Wintery Knight
ARCHIVE

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Best Regards,

/u/dream-hunter

July 23, 2026

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Podcasts on government and economics

January 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Please help yourself to the blog roll and the podcasts in the rightmost column.

Here are some excellent podcasts on the relationship between government and Christianity:

- This one from Dennis Prager with Sally C. Pipes is about health care and government.
- This one from Dennis Prager with Glenn Sacks is about the deterioration of the nuclear family.
- This one from Apologetics.com with Kevin Alan Lewis on economics, law and government.
- This one from Hugh Hewitt with J. P. Moreland on government.

I also would highly recommend reading the articles from the current issue of Salvo magazine.

Domestic violence and censorship

January 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a fascinating article from the Canadian journalist Barbara Kay in their national newspaper, the National Post.

The article describes how the Justice minister of a Canadian province was stripped of his Cabinet position for daring to suggest that men could be victims of domestic violence (DV) and not only women. He did this in an internal e-mail – this was not even said in public.

Some special interest groups and their government allies have a vested interest in making sure that the public thinks that all DV is committed against women. There is a lot of taxpayer money at stake. If it were discovered that male victims of DV existed, that taxpayer money might have to be shared. Canada might then need a Minister for the Status of Men, an Office on Violence Against Men, a Violence Against Men Act, a National Council to Reduce Violence against Men and their Children, etc. I think that we should condemn DV against women *and men*, equally.

Here are the numbers from official government surveys in the UK and Canada:

UK numbers:

> In the event, the CASI method found relatively high levels of male victimisation, to the extent that men appear to be at equal risk to women of domestic assault (4.2% of both sexes reported an assault in the last year).

Canada numbers:

> An estimated 7% of women and 6% of men in a current or previous spousal relationship encountered spousal violence during the five years up to and including 2004, according to a comprehensive new report on family violence.

Here is a related research paper by Dr. Linda Kelly, a professor of Law at Indiana University School of Law.

Birth control funding to stimulate the economy?

January 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse is an ideal exponent of the view that conservative libertarian capitalists *do* have an interest in promoting intact families as the best environment for raising children. She argues that certain social issues can impose huge costs on the taxpayer, and also increases the size and scope of government. Government should at least do no harm in discouraging traditional marriages and even stay-at-home mothers.

In this article, she examines Nancy Pelosi's recent comments regarding the inclusion of contraceptives in the the Democrat's so-called stimulus package. This bill is no stimulus. It is a giveaway to the secular left's special interest groups, on the backs of the productive private sector. Dr. Morse argues that supporting marriage instead of contraceptives would reduce taxpayer costs.

Here is an excerpt from Dr. Morse's excellent article:

> If Nancy Pelosi wants to reduce the costs to taxpayers, she should be promoting marriage. Out-of-wedlock childbearing is one of the surest roads to poverty and, thereby, to taxpayer expenditure. A recent study by the Institute for American Values conservatively estimated the taxpayer costs of non-marital childbearing to be $112 billion per year, or roughly the GDP of New Zealand. Responsible, sustainable childbearing takes place within marriage. And, incidentally, if Speaker Pelosi really wants to reduce abortions (which she hinted at, but did not say) she should also be promoting marriage. Some 80 per cent of abortions, year in and year out, are performed on unmarried women.

Here is a related research paper by Christine C. Kim of the Heritage Foundation on teen sexuality and the effects of family structure and stability in curbing it.

William Lane Craig to debate Hitchens, Carrier

January 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Audio and video from a panel discussion with Hitchens, Craig, etc. is linked here.

UPDATE: My play-by-play transcript of the debate is here.

William Lane Craig is arguably the most effective active defender of evangelical Christianity. He is currently finishing off a 5-day debating/ speaking tour in Ontario, Canada, but he also has an upcoming 4-day debating/ speaking tour in Quebec, Canada in February.

A listing of many of Bill Craig's debates is here, along with links to transcripts, audio and video. Here is audio from a debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong which I think is one of his better debates. It was later incorporated into book debate between the two scholars, which was published by Oxford University Press, 2004.

Craig is scheduled to debate Richard Carrier and Christoper Hitchens this year. The debate with Hitchens will be held on April 4, 2009 at Biola University. Radio show host Hugh Hewitt is the moderator. The debate with Carrier is scheduled for March 19, 2009 at Northwest Missouri State University.

Richard Carrier is a strong proponent of atheism, and did well in his debate (audio, video) with Mike Licona on the resurrection of Jesus. Licona has since been awarded his PhD from the University of Pretoria in South Africa with high grades, and would presumably do better in a re-match. Craig and Carrier debated before on Lee Strobel's "Faith Under Fire" TV show.

Hitchens may be more of an easy win for Craig, as he struggled with the scientific and philosophical issues in his previous debate with Dinesh D'Souza, (video here). Hitchens also debated at Stanford University against Jay Wesley Richards.

UPDATE 1: Welcome, visitors from RichardDawkins.net and SherDog.net! While you're here, why not check out my snarky series on the the war between science and atheism, in which I analyze recent scientific discoveries and how atheists responded to them! Part one, part two. WARNING! These two posts are deliberately mocking the new atheism by being as mean as they are on purpose!

UPDATE 2: Panel discussion in Dallas, TX with William Lane Craig, Lee Strobel, Christopher Hitchens on atheism is also scheduled, details here. Date: Saturday, March 21, 2009 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM.

UPDATE 3: You can get a LIVE FEED of the upcoming Craig/Hitchens debate for yourself or group viewing for $98. Details here!

UPDATE 4: Welcome visitors from Ace of Spades HQ! Ace wins Conservative Blog of the Year *every year*. Thanks for the link, Ace! New visitors, please take a look around. My blog is half conservative/libertarian politics and half analysis of arguments and evidence for and against the Christian faith. The goal of the blog is to bring together fiscal

conservatives with socially conservative Christians, by improving understanding between the two factions.

Here are some posts that explain Christianity for non-Christians: the hiddenness of God, the problem of evil, religious pluralism, and the problem of the unevangelized. I also have posts on why men are leaving the church, how to make a pro-life case *without appealing to religion*, explaining the resurrection *without assuming the Bible is inerrant or even reliable*, etc. Please make yourself at home, and leave your challenges in the comments. Challengers *always* get the last word here, after my 1 rebuttal.

UPDATE: I analyze Hitchens' case against God here, from his debate against Frank Turek.

The war between science and atheism, part one

January 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: Part two of the series on the fine-tuning argument is here.

I was recently reading over at Colliding Universes, and I noticed that Denyse O'Leary was commenting on this post by Christian apologist Frank Turek at TownHall.com. Turek recounts his experiences in his debate (audio, video), with atheist Christoper Hitchens on September 9, 2008 at Virgina Commonwealth University. In particular, Turek describes his use of cosmological argument, and the scientific confirmation of that argument provided by recent discoveries in astronomy and physics.

And suddenly it struck me: *atheism is dead*. The big bang has *killed it*. And it is safe to say that in this day and age, if you meet an atheist, then that person is either ignorant, stupid or insane (or wicked, but I'd rather not consider that). And I think that is worth talking about the discoveries that led up to this theory, since this theory is the most accepted theory of the origin of the universe in astrophysics today. All Christians should be able to discuss these discoveries and explain how God created the entire physical universe from nothing – *and we can know this*. The creation of the universe in the Big Bang is as confirmed as the theory that the Earth goes around the Sun.

First, here is the syllogism for the argument for a supernatural cause that brings the entire physical universe into being:

1. Whatever begins to exist requires a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe requires a cause.

Second, let's review the 6 fairly recent discoveries that confirm premise 2 with scientific observations. These discoveries reversed the atheism-friendly theory of an eternal universe, and led to the theory of the creation of the entire physical universe out of nothing.

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies
3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

Why do atheists deny these findings? Probably for emotional comfort – they desire autonomy and so they invent a worldview that allows them to feel good about jettisoning moral constraints and accountability . But for those of us who do constrain our worldviews using scientific discoveries, I recommend the book "God and the Astronomers" by

agnostic scientist Robert Jastrow. His book is the best introduction that I have seen on the 6 discoveries that led to the Big Bang theory.

Here is the best quote from the book, (p. 116 of the second edition), where Jastrow, the former director of NASA's Goddard Space Institute, explains how atheistic scientists were forced, *against their wills*, to accept the big bang theory.

> For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.

The acceptance of the big bang is just another example of how the progress of science whittles away at the gaps in our knowledge. These gaps are leveraged by atheists in order to cling to the delusion that the material world is all there is. But we *now* know that the physical universe had a non-physical, *supernatural*, cause that brought it into existence, just like the Bible says in Genesis 1:1.

Turek unpacks how the creation of the physical universe is best explained by a supernatural creative act.

> Why couldn't natural forces have produced the universe? Because there was no nature and there were no natural forces ontologically prior to the Big Bang—nature itself was created at the Big Bang. That means the cause of the universe must be something beyond nature—something we would call supernatural. It also means that the supernatural cause of the universe must at least be:
>
> - spaceless because it created space
> - timeless because it created time
> - immaterial because it created matter
> - powerful because it created out of nothing
> - intelligent because the creation event and the universe was precisely designed
> - personal because it made a choice to convert a state of nothing into something (impersonal forces don't make choices).

Now, I would never take the faith of atheists away from them, because it gives them comfort, and hope that no one will ever hold them accountable. It is also important for them to have some *privatized, subjective* way of looking down on other people, so that they can feel better about themselves, despite their flight from science and reason. I really admire the way that by sheer force of will, they are able to believe things without a shred of objective evidence. But, when we discuss these matters in the public square, I think we should insist that we limit our discussion to the available public, testable evidence.

A research paper written by William Lane Craig, and published in a peer-reviewed journal

of astrophysics is available here. This paper contains thorough refutations of all naturalistic rivals to the big bang theory.

UPDATE 1: Welcome, visitors from The Anchoress. Thanks for the link, Anchoress! 300+ hits and counting… WOW!!!

UPDATE 2: Welcome, visitors from Triablogue. Thanks for the link, gentlemen!

UPDATE 3: Welcome, visitors from Post-Darwinist! Thanks for the link, Denyse. First-time visitors, please take a look around the blog. There are many varied topics here, and most of my posts are not nearly as snarky as this satirical one!

UPDATE 4: Part two in the series on atheism's war against science has been posted here.

Obama’s anti-free-trade policy angers the world

February 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, I thought that Obama was too smart to enact protectionist policies, but it looks like he does indeed mean to try to plunge the USA into a new depression, just like Hoover did when he signed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act in 1930. What protectionism says to consumers is this: working families must pay more for inferior products manufactured by government’s favored special interest groups, (e.g. – unions). The standard of living of consumers of those protected products will be reduced, because consumers are overpaying for something that they could get cheaper elsewhere.

What this means that those of us who prefer to use our dollars for purchases that are important to our worldviews (e.g. – Christianity), is that we will have *less purchasing power* to spend on charity, private schools, apologetics resources, or anything else we want to buy to express our values. Money is the fuel that people use to live out their worldviews in the public square. The more money is wasted by government, the less money we have for our *individual* priorities. And the way that a secular government spends money is never as good as the way an informed Christian individual will spend it.

Reactions to Obama’s “Buy American” plan worldwide have been swift and alarming:

- In Canada, the Globe and Mail’s headline is “Buy American, spark a global trade war“
- In the UK, the Telegraph warns that “Protectionism could destroy us all” and the Times declares “Spat with China raises fears of trade war“
- In Australia, the Canberra Times reports that there are “Fears ‘Buy American’ bid could ignite ignite trade war“

Over at Pat Toomey’s Club for Growth, Andrew Roth notes that India is angered at the prospect of having their exports taxed. The headline from Reuters India is “Policymakers sound alarm over protectionism“. We can expect to pay more for goods imported from other countries, because they will retaliate against our tariffs. More consumer purchasing power is lost!

Over at William J. O’Neill’s Investors Business Daily, an editorial describes how firms such as GE and Caterpillar faces *job losses* because they are denied access to cheap foreign steel. By the way, if you haven’t clicked on the IBD podcasts over there on the rightmost column, what are you waiting for? Those are the best podcasts on the Internet!

Over at the Cato Institute blog, Daniel Ikenson notes that the American Steel industry has been enjoying record profits, and that the steel tarrifs supported by Obama’s plan cause other companies to *lose exports* to foreign nations, because businesses here are forced to pay too much for steel that they could get cheaper abroad.

It was Adam Smith who first explained so long ago:

> It is a maxim of every prudent master of a family, never to attempt to make at

> home what it will cost him more to make than to buy. The tailor does not attempt to make his own shoes, but buys them of the shoemaker. The shoemaker does not attempt to make his own clothes but employs a tailor.… What is prudence in the conduct of every private family can scarce be folly in that of a great kingdom. If a foreign country can supply us with a commodity cheaper than we ourselves can make it, better buy it of them with some part of the produce of our own industry employed in a way in which we have some advantage. (Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, Book IV, Chapter II)

A more complete explanation of the effects of imposing tariffs on imports can be found in Robert P. Murphy's new introductory book to free market capitalism, The Politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism. A review of this book is here. Another good book analyzing free market capitalism applied to a number of different areas including crime and abortion, is Freedomnomics by John R. Lott. A review of this book, by the eminent economist Walter Williams, is here.

Atheism, Christianity and the problem of evil and suffering

February 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In Christian theology, a classical definition of evil is found in the work of Augustine of Hippo. He states that the evil is not a thing itself, and therefore is not brought into being by God. Instead, evil is the privation of right order. Or, to put it more simply, evil is the state of affairs when things are the way they ought not to be. So, if a mugger mugs you and steals your money, that was evil, because humans ought not to do that. And if a tsunami leaves thousands of people homeless, that's evil, because the world ought not to be like that. (Let's bracket why God might allow natural evil, such as the latter example, for another post).

The point is that when you talk about evil and suffering, it pre-supposes that the world is not the way it ought to be. But that means that the world ought to be some way. If the world "ought to be" any way other than it is, then that pre-supposes a designer, who had a purpose for the world, i.e. – a way the world ought to be.

But that's not my point today. My point today is that atheists cannot use the apparently gratuitous evil in the world as a disproof that there is a God *until* they define what they mean by evil.

It seems to me that there are 2 choices for what evil could be on atheism. What is NOT open to atheists is the solution above, namely, that evil is a departure from the way things ought to be. Because the universe is an accident on atheism – it is purposeless – there is no way *the universe* ought to be. *We* are accidents on atheism. There is no way *we* ought to be.

So evil must mean one of two things on atheism:

1. Evil means something that the atheist finds personally distasteful. It is a subjective preference that each person decides for themselves. Just as some people don't like broccoli – some people don't like murder or tsunamis. It's up to each person. But that cannot be used as an argument against God, because who says that God's moral purposes ought to be connected to the personal moral preferences of atheists? It won't work.
2. Evil is what society says is counter to the social conventions of a particular time and place. If we decide that murder is against our society's conventions today, then for that time and place, murder is "evil". But then, not signaling when you turn right at a stop sign is also "evil". It's all just made-up conventions. And again, it is difficult to see why God should be bound by a society's conception of good and evil, they are just conventions of accidental people, on an accidental planet, in an accidental universe. (Again, we will bracket the problem of deciding what a society is for this discussion).

So, now I am going to ask you atheists. When you say that there is gratuitous evil in the world, (i.e. – a state of affairs that is apparently pointless, apparently without morally sufficient justification for God to permit it), what do you mean by evil? Does not the invocation of a standard of right and wrong that applies to God himself imply an objective morality? (a moral standard that is independent of personal or cultural preferences) And if there is an objective moral standard like this, where does it come from, on your atheistic worldview?

It seems to me that pressing the problem of evil is inconsistent on atheism. There is no moral standard to hold God accountable to in an accidental universe. You have to *pre-suppose* an objective moral standard, and a designer of the universe who makes that standard and makes it applicable, before you can proceed to hold God accountable to that standard. But then, you have already assumed God in order to argue against him.

Here is a short paper that contains a summary of *everything I know* about the problem of evil, (deductive/ logical, as well as inductive/ probabilistic). If you can only read one short paper on the problem of evil/ suffering, this is what you need to read. Do not pass this paper up – it is *pure wisdom* and will make you effective on this issue in the public square better than anything else out there.

Also, to see these arguments in action, check out the debate here, with William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen. If you want a book, here is one between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, published by Oxford University Press, 2004, (audio of one of their debates here). One of my favorite scholars on this topic is Doug Geivett. If you can listen to the audio from his lecture on evil, that is *pure wisdom*. It's up on the Academy of Christian Apologetics, (audio). I love the use of "noseeums" in his examples.

UPDATE:

I was over on triablogue.com, and they were commenting on a post over at Victor Reppert's blog C.S. Lewis' Dangerous Idea, on the topic of morality on atheism. Also, there this debate between Douglas Wilson and Christopher Hitchens is fantastic for understanding why morality is irrational on an atheistic worldview.

How divorce laws discourage marriage

February 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend notified me of this new article by the Canadian journalist Barbara Kay about a recent decision by a judge in Ontario, Canada. The article states that a Toronto judge has awarded custody of the 3 children from a dissolved marriage to the father, as a result of the mental trauma suffered by the children while they were in custody of the mother. The article notes that this is a "stunning and unusual family law decision".

According the Government of Canada's own numbers, sole-custody is awarded to the mother in nearly 80% of divorce cases:

> In the majority of cases (79.3 percent), the mother had sole custody; the father had sole custody in 8.7 percent of cases. Shared custody (a child spends at least 40 percent of the time with each parent) and split custody (one or more children have primary residence with the mother and one or more children have primary residence with the father) were relatively infrequent at 6.2 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

In this particular case, Kay notes that the mother (K.D.) had pressured the children to distance themselves from their father (A.L.). She writes:

> According to the judgment against K. D., she is denied all contact with the girls, even by telephone or text messages She has been ordered not to come closer to them than 300 metres. A. L. has been given the right to confiscate their computers and cellphones. This is necessary, Justice McWatt said, because the mother had so poisoned her children's feelings toward their father that they had lost their capacity for independent judgment in relating to him.

Now, for good men, the thought of losing access to our own children after a divorce is a terrible thing to contemplate. Two-thirds of divorces are initiated by women, often against the wishes of the men, under no-fault, (i.e. – unilateral), divorce laws. Additionally, there is the question of money. Alimony and child support payments can be high, and men can often be required to pay even if they lose their jobs!

In another related story, a Quebec judge overturned a father's grounding of his daughter because the judge felt the grounding was too harsh! Men are not going to feel comfortable about getting married when the courts interfere with families in order to implement their politically correct agenda. Men want to be fathers, but it seems as if the courts are sending men a message: don't marry, don't have children.

Stephen Baskerville, a professor at Patrick Henry College, has written a cover story for Touchstone Magazine in which he explains the danger that faces men and women who choose to marry. This article summarizes Baskerville's new book, and is highly recommended understand how and why the government discourages marriage.

Here is an excerpt from the article:

> Though obfuscated with legal jargon (losing “custody”), what this means is that a legally unimpeachable parent can suddenly be arrested for seeing his own children without government authorization. Following from this, he can be arrested for failure or inability to conform to a variety of additional judicial directives that apply to no one but him. He can be arrested for domestic violence or child abuse, even if no evidence is presented that he has committed any. He can be arrested for not paying child support, even if the amount exceeds his means (and which may amount to most of his salary). He can even be arrested for not paying an attorney or a psychotherapist he has not hired.

This can happen to women as well, according to Baskerville, in certain cases. Christians typically believe in marriage, and research indicates that a stable marriage is the best environment in which to bring up children. Therefore, Christians should be concerned by the government’s attempt to weaken the bonds of marriage by providing spouses with financial incentives to file for divorce, seize custody of the children, drain their ex-spouse of money, and prevent the ex-spouse from having a healthy relationship with the children.

Stephen Baskerville was interviewed on the Chicago-based radio show Extension 720 with host Milt Rosenberg. This interview is alarming, but required listening for men and women contemplating marriage, and for those who want to see marriage encouraged, and not discouraged, by the government and the courts. Here is another interview with Dr. Baskerville, but this one is from the Dennis Prager show.

Marriage is without a doubt good for children, for spouses, and for society. Shouldn’t we be thinking of ways to encourage people to marry, and to stay married, instead of having the government provide incentives to divorce or not marry at all?

UPDATE: Australian study shows that kids are safer when they live with their fathers.

The pro-life position on abortion explained in plain English

February 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Now, you may think that the view that the unborn deserve protection during pregnancy is something that you either take on faith or not. But I want to explain how you can make a case for the right to life of the unborn, just by using reason and evidence.

To defend the pro-life position, I think you need to sustain 3 arguments:

1. The unborn is a living being with human DNA, and is therefore human.
2. There is no morally-relevant difference between an unborn baby, and one already born.
3. None of the justifications given for terminating an unborn baby are morally adequate.

Now, the pro-abortion debater may object to point 1, perhaps by claiming that the unborn baby is either not living, or not human, or not distinct from the mother.

Defending point 1: Well, it is pretty obvious that the unborn child is not inanimate matter. It is definitely living and growing through all 9 months of pregnancy. (Click here for a video that shows what a baby looks like through all 9 months of pregnancy). Since it has human DNA, that makes it a human. And its DNA is different from either its mother or father, so it clearly not just a tissue growth of the father or the mother. More on this point at Christian Cadre, here.

Secondly, the pro-abortion debater may try to identify a characteristic of the unborn that is not yet present or developed while it is still in the womb, and then argue that because the unborn does not have that characteristic, it does not deserve the protection of the law.

Defending point 2: You need to show that the unborn are not different from the already-born in any meaningful way. The main differences between them are: *size, level of development, environment* and *degree of dependence*. Once these characteristics are identified, you can explain that none of these differences provide moral justification for terminating a life. For example, babies inside and outside the womb have the same value, because location does not change a human's intrinsic value. More at Stand to Reason, here.

Additionally, the pro-abortion debater may try to identify a characteristic of the already-born that is not yet present or developed in the unborn, and then argue that because the unborn does not have that characteristic, that it does not deserve protection, (e.g. – sentience). Most of the these objections that you may encounter are refuted in this essay by Francis Beckwith. Usually these objections fall apart because they assume the thing they are trying to prove, namely, that the unborn deserves less protection than the

already born.

Finally, the pro-abortion debater may conceded your points 1 and 2, and admit that the unborn is fully human. But they may then try to provide a moral justification for terminating the life of the unborn, regardless.

Defending point 3: I fully grant that it is sometimes justifiable to terminate an innocent human life, if there is a moral justification. One of the best known justifications is Judith Jarvis Thomson's "violinist" argument. This argument is summarized by Paul Manata, one of the experts over at Triablogue:

> Briefly, this argument goes like this: Say a world-famous violinist developed a fatal kidney ailment and the Society of Music Lovers found that only you had the right blood-type to help. So, they therefore have you kidnapped and then attach you to the violinist's circulatory system so that your kidneys can be used to extract the poison from his. To unplug yourself from the violinist would be to kill him; therefore, pro-lifers would say a person has to stay attached against her will to the violinist for 9 months. Thompson says that it would be morally virtuous to stay plugged-in. But she asks, "Do you have to?" She appeals to our intuitions and answers, "No."

Manata then goes on to defeat Thomson's proposal here, with a short, memorable illustration, which I highly recommend that you check out. More info on how to respond to similar arguments is here.

For those looking for advanced resources, Francis Beckwith, a professor at Baylor University, published the book Defending Life, with Cambridge University Press, 2007.

UPDATE: I found a neat video over at Tough Questions Answered of a 12-year old girl making the case for protecting the unborn. This is better than I can do!

Mike Licona to debate Bart Ehrman in April at SES

February 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I sent an e-mail to Mike Licona last night to see if he had any upcoming debates. Mike debates in favor of the view that we can know historically, on the evidence, that God raised Jesus from the dead. Mike replied back to let me know that he will be debating Bart Ehrman, a professor at UNC Chapel Hill, *again* at Southern Evangelical Seminary in NC, on April 2, 2009. The topic of their debate will be "Can Historians Prove Jesus Rose From The Dead?"

In Mike's first debate with Ehrman, (audio, video), Licona used the minimal facts approach pioneered by Gary Habermas, which is similar to Bill Craig's approach. Mike's minimal facts approach does not require that the Bible be inspired, inerrant, or *generally reliable*. Mike uses only a fraction of the New Testament, the minimal facts, which are facts that are accepted nearly unanimously by scholars across the ideological spectrum, including atheists. He leans especially hard on 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, which contains the basics of the resurrection narrative and is dated to 1-5 years after the cross.

The minimal facts are accepted because they pass a variety of tests that the other passages do not pass. To be considered a minimal fact, the passage must be cited in one early source, such as Paul's letters or Mark, and it must be in other independent sources. It also helps if the passage is attested to by enemies, or is dissimilar from Jesus' Jewish milieu, or if it embarrasses the people who are recording and preserving the text. So, a fact like the guard at the tomb, which is only recorded in one source, (Matthew), is not a minimal fact.

Licona's 4 facts last time were: 1) Jesus was crucified, 2) Jesus' followers experienced visions of Jesus after his death, 3) Jesus' enemy, Paul, had an experience that transformed into a powerful advocate for Christianity, and 4) Jesus' brother, James, also had a post-mortem experience of Jesus, and changed from being skeptical of Jesus during his lifetime to being a leader in the early church. Both Paul and James were eventually martyred for their new faith in Jesus. This approach to the resurrection is a lot more acceptable to skeptics. There is no blind faith – just pure historical analysis.

Interestingly, Licona does not argue for the empty tomb, as Craig does. In the recent debate between J.D. Crossan and N.T. Wright, I was surprised to hear that Crossan was willing to grant the empty tomb, for the sake of argument, to Wright. Crossan is a radical liberal, so if he grants the empty tomb, then you and I can use it. I think that the fact that the earliest witnesses to the empty tomb were women, whose testimony was not regarded as reliable at that time, enhances the reliability of the empty tomb narrative.

Ehrman argues that the New Testament is not a reliable source for history, because there are manuscripts that differ from other manuscripts. He concludes that the resurrection cannot be proved historically. He also makes a point about how miracles are the "least probable" explanation, (which William Lane Craig demolishes in their debate, see transcript here). These manuscript differences are called variants, and there are quite a

high number of them, because there are quite a high number of manuscripts. The number of variants sounds alarming, until you realize that *no New Testament doctrine is affected by the large number of invariants.*

In Ehrman's debate with Peter Williams on the UK-based Unbelievable radio show, and in Ehrman's debate with Dan Wallace, Ehrman lists the 4 worst problems caused by the invariants:

1. the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11) is a late addition not present in the earliest manuscripts
2. the long ending of Mark (Mark 16:9-20) is a late addition not present in the earliest manuscripts
3. Jesus was angry and not compassionate when he healed the leper (Mark 1:41)
4. that Jesus died apart from God, and not by the grace of God (Hebrews 2:9)

Now I have to tell you, these disputes are *irrelevant* to standard Christian doctrine. Also, I personally *prefer* the woman at the well story being left out, and I *prefer* angry Jesus in 3). Why? Because I am *snarky*. The only variant that bugs me is the ending in Mark, because I liked the long ending. But none of these "worst cases" affects anything that Mike Licona might say on behalf of the resurrection, which is what the debate is supposed to be about, right?

For further study of Licona and Ehrman, I would recommend the book "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus", by Gary Habermas and Mike Licona on the resurrection, which is the best introductory book you can get on how to argue the minimal facts case. If you like Lee Strobel's interviewing style, then you can't go wrong with this book, "The Case for the Real Jesus". If you prefer books featuring debates between opposing scholars, check out William Lane Craig against Gerd Ludemann here, (audio of their re-match is here), William Lane Craig against John Dominic Crossan here, (audio of the debate is here), or N. T. Wright against John Dominic Crossan here, (audio of the debate *only* is here).

If you can get the audio for the N.T. Wright and J.D. Crossan debate, that's quite useful because of the strong respondents, (Doug Geivett, Craig Evans and Charles Quarles). The audio from the Ben Wallace vs. Bart Ehrman debate is also worth getting. These are both available to buy here.

Democrats vote to discriminate against students of faith

February 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you know that Obama's massive stimulus bill contains a provision that "prohibits renovation money for schools that allow religious groups to meet on campus"? Jay Sekulow of the ACLJ describes the provision here. According to this Fox News story, Senator James "Jim" Demint (R. – SC), proposed an amendment to the pork-filled bill to remove the anti-religious provision. However, Demint reported that the amendment failed in the Senate 43-54, with almost all Republicans voting for religious liberty, and almost all the Democrats voting against it. The provision had previously passed in the Democrat-controlled House, with every Republican voting against it.

I think this defeat is a helpful reminder to people of faith about the role of government-run schools, and teacher's unions, in imposing secular-leftist values on the next generation. I recently finished reading Jonah Goldberg's book "Liberal Fascism", in which the author explains what the word *fascist* really means. Fascism is the political philosophy that seeks to undermine individual goals and values, including religious and entrepreneurial values, and to substitute the values of the society, as expressed by the party in power.

A common thread in fascist regimes is the effort to separate children from parents at a young age, so that adult teachers can impose the state's values on the children when they are least able to resist them. That is why, accoring to the Guardian, the National Socialist party abolished homeschooling in fascist Germany in 1938. (A review of Goldberg's book by Canadian author Denyse O'Leary is here). My favorite quote from Goldberg's book is about the role of government-run schools in a fascist state:

> Hence a phalanx of progressive reformers saw the home as the front line in the war to transform men into compliant social organs. Often the answer was to get the children out of the home as soon as possible. An archipelago of agencies, commissions, and bureaus sprang up overnight to take the place of the anti-organic, contra-evolutionary influences of the family. The home could no longer be seen as an island, separate and sovereign from the rest of society. John Dewey helped create kindergartens in American for precisely this purpose — to help shape the apples before they fell from the tree — while at the other end of the educational process stood reformers like Wilson, who summarized the progressive attitude perfectly when, as president of Princeton, he told an audience, "Our problem is not merely to help the students to adjust themselves to world life … [but] to make them as unlike their fathers as possible."

The United States is also heading in this direction. In California, Human Events reported that homeschooling was effectively banned by an activist court. Dinesh D'Souza frankly explains why the left is so intent on keeping control of the schools here. He notes that

secular people do not form families and do not have children, because it is too much of a constraint on their autonomy. Instead, D'Souza writes, secularists simply seize control of the children of religious parents, and pass their values on to the children in the mandatory government-run schools.

This plan has become so successful, that even young evangelicals are abandoning their faith at the ballot box. Phyllis Schlafly recently noted that 32% of young evangelicals voted for Obama in 2008, compared to 16% of them who voted for Kerry in 2004. Some of this slide to the left is due to parents focusing too much on entertainment and material gain. But a large portion of the blame should be pinned on the government-run schools and universities. USA Today notes that 70% of *Protestant Christians* abandon their faith by age 23.

Once you understand that the secular left has an interest in separating children from their parents, you begin to see why they support policies that transfer more familial responsibilities to the state. Higher taxes ensure that mothers *must* work, so that the child's vulnerable pre-school years may be spent with government-certified instructors in day care. The emphasis on sex-education in the government-run schools leads young people into behaviors that later undermine marital stability. And, as Stephen Baskerville argues, the state encourages divorces to make business for itself.

I've argued here that Democrats favor secularizing government-run schools in order to undermine the faith of children. This is something that people of faith, who want to pass on their worldview and values to their children, need to think about. If you voted for Obama for nationalized health care, taxing of the rich, stopping global warming, etc., then *now* may be a good time to think *again*. Do a little studying about what conservatives believe – you may find out that conservatism is more consistent with the goals of faith-based voters than you had first thought.

By the way, as Ezra Levant reports, it happens in Canada, too. Often.

UPDATE: Wow, Ezra Levant is really mad at the University of Calgary for censoring pro-life students! National Post story is here.

Stephen Baskerville on Dennis Prager show today

February 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just received an e-mail from Stephen Baskerville, who is an expert on the effects on marriage and family caused by our divorce laws and divorce courts. He is scheduled to be on the Dennis Prager show today at 2:00 PM Eastern, 11:00 AM PST. (It was pushed back from 1:30 PM to 2:00 PM)
Here are some places where you can listen online:

- WHK 1420
- KRLA 870
- 1280 The Patriot

Or you can try a radio guide here:

- Radio Time – Dennis Prager
- Streaming Radio Guide – Dennis Prager

For more information about Stephen Baskerville, check out his cover story on marriage and divorce for Touchstone Magazine, here.

UPDATE:
Today's show (02/06/09) is available here.
Baskerville's previous appearance (12/19/2007) on the show is here.

BONUS:
An appearance on Milt Rosenberg's Extension 720 is here.

William Lane Craig debates on the Michael Coren show

February 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you're looking for William Lane Craig's appearance on the Michael Coren show, I found them posted over in his Reasonable Faith forum.

Here are the links:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4
- Part 5

The show is posted in 5 parts. By the way, Bill Craig has published his latest newsletter with details of his January speaking tour in Ontario, Canada, eh? Don't forget – Bill will be touring la belle Province (Quebec, Canada) *this month*.

Government-run health care is bad for patients and liberty

February 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Proponents of government-run health care, (i.e. – socialists), want to redistribute wealth from producers to victims. *Producers* create wealth and *victims* engage in risky and/or immoral activities that are likely to require medical treatment. (I am concentrating on medical treatment for culpable activities here). Wealth redistribution reduces economic growth because producers stop producing while victims incur *more* costs, since they do not pay much for their treatment. Eventually, reduced economic growth leads to poor health care, as seen in socialist countries like North Korea, Cuba, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, etc.

Socialists do not trust people to make their own health care decisions, and to deal with the consequences, (i.e. – liberty). In a socialized system, a producer might have his wealth redistributed to victims for services he would never need himself, because of his lifestyle decisions. He might even have his wealth redistributed to victims for services that he objects to on moral grounds, like abortions or sex-changes. He may pay into a mandatory government program for his entire life, without ever making a claim. If at the end of his life, he finally makes a claim, he may be told that he must *get in line* behind the government's favored victims – victims who may not have even paid into the system. To see how this actually happens in Canada, watch these *excellent* 5-minute films from On the Fence Films: Two Women, A Short Course in Brain Surgery, The Lemon, and Dead Meat. Also see this Fraser Institute article.

Imagine how socialism would work if applied to a different business, like auto insurance. *Everyone* would have to carry *mandatory* auto insurance, whether they owned a vehicle or not. People would pay into the system *based on earned income, not based on personal choices, desired coverages or risks.* Different vehicles, driving infractions, vehicle usage, and other risk factors like age would be *irrelevant to the price charged*. Socialized auto insurance would just be a huge transfer of wealth from non-drivers and safe drivers to risky drivers. The socialist system of redistributing wealth to equalize health care outcomes, *destroys* productivity and personal responsibility. For further details, see this Heritage Foundation lecture transcript.

Socialized medicine involves price-fixing. The government is the single-payer, and set the prices that doctors can charge for services. Since doctors cannot make a fair profit practicing medicine, compared to other fields, we get fewer doctors. But since health care is "free" to victims, we get more risky and/or immoral behavior, and increased demand for medical care. Fewer doctors, and more victims results in a shortage of medical care, and waiting lists. Medical costs also increase because doctors often practice "defensive medicine" to avoid exposure to lawsuits from lawyers, worsening the shortage, (Investors Business Daily editorial, podcast). Another factor that increases medical costs is mandatory licensing, which forces hospitals to pay more for labor and supplies, (Cato

Institute podcast). For further details, see this Cato Institute research paper.

Even if the socialist claims that he wants to set up a parallel system to compete alongside the private medical insurers, the government can easily engage in predatory pricing in order to drive out private businesses from the market. The government is far more able to price medical services lower than private alternatives, and run deficits, until their private rivals go out of business. The government does not have stock that private companies could short in order to prevent this predatory pricing. Monopolies are *never* good for the consumer, because consumers can't shop around for the best deal. In a government system, you are forced to pay for services you don't need. The government is already woefully mismanaging Medicare, and Medicaid, (Investors Business Daily editorial, podcast), do we really really want to give them the whole system to manage?

People need to be responsible for their lifestyle choices, and their medical bills. The free market approach preserves liberty, and economic growth. Medical providers have an incentive to lower costs and improve quality. Consumers keep their liberty by taking responsibility for managing their own risks and costs, (see Investors Business Daily editorial, podcast).

It is important to note that upholding traditional morality and traditional relationships, like marriage, helps to reduce medical costs. Government should therefore avoid assaulting religious beliefs, and moral values. An additional problem with socialized medicine is that Christian medical practitioners often have their religious liberty infringed by the government, (see examples here, and here).

These Cato Institute podcasts describe Obama's medical policy proposal, (first, second). For more on Obama's plan, see this Heritage Foundation research paper. For more about socialized health care in other countries, see this Cato Institute research paper. A recent debate on this topic, hosted by the left-wing National Public Radio is here. If you prefer books, there is David Gratzer's book, Sally C. Pipes' book, Arnold Kling's book, and Michael F. Cannon and Michael D. Tanner's book.

A Christian and a postmodernist discuss religious pluralism

February 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to this week's episode of the the radio show "Unbelievable", which is broadcast in the UK by Premier Christian radio. Justin Brierly, the host, moderated a dialog between author Joan Konner and Christian philosopher Peter S. Williams. Konner is the dean of the Columbia School of Journalism, and is the author of "The Atheist's Bible". I enjoyed listening to Konner speak, and I admire her for coming on the show. I learned from this podcast that I need to work harder at being more tactful, and gentle with postmodernists. Brierly and Williams do a great job, and I hope that when you listen to the podcast, that you will learn something about how to handle similar challengers.

I thought that I would make a list of some of the points that postmodernists make, because I guarantee that you will have heard some these things before. Many people in our society are guided primarily by emotions, and intuition. For them, there is a tremendous insecurity about what they believe, and the differing beliefs of others makes them uncomfortable. They are upset by absolute claims of fact or morality, because they consider these claims to be exclusive, and judgmental. What upsets them the most is that other people seem to be certain about what they believe, and that these people vote for public policies on the basis of these beliefs. What we'll see is that postmodernists do exactly what they condemn, namely, they exclude, they judge, and they support public policies that they agree with. These are general points, not specific to Konner.

First, postmodernists have view of faith that is a caricature of authentic Christian faith. Postmodernists think that faith is opposed to reason, and evidence. They believe this because they require that all religions are "equally valid". It is not that postmodernists have evaluated the truth claims of different religions. It is they have decided in advance that thinking you're right is mean, and makes people feel bad, and causes wars. Therefore, no faith can be right – all faith is irrational and unsupported. The fact that their own view is absolutist, and exclusive, goes unnoticed.

Second, postmodernists reject reason, science, and any other reality-based support for claims, because supported claims constrain their own subjective will. Postmodernists think that believer's appeals to reason, and evidence, are coercive. This is because they desire complete autonomy to imagine the world based on their own emotions, and intuition. This is especially true for morality. Postmodernists believe that no one has a right to judge the moral practices of others. But, if you disagree with them on their non-judgmentalism, then you are morally wrong. Again, this is self-contradictory, but it goes unnoticed.

Third, postmodernists reinterpret the truth claims made by all religions as myths, (a la Joseph Campbell). That means that every factual claim made by every religion, past, present, future is factually false. No rational analysis or investigation is necessary. For

example, if a religion claimed that universe began to exist, that would be a myth, according to postmodernists. Scientific confirmation from the big bang is irrelevant. No religion can enjoy support from reason or evidence, a priori. Emotional concerns about how exclusive truth claims make people in other religions feel bad is the deciding factor. Again, the claim that no one can make truth claims is self-refuting, because they believe that their claim is true. They don't notice the contradiction.

Fourth, for postmodernists, the purpose of religion cannot be to hold true beliefs about the external world. The purpose of religions must be to make people behave well, because then they are all equivalent, and no religion is excluded. It is irrelevant to a postmodern that Christians claim that their religion hinges on a historical event, (the resurrection), which either happened or didn't. Postmodernists simply presume to tell religious people what their religion really says, and what it really means. Also, postmodernists believe that since all people can invent moral rules and goals for their lives out of thin air, that there is no need for God to ground them. What this means is that according to postmodernists, Stalin's morality is as valid as William Wilberforce's morality. Both have the exact same validity, namely, that they are "true" for the subject.

The postmodernism and moral relativism I discussed above also informs progressive thought, which is why progressives seem to always take the side of evil against the side of good. An amazing lecture given by Jewish comedian Evan Sayet at the Heritage Foundation is probably the best treatment of that point that you will ever see.

For further reading, check out this paper on Christian exclusivism, and this paper on the fate of the unevangelized. Both of them are by William Lane Craig. And remember, it is OK to think you are right, and to disagree with others. But God does not coerce, and neither should you. Share your beliefs, and your reasons, if someone asks you to share with them. The important thing is to appeal to reason and evidence, and to be civil and charitable. Disagree with the person's ideas, but treat the person with respect.

How the left censors free speech in Canada

February 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Denyse O'Leary, a Canadian journalist, gives a helpful round-up of the latest news in the war against free speech in Canada. Did you know that it's dangerous to disagree with certain special interest groups in Canada? If you say something that they find offensive, it can land you in front of a kangaroo court. It's sort of like the secular equivalent of the Spanish Inquisition, because you are almost certain to be found guilty. You can be forced to apologize or pay fines, or pay off your accuser. If you don't know what's happening with the Canadian Human Rights Commissions, Denyse's post is a good place to start.

UPDATE: WOW, Denyse has the full transcript of Mark Steyn's speech during his Human Rights Commission trial. She even transcribes Steyn's answers to the questions afterwards. You do not want to miss this post!

UPDATE 2: Things are even worse that I thought. It turns out that you can't even disagree with pro-abortion activists at taxpayer-funded campuses in Canada any more. If a campus organization books a speaker, the other side can just show up and shut it down by screaming and shouting like banshees every time the speaker tries to get a word in. Here is a video of what happened on the campus. Here is an article from the The Chronicle Herald describing the incident. A radio interview with the pro-life speaker on Calgary's CHQR 770 radio station is here.

UPDATE 3: The Calgary Herald takes a stand against the Human Rights Commissions here. The Chronicle Herald defends the free speech of pro-lifers here. And this article from the Calgary Herald is the **best one of all**, it includes a link to the video of the pro-life speaker, Jose Ruba, being shouted down while he tries in vain to politely reason with the enraged protesters.

UPDATE 4: A Toronto Sun article on Mark Steyn's vicious denunciation of the Human Rights Commissions and their war against freedom of speech.

UPDATE 5: National Post is reporting that the University of Calgary is going to ban the pro-life club.

The war between science and atheism, part two

February 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In part one, you'll remember that I argued that the progress of science in confirming the big bang disproved atheism, and I on went to speculate about why there are still atheists today, given this tremendous scientific discovery. This time, I want to discuss the fine-tuning of the initial constants and conditions of the big bang and see how atheists responded to these recent scientific discoveries.

In nature, the values of physical constants, (e.g. – the force of gravity), are set at the instant when the universe is created. Initially, atheists assumed that the constants could be any value, and life would still exist. But the progress of science has shown that if these constants were altered even slightly, then the resulting universe would not permit life. For example, physicist Brandon Carter has shown that if the force of gravity were stronger or weaker by 1 part in 10 to the 40th power, life-sustaining stars could not exist. While each possible value of the force of gravity is equally unlikely, the *vast majority* of these possibilities *prohibit complex life of any kind*. That means that any one value picked at random is as likely as any of the others, but it is overwhelmingly likely that the one picked will not permit life.

And how do atheists respond to the evidence of a universe that is finely-tuned for life? Well, there are two responses I've seen. The first is to speculate that there are actually an infinite number of other universes that are not fine-tuned, (i.e. – the gambler's fallacy). All these other universes don't support life. But, lucky us, we just happen to be in the one universe that popped into being out of nothing, and is fine-tuned to an incredible degree for life. What's that you say? "Wintery! How can we be sure that these other universes even exist?" Why, you just have to have faith, because there *is no way of directly observing these other universes.* So, to be an intellectually-fulfilled atheist, you have to believe in billions and billions of demons unobservable universes.

> Short of invoking a benevolent creator, many physicists see only one possible explanation: Our universe may be but one of perhaps infinitely many universes in an inconceivably vast multiverse. Most of those universes are barren, but some, like ours, have conditions suitable for life.
>
> The idea is controversial. Critics say it doesn't even qualify as a scientific theory because the existence of other universes cannot be proved or disproved. Advocates argue that, like it or not, the multiverse may well be the only viable nonreligious explanation for what is often called the "fine-tuning problem"—the baffling observation that the laws of the universe seem custom-tailored to favor the emergence of life.

The second response by atheists is that the human observers that exist today, 14 billion years after the universe was created out of nothing, actually caused the fine-tuning. Now you say to me, "Wintery! How can fairies humans fine-tune constants that were set

before humans even existed!" Well, it's true that causality in science has never been known to go backwards in time. But hey, atheists already believe that the entire physical universe popped into being out of nothing. What's one more anti-science delusion to someone already *against* the *law of conservation of mass and matter*? I mean, if you're already against the progress of science, why not double down?

> …maybe we should approach cosmic fine-tuning not as a problem but as a clue. Perhaps it is evidence that we somehow endow the universe with certain features by the mere act of observation… observers are creating the universe and its entire history right now. If we in some sense create the universe, it is not surprising that the universe is well suited to us.

So what makes people become atheists? It isn't arguments or evidence, because the progress of science repudiates atheism-of-the-gaps. Atheism is really just a long-running tempter tantrum. Atheism is caused when a child's selfish autonomy runs into moral obligations, or when a child feels alienated because they are raised in a minority religion. The extreme reactions to these typical childhood experiences is triggered by the atheism-module of the brain. Scientists now believe that the atheism-module causes atheists to want to start wars, such as the wars of atheistic communism, which killed over 100 million people, and still enslaves millions in North Korea, Cuba, Zimbabwe, etc.

A podcast with scientist Scott Chambers, an active researcher on the fine-tuning is here. Here are two posts (first, second) discussing Newsweek's evasions of the fine-tuning, (related podcast here). Five podcasts with *atheist* scholar Bradley Monton on cosmic fine-tuning are here. Physicist Robin Collins argues here that even if you take the blind leap-of-faith into multiverse-land, *you still need a fine-tuning intelligence*. Further discussions of the *unobservable multiverse delusion* are here and here. Further discussions of the *non-existent observer delusion* are here and here. For a serious, non-snarky, non-satirical look at the psychology of atheism, by a former atheist Professor of Psychology at New York University, look here, (related podcast).

UPDATE 1: Welcome, visitors from The Anchoress. Please take a look around while you are here. And thanks for the link, Anchoress!

UPDATE 2: Welcome, visitors from Colliding Universes. Thanks for the link, Denyse! Denyse's other excellent blogs are Post-Darwinist and Mindful Hack.

Ezra Levant defends free speech on the Michael Coren show

February 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In Canada, the right not to be offended trumps freedom of speech and freedom of religious expression. If you offend someone, nothing can save you from the Human Rights Commissions. All that is needed is for a victim to feel offended. The complainant doesn't have to pay anything to lay charges, but the defendant is on the hook for all of his own legal fees. The conviction rate is virtually 100%. Even if you could somehow win, you would still lose time and money while you defend yourself. Penalties can include fines, public apologies, bans on future speech, and even jail time! These are left-wing inquisitions created by left-wing governments who believe in controlling citizens through the force of government.

Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn are the two most prominent defenders of free speech in Canada.

Here is Ezra Levant's most recent appearance on the Michael Coren show. (There is no clip 3) In this show, Levant gets to debate against two left-wing activists, and there are *fireworks going off*. Do not miss this debate!

Clip 1a
Clip 1b
Clip 2
Clip 4

On the Michael Coren show in 2008, Ezra Levant explains the Human Rights Commissions. No debate in this one.

Clip 1
Clip 2
Clip 3
Clip 4
Clip 5
Clip 6

And, as a special bonus, here is Mark Steyn's appearance on the Michael Coren show.

Clip 1
Clip 2
Clip 3
Clip 4
Clip 5
Clip 6

Here is a summary of Ezra's struggle against the Human Rights Commissions. He has spent more than $100,000 defending himself from charges that he offended people. Here

is a summary of what happened to Mark Steyn. He authored the extremely popular book “America Alone”. Steyn was just hauled in front of the Human Rights Commission in Ontario to answer for offending people with his writings.

To see how this affects Christians in particular, consider the case of Stephen Boissoin. You will not believe the sentence that he gets after 5 years of being tried. These anti-free speech laws are not applied equally, they are almost always applied against groups that are hated by the left. When left-wingers get into power, they are not shy about using the full force of government to go after people who did not vote for them. Your human rights are irrelevant to them.

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from the Anchoress! Thanks so much for the link! New readers may want to take a look around since I cover a lot of different topics here, from free speech to economics to science to public policy!

New RNC chairman Michael Steele debates the porkulus on Fox News

February 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We have a new chairman of the Republican National Committee, former lieutenant-governor of Maryland, Michael Steele.

Steele's first action on taking command of the Republican party was to *clean house.* In this clip, he goes toe to toe with DNC chairman Tim Kaine on the porkulus package. Boy, is it great to have someone who understands fiscal conservatism and can actually talk about it.

Economist Tom Sowell explains in this piece why Steele is a great choice for conservatives and libertarians.

> Steele not only knows how to talk, he seems to understand the need to talk. In his appearances on television over the years, he has been assertive rather than apologetic. When attacked, he has counter-attacked, not whined defensively, like too many other Republicans. And when criticizing the current administration, Steele won't have to pull his punches when going after Barack Obama, for fear of being called a racist.

For details on what is actually in the porkulus bill, check out Tom Coburn's list.

Here are my favorites:

- $39 billion slush fund for "state fiscal stabilization" bailout
- $5.5 billion for making federal buildings "green" (including $448 million for DHS HQ)
- $1.3 billion for NASA (including $450 million for "science" at NASA)
- $1.5 billion for carbon capture projects under sec. 703 of P.L. 110-140 (though section only authorizes $1 billion for five years)
- $850 million for Amtrak

Do Democrats even care about history? Stimulus packages did not work for FDR in the 1930s, or for Japan in the 1990s. Not only that, but Michelle Malkin is reporting that the porkulus bill contains a mechanism to *nationalize health care.* I already blogged in detail about how well nationalized health care works in the UK and Canada.

UPDATE: Here is an article that an atheist Obama supporter sent me that shows why the porkulus is such a bad idea. Needless to say, he is shocked – *shocked* – that Obama is doing exactly what he said he would do during the campaign. Porkulus!

UPDATE 2: Economist Walter Williams argues that not only will porkulus drive us into a depression, but that it is also unconstitutional. Here is economist Tom Sowell's take on porkulus, "Using long, drawn-out processes to put money into circulation to meet an emergency is like mailing a letter to the fire department to tell them that your house is on fire." Paul over at triablogue laments that we have not reached the day where we give

equal credence to the conclusions of eminent black economists, like Williams and Sowell, in Washington.

John Lott debates gun control on Canadian radio show

February 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

John Lott is probably the best known academic researcher on gun laws and the effects of gun ownership on crime rates. He discussed the topic on a Canadian radio station CKNW, and did a great job of covering many of the important points in the debate. The commercial-free show is available here. If you are a Canadian, or if you have never heard the other side of the gun control debate, then you need to spend 18 minutes listening to the case against gun control. The case against gun control is something you may *never* hear about in the mainstream media.

Here is a summary of some of the points he touches on during the dialog.

- Lott begins by noting that guns can be used in tragic ways, but that they can *also* be used to prevent crimes. The only way to decide whether gun ownership should be allowed is to compare the ratio between the tragic incidents against defensive gun usage incidents.
- Lott also briefly discusses the media bias in reporting on firearms. The media selects stories that result in actual violence, so that the vast number of defensive gun uses go unreported. These defensive gun uses seldom involve injuries, or even firing a shot. Instead, a crime is prevented by merely displaying or brandishing the weapon, which scares off the assailant.
- Lott notes that gun control laws are only obeyed by law abiding citizens, never by criminals. Thus, the only purpose gun control serves is to increase crime rates by disarming the potential victims of criminal activity. He also argues that gun bans actually increase violent crime and murder rates in countries where bans have been implemented.
- Lott compares crime rates in the USA and Canada using official United Nations surveys. Lott notes that most of the crime in the USA is due to gang violence, and as such is isolated to small areas within a few counties.
- Lott addresses Canada’s gun registries and gun laws specifically. He explains why gun registries are virtually useless for lowering crime rates. Lott also discusses concealed carry laws in the USA, and their effect on crime rates.
- Lott also notes that concealed-carry permit holders commit fewer crimes than off-duty police officers. In other words, private gun ownership doesn’t cause crime, and gun owners are extremely law-abiding.

But there is hope for Canada. This press release, (dated February 9, 2009), states that:

> Saskatchewan M.P. Garry Breitkreuz has introduced a Private Members' Bill to scrap the decade-old Canadian long-gun registry (see link below to Bill C-301).
>
> The long-gun registry was originally budgeted to cost Canadians $2 million, but the price tag spiraled out of control to an estimated $2 billion a decade later. Breitkreuz says it's time to pull the plug on this useless money pit, because the registry has not saved one single life since it was introduced.

Finally, this video clip is a hilarious knock on gun control laws.

Happy Academic Freedom Day

February 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You can counter the Darwin Day celebrations with these articles on intelligent design and academic freedom. I got these in my e-mail from the Discovery Institute Center for Science and Culture.

- Professors Show Need for Academic Freedom Bill by The Oklahoma Daily Editorial Board, *The Oklahoma Daily*
- Happy Atheist Day by Dr. Michael Egnor, *Evolution News & Views*
- Happy Darwin Day? by Dr. Jonathan Wells, *The Washington Times*
- Darwin, Intelligent Design, and Freedom of Discovery on Evolutionists' Holy Day by Casey Luskin, *US News & World Report*
- Happy Birthday, Charles Darwin by Dr. Benjamin Wiker, *InsideCatholic.com*
- Darwin's Birth Day by Dr. Geoffrey Simmons, Discovery Institute
- Darwin would teach 'weaknesses,' too by Kelly Coghlan, *Dallas Morning News*
- There is no politically correct science by Dr. John West, *Forbes.com*
- A Neurosurgeon, Not A Darwinist by Dr. Michael Egnor, *Forbes.com*
- The problem of evidence by Dr. Jonathan Wells, *Forbes.com*

Tom Sowell explains how to counter leftist indoctrination in the schools

February 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell is my favorite economist. His latest column explains to parents what they can do to counter the left-wing indoctrination that their children receive in the government-run schools.

Now you might be tempted to think that Sowell is going to tell you parents that you just need to make your children read books that undermine what the secular left teaches them in school. But Sowell doesn't think that will always work:

> Yet trying to undo the propaganda that passes for education at too many schools and colleges, one issue at a time, may not always be the best strategy. There are too many issues on which the politically correct party line is considered to be the only way to look at things.

Instead, Sowell recommends a different strategy: he recommends that you engage in a dialog with your child, (preferably in public, I would add, in front of other people), in which you ask your child one simple question about their view:

> Another approach might be to respond to the dogmatic certainty of some young person, perhaps your own offspring, by asking: "Have you ever read a single book on the other side of that issue?"
>
> Chances are, after years of being "educated," even at some of the highest-priced schools and colleges, they have not.
>
> When the inevitable answer to your question is "No," you can simply point out how illogical it is to be so certain about anything when you have heard only one side of the story– no matter how often you have heard that one side repeated.
>
> Would it make sense for a jury to reach a verdict after having heard only the prosecution's case, or only the defense attorney's case, but not both?

Read the whole article. I run into this problem with non-Christians, Democrats and even anti-intellectual Christians every day. The only solution to their dogmatism is to ask about what they have read on the other side. They answer is *inevitably* "nothing". We Christians should be able to argue for opposing views better than any opponent. And that is why many of my posts focus on interchanges between opposing views. You can never really be convinced of something until you see one side of an argument fail miserably in a rough-and-tumble debate.

USA Today reports that men are fleeing the churches today in droves. Maybe if Christians started emphasizing debate, instead of just praise songs, emotions and prayer, then we might be able to get more men to be interested in Christianity. Men and women are different – if you want men to come back to the church, maybe you should be

emphasizing things we men actually like: confrontation, aggression and *competition.* I could share many stories of how female-dominated churches and campus groups actively fight efforts to approach Christianity in this way.

And this goes double for raising Christian kids. If we take the feminine approach exclusively, and shelter our children from opposing views instead of teaching about them, you can guarantee that your child will fall away from the faith as soon as he leaves home. As USA Today reported, 70% of Protestant Christian children already do exactly that. There is nothing more fatal to the project of building up a child's Christian faith than ordering them around on the authority of *blind faith.* It just doesn't work.

Democrats are weak on military policy and counter-terrorism

February 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was browsing over at The Anchoress and I came across this post which describes how Democrat Senator Dianne Feinstein has inadvertently leaked that the USA launches Predator missions from Pakistan. This may cause the government to lessen their cooperation with American military efforts in the region because a significant amount of the population of Pakistan will not react well to this news.

This sort of error is not the exception but the rule with Democrats. Democrats have a reputation for not taking defense and counter-terrorism seriously. According to this post over at the American Thinker, the 9/11 tragedy was mostly due to a failure in intelligence caused by a "wall" between different intelligence-gathering organizations.

> Gorelick, an appointee of Bill Clinton, is the one who constructed the wall of separation that kept the CIA and the FBI from comparing notes and therefore invading the privacy of nice young men like, say, Muhammed Atta and Zacarius Moussaoui. While countless problems were uncovered in our intelligence operations in the wake of 9-11, no single factor comes close to in importance to Jamie Gorelick's wall.
>
> In fact, it was Gorelick's wall, perhaps more than any other single factor, that induces some people to blame Clinton himself for 9-11 since he appointed her and she acted consistent with his philosophy of "crime fighting." She put the wall into place as Deputy Attorney General in 1995.

George W. Bush's bold action abroad gave us 7 years free from terrorist attacks on American assets. If there is one thing that deters future attacks, it is military invasions of countries that support and/or harbor terrorists. They understand military force. For Bush, one terrorist attack was enough to get us to respond with force.

As a result of the Bush doctrine of invading states suspected of developing and/or proliferating WMDs, Libya discontinued its weapons program and invited inspectors to come in and cart away all of its research equipment. That was the Bush doctrine – which Libya believed only because they saw that we were willing to back up our demands with force. We can have peace if our enemies believe that we have the will to go to war, and that our enemies fear that they will lose that contest.

Contrast George W. Bush's immediate response to terrorism with Democrat Bill Clinton. According to Byron York, we had *four* terrorist attacks during Clinton's presidency.

> So Clinton talked tough. But he did not *act* tough. Indeed, a review of his years in office shows that each time the president was confronted with a major terrorist attack — the February 26, 1993, bombing of the World Trade Center, the Khobar Towers attack, the August 7, 1998, bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and

> Tanzania, and the October 12, 2000, attack on the USS *Cole* — Clinton was preoccupied with his own political fortunes to an extent that precluded his giving serious and sustained attention to fighting terrorism.

How did Clinton respond to these four attacks? According to this interview with Richard Miniter, President Clinton was much less aggressive than Bush was, during his two terms. Bush's administration did not fear public opinion, but Clinton's administration did. Miniter lists *sixteen* of the Clinton administration's failures to treat terrorism as a serious threat. Below, I cite my favorites. *Read the whole list!*

> **Lopez:** In sum, how many times did Bill Clinton lose bin Laden?
>
> **Miniter:** Here's a rundown. The Clinton administration:
>
> …
>
> 4. Did not militarily react to the al Qaeda bombing in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
>
> …
>
> 7. Objected to Northern Alliance efforts to assassinate bin Laden in Afghanistan.
>
> 8. Decided against using special forces to take down bin Laden in Afghanistan.
>
> …
>
> 11. Clumsily tipped off Pakistani officials sympathetic to bin Laden before a planned missile strike against bin Laden on August 20, 1998. Bin Laden left the camp with only minutes to spare.
>
> 12-14. Three times, Clinton hesitated or deferred in ordering missile strikes against bin Laden in 1999 and 2000.
>
> 15. When they finally launched and armed the Predator spy drone plane, which captured amazing live video images of bin Laden, the Clinton administration no longer had military assets in place to strike the archterrorist.
> 16. Did not order a retaliatory strike on bin Laden for the murderous attack on the USS *Cole*.

When you look at the facts, we begin to understand *why* Democrats perform so poorly on national security issues. Remember John Kerry's global test? Kerry thought that our national security should be partly based on world opinion. (Ironically, Kerry voted against the first war in Iraq, when the whole world supported us in the liberation of Kuwait).

Republicans, on the other hand, believe in peace through strength.

> In foreign policy, Reagan sought to achieve "peace through strength." During his two terms he increased defense spending 35 percent, but sought to improve relations with the Soviet Union. In dramatic meetings with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, he negotiated a treaty that would eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles. Reagan declared war against international terrorism, sending American bombers against Libya after evidence came out that Libya was involved in an attack on American soldiers in a West Berlin nightclub.

The differences between the two parties could not be more clear. Weakness provokes war. Wars start when our enemies believe that they can strike us with impunity. Military strength, and the will to use it, deter aggression.

Porkulus bill reverses welfare reform and nationalizes health care

February 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post is just a quick summary of what the spendulus bill actually does. The Heritage Foundation notes that the bill reverses welfare reform, threatens religious liberty and effectively federalizes health care.

> Against the recommendations of the Congressional Budget Office, he will sign this bill. Despite returning the nation to a sea of dependency by completely reversing President Clinton's welfare reform in 1996, he will sign this bill. Despite the threat to religious freedom cleverly disguised in the small print, he will sign this bill. Standing steps from the federal agencies he plans on doubling in size through cherry-picked liberal programs, he will sign this bill. Using an economic emergency to shield the liberal goal of federalizing your health care, he will sign this bill. And despite the overwhelming majority of Americans in poll after poll saying 'no' to this bill, he will say 'yes'.

The National Review has more on the reversal of the welfare reform, which was passed by Newt Gingrich and signed by Clinton. Porkulus actually makes the welfare problem *worse* than before 1996.

> Under the provisions in the stimulus bill, states will once again be paid a bounty for expanding their welfare rolls. As reported by Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation, the federal government will now pay states 80 percent of the cost for each new family they sign up for welfare. That means that states will get $4 for every $1 they spend. This will leave the main welfare program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), with a funding mechanism similar to the one that supports Medicaid. As Brian Blase argues here, Medicaid's funding ratio, which gives states $1 to $3 for every dollar they spend, has caused state Medicaid spending to skyrocket. If Medicaid's dollar-for-dollar model has proved ruinous, Obama's new $4-to-$1 ratio for welfare will prove, in all likelihood, four times so.

The Cato Institute's blog explains how porkulus will balloon the budget deficit, and also how it is full of pork. According to the Tax Foundation's Joseph Henchman, only about 24% of the bill is "tax cuts", and not the good kind. Arnold Kling, speaking at a Heritage Foundation/Club for Growth event, argues that the right thing to do would have been to cut payroll taxes. Cutting payroll taxes *would* stimulate the economy. The Competitive Enterprise Institute notes that Cato assembled 200 economists who opposed the Generational Theft Act. CEI also notes that our current national debt is 11 trillion and that we owe 451 billion in interest per year, *before* porkulus even passes.

CNS News reports that the Generational Theft Act was passed without a single Republican

or Democrat in the House or Senate reading it.

> Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) predicted on Thursday that none of his Senate colleagues would "have the chance" to read the entire final version of the $790-billion stimulus bill before the bill comes up for a final vote in Congress.
>
> "No, I don't think anyone will have the chance to [read the entire bill]," Lautenberg told CNSNews.com.

Or, if you like video, you can see John Boehner's disgust with the hiddenness of spendulus here. So much for "transparency". The Democrats also broke their promise to allow the public to see the final version of the bill for 48 hours, before it was voted on. I highly recommend watching this 1 minute clip. At least the Republicans in the House did not provide cover to Obama. He will own the mess he created. Too bad the Democrats aren't owning Clinton's Community Reinvestment Act, which caused a lot of this sub-prime lending mess in the first place.

For details on what pork is actually in the porkulus bill, check out Tom Coburn's list. (This may not reflect the last minute copy from Friday).

Why doesn’t God provide more evidence that he exists?

February 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Apologetics 315! Thanks for the link Brian!

Over at economist Robert P. Murphy’s blog, a recent post makes the point that Jesus had a reason for teaching in vague parables instead of giving detailed lectures like a university professor.

> Jesus used parables to get across a watered-down version of His true message, because the masses were not prepared–as His apostles were–to literally discard their old lives and follow Him 24/7. So they couldn’t possibly understand what His mission really was.

This made me think about the problem of divine hiddenness. You may hear that argument when talking to atheists, as in William Lane Craig’s debate with Theodore Drange, (audio, video). Basically the atheist’s argument is that 1) God wants people to know about him, 2) reasonable people don’t know about him, so then 3) he isn’t there to be found.

Basically, the atheist is saying that he’s looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that’s logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden when our eternal destination depends on our knowledge of his existence.

Well, Dr. Michael Murray, a brilliant professor of philosophy at Franklin & Marshall College, has found a reason for God to remain hidden. He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us. Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him.

Doing the right thing just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants. If it is too obvious that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and do moral things out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out of interest *in him*, just like we might get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God’s veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don’t seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to reach out to us. We are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist’s argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a

contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. The argument requires that God has *no* possible reason for remaining hidden. When Murray offers a possible reason, the argument is defeated. In order for the atheist's argument to go through, he must be able to *prove* that God does not have *any* reason for being hidden. The atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free will of his creatures.

Michael Murray's home page is here.

His first paper on divine hiddenness is here:
"Coercion and the Hiddenness of God", American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007). The book chapter from the Cambridge book is here. The book chapter from the Routledge book is here.

Michael Murray's papers are really fun to read, because he uses hilarious examples. (But I disagree with his view that God's work of introducing biological information in living creatures has to be front-loaded).

This exposition of the problem of divine hiddenness also touches on the topic of religious pluralism. One of the reasons why Christians are so soft on making exclusive theological claims is that we don't talk much about evidence with non-Christians. Try it! It turns out that most people (even Christians) are pretty lazy about investigating what God is really like.

In fact, you can confront people with facts that disprove their religion and they may not care, especially if they are very distracted by day-to-day issues. For example, try telling atheists about the findings of science from the big bang and fine-tuning of the universe. See how quickly they deny that science has any bearing on religion? People don't want to respond to evidence, and God gives them space to avoid the evidence.

People choose to separate themselves from God for many reasons. Maybe they are professors in academia and didn't want to be thought of as weird by their colleagues. Maybe they didn't want to be burdened with traditional morality when tempted by some sin, especially sexual sin. Maybe their fundamentalist parents ordered them around too much without providing any reasons. Maybe the brittle fundamentalist beliefs of their childhood were exploded by evidence for micro-evolution or New Testament manuscript variants. Maybe they wanted something really bad, that God did not give them. How could a good God allow them to suffer like that?

The point is that there a lot of people who don't want to know God, and God chooses not to violate their freedom by forcing himself on them. God wants a relationship – he wants you to respond to him. (See Matthew 7:7-8)

If any Calvinists are reading this, I'm really sorry that I am wrong, but it was pre-destined that I would be wrong. That's a little humor for you. Ouch! Stop hitting me!

Here's more terrific stuff from Dr. Murray:

“Who’s Afraid of Religion?“, Inaugural Lecture delivered March 30, 2006. Franklin and Marshall College.

“Seek and You Will Find“, in God and the Philosophers. Thomas Morris, editor. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1994.

UPDATE 1: Welcome visitors from the Anchoress! Thanks so much for the link! New readers may want to take a look around since I cover a lot of different topics here, from free speech to economics to science to public policies!

UPDATE 2: Welcome, visitors from Robert P. Murphy’s blog Free Advice. Please take a look around – the purpose of my blog is to help Christians to integrate their faith with other areas of knowledge, especially *economics*! For those of you who don’t know, Dr. Murphy is the author of the greatest book on economics ever written (and I’ve read The Road to Serfdom!). This is a book for *everyone* – and it’s the *first* book laymen should read on economics.

UPDATE 3: Welcome, visitors from Colliding Universes. Thanks for the link, Denyse! Denyse’s other excellent blogs are Post-Darwinist and Mindful Hack.

William Lane Craig Ontario debate videos (York, Toronto, Waterloo)

February 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video and audio from William Lane Craig's January 2009 speaking/debate tour in Ontario, Canada are here.

1. DOES GOD EXIST?

VIDEO: William Lane Craig vs Ronald De Sousa at York University (DivX Video File)

I watched this one and this was a *lively* debate, with cross-examination. I recommend this one, De Sousa is fully engaged in the debate. They've debated before. He really bears his burden of proof and doesn't give an inch. He makes a lot of emotional denunciations, like "Christians are mean" and "the Bible is mean". He proposed the unobservable multiverse to explain the fine-tuning. Is this what atheism has come to? Belief in fairies in order to weasel out of the progress of science?

He argues that the laws of physics, (*math formulas* that describe physical regularities), *caused* the entire physical universe to come into being. He argues that morality is what most people do in particular times and places, and Craig nails that. I found it silly to argue that morality is what people decide, yet God is expected to conform to this changing standard or he's evil. I blogged about that problem here. De Sousa's problem of evil argument is pretty vague. This is a solid engagement!

2. DOES GOD EXIST?

AUDIO: William Lane Craig vs James Robert Brown at the University of Toronto
Part 1 (welcome) Part 2 (Intro) Part 3 (Debate 1) Part 4 (Debate 2) Part 5 (Q&A)

They've known each other for a while and debated before. I just listened to the first two speeches and it sounds lame. Brown is a good speaker, but he talks about arguments that Craig never raises, like Aristotle's prime mover and Behe's irreducible complexity. He also started out with the genetic fallacy about how beliefs originate. His speech is really disorganized, flipping between snark and argument. He also proposed the unobservable multiverse to explain the fine-tuning. Sigh.

He believes in objectively morality, but he believes that there is no purpose in life, (no reason to *follow* the moral rules beyond personal satisfaction). He tried to argue the problem of evil, but it was not rigorous. Too much snark about Greek gods and flat earths. Atheists seem to think that the high number of false religions somehow disproves the claim of Christianity to be correct. There are lots of wrong answers to math questions – how does this undermine the correct answer? Because it hurts the other people's feelings? WHO CARES!

3. DOES GOD MATTER?

VIDEO: William Lane Craig vs Christopher Dicarlo at University of Waterloo (Video)
(Or, watch it in 14 Youtube clips, starting here).

This is a pretty lame debate. Dicarlo is completely out of his element and has probably never debated a Christian scholar in his life. I don't recommend this debate. I found him to be as uninformed as he was insulting.

I also posted video of Bill Craig's appearance on the Michael Coren TV show, here. Bill's latest newsletter talks a bit about his upcoming Quebec tour in February 2009:

> Next week I'll be back in Canada, this time in the even colder climes of Quebec. I have a debate on Jesus' resurrection scheduled with the Muslim apologist Shabir Ally at McGill University on February 11, sandwiched between lectures I'll give in French at L'Université Laval and L'Université de Montréal on February 10 and 12 on "Dieu Existe-t-il?" As always we appreciate your prayers!

By the way, I mailed my annual donation for Bill's ministry today. If you like what Bill does, be sure and stop by his Reasonable Faith web site and leave him a contribution. You want to participate in the work of this fine defender of Christianity. If you can't spare the money, then please *pray* for Bill.

12-year-old pro-life girl stuns pro-choice establishment with speech

February 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This amazing 12-year-old girl delivers a defense of the pro-life position using reason and evidence. Be sure that you check out this video of her speech and read the full story here. She's definitely bound for greatness!

Excerpt from the article:

> "She was also told that if she went ahead with that topic, she would not be allowed to continue on in the speech competition," Lia's mother wrote in the email to the Moral Outcry blog. "Initially, I tried helping her find other topics to speak on, but, in the end, she was adamant. She just felt she wanted to continue with the topic of abortion. So she forfeited her chance to compete in order to speak on something she was passionate about."
>
> …
>
> At the schoolwide competition, the mom said one pro-choice teacher on the judge's panel "didn't even want to hear" the speech, and stepped down from the panel before Lia began. After the speech, which Lia's family said was well-received by both students and teachers, the judges initially told Lia she had indeed been disqualified. But controversy among the judges eventually led to a reversal, and Lia's family learned the next day that the panel agreed the girl deserved to win the competition.

Some men and women that I've met seemed to abandon apologetics and polemics in order to to get along with everyone. They also believe that God wants them to be non-confrontational with people. So they never disagree with others about anything. Well, let this young lady be a lesson to us all about the need to stand up to our opponents. I don't think we should give up disagreements with others on important things, just so we can feel happy and be popular!

Lia has *courage*, something that I admire very much. Contrast courageous Lia with Barbara Kay's piece on abortion, which Stephanie Gray demolished here. As someone who normally loves Barbara Kay's pro-male, pro-marriage articles, I was really disappointed with her this time.

Lia had to fight hard to get the chance to even speak in the government-run public schools. Another example of how the pro-choice establishment responds to pro-life debaters is here. Jennifer Roback Morse notes that students can't even defend traditional marriage in public schools, either. My own short defense of the case for the pro-life position is posted here.

Bobby Jindal pushes education reform in Lousiana

February 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Governor Jindal speaks about budget reform

Last year, my favorite Governor, Bobby Jindal, passed several laws to address discipline problems in the schools. One bill's goal was to re-establish discipline in classrooms by empowering teachers. Another bill sought to protect teachers from frivolous lawsuits. A third toughens penalties for students who are absent or tardy. That was a great start, especially since it was miles away from the typical teacher union plan to spend more money without any guarantee of better student achievement.

But he goes even further here, in a post dated 2/17/2009. First, he expands the laws governing discipline in the classroom even further.

> We will give teachers more authority to remove students from the classroom for unruly behavior, require that parents be notified when their child is removed, and administrators will have to give their teachers feedback and management skills to help them work with misbehaving students.
>
> Additional plans to increase discipline include requiring that suspended students make up missed work, permitting courts to help our schools hold parents accountable for attending mandatory intervention programs with their kids, and to allow schools to work with the courts to enforce truancy penalties. These steps will ensure that not only teachers and administrators will be taking a more active role in discipline – parents will be held accountable as well.

He also proposes to strengthen charter schools.

> …we will require that our public elementary and secondary education boards use a high-quality third party review process for approving charter school applications. By ensuring that all applications are measured by the same high-quality standards, we can make certain that only the best applications are approved.

The regulation of charter schools is OK because as I understand it, charter schools are public schools. And lastly, he proposes something that the teacher unions and children will hate, but that parents and taxpayers will love: *teacher and student evaluation criteria*.

> …we will work to implement a comprehensive value-added assessment model, which will aid our schools in better determining teacher effectiveness and student improvement. Our state has completed nationally recognized research, which was recently praised by the National Council on Teacher Quality, dealing with the use of value-added data well-positions in teacher preparation programs to improve our current system. This model takes student achievement into account, which better informs our parents, teachers, and kids on the progress our students are making.

The article also mentions a dropout prevention program that is coming out soon. The press release goes on to discuss budget reforms and coastal infrastructure. He proposes web sites to make budget expenditures transparent to the taxpayers, as well as subjecting all spending to accountability standards.

Bobby Jindal, along with Mark Sanford in South Carolina, are my two favorite governors. Being a person of color myself, it is a real joy for me to see an Indian-American man *universally* regarded as the savior of the Republican party. In the Republican primaries of 2008, I favored Fred Thompson, because he had good ideas. But Jindal is a policy *genius*. And at 38 years old, he has youth, charisma and passion. What we need in the Republican party are compelling ideas, and people who are willing to debate with our opponents in order to convince them.

To find out more about Bobby Jindal, check out these links:

Interview with Michael Medved (audio, 25 minutes)
Interview with Rush Limbaugh (PDF)
The American Spectator: Hope Floats on the Bayou
RedState.com**:** Bobby Jindal Saves Louisiana
Townhall.com**:** The Future of Conservatism (Isn't Running for President)
The Weekly Standard: Jindal All the Way
The National Review: The Governor Is Right
The Wall Street Journal: Bayou Boy Wonder
Townhall.com**:** Want real hope and change? Try Louisiana

Michele Bachmann explains why we need to cut corporate tax rates

February 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

Michele Bachmann is by far my favorite House Representative. In a post dated 2/17/2009, she draws attention to the little-known fact that the combined corporate tax rate of the United States is the *fourth highest* in the world. This is important because the higher to corporate tax rate, the more likely it is that a corporation will move overseas and lay off all of its American workers. Also, a lower corporate tax rate attracts the best and brightest from abroad to move here to start their businesses, powered by American workers.

> This might come as a surprise to you, but the United States is near the top of the list of industrialized countries with the highest corporate tax rates.
>
> You may be asking yourself "so what," or "who cares," but it's important to recognize that lower corporate tax rates result in attracting more investment capital. A reduction of the federal corporate tax rate would increase firms' productivity and investment incentives, and ultimately stimulate our nation's long-term competitiveness by enhancing economic freedom. The end result would be a boon to your family budget.

The problem gets even worse when you realize that many eastern European nations are slashing their corporate tax rates and even imposing flat taxes, leading to astonishing economic growth. This growth attracts foreign investments away from the USA, because investors can get a better return wherever there are lower corporate tax rates.

Bachmann post cites a study from KPMG showing just how bad the USA is compared to other nations.

> "U.S. corporate income tax rate is higher than all other global regions—14 percentage points higher than the global average and nearly 17 percentage

> points higher than the average among European Union nations. Of the 106 countries surveyed, only the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Japan impose a higher corporate tax rate than the combined rate of 40 percent. The United Arab Emirates and Kuwait each have a staggering tax rate of 55 percent; Japan's rate is 40.69 percent."

She also cites alarming figures from Heritage Foundation.

> "Even Europe's old welfare states have joined the aggressive tax cut parade: Sweden has cut its corporate tax rate to 28 percent from 60 percent; Norway's rate has dropped over 50 percent to 28 percent; and Denmark's corporate tax rate is now 25 percent."

Is it any wonder that American firms are laying off workers and shipping jobs overseas? Cutting corporate tax rates creates jobs, increases economic growth and, eventually, increases consumer spending. If you don't believe me, believe the 69-page research paper published by the Congressional Budget Office. The Tax Foundation summarizes their findings here.

> A new study from three prominent economists finds that employees suffer most when their corporate employers must pay high corporate taxes. That contradicts the theory that has prevailed for decades — that corporate taxes mainly hurt investors — but it supports a recent CBO study by Randolph that found workers bearing 70 percent of the burden of corporate income taxes.
>
> …
>
> They find that the workers' share of the corporate tax burden ranges from 45 to 75 percent.

The Tax Foundation has a complete study of corporate tax rates across the world. We are not winning. We are losing. *Badly.*

On a positive note, I find it charming and delightful when women speak passionately about how fiscal conservatism supports marriage, family and charity. Bachmann and her husband Markus run their own business. She's worked as a tax lawyer and an elected legislator, but she still found time for a period of home-schooling. And not only did she raise her own 5 children, but also *23 foster children.*

In her speech at the Republican National Convention in 2008, (video, transcript), Bachmann makes the connection between fiscal conservatism, small government, a strong family and private charity.

> As Republicans, we recognize that service is an innately personal characteristic. It is best achieved by individuals and community groups, faith-based organizations and charities. And, service thrives best in an environment of freedom. Government fosters service best when government binds it least.
>
> …

> As Republicans, we recognize that when you keep more of your hard-earned dollars, you are free to spend it as you choose on the charities that touch your heart and make a difference in your community.

Bachmann believes in marriage, family and charity. My favorite quote from her is from her profile in World Magazine.

> Bachmann says for her one thread ties all the day's obligations together: "radical abandonment to God's call."

For more on big-government socialism and its conflict with marriage, family and charity, see this video lecture, by the eminent economist Jennifer Roback Morse.

William Lane Craig, Lee Strobel and Christopher Hitchens panel discussion

February 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Audio and video from a panel discussion with Hitchens, Craig, etc. is linked here.

UPDATE: My play-by-play transcript of the debate is here.

This just in… William Lane Craig, Lee Strobel, Doug Wilson, Jim Denison and Christopher Hitchens will be participating in a panel discussion at the Dallas Convention Center. The event is being organized by Christianity Today and is being held on **Saturday, March 21, 2009 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM.**

The event is on the web here.

> The New Atheists usually make two charges against Christianity: (1) that it is untrue and (2) that it is harmful. A panel of apologetics experts respond to an atheist critic with evidence from Scripture, science, and history about why the faith is both reasonable and good for the world.
>
> **Moderator**: Stan Guthrie, *Christianity Today*
> **Panelists**:
>
> - Lee Strobel, *The Case for the Real Jesus, The Case for a Creator* (Zondervan)
> - William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith* (Crossway)
> - Douglas Wilson, *Is Christianity Good for the World?* (Canon Press)
> - Christopher Hitchens, *Is Christianity Good for the World?* (Canon Press) and *God Is Not Great* (Twelve Books)
> - Jim Denison, *Wrestling with God* (Tyndale)

More information about the 2009 Christian Book Expo is here.

Video from Hitchens' last debate with Dinesh D'Souza, is here.

There is one thing you really have to admire about Christopher Hitchens, in addition to his sound views on the war on terror. And that is that he has *never* run from a debate with anybody. It seems like it took forever to get Richard Dawkins to face-off against John Lennox, but Hitchens has *no fear.* He's debated some pretty good Christian scholars, like Frank Turek (video) and Douglas Wilson (transcript).

You have to admire the man, and I hope that he does a good job of presenting his views and that our side, and the audience, is courteous and appreciative. This man has courage.

Incidentally, the Dawkins-Lennox debate is here, if you haven't seen it. It's a hoot, but it's not my preferred debate format. I don't know of any other debates with the other new atheists… if anyone has any links, post it in the comments.

UPDATE: I analyze Hitchens' case against God here, from his debate against Frank Turek.

Ezra Levant: “the best news on the freedom of speech front in a year!”

February 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ezra Levant, champion of free speech

Alberta is the most conservative province in Canada, and the most free. It is therefore shocking that they have one of the worst Human Rights Commissions in the country, just behind British Columbia and Ontario. But it looks like there may finally be hope for free speech in Alberta, at least, as Ezra reports here.

Ezra begins by recounting his own brush with the Alberta Human Rights commission.

> Fifteen government bureaucrats and lawyers investigated me for 900 days, leaving me with $100,000 in legal bills — and the taxpayers of Alberta out five times that — before the charges were dropped.

He notes how the phony right to not be offended now trumps real civil rights, like freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of religion. But there is hope. Lindsay Blackett, the provincial Cabinet minister in charge of the Alberta HRC, was interviewed by Rick Bell in the Calgary Sun. And he is not happy about their little kangaroo court.

Here is my favorite quote from the interview:

> “People shouldn’t feel they can’t come to Canada, like a university professor who talks about a subject matter and then there are reprisals,” says the cabinet minister.
>
> “They should have the ability to say what they say and somebody should have their ability to have the counter argument. That is what a free and open society does. Let’s get away from trying to mediate everybody’s feelings.”

And this one:

> Lindsay talks about being turned down by a girl at a school dance with all his pals watching.
>
> “You feel about two inches tall. I guess maybe I should have taken her to the Human Rights Commission because I had hurt feelings. Where does it end?”

Levant concludes that the interview is “the best news on the freedom of speech front in a

year”. We can only hope that Blackett acts on his convictions. *Fire. Them. All.*

UPDATE: If you want to see Ezra Levant in action against leftist opponents of free speech, click here.

Canadian-raised comedian explains what's wrong with socialized medicine

February 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I don't know what it is about Canadians, but they sure have talented comedians. I loved my recent post on health care, in which I cite research and podcasts from practically every think tank out there. So many wonderful facts, figures and evidences! But I know that some of my readers want to learn about health care by laughing and having "fun". Ick!

But, guess what? I've found the perfect video clip for you. By a guy who grew up with in the most progressive city in Canada – Montreal. If this doesn't cure you of supporting socialized medicine, nothing will! If you want more of his videos, his web site is here. He has videos on global warming, abortion, terrorism, the auto bailout and other interesting topics.

By the way, have you guys heard of this guy Zo? He is awesome! This particular video clip has over 800,000 views. He covers health care, economics, energy and foreign policy. Can this guy talk! He needs to have his own radio show. Zo has a ton of videos. His web site is here.

Split decision on Texas evolution standards favors academic freedom

February 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Over at the Discovery Institute's Evolution News blog, they recently reported that the Texas State Board of Education reached a split decision on the state standards for teaching evolution.

Evolution News says this in their post:

> Kudos to the *New York Times* for filing a story on the actions of the Texas State Board of Education that actually describes what happened last week. Unlike much of the rest of the newsmedia, the *Times* doesn't tell only half of what happened or play up the hysterics. The story's even-handed title is telling: "Split Outcome in Texas Battle on Teaching of Evolution."

The NYT article they mentioned explains the compromise reached by the Texas State Board of Education.

First, the bad news:

> …the board voted to drop a 20-year-old mandate that science teachers explore with their students the "strengths and weaknesses" of all theories.

But the board also passed some good amendments, among them this one:

> …one that would compel science teachers to instruct students about aspects of the fossil record that do not neatly fit with the idea of species' gradually changing over time, like the relatively sudden appearance of some species and the fact that others seem to remain unchanged for millions of years.

Let me explain *why* this is a big win for ID. One of my previous employers was a major academic publishing company. By major, I mean my alma mater's campus library featured academic publication databases that I helped to code. In this company, it was well known that California and Texas were the two most important states, because their textbook standards set the guidelines for the other states.

The NYT article explains:

> Whatever the 15-member board decides then will have consequences far beyond Texas, since the state is one of the largest buyers of textbooks in the nation. The new standards will be in place for the next decade, starting in 2010, and will influence the writing of the next generation of biology texts, which the state will order this summer.

John G. West of the Discovery Institute evaluates the board's decision as positive:

> "They did something truly remarkable today," John G. West of the Discovery

> Institute, a group that questions Darwinism, said in a statement. "They voted to require students to analyze and evaluate some of the most important and controversial aspects of modern evolutionary theory."

I actually have podcasts for you of the *testimonies* of pro-ID scholars given to the Texas Board. If you want to learn how scientists argue for academic freedom on issues of origins, you should listen to these three 15-minute podcasts.

1. My favorite ID scholar Stepen C. Meyer testified on the Cambrian explosion and the fossil record, (podcast, article). Meyer holds a Ph.D in the Philosophy of Science from Cambridge University. I once saw him explain biological information using colorful lock-blocks, *live*. (He stole them from his children). I often draw it up for my co-workers on a white board, just like he does!
2. Microbiologist Ralph Seelke testified about how his lab research that shows clear limits on how far bacteria can evolve, (podcast, article). Seelke holds a Ph.D in Microbiology from the University of Minnesota and the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine. He is a Professor in the Department of Biology and Earth Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Superior.
3. Biochemist Charles Garner testified on the chirality problem in chemical evolution, (podcast, article). He also discussed the importance of not glossing over the weaknesses of scientific theories. Garner holds a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry from University of Colorado, Boulder. Garner is now a Associate Professor in the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry at Baylor University.

For those looking for a definition of what intelligent design is, look here. I highly recommend the work of Canadian journalist Denyse O'Leary, who is probably the foremost expert on *why* there is an ID controversy. Her main blog on ID is called Post-Darwinist.

As a supporter of academic freedom, I sent a donation to the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture yesterday. The CSC is currently offering a free book with donations received before February 28th, 2009. For my annual donation, I chose Stephen C. Meyer's forthcoming book "Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design".

On another note, I am also excited about Jay Richards' forthcoming book, "Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem". Jay did a great lecture on basic economics for Christians and another great lecture on what Christians should think about global warming. Maybe his employer, the Acton Institute, will give me a free book if I send them a donation?

UPDATE: Casey Luskin just posted audio of Stephen C. Meyer responding to questions after is presentation at the hearing.

Do free speech and transparency actually make people happier?

February 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was browsing over at the Anchoress, and I found this fascinating article on free speech, political correctness and self-censorship.This is a *huge* issue for Christians, especially given what is happening in countries like Canada with these politically correct, multi-cultural censorship tribunals. In the post, the Anchoress urges us to be *less worried about offending people*.

> In our politically correct age, where everyone is afraid of giving offense, being misconstrued-and -then-sued, or simply fearful of falling out-of-step with the trendoids, we almost never hear or read anything that is uncontrolled.
>
> But "free speech" cannot be controlled or it is not "free" at all. And we in America have for too long engaged in self-censorship in favor of "niceness."
>
> Sometimes, you have to lose control and let the words fly, and if you cannot do that, you are not free.

People in my office know that my favorite way to end a conversation is by apologizing. I probably apologize about 15 times a day. Why do I have to do that? The people I work now with are the most tolerant people I have ever worked with. But I never know if a member of some left-wing special interest victim group is listening, and they may sue me if they don't like what I say.

And what is the effect of this PC victim mentality? Fewer friendships between people who disagree. Shouldn't these "victims" get used to the idea that some people disagree with them? People disagree with me *all the time*. My Christian beliefs were mocked by the media and secular teachers all the way from kindergarden to grad school. I didn't complain! I wasn't offended by people who disagreed with me.

The Anchoress also cites a study from Science Daily that argues that self-censorship makes people very unhappy. The study notes:

> They figured that well-intentioned people are careful – sometimes hyper-careful – not to say the wrong thing about race in a mixed-race group. Furthermore, they thought that such effortful self-control might actually cause both unease and guarded behavior, which could in turn be misconstrued as racial prejudice.
>
> …
>
> …independent black observers found that the powerless volunteers were much more direct and authentic in conversation. And perhaps most striking, blacks saw the less inhibited whites as less prejudiced against blacks. In other words, relinquishing power over oneself appears to thwart over-thinking and "liberate" people for more authentic relationships.

As a person of color myself, I would just state that the joy of having authentic relationships with different people is real. I *love* intimacy. I *love* being myself. I *love* opening myself up to people. I *love* disagreements. If I cannot say what I really think about issues that matter, how am I supposed to be able to form authentic friendships with people with whom I disagree? Enforced segregation by worldview is *very bad.*

The Anchoress goes on in her post to list how free speech has been curtailed in a number of instances, even in the media, where there is supposed to be freedom of the press.

> If we lose our freedom to speak out – to opine loudly, to mock, to question, even to *demand – then we have lost everything.*
>
> And the truth is, we have already – thanks to political correctness and self-censorship – fallen into the mindset that our speech should be controlled, measured and unfree.

Her post made me recall a podcast that Dennis Prager did a while back on the issue of transparency. For those who don't know, Prager has a regular "Happiness Hour" every week on his show. Prager makes the point that being transparent with your neighbors, and not censoring yourself, leads to happiness. There is also a partial transcript here. Here's an excerpt:

> You have to let out your secrets. Keeping yourself bottled is a recipe for misery, anger and pathology. I must have hit paydirt here, because all the lines lit up before I even gave the number.
>
> …
>
> Keeping stuff inside of you, and usually, we do it because we're embarrassed by it. But you know, everybody has things that they are embarrassed by. The more that you keep hidden, the less chance of happiness you have. Why would one want to go through life hiding? It's like wearing a veil over your psyche, and over your soul, or even a burka, completely covered. I've never followed it, because…I've never been hurt by opening up. I mean, it hasn't always received the response that I wanted. It's inevitable that it won't.

The Anchoress ends by mentioning the movie "The Lives of Others". I just watched it myself yesterday evening, because I saw that it was number ONE on National Review's list of top conservative movies. And now I am going to make it clear to you. WATCH THIS MOVIE. This is the most amazing movie I have seen in a long time. I give it my highest recommendation!

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from the Anchoress! Thanks so much for the link! New readers may want to take a look around since I cover a lot of different topics here, from free speech to economics to science to public policy!

Jim Demint presses Democrats to vote on free speech

February 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Senator Jim Demint

James "Jim" Demint is my favorite senator, (although he's nearly tied with James Inhofe). Demint introduced the Broadcaster Freedom Act to protect free political speech in January, and he's trying to force the Democrats to vote on the so called "Fairness Doctrine" so that their views on free speech over the radio can be made clear. If the Fairness Doctrine passed, free political speech on the radio would be effectively abolished. This is dangerous because talk radio is predominantly conservative just as the news media is predominantly leftist.

This NewsMax.com article notes that Senator Debbie Stabenow, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senator Tom Harkin all support reintroducing the Fairness Doctrine. Their article explains what would likely follow from passing the bill.

> Since talk radio is overwhelmingly dominated by conservative hosts, and progressive talk radio draws few listeners, the "equal time" provision would likely force many radio stations to pull popular conservative hosts from the air rather than air low-rated liberal hosts.

If they do go ahead and ban political speech on the radio, I wonder what they will call the bill?

Remember that his Freedom of Choice Act abolishes the right of medical personnel to choose not to performing abortions.

The Family Research Council says:

> If FOCA is passed, it would automatically overturn:
>
> - Forty-six states' conscience protection laws for individual health care providers
> - Twenty-seven states' conscience protection laws for institutions

And remember his Employee Free Choice Act abolishes the right of workers to choose not to join a union.

The Heritage Foundation says:

> Abolishing elections deprives workers of a fundamental democratic right. Elections guarantee that all workers can express their views on whether they want to belong to a union. Under card check, however, workers who have not been contacted by union organizers have no say in whether their workplace organizes. If organizers collect cards from a majority of workers, all workers must join the union without a vote.

Maybe the bill to ban free speech on the radio will be called called the Happiness, Ice Cream, Apple Pie, Sunshine and Nothing To See Here Act?

Democrats caused the recession and Republicans tried to stop it

February 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Who caused this economic downturn and what should we do about it?

Almost no one realizes that this entire subprime lending mess was created by the Community Reinvestment Act, which was passed by President Carter, a Democrat, in 1977. Later on in the 1990s, Bill Clinton, another Democrat, passed laws to enforce the original bill. The purpose of the CRA is to force banks to make risky loans to people who can't afford to repay those loans.

The extremely left-wing Los Angeles Times explains in 1999 that the CRA was passed to force banks to make risky loans.

> Under Clinton, bank regulators have breathed the first real life into enforcement of the Community Reinvestment Act, a 20-year-old statute meant to combat "redlining" by requiring banks to serve their low-income communities. The administration also has sent a clear message by stiffening enforcement of the fair housing and fair lending laws.
>
> …
>
> In 1992, Congress mandated that Fannie and Freddie increase their purchases of mortgages for low-income and medium-income borrowers. Operating under that requirement, Fannie Mae, in particular, has been aggressive and creative in stimulating minority gains… Fannie Mae has agreed to buy more loans with very low down payments–or with mortgage payments that represent an unusually high percentage of a buyer's income. That's made banks willing to lend to lower-income families they once might have rejected.

The extremely left-wing New York Times noted in 1999 that the GSEs gave out the risky loans under duress from Democrat Bill Clinton.

> Fannie Mae, the nation's biggest underwriter of home mortgages, has been under increasing pressure from the Clinton Administration to expand mortgage loans among low and moderate income people and felt pressure from stock holders to maintain its phenomenal growth in profits.
>
> In addition, banks, thrift institutions and mortgage companies have been pressing Fannie Mae to help them make more loans to so-called subprime borrowers. These borrowers whose incomes, credit ratings and savings are not good enough to qualify for conventional loans, can only get loans from finance companies that charge much higher interest rates — anywhere from three to four percentage points higher than conventional loans.

According to the New York Times in 2003, George W. Bush tried to stop the Democrats

from ruining the economy with these forced loans. He was blocked by Democrats like Barney Frank.

> The Bush administration today recommended the most significant regulatory overhaul in the housing finance industry since the savings and loan crisis a decade ago.
>
> …
>
> ”These two entities — Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac — are not facing any kind of financial crisis,” said Representative Barney Frank of Massachusetts, the ranking Democrat on the Financial Services Committee. ”The more people exaggerate these problems, the more pressure there is on these companies, the less we will see in terms of affordable housing.”

Here are some video clips to prove that the Democrats opposed regulating the GSEs. They are responsible for this mess, along with the irresponsible people who signed up for these loans that they could not repay.

Timeline of the events in the crisis: Bush was the first to recommend regulating the GSEs in April, 2001. In 2003, Bush tried to create a new federal agency to regulate the GSEs. He was blocked from doing so by the Democrats in the Senate. In 2005, Alan Greenspan warned that failing to regulate the GSEs could be a catastrophe. Again, Democrats blocked the effort to regulate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The video shows Democrat Chuck Schumer protesting that regulation is not needed. In 2006, McCain and other Republicans introduced a bill to regulate the GSEs. Again, the Democrats voted against it and nothing happened.

Republicans and Democrats in their own words on the GSE accounting practices: Here we have Republican Rep. Richard Baker, Democrat, Democrat Rep. Maxine Waters, Democrat Rep. Gregory Meeks, Republican Rep. Ed Royce, Democrat Rep. Lacy Clay, Republican Rep. Christopher Shays, Democrat Rep. Arthur Davis, Democrat Rep. Barney Frank, Republican Rep. Don Manzullo. Shays notes that the GSEs make many contributions to Democrats who are blocking their regulation.

Fannie Mae CEO addresses Democrats: Fannie Mae CEO calling Obama and the Dems the “Family” and “Conscience” of Fannie Mae. The Democrats obstructed the regulation of the GSEs while taking political contributions from them, especially Obama. Franklin Raines, Jamie Gorelick and Jim Johnson were all executives at the GSEs and are all Democrats. Other Democrats like Penny Pritzker ran other mortgage banks into the ground, and now work for Obama.

According to Human Events, Obama himself sued banks on behalf of ACORN, to force the banks to make these risky loans.

> Obama sued Citibank under the Community Reinvestment Act in a typical ACORN-style lawsuit to force the bank to make these risky loans. ACORN filed many of this type of lawsuit alleging racism in all of them.

According to opensecrets.org, Obama was also the second-highest recipient of political contributions from the GSEs. The American Spectator notes that he included 5.2 *billion* dollars of taxpayer money for ACORN in the porkulus bill.

UPDATE 1: The Achoress just posted even more of the history of this mess here. She has a link to Nice Deb's post which contains about 2 dozen warnings issued by the Bush administration about the looming crisis, including 17 warnings in 2008 *alone*.

UPDATE 2: Here's an even better timeline than mine, by Roger Kimball.

Two ways to conduct a Tea Party revolution against socialism

February 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

GatewayPundit is reporting that the economic news is getting even worse.

> Along with **raising taxes** on businesses, **raising taxes** on the "rich," and **allowing** the Bush tax cuts to expire…
> President Obama will also announce the implementation of an expensive cap and trade energy policy this week to battle pretend global warming.

He cites Human Events' report that we will lose between between $444 billion and $1.308 trillion of GDP output, and unemployment would increase 2.7% (= 4 million jobs lost), mostly in the manufacturing sector.

Well, we're doomed. Or are we? I've found a couple of clever ideas for dealing Obama's plans to plunge the United States into socialism.

The first idea is from Biola University professor Doug Geivett, who is a first-class evangelical Christian scholar. I met Doug at a philosophy conference on Providence and Open Theism at Wheaton College, IL in 2000. I remember asking him whether investments were a form of gambling. He explained that investing was not gambling, because investments fund the creation of new products and services that grow the economy.

Doug starts by noting Rick Santelli's rant against Obama's socialist policies which involve wealth redistribution from those who produce to those who consume. (Note: there is now a new rant up, with supply-sider Larry Kudlow).

In his post, Geivett enumerates the points made by Santelli:

> First, fiscally responsible Americans don't want to pay the bill for borrowers who can't keep up with their mortgages.
>
> Second, fiscally responsible Americans shouldn't have to pay the bill for borrowers who can't make their payments.
>
> Third, this plan doesn't rob the rich to give to the poor. It takes from every tax-paying American and turns it over as free cash to people who can afford to rent but can't afford to buy.
>
> Fourth, there are ways to get the federal government to pay attention, ways the government is totally unprepared for.

Santelli suggests that responsible, productive Americans may want to consider a revolution – a kind of Chicago Tea Party. Right now, the banks are being more careful about who they give credit to. This is not a problem for responsible people with good credit history. The government is giving out bailouts to banks in order to ease credit for

irresponsible consumers – the same ones that got us into this mess in the first place.

Geivett describes what he thinks this Chicago Tea Party might look like:

> For example, what do you think would happen if 30% of all Americans with an income of $50,000 or more organized to do the following two things:
>
> 1. Convert all of their assets held in the stock market and at banks and credit unions into cold, hard cash (or gold bars holed up in their bank's safe deposit boxes)?
> 2. Refused to pay income tax for 18 months (or indefinitely)?

This would remove the money that banks use for consumer loans. If no one can get credit, then no one can default, and there is no need for bailouts to these delinquents. By refusing to pay income taxes for a period of time, the government would have no funds available for bailing out their favorite special interest groups. People might finally have to stop spending and start working and saving again.

Geivett goes on to describe how this plan should incorporate reduced consumer spending, which I agree with. Somehow, America has gone terribly wrong. We use to be a nation of workers and savers. But the progress of left-wing socialism, with all the redistributing of wealth from producers to free-riders, has caused us to drift into an irresponsible, immature, hedonistic culture.

Geivett's plan made me think of a post I read before on "Going Galt". What if all the people who produced wealth *just stopped producing?*

> Do you ever wonder after dealing with all that is going on with the economy and the upcoming election if it's getting to be time to "go John Galt"? For those of you who have never read Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*, the basic theme is that John Galt and his allies take actions that include withdrawing their talents, "stopping the motor of the world," and leading the "strikers" (those who refuse to be exploited) against the "looters" (the exploiters, backed by the government).
>
> …
>
> Obama talks about taking from those who are productive and redistributing to those who are not — or who are not as successful. If success and productivity is to be punished, why bother? Perhaps it is time for those of us who make the money and pay the taxes to take it easy, live on less, and let the looters of the world find their own way.

The National Taxpayers Union explains who pays the taxes that Democrats are redistributing to their freeloading constituents. The top 50% pays 97% of all income taxes collected! The lazy half the country is freeloading off of the productive half.

The second idea that I found for responding to Obama's socialist bailouts is to *move to Canada*. Captain Capitalism had this post in which he compares the two economies and concludes that Canada has a better future than the United States. Canada has a smaller

deficit, a smaller debt, and is not facing a meltdown from entitlement programs like Medicare and Social Security, like we are.

Investor's Business Daily reports that:

> By 2041, Social Security will be essentially broke, having exhausted its trust fund, those dollars amassed through decades of surplus payroll tax revenues that Congress will have already squandered on general budget expenditures. Medicare's future is just as bleak. It is already spending more than it is receiving in payroll taxes.

The prime minister of Canada right now is economist Stephen Harper, a strong fiscal conservative in the mold of F.A. Hayek.

UPDATE 1: Michelle Malkin has even more ideas on what to do here.

William Dembski to speak at SES in May 2009

February 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Just noticed this up at the SES home page:

> **Dr. William Dembski is coming to SES**
>
> May 11-16, 2009
>
> Intelligent Design
>
> Dr. Dembski is an internationally recognized authority on Intelligent Design and Design Theory. He will be teaching a Summer Module on that very topic.
>
> ***The public is welcome to sign up for this module.****
>
> *To register for this course, click here*
>
> *For new students please contact Duke or Nora Hale: 704-847-5600, Ext. 216.*

For an introduction to intelligent design, look here.

John Lennox vs Michael Shermer and Christopher Hitchens

February 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Audio and video from a panel discussion with Hitchens, Craig, etc. is linked here.

I found this debate between Michael Shermer and John Lennox, with video and audio, here. Shermer is, as usual, completely unable to bear his side of the burden of proof. He does not present a single argument other than the problem of evil, and that isn't presented with any rigor. Lennox presses several scientific arguments from the progress of science, including the big bang. He also argues that atheism makes life and moral behavior meaningless. Shermer does not understand this simple maxim: before you can show *why* a belief is wrong, you need to show *that* a belief is wrong.

In other news, Lennox will be facing-off against Christopher Hitchens in Birmingham, AL in March 2009.

> The Samford University Socratic Club is sponsoring a debate between leading atheist and acclaimed journalist **Christopher Hitchens** and Christian apologist and Oxford Professor **John Lennox** in what promises to be a thought-provoking evening.
>
> **"Is God Great?"** will take place at **6:00 pm** on **March 3, 2009** at **Samford University's Wright Center** in Birmingham, AL. Doors will open to the public at 5:15, and the event will last until 8:00 with a booksigning to follow. Books will be on sale in the lobby. Both men debated each other before for the first time this past fall at the **Edinburgh International Festival** over the question of whether or not Atheism could save Europe. Click here for the DVD of that event.
>
> Tickets can be purchased through Samford University
> $20 each / $10 for Samford Students
>
> For questions or other inquiries, call **205.807.4477**
> **For more information, see the** Socratic Club website**.**

Is prescriptive morality rationally grounded on atheism?

February 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post I am going to review a series of 7 posts over at Tough Questions Answered on the topic of whether evolution explains morality. The series critically analyzes two variants of godless morality, based on evolution: 1) optimistic humanism and 2) immanent purpose. Let's start with part 1.

On optimistic humanism, moral values are not objective – that is, they do not exist for all times and places, independent of what humans believe. Instead, they are just arbitrary customs that emerge differently in different cultures, depending on the time and place. So, by good, optimistic humanists mean "what is in fashion here and now" and by bad, they mean "what is not in fashion here and now".

On atheism, moral impulses are just the carry-overs from the need to cooperate in order to survive. Now, suppose we ask the question "Why should I following these arbitrary customs that limit my pleasure, if I can escape punishment?" TQA writes:

> Why should a person be moral? According to optimistic humanism, it is because leading a moral life will give you personal satisfaction. Proponents of this view offer several ways of defining personal satisfaction. Atheistic philosopher Kai Nielsen says that "there can be purposes in life even if there is no purpose to life." He speaks of each individual developing a life plan that may include career goals and social goals. Meaning can be found in "things like love, friendship, caring, knowledge, self-respect, pleasure in life."

Nielsen says that ethics is make-em-up-as-you-go, on atheism. You choose what you like, based on pleasure. That is why today people have given up on the hard virtues, like chastity, sobriety, marital fidelity, charity, self-sacrifice and devotion to children's well-being. Instead, morality has been reduced to recycling, environmentalism, yoga, vegetarianism, animal rights, socialist tax policies, and anti-war protests.

As prominent atheist Michael Ruse says:

> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. **Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory**. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory. (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in *The Darwinian Paradigm* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

Next, part 2 notes that optimistic humanists are not able to judge the evolved morality of other times and places. *Their* morality was right for them, just like *our* morality is right for us – it is all arbitrary on atheism. Widow-burning in India isn't really *wrong* on atheism, it's just *different* from what we believe in our time and place. In their time and place, it's right for them.

Atheist Michael Ruse says this about widow-burning:

> "Obviously, such a practice is totally alien to Western customs and morality. In fact, we think that widow sacrifice is totally immoral. **Clearly there is nothing particularly objective about this morality**, nor is it something one would expect to find the inevitable product of natural selection." (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in *The Darwinian Paradigm* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

In part 3, TQA writes that moral choices and moral responsibility are *impossible* on atheism. On atheism, you are a computer made out of meat, and all of your outputs are fully determined by your genetic programming and sensory input.

TQA notes that:

> Morality seems to require humans to possess a robust form of free will that allows them to make moral choices. We often praise good moral acts and condemn bad moral acts as if the people we are judging have some control over their actions. **If there is no free will, then moral choices are completely determined by the laws of chemistry and physics**, and it makes no sense to praise or criticize anyone because they are acting according to deterministic physical laws.

I would add this quote from Richard Dawkins:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, **no design, no purpose, no evil and no good**, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Source)

In part 4, TQA writes that atheists cannot judge other people, or even God, because their atheistic morality is totally subjective and arbitrary. TQA cites the January-February 2005 edition of Humanist magazine, in which former American ambassador Carl Coon writes:

> [Ethical] principles constitute a structure of interlocking behavioral guidelines that have been growing organically since our ancestors first became human, if not earlier. These standards and principles didn't descend to us from on high as some revealed truth from an intelligent being greater than ourselves. We worked them out through a long and arduous evolutionary process marked by many

> **wrong turns** and much social discord. Indeed, the structure is still **imperfect** and we continue trying to make **improvements**.

Then TQA exposes how all of this language is logically self-contradictory:

> …notice the words he employs to describe morality: *wrong turns*, *discord*, *imperfect*, and *improvements*. All of these words indicate that morality, over time, has been moving in a direction from worse to better, from bad to good, from imperfect to perfect. But how is it possible for the ambassador to judge the morality of the distant past if all morals are relative? How can he say that morality has taken "wrong turns"? How do we know ethics are improving over time if no two time periods can be compared?

TQA goes on to define the immanent purpose view, (our survival is objectively good), in part 5. They critique it in part 6 and part 7. Here are some of their responses to this view:

- no explanation of the origin of the value of human survival
- evolution doesn't justify compassion on the weak and unfit
- no reason why individuals should conform their behavior to past observed behavior

Below are five good debates in which atheists try to answer the question: "on atheism, why is it rational for me to to do the right thing, especially when I feel less pleasure, and when I will not be punished if I do the wrong thing?". There is no reason to be moral on atheism. And that is why atheism killed 100 million people in the 20th century *alone*. Atheists who do act morally are acting *inconsistently* and *irrationally*.

Douglas Wilson vs. Christopher Hitchens

William Lane Craig vs. Kai Nielsen

William Lane Craig vs Richard Taylor

William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz (audio, video1, video2, video3, video4, video5, video6, video7)

William Lane Craig vs. Louise Antony (audio1, audio2, video1, video2)

These debate links are courtesy of ChristianJR4, who really needs to start his own blog! And there is also a good paper by Bill Craig on the problem of rationally-grounding prescriptive morality here.

Democrats to expand porkulus with 410 billion omnibus bill?

February 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Democrats aren't done redistributing wealth to their constituencies yet. They want an increase in discretionary spending that Republicans say will cost *another* 410 billion dollars on top of the auto-bailout and the spendulus!

Wall Street Journal reports on the story here:

> Congress returns next week to take up another spending bill, this one with a price tag of $410 billion. Unlike the emergency recovery plan rushed through Capitol Hill in a matter of weeks, this covers the regular functions of government, from education to agriculture.
>
> The "omnibus" bill would increase discretionary spending — funds for programs that aren't benefits like Social Security and Medicare — by 8.7% over 2008. "This would be the largest increase in discretionary spending since at least 1978 — with the exception of a 10% boost in 2002, shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks — according to figures from the White House Office of Management and Budget.

And it's worse… the omnibus bill will contain loads of earmarks and pork:

> President Barack Obama and congressional Democratic leaders boasted that the stimulus bill had no "earmarks," or special projects inserted by lawmakers for their home areas. In contrast, the new spending bill will have billions of dollars in such projects.

> …
> Taxpayers for Common Sense, a nonpartisan fiscal watchdog group, has listed several thousand earmarks in bills that have passed a subcommittee or full committee and are being combined into the final version. Among them, for example, are $425,000 for Aultman Health Foundation in Canton, Ohio, to buy technology and equipment; $540,000 for Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago to improve its facilities and buy equipment; and $300,000 for the Discovery Center in Boise, Idaho, to mount exhibitions and conduct outreach.

Wow, Michelle Malkin's headline is "9,000 earmarks in the $410 billion omnibus spending bill: Gang tattoo removal, Maine lobster, La Raza & more!". She even has specifics from Hill staffer Tom Jones on the earmarks!

- $200,000 for "Tattoo Removal Violence Prevention Outreach Program," pg. 283;
- Maine lobster earmark in the omnibus, pg. 173;
- $5.8 million earmark for the "Ted Kennedy Institute for the Senate…for the planning and design of a building & an endowment," pg. 232;

- and National Council of La Raza, $473,000 earmark from Sens. Bingaman and Menendez, pg. 212.

Human Events reports (H/T GatewayPundit) that John Boehner and Mike Pence are both requesting that the bill be put out there in the open so everyone can see what's in it. But they are getting snubbed, apparently:

> House minority leader John Boehner (R-Ohio) called upon the Speaker Thursday to release the voluminous spending bill online without delay. "If Democratic leaders plan to schedule a vote on the half-trillion dollar omnibus spending bill next week, they should post the legislation online immediately so the American people have adequate time to read the measure and understand what is in it," Boehner said. "My colleagues in the Republican leadership and I made this request two weeks ago, and to date, our request has gone unanswered…"
>
> Rep. Mike Pence (R-Ind.), the House Republican Conference chairman, joined Boehner in asking again – apparently in vain — for an open process from the secretive Democrat leadership this time around. "More than two weeks ago, House Republicans called on Speaker Pelosi to post online the text of the upcoming half-trillion dollar 'omnibus' spending bill, bringing it out of the shadows and before the American people," Pence said. "So far, that call has gone unanswered…"

Read the comments, the commenters have found *even more* earmarks!

Also, Nice Deb notes the irony of Obama painting himself as a fiscal conservative. She links to CBS News, and they say:

> Mr. Obama has promised to slash the federal deficit in half by the end of his first term, reports CBS News senior White House correspondent Bill Plante.To do that, the president will reduce Iraq War spending, end tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans, and streamline government.

Contrast Obama's wasting of taxpayer dollars with Bobby Jindal, *turning down* porkulus funds. The Anchoress linked to this video over at Hot Air of Jindal excoriating Obama for trying to pass off government spending as a means of stimulating the economy. Just listen to the way that Jindal structures his speech like a debater, and includes facts to support his assertions. WE NEED A COMMUNICATOR. Jindal is all substance and Obama is all style.

UPDATE: Here I explain how taking every penny earned by people making $75,000 or more will not pay for all the spending. Here I explain how Porkulus-2 would abolish the Washington, D.C. voucher program which allows school choice.

James Inhofe says that the Fairness Doctrine will affect Christian radio

February 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On his official blog, Senator James Inhofe links to an article from the Culture and Media Institute. The article states that the Fairness Doctrine could affect Christian radio as well as conservative radio.

> But, the return would also harm religious speech according to a senior Republican senator, James Inhofe, Okla., and the senior vice president of the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB), Craig Parshall. Both are warning religious broadcasting is facing a threat.
>
> According to Parshall, there are about 2400 full power radio stations with a Christian format in the United States. About 40 percent of people who regularly listen do so specifically so they can listen to "teaching, preaching and talk" formats, he said. Christian radio and television have a total reach of 75 million he claimed.

Inhofe is quoted in the article as follows:

> Those warning shots from the left have raised the possibility of the Fairness Doctrine's reinstitution, one that Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., says Christian radio isn't immune to. According to the senior senator from Oklahoma, if the federal government had to enforce a "Fairness Doctrine," in whatever form it may take in the legislative process, it could open the door to lawsuits by advocacy groups, like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).
>
> "Religious messages are, often times, inherently political," Inhofe said to the Culture & Media Institute. "Even when they are not, they could be considered controversial, and under the Fairness Doctrine as it once existed, controversial issues of public importance must be presented in an equitable and balanced manner. I am concerned that the ACLU and other liberal organizations will use this logic to file lawsuits against anyone who presents a message that they deem to be controversial. Though I believe these lawsuits would ultimately fail on First Amendment grounds, the chilling effect that the mere threat of a lawsuit will have on religious broadcasters could be substantial."

Another concerned Republican is Cathy McMorris Rodgers. She is cited as follows:

> "Over the last 20 years, conservative talk radio has done such an incredible job as far as getting out the message," McMorris Rodgers said. "And although, 'Fairness Doctrine' may sound good, it's just a clever title to say, 'We're going to shutdown conservative talk radio, and we're going to potentially really hammer Christian radio, Christian television, and it's very important to not allow this to

> move forward."

Congressman Mike Pence also weights in:

> "The American people cherish freedom, that's why President Reagan repealed the so-called 'Fairness Doctrine' back in 1987," Pence said. "This Depression-era government regulation would actually regulate the content of America's airwaves and represents an existential threat to talk radio—and in particular—Christian talk radio."

The article ends by discussing a legal case in which a Christian radio station was actually shut down by the FCC, because of the Fairness Doctrine. This happened in 1969, but the Fairness Doctrine was repealed in 1987.
Jim Demint's Broadcaster Freedom Act of 2009 is co-sponsored by some of my favorite conservatives, like Tom Coburn and James Inhofe.

First report from William Lane Craig's Quebec speaking tour

February 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig completed his tour in Quebec, Canada on 2/13/09. One of the Quebecois students named Martin wrote to Dr. Craig, challenging him on many aspects of his presentation. Quebec is widely regarded as the most secular and progressive of the Canadian provinces, so I was delighted to hear from this student, but I don't think Dr. Craig spent enough time replying to him, so I will help.

First, if you need a refresher on Craig's standard 20 minute opening speech, look here (opening speech from the Craig-Pigliucci debate, audio from the Craig-Stenger debate, video from the Craig-Dacey debate). Bill usually argues for God from the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe for permitting life of any kind, objective moral values, the resurrection of Jesus as a historically-testable miracle claim, and the immediate personal experience of God.

The student Martin starts off by complaining that atheism is an adequate foundation for rational moral behavior. He writes:

> …you know as well as I do that any thinking person, atheist or no, understands why rape isn't acceptable in modern society. Being an atheist isn't being a hedonist, and I feel that it's pathetic I need to remind you of this.

Notice that Martin links the moral rules to the time and place in which he lives. Rape isn't really wrong for all times and places, it's wrong for us in this society in this time.

First of all, on atheism morality is an illusion. In an accidental universe, the only morality that exists is when societies *make them up*. In that sense, morality is similar to the fashion of clothing – it is purely convention. It varies by time and place. It is completely arbitrary. Let me explain some of the problems with briefly here, but a longer treatment is here.

On atheism, there is no non-physical soul, and no free will. There are therefore no moral choices nor is there moral responsibility. On atheism moral behavior is ultimately *futile*, as humans are all going to die individually and collectively in the heat death of the universe: it does not matter if you are moral or not, on atheism. On atheism, there is no standard by which to judge individual moral progress, or the evil in other cultures, such as widow-burning or slavery.

When an atheist speaks about morality, is isn't talking about the way humans everywhere ought to be, he is talking about social conventions. When an atheist acts morally, he is simply imitating the fashions of the people around him – either to please himself by feeling moral, or to please other people. If they can escape the social consequences, it would be irrational for them to do the right them if it gives them no pleasure.

By the way, it's not just me who says this. Richard Taylor, an atheist who once debated

against William Lane Craig, says this:

> The idea of political or legal obligation is clear enough… Similarly, the idea of an obligation higher than this, referred to as *moral* obligation, is clear enough, provided reference to some lawgiver higher…than those of the state is understood. In other words, our moral obligations can…be understood as those that are imposed by God…. But what if this higher-than-human lawgiver is no longer taken into account? Does the concept of moral obligation…still make sense? …**The concept of moral obligation [is] unintelligible apart from the idea of God. The words remain but their meaning is gone.** (Richard Taylor, *Ethics, Faith, and Reason* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985), p. 83-84)

Next, Martin argues that the anthropic principle is an adequate refutation of the fine-tuning of the physical constants of the universe for life. The anthropic principle is the idea that the presence of intelligent life *causes* the constants to be fine-tuned 14 billion years ago. He writes:

> Impressing a room full of vaguely interested people with figures about the extremely rare conditions that allow life to exist is all well and good – handwaving away the entire anthropic principle with a single bad analogy is not.

Regarding Martin's claim about fine-tuning being explained by the anthropic principle, let me say this. First, the fine-tuning is real. If you change the constants of physics in the big bang, the universe will not support life of *any kind.* Consider another Martin, Martin Rees, an atheist and the British Astronomer Royal. In his book "Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape The Universe", he discusses 6 finely-tuned numbers.

Rees writes **here**:

> These six numbers constitute a 'recipe' for a universe. Moreover, the outcome is sensitive to their values: if any one of them were to be 'untuned', there would be no stars and no life. Is this tuning just a brute fact, a coincidence? Or is it the providence of a benign Creator?

It is impossible for humans, who just appeared relatively recently, to have any causal impact on the selection of these physical constants *14 billion years ago*. I discuss two known responses to the fine-tuning problem, (unobservable multiverse and non-existent observer), here.

Bobby Jindal responds to Obama's SOTU speech

February 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bobby Jindal gave the response to Barack Obama's State of the Union speech last night. I am a huge Bobby Jindal supporter, so I was alarmed by Ace's negative reaction here.

> Awful. He walked out like an earnest dork and has a weird inflection, trying to sound upbeat and sunny when it's clearly not his natural metier. It sounds false, and he looks false.
>
> I don't care how much of a star Jindal is, America doesn't elect somewhat-off dorks as president.

But GatewayPundit liked the speech.

> **Governor Bobby Jindal** was fantastic tonight. He delivered **the Republican rebuttal** to the Democrat's irresponsible spending plan.
>
> Democrats place their hope in government.
> We place our hope in you the American people.
>
> **"We Believe Americans Can Do Anything."**
> This was a terrific speech.
> Jindal has a tremendous amount of charisma.

GatewayPundit also posted the transcript at that same link.

You can watch Bobby's response here at HotAir.com, (12 minutes). My favorite part is when he says "who among us would ask our children for a loan?".

> **Who among us would ask our children for a loan, so we could spend money we do not have, on things we do not need?** That is precisely what the Democrats in Congress just did. It's irresponsible. And it's no way to strengthen our economy, create jobs or build a prosperous future for our children.

Basically he hammered the point that Democrats are for taking your money and solving someone's else's problems with it. They do not trust you to solve problems yourself. He was able to illustrate Republican priorities by talking about his reforms in Louisiana.

> In Louisiana, we took a different approach. Since I became governor, we cut more than 250 earmarks from our state budget. And to create jobs for our citizens, we cut taxes six times — including the largest income tax cut in the history of our state.
>
> …

> In my home state, there used to be saying: At any given time, half of Louisiana is under water — and the other half is under indictment.

> No one says that anymore. Last year, we passed some of the strongest ethics laws in the nation — and today, Louisiana has turned her back on the corruption of the past. We need to bring transparency to Washington, DC — so we can rid our Capitol of corruption and ensure we never see the passage of another trillion dollar spending bill that Congress has not even read and the American people haven't even seen.

I really would appreciate it if you guys can watch this and let me know what you think of his speech! (Leave a comment) I think that the speech seemed a little plain, but remember, *everybody* is watching this response, not just people like us with a big interest in policies. Hey – I'm a Fred Thompson guy – what do I care about a person's charisma? I only care about policies. Policies that increase liberty, prosperity and security.

One more opinion. Michelle Malkin said the delivery was fine. And I say the content was great!

Tom Price, chairman of the conservative Republican Study Commitee responds to Obama here, (5 minutes). He is really being clear about the differences between fiscal conservatism and socialism.

Jim Demint's 2 minute take on Obama's SOTU address is here.

UPDATE: Jindal does much better in this interview with Meredith Viera on NBC Today.

Vladimir Putin tells America that socialism doesn't work

February 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Found this transcript of Putin's remarks in the Wall Street Journal. The story was linked over on John Lott's blog.

Putin opposes protectionism:

> We must not revert to isolationism and unrestrained economic egotism. The leaders of the world's largest economies agreed during the November 2008 G20 summit not to create barriers hindering global trade and capital flows. Russia shares these principles.

Putin opposes state intervention in the economy:

> Excessive intervention in economic activity and blind faith in the state's omnipotence is another possible mistake.
>
> True, the state's increased role in times of crisis is a natural reaction to market setbacks. Instead of streamlining market mechanisms, some are tempted to expand state economic intervention to the greatest possible extent.

Putin opposes big government:

> The concentration of surplus assets in the hands of the state is a negative aspect of anti-crisis measures in virtually every nation.
>
> In the 20th century, the Soviet Union made the state's role absolute. In the long run, this made the Soviet economy totally uncompetitive. This lesson cost us dearly.

Putin opposes wealth redistribution and welfare:

> Nor should we turn a blind eye to the fact that the spirit of free enterprise, including the principle of personal responsibility of businesspeople, investors and shareholders for their decisions, is being eroded in the last few months. There is no reason to believe that we can achieve better results by shifting responsibility onto the state.

Putin opposes bailouts and deficit spending:

> And one more point: anti-crisis measures should not escalate into financial populism and a refusal to implement responsible macroeconomic policies. The unjustified swelling of the budgetary deficit and the accumulation of public debts are just as destructive as adventurous stock-jobbing.

Putin goes on to give recommendations on how to solve the problem.

I can’t believe that America and the USSR have switched places. What is the world coming to? Obama has *unilaterally* plunged us into bankruptcy and angered the entire world with his naive protectionism. How could we have been so ignorant as to have elected someone with *no knowledge of economics whatsoever*? During an economic crisis!

Porkulus-2 bill would destroy school choice in Washington D.C.

February 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I already blogged about the new 410 billion dollar omnibus bill here, but on John Boehner's blog, I found out more about it. It's not just that it contains 9000 earmarks, as Michelle Malkin noted. On John Boehner's blog, he argues that the bill also contains a hidden provision that would destroy the voucher program in Washington, D.C..

This post states:

> Congressional Democrats are scheming to deny low-income parents and students in the nation's capital a popular school choice program by inserting a provision mandating Congress renew the program before more money is spent on it. While this may sound innocuous enough, it would serve as a death blow to the groundbreaking D.C. school choice program – a goal Congressional Democrats have sought since taking control of Congress in 2007.

The post also links to a video produced by the Heritage Foundation that shows some of the affected students pleasing with Obama to let them attend private schools using vouchers, instead of attending defective public schools.

You may have heard that Washington, D.C. spends the most amount of money per pupil, but gets the least return on their investment. Andrew Coulson of the libertarian Cato Institute calculates the cost per student per year as $24,600. That is not a typo. The Washington Times notes that the voucher system cost only $7500 per year, and produced far better results than the government-run, union-staffed public schools.

> The Opportunity Scholarship Program that Congress established allows more than 1,900 low-income D.C. children to receive vouchers so they can attend the private school of their parents' choosing. The scholarships are good for up to $7,500. So, the best bet is obvious: a $7,500 voucher that caters to children – not a one-size-fits-all $24,600 per-pupil plan. The former has measurable academic success and incredible parental demand; the latter consistently places children at the bottom rungs of the academic ladder. **In fact, D.C. ranked the lowest in math and reading, according to results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress tests released in September**.

The Boston Globe summarizes the numbers on reading and math here:

> According to the authoritative National Assessment of Education Progress, only one in seven fourth-graders is ranked at grade-level ("proficient") or better in reading and math. Among eighth-graders, only one in eight is proficient in reading; only one in 12 can handle eighth-grade math.

John Boehner is quote in his blog post as follows:

> The D.C. school choice program has provided hope for thousands of low-income children in the District of Columbia since it was established, and has been demonstrating results when it comes to parental satisfaction and increased parental involvement. Eliminating this program would represent an irresponsible and shameful act on the part of the Democratic leadership in Congress, and the children of the District of Columbia deserve better.

If the Barack Obama is willing to take away school-choice from the poorest students in the nation in order to satisfy the teachers unions that got him elected, then what hope do the rest of us have of keeping our liberty?

Does the origin of the first living organism require an intelligent designer?

February 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a good debate on this question here on the Unbelievable radio show, which is broadcast in the UK. The argument is specifically about the first replicating organism.

The first replicating organism would have to have had a number of characteristics of living things, such as the ability to store its own genetic information and replicate that information. The first living organism cannot be built up by mutation and selection, because mutation and selection require that replication *already be in place*. So, where did the information in the first replicator come from?

If you imagine that the simplest organism is a functional computer program, you have to ask yourself – how much code is needed to provide that minimal functionality for a living system? Whatever that amount of code is, it would have to come together all at once, because having only a part of the program in place means that the program doesn't compile and it doesn't run!

Here is the link to the debate audio. The debate starts at 15 and half minutes into the show, and is 1 hour long. And here is the blurb introducing the topic and speakers:

> Unbelievable? – 21 February 2009
> **Could the DNA that makes up the building blocks of life of every living thing on the earth be the clue to a cosmic designer?**
>
> That's the view of Christian guest Perry Marshall. An electrical engineer by background, he is now a leading authority on information systems and the internet. He says that anybody who comes at the topic of how life originated from an engineering background will see that DNA is a code that needs a designer to create the information it transmits.
>
> Peter Hearty is an atheist biologist. He says that science does not work when you dispense with the search for a naturalistic explanation for the origin of DNA.
> [Note from Wintery Knight: Peter Hearty has a Ph.D in computer science!]

This is a fun and easy-to-understand debate, especially for those of us coming from a computer science or engineering background. I think it's fun to argue with my friends about what kind of professional God would be if he had to get a job. Naturally, I always argue that God is a computer scientist, because he designed the genetic code of the first replicator. If you have a different answer, leave a comment!

For more on science and faith, see my (snarky, mean, satirical) articles on the origin of the universe and the fine-tuning of the physical constants of the universe in order to permit the minimal requirements for complex living systems of any kind.

Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper interviewed by Larry Kudlow

February 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Larry Kudlow sat down with Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper and had a conversation about Canada's economic situation and policies. (Video here)

Kudlow first asks Harper about the banking situation in Canada. Harper says that the banks are run much more tightly in Canada. Harper explains that there are no bailouts planned for Canadian banks because Canadian banks are *private institutions.*

> **KUDLOW:** Let me begin with an interesting subject here, banking. Everybody's talking about banking. The Canadian banks appear to be in much better shape than the American banks. They have fewer toxic assets. Their losses aren't nearly as bad. No one's talking about bankruptcy up there. I want to learn from our northern cousins. What can you tell us? Why are Canadian banks looking better than our banks?
>
> **HARPER:** Well first of all I can tell you, it is true. We have, I think, the only banks in the western world where we're not looking at bailouts or anything like that.
>
> **KUDLOW:** No TARP money sir, if I'm not mistaken? No TARP money?
>
> **HARPER:** We haven't got any TARP money. We've gone in and done some market transactions with our banks to improve liquidity. But I think the reasons are really complex, Larry. You know, first of all, our banks are private. We don't have a Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac equivalent mucking around in the system.
>
> **KUDLOW:** Is that a lesson right there Prime Minister?
>
> **HARPER:** Well, I think my observation is those are institutions with a difficult private/public mix. And sometimes private/ public mixes have benefits and sometimes they have the worst of both worlds. We don't have anything like that. We do have though, a strong system of regulation, and activist regulators, who go and meet with the sector. But they're macro, prudential kind of regulations. They don't try and micromanage banks' decisions. We try and establish good oversight and transparency.
>
> **KUDLOW:** Do you have leverage and borrowing ratios that might have been

> enforced? Because that's clearly one of the breakdowns here in the states?
>
> **HARPER:** Well, we do have leverage ratios. What's ironic is that our own banks had not actually achieved those ratios. They were actually working under them. Part of what we…
>
> **KUDLOW:** They were under leveraged?
>
> **HARPER:** They were under leveraged.
>
> **KUDLOW:** Wait, wait. Canadian banks were under leveraged?
>
> **HARPER:** Under what they could have been.
>
> **KUDLOW:** I didn't know there was such a thing on this entire planet earth.
>
> **HARPER:** Well I think part of what we have done is through the system of regulation we've had, we've encouraged a fairly cautious culture in the banks. For example, our banks, when they sign mortgages, largely hold those mortgages rather than trading them. So they have a lot more interest in the underlying quality of those mortgages. And we avoided the sub-prime kind of problem.

Kudlow goes on to quiz Harper on individual income tax rates, corporate income tax rates, tax cuts, Canadian energy production, carbon emissions, protectionism/free trade and auto-union bailouts. If you want to know what it is like to have an F.A. Hayek-admiring economist running your country, (BA and MA in Economics from the University of Calgary), read the whole thing!

UPDATE: More interviews with Stephen Harper with CNN, Wall Street Journal and Fox Business are here!

Obama introduces cap and trade scheme in budget

February 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was browsing over at Nice Deb and found this story about the budget that really upset me. I am really beginning to fear for the future of the American economy. I don't think we can handle all of these bad decisions in such a short period. We may be looking at a new Depression.

Nice Deb cites this article from Human Events as follows:

> The Department of Energy estimates that S. 2191, the Warner-Lieberman cap-and-trade proposal, will increase the cost of coal for power generation by between 161% and 413%. DOE estimates GDP losses (see chart) over the 21-year period they forecast, at between $444 billion and $1.308 trillion, with particular damage to the manufacturing sector…
>
> **Winegarden estimates that this bill could increase unemployment by 2.7% or about 4 million jobs.** In fact, companies are already preparing to avoid increased level and volatility of American energy prices by setting up factories and partnerships in countries which won't be subject to cap-and-trade restrictions…

In addition, we can expect 1 trillion dollars in new taxes. Here are the individual tax hikes from an ABC News article that Nice Deb links to in her post:

> On people making more than $250,000:
>
> $338 billion – Bush tax cuts expire
> $179 billlion – eliminate itemized deduction
> $118 billion – capital gains tax hike

Here are some of the tax hikes on businesses from the same post. I picked the ones that are specifically going to affect energy production.

> $5.3 billion – excise tax on Gulf of Mexico oil and gas
> $3.4 billion – repeal expensing of tangible drilling costs
> $62 million – repeal deduction for tertiary injectants
> $49 million – repeal passive loss exception for working interests in oil and natural gas properties
> $13 billion – repeal manufacturing tax deduction for oil and natural gas companies
> $1 billion – increase to 7 years geological and geophysical amortization period for independent producers

Oil and gas? Isn't that what people use to heat their homes and power their vehicles?

UPDATE: The Anchoress says that the price hikes on individuals making $250,000 or more

also apply to *small businesses*, as well as individuals! Bye-bye jobs!

Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus

February 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, if this doesn't show the sad state of affairs in the world of militant activist atheism, I don't know what does.

In Chapter 3 of "The God Delusion", Dawkins cites a professor of German, G. A. Wells, as an authority on the historical claim that Jesus did not exist.

> "It is even possible to mount a serious, though not widely supported, historical case that Jesus never lived at all, as has been done by, among others Professor G. A. Wells of the University of London in a number of books, including Did Jesus Exist? Although Jesus probably existed." – Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion, p.122

Now, there is *not one single person in the universe* who has a Ph.D in history would take this view in peer-reviewed published work. Not one. Yet Dawkins cites a professor of German to make his case. If this were handed in as part of university assignment, Dawkins would get a big red "F" for *FAIL* from me.

Rev. Philip Brown comments on Wells' credibility on historical matters here:

> What Dawkins fails to mention is that Professor G. A. Wells from the university of London is NOT a professor of History, Religion, Theology, Philosophy, Literature, or even Anthropology; all subjects that we would be expect him to be an expert in? No! G. A. Wells is the Emeritus Professor of German at Birkbeck, University of London. While Wells does hold a degree in Philosophy his field is in language. Why does Dawkins mention that Wells is a professor and indeed one at the university of London, but fail to mention that Wells is a professor in a field that has noting to do with expertise in assessing validity of historical figures?

Unbelievable. Here is a list of the virtually indisputable facts about Jesus, from *respected, skeptical, non-Christian scholars* like Norman Perrin and E. P. Sanders. That is how serious people do scholarship. But maybe militant activist atheism is not about scholarship at all.

Here is N.T. Wright's list from the same page. N.T. Wright taught on the historical Jesus at Oxford, Cambridge, McGill (Canada) and Duke. That is what we call historical scholarship.

– Born in 4 B.C.E.
– Grew up in Nazareth in Galilee
– Spoke Aramaic, Hebrew, and probably Greek.
– Was initially associated with John the Baptist, but emerged as a public figure in his own right around 28 C.E.
– Summoned people to repent.
– Used parables to announce the reign of Israel's god.

– Conducted itinerant ministry throughout villages of Galilee.
– Effected remarkable cures, including exorcisms, as enactments of his message.
– Shared in table fellowship with a socioculturally diverse group.
– Called a close group of disciples and gave twelve of them a special status.
– Performed a dramatic action in the temple.
– Incurred the wrath of some elements in Judaism, especially among the high priestly establishment.
– Was handed over by this powerful Jewish element to the Romans to be crucified as an insurrectionist.
– Was reported by his followers to have been raised from the dead.

Resources to respond to the proposal that Jesus never existed are here.

Hong Kong debates evolution curriculum

February 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

According to the Nature News, Hong Kong is debating whether to support academic freedom in their schools on controversial areas of science.

> Hong Kong is in the middle of reforming its school system, and the Education Bureau has issued a series of guidelines for all levels of education to go into effect in September 2009.
>
> …
>
> The guidelines were prepared by the Curriculum Development Council and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority.

The change affects the teaching of biology at the secondary level. A section of the proposed curriculum guidelines on 'Genetics and Evolution' states the following:

> In addition to Darwin's theory, students are encouraged to explore other explanations for evolution and the origins of life, to help illustrate the dynamic nature of scientific knowledge.

Opponents of "teaching the controversy" are ducking debates with the other side:

> There has been heated debate in the Hong Kong media since. On 13 February, the radio series Backchat broadcast a programme on 'Creationism versus Evolution'. Kwok, dean of the science faculty at the university, backed out of the programme when he found it had been changed to a debate format at the last minute, noting that he is not a specialist in evolution and thus cannot counter detailed arguments regarding evolution versus creation.

Professors who want to teach the evidence for and against naturalistic theories are having to dodge academic censors:

> Chris Beling, a solid-state physicist and associate professor in the University of Hong Kong department of physics, debated with two other panellists and took the opportunity to mildly criticize the science faculty for refusing his request to continue a course on the origin of the Universe that included a section on intelligent-design thinking. Instead, he has met in private with students to discuss intelligent design.

Keep in mind that Nature News is biased in favor of naturalism and therefore *must* defend the position that scientific inquiry can never implicate an intelligence.

In other words, their opinion has been set by their philosophical assumption of naturalism, and experiments and observations *cannot* overturn their *a priori* commitment to naturalism.

(H/T: Telic Thoughts)

LAT: Conscience rule on abortions may be overturned

February 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Los Angeles Times story is here.

> Reporting from Washington — Taking another step into the abortion debate, the Obama administration today will move to rescind a controversial rule that allows healthcare workers to deny abortion counseling or other family planning services if doing so would violate their moral beliefs, according to administration officials.

And a bit more:

> Last month without official ceremony, Obama overturned a controversial ban on U.S. funding for international aid groups that provide abortion services.
>
> The move by the Department of Health and Human Services to throw out the conscience rule is being made equally quietly as most of Washington focuses on the president's blockbuster budget plan.

UPDATE: The Achoress adds:

> If we are going to be a nation that supports the "freedom to choose," then it seems to me that has to go both ways. Professional health workers should be "free to choose" whether or not they will participate in what they find to be morally objectionable.
>
> **Freedom that is only one-sided** i.e., "she is free to have a late term, partial-birth abortion and you are *not free* to refuse her request" or "she is free to demand this contraception and you are *not* free to refuse to fill that prescription," is not really freedom.
>
> It is enslavement. Dress it up any way you want. If the government is forcing you to do what your conscience tells you not to, under threats to your freedom, your purse or your livelihood, then you are not free.

Higher taxes for the rich will not pay for Obama's spending plans

February 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

On her official Townhall.com blog, Michele Bachmann asks whether Obama will ever be able to find money to pay for all the spending he has announced.

> To pay for the trillions in spending that President Obama and his Congressional Democrat allies have passed and are about to pass in the months ahead, our President has assured us that taxes on Americans making less than $250,000 will not be raised by "one single dime." His plan is to increase the tax rates on Americans making more than $250k a year to offset the spending. But is this even statistically feasible was the question the Wall Street Journal set out to answer?

She links to this story in the Wall Street Journal. The WSJ piece notes that Obama's current plans to raise taxes won't pay for the spending:

> Note that federal income taxes are already "progressive" with a 35% top marginal rate, and that Mr. Obama is (so far) proposing to raise it only to 39.6%, plus another two percentage points in hidden deduction phase-outs. He'd also raise capital gains and dividend rates, but those both yield far less revenue than the income tax. These combined increases won't come close to raising the hundreds of billions of dollars in revenue that Mr. Obama is going to need.

But there just isn't enough money to pay for the spending even if we take 100% of the earnings of those who make only $75,000 and up.

> A tax policy that confiscated 100% of the taxable income of everyone in America earning over $500,000 in 2006 would only have given Congress an extra $1.3

> trillion in revenue. That's less than half the 2006 federal budget of $2.7 trillion and looks tiny compared to the more than $4 trillion Congress will spend in fiscal 2010. Even taking every taxable "dime" of everyone earning more than $75,000 in 2006 would have barely yielded enough to cover that $4 trillion.

And as usual Democrats are ignorant of the fact that when you raise taxes on wealthiest producers, *they stop producing*, so the tax revenues actually go *down.* Not only that, but all of this tax and spend socialism destroys economic growth – so that tax revenues are reduced *even further*.

> Fast forward to this year (and 2010) when the Wall Street meltdown and recession are going to mean far few taxpayers earning more than $500,000. Profits are plunging, businesses are cutting or eliminating dividends, hedge funds are rolling up, and, most of all, capital nationwide is on strike. Raising taxes now will thus yield far less revenue than it would have in 2006.

And the cap-and-trade scheme he announced earlier is going to hurt the economy even more by raising prices on energy production.

> The bottom line is that Mr. Obama is selling the country on a 2% illusion. Unwinding the U.S. commitment in Iraq and allowing the Bush tax cuts to expire can't possibly pay for his agenda. Taxes on the not-so-rich will need to rise as well.
>
> On that point, by the way, it's unclear why Mr. Obama thinks his climate-change scheme won't hit all Americans with higher taxes. Selling the right to emit greenhouse gases amounts to a steep new tax on most types of energy and, therefore, on all Americans who use energy. There's a reason that Charlie Rangel's Ways and Means panel, which writes tax law, is holding hearings this week on cap-and-trade regulation.

Canadian Human Rights Commissions are bad for business

February 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Denyse O'Leary has a re-cap of the sorry state of free speech in Canada, here.

It is worth noting how these Human Rights Commissions don't just affect individual liberty – they affect commerce, as well! Businesses can be sued just as easily as individuals. All it takes is a victim from a special interest group to feel "offended".

Closet Conservative linked to this St. Catharines Standard story:

> The owner of a downtown St. Catharines fitness club faces a mediation hearing today for allegedly denying a pre-operation transsexual access to the women's only areas of his gym.
>
> The transsexual — now a woman, but a man at the time of the incident two years ago — is taking the case to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, John Fulton said Tuesday.

Mark Steyn has more stories of business owners and professionals facing "Human Rights" suits from offended clients. Excerpt:

> What's the "proper conduct" for Mr Fulton? Decline to let the pre-op use the ladies' changing room and get a "human rights" complaint? Or let the Big Swinging Dick have the run of the shower and get a whole bunch of other suits from his outraged female members?
>
> What's the "proper conduct" for Dr Stubbs? Decline to perform a labiaplasty on the post-op transsexual because he's no idea what he's getting into (so to speak)? Or perform it and risk a malpractice suit for botching an operation?
>
> What's the "proper conduct" for Gator Ted? Tell the medical marijuana guy to stop smoking pot in his doorway and be hauled before the commissars? Or let the guy go ahead and get sued by the trucker sitting next to him at the bar when he fails his drug test?
>
> There is no "proper conduct", only the whims and caprices of nuisance plaintiffs backed by the Ontario government's social engineers. Bar owners and fitness clubs run up five- and six-figure legal bills. The nuisance plaintiffs get the tab picked up by taxpayers, and thus have no incentive to settle.

Canada may have a fiscal conservative running the economy today, but Stephen Harper still doesn't have the majority government he needs to abolish these kangaroo courts once and for all.

So it may not be time for Americans to flee Obama's socialist paradise for Canada, yet. Will Canada win back the right to free speech? Maybe. Time will tell.

Does Darwinian evolution matter for the progress of biology?

February 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Over on Tough Questions Answered, they have analyzed an article by Phil Skell, emeritus professor of chemistry at Penn State. Skell's article appeared in Forbes magazine. Skell argues that evolution has no bearing on the progress of science in biology.

TQA writes:

> Skell writes that Darwinists "overstate both the evidence for Darwin's theory of historical biology and the benefits of Darwin's theory to the actual practice of experimental science."
>
> Experimental science, in biology, has "dramatically increased our understanding of the intricate workings within living organisms that account for their survival, showing how they continue to function despite the myriad assaults on them from their environments."
>
> These advances, however, have little or nothing to do with explanations of Darwinian origins. They "are not due to studies of an organism's ancestors that are recovered from fossil deposits." The study of fossils "cannot reveal the details that made these amazing living organisms function."

Another (even better) Forbes article by neurosurgeon Michael Egnor is here. He explains why practicing scientists don't need to be Darwinians, because Darwinism is irrelevant to the practice of science.

Excerpt:

> The fossil record shows sharp discontinuity between species, not the gradual transitions that Darwinism inherently predicts. Darwin's theory offers no coherent, evidence-based explanation for the evolution of even a single molecular pathway from primordial components. The origin of the genetic code belies random causation. All codes with which we have experience arise from intelligent agency. Intricate biomolecules such as enzymes are so functionally complex that it's difficult to see how they could arise by random mutations.

Egnor then asks why Darwinism is so important to some activists. And he describes how strongly they cling to their belief in Darwinism, often in very facistic and insulting ways:

> I came to learn why evolutionary biologists are so fiercely devoted to Darwinism. I was vilified on the Internet. Calls came to my office demanding that I be fired.
>
> And much of the venom was ideological. The vast majority of evolutionary biologists are atheists. I'm Catholic, and my religious faith was mocked by my fellow scientists. Many Darwinists openly express their hatred for Christianity–atheist biologist P.Z. Myers desecrated a Eucharistic host on his Web

> site.
>
> In 1989, Oxford evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins wrote in the *New York Times* book review section that people who don't accept evolution are "ignorant, stupid, insane … or wicked." He has described the religious upbringing of children as "child abuse."
>
> In his book, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, atheist philosopher and Darwinist Daniel Dennett has written that "[s]afety demands that religions be put in cages too–when absolutely necessary." The fight against the design inference in biology is motivated by fundamentalist atheism. Darwinists detest intelligent design theory because it is compatible with belief in God.

Rush Limbaugh speaks at 2009 CPAC conference

February 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Links to entire speech is here.

GatewayPundit says the speech was carried live on CNN and Fox News. I'm watching CNN right now and the CNN anchorwoman is calling Rush "divisive" for asking Democrats to stick to their oath to defend the Constitution. (That's the clip they played, she called that divisive)

Full report from William Lane Craig's Quebec debating tour

March 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I received William Lane Craig's report from his Ontario and Quebec speaking tours in my e-mail inbox. The report is not yet posted on his web site, so I reproduce the portion related to his debate at McGill against Shabir Ally below. (I wanted to post everything, but it was too much)

Here's what Bill says about debating Shabir at McGill University in Montreal:

> The next evening was my debate at the English-speaking McGill University with the Muslim apologist Shabir Ally on "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" I began by presenting a case for Jesus' resurrection, and Shabir then followed. Shabir is a very slick customer, a skilled debater and smooth speaker. Whereas my debating style tends to be pretty formal, ticking off one point after another, Shabir began his opening speech by telling a joke, which got the audience laughing, and even presenting to me a small souvenir gift from Montréal. I thought to myself, "Boy, I'm already ten points behind just on audience rapport!" But my experience is that these first impressions fade pretty quickly as the debate unfolds.
>
> So I figured I should just carry out my plan to attack his view hard, while continuing to be gracious personally. Shabir defends a very strange view of what happened to Jesus. He holds that Jesus was crucified (despite the Qur'an's denial of that fact) but that he was only apparently dead when he was taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb. Before he could die in the tomb, God assumed him into heaven and thereafter gave visions of Jesus to the disciples. In that way, Shabir is able to affirm the historicity of Jesus' crucifixion, burial, empty tomb, post-mortem appearances, and the disciples' belief in his resurrection, but all without Jesus' being raised from the dead!
>
> Unfortunately, to my surprise, Shabir didn't even mention his theory in his opening speech but just presented a wishy-washy, feel-good talk about Islam and Christianity. "Now what should I do?" I thought. "If I attack his view when he hasn't even presented it, I'm really going to come across as mean-spirited. But if I wait till the rebuttals, there won't be enough time to present my critique." As I said, I decided to go after his view anyway, explaining to the audience that this is his position in his published work.
>
> As a preliminary observation, I pointed out that no true Muslim could embrace his view, since the Qur'an could not be more straightforward or unambiguous: "They did not kill him; they did not crucify him" (4:157). I even quoted the Arabic "*wa maa qataluhu, wa maa salabuhu*." I charged that Shabir, in denying the Qur'an, had already deserted Islam for a mishmash of Christianity and Islam, which I dubbed "Chrislam." I said that if you're going to embrace Chrislam, why not go

> all the way and become a Christian?
>
> I then argued that Shabir *should* do this because his view faces insuperable historical and theological objections. Historically, it has inadequate explanatory scope (since mere visions of Jesus would not explain the disciples' belief in Jesus' resurrection), weak explanatory power (since the early Church distinguished visions of Christ from resurrection appearances of Christ), and little plausibility (since it is highly improbable that Jesus was taken down alive).
>
> The theological objections are even more problematic: (1) The theory provides too little, too late. For in virtue of his crucifixion, Jesus has already suffered shame, humiliation, and defeat in the minds of his enemies. (2) By misleading the disciples into thinking that Jesus was risen from the dead, Allah himself is to blame for foisting the religion of Christianity on the world, resulting in hundreds of millions rejecting Islam and going to hell! Shabir had little to say in response to these objections, except to reiterate that there's no way of knowing that Jesus was really dead.
>
> So in the end the palm of victory went clearly to the Christian side. But sad to say, there were very few Muslims in the audience. I hear through the grapevine that Muslims are increasingly disaffected with Shabir because of his compromises on orthodox Islam. In fact the Muslim Student Association at McGill, which had promised to help promote the debate, called at 4:00 p.m. the very afternoon of the debate to say that they weren't coming and had decided to schedule a meeting of their own that night! So it appears that the Muslim community is losing confidence in Shabir.

His newsletter contains more about his speaking in Quebec at the University of Montreal and the University of Laval. The newsletter also discusses his debate with Shelly Kagan of Yale University, held at Columbia University. And he concludes with his upcoming speaking engagements. Please pray for Bill and consider supporting him by donating to Reasonable Faith.

Round-up of US media interviews with Stephen Harper

March 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

I spotted this round-up of media interviews with Stephen Harper on the Canadian blog Blue Like You. I've already blogged about the CNBC interview with optimistic Larry Kudlow here. That interview focused on economic policy.

In the Fox Business interview with Alexis Glick, (video here), she explains how Canada was able to avoid the subprime lending crisis.

> Immediately after I talked to the vice chairman of the Swedish central bank, I interviewed — in a "First on Fox Business" — Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper about a lot of things: Everything from his meeting with President Obama last week, to NAFTA to the "Buy American" clause in the stimulus to carbon emissions and the Canadian Sands to the banking system. Why has Canada's banking system withstood the financial crisis while other countries banking systems like the U.S. are in such dire straits? **In 2008, the World Economic Forum ranked Canada's banking system the healthiest in the world. The U.S. was ranked 40th. Canada's system has much stronger federal regulations and lower mandatory leverage ratios. Canada's firms never engaged in subprime mortgage lending.** For over a decade, Canada has posted budget surpluses; only in the last quarter did they enter into a recession. What is working? What lessons could we learn from them? Take a look. Prime Minister Harper is very impressive.

Canada does not believe in forcing banks to make loans based on ACORN's vision of social justice. I explained how Democrats like Carter and Clinton forced banks to make these loans and how Republicans tried in vain to stop them, here.

The Wall Street Journal interview was more focused on foreign policy. You may have heard of Harper's recent free trade deal with Peru. But did you know that Canada also signed a free trade deal with Colombia?

> But the mention of Canadian and American political opposition to free-trade agreements with Colombia has sparked a change in the PM's unflappable

> manner. For a fleeting moment, what sounds a lot like frustration emerges. "I'm not going to say it's a perfect government, but we have a government in Colombia that is democratically elected, that has increased democratic norms, that has taken on the insurgency, that is moving that country forward economically and politically. And it is in a hemisphere where we have an increasing number of real serious enemies and opponents."

Meanwhile, the economically-illiterate, protectionist ACORN lawyer rejected a free trade deal with Colombia.

And did know that Canada has been taking a leading role in foreign policy?

> Since establishing a minority government in January 2006, this prime minister and his Conservative Party have restored Canada's international prestige by increasing military funding and tenaciously supporting Canada's dangerous NATO mission in the Afghan province of Kandahar. No NATO ally has put more on the line against the Taliban, and Mr. Harper seems to sense not just the opportunity but the need for Canada to capitalize on it. There is a vacuum in conservative leadership in North America and on the world stage, and Mr. Harper is stepping into it. His objective would appear to be the restoration of liberal-democratic resolve against tyranny.

You want Reaganesque? I'll give you Reaganesque:

> An unreliable NATO has implications for Canada not least because Russia is once again becoming a menace. The Kremlin's claim to the Arctic seabed can be discounted, he argues, because it is being pursued through the United Nations Law of the Sea Treaty. But other provocations are worrisome. "They are testing our airspace more frequently than they have been doing in a long, long time," he says. "It's the aggression in the Arctic, aggression more generally, an aggression that is increasingly troublesome just to be troublesome."

Check this out: 2 CF-18 fighters intercepted a Russian bomber that was snooping near Canadian airspace just last week. Look, if Obambi wants to focus on increasing welfare and nationalizing health care, then maybe Canadians will have to pick up the slacker's slack.

I rarely say this, but I am going to say it for this WSJ interview: READ. THE. WHOLE. THING.

UPDATE: Welcome, Canadian visitors from Blue Like You! Thanks for the link Joanne! I've just blogrolled you! I am hoping Stephen Harper gets his majority soon, so he can get rid of those pesky HRCs that keep going after Ezra Levant.

UPDATE 2: I noticed in the comments on Blue Like You that they referenced this interview from CNN with Wolf Blitzer. Here is the video and a news article from the National Post. Ooops. I think the commenter Allison meant a more recent CNN interview with Fareed Zakaria which is here.

UPDATE 3: Welcome visitors from Post-Darwinist! Thanks for linking to me, Denyse!

Report on Plantinga-Dennett debate

March 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Free Mark Steyn linked to *eight* of my posts today, so I went over there to see what else he found. Canadian writer Deborah Gyapong linked to a debate play-by-play between Alvin Plantinga and Daniel Dennett.

First off, the audio of the debate is here.

Here is an excerpt from the play-by-play, which has drawn over 100 comments so far:

> The debate was between Alvin Plantinga and Daniel Dennett. Plantinga is one of the founders of the Society of Christian Philosophers and one of the fathers of the current desecularization of philosophy. He is widely regarded – even by his critics – as one of the finest epistemologists of the last fifty years and one of the finest philosophers of religion since the Medieval period. Daniel Dennett is one of the New Atheists and is a well-known proponent of atheistic Darwinism and critic of religion. He is widely regarded – even by his critics – as one of the most important early philosophers of mind that opened the field to cognitive science and evolutionary biology. He has contributed enormously to the serious study of the mind and its relationship to the brain. Both philosophers are over sixty and perhaps at the height of their philosophical powers. They have also faced off before but, as far as I know, not in person.

It looks like Plantinga presented on his argument that rationality is incompatible with naturalism and evolution. I actually heard him present this paper *live*, and the phrase "the probability of R on N and E" is seared into my memory. Here is another excerpt:

> Plantinga was the presenter. The session asked the question of whether science and religion were compatible. Plantinga argues that they are and that in fact the scientific theory taken to be most incompatible with religion – evolutionary theory – is not only compatible with Christian theism (the religious view Plantinga defends) but is incompatible with Christian theism's most serious opponent in the scientific world – naturalism. Naturalism is the view that physics and the sciences can give a complete description of reality. Plantinga defines it as the view that there is no God or anything like God.

Here's the conclusion of the play-by-play:

> On another note, I walked around and listened to various conversations (not eavesdropping really, just listening for loud reactions to the session). The Christian philosophers were particularly interesting. They were not upset, surprised or even moved. They were wholly unphased. They were so unphased that they weren't even discussing the session. I was floored at Dennett's behavior but they reacted as if Dennett's hateful, childish behavior was to be expected. I thought they would be upset, but from what I can tell they simply

> expected Dennett to compare theistic belief to holocaust denial and to advocate murdering the Almighty. I guess I was wrong to expect more from him.
>
> In my estimation, Plantinga won hands down because Dennett savagely mocked Plantinga rather than taking him seriously. Plantinga focused on the argument, and Dennett engaged in ridicule. It is safe to say that Dennett only made himself look bad along with those few nasty naturalists that were snickering at Plantinga. The Christians engaged in no analogous behavior. More engagements like this will only expand the ranks of Christian philosophers and increase the pace of academic philosophy's desecularization.

If you guys are into debates, I highly recommend William Lane Craig debates here. Plantinga doesn't debate much, but there is this book-debate he did recently, that I haven't checked out yet. Dennett debated twice before that I know of, first, against that wimpy microbiologist Alister McGrath as part of the Greer-Heard series here, and against Dinesh D'Souza here.

Democrat stock-picker Jim Cramer angry with Obama's socialism

March 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

See this awesome post over at Nice Deb. She's got the videos up showing democrat Jim Cramer complaining about the economic free-fall caused by Obama's policies.

There are a lot of people in this country who do not know anything about economics, but they've been buying stocks based on *hype* generated by Obama-supporting Wall Street types.These gamblers (not investors) have not read Hayek or Sowell or Friedman. But they hope that Obama's socialist policies will make the stock market go *up*.

According to Business Week, Cramer is a life-long Democrat. According to this article, he contributes to Democrats. I think it is interesting to note that it's probably Democrats who are taking the most damage from the market right now, because they believe in Obammunism – they think that the market will rise as we go socialist.

Check out this video of Cramer being bullish on the Dow when it was around 14000 in the teeth of *abysmal* fundamentals, and then later denying that he was bullish.

And now Cramer is surprised that the party he supported is wrecking the economy. I hope he loses piles of money, and I hope everyone who voted for Obama loses everything. *EVERYTHING*.

Remember, Democrats caused this mess by forcing banks to make loans in order to achieve social justice for the benefit of other irresponsible Democrats who signed legal contracts with banks to purchase more house than they could afford. Many of these banks were being *run* by Democrats who got million-dollar bonuses while fudging the accounting and paying off Democrat lawmakers to block efforts by Bush to regulate them. Now the Democrat bankers are *working for Obama*.

The Democrats are voting in wasteful spending bill after wasteful spending bill, *and none of this spending will help the economy one iota.* And it's not just socialist tax policy, it's protectionist trade policy, too. And no matter how much Obama raises taxes on the productive class, we cannot afford to pay for this spending.

Democrats in general seem to believe that their socialism will make the economy grow faster. The falling stock market must be a real wake-up call to their ignorant faith in an ideology of feelings and intentions.

The fact that Obama's policies are likely to cause inflation and/or stagflation means that the rest of us responsible people who have to pay for this crap will have the additional comfort of knowing that every dollar we saved after our hard work will be devalued when he has to print money to pay for his wasteful spending.

Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

March 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two kinds of stem-cell research. The first kind is called embryonic stem-cell research (ESCR). This kind is opposed by pro-lifers because it kills unborn persons by extracting their stem cells for use in medical research. The second kind is called adult stem-cell research (ASCR). This kind is supported by pro-lifers.

You may be surprised to know that ESCR doesn't work as nearly as well as ASCR. Despite all the advocacy from left-wing Hollywood actors, ESCR has not helped a single patient. But ASCR in being used for 73 different kinds of therapies. According to the Family Research Council:

> …adult stem cell research had an impressive track record as of 2006-over 1100 FDA approved clinical trials in the United States for 72 different illnesses and disabilities. 2007 has seen further advances in adult stem cell research and therapy. Currently, peer-reviewed studies have documented 73 different conditions in humans where patient health has been improved through adult stem cell therapy, and over 1400 FDA approved trials are ongoing.
>
> Adult stem cells are found throughout the human body from birth onward, in placentas, and in umbilical cord blood. Unlike embryonic stem cell research, no embryos are destroyed in retrieving them.
>
> …There have been *no* successful treatment trials in human beings using *embryonic* stem cells.

But there were still a couple of problems with ASCR as Telic Thoughts explains here:

> In 2007 scientists found a way to induce pluripotency in adult somatic cells. There were just two problems. First, it was a slow process. Second, the cells were modified via a virus delivery system which increased the risk of cancerous mutation in the future.

Cancerous mutation? That sounds bad. But wait:

> Yesterday the second problem was solved as it was announced that scientists had found a way to induce pluripotency similar to that of embryonic stem cells without the use of viral delivery systems.

And their post closes with this:

> Last week the Obama administration promised to move soon to repeal the funding ban on embryonic stem cell research. It will be interesting to see if this monumental scientific breakthrough will alter Obama's course of action.

That won't happen. For more information about *why* pro-lifers oppose ESCR and support ASCR, here is a series of 3 Townhall.com articles written by Greg Koukl, (first, second,

third). Greg is the founder of Stand to Reason, an apologetics ministry with a heavy emphasis on bioethics.

UPDATE: Video of Michele Bachmann opposing ESCR funding.

Bobby Jindal defends Rush Limbaugh against hostile Larry King

March 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hot Air has the video of Jindal kicking butt on Larry King Live. It's more fun to watch when the left is angry and crazy.

Here's Hot Air's blurb about the video:

> Bobby Jindal faced off against an unusually hostile Larry King last night over the Steele-Limbaugh contretemps. King kept trying to stuff words into Jindal's mouth, and Jindal politely but firmly kept spitting them back at King. King insists that Republicans want the country to fail when it's clear that not even Rush says that.

CNN has the full transcript! Here's the best part:

> KING: Governor, do you think people are thinking about capitalism now or are they thinking about problems?
>
> JINDAL: Look, clearly, the American people are worried about paying their mortgages, keeping their jobs and paying their health care bills. I think Rush is a great leader for conservatives. I think he articulates what a lot of people are concerned about. And I think it is absolutely true that you can help people keep their jobs, help people afford their health care, help people afford their homes without abandoning the same conservative principles. For example, Republicans offered ideas like aggressive tax credits to make homes more affordable so people can refinance, can stay in their homes. You'd see more demand for homes. They've offered ideas about — instead of nationalizing banks, why not modify the mark to market rules? …
>
> KING: Do you want him to fail?
>
> JINDAL: I want the — I don't want those policies to be adopted. I want my country to succeed, but I don't want policies to be adopted that I think –
>
> KING: But what if the… policies actually work? What if they work?
>
> JINDAL: This is where we have a fundamental disagreement. I don't think it's going work to borrow half a — to spend in excess of our revenues. If you believed everything that the president — if you believed all of his projections, if you believe the economy starts growing again, you believe that we're not going be spending all that money fighting overseas…if you believe that all of these temporary programs are truly temporary, he's still projecting deficits of half a trillion dollars per year, under the best case scenario. Larry, that's just not sustainable. We cannot continue to do this as a country. China cannot become — continue to be our largest foreign holders of debt. This addiction to debt is what's caused so many of our problems. The government is not going to be the answer

> to every problem. I want my country to succeed. But what I worry about is that simply spending money on new programs — look at every new bailout. You know, you talked today, you know, about the auto bailouts. Then you had the fourth, I think it's the fourth — it's hard to keep track — the AIG bailout today. It seems like every time you turn around, there's another trillion dollar trillion plan. … I've yet to hear a coherent exit plan.
>
> KING: So you hope — you hope it doesn't hurt?
>
> JINDAL: No. I hope that failed policies don't get adopted. I want my country to succeed. I want the economy to grow. I want — certainly I want the economy to grow again so people can afford their homes. But I don't want the Congress to adopt policies that would make the problem worse, not better. … I think it's our — I think it's our obligation as Americans when we don't agree with a policy to speak up against it and to certainly offer different solutions.

Obama blames Bush for Obama's 1.75 trillion dollar deficit

March 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Full story over at Gateway Pundit.

Excerpt:

> [Bush's policies] dropped the deficit **4 of 8 years**, held an **average unemployment at 5.2%**, saw the **strongest productivity growth** in 4 decades and witnessed **robust GDP growth**.
>
> Bush was able to do this despite the recession he inherited, 9-11, Hurricane Katrina, and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
>
> As you can see from this chart, after the Bush tax cuts were implemented the budget deficit was reduced 3 of the last 4 years.
>
> The deficit was reduced in 2005, 2006 and 2007 even with war and implementation of the successful Bush surge of troops in Iraq.
> It wasn't until the mortgage crisis struck the economy, a crisis Bush warned the democratic Congress about **17 times** in 2008 alone, that the deficit climbed to $459 billion.

Have you seen this chart? (Source: CBO chart via **RedState**)

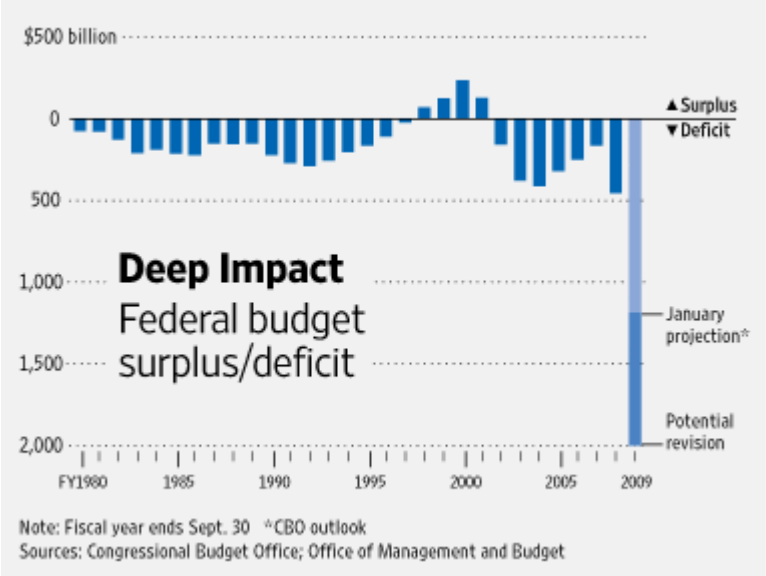

Gateway Pundit also mentions that Bush warned about crisis 17 times in 2008 and was blocked from regulating the GSEs by the Democrats. I proved here that the Democrats are to blame for this mess. In the post, I cited 1999 and 2003 articles from the left-wing New York Times and Los Angeles Times. There are also videos of Republicans trying to stop the crisis and Democrats blocking them.

Obama raises taxes on oil and gas to stop global warming

March 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome, visitors from the Cato Institute! Thanks for your link from here. New visitors, interested in economics make want to check out my posts on card check, the deficit, Stephen Harper, tax hikes for the rich, cap and trade, porkulus 1, porkulus 2, conscience rights, school choice and the subprime crisis.

This Reuters article explains how Obama is going to attack energy producing oil and natural gas companies in order to save the planet from global warming. Here is the exact quotation from Reuters:

> U.S. oil and natural gas producing companies should not receive federal subsidies in the form of tax breaks because their businesses contribute to global warming, U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner told Congress on Wednesday.

In the same article, Senator John Cornyn explains the consequences of this policy:

> Senator John Cornyn of Texas criticized the tax increases, saying they would hurt independent energy companies that provide a large share of U.S. oil and gas supplies.
>
> "My view is that higher taxes on small and independent producers here in America will make us **more dependent on imported oil and gas** while we transition to cleaner energy alternatives, a goal we all share," said Cornyn. "And it will also **hurt job retention and job creation in the energy sector**, which provides an awful lot of jobs in this country."

Let me also note that *consumers* are going to pay the price for raising taxes, because energy producing companies are just going to raise their prices to pay for the tax increase. And if Obama either fixes prices or nationalizes the energy industries, (like he's nationalized health care), then you can expect energy supply shortages.

When you raise taxes on the producers of a commodity, you get less of that commodity. When supply decreases and demand stays the same, you get a shortage. The price of that scarce commodity rises. If you respond to the rising prices by fixing the prices lower, you get line-ups outside of gas stations. This is what we saw in 1973 with price controls on gas.

Jerry Taylor of the Cato Institute explains *why* price controls on oil and gas didn't work in 1973:

> Let's begin with a review of what happened the last time Congress tried to protect consumers from "Big Oil." When Richard Nixon enacted his strict retail price-control regime in 1971, service stations ran out of gas and motorists were forced to wait in staggeringly long lines to get what fuel remained. Burned by the

> fiasco, Congress adopted the Emergency Petroleum Allocation Act of 1973 (EPAA), which essentially removed price controls from the pump and instead applied them upstream into the wholesale domestic oil market.
>
> Indeed the gasoline lines and physical shortages disappeared, but the cap on profits from domestic oil production discouraged investment in new domestic supply, increased reliance on imported oil, and increased the upward pressure on world crude prices. The Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (EPCA) tightened the wholesale oil price controls established in the EPAA and exacerbated the economic dislocations associated with it.

Read the whole article. As Santayana urged, we need to *learn from history* and from the mistakes of other socialist countries, so that we do not repeat their mistakes.

Now on to the secular religion of global warming. Gateway Pundit completely destroys the idea that the earth is even warming:

> Arctic **sea ice growth** finished the year in 2008 at the same level as 1979.
> The **oceans have been cooling** since 2003.
> Sea ice is **growing at the fastest pace** on record.
> Greenland's **glaciers are stabilizing**.
> There are **growing fears** of a coming freeze worse than the ice age.
> **Alaskan Sea Glaciers are advancing** for the first time in 250 years.
> ***And,*** for the second straight year the Earth is, in fact, **cooling… not warming**.

I stole this graphic from his post as well:

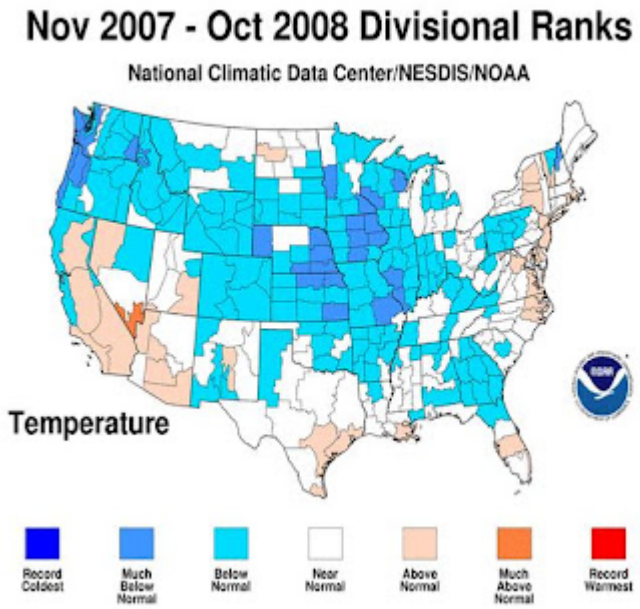

US Climate Map October 2007-November 2008

Warning! Now is a good time to stop reading, as I am about to become mean and snarky.

<snarky>So what we have here is a faith-based initiative introduced by Obama in order to appease his favored secular special interests groups, who substitute recycling for the rigorous demands of traditional, reality-based religion and morality. Do we really need a

religious nut in the White House catering to this crowd of anti-science fanatics? Should these dogmatic eco-fascist fundamentalists be influencing the policy of the most powerful nation on earth with their anti-reality delusions? Should we really be acting on the religious doctrines of non-scientists like Al Gore and his Big-Environmentalism-backed propaganda films, which are even now shown to our children in *public schools* as fact, fact, fact? What happened to the separation of church and state?</snarky>

For my Christian readers, Jay Richards of the Acton Institute did a great lecture on basic economics for Christians and another great lecture on what Christians should think about global warming.

Obama's plan to eliminate the right of workers not to join unions

March 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

According to John Boehner's blog, Obama wants to pass a piece of legislation called the "Employee Free Choice Act". EFCA would deny employees the choice to *not* surrender a significant portion of their wages to left-wing unions, for use in left-wing political activism, (e.g. – redefining traditional marriage in California).

The post by Kevin on Boehner's blog explains:

> Yesterday, President Obama promised union bosses that "We will pass the Employee Free Choice Act," referring to the mis-named official title of the bill popularly known as "card check." Unions came within a few votes of passing "card check" last Congress – and after giving $450 million to the Democratic Party this past election cycle, union bosses are cashing in on their investment by demanding the swift passage of the anti-worker "card check" bill.

Kevin also links to this *must-see* 6-minute video, produced by the pro-business Chamber of Commerce:

EFCA would cost American jobs because some companies would simply *shut down* work sites that use expensive unionized labor, rather than pay the additional costs for the same amount of production. They would just ship their plants and jobs *overseas*. A short policy paper from American Enterprise Institute is cited by Kevin makes the point:

> Card check should be seen for what it is: an attempt to rebuild the private-sector union movement by making it dramatically easier for unions to organize American workers. Adding card check to the already heavy burden of U.S. labor and employment law that companies face today will cost the U.S. economy additional jobs.

Allison Kasic of the Independent Women's Forum released this short research paper on EFCA last week. I think it is ironic that the party that loudly advocates for "making every vote count" and the right to "privacy" would pass a law that hurts voting rights and privacy rights. Allison explains:

> Since Congress enacted the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935, most workplaces have organized through secret ballot elections monitored by the National Labor Relations Board. Once organizers have collected signatures from at least 30 percent of workers expressing the desire to unionize, the union submits the information to the company and requests recognition. Companies can choose to recognize the union based solely on this card check, but more regularly request an election.
>
> **The privacy of the secret ballot system protects workers from strong-**

> **arm tactics by either the unions or the company in question before and after a vote. All of that would change under the EFCA. Elections would no longer be necessary. Instead, a union would be recognized once a majority of workers publicly signed a card supporting unionization. In fact, once a majority of cards have been signed, holding an election would be illegal.**

The Heritage Foundation has a slew of papers on EFCA here, including this recent short research paper by James Sherk, which has a lot more detail on EFCA.

Fred Thompson broadcasting in Bill O’Reilly’s old spot

March 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thompson was my pick in the 2008 primaries, since Jindal and Sanford weren’t running.

Story here.

> Former Tennessee senator and presidential candidate **Fred Thompson** will launch his nationwide radio talk show on March 2, opening with 125 stations, according to the Westwood One syndicate.
>
> The show will air from noon-2 p.m. Monday through Friday opposite Rush Limbaugh, though some stations may delay the broadcast to later in the day. The only Tennessee station signed up thus far is WWTN 99.7 FM in Nashville.
>
> Thompson gave up his role as the district attorney on television’s *Law & Order* in order to run for president.

This is a great move for Teh Fred, provided that the Broadcast Freedom Act passes. Kate at SDA notes that you can listen here. You can probably find more streaming stations here once he gets started in earnest.

(Source: Small Dead Animals)

William Lane Craig's March 2009 speaking engagements

March 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For some reason, Bill's March newsletter has not been posted on the RF web site yet. As one of his financial supporters, I get an early version of the newsletter e-mailed to me. So, I think I will share some of that early newsletter with you all.

> During March two events stand out as especially challenging: on March 16 at Westminster College in Missouri I have a dialogue on the kalam cosmological argument with Dr. Wes Morriston, a philosopher who has published several articles critical of the kalam argument. Then two days later I have a debate at Northwestern Missouri State with the self-described "internet infidel" Dr. Richard Carrier on the resurrection of Jesus.
>
> …I'll also be doing some teaching for Impact 360, a high school ministry, and will be speaking several times at the Christian Book Exposition in Dallas. I round out the month with a Veritas Forum at Florida State.

I already blogged about the panel discussion he is doing with Lee Strobel and Christopher Hitchens at the Christian Book Expo here. And here is a bit more on his recent speaking engagement at Columbia University in March:

> On the first evening I debated professor Shelly Kagan of Yale University on the question "Is God Necessary for Morality?" Actually, this was not a debate but a dialogue. After we each gave our opening statements, we had a very substantive discussion. Kagan has Christian colleagues at Yale, like Robert Adams and John Hare, who defend moral values and duties based in God, and I was struck by the respect with which he treated the view.
>
> He surprised me by not arguing for his own view of ethics, which is a radical consequentialism. He holds that if torturing a little girl to death would somehow result in greater overall good as a consequence, then that is what we should do! Instead he defended a social contract view of morality, according to which our moral duties are whatever rules perfectly rational people would agree to as a way of governing society. I responded that this makes morality a human convention, rather than objective.
>
> Kagan also affirmed in our dialogue that he is a physicalist and determinist. I charged that determinism strips our actions of any moral significance. We also disagreed over the importance of moral accountability. I claimed that the absence of moral accountability on atheism makes morality collide with self-interest and robs our choices of significance, but Kagan maintained that we don't need a sort of cosmic significance in order for our moral choices to be significant. All in all, we had an affable and substantive exchange which fairly presented the

> alternatives.
>
> One feature of our dialogue that pleased and surprised me was how clearly the Gospel emerged in the course of our conversation. Talking about moral values and accountability led naturally to the subject of our failure to fulfill our moral duties and how to deal with that. I was able to explain our need of God's forgiveness, moral cleansing, and rehabilitation.
>
> Kagan then asked me how Jesus fits into the picture. That gave me the chance to expound on Christ's atoning death and the fulfillment of God's justice in Christ's bearing the penalty for our sin. I was gratified that the Gospel could be shared so clearly and naturally with the students present.

I hope I will be able to purchase all 3 of these debates (Morriston, Carrier and Kagan) from the Biola Web Store later, as I love to lend these out to my non-Christian friends. I would encourage you to support the ministry of the most able public defender of Christianity operating today. Bill is the St. Paul of our day.

If you have not seen any of his debates, go here right now and listen to his debate with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong of Dartmouth College, on the problem of evil and suffering. The book version of that debate, (and another debate), was later published by Oxford University Press and you can purchase it here. This is a great book to put on your desk at work to show people that God is not a matter of blind faith.

In case you missed the previous updates, check out the details from Bill's Ontario speaking tour, his appearance on the Michael Coren TV show, and his Quebec speaking tour, as well.

Can atheists on the Richard Dawkins forum justify morality on atheism?

March 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this thread where I am debating atheists on whether moral rules, moral choices, moral accountability, human dignity, human rights, and ultimate significance of moral actions are rationally grounded on the atheist worldview.Warning, the thread contains swearing!

Here is the original starting post for the thread:

> I noticed that a tension between two positions taken by certain atheists. First, they say that morality is an illusion fobbed on us by our genes. Second, they say that the God of the Bible is immoral, or that the Christian church is immoral.
>
> I have a question about this, and maybe you can help me to understand the apparent contradiction. If moral behavior evolved over time, then it seems to me that it varies by time and place. This means that the standards we have today in the place where we live now are not really better or worse than at any other time and any other place. The evolved moral standards are just arbitrary conventions.
>
> If this is true, then in what sense can atheists consistently press the problem of evil, the immoral behavior of God, and the immorality of Christian church in history?
>
> Here is what I have come up with so far:
> 1. The atheist is expressing his personal preferences (I wouldn't do it that way)
> 2. The atheist is using the arbitrary standard of his time and place to judge God and the church (we in this time and place wouldn't do it that way)

Here is one of their comments, which I thought was about as good as an atheist can do on atheism:

> The morality we all appeal to when we make moral judgments is at least 90% the result of the social conditioning we have all received. Where that conditioning contains a strong religious component (most places throughout history), religious values will have a high place. In the modern West, the religious component is weaker, and we now condemn slavery, crusades, inquisitions, and wars between Catholics and Protestants, all of which were once firmly believed to be sanctified by God. (There is a whole thread on this subject just now under "Faith and Religion" above. So far only the person who started the thread and I have posted on it.)
>
> The other 10% consists of personal views arrived at by reflective people on the kind of world they'd like to live in. That portion of it is personal preference. It differs from a personal preference for chocolate over broccoli in only two ways: (1) Its object involves the behavior of other people and their interactions rather

> than that of the individual alone; (2) when two people have different preferences, they cannot both have their way, and so they are in conflict.

If you want to learn about these issues at a deeper level, there is also a good paper by Bill Craig on the problem of rationally-grounding prescriptive morality here. My previous posts on this blog on this topic are here and here. The first post is about whether atheists can use a made-up standard to judge God for his perceived moral failures, the second one is on whether meaningful morality is rational on atheism.

How do leading atheists understand morality on atheism?

March 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are descriptions of morality, as understood by atheists:

> The idea of political or legal obligation is clear enough… Similarly, the idea of an obligation higher than this, referred to as moral obligation, is clear enough, provided reference to some lawgiver higher…than those of the state is understood. In other words, our moral obligations can…be understood as those that are imposed by God…. But what if this higher-than-human lawgiver is no longer taken into account? Does the concept of moral obligation…still make sense? …The concept of moral obligation [is] unintelligible apart from the idea of God. The words remain but their meaning is gone. (Richard Taylor, Ethics, Faith, and Reason (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985), p. 83-84)

> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory. (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins) http://www.simonyi.ox.ac.uk/dawkins/WorldOfDawkins-archive/Dawkins/Work/Articles/1995-05-10nomercy.shtml

The late atheist philosopher J. L. Mackie said that moral properties are "queer" given naturalism "if there are objective values, they make the existence of a god more probable than it would have been without them. Thus we have a defensible argument from morality to the existence of a god." Agnostic Paul Draper observes, "A moral world is very probable on theism."

If you want to learn about these issues at a deeper level, there is also a good paper by Bill Craig on the problem of rationally-grounding prescriptive morality here. My previous

posts on this blog on this topic are here and here. The first one is about whether atheists can use a made-up standard to judge God for his perceived moral failures, the second one is on whether meaningful morality is rational on atheism.

How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others

March 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Basically, as a Christian, I think we, myself included, all ought to be able to show that there is a case for the resurrection on historical grounds. Even if Christians know that the resurrection is true by the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit, you cannot use that when persuading and defending it to other people. So you have to make a case using the available evidence and the normal rules of historical investigation. You can't assume the Bible is inerrant with your co-workers and you can't focus on Christian-ese or peripheral issues, either. So how can you do it?

Part A: Historical methods

The way I normally start is with the standard rules used by all scholars who analyze ancient biographies. Basically, there is a list of criteria that scholars across the spectrum use for deciding which parts of ancient literary sources are more likely to be true. It's amazing when you see debates on this because both sides basically agree on the methodology.

And, if you apply the methodology carefully, then both sides actually agree on what facts in the biographies are authentic. I am talking about agreement on authentic facts by atheists and fundamentalists alike!

Here are some of the rules used for analyzing ancient biographies:

1) multiple attestation – if the fact about X is asserted by two or more sources, then the fact is likely authentic.

2) dissimilarity – if a teaching of X is different from popular teachings and concepts of that time and place, it is likely authentic.

3) embarassment – if a fact is embarassing to X or X's community or the writers of the biography of X, then it is likely authentic.

4) enemy attestation – if a fact about X is corroborated by enemies of X, or X's community, then that fact is likely to be authentic.

5) early attestation – if a fact about X is in an early source, then that fact is likely to be authentic.

And there are others.

So, if you want to talk about the resurrection at work without being laughed at or fired, you can use these criteria to identify historical facts.

Part B: Minimal facts

Using the historical methods above, you won't be able to recover MOST of what the New Testament writings say about Jesus. For example, the guard at the tomb is only in Matthew, so you cannot use that as a minimal fact. And John is a pretty late gospel, so

most of that can't be used. So what parts can be used?

Well, here is William Lane Craig's list of facts:

1) the empty tomb
2) the appearances experienced by various people, including Paul
3) early belief in the resurrection emerged in Jerusalem

And, here is Gary Habermas' list of facts:

1) death by crucifixion
2) early belief in resurrection
3) appearances experienced by disciples
4) Paul's appearance and change of heart
5) James's (Jesus' brother) change of heart
6) the empty tomb

Probably the most celebrated defender of the resurrection writing today is N. T. Wright. He makes a bit of a different case where he asks what sort of historical occurrence would be adequate to explain the changes in theology and practice that occurred when 1st century Jews in Jerusalem became Christians. His argument is that the changes ("mutations") require a historical resurrection. Here is Wright's list:

1) the empty tomb
2) the appearances to various people
and 7 mutations (changes) in the way that early Christians changed
their views of the meaning and centrality of the Jewish doctrines of
the Messiah, resurrection, eschatology, etc.

You'll be surprised to know that few of these facts are disputed by atheistic historians like Gerd Ludemann, Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan. The only one that's sometimes disputed is the empty tomb, but some guys will give it to you. I just read N.T. Wright's debate against John Dominic Crossan, who is on the far-left fringe. He gave up the appearances AND said he was "OK" with the empty tomb.

So, once you apply the historical criteria, and you hammer out your list of facts, what comes next?

Part C: Inference to the best explanation

Once you have the list of facts, you need to explain why the hypothesis that God raised Jesus from the dead is the best explanation for the facts. This is done by showing that the hypothesis is consistent with all of the available data.

The atheist is likely to jump in at this point with an alternative explanation of the facts. Their explanations will not involve any miracles – instead, they try to account for the facts by proposing a naturalistic hypothesis. Here is a list of a few together with my defense against them.

1) Jesus wasn't really dead
– crucifixion is lethal and you can't fake being dead
– this doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection, since

a half-dead Jesus would not inspire a belief in the resurrection

2) Jesus' disciples moved the body and lied about it
– it doesn't explain the appearance to Paul, etc.
– it doesn't explain why the early church was willing to be persecuted

3) The Jews moved the body and lied about it
– they had no interest in helping a rival sect
– it doesn't explain the appearance to Paul, etc.

4) The Romans moved the body and lied about it
– they had no interest in helping a trouble-making sect
– it doesn't explain the appearance to Paul, etc.

5) Somebody else moved the body
– it doesn't explain the appearance to Paul, etc.
– there is no evidence to support the claim

6) The early church hallucinated the appearances
– group hallucinations are impossible
– it doesn't explain the empty tomb
– it doesn't explain the theological mutations about "resurrection", since seeing a ghost does not imply a bodily resurrection

Etc.

Keep in mind that when judging explanations, the simplest explanation is usually the best. If a skeptic has to join together multiple hypotheses, then this weakens the appeal of their explanation, because it's "ad-hoc".

I wrote another post on the resurrection here, with some links to debates. Here is a list of the virtually indisputable facts about Jesus, from *respected, skeptical, non-Christian scholars* like Norman Perrin and E. P. Sanders. More debates are here.

UPDATE: Welcome, visitors from Robert P. Murphy's blog Free Advice. Please take a look around – the purpose of my blog is to help Christians to integrate their faith with other areas of knowledge, especially *economics*! For those of you who don't know, Dr. Murphy is the author of the greatest book on economics ever written (and I've read The Road to Serfdom!). This is a book for *everyone* – and it's the *first* book laymen should read on economics.

How do atheist scholars justify morality on atheism in debates?

March 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I want to tell you that the easiest topic to debate with non-Christians is the foundations of morality. Here's a primer:

1. If atheism is true, matter is all there is. Your actions are biologically determined. So there is no free will. As Dawkins says, there is only DNA and you dance to its music. Period. If there is no free will, there are no moral choices and no moral responsibility. Moral actions are not rationally justifiable on atheism.
2. If atheism is true, humans are accidents with no intrinsic value. Any value that is assigned to humans is arbitrary, and arbitrary standards do not constrain the will of rational people when it is not in their best interest and/or they will not be caught (e.g. – Stalin).
3. If atheism is true, there is no ultimate accountability for moral evil. Being good or evil is irrelevant to where you end up, and where humanity ends up. (The heat death of the universe). Being good when it requires self-sacrifice is irrational, on atheism.
4. There are only 2 reasons to be moral on atheism. If you get pleasure out of following these made-up rules or if you avoid punishment. That is not what theists mean by virtue. Acting in the way you were designed to act in order to achieve what Aristotle called eudaimonia.
5. Etc.

Try absorbing some of these actual public debates with real scholars and see for yourself:

1. From Christianity Today, a written debate: Douglas Wilson vs. Christopher Hitchens
2. From the University of Western Ontario, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs. Kai Nielsen
3. From Schenectady College, a transcript of a public debate:William Lane Craig vs Richard Taylor
4. From Franklin & Marshall College, William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz (audio, video1, video2, video3, video4, video5, video6, video7)
5. From the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, William Lane Craig vs. Louise Antony (audio1, audio2, video1, video2)

These debate links are courtesy of ChristianJR4. Where's your blog, JR4? Come on, man! Get with it! If you other readers agree with me that he should start his own blog, then e-mail me or comment about it, and I will see that he is appropriately castigated for his slacking.

If you want to learn about these issues at a deeper level, there is also a good paper by Bill Craig on the problem of rationally-grounding prescriptive morality here. My previous

posts on this blog on this topic are here and here. The first one is about whether atheists can use a made-up standard to judge God for his perceived moral failures, the second one is on whether meaningful morality is rational on atheism.

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Truthbomb Apologetics! Thanks for posting about my blog, Chad! New visitors from Truthbomb may be interested in my posts in the apologetics category.

John Boehner calls for Congress to freeze spending at current levels

March 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

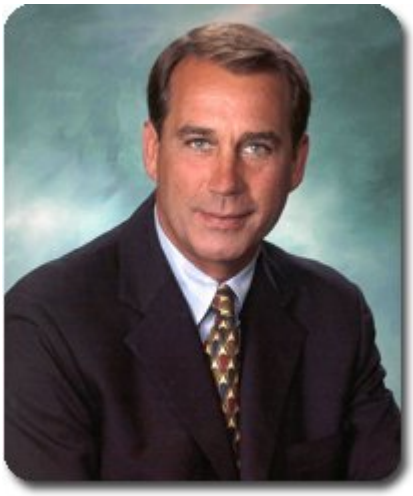

House Republican Leader John Boehner

House Republican Leader John Boehner calls for an immediate spending freeze at current levels. The freeze would cancel the 900 earmarks in the 410 billion dollar porkulus-2 omnibus bill. The video of his speech is below, and you need to watch it right now. Please.

Excerpt from John Boehner's speech on the floor of the House of Representatives:

> I know there are a lot of members that have a lot of other issues that they'd like to include in this, but the fact is that American families are hurting, small businesses are hurting around the country, our economy is hurting. And I think we could help our economy, we could send a strong signal to the American people by extending this spending freeze through September 30.
>
> "Let's show the American taxpayers that we get it. Let's show investors in our American economy that we get it. Because clearly the bill that's been under consideration both here in the House and now in the Senate has a $30 billion increase over last year's spending, and includes nearly 9,000 earmarks. And the way to put all of this to a stop is to just have a spending freeze. **Let's show the American people we understand the pain they are under and show them that we are willing to tighten our belt**.

Boehner was not content to give mere talk. He tried to force a vote on the freeze in order to get the Democrats to go on record on the 1.75 trillion dollar deficit they've introduced. The story is here, and includes this quote from the Associated Press:

> "The top Republican in the House is seizing on the latest spike in unemployment to call for a freeze on government spending and to urge President Barack Obama to veto a $410 billion spending bill."
>
> "Rep. John Boehner, R-Ohio, said the jump in unemployment to 8.1 percent and

> the loss of 651,000 jobs in February is a sign of a worsening recession that demands better solutions from both parties."
>
> "Boehner criticized the spending bill as chocked full of wasteful, pork-barrel projects. The Senate postponed a vote on the bill until Monday amid the criticism."
>
> "Boehner said he hoped Obama would veto the bill. He urged the president to work with House Republicans to impose a spending freeze until the end of this fiscal year."

Who gets it? The House Republicans get it.

UPDATE: Michelle Malkin is reporting (via Connie Hair of Human Events) that the motion failed 160-218, with every Republican present voting for it.

Al Gore refuses questions from reporters, refuses to debate skeptics

March 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Now, if you guys have been on the blog, you know that a majority of stories here are going to be presented as issues to resolve between two oppsing forces, especially when it comes to spiritual issues. And that is because I believe that no one can convinced, by anyone, on any issue, until they hear *both sides*. But that is not the case with Al Gore.

Gateway Pundit links to this story from KNX:

> Former Vice President Al Gore repeated his message that climate change is a planetary emergency at the WSJ's Eco:nomics conference in California. …But don't expect Mr. Gore to debate the merits of how best to tackle climate change anytime soon.
>
> …he was challenged by Mr. Lomborg, the Danish skeptical environmentalist who thinks the world would be better off spending more money on health and education issues than curbing carbon emissions.
>
> "I don't mean to corner you, or maybe I do mean to corner you, but would you be willing to have a debate with me on that point?" asked the polo-shirt wearing Dane.

So Al Gore refused to debate Bjorn Lomborg. Must-see video is here:

Larry Elder links to this Boston Globe article that re-caps Al Gore's impressive scientific credentials:

> Gore's undergraduate transcript from Harvard is riddled with C's, including a C-minus in introductory economics, a D in one science course, and a C-plus in another… Moreover, Gore's graduate school record – consistently glossed over by the press – is nothing short of shameful. In 1971, Gore enrolled in Vanderbilt Divinity School where, according to Bill Turque, author of "Inventing Al Gore," he received F's in five of the eight classes he took over the course of three semesters. Not surprisingly, Gore did not receive a degree from the divinity school. Nor did Gore graduate from Vanderbilt Law School, where he enrolled for a brief time and received his fair share of C's.

Heck, all we have on our skeptical side are people like Richard S. Lindzen:

> **Richard S. Lindzen** is the Alfred P. Sloan Professor of Meteorology in the Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Professor Lindzen received his Ph.D. from Harvard University, and he is a contributor to numerous scholarly volumes and the author of more than 200 articles in scientific journals. He is a member of the national Academy of Sciences and the Science and Economic Advisory Council of the

> Annapolis Center for Science-Based Public Policy.

And just look at the poor quality of his arguments. Al Gore could wipe the floor with Lindzen. Yeah. He really could.

UPDATE: Commenter ECM posted this link to a post on Watts Up With That? blog. Al Gore certainly seems to win a lot of awards, this one is for raising awareness about global warming. From the story: “Scripps Institution of Oceanography is awarding its first-even Roger Revelle Prize to former Vice President Al Gore… UCSD said Gore was selected for his efforts to raise awareness of global warming.”

TCF Bank returns TARP money, rejects government interference in business

March 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

On Michele Bachmann's blog, she has posted twice about banks that are returning TARP bailout money, rather than accept government control of their business. Michele voted against the TARP bill, which redistributed 700 billion dollars from the honest/productive sector of the economy to the irresponsible/fraudulent sector.

Here is an except from her first post:

> The Minneapolis Star Tribune reported yesterday that TFC Financial Corp. has joined Northern Trust and Iberiabank Corp. as financial institutions who are staying clear of the government's Troubled Asset Relief Program.
>
> The way TCF Chief Executive Bill Cooper views it:
>
> "I don't want to be part of the new regulatory regime that's growing up around TARP. Congress is now talking about putting their oar in the water on just about everything we do. That puts us at a competitive disadvantage."

A more recent post links to a Fox News story on TCF bank. According to the TCF Bank CEO, TCF never made any subprime loans, and therefore they do not need a bailout. Although they were going to take the money, they decided to return it, because they refused to yield their autonomy to the federal government.

Watch the 5-minute clip: (need I mention that Megyn Kelly does the interview?)

Now, for those of you who have read F.A. Hayek's "The Road to Serfdom", you know that all our liberties, including our precious freedom of religious expression, hangs on the separation between government and the means of production. If the government controls the means by which you earn your living, then the government controls *you*.

A summary of the Road to Serfdom is here.

Amendments to block coerced abortions and U.N. global taxes fail

March 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Senator James Inhofe

I found these stories on James Inhofe's blog. First, an amendment to the 410 billion dollar omnibus (son of porkulus) that would have prohibited US-taxpayer funds being used by the UN for coerced abortions has been voted down by the Democrats.

Inhofe's first statement reads:

> The amendment would have required that amounts appropriated for the United Nations Population Fund are not used by organizations that support coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization. I am strongly opposed to the use of taxpayer dollars for these purposes and for these organizations. Taxpayers should not be forced to subsidize abortion in the United States or abroad.

Second, another omnibus amendment to prevent US-taxpayer funds being used by the UN to implement global tax schemes has also failed.

Inhofe's second statement reads:

> My amendment to the FY'09 omnibus appropriations bill would have reinstated this important U.S. policy and ensured that officials at the U.N. and other international bureaucracies who receive generous funding from U.S. taxpayers do not pursue or implement policies of international taxes on U.S. taxpayers.

Well, I guess the Democrats think that the UN needs that money more than ordinary US taxpayers, anyway.

Obama’s cap-and-trade plan is a carbon tax that hurts consumers

March 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

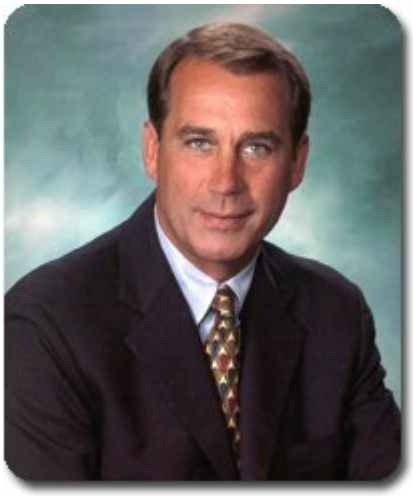

House Republican Leader John Boehner

John Boehner’s blog, notes that his concerns about Obama’s cap and trade bill are now being echoed in the mainstream media.

Investor’s Business Daily explains:

> Tax-challenged Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and White House Budget Director Peter Orszag went to Capitol Hill on Tuesday to defend a federal budget that assumes $650 billion in revenue from a cap-and-trade carbon emissions scheme…
>
> “The president’s budget increases taxes on every American, and does so during a recession,” pointed out Rep. Dave Camp, R-Mich., ranking member on Ways and Means. “And that means higher prices for Americans for food, for gas, for electricity, and in a state like Michigan for home heating — pretty much everything they buy.”
>
> This carbon tax will be paid by energy companies, manufacturers and public utilities and will be passed on to consumers. Camp’s Michigan gets 60% of its electricity from coal. But Obama’s plan has always been to make fossil fuels so expensive that boondoggles like wind and solar suddenly look competitive.

The article concludes:

> Obama’s cap-and-trade budget is a recipe for permanent recession. An analysis by the George C. Marshall Institute estimates GDP losses of as much as 3% in 2015 and as much as 10% in 2050 as a result of this measure.

The Detroit News reports that:

> President Barack Obama’s proposed cap-and-trade system on greenhouse gas

> emissions is a giant economic dagger aimed at the nation's heartland — particularly Michigan. It is a multibillion-dollar tax hike on everything that Michigan does, including making things, driving cars and burning coal.

Let me be clear. Obama intends to raise taxes on energy producers. These energy producers will pass these tax hikes onto consumers. If the prices rise too high, Obama may fix prices lower which would cause a shortage. A shortage would potentially cause gas lines and power rationing. If things get worse, it could lead to the nationalizing of the energy producing companies.

UPDATE: On John Lott's blog, he links to this Reuters story in which Hillary Clinton tells the European Parliament: "Never waste a good crisis … Don't waste it when it can have a very positive impact on climate change and energy security". This quotation echoes Rahm Emanuel: "Never Allow a Crisis to Go to Waste". This might explain why Democrats are so bold about having government take control of the free market.

Can God make a rock so big he can’t lift it?

March 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Over at Tough Questions Answered, I notice they are putting out a lot of quality work. But they also have some answers for beginners. I am going to be posting two of their beginner answers today, just to make sure we can all answer them. Here is the first question they answered: “Why can’t God make a rock so big he can’t lift it”

> This is a common question that is asked by those who misunderstand the nature of God’s omnipotence. Another humorous way of asking this question is: Can God make a sandwich so big he can’t eat it? (I owe that jewel to my friend Greg).

You’ll have to go over there for the answer, I’m not telling!

UPDATE: My answer is actually a little different than their answer. My answer would be that a rock that can’t be lifted is self-contradictory. All objects that have mass can be lifted, by definition. So what the questioner is really asking is something like this: “Can God make a married bachelor?” or “Can God make a round square?”. God’s power does not allow him to perform self-contradictory things. That is not a limit on his power – self-contradictory things are nonsense, and *no one* can do nonsense.

Did God create evil?

March 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Over at Tough Questions Answered, I found an answer to a question I get all the time:

> Now here is a question that many people struggle with. Here is how the argument generally goes:
>
> 1. God is the Author of everything.
> 2. Evil is something.
> 3. Therefore, God is the Author of evil.
>
> This is a valid syllogism, meaning that if premises 1 and 2 are correct, then the conclusion follows.
>
> Looking at premise 1, is God the author of everything? Well, if he isn't, then we don't have a sovereign creator, but that's what the Bible teaches. We can't reject this premise.
>
> Looking at premise 2, if we deny that evil exists, then we deny a basic truth about reality. There clearly is evil in the world and we all know it. To deny the existence of evil would be to deny a fundamental aspect of life.
>
> Are we stuck? Not exactly.

Well, go on over there and see what the answer is, I'm not going to tell you.

Captain Capitalism explains why friends don't let friends marry

March 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics?! NEENER NEENER NEENER!

This is pretty funny, especially because it's totally true.

Excerpt:

> The end came on a Saturday evening. It wasn't late. It wasn't too early and I called him up. I said, "Hey, John, let's go down to the Dubliner and get a beer."
>
> The Dubliner being an Irish joint literally 3 blocks from his house.
>
> Over the phone he said, "I don't know, it's Saturday night and I'm pretty busy."
>
> "Busy!?" I said, "What do you mean busy?! Come on, it's 3 blocks from your house, it'll take all of 30 minutes to have a beer. Let's go."
>
> "Hang on, let me ask my fiancé (he liked to call her his fiancé)"
>
> So in the background I hear his lower toned male voice mumbling, asking his beloved if he could go out and get a beer, "*Murmur murmur murmur murmur?*"
>
> And in return I heard her Beaker-esque (from the Muppets) high pitch voice respond;
>
> "Neener neener neener neneer neen?"
>
> Then I heard my friend say,
>
> "The Captain."
>
> And then in vehement response the girl saying;
>
> "THE CAPTAIN! NEENER NEENER NEENER NEENER NEENER NEEEEEEE!!!!"
>
> Soon he came back on the phone and said, "I'm sorry, we're hanging a pot rack tonight."
>
> I sat there thinking to myself, "Wooooooow. This guy is completely 100%

> castrated."
>
> I said, "Pot rack? A pot rack? Can you postpone the great hanging of the pot rack?"
>
> "No, we've been meaning to hang this for a while, and you know how long these projects take."

Read the whole thing, and remember 1 Corinthians 7. For Christian men, it's not beer that we would be giving up – it's Christian apologetics. Most Christian women I know think that apologetics is *divisive* and *exclusive.*

The doctrine of the Trinity is an asset, not a liability

March 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Over at Tough Questions Answered, I noticed that they posted this graphic of the Trinity:

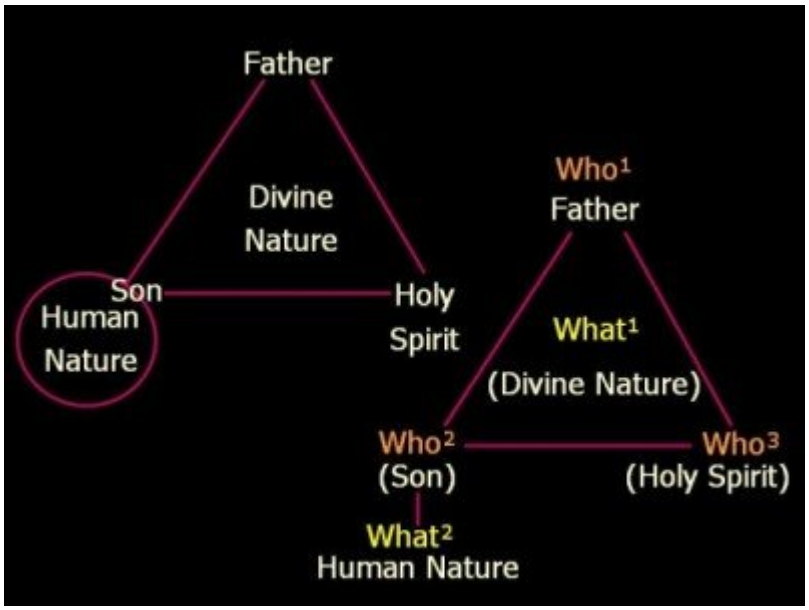

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity

This image is pretty good at conveying who is who and what is what. But you may be asking yourself: how the heck did those Christians come up with that doctrine? Did God come down and tell them that? Well, anything I say is probably going to be wrong or heretical, so let me just pass you over to Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason and you can get an accurate answer to that question.

Here is an excerpt that explains what he is trying to do in his answer:

> The particular question that came up was that my view, or the Christian view, of the Trinity is inconsistent with the Scripture. That was the objection. That's why John 20 was raised as a verse and a number of other verses were raised as contradicting the orthodox notion of the Trinity. In fact, it was questioned as whether such a thing could be an orthodox notion because Jesus Himself didn't teach it.
>
> Now it's clear that Jesus did not teach the Trinity as I would teach the Trinity because it's synthetic in that it's taking a number of different things and synthesizing them into a doctrine. But the synthesis is legitimate if each of those things is actually taught in the Scripture.

Remember, he is answering this question from a Christian perspective, so he is allowed to use the Bible, since Christians believe that it is at least a generally reliable record of Jesus' public ministry. This is the best short answer I've seen so far, from a first-class apologetics guru.

One criticism. Before I cite Bible verses in a debate, I always explain the rules that determine whether a verse is admissable. (I explained the rules as they apply to the

resurrection here). But Greg just cites the Bible as if it were inerrant. That would work on me, but it might not work on my atheist co-workers. A better way is to use only the verses that are early, multiply attested, and pass the other standard historical criteria.

Answering Richard Dawkins' question: "Who made God?"

March 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Apologetics 315! Thanks for the link Brian!

Atheists are very uncomfortable with the progress of science in the areas of cosmic origins and cosmological constants. On my friend's Rick Heller's blog, he responded to my article on the 6 scientific discoveries that led to the theory that the universe, including all matter, time and space, was created out of nothing.

Here is an excerpt from Rick's response:

> The traditional rebuttal to the First Cause argument is, who created God? That makes a nice point, but I don't find it entirely convincing, because it contains a complacent acceptance of an uncaused universe.
>
> I think we humans find ourselves unable to resolve the logical paradox–things don't come into existence without a cause, yet there is no explanation for the first cause. Neither the atheist nor theist views quite hang together.

Richard Dawkins asks a similar question in his book "The God Delusion". My friend Canbuhay got there first and posted the correct answer. Here is what he said:

> The First Cause argument is not simply about how the universe must have a cause because everything else we know about, does. Included in the argument is that whatever must have caused the universe must be unique. Why? Because if everything began at the Big Bang, including time, then whatever caused the Big Bang would have to be outside of time. It could literally have no beginning because there was no such thing as "before" or "beginning" when there was no time.
>
> The atheistic response that there had to be something that caused the causer of the Big Bang cannot adequately account for the time factor.
>
> Whereas, the theistic one can: the causer of the Big Bang is a Deity who lives outside of time.

I got there next and I posted this comment:

> There is no physical universe, and no time, causally prior to the Big Bang. That means that whatever causes the universe to exist is not in time, it is outside of time. It is eternal and exists necessarily. It does not "come into being" because that is a time-bound notion. It exists timelessly, and brings the entire universe into being.
>
> Now, you may well ask, "Wintery! What immaterial thing can bring an entire physical universe into being?". Well the only two non-physical realities that we

> are aquainted with are abstract objects, such as numbers, or *minds*. And that is what caused the universe. A big M I N D. Dawkins' objection of "who made God?" is thus defeated. The universe is contingent, the cause of the universe is not.

Yes, I stole "big M I N D" quote from J.P. Moreland. If you haven't read his book "Love Your God With All Your Mind", then you should. My friend Andrew affectionately calls JP's book LYGWYM ("lig-wim"). JP seems to be going soft lately, just like Ravi Zacharias, who hasn't written anything useful since "Can Man Live Without God?". Look how tough JP used to be.

If you don't like my answer to "Who made God?", check out Perry Marshall's answer. He recently debated on the origin of life. I like his ideas, because he is a software engineer, and not a squishyhead. Yes, I stole "squishyhead" from Henry F. Schaefer. Have you ever read his paper on the big bang and who made God? The video is here: part1, part2.

Michele Bachmann opposes Obama's plan to fund ESCR

March 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

UPDATE: For all the people that are searching for Michele Bachmann, this blog is FILLED with stories on Michele Bachmann!!! Here is a good summary of some of her best material. Here's her latest video.

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- MUST-READ: Michele Bachmann open to running for President in 2012!

Michele Bachmann on ESCR

Michele Bachmann is my favorite member of the House, and I've blogged about her before, here, here and here. Today, she shows that she is aware of the recent breakthroughs in stem cell research in her speech on the floor of the House. Do not miss this great video of the most conservative and articulate legislator in the House.

More videos of Michele Bachmann are here.

(H/T: The Maritime Sentry)

UPDATE: One of my other congressional favorites Mary Fallin had these comments on the ESCR intitiative:

> "**Every human being, no matter how small or how early in his or her**

> **development, has a right to life.** By allowing federal dollars to fund the destruction of human embryos, the Obama Administration is not only denying this essential truth, it is ordering taxpayers to foot the bill for research that many, including myself, find morally repugnant.
>
> "**I enthusiastically support adult and cord blood stem cell research, methods which show great promise and do not involve the destruction of human life.** It is a tragedy the new administration has further weakened protections of the unborn and ignored the science behind morally acceptable alternatives to embryonic stem cell research."

Notice how she echoes the SLED-test argument, and she understands the difference between ESCR and ASCR. That's what I like to see!

UPDATE 2: Michele Bachmann has an even better speech on the dangers of tinkering in the free market here! This one is a must see!

Connecticut Democrats introduce bill to re-organize Catholic church hierarchy

March 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yes, it's fascism – the deliberate intrusion of the state to impose their worldview and values onto people with different, individual worldviews and values. You see, the state's religious and moral views are more important than those of individuals. Any organization that teaches different values needs to be taken over by the state – it's the progressive way.

Gateway Pundit cites this post from The Corner:

> The [Democrat]-controlled Judiciary Committee has introduced **Raised Bill 1098**, a bill aimed specifically at the Catholic Church, which **would remove the authority of the bishop and pastor over individual parishes and put a board of laymen in their place.**

Hot Air notes that the government cannot legislate against religious organizations with *voluntary membership*. It is illegal:

> According to the First Amendment and the Establishment Clause, the government has no business dictating to religious organizations how they should structure themselves.

Hot Air goes on to explain what the effects of the bill would be:

> In other words, bishops would no longer have power over the actions of the parishes. That's the Connecticut legislature's vision of Roman Catholicism, but in America, government doesn't get to structure religious organizations to suit itself. That, in fact, is a form of fascism that we routinely decry in other countries. The State Department objects to China's insistence on picking Catholic bishops itself to suit their political oppression of religion, and Lawlor's motion would find a welcome in Beijing as another means to the same end: state control of Catholicism.

So many people toss around the word fascism without understanding what it means. Having the state control churches is fascism.

RedState.com notes that Connecticut's own Constitution forbids single out any one sect or denomination in legislation.

> Before we go any further, let me quote from Article Seventh of the Connecticut state constitution: *"It being the right of all men to worship the Supreme Being, the Great Creator and Preserver of the Universe, and to render that worship in a mode consistent with the dictates of their consciences, no person shall by law be compelled to join or support, nor be classed or associated with, any*

> *congregation, church or religious association.* ***No preference shall be given by law to any religious society or denomination in the state****.* ***Each shall have and enjoy the same and equal powers, rights and privileges,*** *and may support and maintain the ministers or teachers of its society or denomination, and may build and repair houses for public worship."*

LifeSiteNews has an article explaining that this bill is an attempt to pay Catholics back for supporting traditional marriage as the best environment for children. The Maritime Sentry agrees. The left-wing northeastern states have been very hostile to Catholicism lately, even going so far as to effectively ban Catholic adoption agencies for failure to comply with politically correct dogma.

A majority of the Catholic voters voted for Democrats in 2008. They voted 54% to 45% in favor of Barack Obama. What I would like my Catholic readers to explain to me is – *Why? How?*

UPDATE: I just saw this post over at Deborah Gyapong: Catholic hospitals must perform abortions or be shut down.

UPDATE 2: Nice Deb has ways to take action here.

UPDATE 3: Welcome visitors from the Anchoress! Thanks for the link. More religious liberty here (conscience rule for abortion dissenters) and here (fairness doctrine would affect religious radio broadcasts) and here (stimulus bill discriminates against religious schools). Bonus: free speech in Canada.

Debt and the return of real men?

March 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Captain Capitalism posted this rant which is an excellent, although very snarky, read. He starts with the fictitious case of Cindi, a suburban princess whose every need was provided for by her hard-working Daddy. But Daddy had to take on enormous amounts of debt in order to buy Cindi everything her heart desired.

> Much like debt misled suburbanite Cindi to think free Audi's, nightly dinners at Applebee's, free food clothing and shelter, and avoiding any real career that requires math was "standard," the amount of debt the government and economy as a whole has taken on has brainwashed nearly 3 generations of Americans to be similarly overly optimistic as to just how easy their lives should be. Debt has allowed pretty much every American to live above their means of support. Debt has allowed pretty much every American to live a life that does not produce the wealth necessary to support it. If you can't afford a car, take it out of your home equity line. You don't like math or science? That's alright, piss away some of your dad's money majoring in political science. Don't have a down payment for a house? Don't worry about it, we'll loan you 100% of the money anyway. But the problem is not just the obvious unsustainability of this behavior, but even worse is how it corrupts and destroys society's ability to live in the real world.

And where has this avoidance of math and science, normalization of debt and instant gratification led us?

> You think the divorce rate in this country isn't due to people being spoiled rotten brats and thinking marriage is some kind of trial balloon?
>
> You think the childish and [very bad] behavior of people having "kids" and then dumping them off at daycare to have somebody else raise them because the kid was too much of a burden for them to handle, but they still wanted them anyway would have flown during the frugal 40's?
>
> Would teenage pregnancy even exist if the government wouldn't perpetually bail these losers out because the government can perpetually "rollover" its debts and borrow more to finance a litany of social programs?
>
> Would you have such a volume of frivolous lawsuits and parasitic lawyers in this country driving up the cost of doing business and destroying the standards of living?
>
> Would you have seemingly endless legions of "environmentalists"… who have no real talents or skills, but find themselves pointless, effortless, made-up crusades to give their meaningless lives meaning at the expense of our freedoms and $3 per gallon gas?

He goes on to argue that the worsening economy will be a boon to real men. The decline

of government revenues will reduce the availability of social programs to “solve” social problems that result from poor decision making. (And by poor I mean lacking wisdom, lacking respect for the moral law).

> When Jimmy gets Cindi pregnant at 15 and the government is out of money, there will be two real men (the father of Jimmy and the father of Cindi) with shotguns and baseball bats ensuring Jimmy gets a job, goes to school and marries Cindi, not for Cindi’s sake, but for the child’s sake.
>
> When somebody breaks into the house and the cops are too understaffed dealing with the crime wave that happened once the state released all those prisoners to “save money,” he’ll be the one shooting the burglar to protect himself and his family.
>
> When a woman wants to get married and have children, the real man will wait until he’s financially stable, the country has a future, and make sure he is able to provide the kid a decent upbringing ALL THE WHILE MAKING SURE HE DOESN”T GET DIVORCED.

I am worried that the rising tax rates and inflation will cause men to withdraw *irreversibly* from any enterprising behavior. Big government may help people to feel more secure about making poor decisions. But responsible men fear higher taxes and punitive divorce courts… they are less likely to work hard and to marry.

Real men are just not in demand so long as marxist-feminist welfare state is there to provide everything that real men used to be sought after for. And the big appeal of the state is that it doesn’t ask for anything in return from its dependents. But why should real men work to pay for social programs to fix the problems of other people?

One of my best friends, Andrew, got married to a fabulous Christian woman who spent time as a missionary in Russia. Men are in a terrible state in Russia – there are few real men. Her experience in Eastern Europe really helped her to understand how important the right man is for the responsibilities of marriage and parenting.

She chose to marry someone who would not only care for and provide for her, but who also understood Christian beliefs and would be able to pass them on to her children in an informed and persuasive way. But today, there is no vision for men as husbands or fathers, nor any vision of marriage as a worldview-incubator for children.

Michele Bachmann and Marsha Blackburn defend free market capitalism

March 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Videos of Michele and Marsha defending capitalism

Here's Michele Bachmann, on the floor of Congress, explaining economics and defending free market capitalism. She touches on many important topics: intentions versus incentives, learning from past economic failures, American exceptionalism, economic growth, private ownership of property, the rule of law, private contracts, tax law, the law of unintended consequences and the "forgotten man".

Well, if we're going down as a nation, it won't be because no one understood what was happening. Michele knows – because she is a *trained tax lawyer* and she understands economics and business – she and her husband Markus *own a small business*. They have

5 children and 23 foster children, so they know enough not to saddle the next generation of Americans with debt. *Life experience matters.*

And then there is another "M.B." in the house, Marsha Blackburn.

Representative Marsha Blackburn

Marsha Blackburn also voted against porkulus 1 and porkulus 2, and the cramdown bill:

> Congressman Marsha Blackburn (TN-7) today voted against passage of H.R. 1106, a housing bill that will allow bankruptcy judges to "cramdown" the principle on a mortgage, change the interest rate, or extend the life of the loan. The consequence of this legislation for new homebuyers and homeowners who have lived within their means is dire. As banks attempt to absorb the cost of crammed down mortgages, they will be forced to raise fees, increase down payment requirements, and increase interest rates for potential home buyers.
>
> **"This is yet another bailout for bad actors. It rewards those that gamed the system or knowingly lived beyond their means at the expense of responsible taxpayers. I would have been more comfortable with a bill that helped those who legitimately fell on hard times and excluded unscrupulous borrowers and lenders."** Blackburn said.
>
> **"Some of my colleagues claim that this program is cost-free. It isn't. Struggling banks, who are at the core of our economic problems, will be forced to rebuild their bottom line somehow in order to remain solvent. That cost will be paid for by the first time home buyer who will now have a much harder time getting a mortgage as banks insure themselves against risky loans. It will be paid for by responsible home owners who will watch their bank fees increase as bankruptcy judges cram down home values in their neighborhood."**
>
> Congressman Blackburn supported proposed Republican changes to the bill that would have prohibited taxpayer assistance to any borrower that misrepresented

> or lied about their income on a mortgage or to any lender that failed to follow proper underwriting standards.

Mary Fallin and Sue Myrick, two of my other favorite representatives, also voted against all 3 of these socialist bills. Not only are these 4 representatives fiscal conservatives, but they are also pro-life.

You might remember that Sue was the one who wanted to revoke Jimmy Carter's passport when he met with Hamas.

UPDATE: More Michele Bachmann here and here. She is also Mrs November in a new 2010 calendar. A full list of all of my many posts on Michele Bachmann is here.

Obama’s first 50 days: worst president ever

March 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Oh, there’s no doubt that he’s the *worst president ever*. Gateway Pundit has the re-cap, in point form.

Excerpt:

> ** He’s lost at least 3 administration nominees due to tax fraud.
>
> ** He’s promoted a tax cheat to run the IRS and Treasury.
>
> ** The Dow has dropped faster under Obama than any other new president in 90 years.
>
> ** Obama’s budget **more than doubles the national debt** held by the public, and adds more to the debt than all previous presidents — from George Washington to George W. Bush — combined.
>
> ** Obama managed to **spend more than** the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.
>
> ** Obama will **quadruple the deficit** this year.
>
> ** Cap & trade was introduced that will cost America **4 million jobs** and cost Americans at least **$700 per family per year**.

That’s just about some of the spending and the socialism. Click here to see more about his energy policy, foreign policy, social policy, trade policy. *We’re doomed*. *We’ve elected an unqualified socialist who does not understand anything about how the world works, on any level.*

Also, Gateway Pundit reports here that Obama wants to sign a trade deal with communist Cuba after rejecting a trade deal with our capitalist, pro-American ally Colombia recently. Meanwhile, Canada has a free trade deal signed with Colombia already.

How redistribution of wealth kills the entrepreneurial spirit

March 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There is a perception, especially on the left, but also on the "big government" right, that the federal government should be responsible for redressing every inequality that occurs in society. This is true whether the person brings misfortune on themselves or whether it is accidental. The problem with this wealth redistribution is revealed when you think about the incentives this introduces to the producers and the victims.

1. Government does not transfer wisdom, skill or responsibility from producers to victims
2. Government transfers *money* from producers to victims
3. Being productive involves risk and hard work on the part of producers
4. Receiving money involves ingratitude and rationalization on the part of victims
5. If the government confiscates a large enough portion of the earnings of the producers, they *stop producing*
6. Every dollar taken from producers is a dollar less they have for engaging in their productive plans, (e.g. – running a business or raising a family in a responsible way)
7. The more money is that transferred to victims, the more the frequency of bad behavior *increases* – because being a victim is *easier*
8. If you subsidize being a victim, you get more of it
9. If you tax production, you get less of it

"Going Galt" is named after the character John Galt in Ayn Rand's novel Atlas Shrugs. Galt is an industrialist who withdraws from the economy when faced by punitive tax rates and burdensome regulations. Going Galt refers to slowing down or ceasing production, because the risks and effort involved in producing are not worth the portion of the earnings that producers keep after taxes are redistributed to the victims.

The idea was first brought up afresh by Dr. Helen Reynolds in October 2008 on her blog Ask Dr. Helen. A more recent discussion of the phenomenon is here at the Washington Independent web site.

Excerpt:

> "Just this weekend," said Rep. John Campbell (R-Calif.) on Wednesday in an interview with TWI, "I had a guy come up to me in my district and tell me that he was losing his interest in the business he'd run for years because the president wanted to punish him for his success. I think people are reading 'Atlas Shrugged' again because they're trying to understand what happens to people of accomplishment, and people of talent and energy, when a government turns against them. That's what appears to be happening right now."
>
> The plot of Rand's novel is simple, despite its length — 1,088 pages in the

> current paperback edition. The United States is governed by bureaucrats, "looters" and "moochers," who penalize and demonize creative people. The country is in decline because creative people are disappearing — they have followed the innovative John Galt to a mountain enclave, "Galt's Gulch," where they watch society crumble. Creativity has gone on strike (the working title of the novel was "The Strike"), and the engine of capitalism cannot run without it.
>
> For Campbell, this is a powerful and relevant story. The congressman calls "Atlas Shrugged" an "instruction manual," and inscribes the copies that he gives to interns. Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), the ranking member of the House Budget Committee, also gives copies of the novel as gifts and refers to it to make the case against President Obama's policies. "It's an audacious scheme," said Ryan in his speech to the Conservative Political Action Conference last week. "Set off a series of regulatory blunders and congressional meddling, blame the free market for the financial crisis that follows — then use this excuse to impose a more intrusive state. Sounds like something right out of an Ayn Rand novel."

Michelle Malkin is posting a lot of messages on her blog from people who are suggesting other ways to Go Galt.

Excerpt from one of the producer's letters:

> *It is now fashionable and politically expedient to extend blame for the current financial crisis on greedy businesses and predatory lenders. The reality is that individuals and poorly managed businesses were responsible for the bulk of the problems. Government also played a role – and it was both parties – that encouraged and supported unsound business practices. Now the Government "must" step in to "save" these poor people from losing their homes, and "save" these "too big to fail" financial institutions. What about those of us, and those businesses, that chose to act responsibly? Who chose to live within their means? Who chose sound financial decisions over high risk behavior?*
>
> *Enough is Enough. Let them all fail. It is not too late. I don't care about the homeowner that borrowed more than they could afford and now find themselves potentially without a home and bankrupt. I don't care about the businesses that overlooked sound financial decisions in the name of short term profits. We all make choices in life and it is time to let those that made the bad choices live with their decisions and finally reward those that chose to act responsibly. It has come down to this – either we let those that made the bad decisions fail, or we end up sacrificing our nation, our national identity and our very way of life.*

Related posts.

China cuts sales tax on cars and auto sales shoot up 25 percent

March 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the details of China's sales tax cuts on new vehicle sales from Time Magazine:

> On Jan. 20, **the Beijing government slashed the sales tax on cars with engines of up to 1.6 liters from 10% to 5%.** The measure, designed to get Chinese to buy smaller, more fuel-efficient vehicles, has had an immediate impact. **January sales of small cars jumped 19% compared with the previous month**, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. Also boosting buyer interest: Lower road taxes and fuel prices, which are set by the government.

> …The surge in small-car sales helped China pass a milestone. **For the first time ever, more cars were sold in China (735,000 vehicles) in a month than were sold in the U.S. (657,000)**. In January at least, China was the world's largest car market. "The tax reduction was an obvious help to our sales," says a sales manager surnamed Feng at the biggest Hyundai dealer in Beijing. "**Since the new policy started, sales of our three models with 1.6 liter engines or below have gone up by 30% compared to the same period last year.**"

> …**China's stimulus plans "could have an enormous difference in whether or not people want to buy cars,"** says Ben Simpfendorfer, chief China economist for the Royal Bank of Scotland. "What's unusual about this cycle is that China faces the same problems as everywhere else in the world. The big question is how to spur consumer spending. Strong auto sales will help China, just like they'll help America or Europe."

And it works the same way for jobs! If you want to create jobs, what should you do? Should you waste 1.5 trillion dollars of money stolen from the private sector in order to expand government, pay off special interests, fund pork projects and thousands wasteful earmarks? Of course not! What you need to do is what China did. They made cars go on sale. We need to make *employees* go on sale. How?

The answer is to do what the Arnold Kling of the Cato Institute says and temporarily cut the employer portion of payroll taxes. This means that employers get all of the productive capacity of new employees hired within the United States, but the cost of hiring new employees is *reduced.* All the productivity at a much cheaper cost. Total cost of this stimulus plan: 230 billion dollars!

This plan is actually from Harvard economics professor Greg Mankiw, who describes it more fully here, but couples it with off-setting gas tax hikes.

> I would institute an immediate and permanent reduction in the payroll tax,

> financed by a gradual, permanent, and substantial increase in the gasoline tax. I would make the two tax changes equal in present value, so while the package results in a short-run budget deficit, there is no long-term budget impact. Call it the create-jobs, save-the-environment, reduce-traffic-congestion, budget-neutral tax shift.

But who cares what Harvard economists think? The tax-cheat says that you can fix the economy by raising taxes on companies that actually hire people:

> The Treasury chief today also defended the carbon emissions cap-and-trade proposals in the plan, saying the policy would raise hundreds of billions of dollars and help the country achieve energy independence. "It is critically important for our country that we begin the process now of changing the incentives Americans face for how they use energy," he said. "It's important to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, it is critical for climate change."

Who cares if consumers have to pay more for oil and gas in a recession? We need to think of the *trees* and *whales!* Won't someone please think of the *sea-kittens?*

Don Surber summarizes the problem:

> That's a good bailout because it allows people to spend their own money to buy cars instead of forcing them to pay for not buying cars.
>
> …50 years ago, President Eisenhower dreamed of the day when China would abandon communism in favor of capitalism.
>
> That dream is coming true.
>
> **Little did he know that we would be doing the reverse.**

And here is Monica Crowley's take:

> China cut taxes, and auto sales spiked.
>
> China cut taxes, and a part of its economy started to boom.
>
> Cutting taxes equals economic growth.
>
> The Chinese Commies get it.
>
> …Still waiting for the American Democrats to get it.

Tax cuts = Jobs. Jobs = economic recovery. Why is it that we are disregarding capitalist recommendations from former communist countries like Russia and China? Why is it that we insist on angering the world with our socialist policies? Why is that we are going out of our way to impose new taxes on products that consumers rely on? We can't afford this much spending no matter how much we tax the rich.

Greg Koukl expains the right way to handle an angry, aggressive atheist

March 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Greg Koukl is one of the scholars who got me started in apologetics. I can still remember, (and I know my old friends Andrew, Kerry, and Jose can, too!), over 10 years ago, when we used to sit around in my basement listening to Greg Koukl's radio show over the internet. At the time, streaming audio was quite new. Well, he taught us all how to be ambassadors for Christ. (See 2 Cor 5:9-21)

I got his recent "Solid Ground" newsletter (free registration required), for January/February 2009, and the topic was on dealing with angry, aggressive atheists. This is a topic of real value for me. Not only do I have to face these belligerent atheists in my office (Yes, Gerry, I mean you!), but I also face them online at the Richard Dawkins forum, and face to face in my own family and friends!

Let's start with the question "what is a steamroller?":

> The defining characteristic of a "steamroller" is that he constantly interrupts, rolling over you with the force of his personality. Steamrollers are not usually interested in answers. They are interested in winning through intimidation.

Greg breaks down the techniques for handling steamrollers in 3 steps.

Step 1: Stop Him.

> Your first move when you find yourself in a conversation with a steamroller is a genial request for courtesy. Momentarily put the discussion on "pause." Ask to continue making your point uninterrupted.

One of the ways you can do that is using body language. You can raise your hand in the stop motion to emphasize your verbal attempt to pause the conversation so that you can finish responding. Ask for a specific amount of time to make your point, and make sure that you him to agree that you will get that time to respond! But the most important thing is to *not lose your temper.*

> Be careful not to let annoyance or hostility creep into your voice. That would be a mistake, especially with this kind of person. Don't let a steamroller get under your skin. Being defensive and belligerent always looks weak. Instead, stay focused on the issues, not on the attitude. Talk calmly and try to look confident.
>
> …don't take unfair advantage of the time you buy with this little negotiation. Make your point, then ask, "Does that make sense to you?" This invites him back into the conversation. Give him the courtesy of offering you a reply without interruption.

I hear J.P. Moreland saying "Does that make sense to you?" all the time in his lectures,

and now I've started doing it too! And so should you! But what if "stopping him" doesn't work? Then we go on to step 2.

Step 2: Shame Him.

Suppose the steamroller interrupts you again during your negotiation response time. You want to gently draw attention to the fact that he is being rude and intimidating in the conversation. Again, the goal is not to show the slightest discomfort, but always to act with confidence.

Phase two of the Steamroller tactic is to shame him for his bad manners while maintaining your integrity. Stay on topic and don't follow any "rabbit trails" he may voice.

That point about not taking on any new questions until you finish answering the first one is vital. You see this all the time on the Richard Dawkins forum. Every time you make a point about the progress of science, they start complaining about how cruel God is. (Note that atheists can't even judge God without assuming an absolute moral standard, which only a designer of the universe can ground!)

Below is example of how to do step 2:

> "Can I ask you a quick question? Do you really want a response from me? At first I thought you did, but when you continue to interrupt I get the impression all you want is an audience. If so, just let me know and I'll listen. But if you want an answer, you'll have to give me time to respond. Tell me what you want. I need to know before I can continue." Wait for an answer.

Part of becoming a good ambassador is knowing how to guage your opponent, and how much force you should use. Practice, practice! But suppose even step 2 doesn't work. What should we do now?

Step 3: Leave Him.

The most difficult thing to do is to break off a defense, especially when there are people around listening in or even participating. Usually you do this when the person is moving the wrong way on the aggression scale. Greg cites a number of Bible verses to show that the Bible does support this kind of strategic withdrawal from an engagement that is going the wrong way.

Conclusion

The article concludes with some very useful points. First, you don't have to win every debate. Just make your point and then let the Holy Spirit handle it from there. It is a mistake to think that you can change people's minds just by talking to them at more and more. Mind changing usually happens much later, as the person weights both sides of the issues. So don't rush, and remember, God values free will.

Second, always give an aggressive challenger the last word. This is the policy on my blog, where I get *one* rebuttal to a commenter, and then they get the last word. So far, I haven't had to violate this in 5 weeks of blogging.

And let me just reiterate – do not lose your cool. A lot of arguing relates to your attitude

under fire, especially for beginners who judge debates not on the evidence, but on appearances. You need to spend time studying in advance in order to get this confidence, *and I do mean studying both sides in debates.* Under fire, the confidence you've gained through study, especially the study of debates, is more effective than your words.

Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life

March 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have blogged before about the problems atheist have in accounting for the origin of the simplest living, self-replicating organism. The problem is that a significant amount of biological information is required to provide minimum biological functionality. More importantly, that sequence of biological information, which is *identical to software code* must come together all at once. It cannot be built up step by step.

Now watch this 2 minute clip from the recent movie "Expelled". This is worth the price of the whole movie! The arch-atheist is interviewed by Ben Stein about the problem of the origin of the first replicating organism, which cannot have arisen by Darwinian means, such as mutation and selection.

Wow, that was painful. I almost felt bad for Dawkins. Here he is explaining the origin of life based on unobservable aliens that he just knows, deep down in his knower, evolved by Darwinian means. How does he know that these unobservable aliens evolved? He couldn't have observed them evolving, and he can't even observe them now. I guess he is willing to make that leap of faith.

But commenter ECM sent me something even funnier. Dawkins is now refusing to use the word "design" in his public lectures. Maybe, if everyone stops using that nasty, nasty word, then the whole idea that nature is the product of a Creator and Designer will *just go away*! Yes! If we rule out design *a priori*, then William Dembski and Jonathan Wells and the rest will just go home and leave the public schools to the Darwinists!

Here's the link. Funny stuff.

To see Dawkins debate John Lennox on "The God Delusion", click here. Answering Dawkins' schoolyard objection "Who Made God?". A debate on the origin of life. Atheist views on morality. Actual debates that discuss morality on atheism.

France, Germany and Italy warn G20 nations against Obammunism

March 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was browsing over at the Anchoress and I found some very interesting links in her link-filled post here. She runs a blog that features a mix of Catholic-oriented reflections and a conservative perspective on the news of the day.

Here's the part of her post that caught my attention:

> **Not good:** First Putin told him not to, now France and Germany. Boy, didn't the left HATE when Bush was this stubborn and set on his own way? And he didn't listen to other countries? I seem to remember the left really, really hating that. About Bush. They hated these things too. When Bush did them.

Here is the warning from France and Germany from the Financial Times, via American Thinker:

> Disagreements between the European Union and the US over how to combat the global recession widened on Tuesday as EU governments made clear they had little appetite for piling up more debt to fight the collapse in output and jobs.
>
> Finance ministers from the 27-nation bloc insisted in Brussels that it was doing enough to support world demand and did not need at present to adopt another fiscal stimulus plan, as Washington is urging.
>
> The US-European differences are casting a shadow over next month's summit in London of leaders from the G20 group of advanced and emerging economies, an event to be attended by Barack Obama on his first visit to Europe as US president.

It's true that France, Germany and Italy have *all* elected *conservative* leaders recently, (along with Japan, Canada, the Czech Republic and Mexico). I thought that these European socialist countries were to the left of the USA. Are we now to the left of *France, Germany and Italy?*

You might remember that I posted recently about former-communist Russia warning Obama about the dangers of socialism. Former-communist China also warned Obama to stimulate the economy with tax cuts, not spending. Instead, Obama raised taxes and spent trillions.

Canada, Japan and Mexico also elected conservatives governments. Why can't we be more like them? Why do we have to embrace Obama's unilateral, cowboy-communism? Why must Obama anger the world with unpopular economic policies that fail the "global test"? Why does Obama make the world hate us?

Why Obama's big government socialism leads to secularism

March 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been browsing on a few forums, including forums that discuss Christian apologetics. Imagine my surprise when I encountered pro-Obama, pro-socialism statements by people who are supposed to be informed about these issues.

Well, I found an article over at Mercator Net, (an Australian web site), which might be useful for Christians who are sympathetic with Obama's pacifism, redistribution of wealth and creeping fascism. I want to argue that his policies are inconsistent with Christianity.

First of all, the article notes that Obama did gain a significant number of votes from religious Christians.

> In 2008, according to CNN exit polls, Obama won forty-three percent of the presidential vote among voters who attend religious services once a week or more, up from Senator John Kerry's thirty-nine percent in 2004. Obama did especially well with Black and Latino believers. But he also made real inroads among traditional white Catholics, according to a recent article by John Green in *First Things*.

The article describes Obama's spending, (which I discussed here), and then comments on the significance of that spending for religious institutions, like churches and charities.

> To fund his bold efforts to revive the American economy and expand the welfare state, Obama is proposing to spend a staggering $3.6 trillion in the 2010 fiscal year. Obama's revolutionary agenda would push federal, state, and local spending to approximately 40 percent of Gross Domestic Product, up from about 33 percent in 2000. It would also put the size of government in the United States within reach of Europe, where government spending currently makes up 46 percent of GDP.
>
> Why is this significant for the vitality of religion in America? A recent study of 33 countries around the world by Anthony Gill and Erik Lundsgaarde, political scientists at the University of Washington, indicates that there is an inverse relationship between state welfare spending and religiosity. Specifically, they found that countries with larger welfare states had markedly lower levels of religious attendance, had higher rates of citizens indicating no religious affiliation whatsoever, and their people took less comfort in religion in general. In their words, "Countries with higher levels of per capita welfare have a proclivity for less religious participation and tend to have higher percentages of non-religious individuals."

The article goes on to explain the chain of casusation from big government to

secularization. Read the whole thing.

But this should be no surprise when you recall Nobel prize winning economist F. A. Hayek's thesis in his landmark book "The Road to Serfdom". His thesis is that the natural endpoint to all systems of government that control the means of production is fascism.

Fascism is a left-wing ideology, in which the state substitutes its own values, meanings and purposes for the values, meanings and purposes of individuals. There is no such thing as fascism on the right, because people on the right are free market capitalists who prefer small government and individual liberty.

To see how fascism destroys individual liberty and freedom of conscience, consider:

- Obama's plan to force hospital workers to perform abortions against their conscience
- Obama's forcing of taxpayers to pay for abortions here and abroad against their conscience
- Obama's forcing of taxpayers to pay for embryonic stem cell research against their conscience
- Obama's forcing of students to attend government run schools instead of private schools of their choice
- Obama's discrimination against religious schools in his spendulus bill
- Obama's plan to force some workers to join unions against their will and fun left-wing union political activism against their will
- Obama's forcing individuals to let Washington run their health-care

I could go on. And on. And on and on and on. But the point is that electing a socialist put us on the road to fascism. As IBD notes, socialists want to force-feed (podcast audio) their worldview onto an unwilling populace by any means – from government-run schools to news media.

I think that Christians need to do a much better job of understanding how our religious liberty hangs on small government and the free market. And remember: this crisis that Obama is "fixing": it's the Democrats who caused it, while Republicans tried to stop it.

William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate LIVE FEED

March 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: My play-by-play transcript of the April 4, 2009 debate at Biola is here.

Got this in e-mail from Biola University, regarding the upcoming William Lane Craig vs Christoper Hitchens debate.

> YOU MUST ACT FAST—to set up a viewing site for your church, Bible study, family, or neighborhood! Debate takes place on Saturday, April 4.
>
> The "Does God Exist" Debate is almost completely sold out at Biola University . Nearly 4,000 people will be seeing it live. But the demand is tremendous from all over the world to view this debate as it happens between one of the finest Christian philosophers alive today, Dr. William Lane Craig, and Christopher Hitchens, who is one of the most outspoken atheists in a century.
>
> **Live Broadcast:**
>
> - **Saturday, April 4**
> **7:30 pm Pacific Daylight Time (10:30 pm Eastern)**
>
> **Re-broadcasts:**
>
> - **Sunday, April 5**
> **4:00 pm Pacific Daylight Time (7:00 pm Eastern)**
> - **Wednesday, April 8**
> **5:00 pm Pacific Daylight Time (8:00 pm Eastern)**
>
> **Deadline for sign up:**
> **Monday, March 30, 11:59 pm PDT.**
>
> HOW DO I SIGN UP?
> 1) Just log on to the registration web site:
> http://www.apologeticsevents.com/debate
> 2) Agree to the terms, pay the viewing fee, and receive a code to log into the broadcast
> 3) Use your equipment to put it on a nice monitor, screen, or projector, invite everyone at your church, and enjoy!

Look here for more information, FAQ, and pricing information ($98):
http://www.apologeticsevents.com/debate

If anyone's church is hosting a feed, please post a comment below.

UPDATE: I analyze Hitchens' case against God here, from his debate against Frank Turek.

UPDATE: Audio and video from a panel discussion with Hitchens, Craig, etc. is linked

here.

UPDATE: Information about live-blogging of the debate is here.

Why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?

March 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a recent post, I argued against Christians who hide their faith in public. I said that although hiding your faith may make you happier and more popular, it is more loving to confront others as an informed Christian ambassador. Your goal should be to help your friends to be reconciled with God through Christ, by telling them the truth and answering their questions, if they are willing.

In this post, I want to survey a research paper by evangelical Christian philosopher Michael J. Murray. In a previous post, I surveyed his answer to the question "Why does God hide his existence from us?" in this post, the question is "Why are we afraid to discuss our faith in public?"

Murray begins with a distinction, as philosophers love to do:

> …we would be perfectly happy to have a discussion of claims like…"Mahayana Buddhism emerged in the first century BCE with the appearance of the Mahayana sutras." … It is OK to speak of religion… as a historical phenomenon or a socio-cultural influence. It is something altogether different to discuss religious commitments that one owns. That is the sort of religion that troubles us.

People who aren't religious feel discomfort about hearing about the religious beliefs of others, because those beliefs influence public policy, but (they think) those beliefs are based non-rational factors, such as place of birth, parental beliefs, peer groups, emotions, prejudices, superstitions, etc. They are uncomfortable living in a government that was voted in by people whose views are based on irrational religious beliefs.

He has some illustrations of this "theo-phobia" here:

> …think about the last time you heard a devoutly religious person argue, on explicitly religious grounds, that gay marriage should be banned, or that intelligent design should be taught in the public school biology curriculum, or that abortion is murder and thus should be outlawed.

And I agree with that. I feel uncomfortable when people argue for positions from faith-based premises. But do discussions of religious beliefs necessarily have to be about faith-based personal preferences? Or is there another way to discuss religion that doesn't make non-religious people squirm with discomfort?

In the remainder of the paper, Murray explores five reasons why theo-phobia exists in academic settings:

1. Religion supports oppression, violence, and tyranny and is thus best ignored, excluded or perhaps even actively opposed.

2. Religion is a personal or subjective matter and as a result can't be subjected to canonical standards of rational scrutiny. It thus has no place in the academy.
3. Religion can't have a role in scholarly inquiry since it at best plays a balkanizing role in the scholarly world.
4. If religion is allowed to have a role in the academy it will quickly intrude into domains where it does not belong.
5. Reason #5 is kept secret until the end of the paper.

Regarding point 1, Murray argues that religious excesses can be controlled by falsifying the religion using reason and evidence, because *religions make testable claims.* So, if academics are afraid of the excesses of a dangerous religion, they should *falsify it by arguing that its claims are false.* There is no reason to be afraid of expressions of religious belief when you are free to argue against the testable truth claims of that religion.

I repeat: different religions make different claims about the external world. Either the universe had a beginning (Christianity) or it didn't (Mormonism). Either Jesus died on the cross (Christianity) or he didn't (Islam). If academics are worried about the effects of some religion, they *can* argue against it! If a religious person is *not* willing to defend the testable truth claims, then they are discredited anyway by refusing to engage.

For the remaining 4 points, especially the last one, *I recommend you read the whole article*. Give it to your friends, religious and non-religious, who believe that faith is fundamentally different from other academic disciplines. Some truth claims of different religions *can be tested*. And Christians especially should help others to feel comfortable talking to them by sticking to *testable truth claims and publicly accessible evidence.*

I'll give you a hint about reason #5, from atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel of New York University. Nagel is quoted as follows:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

So we learn from Murray that religions stand or fall based on logical consistency and

empirical validation against the external world, *just like any other academic discipline*. So long as you stick to discussing the public, testable claims of religions, there is no reason to be uncomfortable about discussing religions. Don't discuss the parts of a religion that can't be tested, only discuss the parts that can be tested.

(Note: Nagel isn't all bad, he defends intelligent design as science in a research paper summarized here). To see how religion is debated in academia, (public debates held on university campuses, that leverage arguments from published research across academic fields), look here.

Scott Klusendorf makes the case for protecting the unborn

March 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Linked here at Apologetics 315. His 35-minute presentation (no Q&A) is entitled “Making Abortion Unthinkable: The Art of Pro-Life Persuasion”. There is a presentation of the law of biogenesis and the SLED test (Size, Level of development, Environment, Degree of dependency).

A little biographical information on Scott.

For your office show-and-tell, you can buy Frank Beckwith’s 2007 book “Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice”. Since the book is published by Cambridge University Press, it’s useful to show people who think that there is no respectable case for the pro-life position.

My previous post on the case for the pro-life position in plain english is here. It contains a link to a 4-part series by Beckwith on answering arguments for the pro-abortion position.

Democrats in Congress spending 1 billion per hour

March 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Politico is reporting that the Democrats are spending like drunken sailors.

> "In just 50 days, Congress has voted to spend about $1.2 trillion between the Stimulus and the Omnibus," McConnell says. "To put that in perspective, that's about $24 billion a day, or about $1 billion an hour—most of it borrowed. There's simply no question: government spending has spun out of control."
>
> The math: 50 days times 24 hours equals 1,200 hours. 1,200 times 1 billion equals 1.2 trillion (a thousand billions is a trillion).

H/T: Sen. Jim Demint

Different perspectives on the days of Genesis

March 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Over at Tough Questions Answered, they survey different views on the days of creation described in Genesis. Basically, there are two views: the young-earth creationist view, the old-earth creationist view. (Theistic evolution is nothing but atheism).

As my bio describes, I favor the old-earth view. I believe in micro-evolution (adaption to environment within different body plans), but I don't believe that macro-evolution has been demonstrated in the fossil record or in the lab or in mathematical models of likely mutations and development parthways.

Christians are delighted to that the Bible is in agreement with what scientists have discovered about the origin of the universe, and it's careful design to support the minimal requirements for complex life of any conceivable kind (given our physical laws and chemical diversity). But there is still one apparent disagreement between the Bible and science.

The apparent disagreement is that the book of Genesis describes the creation (*asah, bara)* of the earth as taking place in a series of days (*yom*). But there seems to be a tension between 6 24-hour days and a 4 billion year old earth. Are we stuck with a contradiction between science and Scripture here?

Here's what TQA says:

> The word *yom* can mean several things in Hebrew. It can refer to a 24-hour period or it can refer to longer periods of time. Which is the correct interpretation in Genesis 1?

In fact, Genesis 2:4 uses the word *yom* to describe the entire week of creation. And, St. Augustine, writing in the 5th century, interpreted the *yoms* of Genesis to be long periods of time, not 24-hour days. (And he also predicted the beginning of time at the creation).

For a solid scientific treatment that explains the possible meanings of *yom* and tries to reconcile it with what science tells us about the age of the earth, take a look at this paper by Dr. Walter Bradley of Baylor University.

Here is an excerpt that explains what the paper is about:

> In this paper we would like to focus on the interpretation of the Hebrew words "yom" and "bara/asah" as they are used in the early chapters of Genesis to describe the time frame and mechanism of creation. A careful examination of both biblical and scientific data will be summarized. A critique of the current models based on this data will be made leading to our summary of how at present we think one may best harmonize all of the available information.

I think there are solid young-earth creationists out there, like Paul Nelson and Marcus Ross, but I agree with Bradley and Augustine on this question.

One last thing – the dividing line between Christian and non-Christian views on this issue depends on how you answer this question: “Does nature, including the realm of biology, show signs of having being created and designed by an intelligent agent – signs that are *independent* of the religious beliefs of observers”.

Both young earth and old earth creationists answer “yes”. Yes, the universe shows signs of being programmed by an Engineer. Atheists and “theistic evolutionists” answer no, there universe was not programmed by an Engineer. Intelligent design people also answer “yes”, but their theory is strictly mathematics (probability theory). What Genesis says is not relevant to intelligent design.

What about those who never heard of Jesus?

March 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the most difficult questions for Christians to answer, especially when posed by adherents of other religions, is the question of what happens to those who have never heard of Jesus? In this post, I will explain how progress in the field of philosophy of religion has given us a possible (and Biblical) solution to this thorny question.

First, Christianity teaches that humans are in a natural state of rebellion against God. We don't want to know about him, and we don't want him to have any say in what we are doing. We just want to appropriate all the gifts he's given us, do whatever we want with them, and then have eternal bliss after we die. We want to do whatever we want and then be forgiven, later.

Along comes Jesus, who, through his sinless life and his death on the cross, heals that rift of rebellion between an all-good God and rebellious man. Now we have a real understanding of the fact that God is real, that he has power over death, and that he has very specific ideas on what we should be doing. If we accept Jesus' atoning sacrifice and follow his teachings, we can avoid the penalty of our rebellion.

The only problem is that in order to appropriate that free gift of reconciliation, people need to actually *know* about Jesus. And there are some people in the world who have not even *heard* of him. Is it fair that these other people will be sent to eternal separation from God, just because they happened to be born in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Enter William Lane Craig to save the day. His solution is that God orders the world in such a way that anyone who would freely choose to acknowledge Jesus and appropriate his teachings in their decision-making *will* be given eternal life. God knows in advance who would respond, and chooses their time and place of birth, and he supplies them with the amount of evidence they need.

And this agrees with what the Bible teaches. The apostle Paul says this in his apologetic on Mars Hill in Acts 17:22-31:

> 22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.
> 23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ' N D ' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.
> 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;
> 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;
> 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, **having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,**

> **27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;**
> 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'
> 29 "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.
> 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,
> 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

In this research paper, Craig explains in detail how God foreknows how people will choose in every set of circumstances, and how God uses that knowledge to get everyone where they need to be *without violating their free will.* God wants the best for everybody, and has ordered to whole universe in order to give each of us our best opportunity for eternal life.

Here is a summary of the what is in his paper:

> The conviction of the New Testament writers was that there is no salvation apart from Jesus. This orthodox doctrine is widely rejected today because God's condemnation of persons in other world religions seems incompatible with various attributes of God.
>
> Analysis reveals the real problem to involve certain counterfactuals of freedom, *e.g.*, why did not God create a world in which all people would freely believe in Christ and be saved? Such questions presuppose that God possesses middle knowledge. But it can be shown that no inconsistency exists between God's having middle knowledge and certain persons' being damned; on the contrary, it can be positively shown that these two notions are compatible.

Go read this paper and equip yourself to answer this common question!

And now I want to close by making a general point. There are two kinds of people in the world. The first kind encounters problems, like the hiddenness of God, or the problem of evil, the problem of Cookie monster objections (thanks, Truthbomb!), or religious pluralism, and they respond by *leveraging* that problem in order to justify rejecting God and going their own way.

Even uninformed Christians read books like "The Da Vinci Code", and avoid the arguments and evidence that would defeat the objections raised by that book. Why? They want to be lazy, or to fit in, or to pursue pleasure apart from God. This is because if we don't know that God is real *for certain* then we won't feel *rationally compelled to be good.* And that's why many Christians go out of their way *not to find out the truth* about these thorny problems.

And doubts also relieve us of the burden of evangelizing. Uninformed Christians know

that their doubts give them freedom to keep silent about God, so they can get along with non-Christians. They think that keeping the truth about God to themselves, and not being ready and available to answer questions, is *loving.* But it's really just *selfishness.* It doesn't help non-Christians to keep the truth from them.

So why do some Christians hide the truth from others? It's because they really *do not believe that God will exclude people based on their beliefs about Him*, even though Jesus says so in many places*.* Deep down, *we believe that God's purpose for humans is to be happy.* When Christians don't try to find answers to difficult questions like religious pluralism, they end up softening the Bible's exclusive claims *based on their emotions*.

This is not what ambassadors are supposed to do – we are not free to make up our own doctrines and then lie to people in order to be happy and popular.

The second group is willing to spend time and effort to assess whether science, history, philosophy, etc. support Christianity. This kind of person is willing to go where the evidence leads. They don't jump on doubts and use them to justify disobedience. They are willing to be public (i.e. – "divisive") about their faith and put God first, above worldly goals, like popularity.

The whole point of life is for God to draw people to himself in a *two-way* relationship. He reveals himself a little, and we respond and pursue him. How about you? Do you want to know for certain whether God is real? Are you willing to give up everything to follow him? Or would you rather he just keep out of your busy life and your subjective purposes in the world?

UPDATE: A related post over at Tough Questions Answered on whether Jesus is required to be rightly related to God and to get eternal life.

Michele Bachmann opposes Obama's pro-abortion bill

March 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from dcjunkies! Here are some other posts (usually with videos) on Michele: opposing nationalization of banks, explaining free market capitalism, opposing embryonic stem cell research, evaluating Obama's spending plans, arguing that corporate tax rates are too high.

Michele Bachmann is the most capable and conservative House Representative. In the video below, she explains what Obama's mis-named "Freedom of Choice Act" would actually do.

I just don't think it's right for people to choose to perform activities that result in pregnancy, and take innocent human lives in order to escape the consequences. In fact, it scares me that so many men and women would be willing to hurt other people in order to avoid the responsibility for their own choices.

Life is filled with choices that involve risk. The reason we have speed limits is because we recognize that driving too fast poses a danger to others. And pre-marital sex is no different than speeding. It's fun, but it's dangerous. How about this: let's all try to avoid behavior that is likely to result in hurting innocent people. Is that too hard?

(H/T The Maritime Sentry)

Apologetics 315 lists the 16 best apologetics podcasts

March 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The list of podcasts is here.

Here are the ones I listen to:

> 1. Reasonable Faith – William Lane Craig
> 3. Unbelievable?
> 6. Defenders Podcast – William Lane Craig
> 11. Intelligent Design the Future

But there are a bunch of new ones I had never heard of in his list. Check it out!

And let me just plug a podcast that is not related to Christian apologetics: the Investors Business Daily podcast (RSS link). This is by far the best podcast available on issues ranging from economics, to foreign policy to social policy. I highly recommend this podcast.

Assessing Obama's 5-point plan for education reform

March 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Found this article on Mercator Net, an Australian site that is really getting my attention with the quality and scope of their articles. This is more than just politics, it's policy analysis. Here's Kevin Ryan's article on Obama's education plan.

The plan is composed of 5 points:

> He promises his administration will promote five reforms in particular: major funding for early childhood education; increased funding for and emphasis on standards and assessment; new funding to recruit, educate and reward teachers; a substantial increase in the number of the country's charter schools and new funding for programs to expanding life-long learning with a special emphasis on all American's having another year of education.

Obama is obviously equating more spending with better student performance, an approach that I like to analogize as throwing gasoline on a fire to put it out. The rest of the article deals with the policy implications of the 5 points. The article contains a couple of examples.

Here's one of the examples:

> Historically, it is a very modern idea that money will buy a quality education. Our current experience with funding education hardly supports such a view. Arguably the worst school system in America, the Washington DC schools spends the most dollars per pupil, US$16,650. On the other hand, Utah schools, which relative to the rest of the nation, are outstanding schools spend a third, $5,700, of what is spent in the nation's capital.

Here's an excerpt from the analysis of the 5 points:

> Every one of the President's five-point plan means more jobs and influence for the teachers' union. More early childhood means more teachers and administrators, even though the effects pre-kindergarten and day care are increasingly in doubt. (Finland, whose students recently earned the highest scores in international achievement tests, doesn't send its children to school *until they are seven years old)* The Obama Plan ought perhaps be called the NEA's Full Employment Plan.
>
> Having every America spend an additional year in a classroom sounds wonderful. It will mean a staggering increase tax dollars to fund such an increase. On the other hand, the opportunity costs for an individual student staying away from meaningful salaried work will also be huge.

The article concludes its analysis of the plan with this observation about Obama's personal life:

> As a Chicago politician and now as president, he has exercised school choice for the education of his two daughters, while, de facto, denying it to those parents without his income. The fact of the President's stonewalling parents' efforts to get real educational choice, plus the picture of his daughters being driven out the their tony private school, passing the orange school busses delivering Washington's children to those failing public schools, is the unstated message of his speech.

The article does not mention that Obama himself went to expensive private schools. As Michelle Malkin says, be skeptical that his education will help anyone but teacher's unions.

I will be tracking the education and health care plans that Obama has proposed closely, to find out who really will benefit from his big government approach.

Everything I know about the problems of evil and suffering in a 4 page essay

March 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just wanted to draw your attention to this 4 page essay by Joe Manzari, which is the best darn summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen. The problem of evil is an objection to the existence of God based on the presence of evil or suffering in the world. The arguments basically infer that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then there should not *be* any evil or suffering.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An exampel of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omniscient being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God

> can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order to for the character of humans through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to show* that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil we observer more compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.

Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life. And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.

2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   Given that we humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. We should not be surprised that people would also reject his moral demands on them, which results in some of the evil we see.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.
(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That’s right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again. More on this argument for God’s existence *from evil* here.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I’ve been through… but then, that’s why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

For more on the problem of evil, listen to this lecture by Douglas Geivett, professor of philosophy at Biola University. Then you *must listen* to this debate here between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong. Another debate transcript is here, with William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen. Here’s a book debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, published by Oxford University Press, 2004.

Evan Sayet explains why progressives believe what they believe

March 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the tragedies of being an active blogger is that you don't get to visit all the blogs you used to visit before you started blogging. Well, since Ace linked to my notice about the upcoming debate of the century between Christopher Hitchens and William Lane Craig, I figured: now is the time. So I went over there and scrolled around, catching up on who is drinking Valu-Rite vodka, and who is polishing LauraW's hump.

And I noticed that the brilliant Jewish comedian Evan Sayet, a 9/11 Democrat, has given *another* speech at my favorite think tank, the Heritage Foundation. If you missed Evan's first *brilliant* speech, (brilliant because you learn TONS of stuff that you've never heard before!), don't miss it now. But do not even think about watching this speech if you are a thin-skinned special-interest leftist. You can't handle it.

Here is the link to his FIRST speech for the Heritage Foundation if you missed it:

Here is the audio (MP3) and video of the second speech.

Topics of the second video include:

- What progressives believe: postmodern skepticism, moral equivalence, creative anti-realism
- How progressives side with evil instead of good so that everyone will be equal
- How progressives believe that failure is never an individual's responsibility, but always the fault of some group of oppressors
- How progressives believe that success can only achieved by oppressing others
- Why progressives believe in redistribution of wealth and zero-sum game economics
- *and more*

I really like listening to this guy, and so will you! *Listen to both of his speeches*. You are never going to hear direct truth, as from a fire hydrant, like you will by listening to Evan Sayet. **Pay attention to what he says at the end of the second speech**. Our hope lies in our *individual* willingness to speak out intelligently *to our neighbors* about *what we believe* and *why we believe it*.

Obama’s federal budget: thinking beyond stage one

March 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

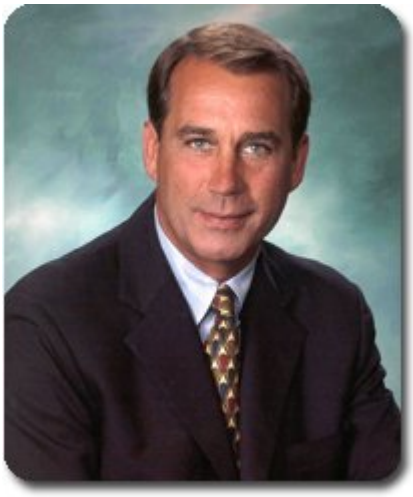

House Republican Leader John Boehner

Everyone who reads Thomas Sowell knows that the most important question to ask when talking about any economic proposal is “And Then What Happens?” That was the point of his one-two punch of introductory books on economics, “Basic Economics: A Citizen’s Guide to the Economy” and “Applied Economics: Thinking Beyond Stage One”. Don’t examine the intentions of the proposal. *Examine the incentives it creates.*

But this idea goes back even earlier to Henry Hazlitt, who wrote about it in “Economics in One Lesson”. (The link goes to a statement of the “one lesson”)

> …the whole of economics can be reduced to a single lesson, and that lesson can be reduced to a single sentence:
>
> The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups.

Well, what are the long-term effects of Obama’s federal budget, for all groups?

Congressman John Boehner has a breakdown of some of the budget numbers on his blog.

> The President’s budget calls for $1.4 trillion in new taxes that will affect every American. There’s a $646 billion “cap and trade” energy tax; a $636 billion tax on income and small businesses; new taxes on investors by raising capital gains and dividend rates; a resurrection of the death tax; and a reduction in charitable deductions which will result in $4 billion less in donations each year to charities across America.

But it’s worse than that. A while back, I wrote about how Obama wanted to discriminate against religious schools by denying them renovation funds. In the budget, he continues his anti-religious trend by de-funding private charities. This is the part that Christians who voted for Obama need to pay attention to, because this matters to us.

Boehner notes:

> The proposed reduction in charitable deductions is especially troubling, since it would hurt charities at a time when American families are struggling and in need of assistance.

But remember, when government expands, the state becomes more secular. The capabilities and influence of private religious groups decreases as the state de-funds them and takes over their duties. Instead of people depending on their neighbors' charity, they now depend on the state. Instead of letting workers decide where to give charity, workers are forced to fund secular government programs.

Boehner cites this Wall Street Journal piece:

> According to the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, total itemized contributions from the highest income households would have dropped 4.8% — or $3.87 billion — in 2006 if the Obama policy had been in place. That year, Americans gave $186.6 billion to charity, more than 40% from those in the highest tax bracket. A back of the envelope calculation by the Tax Policy Center, a left-of-center think tank, estimates the Obama plan will reduce annual giving by 2%, or some $9 billion.

Before Obama's budget, you might have given charity to a Crisis Pregnancy Center. Now that money could be spent by the government on coerced abortions abroad. Before Obama's budget, you might have given charity to support William Lane Craig's web site Reasonable Faith. Now that money could be spent destroying human embryos. *Elections matter.*

Representative Mike Pence

Congressman Mike Pence goes over the budget numbers on his blog.

> The following is a summary of the Administration's plans to increase taxes by $1.4 trillion over the next ten years.

> **Taxing Small Businesses**: In 2010, the President's budget will increase taxes on all taxpayers that earn more than $250,000. The majority of the burden for this $637 billion tax increase will be borne by small businesses that pay taxes as individuals. Small businesses create 60 to 80 percent of all new jobs in America. These new taxes will stifle job creation and economic growth in the midst of a recession.
>
> **Taxing Energy Consumers**: The budget also proposes to raise taxes by $646 billion on consumers of oil, coal, and natural gas through a complicated "cap and tax" program that will increase the cost of energy for every American. These carbon-based fuels provide about 85% of all energy output in the U.S. This new tax will increase the cost of energy by up to $3,128 per household annually, taking more money out of the pockets of hard working families struggling to pay their bills each month.
>
> **Taxing Investors Part I**: Under the President's budget, taxes on capital gains and dividends would increase from 15 to 20 percent, increasing taxes on investors by $338 billion over ten years. These taxes would directly affect investors and shareholders, including many 401k holders and pension funds, most impacted by the declining stock market and would further discourage investments during a time when new investments are essential to jumpstarting our economy.
>
> **Taxing Charitable Giving**: The budget also caps the value of itemized deductions at 28% for those with an income over $250,000 (married) and $200,000 (single), which will reduce charitable giving by $9 billion a year. The current economic crisis has severely damaged charitable organization's ability to provide for people who are most affected by the recession, and the budget would leave these charities with at least a $9 billion deficit.
>
> **Taxing Death**: The budget reinstates the death tax scheduled to be fully repealed in 2010. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, the death tax has "broad economic effects" and one study has found that the death tax is responsible for lowering overall employment by 1.5 million jobs.
>
> **Taxing Investors Part II**: The budget would more than double taxes on carried interest, increasing taxes up from the capital gains rate (15%) to the income tax rate (35%). Carried interest is interest gained on profits from investments and is generally used to pay investment fund managers based on the fund's performance for investors. This tax hike is yet another attack on profit, private equities, and investments in the middle of a recession.

High taxes and big spending is not good for business, and therefore not good for job growth. I predict double-digit unemployment (around 12%) by year's end as a result of this socialist budget.

Already, Gateway Pundit is reporting that Caterpillar has laid off 2,454 employees, with more layoffs on the way. Hot Air has video on the layoffs here: Obama saying that his

bailout will reduce layoffs, and the CEO saying that the bailout will not prevent layoffs. Ooops.

Mark Sanford and Bobby Jindal refuse bailout funds

March 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Governor Mark Sanford

I noticed some posts at the Maritime Sentry about Governor Mark Sanford. If Bobby Jindal can't save us in 2012, then Mark Sanford is my second choice. Everybody knows that Jindal is turning down bailout funds. Here is Bobby Jindal on the Hugh Hewitt show explaining why he is refusing the bailout funds, on how he intends to deal with the economic downturn in his state budget. *Dynamite!*

But Maritime Sentry has the story on Mark Sanford's refusal to take bailout funds. Here, they link to this Forbes article, entitled "Why Mark Sanford Matters: Small-government conservatives have found their champion."

Here is an excerpt from the article:

> Sanford's opposition to President Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and in particular his insistence on using up to a fourth of his state's stimulus funds to pay down debt or refusing it outright, has fast made him a folk hero to conservatives.

I am a little concerned by his opposition to the Iraq war, because I feel that it was a successful action against terrorism with strategic gains that *far* outweighed the costs. I approve of his small government stand, though. The National Taxpayer's Union also approves:

> The 362,000-member National Taxpayers Union (NTU) has applauded South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford (R) and Texas Gov. Rick Perry (R) for their decisions this week to refuse part of the federal stimulus package earmarked for their respective states. Sanford will accept $700 million only if the President allows him to use it to pay down debts rather than create new spending obligations. Perry has refused outright $555 million for expansion of state unemployment

> benefits.

Maritime Sentry also links to this 5-minute video, in which Sanford explains why he is turning down the bailout money. He doesn't want Obama to be able to impose taxes on his state later, if he takes the bailout money today.

The Democrats doesn't like federalism much. The DNC is even running ads in South Carolina against Sanford for refusing to take the money, and the attached strings. I found a statement about these DNC ads over at his blog. Jindal is also taking heat from unions and other economically-illiterate left-wing groups in his state.

UPDATE 1: Here is the transcript of Bobby Jindal's interview on the Hugh Hewitt show. (H/T Binky @ Free Canuckistan!)

UPDATE 2: Here is the first part of an interview with Mark Sanford conducted by the Acton Institute, which specializes in free market capitalism and its relationship to religious liberty. (H/T Binky @ Free Canuckistan!)

New podcasts on academic freedom and intelligent design

March 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a couple of new podcasts on intelligent design on Post-Darwinist!

Here is the skinny:

> **Academic Freedom Update: Where Are We in 2009?**
>
> On this episode of ID the Future, CSC's Casey Luskin gives listeners an update on what's going on with academic freedom legislation around America. Academic freedom bills submitted in five states already this year, including Oklahoma, Iowa, New Mexico, Missouri and Alabama. Listen in to today's podcast as Luskin explains how Darwinist opposition to the bills is showing why academic freedom legislation is necessary to protect teachers from a climate of intimidation.
>
> **Why Specified Complexity Cannot Be Purchased Without Intelligence**
>
> On this episode of ID the Future, CSC's Robert Crowther highlights one of the foundational books of the theory of intelligent design. "No Free Lunch", the sequel to mathematician and CSC senior fellow William Dembski's Cambridge University Press book "The Design Inference", explores key questions about the origin of specified complexity. No Free Lunch demonstrates that design theory shows great promise of providing insight in the field of evolutionary computation.

Do you know what intelligent design is? The definitive statement of the what intelligent design is was *first* published in 1998 by Cambridge University Press. The name of that book is "The Design Inference: Eliminating Chance Through Small Probabilities".

Here's a little bio of the author, William Dembski. And here are some of his earned degrees:

- Ph.D. philosophy University of Illinois at Chicago 1996
- M.A. philosophy University of Illinois at Chicago 1993
- Ph.D. mathematics University of Chicago 1988
- M.S. statistics University of Illinois at Chicago 1983

If you put together the IQs of all the journalists who have ever written against intelligent design, the total number is actually lower than the IQ of William Dembski's pinky finger nail clipping. An introduction to intelligent design is here. A chapter explaining intelligent design from a book published by Michigan State University Press is here.

Or, you can just read this sentence: intelligent design is what happens when you select letters and form sequences that have function. Like writing blog posts or software code. That's intelligent design, and that's *all* it is. Surprise! I do it all day at work. I'm doing it right now while I write this post. And it's in your DNA, too. Sequences of amino acids and

proteins arranged to have biological function.

My Dad, who reads everything I tell him to read because he's such a great Dad, just finished Dembski's new book "Understanding Intelligent Design: Everything You Need to Know in Plain Language". He assures me it is extremely easy to understand, even for you helpless squishyheads who dropped math in grade 10.

Here is a good debate on whether the biological information in the simplest organism requires an intelligent designer.

Walter Williams evaluates Sweden's single-payer health care system

March 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams is my second favorite active economist, just behind Thomas Sowell. (I also like John Lott, Robert P. Murphy and Jennifer Roback Morse – see my blogroll for links) In a recent article, Williams takes a look at how well Sweden's single-payer, socialized health-care system is working out for its customers. The productive Swedish taxpayer forks over a lot of money to the government. What do they get in return?

First, what is socialized medicine? (which we are moving toward, since porkulus passed)

1. Producers pay huge amounts of taxes to the government .
2. Low-achievers pay nothing, since they have no income.
3. When you want treatment, you have to get in line behind everyone else – especially behind special interest groups, such as people wanting sex-changes.
4. The taxation is compulsory, the treatment of patients is at the government's discretion.

Williams begins his article by evaluating the UK's National Health Service:

> A recent study by David Green and Laura Casper, "Delay, Denial and Dilution," written for the London-based Institute of Economic Affairs, concludes that the NHS health care services are just about the worst in the developed world. The head of the World Health Organization calculated that Britain has as many as 25,000 unnecessary cancer deaths a year because of under-provision of care. Twelve percent of specialists surveyed admitted refusing kidney dialysis to patients suffering from kidney failure because of limits on cash. Waiting lists for medical treatment have become so long that there are now "waiting lists" for the waiting list.

And then there's Canada single-payer socialized system:

> …after a Canadian has been referred to a specialist, the waiting list for gynecological surgery is four to 12 weeks, cataract removal 12 to 18 weeks, tonsillectomy three to 36 weeks and neurosurgery five to 30 weeks. Toronto-area hospitals, concerned about lawsuits, ask patients to sign a legal release accepting that while delays in treatment may jeopardize their health, they nevertheless hold the hospital blameless. Canadians have an option Britainers don't: close proximity of American hospitals. In fact, the Canadian government spends over $1 billion each year for Canadians to receive medical treatment in our country.

The article cites Sven R. Larson, who recently completed the book "Lesson from Sweden's

Universal Health System: Tales from the Health-care Crypt," published in the Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons (Spring 2008). The first thing about socialized health care is that you don't pay for treatment like you shop at Wal-Mart. The government takes your money and makes sure that everyone is treated equally, regardless of each individual's earned income and lifestyle choices.

> Mr. D., a Gothenburg multiple sclerosis patient, was prescribed a new drug. His doctor's request was denied because the drug was 33 percent more expensive than the older medicine. Mr. D. offered to pay for the medicine himself but was prevented from doing so. The bureaucrats said it would set a bad precedent and lead to unequal access to medicine.

When health care is free for consumers, demand increases. Doctors and drug companies stop producing since the government won't let them make a profit. Since the government is the single-payer, then the only way to stop the shortage is to ration medical services, often based on leftist victim ideology. Socialists don't trust you to make your own decisions about how you earn income or how you spend it.

Here's a bit more from the article:

> Malmo, with its 280,000 residents, is Sweden's third-largest city. To see a physician, a patient must go to one of two local clinics before they can see a specialist. The clinics have security guards to keep patients from getting unruly as they wait hours to see a doctor. The guards also prevent new patients from entering the clinic when the waiting room is considered full. Uppsala, a city with 200,000 people, has only one specialist in mammography. Sweden's National Cancer Foundation reports that in a few years most Swedish women will not have access to mammography.

Wow, that smacks of fascism! *But that is where socialism inevitably leads*. In Canada, you can't even buy your own drugs and treatment, even if the government puts you on a waiting list (dying list?), or if it won't pay for treatment at all. Private purchases of health care or medical drugs are illegal in Canada. (except for Quebec, oddly enough, because of a recent court decision).

The problem with a system in which low-risk producers pay for the services, but don't use them while high-risk victims use the services, but don't pay for them, is that there is no incentive for people to be healthy. As people act more and more recklessly, the government steps in and starts controlling their lives in order to reduce costs. *Fascism.*

Socialized medicine redistributes wealth in order to equalize the outcomes of good lifestyle choices and poor lifestyle choices. The more that lifestyles are equalized, the less personal responsibility there is among the citizens. Eventually, the government takes control of people's lives to reduce costs. This article shows how it's happening in Canada, as they try to ban trans fats:

> A mammoth government program is a poor excuse for further encroachment on

> people's lives–maybe fewer government entitlements would encourage smarter and healthier habits. If the ban is the sword of the nanny-state crusader, surely the health-care system represents his shield.

Freedom means deciding how much security to want, based on your own free choices and the risks you assume.

A useful podcast on health care and government, featuring Sally C. Pipes on the Dennis Prager show is here. For a good explanation of supply, demand and shortages, see this Von Mises Institute article.

UPDATE: Saw this UK Telegraph story on a single NHS hospital (H/T Stop the ACLU):

> NHS managers were yesterday accused of putting targets and cost-cutting ahead of patients as a report into at Mid-Staffordshire Hospitals trust found up to 1,200 people may have died needlessly due to "appalling standards of care" at a single hospital.
>
> …Last night patient groups voiced concern that managers who should have spotted failings at the trust but did not raise the alarm have been **promoted to key jobs** in the NHS and health care regulation.
>
> …The investigation into care between 2005 and 2008 found overstretched and poorly trained nurses who turned off equipment because they did not know how to work it, newly qualified doctors left to care for patients recovering from surgery at night, patients left for hours in soiled bedclothes and reception staff expected to judge the seriousness of the condition of patients arriving at Accident and Emergency.
>
> Doctors were diverted from seriously ill patients to treat ones with minor problems to make the trust look better because it was in danger of breaching the Government's four-hour waiting time target.

Douglas Groothuis on the Six Enemies of Apologetic Engagement

March 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a link to this article by Doug Groothuis on the importance of Christian apologetics over at Truthbomb Apologetics. He doesn't necessarily endorse my snarkiness in this post, though.

Doug's article is call-to-arms for Christians who do not view the defense of the faith as an integral part of their Christian life. In this post on why men are fleeing the feminized church I argued that apologetics is a necessary part of a healthy two-way relationship with God and that it also engages the men to express their masculinity in a Christian way.

Groothuis starts by recommending 3 books on the lack intellectual rigor in the evangelical church, and he then goes on to lay out 6 "enemies" to the task of apologetics.

First, the 3 books:

> Mark Noll's *"The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind"* (Eerdmans, 1994) explores the historical roots of evangelical anti-intellectualism. Os Guinness' *"Fit Bodies, Fat Minds"* (Baker Books, 1994), discusses some of the historical problems and also outlines what a Christian mind should look like. J.P. Moreland's *"Love Your God with all of Your Mind"* (Navpress, 1997) explains why Christians don't think, develops a biblical theology of the mind, and offers helpful apologetic arguments and strategies to empower the church intellectually.

I've read all of them and LYGWYM is by far the best. J.P. Moreland is a *warrior*. Videos and audio of his university campus lectures are here.

Enemy #1: We don't really love God or our neighbors

If we really cared about God like we say we do, then we would care enough to defend his reputation in public. If we really loved our neighbor and believed that they need to follow Jesus in order to be reconciled with God, we would tell them that. But we don't really care enough about God when his reputation is slammed in public. We don't care that our neighbor has false beliefs, such as a belief in the eternal universe.

Groothuis writes:

> Too many Christians don't seem to care that Christianity is routinely ridiculed as outdated, irrational, and narrow-minded in our culture. They may complain that this "offends" them (just as everyone else is complaining that one thing or another "offends" them), but they do little to counteract the charges by offering a defense of the Christian world view in a variety of settings. Yet Scripture *commands* all Christians to have a reason for the hope that is within them and to present this with gentleness and respect to unbelievers (1 Peter 3:15).
>
> Our attitude should be that of the Apostle Paul who was "greatly distressed"

> when he beheld the idolatry of sophisticated Athens. This zeal for the truth of God led him into a fruitful apologetic encounter with the thinkers gathered to debate new ideas (see Acts 17). It should for us as well. Just as God "so loved the world" that he sent Jesus to set us right with God (John 3:16), Jesus' disciples should so love the world that they endeavor to reach the lost by presenting the Gospel and answering objections to the Christian faith (John 17:18).

Enemy #2: We distort Christian teachings in order to avoid disputes with other religions

As a result of the feminization of the church, we have altered our theology in order to "get along" with other religions that conflict with ours. Instead of wrestling with the competing truth claims of other religions, we just change the nature of our religion from objective knowledge to personal preference. If the Bible claims that Jesus rose from the dead, we reinterpret that historically testable claim as a preference claim. If the Bible says that the universe began to exist, we reinterpret that scientifically testable claim as a preference claim.

And it goes double for moral judgments and soteriological claims. The easiest way to make peace with people in these other religions is by dropping everything that offends our neighbors in other religions, like moral judgments and exclusive salvation. We simply decided that if Christianity claimed X and some other religion claimed not-X, that *both* could somehow be right. But this irrationality divorced Christianity from reason and made it into a personal preference instead of objective knowledge. It's now just another option in the self-help buffet.

Groothuis says:

> For some Christians, faith means belief in the absence of evidence and argument. Worse yet, for some faith means belief *in spite of* evidence to the contrary. The more irrational our beliefs, the better–the more "spiritual" they are… When Christians opt for irrationalism, they become just another "religious option," and are classified along with Heaven's Gate, the Flat Earth Society, and other intellectually impaired groups.

Enemy #3: We refuse to learn the evidences that support Christianity

We spend almost no time reading the kinds of non-fiction books that would inform us so that we are prepared to defend our beliefs. Instead, we put our best effort, our money and our thinking into school, work and other secular pursuits. We give Christianity a piece of our lives, and only allow it to serve us. We never serve it. We read fiction, watch TV and movies, pursue romantic relationships and play video games. But we have no time for preparing a defense based on actual facts and arguments.

Groothuis says:

> Many Christians are not aware of the tremendous intellectual resources available to defend "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3). This is

> largely because many major churches and parachurch organizations virtually ignore apologetics… Few evangelical sermons ever address the evidence for the existence of God, the resurrection of Jesus, the justice of hell, the supremacy of Christ, or the logical problems with nonChristian worldviews. Christian bestsellers, with rare exceptions, indulge in groundless apocalyptic speculations, exalt Christian celebrities (whose characters often do not fit their notoriety), and revel in how-to methods.

Enemy #4: We refuse to defend God if it means being unpopular

Somehow, we have gotten the idea that the purpose of Christianity is for us to be happy. Being popular and accepted by non-Christians makes us happy. Therefore, we want to be popular. To be popular, we avoid being divisive with non-Christians. Moral judgments are divisive. Exclusive salvation is divisive. Christianity teaches moral rules and exclusive salvation. Therefore, we don't talk about Christianity in order to avoid being divisive so that we can be popular and have the happy feelings that God wants us to have. But this is *nowhere* in the Bible.

Groothuis says:

> In our pluralistic culture, a "live and let live" attitude is the norm, and a capitulation to social pressure haunts evangelicalism and drains its convictions. Too many evangelicals are more concerned about being "nice" and "tolerant" than being biblical or faithful to the exclusive Gospel found in their Bibles. Not enough evangelicals are willing to present and defend their faith in challenging situations, whether at school, at work, or in other public settings. The temptation is to privatize faith, to insulate and isolate it from public life entirely. Yes, we are Christians (in our hearts), but we have difficulty engaging anyone with what we believe and why we believe it. This is nothing less than cowardice and a betrayal of what we say we believe.

He goes on to exegete Colossians 4:2-6, Matthew 5:11-12, 1 Peter 4:14, Romans 1:16 and Matthew 28:18-20. The Bible just doesn't support this anti-apologetics stance that seems to be so popular in the feminized church.

I'm out of space: …I'd like to say something about the other 2 enemies, but I am out of space. But that will just encourage you to click on the link and read the rest of the article, right?

700 scientists dissent from global warming and 700 scientists dissent from Darwinism

March 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The fact-free, less-morally-demanding religion of anthropogenic global warming is running into evidential problems. When I wrote about global warming before, I noted that the real goal of the AGW-crowd is to seize control of the free market and implement socialism. Well, we're getting socialism from the erudite Teleprompter-Reader, but that doesn't mean we'll lose the debate.

Scientific Dissent from Global Warming:

MYTH: The latest scientific studies predict more warming (H/T Independent Women's Forum)

> "…You go from a cooling regime to a warming regime or a warming regime to a cooling regime. …we were able to explain all the fluctuations in the global temperature trend in the past century," Tsonis said. "The research team has found the warming trend of the past 30 years has stopped and in fact global temperatures have leveled off since 2001."
>
> "…if we don't understand what is natural, I don't think we can say much about what the humans are doing. …we were very excited when we realized a lot of changes in the past century from warmer to cooler and then back to warmer were all natural," Tsonis said.
>
> Tsonis said he thinks the current trend of steady or even cooling earth temps may last a couple of decades or until the next climate shift occurs.

MYTH: All the scientists agree that the recent warming period was man-made (H/T Club for Growth)

> Fifty nine additional scientists from around the world have been added to the U.S. Senate Minority Report of dissenting scientists, pushing the total to over 700 skeptical international scientists… This updated report… includes yet another former UN IPCC scientist…
>
> The over 700 dissenting scientists are now more than13 times the number of UN scientists(52) who authored the media-hyped IPCC 2007Summary for Policymakers. The 59 additional scientists hail from all over the world, including Japan, Italy, UK, Czech Republic, the U.S. and many are affiliated with prestigious institutions including, NASA, U.S. Navy, U.S. Defense Department, Energy Department, U.S. Air Force, the Philosophical Society of Washington (the oldest scientific society in Washington), Princeton University, Tulane University, American University, Oregon State University, U.S. Naval Academy and EPA.

MYTH: Green jobs will boost the economy (H/T Independent Women's Forum)

> [Myth #2 of 7]: These green jobs studies mistake any position receiving a paycheck for a position creating value. Simply hiring people to write and enforce regulations, fill-out forms, and process paperwork is not a recipe for creating wealth. Much of the promised boost in green employment turns out to be in non-productive – and expensive – positions that raise costs for consumers. These higher paying jobs that fail to create a more eco-friendly society dramatically skew the results in both number of green jobs created and salary levels of those jobs.
>
> [Myth #4 of 7]: Green jobs estimates promise greatly expanded (and pleasant and well-paid) employment. This promise is false. The green jobs model is built on promoting inefficient use of labor. The studies favor technologies that employ large numbers of people rather than those technologies that use labor efficiently. In a competitive market, the factors of production, including labor, are paid for their productivity. By focusing on low productivity jobs, the green jobs literature dooms employees to low wages in a shrinking economy. The studies also generally ignore the millions of jobs that will be destroyed by the restrictions imposed by governments on disfavored products and technologies.

Andrew Chamberlain of the Tax Foundation calculates that the cost of the myth of global warming alarmism, which resulted in Obama's cap-and-trade legislation, would be 144.8 Billion dollars, with an average annual household burden would be $1,218, which would be approximately 2% of the average household income.

John Lott has a post where he links to a UK Telegraph article on media bias that covered two scientific conferences, one pro-AGW and one against AGW, in two completely different ways. The headline is "Nobody listens to the real climate change experts ". Indeed.

Scientific Dissent from Darwinism:

MYTH: There are no reputable scientists who dispute Darwinian evolution

There are over 700 reputable scientists who dissent from Darwinism!(it was 700 as of February 8, 2007, the list has grown even bigger today)

> Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture today [February 8, 2007] announced that over 700 scientists from around the world have now signed a statement expressing their skepticism about the contemporary theory of Darwinian evolution. The statement, located online at www.dissentfromdarwin.org, reads: "We are skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life. Careful examination of the evidence for Darwinian theory should be encouraged."
>
> …"We know intuitively that Darwinism can accomplish some things, but not others," added Egnor. "The question is what is that boundary? Does the information content in living things exceed that boundary? Darwinists have never

> faced those questions. They've never asked scientifically if random mutation and natural selection can generate the information content in living things."
>
> …The list of signatories includes member scientists from National Academies of Science in Russia, Czech Republic, Hungary, India (Hindustan), Nigeria, Poland, and the United States. Many of the signers are professors or researchers at major universities and international research institutions such as Cambridge University, Moscow State University, Chitose Institute of Science & Technology in Japan, Ben-Gurion University in Israel, MIT, The Smithsonian and Princeton.[image]

Really, these two myths are two sides of the same coin. Global warming and Darwinism are examples of politics masquerading as science. We've seen this before in the myths of global cooling in the 1970s, the steady-state model of the universe and nuclear winter.

Bobby Jindal cuts spending in Lousiana and imposes accountability

March 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bobby and Supriya Jindal: no teleprompter needed

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from the Anchoress! Thanks for the link! New visitors, please take a look around. My blog is 50% news and policy analysis, 50% defending Christianity in practical ways.

Found this recent blog post over at Governor Bobby Jindal's blog. (H/T The Maritime Sentry).

Previously, I had blogged about his refusal to take bailout funds, his defense of Rush Limbaugh on CNN, and his plans for education reform in Louisiana.

In the new post, he talks about cutting spending and imposing more reporting and accountability on the government departments:

> Our budget will decrease by 9.8 percent compared to last year's budget, including a 12.7 percent decrease in state funds… We have asked agencies and departments across state government to provide meaningful performance data, so that we can target underperforming and out-of-date programs while protecting high performing programs from severe reductions.

He outlines specific measures to deal with the economic downturn:

School funding based on performance

> First, are calling on the Board of Regents to implement a new funding formula that will reform higher education spending. While the current formula too often rewards enrollment alone and results in duplication, a new formula should reward performance, and, for example, encourage schools to target specific programs that will provide degrees in high demand professions – aligning funding with our state's economic needs.

Eliminate unnecessary government departments

> Next, we will create a Commission on Streamlining Government, whose mission will be to examine agencies and departments throughout state government to ensure that their roles and missions are still relevant today.

Improve efficiency of civil service

> Third, we will work to reduce the size of state government by implementing civil service reforms that encourage state workers to do their jobs well – not just to reach tenure.

Facilitate future spending cuts

> Dedicated funds will have to be just as transparent as discretionary funds, and will sunset every four years beginning in 2010. We will change the current laws so that discretionary funds can be cut up to 10 percent, whereas currently they can only be cut 5 percent, and to remove the two year limit on cutting these funds.

Improve transparency and accountability in education spending

> Finally, we will reform the current MFP funding process for our state's K-12 schools. As the MFP funds are given to school district as a block grant, there is not enough accountability for how the funds are spent. We will require that beginning in FY11 districts must fully account for how these dollars are spent, and the Department of Education will develop an easy to use website allowing taxpayers to see how their hard-earned dollars are being spent.

The post goes on to discuss other initiatives, such as increasing economic growth. And that is when you read this startling statement:

> The retention and expansion of jobs has been a top priority of this administration, and we will continue working to expand our economy in the coming months and years. In December, we were the only state in the nation to add jobs, and in January, we were the only state in the nation whose unemployment rate when down and not up.

Sigh. Shouldn't we have elected Bobby Jindal instead of Mr. Teleprompter-Reader?

To find out more about Bobby Jindal, check out these links:

Interview with Rush Limbaugh (PDF)
The American Spectator: Hope Floats on the Bayou
RedState.com**:** Bobby Jindal Saves Louisiana
Townhall.com**:** The Future of Conservatism (Isn't Running for President)
The Weekly Standard: Another Winner from Winn Parish
The National Review: The Governor Is Right
The Wall Street Journal: Bayou Boy Wonder

Townhall.com**:** Want real hope and change? Try Louisiana

Megyn Kelly takes on ACORN spokesman Scott Levenson

March 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I try to focus more on policy and leave the news to other blogs. But this encounter between Megyn Kelly and ACORN spokesman Scott Levenson on ACORN's participation in the census is too good to pass up. (H/T Nice Deb)

Megyn Kelly is so awesome! Check out that last look she gives the camera at the end! Wow.

According to Gateway Pundit:

> One of Barack Obama's first big "community organizer" jobs **involved ACORN** in 1992. Obama also **trained ACORN** employees. He **represented ACORN** in court. Obama worked with and protested with ACORN. His campaign **donated $800,000** to ACORN this year for voter registration efforts.
> And, ACORN even **canvassed for Obama** this year.
>
> **ACORN** is the **largest radical Leftist group** in America today.

Michelle Malkin has related videos of other ACORN activities.

Our whole economic crisis was caused by the democrats forcing the mortgage lenders to make these risky loans to people who could not afford them. And if the lenders didn't comply with the Community Reinvestment Act, ACORN was right there to sue them into submission.

Does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?

March 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.
   God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.

   And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?
   Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.

   But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of

this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.
Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

The article goes on to make some very informative comments on the relationship between apologetics and belief.

William Lane Craig vs Richard Carrier debate audio

March 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Full audio of the debate at Northwest Missouri State University is here at Apologetics 315, (where else?).

Here's a little blurb about the debate:

> Two well-known American philosophers, Dr. Richard Carrier and Dr. William Lane Craig, will debate the question "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 18, at Northwest's Ron Houston Center for the Performing Arts (formerly the Performing Arts Center).
>
> The debate is being hosted by the Philosophy Club, a student organization that serves as the local chapter of Phi Sigma Tau, a national honor society whose mission is to promote academic excellence in philosophical study.
>
> Admission to the debate is free, and the event is open to the public.
>
> Carrier is a historian and author best known for his Internet writings on "The Secular Web," which he edited for several years. A noted advocate of metaphysical naturalism, he has published articles on elements of naturalist and atheist philosophy and frequently writes and speaks in defense of naturalism as a world view. Carrier was featured in the documentary film, "The God Who Wasn't There," in which he questions the historicity of Jesus.
>
> Craig, who maintains the "Reasonable Faith" Web site, is a theologian, New Testament historian and Christian apologist. He writes and lectures widely on issues related to the philosophy of religion, the historical Jesus, the coherence of the Christian world view and natural theology. The author of more than 30 books, Craig has served as a research professor of philosophy at the Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, Calif., since 1994.
>
> The debate will be moderated by Dr. Janice Brandon-Falcone, professor of history at Northwest, and should last about two hours. Each scholar will make a 20-minute opening statement to be followed 12-minute rebuttals, eight-minute counter-rebuttals and five-minute closing statements. Afterward, both speakers will take questions from the audience.

UPDATE: Richard Carrier's reflections on the debate are here. I have to tell you, I was telling my one of non-Christian co-workers about this debate and I was really worried about what Carrier was going to do to Craig. My friends and I watched Carrier in the Carrier-Licona debate, and Carrier either won or tied. But this time, as Carrier admits, Craig got the better of him – due to sound preparation. As a sponsor of Bill Craig, and also of his web site, Reasonable Faith, let me just say: We dodged a bullet here. The audience was of typical size for Craig debate, at about 1000 people.

Does Obama want to snuggle with theocratic Iranian mullahs?

March 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The problem with progressives is that they never met an evil that they didn't want to appease. Consider the fact that in Iran, you can be imprisoned for *blogging*. And do you know what happens in Iranian prisons? If you answered "you die", give yourself a gold star! First, consider this story from Celestial Junk (H/T Free Canuckistan!) which links to this Beitbart article.

Excerpt:

> A young Iranian blogger jailed in Tehran's notorious Evin prison for insulting supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has died, his lawyer told AFP on Thursday.
>
> …The blogger, aged around 25, was sentenced in February to 30 months in jail for insulting Khamenei and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Republic.
>
> Sayafi was first arrested in April last year and released on bail after 41 days before being detained again this year.
>
> Iran has launched a crackdown on bloggers and Internet users deemed to be hostile to the authorities and their Islamic values.

The Jerusalem Post notes that Freedom House is promising to launch an investigation.

> "Omidreza Mirsayafi's death illustrates the dangerously inhospitable environment in which bloggers operate in Iran," said Jennifer Windsor, Freedom House executive director. "Mirsayafi should never have been subjected in the first place to the cruel conditions found in Iran's most notorious prison. **At a time when President Obama is attempting to engage Iran, it is essential that the United States see Iran's regime beginning to demonstrate a greater respect for human rights.**"

But here's President Teleprompter reaching out to Iran:

Excerpt: (Stop the ACLU has the transcript)

> My administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us, and to pursuing constructive ties among the United States, Iran and the international community. This process will not be advanced by threats. We seek instead engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect.

Remember how progressives think: good is evil and evil is good. Everyone is morally equivalent. Just imagine, (they say), if everyone were the same then there would be no more wars! If we just appease the good Iran and unilaterally disarm the evil USA, then the

world will be at peace.

George W. Bush knew the difference between good and evil, and was not afraid to act to defend liberty abroad. And 2 wars only cost us about 500 billion dollars. Meanwhile, Obama is going to spend several *trillion* dollars over the next few years driving us into a socialist depression. Bush spends a little money and liberty increases. Obama spends tons of money and liberty decreases.

Then again, maybe Obama isn't as much of a naive dove as I think he is. His unilateral trade war with the entire world is going great! Look, John Lott is reporting progress in the trade war against Mexico. Yeehaw! Cowboy communism!

UPDATE: In my RSS reader, I spied this IBD podcast and here's the transcript of it.

When all else failed, Republicans will try conservative ideas

March 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jennifer Rubin over at Pajamas Media writes that the GOP has had enough with the Democrats' big-spending socialist agenda, and they are ready to try something completely different: *small government conservatism*. Instead of just being the party of "NO", the GOP intends to market a series of common sense conservative policies directly to Americans.

Rubin writes:

> Minority Leader John Boehner has a new video out listing a number of Republican themes and promising a Republican alternative budget from reformer Rep. Paul Ryan. The themes are simple: lower taxes, restrain the growth of government, a market-based health care plan, domestic energy development, and ending bailout mania. Boehner's video does not have many details, but its core message is clear: Republicans are tired of being the punching bag for an administration that wishes to paint itself as the only source of ideas capable of solving the country's problems.

But I didn't like John Boehner's video as much as this one from Rep. Paul Ryan:

He can make the case in the House of Representatives:

And look, he can take on the leftist news media, too:

Fun! Rubin continues with some links to wonderful policy ideas:

> Truth be told, for months, Republicans inside and outside of government have been throwing out ideas on how to revive the economy. Americans for Tax Reform has ten ideas to help small business. Newt Gingrich has twelve ideas to promote job growth and recovery. And budget draftsman Paul Ryan has had "A Road Map for America's Future" for some time. But the mainstream media is uninterested in reading through all of this, much of the conservative blogosphere is too invested in carping about the shortcomings of elected leaders and in fighting among themselves, and the president, of course, has made a habit of disparaging his opposition's lack of creative ideas.
>
> …**the task here is to capture the public's dissatisfaction with the Democrats' bailout and pork-laden approach to governance and remind voters that Republicans in fact do *have* ideas — ones that favor lower taxes and less spending**.

As soon as I read this, I rushed over to the Cato Institute to see their take on Ryan's plan, and I found an article by Michael D. Tanner.

He likes Ryan's plan:

> Health Care: Ryan would reform our employment-based insurance system by replacing the current tax exclusion for employer-provided insurance with a refundable tax credit of $2,500 for individuals, and $5,000 for families. This would encourage employers to take the money they currently spend providing health insurance and give it directly to workers, who could then use it to purchase competitive, personally owned insurance plans. That would be insurance that met their needs, not those of their bosses, and people wouldn't lose it if they lost their jobs.
>
> Ryan would also allow workers to shop for insurance across state lines. That would mean residents of states like New Jersey and New York, where regulation has made insurance too expensive for many people, could buy their insurance in states where it cost less. And increased competition would help bring insurance costs down for all of us.

Since I am a clean-living, never-married single guy, this would basically add a bunch of money to my take home pay. More money for donations to Reasonable Faith and the Discovery Institute! So far so good!

Tanner continues:

> Social Security: Like Medicare, Social Security is hurtling toward insolvency. Rep. Ryan would preserve the program unchanged for current recipients and workers older than age 55, but he would allow younger workers to invest part of their Social Security taxes privately through personal accounts. Unlike the present system, workers would own the funds in their accounts, and when they died, they could pass any remaining funds on to their heirs.
>
> Taxes: Rep. Ryan would radically simplify today's hopelessly complex, cumbersome and bureaucratic tax code. He would give filers a choice: They could pay their taxes under existing law, or they could choose a new simplified code, with just two tax rates (10 percent on the first $100,000 for joint filers; $50,000 for individuals, and 25 percent above that).

Human Events has some more details on the tax policy:

> The tax reform aspect of the bill is appealing, offering a simplified tax system that has only two rates and eliminates the alternative minimum tax (AMT) and the death tax. The bill also abolishes taxes on interest, capital gains and dividends among other aggressive tactics that will make a noticeable, long term change.

And this interesting quotation from Ryan:

> "Our fate is not inevitable…we can change it," he said. "I want to be the Paul Revere of fiscal policy in this country."

Now, that two-tier tax plan was one of the reasons why I preferred for Fred Thompson in

the primaries… but the rest of my party wanted style, instead of substance. You blithering toadies! Who cares how warm his belly is? He opposes taxes *and* abortion, you hamster-brains! Oh, well. There's always 2012, where we can try to run Mark Sanford, Bobby Jindal or maybe even Michele Bachmann!

For more on Ryan's plan, here is an article in the Wall Street Journaltat he wrote. (H/T Western Standard Shotgun Blog)

How to talk to your co-workers about your faith

March 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Apologetics 315! Thanks for the link Brian!

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Free Canuckistan! Thanks for the linky, Binky!

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from The Happy Catholic! Thanks for the link, Julie!

Today, I'll talk a little bit about how to go about raising your colors in the workplace. Before we start, here are some catch-up posts on why apologetics matters:

- Does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- Douglas Groothuis on the Six Enemies of Apologetic Engagement
- Why men stay away from the feminized church
- Why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?

How to be yourself at work, without making other people angry

First of all, concentrate on working hard for the first 3 months after you start a job. Your ability to to raise your colors in the workplace is conditional on your ability to do your job well. For example, I decided to cut my career short a while back in order to go back to school and achieve some more goals, before returning to work:

- get a Masters degree in computer science (3.9 GPA)
- get computer science articles published in peer-reviewed journals
- present research at professional conferences
- apply for and be awarded patents

Secondly, *never* fight about work-related conflicts. Your job is not the means by which you will make your mark on the world. You make your mark *solely* by being an ambassador for Christ. Never sour a work relationship by arguing. State your reasons, and document your dissent. Christianity isn't about you. Or climbing a corporate ladder.

Let me be clear: With respect to your Christian commitment, your pride, popularity and reputation are *expendable*.

Thirdly, take every opportunity to make yourself the servant of your co-workers, especially those who may not be as senior or technical as you. In every job I have had so far, I've tried to help clean things up, wash dirty coffee mugs and dishes, and keep a supply cough drops, and other healthy snacks, etc. Also, don't get promoted to manager.

Fourth, after a few months, start to build your bookshelf at work. To start with, only stock debate books from academic presses, especially Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press. These kinds of books connect evidence to the claims of Christianity. It is *much easier* to discuss public, testable evidence with your co-workers than whether they are going to Hell or not .

Here are some examples of debate books I stock:

- Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology, Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA, Cambridge University Press, 2004
- God?: A Debate between a Christian and an Atheist, Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Darwinism, Design, and Public Education, Michigan State University Press, 2004.

Leave these books out on your desk as you read them, with a bookmark to show you are reading them. If asked to explain them, take no position but explain *both sides.* Speak quietly and don't interrupt. Stop talking after 2 minutes. Offer to continue the conversations off-site. Learn what your co-workers believe as they talk to you about your perfectly acceptable debate books.

As you read, note arguments and evidence used for and against your beliefs. When you eventually do get to the point where you are explaining your beliefs to people, you'll need to link them up with evidence and defeat objections. Keep the discussion on public evidence, show you are operating at a research level, and you should be able to avoid blow-ups.

Fifth, expand your book collection with books from any academic press. Your goal is to show that these topics require study and can be debated rationally using evidence. Even if you only read popular level books to start, it is important to project to your co-workers how you approach faith just like any other discipline – by studying it.

- Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice, Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Philosophy of Religion: A Reader and Guide, Rutgers University Press, 2002.
- The Design Inference: Eliminating Chance through Small Probabilities, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Hume's Abject Failure: The Argument Against Miracles, Oxford University Press, 2000.
- The Evidential Argument from Evil, Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Warranted Christian Belief, Oxford University Press, 2003.

If you get no flak from anyone, you can add more books on other issues, like the history, foreign policy, health care, education, philosophy of religion, astrobiology, global warming, economics and family/parenting. These books allow you to link your beliefs to other areas, so that turning the conversation to Christianity becomes easier.

The academic books are useful to convey that you have a serious approach to faith. But you probably will face much more ordinary objections. So, you should be reading *mostly* popular books to address them. That's where books by people like Lee Strobel and Paul Copan are useful. After those two, you can move on to edited collections like "Passionate Conviction" or "Signs of Intelligence".

An important rule is *never* to discuss the person's personal life or morality. And never discuss Christian-ese hymns, prayer, church, feelings, emotions, intuitions, religious experiences, or your own life. Untestable faith claims scare people. Stick to the public, testable evidence. Debate whether DNA is designed, not whether they should stop

shacking up.

Only talk to people who don't offend easily and who don't subscribe to politically correct ideologies. I avoid talking about spiritual things with people from groups that vote overwhelmingly democrat, such as single or divorced women. Eventually, the victim-mentality people will learn to behave in order to talk with you. Avoid breaking cover to anyone in your chain of command.

Sixth, you need to get comfortable with opposing views. In order to do that, you need to get used to being quiet and tolerant, and listening for extended periods of time, while ideas you oppose are forcefully presented. The goal is to be able to recognize your opponent's arguments and argue *for* them better than they can themselves.

Start with these university debate transcripts: (print them out, leave them on your desk)

- William Lane Craig vs Bart Ehrman (Resurrection)
- William Lane Craig vs Edwin Curley (God)
- William Lane Craig vs Kai Nielsen (Meaning)
- William Lane Craig vs Richard Taylor (Morality)
- William Lane Craig vs Ray Bradley (Hell)

Your goal is to speak about Christianity the same way Craig does. Move on to audio and video debates in this list, only *after* you master *reading* debates. Debate your friends and family first for practice. I will write a separate post on what to buy to augment your resource collection with actual debates and lectures that you can lend out.

Another important point: your goal is not to win during the discussion. Try not to beat up your opponent. Instead, explore the issue from both sides using public, testable evidence. Let the person decide for themselves what they think, after the discussion is over. Here's a great book on tactics that will help you.

An example of authentic Christianity in the public square

One last thing. You may be encouraged by listening to some lectures by Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here). Bradley is the best active proponent of public, authentic Christianity. He is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He has a huge pile of grants and research papers, and directed a research lab when he was at Texas A&M.

Here are a couple of different versions of the same lecture on integrating faith and vocation:

- Giants in the Land (80 min, low volume, Q&A)
- Coping in Academia (35 min, no Q&A, clear sound)

And here are a few other Bradley lectures I really like:

- Is There Objective Truth in Religion? (59 min,clear sound, Q&A)
- Walter Bradley's Journey to Faith (30 min, no Q&A, clear sound)
- Is there Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer? (91 min, clear sound)

More Bradley lectures are here.

Obama’s minions go door-to-door to get us to sign loyalty pledges

March 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Free Canuckistan! Thanks for the linky, Binky!

Holy Snark! (H/T Nice Deb)

Talk about The Road to Serfdom.

CBO: Budget adds 4.8 trillion to national debt, China worried

March 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hot Air has this:

> In a new report that provides the first independent analysis of President Obama's budget request, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office predicted that the administration's agenda would generate deficits **averaging nearly $1 trillion a year over the next decade — $2.3 trillion more than the president predicted when he unveiled his spending plan just one month ago.**

Tax hikes are mentioned here at the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Open Market blog:

> Obama's budget would explode the national debt while increasing taxes. That's the conclusion of the Congressional Budget Office, controlled by lawmakers who support Obama. "The President's proposals would add $4.8 trillion to the national debt," increasing "the cumulative deficit from 2010 to 2019 to $9.3 trillion." **The budget also adds $1.9 trillion in tax increases.**
>
> And the stimulus bill Obama claimed was needed to avert "disaster" and "irreversible decline"? It will shrink the economy over the long run, since its "increase in government debt is expected to displace or 'crowd out' . . . private capital."
>
> ...The CBO's conclusion confirms its earlier findings that the stimulus package will cut wages and the size of the economy in the long run, despite costing $800 billion. The stimulus package also gutted welfare reform.

The Heritage Foundation blog The Foundry has more. Here are just a few of their bullet points:

> • He raises taxes not just on upper-income taxpayers as he promised, but on all Americans through his misnamed "climate revenues", and as his budget indicates, this is just a starter program.
>
> • The President calls for enormous increases in government spending on health care and climate change, but on a great many other programs.
>
> • The CBO saw through perhaps the greatest chicanery ever in federal budgeting when President Obama first assumed the full costs of the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in perpetuity, and then claimed he is cutting spending when he asserts a change in policy and those spending amounts disappear.

The more he spends, the more it looks like he's going to have to print money to get out of this, or raise taxes on producers and destroy the economy completely. And all that makes China very, very worried. Here is an article from the leftist New York Times, headlined

“China’s Leader Says He Is ‘Worried’ Over U.S. Treasuries”.

Excerpt:

> The Chinese premier Wen Jiabao expressed concern on Friday about the safety of China’s $1 trillion investment in American government debt, the world’s largest such holding, and urged the Obama administration to provide assurances that its investment would keep its value in the face of a global financial crisis.
>
> …Mr. Wen said he was “worried” about China’s holdings of Treasury bonds and other debt, and that China was watching United States economic developments closely.

If Obama prints more money, this would raise inflation and devalue the US currency, including the Treasury Bonds held by China.

> But economists have cited several possible threats, led by the prospect that the dollar’s value will depreciate over time, lowering the value of China’s holdings.
>
> “In the short run, the dollar is appreciating” because global investors see the American currency as a safe haven at a time of crisis, Bai Chong-En, who heads the economics department at Tsinghua University in Beijing, said in a telephone interview. “But we don’t know what’s going to happen in the long run. If the American stimulus package is financed mainly by borrowing, then that may affect the future value of Treasury securities.”
>
> Some specialists also say that high inflation could erode the dollar’s value. Finally, some believe that China’s investment in American debt is now so vast that, should it need foreign exchange in some emergency, it would be unable to sell its Treasury securities without flooding the market and driving down their price.
>
> “The only possibility, really, is that China will have to hold these bonds until maturity,” said Shen Minggao, the chief economist at Caijing, a Beijing-based business magazine. “If you start to sell those bonds, the market may collapse.

And Heritage Foundation is reporting that they are even talking about switching out of the US dollar as their reserve currency.

Sigh. I found an article by Victor Davis Hanson (H/T Stop the ACLU) where he explores why Obama is destroying the economy. He has three possible solutions, and he analyzes each of them.

1. Clueless
2. Not so clueless
3. A mean streak

Personally, I vote for 1). And that goes for anyone voted for him. And I’ve read David Freddoso’s book, so that’s where I am coming from. But you can read the VDH article and make up your own mind.

Why fiscal conservatives should care about marriage

March 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Free Canuckistan! Thanks for the linky, Binky!

The percentage of out-of-wedlock births is now 40% of all births. Does this have an effect on the size of government? FOX News has a story on the breakdown of the nuclear family. (H/T Institute for Marriage and Public Policy)

Excerpt:

> …births to unwed mothers reached an all-time high of about 40 percent, continuing a trend that started years ago. More than three-quarters of these women were 20 or older.
>
> For a variety of reasons, it's become more acceptable for women to have babies without a husband, said Duke University's S. Philip Morgan, a leading fertility researcher.
>
> …And more women – especially those in their 30s and 40s – are choosing to have children despite their single status.

For some reason, and I know what that reason is, society has decided that men are unnecessary to the task of raising children. A man's job is just to supply sperm and money. And that money is taxed away from men by the government and redistributed, via expensive social programs, to unwed mothers. And this is how the state takes over the traditional role of men as protector and provider.

The House Ways and Means Committee knows about the effect of raising children without fathers.

> US House Testimony on Child support and Fatherhood proposals (Hearing 107-38). June 28, 2001, online House version; http://waysandmeans.house.gov/legacy.asp?file=legacy/humres/107cong/6-28-01/record/chillegalfound.htm) — Father absence, a byproduct of divorce, illegitimacy, and the erosion of the traditional family, is responsible for; filling our prisons, causing psychological problems, suicide, psychosis, gang activity, rape, physical and sexual child abuse, violence against women, general violence, alcohol and drug abuse, poverty, lower academic achievement, school drop-outs, relationship instability, gender identity confusion, runaways, homelessness, cigarette smoking, and any number of corrosive social disorders.

So then why does the government continue to subsidize out-of-wedlock birth? When you subsidize something, you get more of it. When you tax something, you get less of it. Is this so hard for social progressives to understand? Too much compassion, without standards, costs society in the long run, (see Jewish scholar Dennis Prager's piece here).

More statistics on the cost of fatherlessness here at Fathers for Life..

Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

March 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: My play-by-play transcript of the April 4, 2009 debate at Biola is here.

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from the Anchoress! Thanks for the link! New visitors, please take a look around. My blog is 50% news and policy analysis, 50% defending Christianity in practical ways.

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Apologetics 315! Thanks for the link Brian!

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Free Canuckistan! Thanks for the linky, Binky!

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Truthbomb Apologetics! Thanks for the link, DJ Spidey!

In preparation for the upcoming debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens, I thought that I would go over his opening statement from a previous debate to see what we can expect from him. I used his opening speech from his debate with Frank Turek. The audio from that debate is here, at Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 site.

Now the important thing to remember about a generic debate on whether GOD EXISTS is that there should be no mention of any particular God, such as the Christian God, and no mention of the history of any particular religion. All arguments that assume specific theological or moral doctrines or specific religious history are *irrelevant* to a debate on generic theism.

The question to be debated is: does a God who created and designed the universe, who has all the traditional properties of God, such as omniscience, omnipotence, omni-benevolence, etc. exist? That is the question being debated in a "Does God Exist?" debate.

Frank Turek's case for theism:

Frank Turek made 4 *relevant* arguments for theism, each of which *alone* would support his conclusion, that God exists:

- the origin of time, space, matter and energy out of nothing
- the fine-tuning of the physical constants to support the minimum requirements for life of any kind
- the origin of the biological information in the first self-replicating organism
- objective, prescriptive moral rules need to be grounded by the designer of the universe

And he also listed 4 features of the universe that are more consistent with theism than atheism (= materialism).

- non-material minds that allow rationality that would be impossible on materialism/determinism
- the mathematical structure of the universe and its intelligibility to the scientific method

- free will, which is required for moral responsibility and moral choices, requires a non-material mind/soul
- our first person experience of consciousness is best explained by a non-material mind/soul

Hitchens' case against theism

To counter, Hitchens has to argue against God using arguments in one of two forms:

1. The concept of God is logically self-contradictory
2. An *objective* feature of the world is inconsistent with the attributes of God

The claim that God does not exist is a claim to know something about God, namely, that he does not exist. This claim requires the speaker to bear a burden of proof. In a debate on "Does God Exist?", Hitchens must *deny* that God exists. Let me be clear: Hitchens must defeat the arguments for the claim that God exists, and then defend the claim that God does not exist, and support that claim using arguments and evidence.

Hitchens makes 2 basic claims:

- There are no good reasons to believe that theism is true
- There are good reasons to believe atheism is true

So far so good. But what are his good reasons for atheism?

1. I personally don't like Christianity, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: I personally don't like Catholicism getting rid of limbo
   – Premise: I personally don't like Hell
   – Premise: I personally don't like some episodes in church history
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
2. The plurality of religions means that no religious claims can be correct, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: There are lots of religions
   – Premise: The religions all disagree in their truth claims about the external world
   – Conclusion: No religion's claims can be correct, therefore God doesn't exist
3. I believe in one less God than you, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: You disbelieve in every God I do, except one
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
4. Religious people are stupid and evil, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Religious people are ignorant
   – Premise: Religious people are fearful
   – Premise: Religious people are servile
   – Premise: Religious people are masochistic
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
5. Evolution explains how life progressed from single cell to today's bio-diversity, therefore God doesn't exist

– Premise: Modern theists like Turek believe in Paley's argument, and argued it in this debate
– Premise: Paley's argument was refuted by evolution
– Conclusion: God doesn't exist

6. God wouldn't have made the universe this way, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: If God exists, then he would have made the universe my way
   – Premise: The heat death of the universe wasn't done my way
   – Premise: The extinction of species wasn't done my way
   – Premise: The size of the universe wasn't done my way
   – Premise: The amount of open space wasn't done my way
   – Premise: The large number of stars wasn't done my way
   – Premise: The age of the universe wasn't done my way
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
7. Religion makes people do things that I don't like, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Some religions do suicide bombing
   – Premise: Some religions do child abuse
   – Premise: Some religions do genital mutilation
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
8. If you speak a sentence, I can repeat the same words as you said, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Anything that you say is good, I can say is good too
   – Premise: Anything that you say is bad, I can say is bad too
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
9. Atheists are morally superior to religious people, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: I act in a way that is consistent with my personal, arbitrary moral preferences
   – Premise: You don't act in a way that is consistent with my personal, arbitrary moral preferences
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
10. If I believe in God, I would have to submit to an authority
    – Premise: If I believe in God, then I can't do whatever I want
    – Premise: But I want to do whatever I want
    – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
11. I don't like certain Christian doctrines, therefore arguments for God from science fail and therefore God doesn't exist
    – Premise: I don't like the atonement
    – Premise: I don't like the virgin birth
    – Premise: I don't like the incarnation
    – Premise: I don't like original sin
    – Premise: I don't like the resurrection
    – Conclusion: Arguments that are built on recent discoveries from the progress of science like the big bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, etc. are incorrect, and therefore God doesn't exist

General comments about Hitchens' case:

- The form of *all* of these arguments is *logically invalid*. The conclusions do not follow from the premises using the laws of logic, such as modus ponens and modus tollens.

Specific comments about each argument:

- Argument 1 tries to disprove God by arguing from Hitchens' personal preferences about specific Christian doctrines. Christian doctrines are irrelevant to a debate about generic theism. And there is no reason why God should be bound by the personal, subjective preferences of one man. In fact, the concept of God entails that his unchanging nature is the standard of good and evil. So, this argument doesn't disprove God, it's just a statement of personal, subjective preference.
- Argument 2: Just because there are different truth claims made by different groups, doesn't mean no one is correct. Mormons believe that matter existed eternally, and Jews believe it was created out of nothing. The big bang theory shows that the Mormons are wrong and the Jews are right.
- Argument 3: First of all, the debate is a about a generic Creator and Designer, not any particular religious conception of God. So the argument is irrelevant. Moreover, Christians reject Zeus, for example, because Zeus is supposed to exist in time and space, and therefore could not be the cause of the beginning of time and space.
- Argument 4: This is just the ad hominem fallacy. Hitchens is attacking the character of the theist, but that doesn't show theism is false.
- Argument 5: This argument can be granted for the sake of argument, even though it's debatable. The point is that it is irrelevant, since it doesn't refute any of Turek's actual scientific arguments like the big bang, the fine-tuning of the physical constants, the origin of information in the simplest living cell.
- Argument 6: Again, there is no reason to think that God should be bound by Hitchens' personal opinion of how God should operate.
- Argument 7: This is the ad hominem fallacy again. The good behavior of religious believers is not a premise in any of Turek's FOUR arguments for theism. Therefore, Hitchens' point is irrelevant to the debate.
- Argument 8: The fact that the atheist can parrot moral claims is not the issue. Being able to speak English words is not what grounds objective, prescriptive morality. The issue is the ontology of moral rules, the requirement of free will in order to have moral responsibility and moral choices, ultimate significance of moral actions, and the rationality of self-sacrificial moral actions.
- Argument 9: This is just the ad hominem fallacy again.
- Argument 10: This is not argument so much as it reveals that the real reason Hitchens is an atheist is emotional. One might even say infantile.
- Argument 11: Again, these specific Christian doctrines are irrelevant to a debate about generic theism. And Hitchen's subjective, personal preferences about Christian doctrine certainly do not undermine the objective scientific support for the

premises in Turek's 3 scientific arguments.

So, in short, Hitchens lost the debate. A talking parakeet who could only say the 3 premises of the *Kalam* argument over and over, in a squeaky high-pitched voice, would have defeated him. Atheists and agnostics can do a lot better. That is, if the purpose of the debate is to win and not to just hurl insults at people on the other side.

Worst. Debater. Ever.

Here are some posts on defending Christianity: the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the irrationality of morality on atheism, debates on morality, the irrationality of moral judgements against God on atheism, the hiddenness of God, the problem of evil, religious pluralism, the problem of the unevangelized and how to defend the resurrection without assuming that the Bible is generally reliable.

UPDATE: On Hot Air, I noticed that legions of British atheists are signing up to be de-baptized. Probably fans of Hitchens and his "I woudn't have done it that way" case against God. As well, Hot Air is covering a story that scientologists and atheists are uniting. Because, you know, they are both science-based.

Full video and slides from the Heartland Institute GW conference

March 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I first heard about this global warming conference on John Lott's blog here. But at least I'll be able to go through the slides and video of the presenters, because it's all online here.

I was excited to see the Czech Republic President (and current European Union President) Vaclav Klaus in there as a keynote. And I see some other names I recognize, like Richard Lindzen of MIT who also gave a keynote address. I see Tom McClintock gave a keynote. He's a solid conservative who ran against Arnold in the California gubernatorial race, after Gray Davis was dumped.

The only other people I recognize are Sen. John Sununu, Fred Singer and Roy Spencer. And Iain Murray, whose book I still have to buy.

Here's something by Iain Murray in the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Open Market blog that's relevant. The UN wants to impose a tax on wealthy nations to raise 750 billion dollars to stop ManBearPig global warming.

> Achim Steiner, head of the UN Environment Program, has said that the global financial crisis provides an opportunity for a global green new deal.

Murray quotes Steiner in this Reuters article, on how he proposes to get the money:

> "If, for argument's sake, you were to put a five-year levy in OECD countries of $5 a barrel, you would generate $100 billion per annum. It translates into roughly 3 cents per liter," he said.
>
> "It would be almost, if not totally, unnoticed by the consumer"…

Remember a little while back, Sen. James Inhofe tried to stop UN global taxes? I don't know if this counts as one, but it sounds like one to me!

Judd Gregg says Obama's budget will bankrupt the country

March 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Free Canuckistan! Thanks for the linky, Binky!

Found this post over at Gateway Pundit. You'll remember that Judd Gregg is one of those fiscally conservative New Hampshire senators, an expert on business, finance and economics. Despite being a Republican, he was nominated by Obama for the Cabinet position of Commerce Secretary. He backed out of it, though. And now we can guess why.

Last month, he warned that the budget would bankrupt the USA:

A new video from CNN is here. Here's an excerpt from the transcript:

> "The practical implications of this is bankruptcy for the United States," Gregg said of the Obama's administration's recently released budget blueprint. "There's no other way around it. If we maintain the proposals that are in this budget over the ten-year period that this budget covers, this country will go bankrupt. People will not buy our debt, our dollar will become devalued. It is a very severe situation."
>
> "Your listeners have to understand how staggering the numbers are. We're talking about a deficit in the trillion-dollar range for as far as the eye can see. We're talking about deficits which are 4% to 5% of GDP – which is not sustainable under any form of government. We're talking about a public debt – this is a debt that people own of the federal government – that will be around 80% of GDP. Historically, it's been around 40% of GDP in the out years. The practical implication of this is bankruptcy for the United States. There's no other way around it."

I know people who denounced Bush, McCain and Palin. They voted for this ACORN lawyer. As if Obama was God's gift to small government conservatism. They wouldn't read a single economics book. I remember showing them numbers from Citizens Against Government Waste and American Taxpayers Union, which they rejected.

Here's one more interesting piece from the always wonderful IBD (editorial, podcast). I include the details of the Bush and Reagan budgets, for comparison with Obama's budget.

Excerpt:

> According to the CBO, the Obama administration lowballed its deficit forecast by $482 billion over the next four years and $2.3 trillion over the next 10. In other words, the CBO says that 10-year deficits will be 33% higher than the president claims, should his plans get enacted.
>
> This makes Obama's budget one of the worst accounting jobs ever put forward in

> modern times by a new administration.
>
> When the CBO reviewed George W. Bush's first budget, for example, the difference between what Bush said his budget would cost and what the CBO said it would cost was minimal.
>
> …Reagan's first budget, which was widely panned for allegedly employing rosy scenarios to cook the numbers, differed from the CBO by just 1.2% in projected revenues and 5% in spending over the first four years.
>
> So why the huge gap between Obama and the CBO?
>
> Obama's team employed one of the oldest budget tricks in the books — exaggerating economic growth — to hide the true cost of his tax and spending plans. Budget forecasts are hugely sensitive to predictions about GDP growth, inflation, unemployment and interest rates. Even slight differences can have a huge impact on projected outlays and revenues.
>
> And in his budget, Obama is positively Pollyannaish about the economy, predicting 3.2% real GDP growth next year, compared to the CBO's 2.9% and the Blue Chip consensus forecast of 1.9%. While the CBO and Blue Chip think unemployment will be 9% in 2010, Obama claims it will be only 7.9%. And so on.

Here's an image I stole from IBD:

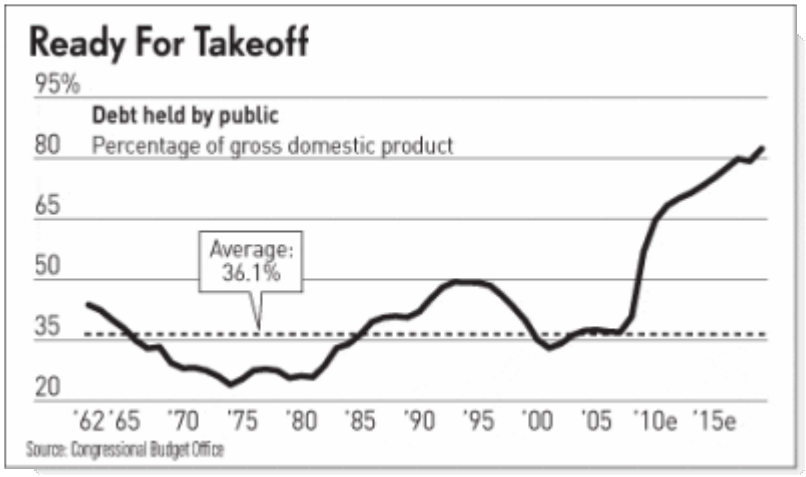

IBD: Publically-held debt

Read the whole editorial! And don't foget to subscribe to IBD's podcast feed. It's FREE!

Michelle Malkin has more details on Obama's "public-private partnership" plan for economic recovery.

Excerpt:

Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

March 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Free Canuckistan! Thanks for the linky, Binky!

I thought I would just go over a paper from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best).Wright has taught at Cambridge, Oxford, Duke, McGill, etc.. He's published 40 books.

CV excerpt, all degrees are from Oxford University:

- 2000 **D.D.**
- 1981 **D.Phil.**
- 1975 **M.A.**
- 1973 **B.A.**(1st class Honours), Theology; Denyer and Johnson Prize (shared) for top first class of year; College Prize
- 1971 **B.A.**(1st class Honours), Literae Humaniores; College Prize

Wright seems to get a lot of respect from skeptics like John Dominic Crossan (their debate is here: book, audio – note: buy the audio, don't buy the book). I have never heard Crossan concede the empty tomb and the appearances before, but he did against Wright. In his debate (audio, book) against William Lane Craig, he denied *all 4* of Craig's minimal facts.

We have seen elsewhere how to argue for the resurrection using the minimal facts approach. The minimal facts are the handful of facts about Jesus that survive the standard historical criteria used in the evaluation of historical biographies. But Wright has a *different* approach.

Let's take a look at a lecture (that link has PDF transcript, audio and movies) that Wright gave on the resurrection.

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable* apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there

were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an invented exaltation was already available to do the job.
3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.
5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissable under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was not a belief in a flying spaceship that was going to come and pick them up if they drank the kool-aid. This was a belief they held *based on personal experience*s. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

Additional resources

For more debates on the resurrection, see here for William Lane Craig, here for Mike Licona, and here for Gary Habermas. I am a big fan of all these guys, but Craig hasn't lost any resurrection debates, while Licona *tied* against Richard Carrier and Habermas *lost* against Arif Ahmed. In particular, I recommend these 3 debates:

- William Lane Craig (Biola) vs Roy Hoover (Whitman College)
- Mike Licona (Independent) vs Bart Ehrman (UNC Chapel Hill)
- Gary Habermas (Liberty) vs Joel Marcus (Duke) – Part1, Part2, Part3

UPDATE: Also, I have a more recent post on the earliest source of historical facts about the resurrection.

Massachusetts state-run health care costs hit 820 million

March 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Spotted this article in the leftist New York Times, (H/T Independent Women's Forum). Looks like the communists in MA are finding out too late that there is a problem with having the state make health insurance compulsory and having prescription drugs and mental health coverage included for every policy holder, regardless of risk.

The article states:

> Alan Sager, a professor of health policy at Boston University, has calculated that health spending per person in Massachusetts increased faster than the national average in seven of the last eight years. Furthermore, he said, the gap has grown exponentially, with Massachusetts now spending about a third more per person, up from 23 percent in 1980.

John R. Graham of the State Policy Network, (H/T Pacific Research Institute) explains how they got into this mess:

> Surely, even the *New York Times* can figure out that spending $820 million on the Bay State's Commonwealth Care "universal" health-care plan, in order to save $250 million in uncompensated hospital care, is not a good trade-off.
>
> Not according to today's article on the latest state to compel its residents to buy health insurance, which reports those savings as the only positive outcome of this out-of-control program. Three years ago, Gov. Romney collaborated with the Democratic-majority legislature to achieve "universal" health care by government diktat: squeezing every resident into either compulsory private health insurance or expanded government programs, using both tax-hikes and subsidies.
>
> Today, we learn that, alongside the absurd cost/benefit ratio, the state can no longer bear the costs, which are spiralling out of control faster than other states' costs are. **This reminds us of a fundamental lesson of government power: When the government orders you to buy something, the government will have to step in to decide what that something looks like.**

It's the same old story of how fixing the price of a product or service below market value results in increased demand and decreased supply. And we all know what happens when the costs of government-run health care escalates – increased government control of the lives of patients and decreased quality of health care service.

For the life of me, I don't know why anyone voted for that RINO Mitt Romney in the primaries. In my opinion, he was terrible on social issues across the board, and this

RomneyCare mess doesn’t exactly inspire confidence on fiscal policy, either.

Republicans call for Obama to fire tax-cheat Geithner

March 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found these stories on the blogs of conservative Republicans. They are not going to let Obama weasel out of the consequences of his incompetent Cabinet picks.

Representative Marsha Blackburn

Marsha Blackburn

Representative Marsha Blackburn posted about Geithner on her blog.

Excerpt:

> Yesterday Congressman Marsha Blackburn (TN-7) appeared on The Fred Thompson Show and called on Secretary of the Treasury Tim Geithner to resign.
>
> **"I think that he has caused more problems than he has solved,"** Blackburn said on the nationally syndicated radio show. **"I think he needs to go and it doesn't matter if the President wants to remove him or he wants to submit his resignation but Secretary Geithner needs to go."**

Audio of Blackburn on the Fred Thompson radio show is here: short clip, long clip).

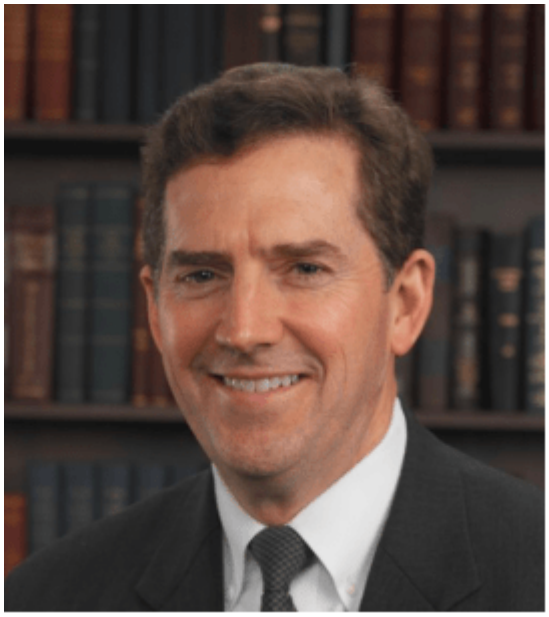

Senator Jim Demint

Jim Demint

Jim Demint calls for the firing of Geithner in this post on his blog:

Excerpt:

> During an interview with FOX Business, Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) discusses Americans' outrage with AIG bonuses and government bailouts. DeMint calls upon President Obama to fire Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, saying that Americans have lost confidence in him because he clearly "has lost his ability to operate" and deal with America's current economic crisis.

Video:

John Shadegg

In addition, Representative John Shadegg had a post on his blog.

Excerpt:

> "How could Geithner have been so intimately involved in the AIG bailout, head of the New York Federal Reserve when the Reserve was informed of the bonuses, head of the Treasury when the department asked for the provision that helped secure these bonuses, and supposedly one of the greatest experts on Wall Street today – and not have known about them?
>
> "Sadly, it appears that **Secretary Geithner is either dishonest or incompetent.**
>
> "Perhaps the Senate should have paid more attention to Geithner's tax errors after all."

We need to embarass Obama for nominating this incompetent tax cheat.

Is there scientific evidence for an intelligent designer?

March 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor, and a great example of the integration of Christian faith and a stellar academic career. He is not a "secret-service" Christian. Rejecting the notion of safe, private Christianity, he instead projects his Christian faith outward, where his students *and colleagues* can be aware of his beliefs.

Below I analyze a lecture I chose from the hundreds of public lectures he has given all over the world on the integration of Christian faith with other public, testable areas of knowledge. In this lecture, entitled "Is There Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer?", Dr. Bradley explains how the progress of science has made the idea of a Creator and Designer of the universe more acceptable than ever before.

Evidence #1: The design of the universe

1. The correspondence of natural phenomena to mathematical law

- All observations of physical phenomena in the universe, such as throwing a ball up in the air, are described by a few simple, elegant mathematical equations.

2. The fine-tuning of physical constants and rations between constants in order to provide a life-permitting universe

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other

selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants and ratios: (there are more examples in the lecture)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would be able to build up the nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.
- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – “carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can’t be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

3. Fine-tuning to allow a habitable planet

- A number of factors must be fine-tuned in order to have a planet that supports life
- Initial estimates predicted abundant life in the universe, but revised estimates now predict that life is almost certainly unique in the galaxy, and probably unique in the universe.
- Even though there are lots of stars in the universe, the odds are against *any* of them supporting complex life.
- Here are just a few of the minimal requirements for habitability: must be a single star solar system, in order to support stable planetary orbits, the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to have liquid water at the surface, the planet

must sufficient mass in order to retain an atmosphere, etc.

The best current atheist response to this is to speculate that there may be an infinite number of unobservable and untestable universes. (I.e. – the Flying Spaghetti Monster did it)

Evidence #2: The origin of the universe

1. The progress of science has shown that the entire physical universe came into being out of nothing (= "the big bang"). It also shows that the cause of this creation event is non-physical and non-temporal. The cause is *supernatural*.

- Atheism prefers an eternal universe, to get around the problem of a Creator having to create the universe.
- Discovery #1: Observations of galaxies moving away from one another confirms that the universe expanded from a single point.
- Discovery #2: Measurements of the cosmic background radiation confirms that the universe exploding into being.
- Discovery #3: Predictions of elemental abundances prove that the universe is not eternal.
- Discovery #4:The atheism-friendly steady-state model and oscillating model were both falsified by the evidence.
- And there were other discoveries as well, mentioned in the lecture.

The best atheistic response to this is to speculate that there is an unobservable and untestable hyper-universe outside our own. (I.e. – the Flying Spaghetti Monster did it)

Evidence #3: The origin of life

1. The progress of science has shown that the simplest living organism contains huge amounts of biological information, similar to the Java code I write all day at work. This is a problem for atheists, because the sequence of instructions in a living system has to come together all at once, it cannot have evolved by mutation and selection – because there was no replication in place prior to the formation of that first living system!

- Living systems must support certain minimum life functions: processing energy, storing information, and replicating.
- There needs to be a certain amount of complexity in the living system that can perform these minimum functions.
- But on atheism, the living system needs to be simple enough to form by accident in a pre-biotic soup, and in a reasonable amount of time.
- The minimal functionality in a living system is a achieved by DNA, RNA and enzymes. DNA and RNA are composed of sequences of proteins, which are in turn composed of sequences of amino acids.

Consider the problems of building a chain of 100 amino acids

- The amino acids must be left-handed only, but left and right kinds are equally abundant in nature. How do you sort out the right-handed ones?
- The amino acids must be bound together using peptide bonds. How do you prevent other types of bonds?
- Each link of the amino acid chain needs to be carefully chosen such that the completed chain with fold up into a protein. How do you choose the correct amino acid for each link from the pool of 20 different kinds found in living systems?
- In every case, a human or other intelligence could solve these problems by doing what intelligent agents do best: *making choices.*
- But who is there to make the choices on atheism?

The best current atheistic response to this is to speculate that unobservable and untestable aliens seeded the earth with life. (I.e. – the Flying Spaghetti Monster did it)

The problem of the origin of life is not a problem of chemistry, it is a problem of engineering. Every part of car functionality can be understood and described using the laws of physics and chemistry. But an intelligence is still needed in order to assemble the components into a system that has the minimal requirements for a functioning vehicle.

Conclusion

In all three areas, scientists expected that the data would be consistent with atheism. First, scientists expected that life could exist even if the physical constants and ratios were altered. The progress of science said *NO*. Second, scientists expected that the universe would be eternal. The progress of science said *NO.* Third, scientists expected that the origin of life would be simple. The progress of science said *NO.*

The Democrats are considering carbon tariffs on imported goods

March 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Robert P. Murphy's linked to this post he wrote at the Institute for Energy Research. Murphy is concerned that Obama is going down the same path as that interventionist Herbert Hoover did. Hoover passed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which led the United States into the Great Depression. Murphy thinks that carbon tariffs could be on the way!

Here is an an excerpt from Murphy's post:

> …the Obama administration—under the guise of fighting climate change—is testing the waters with new restrictions on imports. Specifically, lawmakers on the House Energy and Commerce Committee are considering imposing "carbon tariffs" to prevent foreign nations from gaining a competitive advantage vis-à-vis U.S. producers who are burdened with a forthcoming cap-and-trade regime. The idea is that the U.S. government would slap a huge "compensatory" tax on imports that were produced in foreign nations that do not impose carbon legislation on their manufacturers.

Murphy explains why free trade increases the prosperity of all nations, by promoting efficient production:

> Even without retaliation, a unilateral tariff increase makes Americans poorer. The gains to the workers in the "protected" domestic industry are more than offset by the loss to consumers who have to pay higher prices. A tariff is *a tax on American consumers*; the government says to its own citizens, "If you want to buy a product from a foreign producer, you have to make a side payment to the U.S. Treasury." You don't make a country richer by jacking up taxes on its own consumers.
>
> International trade allows countries to specialize in their "comparative advantage," or their areas of relative expertise. It would be catastrophic if everyone had to grow his own food, sew his own clothes, and drill his own cavities. We all benefit tremendously from the ability to specialize in occupations at which we are better than our peers, and then trade with each other.
>
> The same principle applies to entire countries, which are simply aggregates of the individuals living in them. Because of differences in resource endowments, industrial infrastructure, weather, and the skills of the workforce, it is much more efficient for certain regions of the world to concentrate on a few key items and export them to other regions. When the government raises tax barriers, it interferes with this process and makes everyone poorer on average.

Not only do tariffs hurt consumers, but they also destroy businesses that export products.

First, those businesses will have to pay *more* for raw materials. Second, the goods they export to other countries will face import tariffs. This will cost more American jobs than are "saved" by imposing tariffs. And the government gets the money from tariffs, not the productive private sector.

Murphy explains how global warming is really just a euphemism for economically-ignorant socialism:

> Even if the threat from man-made climate change is as serious as some scientists claim, this fact would not overturn the centuries of work done by economic scientists. We know from both theory and history that raising trade barriers in the middle of a severe worldwide recession is a terrible policy. We also know from theory and history that government central planning *does not work*. When the technocrats reorder the economy, deciding which firms will survive and which prices are too high or too low, the results are disastrous. It doesn't matter whether the justification is "fighting the Depression" (as in the 1930s) or "fighting climate change" (as in today's discussions). Either way, central planning will wreck the economy, and it won't even achieve its ostensible goals.

I recommend you go there and read the whole article. Think of the future of your children, and of your neighbor's children.

Related story over at Stop the ACLU: "EPA may soon deem CO2 a threat to human health". I blogged before about cap and trade, tax hikes on oil, the world's anger at tariffs, and the myth of global warming.

Michele Bachmann opposes nationalization of industries

March 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

We're well on our way down the road to serfdom, but thankfully we still have Michele Bachmann fighting against socialism on our behalf.

Excerpt from her blog post:

> It's vital that we ask questions of this Administration as it continues to insert itself into the private sector. Most recently, it's reported that the Obama Administration is considering asking Congress to give the Treasury Secretary the authority to take over non-bank financial companies, such as large insurers, investment firms and hedge funds.
>
> Giving the Secretary this authority would be an unprecedented transfer of power to the federal government. The current model for regulating the financial markets relies on independent agencies that are independent from the political process.

Give 'em hell, Michele!

UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown excoriated over massive debt

March 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Spotted this awesome video over at The Anchoress. This is a MUST-SEE video. If only someone had the courage to take on President Teleprompter and the economic-illiterates who voted for him, like this British MP takes on Gordon Brown.

The Anchoress has a bunch of great links there, as well.

Excerpt from her post:

> Here in the United States, land of the First Amendment and free speech, it is right now unthinkable that anyone would stand up in a political chamber and speak so forthrightly.
>
> I mean…can you imagine someone in our Congress or Senate actually standing up with a chart like this, and daring to talk to Obama about his "inherited" debt?

Michele Bachmann could do it. Also, here's the chart that she mentions from Ace of Spades: (watch out for vulgar language!)

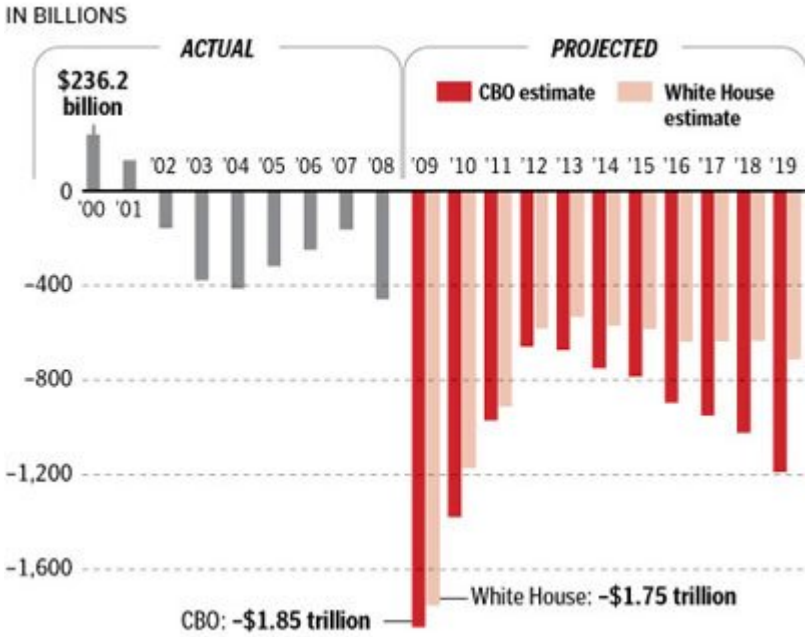

Obama's projected deficits

Gateway Pundit has more here:

> President Obama expects the deficit level to be **12% of GDP** this year.
>
> America is actually in worse shape than Great Britain.
> According to **Heritage**, Obama has already helped **quadruple the deficit** with his stimulus package.

Hot Air has links to the MP's youtube page and blog. Apparently this is *normal* for him, although Hot Air says he isn't a solid conservative.

> Here's his YouTube page, chock full of more in this vein, and here's his blog, in which he marvels at the ability of the 'Net to turn a backbench parliamentarian into an international fiscal conservative hero overnight. Exit question: We're all agreed that Hannan gets to deliver the GOP's response to next year's State of the Union, yes?

Some people who voted for Obama told me during the election that Obama would be *much more* fiscally responsible than Bush and Reagan, because Republicans are all big spenders. They couldn't stand the 550 billion we spent securing our liberty in two wars against radical terrorism. Obama is going to run the national debt up to over 20 trillion by 2019. Which amount is greater?

I asked 2 of my Obama-voting friends today how much the 2 wars cost, and neither of them knew. They did not even believe me when I showed them the *actual numbers*. What do they do in the evenings? Why, they watch Family Guy, Rachel Maddow and sports. One of these people actually told me that Rachel Maddow was a *centrist*. The other one is the more ignorant of the two.

Lastly, two of my fundamentalist Christian friends told me that Obama was more pro-life than McCain. Yes, they really said that! If you have a story about someone who voted for Obama who ought to have known better, please put it in the comments!

Are there objective truths about God?

March 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a lecture entitled “Are there Objective Truths About God?”, philosopher William Lane Craig address the postmodern skepticism of logic that seems to be so fashionable these days, especially on campus and in the “emergent church” movement.

Here’s the link to the lecture audio and the lecture outline.

What is a self-refuting statement?

The main concept in the lecture is the logical concept of self-refutation. A self-refuting sentence is a sentence that, if true, makes itself false or meaningless. For example, if someone said to you: “there are no meaningful sentences longer than 5 words”. Or if they said, “it’s wrong to make moral judgments”. Those statements are self-refuting.

What is truth?

Craig assumes the common-sense correspondence theory of truth. This theory holds that “truth” is a property of a proposition such that if the proposition is true, then it corresponds to the external world. For example, if I claim that there is a crocodile in your closet and we find a crocodile in your closet, then my statement was true. No crocodile in your closet means my statement was false.

Are there objective truths about God?

There are 3 objections discussed in the William Lane Craig lecture. Each objection seeks to make religion subjective, (true for each person, like food preferences), in order to minimize the incumbency and prescriptive force of Christian theology and Christian moral teachings.

Objection #1:The Challenge of Verificationism

The first challenge is that religious claims cannot be verified using the 5 senses, and therefore religious statements are objectively meaningless.

Consider the statement “Only propositions that can be verified with the 5 senses are meaningful”. That statement cannot be verified with the 5 senses. If the statement is true, it makes itself meaningless. It’s self-refuting.

Objection #2: The Challenge of Mystical Anti-Realism

The second challenge is that religious claims, and claims about God, are neither true nor false.

Consider the statement “No statements about God can be true or false”. That statement itself is a statement about God. If the statement is true, then it is neither true nor false. It’s self-refuting.

Objection #3: The Challenge of Radical Pluralism

The third challenge is that each person invents an entire reality of their own, and that there is no mind-independent objective world shared by individuals.

Consider the statement "There is no objective reality shared by all individuals". That statement is a statement that applies to all individuals. If the statement is true, then it only applies to the *speaker's subjective reality,* not to everyone else. It's self-refuting.

Conclusion

Craig ends the lecture by arguing that it is OK to think that other people's views are false. It does not follow that just because Christians think other people's views are wrong that they am going to mistreat other people. In fact, in Christianity it is objectively true that it is good to love your enemies. It is objectively true that all human beings have value, because human beings are made by God.

In Christianity, I am absolutely obligated to treat people with whom I disagree with respect and gentleness (1 Pet 3:15-16). The more convinced I am about *that* belief, the better my opponents will be treated. A *stronger* belief in Christianity means *more* tolerance for those who disagree.

My personal experiences with "Christian" postmodernism

Growing up, I was often confronted with the idea that God was beyond logic and beyond reason. Imagine my surprise as a conservative young Christian to find out that church and campus club leadership had embraced postmodernism, and were very skeptical of controversial doctrines like Hell, exclusive salvation, inerrancy and authorial intent.

As I grew older, I began to uncover why the postmoderns in leadership believed that God is not bound by the laws of logic. It was because of their desire for popularity. They did not want to have to confront people with exclusive and judgmental Christian claims. They did not want to have defend these ideas as true, using evidence – because that would involve *work.*

Postmodern Christians would say to atheists, "Christianity is true *for me*, and atheism is true *for you*", in order to be accepted. And they would feel, emotionally and intuitionally, that non-judmentalism and non-exclusivism was *right.* Postmodernism was their way to avoid wasting time on theology and apologetics, (although technically, it did involve lying to people about God's character).

Postmodern Christians were also very hostile towards apologetics, because "knowing for certain" took away their ability to doubt. They could keep God at arms-length when he was morally demanding, while keeping him within arm's reach for emotional support. God existed for postmoderns when they needed comfort, and he didn't exist when they wanted autonomy.

For further study

A debate between a Christian and a postmodern. You can see for yourself how gentle Peter Williams is during this dialog with someone with whom he disagrees. His objective is to persuade – to win her over. Also, what about those who have never heard of Jesus? What about the problems of evil and suffering?

Also, for extra credit, Super-commenter ECM sent me this post from David Thompson a few days back, in which Thompson interviewed Dr. Stephen Hicks on postmodernism in

academia. The post also describes the link between postmodernism and socialism. This is a great post!

Jim Demint stands up to fascism on the Senate floor

March 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

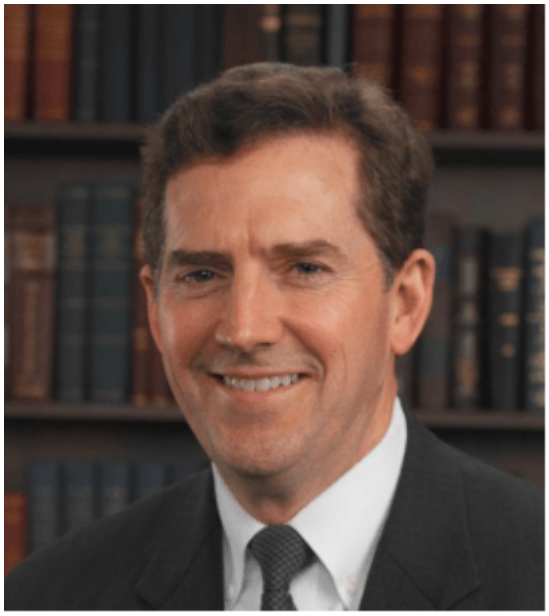

Senator Jim Demint

Here is a video from Hot Air of our hero Jim Demint, the best senator in the Senate.

Here's the best part:

> These are not Government decisions. We need to focus on what we were set up to do and do it much better than we are doing, instead of every week coming in here, bringing our good intentions and our compassion and every problem we see across the country we say something needs to be done. Then we say: The Government needs to do it.
>
> That is the fatal flaw of the Congress today, is we forget that sacred oath of office that says: We will protect and defend the Constitution which says this Federal Government has a very limited function. And those functions that are not prescribed in the Constitution are left to individuals and to the States. At least we have someone fighting back against the democrats.

The whole transcript is here.

I also noticed this other video related to one of my old posts in which Demint opposed discrimination against religious schools in one of Obama's massive spending bills.

And remember Obama's defunding of charities, including churches and other religious organizations. As I argued before, when government increases, secularism increases right along with it. Big government is anti-Christianity and anti-religious-liberty.

Heartland Institute’s podcasts on school choice and education

March 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I waited anxiously for this Heartland Institute series of 10 5-minute podcasts on education to finish, and now it’s finally done!

Here are the links:

- In episode 0, the introduction, we respond to the question, Why Do We Need School Reform?
- In episode 1, surveys reveal that parents who choose independent schools do so on the basis of academics, not athletics or convenience.
- In episode 2, we discuss how allowing tax dollars to follow the child will give parents more control over their child’s education.
- In episode 3, competition encourages creativity and lessens mediocrity.
- In episode 4, choice makes parents accountable and frees leaders from excessive regulation.
- In episode 5, school choice enables teachers to recover lost freedoms.
- In episode 6, funding should be adequate to enable parents to chose high-quality schools, but parents should be allowed to add their own dollars.
- In episode 7, voucher programs help teachers by paving the way for better teachers to receive higher pay.
- In episode 8, private schools should be allowed to retain their self-government. This autonomy is in the best interest of the public.
- In episode 9, school choice promotes and protects the institutions and organizations that create and protect democracy.
- In episode 10, school choice creates a genuine free market for education, free from rules.

The booklet that the series is based on is here as a PDF.

Greg Koukl explains how to be a consistent moral relativist

March 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The absolute easiest way to get into a good conversation with someone is to ask them what makes something right or wrong on their view. You have to be careful not to get into a fight about a particular moral issue, though, so you have to choose a clear-case example, not something controversial.

Just ask the person you want to engage two questions:

1. Is it it wrong to treat people badly just because of their skin color?
2. What makes it wrong?

Now, as I see it, there are only 3 possible answers to this question.

1. I personally prefer not to do that – it is wrong *for me.*
2. Our culture has evolved a set of customs that apply for us in this time and place, and that set of customs says that members of the society ought not to do that. It is wrong *for us, here and now.*
3. Humans are designed to act in a certain way, and part of that design is that we ought not to do that. Acting in line with our design allows us to flourish, (Aristotle's *eudaimonia*).

Response #1, is called "moral relativism". Response #2 is called "cultural relativism", and I will say a few words about that later. Response #3 is my view. I believe in a hierarchy of moral absolutes.

In this post, I wanted to go over a paper by Greg Koukl from Stand to Reason, in which he critiques moral relativism. His paper is called "Seven Things You Can't Do as a Moral Relativist". First, let's see the list of sevent things.

1. You can't make moral judgments about other people's moral choices
2. You can't complain about God allowing evil and suffering
3. You can't blame people or praise people for their moral choices
4. You can't claim that any situation is unfair or unjust
5. You can't improve your morality
6. You can't have meaningful discussions about morality
7. You can't promote the obligation to be tolerant

You'll have to read the paper to see how he argues for these, but I wanted to say a brief word about number 1. I already blogged about 2 here.

1. Relativists can't accuse others of wrong-doing

In moral relativism, what you ought to do is totally up to you. Morality is just like a lunch

buffet – you pick what you like based on your personal preferences.

I remember one particular discussion I had with a non-Christian co-worker. Both she and her live-in boyfriend were moral relativists. They were fighting because she was angry about his not having (or wanting) a job, and he was angry because when he asked her for space, she immediately ran out and cheated on him.

What's interesting is that both of these people chose the other in order to escape being judged themselves. I think this happens a lot in relationships today. Instead of choosing someone who has character and who takes the role of spouse and parent seriously, people choose someone ammoral, who doesn't threaten their autonomy.

Only later do they realize that marriage and parenting requires moral knowledge! I think that they each hope that they will later be able to change the other person into someone they are not. Which is probably why a lot of marriages break up. I just don't see how it's possible to get married without the ability to appeal to objective moral standards when disputes arise.

One of my best friends is married to a woman who I think is a really great wife and mother. A number of times I have disagreed with her about various topics, like firearms or masculinity. She goes away and reads a bunch of things and then comes back with a more thoughtful view. I think this is very important in a marriage. She's changed my mind a few times as well.

(She spends her free night answering apologetics questions for seekers at her church)

A quick point about cultural relativism

Regarding cultural relativism, there a number of problems with it, some of which are described here. What constitutes a society? Who defines the moral consensus? What about the reformer's dilemma? Why should I care what the herd thinks? Why should I sacrifice my own autonomy when the herd won't catch me? Etc.

Also, I want to point out the 7-part series on morality and atheism that Tough Questions Answered put together a while back. I blogged about it here. Here's another post with some debate about the rationality of moral rules and moral behavior on atheism. And then there was that debate with the postmodern moral relativist against Peter Williams.

Traditional marriage supporters sue California over harassment and intimidation

March 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Supporters of traditional marriage are being harassed and intimidated by opponents of the pro-marriage Proposition 8 initiative that passed recently in California. Anti-traditional-marriage activists used public lists of donors to put up web sites with maps showing the names and addresses of people who donated to support traditional marriage.

Here is an excerpt of the Washington Times article: (H/T John Lott)

> After giving $10,000 to California's Proposition 8 campaign last year, Charles LiMandri began receiving some unexpected correspondence.
>
> "I got about two dozen e-mails and hate phone calls," said Mr. LiMandri, who lives in San Diego….Those e-mails are now among hundreds of exhibits in a landmark case challenging California's campaign-finance reporting rules, which require the release of the names, addresses and employers of those who contribute $100 or more to ballot-measure committees.
>
> The lawsuit argues that those who contribute to traditional-marriage initiatives should be exempt from having their names disclosed, citing the widespread harassment and intimidation of donors to the Proposition 8 campaign.
>
> …Intimidation tactics range from letters and e-mails to death threats, proponents say. A Sacramento theater director was fired after opponents of the initiative publicized his Proposition 8 campaign contributions.
>
> "Anybody who's in California knows that it's very widespread," said Brian Brown, executive director of the National Organization for Marriage, one of the biggest contributors to Proposition 8 and a joint plaintiff in the lawsuit. "Every donor has a story. I talked to a $100 donor the other day who had a note in his mailbox that said, 'I know where you live and you're going to pay.'

I don't think it's right for *anyone* to force their views on others by using threats and intimidation. Maybe we need a Human Rights Commission to protect the rights of supporters of traditional marriage.

The Republican alternative budget

March 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tired of trillion dollar deficits as far as the eye can see? Worried that Obama is going to bankrupt the country? Angry about the planned reduction of charitable giving by 9 billion dollars? Or tax hikes on energy companies that will raise consumer energy prices? Are you doubtful that any amount of tax hikes on the productive sector can pay for all this spending?

Well, I spotted this post outlining the Republican alternative to Obama's budget over at Investors Business Daily. (H/T Club for Growth)

This is definitely worth reading! The first part reiterates how tax cuts have stimulated the economy and job creation in the past under Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. The article then list all the details of the GOP budget proposal which would get us similar results.

Instead of socialized medicine, the GOP would lower prices by increasing consumer choice and competition among medical plan suppliers. And they would also introduce a simplified tax system that would reward hard work and productivity:

> …[The GOP budget] would establish "a simple and fair tax code with a marginal tax rate for income up to $100,000 of 10%, and 25% for any income thereafter, with a generous standard deduction and personal exemption."
>
> Prefer the current system? The GOP plan lets you stay in it. The capital gains tax would be cut and the Alternative Minimum Tax would be fixed to prevent huge surprise tax hikes each year.
>
> …businesses with fewer than 500 employees would get a deduction of 20% of their income, so "these engines of growth will continue to fuel our economic recovery and companies can compete with their foreign counterparts, while keeping jobs here at home."
>
> On energy policy, the plan would open the Outer Continental Shelf to oil and gas drilling and use part of the federal share of revenues for alternative fuel programs. The Arctic Coastal Plain would be opened for exploration and development. Obstacles to new nuclear power plants would be removed.

Read the whole wonderful thing! And don't forget: they have a podcast of this article read by the professionals at OutloudOpinion.com. Subscribe here!

Victory for academic freedom in Texas School Board hearings

March 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

"Teach the Controversy" is now the law in Texas. This is a huge win, because the science standards in Texas will influence the science standards of other states, since Texas dominates the science textbook market.

Here's a brief excerpt about the decision from Evolution News:

> Today, the Texas Board of Education chose science over dogma and adopted science standards improving on the old "strengths and weaknesses" language by requiring students to "critique" and examine "all sides of scientific evidence." In addition, the Board—for the first time— specifically required high school students to "analyze and evaluate" the evidence for major evolutionary concepts such as common ancestry, natural selection, and mutations.
>
> The new science standards mark a significant victory for scientists and educators in favor of teaching the scientific evidence for and against evolution.
>
> …The science standards approved today by the Texas State Board of Education include language requiring students to "analyze, evaluate and critique scientific explanations…including examining all sides of scientific evidence… so as to encourage critical thinking by the student." Equally important, the high school biology standards now require students to "analyze and evaluate" the scientific evidence for key parts of evolutionary theory, including common ancestry, natural selection, and mutations.

More here at the Evolution News blog:

- More details on the significant changes that will result from the decision
- Details on the arguments made by the politicians on the pro-metaphysical-naturalism side
- Details on the arguments made by the Ph.D biologists on the pro-critical-thinking side

UPDATE: Discovery Institute Fellow John West has a piece in the Washington Post.

Projected increases in electricity prices under Obama's cap-and-trade policy

March 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Over at Michele Bachmann's blog, I noticed that she has posted about the expected increase in electricity prices (per person) under Obama's proposed cap-and-trade legislation. The numbers are provided by Ways and Means Ranking Member Dave Camp.

Here are a couple of the bigger increases:

- Alabama $1,528.26
- Indiana $1,627.46
- Kentucky $1,798.23
- Montana $1,717.63
- North Dakota $4,350.56
- West Virginia $3,972.29
- Wyoming $7,249.54

Looks like the effect is to transfer wealth from pro-business red states to anti-business blue states. Redistribution of wealth. Equalization of outcomes. Welfare. After all, a lot of these blue states have been spending like drunken sailors, and will need to grab some money from their red-state neighbors, if they are to continue acting irresponsibly.

Here is an interesting quotation in Michele's post, provided by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office, Dr. Douglas Elmendorf on the proposed cap-and-trade legislation:

> At a Ways and Means hearing today, Congressman Camp questioned Congressional Budget Office Director Dr. Douglas Elmendorf about the impact of this policy on consumers in other ways as well. As Dr. Elmendorf said, "at any point in which we are putting a price on carbon emissions, that would be passed through to the cost that consumers face on energy products but also all other products that are made using fossil fuels….I don't know if there are any goods that use no energy in their production. It seems to me unlikely."

I blogged here about the proposed tax hikes on oil companies, and here on the proposed cap-and-trade system and here on the proposed carbon tariffs Obama wants to impose on imported goods. And we've also seen that global warming is just a myth – useful crisis that leftists sell to the public in order to justify government control of the free market.

Assessing the current state of the debate on abortion

March 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a GREAT discussion between Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Institute. The discussion starts at time 55:50 of the podcast. Klusendorf and especially Koukl are *on fire* in this podcast! Do not miss this podcast.

Topics include:

- How do left-leaning Christians justify their pro-abortion voting?
- What kills more people: unintended civilian casualties in war or deliberate killing of unborn babies? Are these two kinds of death morally equivalent?
- Have Obama's policies on abortion reduced or increased abortions?
- Did the rate of abortion decline under Clinton and increase under Bush?
- What policies really do reduce the number of abortions, and who supports those policies?
- Should Christian medical personnel be forced to perform abortions against their consciences?
- What are the root causes of abortion, and should we be addressing them by government-enforced wealth redistribution (social programs), instead of by legislation?
- What is the difference between embryonic stem cell research (ESCR) and adult stem cell research (ASCR)?

As well, Klusendorf alludes to some research by Michael J. New at the Heritage Foundation about the policies that reduce abortions. You can read about it here in National Review. The supporting research is here.

I have blogged about some of these topics before, such as: stem cell research, a simple case for defending the unborn, right of conscience for health care workers, and about Representative Michele Bachmann's opposition to FOCA and ESCR.

Scott Klusendorf makes the pro-life case on audio, here.

UPDATE: Doug Groothuis has a short, non-sectarian argument against abortion here.

Health care policies in the UK and in Ireland

March 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Over on Health Care BS, they reported the results of an Healthcare Commission investigation of Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust in the UK. This foundation runs the which runs Stafford and Cannock Chase hospitals.

Excerpt:

> If you have a friend or loved one in an NHS hospital, make sure to send them flowers. They may have to drink the water out of the vase to avoid dying of thirst.
>
> …The Prime Minister apologized and claimed that this was an isolated situation. Oh, really? Tell that to the NHS patients who *starve to death* in your hospitals. Tell that to the patients who die of cancer because the NHS *won't pay* for their treatment.
>
> Tell that BS to the patient on whom NHS surgeons insisted on operating despite the *dead rat* in the OR. Tell that to the emergency patients *stacked* in ambulances in the ER parking lot. If they could hear, you could tell that the patients waiting for *hearing aids*.

Scary stuff! And this is what Obama wants for us, because then everyone will be *equal*, regardless of their ability to pay. Should individuals be left free to choose how much health care they need based on their own lifestyle choices? Obama says no.

On the other hand, the Stockholm Network reports that Ireland raised their co-payments for ER treatment, in order to encourage people to use managed care instead. (H/T State Policy Blog). They reduced their ER demand by 5%.

> The 2009 Irish budget, presented by finance minister Brian Lenihan, revealed that charges for A&E services would rise from €66 to €100, if the patient has not been referred by their GP, or if they do not hold a medical card.
>
> The revised tariff came into force on 1st January and …saw 4.5% less people attend A&E in January 2009 than in January 2008…

There is a myth on the ignorant left (and in Canada) that Americans are dying in the streets because of private medical care, that emphasizes personal responsibility. Actually, ER medical care is free in the USA, and maybe we should start charging something for it like Ireland is doing.

I posted before on the nationalized health care, the exploding health care costs in Massachusetts, and on health care problems in Sweden. Also, here is a funny video from a Canadian-raised comedian on single-payer health care.

UPDATE: John Lott has a post on how 9 people accounted for 2,678 ER visits over 6 years in Texas, costing taxpayers 3 million dollars.

Global warming is a made-up crisis to justify socialism

March 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just want to get this out there so that we can be clear. There is no climate crisis. The whole thing was invented, just like "nuclear winter", in order to justify government taking control of the economy so they can equalize economic inequalities.

Fox News reports that the United Nations is proposing global redistribution of wealth from productive, free nations to unproductive, repressive ones. The rationalization for this redistribution of wealth is going to be global warming alarmism.

Excerpt: (H/T John Lott)

> A United Nations document on "climate change" that will be distributed to a major environmental conclave next week envisions a huge reordering of the world economy, likely involving trillions of dollars in wealth transfer, millions of job losses and gains, new taxes, industrial relocations, new tariffs and subsidies, and complicated payments for greenhouse gas abatement schemes and carbon taxes — all under the supervision of the world body.

And Wesley J. Smith sheds more light on the topic here, where he analyzes a column by a radical environmentalist who argues that we need to prevent economic growth, on the grounds that it is harming the planet.

Excerpt:

> This willingness to sacrifice human welfare is reaching a fever pitch among those who believe that global warming is a crisis of unimagined proportions–a belief that can border on quasi-religion or pure ideology. An article by David Owen–pushing the importance of economic decline to saving the planet–in the *New Yorker* illustrates the point.

Here's one of the quotes from David Owen:

> The environmental benefits of economic decline, though real, are fragile, because they are vulnerable to intervention by governments, which, understandably, want to put people back to work and get them buying non-necessities again–through programs intended to revive ordinary consumer spending (which has a big carbon footprint), and through public-investment projects to build new roads and airports (ditto).

I would recommend checking out the post to read what environmentalists really think about human welfare when compared to the myth of global warming. It's important to understand what people on the left, who are advising Obama, are planning to do.

To get the real costs of what it would take to "fix" global warming, check out this post at

the Heritage Foundation's blog "The Foundry". In this post, they explain the science, what global warming alarmists are trying to do, and how much it will cost to do it – and they done the research to prove it.

Excerpt:

> Perhaps the most alarming part is the price tag associated with attempting to reduce such a small part of the atmosphere and something we really cannot control. Our analysis shows the cumulative GDP losses for 2010 to 2029 approach $7 trillion. Single-year losses exceed $600 billion in 2029, more than $5,000 per house¬hold. Job losses are expected to exceed 800,000 in some years, and exceed at least 500,000 from 2015 through 2026. It is important to note that these are net job losses, after any jobs created by compliance with the regulations–so-called green jobs–are taken into account. In total, the "climate revenue" (read: energy tax) could approach two trillion over eight years. Keep in mind, this is all for negligible environmental benefits.

UPDATE: Heritage Foundation weighs in with more on the UN's plan for global wealth redistribution.

> The U.N. conference in Bonn, Germany commenced yesterday to hash out details for an international approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The goal is to have a plan ready for the global warming summit in Copenhagen at the end of the year that would supplant the failed Kyoto Protocol.

And the Competitive Enterprise Institute has a link to a piece in the WSJ about the impact to the manufacturing sector and to US trading partners.

Thomas Sowell explains why too much compassion is a bad thing

March 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is something you can forward to all of your progressive friends! It clearly explains what's wrong with too much moral permissiveness and compassion. When you subsidize certain decisions, you get more of those decisions, when you tax certain decisions, you get less of them.

Excerpt:

> Since the average American never took out a mortgage loan as big as seven hundred grand– for the very good reason that he could not afford it– why should he be forced as a taxpayer to subsidize someone else who apparently couldn't afford it either, but who got in over his head anyway?
>
> Why should taxpayers who live in apartments, perhaps because they did not feel that they could afford to buy a house, be forced to subsidize other people who could not afford to buy a house, but who went ahead and bought one anyway?

And what about saving for a rainy day?

> Who hasn't been out of work at some time or other, or had an illness or accident that created unexpected expenses? The old and trite notion of "saving for a rainy day" is old and trite precisely because this has been a common experience for a very long time.
>
> What is new is the current notion of indulging people who refused to save for a rainy day or to live within their means. In politics, it is called "compassion"– which comes in both the standard liberal version and "compassionate conservatism."

The article concludes with this:

> Even in an era of much-ballyhooed "change," the government cannot eliminate sadness. What it can do is transfer that sadness from those who made risky and unwise decisions to the taxpayers who had nothing to do with their decisions.
>
> Worse, the subsidizing of bad decisions destroys one of the most effective sources of better decisions– namely, paying the consequences of bad decisions.

I would just encourage you to try to communicate with your neighbors who may not have thought clearly about "the forgotten man", the taxpayer who works hard, plays by the rules and then is stuck with the bill for the *compassion* of well-meaning socialists.

In one of my more popular posts, I explained how the compassion of socialist democrats got us into this financial crisis by forcing banks to make loans to people who couldn't afford them.

Arizona Supreme Court rules voucher program unconstitutional

March 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Arizona's Supreme court has *banned* their state's voucher program. 500 students were enrolled and will be allowed to complete the year in their currently schools. (H/T Independent Women's Forum and Jay P. Greene).

Excerpt from the linked Arizona Republic article:

> The Arizona Supreme Court on Wednesday declared the state's school-voucher programs unconstitutional because they violate a ban against appropriating public money for private or religious schools.
>
> The unanimous decision shuts the door on vouchers in Arizona unless voters agree to a statewide ballot measure to change the state Constitution.

So parents shouldn't have a choice where their children go for an education. The important thing, according to the socialists, is that the teachers in the failing schools have a guaranteed job and a guaranteed audience. Public schools are not there to serve children – it's *adult day care.* All guaranteed unionized jobs are *adult day care.*

This article from the Alliance for School Choice argues that vouchers provide a better education for students for far less money. If we desire excellent education at reduced cost to taxpayers, then vouchers deliver. If the goal is allowing adult teachers to insulate themselves from the market demands, so they can continue on in perpetual adolescence at the expense of children and parents, then vouchers should be outlawed.

Excerpt:

> Conducted by researchers at the University of Arkansas as part of the independent School Choice Demonstration Project (SCDP), the report found that students in the program generally posted achievement gains that were somewhat higher than that of students in the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). When compared to children in MPS, students enrolled in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program experienced statistically significant gains in 7th and 8th grade math.
>
> At the same time, the report concluded that the MPCP continues to save Wisconsin taxpayers tens of millions of dollars a year. For FY 2009 alone, the state saved $37 million as a result of the voucher program. While the report is focused on state sources of funding, when federal sources of funding are included, it costs $13,468 to educate an MPS child, versus a maximum of $6,607 to educate an MPCP student.
>
> In a significant finding that undercuts the main arguments of school choice detractors, the study demonstrated conclusively that the presence of the

> Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) helped local public schools improve. In the words of the authors: “It appears that Milwaukee Public Schools are more attentive to the academic needs of students when those students have more opportunities to leave those schools.”

The article goes on to note that voucher programs lead to increased parental awareness and involvement in their children’s education.

On a related note, the Pacific Research Institute had this post on the success of charter schools, which are not insulated from competition either, and therefore need to care about student academic performance, instead of left-wing indoctrination.

Excerpt:

> The Academic Performance Indicator for OCA is 902, easily surpassing the statewide goal of 800 (out of 1,000). Within five years the charter rose from an API of 736 to 902. “The API is a good indicator after you pass 800 because the students have to work very hard to maintain it,” says Jorge Lopez, principal and executive director of OCA. Most impressive, this charter school succeeded despite receiving thousands of dollars less per student compared with average California public school funding.
>
> The Oakland Charter Academy, for example, earned the 902 API score while receiving $7,211 per student, nearly $4,366 below the state average of $11,547. Yet, the return on investment is higher than the average public school. Consider the Orange Unified School District. It received $9,544 per student and earned a 777 API with a less-challenging student population.
>
> Ninety-five percent of the students at OCA are from low-income families. The OUSD serves 38 percent low-income children. OCA students achieved 75 percent proficiency in reading on the California Standards Test. Fifty-six percent of OUSD students scored proficient in reading.

The article goes on to compare the much worse performance of public schools in the area who spend a lot more money and have *far fewer* low-income students. The difference is competition. The difference is free market capitalism.

Beware of government-run health care

March 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Anchoress has an inspiring pro-life story posted here. I recommend you take a look. It is very important for people to take her point, that on the Christian view, God has a purpose for allowing us the opportunity to to love those who need love. The purpose of life is not to shove away the demands of others so that you can maximize your own happiness.

The first part of her post is a story about a mother who chooses to deliver a baby whom, she was told, would die shortly after birth. She goes on to have the baby, who is doing (mostly) fine. I recommend you check out the story. But there is another point that needs to be made about this story. Ask yourself – *why was this woman allowed to choose to have her baby?*

The answer is – because the government did not control her health-care decisions, as would be the case in a single-payer system. And in a single-payer system, your health care depends on radical secular-leftist social engineers. The same ones who fund *useless* embryonic stem cell research, because it is a sop to the pro-abortion lobby.

The Anchoress continues:

> **People who clamor for government-run health care** should consider that once the taxpayers have given that power over the government, they – like AIG and all of the "evil banks" currently being talked down – will place themselves and their loved ones into the power of the government and their accounting sheets. The grandmother you think of as gold, may be so much tin, if she costs the government too much to keep alive. The husband you call your diamond becomes only coal to the bureaucrat.
>
> And abortion…if you discover that the child in your womb is "defective" and decide you want to love it, anyway, that you want to allow your daughter a few precious minutes of life and love, give your son the chance to grow *in the life he will have*, you will be told you are unrealistic and selfish to burden the state and your fellow taxpayers with your absurd love.

One of the purposes of my blog is for Christians to realize the connection between public policies and their ability to execute their own Christian lives without interference from the secular state. The point that Anchoress makes above is something that we should all think through carefully. How many "social justice" policies do Christians vote for that will come back to bite us?

I blogged about Obama's plan to outlaw the right of conscience of medical personnel, the abolition of voucher programs here and here, defunding of churches, discrimination against religions schools, and the secularization that results from socialism here. The left favors forced euthanasia and coerced abortions. And the left is willing to reduce costs by

reducing the quality of care.

Is one true religion even possible?

March 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

This is a follow-up to my previous post on Walter Bradley's lecture about the scientific evidence for an Creator and Designer of the universe. Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor, and a great example of the integration of Christian faith and a stellar academic career.

Is there truth in religion?

Another one of Bradley's lectures is on the question "Is There Objective Truth in Religion?". In the lecture, he describes a book by Mortimer Adler, called "Truth in Religion". In the book, Adler makes a distinction between two kinds of "truth".

1. Trans-cultural truth – also known as objective truth. This is Adler's term for the correspondence theory of truth. A claim is true if and only if it is made true by corresponding to the state of affairs in the mind-independent external world. It is irrelevant who makes the claim. The claim is either true or false for everyone, e.g. – "the ice cream is on the table". Either it is, or it isn't, for *everyone.*
2. Cultural truth – also known as subjective truth. This is Adler's term for claims that are arbitrarily true for individual and groups of subjects. For example, your personal preference for a certain flavor of ice cream, or the cultural preference for a certain style of dress or cooking. The claim is true for the person or group, e.g. – "I/we prefer chocolate ice cream and wearing tuxedos".

The question that Bradley addresses in the lecture is: *are religious claims trans-cultural truth or cultural truth?*

Why do people want to believe that religious truth claims are subjective?

People want to believe that religious truth claims are subjective because religious claims differ, and people lack the courage to tell some group of people that their beliefs about the world are *wrong*. By reducing religion to personal preference, no one is wrong, because everyone who believes in any religion, or no religion, is just expressing their own personal preferences.

But, if religious truth claims are trans-cultural claims, e.g. – the universe began to exist, then some religions are going to be wrong, because religions *disagree* about reality. It's possible that no religion is right, or that one religion is right, but it is not possible that

they are all right because there is only one reality shared by all people. Religions make contradictory claims about reality – so they can't all be true.

Suppose religious claims are trans-cultural? How would you test those claims?

I credit E.J. Carnell with a test for truth that I still use today. It is the same test used by Adler and Bradley.

1. Logical consistency (the claim cannot violate the law of non-contradiction)
2. Empirical verification (the claim is verified against the external world)

Adler says that other trans-cultural truth claims, such as those from math and science, must all pass the test for logical consistency, as a minimum. And so with religion, if it is like math and science. Once a proposition passed the test of the law of non-contradiction, then you can proceed to step 2 and see if it is empirically verified.

Adler surveys all the major religions in his book, and concludes that only 3 of them – Judaism, Islam and Christianity – pass the test of the law of non-contradiction. He ends the book by recommending to seekers that they proceed to evaluate the historical claims of these 3 religions, in order to see which *if any* passes the empirical tests.

Conclusion

Bradley concludes with the claim of the resurrection of Jesus could be investigated using historical methods, in order to decide which of these 3 religions might be true, if any. He also mentions the stories of a few people who performed the investigation and changed their initial opinion of the resurrection in the face of the historical evidence.

Related posts

I blogged previously about whether the Bible teaches that faith is opposed to reason and evidence and William Lance Craig's refutation of postmodern sketicism of religion. I also blogged about scientific and historical evidence that could also be used to test religious claims. My post on N.T. Wright's view of the resurrection may also prove useful.

Also, a good debate between a Christian and a postmodern relativist on truth in religion is here.

Fedex threatens to cancel jet order if card check bill passes

March 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Spotted this Wall Street Journal article over on Ask Dr. Helen.

Excerpt:

> FedEx Corp. is threatening to cancel the purchase of billions of dollars worth of new Boeing Co. cargo planes if Congress passes a law that would make it easier for unions to organize at the package-delivery company.
>
> A company spokesman said Tuesday that FedEx may cancel plans to buy as many as 30 new Boeing planes should Congress pass a bill that would remove truck drivers, couriers and other employees at FedEx's Express unit from the jurisdiction of the federal Railway Labor Act of 1926, the law which today also governs labor organizing at U.S. airlines.

I blogged about Obama's card check bill and its effects here.

Mark Sanford interviewed by the Acton Institute

March 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Governor Mark Sanford

Acton Institute blog posted this interview with Governor Mark Sanford of South Carolina. Sanford is my runner-up for the 2012 Republican nomination. The Acton Institute is the think tank that best expresses my deepest concern – the concern for freedom of religious expression. And they believe that certain public policies, such as fiscal conservatism, protect that freedom.

The interview with Sanford is enlightening and encouraging, because it talks about ideas and ideals, in detail. I was particularly interested to see if he would make the connection between free market capitalism and liberty. Here is a relevant excerpt:

> I would say that we got to go back to the basics. And the vision would be for a prosperous, competitive America in what has become a very, very competitive global world. It needs to be based on an advance and adherence to free market capitalistic principles, and on maximizing the sphere of individual freedom.

And that includes religious freedom. And I was also interested to see how Sanford connected his faith to the public policies that he advocates. The interviewer asks him: "When it's convenient, many politicians say they can't bring their own religious views to bear on important issues because they represent all the people. What's your view?"

Here is his reply to the question, in full:

> **I don't agree with that. What people are sick of is that no one will make a stand.** The bottom line in politics is, I think, at the end of the day to be effective in standing for both the convictions that drove you into office and the principles that you outlined in running. And that is not restrained to simply the world of Caesar, it applies to what you think is right and wrong and every thing in between.

> Now we all get nervous about the people who simply wear it on their arm sleeve to sort of prove that they've got that merit badge. But I think the Bible says, "Let your light so shine be fore men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father that's in heaven." Hopefully, by the way in which you act. The way in which you make decisions. They're going to see that something's there.
>
> **I would also say the Bible says in Revelation, "Be hot. Be cold. But don't be lukewarm" [Rev. 3:15]. And there's too many political candidates who walk around completely in the middle—completely in neutral. With regard not only to faith, but with regard to policy. And that's what people are sick of. Everything's gotten so watered down. So I have people come to me frequently saying, "Look, I voted for you. In fact, I completely disagree with you on these different stands over here. But at least I know where you stand."**
>
> And so I would say it's a mistake to confine one's belief to only matters of government. If you have a religious view, it's incumbent upon you and it's real to have that. The Bible talks about the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control. There ought to be certain things that are clearly observable by your actions.
>
> I remember when I first gave a Christmas address, a candle lighting event on the state house capitol. And people were freaking because they said, "You can't say Jesus." **I said, "Look, I'm not trying to offend anybody. But if that's my personal faith, I can say what I want to say. I'm going to say what I want to say."** I'm not going to be rubbing anybody's face in it. **But I say you can't dance around that which you really believe. And so I'd say we need people who are more bold in taking stands on all kinds of different things.**

Now, you know what to do: read the whole thing!

John Campbell takes a shot at Obama's budget

April 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is Representative John Campbell letting the Democrats have it with both barrels.

I found the video linked on his blog, where he has some advice for how to explain to your neighbors what this budget will really cost taxpayers.

Excerpt:

> If you want to see what a 30% tax increase looks like, take your paycheck and multiply the total taxes deducted by 1.3. Then, subtract that from your gross income and that will be close to your new net income. So, if you made $3,000 gross and $2,000 net, you will now only net $1,700. Oh, and that won't include the cuts your employer has to make in order to pay for their tax increases. By the way, this budget includes all kinds of things that are minor in the grand scheme of things, but big to certain people. For instance, it would repeal the use of the 'Last In, First Out' (LIFO) inventory accounting method. This will dramatically raise taxes on all retail businesses who carry inventory.

Gateway Pundit has a list of the top 10 facts about the budget here. On economist Robert P. Murphy's blog, I found a link to this story in Bloomberg.

Excerpt:

> The U.S. government and the Federal Reserve have spent, lent or committed $12.8 trillion, an amount that approaches the value of everything produced in the country last year, to stem the longest recession since the 1930s.
>
> New pledges from the Fed, the Treasury Department and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. include $1 trillion for the Public-Private Investment Program, designed to help investors buy distressed loans and other assets from U.S. banks. The money works out to $42,105 for every man, woman and child in the U.S. and 14 times the $899.8 billion of currency in circulation. The nation's gross domestic product was $14.2 trillion in 2008.

Representative John Shadegg has a list of the taxing/spending records that Obama's budget is breaking in a post on Red County. And remember, the Democrats caused this mess and the Republicans tried to stop them. More details from John Boehner and Mike Pence about what's in Obama's budget here. The Republican alternative budget is here.

The story of the Wintery Knight blog so far…

April 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Those of you who have been reading the blog know that the blog is split between Christian apologetics and policy analysis. Here's a little list of the topics that I have touched on related to Christian apologetics, with topics yet to appear later in *italics*.

Positive apologetics

Scientific arguments for theism:

- the creation of the universe out of nothing (Warning: SNARKY)
- the fine-tuning of physical constants and ratios to support the minimal requirements for life (Warning: SNARKY)
- *the origin of biological information in the simplest living organism*
- *galactic, stellar and planetary fine-tuning to support the minimal requirements for life*
- *the sudden origin of all animal phyla in the Cambrian explosion*
- *the natural limits of biological change*

Philosophical arguments for theism:

- *the moral argument*
- the argument from evil
- *the origin of non-physical mind, rationality and free will*

Historical arguments for Christianity

- the minimal facts argument (Habermas/Craig/Licona)
- the best explanation of the changes in the concept of resurrection (Wright)

Negative apologetics

Scientific objections:

- what about the progress of science and God-of-the-gaps?
- doesn't the Bible require the creation of the earth in six 24-hour days?
- didn't aliens seed the earth with the first life?

Philosophical objections

- the problems of evil and suffering
- the problem of religious pluralism and religious truth claims
- the problem of postmodern skepticism (i.e. – the problem of wanting to be lazy and popular)
- the problem of rational morality and purpose on atheism

- the problem of moral relativism
- the fate of the unevangelized (what about those who never heard of Jesus)
- the hiddenness of God (why isn't there more evidence for God's existence?)
- isn't the doctrine of the Trinity self-contradictory?
- can God make a rock so big he can't lift it?
- did God create evil?
- who made God?
- isn't faith is opposed to reason and evidence?

Emotional objections

- memo to Christopher Hitchens: a sneer is not an argument

Moral issues

- a case for the pro-life position in plain English
- adult stem cell research is superior to embryonic stem cell research

Mentoring

- the importance of being able to argue both sides of a question
- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church

What conditions are needed to create a habitable planet?

April 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome, visitors from Post-Darwinist! Thanks for the link Denyse! New visitors may be interested in this post, which is a jumping off point for all of posts on science and faith issues.

Everyone who isn't Christopher Hitchens or Richard Dawkins already knows about the standard fine-tuning argument. But have you ever considered what it takes to make a planet that is capable of supporting the minimal requirements of living systems? The area of science that specializes in answering this question is called *astrobiology*. Let's take a look!

I will be working from a lecture (with Q&A) delivered in October 2007 at California State University – Fresno, by two of my favorite scholars, Jay Wesley Richards and Guillermo Gonzalez.

The Copernican Principle

Richards introduces the idea of the Copernican Principle. This principle states that the progress of science will show that there is nothing special (designed) about man's place in the universe.

The minimal requirements for life

I've written about this before here, but basically life requires a minimum amount of encoded biological information to allow it to replicate itself. The only element in the periodic table that allows you to encode information is carbon. Carbon is the hub of large molecules which form the paper and text of biological information. No carbon = no life.

Secondly, you need some environment in which to form molecules around the carbon, such as amino acids and proteins. That environment is liquid water. And you need the liquid water to be at the surface the planet where you want life to exist.

The requirements of a habitable planet

Here are just a few of the requirements mentioned in the lecture.

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die

- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

Note that these requirements are connected. If you mess with one, some of the others will be thrown out of tune. For more habitability requirements, see this article by Gonzalez and Richards.

What are the probabilities that we will get these conditions?

Richards explains that the question of whether this is designed is like winning the lottery. Your chance of winning depends on two things:

1. the odds of getting all the conditions correct
2. the number of tries that you get

If the odds of winning are 1 in a million, you could still win by buying a million tickets with all the different numbers. In the universe, there are only about 10^22 possible solar systems. So if the odds of getting a habitable planet are 1 in 10^9, you'll get tons of life. But what if the odds are 1 in 10^40? Then you're not likely to win.

But this is not the argument that these two are making, because even though there are a lot of factors needed for a habitable planet, we still can't say for certain how likely it is that each of these conditions will obtain. Therefore, we can't make the argument except by estimating the odds of getting each condition.

Although you could use very generous estimates, it would still be guessing, and you can win a debate by guessing. So are we stuck?

How to make a design argument using habitability

Gonzalez explains why you can still make an argument for design by arguing that the coorelation between habitability and measurabiliy is intentional. (By measurability, he really means the ease of making scientific discoveries). And you do this by correlating the conditions for sustaining life with the conditions for allowing scientific discoveries.

Gonzalez gives two examples:

1. Solar eclipses require that the sun and moon have certain sizes and certain distances from the sun. The surface of the Earth is the optimal location in our solar system for observing solar eclipses. We were able to make many valuable discoveries due to this fine-tuning, not the least of which was confirming the theory of general relativity, which was cruicial to the science of cosmology.
2. The location of our solar system is fine-tuned within two spiral arms of a spiral galaxy. We escape from radiation and other dangers, but to also allow use to capture heavy elements that are needed to make a suitable Sun and humans bodies, too. But the same conditions that allow life also allow us to make scientific

> discoveries, such as star formation theory and cosmic microwave background radiation measurements, which was needed in order to confirm the creation of the universe out of nothing (the big bang).

Spooky. And what until they list off a half-dozen more examples in their book “The Privileged Planet”. It’s downright terrifying!

Conclusion

Richards sums up the argument with an illustration. He asks why scientists construct observatories high up on mountains. The answer is in order to avoid “light pollution” from nearby cities, which ruin the ability of scientists to observe the stars and make discoveries. And this is what we see with our planet and solar system. No one builds a planet that can be used to make scientific discoveries in a place that doesn’t support life. It turns out that the very places in the universe that are good for making observations are also the best places for supporting life.

Further study

I would recommend checking out the documentary DVD, if you find the book too scary. There is also a university lecture DVD with both authors, filmed at Biola University. If you want to see the DVD online for FREE, then click here (narrated by John-Rhys Davies). Awesome! Go science!

Video and audio from Christopher Hitchens panel debate

April 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: My play-by-play transcript of the Biola debate is here.

Over on Apologetics 315, I've found links to video and and audio from the recent debate panel from the Christian Book Expo in Dallas, TX. This is a useful preview for the upcoming debate on April 4, 2009 between Christopher Hitchens and William Lane Craig.

Below is a summary of the initial 4-minute speeches of all of the participants, in order of speaking:

Lee Strobel

1. There are good arguments for the existence of God:

- creation out of nothing (the big bang)
- cosmic fine-tuning
- biological information (DNA, etc.)
- consciousness (intentionality)
- free will
- historicity of the resurrection

2. Christianity makes a positive difference on people's lives.

Christopher Hitchens

1. Christianity is not needed for personal morality or social cohesion.

2. Christian stories are not unique, they are paralleled in other religious. Therefore, they are not historical, but invented.

3. Christian leaders say and do things that are harmful, but also inconsistent with their stated beliefs.

William Lane Craig

1. There are good arguments for the existence of God:

- the contingency argument
- creation out of nothing
- cosmic fine-tuning
- the argument from objective moral values
- the argument from objective moral duties
- the ontological argument
- historicity of the resurrection
- religious experience (in the absence of any defeaters)

James Denison

1. It is not effective to argue against religion in general by citing the specific bad behaviors of certain religious people in a variety of religions.

Doug Wilson

1. Rational thought is not compatible with atheism, because atheism is committed to materialism. If human behavior are totally determined by chemical reactions, then it is not possible for humans to reason about the world.

Further study

To read more about these arguments, please see my index of arguments used in debates. To see an analysis of Hitchens' case that he used in his recent debate with Frank Turek, click here.

Angela Merkel opposes spending, China stimulates solar energy production

April 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here, from the always-on-target Investors Business Daily. If you prefer a podcast, then here is your podcast.

Angela Merkel is the Chancellor of Germany. She also has a Ph.D in Physics.

First a little background:

> British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's idea for a "global stimulus plan" has met with resolute opposition from Germany's leader, Angela Merkel. Good to see that common sense isn't dead, at least in Europe.
>
> Brown, who'll be hosting the leaders of the G-20 nations later this week as they seek a way out of the global financial crisis, has pushed what he calls a "global New Deal" of up to $2 trillion in added spending.
>
> But he's had trouble selling his idea to others — to put it mildly. Czech Prime Minister and EU President Mirek Topolanek called it "a way to hell." Even Bank of England Governor Mervyn King trashed the idea.

And then Merkel jumps on the pile:

> Now comes Merkel, who, as head of the world's third-largest economy, has probably killed Brown's big idea.
>
> **"I will not let anyone tell me that we must spend more money," she said over the weekend. "We must look at the causes of this crisis. It happened because we were living beyond our means. . . . We cannot repeat this mistake."**

We need to listen to Merkel, because she knows what she is talking about. She has a perspective we don't because of Germany's tragic history in the 20th century.

> After World War I, Germany tried to spend its way out of a recession brought on in large part by the onerous war reparations.
>
> As Weimar Germany printed money, inflation soared (in 1918, $1 bought 4.2 German marks but by 1923, $1 fetched 4.2 trillion marks) and unemployment surged.

If you want a real stimulus, try being like the communist Chinese. I blogged about their sales tax cuts on automobiles before, and about how worried they are about our deficit spending, (along with everyone else in the G20). But look what I found over on Ace of Spades HQ.

They cite an article from semiconductor.net, and here is an excerpt:

> …The Chinese government alerted all silicon, ingot, wafer, cell, and panel manufactures that it intends to announced a very **aggressive Solar subsidy that is equivalent to $3 USD per installed watt**, in cash, as an incentive to aid the Chinese population to install solar. Currently in China non UL, non CE, and non TUV **panels can be purchased for under $2 per watt**…
>
> …With the combination of lower panel prices, renewed Federal and State incentives, utility rebates, the finance freeze thawing out, and oil prices moving up, Solar is once again looking awfully attractive. **When you take into consideration the increased value of your home upon a solar installation and the tremendous credits and rebates available, you can literally install solar for 20 cents on the dollar**….

Why did we elect a socialist ACORN lawyer from the party that got us into to this mess in the first place?

Christianity and the birth of modern science

April 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome, visitors from Free Canuckistan! Did you know that Binks is a web elf? It's true!

Super-commenter ECM sent me this post from Pamela Geller's blog, Atlas Shrugs. I thought that this was something wonderful because this is not an area of expertise for me, although it is something that I do get questions about, because atheists believe that Christianity is anti-science, and I need to know how to respond. The post discusses an essay by the blogger Fjordman.

And here's how it starts:

> Neither Roman, Egyptian, Chinese nor Indian civilization created the Scientific Revolution; they all stagnated after making initial gains in knowledge. This is because the natural human tendency is to want immediate results. If the research does not yield reasonably quick benefits, interest wanes. Yet you needed a critical mass of accumulated knowledge before the Scientific Revolution could be ignited. The Bible commands mankind to subdue the Earth, but in order to do so, men need to understand how the world works. In addition to this, the Bible portrays God as a Creator who made the universe work according to rational laws. Since God's laws are immutable, it remains for us to discover them. **Many of the scholars who created modern science, including Galileo and Newton, believed that they were honoring God by studying his Creation. They saw science as a religious duty.**

Now, I've blogged on the *vital importance* of scientific progress to the Christian worldview. Let me be clear. We are in a period of economic abundance which exacerbates arrogance, hedonism and disdain for theology and morality. We absolutely must avail ourselves of every sign of creative and/or intelligent activity in the natural world. *And that means science must progress.*

The essay then cites an Oxford University Press textbook by James Evans as follows:

> "…Kepler went on to become the most outstanding mathematical astronomer of his generation. His greatest gifts were inexhaustible patience, great calculating ability, and a relentless drive to understand. But his motives for astronomical research always involved a quest for higher knowledge. **Everywhere, he sought for connections between apparently disparate realms of thought. He wanted to know God's plan for the cosmos**…."

Fjordman then continues:

> While leading scholars during the Scientific Revolution such as Galileo, Kepler and Newton were indeed inspired by the mathematics of the ancient Greeks,

> their Christian world view made the connection between mathematics and the natural world even more powerful and explicit. Isaac Newton spent a great deal of time looking for hidden codes in the Bible, and undoubtedly believed that he was studying both of God's Books: **The Bible and the Book of Nature**. Nothing similar happened in East Asia, or indeed in any other civilization.

But wouldn't any old monotheism do in order to ground natural laws? Agnostic sociologist Rodney Stark says no:

> …Rodney Stark agrees that Islam does not have "a conception of God appropriate to underwrite the rise of science…Allah is not presented as a lawful creator but is conceived of as an extremely active God who intrudes in the world as he deems it appropriate. This prompted the formation of a major theological bloc within Islam that condemns all efforts to formulate natural laws as blasphemy in that they deny Allah's freedom to act."

Fjordman continues:

> In contrast [with Islam], for Jews and Christians, God has created the universe according to a certain logic, which can be described. Kepler firmly believed the Solar System was created according to God's plan, which he attempted to unlock. Sir Isaac Newton was passionately interested in religion and wrote extensively about it.

And it ends with this:

> Does mathematics have an independent existence in nature or does the human mind invent it? The answer potentially has huge philosophical implications. The people who created modern science lived predominantly in Europe, an overwhelmingly Christian continent with an important Jewish minority. They apparently had an advantage when they assumed the universe to be designed by a rational Creator. I admit this is a challenging dilemma for those of us who are not religious: Why can nature apparently be described mathematically and rationally if it has not been designed by a rational Creator? As a non-religious man, this is the only religious argument that I find difficult to answer.

It's an interesting essay. It made me think of this article by Walter Bradley in which he talks about the relationship between mathematics and nature as a pointer to an intelligent designer. For those interested in the relationship between Christianity and science, please take a look at the index of Christianity-related posts.

Democrats vote to force health care providers to perform abortions

April 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sen. Tom Coburn

UPDATE: Welcome, visitors from Free Canuckistan! Did you know that Binks is a web elf? It's true!

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from 4Simpsons blog! Thanks for the link, Neil!

Story here, at Gateway Pundit. One of my favorite senators, Tom Coburn, proposed the amendment to protect the conscience rights of health care providers.

Here's the purpose of the amendment:

> To protect the freedom of conscience for patients and the right of health care providers to serve patients without violating their moral and religious convictions.

And here's the roll call.

> Senate Democrats voted down the **Coburn Amendment #828** tonight.
>
> The vote was **41 to 56** against the amendment.
> Senators **Snowe**, **Collins** and **Specter** voted with democrats on the amendment.

The description of the amendment is up at Coburn's blog.

Excerpt:

> This amendment ensures that the funds made available through the budget's health care reserve fund will not be used to violate the conscience of health care providers or to allow government bureaucrats to make health care choices for patients, including which doctors they may see.

But the Democrats are not the only ones who disagree with the right to conscience.

Commenter ECM sent me this story from the Anchoress on abortion. Rev. Ragsdale, the new Dean of Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts has a peculiar belief about the place of abortion in Christianity. The Anchoress cites a sermon on her blog in which she states her views plainly.

Here is Rev. Ragsdale on abortion:

> …when a woman becomes pregnant within a loving, supportive, respectful relationship; has every option open to her; decides she does not wish to bear a child; and has access to a safe, affordable abortion – there is not a tragedy in sight — only blessing. The ability to enjoy God's good gift of sexuality without compromising one's education, life's work, or ability to put to use God's gifts and call is simply blessing.
>
> These are the two things I want you, please, to remember – abortion is a blessing and our work is not done. Let me hear you say it: abortion is a blessing and our work is not done. Abortion is a blessing and our work is not done. Abortion is a blessing and our work is not done.
>
> I want to thank all of you who protect this blessing – who do this work every day: the health care providers, doctors, nurses, technicians, receptionists, who put your lives on the line to care for others (you are heroes — in my eyes, you are saints); the escorts and the activists; the lobbyists and the clinic defenders; all of you. You're engaged in holy work.

And in a different place, Rev. Ragsdale writes about medical personnel who refuse to perform abortions due to conscience:

> Let me say a bit more about that, because the religious community has long been an advocate of taking principled stands of conscience – even when such stands require civil disobedience. We've supported conscientious objectors, the Underground Railroad, freedom riders, sanctuary seekers, and anti-apartheid protestors. We support people who put their freedom and safety at risk for principles they believe in.
>
> But let's be clear, there's a world of difference between those who engage in such civil disobedience, and pay the price, and doctors and pharmacists who insist that the rest of the world reorder itself to protect their consciences – that others pay the price for their principles.
>
> This isn't particularly complicated. If your conscience forbids you to carry arms, don't join the military or become a police officer. If you have qualms about animal experimentation, think hard before choosing to go into medical research. And, if you're not prepared to provide the full range of reproductive health care (or prescriptions) to any woman who needs it then don't go into obstetrics and gynecology, or internal or emergency medicine, or pharmacology. Choose another field! *We'll respect your consciences when you begin to take responsibility for them."*

Laura at Pursuing Holiness explains how to get the sermon here since it was quickly deleted by Rev. Ragsdale:

> … Ms. Ragsdale deleted the sermon, but on the intarweb things have a zombie-like way of coming back to get you. Cached copy is here. And for posterity, here's a PDF of the cached page with Our Work Is Not Done.

Laura goes on to make these admirable comments:

> ***Yes*. I am so sick of this postmodern "what's true for you" mindset that prevents people from calling out evil in the name of tolerance. Aside from "Katie Rags" blessed sacrament of abortion, though, obviously the American church continues to weaken. We're so seeker-sensitive, tolerant and multi-culti we scarcely bother to defend it.** Success is too often defined by butts in the seats – an easy metric to quantify – not true discipleship, which is less metric and more "I know it when I see it."

I agree with you, Laura! And I'd go further. My readers already know what I think about the feminized church, its anti-intellectualism, and its refusal to engage. I also wrote about how to talk about your faith with others, even in the workplace. Please check out my index of posts on Christianity for more on how to defend your Christian beliefs in the public square.

Green policies will cost hundreds of thousands of jobs per year

April 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gateway Pundit has the story here.

He cites Heritage Foundation research for these figures:

> Perhaps the most alarming part is the price tag associated with attempting to reduce such a small part of the atmosphere and something we really cannot control. Our analysis shows **the cumulative GDP losses for 2010 to 2029 approach $7 trillion.** Single-year losses exceed $600 billion in 2029, more than $5,000 per house¬hold. **Job losses are expected to exceed 800,000 in some years**, and exceed at least 500,000 from 2015 through 2026. It is important to note that these are net job losses, after any jobs created by compliance with the regulations–so-called green jobs–are taken into account. In total, the "climate revenue" (read: energy tax) could approach two trillion over eight years. Keep in mind, **this is all for negligible environmental benefits**.

The Heritage Foundation piece also makes clear how much of an impact this will have on the planet's temperature:

> Out of the entire atmospheric makeup, only one to two percent is made up of greenhouse gases with the majority being nitrogen (about 78 percent) and oxygen (about 21 percent). Of that two percent, "planet-killing" carbon dioxide comprises only 3.62 percent while water vapor encompasses 95 percent. And of the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, humans cause only 3.4 percent of annual CO2 emissions.

They have a nice graph that shows these numbers.

Ace of Spades also has nice graphs of solar activity and how well it coorelates to planetary temperature. You know, exactly in the way that CO2 *doesn't.* (And Ace has a graph for that, too).

Further reading

I blogged about the United Nations' plan to stop global warming with *global wealth redistribution* here. More on how much your energy prices will rise, the democrats plan to impose carbon-tariffs on imports, scientific dissent from catastrophic anthropogenic global warming, Al Gore's refusal to debate and Obama's plan to raise taxes on oil production.

Gary Habermas explains the earliest source of resurrection facts

April 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome, visitors from Free Canuckistan! Did you know that Binks is a web elf? It's true!

UPDATE: Western Experience has video of Gary Habermas in action here.

UPDATE: Welcome, visitors from Stand to Reason! Thanks for the link, Melinda!

Do you just skim right over 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 when you read your Bible? Did you know that this passage is the best passage in the entire Bible when it comes to defending the resurrection? Let's take a look at a lecture where historian Gary Habermas explains the importance of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 for defending the bodily resurrection of Jesus as a historical event.

Recall that there are certain criteria for deciding what passages of the New Testament writings are historically reliable. Here is a great article from Gary Habermas that explains all of the criteria. Below, I'll list some of the criteria from that article.

Early attestation

Early sources include: 1) 7 of the 13 Pauline books that are unanimously accepted as being authored by Paul, 2) the "Q" passages which are shared by Matthew and Luke, but that are not in Mark, and 3) certain short creedal passages from the book of Acts. The 7 reliable Pauline epistles are Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Philipians, 1 Thessalonians, Galatians and Philemon.

Habermas writes:

> With regard to the historical Jesus, any material between 30 and 50 AD would be exemplary, a time period highly preferred by scholars like those in the Jesus Seminar.
>
> Reports from such an early date would actually predate the written Gospels. A famous example is the list of Jesus' resurrection appearances supplied by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. Most critical scholars think that Paul's reception of at least the material on which this early creedal statement is based is dated to the 30s AD. Other examples are supplied by the brief creedal statements that many scholars find embedded within the Book of Acts, which Gerald O'Collins dates to the 30s AD. From the so-called "Q" material in the first and third Gospels, another instance is the statement of high Christology found in Matthew 11:27/Luke 10:22. Further, Paul's earliest epistles date from the 50s AD.

Eyewitness testimony

Habermas writes:

> Whenever these early sources are also derived from eyewitnesses who actually

> participated in some of the events, this provides one of the strongest evidences possible. Historian David Hackett Fischer dubs this "the rule of immediacy" and terms it "the best relevant evidence." When scholars have ancient sources that are both very early and based on eyewitness testimony, they have a combination that is very difficult to dismiss.
>
> In our previous example, one reason critical scholars take Paul's testimony so seriously is that his writings provide both a very early date as well as eyewitness testimony to what Paul believed was a resurrection appearance of Jesus. This is even conceded by atheist scholar Michael Martin. Other crucial instances would concern any eyewitness testimony that can be located in the Gospel accounts.

Multiple attestation

Habermas writes:

> Independent attestation of a report by more than one source is another chief indication that that a particular claim may be factual. Ancient historian Paul Maier asserts that: "Many facts from antiquity rest on just one ancient source, while two or three sources in agreement generally render the fact unimpeachable." The Jesus Seminar emphasizes items "attested in two or more independent sources."
>
> Several important examples might be provided. Of the five sources often recognized in the Gospel accounts, Jesus' miracles are reported in all five, with some specific occurrences reported in more than one. Jesus' crucial "Son of Man" sayings are also attested in all five Gospel sources. And the empty tomb is reported in at least three, if not four, of these Gospel sources. This helps to understand why these items are taken so seriously by contemporary critical scholars.

Timeline of New Testament sources

You can only use the data that pass these criteria when you are constructing historical hypotheses in a debate setting. But the passage of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 is special, because it has the markings on an ancient creed. As Habermas explains, Paul received this creed within *five years of the crucifixion.* Paul verified this creed *twice* with eyewitnesses, Peter, John and James, in Galatians 1:11-24 and Galatians 2:1-10.

So, let's set the date of Jesus' death as being 30 AD. Then ask the question: what sources are closest to the event? We need to have multiple early sources in order to be able to surface minimal facts that can be used when debating skeptics and atheists. Here's the timeline, using the absolute latest possible dates for the sources:

- 30 A.D.: Jesus is crucified. (+0)
- 31 A.D.: The early creed originates around this time
- 35 A.D.: Paul receives the early creed from Peter, John and James in Jerusalem
- 55 A.D.: 1 Corinthians (+25)

- 70 A.D. Mark (+40)
- 80 A.D. Matthew (+50)
- 85 A.D. Luke (+55)
- 95 A.D. John (+65)

My preferred dates on the gospels are at least 5 years ealier than the skeptical dates. So, your earliest source for minimal facts about the resurrection is 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. I explained before how to leverage the facts in 1 Cor 15, and other minimal facts, into a case for the resurrection.

Personal application

You really need to be able to talk to your friends and co-workers about the resurrection. That is our obligation as Christians. When you talk to non-Christians, you cannot use the entire Bible *on faith*. Your opponent is not going to allow you to use the entire text as a source because they don't assume that it is inerrant. You need to argue from minimal facts that pass the standard historical criteria.

So, you need to learn how to explain how scholars extract the minimal facts from the Biblical sources. You need to list the criteria, explain why they are generally accepted, and then apply them. You need to know the dates and authors of the New Testament writings. You need to know which passages are considered to be minimal facts. And then you can make you case on those facts.

I think the most promising strategy is to argue from a supernatural creator and designer, using some recent scientific discoveries, and then go on from there to historical concerns once the existence of a deistic God has been firmly established.

Further study

First, listen to the 30-minute lecture delivered at California Polytechnic State University in 2008 by Gary Habermas, on 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. Then, check out N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection. Then listen to this lecture delivered at California State University in 2005 by William Lane Craig, on arguing from the minimal facts.

And finally, you can check out some debates on the resurrection. I recommend the debate between William Lane Craig and Roy Hoover. But it is important to read the N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection *first!* There is a cross-examination section in the debate, so if you're into that, as I am, then get your fix here.

Featured site: The Western Experience

April 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had plans of writing lots of wonderful posts on foreign policy when I started this blog. But when I tried to do so, I found out that watching all the episodes of Danger Man and Secret Agent, together with my wargaming experience, was no preparation at all for being able to blog on current events!

And that is why I am glad to tell you about a relatively new blog called The Western Experience, that started up around the same time I did. The blog features *great posts* on foreign policy, and it's off to a fast start in terms of readership!

Here are some of The Western Experience's recent posts:

- NATO doesn't exist to coddle offended Muslims.
- America is not arming Mexico's war.
- Iran to the world: 'You can win by defiance'
- Saudi Arabia could be headed towards unstable times.
- North Korean missile launch eminent. Will there be consequences?
- Qaddafi settling in comfortably as new leader of Africa

Blogging about foreign policy is *hard*. So I really appreciate Jason's work on these issues.

Live-blogging the William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate

April 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: My play-by-play transcript of the debate is here.

I got the following e-mail from Reasonable Faith regarding the debate tomorrow between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens:

> Follow the debate on our special blog update live from the debate floor!
>
> **The Live Blog will be held at:** DoesGodExistDebate.blogspot.com
>
> The debate begins at 7:30 pm (Pacific) on Saturday, April 4, 2009. If you can't make it in person, join us online!
>
> More debate info can be found at DoesGodExistDebate.com.

I'm really not sure what they have planned for this live-blogging. If you really want to get ready for the debate, check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek. You can also watch or listen to a *preview debate* that was held in Dallas recently between Craig, Hitchens and some other people.

For a complete list of arguments that are used in these debates, check out my list of posts on defending Christianity here. It includes information on scientific, philosophical and historical arguments, pro and con.

Tough Questions Answered has first report of Licona/Ehrman debate!

April 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is their commentary on the recent Licona vs. Ehrman debate at SES. And they didn't even tell me about it, I had to find it myself. Those meanies!

Excerpt from their awesome post-debate report:

> Here is my summary of the arguments that each of them presented.
>
> Licona opened the debate with a historical argument that goes like this. First, he argued, virtually all historians (close to 100%) agree on three key facts about Jesus:
>
> 1. He died by crucifixion.
> 2. His disciples believed they saw Jesus appear several times after he died.
> 3. The apostle Paul believed he saw Jesus appear after he died.
>
> Then, Licona explained that the historian's job was to figure out the best explanation of these three facts. There are four criteria that the professional historian should use to judge possible explanations of the facts:
>
> 1. explanatory scope
> 2. explanatory power
> 3. plausibility
> 4. less ad hoc

I read their post, and it sounds like Bart Ehrman made his standard discredited case based on 1) manuscript variants and 2) David Hume's argument against miracles. He doesn't even care that he lost his debate against Craig with these exact same arguments.

As I reported before:

> In Ehrman's debate with Peter Williams on the UK-based Unbelievable radio show, and in Ehrman's debate with Dan Wallace, Ehrman lists the 4 worst problems caused by the invariants:
>
> 1. the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11) is a late addition not present in the earliest manuscripts
> 2. the long ending of Mark (Mark 16:9-20) is a late addition not present in the earliest manuscripts
> 3. Jesus was angry and not compassionate when he healed the leper (Mark 1:41)
> 4. that Jesus died apart from God, and not by the grace of God (Hebrews 2:9)

> Now I have to tell you, these disputes are *irrelevant* to standard Christian doctrine. Also, I personally *prefer* the woman at the well story being left out, and I *prefer* angry Jesus in 3). Why? Because I am *snarky*. The only variant that bugs me is the ending in Mark, because I liked the long ending. But none of these "worst cases" affects anything that Mike Licona might say on behalf of the resurrection, which is what the debate is supposed to be about, right?

That post also had some links to other debates on the resurrection. Furthermore, in previous debates, Ehrman's argument against miracles is really just David Hume's argument against miracles, which even non-Christian scholars, like John Earman, have defeated at the highest level here:

- Hume's Abject Failure: The Argument Against Miracles, Oxford University Press, 2000.

Here is an another interesting part of part one of TQA's report (part two is forthcoming, they say!):

> Interestingly, Ehrman did fully accept Licona's three facts about Jesus as historically true. He just didn't accept the explanation of Jesus rising from the dead to explain those facts. His favorite explanation seemed to be hallucinations, so the two debaters spent a lot time discussing hallucinations.

UPDATE: Part 2 of their evaluation has been posted!

Further Reading

Here are some resources related to this debate.

- Licona's first debate with Ehrman, (audio, video) which Licona won easily
- William Lane Craig's debate with Ehrman, which Craig won easily
- How scholars determine the minimal facts and the imporance of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7
- Resources on the minimal facts case used by Licona
- N.T. Wrights case for the resurrection based on theological mutations of the concept of resurrection

Mark Sanford stands tall against left-wing media bias

April 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

27-minute Video below. (H/T The Maritime Sentry)

The interviewer appears to be working from Democrat talking points, and Sanford has to correct obvious deceptions several times during the speech. The questioners are all predictably representing Democrat special interest groups, such as teacher unions. Why do these left-wing activists ask for money when private and charter schools can educate students *better* for *half the price* of failing public schools?

Remember, the DNC had plenty of money to run ads against Sanford to pressure him into compliance, too.

Other posts on Mark Sanford:

- Sanford interview with the Acton Institute
- Sanford refuses to take bailout funds

Sanford's opponents seem to be concerned about education and health care, but I don't see why we should be having government solve these problems by throwing money at them, instead of my introducing competition using vouchers and de-regulation. Customers do better when service providers, like schools and health care providers compete.

Reviews of Christopher Hitchens' book

April 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw this book review about Christopher Hitchens' book "God is Not Great", written by Melinda Penner of Stand to Reason.

The post is here. Here is an excerpt:

> Let me say something that isn't very pleasing to think about Religion isn't false just because it's cruel. Even if every one of Hitchens' accusations were accurate, they don't disprove the truth of religion. God might be a cruel being who does delight in manipulating man. In that case, Hitchens' claim that "religion poisons everything" might be true, but his real claim is that God doesn't exist. And that just doesn't follow from every evil example of religion.

What standard of morality is Hitchens using to judge God and Christians as evil? If it is his personal preference, then who cares what he thinks. If it is the current fashion of the culture he is in in this time and place, who cares? That "standard" will change as time and place changes. It's convention. But, if it is an objective moral standard that exists independently of what individuals and cultures think, then God exists to make that design for the way the world ought to be.

Next excerpt:

> Hitchens says religion is evil, and he does mean evil and sin. He freely uses moral language to pin the blame right where he believes it belongs, but he never explained how he, as a materialist, can use moral language and mean them as moral terms that all mankind are beholden to….
>
> As I mentioned, Hitchens professes materialism, believes it's proved. He freely makes moral accusations against religion and religious people. He freely admits contempt, and, given what he believes, that would be the proper response. He accuses religion of sins and evil. These are real, objective categories for him, not his personal sentiment. He never explains how, as a materialist who believes in a world of only what science can explain and prove in the physical world, he can lay claim to morality. He ignores the grounding problem, the explanatory power of a view of reality to account for the features in it. Morality, the way Hitchens is using it, has no material explanation. How does he account for the prescriptive, universal nature of morality, not merely descriptive? His humanism won't get him there because that can only offer a descriptive, contingent account – whatever is is morality. On this major flaw alone, it's justified to ignore anything Hitchens claims because his view of reality can't lay claim to morality.

Melinda wants to know how Hitchens' can help himself to the notion of rationality on a materialistic worldview. After all, if materialism is true, humans are pure matter. Everything humans do is causally determine by their genetic programming and sensory

inputs. But that behavior is targeted towards *survival and reproduction* not *reasoning about the external world.*

She writes:

> There's more to the grounding problem, too. Is rationality material? He can't even ground the rationality he sees as the crown of human progress. If man is purely material, then he's a machine programmed by nature, c-fibers firing, acting according to the laws hard-wired by his biology. He lauds the "chainless mind," free from religion. Yet in his view of reality, man is chained by determinism with no escape. There is no rationality because there is no option to behave, think, believe any way other than we do. There's no point in even trying to persuade religious people to believe and behave different since we're also just acting the way we're programmed to. Indeed, even scientific inquiry that Hitchens offers as the hope of mankind is nonsense since only one conclusion is predetermined by our programming.

And it goes on from there. I'm looking forward to the (not yet planned) debate between Melinda Penner and Christopher Hitchens! Because I think she could kick his butt with half her brain tied behind her back.

If you want to get ready for the debate today between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens, check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek. You can also watch or listen to a *preview debate* that was held in Dallas recently between Craig, Hitchens and some other people. Biola University is live-blogging the debate as well.

UPDATE: I was just chatting with Brian Auten of Apologetics 315, and he recommended this review of Hitchens' book by Douglas Groothuis. This is a 28-minute audio clip.

Summary of the William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate: Does God Exist?

April 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: The video of the debate has been posted:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang
– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws

– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection
– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus

– god wouldn’t have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that’s a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that’s a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that’s a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don’t support life, that’s a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that’s a bad design

3. hitchens’ burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can’t prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig’s scientific arguments don’t go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don’t prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don’t prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn’t be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig’s evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can’t use the progress of science
– it’s too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god’s existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn’t forming his view based on evidence
– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don’t believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you’ve got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God

– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH’s evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH’s argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn’t need to be efficient

CH’s argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH’s argument that Craig’s scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH’s argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn’t need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH’s citation of Craig’s book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true
– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH’s rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH’s rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH’s argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed

– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them
– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that's a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven't even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn't prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they're growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn't improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do

– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn't need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that's why people act morally
– it's degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don't know why, because i can't ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don't hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don't believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don't agree

WC moral argument: it's not epistemology it's the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument <signal loss>
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing

– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection <signal loss>
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history
– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it's just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that's not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek. You can also watch or listen to a *preview debate* that was held in Dallas recently between Craig, Hitchens, Lee Strobel and some other people. Biola also officially live-blogged the debate here.

Philosopher Doug Geivett's review is here. He attended the debate.

For more on the arguments used in the debate, see my index of arguments here.

Final comments on the William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate

April 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Information about how to get the audio and video of the debate will be posted here, later.

My written summary of the debate is here. It's really a play-by-play of every statement made.

Doug Geivett's review of the debate

Doug Geivett's *excellent* summary of the debate is here. This is a comprehensive summary!

The Pugnacious Irishman

The Pugnacious Irishman has a super summary of the debate. (He attended it) In addition, he has some very welcome comments about the general task of apologetics.

Excerpt:

> As **I've said before** (third part of a three part series. To get the whole of my presentation, you need to read the first two parts as well.), this is a gigantic red herring, and confuses epistemology with metaphysics/ontology. Craig was asking, "how can an atheist ground his moral beliefs?" not "how can an atheist behave morally without believing in God?" Those are two totally different questions. In the absence of a good God that grounds morality, well, the atheist might *think* he's behaving morally, but he's just attaching words without meaning to his actions..actually, the same goes for the theist! Without God, all anyone ever does is act in ways we call morality, but our words are meaningless. The moral sense that we have (that Hitchens claims develops via evolution) is merely an illusion that aids our survival…that's what you get if you follow the atheistic premises where they lead.

And towards the end of the post:

> The highlight of the debate for me was when Craig made an evangelistic appeal to both Hitchens and the non believers in the audience. Of course, Hitchens wasn't just gonna bow the knee right there, but this underscores a proper view of apologetics: it is an evangelistic, missionary enterprise.
>
> I frequently hear Christians dismiss apologetical ventures because "its all just arguing about words. You can't win anyone to Christ with an argument. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. It's all head and no heart and is totally irrelevant to my life."
>
> First, I think anyone watching tonight could see Craig's character and fervent love for the Lord. I've seen the same for many Christian philosophers and apologists on the intellectual front lines. They are winsome and attractive

> ambassadors, as Koukl says. This puts that last objection (it's all head and no heart) in it's place.
>
> Secondly, *nothing* in isolation can win someone to Christ without the Spirit, not even love or acts of service. But people are won over to Christ with arguments all the time when they are used by the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit's help, they are quite potent.
>
> Third, it's not just arguing about words. It is rooted in care for the lost. **Paul** did it. **Jesus** did it. **The early church fathers** did it. Craig showed it tonight.
>
> Of course, if someone doesn't care for the lost, he won't care about any of this either…but that's another discussion.

I would like to see TPI post something about that "other discussion"!

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek. You can also watch or listen to a *preview debate* that was held in Dallas recently between Craig, Hitchens, Lee Strobel and some other people. Biola also officially live-blogged the debate here.

Some book reviews of Hitchens' book by Melinda Penner and Doug Groothuis are here.

For more on the arguments used in the debate, see my index of arguments here.

UPDATE: Looks like this has been picked up by Breitbart here.

BY THE WAY: If you enjoyed Bill Craig's performance in his debate, why not stop by his Reasonable Faith web site and leave him a donation? He won that debate through months and months of preparation. So, when you fund his research, you really are helping him to go out there and do his job well. Won't you consider helping Bill in his work?

Editorials by Stephen Baskerville, John Lott, Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams

April 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought I would throw out a variety of recent editorials from some of my favorite economists and public policy experts. Economist Robert P. Murphy isn't featured today, because I wrote an *entire post* about his excellent article on energy policy recently.

Does the government discourage marriage and family?

Patrick Henry College economist Stephen Baskerville wrote an article about the government's role decline of marriage and the family.

He writes:

> …80 percent of divorces are unilateral. Under "no-fault," divorce becomes a power grab by one spouse, assisted by judicial officials who profit from the ensuing litigation: judges, lawyers, psychotherapists, and social workers. Involuntary divorce involves government agents forcibly removing innocent people from their homes, seizing their property, and separating them from their children. It requires long-term supervision over private life by state functionaries, including police and jails.
>
> …Invariably the first action in a divorce is to separate the children from one parent, usually the father. Even if he is innocent of any legal wrongdoing and does not agree to the divorce, the state seizes his children with no burden of proof to justify why. The burden of proof–and financial burden–falls on him to demonstrate why they should be returned.
>
> A legally unimpeachable parent can thus be arrested for seeing his own children without government authorization. He can be arrested through additional judicial directives that apply to no one but him. He can be arrested for domestic violence or child abuse, even without evidence that he has committed any. He can be arrested for not paying child support, regardless of the amount demanded. He can even be arrested for not paying an attorney or psychotherapist. There is no formal charge, no jury, no trial, and no record.

If these statements surprise you, I recommend you read the whole article to find out how this is done. You will never see anything like this reported in the mainstream media. They have an agenda that forbids telling the truth about this issue.

Do gun-free zones discourage multiple victim public shootings?

University of Maryland economist John R. Lott writes about gun-free zones and their effect on MVPS incidents in this Fox News article.

He writes:

> Time after time multiple- victim public shootings occur in "gun free zones" —

> public places where citizens are not legally able to carry guns. The horrible attack today in Binghamton, New York is no different. Every multiple-victim public shooting that I have studied, where more than three people have been killed, has taken place where guns are banned.
>
> You would think that it would be an important part of the news stories for a simple reason: Gun-free zones are a magnet for these attacks. Extensive discussions of these attacks can be found here and here. We want to keep people safe, but the problem is that it is the law-abiding good citizens, not the criminals, who obey these laws. We end up disarming the potential victims and not the criminals. Rather than making places safe for victims, we unintentionally make them safe for the criminal.

Lott is the author of "More Guns, Less Crime", a study, published by University of Chicago Press, that shows how concealed-carry laws drastically reduce crime in every state in which these laws were enacted. Surprising? Take a second look.

Is moral equivalence good foreign policy?

Hoover Institute (Stanford University) economist Thomas Sowell writes about the danger of electing a president with no executive experience at any level. Especially one who believes, as Evan Sayet says, that evil is good, and good is evil.

Sowell writes about Obama's affection for Iran and Russia:

> What did his televised overture to the Iranians accomplish, except to reassure them that he was not going to do a damn thing to stop them from getting a nuclear bomb? It is a mistake that can go ringing down the corridors of history.

> …This year, President Obama's attempt to make a backdoor deal with the Russians, behind the backs of the NATO countries, was not only rejected but made public by the Russians– a sign of contempt and a warning to our allies not to put too much trust in the United States.

And his hostility for Israel and Britain:

> However much Barack Obama has proclaimed his support for Israel, his first phone call as President of the United States was to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, to whom he has given hundreds of millions of dollars, which can buy a lot of rockets to fire into Israel.
>
> Our oldest and staunchest ally, Britain, has been downgraded by President Obama's visibly less impressive reception of British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, compared to the way that previous Presidents over the past two generations have received British Prime Ministers.

You can find a lot more about the kind of foreign policy threats we face at The Western Experience. The world is not a safe place, Bush just made it look that way by keeping our enemies in check, in exactly the way Obama won't.

Is wealth redistribution morally justified?

Finally, let's see what George Mason University economist Walter Williams has to say about the morality of wealth redistribution.

Excerpt:

> The reason is that now that the U.S. Congress has established the principle that one American has a right to live at the expense of another American, it no longer pays to be moral. People who choose to be moral and refuse congressional handouts will find themselves losers. They'll be paying higher and higher taxes to support increasing numbers of those paying lower and lower taxes. As it stands now, close to 50 percent of income earners have no federal income tax liability and as such, what do they care about rising income taxes? In other words, once legalized theft begins, it becomes too costly to remain moral and self-sufficient.

I recommend clicking on whichever of these stories strikes you as the most wrong or unfamiliar, and see if reading the whole thing changes your mind at all. I think it's a fun experience to become more aware and tolerant of different views by learning about them. You can still disagree, but you'll have more understanding.

Recent legislative activity by Trent Franks and Jim Demint

April 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was listening to Mike Pence guest host "The Washington Watch Weekly" radio show recently, which is normally hosted by the Family Research Council's Tony Perkins. And he introduced me to a real pro-life Congressman named Trent Franks. He had Franks on the show and he really seemed to like him. So, I checked up on Franks and added him to my blogroll.

And then I noticed this news story on OneNewsNow.

Excerpt:

> Congressman Trent Franks of Arizona has introduced the "Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act." If passed, the bill would ban race- or gender-selection abortions.
>
> Attorney Steven Aden of the Alliance Defense Fund tells OneNewsNow his organization helped write the bill that is being referred to as "PreNDA."
>
> "Sex-selection and racially-motivated abortion is an immense problem in America and internationally," the attorney explains, "and Congressman Franks' bill would prohibit the performance of such abortions, the funding of them, or promoting them."

That's good news.

And remember how the Heritage Foundation was worried that the porkulus-1 spending bill would nationalize health care? Well, check out this proposed amendment by Senator Jim Demint.

Excerpt:

> Senator DeMint is offering an amendment to the budget resolution that would prevent any legislation from being passed with less than 60 votes that would eliminate the ability of Americans to have freedom in their health care choices. If passed, the amendment would reinforce President Obama's campaign promise to protect the ability of Americans to keep their health care plan and choice of doctor, regardless of changes made to the health care system.

So, we're seeing some advocacy on two fronts: social issues and fiscal issues.

Are all religions basically the same?

April 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from The Western Experience! Thanks for the link, Jason!

I'm sure that all my readers will have noticed that there a huge number of different religions in the world. This is called *religious pluralism.* Religions all make claims about the way the universe is, and the way that we ought to act in order to solve the problems that we all face as human beings.

The law of non-contradiction

To start with, we all need to be familiar with the law of non-contradiction. This is the stuff that software engineers all learned in undergraduate computer science courses. Computer science is a lot like analytical philosophy because both study symbolic logic. Analytical philosophy is as rigorous as mathematics.

The law says that for any proposition P, P cannot be true and not true at the same time, and in the same context. For example, let P be the statement "it is raining outside my window right now". It is impossible that the reality of the world be that it is raining outside my window right now, and not raining outside my window right now.

The external world is shared by all of us, and it is objective (it is not affected by what we think about it). When we make propositional claims, it is the external, mind-independent world that makes claims true or false. And by "world" I mean all of reality, past, present and future.

Similarities between religions

On a superficial level, religions are similar because they all try to answer the same kinds of questions:

- what is the nature of the ultimate reality in the universe?
- what is the fundamental problem faced by human beings?
- what should human beings do to solve this problem?

These questions are shared by all religions, but on a more fundamental level, religions are all completely different because they give *mutually exclusive* answers to these questions. Therefore, according to the law of non-contradiction, they cannot all be true at the same time and in the same context.

Differences between religions

In this post, blogger Neil explains how the Christian Bible claims that Jesus died on a cross, but the Koran claims he did not die on a cross. How do we understand these two contradictory claims? Are they propositional truth claims about the external world, or something else? There are two answers.

Postmodernism: Treating religious claims as subjective nonsense

We could say that all religious claims are just nonsense, and are not intended to apply to

the external world, but are just personal preference claims about each believer – they are neither true nor false. The problem is that the postmodernist is then being condescending to the religious adherent by redefining their own words.

Rationality: Treating religions claims as genuine claims about reality

We could instead avoid insulting believers by being condescending about their claims. We could say that all religious claims are exactly what the believers claim they are: real claims about the external world. We could then resolve the conflicts using the same tools we use in our everyday lives: the laws of logic and empirical evidence.

How do postmodernists reinterpret religious claims as non-propositional?

Here are a few ways that postmodernists reinterpret the conflicting claims of different religions:

1. relativism: you reinterpret truth claims of the different religions so that they are claims of personal preference, which express the deluded myths that each individual religious person finds "fetching"
2. pragmatism: you reinterpret truth claims of the different religions so that they are claims of personal selfishness, so that each religious believer chooses the delusion that is personally satisfying to them
3. syncretism: you re-interpret truth claims of the different religions so that claims that are absolutely central, such as "was Jesus God?" are reinterpreted as being peripheral issues, and then the religions can all agree on the core of religious belief, such as advocacy of socialism, global warming and abortion

Why would postmodernists want to treat religious claims as nonsense?

In addition to the desperate desire to keep God from having authority over our moral decision-making (i.e. – sin, rebellion, etc.), there are 3 reasons why people try to treat religious claims as non-propositional nonsense.

1. Ignorance: people do not know the conflicting truth claims that different religions make
2. Laziness: people do not want to have to spend time evaluating the competing truth claims
3. Cowardice: people do not want to investigate and debate truth claims: it makes them unpopular

Postmodernists have decided that the purpose of life is to be hedonistic, and not to worry about the world really is. They think that trying to find out the truth about our origins, our purpose, and our ultimate fate is hard work, and talking about it makes them unpopular. So they don't want to do it.

But that is not what they say when you ask them. Instead, they say that disagreements about religion has caused a lot of wars, and so it's better if we just reduce the question of truth in religion to personal preference. That way, everyone can choose the delusion that

makes them happy, (although religions are all *actually* false).

But postmodernists are arrogant to redefine the claims of all religions as nonsense. And it is self-refuting because they are substituting their own view of religion as objectively true, which is just what they deny everyone else. And if disagreeing about religion causes wars, then why are they disagreeing with us about religion?

So then how do we deal with the plurality of religions?

The answer is to treat religion the *exact same way* as any other area of knowledge. We can tolerate people's right to disagree, disagree while still being polite, and resolving disputes using logic, and evidence supplied from disciplines such as analytical philosophy, scientific investigation, and historical analysis.

People who want to involve emotion and intuition in the process of testing the conflicting religious claims can just butt out of the conversation. The search for truth should proceed *irrespective* of what you think about the truth claims of religion. Yes, the doctrine of Hell offends people, but *that doesn't make it false*.

Further study

Portions of this article were borrowed from this lecture by philosopher Douglas Groothuis, in which he explains the how to think carefully, using the laws of logic, about religious claims and the fact of religious pluralism. Note that Doug is *a lot* less snarky than I am in the lecture.

Also, I noticed that Unbelievable has posted a debate between Muslim Shabir Ally and Christian Tony Costa on whether Jesus dried on a cross and whether he rose from the dead.

Here are some related posts on the question of postmodernism and testing religious claims. All of them are far, far, far less snarky than my post today.

- Walter Bradley: is there objective truth in religion? (for beginners)
- William Lane Craig: are there objective truths about God?
- A Christian and a postmodern discuss religious pluralism (many logical contradictions exposed!)

Related objections answered:

- Does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- Six enemies of apologetics engagement
- Why men flee the feminized church
- How to talk to your co-workers about your faith
- Why doesn't God give us more evidence that he exists?
- What about the problems of evil and suffering?
- What about those who have never heard of Jesus?

Obama cuts military spending, blinks at North Korean aggression

April 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You knew that the socialist ACORN lawyer was going to cut military spending at some point. Well, he's done it.

Sweetness and Light reports on the cuts in military spending here. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt from an AP article:

> Production of the F-22 fighter jet, which cost $140 million apiece, would be halted at 187.
>
> ...The Army's $160 billion Future Combat Systems modernization program would lose its armored vehicles. Plans to build a shield to defend against missile attacks by rogue states would also be scaled back...

See, the thing you need to understand is that wars start when aggressors believe they can win the war. When you build up your own military, aggressors start to understand that victory may not be so easy. That's how you prevent wars from even starting. This is called **peace through strength**.

So, by cutting defense spending, Obama is basically emboldening aggressors. Not just aggression against us, but aggression against our allies. If our enemies do not believe that we have the will or the firepower to defend our interests, and those of our allies, abroad, then they will act against our interests. The North Korean missile launch is just the beginning.

Closing Velocity had some more details on the missile defense cuts. (H/T Hot Air)

> 1. Total cuts in missile defense: $1.4 billion or roughly 15%.
> 2. Cancel second Airborne Laser (ABL) aircraft, keep the one remaining ABL prototype as a testbed and revert to pure R&D.
> 3. No increases in Ground-based Interceptor (GBI) deployment in Alaska. Remaining silos will stay unfilled. European GBIs will be decided on later during the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).
> 4. Termination of the Multiple Kill Vehicle (MKV) program.

Hot Air linked to this Politico article, featuring comments by Newt Gingrich.

Excerpt:

> "Dick Cheney is clearly right in saying that between the court decisions about terrorists and the administration actions, the United States is running greater risks of getting attacked than we were under President Bush," said the former speaker of the House and Georgia congressman.
>
> On the North Korean missile launch, he said "the embarrassing repudiation of the

> United States appeal to the United Nations Security Council Sunday afternoon is a vivid demonstration of weakness. This is beginning to resemble the Carter administration's weakness in foreign policy."
>
> He said Obama's speech on nuclear disarmament in Prague on Sunday "is a dangerous fantasy that runs an enormous risk. It is part of the Obama administration's substitution of words for thoughts and fantasies for achievements."
>
> "Now we no longer have a 'global war on terror,'" Gingrich said. "We have 'overseas contingency operations' Now we will no longer have 'terrorist attacks.' We will have 'man-made disasters.' None of our enemies seem to have learned this new language."
>
> "There was amazing symbolism in North Korea deciding to launch a missile the very day President Obama was speaking to Europeans about his fantasy of nuclear disarmament. The West has talked with North Korea for over 15 years and they just keep building nuclear weapons and missiles. We have been talking with the Iranians for a decade and they continue to build nuclear capability and missiles.
>
> "Pakistan has a lot of nuclear weapons. Russia, India and China have nuclear weapons. Hamas in Gaza fires missiles into Israel virtually every day. In this reality, our president proposes we have a big meeting in Washington to discuss nuclear disarmament."

And he contrasts Obama's plan with Ronald Reagan's policy.

> "Reagan felt that keeping a defensive shield alive was more important than a paper deal. The Obama administration is rapidly undermining our missile defense system while describing a fantasy world of trust and cooperation."

Here is a related quotation from Ronald Reagan's debate against the 2nd worst president ever, Jimmy Carter.

> And I'm only here to tell you that I believe with all my heart that our first priority must be world peace, and that use of force is always and only a last resort, when everything else has failed, and then only with regard to our national security. Now, I believe, also, that this meeting this mission, this responsibility for preserving the peace, which I believe is a responsibility peculiar to our country, and that we cannot shirk our responsibility as a leader of the free world because we're the only ones that can do it. **Therefore, the burden of maintaining the peace falls on us. And to maintain that peace requires strength. America has never gotten in a war because we were too strong.**

Ronald Reagan's focus on strength projected abroad ended the cold war without firing a shot. And military spending is vital for achieving peace. But Obama is choosing a different path… the path of Jimmy Carter. And we all know where that ended.

UPDATE: More on the NK missile launch, including Gingrich video on Fox News Sunday at Nice Deb.

UPDATE: A new post on the effectiveness of waterboarding and Obama's intent to prosecute the authors of counter-terrorism policies, possible including George W. Bush himself.

Evaluating atheistic reponses to scientific arguments for theism

April 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that I would take a serious look at a couple of recent comments from the atheists who have been traipsing through looking for debate summaries. Normally I don't allow these kinds of comments through to dirty up the blog, but these ones were clean. So, I thought I would post them for all to see how atheism compares to Christianity.

First, let's take a look at commenter Jason R.

First post by Jason R

First of all, commenter ECM, who is a deist, writes that the scientific arguments "make the painfully obvious case for deism".

Jason R. writes in response:

> "painfully obvious case for deism"
>
> As soon as that case exists then I'm sure Hitch will debate against it. So far the case doesn't exist. Every argument for deism has been debunked, the supporters of which just need to perform a bit of due diligence and research it.

Here is my reply to his first post

> Can you give a list of the arguments for a deistic God that have been debunked?

Here is his reply to my question

> Every single one that I am aware of.
> http://www.google.com is good starting point.

What we learn about atheism from this exchange

It is a bad idea for atheists to insinuate that they have disproved the case for theism without citing logically valid arguments with premises that are supported by specific evidence. Because people like me are going to ask you: "what is your reason or evidence to support that assertion?" And you need to be ready to answer that before you make your assertions.

If you cannot even list the arguments for theism, then you don't know that they have been refuted. If your refutation of my scientific arguments is "Google it", then maybe you should reconsider your assertions. You're not helping your team when you cannot list arguments on the other side. Let me be clear: I can argue your case better than you can, and that should concern you.

Commenter ECM adds:

> Traditionally, in a debate, one will attempt to at least refute the points laid out rather than falling back on "Google it" and then offering the standard boilerplate

> materialist reply that ‘it was all one big accident’ but not before, of course, taking a gratuitous whack at theists a la Hitchens.
>
> …Furthermore, if you do not wish to do so (and when your response is ‘Google it’ you clearly do not or cannot), then why waste everyone’s time with the same hollow argument that at least Wintery and I have heard a thousand times?

Second, let’s take a look at commenter Arthur S.

Hist first post

Arthur S. writes:

> Everyone of the scientific arguments from the Christian posts site (see list below) has been refuted time and time again as you well know (seek and ye shall find vs. ignorance is bliss) but christians persist in claiming them as being valid. The same is true of the philosophical arguments which are really more about word play than useful proofs of anything.

Now ask yourself a question. What has he really said here? Well, nothing. He makes an assertion that my arguments have been refuted time and time again. What we have here is just an assertion *without any evidence*, followed by an insult, followed by an unabashed confession of ignorance regarding the construction of philosophical arguments.

His “refutations” of my scientific arguments

> 1) Creation of the universe out of nothing. (Refuted over and over. In addition the “how, who, what, when, where, why was god created?” are questions that can never be satisfactorily answered. How can a christian be satisfied with the shallow answers provided by the bible?)
> 2) Fine-tuning of physical constants and ratios to support the minimal requirements for life (see response to 4 below).
> 3) Origin of biological information in the simplest living organism (please read up on evolution before using this tired argument again).
> 4) Galactic, stellar and planetary fine-tuning to support the minimal requirements for life (Conditions for life exist throughout the universe. Christians fall into these kinds of traps all the time. Once contradictory evidence is demonstrated, they fight it for a few decades and then have to modify their belief system to accommodate the new findings. Kind of like how christians defended slavery in the U.S. in the 1900’s based on the bible until they developed some morals that were in opposition to the bible which contradicts the claim that our morals come from the bible).
> 5) Sudden origin of all animal phyla in the Cambrian explosion (”Sudden” if you consider 50 to 100 million years sudden and have an incredulous attitude).
> 6) Natural limits of biological change (again study up on evolution before making these kinds of nonsense arguments)

A critical evaluation of his responses

Let's take a look at his replies point-by-point.

1. No evidence is cited.
2. No evidence is cited. There is a long-winded personal attack against Christians, which is irrelevant to the science.
3. He says that evolution can explain the origin of the simplest living system. But evolution requires that replication already be in place, it cannot be used as an explanation of the first replicator. So citing evolution here is no defense to the explain the origin of the first replicating organism.
4. No evidence is cited, but there is a long-winded insult.
5. No source was provided for his "50-100 million years" number. The correct number according to the University of California at Berkeley is 5 million years. So that could just be an outright lie. And more insults, of course.
6. No evidence is cited, but we do get yet another insult.

So, there is popular atheism. No evidence, one probable lie, and tons of insults. I am not saying all atheists are like this, but many of them are like this. And I am talking about people with good degrees, good careers and good jobs. They really have never bothered to look into these issues. The creed of atheism is these ignorant, hateful diatribes.

And that's why they love people like Christopher Hitchens, and why many atheist web sites think he is a great debater. Because he is good at *hating* and *insulting* people he disagrees with. And that makes him the *best atheist*. On the other hand, Christians love people like William Lane Craig, because arguments, evidences and truth matter more to us.

Our bestselling books are Lee Strobel books, in which scholars with one or more PhDs are interviewed about their academic research publications. Their bestseller is "God is not great", in which an uneducated journalist goes on a hate-spree, without making a single formal argument against the existence of God. These are two different sets of values.

And that is why when we have debates between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens, all the militant atheists like Common Sense Atheism and Debunking Christianity have to award the victory to Craig.

My advice for atheists

My recommendation is that you proof-read everything you write and remove all the personal attacks and insults. Then, for every assertion, you need to reference some data from a book published by an academic press, or a peer-reviewed research publication. That way, you will be able to sustain your arguments when you try to debate Christians.

I know it feels good for you to hate and insult those with whom you disagree. And since morality and rationality unjustificable on atheism, since atheism cannot ground objective morality and free will, I am not surprised at your tone. But we were all created in God's

image. At least try to treat your neighbors with respect and tolerance.

You can read see a list of arguments for and against Christianity in my post here.

What is the doctrine of peace through strength?

April 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ronald Reagan
Image stolen from Douglas Groothuis.

"Si vis pacem, para bellum"
– Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus

It means, "Let him who desires peace prepare for war."

The idea of peace through strength was paraphrased in George Washington's first state of the union address, as well as by Presidents Lincoln and Reagan. Margaret Thatcher (United Kingdom) and Stephen Harper (Canada) also believe in peace through strength.

Most wars start when a dictator or monarch (e.g. – Hitler) believes he can win a conflict against a weak neighbor quickly and easily. Perhaps to test out his plan, he takes some small aggressive steps to make sure that no one is going to stop his aggression (e.g. – rebuilding the Luftwaffe, occupying the Rhineland, annexing the Sudetenland, annexing Austria, invading Poland). Once he is able to confirm over and over that no democracies are going to stop his conquests by force, he attacks.

The way to stop most wars is to make dictators believe that you have the means and the will to stop their aggression. Clinton allowed about a half dozen attacks in the 90s without any reprisal, (e.g. – World Trade Center, USS Cole, etc.) We did not respond to these terrorist attacks on our national interests. As a result, Bin Laden would joke about how the USA was a "paper tiger" that did not have the stomach for war. He thought that a few American losses would make us pack up and go home.

Contrast Clinton's view with Ronald Reagan. Reagan's biography at the White House web site says this:

> "In foreign policy, Reagan sought to achieve "**peace through strength**". During his two terms he increased defense spending 35 percent, but sought to improve relations with the Soviet Union. In dramatic meetings with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, he negotiated a treaty that would eliminate intermediate-range

> nuclear missiles. Reagan declared war against international terrorism, sending American bombers against Libya after evidence came out that Libya was involved in an attack on American soldiers in a West Berlin nightclub."

When the USA was attacked by terrorists, Bush, following Reagan's example, made sure that the aggressors would understand that the first steps of aggression would draw a violent, decisive response. As a result of the Bush doctrine, Libya has discontinued its WMD program and invited inspectors to come in and cart away all of its research equipment. Libya did this *only* because it believed that the USA was willing to back up diplomacy with force. We can have peace if we cause aggressors to believe that war will cost too much.

Now, violence is not the only way to make war cost too much. We could probably avoid war with Iran or Venezuela or Russia by drilling for our own oil and building our own nuclear plants. No one *prefers* a war. It's better to de-fund potential aggressors by supplying our economy with oil that we produce ourselves. This is one good reason to increase domestic energy production. (Another good reason is to lower the price of oil, etc – because of supply and demand: increased supply leads to lower prices)

Reagan won the cold war without firing a shot. But sometimes, especially after 8 years of Clinton's weak foreign policy, some violence is needed to communicate to our enemies that we mean business. Our willingness to engage in a military response to the 9/11 attacks was enough to provide us with 7 years free of attacks on American soil. The terrorists knew that next time they attacked us, then maybe Syria would become a democracy. So there were no more attacks on American soil while Bush governed.

Deterrence works. The goal is to AVOID war by making tyrants understand that the cost of their aggression will be too much for them to bear. This is the doctrine of peace through strength.

"An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile – hoping it will eat him last."
— Winston Churchill

An analysis of the Democrats socialist health care policies

April 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I would summarize the ideals of Democrats (socialists) as follows:

1. There are unequal life outcomes in society
2. Those who have little wealth are the victims of those who produce wealth
3. We (democrats) must transfer wealth until everyone's life outcomes are equal, regardless of their life choices
4. We (democrats) must use government coercion to achieve this equality
5. Since we (democrats) are so morally superior, we are not obligated to transfer our own wealth to anyone

Consider health care. Some risky lifestyle choices are more likely to require more health care services. The socialist's goal is to make sure that no one is deterred from making these risky choices. Those who do not engage in these risks must be forced to pay for the health care of those who do choose to take on these risks. That way, everyone is equal in the end.

The way this is done is to make sure that people who *don't* engage in risky behaviors cannot pay *less* for their health care than those who *do* engage in risky behaviors. Let me explain.

Suppose a safe person S knows that he only needs coverage for catastrophic care, since his lifestyle choices eliminate the need for elective treatments like abortions, birth control, STD medications, sex changes and drug addiction treatments. He can be covered for a very low premium.

Consider another irresponsible, risky person R who is engaged in all kinds of risky behavior. He can be covered for all of the medical services for a very high premium. His own choices expose him to risks that will require more medical services.

Democrats (socialists), solve this problem by forcing S to pay for mandatory health care with a very high premium that covers services he will never use. That way, he is really paying for his own health care, *and R's health care, too*.

Take a look at this article I found on Health Care BS. In the article, they cite Michael Tanner of the Cato Institute, who analyzes the health care policies that may be included in the Democrats' health care reform bill.

This is the one I want to draw your attention to, because this is what single-payer countries like Canada have that causes them so many problems:

> **An Individual Mandate**. Every American will be required to buy an insurance policy that meets certain government requirements. Even individuals who are currently insured — and happy with their insurance — will have to switch to

> insurance that meets the government's definition of acceptable insurance, even if that insurance is more expensive or contains benefits that they do not want or need.

And here is another one that will force employers to *lay off American workers* because employers have to pay more for the same productivity.

> **An Employer Mandate.** At a time of rising unemployment, the government will raise the cost of hiring workers by requiring all employers to provide health insurance to their workers or pay a fee (tax) to subsidize government coverage.

Yes, that's right. Socialism attacks businesses. Attacking businesses causes unemployment.

And there's more:

> **A Government-Run Plan**, competing with private insurance. Because such a plan is subsidized by taxpayers, it will have an unfair advantage, allowing it to squeeze out private insurance. In addition, because government insurance plans traditionally under-reimburse providers, such costs are shifted to private insurance plans, driving up their premiums and making them even less competitive. The actuarial firm Lewin Associates estimates that, depending on how premiums, benefits, reimbursement rates, and subsidies were structured, as many as 118.5 million would shift from private to public coverage. That would mean a nearly 60 percent reduction in the number of Americans with private insurance. It is unlikely that any significant private insurance market could continue to exist under such circumstances, putting us on the road to a single-payer system.

When government controls your health care, you pay them at gunpoint and when you want care you get in line behind people who *paid nothing into the system.* That is socialized medicine, the dream of all Democratic socialists.

And there's also redistribution of wealth:

> **Massive New Subsidies.** This includes not just subsidies to help low-income people buy insurance, but expansions of government programs such as Medicaid and Medicare.

And remember what I said about the government needing to reducing costs when demand skyrockets for "free" care?

> **Government Playing Doctor**. Democrats agree that one goal of their reform plan is to push for "less use of aggressive treatments that raise costs but do not result in better outcomes." While no mechanism has yet been spelled out, it seems likely that the plan will use government-sponsored comparative effectiveness research to impose cost-effectiveness guidelines on medical care, initially in government programs, but eventually extending such restrictions to

> private insurance.

This is all caused by the good intentions of people who have no knowledge of economics, *whatsoever.* And it is important to note that it is this kind of naive, incompetent meddling in the free-market that leads to poverty and the loss of all of our liberties.

Further study

Here are some previous links that are relevant:

- Senator Jim Demint introduces a bill to prevent the Democrats from restricting choice in health care
- Democrats block Senator Tom Coburn's amendment to defend the conscience rights of medical professionals
- An analysis of good health care policies in Ireland, and bad ones in the UK
- Massachusetts state-run health care costs are spiraling out of control
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates Sweden's health care system
- The provision in Porkulus-1 that gave Washington control of your health care decisions
- The anti-science funding of useless ESCR instead of useful ASCR to appease pro-abortion special interests
- A damning assessment, with video clips, of Canada's single-payer socialized medicine system

Free speech activist Ezra Levant interviewed about his new book

April 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian free speech activist Ezra Levant has a new book out. I am in the process of reading it right now, because I was lucky enough to get a copy as a gift, *autographed!* Ezra had to shell out six figures to defend himself from charges that he offended members of a special interest victim group. His new book tells his story, and the stories of many of the other victims of fascism in Canada.

Here is a video he posted this week of his interview with the libertarian Fraser Institute:

Here is his famous opening speech from his first hearing with the Alberta HRC:

Make no mistake. The left has no respect for individual rights. None. Today they confiscate your money to redistribute it to their favored special interest victim groups, while blaming you for working hard. Tomorrow, they arrest and imprison you for saying things that offend their favored special interest victim groups. Leftism *is* collectivism. Collectivism *is* fascism.

For more information about the book, the best thing I have seen is Denyse O'Leary's twelve part series of posts. Part 12 is linked here and contains all of the other 11 parts and an introduction. Here are some excerpts:

Here is a quotation of "Shakedown" from part 2:

> The main reason that today's human rights commissions feel so un-Canadian is that their operations violate the most basic principles of natural justice. As soon as a human rights complaint is filed, the deck is stacked against the accused. For most of Canada's HRCs, taxpayers foot the bill so that government-paid bureaucrats can investigate complaints and government-paid lawyers can prosecute them. The targets of those complaints, on the other hand, don't get any government help. Many are too poor to hire lawyers and private investigators. So they must fend for themselves against an army of public paper-pushers.
>
> (A study of the cases in which the Canadian Human Rights Commission investigated allegations of hate speech, for example, foujnd that 91 per cent of the government's targets were too poor to afford lawyers and appeared either on their own or with representation by a non-lawyer volunteer.) In other words, it's a turkey shot for the government, with poor, intimidated targets fighting against the unlimited resources of the state. (p. 19)

Check out this quote from Shakedown from part 4:

> It's hard to believe, but government bureaucrats, paid with tax dollars, who are supposed to be promoting human rights and interracial relations, are spending

> their time becoming members of neo-Nazi websites and writing bigoted comments on the Internet. Their goal is to goad Canadian citizens into replying with their own hateful comments – which the human rights investigators can then prosecute as human rights abuses.
>
> That would be like a police officer setting out lines of cocaine at party, snorting a few himself, then inviting other people to do the same – and then arresting them when they take him up on his offer.

Here is a bit more from part 5:

> The March 25 hearing was a disaster for the CHRC. Its staff had to admit, under oath, that they routinely went online under false identities to provoke reactions from neo-Nazis. The CHRC admitted that it had no controls over who had access to these CHRC neo-Nazi website membership accounts. Despite dozens of objections made by CHRC lawyers – apparently to run out the clock on the one-day hearing – the CHRC's dirty laundry was aired in the national media.
>
> The dirtiest fact of all: the CHRC had logged on to a neo-Nazi website by illegally hacking into a private citizen's wireless Internet account at her home. It was a means to cover the CHRC's tracks, so that the identity of the originating, government computers would be hidden. That staggering revelation came from Alain Monfette, a Bell Canada security officer, who had been subpoenaed by Lemire to find out who had gone on online as "Jadewarr," one of the CHRC's neo-Nazi codenames. Monfette disclosed to a stunned courtroom that jadewarr's posts had been made thorugh the Internet account of Nelly Hechme …

Complainants don't have to pay anything, while defendants are drained of tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees. In fact, the defendants taxes go to *pay for their own prosecution*.

Here's an excerpt from part 6:

> If you're mad about something in your life, no matter how trivial – no matter if it's your own fault – there really is no reason *not* to file a complaint with your unfriendly neighbourhood human rights commission. It doesn't cost you a thing to start a complaint. Not even the price of a postage stamp – you can just fax your complaint in. If you win, you can get tax-free cash, and often some sort of government order that will try to assuage your feelings – like an order to make those darned pizza boys change the CD at work and stop hiding your stool. And even if you lose and the HRC vindicates your opponent, there's the cruel satisfaction of knowing that you've punished your adversaries by putting them through years of legal hassles.

And one last word from Denyse herself in part 9:

> …when I read Solzhenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago years ago, one thing that struck me was his testimony that, in general, the Soviet regime punished political

> dissidents much more viciously than it punished street criminals.
>
> That makes sense in a certain kind of regime. Street criminals, after all, threaten only the citizen. Political dissidents threaten the bureaucrat – a much more serious crime.

And one more thing. Although Ezra is Jewish, he is a tireless defender of the free speech rights of Christians. I mean, he goes out of his way to defend our rights – more than highly-placed Christians have done. He is a real hero.

Buy. This. Book.

Further study

Ezra Levant defends free speech in these video clips from the Michael Coren TV show. And remember, fascist HRCs are bad for business, too.

How to defend the kalam cosmological argument just like William Lane Craig

April 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from The Way the Ball Bounces! Thanks for the link!

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Colliding Universes! Thanks for the link Denyse!

This post is the first in a two part series. In case you missed it, here is Craig's *second* argument about fine-tuning.

I've been watching Bill Craig debates for a long time now, ever since I did my first degree in computer science a dozen years ago. Today I thought we could all learn how to argue Craig's first argument for God, which he used in his debate with Christopher Hitchens.

Let's go over Craig's *kalam* argument in brief.

The *kalam* cosmological argument

The argument goes like this:

1. Whatever begins to exist requires a cause
2. The universe began to exist
3. Therefore, the universe requires a cause (M.P. 1,2)

The most important thing for you to realize is that *nothing* can be sustained in a debate unless it can be phrased as a valid argument according the rules of inference. All of Craig's arguments can be broken down into logical propositions that use the standard laws of logical reasoning in order to force their conclusions *deductively*, so long as the premises are true.

Understanding the logical form of the *kalam* argument

The form of the *kalam* argument is valid because it allows for a *modus ponens* inference. (Here's a primer on logical reasoning)

- if p is true, then q is true
- p is true
- therefore, q is true

That means that so long as premise 1 and 2 are true, the conclusion follows necessarily. This is the same form of argument (deductive) used by Sherlock Holmes in his cases.

Proving the premises

Can the atheist deny that either or both of these premises are true?

1. "Whatever begins to exist requires a cause"
   If the atheist denies this premise, then they are denying a fundamental law of natural science, namely, that matter can neither be created or destroyed. That is

natural law.
2. “The universe began to exist”
   The universe came into being. If the atheist denies this they are denying the state of the art in modern cosmology.

First, quantum mechanics is not going to save the atheist here. In QM, virtual particles come into being *in a vacuum.* The vacuum is sparked *by a scientist.* The particles exist for a period of time *inversely proportional to their mass.* But in the case of the big bang, there is no vacuum – there’s nothing. There is no scientist – there’s nothing. And the universe is far too massive to last 14 billion years as a virtual particle.

Secondly, atheists will say that the big bang is speculative physics that could change at any moment. But the trend is in favor of an absolute beginning out of nothing. We have had a string of solid, recent scientific discoveries that point in a definite direction, as follows:

- Einstein’s theory of general relativity, and the scientific confirmation of its accuracy
- the cosmic microwave background radiation
- red-shifting of light from galaxies moving away from us
- radioactive element abundance predictions
- helium/hydrogen abundance predictions
- star formation and stellar lifecycle theories
- the second law of thermodynamics applied to nuclear fusion inside stars

So, insofar as atheists question these discoveries and the origin of the entire physical universe out of nothing, they are opposing the progress of science.

What came into being at the moment of creation?

You need to understand that the big bang theory states that space, time and matter were all created at the moment of creation.

1. There was no space causally prior to the universe beginning to exist
2. There was no time causally prior to the universe beginning to exist
3. There was no matter causally prior to the universe beginning to exist

All of these things *began to exist* at the first moment.

What can we infer about the cause?

So, space, time, and matter began to exist. What could have caused them to begin to exist?

1. Whatever causes the universe to appear is not inside of space, because there *was no space* causally prior to the creation event. The cause must therefore be non-physical, because physical things exist in space.
2. Whatever causes the universe to appear is not bound by time (temporal). It *never began to exist.* There was no passage of time causally prior to the big bang, so the

cause of the universe did not *come into being.* The cause existed *eternally*.
3. And the cause is not material. All the matter in the universe came into being at the first moment. Whatever caused the universe to begin to exist cannot have been matter, because there was no matter causally prior to the big bang.

So what could the cause be? Craig notes that we are only familiar with *two kinds* of non-material realities:

1. Abstract objects, like numbers, sets and mathematical relations
2. Minds, like your own mind

Now, abstract objects don't cause of any effects in nature. But we are very familiar with the causal capabilities of our own minds – just raise your own arm and see! So, by process of elimination, we are left with a mind as the cause of the universe. As Sherlock Holmes says, "*When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.*"

This cause created the entire physical universe. The cause of this event is therefore *supernatural, b*ecause it brings nature into being and is not inside of nature itself. The cause of the universe violates the law of conservation of matter is therefore performing a miracle.

Responding to alternative naturalistic cosmologies

In this published research paper from the journal *Astrophysics and Space Science*, William Lane Craig responds to the several naturalistic attempts to evade the implications of the *kalam* argument. I will list each one by name and explain the main problem with each. I highly recommend you read the paper and become conversant with the arguments and evidences.

1. The steady-state model: disproved by recent empirical observations of radio galaxy distributions, as well as red-shifting of light from distant galaxies moving away from us at increasing speeds
2. The oscillating model: disproved in 1998 by more empirical measurements of mass density which showed that the universe would expand forever, and never collapse (was named Discovery of the Year)
3. The vacuum fluctuation model: the theory allows for universes to spawn at every point in space and coalesce into one extremely old universe, which contradictions observations of our much younger universe
4. The chaotic inflationary model: does not avoid the need for an absolute beginning in the finite past
5. The quantum gravity model: makes use of imaginary time which cannot be mapped into a physical reality, it's purely theoretical

Why the *kalam* cosmological argument matters

We need to make a decision *today* about how we are going to live. The evidence available

today supports the creation of the entire physical universe from nothing, caused by a supernatural mind with immense power. The progress of science has strengthened this theory against determined opposition from rival naturalistic theories.

Those are the facts, and we must all choose what to do with them.

Further study

A good on this topic is the debate between William Lane Craig and atheist physicist Victor Stenger, (audio here). Also, a lecture titled “Beyond the Big Bang”, was delivered at the University of Colorado at Boulder, in front of Victor Stenger and other physicists (audio here). There is a period of Q&A in which Bill must face challengers. These are both available on DVD. More Bill Craig debates are here.

How to defend the fine-tuning argument just like William Lane Craig

April 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Colliding Universes! Thanks for the link Denyse!

This post is the second in a two part series. In case you missed it, here is Craig's *first* argument on the kalam argument.

First of all, if you're not clear on the fine-tuning argument, click here and read Walter Bradley's exposition of it. Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University. He was also a professor and department head at Texas A&M before going to Baylor. He had his Ph.D at age 24 from the University of Texas and was a tenured professor at 27.

The first argument presented by Bradley in that post is the same argument that Craig used against Hitchens in their debate. (It's Craig's second argument in the set of five). Bradley's version of the argument has been presented *live*, *in-person* by Bradley at dozens of universities here and abroad, in front of students *and faculty*. The lecture I linked to in that post is an MP3.

The fine-tuning argument

The argument goes like this:

1. The fine-tuning of the universe to support life is either due to law, chance or design
2. It is not due to law or chance
3. Therefore, the fine-tuning is due to design

What does it meaning to be fine-tuned for life?

Here are the facts on the fine-tuning:

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- The constants are *selected* by whoever creates the universe. They are not determined by physical laws. And the extreme probabilities involved required put the fine-tuning beyond the reach of chance.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other

selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants

Here are a couple of examples of the fine-tuning. Craig only gave one example in the debate and didn't explain how changes to the constant would affect the minimal requirements for life. But Bradley *does* explain it, and he is a professional research scientist, so he is speaking about things he worked in his polymer research lab. (He was the director)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would be able to build up the nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.
- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – "carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can't be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

Either way, you've got no life of *any conceivable kind.*

Is the fine-tuning real?

Yes, it's real and it is conceded by the top-rank of atheist physicists. Let me give you a citation from the best one of all, Martin Rees. Martin Rees is an atheist and a qualified astronomer. He wrote a book called "Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape The

Universe", (Basic Books: 2001). In it, he discusses 6 numbers that need to be fine-tuned in order to have a life-permitting universe.

Rees writes here:

> These six numbers constitute a 'recipe' for a universe. Moreover, the outcome is sensitive to their values: if any one of them were to be 'untuned', there would be no stars and no life. Is this tuning just a brute fact, a coincidence? Or is it the providence of a benign Creator?

There are some atheists who deny the fine-tuning, but these atheists are in firm opposition to the progress of science. The more science has progressed, the more constants, ratios and quantities we have discovered that need to be fine-tuned. Science is going in a theistic direction. Next, let's see how atheists try to account for the fine-tuning, on atheism.

Atheistic responses to the fine-tuning argument

There are two common responses among atheists to this argument.

The first is to speculate that there are actually an infinite number of other universes that are not fine-tuned, (i.e. – the gambler's fallacy). All these other universes don't support life. We just happen to be in the one universe is fine-tuned for life. The problem is that there *is no way of directly observing these other universes and no independent evidence that they exist.*

Here is an excerpt from an article in Discover magazine, (which is hostile to theism and Christianity).

> Short of invoking a benevolent creator, many physicists see only one possible explanation: Our universe may be but one of perhaps infinitely many universes in an inconceivably vast multiverse. Most of those universes are barren, but some, like ours, have conditions suitable for life.
>
> The idea is controversial. Critics say it doesn't even qualify as a scientific theory because the existence of other universes cannot be proved or disproved. Advocates argue that, like it or not, the multiverse may well be the only viable nonreligious explanation for what is often called the "fine-tuning problem"—the baffling observation that the laws of the universe seem custom-tailored to favor the emergence of life.

The second response by atheists is that the human observers that exist today, 14 billion years after the universe was created out of nothing, actually caused the fine-tuning. This solution would mean that although humans did not exist at the time the of the big bang, they are going to be able to reach back in time at some point in the future and manually fine-tune the universe.

Here is an excerpt from and article in the New Scientist, (which is hostile to theism and Christianity).

> …maybe we should approach cosmic fine-tuning not as a problem but as a clue. Perhaps it is evidence that we somehow endow the universe with certain features by the mere act of observation… observers are creating the universe and its entire history right now. If we in some sense create the universe, it is not surprising that the universe is well suited to us.

So, there are two choices for atheists. Either an infinite number of unobservable universes that are not fine-tuned, or humans go back in time at some future point and fine-tune the beginning of the universe, billions of years in the past.

Why the fine-tuning argument matters

We need to make a decision *today* about how we are going to live. The evidence available *today* supports the fine-tuning of the universe by a supernatural mind with immense power. The progress of science has strengthened this theory against determined opposition from rival naturalistic theories.

Those are the facts, and we must all choose what to do with them.

Further study

Here is a paper by Walter L. Bradley that contains many more examples of the fine-tuning, and explanations for *what happens* when you change the constants, quantities and rations even slightly.

Why taxing the rich to grow government fails

April 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from 4Simpsons! Thanks for the link!

I spotted this article from Chris Edwards of the Cato Institute. (H/T Club for Growth)

In the article Edwards explains why taxing the rich is bad for economic growth. The article is a response to a leftist polemic in *The Economist.*

The first thing to note is that tax increases decrease the growth of the efficient, market-oriented private sector:

> President Obama wants to go in the other direction, raising the top two income tax rates, which would reduce production and increase avoidance by highly skilled people. Such economic damage from higher taxes is called deadweight loss. In the 2006 paper, Mr Feldstein argued that deadweight losses from a federal income tax rate increase would be $1.76 for every dollar of tax increase. That means that every new $1 billion spending programme in President Obama's budget will destroy about $1.76 billion of activities in the private sector.

Yes, this is why we are losing jobs today, because Obama is transferring wealth from private companies, who answer to customers and shareholders, to public bureaucracies, who are insulated from market competition.

He continues by explaining that the rich already pay most of the taxes:

> …43% of American households do not pay any federal income tax, according to data from the Joint Committee on Taxation. That large group is doing little to support the huge burden of the welfare state, so it is laughable that they might be angry at the wealthy who do bear the burden. The CBO data show that the top one-fifth of households pay 69% of the entire costs of the federal government. Frankly, the rest of Americans are free-riders on the top quintile's enormous financial support of government.

And he explains why the public sector is less efficient than the private sector:

> There are fundamental reasons why big governments do not work very well. As taxes rise, resources are shifted from more efficient private activities to less efficient government activities. The private sector is not more efficient than government because it does not make mistakes, but because it has mechanisms to purge mistakes and move resources to higher-valued uses. Government policymakers do the opposite: they retain failed programmes year after year, and resources get stuck in low-value uses.
>
> Even if politicians did focus on moving resources to higher-value uses, they would be unable to because government activities do not generate the price and profit signals needed to allocate capital and labour efficiently. A final problem is

> that government programmes are often horribly managed.

For an example of why governments don't manage money efficiently, consider this USA Today story. (H/T Representative Mike Pence)

Excerpt:

> The federal government will soon send more than $300 million in stimulus funds to 61 housing agencies that have been repeatedly faulted by auditors for mishandling government aid, a USA TODAY review has found.
>
> The money is part of a $4 billion effort to create jobs by fixing public housing projects that have fallen into disrepair. Recipients include housing authorities in 26 states that auditors have cited for problems ranging from poor bookkeeping to money that was spent improperly, according to the review of summaries the agencies must file with the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Where did that money come from? It comes from the private sector. It comes from *you.*

Millions Will Lose Health Care from their Employer Under the Democrats' Plan

April 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

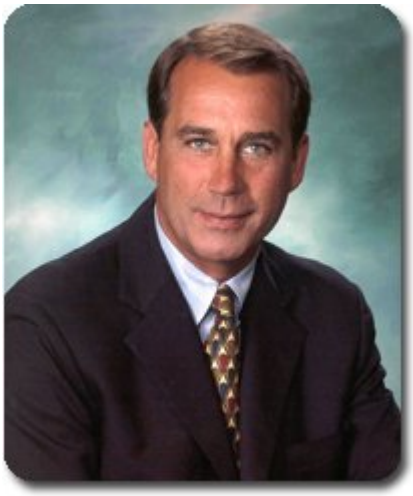

House Republican Leader John Boehner

I spotted this scary post over at John Boehner's blog. The post, written by Kevin Lewis, links to this AP article that highlights a new study from the Lewin Group. I blogged before about the Democrats' plan to equalize life outcomes and redistribute wealth by nationalizing health care. Now we get more details of how they'll do it.

Here is a summary of the Democrats' plan:

> President Barack Obama and many Democrats want to create a government insurance plan to compete with private plans that now cover about 170 million Americans. The issue is major sticking point for Republicans and the insurance industry.

And the predicted results of that plan:

> The Lewin study found that if such a plan were open to all employers and individuals, and if it paid doctors and hospitals the same as Medicare, the government plan would quickly grow to 131 million members, while enrollment in private insurance plans would plummet.
>
> "The private insurance industry might just fizzle out altogether," said John Sheils, a Lewin vice president and leading author of the study.
>
> By paying Medicare rates the government plan would be able to set premiums well below what private plans charge. Monthly premiums for family coverage would be $761 in the government plan, compared with an average of $970 in private plans, the study estimated. Employers and individuals would flock to the public plan to cut costs.

Lewis cites two of the study's key findings:

> "If as the President proposed, eligibility is limited to only small employers, individuals and the self-employed … The number of people with private coverage would fall by 32.0 million people."
>
> "If the public plan is opened to all employers as proposed by former Senators Clinton and Edwards, at Medicare payment levels … The number of people with private health insurance would decline by 119.1 million people. This would be a two-thirds reduction in the number of people with private coverage (currently 170 million people)."

More here at the Heritage Foundation.

Further study

Here are some previous links that are relevant:

- The libertarian Cato Institute's Michael Tanner explains the features of the Democrats' health care plan
- Senator Jim Demint introduces a bill to prevent the Democrats from restricting choice in health care
- Democrats block Senator Tom Coburn's amendment to defend the conscience rights of medical professionals
- An analysis of good health care policies in Ireland, and bad ones in the UK
- Massachusetts state-run health care costs are spiraling out of control
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates Sweden's health care system
- The provision in Porkulus-1 that gave Washington control of your health care decisions
- The anti-science funding of useless ESCR instead of useful ASCR to appease pro-abortion special interests
- A damning assessment, with video clips, of Canada's single-payer socialized medicine system

Colombia hosts international banking conference and signs free trade deals

April 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story has two parts. First of all, take a look at this IBD article that explains how the USA was able to transition Colombia's economy away from drug-trafficking with a plan called "Plan Colombia". The Democrats deserve all the credit for this plan, because it was initiated by Clinton and supported by Joe Biden. It has been a huge foreign policy victory for the USA.

Let's take a look:

> …Colombia is no longer the narco-trafficking hellhole it once was, but a bright Latin American success story.
>
> Plan Colombia not only went after traffickers, but also root causes of conflict, professionalizing the military and offering the population alternatives to trafficking.

IBD is hoping that the lessons we learned in Colombia can be applied in other places like Mexico and and Afghanistan, where similar drug-related problems abound. But wait! All is not well. For Obama has decided to undermine Plan Colombia by reneging on the last step of the plan. Obama is refusing to sign a free trade deal with Colombia!

> But we don't see how the reality of victory can truly be achieved so long as Congressional Democrats undermine the final step in Plan Colombia's victory plan, which is free trade with the U.S.
>
> It's the last step in the process of offering an alternative development path, over drugs and terror. Protectionist Democrats in Congress, in hock to Big Labor cash, still refuse to allow even a vote.

That's right. After all this work on Plan Colombia, we are about to throw away all the fruits of our labor by refusing to allowing American companies to sell to Colombia, and allowing American taxpayers to buy cheaper, higher quality Colombian goods. Free trade is good for us, good for them, and good for world peace. But I guess it's not good for Obama's special interest groups.

And this has implications for Afghanistan, a country desperately trying to break away from an economy based on drug-trafficking:

> Worse, it has potential to undercut victory in Afghanistan. Afghanis can see how hard Colombians worked with Americans to make Plan Colombia succeed. They can see how the program addressed not only military tasks, but social ones, which end in free and legal trade with the vast U.S. market.
>
> …For Colombia, the promise was the free trade that Democrats are now reneging on. Democrats are snatching defeat from the jaws of a victory they could claim

> as their own and extend to Afghanistan. All they have to do is keep their promises.

But Colombia isn't about to take this garbage from the President-Teleprompter. They're going to fight back! Check out this IBD article that explains what Colombia is trying to do to avoid rolling back all the progress they've made against the drug traffickers. They've hosted an international conference of bankers to try to diversify their economy.

Excerpt:

> Colombia asserted itself on the international stage last week, with the 50th annual governors' meeting of the Inter-American Development Bank in Medellin. Some 6,000 bankers and businesspeople came.
>
> …Corporate titans from Brazil, Spain, Japan, China and Germany were present along with the bankers, having invested $8.5 billion in Colombia in 2008.

But wait! One country barely even showed up! Which one? It's the country that angers the world by opposing free trade. The country that was warned about its ignorant and destructive economic policies by former communist basket-cases like China and Russia. Who is it?

Let's see:

> A few U.S. executives were present too, but the Americans seemed overshadowed by the others.
>
> It isn't surprising, because Colombia is rapidly moving to diversify its trading partners, signing deals with China, Japan, Korea, the European Union, Canada and Central America, following Chile's model of signing free-trade deals with all comers.
>
> The U.S., with its Colombia free-trade agreement still on ice in Congress, was the only country that looked isolated and out of tune with the world without its pact.

But the IBD article does end on a hopeful note: there are signs that the free trade deal may be back on the table. We can only hope.

Further study

This previous post I wrote links to an article by economist Robert P. Murphy, published by the Institute for Energy Research. The article warns about the dangers of carbon tariffs and the benefits of free trade. I highly recommend it to those who do not understand whyy free trade matters for our economic growth and prosperity. And that includes *jobs.*

Scoop! Upcoming debate between William Lane Craig and Francisco Ayala

April 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Using my mysterious *Wintery* powers, I have managed to discover a secret story about Bill Craig's next debate! He is going to be debating the evolutionary biologist Francisco Ayala in the fall of 2009, at Indiana University.

Here's the skinny:

> ...the faculty ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, is organizing a debate in early November on the topic of "The Viability of Intelligent Design." It will be an evaluation, so to speak, regarding the criticisms against ID brought forth by the scientific community. This is a cutting edge discussion. The participants are evolutionary biologist, Dr. F.J. Ayala and Christian philosopher, Dr. William Lane Craig.

I know that this is a Google cache, so you may not believe me, but ChristianJR4 has it up here as well. The date has not been set, but the debate itself is confirmed.

My co-workers and I were extremely surprised and excited to see the topic, because Bill has never debated on this topic before. I am not even certain what he thinks about this topic!

My thinking is that this is going to be a debate about philosophy of science. But wouldn't it be *amazing* if Bill came out swinging on William Dembski's explanatory filter, the origin of biological information, the cambrian explosion, the fine-tuning and other evidential concerns? Wow!

Here's a bit more about his opponent, Francisco Ayala:

> His research focusses on population and evolutionary genetics, including the origin of species, genetic diversity of populations, the origin of malaria, the population structure of parasitic protozoa, and the molecular clock of evolution. He also writes about the interface between religion and science, and on philosophical issues concerning epistemology, ethics, and the philosophy of biology.

He's written 650 papers and 12 books. I think this is going to be a *tough debate* for Bill!

Cap and trade will raise electricity prices and increase unemployment

April 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

Michele Bachmann has a post on her blog about a new study by a Spanish economist regarding the cost of green job initiatives.

Excerpt:

> A study directed by Dr. Gabriel Calzada, an economics professor at Juan Carlos University in Madrid, concluded that every "green job" created in Spain resulted in 2.2 other jobs being destroyed.
>
> The study emphasized that only 10% of the "green jobs" created could be considered permanent – such as maintenance of renewable power systems. The remaining jobs consisted of temporary jobs in construction, fabrication and installation jobs; along with administrative positions, marketing, and engineering projects.

Spain has been providing subsidies to create green jobs, and this is viewed by some as a model for future US energy policy.

Bachmann continues:

> "If U.S. subsidies to renewable producers achieve the same result — and President Obama has held Spain up as a model for how to subsidize renewables — the U.S. could lose 6.6 million to 11 million jobs while it creates three million largely temporary 'green jobs.'"
>
> Furthermore, Dr. Calzada stated that "the loss of jobs could be greater if you account for the amount of lost industry that moves out of the country due to

> higher energy prices."

Thomas J. Pyle of the Institute for Energy Research adds:

> "As this study makes clear, Spain has spent billions in taxpayer resources to subsidize renewable energy programs in an effort to jumpstart its ailing economy – and what they've gotten in return are fewer jobs, skyrocketing debt and some of the highest and most regressive energy prices in the developed world. Now, as U.S. policy-makers prepare to embark Americans upon a similar course, this report offers our first realistic glimpse into what we should expect in return for that unprecedented sacrifice of public resources and personal autonomy."

The IER has a list of the key findings from the study in that post.

Ed Morrissey at Hot Air adds:

> Why did the jobs disappear? **In part because of the higher capital confiscation of the government, and in part because the green policies pushed industry out of Spain.** Actually, the study didn't count jobs lost through "industrial relocation", which in this case amounts to capital flight. The largest stainless-steel producer in Spain directly linked its decision to move operations to South America to the higher energy costs imposed by the government.
>
> **In the US, we could see a massive flight, and not just in manufacturing. High-tech industries that rely on cheap energy could be forced to find less expensive environments.** Bloomberg's economist notes that Microsoft and Google have already relocated their servers once to get cheaper energy. The Internet is flexible enough to allow employers to go almost anywhere in the world to host their servers, and in this economy, there will be plenty of competition for them.

In a related post, Gateway Pundit notes that the cap and trade policies of the Democrats will also cause consumer electricity prices to soar.

Excerpt:

> Democrats know that their cap and trade energy policies will devastate the economy.
>
> …Cap and trade policies would likely cost American families $700 to $1,400 dollars per family per year according to the video above. The Department of Energy **estimated** GDP losses would be between **$444 billion and $1.308 trillion** over the 21-year period. Cap and trade also could cost the US **4 million jobs**. In Missouri and the Midwest where energy is "cheap" it would cause electricity rates to double.
>
> ***And,*** it would likely do nothing to help with the make-believe **global warming junk science**.

And GP also links to this video showing what we can expect from the Democrats on this issue:

Further study

I posted a list a while back of the expected increases in electricity prices, broken down by state, here. More about the impact on consumers from John Boehner is here.

More about the rise in unemployment we can expect from green jobs initiatives is here. Info about Obama's tax hikes on energy producers is here. Information about possible carbon tariffs is here.

Information about the recent Cato statement of 700 scientists who dissent from man-made global warming is here.

Understanding the reason for Easter

April 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In order to help everyone to celebrate Easter on a firm foundation of facts, I thought I would re-post links the best 3 of my posts so far on the topic of the resurrection of Jesus.

- The structure of arguments based on sets of minimal facts
- The earliest evidence for the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7
- N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Happy Easter!

Easter fundraising appeal from Reasonable Faith

April 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Happy Easter!

Bill Craig has sent out a fund-raising appeal that I thought I would mention. I am a regular supporter of Bill's efforts, and I doubt that there is *any* ministry that better deserves your financial contributions.

Here is an excerpt:

> We want to show that Christianity has its basis in real events and not merely a philosophy or a myth. That's why your support helps us to provide an intelligent defense of the Gospel for those seeking to know more about our risen Lord. Here's just a sample of what your gifts help to accomplish:
>
> - Present the Gospel through our Web site to people from over 156 countries
> - Provide audio classes to the thousands who download our Defenders and Reasonable Faith podcasts
> - Reaching out to students around the world with lectures and debates
>
> Would you please take a moment to help Reasonable Faith continue to reach out to believers and unbelievers alike with the life-changing message of the resurrection? Simply visit our secure Web site form to give now. Thank you so much for partnering with us!

Just a few weeks back my friend Todd (an ex-coworker from Detroit) and I attended a speaking event in Michigan. Bill was so excited to meet us and autograph our new copies of the 3rd edition of his new book, Reasonable Faith. It's surprising that someone who is so busy can be so authentic in person.

I urge you, if you like apologetics, to consider sending a donation to support Bill! Although Bill makes debating look easy, it isn't. It takes months of preparation to study your opponent's writings. We need to be willing to support him during that preparation time. Please give generously!

Female legislator killed in Afghanistan, pro-jihad woman kidnapped in Pakistan

April 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These two stories create an interesting contrast to say the least. First of all, a female legislator is killed by terrorists in Afghanistan.

Excerpt:

> A female provincial government official in Afghanistan who worked hard for women's rights was gunned down on Sunday during a weekend of violence that has rocked the south of the country.
>
> Sitara Achakzai died when gunmen ambushed her outside her home in Kandahar city before driving away, according to Matiullah Khan Qateh, Kandahar province's chief of police.
>
> Four men on motorcycles drove up to the house and shot Achakzai as she exited her car, Qateh said.
>
> Qari Yousef Ahmedi, a Taliban spokesperson, claimed responsibility for the killing.
>
> Achakzai spent the years of Taliban rule in Afghanistan living outside the country. She lived in Germany for at least 20 years and was a dual Afghan-German citizen.
>
> She returned to Afghanistan to work for women's rights, according to Shahida Bibi of the Kandahar Women's Association.
>
> Achakzai was a member of Kandahar's provincial council and was a vocal proponent of women working outside the home, Bibi said.

And here is an interesting contrast. According to this Fox News article (H/T Small Dead Animals), a Canadian female journalist who advocated in favor of terrorism has now been kidnapped and is being held for ransom by the terrorists that she'd been supporting.

Excerpt:

> Soon after Al Qaeda terrorists killed 3,000 people in the U.S., Giesebrecht converted to Islam, adopted a new name — Khadija Abdul Qahaar — and spent the next two years studying the Koran in Egypt.
>
> She created a pro-Jihadi Web site, Jihad Unspun, and she developed a network of contacts, contributors and translators, some of whom introduced her to the Taliban in Pakistan.

But then her new allies turned on her:

> And then last November, the Taliban, the group she had befriended, kidnapped her while she was chasing a story in the Bannu region of northern Pakistan. In a

> video released after her capture, Qahaar says she’s being held by the Taliban…
>
> In the most recent video, released to the Miranshah Press Club on March 18, Qahaar says her captors demand ransom payment of 2 million Rupees — about $25,000 — by the end of March. On earlier tapes, she said her captors were demanding $375,000.
>
> “I’m pleading with you, save my life. Spare me,” she says. “We have a very short time now, I’ll probably be beheaded.”

The article concludes with this:

> “I need somebody to help me,” Qaahar pleaded on the most recent video. “My government — the Canadian government, the Pakistan government — I want to go home.”

It’s certainly ironic.

Scoop! Craig/Hitchens debate DVD will be produced by Illustra Media

April 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Again, my *Wintery* powers have enabled me to discover a story hidden from the eyes of mortal men. Behold! The DVD of the recent debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens will be produced by Illustra Media.

Illustra Media is the same company that produced professional DVDs, such as “Unlocking the Mystery of Life”, “The Privileged Planet” and the “The Case for a Creator”. All of these DVDs are available from Amazon.com!

My secret source informs me that Illustra has film from the press conference, the pre and post debate interviews, as well as the whole debate itself! They are going to turn the event into a professionally-made film that will be widely disseminated!

You can pre-order the Biola University version of the DVD here!

The llustra Media version will take months to create, because of all the extensive editing and production that will be involved in making it.

At last some honesty on global warming alarmism

April 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You may have read something about the NYT article a while back that discussed the brilliant scientist Freeman Dyson and his opposition to global warming.

Excerpt from the NYT article:

> Dyson may be an Obama-loving, Bush-loathing liberal who has spent his life opposing American wars and fighting for the protection of natural resources, but he brooks no ideology and has a withering aversion to scientific consensus.
>
> …IT WAS FOUR YEARS AGO that Dyson began publicly stating his doubts about climate change. Speaking at the Frederick S. Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future at Boston University, Dyson announced that "all the fuss about global warming is grossly exaggerated." Since then he has only heated up his misgivings, declaring in a 2007 interview with Salon.com that "the fact that the climate is getting warmer doesn't scare me at all" and writing in an essay for The New York Review of Books, the left-leaning publication that is to gravitas what the Beagle was to Darwin, that climate change has become an "obsession" — the primary article of faith for "a worldwide secular religion" known as environmentalism.
>
> Among those he considers true believers, Dyson has been particularly dismissive of Al Gore, whom Dyson calls climate change's "chief propagandist," and James Hansen, the head of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York and an adviser to Gore's film, "An Inconvenient Truth." Dyson accuses them of relying too heavily on computer-generated climate models that foresee a Grand Guignol of imminent world devastation as icecaps melt, oceans rise and storms and plagues sweep the earth, and he blames the pair's "lousy science" for "distracting public attention" from "more serious and more immediate dangers to the planet."

Well, the NYT got a fascinating letter to the editor in response to their profile of Dyson. The letter came from a graduate student at Harvard named Monika Kopacz.

The letter is excerpted in First Things (H/T The Weekly Standard):

> **It is no secret that a lot of climate-change research is subject to opinion, that climate models sometimes disagree even on the signs of the future changes (e.g. drier vs. wetter future climate). The problem is, only sensational exaggeration makes the kind of story that will get politicians' — and readers' — attention. So, yes, climate scientists might exaggerate, but in today's world, this is the only way to assure any political action and thus more federal financing to reduce the scientific uncertainty.**

Remember, in 1975, the leftist magazine Newsweek propped up the global cooling as the crisis-du-jour.

Excerpt from an article from the Business and Media Institute:

> **It took 31 years, but Newsweek magazine admitted it was incorrect about climate change. In a nearly 1,000-word correction, Senior Editor Jerry Adler finally agreed that a 1975 piece on global cooling "was so spectacularly wrong about the near-term future."**
>
> **Even then, Adler wasn't quite willing to blame Newsweek for the incredible failure. "In fact, the story wasn't 'wrong' in the journalistic sense of 'inaccurate,'" he claimed. "Some scientists indeed thought the Earth might be cooling in the 1970s, and some laymen – even one as sophisticated and well-educated as Isaac Asimov – saw potentially dire implications for climate and food production," Adler added.**

Journalists, lacking marketable skills, support socialism. They believe that their word-smithing skills are more worthy than the practical skills of engineers and entrepreneurs. Socialism is their way of regaining the accolades they lost once they left the safe confines of the public school classroom.

Any myth that will allow the government to seize control of the free-market must be supported, regardless of the evidence. And the same thing applies to Darwinism. Only in this case, the target is not the free market, but the church. And the goal is not redistribution of wealth, but autonomy from moral judgments and moral constraints.

For more on scientific opposition politics masquerading as science, see here.

Licona vs Ehrman debate DVD is now available to order!

April 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Apologetics Book Store web site. (H/T Mike Licona)

Details:

> UPDATED: APRIL 11, 2009
>
> DVDs of my recent debate with Bart Ehrman are now available for purchase for $10 at http://theapologeticsbookstore.com/licona-ehrman-debate.aspx.

A review of the debate is linked here.

I like these two new guys, Mike Licona and Tony Costa, a lot. I think we are in good shape on the resurrection debate front, going forward. If we could only find a few good philosophical debaters. Anyone know of any?

Early, independent sources for the empty tomb

April 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bill Craig's "Question of the Week" feature at Reasonable Faith recently addressed the problem of the number and dating of the earliest independent sources for the burial and empty tomb stories. I found that my own views were somewhat mistaken, so I thought we would all benefit from a closer look.

Let's take a look at the independent sources for the empty tomb story.

1) The portion of Mark that recounts the burial is an early source

Mark is the earliest gospel, but even he relies on an earlier source for a portion of his gospel.

> The burial account is part of Mark's source material for the story of Jesus' Passion. This is a very early source which is probably based on eyewitness testimony and dates to within several years of Jesus' crucifixion.
>
> …The empty tomb story is syntactically tied to the burial story; indeed, they are just one story.

Bill talks about the dating and significance of this early source:

> …Whereas most of Mark's Gospel consists of short anecdotal stories strung like pearls on a string, when we get to the final week of Jesus' life we encounter a continuous narrative of events from the Jewish plot during the Feast of Unleavened Bread through Jesus' burial and empty tomb.
>
> …According to James D. G. Dunn, "The most obvious explanation of this feature is that the framework was early on fixed within the tradition process and remained so throughout the transition to written Gospels. This suggests in turn a tradition rooted in the memory of the participants and put into that framework by them" (J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 2003, pp. 765-6.)
>
> The dominant view among NT scholars is therefore that the Passion narratives are early and based on eyewitness testimony (Mark Allen Powell, *JAAR* 68 [2000]: 171). Indeed, according to Richard Bauckham, many scholars date Mark's Passion narrative no later than the 40s (recall that Jesus died in A.D. 30) (Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 2006, p. 243)….

Wow, this independent source is almost as good as 1 Corinthians 15:3-7! What else is a good source?

2) Matthew has an independent source for the empty tomb story

Craig writes:

> As for the other Gospels, that Matthew has an independent tradition of the empty tomb is evident not only from the non-Matthean vocabulary (*e.g.*, the words

> translated “on the next day,” “the preparation day,” “deceiver,” “guard [of soldiers],” “to make secure,” “to seal”; the expression “on the third day” is also non-Matthean, for he everywhere else uses “after three days;” the expression “chief priests and Pharisees” never appears in Mark or Luke and is also unusual for Matthew), but also from Matt. 28.15: “this story has been spread among Jews till this day,” indicative of a tradition history of disputes with Jewish non-Christians.

This one was new to me.

3) A source used by Luke and John for the empty tomb story

The inspection of the empty tomb by Peter implies the empty tomb. Craig writes:

> Luke and John have the non-Markan story of Peter and another disciple inspecting the tomb, which, given John’s independence of Luke, indicates a separate tradition behind the story. Moreover, we have already seen that John’s independence of Mark shows that he has a separate source for the empty tomb.

This one was also new to me.

4) The early sermons in Acts support the empty tomb

Acts was written by Luke. Craig writes:

> The early sermons in Acts are likely not created by Luke out of whole cloth but represent early apostolic preaching. We find the empty tomb implied in the contrast between David’s tomb and Jesus’: “David died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this day.” But “this Jesus God has raised up” (2:29-32; cf. 13.36-7).

This one I had heard about before, from Gary Habermas.

5) The creed recited by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 is an early source

This passage does not explicitly mention the empty tomb, but it does imply the empty tomb. We moderns are not free to re-invent the meaning of the word resurrection. Ancient Jewish theologians who believed in the resurrection had a definite definition of the word: the word means that the body is gone from the tomb.

Craig writes:

> …the old tradition handed on by Paul to the Corinthian church, which is among the earliest traditions identifiable in the NT, refers to Jesus’ burial in the second line of the tradition. That this is the same event as the burial described in the Gospels becomes evident by comparing Paul’s tradition with the Passion narratives on the one hand and the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles on the other. The four-line tradition handed on by Paul is a summary of the central events of Jesus’ crucifixion, burial by Joseph of Arimathea, the discovery of his empty tomb, and his appearances to the disciples.

This creed has been dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, as I mentioned before.

Further study

A scholarly-level article where Craig makes the case for the empty tomb is found here. Atheist commenters: be sure and read this article *before* commenting.

I'll be posting a follow-up later this week on the empty tomb, but I wanted to write about the sources separately.

It’s official: Obama’s socialism will lead to fascism

April 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Homeland Security's worst enemy! (H/T Nice Deb)
Looks like Obama suspended the war on terror abroad… only to start it up again… at home!

What is fascism and how is it caused?

Fascism is the political system that results when the state imposes its values on its citizens and represses individual values. The traditional view of free-market capitalist conservatives is that socialist efforts to “fix” financial inequalities by redistributing wealth in a planned economy inevitably ends in fascism. This is despite the fact that fascism is *never* the desired or intended result of well-meaning socialists.

This thesis is presented in a famous book called “The Road to Serfdom“, written by Nobel prize winning economist F.A. Hayek. This is the book that guided champions of free-market capitalism and individual liberty such as Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and today, Stephen Harper.

What the Department of Homeland Security wrote

Let’s take a look at the latest report from Barack Obama’s Department of Homeland Security.

Michelle Malkin has the complete story here. (H/T The Western Experience)

> Yesterday, Roger Hedgecock and the Liberty Papers posted an unclassified DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis report titled:

> **Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment.**
>
> The "report" (PDF file here) was one of the most embarrassingly shoddy pieces of propaganda I'd ever read out of DHS. I couldn't believe it was real.
>
> …I spent the day chasing down DHS spokespeople…[and] the press office got back to me and verified that the document is indeed for real.

Below, Michelle has the actual quotes from the DHS report.

Here are some questions for you:
Are you for federalism? Are you for limited government? Are you for immigration law enforcement? Are you pro-life?

If you answered "yes", then the Obama regime thinks that you are a potential terrorist:

> Rightwing extremism in the United States can be broadly divided into those groups, movements, and adherents that are primarily hate-oriented (based on hatred of particular religious, racial or ethnic groups), and those that are mainly antigovernment, rejecting federal authority in favor of state or local authority, or rejecting government authority entirely. It may include groups and individuals that are dedicated to a single issue, such as opposition to abortion or immigration.

Here are some more questions for you:
Are you a free-market capitalist? Are you in favor of personal responsibility? Are you for legal firearm ownership?

If you answered "yes", then the Obama regime thinks that you are a potential terrorist:

> Rightwing extremists are harnessing this historical election as a recruitment tool. Many rightwing extremists are antagonistic toward the new presidential administration and its perceived stance on a range of issues, including immigration and citizenship, the expansion of social programs to minorities, and restrictions on firearms ownership and use. Rightwing extremists are increasingly galvanized by these concerns and leverage them as drivers for recruitment. From the 2008 election timeframe to the present, rightwing extremists have capitalized on related racial and political prejudices in expanded propaganda campaigns, thereby reaching out to a wider audience of potential sympathizers.

And there's more in the report:

> Over the past five years, various rightwing extremists, including militias and white supremacists, have adopted the immigration issue as a call to action, rallying point, and recruiting tool. Debates over appropriate immigration levels and enforcement policy generally fall within the realm of protected political speech under the First Amendment, but in some cases, anti-immigration or strident pro-enforcement fervor has been directed against specific groups and

> has the potential to turn violent.

And more:

> DHS/I&A assesses that rightwing extremists will attempt to recruit and radicalize returning veterans in order to exploit their skills and knowledge derived from military training and combat. These skills and knowledge have the potential to boost the capabilities of extremists—including lone wolves or small terrorist cells—to carry out violence. The willingness of a small percentage of military personnel to join extremist groups during the 1990s because they were disgruntled, disillusioned, or suffering from the psychological effects of war is being replicated today.

And more:

> DHS/I&A will be working with its state and local partners over the next several months to ascertain with greater regional specificity the rise in rightwing extremist activity in the United States, with a particular emphasis on the political, economic, and social factors that drive rightwing extremist radicalization.

The Anchoress, unlike me, is more calm and circumspect. But, with her characteristic perceptiveness, she adds this warning:

> **Dissent – normal, healthy political dissent – which was "patriotic" just six months ago**, and expressed without encumbrance throughout our history (until now) seems to be under attack….
>
> As some of us have noted, **everything that was *projected* on to the Bush administration is finding real expression in the Obama administration.** I'm still waiting for the part where those who predicted that "Bush will declare martial law and never allow another election" pooh-pooh the right who say it of Obama. You know it will happen.
>
> So, you see…we're in a bad place, in these United States.

So let's be clear. In my opinion, the United States is now on the road to fascism. Every single person who voted for Obama put us on that road to fascism. The United States of the Founding Fathers has been obliterated by the government-run schools, the leftist media, and our own invincible hedonism. Our liberty, and the liberty of nations struggling against socialism, (i.e. – fascism), worldwide, is now in jeopardy.

To end on a positive note, Open Market has something hopeful to say about possible remedies:

> Government agencies that investigate people for their "politically incorrect" views can be held liable for violating the First Amendment, as happened in White v. Lee (2000), where a federal appeals court held that federal fair-housing officials could be sued individually for punitive damages for investigating citizens who spoke out against a group home for the disabled (in that case, mentally-ill

> substance-abusers).

Let's hope that Bush appointed enough strict constructionist judges, he was pretty good at doing that.

Further study

Nice Deb is making light of the story here by comparing Democrats like Obama's friend Bill Ayers, (a non-terrorist who just tried to blow some innocent people up), with authentic terrorists like little Republican girls who still believe in the Constitution.

Here are books on liberty that people today don't read, but they should. They *really* should. Because God knows, those secularist socialists in the government, and the people who voted them in, sure haven't. Atheistic communism lead to the deaths of 100 million people in the 20th century alone. Is that what we have to look forward to in this country? Ideas have consequences.

An abridged version of The Road to Serfdom is here.

UPDATE: Michelle Malkin's syndicated column is here.

Secretary of Education rescinds previously awarded D.C. vouchers

April 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports on it here: (H/T The Cato Institute)

The Heritage Foundation has *a lot* more.

Let's start with a personal experience from one of the 200 low-income households affected.

> Put yourself in the shoes of LaTasha Bennett. A single mother living in Washington, D.C., Ms. Bennett is able to send her child to a private school thanks to the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship program. Hoping to enroll her daughter in the same private school, Ms. Bennett applied for and recently received a voucher from the Washington Scholarship Fund.
>
> But last week, Ms. Bennett and hundreds of other D.C. parents received a form letter from the U.S. Department of Education informing them that their children wouldn't be receiving a scholarship.

And more:

> Secretary Duncan's decision to take scholarship money away from low-income families came just days after the Department of Education released a study showing that students participating in the Opportunity Scholarship program had statistically significant better reading scores than students who applied to the program but were not offered a scholarship. The students that were in the program the longest showed notable improvement reading at levels approximately 1.5 to 2 full school years ahead of the sample group.
>
> The data is in. School choice works. And it significantly lower costs. Opportunity Scholarships offered through the program are worth $7,500. Since the participating private schools cannot charge scholarship students more than the amount of their scholarships, that amount is still less than half of the $15,315 that D.C. taxpayers spent per pupil in the 2004–05 school year.

And what about the educations of Barack Obama and Arne Duncan?

> Growing up in Hawaii, President Obama attended a private school. Growing up first in Chicago, and now in Washington, Obama's two daughters attended and still attend a private school. Growing up in Chicago, Secretary Duncan attended a private school. And when he moved to D.C. Secretary Duncan chose to live in Arlington, where good schools for his children are assumed.

But maybe they were just pretty typical progressives, living in an emotional fantasy-land, with no access to facts?

The Wall Street Journal reports: (H/T The Heritage Foundation)

> Voucher recipients were tested last spring. The scores were analyzed in the late summer and early fall, and in November preliminary results were presented to a team of advisers who work with the Education Department to produce the annual evaluation. Since Education officials are intimately involved in this process, they had to know what was in this evaluation even as Democrats passed (and Mr. Obama signed) language that ends the program after next year.
> …
> Mr. Duncan's office spurned our repeated calls and emails asking what and when he and his aides knew about these results. We do know the Administration prohibited anyone involved with the evaluation from discussing it publicly. You'd think we were talking about nuclear secrets, not about a taxpayer-funded pilot program.

And the Denver Post's David Harsanyi reports: (H/T The Heritage Foundation)

> When I had the chance to ask Duncan — at a meeting of the Denver Post editorial board on Tuesday — whether he was alerted to this study before Congress eradicated the D.C. program, he offered an unequivocal "no." He then called the WSJ editorial "fundamentally dishonest" and maintained that no one had even tried to contact him, despite the newspaper's contention that it did, repeatedly.
>
> When I called the Wall Street Journal, I discovered a different — that is, meticulously sourced and exceedingly convincing — story, including documented e-mail conversations between the author and higher-ups in Duncan's office. The voucher study — which showed progress compounding yearly — had been around since November and its existence is mandated by law. So at best, Duncan was willfully ignorant.

And why are we surprised? Teacher's unions funded Obama's election campaign, not children and parents. The purpose of schools, according to socialists, is to indoctrinate the youth with socialism, moral relativism, secularism, and the religion of global warming. The purpose of schools is not to provide them with an *education*, so that they can *get a job* and avoid dependence on the government!

Further study

The Heartland Institute's series of podcasts on vouchers and school choice.

Should it be legal to publicly support traditional marriage?

April 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Washington Post reports: (H/T The Heritage Foundation)

> Faith organizations and individuals who view homosexuality as sinful and refuse to provide services to gay people are losing a growing number of legal battles that they say are costing them their religious freedom.
>
> The lawsuits have resulted from states and communities that have banned discrimination based on sexual orientation. Those laws have created a clash between the right to be free from discrimination and the right to freedom of religion, religious groups said, with faith losing. They point to what they say are ominous recent examples:
>
> – A Christian photographer was forced by the New Mexico Civil Rights Commission to pay $6,637 in attorney's costs after she refused to photograph a gay couple's commitment ceremony.
>
> – A psychologist in Georgia was fired after she declined for religious reasons to counsel a lesbian about her relationship.
>
> – Christian fertility doctors in California who refused to artificially inseminate a lesbian patient were barred by the state Supreme Court from invoking their religious beliefs in refusing treatment.
>
> – A Christian student group was not recognized at a University of California law school because it denies membership to anyone practicing sex outside of traditional marriage.

The Heritage Foundation adds a couple more examples:

> The post left out a Los Angeles City College student whose professor called him a "fascist bastard" and refused to let him finish his speech against same-sex marriage and Methodist ministry in New Jersey forced to end performing wedding ceremonies because they did not allow a same-sex union to be performed on their campground.

How does government endorsement same-sex marriage hurt those who believe in traditional marriage?

According to Heritage fellow Thomas Messner, it hurts us in 3 ways:

Excerpt:

> Specifically, in a society that redefines marriage to include same–sex unions, those who continue to believe marriage is a relationship between a man and a woman can expect to face three types of burdens. First, institutions that support

> the traditional understanding of marriage may be denied access to several types of government benefits, and individuals who work in the public sector may face censorship, disciplinary action, and even loss of employment. Second, those who support the traditional understanding of marriage will be subject to even greater civil liability under nondiscrimination laws that prohibit private discrimination based on sexual orientation, marital status, and gender. Third, the existence of nondiscrimination laws, combined with state administrative policies, can invite private forms of discrimination against religious individuals who believe that marriage involves a man and a woman and foster a climate of contempt for the public expression of their views.

Don't believe that it could happen here? Take a look at what is happening in the UK schools according to this Telegraph article, or what is happening in Canadian schools.

Obama aims to destroy math, physics and computer science

April 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story by Christina Hoff Sommers in the Washington Post, or here on AEI. (H/T The American Enterprise Institute)

I bet you thought that Obama was pro-science, didn't you? Nope. Not only is he directing funds towards unproven ESCR and away from useful ASCR, but he also means to destroy university education in the fields of math and science. Leftist politics is more important than science for Obama.

Here's what he plans to do:

> In an October letter to women's advocacy groups, he declared that Title IX, the law that requires universities to give equal funding to men's and women's athletics, had made "an enormous impact on women's opportunities and participation in sports." If pursued with "necessary attention and enforcement," the same law could make "similar, striking advances" for women in science and engineering.
>
> That campaign pledge is hardening into policy, which ought to give people pause. In February, the Congressional Diversity and Innovation Caucus met with academic deans and women's groups to plan for the new Title IX deployment. Nearly everyone present agreed that closing the gender gap in the laboratory is an urgent "national imperative." What they failed to consider, however, is how enforced parity might affect American science.

To start with, consider the effects of Title IX:

> Consider the situation at Washington's Howard University. In 2007, the Women's Sports Foundation, a powerful Title IX advocacy group, gave Howard an "F" grade because of its 24-percentage-point "proportionality gap": Howard's student body was 67 percent female, but women constituted only 43 percent of its athletic program. In 2002, Howard cut men's wrestling and baseball and added women's bowling, but that did little to narrow the gap. Unless it sends almost half of its remaining male athletes to the locker room, Howard will remain blacklisted and legally vulnerable. Former Howard wrestling coach Wade Hughes sums up the problem this way: "The impact of Title IX's proportionality standard has been disastrous because . . . far more males than females are seeking to take part in athletics."

Allison Kasic over at the Independent Women's Forum writes about recent cuts at Kutztown University.

She writes:

> The latest victims of gender equity appear to be men's soccer and swimming at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania. The school announced at the end of March that it would be cutting both sports effective at the end of this season.
>
> …The "gender equity" law guides school's program decisions through its rigid proportionality requirements (aka gender quotas). For background on Title IX's demands, read this as a starting point. **And, lo and behold, after students, parents, and coaches started asking questions about Title IX, the school admitted that many factors, including Title IX were taken into consideration.**

IWF writes about Title IX quite a bit, and they have some of their pieces linked here.

UPDATE: Alison K. at the IWF sent me a couple of links on Title IX.

- A thorough overview of Title IX's impact on athletics is available here.
- If you are looking for something shorter, this is basically the Cliff Notes version.

CNN media bias exposed by slanted tea party coverage

April 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a video clip to get us started from CNN. (H/T Hot Air and Heritage Foundation)

This is not at all unusual for CNN. Notice how those on the left cannot even bear to hear the words of those they disagree with. That is telling, and it foreshadows the oncoming fascism that I predicted earlier based on the leaked Department of Homeland Security report that portrays Republicans as potential terrorists because they are not secular socialists.

Michelle Malkin, (who I think is *very* pretty and funny and smart), was interviewed on Fox News at the Sacramento Tea Party. She explains *exactly* why these protests are happening: fiscal irresponsibility, including high taxes, huge spending, massive deficits, corruption, fraud and government waste. And these protests are as much against big spending Republicans, as Democrats.

And Glenn Beck is even more explicit. (H/T The Heritage Foundation). This is not about Democrats or Republicans. It is about economic policy. Period.

There were 225,481 attendees, according to PJTV. Over 800 protests occurred, across all 50 states! But Gateway Pundit reports that Obama is unaware of the protests. Yes, he's unaware of many things, I'm sure. In fact, that's his specialty. (UPDATE: The Campaign Spot says 337,682 on Thursday April 16th)

In her related post entitled The word of the week is "crazy", The Anchoress has a funny caption over the graph showing the budget deficit projections under Obama's plan. Her caption is: *If you do not like this chart and think something should be done about it, you are "crazy"*. Yes, according to socialists, everyone who objects to socialism is crazy!

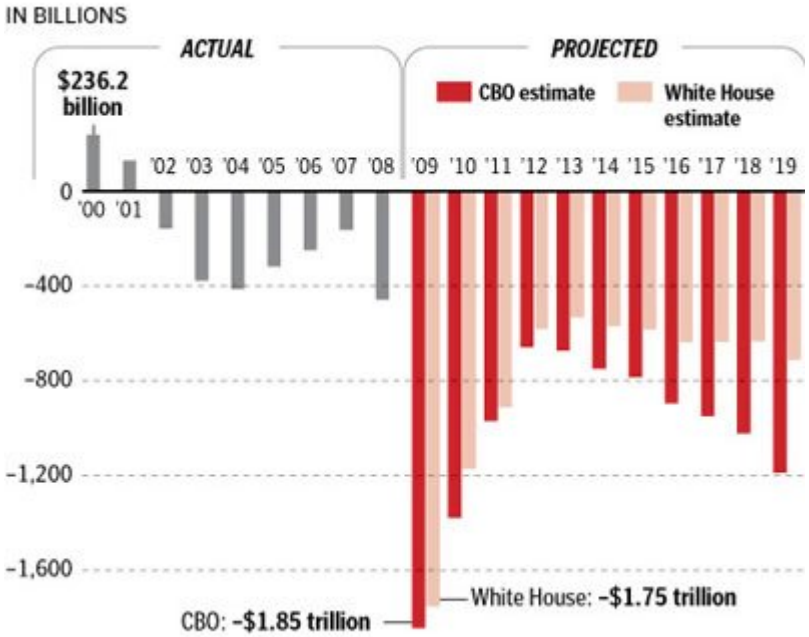

If you do not like this chart and think something should be done about it, you are "crazy"

(H/T The Anchoress)
And here is a bit more of her post: (go read the whole thing!)

> **From the LA Times:** Anti-Obama Taxpayer Tea Parties steeped in insanity
>
> Here is a crazy lady?
>
> That headline is interesting, not only are the Tea Party folk "insane" but they are also *"anti-Obama."* Recall, back in the day, if you were any sort of opponent to Clinton policies or if you donated to a candidate other than a Clinton, you were "anti-Clinton" or, as I liked to say, an "anti-Clintite". Of course for the last 8 years, protesters were just reasonable people with reasonable, moderate and patriotic concerns. They were not "anti-Bush" and they were not "crazy" or "insane." Those protesters, originating from the left, were *smart*, and deserving of respect and respectful media coverage. Hell, when the DHS wrote about "leftwing extremism", they felt no need to even mention them as part of a vague "suspect 'em all" strategy. Imagine that.
>
> But now if you are protesting, you're just a crazy "anti-Obamite."

Gateway Pundit has pictures of the St. Louis rally, which drew 10,000 protesters! And more pictures are linked here.

Remember, these grass-roots protests of the tax-and-spend policies of the Democrats, which have been adopted in response to a crisis caused by the Democrats (videos showing Democrats are linked there). If you still believe that Democrats are fiscally conservative, check out this video of Obama giving a serious economic policy speech during the election campaign.

Also, did you know that Obama made 2.7 million dollars in income last year? At least it's less than the 4.2 million he made in 2007. Somehow, I don't think he'll donate it all to charity like Dick Cheney did.

Pictures and stuff

More Tea Party at the Heritage Foundation, including pictures and videos!

- The Tea Party Protests are grass-roots protests that arose spontaneously
- Comments on Tea Party protests by famous CNBC ranter Rick Santenelli
- Lafayette Square Tea Party pictures, more pictures here and even more pictures here
- Olympia, WA pictures
- Rush Limbaugh
- Fox News coverage of the Sacramento protest

I have to link to the pictures, as everyone I talk to seems to be interested in what the signs say. Laura at Pursuing Holiness, whom I just blogrolled, has a post up with a video of the New Orleans Tea Party protest.

The eyewitness testimony of Jesus' women followers supports the empty tomb

April 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection. The entire paper was also presented orally to the students and faculty at California State University, Fresno in 2005, and a full recording is available here. The paper covers all of Craig's preferred set of minimal facts, which he uses in debates.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

More on this from N.T. Wright, here.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think

> otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s.

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say "The President is hosting a dinner at the White House" and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the "high priest" as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus' death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as "Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women" and "Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female."
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

Critical responses to the empty tomb

Richard Carrier tried to argue that the testimony of women was accepted, in his debate with Craig, but Craig showed that this was only possible in *two cases:* 1) if they were testifying about their status as widows, or 2) if no male witnesses were available, e.g. – they had all been killed. Audio of the debate is here. Carrier's admission of defeat is here, on his blog. Craig's post-debate response to Carrier is here and here.

Further study

To see a debate betwen Craig and the well-known skeptic Bart Ehrman, click here for the 12 part playlist. The first two parts are embedded below, containing Craig's entire 20 minute opening speech. The full transcript of the debate is here, so you can follow along.

To hear a related lecture by Craig on the topic of “Who did Jesus think he was?”, click here. The video is here. This lecture was delivered in February, 2009 at Columbia University, probably the most secular leftist university in the United States. Yes, the same university that invited Ahmadinejad to speak.

How government regulations can cost us our jobs

April 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good post on the effects of government regulation, over at the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Open Market blog.

Excerpt:

> A story in the *Star Tribune* in Minneapolis St. Paul shows how adverse effects of such needlessly onerous standard can spill over into other areas. In this case, a meat plant had to shut its doors, putting 200 people out of work because their water exceeded EPA's standard by 8 parts per billion. EPA can't show that the Clinton era its standard won't save a soul, but we do know that economic hard times hurt many.

Here's an excerpt from the Strib piece:

> More than 200 workers in a small town 90 minutes west of Minneapolis have lost their jobs after a beef slaughtering plant was forced to shut down because its water contained excessive levels of arsenic, a condition the plant owner said he couldn't afford to fix in time to avoid federal penalties.
>
> "I'm done," said William Gilger, owner of North Star Beef Inc. in Buffalo Lake, Minn.

The Heritage Foundation has a good post on how the EPA intends to expand their control of the economy in order to save us from global cooling warming.

> In essence, the endangerment finding says that global warming and climate change pose a serious threat to public health and safety and thus almost anything that emits carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases could be regulated under the Clean Air Act.
>
> The endangerment finding is the first step in a long regulatory process that could lead to EPA requiring different regulations and units of emissions requirements for each gadget that emits carbon dioxide. The first target would be automobiles, but the EPA's Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) suggested regulations of almost everything that moves, including new regulations smaller items such lawnmowers and forklifts. The ANPR also suggests putting speed limiters on large trucks on the table as a means of reducing carbon dioxide and even suggested sharkskin boats oozing bubbles to reduce emissions from the shipping industry.
>
> …Beyond things that move, the agency could go after things that stand still. More than a million energy using businesses, buildings, and farms could also be hit with crushing administrative burdens and costly controls. And even if EPA decides not to go that far, they will almost certainly be sued into doing so.

And they have a forecast of the potential costs of this regulation:

> However, the economic damage would be similar to any carbon capping bill passed by Congress and perhaps even worse. Dr. David Kreutzer and Dr. Karen Campbell of The Heritage Foundation's Center for Data Analysis found the economic costs of EPA regulations to be:
>
> • Cumulative gross domestic product (GDP) losses are nearly $7 trillion by 2029 (in inflation adjusted 2008 dollars)
> • Single-year GDP losses exceed $600 billion (in inflation-adjusted 2008 dollars).
> • Annual job losses exceed 800,000 for several years.
> • Some industries will see job losses that exceed 50 percent.

If you tax or regulate something, you get less of it. If you cut taxes and remove regulations, you get more of it. The best protection a worker has is not onerous taxes and regulations on their employer. The best protection a worker has is a choice among a huge number of employers. If you want a choice of employers, try creating conditions that employers actually want.

Republicans care about creating conditions that allow businesses to create jobs. We want this because we believe that people should not dependent on the government for their livelihood. Your ability to choose your employer is part of your liberty. Democrats care about inventing a faked crisis using junk science in order to justify government-coerced redistribution of wealth.

Upcoming panel debate featuring Tony Costa and Michael Coren

April 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For my Canadian readers, if you are in Toronto, you might want to consider attending this upcoming debate on morality in an atheistic worldview. Is it possible? Is it rational? The official topic is "Evolution of ethics: Science vs Faith". It is being organized by non-Christians, which explains the title, and the apparent 3-2 advantage the non-theists will enjoy.

Excerpt from the Humanist Canada web site:

> Are ethics divinely-inspired or man-made? Are there absolute morals? Although scientists and philosophers have debated the nature of ethics for hundreds of years, developments in genetic research have unleashed a firestorm of issues concerning human control of creation and its impact on our future. Given that society ideals change over time, how can we determine what is morally right or wrong?
>
> Join Humanist Canada for a lively and thought-provoking debate on the nature of ethics. Five prominent speakers, from both the Christian and Humanist communities, will discuss and debate some of the hottest topics today including abortion, gender, homosexuality, and biotechnology. Our panel of speakers includes: **Christopher diCarlo** (celebrated professor of Philosophy of Science and Bioethics; founder of "We Are All African" Campaign); **Michael Coren** (outspoken Christian writer; radio and TV host); **George Dvorsky** (popular transhumanist; animal rights activist); **Tony Costa** (recognized public speaker for Campus for Christ); and **Jean Saindon** (award-winning professor of Natural Science and Technology).

Time and place: Saturday April 18 @ 6:30 pm, Innis Town Hall, 2 Sussex Ave, Toronto

Tickets: **$15 Humanist Canada members; $25 general admission; $10 students (with school ID).** Appetizers, desserts and drinks included. Purchase tickets by April 15 for best seats. Click **HERE** for the printable registration form or click on ticket choices below.

DiCarlo debated Bill Craig before and really, really disappointed me.

If you know of an upcoming debate or discussion event related to the topics on this blog, be sure and send me an e-mail. If you know of any additional materials related to this topic, please leave a comment.

Other debates on atheism and morality

Here are some prior debates on the rationality of morality on atheism.

1. From Christianity Today, a written debate: Douglas Wilson vs. Christopher Hitchens
2. From the University of Western Ontario, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs. Kai Nielsen
3. From Schenectady College, a transcript of a public debate:William Lane Craig vs Richard Taylor
4. From Franklin & Marshall College, William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz (audio, video1, video2, video3, video4, video5, video6, video7)
5. From the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, William Lane Craig vs. Louise Antony (audio1, audio2, video1, video2)

Further study

A good paper by Bill Craig on the problem of rationally-grounding prescriptive morality here. My previous posts on this blog on this topic are here and here. The first one is about whether atheists can use a made-up standard to judge God for his perceived moral failures, the second one is on whether meaningful morality is rational on atheism.

Michelle Malkin takes on Nancy Pelosi's dismissal of tea party protests

April 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard, citing Roll Call, reports on Democrat Nancy Pelosi's explanation for the 800+ Tax Day protests.

Excerpt from the Roll Call article: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> But in an interview on Fox TV in San Francisco, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) chalked up the GOP grass-roots effort as "AstroTurf."
>
> "This initiative is funded by the high end; we call it AstroTurf, it's not really a grass-roots movement. It's AstroTurf by some of the wealthiest people in America to keep the focus on tax cuts for the rich instead of for the great middle class," Pelosi said.
>
> Other House Democratic leaders took a different tack: One senior aide has been circulating a document to the media that debunks the effort as one driven by corporate lobbyists and attended by neo-Nazis…
>
> **In addition, the tea parties are "not really all about average citizens," the document continues, saying neo-Nazis, militias, secessionists and racists are attending them. The tea parties are also not peaceful, since reporters in Cincinnati had to seek "police protection" during one of the events, it states.**

The Weekly Standard responds to Pelosi:

> The suggestions that these tea parties are driven by DC-based groups is laughable; Liz Mair takes a critical look and concludes the charge is baseless. Besides the points that Mair makes, it's worth noting that while there have been dozens of tea parties, few have featured conservative candidates or representatives of DC think tanks and lobbying groups.
>
> As far as the charge that these rallies are composed of Nazis and terrorists, that's hard to reconcile with the pictures of participants. There are too many young children and grandparents. Further, even a strong Obama supporter like Susan Roesgen didn't turn up any violent types at the Chicago Tea Party, despite her best attempt to provoke a strong reaction.

And then they ask about the groups and sponsors of left-wing rallies:

> If this is a conversation they want to have, however, perhaps Ms. Pelosi can explain the role of Marxists and North Korean sympathizers in the U.S. anti-war movement, or discuss how George Soros bought such influence in the Democratic party. It's not a debate that would help Democrats, since it's

> relatively easy to show the role of fringe extremists in the Democratic grassroots.

That’s all well and good, but commentary is better when Michelle Malkin is the commenter:

And Michelle has a lot more photos and videos from the various protests, too.

Debate summary: Is God necessary for morality? William Lane Craig vs Shelly Kagan

April 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Debate summary

This is a summary of a debate on the rational justification for moral values, moral duties and moral accountability on atheism. The question of free will and determinism also comes up. Note that this is not a debate to see who wins. The commie wusses at the Veritas Forum made Craig promise not to press for a victory, as he reports here:

> I did respond briefly to Prof. Kagan's view… but I didn't press the point because our hosts with the Veritas Forum had made it very clear to me that they were not interested in having a knock-down debate but a friendly dialogue that would foster a warm and inviting atmosphere for non-believing students at Columbia. The goal was simply to get the issues out on the table in a congenial, welcoming environment, which I think we did.

The debate was held in February, 2009 at Columbia University between Yale philosopher Shelly Kagan and William Lane Craig.

Video and audio are here:

- Downloadable audio and video of the debate in MP3 and Quicktime, respectively.
- Streaming video of the entire debate.

Shelly Kagan – opening speech

Framing the debate:

- The question is not whether people need God in order to act morally, because atheists are able act morally and immorally just as well as theists
- The questions is whether we need to God in order to be the ground for morality. Do right and wrong really exist if there is not God?
- He will defend objective morality on atheism

One possible explanation for morality without God is:

- right is what helps others and doesn't hurt them
- wrong is what hurts people and doesn't help them

And the standard rules of moral behavior emerge from these 2 principles.

What are the objections to this help/hurt theory

1) Are these really wrong, or is this standard just a matter of opinion?

No, these moral standards are not a matter of opinion, they are facts.

2) What makes these rules apply to everyone and prescribe behaviors

Possible answers:
– moral rules are just brute facts
– contractarianism: (social contract) the moral rules should be chosen by reflecting on a hypothetical discussion between ideal reasoners
– something else

3) Morality involves commandments, so who is the commander?

Possible answers:
– moral commandments don't require a commander
– for example, logical rules like the law of non-contradiction don't need a lawgiver, and moral rules could be just like that
– or, perhaps the commander is society itself, which fits with the contractarian theory

William Lane Craig – opening speech

Framing the debate:

- not debating whether belief in God is necessary to act morally
- the question is whether god is a necessary ground for morality to be meaningful

Is God necessary for morality? It depends on what morality means:
– is morality just an arbitrary pattern of social behavior?
– if so, then God isn't needed to ground humans to act according to a pattern of social behavior

But if morality is objective, (true whether anyone believes it or not):
– then god is necessary to ground objective morality
– because objective moral standards exists independently of human standards of personal preference or cultural fashion

Non-objective morality is illusion/convention
– pattern has no objective moral significance, it's just an arbitrary fashion that varies by time and place

God is necessary for morality in 3 ways
1) God grounds objective moral values, i.e. – what counts as good and what counts as evil
2) God grounds objective moral duties, i.e. – what we ought to do and ought not to do
3) God grounds moral accountability, i.e. – our ultimate fate depends on how we act morally

1) Moral values
– whether some action is good or evil, independent of whether anyone thinks it is or not
– individual and social opinions do not decide these standards of good and evil
– god is necessary to ground moral standards that exist independent of human opinions
– the moral values are set by god's unchanging nature

Human value:
– why think that humans have value, such that they should be treated a particular way

– on atheism, humans are just animals
– evolution means that moral values are the product of the struggle for survival
– the “herd” moral standard is arbitrary, it is not really a true standard
– on atheism, moral values do not exist independently, they are merely descriptions of behaviors that are the product of biological and cultural evolution
– in other animal species, many things that we think of as wrong are practiced, like stealing and rape
– so why think that our practices are objectively true, instead of just customs and fashions of our species?

Free will:
– moral choices require a non-physical mind distinct from the physical brain in order to make free moral choices
– on (biological) determinism, no choices are morally significant – just actions of puppets on strings
– no moral responsibility for a puppet’s determined actions

2) Moral duties
– whether some action is right or wrong
– whether humans are morally obligated to perform certain actions, independent of whether we think that we do or not
– the commands flow from god’s unchanging moral nature
– they become duties for us, his creatures

on atheism
– on atheism, humans are animals, and animals don’t have real moral obligations
– where would moral duties come from on atheism, to whom is the duty owed?
– on atheism, it is just a subjective impression ingrained into us by social and biological pressures
– on atheism, there is no standard of what we ought to do
– on atheism, breaking the social contract is the same as belching loudly at the dinner table, it’s just being unfashionable – not doing what the rest of the heard has decided is customary

3) moral accountability
– on theism, the moral choices we make affect where we end up in the afterlife
– god balances the scales of justice in the end

on atheism:
– it is irrelevant how you act, you end up in the same place (dead) regardless of how you live

why be moral on atheism?
– why shouldn’t a person pursue self interest instead of following the moral conventions of the social contract
– it’s not always the case that doing the right thing is also doing the thing that gives you selfish pleasure

– a very powerful person would not need to be moral, since they can escape the social sanctions that result from their breaking the social contract
– why would a very powerful do the right thing when it is against their self-interest, on atheism, since the social contract is just arbitrary fashion?

acts of self-sacrifice are irrational on atheism
– the result is that no one will be moral when it is hard to do the right thing
– because in the long run, it doesn't matter what you do, on atheism
– compassion and self-sacrifice are not pleasurable, and are therefore pointless on atheism

Conclusion:

questions atheists must answer:
what is the basis of objective moral values?
what is the basis of human value on atheism?
why ought we to do the right thing and avoid doing the wrong thing?
what is the basis for moral accountability

10 minutes of cross X, Craig questioning

1)
WC what makes harming other people wrong, on a naturalistic (atheistic) worldview? Other animals do it, so why is it wrong for humans?

SK because humans have the rational capacity to understand the morality of their actions

WC but why is it wrong for humans to inflict harm on other humans?

SK humans can do neat things that animals can't do like calculus and poetry, so therefore murder is wrong

2) WC Are you a determinist?

SK Yes

WC Then how do you justify moral choices on naturalism?

SK I'm a compatibilist

WC but on your view, behavior is caused by brain chemicals, so then how can you make free choices?

SK I don't want to talk about it right now

10 minutes of cross X, Shelly questioning

1)
SK just because I deny ultimate meaning, it doesn't mean that I can't be moral

WC on naturalism, everything, including stars and humans, is destined to destruction in the heat death of the universe, so why would moral choices matter in the end, since the moral choices don't affect your ultimate fate (death)?

SK just because my moral actions lack ultimate significance, things can be still be significant to the people living now, because I can feel good about doing moral things

when it is against my self-interest

WC the end of your life doesn't change regardless of what we choose, on naturalism/atheism, so why be moral on atheism? on atheism, prudence and morality are in conflict, but on theism prudence and morality coincide

SK but then on theism, being moral is just self-interest – and besides, I can still choose morality over prudence, because it makes me feel good, (i.e. – atheists can adopt the moral point of view against their self-interest, based on feelings of happiness)

WC but it demoralizes moral behavior to realize that it makes no difference in the end whether you do right or wrong

SK but it demoralizes morality on theism that it reduces to self-interest, you are doing right in order to be get an eternal reward

2)
SK how can we justify punishing people on atheism? the hypothetical social contract imagined during a discussion between perfectly rational people prescribes morality for all of us

WC what if the person doesn't want to sign the contract

SK everyone ought to bound by it because the perfectly rational people made it, even very powerful people ought to follow the social contract

Moderator-directed discussion

1)
MD On atheism, is free will impossible

WC yes, because all behavior on naturalism/materialism/atheism is the result of chemical reactions, not free decisions of personal agents

2)
MD if the Nazis won, and ran the world, would the Nazis still be bad

SK yes, because the social contract is a thought experiment with perfectly rational people behind a veil of ignorance so it's still binding on Nazis even if they win world war 2 and run everything

3)
MD religious history is filled with atrocities

WC yes, and this helps to prove that morality really is objective, not just based on social convention

MD but why do humans do such immoral things

WC humans are sinful, and it shows that they need god

4)
MD why do we violate the social contract

SK humans are sinful

MD how would you prevent or control these moral failures

SK moral education, moral community, the power of the state as enforcer of morality

SK (to WC) isn't there a tension between doing good and being saved by grace on christianity?

WC on christianity, the bad people who are contrite go to heaven, the self-righteous think they are good enough without god, they are they ones who go to hell

SK but doing good is significant to me, even if it's not ultimately significant, because it makes me feel good right now

5)
MD should we be nice to animals

WC christians have an advantage here because humans have environmental and animal stewardship duties – not based on animal rights, but based on obligations that god has placed on humans to be good stewards

SK are you a vegetarian

WC no, but we should be humane to animals – in any case why should a naturalist treat animals well?

SK because it's wrong to harm animals, it's wrong to make them feel pain

6)
MD what about cross-cultural differences, how is that affected by theism and atheism

WC the question of ontology is separate from the question of epistemology

MD so are some cultures wrong?

WC yes, nazis, etc.

SK we are largely in agreement, some societies are not evolved enough to be able to know what is right and wrong by educated rationality

William Lane Craig – closing statement

theism does have good answers to the questions of moral values, moral duties and moral accountability
– the values are rooted in god's nature
– the duties are owed to God
– it matters if we're good or not because our ultimate destination is affected by our moral actions

on atheism
– the social contract is just an arbitrary social convention
– determinism does not allow for free moral decisions
– with no one to prescribe duties, there is no reason to perform duties
– on atheism, moral duties are like rules of etiquette
– it makes no difference in the long run how you behave

Shelly Kagan – closing statement

objective morality can exist without god

atheists can prefer to do the right thing against self-interest because it gives them happy feelings of significance, even if there is no ultimate significance
– atheism cannot provide ultimate significance for moral actions, and that is ok so long as their is emotional (subjective) significance

Craig's post debate comments

Craig's comments on the debate from his March newsletter.

Other debates on atheism and morality

Here are some prior debates on the rationality of morality on atheism.

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2. From the University of Western Ontario, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs. Kai Nielsen
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Further study

A good paper by Bill Craig on the problem of rationally-grounding prescriptive morality here. My previous posts on this blog on this topic are here and here. The first one is about whether atheists can use a made-up standard to judge God for his perceived moral failures, the second one is on whether meaningful morality is rational on atheism.

William Lane Craig's comments on the Columbia University debate with Shelly Kagan

April 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thought I would cut and paste these comments from Reasonable Faith regarding the debate I summarized in my last post so that you would be able to see how much Craig appreciated Kagan's debating skill. I thought this was a great debate!

This is just a big quote from Craig's March 2009 newsletter:

> After a week at home, I was off again to New York to speak at a Veritas Forum at Columbia University. Columbia is on the western edge of Harlem, just north of Central Park. Its campus is a lovely oasis in the midst of big city ugliness. Like the other Ivy League universities, it was originally founded as a Christian institution. On the face of the old library the inscription states that Columbia exists "for the advancement of the public good and the glory of Almighty God." In the campus chapel above the altar are inscribed Paul's words, now ironically so appropriate, "Whom therefore you ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts 17. 23)!
>
> On the first evening I debated professor Shelly Kagan of Yale University on the question "Is God Necessary for Morality?" Actually, this was not a debate but a dialogue. After we each gave our opening statements, we had a very substantive discussion. Kagan has Christian colleagues at Yale, like Robert Adams and John Hare, who defend moral values and duties based in God, and I was struck by the respect with which he treated the view. He surprised me by not arguing for his own view of ethics, which is a radical consequentialism. He holds that if torturing a little girl to death would somehow result in greater overall good as a consequence, then that is what we should do! Instead he defended a social contract view of morality, according to which our moral duties are whatever rules perfectly rational people would agree to as a way of governing society. I responded that this makes morality a human convention, rather than objective. Kagan also affirmed in our dialogue that he is a physicalist and determinist. I charged that determinism strips our actions of any moral significance. We also disagreed over the importance of moral accountability. I claimed that the absence of moral accountability on atheism makes morality collide with self-interest and robs our choices of significance, but Kagan maintained that we don't need a sort of cosmic significance in order for our moral choices to be significant. All in all, we had an affable and substantive exchange which fairly presented the alternatives.
>
> One feature of our dialogue that pleased and surprised me was how clearly the Gospel emerged in the course of our conversation. Talking about moral values and accountability led naturally to the subject of our failure to fulfill our moral duties and how to deal with that. I was able to explain our need of God's

> forgiveness, moral cleansing, and rehabilitation. Kagan then asked me how Jesus fits into the picture. That gave me the chance to expound on Christ's atoning death and the fulfillment of God's justice in Christ's bearing the penalty for our sin. I was gratified that the Gospel could be shared so clearly and naturally with the students present.
>
> The next day I sat for an interview with an independent filmmaker who is doing a short film on the theological significance of the beginning of the universe in contemporary cosmology. Later that evening I spoke in a small campus theater on "Who Was Jesus?" Judging by the student questions, this audience was largely Christian. It is very touching to hear so many Christians after the debate and my lecture share expressions of encouragement and thanks for the way the Lord has used our ministry in their lives.

Craig's other lecture at Columbia

To hear the other lecture by Craig on the topic of "Who did Jesus think he was?", click here. The video is here. This lecture was also delivered in February, 2009 at Columbia University, probably the most secular leftist university in the United States. Yes, the same university that invited Achmadinejad to speak.

Friday night funny: Media not sure how to cover Obama's crime spree

April 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Onion, a perfect article to culminate the week's events.

Excerpt:

> WASHINGTON—More than a week after President Barack Obama's cold-blooded killing of a local couple, members of the American news media admitted Tuesday that they were still trying to find the best angle for covering the gruesome crime.
>
> "I know there's a story in there somewhere," said *Newsweek* editor Jon Meacham, referring to Obama's home invasion and execution-style slaying of Jeff and Sue Finowicz on Apr. 8. "Right now though, it's probably best to just sit back and wait for more information to come in. After all, the only thing we know for sure is that our president senselessly murdered two unsuspecting Americans without emotion or hesitation."

This is a must-read, folks! Ow, my cheeks are hurting.

UPDATE: One my Canadian friends and I were talking about upcoming debates just now and he was wondering why I can post so much. It made me think of my only other humor post, on why women and Christian apologetics don't mix. If you have dreams of heroic combat with non-Christians, anywhere, at anytime, then you had better forget about courtship, romance, love and marriage.

On the other hand, I do have a fantastic article coming out about the one exception to this rule that I know of. The article is done, and it is scheduled to come out on Sunday at 5 AM EST. Do not miss this article!

Video clip from Craig vs Hitchens debate at Biola, on God and meaning in life

April 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the recent debate held at Biola University between Dr. William Lane Craig, and Christopher Hitchens.

By the way, don't forget to check out my play-by-play of the debate here, and other reviews of the debate here. I also wrote a play-by-play of the recent debate at Columbia University in February 2009 between Craig and Yale philosopher Shelly Kagan. The topic there was "Is God Necessary for Morality?"

BONUS:

If you missed Dr. Craig debating on the Michael Coren show in Canada, check out these video clips posted by ChristianJR4, located below the fold. You have to click the link to display the rest of the post to see them.

Clip 1 of 5:

Clip 2 of 5:

Clip 3 of 5:

Clip 4 of 5:

Clip 5 of 5:

IBD: Canada fills Obama's leadership void

April 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Investors Business Daily had a good post up about how other countries with more conservative leadership are picking up the slack left by Obama's naive socialism. Canada is led by economist Stephen Harper, who studied the economic theories of F.A. Hayek and other proponents of free-market capitalism. Harper understands what economic policies promote liberty.

Here is an excerpt from the article: (a podcast version is here)

> Thus far, the Obama administration seems more interested in continuing its global apology tour, Latin edition, during this weekend's Fifth Summit of the Americas than he is in leading. His accusations against America are stronger than his promotion of the institutions and treaties that bring authentic democracy and prosperity to our hemisphere.

Obama's aversion to policies like free trade, which supports liberty and prosperity, is well known:

> Today, Obama is paying only lip service to that trade goal while two finished free-trade treaties with friendly American allies Panama and Colombia sit in his desk drawer, unvoted-on in Congress.
>
> He speaks of the U.S. being "distracted by other priorities" but in reality he's only "distracted" by listening to Big Labor, which has tried to shut Colombia and Panama out of free trade.
>
> In the same way, he's distracted by the Farm Lobby's campaign cash and won't think of ending the senseless tariffs on Brazil's ethanol — another major free-trade, and energy policy, issue.

> He has yet to expend political capital to muscle Congress to put those tariffs and treaties to a vote. If he did, he would show leadership. It's not going unnoticed by democratic leaders of our hemisphere, who, from Brazil to Chile to Mexico to Peru, are urging him to take action. This is the one issue he should be showing strong leadership on. But he isn't.

Yes, the world is truly against us because of Obama's economic ignorance. But there are some liberty-opposing communist dictators that love Obama – because he supports their dictatorships and the repression of common people who don't even have enough to eat or the opportunity to earn a decent living. IBD continues:

> The region's protectionists can be counted on one hand, and they just happen to be the same countries trying to ruin their own democracies — among them Venezuela, whose de facto dictator, Hugo Chavez, declared at the last summit in 2005 he would "bury" free trade of the Americas. With Obama failing to lead, he's effectively handing Chavez the leadership, as well as a victory.
>
> He's also giving Cuba a victory, unilaterally loosening rules for remittances to the island, providing the bankrupt Castro dictatorship with an economic lifeline as well as a fresh pool of visitors to spy on, blackmail and potentially recruit.

Hot Air links to the photos of Obama accepting gifts and shaking hands with dictator Chavez. Hot Air writes:

> Via Tapper, the long-awaited meeting between the "destructive force" and the "ignoramus" hath come to pass. There are already a few photos of the encounter at Yahoo News but you have to go to Facebook for the best one. Check out that thousand-watt grin. Funding FARC, imprisoning dissidents, staging wargames with Russia, and of course consolidating dictatorial power — none of it's enough to ruin a photo op for The One. I hope this at least convinces El Presidente not to throw that Cuba-themed tantrum at the summit that he's been planning. We deserve something in return for the free propaganda Barry just handed him.

The world opposes Obama's unliteral war against free trade. Even Russia is disgusted with Obama's economic naivete. And so is China. But what about Stephen Harper and Canada? IBD's article continues:

> Canada, by contrast, is taking the lead. Prime Minister Stephen Harper said his top priority at the Summit is to champion free trade, in line with the will of the region's real democracies.
>
> "Our focus for the Summit of the Americas will be about free trade and avoiding other countries moving back to protectionist measures," Harper's spokesman said. "Canada's position is that we must not allow the impact of the (financial) crisis to reverse our hard-fought progress towards freer trade and investment."

> …What a shame that it's now left to Canada to do the heavy lifting on the actions

> that will genuinely advance peace and prosperity in our global neighborhood.

According to this just-released news story from CTV, Harper is pledging 4 billion dollars to spur trade with Latin America.

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper is pushing for greater regional co-operation and better hemispheric trade relations at the Summit of the Americas, pledging $4 billion in loan guarantees for Latin American countries.
>
> …Harper said on Saturday that loans to the Inter-American Development Bank will help nations in the region get access to credit and build their economies.
>
> "Canada is taking the lead when it comes to ensuring that countries continue to trade during a time of economic contraction," said Harper in a statement. "This has not been done before and is a very significant contribution."

Meanwhile, Obama is making Iran and North Korea feel comfortable about their pursuit of nuclear weapons. What a difference there is between Harper and Obama!

Harper's recognition of Easter and the importance of religious liberty

Religious liberty is the liberty that I value most. Isn't it amazing that at a time when Obama is taking steps to greatly reduce the freedom to express Christian convictions in public, that up north the prime minister of Canada is talking about the resurrection of Jesus and the importance of religious liberty as a Canadian tradition?

In case you missed it, here are some videos of Harper on CNN and Fox News, as well one from CNBC with Larry Kudlow. I previously wrote about how Colombia is trying to diversify their economy in the wake of Obama's snubbing them on the proposed free trade deal.

Is it OK for Christians to marry non-Christians?

April 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I want to draw your attention to a talk given by William Lane Craig. Bill is the ablest defender of the Christian faith operating today. You may remember Bill from such famous debates as "Does God Exist?" with Austin Dacey, "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" with Bart Ehrman, or "Is Goodness Without God Good Enough?" with Paul Kurtz.

The 32-minute talk is in MP3 format and is available on his web site Reasonable Faith, here. This was Bill's chapel address to Biola University students, and he is introduced by his son, John, a Biola grad. As you listen to the talk, and reflect on the quotations that I will reproduce below from his writings, the question "is it OK to marry a non-Christian?" will be answered.

In the talk, it becomes clear that Bill's wife Jan plays an *enormous* role in his success. Indeed, you will see that if it were not for her, he never would have gotten *either* of his doctorates, or even his second Masters degree. Just imagine: Bill Craig with one M.Div pastoring a seeker-sensitive church, instead having 2 MAs and 2 Ph.Ds and stomping Christopher Hitchens with both feet! What a loss!

Here is a quotation that occurs about 11 minutes into the talk, as Bill describes the completion of his Bachelor's degree at Wheaton:

> And it was at Wheaton that my vision began to focus on presenting the gospel in the context of giving an intellectual defense of the faith, to appeal not only to the heart but also to the head, as well. And so I determined that I would go on to seminary for further training.
>
> But, my senior year, in chapel, we heard a speaker who challenged us, before going on to further education, to take a couple of years out, and to wring out the sponge, so to speak, that had been soaking up all that knowledge, and to work with university students while we were still about the same age.
>
> And so I joined the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for 2 years, and was assigned to Northern Illinois University. And that was where I met my wife Jan. She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota where she had come to faith in Christ. And she had a similar vision for her life of evangelism and discipleship.
>
> And as we worked at NIU together, she with gals and I with the guys, leading students to Christ and discipling them to walk with the Lord, we fell in love. And we decided that we would be more effective if we joined forces and became a team.

It is at this point in the talk where Bill begins to explain just how Jan molded him into the lean, mean debating machine that travels the world striking terror into the hearts of atheists today.

Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

In an article on his web site, he talks about how Jan encouraged him to do his first PhD:

> As graduation from Trinity neared, Jan and I were sitting one evening at the supper table in our little campus apartment, talking about what to do after graduation. Neither of us had any clear leading or inclination of what we should do next.
>
> So Jan said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really like to do next?"
>
> I replied, "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to England and do a doctorate under John Hick."
>
> "Who's he?" she asked.
>
> "Oh, he's this famous British philosopher who's written extensively on arguments for the existence of God," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a cosmological argument for God's existence."
>
> But it hardly seemed a realistic idea.
>
> The next evening at supper Jan handed me a slip of paper with John Hick's address on it. "I went to the library today and found out that he's at the University of Birmingham in England," she said. "Why don't you write him a letter and ask him if you can do a doctoral thesis under him on the cosmological argument?"
>
> What a woman! So I did, and to our amazement and delight Professor Hick wrote back saying he'd be very pleased to supervise my doctoral work on that subject. So it was an open door!

And in the same article, he explains how Jan encouraged him to get his second Ph.D:

> As Jan and I neared the completion of my doctoral studies in Birmingham, our future path was again unclear to us. I had sent out a number of applications for teaching positions in philosophy at American universities but had received no bites. We didn't know what to do.
>
> I remember it like yesterday. We were sitting at the supper table in our little house outside Birmingham, and Jan suddenly said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really *like* to do next?"
>
> I laughed because I remembered how the Lord had used her question to guide us in the past. I had no trouble answering the question. "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to Germany and study under Wolfhart Pannenberg."
>
> "Who's he?"
>
> "Oh, he's this famous German theologian who's defended the resurrection of Christ historically," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus."
>
> Our conversation drifted to other subjects, but Jan later told me that my remark had just lit a fire under her. The next day while I was at the university, she slipped away to the library and began to research grants-in-aid for study at German universities. Most of the leads proved to be defunct or otherwise inapplicable to our situation. But there were two grants she found that were possibilities. You can imagine how surprised I was when she sprung them on me!

Both of these Ph.D experiences are also described in the talk. And the talk concludes as follows:

> I am so thankful to be married to a woman who is tremendously resourceful, tremendously talented and energetic, who could have pursued an independent career in any number of areas, but instead, she has chose to wed her aspirations to mine, and to make it her goal to make me the most effective person I can be, for Christ. And she has been like my right arm in ministry over these many years. And it is a tremendous privilege to be a team with a person like that.
>
> And you young men, I would encourage you, if you marry, to find a gal who shares your vision, not some independent vision, but who is interested in aligning herself with you, and pursuing together a common vision and goal that will draw you [together], so that you will avoid the growing separateness that so often creeps into marriages.

And now you know the rest of Bill's story. *The person you marry will have an enormous influence on the impact you will have for Christ and his Kingdom.* It is up to you to decide whether that influence is going to be positive or negative, by deciding if you will marry, and if you do marry, by deciding whom you will marry.

Conclusion

The level of influence of a significant other in a non-platonic relationship greatly impacts your ability to achieve the vocational task that the Lord has set for you. My recommendation is to avoid engaging in *any* romantic relationship in which self-sacrificial service to the Lord is not the main focus. And remember, physical contact greatly reduces your ability to make objective evaluations.

Today, Christians treat the Christian life as a hobby that we engage in *for our benefit.* And this includes romantic relationships. One way of screening prospective mates is by assessing how well prepared they are to defend the Lord's reputation, when it is called into question. An authentic Christian should care enough to have prepared to defend God's existence and character in public.

UPDATE: New William Lane Craig lecture specifically on the topic of Christian marriage:

- Healthy Relationships (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008) (audio here)

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Round-up of stories on adult stem cell research and abortion

April 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

As you know, Obama is making scientific progress and patient care take a back-seat to feminist ideology. He appeases his pro-abortion special interest groups by wasting money on unproven embryonic stem cell research, while neglecting proven therapies based on adult stem cell research. Who cares about patient liberty and curing diseases?

Let's take a look and see what adult stem cells can do.

UPI reports that adult stem cells can revert to an embryonic state.

> U.S. scientists say they have, for the first time, returned adult mouse cells to their embryonic pluripotent state, meaning they can become any cell type.
>
> The University of California-San Francisco researchers said they used tiny molecules called microRNAs to reprogram the cells.
>
> The achievement suggests scientists will soon be able to replace retroviruses and even genes currently used in laboratory experiments to induce pluripotency in adult cells. The researchers said that would make potential stem cell-based therapies safer by eliminating risks posed to humans by these DNA-based methods, including alteration of the genome and risk of cancer.

Adult stem cells provide solutions for stroke victims.

> The good news continues to flow about the first stroke patient successfully treated in Houston using the patient's own adult stem cells. The patient, Roland Henrich, was originally admitted to the emergency room at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center on March 25, 2009 with signs of stroke–he could not speak and had significant weakness on his right side. Because it was beyond the few hours window for use of the clot-dissolving drug TPA, the adult stem cell trial was his only option. The next day some of his bone marrow was removed, the adult stem cells separated, and returned intravenously to the patient. In less than a week doctors noted that he was recovering remarkably well and had not shown any signs of paralysis. Within 11 days of the treatment Mr. Henrich was walking, climbing stairs unassisted, and said his first word after the stroke, captured on a local news video and surprising his own doctor and leader of the clinical trial, Dr. Sean Savitz. His wife says now he has spoken several single words and phrases and has fed the cows by himself.

Adult stem cells provide solutions for infertile women.

> Chinese scientists have published a study in *Nature Cell Biology* that suggests even older females retain adult stem cells that can stimulate fertility, including the production of more eggs. The evidence is in contrast to the usual dogma that

> women have a finite number of immature eggs, some of which mature and are ovulated, and that the number of eggs becomes depleted with age. Tilly *et al.* recently reviewed the evidence for and against production of new eggs after birth. Tilly's group was one of those recently to challenge the dogma with evidence that new egg production could occur in mammals.
>
> What the Chinese group showed is that ovaries contain stem cells that can produce more eggs, similar to the stem cells in testes that produce sperm.

Adult stem cells provide solutions for healing bones.

> Patients confined to wheelchairs have been able to walk or live independently again because their broken bones finally healed, thanks to a drug that stimulates their adult stem cells. Preliminary results presented at the Orthopaedic Research Society meeting found 93% of those with an unhealed bone fracture had significant healing and pain control after treatment for only 8 to 12 weeks. Half of the 145 patients studied had non-healing fractures for 6 months or longer. The drug, teriparatide (Forteo), was approved by the FDA in 2002 for treatment of osteoporosis. A team led by Dr. J. Edward Puzas at the University of Rochester Medical Center discovered that this drug can also boost the body's bone adult stem cell production to the point that adults' bones appear to heal at a rate typically seen for young kids.

Adult stem cells provide solutions for diabetes.

> Another success for adult stem cells, again treating Type I (juvenile) diabetes patients. As reported in a study published today in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 20 of 23 patients became insulin-independent after treatment with their own bone marrow adult stem cells. This report is a follow-up to the previous report by Voltarelli & Burt in 2007, and includes new patients as well as a longer period to follow the patients. Some of the patients have gone for four years insulin-free. The authors note in the paper that this adult stem cell treatment "remains the only treatment capable of reversing type 1 diabetes in humans."

Adult stem cells provide solutions for treating ligaments and tendons

> Recent news from London that adult stem cells will be used to repair damaged tendons and ligaments in patients. This isn't really a new technique, but the interesting thing is that the technique is now used routinely in horses and other animals. Finally, the realization has hit that this adult stem cell treatment might work for people, too. More than 1,500 race horses have been treated using the same process, and follow-up data suggest a 50 percent reduction in re-injury over a three year period, compared with conventional treatment.

We don't need to kill innocent unborn humans in order to make medical progress. We don't need an excess of 32 million males due to anti-female sex-selection abortions. And

we don’t need to subsidize Planned Parenthood with 350 million dollars when they already have net assets of 1 billion dollars.

And lastly, some good news. In contrast to the Democrats anti-life stance, Republicans in the Oklahoma legislature voted to ban embryonic stem cell research. Now that’s progress.

Are polar ice caps really melting due to global warming?

April 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post is old, please take a look at some of my newer posts

- UN IPCC claim that Himalayan glaciers are melting revealed to be a hoax
- Britain to be hit by coldest winter in 100 years
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Will December 2009 be the coldest on record?
- 877 snowfall records were set last week in the USA
- Record snowfall in Oklahoma City, OK and Duluth, MN
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal
- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline
- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- The state of the debate about catastrophic man-made global warming
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says solar activity impacts climate
- Famous UN IPCC hockey stick graph is based on cherry-picked data
- Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming
- Global warming advocates refuse to give their data to skeptics
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says prior ice melting caused by solar variation
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Global warming is not caused by humans

Are global warming alarmists wrong?

Consider this article from The Australian: (H/T Watts Up With That)

> **ICE is expanding in much of Antarctica, contrary to the widespread public belief that global warming is melting the continental ice cap.**
>
> The results of ice-core drilling and sea ice monitoring indicate there is no large-scale melting of ice over most of Antarctica, although experts are concerned at ice losses on the continent's western coast.
>
> Antarctica has 90 per cent of the Earth's ice and 80 per cent of its fresh water. Extensive melting of Antarctic ice sheets would be required to raise sea levels substantially, and ice is melting in parts of west Antarctica. The destabilisation of

> the Wilkins ice shelf generated international headlines this month.
>
> However, the picture is very different in east Antarctica, which includes the territory claimed by Australia.
>
> **East Antarctica is four times the size of west Antarctica and parts of it are cooling. The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research report prepared for last week's meeting of Antarctic Treaty nations in Washington noted the South Pole had shown "significant cooling in recent decades".**

And here's the graph that goes with the findings:

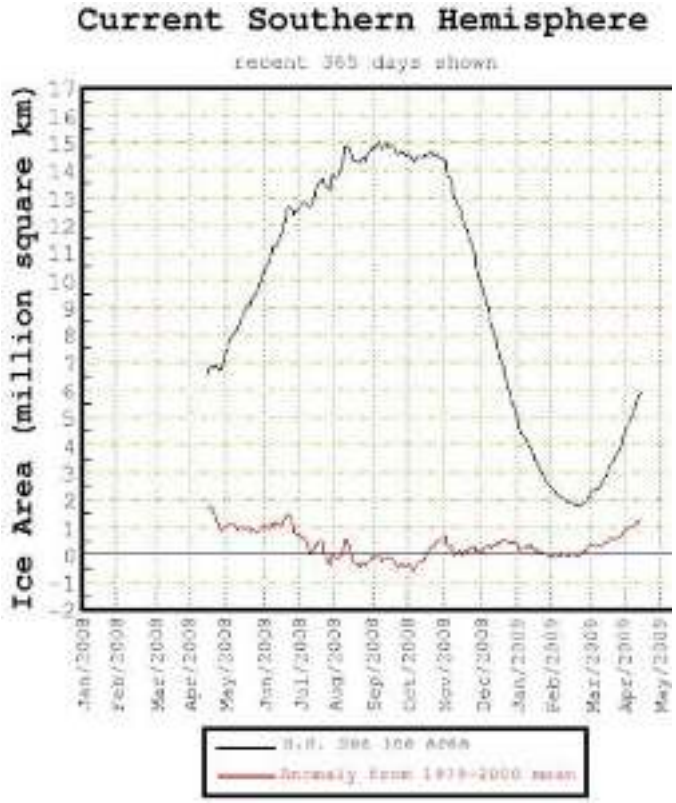

Source: Cryosphere Today

Why are global warming alarmists wrong?

Now we know that they're wrong. Why are they wrong? Well, maybe I should start by showing that the media is cherry-picking data in order to delude the public. This post by Anthony Watts which explains how the media deliberately recycles the images and stories about imminent climate catastrophes. This time, it's about a vast antarctic shelf that's about to collapse.

Only one problem. It was just about to collapse *last year*, but the media is re-using the the same scary stock photo and story again *this year* and telling us again that it's just about to collapse.

Excerpt:

> Those masters of disaster are at it again, and it appears our friendly scientists at that National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) help this story along each year.
>
> …It seems that not only is the photography recycled, so is the storyline. It seems

> to happen every year, about this time. Note the photos show shear failure and cracks, not melted ice. Shear failure is mostly mechanical-stress related, though ice does tend to be more brittle at colder temperatures.
>
> National Geographic reported this story headline last year, March 25th 2008.
>
> …From the Nat Geo story:
>
> > "[It's] an event we don't get to see very often," Ted Scambos, lead scientist at the U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, Colorado, said in a press statement.
>
> > Now, how is it that an ice shelf breaks up in the spring of 2008 and again in the spring of 2009 and it's "not very often"? Hmmm.

Watts goes on in his post to take a look at how much the ice shelf has really changed over the years (it hasn't) and whether the air temperatures have gotten warmer (theyhaven't) such that the air would be causing cracks. So all we really have is a scary re-used photo and a lot of propaganda.

What are the economic effects of policies based on global warming alarmism

Well, to start with, we're going to lose a lot of jobs, due to increase taxation and regulation of "the rich" and "greedy corporations". And, the EPA is going to raise consumer energy prices and put American money in the pockets of terrorists, by curtailing domestic energy production. And, we're going to waste tons and tons of taxpayer money subsidizing corporations to be "green".

The good news: public opinion is shifting away from global warming alarmism

A recent Rasmussen Reports poll shows that there is hope. (H/T The Chilling Effect)

Global Warming is Primarily Caused By…

Date	Human activity	Planetary Trends	Other Reason
Apr 09	34%	48%	7%
Mar 09	41%	43%	7%
Feb 09	38%	45%	7%
Jan 09	44%	41%	7%
Dec 08	43%	43%	6%
Apr 08	47%	34%	8%

So at least we're slowly winning the battle for truth. Unfortunately, Obama has got until 2010 until he can be challenged in the mid-term elections.

r.

Conservatives in British Columbia defend free speech

April 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

Canadian columnist Mark Steyn has some welcome news on the sorry state of free speech north of the border. (H/T Free Canuckistan) Specifically, the good news is from the western province of British Columbia, (contains Vancouver), home to one of the 3 worst Human Rights Commissions operating in Canada.

Steyn writes:

> BC is a bit like Quebec in that it has a two-party system in which neither choice is conservative: in *la belle province*, it's a choice between the separatists and the Quebec Liberals; on the left coast, it's a choice between the socialists and the BC Liberals. So the right-of-centre vote in BC goes, *faute de mieux*, to Gordon Campbell's party.

So, there really is no way that the provincial conservatives can win at the provincial level, and conservative voters ending up voting for the Liberals, just to keep the socialists out of power.

But suddenly, the provincial conservatives decided that the status quo was not good enough for British Columbians:

> Or at any rate that's the way it was until the upstart BC Tories decided to challenge Premier Campbell from the right in next month's provincial election. Robert Jago spoke to their leader, Wilf Hanni, about the "Human Rights" Tribunal and got the following response:
>
> A BC Conservative Government will reform the BC Human Rights Tribunal:
>
> * So that any complainant will be responsible for the legal fees associated with his or her human rights complaint.

> * To make complainants responsible for paying the defendant's legal fees should the complainant lose their Human Rights Tribunal case.
> * To disallow individuals and organizations from making Human Rights Tribunal complaints when Human Rights Tribunals in other Canadian jurisdictions are already investigating the same issue.
> * To disallow cases dealing with freedom of speech under Section 2 of the Charter.
> * To allow appeals, to a court of law, for any decision made by the Tribunal.
> * So that the Tribunal cannot render penalties outside the boundaries of Canadian Laws.
>
> We realize that it is neither fair nor equitable that complainants currently receive free legal representation no matter how frivolous the complaint, while defendants must pay their own legal fees.

Stay tuned, because tomorrow at 11 AM I will be posting about how conservatives in another province are defending free speech against left-wing fascism.

How teacher’s unions make war on charter schools

April 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the Wall Street Journal. (H/T The Heritage Foundation and Independent Women’s Forum)

Let’s see what Jay P. Greene has to say about charter schools:

> In New York, for example, the unions have backed a new budget that effectively cuts $51.5 million from charter-school funding, even as district-school spending can continue to increase thanks to local taxes and stimulus money that the charters lack. New York charters already receive less money per pupil than their district school counterparts; now they will receive even less.

When I was a young man, I dreamed of becoming a prosecuting attorney or English teacher. (Software engineering was my third choice). But the political activism of left-wing teacher unions, and their opposition to merit-pay, stopped me from becoming a teacher. I always think of unions as a form of adult day-care, insulated from real world competition and consumer needs.

> Unions are also seeking to strangle charter schools with red tape. New York already has the “card check” unionization procedure for teachers that replaces secret ballots with public arm-twisting. And the teachers unions appear to have collected enough cards to unionize the teachers at two highly successful charter schools in New York City. If unions force charters to enter into collective bargaining, one can only imagine how those schools will be able to maintain the flexible work rules that allow them to succeed.
>
> …Eva Moskowitz, former chair of the New York City Council education committee and now a charter school operator, has characterized this new push against charters as a “backlash” led by “a union-political-educational complex that is trying to halt progress and put the interests of adults above the interests of children.”
>
> …When charter schools unionize, they become identical to traditional public schools in performance. Unions may say they support charter schools, but they only support charters after they have stripped them of everything that makes charters different from district schools.

And why does school-choice matter?

> In New York City, Stanford economist Caroline Hoxby found that students accepted by lottery to charter schools were significantly outpacing the academic progress of their peers who lost the lottery and were forced to return to district schools.
>
> Florida State economist Tim Sass and colleagues found that middle-school

> students at charters in Florida and Chicago who continued into charter high schools were significantly more likely to graduate and go on to college than their peers who returned to district high schools because charter high schools were not available.
>
> The most telling study is by Harvard economist Tom Kane about charter schools in Boston. It found that students accepted by lottery at independently operated charter schools significantly outperformed students who lost the lottery and returned to district schools. But students accepted by lottery at charters run by the school district with unionized teachers experienced no benefit.

I highly recommend you read the whole article, as Greene is a respected authority on education policy. In case you missed my recent article on Obama's cancelling of vouchers, check it out here.

Why is critical evaluation of Darwinism not permitted in the public square?

April 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome Post-Darwinist readers! Thanks for the link Denyse!

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from 4Simpsons! Thanks for the link!

No one doubts what can be proved in the lab or in the fossil record about the ability of organisms to adapt to their environment. Finch beak sizes can change, bacteria can become resistant, etc. Perhaps even some limited "speciation" between ancestors due to geographic isolation. But that isn't what Darwinism-skeptics object to. We object to naturalistic accounts of the origin of life and to macro-evolution.

But Darwinism, like global warming, is one of those beliefs that is long on faith and short on evidence. And the way you can tell that you're being sold a pig in a poke is by taking a look at how welcoming Darwinists are to debate. Do they organize public debates and publish books with their opponents? Or do they simply have them fired and black-listed from the academy? Let's talk a look at the data.

The case of NPR media bias

Here is an interesting article from Evolution News by ID proponent Casey Luskin. Casey was interviewed by the government-run, taxpayer-funded National Public Radio, regarding the recent decision favoring critical thinking in science by the Texas Board of Education.

Casey writes:

> Last week I did an interview with an NPR reporter, Bob Garfield, for his NPR show "On the Media" about the recent Texas decision…

> The interview started with benign questions about the recent decision of the Texas State Board of Education to welcome scientific critique of evolution into the curriculum. This quickly descended into various "how dare you" type questions, about whether this was all a plot by the "Religious Right" to insert religion into public schools, and why I rejected all the fossil and cosmological evidence that shows the universe isn't 10,000 years old. "Huh?," I replied. I quickly informed Mr. Garfield that not only do we oppose advocating religion in science classrooms, but that I'm not a young earth creationist, and that the debate in Texas has never been about young earth creationism. The new Texas Science Standards only require scientific critical analysis of evolution, and in no way shape or form invited biblical creationism or religion into the classroom.
>
> Mr. Garfield was also reminded that many of the 13 members of the Texas State Board of Education who voted for the new science standards *both professed to accept evolution and stridently opposed the teaching of creationism*, and thus it would seem highly unlikely that the new Texas standards were a "Trojan horse"

> for teaching religion. Nonetheless, the final story favorably quoted members of the evolution lobby saying this is all a ruse for creationism.

How familiar is the left-wing elite media with the 700+ scientists who dissent from Darwinism? Not so much:

> But during our interview, having lost his argument that the new Texas Science Standards were a conspiracy to bring religion into the curriculum, Garfield shifted our conversation to the science. Again, he asked various "How dare you?" type questions, making assertions like *virtually "100%" of scientists accept evolution*, or that *evolution comprised the unchallengeable "consensus,"* or that *there is no fossil evidence that challenges evolution*. I reminded him that a critical mass of well-credentialed scientists in fact don't support neo-Darwinian evolution, and that a number of Ph.D. biologists testified in Texas about scientific weaknesses in evolution. He then accused me of cherry-picking data because, outside of the Texas hearings, he asserted that essentially the "universe" of scientists support evolution. Not true, I told him. I replied that while surely majority of scientists do support evolution, there are credible scientists who dissent from it–hundreds of Ph.D.s in fact–and that there are plenty of discussions of doubts about core claims of neo-Darwinism in the scientific literature. I also discussed some of the reasons for these doubts-ranging from the inability of empirical evidence of natural selection to be extrapolated to bolster the grand claims of neo-Darwinism to the lack of confirming fossil evidence.

And the result of this cloistered, close-minded, intolerant, bigoted, echo-chamber caricature of evolution critics?

> Mr. Garfield's reply to my discussion of the science was that we were getting outside of his field, and he cut all of my discussions of the scientific weaknesses in neo-Darwinism from the final story. There's no shame in him not knowing much about science, but it's troubling that despite his self-professed ignorance on the science, he acted like he knew for a fact that skeptics of Darwinian evolution had no scientific basis should be treated like crazy religious fanatics.

But isn't the left-wing elite media right to think that opposition to evolution is entirely from Bible-thumping, snake-handling, shotgun-toting, pick-up-truck driving rednecks?

> As a last ditch attempt to discredit Darwin-doubters, Garfield compared teaching critique of evolution to teaching Holocaust denial. I replied that not only is there a world of difference between the two (hundreds of serious Ph.D. scientists doubt neo-Darwinism, and one cannot find such credibility supporting something as pernicious as Holocaust denial!), but I also told him that given that I (as well as many other Darwin-skeptics) am Jewish and had close friends impacted by the Holocaust, his comparison was not just fallacious, but out-of-line. I mentioned that even more scientists would come out of the closet to express their doubts

> about evolution were it not for the intolerance in the scientific community towards dissent from Darwinism. His reply was to twist my position into allegedly arguing that scientists don't really believe in evolution, they're just forced to pledge allegiance to it due to pressure.
>
> **I replied that this was not at all what I was saying, because of course a great many scientists harbor purely bona fide scientific support for evolution. My point was that were it not for the climate of intolerance, we'd see far more doubters and skeptics breaking their silence. However, in the final story, Garfield apparently sliced and diced my response so that it sounded like I affirmed his assertion that any "consensus" over evolution is the result of intimidation, when that is not at all how I responded to his question and false characterization of my views.**

The article goes to explain how NPR cited a well-known critic Ken Miller of intelligent as an authority on intelligent design, despite the fact that he elementary errors on obvious details about the ID research program. I recommend reading the entire article, as it explains a lot about leftism and their propensity for group-think, censorship and fascism.

When he isn't misleading his readers about historical facts, even Richard Dawkins allows that the first living system may have been intelligently designed by aliens. But those aliens must have evolved. How does Dawkins know that? Even without looking at the evidence, they must evolved, because of Dawkins' anti-science faith in materialism. *Evidence is irrelevant once you pre-suppose materialism, on faith.*

So how did the Darwinists win then?

The same way that they've been winning on global warming alarmism. By avoiding a fair, open debate on the merits!

First, by intimidation, censorship and ridicule of anyone who opposes them. To say that their treatment of skeptics is like McCarthyism would be a tremendous insult to McCarthy. These are fact-averse fideistic fascists, plain and simple. If they had the evidence, they wouldn't be firing peope left, right and center in the academy – they would be welcoming public debates.

Consider the case of Caroline Crocker. Here is video clip 1 of 6:

Second, by deliberate deception. Jonathan Wells' book "Icons of Evolution", showed multiple serious inaccuracies in the way that Darwinism is presented in textbooks. To take just one, the images of Haeckel's embryos used in textbooks are fraudulent and have known to be so for decades! And this fraud is debunked in the highest research journals, like Science and Nature.

Consider this one example from *Science*: (*Science* 5 September 1997: Vol. 277. no. 5331, p. 1435)

> [Abstract:] Using modern techniques, a British researcher has photographed embryos like those pictured in the famous, century-old drawings by Ernst

> Haeckel–proving that Haeckel's images were falsified. Haeckel once admitted to his peers that he doctored the drawings, but that confession was forgotten.

Third, by judicial activism. Since Darwinists cannot win a debate on the evidence, in the public square, the next best thing is to win by judicial fiat. Judges typically have no relevant qualifications, either in science or in philosophy of science. They can also be intimidated by peer-pressure to conform to the opinions of the elite, regardless of the evidence.

Conclusion

The reason why critical evaluation of Darwinism is not permitted in the public square by Darwinists is because *they would lose the debate.* I will be posting a few of the debates that have occurred between faith-based Darwinists and their fact-based critics later in the week, and you will be able to see how well their case for naturalistic evolution holds up.

Further study

Here are posts on cosmological argument and the fine-tuning argument.

UPDATE: How well do Darwinists do in debates: Michael Shermer vs Steven Meyer.

Conservatives in Ontario defend free speech

April 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

BC isn't the only province where conservatives are fighting back against progressive threats to fundamental rights. Ontario, (contains Toronto and Ottawa), has one of the other really bad provincial Human Rights Commissions, and provincial representatives Lisa MacLeod and Randy Hillier on the case in that benighted province.

Here's an assessment of MacLeod and Hillier from free-speech superhero Ezra Levant: (H/T The Western Standard)

> Hillier, along with fellow PC MPP Lisa Macleod, have been leading the charge to reform Ontario's HRCs. They were the ones who pressed for public hearings at which Tribunal appointees would be grilled — which led to some scary revelations about the censorious instincts of that panel. And he also was part of the team (led by Macleod) who brought Mark Steyn to Queen's Park to testify about the kangaroo court nature of the OHRC.

Levant is referring to her questioning of Mark Steyn regarding the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. The full transcript is here, courtesy of Pamela Geller at Atlas Shrugs. This is about as strong a defense of free speech as you'll ever see, folks. And it's a warning to the consequences of electing progressives who do not trust you to exercise your own free will, lest you hurt someone's feelings.

Here is a little of Mark Steyn's opening speech from the hearing:

> **Mr. Mark Steyn:** The present Ontario human rights regime is incompatible with a free society. It is useless on real human rights issues that we face today and, in the course of such pseudo human rights, as the human right to smoke marijuana on someone else's property or the human right to a transsexual labioplasty, in the course of those pseudo-rights it tramples on real human rights including

> property rights, free speech, the right to due process and the presumption of innocence. Far from reducing racism or sexism, the Ontario human rights regime explicitly institutionalizes racism and sexism through its inability to view any dispute except through the narrow prism of identity politics. It's at odds not just with eight centuries of this province's legal inheritance, but with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Canada likes that one so much, it sticks it on the back of the $50 bill, even though Ontario's human rights regime is in sustained, systemic breach of article 6, article 7, articles 8 to 10, 11, 12, 18, 19, 21 and 27 of the UN declaration. The good news is that Ontario's not in violation of as many articles as Sudan or North Korea.
>
> All are equal before the law and are entitled, without any discrimination, to equal protection of the law. That's article 7. It's not true in Ontario. Last year, the Ontario Human Rights Commission effectively gave Maclean's and myself a driveby verdict. They couldn't be bothered taking us to trial but they decided to pronounce us guilty anyway. That neglects the most basic principle of justice: Audi alteram partem, hear the other side. Chief commissar Barbara Hall didn't bother hearing the other side; she simply declared us guilty. That is the very defining act of a police state: an apparatchik announcing that a citizen is guilty of dissent from state orthodoxy.
>
> But here's the point: Maclean's and I have no fear of Barbara Hall, the commission or the tribunal. You're welcome to try and do your worst to us. We have deep pockets, we pushed back and we filled the newspapers with stories about all these wacky cases that Barbara Hall and others are so obsessed about. Like all tinpot bullies, the commission couldn't take the heat and backed down. But if you're just a fellow who happens to own a restaurant in Burlington, the Ontario human rights regime will destroy your savings, your business, your life for no good reason. The verdict's irrelevant; the process is the punishment.

He is saying this about a tribunal run by fascist progressive inquisitors hell-bent on ramming their values down the throats of individuals. And here is an excerpt from MacLeod's questioning of Steyn:

> **Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Welcome to our committee Mr. Steyn. During the summer, this committee convened to interview and review the 22 vice-chairs and the 22 members of the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal and throughout that process your case, Maclean's vs. the Ontario Human Rights Commission, as well as what happened in British Columbia to you as well as what happened federally to you was front and centre on our minds. Consistently throughout that process I asked questions of the deputants, those seeking to be appointed to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, if they believed free press trumped discrimination or vice versa. One of the deputants actually responded. Today, earlier, I asked the same question to the chair of the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. He responded and said that neither trumps either. I would like your view on that, because it follows

> sort of a logical set of questions that I have which are next with respect to freedom of expression and freedom of speech.
>
> **Mr. Mark Steyn:** With respect to the witness this morning, that has become a standard equivocation at the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. Whenever tribunal judges take away individual human rights they do so under the guise of what they call balancing competing rights. So for example, going back to the Scott Brockie case, they claim to be balancing his right to freedom of religion with the right of the gay people seeking printed materials to be free from discrimination. In practice they almost never balance those rights. They always defer to collective rights, group rights in favour of individual rights. I'm an absolutist on this. I agree with the view that the ultimate minority is the individual and classically, historically, common law has been entirely antipathetic to group rights, because who can speak for a group? Who can speak for a group? The notion of group rights should be an abomination to a settled democracy as old as this province.

As an aside, Lisa MacLeod is also fighting polygamy in Ontario. (H/T Blue Like You)

I hope that the Canadian conservatives at every level of government turn this into an election issue, in order to draw libertarians away from the other parties. These Human Rights Commissions are the darlings of secular left-wing politically correct fascists, and they can't stand the idea of their totalitarian censorship seeing the light of day.

This article is a follow-up to yesterday's article about free speech efforts in British Columbia.

Jobless rate climbs in 46 states

April 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wall Street Journal has the story here.

Excerpt:

> The state-by-state employment figures showed only a few states avoiding the deterioration seen nationwide. Unemployment rose in 46 states during the month, and 12 states plus the District of Columbia posted unemployment rates in March that were significantly higher than the 8.5% nationwide figure the government released earlier this month.
>
> The chief economist for California's finance department, Howard Roth, said the state's unemployment rate hasn't been this high since reaching 11.7% in January 1941. The highest level on record in California is 14.7% in October 1940, he said.
>
> …Most economists expect job losses across all U.S. nonfarm employers to continue in April at or near the rapid pace seen in March, when 663,000 jobs disappeared.

Here's WSJ's map of the numbers. Click the map for more details.

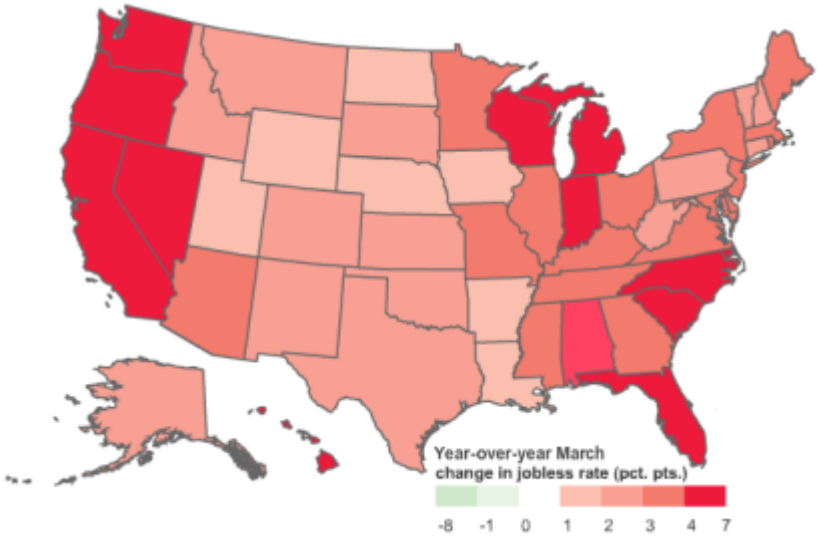

March year-over-year unemployment
So much for socialism hope and change.

Waterboarding saved American lives, so Obama opposes it

April 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

According to Gateway Pundit, waterboarding does work after all:

> According to a former intelligence agent, waterboarding of terrorist Abu Zubaydah got him to talk in less than 35 seconds. The technique, which critics say is torture, probably **disrupted "dozens" of planned al-Qaida attacks and saved hundreds and thousands of lives.** The CIA also confirmed that waterboarding 9-11 mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammed led to information that prevented a similar attack on Los Angeles.
>
> …The CIA confirmed that waterboarding of 9/11 mastermind Led to Info that aborted 9/11-style attack on Los Angeles.

The details on the prevention of that Los Angeles attack are provided by CNS News. (H/T Hot Air)

> The Central Intelligence Agency told CNSNews.com today that it stands by the assertion made in a May 30, 2005 Justice Department memo that the use of "enhanced techniques" of interrogation on al Qaeda leader Khalid Sheik Mohammed (KSM) — including the use of waterboarding — caused KSM to reveal information that allowed the U.S. government to thwart a planned attack on Los Angeles.
>
> Before he was waterboarded, when KSM was asked about planned attacks on the United States, he ominously told his CIA interrogators, "Soon, you will know."
>
> According to the previously classified May 30, 2005 Justice Department memo that was released by President Barack Obama last week, the thwarted attack — which KSM called the "Second Wave"– planned " 'to use East Asian operatives to crash a hijacked airliner into' a building in Los Angeles."

Hot Air fills in some more of the details:

> …the [CIA] remains tenacious in insisting that waterboarding Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Ramzi Binalshibh, and Abu Zubaydah saved American lives. CNS News reports that the CIA stands by its 2005 memo describing how those interrogations stopped another 9/11-scale attack:
>
> KSM initially resisted all other interrogation procedures, right up to the waterboard. He insisted that Americans did not have the necessary resolve to get information out of him, and that we would only know about the next plot when it killed hundreds, if not thousands again. Only after the waterboard did KSM cough up the information on the "second wave" attacks, and the CIA and other national-security agencies stopped it.

But nevermind the good results of counter-terrorism programs and policies. Obama needs to appease the special interest groups who elected him! How will he do that?

The left-wing BBC reports that Obama may prosecute the authors of the counter-terrorism policies: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> US President Barack Obama has left open the possibility of prosecuting officials who wrote CIA memos allowing harsh interrogation methods.
>
> It would be up to the attorney general whether to prosecute, Mr Obama said.
>
> The memos detailed the range of techniques the CIA could use for questioning terror suspects.
>
> Mr Obama had said he would not use anti-torture laws to prosecute CIA personnel who relied in good faith on legal opinions issued after 9/11.
>
> The BBC's James Coomarasamy in Washington says the president's comments marked a change of tone amid growing pressure from the Democratic Party not to rule out potential prosecutions.

Well, prosecuting counter-terrorism experts is one thing, but that may not be enough to appease Michael Moore and the rest of the high school dropouts in Hollywood.

Gateway Pundit reports that Obama won't rule out prosecuting George W. Bush either, because protected America too much:

Video here:

Gateway Pundit reported a few days ago that Dick Cheney, a serious statesman, has asked the Obama regime to declassify the details of the attacks that were stopped by waterboarding, but so far Obama has declined to do so. I guess he doesn't want the American people to know the realities of national security decision-making in the 21st century.

Should we really have elected an ACORN lawyer who is tougher on counter-terrorists than on actual terrorists? Remember these things when the 2010 elections come around.

UPDATE: More about Obama's defense spending cuts, including cuts of missile defense programs, is here. This post also talks about his appeasement of aggressors such as North Korea and Iran as they go nuclear.

UPDATE: A total of THREE terrorists were waterboarded during the time the policy was in place.

Is the concept of moral obligation intelligible on atheistic materialism?

April 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Commenter ECM sent me this post from Uncommon Descent about the is-ought fallacy, and the difficulties that atheists have grounding morality on worldview in which only material things exist. The post is written by Barry Arrington. He is summarizes an argument based on some of the comments from an earlier post.

Barry introduces two assumptions:

> (1) That atheistic naturalism is true.
>
> (2) One can't infer an "ought" from an "is." Richard Dawkins and many other atheists should grant both of these assumptions.
>
> Given our second assumption, there is nothing in the natural world from which we can infer an "ought." And given our first assumption, there is nothing that exists over and above the natural world; the natural world is all that there is. It follows logically that, for any action you care to pick, there's nothing in the natural world from which we can infer that one ought to refrain from performing that action.

This makes sense to me. If only matter exists, and the whole universe is an accident, then where would an atheist get this idea that the current arrangement of matter ought to be any other way? Matter just is. This concept of "ought to be" is totally alien to an atheistic worldview where everything is matter, because moral obligations are non-material.

The article goes on: (I added the number 3)

> Add a further uncontroversial assumption: (3) an action is permissible if and only if it's not the case that one ought to refrain from performing that action. This is just the standard inferential scheme for formal deontic logic.

Basically, he is saying that an action is permissible so long as there is no moral obligation against that action. Can you see what's coming? (I added the number 4)

> We've conformed to standard principles and inference rules of logic and we've started out with assumptions that atheists have conceded. And yet we reach the absurd conclusion: (4) therefore, for any action you care to pick, it's permissible to perform that action.

And let's be clear about why this is bad for atheists:

> If you'd like, you can take this as the meat behind the slogan "if atheism is true, all things are permitted." For example if atheism is true, every action Hitler performed was permissible. Many atheists don't like this consequence of their worldview. But they cannot escape it and insist that they are being logical at the

> same time.

Let me just add one more point. How are we supposed to be morally obligated to perform any action if we are pure matter? Meat machines don't have free will. We would just be strings of dominoes falling forward, with no choice whether to fall or not. And even if we could somehow choose, our choices have no ultimate moral significance.

So, what does morality mean to atheists, then?

A while back, I listed some quotes about morality on atheism, taken from atheists who have actually thought through the consequences of atheism for rational moral behavior.

Here is a quotation from Richard Dawkins:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.

Of course, atheists can sense the objective moral standard that God has built into every person. But their materialist worldview undercuts the meaningfulness of moral values, moral duties and moral accountability. And people just don't act morally once morality has become irrational for them. Acting morally is *hard*.

What ends up happening to atheists is that they only do the right thing for pleasure, or to avoid social punishments. Once the pre-supposition of materialism has destroyed the rationality of morality, it becomes impossible for atheists to answer the question "Why be moral?". Any atheist who continues to act morally is living inconsistently with their own worldview – and that is not sustainable in the long run.

Atheistic assumptions wear down the awareness of the moral law that atheists started out with, so that they begin to advocate for obviously immoral things, like the suppression of freedom of inquiry. Eventually, the guilt becomes so strong that they exchange authentic moral values like chastity and sobriety for cheap narcissistic fads like recycling and yoga.

The case of William Wilberforce

Consider this article from the Wall Street Journal about the abolitionist William Wilberforce.

> In fact, William Wilberforce was driven by a version of Christianity that today would be derided as "fundamentalist."
>
> …William Wilberforce himself, as a student at Cambridge University in the 1770s and as a young member of Parliament soon after, had no more than a nominal sense of faith. Then, in 1785, he began reading evangelical treatises and underwent what he called "the Great Change," almost dropping out of politics to study for the ministry until friends persuaded him that he could do more good

where he was.

And he did a great deal of good…[h]is relentless campaign eventually led Parliament to ban the slave trade, in 1807, and to pass a law shortly after his death in 1833, making the entire institution of slavery illegal. **But it is impossible to understand Wilberforce's long antislavery campaign without seeing it as part of a larger Christian impulse. The man who prodded Parliament so famously also wrote theological tracts, sponsored missionary and charitable works, and fought for what he called the "reformation of manners," a campaign against vice.**

Even during the 18th century, evangelicals were derided as over-emotional "enthusiasts" by their Enlightenment-influenced contemporaries. By the time of Wilberforce's "great change," liberal 18th-century theologians had sought to make Christianity more "reasonable," de-emphasizing sin, salvation and Christ's divinity in favor of ethics, morality and a rather distant, deistic God. Relatedly, large numbers of ordinary English people, especially among the working classes, had begun drifting away from the tepid Christianity that seemed to prevail. Evangelicalism sought to counter such trends and to reinvigorate Christian belief.

…Perhaps the leading evangelical force of the day was the Methodism of John Wesley: It focused on preaching, the close study of the Bible, communal hymn-singing and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Central to the Methodist project was the notion that good works and charity were essential components of the Christian life. Methodism spawned a vast network of churches and ramified into the evangelical branches of Anglicanism. Nearly all the social-reform movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries–from temperance and soup kitchens to slum settlement houses and prison reform–owe something to Methodism and its related evangelical strains. The campaign against slavery was the most momentous of such reforms and, over time, the most successful.It is thus fitting that John Wesley happened to write his last letter–sent in February 1791, days before his death–to William Wilberforce. Wesley urged Wilberforce to devote himself unstintingly to his antislavery campaign, a "glorious enterprise" that opposed "that execrable villainy which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature." Wesley also urged him to "go on, in the name of God and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it."

Wesley had begun preaching against slavery 20 years before and in 1774 published an abolitionist tract, "Thoughts on Slavery." Wilberforce came into contact with the burgeoning antislavery movement in 1787, when he met Thomas Clarkson, an evangelical Anglican who had devoted his life to the abolitionist cause. Two years later, Wilberforce gave his first speech against the slave trade in Parliament.

…This idea of slaving as sin is key. As sociologist Rodney Stark noted in "For the

> Glory of God" (2003), the abolition of slavery in the West during the 19th century was a uniquely Christian endeavor. When chattel slavery, long absent from Europe, reappeared in imperial form in the 16th and 17th centuries–mostly in response to the need for cheap labor in the New World–the first calls to end the practice came from pious Christians, notably the Quakers. Evangelicals, not least Methodists, quickly joined the cause, and a movement was born.

William Wilberforce believed that slaves were made in the image of God – that they were embodied souls who could be resurrected to eternal life. Wilberforce believed that the purpose of human life is to freely seek God, and to be reconciled with God through Christ. He wanted all men and women to have the opportunity to investigate and respond to God's self-revelation to them.

Further study

You can read more about Wilberforce's beliefs here and his public activities here. And you can still see modern-day abolitionists, like Scott Klusendorf, acting out their Christian faith. Only today they're called pro-lifers.

A good paper by Bill Craig on the problem of rationally grounding prescriptive morality is here.

Alfonzo Rachel on progressives and sex

April 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Zo re-caps the week in politics, and comments on Sarah Palin, progressive hypocrisy, abortion and abstinence.

I just noticed that he posted this video from a tea party as well.

PJTV did well to pick this guy up. More here.

More states look to raise taxes to address budget shortfalls

April 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In America, one of the political parties is dominated by people who were born into rich families and have never run any business – not even a lemonade stand. Try contrasting people like Howard Dean or Al Gore with Representatives John Campbell or Michele Bachmann. And there are consequences to being sheltered from the realities of commerce and economics your entire life.

The Wall Street Journal reports: (H/T The Tax Foundation)

> A free fall in tax revenue is driving more state lawmakers to turn to broad-based tax increases in a bid to close widening budget gaps.
>
> At least 10 states are considering some kind of major increase in sales or income taxes: Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin. California and New York lawmakers already have agreed on multibillion-dollar tax increases that went into effect earlier this year.
>
> Fiscal experts say more states are likely to try to raise tax revenue in coming months, especially once they tally the latest shortfalls from April 15 income-tax filings, often the biggest single source of funds for the 43 states that levy them.

And WSJ provides this useful map of who is likely to be affected:

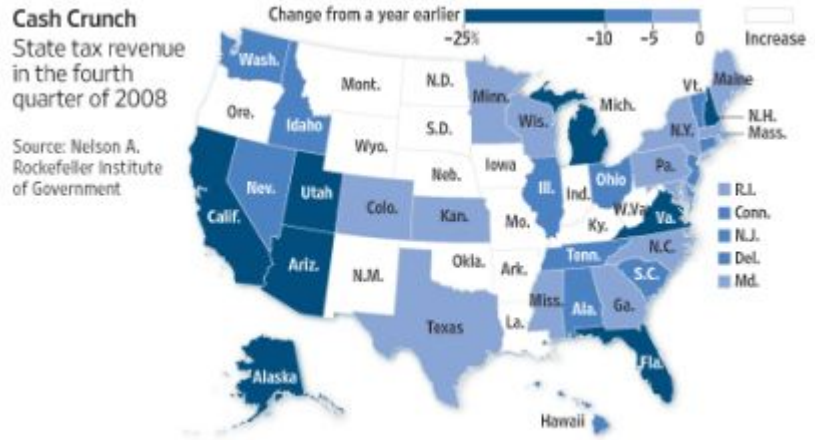

State budget shortfalls

I'm thinking it was a bad idea for 50% of the country to not pay income taxes, then to spend on social services like drunken sailors.

How well do Darwinists do in debates with skeptics?

April 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome Post-Darwinist readers! Thanks for the link Denyse!

I thought that I would introduce a couple of my favorite critics of Darwinian fundamentalism, Stephen C. Meyer and Jonathan Wells. Here they are debating with Michael Shermer. I like Michael Shermer for two reasons – fiscal conservatism and engagement with his opponents. I've seen him MC sessions at Christian conferences. So let's give him a chance to make his case.

Biographies of our debaters

Michael Shermer

Dr. Michael Shermer is the Founding Publisher of *Skeptic* magazine (www.skeptic.com), the Executive Director of the Skeptics Society, a monthly columnist for *Scientific American*, the host of the Skeptics Distinguished Science Lecture Series at Caltech, and Adjunct Professor of Economics at Claremont Graduate University. Dr. Shermer received his B.A. in psychology from Pepperdine University, M.A. in experimental psychology from California State University, Fullerton, and his Ph.D. in the history of science from Claremont Graduate University (1991).

Stephen C. Meyer

Stephen C. Meyer is director and Senior Fellow of the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute, in Seattle. Meyer earned his Ph.D. in the History and Philosophy of Science from Cambridge University for a dissertation on the history of origin of life biology and the methodology of the historical sciences. Previously he worked as a geophysicist with the Atlantic Richfield Company after earning his undergraduate degrees in Physics and Geology.

Jonathan Wells

Jonathan Wells has received two Ph.D.s, one in Molecular and Cell Biology from the University of California at Berkeley, and one in Religious Studies from Yale University. He has worked as a postdoctoral research biologist at the University of California at Berkeley and the supervisor of a medical laboratory in Fairfield, California, and he has taught biology at California State University in Hayward.

Massimo Pigliucci

Massimo Pigliucci, Ph.D., is a professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolution at State University of New York at Stony Brook, where he conducts research on the ecology of plant populations and the evolution of adaptations…. He received his doctorate in genetics at the University of Ferrara in Italy, his Ph.D. in botany from the University of Connecticut, as well as a Ph.D. in philosophy of science at the University of Tennessee.

Let's get ready to rumble!

Let's start with a short 15-minute debate between Michael Shermer and Stephen Meyer,

moderated by Lee Strobel.

Meyer starts with these points:

- the origin of the universe implies a Creator who exists outside of time, space and matter, because he created time, space and matter
- the physical constants and ratios of physics must be fine-tuned in order to support the minimal requirements for life
- the cell is filled with molecular machines that are identical to machines built by humans, such as rotary engines
- the cell contains biological information in the DNA, and the origin of this information cannot be explained by evolution

Shermer makes these points:

- we should never infer intelligent causes, we should keep searching for a materialistic explanation and say we don't know until we find an explanation that allows me to continue to be an intellectually-fulfilled atheist
- who made the designer?
- maybe the big bang will be overturned and then we can go back to the eternal universe that I want to be true in spite of the evidence
- we can speculate (without any experimental evidence) about alternative theories of how the universe got here, unlike the standard big bang theory which is backed by multiple lines of scientific evidence

Then a dialog ensues:

Shermer: The design of life is sub-optimal – if God did it, it should be perfect, with no trade-offs between non-functional requirements, just like Wintery Knights' software architecture designs and Java code are perfect

Meyer: There is no such thing as a perfect design. Software architects, like Wintery Knight, who have studied software design, will tell you that non-functional requirements must be traded-off against one another. (Source: Software Engineering Institute at Carnegie Mellon University)

Shermer: Let me commit the ad hominem fallacy by attacking the motives of intelligent design proponents instead of dealing with their arguments and evidence.

Meyer: Two can play at that game, since evolutionists are atheists and secular humanists. But who cares? let's stick to the arguments and evidence, ok?

Strobel: Meyer, are evolution and Christianity compatible?

Meyer: No, because evolution requires that the natural processes that create the diversity of life be random and unpredictable.

Shermer: Well, maybe the natural forces could be caused by the designer but in a totally undirected and undetectable way, so you Christians could have blind faith and we could run the public square.

Meyer: But Darwinism says and that no design is detectable in those processes, so they processes cannot be *actually directed* on Darwinism.

Shermer: But the designer could use natural selection and mutation.

Meyer: If so, then why did Darwin explicitly reject God having a role in these processes?

Shermer: I don't believe in God because there isn't enough evidence and it would require too many changes in my life. I like having autonomy from God and his moral demands. Also, we must always prefer material explanations, we can never infer that an intelligence played a role. I will only allow you to have two explanations of natural phenomena: 1) God didn't do it, or 2) we don't know.

Meyer: I like that you allow "we don't know" as an explanation if we don't know, because that is a rejection of dogmatic explanations that don't fit the available evidence. But the arguments for design are based on what we do know, not what we don't know – science gave us these arguments – and the progress of science has only *strengthened* them.

Conclusion

Well, I think it's pretty clear who won, and who had the evidence! I like Michael Shermer, though, and I hope that he comes around to our point of view in time. At least he's willing to debate, and he has a pretty moderate view compared to other Darwinian fundamentalists.

Other debates on Darwinism vs intelligent design

Michael Shermer debates Jonathan Wells at the pro-Darwinism Cato Institute (in 7 parts), MP3 audio is here.

Massimo Pigliucci debates Jonathan Wells for the pro-Darwinism PBS, downloadable video and audio.

John Lennox debates against Michael Shermer about the existence of God.

Further study

Here are posts on cosmological argument and the fine-tuning argument. I'll respond to hopeful, but unwarranted, speculations about quantum mechanics and chaotic inflationary models, which I will be blogging about later. I'll blog about molecular machines in a future post.

An essay on the origin of biological information by Meyer is here and a debate between two software engineers on it is here. I'll also mention Meyer's forthcoming book Signature in the Cell. Don't forget about the upcoming debate between William Lane Craig and Francisco Ayala!

By the way, William Lane Craig has also debated Massimo Pigliucci on the topic "Does God Exist?".

UPDATE: Did you see my post on why Darwinists don't allow debates like this to happen in school classrooms?

Steven Crowder’s Obama Song

April 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For those of you who need a re-cap of Obama’s first 100 days in office.

More Crowder here.

How childhood experiences shape our view of religion

April 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a very good friend named Rick Heller who blogs at several places, including Transparent Eye. Rick is not a Christian, but he is fairly familiar with the relevant evidence pro and con, except on the resurrection of Jesus. I was browsing on Transparent Eye the other day and I found this post about a childhood experience that turned Rick away from religion.

Excerpt:

> Even when I was religious, I always found the glorification of God to be a lesser form of spirituality. As an Orthodox Jew, I disliked the text of the Yishtabach prayer (though I liked the tune)
>
> May your Name be praised, our King, the God, the great and holy King, in heaven and on Earth. Because, our God and God of our forefathers, you deserve song and praise, lauding and hymns, power and dominion, triumph, greatness and strength, praise and splendor, holiness and kingship, blessing and thanksgivings now and forever.
>
> It seemed to me that the Rabbis thought that God had a self-esteem problem, and His ego needed massaging. Even as a religious person, I thought these prayers were inferior to the Psalms, which often expressed delight and gratitude rather than the obsequious praise of the courtier.
>
> In life, I can think of two reasons why you might flatter someone. First, the person might be insecure, and out of compassion you might say a little white lie that makes them feel better. Second, the person might have power over you, and you tell a lie in order to elevate them in the hopes of reciprocity, that they will elevate you, or at least not punish you.
>
> This sucking up to God seems to me like the flattery of the poweful. The extravagent praise of the Yishtabach prayer strikes me as something done to propitiate a powerful and potentially dangerous Being that could destroy you.
>
> Does God need our glorification? A mature person does not need constant praise (though a heartfelt thank-you every once in a while is appreciated).

Let's take a look at his concern and see if we can find a solution.

The problem of forcing religion on children

Now, I have a different view of worship than many Christians. I think it's better to worship God in the public square, not just in church. I believe in worshiping with theological truths *and* with publicly available knowledge, such as describing the scientific discoveries that led to our knowledge of God's role in creating the universe. And I believe in talking about

God's worth to non-Christians, not just Christians.

Surprising as it may be to many Christians, as someone who was not raised in a Christian home, I really struggle with the church. Unlike Rick, I enjoy ascribing worth to God. I think that voluntary worship is best, because you make your own case based on what you know about God from your own study. But I also think a prayer like Rick's may be appropriate, *but only after you convince yourself it is true.*

I want to go on to make a general point about the way religion is presented to young people.

A lot of people who have religion crammed down their throats at a young age end up either rebelling or just going through the motions until they leave home. What I noticed about Rick's post is that sounds like he was being made to do things that he didn't want to do. Can you imagine what would have happened if he told the church elders or his parents that he was uncomfortable mouthing these parrot-praises?

This is the problem. Church elders and parents are long on ordering people around, and short on answering questions. They don't try to convince you of anything, they just demand visible behaviors. Rick might be willing to say that prayer, but first he deserves to be convinced. It is not enough to just pressure him into mouthing the words. He needs to persuade himself that the words are true, by studying the facts!

The problem is that parents and the church won't lift a finger to present religious truth claims the same way as truth is presented in the classroom, the lab or the workplace. Children know when they are being told fairy tales. We need to give them public knowledge! Show them some debates! We need to put in the same effort into persuading people about religion as we do about *any other area of knowledge*.

I once exchanged e-mails with a fundamentalist Christian who explained to me how her approach to atheist's questions was to quote the Bible to them. I asked her whether it might not be better to appeal to scientific or historical evidence, instead, since atheists don't believe the Bible. Naturally she cited a Bible verse to me, in order to justify her not having to answer anyone's questions.

> A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away. (Matthew 16:4)

Now the thing is, this woman had no idea what this verse was saying. She was just trying to justify being lazy. But every serious Christian knows that Jesus is predicting his own resurrection in that verse! That is what the sign of Jonah is: 3 days in the tomb and then out of it. So Jesus is saying, you guys are going to get a historical event, and it's going to be done right in front of you as a sign to prove my claims.

This is exactly how the early church presented the resurrection (e.g. Peter in Acts 2:14-41). Non-Christians were supposed to form their opinion of whether Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, or not, based on a historical event. The whole Bible is chock-full of examples of faith founded on fact! But you would never, ever know that by watching

parents and churches present religion to children.

I hereby apologize to sincere atheists, agnostics and deists for these experiences. But guess what? Authentic Christians like William Wilberforce agree with me on this.

What would William Wilberforce think?

Well, take a look for yourself, from his own writings:

> Look at the facts. Do cultural Christians view Christian faith as important enough to make it a priority when teaching their children what they believe and why they believe it? Or do they place greater emphasis on their children getting a good education than on learning about the things of God? Would they be embarrassed if their children did not possess the former while basically being indifferent about the latter? If their children have any understanding of Christian faith at all, they probably have acquired it on their own. If the children view themselves as Christians, it is probably not because they have studied the facts and come to a point of intellectual conviction but because their family is Christian, so they believe they must be Christians also.
>
> **The problem with this way of thinking is that authentic faith cannot be inherited. When Christianity is viewed in this way, intelligent and energetic young men and women will undoubtedly reach a point where they question the truth of Christianity and, when challenged, will abandon this "inherited" faith that they cannot defend. They might begin to associate with peers who are unbelievers. In this company, they will find themselves unable to intelligently respond to objections to Christianity with which they are confronted. Had they really known what they believe and why they believe it, these kinds of encounters would not shake their faith one bit.**
>
> I fear for the future of authentic faith in our country. We live in a time when the common man in our country is thoroughly influenced by the current climate in which the cultural and educational elite propagates an anti-Christian message. We should take a look at what has happened in France and learn a lesson from it. In that country, Christianity has been successfully attacked and marginalized by these same groups because those who professed belief were unable to defend the faith from attack, even though its attackers' arguments were deeply flawed. We should be alarmed that instruction in authentic faith has been neglected, if not altogether eliminated, in our schools and universities.
>
> **Is it any wonder then that the spiritual condition of our country is of little concern to those who don't even educate their own children about true Christianity? Their conduct reflects their absence of concern, not only for the state of Christianity in our own country, but also for the need to communicate the message of Christ to those in other parts of the world who have not heard this truth.**

This is the guy who stopped slavery in the UK, folks. My advice: let’s do whatever Wilber says.

In a forthcoming post, I’ll look at another childhood experience that causes problems for people. It turns out that bad views of economics can be traced to childhood experiences, just like bad views of religion.

How childhood experiences shape our view of economics

April 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last time, we looked at how childhood experiences influence our views of religion. This time, I want to go over an article from the Cato Institute from the famous Harvard philosopher Robert Nozick. This article will give you insights into why leftist academics are against capitalism, and what specifically causes them to have that belief.

Here's a blurb about Nozick:

> *Robert Nozick is Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University and the author of* Anarchy, State, and Utopia *and other books. This article is excerpted from his essay "Why Do Intellectuals Oppose Capitalism?" which originally appeared in* The Future of Private Enterprise*, ed. Craig Aronoff et al. (Georgia State University Business Press, 1986) and is reprinted in Robert Nozick,* Socratic Puzzles *(Harvard University Press, 1997).*

Nozick's thesis is that the school environment encourages "wordsmith intellectuals" to be hostile to free market capitalism and prefer centralized systems.

First, let's see what a wordsmith intellectual is:

> By intellectuals, I do not mean all people of intelligence or of a certain level of education, but those who, in their vocation, deal with ideas as expressed in words, shaping the word flow others receive. These wordsmiths include poets, novelists, literary critics, newspaper and magazine journalists, and many professors. It does not include those who primarily produce and transmit quantitatively or mathematically formulated information (the numbersmiths) or those working in visual media, painters, sculptors, cameramen. Unlike the wordsmiths, people in these occupations do not disproportionately oppose capitalism. The wordsmiths are concentrated in certain occupational sites: academia, the media, government bureaucracy.

Nozick's argument is that wordsmiths oppose capitalism because the free market doesn't provide them with the rewards and adulation from authority figures that they received in their school years.

He writes:

> Schools became the major institution outside of the family to shape the attitudes of young people, and almost all those who later became intellectuals went through schools. There they were successful. They were judged against others and deemed superior. They were praised and rewarded, the teacher's favorites. How could they fail to see themselves as superior? Daily, they experienced differences in facility with ideas, in quick-wittedness. The schools told them, and

> showed them, they were better.
>
> The schools, too, exhibited and thereby taught the principle of reward in accordance with (intellectual) merit. To the intellectually meritorious went the praise, the teacher's smiles, and the highest grades. In the currency the schools had to offer, the smartest constituted the upper class. Though not part of the official curricula, in the schools the intellectuals learned the lessons of their own greater value in comparison with the others, and of how this greater value entitled them to greater rewards.

But what happens when these pampered wordsmith intellectuals hit the job market?

> The wider market society, however, taught a different lesson. There the greatest rewards did not go to the verbally brightest. There the intellectual skills were not *most* highly valued. Schooled in the lesson that they were most valuable, the most deserving of reward, the most entitled to reward, how could the intellectuals, by and large, fail to resent the capitalist society which deprived them of the just deserts to which their superiority "entitled" them? Is it surprising that what the schooled intellectuals felt for capitalist society was a deep and sullen animus that, although clothed with various publicly appropriate reasons, continued even when those particular reasons were shown to be inadequate?

So, what economic system do wordsmith intellectuals advocate for instead of capitalism?

> The intellectual wants the whole society to be a school writ large, to be like the environment where he did so well and was so well appreciated. By incorporating standards of reward that are different from the wider society, the schools guarantee that some will experience downward mobility later. Those at the top of the school's hierarchy will feel entitled to a top position, not only in that micro-society but in the wider one, a society whose system they will resent when it fails to treat them according to their self-prescribed wants and entitlements.

Intellectuals can't make money degreez in Marxist Studies, Peace Studies, or <Insert_Victim_Group_Here> Studies. And yet, they feel entitled because of their classroom experiences. So, the answer is to confiscate the wealth of the productive entrepreneurs and redistribute them to the intellectuals.

But there are further unrelated points I must add to this article.

What makes people less religious the more educated they become?

OK, if you watch the debate between Peter Atkins and Bill Craig, or Lewis Wolpert and Bill Craig, etc. then it's pretty clear that these "intellectuals" have not rejected God for intellectual reasons. On the contrary, they rejected God based on the reasoning of a 12 year old and never bothered to look for answers since they were 12.

The real reason that more educated people reject God is due to pride. Specifically, they do not want to be identified as believing the same spiritual things as the masses. Their great education makes them feel pressure to please their colleagues by embracing views

that are different from the benighted masses.

So, it comes down to peer-pressure. They simply don’t want to be different from their colleagues. They want to be able to look down at the benighted masses.

What makes researchers support socialist dogma and pseudoscience?

Researchers are funded by government grants. Grants proposals have to get the attention of government bureaucrats. Bureaucrats are always looking for a crisis that they can sell to the public in order to increase the size of government and regulate the free market.

Therefore, researchers tend to embrace whatever the latest Chicken Little crisis is, be it global cooling, global warming, or unsafe consumer products, etc. Grant proposals that open up opportunities for government to control the free market will get the most funding.

What makes government-run schools and media support socialism?

Again, government-run schools and media receive funds based on the size of government. NPR, PBS and the whole public school system can never be objective about anything. They must always side with government and against individual liberty. They also oppose competition from private alternatives like Fox News and vouchers.

How the left abandoned argument for coercion and intimidation

April 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Steven Crowder is funny and I hope that his video about bullying from the left this will encourage everyone who disagrees about these issues to be more civil about it instead of calling people names and intimidating one another.

I think it's wrong to intimidate people who disagree with you, e.g. – by making them lose a beauty contest. Dragging people into court and making them lose their jobs, pay fines or publicly apologize, etc., just because they don't agree with your view, is WRONG.

Let's have everybody concentrate on winning arguments about issues, not on coercion, insults and intimidation.

UPDATE: I posted a while back on whether it should be illegal to publicly defend traditional marriage.

Friday night funny: Obama's plan to undo waterboarding damage

April 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a double feature for this week's Friday Night Funny.

First, Scott Ott writes about Obama's new interrogation policy for terrorists. (H/T Scrappleface)

Excerpt:

> Although aggressive interrogation techniques on three terrorists produced intel that likely prevented major attacks on American cities, most experts agree that there's no way to know whether less vigorous methods might have produced the same results.
>
> "In hindsight," the president said, "it might have been better to gain the trust of men like Khalid Sheik Mohammed by speaking gently with them, and offering small gifts like Pop-Tarts, or Nair."

Next, Frank J. Fleming writes about Obama's plan to fix the national security mess, (7 years free of terrorist attacks), of the Bush administration.

Excerpt:

> "We were shocked when we learned the full extent of the inappropriate techniques approved by the CIA under the previous administration," White House press secretary Robert L. Gibbs told reporters. "That's one of the reasons we made the memos public. We want everyone to know what was done, supposedly in our name, and that this administration does not condone such actions."
>
> The president plans to go even further, Gibbs said.
>
> "It would be unconscionable for this administration to look the other way, just because those tactics achieved results. It was wrong to use them, and we should not benefit from their use," Gibbs stated. "The president had directed that, since those tactics obtained information that prevented a major attack on Los Angeles, it is only right that we carry out the attack on ourselves."

Did you miss last week's Friday Night Funny: Media not sure how to cover Obama's crime spree.

Happy Friday!

Guest post: Some thoughts on marriage, part 1

April 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The following post is a guest post from my friend Andrew, who has the best marriage of anyone I know. The post below is pat one of a two part series. Part two will be out later today.

Some Thoughts on Marriage (Part 1 of 2)

I (Andrew) have been married for 7 years now and thought I would share a couple of things that I've learned over this time that I really hadn't given much thought about before.

Real commitment means no back door!

No one walks down the aisle thinking maybe this marriage will work out okay. Everyone thinks that their marriage will last forever. But with about one third of married couples getting divorced, you need real commitment and a 'no back door' policy to make your marriage go the distance.

My wife and I took premarital counseling before we were married. This is something I would highly recommend as it helped us to identify potential stumbling blocks before we actually ran into them. Pre-marital counseling is not about someone telling you what you should do. Rather, it helps you identify and work through things that commonly come between couples and things that might be areas of conflict specifically for you – e.g., finances, expectations, roles, in-laws, etc.

One of the things that my Christian pastor made very sure that my wife and I understood before he would marry us is that marriage is meant to be for life, and if you want it to be for life you have to make sure there is no 'back door'. You need to both go into marriage with the understanding that this is a permanent arrangement and that there is no way out, no back door.

In my vow I made it clear to my wife that I was 'in' for better or for worse. It's the 'for worse' part that you really need to be committed for. Every marriage will eventually experience some difficult times, and it's during those really challenging times that your marriage will be put to the test, not during the easy times.

Marriage is not about you! But it can help you grow!

Most of us automatically take care of ourselves first, me included. However, I soon came to realize that marriage is in fact about elevating your spouse and putting them first. It's not giving 50% and getting 50%. It's about giving 100% and expecting nothing in return. It's about building your spouse up to be all they can be.

One of the painful benefits of marriage is that it will make you a better person. I say 'painful' because in marriage everything is magnified. If you have a disagreement with a friend you can just put some distance between each other and things will probably work

themselves out. In marriage you can't put distance between you and your spouse because they are always there. You have to deal with things. This is what makes you a better person, because you find out things about yourself that you didn't realize before and you have an opportunity either to work on these things or to harden your heart.

For example, I always thought of myself as an incredibly patient person, but over time I have found that this is in fact something that I need to work on. In his book "Sacred Marriage", author Gary Thomas suggests that the purpose of marriage is to make us holy, not (only) happy.

UPDATE: I spotted this related post on the importance of marriage on Hot Air.

Guest post: Some thoughts on marriage, part 2

April 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is part two of a two-part series of guest posts written by my friend Andrew. My friend Andrew has thought a lot of the issue of marriage and he and his wife have really done an amazing job. I thought we could all benefit by absorbing his tips and experiences.

Some Thoughts on Marriage (Part 2 of 2)

Continuing on from my Part 1 post, here are a couple more things that I have learned about marriage that I don't think I really understood before (at least not to the same extent) I was married:

Men and women are different…and that's okay!

In general, men are logical and physical, and women are emotional and relational. Taken to the extreme, men can be cold and uncaring, and women can be led purely by their emotions and inappropriately compromising. By coming together in marriage men and women can really work together and learn from each other. In marriage, expect each other to be different, and expect to learn a lot from your spouse.

If I'm very frustrated, my normal reaction as a male is to kick something. Something like a steel door or a brick wall. If my wife is frustrated or overwhelmed, her normal reaction as a female is to cry. As a man, I only cry when something is really wrong…like my both my arms and legs were accidentally amputated. As a woman, my wife would only consider hitting something if the situation was really desperate. God made men and women special, equal, complementary…and very different.

Now that my wife and I have children, I have discovered just how much the difference between the sexes is innate, and not learned. Last week my wife took some food over to a friend of hers who had undergone an operation and was out of commission. She brought our two young sons with her, who played with her friend's three young daughters. My wife later told me what she had overheard: Girl to her sisters and to my son: "Let's play princesses. We can dress up in our princess dresses. You [to my son] can pretend to be a prince!". My son's reply: "I don't want to be a prince, I want to be a tiger-shark!"

Two different people = different expectations.

Though it is obvious enough, it helps to realize and acknowledge that in marriage the husband and wife are two different people. Two different sexes. Two different backgrounds and upbringings. Therefore you should expect to have different ideas of what the different aspects of your marriage will be like. One spouse might expect to have three children because they came from a three child family, the other doesn't want children. One spouse expects to celebrate Christmas Day with their family, the other expects to alternate. And so on.

This brings us back to two things that I have come to realize: One should enter into

marriage with an open mind and realize that there are many ways to do things, and often it doesn't really matter as long as husband and wife can agree on which way works for them. The other thing is premarital counseling – it will help you both to identify your expectations as well as areas that might lead to conflict in your marriage. By the way, it's never too late to go for premarital counseling, even if you've been married for several years. And on that note, a word of caution: if you are having difficulties in your marriage please don't harden your heart – seek help before it's too late. Contrary to popular understanding, divorce makes things more difficult, not easier. Many church pastors are professionally trained to provide marriage counseling.

UPDATE: I spotted this related post on the importance of marriage on Hot Air.

An experimental particle physicist answers speculations about creation and fine-tuning

April 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was corresponding with Dr. Michael G. Strauss recently regarding some comments that my previous articles on the kalam, fine-tuning and habitability arguments had drawn. Dr. Strauss is a tenured professor but he also does research on particle physics.

I wanted to draw your attention to a lecture given by Dr. Strauss to the students at Stanford University. In the lecture, he gives 3 arguments from the progress of science that support the conclusion that the universe was created and designed by an intelligent agent of immense power.

I highly recommend this lecture, entitled "Scientific Evidence for the Existence of God".

Dr. Strauss is not a Christian philosopher or debater – he is a practicing physicist with a stack of publications, who is excited by scientific discoveries that confirm the existence of God.

Here is an outline of the lecture:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

What Dr. Strauss thinks about science

As you listen to the lecture, pay close attention to the fact that it is the progress of science that has disproved atheism and given support to theism. Atheism is based on *old science*. And people who continue to cling to atheism against the new evidence must resort to speculations that are either not testable at all, or not confirmed by experimental testing.

Let's take a look at two of the speculations that sound scientific, but aren't confirmed by any research. The first is quantum mechanics (i.e. – vacuum fluctuation model). It argues that the universe is an event without a cause, because there is an unobservable hyper-universe that spawned our universe. The second is a response to the fine-tuning. It argues that there are an infinite number of unobservable universes that are not fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the fine-tuned one.

Notice that both responses are theoretical speculations that take refuge in unobservable entities in order to escape the good experimental science that proves that there is a Creator and Designer. It's atheism-of-the-gaps!

Vacuum fluctuation:
– offered as a response to the big bang
– what can QM do: explain how particles appear in a vacuum when the vacuum is sparked
– speculation is that this same process may explain the origin of the universe
– in order to test it, our universe would have to be contained within a larger universe, with similar laws of physics
– but there is *no evidence that this unobservable hyper-universe exists*

Chaotic inflationary model:
– offered as a response to the fine-tuning
– speculates that inflation may cause other universes to come into being, with different constants
– no experimental verification has been offered
– no evidence of any of these other universes

So, what we have here is a clear cut case of logical arguments and evidence for theism, vs atheist faith and wish-fulfillment. All the data we have today is for theism, but all the untestable speculating is on the part of the atheists, who have faith and hope that the progress of science will overturn what we know and replace it with the what atheists hope for. (And I haven't even talked about the origin of life and molecular machines, etc.!)

In fact I e-mailed Dr. Strauss about these two speculations, and this was his response:

> Wintery Knight,
>
> Quantum mechanics works within the laws of physics. So if you postulate that this universe was created from QM then you must also postulate that a previous universe with similar laws existed previously.
>
> There are a number of theories that would allow multiple universes, though none have any experimental verification. Have you read Jeff's "Who's Afraid of a Multiverse?" It is very good.

> -Mike

I think that we need to be careful when we explore these issues of faith and science. This is not a game. We need make decisions about what is true today, not hold out hope that some discovery will be made later that validates what we want to believe.

Further study

Dr. Strauss gave a similar lecture more recently at the University of California (Santa Cruz) and in the Q&A, he actually faced questions regarding quantum mechanics and the chaotic inflationary model. You can hear him express his mistrust of theories that haven't been proven as he urges the audience to go with the evidence, not with the self-serving speculations. Dr. Strauss takes part in a panel discussion on science and religion here.

Also on this topic is the debate between William Lane Craig and atheist physicist Victor Stenger, (audio here). Also, a lecture titled "Beyond the Big Bang", was delivered at the University of Colorado at Boulder, in front of Victor Stenger and other physicists (audio here). There is a period of Q&A in which Bill must face challengers. These are both available on DVD. More Bill Craig debates are here.

In this published research paper from the journal *Astrophysics and Space Science*, William Lane Craig responds to the several naturalistic attempts to evade the implications of the *kalam* argument. Vacuum fluctuation, chatoric inflationary, steady state and quantum gravity models are all addressed.

Why does President Pantywaist hate America so badly?

April 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

That is the actual title of an article by Gerald Warner of the UK Telegraph. (H/T Stop the ACLU)

We are the laughingstock of the entire world now.

This entire passage from the Telegraph piece needs to be excerpted, so that people understand that the United States has elected a President who is far less competent than Jimmy Carter. The Worst President Ever.

> If al-Qaeda, the Taliban and the rest of the Looney Tunes brigade want to kick America to death, they had better move in quickly and grab a piece of the action before Barack Obama finishes the job himself. Never in the history of the United States has a president worked so actively against the interests of his own people – not even Jimmy Carter.
>
> Obama's problem is that he does not know who the enemy is. To him, the enemy does not squat in caves in Waziristan, clutching automatic weapons and reciting the more militant verses from the Koran: instead, it sits around at tea parties in Kentucky quoting from the US Constitution. Obama is not at war with terrorists, but with his Republican fellow citizens. He has never abandoned the campaign trail.
>
> That is why he opened Pandora's Box by publishing the Justice Department's legal opinions on waterboarding and other hardline interrogation techniques. He cynically subordinated the national interest to his partisan desire to embarrass the Republicans. Then he had to rush to Langley, Virginia to try to reassure a demoralised CIA that had just discovered the President of the United States was an even more formidable foe than al-Qaeda.
>
> "Don't be discouraged by what's happened the last few weeks," he told intelligence officers. Is he kidding? Thanks to him, al-Qaeda knows the private interrogation techniques available to the US intelligence agencies and can train its operatives to withstand them – or would do so, if they had not already been outlawed.
>
> So, next time a senior al-Qaeda hood is captured, all the CIA can do is ask him nicely if he would care to reveal when a major population centre is due to be hit by a terror spectacular, or which American city is about to be irradiated by a dirty bomb. Your view of this situation will be dictated by one simple criterion: whether or not you watched the people jumping from the twin towers…
>
> President Pantywaist's recent world tour, cosying up to all the bad guys, excited the ambitions of America's enemies. Here, they realised, is a sucker they can

> really take to the cleaners. **His only enemies are fellow Americans. Which prompts the question: why does President Pantywaist hate America so badly?**

Michelle Malkin has more on the Democrats national security and foreign policy blunders:

> Data point – Hillary cackles at serious questions about the effectiveness of enhanced interrogation.
>
> Data point – House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ups pressure for 'truth' panel on torture
>
> Data point – Soros acolyte Rosa Brooks, al Qaeda apologist and military-basher, now ensconced at the Pentagon.
>
> Data point – Radical Yale Law School Dean Harold Koh's Senate confirmation hearing for a key State Department legal adviser slot set for next Tuesday.
>
> Data point – Department of Haplessness and Stupidity Secretary Janet Napolitano — fresh from pooh-poohing terrorism and illegal border-crossings, botching 9/11 history and issuing hit jobs on limited government conservatives and veterans — is now pushing for repeal of Real ID Act

And she ends with this:

> We have lost our war footing. Welcome back to the Sesame Street school of national security. Feel safer? Me neither.

You Democrats who voted for Obama didn't want to know anything about this man during the election campaign. You trust the left-wing media to tell you everything you needed to know. Well, now you know what we, the people who *can* read, were trying to tell you.

UPDATE: Stop the ACLU linked to another post by Gerald Warner entitled Barack Obama: President Pantywaist – new surrender monkey on the block. Why is it that the entire world can see this guy is an unqualified joke, except us?

Michele Bachmann calls for Napolitano to resign

April 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

This video is awesome. (H/T The Maritime Sentry)

But the leaked DHS report is not the only problem that conservatives are facing from the fascist left. The tolerant left, champions of diversity and tolerance, doesn't like the idea of hearing things that might hurt their feelings. Every word you say has the potential to incite violence against them!

So, they've proposed this new Hate Crimes bill so that they don't have to listen to people they disagree with anymore.

Excerpt from a post on Atheism Analyzed: (H/T Apologetics 315)

> Committee members allowed that, yes, the law could result in the imprisonment of religious leaders. Conceivably then, a threat might be perceived in the preaching from a Bible (the weapon), perceived as inciting "radicals" to do bodily harm to non-believers or gays or whoever. Thus the ***perception allegedly received*** by the alleged victim holds total sway over the actual occurrence, which in actuality might have been completely benign.
>
> If the validity of the actual occurrence is not the basis for justice, then there is no justice under this proposed law; it is an invitation for persecution by allegation of personal offendedness, a legalization of internal outrage as the definition of a crime regardless of whether the outrage is legitimate.
>
> Protection from outrage is not possible; so persecution of the hated must substitute. Justice misapplied can become persecution, and it undoubtedly will if H.R. 1913 becomes law.

We elected Obama, and now the whole country will look like the university campuses, where leftist fascism is the rule, and conservatives need bodyguards and police escorts in

order to be able to speak.

BONUS:

Michele Bachmann talks with Neil Cavuto about cap and trade, and the recession: (H/T The Maritime Sentry)

Sensible science, sensible energy policy and sensible pollution reduction. Why won't the socialists just listen to her? Just do whatever she says to do and we'll get out of this mess that the Democrats put us into.

Marsha Blackburn busts Al Gore on cap and trade corruption

April 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Marsha Blackburn

Surprise! Al Gore stands to gain from the cap and trade legislation that he's backing! No wonder Democrats oppose domestic oil production.

Gateway Pundit has the story:

> Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) challenged Al Gore's motives for supporting climate change legislation including his links to a firm that will make millions from cap and trade:
>
> ***Funny…*** During that same hearing Gore compared global warming skeptics to fraudster Bernie Madoff.

Video clip:

More from The Hill:

> Blackburn noted Gore's role as partner in Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers, a venture capital firm that invests in technology to address global warming.
>
> Blackburn asked Gore if he stood to benefit financially from cap-and-trade legislation, which would force companies to reduce carbon emissions. Companies would likely turn to the kinds of technologies Kleiner Perkins helps develop.
>
> "This bill is going to fundamentally change the way America works." Given the magnitude of those changes, I think it's really important that no suspicion or shadow fall on the foremost advocates of climate change legislation. So I wanted to give you the opportunity to kind of clear the air about your motives and maybe set the record straight."

Transcript:

> BLACKBURN: I've got an article from October 8th, the New York Times Magazine about a firm called Kleiner Perkins. A capital firm called Kleiner Perkins. Are you aware of that company?
>
> GORE: (LAUGHS) Well yes, I'm a partner at Kleiner Perkins.
>
> BLACKBURN: So you're a partner at Kleiner Perkins. OK. Now they have invested about a billion dollars in 40 companies that are going to benefit from cap and trade legislation. So is the legislation that we're discussing here today, is that something you are going to personally benefit from?
>
> GORE: I believe that the transition to a green economy is good for our economy and good for all of us. And I have invested in it. But every penny that I have made, I have put right into a non-profit, the Alliance for Climate Protection, to spread awareness about why we have to take on this challenge. And Congresswoman, if you're, if you believe the reason I have been working on this issue for 30 years is because of greed, you don't know me.
>
> BLACKBURN: I'm not making accusations. I'm asking questions that have been asked of me. And individuals, constituents that were seeking a point of clarity–
>
> GORE: I understand exactly what you're doing, Congresswoman. Everybody here does.
>
> BLACKBURN: Well, are, you know, are you willing to divest yourself of any profit? Does all of it go to a not-for-profit that is an educational not-for-profit.
>
> GORE: Every penny that I have made has gone to it. Every penny from the movie, from the book, from any investments in renewable energy. I've been willing to put my money where my mouth is. Do you think there's something wrong with being active in business in this country?

The Heritage Foundation has more on Al Gore's testimony here.

I blogged about the increases we can expect in energy prices here.

Read my lips. Cap and trade is a tax on energy consumption: (H/T Gateway Pundit, The Heritage Foundation)

Remember Al Gore's house?

> So much that last August Tipper and **Al Gore** used twice as much electricity in their two-building property as an average U.S. household uses in an entire year, the Tennessee Center for Policy Research, a think tank, reported Tuesday.
>
> Public power and gas bills turned up by the group show that the man behind the Oscar-winning global warming wakeup documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth," uses much more overall carbon-based fuel than the average American, spending thousands of dollars a month on electricity and gas.

An inconvenient truth.

Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming

April 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from two or three . net!

This transcript was sent to me by my friend Richard. It is an 11 page PDF containing the full testimony of William Happer, the Cyrus Fogg Bracket Professor of Physics at Princeton University. This testimony was given on February 25, 2009 to the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, chaired by Democrat Barbara Boxer.

> I do work in the related field of atomic, molecular and optical physics. I have spent my professional life studying the interactions of visible and infrared radiation with gases – one of the main physical phenomena behind the greenhouse effect. I have published over 200 papers in peer reviewed scientific journals. I am a member of a number of professional organizations, including the American Physical Society and the National Academy of Sciences. I have done extensive consulting work for the US Government and Industry. I also served as the Director of Energy Research at the Department of Energy (DOE) from 1990 to 1993, where I supervised all of DOE's work on climate change.

Here, he explains the limited role that CO2 plays in global warming, and also why an increase in CO2 will not have a continued effect on the warming, because the limit of what CO2 can do has already been reached.

> Without greenhouse warming, the earth would be much too cold to sustain its current abundance of life. However, at least 90% of greenhouse warming is due to water vapor and clouds. Carbon dioxide is a bit player. There is little argument in the scientific community that a direct effect of doubling the CO2 concentration will be a small increase of the earth's temperature — on the order of one degree. Additional increments of CO2 will cause relatively less direct warming because we already have so much CO2 in the atmosphere that it has blocked most of the infrared radiation that it can.

So CO2 really won't lead to increased warming directly, unless it somehow causes the warming from water vapor and clouds to increase. But, the evidence clearly shows that this is not the case. In fact, increasing the CO2 level decreases the warming effects of water vapor and clouds.

> Since most of the greenhouse effect for the earth is due to water vapor and clouds, added CO2 must substantially increase water's contribution to lead to the frightening scenarios that are bandied about. The buzz word here is that there is "positive feedback." With each passing year, experimental observations further undermine the claim of a large positive feedback from water. In fact,

> observations suggest that the feedback is close to zero and may even be negative. That is, water vapor and clouds may actually diminish the already small global warming expected from CO2, not amplify it.

But doesn't the corelation between rising CO2 levels and increased warming imply causation?

> No, the current warming period began about 1800 at the end of the little ice age, long before there was an appreciable increase of CO2. There have been similar and even larger warmings several times in the 10,000 years since the end of the last ice age. These earlier warmings clearly had nothing to do with the combustion of fossil fuels. The current warming also seems to be due mostly to natural causes, not to increasing levels of carbon dioxide. Over the past ten years there has been no global warming, and in fact a slight cooling. This is not at all what was predicted by the IPCC models.

But what about the hockey stick graph, that, like the images of Haeckel's embryos, has been used to terrify a generation of children taught in the government-run schools about the dangers of capitalism and economic growth? Surely scientists wouldn't lie to manufacture a crisis that would lead to bigger government, bigger tax revenues, and more research grants?

> When I was a schoolboy, my textbooks on earth science showed a prominent "medieval warm period" at the time the Vikings settled Greenland, followed by a vicious "little ice age" that drove them out. So I was very surprised when I first saw the celebrated "hockey stick curve," in the Third Assessment Report of the IPCC. I could hardly believe my eyes. Both the little ice age and the Medieval Warm Period were gone, and the newly revised temperature of the world since the year 1000 had suddenly become absolutely flat until the last hundred years when it shot up like the blade on a hockey stick. This was far from an obscure detail, and the hockey stick was trumpeted around the world as evidence that the end was near. We now know that the hockey stick has nothing to do with reality but was the result of incorrect handling of proxy temperature records and incorrect statistical analysis. There really was a little ice age and there really was a medieval warm period that was as warm or warmer than today…. The IPCC has made no serious attempt to model the natural variations of the earth's temperature in the past. Whatever caused these large past variations, it was not due to people burning coal and oil.

But what about Al Gore, a brilliant 2-time university drop-out with a C average and an unparalleled talent for smoking pot? Surely he understands atmospheric science better than lousy professors of physics from Princeton?

> By looking at ice cores from the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets, one can estimate past temperatures and atmospheric concentrations of CO2. Al Gore

> likes to display graphs of temperature and CO2 concentrations over the past million years or so, showing that when CO2 rises, the temperature also rises. Doesn't this prove that the temperature is driven by CO2? Absolutely not! If you look carefully at these records, you find that first the temperature goes up, and then the CO2 concentration of the atmosphere goes up. There is a delay between a temperature increase and a CO2 increase of about 800 years. This casts serious doubt on CO2 as a climate driver because of the fundamental concept of causality. A cause must precede its effect….In the case of the ice cores, the cause of increased CO2 is almost certainly the warming of the oceans. The oceans release dissolved CO2 when they warm up, just like a glass of beer rapidly goes flat in a warm room.

But my teacher says that CO2 is a poison that will destroy us all! We need big government (and increased teacher pay) to save us all from fiery doom!

> We are all aware that "the green revolution" has increased crop yields around the world…. no small part of the yield improvement has come from increased atmospheric levels of CO2…. If we really were to decrease our current level of CO2 of around 400 ppm to the 270 ppm that prevailed a few hundred years ago, we would lose some of the benefits of the green revolution. Crop yields will continue to increase as CO2 levels go up, since we are far from the optimum levels for plant growth. Commercial greenhouse operators are advised to add enough CO2 to maintain about 1000 ppm around their plants. Indeed, economic studies like those of Dr. Robert Mendelsohn at Yale University project that moderate warming is an overall benefit to mankind because of higher agricultural yields and many other reasons.

But doesn't consensus determine truth?

> We are told that only a few flat-earthers still have any doubt about the calamitous effects of continued CO2 emissions…. First, what is correct in science is not determined by consensus but by experiment and observations…. Secondly, I do not think there is a consensus about an impending climate crisis.

But if that is true, then why is no one speaking out against this politicized science?

> Many distinguished scientific journals now have editors who further the agenda of climate-change alarmism. Research papers with scientific findings contrary to the dogma of climate calamity are rejected by reviewers, many of whom fear that their research funding will be cut if any doubt is cast on the coming climate catastrophe…. Certainly, it is a bit unnerving to read statements of Dr. James Hansen in the Congressional Record that climate skeptics are guilty of "high crimes against humanity and nature."
>
> Even elementary school teachers and writers of children's books are enlisted to terrify our children and to promote the idea of impending climate doom….

> children should not be force-fed propaganda, masquerading as science. Many of you may know that in 2007 a British Court ruled that if Al Gore's book, "An Inconvenient Truth," was used in public schools, the children had to be told of eleven particularly troubling inaccuracies.

Read the whole thing! And don't forget to read more about dissent from global warming, melting polar ice caps, Obama's planned tax hikes on oil and gas, deceptive alarmism to procure research funding, the cost of green jobs programs and the use of made-up crises in order to impose socialism.

Hate crimes bill H.R. 1913 destroys civil liberties and Constitutional protections

April 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from Free Canuckistan! Thanks for the linky Mr. WebElf!

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from 4Simpsons!!! Thanks for the link, Neil. 4Simpsons is a daily read for me, and it should be for you, too!

Hans Bader of the Open Market blog of the Competitive Enterprise Institute has done a massive analysis of the Democrat's hate crimes bill.

First, the news:

> On April 23, the House Judiciary Committee voted 15-to-12 to approve a dramatic expansion of the federal hate-crimes law. The bill, H.R. 1913, would add gender, sexual orientation, and transgender characteristics to a law originally designed to protect racial minorities. It also greatly expands the law's reach over local offenses typically handled by state prosecutors, by eliminating many jurisdictional limits.

The hate crimes bill violates federalism:

> The bill would allow people who have been found innocent of a hate crime in state court to be reprosecuted in federal court.... Supporters of the hate crimes bill also see it as a way to prosecute people even in cases where the evidence is so weak that state prosecutors have decided not to prosecute. Attorney General Eric Holder has pushed for the hate crimes bill as a way to prosecute people whom state prosecutors refuse to prosecute because of a lack of evidence. To justify broadening federal hate-crimes law, he cited three examples where state prosecutors refused to prosecute, citing a lack of evidence. In each, a federal jury acquitted the accused, finding them not guilty.

But that's not all, it also violates the principle of *double jeopardy*:

> Civil libertarians like Wendy Kaminer have criticized the federal hate-crimes bill for taking advantage of a loophole in constitutional double-jeopardy protections. Law professor Gail Heriot, a member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, has also criticized the bill for circumventing protections against double-jeopardy.
>
> I wrote earlier about how the federal hate-crimes bill backed by Obama and Congressional leaders would violate constitutional federalism safeguards, such as the Supreme Court's decision in United States v. Morrison (2000), and how it would allow people found innocent in state court to be retried in federal court.

One more point that caught my attention:

> The ACLU long opposed the loophole in Constitutional double-jeopardy

> protections that the bill is designed to exploit. But it switched its longstanding position in order to back the federal hate crimes bill, apparently believing that civil-liberties must be sacrificed in order to fight hate.

Yes, when push comes to shove, leftists oppose all liberties, and end up supporting fascism.

UPDATE: Ed Morrissey has more on the hate crimes bill here.

UPDATE: Don't forget about the bill that criminalizes blogging here.

I highly recommend this article!

Carbon caps already killing California jobs

April 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome, visitors from Pursuing Holiness! Thanks for linking to me, Laura!

The Foundry, the blog of the Heritage Foundation, has an amazing story on the cost of regulations against energy producers. This is a preview of what we can expect from Obama's crazy cap and trade plan!

Here's the first story about a cement manufacturer in California:

And a second video, featuring a debate about this:

And here's the bottom line:

> Heritage's research on U.S. manufacturing vulnerability shows roughly 4 million jobs nationwide will disappear or relocate to other countries. This massive climate bill is a minefield for American families, who will pay extremely higher prices for energy and goods, and for American businesses who will suffer under the heavy hand of government.

If you haven't already bookmarked The Foundry, I would highly recommend it.

Barack Obama after 100 days: Worst President Ever!

April 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hans Bader has the details at the Open Market blog, the blog of the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

What about Obama's campaign promise for a net spending cut?

> The Congressional Budget Office says that Obama's proposed budgets will explode the national debt through massive spending increases, increasing the already large deficits left behind by the Bush Administration from $4.4 trillion to $9.3 trillion. His record-setting budgets flagrantly violate his promise to propose a "net spending cut."

His promise not to raise taxes on those making less than 250K?

> Obama broke his campaign promise not to raise taxes on anyone making less than $250,000 a year by signing a regressive SCHIP excise tax increase, and by proposing a cap-and-trade energy tax that could charge up to $2 trillion, a massive cost that Obama himself has said will be passed "on to consumers," as well as homeowners and motorists.

His promise to improve transparency?

> Over and over again, Obama has broken his campaign promise to give the public five days of notice before signing bills into law, including his very first law, the trial-lawyer backed Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.
>
> …Obama broke seven campaign promises dealing with transparency and clean government in signing the $800 billion stimulus package, much of whose contents were secret until shortly before Congress voted on it, and whose 1400 pages went unread by most Congressmen who voted on it.

And there's more in the post! He doesn't even mention the federal cigarette tax hike!

I posted some nice charts showing the messes we are in as far as spending, debt and jobs.

RELATED: The Heritage Foundation has more details on the spending catastrophes of the first 100 days. And he hasn't even gotten started on card check, health care and cap and trade, yet!

UPDATE: A friend e-mails me regarding this essay by John Hawkins, (of Right Wing News), documenting the 20 most notable features of Obama's first 100 days.

My favorite:

> 7) In the best example yet of Obama's over-reliance on a teleprompter and the mainstream media's fervent devotion to him, during an appearance with the Irish prime minister, there was a mix-up — and "**President Obama thanked**

> **President Obama for inviting everyone over**." The same mainstream media which relentlessly mocked George Bush for his slip-ups wouldn't even release the footage.

Read the whole thing! Early humor before this week's Friday funny.

Worst. President. Ever.

Jim Demint scores against Democrats on health care

April 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

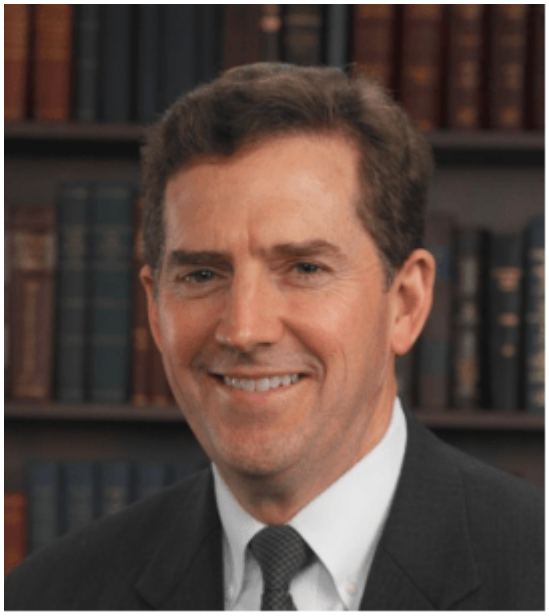

Senator Jim Demint

Great news! Senator Jim Demint tried to pass a bill guaranteeing more liberty in health care, and he succeeded. The Heritage Foundation's blog The Foundry has the story.

His bill read, in part:

> The Senator from South Carolina, Mr. DeMint, moves that the managers on the part of the Senate … be instructed to insist that the conference report on the concurrent resolution … **shall not decrease the number of Americans enrolled in private health insurance, while increasing the number of Americans enrolled in government-managed, rationed health care.**

Remember, Obama's goal is to control our lives, by controlling the free market:

> This language is important because many aspects of Obama's health care budget seek to expand the numbers of Americans enrolled in government-managed health care, which necessarily then "crowds out" private health care forcing more Americans into government managed care.
>
> Those voting against DeMint's motion (and therefore for the unlimited expansion of government rationed care) include:
>
> Bingaman (D-NM)
> Brown (D-OH)
> Burris (D-IL)
> Cardin (D-MD)
> Durbin (D-IL)
> Harkin (D-IA)
> Kerry (D-MA)

> Levin (D-MI)
> Merkley (D-OR)
> Mikulski (D-MD)
> Sanders (I-VT)
> Stabenow (D-MI)
> Udall (D-NM)
> Warner (D-VA)

I also spotted this story over at the Pacific Research Institute. This should be a wake up call to all those who believe that nationalizing health care would give them more freedom.

Excerpt:

> In 2005, the Supreme Court of Canada found that elements of the province of Quebec's monopoly over health care violated citizens' human rights, because of the government's failure to deliver care. Since then, other Canadians have launched similar lawsuits in other provinces.
>
> **In British Columbia, the monopolistic provincial health plan is suing Dr. Brian Day, an orthopedic surgeon, for allegedly receiving direct payment from patients for performing surgeries in his clinic. Mindful of the 2005 Supreme Court decision, the province has adopted a novel legal tactic: claiming that health care is *not* a right! If that is the case, then the government's monopoly obviously cannot violate citizens' rights!**

We need to learn from countries like Canada, who have already tried socialized medicine. Or we could look at Sweden. Either way, we shouldn't be adopting failed health delivery systems.

Missouri legislators consider Fair Tax policy

April 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from The Maritime Sentry!

I discovered this story at the Tax Foundation blog.

Excerpt:

> Missouri lawmakers are considering a drastic change to their tax system. A bill recently passed by the state's House of Representatives would allow residents to vote on a Constitutional amendment that would eliminate corporate and individual income taxes in the state and replace them with a broad based sales tax. The plan is essentially a state version of the national FairTax proposal popular with some grassroots groups that would replace the federal income tax with a national sales tax. If the Senate passes the bill Missouri residents would be voting on the amendment in November of 2010.
>
> Missouri currently has a sales tax, a corporate income tax, and a personal income tax. The sales tax rate is 4.225%, and the top corporate and personal tax rates are 6.25% and 6%, respectively. The plan put forth would replace all those taxes with a single sales tax levied at a rate of 5.11%. Accompanying the sales tax rate hike would be a substantially broadened sales tax base that would include all purchases. Currently most services are tax exempt and certain goods, most notably groceries, are taxed at a reduced rate of 1.225%. These exemptions would not exist under the new tax structure.
>
> The overhaul of the tax system is meant to be revenue neutral. In other words, the revenue from the sales tax increase and broadening of the tax base is meant to exactly offset the elimination of income taxes. In 2008 Missouri's sales tax brought in $3.2 billion while the state's corporate and individual income taxes brought in $5.5 billion. In order to achieve revenue neutrality, at a rate of 5.11% the base would have to increase by 124%, or a little more than double. This may sound like a huge increase, but it is very possible.

This would be a useful test case to see if a national fair tax is feasible. I am all for consumption taxes. Leave a comment if you prefer the fair tax to the flat tax. I'm leaning towards the flat tax, and I love the way that it's been implemented in those Baltic states, like Estonia. Estonia is such a courageous country!

Obama’s spending spree in one simple chart

April 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This one graphic tells the whole story. (H/T RedState and Ace of Spades)

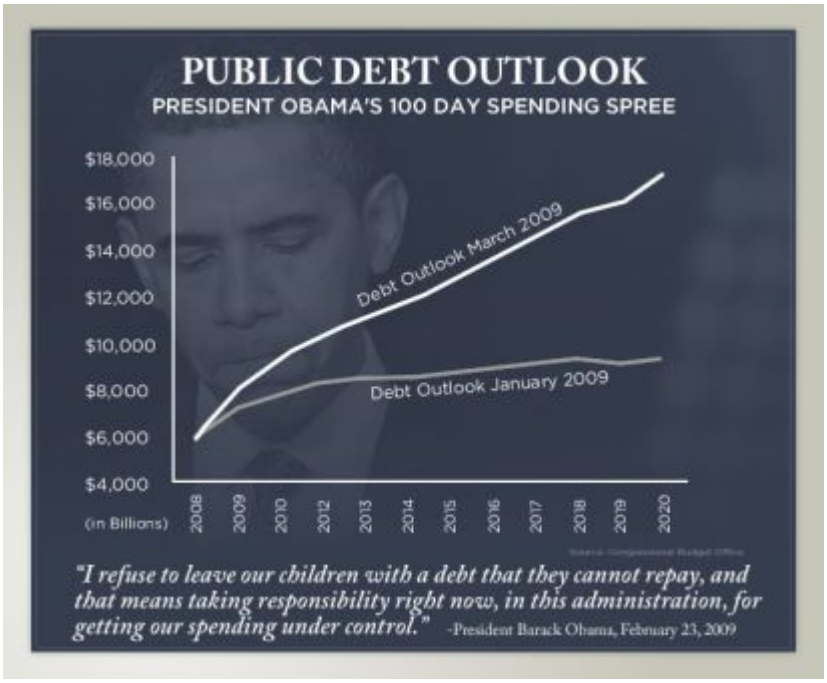

Public Debt Outlook

Click the images to enlarge them.

More charts:

Jobs Lost

National Debt

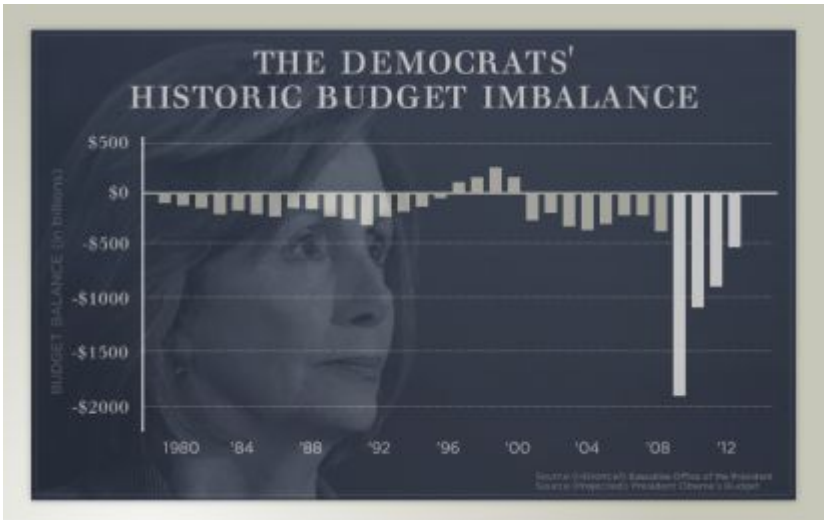

Budget Deficit

More here.

RELATED: The Heritage Foundation has more details on the spending catastrophes of the first 100 days. And he hasn't even gotten started on card check, health care and cap and trade, yet!

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My favorite:

> 7) In the best example yet of Obama's over-reliance on a teleprompter and the mainstream media's fervent devotion to him, during an appearance with the Irish prime minister, there was a mix-up — and "**President Obama thanked President Obama for inviting everyone over**." The same mainstream media which relentlessly mocked George Bush for his slip-ups wouldn't even release the footage.

Read the whole thing! Early humor before this week's Friday funny.

Is waterboarding really torture? Does it enhance our national security?

April 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal has an editorial by Representative Pete Hoekstra, regarding Barack Obama's decision to inform our enemies about the details of the interrogation techniques we would be using against them to protect America:

> Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair got it right last week when he noted how easy it is to condemn the enhanced interrogation program "on a bright sunny day in April 2009." Reactions to this former CIA program, which was used against senior al Qaeda suspects in 2002 and 2003, are demonstrating how little President Barack Obama and some Democratic members of Congress understand the dire threats to our nation.
>
> George Tenet, who served as CIA director under Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton, believes the enhanced interrogations program saved lives. He told CBS's "60 Minutes" in April 2007: "I know this program alone is worth more than the FBI, the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency put together have been able to tell us."
>
> Last week, Mr. Blair made a similar statement in an internal memo to his staff when he wrote that "[h]igh value information came from interrogations in which those methods were used and provided a deeper understanding of the al Qa'ida organization that was attacking this country."
>
> **Yet last week Mr. Obama overruled the advice of his CIA director, Leon Panetta, and four prior CIA directors by releasing the details of the enhanced interrogation program. Former CIA director Michael Hayden has stated clearly that declassifying the memos will make it more difficult for the CIA to defend the nation.**
>
> It was not necessary to release details of the enhanced interrogation techniques, because members of Congress from both parties have been fully aware of them since the program began in 2002. We believed it was something that had to be done in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks to keep our nation safe. **After many long and contentious debates, Congress repeatedly approved and funded this program on a bipartisan basis in both Republican and Democratic Congresses.**

I previously wrote about how Obama had opened the door to prosecutions of those who, from the bottom to the top, defended the United States from terrorist threats. Even if no one is convicted, this witch-hunt undermines our vigilance, and will create incentives that will make our counter-terrorism personnel hesitate in the performance of their duty to defend us.

But now I want to ask a different question. Is waterboarding really torture? Take a look at this MSNBC video linked at Hot Air, featuring a debate between an ignorant, unqualified, left-wing journalist and Liz Cheney.

And here is some of the transcript from Hotline:

> O'DONNELL: Well Liz, we'll get to that argument in a minute, about do the means justify the ends. Whether torture justifies…
>
> L. CHENEY: Well, it wasn't torture, Norah, so that's not the right way to lay out the argument.
>
> O'DONNELL: OK.
>
> **L. CHENEY: Everything done in this program, as has been laid out and described before, are tactics that our own people go through in SEER training and that our own people have gone through for many years. So it's really – does a fundamental disservice to those professionals who are conducting this very effective program and to those people who approved the program in order to keep this nation safe and prevent attacks through the program to call it torture.**
>
> O'DONNELL: Liz, the CIA, on its own after 2005, stopped waterboarding on its own. The U.S. prosecuted people for waterboarding after World War II.
> So to suggest there's a consensus out there that waterboarding is not torture is not in fact accurate.
>
> **L. CHENEY: No, I think it is accurate. There were three people who were waterboarded. And two of those people are people who gave us incredibly important and useful information, information that saved American lives after they were waterboarded. Both Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Abu Zubaydah.**
>
> And I would just refer your viewers to the really important op-ed piece that Mike Hayden and Attorney General Mukasey wrote laying out why this program worked, why it was effective and what damage has now been done to our national security by releasing the tactics of this program

The impression I get is that the left-wingers in the Democrat party and the mainstream media is more concerned about the rights of terrorists than protecting American lives. They have a right to hold and express those opinions – it's a free country. But should we really reward them by voting for them or watching their silly biased television broadcasts?

RELATED: Hot Air notes that a new Rasmussen poll finds that 58% think Obama endangered national security.

Is Al Gore getting rich from faith-based global warming alarmism?

April 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Marsha Blackburn

You may remember I blogged before about how Marsha Blackburn asked Al Gore about whether he was profiting from his global warming alarmism? That was a very interesting video clip. And Green Hell Blog has posted many interesting things about Gore's answer to Blackburn in that video clip.

Excerpt: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> When Tennessee Rep. Marsha Blackburn confronted Al Gore with his profiteering from global warming legislation at today's House Energy and Environment Subcommittee hearing on the Waxman-Markey climate bill, Al Gore said that every penny he ever made from his business activities went into non-profit efforts.
>
> That is a flat-out lie, according to this March 6, 2008 Bloomberg report that indicates that Al Gore invested $35 million of his own money in various for-profit endeavors.
>
> Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore left the White House seven years ago with less than $2 million in assets, including a Virginia home and the family farm in Tennessee. Now he's making enough to put $35 million in hedge funds and other private partnerships.
>
> Gore invested the money with Capricorn Investment Group LLC, a Palo Alto, California, firm that selects the private funds for clients and invests in makers of environmentally friendly products, according to a Feb. 1 securities filing. Capricorn was founded by billionaire Jeffrey Skoll, former president of EBay Inc. and an executive producer of Gore's Oscar-winning documentary film on global

> warming.Kudos to Rep. Blackburn for asking one of the "10 Questions for Al Gore" and exposing Gore as the fundamentally dishonest operator that he is.

Pro Patria analyzed of Al Gore's rising net worth here.

Excerpt: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> **So what has Al Gore gained from his Big Green escapades?**
>
> According to public disclosure information, **Gore was worth somewhere between $1 million and $2 million in 2000. Not quite eight years later, Gore is estimated to be worth somewhere in the neighborhood of $100 million.** While I ordinarily would applaud such financial gains from such a short period of time, I can't help but to question just how it happened. When you look out at what Al Gore has done, it's evident that he figured out on a way to capitalize on the creation of Big Green while becoming the official doomsday prophet that has helped to build Big Green into the monetary powerhouse that it has become.
>
> In any other industry this would be considered a severe conflict of interest. In essence, Al Gore has helped to create a fictitious catastrophe, then told everybody what the solutions have to be, and then put himself in a position to capitalize on the hype. It's not only seriously dishonest, but many people and industries are going to suffer in the wake of this hype while Gore and Big Green bring in millions (and in some cases, billions) of dollars in green money.

Follow the money! Somehow I doubt that he is giving away the vast majority of it, like Dick Cheney did.

Are same-sex marriage advocates tolerant of traditional-marriage advocates?

April 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hot Air reports that the the organizers of the recent Miss America pageant tried to get Miss California to renounce her beliefs about marriage and apologize to same-sex marriage activists like Perez Hilton. The organizers didn't want her to be herself. They wanted to change her beliefs to be like theirs. The organizers didn't want a rainbow of diverse opinions, they wanted uniform, lock-step, monochrome compliance!

The Western Experience linked to a video debate from CNN between Jewish scholar Dennis Prager and Perez Hilton.

Sometimes, same-sex activists like Perez Hilton move beyond disagreement to name-calling, and to harassment, and to threats of violence, and to vandalism, and to actual violence, as even the New York Times acknowledges. It seems to me that this *coercion* intrudes on the freedom of other people to express disagreement with same-sex marriage activists over same-sex marriage.

I wanted to draw your attention to a 10-point analysis of the whole Perez Hilton episode by Christian philosopher Douglas Geivett, so that we could really see who is being intolerant of who.

Here are my favorites:

> 3. Carrie Prejean was not "inclusive" enough in her answer, say her critics. But if she had answered that she approved of gay marriage, she would have *excluded* many Americans who also disapprove, including all those from her own state who passed Proposition 8 with their vote in November.
>
> 4. Gay rights advocates are bound to take offense even if Carrie Prejean meant no offense. Gay rights advocates are duty-bound by their cause to take offense. It is a strategic requirement in their effort to persuade others of gay rights. "Being offended" is an acquired taste. It comes natural when you've trained for it.
>
> 5. A beauty pageant is a popularity contest. Because of her answer, Carrie Prejean is unpopular with certain people. Which people? Gay rights activists. Who are gay rights activists? This is an important question. Some gays are not gay rights activists. Many gay rights activists are not gay. Gay rights activists are engaged in a strategy to marginalize anyone who believes that there is no "right" to gay marriage. You may believe that marriage is between one man and one woman. But do you have a right to believe this? Do you have a right to say so? Doesn't matter. Gay rights activists will do anything in their power to ensure that if you believe it you will be made a pariah.
>
> 7. Former Miss USA, now director of the Miss California USA pageant, Shanna Moekler has also made it publicly known that she's disappointed in Carrie

> Prejean. As state pageant director who sought sponsors for Prejean's participation in the pageant, Moekler was embarrassed and indignant, and said that Prejean had betrayed her sponsors. Apparently, Prejean should have betrayed herself and her own values, instead. This is very revealing about Moekler's own moral compass. We should like to know who the sponsors are and which ones are so offended. In view of serious economic reversals in this country, it's become imperative that Americans know more about the moral compass of corporate leaders. So tell us, Ms. Moekler, which sponsors are embittered by Prejean's integrity?

Isn't the activist left worried about inciting hatred, violence, depression and increased suicide rates against those who are different from them? Shouldn't we celebrate diversity (of opinion) and not coerce those who disagree?

I recently wrote about legal sanctions being faced by those who stand up to the agenda of same-sex marriage activists.

How educrats sacrifice academic excellence for self-esteem

April 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome Post-Darwinist readers! Thanks for the link Denyse! For more on the failures of educrats to focus on teaching young people instead of building up their self-esteem, please see Denyse's post on the subject.

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Blazing Cat Fur! One of my favorite Canadian blogs! Please take a look around, as I cover a number of issues of importance to Canadians, including health care, education, free trade, tax policy and of course FREE SPEECH! The Wintery Knight is a HUGE fan of PM Stephen Harper, MP Maurice Vellacott, MP Jason Kenney, Ezra Levant, Mark Steyn and MPP Lisa MacLeod.

My friend Richard sent me this:

Apparently, it has come to the point where students may not be given a zero grade for handing in assignments late, or a zero for not showing up the remake test/assignment. Below is a link to a petition a HS teacher in Ottawa has set up to reassess this policy. Please sign it. The last thing we need is to raise a generation of kids that have no concept of deadlines and consequences. That would be the end of our workforce.

The petition is here.

Excerpt from the petition content:

> According to the Ontario Ministry of Education policies, if a student misses a test (whether they skip class or are sick) or if they cheat then the evaluation is not valid and they must not be given a zero. The student must have an opportunity to be re-evaluated on the material. Assignments can have a due date but if the student does not hand it in on the due date a zero cannot be assigned. The student must be allowed to hand in the assignment late without being penalized.
>
> In the past teachers would go out of their way to make sure they evaluated students, but when given an opportunity to be re-evaluated, the student had to turn up. Now you can offer the student a chance to be re-evaluated, and if they don't turn up they still cannot get a zero. Assignments can be handed in at any time during the year. If the whole class is doing the same assignment, the teacher can receive the finished assignments any time between the due date and the end of the year. If the teacher marks the assignments as he/she gets them and returns them as they are marked, then anyone who has not handed in an assignment can, if they are so inclined, copy an assignment that has been marked and turn it in as their own work. The only way around this is not returning the assignments until all of the students have submitted their work, but this

> delays essential feedback to the students. Teachers have to be able to indicate to students that a zero may given on missed evaluations and give penalty marks for work not done on time.

We cannot succeed in a global economy when those in charge of educating our children fail to teach them the kinds of skills they will need to take on the demanding jobs of the future. This is just another area of life where things have gotten so politically correct that we have forgotten the purpose of school: to gain knowledge! I urge you to consider signing the petition.

UPDATE: I found this story featuring Caroline Orchard in the Ottawa Citizen. And a panel discussion transcript. MP3 audio of an interview with Caroline Orchard from 580 CFRA, the news talk radio station in Ottawa.

A brief introduction to the blind faith religion of Marxism

April 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The American Thinker has this post up explaining the blind faith of Marxism. (H/T Douglas Groothuis)

Marx thought that value was proportional to the labor spent in creating a product:

> Marx claimed that all products contain value that is directly proportional to the amount of labor embodied within them. He was wrong. All the rest of Marxism is based entirely on this mistaken and falsifiable premise.

That's clearly wrong. The price of products varies depending on supply and demand!

Marx thought that the free market would create monopolies:

> Marxists claim that the operations of markets have a natural tendency to spawn monopolies. They call this "monopoly capitalism." In reality, markets have a natural tendency to break up and undermine monopolies. Almost all monopolies under capitalism are those set up by governments stifling and interfering in the operations of markets.

That's clearly wrong. Government regulation is needed to insulate monopolies from competition. And in capitalism, capitalists agree that government should take an active role in destroying monopolies and fostering competition, in order to give consumers *choices.* When consumers can choose, producers have to add value and reduce prices. Socialism, on the other hand, allows consumers one choice: the state-run firm.

Marx had no idea what incentives and laws were needed in order to foster conditions in which entrepreneurs would want to create wealth:

> Marxists and socialists in general care a lot about the distribution of material wealth. But they have no idea how to bring about the creation of the material wealth that they wish to redistribute. They just assume it all gets produced all by itself. That is why people in communist regimes starve.

Wrong again!

Marx believed that capitalism was bad for workers.

> Marxists claim that workers are oppressed in capitalist societies. Workers in communist societies always try to sneak out into capitalist societies. No one in South Korea is trying to sneak into North Korea. The Berlin Wall was not built to keep West Germans from sneaking into East Germany's collective farms. Cubans in Florida do not steal boats to seek asylum in Cuban collective farms.

Why is it bad to encourage people to take risks, start their own companies and hire

workers? Isn't it better for for workers to have a *choice* of employer, so that they can leave if their working conditions or remuneration are unacceptable? How do people leave their employer in Marxism? Oh yeah – by firing squad or by jumping the wall.

But what about companies? Aren't they all owned by greedy, colluding capitalists?

> Marxists claim that capitalists do not work and that workers do not own capital. That is why they comprise "social classes." But nearly all capitalists work, often in work days with very long hours. Meanwhile, a huge portion of capital is held by workers themselves through their pension funds and other institutional investment intermediaries.
>
> …Marxists claim that businesses are owned by a small closed clique of capitalists. Actually, most businesses are "public," meaning they are owned by shareholders and anyone at all can be a shareholder in them.

But isn't capitalism opposed to democracy?

> Marxists claim that capitalism cannot be democratic. But every single democratic society on earth is predominantly capitalist. Not a single communist regime was ever democratic. Communists take power via military coups and military conquest, not via elections.

But isn't violence used against people in order to preserve capitalism?

> Marxists claim that capitalists use violence to protect their perquisites and privileges. In truth, Marxists in power use violence to protect their perquisites and privileges. They use violence to suppress opposition wherever they manage to seize power, including violence against opposition groups of workers. It is conservatively estimated that 100 million people were killed by Marxism and by Marxists in the twentieth century.

But aren't workers less well off in capitalist economies?

> Marxists think that only *things* matter in economics, meaning tangible products, and so services do not. They believe that big products are more important than small products, big industries being more important than small industries. They also believe that consumer goods are superfluous and should not be produced much. All those ideas are why the quality of life and the standard of living are so miserable under communist regimes. In wealthy countries, small- and medium-size enterprises are the main engines for producing wealth.

But aren't people poorer and less free in capitalist economies?

> Marxists claim that under Marxism everyone receives according to his needs and contributes according to his capabilities. In reality, under Marxism everyone receives according to whatever the entrenched party apparatchiks decide their needs are, usually sub-sustenance levels of consumption, and the same people

> decide what are your abilities, generally assumed to be your ability to work endlessly at whatever you are told to do without getting paid much. To put this differently, in the absence of positive incentives, no one is capable of doing anything and everyone's needs are infinite.

But isn't a centrally-planned economy with fixed prices better than a free market capitalist economy?

> Marxists think that "experts" can tell what needs to be produced. They cannot. That is why Marxist experts produce starvation. In some cases Marxist starvation has produced cannibalism. There is not a single Marxist scholar or expert on earth who could produce a pencil by himself.

But letting people earn money based on what they do leads to lower productivity, right?

> Marxists believe that economic incentives do not matter. That is why they think there is no need to pay people more for working hard or exerting effort. It is enough to appeal to their "class interests." That is why people starve under communism.

But in a Marxist economy, everyone is equal, right?

> Marxists pretend to be in favor of the working class collectively owning all property. In reality Marxists always steal the property of members of the working class and turn it over to well-paid party apparatchiks.

But in capitalist economies, when two parties freely agree to exchange items of value for money, one of them is oppressing the other, right?

> Marxists believe that in every voluntary transaction, one side wins and the other loses, and so it is impossible for two sides to profit from it. That is why they think you should be told what to buy and how much you should pay for it.

But capitalists go all around the world imposing their free market ideology through military force, right?

> Marxists claim that capitalist countries engage in imperialism. But since World War II the largest empires of imperialist conquest were those headed by Marxist regimes.
>
> Marxists believe that there are no real conflicts of interest between the workers living in different countries and speaking different languages or coming from different cultures. That is without a doubt the very stupidest idea of all coming from Marxism. In any case, that is why Marxism is generally spread only via military conquest.

This article is one to e-mail to all your friends who voted for the Marxist Obama. Obama's Marxism was well known to everyone who took the time to read his books, and to read about his past actions and policies. Now we are going to be governed by someone who

knows less about economics than Al Gore knows about climate science.

Maybe one day Obama will release his grades, so we can finally find out which of them is smarter.

Arlen Specter's challenger Pat Toomey panned by RINOs in the NRSC

April 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was just browsing over at the Maritime Sentry, and there was this interesting post about Arlen Specter's primary challenger, Pat Toomey. Specter has been a de facto Democrat for a long time now, but for some reason the NRSC has continuously endorsed him in the primary. So what happens now? They can't endorse Specter, he's a Democrat. But they won't endorse Pat Toomey.

Here is what happened with the Maritime Sentry phoned the NRSC about this:

> I was shocked when I read at Hot Air today that the NRSC may not support Pat Toomey and may instead back another RINO candidate. I immediately called them and in very polite terms said I was disappointed and that I hoped they would change their mind and support Toomey; otherwise I would not support them in any way.
>
> The guy who answered was extremely rude and hung up on me. I called back and got through to a woman this time. I asked to speak to a supervisor and she refused. She asked what my problem was. I went through the whole ordeal with her and again repeated my request to speak to a supervisor. She told me no, that she would handle it, and that my concerns were unjustified because the NRSC was supporting Toomey.
>
> I read the quotes from Senators Hatch and Cornyn in the Hot Air article that stated otherwise. She then put me on hold, came back on, and said they have not decided who they will support, but that they needed to go with someone who could actually win.
>
> I said something to the effect of 'fine, if you go with a RINO I will not support the NRSC in any way…..'. She addressed me like a parent does a little child and promptly let me go. That is the legist of the call. I was raised to say sir and mam so I assure you I was polite.

Here's a little more about it from post from NRO's The Corner: (H/T Hot Air)

> "I don't think there is anybody in the world who believes he can get elected senator there," said Sen. Orrin Hatch, the vice chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee.
>
> Asked if the NRSC would back Toomey, Hatch said, "I don't think so" and that the party should look for "someone who can win there."…
>
> Hatch later equivocated and said, "I'm not saying he can't win – nobody gave me a chance when I ran."…
>
> On Wednesday, Cornyn said he didn't know if Toomey would be the "only

> candidate” or the “strongest candidate” in the GOP primary.
>
> “It’s too early to endorse,” Cornyn said.

Pat Toomey’s site is here. We can’t win the country back unless we stop being Democrat-lite and start articulating conservative principles and policies. And I do include socially conservative principles and policies as well as fiscally conservative ones.

UPDATE: Here’s an MP3 podcast featuring Pat Toomey on the Hugh Hewitt show.

Round-up of stories about intelligent design, from the Discovery Institute

April 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Discovery Institute is the headquarters for ID research and advocacy in the United States. They send out a newsletter by e-mail and I though this week's hit on all cylinders. Below are some of their stories from the newsletter. Thanks to commenter ECM for an earlier tip on the Junk DNA story.

When "Junk DNA" Isn't Junk: Farewell to a Darwinist Standard Response

Richard Sternberg, research scientist at the Biologic Institute supported by the Center for Science and Culture, is now blogging at Evolution News & Views, weighing in on the latest research showing that so-called "Junk DNA," which Darwinists have discounted as "rubbish," are actually "anything but that."

Sternberg writes:

> In the Darwinist repertoire, a standard response to evidence of design in the genome is to point to the existence of "junk DNA." What is it doing there, if purposeful design really is detectable in the history of life's development? Of course this assumes that the "junk" really is junk. That assumption has been cast increasingly into doubt. New research just out in the journal Nature Genetics finds evidence that genetic elements previously thought of as rubbish are anything but that. The research describes tiny strands of RNA, previously thought to be junk, that now turn out to play a role in gene expression. Another finding by Dr. Geoff Faulkner shows that "retrotransposons," a further variety of "junk" as the dogma previously taught, play a similar role.

Also at ENV, Dr. Sternberg takes a look at the old Darwinian tripe that biological systems couldn't possibly have been designed because they exhibit "shoddy engineering":

> We often hear from Darwinians that the biological world is replete with examples of shoddy engineering, or, as they prefer to put it, bad design. One such case of really poor construction is the inverted retina of the vertebrate eye. As we all know, the retina of our eyes is configured all wrong because the cells that gather photons, the rod photoreceptors, are behind two other tissue layers. Light first strikes the ganglion cells and then passes by or through the bipolar cells before reaching the rod photoreceptors. Surely, a child could have arranged the system better — so they tell us.
>
> The problem with this story of supposed unintelligent design is that it is long on anthropomorphisms and short on evidence. Consider nocturnal mammals. Night vision for, say, a mouse is no small feat. Light intensities during night can be a million times less than those of the day, so the rod cells must be optimized —

> yes, optimized — to capture even the few stray photons that strike them. Given the backwards organization of the mouse's retina, how is this scavenging of light accomplished? Part of the solution is that the ganglion and bipolar cell layers are thinner in mammals that are nocturnal. But other optimizations must also occur. Enter the cell nucleus and "junk" DNA.

Jerry Coyne Recycles: Why Darwinism Is False

Jonathan Wells is reviewing Jerry Coyne's Why Evolution Is True over at ENV, and already the list of problems with Coyne's book is mounting:

> On Earth Day 2009, we are reminded of the ecological importance of recycling. As a professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolution at The University of Chicago, Jerry A. Coyne must be keen on recycling: He even recycles worn-out arguments for Darwinism.
>
> If "evolution" meant simply that existing species can undergo minor changes over time, or that many species alive today did not exist in the past, then evolution would undeniably be true. But "evolution" for Coyne means Darwinism — the theory that all living things are descendants of a common ancestor, modified by unguided natural processes such as DNA mutations and natural selection.
>
> Coyne discusses the fossil record, embryos, vestigial structures, the geographic distribution of species, artificial and natural selection, and the origin of species. In the process, (1) he ignores the Cambrian explosion — which Darwin considered a "serious" problem — and he rearranges the fossil record to fit Darwin's theory; (2) he defends Ernst Haeckel — who faked some drawings of vertebrate embryos to provide support for Darwinism — and he dredges up the doctrine that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny; (3) he claims that much human DNA is useless junk — despite abundant recent evidence that this is not true — and he relies on theological arguments that have no legitimate place in natural science; (4) he invokes "the well-known process called convergent evolution" to explain many cases of the geographic distribution of species — even though the "well-known process" is merely speculation — and he again falls back on theology to justify a supposedly scientific theory; and (5) he describes examples of natural and artificial selection — none of which show anything more than minor changes within existing species — and he misrepresents experimental evidence to make it sound as though the origin of species by natural selection has been directly observed.

Part 1
Part 2
Part 3
Part 4

Other stuff

The newsletter also discussed historian A.N. Wilson's return to faith from atheism, which is really interesting because he seems to be well-rounded in his reasons for rejecting atheism. And the newsletter mentions that Jay Richards' forthcoming book, "Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem" is out May 6th! Jay gave a great lecture on basic economics for Christians and another great lecture on what Christians should think about global warming.

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty faces protests over socialized medicine failures

April 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How well does socialized medicine work? Just ask Dalton McGuinty, the Premier (governor) of the wealthy province of Ontario. According to Yahoo News, he's facing protests over his proposed cuts in medical service. It's government-run health care at its finest, complete with Canada's own version of tea parties!

(I know some of you Canadians are proud your nationalized health care, but please allow me to critique it and don't be too upset with me).

Excerpt:

> TORONTO – With a massive protest over hospital cuts planned today, Premier Dalton McGuinty says he's not trying to dismantle local health care services.
>
> Thousands of demonstrators are expected to descend on the front lawn of the Ontario legislature to denounce changes at six Niagara hospitals that they say are also happening in other communities.
>
> Critics say a regional health-care agency in the Niagara-Hamilton area is planning to close ERs in smaller communities and move services elsewhere.
>
> …The Ontario Health Coalition says about 50 busloads from communities across Ontario will take part in the protest, starting at 11:30 a.m.
>
> They are expected to be joined at the legislature by seniors and patients to demand that McGuinty to save hospital services.
>
> Buses were expected to arrive from such communities as Belleville, Trenton, Windsor, Leamington, Wallaceburg, Sarnia, Strathroy, Cambridge, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Welland, Port Colborne and Fort Erie.

Niagara-Hamilton is the region south and southwest of Toronto, which votes overwhelmingly Liberal and NDP (Socialist). It's a union area where steel and auto manufacturing is the major industry. This is the area just northwest of Buffalo, New York.

The Conservative Party leadership race in Ontario

Right now, Ontario has kicked out their ineffective and moderate provincial leader John Tory, and they are in the process of choosing a new leader. One of our free speech heroes, Randy Hillier is in the running. The other two candidates are too far to the left, i.e. – "red tories". Joanne from Blue Like You is also leaning towards Hudak.

Conservative MP Jason Kenney has already endorsemed Hudak:

> TORONTO – Immigration Minister Jason Kenney is backing Tim Hudak in the Ontario Progressive Conservative leadership race – a move that could make things awkward at the federal cabinet table.

> …Having the backing of an influential federal minister is a major coup for Hudak, 41, the perceived front-runner in the race to succeed John Tory.
>
> …"He's the bright, young, energetic, common-sense conservative that will appeal to Ontarians," he said.

Here is an excerpt from another article about the candidates:

> The Niagara-area member, who is married to Harris's former chief of staff Deb Hutton, also has about half of the 24-member caucus in his corner.
>
> Norm Miller – son of former premier Frank Miller – Julia Munro, Garfield Dunlop and Lisa MacLeod have all endorsed Hudak.
>
> …Hillier, a self-described libertarian who wants to scrap the Ontario Human Rights Commission, will likely make a splash in the race, but observers say he has virtually no support among caucus members.
>
> …Hillier has cast himself as the leader who will steer the party and the province back to true conservatism, including smaller government, fewer regulations and a more participatory democracy.

MPP Lisa Macleod and MPP Randy Hillier are free-speech champions in Ontario. Free speech is also an issue in British Columbia.

Prayer is good, but reason and evidence are better

May 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted a post over at the Anchoress about the issue of prayer and abortion. She is discussing with a friend whether to pray in front of an abortion clinic, which takes a lot of courage. But I don't think that's the only way to make a difference on abortion. I want to remind my readers that you can pray *and* debate. I think both are necessary. And debate is just as Biblical as prayer.

The Anchoress writes about the importance of prayer:

> If you stand outside an abortion mill and peacefully pray for everyone inside, the abortionists and their aides, the troubled women choosing to enter, the babies – you are truly moving outside of your own concerns, your own ego, and growing in knowledge of generosity and detachment. Will you save a few lives? Perhaps, if God wills it.
>
> But perhaps the point of your calling is two-fold; to affect the lives of others in a positive way, yes, but also to affect your own life, if you are open and trusting enough to allow yourself to be instructed and changed, as I know you will be.
>
> I am convinced that the abortion issue itself is meant to be the long, protracted, painful, divisive and enduring struggle it is, because it is a challenge to the entire age.
>
> The Torah says, "who saves a life saves the world entire." Our common-wisdom will sometimes say – over new laws, or new restrictions or new requirements – "well, but if it saves a single life, it's worth it." We *do know* the value of human life, we know it instinctively and intrinsically, because our own DNA shouts out "I am good; I am important and I want to live" with every breath we take, every heartbeat pumped and every new blood cell created. But some of us work against that knowledge, for a variety of reasons. Some of it is self-loathing. Some of it is faux enlightenment. Some of it is simple, stubborn, adolescent contrariness, writ large.

I agree with all of this, but I want to also emphasize the importance of debating with our opponents.

I tend towards more confrontational means, and so I wanted to link together some of my best posts on defending the pro-life position, and then make some comments. When it comes to abortion, I'm inclined to keep faith, emotions and personal experiences right out of the discussion and stick with the strict philosophical reasoning and pure science.

First, let me share with you the links:

- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring two great pro-life debaters, Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf

- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

And now the comment. I think we need to get serious about the way we talk about social issues like abortion, marriage and divorce. Some Christians are hiding from these discussions and resorting to prayer alone because they believe that these are issues that are too emotional to debate. But emotions and personal experiences are irrelevant to questions of truth and morality.

The reason why society as a whole is sliding leftwards on social issues is because we wrongly believe that there is a fundamental split between facts and values. We believe in objective truth over here, as in chemistry and physics. And we believe in religious and moral truth over there, as in the existence of God and the sanctity of life. We need to halt the slide by treating the latter like the former.

And here's how: *learn to defend your views by reading books.*

For example, is the abortion issue a concern to you? Then read Francis J. Beckwith's 2007 book "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice", published by Cambridge University Press, and put it up on your shelf at work.

Is the marriage/divorce issue a concern to you? Then read Stephen Baskerville's 2007 book "Taken into Custody: The War Against Fatherhood, Marriage, and the Family", published by Cumberland House, and put it up on your shelf at work.

And so on… bioethics is just like any other area of publicly testable knowledge. The more you know, the more confident you become, and the easier it is to speak about these things in a non-threatening, academic tone. People actually debate these topics in formal, timed debates at universities, in front of students, for example.

We succeed in persuading our neighbors about social issues as we succeed in persuading our neighbors about *anything.* Bring more data to the table than your opponent and you will do well. Even if you don't get an admission, talking about moral issues seriously creates respect for traditional social conservative views in the culture, by showing that we have reasons, and not just blind-faith.

UPDATE: This post over at Nice Deb is a must-read. Obama is telling Catholic Cardinals that he's not pro-abortion.

What is Obama working on instead of making Americans safer?

May 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below is the video of the new Republican ad that highlights all the recent bungling by Obama on national security and foreign policy. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

The Patriot Room has more on this effective ad.

Check out this post on Obama's opposition to waterboarding. And this one of Obama's military spending cuts. A general article listing the administration's failures on national security and foreign policy. And an essay I wrote on the conservative doctrine of peace through strength. And don't forget last week's Friday night funny on Obama's plan to undo the effects of Bush's successful national security policies.

Robert Spencer over at Jihad Watch has this post up about how Obama overruled the CIA and FBI in order to release Gitmo detainees into the United States.

> Excerpt:They told him these guys were dangerous jihadists, and Obama *doesn't seem to care*. They're coming to your neighborhood whether you or the FBI or DHS like it or not. Relax. What could go wrong?

Spencer asks: "How about putting them up in the White House?"

So, what are Democrats focused on instead of national security?

First, Democrats are busy restricting free speech to protect the hurt feelings of their special interest groups. Here is a speech by Representative Trent Franks about the recent thought crime hate crime bill that the Democrats just passed in the House.

Excerpt:

> In fact, Madam Speaker, the essence of America is that all people should be treated with the same respect and should be protected completely equally under the law. To break up people into different categories and say that one group is more worthy of protection than another and then to grant special protection to some groups and not to others, fundamentally diminishes the protection of all of the other remaining groups.
>
> …The First Amendment of our Constitution was crafted because our Founding Fathers recognized that the freedom of thought and belief is the cornerstone of every other freedom. It is the foundation of liberty itself, because, without it, every other freedom, including the freedom of speech, becomes meaningless.
>
> …Not only does this legislation require law enforcement to investigate an individual's motivations–those are the thoughts and beliefs that seemingly motivate him or her to commit a crime–but it would expand the scope of the prosecution to include individuals or members of organizations or religious groups whose ideas or words may have influenced a person's thoughts or

> motivations when he committed a crime.
>
> …Madam Speaker, this would have a devastating and chilling effect on free speech in America. Who could blame pastors, educators or any other cultural leaders if they chose to cease expressing their beliefs for fear of being thrown in prison and charged with a Federal crime? This is not rhetorical speculation. It has already happened in the case of the Philadelphia 11 and in other cases. In the Philadelphia 11 case, 11 individuals were jailed, and they faced $90,000 in fines and 47 years in prison for simply speaking the gospel openly and publicly.

Democrats have to be divisive, and pit one group against another. That is how they get elected – by promising all of their victims government-run salvation from their "enemies". They thrive on anger, divisiveness, victimization, blame-fixing and resentment.

Second, the Democrats are working hard to raise the unemployment rate by attacking small businesses.

> Today's *Washington Post* has a front page story: "Small Businesses Brace for Tax Battle," that catalogues the burden small businesses will face under the President's massive $4 trillion budget which raises taxes by more than $1.4 trillion.
>
> Gail Johnson, the subject of the *Post's* story, is a former pediatric nurse who's spent "20 years building a chain of preschools and after-school programs that accommodate sick children so working parents can keep their jobs," but since, "like most small-business owners, Johnson reports her profit on her personal tax return," she'll see her taxes go up under the President's plan – big time.

The WaPo's article says this:

> In a typical year, Johnson's federal tax bill would be about $120,000. But starting in 2011, the higher marginal rates would add about $13,000 a year, Hurst said. Capping the value of itemized deductions at 28 percent would add another $10,000, for a total increase of $23,000.
>
> And Johnson's tax bill stands to grow dramatically if Obama were to revive a plan to apply Social Security tax to income over $250,000 instead of capping it at the current $106,800. Because Johnson is an employee and an employer, she would have to pay both portions of the tax, Hurst said, tacking another $30,000 onto her bill.
>
> Johnson said such an increase would force her to consider scaling back operations.

Why do Democrats complain so much about outsourcing and "the rich"? They are the ones who cause businesses to shut down, downsize, relocate overseas or outsource. They push anti-business policies, like tax hikes, card check, global warming regulations, tariffs, etc. If you want more jobs, then make business ownership profitable. Is that so hard to understand?

Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams are my two favorite living economists

May 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Free Canuckistan! Thanks for the link, Binks!

Let's see some of their recent posts.

Is Obama's weak foreign policy going to get us killed?

My biggest concern about Jimmy Carter II is for the nations that rely on us to protect their liberties. Our armed forces project strength abroad that safeguards the liberties of our allies against our enemies. Thomas Sowell just nails this point in his post about the dangers of weak foreign policy, a point most of us don't even think about.

> As if it is not enough to turn cutthroats loose to cut throats again, we are now contemplating legal action against Americans who wrung information about international terrorist operations out of captured terrorists.
>
> Does nobody think ahead to what this will mean– for many years to come– if people trying protect this country from terrorists have to worry about being put behind bars themselves? Do we need to have American intelligence agencies tip-toeing through the tulips when they deal with terrorists?
>
> …Repercussions extend far beyond issues of the day. It is bad enough that we have a glib and sophomoric narcissist in the White House. What is worse is that whole nations that rely on the United States for their security see how easily our president welshes on his commitments. So do other nations, including those with murderous intentions toward us, our children and grandchildren.

Who caused the subprime mortgage crisis?

Thomas Sowell writes about who caused the subprime mortgage crisis. And he has a new book out about it, too!

> Beginning in the 1990s, getting a higher proportion of the American population to become homeowners became the political holy grail of government housing policies. Increasing home ownership among minorities and other people of low or moderate incomes was also part of this political crusade.
>
> Because banks are regulated by various agencies of the federal government, it was easy to pressure them to lend to people that they would not otherwise lend to– namely, people with lower incomes, poorer credit ratings and little or no money for a conventional down payment of 20 percent of the price of a house.
>
> Such people were referred to politically as "the underserved population"– as if politicians know who should and who shouldn't get mortgages better than people who have spent their careers making mortgage-lending decisions.

My own comprehensive post on this topic is Democrats caused the recession and Republicans tried to stop it.

What happens when the secular left undermines morality?

I've blogged about how atheism cannot ground the rationality of moral values, moral duties and moral accountability. The presumption of materialism is inconsistent with rationality, consciousness and free will which are necessary pre-conditions for non-ephemeral morality. So what happens to civil society when atheists push religion out of the public square? Walter Williams explains.

> To see men sitting whilst a woman or elderly person was standing on a crowded bus or trolley car used to be unthinkable. It was common decency for a man to give up his seat. Today, in some cities there are ordinances requiring public conveyances to set aside seats posted "Senior Citizen Seating." Laws have replaced common decency. Years ago, a young lady who allowed a guy to have his hand in her rear pocket as they strolled down the street would have been seen as a slut. Children addressing adults by first names was unacceptable.
>
> You might be tempted to charge, "Williams, you're a prude!" I'd ask you whether high rates of illegitimacy make a positive contribution to a civilized society. If not, how would you propose that illegitimacy be controlled? In years past, it was controlled through social sanctions like disgrace and shunning. Is foul language to or in the presence of teachers conducive to an atmosphere of discipline and respect necessary for effective education? If not, how would you propose it be controlled? Years ago, simply sassing a teacher would have meant a trip to the vice principal's office for an attitude adjustment administered with a paddle. Years ago, the lowest of lowdown men would not say the kind of things often said to or in front of women today. Gentlemanly behavior protected women from coarse behavior. Today, we expect sexual harassment laws to restrain coarse behavior.

I personally feel alienated by how impolite, unchaste, unromantic and unchivalrous my generation has become.

Friday night funny: Obama to ban fully-automatic assault vehicles

May 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scott Ott at Scrappleface.com has the scoop on Obama's plan to spur new vehicle sales. No, it's isn't lowering the sales tax on new vehicle sales, like communist China did. Obama likes taxes, and sometimes I think he is to the left of communists.

Oh no, Obama has an even better idea!

Excerpt:

> Since the Obama administration's talk of banning so-called 'assault weapons' has resulted in a huge spike in semi-automatic weapon sales nationwide, the White House has recently begun a covert 'whisper campaign' suggesting the president might also ban U.S.-manufactured cars and trucks with fully-automatic transmissions, now dubbed 'assault vehicles'.
>
> President Obama reportedly hopes such chatter will give a much-needed boost to U.S. auto sales.

Happy Friday!

Mark Steyn and Ezra Levant on Milt Rosenberg's Extension 720 radio show!

May 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Free Canuckistan! Thanks for the link, Binks!

Here is the commercial-free MP3 recording. We Americans need to understand what leftist ideologues do to free speech rights in other countries. It's going to look a lot like what's been done by the left in Canada, Europe and in leftist-dominated university campuses the world over. You *must* listen to this podcast! You will not find a better resource about the leftist threat to our liberties!

Already, we are seeing the Democrats take action to pass "Hate Crime" laws that punish free speech that might offend their favored constituencies! As Trent Franks notes, religious Christians are the likely targets of such laws. Our civil liberties are being threatened, and we need to start learning by studying the defenders of free speech, such as Mark Steyn and Ezra Levant.

What I like best about Ezra Levant

Ezra Levant is Jewish, but he is the best friend that Christians ever had in Canada. One of the victims of the virulently anti-Christian Human Rights Commissions was a penniless pastor by the name of Stephen Boissoin. Boissoin wrote an essay in which he expressed his opinions on gay activism. The case is described by Levant in the audio linked above.

But the main thing is that I have been watching with awe at how this good Jewish man Ezra Levant, who has his own 6-figure legal bill to worry about, has tirelessly supported this Christian pastor's right to free speech. He not only re-published Boissoin's letter on his own blog several times, but he has also organized fundraisers to raise funds for Boissoin's appeal.

> Calgary, Thursday, April 30
>
> This one (and the next two) are very special events. They're dinners to help a victim of Alberta's human rights commission — Rev. Stephen Boissoin. As readers will recall, because he expressed his religious views on gay marriage, Rev. Boissoin was punished with a six-year government prosecution, and then an outrageous order — punitive fines, a lifetime ban on expressing his views in public or in private, and an abominable order to publicly renounce his religious views. Seriously — you can read the details here. Tickets are $100, with proceeds going to pay for Rev. Boissoin's appeal. For more info, and to register, click here.
>
> Red Deer, Friday, May 1
>
> Second fundraising dinner for Rev. Stephen Boissoin's legal defence, 6 p.m. Details here.
>
> Edmonton, Saturday, May 2
>
> Third and final fundraising dinner for Rev. Stephen Boissoin's legal defence, 6

> p.m. Details here.

Ezra Levant is without a doubt the most heroic person in Canada! That is another reason to listen to the podcast. Levant and Steyn are two good men of courage and directness. This is the podcast equivalent of “Gladiator” and “300”. These are courageous, forceful men who have been given a difficult task. They are direct and passionate. PLEASE LISTEN TO THE PODCAST!!!

My previous posts on free speech in Canada

The Conservative Party takes up free speech in British Columbia

The Conservative Party takes up free speech in Ontario

Video of Ezra Levant discussing free speech on the Michael Coren show

Video interview with Ezra Levant by the libertarian Fraser Institute

Impact of the Human Rights Commissions on commerce in Canada

How socialism undermines family, community and the dignity of labor

May 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Free Canuckistan! Thanks for the link, Binks!

I saw this amazing post over on the Pugnacious Irishman, and I would highly recommend you take a look at it. Rich comments on an essay by Charles Murray on whether the United States should start implementing European-style social policies.

Here is Rich's summary of the Murray article:

> In the annual Irving Kristol Lecture given at the American Enterprise Institute Dinner, he argues that while such Europe-style policies might produce an economic benefit or two, they are ill conceived because they suck the meaning out of life. They do this by enfeebling the institutions necessary for robust meaning in life: family, community, vocation, and faith. Lastly, he argues that in the next few decades, science will provide ample evidence that such policies are ill conceived.

But how does European democratic socialism destroy human flourishing?

Murray writes:

> To become a source of deep satisfaction, a human activity has to meet some stringent requirements. It has to have been important (we don't get deep satisfaction from trivial things). You have to have put a lot of effort into it (hence the cliché "nothing worth having comes easily"). And you have to have been responsible for the consequences.
>
> There aren't many activities in life that can satisfy those three requirements.... Let me put it formally: If we ask what are the institutions through which human beings achieve deep satisfactions in life, the answer is that there are just four: family, community, vocation, and faith.
>
> ...It is not necessary for any individual to make use of all four institutions, nor do I array them in a hierarchy. I merely assert that these four are all there are. The stuff of life–the elemental events surrounding birth, death, raising children, fulfilling one's personal potential, dealing with adversity, intimate relationships–coping with life as it exists around us in all its richness–occurs within those four institutions.
>
> Seen in this light, the goal of social policy is to ensure that those institutions are robust and vital. And that's what's wrong with the European model. It doesn't do that. It enfeebles every single one of them.

And then comes Murray's central thesis. Big government socialism, by taking responsibility away from individuals in the areas of importance and meaning, actually

causes more problems than it solves. Murray calls this government involvement in these areas “taking the trouble out” of life.

Murray continues:

> The problem is this: Every time the government takes some of the trouble out of performing the functions of family, community, vocation, and faith, it also strips those institutions of some of their vitality–it drains some of the life from them.
>
> It’s inevitable. Families are not vital because the day-to-day tasks of raising children and being a good spouse are so much fun, but because the family has responsibility for doing important things that won’t get done unless the family does them. Communities are not vital because it’s so much fun to respond to our neighbors’ needs, but because the community has the responsibility for doing important things that won’t get done unless the community does them. Once that imperative has been met–family and community really do have the action–then an elaborate web of social norms, expectations, rewards, and punishments evolves over time that supports families and communities in performing their functions.
>
> When the government says it will take some of the trouble out of doing the things that families and communities evolved to do, it inevitably takes some of the action away from families and communities, and the web frays, and eventually disintegrates.
>
> …We have seen growing legions of children raised in unimaginably awful circumstances, not because of material poverty but because of dysfunctional families, and the collapse of functioning neighborhoods into Hobbesian all-against-all free-fire zones.

This next point is something I first read about in George Gilder’s book “Men and Marriage”. When the government steps in and takes away the responsibilities of a man, especially husband and father responsibilities, it destroys the male will to be a responsible contributor to society. If the welfare state awards money to women to raise children without the father, what honor is there in being a good man?

> Earlier, I said that the sources of deep satisfactions are the same for janitors as for CEOs, and I also said that people needed to do important things with their lives. When the government takes the trouble out of being a spouse and parent, it doesn’t affect the sources of deep satisfaction for the CEO. Rather, it makes life difficult for the janitor. A man who is holding down a menial job and thereby supporting a wife and children is doing something authentically important with his life. He should take deep satisfaction from that, and be praised by his community for doing so. Think of all the phrases we used to have for it: “He is a man who pulls his own weight.” “He’s a good provider.”
>
> If that same man lives under a system that says that the children of the woman he sleeps with will be taken care of whether or not he contributes, then that

> status goes away. I am not describing some theoretical outcome.
>
> I am describing American neighborhoods where, once, working at a menial job to provide for his family made a man proud and gave him status in his community, and where now it doesn't. I could give a half dozen other examples. Taking the trouble out of the stuff of life strips people–already has stripped people–of major ways in which human beings look back on their lives and say, "I made a difference."

Murray's article and Rich's commentary continue, but for me this was the important point. When government distributes wealth, it gets involved in the decision-making of the most important areas of life: marriage, education, parenting, taxes, etc. Speaking as a man, when you take away choice and responsibility from me, you cannot expect me to engage in work or family or community in the same way I would if I were in charge.

By the way, I explained why European socialism leads to the decline of religion in a previous post.

Barack Obama outlaws capitalism: threatens Chrysler's non-TARP creditors

May 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: More details about this story and related stories of government intervention and wealth redistribution are here.

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from 4Simpsons! Thanks for the link!

This bombshell comes to me from my favorite commenter ECM.

Newsbusters is reporting that the White House is making threats to Chrysler's creditors. Obama is living that these creditors allowed Chrysler to go bankrupt, because he would prefer to throw your money at his auto union worker constituents. What does it mean when the President of the United States threatens and coerces private investors?

- Private property is abolished
- The free market is abolished
- The rule of law is abolished
- The Constitution has been abolished
- Private contracts are abolished
- Capitalism is abolished

It means that socialism has come to the United States, just as the rest of the world is abandoning a failed system.We are now the equivalent of Zimbabwe and North Korea! Our run of liberty and prosperity is now OVER.

The source of the story is a radio interview conducted between 760 WJR's radio host Frank Beckmann and Tom Lauria, the attorney representing Chrysler's non-TARP creditors. I am reproducing the full transcript, because you need to read the whole thing, especially what I've bolded.

Beckmann: So what's the matter with your vulture clients who are so greedy and selfish. Why won't they go along with this?

Lauria: Well, they bought a contract that says that they get paid before anyone else does by Chrysler. And they have been told by the government who is in complete control of Chrysler, oddly enough, that despite their contractual right, they do not get paid before everyone else.

So they are standing on their rights, standing on the law, trying to defend in effect what is the Constitution of the United States, to make sure that they get what they're entitled to for their investors.

Beckmann: Tom, let me make the argument against you in another way. We've heard the President say this, "I wouldn't want to stand on their side." Ron Gettelfinger says "Everyone else has made concessions. These people won't; they're greedy." Why not

take a concession that is being asked of everybody else and is being accepted by everybody else, including other hedge funds that had bought some of these bonds in Chrysler?

Lauria: Well that's a great question, because let me tell you it's no fun standing on this side of the fence opposing the President of the United States. In fact, let me just say, people have asked me who I represent, and that's a moving target.

I can tell you for sure that I represent one less investor today than I represented yesterday. One of my clients was directly threatened by the White House, and in essence compelled to withdraw its opposition to the deal under threat that the full force of the White House press corps would destroy its reputation if it continued to fight. That's how hard it is to stand on this side of the fence.

Beckmann: Was that Perella Weinberg?

Lauria: That was Perella Weinberg.

Beckmann: All right.

Lauria: Now let me just tell you, to be clear, that we do not oppose the rehabilitation of Chrysler. We think it is vitally important that a company like Chrysler be protected to the extent that it can be within the framework of the law. I want to also say that we do not oppose the government backstopping or supporting the pensioneers and retirees and workers of Chrysler.

I actually think that in a troubled economic time like we're in, that is an appropriate role for the government to perform. What we do oppose, however, is the abuse of the bankruptcy law to coerce first-lien lenders subsidize the rehabilitation of Chrysler or the backstop of the obligations to the pensioneers and retirees beyond what they will do voluntarily.

And just to be clear, these clients of mine have agreed to compromise 50% of their first-lien position to help support the rehabilitation of Chrysler — Contrary to what the President said yesterday in his new conference that "these people will not give to support the effort," they have agreed to compromise 50% of what they're owed to support the rehabilitation of Chrysler, despite the fact that they're under no obligation whatsoever to do so.

That is what we stand for, and that is what we're going to go to court to fight for.

Beckmann: OK, so they have offered to take 50 cents on the dollar. What are they being offered in return, and how does that compare to what other stakeholders, say the UAW, are going to be receiving?

Lauria: Here's the troubling circumstance here. My clients bought a position in the Chrysler capital structure that entitles them to be paid "first dollars out." That is, they're to be paid 100 cents of what they're owed before any junior creditors get a penny.

The government has offerend them 29 cents on the dollar, in the context of a restructuring of Chrysler that will send over $10 billion of value to junior claims. And when I say $10 (billion), that's a floor. As we're continuing to review the papers that Chrysler has filed in the bankruptcy court, that number may actually be more like $20 billion. So in other words, my clients, who are contractually entitled to 100 cents on the dollar, are being asked to take 29 cents on the dollar, while junior creditors are being offered somewhere between $10-$20 billion of value in the Chrysler rehabilitation.

Now I ask your listeners, what would they do if they were in our position?

Beckmann: Now Tom Lauria, let me cite a New York Times piece, I believe this was yesterday's New York Times. No, it's today's as a matter of fact. And it says about the creditors who are standing firm: "Many of them bought Chrysler debt for about 30 cents on the dollar." So what they're saying is, "Look, they got a discount to begin with. They're getting a good deal here. If they bought it for 30 and they're being offered 29, that's a great deal, better percentagewise than anybody else got."

Lauria: Well, what people need to understand, first of all, that that is only speculation. There are people who bought this debt at par in my group, there are people who bought this at 70 cents, there are people who bought it at other prices. But what people really need to understand is that the people who bought this debt are pensioneers, teachers' credit unions, personal retiree accounts, retirement plans, college endowments. That's who my clients act as fiduciaries for. And they make all kinds of investments. And as you can imagine in this economy, there are numerous of those investments that have gone bad.

This was an investment that people made based on their assessment of the assets of Chrysler, and the view that this was a very secure, very safe investment. And they bought a contract that said they would get a very low rate of return in exchange for that high level of security. So the argument about what they paid for their investment really is irrelevant.

The fact of the matter is they bought a contract that said "you're first in line, and in exchange for that you're going to get a very low rate of return." And I think everybody in this country should be concerned about the fact that the President of the United States, the executive office, is using its power to try to abrogate that contractual right. If the President will attack that contractual right, what right will it not attack?

Beckmann: You made a comment to me before we went on the air about the significance of this case as it relates to the Constitution. I'd like you to explain that to my audience.

Lauria: Well, look, there are kind of two aspects to that. The first is the right to property and the right to contract are kind of sacronsanct in this country. I think everybody understands that when you make a deal it's supposed to be honored, and if it's not honored you're supposed to be able to get protection in court. And what is happening here, through the force of the United States government, and that's what's disturbing about this — I mean, private parties

have contract disputes all the time — but for the United States Government to step in, the Executive Office of the United States Government, who under the Constitution is charged with enforcing the laws to step in and try to in effect break the laws, I think we should all be concerned about that. That is a constitutional issue.

OK, number one. Number two, realize that our Constitution is premised on the notion that there is a balance between the three branches of government: the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary.

And what's going to be happening, in fact I'm going to have to go here, because I'm heading down to the bankruptcy court to start taking on this battle, which is of epic proportions. But what is going on here is you've got the executive branch coming into the judicial branch. And I think it is really important for the Constitution of the United States that people understand that the judicial branch can stand independent and interpret and apply the laws as it's required to do under the Constitution in the face of intense pressure from the Executive branch to do otherwise.

Beckmann: Tom Lauria, really appreciate it. Final question, will Oppenheimer Funds and Stairway Capital, your other two clients in this, are they committed to standing firm? I've got to believe they're facing the same pressure Perella Weinberg did before it changed its mind and said "Okay, we'll go along now."

Lauria: Well they are today, but the Executive Office hasn't called them yet and made threats to them. So, maybe by tomorrow I won't have any clients, and maybe this fight will be over.

Click the link below to see more commentary from National Review, Wall Street Journal and Hot Air.

The editors of the National Review comment on the story.

Excerpt:

> The administration tried desperately to keep Chrysler out of bankruptcy court; in the process, it demonstrated exactly why that institution is so valuable. Obama's auto task force attempted to browbeat Chrysler's creditors into taking a terrible deal in order to spare the United Auto Workers union as much pain as possible. The large banks, which owe their continued existence to the $700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), caved and agreed to take a massive haircut on their secured Chrysler debt. But a group of smaller firms, calling themselves "The Committee of Chrysler Non-TARP lenders," refused to play ball.
>
> In a statement released yesterday, the firms pointed out that they would be shirking their fiduciary duty to their investors if they did not hold out for the best possible deal. For them, the best deal is bankruptcy. In bankruptcy court, secured debtholders take priority over other creditors. The administration's plan called for

> secured lenders to get in line behind the UAW.
>
> For resisting this expropriation and following the law, the non-TARP lenders were publicly denounced as vicious Benedict Arnolds by a sitting American president. "I stand with Chrysler's employees and their families and communities," Obama said — not "those who held out when everybody else is making sacrifices." He stands, he said, "with the millions of Americans who own and want to buy Chrysler cars." If millions of Americans wanted to buy Chrysler cars, the company wouldn't need the president of the United States to be its pitchman.

Hot Air has more here about whether the media will call Obama to account:

> Glenn Reynolds wonders how the White House press corps will feel about being used as an arm of the administration to beat its opposition into submission. My guess? Enchanted, with just a couple of exceptions. He also wonders whether they will show the slightest inclination to ask about these allegations. So far, it looks like the Sounds of Silence on the WHPC dial rather than We're Not Gonna Take It.
>
> Bear in mind that this is one attorney operating in his client's interest, and attorneys do like to make media waves by fighting cases on the evening news and the front page before they fight them in court. However, the WHPC should be asking whether they're getting played by the Obama administration — and consider the strong possibility that they've allowed themselves to be put in that position.

Commenter ECM adds a link to a WSJ piece:

> Here's a link to the WSJ piece where the rapacious, evil, capitalists stake out their position on the matter (which was quoted from in the NRO piece):
>
> http://blogs.wsj.com/deals/2009/04/30/statement-from-non-tarp-lenders-of-chrysler/

Heritage Foundation has more analysis here.

Excerpt:

> Specifically, the creditors refused to settle the debt owed to them by Chrysler for 29 cents on the dollar. **The offer was far below what the UAW would get under Obama's plan**, and the creditors thought they could do better, electing to bring the matter up before a bankruptcy judge.
>
> …True, the holdouts represent only a small minority of Chrysler's creditors. But among those who did agree to the terms, the four biggest – Citi, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs – are banks which themselves took massive bailout money from the feds, and whose future is largely in the Administration's hands. Not only does the government own a substantial amount of their stock, but government "stress tests" of their stability are due to come out next week.

READ THE WHOLE THING AND SEND IT TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW!!!

Audio debate: Did Jesus die on a cross?

May 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've decided to feature 4 debate podcasts in 4 sequential posts. Each debate will be on an off the wall topic or feature a clearly insane person. They are all from the Unbelievable? radio show, which is broadcast in the UK. I don't know what it is about these Brits, but they seem to really go in for the Monty Python in their debates.

The first debate features a strong Christian Tony Costa going up against the likable Muslim scholar Shabir Ally. I wish I had a Muslim friend like Shabir, because he is a smart guy and super polite. But the reason why this is a weird debate is because Shabir has to defend the idea that Jesus was never crucified, because that's in the Koran.

But no historian believes that! So Shabir is really in tough. If you want to see the best debater that Islam can offer, then listen to Shabir, he is the best. I have even sponsored debates on university campuses that featured Shabir.

Note that debates on the Unbelievable radio show start at about 15 minutes into the podcast.

> **Unbelievable? "Did Jesus rise from the dead? Did he die on the cross?"4 Apr 2009**
>
> As Easter approaches we hear from one of the best respected Muslim scholars in the world – Shabir Ally. He explains why he does not believe Jesus rose from the dead, namely because he never actually died upon the cross – he merely 'swooned'. Christian Apologist Tony Costa presents his case for the resurrection of Christ and critiques Ally's belief that Jesus did not die.
> For Shabir Ally visit www.islaminfo.com
> For Tony Costa visit www.freewebs.com/tonycosta/

Tony and Shabir are both from Canada!

Audio debate: Did Jesus rise from the dead?

May 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sometimes, they do debate serious questions on Unbelievable? radio show. But they feature clearly insane people like Steven Carr. Note that debates on the Unbelievable radio show start at about 15 minutes into the podcast. The Christian debater and callers are woefully uninformed in this debate, so I would recommend listening to something with William Lane Craig instead.

> **Unbelievable? 11 Apr 2009 – "Did Jesus Rise from the dead?" An atheist perspective**
>
> Steven Carr has a prolific presence on the internet as an atheist blogger and debater. He contends that the early Christians did not believe in Jesus' resurrection and that the Biblical views of resurrection are contradictory.
> Canon Michael Cole is a veteran defender of Christian faith and responds to Steven's criticisms of the resurrection.
> For Steven Carr see http://stevencarrwork.blogspot.com/
> For Canon Michael Cole see http://www.nationwidechristiantrust.com

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I'm trying to give my audience something different here. I prefer formal academic debates, but maybe I need to post things like this for some of the more crazy atheists who leave me weird comments. I don't know. Maybe my Christian readers will enjoy hearing an unqualified loon rant and rave like a lunatic at the full moon. Your call.

UPDATE: I am, of course, kidding about Steve Carr and I think he did a good job in his debate, whereas his opponent and the callers were not nearly as prepared. I wanted to see how fast he would descend on my blog, and if you read the comments, you'll see that I wasn't mean to him at all. But I wanted to engage him in a discussion and I thought this was the best way to get his attention. I apologize for my sneaky tricks, but they worked!

My response to Carr would be two-fold:

1) That word you keep using. Resurrection. I do not think it means what you think it means.

2) How do you square the empty tomb with your idea of a non-physical resurrection? We have multiple early sources for the empty tomb, and piles of evidence for it from those early sources, not the least of which is the testimony of the women followers of Jesus.

Audio debate: Should Christians be coerced to act like non-Christians by the state?

May 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Our next debate in the series of 4 wacky British debates is on whether Christians should be allowed to express their faith in public. In particular, should Christians be allowed to express their faith in the workplace? In the UK, it sounds like it is virtually illegal, just like it was in Stalinist Russia or North Korea today.

The way it works in the UK is like this: if you are a nurse, and you offer to pray for a patient, you're suspended. Period. The offendedness of thin-skinned atheists cancels out the liberties of Christians. Listening to the atheist Terry Sanderson is like listening to Stalin. American Christians will be shocked to find how atheism leads naturally to fascism. *Listen to him for yourself!*

Note that debates on the Unbelievable radio show start at about 15 minutes into the podcast.

Unbelievable? 18 Apr 2009 – Are Christians being marginalised?

Premier is inviting Christians to sign the "I am a Christian" declaration at www.iamachristian.org.uk and stand up for their Christian faith. It's in response to the fact that over 100,000 have downloaded the National Secular Society's "Debaptism" certificate, renouncing childhood baptismal vows.There have been a number of stories that suggest Christians are being restricted form being open about their Christian faith in the public arena, and now the National Secular Society is urging that hospital chaplains should not be funded by the NHS.Premier's CEO Peter Kerridge explains why he believes the campaign will encourage Christian to be bold in their faith. Terry Sanderson of the National Secular Society explains why they want to take Christian influence out of the public sphere, while Andrea Williams of Christian Concern for Our Nation explains why she believes the rights of Christians are being challenged.
Sign the declaration at www.iamachristian.org.uk
For Terry Sanderson see www.secularism.org.uk
For Andrea Williams see www.ccfon.org

Atheism naturally leads to heavy-handed censorship of other views.

Human rights and liberties have no place in an atheistic, materialistic universe – it's just survival of the fittest. And that's what led atheist regimes to murder 100 million people in the 20th century. Violence, hatred and coercion are natural on atheism. That's consistent atheism. There are no objective moral values, moral duties and morally significant actions in an atheistic universe. It's all accidental.

Yes, I am exaggerating for effect, many atheists are not like that, especially the libertarians and fiscal conservatives, who do believe (inconsistently) in morality and

freedom of religion. But those are rare! In a materialist universe, there is no such thing as objective human rights and human dignity, so even the fundamental right of free speech and freedom of religious expression can be removed.

UPDATE: I just want to define fascism so people understand what I am saying. Fascism is the system of government in which the values and purposes of the state are imposed on the people through state coercion. When something that someone else says makes you feel bad, and you threaten them with state coercion, you are using the state to force that person to give up their fundamental rights, such as the right to free speech, and act in a state-approved manner. That's fascism.

Atheists need to learn how to listen to those who disagree with them and *tolerate other points of view.*

UPDATE: Be sure and check my comparison of a famous, authentic, consistent Christian with a famous, authentic, consistent non-Christian.

Audio debate: Did Jesus even exist?

May 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate features James Patrick Holding one of the experts on the question of whether there is sufficient evidence outside the New Testament writings to answer the question of whether Jesus ever existed. Note that debate on the Unbelievable radio show start at about 15 minutes into the podcast.

The wacky thing about this debate is the topic of course. No PhD historian has ever taken the position that Jesus never existed in a research publication or book.

This is the last debate in my series of 4 wacky UK debates. I hope you enjoyed them!

Note that debates on the Unbelievable radio show start at about 15 minutes into the podcast.

Unbelievable? 2 May 2009 "Did Jesus exist?"

While non-Christians may doubt the miracles and resurrection of Jesus, few doubt his actual existence.However, Ken Humphreys believes the evidence for Jesus' very existence is scant and that Christian belief in him is the result of "late and fake" accounts. JP Holding is a vociferous defender of Christian history and doctrine and believes Ken's scepticism is unfounded and biased.They examine the evidence both in and beyond the Gospels for Jesus' existence.
For JP Holding see www.tektonics.org
For Ken Humphreys see www.jesusneverexisted.com

If you want to see more debates on weird subjects, featuring fringe atheists, let me know.

How do Democrats plan to improve health care?

May 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think it's important to be clear about what their goal is for their seizing control of reforming health care.

The Heritage Foundation says this:

> Earlier this month in Chicago, Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) told a rally of government-run health care supporters: "I know many of you here today are single payer advocates and so am I … and those of us who are pushing for a public health insurance don't disagree with this goal. This is not a principled fight. This is a fight about strategy for getting there and I believe we will."

And let's be clear about how they mean to do it:

> Recent SCHIP expansion and additional Medicaid funding in the stimulus package made a substantial down payment on major expansion of government run health programs. Established research shows that a public health plan will "crowd out" private insurance, forcing millions of Americans off their current plans, and away from their family doctors. A public health plan, coupled with Comparative Effectiveness Research, would engineer artificially lower prices for medical services through the imposition of Medicare-style price controls. Such Medicare-style payment levels would undercut the market share of existing private health plans, and, combined with a mandate on employers, stack the incentives against workers in private employer-based health insurance by encouraging their employers to dump them into a new government-run health plan. Watch the video of Rep. Schakowksy's statements on The Foundry. She clearly admits that the purpose of the government run option is to kill private insurance so everyone eventually is forced into government-run health care.

And the result is also known:

> Moving all Americans into a government-run health care system will not only bankrupt our country, but will lead to less innovation in the health care sector and lower quality care for all Americans.

This is what people who vote for Democrats will get. It's not what they expected, but it's what they'll get.

What will cap and trade mean for American consumers?

May 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation posted this summary of the top ten points regarding cap and trade.

> ***Cap and Trade Top Ten List***
> 1. Cap and Trade Is a Massive Energy Tax
> 2. It Will Not Make A Substantive Impact on the Environment
> 3. It Will Kill Jobs
> 4. It Will Cause Electricity Bills and Gas Prices to Sharply Increase
> 5. It Will Outsource Manufacturing Jobs and Hurt Free Trade
> 6. It Will Make You Choose Between Energy, Groceries, Clothing or Haircuts.
> 7. It Will Be Highly Susceptible to Fraud and Corruption
> 8. It Will Hurt Senior Citizens, the Poor, and the Unemployed the Worst
> 9. It Will Cost American Families Over $3,000 a Year
> 10. President Obama Admitted "Electricity Rates Would Necessarily Skyrocket" under a cap-and-trade program. (January 2008)

I can help with number 4: the energy price increases for consumers are right here, courtesy of Michele Bachmann.

Their post goes on to list and analyze the effects of various legislation proposed by Democrats in terms of number of jobs lost and amount of money confiscated from the private sector for the government to spend. It's amazing how many times Democrats tried to destroy the economy while Bush was President. And now they will finally be able to do it!

The article also mentions how many jobs will be lost by the proposed green jobs programs, as well as how many jobs will be outsourced to China and India, who will enjoy a manufacturing boom since they are not capping their emissions at all.

That's right, let's be clear on that:

> The Ultimate Outsourcing: India and China have repeatedly said they would not match U.S. environmental goals in order to protect their economies. Cap and Trade will merely move manufacturing jobs to China and India.

There are people I know who voted for Obama who are worried about their jobs. They complain to me about outsourcing. They do not understanding that Obama causes outsourcing by taxing "the rich" and regulating "greedy corporations". What a tragedy! Defeated by your own ignorance!

The 10 part series on cap and trade

The Heritage Foundation has also started a nice series of 10 posts about what cap and

trade will do to the economy. In this series, they are going into a lot more detail than in the summary posted I talked about above.

Part 1 is called Cap-and-Tax is a Jobs Destroyer.

They explain cap and trade:

> It works like this: Policymakers set a cap on the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that can be omitted into the atmosphere. Each power plant, factory, refinery, and other regulated entity will be allocated allowances (rights to emit) six greenhouse gases. However, only a certain percentage of the allowances will be allocated to these entities. The remaining percentage will be auctioned off or distributed to other emitting entities. Most emitters will need to purchase at least some allowances at auction. Emitters who reduce their emissions below their annual allotment can sell their excess allowances to those who do not–the trade part of cap-and-trade. Over time, the cap would be ratcheted down, requiring greater cuts in emissions.

So this is basically a tax on energy production. Yes, Democrats think that we produce too much energy, employing too many Americans, and that we sell it for too little money. According to Democrats, we need less production, fewer jobs and higher consumer prices for electricity. And other companies who use energy will have to pay more for it as well.

Take a look at this graph showing projected job losses under the Liberman-Warner cap and trade bill:

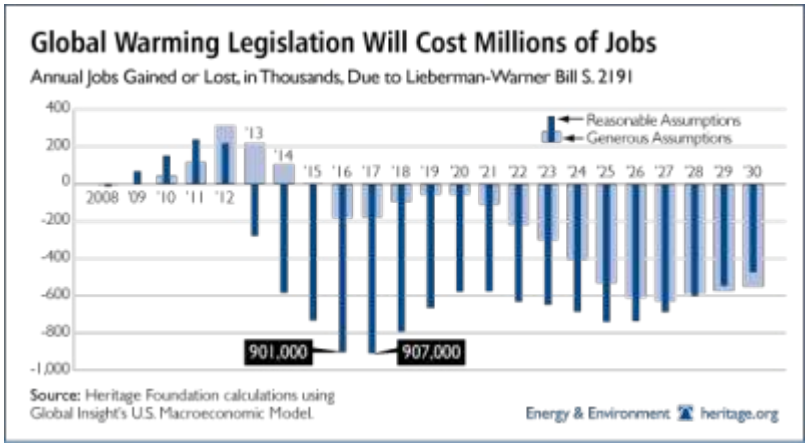

Jobs lost from Lieberman-Warner bill
Click the image for a bigger version.

Now let's take a look at Part 2, which is called Cap and Trade will force you to make budget cuts.

Again, Heritage explains how cap and trade transfers money out of the private sector, where money is used to produce goods, into the public sector, where money is wasted by bureacrats on bicycle paths and gold monuments to Obama.

> …if President Obama were to sign a cap and trade bill into law, he would have to call for familial budget cuts much greater than one dollar. (For a brief explanation of how cap and trade works, go here.) As recently acknowledged by a top White

> House official, a global warming tax could generate as much as $1.9 trillion in tax revenue over eight years, which amounts to a nearly $2,000 tax every year for every American household.* Add this up over the period of a few years and we're talking about trillions of dollars in lost income for the entire U.S. economy.

And here's the chart:

How much will cap and trade cost you?

I hope the people with low income who were hoping to become rich under Obama won't be too shocked to find that the poor do better under *capitalism* not *socialism*. I mean, I hope they don't drop their television remote controls and doughnuts.

Save us Michele Bachmann!

Actually, she did save us on that mortgage cramdown bill that I blogged about while back. So my pleading is not in vain.

UPDATE: Good news! Michelle Malkin says the cap and trade tax is in trouble! It turns out that the Democrats in manufacturing-intensive states are aware of what the tax will mean to their unemployment rate.

> Yesterday, I noted Henry Waxman's debate-evading maneuvers to try and facilitate passage of the massive eco-tax/"climate change" bill.
>
> The NRCC sent out a helpful fact sheet outlining why the radical green plan is really in trouble. You can thank opposition from Democrats in manufacturing and energy-producing states.

Michelle has all the citations from the Democrat politicians who are never going to vote for this mess. So, good news!

UPDATE: My post on the fraud involved in the "polar ice caps are melting" myth.

Michele Bachmann evaluates Obama's first 100 days

May 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

I *do* recommend that you watch at least the CNBC video clip below, as she *is* wearing my favorite color (white).

And here she is again on Fox News with Liz Claiborne.

She makes even swine flu seem *terribly* interesting.

Thanks for the Maritime Sentry for the butterflies videos.

Bill H.R. 1966 would make blogging a crime, punishable by up to two years in prison

May 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from Small Dead Animals! Thanks for the link, Kate! Canadian readers, this post that I wrote is an index to most of my recent posts on your free speech troubles with the Human Rights Commissions. I hope and pray that you guys can get your civil liberties restored, and be the True North Strong and Free, again!

UPDATE: If you are looking for the story on the hate crime bill that adds pedophiles to the list of "protected" groups, see here.

Wow, check out this story from OpenMarket blog.

Excerpt:

> Under a recently-introduced bill, H.R. 1966, bloggers would face up to two years in prison if they "harass" public figures by criticizing them in a "severe, repeated, and hostile" manner, and thereby cause them "substantial emotional distress."

I guess fascism is coming along faster than I thought.

> U.C.L.A. Law Professor Eugene Volokh, the author of a First Amendment treatise, has concluded that the bill is unconstitutional. I agree, as I explain here. As a federal appeals court noted in *DeJohn v. Temple University* (2008), "there is no harassment exception to the First Amendment's free speech clause." Speech that causes emotional distress can be protected,as the Supreme Court made clear in barring a lawsuit by Jerry Falwell over an offensive parody.

Wow, it's like the left is doing everything they accused Bush of doing, which he never did. The fascist policies they imagined were all projections onto Bush of what they intended to do themselves! Now I get it. It wasn't conservatives who were in favor of government control of private lives, it was the progressive left.

> The bill is a telling example of how the American Left has turned against free speech and civil liberties. The bill's sponsor, Linda Sanchez (D-CA), and nearly all of her 14 co-sponsors are liberals. All of them backed the federal hate-crimes bill passed by the House yesterday, which is designed to allow people who have been found innocent in state court to be reprosecuted in federal court. (That bill has been criticized by four members of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, including law professor Gail Heriot, and by civil libertarian Wendy Kaminer. Advocates of the federal hate-crimes bill once cited the defendants in the Duke Lacrosse case, who were innocent, as an example of people who should be prosecuted in federal court).

And don't forget about the hate crimes bill: I wrote previously about the two ways in

which that bill is unconstitutional.

Why do conservative Catholics support Obama so strongly?

May 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's see what the story is, from Hot Air:

> I know I've said this before on the site, and I know many devout Catholics' experiences are different, but having grown up in the Church, there's nothing here that surprises me. Most Catholics I know treat the Church's commands as essentially hortatory, to be politely ignored when need be — as in the case of torture — which is why I can't quite fathom the outrage over a pro-choicer as adamant as The One speaking at Notre Dame. His job approval this month among Catholics is *70 percent*, and 65 percent among those who attend church weekly. They're fighting a losing battle here.

Allahpundit then goes on to quote the findings here:

> Even Catholics who consider themselves "conservative" politically are more likely to approve than disapprove of Obama's job performance [49/40]…
>
> In fact, 53% of Catholics voted for Obama for president in November, almost identical to the 52.9% of the popular vote Obama won in the 2008 election. Catholics' 67% approval of Obama in his first 100 days is slightly higher than his overall 63% average approval rating for the same period. Thus, relative to the population, Catholics have become a bit more supportive of Obama as president than they were in the election.

This news makes the Wintery Knight sad… so sad, that he is tempted to cry tiny icicle tears.

I am an evangelical Protestant Christian who believes in the inerrancy of the Bible (in the autographs). I think that one of the reasons why evangelical Protestants are more politically conservative than Catholics (and some mainline Protestants) is because there is more emphasis on free market capitalism in evangelical Protestantism.

Evangelical Protestants are also more conservative on the exclusivity of salvation than Catholics are. We believe that salvation is based on knowing God, not on doing good works. I think some Catholic voters are being swayed by Obama's emphasis on helping the poor, even by government redistribution of wealth. This is also true for mainline Protestants, who seem to be increasingly concerned with social justice instead of economic liberty, and they are also soft on exclusive salvation.

UPDATE: Commenter ECM says that I should not make too much of this poll, because it is done by Gallup and their polls lately have been way off.

UPDATE: And now I'm going to rebut my own post: Pastor Joel Hunter says Obama Displaying "Wisdom and Balance" During First 100 Days. (H/T The Pugnacious Irishman)

Excerpt:

> As someone who is completely pro-life (concerned about the vulnerable outside the womb as well as inside the womb), I am encouraged by the vision (and budget) President Obama has cast for empowering those marginalized with the resources they need to become responsible citizens.
>
> …By supporting sex education and contraception, we reduce the number of unexpected pregnancies and thus reduce the likelihood of abortion. Also, by supporting expectant mothers who are feeling pressure to have an abortion because of financial concerns, education interruptions, or the baby having development problems, we again decrease the likelihood and therefore the incidence of abortion.
>
> …Even the overturning of the Mexico City Policy had a pro-life side to it, in that sex education, contraception and family planning almost certainly will decrease the number of abortions performed."

It's the social justice that does them in, and I should write something about how social justice suddenly became the main job of the church instead of spreading the Gospel and answering speculations against it. What do you expect when people abandon truth? If religion is about meeting people's needs, then everybody goes to Heaven and we should all focus on making people feel good about their sins in the here and now.

EVERYBODY: Say it with me: when you subsidize something, you get more of it. When you tax something, you get less of it. Subsidizing pre-marital sex gives you more pre-marital sex, and more accidental pregnancies, and more abortions. Reduce government subsidies and support for risky sex, and you lower the number of abortions.

UPDATE: Maritime Sentry has a much more reliable Rasmussen Reports poll shows that Catholics are more serious about their faith than the flawed Galup poll indicated.

Why Democrat policies discourage men from marrying, part 1

May 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is the first of a three-part series on how Democrat policies discourage marriage and child-rearing. Part 2 is here and Part 3 is here.

How women's voting grew government and destroyed the need for fathers

Let's start with a research paper written by economists John Lott, then at Yale University, and Lawrence Kenny, then at University of Florida. The peer-reviewed paper was published by in the University of Chicago's Journal of Political Economy. The abstract summarizes the argument I am about to make in their abstract to the paper.

> This paper examines the growth of government during this century as a result of giving women the right to vote. Using cross-sectional time-series data for 1870–1940, we examine state government expenditures and revenue as well as voting by U.S. House and Senate state delegations and the passage of a wide range of different state laws. **Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue and more liberal voting patterns for federal representatives, and these effects continued growing over time as more women took advantage of the franchise.** Contrary to many recent suggestions, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s, and it helps explain why American government started growing when it did.

Now let's look at this article by John Lott from Fox News, available here.

> For decades, polls have shown that women as a group vote differently than men. Without the women's vote, Republicans would have swept every presidential race but one between 1968 and 2004.
>
> The gender gap exists on various issues. The major one is the issue of smaller government and lower taxes, which is a much higher priority for men than for women. This is seen in divergent attitudes held by men and women on many separate issues.
>
> Women were much more opposed to the 1996 federal welfare reforms, which mandated time limits for receiving welfare and imposed some work requirements on welfare recipients. Women are also more supportive of Medicare, Social Security and educational expenditures.
>
> Studies show that women are generally more risk-averse than men. This could be why they are more supportive of government programs to ensure against certain risks in life.
>
> Women's average incomes are also slightly lower and less likely to vary over

> time, which gives single women an incentive to prefer more progressive income taxes. Once women get married, however, they bear a greater share of taxes through their husbands' relatively higher incomes — so their support for high taxes understandably declines.
>
> Marriage also provides an economic explanation for why men and women prefer different policies.
>
> Because women generally shoulder most of the child-rearing responsibilities, married men are more likely to acquire marketable skills that help them earn money outside the household. If a man gets divorced, he still retains these skills. But if a woman gets divorced, she is unable to recoup her investment in running the household.
>
> Hence, single women who believe they may marry in the future, as well as married women who most fear divorce, look to the government as a form of protection against this risk from a possible divorce: a more progressive tax system and other government transfers of wealth from rich to poor. The more certain a woman is that she doesn't risk divorce, the more likely she is to oppose government transfers.

And I have to quote his interesting conclusion:

> During the early 1970s, just as women's share of the voting population was leveling off, something else was changing: The American family began to break down, with rising divorce rates and increasing numbers of out-of-wedlock births.
>
> Over the course of women's lives, their political views on average vary more than those of men. Young single women start out being much more liberal than their male counterparts and are about 50 percent more likely to vote Democratic. As previously noted, these women also support a higher, more progressive income tax as well as more educational and welfare spending.
>
> But for married women this gap is only one-third as large. And married women with children become more conservative still. Women with children who are divorced, however, are suddenly about 75 percent more likely to vote for Democrats than single men. So as divorce rates have increased, due in large part to changing divorce laws, voters have become more liberal.

The article also explains what statistics were used to arrive at these conclusions.

Based on this research, I argue that as government grows, it takes over all of the traditional responsibilities of the mothers *and* fathers, because socialists don't trust parents to raise their own children. Government provides and controls day care, policing, counseling, schooling, finances, etc. As the sphere of government increases, there is less money for families to spend, and less influence for parents.

And as men see that there is nothing for them to do, they begin to withdraw from responsible behaviors like marriage and child-rearing. Men need to be needed, valued

and respected for doing tasks that only they can do. Men rise to challenges *if* they are in control. Men don't like to share authority with anyone, especially a meddling feminist-marxist state! More government means fewer manly men.

Let's take a quick peek ahead to tomorrow's topic to see why the welfare state is hostile to marriage and family.Stanley Kurtz, writing in the Weekly Standard, talks about feminism, contraception, abortion and the welfare state.

> In Sweden, as elsewhere, the sixties brought contraception, abortion, and growing individualism. Sex was separated from procreation, reducing the need for "shotgun weddings." These changes, along with the movement of women into the workforce, enabled and encouraged people to marry at later ages. With married couples putting off parenthood, early divorce had fewer consequences for children. That weakened the taboo against divorce. Since young couples were putting off children, the next step was to dispense with marriage and cohabit until children were desired. Americans have lived through this transformation. The Swedes have simply drawn the final conclusion: If we've come so far without marriage, why marry at all? Our love is what matters, not a piece of paper. Why should children change that?
>
> Two things prompted the Swedes to take this extra step–the welfare state and cultural attitudes. No Western economy has a higher percentage of public employees, public expenditures–or higher tax rates–than Sweden. The massive Swedish welfare state has largely displaced the family as provider. By guaranteeing jobs and income to every citizen (even children), the welfare state renders each individual independent. It's easier to divorce your spouse when the state will support you instead.
>
> The taxes necessary to support the welfare state have had an enormous impact on the family. With taxes so high, women must work. This reduces the time available for child rearing, thus encouraging the expansion of a day-care system that takes a large part in raising nearly all Swedish children over age one. Here is at least a partial realization of Simone de Beauvoir's dream of an enforced androgyny that pushes women from the home by turning children over to the state.
>
> …There are also cultural-ideological causes of Swedish family decline. Even more than in the United States, radical feminist and socialist ideas pervade the universities and the media. Many Scandinavian social scientists see marriage as a barrier to full equality between the sexes, and would not be sorry to see marriage replaced by unmarried cohabitation. A related cultural-ideological agent of marital decline is secularism. Sweden is probably the most secular country in the world. Secular social scientists (most of them quite radical) have largely replaced clerics as arbiters of public morality. Swedes themselves link the decline of marriage to secularism. And many studies confirm that, throughout the West, religiosity is associated with institutionally strong marriage, while heightened

> secularism is correlated with a weakening of marriage. Scholars have long suggested that the relatively thin Christianization of the Nordic countries explains a lot about why the decline of marriage in Scandinavia is a decade ahead of the rest of the West.

Democrats are anti-family, and pro-big-government. The reason why there is a huge weakening of marriage and skyrocketing rates of out-of-wedlock births is because Democrats have replaced the need to marry competent, responsible men with an anonymous welfare check from the state, thus depriving children of fathers. Women don't need men to rise to the occasion when they know that a welfare check, social programs and a divorce settlement is there to back them up.

This series will be continued tomorrow with another scholar and another data point.

HUGE natural gas discovery in Louisiana! And Texas, Arkansas and Pennsylvania!

May 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bobby and Supriya Jindal

GREAT NEWS! Oh, I know that I usually say some depressing things on this blog… but I'm going to make up for all that right now by bringing out the Bobby and Supriya Jindal picture to illustrate this exciting story.

Here's the story from the Wall Street Journal, courtesy of commenter ECM. The title is "U.S. Gas Fields Go From Bust to Boom".

Excerpt:

> A massive natural-gas discovery here in northern Louisiana heralds a big shift in the nation's energy landscape. After an era of declining production, the U.S. is now swimming in natural gas.
>
> Even conservative estimates suggest the Louisiana discovery — known as the Haynesville Shale, for the dense rock formation that contains the gas — could hold some 200 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. That's the equivalent of 33 billion barrels of oil, or 18 years' worth of current U.S. oil production. Some industry executives think the field could be several times that size.
>
> "There's no dry hole here," says Joan Dunlap, vice president of Petrohawk Energy Corp., standing beside a drilling rig near a former Shreveport amusement park.
>
> Huge new fields also have been found in Texas, Arkansas and Pennsylvania. One industry-backed study estimates the U.S. has more than 2,200 trillion cubic feet of gas waiting to be pumped, enough to satisfy nearly 100 years of current U.S. natural-gas demand.
>
> The discoveries have spurred energy experts and policy makers to start looking to natural gas in their pursuit of a wide range of goals: easing the impact of energy-price spikes, reducing dependence on foreign oil, lowering "greenhouse

> gas” emissions and speeding the transition to renewable fuels.
>
> …The natural-gas discoveries come as oil has become harder to find and more expensive to produce. The U.S. is increasingly reliant on supplies imported from the Middle East and other politically unstable regions. In contrast, 98% of the natural gas consumed in the U.S. is produced in North America.
>
> Coal remains plentiful in the U.S., but is likely to face new restrictions. To produce the same amount of energy, burning gas emits about half as much carbon dioxide as burning coal.

Read the whole thing!

Scary happenings around the world that the Democrats ignore

May 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was trying to work my way through the latest voluminous post from my buddy Binks over at Free Canuckistan, and I thought that I would share some links with you from stories around the world. Warning, these are pretty depressing.

Brazil: Brazilian President Will Seek to "Criminalize Words and Acts Offensive to Homosexuality".

> In a written address delivered to the Third Congress of the Brazilian Association of Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transvestites, and Transsexuals (ABGLT), Lula denounced groups, most of them Christian, who have objected to plans to outlaw such speech, calling them "hypocrites."
>
> "Some backward as well as hypocritical sectors … have criticized our government for supporting initiatives that criminalize words or acts that are offensive to homosexuality," he wrote. "That has no importance. I will continue, with the support of the entire government, to maintain that attitude."
>
> As LifeSiteNews has reported in the past, Lula has for several years sought to pass a "homophobia law" that would make it a crime to criticize homosexual behavior.

India: India is in peril. Obama is making it worse.

> The real threat is of an Islamist takeover of Pakistan. Yet Obama's strategy on Afghanistan and Pakistan (or 'Af-Pak' in Washingtonese) inspires little confidence. Throwing more money at Pakistan and keeping up the pretence that the badly splintered and weakened al-Qa'eda poses the main terrorist threat risks failure.
>
> …As Bush's national security adviser Stephen Hadley pointed out just before leaving office in January, 'You can't really solve Afghanistan without solving Pakistan.'
>
> …Yet to mend a broken policy on Pakistan, Obama is doing more of what helped to create the failure — dispensing rewards upfront.It's no wonder that even as the Taleban's sway in Pakistan spreads, the US defense secretary Robert Gates declared in Krakow that the United States 'would be very open' to an agreement in Afghanistan similar to the one Pakistan made with the Taleban which ceded control of the Swat Valley to the Taleban. All this is music to the ears of the Pakistani military and its offspring — the Taleban.

Venezuela: In Venezuela, political opposition has a price.

> In 2002-2004, almost 5 million Venezuelans signed one or more in a series of three petitions calling for an election to remove President Hugo Chavez from

> office. After Chavez survived the recall vote of August 2004, the names of those who had signed the final petition were compiled into a database using software called *Maisanta*.
>
> Now economic analysis has found evidence that petition signers paid a price in lost employment and wages. This tends to corroborate long-held suspicions that the Chavez government used the *Maisanta* database as an enemies list. The analysis also quantifies the loss to Venezuela's economy due to the regime's apparent indulgence of political vendettas.

Middle East: Woman's Inhumanity to Woman, Jihadic Style.

> …there were three carefully organized explosions on one day in Iraq, which killed a total of 80 civilians. One explosion was carried out by a woman in a black abaya, holding a 5 year-old child's hand, (probably not her own). She killed herself and 28 other Muslims in a crowded market in a Baghdad slum. The civilians, many of whom were other women, were waiting on line for free flour, cooking oil, tea, macaroni, and other staples that the police were handing out. Of course, police officers died as well.
>
> I have written a number of articles about Muslim mothers who have participated, both directly and indirectly, in the honor killing of their daughters; and about female Muslim suicide-homicide bombers who have specifically targeted other women and children.
>
> For example, in 2008, in Iraq, one of four female homicide bombers entered a tent that provided shelter to weary female religious pilgrims. She sat down, read the Koran with them, and left a bag behind that, moments later, blew them all up. Please note that she targeted *weary, religious* Muslim women.
>
> Thus, I was dismayed but not surprised when a Sunni, Al-Qaeda plot emerged, one in which male terrorists raped eighty Muslim girls and women, then turned them over to Samira Jassim who patiently, persistently, "maternally," persuaded the rape victims, (many of whom had been targeted because they were depressed or mentally ill), to "cleanse" their shame by blowing themselves and other Muslims up. Twenty eight women did so.

Middle East: Nine Muslim countries among top 13 "egregious" violators of religious freedom. (Quote below is from CNN)

> A U.S. government panel listed 13 countries Friday as "egregious" violators of religious freedom.
>
> The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's annual report named Myanmar, North Korea, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, China, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

Cuba: What Bob Gates Should Do With the Gitmo Uighurs.

> So, Defense Secretary Gates now confirms for the first time that, yes, the Obama administration intends to release "some" Uighurs into the US–said Uighurs being the 17 Chinese Muslims at GItmo whom Andy McCarthy describes as being "steeped in jihadist ideology, trained in explosives and assassination tactics, and anxious enough to get that way that they high-tailed it from China to Afghanistan to become more lethal terrorists."

Egypt: Coptic Priests and Women Assaulted.

> The Egyptian State Security forces attacked and demolished on 26/04/09 at 7.30 am the services building belonging to the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Masrah Matrouh, assaulting the Coptic priests and Coptic women and men. More than 1000 Copts have surrounded the remains of the demolished building, ready for martyrdom, said a church member.

Scotland: Scottish Schoolchildren to Attend Government Funded "Islamophobia Workshops". (from UK Press)

> The Scottish Government is to back efforts to challenge Islamophobia in schools across the country.
>
> More than £81,000 will be spent on holding more than 150 workshops in secondary schools over the next two years.
>
> The move was announced by the Education Secretary Fiona Hyslop and welcomed by the charity Show Racism The Red Card, which will put on the 90-minute workshops.

And here's one from Laura over at Pursuing Holiness…

Europe: Hey, Europe – don't like U.S. control of the internet? Then build your own.

> ICANN is a non-profit organization that coordinates things like the system that allows you to type hotair.com instead of 67.192.179.13 into your browser's address bar. It has that authority thanks to a Joint Project Agreement with the Department of Commerce. It also manages domain name disputes like the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals vs. People Eating Tasty Animals fight over peta.org. (The carnivores lost.) That JPA is going to expire on September 30th, and the United Nations and the European Union are continuing their ongoing fight to gain control.
>
> I'm not a big fan of ICANN for a number of reasons. But turning control of basic internet functions that we've come to take for granted over to the nanny-state Europeans is even worse. People who "issue binding regulations governing all aspects of public life on all member states, right down to the sizes of apples and oranges in street markets" are not fit guardians of the internet.
>
> They micromanage business and their impulse is to criminalize and control dissenting opinion…

Commenter ECM sent me this article from the UK Times featuring a video of actual torture.

> The 45-minute tape shows a man that the Government of Abu Dhabi has acknowledged is Sheikh Issa bin Zayed al-Nahyan — one of 22 royal brothers of the UAE President and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince — mercilessly and repeatedly beating a man with a cattle prod and a nailed board, burning his genitals and driving his Mercedes over him several times. He is assisted by a uniformed policeman.

This act, by a member of the United Arab Emirates Royal Family, is *actually* torture. When the USA waterboards a terrorist, it's *not* torture, and we potentially save thousands of lives from future terrorist attacks. Check out this article from the Weekly Standard regarding the Democrats' politicization of national security and foreign policy.

Excerpt:

> **…In a letter to his intelligence community colleagues last Thursday, Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair described those briefings. "From 2002 through 2006 when the use of these techniques ended, the leadership of the CIA repeatedly reported their activities both to Executive Branch policymakers and to members of Congress, and received permission to continue to use the techniques."**
>
> **That passage from Blair's letter – along with another confirming that the interrogations produced "high-value information" that provided a "deeper understanding of the al Qaeda organization attacking this country" – was dropped when language from the letter was released publicly. A spokesman for Blair attributed to the omission to normal editing procedures.**
>
> In an interview this morning, senior Bush administration official accused the DNI of "politicizing intelligence" by attempting to hide his judgment that the program had produced valuable results. This official also accused the Obama administration of double standards, citing its professed belief in transparency and its unwillingness – at least so far – to declassify memos that demonstrate the value of the interrogation techniques Obama has banned.

I have an idea. Let's kick these bums out in 2010!

Conservative Marco Rubio announces for Florida Senate seat

May 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this over on the Maritime Sentry, a conservative policy-oriented blog.

Excerpt:

> This gives the voters of Florida a chance to elect a true Conservative. Marco Rubio already has a record of standing on principle and being an articulate spokesman for Conservative ideals. Here is his official announcement video.

The video:

Cuban-Americans are SO CONSERVATIVE! They know the dangers of progressive policies.

I also noticed that the fiscal conservatives at the Club for Growth are pretty excited as well!

Excerpt:

> Rubio, a young Cuban-American, highlighted his conservative record in a recent interview with the Club for Growth – including efforts to overhaul Florida's tax system, reduce property taxes, and decrease the size of government.
>
> "His fiscally responsible, pro- growth approach in the State Capitol stands in stark contrast with other elements of the state government, led by Charlie Crist" said Club for Growth President Chris Chocola.

Also from the Washington Independent's David Weigel, good news for Pat Toomey in Pennsylvania: (H/T Club For Growth)

> The campaign of Pennsylvania GOP Senate candidate Pat Toomey announced that is has raised "raised over half a million dollars from over four thousand contributors" since the candidate entered the race on April 15. A hard number would be more interesting, but the campaign is backing up what a campaign worker told me (anonymously, for some reason) on the day of the the Specter switch: that the Website was deluged with donations.

Looking good for 2010!

UPDATE: I found even MORE good news over on the Anchoress' blog. She has a post filled with interesting links, including a link to a recent Pew Research poll. The poll shows that the public is becoming more supporting of the pro-life view and the pro-legal-gun-ownership view.

> For the first time in a Pew Research survey, nearly as many people believe it is more important to protect the right of Americans to own guns (45%) than to control gun ownership (49%). As recently as a year ago, 58% said it was more

> important to control gun ownership while 37% said it was more important to protect the right to own guns.
>
> …Currently, 46% say abortion should be legal in most cases (28%) or all cases (18%); 44% believe that abortion should be illegal in most (28%) or all cases (16%).

So, some things are going well!

Why do people favor legal private ownership and concealed carry of handguns?

May 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The entire practical case for concealed carry is based on a comparison between the number of crimes that can be prevented by brandishing a weapon versus the number of incidents where firearms are misused. Basically, supporters of the 2nd amendment (the right to bear arms) argue that the number of successful defensive handgun uses is high, and the number of accidents is low.

Take a look at this defensive handgun usage story from WSB TV: (H/T John Lott, Michelle Malkin)

> COLLEGE PARK, Ga. — A group of college students said they are lucky to be alive and they're thanking the quick-thinking of one of their own.
>
> Police said a fellow student shot and killed one of two masked me who burst into an apartment.
>
> Channel 2 Action News reporter Tom Jones met with one of the students to talk about the incident.
>
> "Apparently, his intent was to rape and murder us all," said student Charles Bailey.
>
> Bailey said he thought it was the end of his life and the lives of the 10 people inside his apartment for a birthday party after two masked men with guns burst in through a patio door.
>
> "They just came in and separated the men from the women and said, 'Give me your wallets and cell phones,'" said George Williams of the College Park Police Department.
>
> Bailey said the gunmen started counting bullets. "The other guy asked how many (bullets) he had. He said he had enough," said Bailey.
>
> That's when one student grabbed a gun out of a backpack and shot at the invader who was watching the men. The gunman ran out of the apartment.
>
> The student then ran to the room where the second gunman, identified by police as 23-year-old Calvin Lavant, was holding the women.
>
> "Apparently the guy was getting ready to rape his girlfriend. So he told the girls to get down and he started shooting. The guy jumped out of the window," said Bailey. . . . . .

If you are a supporter of gun control, how does a story like this fit into your worldview?

What if the number of defensive handgun uses was 1 million per year, but the number of accidental incidents was less than a 100? Is that worth looking into, or is this an issue where facts must yield to emotions and intuitions?

RELATED: I found a story recently in Reason magazine in which the writer explains how the banning of handguns in the UK in 1997 *DOUBLED* the violent crime rate in the next 4 years. The whole point of the case for permitting the concealed carry of legally owned handguns is that it *dramatically* reduces violent crime.

Excerpt:

> The illusion that the English government had protected its citizens by disarming them seemed credible because few realized the country had an astonishingly low level of armed crime even before guns were restricted. A government study for the years 1890-92, for example, found only three handgun homicides, an average of one a year, in a population of 30 million. In 1904 there were only four armed robberies in London, then the largest city in the world. A hundred years and many gun laws later, the BBC reported that England's firearms restrictions "seem to have had little impact in the criminal underworld." Guns are virtually outlawed, and, as the old slogan predicted, only outlaws have guns. Worse, they are increasingly ready to use them.
>
> Nearly five centuries of growing civility ended in 1954. Violent crime has been climbing ever since. Last December, London's *Evening Standard* reported that armed crime, with banned handguns the weapon of choice, was "rocketing." In the two years following the 1997 handgun ban, the use of handguns in crime rose by 40 percent, and the upward trend has continued. From April to November 2001, the number of people robbed at gunpoint in London rose 53 percent.
>
> Gun crime is just part of an increasingly lawless environment. From 1991 to 1995, crimes against the person in England's inner cities increased 91 percent. And in the four years from 1997 to 2001, the rate of violent crime more than doubled. Your chances of being mugged in London are now six times greater than in New York. England's rates of assault, robbery, and burglary are far higher than America's, and 53 percent of English burglaries occur while occupants are at home, compared with 13 percent in the U.S., where burglars admit to fearing armed homeowners more than the police. In a United Nations study of crime in 18 developed nations published in July, England and Wales led the Western world's crime league, with nearly 55 crimes per 100 people.
>
> This sea change in English crime followed a sea change in government policies. Gun regulations have been part of a more general disarmament based on the proposition that people don't need to protect themselves because society will protect them. It also will protect their neighbors: Police advise those who witness a crime to "walk on by" and let the professionals handle it.

So, given this data regarding legal gun ownership and violent crime rates, what should

our policy be?

The Family Research Center evaluates Barack Obama's first 100 days

May 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Has Obama been a good President for Christians? Should Christians have voted for him? How well has he done at fulfilling his campaign promises to pro-life and pro-marriage social conservatives?

Watch this 7-minute video and see for yourself how prudent it was for Christians to put their faith in Obama's promises. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

The Cloak Room lists the decisions of interest to Christians and social conservatives from the first 100 days of Obama's regime.

I think we should judge presidential candidates on their record, not on their speeches or their appearance. How did Obama vote before his campaign started? Did the Christians who voted for Obama take the time to find out?

This video follows the story of the Democrats' Hate Crime bill, which allows the government to imprison bloggers and Christians, (much like Iran's theocratic government). My original post on Obama's attempts to intimidate Chrysler's creditors, thereby undermining the Constitution and the rule of law, is here. And it has now been corroborated over at Hot Air, here.

Regarding the intimidation of Chrysler's creditors, Hot Air has a follow-up story from the Business Insider:

> Creditors to Chrysler describe negotiations with the company and the Obama administration as "a farce," saying the administration was bent on forcing their hands using hardball tactics and threats.
>
> Conversations with administration officials left them expecting that they would be politically targeted, two participants in the negotiations said. …
>
> The sources, who represent creditors to Chrysler, say were taken aback by the hardball tactics that the Obama administration employed to cajole them into acquiescing to plans to restructure Chrysler. One person said described the administration as the most shocking "end justifies the means" group they have ever encountered. Another characterized Obama was "the most dangerous smooth talker on the planet- and I knew Kissinger." Both were voters for Obama in the last election.
>
> **One participant in negotiations said that the administration's tactic was to present what one described as a "madman theory of the presidency" in which the President is someone to be feared because he was willing to do anything to get his way. The person said this threat was taken very seriously by his firm.**

Hot Air comments:

> Well, that's certainly reassuring. The man at the helm during one of the biggest economic crises in decades is a madman who will act in an unpredictable and irrational manner if he doesn't get his way. It sounds like they paint Obama as either a lunatic or a petulant child.

The "madman theory" of the Presidency? Is that what uninformed Christians who voted for Obama expected?

UPDATE: Ace has more here and here. (H/T Commenter ECM) And Hot Air (Ed Morrissey) has more here.

Why Democrat policies discourage men from marrying, part 2

May 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is the second of a three-part series on how Democrat policies discourage marriage and child-rearing. Part 1 is here and Part 3 is here.

How same-sex marriage separates marriage from procreation and child-rearing

This time we'll look at an article from the Weekly Standard by Stanley Kurtz. He looks at the death of marriage in Scandinavia and concludes that the policy of same-sex marriage encourages people to separate the concept of marriage from the need to provide a stable environment in which to raise children. This results in fewer people getting married.

Let's take a look at his conclusion, first.

> A majority of children in Sweden and Norway are born out of wedlock. Sixty percent of first-born children in Denmark have unmarried parents. Not coincidentally, these countries have had something close to full gay marriage for a decade or more. Same-sex marriage has locked in and reinforced an existing Scandinavian trend toward the separation of marriage and parenthood.
>
> …More precisely, it has *further* undermined the institution. The separation of marriage from parenthood was increasing; gay marriage has widened the separation. Out-of-wedlock birthrates were rising; gay marriage has added to the factors pushing those rates higher. Instead of encouraging a society-wide return to marriage, Scandinavian gay marriage has driven home the message that marriage itself is outdated, and that virtually any family form, including out-of-wedlock parenthood, is acceptable.

Basically, same-sex marriage, and especially no-fault divorce, undermines the purpose of marriage. Marriage is for children. But when you ask same-sex marriage proponents why it should be legal, they say: because getting married is what people do when they love each other. So, the purpose of marriage for them is the happiness for adults, not bringing up children.

But if Democrats make marriage policy in order to make adults happy, then when adults aren't happy, they can break those marriages up. The vision of providing an environment for children who are biologically linked to the parents has been lost. Children will not get a stable environment if people do not put happiness second, and commitment to a serious relationship first!

Kurtz continues:

> The family dissolution rate is different from the divorce rate. Because so many Scandinavians now rear children outside of marriage, divorce rates are unreliable measures of family weakness. Instead, we need to know the rate at which

> parents (married or not) split up. Precise statistics on family dissolution are unfortunately rare. Yet the studies that have been done show that throughout Scandinavia (and the West) cohabiting couples with children break up at two to three times the rate of married parents. So rising rates of cohabitation and out-of-wedlock birth stand as proxy for rising rates of family dissolution.
>
> By that measure, Scandinavian family dissolution has only been worsening. Between 1990 and 2000, Norway's out-of-wedlock birthrate rose from 39 to 50 percent, while Sweden's rose from 47 to 55 percent. In Denmark out-of-wedlock births stayed level during the nineties (beginning at 46 percent and ending at 45 percent). But the leveling off seems to be a function of a slight increase in fertility among older couples, who marry only after multiple births (if they don't break up first). That shift masks the 25 percent increase during the nineties in cohabitation and unmarried parenthood among Danish couples (many of them young). About 60 percent of first born children in Denmark now have unmarried parents. **The rise of fragile families based on cohabitation and out-of-wedlock childbearing means that during the nineties, the total rate of family dissolution in Scandinavia significantly increased.**
>
> …And now that married parenthood has become a minority phenomenon, it has lost the critical mass required to have socially normative force. As Danish sociologists Wehner, Kambskard, and Abrahamson describe it, in the wake of the changes of the nineties, "Marriage is no longer a precondition for settling a family–neither legally nor normatively. . . . What defines and makes the foundation of the Danish family can be said to have moved from marriage to parenthood."

What is the effect of this weakening of marriage on the children?

> In 2000, Danish sociologist Mai Heide Ottosen published a study, "Samboskab, Aegteskab og Foraeldrebrud" ("Cohabitation, Marriage and Parental Breakup"), which confirmed the increased risk of family dissolution to children of unmarried parents, and gently chided Scandinavian social scientists for ignoring the "quiet revolution" of out-of-wedlock parenting.
>
> Despite the reluctance of Scandinavian social scientists to study the consequences of family dissolution for children, we do have an excellent study that followed the life experiences of *all* children born in Stockholm in 1953. (Not coincidentally, the research was conducted by a British scholar, Duncan W.G. Timms.) That study found that regardless of income or social status, parental breakup had negative effects on children's mental health. Boys living with single, separated, or divorced mothers had particularly high rates of impairment in adolescence. An important 2003 study by Gunilla Ringbäck Weitoft, et al. found that children of single parents in Sweden have more than double the rates of mortality, severe morbidity, and injury of children in two parent households. This held true after controlling for a wide range of demographic and socioeconomic

> circumstances.

Now the question is, is same-sex marriage really viewed as a weapon against traditional marriage by left-wing radicals?

Well, it certainly is in Europe:

> Kari Moxnes, a feminist sociologist specializing in divorce, is one of the most prominent of Norway's newly emerging group of public social scientists. As a scholar who sees both marriage and at-home motherhood as inherently oppressive to women, Moxnes is a proponent of nonmarital cohabitation and parenthood. In 1993, as the Norwegian legislature was debating gay marriage, Moxnes published an article, "Det tomme ekteskap" ("Empty Marriage"), in the influential liberal paper Dagbladet. She argued that Norwegian gay marriage was a sign of marriage's growing emptiness, not its strength. Although Moxnes spoke in favor of gay marriage, she treated its creation as a (welcome) death knell for marriage itself. Moxnes identified homosexuals–with their experience in forging relationships unencumbered by children–as social pioneers in the separation of marriage from parenthood. In recognizing homosexual relationships, Moxnes said, society was ratifying the division of marriage from parenthood that had spurred the rise of out-of-wedlock births to begin with.
>
> A frequent public presence, Moxnes enjoyed her big moment in 1999, when she was embroiled in a dispute with Valgerd Svarstad Haugland, minister of children and family affairs in Norway's Christian Democrat government. Moxnes had criticized Christian marriage classes for teaching children the importance of wedding vows. This brought a sharp public rebuke from Haugland. Responding to Haugland's criticisms, Moxnes invoked homosexual families as proof that "relationships" were now more important than institutional marriage.
>
> …Months before Moxnes clashed with Haugland, social historian Kari Melby had a very public quarrel with a leader of the Christian Democratic party over the conduct of Norway's energy minister, Marit Arnstad. Arnstad had gotten pregnant in office and had declined to name the father. Melby defended Arnstad, and publicly challenged the claim that children do best with both a mother and a father. In making her case, Melby praised gay parenting, along with voluntary single motherhood, as equally worthy alternatives to the traditional family. So instead of noting that an expectant mother might want to follow the example of marriage that even gays were now setting, Melby invoked homosexual families as proof that a child can do as well with one parent as two.

At the center of the Democrat defense of same-sex marriage and single motherhood is the idea that children do not deserve the stability of a two parent family, with parents who are strongly linked to the children genetically. Democrats believe that children are playthings for adults, like pets, and therefore the happiness of adults is of primary concern.

But traditional marriage isn't about adults having their needs met. Traditional marriage is *explicitly* for the the purpose of creating a next generation of people. And people who marry for this purpose, especially people who go through pre-marital counseling, *know* that children are little monsters, and they *expect* to be sacrificing their happiness for the children.

Men engage in risky, demanding, self-sacrifical behaviors, like joining the army or marrying, because of the social respect they get for doing something hard that *not everyone can do.* Making a firm commitment is a hard thing to do, and raising children is a hard thing to do. That's why we invented marriage and we attach so much social respect to this institution.

But if we divorce marriage from commitment, stability and sacrifice for the sake of the children, then men will not get involved in this higher calling. If "marriage" is just two or more people living together and children are an accident, then why should men bother sacrificing their childish irresponsibility and selfishness when this sacrifice means nothing special to society?

Kurtz concludes:

> If America is to avoid being forced into a similar choice, we'll have to resist the separation of marriage from parenthood.
>
> …AMERICANS take it for granted that, despite its recent troubles, marriage will always exist. This is a mistake. Marriage is disappearing in Scandinavia, and the forces undermining it there are active throughout the West. Perhaps the most disturbing sign for the future is the collapse of the Scandinavian tendency to marry after the second child. At the start of the nineties, 60 percent of unmarried Norwegian parents who lived together had only one child. By 2001, 56 percent of unmarried, cohabiting parents in Norway had two or more children. This suggests that someday, Scandinavian parents might simply stop getting married altogether, no matter how many children they have.

This series will be continued tomorrow with another scholar and another data point.

UPDATE: Another good essay on traditional marriage is here, courtesy of Hot Air.

Barack Obama wants to control whether you can pay for your own medical care

May 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yes, privatized health care is such a bad, bad thing. Health care is so much better in Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam.

Really? Here is a post that begs to differ by Betsy McCaughey on National Review. (H/T Commenter ECM)

Here is a dose of reality, for those who voted for the Democrats:

> President Obama pledges to provide health insurance for 46 million uninsured people and, at the same time, restrain the nation's total health spending. Covering the uninsured is a worthy goal, but it will not save money: Once they are covered, they will use 70 percent more health services overall than before, according to the Congressional Budget Office.
>
> So where will the promised savings come from? **The truth is that Americans who already have insurance will get less care.**

Well, I know this will come as shock to Democrats who based their vote for Obama on Michael Moore movies depicting health care in Cuba, but government-run heath care means skyrocketing costs and waiting lists for treatment.

> Health spending is higher in the U.S. than in Europe not because the American medical profession is less efficient, but because Americans have higher incomes: "The more people have, the more of it they tend to spend on health care," wrote David Blumenthal, a Harvard Medical School professor. Blumenthal was recently chosen by Pres. Barack Obama to be national coordinator of health information technology, a key position. In his academic writings, Blumenthal has long advocated government limits on how much health care you can get.
>
> **Patients will be dissatisfied, he admits. "Government controls on health care spending are associated with longer waits for elective procedures and reduced availability of new and expensive treatments and devices," he conceded in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (*NEJM*) in 2001.**

You need to understand that people who voted Democrat did so from a position of total ignorance about how the world actually works. They think money grows on trees. They think that "greed" is the only reason why the world isn't a utopia of equalized of outcomes, regardless of individual choices. Unfortunately, government-run health care is a done deal in the USA.

> Legislators slipped the framework for top-down government controls into the stimulus package passed in February. One provision called for computer technology that will "guide" doctors' decisions about what care is "cost-

> effective." **Beginning in 2014, Medicare and other federal programs will impose financial penalties on doctors and hospitals who are not "meaningful users" of this system.** Private insurers historically have followed Medicare's lead.

That's right. Your doctor will be coerced by the federal government to prevent you from spending your own money on your own health care. Instead, the government has decided that your money would be better spent on more valuable things like sex changes, because those are for a Democract special interest group, and you're not in that group. You're just a taxpayer, not a victim. No health care for you!

> How much leeway will your doctor have to order tests and treatments? It's hard to say, because the government can make the standard of compliance "more stringent" over time. Blumenthal says his job is not about "just putting machinery in offices." **In fact, it's about control. In a *New England Journal of Medicine* article published April 9, just after his appointment to the Obama administration was announced, Blumenthal explained that if electronic technology is to save money, doctors will have to take advantage of "clinical decision support," a term of art for computers telling doctors what to do. He predicted that "many physicians and hospitals may rebel, petitioning Congress to change the law or just resigning themselves to . . . penalties."**

Yes, I know this is hard for your People-magazine-reading Democrats to believe, but socialism leads to a loss of liberty. Yes! Isn't that crazy? If you voted for Obama, you voted for fascism! You voted for the values of the state, as expressed by the ruling elite, to be imposed on the individuals who actually provide the state with capital for their schemes. Surprise!

> **Government controls on health expenditures will reduce the availability of medical technology, such as MRIs, and cause waits for treatment.** Blumenthal says it's "debatable" whether the timely care Americans currently receive is worth the added price. Ask a cancer patient about waiting, and you'll get a different answer. **Delays lower your chance of survival.** For example, women in the U.S are more likely to have regular mammograms than are women elsewhere, according to data from the Commonwealth Fund. Their breast cancer is detected sooner. They are also treated faster and have higher survival rates than women in any other developed country, according to the CONCORD study published in 2008 in *Lancet Oncology*. These statistics include all American women, not just those with insurance.
>
> Treating cancer is costly. Nancy-Ann De Parle, newly appointed director of the White House Office of Health Reform, said on March 23, "we have to get to a system of keeping people well, rather than treating the sickness." That would

> make sense if all disease were preventable. But many cancers and other diseases are linked to genetics or unknown causes. **De Parle's pronouncement echoes the chilling explanation offered by Sir Michael Rawlins, head of Britain's National Institute of Clinical Effectiveness (NICE), for his nation's low cancer survival rates. The British National Health Service, he is quoted as saying in the *NEJM* last November, has to be fair to all patients, "not just the patients with macular degeneration or breast cancer or renal cancer. If we spend a lot of money on a few patients, we have less money to spend on everyone else."**

Isn't that great? You pay into the system based on the amount of money you earn, and then left-wing activists with degrees in Marxist Studies decide when, or even IF, you will be treated. That is what we have in this country now. And we got it by our incredible ignorance about the way the world works.

And do you know what else gets reduced or eliminated in government-run health care?

> Also, built into the U.S. health-care tab is research for cures. Five hospitals in the U.S. do more clinical trials than any entire country in Europe, including the U.K., the McKinsey Global Institute reported in December. If someone in your family has an incurable disease, you start each day hoping for a breakthrough. Yet in his writings, Blumenthal identifies innovation as a culprit driving up health spending.
>
> The health provisions in the stimulus legislation were rushed through without discussion. "Speed is essential," Blumenthal wrote in the *NEJM* last November. "Bill Clinton waited for nine months to introduce his Health Security Act in 1993, which allowed his opposition to mobilize and defeat him." This time, he added, a "savvy health advisor" will warn the president, "Hurry up, we're almost out of time for health reform."

Now ask yourself. What is the point of producing wealth in a country where your money is confiscated to pay for other people who live risky lives and never pay anything into the system. Is work worth it? Is prudent living worth it? Only the suckers produce wealth and live clean, in Obama's socialist utopia. Ignorance of economics is going to mean death for many Americans. And Democrats don't care. They want everyone to be "equal", regardless of individual choices.

UPDATE: John Lott posts that Obama thinks that US taxpayers should give up 63 billion dollars to pay for health care *abroad*.

Excerpt from MSNBC:

> The Obama administration wants the United States to spend $63 billion over the next six years to fight global diseases and provide more aid for prenatal and postnatal care, children's health and fighting tropical diseases.
>
> "We cannot fix every problem," Obama said in a written statement Tuesday. "But we have a responsibility to protect the health of our people, while saving lives,

> reducing suffering, and supporting the health and dignity of people everywhere. America can make a significant difference in meeting these challenges and that is why my administration is committed to act.”

That is more than 10% the total cost of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars in one fell swoop! At least we got good strategic value for the money spent on the wars! What can we expect from this? Obama’s enormous ego to become even more inflated while he spends other people’s money?

How Darwinian fundamentalists burn their critics at the stake

May 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's the story of Galileo and the Catholic Church. Only this time, the Darwinians refuse to look through the microscope, and the penalty isn't house arrest. Read Jerry Bergman's story in the Toledo Blade. (H/T Access Research Network)

Who is Jerry Bergman?

> Jerry Bergman is a mild-mannered, soft-spoken, and balding college professor, author, and member of Mensa – a group of people whose IQs are in the top 2 percent of the population.

And what happened to him?

> "In 1979, I was let go by Bowling Green State University openly due to my increasing disillusion with Darwinism," he said in a lecture Monday night at WLMB-TV, Channel 40, Toledo's Christian television station.

What has he been up to since?

> For the last 30 years, Mr. Bergman, 62, has interviewed hundreds of people in academia and documented cases in which he contends that careers were derailed because of doubts about evolution.
>
> The results of his interviews and research are compiled in his latest book, Slaughter of the Dissidents: The Shocking Truth about Killing the Careers of Darwin Doubters, published last fall by Leafcutter Press.

Well, these cases must deal with young-earth creationists, right?

> The students, professors, and scientists suffered not because they were advocating the teaching of biblical Creationism or Intelligent Design, he said, but for questioning or debating aspects of Charles Darwin's famous theory.

Well, this guy is a fringe scholar with fewer degrees and published papers than Richard Dawkins, right?

> Mr. Bergman has nine academic degrees, including a doctorate in education from Wayne State University, and currently teaches at Northwest State Community College in Archbold, Ohio, and the University of Toledo's Health Science campus. In 35 years as an educator, Mr. Bergman has taught college-level courses in biology, microbiology, chemistry, biochemistry, genetics, pathology, anthropology, geology, and statistics, among other subjects, and has published more than 800 academic papers.

But surely this is an isolated case?

> Publicity over the lawsuit, however, led other academics to contact him with similar stories, he said. He has since compiled a list of 3,000 cases alleging discrimination due to religious beliefs, and personally has interviewed more than 300 people in such situations.
>
> "It's unlikely today that an out-of-the-closet Darwin doubter will survive in academia," he said. And there's much at stake because a PhD requires a huge investment in time and money, averaging nine years of school and $300,000 and $500,000 in costs, he said.
>
> Rather than risk losing everything over one's personal beliefs, Mr. Bergman said he advises people to "stay in the closet until things change" and to seek change through legislation.

Is it possible that Darwinists could be so blinded by faith in materialism, that they would protect their monopoly in the the public square by censorship of their opponents?

BONUS:

Here is a video of Casey Luskin, whom I blogged about before, on Fox News, explaining how well leftists in academia respond to scientific evidence contrary to their own assumptions of naturalism and materialism. And click here for some examples of how well Darwinians do in debates with the top atheist scholars, like Michael Shermer.

By the way, if you haven't seen the movie "Expelled" yet, what are you waiting for? You get to see Richard Dawkins attribute life to unobservable aliens.

This is a must-see movie that explains how freedom of inquiry is being violated by Darwinian fascists in the academy. You can tell how warranted an idea is by how willing supporters are to defend them in public. If the true believers start to resort to judicial activism, threats and intimidation, it's a blind-faith religion!

Further study

Atheist responses to scientific arguments for theism are fun to understand. Atheists attribute the beginning of the universe to untestable theories and the fine-tuning to an unobservable multiverse. (And don't forget their lame responses to galactic, stellar and planetary habitability arguments)

UPDATE: This post seems to be quite popular! Commenter ECM sent me this additional post from Denyse O'Leary's Post-Darwinist blog. She has a citation from a scholar that, if expressed publicly in an academic setting, would be sure to doom the career of whoever uttered it. Click the link, read the quote.

Why Democrat policies discourage men from marrying, part 3

May 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is the third of a three-part series on how Democrat policies discourage marriage and child-rearing. Part 1 is here and Part 2 is here.

How no-fault divorce discourages men from marrying

This time we'll look at my favorite argument against marriage. Today's article is from Dr. Stephen Baskerville, author of the amazing book "Taken Into Custody: The War Against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family". I own two copies, one for me and one to lend out.

Let's get a look at the problem posed to marriage by the Democrat policy of no-fault divorce:

> …80 percent of divorces are unilateral. Under "no-fault," divorce becomes a power grab by one spouse, assisted by judicial officials who profit from the ensuing litigation: judges, lawyers, psychotherapists, and social workers. Involuntary divorce involves government agents forcibly removing innocent people from their homes, seizing their property, and separating them from their children. It requires long-term supervision over private life by state functionaries, including police and jails.
>
> …Invariably the first action in a divorce is to separate the children from one parent, usually the father. Even if he is innocent of any legal wrongdoing and does not agree to the divorce, the state seizes his children with no burden of proof to justify why. The burden of proof–and financial burden–falls on him to demonstrate why they should be returned.
>
> A legally unimpeachable parent can thus be arrested for seeing his own children without government authorization. He can be arrested through additional judicial directives that apply to no one but him. He can be arrested for domestic violence or child abuse, even without evidence that he has committed any. He can be arrested for not paying child support, regardless of the amount demanded. He can even be arrested for not paying an attorney or psychotherapist. There is no formal charge, no jury, no trial, and no record.

When I was a student in graduate school, I used to hate going out the door and leaving my pet parrot behind with my brother. I did not believe then, and do not now, that *anyone in the world* is capable of taking care of my bird except me. I felt awful leaving the house, and I would call home between classes just to check on him. That is how parents feel.

I could go on and on about the way that I have bonded with that little creature. And this is basically why marriage is a virtual impossibility to me, given the divorce laws enacted by Democrats and their special interest groups, (trial lawyers, feminists, academic elites,

etc.). I do not think I could survive being separated from my children for years by lawyers and courts.

> To justify this, the divorce machinery has generated hysteria against parents so inflammatory that few dare question it: child abuse, wife-beating, and nonpayment of “child support”–all propagated by feminists, bar associations, and social work bureaucracies, with federal funding. The accused parent loses his children and is abandoned by friends, family members, parishioners, and co-workers–all terrified to be associated with an accused “pedophile,” “batterer,” or “deadbeat dad.”
>
> Each of these figures is largely a hoax. There is no evidence of large numbers of fathers abandoning their families, beating their wives, and molesting their children. Divorce courts separate parents from their children, with false accusations as a rationalization.
>
> Child abuse and domestic violence have no precise definition. They are not adjudicated as assault, and accused parents do not enjoy the constitutional protections of criminal defendants. Allegations are “confirmed” not by juries but by judges or social workers. Domestic “violence” need not be violent or even physical. Official definitions include “extreme jealousy” and “constant criticizing.”
>
> Child abuse is itself the creation of welfare bureaucracies. An intact family is the safest place for women and children, since child abuse overwhelmingly occurs in single-parent homes from which the father has been removed. Britain’s Family Education Trust reports that children are up to 33 times more likely to be abused in a single-parent home than in an intact family. Domestic violence too is far more likely with the breakup of a marriage than among married couples.
>
> Yet trumped-up accusations are rampant in divorce courts, usually to eliminate fathers. Elaine Epstein of the Massachusetts Women’s Bar Association writes that “allegations of abuse are now used for tactical advantage” in custody cases, a trend documented in the Illinois Bar Journal, Yale Law Review, Rutgers Law Review, and others.
>
> The principal impediment to child abuse is thus the father. “The presence of the father placed the child at lesser risk for child sexual abuse,” concludes a study in Adolescent and Family Health. By eliminating fathers, officials pose as the solution to the problem they themselves create. Appalling as it sounds, we have created a massive army of officials with a vested interest in child abuse.

And it’s not just the separation, the legal fees, the false allegations and the criminal record. It’s the fact that I would be driven into poverty by the courts.

> The “deadbeat dad” is another creation of divorce machinery. He is far less likely to have voluntarily abandoned offspring he callously sired than to be an involuntarily divorced father who has been, as one attorney writes, “forced to finance the filching of his own children.”

> Originally justified to recover welfare costs, child support has become an entitlement for all mothers, regardless of their behavior, and a subsidy on middle-class divorce. It allows the mother–simply by divorcing–to confiscate her husband's income. It is tax-free to the recipient, and nonpayment means incarceration without trial. The Journal of Socio-Economics notes that child support serves as an "economic incentive for middle-class women to seek divorce." Economist Robert Willis calculates that one-fifth to one-third of child support payments are used for children; the rest is profit for the custodial parent.
>
> State governments also generate revenue from child support, giving them a financial incentive to make it onerous and to encourage divorce. Federal taxpayers subsidize this family destruction scheme with about $3 billion annually. Officials have admitted that the arrearages are far beyond the parents' ability to pay.
>
> Government's divorce apparatus has become a machine for destroying families, seizing children, and incarcerating parents without trial. It is the most repressive government machinery ever created in the United States.

So, the creation of no-fault divorce, an intrusion by the state on private contracts, makes marriage impossible for rational men. The stakes are just too high to be taking chances.

You can hear Dr. Baskerville on the radio with Dennis Prager and Milt Rosenberg in podcasts linked here.A more complete version of the article can be found here in Touchstone Magazine. I highly recommend the more complete version. If you are a single man, or you have male children, you really need to read it. Dr. Baskerville wrote recently about marriage and the Christian church here.

This series on Democrat's opposition to marriage and family is now complete. If you absolutely, positively have to have more on marriage, then you can read one of my most popular posts about an ideal marriage I know about, or some guest posts from my *very* happily married friend Andrew on marriage, here and here.

Democrats introduce bill to punish infanticide as a felony, not murder

May 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Sorry, the headline from before should read that infanticide up to one year will be reduced to a felony, not legalized outright! My mistake!

A post at Gateway Pundit, sent to me by the greatest commenter in the blogosphere, ECM.

Gateway Pundit has a link to the bill, but Cassy Fiano has a lot more.

Here's a bit about the bill:

> It defines infanticide as:
>
> A person commits an offense if the person wilfully by an act or omission causes the death of a child to whom the person gave birth within the 12-month period preceding the child's death
> The bill says that infanticide should not be prosecuted as murder, though, as long as:
>
> … at the time of the act or omission, the person's judgment was impaired as a result of the effects of giving birth or the effects of lactation following the birth.
> Infanticide would become a felony, punishable by no more than two years in prison, with a minimum of 180 days, and/or a fine of no more than $10,000.

We need to start getting serious about defending the pro-life view using facts and arguments. Here's some stuff to get you started. Disagreeing with people is fun once you take time to learn your stuff in detail.

- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring two great pro-life debaters, Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

Here is a new video featuring pro-life supermodel Kathy Ireland talking to Mike Huckabee, who strikes as very ignorant. (No surprise, given his terribly uninformed positions on illegal immigration and fiscal policy!)

The Wintery Knight strongly approves of pro-life supermodels!

Barack Obama's claim to save or create 150000 jobs falsified by FactCheck.org

May 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama claim that his socialist policies that attack "greedy corporations" and "the rich" are actually increasing employment rates. Now, that seems to be impossible for rational people to believe, and FactCheck.org confirms that intuition. It is not possible for socialist policies such as card check, higher taxes, increased spending, more regulation, etc. to create more jobs than are lost from the changes.

Obama's claim was:

> At President Obama's April 29 news conference, he claimed that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has "already saved or created over 150,000 jobs."

That's what he learned to believe at Harvard in his marxist rap sessions with the radical students and professors.

But how does the world really work?

> According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the economy lost more than 1.3 million jobs in the two months after he took office, and it has probably lost at least another half-million in April. The day after Obama spoke, the Department of Labor announced that another 631,000 workers (seasonally adjusted) had filed new claims for unemployment insurance the previous week.
>
> So what 150,000 jobs was Obama talking about?
>
> It turns out the president's claim is really an estimate of what his economic advisers think the stimulus bill is doing, and not based on any evidence of its actual effects.

But how does the White House respond to the falsification of their propaganda by reality?

> We asked the White House for substantiation of Obama's claim, and a spokesman responded that the figure comes from a recent estimate by the Council of Economic Advisers. "Because the baseline for employment is obviously still strongly downward," the spokesman told us, "the estimate does not mean that employment has risen by 150,000. Rather, it means that employment is 150,000 higher than it otherwise would have been." He said the figure is an estimate of people hired to work directly on ARRA-funded projects, plus "jobs created by the tax cuts, aid to the states, and other parts of the ARRA."
>
> So when the president said his stimulus bill "already saved or created" those jobs, he was just giving an estimate produced by his own economic advisers at the White House. Furthermore, the jobs figure is based on projections done at the time ARRA was passed. Recipients of ARRA spending aren't required to report

> until later what they're doing with the money and how well it's working, so there's very little hard data on where the money is being spent, let alone how many jobs may have resulted from the legislation. The CEA incorporated some actual spending reports into its estimate, but that information is not complete.

This is the result of voting by people who know more about the lives of celebrities than they know about economics. Imagine how surprised these Democrat voters are to find out that the 1 hour spent voting was not enough time to have thought anything through. Some of them thought that Obama was better on pro-life issues and government spending than McCain for example.

Remember, Democrats caused this recession and Republicans tried to stop it.

Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper visits the troops in Afghanistan

May 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Harper: Not a primping peacock bitterly clinging to his teleprompter

Joanne over at Blue Like You has the story. (Photo credit:THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick)

Here are some of the best bits from the official government press release:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper today travelled to Afghanistan, where he visited with Canadian Forces and civilian personnel stationed in Kandahar.
>
> "From the very first day of the Afghan mission the men and women of the Canadian Forces and civilian officials, have served courageously and selflessly to help the people of Afghanistan build a better future," said the Prime Minister. "Over the course of this mission our men and women in Afghanistan have made incredible sacrifices to defend our values and our interests. It is an honour for me to meet with them, to thank them, and to let them know that their country supports them. They make us very proud."

Look, the Canadian general even put him to work as a field artillery spotter. (Photo credit:THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick)

Harper (not effeminate) calls in his third fire mission on Taliban forces: "Right 1 degree. Fire for effect!"

While Barack Obama drags 25 teleprompters with him when he travels overseas, Harper didn't bring *any* teleprompters with him, and he travels into a warzone.

Here is the description of Canada's mission in Afghanistan from the Canadian forces web site:

> Canada's efforts in Afghanistan are guided by the Afghanistan Compact, which includes a five-year framework for coordinating the work of the Afghan government and its international partners, outlining specific outcomes related to security, governance and development with benchmarks and delivery schedules.
>
> For example, a new Afghan constitution has restored the rule of law and respect for the human rights of all Afghan citizens, including women and children. The Afghan people now vote, women and girls have rights, and children are going to school.
>
> The biggest threat to rebuilding is continued violence and threats from the Taliban and al-Qaeda. In fact, terrorism is a clear and present threat to global peace and security, and terrorists used Afghanistan as a base of operations during the seven-year Taliban regime. In the interest of collective security, Canada and its international partners share a duty to help ensure that terrorism cannot take root again in Afghanistan.

And Canada is busy spending money on things like this:

> The Prime Minister announced that the Government of Canada is deepening its partnership with UNICEF and the Afghan Ministry of Education to invest in improved learning centres, construct new schools for 18,000 children in Kandahar, and provide funding for a 10-month literacy course for 2,500 women in the region.
>
> "Investing in education is vital to improving human rights and, in particular, the rights of women in Afghanistan," said the Prime Minister. "My message to the people of Afghanistan, and to our international partners is clear. Canada will do

> its part."
>
> The Prime Minister also visited Kandahar's Dahla Dam project on the Arghandab River. Eighty percent of Kandahar's population lives along the Dahla irrigation system. The Government of Canada is investing up to $50 million over three years to repair the dam and improve its surrounding irrigation system while helping train local farmers in new water management and crop production techniques.
>
> "Canada's Afghan mission is more than just a security operation. It is also about making a real difference in the quality of life for thousands of Afghan families," said the Prime Minister. "I am delighted to have had the opportunity to see, first hand, the kind of meaningful contribution Canadians are making to Afghanistan's future."

Hmmmn. Obama is spending a lot of money, too. I wonder what the trillions of dollars he spent on his special interest groups is accomplishing? Well, Warner Todd Huston at Stop the ACLU managed to track down some of it.

> If we need no other example of why government can't "stimulate" an economy, we have but to look at the use to which the city of Akron, Ohio wants to put some of its "stimulus" money. Akron, it seems, wants to spend some of that money for suicide prevention. Oh, not a general suicide prevention program that might at least employ people. No, Akron wants to build a fence on a bridge that seems to emit a siren call for jumpers to prevent them from killing themselves.
>
> Akron's All-American Bridge, a "Y" shaped structure that serves as a main artery into the city, has been a platform for suicide jumpers for so long now that area residents have nicknamed it the suicide bridge. Consequently, city officials have proposed using more than **one million dollars** of the city's "stimulus" money to erect a fence that will help prevent people from being able to use the span as a means to an end.

There's other stuff we could do with that money you know. Like making the rest of the world freer and reducing threats from terrorists to the homeland.

Democrats vote to protect pedophiles in H.R. 1913 hate crime bill

May 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from But as For Me! Thanks for the link!

UPDATE: If you are looking for the story about bloggers facing jail terms for "harassing" public figures, see here.

The indomitable Pamela Geller at Atlas Shrugs has the full story on the hate crime here. (H/T Stop the ACLU)

She links to this video of Democrats voting for protection for pedophiles, and against protections for military veterans.

And then writes this summary about the left (Democrats), and their *inevitable* drive towards fascism:

> Hate crime — hate is in the eye of the beholder, eh? And if you are a Democrat – you protect child rapists, but G-d forbid you protect the military.
>
> Hate crime legislation will be used as a tool against the right. Period. A crime is a crime. WTF is the "hate" bias? Will those screaming for the death to Jews at those demonstrations in January be prosecuted under these laws?
>
> Who are these people? Good is evil and evil is good. Good luck with that super majority, America.

Yes, remember the speeches by Evan Sayet at the Heritage Foundation. Good is evil, and evil is good. That is the essence of the left.

I'm going to steal some comments from RedState that Pamela cites.

Over at Red State:

This is really kind of mind numbing and demonstrates what is wrong with Congress.

During a House Judiciary Committee meeting, Congressman Steve King (R-IA) offered up an amendment to the hate crimes bill to exclude pedophiles from being a protected category under the hate crimes legislation.

Every single Democrat voted it down.

In the same meeting, Congressman Tom Rooney (R-FL) offered an amendment to include veterans as a class protected under the hate crimes bill. Not only did the Democrats vote it down, but Cogresswoman Debbie Waasserman Schultz attacked the Republicans for even thinking veterans might need protection under hate crimes legislation. After all, who but Democrats in Congress hate veterans?

Pamela cites Congress Louis Gohmert to explain what does this hate crime bill does.

> If a mother hears that their child has been raped and she slaps the assailant with her purse, she is now gone after as a hate criminal because this is a protected

> class. There are other protected classes in here. I mean simple exhibitionism. I have female friends who have told me over the years that some guy flashed them, and their immediate reaction was to hit them with their purse. Well now, he's committed a misdemeanor, she has committed a federal hate crime because the exhibitionism is protected under sexual orientation.

The Democrat bill says that Americans can't make moral judgments on others, because that makes those poor victims feel bad. If moral people make moral judgments against these victims, it's a federal crime. Democrats are the party of moral relativism and moral equivalence. And Christians voted for Democrats in record numbers because we were too lazy to inform ourselves about them before the election.

And one more quote from Pamela's post:

Similar state laws have resulted in persecution for Christians. In Philadelphia several years ago, a 73-year-old grandmother was jailed for trying to share Christian tracts with people at a homosexual festival.

Rep. Virginia Foxx, R-N.C., said H.R. 1913 will create "thought crimes," and U.S. Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., said it will end equality in the U.S.

Gohmert warned the law will be used against pastors – or anyone else – who speaks against homosexuality or other alternative sexual lifestyle choices. He said it provides that anyone who through speech "induces" commission of a violent hate crime "will be tried as a principal" alongside the active offender.

Critics say that would allow for prosecutions against pastors who preach a biblical ban on homosexuality if someone who hears such a message later is accused of any crime.

Andrea Lafferty, executive director of the Traditional Values Coalition, said, "A pastor's sermon could be considered 'hate speech' under this legislation if heard by an individual who then acts aggressively against persons based on 'sexual orientation.' The pastor could be prosecuted for 'conspiracy to commit a hate crime'" she said.

On the other side of the religious liberty aisle, there's Republican Senator James Inhofe's recognition of the National Day of Prayer, which Obama refused to recognize publicly.

> The New Testament's Book of James states, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." I wholeheartedly agree and personally rely on prayer in every aspect of my life. Today, we honor the "National Day of Prayer," a day that has been officially recognized since 1952 by the President of the United States, who issues an annual proclamation in its honor.
>
> "Across the country, people from different walks of faith and different walks of life gather together to pray for our nation. In 2008, over two million people attended 40,000 locally organized events nationwide, and the governors from all 50 states signed similar proclamations.
>
> "The National Day of Prayer is a traditional and fundamental part of our history. In 1775, while forming a nation, the Continental Congress invited the colonies to pray for wisdom. This first call to prayer has since become a tradition and has not

> ceased from reoccurring in the years that followed. In 1789, President George Washington issued the first presidential proclamation for prayer as he stated, “It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and to humbly implore His protection and favor…” And in 1863, President Lincoln proclaimed a day of “humiliation, fasting, and prayer.”
>
> “Prayer is as important today as it was when our Founding Fathers first formed our nation. Today, may God continue to bless you all in a special way.

Michele Malkin talks about Obama’s refusal to hold a public prayer event, which Bush did for all 8 of his years, in this Fox News video clip. He talked so much about the importance of prayer during his campaigns, but I guess the mask is off now.

I know fundamentalist Christians who voted for Barack Obama based on his skin color, (which is the same color as my skin, by the way). Unbelievable! Their votes undermined the free expression of Christian beliefs in the public square. Newsflash! Barack Obama shows no evidence of being a Christian *in his policies*. On the contrary, his policies are deeply anti-Christian, anti-capitalism and anti-liberty. His skin color should have been *irrelevant* to the decision of who to vote for, for Christians.

UPDATE: The Maritime Sentry has a relevant video with Steve King and Sean Hannity.

Ex-atheist A. N. Wilson's reasons for returning to Christianity

May 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: A very special welcome to readers from 4Simpsons blog! If you do not have Neil's blog bookmarked, you are missing out on perceptive commentary on current events and apologetics, all packaged in an attractive and functional layout! For example, check out this post on Obama's record on abortion, and this post analyzing a recent encounter with a pro-choice challenger! Neil can fight!

Thanks so much for the link and the kind words, Neil! I appreciate it very much!

UPDATE: Welcome readers from Free Canuckistan! Thanks for the linky, Mr. WebElf!

This story is all over the Christian blogosphere, so let's try to cover all the people who've written about it.

Wilson's initial statement is found in his article in the New Statesman. (H/T Truthbomb Apologetics)

Excerpt where he describes his conversion to atheism:

> …I realised that after a lifetime of churchgoing, the whole house of cards had collapsed for me – the sense of God's presence in life, and the notion that there was any kind of God, let alone a merciful God, in this brutal, nasty world.

Yeah, that's why I would never send my kids to church until they begged and pleaded to go, and knew why they were doing it. The problem of evil and suffering that he mentions is a solid argument against God, one well worth responding too, that I answer fully here.

But another cause of his atheism was peer pressure – the desire to want to be thought of as smarter than others, the desire to not be bound by morality, the desire for autonomy from the hard task of seeking after the Lord in study and service. (More on this below)

> If I bumped into Richard Dawkins (an old colleague from Oxford days) or had dinner in Washington with Christopher Hitchens (as I did either on that trip to interview Billy Graham or another), I did not have to feel out on a limb. Hitchens was excited to greet a new convert to his non-creed and put me through a catechism before uncorking some stupendous claret. "So – absolutely no God?" "Nope," I was able to say with Moonie-zeal. "No future life, nothing 'out there'?" "No," I obediently replied. At last! I could join in the creed shared by so many (most?) of my intelligent contemporaries in the western world – that men and women are purely material beings (whatever that is supposed to mean), that "this is all there is" (ditto), that God, Jesus and religion are a load of baloney: and worse than that, the cause of much (no, come on, let yourself go), most (why stint yourself – go for it, man), all the trouble in the world, from Jerusalem to Belfast, from Washington to Islamabad.

He talks about the importance of the moral argument, which is the argument that converted *me* to Christianity so many years ago. There can be no doubt that when you meet an atheist, you are talking to someone who is disdainful of the demands of the moral law, (the objective moral standard that is imprinted on every human heart).

Everyone who has any conscience at all believes in God as the ground for that morality. It is *only* the immoral man who reduces morality to personal preferences or evolved social conventions. And there are so many immoral atheists today… inventing more and more speculations like Darwinism and postmodernism in order to justify full flight from the moral law they know is there.

> I haven't mentioned morality, but one thing that finally put the tin hat on any aspirations to be an unbeliever was writing a book about the Wagner family and Nazi Germany, and realising how utterly incoherent were Hitler's neo-Darwinian ravings, and how potent was the opposition, much of it from Christians; paid for, not with clear intellectual victory, but in blood. Read Pastor Bonhoeffer's book Ethics, and ask yourself what sort of mad world is created by those who think that ethics are a purely human construct. Think of Bonhoeffer's serenity before he was hanged, even though he was in love and had everything to look forward to.

Truthbomb Apologetics also linked to an online interview with Wilson. Peter Williams, a British Christian apologist, highlights one question, "Can you love God and agree with Darwin?", from the interview.

Here is Wilson's answer:

> I think you can love God and agree with the author of The Voyage of the Beagle, the Earth Worm, and most of the Origin of Species. The Descent of Man, with its talk of savages, its belief that black people are more primitive than white people, and much nonsense besides, is an offence to the intelligence – and is obviously incompatible with Christianity. I think the jury is out about whether the theory of Natural selection, as defined by neo-Darwinians is true, and whether serious scientific doubts, as expressed in a new book Why Us by James Lefanu, deserve to be taken seriously. For example, does the discovery of the complex structure of DNA and the growth in knowledge in genetics require a rethink of Darwinian "gradualism". But these are scientific rather than religious questions.

twoorthree.net has another analysis of the initial article.

A second article emerges

Here's Wilson's more recent article from the UK Daily Mail in which he describes his reasons for returning to the Christian faith even further. (H/T Apologetics 315)

The new article has a very striking title, "Religion of hatred: Why we should no longer be cowed by the chattering classes ruling Britain who sneer at Christianity". There are some neat parts to this article as well.

For example, why are atheists who are force-fed faith so angry?

> Like many people who lost faith, I felt anger with myself for having been 'conned' by such a story. I began to rail against Christianity, and wrote a book, entitled Jesus, which endeavoured to establish that he had been no more than a messianic prophet who had well and truly failed, and died.

This next point is the critical point of this entire story. Atheists dismiss God for three reasons. 1) They want to appear intelligent in comparison others (i.e. – pride, vanity), 2) they do not want to dedicate any time to seeking and serving the person who loves them most, and 3) they believe that God should give them happiness and their needs are not met by God.

When a person becomes an atheist, they are giving an answer to questions like "does God exist?" and "does God have a will for the way I ought to live?". Atheists do not accept that their purpose in life is to work on knowing God by first accepting Christ's sacrifice for their current rebellion and then by re-prioritizing their lives based on the character and deeds of Christ.

Instead of accepting the need for a Savior, and the process of following Christ, they want to *earn* eternal life by dedicating their efforts to projects *of their own choosing*. Atheists choose a project that they like and work on that hoping to somehow gain eternal life by excelling at that. Similarly, atheists choose a different moral standard (i.e. – yoga, vegetarianism, recycling, socialism, etc.) and work to fulfill this standard of their own choosing in the hope that meeting that standard will justify them morally with God.

The thought that they would have to discover and reflect on God's revealed character and love for people revealed in the origin and design of the universe, and in the incarnation and sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, is totally repulsive to them. They seize on the most childish opinions about God, (God is unknowable, Christians are stupid hypocrites, I don't want to be moral, I don't want to be unpopular, etc.), and refuse to engage in debate to correct those childish objections.

But let's hear from Wilson about the peer-pressure he received from smart atheists:

> Like most educated people in Britain and Northern Europe (I was born in 1950), I have grown up in a culture that is overwhelmingly secular and anti-religious. The universities, broadcasters and media generally are not merely non-religious, they are positively anti.
>
> To my shame, I believe it was this that made me lose faith and heart in my youth. It felt so uncool to be religious. With the mentality of a child in the playground, I felt at some visceral level that being religious was unsexy, like having spots or wearing specs.
>
> This playground attitude accounts for much of the attitude towards Christianity that you pick up, say, from the alternative comedians, and the casual light blasphemy of jokes on TV or radio.

> It also lends weight to the fervour of the anti-God fanatics, such as the writer Christopher Hitchens and the geneticist Richard Dawkins, who think all the evil in the world is actually caused by religion.
>
> The vast majority of media pundits and intelligentsia in Britain are unbelievers, many of them quite fervent in their hatred of religion itself.

Wilson goes on to explain what finally did work to change his mind. One of the reasons for his conversion is also the second reason why I converted: discomfort with the moral evil of the godless and their hatred of God. Observing the godless can create a powerful feeling of sympathy and allegiance to God revealed in Christ, such that you naturally rebel against those who reject God.

> Rather than being cowed by them, I relish the notion that, by asserting a belief in the risen Christ, I am defying all the liberal clever-clogs on the block: cutting-edge novelists such as Martin Amis; foul-mouthed, self-satisfied TV presenters such as Jonathan Ross and Jo Brand; and the smug, tieless architects of so much television output.

One thing you need to understand about being a Christian is that the life consists in being an ambassador for Christ and then taking the lumps from those who will mock you, blacklist you, expel you, suspend you, fire you, jail you, torture you and murder you. This path of suffering is rejected by atheists and church Christians alike, even though imitating Christ's suffering for obeying God rather than men is central to Christianity.

We humans somehow internalize the idea that God should desire our happiness, and our freedom to seek that happiness in whatever activities we choose to be meaningful for us. The idea that God may have made us for a purpose – to acknowledge and defend him in public in word and deed – is so repulsive to our wills that it is totally suppressed, not just from inquiry or discussion, but in our thoughts as well.

A third argument that convinced me, that Wilson also finds convincing, is the superior character of Christians when compared to atheists. Atheists have *no idea* how horribly immoral they look to Christians – about as immoral as Christians look to themselves. For once the horizontal dimension of loving your neighbor is dropped, and the vertical dimension of loving God is taken up, the mask is off. The horror of sin is revealed.

And in the face of that horror, men can do extraordinary deeds as they respond to God's forgiveness. Actions that are irrational on a naturalistic, materialistic universe are rational for Christians. Atheists simply cannot engage in self-sacrificial behaviors against their self-interest the way that Christians can. Doctrines like eternal life, the incarnation, the atonement, and objective morality, *make* self-sacrifice rational.

> And in contrast to those ephemeral pundits of today, I have as my companions in belief such Christians as Dostoevsky, T. S. Eliot, Samuel Johnson and all the saints, known and unknown, throughout the ages.
>
> When that great saint Thomas More, Chancellor of England, was on trial for his

> life for daring to defy Henry VIII, one of his prosecutors asked him if it did not worry him that he was standing out against all the bishops of England.
>
> He replied: 'My lord, for one bishop of your opinion, I have a hundred saints of mine.'
>
> Now, I think of that exchange and of his bravery in proclaiming his faith. Our bishops and theologians, frightened as they have been by the pounding of secularist guns, need that kind of bravery more than ever.

The Christian life is a life of self-sacrifice, self-control and bravery, punctuated by periods of loneliness and defeat. It is not for everyone, and it is certainly not for atheists. Responding in love to God's initiative in reaching out to us is the most difficult task that can ever be assigned to any human agent. Atheists, having rejected the laws of logic, scientific discovery, the demands of the moral law and the obligations of moral duties, are simply not up to the task.

Wilson concludes his case with a final argument:

> …an even stronger argument is the way that Christian faith transforms individual lives – the lives of the men and women with whom you mingle on a daily basis, the man, woman or child next to you in church tomorrow morning.

Let me just say that I have not had the happiest experiences in life, as I have alluded to elsewhere. Things are going great now, as you know from my bio. But I know, and I hope that others can see, that the kind of acts of love that I unleash on my neighbors cannot – *cannot* – be explained merely as a result of human effort. Life is hard, but God makes love possible in the midst of suffering.

William Lane Craig weighs in on this Daily Mail article in his audio blog here.

I am planning an *entire series* of posts on atheism and the Christian life next week, and I have been *interviewing atheists* in order to collect data for the series of posts. I highly recommend that you tune in to the blog next week for this series!

Friday night funny: Ann Coulter on The View, Ezra Levant meets HRC censor

May 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from the Blog of Walker! Happy to have you aboard!

OK, first this fun image I found at the Western Experience.

How about rooting for our side?

And then there's this video, also from the Western Experience, featuring Ann Coulter taking on one of the foul harpies on "The View".

You go, Ann! I remember the first time I discovered Ann Coulter columns when I was working in Chicago. Without having any idea what she looked like, I had the urge to send her roses. Smitten as I was, I went so far as to contact a friend of mine who was connected with Human Events, where she was working, to ask how to do it. She said that lots of people sent Ann flowers, so then I decided not to do it. But yes, I had butterflies for several days, especially after I saw her photo.

But let's continue with more Friday night funny!

Now, I hope everyone got a chance to listen to Canadian free speech activists Mark Steyn and Ezra Levant on the Milt Rosenberg show! Recently, Ezra was in Ottawa, (the capital of Canada), and he ran into the Inquisitor-in-Chief herself: JENNIFER LYNCH. Yes, *I know* that's a very ironic name for the head fascist of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Here's a clip of what transpired at their meeting:

> I took in a bit of Question Period when I was in Ottawa yesterday. I was in the Centre Block waiting for the elevator, and a kindly old lady gave me a huge smile, and said hello. I said hello back — perhaps it was a fan.Not quite. She introduced herself to me: she was Jennifer Lynch, the Chief Commissar of the

> Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Jennifer likes wasting taxpayer money by traveling around the world to left-wing meetings.

> I wasn't particularly surprised to bump into Lynch. It's Ottawa after all, and she's furiously lobbying MPs to keep the censorship provision in the Canadian Human Rights Act — and to keep her job. I was just surprised to bump into her in Canada. Other than the foreign affairs minister and the international trade minister, I doubt there's many people in Ottawa who rack up bigger travel expenses on the public dime than Lynch does. I mean, just to pick one of her countless junkets at random, here is the expense report from one of her jaunts to Vienna — she stuck taxpayers with an $8,200 tab to go to a 15th anniversary party, commemorating… another junket.

Ezra goes on to needle her some more, and then ends with this:

> Lynch was quiet now. But I was warming to my theme: "I think I'm going to file a hate speech complaint against myself," I told her. "Who do you think would win that one?"

UPDATE: I was reading Denyse O'Leary's free speech round-up #2 of 3 here, and she linked to Debra Gyapong's photos of Ezra's events in Ottawa where all of the "hate speech" was going on. Wow, there's pictures of Mark Steyn and my one of my favorite MPs Jason Kenney. On this page, Debra asks whether Ezra Levant could be the next Governor General of Canada. I hope so!

The GG is the Queen's official representative in Canada and has to sign all legislation that the Parliament passes. Ezra should be a good GG and I don't see why Prime Minister Stephen Harper doesn't just appoint him straight away. You really need to go over to Debra's site and check out these photographs and quotations. Canada is really turning against the PC-censorship of the left.

And here is cute cartoon from Malcolm Mayes that my friend Andrew sent me :

The truth about Canada's HRCs

More Ezra Levant videos from the Michael Coren TV show, here.

And for some really great details on the latest on free speech north AND south of the border, check out Denyse's O'Leary's 3 posts on the state of free speech here, here and here. Denyse is a thousand times more witty and charming than even Ann!

Happy Friday!

Denyse O'Leary tells about Uncommon Descent's contest to win FREE STUFF

May 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Denyse has started up a contest over at Uncommon Descent where you can win the following stuff:

> 10 DVDs of Expelled,courtesy the producers.
>
> 10 DVDs of Privileged Planet, courtesy the producers.
>
> 5 subscriptions, including back issues, to the excellent Christian/theistic science and culture mag, Salvo, complete with recent back issues, courtesy the editor-in-chief.

I already have those DVDs but I want the subscription to Salvo.

Now, what must I do to win? Denyse says:

> I will pose a question based on a recent news story, and ask for responses within two weeks. I will publish the winning response in a subsequent post.
>
> You must go to Uncommon Descent and register to comment. (You will not receive any solicitations – at least none that originate from us.)
>
> *Rules:*
> 1. No more than 400 words in response. I will select the response I find most interesting and print it as a post. Be succinct.
> 2. New ideas impress me, even if I disagree. Rants and myths don't. Re abuse: Uncommon Descent is *not* competing for Troll Hole of the Year, so …
> 3. I will not correspond with anyone about the award. My In Tray is already a natural disaster. If you don't win, try again. And who knows, if this contest takes off, I may be offered more prizes.
>
> The first question will come shortly.

Well, according to Denyse's latest post on Colliding Universes, the first question *is here!*

> This is Contest Question 1 for Earn Free Stuff: **Does the multiverse help science make sense – or simply destroy science?**
>
> Question: For a free copy of Expelled, is this a way to do science? Note, you must register at Uncommon Descent to comment.

She has a link to an article that will help you answer, plus you can read my posts on the multiverse:

- My snarky post against crazy atheist responses to the fine-tuning argument (very insulting)
- My newer post on fine-tuning: much less insulting, but still somewhat insulting

- Dr. Walter Bradley's exposition of the fine-tuning argument
- Dr. Michael Strauss' take on untestable speculations to avoid the fine-tuning argument
- A related lecture on the requirements for making a habitable planet

OK, now get right to work on your answer, and I'll work on my answer. Denyse says that each contest will last about two weeks!

By the way, Denyse is a professional writer and editor. So watch your spelling and grammar!

Contrasting the moral values of an authentic Christian with an authentic Darwinist

May 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's start with someone who acted consistently on the plain, intended meaning of the Christian worldview, as expressed in the New Testament.

The case of William Wilberforce, an authentic Christian

Consider this article from the Wall Street Journal about the abolitionist William Wilberforce.

> In fact, William Wilberforce was driven by a version of Christianity that today would be derided as "fundamentalist."
>
> …William Wilberforce himself, as a student at Cambridge University in the 1770s and as a young member of Parliament soon after, had no more than a nominal sense of faith. Then, in 1785, he began reading evangelical treatises and underwent what he called "the Great Change," almost dropping out of politics to study for the ministry until friends persuaded him that he could do more good where he was.
>
> And he did a great deal of good…[h]is relentless campaign eventually led Parliament to ban the slave trade, in 1807, and to pass a law shortly after his death in 1833, making the entire institution of slavery illegal. **But it is impossible to understand Wilberforce's long antislavery campaign without seeing it as part of a larger Christian impulse. The man who prodded Parliament so famously also wrote theological tracts, sponsored missionary and charitable works, and fought for what he called the "reformation of manners," a campaign against vice.**

> **Even during the 18th century, evangelicals were derided as over-emotional "enthusiasts" by their Enlightenment-influenced contemporaries.** By the time of Wilberforce's "great change," liberal 18th-century theologians had sought to make Christianity more "reasonable," de-emphasizing sin, salvation and Christ's divinity in favor of ethics, morality and a rather distant, deistic God. Relatedly, large numbers of ordinary English people, especially among the working classes, had begun drifting away from the tepid Christianity that seemed to prevail. **Evangelicalism sought to counter such trends and to reinvigorate Christian belief.**

> **…Perhaps the leading evangelical force of the day was the Methodism of John Wesley: It focused on preaching, the close study of the Bible, communal hymn-singing and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.** Central to the Methodist project was the notion that good works and charity were essential components of the Christian life. Methodism spawned a vast network of

> churches and ramified into the evangelical branches of Anglicanism. Nearly all the social-reform movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries–from temperance and soup kitchens to slum settlement houses and prison reform–owe something to Methodism and its related evangelical strains. The campaign against slavery was the most momentous of such reforms and, over time, the most successful. **It is thus fitting that John Wesley happened to write his last letter–sent in February 1791, days before his death–to William Wilberforce. Wesley urged Wilberforce to devote himself unstintingly to his antislavery campaign, a "glorious enterprise" that opposed "that execrable villainy which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature." Wesley also urged him to "go on, in the name of God and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it."**
>
> Wesley had begun preaching against slavery 20 years before and in 1774 published an abolitionist tract, "Thoughts on Slavery." Wilberforce came into contact with the burgeoning antislavery movement in 1787, when he met Thomas Clarkson, an evangelical Anglican who had devoted his life to the abolitionist cause. Two years later, Wilberforce gave his first speech against the slave trade in Parliament.

> …This idea of slaving as sin is key. As sociologist Rodney Stark noted in "For the Glory of God" (2003), the abolition of slavery in the West during the 19th century was a uniquely Christian endeavor. When chattel slavery, long absent from Europe, reappeared in imperial form in the 16th and 17th centuries–mostly in response to the need for cheap labor in the New World–the first calls to end the practice came from pious Christians, notably the Quakers. Evangelicals, not least Methodists, quickly joined the cause, and a movement was born.

William Wilberforce believed that slaves were made in the image of God – that they were embodied souls who could be resurrected to eternal life. Wilberforce believed that the purpose of human life is to freely seek God, and to be reconciled with God through Christ. He wanted all men and women to have the opportunity to investigate and respond to God's self-revelation to them.

You can read more about Wilberforce's beliefs here and his public activities here. And you can still see modern-day abolitionists, like Scott Klusendorf, consistently acting out their Christian convictions in the public square. Only today they're called *pro-lifers*. By the way, like Wilberforce, I am also a Wesley-inspired Evangelical Protestant Christian. Hooah!

The case of Adolf Hitler, an authentic Darwinist

Now let's take a look at the opposite of Wilberforce someone who despised and rejected Christianity entirely. Adolf Hitler was strongly influenced by the anti-Christian zealot, Nietzche, but also by Darwin's evolutionary ideas such as human inequality, moral relativism, the non-existence of human rights, equality of humans with animals, denial of

the soul, and survival of the fittest.

You can see the entire case presented by tenured professor of history at the University of California, Dr. Richard Weikart, in a lecture presented at the University of California at Santa Barbara, here:

Here's the blurb on the lecture from the University of California Television web site:

> **First Aired: 11/15/2004**
> **58 minutes**
>
> In his book, From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany (2004), Richard Weikart explains the revolutionary impact Darwinism had on ethics and morality. Darwinism played a key role in the rise not only of eugenics (a movement wanting to control human reproduction to improve the human species), but also on euthanasia, infanticide, abortion, and racial extermination. This was especially important in Germany, since Hitler built his view of ethics on Darwinian principles.

But for those who don't like watching video lectures given by tenured professors, with nice Powerpoint slides, in front of a live audience of students and faculty, at a major university, then here is an article by secular Jew David Berlinksi writing in Human Events to give us the briefest of summaries of Weikart's argument.

A little bio of David Berlinski:

> David Berlinski received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Princeton University and was later a postdoctoral fellow in mathematics and molecular biology at Columbia University. He has authored works on systems analysis, differential topology, theoretical biology, analytic philosophy, and the philosophy of mathematics, as well as three novels. He has also taught philosophy, mathematics and English at such universities as Stanford, Rutgers, the City University of New York and the Universite de Paris. In addition, he has held research fellowships at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Austria and the Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques (IHES) in France.

He starts his Human Events piece like this:

> Published in 1859, Darwin's On the Origin of Species said nothing of substance about the origin of species. Or anything else, for that matter. It nonetheless persuaded scientists in England, Germany and the United States that human beings were accidents of creation. Where Darwin had seen species struggling for survival, German physicians, biologists, and professors of hygiene saw races.
>
> They drew the obvious conclusion, the one that Darwin had already drawn. In the struggle for survival, the fittest win out at the expense of their rivals. German scientists took the word expense to mean what it meant: The annihilation of less fit races.

> …At Hitler's death in May of 1945, the point was clear enough to the editorial writers of the New York *Times*. "Long before he had dreamed of achieving power," they wrote, [Hitler] had developed the principles that nations were destined to hate, oppose and destroy one another; [and] that the law of history was the struggle for survival between peoples … ".

Berlinski concludes by analyzing an answer given by Richard Dawkins to Ben Stein in the movie Expelled:

> Would he care to live in a society shaped by Darwinian principles? The question was asked of Richard Dawkins.
>
> Not at all, he at once responded.
>
> And why not?
>
> Because the result would be fascism.
>
> In this, Richard Dawkins was entirely correct; and it is entirely to his credit that he said so.

The difference between consistent Christianity and consistent Darwinism is the difference between day and night. There is not now, nor will there ever be, an atheist Wilberforce. Atheists live their lives seeking pleasure and avoiding social disapproval, and they will *never* be able to *consistently* and *rationally* sacrifice their self-interest to oppose the fashions of their culture in obedience to a higher objective moral standard.

Atheists acknowledge no higher moral standard. If there is no God and the universe is an accident, then there is *no way humans ought to be.* The only thing to do in life is to invent your own arbitrary "morals" and hold to that, or not, (you do whichever gives you pleasure, since there no ultimate accountability one way or the other), while avoiding social disapproval for breaking the arbitrary cultural standard of your time and place. That's atheist "morality".

The moral character of a consistent Christian towers above the base animal selfishness of a consistent atheist like a Colossus towers over an ant. Atheists understand morality like a cat in a library, seeing the words, but lacking all understanding of their meaning.

Here is a quote I am stealing from the Anchoress to summarize: "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried."

Other debates on atheism and morality

My summary of the William Lane Craig (of Biola) vs Shelly Kagan (of Yale) debate at Columbia University on the topic "Is God Necessary for Morality?" is here.

Here are some prior debates on the rationality of morality on atheism.

1. From Christianity Today, a written debate: Douglas Wilson vs. Christopher Hitchens
2. From the University of Western Ontario, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs. Kai Nielsen
3. From Schenectady College, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs

Richard Taylor
4. From Franklin & Marshall College, William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz (audio, video1, video2, video3, video4, video5, video6, video7)
5. From the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, William Lane Craig vs. Louise Antony (audio1, audio2, video1, video2)

Further study

A good paper by Bill Craig on the problem of rationally-grounding prescriptive morality is here. My previous posts on this blog on this topic are here and here. The first one is about whether atheists can use an ungrounded, arbitrary standard to judge God for his "moral failures", the second (better) one is on why the concept of morality is literally meaningless on atheism.

Who cut federal spending more, Bush or Obama?

May 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation is my favorite think tank, just like the Investors Business Daily podcast is my favorite podcast. These two news sources are heads and shoulders over anything else. Except for Commenter ECM, but that goes without saying.

Let's see what they have for us today!

First, let's get an answer to the question of who cut spending more, Bush (in his last year budget) or Obama (in his first budget)?

The graphic, from Keith Hennesey, tells all:

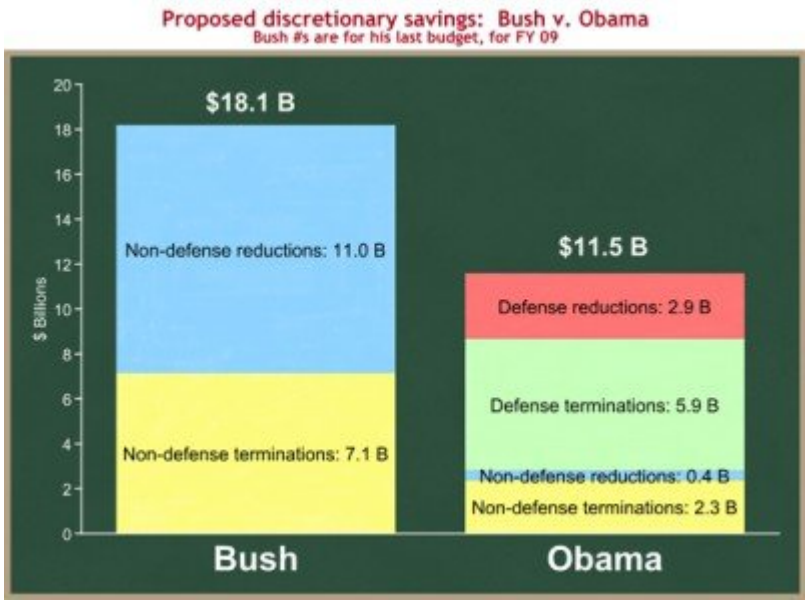

Who cut spending more? Bush or Obama?

Oh, that reminds me of a video I saw on the Maritime Sentry of the lovely Michele Bachmann trying desperately to persuade the silly people in Congress not to give more money to organizations like ACORN who are facing charges of voter fraud. But there's only *one* Michele and so *many* other unqualified people.

Well, let's see her speak anyway:

She's addressing Barney Frank, who is one of the people responsible for the recession in my opinion.

I don't know why they won't listen to her and do what she wants. When I see Michele speaking, I just want to give her whatever she wants. She seems so passionate, moral and competent, much more so than the other people who haven't actually run a business or home-schooled 5 children and 23 foster children.

Representative Michele Bachmann

She had a post on her blog about her amendment to block giving money to ACORN, too.

Excerpt:

> On Monday of this week, charges were brought in Nevada against ACORN and two of its former employees for voter registration violations, and today, the Allegheny County District Attorney in Pennsylvania charged seven employees of ACORN with forgery and election law violations, saying they filed hundreds of fraudulent voter registrations during last year's general election.
>
> It really could not be more timely as Chairman Barney Frank was just on the House floor trying to justify his amendment to the Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act that will allow groups such as ACORN that have been indicted, or have employees who have been indicted, of voter fraud to receive millions in taxpayer funding.
>
> Last week, the House Financial Services Committee unanimously passed my amendment to prohibit the flow of your money to such groups, but Chairman Frank feels it necessary to take back his support for that commonsense language and raise the bar so that organizations would have to be convicted before their access to tax dollars would be cut off.
>
> While I realize that we are all innocent until proven guilty, ACORN has established a pattern of voter registration violations that seems to pop up election after election and in state after state. The courts are the appropriate place to try guilt and innocence. Congress has a fiduciary obligation to spend tax dollars wisely.
>
> Your taxpayer money must be held to the highest standard, and not used to engage in a proven pattern of voter registration violations.

Here's another story from the Heritage Foundation about Obama's interventions into the free market. The more he meddles, the fewer people will want to run businesses in the USA, and the more unemployment there will be. You'll remember that Obama tried to

force the banks to stiff creditors for pennies on the dollar, while giving his union supporters a much better bankruptcy deal than they deserved.

> "…I am indeed fearful writing this. It's really a bad idea to speak out. Angering the President is a mistake…" What country would you expect to hear a citizen make this statement? Venezuela? Cuba? Russia? Nope, those are the words of prominent hedge fund manager Clifford Asness, who wrote a now-famous and widely circulated open letter this week describing the intimidation techniques used by President Obama and his administration.
>
> Why did the President have to resort to such enhanced techniques of intimidation? Mainly because he was asking financial lenders to engage in the same unscrupulous acts his administration has been engaging in since January, i.e. picking winners and losers without concern for free market principles. The President wanted hedge funds to force a loss on investment onto their unknowing clients, so he could reward supportive union bosses in a "controlled" (i.e. Obama controlled) bankruptcy.

The rest of the post documents the ways in which government intervention and intimidation of private business hurts the economy. And they summarize Tom Lauria's testimony that I blogged about before:

> Tom Lauria, a prominent bankruptcy judge, and Democratic Party contributor, recently told WJR in Detroit: "One of my clients was directly threatened by the White House and in essence compelled to withdraw its opposition to the deal under threat that the full force of the White House press corps would destroy its reputation if it continued to fight." Certainly the White House press corps considers themselves independent of any revenge scheme the President may cook up, but then why has their silence on these issues been so loud?

And here is the big picture lesson:

> While the left and the right can agree to disagree on certain matters of this bailout, every American should be on one side of this intimidation debate, against what Michael Barone labeled "Gangster Government". Whether trying to strong arm the dissolution of a company to benefit its union bosses, or trying to use selective declassification of national security memos to prove a policy point, the White House needs to be held to the highest (not higher) standard. The best way to end this cycle of government intimidation is to get government out of these businesses to begin with. Without an end, there shall be no means.

Attack the free market and you attack all of our liberties, especially our precious freedom of religious expression. If I cannot earn an income and make purchases without government approval, then I am not free. We have to keep talking about this story until Obama understands.

My next story is from Victor Davis Hanson, writing in Investor's Business Daily. He makes

the case that America is strong, secure and prosperous for specific reasons. Mess with the design of the country and we will lose our liberty, security and prosperity.

His first example is environmental regulation in California:

> Now in California — the nation's richest farm state — the population is skyrocketing toward 40 million. Yet hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland this year are going out of production, and with them thousands of jobs.
>
> Why? In times of chronic water shortages, environmentalists have sued to stop irrigation deliveries in order to save threatened two-inch-long delta fish that need infusions of fresh water diverted from agricultural use. And for environmental and financial reasons, we long ago stopped building canals and dams in the Sierra Nevada to find sources of replacement irrigation water.

And what about domestic energy production?

> Developing such traditional sources of energy responsibly would save us trillions of dollars in imported fuels, keep jobs at home and allow the nation a precious window of energy autonomy as we steadily transfer to more wind, solar and renewable energy.
>
> If we exploit our own energy carefully offshore and in Alaska, it will mean less sloppy foreign drilling off places like Nigeria or in the fragile Russian tundra to feed American cars and trucks.

And what about being able to project military power abroad?

> Democrats and Republicans have also taken for granted having enough military power to intervene overseas to remove tyrants like Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic, Manuel Noriega and the Taliban — and to stop atrocities whenever we can. But such power takes hundreds of billions of dollars in expensive hardware and military personnel.
>
> He also wants to keep the defense budget static, or even cut it in some places.
>
> In our have-it-both-ways generation, we want to keep our involvements abroad while not worrying as much about the practical means to meet them.

And his last example, massive deficits… and expanded entitlement programs?

> Then there is the question of national debt. We are projected to run a record $1.7 trillion deficit — and may add $9 trillion to our existing $11 trillion in aggregate debt over the next eight years.
>
> Meanwhile, the president has outlined vast new entitlement programs in health care, education, environmental programs and infrastructure.

It's like we think that the USA is a magic place that will somehow keep running smoothly if we stop believing everything that got us the top spot in the first place. Shouldn't we send Obama to North Korea or something where his policies might actually be welcomed?

Democrats can’t handle any of these issues. Let’s put Michele Bachmann in charge in 2012.

Who is more responsible for the mass murders of history? Christians or atheists?

May 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is presented as an exchange with one of my commenters in response to the story about the nurse in the UK who was suspended who offending a patient by *asking to pray for the patient*.

Here is the initial post, provocative, but regular atheist readers know that I am a lamb, and this is just a trick to get first-time atheists to comment so that I can engage them.

Here is the first rebuttal from the challenger:

1) I have never read so much rubbish as I just have. Are you seriously saying that Atheists are responsible for the deaths of millions of people and yet you include none of the religions whose wars have led to countless more deaths?

2) [Wintery Knight paraphrases]: What did Christians do to stop Hitler in WW2?

3) [Wintery Knight paraphrases]: But isn't Christianity supportive of wars of aggression such as conducted by Germany in WW2?

4) There have been many good and bad, of faiths and of no faith yet so worried are you by the simple wish of some people to have church and state separated that you use half truths, leave out pertinent facts or omit them altogether. Some of you will even lie.

If that is the face of your christianity, then it is of little wonder that people turn away from it, either by finding another faith or by having no faith at all.

5) Your example of the nurse above, mentions nothing of the fact that she was asked by the patient to stop and or that she has a record of trying to impose her beliefs on those who wish to have none of it or are content with their own faith and have no need or desire for the zealotry displayed by this woman or indeed for others who feel they have a right to inflict their views on others.

And my first rebuttal:

Thanks for your comment. Sorry I had to edit your comment a bit, I hope I didn't change the meaning of what you said. Now don't be too unhappy, with me, let's have a dialog, at least for a bit.

Here's my response:

1) Here's my **source** for the 100 million deaths due to communism, an atheist system that represses free expression of faith. I can provide you with citations of atheist leaders in communist countries explaining how war flowed from their atheist views that the universe is an accident and humans are just animals and morality is a sham. I am only interested in defending Christianity, so for this point I need you to give me the list of wars

started for specifically Christian reasons, and then show me in the Bible where Jesus sanctions these wars. I also need a body count for each war in your list. You can include a body count for the Inquisitions and the witch trials, as well. Thanks.

2) On atheism, where is the moral standard that allows you criticize what the Nazis did? Let me help. Is it your personal opinion? Or is it the evolved standard in place in your culture at this time? Or is it an objective standard that governs any culture at any time in history? I need to know what you mean by right and wrong, on atheism, before I answer the charge. Next, please find for me the part in the Bible where Jesus urges his followers to engage in wars of aggression and genocide.

3) Again, I need an explanation, on atheism, for why wars of aggression are wrong, then the Bible verse that shows where Jesus supports wars of aggression and genocide. These things are not forbidden on atheism, (nothing is), but they are forbidden in Christianity.

4) Again, on atheism, what do you mean by good and bad? Also, we do not have an official church in the USA, so we do have separation of church and state. How do you think that separation of church and state should limit the Constitutionally-guaranteed right to free speech and to freedom of religious expression? In short, why do your unhappy feelings justify the removal of fundamental human rights, rights that are grounded in God, and not grounded anywhere on atheism, I might add.

5) What do you mean when you say that the nurse was imposing her beliefs? Do you mean that speaking freely to people should be controlled by the state? If not, how do you propose to prevent people from speaking freely about whatever they wish?

Thanks. Take it easy, we've got time.

And her second rebuttal:

Well, I'm disappointed that you felt a need to rewrite my original email but I can't say I'm too surprised.

I'm sorry, but when you said you had sources for the hundred million deaths caused by Atheism, I thought it would more than just a website sponsored by a discredited former U.S. President whose actions have led to the deaths of many of his fellow countrymen and women but also to thousands of Iraqis and who has postured on the world stage but done nothing for humanity.

You ask me for proof of wars started for specifically christian reasons. Well, I could start with the second Roman invasion of Britain, which also included most of Western Europe. Not a nice time to be an unbeliever of any sort, unlike during the first Romano invasion. We can then move on to the Crusades and the invasion of the Arab nations there with the subsequent savagery that attended them. Next? How about the Spanish Armada and the French/Spanish war with Britain based purely because one of our kings fell out with the catholic religion, and we should surely remember the Spanish Inquisition, that was a nasty little war all in itself.

Let's see, we've got the British civil war, again, over religion. I'm ignoring wars in Europe

that don't directly affect the UK, by the way. But let's not forget the Spanish invasion of South America and the mindless violence that erupted from that. Or indeed, the murder of thousands of North American Indians, all done with the blessing of the church. Two examples which could justly be called Holocausts.

We have various wars with Europe after that, but mostly over Empire (but yet again, an endeavour vigorously encouraged by the church) until we come to the Great War where it was your christian duty to fight the hun as much as it was your christian duty to fight the French/British/American troops, moving swiftly on to the second Great War, where Hitler's troops invaded Europe, sent millions to the camps, all with the motto "Gott mitt uns" giving the delusion that their "work" would be approved by a higher authority and all the while, the church, either protestant or catholic did nothing. How many dead is that? Who knows but even Stalin's excesses are reckoned to be around the 20 million mark, leaving 80 million others according to your figures. I very much doubt China lost eighty million during the Chinese Revolution.

There have been various smaller atrocities around the world, all in the name of religion. **You ask me to show you in the bible where jesus specifically sanctions these wars. Why should I need to do that**, it's your religion, and others, that have caused these wars and it has been the interpretation of those biblical words which have caused so much harm in this world. I don't need to specify anything, you need to defend your argument about the interpretations based on this book of your god. Mind you, what is your view on Gods instruction to Moses to go out and kill everything of the Amalekites? I believe that is in your bible.

As for asking me to provide specific casualty details, well, I think asking me to provide the casualty list for an invasion two thousand years ago is being a bit silly really, you know I can't provide such a list any more than you can. There are, of course, estimates, such as those for the English Civil War in which it has been said the dead and injured equalled that of the Great War. But then, in the examples you quote, there aren't specific casualty lists, only approximations.

As for Atheism, why shouldn't atheists have as good a knowledge of right and right as any one else, such as Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus or even Christians. You don't have to be a christian or be religious at all to be aware of a moral code which embraces right and wrong. Again, I fail to see why I should provide you with quotes in the bible where people are urged to wage war, if there are any, again, you know as well as I do that the interpretation of that book by its readers who use it as the sole authority on what's right and wrong, go out and do harm. I doubt very much there are any parts of the bible where it says go out and torture to death all those who do not believe but that's the very thing which was done in your gods name during the Spanish Inquisition and by others throughout history. You know this, yet you argue that it doesn't happen. I find it quite odd.

As for the nurse, she was asked by the patient not to pray or proselytise yet she ignored that specific request. She had the right to speak freely, and still does, but when a person

is asked not to do something and that person ignores that request, then you are not speaking freely, your are impinging on another persons rights and no matter what your belief, you don't have that right.

Now, 'm pretty sure, that you will alter this reply as you did my first post into something that fits your particular world view of atheism and Christianity but all it will show me, is that your faith in religion is so fragile, that you feel you have to shield it from any fully justified criticism. As others of your ilk do, the truth will be distorted, facts will be omitted or presented in a poor light and you will think you have done the will of your god. You will, of course, have done nothing of the kind, unless your god is a cruel vindictive being which you claim he isn't.

For me, all this nonsense about militant atheism and religion under attack is puerile and arrant nonsense. The hierarchy of the various churches see their comfortable positions under threat from a congregation now doing a bit more than just turning up and kneeling and are trying to cloud the issue with a smokescreen about how their religion is under attack. Which it isn't.

And my second rebuttal:

Atheism's record

Here is **R.J. Rummel**, a professor of political science at University of Hawaii:

> With this understood, the Soviet Union appears the greatest megamurderer of all, apparently killing near 61,000,000 people. Stalin himself is responsible for almost 43,000,000 of these. Most of the deaths, perhaps around 39,000,000 are due to lethal forced labor in gulag and transit thereto. Communist China up to 1987, but mainly from 1949 through the cultural revolution, which alone may have seen over 1,000,000 murdered, is the second worst megamurderer. Then there are the lesser megamurderers, such as North Korea and Tito's Yugoslavia.
>
> Obviously the population that is available to kill will make a big difference in the total democide, and thus the annual percentage rate of democide is revealing. By far, the most deadly of all communist countries and, indeed, in this century by far, has been Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge. Pol Pot and his crew likely killed some 2,000,000 Cambodians from April 1975 through December 1978 out of a population of around 7,000,000. This is an annual rate of over 8 percent of the population murdered, or odds of an average Cambodian surviving Pol Pot's rule of slightly over just over 2 to 1.
>
> In sum the communist probably have murdered something like 110,000,000, or near two-thirds of all those killed by all governments, quasi-governments, and guerrillas from 1900 to 1987. Of course, the world total itself it shocking. It is several times the 38,000,000 battle-dead that have been killed in all this century's international and domestic wars. Yet the probable number of murders by the Soviet Union alone–one communist country– well surpasses this cost of

> war. And those murders of communist China almost equal it.

Communism is a worldview that explicitly repudiates the truth of religion and the idea that man is created in the image of God. If God is dead, all things are permissible. Atheism, historically, has been the moral foundation for mass murder and genocide.

Christianity's record

For all of your examples, no link to the Bible was even attempted. The assertions that wars were conducted for religious purposes was made, but not substantiated with a single piece of evidence.

I'll help you again with a list. There are only a few areas where Christian doctrine appears to have been a factor:

– the Crusades (between 2 and 100 thousand according to Encarta, I say about 30 thousand)
– the Inquisition (about 2000 dead)
– the Salem witch trials (about 25 dead)

I won't worry too much about the 25 dead from the witch trials. Let's take a closer look at the others **with the help of Dinesh D'Souza**, who has sustained these points in debates against Hitchens and other prominent atheists:

The Crusades:

"The Crusades were a belated and necessary Christian enterprise to block Islamic invasion and conquest. Remember that before Islam, virtually the entire Middle East was Christian. Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Jordan—these areas were predominantly Christian. The Muslims conquered the region, and then Muslim armies invaded Europe, conquering parts of Italy and virtually all of Spain, which the Muslims ruled for nearly 700 years. The Muslims over-ran the Balkans and were at the gates of Vienna. Edward Gibbon, no friend of Christianity, says that if the Christians hadn't fought back then, today at Oxford and Cambridge—and by extension Harvard and Duke—we'd all be studying the teachings of Muhammad in the Arabic language. Western civilization, then called Christendom, was mortally threatened. The Crusades, for all their excesses, helped to prevent this disastrous outcome."

The Inquistions:

"Well, the best scholarship on the Inquisition shows that approximately 2,000 people were killed by the Spanish Inquisition over a period of 350 years. I would never apologize for the Inquisition, which I think represented a terrible strain in late-medieval Christianity. I am glad that Christianity is different now, and the closest thing you have to a religious inquisition today would be something like the regime of the ayatollahs in Iran. Still, how can you even compare the casualties of the Inquisition to those of the atheists' regimes? Even a second-rate atheist despot like Pol Pot killed more people in a month than the Inquisition managed to do in three centuries."

More on the Crusades here.

Do belt buckles on SS troops prove anything?

Here is **a historical assessment by Dinesh of Hitler's vicious hatred of Christianity**. Also, I recently wrote a post where I **contrasted the morality of an authentic Bible-believing Christian with an authentic Darwin-believing non-Christian**. The morality you inherited today in the West is a morality left-over from the prominence of Christianity in the last few centuries. It is based on Christian ideas, and explicitly so, ideas that have NO GROUNDING on atheism.

Please explain to me how a 3-word inscription on belt buckles undergirded Hitler's wars of aggression, and explain the real record of his hatred of Christianity in his own actual writings. On your view, you would have to argue that Barack Obama is a Christian, because he claimed to be one. Don't we actually have do some scholarly study to link external activities directly back to specific Biblical teachings in order to claim that there was a meaningful link? If I taught my parrot to claim to be a Christian in his speeches, would he also be a Christian?

What is the ground for a moral standard on atheism?

Again, you had nothing to say here because there is no standard of morality on atheism. None. Atheists do what they please. Indeed, that is the whole point of it – to rebel against morality. If you would like to try again to tell me where is the content and being of the atheist moral standard, I would be delighted to hear.

Until then, the moral language you use in praising this and condemning that is literally meaningless gibberish. There is no standard that you can use, on atheism, in order to praise or denounce anything in the world, past present and future. I offered you 3 alternatives for the source of the moral standard, you declined to answer. Answer the question, please. Where is this moral code that atheists follow? What is the reason for following it when it goes against their own self-interest? What does it matter, on atheism, whether atheists follow the moral code, or not?

Are you familiar with the concept of "heat death of the universe". Eventually, the usable energy in the universe will run down and no life will be possible. This occurs whether atheists act one way or another. What does it matter for atheists ultimately if they act this way or that way? Is it not the case that what is rational, on atheism, is for atheists to simply do what pleases them most at any given moment? What reason is there, given the meaningless of life on atheism, for putting selfishness second and morality (and you need to point me to the atheist moral standard) first?

The nurse

If you ask someone to shut up, and they don't shut up, do you then remove their means of earning a living? Do you imprison them? Do you torture them? Do you murder them? Do you remove their fundamental rights by means of state coercion?

Or, do you *grow up* and realize that in life you are going to hear things you disagree with and that is not a justification for destroying the fundamental liberties of individuals by imposing fascism on individual values.

This is where the impulse in atheism that justifies mass murder and genocide comes from. You feel strongly in the removal of the fundamental rights of those who disagree with you. The idea of tolerating other views seems wrong to you. Instead, atheism seems to bring out the fascist impulse, and you use the very means that you condemn in others against those who have different beliefs than you do. Show me where this idea is in atheistic prescriptions of morality. (I.e. – where is "you ought to love your enemies" on atheism?)

Here's an idea: how about going out right now and finding the first evangelical Christian you meet and buying them lunch in order to listen to why they are a Christian and what it means to them? I did that 3 times with atheists this week, and will be posting the results of my interviews in a highly-anticipated series about what atheists think. All of these atheists are my personal friends, they know my real identity and could blow my cover at any time. Do you have any Christian friends that you love with all your heart? I do. Love for enemies is explicitly taught by Jesus in the Bible.

Conclusion

Thanks for your comment. I enjoyed responding to it. Please comment again soon, I won't mind to hear your ideas. Differences of opinions are welcome here!

UPDATE: I gave her the last word here.

Are Obama's bailouts just pay-offs to left-wing special interest groups?

May 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We looked at whether Al Gore's global warming alarmism was just a scam to increase his already considerable wealth by misleading people desperate to find meaning in life with a bunch of faith-based lies. This time, let's take a look at Obama's bailout activities and see whether the the bailouts are to stimulate the economy, or to reward people who voted for him.

For instance, California recently cut $74 million from its state budget by lowering the salaries of unionized workers. How did Obama respond? By threatening to withhold stimulus money unless the unions got the money back.

The radically leftist Los Angeles Times has the story. (H/T Hot Air)

> Reporting from Sacramento — The Obama administration is threatening to rescind billions of dollars in federal stimulus money if Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and state lawmakers do not restore wage cuts to unionized home healthcare workers approved in February as part of the budget.
>
> Schwarzenegger's office was advised this week by federal health officials that the wage reduction, which will save California $74 million, violates provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Failure to revoke the scheduled wage cut before it takes effect July 1 could cost California $6.8 billion in stimulus money, according to state officials. …
>
> The wages at issue involve workers who care for some 440,000 low-income disabled and elderly Californians. The workers, who collectively contribute millions of dollars in dues each month to the influential Service Employees International Union and the United Domestic Workers, will see the state's contribution to their wages cut from a maximum of $12.10 per hour to a maximum of $10.10.

And we know from Michelle Malkin that Obama is pressuring private companies to shaft their shareholders in order to give his union buddies a better deal than they deserve.

> Greed is good – until it gets in the way of a union-friendly restructuring deal. President Obama, generous recipient of Wall Street largesse, angrily derided a group of hedge fund managers this week as "speculators." The miffed president suggested that uncooperative firms were selfish for holding out on the government's Chrysler bankruptcy plans and refusing to make "sacrifices" to benefit the United Auto Workers.
>
> The "sacrifices" involved Chrysler debt holders agreeing to sell the debt to the government at prices determined by union-beholden bureaucrats instead of bankruptcy courts. The hedge firms balked. Obama sneered that the dissenters

> were looking for "unjustified taxpayer-funded bailout." But the holdouts never took banking bailout funds from Washington. And the targeted financial executives were simply doing what good money managers are supposed to do: put their clients' fiduciary interests first.

Michelle Malkin also reports on how Obama wants another $19 billion for his peeps at Fanie Mae. Remember, democrats caused this recession by forcing banks via regulations to make loans to Democrat voters against all common sense. Obama gets happy leftist feelings of superiority by redistributing wealth from the producers to the victims. And he thinks that if you went to expensive private schools and Harvard thanks to a rich grandmother, then you would feel good about him redistributing your money, too.

The story from Yahoo News Michelle links to says:

> Fannie Mae (FNM.P), the largest provider of U.S. home mortgage funding, said on Friday it needs more capital from the U.S. Treasury after a $23.2 billion loss in the first quarter, and warned government housing programs would cut deeper into its profitability.
>
> The government-controlled company said its regulator requested $19 billion from the Treasury under a funding commitment that on Wednesday was doubled to $200 billion. The credit, in the form of senior preferred stock purchases, was established as soaring losses led the government to push the company into conservatorship in September.
>
> As the nation's housing market reels in its worst downturn since the 1930s, credit-related expenses accounted for the majority of Fannie Mae's loss, at $20.9 billion. It also took a $5.7 billion loss on mortgage securities.
>
> Provisions for credit losses soared 85 percent as the U.S. economy faltered, expanding delinquencies — which have wreaked havoc on the entire financial system — to consumers with better credit, it said.

Oh, and here is news of a prospective bailout of Obama's buddies in the left wing media.

Inquisitr.com and Free Republic reported: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> At the annual White House Correspondents Dinner in Washington DC Saturday evening (May 9), President Barack Obama ended on a serious note, pledging his undying support for journalists and specifically newspapers.
>
> President Obama spoke about media job losses and changes in the industry, then quoted Jefferson, "if he had the choice between Government with newspapers or newspapers without Government, he'd choose the latter." The gushing was perhaps understandable at a press function, but it's what he said next that foretold of a newspaper bailout.
>
> Obama told the crowd "Your ultimate success is essential to success of our democracy" before shortly saying "Government without a tough and vibrant media is not an option for the United States of America."

> The notable thing in context is that Obama primarily in the speech talks about newspapers, with other media outlets being mentioned second (collectively), or when making a joke (for example, noting that Jefferson hadn't seen Cable News.) It would appear from the speech clearly that Obama holds the mainstream media, and particularly newspapers above online media. It is clear that when he talked about "tough and vibrant media" that he is referring to mainstream media, and newspapers in particular.
>
> He concludes with the line that the problems in the media industry are "problems worth solving," which sounds an awful lot like the final word that there's going to be a newspaper bailout.

And remember I blogged recently about Michele Bachmann's effort to prevent taxpayer money from going to ACORN while they are facing criminal charges.

It's like Bush and Haliburton. Only that Bush stuff never actually happened, but this Democrat stuff is actually happening. Everything the Democrats hated about Bush? Like opposing dissent and free speech? Bush never did any of it. Democrats are the ones who are authoring hate crime bills and criminalizing blogging. Yeah, fascism is a solely a phenomenon of the left. Always has been, always will be.

Interview with the atheist, part 1: the questions

May 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: The answers are posted here.

Recently, I have been writing about morality on atheism. In one post, I contrasted the moral behavior of a consistent, authentic Christian, William Wilberforce, with the moral behavior of a consistent, authentic non-Christian Darwinist, Adolf Hitler. In another post, I engaged an atheist commenter about who is really responsible for the mass murders in history. And the post on British novelist A. N. Wilson's recent return to Christian faith which was partly due to his discovery of the objective moral law.

I decided to interview my atheist friends about God and morality. Yes, I have atheist friends, and yes, they read the blog, and yes, they know the Wintery Knight's true identity. So, I arranged some lunch meetings with them, and I asked them, and recorded their responses. Later on, I will be posting their replies and my comments about their replies, then some general comments about the Christian Life.

Who is safe to talk to?

In this post, I am going to explain to you clearly how to engage your atheist friends on these issues. But be careful. Some atheists have fascist tendencies – when they feel offended, some of them want to bring state to bear against those who make them feel bad. Atheists struggle with morality, it just doesn't sit well on their worldview, even though they sense God's law on their hearts, like we do.

If you want some advice about who to avoid, e-mail me. The easiest way to see if the person is safe, is to ask them for reasons why someone might accept positions that they don't hold. Ask them: "Why do people believe in God?", "What's good about capitalism?", and "Why are people pro-life?" and so on. If you can't hear any good reasons presented respectfully, then move on.

How to organize the engagement

My advice is to meet with the person one-on-one for lunch. Describe the questions, but don't give them the list: 45 minutes is needed to get through all the questions below. You should buy their lunch. Try to convey to them that this will be a safe place for them to tell what they think, and that you will keep what they say in confidence. Explain that you will not be responding or arguing, just asking questions.

You should definitely pray about it beforehand. Ask God to help you to keep calm. Ask him to help you not to be defensive. Also, it may help if you practice these questions on safe people, like family members, first. Yes, they are impossible to persuade, but they won't be as inclined to censor you. You need to practice hearing views you don't agree with, and saying the words "I'm sorry!" if you offend someone.

What are the questions to ask?

Below are the questions I used last week in the 5 interviews I did so far. I have more interviews scheduled this week with an agnostic and an atheist, so I may use different

questions.

1) Do you believe that the universe was brought into being out of nothing by a person (agent)? Is it possible that this agent could communicate to us, or that we could discover something about that agent? (i.e. – does God exist, is he knowable)

2) Explain to me in which religion you were raised by your parents, if any. How did your parents approach religion in the home? (strict, lax, etc.)

3) What events in your past affected your beliefs about God's existence and knowability? (e.g. – I studied biology, comparative religions or anthropology, or I met a girl I liked)

4) What are your main objections to belief in God's existence and knowability today? (e.g – suffering, pluralism, hiddenness)

5) This salt shaker (grab salt shaker and brandish it in a non-threatening way) exists because it is made of matter and occupies space. What is the mode of existence of moral values and moral duties, on atheism? Where do they exist, and what do they exist as? (e.g. – in people's minds, as descriptions of behavior, in God's mind)

6) Free will is required in order for humans to act in ways that are morally responsible. You cannot assign praise or blame to anyone if they do not have free will. What is the rationale for free will on atheism? If there is no free will, on what grounds can atheists praise or condemn any behavior? (free will means the ability to act or not act)

7) Suppose you are an atheist journalist writing a story in atheistic North Korea in which you criticize the atheist leader Kim Jong Il. His secret police burst through the front door of your apartment and drag you off you a torture chamber. You are told that you are about to be personally executed by the dictator himself. On what basis would you plead for your life, on atheism? (i.e. – how would you persuade a powerful atheist to do right)

8) Suppose that you are strolling along the river in the winter, and you cross a bridge. Suddenly, you hear shouts for help coming from the icy water below. A little girl has fallen in the water and will die in minutes unless you jump in. There is no one else around to save her. You have no relatives/dependents. You can swim. There is an even chance that you will both die if you try to save her. Do you try? How is this rational on your worldview? (i.e. – how is self-sacrifice rational on atheism)

9) Suppose you travel back in time to the United Kingdom, when slavery is still legal! You meet William Wilberforce. He says that he has been battling slavery hard for 20 years, on the basis of Christian convictions, but that today he wants to let you try it in his place. On atheism, on what rational grounds could you try to persuade them? (If they say yes, ask them if they are pro-life and what they have done to support the pro-life movement)

10) Consider the heat death of the universe, which is the theory that the amount of usable energy is going to run out at some point in the finite future, as it disperses in space. On atheism, what is the ultimate significance of your moral decisions? How does it does it affect your fate, or the fate of anyone else you act on ultimately? What does it matter to you and to the species ultimately whether you act morally or not? (i.e. – how do your good and evil actions change where you and everyone else ends up?)

11) What is your purpose in life, and why did you choose that purpose? Is it just yours, or for everyone else too?

12) Suppose Jesus appeared to us right now and addressed you directly with the following words: "I'm really here and you need to *follow me* in order to flourish and achieve the goal for which I created you". He then glares suspiciously at me, snatches a few fries from *my* plate, eats them, and then disappears. Later on, the Ghostbusters show up and confirm that Jesus was no ghost, but really God stepping into history. And everyone in the restaurant saw and heard exactly what you and I saw and heard. How would you proceed? How would you find out what to do? (i.e. – the atheist now knows Christianity is true, and I want to see what they think they should do in order to act like a Christian)

13) What would be the most difficult thing about becoming a Christian for you? Would it be the moral demands? The demands on your time? The unpopularity, humiliation and persecution that you would face? How would you feel about publicly declaring your allegiance for Christ and facing the consequences? (i.e. – they have become a Christian, what is the most difficult adjustment from your current life?)

Your assignment

If you are an atheist, please go ahead and answer the questions, and e-mail your answers to me. Don't leave a comment, use e-mail. This is not about winning and losing, it is about promoting understanding between two opposing teams. I will post non-polemical atheist responses as separate blog posts, and link to your blog if you have one. Answers must be 1-2 lines, at most.

If you are a Christian, start practicing these questions on your safe or Christian friends, and write down their answers. Read the materials below and understand the arguments. Then interview some of your atheist friends and write down their answers. Send me the results of your interviews and I will post them as separate blog posts. Send me any other questions you think of, too!

NOTE: If I interviewed you and you didn't get all these questions, e-mail me your response to the ones I missed and I'll add your reply to the list. But you can't change the answers you already gave!

Atheists: come up with your own list of difficult questions and send them to me. I will post my replies in a separate blog post and link to your blog. Your questions should expose my weaknesses, but not be insulting. This is getting to know each other, it's not the time for snarkiness. I am doing an interview series on Christians in a couple of weeks, and I may include your questions in my list.

Debates on atheism and morality

My summary of the William Lane Craig (of Biola) vs Shelly Kagan (of Yale) debate at Columbia University on the topic "Is God Necessary for Morality?" is here.

Here are some prior debates on the rationality of morality on atheism.

1. From Christianity Today, a written debate: Douglas Wilson vs. Christopher Hitchens
2. From the University of Western Ontario, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane

Craig vs. Kai Nielsen
3. From Schenectady College, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs Richard Taylor
4. From Franklin & Marshall College, William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz (audio, video1, video2, video3, video4, video5, video6, video7)
5. From the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, William Lane Craig vs. Louise Antony (audio1, audio2, video1, video2)

Further study

A good paper by Bill Craig on the problem of rationally-grounding prescriptive morality is here. My previous posts on this blog on this topic are here and here. The first one is about whether atheists can use an ungrounded, arbitrary standard to judge God for his "moral failures", the second (better) one is on why the concept of morality is not rationally grounded on atheism.

Free speech in Canada, the United Kingdom and Cuba

May 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Jojo writes to inform me that I *must* blog about the state of free speech in Canada, so I will do it. But I am worried that my readers do not like to hear about other countries, like Canada. Just last week I blogged about Stephen Harper traveling to visit the Canadian troops in Afghanistan, and did not see a big hit count on that story, even thought I thought it was awesome!

Here is Jojo's article on free speech. In the most Conservative province of Alberta, the "conservative" Ed Stelmach that they elected in the primaries is blocking HRC reform, and increasing the HRC budget! Since only the Conservatives can win in Alberta, all the Liberal and NDP (socialist) people vote in the primary and they end up with the equivalent of Arlen Specter as the Conservative nominee!

I had blogged about Ezra Levant's support for Stephen Boissoin before, and about Lindsay Blackett's intent to reform the Alberta HRC. But it looks like Stelmach is going to block Blackett's effort to reform the Alberta HRC!

And here is the excerpt for Alberta:

> Lindsay Blackett, Minister of Culture and Community Spirit, oversees Alberta's Human Rights Commission. He announced plans to reform the human rights code and commission. He disparagingly called the commission a "Kangaroo Court," and hinted at the likelihood that the government would repeal the censorship provisions in the provincial human rights code so that the commission could not be used as a weapon against free speech.
>
> Bu Premier Stelmach sent his black Culture Minister to the back of the bus. The government's set of amendments to Alberta's human rights industry is preserving the censorship provisions.
>
> Not only that, but professing Christian Premier Stelmach is rewarding the anti-Christian bigotry of Alberta's HRC by giving them a raise – a budget increase of $1.7 million – in the middle of a recession – in a deficit budget.

Note to conservatives: have some sort of ideology test for delegates. And then we move to Ontario, where one the 4 candidates I blogged about before is promising to abolish the Ontario HRC entirely:

> The fight against human rights commissions moves to Ontario with Ontario Progressive Conservative leadership candidate Randy Hillier advocating the elimination of that province's Human Rights Commission. Mr. Hillier's leadership campaign platform includes a number of freedom-oriented and private property rights entrenching proposals. Mr. Hillier recognizes that the Human Rights Commission is guilty of serious violations of Ontarians' fundamental freedoms.

> Additionally, defending his proposal to abolish Ontario's HRC, Mr. Hillier said that real human rights are so important that they should be defending in real courts, not delegated to Kangaroo Courts.
>
> To vote in Ontario's provincial PC leadership campaign, you need to be a member of the PC party by May 14th.
>
> I haven't heard any pro-freedom comments from the other three leadership candidates, especially in reference to human rights commissions. In fact, there seems to be a real paucity of tangible policy proposals from the other three candidates, so I don't know where they stand, or what I can hold them accountable to, if any of them become the next leader of the Ontario PC Party.

Now on to the UK, where things are definitely taking a turn for the worst! The Australian has this report about Britain.

This is scaring the snark out of me:

> Countryside Restoration Trust chairman and columnist Robin Page said at a rally against the Government's anti-hunting laws in Gloucestershire in 2002: "If you are a black vegetarian Muslim asylum-seeking one-legged lesbian lorry driver, I want the same rights as you." Page was arrested, and after four months he received a letter saying no charges would be pressed, but that: "If further evidence comes to our attention whereby your involvement is implicated, we will seek to initiate proceedings." It took him five years to clear his name.

And this is worse still, because she just a child:

> In September 2006, a 14-year-old schoolgirl, Codie Stott, asked a teacher if she could sit with another group to do a science project as all the girls with her spoke only Urdu. The teacher's first response, according to Stott, was to scream at her: "It's racist, you're going to get done by the police!" Upset and terrified, the schoolgirl went outside to calm down. The teacher called the police and a few days later, presumably after officialdom had thought the matter over, she was arrested and taken to a police station, where she was fingerprinted and photographed. According to her mother, she was placed in a bare cell for 3 1/2 hours. She was questioned on suspicion of committing a racial public order offence and then released without charge. The school was said to be investigating what further action to take, not against the teacher, but against Stott. Headmaster Anthony Edkins reportedly said: "An allegation of a serious nature was made concerning a racially motivated remark. We aim to ensure a caring and tolerant attitude towards pupils of all ethnic backgrounds and will not stand for racism in any form."

The article is filled with anti free speech madness:

> A bishop was warned by the police for not having done enough to "celebrate diversity", the enforcing of which is now apparently a police function. A Christian

> home for retired clergy and religious workers lost a grant because it would not reveal to official snoopers how many of the residents were homosexual. That they had never been asked was taken as evidence of homophobia.
>
> Muslim parents who objected to young children being given books advocating same-sex marriage and adoption at one school last year had their wishes respected and the offending material withdrawn. **This year, Muslim and Christian parents at another school objecting to the same material have not only had their objections ignored but have been threatened with prosecution if they withdraw their children.**

And naturally, Christian lambs are the target of atheist wolves:

> There have been innumerable cases in recent months of people in schools, hospitals and other institutions losing their jobs because of various religious scruples, often, as in the East Germany of yore, not shouted fanatically from the rooftops but betrayed in private conversations and reported to authorities. The crime of one nurse was to offer to pray for a patient, who did not complain but merely mentioned the matter to another nurse. A primary school receptionist, Jennie Cain, whose five-year-old daughter was told off for talking about Jesus in class, faces the sack for seeking support from her church. A private email from her to other members of the church asking for prayers fell into the hands of school authorities.

Maybe things are different in the UK, which may explain a recent exchange I had with a British atheist about a recent audio debate regarding that nurse. Read the exchange and consider how far gone the UK must be when the mere fact that a non-Christian hears something they don't like is grounds for removing fundamental rights to free speech and freedom of religious expression.

I also noticed some comments from Ed West, who blogs for the UK Telegraph here, talks about the SECULAR THEOCRACY or ATHEOCRACY.

Excerpt:

> Lib Dem MP Evan Harris felt very smug about overturning Britain's long disused blasphemy laws last years, and was made "Secularist of the Year", even though Britain hasn't been in any way an Anglican theocracy since the early Victorian era. This – arresting people for having unfashionable views, however objectionable – is a real theocracy. If you want to fight for freedom, Dr Harris, fight for the peoples' right to be racist or sexist or Islamophobic or simply rude.
>
> This atheocracy derives from the incredibly liberal but also incredibly intolerant anti-discrimination morality that spread through Britain's universities in the 1970s, 80s and 90s.
>
> It became known as "political correctness", which itself became a tedious cliche because we journalists overused it…. The point of political correctness was that it

> closed down debate. Political correctness sought – in true Orwellian fashion– to make contrary ideas utterly verboten.

Everyone is so surprised to find out that atheist rule is totalitarian. Excuse me? Who do you think killed 100 million people in the 20th century alone? (Hint: It was wasn't followers of Jesus, who are obligated to love their enemies). Atheism leads to fascism! Wake up!

Where on the planet are atheists in charge of states? Well, there's North Korea, Cuba, Venezuela… Hey! What's going on in atheistic Cuba? (H/T Mere Rhetoric)

> Cuba is further limiting access to the World Wide Web for its citizens, in what many believe is an effort to rein in a small but increasingly popular group of bloggers who are critical of the government. In a move seen as aimed at anti-government bloggers, Cuba is further limiting access to the World Wide Web Only government employees, academics and researchers are allowed their own Internet accounts, which are provided by the state, but only have limited access to sites outside the island. Ordinary Cubans may open e-mail accounts accessible at many post offices, but do not have access to the Web. Many got around the restrictions by using hotel Internet services. But a new resolution barring ordinary Cubans from using hotel Internet services quietly went into place in recent weeks, according to an official with Cuba's telecom monopoly, hotel workers and bloggers.

What does Santayana say about those who are ignorant of the lessons of history?

UPDATE: Just a reminder that the Democrats are trying to pass a hate crime bill and a bill to criminalize blogging as well, in the USA.

Videos from Zo, Steven Crowder and How the World Works

May 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Alfonzo Rachel's latest video on RINOs, abortion, and our mounting debt to China:

Why can't I talk like that? Oh, because I'm a software engineering nerd! That's why.

And here's Steven Crowder's latest video on National Prayer Day:

Steven says this on Big Hollywood under the video:

> For all of you atheist Libertarians who will undoubtedly be offended by this…
> Don't worry, you'll have plenty of time to complain about it while you're in hell.

These guys are solid across the board on issues of interest to Christians and conservatives. I am so glad to see talented Christians making a difference in the blogosphere! Bookmark their blogs! They post new videos every week.

Here is one more video by How the World Works, explaining media bias:

The media is an arm of the Democratic party.

By the way, did you see my first ever Friday night funny on media bias? It was hilarious!

Unemployment rate tracking above Obama's projection

May 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have an idea. Let's put a Democrat ACORN lawyer in charge of the economy during a recession caused by Democrats and ACORN. What could go wrong?

This: (From Hot Air, H/T Ace of Spades)

> Barack Obama pushed for almost $800 billion in stimulus spending by claiming that it would save or create millions of jobs this year. Critics pointed out that most of the spending started in 2010 and more than half of it came in 2011 or later, calling the stimulus useless at best for salvaging jobs, let alone creating them. The White House has quietly agreed with its critics, according to the New York Times, and now says it expects to see no hiring rebound in 2009.

I can't believe what I'm reading. Are you telling me that the Marxist-in-Chief blew trillions of taxpayer dollars on big government wastefulness, and he created NO JOBS?

Hot Air continues:

> We just got done hearing Obama take credit for saving 150,000 jobs — which his administration never documented. Now we're hearing that the stimulus package demanded by Obama and passed over near-unanimous Republican objections won't actually make any difference at all. The cure, Obama and his team now admit, is private-sector growth.

Take a look at the numbers below. We are getting worse unemployment numbers for Mr. Teleprompter than if *he had never spent a dime of taxpayer money at all.*

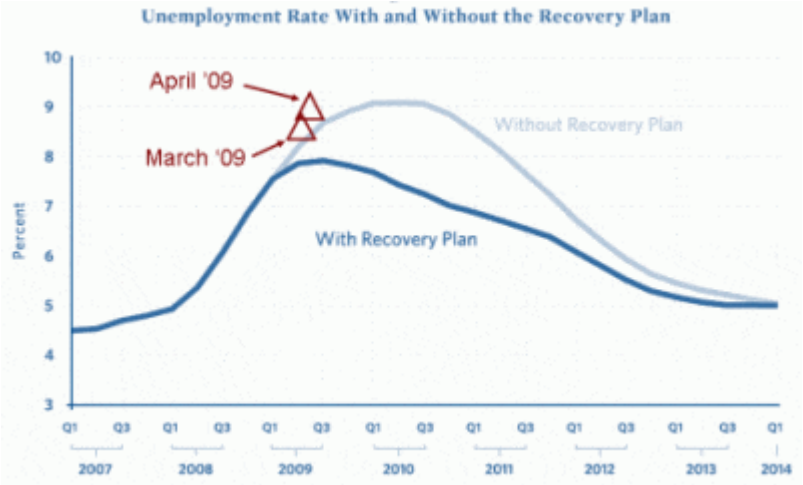

Chart by Geoff from Innocent Bystanders

Hot Air explains:

> Actually, only the red indicators come from Geoff. The chart itself comes from page 5 of an analysis prepared by Romer and Obama's council of economic

> advisers in support of the $787 billion Porkulus plan.
>
> We’re already past 8.8%, well on the way to 9.5%, above her predictions in either case. They predicted that the upper curve would occur *without* spending $800 billion on government make-work, and that passage would prevent the severe spike in unemployment. Now Romer admits that the upper curve will happen anyway.

Remember under George W. Bush, when unemployment averaged about 5% over the course of his two terms? Yeah, I miss him too.

4Simpsons explains why tariffs turn recessions into depressions

May 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was browsing around on 4Simpsons, my favorite Christian Living blog, and I found this gem of a video on Neil's latest round-up of links. I love this blog, because you get solid economics, solid social conservatism and solid apologetics.

Here's the video:

It features Amity Shlaes, whose voice I find irresistible! And Jagdish Bhagwati, too.

If you are a Christian and you voted for Democrats, please listen to this lecture by Jay Richards on the "Myths Christians Believe about Wealth and Poverty". When Jay mentions the "Trading Game" and networking theory, I had to study that in grad school e-commerce: "Metcalfe's Law" and "network externalities".

If you want to read the book by Henry Hazlitt that he mentions, it's all posted online here. But I recommend Robert P. Murphy's "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism" as the best economics book for beginners. Better than Tom Sowell's "Basic Economics"? For beginners, yes! Get both, they're all you need to understand basic economics.

Now, remember how leftist Democrats were always complaining about how much the world hated us because of Bush? Yeah, they didn't really hate us then, (because they all voted in conservatives themselves!), but they really hate Obama's trade policies now!

Take a look at what Canadians think of Obama's Buy American anti free trade policy: (H/T My best friend, Andrew who has a perfect marriage)

> The dire predictions about Buy American are coming true. From pipes and water pumps to steel beams and office furniture, a wide range of Canadian manufacturers are suddenly finding themselves shut out of traditional markets south of the border, according to industry and government officials.

> …Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) has compiled a list of seven pieces of legislation now before Congress that contain overtly protectionist language. They include bills to fund local sewer and water projects, expand broadband access, build smart electrical grids, replace Air Force One, purchase 100,000 hybrid vehicles, and build and renovate government buildings.

> …Canadian steel makers and fabricators are feeling the impact of Buy American restrictions, which were inserted into the stimulus bill to appease U.S. steel makers and workers. Companies are losing orders, threatening $1-billion-a-year worth of exports, according to Ed Whalen, president of the Canadian Institute of Steel Construction.

Who loses from Americans paying too much for materials and products? Canadian companies and consumers are hurt from lost revenue, so they lay people off and buy less

of our stuff. US companies pay more for materials, so they lay people off. US Consumers, who must pay more for products they could have got cheaper. And taxpayers, whose money is wasted by paying too much for government projects.

And who gains from protectionism? Why Obama's union supporters and donors, that's who. It's basically a legal way of rewarding the people who put you in office ,and buying the next election with money confiscated from the productive private sector, i.e. – your boss.

A comprehensive article about Obama's plans for energy policy, which will really destroy the economy and cost us piles of jobs, is here.

Should atheists or Christians be blamed for communism's 100 million deaths?

May 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from the the Western Experience! Thanks for the link, Jason!

I have had some atheist commenters lately. Initially, I try to post a provocative article to attract them, and then I make a conscious effort to be polite as they challenge my initial post. Recently, I had this exchange with a commenter called Robert, and I thought this was worth posting to see what you all thought of my style. Was I too mean?

I think it's important that angry atheists who want to blame God for atrocities should actually know what God is like, as revealed in the Bible, and especially in the life of Jesus. For that topic, check out a post by Neil, on 4Simpsons blog, that expresses the problem that I am trying to resolve below.

Here is the initial post that generated the challenge, which talks about who is more responsible for the mass murders of communism: Christians Or atheists? (By the way, I see that Chad, on Truthbomb Apologetics, has posted a breakdown of the numbers murdered and who did the murdering)

.

.

Here is Robert's first rebuttal:

Communism did not arise from atheism. In fact, some of the first communists were Christians, and there are even Christian communists today. Communism actually owes an intellectual debt to Christians and the Bible. You can read more in my article on atheism and communist atrocities found here. More articles debating Christian apologists Dinesh D'Souza and Dr. David Aikman can be found at my site too (yes, these guys actually responded to me).

It's interesting you quote Dr. Rummel as a source for your views. Do you know what else he wrote?

> Q: Is atheism the principal factor in democide, such as that committed by the "Big Three," Stalin, Mao, and Hitler?
>
> A: No. I find that religion or its lack – atheism – have hardly anything to do in general with wide-scale democide. The most important factor is totalitarian power. Whether a church, atheists, or agnostics have that power is incidental – it is having the power that is a condition of democide. Incidentally, some ideologies, such as communism, function psychologically and sociologically as though a religion. The only distinction is whether the subject is a god or a man, such as Marx, Lenin, Hirohito, Hitler, Mohammed, Kim Ill sung, Mao, etc.

Your view is explicitly debunked by the very scholar you use to support it.

.
.
And here is my reply:

I trust Rummel's numbers, not his personal opinions about the numbers. All totalitarian systems that murdered massive numbers of people have been atheistic, because the content of the worldview (materialism) does not forbid it. Atheism does not have a ground for human rights, human dignity, etc. The content of the worldview makes the murders possible.

Communism is a system of economics built upon materialist atheism. No Christian can believe in atheism, the two are mutually exclusive. Marx himself wrote about atheism and he was an aggressive atheist. His economic views emerged directly from his metaphysics. That is why Marx wrote that "religion is the opium of the people", while the New Testament says that if a man does not work, neither shall he eat. The New Testament values private, voluntary charity. Marx values redistribution of wealth by a fascist state.

Here is a citation from **a communist web site**:

> In the body of his study Marx pointed out that: "The proofs of the existence of God are either mere hollow tautologies… all proofs of the existence of God are proofs of his non-existence." (Marx, The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature, 1841, MECW 1.)
>
> …In 1841 Marx and Bauer planned to publish a radical philosophical periodical, Archives of Atheism. The views of some contemporaries give some indication of the scope of their project.
>
> Arnold Ruge wrote: "**Bruno Bauer, Karl Marx, Christiansen and Feuerbach are forming a new montagne and are making atheism their slogan. God, religion, immortality are cast down from their thrones and man is proclaimed God.**"
>
> And Georg Jung wrote to Ruge: "If Marx, Bruno Bauer and Feuerbach associate to found a theological-philosophical review, God would do well to surround himself with all the angels and indulge in self-pity, for these three will certainly drive him out of his heaven… **For Marx, at any rate, the Christian religion is one of the most immoral there is.**" (David McLellan, Marx before Marxism, 1970)
>
> **Flowing from his atheism, Marx opposed organised religion and the role of religion in politics.** A flavour of Marx's attitude can be gleaned from his journalism at the time.
>
> …in "The Leading Article" in No. 179 of the Kölnische Zeitung (1842), Marx accused the Prussian state of disseminating Christian dogma, criticised the police and the censor for protecting religion and insisted that no distinction should be made between religion as belief and the religious establishment. (MECW 1)

Robert's comment gives me a chance to plug Jay Richards' new book from Harper-Collins.

Now Jay Richards is a Princeton educated theologian and philosopher, who writes advanced books about the nature of God. Whatever he says about whether Christianity is more compatible with capitalism or communism should be considered authoritative for Christians. His specialty is explaining what is and is not compatible with orthodox Christianity, and he is the best.

—-

Money, Greed and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem

Does capitalism promote greed? Can a person follow Jesus's call to love others and also support capitalism? Was our recent economic crisis caused by flaws inherent to our free market system? Jay Richards presents a new approach to capitalism, revealing how it's fully consistent with Jesus's teachings and the Christian tradition, while also showing why this system is our best bet for renewed economic vigor.

The church is bombarded with two competing messages about money and capitalism:

* wealth is bad and causes much of the world's suffering
* wealth is good and God wants you to prosper and be rich

Richards exposes these myths, and other common misconceptions about capitalism, and reveals the surprising ways that capitalism is, in fact, the best system to respond to the biblical mandates of alleviating poverty and protecting the environment. Money, Greed, and God equips readers to take practical steps in their own lives to conduct business, worship God, and serve others without falling into the "prosperity gospel" trap.

—-

You can listen to a good lecture featuring Jay Richards on the **agreement between Christianity and capitalism here**.

—-

And don't forget agnostic historian/sociologist Rodney Stark's book: "**The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success**".

So, I think you're mistaken. What is that noise I hear? The theme from Jaws? Oh, my God! Run! It's ECM! He's coming for you!

.

.

And here is Commenter ECM, who is a deist:

Communism did not arise from atheism.

I'd say he makes a more compelling argument than you do, unless we're supposed to simply take you at your word.

In fact, some of the first communists were Christians, and there are even Christian communists today.

Wow, no kidding: you're telling me that in a day and age when Christianity was as ubiquitous as the preening of religious atheists on the Internet that some of them might

just be Christians? Wow, my mind is, like, totally blown.

Of course there is the sticky points that WK makes and the simple fact that, based on the quotes below (and writings and beliefs) of the arch-priests of communism that the two are painfully and obviously mutually-exclusive but, hey, you're making a point here…I think…so to hell with intellectual honesty.

Communism actually owes an intellectual debt to Christians and the Bible. You can read more in my article on atheism and communist atrocities found here.

Again, so what? Most of the philosophies in human history owe a debt, no matter how potentially perverse, to the ones that came before and is, generally, what one might call 'progress.' (Though i'll be the first to admit that 'progress' isn't a good unto itself.) As a key example, does it bother you that science, as we understand it, owes a tremendous debt to Christianity, i.e. it wouldn't exist in the terms we comprehend without its influence.?

More articles debating Christian apologists Dinesh D'Souza and Dr. David Aikman can be found at my site too (yes, these guys actually responded to me).

And (again!) so what? What does that have to do with what you're arguing here? I mean, other than self-promotion and/or auto-ego stroking.

With all that said, though, I figured I'd pull some quotes from the leading lights on communism to show the depths of their tolerance and belief in religion and how that might make Christian communists (whatever they are) sorely confused at best and devious liars using Christianity as a foil to make converts at worst:

Marx:

The foundation of irreligious criticism is: Man makes religion, religion does not make man. Religion is indeed the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet won through to himself or has already lost himself again. But man is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the world of man, state, society. This state and this society produce religion, which is an inverted consciousness of the world, because they are an inverted world. Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual point d'honneur, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement and its universal basis of consolation and justification. It is the fantastic realization of the human essence since the human essence has not acquired any true reality. The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion.

Lenin:

Religion is one of the forms of spiritual oppression which everywhere weighs down heavily upon the masses of the people, over burdened by their perpetual work for others, by want and isolation. Impotence of the exploited classes in their struggle against the exploiters just as inevitably gives rise to the belief in a better life after death as

impotence of the savage in his battle with nature gives rise to belief in gods, devils, miracles, and the like. Those who toil and live in want all their lives are taught by religion to be submissive and patient while here on earth, and to take comfort in the hope of a heavenly reward. But those who live by the labor of others are taught by religion to practice charity while on earth, thus offering them a very cheap way of justifying their entire existence as exploiters and selling them at a moderate price tickets to well-being in heaven. Religion is opium for the people. Religion is a sort of spiritual booze, in which the slaves of capital drown their human image, their demand for a life more or less worthy of man.

Mao Zedong:

But, of course, religion is poison. It has two great defects. It undermines the race (and) retards the progress of the country. Tibet and Mongolia have been poisoned by it.

(Note: having read several of your blog posts, I am fairly certain you would agree with the statement 'religion is poison', yes? Incidentally, this is why most blogs like this one require comment moderation: far too many religious atheists are unable to be civil and decent in debate, even when they are busily assuring the rest of us that they have lots of "empathy" for those with which they disagree.)

Anyway, those are just a few of the big-time communists (you can, I'm sure, dig up more from, say, monsters like Pol Pot and Stalin) and how they view religion and not a one of them has a kind word for it. It's also painfully clear that communism sees relgiion as an arch-rival that must be stomped out of existence with extreme prejudice, and that one of the pillars of communism is, obviously (yes, **obviously**), rabid, blood-thirsty, atheism–how anyone that's read the Communist Manifesto or the writings and speeches of any number of communist leaders could believe otherwise calls into question the intellectual honesty of the individual in question.

Round-up of stories on fiscal, social and foreign policy

May 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gateway Pundit reports that the Democrat government has raised the average wage of government employees by over $2600 during a recession caused by the Democrat's own policy of forcing private banks via regulation to make risky loans to Democrat special interest groups.

Excerpt from the CBS article:

> President Obama's call last year for "shared sacrifice" doesn't extend to federal employees, at least based on the details of his administration's 2010 budget released this week.
>
> At a time when the official unemployment rate is nearing double digits, and 6.35 million people are receiving unemployment benefits, the U.S. government is on a hiring binge.
>
> Executive branch employment — 1.98 million in 2009, excluding the Postal Service and the Defense Department — is set to increase by 15.6 percent for the 2010 fiscal year. Most of that is thanks to the Census Bureau hiring 102,000 temporary workers, but not counting them still yields a net increase of 2 percent in one year.
>
> There's little belt-tightening in evidence in Washington, D.C.: Counting benefits, the average pay per federal worker will leap from $72,800 in 2008 to $75,419 next year.

So much for communism, the economic system of those who are unable to revise their beliefs in the face of reality and history. I recommend that those who voted for Obama read Robert P. Murphy's "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism", the best economics book for complete beginners. I wonder why American atheistic leftists are still living in the capitalist USA instead of in North Korea or Cuba? Oh, I know: hypocrisy!

And then there is the story of 5 of the 6 wannabe-Jihadists from a Miami terror cell were finally convicted for their part in a plot to attack the Sears Tower in Chicago.

The Jawa Report cites this Chicago Tribune article:

> Ringleader Narseal Batiste, 35, was the only one convicted of all four terrorism-related conspiracy counts, including plotting to provide material support to terrorists and conspiring to wage war against the U.S. Batiste, who was on the vast majority of hundreds of FBI audio and video tapes, faces up to 70 years in prison.
>
> Batiste's right-hand man, 29-year-old Patrick Abraham, was convicted on three counts and faces 50 years behind bars. Convicted on two counts and facing 30

> years are 24-year-old Burson Augustin, 25-year-old Rotschild Augustine and 33-year-old Stanley Grant Phanor. Naudimar Herrera, 25, was cleared of all four charges.

Jihad Watch notes some bias in the coverage by AP, where they leave the identity and motives of the attackers to the last few paragraphs.

> …Prosecutors Richard Gregorie and Jacqueline Arango focused on the group's intent as captured on dozens of FBI audio and video recordings. Batiste is repeatedly heard espousing violence against the U.S. government and saying the men should start a "full ground war" that would "kill all the devils."

> **"I want to fight some jihad,"** Batiste says on one tape.

> A key piece of evidence is an FBI video of the entire group pledging an oath of allegiance, or "bayat," to al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden in a March 16, 2006, ceremony led by an Arabic-speaking FBI informant posing as "Brother Mohammed" from al-Qaida. Testimony also showed the men took photographs and video of possible targets in Miami, including the FBI building, a courthouse complex and a synagogue.

Oooh, but there's no such thing as media bias! The media is certainly not an arm of the Democrat party that covers their every policy blunder. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Remember, the media elite has to cover for the Democrats. Who else would give them a bailout of taxpayer money?

Interview with the atheist, part 2: the answers

May 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last time, we went over the plan for this atheist interviewing operation, including the list of questions and how you can participate by sending in your own questions and answers.

The order of the answers is rotated so different people are listed first, second, etc. Note that all attempts to malign theism or Christianity or to employ *tu quoque* arguments in your answers were DELETED. Wherever possible, I sought clarification. I will answer the questions myself later, and then you may comment on my answers.

Atheist/Agnostic/Unitarian answers: [10 respondents]

Question 1: Is there a God? [YES: 1 NO: 8] and is he knowable in principle, if he existed? [YES: 2 NO: 1]

- It just didn't seem to make sense. No matter how hard I tried to include scientific fact and personal experience into religion there came point when there was so much, indeed overwhelming evidence, that religion was based on a premise (a hypothesis) that did not stand up to testing.
- There is no God, and we can know he does not exist
- There is no God, I have no presumptions or beliefs concerning the "origins of the universe".
- Don't know. Don't know
- There is a God, but he is remote, unknowable and disinterested in humans

Question 2: Which religion were you raised in?

- Jewish. Strict
- Atheist (x3)
- Catholicism (x2)
- Catholic, strict.
- Hinduism
- Episcopalian. They took it seriously but not literally.
- Quaker

Question 3: Explain some events, not arguments yet, that altered your spiritual worldview.

- I prayed to pass an important exam, and I failed (unanswered prayer)
- None
- Parental abandonment
- I found the beliefs and practice of the Catholic church to be irrational and contrived
- Unanswered questions from early age onwards

Question 4: What are your main objections to God's existence and knowability?

- I have nothing against religious belief. I don't feel that I need it to cope with or explore life.
- All religions are all man-made
- All religions are the same
- Religions all have the same goal, to make people act morally
- Religions all have the same goal, to make civilization survive
- Belief is when you suspend critical thinking because you want, so much, for something to be true. That's not very grown up, is it?
- Evolution shows that a Creator and Designer aren't needed to explain life
- The world operates according to natural laws. Even if Creator God, no obvious mechanism how this Creator can communicate with people.
- Progress of science, naturalistic explanations of natural phenomena
- The hiddenness of God
- There is too much moral evil and suffering in the world
- The suffering in the world makes me wonder whether God is good, even if he existed
- I don't a reason why God would allow certain instances of suffering
- The plurality of religions, and the way your religion is set by where you were born
- God is unknowable because he is non-material, eternal, etc.
- I don't find the scientific arguments from the big bang and fine-tuning arguments convincing because science changes all the time
- I don't to drop my own personal moral standard and purpose and exchange it for anyone's else's
- As long as people are good, then then they should not be punished in Hell for an eternity
- Biblical contradictions
- Bible outdated
- I don't like the idea of Hell
- Religion is not testable
- There is no empirical evidence
- Canonization was done by the victors at Nicea
- Religious believers are not significantly more moral than non-believers

Question 5: What is the ontology of moral values and moral duties? [Individual relativism: 8] [Cultural relativism: 2] [Objective: 0]

- Subjective. The standard varies by each individual. What we ought to do is whatever we want to do.
- Subjective/Cultural. The standard varies by each culture's evolved social conventions. What we ought to do is to do whatever the majority of the people are doing in the society we live in. Morality is like driving/traffic laws, just do what is right for where you live
- Subjective. Abstract values can only exist in brain states of individual people
- Subjective. They reflect properties of the mind. They can be codified as law and

custom.
- Subjective. Moral values are ideas that get passed from person to person.
- Subjective/Cultural. They don't exist. What does exist is a social contract that we make with each other so that we might have a better life.
- Subjective. Morality exists in our minds and, given what we know about our animal cousins, likely evolved in us as a means to ensure group cooperation and safety.
- Subjective. Moral and ethical values appear to be properties of minds (which are themselves physical entities with complicated causal explanations).

Question 6: Does your worldview ground free will, which is required for consciousness, rationality, moral judgments, moral choices and moral responsibility? [NO: 8] [YES: 0]

- There isn't any
- I don't know
- No good evidence for free will, and people do what they do because of genes and environment. Still, to the extent that we can change our environment, it's worthwhile to create an environment that deters atrocities.
- There is no free will.
- I do not think the concept of "free will" is logically coherent.
- I don't think that there is such a thing as free will – not in the sense that you mean anyway.

Question 7: Is there a way for you to rationally persuade an atheist dictator to grant you mercy? [NO: 10] [YES: 0]

- There is no way
- I would be pleading for my life for the sake of life itself, or if I had dependents, I would ask to be spared for their sake.
- It would be pretty pointless wouldn't it? When bad people do things for their own good you can't persuade them to do otherwise.
- Would point out that international sanctions might get tighter if Kim commits atrocity
- I don't know
- There's no way to get mercy from an atheist who wishes to harm you and does not fear human reprisal.
- I would probably ask what he wants from me to spare my life.

Question 8: Is it rational for you to risk your life to save a stranger? [NO: 10] [YES: 0]

- It would be an emotional or intuitive decision. Not a time for rational calculation.
- Self-sacrificial acts are not rational on atheism, there is no reason to do it
- No
- Self-sacrifice isn't necessarily rational, but not everything an atheist does has to be purely rational.

- I use happiness in more of an Aristotelian sense. Happiness is not something that I necessarily feel at this very moment. I know that I would feel bad if the little girl died, but it would be more than just immediate feelings.
- I behave in a way that I hope others will. It works pretty well most of the time.

Question 9: Could you condemn slavery in a society where it was accepted, on rational grounds? [NO: 10] [YES: 0]

- No. I do not believe in praise and blame and judging others. I would not try to persuade them for fear of repercussions, up to and including my death at their hands
- I would not because slavery is the custom of that society. Each society has different customs, and slavery is their custom. If I moved there, I would not oppose it because I would get used to it
- Would use evidence that all people are basically similar neurologically, and ask slaveowners to empathize with enslaved. Might work with Thomas Jefferson.
- I don't know
- No but I personally oppose suffering
- I can oppose slavery by merely opposing slavery. True, moral subjectivism does not provide an objective basis for deciding the question of slavery, in and of itself.
- If I traveled back into time then it would be me who traveled. So I would oppose slavery. If I were born into that time period, it would be different.
- I would argue that people deserve the right to be free from slavery because I think that's a good idea.
- I wouldn't "use" atheism as it doesn't come with any particular tenets or morals or behavioral requirements.
- I would oppose slavery because I would *want* to, not because I think there's some extrinsic reason I ought to.

Question 10: Is there ultimate significance for acting morally or not? I.e. – does it affect your or anyone else's destination if you act morally or not? [NO: 10] [YES: 0]

- There is no ultimate significance
- Acting morally makes life easier
- Too long after I'm dead for me to care about.
- It always matters to maximize my happiness now. I don't care what happens in 20 billion years.
- There's a preceding question that hardly ever gets asked. "Is there a meaning to life?" I don't think there is.

Question 11: Is there an objective purpose to life, (or does each person decide for themselves)? [NO: 10] [YES: 0]

- Mine is to feel good about myself and to feel respected by others.

- Mine is to enjoy it. I'd hope that I go about it in a way that doesn't interfere with others enjoyment and that when it does we can compromise.
- Mine is to relieve inordinate suffering, while leaving room for constructive suffering that lead to creativity and progress. Based on empathy.
- Mine is to help the species survive by having lots of children, because that lasts after you die
- Each person decides for themselves. My purpose is to have happy feelings
- My purpose is to have happy feelings by doing what most of the other people are doing and avoiding social disapproval
- I have no "objective" purpose. I do what I can to be happy, all things considered.
- To live as contented as possible. To find answers to big questions. To prepare my children for adulthood. I chose these things because that's what I like. I don't care what another's purpose is as long as they don't harm anyone.
- My purpose is to seek happiness while doing no harm (or as little harm as is it may be possible to do) for as long as I'm alive. Of course it's just my own purpose – I can't presume to choose another's purpose. That being said, I do presume everyone has more or less the same goal of happiness and fulfillment, but the precise methods of going about it are always going to vary from person to person.
- I want to be happy. I generally like other people, and I want them to be happy too.

Question 12: Would you follow (and *how* would you follow) Jesus at the point where it became clear to you that Christianity was true? [NO: 7] [YES: 2]

- I have no idea
- I would not follow. My own goals are all that I have, and all that I would continue to have in that unlikely situation. I would not yield my autonomy to anyone no matter what their authority to command me
- I would not follow, because God doesn't want humans to act any particular way, and he doesn't care what we do
- I would not follow. Head is spinning. Would go to physician to find out if hallucinating.
- If I found there was no trickery? I'd have to change my mind wouldn't I! Not really likely though is it?
- I would keep doing what I am doing now, acting morally. That's what all religions want anyway. (In response to my triumphant scribbling, he realized he had fallen into a trap and changed his answer to the right answer) Oh, wait. I would try to try to find out what Jesus wanted and then try to do that.
- I hope I would be courageous enough to dedicate my life to rebellion against God.
- I would not have to change anything unless forced to and all that would change is my actions not my values. I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran.
- He would have to convince me that what he wants for me is what I want for me.

Question 13: What would be the hardest adjustment you would have to make to live a faithful, public Christian life?

- I don't know
- It would not be that big of a change for me. I already act morally, I'm already public about my beliefs, and I don't care what people think about what I believe. I don't mind disagreeing with people and being unpopular for it. I think the 10 commandments are good. I could find out what to do and start doing those things.
- I would not be able to believe in miracles, so there would be cognitive dissonance
- Sacrificing my personal moral standards to take up a standard from a book that is very old and outdated
- The most difficult would be the fact that I believe something without good evidence.
- I work many hours a week for institutions and organizations that are charitable. I'm certainly not going to swap those for hours for "prayer time" and waste them.
- I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran. Obviously, it is possible that if I became a Christian, then I would have different values then I have now.
- The most difficult thing would be trying to believe the ridiculous claims of Christianity. As for what a Christian finds difficult, how would I know?
- I could never obey God from gratitude and love, only from servility inspired by fear and cowardice. I do not see myself as servile, fearful or cowardly, and to behave in such a manner would injure my self-esteem and self-image.

To my atheist interviewees: Thank you for giving me these answers. I will be commenting on them shortly, and posted my own answers.

Bear in mind: It does not matter to me whether you can do something irrationally by an act of will, (supposing that you could even have free will on a materialistic, deterministic universe). I only cared whether you could give a rational argument based on evidence. When the chips are down, people act on what is rational to them.

UPDATE: Hot Air on the atheism agenda.

Four-minute overview of 11 arguments for Christianity by William Lane Craig

May 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that I would post a few videos from the two debates featuring William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens. The first video may be useful to Christians who have never heard any arguments for the existence of God. (See my index of apologetics posts for some arguments and responses)

Here is Bill's concluding speech from the first skirmish at the Dallas Christian Book Expo debate:

Here is a video clip of an exchange they had in their debate at the massive Biola University showdown:

And here are some snippets from the pre-debate press interviews with Craig and Hitchens:

Here's more information of the Biola University debate between Craig and Hitchens.

Remember what the atheist reaction in the blogosphere was: (H/T MandM)

> When Debunking Christianity puts up a post entitled William Lane Craig "Won by a Landslide" Against Hitchens I think it is safe for all to say Craig bested Hitchens.
>
> Common Sense Atheism states "Craig was flawless and unstoppable. Hitchens was rambling and incoherent, with the occasional rhetorical jab. Frankly, Craig spanked Hitchens like a foolish child."

Now that we have the answers to the atheist questionnaire, we'll be able to answer *why* people become atheists shortly. We'll see in the coming days!

Here's a hint from atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel of New York University. Nagel says this:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that

> I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

By the way, Nagel is *not*, I repeat, *not* a the kind of atheist I usually rail against. He is one of the informed ones, and has even argued in defense of intelligent design as science, as has another informed atheist Bradley Monton. These are fair, honest, educated atheists – like Anthony Flew and Dean Kenyon were before they changed their minds. More on Nagel's paper, and Monton's reaction.

BONUS:

Remember the debate between William Lane Craig and Internet Infidel Richard Carrier? Audio of the debate is here. Carrier's admission of defeat is here, on his blog. Craig's two-part post-debate response to Carrier (MP3 podcasts) is here and here.

NRSC backs RINO Crist against conservative Rubio

May 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yes, when I champion the Republican party, obviously I mean the conservatives within the Republican party. (See my blogroll, and notify me if any changes are needed. I would also link to true conservatives in other countries!).

I think we need to remember that the NRSC has an abysmal record at picking and backing the right candidates. Not only did they opposed Pat Toomey when he ran against that squish Arlen Specter, (now a Democrat), but now they are backing Crist against a Cuban-American.

Excuse me? Without a conservative message, we cannot win.

Here is the main post about Rubio vs Crist from the Maritime Sentry:

> The NRSC has once again decided to stick it to us Conservatives in an extremely rare move; they immediately came out and endorsed Gov. Crist over Conservative Marco Rubio. Even appearing to go so far as to try and get Rubio to drop out. Of course, obviously, we should never support the NRSC I was hopeful that when Sen. Cornyn, a Texan, took over he would recruit Conservatives.
>
> Instead he has made it apparent he will only recruit and support RINO's. He supported Specter before his defection, he encouraged Ridge to run, and now he is taking sides in an open primary to support Crist. What good does it do us if we elect Senators who agree with the Democrats the majority of the time. It is just repeating the mistakes of the Bush years. Senator Cornyn should step down.

And what should we do?

> Until the establishment wants to support Conservatives they should receive no support from the base. I am actually quite excited about this development though. They are not hiding the fact that they plan on blowing us Conservatives off. If we get behind good Conservative candidates like Rubio and Toomey. The grassroots could be responsible for electing Conservative candidates and putting the Party establishment on notice. They believe Crist will raise more money than Rubio; let's prove them wrong.

Marco Rubio profile video:

Marco Rubio on Fox News:

This is exactly the kind of candidate the NRSC should be backing! My previous post on Rubio and Toomey's candidacy announcements is here, and there are more videos in that post!

Interview posted at NRO!!!

UPDATE: Here is an interview over at the National Review blog with Rubio! (H/T The Maritime Sentry)

Excerpt:

> FREDDOSO: How are [Republicans] failing?
>
> RUBIO: Two things. There's one group of Republicans who feel our slogan should be, "If you can't beat them, join them." That, in essence, it's too hard to take on this expansion of government, this overreliance on government to grow our economy and create jobs. And so what we should do is just be more like the Democrats. Another group of Republicans believes that we should basically be the party of opposition without any ideas in return — that all we have to offer is ideology, but without any new ideas behind the ideology.
>
> I think both sides of that debate are wrong. We are a party that should have a very clear vision about government's role in our economy and government's role in our country, and we should back that up with specific solutions for the future. That's what I've built my career on, and that's what our candidacy should be about.

And here's my favorite, oh, how I wish that the economic-illiterates could understand this:

> FREDDOSO: What do you make of President Obama's plans to change the taxation of deferred corporate income?
>
> RUBIO: He's dealing with a symptom rather than the cause. There's a reason why companies move their assets overseas and do these things. Those are legal loopholes that exist because they're trying to escape the punitive and anti-competitive nature of the American tax system. If we had a system that's fair, there are few countries in the world people would rather do business in. . . . Our laws are stable; their contracts will be enforced here; we have a system of infrastructure that's still superior to the rest of the world; we still produce the best college graduates in the world. So all things being equal, everyone would rather be in America doing business and headquartering their companies here.
>
> And there's another thing that's really wrong with our tax system, and we've been complicit in it as Republicans. We've allowed the system grow so complicated that it benefits those people who can afford to hire lawyers and accountants to find loopholes, and lobbyists to create loopholes. And I think the Republican party stands to blame for that as well. So I think the Republican party is ripe for reform — if not from the inside out, then from the outside in.

You want to shut down manufacturing and ship jobs overseas? Elect a democrat who will raise corporate taxes, regulate companies with mandatory health-care and impose cap and trade. Mark my words: unemployment will be 12% by December, if cap and trade passes. And rising!

How progressive social policy enlarges the size of government

May 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great editorial by Ed West writing in the UK Telegraph. Is it possible to be a social leftist and a fiscal conservative? Or does the former impact the latter negatively? West's editorial assesses the impact of feminism and sex education on government budgets, which receive much funding from the productive private sector.

First, Britain's social program for unwanted children is seeing record enrollment:

> Last night's Rageh Omaar programme, Lost in Care, is timely. The number of unwanted children in Britain has reached 80,000, and that figure was calculated before the recent Baby P surge. Of those unwanted kids, 10,000 live in children's home.

And what are the costs to the taxpayer for this skyrocketing number of unwarranted children?

> The show reminded us how awful the statistics are for care home children; only 13 per cent get good GCSEs [high school diplomas] and almost half achieve no qualifications. One in four prisoners were in care, as were one in three homeless. and one in five girls in care are pregnant within a year of leaving. No wonder there is currently a desperate drive to find more foster parents, a calling that is seriously heroic.

Well, I already talked about how leftist domestic policies destroy marriage here (socialism), here (same-sex marriage) and here (no-fault divorce). But the interesting thing is the *cost* of the anti-family, anti-child policies of the left. They were in such a rush to rebel against social conservatives, that it never occurred to them that those moral rules were in place to protect the interests of all parties.

> Recklessly impregnating someone or getting pregnant without the ability or willingness to look after that child ruins another person's life, and also costs the state £25,000 a year for that matter.

This is the problem with people who enact policies based on the need to feel compassionate and superior, while disregarding the logical consequences. Should we really be voting in people who undermine traditional morality run our government? If we do, it will cost us. To see more about how leftist policies increased the size of government and raised tax rates, see this previous post.

For more news from abroad, check out my recent post on the state of free speech in Canada, the United Kindom and Cuba.

UPDATE: Just noticed this over at OneNewsNow: Obama would ax abstinence-only

funding.

Excerpt:

> If Congress approves President Obama's budget requests, there will be no more federal funding of abstinence-only education programs.
>
> Barack Obama has recommended completely zeroing out Title V abstinence programs to states, as well as abstinence education programs to community-based organizations (CBAE) and replacing them with more than $100 million for contraceptive-based sex-education programs. The massive omnibus bill signed by the president had already reduced funding to abstinence programs by $14 million.

And then there is this story from mensactivism.org, entitled "Number of Unwed Moms in the U.S. Rising.

> Story here. Excerpt:
>
> '(AP) The percentage of births to unmarried women in the United States has been rising sharply, but it's way behind Northern European countries, a new U.S. report on births shows.
>
> Iceland is the leader with 6 in 10 births occurring among unmarried women. About half of all births in Sweden and Norway are to unwed moms, while in the U.S., it's about 40 percent.
>
> France, Denmark and the United Kingdom also have higher percentages than the United States, according to the report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.'

Oh, well. Ideology beats out fiscal prudence, I guess. I don't think that immorality of the parents is too good for the children who are affected, either. Bible: 1, Atheists: 0.

The relationship between science, faith and academic freedom

May 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I blogged recently about atheist philosophers Thomas Nagel and Bradley Monton, informed atheists, who both support the idea that intelligent design could potentially be researched using ordinary scientific methods. I thought it was interesting especially in the case of Nagel, who has this famous quote about his reasons for adopting atheism:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: **I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that.**"
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

The thing is, Thomas Nagel has written a paper supporting ID as science, and now I've learned that he is rejecting Darwinism as a full explanation of human origins. (H/T Denyse O'Leary's related post at the Post-Darwinist). Nagel contrasts the idea that natural selection is responsible for our mental capacity, or whether some other explanation is needed.

Nagel writes:

> I see no reason to believe that the truth lies in the first alternative. The only reason so many people believe it is that advanced intellectual capacities clearly exist, and this is the only available candidate for a Darwinian explanation of their existence. So it all rests on the assumption that every noteworthy characteristic of human beings, or of any other organism, must have a Darwinian explanation. But what is the reason to believe this? Even if natural selection explains all adaptive evolution, there may be developments in the history of species that are not specifically adaptive and can't be explained in terms of natural selection. Why not take the development of the human intellect as a probable counterexample to the law that natural selection explains everything, instead of forcing it under the law with improbable speculations unsupported by evidence? We have here one of those powerful reductionist dogmas which seem to be part

> of the intellectual atmosphere we breath.

It's interesting that Nagel is breaking from the pack, because my post about A. N. Wilson's return to faith highlighted the peer-pressure that atheists feel with regards to the need to project intelligence to their peers. It's almost as they feel the need prove themselves as better than other people, perhaps to make up for some past rejection that gave them a deep sense of being unworthy.

Wilson said:

> If I bumped into Richard Dawkins (an old colleague from Oxford days) or had dinner in Washington with Christopher Hitchens (as I did either on that trip to interview Billy Graham or another), I did not have to feel out on a limb. Hitchens was excited to greet a new convert to his non-creed and put me through a catechism before uncorking some stupendous claret. "So – absolutely no God?" "Nope," I was able to say with Moonie-zeal. "No future life, nothing 'out there'?" "No," I obediently replied. At last! I could join in the creed shared by so many (most?) of my intelligent contemporaries in the western world – that men and women are purely material beings (whatever that is supposed to mean), that "this is all there is" (ditto), that God, Jesus and religion are a load of baloney: and worse than that, the cause of much (no, come on, let yourself go), most (why stint yourself – go for it, man), all the trouble in the world, from Jerusalem to Belfast, from Washington to Islamabad.

Anyway, Denyse O'Leary also talks about some research done by Jeffrey Schwartz on her blog the Mindful Hack. I saw Schwartz present this research before in a live debate with Michael Shermer, another atheist I like somewhat. (I own, and have watched dozens of debates and hundreds of academic lectures – and I sponsor them, too! I love civil, fact-based disagreements!)

Denyse cites from a forthcoming paper of hers, as follows:

> UCLA psychiatrist Jeffrey Schwartz, a practitioner of Buddhist mindfulness, saw OCD as a good candidate for a non- pharmaceutical—essentially non-materialist—approach to treatment….
>
> Schwartz used neuroscience techniques to identify the cause of the disorder. Specifically, the cause is most likely a defect in the neural circuitry connecting the orbitofrontal cortex, cingulate gyrus, and basal ganglia, from which panic and compulsion are generated. When this "worry circuit" is working properly, we worry about genuine risks and feel the urge to reduce them. But, Schwartz found, when that modulation is faulty, as it is when OCD acts up, the error detector can be overactivated. It becomes locked into a pattern of repetitive firing. The firing triggers an overpowering feeling that something is wrong, accompanied by compulsive attempts to somehow make it right.
>
> He then developed a four-step program (Relabel, Reattribute, Reassign, and Revalue) to help patients identify and reassign OCD thoughts, until they felt that

> they were diminishing in severity. Schwartz was not simply getting patients to change their opinions, but to change their brains. Subsequent brain imaging showed that the change in focus of attention substituted a useful neural circuit for a useless one. For example, it substituted "go work in the garden" for "wash hands seven more times." By the time the neuronal traffic from the many different activities associated with gardening began to exceed the traffic from washing the hands, the patient could control the disorder without drugs. The mind was changing the brain.

Schwartz called this "mental effort" in the debate, and he used the treatment successfully on people like Leonardo DiCaprio.

The issue of mind as a non-material cause is an area of specialty for Denyse. She recently wrote a book on it for Harper-Collins called "The Spiritual Brain". I bought 7 copies of that book and gave them to 6 of my friends for their Christmas presents. (One was for me!) Check it out. I hate (but use) philosophical arguments for substance dualism. Her book provides lots of hard scientific evidence that I prefer to use instead.

Atheism, science and free speech

As Denyse O'Leary notes in her post on Colliding Universes, Christian researchers in the sciences have to jump through hoops to keep their jobs and get tenure, in an establishment *dominated* by activist atheists. She links to this story in Science, regarding a Christian professor who is brilliant, but who has to watch his step in secular-leftist-dominated academia.

> Szilágyi sees his religious faith and his research efforts as two complementary aspects of his life. Within the scientific environment, "I have some options where I can express my faith," Szilágyi says. He directly referred to God both in the acknowledgements of his master's and doctoral dissertations and while receiving his awards. He runs a Bible-study group for young adults, and together with a friend he founded a Christian scientific group.
>
> But although Szilágyi's views often lie far outside the scientific mainstream, he expresses those views only off-campus and in his personal time. For him, "the debate over evolution, design, creation, supernatural intelligence, etc., is not a scientific question in the first place but the collision of worldviews, the confrontation of materialism and idealism," he says. He takes the Bible literally, but when he lectures on the subject–outside of work–he presents what he calls "the options" and indicates which one "to me … seems to be more probable." But he insists that it is up to "everybody to make his or her own decision."
>
> "As a Christian who works in the field of science, I find it quite important to deal with the relation of Christianity and science," Szilágyi says. But "I know that it is a minefield in today's scientific life and can be quite dangerous for one's scientific career. … Therefore, I do these activities absolutely separately from my university work. … I am very cautious and careful that whenever I am talking

> [about these issues] I do not represent my university.
>
> “My belief is very important for my career because this is the first thing that gives me my motivations so that I could work hard and I could achieve the best I can,” Szilágyi says.

Denyse, who sees the battlefield better than anyone I know, comments:

> It is sad when talented people must grovel and cringe just to keep their jobs. The thing is, in the end, that never works.
>
> “Theistic evolution” is just a way of adjusting to a world run by atheists.
>
> Practical questions like “Does the world show evidence of design” are scientific if the answer appears to be no, but unscientific if it appears to be yes.

Denyse also wrote about this comment on the Post-Darwinist, which emerged during the recent Texas School Board hearings.

> “If our students do not feel the freedom to simply raise their hand and ask a question in science class, then we are no longer living in the United States of America.”
>
> Common sense, combined with the pressure of at least 14,000 constituent communications in favor of allowing students to discuss all sides of science theories, finally prevailed.

You may also remember the case of Guillermo Gonzalez, who, despite outperforming virtually everyone in his department, was denied tenure thanks to a crusade by an activist atheist professor of religious studies, Hector Avalos. Persecution of outspoken Christians by secularists goes on all the time in academia. If you come out as a Christian, the secularists will be offended, and then you have to suffer the consequences.

And don’t forget, as public Christianity declines in the face of persecution by secularists, so has the right to free speech. The Democrats have recently tabled bills to enact hate crime laws and to imprison bloggers who are critical of the government.

Evaluating Democrat policies on the budget, health care and cap and trade

May 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A Harvard economist says that tax hikes will kill the recovery: (H/T John Boehner, Mike Pence)

Harvard economist Martin Feldstein writes in the Wall Street Journal:

> Even if the proposed tax increases are not scheduled to take effect until 2011, households will recognize the permanent reduction in their future incomes and will reduce current spending accordingly. Higher future tax rates on capital gains and dividends will depress share prices immediately and the resulting fall in wealth will cut consumer spending further. Lower share prices will also raise the cost of equity capital, depressing business investment in plant and equipment.

Tax hikes for the poor:

> Mr. Obama's biggest proposed tax increase is the cap-and-trade system of requiring businesses to buy carbon dioxide emission permits. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that the proposed permit auctions would raise about $80 billion a year and that these extra taxes would be passed along in higher prices to consumers. Anyone who drives a car, uses public transportation, consumes electricity or buys any product that involves creating CO2 in its production would face higher prices…
>
> But while the cap-and-trade tax rises with income, the relative burden is greatest for low-income households. According to the CBO, households in the lowest-income quintile spend more than 20% of their income on energy intensive items (primarily fuels and electricity), while those in the highest-income quintile spend less than 5% on those products.

Bye-bye, American manufacturing sector. Or maybe Obama will nationalize the entire industry, who can say? He's already practically doing it now.

Remember the no tax increases pledge that Obama made? Kevin Boland writes:

> If you drive a car or flip on a light switch – Democrats have a new national energy tax for you. If you're a small business owner or if you're employed by one – Democrats have a new tax for you. If you're a charity – Democrats have a new tax for your donors. If you're looking to produce more American energy – Democrats have a new tax for you. If you own stock – Democrats have a new tax for you. And when you're finally able to relax – after paying all your taxes to Uncle Sam – and you want to kick back, relax, and have a cold beer, you guessed it, Democrats may have a new tax for you too.

USA Today asks where the promised fiscal restraint of Mr. ACORN lawyer has gone off to. (H/T Mike Pence)

> When it comes to federal spending, there's a pattern emerging with President Obama, and it's not a flattering one. The president says all the right things about the importance of getting the deficit under control, but his actions don't come close to matching his rhetoric.
>
> An early sign of the disconnect was his heavily publicized demand last month that his Cabinet secretaries shave $100 million from their administrative budgets. Obama said the cuts would "send a signal that we are serious about how government operates" and would help close the "confidence gap" with skeptical Americans. Those cuts amounted to a less-than-confidence-inspiring 0.003% of the 2009 budget, or about 3 cents out of every $1,000.
>
> Then, when he unveiled his 2010 budget last week, Obama made a big deal of his demand for $17 billion in cuts, insisting that the cuts "even by Washington standards … are significant" and that $17 billion is "real money."
>
> The president got it backward. Out in the rest of the world, $17 billion is a ton of money. But in Washington, where the president is proposing to spend $3.6 trillion next year, $17 billion looks puny – a little less than half a percent of the budget, or the equivalent of cutting a $100 grocery bill by handing back a 50-cent pack of gum.

Anybody who read David Freddoso's book or looked up Obama's voting record could have known that his rhetoric was just lies for the gullible.

Over to the health care issue, where John Shadegg explains how capitalism is the right way to reduce health care costs.

> President Obama's pledge to work with health care providers and insurers to scale back costs misses the entire point: health care costs are so high because we are not giving patients choice and forcing insurers to compete. We need robust market reforms – not symbolic gestures. The way to lower prices is to put control in the hands of patients. We need to empower Americans by giving them the freedom to either keep their employer plan or purchase the plan of their choice through a tax credit. Choice and competition will drive prices down and quality up.

Shadegg goes on to explain why the Obama plan does *none* of this. And why should it? We already know that the Democrats want private health care to fail, so they can usher in single-payer health care. (Just they want private industry to fail so they can nationalize more of the free market)

> Putting 120 million Americans on government coverage will create a monopoly that sends costs skyrocketing. Choice will be lost because the enormous government-run plan will put the private plans out of business. In other words, if

> you like what you have, you will lose it. And while health insurance will be provided, health care will not – like every nationalized health plan across the world, as costs escalate, care will be slashed, patients waitlisted, drugs denied.

Meanwhile, Michele Bachmann notes the looming entitlement crisis is now closer than ever, with the Medicare insolvency date moving earlier.

> Yesterday, the Medicare and Social Security Trustees issued a new report that laid out unequivocally that our current Medicare and Social Security programs are on a path for financial implosion and are in need of serious reform.
>
> In fact, the Medicare insolvency date has moved up to 2017. And, that doesn't include the impact of the so-called "stimulus" bill, which could accelerate insolvency by about 6 months.
>
> And, we're facing a strain on Social Security like never before, with nearly 80 million retiring Baby Boomers tapping into the funds soon we'll be spending more to pay benefits than what the system receives in payroll taxes. Yet, we continue to carry on with the status quo, every now and then saying that we need to reform it, but not actually doing anything about it.

Michele is trying to do something about it, but the House is filled with Democrats who never ran a business in their entire lives.

> I've introduced the Truth In Accounting Act to make government finances truly transparent and open. Not only would financial commitments be crystal clear to Congress, but also to the taxpayers.
>
> Currently, when Congress and the President prepare budget proposals and pass spending bills, they have the luxury of ignoring shortfalls year after year. They prepare, present, and approve budgets which project these estimates over the short-term – usually five or ten years. And, there are a lot of things that can be done on paper to paper over the long-term shortfalls.
>
> My Truth in Accounting Act would require the President to consider these long-term shortfalls when he proposes his budget. And, it would require both the GAO (Government Accountability Office) and the U.S. Treasury to report this information to the Congress so that the numbers can be used when we're finalizing the annual budget.
>
> Furthermore, my legislation would require that the report be translated into easily comprehensible terms so that nothing could be hidden by complex jargon. The government's fiscal imbalance would be presented in the whole, and as distributed per person, per worker, and per household.

I hope she is somehow able to pass this bill.

Which is more cruel and immoral? Waterboarding or abortion?

May 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Hot Air reports: Sweden legalizes sex-selection abortions! Sweden, the most secular nation on the planet!

Dr. Frank Turek has a post here, examining whether pro-abortion Democrats are inconsistent for calling waterboarding torture, when the procedures used to kill the unborn can be far more cruel and painful. Turek is a former naval fighter pilot (8 years served), who served in the Pacific, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf.

Turek actually was waterboarded as art of his SERE training, in case of capture and interrogation. He's now a full time Christian debater, and he now debates people like Christopher Hitchens. Christianity is definitely a step up in terms of excitement and danger from his previous job, where I imagine he spent time on dull chores such as landing on pitching carrier decks at night, dodging SAMs and triple-A, etc.

He writes:

> Now, despite decades of its use on American service members, President Obama declares that waterboarding is torture when used on terrorists. Is it? Reasonable people cannot disagree whether scalding a person's skin, dismembering him, or beheading him constitutes torture. Those are undeniably torturous acts that our enemies have inflicted on Americans. But since waterboarding leaves no permanent physical damage, reasonable people can disagree over whether or not it's actually torture and should be used on terrorists.

He then goes on to talk about whether the Democrats are being inconsistent on what counts as torture.

> Despite being against waterboarding, President Obama does not seem to think that scalding, dismembering, or beheading is torture in all circumstances. In some circumstances, the President actually approves of such treatment, so much so that he is now exporting it to other countries with our tax dollars. He's even thinking of forcing certain Americans to inflict it on the innocent.
>
> **In fact, the President along with most in his party and some in the Republican Party, think that such brutality is a Constitutional right, which they cleverly disguise with the word "choice." Choice in these circumstances actually means scalding, dismembering, or de-braining a living human being—which is literally what saline, D&C, and partial birth abortions respectively accomplish.**

I won't give the whole article away, but you *must* read it. I don't link to Turek a lot, but this is awesome.

Further study

- Audio: Scott Klusendorf’s 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring two great pro-life debaters, Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

British flight attendant fired for refusing to behave as a Muslim

May 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from the Maritime Sentry! A conservative blog without peer. I see they have posted a new Michele Bachmann video, but I can't see it from work. Can someone watch it and leave a comment about it?

Wow, check out this Washington Times article I just found on OneRedThread. Apparently, female flight attendants on British Midland Airways have got to start acting as if they are Muslims, in order not to offend Muslims. Excuse me? THEY AREN'T MUSLIMS. Why should people be forced by the state to act as though they accept a religion (or no religion), when that's not what they believe???

This is insanity:

> …British Midland Airways is going to absurd and insulting lengths to patronize backward habits of the Middle East by forcing its female flight attendants to dress and behave in a stereotype of subservient Saudi women. When flight attendant Lisa Ashton stood up to the policy, she was fired.
>
> …In addition to wearing the traditional abaya, the policy stated that, "it is expected that female crew members walk behind their male counterparts in public areas such as the airport, no matter what rank."
>
> …
>
> Miss Ashton's union representative told her the abaya was considered "an item of uniform" and that refusal to wear it should be treated as "a potential disciplinary matter." Miss Ashton went to great lengths to avoid coming into conflict with the policy. … When her time finally came to fly to Saudi Arabia, she refused, and was suspended.
>
> … She appealed her case but a labor tribunal accepted BMI's argument that the airline introduced the requirements "entirely from the need to conform to local customs, practices and law in Saudi Arabia."

I have an idea. How about everybody has free speech and freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, and the people who get offended by those rights can just *grow up*. Why is it that on any given day you have some atheist, and/or left-wing activist is complaining that other people have human rights and that the free exercise of these rights should be prevented by the state?

This is exactly the same as the recent case where the Christian nurse was suspended because an atheist complained when the nurse offered to pray for her. Newsflash! Let people act on what they believe! Don't try to change them so that they believe what you believe, using the power of the state. That's fascism – the state overriding the values of

individuals.

Excerpt:

> The incident which led to her suspension took place at the home of a woman patient in Winscombe, North Somerset.
>
> “It was around lunchtime and I had spent about 20 to 25 minutes with her. I had applied dressings to her legs and shortly before I left I said to her: ‘Would you like me to pray for you?’.
>
> “She said ‘No, thank you.’ And I said: ‘OK.’ I only offered to pray for her because I was concerned about her welfare and wanted her to get better.”
>
> However, after the incident on December 15, she was contacted by the trust and asked to explain her actions.

Everyone: stop being offended victims!

Videos showing the folly of government-run health care

May 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Get your butt over to Hot Air right now, and read this post on health care policy by my blog-friend Laura, who blogs at Pursuing Holiness. Laura writes about the myth of the millions of uninsured who cannot afford coverage. She outlines the many ways in which free care is available to everyone, including illegal immigrants, and those who cannot pay the full price. This is a MUST READ post.

Excerpt from Laura's post:

> ...basic care and life-saving care is available to every human being who manages to set foot in this country, regardless of their ability to pay.
>
> ...Thanks to EMTALA, emergency rooms are required to help you.
>
> ...Thanks to hundreds of thousands of charity hospitals and community health centers – via both charities and government – you can get free or sliding-scale payment care.

I wanted to supplement her post with some of my own videos.

Two Women:

The Lemon:

And one more video from On The Fence Films called "Dead Meat".

> ***Dead Meat*** is a 25 minute short film which shows the reality of health care under Canada's socialized medical system: Canadians wait … and wait … and wait. … And sometimes they die while waiting for *free* government health care.

Previous posts from me:

- Walter Williams on Sweden's health care system. (Yes, the same Sweden that just legalized sex-selection abortions)
- Government-run health care is bad for patients and liberty (Links to some useful podcasts on health care)

How to engage pro-abortion commenters and win

May 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neil from 4Simpsons posted a MUST-READ exchange with a pro-abortion commenter here. It's entertaining and informative. I'll just paste in a few excerpts below, so you can get the flavor of the exchange.

Here's an effective exchange: (the challenger is in *italics)*

Then I suppose you're equating an aborted fetus with a conscious, adult human? Something doesn't seem quite right there; unless, you are actually thinking of the adult human beings the unborn will grow into when you say abortion kills the same kind of human beings genocide and the other transgressions do.

What kind of fetus are you speaking of? If it is a human fetus then she is a human being at a particular stage of development deserving of having her life protected. She isn't an adult, but neither are toddlers. Your rationale could plug in *human toddler* instead of *human fetus* and claim that the "toddler will grow into" being an adult, but it would still involve killing an innocent human being.

This is kind of what I was getting at earlier when I mentioned something about equating an unborn human being with one outside the womb. If you're saying the fertilized egg is a human being are you saying there's no difference between us and that egg?

Of course there are differences: Size, level of development, environment and dependency. My claim is that none of those differences gives rise to the right to destroy those human beings.

And here are couple more funny parts:

I suppose it depends on how you define "me," or "I," or "you." I'm pretty sure when we say those things, we are talking about the present us. If you really want to get philosophical, the "me" you will respond to after I post this will technically not be the same "me" as the one who wrote this because some time has elapsed and we are all in a constant state of change/growth.

Try committing a crime then sharing that philosophy with the judge. I'll come visit you when I'm doing prison ministry 😉 .

I'll spell it out for you: There is a 1:1 correlation between the human fetus and the subsequent human being. If you arm had been ripped off in utero, you'd only have one arm now. That was you in your mother's womb, not a potential you. It was you at that particular stage of development.

And the last one before you click over to read the whole thing!

Honestly, Neil, I think abortion is a sad state of affairs for any society; that circumstances permit individuals to find themselves in the process of bringing about human life they did not intend to is sad.

That is a bad argument. These people had sex. Pregnancy is a potential outcome of sex.

They didn’t wake up one day and realize they’d had an accidental in vitro fertilization or an immaculate conception.

Do you find it sad that actions have consequences? Boo-hoo. But don’t kill an innocent human being over actions you regret.

The pro-life issue is such a fun issue to debate, because it’s like the big-bang, fine-tuning and habitability arguments from the progress of science. The facts are all on our side, the delusions are solely theirs. And the more science progresses, the worse it gets for them. All you need to do is prepare and study like Neil has, and one day you’ll be as effective as he is in this exchange.

Friday night funny: waterboarding, same-sex marriage and capitalism

May 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Our first Friday night funny this Friday comes to us from Scrappleface, by Scott Ott. He reports on a story that you may not have heard about this week, the CIA's offer to help Nancy Pelosi remember when she voted for the same interrogation techniques that she now opposes.

Excerpt:

> In an effort to clarify exactly when House Speaker Nancy Pelosi knew that the U.S. employed enhanced interrogation techniques, like waterboarding, on terrorists, the CIA today offered to question the California Democrat.
>
> "With the passage of time, memory gets clouded," said a CIA source who spoke on condition of anonymity. "But we have learned how to clear away the clouds, and bring into sharp focus the relevant details."
>
> Rep. Pelosi initially said she had not been briefed on the harsh interrogation methods, then said she thought the briefings she did receive were theoretical in nature, and now her associates say the Speaker knew in early 2003, but didn't protest out of respect for 'appropriate' legislative channels.
>
> "A woman in Nancy Pelosi's high-stress position, can get overwhelmed by the constant drip, drip, drip of information," the CIA source said. "It's easy to lose isolated details among the battery of facts that assault her daily. But a little time alone with one of our seasoned counselors should remedy that."

Our next funny is also from Scott Ott. It turns out that proponents of same-sex marriage are not at all happy with the way that heterosexuals undermining the sanctity of same-sex marriage.

Excerpt:

> The boom in childbirth by unwed mothers has some American homosexuals concerned about the sanctity of their newly-minted marriages, according to a spokesman for the Defense of Gay Marriage Association (DOGMA).
>
> Some 40 percent of all children are now born to unwed mothers, according to National Center for Health Statistics. Among minority groups, the news is even more stunning. Black single Moms give birth at twice the White rate, and Hispanic solo mothers bear babies at triple the rate.
>
> "All of this is bad news for the institution of traditional gay marriage," said the unnamed source at DOGMA. "It's hard not to see this as another example of homophobia. Gays finally start getting the right to marry, and what happens? We see straights abandoning the practice. Heterosexual bigots are looking at

> marriage and apparently saying, 'That's so gay!'"
>
> The advocacy group claims that no society has survived the collapse of the institution of marriage, and it backs a Constitutional amendment forcing cohabiting couples to wed.

I would support a Constitutional amendment banning out-of-wedlock birth – as Captain Capitalism noted in an earlier post, unwed motherhood is nothing but child abuse. Co-habitation, no-fault divorce, government-run day care, and drugs for controlling children are anti-child policies. I am against pre-marital sex. I am for abstinence and chastity. I value the rights of children over the "happiness" of irresponsible adults.

And our final story this week is from IMAO.us. I used to spend hours reading over his old "In My World" posts. I just love things that are totally made-up in which very serious people do very silly things. Frank links to this video in which you can learn more about capitalism than you can while getting a Law degree from Harvard!

Happy Friday!

UPDATE: I cannot let this go unblogged: What happens with Jim Treacher joins Nancy Pelosi and Haiku?

You get Pelosiku!

From Hot Air and Michelle Malkin:

> What's this trigger do?
> Ouch, my right foot really hurts
> Let's try the left one
>
> ***
>
> As I tell my tales
> Watch me blink out in Morse Code:
> "I'm a lying [bleep]"
>
> ***
>
> I am not lying
> Except for what I just said
> And what I'll say next
>
> ***
>
> I've been a liar
> A lot longer than Barack
> But without his gift

Leave yours in the comments!

Has the university become intolerant and close-minded?

May 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article by prestigious McGill University ethicist Margaret Somerville is worth reading. (H/T Commenter ECM) She is one of the leading defenders of traditional marriage in Canada. She is a moderate social conservative. Here is a brief summary of her case against same-sex marriage. Her short article in the journal Academic Matters is about the intolerance of the leftist university elites against their opponents.

Here is the abstract:

> In this edited excerpt from her Research and Society Lecture to the 2008 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, ethicist Margaret Somerville argues that universities are becoming forums of intolerance. Keeping the university as an intellectually open and respectful place is critical, she says, to finding the "shared ethics" essential to maintaining healthy, pluralistic democracies.

And here is an excerpt in which she discusses the impact of moral relativism on moral disagreements:

> That is where political correctness enters the picture. It excludes politically incorrect values from the "all values are equal" stable. The intense moral relativists will tolerate all values except those they deem to be politically incorrect—which just happen to be the ones that conflict with their values.
>
> Political correctness operates by shutting down non-politically correct people's freedom of speech. Anyone who challenges the politically correct stance is, thereby, automatically labeled as intolerant, a bigot, or hatemonger. The substance of their arguments against a politically correct stance is not addressed; rather people labeled as politically incorrect are, themselves, attacked as being intolerant and hateful simply for making those arguments. This derogatorily -label-the-person-and-dismiss-them-on-the-basis-of-that-label approach is intentionally used as a strategy to suppress strong arguments against any politically correct stance and, also, to avoid dealing with the substance of these arguments.
>
> It is important to understand the strategy employed: speaking against same-sex marriage, for example, is not characterized as speech; rather, it is characterized as a discriminatory act against homosexuals and, therefore, a breach of human rights or even a hate crime. Consequently, it is argued that protections of freedom of speech do not apply.

She illustrates with some examples:

> We need to look at what “pure” moral relativism and intense tolerance, as modified by political correctness, mean in practice. So let ‘s look at the suppression of pro-life groups and pro-life speech on Canadian university campuses. Whatever one’s views on abortion, we should all be worried about such developments. Pro-choice students are trying to stop pro-life students from participating in the collective conversation on abortion that should take place. In fact, they don’t want any conversation, alleging that to question whether we should have any law on abortion is, in itself, unacceptable.
>
> In some instances some people are going even further: they want to force physicians to act against their conscience under threat of being in breach of human rights or subject to professional disciplinary procedures for refusing to do so. The Ontario Human Rights Commission recently advised the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario to this effect.
>
> Political correctness is being used to try to impose certain views and even actions that breach rights to freedom of conscience; to shut down free speech; and to contravene academic freedom. I do not need to emphasize the dangers of this in universities. The most fundamental precept on which a university is founded is openness to ideas and knowledge from all sources.

She spends the rest of the paper arguing for a system of “shared ethics” that grounds open, respectful debate between disagreeing parties. I hope this catches on before secular-left moves from censorship to outright violence, against those who would dare to disagree with them.

A short bio of Margaret Somerville

Margaret Somerville is Samuel Gale Professor in the Faculty of Law and a professor in the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University and is the founding director of the McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law. In 2004, she received the UNESCO Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science and in 2006 delivered the prestigious Massey Lectures.

Democrat terrorist sentenced to two years in prison

May 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Minneapolis Star Tribune. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> A protester from Texas has been sentenced to two years in prison for possessing Molotov cocktails during the Republican National Convention last September.
>
> U.S. District Judge Michael Davis on Thursday also sentenced Bradley Neal Crowder to three years of supervised release.
>
> The 23-year-old Austin, Texas, man was part of a group from Austin that allegedly planned to disrupt the convention in St. Paul last September. He pleaded guilty in January.

Gateway Pundit asks: “Maybe he’ll [enjoy an] illustrious teaching career when he gets out?”. Indeed.

Sweden legalizes sex-selection abortions

May 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Hot Air.

Excerpt:

> Sweden has approved gender-specific abortions, allowing parents to rid themselves of an unwanted daughter in a closely-watched ethics case…
>
> Last month, I noted the opposition of the abortion-rights group Center for Reproductive Rights to the same practice in China, where the state's one-child policy makes gender selection more important for parents. Sweden has no such restrictions; in this case, the woman already had two daughters and wants a son. CRR opposed the Born Alive Infant Protection Act, putting their fright over what they call "fetus rights" over their objections to gender-specific infanticide.
>
> At least Sweden remained consistent. Unlike the CRR, their decision reluctantly noted that the woman's motivation was irrelevant if one accepts that someone can "choose" to end human life as a right. One wonders whether CRR will protest this decision in Sweden as they do in China, extending their intellectual confusion over the nature of "choice" as an absolute right.

Keep in mind that Sweden is the most secular nation in the world. What did we learn from the responses to our survey of atheists that would explain why they would support such barbarism?

We learned that atheists believe:

- There is no such thing as human rights or human dignity, objectively speaking
- There is no such thing as moral values or moral duties, objectively speaking
- The purpose of life is happiness in the here and now
- There is no ultimate significance to any actions – it doesn't matter what you do, your end is the same
- Our actions are biologically determined, so we're not responsible anyway
- There is no after-life, no accountability after death for actions
- Morality is determined by each person's personal preferences, or arbitrary cultural conventions

On atheism, the weak have no *objective* human rights or human dignity, because people are just arrangements of matter, not creatures made in the image of God. On atheism, there is no purpose for the weak, such as the purpose of freely coming to know God, that would give them dignity and value, regardless of their social utility.

So, the strong can oppress the weak, even to the point of slavery or murder, in order to maximize their own happiness in the short time they are allotted to live. On atheism, why not? Why let anyone else offend you, burden you and diminish your happiness, if you can

use force to silence or destroy them?

Bill Maher mocks Carrie Prejean's stand on marriage

May 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Spotted this video over at Hot Air, posted by AllahPundit, who is an atheist. He is beginning to question whether atheism leads to great heights of moral behavior. You'll recall that this is one of the factors that convinced A.N. Wilson, as well as the Wintery Knight himself.

Atheism maintains that the universe is an accident, that there is no objective moral standard, no free will, no accountability when you die, no ultimate significance to our actions, no after-life, and no one to whom moral duty is owed. Bill Maher is a committed atheist. Let's see what counts as morality on atheism.

And here is an excerpt from AllahPundit's comments:

> A quickie from last night's show displaying all the charm and subtlety we've come to expect, and surely the first time in his life that he's had an unkind word to say about breast implants. There's something cosmically apt about him attacking her: No one in American media better embodies the lefty paradox of libertinism paired with judgmentalism, therefore no one's better qualified to prosecute her for the left's capital crime of hypocrisy.

Why are atheists making moral judgments in an accidental universe, where their moral standards are just their own personal preferences, or at best the arbitrary conventions of their society? Why even attribute blame to Carrie Prejean if she doesn't even have free will, which is an impossibility on atheism, since we are just mindless matter?

There are some things that other people do that I don't like based on personal preferences. For example, I do not like people who spend a lot of time following sports or watching popular movies in the theater. But I don't insult them for not complying with my preferences. And that's all morality is, on atheism. Individual preferences and cultural conventions.

You can only judge others if there is an objective standard that is binding on this other person. What sense does it make to mock and deride people who have different preferences than you do? It seems as if atheists *do* believe in objective morality, however inconsistently. But only when judging others, never when judging themselves.

Is Obama saving or creating jobs?

May 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

KSDK reports that Obama's cuts in defense spending will cost St. Louis 30,000 jobs. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Thousands of jobs could be in jeopardy at St. Louis' second largest employer: Boeing.
>
> The aerospace company announced the government's planned defense budget cutbacks will slow production of two locally-built planes and eliminate the jobs of the employees who make them. Michael Moran has helped build hundreds, if not thousands, of C-17 cargo planes.
>
> …The bottom line is Boeing needs to get through to President Obama, Congress and Secretary Gates. If not, they stand to lose more than 5,000 jobs at Boeing in St. Louis, and 30,000 total local jobs, including suppliers.
>
> Boeing executives are reaching out to anyone who will listen. They're trying to get Congress to put the planes back in the budget.

The video is here.

And remember the protectionist regulations Obama included in his Porkulus bill? Recently, we talked about how the "Buy American" provisions of the stimulus bill caused American companies to stop buying anything from Canada for their projects. Well guess what? The Canadians were not amused.

Here's the story from the left-wing Washington Post. (H/T Ace of Spades)

> This week, the Canadians fired back. A number of Ontario towns, with a collective population of nearly 500,000, retaliated with measures effectively barring U.S. companies from their municipal contracts — the first shot in a larger campaign that could shut U.S. companies out of billions of dollars worth of Canadian projects.

And it's going to cost American jobs:

> The new buy American provisions, the company said, are being so broadly interpreted that Duferco Farrell is on the verge of shutting down. Part of an increasingly global supply chain that seeks efficiencies by spreading production among multiple nations, it manufactures coils at its Pennsylvania plant using imported steel slabs that are generally not sold commercially in the United States. The partially foreign production process means the company's coils do not fit the current definition of made in the USA — a designation that the stimulus law requires for thousands of public works projects across the nation.
>
> In recent weeks, its largest client — a steel pipemaker located one mile down the

> road — notified Duferco Farrell that it would be canceling orders. Instead, the client is buying from companies with 100 percent U.S. production to meet the new stimulus regulations. Duferco has had to furlough 80 percent of its workforce.
>
> “You need to tell me how inhibiting business between two companies located one mile apart is going to save American jobs,” said Bob Miller, Duferco Farrell’s executive vice president. “I’ve got 600 United Steel Workers out there who are going to lose their jobs because of this. And you tell me this is good for America?”

Losing your job sucks, and there’s going to be a lot more of it until people shut off their televisions and pick up some books on economics, like the Federalist Papers or The Road to Serfdom. Learn a little about what made our country *not like North Korea*. Our prosperity wasn’t an accident, it was the result of a set of decisions made by men who believed in God, human rights and free enterprise.

UPDATE: The Competitive Enterprise Institute has more on the trade war with Canada.

Are the oceans warming?

May 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We actually have a pretty comprehensive way of measuring the changes in the temperature of the oceans. We use a submersible sensor called an "Argo Buoy" in order to do the measurements. Since 2003, 3000 of them have been taking measurements in all the oceans of the world. The purpose of the buoys is to provide scientists with confirmation that the globe is really warming. But all was not well.

But the Vancouver Sun reports: (H/T Commenter ECM)

> So why are some scientists now beginning to question the buoys' findings? Because in five years the little blighters have failed to detect any global warming. They are not reinforcing the scientific orthodoxy of the day, namely that man is causing the planet to warm dangerously. They are not proving the predetermined conclusions of their human masters. Therefore they, and not their masters' hypotheses, must be wrong.
>
> In fact, "there has been a very slight cooling," according to a U.S. National Public Radio (NPR) interview with Josh Willis at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, a scientist who keeps close watch on the Argo findings.

Well, maybe the climate models predicted some cooling?

> The big problem with the Argo findings is that all the major climate computer models postulate that as much as 80-90 per cent of global warming will result from the oceans warming rapidly then releasing their heat into the atmosphere.

But surely the other models are being confirmed by observations?

> Modellers are also perplexed by the findings of NASA's eight weather satellites that take more than 300,000 temperature readings daily over the entire surface of the Earth, versus approximately 7,000 random readings from Earth stations.
>
> In nearly 30 years of operation, the satellites have discovered a warming trend of just 0.14 C per decade, less than the models and well within the natural range of temperature variation.

But maybe if we wait for a while, scientists will discover new measurements that are the opposite of these measurements. The new measurements will confirm that global warming is real, that scientists need more grant money, and that socialists must take control of the economy *right now* in order to save us from the horrible Flying Spaghetti Global Warming Monster! Those 700 dissenting scientists? Paid off by big oil! All of them!

The polar ice caps were also paid off by big oil. How else do you explain their refusal to melt?

UPDATE: NASA study shows that solar activity is responsible for past global warming.

Why do people oppose same-sex marriage?

May 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: The research paper seems to have expired from the FRC web site, but you can see the whole thing here.

I found this research paper at the Family Research Council web site. The paper compares same-sex couples and heterosexual married couples, in the following ways:

- relationship duration
- monogamy vs. promiscuity
- relationship commitment
- number of children being raised
- health risks
- rates of intimate partner violence

Are there really significant differences between the two arrangements? Let's take a look at the some of the data.

Relationship duration

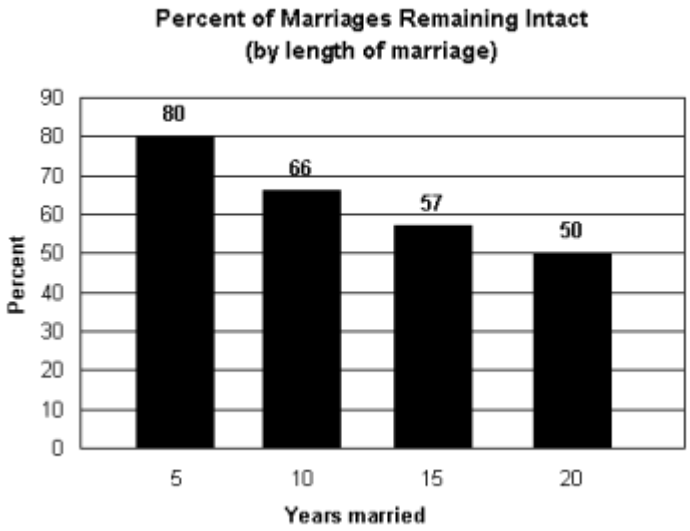

% of Marriages Remaining Intact
Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2001)

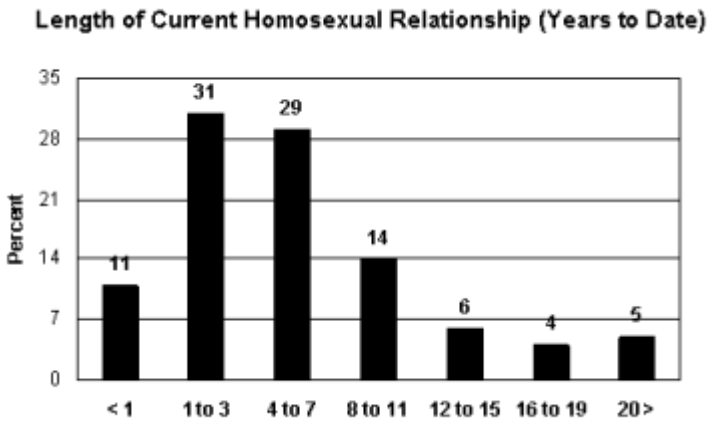

Length of Current Homosexual Relationship
Source: 2003-2004 Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census

Monogamy vs Promiscuity

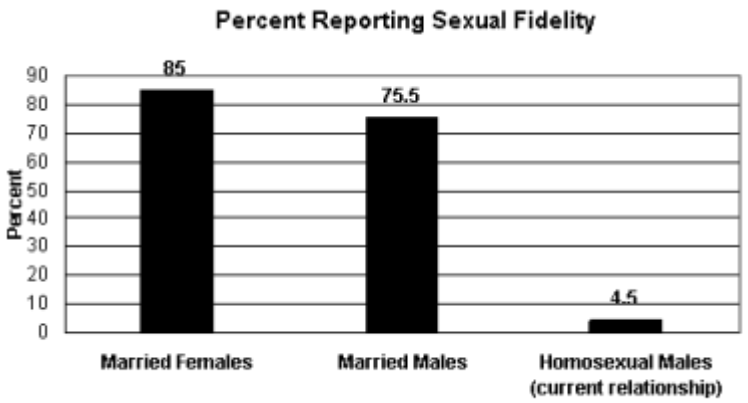

% Reporting Sexual Fidelity
Sources:Laumann, The Social Organization of Sexuality, 216; McWhirter and Mattison, The Male Couple: How Relationships Develop (1984): 252-253; Wiederman, “Extramarital Sex,” 170.

Rates of intimate partner violence

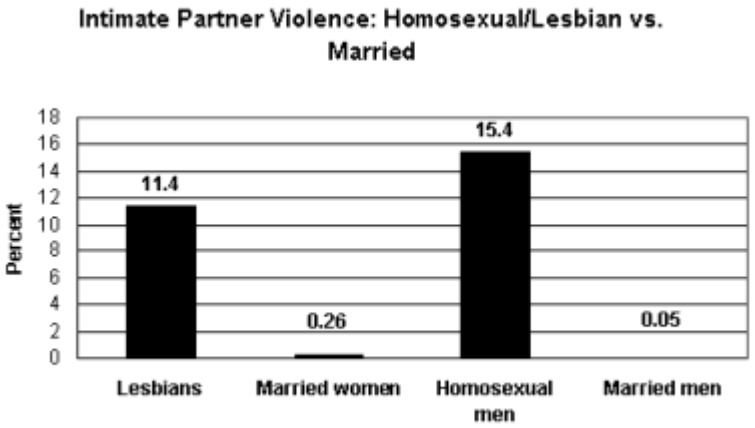

Intimate Partner Violence
Sources: “Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence,” U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs: 30; “Intimate Partner Violence,” Bureau

of Justice Statistics Special Report:11.

Conclusion

Marriage is a relationship that has a specific purpose. That purpose is to bind together two opposite natures and to produce children that are biologically linked to the parents. The children gain the benefits of being parented by the two different natures, so they get two perspectives. The fact that the children are genetically linked to two parents helps to ensure the stability of the commitment, as we see in the animal kingdom where animals protect their young.

The goal of marriage is not to increase the happiness of the adults, or to "recognize" the love of adults. The goal of marriage is have two people enter into a relationship where they understand that it is not about adults being fulfilled. Marriage is about people having a goal of raising children, which are tremendously stressful to raise. Marriage requires self-denial and sacrifice in order to raise those children – that is the main point of it. It also requires fidelity and chastity, so that the environment is kept stable for the children over a long period of time.

Children benefit from the stability that is more common in traditional marriages than it is in other arrangements, including heterosexual co-habitation which is similarly unstable (50% greater chance of divorce, more domestic violence, etc.). Therefore, it is important to keep the concept of marriage separate from other kinds of relationships so that the focus on commitment for the sake of the children is clear to those who contemplate marriage. Society needs to give special recognition to married couples, in view of their child-focused commitment.

I apologize in advance if this post causes anyone any harm or distress, I am just trying to explain why people have that opinion. They could be wrong, but that is the case they make. Obviously, married couples fall short of the goal, but that is their goal.

Further study

Two much bigger challenges to marriage are big-government socialism and *especially* no-fault divorce. I also wrote about same-sex marriage and co-habitation before, in the context of European states like Sweden and Norway.

You may also be interested in a recent post about whether homosexuality is caused by a "gay gene".

Indian Christians cheer election results

May 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In September of 2008, the Wall Street Journal reported on anti-Christian violence in India:

> In the past week in Karnataka, the southern Indian state that is home to India's high-technology capital of Bangalore, at least 17 attacks have been reported on churches and prayer halls, according to local Christian groups, independent monitors and police….Christians, who make up roughly 2% of India's 1.1 billion population, have periodically been the targets of violence by Hindu-extremist groups who oppose Christian missionaries and the conversion of Hindus. Christianity has proven popular among those on the lowest rungs of Hinduism's caste hierarchy, in part because Christian groups often offer education and health care.
>
> Christians and churches also have been targeted in Kerala in southern India, Madhya Pradesh in central India and Uttar Pradesh in the north.
>
> The incidents follow attacks on Christians in the eastern state of Orissa starting last month that have left about 25 dead. The Orissa attacks were sparked after a Hindu-fundamentalist leader, Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati, was found dead in a temple. Orissa police have said they suspect Maoist rebels for the deaths, but Hindu-extremist groups blame Christian missionaries.
>
> The violence has taken on a political tinge as India prepares for national elections that must be held before May.

The article talks about the two main parties in the May elections:

> The opposition Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party is viewed as ideologically aligned with the extremist Hindu groups, such as the Bajrang Dal, that minority groups and some other parties blame for stoking the violence.
>
> The BJP and the Congress Party are India's two main national parties. The current government is a Congress-led coalition.
>
> …"The BJP has always fallen back on a strategy that polarizes people on communal lines to get what they imagine will be electoral gains," said Jayanti Natarajan, a Congress spokeswoman.

Check out these comments by the BJP, it's scary:

> Kalyan Singh, BJP national vice president, said the party doesn't believe in sectarian agitation. "We condemn the violence in Orissa, but the main and deep root is the mass conversions by the Christian missionaries," which the BJP opposes, he said.
>
> Bajrang Dal is a militant youth wing of the Vishva Hindu Parishad, a Hindu-nationalist organization. Prakash Sharma, Bajrang Dal's national head, said in an

> interview that the death of Mr. Saraswati in Orissa was "under the inspiration of the Christian missionaries and converts." He said that as a result, "people all over India are responding spontaneously against them." Asked if he could cite evidence of Christian culpability for the death, he failed to do so.
>
> He denied any involvement of Bajrang Dal in the riots against Christians in Orissa and Karnataka.

CNS reported on the anti-Christian campaign waged by the BJP:

> **Orissa is one of five Indian states where BJP authorities have passed anti-conversion laws which the U.S. State Department says infringe upon an individual's right to change religion.**
>
> …Christians say those who have become believers do so willingly, and in the process escape the discriminatory caste system.
>
> The Christian ministry Open Doors, which maintains a watchlist of countries where Christians face the worst persecution, this year moved India to 22nd place, up from 30th last year.

The May elections are now completed! And here are the election results so far, from the BBC: (H/T Dr. Roy)

> State television says Congress's alliance has won or is ahead in 263 seats, compared with the BJP's (154), the Third Front (60) and others (66).
>
> …Prakash Karat, the leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the key mover in the Third Front, accepted Congress had won.
>
> "The CPM and the Left parties have suffered a major setback," he said.

It's a Parliamentary system with 543 seats, you need a governing coalition with the majority of seats to govern.

Dr. Roy says:

> …There will no need for commies to be part of the governing coalition. There was 60% turnout. Unfortunately 60 people died in attacks by maoist terorrists. Congress and its allies have won in Tamil Nadu. Probably not very good news for the ltte. The Prime minister will be ManMohan Singh for now, but it is likely a Gandhi will be PM in the not too distant future.

Great news for Christians in India!

UPDATE: The Competitive Enterprise Institute says that it's a victory for free market capitalism, as well! Bonus!

Featured blog: Muddling Toward Maturity

May 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just discovered this blog "Muddling Toward Maturity". The blog links to a lot of interesting stories I haven't seen anywhere else!

Here are a couple:

A review of Mark Levin's new book "Liberty and Tyranny" by Andrew C. McCarthy in the New Criterion

Excerpt from the review:

> [Levin] is especially trenchant on the animating role of faith in the American founding, and, consequently, its place atop the statist hit-list. The Framers understood "that liberty and religious liberty are inseparable." But Christianity, unapologetically, was and is America's dominant religion and it is undeniable that Judeo-Christian values heavily influenced our founding law. The point of religious liberty was to forfend the establishment of a theocracy of the type Tocqueville discerned in the Islamic world, where the Qur'an imposed not merely religious tenets but control over every aspect of life. The Supreme Court's fabrication of a "wall of separation" in its 1947 *Everson* decision (authored by one-time Klansman Hugo Black, the first justice appointed by FDR), installing official hostility to religion, was "a wretched betrayal of America's founding." As a result, "American courts sit today as supreme secular councils, which, like Islam's supreme religious councils, dictate all manner of approved behavior respecting religion."
>
> A strong proponent of constitutional originalism, Levin particularly laments FDR's "Second Bill of Rights," the initiative Obama has thrown into high gear. These "positive rights"—economic and social welfare benefits, not rights but redistributions—are "tyranny's disguise": the statist's "false promises of utopianism … to justify all trespasses on the individual's private property." Like freedom of conscience, property is part of liberty's irreducible core, and is thus exalted in our founding law. So, like religion, it is forever in the statist's cross-hairs as he seeks to micromanage every vestige of autonomy from employment to healthcare to the type of cars we drive.

Deep thinking on big ideas. That's what we can expect from Mark Levin. And I love it when Jewish people are supportive Christians! My favorite three radio shows are Dennis Prager, Michael Medved and Mark Levin. All three are Jewish!

Now the next link is special to me, because I have a copy of the book Rare Earth in my overhead shelf at work. It's written by atheist Peter Ward and agnostic Donald Brownlee, and it documents all the characteristics that are needed to create a habitable planet. The book kicks butt.

Why We Need Earthquakes by Dinesh D'Souza, writing in Christianity Today.

Excerpt from the article:

> Ward and Brownlee ask: Why do natural disasters such as earthquakes, seaquakes, and tsunamis occur? All three are the consequence of *plate tectonics*, the giant plates that move under the surface of the earth and the ocean floor. Apparently our planet is unique in having plate tectonics. Ward and Brownlee show that without this geological feature, there would be no large mountain ranges or continents.
>
> While natural disasters occasionally wreak havoc, our planet needs plate tectonics to produce the biodiversity that enables complex life to flourish on earth. Without plate tectonics, earth's land would be submerged to a depth of several thousand feet. Fish might survive in such an environment, but not humans.
>
> Plate tectonics also help regulate the earth's climate, preventing the onset of scorching or freezing temperatures that would make mammalian life impossible. In sum, plate tectonics are a necessary prerequisite to human survival on the only planet known to sustain life.

Muddling Toward Maturity also links to some other similar articles, that go into more detail.

Check them out!

What are the minimal requirements for rational morality?

May 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from the the Western Experience! Thanks for the link, Jason!

Last week, I posted a list of 13 questions that Christians could use to get discussions going with their atheist friends. Basically, you ask your atheist friend out to lunch, ask them the questions. We got 10 responses to the questions, which I summarized here. And I had lunch with another one of my friends, another Jewish atheist, who goes to a Reformed synagogue, as well.

Basically, the questionnaire's purpose is to establish whether atheism provides a *rational* foundation for moral behavior. Specifically, can atheism account for the minimal requirements for *rational* moral behavior (see below).

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question

“what does it matter?”. Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you’ve finished eating them, you die for real and that’s the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It’s hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Tomorrow, I will explain why the answers given by the atheists show that the worldview of atheism offers *none* of these 5 requirements, and that therefore morality is really, really, really irrational on atheism. Atheist can look over their shoulders at their neighbors, and act like them in order to feel happy that they are acting consistently with the arbitrary fashions of their herd, but that’s *all* they can do, on atheism.

Further study

You can get the full story on the requirements for rational morality in a published, peer-reviewed paper written by William Lane Craig here. You can also hear and see him present the paper to an audience of students and faculty at the Georgia Institute of Technology in 2008. The audio is clipped at 67 minutes, the video is the full 84 minutes. There is 45 minutes of Q&A, with many atheist challengers.

The video of this lecture is the *best material you can get* on this issue, and the Q&A from the hostile audience is *vital* to the lesson. More debates on atheism and morality can be found on the debate and lecture page.

You can find a post contrasting the morality of an authentic, consistent Christian with an authentic, consistent non-Christian here. A post examining how atheism is responsible for the deaths of 100 million innocent people in the 20th century alone is here. A post analyzing the tiny number of deaths that religion was responsible for is here.

Is Obama a pro-life or pro-choice President?

May 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From NewsBusters, we get a nice list of things Obama has done for the unborn.

- January 23, 2009 – Forces taxpayers to fund pro-abortion groups that either promote or perform abortions in other nations. Decison to overturn Mexico City Policy sends part of $457 million to pro-abortion organizations.
- February 27, 2009 – Starts the process of overturning pro-life conscience protections President Bush put in place to make sure medical staff and centers are not forced to do abortions.
- March 9, 2009 – Obama signed an executive order forcing taxpayer funding of embryonic stem cell research.
- March 11, 2009 – Obama signed an executive order establishing a new agency within his administration known as the White House Council on Women and Girls. Obama's director of public liaison at the White House, Tina Tchen, an abortion advocate, became director of it.
- March 11, 2009 – Obama administration promotes an unlimited right to abortion at a United Nations meeting.
- March 17, 2009 – Obama makes his first judicial appointment and names pro-abortion federal Judge David Hamilton to serve on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.
- March 26 – President Obama announced $50 million for the UNFPA, the UN population agency that has been criticized for promoting abortion and working closely with Chinese population control officials who use forced abortions and involuntary sterilizations.
- April 23 – Refused to appeal a ruling requiring the FDA to allow 17-year-old girls to purchase the morning after pill without either a doctor visit or parental involvement beforehand.
- May 5 – Details emerge about a terrorism dictionary the administration of President Barack Obama put together in March. The Domestic Extremism Lexicon calls pro-life advocates violent and claims they employ racist overtones in engaging in criminal actions.
- May 8 – President Obama releases a new budget that allows the Legal Services Corporation to use tax dollars to pay for pro-abortion litigation.
- May 8 – President Obama's new budget calls for taxpayer funded abortions in the nation's capital, and eliminates all federal funding for abstinence-only education.

And we shouldn't be surprised at his record on social issues in office, because those of us who *can* inform ourselves, using means other than television commercials during sports telecasts, knew about Obama's record before he started to run for office:

- Obama expressed support for legislation that would repeal the Hyde Amendment, which protects pro-life citizens from having to pay for abortions, and which has been credited with saving over a million lives.
- Obama, unlike even many allegedly "pro-choice" legislators, opposed the ban on partial-birth abortions when he served in the Illinois legislature and condemned the Supreme Court decision that upheld legislation banning this heinous practice.
- On the campaign trail, Obama referred to a baby conceived inadvertently by a young woman as a "punishment" that she should not have to endure.
- Obama has stated that women's equality requires access to abortion on demand.
- Obama, despite the urging of pro-life members of his own party, did not and has not endorsed or offered support for the Pregnant Women Support Act, the signature bill of Democrats for Life, meant to reduce abortions by providing assistance for women facing crisis pregnancies.
- Obama, as an Illinois state senator, opposed legislation to protect children who are born alive, either as a result of an abortionist's unsuccessful effort to kill them in the womb, or by the deliberate delivery of the baby prior to viability. The Obama campaign lied about his vote until critics produced documentary proof of what he had done. In fact, Obama continued to lie about his inhuman voting record in regard to the Illinois Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, and even stooped so low as to run a disgusting television ad **attacking the disabled survivor of a botched abortion.**

And don't forget his plans to enact the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), which *denies* Christian doctors and nurses the freedom to choose *not* to perform abortions, in violation of their consciences:

> But Obama the presidential candidate also promised that "the first thing I'd do as President is sign the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA)," which would create a federally guaranteed "fundamental right" to abortion through all nine months of pregnancy, including "a right to abort a fully developed child in the final weeks for undefined 'health' reasons", and would abolish virtually every existing state and federal limitation on abortion, including parental consent and notification laws for minors, state and federal funding restrictions on abortion, and conscience protections for pro-life citizens working in the health-care industry.

A lot of pro-lifers say that abortion is the new slavery – you pick a group of people and dehumanize them because they are weaker than you are, for your own financial gain. At least the slave owners didn't kill the slaves, though.

Other blogs writing on abortion:

- Hot Air: Obama's speech at Notre Dame
- Nice Deb: Audio of Obama arguing in favor of infanticide in the Illinois legislature
- Heritage Foundation: Contrasting the Notre Dame speech with Obama's actual policies

- Western Experience: Pro-life protesters arrested at Notre Dame

The full story of nurse Jill Stanek, who blew the whistle on infanticide in Illinois hospitals, in case you missed it.

UPDATE: Hot Air has video of John Piper speaking about what Obama's pro-abortion stance really means: 1,000,000 dead babies every year. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Ironic, because I was just listening to John Piper's sermon on William Wilberforce, who abolished the "abortion" of his day: slavery.

Is Obama keeping America safe?

May 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's see how Obama is performing on national security issues. Most of these links courtesy of Free Canuckistan.

Former FBI agent tells NewsMax that Obama is making another 9/11 "inevitable". (H/T Infidel Blogger Alliance)

> A former FBI agent who recently won a lawsuit defeating FBI attempts to muzzle him tells Newsmax that the agency's morale may be at its lowest ebb ever, and warns the "chilling" effect of Obama administration policies is making another terrorist attack on the U.S. homeland "inevitable."
>
> ..."I'm not exactly sure where the president is coming from, but all the signals he gives out is that the United States is prepared to talk peace, we're not going to do anything to upset any of the people that are conducting all these terrorist acts, we're going to back out of everything we've done before, we're going to apologize for everything we've done in the past – what kind of signals does that send?" Vincent asks. "It sends a signal of weakness and: 'We are not willing to try and stop what you have planned.'"

Yes, this is what happens when the people claim that Bush could have kept us safe without force or surveillance. We already know how Obama's leftist diplomacy works. We were attacked *multiple* times during Clinton's presidency, and Clinton was like Churchill or Thatcher, compared to the Obama.

IBD had this editorial by economist Thomas Sowell regarding Obama's national security performance:

> In 1938, with Hitler preparing to unleash a war in which tens of millions of men, women and children would be slaughtered, the play that was the biggest hit on the Paris stage was a play about French and German reconciliation, and a French pacifist that year dedicated his book to Adolf Hitler.
>
> When historians of the future look back on our era, what will they think of our time? Our media too squeamish to call murderous and sadistic terrorists anything worse than "militants" or "insurgents"? Our president going abroad to denigrate the country that elected him, pandering to feckless allies and outright enemies, and literally bowing to a foreign tyrant ruling a country from which most of the 9/11 terrorists came?

There was a time when American elected Presidents like Reagan and Bush. Those presidents believed in and fought for the cause of liberty. But that time is gone.

> ONE of the world's most courageous women is locked away in a miserable rat-hole in Rangoon. Her "crime"? Demanding freedom for her people.

> …Of course, with an "election" coming up next year, Burma's kooky generals have every reason to keep their country's most beloved democrat under lock and key — and most of the world sees through the sham. Voices from Congress to the European Union have demanded Suu Kyi's release.
>
> And the Leader of the Free World? Silence.
>
> What a change from the previous White House, which had two champions of Burmese freedom in President George and, especially, Laura Bush. Their backing of Suu Kyi was part of a much broader campaign for freedom fighters around the world. Bush sent a clear message to those risking everything for their freedom: If you stand up for liberty, the president will stand with you.
>
> Now, that message is muffled. In recent weeks, some of the worst human-rights violators have seized and detained US citizens — from journalists Roxana Saberi in Iran and Laura Ling and Euna Lee in North Korea, to prisoner John William Yettaw in Burma — with nary a word from President Obama in reply.

Not to mention the forced conversion of Christian children in Egypt to Islam, or the actual torture that goes on in North Korea. (H/T Half Done)

God help us all if the President of the United States is more concerned with scoring political points than improving liberty, prosperity and security, at home and abroad. There is a price to pay for the moral decay that results from rejecting objective morality. When threats arise, the secular left blames America and praises the enemies of liberty and prosperity, as Evan Sayet has argued.

UPDATE: The Heritage Foundation linked to a couple more national security stories.

- In remarks to a foreign-policy group in Los Angeles yesterday, CIA Director Leon Panetta suggested that comments like House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's recent critiques of the CIA could be detrimental to American national security.
- CIA officials warn that new rules may hinder effective interrogations.

Is morality rational, on atheism?

May 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from the the Western Experience! Thanks for the link, Jason!

Last week, I posted a list of 13 questions that Christians could use to get discussions going with their atheist friends. We got 10 responses to the questions. Yesterday, we took a look at the minimal requirements for robust, prescriptive morality. Today, we'll evaluate atheism, as represented by the 10 respondents to the survey, to see whether the minimal requirements are rationally grounded by atheism.

1) Objective moral values: **NOT GROUNDED**

All ten respondents stated that moral values have no mind-independent existence. In other words, they are purely subjective. Eight of the respondents thought that each person should decide for themselves what is moral for them, and 2 thought that each person should act in accordance with the arbitrary social conventions of the culture where they lived. Those standards change over time and in different places, of course. They are arbitrary.

2) Objective moral duties: **NOT GROUNDED**

All ten respondents said that there was no such thing as objective moral values, and so there can be no objective moral duties either. Most people said that their own preferences were the source of *subjective* moral values. But a duty owed to oneself can be canceled when things get difficult. The best attempt was the social contract answer, but this fails because the social contract is arbitrary. There is no reason to limit your happiness because of an arbitrary social contract, so long as you can escape the social consequences of disobedience.

3) Moral accountability: **NOT GROUNDED**

Nine respondents did not believe in God. The one who did believe said that God did not care about our actions. Therefore, there is no accountability for the decisions we make. So long as we can avoid the consequences for violating the arbitrary fashions of the time and place where we live, nothing will happen to us if we put our happiness above the needs of our feelings of "empathy" for others.

4) Free will: **NOT GROUNDED**

All ten respondents were materialists, and therefore did not believe in minds or souls independent of the material that makes up the body. Therefore, everything that humans do is fully determined by the genetic programming and the sensory inputs. To expect moral choices or moral responsibility on atheism is like expecting the same from a computer. Physical systems don't have free will. There is no "ought to do" for lumps of matter that are not designed by anyone for any specific purpose.

5) Ultimate significance: **NOT GROUNDED**

All ten of the respondents were materialists, so life ends in the grave for them. Scientists

have discovered that in the future, the amount of usable energy, such as the heat and light emitted by stars, will run down to zero, the “heat death of the universe”. What this means is that the entire universe will become cold and lifeless at some point. Humans are therefore doomed to extinction no matter how they act.

Conclusion

On atheism, there is no reason for an atheist to constrain his pursuit of happiness. If he does take into account the needs of others because of feelings and emotions (“empathy”), he is acting irrationally. Feelings are not logical arguments. There is no such thing as a “moral” action on atheism, all actions are undertaken for pleasure or personal preference.

In the survey results, *none* of the ten respondents could oppose slavery on rational grounds, *none* of the ten respondents could perform self-sacrificial acts on rational grounds, and *none* of the ten respondents could explain why murder was wrong, on rational grounds. They may have chosen the right alternative, but only based on emotion, not on reason.

As Greg Koukl argues, morality is not rationally grounded on atheism. Now, it is true that atheists act inconsistently in ways that seem to be moral. This is because:

1. Judeo-Christian morality is still floating around in out Western society, even though it is on the way out due to materialist persecution of public religious expression and the Judeo-Christian theology that grounded morality
2. Regardless of what materialism says, God made the universe with objective moral values, and humans with free will, so even if people say that morality is relative and that they are machines, they may still act inconsistently to do the right thing, since their views are mistaken, especially if the costs are minimal

But when the heat is really on, they will cave in to their desires. Rational grounding is needed in order to do the right thing when there are consequences for doing the right thing.

Further study

You can get the full story on the requirements for rational morality in a published, peer-reviewed paper written by William Lane Craig here. You can also hear and see him present the paper to an audience of students and faculty at the Georgia Institute of Technology in 2008. The audio is clipped at 67 minutes, the video is the full 84 minutes. There is 45 minutes of Q&A, with many atheist challengers.

The video of this lecture is the *best material you can get* on this issue, and the Q&A from the hostile audience is *vital* to the lesson. More debates on atheism and morality can be found on the debate and lecture page.

You can find a post contrasting the morality of an authentic, consistent Christian with an authentic, consistent non-Christian here. A post examining how atheism is responsible for the deaths of 100 million innocent people in the 20th century alone is here. A post

analyzing the tiny number of deaths that religion was responsible for is here.

Who has the better economy? Canada or the USA?

May 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hans Bader at the Competitive Enterprise Institute reports:

> 1.2 million Americans have lost their jobs since the $800 billion stimulus package was signed into law.
>
> The stimulus package has directly destroyed tens of thousands of jobs. A provision in the stimulus package that blocked 97 Mexican truckers from U.S. roads "caused Mexico to retaliate with tariffs on 90 goods affecting $2.4 billion in U.S. trade," destroying 40,000 American jobs.
>
> It also ignited a *trade war with Canada*. In response to vague "buy American" provisions in the stimulus package, "A number of Ontario towns, with a collective population of nearly 500,000, retaliated with measures effectively barring U.S. companies from their municipal contracts — the first shot in a larger campaign that could shut U.S. companies out of billions of dollars worth of Canadian projects."
>
> Yet, Obama had the audacity to claim that only passing the stimulus package would save us from "irreversible decline" and economic ""disaster".
>
> Obama's policies echo those of Herbert Hoover, who helped spawn the Great Depression through his protectionism and tax increases.

Remember how Democrats used to complain about Bush and his "tax cuts for the rich"? Yeah, it's strange how only people who pay taxes (59% of the public) can actually get tax cuts, isn't it. But Obama has an even better idea: "tax hikes for the poor".

The Washington Post reports on Obama's new car tax: (H/T Heritage Foundation, Michelle Malkin, Stop the ACLU, Gateway Pundit)

> A senior administration official said the new standards would raise the cost of an average car by $1,300, $600 of which could be attributed to the rules being announced today.

This is not to mention the electricity tax (cap and trade), the cigarette tax, taxing employee health care plans, and the rising cost of living caused by protectionism.

On the other hand, let's take a look at Canada in relation to the United States, courtesy of the Cato Institute. (H/T Heritage Foundation)

The Cato Institute writes:

> **Spending:** Spending by all levels of the Canadian government peaked at 53 percent of the country's GDP in the early 1990s, then plunged to 40 percent in 2008. U.S. government spending has risen, reaching 39 percent of GDP in 2008. And with the stimulus package, that number is likely to jump even higher.

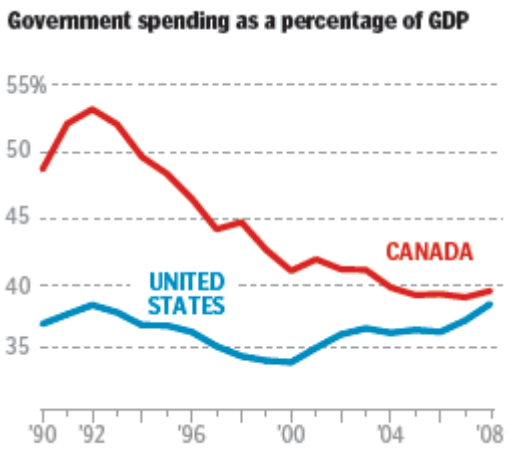

Government spending as % of GDP

> **Debt:** The Canadian government cut its debt from 71 percent of GDP in 1995 to 32 percent in 2008. Under President Obama's budget plan, U.S. federal public debt will jump from 41 percent of GDP in 2008 to more than 60 percent next year.

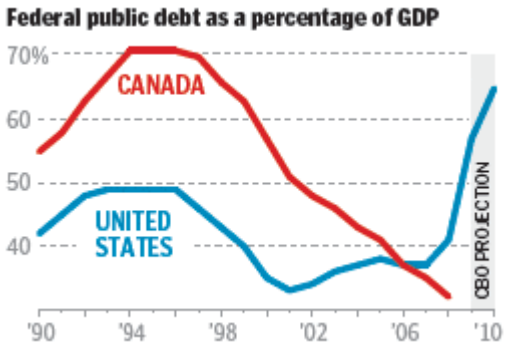

Federal debt as % of GDP

> **Deficits:** Canada has balanced its budget every year since 1998 — not by raising taxes, but by cutting spending. The United States balanced its budget for four years in the late 1990s, but now deficits are so large that it's difficult to imagine that ever happening again.

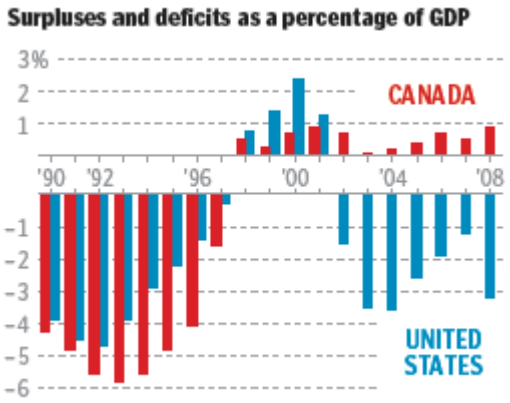

Surplus / Deficit as % of GDP

> **Corporate Taxes:** Canada has cut the corporate tax rate from 28 percent to just 15 percent, and most provinces have trimmed corporate taxes as well. The U.S.

> federalstate rate stands at about 40 percent, and the Obama administration is planning to increase corporate taxes.

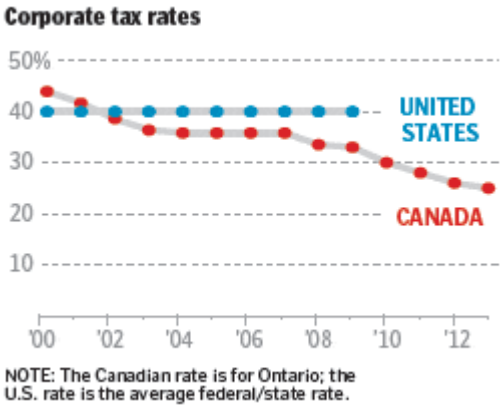

Corporate tax rates

It’s important to note that the Liberal party in Canada is socially progressive, but moderate on fiscal issues. Of course, now that the Conservatives have been running things, it’s gotten even better. It would be great if they could win a majority. The biggest problem in Canada right now is the fascist Human Rights Commissions, but there are candidates from the Conservative Party who intend to abolish the HRCs in BC and Ontario.

Are Obama's policies weakening America's security, liberty and prosperity?

May 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this American Spectator piece entitled "Obama the Destroyer", Quin Hillyer recounts the many deeds that Obama performed in order to weaken America.

Hilyer writes:

> If somebody were deliberately trying to undermine the very fabric of these United States, he would first vow not just to change its policies but to completely "change America," and then would do just about everything Barack Obama already has begun to do as president.

He then lists some of the specific areas that Obama has weakened:

- contract law (which is part of the foundation of capitalism and free enterprise)
- strict interpretation of the Constitution
- counter-terrorism (released interrogation techniques)
- responsible spending and size of government
- energy production
- missile defense
- military preparedness and research
- border security
- transparency and free/open debate on legislation
- freedom of choice in health care
- the integrity of the voting/census system
- diplomacy and foreign policy

I could name at least a half-dozen more areas not on that list, such as the Western Experience's post about Obama's decision to weaken our nuclear capabilities. In fact, Jason has a whole article on the Obama's naive, weak foreign policy.

But foreign policy is one thing, what about the cost of the trillions in spending? Writing in the Weekly Standard, Irwin M. Stelzer explains that there are only two ways out of the massive deficits that Obama has run up: Higher taxes, which destroys economic growth and ships jobs overseas, and hyperinflation, which impoverishes the poorest among us by making them pay more for everything.

He lists all the mistakes that the ACORN lawyer has made, and concludes:

> We are also certain to see the portion of our pay that we actually get to take home decline significantly. The debt that Obama is running up will have to be repaid. Already, there are grumblings in the market about the future of the dollar, with the Chinese not the only one of our creditors worrying that we will inflate our way out of our obligations. Run the presses, make dollars cheaper,

> and use the debased currency to repay debts.
>
> …But inflation is not the only possibility. Instead, politicians, remembering the fate of Jimmy Carter when he allowed inflation to climb towards 20 percent, will try to restore fiscal sanity by raising taxes. Harvard economist Martin Feldstein, who supported the president's stimulus package, puts the needed tax increase at $1.1 trillion over the next decade; the International Monetary Fund puts the figure at $1.9 trillion, a sum the magnitude of which is better understood when written as $1,900,000,000,000.

And don't forget the looming problem of entitlements. You remember. Social Security and Medicare? Costs ballooning out of control? Matthew Continetti writes about it in the Weekly Standard:

> The trustees conclude that a combination of lavish benefits, an aging population, and a moribund economy has brought the United States's social insurance system close to bankruptcy. Medicare is already running a deficit, and the trustees say that it will be totally out of money by 2017. Social Security will be in the red as soon as 2016. That's a problem not only for Social Security. It's a problem for the federal budget.
>
> …Meanwhile, bizarrely and perversely, Obama and the Democrats on Capitol Hill say that the only way to fix America's spending problem–we are not making this up–is to spend more money. More on energy. Health care. Education. The three pillars of the president's "new foundation." Don't worry about the cost, Obama says. The rich guy at the other table will pick up the bill.

What sort of person would spend trillions of dollars in a recession with a looming entitlement crisis? Oh, I know. An unqualified spendthrift who can't even keep his own financial house in order.

Gateway Pundit reminds us that the Democrats understand that their cap and trade bill with hurt the poorest people the most. And they don't care! Most of them are probably like Al Gore, who owns assets that will benefit from the unnecessary government regulations.

Gateway Pundit writes at the American Issues Project:

> The potential cost of the democrat's cap and trade policy is enormous. It will likely cost $700 to $1,400 dollars per family per year. The Department of Energy estimated that a similar bill, S. 2191, the Warner-Lieberman cap-and-trade proposal, will increase the cost of coal for power generation by between 161 percent and 413 percent. Human Events reported that the DOE estimated GDP losses (see chart) over the 21-year period they forecast, at between $444 billion and $1.308 trillion. There are estimates that the bill could increase unemployment by 2.7 percent or about 4 million jobs.
>
> White House Budget Director Peter Orszag was on "This Week" with George

> Stephanopoulos in March. During his interview Orszag admitted that Obama's proposed cap and trade energy legislation will increase energy costs for everyone. The Heritage Foundation reported that cumulative GDP losses for 2010 to 2029 approach $7 trillion. Single-year losses exceed $600 billion in 2029, more than $5,000 per household. Job losses are expected to exceed 800,000 in some years, and exceed at least 500,000 from 2015 through 2026. In Missouri and the Midwest where energy is "cheap" the democrat's legislation would cause electricity rates to double. Even the far left Huffington Post admits that the approach taken by the Waxman-Markey bill does not alleviate the problem whereby household consumers will pay higher energy costs.

The article continues here.

Remember when Obama said this in 2008?

> *"Under my plan of a cap and trade system electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket. Businesses would have to retrofit their operations. That will cost money. They will pass that cost onto consumers."*

What? You voted for Obama and the MSM didn't tell you that he said that? I'm shocked.

Is morality rational, on Christian theism?

May 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last week, I posted a list of 13 questions that Christians could use to get discussions going with their atheist friends. We got 10 responses to the questions. On Monday, we took a look at the minimal requirements for robust, prescriptive morality. On Tuesday, we evaluated whether the minimal requirements are rationally grounded on atheism. Today, we'll evaluate Christianity.

The case for Christian theism

Christian morality is based on the objective truth of the Christian faith. So, let's recall how people argue for Christianity.

Arguments for theism:

- The argument from abstract objects
- The argument from contingency
- Kalam cosmological argument
- Fine-tuning of cosmological constants
- Galactic, stellar and planetary fine-tuning
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell (Advanced article – First Things)
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion (Very Advanced – peer-reviewed paper!)
- The moral argument (see below)
- The argument from non-physical minds
- The argument from near-death experiences
- The argument from irreducibly complex molecular machines (Michael Behe)
- The argument from evil (yes, that's what I said)
- The arguments from mathematical effectiveness, simplicity and beauty (Eugene Wigner)
- The argument from the incompatibility between naturalism and rationality (Alvin Plantinga)
- The argument from the natural limits to biological change (Ray Bohlin)
- Etc.

And then there are arguments for Christianity in particular:

- The minimal facts case for the resurrection
- The argument for the resurrection from changes in Jewish belief and practice
- The argument from fulfilled prophecy
- The argument from accuracy in describing the human condition
- The logical consistency and testability of Christianity
- The superior moral character of authentic Christians in history

- Etc.

And here are the rebuttals and refutations to the arguments *against* Christian theism:

- Postmodernism, relativism and skepticism
- The problems of evil and suffering
- Divine hiddenness
- Religious pluralism
- The fate of the unevangelized / divine sovereignty vs free will
- Incoherence in the concept of God
- Isn't faith supposed to be irrational and evidence-free? (only for atheists, not for Christians)
- Materialist speculations against the kalam and fine-tuning arguments
- The progress of science
- Etc.

So, let's assume Christian theism is true, and go on to see if it rationally grounds the minimal requirements for morality.

Evaluation

1) Objective moral values: GROUNDED

Objective moral values are grounded in God's unchanging nature. His own character is the standard for what counts as good and evil. The standard is not variable, but fixed, by God's unchanging nature.

2) Objective moral duties: GROUNDED

Objective moral duties are grounded in God's commands, which flow from the values in his nature and become duties for his creatures.

3) Moral accountability: GROUNDED

On Christian theism, there is a final judgment after death in which good will be rewarded and evil will be punished, proportionally.

4) Free will: GROUNDED

On Christian theism, each person is a union of a material body and a non-material mind / soul. The actions of the non-material mind / soul are not determined by material processes, and humans are therefore able to make real choices.

5) Ultimate significance: GROUNDED

On Christian theism, death is not the end of the story. Each moral action performed is part of on ongoing relationships with God, and people. So, no action is meaningless, because all your actions relate to God, who exists eternally, or to other people, who also exist eternally into the future.

Conclusion

Christian theism grounds all of the minimal requirements needed for rational morality. In Christian theism, we see the fusion of prudence (Acting morally is what I am designed to

do in order to flourish, i.e. – “eudaimonia”) and submission to a loving God (I will act morally to respect God, because he loves me the most). More to come on the latter point!

Tomorrow, I’ll post my own answers to the 13 questions, since Commenter ECM and moderate-leftist unitarian Rick demand that I do.

Further study

You can get the full story on the requirements for rational morality in a published, peer-reviewed paper written by William Lane Craig here. You can also hear and see him present the paper to an audience of students and faculty at the Georgia Institute of Technology in 2008. The audio is clipped at 67 minutes, the video is the full 84 minutes. There is 45 minutes of Q&A, with many atheist challengers.

The video of this lecture is the *best material you can get* on this issue, and the Q&A from the hostile audience is *vital* to the lesson. More debates on atheism and morality can be found on the debate and lecture page.

You can find a post contrasting the morality of an authentic, consistent Christian with an authentic, consistent non-Christian here. A post examining how atheism is responsible for the deaths of 100 million innocent people in the 20th century alone is here. A post analyzing the tiny number of deaths that religion was responsible for is here.

Obama's car regulations will kill more Americans than the Iraq war

May 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation reports on Obama's proposed regulations on fuel economy.

> Time for practice. Time to pile into the…Toyota Prius? Maybe the Yaris. Or surely the Smart Car will do. Those are three of eleven cars that meet President Obama's new emissions standards that include "nothing larger than a midsize sedan, even when you include hybrids."

Eleven choices of vehicle? The soccer moms will not be liking that.

But it gets worse. It's going to cost another 50,000 jobs added on to Obama's massive count.

Keith Henessey writes: (H/T Competitive Enterprise Institute)

> **NHTSA estimated that a similar option would cost almost 50,000 U.S. auto manufacturing jobs over five years.**

> See Table VII-1 on page 586 of the NHTSA analysis. NHTSA estimated that the TC=TB option, which I'm using as a proxy for the Obama plan, would result in the following job losses among U.S. auto workers:

> | MY 2011 | MY 2012 | MY 2013 | MY 2014 | MY 2015 |
> |---|---|---|---|---|
> | 8,232 | 24,610 | 30,545 | 36,106 | 48,847 |
>
> Compared to the Bush draft final rule, this is **37,000** more jobs lost.
>
> Since I know this table is inflammatory, I will anticipate some of the responses:
>
> - This is an estimate for the job loss from the TC=TB option analyzed by NHTSA in 2007. This is the closest proxy for the Obama rule, and I'm convinced it's a good proxy until someone demonstrates otherwise. But technically, it's not a job loss estimate for the Obama proposal.
> - This estimate was done in a different economic environment (late 2008), and before the U.S. government owned 1.5 major U.S. auto manufacturers. My guess, however, is that these changed conditions should push the estimated job loss *up* from the above estimate, rather than down.
> - There's a false precision in the above table. It's just what NHTSA's model spits out. …I don't put any weight on the precise annual estimates.

And it gets even worse than that.

Steve Milloy writes about the really bad problem on Green Hell blog: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> The Obama administration's proposed mileage standards that will be announced

> today may kill more Americans at a faster rate than the Iraq War — his signature issue in the 2008 presidential campaign.
>
> Obama's standards will require automakers to meet a 35 miles-per-gallon standard by 2016 — four years earlier than the same standard imposed by the Energy Security and Independence Act of 2007.
>
> As discussed in my new book Green Hell, the only way for carmakers to meet these standard is to make smaller, lighter and deadlier cars.
>
> The National Academy of Sciences has linked mileage standards with about 2,000 deaths per year. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that every 100-pound reduction in the weight of small cars increases annual traffic fatalities by as much as 715.
>
> In contrast in the more than *six years* since the Iraq war began, there have been 4,296 deaths among American military personnel.

The Iraq war cost 550 billion and 4300 lives. And for this we got more liberty and security. Obama is spending trillions and trillions of dollars, and he wants to kill 2,000 Americans per year? I am not even talking about his subsidies to kill more unborn babies at home and abroad. This is on top of that!

Obama cuts missile defense as Iran test-fires missile that can hit Israel

May 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yesterday I linked to the story about Obama's decision to weaken our nuclear capabilities, and a while back I blogged about the ACORN lawyer's cuts to missile defense, just as North Korea was ramping up its medium-range missile program.

Here is a quick refresher:

Closing Velocity had some more details on the missile defense cuts. (H/T Hot Air)

> 5. Total cuts in missile defense: $1.4 billion or roughly 15%.
> 6. Cancel second Airborne Laser (ABL) aircraft, keep the one remaining ABL prototype as a testbed and revert to pure R&D.
> 7. No increases in Ground-based Interceptor (GBI) deployment in Alaska. Remaining silos will stay unfilled. European GBIs will be decided on later during the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).
> 8. Termination of the Multiple Kill Vehicle (MKV) program.

Well, now we can add Iran to the list of nations emboldened by Obama's weak foreign policy.

The Heritage Foundation reports: (from their 33 Minutes blog)

> Earlier this week we mentioned Iran's defiance and nuclear ambitions, President Barack Obama's too-friendly request to enter into talks with Iran, the necessity to build agreed-upon missile defense shields in Poland and the Czech Republic, and Israel's desire to take more aggressive action against Iran. Today's post reaffirms why we blogged about these issues.
>
> My Way News reports that Iran test-fired an advanced missile today, with a range far enough to hit Israel, southeastern Europe, and our bases in the Middle East. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made this claim. So, despite Obama's "tough" words of warning, Iran is busy developing and apparently testing its ballistic missile capability.
>
> That Iran doesn't have nuclear capability at this very moment is beside the point. A team of U.S. and Russian scientists just released a report stating Iran would have such capability in as few as five years. In light of this recent missile test-fire, will our president take a more aggressive approach to dealing with Iran, or will he stand by his decision to give the rogue nation a year-end deadline?

Here's Nile Gardiner and a leftist journalist on MSNBC:

This reminds me of a quotation from Ronald Reagan's debate against the 2nd worst president ever, Democrat Jimmy Carter.

> And I'm only here to tell you that I believe with all my heart that our first priority

> must be world peace, and that use of force is always and only a last resort, when everything else has failed, and then only with regard to our national security. Now, I believe, also, that this meeting this mission, this responsibility for preserving the peace, which I believe is a responsibility peculiar to our country, and that we cannot shirk our responsibility as a leader of the free world because we're the only ones that can do it. **Therefore, the burden of maintaining the peace falls on us. And to maintain that peace requires strength. America has never gotten in a war because we were too strong.**

We had 8 years of constant terrorist attacks with the Democrat Clinton. We had 7 years of security, liberty and properity with the Republican Bush, who had the moral clarity, (from his Christian worldview), to oppose tyranny. Let's see how well Obama's diplomacy works. Somehow, I don't think Obama's appeasement of torturing, murdering dictators will be as effective as peace through strength.

UPDATE: Gateway Pundit links to details on the missile. Range is 2000 km, two-stage solid fuel.

Interview with the Christian: why I am a Christian

May 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Please see my new testimony page, in which I explained how I became a Christian by answering the survey questions.

Some debates are posted here, and my index of arguments pro and con are listed here.

Selling single-payer health care with lies

May 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Holy Snark!

You *will* watch this 3 minute video about the Democrats' plan for single-payer health care *right now*! (H/T Heritage Foundation)

This video is courtesy Verum Serum, the same guys who brought us that Jan Schakowsky video where she admits that Obama's plan will destroy private medical insurance. They seem to be a Christian blog, so I blogrolled them, along with Bush White House economist Keith Hennessey, who I linked to twice.

Quick quote from Heritage Foundation's post:

> As Yale professor Jacob Hacker says in the video: "Someone once said to me this is a Trojan Horse for single payer and I said well its not a Trojan Horse, right? Its just right there."
>
> And then later: "One of the virtues of it though is that you can at least make the claim that there is a competitve system between the public and private sectors."

Don't forget some other videos I posted on health care, (that post has a link to Laura's amazing post on health care that was on Hot Air, which had more helpful videos!).

Michelle Malkin has some ideas about what the grassroots can do! We can fight this.

A comprehensive, point-by-point refutation of government-run health care is here, at the Heritage Foundation.

They cover:

- the hidden costs of government-run health care, that are paid by the private sector
- the low efficiency and low quality of existing government plans like Medicare and Medicaid
- how government-run health care would lead to controls on your private life to reduce health costs
- the real solution to the health care mess: competition, de-regulation and consumer choice

Some good news on health care

OK, Heritage Foundation had this story on a bill introduced by Republican senators Tom Coburn and Richard Burr. It's called the "Patient's Choice Act".

Excerpt: (I bolded the stuff I liked)

> As Galen Institute President Grace-Marie Turner and Joseph Antos with American Enterprise Institute note in The Wall Street Journal, the legislation "provides a path to universal coverage by redirecting current subsidies for health insurance to individuals. It also provides a new safety net that guarantees access to

> insurance for those with pre-existing conditions."
>
> By restructuring the tax treatment for health insurance, the plan would give every taxpayer direct assistance to buy private health insurance, and end the inequities that plague the current system. The bill would shift the $300 billion annual tax exclusion for employer-based health benefits toward refundable tax credits for families and individuals. Families would get $5,700 a year and individual consumers would get $2,300 a year to purchase private plans and invest in health savings accounts (HSAs).
>
> Low-income families would receive a supplemental debit card worth up to $5,000 that would help them pay for health coverage and out-of-pocket medical bills. **They'd also be incentivized to make the most of their health care dollars since the remaining balance on their card would roll over to the next year. The expected expansion of private health plans would reduce the dependence of many uninsured Americans on the hospital emergency rooms for routine care, saving American taxpayers billions of dollars.**
>
> "The combination of the refundable tax credit and debit card gives lower-income Americans a way out of the Medicaid ghetto so they can have the dignity of private insurance," Turner and Antos add.

This is what Republicans would do if we could elect enough of them.

Understanding the challenge of becoming a Christian

May 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One thing that I have noticed as I compiled the results of the survey is that *none* of these non-Christians understood what Christianity is about, and none of them have tried to find out, and none of them wanted to find out. All but one refused to follow Jesus even if it became *clear* to them beyond a shadow of a doubt that Christianity were true. And he initially answered as the others did.

Somehow, people have gotten into their heads the idea that religions are all the same, and that the purpose of religion is to make people "good", (or worse, "happy"). And when they say "good", they mean being nice to others. Surprise! The purpose of Christianity is NOT to make you be nice to others nor to make you happy. In fact, no amount of being nice is going to please God, unless something even more important is secured first.

The purpose of Christianity is three-fold. You must expend time, effort and wealth:

1. KNOWING GOD'S CHARACTER AS HE REALLY IS.
2. KNOWING WHAT GOD HAS DONE IN HISTORY.
3. RESPONDING TO AND PURSUING GOD, AS HE REVEALS HIMSELF TO YOU.

You don't decide what your purpose is, God does. God was there before the universe and his character was set before you were even born. He created you and designed you for a purpose.

I wanted to highlight a story in Daniel 3 in order to show what it is that atheists choose not to do, which God considers *moral*. An atheist cannot stand for God in public, and remain faithful and loyal to him in the midst of suffering and persecution. And Christians *are required* do this. This is following the example of the Old Testament prophets, as well as Jesus himself.

It should be no comfort to atheists that they stick to their chosen diet, or stop at stop signs, practice yoga and recycle. God is not the least bit interested in your compliance with your own arbitrary personal preferences, nor the arbitrary standard of your culture in the time and place you live in. *That's not morality! T*hat's just giving yourself happy feelings by effortlessly complying with made-up standards*.*

One way of loving God, (which is the most important commandment), is by keeping faith with God publicly, even when things *don't go your way*. Atheists can't do that. It just isn't rational for people who will be alive for 75 years and then gone, to deny themselves for any higher purpose, especially when it involves suffering. And when being good isn't rational, *people don't do it,* especially when it's hard to do*.*

That is why it is impossible to please God unless you first believe certain things that are only possible if God exists. For example, you need an objective moral standard, free will, someone to whom duty is owed, moral accountability, moral significance, etc.

And to illustrate what counts with God, let's take a look at this sermon on Daniel 3 that I

found that tells the story of Daniel and his 3 friends.

The Scripture is here. You'll need to read this if you don't know the story.

And the sermon excerpt is here:

> Now, before we set up Nebuchadnezzar as the worst guy ever, we don't have to go back very far to see similar things that have happened in our own day and age. Every totalitarian the regime in the 20th century had statues erected in honor of their own tyrant. Whether it was statues of Lenin in the Soviet Union, statues of Mao in China, or statues of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, people had to pay homage to these statues is they wanted to advance in society, and in some cases, simply to stay alive. Usually one was allowed to keep believing in whatever 'god' they wanted as long as it was subordinate to the empire. Allegiance to the state was more important than allegiance to any god.
>
> Our society is certainly different in that we don't have a dictator, and nobody, at least not yet, is threatening to shoot us or toss us into a fiery furnace. But in some ways our society is actually worse, mostly because its pressure is very subtle and sometimes we don't even realize it's going on. Our culture places the same type of pressure on each one of us to put God in second place. We find ourselves constantly pressed to keep our beliefs private and secondary. We can believe whatever we want as long as we don't ever talk about it.
>
> …Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego… had failed to bow down and worship the statue, thereby disrespecting not only the statue but the king as well.
>
> They were accused of ingratitude, verse 12, "There are certain Jews whom you have appointed," and impiety," they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." But the fundamental element of both these charges was their offense against Nebuchadnezzar himself. But that's not how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego saw it.
>
> They were simply trying to be obedient to the commandment, Exodus 20:45a, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God …"
>
> It's worth noting that there were only three men in the whole crowd who refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's statue…. this highlights the fact that sometimes standing up for God can be a lonely activity. And it doesn't matter if you're standing on the national stage or you're simply visiting with all your unbelieving relatives who think you're some sort of moronic freak. There are times in life when doing what's right means you can't hide in the crowd.
>
> …I've come to see this same battle being fought daily in my heart over much lesser issues. Am I going to declare the Lord to be my primary allegiance, come what may, or will I bow to the multitude of idols that the world presents? Unless

> you're an actor, our idols aren't usually golden statues. Our idols are the various pleasures, desires, and attitudes that the culture tells me I need to have in order to live a fulfilled and worthwhile life.
>
> For some, their golden image is the respect and admiration and acceptance of others. For a lot the young adults here, high school and college, there's the pressure to be part of the "in crowd," even though the cost of admission to this club is that we shouldn't show respect to our parents, or talk about God, or keep ourselves pure until marriage. This image of acceptance says, "Bow to me or I'll throw you into the fiery furnace of the mockery and ridicule of your peers.'

Notice how this example of obedience and endurance parallels the life of Jesus, as well, which provides the model for Christians who are called upon to do the same – and this is central to Christianity. Where is this on atheism? Clearly, atheists cannot meet this standard. It is *irrational*, on atheism, to perform acts of self-sacrifice like this in obedience to an objective moral law, and to the moral lawgiver.

So, what is important to Christians is not what is important to atheists, obviously. Our primary goal is not our feelings and well-being, or being "nice" to others or being liked by others. That is *irrelevant*. What is considered *normal* in Christianity is put yourself second, and to put God first, under fire. That is loving God. The most important commandment.

Greg Koukl put it nicely in one of his lectures in the Q&A session when he said "With respect to God's purposes in the world, your happiness is expendable". That is the *normal Christian life*. And it isn't for everyone.

Friday night funny: Nancy Pelosi, Michele Bachmann and capitalism

May 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Canadian-raised comedian Steven Crowder's latest video. This one made me laugh out loud, and you will too! (H/T IMAO.us)

And here's the lovely Michele Bachmann staying calm against Barney Frank. Beauty and the Beast! (H/T The Maritime Sentry)

Remember, Democrats caused the recession and Republicans tried to stop it! And Barney Frank was one of the main players in causing this recession, as you can see from the linked New York Times article. Now Michele has to come in and try to clean up their mess.

Fun cartoons

Here is an old-fashioned video on capitalism. I feel so subversive even showing them to you. This is the kind of thing real Americans used to learn about before the public schools were taken over by marxists, feminists and draft-dodging leftists! (H/T IMAO.us)

Part 1:

Part 2:

More old-fashioned capitalist propaganda here! This one is about energy production, enterprise and competition. It has little green men with pointy ears!

Happy Friday!

Women dominate the classroom, so why are they so unhappy?

May 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this story entitled "At the science fair, girls dominate the class" from the Canada's Globe & Mail newspaper. (H/T My friend Andrew)

Excerpt:

> As female students increasingly dominate in science competitions across the country, educators are facing a conundrum that requires more social analysis than hard science: Boys are not just getting beaten by girls — they're not even showing up.
>
> Five years ago, boys made up 55 per cent of the competitors at the annual Canada-Wide Science Fair, a national competition where youth in grades 7 to 12 compete against other regional representatives. After a steady decline, this year boys are in the minority at 44 per cent.
>
> Girls are also claiming the lion's share of prize money available each year: Eight of the last nine overall winners have been female.
>
> …Megan Hawse, 13, … plans to apply for a provincial internship program that promotes women in science and engineering — but there isn't a similar program for her male classmates.

I guess none of these educrats have read any books like Christina Hoff Sommers' "The War Against Boys".

What caused the decline in male achievement?

Feminism did.

Let's take a look at just one of the reasons why. There are almost no male teachers in the schools, due to discrimination against men.

Consider Australia: (from the Sydney Morning Herald)

> According to… the NSW Teachers Federation, as of June 30, 2005, there were 14,446 female primary school teachers in NSW compared with just 2820 who were male.
>
> In Victoria for the same period, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, there were 15,640 primary school female teaching staff as opposed to 3952 who were male.
>
> "It's very striking to realise that 80 per cent of non-readers and problem learners are boys. We can speculate as to whether this is a direct consequence of the inadvertent femininity of schools."
>
> "Boys need role models who can show them that learning is a masculine activity,

> that men are interested in them, and are not always remote, critical or uncaring," says Biddulph.
>
> "This may be their only chance to experience men who are nonviolent, friendly, good at dealing with misbehaviour and interested in their development. Men can show boys that the world of reading, writing, music, art and learning is as much a man's as a woman's world."

What about the United Kingdom: (from the BBC)

> The YouGov survey of 603 children aged eight to 11 shows 51% of boys believe they are better behaved with a male teacher – and 42% say they work harder.
>
> At present, a large majority of teachers in England's primary schools are women with only 16% being men.
>
> Currently one in 12 pupils will have gone through primary school without ever having been taught by a man.
>
> …There were indications that having male teachers could help boys' overall experience of school – with 44% agreeing that male teachers "help them to enjoy school more" and 37% of boys saying it made them feel more self-confident.
>
> More than a quarter of boys agreed that male teachers "understand them better" and could be "relied upon for good advice".

And so we graduate class after class of feminized, irresponsible, underachieving men. They can't earn a living or make a commitment, but they are well trained in drinking, partying and pre-marital sex.

How has this affected women?

Women are more unhappy than ever

Ann Althouse notes that women are more unhappy than ever, according to a new survey.

And no wonder! Women are generally more satisfied by fulfilling relationships with a loving husband and children. Spending all of this government money on things like day care, birth control, abortions, scholarships, etc. incentivizes women to get away from the things that women really want. Naturally, women should have the same opportunities as men to accomplish anything they want to. But they should not be coerced by an ideology.

I wonder what women will do to find husbands and children now? I am not sure that sperm donors, divorce settlements and big government welfare programs are adequate to take the place of loving husbands and fathers, the way that Democrats seems to think. The more the state taxes, regulates and controls the behavior of men, the less men will want to engage in any enterprise, including marriage and parenting.

Marriage, family and children are *way* more important than making money. Everyone who reads my blog knows that I think that Michele Bachmann is an exemplary woman. But remember – she had 5 children and 23 foster children and she home-schooled them for 5 years in between her time as a tax lawyer, business owner, state senator and a

Congresswoman. If you’re looking for a first female President, look no further.

Further study

Don’t forget my 3 part series on why Democrat policies, which single women overwhelmingly support, discourage men from marrying, here (socialism), here (same-sex marriage & cohabitation) and here (no-fault divorce).

Why don’t thoughtful Christians vote for Democrats?

May 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Over at 4Simpsons, Neil takes a United Church minister to task for upholding the policies of the Democrats. I thought it was a great summary of why Christians should not be voting for the Democrats. We cannot live authentic Christian lives when our money is taken from us and spent by a secular-leftist state that has *no* sympathy for our Christian goals and ideals.

We need to keep our own money, have a choice of employers, a choice of service providers, and our fundamental freedoms must be secured by unbiased courts that strictly interpret the law. At a minimum, I need to be able to *choose* how my children are educated. I will not marry or have children if the state is going to confiscate my money and indoctrinate my children.

Anyway, here is Neil’s post, and I’ll cite you an excerpt.

> No, Democrats support socialism and job and wealth destroying policies. Some of them have good intentions but know nothing about history, economics or basic human nature.
>
> Democrats support unrestricted destruction of the “least of these,” the unborn.
>
> Democrats ignore the incredible success of the United States and capitalism, which has done more to lift people out of poverty than any other -ism.

Highly recommended, especially the last paragraph. There is only one group of people that can cause me to become upset, and it is fake Christians who are lazy, ignorant and cowardly.

Exploding the myth of “Deadbeat Dads”

May 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Stephen Baskerville e-mailed met to let me know about an important article in the Washington Times about the new show on the anti-male “Lifetime” network. If you want to understand why men don’t want to be husbands and fathers any more, read this entire piece.

Excerpt:

> More than 90 percent of fathers with joint custody paid the support due, according to a Census Bureau report (Series P-23, No. 173). So deadbeats are in the minority. Also, most so-called deadbeat dads actually are dead broke. Two-thirds of men who fail to make child-support payments earn poverty-level wages, according to the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. Most of the others are unemployed.
>
> Bruce Walker, executive coordinator at the District Attorneys Council in Oklahoma City, who ran the state’s child-support enforcement program for three years and jailed hundreds of fathers for nonpayment, told the Newark Star-Ledger in 2002: “These men are seldom the mythical monsters described by politicians.”
>
> “Many times I prosecuted impoverished men,” he told the Star-Ledger. “I prosecuted one deadbeat dad who had been hospitalized for malnutrition and another who lived in the bed of a pickup truck.”

On his blog, Dr. Baskerville links to some responses to the article, including his own:

> Two powerful letters in response were published Wednesday:
> http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/20/the-demonization-of-dads/
> http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/20/love-and-divorce/
>
> My own letter was published Thursday (full letter below):
> http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/21/the-agony-of-child-support/

All three are worth reading because they are full of statistics that will shock you. Here is the best bit from the third:

> Ostensibly created to recover welfare costs, child support enforcement on the federal level has failed and now costs taxpayers more than $3 billion annually. More seriously, it pays mothers to divorce or forgo marriage, thus creating the very problem it is supposed to alleviate.
>
> Mothers are not the only ones who profit from fatherless children. State governments generate revenue from child support at federal taxpayers’ expense. By paying states according to the amount of child support they collect, federal programs give states an interest in more fatherless children. The more broken

> homes there are, the more revenue for the state.

Don't forget to read the facts on the lack of male teachers in the schools, which undermines men's ability to achieve and to be responsible. And when you're done with that, you can read about the problem of no-fault divorce and the family court system. (A shorter version is linked here)

For those of you who are pro-life or pro-traditional marriage, I want to advise you that this issue is also a very important, although under-reported, issue for social conservatives. Fathers matter, and the state has policies in place that are discouraging men from their traditional role in the family. In the case of a divorce, fathers almost never get custody, and sometimes they do not see their children for years.

Before, I wrote about the fact that 40% of new births are to unwed mothers. Generous benefits provided by the government ensure that fathers are dispensable. Over 20 million children in the United States are raised without a father in the home. And I'm sure you know the social costs to young men and women: violence, anxiety, promiscuity, unwed motherwood, teen pregnancy, abortion, suicides, depression, drug addiction, etc.

And don't even get me started on the false allegations of rape, harassment, etc., such as the recent Duke University lacrosse scandal. Women who make these false allegations are almost never punished! Over two-thirds of divorces are initiated by women for "irreconcilable differences". You have to understand that thoughtful men notice these things, and they will make decisions accordingly.

Surprise! Men don't like being treated poorly by the state. Treat us poorly enough and we'll find other things to do with our lives than get marriage and raise children. To see what that might look like, take a look at this article on birth rates in countries that are further along the marxist-feminist agenda than the United States.

More in my series on how Democrat policies discourage marriage: Part 1 is here and Part 2 is here and Part 3 is here.

One of the best things about being a Christian is other Christians

May 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to highlight some of the Christian blogs that I've discovered since I started blogging.

The top one in the list is definitely Neil Simpson's blog. I was just reading over there today and he was really hard on poor Dawn Eden, whose book on chastity I have read. I recommend it, although she doesn't go as far as I would. Anyway, she's responded in the comments. She is currently taking classes in philosophy and theology, so it should be a good fight between her and Neil! Dawn's blog is here.

I also noticed this post over on Laura's blog, but it's cross-posted on Hot Air. Laura writes about how the left implicitly doesn't trust parents to make decisions about how they address the topic of sex when talking to their own children. She writes about the left's view of parents:

> Our teens are political pawns for the left. They're helpless victims of our prudery, children that the government needs to provide for at every turn with health insurance and free college tuition (but don't deserve an adequate secondary education except when it's time to raise taxes), socially and technologically savvy enough to make their own entertainment and political choices free from our censorship, mature and wise enough to choose abortion (but not give birth), and 18 year old babies who need to be protected from sneaky military recruiters and beer. The rallying cry may be "it's for the children!" but the only really consistent position I see in the left is that parents do not know best; government does.

Over on Muddling Toward Maturity, he links to a Chuck Colson story on how the self-esteem movement in education and parenting has undermined civility in our children. Here is an excerpt from Chuck Colson:

> Whether or not today's kids are actually "ruder than ever," the article and others like it reflect the sense that something has gone wrong in the way we raise our children. Specifically, it has to do with "popular parenting movements focusing on self-esteem."
>
> These movements produce parents who "[respond] with hostility to anyone they perceive as getting in the child's way." By "getting in the child's way," they mean doing anything that might make the child feel less-than-wonderful about him or herself—in the classroom, among their peers, or on the playing field.

Denyse O'Leary takes on the theistic evolutionists here at Post-Darwinist. I love it when she gets mad at them! She gets right to the heart of the issue: is there *objective* evidence

of intelligent agency active in nature? Intelligent design supporters say YES, atheists and theistic evolutionists (but I repeat myself) say NO.

A video of Denyse talking about her book "The Spiritual Brain" here: (H/T Mindful Hack)

She talks about whether faith is *good* for people, and how people invent genes to explain their bad behavior.

Kreitsauce writes about the importance of self-denial and self-sacrifice in the Christian worldview, which is neglected these days now that the church has bowed to the society at large and reduced Christianity to feelings of happiness.

> Discipleship, in contrast to narcissism, brings true satisfaction with life, because life gains a whole new sense of meaning and purpose. We have real freedom to do what is right, to live a life of intimacy with God. This life of discipleship and self-denial does not mean living without desire or without anything that brings pleasure. God does not call us to the monastery but to live life in the world but not of the world.

Chad at Truthbomb Apologetics has a post up that I will be writing about shortly, because it's that good. He links to an episode of Casey Luskin's ID The Future podcast featuring a discussion between a Darwinist and Socrates. He has an excerpt from the dialog here on his blog. The entire dialog is in a PDF on his site.

Tough Questions answered has an analysis showing which "Christian" groups swung from Bush to Obama, as well as this post on post-Christian morality in secular-leftist European nations. TQA cites this article from First Things that argues what I have been arguing recently in my series on atheism and morality.

> Over time human rights, now almost universally accepted among Europeans, will themselves come to be seen as so many arbitrary constructions that may, on utilitarian grounds, be revoked—because there is nothing intrinsic about human beings such that they are not to be ill-treated or violated or even killed. Even now, many do not want to be bothered with the infirm elderly or damaged infants, so we devise so-called humane ways to kill them and pretend that somehow they chose (or would have chosen) to die. Elderly patients are being killed in the Netherlands without their consent. A new protocol for euthanizing newborns with disabilities is institutionalized in the Netherlands…
>
> The Australian utilitarian Peter Singer predicts confidently that the superstition that human life is sacred will be definitively put to rest by 2040.
>
> …In an interview for a British magazine during the summer of 2005, Singer said that if he faced the quandary of saving from a raging fire either a mentally disabled child, an orphan child nobody wanted, or normal animals, he would save the animals. If the child had a mother who would be devastated by the child's death, he would save the child, but unwanted orphans have no such value.

Yes, there is consistent, authentic atheist morality: the happiness of the strong trumps

the non-existent human rights of the weak.

My buddy Rich and I scrap over whether chastity is better than marriage over at the Pugnacious Irishman. (He's getting married shortly, and my friend Robb is getting married tomorrow, so it's a hot topic for me!)

Over on the Western Experience, Jason has a post up on how Dick Cheney is taking on Obama on his lousy policies. Here's a clip:

Unqualified teleprompter-reader versus qualified statesman. Nice Deb has a complete round-up here, featuring Michelle Malkin and others. I have to tell you, I am really liking what Liz Cheney has to say these days, as well.

By the way, if you're into Obama versus the evidence, check out this video on the real value of Obama's health care reforms, which I found at the Christian blog Verum Serum.

If you have not bookmarked this blog, better do it. They are a new blog, but they are producing high-quality videos and getting linked by major blogs.

What are our troops doing on Memorial day?

May 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that I would observe Memorial day by taking some time to read about the exploits of our military forces in the field, so that I would be able to more fully appreciate the sacrifices they are making to provide me with liberty, prosperity and SECURITY.

I looked around and found this article by Bill Roggio, on the Long War Journal. (H/T Foundation for Defense of Democracies)

Excerpt:

> Afghan commandos and US troops are battling the Taliban for control of a region in northern Helmand province that serves as a command and control center as well as a major drug processing center.
>
> The combined forces launched an attack against the Taliban in the town of Marja in the Nad Ali District late at night on March 18. The town is described by the US military as "a main command node" and a "hub of narcotics processing" for the Taliban in Helmand province. According to *Quqnoos*, an English language Afghan news outlet, Marja has been under Taliban control for more than a year and a half.
>
> Afghan commandos and US forces took control of the center of the town and targeted the bazaar, which is described as "a nucleus of militant activity." There the forces discovered two "war rooms stocked with maps, communication equipment, Russian-made night vision goggles and US military vehicle parts," as well as a variety of weapons.
>
> The soldiers also discovered a large amount of home made explosives and "packaged into gallon-size drums and prepared for use in vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices," as well as 14,750 kilograms of black tar opium, 11 kilograms of processed heroin and 30 kilograms of morphine.
>
> Thirty-four Taliban fighters have been killed during what the US military called heavy fighting to control the town. Sixteen fighters were killed in an airstrike in the bazaar as the Taliban attempted to retake control of the town. Six more Taliban fighters surrendered during Coalition raids in the town.

For more reading, why not check out some of the military bloggers?

- BlackFive
- Mudville Gazette
- Froggy Ruminations
- Michael Yon
- Bill Roggio
- Adventures of Chester

If you want to help out our troops, you can send them things through Soldier's Angels. Earlier this year, I won a contest in our office for sending the most stuff to our adopted units! It's fun! If anyone wants a list of what they like to get, please e-mail me.

For our Canadian readers, I understand that your Memorial Day is November the 11th, to celebrate the armistice of the first world war. But in case you like to be reminded about your important role in providing freedom from tyranny, here is something I wrote recently about your prime minister Stephen Harper, and his surprise visit to see the Canadian troops deployed in Afghanistan. There are photos!

God Bless our troops!

Another way that the secular left kills millions of people

May 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from the the Western Experience! Thanks for the link, Jason!

On this blog, we've talked about how the secular left killed 100 million people in the wars of atheistic communism, and we analyzed why atheism leads naturally to these atrocities by elevating the pursuit of selfish happiness over the human rights of others, (because human rights and rational morality are not rationally grounded on atheism).

We've also talked about the 50 million unborn children killed by abortionists in the United States alone, since abortion was made legal. That's millions of unborn children killed so that adults can be irresponsible about their sexual choices, and not have to deal with the consequences.

But there is another way that leftists kill millions of innocent people…

Here is an article about it from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Green Hell)

Excerpt:

> In 2006, after 25 years and 50 million preventable deaths, the World Health Organization reversed course and endorsed widespread use of the insecticide DDT to combat malaria. So much for that. Earlier this month, the U.N. agency quietly reverted to promoting less effective methods for attacking the disease. The result is a victory for politics over public health, and millions of the world's poor will suffer as a result.
>
> The U.N. now plans to advocate for drastic reductions in the use of DDT, which kills or repels the mosquitoes that spread malaria. The aim "is to achieve a 30% cut in the application of DDT worldwide by 2014 and its total phase-out by the early 2020s, if not sooner," said WHO and the U.N. Environment Program in a statement on May 6…
>
> **"Sadly, WHO's about-face has nothing to do with science or health and everything to do with bending to the will of well-placed environmentalists," says Roger Bate of Africa Fighting Malaria. "Bed net manufacturers and sellers of less-effective insecticides also don't benefit when DDT is employed and therefore oppose it, often behind the scenes."**

UPDATE: You can find more quotations from environmentalists about their real goals in this post.

The biggest mystery in the world is how the secular left managed to paint themselves as rational and non-violent. Maybe we should be reminding them about what it takes to be moral, and why their secular-left worldview doesn't ground morality. Ideas have

consequences. When people on the left try to find meaning and purpose in unscientific delusions like eco-fascism, there will be consequences.

Cap and Trade

And don't think that we in the West will avoid the consequences of eco-fascism. Once the Democrats' cap-and-trade bill is passed, we can look forward to our own disasters.

The Heritage Foundation lists 10 things we can expect from the Waxman-Markey cap-and-trade bill:

> **KILLS MORE JOBS AND KILLS THE ECONOMY**
>
> ***Cap and Tax Top Ten List***
>
> 1. Cap and Trade Is a Massive Energy Tax
> 2. It Will Not Make a Substantive Impact on the Environment
> 3. It Will Kill Jobs
> 4. It Will Cause Electricity Bills and Gas Prices to Sharply Increase
> 5. It Will Outsource Manufacturing Jobs and Hurt Free Trade
> 6. It Will Make You Choose Between Energy, Groceries, Clothing, and Haircuts
> 7. It Will Be Highly Susceptible to Fraud and Corruption
> 8. It Will Hurt Senior Citizens, the Poor, and the Unemployed the Worst
> 9. It Will Cost American Families Over $3,000 a Year
> 10. President Obama Admitted "Electricity Rates Would Necessarily Skyrocket" Under a Cap-and-Trade Program (January 2008) –*follow link for video*

More details are at the linked article.

Further study

Myron Ebell of the Competitive Enterprise Institute argues that this bill will be the biggest tax increase in the history of the world. (H/T Heritage Foundation)

Steven Pearlstein of the Washington Post notes that the bill creates huge opportunities for fraud, waste and corruption. (H/T Chilling Effect, Heritage Foundation)

How can we smarten up young people who voted for Obama?

May 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was browsing on Captain Capitalism's web site and I found this article where he denounces the idiocy of today's youth, who have destroyed their own future by voting in droves for Barack Obama.

Here's an excerpt from the article: (H/T Small Dead Animals)

> Young (latin for – idiots who are too young to know what they're talking about and should not be able to vote until they're 35) Americans voted in droves for Barack Obama. Why they did this can be summarized why they voted for Stevie or whoever it was that won the latest round of American Idol. It was a popularity contest. Nobody bothered to look at his projected spending. Nobody bothered to see whether there was enough money to pay for his promises. Nobody held him up to any kind of standard or rigor that should have been applied to the president of the United States. And the reason why is that's "lame man. Why do you have to kill our good time? Why do you have to be such a downer, man? Who cares about economics and finance and the budget. Can't you just be for hope and change? Besides he's cool. Did you see his pecks? Geez, you're such a nerd!"

How are we going to fix these pampered ignoramuses?

Well, for one thing, we can start by pulling them out of public schools run by the secular-left teacher's unions, and shove them into homeschooling or private schools. But failing that, you can show them an article like this one, from the New York Post, which talks about what "greedy corporations" and "the rich" do when you start to confiscate their profits more and more. *They stop producing and/or leave.*

Excerpt: (H/T The Cato Institute)

> Politicians like to talk about incentives — for businesses to relocate, for example, or to get folks to buy local. After reviewing the new budget, I have identified the most compelling incentive of all: a major tax break *immediately* available to *all* New Yorkers. To be eligible, you need do only one thing: move *out* of New York state. Last week I spent 90 minutes doing a couple of simple things — registering to vote, changing my driver's license, filling out a domicile certificate and signing a homestead certificate — in Florida. Combined with spending 184 days a year outside New York, these simple procedures will save me over $5 million in New York taxes annually.
>
> …This problem didn't begin with the current recession. New York faced a $6 billion shortfall before the economic downturn. However, in the face of economic turmoil, Gov. Paterson, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith looked to the unions and special interests, who answered

> with one voice: *raise taxes*. That was irresponsible — and may just prove to be counterproductive, since the top 1 percent of earners account for about 50 percent of state revenue and are the ones who can and will leave.

It’s called Going Galt.

North Korea conducts second nuclear test, Obama sternly disapproves

May 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the New York Times. (H/T Stop the ACLU)

Excerpt:

> North Korea announced on Monday that it had successfully conducted its second nuclear test, defying international warnings and drastically raising the stakes in a global effort to get the recalcitrant Communist state to give up its nuclear weapons program.
>
> Word of the test sent a shudder through Asian financial markets and clearly **caught South Korea and the United States off guard**. The news hit just as South Korea's government and people were mourning the suicide of former President Roh Moo-hyun. And hours after the test was reported, South Korean state media reported that the North had fired a short-range missile.

Stop the ACLU has reactions from around the blogosphere.

- Michelle Malkin: Emergency wrist-slap to follow.
- Ameripundit: Clearly this situation calls for additional appeasement. Oh, and a speech on how the United States should eliminate its nuclear weapons stockpile.
- Ace of Spades: This failure of diplomacy clearly shows the need for more diplomacy…. missile defense remains unproven.

Obama who recently cut missile defense funding, and defunded our nuclear weapons program, has issued this sternly-worded statement of appeasement to the communist dictator. Democrats, what did you expect? Did you even try to assess his voting record and qualifications during the election? *This was all as plain as day to anyone who could be bothered to read about Obama before his election.*

What about Hugo Chavez?

The Washington Post also reports on Obama's very good communist friend Hugo Chavez. (H/T Stop the ACLU, Nice Deb)

Excerpt:

> WHILE THE United States and Venezuela's neighbors silently stand by, Hugo Chávez's campaign to destroy his remaining domestic opposition continues. On Thursday night state intelligence police raided the Caracas offices of Guillermo Zuloaga, the president of the country's last independent broadcast network, Globovision. They claimed to be looking for evidence of irregularities in the car dealership that Mr. Zuloaga also runs. In fact this was a thinly disguised escalation of an attack that Mr. Chávez launched this month against Globovision.

> In February Mr. Chávez eliminated the limit on his tenure as president after a one-sided referendum campaign that included ugly attacks on Venezuela's Jewish community. Since then he has imprisoned or orchestrated investigations against most of the country's leading opposition figures, including three of the five opposition governors elected last year. The elected mayor of Maracaibo, who was the leading opposition candidate when Mr. Chávez last ran for president, was granted asylum in Peru last month after authorities sought his arrest on dubious tax charges. The National Assembly, controlled by Mr. Chávez, is considering legislation that would eliminate collective bargaining and replace independent trade unions with "worker's councils" controlled by the ruling party. Another new law would eliminate foreign financing for independent non-government groups.

Obama can't object, because that's what his Democrat constituents approve of doing with the right in this country.

What about Ahmadinejad?

If you can't remember his name, think of "I'm mad in a Jihad". Remember, Iran recently tested medium range missiles capable of hitting Israel.

How religious faith drives the delusion of Darwinism

May 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Commenter ECM alerted me to Cornelius Hunter's new blog "Darwin's God". Cornelius is a software engineer like me who rose up the ranks of the firm through "sweat equity", and was able to eventually pursue a PhD in Biophysics from the University of Illinois. I have his first book "Darwin's God" and I read it. His thesis is basically that theological beliefs about what God would and would not do are the driving force behind evolution.

Evolution and the problem of evil

Here is his latest post about a debate that occured at Westminster Abbey between an atheistic evolutionist and a theistic evolutionist.

Here's what the theistic evolutionist said:

> Alexander is a theist and Jones an atheist. But they both agree that God would not have created what we find in this world. Everything from programmed cell death to the extinction of so many species and the food chain points to a massive economy of death in nature. With this sort of evidence, "What kind of a designer," asks Alexander, "are you going to end up believing in?
>
> …According to Alexander, this problem of death and evil does not leave much room for a divine creator. Alexander concludes that God did not create the details of the world. He is thus absolved of the world's many evils. He implemented a framework of sorts, but let unguided processes do the rest.

And here's what the atheist evolutionist said:

> As with Alexander, Jones also finds that biology does not meet with his expectations of divine creation. "The feeblest of designer," Jones has written, could improve the design of the human eye. This and other examples, says Jones, shows that complex organs are "not the work of some great composer but of an insensible drudge: an instrument, like all others, built by a tinkerer [i.e., the evolutionary process] rather than by a trained engineer." As with Alexander, Jones' religious sentiment mandates some sort of evolution to be true.

So let's think about what causes people to become evolutionists, beyond the normal answers of peer-pressure, career preservation, wanting to be thought of as smart, wanting to rebel against parents, wanting to have sex and drink alcohol, etc. Is it about science? No. It's about knowing what God *would* do and observing that the world does not correspond to these ideas of what atheists think God would do.

Remember that post I wrote a while back about Christopher Hitchens' case against God. *None* of his arguments against God were based on evidence, but only on his personal preferences. God wouldn't have done it that way. God should have done it this way. I don't like this theology. I don't like that feature of the universe. It's just a long-running

temper tantrum against any kind of authority, regardless of the evidence.

Here's Dawkins explaining how unobservable aliens must ave evolved, even if Dawkins doesn't have any evidence:

He doesn't even need to see the evidence that we evolved. He knows that God wouldn't have created the life this way, and so the evidence is *irrelevant*.

Evolution and the problem of sub-optimal design

Another way that assume that evolution is true, other than childhood trauma and the desire to be morally evil, is by assuming that if material forces did not do the creating, then the design must be optimal. Now I am a software engineer, with undergraduate and graduate degrees, a published paper that I presented at the IEEE and a patent in wireless technology. My specialty is architecture. So I will tell you.

There is no such thing as an optimal design.

As part of my graduate course work, I had to study the work done at the Software Engineering Institute at the Carnegie-Mellon University. They have invented an entire methodology for designing software based on analyzing trade-offs between alternative architectural candidates. They use use case scenarios, disaster scenarios, maintenance scenarios and other scenarios in order to evaluate how well each architecture performs.

All of the architectures can satisfy the so-called "functional requirements". But the architectures differ in their ability to satisfy non-functional requirements, the "-ilities". These can include performance, maintainability, security, extensibility, testability, simplicity, re-usability. This is the bread and butter that software engineers like me have to deal with every day.

Here's an excerpt from a related post from Uncommon Descent:

> It is simply impossible for one architecture to have all the "ilities" because many conflict. For instance, if I want high "security" I am going to have to give up a good deal of "interoperability". A large part of architecture is actually deciding what you are going to give up, which incidentally affects how the architecture can change in the future (i.e. usually it cannot "evolve" to conform to different "ilities"). This is all still fairly new, but we are now able to judge architectures in terms of the "ilities" they match and the "ilities" they do not match. A better understanding of the conflicts between certain "ilities" is gradually developing.

When I worked in the embedded space on operating systems like VxWorks, we regularly traded-off memory against speed. It's the nature of the engineering business. And make no mistake – God is a *software engineer.* He writes code.

Conclusion

Hunter's article concludes with this:

> Have the theists sold out? Have the theists been duped? Are they afraid to stand up for themselves? Are the atheists taking over? No, no, no, and no. The theists and atheists are united in their religious beliefs about God and how he would

> interact with the world. They may have their differences, but regarding evolution those differences are irrelevant. Their shared religious convictions mandate evolution. Religion drives science and it matters.

I have an idea. Let's keep religion out of science and decide how we really got here, no holds barred. Instead of blocking debates and persecuting dissent, let's actually have a debate about origins, and not rule intelligent causes out before we look at the evidence.

Further study

Atheist responses to scientific arguments for theism are fun to understand. Atheists attribute the beginning of the universe to untestable theories and the fine-tuning to an unobservable multiverse. (And don't forget their lame responses to galactic, stellar and planetary habitability arguments)

http://www.uncommondescent.com/intelligent-design/ilities-judging-architecture-and-design/

Should Obama pick judges who favor Democrat special interest groups?

May 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yes, I know he calls it "empathy". And by empathy he means twisting the law to benefit the people who voted for him. What you don't believe me? Well, check out the evidence here about who Obama's bailouts really benefit. Nice Deb even links to a story that questions whether the recent Chrysler dealership closures were made because the owners donated to Republican candidates.

Now, what kind of judges does someone like Obama need to install in order to back his authoritarian regime? Well, it has to be someone who will help him to punish the people who disagree with him. Someone who believes that there are good Americans (Democrats) and bad Americans (Republicans), and that the laws should apply differently to those different groups.

Let's take a look at what my favorite two economists, Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams have to say about this.

Thomas Sowell

Thomas Sowell has a four-part series on Obama's judicial philosophy.

In part one, Sowell asks what it means that Obama will pick judges who come from certain groups, and who believe in twisting the law to favor those groups.

> That President Obama has made "empathy" with certain groups one of his criteria for choosing a Supreme Court nominee is a dangerous sign of how much further the Supreme Court may be pushed away from the rule of law and toward even more arbitrary judicial edicts to advance the agenda of the left and set it in legal concrete, immune from the democratic process.
>
> Would you want to go into court to appear before a judge with "empathy" for groups A, B and C, if you were a member of groups X, Y or Z? Nothing could be further from the rule of law. That would be bad news, even in a traffic court, much less in a court that has the last word on your rights under the Constitution of the United States.
>
> Appoint enough Supreme Court justices with "empathy" for particular groups and you would have, for all practical purposes, repealed the 14th Amendment, which guarantees "equal protection of the laws" for all Americans.

In part two, Sowell talks about Olive Wendell Holmes' strict constructionist jurisprudence, which allowed citizens to undertake economic enterprises because they could predict how the law would be enforced.

> Justice Holmes saw his job to be "to see that the game is played according to the rules whether I like them or not."

> That was because the law existed for the citizens, not for lawyers or judges, and the citizen had to know what the rules were, in order to obey them.
>
> He said: “Men should know the rules by which the game is played. Doubt as to the value of some of those rules is no sufficient reason why they should not be followed by the courts.”
>
> Legislators existed to change the law.

In part three, Sowell talks about why the judiciary must remain impartial as a check on the power of the legislative and executive branches.

> Barack Obama’s vision of America is one in which a President of the United States can fire the head of General Motors, tell banks how to bank, control the medical system and take charge of all sorts of other activities for which neither he nor other politicians have any expertise or experience.The Constitution of the United States gives no president, nor the entire federal government, the authority to do such things. But spending trillions of dollars to bail out all sorts of companies buys the power to tell them how to operate.
>
> Appointing judges to the federal courts– including the Supreme Court– who believe in expanding the powers of the federal government to make arbitrary decisions, choosing who will be winners and losers in the economy and in the society, is perfectly consistent with a vision of the world where self-confident and self-righteous elites rule according to their own notions, instead of merely governing under the restraints of the Constitution.

In part four, Sowell explains how big government socialists like Obama view the Constitution as an obstacle to be overcome.

> Judicial expansion of federal power is not really new, even if the audacity with which that goal is being pursued may be unique. For more than a century, believers in bigger government have also been believers in having judges “interpret” the restraints of the Constitution out of existence.
>
> They called this “a living Constitution.” But it has in fact been a dying Constitution, as its restraining provisions have been interpreted to mean less and less, so that the federal government can do more and more.
>
> For example, the Constitution allows private property to be taken for “public use”– perhaps building a reservoir or a highway — if “just compensation” was paid. But that power was expanded by the Supreme Court in 2005 when it “interpreted” this to mean that private property could be taken for a “public purpose,” which could include almost anything for which politicians could come up with the right rhetoric.

Walter Williams

And Walter Williams writes about the dangers of empathy using last year’s Super Bowl as

an example.

> The Pittsburgh Steelers have won six Super Bowl titles, seven AFC championships and hosted 10 conference games. No other AFC or NFC team can match this record. By contrast, the Arizona Cardinals' last championship victory was in 1947 when they were based in Chicago. In anyone's book, this is a gross disparity. Should the referees have the empathy to understand what it's like to be a perennial loser and what would you think of a referee whose decisions were guided by his empathy? Suppose a referee, in the name of compensatory justice, stringently applied pass interference or roughing the passer violations against the Steelers and less stringently against the Cardinals. Or, would you support a referee who refused to make offensive pass interference calls because he thought it was a silly rule? You'd probably remind him that the league makes the rules, not referees.
>
> I'm betting that most people would agree that football justice requires that referees apply the rules blindly and independent of the records or any other characteristic of the two teams. Moreover, I believe that most people would agree that referees should evenly apply the rules of the games even if they personally disagreed with some of the rules.

But what if the Steelers had lost due to referee partiality? Well, presumably they would *stop playing the game*. And when enough small businesses get tired of being sued by special interest group plaintiffs, we will all be working for the government and that will be the end of our liberty.

Further study

Probably one of the greatest books ever written is Thomas Sowell's "A Conflict of Visions". Go out right now and buy it if you don't have it, but be warned, it was a tough read for a software engineer like me, and my Dad also found it difficult when I gave it to him.

Everything you need to know about the SCOTUS pick

May 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you haven't already bookmarked Verum Serum, now is the time to do it.

Verum Serum's May 3rd post discussed Obama's SCOTUS pick, Sonia Sotomayor.

The post features this video of the nominee from a Duke University panel in 2005.

Quote from the video: (H/T Heritage Foundation via Commenter ECM)

> "All of the legal defense funds out there, they're looking for people with Court of Appeals experience. Because it is — Court of Appeals is where policy is made. And I know, and I know, that this is on tape, and I should never say that. Because we don't 'make law,' I know. [Laughter from audience] Okay, I know. I know. I'm not promoting it, and I'm not advocating it. I'm, you know. [More laughter] Having said that, the Court of Appeals is where, before the Supreme Court makes the final decision, the law is percolating. Its interpretation, its application.

Verum Serum's May 5th post has some quotes from a speech she gave at UC Berkeley, at a conference sponsored by the *Berkeley La Raza Law Journal*.

Here's one of the quotes from Verum Serum:

> Whether born from experience or inherent physiological or cultural differences, a possibility I abhor less or discount less than my colleague Judge Cedarbaum, our gender and national origins may and will make a difference in our judging. Justice O'Connor has often been cited as saying that a wise old man and wise old woman will reach the same conclusion in deciding cases…I am also not so sure that I agree with the statement. First, as Professor [Martha] Minnow has noted, there can never be a universal definition of wise. Second, **I would hope that a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experience would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a white male who hasn't lived that life**. (emphasis added)

Nice Deb comments: "Imagine the hue and cry if a white male had said that about a Hispanic female."

And one more from Verum Serum:

> I willingly accept that we who judge must not deny the differences resulting from experience and heritage but *attempt*, as the Supreme Court suggests, continuously to judge when those opinions, sympathies, and prejudices are appropriate.

> There is always a danger embedded in relative morality, but since judging is a series of choices that we must make, that I am forced to make, I hope I can make them by informing myself on the questions I must not avoid asking and

> continuously pondering. We…must continue individually and in voices united in organizations that have supported this conference, to think about these questions and to figure out how we go about creating the opportunity for there to be more women and people of color on the bench so we can finally have statistically significant numbers to measure the differences we will and are making.

You need to click through and read the rest of the quotes. Heritage Foundation has more quotes from the same speech, and some other quotes from her published papers.

Here's one of the additional quotes from her published work:

> The constant development of unprecedented problems requires a legal system capable of fluidity and pliancy. Our society would be strait-jacketed were not the courts, with the able assistance of the lawyers, constantly overhauling the law and adapting it to the realities of ever-changing social, industrial and political conditions; although changes cannot be made lightly, yet law must be more or less impermanent, experimental and therefore not nicely calculable. Much of the uncertainty of law is not an unfortunate accident: it is of immense social value.

The Heritage Foundation has more here, on their rapid response page.

And what about her judicial temperament, which is of critical importance?

John Lott has this quote on his blog from the Almanac of the Federal Judiciary:

> Sotomayor can be tough on lawyers, according to those interviewed. "She is a terror on the bench." "She is very outspoken." "She can be difficult." "She is temperamental and excitable. She seems angry." "She is overly aggressive–not very judicial. She does not have a very good temperament." "She abuses lawyers." "She really lacks judicial temperament. She behaves in an out of control manner. She makes inappropriate outbursts." "She is nasty to lawyers. She doesn't understand their role in the system–as adversaries who have to argue one side or the other. She will attack lawyers for making an argument she does not like."

And how smart is she?

Here's Eric Posner writing on the Volokh Conspiracy blog:

> The most complete effort so far to evaluate federal appellate judges is this paper by Stephen Choi and Mitu Gulati. Choi and Gulati use data from Lexis to measure three aspects of the judge's performance—productivity, opinion quality, and independence.
>
> …To determine how Sotomayor would do in the ranking, I had some research assistants collect her data for the years 1999-2001. To address the "freshman effect" (the possibility that her statistics are worse for her earliest years because of inexperience), we also looked at her data from 2006.

> …*Productivity*. Judges write opinions, which provide guidance to lawyers and the public. All else equal, a judge who writes more opinions is more productive, and provides a greater social benefit. Over the three year period from 1998 to 2000, the most productive judge published 269 opinions, the least productive judge published 38 opinions, and the mean was 98.1. For the comparable period from 1999-2001, Judge Sotomayor published 73 opinions. She would have ranked 68th out of 98.
>
> *Quality (1)*. Choi and Gulati measure quality by counting citations to a judge's top twenty opinions… The range is 96 to 734, with a mean of 277.9. Judge Sotomayor's statistic is 231, which would place her 59th.
>
> *Quality (2)*. Judge Sotomayor's opinions from 1999-2001 were cited 289 times in law reviews and other legal periodicals through May 31, 2004… Sotomayor would have ranked 65th.
>
> *Quality (3)*. Choi and Gulati also check what they call "invocations"—the frequency with which opinions written by other judges refer to the judge in question by name… Invocations range from 0 to 175 (excluding two outliers, the highest is 23), with a mean of 32. Judge Sotomayor was invoked 0 times (tied for last).
>
> *Independence*. Judges should decide cases in a non-partisan way… A score of 0 means that a judge is just as likely to disagree as agree with a co-partisan (or opposite-partisan). Negative scores mean that a judge is more likely to agree with co-partisans. Judge Sotomayor's score is -0.153 …which would have placed her 55th.

And how liberal is she?

Wendy Long at Bench Memos has that angle covered.

> Judge Sotomayor is a liberal judicial activist of the first order who thinks her own personal political agenda is more important that the law as written. She thinks that judges should dictate policy, and that one's sex, race, and ethnicity ought to affect the decisions one renders from the bench.
>
> She reads racial preferences and quotas into the Constitution, even to the point of dishonoring those who preserve our public safety. On September 11, America saw firsthand the vital role of America's firefighters in protecting our citizens. They put their lives on the line for her and the other citizens of New York and the nation. But Judge Sotomayor would sacrifice their claims to fair treatment in employment promotions to racial preferences and quotas. The Supreme Court is now reviewing that decision.
>
> She has an extremely high rate of her decisions being reversed, indicating that she is far more of a liberal activist than even the current liberal activist Supreme Court.

Isn’t there are word to describe a person that discriminates against people based on their race?

Verum Serum has a video of the White House and left-wing media responses to these shocking challenges to the pick. Charles Shumer warns the GOP not to oppose her in this video at Hot Air. Michelle Malkin and Gateway Pundit go over her liberal credentials in detail.

CRISIS! British politicians caught abusing expense accounts

May 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I remember when Stephen Harper took over from the corrupt left-wing Liberal party in Canada, the first thing he did was to pass the Federal Accountability Act, which requires all expense claims to posted on government web sites for the public to see. Conservative MPs could be seen having business meetings at Subway, while Liberals bilked the public for thousands for various junkets. I was so happy for the Canadians.

But the Conservative Party isn't running things in secular socialist Britain…

Muddling Towards Maturity posted on the whole sordid story, which appeared in the National Review.

David Pryce-Jones writes:

> It turns out that the Blair-Brown Labour government could not bring itself to raise salaries for MPs, but instead set up "the system" of allowances that were privileged and kept secret. An MP could claim thousands of pounds more or less on his own say-so, with shaky receipts for dubious expenditure, and the result is that some have built property portfolios worth a million pounds or more.
>
> …Supervising this milking of "the system" was Michael Martin, the Speaker. In the early days of Tony Blair, this man was press-ganged into a job for which he was unfit. An old hardline socialist and trade-union man, he saw himself as defender of entitlements rather than liberty and proper government. He put in outrageous claims for himself and his wife. He did his very best to suppress information about the embezzling and spivery going on under him, in the classic manner of a trade unionist getting whatever he could for his comrades.

READ. THE. WHOLE. THING.

And Muddling also linked to this updated story in the New York Post, entitled "The Mother of All British Scandals".

> …A government minister, one of the richest men in the House of Commons, claimed $150,000 from the taxpayer to finance the mortgage on a "second home." (He already had seven.) A leading Tory repaired the moat around his stately home on expenses.
>
> Sometimes, the claims were trivial and comically embarrassing: tampons, diapers, the repair of leaky pipes, ice-cube trays ($2.50), hair straighteners ($150) and Scotch eggs ($1.25). Taxpayers unknowingly rented two pornographic movies for the husband of another Cabinet minister. A Tory spokesman on "skills and education" hired an electrician to change his light bulbs. (Cost to the taxpayer? About $225.)

> The worst claims bordered on the fraudulent — and some stepped over that border. One MP claimed mortgage-interest payments of about $17,000 on a house that had no mortgage. Another took $55,000 in expenses on a necessary "second home" near Parliament, when his primary home was only a few hundred yards away.
>
> Many MPs "flipped" — i.e., changed their homes from primary to secondary in order to receive second-home allowances. One MP flipped three times and got more than $150,000 of public money.
>
> …Prime Minister Gordon Brown claimed $8,000 to pay for his brother to clean his London apartment. My favorite example, though, is the case of Sinn Fein MPs from Northern Ireland who claimed about $750,000 in expenses to attend a Parliament that they refuse to attend on principle.

This is absolutely amazing. **Read the whole thing!**

Ed West has more on this story. First of all, the British government hands out taxpayer money to lobbying firms, in order to be lobbied for policies they really want to enact anyway. And here, he talks more about solutions to the problem of government entitlements.

Does the new Ida fossil prove evolution?

May 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, if it does, doesn't that mean that evolution wasn't proved before?

But I digress. Whenever you have questions about evolution and culture, there is *only one* blog that you really need to read, and that's Denyse O'Leary's Post-Darwinist. She has written no less than THREE stories on the Ida fossil, so let's take a look at see what she's found.

First, on May 19th, she noted that the lemur-like fossil contradicted the current best naturalistic theory of human origins.

> [The] fossil doesn't "explain" human evolution; it complicates the picture. The theory that was gaining ground was that humans were descended from tarsier-like creatures, but this fossil, touted as a primate ancestor, is a lemur-like creature.

Second, on May 21st, she added:

> This recent Messil Pit find bolsters the case of the lemur supporters against the previously dominant tarsier supporters.
>
> That only creates more confusion about origins, it seems to me, rather than resolving anything.
>
> Where you have opposing histories, evidence that strengthens one history must weaken the other.
>
> It does not necessarily add up to a gain in information.
>
> What if the tarsier advocates find a fossil that bolsters *their* case in, say, 2012?
>
> And who's to say that won't happen – as it has happened already?

Everything gets so complicated, once you look past the "missing link" sound-bites. But many people looking for validation for their atheist lifestyle will never bother – so long as the cultural authorities can offer them some Piltdown Man or Archaeoraptor or Haeckel's embryos or Peppered Moths, etc., to justify their atheistic faith.

Denyse also points to a round-up of links from Access Research Network, as well as a New Scientist story that is skeptical of Ida's status as *the* missing link.

Third, on May 25th, she linked to this story from the UK Times Online:

> … in the research paper detailing the discovery, the scientists had painted a rather different picture. Ida, they said, "**could represent a stem group from which later anthropoid primates (including humans) evolved but we are not advocating this here**".

And more:

> Robert Foley, professor of human evolution at Cambridge University, believes many people misunderstand the huge timescales involved in assessing fossils.
>
> “This animal lived around 47m years ago but human-like creatures only appeared in the last 2m years,” he said. “That’s a gap of around 45m years with many other species lying between us and that era. Any one of them could be called a missing link. Really, the term is meaningless.”

Now I know what my many atheist readers are saying: “we’re only skeptical of *your* beliefs! Not *our* beliefs!”. Well, I’m sorry, true believers, to throw cold water on you.

The most productive taxpayers flee higher tax rates

May 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from Pursuing Holiness! Thanks for the link, Laura! Laura knows about this from experience – she runs her own information technology business, and is scaling it back. Go read her post, too!

A few days back, I posted on the Cato Institute's story about the New York businessman who shifted his residence to Florida to avoid paying confiscatory tax rates to the greedy socialists in Albany.

Well, that's not the only place where this is happening. There is a reason why freedom-hating atheists had to build Gulags and walls to keep people from escaping their communist prison. When tax rates go up, the most productive citizens either stop working or they leave entirely!

Here is a story from the UK Times Online about the exodus of British taxpayers from Gordon Brown's corrupt socialist regime.

Excerpt:

> SOL ZAKAY, the billionaire property tycoon, is the latest entrepreneur to quit Britain after the introduction of a 50% tax rate on high earners.
>
> …Zakay joins a growing list of businessmen and City financiers disenchanted at the new tax rate as well as the proposed changes to EU regulation of private-equity and hedge funds.

And here is a story from the Wall Street Journal about Maryland taxpayers fleeing their left-wing state's tax hikes.

> Maryland couldn't balance its budget last year, so the state tried to close the shortfall by fleecing the wealthy. Politicians in Annapolis created a millionaire tax bracket, raising the top marginal income-tax rate to 6.25%. And because cities such as Baltimore and Bethesda also impose income taxes, the state-local tax rate can go as high as 9.45%. **Governor Martin O'Malley, a dedicated class warrior, declared that these richest 0.3% of filers were "willing and able to pay their fair share." The Baltimore Sun predicted the rich would "grin and bear it."**
>
> One year later, nobody's grinning. **One-third of the millionaires have disappeared from Maryland tax rolls. In 2008 roughly 3,000 million-dollar income tax returns were filed by the end of April. This year there were 2,000, which the state comptroller's office concedes is a "substantial decline." On those missing returns, the government collects 6.25% of nothing. Instead of the state coffers gaining the extra $106 million the politicians predicted, millionaires paid $100 million *less* in taxes than they did last year — even at higher rates.**

When the most productive taxpayers stop producing, they take your jobs with them. It's called the Laffer curve. Maybe you progressives should read about it. Think about the way the world *actually works in reality*. And then ask yourself a very important question. A question that you never heard answered in Harvard Law School.

Who is John Galt?

UPDATE: Hot Air notes that IRS revenues are dropping rapidly. Gateway Pundit adds: 16K jobs lost PER DAY since stimulus passed. Gateway Pundit reports Democrats consider national sales tax (hurts the poor disproportionately, just like cap and trade), and China has warned democrats about printing more money.

CRISIS! Is Obama shutting down Chrysler dealerships owned by Republicans?!

May 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have we elected a worst left-wing fascist than Stalin? Time will tell.

Gateway Pundit has multiple stories.

First story excerpt:

> **Are we looking at the biggest political scandal since Watergate?**
>
> **Big Dem Donor Group allowed to keep all 6 Chrysler dealerships open…. Local competitors eliminated by Obama's task force!!**
>
> Earlier it was reported that the Obama Administration may have targeted GOP donors in deciding which Chrysler dealerships would have to close their doors.
>
> Now there's this…
> RLJ-McLarty-Landers is owned by three men.
> One was the former Chief of Staff for President Clinton.
> One is the founder of Black Entertainment Television and a huge Obama supporter.
> All 6 of their Chrysler dealerships will remain open.
> ***And, get this…*** Their local competitors have been eliminated!

Second story excerpt:

> But, so far in the shutdown list **there is an extremely high correlation between dealers closing and congressional districts BHO lost.**
>
> **Texas** is getting killed and Blue States are sliding by. **Florida** is also taking major hits and nearly all are in Republican Congressional Districts.
>
> Little **West Virginia is getting hammered**…
>
> **UPDATE:** Here is a list of the closings— Notice all of the Texas and Florida closings.

Last story excerpt:

> ***Now this…***Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-Fla) lost his Chrysler dealership in Florida.
>
> ***Again…*** It was Obama's task force who made the decision about which dealerships would close and which would stay open.

Leave your suggestion for the name of this fiasco in the comments. I'll start: Chrysler-gate. Serfdom-gate. Union-gate. Commie-gate. Banana-Republic-gate.

UK: Most teenage pregnancies end in abortion

May 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Startling news from the other side of the pond.

Story here. (H/T My friend Andrew, who has an amazing marriage to Jen)

Excerpt:

> Most pregnancies among girls under 18 ended in abortion last year.
>
> Out of around 40,000 pregnancies more than 20,000 were terminated – the first time more had chosen this option than become mothers.
>
> The figure is higher than 2007, when it just hit 50 per cent, and consistent with a steady upwards trend since the Government started its controversial Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in 1999.
>
> Figures out on May 21 will also show that for the first time the number of abortions performed on women living in England and Wales topped 200,000.
>
> **The teenage pregnancy strategy, which has cost taxpayers more than £300million, was meant to halve the number of conceptions among girls under 18 in England between 1998 and 2010.**
>
> **Ministers have tried to slash teenage pregnancies by freely handing out contraceptives and expanding sex education.**
>
> **But the fall in pregnancy rates has not met Government targets, and in 2007 the rate actually rose.**
>
> **Teenage pregnancy rates are now higher than they were in 1995. Pregnancies among girls under 16 – below the age of consent – are also at the highest level since 1998.**

And:

> Phyllis Bowman, of the Right to Life group, said: 'Contraception campaigners and clinics depend for their living on providing contraception and abortion to underage girls.
>
> 'The Government listens to them, but they are responsible for this disaster.
>
> 'We have the highest level of sexually transmitted disease in Europe and the highest level of sexual activity among teenagers in Europe.
>
> 'Unicef says we have the unhappiest teenagers in Europe.
>
> 'The young have been deliberately sexualised in a culture which sneers at the idea of telling teenagers they should not have sex.'

"When you tax something you get less of it, and when you reward something you get more of it." – Jack Kemp

I have an idea. Let's find a special group of people. They must believe that the entire

physical universe popped into being, fine-tuned for life, uncaused, out of absolute nothing. They must believe that the massive amount of DNA code in each cell sequenced itself, by chance. They must believe that morality and human rights are *illusory.* And that the purpose of life is to have happy feelings, even if it means exploiting the weakest among us.

Then let's vote them into office so that they can impose their irrational worldview on us by government coercion!

What could go wrong?

Is the presupposition of naturalism a science stopper?

May 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from 4Simpsons! Thanks for the link Neil!

In cosmology, we had to wait *decades* for the theism-friendly big bang theory to beat out atheism-friendly theories like the eternal universe model, the steady-state model, the oscillating model, etc. Piles of taxpayer money *wasted* trying to prove atheistic flights of fancy. But in the end, the evidence for the big bang was too much for the atheistic theories, and we beat them out.

Junk DNA

And here is another example of how atheism is bad for scientific inquiry: "Junk DNA".

The purpose of the genome is to contain the instructions that allow the cell to build functional sequences of smaller components. If the sequences are done right, you get a folded-up protein that can be used for all kinds of things.

But what those parts of the genome that *don't* code for proteins? Well, atheists have been calling them "Junk DNA" and hailing it as proof that there is no designer to life. I can remember Christian groups like Reasons to Believe predicting that a purpose for "Junk DNA" would be found. But atheists pooh-pooh'd that idea. Gee, I wonder who was right? The same people who are *always* right: THEISTS.

Denyse O'Leary cites this Princeton University press release on Post-Darwinist:

> Now researchers from Princeton University and Indiana University who have been studying the genome of a pond organism have found that junk DNA may not be so junky after all. They have discovered that DNA sequences from regions of what had been viewed as the "dispensable genome" are actually performing functions that are central for the organism. They have concluded that the genes spur an almost acrobatic rearrangement of the entire genome that is necessary for the organism to grow.
>
> …The term "junk DNA" was originally coined to refer to a region of DNA that contained no genetic information. Scientists are beginning to find, however, that much of this so-called junk plays important roles in the regulation of gene activity. No one yet knows how extensive that role may be.

She's got a stack of other related links at the bottom of the post.

Commenter ECM also sent me this story from Cornelius Hunter's new blog.

Excerpt:

> One problem with evolution is its strong bias toward viewing everything in biology as a kludge. When a newly discovered structure is examined, evolutionists take one look and conclude it is leftover junk. After all, blind,

> unguided mutations and other processes just happened to produce everything we see. The evolutionist's going in position is that biology is a fluke. We're lucky anything works.

Hunter then cites this passage from some naturalist researchers who study "junk DNA":

> Here we have a molecule that serves an important role in how cells function and survive, but it contains these puzzling 'junk' sequences that don't seem to have any apparent purpose. Our work suggests that this disorder is really a way of creating flexibility, allowing the protein to function as a molecular switch, a process that is thought to go wrong in certain diseases.
>
> Evolution has provided researchers with convenient modular structures, areas that are repeated over and over again to make up proteins, and so we tend to dismiss the interspersed disordered sequences that don't seem to have any definable structure. Here we show that the weak molecular interactions in a disorganized protein sequence are essential in giving this protein its unique attributes.

Know what? If you substitute "Flying Spaghetti Monster" in there for "Evolution", it makes just as much sense! Try it! Evolution causes toothpaste to come out of the toothpaste tube when you squeeze it, and Shakespearean rhyming couplets to rhyme, and my Java code to compile. It's all evolution!

Conclusion

Atheists, always remember this quote from agnostic NASA astronomer Robert Jastrow, regarding the progress of science:

> For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.

In the 1920s, there was no theory about a universe that begins to exist out of nothing, no fine-tuning, no DNA, no Cambrian explosion, nothing. Then science progressed, reducing atheism to a kind of childish delusion, still believed by ignorant snake-handlers and people with certain persistent moral, … ah… issues. But that's what psychiatrists are for!

Science is always for us, it's never for you. You have faith. Blind faith. We have all the evidence. We invented science, and every new discovery makes your materialism look more silly and naive… you bravely hold out hope for some hopeful Flying Spaghetti Monster to swoop in and rescue your atheism from the big, bad mind-independent reality. When will you grow up?

There is no Flying Spaghetti Monster!

What is it like to be a Christian in an Islamic state?

May 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Robert Spencer's Jihad Watch links to some interesting stories.

First, this story from Singapore, from AFP:

> A Christian Singaporean couple were found guilty of sedition on Thursday for distributing evangelical publications that cast Islam in a negative light, court officials said.
>
> Ong Kian Cheong and his wife Dorothy Chan had been charged with distributing a seditious publication to two Muslims in October and March 2007 and sending a second such booklet to another Muslim in December that same year, a district court official told AFP.
>
> The publications were found to have promoted feelings of ill-will and hostility between Christians and Muslims, the Straits Times said on its website….
>
> The sedition charge carries a jail term of up to three years or a fine of up to 5,000 Singapore dollars (3,437 US) or both….

I'm surprised, because Singapore has one of the most free economies in the world, next to Hong Kong. I guess someone there cannot tolerate a public discussion about which religion is more likely to be true. This story reminds me of atheists, who sometimes sue people for offering to pray for them.

Second, this story from Pakistan, from Compass Direct News:

> Nine pastors from two neighboring villages in Pakistan could face prison time for using loudspeakers to broadcast prayers and sermons from their churches on Easter Sunday. Martinpur and Youngsnabad, 150 kilometers (93 miles) east of Lahore, are majority Christian villages. The nine pastors who lead congregations there say that local Muslim security forces have twisted the law to solicit a bribe….

This reminds me of the left-wing ACLU, which sometimes sues people for mentioning Jesus in speeches.

Third, this story from Tanzania, from Compass Direct News:

> Worship in a house church near Zanzibar City, on a Tanzanian island off the coast of East Africa, did not take place for the third week running on Sunday (May 24) after Muslim extremists expelled worshippers from their rented property. Radical Muslims on May 9 drove members of Zanzibar Pentecostal Church from worship premises in a rented house at Ungunja Ukuu, on the outskirts of Zanzibar City.
>
> Angered by a recent upsurge in Christian evangelism in the area, church members said, radical Muslims had sent several threats to the Christians warning them to stop their activities. The church had undertaken a two-day evangelism

> campaign culminating in an Easter celebration. On the morning of the attack, more than 20 church members had gathered for Saturday fellowship when word reached them that Muslim extremists were about to attack.
>
> As the radical group approached, the Christians fled in fear of their lives. “The group was shouting, saying, ‘We do not want the church to be in our locality – they should leave the place and never come back again,’” said one church member who requested anonymity.

Scary, but free speech is regulated in Canada, too, thanks to those Human Rights Commissions.

Fourth, this story from Pakistan, from Worthy news:

> Suspected Muslim militants with links to the terror groups Al Qaeda and the Taliban attacked a historic church in northwestern Pakistan and burned Bibles and other Christian books, but police are reluctant to investigate the case and detain suspects, Christians said Tuesday, May 26.
>
> The destruction of the St. George Grecian Church was discovered by workers renovating the building, said the church’s pastor Ijaz Masih in a statement distributed by rights group International Christian Concern (ICC).
>
> Masih said that shortly after he presided over a Sunday service, workers “were shocked when they arrived” in the morning of May 12, “and **found the church’s cross broken in pieces, the altar demolished and partially burned, Bibles and hymnbooks burned and torn apart, and the pews reduced to ashes.”**

Well, the secular left does commit violent acts against defenders of traditional marriage.

I was surprised to learn from an Indian commenter that Christians are also persecuted in certain areas of India for evangelizing. Why do states insist on forcing their view of evangelism on individuals who have a different view? I wouldn’t force my view on anyone else, yet atheists and some nationalist Hindus and fundamentalist Muslims seem to do it all the time.

And it isn’t just dogma or strongly-held beliefs that causes extremism. There is no room for coercion in Bible-based Christianity. The more you believe in Christianity, the less you believe in coercion, and the more you believe in persuasion by reason and evidence. That’s what Jesus did.

http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=news&lang=en&length=short&idelement=5938&backpage=summaries

Atheist explains why Christians ought to evangelize him

May 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a neat video from a normally mean atheist, named Penn. Since I don't own a TV, I have no idea who he is, but this is a thoughtful talk. Penn does not expect Christians to act like atheists in public.

From this, we learn two things:

1. Making fun of atheists on the Internet is one thing, but if you have atheists that you relate to in person, be nice.
2. Some atheists are grown-ups. They admire authentic, consistent Christianity, boldly expressed.

I will be surveying Christians soon to see why we don't do what Penn says, and I'll publish the results.

By the way, blogging is light today, because I had to work on a guest post for someone.

If you haven't read any of my mentoring posts, you can read some of those to keep busy!

Mentoring

- the importance of being able to argue both sides of a question
- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church

The challenge of postmodernism

- the problem of religious pluralism and religious truth claims
- the problem of postmodern skepticism: why Christians won't debate
- isn't faith is opposed to reason and evidence? (a debate)

My testimony is here, in case you missed it.

Friday night funny: Evangelism, names, unions and capitalism

May 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First video here, for those of you haven't seen this.

He loves apologetics, too.

He played cornerback in the NFL, and I played cornerback in high school. For one year. Back-up bench warmer.

Second, a video from the BBC here: (H/T Jill Stanek)

And a cartoon from IMAO.us on capitalism:

Commenter ECM sent me this video from Double Plus Undead:

Yeah, these are the kind of people that Obama is kow-towing to now. Newsflash! Democrats are not good people, which is why we shouldn't be subsidizing their poor decisions with our money. It just encourages them, like feeding racoons.

Three funny Christian videos are here. (H/T Commenter ECM)

Happy Friday!

UPDATE: One more from ECM: Lightbulbs or dimwits! These are pretty funny!

Hugh Hewitt demolishes MSNBC's Larry O'Donnell

May 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was browsing over at my buddy Muddling's blog and I found this amazing story. (He finds, without fail, the best stories!)

Hugh Hewitt does a great interview, the best in the business. He's interviewed tons of people in the mainstream media over the years. This time, he interviews Larry O'Donnell. This is a must listen. I feel like I should put in a policy on the blog that no citations of left-wing journalists will be permitted.

Excerpt:

> HH: What was the last book you read about terrorism?
>
> LO'D: The last…I don't think I've read a book about terrorism.
>
> HH: Ever?
>
> LO'D: No.
>
> HH: About al Qaeda?
>
> LO'D: No.
>
> HH: About…how about the mullahs in Iran?
>
> LO'D: No.
>
> HH: I'm just stunned.
>
> LO'D: Well, I'll tell you, I've read Bob Woodward's books about the accounts inside the Bush administration from what they were doing from the day they got sworn in, okay?
>
> HH: You've never read a book about terrorism?
>
> LO'D: There is no, there is absolutely no evidence, and I defy you today, Hugh,
>
> HH: Larry, you've never read a book about terrorism?
>
> LO'D: I defy you to point to me, point to me a citation of one memo or one meeting that Dick Cheney was in where he says anything about al Qaeda.
>
> HH: Larry, I've got to go lie down. I really do. Do you think you're a well-informed MSNBC, by MSNBC standards, do you think you're above the grade of people on that network?
>
> LO'D: That's a trick question, Hugh.

Good Lord, it's his *job* to know about these things. Where is he getting his news stories? Daily Kos? Firedog Lake? Feministing?

Now Hugh asks him to substantiate an assertion that he made:

> HH: You said people have been prosecuted for exactly this. Did you mean for waterboarding?

> LO'D: Yeah.
>
> HH: Who?
>
> LO'D: Well, we've done it, you know, this country has prosecuted that, that, torture method before.
>
> HH: When?
>
> LO'D: Um, I don't know, what's…I think it is was…umm, I don't know. I…you know, I've…I know that we've done it, and I don't have the research in front of me as to exactly when we've prosecuted who for it and which conflict.

Hot Air has a link to the transcript and MP3 podcast.

The Media Research Center has some admissions about media bias from the lefties themselves.

Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus

May 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's start by listing some of Bart's debates, and then we can take a look at his argument.

Bart Ehrman's debates

1. William Lane Craig vs. Bart Ehrman. The full transcript of the debate is here, so you can follow along with the video.
2. Mike Licona's first debate with Ehrman (audio, video).
3. Ehrman's debate with Peter Williams on the UK-based Unbelievable radio show.
4. Ehrman's debate with Dan Wallace
5. Ehrman's second debate with Licona can be ordered here for $10. Review is here.

Here's William Lane Craig's opening speech against Bart: (in 12 parts)

Part 1 of 12:

Part 2 of 12:

Bart's argument

Bart Ehrman has a standard case based on 1) manuscript variants and 2) David Hume's argument against miracles. Basically, he says that because the massive number of manuscripts contains a massive number of minor disagreements (see below), that the Bible cannot be trusted and therefore we can't know whether Jesus rose bodily from the dead.

In Ehrman's debate with Peter Williams on the UK-based Unbelievable radio show, and in Ehrman's debate with Dan Wallace, Ehrman lists the 4 worst problems caused by the invariants:

1. the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11) is a late addition not present in the earliest manuscripts
2. the long ending of Mark (Mark 16:9-20) is a late addition not present in the earliest manuscripts
3. Jesus was angry and not compassionate when he healed the leper (Mark 1:41)
4. that Jesus died apart from God, and not by the grace of God (Hebrews 2:9)

I personally dislike that story in 1), because I think a lot of feminized Christians like it because they do not want to have their happiness diminished by moral judgments. They misunderstand this passage to support self-serving moral relativism and postmodern hedonism. Or worse, anti-capital-punishment. Eww.

This Bible verse is a favorite of all the liberal "Christian" women I've met. I've noticed that they are terrified of moral judgments and they don't like to have to do anything for God, like study apologetics. I don't like that. So I say: *throw the girly-verse out!* If you want a

good verse that shows that Jesus liked women, you should be reading the woman at the well story. Or the women witnesses to the empty tomb.

Regarding 2), I like that long ending because it's more useful from an apologetics standpoint. So I do care about this invariant, and I just don't use that ending when I debate. For 3), I prefer angry Jesus to compassionate Jesus. And for 4) I really don't care. It's Hebrews! It's not like it's Mark or 1 Corinthians 15.

Ehrman's argument against miracles is really just David Hume's argument against miracles, which even non-Christian scholars, like John Earman, have defeated at the highest level here:

- Hume's Abject Failure: The Argument Against Miracles, Oxford University Press, 2000.

So, one can easily see that Bart Ehrman's case is silly and amounts to nothing in a formal debate on the resurrection. If you want to understand why he is selling so many books, just like Dan Brown, you need to understand that people want space to invent a Jesus that they like. Bart gives them that space by fueling their skepticism of traditional Christianity.

Responding to Bart Ehrman with the minimal facts

Bart seems to be under the misapprehension that Christians argue for the resurrection by assuming the whole Bible is inspired. But we don't. We use a minimal facts case where each fact had to pass a battery of standard historical tests for the genre of historical biography.

- The historical criteria and the standard minimal facts case.
- The list of minimal facts that are accepted by all non-Christian scholars.
- The earliest and best source for the minimal facts.
- Some additional details about the empty tomb sources.
- And some details about the first witnesses to the empty tomb.

We come up with a list of minimal facts like this list:

- the burial narrative
- the empty tomb
- the appearances
- the early belief in a bodily resurrection

We argue that the bodily resurrection is the best explanation of these facts, and we refute all naturalistic explanations of these minimal facts like these:

- Jesus wasn't really dead
- Someone stole the body
- The appearances were hallucinations

One other thing that may be of interest is British scholar N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection, based on the changes introduced in the belief and practice of the first Jewish converts to Christianity.

Further study

For further study of Licona and Ehrman, I would recommend the book "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus", by Gary Habermas and Mike Licona on the resurrection, which is the best introductory book you can get on how to argue the minimal facts case.

If you like Lee Strobel's interviewing style, then you can't go wrong with this book, "The Case for the Real Jesus" and his earlier book "The Case for Christ". All the Lee Strobel books are excellent, the best books that a beginner can get – the ground floor of apologetics, so to speak.

If you prefer books featuring debates between opposing scholars, check out William Lane Craig against Gerd Ludemann here, (audio of their re-match is here), William Lane Craig against John Dominic Crossan here, (audio of the debate is here), or N. T. Wright against John Dominic Crossan here, (audio of the debate *only* is here).

Gary Habermas, (has dual doctorates from Oxford and Michigan State) is also a good source.

He debates a Duke University professor here: (one of my favorites)

Two Views on the Resurrection: Dialog with Dr. Joel Marcus, Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Duke University Divinity School
PART I (8MB) :|: PART II (8MB) :|: PART III (8MB) [MP3 files]

And he responds to Dan Brown's fictional novels here:

Cracking the Da Vinci Code
PART I (8MB) :|: PART II (8MB) :|: PART III (5MB) :|: PART IV (5MB) [MP3 files]
Lecture given at the 4th Annual Worldview Apologetics Conference
April 21-22, 2006, Seattle, Washington

The war on parents in Canada, Germany and New Zealand

May 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Everyone is complaining about men not wanting to be responsible and get married these days, but no one is paying attention to the incentives that cause men to stay clear of a relationship that is completely regulated by the state. Men don't want to be coerced to do things.

The problem with the political left is that they never understand what incentives they are creating when they start controlling private interactions between individuals. Take a look at the stories below and ask yourself: is this going to make men and women want to marry and have children?

In Canada:

> A Quebec youngster has used the courts to avoid parental discipline in a "landmark" case. The 12-year-old girl, who is too young to be named, went to court to force her father to overturn his decision not to allow her to go on a school trip. Her father had decided to ground her after he found out she had posted photos of herself on a dating website against his wishes.
>
> The sixth grader then took her father to court, arguing that his punishments were too severe.
>
> Madam Justice Suzanne Tessier of the Quebec Superior Court ruled today that denying the girl permission to go on the school trip was an excessive punishment. The girl's lawyer, Lucie Fortin, said, "She's becoming a big girl" and described the school trip as "a unique event in her life", the Globe and Mail reported.

In Germany:

> A homeschooling family in Southern Germany spent six hours in a grueling German Family Court session this week with the hopes of regaining custody of their six homeschooled children, who have been held in state custody since January. After the long and confusing session, the Gorbers regained custody of their 3-year-old son. The judge, meanwhile, retained custody of five other Gorber children now being kept in foster care and youth homes pending a court-ordered psychological evaluation of the parents. The court did allow increased visitation for some of the children up from one hour every two weeks that had been permitted since the children were seized in a surprise raid by the youth welfare office ("Jugendamt") and police.

In New Zealand:

> Green MP Sue Bradford's controversial child discipline bill was tonight passed by

> Parliament, with only seven MPs voting against it.
>
> The bill removes from the Crimes Act the statutory defence of "reasonable force" to correct a child, meaning there will be no justification for the use of force for that purpose.

But it doesn't even work because it targets law-abiding people only! (Just like gun control!)

It's very much like the Democrat party's complaints about outsourcing. *The left caused outsourcing* with their interventionist war on "the rich" and "greedy corporations". We need to move away from noble-sounding intentions fueled by the need to feel superior, and talk about actual incentives and actual effects of policies.

Sex education and taxes

Laura posted on the state interfering with parents' right to educate their own children about sex: (CP link)

> No, we generally are not in favor of sex ed at school. If "comprehensive" sex education included what it did when I took it in the early 80s – basic human anatomy, puberty, tab A fits into slot B, birth control methods include the following… even in the conservative evangelical circles I run in, few would object. That's all stuff we tell kids at home after we opt them out of sex ed at school- along with the main message of "Don't do this; it's not time in your life yet for this." What we object to is the attitude that teen sex is normal and inevitable and we should quit squawking about it. We object to schools teaching bizarre sex practices like fisting. We object to the theory that teenagers are mindless bags of hormones who can't be expected to control themselves.
>
> …Our teens are political pawns for the left. They're helpless victims of our [= parents'] prudery, children that the government needs to provide for at every turn with health insurance and free college tuition (but don't deserve an adequate secondary education except when it's time to raise taxes), socially and technologically savvy enough to make their own entertainment and political choices free from our censorship, mature and wise enough to choose abortion (but not give birth), and 18 year old babies who need to be protected from sneaky military recruiters and beer. The rallying cry may be "it's for the children!" but the only really consistent position I see in the left is that parents do not know best; government does.

Laura also posted on how socialism takes money away from the family:

> When we charge people more to earn money via income taxes, regulations, and similar means, history has proved time and again that people earn less money. Whether that's by choice, where people like me purposely throttle back our income in order to pay fewer taxes, or by government fiat, where government takes more money from businesses, the bottom line is that productivity goes

> down and everybody, including the government, gets less money out of the system.

By the way, I notice that Laura has a new post up at Hot Air's Green Room, (CP link), on how families can send the socialists a message by cutting off their supply of money, *legally*. She runs a business, so she knows what she is talking about.

Further study

Recently, I blogged about the myth of "dead-beat Dads". And about how the feminist state's discrimination against male teachers is negatively impacting young men. And there is my series on how Democrat policies discourage marriage: Part 1 is here and Part 2 is here and Part 3 is here.

Assessing feminism's results: the hook-up culture

May 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This must-read ABC news story should help to open some eyes. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Canadian filmmaker Sharlene Azam interviews some young people about the quality of their relationships in the brave new world of feminism.

Prostitution:

> "Five minutes and I got $100," one girl said. "If I'm going to sleep with them, anyway, because they're good-looking, might as well get paid for it, right?"
>
> Another girl talked about being offered $20 to take off her shirt or $100 to do a striptease on a table at a party.
>
> The girls are almost always from good homes, but their parents are completely unaware, Azam said.

Coercion:

> "I think there's very much trading for relationship favors, almost like 'you need to do this [to] stay in this relationship,'" one girl told "Good Morning America."
>
> "There's a lot of social pressure," said another. "Especially because of our age, a lot of girls want to be in a relationship and they're willing to do anything."

Self-destruction:

> "I mean, we're not looking for our future husbands," one girl said. "We're just looking for, maybe like … at our age, especially, I think all of us, both sexes, we have a lot of urges, I guess, that need to be taken care of. So if we resort to a casual thing, no strings attached, it's perfectly fine."
>
> Azam said she thinks the "no strings attached" romances could be a defense mechanism against a greater disappointment.
>
> "A lot of girls are disappointed in love," she said. "And I think they believe they can hook up the way guys do and not care.

Why feminism is to blame

It was feminism that sought to replace fathers with government social programs. Feminism that raised taxes to provide social safety nets for women who could not be bothered to choose boyfriends wisely. Feminism that instituted no-fault divorce to encourage women to divorce men for money. And feminism that pushed women out of the home via high tax rates, so that children would be indoctrinated by left-wing public schools.

Let me be clear: the Democrat party is *anti-family.* Their policies destroy love, marriage and parenting. The secular-marxist-feminist left wants to control people. Free market

capitalism, the family and robust religious beliefs are obstacles to their fascist goals. Feminism opposes the family, secularism opposes the integration of faith and public actions, and marxism opposes free market capitalism – the ground of liberty itself.

I think that young people are uninformed/unwise/un-parented enough to believe that these experiences are not scarring them emotionally. I am a man and growing up I knew intuitively that sexual intimacy with women followed by separation would be a catastrophe emotionally. The only way to properly assess the opposite sex is by keeping clear of their insecure, godless, soulless, clutching arms. Physical contact kills objectivity.

Young people are the most shallow people in the world. They judge people on appearances, and they try to use people to make themselves happy. Christian young people are not taught to view relationships as alliances made for the benefit of God's purposes in the world. Instead, young people don't know whether God exists, what he is like, and how to involve his goals and character in their decision making.

When I was a young man, I dreamed about romance, courtship, poetry, roses, marriage and lifting up my children in front of my face. I made decisions to prepare for that vision: chastity, investing, frugality, studying theology and apologetics, etc. I made sure that I could satisfy the demands of being a husband and father. I spent equal time on computer science, to make money, and on Christianity, to gain knowledge, wisdom and character.

I would say that the vast majority of young people today repudiate that vision of family with their actions. Their morality is moral relativism. Their epistemology is postmodernism. Their purpose in life is hedonism. This is not liberating. On the contrary: their actions removed their ability to marry, relate to a spouse and parent children. The more Christianity retreats, the more atheist "morality" steps in.

If atheism is true, then there is no real way we ought to be. Each person struggles with others to secure feelings of happiness. Other people don't have any purpose except to be forced to make us happy. There is no morality. There is no free will. There is no moral accountability. There is no ultimate significance. There is no purpose. And children, born and unborn, are the biggest victims of all.

Is the murder of abortion-performing doctors like George Tiller morally wrong?

May 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wintery Knight Blog strongly condemns all abortion-related violence, whether it's committed against the born or the unborn.

The news story is linked here by Stop the ACLU, Sweetness and Light, Patterico's Pontifications, Michelle Malkin, Hot Air and Gateway Pundit.

Can Christians condemn the murder of George Tiller?

Yes, Christians can, and yes, Christians do, condemn any and all violence against abortion doctors. And so do I. I believe that murder is objectively wrong, whether it is performed against born or unborn victims.

Morality is rational on Christianity because Christianity grounds the minimal requirements for meaningful morality. (The post also contains arguments and evidence for Christian theism and responses to the arguments against Christian theism)

The Bible says: "You shall not murder".

So, anyone who murders the born or the unborn is not a Christian and is not being moral. I am a Christian, and therefore I strongly condemn any violence against doctors who perform abortions, including George Tiller. The murderer of George Tiller was wrong, had no justification for what he did, and he should get the death penalty.

UPDATE: My pro-life friend Neil from 4Simpsons reacts:

> I subscribe to over 100 blogs. Well over a dozen have commented on this. I've yet to see one that didn't condemn the murder, though I'm sure the MSM will ignore the clear and consistent principles of the pro-live movement and try to demonize and broad-brush us with this.

Now let's see whether murder is wrong on the atheist worldview…

Can atheists condemn the murder of George Tiller?

The goal is to see whether humans ought to adopt the moral point of view, on atheism. Does atheism ground the the minimal requirements for morality? Is it rational to do the right thing on atheism?

Requirement 1) Objective moral values: **NOT GROUNDED**

On atheism, moral values have no mind-independent existence. In other words, they are purely subjective. Either you invent your own personal standard or you adopt the standards of the majority of your herd, in the time and place in which you live. Those herd standards change over time and in different places, of course. They are arbitrary conventions. And there is no reason why your preferences are better than anyone else's preferences, even a murderer's. On atheism, a murderer and a non-murderer just have different preferences.

Requirement 2) Objective moral duties: **NOT GROUNDED**

On atheism, there is no such thing as objective moral values, and so there can be no objective moral duties either. Atheism is committed to materialism, and objective moral values and moral duties are non-material. Atheists can only ground *subjective* moral values and moral duties. But a duty owed to oneself can be canceled when things get difficult. Even a social contract is arbitrary. There is no reason to limit your happiness because of an arbitrary social contract, so long as you can escape the social consequences of disobedience.

Requirement 3) Moral accountability: **NOT GROUNDED**

On atheism, there is no accountability after death for the decisions we make in life. So long as we can avoid the consequences for violating the arbitrary fashions of the time and place where we live, nothing will happen to us if we put our happiness above the needs of our feelings of "empathy" for others.

Requirement 4) Free will: **NOT GROUNDED**

On atheism, there are no minds or souls independent of the material that makes up the body. Therefore, everything that humans do is fully determined by the genetic programming and the sensory inputs. To expect moral choices or moral responsibility on atheism is like expecting the same from a computer. Physical systems don't have free will. There is no "ought to do" for lumps of matter that are not designed by anyone for any specific purpose.

Requirement 5) Ultimate significance: **NOT GROUNDED**

On atheism, life ends in the grave for them. Scientists have discovered that in the future, the amount of usable energy, such as the heat and light emitted by stars, will run down to zero, the "heat death of the universe". What this means is that the entire universe will become cold and lifeless at some point. Humans are therefore doomed to extinction. It doesn't matter ultimately how an atheist acts – they end up the same no matter what they do. The only action that is rational on atheism is the selfish pursuit of pleasure and happiness.

Can atheist scholars ground morality rationally?

Let me cite the views of atheist scholars from a previous post. These are the people who are the most committed, authentic atheists, and who have thought through what it means to be an atheist at the highest level.

> The idea of political or legal obligation is clear enough… Similarly, the idea of an obligation higher than this, referred to as moral obligation, is clear enough, provided reference to some lawgiver higher…than those of the state is understood. In other words, our moral obligations can…be understood as those that are imposed by God…. But what if this higher-than-human lawgiver is no longer taken into account? Does the concept of moral obligation…still make sense? …The concept of moral obligation [is] unintelligible apart from the idea of God. The words remain but their meaning is gone. (Richard Taylor, Ethics, Faith,

> and Reason (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985), p. 83-84)
>
> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Source: Richard Dawkins)
>
> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory. (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

The late atheist philosopher J. L. Mackie said that moral properties are "queer" given naturalism "if there are objective values, they make the existence of a god more probable than it would have been without them. Thus we have a defensible argument from morality to the existence of a god."

Conclusion

In my survey of atheist views, *none* of the ten respondents could oppose slavery on rational grounds, *none* of the ten respondents could perform self-sacrificial acts on rational grounds, and *none* of the ten respondents could explain why murder was wrong, on rational grounds. They may have chosen the right alternative, but only based on emotion, not on reason. Morality is not rational on atheism and there is no way to condemn immorality in others.

So long as an person can escape the consequences of his actions, there is nothing wrong with murder, on an atheistic worldview. Atheists can express what they personally like and don't like, or what the customs are in their society in a certain time and place. There is no "moral ought" on atheism, no principled reason to act any particular way except to be "happy" and to avoid social disapproval from acting unconventionally. So, keep that in mind in the coming days as you discuss the George Tiller story with atheists.

Further study

You can get the full story on the requirements for rational morality in a published, peer-reviewed paper written by William Lane Craig here. You can also hear and see him present the paper to an audience of students and faculty at the Georgia Institute of Technology in 2008. The audio is clipped at 67 minutes, the video is the full 84 minutes. There is 45 minutes of Q&A, with many atheist challengers.

The video of this lecture is the *best material you can get* on this issue, and the Q&A from the hostile audience is *vital* to the lesson. More debates on atheism and morality can be found on the debate and lecture page.

You can find a post contrasting the morality of an authentic, consistent Christian with an authentic, consistent non-Christian here. A post examining how atheism is responsible for the deaths of 100 million innocent people in the 20th century alone is here. A post analyzing the tiny number of deaths that religion was responsible for is here. A post examining other ways that the secular-left kills millions of people is here.

The Wintery Knight Blog strongly condemns all abortion-related violence, whether it's committed against the born or the unborn.

Why social conservatives should be fiscal conservatives

June 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from the Maritime Sentry! Thanks for the link!

We socially-conservative men need lots of things in order to have a successful family, and those things are all supported by free market capitalism.

Here is what I would need to marry and to run a family:

- a job
- the ability to to keep almost all of what I earn
- the ability to spend what I earn on whatever I want
- complete freedom from government influence across the board
- the ability to find Christian services and products in the marketplace
- the ability to find a new job if I get terminated for being a public Christian at work

The best way to achieve my social conservative goals is by voting for the economic system that will allow me to get the money and liberty to pursue the social goals.

Here are some things that raise the price of consumer goods and reduce my opportunities to find employment: (add yours in the comments)

- workers unions
- tariffs
- corporate taxes
- regulations
- environmentalists
- trial lawyers

And here are some others that have other nasty effects:

- public schools: they substitute PC leftist indoctrination for a real education
- teacher's unions: they deny me school choice, protect unqualified teachers and indoctrinate my children with lefty crap
- welfare programs: they waste tax money and destroy the need for real men and diminish the role of husbands and fathers
- gun control: they disarm the law-abiding sector of the society in order to protect criminals
- feminists: they reduce the pool of marriage-minded women by indoctrinating women to oppose chastity, family, men, God and children… and they favor no-fault divorce
- socialists: they want government to control how I can spend my money on things like health care – they don't want me to buy health care myself, they want me to pay for everyone else's health care and then get in line

- secularists: they are annoyed by the thought that I might spend my money in ways that increases the influence of Christianity and they will try to stop me from doing so
- naturalists: they waste money speculating about ways to explain the effects of intelligence in nature without implicating an intelligence

Many of these aggravating factors have gotten worse because of the recession. We know why we are in a recession right now: because the Democrats forced banks to make loans to people who could not afford them. Obama himself worked for ACORN to sue banks like Citibank.

Consider this article from the American Thinker to see how Obama has affected the businesses where people work to earn the money they need to fuel their marriage and parenting activities.

Excerpt: (H/T 1RedThread)

> On Thursday, May 14, 2009 I was notified that my Dodge franchise, that we purchased, will be taken away from my family on June 9, 2009 **without compensation** and given to another dealer at **no cost** to them. My new vehicle inventory consists of 125 vehicles with a financed balance of 3 million dollars. This inventory becomes impossible to sell with **no factory incentives** beyond June 9, 2009. Without the Dodge franchise we can no longer sell a new Dodge as "new," nor will we be able to do any warranty service work. Additionally, my Dodge parts inventory, (approximately $300,000.) is virtually worthless without the ability to perform warranty service. There is no offer from Chrysler to buy back the vehicles or parts inventory.
> Our facility was recently totally renovated at Chrysler's insistence, incurring a multi-million dollar debt in the form of a mortgage at Sun Trust Bank.
> …This is beyond imagination! My business is being stolen from me through NO FAULT OF OUR OWN. We did NOTHING wrong.This atrocity will most likely force my family into bankruptcy. This will also cause our 50+ employees to be unemployed. How will they provide for their families? This is a total economic disaster.

Obama has destroyed capitalism and the rule of law in this country. What happens to a man who has his means of earning a living, which is the fuel of his marriage and parenting engine, removed? Obama took trillions from the private sector to spend on his own special interest groups, like ACORN and auto worker's unions.

Wrecking the economy is *good* for Democrats because their goal is to replace responsible men with the federal government. Single women, who vote overwhelmingly Democrat, prefer the guarantee of security from government handouts over the responsibility of having to choose and relate to a moral, responsible husband and father.

Here is the article from the Wall Street Journal:

And the excerpt:

> For example, for black males ages 20 to 24, the unemployment rate is close to 50 percent; in the black community overall, men have absorbed 100 percent of the job losses 463,000 jobs since the recession started in November 2007.
>
> And even if the economy grows by the forecasted 1.3 percent, it's not enough to create job growth, says Mr. Sum, who doesn't anticipate any net job growth until 2011.
>
> "From a fatherhood perspective, it's going to have an enormous impact on an already fragile community," says Roland Warren, president of the National Fatherhood Initiative, a nonprofit group aimed at "increasing the proportion of children growing up with an involved, responsible and committed father."
>
> "So much of the traditional view of the father revolves around his ability to provide," says Mr. Warren, who writes a column for The Washington Times.
>
> …Meanwhile, black women have experienced a small net job gain during this recession, mainly due to the fact that they are overwhelmingly employed in health care and education, two sectors that haven't experienced huge layoffs since November 2007, Mr. Sum says.

The article tries to make a case that men can have an influence in the family without earning money. In the vast majority of cases that is just not going to work. Men need to have authority in the family to have a positive impact, and that authority that is guaranteed by their role as primary provider.

Let me be clear. Welfare programs that reward people for choosing to have children from the wrong sorts of men come at the expense of good men. Good men pay the taxes for the welfare, and good men are passed over because the government is a substitute – a safety net – which removes the need for women to be choosy about men. When you have compassion on people for choosing bad men, you are encouraging them to continue to do so.

Before you vote, think about whether government welfare programs are an adequate substitute for a husband and father. You can have one or the other, but you can't have both. I know an awful lot of single-mothers who voted Democrat in the last election and had no idea that they had just voted to destroy the male roles of husband and father. Ideas have consequences.

Further study

Recently, I blogged about how government intrudes into the family and about the myth of "dead-beat Dads". And about how the feminist state's discrimination against male teachers is negatively impacting young men. And there is my series on how Democrat policies discourage marriage: Part 1 is here and Part 2 is here and Part 3 is here.

Can same-sex marriage and religious liberty co-exist?

June 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from 4Simpsons! Thanks for the link Neil!

Maggie Gallagher has written an article in the National Review asking whether same-sex marriage will crowd out fundamental liberties, such as the religious liberty.

First, we need to understand that the public expression of religious convictions is a buffer against fascism, just like free market capitalism and the family unit.

Maggie writes:

> Take "religious liberty." Religious liberty is a deeply American solution to a perennial problem. It means that every individual has a right to pursue ultimate meaning without coercion from the government. Totalitarian governments repress religion because they recognize faith communities as competitors with the state's power to define — or redefine — human rights.
>
> But a funny thing happened on the way to defeating Communism. Religion has emerged as the sole institution standing in the way of a powerful neo-statist liberalism, in which equality doctrines are used not as a shield but as a sword — to legitimate state intrusion into once-private realms.
>
> In practice, religious voters are the core of resistance to social liberalism, and they empower economic conservatism by providing a much broader base of voters for a center-right coalition government.

How will the left get rid of rights like the right to free speech, and the right of religious liberty, which stand in the way of their socialist road to fascism? Well, they might be able to use same-sex marriage.

Maggie goes on to wonder what the left will do in the USA, given what the left is doing in the UK:

> Consider what is happening right now in Great Britain, our closest sister democracy and the one with the strongest free-speech tradition. How does the British government treat religious liberty when it clashes with "gay equality"?
>
> Can the British government force a Catholic school to retain a principal who enters a civil union? Yes, it already has. How can that be, given British religious liberty? Well, the government says that if a religion teacher at a Catholic school enters a gay union publicly, he or she could be fired. But nobody else.
>
> Can the government fine an Anglican bishop who refuses to hire an actively and proudly gay youth minister? Yes, it already has. (How is this justified by the above principle? I don't know. I just know the government can do it, because it has.)

Consider this story from the UK Telegraph.

> Religious groups are to be forced to accept homosexual youth workers, secretaries and other staff, even if their faith holds same-sex relationships to be sinful.
>
> …Maria Eagle, the deputy equalities minister, has now indicated that it will cover almost all church employees."Members of faith groups have a role in making the argument in their own communities for greater LGBT acceptance, but in the meantime the state has a duty to protect people from unfair treatment."

But limitations on our rights because of same-sex marriage are already here, because of secularism. The denial of fundamental human rights, (which are illusory if God does not exist), is quite widespread in Canada and the United States. Atheists want to be happy, and they will sweep aside your Constitutional rights in order to get that happiness.

Consider the case of Julie Ward.

> Ms. Ward was enrolled in a graduate program at the school and as part of her education was required to enroll in a counseling practicum. In that practicum, she was assigned a case involving a homosexual who needed help. Ms. Ward did not feel that she could affirm the student's homosexual lifestyle because of her Christian beliefs, so she asked her supervisor what she should do. His advice was to refer the student to a counselor who had no qualms with affirming homosexual behavior. That is what she did, and it was all done before she saw the student. There was no counseling that took place between the two, there was no confrontation between the two, and there was no condemnation of homosexuality — just an honest confession of her deeply held religious belief.
>
> Julea was summoned to appear before a disciplinary hearing and told that if she wanted to continue on with her graduate program, she would have to submit to a "remediation" program so that she could see "the error of her ways." She refused to be forced into a re-education program designed to convert her from biblical faith, and as a result, she was kicked out of school. There's your tolerance.

And consider homosexual indoctrination for 5-year olds. (H/T Stop the ACLU)

> A California school district seems intent on teaching pre-school children to accept the homosexual lifestyle.
>
> The Alameda Unified School District announced it was considering a supplemental curriculum to eradicate "homophobia" in kindergarten children. Brad Dacus, founder of the Pacific Justice Institute (PJI), said the meeting room for the public session earlier this week was overcrowded with angry parents.
>
> "Nowhere at anytime did it give any protection for children being bullied because of their faith, their religion, their size, their race, ethnicity," he points out. "It is only going to give this special anti-bullying protection for homosexuals and

> transsexuals."
>
> …Parents cannot opt out their children from the curriculum.

No wonder men don't want to marry and have kids, and have the whole thing regulated by the government. If you can't even pass on your worldview to your kids, or express your beliefs in public, because of all the left-wing cry-babies who are so intolerant that they can't bear to hear other points of view, then why bother marrying and having children? If single women really wanted husbands and children, they wouldn't vote Democrat (= anti-family).

Same-sex marriage activists believe in compelling celebration, respect and approval from Christians against their will and in violation of their human rights. If SSM ever became law, our entire society would be re-made so that no public expression of preference for traditional marriage would go unpunished.

Further study

Muddling Towards Maturity linked to two commentaries (one, two) by Chuck Colson listing the many examples of discrimination, including: the coercion of Christian business eHarmony to open up a business to homosexuals, suing people for refusing to facilitate weddings, suing doctors for refusing to provide therapy or in vitro fertalization, forcing adoption agencies to place children with same-sex couples, etc.

I documented the persecution of defenders of traditional marriage here.

Who did Obama pick to handle the re-organization of General Motors?

June 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Look!Obama is appointing the best and the brightest person possible to oversee the bankruptcy re-organization of GM!

First, you need to know about Obama's take-over of GM, which is pure communism.

Here's the story from CNSNews:

> Without the prior approval of Congress or any legislation authorizing the act, President Obama plans to announce on Monday that the federal government will take a 60-percent ownership stake in General Motors as part of a bankruptcy and reorganization plan for the company.
>
> The White House on Sunday night announced that the plan will require the federal government to provide another $30 billion of taxpayer money to General Motors, on top of the $20 billion in aid the federal government already has given the company.

And guess who Obama's picked to supervise the bankruptcy and reorganization?

Here's the left-wing New York Times article: (H/T Hot Air)

> It is not every 31-year-old who, in a first government job, finds himself dismantling General Motors and rewriting the rules of American capitalism.
>
> But that, in short, is the job description for Brian Deese, a not-quite graduate of Yale Law School who had never set foot in an automotive assembly plant until he took on his nearly unseen role in remaking the American automotive industry.
>
> Nor, for that matter, had he given much thought to what ailed an industry that had been in decline ever since he was born. A bit laconic and looking every bit the just-out-of-graduate-school student adjusting to life in the West Wing — "he's got this beard that appears and disappears," says Steven Rattner, one of the leaders of President Obama's automotive task force — Mr. Deese was thrown into the auto industry's maelstrom as soon the election-night parties ended.
>
> "There was a time between Nov. 4 and mid-February when I was the only full-time member of the auto task force," Mr. Deese, a special assistant to the president for economic policy, acknowledged recently as he hurried between his desk at the White House and the Treasury building next door. "It was a little scary."

Ed Morrissey comments:

> *Scary*? Well, yes, and not just for Mr. Deese, whose executive experience actually is less than Obama's. He's never run *any* business, let alone worked in

> the auto industry. **He joined the Hillary Clinton campaign by taking a hiatus from law school, which he began after working as an assistant to Gene Sperling, now an advisor to Tim Geithner. His entire resume consists of campaign work.**
>
> Perhaps Deese will do a good job, but I'm not terribly sanguine about the prospects of GM prospering under the guidance of someone who hasn't ever met a payroll or sold a car. A President who took his own job seriously would never have appointed a second-tier adviser to this position. A national media who took their jobs seriously wouldn't let him get away with it, and don't count this NYT piece in their favor. They give a glowing report to this political-hackery appointment.

Heck of a job, Deesie!

Nice Deb has reactions from around the blogosphere here. Here's one from the Heritage Foundation:

> Will the new majority owner of General Motors — the United States Government — take an active role in managing the firm as it struggles for viability? In a statement earlier today, President Obama insisted that the government wouldn't impose it's own political agenda on GM.
>
> "What we are not doing, what I have no interest in doing, is running GM," he declared. Calling the government a "reluctant shareholder", he declared that "GM will be run by a private board of directors and management team with a track record in American manufacturing that reflects a commitment to innovation and quality…They and not the government will call the shots and make the decisions about how to turn this company around… When a difficult decision has to be made like where to open a new plant or what type of new car to make, the new GM, not the US government will make that decision".
>
> This sounds reassuring, but in fact this non-interference pledge was broken even before he started speaking, as the White House was already trumpeting a pledge extracted from GM to "build a new small car in an idled UAW factory", furthering the President's environmental goals as well as pleasing his labor allies.

I think a law student/Hillary campaign lackey is the best candidate available. He's a Democrat, at least, so you know you're getting superior economic reasoning power. And GM just asked for another 30 billion, presumably to pay for their union member pensions and benefits. What do you expect when the President and Democrat Congress are running trillion-dollar deficits?

His Supreme Court nominee has similar qualifications. She's Hispanic *and* female – female *and* Hispanic. And she thinks her sex and race will make her a better judge than white male candidates. The best and brightest!

Featured blog: Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

June 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my favorite topics is the interplay between economics and marriage. And the best blog on the topic is Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse. She has excellent credentials as a sound fiscal conservative and a staunch social conservative. She is not only solid on abortion and traditional marriage, but she is one of the few people with enough vision to know the damage caused to the family by no-fault divorce and big government, as well.

Note to you young men who are thinking of marrying: marry someone like Dr. Morse, who understands how economic policy affects the marriage. Regular readers will know how I regularly gush over Michele Bachmann's attempts to try to wrestle with Democrats to cut spending. That is how wives ought to be – defending their family from high taxes and regulations.

Articles

Here is one of the papers from Dr. J that I really liked. (the PDF version is better!)

In the paper, she addresses many topics related to feminism:

- work/parenting balance
- no-fault divorce
- marriage vs. cohabitation
- domestic violence
- fertility
- single-mother subsidies
- income disparities
- recreational sex
- power struggles in marriage

She also discusses remedies from a Catholic perspective. (Note: the Wintery Knight is a proud evangelical Protestant)

Dr. J's full list of articles is here.

Lecture

Here is a 30-minute lecture version of that paper by Dr. J, if you prefer watching and listening to reading. The title is "Freedom, the Family and the Market".

The description of the lecture is:

"The socialist ideal of equality has played an independent role in the breakdown of the family. Socialism has attacked the family directly, and has adopted policies that have led to demographic collapse. Christianity and capitalism offer more appealing solutions to the problems socialism claims to solve."

I highly recommend this lecture. It's as good as William Lane Craig, just on a different topic. This lecture is especially suitable for men.

Here's her bio:

> Born into a Catholic working class family, Dr. Morse earned a doctorate in economics during her twelve year lapse from the faith. A committed career woman before having children, she taught economics for fifteen years at Yale University and George Mason University.
>
> The devastating experience of infertility brought her to her knees and back to the practice of the Catholic faith. In 1991, she and her husband adopted a two year old Romanian boy, and gave birth to a baby girl. She left her full-time university teaching post in 1996 to move with her family to California. She is now a part-time Research Fellow at the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty.
>
> Dr. Morse writes about the family and the free society. Her first book, Love and Economics: Why the Laissez-Faire Family Doesn't Work, shows why the family is the necessary building block for a free society and why so many modern attempted substitutes for the family do not work. Her second book, Smart Sex: Finding Life-Long Love in a Hook-Up World, exposes the sexual revolution's fraudulent promise of freedom and points the way to the most thrilling adventure of all–life-long love.
>
> Her public policy articles have appeared in Forbes, Policy Review, The American Enterprise, Fortune, Reason, the Wall Street Journal, Vital Speeches, and Religion and Liberty.
>
> Dr. Morse's scholarly articles have appeared in the Journal of Political Economy, Economic Inquiry, the Journal of Economic History, Publius: the Journal of Federalism, the University of Chicago Law Review, and the Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy, Social Philosophy and Policy, The Independent Review, townhall.com, and The Notre Dame Journal of Law Ethics and Public Policy.

I know I don't have to tell you George Mason University is home to Walter Williams, one of my two favorite living economists, whose work I often feature. GMU has the best economics school in the entire nation, featuring 2 Nobel prize winners. (Their only black mark is their shoddy treatment of intelligent design theorist Dr. Caroline Crocker).

Why should Christians embrace chastity?

June 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christians should be chaste because research shows that sex before marriage decreases marital stability.

Story from Life Site News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Couples who reserve sex for marriage enjoy greater stability and communication in their relationships, say researchers at Brigham Young University.
>
> A new study from the Mormon college found that those couples who waited until marriage rated their relationship stability 22 percent higher than those who started having sex in the early part of their relationship. The relationship satisfaction was 20 percent higher for those who waited, the sexual quality of the relationship was 5 percent better, and communication was 12 percent better.
>
> The study, published in the American Psychological Association's Journal of Family Psychology, involved 2,035 married individuals who participated in a popular online marital assessment called "RELATE." From the assessment's database, researchers selected a sample designed to match the demographics of the married American population. The extensive questionnaire included the question "When did you become sexual in this relationship?"
>
> Couples that became sexually involved later in their relationship – but prior to marriage – reported benefits that were about half as strong as those who waited for marriage.
>
> […]Sociologist Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas at Austin, who was not involved in the study, responded to its findings, saying that "couples who hit the honeymoon too early – that is, prioritize sex promptly at the outset of a relationship – often find their relationships underdeveloped when it comes to the qualities that make relationships stable and spouses reliable and trustworthy." Regnerus is the author of *Premarital Sex in America*, a book forthcoming from Oxford University Press.
>
> Because religious belief often plays a role for couples who choose to wait, Busby and his co-authors controlled for the influence of religious involvement in their analysis.
>
> "Regardless of religiosity, waiting helps the relationship form better communication processes, and these help improve long-term stability and relationship satisfaction," Busby said.

Research matters when discussing morality

Young men and women growing up really need to be informed by their parents what they are going to want to be doing long term, and what they should be doing today to

accomplish those goals. Young people benefit greatly from the guidance of older and wiser people, but in defining goals and defining the steps to reach those goals. To be a convincing parent, you have to be convinced yourself. And to be convinced yourself, you need to be seen as having knowledge, not just opinions, but knowledge. Having the right peer-reviewed papers at hand will help you to be a better parent.

My previous post on research showing how sex before marriage greatly reduces the stability of marriage. That post contains even more research showing that having even ONE pre-marital sex partner can GREATLY reduce the probability that the marriage will last. And it gets worse as you add more partners.

Christians and chastity

What should Christians know about the purpose of chastity?

1. Chastity is not just abstinence

Chastity is not just abstaining from sex. Chastity is the Christian virtue by which Christians take God's character and goals into account in their relationships with the opposite sex. Probably about 99.9% of the people in the world look at members of the opposite sex and think "what's in it for me?". Chastity allows you to look at members the opposite sex, even the unattractive ones, and ask "what's in it for God?".

I've written about how the goal of life on atheism is to be happy. One of the consequences of this is that atheists look at other people as objects that can make them happy or not, depending on how resistant they are to sticks and carrots. In Christianity, chastity is the gift that allows you to look at people you are not attracted to in the least and to love them enough to help them grow in the knowledge of God.

2. Physical contact clouds the judgment

Chastity allows you to make a better decision about who you are going to marry. When you are desperate to be loved (women) or desperate for physical intimacy (men) it's easy to hide the bad parts of yourself and to overlook the flaws of others. Physical contact leads to rushed commitments and emotions that are difficult to undo later once you learn more about the other person's moral and spiritual beliefs.

Chastity allows you to keep God in the picture as you evaluate prospective mates. Instead of looking at candidates who will fulfill your needs, you look for candidates who benefit God, perhaps because they are skilled at explaining Christianity to your future children. Without chastity, women choose men who are amoral, to avoid being judged, and men choose women solely on appearance, who are unqualified for married life.

3. Sex without commitment destroys the capacity for trust and vulnerability

When persons have sex outside of a lifelong commitment, they have to make an effort to separate their emotions from the physical activity. This leads to a kind of "guarded" condition where a person is no longer free to be really engaged emotionally in a relationship. For example, women lose feminine qualities like trust and vulnerability, which are necessary to attract good men without using sex appeal. (Men can tell)

In addition, I would say that when a relationship is kept platonic, the break-ups are going

to be a lot less damaging emotionally. All my relationships have been platonic, so even when the break-ups occurred, there was never any physical element to add to the pain. It is important for people to go after the best spousal candidate they can find, not to settle for some amoral loser just to avoid the pain of rejection.

Related posts

- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- What is the meaning of white roses?
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- The Wintery Knight's greatest fears about the future
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Obama agrees with Ahmadinehad: Iran should have nukes

June 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, this graphic from the Heritage Foundation about what would happen if North Korea hit Seattle with a long-range nuclear missile.

What if North Korea nuked Seattle?
Excerpt:

> "North Korea has positioned its most sophisticated long-range ballistic missile at a launch site for a test firing that could come within weeks," the Los Angeles Times reports from Seoul, citing a South Korean newspaper account.

Next, Obama has decided that Iran should be allowed to go nuclear. Keep in mind that Iranian forces have been one of the key players in supplying the means to kill our troops in the field.

Story from the Washington Post. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama suggested that Iran may have some right to nuclear energy – provided it proves by the end of the year that its aspirations are peaceful.
>
> In a BBC interview broadcast Tuesday, he also restated plans to pursue direct diplomacy with Tehran to encourage it set aside any ambitions for nuclear

> weapons it might harbor.
>
> …"What I do believe is that Iran has legitimate energy concerns, legitimate aspirations," Obama said, adding that the international community also "has a very real interest" in preventing a nuclear arms race.

Stop the ACLU has another related story here.

> **…just last month Obama approved a nuclear power deal with the United Arab Emirates, as well. So, it's nuclear power for everyone but the U.S.**

The Heritage Foundation asks:

- what % of GDP is spend on defense?
- what % of GDP is spent on entitlements like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security

Find the facts, here.

More stories about Obama's cuts to missile defense and to our own nuclear program.

Canada seeks to sell government-run firms

June 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My Canadian friends are telling me that Prime Minister Stephen Harper is under fire for offering 9.5 billion dollars to GM. I tell them, who cares? Canada is 10% the size of the USA, so that would be 95 billion for us. I still believe in Harper, and in any case, he already expressed that his preference would be to let the companies go bankrupt.

But let's take a look at the latest news from Canada. In Canada, they have corporations that are owned by the government called Crown corporations. Some of them are losing money. So what does Harper want to do about that?

Check out this story from the National Post. (H/T My friend Andrew, the perfect father)

> The federal Department of Finance has flagged several prominent Crown corporations as "not self-sustaining," including the CBC, VIA Rail and the National Arts Centre, and has identified them as entities that could be sold as part of the government's asset review, newly released documents show.
>
> …Finance Department documents, obtained by Canwest News Service under the Access to Information Act… reveal that the government will consider privatizing Crown corporations that require public subsidies to stay afloat.
>
> "The reviews will also examine other holdings in which the government competes directly with private enterprises, earn income from property or performs a commercial activity," states a Finance briefing note dated Dec. 2, 2008. "It includes Crown corporations that are not self-sustaining even though they are of a commercial nature."
>
> In the briefing note, the Finance Department identifies nine Crown corporations that fall in that category, including Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., the CBC and VIA Rail.

CBC is their NPR/PBS and Via Rail is their AMTRAK. Harper is taking a lot of heat right now because he is running a 50 billion dollar deficit. That's chump change compared to our nearly 2 trillion dollar deficit this year alone, with no end in sight. Not only that, but Heritage Foundation reports that Obama's calling up the mayor of Detroit and reassuring him that GM will not move their headquarters to Warren, from Detroit.

More Harper

- IBD: Canada fills Obama's leadership void
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper visits the troops in Afghanistan
- Round-up of US media interviews with Stephen Harper
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper interviewed by Larry Kudlow

Are things beginning to turn around in Alberta?

June 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

I blogged before about the California school district that is indoctrinating 5-year olds with homosexual propaganda in kindergarten. Well, Canada had a similar problem in the province of British Columbia, where the entire curriculum was going to be designed by gay activists. Now, you might think that the Canadians would be a lot more leftist on such issues, you'd be wrong.

Alberta has a bill in the works to give rights to parents to opt out of programs like this.

Check out this story from the Globe and Mail. (H/T My friend Andrew)

> Bill 44, which proposes amendments to Alberta's Human Rights, Citizenship, and Multiculturalism Act, contains two significant changes. The first adds sexual orientation to proscribed grounds of discrimination. This would bring Alberta's human rights legislation into conformity with a Supreme Court of Canada ruling that "read in" sexual orientation after it had been deliberately omitted three times by the Legislative Assembly in Edmonton. The amendment has been widely praised.
>
> Section 11 of the new act is more controversial. It requires that parents be notified whenever instructional materials are taught dealing "explicitly with religion, sexuality or sexual orientation." If parents object in writing, the student can be excused from class.
>
> According to Rob Anderson, Conservative MLA from Airdrie-Chestermere, a riding just north of Calgary, Bill 44 "is one of the most positive and meaningful advances for human rights that this province and this country has seen for many years." Specifically, he explained, the "parental rights clause" enshrines Article 26 (3) of the United Nations universal declaration of human rights: "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

> Premier Ed Stelmach added that his government “supports a very, very fundamental right and that is parental rights with respect to education.”

This article was written by a political science professor at the University of Calgary, which is the school where their prime minister Stephen Harper got both his degrees in economics. They are known for their conservative views. They even have a special name: the “Calgary School” of economics, just like you might talk about the “Chicago School” and the “Austrian School”. Awesome!

Here’s a letter to the editor from a University of Lethbridge (Alberta) professor that I found in the National Post, (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

> Bill 44 is a response to a B. C. Human Rights Tribunal decision mandating two gay activists to commandeer the Ministry of Education in that province to impose a “social justice” course into the curriculum. Parents’ rights, never mind those of local school boards, were overridden.
>
> The B. C. example and Alberta’s Bill 44 indicate how HRCs have poisoned politics in those two provinces.
>
> Now everyone, not just Christian preachers, has to worry about getting dragged before an HRC. A former chairman of the Calgary School Board once proclaimed the state “owns” children who must be liberated from the supposedly claustrophobic viewpoints of their parents. This goes to show how little this debate has to do with promoting critical thinking or cosmopolitanism, as the Post’s article suggests.
>
> If there is an upside to this, perhaps now there will be sufficient support across the political spectrum to dismantle the HRCs.

Go Canada, eh?

Michelle Malkin asks: Is an abortionist worth more than a military recruiter?

June 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michelle Malkin

My friend Andrew drew my attention to Michelle Malkin's most recent column. It's a must-read!

Michelle starts by talking about two murders that occurred at almost the same time. Which one was more important to Obama and the left-wing media, and why?

She writes:

> When a right-wing Christian vigilante kills, millions of fingers pull the trigger. When a left-wing Muslim vigilante kills, he kills alone. These are the instantly ossifying narratives in the Sunday shooting death of Kansas late-term abortionist George Tiller versus the Monday shootings of two Arkansas military recruiters.
>
> Tiller's suspected murderer, Scott Roeder, was white, Christian, anti-government, and anti-abortion. The gunman in the military recruiting center attack, Abdul Hakim Mujahid Muhammad, was black, a Muslim convert, anti-military, and anti-American. Both crimes are despicable, cowardly acts of domestic terrorism. But the disparate treatment of the two brutal cases by both the White House and the media is striking.

In the column Michelle notes the following differences between the two stories:

- Obama issued a statement condemning the murderer of the abortionist, but not the murder of the military recruiters
- The Justice Department dispatched federal marshals to protect abortion clinics, not military recruitment offices
- The left-wing media labeled the murderer of the abortion doctor a terrorist, not the murderer of the military recruiters
- The left-wing media blamed conservative media for one murder, but militant Islam

was not blamed for the other murders

Michelle asks what Obama had to say about the deaths of two of our brave soldiers:

> …President Obama said nothing. The Justice Department was mum. And so were the legions of finger-pointing pundits happily convicting the pro-life movement and every right-leaning writer on the planet of contributing to the murder of George Tiller. Obama's omission, it should be noted, comes just a few weeks after he failed to mention the Bronx jihadi plot to bomb synagogues and a National Guard airbase during his speech on homeland security.

She goes on to catalog some more incidents showing where the real threat of domestic terrorism lies. Most of them I had *never even heard of.* It just goes to show you that some victims are more equal than others, especially when you are trying to squash down the good and lift up the evil – so that the distinctions that make people able to judge others will be demolished. Abortion good, patriotism bad. Feminism good, military service bad.

Watch this video with Evan Sayet and you'll learn how the secular-left thinks.

Another video by Evan Sayet is linked here.

We need to understand how it has become possible for the secular-left to be viewed as "moral" while faithful conservatives are viewed as "immoral". One worldview views the universe as an accident and human rights as fictions. The other believes that God grounds human rights and that every person has a purpose that makes them valuable: to know God.

UPDATE: Nice Deb says that the anti-war left is to blame for the death of the military recruiters. Turnabout is fair play. She has a lot more at that link, too.

Obama’s corporate tax hike would cause Microsoft to outsource jobs

June 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This Bloomberg article may be helpful to those Democrats who voted for Obama because they hoped that Obama would stop outsourcing by taxing “the rich” and by taxing “greedy coporations”. (H/T Club For Growth)

Excerpt:

> Microsoft Corp. Chief Executive Officer Steven Ballmer said the world’s largest software company would move some employees offshore if Congress enacts President Barack Obama’s plans to impose higher taxes on U.S. companies’ foreign profits.
>
> “It makes U.S. jobs more expensive,” Ballmer said in an interview. “We’re better off taking lots of people and moving them out of the U.S. as opposed to keeping them inside the U.S.”
>
> …In a roundtable discussion today, Ballmer, Symantec Corp. Chairman John Thompson and the heads of smaller companies such as privately held Bentley Systems, an Exton, Pennsylvania-based maker of engineering software, said such policies would hurt domestic investment, reduce shareholder value and increase the cost of employing U.S. workers.

See, there’s a difference between what Obama thinks will happen (fantasy) and what actual will happen (reality). He is probably very surprised that corporations are responding to his socialism by shipping jobs overseas. What an unexpected surprise! Let’s recall the simplest possible economics lesson from Henry Hazlitt’s “Economics in One Lesson”.

> From this aspect, therefore, the whole of economics can be reduced to a single lesson, and that lesson can be reduced to a single sentence. *The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups.*

Obama shows no evidence of knowing this lesson. And *neither does anyone who voted for him.* And it isn’t just that he and his voting bloc seem to know nothing about economics, it’s that they seem not to know anything about *anything*. And this, coupled with disregard for the unemployment rate, the budget deficit and the national debt, is what fuels his domestic policy.

Isn’t it mysterious that Bush cut taxes across the board, and tax revenues skyrocketed, while unemployment dove down below 5%? It’s a mystery! At least it’s a mystery to people who have never cracked open a book.

How communists operate

Here's a preview of what we can expect from someone like Obama, who has no doubt absorbed the views of many left-wing arts professors, who, like him, have probably never run so much as a lemonade stand. Chavez doesn't even have a college degree. (I have not seen Obama's grades, he hasn't ever released them – but he used alcohol, pot and cocaine).

IBD writes about Chavez:

> It ought to worry people that what's happening at GM is perfectly recognizable in Caracas.
>
> In 2004, Chavez began by expropriating cattle ranches in Venezuela, saying he only wanted to clarify property rights, not confiscate land. End result: Virtually all productive land now is in his hands, redistributed to his loyalists in serfdom.
>
> After that, he went after the U.S. oil industry, snagging prizes like Exxon Mobil's $1 billion heavy-oil complex on the Orinoco River in 2007, citing a different legal issue: tax disputes.
>
> He did similar expropriations with steel, cement, ports, banks, sugar, rice, pretty much any industry that was viable.
>
> Running out of companies to steal, he now persecutes private media — not, he claims, to stifle dissent, but to protect children from smut, his pretense for shutting down RCTV in 2007.
>
> For the last remaining nonstate TV station, his concern is now environmental desecration, with Chavistas using the pretense of some old antlers on the wall of a Globovision executive following an open-ended state raid as the excuse to shut down the TV station.
>
> Whatever Chavez's legal concerns are, the punishment is always the same: expropriation and more power to the state, the two pillars of socialism.

Read the whole thing, it goes on to juxtapose Obama and Chavez. (MP3 Podcast is here)

Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough

June 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I blogged about how scientists had discovered a way to prevent ethical adult stem cells from being infected with cancerous mutations. I've also written about some of the proven cures that have been developed with adult stem cells and compared it with the number of cures developed by unethical embryonic stem-cell research, i.e. – NONE.

But now we learn about a new source of functional stem cells: PIGS! That's right, PIGS!

Check out this story from the BBC.

Excerpt:

> Chinese scientists have given cells from adult pigs the ability to turn into any tissue in the body, just like embryonic stem cells.
>
> They hope the breakthrough could aid research into human disease, and the breeding of animals for organ transplants for humans.
>
> The study appears online in the Journal of Molecular Cell Biology.
>
> …Tests showed that the reprogrammed cells were capable of becoming any of the cell types that make up the three layers in a developing embryo.

Now you say, "Wintery! What good are pig stem cells for human beings?" So I'll tell you.

> Dr Xiao said pigs were a potentially ideal source of organs for transplant, as their organs were similar in function and size to those found in humans.
>
> He said reprogrammed stem cells could potentially be used to make a pig organ compatible to the human immune system, minimising the risk of rejection.
>
> The cells could also be used to mimic human disease in pigs, allowing scientists to test new therapies without requiring human volunteers.

There's more in the story, it's worth a look!

BONUS (depressing, though)

My elusive friend Richard e-mails me this article from the CBC, which talks about Quebec's plan to pay for screenings for pregnant women to see if their child has Down's syndrome. The article states that "statistics in other countries show that 90 per cent of women end their pregnancy after a positive test." Quebec is the most secular and left-wing province in Canada.

What is it about the weak that causes leftists to want to kill them? Is it because they desire happiness for themselves above all and do not believe that humans have certain inalienable rights guaranteed by God? Is it because they believe that there is no value in suffering a little in order to take care of others has no value in a mindless, accidental universe where the only purpose is to have happy feelings until you die?

Walter Williams evaluates American academic performance

June 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article is here in Townhall.com. The left is always complaining that they need more money to raise test scores, and that schools are underfunded. But is more money the answer?

Excerpt:

> The teaching establishment and politicians have hoodwinked taxpayers into believing that more money is needed to improve education. The Washington, D.C., school budget is about the nation's costliest, spending about $15,000 per pupil. Its student/teacher ratio, at 15.2 to 1, is lower than the nation's average. Yet student achievement is just about the lowest in the nation. What's so callous about the Washington situation is about 1,700 children in kindergarten through 12th grade receive the $7,500 annual scholarships in order to escape rotten D.C. public schools, and four times as many apply for the scholarships, yet Congress, beholden to the education establishment, will end funding the school voucher program.

Teacher's unions are not interested in being paid to perform, they want to be paid regardless of whether they perform. That is why they oppose voucher programs, which give parents a choice. If parents can choose, then schools that insist on retaining teachers who can't teach will finally come under pressure to fire those teachers and find some better ones. More money thrown into the fire is not the answer.

Williams continues:

> Any long-term solution to our education problems requires the decentralization that can come from competition. Centralization has been massive. In 1930, there were 119,000 school districts across the U.S; today, there are less than 15,000. Control has moved from local communities to the school district, to the state, and to the federal government. Public education has become a highly centralized government-backed monopoly and we shouldn't be surprised by the results. It's a no-brainer that the areas of our lives with the greatest innovation, tailoring of services to individual wants and falling prices are the areas where there is ruthless competition such as computers, food, telephone and clothing industries, and delivery companies such as UPS, Federal Express and electronic bill payments that have begun to undermine the postal monopoly in first-class mail.

Here is an article from the extremely left-wing Los Angeles Times that explains what it takes for a school to succeed. A school needs stay away from unions and educational bureaucrats, and stick with the basics: math, reading, writing and *discipline.* Let's take a look at an Oakland school that serves the poorest, underprivileged minorities, but still

manages to deliver the goods.

What kind of teachers teach in the American Indian Public Charter schools?

> "**We are looking for hard working people who believe in free market capitalism**. . . . Multicultural specialists, ultra liberal zealots and college-tainted oppression liberators need not apply."

Good start. But are they "progressive"?

> That, it turns out, is just the beginning of the ways in which American Indian Public Charter and its two sibling schools spit in the eye of mainstream education. These small, no-frills, independent public schools in the hardscrabble flats of Oakland sometimes seem like creations of television's "Colbert Report." **They mock liberal orthodoxy with such zeal that it can seem like a parody.**

Well, surely they must embrace teacher's unions?

> School administrators take pride in their record of frequently firing teachers they consider to be underperforming. Unions are embraced with the same warmth accorded "self-esteem experts, panhandlers, drug dealers and those snapping turtles who refuse to put forth their best effort," to quote the school's website.

But what about the need for compassion, tolerance and empathy?

> Conservatives, including columnist George Will, adore the American Indian schools, which they see as models of a "new paternalism" that could close the gap between the haves and have-nots in American education. Not surprisingly, many Bay Area liberals have a hard time embracing an educational philosophy that proudly proclaims that it "does not preach or subscribe to the demagoguery of tolerance."

The LA Times article shows that conservative, anti-union schools work for the poorest children. But there are challenges that are blocking the expansion of charter schools, such as "hostile state legislatures and arbitrary caps", according to the Heritage Foundation.

Their article cites Rep. Buck McKeon (R-CA) as follows:

> These caps are often the consequence of legislative trade-off – representing political deal-making designed to appease special interests who prefer the status quo rather than reasoned education policy. As a result of the caps, children across the country now languish on daunting wait lists, just waiting to enroll in the public school of their choice, simply because it happens to operate as a charter. **An estimated 365,000 students are on charter school wait lists today. That's enough students to fully enroll 1,100 new averaged-size charter schools.**

As I discussed before, there are almost no males involved in education in the classroom, which means that the classrooms will emphasize compassion, tolerance, equal outcomes, non-judgmentalism and self-esteem. Competition and excellence are definitely out. In order for Americans to continue to have the same level of prosperity, we need to focus on academic excellence, not secular-leftist indoctrination.

What is intelligent design? What is capitalism?

June 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two new books have just come out by two of my favorite people in the whole world:

- Stephen C. Meyer (Ph.D from Cambridge University)
- Jay W. Richards (Ph.D from Princeton University).

Meyer's book is about intelligent design, and Richards' book is about capitalism. Let's take a look.

What is intelligent design?

To understand what intelligent design is, you can watch two DVDs that are now online at Youtube. Both videos are by Illustra Media.

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

I give these videos my highest recommendation. If you have not seen them, you must see them.

Stephen C. Meyer's new book

The new book by Stephen C. Meyer is called "Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design". It is being published by Harper-Collins.

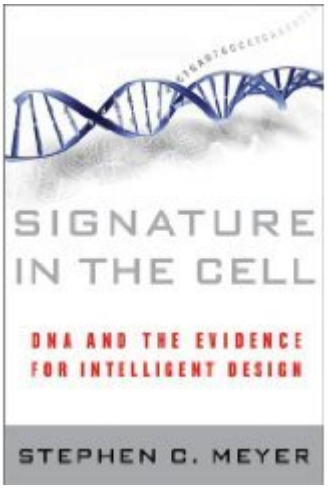

Signature in the Cell

Here is the blurb:

Meyer tells the story of the successive attempts to solve this mystery of DNA and argues that fundamental objections now exist to the adequacy of all purely naturalistic or materialistic theories. The book then proposes a radical alternative based upon developments in molecular biology and the information sciences: it proposes the design hypothesis as the best explanation for the origin of the information necessary to produce the first life.

SIGNATURE IN THE CELL will not merely provide a critique of evolutionary theories. It also shows that, based on our uniform and repeated experience-the basis of all scientific reasoning about the past-there is a strong positive case for intelligent design. From our experience we know that intelligence alone produces large amounts of information. Thus, the book shows that the argument for intelligent design from DNA is not based on ignorance or a desire to "give up on science," but instead upon just the opposite: our growing scientific knowledge of the inner workings of the cell and our experience-based knowledge of the cause-and-effect structure of the world. For just this reason the argument for design can be formulated as a rigorous and positive scientific argument-specifically one called "an inference to the best explanation." The book shows, ironically, that the argument for intelligent design from DNA is based on the same method of scientific reasoning that Darwin himself used.

I pre-ordered mine! You can see Stephen Meyer debating against Skeptic magazine's editor Michael Shermer here.

Now let's turn to Jay W. Richards' book.

What is capitalism?

To understand what capitalism is, you can watch this lecture entitled "Money, Greed and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem" by Jay W. Richards, delivered at the Heritage Foundation think tank, and televised by C-SPAN2. The book has the same title, and is published by Harper-Collins.

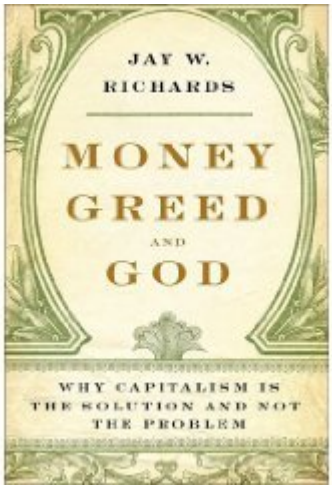

Money, Greed and God

Here is the blurb:

Does capitalism promote greed? Can a person follow Jesus's call to love others and also support capitalism? Was our recent economic crisis caused by flaws inherent to our free market system? Jay Richards presents a new approach to capitalism, revealing how it's fully consistent with Jesus's teachings and the Christian tradition, while also showing why this system is our best bet for renewed economic vigor.

The church is bombarded with two competing messages about money and capitalism:

> - wealth is bad and causes much of the world's suffering
> - wealth is good and God wants you to prosper and be rich

Richards exposes these myths, and other common misconceptions about capitalism, and reveals the surprising ways that capitalism is, in fact, the best system to respond to the biblical mandates of alleviating poverty and protecting the environment. *Money, Greed, and God* equips readers to take practical steps in their own lives to conduct business, worship God, and serve others without falling into the "prosperity gospel" trap.

I can hardly wait to get my copy!

If you can't see the Richards video, here is an audio lecture by Jay Richards on the "Myths Christians Believe about Wealth and Poverty". Also, why not check out this series of 4 sermons by Wayne Grudem on the relationship between Christianity and economics? (a PDF outline is here)

Friday night funny: overdue account, private property, civics

June 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Spotted this video linked at Nice Deb:

Cute video of the best kind of bird ever made!

This is the funniest thing I ever got in an e-mail. It's a real e-mail exchange.

It starts like this:

> **From: Jane Gilles**
> **Date: Wednesday 8 Oct 2008 12.19pm**
> **To: David Thorne**
> **Subject: Overdue account**
>
> Dear David,
> Our records indicate that your account is overdue by the amount of $233.95. If you have already made this payment please contact us within the next 7 days to confirm payment has been applied to your account and is no longer outstanding.
>
> Yours sincerely, Jane Gilles

Click here for the rest of the exchange.

Second, here is a catchy tune for you to brighten your day from IMAO.us: (H/T Free Canuckistan)

And our weekly lesson in capitalism also from IMAO.us. (You have to click through to see the video)

Happy Friday!

UPDATE: I noticed that Dawn Eden had posted a serious post by Catholic Mark Shea about the different ways that Catholics and Evangelicals talk. Evangelicals are masculine and Catholics are feminine. Everybody knows that!

It's funny to hear Catholics described like this, but it's so true:

> Similarly, Catholics should not dismiss Evangelicalism as simplistic chatter merely because Evangelicals tend to be more verbal about their faith. **There is nothing noble or spiritual about the common lay Catholic's inability to be always ready to give an account of the hope within us (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15).**

But we Evangelicals also get whacked:

> [1] Back in my Evangelical days, I saw a cartoon in *The Wittenburg Door* featuring an earnest Evangelical hunched over in prayer with eyes clamped shut, pleading, "Oh Lord, I just really worship you and I just really want to come before

> you and just really pray that you would just really take the words just and really out of my prayer vocabulary." Not all spontaneous prayer is up to the glory of the task, and there is much wisdom in Catholics using the great and poetic prayers of the saints as their own.

It's funny because it's true!

Free speech: Mark Steyn radio interview and Ezra Levant radio debate!

June 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Blue Like You! Thanks for the link Joanne!

Canadian/American free speech activist Mark Steyn on the line with Chicago radio show host Milt Rosenberg. Commercial free!

Extension 720 – Mark Steyn – June 1, 2009

URL : http://www.wgnradio.com/media/mp3file/2009-06/47337079.mp3

Duration : 1 hours 29 mins 26 secs

He re-caps the history and outcome of his trial in Canada for offending Muslims, and goes on to discuss his previous book "America Alone: The End of the World As We Know It" and his new book "Lights Out: Islam, Free Speech And The Twilight Of The West". He reviews the state of free speech, Western Civilization, single-payer health care, welfare, anti-Western attitudes in education, and the 2008 election results.

BONUS

Ezra Levant reports on his debate against secular-leftist professor Lucie Lamarche on CBC radio. Note that the start time is 1:12 into the show. Press pause, let the clip buffer for a few minutes, then drag the slider to the 1:12 position.

> Last Sunday I was on Michael Enright's CBC radio show, The Sunday Edition, debating human rights commissions along with Keith Martin, the Liberal MP, and a nutty professor called Lucie Lamarche.
>
> You can listen to the show here — it's the May 31 edition. **The debate starts at about 1 hour and 12 minutes into the show.**
>
> [Lamarche] loses her grip at 1:25 when Enright challenged her on the lack of due process and natural justice in HRCs. Her first response is to dismiss the horrors of HRCs as my own personal story. When I pushed back, citing the very section of the Alberta act that allows warrantless search and seizures, and pointing out that targets of HRCs don't get legal aid, she just collapsed, saying that "discrimination is about attitudes… and transformation. It's not only about due process."
>
> Oh. So to hell with the law or fairness. Guys like me need to have our attitudes transformed. It's not law. It's brutal politics pretending to be the law.
>
> I like this Lucie Lamarche — for her honesty.
>
> After a few minutes of her reading her talking points — likely authored by the battallion of PR flacks at the Canadian Human Rights Commission — she just stops pretending that HRCs are about justice. They're about politics and propaganda — making political dissidents like me conform to the "official line". And the high costs? That's just an additional punishment for our thought crimes.

> Seriously: when she ran out of her prepared talking points, she said what she truly believed: this was about transforming attitudes.

Ezra also hints at which kind of people fight back to defend human rights, and what kind of people destroy human rights:

> Readers, do you think that Orwell or Solzhenitsyn would call Lamarche a defender of human rights, or a destroyer of them?
>
> Do you think that giving the state the power to transform your attitudes is a protection of your freedoms, or an abridgement of them?
>
> Do you think that Lucie Lamarche follows in the footsteps of dissidents who challenged the conventional wisdom, like Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi — or is she a descendant of the censors and bullies who tried to shut those two up?

Do not miss this debate podcast! Ezra is on fire!

And remember: we know that the secular-left believes in pounding down the good and lifting up the evil, so that moral judgments become impossible and no one feels badly for being morally evil. Remember Evan Sayet's explanation for how progressives think: moral equivalence, postmodernism and moral relativism. And atheists do not have the ability to resist Islamo-fascism: they want to be happy, not to be heroes.

Obama loses 2.19 million jobs, 9.4% unemployment, worst in 25 years

June 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from 4Simpsons! Thanks for the link Neil!

Gateway Pundit has the story in graphs. (H/T Lonely Conservative)

What was the unemployment rate under Bush?

> **Despite the recession he inherited, 9-11, stock market scandals, Hurricane Katrina and two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the unemployment rate during the Bush years averaged out to 5.27%.** (Misery Index)

How about so far under Obama?

> The US economy lost 598,000 jobs in January.
> The US economy lost 706,000 jobs in February.
> The US economy lost 742,000 jobs in March.
> The US economy lost 545,000 jobs in April.
> And, in May the US economy lost 345,000 jobs.

Here's a graph that may help you to understand how bad Obama really is, compared to Bush:

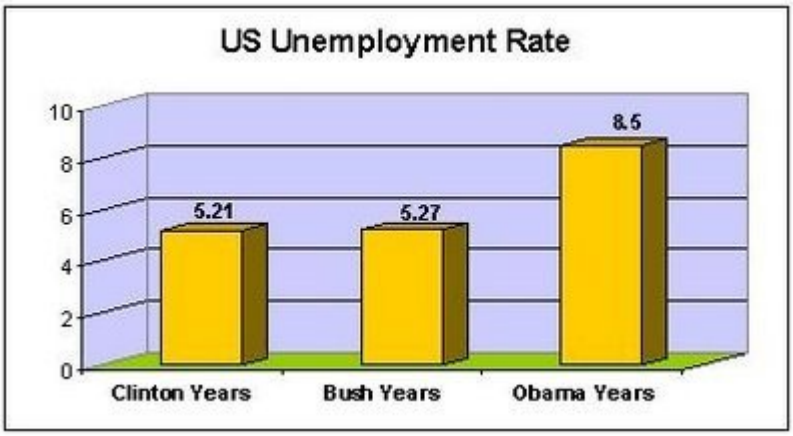

US Unemployment Rate

Clinton's rate is good because Newt Gingrich was in charge of the House in 1994 onward, and the House is where all spending bills originate

Hot Air reports (with a graph) that the unemployment rate is *worse* than the White House predicted it would be if they *hadn't* passed the stimulus:

> We are heading towards double-digit unemployment *and* doing that while we incur the massive debt of the unstimulating stimulus package. **We could just as easily have kept the money and ridden out the unemployment, much as we're forced to do now, only being a lot poorer while doing it.**

> Why is this important? It demonstrates that the President and his economic advisers have gotten pretty much everything about this economic collapse wrong. Instead of contracting government spending and shoring up the credibility of the currency, they're setting records in dissipating it instead. **Instead of focusing on fixing the problem that government explicitly created — mortgage-backed securities — they've literally left that for last while they waste money chasing every Democratic constituency but ignoring the actual cancer in the financial system.**

Bush was cutting into the deficit until the Democrats Community Reinvestment Act caught up with him in 2008. But Obama has ruined Bush's effort to balance the budget, with his massive redistributions of wealth.

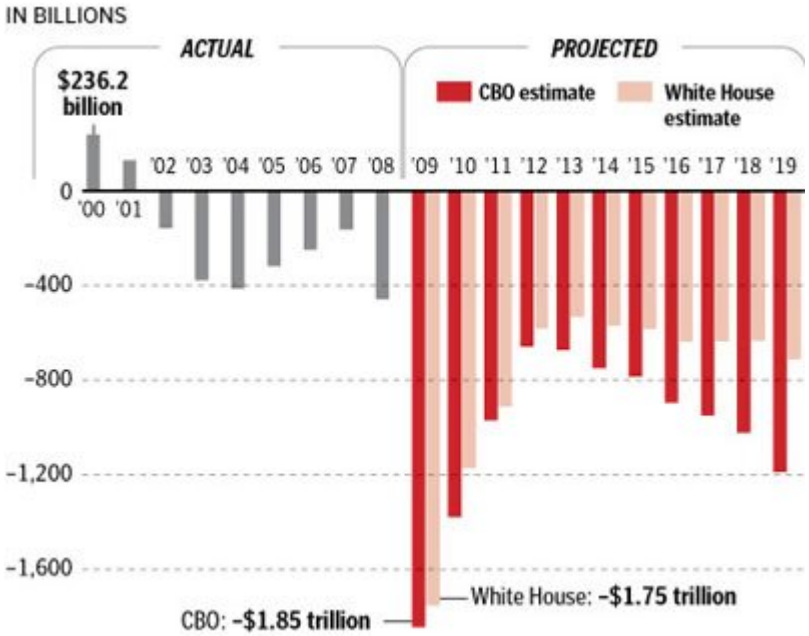

Obama's projected deficits

And the Heritage Foundation shows that the national debt is getting much worse under Obama's tax and spend policies:

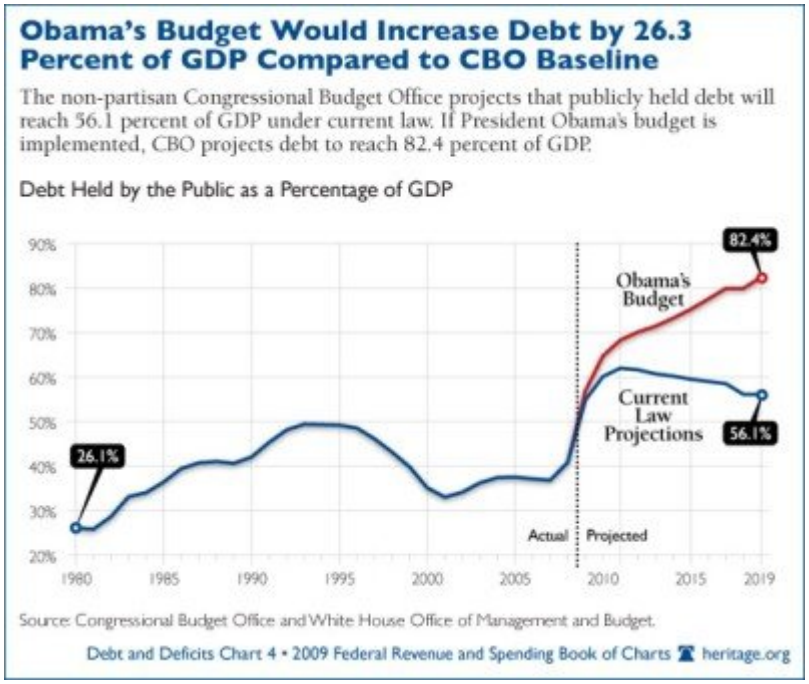

Debt as % of GDP under Obama
The Heritage Foundation writes:

> The national debt is skyrocketing. In 2009 publicly held debt is projected to jump to 54.8 percent of GDP, up from 40.8 percent in 2008. A year to year increase of this size hasn't occurred since World War II. While the main causes of this massive increase – $787 trillion economic "stimulus" and the $700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) – are sure to be debated for some time, the truly freighting revelation should be not what has already taken place, but what our elected officials have planned.
>
> President Obama's budget, if passed, would send debt to levels 26.3 percent of GDP over current law. Although President Obama has publicly stated his desire to both bring down deficits and reform entitlements under his watch, his actions don't match his words.

Who caused the recession? The democrats caused the recession, Bush tried to stop them in 2003. And Obama's spending spree is only making things worse. We have a worse economy than Canada now, in every measure that counts. Obama's planned tax hike is causing companies like Microsoft to ship jobs overseas, and his cap and trade plan will cost us even more jobs.

High tax rates cause the most productive people to stop working, costing us jobs. Obama is to blame. His total ignorance of economics means that he will be playing whack-a-mole with the US economy – always inventing new interventions into the market to fix the problems his last intervention caused.

UPDATE: Muddling Towards Maturity links to a comment by a business owner who explains why he will be hiring in Panama, not in the USA.

What are the real goals of environmentalist radicals?

June 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from In Haught Pursuit! Thanks for the link!

Today I've been listening to the audio book version of Christopher C. Horner's "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Global Warming and Environmentalism". And I thought that I would share with you some quotations from the environmentalist radicals to shed some light on their real motivations.

In the audio book, Horner is tracing the evolution of the modern environmentalist movement back to two failed groups: 1) people who predicted overpopulation and 2) people who advocated for communism. Both of these groups failed, but their aims (mass murder) live on in the abortion and environmentalist movements. Let's take a look at the real views of environmentalists.

Economist Walter Williams puts it this way:

> The authors of the study don't quite reach a conclusion that I've reached about environmental activists, whose agenda calls for private property confiscation and control over the lives of ordinary citizens. Back in the 60s and 70s, America's leftists called themselves socialists and communists. They were the people who paraded around college campuses singing praises of support to tyrants like Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro and Pol Pot. Today, the communist system and its promises have been revealed as both a miserable failure and a system of unprecedented brutality. Thus, communism and socialism have become an embarrassment, so environmentalism is the name for an old agenda.

Here is an article by Mr. Horner from the National Review to help us with some actual quotations by environmentalists.

1. Radical environmentalists hate capitalism because it helps the poor.

> "Giving society cheap, abundant energy… would be the equivalent of giving an idiot child a machine gun," says green godfather Paul Ehrlich. Oh, the horrors of subjecting millions to affordable heating, lighting and cooling, transportation, and other freedoms.
>
> …the greens [affirmed] their agenda at the August World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg… Among their projects: impeding technology that increases agricultural abundance, even the shipment of food to famine-stricken countries like Zimbabwe; lamenting the pernicious influence of indoor plumbing; and complaining that the poor shouldn't want (or get) such comforts as electricity because there are larger, Gaia-centric considerations at play.

2. Radical environmentalists favor mass murder of the poor, and not just by abortion and technological regress.

- “To feed a starving child is to exacerbate the world population problem.” Lamont Cole (as quoted by Elizabeth Whelan in her book *Toxic Terror*)
- “This is as good a way to get rid of them as any.” Charles Wursta, Chief Scientist for the Environmental Defense Fund, commenting on the likelihood of millions dying from a global ban on DDT (also quoted in *Toxic Terror*)
- “I got the impression that instead of going out to shoot birds, I should go out and shoot the kids who shoot birds.” Paul Watson, founder of Greenpeace (quoted in *Access to Energy*, vol. 10, no. 4, Dec. 1982)
- “The right to have children should be a marketable commodity, bought and traded by individuals but absolutely limited by the state.” Kenneth Boulding, originator of the “Spaceship Earth” concept (quoted by William Tucker in *Progress and Privilege*, 1982)
- “The only real good technology is no technology at all. Technology is taxation without representation, imposed by our elitist species [man] upon the rest of the natural world.” John Shuttleworth, *Friends of the Earth* manual writer

And In the Walter Williams article I cited earlier, he adds a couple more:

> Then there are statements like those of David Brower, founder of Friends of the Earth, and former executive director of Sierra Club: “While the death of young men in war is unfortunate, it is no more serious than the touching of mountains and wilderness areas by humankind.” David M. Graber, research biologist with the National Park Service wrote, “Human happiness, and certainly human fecundity, are not as important as a wild and healthy planet.” John Davis, editor of Earth First Journal, says, “Human beings, as a species, have no more value than slugs.” Davis also opined, “I suspect that eradicating small pox was wrong. It played an important part in balancing ecosystems.”

> These people have an abiding contempt for humankind. They seek to accomplish their agenda with useful idiots in and out of government and make use of what H.L. Mencken warned us about, “The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed, and hence clamorous to be led to safety, by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.”

Environmentalism is really about controlling others. And when your kids go to public schools to be taught by the left, they are indoctrinated to have these environmentalist beliefs: that humans are bad and that we need to die. The mass murders that emerged from the secular-left are not aberrations – they really do believe in killing hundreds of millions of innocent people with communism, abortion DDT bans, etc.

Featured blog: Pursuing Holiness

June 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been featuring a lot of conservative women lately, and not just Marsha Blackburn and Michele Bachmann. Earlier this week I featured Dawn Eden, who is a champion of chastity, and Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse who champions parenting, men and the family. (I found a very frank, funny podcast by Dr. J where she is speaking to a Catholic church about chastity, marriage and parenting – her podcast feed is here)

How are women different than men?

Here are some ways that women are different than men:

1. women tend to favor gun control, because guns are loud and scary
2. women tend to emphasize having their needs met by Christianity over theology and apologetics
3. women tend to favor compassion and forgiveness over responsibility and moral obligations

Well, let's just see what Laura over the Pursuing Holiness blog thinks about all of that!

1. Laura likes guns

She writes:

> Consider, for example, the New Bethel Church in Louisville, KY. Pastor Ken Pagano has decided to have a Gun Day at church. The Gun Day will include patriotic music and gun safety information. After all, recent shootings at churches have illustrated the need for responsible, defensive gun ownership.
>
> I thought to myself, S*weet, maybe I should convert to the Assemblies of God and be a part of this.*

Read the rest here.

2. Laura likes God

She writes:

> What if church was about worshiping and learning about a holy and sovereign God? A radical idea, I know.
>
> …What's the point of filling a church with benchwarmers, or in turning a church into a community organization where people perform service in order to fulfill their own moral code instead of for the glory of God? We have a country full of people and groups intent on self-gratification. If the church is no different, people may as well sleep in on Sundays.

Read the rest here.

3. Laura likes moral obligations

She writes:

> Is there something morally wrong about being required to pay for [medical] services we willingly received? It's far more morally wrong to have people throw in the towel and just refuse to pay, but even that is an option that society chooses to accept via bankruptcy laws.
>
> I really don't understand why people are buying into the idea that it's some massive, morally unsound, *unfair* burden to pay for the medical services that they willingly received. It's *entirely* fair. You asked for those services, you accepted them, and now you need to quit whingeing and pay up.

Read the rest here.

Laura's blog is called Pursuing Holiness.

Which cable news network has the worst media bias?

June 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why I think that MSNBC is the most biased channel

Listen to Ed Schulz, who works for MSNBC, as he takes a call from a mildly critical caller to his radio show. (H/T NewsBusters)

See, an outburst like this is why I am not at all convinced that left-wingers would protect the rights to free speech of those who disagree with them. It seems to me that there is some fundamental disrespect for the human rights of others that is grounded by the secular-left's worldview.

Here's another left-winger, Tamarin Hall, from MSNBC. (H/T Hot Air)

Here's another MSNBC left-winger, Rachel Maddow. (H/T American Power Blog via Blazing Cat Fur)

News Busters has more detail on Maddow's reaction to Obama's Cairo speech here.

The best one of all is here at Hot Air, in which Newsweek's Evan Thomas is interviewed by Chris Matthews on MSNBC! Thomas says, "I mean in a way Obama's standing above the country, above – above the world, he's sort of God.".

Check out this interview by Keith Olbermann, also of MSNBC, with Steven Crowder.

Well, it's not really Keith. So this video is fake, but accurate.

Contrast MSNBC with FoxNews

Contrast the fawning over Obama you see on MSNBC, with Charles Krauthammer on Fox News. (H/T Hot Air)

Krauthammer is too moderate for me, but at least he's a journalist, not a sycophant.

The Western Experience

Here is a more even-handed reaction to Obama's Cairo speech from Jason at the Western Extern Experience. He has a round-up of stories from Lebanon, Palestine and Iran that shows what is really at stake.

Here are a few of the more disturbing headlines:

- Guardian UK | Lebanon vote likely to shift power to Hezbollah
- Fox News | Obama Overture to Hamas Suggests Inevitability of Terror Group's Dominance Among Palestinians
- Washington Post | Iran in major nuclear expansion, UN oversight harder

This is what Obama should have talked about, but didn't. Appeasement didn't work for Chamberlain or Carter, and it won't work for Obama.

What's at stake?

The Washington Post reports that drug cartels use submarines to move massive amounts of drugs into the United States. The write that "U.S. officials fear that the rogue vessels

could be used by terrorists intent on reaching the United States with deadly cargos". Maybe Obama should be focused on defending the United States instead of apologizing on our behalf in order to send tingles up the legs of MSNBC talking heads.

Will Obama's speeches deter aggression of this sort? Or will they be viewed as evidence that no reprisals would follow such an attack?

UPDATE: Muddling Toward Maturity links to a substantive refutation of Obama's Cairo speech by Caroline Glick writing in the Jerusalem Post.

GREAT NEWS! Lebanon elects anti-Syrian coalition!

June 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow! This is the best news I've heard all week!

Yahoo news reports: (H/T My Dad)

> An anti-Syrian coalition defeated Hezbollah in Lebanon's parliamentary election on Sunday in a blow to Syria and Iran and a boost to the United States.
>
> …Lebanon's rival camps are at odds over Hezbollah's guerrilla force, which outguns the Lebanese army, and ties with Syria, which dominated Lebanon for three decades until 2005.
>
> …The United States, which lists Hezbollah as a terrorist group, has linked future aid to Lebanon to the shape and policies of the next government. Hezbollah, which says it must keep its arms to deter Israel, is part of the outgoing cabinet.
>
> The anti-Syrian coalition has enjoyed firm backing from many Western countries since the 2005 assassination of Hariri's father Rafik al-Hariri.
>
> The coalition took power in an election following Hariri's killing, but struggled to govern in the face of a sometimes violent conflict with Hezbollah and its allies.

This good news follows on the good news of India's election results, which I reported on here.

GREAT NEWS! Center-right parties win EU election!

June 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story is here at the BBC, entitled "European voters punish the left". (H/T Gateway Pundit via Commenter ECM)

Excerpt:

> **Centre-right parties have done well in elections to the European Parliament at the expense of the left, according to exit polls and initial results.**
>
> **…Centre-left parties are projected to have lost almost a quarter of their seats, while the centre-right is only slightly down.**…The BBC's Jonny Dymond in Brussels says it looks as if the centre-right European People's Party (EPP) will continue to hold power in the parliament.

Some specifics:

- French President Nicolas Sarkozy's UMP trounced socialist opponents, while greens from the Europe-Ecologie party also made gains
- German Chancellor Angela Merkel's governing centre-right grouping lost ground but finished ahead of its rivals. The Social Democrats, Ms Merkel's partners in the grand coalition, saw their worst election showing since World War II with just 20.8%
- In Italy, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's centre-right coalition is ahead of the socialist opposition, with between 39% and 43% of the vote, exit polls suggested. The Italian group may be the largest within the EPP
- In the UK, the governing Labour Party is expecting a serious defeat, slipping to third place
- Spain's governing Socialists were slightly behind the opposition Popular Party, according to partial results
- Poland's governing centre-right Civic Platform has gained ground at the expense of the Eurosceptic Law and Justice Party
- Early results show Portugal's ruling Socialists dropped a massive 18 percentage points, losing out mainly to Greens and far-left parties

In the United Kingdom, Gordon Brown's left-wing Labour Party lost badly:

> **Labour is facing an historic defeat in European elections which have seen the BNP gain its first seat in Brussels.**
>
> Labour may dip below 20% of the popular vote in what deputy leader Harriet Harman called a "very dismal" night.
>
> The party lost 12% of its vote in Wales, where they were beaten by the Tories for the first time since 1918.
>
> The BNP win in Yorkshire and Humberside was branded a "sad day" by the Tories

> and Labour but the party said it was a blow against EU “dictatorship”.
>
> With results starting to flow in, Labour looks on course to finish behind the UK Independence Party, which is currently on 17%, increasing pressure on Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who is facing calls from leading figures within his own party to stand down.
>
> Labour has been beaten into fifth place behind the Greens in two English regions – the South-East and South-West.
>
> The Conservatives on course to repeat their victory of 2004 with 27% of the vote, but without significantly increasing their share of the vote.
>
> The Lib Dems are neck-and-neck with Labour on 16%.

And there are also local level elections in the UK, where the Conservatives gained over 10% from their already impressive showing in 2004.

> In the English local elections held on Thursday the Conservatives got a projected 38% of the vote, the Lib Dems 28% and Labour 23%.
>
> In the 2004 European elections the Conservatives won 26.7% of votes, Labour 22.6%, UKIP 16.1%, the Lib Dems 14.9%, the Greens 6.3% and the BNP 4.9%.

The BBC also has a country-by-country breakdown here in text, and an animated version showing seat counts by country.

I blogged before about the good news from the Lebanon and India election results as well.

UPDATE: Western Experience links to a more recent overview from the Wall Street Journal.

Patients United gets advanced copy of Obama's health care plan

June 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

And the news so far is not good…

Hot Air has the story, along with a video of Amy Menefee from Patients United Now. (H/T Stop the ACLU)

The bill is HUGE, so right now conservative bloggers are scouring it to find out what's in it.

Here's what Ed Morrissey found so far in the bill, on pages 39-40:

> (1) IN GENERAL – A State shall keep an accurate accounting of all activities, receipts, and expenditures of any Gateway operating in such State and annually submit to the Secretary a report concerning such accountings.
>
> (2) INVESTIGATIONS – The Secretary may investigate the affairs of a Gateway, may examine the properties and records of a Gateway, and may require periodical reports in relation to activities undertaken by a Gateway. A Gateway shall fully cooperate in any investigation conducted under this paragraph.

Ed writes:

> "Gateway" means "provider," and this appears to do away with that pesky Fourth Amendment, which normally requires search warrants and probable cause to access the records of individuals and businesses. Not under ObamaCare! Now, everyone belongs to the government … rather than the other way around. George Orwell, call your office!

Amy Menefee's group is running this TV ad to help Americans to understand the perils of single-payer health care by learning from the Canadians, who are stuck in waiting so long that they die, or bite the bullet and come here to pay out of pocket. Patients United Now has the entire 167 page bill online and it is searchable, for those of you who would like to take a look at it.

My previous post on socialized medicine linked to even more horror stories from other countries with socialized medicine.

UPDATE: Commenter ECM sent me this story about how the CBO is not counting the costs of mandatory health care for the uninsured in their estimates, because they are charging it against private insurers!

> Typically, the CBO scores legislation only after it has been finalized. But in a May 27 issue brief, the CBO took a proactive stance on budgetary treatment of proposals to change the nation's health insurance system. A federal mandate requiring individuals to have a minimum amount of health insurance would not be counted as a government expense "because the federal government imposes

> a variety of mandates on private entities whose associated costs are not included in the budget," said CBO director Douglas Elmendorf in a blog explaining the brief.

NOT GOOD!

NASA study links solar activity and global warming

June 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Watts Up With That is reporting that a NASA study is FINALLY acknowledging that the Sun is responsible for past warming not man! (H/T Small Dead Animals)

Excerpt:

> A study from NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland looking at climate data over the past century has concluded that solar variation has made a significant impact on the Earth's climate. The report concludes that evidence for climate changes based on solar radiation can be traced back as far as the Industrial Revolution.
>
> Past research has shown that the sun goes through eleven year cycles. At the cycle's peak, solar activity occurring near sunspots is particularly intense, basking the Earth in solar heat.

But don't get too excited, because there is *no way* that a government-run agency is going to give back money to the taxpayer by hinting that there is no such thing as man-made global warming, regardless of scientific evidence.

> While the NASA study acknowledged the sun's influence on warming and cooling patterns, it then went badly off the tracks. Ignoring its own evidence, it returned to an argument that man had replaced the sun as the cause current warming patterns. Like many studies, this conclusion was based less on hard data and more on questionable correlations and inaccurate modeling techniques.

Don't forget to read my recent post which contains quotations from real environmentalists.

Commenter ECM has more

UPDATE: ECM sent me the following related stories:

- Record low day temperature in Green Bay for June 6 (52 degrees!)
- Dickinson, North Dakota sees first June snowfall in 60 years
- Scientists say "green transport" can emit more than non-green transport

Richard Dawkins debates John Lennox: Does God Exist?

June 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Audio of the debate is hosted by my buddy Brian Auten who operates the Apologetics 315 blog.

You can download the full MP3 audio here.

I listened to this debate and thought that Dawkins did well against Lennox. It is a very short debate. This is not a rigorous academic debate, as neither participant argued in a formal manner. Dawkins came across as firm, but gracious, and he does a lot better than Hitchens did in his recent debate against Craig.

This debate is recommended for beginners to get a bird's eye view of some of the issues before moving on to professional academic debates featuring analytical philosophers such as William Lane Craig, Walter Sinott-Armstrong, etc. They don't really go into complicated details.

My favorite academic debate is this one featuring William Lane Craig vs Walter Sinnott-Armstrong on the problems of evil and suffering. Another great debate featuring Bill Craig and Austin Dacey is here (video) and their re-match is here (audio).

A huge list of other William Lance Craig debates is here, courtesy of ChristianJR4.

Rich trust-fund leftists caught spying for Cuba

June 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Heritage Foundation has the story:

> Move over, Bill Ayers, you've got company. The arrest of retired State Department intelligence analyst Walter Kendall Myers has apparently uncovered yet another overweened Social Register Rebel in our midst. Myers and his wife, Gwendolyn, were arrested on June 5 and charged with being espionage agents for Fidel Castro for 30 years.
>
> …Kendall Myers got his PhD and later taught at Johns Hopkins/SAIS…
>
> Myers's mother's pedigree (AT&T money and top-drawer National Geographic Society founders) even topped Ayers's father's Commonwealth Edison/Chicago fortune. Both of these bad boys seemingly felt so bad about living large off the sweat of their ancestors that they became hard-core leftists and turned on their fellow Americans.

A bit more in a subsequent post:

> Cases like those of Defense Intelligence Agency analyst Ana Belen Montes, convicted in 2002 of spying for Cuba, or the five Cubans convicted in Miami in 2001 on 26 counts of spying for the regime, demonstrate the ability of the Cuban operatives to work in the U.S. to the detriment of U.S. national security and interests.

What about Barack Obama?

Barack Obama launched his presidential campaign from the house of his friend, Bill Ayers. He was raised by a rich grandmother and went to expensive private schools, where he took illegal drugs like cocaine. His mentor Frank Marshall Davis was a member of the Communist Party and a Soviet-sponsored activist. I've posted before about whether Obama is destroying the United States with his policies. He voted against missile defense, but he favors nuclear plants for Iran.

And we know that Obama is traipsing around with dictators in Venezuela and is even trying to normalize relations with Cuba. Who cares about the torture and unlawful imprisonment that goes on in Cuba and Iran? Obama's response to North Korea hasn't been inspiring.

CRISIS! Evaluating the leaked Democrat health care bill

June 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Keith Hennessey is the go-to guy for analyzing economic policies. He takes a look at the leaked draft of the health care bill that I blogged about before. He lists 15 things you need to know about the draft bill.

Below I've listed a few of the scariest parts.

Mandatory coverage

> The Kennedy-Dodd bill would create an individual mandate requiring you to buy a "qualified" health insurance plan, as defined by the government. If you don't have "qualified" health insurance for a given month, you will pay a new Federal tax. Incredibly, the amount and structure of this new tax is left to the discretion of the Secretaries of Treasury and Health and Human Services (HHS), whose only guidance is "to establish the minimum practicable amount that can accomplish the goal of enhancing participation in qualifying coverage (as so defined)." The new *Medical Advisory Council* (see #3D) could exempt classes of people from this new tax. To avoid this tax, you would have to report your health insurance information for each month of the prior year to the Secretary of HHS, along with "any such other information as the Secretary may prescribe."

Employer mandate

> The bill would also create an employer mandate. Employers would have to offer insurance to their employees. Employers would have to pay at least a certain percentage (TBD) of the premium, and at least a certain dollar amount (TBD). Any employer that did not would pay a new tax. Again, the amount and structure of the tax is left to the discretion of the Secretaries of Treasury and HHS.

Mandatory services that I don't use

> A qualified plan would have to cover "essential health benefits," as defined by a new *Medical Advisory Council (MAC)*, appointed by the Secretary of Health and Human Services… The MAC would have to include items and services in at least the following categories: ambulatory patient services, emergency services, hospitalization, **maternity and new born care**, medical and surgical, **mental health**, prescription drugs, rehab and lab services, preventive/wellness services, **pediatric services**, and anything else the MAC thought appropriate.

That's just redistribution of wealth for elective services, right there. I wonder whether support for contraceptives and abortion would also be required.

Premiums not related to lifestyle risks

> Health insurance plans could not charge higher premiums for risky behaviors: "Such rate shall not vary by health status-related factors, … or any other factor not described in paragraph (1)." Smokers, drinkers, drug users, and those in terrible physical shape would all have their premiums subsidized by the healthy.

Guaranteed issue and renewal

> All health insurance would be required to have guaranteed issue and renewal, modified community rating, no exclusions for pre-existing conditions, no lifetime or annual limits on benefits, and family policies would have to cover "children" up to age 26.
>
> …Guaranteed issue and renewal combined with modified community rating would dramatically increase premiums for the overwhelming majority of those Americans who now have private health insurance. New Jersey is the best example of health insurance mandates gone wild. In the name of protecting their citizens, premiums are extremely high to cover the cross-subsidization of those who are uninsurable.

Massive wealth redistribution, especially to Democrats

> People from 150% of poverty up to 500% (!!) would get their health insurance subsidized (on a sliding scale). If this were in effect in 2009, a family of four with income of $110,000 would get a small subsidy. The bill does not indicate the source of funds to finance these subsidies.
>
> …People in high cost areas (e.g., New York City, Boston, South Florida, Chicago, Los Angeles) would get much bigger subsidies than those in low cost areas (e.g., much of the rest of the country, especially in rural areas). The subsidies are calculated as a percentage of the "reference premium," which is determined based on the cost of plans sold in that particular geographic area.

Hennessey then goes on to explain all of the implications of his 15 points. READ IT ALL.

BONUS

Verum Serum has 2 posts up where they examine:

Comparing patient outcomes for cancer treatment in the USA vs Europe

Related chart:

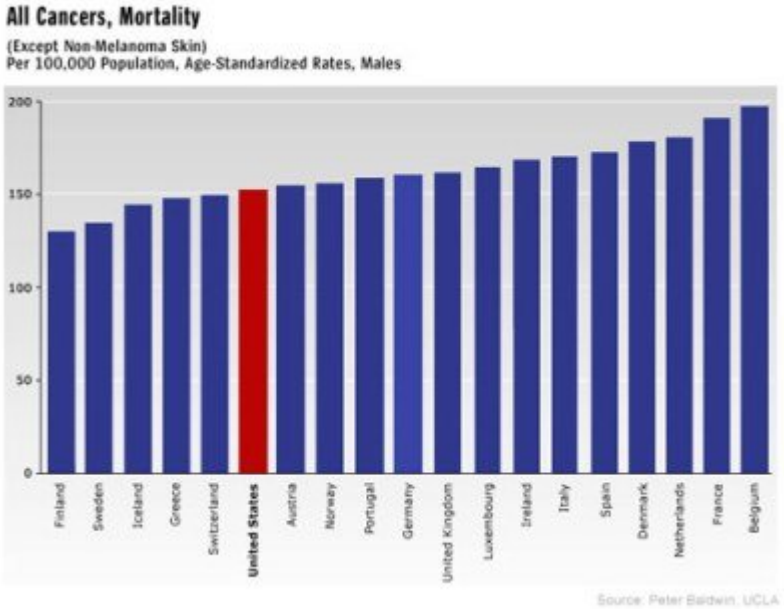

Cancer mortality rates

AND:

Obama’s plan to pass the health care bill unilaterally, under a bi-partisan smokescreen

They have a plan to bypass the likely Republican filibuster. It’s a done deal.

Why do Democrats live far beyond their means?

June 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republicans typically enjoy massive support from people who actually know how the world works, namely, small business owners, investors and entrepreneurs. But do Barack Obama and his new Supreme Court nominee know how the world works?

Sonia Sotomayor

Let's look at Obama's Supreme Court nominee first.

Here is what she says:

> I would hope that a wise **Latina woman** with the richness of her experience would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a **white male** who hasn't lived that life.

So she discriminates against people based on sex and race. There are words for people who discriminate against others based on sex and race.

The American Thinker reports on how she lives within her means: (H/T Commenter ECM)

> Sotomayor's annual earnings come to $196,000 a year ($170,000 a year as an appeals judge and $26,000 for part-time teaching). She has served as an appeals judge for 17 years. This service was preceded by lengthy tenure at a corporate law firm of Pavia and Harcourt, where she was a partner, and presumably was well compensated.
> Yet after a career that has spanned 25 years, Ms Sotomayor only has one thousand dollars in net savings. As reported in the *New York Post*, Sotomayor's bank account holds $31,985. Her credit cards debts are $15,823, and she has $15,000 in unpaid dental bills. That leaves her with $1,162. Sotomayor's total assets, revealed as $708,068, consist almost entirely of equity in her Manhattan apartment.

And here is what it means for us:

> If confirmed as a Supreme Court justice, Ms Sotomayor will be ruling on numerous cases that involve investors, savers, corporate profits, business regulation, and related free-market issues…. the fact that Ms Sotomayor, after so many years of highly paid professional work, has no savings or investments and no experience or apparent "empathy" with savers or investors, should be highly troubling to the tens of millions of Americans who do have investments, 401Ks, and personal savings.

And here is how this has affected her previous rulings:

> In one of her most important rulings (as reported in the *New York Times*), Sotomayor ruled that corporations must address environmental concerns in the

> most radical manner without consideration of the cost. If one particle of pollutant remains to be removed, even at the cost of bankrupting all of the companies in the S&P 500 index, that particle must be removed. If a small business has failed to purchase the most advanced equipment available to address environmental concerns, even if the price of that equipment is one hundred times the revenue of the business in question, the equipment must be purchased. That is how much "empathy" we can expect from Judge Sotomayor.

If she is confirmed, she will probably hurt our free market capitalist system, and the liberties grounded by it. The more that the court hurts business and commerce with judicial activism, the more we lose our jobs, our incomes and our liberty itself.

Barack Obama

Now, let's take a look at how Obama lives. First of all, it's well known that Obama was raised with a silver spoon in his mouth and went to all the best private schools, where he snorted expensive cocaine. And he awarded massive taxpayer grants to the hospital where his wife worked after her salary was *nearly tripled*.

The National Review reports:

> One of Obama's Earmark Requests Was for the Hospital That Employs Michelle Obama.
>
> Dan Riehl notes, via Amanda Carpenter, that in the list of earmarks he requested, $1 million was requested for the construction of a new hospital pavilion at the University Of Chicago. The request was put in in 2006.
>
> You know who works for the University of Chicago Hospital?
>
> Michelle Obama. She's vice president of community affairs.
>
> As Byron noted, "In 2006, the Chicago Tribune reported that Mrs. Obama's compensation at the University of Chicago Hospital, where she is a vice president for community affairs, jumped from $121,910 in 2004, just before her husband was elected to the Senate, to $316,962 in 2005, just after he took office."

The NY Daily News reports on how well the Obamas live within their means. (H/T Sweetness and Light)

> A close examination of their finances shows that the Obamas were living off lines of credit along with other income for several years until 2005, when Obama's book royalties came through and Michelle received her 260% pay raise at the University of Chicago. This was also the year Obama started serving in the U.S. Senate.
>
> In April 1999, they purchased a Chicago condo and obtained a mortgage for $159,250. In May 1999, they took out a line of credit for $20,750. Then, in 2002, they refinanced the condo with a $210,000 mortgage, which means they took out about $50,000 in equity. Finally, in 2004, they took out another line of credit for $100,000 on top of the mortgage.

> Tax returns for 2004 reveal $14,395 in mortgage deductions. If we assume an effective interest rate of 6%, then they owed about $240,000 on a home they purchased for about $159,250.
>
> This means they spent perhaps $80,000 beyond their income from 1999 to 2004.
>
> The Obama family apparently had little or no savings during this period since there was virtually no taxable interest shown on their tax returns.
>
> These numbers clearly show the Obamas were living beyond their means and they might have suffered financially during the decline in housing prices had they relied on taking ever larger amounts of equity from their home to pay the bills.

And what did the Obamas learn from this?

> But in 2005, Obama's book sales soared and the royalties poured in. Michelle explained, "It was like Jack and his magic beans."
>
> Without those magic beans, the Obama family would have eventually suffered the consequences of too much debt.
>
> President Obama has never faced consequences in his private life when it comes to managing money. He always had enough money simply by borrowing more and more. And just when things got tight, those magic beans came along to save the day.

I guess this explains Barack Obama's fiscal policy and his surprise at the consequent surge in unemployment. But he can count on his new judge to back him to the hilt in all of his unconstitutional interventions in the free market – neither of them knows the slightest thing about saving and investing… just borrowing and spending.

Meet two conservative women who are better than Sarah Palin

June 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed a story up at Hot Air about that Hollywood idiot David Letterman making fun of Sarah Palin, and it occurred to me to remind my readers that *we have better women* who can represent our views, among them Michele Bachmann and Marsha Blackburn.

First, let me just say that Sarah Palin is NOT conservative on issues like private schools and vouchers, as well on global warming. While Michele Bachmann took time off to homeschool a bunch of her children, (she has 5 natural-born and 23 foster children), we all know about Palin's weaknesses with her children.

Let's see what real conservative women can do.

Representative Michele Bachmann

Michele Bachmann

Her official blog is here.

Her video clips are here.

Here is a sample video – she wants to drill in ANWR so that we can all pay less for gas. (If you click on the video to go to YouTube, they've got an HQ button for high quality!)

Here is another sample video – she can defend capitalism and the rule of law as articulately as Thomas Sowell or Walter Williams might. (If you click on the video to go to YouTube, they've got an HQ button for high quality!)

Her most recent issue is trying to stop the Democrats from giving money to ACORN while they are charged with criminal offenses, such as voter fraud. Here she is speaking with Glenn Beck on that very issue.

Representative Marsha Blackburn

Marsha Blackburn

Her official blog is here.

And here is a recent video clip where she exposed Al Gore's financial reasons for supporting cap and trade.

I noticed that the Heritage Foundation featured a video clip of her today regarding health care.

Could the building blocks of life have emerged spontaneously on the early Earth?

June 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The origin of life

There are two problems related to the origin of the first living cell, on atheism:

1. The problem of getting the building blocks needed to create life – i.e. the amino acids
2. The problem of creating the functional sequences of amino acids and proteins that can support the minimal operations of a simple living cell

Normally, I concede the first problem and grant the atheist all the building blocks he needs. This is because step 2 is impossible. There is no way, on atheism, to form the sequences of amino acids that will fold up into proteins, and then to form the sequences of proteins that can be used to form everything else in the cell, including the DNA itself. But that's tomorrow's topic.

Today, let's take a look at the problems with step 1.

The problem of getting the building blocks of life

Now you may have heard that some scientists managed to spark some gasses to generate most of the 20 amino acids found in living systems. These experiments are called the "Miller-Urey" experiments.

The IDEA center has a nice summary of origin-of-life research that explains a few of the main problems with step 1.

Miler and Urey used the wrong gasses:

> Miller's experiment requires a reducing methane and ammonia atmosphere,[11, 12] however geochemical evidence says the atmosphere was hydrogen, water, and carbon dioxide (non-reducing).[15, 16] The only amino acid produced in a such an atmosphere is glycine (and only when the hydrogen content is unreasonably high), and could not form the necessary building blocks of life.[11]

Miller and Urey didn't account for UV of molecular instability:

> Not only would UV radiation destroy any molecules that were made, but their own short lifespans would also greatly limit their numbers. For example, at 100ºC (boiling point of water), the half lives of the nucleic acids Adenine and Guanine are 1 year, uracil is 12 years, and cytozine is 19 days[20] (nucleic acids and other important proteins such as chlorophyll and hemoglobin have never been synthesized in origin-of-life type experiments[19]).

Miller and Urey didn't account for molecular oxygen:

> We all have know ozone in the upper atmosphere protects life from harmful UV radiation. However, ozone is composed of oxygen which is the very gas that Stanley Miller-type experiments avoided, for it prevents the synthesis of organic molecules like the ones obtained from the experiments! Pre-biotic synthesis is in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. The chemistry does not work if there is oxygen because the atmosphere would be non-reducing, but if there is no UV-light-blocking oxygen (i.e. ozone – O_3) in the atmosphere, the amino acids would be quickly destroyed by extremely high amounts of UV light (which would have been 100 times stronger than today on the early earth).[20, 21, 22] This radiation could destroy methane within a few tens of years,[23] and atmospheric ammonia within 30,000 years.[15]

And there were three other problems too:

> At best the processes would likely create a dilute "thin soup,"[24] destroyed by meteorite impacts every 10 million years.[20, 25] This severely limits the time available to create pre-biotic chemicals and allow for the OOL.

> Chemically speaking, life uses only "left-handed" ("L") amino acids and "right-handed" ("R)" genetic molecules. This is called "chirality," and any account of the origin of life must somehow explain the origin of chirality. Nearly all chemical reactions produce "racemic" mixtures–mixtures with products that are 50% L and 50% R.

Two more problems are not mentioned in the article. A non-peptide bond anywhere in the chain will ruin the chain. You need around 200 amino acids to make a protein. If any of the bonds is not a peptide bond, the chain will not work in a living system. Additionally, the article does not mention the need for the experimenter to *intervene* in order to prevent interfering cross-reactions that would prevent the amino acids from forming.

The progress of science

As science has progressed, the discoveries have proved out the need for a Creator and Designer in every area – the big bang, cosmic, galactic and stellar fine-tuning, the Cambrian explosion, etc…. and even the origin of life.

> "More than 30 years of experimentation on the origin of life in the fields of chemical and molecular evolution have led to a better perception of the immensity of the problem of the origin of life on Earth rather than to its solution. At present all discussions on principal theories and experiments in the field either end in stalemate or in a confession of ignorance. New lines of thinking and experimentation must be tried."
>
> (Dose, Klaus, "The Origin of Life: More Questions Than Answers," Interdisciplinary Science Reviews, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1988, p.348.)

Meanwhile, atheists are left to have blind faith that the progress scientists have made during decades of research will be miraculously overturned by new evidence that their

beloved unobservable Flying Spaghetti Monster, (peas be upon him), did it. Hey! Don't blaspheme against the non-supernatural powers of his noodly appendage! (Two Ph.Ds in biology will not save you from the wrath of the Darwoid cultists!)

To see how bad this gets for atheists, watch this video where Dawkins says that unobservable aliens evolved somewhere else and then seeded the Earth with life. He has *no evidence* that these aliens did evolve (no fossil record), and even worse, he does not know *whether they even exist*. Nevertheless, that is the state of atheism today – an unobservable Flying Spaghetti Monster evolved somewhere else and seeded the Earth with life.

What else could have happened?

Further study

One of my favorite resources on the origin of life is this interview from the University of California with former atheist and origin of life researcher Dean Kenyon. Kenyon, a professor of Biology at San Francisco State University, wrote the textbook on "chemical evolution", which is the view that chemicals can arrange themselves in order to create the first living cell, without intervention.

This interview from the University of California with another origin of life researcher, Charles Thaxton, is also one of my favorites.

You'll need Quicktime to see the videos, or buy the videos from ARN. (Kenyon, Thaxton) I have both of them – they rock!

Debate: June 11, 2009 in Toronto: Tony Costa vs. Habeeb Alli

June 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity vs. Islam debate

Tony Costa e-mailed me to notify my readers in Ontario about a debate scheduled for this Thursday!

Details here.

- Date: June 11, 2009 @ 7 PM
- Place: 4140 Finch Avenue East, Scarborough, Ontario
- Price: FREE!

For some background, check out my post on the doctrine of the Trinity.

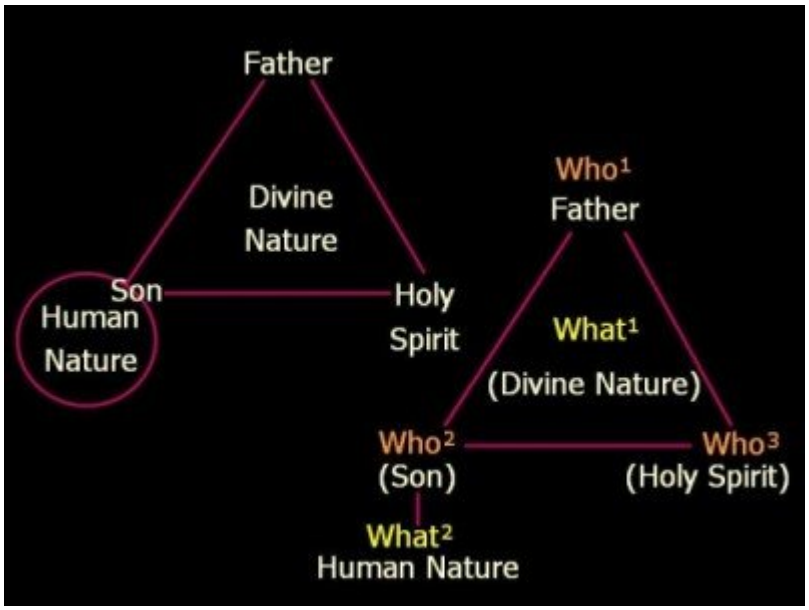

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity

Other debates on Christianity and Islam featuring William Lane Craig

Opponent	Debate Topic	Audio	Video
Jamal Badawi	The Concept Of God In Islam and Christianity	Audio	Video
Shabir Ally	Did Jesus Rise From The Dead?	Audio	Video
Shabir Ally	The Concept Of God In Islam and Christianity	Audio	Video
Shabir Ally	Who Is The Real Jesus?	Audio	Video

Courtesy of ChristianJR4 who maintains a full list of Bill Craig debates here. I helped to sponsor the last 3 of those debates!

Will Al Gore make billions if cap and trade passes?

June 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this story over on Steve Milloy's Green Hell blog.

He writes:

> Al Gore's venture capital firm has invested $6 million in a software company that stands to make billions of dollars from cap-and-trade regulation — further fueling controversy that Gore lied about his profiteering from cap-and-trade to Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) and the House Energy and Environment Subcommittee during testimony in April.
>
> Hara Software sells software to help track greenhouse gas emissions. The market for such software is now about $2.5 billion dollars in size, and is expected to grow by a factor of ten to $25 billion if cap-and-trade legislation is enacted, according to Hara CEO Amit Chatterjee.
>
> …Gore is also under fire for lying to Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA) at the same congressional hearing about his relationship with Goldman Sachs.

My post featuring the video of Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn grilling Al Gore on his investments is here.

Round-up of recent Republican legislative initiatives

June 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tom Coburn

The Maritime Sentry had this post about Senator Tom Coburn's Patient's Choice Act.

> "The Patients' Choice Act of 2009," transforms health care in America by strengthening the relationship between the patient and the doctor; using choice and competition rather than rationing and restrictions to contain costs; and ensuring universal, affordable health care for all Americans.

Tom Coburn is a medical doctor, not an ACORN lawyer who sues banks to force them to make risky loans. Commenter ECM sent me this article he wrote for the left-wing Huffington Post, in which he explains his new bill.

Marsha Blackburn

Congresswoman Blackburn urged the Senate not to pass the Democrat health care bill, citing the experience gleaned from Tennessee's own bankrupt single-payer system.

> In 1995, the state implemented TennCare, a health program modeled after Medicaid. While it covered more uninsured adults, the budget-busting program grew at a 1.5-percent annual rate, with costs skyrocketing from $2.5 billion in 1995 to $8 billion by 2004, Blackburn said.
>
> "This program started to consume every new dollar that was generated in the state," Blackburn said. Additionally, Tennessee residents who already had private health insurance were dropping their plans to get on the free health program, she said. "We started hearing stories of individuals trying to buy 'uninsurable' letters so they could get on TennCare."
>
> By 2005, Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen cut 170,000 adults from the program and reduced benefits for thousands more to get a handle on the soaring costs. "Our experience with trying to do universal coverage ended up being a disaster," he recently told the AP.

Don't forget about Mitt Romney's socialized health care plan in Massachusetts, which is also bankrupt. When you make something "free" demand skyrockets, and the people who are being taxed to pay for it stop working or leave. That's reality.

Lamar Alexander

Senator Lamar Alexander introduced a bill last week to distribute the government's newly acquired stock in GM and Chrysler to taxpaying Americans.

> "Instead of the Treasury owning 60 percent of shares in the new GM and 8 percent of Chrysler, you would own them, if you were one of about 120 million individuals who paid taxes on April 15," Alexander explained. "This is the fastest way to get the stock out of the hands of Washington and back into the hands of

> the American people in the marketplace where it belongs. The stock certificates would be in your name, not that of your government."
>
> …"It would be helpful to GM and Chrysler if they had 120 million Americans interested in their success."

And Senator Mike Johanns urges oversight on the TARP money already redistributed to the Obama's union special interests, who desperately need it to pay for their underfunded pensions. In contrast, Democrat Barney Frank called GM's CEO to complain about a GM warehouse closing in his home state. (Recall that Obama called the mayor of Detorit to assure him that GM would not be moving their headquarters out of Detroit). The Road to Serfdom.

Mike Pence

Congressman Mike Pence introduces the American Energy Act, a bill to increase clean domestic energy production.

The bill has 4 main objectives:

- Increase production of American-made energy in an environmentally-sound manner.
- Promote new, clean and renewable sources of energy such as nuclear, clean-coal-technology, wind and solar energy.
- Encourage greater efficiency and conservation by extending tax incentives for energy efficiency and rewarding development of greater conservation techniques and new energy sources.
- Cut red-tape and reduce frivolous litigation.

Good idea since gas prices are up $1.00 per gallon from the beginning of the year.

Bobby Jindal

Bobby Jindal, my pick in 2012 for President, is championing EIGHT bills to get tough on criminals.

Here are two of them:

- House Bill 445 will, as reported by the *Baton Rouge Advocate*, "suspend a license for two years the first time a driver refuses to take a Breathalyzer test [and] a subsequent refusal would strip a driver's license for four years."
- Senate Bill 166 would, as stated in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, "change the offense of driving with a suspended license for a previous DWI-related conviction from a traffic law violation to a violation of the criminal code."

The rest are here, addressing child abuse, child welfare, sexual misconduct by teachers, monitoring of sex offenders, and more!

Glenn Beck compares Alaska and California

June 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Commenter ECM spotted this video. This is something that we all need to watch twice.

If I had to rate candidates, I would rate Obama as an F, McCain as a C, and Sarah Palin as a A-. She only had a few flaws, and we missed out on her superior policies because of the left-wing media and an economically illiterate electorate.

Remember why people voted against Sarah Palin?

We could have had a fiscal conservative that would have turned around the Democrat-caused recession. But many people believed the media and the comedians instead of a proven voting record and a sound balance sheet. So remember to blame the left-wing media if you lose your job and your electricity costs go through the roof!

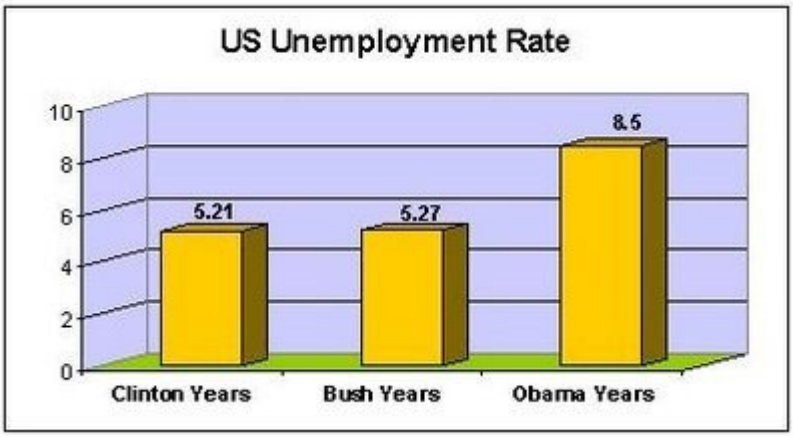

US Unemployment Rate

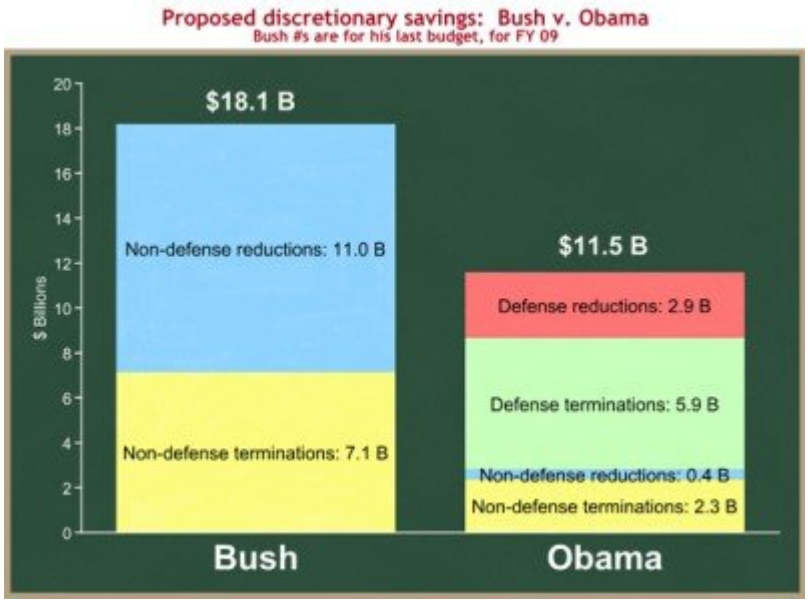

Who cut spending more? Bush or Obama?

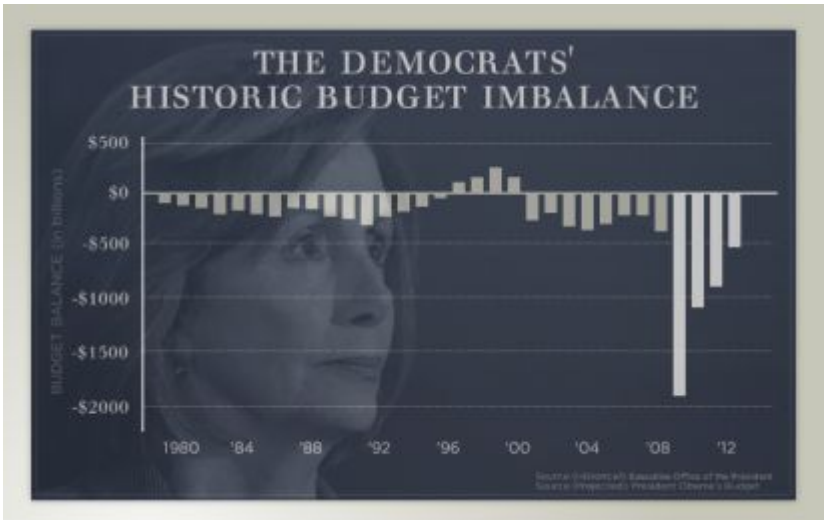

Budget Deficit

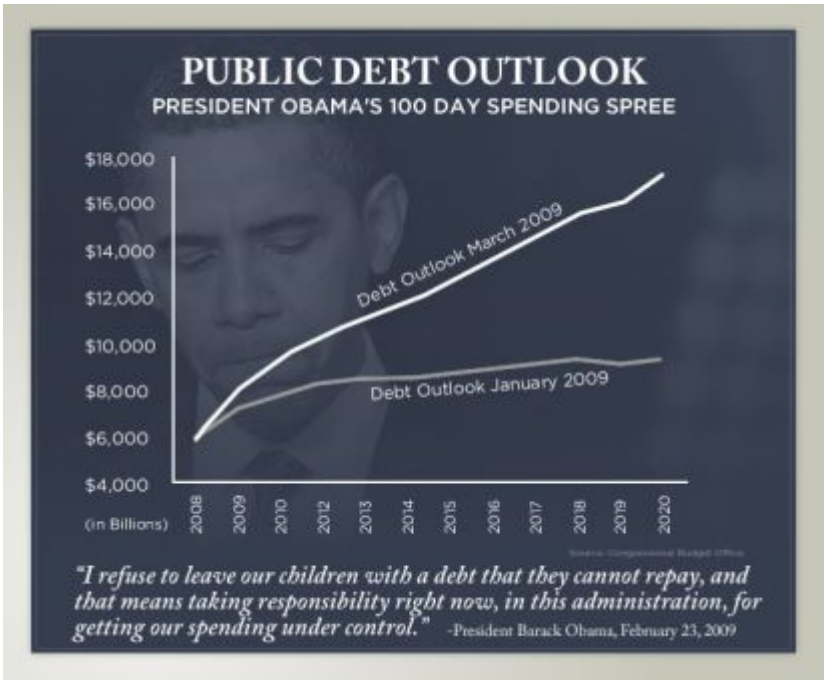

Public Debt Outlook

I am worried about the future… we should have elected Sarah Palin.

Could life have emerged spontaneously on the early Earth?

June 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last time we saw how the progress of science in the last 30 years has proved that the environment of the early Earth would not have allowed the emergence of the basic building blocks of life. This time, let's allow the atheist to assume the building blocks were created by the noodly appendage of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, (peas be upon him), and see whether it's possible for the blocks to chain themselves together to make a living cell withinin a reasonable amount of time (400 million years, say).

For this post, I will be referencing an article by Stephen C. Meyer, which he published in the Catholic journal "First Things". I chose this article deliberately because it was written at the level of an ordinary layman, so we could all understand everything well enough to feel confident explaining it to our neighbors. All unattributed quotes are from this article.

The combatants

The contest over origins features two opposing points of view:

- A Creator and Designer is responsible for the origin of life
- Matter, chance and long periods of time are sufficient to explain the origin of life

What's at stake?

Atheistic Cornell University professor Will Provine explains what logically follows from naturalistic evolution:

> There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either. What an unintelligible idea.

So, the stakes are high.

Why doubt the apparent design in nature?

There are two main reasons why atheists doubt the appearance of design in nature:

- David Hume's argument against miracles (refuted at the highest levels by non-Christian scholars)
- Charles Darwin's theory of evolution (refuted by the Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, the natural limits of biological change, the incompatibility of naturalistic evolution and rationality, etc.)

Minimal life functionality requires information

In order for a living organism to support life, it must be able to perform minimal functions:

- store information
- transmit information
- edit information
- use that information to regulate metabolic processes

There must be sufficient information inside the cells of that organism to support those functions. How does this information exist in the cell, and where did it come from?

Atheism is a pre-scientific worldview

Meyer describes the primitive superstitions of tribes of atheists living in primitive, pre-scientific cultures:

> …in the 1870s and 1880s scientists assumed that devising an explanation for the origin of life would be fairly easy….they assumed that life was essentially a rather simple substance called protoplasm that could be easily constructed by combining and recombining simple chemicals such as carbon dioxide, oxygen, and nitrogen. …just as salt could be produced spontaneously by adding sodium to chloride, so… could a living cell be produced by adding together several chemical constituents and then allowing spontaneous chemical reactions to produce the simple protoplasmic substance that they assumed to be the essence of life.

Atheists believe in all kinds of primitive pre-scientific myths, like the eternal universe, etc., which the progress of science has falsified. Can the progress of science falsify the atheistic superstitions about the origin of life?

The Oparin-Haldane hypothesis

Atheists began to panic in the early 20th century as discoveries began to pile up confirming the that the entire physical universe, and time itself, was created by a supernatural force that existed transcendentally, independent of matter, energy, space and time. (See here for a listing of 6 of these discoveries from the progress of science). Atheists decided that they'd better get involved in this "science" thing that the Christians had started.

Meyer reports on one of their first groundless speculations:

> During the 1920s and 1930s a more sophisticated version of this so–called "chemical evolutionary theory" was proposed by a Russian biochemist named Alexander I. Oparin…. Oparin, like his nineteenth–century predecessors, suggested that life could have first evolved as the result of a series of chemical reactions.

It was hoped that that the Flying Spaghetti Monster would appear to his true believers and ground this blind speculation, allowing atheists to continue in their flight from rationality and moral obligations.

The Miller-Urey experiment

Pre-biotic synthesis (see below) produces amino acids, which are the first step in explaining the origin of the simplest life, on atheism:

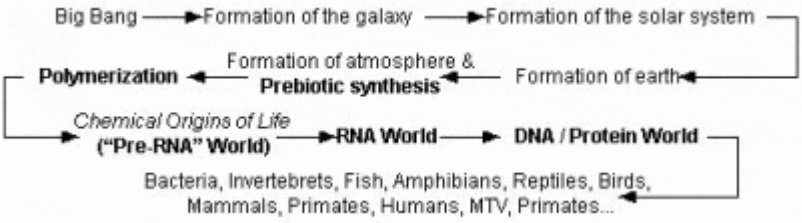

How did life begin?

As we saw last time, the Miller-Urey experiments that were designed to produce the building blocks of life (amino acids) were horribly flawed and did not reflect the conditions that would have existed on the early Earth.

I'll summarize the problems with the experiment:

- the gasses were used in the experiment were not those present on the early Earth
- molecular oxygen was excluded from the experiment
- Harmful UV radiation was filtered out by the experimenter intervention
- interfering cross-reactions were prevented by experimenter intervention

Other problems:

- extinction events, such as meteorite impacts, were excluded not considered
- the chirality problem (left-handed amino acids, right-handed sugars) was not considered
- the problem of getting all peptide bonds was not considered

This experiment, though flawed, still exists in biology textbooks today, along side faked photographs of peppered moths and doctored drawings of embryos. All must praise the Flying Spaghetti Monster, and at taxpayer expense!

The problem of biological information

To create life, you need to sequence amino acids into proteins, and sequence the nucleotides on DNA strands.

Meyer explains:

> To form a protein, amino acids must link together to form a chain. Yet amino acids form functioning proteins only when they adopt very specific sequential arrangements, rather like properly sequenced letters in an English sentence. Thus, amino acids alone do not make proteins, any more than letters alone make words, sentences, or poetry. In both cases, the sequencing of the constituent parts determines the function (or lack of function) of the whole.

> …As it turns out, specific regions of the DNA molecule called coding regions have the same property of "sequence specificity" or "specified complexity" that characterizes written codes, linguistic texts, and protein molecules. Just as the letters in the alphabet of a written language may convey a particular message

> depending on their arrangement, so too do the sequences of nucleotide bases (the A's, T's, G's, and C's) inscribed along the spine of a DNA molecule convey a precise set of instructions for building proteins within the cell. The nucleotide bases in DNA function in precisely the same way as symbols in a machine code. In each case, the arrangement of the characters determines the function of the sequence as a whole…. In the case of DNA, the complex but precise sequencing of the four nucleotide bases (A, T, G, and C) stores and transmits the information necessary to build proteins.
>
> …As Bernd–Olaf Kuppers recently stated, "The problem of the origin of life is clearly basically equivalent to the problem of the origin of biological information."

How do atheists account for this biological information?

Atheistic superstitions about the biological information

Le's take a look at the atheist's faith-based explanations of the origin of life: chance, law and self-organization.

For the first one, let's calculate the odds of building a protein composed of a functional chain of 100 amino acids, by chance. (Think of a meaningful English sentence built with 100 scrabble letters, held together with glue)

1. Chance:

- BONDING: You need 99 peptide bonds between the 100 amino acids. The odds of getting a peptide bond is 50%. The probability of building a chain of one hundred amino acids in which all linkages involve peptide bonds is roughly (1/2)^99 or 1 chance in 10^30.
- CHIRALITY: You need 100 left-handed amino acids. The odds of getting a left-handed amino acid is 50%. The probability of attaining at random only L–amino acids in a hypothetical peptide chain one hundred amino acids long is (1/2)^100 or again roughly 1 chance in 10^30.
- SEQUENCE: You need to choose the correct amino acid for each of the 100 links. The odds of getting the right one are 1 in 20. Even if you allow for some variation, the odds of getting a functional sequence is (1/20)^100 or 1 in 10^65.

The final probability of getting a functional protein composed of 100 amino acids is 1 in 10^125. Even if you fill the universe with pre-biotic soup, and react amino acids at Planck time (very fast!) for 14 billion years, you are probably not going to get even 1 such protein. And you need at least 100 of them for minimal life functions, plus DNA and RNA.

Research performed by Doug Axe at Cambridge University, and published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Molecular Biology, has shown that the number of functional amino acid sequences is tiny:

> Doug Axe's research likewise studies genes that it turns out show great evidence of design. Axe studied the sensitivities of protein function to mutations. In these "mutational sensitivity" tests, Dr. Axe mutated certain amino acids in various

> proteins, or studied the differences between similar proteins, to see how mutations or changes affected their ability to function properly. He found that protein function was highly sensitive to mutation, and that proteins are not very tolerant to changes in their amino acid sequences. In other words, when you mutate, tweak, or change these proteins slightly, they stopped working. In one of his papers, he thus concludes that "functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences," and that functional protein folds "may be as low as 1 in 10^77."

The problem of forming DNA by sequencing nucleotides faces similar difficulties. And remember, mutation and selection cannot explain the origin of the *first* sequence, because mutation and selection require replication, which does not exist until that first living cell is *already in place*.

2. Law:

The idea here is that components, such as nucleotides, might have special bonding affinities that might cause them to bond together spontaneously into functional sequences. Like if certain SCRABBLE tiles had an affinity for certain other tiles that caused them to bond together whenever they met.

Meyer writes:

> Consider what would happen if the individual nucleotide "letters" in a DNA molecule *did* interact by chemical necessity with each other. Every time adenine (A) occurred in a growing genetic sequence, it would likely drag thymine (T) along with it. Every time cytosine (C) appeared, guanine (G) would follow. As a result, the DNA message text would be peppered with repeating sequences of A's followed by T's and C's followed by G's.

3. Self-organization:

The idea here is that some spontaneous order might arise due to some physical force, just like rocks sort themselves by size in a rock agitator because of gravity.

Meyer writes:

> …just as magnetic letters can be combined and recombined in any way to form various sequences on a metal surface, so too can each of the four bases A, T, G, and C attach to any site on the DNA backbone with equal facility, making all sequences equally probable (or improbable). The same type of chemical bond occurs between the bases and the backbone regardless of which base attaches. All four bases are acceptable; none is preferred. In other words, differential bonding affinities do not account for the sequencing of the bases. Because these same facts hold for RNA molecules, researchers who speculate that life began in an "RNA world" have also failed to solve the sequencing problem…

Understanding what creates information

The bottom line is that in order for software code, or even English letters, to be functional, it needs to defy ordering mechanisms. Biological sequences are functional for

the same reason that software code or English text is functional – because some intelligent agent *chose* an irregular sequence of characters in order to achieve a specific purpose. Look at the letters in this post – they are not ORDERED by physical laws. They are SELECTED by an intelligent agent.

Meyer writes:

> To see the distinction between order and information, compare the sequence "ABABABABAB ABAB" to the sequence "Time and tide wait for no man." The first sequence is repetitive and ordered, but not complex or informative.

What causes specified, complex sequences?

> …the information contained in an English sentence or computer software does not derive from the chemistry of the ink or the physics of magnetism, but from a source extrinsic to physics and chemistry altogether. Indeed, in both cases, the message transcends the properties of the medium… Our experience with information–intensive systems (especially codes and languages) indicates that such systems always come from an intelligent source…

And this is what everybody means by "intelligent design". This design inference came from the progress of science. The more we discovered about the cell, the more nature pointed towards a creative, designing intelligence. The only option left to atheists now is *blind faith that the Flying Spaghetti Monster will swoop in and undo the progress of science over the last 100 years.* Good luck with that, atheists!

Further study

One of my favorite resources on the origin of life is this interview from the University of California with former atheist and origin of life researcher Dean Kenyon. Kenyon, a professor of Biology at San Francisco State University, wrote the textbook on "chemical evolution", which is the view that chemicals can arrange themselves in order to create the first living cell, without intervention.

This interview from the University of California with another origin of life researcher, Charles Thaxton, is also one of my favorites.

You'll need Quicktime to see the videos, or buy the videos from ARN. (Kenyon, Thaxton) I have both of them – they rock!

Obama releases terrorists to Bermuda, forces FBI to mirandize captured terrorists

June 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Releasing captured terrorists

The President of the United States is releasing capture terrorists, known allies of Al-Quaeda and the Taliban, so that they can attack us again.

ABC News reports: (H/T Hot Air)

> The Obama administration put out some seemingly mixed messages on the Uighur transfer, saying that their release to Bermuda would make the US safer, while insisting the government would guard against their travel to the US.
>
> An Obama administration source told ABC News that "the Uighurs will not be able to travel to the United States unless the U.S. government consents in advance."

See, the thing is, during Clinton's 2 terms, the United States was attacked abroad four times, so terrorists don't have to be in the country to hurt us. So restricting them from traveling to the US solves *nothing*, since they can travel somewhere else and attack us there.

The UK Times says that the British, who own Bermuda, are furious that weren't consulted:

> The British Government responded with ill-disguised fury tonight to the news that four Chinese Uighurs freed from Guantanamo Bay had been flown for resettlement on the Atlantic tourist paradise of Bermuda.
>
> The four arrived on Bermuda in the early hours, celebrating the end of seven years of detention after learning that they were to be accepted as guest workers.
>
> But it appears that the Government of Bermuda failed to consult with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the decision to take in the Uighurs – whose return is demanded by Beijing – and it could now be forced to send them back to Cuba or risk a grave diplomatic crisis.
>
> Bermuda, Britain's oldest remaining dependency, is one of 14 overseas territories that come under the sovereignty of the United Kingdom, which retains direct responsibility for such matters as foreign policy and security.

National security you can believe in! Leftists hates the good and love the evil, as Evan Sayet explained.

Forcing the FBI to give terrorists miranda rights

But Obama the hawk is not just releasing terrorists so they can attack our assets abroad. He's also forcing the FBI to give miranda rights to terrorists captured on the battlefield – to make sure they don't reveal their nice plans to any sneaky counter-terrorism experts.

The Weekly Standard had the scoop: (H/T Michelle Malkin)

> When 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammad was captured on March 1, 2003, he was not cooperative. “I’ll talk to you guys after I get to New York and see my lawyer,” he said, according to former CIA Director George Tenet.
>
> Of course, KSM did not get a lawyer until months later, after his interrogation was completed, and Tenet says that the information the CIA obtained from him disrupted plots and saved lives. “I believe none of these successes would have happened if we had had to treat KSM like a white-collar criminal — read him his Miranda rights and get him a lawyer who surely would have insisted that his client simply shut up,” Tenet wrote in his memoirs.
>
> If Tenet is right, it’s a good thing KSM was captured before Barack Obama became president. For, the Obama Justice Department has quietly ordered FBI agents to read Miranda rights to high value detainees captured and held at U.S. detention facilities in Afghanistan, according a senior Republican on the House Intelligence Committee.

And my friend Andrew e-mailed me this story from Fox News, which has more details.

MUST SEE! Michele Bachmann goes nuclear against gangster government!

June 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

UPDATE: For all the people that are searching for Michele Bachmann, this blog is FILLED with stories on Michele Bachmann!!! Here is a good summary of some of her best material. Here's her latest video.

More recent posts

Here are my recent posts on Michele Bachmann:

- Michele Bachmann defends free trade at the Heritage Foundation
- MUST-SEE: Michele Bachmann explains why the US dollar is in serious trouble
- Congresswoman Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar
- Hot Air and Michelle Malkin post new video of Michele Bachmann's town hall
- New Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- MUST-READ: Michele Bachmann open to running for President in 2012!

Michele Bachmann's amazing speech

This video is a MUST SEE. (H/T Doug Groothuis)

Here is the article by Michael Barone that she cited.

What is gangster government?

> To start with the obvious, even though Obama denies that he will manage the companies, we have all learned by now that he has no problem doing the very thing he is denying. (In ordinary life this political artfulness is called lying). He fired one CEO, forced Chrysler to accept Fiat (WSJ.com 6/5/09), told GM that it cannot move its headquarters out of Detroit (WSJ.com 6/3/09), and may have

> ordered that whoever buys GM's European auto maker Opel must agree not to export cars to the U.S.. (WSJ.com 6/1/09) These decisions were made in secret with no Congressional oversight, by a man with no training or experience of any kind in business, never mind the auto business. The companies will be run by politicians, who will make decisions for the benefit of political agendas rather than on sound business principles. The result will be that the auto companies and the union will not make the deep changes required to make the companies profitable, so we can anticipate many more cash infusions.

Gary Jason writes about how Obama is intervening in the free market to screw creditors and take care of his union supporters with taxpayer bailouts.

> I will argue that the unprecedented action by the current administration in manipulating the bankruptcies of Chrysler and GM, and in effect nationalizing the companies, is egregiously unethical by every one of these major ethical perspectives. For this reason, I believe that this action makes it morally imperative for Americans to boycott these socialized companies.
>
> … the Obama administration spent tens of billions in taxpayers' dollars to take control of the companies and force the outcome it wanted. Obama, who received millions in contributions from the United Auto Workers union, has forced a settlement that will give UAW far more equity in the companies when they come out of bankruptcy than it was due compared to the secured debt holders.[i] Obama's agents used threats and intimidation (calling holdout bondholders speculators and hedge funds at one point) to get the creditors to accept being shafted. (WSJ.com 5/11/09)The result is that the vast majority of the two companies will be almost clearly owned by the federal government and the UAW, and the UAW arguably controls the federal government.
>
> The result is drenched in irony. The UAW was a major reason why the companies hit the wall, and now the UAW will be rewarded with major control and ownership. It is as if a rape victim were forced to marry her rapist. The result makes the crony capitalism we saw in Russia look clean by comparison; it, at least, was a kind of capitalism.

And what are the long-term consequences?

> …To start with the obvious, even though Obama denies that he will manage the companies, we have all learned by now that he has no problem doing the very thing he is denying. (In ordinary life this political artfulness is called lying). He fired one CEO, forced Chrysler to accept Fiat (WSJ.com 6/5/09), told GM that it cannot move its headquarters out of Detroit (WSJ.com 6/3/09), and may have ordered that whoever buys GM's European auto maker Opel must agree not to export cars to the U.S.. (WSJ.com 6/1/09) These decisions were made in secret with no Congressional oversight, by a man with no training or experience of any kind in business, never mind the auto business.

> The companies will be run by politicians, who will make decisions for the benefit of political agendas rather than on sound business principles. The result will be that the auto companies and the union will not make the deep changes required to make the companies profitable, so we can anticipate many more cash infusions.
>
> Worse yet, we can foresee that now that the UAW and feds have control of Chrysler and GM, they won't stop there. Their natural instinct will be to achieve monopolistic control. The UAW has helped drive Chrysler and GM to the wall and is now co-owner with the government of most of the equity. They will likely next target Ford, to get equity ownership of it. Then look for the UAW and the administration it controls to attempt to force the employees of foreign auto makers in this country to join the UAW, or use environmental and other regulatory laws to put those companies out of business.

Obama and the Democrats are willing to use threats and intimidation to ram through their socialist policies. Here is a long list of unconstitutional interventions. (H/T 4Simpsons) He does not care about laws and rights – he wants power over your liberty. He wants to control your life.

The Road to Serfdom

For those of you who did not know before, the greatest economics book of the 20th century was Nobel-prize winning economic F.A. Hayek's "The Road to Serfdom", which is analyzes the history of socialism and fascism in Nazi Germany and Russia. This book is #1 on Human Events' Top 10 books every Republican should read.

Human Events writes:

> Friedrich Hayek (1899-1992) was an Austrian economist awarded the Nobel Prize in 1974. He defended capitalism and individual liberty against collectivism. In "The Road to Serfdom," he describes how government planning of the economy leads to tyranny. President Reagan cited Hayek as one of his favorite economists. "To decentralize power is to reduce the absolute amount of power, and the competitive system is the only system designed to minimize the power exercised by man over man," wrote Hayek. "Who can seriously doubt that the power which a millionaire, who may be my employer, has over me is very much less than that which the smallest bureaucrat possesses who wields the coercive power of the state and on whose discretion it depends how I am allowed to live and work?"

When Michele Bachmann stands up on the floor of the House and advocates against government intervention in the free market, she is literally standing between the American people and mass-murdering, rights-trampling, faith-destroying communism.

And by the way, Obama means to do the exact same thing with the health care and energy sectors.

BONUS

Don’t forget my recent post which has even more amazing and encouraging videos of Michele Bachmann and Marsha Blackburn defending the American way. Or click here to see all of my Michele Bachmann posts. You can read more about her strong Christian faith in this article from World Magazine.

Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

June 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I made you all suffer this week by reading two long posts on the origin of life:

- The problem of making the building blocks needed for life
- The problem of making the biological information needed for life

So now I'm going to be nice and let you learn about the Cambrian explosion through videos! Yeah! Because it's Friday.

What is the Cambrian explosion?

Same story as always. Primitive tribes of atheists living during pre-scientific times naively attributed the diversity of life to the Flying Spaghetti Monster's noodly appendage, working over billions of years. But then science progressed, discoveries were made, and all rational people accepted that virtually all the basic body plans emerged, fully-formed, in a 3-5 million year period, about 540 million years ago. And no new body plans have emerged since.

The best explanation of the sudden origin of nearly all animal body plans in the blink of an eye is that an intelligent designer provided the required software code for all of these brand new body plans. New instructions, like new Java code or new English sentences, require an intelligent cause. Period.

Part 1: (7:50)

Part 2: (3:25)

Yes, the people in the videos have Ph.Ds from Cambridge, Yale, Berkeley, etc. They are much smarter than any atheists, and they win any debates with atheists that dare to debate them. (Which is why atheists prefer censorship instead of debate, and blind faith instead of evidence)

Don't worry, if you are an atheist, I'm sure that the noodly appendage of the hopeful Flying Spaghetti Monster will eventually overturn decades of scientific progress very soon, and then you can be comfortable avoiding moral obligations, being self-centered, thinking you are better than other people, and pursuing happy feelings at the expense of the liberties and rights of other people.

Further study

Advanced students can read more about the Cambrian explosion a published peer-reviewed book chapter (Michigan State University Press, 2003) or in a peer-reviewed research paper (Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington, 2007).

If you are totally lost on the question of origins, you can watch two DVDs that are now online at Youtube. Both videos are by Illustra Media. This is the place for complete

beginners to get started.

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

Friday night funny: Obama's magic speeches and wise Latina writings

June 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scrappleface reports that Obama's Cairo speech has *worked!*

> "I suppose I've been a bit unreasonable, testy, even dictatorial at times," said the contrite Iranian leader. "After that speech, I feel like my eyes have been opened. How could I have missed all of the common ground we share with America and Israel. I'm going to have Barack over to the house, and let him know that Iran's nuclear ambitions can take a back seat to our desire for true brotherhood and unity. And boy, do I ever owe those Jews a big apology?"

According to Press Secretary Gibbs, Obama plans a similar speech… for atheists:

> "Most peace-loving atheists want nothing more than to be left alone to pursue sensory stimulus, pass along their DNA, and then to allow their carbon molecules to reunite with the soil," said Gibbs, "but instead they bear the reproach of those who blame them for the actions of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot and George Soros.

> …Like most Americans, atheists want safety for their offspring, those charming little vessels of genetic code," said Gibbs. "They want the right to elect representatives who will make laws guaranteeing survival of the fittest. They want freedom to speak whatever ideas the electro-chemical reactions in their brains happen to produce…."

Steven Crowder meets Alfonzo Rachel, and they explain what Republicans are *really like.* (H/T 4Simpsons, Hot Air)

Oh, I know I'm just like those two! Well, I look more like Zo than Crowder.

Here are some of Ronald Reagan's best lines: (H/T Club For Growth)

Barney Frank's fascist tendencies are showing: (H/T Michelle Malkin)

You can also read some of the wise Latina's writings. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

LifeNews reports on her interview with Senator Demint:

> "When I asked if an unborn child has any rights whatsoever, I was surprised that she said **she had never thought about it**," he said. "This is not just a question about abortion, but about respect due to human life at all stages — and I hope this is cleared up in her hearings."

Happy Friday!

Indian government says sex education promotes promiscuity

June 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The Indian government has rejected western-style sex education programs, saying they do nothing to solve the problem of teenage pregnancy but only exacerbate the problem by promoting sexual promiscuity.
>
> A government report on the matter was issued in response to a citizen-launched petition against a decision by the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) to start sex-education in schools. The program had been touted as a means of preventing the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Materials for teachers and facilitators in India included explicit details about "alternative methods" of sex, including anal and oral sex, presented as a means of avoiding AIDS.
>
> According to the government, the curriculum prepared with material from UNICEF, had "shocked the consciences" of the country and was described as "quite frightening." If implemented, the report said, it would "promote promiscuity of the worst kind." The report was issued in March by a committee of the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament, and says that the introduction of sex education in India's schools should at least be delayed until the issue has been fully debated in public.

Here is my post regarding homosexual sex education for kindergarten students in the USA. Here is another post about Alberta's proposed Bill 44 which allows parents to opt their children out of sex education.

American university gender gap: 57% female, 43% male

June 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the Gainesville Sun.(H/T Why Boys Fail)

They focus mostly on the gender gaps in Florida universities, but I think these schools reflect the national situation. Boys are falling behind girls in schools, and in life.

Excerpt:

> Women make up 57 percent of college enrollment nationally, according to the most recent federal statistics. In Florida, five of the 11 state universities have female enrollments topping 60 percent.
>
> …Graduation rates support the thought. More than 63 percent of women graduate from UF in four years, compared with 42 percent of men.

I agree with this statement from Thomas Mortenson, a senior scholar at the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education:

> He calls for changing the way in which boys are educated. Boys learn through a more active, hands-on learning style than girls, he said. Mischief-making boys are treated as criminals or sent to special education classes, he said.
>
> "Boys aren't allowed to be boys today," he said. "They're treated as defective girls."

Does anyone care enough to ask men why they are not motivated? Are there proper schools, teachers and incentives in place to prod men towards responsible manhood?

Debate: Must morality be grounded by God?

June 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

"Unbelievable", is a show broadcast every Saturday in the UK. Every week, they feature a debate between a Christian and a non-Christian. The debate this week was on the moral argument, which argues that meaningful morality, including free will, human rights, moral rules, moral obligations, and moral significance, *must* be grounded in God.

THIS IS A MUST-LISTEN.

The debate starts a bit into the podcast, after they review audience reactions to last week and preview the next week's topic.

Here is the link to the podcast. (MP3 audio)

If you have trouble with that link, try here instead.

The atheist Paul Orton argues this:

- no moral absolutes
- morality is a set evolved conventions
- the set varies by time and place

The Christian David Robertson argues this:

- morality is meaningless unless there are moral absolutes
- cultural relativism doesn't rationally ground moral judgments
- the Bible does not teach that slavery is good

One of the best parts of the debate is when David contrasts H.G. Wells, an atheistic socialist who embraced socialism and fascism as a natural extension of his atheism, and a Christian, William Wilberforce who spent over two decades of his life trying to free the slaves in the UK.

This debate can be seen as an illustration of the thesis that I advanced in my series of posts on atheism and morality, in which I argued that atheism does not ground the minimal requirements for rational morality.

Further resources

This page contains a link to an excellent lecture on the ontological foundations of rational morality, as well as a number of debates between Christians and atheists on whether morality is rationally grounded by the worldview of atheism. And you can find some other apologetics posts here, including an article on whether the the moral statements of atheists are even intelligible, on atheism.

The best book ever written on this topic is Greg Koukl and Francis J. Beckwith's "Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air". You can see Greg deliver a lecture about relativism to an audience of students and faculty at UCLA (MP3 audio here). If you want to read something free on the web that explains the problems with moral relativism, which

is the view of morality that *is* grounded by atheism, look here.

Does legalized abortion increase or decrease child abuse?

June 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neil Simpson has created a round-up of links on his blog. All the stories in his round-up are interesting, but this one by Randy Alcorn caught my eye. It's entitled "The Rise of Child Abuse as a Result of Abortion". You have to skip down a bit to get to the main point as he first talks for a while about his evil twin.

Here is his thesis:

> My belief is that when people believe it's okay to kill a child before he's born, because an adult has rights over his life, then inevitably it will become more acceptable to beat him up once he's born.

And here is his proof:

> In 1973, when abortion was first legalized, United States child abuse cases were estimated at 167,000 annually. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, approximately 903,000 children were victims of abuse during 2001, a number more than five times greater.

Obviously, this is not counting the 49 million murders of actual children.

Now you might say: "Wintery! Doesn't abortion decrease child abuse by eliminating unwanted children?".

Randy says no:

> University of Southern California professor Edward Lenoski conducted a landmark study of 674 abused children. He discovered that 91 percent of the parents admitted they wanted the child they had abused.
>
> "Studies indicate that child abuse is more frequent among mothers who have previously had an abortion." Dr. Philip Ney's studies indicate that this is partially due to the guilt and depression caused by abortion, which hinders the mother's ability to bond with future children. He documents that having an abortion decreases a parent's natural restraint against feelings of rage toward small children.
>
> The attitude that results in abortion is exactly the same attitude that results in child abuse. Furthermore, if she doesn't abort, the mother can look at her difficult three-year-old and think, "I had the right to abort you." The child owes her everything; she owes the child nothing. This causes resentment of demands requiring parental sacrifice. Even if subconscious, the logic is inescapable: If it was all right to kill the same child before birth, surely it's all right to slap him around now.

I think we need to realize what is going through the mind of young women: they want to be happy and they are willing to murder innocent children in order to secure their own happiness. They do not see why anyone else's rights should limit their own pursuit of happiness. After all, it's survival of the fittest. The majority of single women are pro-abortion. They believe that their own happiness matters more than moral values and moral duties.

Consider how women voted in 2008:

> Unmarried women supported Barack Obama by a 70-to-29 percent margin, and they voted for Democratic House candidates by a similar margin — 64-to-29 percent. These margins mean that unmarried women edged out both younger voters and Hispanic voters as the demographic with the strongest support for President-elect Obama. These unmarried women voters joined with younger voters and people of color to create what GQR calls a "new American electorate" — voters with a decided preference for liberal candidates.
>
> Overall, women strongly supported Senator Obama over Senator McCain (56 percent for Obama, 43 percent for McCain). Men split their votes about evenly between the two presidential candidates, with 49 percent for Obama and 48 percent for McCain.

Obama is the most pro-abortion President there has ever been.

In my series of posts on atheism and morality, I explain why moral relativism is the result of atheism. If you want to stop abortion, there are two things to do. 1) You need to start convincing women that God exists, that objective morality is real, and that moral obligations trump the pursuit of selfish happiness. 2) You need to vote to cut off all taxpayer subsidies for pre-marital sex; sex education, contraception, single motherhood and abortion.

Obama silent following rigged Iranian election and protester beatings

June 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why doesn't Obama stand up for freedom and democracy in Iran?

Fox News reports that the election was fraudulent, accoring to U.S. analysts: (H/T Hot Air)

> U.S. analysts find it “not credible” that challenger Mir Hossein Mousavi would have lost the balloting in his hometown or that a third candidate, Mehdi Karoubi, would have received less than 1 percent of the total vote, a senior U.S. officials told FOX News.

Hot Air has tons of updates at the link above, and a video of the protest.

The UK Times reports: (H/T Pajamas Media)

> In the Iranian capital’s most serious unrest for 10 years, thousands of liberals who claimed the election had been rigged vented their fury in running battles with police.
>
> They fought officers armed with batons and stun grenades, set fire to police vehicles and threw stones at government buildings.
>
> I saw police in camouflage uniforms and black flak jackets respond by firing the grenades from motorcycles into a crowd that chanted “Down with the dictator” and denounced what it called a stolen election.
>
> In a stand-off near the interior ministry, which oversaw the count, opposition supporters formed barricades of burning tyres, sending plumes of smoke over

> the city. Helmeted police chased protesters who became detached from the main group and beat them with truncheons.

Hot Air linked to this BBC video, in which protests cry for freedom are beaten by police: (H/T Hot Air)

Fox News reports on the response of the Obama administration: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> The Obama administration would not describe the outcome as legitimate or illegitimate or deem a victory by Mousavi as necessarily better.
>
> "We're not going to characterize what would have been a better or worse scenario," the official said. "We will deal with this as it is, not as we wish it to be.

And they also report on the Republican response, which is quite different:

> "There appears to be pretty good evidence that this is a cooked election," Rep. Dan Lungren, R-Calif., told FOX News. "And the most depressing thing for me is we were going to see whether in fact the true leaders of this country, the religious leaders, were going to allow for a real election to have an expression of the people.

Michael Ledeen describes the atrocities:

- *Mousavi and Karrubi, the two "reformist" candidates in Friday's "elections" are under house arrest, along with dozens of their followers;*
- *"Reformist" journalists and activists have been rounded up and jailed;*
- *Cell phones (including, after a day's delay, international cell phones) have been blocked, access to internet has been filtered, facebook is unreachable, and you can't tweet (can the silencing of Western reporters be far behind?);*
- *In Tehran, student dormitories are surrounded by security forces.*

The Tehran Journal claims 50-100 protesters are dead. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

The NYT reports on Obama's response:

> The Obama administration is determined to press on with efforts to engage the Iranian government, senior officials said Saturday, despite misgivings about irregularities in the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad…

Business as usual… just keep talking with them, and hope they will forgive us for all our misdeeds. There is not going to be a challenge to this coup from the White House… the Iranian people are on their own.

Gateway Pundit linked to some photos are here and here.

Hot Air has links to Twitter channels if you want to keep on top of the unfolding story.

Democrat health care bill requires 600 billion dollar tax hike

June 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome visitors from 4Simpsons! Thanks for the link Neil!

Bloomberg reports:

> Health-care overhaul legislation being drafted by House Democrats will include $600 billion in tax increases and $400 billion in cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, Ways and Means Committee Chairman Charles Rangel said.
>
> Democrats will work on the bill's details next week as they struggle through "what kind of heartburn" it will cause to agree on how to pay for revamping the health-care system, Rangel, a New York Democrat, said today. The measure's cost is reaching well beyond the $634 billion President Barack Obama proposed in his budget request to Congress as a 10-year down payment for the policy changes.
>
> Asked whether the cost of a health-care overhaul would be more than $1 trillion over a decade, Rangel said, "the answer is yes." Some Senate Republicans, including Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah, say the costs will likely exceed $1.5 trillion.

> …That won't be enough to cover the overhaul costs. Obama said this week he plans in the coming days to disclose more proposals for raising "additional sources of revenue." In a letter last week to Senate Democrats drafting legislation he said he will be proposing between $200 billion and $300 billion in further Medicare and Medicaid cuts.

If you think that tax hikes on "the rich" won't affect you, you're naive. The rich are the people you work for. If Obama starts confiscating your money, they will ship your job overseas where taxes are lower. That's just the way it is. The most productive people in the world are not just going to hand over their money to Obama to redistribute to unions, bureaucrats, the United Nations, ACORN and Planned Parenthood.

Stem cells in India

Meanwhile, here is a neat health care story so you will know where to go for medical treatment (India) after Obama tells you that you will have to wait two years behind people who voted *for* him.

> "It was the first time in eastern India that such a transplant was being performed on a child," he said….Pramita's bone marrow, which contain stem cells, was collected from her spinal cord. It was successfully transplanted in her body in April 2009. The entire process took two months during which she was kept isolated in a sterilised room with high efficient particulate air (HEPA) filter. "We

> will do a follow-up on her health for the next six months since she may contract infection during this period and so has to follow some restrictions. But after that she can lead a normal life and can resume her dance lessons without any problem," Dr. Mukhopadhyay said.

For more on stem cell research, see this post.

Two must-see media interviews with Sarah Palin

June 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome visitors from the Maritime Sentry! Thanks for the link!

Sarah Palin is looking very good as a contender in 2012. I am still favoring Governor Jindal in Louisiana, with Governor Sanford in South Carolina as #2. But Palin is definitely in the mix!

- Here she is debating left-wing extremist Wolf Blitzer on CNN.
- Here she is debating left-wing extremist Matt Lauer on NBC.

I am so happy when I see women standing up for fiscal conservatism, social conservatism and a strong foreign policy. I am going to give her 2 A+ ratings for these two tough media interviews. She understands the vision of small government and low taxes. And she has a talent for explaining it in a winsome, engaging manner. The trouble is that Democrat voters are so ignorant about economics that she has to explain it very slowly.

UPDATE: This post seems to be popular. Don't forget my previous post about two women I think are even better conservatives than Sarah Palin. And here is the best of those two attacking Democrats in a super video clip.

Robert P. Murphy explains why he is public about his faith

June 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am always appreciative of Christian scholars who are can rise to the top of their professions without hiding their faith. One top economist is Robert P. Murphy, author of the *best* entry-level economics textbook out there, called "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism". Rob also has a new book out called "The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Great Depression and the New Deal".

Recently, Rob posted about why he is public about his faith, especially given the discomfort felt by the many famous economists that he works with.

Excerpt:

> I remember when I was an atheist, I was extremely uncomfortable one time when a guy's wife asked me if I knew Jesus….
>
> In contrast, what I do is make my views known on this blog (or in public forums if it is appropriate), and I have even restricted the Jesus talk to Sundays. I absolutely love it when a bunch of you regular readers say things like, "Jeez Bob, you're a good economist and very logical on a lot of things, but you went off the deep end with this God stuff." So that's part of my point in doing it, is to show that I think the doctrines of Christianity make sense and are logical. I utterly reject the idea–which many simple Christian folk have advanced–that you shouldn't think too much about Biblical matters, or that you shouldn't use your reason when contemplating God.

This is exactly my view as well. I like to tell people what I believe and why as I get to know them, then leave it up to them to come back to me with questions.For me this serves two purposes: 1) That person will know that at least one smart person (me) still believes in Christianity and 2) That person will have a resource in case they decide to try to respond to God's seeking after them.

Further study

For more about integrating your vocation and your faith, and being a public Christian where you work, check out these posts from my index of apologetics.

Mentoring

- the importance of being able to argue both sides of a question
- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?

- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church

Democrats still silent on Iran, but Republican whip Eric Cantor takes a stand

June 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from iPandora! Thanks for the link Matthew!

Before we start, head on over to Gateway Pundit and take a look at some of the photos and videos he's assembled. Go on, I'll wait.

Here's one to get you started:

Iranian women come to the aide of a man being beaten

Time magazine says that one protester rally drew between 2-3 million people. (H/T Hot Air)

Compare this article from the UK Telegraph about Obama's response with the response of the Republican whip Eric Cantor.

The Telegraph article says:

> The Obama administration's response to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's fraudulent election victory is cowardly, lily-livered and wrong. The White House's refusal to officially question the result or even condemn the brutal suppression of opposition protestors, is undermining America's standing as a global power, and is little more than a face-saving, cynical exercise in appeasement that will all end in tears.

That's right. The world hates us. (And not just over Obama's naive protectionism). Although Reagan and George W. Bush might have sided with freedom-lovers against tyranny, Obama prefers to free America-hating terrorists, who mocks his own country to get a pat on the head from ruthless dictators, who gives Iran a free pass on nuclear plants, and who cuts missile defense as North Korea launches missiles over Japan.

Vice President Joe Biden on Sunday's *Meet the Press*:

> "we're going to withhold comment… I mean we're just waiting to see."

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in a statement on Saturday:

> "the United States has refrained from commenting on the election in Iran"

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs:

> "impressed by the vigorous debate and enthusiasm this election generated."

Now, you might think that Germany, led by Dr. Angela Merkel, might be worse than Obama. But you'd be *very* wrong. Merkel is a conservative – she believes in freedom, and her statement shows that Germany has elected someone a backbone, someone who cares about what goes on in other nations.

> …the Germans, who shamefully happen to be Europe's biggest exporters to Iran, strongly denounced the crackdown on protestors, as have a number of European governments. Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier condemned the "brutal actions" against demonstrators, and summoned the Iranian Ambassador to Berlin in protest.

UPDATE: France piles on. FRANCE! But Sarkozy is a conservative, not a radical leftist like Obama. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> French President **Nicolas Sarkozy on Tuesday branded Iran's election result a fraud** as the international outcry over the security forces' crackdown on the opposition in Tehran intensified.
>
> Governments from Asia to Europe voiced concern about the violence that erupted Monday during rallies protesting the hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's re-election, with US President Barack Obama saying he had "deep concerns" while also not wanting to meddle in Iran's affairs.
>
> But while some governments tried to avoid taking sides, Sarkozy said the unrest was a direct result of Ahmadinejad's failings in his first term.
>
> **"The extent of the fraud is proportional to the violent reaction,"** said the French leader.

MUST-SEE: Brit Hume calls out the Democrats on their moral equivalence and hypocrisy: (H/T Hot Air)

What do you expect from a party of godless hedonists? They want "free" health care… who cares about other people's human rights? They were never interested in helping others… they just want to steal what other people worked for. It's all about the money.

Hot Air links to a Fox News poll in which 66% of respondents said that Obama was not being tough enough on Iran. Presumably the blame-America-first crowd who voted for him will be pleased with his inaction. What do they care about liberty? George W. Bush

push liberty harder than any president since Ronald Reagan. Now we have to watch pro-democracy protesters die, while President Pantywaist dithers over health care.

Republicans speak out against tyranny

Let's take a look at Eric Cantor's statement in The Hill. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> "The Administration's silence in the face of Iran's brutal suppression of democratic rights represents a step backwards for homegrown democracy in the Middle East," Cantor said. "President Obama must take a strong public position in the face of violence and human rights abuses. We have a moral responsibility to lead the world in opposition to Iran's extreme response to peaceful protests.
>
> "In addition, Iran's clerical regime has made clear that its nuclear program will move forward," he said. "The United States cannot trust the aspirations of a nation that is a state-sponsor of terrorism, and the Administration must work with Congress to do everything in its power to deny Iran nuclear weapons."

He's the House Republican Whip.

Mark Steyn argues that big government means less liberty

June 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent this New Criterion article by Mark Steyn, Canada's National Treasure, along with Ezra Levant, and Stephen Harper.

Have you heard about Paul A. Rahe's new book entitled "Soft Despotism, Democracy's Drift"? I heard an interview with the author on Milt Rosenberg's radio show, and the podcast is here. But I also found this book review by Mark Steyn, which seems to be popular in the blogosphere. It's a long read, but you will find it stimulating – especially the citations of Alexis de Toqueville. Prescient.

Excerpt:

> ...the consequence of funding the metastasization of government through the confiscation of the fruits of the citizen's labor is the remorseless shriveling of liberty.Is it, as Mark Levin's caller said, "inevitable"? No, not quite. But it seems like the way to bet. When President Bush used to promote the notion of democracy in the Muslim world, there was a line he liked to fall back on: "Freedom is the desire of every human heart." Are you quite sure? It's doubtful whether that's actually the case in Gaza and Waziristan, but we know for absolute certain that it's not in Paris and Stockholm, London and Toronto, Buffalo and New Orleans. **The story of the Western world since 1945 is that, invited to choose between freedom and government "security," large numbers of people vote to dump freedom every time—the freedom to make their own decisions about health care, education, property rights, and eventually (as we already see in Europe, Canada, American campuses, and the disgusting U.N. Human Rights Council) what you're permitted to say and think.**

If you think you can run a Christian life in a welfare state run by secular socialists, think again. Their goals and values are not your goals and values, and they will force their goals and values on you, and on your children.

And ECM also send me this article by Mark Steyn in the National Review, regarding single-payer health care.

Excerpt:

> When President Obama tells you he's "reforming" health care to "control costs," the point to remember is that **the only way to "control costs" in health care is to have less of it**. In a government system, the doctor, the nurse, the janitor, and the Assistant Deputy Associate Director of Cost-Control System Management all have to be paid every Friday, so **the sole means of "controlling costs" is to restrict the patient's access to treatment**. **In the Province of Quebec,**

> **patients with severe incontinence — i.e., they're in the bathroom twelve times a night — wait three years for a simple 30-minute procedure**. True, Quebeckers have a year or two on Americans in the life-expectancy hit parade, but, if you're making twelve trips a night to the john 365 times a year for three years, in terms of life-spent-outside-the-bathroom expectancy, an uninsured Vermonter may actually come out ahead.

In Canada, you can deliver babies yourself while you wait. (H/T ECM)

And the same thing happens in the UK.

The Wintery Knight teaches capitalism… using short video clips!

June 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from IMAO.us! Thanks for the link Harvey!

Have you ever heard an American-Idol-watching Dummocrat approve of Obama plans to tax the rich? Watch this video from the Center for Freedom and Prosperity (H/T Hot Air) and learn the facts you'll need to defeat them in a debate.

Here are a few more videos from America's golden age when everyone could explain why the country was founded, and why our free market capitalist economy was the envy of the world. (I stole these from IMAO.us)

The importance of economic growth:

Civics: Part 1 of a 2 part set:

Civics: Part 2 of a 2 part set:

A mouse's perspective on America's greatness:

Have fun learning!

Why won't Christians defend their faith in public?

June 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: The Pugnacious Irishman has linked to me! Thank you for the link Rich! EVERYONE: GO READ HIS POST RIGHT NOW!

UPDATE: Neil Simpson has a debate going on about whether faith is opposed to reason. 50+ comments so far.

Shout out: Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 helped me to make this post nicer. He's much nicer than I am.

I would like to describe a situation that arises frequently that concerns me. The situation I describe below brings out a flaw I see in the way that rank-and-file Christians respond to criticisms of Christianity in the public square.

Here is the situation

Eve is busy programming away at her desk, rushing to check in her unit tests so she can spend her lunch hour reading the latest Stephenie Meyer horror novel, or looking through an Avon catalog. Suddenly Eve hears Alice talking to Bob on the other side of her cube. She stops typing to listen to the following unencrypted conversation.

Alice: I was watching a documentary on the Discovery Channel last night that said that the universe has always existed, so there is no God!

Bob: I was watching a documentary on PBS last night showing simulations of how the first life started on Earth! God didn't do it!

Alice: I saw "Inherit the Spin" on the weekend! The only reason people oppose evolution is because of the Bible! Not because of science!

Bob: I'm going to see "The Va Dinci Code" this weekend! It says that the Gospels are unreliable and that Jesus didn't even die on the cross!

Alice: I just bought the latest Dichard Rawkins book "Christians Should Be Fed to Lions and the Bible Should Be Burned"!

Bob: I will read that as soon as I finish Histopher Chritchens' book "Why God is the Evilest, Stupidest Person in the World"!

Eve double-majored in business and computer science at the Indian Institute of Technology, and has an MBA from the London School of Economics. She has spent a ton of time, effort and money studying very difficult subjects for her job, and she even publishes research. She works full-time and runs her own business part-time, and earns about 200K per year. She lives in a huge house, drives a huge car, and goes on vacation abroad to all the best vacation spots.

Eve thinks she is a Christian. She has attended church since childhood, her husband is a church elder and she sings in the church choir. She reads the Bible and prays. She gives money to the poor. She teaches Sunday school to children. She has even read all of the Narnia novels three times!

But even though God is being maligned in Alice and Bob's conversation, Eve is not going to stand up to defend God's reputation to them, (or even to her own children, who are both committed atheists).

Why won't Eve stand?

I am wondering if anyone can explain to me why it is that most church Christians are not able or not willing to make a public defense when God's reputation is called into question. It seems to me that there are two bad effects that follow from Eve's unwillingness to stand up and invite Alice and Bob to lunch so that she can address their questions and concerns.

1) God's reputation is being trashed by Alice and Bob on the basis of lies they've swallowed from pop culture. These lies about God's existence and character could be easily corrected with a minimal amount of study, which Eve is capable of. If someone said similar lies about her husband or children, she *would* speak up, but she won't speak up for God.

2) Alice and Bob are bound for Hell unless someone cares enough to correct their mistaken beliefs, which, along with their sinfulness, is what is keeping them from a relationship with God that would go on in Heaven. If Eve's husband or children were mistakenly about to drink poison thinking it was Aspirin, then Eve *would* speak up. But to save her co-workers from Hell, she won't speak up.

Eve is capable of studying to defend the faith, because of her great success in other areas where so much time and effort were required to master difficult material. So why has she not applied herself to answering public challenges to her Christian faith from her professors, teachers, actors, the media, politicians, scientists, historians, etc.?

It seems to me that if she did spend some time studying, and then made her defense to her co-workers, then two things would follow:

D1) Eve would be demonstrating her love for God and her friendship with God by protecting his reputation when it is called into question by unbelievers in public settings. That's what friends do – if Eve wanted to be God's friend, she would care that no one believed lies about him and told lies about him in public settings.

D2) Eve would be demonstrating her love for her neighbor if she was able to correct some of these false beliefs, such as that the universe is eternal, or that a historical case cannot be made for the resurrection, or that evil is not compatible with theism. It's important for Alice and Bob to know that Christianity is not stupid.

So why is it that Eve is able to go to church for 20 years, sing in the choir, read the Bible, read the Narnia stories, pray on her knees, and yet still be unwilling to do the best thing for God and the best thing for her neighbor?

Questions for my readers

Can anyone help me to understand why Christians are willing to accept this? Why is this not being addressed by churches?

Do you have an experience where a Christian group stifled apologetics? Tell me about

that, and why do you think they would do that, in view of the situation I outlined above? My experience is that atheists (as much as I tease them) are FAR more interested in apologetics than church Christians. Why is that?

My answers

My answers to these problems are given in the following previous posts.

In general:

- Christians think that the Bible teaches that faith is irrational and unprovable
- Christians don't know how to discuss faith in public without upsetting others
- Christians don't think that their silence harms God or their neighbors
- Christians don't treat their faith as seriously as their academic and professional work
- Christians are afraid to study because they think that they'll have doubts
- Christians don't believe that reasons and evidence lead people to faith
- Many churches are feminized, and therefore knowledge and disputes are discouraged

Also, this debate I blogged about before talks about postmodernism and relativism, which has infected the church and has an impact on this question of whether we will study and defend our beliefs in public. I highly recommend giving it a listen – you will learn something about how we got to this point.

Disclaimer:

I want to clear that this is a problem for male and female Christians. I have seen it manifested by equal numbers of men and women in leadership roles. I picked these names because there is a running gag in computer network security where these names are used to describe the actors. Eve is the eavesdropping hacker, get it?

Obama believes the Ayatollah but what would Ronald Reagan do?

June 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breitbart reports on Obambi's latest effort to be loved by bloodthirsty dictators abroad.(H/T Stop the ACLU)

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama says he believes supreme leader Ayatollah ali Khamenei has deep concerns about the civil unrest that has followed the hotly contested presidential election there.
>
> Obama repeated Tuesday at a news conference his "deep concerns" about the disputed balloting. He said he believes the ayatollah's decision to order an investigation "indicates he understands the Iranian people have deep concerns."
>
> **But at the same time, Obama said it would not be helpful if the United States was seen by the world as "meddling" in the issue.**

What do other Western countries have to say about Iran?

Germany

Germany denounces the suppression of democracy:

> …the Germans, who shamefully happen to be Europe's biggest exporters to Iran, strongly denounced the crackdown on protestors, as have a number of European governments. Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier condemned the "brutal actions" against demonstrators, and summoned the Iranian Ambassador to Berlin in protest.

Merkel is a *conservative*, not a moral relativist secular-leftist. Freedom means something to her.

France

France denounces the suppression of democracy: (H/T Lucianne)

> French President **Nicolas Sarkozy on Tuesday branded Iran's election result a fraud** as the international outcry over the security forces' crackdown on the opposition in Tehran intensified.
>
> Governments from Asia to Europe voiced concern about the violence that erupted Monday during rallies protesting the hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's re-election, with US President Barack Obama saying he had "deep concerns" while also not wanting to meddle in Iran's affairs.
>
> But while some governments tried to avoid taking sides, Sarkozy said the unrest was a direct result of Ahmadinejad's failings in his first term.

> **“The extent of the fraud is proportional to the violent reaction,”** said the French leader.

Sarkozy is a *conservative*, not a moral relativist secular-leftist. Freedom means something to him.

Canada

Canada denounces the suppression of democracy:

> “We have called for a full and transparent investigation into electoral fraud and discrepancies,” Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon told Parliament in Ottawa, as the government called Iran’s top diplomat on the carpet to explain the reported beating and detention of a freelance Canadian journalist in Tehran following Friday’s contested ballot.
>
> “The security force’s brutal treatment of peaceful demonstrators is unacceptable.”
>
> “The government of Canada calls for freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Iran, and urges the country to fully respect all of its human rights obligations, both in law and in practice. We also continue to call on Iran to comply immediately with its legal obligations concerning its nuclear program.”

Harper is a *conservative*, not a moral relativist secular-leftist. Freedom means something to him.

What about the Republicans?

Consider conservative Republicans like Mike Pence: (H/T Hot Air)

Nice Deb has the full transcript of Pence’s speech.

Excerpt:

> We are witnessing a Tiananmen in Tehran, and the United States of America must stand in the gap on behalf of those brave Iranian citizens who are standing for free and fair elections, democracy and basic rights.
>
> Let me say from my heart, the American cause is freedom and in this cause the American people will not be silent, here or abroad. If the President of the United States won’t express the unqualified support of our nation for the dissidents in the streets of Tehran, this Congress must.

What will you do about it, Republican Congressman Mike Pence?

> Today I’m introducing a resolution that will do just that. It will express its concern regarding the reported irregularities of the presidential election of 12 June, 2009. It will condemn the violence against demonstrators by pro-government militia in Tehran in the wake of the elections. It will affirm our belief in the universality of individual rights and the importance of democratic and fair elections. And lastly, and most importantly, it will express the support of the American people for all

> Iranian citizens who struggle for freedom, civil liberties and the protection of the rule of law.

Read the whole thing to find out about his Hungarian neighbor. I have Lebanese neighbors, and they say the same things – the USA is the guardian of freedom in the world. Our military might is the reason why countries like South Korea are free. We should not have elected Democrats who let let innocent people die while bashing liberty and prosperity to foreign dictators. Being a Democrat means being an amoral coward. It means being interested in your own comforts, provided stealing from those who work, and ignoring the real poor and oppressed who languish under despots abroad.

Why can't Obama give a speech like this? Because Obama is a *Democrat*, and Democrats are moral relativists. Always remember how Evan Sayet explained why progressives hate what is good and love what is evil. They believe in abolishing moral distinctionsso that all disagreements will disappear, and so they must side with tyrants and terrorists against freedom and prosperity.

What would Reagan do?

Remember what it was like to have a Christian President, who beleived in God, and objective morality, and wanted everyone in the world to enjoy certain inalienable rights, guaranteed by their Creator? Remember "The Speech" he gave in 1964?

And his speech at the Berlin wall?

And his 40th anniversary of D-Day speech?

There is a difference between Republicans and Democrats. Those who have high ideals and those who act like spoiled children.

And remember when the atheistic communists were oppressing Poland, and the left was mocking Ronald Reagan for his "naive" anti-communism and his irrational Christian beliefs? That's right, atheists hate Christianity, and the human rights grounded by it. And they hate capitalism, too. But Reagan didn't care what the secular left though of his faith and his foreign policy. He didn't want to be loved by dictators. He stood with Poland.

> We view the current situation in Poland in the gravest of terms, particularly **the increasing use of force against an unarmed population and violations of the basic civil rights of the Polish people**.
>
> Violence invites violence and threatens to plunge Poland into chaos. **We call upon all free people to join in urging the Government of Poland to reestablish conditions that will make constructive negotiations and compromise possible.**
>
> …The Polish nation, speaking through Solidarity, has provided one of the brightest, bravest moments of modern history. **The people of Poland are giving us an imperishable example of courage and devotion to the values of freedom in the face of relentless opposition. Left to themselves, the Polish people would enjoy a new birth of freedom.** But there are those who oppose the idea of freedom, who are intolerant of national

> independence, and hostile to the European values of democracy and the rule of law.
>
> Two Decembers ago, freedom was lost in Afghanistan; this Christmas, it's at stake in Poland. **But the torch of liberty is hot. It warms those who hold it high. It burns those who try to extinguish it.**

Story from Hot Air. Please click over and read ALL of Reagan's speech.

This is Reagan.

> And I'm only here to tell you that I believe with all my heart that our first priority must be world peace, and that use of force is always and only a last resort, when everything else has failed, and then only with regard to our national security. Now, I believe, also, that this meeting this mission, this responsibility for preserving the peace, which I believe is a responsibility peculiar to our country, and that we cannot shirk our responsibility as a leader of the free world because we're the only ones that can do it. **Therefore, the burden of maintaining the peace falls on us. And to maintain that peace requires strength. America has never gotten in a war because we were too strong.**

Does this sound like Obama?Does Obama believe this? Can a secular-leftist fight for these ideals?

Does it sound like a man who could win the cold war and liberated millions of people without fighting a world war?

And also see my essay on Reagan's doctrine of "Peace through Strength" to understand why Reagan mattered.

ABCNews refuses to allow Republican response to Obama's health care propaganda

June 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ABC News sheds all pretense of objectivity. (H/T Hot Air)

Drudge reports: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> On the night of June 24, the media and government become one, when ABC turns its programming over to President Obama and White House officials to push government run health care — a move that has ignited an ethical firestorm!
>
> Highlights on the agenda:
>
> ABCNEWS anchor Charlie Gibson will deliver WORLD NEWS from the Blue Room of the White House.
>
> The network plans a primetime special — 'Prescription for America' — originating from the East Room, exclude opposing voices on the debate.

Republicans asked for a response, as is customary:

> As the national debate on health care reform intensifies, I am deeply concerned and disappointed with ABC's astonishing decision to exclude opposing voices on this critical issue on June 24, 2009. Next Wednesday, ABC News will air a primetime health care reform "town hall" at the White House with President Barack Obama. In addition, according to an ABC News report, GOOD MORNING AMERICA, WORLD NEWS, NIGHTLINE and ABC's web news "will all feature special programming on the president's health care agenda." This does not include the promotion, over the next 9 days, the president's health care agenda will receive on ABC News programming.

ABC posted a rejection on their blog. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

> I hope we can all agree that a robust debate of health care issues and potential policies is in order.

and below their rejection letter:

> **The comments to this entry are closed.**

Gateway Pundit notes:

> **The last time Obama held a "town hall meeting" in the White House ALL of the participants were campaign supporters.**
>
> **The Director of Communications for the White House Office of Health Reform, since last month, is former ABC News correspondent Linda Douglass.**

Shouldn’t they at least pretend to be objective?

UPDATE: Stop the ACLU writes that they also refused *commercials* that opposed Obama’s health care plan.

New research paper highlights the importance of fathers

June 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here on Florida International University's web site:

Who did the research:

> FIU's Fatherhood Lab explores these issues and Psychology Professor Gordon Finley, who runs the lab, focuses specifically on how divorce impacts fathers and the development of their children. Finley has found that a father's role is unique and far too often neglected by the family court system.

What did they find:

> Using questionnaires and a retrospective technique in which he asked 1,989 young adults to think back on their relationship with their fathers, Finley found that children of divorce *really* miss their fathers. According to Finley, they are denied a relationship with them because of present-day family law and court practices.
>
> "Divorce marginalizes or severs a father's relationship with his child," he says. "In reality, the father becomes a visitor in his or her life. He is no longer a father in the very literal sense."

Recently, I blogged about why social conservatives should be fiscal conservatives.

But you fiscal conservative readers – shouldn't you be social conservatives, too?

> The statistics are alarming: children from fatherless homes account for 63 percent of youth suicides, 85 percent of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders and 71 percent of all high school dropouts. And 37 percent of fathers have no access or visitation rights to their children.

Read the whole thing, especially if you don't usually care about social conservatism. It matters. The family is a bulwark against state power, and is the first thing to go as socialism progresses into fascism

More on this topic later in the week

Further study

Recently, I blogged about how government intrudes into the family and about the myth of "dead-beat Dads". And about how the feminist state's discrimination against male teachers is negatively impacting young men. And there is my series on how Democrat policies discourage marriage: Part 1 is here and Part 2 is here and Part 3 is here.

Michele Bachmann explains why government should not meddle in the free market

June 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video was found by the Maritime Sentry, a conservative policy-oriented blog.

We've seeing a lot of my two favorite Congresswomen lately. Did you miss the previous posts?

- Michele attacks Democrats on nationalization of industries
- Michele defends capitalism, Marsha exposes Al Gore's corruption

If we had elected these two as POTUS and VPOTUS, we would not be spending trillions of dollars on single-payer health care.

CRISIS! Obama fires Inspector General after investigation of Democrat corruption

June 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Hot Air says 2 IGs have been fired, and a 3rd is in trouble.

Michelle Malkin's latest column explains the incident from the beginning. But I'll jump to the middle for the excerpt.

Excerpt:

> The second program Walpin challenged is the non-profit St. HOPE Academy, run by Obama supporter Kevin Johnson, the Democrat mayor of Sacramento and a former NBA basketball star. In a special May 2009 report, Walpin's office blew the whistle on a highly politicized U.S. Attorney's Office settlement with Johnson and his deputy, Dana Gonzalez. The pair exploited nearly $900,000 in AmeriCorps funding for personal and political gain.

> But in the wake of Johnson's mayoral victory and President Obama's election in November, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Sacramento rushed to settle with the new mayor so he could avail himself of federal stimulus funds and other government money. It was, Walpin said in his special report last month, "akin to deciding that, while one should not put a fox in a small chicken coop, it is fine to do so in a large chicken coop! The settlement…leaves the unmistakable impression that relief from a suspension can be bought."
>
> Shortly after, the White House announced that it had "lost confidence" in Walpin. With Walpin's removal, the top management positions at AmeriCorps' parent organization are now all open. The decks are clear to install lackeys who will protect the government volunteerism industry and its Democrat cronies. And a chilling effect has undoubtedly taken hold in every other inspector general's office in Washington.

This is a MUST-READ.

Let's see what hope and change really means. Nothing like this abuse of power ever happened in 8 years under George W. Bush. Bush was an evangelical Christian who took morality and honor seriously. Even if he sometimes made mistakes, they were generally mistakes of policy – not abusing his power to cover up corruption.

In a Hot Air post we learn that Democrat Senator Claire McCaskill isn't happy about Walpin's dismissal.

> "The White House has failed to follow the proper procedure in notifying Congress as to the removal of the Inspector General for the Corporation for National and Community Service. The legislation which was passed last year requires that the president give a reason for the removal. 'Loss of confidence' is not a sufficient

> reason. I'm hopeful the White House will provide a more substantive rationale, in writing, as quickly as possible," McCaskill said.

Ed Morrissey writes "They can't provide the *real* reason, which is that Walpin went after a political ally of the President's."

Fox News has more about Walpin. (H/T Hot Air)

> In the letter, White House Special Counsel Norman Eisen wrote that Walpin was "confused" and "disoriented" at a May board meeting, was "unduly disruptive," and exhibited a "lack of candor" in providing information to decision makers.
>
> "That's a total lie," Walpin said of the latter charge. And he said the accusation that he was dazed and confused at one meeting out of many was not only false, but poor rationale for his ouster.
>
> "It appears to suggest that I was removed because I was disabled — based on one occasion out of hundreds," he said.
>
> "I would never say President Obama doesn't have the capacity to continue to serve because of his (statement) that there are 57 states," Walpin said, adding that the same holds for Vice President Biden and his "many express confusions that have been highlighted by the media." Obama mistakenly said once on the campaign trail that he had traveled to 57 states.

When tyranny comes to a nation, the honest men are the first against the wall.

The Pugnacious Irishman invites Christians to defend their faith

June 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

His post is boldly entitled “Walking Around with our Pants Around our Ankles”.

A little bit about Rich: his background is in teaching and his most recent post was in a school in a very rough part of Los Angeles.

Rich makes an important point about the need to find people who disagree with you and engage them. You won’t find them in your house or in your church. You’ve got to go to the workplace or the university campus and start making friends with them to find out what they believe and whether they are open to new ideas!

Rich reacts to my post from yesterday here:

…Another thing is that when people are caught in an environment where they have to defend God’s honor, they suddenly become starved for the kind of training Wintery advocates. If you regularly find yourself amidst a bunch of atheists, agnostics, and Muslims who are constantly challenging you on the reasonableness of your faith, chances are, you’ll start searching for answers pretty quickly. Hey, it happened to me. In other words, if your pants fall down, buying a belt suddenly moves up a few notches on your priority list.

The kicker is that many people never experience that felt need; they are sequestered in an environment of comfort. A decent number go to great lengths to maintain this bubble, avoiding being exposed. They are walking around in closeted quarters, with the shutters drawn and drapes pulled down, oblivious to the fact that their trousers are hanging around their ankles.

Many people assume apologetics is all about merely “winning an argument,” but nothing could be further from the truth. WK puts it in the proper perspective: it’s about defending God’s honor in public. If someone were clowning on your spouse at work, wouldn’t you want to stand up and say something?

That’s the first key point about apologetics: protecting God’s reputation as a way of participating in a friendship with God. He’s also got some book recommendations in his post for beginnners and I could not agree more. I own every stinking one of them!

And he’s got an update here, where he makes the second key point about apologetics.

Excerpt:

> Addition to today’s post: I don’t think I underscored enough another motivation of apologetics–love.
>
> **Why defend the faith? Because we love our neighbors.**

This is a good point for Christians who value love. *Apologetics is love*. It’s one way that

you can love your neighbor. God expects us all to spend some time responding to his overtures to us in nature, in conscience, and in history. It does no good to help atheists to ignore God’s calling by keeping silent about God’s will for that person.

Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism

June 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan

This article is long! You will have to print it out and read it in little bits. It took me 15 minutes to read!

The title is "How Will Conservatism Become Credible Again?". Paul Ryan is one of the "ideas" conservatives in the Congress. His job is to think up new bills and initiatives that reflect conservative ideals.

Let's learn about America

Here, he talks about how the conservative vision of government values liberty and personal responsibility over equality of outcomes and "social justice":

> Nowhere was the Western tradition epitomized more memorably than in the Declaration of Independence. By "the laws of nature and of nature's God," all human beings are created equal…not in height, or skills, or knowledge, or color, or other nonessentials…but equal in certain inalienable rights – to live, to be free, and to fulfill their best individual potential, including the right to the "material" such as property needed to do this. Each individual is unique and possesses rights and dignity. There are no group or collective rights in the Declaration. Nor does basic human equality imply "equal result." It means "equal opportunity": every person has a right not to be prevented from pursuing happiness, from developing his or her potential. The results should differ from one to another because "justice" or "fairness" gives each individual what each has earned or merited.
>
> The great conservative purpose of government is to secure these natural rights

> under popular consent. Protecting every person's life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness should be the great and only mission of legitimate government.

He talks about how the Constitution's purpose is to enable prosperity through free market capitalism:

> The authors of the Constitution surrounded economic freedom with a multitude of guarantees: freedom of contract against government interference… private property rights… patents and copyrights…standard weights, measures, and monetary values…punishment of counterfeits…freedom under law for interstate and foreign commerce…enforcement of agreements in law courts… uniform bankruptcy laws, and other protections.
>
> They promoted Smithian free markets to produce resources for strong military defenses and to keep America free of economic dependency on other nations. But they also expected commercial life to encourage certain moral qualities: personal responsibility to work, save, create businesses, hire employees, pay off their debts, earn the rewards of merited effort, moderate appetites, practice honesty and justice in business dealings, self-discipline, industriousness, timeliness, plus trust and confidence in other persons.

And he talks about how America is a country where social conservatives and fiscal conservatives should be united:

> A "libertarian" who wants limited government should embrace the means to his freedom: thriving mediating institutions that create the moral preconditions for economic markets and choice. A "social issues" conservative with a zeal for righteousness should insist on a free market economy to supply the material needs for families, schools, and churches that inspire moral and spiritual life. In a nutshell, the notion of separating the social from the economic issues is a false choice. They stem from the same root.

Did you know that Republicans believe in the right to life, the sanctity of marriage and the public expression of faith? These values were present at our founding, and Republicans hold to them because they are American values.

> Since America's first political principles establish a high but limited mission of securing the natural rights of all, conservatives should expect government to fulfill that entire mission…by enforcing every human being's **natural right to life**, which is the first clause of the social compact that formed America, the Declaration of Independence.
>
> A credible conservatism will also seek to secure the **privileged legal status of marriage**. The traditional family must be protected as the indispensable mediating institution for developing the moral qualities of a free people.
>
> A credible conservatism will **resist the purging of faith from the public square**. It will make public space for the practice of faith because belief is a

> central pillar of a free and prosperous society. Nor can government welfare programs substitute for the faith-based love that unites citizens in free bonds of charity and compassion.

Recommended for my readers from at home, or abroad, who need a refresher on the vision of conservatism… or a breath of fresh air from the fetid leftist gasses emanating from the White House.

More articles on conservatism from the New Ledger are here.

We haven't forgotten our principles.

Understanding Obama's health care reform bill… with video clips!

June 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sen. Tom Coburn

Tom Coburn

These video clips feature one of the conservatives I like, Senator Tom Coburn! (H/T Club for Growth)

Tom Coburn is a medical doctor, and ran a medical business. He gives you the inside view of why American health care needs changing, and why big government socialism is not the answer. This is not *just* a lesson in health care. Listen closely – this is a lesson in economics, and it shows the vision of free-market capitalism, liberty and personal responsibility that drives the policies of the right-wing.

Part 1:

Part 2:

And here is Ronald Reagan talking about the loss of liberty that follows when a country adopts socialized medicine. (H/T Club for Growth)

This is the easiest way to learn about health care policy.

Note: If you prefer to learn about socialized vs consumer-driven health care with podcasts, click here.

More details from a think tank

Here is a comprehensive treatment of the problems of health care today, and the right way to reform it. This article by the founder of the Heritage Foundation, Edwin Feulner, Ph.D., is so long that it is exactly the kind of thing that lefties like commenter Jerry won't have the patience to read! This is the best thing to read in this post if you can only read one thing.

Here is are some of the myths he corrects:

If you like your health care package you can keep it

"…a public plan will lead many employers to drop private health coverage for their workers and dump them into the public plan… According to independent analyses, as many as 119 million Americans could end up in a public plan…."

The end goal is not a single payer system

"…The "single payer" here is Uncle Sam, using taxpayers' money, and not just paying the bills but calling the shots and deciding what care every American will get—or not get…."

The end goal is not a single payer system

"…Congress's own watchdog–have issued preliminary estimates that the cost could be high as $2 trillion over 10 years, with most of that borrowed money…"

The quality of your health care will get better

"…Medicare has huge gaps in coverage. Medicaid's quality is notoriously bad. They both offer substandard care compared to most private insurance plans…"

And of course his letter also gives conservative solutions to the problem of rising health care costs. The Heritage Foundation is my favorite think tank. Conservative across the board – not just on fiscal issues.

James Demint

And conservatives like James Demint are getting this message out to the public, too.

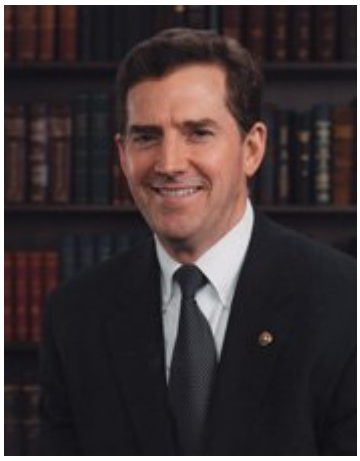

Sen. James Demint

Here is Senator Demint's article in Forbes magazine. He answers the question: "What is the cause of our current health care problems? Is it the free market? Or is it government intervention into the free market?"

Excerpt:

> …Washington politicians make it hard for individuals to own their own health insurance policies. Government gives tax benefits to businesses to provide group health plans to employees, but offers no such tax benefit to individuals who try to buy their own plan for themselves or their family. Government prevents consumers from shopping for better plans across state lines, which limits competition and drives up prices. Government health care programs like Medicare and Medicaid pay doctors and hospitals less than the full value of their

> services, and the difference gets priced into the higher premiums paid by people who do have insurance.
>
> In other words, politicians deliberately restrict consumer choice, drive up prices, underpay doctors and hinder both access and portability. Then they turn around, blame the free market for the health care crisis and say the only way to save the system is a government takeover of health insurance in the form of a so-called "public option."

And he's goes on to explain conservative solutions to the problem of rising health care costs. A great article from one of my favorite conservatives.

The real costs of Obama's plan

Keith Hennessey has an analysis of the costs of Obama's new government-controlled, rationed health care plan. You may have heard that the CBO has issued an estimate about the costs of Obama's plan: 1 Trilliion over 10 years. Keith says that the number is actually closer to 1.3 trillion.

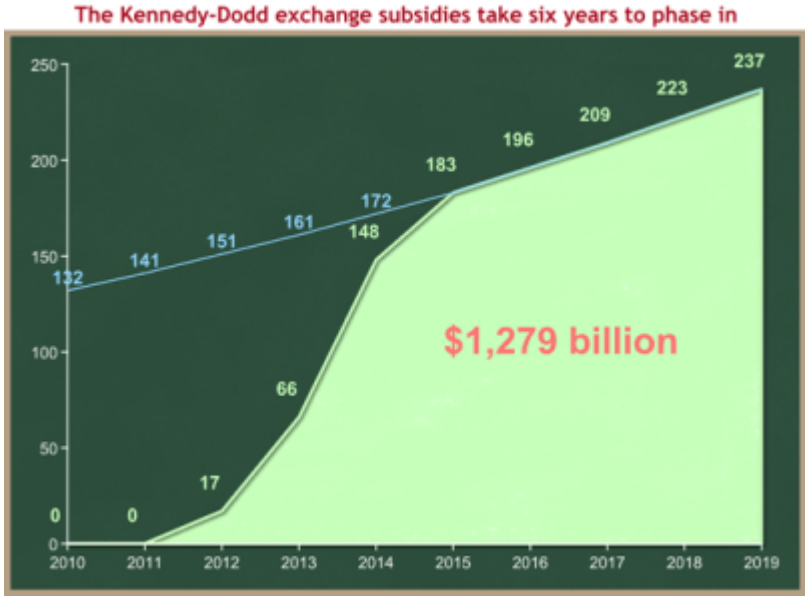

Health care subsidies over 6 years

Keith took at closer look at the CBO's 1 Trillion estimate, which includes only ONE area where money will need to be spent (subsidies for the poor). He found that many items in the Democrats' health care bill were not included in the CBO estimate!

Excerpt:

1. The budgetary effects of neither the individual mandate nor the employer mandate are included in this score. I think CBO will find these provisions would raise revenues for the government and reduce the deficit. While the leaked draft of Kennedy-Dodd was specific about the employer mandate, the official version has just the placeholder language, "Policy under discussion." Both mandates leave wide discretion for the Secretaries of Treasury and HHS to create a level and structure of taxation "to accomplish the goal of enhancing participation in qualifying coverage." It is extremely difficult for CBO and their tax counterparts, the Joint Committee on

Taxation (JCT) staff, to estimate something like this.
2. The estimate does not include the budgetary cost of expanding Medicaid to childless adults with income below 150% of the poverty line. I expect that this will add hundreds of billions of dollars to the cost over the next decade.
3. It does not include the requirement that health plans define "children" as dependents up to age 27. I expect this will raise costs.
4. It does not include the effects of the Medical Advisory Council's ability to define benefits, or the requirements that plans rebate premiums to the insured. I think this too will raise costs.
5. It does not include the budget effect of having a "public plan option."
6. There are a bunch of other programs in the bill, including a new disability program and lots of new public health programs.

Keith will be posting more articles on his blog as he calculates the real costs of Obama's plan.

The bottom line

Obama's health care plan is simply "Obama knows best". You will pay money to Obama, based on your income, (not on your health risks). And then Obama will decide whether government will give you any health care. He'll probably make these decisions the same way he makes other decisions: based on whether you are one of his unionized supporters, whether you donated to Democrats, or whether you investigate his corrupt dealings.

Obama thinks that you are more satisfied with the service at your local DMV than you are with Amazon.com. And he plans to make sure that you are dealing with government bureaucrats, not with private businesses, when you need health care. Who gives you better service? The government, that isn't trying to compete with anyone to meet your needs? Or private businesses, which do need to compete to earn your business?

Further study

You can watch some videos containing horror stories from countries that have adopted single-payer health care, too.

My previous post on socialized medicine linked to even more horror stories from other countries with socialized medicine.

http://www.youtube.com/swf/l.swf?iurl=http%3A%2F%2Fi2.ytimg.com%2Fvi%2FAe2XEl5952A%2Fhqdefault.jpg&fexp=903902%2C902800&title=McCain%3A+%27This+is+a+joke%27+on+health+care&length_seconds=172&avg_rating=5.0&video_id=Ae2XEl5952A&showinfo=0&allow_embed=1&swf=http%3A%2F%2Fs.ytimg.com%2Fyt%2Fswf%2Fcps-vfl103922.swf&sk=_0zSL5HkbumJPmD211uCey-iMAHfrOKbC&fs=0&allow_ratings=1&rel=1&amp=&cr=US&eurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.verumserum.com%2F%3Fp%3D6405&showsearch=0

What can the political contributions of journalists tell us about media bias?

June 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Commenter ECM sent me this link from Ace of Spades.

The story is from Riehl Worldview.

Excerpt:

> In the face of ABC's pending Obamanation on health care reform, that's especially troubling given the tremendous imbalance in ABC's record of recent political contributions.
>
> None of the four McCain contributors, which includes Elizabeth Hasselbeck, are from journalists at ABC. Meanwhile, approximately 130 ABC employees gave money to Obama. That's close to a 33 – 1 ratio. Yet, ABC officially announced that they and they alone would manage what questions were asked of Obama about his program, including from the audience.
>
> It strikes me as simply unwise to entrust such a significant portion of the debate around a policy that will impact American lives, potentially forever, to just one organization with such an imbalance in their political views.
>
> An analysis of contributions to the Obama and McCain campaign shows that ABC employees contributed more than $160,000 to the Obama campaign versus less than $5,000 to the McCain campaign.

And ECM also sent me this link on Ace of Spades.

Apparently, the left-wing New York Times and the Wall Street Journal are re-writing headlines to make Obama look better, despite polls showing that the public is growing increasingly disenchanted with his amateurish bumbling.

Ace writes:

> The NYT poll I hadn't heard of, so I clicked on it. The headline…
> **Obama Poll Sees Doubt on Budget and Health Care**
>
> …But the article originally ran with a more interesting headline, as the Rhetorican notes.
> **In Poll, Obama Is Seen as Ineffective on the Economy**
>
> …Similarly, the WSJ article on their own poll went from…
> **Rising Doubts Threaten to Overshadow Obama's Agenda**
>
> to…
> **Public Wary of Deficit, Economic Intervention**

Here are my previous posts on media bias at the left-wing ABCNews and the left-wing MSNBC.

Friday night funny: Fleeing communism, velcro, single-payer health care

June 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the funniest thing I have seen all week! (H/T Pugnacious Irishman)

There's a little grown-up content at the end, there, so watch out!

And this one was sent to me by commenter ECM:

I found that YouTube version of the video on the Heritage Foundation blog.

Scott Ott of Scrappleface.com wrote a hilarious satire of Obama voters for the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> While opinion polls indicate a growing concern among Americans that their new president has no coherent plan to reverse the nation's economic woes, and lacks the principled conviction to boldly address crises in Iran, North Korea and the Middle East, still a majority say they love "the idea of an Obama presidency."
>
> A new Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll shows that 56 percent still of approve of President Barack Obama "as a theoretical concept," even as support for his handling of the economy and foreign policy has slipped in recent days.
>
> **…In an unrelated poll, 79 percent of women said they would "continue to date a hot guy with a great car even if he made me pay his way into the movies and I lived in constant fear that his reckless driving was going to get me killed."**

My God, Scott has talent. If you feel that the people who voted for Obama made a mistake, and you want to make fun of them, this is your article. You will laugh, and then you will cry.

Scott is actually on fire this week:

- Obama: 46 Million in America Live Without Haircare
- Obama Extends Job Benefits to Gay Partners, BFFs
- If Sanctions Fail, U.N. Threatens to Nuke North Korea

These are all very funny posts.

Frank J. Fleming of IMAO.us has a post up at Pajamas Media:

Excerpt:

> Okay, liberals, I have a radical idea I want to run by you: the Iranian government is bad and worthy of some of your outrage.
>
> Yeah, I know, it sounds crazy. Iran is not a beauty queen speaking out against gay marriage, or Sarah Palin. Why in the world would you want to direct any

> scorn towards a brutal theocracy seeking nuclear weapons? It’s not obvious, but let me explain.

The second page is even funnier than the first! I wish Frank was still writing “filthy lies” about Glenn Reynolds and his puppy-blending habit. That was really funny! Maybe I should try that. I could write a filthy lie about Richard Dawkins, claiming he’s really a secret Southern Baptist, who just loves to sing praise hymns. I could photoshop some fake evidence of Dawkins with his hands raised and eyes closed in church. I think that would work!

Happy Friday!

Understanding the effect of sex on your brain chemistry

June 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article was sent to me by my friend Andrew. It's by Marcia Segelstein.

Marcia is trying to make the same point about sex that Miriam Grossmann made in her book "Unprotected". The point is that although bureaucrats and educrats love to tell people about the riskiness of behaviors like smoking and obesity, they don't tell people the truth about the dangers of casual sex, because they don't want to antagonize special interest groups like feminists and gay activists.

In the article, Marcia talks about the mental effects of casual sex. She talks about dopamine first, but the one I want to tell you about is called oxytocin. It is very important that you parents of young ladies understand this and present this evidence to your daughters. (The male version of this phenomenon is also explained in the article, it's called *vasopressin*).

Excerpt:

> Oxytocin is another important brain chemical we are now learning more about. Oxytocin helps females, in particular, bond with other people. When a new mother breastfeeds her infant, for example, oxytocin floods her brain. The effect is powerful. She feels a strong desire to be with her baby, and is willing to suffer the sleepless nights and inconveniences that come with having a baby.
>
> Oxytocin also helps females bond with men. When a woman and man touch each other in a loving way, oxytocin is released in her brain. It makes her want more of that loving touch, and she begins to feel a bond with her partner. Sexual intercourse leads to the release of even more oxytocin, a desire to repeat the contact, and even stronger bonding. But, like dopamine, oxytocin is values-neutral. It's a chemical reaction, or, as the authors write: "[I]t is an involuntary process that cannot distinguish between a one-night stand and a lifelong soul mate. Oxytocin can cause a woman to bond to a man even during what was expected to be a short-term sexual relationship." So when that short-term relationship ends, the emotional fallout can be devastating, thanks to oxytocin.
>
> Another significant finding about oxytocin is that it produces feelings of trust. That can be good or bad, depending on the situation. "While the hormonal effect of oxytocin is ideal for marriage, it can cause problems for the unmarried woman or girl who is approached by a man desiring sex….[T]he warning is that a woman's brain can cause her to be blindsided by a bad relationship that she thought was good because of the physical contact and the oxytocin response it generates."

This is why Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse says that the only smart sex is married sex.

Otherwise you are just coarsening your own self. Neil Simpson calls this the duct tape theory of sex. He explains why sex is like duct tape here. Don't order your children around – give them the data so they understand the *why* of chastity.

How government forces private firms out of business with predatory pricing

June 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article on Fox News' Forum is by John Lott. He explains the threat of predatory pricing as it relates to Obama's health care plan.

First, Lott explains the stated goal of Obama's plan:

> President Obama is selling government health insurance to the American people as the way to save money. That government health insurance will merely provide competition to keep private insurance companies from gouging their customers.

But here is the problem with a parallel system run by the government:

> There are a couple of problems with Obama's argument. Government is just not known for its cost effectiveness or quality. And the way for government enterprises to survive is with massive taxpayer subsidies and charging customers prices below the firm's actual costs, driving more efficient private firms out of business. These subsidies mean that when government enterprises "win" they do so by driving more efficient private firms out of business.

Here is an an example of how it works with USPS vs Fedex:

> The U.S. Postal Service would often increase its first-class mail rate, where it had a monopoly, to raise money to subsidize its overnight delivery service where it faced stiff competition. For example, it raised first-class mail to thirty-three cents in January 1999 and simultaneously reduced the price of domestic overnight express mail from $15.00 to $13.70, even though it was already losing money at the $15.00 rate. The price, which was lowered in response to increasingly successful competition in overnight delivery from FedEx and UPS Overnight, remained below $15.00 for the next seven years. Clearly the Postal Service was not able to drive its competitors out of business with this maneuver, in part because its on-time delivery record and quality was poorer.
>
> The Postal Service lost money on its overnight deliveries despite advantages that FedEx and UPS could only dream of. The Postal Service is exempt from paying state sales, property and income taxes. And it uses some of the most expensive real estate in the country — rent-free. The competition that Obama advocates between government and private insurance companies isn't going to be any fairer.

The government can run huge deficits, effectively transferring money from the productive private sector into their parallel public competitor, with the end goal being complete control of consumer purchases. Obama intends to run private companies out of business

so that you have only one place where you can go to purchase health care: OBAMA. And you will do anything he tells you in order to get that health care.

It’s all about controlling your behavior by taking your money and then restricting your access to services. The end goal is that everyone will have equal life outcomes regardless of how hard they work, and how risky and/or immoral their lifestyle. Democrats do not trust you to keep the money you earn, and to spend your money on the things that you want. They think government knows best.

In his book “Freedomnomics”, Lott has even more examples of predatory pricing. I recommend that book, especially for the chapter on abortion and crime. Pro-lifers will find the book very useful. It’s important for people to understand that the more involved government gets in the free market, the less liberty we have as consumers.

What is the Chief of the Human Rights Commission like?

June 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was browsing on "The Blog of Walker" and I found some links to a speech given by Jennifer Lynch, the head fascist at the Canadian Human Rights Commission. It's interesting because she is exactly the kind of person that I would expect Obama to put in charge as the Free Speech Czar, given his record of suppressing dissent.

Take a look at his post:

> First there was the speech.
>
> …Now she's actually going to go mano-a-chicko with Ezra Levant on the Roy Green Show! Well…sort of. I guess the excitement would be too much for her delicate constitution, so she'll be on the show after Ezra's had his say, or even before – it doesn't really matter as long as she doesn't have to deal with that icky fellow who's been keeping her up at night with head-aches and upset stomach these past few months (although I'm just guessing as to that).

Mark Steyn links to other responses to the the speech. But let's focus on Ezra Levant's response.

The speech given by Canada's Chief Fascist

Here is a post written by free speech activist Ezra Levant about Lynch's hate-filled speech:

> On Monday, Jennifer Lynch, the chief commissar of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, gave a speech to her fellow censors at the human rights industry's annual trade show in Montreal. It was such a grotesque speech, any self-respecting government ought to fire her for uttering it. It revealed Lynch's complete misunderstanding of the nature of human rights, the right of citizens to question their government, and the government's proper attitude towards peaceful criticism.
>
> It was the speech of an angry bigot.
>
> It showed Lynch to be temperamentally unsuitable for any public office, especially a prosecutorial office with powers similar to those of real police. She's bitter, vindictive, paranoid and motivated by anger and vengeance. If she was a real cop, answerable to an internal affairs branch, she'd be put on leave and investigated for her rage-filled rant.
>
> Lynch's speech was that of a bureaucrat at war with Canadian citizens. It was a speech of a bully who seeks the power to destroy those who oppose her.
>
> … Lynch's speech, in which she catalogues her enemies and denounces them, was a formal, public utterance, vetted by the CHRC's half-dozen PR staff. It was

> clearly written by Lynch herself – the personal venom of it just couldn't be faked.

He then goes on to provide excerpts of the speech that are particularly hateful and bigoted. Witness the secular-left in their full fascist flowering! Unhinged and unmasked. This is what they learn in university – that there way is the right way and that all dissent to their agenda proceeds from racism, sexism, etc.

My friend Andrew sent me an article from Canada's National Post about her speech.

Excerpt:

> Contrast such criticism, though, with the chill writers and other public figures feel knowing that if their words offend any minority favoured by a rights commission, the commissioners may, on behalf of the complainant (and at taxpayers' expense), compel testimony, seize documents, search private offices and impose fines and other penalties. The CHRC, too, has a frighteningly undemocratic 100% conviction rate in hate-speech cases.

These laws were brought in by the secular-left in Canada. We just elected the secular left here in the United States. Can we expect the same kind of suppression of free speech from Obama?

Recall that the Democrats have already put forward a hate crime bill and a bill to criminalize blogging, with sentences up to 2 years. The hate crimes bill passed the House, while the blog-crime bill is still in committee.

Will Canada's Chief Fascist debate?

Ezra "debated" her on Saturday on the radio. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

But she would not go against him head-to-head. Instead she wanted to speak after him, so that she could not be corrected or rebutted. There you see the full expression of the left – they cannot stand that you are allowed to talk back to them, and they want to silence you – regardless of evidence.

This is how Darwinism and Global Warming are being put through by the secular-left right now. Stifle dissent, choke off debate, malign your opponent's motives, coerce them with the force of government.

I will update this post with Ezra's reflections on the "debate".

Further study

- Mark Steyn radio interview and previous Ezra Levant debate
- Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn on Milt Rosenberg's radio show
- Ezra Levant videos from the Michael Coren TV show, here.
- Evan Sayet's speeches on how progressives think

CRISIS! Obama cuts off funding for pro-democracy movement in Iran!

June 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why did Obama cut off her funding?

Saturday news

Obama cuts funding for pro-democracy groups in Iran. He's finally choosing a side!

From Newsmax:

> Newsmax has learned that **the Obama administration also has zeroed out funding for pro-democracy programs inside Iran** from the State Department budget for fiscal 2010, just as protests in Iran are ramping up.
>
> Funding for pro-democracy programs began in 2004, when Congress earmarked $1.5 million of the State Department budget for "educational, humanitarian, and non-governmental organizations and individuals inside Iran to support the advancement of democracy and human rights in Iran."
>
> The funding ramped up dramatically two years later, when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice requested $75 million for pro-democracy programs. More than half of the $66.1 million Congress finally appropriated went to expand U.S. government-funded Persian language broadcasting services at Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.
>
> But **no money has been earmarked for such programs in the administration's fiscal 2010 foreign operations budget request**. Congressional sources told Newsmax they doubted that a Democrat-controlled Congress would add it when the budget comes before a committee next week.

Iranian fascists shoot women and student protesters dead, *on camera*. Graphic videos at the linked story.

Iranian fascists beat women and student protesters, *on camera.* Graphic video at the linked story.

Iranian fascists shoot a young man on the street, *on camera.* Graphic video at the linked story.

Iranian fascists open fire on crowds of pro-democracy protesters.

Michelle Malkin has photos here.

Hot Air reports that Obama takes a leisurely trip to the ice cream parlor.

Obama's tepid response

Here is Obama's lame, insecure, moral equivalence, moral relativist, politically correct response:

> "The Iranian government must understand that the world is watching. We mourn each and every innocent life that is lost," Obama said in a statement.

Something tells me that Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush would have gone a lot further. But those two are coming from a worldview where humans have certain inalienable rights, grounded by a Creator, and that no one has a right to take away those rights. Reagan and Bush were not afraid to speak divisively in order to condemn evil, and praise the good. Is that so hard for Democrats to do?

Hot Air notes that even the extremist left-wing web site "The Nation" is criticizing Obama's response to Iranian fascism.

Excerpt: (H/T Hot Air)

> President Obama's tepid response to the evidence the Iranian election was stolen from the people of that country by current president President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his thuggish allies is disappointing. …
>
> The president says he entertains "deep concerns about the election" in Iran. Well, who doesn't? Expressing concern is "nice," it's "diplomatic"–in the worst sense–but it is not sufficient to the circumstance…

The Nation article also has some nice citations of conservative French leader Sarkozy, who has courage, moral conviction, and moral clarity.

ECM sent me this link to a post on Ace of Spades, regarding the Department of Defense written exam. Do you know know what counts as a form of "low-level terrorism" in Obama's regime? Is it attacking the Pentagon? IEDs? Hate crimes? or *PROTESTS?* Click here to find out.

Ralph Peters

Very angry column is here. (H/T Berman Post)

Excerpt:

> SILENCE is complicity. Our president's refusal to take a forthright moral stand on the side of the Iranian freedom marchers is read in Tehran as a blank check for the current regime.
>
> The fundamentalist junta has begun arresting opposition figures, with regime mouthpieces raising the prospect of the death penalty. Inevitably, there are claims that dissidents have been "hoarding weapons and explosives."
>
> Foreign media reps are under house arrest. Cellphone frequencies are jammed. Students are killed and the killings disavowed.
>
> And our president is "troubled," but doesn't believe we should "meddle" in Iran's internal affairs. (Meddling in *Israel's* domestic affairs is just fine, though.)
>
> We just turned our backs on freedom.

This article by Ralph Peters is MUST-READ. We used to be a great nation that cared about the plight of the oppressed peoples abroad. But not anymore.

The Berman Post post has a HUGE number of links, if you're into this story, as I am.

Republican Mike Pence

His resolution condemning the Islamic fascists brutal suppression of peaceful pro-democracy protesters passed in the House.

His speech can be viewed here:

Excerpt:

> "This resolution simply states that the House of Representatives expresses its support for all Iranian citizens who embrace the values of freedom, human rights, civil liberties and the rule of law. It also condemns the ongoing violence against demonstrators by the government of Iran and pro-government militias, as well as the ongoing government suppression of independent electronic communication through interference with the Internet and cell phones. And lastly, it affirms the universality of individual rights and the importance of democratic and fair elections.

His full statement following the passage of his pro-democracy bill is here. I should just note that Mike Pence is a devout Christian, and that human rights and human dignity are grounded by his worldview. He is saying such things because it is rational for him to say such things, on his worldview of Christian theism.

How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?

June 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the American Spectator provides the answer.

Excerpt:

> Left-wing activists are indignant at obscene oil company profits, hefty CEO bonuses, and sweet golden parachutes — but what about expansion of the No. 1 violator of human rights in the United States?
>
> No, it's not Dick Cheney and the CIA. It's Planned Parenthood. The abortion giant took home $85 million in "excess of revenue over expenses" (a nifty way of saying profits) and had an operating budget of over $1 billion for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, according to its latest annual report. Included in that budget was $350 million in "government grants and contracts" (an equally nifty way of saying your tax dollars). An increase in the number of abortions performed helped fuel the profits.

Should government money be going to special interest groups that helped Obama to get elected?

> Uncle Sam helps, too. The federal government has morphed into Planned Parenthood's sugar daddy, and the co-dependency is only going to get worse in the age of Obama. Fully one-third of the organization's revenue last year came from the government, compared with less than one-fourth from private contributions. If Planned Parenthood can't get your money voluntarily, its advocates in Congress will coercively.
>
> That's why limited government advocates have a stake in the pro-life cause. On April 15, over one million Americans flocked to state capitals, public parks, and town halls to protest runaway government spending — and rightly so. Although most of the movement's furor was directed at bailouts and stimulus packages, government's love tryst with the abortion lobby should be exhibit A in the tea partiers' future arsenal.
>
> The first target should be Obama's executive order rescinding the Mexico City Policy, which had ensured that American taxpayer funds would never be used for overseas abortions. The move didn't get much ink because of the media's preoccupation with the economic crisis, but it stands as an example of both Obama's abortion radicalism and intention, even in a troubled economy, to throw public money at groups that helped him get elected.

Yet another reason why fiscal conservatives should be social conservatives.

Related posts

- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- House Republicans win vote to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Rep. Mike Pence drafts amendment to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

Was Hitler a Christian? Is Nazism similar to Christianity?

June 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Muddling Towards Maturity links to a few articles by Jonah Goldberg, a Jewish author who wrote a lengthy history of fascism that was on the New York Times Bestseller list for several months. Since Goldberg is Jewish, I think it's fair to say that we will get a unbiased answer to this question from someone who spent a lot of time studying it for his book.

Goldberg's posts are here and here. He reproduces the FULL excerpts from his book *Liberal Fascism* that deal with the relationship between Hitler & Christianity. I will be giving you excerpts from the excerpts, but you must click through to read the chapter.

So, let's take a look at what Hitler actually did in his policies.

Let's start with the first post.

1) Hitler wanted Christianity removed from the public square

> Like the engineers of that proverbial railway bridge, the Nazis worked relentlessly to replace the nuts and bolts of traditional Christianity with a new political religion. The shrewdest way to accomplish this was to co-opt Christianity via the Gleichschaltung while at the same time shrinking traditional religion's role in civil society.

Do you want Christianity removed from the public square? If so, then you are like Hitler.

Do you want to minimize Christianity's role in civil society? If so, then you are like Hitler.

2) Hitler banned the giving of donations to churches

> Hitler banned religious charity, crippling the churches' role as a counterweight to the state. Clergy were put on government salary, hence subjected to state authority. "The parsons will be made to dig their own graves," Hitler cackled. "They will betray their God to us. They will betray anything for the sake of their miserable little jobs and incomes."

Do you want to ban charitable contributions to churches? If so, then you are like Hitler.

3) Hitler replaced Christian celebrations with celebrations of the state

> Following the Jacobin example, the Nazis replaced the traditional Christian calendar. The new year began on January 30 with the Day of the Seizure of Power. Each November the streets of central Munich were dedicated to a Nazi Passion play depicting Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch. The martyrdom of Horst Wessel and his "old fighters" replaced Jesus and the apostles. Plays and official histories were rewritten to glorify pagan Aryans bravely fighting against Christianizing foreign armies. Anticipating some feminist pseudo history, witches became martyrs to the bloodthirsty oppression of Christianity.

Do you want to replace Christian traditions and holidays with secular traditions and holidays? If so, then you are like Hitler.

4) Hitler favored the complete elimination of Christianity

> When some Protestant bishops visited the Fuhrer to register complaints, Hitler's rage got the better of him. "Christianity will disappear from Germany just as it has done in Russia . . . The Germanrace has existed without Christianity for thousands of years . . . and will continue after Christianity has disappeared . . . We must get used to the teachings of blood and race."

Do you favor the complete elimination of Christianity? If so, then you are like Hitler.

5) Hitler favored the removal of mandatory prayers in schools

> In 1935 mandatory prayer in school was abolished…

Do you favor the removal of prayer from schools? If so, then you are like Hitler.

6) Hitler favored the banning of Christmas carols and nativity plays

> …and in 1938 carols and Nativity plays were banned entirely.

Do you favor the banning of Christmas carols and nativity plays? If so, then you are like Hitler.

7) Hitler abolished religious instruction for children

> By 1941 religious instruction for children fourteen years and up had been abolished altogether….

Do you favor abolishing religious instruction for children? If so, then you are like Hitler.

(Now we are on to the second post)

8) Hitler opposed the ideas of universal truth and objective moral absolutes

> …Just as the Nazi attack on Christianity was part of a larger war on the idea of universal truth, whole postmodern cosmologies have been created to prove that traditional religious morality is a scam, that there are no fixed truths or "natural" categories, and that all knowledge is socially constructed.

Do you oppose the idea of universal truth? If so, then you are like Hitler.

Do you oppose the idea of objective moral absolutes? If so, then you are like Hitler.

One more that Goldberg doesn't mention

Hitler was against homsechooling and school choice. He favored compulsory government-run (public) schools.

> "The Youth of today is ever the people of tomorrow. For this reason we have set before ourselves the task of innoculating our youth with the spirit of this community of the people at a very early age, at an age when human beings are still unperverted and therefore unspoiled. This Reich stands, and it is building

> itself up for the future, upon its youth. And this new Reich will give its youth to no one, but will itself take youth and give to youth its own education and its own upbringing."

Do you oppose homeschooling and school choice? If so, then you are like Hitler.

Conclusion

It doesn't rally matter what a person says in his public speeches, because politicians lie all the time in order to get votes from particular groups, or to maintain their popularity. We need to look at what policies a politician actually enacts to see what he really believes. For example, Barack Obama had a number of pro-life advertisements during his campaign, but he is the most pro-abortion President ever in his actual policies.

Adolf Hitler was a man influenced by two big ideas: evolution and socialism. His party was the national SOCIALIST party. He favored a strong role for the state in interfering with the free market. He was in favor of regulating the the family so that the state could have a bigger influence on children. And he favored the idea of survival of the fittest. His ideas are 100% incompatible with Christianity and capitalism, two ideas which fit together hand in glove.

How about you? Do you lean to the left in your politics? Did you vote for fiscally-liberal Democrats who redistribute wealth from "the greedy rich" to the deserving poor by government coercion? Do you believe in evolution?

Does your belief system ground inalienable rights, including the right to life, which would make mass murder irrational? Christianity says that all men are made in the image of God, for the purpose of knowing God. Do you believe that? Or do you believe that we are just bundles of molecules here by accident?

Further study

I did a series of posts a while back that asked the question: is morality compatible with atheism? Do concepts like moral values, moral duties, free will, moral accountability, and moral significance rationally grounded by atheism?

I did a comparison of a consistent authentic Christian, William Wilberforce, with a consistent authentic evolutionist, Adolf Hitler. These two are totally opposed in every way, because their worldviews are diametrically opposed. Another prominent Christian at the time, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, also opposed Hitler and was executed for his part in a plot to assassinate Hitler.

In another post, I asked whether Christians or atheists are more responsible for the mass murders of history. I did the body count and the analysis of worldviews to determine which worldview doesn't oppose the murder of millions of innocent people.

In another post, I looked at the ideas that kill millions of innocent people, including economic theories, scientific theories and social theories. Is there a common denominator between these ideas that have killed millions of people?

Here is an audio lecture by Jay Richards on the "Myths Christians Believe about Wealth and Poverty". His new book is called "Money, Greed and God: Why Capitalism is the

Solution and Not the Problem”. To understand what capitalism is, you can watch this lecture about the book. Here is a series of 4 sermons by Wayne Grudem on the relationship between Christianity and economics?.(a PDF outline is here)

12-year-old girl sues Dad for grounding her… and wins!

June 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a story from Canada that shows why we need to be careful about enacting compassionate, non-judgmental, feminized social policies.The more you reduce the male role and male authority in the family, the fewer men will want to take on the responsibilities of being a Dad. We need to be careful not to replace husbands and fathers with big government social programs and intrusive, anti-male courts.

Excerpt:

> A Gatineau father lost an appeal Monday after a lower court ruled last June that he had issued a too severe punishment against his 12-year-old daughter.
>
> The case involves a divorced man who says that in 2008 he caught the girl, over whom he had custody, surfing websites he had forbidden and posting "inappropriate pictures of herself" online. The girl's father told her as a consequence that she would not be allowed to go on her class' graduation trip to Quebec City, even though her mother had already given permission for her to do so.
>
> The girl then contacted a legal-aid lawyer who was involved in the parents' custody battle, who convinced the court to order that the girl be allowed to go on the trip with her class. The father appealed the decision on principle, although his daughter went on the trip in the meantime.
>
> The appeals court reportedly warned in its ruling that the case should not be seen as an open invitation for children to take legal action against their parents when grounded.
>
> The girl now lives with her mother.

There is more to the story.

You may think that this would be overturned on appeal, but the father LOST his appeal, too.

So, what the daughter, wife, prosecuting attorney and judge (all feminists?) are all telling this Dad that he can donate sperm, pay bills, and pay taxes for feminist social programs, but that he cannot PARENT his own children. Somehow, the idea that certain victim groups should have complete autonomy from moral standards, moral judgment and from the consequences of their actions has been enshrined into the law and the government.

- Does anyone care what men want, or should we just be ordered around like little boys?
- Do we really think that state coercion is going to make men be more involved with their marriages and children?

I think that marriage should allow men to express themselves as fathers, just as much as women can express themselves as mothers. Parenting should be an equally shared responsibility, and the father should have as much parental authority as the mother. Equality.

Compassion vs standards

Here is a pretty good article by Jewish scholar Dennis Prager that argues against compassion and for moral standards. He tells a story of a team losing a baseball game 24-7, when the scoreboard is reset to 0-0 DURING THE GAME. He then asks what beliefs would motivate this action.

> As is happening throughout America, compassion trumped all other values.
>
> Truth was the first value compassion trashed. In the name of compassion, the adults in charge decided to lie. The score was not 0-0; it was 24-7.
>
> Wisdom was the second value compassion obliterated. It is unwise to the point of imbecilic to believe that the losing boys were in any way helped by changing the score. On the contrary, they learned lessons that will hamper their ability to mature.

He lists the lessons that the winning and losing boys learned from this compassionate act, and how they will act in the future. Then he continues his list.

> Building character was the third value trumped by compassion. People build character far more through handling defeat than through winning. The human being grows up only when forced to deal with disappointment. We remain children until the day we take full responsibility for our lives.
>
> …The fourth value that compassion denied here was fairness. It is remarkable how often compassion-based liberals speak of "fairness" in formulating social policy given how unfair so many of their policies are. It was entirely unfair to the winning team to have their score expunged, all their work denied. But for the compassion-first crowd, the winning team is like "the rich" who earn "too much" and should therefore be penalized with a higher tax rate; the winning team scored "too many" runs to be allowed to keep them all.

The standards that are undermined by compassion can be moral standards or standards of rationality. The former is under attack from moral relativism, and the latter is under attach from postmodernism. But I guess parents don't really care enough to teach their children about these ideas, and when the children grow up, they vote for the policies that follow from moral relativism and postmodernism: policies of the secular left.

Recall that in my survey of atheists, the guiding principle was not truth, but happiness. Atheists want to feel happy, not to feel obligated to find out the way the world really is, and then to adjust their conduct to this truth. Even if Christianity were proven true, and they were then faced with rational and moral obligations, they would not feel obligated – they would continue to please themselves as before, *anyway.*

UPDATE: ECM send me two additional stories:

- David Warren reflects on how women will suffer most from the feminization of society
- Michael Wilson writes about how government encourages the breakdown of the family

Further study

This week, I blogged about a new study that shows the importance of fathers to the development of children.

Recently, I blogged about how government intrudes into the family and about the myth of "dead-beat Dads". And about how the feminist state's discrimination against male teachers is negatively impacting young men. And there is my series on how Democrat policies discourage marriage: Part 1 is here and Part 2 is here and Part 3 is here.

How is well is Britain's National Health Service working?

June 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK has a two-tier health care system, just like India does. One tier is private, the other is public. The British system is called the National Health Service (NHS). Everyone has to pay into the NHS, but only some people are treated. Since the government is paying for all NHS service, the decision about what will and will not be covered is not left to individuals. The state decides what gets treated or not.

British journalist Melanie Phillips writes about it in her latest column.

Excerpt:

> ...central government should not be making such decisions in the first place. It is wrong for a politician or some Whitehall bean-counter to say people can't have IVF or the latest drug to combat Alzheimer's.
>
> Whether or not these things are efficacious or worth the money is a calculation central government should not be making. It should be no business of the state to tell us what treatments we can and can't have.
>
> But as long as the Government controls the purse-strings, it is entitled to make up the rules. What's wrong is that it does control the purse-strings. It's our money, and we should be entitled to decide how to spend it.
>
> For we now know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Government cannot be trusted to spend it properly. We know about the serial computer debacles.
>
> We know about the huge profligacy and waste, with the idiotic non-jobs of 'diversity outreach co-ordinator' and such-like.
>
> We know that in both health and education, gazillions have been poured straight into a black hole. We know that, while the extra money has undoubtedly brought about some improvements in the NHS, most of it has been wasted.

She also talks about the problem of choice in education in the same article.

Be careful who you trust your money to. Maybe you should be handling these decisions yourself, instead of putting your faith in strangers who get paid regardless of whether you get what you want, or not. Government-run services are not like the free market. You pay and then you pray with government-run social programs. When you buy from a private business, they *have* to meet your needs, or they go out of business.

UPDATE: Neil Simpson has a good article linked in his round-up about how single-payer health care will require that services be rationed.

Is it a good idea to raise taxes on your rich, greedy employer?

June 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's a great idea, if you want to lose your job!

John Jay Ray writes about what it takes to start and run a small business over at Stop the ACLU.

Do people even understand where their job comes from? What kind of person is willing to start their own business? Is the government a help or a hindrance to them? Some people have never even thought about who hires them and pays their salary. I think this article will really help people to start thinking about it.

Excerpt:

> **To All My Valued Employees:**
>
> There have been some rumblings around the office about the future of this company, and more specifically, your job. As you know, the economy has changed for the worse and presents many challenges. However, the good news is this: The economy doesn't pose a threat to your job. What does threaten your job however, is the changing political landscape in this country.
>
> However, let me tell you some little tidbits of fact which might help you decide what is in your best interests. First, while it is easy to spew rhetoric that casts employers against employees, you have to understand that for every business owner there is a Back Story. This back story is often neglected and overshadowed by what you see and hear. Sure, you see me park my Mercedes outside. You've seen my big home at last year's Christmas party. I'm sure; all these flashy icons of luxury conjure up some idealized thoughts about my life.
>
> However, what you don't see is the BACK STORY: I started this company 28 years ago. At that time, I lived in a 300 square foot studio apartment for 3 years. My entire living apartment was converted into an office so I could put forth 100% effort into building a company, which by the way, would eventually employ you. My diet consisted of Ramen Pride noodles because every dollar I spent went back into this company. I drove a rusty Toyota Corolla with a defective transmission. I didn't have time to date.
>
> Often times, I stayed home on weekends, while my friends went out drinking and partying. In fact, I was married to my business — hard work, discipline, and sacrifice. Meanwhile, my friends got jobs. They worked 40 hours a week and made a modest $50K a year and spent every dime they earned. They drove flashy cars and lived in expensive homes and wore fancy designer clothes. Instead of hitting the Nordstrom's for the latest hot fashion item, I was trolling through the discount store extracting any clothing item that didn't look like it was

> birthed in the 70’s. My friends refinanced their mortgages and lived a life of luxury.
>
> I, however, did not. I put my time, my money, and my life into a business with a vision that eventually, some day, I too, will be able to afford these luxuries my friends supposedly had. So, while you physically arrive at the office at 9am, mentally check in at about noon, and then leave at 5pm, I don’t. There is no “off” button for me. When you leave the office, you are done and you have a weekend all to yourself. I unfortunately do not have the freedom. I eat, and breathe this company every minute of the day. There is no rest. There is no weekend. There is no happy hour. Every day this business is attached to my hip like a 1 year old special-needs child.

This is a great article to send to anyone you know who voted Democrat. We need to educate Democrat voters about basic economics so that they never vote Democrat again! Somehow, we have gotten to a point in this country where we think that stealing from people who take tons of risks to provide us all with jobs are greedy and evil, and that we can pillage their profits with impunity.

We need to tell the heroic stories of hard-working entrepreneurs, and stop listening to anti-business government bureaucrats, ivory tower academics, Hollywood stars, and union layabouts. We need to realize that people who understand business make this economy run, not a bunch of perpetual adolescents insulated from real life.

Do affirmative action policies help or hurt quality of service?

June 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Commenter ECM sent me an article from a newspaper in Annapolis, Maryland, written by a professor at the Naval Academy. The author is a professor of English, and he doesn't think that affirmative action provides taxpayers with good quality service. Quality of service is very important because the Navy keeps us safe from harm. They have an important job, so shouldn't we be hiring the best candidates?

Excerpt:

> Midshipmen are admitted by two tracks. White applicants out of high school who are not also athletic recruits typically need grades of A and B and minimum SAT scores of 600 on each part for the Board to vote them "qualified." Athletics and leadership also count.
>
> A vote of "qualified" for a white applicant doesn't mean s/he's coming, only that he or she can compete to win the "slate" of up to 10 nominations that (most typically) a Congress(wo)man draws up. That means that nine "qualified" white applicants are rejected. SAT scores below 600 or C grades almost always produce a vote of "not qualified" for white applicants.
>
> Not so for an applicant who self-identifies as one of the minorities who are our "number one priority." For them, another set of rules apply. Their cases are briefed separately to the board, and SAT scores to the mid-500s with quite a few Cs in classes (and no visible athletics or leadership) typically produce a vote of "qualified" for them, with direct admission to Annapolis. They're in, and are given a pro forma nomination to make it legit.
>
> Minority applicants with scores and grades down to the 300s with Cs and Ds (and no particular leadership or athletics) also come, though after a remedial year at our taxpayer-supported remedial school, the Naval Academy Preparatory School.
>
> By using NAPS as a feeder, we've virtually eliminated all competition for "diverse" candidates: in theory they have to get a C average at NAPS to come to USNA, but this is regularly re-negotiated.

Try and reflect on the fact that when quality goes down in an area where performance means life or death, the consequences for NOT hiring the best could be disastrous.

Does the academic left use rational arguments or intimidation in debates?

June 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Muddling Towards Maturity has found yet another interesting post for us. This post is by David French, who writes at the National Review.

The full post:

> Late yesterday afternoon, I happened to catch a short-but-insightful lecture by one of my favorite Christian apologists, Ravi Zacharias. In the midst of an interesting discussion about the allure of Eastern mysticism in Western culture, he made a fascinating statement (I'm paraphrasing): In the battle of ideas, stigma always beats dogma. In other words, through stigmatization, one can defeat a set of ideas or principles without ever "winning" an argument on the merits.
>
> I was instantly reminded of not just my own experiences in secular higher education, but also the experiences I see and hear every day while defending the rights of students and professors. Why convince when you can browbeat? Why dialogue when you can read entire philosophies out of polite society? That's not to say there aren't intense debates on matters of public policy, but all too often we see social conservatism not so much engaged as assaulted.
>
> I fear that we like to comfort ourselves by saying something like, "kids see through this heavy-handed nonsense." This is simply wishful thinking. Most people don't like to be labeled as "bigots," and they often assume that such overwhelming ideological consensus is the product of considered thought. If "everyone" seems to believe something (especially when "everyone" includes all of your professors and other academic authorities), then mustn't it be true?
>
> Here's a question for conservative parents and teachers: Are we really equipping young people to face the challenges of college if we teach them arguments? Or should we instead be primarily preparing them to face scorn and hate with inner toughness and good cheer? After all, when a professor calls you a "fascist bastard" for defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman, what is he doing if not trying to defeat dogma with stigma?

Below, I'll give my thoughts on this.

My thoughts on the academic left

First of all, from a practical point of view, never take anything except math, engineering or computer science at the university, unless you are really passionate about some other field. Everything else is so politicized that you may be forced to assent to things you do not believe in order to pass. There is not a shred of open-mindedness or tolerance for other viewpoints in today's leftist campuses. It's just fascism all the way.

Secondly, young conservatives and Christians need to get used to staying calm while ideas that they don't agree with are shouted in their faced in the typical vulgar, abusive manner that secular leftists seem to find so fetching these days. The best way to do that is to watch as many debates as possible in advance and get used to sitting still and disagreeing while someone else explains their point of view.

Thirdly, other points of view are only annoying if you have lousy reasons for your own point of view. If you put the time in learning your arguments and evidence, and the best that could be argued against you from the other side, then there should be no problem. Just repeat what Jay Richards said after his debate with atheistic journalist Christopher Hitchens: "a sneer is not an argument, an insult is not evidence". Richards has a Ph.D from Princeton University… Hitchens does not.

Fourthly, we need to start making it common knowledge that atheism does not ground morality and that is a worldview that is responsible for at least a hundred million deaths in the last 100 years alone. That point must be made over and over – when someone claims to be an atheist it should be immediately put to them that meaningful morality is not rationally grounded by their worldview. Don't let them make any moral judgments without challenging them on the foundations of morality.

Example of what students can expect from left-wing fascists on campus

Don Feder has a list of campus violence incidents against conservative speakers in a OneNewsNow article.

Here are a couple of the incidents in his list:

> When she attempted to speak at Penn State in 1999, black conservative Star Parker was forced from the stage. Parker described the experience as "very frightening" and said she "feared for my life." Parker's hatefulness was her contention that single mothers are better off with jobs than on welfare, based on her own experience.
>
> At Emory University in 2006, David Horowitz gave a lecture as part of Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week. To show their outrage at the comparison of radical Islam to fascism, protestors behaved like fascists. A mob of over 300, from groups like Amnesty International, Veterans for Peace, and Students for Justice in Palestine, waved signs and shouted, "Does George Bush respect anybody's rights?" and "Why don't you talk about fascism in America?" mixed with chants of "Racist, sexist, anti-gay, David Horowitz go away!" (They can't reason. But they sure can rhyme.) "Are we going to talk about who killed JFK?" one protestor demanded. (The Zionist-CIA-Karl Rove-AIG Executives cabal?). Horowitz (who had to be escorted off stage) observed, "This is exactly what the fascists did in Germany in the 1930s." True, but at least they weren't hypocrites claiming they were motivated by concern for minority rights.

This is the tolerant, open-minded left. The same tolerant left that brought secular-socialist mass-murdering regimes into power in Russia, Italy and Germany. And they kill millions in

many ways. You will never find right-wing advocates of free market capitalism and human rights treating their opponents like this. We don’t take positions based solely on emotions, so there is no need for us to use violence to win an argument.

ACORN sues whistleblower for exposing their secrets

June 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's learn about ACORN

In case you don't know anything about ACORN, Michelle Malkin can introduce this organization. (post dated June 20, 2008)

Excerpt:

> The radical left-wing, government-subsidized group ACORN uses your tax dollars to engage in voter fraud, enrich itself as part of the mortgage counseling racket, and serve as an activist branch of the Democrat Party.
>
> There's more. Ashley Eiler e-mails about a new report: "The Consumers Rights League just released a collection of whistleblower documents from an ACORN staffer that raise some new concerns about how the organization has established policies for its housing counselors to use undocumented / under-the-table income for processing loan applications from low-income individuals. In addition to pushing these and other exotic loans, the documents reveal that ACORN has engaged in some apparently illegal activities by commingling government funds from its tax-exempt offshoot entities to fight political battles against corporate lenders. "

Who has close ties to this suspicious group? Is it Dick Cheney?

Obama's close relationship with ACORN

Michelle Malkin can tell you all about Obama's close ties with ACORN. (post dated June 25, 2008)

Excerpt:

> Who in Washington will fight to ensure that your money isn't being spent on these radical activities?
>
> Don't bother asking Barack Obama. He cut his ideological teeth working with ACORN as a "community organizer" and legal representative. Naturally, ACORN's political action committee has warmly endorsed his presidential candidacy. According to ACORN, Obama trained its Chicago members in leadership seminars; in turn, ACORN volunteers worked on his campaigns. Obama also sat on the boards of the Woods Fund and Joyce Foundation, both of which poured money into ACORN's coffers. ACORN head Maude Hurd gushes that Obama is the candidate who "best understands and can affect change on the issues ACORN cares about" — like ensuring their massive pipeline to your hard-earned money.
>
> …For excellent background on Obama and ACORN, see Stanley Kurtz's NR piece here, plus City Journal pieces here and here. Also here and here.

This article has some startling numbers on ACORN's operations.

How is ACORN funded?

ACORN is funded by taxpayer money, and Obama's porkulus bill included 4.19 billion dollars for his former employer. (post dated January 26, 2009)

Excerpt:

> House GOP leader John Boehner's office reports that the left-wing voter fraud/illegal alien/housing entitlement racketeers at ACORN "could get billions" more in federal taxpayer funding from the Democrats' stimulus bill.

Remember, these guys are accused of voter fraud, and they are being asked by Obama to go door-to-door to assist with the US census. I'm sure they will not use that opportunity to commit more voter fraud. Not at all.

ACORN sues whistleblower

Remember that whistleblower that I mentioned earlier? Michelle has the latest news.

Excerpt:

> The White House is on a witch hunt against inspectors general who blow the whistle on waste, fraud, and abuse of taxpayer dollars.
>
> And now, taxpayer-subsidized ACORN affiliate Project Vote — where President Obama cut his teeth as a community organizer and learned Leftist intimidation tactics up close and personal — is going after whistleblower Anita MonCrief and an anonymous "John Doe" defendant for posting invaluable documents that reveal the money-shuffling racket.
>
> Obama. ACORN. Project Vote. Corrupt birds of a feather bully together.
>
> The scoop: Project Vote has filed a federal lawsuit against MonCrief for blogging about her experience and knowledge of the non-profit 501(c)(3) organization's partisan and political activities, including coordination with the Obama campaign. Project Vote seeks compensatory damages and exemplary damages "of at least $5 million" and all costs and attorney's fees on trumped-up charges of "trademark infringement" and publication of "trade secrets."

Should we be surprised that the left is willing to bully and intimidate people for exposing them?

ACORN was instrumental in causing the current recession by suing banks so that they would be forced to make loans to people who would never be able to pay the money back. Remember, Democrats caused this recession and Republicans tried to stop them.

What is our exit strategy from the quagmire of this unilateral war?

June 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The world is angry with our policies

Look, even the National Review wants us out of this unilateral war that is making the whole world hate us!

> Canada and Mexico, our top two export markets, are embroiled in trade feuds with the U.S., both triggered by American protectionism. As a global leader and a decent hemispheric neighbor — especially during these economic doldrums — the United States immediately should rejoin Canada and Mexico on the road to free trade.
>
> …Obama's $410 billion omnibus spending plan defunded a pilot program in which about 100 Mexican trucks were allowed to drive goods into the U.S. beyond a 25-mile frontier zone. American trucks were given equal access to Mexican destinations. (Removing goods from one country's trucks and reloading them onto the other's for onward travel has boosted transit costs anew. These eventually increase price tags.)
>
> Mexico correctly argues that the North American Free Trade Agreement, which President Clinton signed in 1995, opened U.S. roads to Mexican trucks. However, Washington kept dragging its feet. In 2002, Congress imposed 22 safety regulations on Mexican (but not Canadian) trucks, and it was only in 2007 that the Bush administration started the pilot program. In exasperation at the cancellation of this initiative, Mexico has raised tariffs on 90 American exports worth $2.4 billion, including grapes and toilet paper. This reportedly will kill 40,000 American jobs. Mexico's backlash against U.S. protectionism interrupted its *unilateral* reduction of average industrial tariffs from 10.4 percent in 2008 to a projected 4.2 percent in 2013.
>
> Even worse, June 1 brought word that Canacar — an association of 4,500 Mexican trucking companies — had filed a grievance with the U.S. State Department seeking $6 billion in damages because of the pilot program's termination and the resulting brick wall that arose in front of big rigs at the border.
>
> "We want reciprocity," Canacar attorney Pedro Ojeda told the *Wall Street Journal*. "The U.S. has notoriously not kept its commitments."

I mean trade war, of course.

The world is angry with America

Andrew Roth writes:

> China has now retaliated with a "Buy China" provision in their own stimulus bill.

> Canada has complained and all Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has done in response is pledge "cooperation." No, we don't need pledges. We need to revoke "Buy American." We need to kill it.

Here is a list of countries that are angry with Obama's short-sighted protectionism. He wants to isolate America from the rest of the world by refusing to sign trade deals with them.

> Canada ($600B) passes resolution to counter "Buy American" policy.
>
> The European Union ($639B) calls it the "worst possible signal."
>
> Japan ($204B) warns the United States, and Australia ($32B) threatens retalitory measures.
>
> After slamming the "Buy American" policy, India ($43B) raised tariffs.
>
> Singapore ($43B) is concerned with "Buy American."
>
> The president of Brazil ($62B), a former *labor activist*, criticizes Buy American and has threaten to challenge the U.S. at the WTO.
>
> France's ($72B) Nicholas Sarkozy wants a "Buy France" provision for french auto companies.

Big Labor opposes free trade, and Big Labor helped to get Obama elected.

So now we get a trade war.

GOOD NEWS! Democrat PR firm recommends dropping global warming

June 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Steve Milloy's Green Hell blog.

Excerpt:

> A public relations firm advising Democrats on climate legislation says that global warming alarmism needs to be dropped.
>
> According to a memo from Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, global warming should not be used as the "primary frame"…

Here's a quote from the firm's memo:

> Awareness about global warming is broad, and some in the public are seriously concerned about it. But almost no one in our groups expressed such concern; for most voters, global warming is not significant enough on its own to drive support for major energy reform. So while it can be part of the story that reform advocates are telling, global warming should be used only in addition to the broader economic frame, not in place of it.

See, the news isn't all bad!

My big post on cap and trade is here, so you can learn what the Democrats have planned for us.

Why does the secular-left denigrate stay-at-home moms, marriage and family?

June 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Alberta Minister of Finance, Iris Evans.

There was an interesting story that broke last week about the Alberta Finance Minister's comment that the best way to raise children is by having one parent stay home with them during the early childhood years.

Well, D'UH! Only a moron who is ignorant of parenting research doubts that!

But what was interesting was the reaction of the secular-left to her comments.

Excerpt:

> Following the speech, however, the Minister was sharply criticized for her comments by Alberta Liberal leader David Swann, who called for her to apologize. Swann said Evans should be fired should she not do so. "If she really said these things, she must apologize," said Swann. "If she doesn't apologize, the premier must fire her. … These are truly outrageous claims. I have never been as stunned by the sheer arrogance and ignorance of the Tories as I am today."
>
> According to Swann, "In a sense, Iris Evans did us all a favor by revealing her contempt for the sacrifices made by hard-working Alberta families." Swann suggested that Evans' comments prove that the current PC government of Alberta is a "group of small-minded social conservatives who don't understand the problems of ordinary Albertans."

Are leftists totally stupid or something? I would LOVE to stay at home with my children, if I ever found woman I liked and got married and had some. Relationships and debates are even more interesting than programming all day. (And programming is very interesting!) Why are people so focussed on making and spending money? What could be more important than introducing children to God?

Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries

June 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to review a previous post before I go on to discuss some news regarding teacher's unions and whether they contribute to improving the academic performance of their customers (students).

Here is my recent post about Walter Williams, on the education system.

I want to highlight this part where Williams explains how the schools that charge taxpayers the most money achieve the worst academic results for their customers (students):

> The teaching establishment and politicians have hoodwinked taxpayers into believing that more money is needed to improve education. The Washington, D.C., school budget is about the nation's costliest, spending about $15,000 per pupil. Its student/teacher ratio, at 15.2 to 1, is lower than the nation's average. Yet student achievement is just about the lowest in the nation.

In that same post, I linked to an L.A. Times article about a charter school that produces amazingly high academic output for a tiny fraction of the cost, and with some very poor students who are from first-generation immigrant families that can barely speak English.

Here is the secret of this high-performing school:

> That, it turns out, is just the beginning of the ways in which American Indian Public Charter and its two sibling schools spit in the eye of mainstream education. These small, no-frills, independent public schools in the hardscrabble flats of Oakland sometimes seem like creations of television's "Colbert Report." **They mock liberal orthodoxy with such zeal that it can seem like a parody.**
>
> …School administrators take pride in their record of frequently firing teachers they consider to be underperforming. Unions are embraced with the same warmth accorded "self-esteem experts, panhandlers, drug dealers and those snapping turtles who refuse to put forth their best effort," to quote the school's website.

Read the whole post for the whole amazing story.

Below, Ed Morrissey explains *why* public schools suck up so much taxpayer money, while providing horrible results.

Do teacher unions help students to learn?

This is a MUST-READ story from Ed Morrissey, writing at Hot Air. (H/T Ace of Spades)

In a free market capitalist system, teachers, like other grown-ups, are paid based on their

performance. Parents should have a choice of schools, and they should be able to pull their children out of any school that doesn't produce a quality education for their customers, the children. But what happens when the government, to please their union supporters, decouples teacher pay from educational outcomes?

Yahoo News reports:

> Hundreds of New York City public school teachers accused of offenses ranging from insubordination to sexual misconduct are being paid their full salaries to sit around all day playing Scrabble, surfing the Internet or just staring at the wall, if that's what they want to do.
>
> Because their union contract makes it extremely difficult to fire them, the teachers have been banished by the school system to its "rubber rooms" — off-campus office space where they wait months, even years, for their disciplinary hearings.
>
> The 700 or so teachers can practice yoga, work on their novels, paint portraits of their colleagues — pretty much anything but school work. They have summer vacation just like their classroom colleagues and enjoy weekends and holidays through the school year.

> …"You just basically sit there for eight hours," said Orlando Ramos, who spent seven months in a rubber room, officially known as a temporary reassignment center, in 2004-05. "I saw several near-fights. `This is my seat.' `I've been sitting here for six months.' That sort of thing."

Unbelievable. These unions got Obama elected and they are no different than the auto union workers who expect something for nothing. Who cares about whether children learn anything? So long as Democrat supporters get their taxpayer money, why should they have to produce any results?

Ed Morrissey continues:

> If ever one wanted an argument against Card Check, this would be it. Imagine if you will an entire private sector with "rubber rooms" filled with employees left dangling in limbo because their union contracts made them "extremely difficult to fire." There are enough teachers in these rooms in NYC to fill several schools, and yet the taxpayers are shelling out money to have them sit in rooms, play Scrabble, and act like children.
>
> The Big Apple isn't alone in this process, either. Los Angeles has almost 200 teachers in rubber rooms at the moment. Apparently, neither system has the competence nor the inclination to process wrongful conduct or poor-performance hearings with any speed, which is not just unfair to the taxpayers, but also unfair to those teachers wrongfully accused of either or both.
>
> If this was the private sector, it would at least get handled expeditiously, as no business can afford to have hundreds of people sitting around and producing

> nothing. Perhaps as well as a cautionary tale about Card Check and the expansion of unions, it also serves as warning to those who want to replace the private sector in health care and energy production with public employees instead.

This is why I am a small-government capitalist. I want Democrat-supporting unions abolished. Let them earn their salaries like everyone else who works in the free market economy. Consumers deserve performance in exchange for their hard-earned money. And if consumers don't get value, we should demand refunds so that we can take our money to a competitor.

To understand why school choice matters, take look at this video posted over at the Heritage Foundation, featuring 14-year old Johnathan Krohn. Notice how he is the only one of the panel of 3 kids who isn't reciting memorized facts but is actually make a cause-and-effect economics argument.

How big business and enviro-charlatans benefit from Obama's cap-and-trade energy tax

June 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I posted about the economic effects of the Waxman-Markey cap-and-trade bill, including how it would impact individual families. I wrote about the true effects of Obama's green jobs initiative, which will actually decrease employment instead of increasing it.

I also posted before about scientific dissent from global warming, the alleged melting polar ice caps, Obama's planned tax hikes on oil and gas, deceptive alarmism to procure research funding, the alleged warming of the oceans, and the use of made-up crises in order to impose socialism. You can also read the testimony of a Princeton University physicist who is against global warming alarmism.

Who will pay for cap-and-trade?

ECM e-mailed me this story from PowerLine Blog, which explains how much each state will pay if cap and trade passes. John Hinderacker asks whether Obama things that the electorate is stupid enough to believe that the firms who must absorb this tax will just take it out of their profits and leave consumers untouched. He argues that Obama thinks we are stupid enough to believe that.

One commenter to the post writes:

> No, he like many liberals actually believe corporations don't pass on the tax to consumers but it is extracted from profits (lowering them). Remember, they have a very static, zero-sum view of the world.

This is also my view of Obama. He has been indoctrinated with socialist views and he has *no freaking idea* why they don't work. He will be as shocked and surprised as any child is when they first learn that the Tooth Fairy is a myth. But that won't stop him from nationalizing companies once he sees the mess that his interventions have made. Probably his handlers have this all planned out for him.

And where will that money be redistributed to?

But today I wanted to tell you about the people and corporations that are actively pushing for cap-and-trade, because if it passes they will suddenly become very, very rich.

The full story is posted at Steve Milloy's Green Hell blog.

Big business meddling in government

Excerpt:

> Although many businesses have been coerced into supporting Waxman-Markey, much of big business has actively pushed for the bill. Many Wall Street banks hope to profit from the trading of the $9 trillion in emissions allowances to be created under Waxman-Markey. Goldman Sachs would be the preeminent global

> warming bookie as it owns the exchanges where carbon allowances would be traded.
>
> General Electric, whose CEO sits on Barack Obama's Economic Recovery Advisory Board, was instrumental in putting together the U.S. Climate Action Partnership (USCAP), a bizarre big business-environmental activist group lobbying consortium that is a primary driver of global warming legislation. USCAP has even taken credit for drafting parts of Waxman-Markey. GE, it seems, would like a federal law requiring electric utilities buy the wind turbines and other energy technologies manufactured by — guess who — GE.
>
> Republican James Sensenbrenner recently asked the Department of Justice to investigate USCAP members General Motors and Chrysler for illegally using taxpayer bailout money to lobby for global warming legislation. AIG, the insurance giant that is now a ward of U.S. taxpayers, only dropped out of USCAP after Rep. Joe Barton pointed out the illegality of accepting federal money and then using it to lobby the federal government.

Enviro-charlatan greed

Excerpt:

> And then there's Al Gore, who stands to become the first "carbon billionaire" through his partnership in the venture capital firm of Kleiner Perkins Caufield and Byers and the UK-based investment firm of Generation Investment Management. When Gore testified in favor of global warming legislation before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January, he failed to disclose his personal financial interests and no Senator came close to asking him about them.
>
> When he testified in April before the House Energy and Environment Subcommittee in favor of Waxman-Markey, Gore again failed to disclose his conflicts-of-interest. When Reps. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) and Steve Scalise (R-LA) probed into these matters, Gore feigned ignorance and pretended that he would not personally benefit from Waxman-Markey. Although Rep. Waxman made baseball players testify under oath to Congress about the comparatively petty issue of drug use in baseball, he did not subject Gore to penalty for perjury.

And more fascism, too

> Competing for most-appalling character in the Waxman-Markey saga is Rep. Ed Markey. Immediately after the head of Warren Buffet's electric utility unit testified against Waxman-Markey's cap-and-trade provision, Markey fired off a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) specifically requesting that Buffet's utility be investigated. After being rebuked by House Republicans for this blatant intimidation, Markey then asked FERC to expand the requested investigation to all investor-owned utilities, rather than appearing to single out Buffet's. Now all utilities are under operating with a Markey-pointed

> gun to their heads.

They told lies about Bush's "abuses of power" all through his presidency. Now that they are in control, and every new day brings to light more greed, bullying, corruption and fraud than we saw in Bush's entire eight years in office. And that's not even to mention that the average unemployment rate under Bush was about *half* of what it is today under Obama.

Kevin Boland reports on John Boehner's blog that the bill is up for a floor vote in the House this week.

Keith Hennessey explains the looming crisis of entitlement spending

June 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the best post I have ever seen on the problem of demographics and entitlement spending, which is due to explode in about a few years. I'll summarize so that you will click through and read this post for yourself. There is almost no text in the post, it is all graphs, and they are self explanatory. It will take your about 5 minutes to scare yourself into a coma.

Summary of the post:

- There are 3 entitlement programs: social security, medicare and medicaid
- These programs are funded by taxes on young people who are still working
- These 3 programs currently cost 9% of GDP.
- By 2050, the costs will have doubled to 18% GDP.
- Some of this increase will be due to excess growth in health costs
- And some of this increase will be due to demographics

Let me talk more about the demographics problem:

- More people are living longer
- That means that benefits are being paid out over more years, per person
- A huge group of babies from the Baby Boom started retiring in 2008
- But the number of younger workers who pay their benefits is not growing fast enough
- The number of workers needed to pay each retiree's benefits is shrinking
- Taxes will have to increase, or benefits will have to decrease

Please read the article. It will help you to put Obama's massive spending and tax hikes in perspective. By the way, this is a great post to forward to your friends and neighbor's who voted for Obama who do not like to read about economics and finance.

Should we prefer a President who has moral standards and character?

June 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By Michael Ramirez (cropped image, click for full size!)
Image H/T The Western Experience.

Let's take a closer look at Obama's response to the Iranian crackdown, courtesy of the Heritage Foundation. They reproduced FOUR of Obama's talking points in their post, two which I quote in full below:

> **Only history can tell.** As though Hegelian historical forces were at play, on which the president of the United States can have no impact, Mr. Obama was at pains to state that only time will tell how the situation in Iran is resolved. Repeatedly, the president stated that "we are watching," "we are waiting to see how this plays itself out," "we have to monitor the situation." Or, at the very end of the press conference, "The Iranian people know that we are watching." That must be a great comfort to them.
>
> **The choice is up to the Iranian government.** If the Iranian government wants to follow the path to international acceptance that Mr. Obama has graciously opened for them, they will have to behave according to international accepted norms of behavior. If not, that is really too bad. Mr. Obama repeatedly declined the opportunity to spell out any consequences for the violence. He did not even want to say that Iranian diplomats might be disinvited from July 4 celebration at the U.S. embassies. Our doors are open, and if the Iranians want to walk in, that is their choice, in other words.

In an article from Forbes magazine, there is an analysis of Obama's answers to the questions of challengers, who thought that he should have done more to help the cause

of freedom in Iran. (H/T Stop the ACLU)

Excerpt:

> [Obama] is a man who embodies the opposite of the courage to act. His appalling ignorance of history prompted him to claim at his press conference that "the Iranian people … aren't paying a lot of attention to what's being said … here." On the contrary, from their jail cells in the Gulag, Soviet dissidents took heart from what was being said here–as all dissidents dream that the leader of the free world will be prepared to speak and act in their defense.
>
> The president's storyline that we don't know what has transpired in Iran is an insult to the intelligence of both Americans and Iranians. Our absence from the polling booths doesn't mean the results are a mystery. The rules of the election were quite clear. Candidates for president must be approved by the 12-member Council of Guardians. As reported by the BBC, more than 450 Iranians registered as prospective candidates while four contenders were accepted. All 42 women who attempted to run were rejected. So exactly what part of rigged does President Obama not understand?
>
> Instead of denouncing the fake election, President Obama now tells Iranians who are dying for the real thing "the United States respects the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran." Whose sovereignty is that? The Hobbesian sovereign thugs running the place? Sovereignty to do what? To deny rights and freedoms to their own people? In a state so bereft of minimal protections for human dignity, why should the sovereignty of such a government be paramount?
>
> But President Obama didn't want to dwell on the daily reality of sovereign Iran: A criminal code that permits stoning women to death for alleged adultery and hanging homosexuals for the crime of existing. Instead, he repeatedly invoked "respect" for "their traditions and their culture."
>
> This is the same mantra he espoused to the Islamic world in Cairo when three times he spoke of the "rights" of Muslim women to cover up their bodies. Knowing full well that women in the Muslim world face the contrary problem of surviving after refusing to cover up their bodies, he never once dared to mention that this was also a human right. What part of cultural relativism and traditional oppression does President Obama not know how it plays out?

And now I want to ask a question about the vocation of the President of the United States of America, the leader of the Free World.

Does morality and character matter in a President?

I found these two videos posted by Smitty at The Other McCain.

First, compare Barack Obama vs. Ronald Reagan.

Notice how Ronald Reagan appeals to fundamental human rights, human dignity and the high ideal of freedom. And then he backs up his fine words with teh threat of economic

disaster for Poland’s government if they refuse to comply.

Second, here’s John McCain, the President we could have had, if we had voted purely on substance.

Morality matters. Character counts.

Obama’s secular worldview provides no rational grounding for morality or character. He craves the power to control the lives of others. The plight of the weak and powerless means nothing to him.

Wintery Knight Blog cited in Republican Congressman's TV advertisement

June 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, not exactly, but check this out.

Here is the story about the 30-second TV ad on RealClearPolitics. You can watch the TV ad on that page.

Excerpt:

> Political observers looking to see how the stimulus battle might play out in the 2010 midterms have an early example in the Kansas Senate race. Rep. Todd Tiahrt (R) launched the first TV ad of that campaign today, and it slams President Obama and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi while urging Kansans to join him in his fight against the government spending program.
>
> "These two Washington politicians, Obama and Pelosi, sold America a bill of goods," a narrator says in the 30-second spot. The Recovery Act hasn't worked, it continues, but "one Kansas conservative" is fighting to stop it.

Here is the ad's script:

> "These two Washington politicians, Obama and Pelosi, sold America a bill of goods. A so-called stimulus plan. Since then, more homes are in foreclosure. More than two million jobs lost. And the economy is hurting. But one Kansas conservative, Todd Tiahrt, said the bailouts and stimulus were wrong from the start. Now, Tiahrt's fighting to stop it. Go to this Web site. Help Todd Tiahrt stop Obama and Pelosi now."

Here is the image showing the title of my post:

Image from the TV commercial.
This is the post I wrote that they cited.

And here the online news site that did the search to find that my blog was the one being cited.

I've notified RealClearPolitics to see if we can get a link, at least!

Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

June 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Venezuela

The extremely left-wing Al-Jazeera reports that Obama intends to reinstate diplomatic relations with Venezuela. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The United States and Venezuela are to reinstate ambassadors to Caracas and Washington, setting aside a diplomatic spat that soured ties last year.
>
> The two nations expelled each other's envoys last September in a dispute involving allegations by Bolivia, a close ally of Venezuela, that Washington was meddling in its internal affairs.
>
> The normalisation of diplomatic ties "will take place in the coming days, and as soon as the ambassadors have resumed their functions we will move forward to a more fluid communication," Nicolas Maduro, the Venezuelan foreign minister, said on Wednesday.

Venezuela is a well-known sponsor of terrorism in neighboring Colombia, as well as a communist nation, with all the standard losses of liberty and prosperity that entails.

Syria

Syria is a puppet of Iran and a supporter of Hezbollah, which menaces Israel from the north with terrorist attacks. George W. Bush withdrew the last ambassador after it came out that Syria was involved in the assassination of Rafik Hariri in Lebanon. But Obama thinks it's a good idea to re-instate relations with them, as well.

The extremely left-wing Associated Press reports:

> President Barack Obama plans to return an ambassador to Syria, filling a post that has been vacant for four years and marking an acceleration of Washington's engagement with the Arab world, the White House said on Wednesday.
>
> Presidential spokesman Robert Gibbs said Obama's decision was aimed at fulfilling his promise to show more U.S. engagement in the Arab world and not a response to any explicit policy change on Syria's part.
>
> He cited a series of meetings between Syrian and U.S. officials since Obama took office.
>
> "This strongly reflects the administration's recognition of the role Syria plays, and the hope of the role that the Syrian government can play constructively, to promote peace and stability in the region," Gibbs said.

Obama wants to dialogue with ruthless, murdering dictators – the kind of people the left

regards as good.

What it means

Briefly, when the US is seen as consorting with terrorist-supporting regimes, it is a blow to all the freedom-loving people in the world. Instead of supporting those who are imprisoned, beaten, tortured and murdered by the dictators, Obama is supporting the dictators, by giving their terrorist-supporting regimes legitimacy in the eyes of the public, and discouraging pro-democracy movements.

Stephen Meyer explains the design of DNA at the Heritage Foundation

June 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

THIS IS A MUST-SEE VIDEO!!!

The Heritage Foundation is by far my favorite think tank. If any of my readers have a blog, and you would like to get into policy a little bit, I highly recommend them. My Christian readers may be worried that think tanks are too focussed on fiscal conservatism and that they neglect foreign policy and social conservatism, including faith issues. You will not have that problem with the Heritage Foundation.

This time, they hosted one of my top 5 Christian scholars, Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, so that he could give a lecture to the public about the evidence for an intelligent designer of DNA.

The video and audio of the lecture is posted here, at The Foundry. (H/T The Discovery Institute)

I have seen Meyer give this lecture live. He steals his children's toys to explain DNA to people! *I am begging you*: do not be afraid of learning about scientific evidence. Watch the lecture!!! And then watch it again!!!

Information about Dr. Meyer from that page:

Stephen C. Meyer is Director and Senior Fellow of the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. Dr. Meyer earned his Ph.D. in the History and Philosophy of Science from Cambridge University for a dissertation on the history of origin of life biology and the methodology of the historical sciences.

And you can listen to a wonderful podcast with Stephen Meyer, too!

> This episode of **ID the Future** tells the story of how philosopher of science Stephen C. Meyer first began his quest for the origin of life. How did one of the architects of the intelligent design movement move from the oilfields of Texas to the study halls of Cambridge to pursue the mystery of where biological information originated? Listen in and find out. The new book, *Signature in the Cell*, tells the rest of the story, the culmination of over 20 years of study and research on the origins of life.

I wrote about the evidence for intelligent design in the cell here, using a paper published by Stephen Meyer. Watch the lecture, and read the paper.

Don't forget to bookmark the Heritage Foundation's blog!

Further study

One of my favorite resources on the origin of life is this interview from the University of California with former atheist and origin of life researcher Dean Kenyon. Kenyon, a professor of Biology at San Francisco State University, wrote the textbook on "chemical

evolution”, which is the view that chemicals can arrange themselves in order to create the first living cell, without intervention.

This interview from the University of California with another origin of life researcher, Charles Thaxton, is also one of my favorites.

You’ll need Quicktime to see the videos, or buy the videos from ARN. (Kenyon, Thaxton) I have both of them – they rock!

Responding to the parable of the blind men and the elephant

June 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article on Stand to Reason is worth reading again and again until you get it! We live in a postmodern world, where people believe that religion is a matter of personal preference. Young people especially assert that no knowledge of God is possible, and that we are all grasping at straws when it comes to knowing God and making sense of morality.

First, let's take a look at the parable:

In the children's book, *The Blind Men and the Elephant*, Lillian Quigley retells the ancient fable of six blind men who visit the palace of the Rajah and encounter an elephant for the first time. As each touches the animal with his hands, he announces his discoveries.

The first blind man put out his hand and touched the side of the elephant. "How smooth! An elephant is like a wall." The second blind man put out his hand and touched the trunk of the elephant. "How round! An elephant is like a snake." The third blind man put out his hand and touched the tusk of the elephant. "How sharp! An elephant is like a spear." The fourth blind man put out his hand and touched the leg of the elephant. "How tall! An elephant is like a tree." The fifth blind man reached out his hand and touched the ear of the elephant. "How wide! An elephant is like a fan." The sixth blind man put out his hand and touched the tail of the elephant. "How thin! An elephant is like a rope."

An argument ensued, each blind man thinking his own perception of the elephant was the correct one. The Rajah, awakened by the commotion, called out from the balcony. "The elephant is a big animal," he said. "Each man touched only one part. You must put all the parts together to find out what an elephant is like."

Enlightened by the Rajah's wisdom, the blind men reached agreement. "Each one of us knows only a part. To find out the whole truth we must put all the parts together."

And then Greg explains why this is a problem for Christianity:

The religious application holds that every faith represents just one part of a larger truth about God. Each has only a piece of the truth, ultimately leading to God by different routes. Advocates of Eastern religions are fond of using the parable in this way.

The second application is used by skeptics who hold that cultural biases have so seriously blinded us that we can never know the true nature of things. This view, de rigueur in the university, is called post-modernism.

This skepticism holds for all areas of truth, including the rational, the religious, and the moral. In Folkways, a classic presentation of cultural relativism, anthropologist William Graham Sumner argues that morality is not objective in any sense. "Every attempt to win an outside standpoint from which to reduce the whole to an absolute philosophy of truth and right, based on an unalterable principle, is delusion," he states.

Sumner is making a very strong assertion about knowledge. He says that all claims to know objective truth are false because each of us is imprisoned in his own culture, incapable of seeing beyond the limits of his own biases. Sumner concludes, therefore, that truth is relative to culture and that no objective standard exists.

I want everyone reading who doesn't know how to respond to this challenge to click through to STR's web site, read the correct response, and then explain it to your spouse, children and/or pet(s). (If Dennis Prager can lecture geese in Ohio, then you can explain the blind men and the elephant to your pet(s)) The important thing is that you feel comfortable explaining it to other people.

You learn these things by reading, and then by trying to explain what you've learned to people around you – especially to the people who don't agree with you. So, go to work, and leave a comment about your experience below!

One last thing. Christians – I *forbid* you to argue using parallels, analogies or parables like this. (I'm looking at you, my Catholic readers!) When you argue for your view, don't use these whacky stories. Jesus used *miracles* to prove his statements. But you can't perform miracles. So you can argue using the miracles in nature, and the miracle of the resurrection from history. Find your evidence here, and see it applied in debates here.

Women are becoming more violent towards their partners

June 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed this story in Australia's Daily Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Shocking figures have revealed that the number of women who have been charged with domestic violence-related assault has soared by 159 per cent over the past eight years.
>
> The figures, from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics, show 2336 women faced court on charges of domestic violence in 2007, mainly for bashing their husbands, compared with just 818 in 1999.
>
> ….The figures show that although the number of women prosecuted for general assault remained stable between 1999 and 2007, there was an increase of 11 per cent a year in the number of women prosecuted for domestic violence.
>
> During the same period, domestic violence charges against men rose by 2.3 per cent a year.

I am at a loss to understand why this is. Does anyone have a theory about why this is happening? Leave a comment if you do.

I wrote before about the problem of domestic violence against males, on the first day I started my blog. It turns out that these Australian numbers are echoing the numbers in Canada and the UK that I cited in that post:

UK numbers:

> In the event, the CASI method found relatively high levels of male victimisation, to the extent that men appear to be at equal risk to women of domestic assault (4.2% of both sexes reported an assault in the last year).

Canada numbers:

> An estimated 7% of women and 6% of men in a current or previous spousal relationship encountered spousal violence during the five years up to and including 2004, according to a comprehensive new report on family violence.

Here is a related research paper on the problem of domestic violence against men, writen by Dr. Linda Kelly, a professor of Law at Indiana University School of Law.

The Democrat war on science destroys our prosperity and our consciences

June 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are a couple of stories from IBD showing how the secular-left twists science in order to advance their socialist policy.

Obama's cap-and-trade bill

The story is here. (H/T The Chilling Effect)

> All Americans in the Midwest, South and Rocky Mountain regions will be most drastically affected because the climate change legislation will destroy the nation's coal industry and the low-cost electricity it has provided to these regions for generations.
>
> Wealth will be transferred away from almost every state to the West Coast and New England.
>
> …Reliable estimates show that this bill will cost each American family at least $3,000 more in energy costs each year, notwithstanding the $2 trillion cost to the economy in just eight years.
>
> …All these countries have stated that they will not place any restrictions on carbon dioxide emissions. China alone, which has surpassed the United States in carbon dioxide emissions, brings a new 500-megawatt coal-fired power plant on line every week. They will have low-cost electricity, and America will massively export more jobs to them.

I blogged here about the costs of this energy tax in more detail.

Stem-cell research

The story is here.

Excerpt:

> Inspectors general are apparently not the only ones to pay for annoying the White House by doing their job. The 18-member council existed to provide the president with advice on the moral and ethical implications of the rapid advances in science and medical research. It exists no more.
>
> The council existed to ponder whether we should do something just because we can. Apparently President Obama wanted not advice but agreement on such matters, particularly with regard to one of the panel's areas of interest, embryonic stem cell research. So he has fired them.
>
> Reid Cherlin, a White House press officer, told the New York Times that Obama saw the panel as "a philosophically leaning advisory group" handpicked by the Bush administration, and that he wanted to appoint a new bioethics commission

> that instead offered “practical policy options.”

I blogged here about the advantages of adult stem cell research compared to embryonic stem-cell research.

Obamacare exposed: rationing for thee but not for me

June 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previous health care posts

We need to learn from what goes on in other countries.

- Consider the rationing of health care in the UK
- In Canada, you can deliver your own babies while you wait
- Single-payer health care explained with videos
- More videos showing socialized medicine horror stories
- Keith Hennessey explains Obamacare in 15 points

The latest news

All communists are the same. They only want YOUR wealth to be redistributed, not theirs. In Obama's socialist America, all the people are equal, but Obama is more equal than the others.

Check out this story from Hot Air. (H/T ECM)

> President Obama struggled to explain today whether his health care reform proposals would force normal Americans to make sacrifices that wealthier, more powerful people — like the president himself — wouldn't face.
>
> The probing questions came from two skeptical neurologists during ABC News' special on health care reform, "Questions for the President: Prescription for America," anchored from the White House by Diane Sawyer and Charles Gibson.
>
> Dr. Orrin Devinsky, a neurologist and researcher at the New York University Langone Medical Center, said that elites often propose health care solutions that limit options for the general public, secure in the knowledge that if they or their loves ones get sick, they will be able to afford the best care available, even if it's not provided by insurance.
>
> Devinsky asked the president pointedly if he would be willing to promise that he wouldn't seek such extraordinary help for his wife or daughters if they became sick and the public plan he's proposing limited the tests or treatment they can get.
>
> The president refused to make such a pledge, though he allowed that if "it's my family member, if it's my wife, if it's my children, if it's my grandmother, I always want them to get the very best care.["]

The video is here at RealClearPolitics.

Read the whole thing, and remember what single-payer health care means, more demand, less supply, waiting lists, rationing and denials of service. But only for you

plebians – NOT for Obama and his family.

Friday night funny: Brian Regan and term limits

June 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reformed theology blogger Tim Challies had a post up about a funny CLEAN comedian named Brian Regan. This is really funny stuff.

Brian Regan goes to the doctor:

Brian Regan calls UPS for a pick-up:

Brian Regan goes to the grocery store:

Brian Regan goes to the emergency room, part 1 of 2:

Brian Regan goes to the emergency room, part 2 of 2:

I've driven myself to the emergency room for food poisoning, and was dismissed after 45 minutes. They told me stop breathing shallow and stop throwing up! So I did that. Then they sent me home.

One more: Brian Regan goes to the airport:

And for those who don't get YouTube through their company's proxy server, here is something funny from Frank J. of IMAO.us, on term limits. Inventing ridiculous things is what I find the most humorous.

Excerpt:

> This whole Sanford mess reminds me of the main problem with politics: Politician. Apparently, normal people don't want to go into politics, so we mainly gets weirdos. Fred Thompson used the Sanford incident to argue for term limits, the idea being if we have to have politicians, at least let's not keep them around too long.
>
> Here's my idea: Kidnapping.

Happy Friday!

Counting the cost of the Waxman-Markey energy tax

June 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Update from the Heritage Foundation.

What happened:

> The Waxman Markey Cap and Trade bill passed by a narrow margin tonight, 219 to 212 with 8 Republicans supporting and 44 Democrats voting against, hardly overwhelming support.

What it means:

> The Heritage Foundation's Center for Data Analysis found that by 2035 gasoline prices would increase 58 percent, natural gas prices would increase 55 percent, home heating oil would increase 56 percent, and worst of all, electricity prices would jump 90 percent.
>
> But the direct tax on household energy use is just the beginning. The energy tax also hits producers. As the higher production costs ripple through the economy, the household pocketbooks get hit again and again. When all the tax impacts have been added up, the average per-family-of-four costs rise by $2,979 per year. In the year 2035 alone, the cost is $4,609. And the costs per family for the whole energy tax aggregated from 2012 to 2035 are $71,493.

The eight Republicans who voted for it. (From Green Hell)

ECM sent me the findings of two *more* studies from The Beacon Hill Institute, at Suffolk University in Boston. The studies were linked by the American Spectator.

Excerpt:

"Contrary to the claims made in these studies, we found that the green job initiatives reviewed in each actually causes greater harm than good to the American economy and will cause growth to slow," reported Paul Bachman, Director of Research at the Beacon Hill Institute, one of the report's authors….

And:

If the United States were to cut emissions alone, with no cutbacks (relative to trend) by other countries, it would bear the full cost of abatement (PV = $3.85 trillion) while reaping only about $0.27 trillion in benefits. This represents a net cost, relative to doing nothing, of $3.42 trillion. It would cost the United States $154 billion by 2020 and $1.318 trillion by 2050.

Green Hell linked to a must-see video of Rep. John Boehner filibustering the bill in the House. No one has even read the 1200-page bill, or the 300-page amendment.

Gateway Pundit has a video of Rep. Paul Broun trying to tell the House that global warming is junk science:

Gateway Pundit has a video of Rep. Tom Price requesting a moment of silence to recognize the 2 million plus who will lose their jobs for the sake of junk science and inflated egos.

The Western Experience talks about the experiences of other countries who have tried to enact similar laws.

> What is totally sad in the bill's passing is, like socialism, it has been a total failure wherever it has been tried. Across Europe and even down to Australia, this nonsense has been scrapped. The economist in Spain blamed their own version of a climate change bill on their tragically high unemployment rate of 18 percent. The government reports that for every "green job" created equaled two losses in other private sector jobs. Energy prices have skyrocketed and businesses find it too expensive to produce. Therefore, they pass on the costs by cutting back production, which are driving prices higher, and laying off employees, which are driving unemployment numbers higher. Sounds like a recipe for contraction.

Why can't we learn from the mistakes of other countries?

Hot Air says that the bill will almost certainly die in the Senate.

Further study

Recently, I posted about the economic effects of the Waxman-Markey cap-and-trade bill, including how it would impact individual families. I wrote about the true effects of Obama's green jobs initiative, which will actually decrease employment instead of increasing it.

I also posted before about scientific dissent from global warming, the alleged melting polar ice caps, Obama's planned tax hikes on oil and gas, deceptive alarmism to procure research funding, the alleged warming of the oceans, and the use of made-up crises in order to impose socialism. You can also read the testimony of a Princeton University physicist who is against global warming alarmism.

Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion

June 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Discovery Institute.

A new peer-reviewed paper has been published that concludes that there is no material explanation for the massive amounts of information introduced during the Cambrian explosion, when all of the phyla came into being in the blink of an eye, geologically speaking, with *no fossilized precursors.*

Excerpt:

> Thus, elucidating the materialistic basis of the Cambrian explosion has become more elusive, not less, the more we know about the event itself, and cannot be explained away by coupling extinction of intermediates with long stretches of geologic time, despite the contrary claims of some modern neo-Darwinists.

Once again, the progress of science brings light.

The DI post goes on to cite another passage from the paper:

Beginning some 555 million years ago the Earth's biota changed in profound and fundamental ways, going from an essentially static system billions of years in existence to the one we find today, a dynamic and awesomely complex system whose origin seems to defy explanation. Part of the intrigue with the Cambrian explosion is that numerous animal phyla with very distinct body plans arrive on the scene in a geological blink of the eye, with little or no warning of what is to come in rocks that predate this interval of time. The abruptness of the transition between the ''Precambrian'' and the Cambrian was apparent right at the outset of our science with the publication of Murchison's *The Silurian System*, a treatise that paradoxically set forth the research agenda for numerous paleontologists — in addition to serving as perennial fodder for creationists. The reasoning is simple — as explained on an intelligent-design t-shirt.

> Fact: Forty phyla of complex animals suddenly appear in the fossil record, no forerunners, no transitional forms leading to them; ''a major mystery,'' a ''challenge.'' The Theory of Evolution – exploded again (idofcourse.com).

Although we would dispute the numbers, and aside from the last line, there is not much here that we would disagree with. Indeed, many of Darwin's contemporaries shared these sentiments, and we assume — if Victorian fashion dictated — that they would have worn this same t-shirt with pride.

Here is the reference for the paper:

> (Kevin J. Peterson, Michael R. Dietrich and Mark A. McPeek, "MicroRNAs and metazoan macroevolution: insights into canalization, complexity, and the

> Cambrian explosion," *BioEssays*, Vol. 31 (7):736 – 747 (2009).)

I linked before to a bunch of easy-to-understand videos that explain the Cambrian explosion. That post has a link to another peer-reviewed research paper written by Stephen C. Meyer, on the Cambrian explosion.

Christian parents: be sure to encourage your children to do the best they can in science, and push them to go on to graduate school to earn their Ph.Ds. We really need to have people working on these problems who are not wedded to the pre-supposition of atheism. We need to have people who are open-minded and willing to go wherever the evidence leads.

Further study

One of my favorite resources on the origin of life is this interview from the University of California with former atheist and origin of life researcher Dean Kenyon. Kenyon, a professor of Biology at San Francisco State University, wrote the textbook on "chemical evolution", which is the view that chemicals can arrange themselves in order to create the first living cell, without intervention.

This interview from the University of California with another origin of life researcher, Charles Thaxton, is also one of my favorites.

You'll need Quicktime to see the videos, or buy the videos from ARN. (Kenyon, Thaxton) I have both of them – they rock!

Understanding the effects of moral relativism on New Zealand schools

June 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I had discussed why atheism is not able to ground the minimal requirements for rational moral behavior.

Now let's see an example of the effects of not being able to make moral judgments about good and evil.

An example from the education system

I was reading over on the MandM blog, which is based in New Zealand and I found a post about the bullying problems that their 14-year-old son was having in his school. Schools are *notorious* breeding grounds for moral relativism – that is where young minds are brainwashed with "values clarification" programs. Students learn to make up their own values based on personal preferences.

Here is what happened to their son Christian:

> Christian began attending Liston at the start of 2008 as a Year 9 student. Since that time he has been repeatedly bullied by other students. This bullying included being called names, threatened, being taunted about his medical condition (he has Aspergers Syndrome – see the attachment "medical condition"); he has been shoved, choked, hit, punched, knocked over, kicked, had his pants pulled down and has been dragged across the concrete while a student filmed him on his cell phone. During class, he has had objects thrown at him, he has been hit, punched, kicked, he has been knocked out of his desk, has had people steal his belongings, call him names and taunt him about his condition.

And this is what the teachers did:

> Frequently the response of the teachers in these classes to these incidents has not been adequate, often it has been [to have] him moved instead of the bully.
>
> To our knowledge, no student has been stood down, reported to the board of trustees or even had their parents phoned over the assaults and harassment they have committed against our son in his year and a half at Liston, including the repeat offenders.

And here's what it means:

> It seemed to us (aside from the repeat offenders) that as each bully was dealt with another one popped up to take his place. **This suggested to us that a culture of bullying had developed within the school; that to the other students, bullying didn't come with serious consequences: your parents didn't get told, you were not at risk of being stood down and the**

> **teachers didn't really view it as anything serious anyway when it happened in the classroom.**

This is the problem with the moral relativism, which has become dominant as Christianity has retreated. It is irrational for an atheist to stand up to evil and injustice if it involves possible unpleasantness for them. The moral relativist, believes that there is no distinction between the victim and the bully – and this prevents the relativist from standing up to the bully and stopping their bullying.

You can see an example of this moral relativism going on right now with Obama and the Iranian dictators.

New Zealand's anti-smacking law

It has been argued by family-values advocates that children need to form their conscience and moral sense by relating to their parents, especially their mother, at a very early age. Anxiety and aggression in children increases as the family is weakened or broken up by things like day care and no-fault divorce.

The disintegration of the family is aided by many progressive policies enacted by the political left. The left is wedded to moral relativism, because the left is secular. And they even desire to force moral relativism on families. What that means to parents is that the state can criminalize moral judgments with hate crime laws, restrictions on speech and even restrictions on parenting.

In New Zealand, the country is actually having a referendum about their "anti-smacking" law. The current law is that parents are prohibited from physically disciplining their children. I would think that this law would exacerbate the bullying problem in the schools. [Note: I fixed this paragraph to reflect the fact that the law is already in place, and the referendum is *non-binding!*]

UPDATE: I noticed a post about how Christians are allowed to make moral judgments, including judgments against bullies, also on MandM.

Does Obama's stimulus bill discriminate against men?

June 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this story from Hans Bader of the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

It turns out that the $800 billion stimulus bill (porkulus-1) was altered in order to discriminate against the blue-collar men who are losing the lion's share of jobs in the Democrat-caused recession.

Excerpt:

> Christina Hoff Sommers points out that "of the 5.7 million jobs Americans lost between December 2007 and May 2009, nearly 80 percent had been held by men. . . .Men are bearing the brunt of the current economic crisis because they predominate in manufacturing and construction, the hardest-hit sectors, which have lost more than 3 million jobs since December 2007. Women, by contrast, are a majority in recession-resistant fields such as education and health care, which gained 588,000 jobs during the same period."
>
> But when the Administration floated the concept of "an ambitious . . . stimulus program to modernize roads, bridges, schools, electrical grids, public transportation, and dams" as a way of "reinvigorating the hardest-hit sectors of the economy," "Women's groups were appalled," asking "Where are the New Jobs for Women?" and denouncing what they called "The Macho Stimulus Plan."

And what did Obama do in response to this feminist pressure?

> The Obama Administration quickly knuckled under to this pressure, replacing its recovery package with an $800 billion stimulus package that instead "skews job creation somewhat towards women" by spending money instead on social services like welfare that are administered mostly by female employees.
>
> "A recent Associated Press story reports: 'Stimulus Funds Go to Social Programs Over 'Shovel-ready' Projects.' A team of six AP reporters who have been tracking the funds find that the $300 billion sent to the states is being used mainly for health care, education, unemployment benefits, food stamps, and other social services." Or, as another AP report put it, "Stimulus Aid Favors Welfare, Not Work, Programs."
>
> The stimulus package also repealed welfare reform…

Read the whole thing. I think this is very interesting given the fact that it was these blue-collar unions who helped to get Obama elected. If there is a silver-lining to Obama's socialism, this has to be it.

I think the most interesting question to ask about this story is: do single women, who voted for Obama 60-35, expect to find husbands and fathers for their children? Or will

they all marry the government?

What can you learn by reading apologetics books?

June 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For beginning apologists, I wanted to recommend a series of 3 books designed to give you coverage of most of the issues. Each book is a collection of short chapters designed to introduce you to the various areas that are likely to come up in disputes.

Here they are:

1. "The Case for a Creator" by Lee Strobel
2. "Passionate Conviction" edited by William Lane Craig and Paul Copan
3. "Contending with Christianity's Critics" edited by William Lane Craig and Paul Copan

I just wanted to show you the table of contents so that you could get an idea about what you might learn by reading through these books.

The Case for a Creator

Here is the table of contents. (Watch the book's DVD on YouTube)

1. White-Coated Scientists Versus Black-Robed Preachers
2. The Images of Evolution
3. Doubts About Darwinism: An Interview with Jonathan Wells
4. Where Science Meets Faith: An interview with Stephen C. Meyer
5. The Evidence of Cosmology: Beginning with a Bang; An interview with William Lane Craig
6. The Evidence of Physics: the Cosmos on a Razor's Edge; An interview with Robin Collins
7. The Evidence of Astronomy: The Privileged Planet; An interview with Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Wesley Richards
8. The Evidence of Biochemistry: The Complexity of Molecular Machines; An Interview with Michael J. Behe
9. The Evidence of Biological Information: The Challenge of DNA and the Origin of Life; An Interview with Stephen C. Meyer
10. The Evidence of Consciousness: The Enigma of the Mind; An Interview with J.P. Moreland
11. The Cumulative Case for a Creator

Passionate Conviction

Here is the table of contents. (Sample chapter in a PDF)

PART 1 WHY APOLOGETICS?

- In Intellectual Neutral by William Lane Craig
- Living Smart by J. P. Moreland

PART 2 GOD

- Why Doesn't God Make His Existence More Obvious to Us? by Michael J. Murray
- Two Versions of the Cosmological Argument by R. Douglas Geivett
- The Contemporary Argument for Design: An Overview by Jay W. Richards
- A Moral Argument by Paul Copan

PART 3 JESUS

- Revisionist Views about Jesus by Charles L. Quarks
- What Do We Know for Sure about Jesus' Death? by Craig A. Evans
- Jesus' Resurrection and Christian Origins by N. T. Wright

PART 4 COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS

- Christianity in a World of Religions by Craig J. Hazen
- The East Comes West (or Why Jesus instead of the Buddha?) by Harold Netland
- Christ in the New Age by L. Russ Bush
- Islam and Christianity by Emir Fethi Caner

PART 5 POSTMODERNISM AND RELATIVISM

- The Challenges of Postmodernism by J. P. Moreland
- Is Morality Relative? by Francis J. Beckwith
- Reflections on McLaren and the Emerging Church by R. Scott Smith

PART 6 PRACTICAL APPLICATION

- Dealing with Emotional Doubt by Gary R. Habermas
- Apologetics for an Emerging Generation by Sean McDowell

Contending with Christainity's Critics

Here is the table of contents. (Sample chapter in a PDF)

PART 1 THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

- Dawkins's Delusion by William Lane Craig
- At Home in the Multiverse? by James Daniel Sinclair
- Confronting Naturalism: The Argument from Reason by Victor Reppert
- Belief in God: A Trick of Our Brain? by Michael J. Murray
- The Moral Poverty of Evolutionary Naturalism by Mark D. Linville
- Dawkins's Best Argument Against God's Existence by Gregory E. Ganssle

PART 2 THE JESUS OF HISTORY

- Criteria for the Gospels' Authenticity by Robert H. Stein
- Jesus the Seer by Ben Witherington III

- The Resurrection of Jesus Time Line by Gary R. Habermas
- How Scholars Fabricate Jesus by Craig A. Evans
- How Badly Did the Early Scribes Corrupt the New Testament? An Examination of Bart Ehrman's Claims by Daniel B. Wallace
- Who Did Jesus Think He Was? by Michael J. Wilkins

PART 3 THE COHERENCE OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

- The Coherence of Theism by Charles Taliaferro and Elsa J. Marty
- Is the Trinity a Logical Blunder? God as Three and One by Paul Copan
- Did God Become a Jew? A Defense of the Incarnation by Paul Copan
- Dostoyevsky, Woody Allen, and the Doctrine of Penal Substitution by Steve L. Porter
- Hell: Getting What's Good My Own Way by Stewart Goetz
- What Does God Know? The Problems of Open Theism by David P. Hunt

Before you can mount a detailed defense on any of these questions, it helps to be able to recognize them all!

By the way, you can get a head start on the first one if you just connect to YouTube and watch the movies "Unlocking the Mystery of Life" and "The Privileged Planet".

Polar bear expert suppressed for telling inconvenient truth

June 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Polar bear population has increased 5 times in the last 50 years

First, polar bear populations are BOOMING worldwide as the current global cooling phase continues.

Gateway Pundit has a round-up with all the numbers.

Excerpt:

> Polar bear numbers in Canada have increased in 11 of 13 regions in recent years.
>
> Another report shows that polar bear encounters on the North Slope oil fields have risen to record levels the last two years. The global warming religionists blame the increase in polar bear sightings on shrinking ice flows. So, now the alarmists are blaming manmade global warming on **both** increased and decreased polar bear populations.
>
> There are 5 times as many polar bears today as there were 50 years ago…
>
> In August 2008 Alaska Governor Sarah Palin sued the federal government seeking to reverse the decision to put the polar bear on the threatened species list.

A new US Senate report says:

> The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service estimates that the polar bear population is currently at 20,000 to 25,000 bears, up from as low as 5,000-10,000 bears in the

> 1950s and 1960s.

But it's much worse than that.

The suppression of the evidence

Not only is the number of polar bears 5 times higher than it was 50 years ago, but the research of the most prestigious scientists is being suppressed.

Consider this story from the UK Telegraph. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Over the coming days a curiously revealing event will be taking place in Copenhagen. Top of the agenda at a meeting of the Polar Bear Specialist Group (set up under the International Union for the Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission) will be the need to produce a suitably scary report on how polar bears are being threatened with extinction by man-made global warming.
>
> This is one of a steady drizzle of events planned to stoke up alarm in the run-up to the UN's major conference on climate change in Copenhagen next December. But one of the world's leading experts on polar bears has been told to stay away from this week's meeting, specifically because his views on global warming do not accord with those of the rest of the group.
>
> Dr Taylor… was voted down by its members because of his views on global warming. The chairman, Dr Andy Derocher, a former university pupil of Dr Taylor's, frankly explained in an email (which I was not sent by Dr Taylor) that his rejection had nothing to do with his undoubted expertise on polar bears: "it was the position you've taken on global warming that brought opposition".
>
> Dr Taylor was told that his views running "counter to human-induced climate change are extremely unhelpful". His signing of the Manhattan Declaration – a statement by 500 scientists that the causes of climate change are not CO2 but natural, such as changes in the radiation of the sun and ocean currents – was "inconsistent with the position taken by the PBSG".

Newsbusters has more on the suppression of the dissenting expert.

http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Minority.Blogs&ContentRecord_id=d6c6d346-802a-23ad-436f-40eb31233026

Round-up of stories from around the world

June 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

United Kingdom

Here's an article from the BBC News from reader Steven about the suppression of the rights of medical personnel by secular humanists. This time, we get some good news.

Excerpt:

> Doctors are demanding that NHS staff be given a right to discuss spiritual issues with patients as well as being allowed to offer to pray for them.
>
> Medics will tell the British Medical Association conference this week that staff should not be disciplined as long as they handle the issue sensitively.
>
> The doctors said recent cases where health workers had got into trouble were making people fearful.
>
> But atheists said it was wrong to mix religion and health care.

I also noticed this related article on LifeSiteNews linked by Binks in his latest round-up. Another Christian nurse gets flak from the atheistic fascists for daring to not behave as an atheist in public.

Excerpt:

> Nurse Slatter was told by her employer, the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, that the 1-inch gold necklace could "harbour and spread infections" or be used as weapon. She refused the hospital's suggestion that she carry the necklace in her pocket and has resigned, saying she would not choose between her job and her religion.
>
> …Many of these clashes have been the result of action by homosexual activists and the help of the Labour government's "anti-discrimination" laws. Most recently, the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) has issued draft "guidance" for schools that say teachers must hide their religion from students and colleagues. They must "promote equality and value diversity" by keeping their religious beliefs to themselves it said.

You can listen to a debate here that shows how naturally atheism leads to fascism in places like the UK. Or you can read my exchange with a British fascist here. (Fascism is the system of government in which individual rights, such as the right to free speech, are curtailed by the state)

India

You might remember that I blogged about the persecution of Christians in the eastern state of Orissa when I covered the recent Indian election.

Orissa is one of the states where Christians are really in the minority and there are Hindu

schools teaching the Hindu-nationalist doctrine of Hindutva, which is extremely hostile to Christianity.

Well, Shalini sent me some good news about the situation in Orissa:

Excerpt:

> Home Minister P Chidambaram, who is on a two-day visit to Orissa, visited one of the relief camps in riot-hit Kandhmal district on Friday.
>
> While speaking to the victims, he apologised for the conditions they had to face in the wake of a series of communal clashes following the killing of 85-year-old VHP leader Swami Laxmananda Saraswati in August 2008.
>
> …Condemning the incident, Chidambaram asked them to start life afresh, build the churches and practice their religion.
>
> "Whatever happened was wrong. Build your churches and practice your dharma," he said.
>
> When some refugees spoke of fear of RSS and Bajrang Dal, the Home Minister assured then that the guilty will be "prosecuted and punished."

I hope that this is a sign of better things to come for Indian Christians. I must admit that I spoke to a few Indian Hindus here in the USA, and they were not supportive of the rights of Christians to evangelize or to exercise freedom of religious expression in India.

Australia

Looks like Australia is considering implementing Human Rights Commissions, exactly like the ones that Canada has. Story from Life Site News. (H/T Free Canuckistan)

Excerpt:

> Australian life and family advocates are deeply concerned with plans by a government agency to institute new "human rights" legislation modelled on that of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Endeavour Forum, a national pro-life and pro-family advocacy group, has submitted a brief to a consultative committee, warning that since the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has "consistently failed" to protect the Christian values of the majority of Australians, "its probable recommendations will diminish, not enhance, our freedom."
>
> The AHRC is conducting national consultations on a proposed Human Rights Charter that is supported by the Attorney General, Robert McClelland, who has argued that since other countries, such as Canada, have such documents, Australia should follow suit.

And to think there was a time when I wanted to move to Queensland! Ha!

Canada

A Quebec court will hear from a Catholic school that is resisting the anti-Christian curriculum that is being pushed by the province. The article is from LifeSiteNews courtesy

of Binks.

Excerpt:

> Loyola Catholic High School has finished presenting its case in court against Quebec's mandatory Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC) program. The case was launched after the Department of Education refused to allow the school to continue teaching its own Catholic-centered religion course.
>
> The private Catholic boys' school objects to the province's mandatory course on the grounds that it conflicts with the school's Catholic character and presents a relativistic world-view of religion.
>
> …Quebec Education Minister Michelle Courchesne has denied all applications for exemption from the ERC and has made it clear that any religious education program that promotes one religion over any other is not acceptable.

Quebec is the most secular, left-wing province in Canada.

Pakistan

I spotted this story over at The Lambeth Walk blog. It recounts the details of some anti-Christian crimes in Muslim-dominated Pakistan.

Excerpt:

> Recently two very disturbing cases have emerged from Pakistan which give some insight into the risks which non-Muslims face in Muslim countries, particularly if they fail to pay the jizya.
>
> The first concerns a Christian man who was sexually abused, raped and murdered for refusing to convert to Islam…
>
> The second case involves the police torturing a Christian man and then denying him medical treatment…

Here's another one from Weasel Zippers, also via Binks.

Excerpt from the linked BosNewsLife article:

> **Two Pakistani Christians remained detained Thursday, June 25, on false charges of "blasphemy" and "robbery", advocacy groups said.**
>
> Asia Bibi, 37, was reportedly detained by police on allegations of blasphemy in the village of Ittanwali in Punjab province on June 19, following heated discussions about Islam with Muslim women who work with her on a farm.
>
> **"Bibi told them that Christ died on the cross for their sins and asked them what Mohammed had done for them,"**said Voice Of the Martyrs Canada (VOMC), which monitored the case. "Our Christ is the true prophet of God and yours is not true," Bibi reportedly said.

Something to pray about, and there's no time like the present for prayer.

Mauritania

Al-Qaeda kills an American missionary in Mauritania. Story from Jihad Watch, via Binks. Excerpt from the linked AFP story:

> The man was shot several times in the head from close range after he resisted an apparent kidnap attempt, a witness told AFP, after the shooting outside a private language and computer school run by the American.

> "A foreigner has been shot dead, apparently by **youths** who fled. We are investigating the case," police said, while the interior ministry identified the man as Christopher Logest and said he also worked for a charity, Noura.

Mauritania is in northwest Africa.

Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

June 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gee. I wonder who is more likely to take an innocent life? A pro-lifer? Or a pro-abortionist?

Let me think about it.

While I think, you can read this excerpt from a LifeSiteNews story.

> James Canfield, a regular pro-life protester of a Planned Parenthood and Women's Health Center in Chico, California, was almost run down during a protest last Wednesday, according to the Chico Enterprise Record. His alleged attacker, Matthew Haver, was charged with assault with a deadly weapon.
>
> Witnesses reported that a man driving an SUV attempted to strike Canfield, who dove out of the way and was not seriously injured. The license plate of the SUV was taken down and was traced back to Haver, who was then arrested.

I'm still thinking…

Gay Duke University health expert charged with selling adopted 5-year old for sex

June 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

WARNING: Mature subject matter.

Here's the full story from Newsbusters.

> Frank Lombard is an associate director at Duke University's Global Health Institute and a homosexual who was charged last week with the molestation of his adopted 5-year-old black son and actively trying to sell him for sex on the internet.
>
> The 40 words above are 40 more than the Main Stream Media has said on this horrible story.
>
> In nearly a week since Lombard was arrested, not one national broadcast or cable television news show has picked up the story. Compare this to the weeks on end of sensational coverage of the white male lacrosse players of the same university charged with rape several years ago.
>
> At the time of this post not one television show has reported the story and only 17 newspapers in the United States featured it – a majority of which are only small local newspapers.
>
> And most of these articles cited the American Press' report on the events, which was as follows:
>
> **AP)** WASHINGTON – A Duke University official has been arrested and charged with offering his adopted 5-year-old son for sex.
>
> Frank Lombard, the school's associate director of the Center for Health Policy, was arrested after an Internet sting, according to the FBI's Washington field office and the city's police department.
>
> According to an affidavit by District of Columbia Police Det. Timothy Palchak, an unnamed informant facing charges in his own child sex case led authorities to Lombard.
>
> Authorities said that Lombard tried to persuade a person -who he did not know was a police officer -to travel to North Carolina to have sex with Lombard's child.
>
> The detective's affidavit charges Lombard identified himself online as "perv dad for fun," and says that in an online chat with the detective, Lombard said he had sexually molested his son, whom he adopted as an infant.
>
> The court papers say Lombard also invited the undercover detective to North Carolina to have sex with the young boy, and even suggested which hotel he should use."
>
> In response to the AP report, which most of the newspapers used almost

> verbatim, Mike Adams of Townhall made the observation that “The Associate Press (AP) did not mention the fact that the five-year old offered up for molestation was black. Bringing that fact to light might be damaging to the political coalition that exists between blacks and gays. Nor did the AP mention that the adopted child is being raised by a homosexual couple. Bringing that fact to light might harm the gay adoption movement.”
>
> With this shocking lack of coverage of an even more shocking story, many are asking why this did not make the front pages and top headlines like the Duke lacrosse team scandal did. Thomas Lifson of American Thinker posited that “identity politics … apparently trumps all sense of outrage.”

Thanks to ECM to alerting me to this story. Notice how this story is not covered as well as the Matthew Sheppard story or the George Tiller story was. I wonder why. I guess some victims of violence are more equal than others.

SCOTUS overturns Sotomayor's decision against white male firefighters

June 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama's Supreme Court pick made a decision that was so bad that it was rejected by all NINE justices of the Supreme Court.

Story from DRJ, guest posting at Patterico:

> ABC News reports the Supreme Court ruled today that the white New Haven firefighters were unfairly denied promotions because of their race, reversing an appellate decision by Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor.

The ABCNews article states:

> "I think the import of the decision is that cities cannot bow to politics and pressure and lobbying by special interest groups, or act to achieve racial quotas," said Karen Torre, the attorney for the firefighters. "If the test is job-related, especially in a dangerous occupation, then the fact that more African Americans pass, or more Hispanics pass, or more whites pass, isn't sufficient grounds to ignore the results of an occupational test."

Sotomayor ruled against the white male firefighters, and in favor of affirmative action. Wise Latina indeed!

Wendy Long Bench Memos explains what it means:

> Not a Single Justice Agreed with Sotomayor
>
> Frank Ricci finally got his day in court, despite the judging of Sonia Sotomayor, which all nine Justices of U.S. Supreme Court have now confirmed was in error. She essentially committed judicial malpractice.
>
> That even Justice Ginsberg and the dissenters would have remanded — undoing what Judge Sotomayor did — confirms that Sotomayor is a far-left liberal judicial activist who ignores the law and rules on her own personal agenda, even beyond the current liberals on the Court.

ECM sent me an article from Gateway Pundit, who notes that Sotomayor was overturned SIXTY-SIX PERCENT of the time by the Supreme Court.

Hot Air explains what this means for her confirmation:

> This creates a big problem for Obama and the Democrats in Congress. They certainly have the votes to confirm Sotomayor, but their big sell — that she was one of the appellate court's most brilliant minds — just took a body blow on this decision. Most people want to move past the old arguments on race and hiring, feeling that forty years of affirmative-action policies have run their course.

> Having to defend a jurist who attempted to impose them in a court case will not make Sotomayor seem moderate or reasonable at all, but extreme and perhaps less than competent.
>
> Ironically, the Democrats have pushed for an earlier confirmation hearing, as soon as mid-July, while Republicans wanted a September date. I suspect the two may switch sides now, with the GOP wanting to hold the hearings in the wake of Sotomayor's high-profile reversal, and Democrats perhaps hoping that other stories will eclipse it. Regardless of when this confirmation hearing takes place, expect *Ricci* to play a central part in the questioning.

This is good news for everyone who believes in the rule of law.

Obama supports socialist dictator against democracy in Honduras

June 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why does Obama only meddle when the pro-democracy side is winning? (Image from IBD's Michael Ramirez, sent to me by ECM).

First, I really recommend you take a look at this beautifully-written article by Mary Anastasia O'Grady in the WSJ. It explains how the Honduran military was authorized by their Supreme Court to prevent their leftist dictator from extending his reign beyond the term limits required by law.

Excerpt:

> It seems that President Mel Zelaya miscalculated when he tried to emulate the success of his good friend Hugo in reshaping the Honduran Constitution to his liking.
>
> …That Mr. Zelaya acted as if he were above the law, there is no doubt. While Honduran law allows for a constitutional rewrite, the power to open that door does not lie with the president. A constituent assembly can only be called through a national referendum approved by its Congress.
>
> But Mr. Zelaya declared the vote on his own and had Mr. Chávez ship him the necessary ballots from Venezuela. The Supreme Court ruled his referendum unconstitutional, and it instructed the military not to carry out the logistics of the vote as it normally would do.

But O'Grady is not optimistic that it will stick, especially with the pro-dictator Obama offering support to the dictator Zelaya via Hillary Clinton:

> But Honduras is not out of the Venezuelan woods yet. Yesterday the Central American country was being pressured to restore the authoritarian Mr. Zelaya by the likes of Fidel Castro, Daniel Ortega, Hillary Clinton and, of course, Hugo

> himself. The Organization of American States, having ignored Mr. Zelaya's abuses, also wants him back in power. It will be a miracle if Honduran patriots can hold their ground.

Read the whole thing, it's worth it.

But the best ongoing coverage of the Honduras situation is at Fausta's blog. The main the thing I want to note from her coverage is that she has many links to other sites.

Excerpt:

> This is why Zelaya was removed from power: all branches of government and the country's institutions recognized that he had broken the law.

Check out this story from the WSJ: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> The Obama administration worked in recent days to prevent President Manuel Zelaya's ouster, said a senior U.S. official. The State Department, in particular, communicated to Honduran officials on the ground that President Barack Obama wouldn't support any nondemocratic transfer of power in the Central American country.
>
> "We had some indication that a move against Mr. Zelaya was afoot," said a U.S. official briefed on the diplomacy. "We made it clear it was something we didn't support."
>
> Secretary of State Hillary Clinton joined Obama Sunday in criticizing the Honduran coup and calling for the restoration of the democratic process.
>
> "We call on all parties in Honduras to respect the constitutional order and the rule of law, to reaffirm their democratic vocation, and to commit themselves to resolve political disputes peacefully and through dialogue," Clinton said in a statement.

We saw above that everything that the Honduran government did was within the rule of law, and yet Obama and Hillary are following Chavez's lead and making it sound like Zelaya was following the law!

Thanks to ECM for notifying me about this story.

Argentina

Just a quick link to Fausta's blog again to note that other left-wing socialists were kicked out in the Argentinian election.

FRC opposes Obama’s school safety nominee

June 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrat President Barack Obama has nominated Kevin Jennings to head the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools.

The Family Research Council has issued a press release announcing their disapproval. I found it linked at Muddling Towards Maturity.

Excerpt:

> As the former president of the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, Mr. Jennings worked tirelessly to bring the homosexual agenda into our nation’s classrooms, even in grades as young as kindergarten. In addition, in his autobiography, Mr. Jennings expresses no regret about his past drug abuse or recognition of its risks. Instead, he seems amused. In his words, “[W]atching the planes take off and land is actually quite fun when you are drunk and stoned.”
>
> Jennings has spoken publicly about a high school student he once counseled who was in a sexual relationship with an older man he met in a bus station – yet Jennings never reported this abuse to the authorities, the school, or the child’s parents.

Muddling linked to the FRC’s ad here.

How could Christians vote for Obama?

It might be worth reflecting for a moment on who put Obama into office. (Source: First Things)

	% Electorate	2008 Obama	2008 McCain
Minority Religious Groups			
Black Protestants	11	95	5
Other Faiths	5	81	19
Ethnic Catholics/Other Christians	6	74	26
Ethnic Protestants	8	52	48
Unaffiliated	12	75	27
White Catholics			
Moderate Catholics	7	46	54
Centrist Catholics	6	34	66
Traditionalist Catholics	6	39	61
White Mainline Protestants			
Moderate Mainline Protestants	6	61	39
Centrist Mainline Protestants	6	51	49
Traditionalist Mainline Protestants	4	32	68
Other Christians	3	28	72
White Evangelical Protestants			
Moderate Evangelical Protestants	3	45	55
Centrist Evangelical Protestants	9	31	69
Traditionalist Evangelical Protestants	15	11	89
ALL	100	54	46

Should Christians have voted for Obama?
I'm sure that many of these Christians (?) voted for Obama because they didn't like spending 550 billion dollars on two wars to protect America from Islamic fascism while liberating people living in dictatorships. Or maybe because they didn't see how taxing the greedy rich could be bad. Or maybe they thought that Obama was pro-life and pro-family regardless of his actual voting record.

Ideas have consequences. Elections matter.

UPDATE: Whoa! Just noticed this story at Pamela Geller's blog. It turns out that Jennings is worse than described by the FRC! Warning: the link describes extreme sexual practices supported by Jennings.

California Democrat leader says free speech is terrorism

June 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Speaking out against my tax increases is terrorism! Give me your money, and shut up! Stop the ACLU links to this LA Times interview with California Speaker of the House Karen Bass. As you know, California is in the worst financial crisis in all 50 states. Karen is very angry that Republicans are pressured by voters to vote against tax increases. She thinks that Republicans should vote like Democrats, regardless of what their constituents want.

Excerpt:

> **How do you think conservative talk radio has affected the Legislature's work?**
>
> The Republicans were essentially threatened and terrorized against voting for revenue. Now [some] are facing recalls. They operate under a terrorist threat: "You vote for revenue and your career is over." I don't know why we allow that kind of terrorism to exist. I guess it's about free speech, but it's extremely unfair.

See, California is running a 24.3 BILLION dollar deficit, which is half the deficit that Canada is running this year. It's so bad that they are issuing IOUs to contractors. And the Democrats think that tax hikes are the answer. By the way, her background is "community organizing" as well.

Hot Air has more here:

> There's a lot of stupidity and tyranny locked into those few words. The First Amendment guarantees the right to petition the government for redress of grievances, even apart from the "free speech" issues Bass casually discards. Elected politicians are accountable to the people who elect them in a free society. Politicians do not acquire lordly status when they go to the Assembly, or anywhere else.
>
> Usually, politicians are smart enough to at least pay lip service to getting feedback from their constituents. Instead, Bass calls them "terrorists" for … what? Calling their representatives and telling them not to raise taxes even higher, in the state with the sixth-highest per capita tax burden in the nation?

> Expressing their opinions? Telling politicians they won't get their support if they vote for a tax hike? That's *democracy*, not terrorism, although I'm hardly surprised that Bass can't tell the difference.
>
> …Beware the politicians who consider dissent terrorism. They're either idiotic beyond belief, or tyrants waiting for an opportunity. Bass might just be both.

Remember when dissent was the highest form of patriotism? Yeah, now dissent makes you a terrorist. This is what secularism and socialism amounts to: disagree with me and you're the worst person in the world and anything I do to you is morally justified.

There is no difference between communists in North Korea and communists is the United States. They believe the same things. They are just on different stages of the same road to serfdom.

Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

July 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story is at Hot Air. (H/T The Pugnacious Irishman)

Ed Morrissey writes:

> Lila Rose and Jackie Stollar have another of their series of exposés of Planned Parenthood clinics and their refusal to follow the law in reporting sexual abuses of underaged girls. This time, Lila and Jackie went to Birmingham, Alabama to procure an abortion as a 14-year-old girl impregnated by a 31-year-old man. According to Alabama law, that's statutory rape, and the law requires any health-care provider to report it to law enforcement. Does this PP clinic follow the law?

Click through to Hot Air and watch the video to find out what happens!

LaShawn Barber notes the pro-abortion response to being caught:

> *U.S. News and World Report* blogger Bonnie Erbe wants to know why the pro-life crusader hasn't been arrested for trespassing or fraud, and – get this – Planned Parenthood has posted Lila Rose's picture so its disgraceful workers will be on the alert.

Pro-life spies kick butt!

Also see my previous post on how the "non-profit" Planned Parenthood makes millions in profits while still receiving taxpayer subsidies.

Sarah Palin photos: not as hot as Michele Bachmann

July 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Former Alaska governor Sarah Palin

ECM, Hot Air and Muddling alerted me this story in Runner's World featuring Sarah Palin. I think Sarah Palin is getting a lot of interest from this article, and most because of the photos. But there is more to a political candidate than looks.

Introducing Michele Bachmann

Allow me to introduce you to someone who is even better than Sarah Palin: Congresswoman Michele Bachmann.

Rep. Michele Bachmann

About Michele Bachmann:

> Congresswoman Bachmann is a leading advocate for tax reform, a staunch opponent of wasteful government spending, and a strong proponent of adherence to the Constitution, as intended by the Founding Fathers. She believes government has grown exponentially, with ObamaCare being the most recent example of its uninhibited growth. Congresswoman Bachmann wants government to make the kind of serious spending decisions that many families and small businesses have been forced to make. She is a champion of free markets and she believes in the vitality of the family as the first unit of government. She is also a defender of the unborn and staunchly stands for religious liberties.
>
> Prior to serving in the U.S. Congress, Bachmann served in the Minnesota State Senate. She was elected to the Minnesota State Senate in 2000 where she championed the Taxpayers Bill of Rights. Before that, she spent five years as a federal tax litigation attorney, working on hundreds of civil and criminal cases. That experience solidified her strong support for efforts to simplify the Tax Code and reduce tax burdens on family and small business budgets. Congresswoman Bachmann also led the charge on education issues in Minnesota calling for the abolishment of Goals 2000 and the Profiles of Learning in its school. She recognized the need for quality schools and subsequently started a charter school for at-risk kids in Minnesota.
>
> Congresswoman Bachmann sits on the Financial Services Committee (FSC) and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. The FSC is tasked with oversight of numerous financial sectors including housing, real estate and banking. This gave the Congresswoman keen insight into the housing crisis and

> credit crunch, leading her to be a staunch opponent of the taxpayer-funded bailout of Wall Street and the Dodd-Frank legislation. Serving on the Intelligence Committee was a welcomed opportunity for Congresswoman Bachmann as she has consistently advocated peace through strength to ensure America's national security. As a mother of five children and 23 foster children, she has a deep appreciation for that portion of the Oath of Office in which members of Congress vow to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.
>
> In July 2010 Congresswoman Bachmann hosted the first Tea Party Caucus meeting because she saw the need for Tea Partiers to have a listening ear in Congress. She is seen as a champion of Tea Party values including the call for lower taxes, renewed focus on the Constitution and the need to shrink the size of government.

Let's learn a bit more about her from this profile article.

Excerpt:

> Michele Bachmann was a self-styled "education researcher" making a run for a Minnesota school board seat in 1999 when the question came up at a candidate forum: If elected, would she serve all four years?
>
> Maybe not, she said.
>
> Bachmann, now a three-term congresswoman and tea party favorite who may run for president in 2012, opened up about a confrontation she'd had with a state senator over Minnesota's new school standards.
>
> "I told him that if he's not willing to be more responsive to the citizens, that I may have to run for his seat or find someone else who would do so," she said, according to a newspaper account of the meeting.
>
> Bachmann lost the school board race, but then knocked off the senator, a fellow Republican, just months later using the standards as her primary issue.
>
> It was an early indicator of a recurring theme: Bachmann often wins by losing.
>
> […]The race would test her resilience because she would start far back. But as a little-known House member only a few years ago, Bachmann became hero of the conservative tea party movement in part by fighting losing battles with the GOP establishment. Her path to Congress was paved by failed efforts to pass a ban on gay marriage in the Minnesota Legislature.
>
> "She is very good at turning lemons into lemonade all the time," said Sal Russo, a California political consultant who came to know Bachmann through the tea party.
>
> […]From her first involvement in politics, the 55-year-old Bachmann has shown a determination to keep pressing forward and find opportunities, even when the way seemed blocked.

> In the late 1990s, Bachmann was a stay-at-home mother of five in Stillwater, a scenic St. Croix River town east of St. Paul. Then she was drawn into a revolt over education standards.
>
> […]"People had been predicting her demise since Day One: 'Oh, she's a radical, she's too far right, she's too outspoken, she's too inflammatory,'" Pulkrabek said. "The fact of the matter is, with the exception of the first race, she wins."
>
> Parlaying her school board defeat into a victorious legislative campaign, she moved to the state Senate and seized on a new issue.
>
> Around Thanksgiving 2003, justices in Massachusetts ruled the commonwealth couldn't prevent same-sex marriage. Bachmann hit the phones, reaching out to fellow conservatives about making sure gay marriage would stay illegal in Minnesota.
>
> […]Jeff Davis heard her public appeal through his car radio. Not politically involved at the time, Davis came to the Capitol and pledged to help Bachmann.
>
> […]"She's an energizer. She influences people around her," Davis said. The drive instantly elevated Bachmann's political profile, he said. "It was a launch point."
>
> […]Bachmann's victory in that race brought her to the national stage and prompted a new focus on fiscal issues. She harnessed the outrage of the tea party, a fledgling political force inflamed by debates over government bailouts and a far-reaching health law pursued by President Barack Obama.
>
> Her outspoken opposition did not stop the health law, but it got her much more television exposure and helped make her a face of the new resistance. In one Fox News interview, Bachmann urged viewers to flood Washington and "go up and down through the halls, find members of Congress, look at the whites of their eyes and say, 'Don't take away my health care.'"
>
> Amy Kremer remembers seeing Bachmann's television plea while on a Tea Party Express bus heading between rallies in Washington state. The next week, Kremer joined Bachmann in the nation's capital for a big tea party protest.
>
> "You can tell the ones who have the passion, the fire in the belly and are truly speaking from the heart. She's one of those," Kremer said. "That comes through."

The article goes on to explain how Michele got to be a three-term Congresswoman in one of the most liberal states in the entire country.

Read this interview with World Magazine.

Excerpt:

> As her politics changed, so did her faith. She attributes a turning point to watching Francis Schaeffer's Christian worldview video series, *How Should We Then Live?* "In college I felt like in some ways my mind had been saved," she said.

> For Bachmann, who is a member of Salem Lutheran Church in Stillwater, Minn., being a Christian and a politician means fighting for compassion—individual compassion. “People confuse compassion with government being compassionate with other people’s money versus people being compassionate with their own money,” she said.
>
> For the Bachmanns, opening their family’s home to teenage girls was a way to express their Christian faith and live out good economics. That didn’t mean it wasn’t challenging. At one point, Bachmann was nursing a newborn, juggling two toddlers, homeschooling two children, and overseeing four foster teenage girls. “I was so tired, I could hardly pick my head up off the pillow,” she admitted. These days, all of her foster children have moved on, but she still makes time for her mostly grown children, who range in age from 26 to 14.
>
> …Bachmann says for her one thread ties all the day’s obligations together: “radical abandonment to God’s call.”

Listen to this interview with Michele Bachmann, by Pamela Geller. (The linked post has an MP3)

Excerpt:

> Bachmann: Right. We actually, this is a man-made, government-made disaster, this economic conundrum we’re in right now. We could see ourselves go forward next quarter already if we do a few things, if we would do this. If we would permanently zero out the capital gains tax for four years, so that we could let people know that for four years there would be zero capital gains tax. Take the business tax rate from the second highest in the world, 34%, and cut that down to 9% for a corporate tax rate, that would be bring in foreign investment and jobs back into the United States. Completely eliminate the death tax, completely eliminate the alternative minimum tax, and then I think that we need to bold on income tax. Scrap the income tax code, and put into place a tax system where everyone has to get in on the game.
>
> Whether it’s through a national sales tax, or whether it’s through a flat tax, and my personal opinion, I’d love to see in our perfect world a flat tax rate that’s no more than 10% on any American on the federal level, and then that’s it. And then we would pull way back on our spending, including eliminating the federal department of education. We don’t need the federal department of education, that function needs to happen at the state level. And then we need to go through, dramatically change what government does, that we truly are a constitutional government acting under our enumerated powers, and then we do no more, because the number one duty of government is to protect the health and the safety of the American people, and we need to make sure that we focus on first things first.

And she is very pretty, just like Sarah Palin:

Rep. Michele Bachmann

Let's look at how she does in interviews.

First, Bret Baier spends some time with Michele going over her pluses and minuses as a candidate: (MP3 version here – 3 Mb)

Second, here is another interview with popular social conservative Mike Huckabee: (MP3 version here – 3 Mb)

You can learn more about Michele in the links below.

Campaign speeches, interviews and debates

Speeches:

- Michele Bachmann's Republican Leadership Conference speech
- Michele Bachmann's speech at the Right Online Conference

Reactions from her recent debate performance:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

Profiles of Michele Bachmann:

- ABC News
- WORLD Magazine

And here are some of her media interviews and speeches in the House of Representatives.

You can contribute to her campaign right here. You can be her friend on Facebook here and also here.

Related posts

- What books does Michele Bachmann read on vacation?
- The Wintery Knight demands that Michele Bachmann run for President
- New Michele Bachmann interviews on the economy
- MUST-HEAR: Michele Bachmann gives the best speech ever

- Michele Bachmann beats RINO Mitt Romney in fundraising
- Michele Bachmann looking presidential against the liberal media
- Michele Bachmann courts homeschoolers in Iowa speech
- Michele Bachmann and Paul Ryan on the Wisconsin teacher union pensions
- Video and transcripts of response speeches by Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann
- What was the context of Michele Bachmann's "armed and dangerous" comment?
- AT LAST: Michele Bachmann open to presidential run in 2012
- Megyn Kelly and Michele Bachmann on the Bush tax cut deal
- CNS News interviews Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann requests the resignation of Attorney General Eric Holder
- Michele Bachmann attacks government bailout of unions
- Michele Bachmann makes the case for limited government
- Why is the left so angry with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin?
- Michele Bachmann on Fox News with Laura Ingraham
- Democrats kill Michele Bachmann's attempt to freeze federal salaries
- Michele Bachmann on the US taxpayer-funded bailout of Greece
- Michele Bachmann explains the Obama's Wall Street bailout bill
- Michele Bachmann promises to work to repeal Obamacare
- Video of Michele Bachmann defending unborn children
- Michele Bachmann's passionate and inspiring speech at CPAC 2010
- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama's latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare's rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

Does the Bible condone slavery?

July 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Matt and Madeleine Flanagan have a wonderful post up to answer this thorny question. These guys are professional apologists, not amateurs, like me! They have *footnotes* in their post!

Your strategy

If someone asks you a question like this, there are two responses you need to make:

1. Explain why the Bible does not condone slavery
2. Ask the challenger why slavery is wrong, on their worldview

Let's start with number 1.

Does the Bible condone slavery?

MandM's response is based on the writings of John Locke in his "Second Treatise on Civil Government". Locke based his argument on a reading of Exodus 21, where the rules of "slavery" are defined.Locke's argument is that the definition of slavery in the Bible is not the same as the slavery of modern times.

MandM quotes Locke's argument. Then they summarize it:

> [1] If a person is a slave then that person is "under the absolute, arbitrary power of another, to take away his life, when he pleases."
> [2] The institution referred to in scripture that people could sell themselves into, was not one where they were "under an absolute, arbitrary, despotical power."

Then they explain some reasons why the indentured servitude in the Bible is not the same as slavery in the last few hundred years.

- there was no kidnapping of an indentured servant, they served voluntarily in order to get rid of a debt
- there was no racial component to indentured servitude
- killing an indentured servant was a capital offense, striking one was illegal
- indentured servitude was for 6 years, not for a lifetime
- if the indentured servant fled from an abusive master, it was illegal to return teh servant to his master

References are provided for each of these points.

So the Biblical concept of "slavery" wasn't what we mean as slavery when we look at British, Arab, or American slavery in history. Instead, the Bible is talking about *indentured servitude.*

What's wrong with slavery, on atheism?

I think a more fundamental question that needs to be pressed on the atheist is whether

slavery is wrong on *their* worldview. I've argued elsewhere that worldviews like atheism do *not* support the minimal requirements for rational morality.

Specifically, atheism does not ground:

1) Objective moral values: where is the standard?
2) Objective moral duties: to whom are moral duties owed?
3) Moral accountability: will I get caught if I am immoral?
4) Free will: are humans capable of free choice?
5) Ultimate significance: does it matter ultimately?

NEVER let atheists get away with making any moral statements, because even though an individual atheist might get lucky and act morally based on the objective moral law that God actually made, their actions are not rationally grounded by their worldview. Call them out!

This actually came out in the comments for MandM's post, where John W. Loftus, a prominent lay-atheist, chimed in.

Here is a sample comment:

> Rob says: (from Manawatu Christian Apologetics)
>
> I presume John Loftus is a born-again atheist? If this is so, then upon what grounds would he criticize slavery at all?
>
> If atheism is true truth, then I fail to see any possible ground that could provide a basis for outrage against moral evil, since moral evil cannot exist.
>
> Indeed, if the universe is material only, then at what time did atoms create morality?
>
> So John Loftus has to assume a Biblical morality to attack Biblical morality, but he would then be rejecting the basis for his indignation at slavery in the South, or any other slavery for that matter. He cannot logically have his cake and eat it too.

I can't recommend this post *and* the comments enough. This is a great post and the comments are totally awesome, although you may find them difficult to understand. You will learn a lot from this post and exchange.

I am really impressed with MandM's blog. Please pay them a visit and have a look yourself.

Related questions

You may be interested in similar challenges made by atheists that I answered in previous posts.

- Does Christianity or atheism justify mass murder?
- Wasn't Hitler a Christian? Is Christianity like Nazism?

More questions here.

Democrats use TARP money to shore up personal fortunes

July 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Washington Post. Senator Daniel Inouye (DEMOCRAT) intercedes to have TARP funds redirected to the floundering "Central Pacific" bank, which he owns.

But I prefer Hot Air's summary.

> In other words, Inouye interceded to get TARP funds to secure his personal assets. He used his political clout on Capitol Hill to get Treasury to approve a "marginal" application that had already been rejected once, in order to save his own bank from collapse. Central Pacific had already been in trouble with the FDIC even before the collapse in the lending and financial sector, thanks to bad management practices and undercapitalization. The FDIC had required a change in management and $40 million more in capitalization, which is why Treasury was reluctant to give CP a bailout check in the first place.
>
> Inouye isn't the first member of Congress to have used TARP to rescue personal fortunes. Maxine Waters did the same thing with OneUnited of Massachusetts, where she and her husband had significant investments. In that case, Waters arranged a meeting between OneUnited and regulators, while Barney Frank wrote legislation that required Treasury to grant special consideration to OneUnited's TARP application.

A second Hot Air piece about the corruption in the cap-and-trade bill.

> Remember that last-minute, 300-page amendment to the cap-and-trade bill that hit the House just hours before the vote approving it? The one that Democrats insisted on putting up for a vote before anyone had the chance to read it? When one reads the contents of it, as the Washington Times' Edward Felker did, it becomes apparent why Henry Waxman and Edward Markey pushed it through so quickly. It was a payoff for Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) to turn her back on coal-producing Ohio and vote to kill the economy in her state, and she wasn't alone…
>
> …The amendment itself got published in the wee hours of Friday morning. By the time the House came to order and began debate, it hadn't yet been noted by the media.
>
> In essence, Waxman and Markey bought Kaptur with our money. They spent $3.5 billion for a single vote in Congress, and Kaptur had willingly put herself up for sale. Never mind that Ohio will get [hit] hard by caps on the use of coal. Ohioans will lose jobs, their energy bills will skyrocket, and that will have an inflationary effect on all goods and services as the jobless rate escalates.

More Democrat corruption in Michigan

But this is not the only corruption going on with those sneaky Democrats.

Michigan Democrats are involved in yet another corruption scandal. I wonder if these Democrats keep their piles of cash in freezers like the Louisiana Democrats do.

Here's the story from the BlogProf. This blog has been tracking the story from its inception.

Excerpt:

> Ever since Monica Conyers became a convicted felon, a big chunk of the the most powerful Michigan Democrats have been somehow connected to the growing scandal. Husband John Conyers somehow wrote a letter to the EPA to open toxic deep wells that he vehemently opposed, which was a boost to Jim Pappas who was bribing Monica for the favor. In the middle was Monica Conyers advisor Sam Riddle. In addition, Pappas hired U.S. Sen Debbie Stabenow's husband, Tom Athens, to illegally lobby for the same deal, all the while Stabenow publicly came out against Canadian trash imports, including those that we to be injected into said wells.
>
> Since the conviction of Monica, Riddle has been talking. What he said today raised many eyebrows throughout the state, now ensnaring the Michigan Democrat Party, Jennifer Granholm, Mark Brewer chairman of the Michigan Democratic Party, and Bernard Kilpatrick father of disgraced felon ex-mayor Kwame Kilpatrick. From The Detroit News: Riddle: FBI probed $50K deal with Dems.

People who trash the free exercise of religion, traditional morality, the rule of law and family should not be expected to act honestly. Morality requires certain metaphysical beliefs, which Democrats, being secular socialists, just don't have grounded by their worldview.

We can't elect people who believe that it's OK to kill defenseless unborn children for convenience and then expect them to have integrity. It's not rational for someone like that to act morally. If they are willing break the big moral laws, they'll have no trouble breaking the small ones, too.

Honduras defies Obama-supported socialist dictator

July 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Background

The Honduran Constitution specifies that Presidents are only allowed to serve one-term. The current President Zeyala decided that things would be better if he were allowed to serve indefinitely. He tried to arrange a referendum to redo the Constitution so that he could serve a second term.

The Supreme Court declared that the Constitution does not allow the president to call a referendum, only the Congress can do that. So, they ordered the army to prevent the dictator from carrying out his plan to seize power anyway.

But Obama loves communist dictators. He would not side with the Iranian people against their Islamo-fascist dictator, and he will not side with the Honduran people against their communist dictator. It makes you wonder what Obama has against Constitutions, liberty, free market capitalism and limits on power, doesn't it?

The latest

Obama's UN representative introduced a resolution in the United Nations, along with other Marxist dictatorships in Venezuela and Bolivia, to support the Marxist dictator of Honduras.

The Hill reports: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> The U.S. co-sponsored a successful U.N. resolution supporting Honduras's ousted leader Tuesday as Republicans began to speak out against the Obama administration's condemnation of the overthrow.
>
> Manuel Zelaya, who was arrested and forced into exile Sunday, addressed the U.N. General Assembly after the unanimous vote on the resolution sponsored in part by Bolivia, Mexico, Venezuela and the United States.
>
> "The resolution that the United Nations has just adopted unanimously … expresses the indignation of the people of Honduras and the people worldwide," said Zelaya, who began his speech by thanking Venezuela and Ecuador.

Obama even wants to speak with the exiled dictator:

> …"I believe, if he — if he does come either today or tomorrow, that he will likely meet with officials from the State Department, some of whom, as I said, have been in contact," White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said in Tuesday's briefing, repeating this when pressed by a reporter about whether Zelaya would meet with Obama.
>
> Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has urged Zelaya to try to speak with Obama while in D.C., saying the American president's support would "deliver a major blow" to Honduras's interim government.

But the Republicans in Congress are siding with the Honduran people, and against socialist dictators:

> "Manuel Zelaya trampled the Honduran Constitution by pushing for his illegal referendum to allow him to rule indefinitely, and by firing the top military official, General Romeo Vasquez Velasquez, when he refused to comply with Zelaya's unconstitutional orders," Rep. Connie Mack (R-Fla.) said in a statement to The Hill on Tuesday.
>
> "There is little doubt that Zelaya, in his blatant power grab, has moved Honduras down a dangerous path toward less freedom, less security, and less prosperity. He consistently ignored the checks and balances which are essential to a democratic government."
>
> The referendum had been judged illegal by Honduras's highest court and was opposed widely through political and military circles, including within Zelaya's own party.

The Wall Street Journal reports: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> Hondurans are understandably afraid that, backed by Chávez agents and money, it could lead to similar antidemocratic subversion there. In Tegucigalpa yesterday, thousands demonstrated against Mr. Zelaya, and new deputy foreign minister Marta Lorena Casco told the crowd that "Chávez consumed Venezuela, then Bolivia, after that Ecuador and Nicaragua, but in Honduras that didn't happen."
>
> It's no accident that Mr. Chávez is now leading the charge to have Mr. Zelaya reinstated, and on Monday the Honduran traveled to a leftwing summit in Managua in one of Mr. Chávez's planes. The U.N. and Organization of American States are also threatening the tiny nation with ostracism and other punishment if it doesn't readmit him.
>
> …As for the Obama Administration, it seems eager to "meddle" in Honduras in a way Mr. Obama claimed was counterproductive in Iran. Yet the stolen election in Iran was a far clearer subversion of democracy than the coup in Honduras. As a candidate, Mr. Obama often scored George W. Bush's foreign policy by saying democracy requires more than an election — a free press, for example, civil society and the rule of law rather than rule by the mob. It's a point worth recalling before Mr. Obama hands a political victory to the forces of chavismo in Latin America.

Meanwhile, the Honduran people marched in the streets against Obama and his communist dictator buddies, reports Gateway Pundit.

Hondurans protest against the unilateral meddling in their national affairs by Cowboy Socialist Barack Obama

Imagine what conservative Christian Republicans like Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush would have done in a similar situation. They would have defended the rights and liberties of the people from the arbitrary power of socialist dictators. But they understood the value of liberty, democracy and human rights. They were prepared to take stands against the tyrannies of communism and fascism. They did not want to be loved by evil tyrants.

UPDATE: Ed Morrissey at Hot Air notes that even the socialists at the New Republic are condemning Obama for neglecting the Honduran Constitution and the will of the people. (H/T Stop the ACLU)

Round-up of news on Obama's economic policies

July 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tax policies that destroy traditional families

New taxes on married couples with intact families to subsidize out-of-wedlock births. (This is basically an incentive to not marry, by the way)

Hans Bader at the CEI's blog reports: (H/T ECM)

> Not content with repealing welfare reform through the job-killing stimulus package, and proposing a massive marriage penalty in the tax code, Obama and his Congressional allies are now planning to make married and widowed taxpayers subsidize benefits for which they are not eligible, such as payments to households with out-of-wedlock births. For example, they are pushing a bill that will allow even households that receive tens of thousands of dollars a year in child support to demand food stamps.
>
> …Intact families, and widows, usually have every dollar they make considered in whether they qualify for food stamps. But under the Obama-backed proposal, unwed mothers, and divorced mothers, would not, since the child-support dollars they receive would be arbitrarily excluded.

Stop and think about what sorts of incentives this creates. What kind of man would be stupid enough to consider getting married and being a father to his own children? This is how Democrats destroy the family with tax policies, so that women with children depend on the state, and the state can in turn influence the way children are raised by getting them into day care, pre-K and government-run schools.

The goal is to prevent parents from influencing their own children with benighted traditional beliefs about traditional religion and morality. According to Democrats, that is the job of qualified public school teachers using approved teaching materials designed by experts like Kevin Jennings. And besides, the more children are raised without fathers, the more government jobs are created to deal with the fallout.

And there's more:

> The Obama-backed bill also increases the federal matching funds states receive for maximizing their collection of child support payments, giving them an incentive to artificially jack up child support obligations in order to reap federal money (as many states did in the aftermath of the 1988 Family Support Act), even if that means forcing fathers who have never missed a payment to pay much more than the actual cost of raising a child. I have previously written about how court-ordered child support payments generally exceed the actual cost of raising a child under most existing state child-support guidelines.

Democrat women that I know (single/divorced women and single/divorced mothers) are so mystified as to why men are not lining up to marry them. Maybe they should be

thinking about the policies that they actually voted in favor of – they are not husband-friendly or father-friendly.

Democrat women think that they can crush the last drop of liberty and autonomy out of a man, and still expect him to love, protect and provide for women and children. Inexplicable. They want the security of the state and they don't realize how it decreases the number of men willing to make commitments.

Home sales will require government approval

The Democrats cap-and-trade bill will require you to fix your house up to be eco-friendly, before you will be allowed to sell it. What? Global warming isn't going to solve itself, you know…. Oh, wait!

CNSNews reports on what we can expect. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> The 1,400-page cap-and-trade legislation pushed through by House Democrats contains a new federal policy that residential, commercial, and government buildings be retrofitted to increase energy efficiency, leaving it up to the states to figure out exactly how to do that.
>
> This means that homeowners, for example, could be required to retrofit their homes to meet federal "green" guidelines in order to sell their homes, if the cap-and-trade bill becomes law.

This is the first time since these subprime mortgage bank bailouts started that I've ever been happy about renting.

New Republican cap-and-trade TV ad

Here's the new ad put out by Republicans to educate the public about the cap-and-trade bill that just passed the house. (H/T ECM)

Now that's a great ad.

Why Democrats voted for Obama

Because they don't know anything about economics!

The second one is from Nice Deb.

Christina Hoff Sommers explains feminist myth-making

July 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Christina Hoff Sommers

This story was sent to me by ECM, but I also saw posted at Dinocrat.com, Jennifer Roback Morse and Muddling Towards Maturity.

How reliable are the stories you read in women's studies textbooks? Does violence against women really increase on Superbowl Sunday? Or is it just a ploy to create a made-up crisis to justify transferring wealth from taxpayers to feminists for research, social programs, etc.?

Excerpt:

> One reason that feminist scholarship contains hard-to-kill falsehoods is that reasonable, evidence-backed criticism is regarded as a personal attack.
>
> Lemon's *Domestic Violence Law* is organized as a conventional law-school casebook — a collection of judicial opinions, statutes, and articles selected, edited, and commented upon by the author.
>
> …in a selection by Joan Zorza, a domestic-violence expert, students read, "The March of Dimes found that women battered during pregnancy have more than twice the rate of miscarriages and give birth to more babies with more defects than women who may suffer from any immunizable illness or disease." Not true. When I recently read Zorza's assertion to Richard P. Leavitt, director of science information at the March of Dimes, he replied, "That is a total error on the part of the author. There was no such study." The myth started in the early 1990s, he explained, and resurfaces every few years.
>
> Zorza also informs readers that "between 20 and 35 percent of women seeking

> medical care in emergency rooms in America are there because of domestic violence." Studies by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, indicate that the figure is closer to 1 percent.

Sommers is a Christian equality-feminist who writes against activist "gender" feminism. I have her first two books. She is a professional philosopher who understands men and tells the truth.

You can read more about what constitutes feminist research in this article by Rod Dreher.

Further study

My previous story on domestic violence showed that female-instigated DV is rising in Australia, and that rates of DV are similar in Canada and the UK.

Previously, I blogged about a new study that shows the importance of fathers to the development of children.

I also blogged about how government intrudes into the family and about the myth of "dead-beat Dads". And about how the feminist state's discrimination against male teachers is negatively impacting young men. And there is my series on how Democrat policies discourage marriage: Part 1 is here and Part 2 is here and Part 3 is here.

Dr. Linda Kelly Hill

Here is a related research paper by Dr. Linda Kelly, a professor of Law at Indiana University School of Law.

Round-up of news from around the world

July 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Pro-freedom protesters in Honduras defy Obama and CNN

So much foreign policy news!

Iraq

Jason over at The Western Experience has a number of good stories up.

He writes that Iraq is struggling to find foreign investors for its oil fields.

Excerpt:

> …the Iraqi government has to decide on how to lure foreign investors and oil firms to setup shop in the many rich oil fields. With modern development, industry and organization Iraq could be a major producer and, potentially, one of the major countries in the world in just a few decades. So far, things haven't exactly happened in the order many experts and investors hoped. The hang up is, of course, price per barrel. Companies were asking too much for operating in the country in the eyes of the government. Still, others were willing to operate at loss just to get a foothold in the new market.

It's funny, because if our war in Iraq were really a war for oil, why is Iraq taking offers to see who will be drilling for all that oil? (The offers are also coming from China, Russia and India, not just the USA)

Egypt

Robert Spenser of Jihad Watch links to this Assist News article about the state of Christian liberty in Egypt.

Excerpt:

> Since early 2007 the Egyptian government has been appeasing Muslim fundamentalists by settling matters of sectarian conflict out of court in line with Islamic Sharia law. That prohibits Christians from bringing evidence against

> Muslims. **The government brokers 'reconciliation' sessions where the Christians are forced to drop all the charges they are making (arson, looting, assault, kidnap, robbery, criminal damage, rioting, torture, rape, murder) in exchange for Muslim guarantees of 'peace'.**
>
> **…Not only is violence against Christian individuals, churches and communities escalating dangerously, but the courts are increasingly subordinating the Constitution to Sharia law.** Notably, the courts are refusing to allow Muslims the right to convert. The consequences of this are huge. A woman who is officially registered as a Muslim must by law marry a Muslim and the children of a man officially registered as a Muslim are automatically deemed Muslim by the State. **The few who have courageously challenged this have been forced into hiding to preserve their lives.**

Please pray for our Christian brothers and sisters in other countries.

Sri Lanka, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Georgia, etc.

Wow! Michael Totten has a super-long interview with Robert Kaplan, a moderate who writes about the U.S. military and global conflicts in the most far-flung places in the world.

Excerpts:

> **Kaplan:** …The Tamil Tigers had human shields by the tens of thousands, not just by the dozens and hundreds like Al Qaeda. They put people between themselves and the government and say "you have to kill all the people to get to us." So the government obliged them. The government killed thousands of civilians.
>
> **Kaplan:** …The Sri Lankan government was elected in 2005 to win the war. And it has done that. Extremely brutally. It's a government that's very nationalist Sinhalese Buddhist. These are not the Richard Gere's "peace and love" Buddhists. These are the real blood and soil Buddhists, where Buddhism is like any other religion when it's threatened and it's defending a piece of territory. It can be very brutal.

Wow, this thing was really messy. You have suicide bombing terrorists with human shields on the one side, and a journalist-killing authoritarian government on the other side. There were no good guys. What a mess. These militant Buddhists remind me of the militant nationalist Hindus I talked about before.

And here is a guest post about Russia and Georgia.

Honduras timeline

Here is a pretty useful timeline of events from Atlas Shrugs for the current democratic crisis in Honduras. This article really emphasizes the socialist policies of the wanna-be dictator. The person who provided it is an American investor living in Honduras.

Excerpt:

> I have been disgusted at the world reaction to these events. It's like they only

> looked at what happened on Sunday morning and ignored what events led to that day. I don't understand how the removal of Zelaya was anything less than a small country demanding that their country remain democratic. Their constitutional process worked exactly right to remove a rogue president with an agenda that was detrimental to the Honduran constitution and society. While the actions o f June 28 would fit some definitions of a coup, it was certainly a legal and CONSTITUTIONAL coup. There have been several articles written that state that it was a MANDATORY coup. That's a very difficult concept for most people from the first world to understand, but there are some coups that are good and even required.

I hope that Honduras can bear up under the economic sanctions they are likely to face – and no help from Obama, either. He seems to prefer Chavez and Ahmadinejad.

Do biology textbooks lie to prove evolution?

July 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lately, a lot of people have been stopping by the blog to learn about the how left-leaning scientists are producing faked evidence of global warming in order to support President Obama in his efforts to pass cap and trade.

- oceans are warming – NOT!
- polar ice caps are melting – NOT!
- polar bear populations are decreasing – NOT!
- global warming is caused by humans – NOT!

…and so on.

You might even see evidence against global warming being suppressed. Michelle Malkin writes about the suppression of an EPA report that would have undermined the rationale for the cap-and-trade bill.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration doesn't want to hear inconvenient truths about global warming. And they don't want you to hear them, either. As Democrats rush on Friday to pass a $4 trillion-dollar, thousand-page "cap and trade" bill that no one has read, environmental bureaucrats are stifling voices that threaten their political agenda.
>
> The free market-based Competitive Enterprise Institute in Washington (where I served as a journalism fellow in 1995) obtained a set of internal e-mails exposing Team Obama's willful and reckless disregard for data that undermine the illusion of "consensus." In March, Alan Carlin, a senior research analyst at the Environmental Protection Agency, asked agency officials to distribute his analysis on the health effects of greenhouse gases. EPA has proposed a public health "endangerment finding" covering CO2 and five other gases that would trigger costly, extensive new regulations of motor vehicles. The open comment period on the ruling ended this week. But Carlin's study didn't fit the blame-human-activity narrative, so it didn't make the cut.
>
> On March 12, Carlin's director, Al McGartland, forbade him from having "any direct communication" with anyone outside his office about his study. "There should be no meetings, emails, written statements, phone calls, etc."

It's important to understand that left-leaning scientists have many reasons for doing things like this. Some of the reasons are political.

Here are just two examples.

1. Many academics spend their entire lives in academia working on esoteric research

of marginal utility. They depend for their livelihoods in large measure on research money awarded by the government. They therefore tend to want to prove their importance to the public and the government by inventing crises that require more research money and bigger government budgets.
2. In additional, many academics are jealous of hard-working entrepreneurs in private industry, who are able to earn more money by pleasing customers with useful products and services than they can by talking and writing papers on topics of marginal utility.

For these reasons and others, it is common for a "scientific consensus" to emerge among left-leaning scientists to prove things that are not true in order to achieve certain social and/or political results desired by these left-leaning scientists. (Note: you can verify that the majority of university professors are left-leaning by looking at their political donations – which are *overwhelmingly* Democrat)

Evolution

Evolution is virtually identical to global warming. Naturalists embraced evolution for many reasons, none of them related to actual evidence.

Among these reasons are the following:

1. As Cornelius Hunter has documented, naturalists felt that if God were the designer of life, then he wouldn't have done it in a way that involved so much suffering and waste.
2. Naturalists, like everyone else, are resentful of the demands of the moral law on their autonomy. Rather than wasting time on theology and religious observances, they would prefer to be doing whatever they want – without any social disapproval. A theory like evolution could be foisted on the public in order to marginalize God, and his obligations, in one swoop.

Let's learn about one of the ways that naturalists lie to the public in order to achieve desired social and political ends.

Lies my biology textbook told me

Jonathan Wells, a biologist with Ph.Ds from Yale and UC Berkeley, writes about one example of fake evidence here:

> Charles Darwin thought that "by far the strongest" evidence that humans and fish are descended from a common ancestor was the striking similarity of their early embryos. According to Darwin, the fact that "the embryos of the most distinct species belonging to the same class are closely similar, but become, when fully developed, widely dissimilar… reveals community of descent." [2] To illustrate this, German Darwinist Ernst Haeckel made some drawings in the 1860s to show that the embryos of vertebrates (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals) look almost identical in their earliest stages.
>
> But Haeckel faked his drawings. Not only do they distort vertebrate embryos by

> making them appear more similar than they really are (in a way that Stephen Jay Gould wrote "can only be called fraudulent" [3]), but they also omit classes and stages that do not fit Darwin's theory. *Most significantly, Haeckel omitted the earliest stages, in which vertebrate embryos are strikingly different from each other.* The stage he portrayed as the first is actually midway through development. Yet according to Darwin's logic, early *dis*-similarities do *not* provide evidence for common ancestry.
>
> Haeckel used his faked drawings to support not only Darwinian evolution, but also his own "Biogenetic Law," which stated that embryos pass through the adult stages of their ancestors in the process of development.
>
> …Haeckel's drawings were exposed as fakes by his own contemporaries, and his Biogenetic Law was thoroughly discredited by 20th century biologists. It is now generally acknowledged that early embryos never resemble the adults of their supposed ancestors. A modern version of recapitulation claims that early embryos resemble the *embryos* of their ancestors, but since fossil embryos are extremely rare, this claim is little more than speculation based on the assumption that Darwin's theory is true.

Now the standard response from Darwinists: *no textbooks are still using the fraudulent embryo images*. Is it true? It's as true as global warming!

You can see the actual faked pictures from the modern textbooks here. These textbooks were being produced as late as 2004, even though the fraud was detected in the 1800s! Is this the vaunted self-correction of science, or science being twisted to support social and political goals?

And this excerpt from that article is interesting:

> Some Darwinists continue to deny that there has been any misuse of Haeckel in recent times. If that is the case, why did Stephen Jay Gould attack how textbooks use Haeckel in 2000? Gould wrote: "We should… not be surprised that Haeckel's drawings entered nineteenth-century textbooks. But we do, I think, have the right to be **both astonished and ashamed by the century of mindless recycling that has led to the persistence of these drawings in a large number, if not a majority, of modern textbooks!**" (emphasis added) Similarly, in 1997, the leading embryologist Michael K. Richardson lamented in the journal *Anatomy and Embyology* that "Another point to emerge from this study is the **considerable inaccuracy of Haeckel's famous figures**. These drawings are **still widely reproduced in textbooks** and review articles, and continue to exert a significant influence on the development of ideas in this field." (emphases added)

And you can read about the 700 scientists who doubt that natural selection and mutation are sufficient to produce the diversity of life here.

Obama loses 2.5 million jobs, 9.5% unemployment, worst in 26 years

July 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When Democrats talk about economic policies, they don't actually know what they are talking about. They just make up numbers and conducting kabuki-theater townhalls with pre-screened questions from hard-core Democrat activists. They'll say whatever is necessary in order to maintain power.

Want proof?

Here's proof from the Heritage Foundation. Democrats promised us that if their pork-filled spending bills were passed, that unemployment would be much lower than if we did nothing at all. But guess what? They passed the spending bills and unemployment is MUCH HIGHER now than if we had done nothing at all.

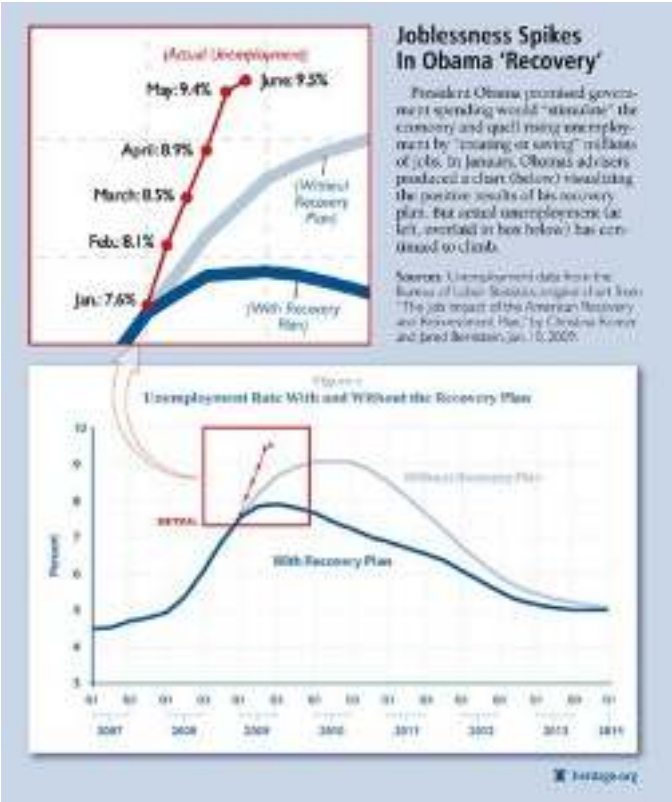

Obama's massive spending bills caused us to have a much higher unemployment rate than if we had not spent one thin dime

That means that we are now stuck with trillions of dollars in spending, massive budget deficits and a ballooning national debt. And not only did it not help unemployment, it actually HURT the unemployment rate.

Heritage writes:

> In January, President Obama pressed for an $800 billion economic "stimulus" package to turn the economy around. Though the bill largely consisted of increased spending on traditional liberal priorities, the President claimed that it would "create or save" 3.5 million jobs. The President's economic advisors

> predicted that unemployment would rise to 9 percent by 2010 if Congress did not pass the stimulus bill, but that with the stimulus unemployment would stay below 8 percentage points.
>
> Congress passed the stimulus bill in February 2009 and the President has repeated his claims. President Obama recently said that the stimulus bill has already created or saved 150,000 new jobs and that it will "create or save" another 600,000 jobs by the end of the summer. Asked when the public should begin to judge the effects of the stimulus, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said "I think we should begin to judge it now."

Surprise! You can't borrow and spend your way out of debt. Maybe having rich parents is not the best preparation for higher office, yes?

Where is President Bush when you need him?

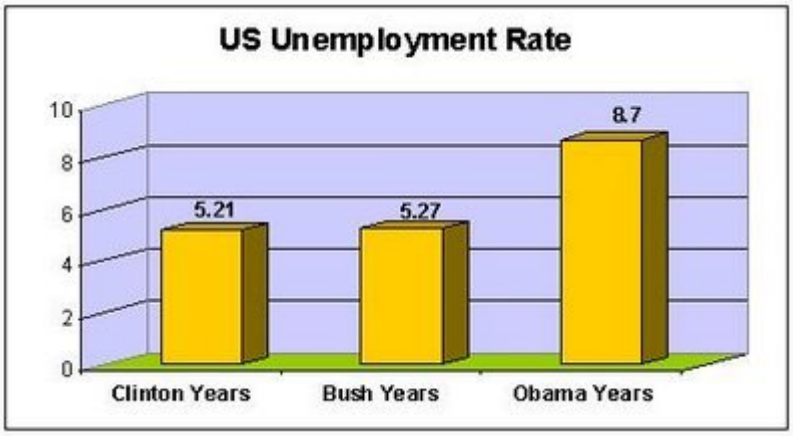

Comparison of Bush and Obama unemployment rates

Bush "spent" money on trillions of dollars in tax cuts. That's how you stimulate an economy. Put the money back in the private sector – in the hands of working families and businesses – not in the hands of bureaucrats.

How out-of-touch are the Democrats?

The Wall Street Journal reports on how sincere the Democrats are in their empathy for the common man. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> The spending on overseas travel is up almost tenfold since 1995, and has nearly tripled since 2001, according to the Journal analysis of 60,000 travel records. Hundreds of lawmakers traveled overseas in 2008 at a cost of about $13 million. That's a 50% jump since Democrats took control of Congress two years ago.
>
> The cost of so-called congressional delegations, known among lawmakers as "codels," has risen nearly 70% since 2005, when an influence-peddling scandal led to a ban on travel funded by lobbyists, according to the data.

> Although complete travel records aren't yet available for 2009, it appears that such costs continue to rise. The Journal analysis shows that the government has picked up the tab for travel to destinations such as Jamaica, the Virgin Islands

> and Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

People are suffering under a recession caused by the Democrats and they just keep collecting and spending more and more of our money!

We knew that Democrats would do this: we had access to their voting records, their pork and earmark records, their records on spending, waste and other issues. People who studied their voting records and voter guides knew that Democrats would mess up the economy.

The Republican response

Read this statement by Eric Cantor and you will hear a completely different attitude from the Democrats.

Excerpt:

> "First and foremost, the American people are concerned about the economy, job creation and the unsustainable debt obligations incurred in the last 6 months.
>
> Beginning in January, House Republicans laid out a serious and substantive agenda that put jobs first. House Democrats, along with the White House, instead took an unfocused, 'go it alone' approach that has fallen well short of its goals and has failed to create jobs.
>
> "Inexplicably, instead of focusing on jobs and restoring the financial security that has been lost by millions of struggling families, the President continues to push an agenda that the majority of Americans are uneasy with. The American people do not support a government healthcare plan that will increase costs, reduce patient choice and flexibility, and lower the quality of care available in our country. The American people do not support the radical Cap & Tax plan which will impose a hard-hitting tax upon families and small businesses costing our struggling economy thousands of jobs.
>
> "As job losses continue to mount, families' worries about losing their healthcare, paying their mortgage, and sending their children to college continues to intensify. Employment must be our focus, yet Speaker Pelosi and the unchecked Democrat majorities continue to increase Washington's hand in the free market, at the expense of job creation. **At some point, even the Speaker must realize that enough is enough.**

Mike Pence gives his assessment of the situation here.

My favorite lectures from J.P. Moreland, Walter L. Bradley and Philip E. Johnson

July 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These are the lectures that made me who I am today!

Dr. J.P. Moreland

B.S. in Chemistry, University of Missouri
M.A. in Philosophy, University of California Riverside
Th.M. in Theology, Dallas Theological Seminary
Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Southern California

- Atheism, Theism, and the Meaning of Life
- The Importance of the Mind in Christian Living

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Ph.D. in Materials Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1968
B.S. in Engineering Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1965

- Truth in Religion
- Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer
- Journey to Faith (His testimony)
- Giants in the Land (low volume, but it's my favorite lecture of all)

Dr. Philip E. Johnson

A.B., Harvard University, 1961
J.D., University of Chicago, 1965

- The Grand Metaphysical Story of Science
- Can Science Know the Mind of God?
- Darwinism on Trial

Happy Independence Day!

July 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

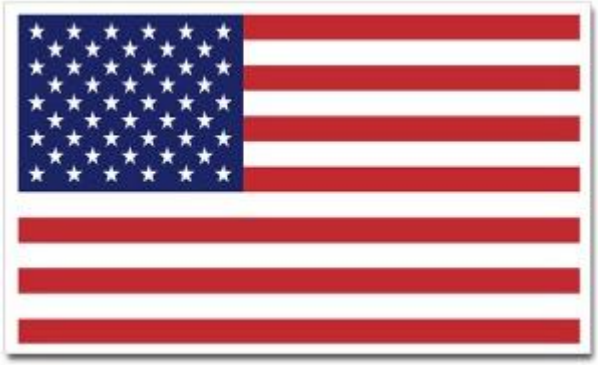

The Stars and Stripes

The Declaration of Independence

You can listen to conservative writer Scott Ott reading the Declaration of Independence here, and follow along with the complete text here.

The best book to read about the Revolutionary War is David McCullough's 1776, which I highly recommend. The audio book version is awesome.

Whenever I drive on long trips, I always practice singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "America the Beautiful".

Even if you are not an American, you can be an honorary American, just for today, if you sing the songs below. God knows that there are other people in the world that love freedom and look to the United States as the model.

If we fall now, then you other freedom-loving people abroad must be ready to pick up the torch!

United States Air Force

The Star Spangled Banner

Lyrics:

"Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,

Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe’s haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o’er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning’s first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
‘Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle’s confusion,
A home and a country should leave us no more!
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps’ pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war’s desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav’n rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: “In God is our trust.”
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!”

America the Beautiful

Lyrics:

“O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare of freedom beat
Across the wilderness!

America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife.
Who more than self their country loved
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for halcyon skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the enameled plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till souls wax fair as earth and air
And music-hearted sea!

O beautiful for pilgrims feet,
Whose stem impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till paths be wrought through
wilds of thought
By pilgrim foot and knee!

O beautiful for glory-tale
Of liberating strife
When once and twice,
for man’s avail

Men lavished precious life!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till selfish gain no longer stain
The banner of the free!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till nobler men keep once again
Thy whiter jubilee!"

Here is my favorite version of America the Beautiful, sung by Ray Charles. This is the same version you hear on the Mark Levin show on Friday. Perfection.

George Washington

Washington Crossing the Delaware

For those of you who know nothing about the United States, you should read the story of Washington crossing the Delaware. At this point in the Revolutionary War, the British commanders had achieved a stunning series of victories against the Americans. They had even sent word home to the King that the war was over, and that the Americans would be forced to surrender. But Washington did not give up.

Ronald Reagan

Ronald Reagan

Here is a portion of Ronald Reagan's farewell speech:

Excerpt:

> I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind it was a tall proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace, a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity, and if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That's how I saw it, and see it still.
>
> And how stand the city on this winter night? More prosperous, more secure, and happier than it was eight years ago. But more than that; after two hundred years, two centuries, she still stands strong and true on the granite ridge, and her glow has held steady no matter what storm. And she's still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home.

This is no ordinary nation.

Any more ideas?

Put your suggestions for more songs and speeches in the comments!

Remember to be grateful for the Founding Fathers, and other patriots, who risked everything for liberty in the Revolutionary war. Be grateful to those men and women still fighting abroad to keep those freedoms safe from evil. And most of all, be grateful to God that America is still the beacon of liberty.

Happy Independence Day!

John Boehner asks: where are the jobs?

July 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a pretty good ad featuring House Republican Leader John Boehner. The ad argues that government spending is not creating any jobs.

H/T Nice Deb.

Senate bill would fine people $1000 for refusing medical coverage

July 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News.

> Americans who refuse to buy affordable medical coverage could be hit with fines of more than $1,000 under a health care overhaul bill unveiled Thursday by key Senate Democrats looking to fulfill President Barack Obama's top domestic priority.
>
> The Congressional Budget Office estimated the fines will raise around $36 billion over 10 years. Senate aides said the penalties would be modeled on the approach taken by Massachusetts, which now imposes a fine of about $1,000 a year on individuals who refuse to get coverage. Under the federal legislation, families would pay higher penalties than individuals.
>
> In a revamped health care system envisioned by lawmakers, people would be required to carry health insurance just like motorists must get auto coverage now. The government would provide subsidies for the poor and many middle-class families, but those who still refuse to sign up would face penalties.

H/T Nice Deb.

The Democrats make war on science to protect their faith-based policies

July 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did everyone hear about how the EPA, (a government agency), suppressed a report questioning global warming? Basically, the Democrats wanted to pass the cap-and-trade bill without facing any criticism of their faith in man-made global warming. So they told Carlin not to publish his report or speak about it to anyone. Alan Carlin went ahead and released the report to CEI anyway. And now he tells the whole story in the WSJ.

In the Wall Street Journal. (H/T CEI)

> Mr. Carlin and a colleague presented a 98-page analysis arguing the agency should take another look, as the science behind man-made global warming is inconclusive at best. The analysis noted that global temperatures were on a downward trend. It pointed out problems with climate models. It highlighted new research that contradicts apocalyptic scenarios. "We believe our concerns and reservations are sufficiently important to warrant a serious review of the science by EPA," the report read.
>
> The response to Mr. Carlin was an email from his boss, Al McGartland, forbidding him from "any direct communication" with anyone outside of his office with regard to his analysis. When Mr. Carlin tried again to disseminate his analysis, Mr. McGartland decreed: "The administrator and the administration have decided to move forward on endangerment, and your comments do not help the *legal* or *policy* case for this decision. . . . I can only see one impact of your comments given where we are in the process, and that would be a very negative impact on our office." (Emphasis added.)
>
> Mr. McGartland blasted yet another email: "With the endangerment finding nearly final, you need to move on to other issues and subjects. I don't want you to spend any additional EPA time on climate change. No papers, no research etc, at least until we see what EPA is going to do with Climate." Ideology? Nope, not here. Just us science folk. Honest.
>
> The emails were unearthed by the Competitive Enterprise Institute. Republican officials are calling for an investigation; House Energy Committee ranking member Joe Barton sent a letter with pointed questions to Mrs. Jackson, which she's yet to answer. The EPA has issued defensive statements, claiming Mr. Carlin wasn't ignored. But there is no getting around that the Obama administration has flouted its own promises of transparency.

In case you missed it, CEI wrote a lot more about the Democrats' war on science here and here.

I blogged previously about how the Democrats undermine science in the university with

their affirmative action policies, and how they insist on spending money on unproven ESCR, when ASCR has all the proven cures.

Stephen C. Meyer podcasts on intelligently designed DNA

July 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephen C. Meyer podcasts on intelligently designed DNA

The Making of an ID Theorist: Stephen C. Meyer and the Origin of Life

This episode of **ID the Future** tells the story of how philosopher of science Stephen C. Meyer first began his quest for the origin of life. How did one of the architects of the intelligent design movement move from the oilfields of Texas to the study halls of Cambridge to pursue the mystery of where biological information originated? Listen in and find out. (MP3 file)

Delving Into Science at Cambridge: Stephen C. Meyer and *Signature in the Cell*

On this episode of **ID the Future** philosopher of science Stephen C. Meyer continues the story of how he became involved in intelligent design, sharing some of what he studied while at Cambridge University. What methods do scientists use to study biological origins? Is there a distinctive method of historical scientific inquiry? Meyer set off to investigate not only the history of scientific ideas about the origin of life, but also questions about the definition of science and about how scientists study and reason about ancient events in the past. Listen in and learn, and check out Dr. Meyer's new book, *Signature in the Cell*, which tells more of the story, the culmination of over 20 years of study and research on the origins of life. (MP3 file)

DNA Evidence for Design: Stephen C. Meyer and *Signature in the Cell*

On this episode of **ID the Future** CSC Director Stephen C. Meyer explains the problem that information presents to origin of life researchers within a naturalistic paradigm. Information within the cell presents a daunting challenge to Darwin's theory — and provides significant evidence for a signature of a designing intelligence, as Meyer explains in his new book. (MP3 file)

The Design Argument Is Unrefuted: Stephen Meyer Responds to Critics With *Signature in the Cell*

On this episode of **ID the Future** philosopher of science Stephen C. Meyer responds to critics of intelligent design, such as Richard Dawkins and his book, *The God Delusion*. (MP3 file)

BONUS

Hear Stephen C. Meyer on the popular, nationally-syndicated Michael Medved show. (H/T Discovery Institute)

How do we stop the mass exodus of men from the church?

July 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Pastor Kreitsauce wrote a post a while back discussing the exodus of men from the church.

Here are the numbers fro the web site Church for Men:

- American churches on average display an incredible gender gap- 69% women and 31% men. That translates to about 13 million more women attending than men.
- 1 in 4 “churched” women will attend the Sunday service without their husbands, while 80% of attendees at the midweek services are women.
- Over 70% of boys raised in church will drop out by the end of their college years.
- At Christian colleges, the ratio of female to male students is 2 to 1.

Kreitsauce writes:

> Men seem to enjoy theology, philosophy, politics, ethics, and science more than women do. They love debate, contest, competition, adventure, challenges, danger, risk, and achievement in a unique way. It isn’t that these are “men’s areas”, but there is something different in how men are wired that gives them an affinity for these things. As John Eldridge’s book *Wild at Heart* observes, our self-worth is intimately connected to these things. Men don’t feel complete unless they are accomplishing, building, and standing on something larger than themselves. As Christian comedian Jeff Allen has said, men need something worth dying for to make them truly come to life.
>
> So what’s a church to do?

Click through and read his solutions. I agree with his solution, and this is what I do in my own life!

Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank

July 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

More communism from Obama's communist buddy.

Excerpt:

> President Hugo Chavez's government assumed control of Venezuela's third-largest bank on Friday – making the state the largest player in the nation's banking system.
>
> The purchase of the Spanish-owned Banco de Venezuela gives Chavez's socialist government control over more than one-fifth of bank deposits as he tightens his grip over the economy.
>
> The acquisition will "strengthen the public banking system," which favors sectors including agriculture, energy, housing and tourism, Finance Minister Ali Rodriguez said in a statement.
>
> …Combined with other state banks, the government will now control about 21 percent of deposits and 16 percent of loans, a payroll of 15,000 employees and 651 bank branches.
>
> …Like the rest of the economy, Venezuela's banking sector is already highly regulated, with the government dictating interest rates and commissions.
>
> Under Chavez, Venezuela has nationalized major players in the steel, electricity and other sectors, including four major oil projects, since 2007.
>
> The Venezuelan consulting firm Ecoanalitica calculates those nationalizations have cost Chavez's government some $23 billion.

Things are so much more efficient when no one owns anything except the state bureaucrats. Look how well the Soviet Union did.

Understand Obama’s health care plan with LEGO videos

July 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this amusing video over at the Heritage Foundation.

And here’s one about Obama’s crazy spending and the ballooning debt:

And one more about the jobs *lost* after passing Obama’s 800 billion dollar spending bill:

By the way, I hope you all listened to those 4 podcasts about Stephen C. Meyer and his argument from DNA. They’re good!

Understanding what cap-and-trade actually does

July 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought I would put together a few snippets to help everyone understand what Obama's cap-and-trade energy tax actually does.

It's a massive government intervention in the free market

The Heritage Foundation explains the point of cap and trade.

> One of the most contentious provisions in the bill is the use of offsets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, in which "a manufacturing plant in, say, Gary, Ind., that is exceeding its 'permitted' expulsion of CO2, could continue to commit this sin against humanity by paying for a Brazilian farmer to plant some trees in the rain forest.... Of course, to guard against some nefarious polluter trying to cheat Uncle Sam and the world by claiming bogus 'offsets,' here must be a monitoring mechanism. Enter the 'Offsets Integrity Advisory Board' — yet another group of scientific 'experts' that would be tasked with compiling a list of qualifying offsets around the globe."
>
> Cap and trade is a regulatory nightmare that would hand over more power and money to the government with the intention of reducing global temperatures. The problem with that, however, is the Waxman-Markey cap and trade bill will only reduce temperatures by an amount almost too small to measure. The bigger problem is that consumers' pocketbooks will be hit hard by this bill. The Heritage Foundation's Center for Data Analysis found that by 2035, gasoline prices would increase 58 percent, natural gas prices would increase 55 percent, home heating oil would increase 56 percent, and worst of all, electricity prices would jump 90 percent. After all, the goal of cap and trade is to drive up energy prices so high that people will use less. Yet in Missouri, state legislators are considering a bill that would charge consumers for saving electricity.

That's enough to scare the snark out of you, but there's much more to it than that.

The bill provides opportunities for corruption

Consider this National Review Online post, which counts 50 reasons why cap-and-trade is bad. (H/T Club for Growth)

I cannot excerpt the 50 points. I read through them and each one is more horrible than the last. Any of the 50 would be sufficient to cause an honest man to cry like a baby. (The print version of the article is easier to read – please send it to all your friends, too!)

The Democrats didn't even read the bill

And remember, none of the Democrats who voted for the energy tax actually read it.

Excerpt:

> Recall the passing of Waxman-Markey by the House, which had 300 pages added

> 18 hours before the floor vote–almost certainly going unread by most members of Congress. Furthermore, the nonplussed responses from administration backers and Democrats in Congress–when pressed to read the legislation they vote on or support–should be infuriating to anyone in favor of transparency and responsibility in government. As CEI Adjunct Fellow Fran Smith noted, some on the left went as far to claim that members of Congress uncomfortable with voting for climate change legislation in the dark were guilty of "treason against the planet."

Yes, there's that vaunted leftist morality again. Cutting missile defense is good, but not passing an energy tax is treason.

Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?

July 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a great article from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Club for Growth)

Excerpt:

> In her weekly "What Matters Most" newspaper column, Randi Weingarten recently bid the Big Apple farewell. Ms. Weingarten has been elevated to president of the national American Federation of Teachers from head of its New York City affiliate, and she had some notable parting words: "One of the most rewarding (and exhausting) things about working in public education in New York City is that it is the best laboratory in the world for trying new things."
>
> Well, it could be, if it weren't for Ms. Weingarten's union. Since taking over in 1998, she has done everything she could to block significant reforms to New York's public schools. Take her opposition to charter schools. She resisted raising the state cap on charters from 100 unless the union could organize them. (She lost and the cap now is 200.)
>
> Ms. Weingarten was also against merit pay for individual teachers. She supported a law that bars school districts from linking teacher tenure to student test scores. In return for even the mildest pension reforms, Ms. Weingarten recently won a concession that teachers no longer need to work on the two days before the start of the school year. Meanwhile, she has fought to ensure that the Absent Teacher Reserve Pool keeps allowing teachers whom no principal wants to hire to receive their full salaries. New York spends an estimated $150 million on this and on Teacher Reassignment Centers (for instructors who have been accused of misconduct) alone.
>
> Speaking of money, Ms. Weingarten has long been among the union leaders claiming that more cash will fix public education. Mayor Michael Bloomberg has paid for the modest reforms he's been able to implement by increasing spending to $22 billion from $13 billion, much of that in teacher salaries. The four-year high school graduation rate in New York City is now 56%. In union politics, results like these are how you win a promotion to national leadership.

I blogged before about the NYC teachers removed from their duties who are still being paid.

But there's more to it than that. My Christian readers should also be aware that teacher's unions, like most unions (but not all!), are also very interested in promoting left-wing, anti-family social programs. (Weingarten herself is openly gay)

- Teachers' union to consider abortion issue. (H/T Jennifer Roback Morse)

- NEA to consider full support of homosexual ‘marriage’. (H/T Jennifer Roback Morse)

If you missed my post about Obama’s appointment of a gay activist to be the director of “safe schools”, check it out here.

The take-home lesson for you is not to vote for Democrats just because they say they will spend more money on education. What Democrats really mean is that they will spend more money on teacher’s unions, so that the teachers can turn around and advocate for leftist policies, like abortion and same-sex marriage, using union dues.

85 sharia courts operating in Britain

July 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the UK Guardian was sent to me by my friend Andrew.

Excerpt:

> There are as many as 85 sharia courts operating in Britain, according to a new report.
>
> Academic Denis MacEoin, the report's author, said the existence of the courts practising Islamic law could lead to different legal standards being applied to Muslim and non-Muslim citizens.
>
> He said many of the courts operate out of mosques and their rulings are closed off to non-Muslims.
>
> In previous reports it was claimed there were only five sharia courts in the UK, working in London, Manchester, Bradford, Birmingham and Nuneaton.
>
> …The report states: "Among the rulings … we find some that advise illegal actions and others that transgress human rights standards as they are applied by British courts."

This is the same UK that has effectively banned the public expression of Christianity, such as asking to pray for someone. Like Evan Sayet says: the modern progressive believes that evil is good, and good is evil. Their aim is to squash everyone down to the same level so that there are no disagreements about who is right and who is wrong.

Understanding the effects of government-run health care

July 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previous health care posts

Before we see today's post, here are some of my previous posts on health care.

- Obama plans health care rationing for you, but not for him!
- Consider the rationing of health care in the UK
- In Canada, you can deliver your own babies while you wait
- Single-payer health care explained with videos
- More videos showing socialized medicine horror stories
- Keith Hennessey explains Obamacare in 15 points

Socialized medicine by the numbers

I was having a nice chat today with a friend about whether we should expect government-run health care to work as well as private health care. I asked to him to reflect on how incompetent government offices are for services like driver's licenses, vehicle titles, immigration, postal services, etc. Then I asked him how satisfied he was shopping online from Amazo.com or in person at Wal-mart. A private seller in the free market needs to meet your needs better than other competitors, so you will get good service – because you have a free choice. But what happens when you have only *one* option?

Hot Air has a post by DirectorBlue that analyzes government-run health care.

Here are just a few of his numbers related to waiting times:

> **14**: The percentage of all patients in Britain who **wait more than one (1) year** to receive treatment after a referral by a general practitioner. Half of all National Health Care patients in Britain wait between 18 and 52 weeks for treatment.
>
> **90**: Number of days, on average, each Canadian patient must wait for an MRI under the Canadian government-run health care system.
>
> **750**: The estimated number of people waiting in line (in the pouring rain) at Britain's Bury Office attempting to register for dental care.
>
> **10,000**: Number of Canadian breast cancer patients to file a class action lawsuit against Quebec's hospitals because, on average, they were forced to wait 60 days to begin post-operative radiation treatments.
>
> **443,849**: The number of British patients of the National Healthcare Service (NHS) who waited **four or more weeks for inpatient admittance into a hospital** (Excel file) in May of 2009 (more than 75% of all patients).
>
> **1,500,000**: The number of Canadians who do not have — and cannot find — a

> general practitioner/primary care physician due to shortages in medical staff: "In Norwood, Ontario, *20/20* videotaped a town clerk pulling the names of the lucky winners out of a lottery box. The losers must wait to see a doctor… Shirley Healy, like many sick Canadians, came to America for surgery. Her doctor in British Columbia told her she had only a few weeks to live because a blocked artery kept her from digesting food. Yet Canadian officials called her surgery 'elective.' …'The only thing elective about this surgery was I elected to live,' she said."

The article also discusses the costs of socialized medicine, patient outcomes, illegal immigrants, fraud, waste, etc.

Needless to say, this is a MUST-READ. Send it to all your friends!

Who caused the recession? How did the housing bubble happen?

July 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republicans on the House Oversight have released a report that explains what caused the subprime crisis.

I can't read the whole thing! But Hot Air has the key facts so you don't have to read it either!

> ** Political pressure led to the erosion of responsible lending practices:*
>
> *In the early 1990s, Fannie and Freddie began to come under considerable political pressure to lower their underwriting standards, particularly on the size of down payments and the credit quality of borrowers. (p.6)*
>
> ** Lower down payments led to housing prices that outpaced income growth: Once government-sponsored efforts to decrease down payments spread to the wider market, home prices became increasingly untethered from any kind of demand limited by borrowers' ability to pay. Instead, borrowers could just make smaller down payments and take on higher debt, allowing home prices to continue their unrestrained rise. Some statistics help illustrate how this occurred. Between 2001 and 2006, median home prices increased by an inflation-adjusted 50 percent, yet at the same time Americans' income failed to keep up. (p. 11)*
>
> ** Members of an "affordable housing" coalition shared profits with political allies to help legitimize their business practices: Fannie Mae created and used The Fannie Mae Foundation to spread millions of dollars around to politically-connected organizations like the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. It also hired well-known academics to give an aura of academic rigor to policy positions favorable to Fannie Mae. One paper coauthored by now-Director of the Office of Management and Budget Peter Orszag, concluded that the chance was minimal that the GSEs were not holding sufficient capital to cover their losses in the event of a severe economic shock. The authors suggested that "the risk to the government from a potential default on GSE debt is effectively zero," and that "the expected cost to the government of providing an explicit government guarantee on $1 trillion in GSE debt is just $2 million." (p.7)*
>
> ** The Government Sponsored Enterprises led the way into the housing crisis: Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were leaders in risky mortgage lending. According to an analysis presented to the Committee, between 2002 and 2007, Fannie and Freddie purchased $1.9 trillion of mortgages made to borrowers with credit scores below 660, one of the definitions of "subprime" used by federal banking regulators. This represents over 54% of all such mortgages purchased during those years. (p.24)*

My comprehensive post on this issue is here. In that post, I collected videos of Democrats admitting that their plan was to force banks to make loans to unqualified borrowers, as well as news articles by the New York Times and Los Angeles Times on the topic.

John McCain tells Obama that Honduras was right to kick Zelaya out

July 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Hill has a post up about McCain's response to the Honduras crisis. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

They quote McCain's Twitter feed:

> Violence and unrest in Honduras & China – we need to continue to stand up for human rights and democracy around the world!

> I regret the military takeover in Honduras, but it's clear President Zelaya was in violation of his country's constitution.

The Hill writes:

> McCain's statement runs in direct conflict with the Obama administration's position on the coup. Last week, the president said that the coup was "not legal" and that Zelaya is still the president of the Latin American nation.
>
> Members of Congress have generally been mum on the situation, but some tensions are beginning to show, especially amongst Republicans. Rep. Connie Mack (R-Fla.) said that Zelaya "trampled on the Honduran constitution" and called the Honduran president's effort to extend his term a "blatant power grab."
>
> Zelaya proposed a constitutional referendum that would allow him to seek reelection, superceding term limits layed out in the country's constitution. Members of the Honduran military arrested him and forced him into exile on June 29.
>
> Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with the ousted president today.

More at Gateway Pundit.

Is Rick Warren an orthodox Christian?

July 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In my view, Warren minimizes sin and judgment in order to appeal to "seekers". He doesn't defend traditional marriage. He seems to think that Christianity is about doing nice things for people, and making everyone feel good, instead of telling them the truth.

Well, Neil Simpson's latest round-up has an article about Warren's latest blunder.

Neil writes:

> Rick Warren doesn't understand the concept of unequally yoked. It isn't just about not marrying unbelievers, it is about not partnering with them in spiritual enterprises. We should share the Gospel with Muslims, not do "ministry" together.

The post he links to at Slice of Laodicea cites this Washington Times article:

> The Rev. Rick Warren, one of America's best-known evangelical Protestant pastors, pleaded with about 8,000 Muslim listeners on Saturday night to work together to solve the world's greatest problems by cooperating in a series of interfaith projects.
>
> "Muslims and Christians can work together for the common good without compromising my convictions or your convictions," Mr. Warren said during an evening session of the annual convention of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) at the Washington Convention Center.
>
> "I am not interested in interfaith dialogue but interfaith projects," said the pastor of the 24,000-member Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., who is widely known for his bestseller "The Purpose-Driven Life."…

My advice: Never trust Christians who think that Christianity is *just* about helping the poor. That is a peripheral issue, which some Christians focus on in order to avoid debates about the main issues of Christianity. The main issues are "Does God Exist?" and "Who was Jesus?". Why people follow these left-wing social justice mega-church pastors instead of solid Christian scholars is beyond me. Just another reason why Christians should be fiscal conservatives.

Michael Medved interviews Stephen C. Meyer about his new book on DNA

July 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hear Stephen C. Meyer on the popular, nationally-syndicated Michael Medved show. (H/T Discovery Institute)

This is a hugely popular radio show.

I just received my copy of the "Signature in the Cell" book from the Discovery Institute in the mail today. My former co-worker Robb got his last week. It's a ~600 page hardcover, so perhaps Robb and I should have a contest to see who can finish it first! It has huge print and lots of space, and beautiful illustrations on practically every page. I'm so excited – I can tell that I am going to learn a lot by reading this book.

Turkish TV show offers prizes for convincing atheists to convert

July 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I would be very happy if everyone could comment on the following story from CNN.

Excerpt:

> A Turkish television show is offering contestants what it claims is the "biggest prize ever" — the chance for atheists to convert to one of the world's major religions.
>
> The show, called "Tovbekarlar Yarisiyor," or "Penitents Compete," features a Muslim imam, a Catholic priest, a Jewish rabbi and a Buddhist monk attempting to persuade 10 atheists of the merits of their religion, according to CNN Turk.
>
> …Ahmet Ozdemir, deputy director of Turkish channel Kanal T, which will air the show from September, said the program aimed to "turn disbelievers on to God."
>
> "People are free to believe anything they want. Our program does not have a say," he said, according to Turkish newspaper Hurriyet.

But the Muslims don't approve:

> But the show has been condemned by Turkish religious leaders. The head of the country's supreme council of religious affairs, Hamza Aktan, told CNN Turk that it was "disrespectful" to place different faiths in competition with each other and accused Kanal T of using religion to boost ratings.

Wow, the Muslim theologian doesn't like to debate! I wonder why?

My take is that this is a very positive thing, and we need a lot more of it.

Democrat Majority Leader Steny Hoyer says we may need another massive stimulus

July 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

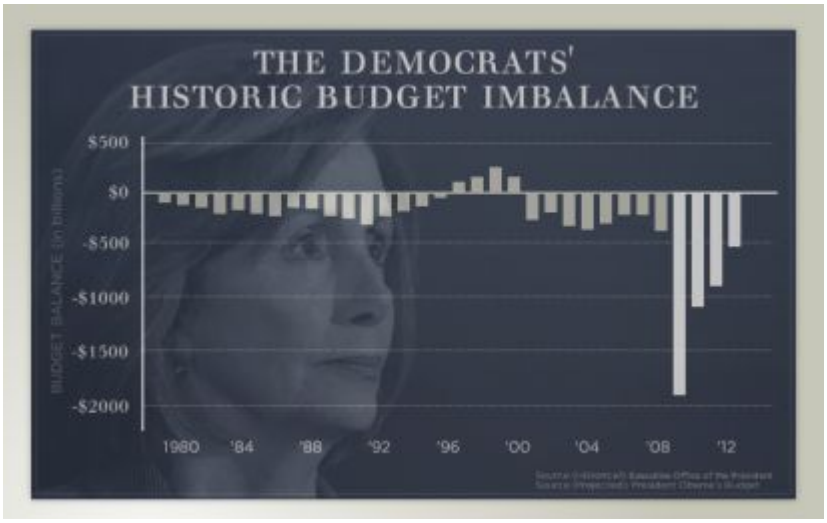

Budget Deficit

The first two spending bills didn't work, so we just need to keep trying harder to spend our way out of debt!

Check out this story from Reuters. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> U.S. leaders should be open to the possibility of a second stimulus package to jolt the economy out of a recession still causing job losses, House of Representatives Majority Leader Steny Hoyer said on Tuesday.
>
> …President Barack Obama led the charge for a two-year $787 billion stimulus package that his fellow Democrats who control Congress pushed through the House and Senate in February and he has argued it would help create or save up to 4 million jobs.

Create 4 million jobs? He's *lost* 2.5 million jobs so far. Maybe he doesn't know what the word *create* means?

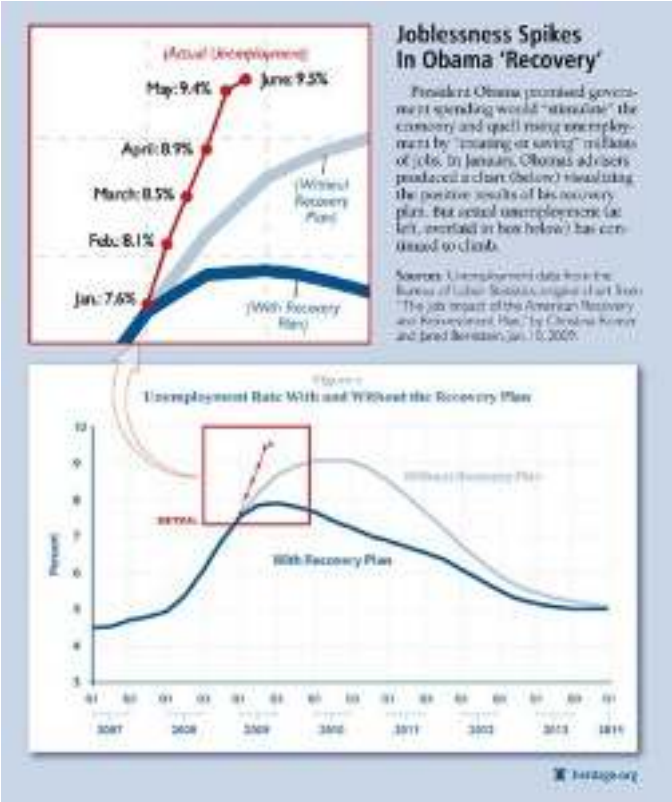

Michelle Malkin lists a few more of the Democrats in favor of more government spending.

Excerpt:

> As you all have heard, Laura D'Andrea Tyson, the Clinton economic adviser now on Team Obama, has floated a second stimulus plan. Democrat Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island has echoed the call. Other Democrats are open to it.
>
> Only 10 percent of Porkulus One has been spent, misspent, or gone untracked, but who's counting?
>
> I've uploaded two documents for your perusal this morning: The first is a GAO report on stimulus spending by states and localities, which will be released this morning at a House oversight hearing.
>
> You can read the whole thing here.
>
> Bottom line: The funds are not being spent on what they're supposed to be spent on. States made up their own criteria for spending. School and transportation bureaucrats preserved their own jobs instead of "stimulating" others.
>
> The second document is a GOP memo dissecting the failures of Porkulus One.
>
> You can read the whole thing here.

Michelle lists a few of the key findings from the second document.

National Debt

Why didn't the massive Democrat spending spree work?

This is lesson one of Economics 101. When government spends money, the money comes out of the private sector. Government is not even close to allocating capital and producing wealth as efficiently as the free market system.

Ed Morrissey explains:

> Here's where we get into the "saved or created" dodge of the Obama administration. The Porkulus money may have "saved" jobs, but they were government jobs, not the private sector. Most government employees have union representation, primarily by the SEIU. The only jobs Porkulus may have saved were those of bureaucrats in state government, and mostly to make sure the unions stay on the side of the Democrats.
>
> None of that money went into promoting growth in the private sector, which is why unemployment skyrocketed. Capital stayed out of the market, in part because of fears of confiscatory tax increases and in part because of the amount of regulation threatened by the Obama administration, and what capital was left will get eaten up by the cost of Porkulus eventually. And the GAO says it will take months just to get effective reporting on how that money gets spent, regardless of where it goes.

Obama's support is now virtually 50-50 according to Rasmussen Reports.But he won't care, because he's the Obamessiah! As long as the left-wing fascists and terrorists love him, who cares what economically-literate peons like us think?

Democrat Waxman believes that opposing Obama's energy tax is equivalent to opposing America

July 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this Politico.com post. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), who has had an eventful couple of weeks to say the least, believes House Republican opposition to climate change legislation and the stimulus indicates they're cheering against the good ol' US of A.
>
> "It appears that the Republican Party leadership in the Congress has made a decision that they want to deny President Obama success, which means, in my mind, they are rooting against the country, as well," the powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee chairman told WAMU radio host Diane Rehm on Tuesday morning, promoting his new book, "The Waxman Report."

All the lies they spoke about that Christian fascist Bush was just so much projection, foreshadowing how they themselves would deal with "unpatriotic" dissent.

Al Gore and Goldman Sachs

In a related story, repeat college drop-out Al Gore (NOT A SCIENTIST) equated his war on global warming to the war against Nazism.(H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Al Gore today compared the battle against climate change with the struggle against the Nazis.
>
> …Speaking in Oxford at the Smith School World Forum on Enterprise and the Environment, sponsored by The Times, Mr Gore said: "Winston Churchill aroused this nation in heroic fashion to save civilisation in World War II."

And he has good reason to do so, given that his personal fortune has skyrocketed from $2 million to over $100 million. Oh, don't let those tolerant Democrats fool you. If you oppose their greed and lust for power, then you're worse than Satan. How dare you assert your rights to liberty and prosperity against the power of their oligarchy?

And he isn't the only one who is ready to cash in. The employees of investment firm Goldman Sachs donated tons of money to Democrats, and they are positioned to strike it rich if cap-and-trade passes. Steve Milloy writes that "Goldman Sachs has spent millions of dollars lobbying for cap-and-trade legislation in anticipation of making billions of dollars at the expense taxpayers and consumers."

The war on small business

Here is a Fox News article that describes how the cap-and-trade bill championed by Democrats like Waxman and Gore destroys small businesses. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> David McArthur, vice president of the 52-year-old family operation, a Gateway City institution, is one of a growing number of business owners and taxpayers nationwide who are mobilizing against the so-called cap-and-trade bill, which would levy harsh fines on energy consumption that harms the environment.
>
> McArthur told FOXNews.com that every aspect of his business relies on the forms of energy targeted by the American Clean Energy and Security Act, and that his congressman, Carnahan, was supporting "a direct tax increase on small business" by voting for it.
>
> "We make (our product) with electricity, we bake it with gas, we refrigerate and freeze it with electricity and we distribute it with gas and oil," said McArthur, who said he worries that high prices could cost his company up to $15,000 a year in an industry with a very tight margin for profit.

This is cause-and-effect, people. There is a reason why Cuba and North Korea are poor today – they voted in radical leftists just like Obama. This is the way the world actually works.

Obama's energy tax ships jobs overseas

The Times Online reports that India and China decided against crippling their economies for the myth of global warming. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> As world leaders sat down for a working lunch at the start of a three day meeting of the G8, it emerged that negotiations had failed to reach agreement on halving greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
>
> Summit negotiators, who do the hard bargaining before the heads of state arrive to complete the agreements, failed to make progress on the issue in talks that continued late last night. China and India are understood to have blocked any mention of the target in the draft communiqué, insisting that the developed economies should promise to cut their own emissions sharply by 2020 before asking developing nations to commit to a long term target.
>
> The breakdown in negotiations has undermined President Obama's chances of producing a diplomatic coup when he chairs talks on climate change at a meeting of the 17-nation Major Economies Forum tomorrow.

Where do you think all our manufacturing jobs will go when it becomes expensive to manufacture goods here?

Meanwhile, WattsUpWithThat reports that Prince Edward Island in Canada is seeing the first frost *ever* in July.

How Obama rewards his most prolific fundraisers with crony appointments

July 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Washington Times. (H/T Verum Serum)

Morgen at Verum Serum writes:

> These top fundraisers are known as "bundlers". Since campaign finance laws restrict any one individual from donating more than $2400 to a single candidate, these bundlers achieve prominence within a campaign by soliciting for and then – you guessed it – bundling up individual donations received via their extended network of friends, family, business contacts, etc. While exact figures are not available, the top bundlers within the Obama campaign each delivered in excess of $1 million in campaign contributions, and there were nearly 50 bundlers who were responsible for at least $500K in donations.
>
> As the Times notes, it's somewhat of a Washington tradition for an incoming President to appoint choice ambassadorships to key political donors and allies. While this may be the case, for a President who declared a "new era" of accountability, and who championed ethics reform while in the Senate, a look at the appointments made to date reveals what I think is a surprising level of cronyism on the part of this Administration. And notably, many of these appointments extend outside the relatively ceremonial realm of diplomatic posts.

What sort of positions are they talking about? Just harmless ambassadorships?

> Special Counsel to the President
> Chairman, FCC
> General Counsel, Dept. of Energy
> Deputy Asst. Attorney General
> Associate Attorney General
> Under-Secy. for International Trade
> Chairman, Corp. for Nat'l & Community Service
> Asst. Attorney General, Civil Div.
>
> By my calculation, nearly half of the top level of Obama campaign bundlers have been rewarded with some sort of role within the government.

And it gets worse:

> Robert Wolf is the Chairman/CEO of investment bank UBS and given his influence on Wall Street may in fact be the largest bundler of them all. Significantly, Wolf's firm seems to be mired in several tax-related scandals; and they were also a key counter-party recipient of funds from AIG, courtesy of the U.S. tax payer. However, apparently all this was not enough to deter the President from naming

> Wolf to his Economic Advisory Council.

Verum Serum has the full list of donors, the total funds raised by each one, and the appointments.

What do you expect from the affirmative action President, whose private-school education was paid for by his rich grandmother?

MUST-LISTEN: William Lane Craig takes on prominent atheist Daniel Dennett

July 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This audio records a part of the Greer-Heard debate in 2007, between prominent atheist Daniel Dennett and lame theistic evolutionist Alister McGrath. Craig was one of the respondents, and this was the best part of the event. It is a little bit advanced, but I have found that if you listen to things like this over and over with your friends and family, and then try to explain it to non-Christians, you'll get it.

By the way, this is mostly original material from Craig, dated 2007, and he delivers the speech perfectly, so it's entertaining to listen to.

Craig presents three arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe:

- the contingency argument
- the kalam cosmological argument
- the teleological argument

He also discusses Dennett's published responses to these arguments.

Dennett's response to Craig's paper

Here is my snarky paraphrase of Dennett's reponse: (I haven't been snarky all day!)

- Craig's three arguments are bulletproof, the premises are plausible, and grounded by the best cutting edge science we know today.
- I cannot find anything wrong with his arguments right now, but maybe later when I go home it will come to me what's wrong with them.
- But atheism is true even if all the evidence is against it today. I know it's true by my blind faith.
- The world is so mysterious, and all the science of today will be overturned tomorrow so that atheism will be rational again. I have blind faith that this new evidence will be discovered any minute.
- Just because the cause of the beginning of time is eternal and the cause of the beginning of space is non-physical, the cause doesn't have to be God.
- "Maybe the cause of the universe is the idea of an apple, or the square root of 7". (HE LITERALLY SAID THAT!)
- The principle of triangulation might have brought the entire physical universe into being out of nothing.
- I don't understand anything about non-physical causation, even though I cannot even speak meaningful sentences unless I have a non-physical mind that is causing my body to emit the meaningful sentences in a non-determined manner.
- Alexander Vilenkin is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.

- Alan Guth is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- This science stuff is so complicated to me – so Craig can't be right about it even though he's published about it and debated it all with the best atheists on the planet.
- If God is outside of time, then this is just deism, not theism. (This part is correct, but Craig believes that God enters into time at the moment of creation – so that it is not a deistic God)
- If deism is true, then I can still be an atheist, because a Creator and Designer of the universe is compatible with atheism.
- I'm pretty sure that Craig doesn't have any good arguments that can argue for Christianity – certainly not an historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus based on minimal facts, that he's defended against the most prominent historians on the planet in public debates and in prestigous books and research journals.

I was in the second row at the Baylor Conference on intelligent design when Guth debated Craig on the origin of the universe. Guth admitted afterwards that the universe did require a cause.

I do not recommend purchasing the whole 2007 debate, because McGrath is a squish. You're better off with the 2005 and 2008 sets. The 2006 one is OK, but not great. I don't have the 2009 one yet, but it looks good.

What should wives do when they are not in the mood for sex?

July 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager features a lot of discussions about male-female relationships on his show, particularly during the male-female hour. I think this is one of the parts of his show that I really like best, because he knows what he is talking about and has on great female guests like Alison Armstrong.

He did a two part series a while back on 1) male sexuality and 2) what women should do about it within a marriage.

Part 1 is here.

Excerpt:

> It is an axiom of contemporary marital life that if a wife is not in the mood, she need not have sex with her husband. Here are some arguments why a woman who loves her husband might want to rethink this axiom.
>
> First, women need to recognize how a man understands a wife's refusal to have sex with him: A husband knows that his wife loves him first and foremost by her willingness to give her body to him. This is rarely the case for women. Few women know their husband loves them because he gives her his body (the idea sounds almost funny). This is, therefore, usually a revelation to a woman. Many women think men's natures are similar to theirs, and this is so different from a woman's nature, that few women know this about men unless told about it.
>
> This is a major reason many husbands clam up. A man whose wife frequently denies him sex will first be hurt, then sad, then angry, then quiet. And most men will never tell their wives why they have become quiet and distant. They are afraid to tell their wives. They are often made to feel ashamed of their male sexual nature, and they are humiliated (indeed emasculated) by feeling that they are reduced to having to beg for sex.
>
> When first told this about men, women generally react in one or more of five ways…

He then explains the 5 ways that women respond to this. I think this whole problem of women not understanding men, of treating men as objects, and of demeaning male feelings and values, is very serious. In my opinion, there is a whole lot of work that needs to be done by women in order to fix this problem.

Part 2 is here.

Excerpt:

> Here are eight reasons for a woman not to allow not being in the mood for sex to determine whether she denies her husband sex.

He then explains the eight reasons and then makes a general point about women that I think needs to be emphasized over and over and over. (This is one of the things that makes me not want to marry)

> That solution is for a wife who loves her husband — if she doesn't love him, mood is not the problem — to be guided by her mind, not her mood, in deciding whether to deny her husband sex.

I think he overdoes it in describing how sex-crazed men really are, but he is probably talking about men in general as opposed to Christian men. Christian men have other things that they are trying to do with women, such as influence their worldviews and make them stronger in apologetics.

We have a few brave female commenters on the Wintery Knight blog, and they are all wonderful, so I am wondering whether they are brave enough to comment on this topic. Or maybe they can send me their comments by e-mail and give me permission to post them anonymously instead.

Related posts

- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- What should wives do when they are not in the mood for sex?
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?
- Purposeful parenting today
- Marriage tips part 1
- Marriage tips part 2
- Unfair child custody laws
- Why fiscal conservatives should care about marriage
- How Democrat policies discourage marriage: Part 1 (big government) is here and Part 2 (same-sex marriage) is here and Part 3 (No fault divorce) is here.

Obama's federal aid overwhelmingly given to Democrat-supporting counties

July 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

USA Today reports. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Billions of dollars in federal aid delivered directly to the local level to help revive the economy have gone overwhelmingly to places that supported President Obama in last year's presidential election.
>
> That aid — about $17 billion — is the first piece of the administration's massive stimulus package that can be tracked locally. Much of it has followed a well-worn path to places that regularly collect a bigger share of federal grants and contracts, guided by formulas that have been in place for decades and leave little room for manipulation.
>
> "There's no politics at work when it comes to spending for the recovery," White House spokesman Robert Gibbs says.
>
> Counties that supported Obama last year have reaped twice as much money per person from the administration's $787 billion economic stimulus package as those that voted for his Republican rival, Sen. John McCain, a USA TODAY analysis of government disclosure and accounting records shows. That money includes aid to repair military bases, improve public housing and help students pay for college.
>
> The reports show the **872 counties that supported Obama received about $69 per person**, on average. The **2,234 that supported McCain received about $34.**

This reminds of Obama's doings in Chicago.

$18 Million Dollar Contract goes to Democrat-supporting IT firm

David Freddoso broke a story today about an $18 million dollar IT contract awarded to a firm that donates exclusively to Democrat House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer. (H/T Hot Air)

Here is an excerpt from the Washington Examiner story:

> ABC reports this morning that the Maryland firm Smartronix has won what seems like an enormous $18 million contract to re-design the Recovery.gov website. Approximately $9.5 million would be spent by January in order to make "Recovery 2.0" out of the site that is supposed to track the spending of federal stimulus funds in detail.
>
> Smartronix, a medium-sized Maryland-based firm (over 500 employees) founded in 1995, boasts a large number of government clients, mostly military. The

> company appears to have just one important political connection: according to FEC records, Smartronix president, Mohammed Javaid, vice president Alan Parris, and partner John Parris have together given $19,000 to House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D) since 1999. There is no record of a Smartronix employee contributing to any other federal politician.
>
> **UPDATE: Smartronix got $260 million in other federal contracts**
>
> Smartronix has received more than $260 million in federal contracts since the year 2000, with the top awarding agencies being the U.S. Navy, Federal Technology Service, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the Office of Policy, Management and Budget (not clear which department or agency issued this contract), according to USASpending.gov.
>
> Nearly $180 million of the contracts awarded to Smartronix during the period 2000-2009 were awarded on less-than-competitive basis, including $21 million for non-competitive awards. Another $33 million was awarded in competitive processes in which Smartronix was the sole bidder.

And one of my co-workers noticed that this even got posted on SlashDot with 341 comments so far!

The Republican response

House Republicans released this new ad about the staggering 9.5% unemployment rate.

H/T Gateway Pundit.

NEA General Counsel explains the real goals of teacher unions: MONEY and POWER

July 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at the Heritage Foundation.

NEA General Counsel Bob Chanin tells the world the top priority of the largest teacher union in the USA.

Are they concerned with providing a quality education for our children?

Here is the video:

And the transcript:

> **Despite what some among us would like to believe it is not because of our creative ideas; it is not because of the merit of our positions; it is not because we care about children; and it is not because we have a vision of a great public school for every child.**
>
> **The NEA and its affiliates are effective advocates because we have power. And we have power because there are more than 3.2 million people who are willing to pay us hundreds of million of dollars in dues each year because they believe that we are the unions that can most effectively represent them; the union that can protect their rights and advance their interests as education employees.**
>
> This is not to say that the concern of NEA and its affiliates with closing achievement gaps, reducing drop rate rates, improving teacher quality, and the like are unimportant or inappropriate. To the contrary these are the goals that guide the work we do. But they need not and must not be achieved at the expense of due process, employee rights, or collective bargaining.
>
> That is simply too high a price to pay.

The Heritage Foundation notes that union dues are *not voluntarily* in many parts of the USA.

> First of all, there is little that is voluntary about the millions in dues paid to the NEA every year. The NEA is strongest in states without right to work laws, and if you want to teach in a public school that is under an NEA contract in those jurisdictions (like California and New York), you must pay dues to the NEA. It is the law. There is nothing voluntary about it. Second, that is tax payer money he's talking about, which is exactly what is so corrupting about public sector unions: the government is lobbying itself for its own expansion.

And what happens when you value the rights of incompetent teachers ahead of the rights of parents and children?

> And what are “employee rights” and “due process,” you might ask? Well, those are what require New York City to pay 700 union teachers $65 million a year to do nothing. Same thing in Los Angeles, where 165 union teachers collect a total of $10 million a year from tax payers for doing nothing.

It is very important to note that he gets a standing ovation from the teachers present at the convention. These are the people who teach your children. Or rather, these are the people who want to *indoctrinate* your children to accept *their values,* and to be *paid by you* for doing it.

ECM also sent me this article from Betsy’s Page via Granite Grok.

Excerpt:

> Sometime last year, while negotiating a teacher contract for the KIPP Ujima Village charter middle school in Baltimore, founder Jason Botel pointed out that his students, mostly from low-income families, had earned the city’s highest public school test scores three years in a row. If the union insisted on increasing overtime pay, he said, the school could not afford the extra instruction time that was a key to its success, **and student achievement would suffer.**
>
> **Botel says a union official replied: “That’s not our problem.”**
>
> Such stories heat the blood of union critics. It is, they contend, a sign of how unions dumb down public education by focusing on salaries, not learning.

They don’t care about your children’s education or career.

Economist Thomas Sowell explains the housing boom and bust

July 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite living economist!

The links below will take you to streaming videos.

- Part 1 (7 minutes) The economics of the housing boom.
- Part 2 (6 minutes) The politics of the housing boom.
- Part 3 (6 minutes) The origins and unique features of the housing bust.
- Part 4 (6 minutes) The pitfalls of New Deal thinking.
- Part 5 (9 minutes) The economic proposals of the Obama administration.

Thanks to ECM for notifying me about these videos!

About Thomas Sowell

Thomas Sowell has studied and taught economics, intellectual history, and social policy at institutions that include Cornell, UCLA, and Amherst. Now a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Sowell has published more than a dozen books. His latest book is The Housing Boom and Bust.

Full bio is here.

Friday night funny: Bill Cosby

July 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bill Cosby

These are my favorite Bill Cosby routines! I hope you like them!

Dentists:

Natural child birth, part 1 of 2:

Natural child birth, part 2 of 2:

Brain damage:

Grandparents:

Breakfast:

Happy Friday!

The worst pro-abortion argument ever!

July 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Neil Simpson.

The challenge:

> Some pro-legalized abortions take the view that technically speaking the unborn are parasites and that they are fair game for destruction because they are dependent on the mother and consume some of her resources. As weird as that argument is I actually like when they present it. I think that middle grounders will immediately realize what a horribly wrong attempt it is to de-humanize the unborn.

The response:

> By that line of reasoning, a woman would be totally justified in killing her baby a day before its due date.
>
> That absurdity aside, their analysis fails (at least legally, if not morally). **While you are never responsible for keeping someone else alive, you are responsible for doing so if you created the situation in which they are dependent upon you.** The classic example is a person who is drowning in the ocean. You, as a boater with a life preserver, are under no obligation to help them out of the water. If, however, you were the one who chucked her overboard, then watched her drown, you can bet that a jury would convict your immoral butt for murder, not for ruining her clothes by getting her wet.
>
> Likewise, you are under no obligation to give a dying person a kidney to save his life, but, if you ripped his kidneys out of his body, you would be charged with murder if he died from those injuries. If the only way to avoid his death is to give him your kidneys, you can bet that your options are to fork over an organ or be charged with murder.

I find it scary that people think of little babies as parasites in the first place!

Is illegal immigration helping to drive California bankrupt?

July 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the extremely left-wing LA Times. (H/T commenter ECM)

Excerpt:

> The largest costs to California's budget from its illegal residents are in three areas:
>
> * Education: The state has no official count of how many students are in the country illegally because school districts do not ask. But the state legislative analyst estimated, based on data from the Pew Hispanic Center, that the state's 6.3 million public school students include about 300,000 illegal residents. At an annual cost of about $7,626 each, the total comes to nearly $2.3 billion.
>
> * Prisons: In fiscal year 2009-10, California expects to spend about $834 million to incarcerate 19,000 illegal immigrants in the state's prisons. In Los Angeles County, illegal immigrants add between $370 million and $550 million annually to criminal justice costs, including prosecution, defense, probation and jails, according to Supervisor Mike Antonovich.
>
> * Healthcare: The expected state tab for healthcare in fiscal 2009-10 is $703 million for as many as 780,000 illegal immigrants. Of that, $486 million goes to emergency services. But low-income illegal residents are also eligible for some nonemergency health services, including prenatal and postpartum care, abortions, breast and cervical cancer treatment and certain types of long-term care, such as stays in nursing homes. Most of the nonemergency care for illegal immigrants was authorized by the Legislature in the 1980s.

The story was linked by Fausta's blog and Fausta noted this:

> In addition, the article states that 48,000 children in families headed by illegal immigrants receive a monthly average of $472.

Compassion sounds so wonderful until you have to pay for it during a recession. I am in favor of increased legal immigration and work permits. Anyone who can find a job, learn English and American civics, obey the law, and pay for their own education and health care for 5 years should get a green card. But there should be no pathway to a green card *ever* for anyone who entered the country illegally at any time.

9th Circuit CA says Christian pharmacists must dispense abortion-causing pill

July 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Earlier today, I posted about how to respond to the pro-abortion argument that states that abortion is OK because babies are parasites and women should not be obligated to carry them for 9 months.

Pharmacies forced to dispense the morning-after pill

I noticed this (left-wing) LA Times article on Hot Air.

Excerpt:

> Pharmacists are obliged to dispense the Plan B pill, even if they are personally opposed to the "morning after" contraceptive on religious grounds, a federal appeals court ruled Wednesday.
>
> In a case that could affect policy across the western U.S., a supermarket pharmacy owner in Olympia, Wash., failed in a bid to block 2007 regulations that required all Washington pharmacies to stock and dispense the pills.
>
> Family-owned Ralph's Thriftway and two pharmacists employed elsewhere sued Washington state officials over the requirement. The plaintiffs asserted that their Christian beliefs prevented them from dispensing the pills, which can prevent implantation of a recently fertilized egg. They said that the new regulations would force them to choose between keeping their jobs and heeding their religious objections to a medication they regard as a form of abortion.

Notice the important distinction made by Ed Morrissey here:

> There have been two different issues in the legal fight over Plan B. In one group, pharmacists not working for themselves — for instance, at chain pharmacies — objected to dispensing the pill and wanted job protection despite their refusal. Those cases hardly stand up to scrutiny. The owner of the pharmacy has the right to decide on his own inventory and what to sell, and the employees of that pharmacy either should follow that policy or find a job somewhere else if it offends them. It falls into the same category as a cashier who refuses to handle meat at the checkout counter because he's a vegetarian.
>
> **However, this is something else. The owners of the pharmacy do not want to stock the pills for their own reasons. Even apart from religious grounds, that still seems to be their decision in the marketplace. If they don't want to sell aspirin, or Ginsu knives, or inflatable life vests for swimming pools, that should be their decision, too. If their customers object to their policies, they will find other pharmacies to patronize.** The government has a public interest in telling retailers what they *cannot* sell for

> safety reasons (like dynamite, as an example), but should not force business owners to sell something they do not want to sell.

Let's have the facts: The "morning after" pill kills an unborn human person.

(UPDATE: that link is for RU-486! My mistake, but Plan B can also cause an abortion in some cases by preventing implantation, see the comments below)

And this is another reminder why it was crazy for "Christians" to vote for Obama to steal the money from their rich neighbors. When you vote for left-wing socialists because you covet other people's money, do not be surprised when the socialist comes after your Christian beliefs soon after. There are a lot of people in church on Sunday morning who need to be reading about economics and capitalism on Sunday night.

How do Democrat policies stimulate the economy?

July 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this Washington Times article to see how it works. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration revealed last week that **as much as $16.1 million from the stimulus program is going to save the San Francisco Bay Area habitat of, among other things, the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse.**
>
> That has revived Republican criticism that the pet project was an "invisible earmark" in the massive spending bill for Mrs. Pelosi, whose San Francisco district abuts the Bay, and epitomizes what Republicans say is the failure of stimulus spending so far to help an economy still shedding jobs.
>
> "Lo and behold, the government has announced that **the mouse is getting its money after all**," House Minority Leader John A. Boehner, Ohio Republican, said, standing beside a poster of the furry varmint. "Speaker Pelosi must be so proud."
>
> Mrs. Pelosi's office was quick to dismiss the criticism.

My preferred stimulus was to spend under $400 billion and to temporarily suspend the employer portion of payroll taxes, so that American employees would go on sale. When people have jobs, then they are comfortable spending money. But Obama and Pelosi preferred to spend the money on mice. American workers or mice? Which one stimulates the economy?

Earlier this week I wrote about how well the first two stimulus bills worked, and how the Democrats would like to pass a third stimulus bill.

Raising taxes

Democrats also think that raising taxes on businesses and individuals will stimulate the economy. See, when the unemployment rate goes to 9.5%, and everyone has to pay more for electricity and gas, then Democrats believe that people will spend *more*.

Consider this article from Politico which lists some of the ideas they are considering. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> — Broaden the 1.45-percent Medicare tax on earned income to "passive income," which could include money from capital gains, rental properties and businesses that do not require direct participation. This could raise $100 billion.
>
> — Levy a five-percent surtax on individuals who earn more than $500,000 and couples that make $1 million.
>
> — Tax health benefits at a higher level than had been considered. Two scenarios

> are in play. Taxing plans worth more than $20,300 for a family and $8,300 for an individual could raise $240 billion. Increasing the cut-off to plans worth more than $25,000 would bring $90 billion.
>
> — Capping the tax break on itemized deductions at 28 percent, as President Barack Obama had proposed, or freezing the top deduction rate at 35 percent when the Bush tax cuts expire in 2010. The first scenario would raise $168 billion, while the second would collect $90 billion.
>
> — Issue tax credit bonds to pay for the proposed Medicaid expansion, raising $75 billion.
>
> — Charge fees to pharmaceutical manufacturers, bringing in as much as $20 billion, and insurance providers, raising $75 billion.
>
> – Raise taxes on sodas and sugary drinks. A 3-cent hike could pick up $30 billion, and a 10-cent hike could make $100 billion. This one already appears out of favor: Many senators have specifically ruled out the sugar tax, and a Senate Democratic source said it was the one option that was clearly not gaining traction with committee members.

Try to think about what effect this will have on the person who rents you your apartment, who supplies your employer with capital, or who pays your salary. Try to think about whether you will pay more or less for the goods and services you need when the people who provide them are attacked by the government. Try to think about what effect increased borrowing will have on the prosperity of your children.

In Iran, two jailed Christian women face execution

July 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marzieh Amirizadeh, 30, and Maryam Rustampoor, 27 are in an Iranian prison for converting to Christianity

BosNewsLife reports. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Two detained Christian women are "in danger of being forgotten" amid concerns they may face execution, Iranian Christians said Tuesday, July 7.
>
> Marzieh Amirizadeh, 30, and Maryam Rustampoor, 27, have been held for over four months in Tehran's notorious Evin prison apparently for converting to Christianity from Islam.
>
> Iranian Christians and rights investigators said the two young women, who were arrested March 5, suffered sleep deprivation as part of police interrogations and were held in solitary confinement for three weeks in May and early June.
>
> …There was still no clarity regarding the case of the two Christian women, Tuesday, July 7, with one judge reportedly telling them they were both to be executed as 'apostates'. "Maryam and Marzieh have responded with courage, however, telling the judge to 'expedite his sentence'," said Pray for Iran, an Internet initiative of Iranian churches.

I find this story to be the most depressing thing in the world. I look at the pictures of the two women and I just want to cry. Here I am in the USA, surrounded by postmodern-relativist "Christian" feminists who vote for abortion, big government and higher taxes. Meanwhile, the real Christian women that I should be protecting and providing for are on the other side of the world in a filthy jail cell.

Female Iranian pro-democracy protester was a Christian

Neda Soltani was a Christian

One other thing. That woman who was murdered by the Iranian dictatorship while peacefully protesting the rigged Iranian election was also a Christian. You can read more about her here on Robert Spenser's Jihad Watch. (H/T Nice Deb, Atlas Shrugs)

He writes:

> This is the poor young woman who was shot dead by Iranian security forces, and whose bleeding face became an image of the brutality and humanity of the mullahs. Now it turns out the Neda Soltani was a Christian — a telling indication that the analysts who dismissed the protesters as simply wanting more Sharia, or better Sharia, or Sharia with a different face, were wrong: it just wasn't that simple.

Christians don't want *any* Sharia. We want the freedom to convert and to live publicly and authentically as Christians.

Video of her assassination: (WARNING: GRAPHIC!)

Where are all the feminists? Oh yes – they are running the Human Rights Commissions that suppress the free speech of Christians whenever Muslim agitators complain about being offended. And Obama didn't do anything to help the voters in Iran or Honduras, either.

CRISIS! Science czar advocated forced abortions, mass sterilizations and totalitarianism

July 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Report here by ZombieTime, featuring quotations, page scans and photographs of the actual pages from the book. (H/T Hot Air, Michelle Malkin)

The report linked above is a MUST-READ. It is important that we understand the thinking of people on the secular left. We need to understand why they oppose traditional morality, religion and capitalism. We need to look at the writings of the most committed secular leftists, environmentalists, feminists and environmentalists and ask ourselves whether we should be voting for these people.

Here is the book cover:

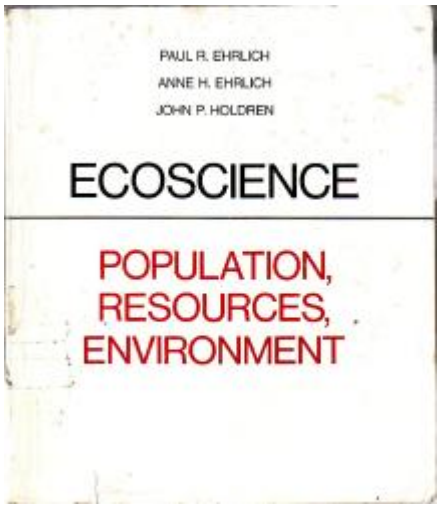

The book authored by John Holdren, Obama's science czar

Here are the main points in the parts cited at ZombieTime's report:

> - Women could be forced to abort their pregnancies, whether they wanted to or not;
> - The population at large could be sterilized by infertility drugs intentionally put into the nation's drinking water or in food;
> - Single mothers and teen mothers should have their babies seized from them against their will and given away to other couples to raise;
> - People who "contribute to social deterioration" (i.e. undesirables) "can be required by law to exercise reproductive responsibility" — in other words, be compelled to have abortions or be sterilized.
> - A transnational "Planetary Regime" should assume control of the global economy and also dictate the most intimate details of Americans' lives — using an armed international police force.

When you're done reading the report, come back here I will explain how people born and raised in this country of liberty can even think things like this, much less advocate for

them in public.

Michelle Malkin's post had this video that explains where Holdren's views came from:

And left-wing Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader-Ginsburg has similar views.

She says this in a New York Times interview:

> Frankly I had thought that at the time Roe was decided, there was concern about population growth and particularly growth in populations that we don't want to have too many of.

This is the mindset of the secular left. The secular left doesn't want to have too many babies of a certain color or gender, so they kill them. Because there is no purpose to life except to be happy, and the strong need to be happy even at the expense of the weak.

The denial of God matters

If there is no God, then survival of the fittest is true. Those who are deemed unfit by the secular left elites may be culled by abortion or eugenics so that they do not use too many of the world's resources. This way, the happiness of the strong can be maximized. And that is the purpose of life on atheism – to maximize your happy feelings at the expense of others weaker than you.

The nihilism of the secular left makes them try to prevent future crises by seizing control. There are no human rights in an accidental, materialist universe, so there are no objective restraints on their exercise of power. In contrast, Christians believe that God is in control of history, and that other people have human rights and were made to freely respond to God, if they want to.

The job of Christians is to make sure that everyone has a chance to respond, and that means other people need to have liberty, prosperity and security to give them time to respond. People have value because they can respond to God. And even those who can't or won't respond have a human rights. The needs of others give Christians the opportunity to exercise love instead of selfishness. We were made to be good.

In Christianity, Christians are admonished not to compare themselves to others, and especially not to think that they are better than others. Christians are only allowed to voice their disagreement, set an example and try to persuade others. It is actually the worse sin (pride) to compare yourself to others and look down at them. In Christianity, everyone is equally loved by God, and having different views doesn't change their value.

Secular leftists are different. When they turn away from God (and ultimate purpose and meaning), they feel a tremendous pressure to do something important in the world in order to maintain the illusion of having meaning and purpose. As they carry out their plans, the pride of comparing themselves to others grows, until they start to think they should really be controlling others, and even killing those who are "unfit".

There is all the difference in the world between a Christian and a secular leftist.

Further study

I wrote an entire series here about how the worldview of the left, which begins with the

denial of God, does not provide an adequate grounding for human rights, human dignity, moral values, free will, ultimate significance, and moral accountability.

Frank the Firefighter gets “Joe the Plumber” treatment from Democrats

July 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you disagree with Dear Leader, the power of the state will be used against you, comrade!

Here is the article from McClatchy. (H/T Verum Serum, John Lott)

Excerpt:

> Supporters of Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor are quietly targeting the Connecticut firefighter who’s at the center of Sotomayor’s most controversial ruling.
>
> On the eve of Sotomayor’s Senate confirmation hearing, her advocates have been urging journalists to scrutinize what one called the “troubled and litigious work history” of firefighter Frank Ricci.
>
> This is opposition research: a constant shadow on Capitol Hill.
>
> “The whole business of getting Supreme Court nominees through the process has become bloodsport,” said Gary Rose, a government and politics professor at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Conn.
>
> On Friday, citing in an e-mail “Frank Ricci’s troubled and litigious work history,” the liberal advocacy group People for the American Way drew reporters’ attention to Ricci’s past. Other advocates for Sotomayor have discreetly urged journalists to pursue similar story lines.
>
> Specifically, the advocates have zeroed in on an earlier 1995 lawsuit Ricci filed claiming the city of New Haven discriminated against him because he’s dyslexic. The advocates cite other Hartford Courant stories from the same era recounting how Ricci was fired by a fire department in Middletown, Conn., allegedly, Ricci said at the time, because of safety concerns he raised.
>
> The Middletown-area fire department was subsequently fined for safety violations, but the Connecticut Department of Labor dismissed Ricci’s retaliation complaint.
>
> No People for the American Way officials could be reached Friday to speak on the record about the press campaign.

Laws and morals should not constrain mighty elites like Obama! He knows he is right, and all his enemies are just stupid and evil racist, sexist homophobes! Why should his power be constrained by laws, human rights and the arbitrary moral customs of this time and place?

MUST-SEE: Michael Coren blasts moral equivalence in a debate against leftists

July 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

MUST-SEE Video from the Michael Coren TV show. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur, Vlad Tepes)

Topic: Is there such a thing as Islamic fundamentalism? Is it a concern?

Michael Coren's opponents say there is no threat of Islamic violence:

- Marilyn Churley, NDP representative (the secularist socialist party of Canada)
- Krisna Saravanmutta, President of the York Federation of Students (where Jewish students are persecuted and pro-life groups are banned)

Well, what about this violence?

This CNN report documents Muslim terrorists bombing churches in Iraq. (H/T Vlad Tepes)

Excerpt:

> At least four people were killed and 32 wounded as six Baghdad-area churches were bombed within 24 hours, officials told CNN.
>
> The first bombing took place Saturday night at St. Joseph's church in western Baghdad, according to an Interior Ministry official. Two bombs placed inside the church exploded at about 10 p.m. No one was in the church at the time of the attack.
>
> Sunday afternoon, three bombs exploded outside churches, wounding eight civilians, the official said. The bombs detonated within a 15-minute span, between 4:30 and 4:45 p.m. Two of the churches are in central Baghdad's al-Karrada district, and the third is in al-Ghadeer in eastern Baghdad.
>
> Sunday evening, a car bomb exploded outside a church on Palestine Street in eastern Baghdad just after 7 p.m., the official said. Four people died, and 21 were wounded.

If the secular left and the radical Islamists want to talk about "fundamentalism", then might I suggest that they begin with the events of the day, rather than by desperately grasping at examples of "Christian fundamentalism" that, on closer inspection, have nothing to do with Christianity. Christians are commanded *love their enemies* and *do not murder them.* A fundamentalist Christian obeys those commandments.

UPDATE: Jihad Watch reports that a Christian leader has been assassinated in Iraq, in front of his own daughter.

Does legalized abortion reduce crime rates?

July 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the reasons given by pro-choice people for legalized abortion is that it reduces crime rates. But does it really reduce crime rates?

Let's take a look at a two-part series by economist John Lott, writing for Fox News.

Here is the first article.

Excerpt:

> Academic studies have found that legalized abortion, by encouraging premarital sex, increased the number of unplanned births, even outweighing the reduction in unplanned births due to abortion.
>
> In the United States from the early 1970s, when abortion was liberalized, through the late 1980s, there was a tremendous increase in the rate of out-of-wedlock births, rising from an average of 5 percent of all births from 1965 to 1969 to more than 16 percent two decades later (1985 to 1989).

Here is the second article.

Excerpt:

> What happened to all these children raised by single women? No matter how much they want their children, single parents tend to devote less attention to them than married couples do. Single parents are less likely than married parents to read to their children or take them on excursions, and more likely to feel angry at their children or to feel that they are burdensome. Children raised out of wedlock have more social and developmental problems than children of married couples by almost any measure — from grades to school expulsion to disease. Unsurprisingly, children from unmarried families are also more likely to become criminals.

This material is exposited more fully in Lott's book "Freedomnomics", which is one of my favorite books. I bought it for 3 of my friends as part of their Christmas present bundle, including Andrew and Jen, the smartest married couple in the world!

About the author

John R. Lott, Jr. is a Senior Research Scholar at the University of Maryland. Lott has held positions at the University of Chicago, Yale University, Stanford, UCLA, Wharton, and Rice and was the chief economist at the United States Sentencing Commission during 1988 and 1989. Lott has published over 100 articles in academic journals. He is the author of six books including: "More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws", "The Bias Against Guns", and most recently "Freedomnomics." Opinion pieces by Lott have appeared in such places as The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, USA Today, and The Chicago Tribune. He has appeared on such

television programs as the ABC and NBC National Evening News broadcasts, The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer, and the Today Show. He received his Ph.D. in economics from UCLA in 1984.

Podcasts featuring Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

July 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. J integrates fiscal conservatism with social conservatism

I have become increasingly impressed with Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, so imagine my joy when I saw that she is being regularly featured on the Lutheran radio show "Issues, Etc", with Todd Wilken. Check out these short podcasts on your lunch break, I listened to them TWICE.

Is Marriage Worth It? (MP3 file, 10 minutes)

This is a very good primer on marriage, and whether narcissistic men and women have what it takes to be married. Dr. J also explains what the purpose of marriage is.

Are Fathers Necessary? (MP3 file, 21 minutes)

One of the best things about Dr. J is that she understands men and values men. She talks about same-sex marriage in this podcast, as well.

The Future of Marriage (Mp3 file, 10 minutes)

She explains how the secular left would like to be the ones raising your children, so they would love to break up the family unit. You can really see her libertarian economics streak coming out in this one.

I once e-mailed her to get her thoughts on no-fault divorce, and she *mailed me a hardcover book* featuring a book chapter where she argued against no-fault divorce. It was a great chapter because she understands men and defends us capably. She's brilliant and she's a stay-at-home mom! I just ordered her "Smart Sex" book last week. When you e-mail her, she takes time to talk with you back-and-forth.

My previous post on Dr. J featured a lecture on love and economic policy and a great paper on feminism that she presented to university students.

By the way, there was a pretty good fight on the blog about marriage and sex between me and theobromophile, a pro-life feminist. Leave a comment! The wonderful Andrew and

Jen, as well as Madeleine from MandM in New Zealand all left comments.

About the speaker

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, Senior Fellow in Economics at the Acton Institute and regular contributor to *National Review Online* and *The National Catholic Register*, received her Ph.D. in economics from the University of Rochester. Until recently, she was a Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution. She has been on the faculty of Yale University and George Mason University, and is the author of *Love and Economics: Why the Laissez-Faire Family doesn't work*.

Audio debate: Muslim and Christian converts debate their former religions

July 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one heck of a good debate. I really liked the Christian guy, who is a former Muslim from Pakistan. He speaks as though he had a lot of experience debating this topic, and he is a medical doctor, too. I like it when people have the calm, experienced tone that comes from having had lots of debates and being *very* confident about what you believe. If only we Christians all sounded like Nabeel.

Description of the debate:

> Unbelievable? 11 Jul 2009 – Islamic & Christian converts debate – 11 July 2009
>
> Nabeel Qureshi converted to Christianity from Islam after being convinced that the weight of evidence was in favour of Christian faith.
> Yahya Seymour's story is the opposite – he became a Muslim after having a Christian upbringing.
>
> They discuss the issues in advance of debates coming up in London.
>
> For more information on the debates from Sun 12 Jul 09 to Sat 18 Jul 09.
> See http://www.thedebateinitiative.com or http://www.answeringmuslims.com

The MP3 file is here.

MUST-SEE: Steven Crowder's undercover expose of single-payer health care in Canada!

July 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome Canadian visitors from Blazing Cat Fur! Thanks for the link! I am going to tell you all straight – I have seen Canadian Football and it is twice as exciting as American Football. Please allow us to have CFL teams (again)!

Hilarious, and totally un-scripted, totally undercover!

How long must you wait for FREE HEALTH CARE in Canada?

You can leave a comment at his blog here. (H/T IMAO.us)

Hot Air summarizes the lessons of the video:

> The big lesson from Steven Crowder's undercover look at the single-payer health-care system in Canada? "Don't get sick on Sunday." Actually, we can probably narrow that to, "Don't get sick," because Steven demonstrates that the only thing reliably covered in CanadaCare is the bill.

What would Obamacare do to us?

Check out this assessment by Chapman university law professor Hugh Hewitt. (H/T The Heritage Foundation)

> Some of my law firm's clients and some executives in my broadcast audience are quietly preparing for the necessary analysis that will follow the passage of Obamacare by asking their personnel departments the obvious question: Will it make economic sense to discontinue health care coverage for my employees and instead push them into the government plan?
>
> These employers –manufacturers, builders, entrepeneuers of all sorts– cannot yet get an answer to this question because they don't have any specifics about costs from which they can make an informed decision.
>
> But they all know they will have to "do the math" if the "government option/public plan" makes it into law. They cannot not do so for they owe shareholders and investors an objective assessment of what will improve their bottom lines.
>
> If the "government option/public plan" costs $300 per employee per month and private sector insurance costs $350 per employee per month, the choice to push their workforce into the waiting arms of President Obama's new bureaucracy will make itself.

Under Obamacare, *your employer* will decide whether you are on the private or public option – by dumping everyone that costs them too much. That's Obama's public option – it's not *your* option.

Obamacare will run huge deficits

The latest report from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is out. (H/T The Heritage Foundation)

Excerpt:

> For the past half-century, federal spending has averaged about 20 percent of GDP, federal taxes about 18 percent of GDP and the budget deficit 2 percent of GDP. The CBO's projection for 2020 — which assumes the economy has returned to "full employment" — puts spending at 26 percent of GDP, taxes at a bit less than 19 percent of GDP and a deficit above 7 percent of GDP. Future spending and deficit figures continue to grow.
>
> [T]he major causes of the budget blowout are well-known: an aging population and rapid increases in health spending. In 2000, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid — the main programs providing income and health care for those 65 and over — totaled nearly 8 percent of GDP. In 2020, CBO projects that will reach almost 12 percent of GDP. But the deeper source of our predicament is a self-indulgent political culture that avoids a rigorous discussion of government's role.
>
> …Obama would make matters worse. He talks about controlling "entitlement" spending (mainly Social Security and Medicare) but hasn't done so. He's proposing just the opposite. His health-care proposal would increase federal spending. He says he will "pay for" the added outlays with tax increases or other spending cuts, but what people forget is that every penny of this "payment" could be used (and should be) to close the long-term deficit — not raise future spending and taxes.

As if we were not already spending too much!

Previous posts on health care

- The effects of government-run health care, by the numbers
- Obama plans health care rationing for you, but not for him!
- Consider the rationing of health care in the UK
- In Canada, you can deliver your own babies while you wait
- Single-payer health care explained with videos
- More videos showing socialized medicine horror stories
- Keith Hennessey explains Obamacare in 15 points

Verum Serum has more Canadian horror stories:

- To Avoid Year Long Wait, Canadian Patient Flies to India for Hip Resurfacing
- Patient Wait Times Cost Canada $15 Billion a Year
- Fed Up Canadians Choose Surgery Overseas
- Doctor Advises Patient to Fly to Italy for Cancer Treatment
- Canadian's Access to Drugs Blocked by Goverment Policy

- Excruciating Wait Times
- Government Health Care Only Looks Good on Film
- Why Ontario Keeps Sending Patients to the US

Canadian visitors, please leave a comment with your worst health care story so that we can understand what you are going through.

UPDATE: Gateway Pundit reports that Obamacare will provide taxpayer funding for abortion just as polls show that the country is more pro-life than ever.

UPDATE: But there's hope! Obama's teleprompter has been smashed! Perhaps this will be an end of Obamacare now that the evil genius is no more.

An Iraqi columnist thanks America for supporting Democracy in Iraq

July 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's win in Iraq

Let me be clear. I am pro-victory when it comes to defending America's interests abroad. America is the beacon of freedom in the world, and we need to use our power to do right. To whom much is given, much is expected.

Here is the article from the Weekly Standard. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> **Thank You America – And Damn You, You Bastards**
> **By Jabr Al Jabouri**
> ***Al-Bayyna Al-Jadida* [Baghdad]**
> **July 1, 2009**
>
> America chose to save us from the most evil party, and the most despicable President in the universe [Saddam]. Meanwhile, the Arab powers stood firmly against the American project. They used all means to thwart them, but Allah's will had another say in this matter. America turned the Ba'athists into the world's laughing stock by showing them fleeing in their underwear on live television. Meanwhile, the Arab powers turned those cowards into national heroes on their satellite channels.
>
> America gave the lives of 4,000 of its people to Iraq's land to instill security and democracy, while the Arabs sent us their filthy mercenaries who mercilessly murdered, bombed, and slaughtered the Iraqi people.
>
> America came bearing democracy for Iraq, while the Arabs brought us the new religion of the Wahhabis and Salafists. This religion aims to destroy Iraq and return it to the days of minority rule.

And it goes on and on and on about all the things that America has done for Iraq.

This is a must-read, especially for the many Christians that I know personally who thought that 600 billion dollars was too much money to spend giving the gift of liberty to our neighbors in Iraq, while making the whole world safer at the same time. And I think we should be supporting democracy in Lebanon, Iran and Honduras as much as we can – certainly with diplomatic and economic measures.

Thank you, ECM, for sending me this fine article. America is a great country, and we do great things, and we have glory (reputation) for doing these great things with the people

who matter most – the people who love liberty, prosperity and security. The people who are grateful. The people who believe in democracy and human rights.

Can anyone prove God's existence? Is there any evidence?

July 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Pugnacious Irishman considers the general objection:

> No one can prove God's existence (or Jesus' existence, or that the Bible is God's word, etc, etc…just toss in any number of Christian staples). There is no evidence whatsoever. It's all belief and faith.

This is called hard agnosticism. Atheism is the claim "There is no God". Soft agnosticism is the claim "I don't know if there is a God". Hard agnosticism is the claim "No one can know whether there is a God or not".

Now take a moment and think about how you would respond in a general way, without plunging into the arguments and counter-arguments.

Rich begins by teaching us about the notion of *burden of proof:*

> It is important that when someone says that to you, that you *never* let them off the hook. It is just too easy to throw it out there without backing it up. It is a particularly convenient one liner for those who aren't really interested in God and for those who have not thought deeply about God. That's not to say that everyone who says that hasn't thought deeply about God, it's just that it's easy for folks like that to resort to it. Rather than launching into disproving the "no proof" belief, force your conversation partner to shoulder his responsibility: he made a claim, now he must back it up. No reason for you to launch into Kalam mode.

This actually happened to me when I was working for a software company in Chicago. We were waiting for a meeting room to empty. I was browsing a William Lane Craig debate transcript on one of the lab machines, when one of the engineers said, "Why do you read that stuff? No one can know whether God exists or not!" So I said, "Why do you think that?" And he said, "Because God is non-physical and that means that we can never have evidence of a non-physical entity". And we went from there, straight to the Kalam argument.

Rich documents FIVE responses here, and breaks them down. My favorites are the last two, but they are all useful, depending on the person who is asking.

By the way, here is the evidence for Christian theism and responses to objections, if evidence is really required. But the point of this post is that if anyone makes a claim to know that there is no proof that God exists, the first questions you need to ask before you go to the data is: what do you mean by "God"? what would count as proof for you? who have you read? what is wrong with the arguments that you've read? Etc.

Has the Episcopal church gone completely crazy?

July 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Associate Press via the American Spectator. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church called the evangelical notion that individuals can be right with God a "great Western heresy" that is behind many problems facing the church and the wider society.
>
> Describing a United States church in crisis, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori told delegates to the group's triennial meeting July 8 in Anaheim, Calif., that the overarching connection to problems facing Episcopalians has to do with "the great Western heresy — that we can be saved as individuals, that any of us alone can be in right relationship with God."
>
> "It's caricatured in some quarters by insisting that salvation depends on reciting a specific verbal formula about Jesus," Jefferts Schori, the first woman to be elected as a primate in the worldwide Anglican Communion three years ago, said. "That individualist focus is a form of idolatry, for it puts me and my words in the place that only God can occupy, at the center of existence, as the ground of being."
>
> …Jefferts Schori said "heretical and individualistic understanding" contributes to problems like neglect for the environment and the current worldwide economic recession.

I wonder if the Bishop has ever encountered this passage:

> 32"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.
>
> 33But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.
>
> 34"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.
>
> 35 For I have come to turn
> " 'a man against his father,
> a daughter against her mother,
> a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law –
>
> 36a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'
>
> 37"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;
>
> 38and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

That statement is also in Luke. So it originates in Q, the source of Matthew and Luke, and it is therefore very, very early, and very, very reliable. And it's worse than that – you can find something similar in the earliest gospel, Mark. So it is pretty clear that what is required to be saved is the *individual* decision to *acknowledge Jesus* and *follow Jesus.*

Here's one more story from OneNewsNow about the Episcopalian church.

> Episcopalians are moving toward affirming an open role for homosexual clergy in their church despite pressure from fellow Anglicans not to do so.
>
> Episcopal bishops voted at a national meeting yesterday for a statement that says "God has called and may call" homosexual men and women to ministry. Delegates to the meeting already approved a nearly identical statement. This latest version is likely to be approved by Friday.
>
> Episcopalians caused an uproar in 2003 by consecrating the first openly homosexual bishop, Vicki Gene Robinson of New Hampshire. That decision has nearly split the world Anglican Communion, which includes Episcopalians.
>
> To calm tensions, Episcopal leaders three years ago had urged restraint by dioceses considering homosexual candidates for bishop. No openly homosexual bishops have been consecrated since then.

And don't forget my previous post about the Rev. Ragsdale, another Episcopalian, who thinks that abortion should be made into a sacrament. She is the new Dean of Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Sarah Palin crushes cap-and-trade in the Washington Post

July 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sarah Palin's op-ed in the Washington Post is called "The 'Cap And Tax' Dead End". (H/T Watts Up With That, Gateway Pundit, Stop the ACLU)

Excerpt:

> American prosperity has always been driven by the steady supply of abundant, affordable energy. Particularly in Alaska, we understand the inherent link between energy and prosperity, energy and opportunity, and energy and security. Consequently, many of us in this huge, energy-rich state recognize that the president's cap-and-trade energy tax would adversely affect every aspect of the U.S. economy.
>
> There is no denying that as the world becomes more industrialized, we need to reform our energy policy and become less dependent on foreign energy sources. But the answer doesn't lie in making energy scarcer and more expensive! Those who understand the issue know we can meet our energy needs and environmental challenges without destroying America's economy.
>
> Job losses are so certain under this new cap-and-tax plan that it includes a provision accommodating newly unemployed workers from the resulting dried-up energy sector, to the tune of $4.2 billion over eight years. So much for creating jobs.
>
> In addition to immediately increasing unemployment in the energy sector, even more American jobs will be threatened by the rising cost of doing business under the cap-and-tax plan. For example, the cost of farming will certainly increase, driving down farm incomes while driving up grocery prices. The costs of manufacturing, warehousing and transportation will also increase.
>
> The ironic beauty in this plan? **Soon, even the most ardent liberal will understand supply-side economics.**
>
> …The Americans hit hardest will be those already struggling to make ends meet. As the president eloquently puts it, their electricity bills will "necessarily skyrocket." So much for not raising taxes on anyone making less than $250,000 a year.
>
> Even Warren Buffett, an ardent Obama supporter, admitted that under the cap-and-tax scheme, "poor people are going to pay a lot more for electricity."

Meh. It's merely excellent. Somewhat superlative.

Not nearly as good as Michele Bachmann could do, and Michele is conservative on vouchers *and* illegal immigration, *unlike Sarah*. See, Sarah writes about supply-side

economics once in a while, but Michele gives passionate speeches about supply-side economics every day:

- Michele makes an articulate, impassioned speech against gangster-government
- Michele tells government to butt out of the free market
- Michele talks about ANWR, the rule of law and ACORN
- Michele calls for audit of the Federal Reserve (from the Maritime Sentry)
- Michele makes passionate pro-life speech

And Michele likes Christian apologetics more than Sarah! Sarah probably doesn't even know who William Lane Craig is! Michele should be President, Sarah can be Secretary of Energy.

Ed Morrissey at Hot Air comments on Sarah's article:

> We need to make all of this clear. Cap-and-trade rations energy production, which means there will be *less of it* for a long time. Alternatives are not ready for the kind of mass production that would allow a complete replacement of energy, and probably won't be for decades, if ever in some cases (notably wind power, as GreenChoice showed and as T. Boone Pickens finally realized). That means a lower standard of living that will impact America regressively, with the lowest income earners getting hit the hardest. The drain on the economy from high energy prices means less jobs and higher retail prices for goods and services, again a regressive consequence of energy rationing.
>
> Obama and his Utopian allies promise that government will help close the gap by offering more services to the unemployed and the poor at the expense of the "rich". What will that do? It will further handicap the economy by keeping capital out of the markets. Even worse, it will vastly expand the dependent class in America who have to go on the dole to survive. And many of those ardent liberals will be pretty happy with that outcome, too.

We need to stop this thing. It's good that Sarah came out against it.

Does Obama plan to tax people making less than $250,000?

July 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Keith Hennessey explains how Obamacare will result in higher taxes on the middle class.

Excerpt:

> As expected, the House bill would mandate that individuals and families have or buy health insurance.
>
> But what if they don't buy it?
>
> Then Section 401 kicks in. Any individual (or family) that does not have health insurance would have to pay a new tax, roughly equal to the smaller of 2.5% of your income or the cost of a health insurance plan.
>
> I assume the bill authors would respond, "But why wouldn't you want insurance? After all, we're subsidizing it for everyone up to 400% of the poverty line."
>
> That is true. But if you're a single person with income of $44,000 or higher, then you're above 400% of the poverty line. You would not be subsidized, but would face the punitive tax if you didn't get health insurance. This bill leaves an important gap between the subsidies and the cost of health insurance. CBO says that for about eight million people, that gap is too big to close, and they would get stuck paying higher taxes and still without health insurance.

He uses several different examples to show how Obama's plan would raise taxes on people making much less than 250,000 dollars a year. I know what you're thinking – "Wintery! Obama promised he wouldn't raise taxes on the middle class!" Well, he's going to do exactly what is consistent with his voting record. If only the left-wing media had told us his voting record, instead of talking incessantly about Sarah Palin's children.

I should note that Obama broke his tax pledge many times already.

> Americans for Tax Reform has been documenting Obama's string of broken tax promises. Obama first shattered his $250K promise only 16 days into the presidency when he enacted a 61 cent tax increase on cigarette packs, disproportionately hurting low-income Americans. Next, Obama aggressively supported the cap-and-trade tax that, if the bill passes the Senate, will increase energy costs for an average American family by $1,500. Now, in a recent interview with Obama's Senior Adviser David Axelrod, the administration is waffling about how taxes will be raised for health care reform. When asked if tax increases on families making less than $250,000 might pay for health care, Sen. Schumer, D-N.Y. said, "There are lots of things on the table now."

Next time, don't worry about Tina Fey's sketches, worry about the thousands of dollars that Obammunism will cost you in increased health care costs, increased electricity costs,

higher taxes, lost income, stock losses, interest on the national debt, etc. Katie Couric isn't going to give you all your savings back. Campbell Brown isn't going to give you your job back. *They're rich Democrats. They don't care about truth.*

UPDATE: Hot Air links to the story and adds this:

> As John Boehner points out, many of the so-called "rich" above $250K a year in earnings are small-business owners who simply file their business revenues as personal income. A 5.4% "surtax" — really just a hike in the upper tax bracket — will take more of their capital out of their businesses and reduce the opportunity for job growth.
>
> The Post notes that the "surtax" would apply to about 2.1 million Americans. The mandate for coverage will force almost *four times as many middle-class Americans* to pay higher taxes as a result of the ObamaCare plan in the House while preventing them from getting coverage. The House hasn't soaked the rich; they've declared war on the middle class and the uninsured.

Socialists against the middle class.

Can people twist the Bible to make it say anything they want?

July 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Pugnacious Irishman Rich is at it again!

Here's the challenge:

> "People twist the Bible all the time to make it say whatever they want."
>
> Ever heard that one? Have you ever been the one who said that? Perhaps you just finished giving your view on homosexual behavior. In the process, you cite a Bible verse or two, and the person you are conversing with responds with the above. Where to go from there?

Now, I don't like to use the Bible with people who don't accept its authority, unless I'm ready to argue for the reliability of the verses I want to use using the historical criteria for surfacing reliable passages. (Early, Multiply attested, Enemy-attested, Embarassing to the author, etc.)

But I think Rich is talking about people who are asking you what the Bible teaches.

He continues:

> Really, most of the time, that one liner is merely a dismissal of your case. You give a verse, explain the context, and give an argument for its meaning, and someone merely dismisses it with a "ah, people twist the Bible all the time." You've made a specific case, and somehow, just by making the general observation that people twist the Bible, your whole case is defeated. Really? No, not really.

Click through to see his response, with a sample conversation to illustrate. This one was new to me!

How objective are scientists about their research, given their political views?

July 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hot Air linked to this Pew Research poll about the beliefs and attitudes of researchers in the scientific fields.

Excerpt:

> More than half of the scientists surveyed (55%) say they are Democrats, compared with 35% of the public. Fully 52% of the scientists call themselves liberals; among the public, just 20% describe themselves as liberals. Many of the scientists surveyed mentioned in their open-ended comments that they were optimistic about the Obama administration's likely impact on science.
>
> For its part, the public does not perceive scientists as a particularly liberal group. When asked whether they think of scientists as liberal, conservative or neither in particular, nearly two-thirds (64%) choose the latter option. Just 20% say they think of scientists as politically liberal. However, a majority of scientists (56%) do see members of their profession as liberal.
>
> Most scientists had heard at least a little about claims that government scientists were not allowed to report research findings that conflicted with the Bush administration's point of view. And the vast majority (77%) says that these claims are true. By contrast, these claims barely registered with the public – more than half heard nothing at all about this issue. Only about a quarter of the public (28%) said they thought the claims were true.
>
> Both scientists and the public overwhelmingly say it is appropriate for scientists to become active in political debates about such issues as nuclear power or stem cell research. Virtually all scientists (97%) endorse their participation in debates about these issues, while 76% of the public agrees.

I think it helps to make the point I was making earlier about the fraudulent science used to support global warming and Darwinian evolution. Many scientists have an agenda. They get paid by the government. The bigger government is, the better they get paid. Therefore, many are Democrats. Scientists tend to be biased in favor of material entities and explanations. Morality is non-material. Scientists therefore tend to resent the idea that moral claims are knowledge. They prefer to have autonomy from non-material moral rules. Therefore, many are atheists.

There are some dissenters of course. But these are rare.

Science Daily: Co-habiting before marriage is a bad idea

July 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Science Daily. This is old news, but maybe it will be new news to some of my readers.

Excerpt:

> University of Denver (DU) researchers find that couples who live together before they are engaged have a higher chance of getting divorced than those who wait until they are married to live together, or at least wait until they are engaged. In addition, couples who lived together before engagement and then married, reported a lower satisfaction in their marriages.
>
> …"Cohabiting to test a relationship turns out to be associated with the most problems in relationships," Rhoades says. "Perhaps if a person is feeling a need to test the relationship, he or she already knows some important information about how a relationship may go over time."

This is why I love chastity. Chastity is like the fine-tuning argument – you can't lose the argument because you have all the evidence. Your opponent has unobservables hopes and dreams. And these moral rules like chastity are not just there to protect you from harm. Chastity allows you to relate to the opposite sex in ways you'd never dreamed of. And it works on people you aren't even attracted to, as well!

Isn't it interesting how disdainful we seem to have become of traditional wisdom in regards to sexual matters? As if civilization worked one way for thousands of years, and then all of a sudden the feminists tell us how human nature really works.

Check out this article from Focus on the Family.

Excerpt:

Researchers from Pennsylvania State University find "it has been consistently shown that, compared to spouses who did not cohabit, spouses who cohabit before marriage have higher rates of marital separation and divorce."[3] Sociologists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison report, "Recent national studies in Canada, Sweden, and the United States found that cohabitation increased, rather than decreased, the risk of marital dissolution."[4] This was also found to be true in the Netherlands.[5]

A leading researcher on cohabitation from the University of Victoria, British Columbia, reports:

> Contrary to conventional wisdom that living together before marriage will screen out poor matches and therefore improve subsequent marital stability, there is considerable empirical evidence demonstrating that premarital cohabitation is associated with lowered marital stability.[6]

Additional researchers found, “cohabitation is not related to marital happiness, but is related to lower levels of marital interaction, higher levels of marital disagreement and marital instability.”[7] They conclude, “On the basis of the analysis provided so far, we must reject that argument that cohabitation provides superior training for marriage or improves mate-selection.”[8]

Research conducted at Yale and Columbia University and published in American Sociological Review found:

> The overall association between premarital cohabitation and subsequent marital stability is striking. The dissolution rate of women who cohabit premaritally with their future spouse is, on average, nearly 80 percent higher than the rate of those who do not.

Other studies show that those who have any type of pre-marital cohabiting experience have a 50 to 100 percent greater likelihood of divorce than those who do not cohabit premaritally.[10] This data has led researchers to conclude that the enhanced chance of divorce after cohabitation “is beginning to take on the status of an empirical generalization.”[11]

Marriage is not for people who are “in love”. And having things in common is not the most important thing either. What you need are two people who are trained and experienced in making commitments to do arduous, long-running tasks. People who come into a marriage thinking it will solve all their problems are crazy. And children make it even more stressful!

UPDATE: Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse podcast on the subject is here. (11 minutes)

Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!

July 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

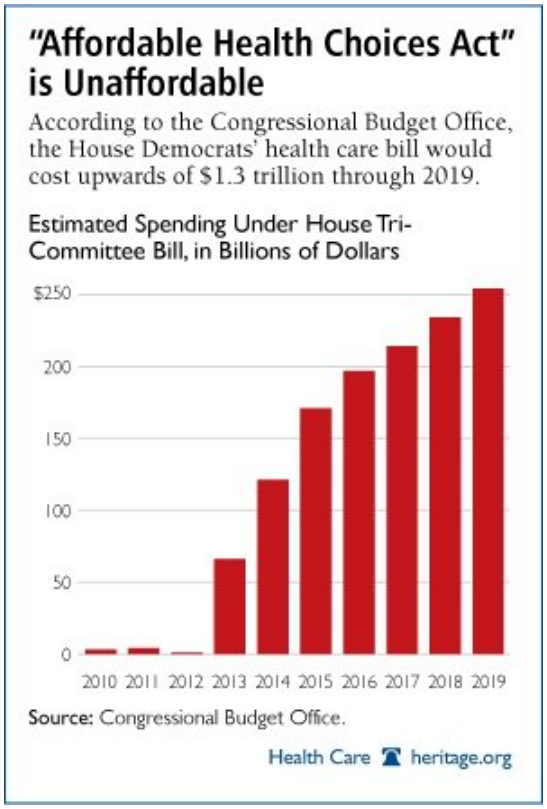

CBO says that the total cost of Obamacare is 1.3 trillion over 10 years
Source: The Heritage Foundation

The problem with health care today in the United States is that medical care and services cost too much. Now, everyone seems to think that the only solution to this problem is to go with a single-payer system like Canada or Cuba. Only one problem: there is another solution that no one is talking about: consumer-driven health care. And this is the only solution that actually works.

At lunch yesterday, I went to the Chinese buffet and started to read a new book on this issue by Regina Hertzlinger, a professor at Harvard University who specializes in health care policy. So now I understand it a little more. And I managed to round up a few podcasts that can explain her idea of consumer-driven health care to you, too. (I listed them in a sensible order)

Consumer-driven health care:

Health Care: Fostering Focus Factories
with Dr. Regina Hertzlinger
(8:46)

Choice, Competition Should Drive Health Care Reform
with Dr. Michael D. Tanner
(5:21)

The Republican Plan ("Patient Choice Act") is consumer-driven:

Obama's False Health Care Choice
with Rep. Paul Ryan
(10:39)

Ideas for Free-Market Health Care Reform
with Rep. Paul Ryan
(8:30)

Obamacare, Medicare, RomneyCare and CanadaCare are all garbage:

Competing with the Government
with Dr. Michael F. Cannon
(7:34)

Medicare: A Model for Reform?
with Dr. Michael D. Tanner
(4:34)

Lessons from Massachusetts Health Care Reform
with Dr. Michael D. Tanner
(4:18)

The Canadian Health Care Experience
with Sally C. Pipes
(7:45)

Puncturing the Myths of American Health Care
with Sally C. Pipes
(about 8 minutes)

Check out this article from the Wall Street Journal entitled "Universal Health Care Isn't Worth Our Freedom". (H/T Club For Growth)

This is the key insight that everyone must understand:

> Many Americans would willingly pay for insurance to protect them against the exorbitant cost of treating their own leukemia. But how many Americans would willingly pay for insurance to protect them from the expenses of treating their own depression?
>
> Everyone recognizes that the more fully we wish insurance companies to defray our out of pocket expenses for our car repairs, the higher the premium they will charge for the policy. Yet foregoing reimbursement for trivial or unnecessary health-care costs in return for a more suitable health-care policy is an option unavailable under the present system. Everyone with health insurance is compelled to protect himself from risks, such as alcoholism and erectile dysfunction, that he would willingly shoulder in exchange for a lower premium.

Liberty means choosing the right amount to pay for your own health care, based on your own lifestyle choices, and your own risk assessment. Anything less is tyranny.

Along those lines, people who are sexually promiscuous or who abuse drugs will be paying the same medical premiums as everyone else, under Obama's health care plan. Your lifestyle decisions are *irrelevant* to the amount you pay and the amount of coverage you get.

Excerpt:

> Under the terms of the health-care reform bill approved by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, the legal use of tobacco products is the only vice for which insurance companies will be able to charge their customers higher premiums.
>
> …In other words, a person could have been admitted to hospitals three times for heroin overdoses, or been pregnant five times out of wedlock, or been treated for venereal diseases at least once per year for the past five years, but none of these factors could be used to charge that person a higher insurance premium.

This is a massive transfer of wealth from clean–living, productive citizens to citizens who are not minimizing lifestyle risks and who are not productive. This is nothing but a massive incentive for people to stop working and stop being moral. What would be the point to restraining yourself? Someone else will pay for your mistakes anyway, right? And that's just what the compassionate, progressive secular-leftists want. To abolish income differentials and the privileges of moral living. So everyone will be the same, and no one will feel bad for being lazy and immoral.

And as if that wasn't bad enough…

Investors Business Daily is reporting this scary story.

Excerpt:

> It didn't take long to run into an "uh-oh" moment when reading the House's "health care for all Americans" bill. **Right there on Page 16 is a provision making individual private medical insurance illegal.**

As Ed Morrissey explains in this Hot Air article, the government has a track record running health care programs already, such as the Indian Health Service. This is a single-payer system run by the federal government. Click through to the article and find out how good of a job government does of running anything. People are dying. Government-run health care is an inefficient system that allows bureaucrats to decide how health care is rationed.

Books I am reading about health care

Right now, I've picked out 3 books on health care to help me learn about the issue.

Who Killed Health Care?: America's $2 Trillion Medical Problem – and the Consumer-Driven Cure
by Dr. Regina Herzlinger

The Cure: How Capitalism Can Save American Health Care

by David Gratzer, M.D.

The Top Ten Myths of American Health Care
by Sally C. Pipes

The latter two books are by Canadians intimately familiar with the Canadian single-payer system.

Evaluating Sotomayor's views on abortion and gun ownership

July 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article by Wayne Lapierre is from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> After the first day of confirmation hearings, gun owners have good reason to worry. Those of us who respect the Second Amendment are concerned about the case of Maloney v. Cuomo, which reviewed whether this freedom applies to all law-abiding Americans or only to residents of Washington. If it's incorporated, the Second Amendment prevents the states from disarming honest Americans. If it's not, the Second Amendment is meaningless outside of our nation's capital.
>
> Judge Sotomayor was on the U.S. 2nd Circuit panel that decided the Maloney case in a short, unsigned and clearly incorrect opinion. The fact that the Maloney panel misread precedent in order to avoid doing the 14th Amendment "incorporation" analysis required by the Supreme Court is troubling to say the least.
>
> Equally troubling is the fact that Judge Sotomayor said she wasn't even familiar with the Supreme Court's modern incorporation cases. There are few issues more important for a judge to understand than whether the fundamental guarantees in the Bill of Rights apply to all Americans. Our First Amendment right to free speech applies to all Americans. Our Fourth Amendment protection from illegal search and seizure applies to all Americans. It's hard to believe that a potential Supreme Court justice wouldn't be familiar with those cases.
>
> Despite that judicial amnesia, Judge Sotomayor co-authored an opinion — in January — holding that the Second Amendment does not apply to the states. So that leaves two options: Either she failed to follow the Supreme Court's direction in Heller that judges are required to analyze the modern incorporation cases or she actually did review those cases but came to an incorrect conclusion. Neither option gives gun owners much confidence in her view of the Second Amendment.

Issues, Etc. did a podcast with pro-lifer Charmaine Yoest. Sotomayor is apparently a radical pro-abortionist, as well.

Video from Fox News:

You can read more about Charmaine's challenge to Sotomayor in this Washington Post article.

Excerpt:

> Yoest is a calm, articulate, smart abortion opponent — the kind who gives abortion-rights supporters nightmares. Since virtually the moment Sotomayor's

> name surfaced as a possible Supreme Court candidate, AUL has been conducting vigorous opposition research. It has set up two Web sites, including Sotomayor411.com that compares Souter to Sotomayor on a variety of issues, including abortion, end-of-life issues and the rights of abortion demonstrators. Suffice to say that Sotomayor doesn't fare too well. And it has also has AskSotomayor.com, which lays out 10 questions that it says senators need to ask her.

I am so glad that we have someone intelligent and articulate to speak for us at Sotomayor's hearings. A lot of people are pro-life, and are not really informed about it. But Charmaine is going to go out there and make a solid case in the little time she has available!

Does the education system discriminate against boys?

July 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this article from MercatorNet, about the plight of boys stuck in the feminized public schools.

Excerpt:

> Men are now lagging women in every major category from lifestyle to health, from education to employment. For instance, on the health and lifestyle front, men are involved in twice as many fatal auto accidents as women. Good-bye to all those jokes about women drivers. Currently the US has 1.5 million men in the slammer, a 15 to 1 lead over the fairer sex. We guys are much more likely to be alcoholics and we are ahead in the obesity derby. No surprise, then, that on average women have a five-year lead in life span.
>
> For decades now, feminists have been decrying the salary deferential that men have enjoyed. Perhaps this is so for men in their 40s and 50s, but no longer for the 20-something crowd. The playing field is now level, with the advantage held by the women when it is time to tighten the corporate belt and lay-offs occur. As our recession/depression deepens, bosses are laying off young male employees at a greater rate than young women. This employment data corresponds to staggering statistics showing that across the country girls and young women are dramatically out-schooling their male counterparts. Last September 58 percent of the entering freshman class at the nation's colleges and universities was female.
>
> However, not only is there a large gap in favor of women's college attendance, but women go through college faster, with higher grades, more honors and fewer disciplinary setbacks. Currently, they are being admitted to elite graduate business and medical schools in greater numbers.

Other topics:

- men's apathy due to getting sex from women without having to prove themselves
- the lack of fathers (caused by no-fault divorce and welfare programs)
- the lack of male teachers in schools
- the lack of male role models in the feminized curriculum
- parents spending too much on video games and other distractions

This is a must-read for anyone who cares about men.

Other articles by this author

- Higher education's new sobriety
- Education change unions can believe in

- The educational reform we need most
- The change they forgot about: education

Books I am reading about education

Education Myths: What Special Interest Groups Want You to Believe About Our Schools – And Why It Isn't So
by Jay P. Greene

The Worm in the Apple: How the Teacher Unions Are Destroying American Education
by Peter Brimelow

The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism Is Harming Our Young Men
by Christina Hoff Sommers

Court knew that man jailed for failure to pay child support was not the father

July 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Atlanta Journal-Constution. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Frank Hatley has languished in a South Georgia jail for more than a year.
>
> The reason? He failed to reimburse the state for all the public assistance his "son" received over the past two decades.
>
> The problem? Hatley is not the biological father — and a special assistant state attorney general and a judge knew it but jailed Hatley anyway.
>
> Even after learning he was not the father, Hatley paid thousands of dollars the state said he owed for support. After losing his job and becoming homeless, he still made payments out of his unemployment benefits.
>
> Hatley's lawyer, Sarah Geraghty of the Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta, said two independent DNA tests — one nine years ago and one just a few days ago — prove he is not the biological father.
>
> "This is a case of excessive zeal to recover money trumping common sense," she said. "What possible legitimate reason can the state have to pursue Mr. Hatley for child support when he does not have any children?"
>
> It may be difficult for Hatley to get out from under the court order, said Atlanta family lawyer Randall Kessler, who is not associated with the case. "It's definitely unfair," Kessler said. "But at the same time, he's dealing with a valid court order."

This is yet another reason for Christian men to prefer chastity. Chastity is a higher calling for Christian men and feminism is so widespread that single men need to be very careful about discrimination, fraud and coercion by the marxist-feminist state. Men go to jail and/or commit suicide for failure to pay alimony, child support, etc. all the time. My advice: don't get involved until they fix the problem.

Why do Democrats cut the funding of missile defense programs?

July 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article from the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> President Obama, in his FY2010 defense budget, proposed a $1.2 billion cut to missile defense funding and halted development on our long-range interceptors in Alaska and California.
>
> …Rep. Trent Franks offered an amendment to restore the $1.2 billion cut from missile defense by President Obama. The Democrats argued that this cut was reasonable, but in the face of Iranian and North Korean activities, any significant cut to missile defense funding seems foolish. In the last two months, we have seen Iran test its long-range missile capabilities (under the guise of a space launch) and North Korea test a nuclear weapon and launch (unsuccessfully) a long-range Taepo-Dong II missile. The North Koreans now appear to be preparing to launch yet another Taepo-Dong II. In the face of all of these activities, the Democrat majority on the Armed Services Committee voted down the Franks amendment to restore missile defense funding by a vote of 36-26. This amendment was then voted on by the full House of Representatives and again defeated along largely party lines.
>
> There were a number of other amendments related to missile defense that we discussed, including Republican efforts to fund the European Site and the Airborne Laser, but they were all shot down by the Democrats. For the sake of our nation's security, we should be focused on shooting down enemy missiles, not on shooting down our own missile defense system. As North Korea and Iran push forward, every member of the House of Representatives has taken a stand on missile defense. Unfortunately, it seems that the position of the Democratic majority is clear: shoot down missile defense.

The Heritage Foundation post I cited is a guest post by Congressman Todd Akin of Missouri.

Joe Biden: spend more taxpayer money to keep US from bankruptcy

July 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am not making this up. (H/T IOwnTheWorld.com)

(24 seconds long)

Transcript:

> "Now, people when I say that look at me and say, 'What are you talking about, Joe? You're telling me we have to go spend money to keep from going bankrupt?'"
> "The answer is yes, that's what I'm telling you."

Elect "silver spoon" Democrats, and this is what you get.

National Debt

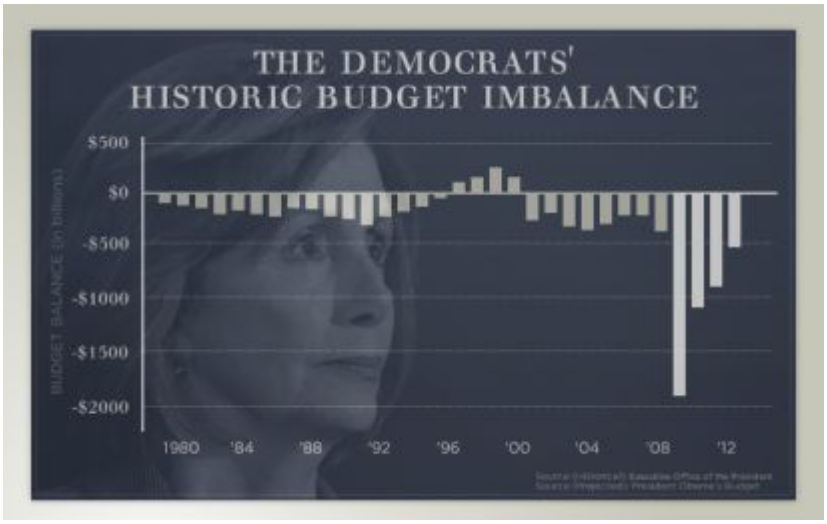

Budget Deficit

Sen. Jim Demint denounces the Democrats' new Hate Crimes amendment

July 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: NEW MUST-SEE Jim Demint video has been posted here on the the failed stimulus bills and Obamacare!

UPDATE: Welcome, visitors from the Corner (National Review)! Thanks for the link from Mark Steyn!

UPDATE: Welcome Canadian readers from Blazing Cat Fur! Guess what? The Democrats are trying to pass laws that will make us just like you!

Canadian readers, pay close attention, *the second half of the video is all about you*.

Here's the video of my favorite Senator Jim Demint: (11:44)

You can read about how Christians are persecuted in Canada here:

- **NEW!** The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

But what about the right to free speech here, in the USA?

Why did some Christians vote (indirectly) for anti-Christian policies?

There are 3 themes on the Wintery Knight blog.

1. Christians must appeal to public knowledge when defending their faith
2. Social conservatives need to become fiscal conservatives
3. Fiscal conservatives need to become social conservatives

Regarding point #2. It has come to my attention that some well-meaning Christians, who are apparently socially and theologically conservative, nevertheless voted for Obama, because they are opposed to fiscal conservatism and small government.

Specifically, they don't believe in things like:

- lowering taxes
- decreasing government or union regulations
- shrinking the size of government
- preserving the rule of law
- protecting private property
- protecting the free market and free trade
- protecting liberty and personal responsibility

Here is a breakdown of which Christian denominations voted for Obama:

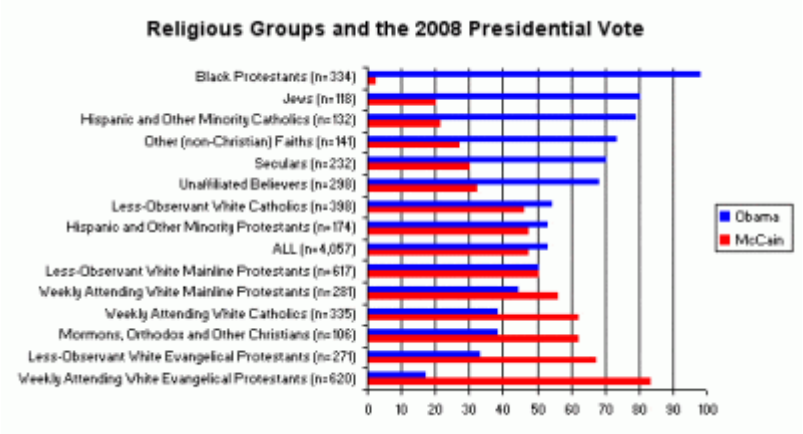

2008 voting broken by religious groups
(Click for full-sized image, courtesy of Pew Research)

For the record, I am an ethnic evangelical Protestant. You can read all about how I became a Christian and the list of arguments for and against Christian theism.

On this blog, I examine policies like cap-and-trade, socialized medicine and tariffs. I argue that these policies are bad for the poor. All it takes to understand the economics is a little bit of study. Christians need to study these issues so that they are not deceived by their emotions when it comes time to vote. Otherwise, we will not only hurt the poor, but we will also lose the freedoms we need to live our lives as Christians.

We should not be so envious of our neighbor's prosperity that we are willing to sell our religious liberty and free speech rights in order to punish their success. We should not be coveting our neighbor's goods. We should not be stealing from our neighbor, either. Instead, we should try to improve the nation's prosperity without involving the government. And we can start by working harder, saving more and spending less.

Further study

You might be interested in Jim Demint's book "Why We Whisper", which I bought but have not yet finished.

If you'd like to hear more from Jim Demint, he did a 51-minute Town Hall for the Heritage Foundation on the Sotomayor nomination.

For more about free speech in Canada, see these previous posts:

- Mark Steyn radio interview and previous Ezra Levant debate
- Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn on Milt Rosenberg's radio show
- Ezra Levant videos from the Michael Coren TV show, here.
- Evan Sayet's speeches on how progressives think

For two technical articles discussing property rights and the poor, take a look at these two articles from New Zealand philosopher Matt Flanagan.

- What About the Poor? Sustenance Rights Examined
- What About the Poor? More on Sustenance Rights

And here is an audio lecture by Jay Richards on the "**Myths Christians Believe about**

Wealth and Poverty“. His new book is called “**Money, Greed and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem**“. To understand what capitalism is, you can **watch this lecture** about the book. Here is a **series of 4 sermons** by Wayne Grudem on the relationship between Christianity and economics?.(**a PDF outline is here**)

Is universal common ancestry based on established facts?

July 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Casey Luskin wrote a wonderful article called "A Primer on the Tree of Life" that will help you to consider whether universal common ancestry is true.

Excerpt:

> Evolutionists often claim that universal common ancestry and the "tree of life" are established facts. One recent opinion article argued, "The evidence that all life, plants and animals, humans and fruit flies, evolved from a common ancestor by mutation and natural selection is beyond theory. It is a fact. Anyone who takes the time to read the evidence with an open mind will join scientists and the well-educated."[1] The take-home message is that if you doubt Darwin's tree of life, you're ignorant. No one wants to be ridiculed, so it's a lot easier to buy the rhetoric and "join scientists and the well-educated."
>
> But what is the evidence for their claim, and how much of it is based upon assumptions? The truth is that common ancestry is merely an assumption that governs interpretation of the data, not an undeniable conclusion, and whenever data contradicts expectations of common descent, evolutionists resort to a variety of different *ad hoc* rationalizations to save common descent from being falsified.

Here are two of the four evidences he looks at:

Molecular phylogenies

> …the cover story of the journal New Scientist… titled, "Why Darwin was wrong about the tree of life." …reported that "The problem was that different genes told contradictory evolutionary stories." The article observed that with the sequencing of the genes and proteins of various living organisms, the tree of life fell apart…

You get completely different molecular phylogenies depending on which gene or protein you analyze from the organism. If UCA were true, all the genes and proteins would have to give similar molecular phylogenies. Casey also addresses horizontal gene transfer.

Convergent evolution

> One data-point that might suggest common design rather than common descent is the gene "*pax-6*." *Pax-6* is one of those pesky instances where extreme genetic similarity popped up in a place totally unexpected and unpredicted by evolutionary biology. In short, scientists have discovered that organisms as diverse as jellyfish, arthropods, mollusks, and vertebrates all use *pax-6* to control development of their very distinct types of eyes. Because their eye-types are so different, it previously hadn't been thought that these organisms even shared a

> common ancestor with an eye.

Here, you have the same gene being used for the same function in different organisms that *do not share a common ancestor*.

Homologies and Morphological phylogenies

Casey goes on to look at the evidence from homologies and the disparities between molecular phylogenies and morphological phylogenies, (e.g. – Cytochrome B). Casey's article is worth looking at, especially if you have never considered the case against universal common ancestry.

Understanding American values, with Dennis Prager

July 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A refresher course for all natural-born Americans, and Americans in spirit. (5 minutes)

If you've never heard of the conflict between liberty and equality, this is a must-see. Very important.

Inequality will exist as long as liberty exists. It unavoidably results from that very liberty itself.
–Alexander Hamilton

(H/T The Chicago Bench)

Some of the challenges facing men today

July 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is just a round-up of a few issues that that will be of interest to those who would like to learn more about the challenges facing men today. These articles are all from this week.

- Narcissism in young women (Wall Street Journal)
- Domestic violence rates similar for men and women (Inside Higher Education)
- Discrimination in admissions, scholarships and government-funding (The Register)
- Man jailed for failure to pay 2.5 million dollar divorce settlement (Pittsburg Post-Gazette)
- Children recant false sex-abuse charges after father spends 20 years in prison (Fox News)
- Men losing 78% of all jobs lost during the recession (Forbes)

And from earlier posts this week:

- Paternity fraud (Atlanta Journal-Constitution)
- Discrimination in the schools (MercatorNet)

And some oldies-but-goodies:

- Man forced to pay $500 a month in child support to ex-girlfriend (USA Today)
- Duke University Lacrosse players faced baseless rape charges (Fox News)
- Wife murders sleeping husband, gets 2 months in mental hospital (RightPundits)
- Daughter and mother sue father for grounding daughter, and wins (LifeSiteNews)

And the Independent Women's Forum's introduction to Title IX, which discriminates against male athletics on the university campus.

Friday night funny: high school, lawyers, CIA, Obama, knighthood

July 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

High school then and now

ECM sent me this comparison of high school in 1959 vs. 2009.

Scenario 1:
Jack goes quail hunting before school and then pulls into the school parking lot with his shotgun in his truck's gun rack.
1959 – Vice Principal comes over, looks at Jack's shotgun, goes to his car and gets his shotgun to show Jack.
2009 – School goes into lock down, FBI called, Jack hauled off to jail and never sees his truck or gun again. Counselors called in for traumatized students and teachers.

Scenario 2:
Johnny and Mark get into a fist fight after school.
1959 – Crowd gathers. Mark wins. Johnny and Mark shake hands and end up buddies.
2009 – Police called and SWAT team arrives — they arrest both Johnny and Mark. They are both charged them with assault and both expelled even though Johnny started it.

Scenario 3:
Jeffrey will not be still in class, he disrupts other students.
1959 – Jeffrey sent to the Principal's office and given a good paddling by the Principal. He then returns to class, sits still and does not disrupt class again.
2009 – Jeffrey is given huge doses of Ritalin He becomes a zombie. He is then tested for ADD. The school gets extra money from the state because Jeffrey has a disability.

Scenario 4:
Billy breaks a window in his neighbor's car and his Dad gives him a whipping with his belt.
1959 – Billy is more careful next time, grows up normal, goes to college and becomes a successful businessman.
2009 – Billy's dad is arrested for child abuse. Billy is removed to foster care and joins a gang. The state psychologist is told by Billy's sister that she remembers being abused herself and their dad goes to prison Billy's mom has an affair with the psychologist.

Scenario 5:
Mark gets a headache and takes some aspirin to school.
1959 – Mark shares his aspirin with the Principal out on the smoking dock.
2009 – The police are called and Mark is expelled from school for drug violations.. His car is then searched for drugs and weapons.

Scenario 6:
Pedro fails high school English.
1959 – Pedro goes to summer school, passes English and goes to college.

2009 – Pedro's cause is taken up by state. Newspaper articles appear nationally explaining that teaching English as a requirement for graduation is racist. ACLU files class action lawsuit against the state school system and Pedro's English teacher. English is then banned from core curriculum. Pedro is given his diploma anyway but ends up mowing lawns for a living because he cannot speak English.

Scenario 7:
Johnny takes apart leftover firecrackers from the Fourth of July, puts them in a model airplane paint bottle and blows up a red ant bed.
1959 – Ants die.
2009 – ATF, Homeland Security and the FBI are all called. Johnny is charged with domestic terrorism. The FBI investigates his parents –and all siblings are removed from their home and all computers are confiscated. Johnny's dad is placed on a terror watch list and is never allowed to fly again.

Scenario 8:
Johnny falls while running during recess and scrapes his knee. He is found crying by his teacher, Mary. Mary hugs him to comfort him.
1959 – In a short time, Johnny feels better and goes on playing.
2009 – Mary is accused of being a sexual predator and loses her job. She faces 3 years in State Prison. Johnny undergoes 5 years of therapy.

Beware the nanny state.

A modest proposal

Ed Morrissey has a new proposal to ensure equal access to legal representation!

Excerpt:

> Ladies and gentlemen of the Hot Air community, I have discovered an unfair disparity in access to a vital resource based on the economic condition of the consumer. This disparity is not just egregious, but it threatens the very core of our American way of life. People routinely get denied adequate and competent service on the basis of their ability to pay, even though they have a right to it, while the rich eat up all the resources with their ability to access the best and brightest in the field. And in the interest of fairness, the federal government needs to find a solution and impose it on the industry as a whole.
>
> I refer, of course, to *legal representation*.

I'm sure the lawyers will love that!

CIA probe

Scott Ott writes about the new Democrat probe of the CIA's covert operations.

Excerpt:

> With Democrats in Congress already alarmed at revelations that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had a covert scheme to kill terrorist leaders like Usama Bin Laden, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is reportedly set to announce a probe

> into allegations that the CIA may have also "conspired to conduct espionage operations against America's enemies."
>
> According to a Pelosi staffer, who spoke on the condition of anonymity due to the top-secret nature of the information he revealed, the CIA has "surreptitiously conducted what amounts to international spy operations without proper notification of its espionage targets, or of the United Nations."

Obama and the booty

And here's Obama looking at a girl's butt:

Obama spies some booty!
(Note: One of my commenters below points out that he isn't actually looking at her butt)

How to be a knight

From eHow. This is basically accurate. It's all about swordsmanship and horsemanship and romance.

I am stuck on step 5.

Excerpt:

> If chivalry, loyalty and a penchant for heavy metal armour interests you, you may be well suited to being a knight. Once the domain of the noble-born, knighthood can be achieved through hard work, dedication and the benevolence of a lord.

If anyone would like to help me with step 5, I would appreciate it! Send me an e-mail. And tune in this weekend when I will be explaining what men want from women, using paintings! That's right, paintings!

Happy Friday!

HIGH SCHOOL —1959 vs. 2009
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MUST-SEE: New ad compares Obama's job-creation rhetoric then and now

July 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video is up at Hot Air. (H/T 4Simpsons)

So what is the unemployment rate now? How well is Obammunism working?

WHTR News reports:

> President Obama's $787 billion stimulus bill to revive the economy is a staggering figure. So why then is there talk in Washington about a possible second stimulus package to jolt the American economy out of recession?
>
> Economists say that only 10 percent of stimulus dollars have been spent and the president's plan has been criticized for not creating enough jobs.
>
> "You can't justify it logically. You have to justify it politically and that's what this comes down to. It's political distribution of dollars," said Matt Will, University of Indianapolis.
>
> **When the president signed the Recovery and Reinvestment Act into law in February, he said it would create new jobs. Yet unemployment now stands at almost 9.7 percent, the highest in over two decades.**

When will voters learn that there is no way to stimulate an economy by spending? The right way to stimulate an economy is by creating jobs, by passing laws to encourage businesses to expand and hire more employees. For example, we could have spent 400 billion dollars and cut the employer portion of payroll taxes, so American workers would go on sale. The Democrat porkulus bills (1 and 2) did noting to create private sector jobs.

Remember, Democrats caused this recession and Republicans tried to stop them. Why should we trust Democrats to get us out of the mess they put us into?

Science Daily: Unborn babies can learn and remember

July 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Science Daily. (H/T Verum Serum)

Excerpt:

> [I]n a new study from the Netherlands, scientists have found fetal short-term memory in fetuses at 30 weeks…
>
> Based on their research, the scientists found the presence of fetal short-term memory of 10 minutes at 30 weeks. They determined this because a significantly lower number of stimuli was needed to reach habituation in a second session, which was performed 10 minutes after the first session. They also found that 34-week-old fetuses can store information and retrieve it four weeks later.

Verum Serum comments:

> None of the articles mentions abortion, but the significance of the study to that debate is obvious. With viability and fetal pain as early as 22 weeks, this study only confirms that late term abortion is not the removal of a blob of tissue but the killing of a human being able to feel, learn and think.

How about this: let us agree not to undertake any actions for our own pleasure that may result in the death of an innocent person. There are other things we can do for fun with the opposite sex, like *talking to them, caring for them* and *helping them to grow in their knowledge of God.*

Keith Hennessey and Howard Dean debate health care reform on CNBC

July 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You need to click through to see the video. (11 minutes long)

It's a great little debate! I recommend watching it.

HINT: Somebody won, and somebody lost. And it's obvious.

About Keith Hennessey

Keith Hennessey is the former Assistant to the U.S. President for Economic Policy and Director of the U.S. National Economic Council. He was appointed to the position in November 2007 by President George W. Bush, and served until the end of Bush's second term in office. Mr. Hennessey served in the White House since August 2002, when he was appointed to his previous position of *Deputy* Assistant to the U.S. President for Economic Policy and *Deputy* Director of the U.S. National Economic Council.

Hennessey holds a B.S. in Mathematics and Political Science from Stanford University as well as a Master of Public Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. The title of his Harvard public policy thesis was *Unintended Consequences: Critical Assumptions in the Clinton Health Plan*.

About Howard Dean

Yeaarrrrrrghhh! He makes Al Franken look like an even-tempered centrist.

Government of Canada moves to monitor Internet users

July 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Western Standard.

Excerpt:

> In the spring, the Government of Canada introduced two pieces of legislation that would greatly expand the power of the state to monitor its citizens online activity. The legislation, known as the Investigative Powers for the 21st Century (IP21C) Act, would force Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to install costly surveillance systems on their networks and give police wide ranging new powers that do away with judicial oversight.
>
> …First, ISPs will be required to install costly surveillance equipment on their networks. …Second, the legislation would require that all ISPs give personal information to the government, including the names of their customers, as well as their IP, e-mail, and mailing addresses—on demand and without any judicial oversight.
>
> Police will also gain expanded powers under this legislation. First, they will be able to obtain information about Internet-based messaging, including tracking what sites people are visiting and who they are communicating with. This information will be subject to a judicial order. Second, police will be able to order ISPs to preserve data on their customers. Third, police will be able to obtain a warrant to remotely activate tracking devices in technologies such as cellular telephones.

Surprising, because the Conservatives are in power in Canada.

Understanding how concealed carry laws save lives

July 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Richmond Times-Dispatch has this story. (H/T John Lott)

Excerpt:

> A gunman who had wounded a shopkeeper and opened fire on several customers was stopped yesterday when another man shot him at the store in South Richmond, authorities said.
>
> …The man who shot the robber is a friend of the store owner, and he was wearing a holster with a Western-style revolver, said Managing Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Tracy Thorne-Begland.
>
> After the suspect shot the store owner and opened fire on patrons, the owner's friend shot the suspect once in the torso, took his gun and called police, Thorne-Begland said.

How many times are legally-owned firearms used to prevent crimes, as occurred in this story?

Consider this interview with Florida State University criminology professor Gary Kleck.

Excerpt:

> "In 2006, about 11,600 homicides were committed by criminals armed with guns, claiming 68 percent of all homicides," he says. Based on data from the National Criminal Victimization Survey (NCVS), as many as 500,000 violent crimes were committed in the United States in 2006 by offenders armed with guns, and around 26 percent of robberies and 7 percent of assaults were committed by gun-armed offenders.
>
> These facts have led many people to conclude that America's high rate of gun ownership must be at least partially responsible for the nation's high rates of violence, or at least its high homicide rate, says Kleck, adding that this belief in a causal effect of gun levels on violent crime rates has, in turn, led many to conclude that limiting the availability of guns would substantially reduce violent crime, especially the murder rate.
>
> "What's not so widely known, though, is that large numbers of crime victims in America also use guns in the course of crimes (but) in self-defense," says Kleck.
>
> **Based on 16 national surveys of samples of the U.S. population, he continues, the evidence indicates that guns are used by victims in self-protection more often than crimes are committed by offenders using guns. Victims used guns defensively two to two-and-a-half million times in 1993, for example, compared to about 850,000 crimes in which offenders possessed guns.**

Maybe guns are not as scary as we had been led to believe!

New Scientist: the force of gravity is fine-tuned to permit life

July 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article from the New Scientist is here. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe's birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

I know you guys look at my big list of objective evidence for Christianity, and you think "Wintery! Those evidences are not admitted by the majority of scientists!" I keep trying to tell you – my goal is to give you arguments and evidence that will work in the public square. These are mainstream evidences accepted by most or all non-Christian scientists as fact, and they used in public academic debates.

When I tell you about evidences from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, etc., I am telling you evidence that should compel *anyone* to deny atheism, so long as they are not irrational and emotional. These are not Christian tricks. They do not address felt needs. They are not there to help you to be happy. They are not optional, depending on how you feel about them.

But there is another way to recommend Christianity to people, which is not rationally compelling, but instead relies on intuitions and experiences.

A different approach to apologetics

Some people offer Christian doctrines to others as a way of interpreting the human condition, etc. And it's true that the Bible gives you an accurate description of your own inner life, and your rebellious attitude towards God. So these well-meaning Christians try

to “persuade” non-Christians to consider whether the words of the Bible “ring true” with their intuitions and experiences.

Consider this quote from G.K. Chesterton’s “Orthodoxy”:

> And now we come to the crucial question which truly concludes the whole matter. A reasonable agnostic, if he has happened to agree with me so far, may justly turn round and say, “You have found a practical philosophy in the doctrine of the Fall; very well…. If you see clearly the kernel of common-sense in the nut of Christian orthodoxy,why cannot you simply take the kernel and leave the nut? Why cannot you (to use that cant phrase of the newspapers which I, as a highly scholarly agnostic, am a little ashamed of using) why cannot you simply take what is good in Christianity, what you can define as valuable, what you can comprehend, and leave all the rest, all the absolute dogmas that are in their nature incomprehensible?” This is the real question; this is the last question; and it is a pleasure to try to answer it.
>
> The first answer is simply to say that I am a rationalist. I like to have some intellectual justification for my intuitions. If I am treating man as a fallen being it is an intellectual convenience to me to believe that he fell; and I find, for some odd psychological reason, that I can deal better with a man’s exercise of freewill if I believe that he has got it. But I am in this matter yet more definitely a rationalist. I do not propose to turn this book into one of ordinary Christian apologetics; I should be glad to meet at any other time the enemies of Christianity in that more obvious arena. Here I am only giving an account of my own growth in spiritual certainty. But I may pause to remark that the more I saw of the merely abstract arguments against the Christian cosmology the less I thought of them. I mean that having found the moral atmosphere of the Incarnation to be common sense, I then looked at the established intellectual arguments against the Incarnation and found them to be common nonsense. In case the argument should be thought to suffer from the absence of the ordinary apologetic I will here very briefly summarise my own arguments and conclusions on the purely objective or scientific truth of the matter.
>
> If I am asked, as a purely intellectual question, why I believe in Christianity, I can only answer, “For the same reason that an intelligent agnostic disbelieves in Christianity.” I believe in it quite rationally upon the evidence. But the evidence in my case, as in that of the intelligent agnostic, is not really in this or that alleged demonstration; it is in an enormous accumulation of small but unanimous facts. The secularist is not to be blamed because his objections to Christianity are miscellaneous and even scrappy; it is precisely such scrappy evidence that does convince the mind. I mean that a man may well be less convinced of a philosophy from four books, than from one book, one battle, one landscape, and one old friend. The very fact that the things are of different kinds increases the importance of the fact that they all point to one conclusion. Now, the non-

> Christianity of the average educated man to-day is almost always, to do him justice, made up of these loose but living experiences. I can only say that my evidences for Christianity are of the same vivid but varied kind as his evidences against it. For when I look at these various anti-Christian truths, I simply discover that none of them are true. I discover that the true tide and force of all the facts flows the other way.

The problem with Chesterton's view is that it is not *rationally compelling*. It is apprehended in a subjective way, depending on whether the person likes it or not. This pragmatic approach is popular today because people want to have their felt needs met. But this approach doesn't allow you to *demonstrate* the truth of Christianity in the public square, using objective evidence, as Chesterton admits.

This rejection of objective apologetics has marginalized Christianity as subjective. I think we need to emphasize hard evidence. We need to have studied science, analytical philosophy, New Testament and history. We need to offer evidence that is objective, not subjective, like the fine-tuning of the gravitational force, so that our opponents are clear that Christianity is objectively true.

I think that Chesterton is a bad example for Christians to follow. In the Bible, I see Jesus constantly providing physical evidence for this claims by employing miracles. We can do something similar to Jesus today, by leveraging past miracles, such as the fine-tuning of the gravitational force, in our public debates. We don't need to invent new ways of evangelizing based on intuitions and experiences.

Further study

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church
- why won't Christians defend their faith in public?

You can read more about the fine-tuning of the gravitational force from Robin Collins, who is the best we have on the topic. Collins started a Ph.D in Physics at the University of Texas at Austin, but ended up completing a Ph.D in philosophy at Notre Dame, under Alvin Plantinga, the greatest living philosopher today, in my opinion. I heard Collins speak at the Baylor ID conference in 2000.

Here is a textbook on physics and philosophy for high-schoolers written by David Snoke, a professor of Physics at University of Pittsburgh. He homeschools his own 4 children with this very book. The book contains Bible study and philosophy sections.

What did Reagan do when he inherited a recession?

July 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ronald Reagan

Here is a piece from Bloomberg from Amity Shlaes. (H/T The Western Experience)

Excerpt:

> Double-digit unemployment looms. The country is in a funk. The federal budget deficit is widening to an extent not seen in decades.
>
> This scenario isn't new. It also describes the U.S. in 1982. Somehow, the 1980s and the 1990s turned out to be pretty good years. So it's worthwhile to compare current policy to the one followed then.
>
> …Today, taxes are on their way up. Whether it will be abolishing some of the tax deductibility of health care or increasing taxes on soda, President Barack Obama and Congress are clearly signaling the direction in which they want to move. Most tax increases under discussion would make the rich, or companies, the first to pay. The justification offered for this is that the federal government needs the money and may know how to spend it better than the private sector, anyhow.
>
> …In the early 1980s, the view on taxes was the opposite: get them down. The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, enacted by Ronald Reagan, pushed tax rates down for wealthy and non-wealthy alike. The capital gains tax rate dropped to 20 percent. When Reagan signed the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the top marginal rate on income taxes fell to 28 percent.

Is Obama right? Or was Reagan right?

The coming tax increases

The Wall Street Journal reports on some of the new taxes Obama wants to impose.

> The [health care] bill's main financing comes from another tax increase on top of the increase already scheduled for 2011 under Mr. Obama's budget. The surtax starts at one percentage point for adjusted gross income above $350,000 in

> 2011, rising to two points in 2013; a 1.5 point surtax at incomes above $500,000, rising to three in 2013; and a whopping 5.4 percentage points in 2011 and beyond on incomes above $1 million.

And what happens when you tax the rich?

> House Democrats… claim that this surtax would raise $544 billion in new revenue over 10 years. America's millionaires aren't that stupid; far fewer of them will pay these rates for very long, if at all. They will find ways to shelter income, either by investing differently or simply working less. Small businesses that pay at the individual rate will shift to pay the 35% corporate rate. When the revenue doesn't materialize, Democrats will move to soak the middle class with a European-style value-added tax.

It should be noted that a value-added sales tax disproportionately hurts the poor.

In Iran, convicted virgins are raped by prison guards prior to being executed

July 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Jerusalem Post via Mark Steyn at the Corner. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

He said he had been a highly regarded member of the force, and had so "impressed my superiors" that, at 18, "I was given the 'honor' to temporarily marry young girls before they were sentenced to death."

In the Islamic Republic it is illegal to execute a young woman, regardless of her crime, if she is a virgin, he explained. Therefore a "wedding" ceremony is conducted the night before the execution: The young girl is forced to have sexual intercourse with a prison guard – essentially raped by her "husband."

"I regret that, even though the marriages were legal," he said.

Why the regret, if the marriages were "legal?"

"Because," he went on, "I could tell that the girls were more afraid of their 'wedding' night than of the execution that awaited them in the morning. And they would always fight back, so we would have to put sleeping pills in their food. By morning the girls would have an empty expression; it seemed like they were ready or wanted to die.

This is the kind of story that makes me cry.

We could have been using our tremendous resources to support the Iranian pro-democracy movement, instead of piling up more and more entitlements for ourselves at home.

Michele Bachmann explains the impact of health care mandates on small businesses

July 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele Bachmann explains what would happen if small businesses were forced to provide health care for their employees.

There are really too many companies – some of the small ones should just go out of business. People don't really need a choice of employers, do they? Wouldn't it be much better if everyone were taken care of by the government? Then we would all be equal, just like the socialists want! Free labor markets and right-to-work laws are so nasty, because people are paid different salaries. It's not fair!

Gateway Pundit linked to a video of John Kyl, who explains the problems with Obamacare.

The Republican plan:

> "Republicans have put forward common-sense ideas, including rooting out Medicare and Medicaid fraud, reforming medical liability laws to discourage frivolous lawsuits, strengthening wellness and prevention programs that encourage healthy living, and allowing small businesses to band together and purchase health insurance like large corporations do.
>
> "These changes do not require government takeover of the healthcare system, or massive new spending, job-killing taxes, or rationing of care.

The Democrat plan:

> "Democrats in Congress have a different approach. Their plan would increase spending by more than two trillion dollars when fully implemented, and would, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, "'add additional costs onto an already unsustainable system.'
>
> "It would empower Washington, not doctors and patients, to make health care decisions and would impose a new tax on working families during a recession. A study by the respected Lewin Group shows it would also move millions of people who are happy with their current insurance to a new government plan.
>
> "They propose to pay for this new Washington-run health care system by dramatically raising taxes on small business owners. Small businesses create jobs — approximately two-thirds of new jobs in the last decade.
>
> "With a shaky economy and the need for new jobs, the last thing the President and the Congress should do is impose new taxes on America's small businesses. New taxes on small business would cripple job creation, especially jobs for low-wage earners.

Don't forget about my post from last week with all the wonderful podcasts. I listened to them all again, taking notes, and re-organized them with headings for you. They are

awesome! Plus I read some more of the Regina Hertzlinger book. A lot of people came by to ask me about it while I was reading it, including the waitress! She could barely speak English, but I tried to explain it to her anyway.

Obama's appointee supports regulating free speech on the Internet

July 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article by Kyle Smith. (H/T Jihad Watch)

Excerpt:

> When it comes to the First Amendment, Team Obama believes in Global Chilling.
>
> Cass Sunstein, a Harvard Law professor who has been appointed to a shadowy post that will grant him powers that are merely mind-boggling, explicitly supports using the courts to impose a "chilling effect" on speech that might hurt someone's feelings. He thinks that the bloggers have been rampaging out of control and that new laws need to be written to corral them.
>
> …Sunstein is President Obama's choice to head the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

Cass Sunstein's new book explains how he would like to regulate free speech.

> Sunstein questions the current libel standard – which requires proving "actual malice" against those who write about public figures, including celebrities. Mere "negligence" isn't libelous, but Sunstein wonders, "Is it so important to provide breathing space for damaging falsehoods about entertainers?"

Recall my previous post about the Democrat bill that would criminalize blogging.

Excerpt:

> Under a recently-introduced bill, H.R. 1966, bloggers would face up to two years in prison if they "harass" public figures by criticizing them in a "severe, repeated, and hostile" manner, and thereby cause them "substantial emotional distress."

This makes me think also about my previous post about the Democrat Speaker of the House in California who said that dissenting speech is terrorism.

The Road to Serfdom

The greatest economics book of the 20th century was F.A. Hayek's "The Road to Serfdom", which is analyzes the history of socialism and fascism in Nazi Germany and Russia. This book is #1 on Human Events' Top 10 books every Republican should read.

Human Events writes:

> Friedrich Hayek (1899-1992) was an Austrian economist awarded the Nobel Prize in 1974. He defended capitalism and individual liberty against collectivism. In "The Road to Serfdom," he describes how government planning of the economy leads to tyranny. President Reagan cited Hayek as one of his favorite economists. "To decentralize power is to reduce the absolute amount of power, and the

> competitive system is the only system designed to minimize the power exercised by man over man," wrote Hayek. "Who can seriously doubt that the power which a millionaire, who may be my employer, has over me is very much less than that which the smallest bureaucrat possesses who wields the coercive power of the state and on whose discretion it depends how I am allowed to live and work?"

I have a friend who is a Democrat, and every time I run these steps toward fascism by him, he never objects to them. There is a powerful impulse on the left towards controlling people's choices to reproduce, earn, spend and work. Democrats believe that they are enlightened, so enslaving others is permissible for them. People today are willing to trade their liberty for a government handout, such as socialized health care.

Sean Hannity says Michele Bachmann is second most hated Republican woman

July 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele Bachmann tries valiantly to get back some TARP money for the taxpayers.

She seems to become even more beautiful as time passes!

More Michele Bachmann here.

Why fiscal conservatives should support marriage and family

July 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation has a post up about the social costs of the decline of marriage and family fore adults, children and society.

> …nearly four of every ten babies is born out of wedlock and only half of all teenagers live in intact families. Cause for alarm is also found in a bevy of academic studies revealing the impact of the dissolution of the nuclear family on the life prospects and well-being of adults and their children. Research has clearly shown the physical, emotional, and fiscal benefits that married couples experience, as well as the devastating impact that the decline of the intact family has for the next generation. Compared with peers living with both biological parents, children and youth in other family structures fare worse in terms of academic achievement, mental and emotional health, and problem behavior. A father's presence and involvement can make a lasting difference in a child's prospects for life.
>
> A married father is more likely to be involved with his children…while unmarried fathers are "soon out the door" when the demands of family life inevitably occur.

And then there is this troubling observation about the way the next generation destroys their ability to succeed in marriage, even though they would like to marry!

> Surveys have indicated that American adolescents' attitudes toward marriage tend to be hopeful (76 percent said that the institution of marriage and family life are "extremely important" and 81 percent said that they expected to marry), but trends in their favorable attitudes toward cohabitation and premarital sexual activity belie that hope. Research indicates that cohabiting couples are more likely to experience divorce in a subsequent marriage and premarital sex is likewise related to an increased likelihood of divorce.

When families break down, government must increase in order to deal with the fallout of divorce and of broken homes. That can mean more government control, more expensive social programs, more courts, more regulation, more police, etc. That is why fiscal conservatives need to stand up for social conservatism – and that means strong families raising well-adjusted children.

Marriage is a job. Certain skills and character traits are needed in order to succeed. The character traits have to be developed by studying in order to form a worldview that makes marriage rational. The worldview should rationally ground 1) moral obligations, and 2) self-sacrificial love. The rational grounding should not be based on self-interest- because marriage is tough.

People also need to study how marriage and parenting works. They need to study the effects of behaviors like pre-marital sex and co-habitation on their ability to have a successful marriage. They need to study the effects of focusing too much on education and career on parenting. The need to assess whether certain ideas (e.g. – feminism or promiscuity) help or hurt their ability to marry and raise children.

The vast majority of young people today have formed opinions and performed actions that make them incapable of commitment and parenting. If people really wanted marriage and children, they should have studied and acted differently. Attitudes can only change as people study these issues and understand the consequences of their decisions, before they make them.

When I think of a leftist, I think of someone who jettisons the wisdom of centuries of civilization, based on their emotions. These people are perpetually surprised by the consequences of their actions and public policies. They have no idea why moral rules are in place, and what consequences follow from disregarding these moral rules. They do not understand, they oversimplify, then they are surprised by failure.

MUST-SEE: Sen. Jim Demint demolishes Obama's socialist health care plan

July 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is more must-see than any other must-see I have ever recommended. (H/T Hot Air, Stop the ACLU)

Excerpt: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> "**The last time the President made grand promises and demanded passage of a bill before it could be reviewed, we ended up with the colossal stimulus failure and unemployment near 10 percent**," said Senator DeMint.
>
> "Now the President wants Americans to trust him again, but **he can't back up the utopian promises he's making about a government takeover of health care.** He insists his health care plan won't add to our nation's deficit despite the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office saying exactly the opposite. And today we learn that the President is refusing to release a critical report on the state of our economy, which contains facts essential to this debate. **What is he hiding?**
>
> "If the actual legislation came close to matching the President's rhetoric, he would have no problem passing this bill with huge Democrat majorities in both chambers. But Americans aren't being fooled and are discovering the truth about his plan which includes rationed care, trillions in new costs, high taxes and penalties that will destroy jobs, and even government-funded abortions.
>
> "Let's be clear, **there is no one in this debate advocating that we do nothing despite the President's constant straw man arguments**. Republicans have offered comprehensive health care reform solutions that cover millions of the uninsured without exploding costs, raising taxes, or rationing care. We can give every American access to a health plan they can own, afford and keep *without a government takeover*."

THIS IS A PERFECT SPEECH.

Even better than his denunciation of the hate crime bill.

It's as good as Michele Bachmann's Gangster-Government speech!

So I guess it's Michele Bachmann and Jim Demint in 2012, then! Right? Bobby Jindal can be Secretary of Health & Human Services, Sarah Palin can be Secretary of Energy, Paul Ryan can be Secretary of Commerce and John Bolton can be Secretary of State. And Edith Hollan Jones and Janice Rogers Brown go on the Supreme Court! Oh, that makes me so happy!

Health care quality will suffer

Meanwhile, the Mayo Clinic, one of the most prestigious health care providers in the world, is disgusted with Obama's health care plan. (H/T Hot Air, American Spectator via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Although there are some positive provisions in the current House Tri-Committee bill – including insurance for all and payment reform demonstration projects – the proposed legislation misses the opportunity to help create higher-quality, more affordable health care for patients. **In fact, it will do the opposite.**
>
> In general, the proposals under discussion are not patient focused or results oriented. Lawmakers have failed to use a fundamental lever – a change in Medicare payment policy – to help drive necessary improvements in American health care. Unless legislators create payment systems that pay for good patient results at reasonable costs, the promise of transformation in American health care will wither. The real losers will be the citizens of the United States.

Obama is interested in controlling as much of the economy as possible – he is not interested in providing good services and prosperity for you!

Further study

You can learn more about the Republican health care plan with short 5-minute podcasts by brilliant policy analysts like Regina Hertzlinger, Sally Pipes and Rep. Paul Ryan. Not to mention Michael Tanner and Michael Cannon of the Cato Institute. There is an alternative way to lower health care costs while preserving individual choice and liberty: *consumer-driven health care*. Health care videos are here.

New Lewin study: 83 Million would lose private health coverage under Obamacare

July 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the American Spectator. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Democrats and President Obama have denied that the creation of a new government-run health care plan would be a Trojan Horse for single-payer health care, but a new report by the Lewin Group (comissioned by the Heritage Foundation) finds that the House Democrats' health care bill would shift more 83.4 million Americans from private health care coverage to the government plan. To put that in perspective, that would mean that nearly half (48.4 percent) would lose their private health coverage. In all, the government plan would have 103.4 million members once implemented, according to the Lewin analysis. President Obama has repeated the mantra that anybody who likes their health insurance plan can keep it, but in reality about 63 percent of covered Americans get their health care through their employers, and if employers decide to drop their current health plans in favor of the government plan, workers won't have any choice but to sign up.
>
> The reason for the dramatic shift is that the Lewin Group has anticipated that with government setting lower reimbursement rates for doctors, hospitals and other health care providers, the government plan will offer lower premiums than private plans. However, the flip side is that the Congressional Budget Office estimates providers will lose $361.9 billion in revenue over the next decade if the House bill is passed. That will mean lower quality of care, shortages in doctors and hospitals, and/or increased shifting of costs on to those with private health care. Should further cost-shifting occur, it will then in turn erode private health care coverage even more dramatically.

He's a socialist. He wanted single-payer health care. He wants to control whether you can buy medical services. He wants to confiscate your earned income that you want to use to pay for your prostate cancer treatment, and he wants to spend it on someone else's elective abortion. Understand?

What I'm reading and listening to these days

July 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guess what?

The Wintery Knight Blog got listed on a prestigious list of apologetics sites compiled by the Internet-King of apologetics, Brian Auten, who runs Apologetics 315. Go pay him a visit and bookmark his site!

By the way, if you are a regular reader, please take a moment to tell your friends about the blog! If you like the blog, chances are that your friends will like it, too! I don't advertise, so you are my only hope of getting any new readers!

Well, in honor of Brian's list, I thought that I would write a post explaining what resources I am working through right now!

Books

Right now, I am reading the following books:

- Lunches at work: Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse "*Love and Economics:It Takes a Family to Raise a Village*" (*autographed!*)
- Lunches not at work: Dr. Regina Hertzlinger "*Who Killed Health Care?: America's $2 Trillion Medical Problem – and the Consumer-Driven Cure*"
- At home in bed: Theodore Dalrymple, M.D. "*Life at the Bottom: The Worldview That Makes the Underclass*"

And I just received books from two of my favorite ID theorists:

- Dr. Stephen C. Meyer "*Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*"
- Dr. Jay W. Richards "*Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem*"

Lectures

I got Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse's 3-CD set "Smart Sex" in the mail, and I've been listening to that. It's awesome! You can get it from the Ruth Institute. If you want a sample of her thinking, listen to this 29-minute clip about the effects of same-sex marriage on children.

I also like learning apologetics by listening so today, I ordered an apologetics lecture set from It's a New Day. This is a perfect set for beginners, as the conference was held in a churches! So, if you go to church, this is for you! Try to make your church buy one! I would recommend burning a backup copy for the church library and saving the originals.

Here are the 32 lectures on CD in the set, grouped by topic:

Historical Jesus
Daniel B. Wallace – Is What We Have Now What They Wrote Then?
Paul Rhodes Eddy – The Criteria of Authenticity

Craig Evans – Fabricating Jesus
Lee Strobel – The Case For the Real Jesus
Ben Witherington, III – Knowing the History of Jesus
Gary Habermas – The Resurrection of Jesus: Knowable History

Postmodernism:
Sean McDowell – Truth or Tragedy
Brett Kunkle – Moral Truth: True for You, but Not for Me?
R. Scott Smith – The Emerging Church: The Promise and the Perils
James Stump – Deconstructing Postmodernism: Truth, Rationality, and the Gospel

Science:
Sean McDowell – The Case for a Creator
Steve Davis – The Cosmological Argument for the Existence of God
James Sinclair – Science and the Cosmos: Prospects for the Cosmological and Teleological Arguments
John A. Bloom – Darwin & Design

Apologetics Advocacy:
Craig Hazen – To Everyone An Answer
Glenn Scorgie – Smash-mouth Apologetics vs. Grace-filled Persuasion

The New Atheism:
Chad Meister – Answering the New Atheism
William Lane Craig – The Dawkins Illusion

Philosophy of Religion:
J.P. Moreland – Argument from Consciousness
Michael Murray – Is Belief in God Hard-Wired in the Brain?
R. Douglas Geivett – Wrestling With the Problem of Suffering
Michael Rea – Why Doesn't God Show Himself?
David P. Hunt – What Does God Know? The Problems of Open Theism
Charles Taliferro – The Coherence of Theism

Philosophical Theology:
Steve Porter – Did Jesus Have to Die? Defending the Christian Doctrine of Atonement
Paul Copan – The Incarnation of Christ in Philosophical Perspective
Garry DeWeese – Making Sense of the Trinity
Brett Kunkle – Is One Way the Only Way?
Paul Copan – Why I Believe in Hell: A Philosopher's Reasoning

Cults and World Religions:
Kevin A. Lewis – Cults and Crimes: The Limits of the First Amendment
Josh Lingel – Standing Up To Islam

Questions and Answers:
Sean McDowell & Brett Kunkle – Ask Your Toughest Questions

The set was $159. Pretty soon Obama will be confiscating that money for elective abortions paid for by Obamacare, so I thought I'd better splurge now! If this sounds like a

lot of money to spend on apologetics, you should pick up the book “Passionate Conviction”, which is based on an earlier conference. This is my favorite apologetics book to give to beginners! Or cut out cable for 3 months! I don’t even have a TV!

Lee Strobel – The Case For the Real JesusJ.P. Moreland – Argument from Consciousness
Paul Rhodes Eddy – The Criteria of Authenticity

Michael Murray – Is Belief in God Hard-Wired in the Brain?

R. Scott Smith – The Emerging Church: The Promise and the Perils

Sean McDowell – Truth or Tragedy

James Sinclair – Science and the Cosmos: Prospects for the Cosmological and Teleological Arguments

Ben Witherington, III – Knowing the History of Jesus

Craig Evans – Fabricating Jesus

Chad Meister – Answering the New Atheism

Steve Davis – The Cosmological Argument for the Existence of God

Glenn Scorgie – Smash-mouth Apologetics vs. Grace-filled Persuasion

Brett Kunkle – Moral Truth: True for You, but Not for Me?

Craig Hazen – To Everyone An Answer

William Lane Craig – The Dawkins Illusion

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Charles Taliferro – The Coherence of Theism

Paul Copan – The Incarnation of Christ in Philosophical Perspective

Garry DeWeese – Making Sense of the Trinity

Michael Rea – Why Doesn’t God Show Himself?

David P. Hunt – What Does God Know? The Problems of Open Theism

James Stump – Deconstructing Postmodernism: Truth, Rationality, and the Gospel

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Obama’s health care plan will provide coverage for illegal immigrants

July 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from NewsMax. (H/T doubleplusundead via ECM) Warning: Vulgar Language!

Republicans tried to stop it, but…

Excerpt:

> On Friday, Democrats moved one step closer to giving free health insurance to the nation’s estimated 12 million illegal aliens when they successfully defeated a Republican-backed amendment, offered by Rep. Dean Heller, R-Nev., that would have prevented illegal aliens from receiving government-subsidized health care under the proposed plan backed by House Democrats and President Barack Obama.

Click through to the doubleplusundead post to see what Democrat Senator Bob Menendez said at a La Raza health care conference.

This is exactly the kind of thing that causes Americans to oppose legal immigration. If people who come here had to pay their own way and stay out of legal trouble, then we could open the doors wide and naturalize them after 5 years of clean, productive, self-sufficient living. But the Democrats are looking for people who are *not self-sufficient.* They want the votes of people who can’t make their own way. And they want *you* to pay for it!

How environmentalist extremism hurts the poorest developing countries

July 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wrote before about how environmentalists banned DDT in Africa, causing 25-50 million innocent deaths. And I also profiled the murderous views of leading environmentalists, including the radical views of Obama's pick for Science Czar. The real goal of the secular-left is to equalize life outcomes by controlling the economy, and they don't care how many poor people have to die in order to get control.

Consider this video from the Competitive Enterprise Institute about Ecuador.

It isn't businesses that hurt the poorest of the poor in these developing countries, it's eco-socialists who want to restrict development.

And now let's take a look at an article that provides more detail.

Understanding Eco-Imperialism

Consider this article by policy analysts Willie Soon and Paul Driessen, in which they argue that environmental extremism hurts developing nations by forcing them to remain in poverty.

Excerpt:

> Eco-colonialism keeps Africans "traditional" and "indigenous," by insisting that modern technologies are harmful and not "sustainable" in Africa.
>
> Abundant, reliable, affordable electricity could power homes, offices, factories, schools and hospitals, create jobs, bring clean running water, and generate health and prosperity. But Rainforest Action Network and other pressure groups oppose coal and natural gas electricity generation on the grounds of climate change, and hydroelectric and nuclear power for other ideological reasons. They promote wind turbines and solar panels that provide electricity unreliably and in amounts too small to meet any but the most rudimentary needs.
>
> Biotechnology could produce bumper crops that overcome droughts, floods, insects, viruses, and even global warming and cooling. But Greenpeace and Sierra Club oppose this precision hybrid-making technology, and instead promote land and labor-intensive subsistence farming.

> DDT and insecticides could slash malaria rates that Al Gore and other climate alarmists falsely claim are rising because of global warming. But Pesticide Action Network and other activists stridently oppose their use, and the European Parliament recently imposed new pesticide restrictions that will further restrict African access to life-saving chemicals.

This is important, because a lot of well-meaning, uninformed Christians are taken in by environmentalist rhetoric about saving the planet. We need to *do good* not just *feel good*

while actually doing harm.

First black female billionaire endorses Republican for VA Governor!

July 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Corner. (H/T ECM)

Republican gubernatorial candidate Bob McDonnell has been endorsed by Sheila Crump Johnson, co-founder of Black Entertainment Television.

Excerpt:

> Speaking about the endorsement, Johnson said, "Make no mistake, these are tough economic times for all Virginians. Unemployment is on the rise and families are struggling to stay in their homes. We need bold and innovative leadership to move our state forward and that's why I've chosen to support Bob McDonnell for Governor. He has shown me that he has the right vision and the executive leadership skills that will guide Virginia through these challenging times. He understands that we have to help businesses in our state – both big and small – thrive so that we put Virginians back to work. I'm proud to endorse Bob McDonnell to be our next governor."

Oh, my goodness:

> Sheila Crump Johnson is the first African-American female billionaire. **Her history of previous political donations is almost exclusively to Democrats.**

Speaking as a colored conservative, let me just say this: more, please!

John Stossel annihilates Michael Moore in ABCNews health care debate

July 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome, readers from Pundit and Pundette! Thanks for the link!

Note: If you prefer to learn about socialized vs consumer-driven health care with podcasts, click here.

ABCNews features libertarian John Stossel explaining what's wrong with socialized medicine!

Here's part 4, which contains the showdown with Michael Moore.

Here is the entire show in 6 parts:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4
- Part 5
- Part 6

Voters laugh when Democrat claims that socialized medicine will save money. (H/T Michelle Malkin, Hot Air)

Meanwhile, Pundit and Pundette wonder why the elderly voted for Obama, especially in view of Obama's latest slip.

UPDATE: ECM e-mails more John Stossel.

- Light bulbs: CFLs vs. incandescents
- Electronic Medical Records

20 questions you won't hear at Obama's press conference tonight

July 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Keith Hennessey. He groups the questions into 4 categories, so I'll excerpt one from each category below. The press conference is scheduled for Wednesday at 8 PM Eastern time.

Economy:

> You proposed spending money from the TARP to prevent foreclosures, help small businesses, and to buy toxic assets from banks. In June CBO said they had found no evidence that any money has been spent for any of these programs. How many foreclosures have been prevented, how many small businesses have received loans from, and how many toxic assets have been purchased?

Health care:

> Your Administration has said that health care reform is the key to addressing our long-term budget problem. Yet you have adopted a lower standard, that health care reform legislation simply does not make our deficit problems worse. If health care reform leaves the unsustainable budget situation unchanged, and since CBO says your budget would result in nine trillion dollars of new debt over the next decade, then how else do you propose to deal with the projected explosion of government debt over the long run?

Global Warming:

> Does it make sense for the U.S. to impose higher energy costs on American workers and manufacturers if the two largest developing economies [India and China] are unwilling to slow their emissions growth? Won't that just disadvantage American workers with little reduction in future global temperatures?

Trade:

> The top Democrat and Republican on the Senate Finance Committee have called for you to submit to Congress for their approval the signed Free Trade Agreements with U.S. allies Colombia, Panama and South Korea. Why have you not submitted them to Congress? When will you do so?

These questions really expose how things have gone awry with the Obama presidency.

Round-up of articles from Townhall.com

July 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Three editorials sent to me by my friend Andrew.

First, Dennis Prager explains the real goals of the left. (Also H/T Muddling Toward Maturity)

Excerpt:

> Principle One: The left, as distinct from traditional liberals, is not, and has never been, interested in creating wealth….
>
> Principle Two: The reason the left asks why there is poverty instead of why there is wealth is that the left's preoccupying ideal is equality — not economic growth….
>
> Principle Three: The left everywhere seeks to make as big and powerful a state as possible….
>
> Principle Four: The left imposes its values on others whenever possible and to the extent possible.

Second, Phyllis Schlafly explains why family courts are unfair to men.

Excerpt:

> Did you know that a family court can order a man to reimburse the government for the welfare money, falsely labeled "child support," that was paid to the mother of a child to whom he is not related? Did you know that, if he doesn't pay, a judge can sentence him to debtor's prison without ever letting him have a jury trial?
>
> Did you know that debtor's prisons (putting men in prison because they can't pay a debt) were abolished in the United States before we abolished slavery, but that they exist today to punish men who are too poor to pay what is falsely called "child support"?
>
> …Did you know that alleged "child support" has nothing to do with supporting a child because the mother has no obligation to spend even one dollar of it on a child, and in many cases none of the "support" money ever gets to a child because it goes to fatten the payroll of the child-support bureaucracy?

Finally, Rebecca Hagelin explains how to teach children about morality.

Excerpt:

> Many overwhelmed parents institute a bunch of rules and routines to help get through each day. But don't mistake having a list of "dos" and "don'ts" for parenting – it's more like policing. Having rules without telling our children what they mean in context of their future can leave them feeling frustrated and angry.

> Worse still, living a legalistic life can result in emptiness. Yes, your children should obey you just because you “said so”, but parenting also involves inspiring them to do so.
>
> Today’s culture teaches our kids to live for the moment, to fulfill selfish desires and cravings, and says very little about who – not just what – they should become. No one is inspiring and encouraging our children to become adults whose lives are marked by strong moral character, goodness, truth and joy. We need to set the vision clearly before them – and you can’t do that with just a set of rules. If you don’t thoughtfully connect your rules with how they help your children have a beautiful, meaningful life, you have missed the opportunity to raise sons and daughters of purpose.

This is exactly my own view, and I have used the same Scripture she does to encourage my relatives. Memorize that verse and apply it to raising your pets and children.

Rep. Mike Pence drafts amendment to defund Planned Parenthood

July 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article here from OneNewsNow.

Full text:

> Pro-life Congressman Mike Pence (R-Indiana) has drafted an amendment to defund Planned Parenthood.
>
> Pence's amendment is attached to a Department of Health and Human Services funding bill that, in part, throws federal tax dollars Planned Parenthood's way. Justin Aquila of the Susan B. Anthony List tells OneNewsNow the abortion provider receives a sizeable part of the appropriation.
>
> "In the past two years, Planned Parenthood has received $350 million [in taxpayer funding]," he notes.
>
> That taxpayer support goes to a non-profit organization that reports a sizeable profit each year, generates annual revenues in excess of one billion dollars (according to its most recent annual report), and performs many of the abortions done in the U.S. Aquila points to the abortion figures for last year.
>
> "[They performed] 290,000 abortions, which is 25,000 more than the previous year — and approximately one in every five abortions occurs at a Planned Parenthood facility," he adds.
>
> People can encourage their elected representatives to vote for the amendment by going to the Susan B. Anthony website. "To flood the House all week would be great," says the pro-life activist.
>
> Otherwise, notes the pro-life group, Congress will continue to "pump millions of your tax dollars" into the abortion industry each year. Surveys have indicated the public does not want their taxes used to fund abortions.

I wonder how the Democrats will vote on this one.

Democrats say they rescued the economy, Republicans ask where are the jobs?

July 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama will announce today "We rescued the economy". (H/T ECM, Breitbart TV, Hot Air, Gateway Pundit)

Gateway Pundit adds:

> President Disaster will quadruple the US budget deficit his first year in office. He will reportedly spend $23.7 trillion to "fix" the economy… or bankrupt it by next year.
>
> …Government Motors sales drop 22%. (H/T ECM, Gateway Pundit,

Meanwhile, 134 House Rebublicans ask "Where are the Jobs?".

Gateway Pundit adds:

> President Obama and democrats in Congress, of course, promised that their stimulus would prevent unemployment from rising about 8%. Today it is at 9.7% and House Republicans who unanimously opposed the Stimulus Bill want to know where are the jobs?
>
> The unemployment rate during the Bush years was 5.27%.
> President Disaster's unemployment rate is averaging above 8.6%.

Jim Demint contends with the leftist media trying to get the word out.

Pundit and Pundette give him a gold star!

They've got the transcript, too!

Excerpt:

> LAUER: . . . But over the past couple of days, I don't have to tell you, you've ignited a firestorm, and people are saying that you are playing pure politics with this issue. How do you respond?
>
> DEMINT: Well, it has nothing to do with politics or it's certainly not personal. But, but the President's policies have not matched up to his promises so far. We saw that in this giant stimulus, his trillion dollar stimulus that has stimulated the government, but really cost American jobs and, and, and loaded lots of debt on top of future generations.
> LAUER: But, but sticking to health care reform, let, let me, you know, give you your own words here. You, you were addressing the group Conservatives for Patients Rights about the health care debate and you said quote, "If we're able to stop Obama on this, it will be his Waterloo. It will break him." Now are you rallying conservatives to the cause of health care reform? Or are you rallying conservatives to the cause of breaking a president?

DEMINT: Oh, we need to put the brakes on this President. He's been on a spending spree since he took office. And we need health care reform. Unfortunately, when the President was in the Senate, I've probably offered more health care reform proposals than anyone in the Senate. And the President voted against every proposal that would have made health insurance more available and more affordable to people. His goal seems to be a government takeover, not making insurance more available. So I do think we need to stop the President on this. We need to stop his policy, because if we allow him to continue to ram things through Congress before we even get a chance to read them.

LAUER: But-

DEMINT: Matt, I just brought one of the bills this morning. I mean, if you look at this bill, it's one of the three bills that we're gonna have to look at.

LAUER: It's a complicated issue. There are a lot of details in that bill.

DEMINT: Well why do we need to pass it in two weeks before we go home in August?

LAUER: Well that's, that's a good question. And I'm gonna get to that in a second. But, but the words you chose were very specific. "It could be his Waterloo, it could break this President." I, I guess the obvious question is, it wouldn't break your heart if you break this President, would it?

DEMINT: Well, again, it's not personal, but we've got to stop his policies, Matt. The policies are not matching up to the promises. They're loading trillions of dollars of debt onto the American people. And the thing is we need real health care reform. I've introduced proposals that would help individuals own their own health insurance policies if they don't get it at work.

LAUER: Right.

DEMINT: There are a lot of ways to do this without a government takeover and a government plan.

LAUER: And I read, I read some of your plan. You wrote it in an op-ed, and I, and I did read that, and would encourage people to go see that. Is the deadline dead, Senator?

DEMINT: It appears to be, and I hope it is. And that's what I mean, the Senate is supposed to be the body that deliberates and debates and actually reads bill, bills. You know, I hear that more than anything else, as I go around the country. Why don't you guys read the bills before you pass them? There are a lot of things in these bills that are gonna alarm the American people. I'm afraid the President knows that. He wants to push it through before we're able to take a look at what's really in it. And that shouldn't happen in Congress. This doesn't take effect for four years, Matt. We don't need to pass it in two weeks. It's 20 percent of the American economy.

LAUER: Right.

> DEMINT: It’s one of the most personal issues that we deal with as Americans. The government shouldn’t take it over and we shouldn’t pass a bill in two weeks.
>
> LAUER: Senator Jim DeMint. Senator thanks for joining us this morning. We appreciate your time.
>
> DEMINT: Thank you Matt.

Worst. President. Ever.

Are coerced abortions and euthanasia part of Obama's health care plan?

July 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation writes about it here. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Earlier this year, President Obama moved to overturn the "conscience clause" regulation issued by the Bush Administration. The regulation provides for the enforcement of federal conscience protections, including the Church Amendments, for health care workers.
>
> New concerns also surround the President's health care reform legislation making its way through Congress, which would allow mandatory taxpayer funding of abortion. During mark-up of the Kennedy-Dodd health care bill, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee approved provisions to require insurance plans to contract with organizations that perform abortions. In addition, several amendments were rejected that would have preserved states' laws regulating abortion, prohibited federal funds from being used for abortions, and provided conscience protections for health care providers for not providing abortions.
>
> Click here for a fact sheet assessing President Obama's administrations' impact on families.

The Maritime Sentry has the latest Michele Bachmann video on that topic:

That's coerced abortion, at least in the sense that doctors and nurses would be coerced to perform them against their moral beliefs, as well as in the sense that pro-life taxpayers would be forced to fund what they regard as murder. But what about coerced euthanasia?

Ed Morrissey posted this video at Hot Air.

Consider this American Thinker article about how socialists cut costs by rationing health care to the elderly. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Consider what happens in the Netherlands to elderly people. The Netherlands legalized "assisted suicide" in 2002, no doubt in part for compassionate reasons. But *also* to save money. There is only one money kitty for medical care in the socialist Netherlands. When you get old, the question is asked, either explicitly or by implication:
>
> *Do you deserve to live another year compared to young refugees from Somalia, who can use the same euros to have many years of life?*
>
> There's only so much money available. The Netherlands radio service had a quiz show at one time, designed to "raise public awareness" about precisely that

> question. Who deserves to live, and who to die?
>
> But nobody debates any more about who has the power to make that decision. In socialist Europe the State does. It's a done deal.

I think we can expect that this is just the beginning of Obama's plans to make sure that the elderly don't use more than their "fair share" of health care services. Remember, Obama recommended that the elderly take painkillers rather than pay for life-saving operations. And if his bill passes, he'll be running the show – and he'll have to cut an awful lot in order to pay for the nine trillion dollar cumulative deficit he's supposed to rack up by 2019.

Muslims in Michigan assault Christians for asking questions at Arabfest

July 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome readers from ProtoCatholic! Thanks for the link, Gretchen!

Watch this 10-minute video of Christian apologist Nabeel Qureshi trying to engage Muslims in dialog in Dearborn, Michigan. (H/T ECM)

This is the same Nabeel who had the radio debate with the Muslim that I wrote about before.

About Nabeel:

> **Nabeel Qureshi** is a convert from Islam to Christianity. He holds an MA in Christian Apologetics from Biola University, and he is currently finishing his MD at Eastern Virginia Medical School. Nabeel debates Muslims and writes for the blog http://www.answeringmuslims.com/.

Now consider a different story from ArabFest about a different group of Christians distributing pamphlets.

This story is from the San Jose Mercury News. (H/T Clayton Cramer via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A federal judge today denied an evangelical Christian group's request for permission to hand out literature on sidewalks at an Arab festival in the heart of the Detroit area's Middle Eastern community.
>
> U.S. District Judge Nancy Edmunds denied Anaheim, Calif.-based Arabic Christian Perspective's request for a temporary restraining order.
>
> The group describes itself in its court filing as "a national ministry established for the purpose of proclaiming the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ to Muslims … (that) travels around the country attending and distributing Christian literature at Muslim festivals and mosques."

There is a law banning the distribution of pamphlets, so these Christians were not being discriminated against. But lawyer Eugene Volokh at the Volokh Conspiracy says that the law is unconstutional, in his opinion.

Understanding why Democrat policies don't create jobs

July 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Before we take a look at why Democrat policies don't crate jobs, let's first make sure that Democrat policies don't create jobs. As it stands, Obama policies have lost 3 million jobs and driven the unemployment rate to 9.7%. But let's take a look at an example to show that his socialist policies failed to do what he promised (and I think he sincerely believed) they would do.

New Hampshire gets $413 million, creates 34 jobs

Now! Hampshire reports:(H/T ECM)

> The stimulus package is working and has already "improve[d] the number of jobs" in New Hampshire, according to Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (NH-01) in a recent radio interview with WGIR radio personality Charlie Sherman.
>
> "New Hampshire certainly has seen some jobs come and, actually, we grew jobs. We've actually had improvement in the number of jobs," said Shea-Porter.
>
> Shea-Porter's comments notwithstanding, New Hampshire has lost roughly 16,000 since the beginning of the year and the New Hampshire Union Leader reported recently that the stimulus plan has thus far created only thirty-four fulltime jobs despite the $400 million plus dollars that have come into the Granite State from the federal government.

Obama is very surprised by this unintended consequence of his anti-growth, anti-business policies. He meant well. Aren't good intentions enough to create jobs?

Democrats in Michigan

The American Thinker writes about how Democrats plan to create jobs to alleviate Michigan's over 15% unemployment rate.

1. "Hiking the minimum wage to $10 an hour for all workers.
2. Imposing a blanket moratorium on home foreclosures for 12 months.
3. Cutting utility rates 20% across the board.
4. Requiring all employers to provide health care to their employees.
5. Hiking, by $100 a week, and extending, for six months, unemployment benefits."

Let's take a look at these one at a time.

1. If you force employers to pay more for each employee, and employers are still getting the same amount of production from each employee, then the employer will lay off the least productive employees and fewer employees who can offer better productivity for the higher salaries they are required to pay. Raising the minimum wage RAISES unemployment.

2. If you force banks to not foreclose on homes, then banks will take huge losses and have less money to lend anyone else. Small businesses, new home buyers and existing homeowners will suffer, as well as bank shareholders.
3. Cutting utility rates by 20% across the board will make consumption increase while supply decreases, causing a shortage. This would lead to blackouts, which is exactly what happened in California when the Democrats tried to do the same thing.
4. If employers are forced to provide health care for all employees, they must pay more for each employee for the same amount of productivity. This will result in increased unemployment and reduced hiring as employers reduce their number of employees. The least productive employees are the first to go.
5. Raising unemployment benefits will create a budget deficit that has to be filled by spending cuts or, more likely, tax increases. Tax increases cause the most productive people like investors and business owners to dial back their productivity. That raises unemployment.

Michigan is probably one of the worst states in the Union in terms of being run by Democrats who have *no idea* how jobs are created. You might as well give the job of running the state to a four-year old. Democrats just don't understand anything about economics. Democrats are trying to fix problems on the basis of what makes them feel good about themselves and what makes people like them.

Bobby Jindal explains the right way to lower health care costs

July 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bobby and Supriya Jindal

Governor Bobby Jindal is a wizard with health care policy!

Here he is writing in the Wall Street Journal about how to cut health care costs without rationing care:

> *Consumer choice guided by transparency.* We need a system where individuals choose an integrated plan that adopts the best disease-management practices, as opposed to fragmented care. Pricing and outcomes data for all tests, treatments and procedures should be posted on the Internet. Portable electronic health-care records can reduce paperwork, duplication and errors, while also empowering consumers to seek the provider that best meets their needs.
>
> Aligned consumer interests. Consumers should be financially invested in better health decisions through health-savings accounts, lower premiums and reduced cost sharing. If they seek care in cost-effective settings, comply with medical regimens, preventative care, and lifestyles that reduce the likelihood of chronic disease, they should share in the savings.
>
> Medical lawsuit reform. The practice of defensive medicine costs an estimated $100 billion-plus each year, according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, which used a study by economists Daniel P. Kessler and Mark B. McClellan. No health reform is serious about reducing costs unless it reduces the costs of frivolous lawsuits.
>
> Insurance reform. Congress should establish simple guidelines to make policies more portable, with more coverage for pre-existing conditions. Reinsurance, high-risk pools, and other mechanisms can reduce the dangers of adverse risk selection and the incentive to avoid covering the sick. Individuals should also be able to keep insurance as they change jobs or states.

> Pooling for small businesses, the self-employed, and others. All consumers should have equal opportunity to buy the lowest-cost, highest-quality insurance available. Individuals should benefit from the economies of scale currently available to those working for large employers. They should be free to purchase their health coverage without tax penalty through their employer, church, union, etc.
>
> Pay for performance, not activity. Roughly 75% of health-care spending is for the care of chronic conditions such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes—and there is little coordination of this care. We can save money and improve outcomes by using integrated networks of care with rigorous, transparent outcome measures emphasizing prevention and disease management.
>
> Refundable tax credits. Low-income working Americans without health insurance should get help in buying private coverage through a refundable tax credit. This is preferable to building a separate, government-run health-care plan.

These are conservative solutions – they will preserve out liberty and prosperity.

Bobby Jindal is my pick for Secretary of Health and Human Services in 2012, if he isn't elected President. So remember his name!

What would Jesus say about no-fault divorce and same-sex marriage?

July 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neil Simpson posted recently about this passage of Scripture from the gospel of Matthew.

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" 4 He answered, "**Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,** 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." (Matthew 19:1-11)

OK, just so you know no-fault divorce is the most anti-family policy out there right now, along with anti-father welfare programs that reward women for having out-of-wedlock births. Same-sex marriage is probably in third place, I would think. All three of these things are bad for at least one reason: they all deprive children of being raised by a father and a mother. Both are needed.

When the parents are linked to the children biologically, the bond is even more stable and the children benefit even more. Children are more vulnerable than adults, and we need to put their needs above the needs of adults, especially adults whose only reason for atacking marriage is selfishness and hedonism. I also think that re-marriage after a divorce is bad for the children. Stepfathers are trouble!

Neil is particularly concerned with responding to "Christians" who don't support traditional marriage.

Neil writes:

> Jesus didn't drag out the discussion with the Pharisees like we do with the pro-gay theology crowd. I think He would have answered them the same way He did with the pro-divorce crowd, with a dig at how in their rebellion they miss the obvious: "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man

> separate.”

Are we straining for complicated responses, when a simple response will do?

Friday night funny: health care, legislators

July 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Just a few items this week.

ECM sent me this video from GOP.com. I cannot believe that a political party put out an ad this good. (H/T Health Care BS via ECM)

Next, Frank J. asks whether doctors should really be making your health care decisions, instead of Obama.

Excerpt:

> Blinded by profit, doctors often try to remove tonsils from children. If your doctor wants to remove your child's tonsils, take some step to make sure it's necessary.
>
> * Ask the doctor if he's considered whether the problem could be just allergies or something.
>
> * Ask how much profit will he make from this "necessary" procedure.
>
> * Take your child's medical files and send it to Barack Obama. He or another qualified bureaucrat will determine whether the operation is necessary.
>
> * Wait eight to ten months for a response.
>
> Remember: Only you can prevent doctors from making a profit off your kids' tonsils.

Why trust trained professionals? They cost too much. A government worker can make the decision for a third of the price of a doctor. Think of the money we'll save!

But seriously, should we really be hand over health care to Obama?

> Recently at a townhall, when a woman asked whether she would have been able to get a pacemaker for her ninety-nine-year-old mother, Obama responded by saying her mother could have just taken painkillers. This illustrates what a lot of people have started to realize about Obama: He's a moron.
>
> That's why his health care plans are not winning popular support; from Obama's handling of the economy people know he's a moron and they know health care will only be made worse by having a moron fiddle with it. They worry if they let Obama loose in a hospital, he'll eat all the lollipops, chew on the wiring, and get a bio-hazard bucket stuck on his head. And if the moron Obama chases a ball into traffic, the White House has a spare moron, Biden, waiting. That's why we have to keep health care out of governments hands: Government is full of morons who couldn't make in the private sector just waiting to get their stupid on everything. You don't want your life in their hands.
>
> What Republicans need to do and I think public opinion will support is just keep moron Obama away from important things so he doesn't hurt himself and others. Maybe they can have a resolution passed to pin mittens to his jacket.

On the other hand, there are some real medical problems that government needs to solve, as Scott Ott describes.

Excerpt:

> A provision of the comprehensive healthcare reform bill now before Congress includes $87 billion to establish a national research facility to study a condition called Lawmaker Reading Disorder (LRD), according to summaries of the bill prepared by professional lobbyists.
>
> Experts say symptoms of LRD include a variety of ‘avoidance strategies’ when confronted with a legal or ethical obligation to read legislation before voting on it.

Click here to read the whole thing.

Happy Friday!

Michele Bachmann calls for audit of the Federal Reserve

July 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

With the aim of stopping future bailouts! (H/T The Maritime Sentry)

This video has lots of full-screen Michele, instead of split-screen.

Sarah Palin, who is almost as pretty as Michele Bachmann, also grabbed the spotlight by signing a bill recognizing the sovereignty of Alaska over all powers not enumerated and granted to the federal government in the Constitution.

Meh. Michele's video is better.

Marsha Blackburn explains how public-option health care failed in Tennessee

July 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tennessee tried to put in a public-option health care plan, and it has totally wrecked their state.

First, watch this video of Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn on FOX News.

Second, here is an op-ed she did for RealClearPolitics.

Excerpt:

> The genesis of TennCare has many parallels to the situation in which we find ourselves today. It was a public option plan designed to save money and expand coverage. In the early 1990s, Tennessee was facing rising costs in its Medicaid program. TennCare was designed to replace Mediaid with managed care and use the promised savings to expand coverage. By 1998, TennCare swelled to cover 1.2 million people. Private business dropped coverage for employees and forced them onto state rolls. By 2002 enrollment had swelled to 1.4 million people and forced Tennessee's Governor to raise taxes and ultimately propose an entirely new state income tax to cover the unforeseen costs. Governor Bredesen was ultimately forced to dramatically restructure a program he has since called "a disaster". By 2006 Bredesen had disenrolled nearly 200,000 people and slashed benefits.

This is a *great editorial* with lots of bullet points explaining everything that went wrong with TennCare. This is *exactly* the kind of case we need to be making – a case based on past experiences, instead of on rosy rhetoric.

ECM sent me this post from the National Review where K-Lo interviewed Marsha about her editorial.

Excerpt:

> LOPEZ: Should there be such a thing as a national health-care model? Or is this something states can tackle?
>
> REP. BLACKBURN: A one-size-fits-all approach to healthcare would seem to me to be unworkable. Both health care and medical care should be personalized to the patient. While some reforms on cost, access, and insurance are needed, it would be difficult to have a national model.
>
> There should be a hard look at federal regulation of insurance. What is Washington doing that forces costs to rise? Representative Shadegg has a tremendous bill that would alter federal barriers so that a broader spectrum of entities can offer coverage and individuals are encouraged to buy coverage privately. That will bring health-care costs closer to market forces and expand

> coverage. As insurance is reviewed, liability reform should also be addressed.

Instead of taking control of health care, maybe we should solve the actual problem of rising health care costs.

What socialists did to the economies of Cuba and Venezuela

July 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article from Babalu blog. (H/T ECM)

Cuba:

> Cuba was a small island nation that once was the biggest producer and exporter of sugar in the world. Once *La Revolución* got its paws on it though, it was systemically destroyed to the point that the island cannot even produce enough to supply its own populace with the sweet spice.

Venezuela:

> Enter Chavez with his *Revolución Bolivariana*, and in a few short years they have gone from one of the biggest producers of some of the best Arabica coffee beans in the world, to now facing, for the first time in history, the prospect of having to import its coffee.

Socialism doesn't work.

Christian woman murdered by atheistic communist for distributing Bible

July 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Associated Press reports on a horrifying story from North Korea. (H/T 4Simpsons, Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> A Christian woman accused of distributing the Bible, a book banned in communist North Korea, was publicly executed last month for the crime, South Korean activists said Friday.
>
> The 33-year-old mother of three, Ri Hyon Ok, also was accused of spying for South Korea and the United States, and of organizing dissidents, a rights group said in Seoul, citing documents obtained from the North.
>
> The Investigative Commission on Crime Against Humanity report included a copy of Ri's government-issued photo ID and said her husband, children and parents were sent to a political prison the day after her June 16 execution.

A woman's human rights are violated by a left-wing communist dictator. Where is the outcry from the secular left? Where is the Hollywood elite? Where is the ACLU? Is she not the right kind of victim?

Is there a difference between the atheist Kim Jong Il and other atheists like Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens? Is the murder of this woman wrong, on atheism? Why is it wrong? Why is it rational to not murder innocent people, on atheism?

I wrote an entire series of posts on the problem of grounding morality rationally on atheism here.

Reviewing honor killings in Canada

July 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was just browsing on Blue Like You and found this post that links to an article in the National Post about sharia law and honor killings.

Excerpt:

> The practice of honour killing was born hundreds of years ago, rooted in a primitive patriarchal belief that a woman who chooses her own sexual partner is disreputable and must die. But in recent years, along with waves of immigration, alleged honour killings have started happening on Canadian soil, spurring a heated debate imbued with religious and political implications.

The article is a must-read. It contains a time-line for the most recent honor killing of 4 victims in Kingston, Ontario. And there is also a history of several other recent honor killings in Canada.

Where are the feminists? Where are the secular humanists? Where is the vaunted atheistic morality that is so much better than traditional Christian morality?

Other related article at Blazing Cat Fur.

UPDATE: ECM sent me this article that says that Muslims in the UK may get an all-Muslim police force to investigate their honor killings.

Excerpt:

> MUSLIM crime victims could gain the right to have their cases overseen by police from their own religion, it emerged last night.
>
> But Palbinder Singh, chairman of the Metropolitan Police Sikh Association, said: “I don’t believe a white officer is ever going to be fully conversant with a Sikh.”

> Police in London already give victims the right to ask for a Sikh officer to be involved in an investigation but the scheme could be introduced for other religions elsewhere.
>
> Chief Supt Joanna Young, from the Met’s Criminal Justice Policy Unit, said: “If it’s a success, I would encourage the other (police) associations to do likewise.”
>
> The project is intended to help investigate “honour” killings and forced marriages but Metropolitan Police Federation chairman Peter Smyth said: “We’re stretched thin enough already. Are Sikh officers going to have their rotas changed so there’s always one on duty?
>
> “It’s political correctness gone mad. We talking about the creation of a separate force within a force.”

Way to go, secular humanists!

http://www.express.co.uk/posts/view/115757/Muslims-could-get-own-police

India rejects global warming alarmism

July 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from FT.com. (H/T Babalu Blog via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A split between rich and poor nations in the run-up to climate-change talks widened on Thursday.
>
> India rejected key scientific findings on global warming, while the European Union called for more action by developing states on greenhouse gas emissions.
>
> Jairam Ramesh, the Indian environment minister, accused the developed world of needlessly raising alarm over melting Himalayan glaciers.
>
> He dismissed scientists' predictions that Himalayan glaciers might disappear within 40 years as a result of global warming.
>
> "We have to get out of the preconceived notion, which is based on western media, and invest our scientific research and other capacities to study Himalayan atmosphere," he said.
>
> "Science has its limitation. You cannot substitute the knowledge that has been gained by the people living in cold deserts through everyday experience."

Methinks it's time to review my investment portfolio.

The importance of chivalry in everyday life

July 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was just telling Andrew and Jen about the importance of chastity for enabling men to think of the needs of women around them whether they are attracted to them or not, whether they are married or not.

Well, just now I was chatting on my cell phone outside the building and it started to rain. One of the ladies who I work with came out and stopped there staring at the rain with a frown, so I offered to go and bring her car to the door for her so she would not get wet. And she agreed! (Even though she voted for Obama and doesn't like Sarah!)

Anyway, let this be a lesson to you women of all ages – it is nice for men to be able to do nice things for you, even if you can do it yourself, you should let men help because it makes them happy to help. Men should always have one eye open for the needs of other people, especially women, around them.

By the way, if you like this post, I could tell you more about some of the other chivalrous things I do. So be sure and leave a rating or a comment, so I know. If you have a chivalry story to tell, leave it in the comments.

Is Obama against police officers and victims of crime?

July 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama has really put his foot in his mouth this time by insulting police officers just for performing their duties.

Normally, I would always blog about policy issues and leave these Obama gaffes for other blogs. But in watching the story explained on Fox News below, I began to realize that there *was* a policy angle after all.

Watch this Fox News clip: (H/T Nice Deb)

And pay attention to the part of the transcript that Deb snipped out from NRO, where Charles Krauthammer makes the point:

> I think it was important, because the Democrats have suffered for almost a half a century of a reputation of being soft on crime. The flip side of that is tough on cops, or insensitive to the duties and the sacrifices of law enforcement.

Now click through and see Verum Serum's video of non-white police officers standing by officer Crowley. (H/T Hot Air)

The police are not happy with Obama calling them stupid. But should we be surprised that he thinks police are stupid?

Consider this article on Obama's softness on crime from The Hill.

Excerpt:

> In 1998, Obama was one of only three senators to vote against a proposal making it a criminal offense for convicts on probation or on bail to have contact with a street gang.
>
> In 2001, Obama voted against a measure that would have expanded the penalties for some gang activity to include the death penalty. The bill was vetoed by then-Gov. George Ryan (R) not long after he had issued a moratorium on the death penalty in the state.
>
> Obama, at the time, said the bill would unfairly target minorities, stating, "There's a strong overlap between gang affiliation and young men of color … I think it's problematic for them to be singled out as more likely to receive the death penalty for carrying out certain acts than are others who do the same thing."
>
> Obama opposes the death penalty except for terrorists, serial killers and child-murderers, but his campaign added that he does not support the death penalty as it is currently administered in this country.
>
> On a 1999 vote making adult prosecution mandatory for aggravated discharge of

> a firearm in or near a school, the senator voted "present."
>
> He explained the vote, saying, "There is really no proof or indication that automatic transfers and increased penalties and adult penalties for juvenile offenses have, in fact, proven to be more effective in reducing juvenile crime or cutting back on recidivism."
>
> And in 2001, Obama voted "present" on a bill that would increase penalties for trafficking in Ecstasy and other designer drugs.
>
> The senator questioned the length of some drug penalties when compared to other crimes, noting that selling 15 tablets of Ecstasy was a Class X felony, as was raping a woman at knifepoint.
>
> …During Obama's campaign against Rush, the senator missed a vote on the Safe Neighborhoods Act that would have made illegal gun possession a felony, and Ryan blamed Obama and two other lawmakers for missing the vote and dooming the legislation, though it failed 31-17.

And consider this IBD article:

Excerpt:

> As an Illinois state senator, for example, he acted more as a friend to criminals than to cops, legislating among other things:
>
> • Curbs on what he called a "broken" death penalty system.
>
> • A measure to expunge some criminal records and give job grants to ex-cons.
>
> • Tougher handgun controls.
>
> • A vote against making gang members eligible for the death penalty if they kill someone to help their gang.
>
> • Opposition to a bill requiring juveniles to be prosecuted as adults for firing a gun at or near a school.
>
> At the federal level, Obama would:
>
> • Repeal "unfair" mandatory sentences for crack convictions.
>
> • Provide drug counseling instead of jail time for some abusers.
>
> • Rethink criminal penalties for pot.
>
> • Ban profiling by federal law enforcement, even if it helps catch violent criminals including terrorists.
>
> • Strengthen hate-crime laws and beef up civil rights enforcement against police chiefs who profile.
>
> • Provide job training, drug rehab and counseling for ex-cons.
>
> • "Re-enfranchise" felons denied the right to vote.
>
> In addition, Obama, who once vowed to repeal the Patriot Act, still talks about reforming it. He also once proposed banning executions of inmates, arguing he

> was against capital punishment.
>
> …”In our criminal justice system, African-Americans and whites are arrested at very different rates,” Obama recently complained. “It has to do with how we pursue racial justice.”

This Cambridge, MA story is consistent with Obama’s previous voting record against public safety and law enforcement.

MUST-READ: The best article yet on Obama's health care plan

July 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The 47 Million Uninsured
Source: Hot Air (Click image for larger version)

The article is from Fortune Magazine. (H/T Legal Insurrection)

It explains why health care is so expensive when government regulates it.

There are 5 points in the article, let's look at the first one.

Excerpt, showing the quality of the article:

> The bills in both houses require that Americans purchase insurance through "qualified" plans offered by health-care "exchanges" that would be set up in each state. The rub is that the plans can't really compete based on what they offer. The reason: The federal government will impose a minimum list of benefits that each plan is required to offer.
>
> **Today, many states require these "standard benefits packages" — and they're a major cause for the rise in health-care costs. Every group, from chiropractors to alcohol-abuse counselors, do lobbying to get included. Connecticut, for example, requires reimbursement for hair transplants, hearing aids, and in vitro fertilization.**
>
> **The Senate bill would require coverage for prescription drugs, mental-health benefits, and substance-abuse services. It also requires policies to insure "children" until the age of 26. That's just the starting list. The bills would allow the Department of Health and Human Services to add to the list of required benefits, based on recommendations from a committee of experts. Americans, therefore, wouldn't even know what's in their plans and what they're required to pay for, directly or**

> **indirectly, until after the bills become law.**

You will not be able to save money under Obama's plan by choosing to live clean. This bill is a massive transfer of wealth from the productive to the non-productive. It does NOTHING to reduce the costs of health care so that everyone, rich or poor, can pay their own way.

The other four points are:

- All patients will pay the similar rates, regardless of their lifestyle and choices
- Patients will be barred from purchasing catastrophic care alone, as with Health Savings Accounts
- Many patients covered through their employers will be dumped into the public option plan
- Patients will not be able to choose their own doctors, and care will be rationed

PLEASE READ IT AND SEND IT TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW.

Dr. Jean Twenge takes on narcissism in today's children

July 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jean M. Twenge, Ph.D

A female Christian social studies professor *railing* against narcissism? Sign me up!

The podcast is here.

Here's her bio:

> Jean M. Twenge, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Psychology at San Diego State University and the author of more than 40 scientific journal articles and book chapters. She received a BA in sociology and psychology, and an MA in social sciences from the University of Chicago in 1993 and a Ph.D. in personality psychology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in 1998. She then completed a postdoc in social psychology at Case Western Reserve University.

We need more like her. *A lot more!*

When does a hate-crime not count as a hate-crime?

July 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The hate crime that wasn't

The American Thinker had this article about the hate-crime that wasn't. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Late one night, a black woman living in a predominately white neighborhood was startled awake by the sound of breaking glass. Inside her 4-year-old son's room, she found a brick. Attached to it was a note: "Keep Eastside White. Keep Eastside Strong."
>
> Yes, a clear-cut case of racism. A hate crime. Yet incredibly, the police decided otherwise. Why? Police said the note did not constitute "hate speech." Accordingly, the crime "probably would be criminal mischief and deadly conduct, both misdemeanors," according to police.
>
> No doubt, the brick-throwing incident — and the police's handling of it — would surely make a good story for Harvard's Henry Louis Gates, Jr to include in yet another essay or book on America's deep-seated racism. Racism that he recently experienced first-hand.
>
> The forgoing incident, by the way, occurred not long ago in Austin, Texas. However, two small details were changed to make a point: The mother was in fact white, and she was living in a predominately black neighborhood. This may help to explain why police decided there was no hate crime: Hate crimes, of course, can only be committed by whites against other racial and ethnic minorities.

It doesn't fit the left's narrative.

The attempted rape that wasn't

Here is another American Thinker article about a rape that didn't count as a rape. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> There is a young man imprisoned in the California State Prison system whose story has to be told again and again until he is pardoned or otherwise released from his sentence. His story really boils down to one question: *Should not our sons be accorded the same legal protections as our daughters if they are raped or fighting off an attempted rape?*
>
> This is the story of Steven Nary, an 18-year old sailor who stood nary a chance

> after a night on the town turned horribly wrong.

It doesn’t fit the left’s narrative.

Laura Rosen Cohen tells Jewish community: Islam just isn't into us

July 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this editorial from the National Post. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> It has been said that a definition of crazy is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result. Certainly, there can be no better explanation for Jews, and particularly liberal Jews to keep trying new ways of currying favour in the eyes of the Islamic world.
>
> …In the Jewish diaspora, and under the heavy influence of socialist and Marxist dogma, liberal Jews pour small fortunes into "inter-faith" causes, conferences and dialogues in the hopes of finding "greater understanding" with the Islamic world in general-and in particular with the Palestinians.
>
> …Jews continue to support the Liberal party in Canada, and the Democratic party in America, **despite the obvious and undeniable evidence that their true friends are on the Christian, Zionist political right.** Unfortunately, their commitment to liberalism trumps their commitment to their own people.

Please read the whole thing!

Speaking as a Christian, I have one thing to say to Laura: Generally-speaking, Islam isn't into us, either!

If you haven't already bookmarked Blazing Cat Fur, I recommend it! Always something good there.

Michelle Malkin’s new book is the #1 bestseller on Amazon.com!

July 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A 400-page book on the culture of corruption in Obama’s regime. Written after just 6 months!

Here she is on Sean Hannity: (H/T Nice Deb)

Here she is on Glenn Beck: (H/T Hot Air)

The book is here from Amazon.com.

Public transportation can be a nightmare for women in countries like India

July 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this story from last month from the Times of India.

Excerpt:

> 27 years old, Ida Loch Hansen from Denmark, who had been in the city working, ironically enough, on the issue of women welfare, faced a harrowing experience when she was molested blatantly in a crowded bus on her way back from Hazratganj to Indiranagar. Choosing to sit in the cabin near the driver because she considered it safe, Ida was molested by a young boy of about her age. Though she had faced eve-teasing before, this blatant physical assault was made at her for the first time.

> What was more shocking for her was the fact that though the bus was full, nobody tried to take a stand in response to her screams and in fact, it was only when she raised an alarm that the conductor asked the molester to take a backseat. To add to her misery, instead of reporting the matter to the nearest police station or dropping the man out of the bus, the driver and the conductor forced Ida to get off before her destination.

I think we could end this little problem pretty quickly by allowing women to purchase and carry legal firearms. Imposing stiff penalties for these kinds of sexual assaults would also be a good deterrent. I would *not* want my daughters to have this kind of thing happen to them. And I find the lack of moral courage of bystanders to be very unsettling.

I've noticed that this happens a lot with European bystanders who are confronted by Muslim thugs. Do secularism and Hinduism have the worldview scaffoliding to ground self-sacrifical acts, such as protecting the dignity of others? Maybe some of our Indian commenters can comment about why no one in the bus stood up to protect the screaming victim?

UPDATE: Andrew e-mails this story about a Sudanese woman who is facing 40 lashes… for *wearing pants*. This is ridiculous.

Christian doctor fired in the UK for acting in the best interests of children

July 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This UK Telegraph article describes a case of anti-Christian discrimination. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Dr Matthews, 50, was removed from the panel earlier this month because her view was at odds with the council's equal opportunity policies.
>
> She said: "As a Christian and a paediatrician I believe that children do best with a mother and father in a committed, long-term relationship.
>
> "Therefore, I cannot recommend a same-sex household to be in the best interest of a child, despite what politicians may have legislated for, and as those on the panel have a legal obligation to do what is in the best interest of the child, then I am not able to vote in favour of such placements."

Children have a right to the best family arrangement possible, based on the evidence. Adults have to make adjustments for the more vulnerable children, and not the other way round.

What is the scientific evidence for intelligent design?

July 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article summarizes three types of evidence for intelligent design.

They are:

1. Fine-tuning of the laws of physics to allow for advanced life
2. Information in life
3. Irreducible complexity

(Not discussed in the article are three other mainstream scientific arguments against naturalism, from the origin of the universe, habitability-observability convergence and the sudden origin of body plans in the fossil record)

Recall that intelligent design is based on the notion of specified complexity. A sequence of symbols is complex if it is composed of a large number of symbols. It is specified if it conforms to an independent pattern. If it is large and conforms to a pattern, then it exhibits specified complexity. Sequences that exhibit specified complexity are designed.

Examples:

- **Neither complex, nor specified:** "AB"
- **Complex, not specified:** "AB KN IH KML NIFCS YDH HOEHS KFSA"
- **Specified, not complex:** "The"
- **Complex and specified:** "Obama is the worst president ever"

Now you know more about intelligent design than 99.9% of journalists who bash intelligent design.

Here's a snap shot of each of three basic arguments for intelligent design:

Fine-tuning

> The fine-tuning of the laws of physics and chemistry to allow for advanced life is an example of extremely high levels of CSI in nature. The laws of the universe are **complex** because they are highly unlikely. Cosmologists have calculated the odds of a life-friendly universe appearing by chance are less than one part in $10^{10^{\wedge 123}}$. That's ten raised to a power of 10 with 123 zeros after it! The laws of the universe are **specified** in that they match the narrow band of parameters required for the existence of advanced life.

The Origin of Life

> Studies of the cell reveal vast quantities of biochemical information stored in our DNA in the sequence of nucleotides. No physical or chemical law dictates the order of the nucleotide bases in our DNA, and the sequences are highly improbable and complex. Moreover, the coding regions of DNA exhibit sequential

> arrangements of bases that are necessary to produce functional proteins. In other words, they are highly specified with respect to the independent requirements of protein function and protein synthesis.

Irreducible complexity

> One easily testable form of CSI is irreducible complexity, which can tested and discovered by experimentally reverse-engineering biological structures through genetic knockout experiments to determine if they require all of their parts to function. When experimental work uncovers irreducible complexity in biology, they conclude that such structures were designed. This method has been used to detect irreducible complexity in a variety of biochemical systems such as the bacterial flagellum.

Now you know what the word “intelligent design” really refers to. Notice that it has absolutely nothing to do with religion, in much the same way as atheism nothing to do with science.

Huge debate at Neil Simpson's blog on religion and same-sex marriage

July 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neil Simpson has the best online debates. Here's the post that kicked it all off.

Excerpt:

> Here's why I am free to support real marriage in the public square:

> 1. That First Amendment thingy. We're allowed to let our religious views inform our political views whether you like it or not. It doesn't inhibit religious freedoms, it protects them.
>
> 2. My religion tells me that stealing, perjury, gay bashing and murder are also wrong. Do you object to me letting those views inform my political views, or just the views you don't like?
>
> 3. Lots of churches are thoroughly pro-gay, such as the UCC and the Episcopals. I don't recall you objecting to their advancement of the pro-gay cause. If you were being consistent and if you really opposed any religious beliefs in the public square, shouldn't you be objecting to their views just as strenuously? Why do you just use that argument against views you disagree with?
>
> 4. You are begging the question by assuming what you should be proving. You claim that we are denying "rights" to gays but you must change the definition of the word in question to draw that conclusion. But the whole debate is whether to change the word and give them a new right. You cheat and pretend that we've already changed the word and given them the right and then insist that we're denying this existing right. Sadly, pro-gay apologists commit this fallacy so reflexively that I doubt you realize what you are doing….
>
> 5. Finally, and most importantly, I didn't bring up religion. You did. I can argue this topic without it — though of course, if you want to know Jesus' views on it I'll be glad to share the biblical view with you.

To give you a hint of how things are going over there with Neil, I've excerpted a sample exchange from the comments.

Sample exchange:

morsec0de writes:

> Denying homosexuals the ability to marry each other has no secular justification.

Neil writes:

> By nature and design [same-sex marriages] do not produce the next generation. Please don't come back and tell me about infertile couples, those who use birth control, etc., as that isn't the point I just made. My point is that by nature only

> heterosexual unions can produce children.
>
> Homosexual couples can never provide a mother and father to a child, which by nature and design is the ideal. Again, just because there are non-traditional families doesn't mean we shouldn't encourage the ideal.

My own argument against same-sex marriage is here. Notice that it is completely fact-based, without even a *hint* of religion. That's the way we roll on the Wintery Knight Blog.

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse explains the dangers of cohabitation

July 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The podcast is here.

The story she is talking about is here.

Excerpt:

> DALLAS — The hotel bathroom was a de facto prison cell — a cramped, foul space where three young children were starved, beaten and sexually assaulted for at least nine months.
>
> The toilet didn't work. The bathtub was a place to sleep. Meals were rare, and the two oldest children — once each a healthy 90 pounds — withered to less than 60 pounds.
>
> Each day for reasons unknown, their mother's boyfriend would force the 10-year-old boy to stand in the corner with his arms raised above his head; his 5-year-old half brother had to kneel in another corner, arms also raised.
>
> The disturbing details emerged in court records that tell the horrific story of the torture borne by the two boys and their 11-year-old half sister, all of whom have different fathers. The children were found July 2 after their mother called a relative to say she feared for her own life and those of her children.

A photo of the cohabiting couple are here.

Dr. J's blog is here.

Animal rights activists oppose research that can save millions of lives

July 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It is an axiom of my profession (software engineering) that "there is no silver bullet". Every design decision represents a compromise – a trade-off – between two competing goals. As someone who loves animals very much, I think that it is important that my readers understand the benefit that we get when we allow medical researchers to experiment on animals to develop new cures.

The story is here. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A new malaria vaccine has been shown to provide 100% protection in mice. If it can approach that level in people, it could slash the toll from one of the world's worst scourges, according to Stefan Kappe of Seattle Biomedical Research Institute (SBRI). "We're shooting for 90%-plus protection," said Kappe, who is the leader of the international collaboration behind the vaccine. "I am extremely optimistic this will work. The initial trials on Kappe's vaccine are tentatively scheduled to start in January at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval is required.

Either we are going to save many human lives or save a few animal lives. It's that simple. We cannot do both.

How the secular-left feminized Britain and what it cost

July 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T DoublePlusUndead via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Colin Philpott, 58, allegedly stabbed a 16-year-old in the chest during the incident in the front garden of his £500,000 Tudor-style house.
>
> He had awoken late on Friday night to discover stepson Alex Lee being beaten by the group of teenagers.
>
> Mr Lee, 25, had gone outside to stop the gang from vandalising Mr Philpott's Jaguar car. Mr Lee was said to have then been punched and kicked in the head, suffering a broken nose and concussion for which he needed hospital treatment.
>
> Speaking after his release on bail, his stepfather Mr Philpott, who owns an escalator cleaning company, described how he had gone downstairs to find the gang on the doorstep.
>
> 'I was asleep and I awoke to hear a noise outside. When I appeared at the door I was set upon by them, as a result of which one of the youths received several stab wounds,' he said
>
> …When police arrived at the five-bedroom house in Crowthorne, Berkshire, Mr Philpott was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder.

So, self-defense has been effectively banned in Britain. This is not the first story like this I've heard. Violence, even in self-defense, is scary male behavior and must be forbidden.

Remember, the feminized UK banned scary guns in 1997 and violent crime doubled over the next four years. Because guns are scary when wielded by law-abiding citizens. But it's OK if criminals have them.

Meanwhile, Scotland Yard officers are forbidden to wear badges to support the troops. (H/T DoublePlusUndead via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Scores of Scotland Yard officers are in open revolt after being banned from wearing Union Flag badges in support of British troops.
>
> Met chiefs have decreed that the tiny emblems – which cost £1 with proceeds going to charity – must be removed after a complaint that they are offensive.
>
> But furious junior officers are continuing to wear them in defiance at the politically correct stance.
>
> A petition has been launched on the Downing Street website demanding they be allowed to wear the badges, which are to raise funds for the Royal British Legion

> and the Help for Heroes charity.
>
> Peter Smyth, chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation, said: ‘The decision to forbid police officers from joining the rest of the country in showing support for those who are fighting for their country is nothing less than shameful.’

The feminization of a once great nation.

Obama’s health care plan treats taxpayers like children

July 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

New video from the Acton Institute. (H/T Hot Air)

It’s a 4 minute video, and you will learn something new, guaranteed.

It’s important to understand what Democrats think of you. Do they trust you to earn your own money and to buy whatever you think is best for you? Or would they rather control you to keep you from misusing the freedoms they keep for themselves?

Consider this article by classical historian Victor Davis Hanson. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

The article contrasts the public positions of elites with their own lifestyles:

- environmentalists like Thomas Friedman and Al Gore
- racism-hollerers like Henry Gates and Jeremiah Wright
- socialists like John Edwards, Chris Dodd and Tom Daschle

This reminds me of historian Paul Johnson’s book “Intellectuals”, which was formative for me.

Learn more about health care with my previous posts on health care:

- Are coerced abortions and euthanasia part of Obama’s health care plan?
- Understanding Obama’s health care reform bill… with video clips!
- Paul Ryan and Ann Coulter make the case against Obamacare
- Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!
- Five freedoms you will lost if Obamacare passes
- Marsha Blackburn explains how Tennessee’s public option plan failed
- Bobby Jindal explains a dozen freedom-preserving ways to cut health care costs
- John Stossel vs Michael Moore in 20/20 health care documentary
- Obamacare will provide health care to illegal immigrants
- Study shows 83 million people will lose private insurance under Obamacare
- Jim Demint destroys Obama’s health care plan on the Senate floor
- Michele Bachmann explains the effect of Obamacare on small businesses
- Keith Hennessey and Howard “Mad How” Dean debate Obamacare

The Canadian left equates honor killings with domestic violence

July 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barbara Kay writes in the Vancouver Sun. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Liberals deliberately conflate domestic violence with honour killing because they feel that making any distinction would "racialize" the crimes, indicting a whole culture. But in order to avoid offending the minority communities in which honour killings occur, they must then "genderize" the practice by force-fitting it into the category of all male-on-female domestic violence.
>
> For theory's sake — all cultures are equal — they willingly indict an entire sex for these horrific crimes. Clearly liberal ideologues consider misandry a lesser evil than racism (and to many feminists no evil at all, rather an entitlement and a pleasure).
>
> Male-female relations are culturally determined. In reality, for a Western man to kill a girl or woman under his protection for any "reason" at all–let alone her sexual choices — runs so counter to our own chivalric tradition of honour (vestigial as it is), that such rare acts are always linked to psychological derangement. To misrepresent the impulse to murder one's wife or daughters as a generically male characteristic is a misandric slander, and every bit as contemptible as racism.

I noticed that Muddling Towards Maturity had a feature on a new movie about Islam's practice of stoning women.

Tune in at 10 AM Eastern today when I will be posting about male-female relations in Christianity.

What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!

July 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The gift of tokens, such as handkerchiefs or pennants, is standard operating procedure in chivalry. Chivalry and chastity are two important factors in my life. Both are complex disciplines to learn. Reading literature is the best way to learn, or by watching your parents get along, if you have a good father and mother (I did not!). But another way to learn is by studying the great works of art.

Below are just a few of my favorite paintings. (I like the Pre-Raphaelite era especially)

Click the small images for MUCH larger images!

RECOGNITION:

Godspeed – Edmund Blair Leighton – 1900

Men should be judged by godly women based on whether they are doing what God wants them to do. Those men who are willing to put God first in their planning should be recognized as special. Standard procedure is to give committed Christian men a token with the lady's colors that he can carry into battle.

APPROVAL:

The Accolade – Edmund Blair Leighton – 1901

Men need to be encouraged to fulfill their obligations to God by receiving the approval of

godly women. Men who accomplish great things for God should receive rewards from women. Notice that the painting is portraying a public accolade.

ATTENTION:

Alain Chartier – Edmund Blair Leighton – 1903

Along with her relationship with God, godly women should make time for relating to godly men, especially to her husband if she is married. This is even more important than parenting! I am a big believer in eye contact and long written essays.

UNDERSTANDING/RESPECT:

Call to Arms – Edmund Blair Leighton – 1888

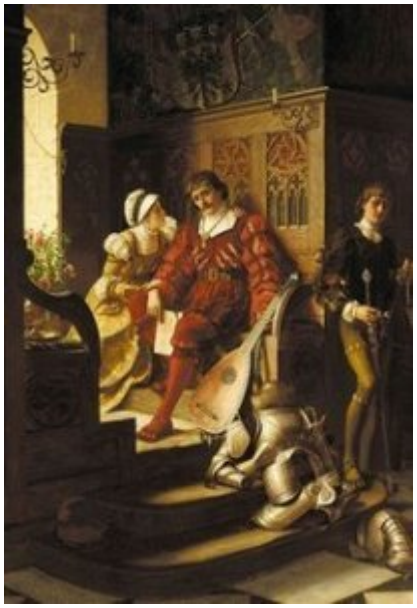

Duty – Edmund Blair Leighton – 1883

Women need to understand that a man's duty to her comes second to a man's duty to God. Part of loving a man is letting him do the activities that he needs to do in order to flourish *as a man.*

DEFERENCE/GRATITUDE:

[image]

St. George Fighting the Dragon – Raphael Sanzio – 1505

A woman should be able to drive a stick shift, fire a Springfield Arms XD accurately, do the family tax return, throw a football 20 yards, and barbecue steaks. However, when men are around, she should allow men to do things for her, even if she can do them better herself. Men should always be asked to do dangerous tasks (shoveling snow, killing spiders, etc.), and they should never be criticized about their performance in front of other people, only in private.

Next time

Next time we can look at other paintings from Frank Dicksee, Arthur Hughes and George F. Watts to express other ideas like vulnerability, susceptibility, nurturing children and animals, modesty, chastity, and trust. It's important that Christian men and Christian women know how to get along with one another. It's important that non-Christians see real differences in the way Christians treat the opposite sex.

If you like these paintings, leave a comment and I'll write more posts about chivalry and romance. Just because I have *no experience* with women doesn't mean that I haven't read the classics. If you want to read something really good on chivalry, check out C.S. Lewis' essay "The Necessity of Chivalry" or Edmund Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac" or Edmund Spenser's "The Faerie Queene".

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian

- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Science czar says trees should be able to sue and born babies are not human beings

August 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story from CNSNews. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The idea has been endorsed by John P. Holdren, the man who now advises President Barack Obama on science and technology issues. Giving "natural objects" — like trees — standing to sue in a court of law would have a "most salubrious" effect on the environment, Holdren wrote the 1970s. "One change in (legal) notions that would have a most salubrious effect on the quality of the environment has been proposed by law professor Christopher D. Stone in his celebrated monograph, 'Should Trees Have Standing?'" Holdren said in a 1977 book that he co-wrote with Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich. "In that tightly reasoned essay, Stone points out the obvious advantages of giving natural objects standing, just as such inanimate objects as corporations, trusts, and ships are now held to have legal rights and duties," Holdren added.

And also:

> "The fetus, given the opportunity to develop properly before birth, and given the essential early socializing experiences and sufficient nourishing food during the crucial early years after birth, will ultimately develop into a human being," John P. Holdren, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, wrote in "Human Ecology: Problems and Solutions."

I wonder which of Obama's advisers is the *most* insane?

From the Secondhand Smoke article:

> Just when you thought that the high advisers to President Obama couldn't get any more radical. Consider: Cass Sunstein, his nominated regulations czar, wants animals to be able to sue their owners and has asserted that the lives of elderly people should be given less value in government regulatory cost/benefit determinations. Ezekiel Emanuel, a high health care adviser, wants to ration health care based on quality of life (and perhaps against the elderly) and has asserted we all have a moral obligation to be experimented on.

I wrote before about how environmentalists banned DDT in Africa, causing 25-50 million innocent deaths. And I also profiled the murderous views of leading environmentalists, including the radical views of Obama's pick for Science Czar. And don't forget – they kill 1 million unborn babies per year in the USA alone – 50 million since abortion was legalized in 1973.

Secularism is not a nice worldview.

Head NIH bioethicist supports health care rationing by age and quality of life

August 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In another article from Secondhand Smoke sent to me by ECM, Wesley J. Smith writes about Ezekiel Emanuel, Obama's chief bioethicist at the NIH. It turns out that Emanuel has written about rationing health care based on age (at least in some cases) and quality of life.

Here are Emanuel's own words:

> Unlike allocation by sex or race, allocation by age is not invidious discrimination; every person lives through different life stages rather than being a single age. Even if 25-year-olds receive priority over 65-year-olds, everyone who is 65 years now was previously 25 years. Treating 65-yearolds differently because of stereotypes or falsehoods would be ageist; treating them differently because they have already had more life-years is not.

And he also wrote:

> This civic republican or deliberative democratic conception of the good provides both procedural and substantive insights for developing a just allocation of health care resources. Procedurally, it suggests the need for public forums to deliberate about which health services should be considered basic and should be socially guaranteed. Substantively, it suggests services that promote the continuation of the polity-those that ensure healthy future generations, ensure development of practical reasoning skills, and ensure full and active participation by citizens in public deliberations-are to be socially guaranteed as basic. **Conversely, services provided to individuals who are irreversibly prevented from being or becoming participating citizens are not basic and should not be guaranteed. An obvious example is not guaranteeing health services to patients with dementia.**

I think we need to be careful about electing people who want to make all our decisions for us.

How corroborative near-death experiences falsify atheism

August 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Over at Apologetics 315, Brian Auten has linked to this podcast from Dr. Gary Habermas. The lecture was delivered to the students and faculty at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo in 2003.

Habermas goes through several examples of corroborative near-death experiences written up in peer-reviewed medical journals. This is scary! And if it's true that we have non-physical minds that can exist outside the body, then materialism is false, and atheism is disproved again.

The MP3 podcast is here. (72 minutes)

There are two cases that you should really know about, and you can read about them in this London Times article.

Excerpt:

> There are thousands of reports of OBEs but the two most famous cases are Pam Reynolds and Maria's Tennis Shoe. Reynolds, an American singer, watched and later reported on with remarkable accuracy the top of her own skull being removed by surgeons before she moved into a bright glowing realm. But it was Reynolds's account of the surgical implements used and the words spoken in the theatre that make the case so intriguing.
>
> Maria, meanwhile, underwent cardiac arrest in 1977. She floated out of her body, drifted round the hospital and noticed a tennis shoe on a window sill. It was later found to be exactly where she said it was. The shoe was said to be invisible from the ground and not in any location where Maria could have seen it. Such stories suggest that OBEs should be scientifically verifiable.

Sleep tight, atheists! I'm sure there's nothing to these stories… nothing at all!

Mu hu ha ha haaaaa!

Note: I would *not* use this argument in a debate. But I do find it interesting and I am open-minded. I haven't decided whether these are real or not, although I am a substance dualist and believe in a real non-material soul that survives the body. If anyone has a solid NDE story, send it to me.

Muslims kidnap two girls in Egypt and force them to convert to Islam

August 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Assyrian International News Agency. (H/T Jihad Watch)

Excerpt:

> "At 10 o'clock of the same morning someone called me and asked if I was Amira's mother. He introduced himself as Sheikh Mohammed, and said that my daughter is fine and will convert to Islam," the mother said. "When I cried and begged him to let me have my daughter back, he said he would let me see her again after her conversion to Islam, and ended the call. I tried calling that cell phone back several time, but there never was a reply."
>
> The mother went to El-Sennin Mosque in her neighbourhood at 1.30 PM, after the Muslim noon prayers, and asked a bearded man emerging from the Mosque regarding Sheikh Mohammed, he laughed and said they have more than fifty Sheikh Mohammeds.
>
> "When I started to cry at the Mosque entrance, one of them came to me and said '**Listen, mother of Amira, I am warning you not to report the abduction to the police or do anything, the price will be your son Meena (9 years old) being slaughtered in front of your own eyes. I am not threatening, I'm talking seriously**.'" He further said "Listen, your daughter Amira will convert to Islam next Friday, and we are now preparing her for that. Now go home and stay indoors until everything is quietly over."
>
> …The first to report (AINA 7-18-2009) on the lucrative business of the 'brokers' of Islamization of Christians, was the independent Egyptian newspaper Al Fagr (the Dawn) in its May 19 2008 issue, citing the city of Alexandria as an example.
>
> Al Fagr reporter Tamer Salah-el-Din highlighted how the operation, which is funded by Muslim businessmen, is carried out with the collusion of State Security and Mosque sheikhs. The 'trading rates' cashed by brokers for each Christian male and female conversion to Islam, at the time of writing this report, was 7000 Egyptian pounds for males and 6000 for females. The rates for Coptic girls fluctuate depending on how good-looking she is and her family's social status.

All religions are not the same.

UK National Health Service refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

August 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Commenter LCB sent me this very popular article from the UK Telegraph. This article is their most popular article as of Sunday. (ECM also sent it)

The title is "Patients forced to live in agony after NHS refuses to pay for painkilling injections".

Excerpt:

> The Government's drug rationing watchdog says "therapeutic" injections of steroids, such as cortisone, which are used to reduce inflammation, should no longer be offered to patients suffering from persistent lower back pain when the cause is not known.
>
> Instead the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is ordering doctors to offer patients remedies like acupuncture and osteopathy.
>
> Specialists fear tens of thousands of people, mainly the elderly and frail, will be left to suffer excruciating levels of pain or pay as much as £500 each for private treatment.
>
> The NHS currently issues more than 60,000 treatments of steroid injections every year. NICE said in its guidance it wants to cut this to just 3,000 treatments a year, a move which would save the NHS £33 million.

Why did the government decide that accupuncture and osteopathy were more effective than painkillers? Was it because of research findings? Or was it due to the influence of *alternative medicine lobbyists*?

> **The NICE guidelines admit that evidence was limited for many back pain treatments, including those it recommended. Where scientific proof was lacking, advice was instead taken from its expert group. But specialists are furious that while the group included practitioners of alternative therapies, there was no one with expertise in conventional pain relief medicine to argue against a decision to significantly restrict its use.**

Doctors don't like it at all, but government-run health care means *government-run health care*.

> Dr Jonathan Richardson, a consultant pain specialist from Bradford Hospitals Trust, is among more than 50 medics who have written to NICE urging the body to reconsider its decision, which was taken in May.
>
> He said: "The consequences of the NICE decision will be devastating for thousands of patients. It will mean more people on opiates, which are addictive,

> and kill 2,000 a year. It will mean more people having spinal surgery, which is incredibly risky, and has a 50 per cent failure rate."
>
> …Anger among medics has reached such levels that Dr Paul Watson, a physiotherapist who helped draft the guidelines, was last week forced to resign as President of the British Pain Society.

So much for the "public" option. It should be called the "rationing" option.

MUST-READ: How does health care in the USA compare with other countries?

August 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, via ECM.

The article compares American health care to health care in other places like Canada, the UK and Europe.

I am particularly interested in prostate cancer rates, because that is a cancer that will necessarily be neglected by states that have single-payer systems. Why, you ask? Because only *men* get prostate cancer. And in a welfare state where leftist politicians are always catering to their special interest victim groups, men will definitely be discriminated against.

The full article. I almost never cite the full article, but this is a must read.

MEDICINE AND HEALTH:
Here's a Second Opinion

By Scott W. Atlas

Ten reasons why America's health care system is in better condition than you might suppose. By ***Scott W. Atlas.***

Medical care in the United States is derided as miserable compared to health care systems in the rest of the developed world. Economists, government officials, insurers, and academics beat the drum for a far larger government role in health care. Much of the public assumes that their arguments are sound because the calls for change are so ubiquitous and the topic so complex. Before we turn to government as the solution, however, we should consider some unheralded facts about America's health care system.

1. Americans have better survival rates than Europeans for common cancers. Breast cancer mortality is 52 percent higher in Germany than in the United States and 88 percent higher in the United Kingdom. Prostate cancer mortality is 604 percent higher in the United Kingdom and 457 percent higher in Norway. The mortality rate for colorectal cancer among British men and women is about 40 percent higher.

2. Americans have lower cancer mortality rates than Canadians. Breast cancer mortality in Canada is 9 percent higher than in the United States, prostate cancer is 184 percent higher, and colon cancer among men is about 10 percent higher.

3. Americans have better access to treatment for chronic diseases than patients in other developed countries. Some 56 percent of Americans who could benefit from statin drugs, which reduce cholesterol and protect against heart disease, are taking them. By comparison, of those patients who could benefit from these drugs, only 36 percent of the Dutch, 29 percent of the Swiss, 26 percent of Germans, 23 percent of Britons, and 17 percent of Italians receive them.

4. Americans have better access to preventive cancer screening than Canadians. Take the proportion of the appropriate-age population groups who have received recommended tests for breast, cervical, prostate, and colon cancer:

- Nine out of ten middle-aged American women (89 percent) have had a mammogram, compared to fewer than three-fourths of Canadians (72 percent).
- Nearly all American women (96 percent) have had a Pap smear, compared to fewer than 90 percent of Canadians.
- More than half of American men (54 percent) have had a prostatespecific antigen (PSA) test, compared to fewer than one in six Canadians (16 percent).
- Nearly one-third of Americans (30 percent) have had a colonoscopy, compared with fewer than one in twenty Canadians (5 percent).

5. Lower-income Americans are in better health than comparable Canadians. Twice as many American seniors with below-median incomes self-report "excellent" health (11.7 percent) compared to Canadian seniors (5.8 percent). Conversely, white, young Canadian adults with below-median incomes are 20 percent more likely than lower-income Americans to describe their health as "fair or poor."

6. Americans spend less time waiting for care than patients in Canada and the United Kingdom. Canadian and British patients wait about twice as long—sometimes more than a year—to see a specialist, have elective surgery such as hip replacements, or get radiation treatment for cancer. All told, 827,429 people are waiting for some type of procedure in Canada. In Britain, nearly 1.8 million people are waiting for a hospital admission or outpatient treatment.

7. People in countries with more government control of health care are highly dissatisfied and believe reform is needed. More than 70 percent of German, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, and British adults say their health system needs either "fundamental change" or "complete rebuilding."

8. Americans are more satisfied with the care they receive than Canadians. When asked about their own health care instead of the "health care system," more than half of Americans (51.3 percent) are very satisfied with their health care services, compared with only 41.5 percent of Canadians; a lower proportion of Americans are dissatisfied (6.8 percent) than Canadians (8.5 percent).

9. Americans have better access to important new technologies such as medical imaging than do patients in Canada or Britain. An overwhelming majority of leading American physicians identify computerized tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) as the most important medical innovations for improving patient care during the previous decade—even as economists and policy makers unfamiliar with actual medical practice decry these techniques as wasteful. The United States has thirty-four CT scanners per million Americans, compared to twelve in Canada and eight in Britain. The United States has almost twenty-seven MRI machines per million people compared to about six per million in Canada and Britain.

10. Americans are responsible for the vast majority of all health care innovations. The top five U.S. hospitals conduct more clinical trials than all the hospitals in any other developed country. Since the mid- 1970s, the Nobel Prize in medicine or physiology has gone to U.S. residents more often than recipients from all other countries combined. In only five of the past thirty-four years did a scientist living in the United States not win or share in the prize. Most important recent medical innovations were developed in the United States.

Despite serious challenges, such as escalating costs and care for the uninsured, the U.S. health care system compares favorably to those in other developed countries.

This essay appeared on the website of the National Center for Policy Analysis on March 24, 2009. An earlier version was published in the *Washington Times.*
Available from the Hoover Press is *Power to the Patient: Selected Health Care Issues and Policy Solutions,* edited by Scott W. Atlas. To order, call 800.935.2882 or visit www.hooverpress.org.

Scott W. Atlas is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a professor of radiology and chief of neuroradiology at Stanford University Medical School.

Please forward this article to all of your friends! It's important!

MUST-SEE: Caught on tape: Obama committed to universal health care in 2007!

August 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Found on Newsbusters via Granite Grok, sent to me by the indomitable ECM. (Lots of comments on Hot Air)

Video:

Newsbusters writes:

> As President Obama repeatedly tells America that his plan for healthcare reform will not lead to the elimination of private health insurance, statements he made in 2007 and 2003 tell a different story altogether.
>
> In shocking video uncovered by our good friends at Naked Emperor News, Obama, speaking at the **SEIU Health Care Forum on March 24, 2007**, said, "My commitment is to make sure that we have universal healthcare for all Americans by the end of my first term as President."
>
> I would hope that we set up a system that allows those who can go through their employer to access a federal system or a state pool of some sort. **But I don't think we're going to be able to eliminate employer coverage immediately. There's going to potentially some transition process. I can envision a decade out or fifteen years out or 20 out.**

The video also features clips of other Democrats advocating for universal, government-run, single-payer health care.

If only the left-wing media had done its job – instead of talking about Sarah Palin's clothes for 8 weeks – we would have found out about this before the election.

UPDATE: Over in the left-wing stronghold of Oregon, Stop the ACLU (via ECM) reports that a patient can have funding for an assisted suicide, but no funding for actual medical care!

UPDATE: Meanwhile, the natives are getting restless. (H/T ECM)

Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela

August 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Reuters, via Fausta's blog. Obama's bosom buddy has been busy.

Excerpt:

> CARACAS, Aug 1 (Reuters) – More than a dozen of 34 radio stations ordered shut by the Venezuelan government went off the air on Saturday, part of President Hugo Chavez's drive to extend his socialist revolution to the media.
>
> The association of radio broadcasters said 13 stations had stopped transmitting, following an announcement Friday night by government broadcasting watchdog Conatel that 34 radio outlets would be closed because they failed to comply with regulations.
>
> Critics said the crackdown infringed on freedom of speech and that owners were not given the right to a proper defense.
>
> "They're closing the space for dissidents in Venezuela," William Echeverria, head of the National Council of Journalists, told RCTV, a private cable TV station, which did not have its broadcasting license renewed in 2007.
>
> Chavez defended the closures, calling them part of the government's effort to democratize the airwaves.
>
> "We haven't closed any radio stations, we've applied the law," Chavez said on state television. "We've recovered a bunch of stations that were outside the law, that now belong to the people and not the bourgeoisie."
>
> Chavez supporters say they are waging a "media war" against private news companies and have denounced in recent days what they say is a renewed offensive by privately owned domestic and international media to discredit Venezuela.

The Road to Serfdom. Venezuela is just a little further along the road than we are. For now.

Democrats introduce amendment to allow taxpayer funding for abortions

August 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Weekly Standard. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Instead of the Stupak-Pitts amendment [preventing abortion funding in public option], the committee passed an amendment that is being billed by some Democrats as a "common ground" measure on abortion. **The amendment–sponsored by Lois Capps (D-Calif.), whose National Right to Life Committee vote-scorecard is 0 for 74–would allow the "public option" to provide coverage for elective abortions and would allow federally subsidized private plans to provide abortion coverage as well.** How exactly could this be construed as "common ground"? Congress isn't *requiring* the public option to cover abortion–merely allowing it. And through some nifty bookkeeping, abortions will supposedly be paid for out of private funds rather than tax dollars…
>
> Because money is fungible, it's difficult to say that tax dollars wouldn't fund abortions through this plan. Douglas Johnson of the National Right to Life Committee says, "Federal subsidies would also flow to private plans that cover elective abortions, under meaningless bookkeeping schemes — and the amendment actually creates a federal mandate that there must be at least one private abortion plan in each premium rating areas of the health insurance exchange."

Wesley J. Smith writes:

> A health unwanted pregnancy is not an illness. When a woman decides to terminate that pregnancy, it should be her (and/or the father's) responsibility, just like elective cosmetic surgery. This turn of events also illustrates how health care reform isn't just about expanding medical coverage–but about impacting the culture.

When the government provides subsidies for a behavior, the frequency will increase, because the cost is lowered. Therefore, the Democrats are PRO-ABORTION. They want *more abortions*. They are *in favor* of killing innocent people. They are in favor of allowing people to kill unborn babies *just because they are female* (sex-selection abortions). They don't care about the consciences of pro-life taxpayers – we have to support this, too.

Previously, I explained how Obama is the most pro-abortion President ever.

Additional pro-life resources

- Audio: Scott Klusendorf’s 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring two great pro-life debaters, Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

Robert P. George explains why same-sex marriage is morally wrong

August 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Famous Princeton University professor writing in the Wall Street Journal. (H/T ECM)

This is the best single article I've read on same-sex marriage.

Excerpt:

> **If marriage is redefined, its connection to organic bodily union—and thus to procreation—will be undermined. It will increasingly be understood as an emotional union for the sake of adult satisfaction that is served by mutually agreeable sexual play. But there is no reason that primarily emotional unions like friendships should be permanent, exclusive, limited to two, or legally regulated at all. Thus, there will remain no principled basis for upholding marital norms like monogamy.**
>
> **A veneer of sentiment may prevent these norms from collapsing—but only temporarily. The marriage culture, already wounded by widespread divorce, nonmarital cohabitation and out-of-wedlock childbearing will fare no better than it has in those European societies that were in the vanguard of sexual "enlightenment." And the primary victims of a weakened marriage culture are always children and those in the poorest, most vulnerable sectors of society.**
>
> Candid and clear-thinking advocates of redefining marriage recognize that doing so entails abandoning norms such as monogamy. In a 2006 statement entitled "Beyond Same-Sex Marriage," over 300 lesbian, gay, and allied activists, educators, lawyers, and community organizers—including Gloria Steinem, Barbara Ehrenreich, and prominent Yale, Columbia and Georgetown professors—call for legally recognizing multiple sex partner ("polyamorous") relationships. Their logic is unassailable once the historic definition of marriage is overthrown.

You know, there's no law that says that we could not strengthen marriage if we wanted to. Just saying. Children do better when conceived and raised in stable environments with a strong exclusive bond between two opposite-sex parents. Do we care about children's welfare? If so, then we need strong marriages.

British government plans to spend 400 million pounds to spy on problem families

August 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Daily Express via Canadian blog Dust My Broom. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> They will be monitored to ensure that children attend school, go to bed on time and eat proper meals.
>
> Private security guards will also be sent round to carry out home checks, while parents will be given help to combat drug and alcohol addiction.
>
> Around 2,000 families have gone through these Family Intervention Projects so far.
>
> But ministers want to target 20,000 more in the next two years, with each costing between £5,000 and £20,000 – a potential total bill of £400million.

Let's see. The government of Britain embraced secularism, feminism and marxism by electing the left-wing Labor party continuously for over a decade.

- Secularism destroys objective moral values and duties
- Feminism destroys marriage and parenting
- Marxism destroys prosperity and responsibility

How did it help children to undermine morality, marriage and prosperity? How does it help the most vulnerable people in society to debunk all of the institutions that are needed to protect and nurture them?

How Obama harms the very people who voted for him

August 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sonja Schmidt from PJTV explains. (H/T Lex Communis)

Here are the 3 points from the video:

1. Obama was supported by anti-woman, pro-drug, pro-violence rapper Ludacris during his campaign
2. Obama supports welfare programs that replace fathers with government social programs
3. Obama supports abortion, which has killed millions of black babies since 1973

A vote for a Democrat is a vote against family, marriage and children. Period.

The more money is transferred to single mothers, the less women need to be careful about who they sleep with. Big government *creates* fatherlessness. Big government destroys the family.

Mona Charen explains how individual initiative is dying in America

August 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mona Charen writing in the National Review Online. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A plucky teller foiled a robbery attempt at Key Bank in Seattle. But the story does not end happily. When a small man in a beanie cap, dark clothing, and sunglasses pushed a backpack across the counter and announced, "This is a ransom. Fill the bag with money," teller Jim Nicholson ignored his training and "instinct took over." He lunged across the counter and attempted to grab the thief by the throat, or at least to pull his glasses off. The nonplussed would-be robber bolted for the door with Nicholson on his heels. A couple of blocks away, with the help of others, Nicholson tackled the guy and held him until police arrived.
>
> Two days later, Key Bank got in touch with Nicholson. A bonus, perhaps? A commendation? Not quite. He was fired. It seems he had violated the bank's strict policy that tellers should always comply with robber demands. A Key Bank spokesman has not returned a call asking for comment.

It gets worse, though. OK, everyone know s that I absolutely *adore* birds. All kinds of birds, but especially cockatiels. Birds are the most cuddly and adorable creatures in the world and I want to make friends with all of them whenever I see them. We have Canadian geese that walk around my building and I whistle to them. They stop, lift up their heads and stare at me. Sometimes, they honk back, if I honked at them first.

Look at this tragedy:

> We see Canadian geese crossing roadways all the time here in Fairfax County. Usually it's an adult goose followed by four to six fuzzy gray goslings with another adult goose bringing up the rear. One assumes it is a family unit. Jozsef Vamosi was driving to work around 9:30 a.m. when he saw such a family assembling to cross a busy thoroughfare. "They were walking like gentlemen," Vamosi told the *Washington Post*. "Like the Beatles on 'Abbey Road.'" Vamosi got out of his car, held up a hand to stop traffic and escorted the birds to the median. He then did the same thing on the other side of the road. The geese went safely on their way. "Everything came out fantastic," the Hungarian immigrant explained. That is, until a Fairfax County police officer arrived on the scene berating Vamosi and questioning his sanity. Vamosi was issued a ticket for jaywalking. A police spokesman advised, "We can appreciate the citizen's response and compassion for wildlife. But a more prudent response would be to pull off the road and use their cellphone. Call the police, and have them

> respond.”
>
> By the time even the most responsive police could have arrived for such a call (and don’t they have more important matters to attend to?) the geese would have been pâté. Nicholson and Vamosi acted on impulse — and I for one would not like to live in a country where such instincts have been ironed out of us.

Stop taking away all of our chances to be heroic, you stupid bureaucracy!

Oh – speaking of that, I was talking on my cell phone outside the office last week when one of our female Democrats came out. It had just started to rain *really hard*. So I asked her for her car keys and brought the car around for her so she would not get wet. (I got soaked!) I suppose that if the feminists find out, I would be sued. This is what men are *supposed* to do for women.

This is also why men (and women) should be allowed to own firearms and carry them. We should not be calling the cops when a crime can be prevented just by brandishing a firearm.

How domestic violence against men is ignored by the feminist state

August 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article is from MSN Lifestyle. (H/T Andrew)

If your wife attacks you and the police are called, it is often the law that they must arrest the man:

> Four Sacramento County Sheriff's cars pulled up in front of David Woods's house. He tried to explain to them what happened. But the lead deputy cut him off: "Yeah, that's fine. Put your hands behind your back."
>
> David said, "No, wait, she stabbed me … there's the knife. See the knife? See my neck wound? See?"
>
> "Put your hands behind your back. Turn around," the deputy replied.
>
> "No," David protested. "She stabbed…"
>
> The deputies drew their weapons.

Women use the element of surprise and weapons when they assault men:

> She had a serrated vegetable knife with a blade about seven inches long. She turned around and she stabbed at me.
>
> "I tried to block it, but I was surprised. I was off balance…the knife went right through my collar and gave me a little nick on my neck.
>
> "She reared back to stab me again. I tried to block it again…I hit her in the mouth. She dropped the knife, ran to the telephone, called 911, and told them, 'My husband is hitting me! I think he's gonna kill me.'

State employees, including police, social workers and judges, have been brainwashed to believe that women can never be violent:

> After 15 minutes, the female deputy returned from the bedroom after talking to David's children. She told the other deputies, "It's true. Both of the daughters saw it. She tried to stab him with the knife."
>
> They took the cuffs off David. "Your wife obviously needs help," the lead deputy said. "She works for Kaiser, you've got health insurance that covers mental health, you need to call the emergency number and get her an appointment."
>
> David says there's a double standard when it comes to charging men. "Now, isn't that strange? When she had a fat lip, it was a felony and I was going to jail. But when they finally realized that she tried to stab me in the neck, it stopped being a crime, and instead it was a mental health issue."

Taxpayer money is spent used to fund feminist research and a bevy of social programs

exclusively for women:

> "The violence really began in our family about 10 days after Ruth realized that she had all the power [financially]. I knew I had to get my kids out. I called the largest domestic violence shelter agency in Sacramento County several times. They told me, 'Men are perpetrators of domestic violence; women are victims of domestic violence,' and hung up.
>
> "I had no way out. I had no money. Whenever we bought a car, Ruth insisted that the car be in her name only, so that if I took it and went to the movies without her approval she would call the police, and report, 'I'm estranged from my husband, and he stole my car.' She did that several times."
>
> Worst of all is what David's children endured. One daughter says, "No one would help. Teachers, parents of friends, anyone I tried to talk to about what was going on at home told me I didn't understand, that my mother couldn't possibly be the violent party. When the police came to our home, they would always be ready to arrest my father, sometimes putting handcuffs on him. It was up to me to scream as loud as possible that it was my mom and not my dad, so they wouldn't take him away and leave me alone with her."

That was all just an example. The article goes on to explain the real domestic violence statistics and laws. In this country we have a massive budget to pay for a collection of social programs just for protecting women from violence committed by men. There is nothing remotely comparable for male victims of female violence.

All of these discriminatory programs are authorized by bills like the "Violence Against Women Act". There is no "Violence Against Men Act", and virtually no social programs for violence against men.

The take-home lesson for men is this: women have been trained by feminists for decades to view themselves as the victims of male discrimination. This state-sponsored resentment makes every woman prone to rationalize anti-male behavior up to and including domestic violence. Every woman is a potential batterer.

Additionally, women have been trained to view unborn babies and their own children as parasites who restrict their careers. This state-sponsored resentment makes every woman prone to rationalize anti-child behavior up to and including abortion and child abuse. Every woman is a potential murderer and child abuser.

Men: stay away from women until these anti-male laws and social programs are repealed. They have to learn somehow that hating men is not OK. Vote with your feet.

My previous posts on domestic violence are here.

Is the Bible we have now the Bible they had then?

August 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

OK, I think Dan Wallace is the best guy out there on the reliability of the New Testament documents. He even debated Bart Ehrman and cleaned his clock.

One of the set of 32 lectures I just ordered was given by Dan Wallace on the reliability of the New Testament.

So what does Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 do?

He finds you a free version of that same lecture!!!

Here is the MP3 file.

I had to pay $5 for mine, but Brian found you a free one! Not fair!

Here is my post on Bart Ehrman, a prominent skeptic much loved by the media and liberal Christians, who argues against what Wallace says in the lecture.

UPDATE: This thing is 42 minutes long and it is AWESOME! Filled with humor, really entertaining. If you guys want to get the 2008 debate between Dan Wallace and Bart Ehrman, you can get it here. I got the MP3s, they're cheap!

By the way, check out the topic for 2010 Greer-Heard debate: atheist John Dominic Crossan vs Ben Witherington.

New Illustra Media DVD on the Cambrian Explosion available to pre-order

August 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ARN reports on "Darwin's Dilemma", the final DVD in the magnificent intelligent design trilogy.

Excerpt:

> The final film in Illustra Media's long-planned Intelligent Design trilogy, *Darwin's Dilemma*, is scheduled for release September 15, 2009 and is currently available for pre-order at ARN at a special introductory price.

> This documentary will examine what many consider to be the most powerful refutation of Darwinian evolution-the Cambrian fossil evidence. Charles Darwin realized that the fossil evidence did not support his theory of gradual, step-by-step evolutionary development. He hoped that future generations of scientists would make the discoveries necessary to validate his ideas. Today, after more than 150 years of exploration fossil evidence of slow, incremental biological change has yet to be excavated. Instead, we find a picture of the rapid appearance of fully developed, complex organisms during the outset of the Cambrian geological era. Organisms that embody almost all of the major animal body plans that exist today. This remarkable explosion of life is best explained by the existence of a transcendent intelligence.
>
> Filmed on four continents, this fascinating documentary examines some of the most important fossil discoveries ever made… and, with them, a mystery deeper than Darwin ever imagined. The Cambrian explosion was actually an explosion of biological information: assembly instructions in DNA and embryonic blueprints that directed the development of the first complex animals…information that points unmistakably to foresight, purpose and intelligent design.
>
> Darwin's Dilemma is a high-quality documentary that includes interviews with world-class paleontologists Simon Conway Morris and James Valentine, as well as leading intelligent design theorists and scientists Paul Nelson, Jonathan Wells, Stephen C. Meyer, Paul Chien, Doug Axe, and Richard Sternberg.

I would click through to ARN's description if you're interested, they have a feature list! They also link to the trailer, which you can view online.

Paul Chien and Simon Conway Morris are the top two paleontologists on Cambrian era fossils in the world, in my opinion. (One is an expert on the Burgess Shale in Canada, the other on the Chengjiang Valley in China – the two best locations in the world for Cambrian era fossils). James Valentine is also an expert on the Cambrian era fossils. This will be a HOOT!

Related DVDs

The first two DVDs “Unlocking the Mystery of Life” and “The Privileged Planet” are must-buys, but you can watch them on youtube if you want, for free.

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

I also recommend Coldwater Media’s “Icons of Evolution”. All three of these are on sale from Amazon.com.

Previous posts

- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

I have to tell you a joke. I just bought an Expelled DVD for one of the guys in my office. But a different guy in my office watched it all by himself on the weekend, the same weekend I went to his church, which he has always been trying to get me to do. Well I offered to take the second guy out to lunch so we could talk about it, but he wants me to rake his lawn for him! He has a HUGE lawn in the country!

The things I do to make people learn things so God will have a stronger bench!

Who has the real extremist mobs? The right or the left?

August 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It looks like Obama isn't very happy with community-organizing when the shoe is on the other foot.

The Republicans have released a new ad about Obama's public option plan. (H/T Hot Air)

But look at this Democrat ad about those who disagree with Obama's policies. (H/T Hot Air)

Are people who dissent from Obama's takeover of health care really as bad as the Democrats say?

Michelle Malkin has 6 different videos of real mobs in action, including:

- suppressing free speech and freedom of assembly
- interfering with military operations
- breaking into people's homes illegally
- chasing Christian evangelists in the streets
- and attacking supporters of traditional marriage

It seems to me that real mobs are *on the left.*

Please tell Big Brother who is dissenting

The Democrats are now asking people to report dissent against their plan to take over health care.The secular-left knows how to handle dissenters, comrade!

It's right here on the White House web site. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

> There is a lot of disinformation about health insurance reform out there, spanning from control of personal finances to end of life care. These rumors often travel just below the surface via chain emails or through casual conversation. Since we can't keep track of all of them here at the White House, we're asking for your help. If you get an email or see something on the web about health insurance reform that seems fishy, send it to flag@whitehouse.gov.

Let's face it. The secular-left in the USA is no different than the secular-left throughout history. This is what they do.

UPDATE: Michelle Malkin reports that Senator John Cornyn has asked Obama to stop asking citizens to report dissent to the White House from their fellow citizens. Read Cornyn's statement here.

Deutsche Bank says 48% of mortgage balances will exceed home values in 2011

August 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Yahoo News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> NEW YORK (Reuters) – The percentage of U.S. homeowners who owe more than their house is worth will nearly double to 48 percent in 2011 from 26 percent at the end of March, portending another blow to the housing market, Deutsche Bank said on Wednesday.
>
> […]Covering 100 U.S. metropolitan areas, Deutsche Bank in June forecast home prices would fall 14 percent through the first quarter of 2011, for a total drop of 41.7 percent.
>
> […]Homeowners with the riskiest mortgages taken out during the housing boom have seen the greatest erosion in equity, in part because they were "affordability products" originated at the housing peak, Deutsche said. They include subprime loans, of which 69 percent will be underwater in 2011, up from 50 percent in March, Deutsche said,
>
> Of option adjustable-rate mortgages — which cut payments by allowing principal balances to rise — 89 percent will be underwater in 2011, up from 77 percent, the report said.
>
> Regions suffering the worst negative equity are areas in California, Florida, Arizona, Nevada, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Massachusetts and West Virginia. Las Vegas and parts of Florida and California will see 90 percent or more of their loans underwater by 2011, it added.

Socialism destroys economic growth. There is no way around it.

Woman offended by seeing-eye dog ejects blind man from bus

August 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: My opinion is that the woman in the story is probably a Muslim because Muslims have an aversion to dogs, but the news article is not conclusive on this point.

ECM likes dogs, while I like birds. He sent me this story from the Reading Post in the UK.

Excerpt:

> A driver told a blind cancer sufferer to get off his bus when a woman and her children became hysterical at the sight of his guide dog.
>
> George Herridge, 71, told how the mum flew into a rage and shouted at him in a foreign language. A passenger explained she wanted him to get off the bus during the incident on May 20.

ECM also sent me this story from the UK Telegraph, linked by David Thompson, about the death of initiative and outrage.

Excerpt:

> Few people now dare to challenge just simple, inconsiderate behaviour in others – behaviour which flies well under the criminality radar but which manages to alienate and intimidate. It's this which is the most worrying, though understandable, aspect to it all. There is a section of our society that remains awfully polite about such issues, and prefers to see such non-reaction as part of a British desire not to make a fuss or cause embarrassment. It's a nice, quaint idea but it no longer plays: they simply don't get the fact that now, it's all about fear.
>
> And alongside this fear is the sense that the order of things has become so inverted that one will be on shaky ground if one does indeed speak up. Most people now register some degree of outrage at being asked to desist, no matter how politely you do it. You are the rude troublemaker in their eyes. For some kind of order to be restored, back-up is crucial. And formal authority has more or less left the scene. You are on your own.

I actually blame secularism for eroding the objective morality that was, until recently, dominant in the West. The moral relativism that emerged as objective morality declined does not allow people to rationally oppose injustice. Instead, people just keep quiet. If moral relativism is true, you can't make moral judgments against anyone.

William Lane Craig explains how to have a great marriage

August 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just noticed that Bill's latest question of the week is on "Marriage Advice"!

Here are the main pieces of advice:

1. *Resolve that there will be no divorce*
2. *Delay having children*
3. *Confront problems honestly*
4. *Seek marital counseling*
5. *Take steps to build intimacy in your relationship*

Well, I recommend clicking through to read this! It's answer #120.

I command all you married readers to give me your honest assessment of his advice!

Is he as good at advice as he is at Christian scholarship and debate?

Further study

- How Bill's wife Jan helped him to be a success
- What Christian men need from Christian women
- What should wives do when they are not in the mood for sex

Associated Press: Obama's health care plan would allow coverage for abortion

August 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The story from the left-wing Associated Press is here.

Let's be clear. The Democrat health care plan would spend taxpayer money collected from pro-life taxpayers on abortions that take the lives of innocent unborn persons.

Excerpt:

> Health care legislation before Congress would allow a new government-sponsored insurance plan to cover abortions, a decision that would affect millions of women and recast federal policy on the divisive issue.

It turns out that this is a CORRECTION of an earlier story by the AP printed a few days back that was NOT ACCURATE.

According to LifeNews.com: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> Two days after LifeNews.com exposed an Associated Press article that mislead its readers on the abortion funding contained in the government-run health care plans, AP has backtracked. The news service is now reporting that the bills Congress is considering will result in taxpayer-funded abortions.
>
> AP features a new article today with the headline, "Gov't insurance would allow coverage for abortion."

This is what "Christians" who voted for Obama have accomplished – subsidies for abortions that will *increase* the number of abortions. Intentions don't matter in life, only results matter. The results of electing Democrats will be *more* innocent lives lost. All for want of a little knowledge.

New peer-reviewed paper in Science should end the global warming debate

August 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the link to the published paper in Science. (H/T Watts Up With That via ECM)

Excerpt from the press release:

> CORVALLIS, Ore. – A team of researchers says it has largely put to rest a long debate on the underlying mechanism that has caused periodic ice ages on Earth for the past 2.5 million years – they are ultimately linked to slight shifts in solar radiation caused by predictable changes in Earth's rotation and axis.
>
> In a publication to be released Friday in the journal *Science*, researchers from Oregon State University and other institutions conclude that the known wobbles in Earth's rotation caused global ice levels to reach their peak about 26,000 years ago, stabilize for 7,000 years and then begin melting 19,000 years ago, eventually bringing to an end the last ice age.
>
> **The melting was first caused by more solar radiation, not changes in carbon dioxide levels or ocean temperatures, as some scientists have suggested in recent years.**
>
> **"Solar radiation was the trigger that started the ice melting, that's now pretty certain," said Peter Clark, a professor of geosciences at OSU. "There were also changes in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels and ocean circulation, but those happened later and amplified a process that had already begun."**

That should be the end of global warming alarmism, but it won't be, because this whole brouhaha isn't about science. It's about money and power. The power to control other people. The power to control the free market. So it doesn't matter if solar radiation cycles cause global warming as a matter of fact, because facts don't decide here.

Here's a helpful quote from the neo-Darwinian George Gaylor Simpson that ECM sent me from Uncommon Descent:

> The verdict of paleontologists is practically unanimous: almost all agree in opposing [Alfred Wegener's hypothesis that the continents used to be one land mass and have since drifted apart]… The fact that almost all paleontologists say that the paleontological data oppose the various theories of continental drift should, perhaps, obviate further discussion of this point … It must be almost unique in scientific history for a group of students admittedly without special competence in a given field thus to reject the all but unanimous verdict of those who do have such competence.
>
> George Gaylord Simpson, "Mammals and the Nature of Continents", American

> Journal of Science 241 (1943): 1-31, p. 2.

Yes, there was a time when the consensus of scientists was against the theory of continental drift. Something to keep in mind.

CORVALLIS, Ore. – A team of researchers says it has largely put to rest a long debate on the underlying mechanism that has caused periodic ice ages on Earth for the past 2.5 million years – they are ultimately linked to slight shifts in solar radiation caused by predictable changes in Earth's rotation and axis.

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"Solar radiation was the trigger that started the ice melting, that's now pretty certain," said Peter Clark, a professor of geosciences at OSU. "There were also changes in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels and ocean circulation, but those happened later and amplified a process that had already begun."

MUST-READ: A medical doctor explains how Obamacare fails patients

August 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This American Thinker essay is awesome, and was sent to me by ECM.

The author gives the physician's perspective on Obama's government-run health care plan.

First, Pollard explains that Medicare is not providing good service now because it is rationing care.

Excerpt:

> I have taken care of Medicaid patients for 35 years while representing the only pediatric ophthalmology group left in Atlanta, Georgia that accepts Medicaid. For example, in the past 6 months I have cared for three young children on Medicaid who had corneal ulcers. This is a potentially blinding situation because if the cornea perforates from the infection, almost surely blindness will occur. In all three cases the antibiotic needed for the eradication of the infection was not on the approved Medicaid list.
>
> Each time I was told to fax Medicaid for the approval forms, which I did. Within 48 hours the form came back to me which was sent in immediately via fax, and I was told that I would have my answer in 10 days. Of course by then each child would have been blind in the eye.
>
> Each time the request came back denied. All three times I personally provided the antibiotic for each patient which was not on the Medicaid approved list. Get the point — rationing of care.
>
> Over the past 35 years I have cared for over 1000 children born with congenital cataracts. In older children and in adults the vision is rehabilitated with an intraocular lens. In newborns we use contact lenses which are very expensive. It takes Medicaid over one year to approve a contact lens post cataract surgery. By that time a successful anatomical operation is wasted as the child will be close to blind from a lack of focusing for so long a period of time.
>
> Again, extreme rationing. Solution: I have a foundation here in Atlanta supported 100% by private funds which supplies all of these contact lenses for my Medicaid and illegal immigrants children for free. Again, waiting for the government would be disastrous.

That is what happens when the government is the single-payer for treatment. Long delays, waiting lists, rationing. The solutions are all with the private free market, not with the government.

The rest of the article contains other examples of problems with government-run health

care:

- how Sweden’s government-run health care system puts people on waiting lists
- how Medicare is slow to reimburse doctors for services performed
- how government-run care in the military is rationed
- how the British government-run system denies care to the elderly
- the consequences of billing the government for care instead of paying your doctor what they ask for
- the real story about whether the uninsured receive care

But there is one point you may never have heard before, and I want to cite this last point in full.

In the free market, doctors compete with other doctors to provide the best care for the patient at the lowest price. But the government is run by politically correct social engineers who make rules based on what seems fair to them. And often, what seems fair to them is racial discrimination and gender-discrimination in the form of affirmative action programs. And that has consequences for you.

Excerpt:

> One last thing: with this new healthcare plan there will be a tremendous shortage of physicians. It has been estimated that approximately 5% of the current physician work force will quit under this new system. Also it is estimated that another 5% shortage will occur because of the decreased number of men and women wanting to go into medicine. At the present time the US government has mandated gender equity in admissions to medical schools .That means that for the past 15 years that somewhere between 49 and 51% of each entering class are females. This is true of private schools also, because all private schools receive federal funding.
>
> The average career of a woman in medicine now is only 8-10 years and the average work week for a female in medicine is only 3-4 days. I have now trained 35 fellows in pediatric ophthalmology. Hands down the best was a female that I trained 4 years ago — she was head and heels above all others I have trained. She now practices only 3 days a week.

Don’t let the government run your health care plan, do it yourself. There are other ways to reduce costs that do not involve rationing of care.

MUST-READ: Why women today are refusing to have children

August 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from Maclean's magazine, (Canada's most popular magazine), has about 400 comments right now. (H/T Andrew)

The article explains why people, especially women, are refusing to have children.The entire tone of the article is extremely narcissistic, which is exactly what I have argued follows from the denial of God. If there is no God, there are no objective moral values, no moral obligations and no human rights. The purpose of life is to have happy feelings, and to force others to give you happy feelings. Survival of the fittest.

The facts:

> "Are you planning to have children?" is a question Statistics Canada has asked since 1990. In 2006, 17.1 per cent of women aged 30 to 34 said "no," as did 18.3 per cent of men in the same category. The U.S. National Center of Health Statistics reports that the number of American women of childbearing age who define themselves as "child-free" rose sharply in the past generation: 6.2 per cent of women in 2002 between the ages of 15 and 44 reported that they don't expect to have children in their lifetime, up from 4.9 per cent in 1982.

You might say that adults who will depend on the taxes paid by other people's children for their retirement and health care are not just selfish and narcissistic, but also morally evil. But they don't agree.

See, their narcissism is actually virtuous because we need to save the planet!

> In a culture in which Jennifer Aniston's childlessness provides weekly tabloid lamentations, a female star who goes public with a decision to remain so demonstrates courage. In a recent interview in U.K. *Cosmopolitan*, the 36-year-old actress Cameron Diaz, who is childless, expressed a disinclination to have children, citing environmental reasons: "We don't need any more kids. We have plenty of people on this planet."

Selfishness is morally good! And you know what else is good? Viewing children as parasites who disrupt your selfish hedonism.

> Now the childless in North America have their most defiant advocate in a mother of two: Corinne Maier, a 45-year-old French psychotherapist whose manifesto, *No Kids: 40 Good Reasons Not to Have Children*, created a furor when published in France last year. Count on the same happening when it's released here this week. Among Maier's hard-won advice: "If you really want to be host to a parasite, get a gigolo."

One woman laments the fact that you can't abort children after they are born, in case you don't like them.

> The American author Lionel Shriver, who never wanted children, writes in "Separation From Birth" that her greatest fear "was of the ambivalence itself": "Imagine bearing a child and then realizing, with this helpless, irrevocable little person squalling in its crib, that you'd made a mistake. Who really, in that instance, would pay the price?"

And women who choose not to have children are victims of mean, judgmental people!

> Speaking from her home in Brussels, Maier says she was prompted to write *No Kids* by a conversation she had with two female friends in their 30s who told her they felt like social deviants because they didn't want children. That perception is well-founded, she writes: "To be childless is considered a defect; irrevocably judged, those who just don't want children are also the objects of pity." But Maier believes "conscientious objectors to this fertility mythology" should be rewarded, not stigmatized. "To have a kid in a rich country is not the act of a citizen," she writes. "The state should be helping those who decide not to have children: less unemployment, less congestion, fewer wars."

But it goes much further:

> Maier doesn't mince words, calling labour "torture," and breastfeeding "slavery." The idea that children offer fulfillment is also dismantled: "Your kid will inevitably disappoint you" is reason No. 19 not to have them. Much of what she has to say won't be breaking news to most parents: children kill desire in a marriage and can be demanding money pits. Without them, you can keep up with your friends and enjoy your independence.
>
> Research backs Maier's assertions. Daniel Gilbert, who holds a chair in psychology at Harvard and is the author of the 2006 best-seller *Stumbling on Happiness*, reports that childless marriages are far happier. He also reports researchers have found that people derive more satisfaction from eating, exercising, shopping, napping, or watching television than taking care of their kids: "Indeed, looking after the kids appears to be only slightly more pleasant than doing housework," he writes in *Stumbling on Happiness*.
>
> […]Over-attentive focus on children saps cultural creativity, she argues: "Children are often used as an excuse for giving up on life without really trying. It takes real courage to say 'Me first.' "

And look how wisely Canadian taxpayer dollars are being spent.

> Ingrid Connidis, a sociologist at the University of Western Ontario and the author of *Family Ties and Aging*, has conducted pioneering studies among people 55 and over that distinguish between those who are childless by choice and those who

> are childless by circumstance. All have adapted, she says: “But the childless by choice are more content, have higher levels of well-being and are less depressed.”

And Canada also spends taxpayer money on studies (conducted by feminist academics) to demonstrate the need for polygamy. Well, what else is the Justice Department and the commission on the Status of Women supposed to do with all the money they collect from working families? Give it back to the families? Families are just going to spend their own money on beer and popcorn! What we really need is taxpayer-funded day care!

What I learned from this article

The point of this article for me is that some women (and men!) are just blundering their way through life grasping at pleasure wherever they can find it, and justifying their narcissism with a lot of lies. They don’t want to commit. They don’t want to love. They don’t want to *be responsible* for other people who need them. A man would have to be supremely ignorant to get married and have children in this environment.

Canadian court rules that Christians MUST perform same-sex marriages

August 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from LifeSiteNews.

Excerpt:

> Nichols, who served as a marriage commissioner from 1983 after retiring from a 25-year career in the police force, was approached by the complainant, only identified as M.J., in April 2005 to conduct the ceremony. Nichols informed M.J. that he was available, but when he realized that M.J.'s partner, B.R., was a man, he told them that he could not "marry" them based on his religious beliefs.
>
> […]Nichols had himself complained to the human rights tribunal in February 2005 after he had been informed in November 2004 by the Saskatchewan Department of Justice that commissioners would be required to conduct same-sex ceremonies after the law changed to allow them. That case was later dismissed, in March 2006.
>
> He was fined $2,500 by the tribunal in June 2008, which decided that as an official of the government, Nichols was not entitled to have his religious beliefs accommodated.
>
> Nichols appealed that decision to the Court of Queen's Bench, contending that his right to religious freedom should have been protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. But Justice Janet McMurtry upheld the tribunal's decision.
>
> Nichols' religious views are not relevant in how he conducts his job, according to the judge in her 36-page decision. "In that capacity [as marriage commissioner], his personal religious beliefs do not matter," she wrote.

So much for the right to religious liberty. What this decision says is that government's values *supercede* the values of individual citizens – even if it violates the fundamental right to religious liberty.

Black conservative savagely beaten by Democrat union thugs

August 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the St. Louis Dispatch. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> St. Louis County police say six people were arrested. Two of those were arrested on suspicion of assault, one of resisting arrest and three on suspicion of committing peace disturbances. Carnahan was gone when the ruckus started.
>
> **Kenneth Gladney**, a **38-year-old conservative activist from St. Louis**, said he was attacked by some of those arrested as he handed out yellow flags with "Don't tread on me" printed on them. He spoke to the Post-Dispatch from the emergency room of the St. John's Mercy Medical Center, where he said **he was waiting to be treated for injuries to his knee, back, elbow, shoulder and face** that he suffered in the attack. **Gladney, who is black, said one of his attackers, also a black man, used a racial slur against him before the attack started.**
>
> "It just seems there's no freedom of speech without being attacked," he said.

More on how Democrats are suppressing dissent here.

Hot Air has pictures and a few more details from an eyewitness:

> I was at the town hall meeting as well and witnessed the events leading up to the attack of Kenneth. Kenneth was approached by an SEIU representative as Kenneth was handing out "Don't Tread on Me" flags to other conservatives. The SEIU representative demanded to know why a black man was handing out these flags. The SEIU member used a racial slur against Kenneth, then punched him in the face. Kenneth fell to the ground. Another SEIU member yelled racial epithets at Kenneth as he kicked him in the head and back. Kenneth was also brutally attacked by one other male SEIU member and an unidentified woman. The three men were clearly SEIU members, as they were wearing T-shirts with the SEIU logo.Kenneth was beaten badly. One assailant fled on foot; three others were arrested. Kenneth was admitted to St. John's Mercy Medical Center emergency room, where he was treated for his numerous injuries. Kenneth was merely expressing his freedom of speech by handing out the flags. In fact, he merely asked people as they exited the town hall meeting whether they would like a flag. He in no way provoked any argument or altercation, as evidenced by the fact that three assailants were arrested.

Where are the Democrat race-hustlers to yell "Racism"? Oh, probably sitting next to the feminists when do nothing about Muslim honor killings.

Here is another video of a Democrat politician screaming at a constituent who dared to ask him a question about Obama's health care plan at a town hall meeting.

Sarah Palin’s statement on health care mentions Michele Bachmann!

August 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow! Check out Sarah Palin’s bold statement on health care where she invokes my favorite economist (Thomas Sowell) and my favorite Congresswoman (Michele Bachmann) and my favorite President (Ronald Reagan).

Here is her statement from her Facebook page. (H/T Hot Air, Gateway Pundit)

Full text: (emphasis is mine)

As more Americans delve into the disturbing details of the nationalized health care plan that the current administration is rushing through Congress, our collective jaw is dropping, and we’re saying not just no, but hell no!

The Democrats promise that a government health care system will reduce the cost of health care, but as the economist **Thomas Sowell** has pointed out, government health care will not reduce the cost; it will simply refuse to pay the cost. And who will suffer the most when they ration care? The sick, the elderly, and the disabled, of course. The America I know and love is not one in which my parents or my baby with Down Syndrome will have to stand in front of Obama’s “death panel” so his bureaucrats can decide, based on a subjective judgment of their “level of productivity in society,” whether they are worthy of health care. Such a system is downright evil.

Health care by definition involves life and death decisions. Human rights and human dignity must be at the center of any health care discussion.

Rep. Michele Bachmann highlighted the Orwellian thinking of the president’s health care advisor, Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, the brother of the White House chief of staff, in a floor speech to the House of Representatives. I commend her for being a voice for the most precious members of our society, our children and our seniors.

We must step up and engage in this most crucial debate. Nationalizing our health care system is a point of no return for government interference in the lives of its citizens. If we go down this path, there will be no turning back. **Ronald Reagan** once wrote, “Government programs, once launched, never disappear. Actually, a government bureau is the nearest thing to eternal life we’ll ever see on this earth.” Let’s stop and think and make our voices heard before it’s too late.

– Sarah Palin

Rep. Bachmann’s speech can be viewed here:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CHBvKGmevI

OK, if Sarah wants to usurp Michele’s crown, then quoting three of my favorite people in the whole world is a great start. If she invoked William Lane Craig, then I would definitely be sold.

Coach suspended for 30 days without pay for being mean

August 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yes, he said a terrible thing, and yes, this was poor judgment. But does he deserve all this punishment just for saying something that offended some people?

The article is in the Salt Lake Tribune. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Hawaii football coach Greg McMackin has been suspended by the university for 30 days without pay for Thursday's anti-homosexual comments he made toward the Notre Dame football program during the Western Athletic Conference meetings in Salt Lake City.
>
> As a part of the suspension, McMackin has agreed to voluntarily coach the Warriors without pay during his suspension. His salary during that time will be used to support a student intern in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender program on the Hawaii campus.
>
> As a part of McMackin's punishment, he must participate in a public service announcement describing how words can hurt and support awareness training for the athletics program. He also must personally participate in activities directed at improving the environment for the LGBT community.

People say mean things to me all the time, and I don't complain (that much). I have found that if I scare people by threatening them because they have offended me, then they don't want to talk to me any more. But I want people who disagree with me to talk to me! So I try to be forgiving instead of intimidating people who want to express a different point of view.

Why can't people just forgive people when they make a mistake and say they're sorry?

MUST-SEE: Shocking video example of left-wing media bias on MSNBC

August 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

PLEASE take 8 minutes to watch this video of Lawrence O'Donnell bullying Peter Schiff. (H/T Hot Air)

Newsbusters has the transcript of the interview.

Peter Schiff predicted the housing bust in 2006 and 2007. He is running for Senate in Connecticut in 2010.

UPDATE: The Maritime Sentry had this audio compilation from Peter Schiff.

Previous posts

- What can the political contributions of journalists tell us about media bias
- ABC refuses to allow Republican response to Obama health care infomercial
- Which news network has the worst media bias?
- Hugh Hewitt's interview with Lawrence O'Donnell on media bias

39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam

August 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this exclusive story from The Record.

Excerpt:

> A MUM suffering chest pains died in front of her young son hours after being sent home from hospital and told to take painkillers.
>
> Debra Beavers, 39, phoned NHS 24 twice in two days before getting a hospital appointment. But a doctor gave what her family described as a cursory examination lasting 11 minutes, before advising her to buy over-the-counter medicine Ibuprofen.
>
> Family members claim the medic was abrupt and rude – and when Debra clutched her chest, he told her: "Your heart is on the other side."
>
> Seven hours later, the mum-of-two collapsed and died from a heart attack in front of her 13-year-old boy.

The government-run health care administrators say that no mistakes were made:

> […]A spokeswoma for NHS Fife said: "We would like to express our condolences. NHS Fife's duty to uphold patient confidentiality prevents us from making any comment on an individual case."
>
> NHS 24 executive nurse director Eunice Muir said: "We can confirm Ms Beavers contacted NHS 24 and that her onward referral was managed safely and appropriately.
>
> "We would ask her family to contact us if there are any aspects of the case they wish to discuss."

Believe me, this kind of rushing through examinations is *exactly* the kind of thing you can expect when the government is paying instead of the patient. When the government pays for health care, the doctor has ZERO incentive to provide good quality. You have *one choice of provider*. That means you either take the bad treatment paid for by the government or you can go home and die.

And if you don't like it, you have NO RECOURSE. Because this is the government you are dealing with! Nothing is going to happen to fix it because no one has any *profit incentive* to fix it. Everyone involved is probably unionized, so no one can be fired. The customer has no rights in a socialized system, which is exactly what Barack Obama said he wanted in that video from 2003.

Free market capitalism is designed to protect people by *forcing* the providers of products and services to *please the customer* better than any other *competing vendors.*

Government-run health destroys these incentives by 1) removing the leverage that the customer have the money, and 2) removing the customer's ability to choose another vendor if they are not happy.

Recall that Obama said that people should get painkillers instead of surgery in this video. When will people understand? The left has swallowed all kinds of lies about global warming, overpopulation, gun control, and everything in between. They have misdiagnosed the problems we face and are proposing solutions are worse than the problems themselves, because of their ignorance of reality.

Dogs have better health care than people in socialized systems

Theodore Dalrymple compares the health care provided to dogs and people in socialized systems in the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Mark Steyn via ECM)

Excerpt:

In the last few years, I have had the opportunity to compare the human and veterinary health services of Great Britain, and on the whole it is better to be a dog.

As a British dog, you get to choose (through an intermediary, I admit) your veterinarian. If you don't like him, you can pick up your leash and go elsewhere, that very day if necessary. Any vet will see you straight away, there is no delay in such investigations as you may need, and treatment is immediate. There are no waiting lists for dogs, no operations postponed because something more important has come up, no appalling stories of dogs being made to wait for years because other dogs—or hamsters—come first.

The conditions in which you receive your treatment are much more pleasant than British humans have to endure. For one thing, there is no bureaucracy to be negotiated with the skill of a white-water canoeist; above all, the atmosphere is different. There is no tension, no feeling that one more patient will bring the whole system to the point of collapse, and all the staff go off with nervous breakdowns. In the waiting rooms, a perfect calm reigns; the patients' relatives are not on the verge of hysteria, and do not suspect that the system is cheating their loved one, for economic reasons, of the treatment which he needs.

Steyn knows what he is talking about – he escaped the nightmare of fully socialized medicine in Canada. The profit motive coupled with a competitive free market is the only solution proven to reduce the cost of medical care. The government has no incentive to give you health care when you are old – you are no longer supplying them with tax money! That's why the Democrats want to be able to deny treatment to the elderly.

Michelle Malkin has a round-up of a half-dozen recent horror stories from the National Health Service. Is this what we want for our health care?

Announcing Reasonable Faith Chapters

August 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this new intiative that William Lane Craig has started.

> Start a Reasonable Faith Chapter!
>
> Now you can start a Reasonable Faith Chapter on your campus or at your church!
>
> **The Director**
>
> Finding a qualified local Director is the key to establishing a Reasonable Faith chapter. The Director should be a regenerate Christian, evangelical in theology, who manifests the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5. 22-23) and who has successfully worked through *Reasonable Faith* (3rd edition) and the Study Guide.
>
> **The Group**
>
> We want local chapters of Reasonable Faith to have the freedom and flexibility to develop programs suited to local needs and interests. We encourage local chapters to experiment with book studies, discussions of DVDs of debates and lectures, listening to Defenders podcasts, inviting guest speakers, and so forth. Local chapters should meet at least once a month so as to maintain momentum.

The main page has all the steps for getting started. Looks pretty easy! Even I could do it, if I wasn't always moving around between cities!

Photograph of protester being assaulted by Democrat thug in Denver

August 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrat thug (left) assaults peaceful protester (center) as she calls for help from the police

This is actually just the tip of the iceberg.

Gateway Pundit has a full round-up, with pictures and videos, of the latest violence committed by Democrat thugs against the peaceful protesters.

ECM sent me this Hot Air video in which a New Hampshire protester explains what the protests are about.

As Michelle Malkin reported last week, the SEIU is closely linked to Obama through money and political appointments. Michelle explains in her post how the SEIU union has not been shy about bullying people to get what they want from them.

NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin

August 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Telegraph. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Ants in operating theatres and maternity, cockroaches in x-ray and mice in A&E are some of the 30,000 pest infestations in NHS hospitals over the last four years, figures have revealed.
>
> Data released under the Freedom of Information Act shows NHS hospitals in England have dealt with almost 30,000 pest infestations since 2006. Exterminators were called to deal with black ants, wasps, rodents, cluster flies, biting insects, silver fish, woodlice, bird mites, maggots, pigeons, red spiders, may bugs, mosquitoes, ladybirds, bees, mice and fleas.
>
> The pests were found in all areas of hospitals including patient wards, operating theatres, maternity units, A&E and children's wards as well as in kitchens, maintenance, offices and staff accommodation. On average 70 exterminators are called out each day to NHS hospitals in England and often deal with more than one infestation at a time.

When the consumers are not the ones paying the bills, and there are no competing vendors, what possible incentive is there for the service providers to provide quality service? There is no inventive, and so there is no quality service.

Frank Turek says we should blame the church for the country's mess

August 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Frank Turek's article from Townhall is right on target.

Excerpt:

> Believers are God's ambassadors here on earth, called to be salt and light in the world and to the world. When we follow our calling, individuals are transformed and societies with them. Our country is failing because too many believers have abandoned this calling.
>
> They began abandoning it in earnest in the 1920's. That's when an anti-intellectual movement called fundamentalism led believers to separate from society rather than reform it, and to bifurcate life into two separate spheres—the sacred and secular. Reason was given up for emotionalism, and only activities that directly saved souls were deemed sacred. Everything else was considered secular. Careers in clergy and missions were glorified at the expense of everything else. That led too many believers to leave public education, the media, law, and politics in the hands of the unbelievers. Is it any wonder why those areas of our culture now seem so Godless? Take the influence of God out, and that's what you get.
>
> […]So if you're a believer who is upset that life is not being protected; that marriage is being subverted; that judges routinely usurp your will; that our immigration laws are being ignored; that radical laws are passed but never read; that mentioning God in school (unless he's Allah) results in lawsuits; that school curriculums promote political correctness and sexual deviance as students fail at basic academics; that unimaginable debt is being piled on your children while leftist organizations like Planned Parenthood and ACORN receive your tax dollars; and that your religion and free speech rights are about to be eroded by "hate" crimes legislation that can punish you for quoting the Bible; then go look in the mirror and take your share of the blame because we have not obeyed our calling.

I went to church again last night. This time, instead of giving a sermon, the pastor answered questions from the congregants that were written out and submitted over the last 4 months. Unfortunately, none of the questions were about anything remotely important, except for one on same-sex marriage. The pastor said that the Bible was against it, but he gave no non-Biblical reasons or evidence to oppose SSM.

He presented nothing at all that could be used to influence the culture outside the church. His answer was useful only for those who assumed that the Bible was already true.

I thought that it was a good idea to have a question and answer time. Some of the

questions were interesting. But the majority had nothing to do with life outside of the church. (E.g. – Can we clap our hands during worship? Can we raise our hands during worship? Can divorced people attend the singles group?) I think we need more people like Frank Turek speaking in the church because what he says can be used outside of church.

You can download Turek's debate with arch-atheist Christopher Hitchens from Apologetics 315. Ever heard anything like Turek's opening speech in all your years of going to church? Nothing he said in his opening speech depends on the Bible being inerrant. It could all be used to persuade people who do not believe in the inerrancy of the Bible. The kind of people you meet at work, at school, or in the legislature.

Ever thought that the church should equip you to do that?

If you disagree with Obama's health care plan then you are un-American

August 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out the editorial by Democrats Nancy Pelosi and Steny Hoyer in USA Today. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> However, it is now evident that an ugly campaign is underway not merely to misrepresent the health insurance reform legislation, but to disrupt public meetings and prevent members of Congress and constituents from conducting a civil dialogue. These tactics have included hanging in effigy one Democratic member of Congress in Maryland and protesters holding a sign displaying a tombstone with the name of another congressman in Texas, where protesters also shouted "Just say no!" drowning out those who wanted to hold a substantive discussion.
>
> These disruptions are occurring because opponents are afraid not just of differing views — but of the facts themselves. Drowning out opposing views is simply **un-American**. Drowning out the facts is how we failed at this task for decades.
>
> Health care is complex. It touches every American life. It drives our economy. People must be allowed to learn the facts.

Nothing like this was ever said by the Republican politicians during Bush's eight years. Not once. Never. Who are the real fascists now? The same people who are *always* the fascists: nationalist socialists. This is the way it always worked in history: the left progresses from socialism to fascism.

Ed Morrissey writes:

> I can't think of three better reasons to get government out of health care than that it's "complex," "it touches every American life," and "it drives our economy." However, it's now apparently un-American to say that it in public. Will Pelosi and Hoyer set up a tip line for un-American activities, such as flag@house.gov? Maybe they'll just recreate the House Un-American Activities Committee to hold hearings and demand testimony. After all, that effort had such a glorious history of operating on the same principles Hoyer and Pelosi espouse here, which can be boiled down to "shut up and do what you're told."

Dissent is only patriotic if you're a left-wing fascist.

What do the Republicans think about your right to dissent?

Watch this interview of Congressman Mike Pence with the lovely Megyn Kelly.

And here's one with Congressman Tom Price:

These guys are both listed in my blogroll.

SEIU union thug attacks a camerawoman

Watch the video, and see Michelle Malkin comment on Democrat violence against protesters afterwards.

Allahpundit writes:

> It's not just SEIU, of course. ObamaCare astroturfing is apparently rampant on the left at the moment, replete with Craigslist ads offering idealistic young Americans a chance to "fight" for health-care reform — for a small hourly fee. Where's the money coming from? Verum Serum has a theory, and of course so does our own Ed Morrissey. And they're not mutually exclusive.

> At the very least, no one from the Craigslist crowd has sent any protesters to the hospital yet, which is more than can be said of SEIU.

Caleb Howe at RedState has more on how the left hires counter-protesters.

What should be done with un-American protesters?

Click through to this story to see Megyn Kelly interview a protester who confronted Democrat Congressman John Dingell at a townhall. He was escorted out by police and then filed a police report the next day about a nice visit he got that night.

Are the Democrats to blame for inciting violence against protesters?

Excerpt:

> [Speaker Pelosi] questioning her opponents' patriotism is actually par for the course for Madam Speaker — but it truly is amazing to think how many "climate of hate" pieces have been written about the right's rhetorical excesses vis-a-vis the near total pass the left's gotten over the past week. We've had congressmen screeching about "political terrorists," "brown shirts," and "rabid animals," Senators denouncing "un-American" activities, the DNC running ads about "angry mobs," the president himself telling his opponents to shut up and get out of the way, and the Democratic brain trust now setting up a "war room" to respond to health-care "attacks." Glenn Beck's said repeatedly on his show that he supports nonviolent resistance only, but a fat lot of good that's done him with liberals more interested in the "subtext" of his messaging; pray tell, what "subtext" should we glean from the dehumanizing venom being spit by the Democratic leadership over the past 10 days?

Hot Air reports that MSNBC says that people who oppose socialism are really racists.

Excerpt:

> This clip goes hand in hand with Cynthia Tucker's moronic guesstimate that 45-65 percent of town hall protesters are probably racist.

An impartial observer might ask whether the Democrats are creating a climate of hate,

fear, bigotry and intolerance that could lead to violence. Do we need to write a hate crime bill to oppose Democrat hate speech that could lead to hate crimes?

Further study

Learn more about health care with my previous posts on health care:

- How Obamacare turns American taxpayers into children
- Are coerced abortions and euthanasia part of Obama's health care plan?
- Understanding Obama's health care reform bill… with video clips!
- Paul Ryan and Ann Coulter make the case against Obamacare
- Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!
- Five freedoms you will lost if Obamacare passes
- Marsha Blackburn explains how Tennessee's public option plan failed
- Bobby Jindal explains a dozen freedom-preserving ways to cut health care costs
- John Stossel vs Michael Moore in 20/20 health care documentary
- Obamacare will provide health care to illegal immigrants
- Study shows 83 million people will lose private insurance under Obamacare
- Jim Demint destroys Obama's health care plan on the Senate floor
- Michele Bachmann explains the effect of Obamacare on small businesses
- Keith Hennessey and Howard "Mad How" Dean debate Obamacare

New Heritage Foundation study says cap-and-trade will kill jobs and the economy

August 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

New study from The Heritage Foundation, my favorite think tank! (H/T Hot Air)

This image tells all:

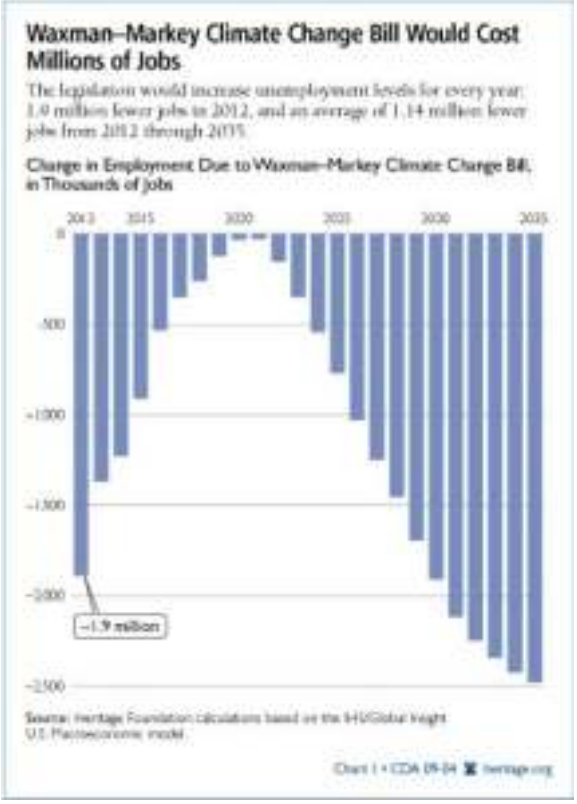

Job losses per year if cap and trade passes.

Summary of the effects: (adjusted for inflation to 2009 dollars)

- Cumulative gross domestic product (GDP) losses are $9.4 trillion between 2012 and 2035;
- Single-year GDP losses reach $400 billion by 2025 and will ultimately exceed $700 billion;
- **Net job losses approach 1.9 million in 2012 and could approach 2.5 million by 2035. Manufacturing loses 1.4 million jobs in 2035;**
- The annual cost of emissions permits to energy users will be at least $100 billion by 2012 and could exceed $390 billion by 2035;
- **A typical family of four will pay, on average, an additional $829 each year for energy-based utility costs; and**
- **Gasoline prices will rise by 58 percent ($1.38 more per gallon) and average household electric rates will increase by 90 percent.**

FYI, current GDP is around 14 trillion per year. The current labor force is around 130 million (non-farm).

MUST-READ: The Western Experience debunks the doomsday predictions of the left

August 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just got an e-mail this week from someone I know who voted for Obama. He was worried about the bogeyman peak oil. Where does the left get all these crazy views? I actually think that atheism causes people on the left to be afraid of the unpredictable future. They imagine insane doomsday scenarios and they become very frightened. They then try to make the world predictable by imposing totalitarianism, to control consumption of scarce resources.

It's the secular equivalent of "Left Behind" fiction, only they *actually believe it*. It's their *religion.*

But the thing is, it's all *false.*

Take a look at this post by Jason over at The Western Experience.

Here's the summary:

- Who was Thomas Malthus?
- What did he predict?
- Why did his predictions fail?
- Who was Paul Ehrlich?
- What did he predict?
- Why did his predictions fail?
- Some more insane predictions of the left

You might want to read his short, informative post. (It's a perfect post) And then remember, this is the worldview of the left. They believe this, right up to Obama's mad science czar.

Previous stories about Obama's science czar:

- Science czar says trees should be able to sue and born babies are not human beings
- Science czar advocated forced abortions, mass sterilizations and totalitarianism
- Why leftists push policies that kill tens of millions of innocent people
- The murderous views of leading environmentalists

The fact that their predictions are always wrong doesn't stop them from acting crazily.

Milt Rosenberg hosts radio debate on health care featuring David Gratzer

August 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, listen to Canadian Sally C. Pipes for explaining the myths of American health care. (9 minutes)

The debate!

Milt Rosenberg talks to James Milam and Canadian David Gratzer about the problems surrounding American healthcare.

Here is the MP3. (86 minutes, commercial-free)

The bad guy isn't all that bad – he likes HSAs and high-deductible plans.

Learn more

Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!

For my Canadian readers: new t-shirts mocking Jennifer Lynch

August 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You remember her. She's the Queen of the Harpies at the Human Rights Commission.

Blazing Cat Fur asked me to notify all my readers that t-shirts were available.

He writes:

> The "Be Mean to Jennifer Lynch" T-shirts, as endorsed by Mark Steyn and RightGirls Bazooms, are now available for sale!
>
> 5 dollars from each purchase goes to the legal defense fund of Ezra Levant, 5 Feet of Fury, Small Dead Animals and Free Dominion. Plus Shipping is Free!
>
> These are quality silk-screened T's designed by Alexander of Hollywood, who we owe a big Thank You to for so generously donating his time and efforts.
>
> Support Free Speech: Be Mean to Jennifer Lynch!
>
> PS: Alexander will accept Money Orders! Just e-mail him at alexanderofhollywood@gmail.com
>
> T's available in black on white, yellow on black, & hot pink on black

They look pretty cool! Click through to his site to see the design.

Milt Rosenberg interviews libertarian Richard Epstein on Obama's policies

August 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Epstein is a law professor from the University of Chicago.

Here is the MP3.

He covers all of Obama's major economic policies.

What Christians need to do to fix the church

August 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was recently notified about a speaking event that Greg Koukl is doing in Calgary (Canada), in October 2009.

Take a look at this web site set up by the organizers.

Here are the organizers:

We are a group of Evangelical Christians from a variety of different churches (we include Pentecostals, Baptists and Reformers; Greg Koukl is Reformed), who have been studying how to defend our faith. To put it another way, we've been learning Christian apologetics.

The need for apologetics seems greater now more than ever. From Oprah to the New Atheists like Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris, the Christian faith is mischaracterized and attacked. And too many times we see Christians either being unable to defend their faith or worse, embracing false ideas about the faith.

But rather than learning to answer these claims against Christianity, too few Christians seem to take their faith seriously. Many see faith as mere belief, something that may or may not be true. It is a preference not a worldview that makes sense. In doing so, many are rejecting the Christian faith for what they think it is, not for what it really is.

Furthermore, through trial and error, we've realized apologetics has a bad connotation, not just for nonbelievers but for believers too. Many see it as just merely head knowledge with no heart or worse, creating argument for argument's sake.

We're organizing these events to help introduce the Christian community in Calgary to some of the most cutting-edge Christian ideas. This kind of apologetics is geared towards helping Christians become good ambassadors for God's Kingdom by helping them understand what the Christian worldview is and then by equipping them to clearly share that worldview with others.

Too many people are rejecting the Christian faith for what they think it is and that is a sign of failure on our part as the church. We believe strongly that it is our Christian mandate to make the gospel as clear as possible just as Paul wrote:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh (3), for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. (4) We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ… (5)
(2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

And this is the purpose of the event:

I have to be honest with you. Though I've lived by the foot of the Rocky Mountains now for a few years, I've never been rock climbing. I've often thought about going, but then that old cliché comes to mind: It's not the heights that kill you, it's the landings!

I guess that shows the kind of faith I have in my skills as a climber and the equipment

climbers use.

Of course any seasoned climber always assures people like me, how reliable their equipment is. They constantly test it, in all kinds of conditions because their lives hinge on the equipment's reliability. They wouldn't put their faith in that equipment unless it was trustworthy.

That's the kind of faith Jesus talks about in the Bible. He wants us to put our trust in Him because He says our lives depend on Him.

Unfortunately, the word faith has lost much of its meaning today, particularly when it comes to religion.

People juxtapose it with reason or fact, implying that faith is somehow irrational.

People use it interchangeably with words like wishing, saying that if you simply believe hard enough, whatever you wish for, will be true for you.

And it seems there's a growing gap between how society views what faith is, and what Jesus meant as faith.

That's why I'm part of a group of Evangelical Christians (that include Pentecostals, Reformers, Baptists and others) who've informally joined together to organize a series of presentations here in Calgary under the theme, Faith Beyond Belief.

The series is meant to challenge our thinking about the Christian faith and to equip Christians to be able to explain their faith more clearly to others. The talks are not a set of lectures on the newest evangelism techniques. Neither are they going to cover new projects that Christians can do to prove to our neighbours how much we love them.

Rather, these presentations cover something more basic; they are about understanding the Christian worldview. Because no matter how important evangelism techniques and love projects are for Christians – and they are important – these need to be grounded in the right understanding of what the Christian faith is all about. Without proper Christian knowledge, we cannot do Christian work properly.

Our speaker, Greg Koukl represents a group called Stand to Reason, whose mandate is to equip Christians to understand what they believe and then to winsomely but effectively challenge society's bad thinking about the Christian faith.

Our hope is that you attend one of these presentations and are challenged to think about what the Christian faith is all about and what it says about the world we live in.

We may never face the challenge of climbing a mountain and so we may never need to put faith in climbing equipment. But we all face the challenges of living life here on earth and that means we all need to choose what equipment we put our faith in, to face that challenge. We hope through these talks, you'll learn what it means to have a faith beyond belief.

They are accepting donations is here.

The schedule is here.

Their official blog is here.

My thoughts

There are two things I like about this event:

1. There is a debate, which is very good for male Christians who appreciate competition and conflict
2. That Greg Koukl will be speaking in the main morning service, from the pulpit, about truth and apologetics

This is the best way for us to fix the church. All my Canadian and American readers, if you are looking to fund a quality event, this is a quality event that could use your support. Actually, reading over their web site just gives me the shivers. *This is what we need to do.* Notice that they are not focused on safe, in-house issues like Calvinism/Catholicism, the age of the earth, etc. They are talking about whether truth exists, whether God exists, whether the resurrection really happened, whether morality is real, and how to answer philosophical objections to Christian theism.

Now, I want to hear what my readers think about this. Have you guys ever done something like this in your churches? Ask your pastors and priests about this event and see what the response is. Ask them whether this is something your church might be interested in doing, too. Then let me know what they say!

Six states record coldest July temperatures ever

August 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Watts Up With That.

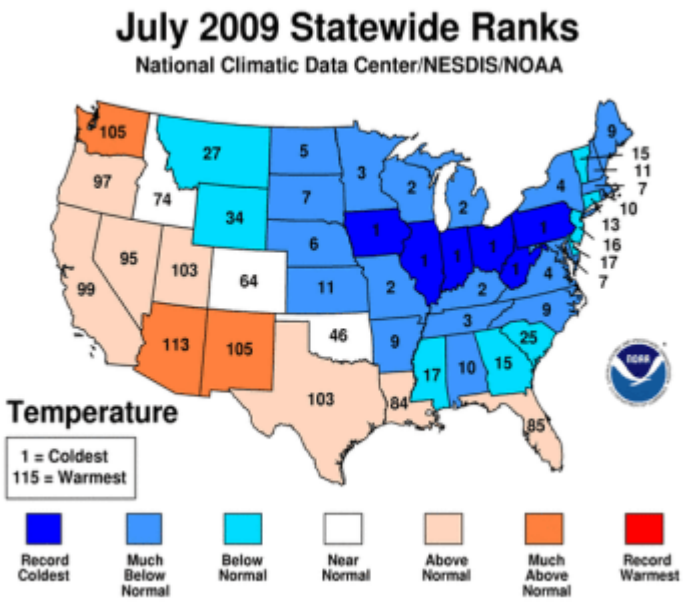

Record cold temperatures for July 2009
(Click for larger image)

A huge number of states recorded record low temperatures:

> **Ohio, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania experienced their coolest July on record. Kentucky, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Michigan each had their second coolest July on record, while Minnesota and Tennessee had their third coolest July on record.**

But a few states were warmer than normal:

> […]Alaska posted its second warmest July, Arizona had its third warmest, while New Mexico and Washington had their ninth warmest.

That doesn't sound like global warming to me. How is the left supposed to impose socialism now? We'll need another lie!

Click here for more stories on global warming.

In Oregon's government-run health care system, lobbyists prioritize treatments

August 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

See, this is one of the major problems with government-run health care. Whenver government runs anything, private businesses are going have to spend lots of money trying to influence government to favor their interests. That money would normally be spent pleasing customers, in the free market. But as soon as government gets involved in regulating anything, then lobbyists are hired.

Consider this video posted at Stop the ACLU about Oregon's health care system. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> As it happens, each year politicians get together to decide what illnesses will get priority funding. Naturally, once the politicians (not doctors, but politicians) decide what "deserves" to be funded by Oregon's government run healthcare system, the lobbyists flood in and begin to agitate for their own priorities.
>
> The result is that often times serious illnesses end up pushed down this list as the political needs of lobbyists get pushed up to be funded first.

Ever wonder why socialized systems cover breast implants, sex changes, elective abortions, and in vitro fertilization?

Lobbying for illegal immigrants to be covered

Here's some more lobbying going on right now about Obama's plan.

ECM also send me this story from the Chicago Tribune, via Secondhand Smoke.

> Immigration activists say it is "immoral" for hospitals and doctors, as well as a nation, to deny health care to the seriously ill, no matter their legal status. "Those of us with good health insurance just don't have to live with because we can go get the medication," said Jennifer Tolbert, a policy analyst at the non-profit Kaiser Family Foundation.
>
> […]"Concerns over the financial burden have led other hospitals to make…decisions denying treatment", said Julie Contreras, an organizer in Chicago for the League of United Latin American Citizens."These people, some of them are going to die," Contreras said. "When a hospital denies treatment to any human being … this is flat-out immoral."

Who is going to pay for this compassion? It isn't free.

Anti-male discrimination

And don't forget about anti-male discrimination in socialized systems, which I documented in a previous post.

> Breast cancer mortality in Canada is 9 percent higher than in the United States, prostate cancer is 184 percent higher, and colon cancer among men is about 10 percent higher.
>
> More than half of American men (54 percent) have had a prostatespecific antigen (PSA) test, compared to fewer than one in six Canadians (16 percent).

Why males vote Democrat is beyond me.

Canada signs free trade deal with Panama, tracks Russian subs on east coast

August 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two pieces of good news for our neighbor to the North.

First, while Obama has been embracing protectionism, Canada has signed *yet another* free trade deal.

CTV News reports:

Canada has signed off on a free-trade agreement with Panama, which will immediately slash tariffs on a number of Canadian exports.

Excerpt:

> […]The new agreement with Panama will cut more than 90 per cent of tariffs on various Canadian exports, including agricultural exports and high-tech machinery. Any remaining tariffs will be eliminated within 10 years under the terms of the deal.
>
> Beef producers will also benefit, as Panama will lift a six-year-old ban on Canadian beef as part of the deal, CTV's Roger Smith said Tuesday.
>
> […]Beyond reducing tariffs on export goods, the deal will help Canadian businesses gain greater access to the Panamanian market, Smith said.
>
> […]Panama is the eighth country to reach a trade pact with Canada in the past year. Canada has also reached trade deals with four European countries and Peru. Similar deals with Colombia and Jordan have been signed, but not implemented.

Previously, I wrote about Obama's naive protectionism. Anti-free-trade policies (= protectionism) is the kind of policy favored by people who do not know the first thing about economics. Being anti-free-trade is right up their with being pro rent-control. We are talking about amazing levels of economic ignorance, coupled with pandering to his ignorant special interest groups.

CTV also reports that Canada's anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft detected nuclear-powered (= quiet) Russian attack submarines patroling off the east coast.

Frankly, I am surprised that Canada was able to detect Akula class SSNs by using airborne ASW aircraft. I've used the S-3 Viking and the P-3 Orion fixed-wing platforms before, (as well as helicopters), and this CP-140 doesn't look much different. If I had to bet, I would bet that they got the contact on the SOSUS network and that this press release is fudging things to make the Canadian forces look more effective than they really are.

Excerpt:

> It’s unclear whether Canada took the initiative to have a CP-140 Aurora patrol plane watch the vessels, or whether there was a request from the U.S. Northern Command which tracks submarines.

My guess is that this is a SOSUS contact that was delegated to the Canadians for PR purposes. I just don’t believe that you are going to get a contact cold on an Akula-class attack submarine from a fixed wing aircraft. Akulas are *quiet.* These are not SSBNs like a Typhoon class – they much smaller. ASW aircraft are usually brought in after a sonar contact – otherwise you’re just wasting sonobuoys looking for a needle in a haystack.

Did you guys miss the story from earlier this year about Canada chasing off Russian bear aircraft?

New video takes you inside the cell to see how DNA is replicated

August 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow, this is pretty! (H/T Uncommon Descent via ECM)

If you need to understand how to explain this video in the context of intelligent design, see my previous posts on the building blocks of life and the origin of biological information. I find it useful to draw up the probability calculations for your friends. It's all explained in the latter article. Fun!

Can we tax the rich enough to pay for all of Obama's spending?

August 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The libertarian Cato Institute says no way. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Funding the new health-care plan on the backs of households making $200,000 or more per year would require permanently increasing their annual total tax payments by about 50 percent. So, for example, a household that currently pays $50,000 in federal income taxes would need to pay another $25,000. Remember, however, that Social Security and Medicare already face enormous shortfalls. Shoring up these programs — another Obama campaign promise — would require collecting 328 percent more tax revenue from the rich. No, we didn't forget a decimal point: That is three hundred and twenty-eight percent.

And what follows from taxing the rich?

> […]A major tax increase causes the tax capacity of the rich to shrink gradually as two factors kick in. First, many of the households falling into Obama's "rich" definition are married couples in which both partners are working professionals. When tax rates rise, the lower-earning spouses in these couples tend to work less. Often, they quit work entirely. Second, many of the "rich" are budding entrepreneurs and small-business owners. They finance their operations using their own after-tax income, or with after-tax resources from family and friends. Small-business innovation is the fuel for long-term economic growth. In fact, many of the largest companies in the United States today were either small or nonexistent just 25 years ago. Killing small business kills the American economy.

Why do ivory tower socialists like Obama seem incapable of thinking through the consequences of his utopian policies for *all* parties concerned? You can't assume that people are just going to sit there and let you rifle through your pockets to redistribute their money to everyone who voted for you.

(By the way, if you are thinking that "preventative care" will cut medical costs, think again. The CBO says no way.)

MUST-LISTEN: Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse in her greatest podcast EVER!

August 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: You can listen to Dr. J's new podcast on basic economics as well.

This one is the best podcast she has ever done, in my opinion.

The MP3 file is here. (31 minutes, 14 megs)

Listen closely to avoid missing anything!

Topics:

- same-sex marriage in California and recent court decisions
- the purpose of marriage
- is marriage child-centered or adult-centered?
- family courts awarding parental rights to non-parents
- why the secular left wants to break down the connections between sex, reproduction, marriage and parenting
- how the destruction of family leads to the marginalization of the male roles of husband and father
- why fathers matter in the family
- how no-fault divorce and unfair family courts destroy families
- making your case on to university students
- how the breakdown of the family necessarily expands the power of the state into our private lives

I've listened to this three times already! I love it! This podcast is for men and women. Men will love this podcast.

Best line: "This actually is the social worker and family court full employment act".

The Father's Day page she mentions is here.

I refuse to get married to anyone who isn't as passionate about *all* of these social issues as Jennifer Roback Morse. How do single women expect to be able to attract a husband when they don't know anything about these issues and vote *Democrat*? That just drives men away from marriage! Women need to speak and write *passionately* about these issues. Abortion is *not* the only social issue that matters.

DOWNLOAD THE PODCAST. LISTEN TO THE PODCAST. REPEAT.

The Ruth Institute accepts donations. I sent her TWO already this year. She does on-campus events, just like William Lane Craig. If you want to have an impact on the university, she should be considered for funding.

Bad news for social conservatives in Sweden and Quebec

August 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, in Sweden, the socialists want to ban homeschooling.

Excerpt:

> The Swedish Association for Home Education (ROHUS) is asking for support from the international community to stop an attempt by the Swedish government to outlaw homeschooling. The new legislation argues that because a child's education should be "comprehensive and objective" it must be "designed so that all pupils can participate, regardless of what religious or philosophical" views of parents or children.

When you give the government your money, you give up the right to choose. If you keep your money, you keep your right to choose. If you think that the government should take your money and then provide you with services like health care, education, welfare, therapy, etc., then you just gave up your right to choose. You gave up your liberty for security.

I think that Christians give their money away thinking that the government will act in their own best interests. That is, that a secular government will act in the interests of Christians. Maybe Christians think that their interests lie in "helping the poor", and that a big government is needed to do that. But when government gets that money, they will use it in ways that cannot possible be as good as you would use it yourself.

Let me be clear. If you are a Christian, and you give money to government to take care of you, then you cannot complain with a secular government bans homeschooling or outlaws voucher programs. Obama isn't going to take your money and defend homeschooling or create voucher programs. He was elected with the help of teacher unions, who are opposed to any education provider other than government-run schools.

The time to act in your own best (Christian) interests was when you still had the money in your hand. Don't give your money to the government because they tell you some sob story about taxing the rich and helping the poor! What they really want to do is to take your money and pay off their political donors, like abortion providers, trial lawyers and unions. They cannot possible spend the money as well as you could have spent it yourself.

Christians need to be fiscal conservatives. They need to learn economics. They need to think with their heads when voting.

Quebec schools impose same-sex parenting curriculum

Same-sex marriage activists always ask the same question, "how does allowing me to marry hurt you?". I don't think they are interested in an answer, but here is one answer. When the government decides that marriage is what we call a bunch of people having

sex and living together, then there is *no reason* to prefer traditional marriage in the schools. And the curriculum will be modified to reflect that.

And this is what is happening in Quebec.

Excerpt:

> The Quebec Ministry of Education has funded the development and implementation of training for primary school teachers promoting inclusiveness for families with same-sex parents, and will be implementing it in Montreal and Quebec City, reports Le Journal de Quebec.
>
> Estimated to have cost the province between $50,000 and $80,000, the training involves a three-hour session for teachers on location, with a kit of materials including videos, brochures, and activity books for students. According to Manon Boivin of la Coalition des familles homoparentales (the 'Coalition of Same-Sex Families'), who is training the teachers, "It's almost a recipe book with all the ingredients to make of our schools schools that are inclusive and more open."
>
> Boivin, who herself has a 5-year-old daughter and raises her with her same-sex partner, commented: "Often, in the face of homophobic insults, teachers do not know what to say….We will make an offensive to inform the schools."

This is similar to the first story. Well meaning Christians feel that poor people should not be excluded from health care or education. So they hand the government their own money and ask government to take over health care and education. It's "compassion" for the poor. And then the government does take over these things – but in a *secular* way.

The government is not going to spend your money that *you gave them* on things that are in keeping with your religious values. They were elected by certain groups, and they must reward those groups. If you want the freedom to teach your children what you believe, don't vote for bigger government and higher taxes. Don't vote for things like single-payer health care and environmental regulations.

And stop hating wealthy people and big corporations! The government is much, much worse than either of those two – the wealthy people and big corporations can't ban you from homeschooling your kids and they can't forcibly indoctrinate your children in views you don't hold. Only government can do that! Think! Don't give them your money, don't let them take care of you. Handle it yourself!

New domain name has been registered! Thanks to all my readers!

August 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just added a new domain name **winteryknight.com** but the main domain will still be active until Google gives me a new PageRank.

This is to celebrate my crossing over 100,000 page views since the blog began.

Please e-mail me if you notice any problems.

You can also update your bookmarks, but the old links should be redirected automatically.

Now is probably a good time to thank all my readers, especially my regular readers, and most of all my regular commenters, and most of all **ECM**, who gives me over half of my stories!

If you like the blog, please send it the new URL to all of your friends and invite them to give it a read.

THANK YOU!

Do Democrats think that voters have a right to dissent from their policies?

August 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A round up of Obamacare stories from all the best conservative web sites.

What do Democrats think of voters who dissent from their socialist policies?

Democrats Nancy Pelosi and Steny Hoyer say that some people who oppose Obamacare are un-American.

Democrat Baron Hill says that some people who oppose Obamacare are political terrorists.

Democrat John Dingell says that his critics are "infiltrators" and compares them to the KKK. (H/T Hot Air)

And how do Democrats respond to these benighted miscreants?

Democrats admit that they are storing the e-mails of Obamacare critics. (H/T Hot Air)

Democrat Sheila Jackson-Lee takes a cell phone call during a constituent's question. (H/T Michelle Malkin, The Spectator via ECM)

This video from the Heritage Foundation.

Democrats bus in supporters to town halls who are fast-tracked into the auditorium. (H/T Hot Air)

Obama holds a staged townhall with questions from Democrats and their children. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

But is Obama really in favor of government-controlled health care?

It depends on whether you believe Obama… or Obama!

The Heritage Foundation has a thorough fact check of Obama's latest kabuki theater event.

Further study

Learn more about health care with my previous posts on health care:

- Left-wing extremist on MSNBC says that some opponents of socialism are racists
- How Obamacare turns American taxpayers into children
- Are coerced abortions and euthanasia part of Obama's health care plan?
- Understanding Obama's health care reform bill… with video clips!
- Paul Ryan and Ann Coulter make the case against Obamacare
- Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!
- Five freedoms you will lost if Obamacare passes
- Marsha Blackburn explains how Tennessee's public option plan failed
- Bobby Jindal explains a dozen freedom-preserving ways to cut health care costs
- John Stossel vs Michael Moore in 20/20 health care documentary

- Obamacare will provide health care to illegal immigrants
- Study shows 83 million people will lose private insurance under Obamacare
- Jim Demint destroys Obama's health care plan on the Senate floor
- Michele Bachmann explains the effect of Obamacare on small businesses
- Keith Hennessey and Howard "Mad How" Dean debate Obamacare

A fishy statement by someone who needs to go on an enemies list

August 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sorry for the light posting, because I've spent more time spent replying to comments and reading e-mail.

Keith Hennessey has found a very fishy statement that could mislead the public about Obama's health care plan.

Excerpt:

> I call to your attention several fishy statements about health care reform legislation made by a gentleman named Dr. Douglas Elmendorf. He claims to be Director of the "Congressional Budget Office" and has posted frequently about health care reform on his website, cbo.gov. This information takes the form of personal posts on his *Director's Blog*, as well as in-depth reports that have the veneer of competent, thorough, impartial professional analysis. The IP address of his site is 206.106.246.254, and his organization has named their hideout the "Ford House Office Building."
>
> Elmendorf appears to have several hundred followers in his organization, which has extraordinary influence over many in Congress. I understand that some right-wing Members of Congress support and even vote for his annual funding source.
>
> CBO and Elmendorf make extraordinary claims about bills moving through Congress that attempt to implement the President's plans for health care reform. I bring them to your attention so that you can refute them. I have included these allegations below. Specifically, Elmendorf and his rabble-rousers make the following claims…

You have to click through to read the *evil* claims of this *evil* man! I certainly don't want to anger Big Brother by re-posting those awful lies on my blog.

Further study

Learn more about health care with my previous posts on health care:

- How Democrats are handling dissent from their health care plan
- Left-wing extremist on MSNBC says that some opponents of socialism are racists
- How Obamacare turns American taxpayers into children
- Are coerced abortions and euthanasia part of Obama's health care plan?
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William Dembski answers the top 3 objections to intelligent design

August 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

New podcast from the ID the Future podcast. (RSS feed)

The MP3 file is here.

Here are the objections he addressed:

1. Just because something is unlikely doesn't mean that it was designed because improbable things occur all the time.
2. You can't infer design if the object is sub-optimally designed, or exhibits evil
3. But intelligent design is just re-packaged creationism

I worry about Dr. Dembski because he takes a lot of heat from these evolutionists, who are not fit to shine his shoes. But he sounds very happy and comfortable in this podcast, so I was very happy.

William Dembski's new book

OK, everybody knows that I am an old-earth creationist and a strong supporter of intelligent design. Whenever some tries to tell me that the doctrine of the Fall explains all the evil in the world, I just roll my eyes and fold my arms. Because that's just young-earth stuff, right? WRONG!

Check out the endorsements for Bill's new book "The End of Christianity: Finding a Good God in an Evil World". Bill accepts the standard dating, as do I, but he obviously does not accept evolution, and neither do I.

- Amazon.com link
- Introductory material from Bill's web site
- Endorsements

Well, I went straight to the endorsements. Everybody who is anybody is raving about this book, including some real heavy hitters like Don Page at the University of Alberta.

Here are a few of the endorsers:

- Frank Turek
- Hank Hanegraaff
- Douglas Groothuis
- Michael Licona
- Gary R. Habermas
- Peter S. Williams
- Chuck Colson
- Norman Geisler

- John A. Bloom
- Steve Fuller
- Henry F. Schaefer III
- Josh and Sean McDowell
- Stephen T. Davis
- Don Page
- J. P. Moreland

I noticed he's got TWO *peer-reviewed papers* on intelligent design that will be in print shortly. Here's the first one and here's the second one.

Ken Ham says that I am right about how to fix the church

Oh, I get a lot of flack from mean young-earth people who tell me that I am wrong to emphasize apologetics, and that I should really be focusing on praise songs and worship instead. (I am kidding!) But Ken Ham did some surveys of young people and he says that singing is *dead last* in the list of things that young people want in church. And he also says that apologetics is the answer for curing the the mass exodus of young people from the church.

The MP3 file is here. (35 minutes, 14 megs)

Listen to the last 10 minutes, especially.

Well, I agree with Ken Ham on that much, at least! Bet you'd never thought I would agree with him on anything!

(By the way, I know how kids think. I used to be a volunteer camp counselor, volunteer swimming instructor, volunteer athletic supervisor, volunteer apologetics instructor, paid math teacher, and paid math tutor)

India lowers income taxes and increases deductions for savings

August 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The story is here from the Times of India, sent to me by Shalini.

Changes to tax rates

Here are the current tax rates:

> Now 10 per cent is levied on incomes of Rs 1.6-3 lakh, 20 per cent on Rs 3-5 lakh and 30 per cent above Rs 5 lakh.

Here are the new rates:

> The government on Wednesday initiated radical tax reforms through a draft code that aims at moderating income tax rates, abolishing Securities Transaction Tax and increasing deduction for savings up to Rs three lakh. The new Direct Taxes Code has suggested a significant expansion of personal income-tax slabs, with levels of relief going up with incomes.
>
> Releasing the Direct Taxes Code that will ultimately replace the over four-decades old Income Tax Act and bring all other direct taxes like wealth tax under its purview, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee today said if reasonable level of discussion happens on the code, a bill could be placed in the winter session of Parliament.
>
> **The Code said that the 10 per cent tax rate should apply to an annual income of Rs 1.6-10 lakh per annum and the 20 per cent rate to Rs 10-25 lakh.**
>
> **The maximum rate of 30 per cent, it added, should apply to income above Rs 25 lakh per annum.**
>
> The new rates, it said, "are expected to yield the existing level of revenues with the revised comprehensive tax base proposed in this code".

Indian tax brackets

Here are my calculations… are they wrong?

First bracket (10%): 1.6 to 10 lakh = 10 x 100,000 rupees = 1,000,000 rupees = up to 20,000 USD.

Second bracket (20%): 10 to 25 lakh = 10 x 100,000 rupees = 1,000,000 rupees = up to 50,000 USD.

Third bracket (30%): over 25 lakh = 10 x 100,000 rupees = 1,000,000 rupees = over 50,000 USD.

Changes to encourage more saving

Not only are they slashing income tax rates but they are increasing the deductions for

savings.

I can’t believe this. India is doing everything *RIGHT* and we are doing everything *WRONG*. Even Canada is signing free trade deals, while Inspector Clouseau is trying to make us into North Korea. India is buying arms, we’re cutting the F-22 and missile defense.

How is government-run health care working out in Canada?

August 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

This Vancouver Sun story was linked at Unambigously Ambidextrous and the Heritage Foundation. (H/T DJ)

Excerpt:

> Dr. Brian Brodie, president of the BC Medical Association, called the proposed surgical cuts "a nightmare."
>
> "Why would you begin your cost-cutting measures on medically necessary surgery? I just can't think of a worse place," Brodie said.
>
> According to the leaked document, Vancouver Coastal — which oversees the budget for Vancouver General and St. Paul's hospitals, among other health-care facilities — is looking to close nearly a quarter of its operating rooms starting in September and to cut 6,250 surgeries, including 24 per cent of cases scheduled from September to March and 10 per cent of all medically necessary elective procedures this fiscal year.

Now consider this story about elderly patients and euthaaisia, from the Washington Examiner. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> "I recommend that you seriously consider a "do not resuscitate" order, said the seemingly nice man in the white coat. "He has diminishing quality of life. And, if he has an infection or illness, we can provide comfort care for him."
>
> […]An emergency room doctor made similar comments. She suggested that I did not need to feed him now that he was unable to feed himself–in essence suggesting euthanasia for a man who simply had an infection treatable with

> antibiotics.
>
> […]Despite the persistent infection, Dad was discharged because his temperature fell one-tenth of one point below the Medicare guideline for hospitalization. I begged the doctor to let him stay, citing his Blue Cross Blue Shield coverage. The doctor insisted that Medicare ruled and that my father was safer outside of the hospital where he would be less likely to contract a secondary infection.
>
> I did what most people do; I trusted the authoritative person in the white coat. It was a fatal mistake. The lingering infection led to complications that killed him a few weeks later.

Rationing of care to the elderly is already taking place in government-run programs like Medicare. I don't think we should expand government control any further.

This is the problem with making health care "free". Everybody wants to use it. So demand is HIGH. But the government doesn't have unlimited money, so supply is LOW. That's why there is a SHORTAGE. And that's why waiting lists, rationing, euthanasia and service cuts are needed.

India launches nuclear-powered submarine!

August 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

And it's a boomer! 12 ballistic missiles!

Congratulations to India! First massive tax cuts, now peace through strength! You're on a roll!

Story here from the Russian newspaper RIA Novosti.

Excerpt:

> MOSCOW, July 26 (RIA Novosti) – India launched its first nuclear-powered submarine on Sunday for sea trials, national media reported.
>
> The launch ceremony of the 6,000-ton INS Arihant (Destroyer of Enemies) was attended by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his wife Gursharan Kaur, the Times of India said.
>
> **The submarine completes India's nuclear triad, making it the sixth country after the U.S., Russia, China, France and the U.K. to have land, air and sea-based nuclear strike capability.**
>
> **The submarine will be armed with torpedoes and missiles, including 12 ballistic missiles, and can also be armed with cruise missiles, the paper said.** It is powered by an 85-MW reactor, and can reach a submerged speed of 44 km/h (24 knots). It will carry 95 crewmembers.
>
> The long-running project to build the submarine, completed with Russian help, is part of a $2.9-billion plan to build five submarines.
>
> The design was based on a Charlie 1 submarine that India leased from the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. Sea trials and weapons tests will take place in the Bay of Bengal, and the submarine is expected to enter service in two or three years.

Did you miss the earlier story about Canada's new free trade deal with Panama, and their tracking of 2 Russian Akula-class nuclear submarines off the east coast?

MUST-SEE: Conservative British MEP Daniel Hannan trashes Obamacare

August 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You remember Daniel Hannan, don't you? Well he's done some interviews *this week*.

Here he is explaining Britain's government-run health care system (the NHS) to Glenn Beck. (H/T Moonbattery)

And here he is on Sean Hannity:

Previous videos featuring Daniel Hannan

On Glenn Beck: (March 25, 2009)

On Sean Hannity: (March 27, 2009)

Here was the rant that made him famous, where he spoke the turth to the leftist Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

This guy is not even a real conservative – *he backed Obama* in the 2008 election! But at least he understands small government and free market capitalism.

Why do we have to make the same mistakes that all the European countries made decades ago?

MUST-LISTEN: Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse explains basic economics!

August 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow, I thought that her earlier podcast on marriage and family was good.

This new podcast is a MUST for social-conservatives who nevertheless like big government, taxing the rich, public schools, and single-payer health care. I listened to this twice already, and it's going to become one of my favorites for sure!

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- The study of economics is anti-postmodern – there is objective truth independent of what people think
- The study of economics believes in fixed principles of human nature
- Economics studies the allocation of scarce resources that have alternative uses
- Economics studies how people exchange resources
- How both people who engage in a voluntary trade always believe that they will be better off
- How both people who engage in a voluntary trade both benefit from the exchange
- How incentives motivate people to act
- Understanding supply and demand
- Understanding how "free" government services are rationed
- Understanding opportunity costs
- How prices signal producers to produce more or less, and consumers to buy or not buy
- Market-driven prices versus price controls
- The role of substitution
- The necessity of allowing failure in a free market

The requirements of economic growth:

- private property
- contracts
- the profit motive
- competition
- free trade
- entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation
- the rule of law

DOWNLOAD THE PODCAST. LISTEN TO THE PODCAST. REPEAT.

The Ruth Institute accepts donations. I sent her TWO already this year. She does on-campus events, just like William Lane Craig. If you want to have an impact on the

university, she should be considered for funding.

You can find more economics lectures at the Acton Institute.

Michele Bachmann needs help raising funds for her next campaign

August 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

Commenter James notified me that the Democrats have made the lovely Michele Bachmann their number one target! Please, I'm begging you all – considering sending Michele a small donation. She is my favorite House Representative. And not just because she's the prettiest. Or because she's the smartest. Or because she loves children the most. It's because she loves Christian apologetics, social conservatism AND free market capitalism. She's perfect!

You can view some videos of her passionate, articulate speeches here if you need convincing.

Here's the full text of appeal for contributions:

Dear Friend:

Last month, I appeared on Sean Hannity's show on Fox News Channel. I was talking about the Democrats' latest scheme to pick the taxpayer's pocket to pay for a $1.5-billion slush fund for ACORN.Before getting into the meat of this terrible new anti-taxpayer proposal, **Sean Hannity said that he considers me "the second most hated Republican woman," second only to Governor Sarah Palin.**

With Governor Palin taking a well-deserved step out of the spotlight, it appears that I may be absorbing even more of the liberals' scorn.And, I'd really appreciate your support so that I can defend myself against their attacks.

I'm out there every day speaking the truth about their attempts to guide this nation into socialism:

- Their government-run health care proposal that will put government bureaucrats in between you and your doctor and end up rationing care — and the most vulnerable will suffer first and most.
- Their cap-and-trade national energy tax that will drive up energy costs for every American and send our jobs overseas.
- Their spending spree that has pushed the national budget deficit over the $1 trillion mark for the first time in our history. We're already closing in on $2 trillion and there's no end in sight to their spending.
- Their dozens of White House czars with power over your lives and futures and absolutely no accountability to Congress or the people.
- And, speaking of unaccountable — when are they going to open up the Fed's books to the public?
- Their political patronage to groups like ACORN — doling out billions of your tax dollars and partnering with them to collect your private information for the Census.

But just as they did with Sarah Palin, the more I talk about the issues, the more they attack with below-the-belt personal hits. In fact, yesterday, a Minnesota paper gave a full column to a hit piece on one of my kids!

Can you help me to defend against these attacks? Click here to make a donation!

I'll tell you the truth: Their sticks and stones will not stop me from going out and speaking the truth about their bad policies! And, your support really helps!God bless and thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Congresswoman Michele Bachmann

Please help her out if you can! There is no one else like her!

British tax and benefit system favors single parents over married couples

August 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM found this article by Carolyn Moynihan on MercatorNet.

Excerpt:

> An analysis of 98 couples with different earnings and numbers of children carried out by the charity Care showed that 76 of the couples would be better off if they split up and claimed welfare benefits that average £8007. Increasingly it is middle-income families where both parents work that suffer this "couple penalty".
>
> […]Many do stay single — but they have children anyway, which entitles them to tax credits that take account of only one working adult per household.
>
> Last year Labour MP Frank Field calculated that a single mother on the minimum wage with two children under eleven would get a weekly income of £487 if she worked 16 hours a week. A two-parent family with one earner would have to put in 116 hours of work on the same pay to get the same money.
>
> It would be a poor sort of marriage that could break under the "pressure" of the partners receiving less in the way of tax breaks than the solo mum down the road (who has other disadvantages, to be sure) — as the Daily Mail suggests — but the messages being sent out are certainly not supportive of marriage as the best environment for children growing up.
>
> The Conservative Party has promised to give back tax breaks to married couples.

This is how big government discourages marriage. The left-wing parties get elected by promising to help the poor. They help the poor by confiscating the wealth from married couples and giving it to single mothers. People see this wealth redistribution, and they stop marrying in order to get more money for doing less work. The children suffer from being raised without a father. This is called "compassion".

Christians! Stop being ignorant! If you want to do some good in the world, do it with your own money. Don't give it to a secular government who will try to solve the problem without any awareness of the moral law or human nature. Secular-left elites can't solve social problems because *they have no wisdom*. Solve the problem yourself!

Friday night funny: Steven Crowder, unions, health care

August 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Steven Crowder interviews members of the angry mob in Denton, TX.

I've always wanted to live in Texas. Just not in Austin, duh. Denton is good because of Denton Bible Church. They host debates.

Unions

Stop the ACLU reports on how the Teamsters Union is trying to prevent a worker's union from striking. (H/T ECM)

Cartoons

From iowntheworld.com:

We're dead.

And a bird cartoon from ECM! I love birds, but cats are horrible.

Bad idea
Happy Friday!

The increase in tropical storms and hurricanes is NOT due to global warming

August 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

NASA's NOAA notes a new study published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Climate*. (H/T Watts Up With That via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A NOAA-led team of scientists has found that the apparent increase in the number of tropical storms and hurricanes since the late 19th and early 20th centuries is likely attributable to improvements in observational tools and analysis techniques that better detect short-lived storms.
>
> The new study, reported in the online edition of the American Meteorological Society's peer-reviewed *Journal of Climate*, shows that short-lived tropical storms and hurricanes, defined as lasting two days or less, have increased from less than one per year to about five per year from 1878 to 2008.
>
> **"The recent jump in the number of short-lived systems is likely a consequence of improvements in observational tools and analysis techniques," said Chris Landsea, science and operations officer at NOAA's National Hurricane Center in Miami, and lead author on the study. "The team is not aware of any natural variability or greenhouse warming-induced climate change that would affect the short-lived tropical storms exclusively."**
>
> […]When the researchers discounted the number of short-lived tropical storms and hurricanes and added the estimated number of missed medium- to long-lived storms to the historical hurricane data, they found no significant long-term trend in the total number of storms.

The paper is online at the NOAA.gov web site.

Why are sentences for domestic violence committed by women so lenient?

August 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this article by Hans Bader of the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

I feel terrible about how unfairly men are treated when they are victims of domestic violence. I think that a lot of men are going to be put off of marriage when stories like the ones in the article become widely known.

Here is an excerpt from the article:

> Mothers who kill their children often serve little jail time. Gender stereotypes lead people to believe that any woman who kills her kid must have done so as a result of duress or insanity. Andrea Yates ultimately escaped punishment after methodically drowning her five children one by one in a bathtub. A Prince William County woman guilty of stabbing her five daughters received less than three years in jail (after her lawyer ridiculously claimed the children should not be deprived of their mother!).
>
> A woman who used poison to paralyze her daughter, enabling her husband to then kick her conscious-but-immobilized daughter to death, escaped penalty by pleading "battered woman syndrome."
>
> […]Battered woman syndrome has become an excuse to kill not only children, but also innocent non-relatives. A California woman got her lover to kill an innocent man by falsely telling him that the man was her paramour. She then had her murder conviction overturned by the California Court of Appeal. How? She claimed that "battered women's syndrome" made her do it.
>
> […]According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' study of large urban counties, wives who kill their husbands without provocation get only seven years in prison, on average, compared to a more reasonable 17 years in prison for husbands who kill their wives without provocation.
>
> […]For a glaring example of gender bias in the courts (and the media), you need look no further than *The Washington Post* story by Tamara Jones, in which she commiserates with convicted felon Teressa Turner-Schaefer, who spent a mere 11 months in jail for killing her husband after an argument.
>
> Now Turner-Schaefer gets to collect $400,000 in life insurance for killing her husband. In a plea bargain, she pleaded guilty to the crime of involuntary manslaughter, which, amazingly enough, doesn't bar you from collecting life insurance taken out on the person you killed.

There are many more horrible stories in the article about children and men being assaulted and murdered by women. The crimes are not being punished fairly. It discourages me greatly that most women don't seem to be up in arms defending men

when injustices like this happen. Actually, the man is usually blamed for the violence committed against him by the woman.

I think it is particularly shocking how Christians have nothing to say about this.

Is government more efficient than the private sector?

August 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When it comes to providing quality services at the lowest cost, private firms are very different from government bureaucracies. A private firm has to compete in an open marketplace where consumers are free to shop around for the best deal. So a private firm has to provide more quality at a lower price or consumers will take their business to a competitor! And the owners and employees share in the profits or losses. They have an incentive to cut costs, raise quality and lower prices. They have a stake in pleasing the customer.

But what about government? Do they have competitors that pressure them lower costs and raise quality? Do the people who run the government benefit financially if they please customers? Do employees of the government benefit if they please customers? Do customers have the freedom to buy from someone else if they are not happy with the price or quality of government services?

Consider this Washington Times story. (H/T John Stossel via ECM)

Excerpt:

> *An audit of the government's legal aid program for the poor concluded Monday that the purchase of more than $188,000 worth of imported Italian stone to decorate one of the program's office buildings in Texas was unnecessary and excessive…*
>
> *The inspector general of the Legal Services Corp.(LSC) said the stone, which adorns three full stories of a newly remodeled Fort Worth office building, "appears only to be decorative in nature" and does not constitute a "reasonable and necessary" expense.*

If a private firm wasted money like this, they would go out of business. The directors and employees who run private firms never waste money like this! If they did, the private firm would go out of business. But the government wastes money like this *all the time*. It's not their money, after all – it's *your money*. Why should they spend it wisely? What's in it for them?

And they're aren't exactly accountable when they get caught wasting taxpayer money, either.

> *The inspector general quoted officials involved with the Texas program as defending the purchase, saying the high-end imported stone was selected for its beautiful finish and installed as a decorative flourish.*

And this applies to government-run health care, too. Why should be expect government to cut health care costs when they have no *incentive* to be efficient? Private firms have

an incentive – to keep their jobs, to be promoted, to get raises, etc. Government has *no incentive* to be efficient.

Obama tells Mexico that opponents of amnesty are “demagogues”

August 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> At a joint press conference with Mexican President Felipe Calderon and the Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper in Guadalajara, Mexico on Monday, President Barack Obama referred to American opponents of amnesty for illegal aliens as “demagogues.”
>
> […]Obama was asked by a reporter whether “given the fight that you’re having to wage for health care, I wonder if you can tell us what you think the prospects are for immigration reform, for comprehensive immigration reform, which you’ve said is your goal; and whether you think that the blows you’re taking now on health care and that the Democrats are likely to take around the midterm elections will make it hard, if not impossible, to achieve comprehensive immigration reform in this term and what you’ve told President Calderón about that?”
>
> Obama gave a long answer indicating that he believed he could secure an immigration reform package that included a “pathway to citizenship” for illegal immigrants. In his answer, he characterized opponents of this “pathway” as “demagogues.”
>
> “Now, am I going to be able to snap my fingers and get this done? No,” said Obama. “This is going to be difficult; it’s going to require bipartisan cooperation. There are going to be demagogues out there who try to suggest that any form of pathway for legalization for those who are already in the United States is unacceptable. And those are fights that I’d have to have if my poll numbers are at 70 or if my poll numbers are at 40. That’s just the nature of the U.S. immigration debate.

Offering a pathway to citizenship for illegal aliens while restricting the legal path to citizenship is unconscionable. We should be encouraging *legal immigration* of skilled immigrants, who come here legally to work and who respect our laws.

How do we know that some parts of DNA really are non-functional?

August 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this post from Uncommon Descent about DNA and software design.

Perhaps I should begin by explaining explaining how software is made. The customer gives you a list of use case, which are descriptions of things that you expect the finished software to do. This list of expected system behaviors is called the "functional requirements". There are also "non-functional requirements" that the user will not see, such as how easily the components of the system can be maintained or tested.

Now consider the post by William Dembski. He writes:

> One of the main arguments to support evolution appeals to shared non-functional structures between organisms. Since design entails design for function, shared non-functional structures would suggest common ancestry in the absence of common design. But how can we tell whether something is truly non-functional?

Then he cites an e-mail sent to him by a software engineer, who explains how a lot of code is included to address exception handling and non-functional concerns.

> As a programmer, sometimes I spend a lot of time designing error-detection and/or error-correction algorithms (especially for dealing with user input). Some of these functions may never, ever be used in a real-life situation. There are also various subroutines and functions that provide either exotic or minor capabilities that, likewise, maybe be used very seldom if at all. But they are there for a reason. Good programming practice requires considerable extra design and implementation of features that may only rarely, if ever, be used.
>
> If someone were to cut out and eliminate these sections of code, repairing what's left so that the program still functions, the program may work perfectly well for just about all situations. But there are some situations that, without the snipped code, would create havoc if the program tried to call on a function that was no longer there or that was replaced by some different function that tried to take its place. (Ask yourself what percent of the functionality of your spreadsheet or word processor program you use, and then ask if you would even notice if some of the lesser-known functionality were removed.)
>
> I think biological life is like that. It seems to me that if some DNA code can be successfully removed with no apparent effects, one possibility is that the removed portion is rarely used, or the impact of it not being there has effects that are masked or otherwise hidden.
>
> Perhaps redundancy is what was removed, meaning the organism will now not be quite as robust in all situations as before. I can give a kidney to someone else and suffer no ill effect whatsoever… until my remaining kidney fails and cannot

> be helped by the redundant one that I gave up (which situation may never, ever really occur due to my general good health).
>
> P.S. Being able to snip something with no apparent ill effect may in fact provide support for ID by showing that the system was so well engineered that it could automatically adjust to a certain degree, and in most cases completely (apparently). It would be interesting to see some ID research into some of the evo cases that are being used to support the various flavors of junk DNA, to see what REALLY happens long term with the new variety now missing something snipped.

Sometimes, I forget that most of the world is trying to assess where biological systems are designed without knowing what engineers know about how the process of engineering.

Consider the example of implementing caching in order to reduce the frequency of network and database calls. Making a call to a remote system over a network can be very slow if there is lot of traffic congestion. The same thing applies to reading from a database or the file system. Engineers have invented a solution to this problem called “caching”. This basically means keeping the data you use the most often, or the most recently, in memory. It helps you to avoid looking up the same data over and over.

Notice that caching doesn’t do anything for the functional requirements. Instead, engineers are writing a whole bunch of code to address a non-functional requirement: performance. That caching code still has to be designed, written and tested, but the user will never see it produce any external behavior. In fact, the user will not be aware of the caching module at all!

The etiquette czar's rules for patriotic protest

August 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michelle Malkin's latest column is a must-read.

Michelle has had it with the left's double-standard on questioning government.

Here's a tip from the Democrats for those who disagree with their socialist plans:

> No shouting. Congressional representatives cannot sell Obamacare with mobs of unruly senior citizens and small business owners interrupting to press them on specific sections of the bill. Limit your objections to a library whisper (30dB or less) and only challenge your lawmakers with hushed, dulcet tones. Otherwise, you will scare them and they will be forced to hide behind teleconference calls, sick children at hospitals, or union bosses.
>
> If, on the other hand, you are attending a presidential town hall to show your affection and approbation, "spirited" chanting is acceptable.
>
> Don't: "HANDS OFF HEALTH CARE!" and "READ THE BILL!"
>
> Do: "I LOVE YOU, BARACK!" "AMEN!" and "YES WE CAN!"

And one more:

> No Nazi comparisons. References to fascism are ugly and un-American. Swastikas have no place in debates about nationalizing 20 percent of the economy. Swastikas may, however, still be used as substitutes for the "S" in "BusHitler" and tattoos on the forehead of Darth Cheney.

This is the left. They don't like to be opposed, and they are willing to exercise power to stifle dissent – just the opposite of what Bush did when he faced much stiffer opposition during his 8 years. This suppression of free speech and free debate is *exactly* what goes on on university campuses today. The left is not about using reason and evidence to settle disagreements. They want to crush dissent by using government power.

We need to be really clear about this. When the government takes control of any part of the private economy, it is socialism. When the individual earns less money because of high taxes, and is legally obligated to buy goods and services from *one* service provider, (the government), then he has lost his liberty. That is fascism. Democrat policies lead to socialism, and socialism leads to fascism.

Choosing my religion: why I am not a Muslim

August 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've decided to spend some time writing extremely short explanations about why I am an evangelical Protestant Christian instead of anything else.

I have two aims.

First, I want show how an honest person can evaluate rival religions using the laws of logic, scientific evidence and historical evidence. Second, I want people who are not religious to understand that religions are either true or it is false. Religions should not be chosen based where you were born, what your parents believed, or what resonates with you. A religion should be embraced for the same reason as the theory of gravity is embraced: because it reflects the way the world really is.

Why I am not a Muslim

1. To be a Muslim, you must believe that the Koran is without error.
2. The Koran claims that Jesus did not die on a cross. (Qur'an, 4: 157-158)
3. The crucifixion of Jesus is virtually undisputed among non-Muslim historians, including atheist historians.
4. Therefore, it is not rational for me to become a Muslim.

The data

Consider some quotes from the (mostly) non-Christian scholars below:

> "Jesus' death as a consequence of crucifixion is indisputable." Gert Lüdemann
>
> "That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be." J.D. Crossan
>
> "The passion of Jesus is part of history." Geza Vermes
>
> Jesus' death by crucifixion is "historically certain". Pinchas Lapide
>
> "The single most solid fact about Jesus' life is his death: he was executed by the Roman prefect Pilate, on or around Passover, in the manner Rome reserved particularly for political insurrectionists, namely, crucifixion." Paula Fredriksen
>
> "The support for the mode of his death, its agents, and perhaps its co-agents, is overwhelming: Jesus faced a trial before his death, was condemned, and was executed by crucifixion." L.T. Johnson
>
> "One of the most certain facts of history is that Jesus was crucified on orders of the Roman prefect of Judea, Ponitus Pilate." Bart Ehrman

That's 7 famous historians: 3 atheists, 3 Jews and 1 moderate Catholic. Ludemann, Crossan and Ehrman have all debated against the resurrection of Jesus with William Lane Craig. The Koran was written in the 7th century. That is why no professional historian accepts the Koran as more authoritative than the many earlier Christian and non-Christian sources for the crucifixion story. Many of the sources for the crucifixion are

dated to the 1st century.

So that’s one reason why I am not a Muslim.

Canadians moving to allow more private options for health care

August 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Associate Press. (H/T Newsbusters)

Excerpt:

> The incoming president of the Canadian Medical Association says this country's health-care system is sick and doctors need to develop a plan to cure it.
>
> Dr. Anne Doig says patients are getting less than optimal care and she adds that physicians from across the country – who will gather in Saskatoon on Sunday for their annual meeting – recognize that changes must be made.
>
> "We all agree that the system is imploding, we all agree that things are more precarious than perhaps Canadians realize," Doing said in an interview with The Canadian Press. […]
>
> [Dr. Robert Ouellet, the current president of the CMA] has been saying since his return that "a health-care revolution has passed us by," that it's possible to make wait lists disappear while maintaining universal coverage and "that competition should be welcomed, not feared."
>
> In other words, Ouellet believes there could be a role for private health-care delivery within the public system.

And here is the most important part:

> "(Canadians) have to understand that the system that we have right now – if it keeps on going without change – is not sustainable," said Doig.
>
> "They have to look at the evidence that's being presented and will be presented at (the meeting) and realize what Canada's doctors are trying to tell you, that you can get better care than what you're getting and we all have to participate in the discussion around how do we do that and of course how do we pay for it."

My most recent post on the problems of health care in Canada is here.

Further study

Learn more about health care with my previous posts on health care:

- Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!
- Bobby Jindal explains a dozen freedom-preserving ways to cut health care costs

If the Canadians are running away from single-payer, why are we running towards it?

MUST-READ: Michele Bachmann open to running for President in 2012!

August 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

I normally never link to WND, because they are out on the fringe, but this story seems ok.(H/T Commenter MC)

Let's learn a bit about Michele!

Excerpt:

> She began her political career simply, as a Christian mom concerned about the content of school papers her children brought home in their backpacks, but today she has become one of the leading defenders of liberty and conservative principles on Capitol Hill.
>
> […]Bachmann, a federal tax litigation attorney before serving in elected office, told WND that she is "first and foremost a mother." In the late 90s, the mother of five and foster mom to another 23 children through the years, grew concerned about what her foster kids were bringing home from the public school.
>
> "Through the Goals 2000 program, the federal government was pushing knowledge, facts and information out of classroom study, substituting them with a study of attitudes, values and beliefs," she said, "but not necessarily the values that moms and dads would like."
>
> […]"I started my career in politics believing the federal government should not

> have a role in the classroom," Bachmann told WND. "Going forward, we have to pare back dramatically the size, scope and reach of the federal government. It's extending its hand over almost every area and aspect of people's lives, and that needs to come back if we are to remain free and prosperous. We can't be free and prosperous if we go in the direction we're heading."
>
> […]"I believe in equality of opportunity, not equality of result, and that's the big dividing line between liberals and conservatives," she said. "Conservatives believe that each individual is important and deserves protection of their inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
>
> "These rights come from our creator," she continued, "Government neither gives them nor does government have the power to take them away. … I believe my job as a member of Congress is to secure those inalienable rights.
>
> "The heart and soul of who we are as a nation is in the Declaration of Independence; the Constitution is the framework for how we uphold those rights; and the Bill of Rights goes on to secure those rights to the individual, protecting individual rights from big government," she said.
>
> […]"Over the weekend, I read a 1986 book – 'Destroying Democracy' by James T. Bennett and Thomas J. Dilorenzo – that talked about ACORN's agenda, and it was as fresh as everything President Obama has been advancing since he took office," she said. "Complete nationalization of health care, energy tax, government taking over the economy – now that we have 'bailout nation,' the U.S. government owns or controls 30 percent of the American economy. If Obama gets his way and effectively nationalizes 18 percent of the nation's wealth in healthcare, that will put 48 percent of our economy controlled or owned by the federal [government]. That's outlandish.
>
> "Americans gave got to melt the phone lines of the Democrats on the health care bill," she continued. "If the president gets his way with nationalized health care, it will be almost impossible to ever turn it back and restore to us our freedom."
>
> […]Bachmann explained much of the ridicule she endures is because powerful women with conservative views don't fit liberals' desired image.
>
> "I'm not afraid to be a social or fiscal conservative, and that doesn't fit their template," she told WND. "Democrats see women as yet one more dependency group, but I defy that. I don't need government programs to succeed. I worked my way through college, my husband and I started our own business, and we didn't need the government to be the answer.
>
> "I also think they're upset that I'm willing to go on radio and TV shows and call them out on their policies," she continued. "They've thrown just about everything they can throw at me and they haven't prevailed yet, and I think that infuriates them."

And would she run for President?

> “If I felt that’s what the Lord was calling me to do, I would do it,” she answered. “When I have sensed that the Lord is calling me to do something, I’ve said yes to it. But I will not seek a higher office if God is not calling me to do it. That’s really my standard.
>
> “If I am called to serve in that realm I would serve,” she concluded, “but if I am not called, I wouldn’t do it.”

She is probably the politician who best reflects my views across the board. She understands what policies men want. And she loves Christian apologetics.

Now consider a little more about her revealed by the extremely left-wing Minneapolis Star-Tribune – (probably the worst newspaper on the planet behind the New York Times and Los Angeles Times).

Excerpt:

> Michele Marie Amble was born in 1956 into a family of Norwegian Lutheran Democrats. When she was young, they moved from Iowa to Minnesota, where she was an A student and a cheerleader and had hair to her waist. She was named Miss Congeniality in the Miss Anoka competition.
>
> In 1970, her parents divorced, and her father moved to California.
>
> Her mother, Jean, got a job at the First National Bank in Anoka, earning $4,800 a year — not enough to keep up the payments on their home in Brooklyn Park. She sold the house and moved the family to a small apartment in Anoka.
>
> So when sixth-grader Michele wanted contact lenses, she knew she had to tackle the expense herself.
>
> She began babysitting at 50 cents an hour, stuffing dollar bills and quarters into a small bank in her room for two years until, in the summer before ninth grade, she’d earned enough.
>
> Then, one afternoon as she bicycled along West River Road, a contact lens flew out of her eye.
>
> She and her mother got down on their hands and knees, peering at every glint in the gravel, hoping that they wouldn’t have to start pawing through the brush that hemmed the highway. Finally, they rose, empty-handed, to a loss that felt enormous. Somehow, Jean found the money to buy a replacement, recalling that she could hardly let her daughter’s determination go unrewarded.

Pamela Geller of Atlas Shrugs interviewed her, and so did World Magazine.

She is accepting contributions for her Senate race here.

You can view some videos of her passionate, articulate speeches here if you need convincing.

Jennifer Lynch flies to Ireland to ask lawyers to help her to crush free speech

August 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Vancouver Sun. (H/T Big Blue Wave)

Jennifer Lynch is the Chief Censor at the Canadian Human Rights Commission. She flew off to Dublin, Ireland on the Canadian taxpayer's dime to tell the lawyers of the left-wing Canadian Bar Association that she needed their help. I guess that suppressing the free speech of ordinary Canadians is hard work, and people are so mean to her – always complaining about her travel expenses and the six figure legal fees they have to pay when they are put on trial for hurting the feelings of thin-skinned Canadian leftists.

Excerpt:

> Jennifer Lynch, head of the Canadian Human Rights Commission since 2007, told the Canadian Bar Association's annual meeting that opponents of rights bodies have successfully created a "chill" that makes it difficult for anyone to defend those bodies without also becoming a target…
>
> She urged them to write "letters to correct misinformation," encourage other experts to participate in the debate and promote public education of the role of rights commissions and tribunals in the justice system.

How Human Rights Commissions hurt religious liberty

- **NEW!** The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

Learn more about the Canadian free speech crisis

- Mark Steyn radio interview and previous Ezra Levant debate
- Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn on Milt Rosenberg's radio show
- Ezra Levant videos from the Michael Coren TV show, here.
- Evan Sayet's speeches on how progressives think

Link round-up

Blazing Cat Fur has a round-up of links here:

Ezra Levant: They're laughing at you in Dublin Jennifer
Mark Steyn: Jennifer Lynch- please send reinforcements
Freedom Through Truth: Fire When Ready
Deborah Gyapong: Jennifer Lynch's Dublin whine tour
Moose & Squirrel: Lynching the help of lawyers

Ferreras J Dissenting: Jennifer Lynch isn't just a Cry Baby
Jay Currie: Jennifer Lynch is Pathetic
Scaramouche – Lynch Looks to Lawyers
Denyse O'Leary: Give the CHRCs something worthwhile to do
Five Feet of Fury: Make the life of Canada's Censor in Chief miserable
Dr. Roy: Lynch calls for lawyers to defend thought police
Scary Fundamentalist: Late to the Party

Here is a breakdown of some of the costs of her globe-hopping from Miss Nixon. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

CRISIS: Obama administration files court papers against the Defense of Marriage Act

August 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Associated Press. (H/T Breitbart)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration filed court papers Monday claiming a federal marriage law discriminates against gays, even as government lawyers continue to defend the law.
>
> […]In the court papers, the administration urges the repeal of the law but says in the meantime, government lawyers will continue to defend it as a law on the books.
>
> […]"The administration believes the Defense of Marriage Act is discriminatory and should be repealed," said Justice Department spokeswoman Tracy Schmaler, because it prevents equal rights and benefits.
>
> The law, often called DOMA, denies federal recognition of gay marriage and gives states the right to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states.
>
> Obama has pledged to work to repeal the law.

I have written before about the real reasons why people oppose same-sex marriage: because it is bad for children and because it is bad for liberty. So, by extension, everyone who voted for Obama is (effectively) voting against the well-being of children and against liberty, especially religious liberty and freedom of speech. Obviously most of them don't know what they are voting for, but that's their own fault for not studying hard enough.

At this point, it may be worth recalling all the "Christians" who voted for the most pro-abortion President ever, and who have now voted for the most anti-family, anti-marriage, anti-child President ever.

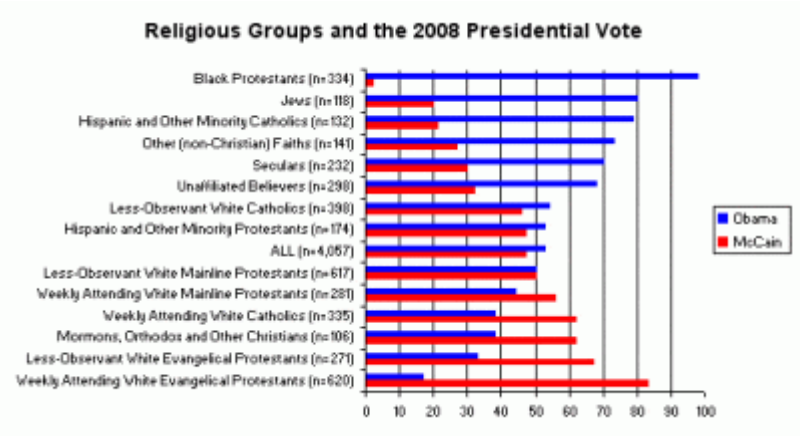

2008 voting broken by religious groups
(Click for larger image)

Part of the reason that I am disappointed with the church is because they never discuss anything related to the real world. Too much time is spent on inwardly-focused practices like singing. And then the “Bible-believing Christians” go out and vote for Democrat candidates who oppose authentic Christianity (and religious liberty itself). They seem do vote Democrat on the basis of vague feelings of compassion, which causes them to support big government social programs instead of individual charity.

I wonder if the pastors will finally learn their lesson when the state jails them for refusing to perform same-sex marriages or for citing the Bible? Or will they just compromise on moral issues tomorrow, the same way they compromise on intellectual rigor today? It was so easy to invent nice-sounding justifications for dismissing apologetics from the church. I am sure they will find it easy to justify same-sex marriage and abortion in time, in order to keep the pews filled. Just look at Rick Warren.

And I think the root of the problem is the unwillingness to talk about evidence for and against Christianity in the church, to show debates and to host public debates as well. If Christianity is not real, then people are not going to integrate their faith with the rest of their lives outside of church in the real world. And that real world includes the voting booth.

Note: I am angry. To my regular commenters, please cut me some slack. I went to church again on Sunday and it was fine. (Mostly useless, but not heretical). But right now, I am incensed at the spiritual malpractice that led to “Christians” voting for a thoroughly *anti-Christian* candidate for President.

Choosing my religion: why I am not a Hindu

August 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've decided to spend some time writing extremely short explanations about why I am an evangelical Protestant Christian instead of anything else.

I have two aims.

First, I want show how an honest person can evaluate rival religions using the laws of logic, scientific evidence and historical evidence. Second, I want people who are not religious to understand that religions are either true or it is false. Religions should not be chosen based where you were born, what your parents believed, or what resonates with you. A religion should be embraced for the same reason as the theory of gravity is embraced: because it reflects the way the world really is.

Why I am not a Hindu

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

So that's one reason why I am not a Hindu.

(The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with Buddhism, Mormonism, etc. because they also require an eternally existing universe)

Muslim girl in Ohio converts to Christianity and escapes abusive parents

August 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Rifqa's hearing is today (September 3, 2009). Please click here for the updated story.

UPDATE: The latest update on Rifqa is here (October 13, 2009).

Check out this story of a young girl from Ohio who converted to Christianity and fled to Florida from her Muslim parents. She hitchhiked to the bus station and took a Greyhound from Ohio to Florida because she was afraid that her father would carry out his threats to murder her.

Here's the video:

The transcript of the video is here on Jihad Watch.

Excerpt:

> Well, I'm a Christian, and my parents are Muslim. They're extremely devout. And they can't know about my faith – well, they do now. But they've threatened to kill me. I don't know if you know about honor killing….You guys don't understand. Islam is very different than you guys think. They have to kill me. My blood is now halal, which means that because I am now a Christian, I'm from a Muslim background, it's an honor. If they love God more than me, they have to do this. And I'm fighting for my life, you guys don't understand. You don't understand.

Pamela Geller of Atlas Shrugs reports that the child suffered violent beatings from her parents that were reported to the school counselors. The parents attend a very hard-line mosque (the "Noor Islamic Cultural Center") that taught Islamic supremacy.

You can read more about the mosque here at the Jawa Report.

Jihad Watch has information on what you can do to make sure she is not killed by her parents:

Contact Governor Charlie Crist today:

Phone Calls to (850) 488-7146
Fax letters to (850) 487-0801
or Email him at Charlie.Crist@MyFlorida.com

The Florida Department of Children and Families

George H. Sheldon, Secretary
1317 Winewood Blvd.
Building 1, Room 202
Tallahassee, Florida
Fax: (850) 922-2993

Jihad Watch and Atlas Shrugs have lots of posts up about this story!

UPDATE: Good news about this story can be found here.

Two women imprisoned in Iran for converting to Christianity get their day in court

August 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The story is here. (H/T Reasonable Faith)

Excerpt:

> In a dramatic session before the revolutionary court today in Tehran, Maryam Rustampoor (27) and Marzieh Amirizadeh (30) were told to recant their faith in Christ. Though great pressure was put on them, both women declared that they would not deny their faith. Maryam and Marzieh were originally arrested on March 5, 2009 and have suffered greatly while in prison, suffering ill health, solitary confinement and interrogations for many hours while blindfolded.
>
> […]Mr. Haddad, asked the two women if they were Christians. "We love Jesus," they replied. He repeated his question and they said, "Yes, we are Christians."
>
> Mr. Haddad then said, "You were Muslims and now you have become Christians."
>
> "We were born in Muslim families, but we were not Muslims," was their reply.
>
> Mr. Haddad's questioning continued and he asked them if they regretted becoming Christians, to which they replied, "We have no regrets."
>
> Then he stated emphatically, "You should renounce your faith verbally and in written form." They stood firm and replied, "We will not deny our faith."
>
> During one tense moment in the questioning, Maryam and Marzieh made reference to their belief that God had convicted them through the Holy Spirit. Mr. Haddad told them, "It is impossible for God to speak with humans."
>
> Marzieh asked him in return, "Are you questioning whether God is Almighty?"
>
> Mr. Haddad then replied, "You are not worthy for God to speak to you."
>
> Marzieh said, "It is God, and not you, who determines if I am worthy."
>
> Mr. Haddad told the women to return to prison and think about the options they were given and come back to him when they are ready (to comply). Maryam and Marzieh said, "We have already done our thinking."

Read the whole thing. Please pray for these two brave women, and consider sending a donation to Answering Muslims.

What are the differences between Wesleyan Arminianism and Calvinism?

August 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Time for a little in house debate between Protestants in preparation for my dangerous posts on “Why I am not a Catholic” and “Why I am not a Calvinist”, which will lose me 90% of my Christian readers. Sigh. I don’t want to lose any readers, but I like to be me!

Anyway…

I spotted this article over on Birds of the Air blog. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

Classical Wesleyan Arminianism:

1. Humans are naturally unable to make any effort towards salvation
2. Salvation is possible by grace alone
3. Works of human effort cannot cause or contribute to salvation
4. God’s election is conditional on faith in Jesus
5. Jesus’ atonement was for all people
6. God allows his grace to be resisted by those unwilling to believe
7. Salvation can be lost, as continued salvation is conditional upon continued faith

Standard Calvinism:

1. Total Depravity – After the Fall, human will was given over to sin and is as if it were dead, so that without being “awakened” by the Holy Spirit (the initiator) a human is unable to choose to be saved.
2. Unconditional Election – God’s choice was not determined by anything ever done or to be done by a human; it is a free gift not earned by merit. Under this view, God is the initiator of salvation.
3. Particular Redemption (AKA Limited Atonement) – The blood of Christ was a substitution for the penalty of sin, and was effectual for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, it not only secures but guarantees salvation.
4. The Efficacious Call of the Holy Spirit (AKA Irresistible Grace) – The outward call to salvation is made to all, but the Holy Spirit also places an inward call in the hearts of those who are elected for salvation. The outward call can (and often is) resisted, but the inward call is more powerful than human willpower. The Holy Spirit causes the sinner to respond in faith.
5. Perseverance of the Saints – The Holy Spirit will keep the believer secured in faith in Christ to the end.

I am basically in agreement with the Classical Arminian view, and I would accept the following points of Calvinism: Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Definite Atonement. I totally disagree with Irresistible Grace. Perseverance of the Saints is fine, except for people who literally reject their former faith. I.e. – you can’t lose your salvation by

committing sins X,Y and Z. I am a 3.99 point Calvinist.

For my non-Christian readers who struggle with understanding why you are assumed to be in rebellion, ask yourself how much of your busy lives you have spent trying sincerely to decide whether God is really there by watching debates, making friends with Christians, visiting church, reading the Bible, praying test prayers, etc. Before God starts to work on you, you are in full flight away from God. That's just the way it is.

When you are at the point of inventing an infinite number of universes to explain the fine-tuning, you'll know what I am talking about. For every 100 non-Christians who starts to make that speculative multiverse reply to the fine-tuning argument, maybe 1 of you closes his mouth and says "ENOUGH".

The doctrine of middle knowledge

And I think Wesleyans like me can recover an extremely robust view of divine sovereignty by invoking the doctrine of middle knowledge. This is the view that God can foresee what any individual will do in any set of circumstances (counterfactuals of creaturely freedom). And he uses this middle knowledge to actualize a world in which everyone who can freely choose to be respond to God's saving initiative will be placed in the exact time and place where they would freely respond.

Consider Paul's defense in Athens on Mars Hill: (in Acts 17:22-31)

22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that
in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your
objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now
what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and
does not live in temples built by hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he
needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.
**26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the
whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places
where they should live. 27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps
reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.** 28 'For in
him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are
his offspring.'

29 "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like
gold or silver or stone—an image made by man's design and skill. 30 In the past God
overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For
he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed.
He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

I've actually stood on Mars Hill, so this is a special, special passage for me.

Without God's actualization of the conditions needed to save each individual person, no one could be saved. And it's more than just the time and place, God has to individually reveal just the right amount of himself to the person in that time, so that they have the

choice to respond without being coerced. So you have unilateral salvation initiated by God, but man is still responsible for rejecting God. It's PERFECT!

If you haven't heard of middle knowledge, I highly recommend that you take a look at it. It solves the problem of reconciling divine foreknowledge, free will and human responsibility. It's kind of new though, so you may not have heard about it unless you are into philosophy of religion research. I went to a Wheaton Philosophy conference which had the Calvinist Paul Helm of Oxford University as the main speaker. He plowed, but the consensus among the audience (90% in the people I surveyed and judging from audience questions) was that middle knowledge was the correct solution to these thorny problems.

Further study

I have to mention this post on Between Two Worlds linked by Muddling Towards Maturity. This has to do with the scope of the atonement.

For whom did Christ Die?

Michael Bird posts three short entries by three different scholars regarding the intent and extent of the atonement:

- Paul Helm (Calvinist View)
- Michael Jensen (Amyraldian View)
- Ben Witherington (Arminian View)

My guy in the race is my favorite historian, Ben Witherington, but I'm not familiar with Jensen. Witherington is highly qualified scholar who is respected and endorsed across the spectrum. He is an evangelical.

I'll be posting something about the atonement later this week.

Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance

August 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A young mother gave birth on a pavement outside a hospital after she was told to make her own way there.
>
> Mother-of-three Carmen Blake called her midwife to ask for an ambulance when she went into labour unexpectedly with her fourth child.
>
> But the 27-year-old claims she was refused an ambulance and told to walk the 100m from her house in Leicester to the city's nearby Royal Infirmary.
>
> **'They said they were not sending an ambulance and told me I had had nine months to sort out a lift.'**
>
> Her daughter Mariah was delivered on a pavement outside the hospital by a passer-by, just before ambulance crews arrived.
>
> Today a spokeswoman for the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust said: 'We are disappointed that Ms Blake was not happy with the advice and care she received and will of course investigate any complaint'.

Another NHS horror story. Is this what we want?

60,000 seniors leave AARP in one month

Looks like those seniors don't take too kindly to being interrogated by death panels.

Story from CBSNews. (H/T Hot Air via Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> CBS News has learned that up to 60,000 people have cancelled their AARP memberships since July 1, angered over the group's position on health care.
>
> Elaine Guardiani has been with AARP for 14 years, and said, "I'm extremely disappointed in AARP."
>
> Retired nurse Dale Anderson has 12 years with AARP and said, "I don't wanna be connected with AARP."
>
> Many are switching to the American Seniors Association, a group that calls itself the conservative alternative as CBS News Investigative Correspondent Sharyl Attkisson reports.

Here is a video of a famous Christian pastor opposing government-run health care.

AWESOME! This goes to show you how a smart pastor like Harry Jackson can really be persuasive.

I just looked him up. He has an MBA from HARVARD UNIVERSITY. All is now clear as spiderwebs.

Choosing my religion: why I am not a Calvinist

August 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've decided to spend some time writing extremely short explanations about why I am an evangelical Protestant Christian instead of anything else.

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Why I am not a Calvinist

1. Calvinism requires the doctrines total depravity, unconditional election and irresistible grace.
2. Humans cannot choose to love God unless God "regenerates" them first.
3. God alone decides whether he will regenerate each person.
4. Regeneration is not conditional on anything that a person does.
5. People are not responsible for whether God chooses to regenerate them.
6. If God does not regenerate a person, then they go to Hell for eternity.
7. God arbitrarily and unilaterally regenerates some people but not others.
8. Therefore, God creates and pre-destines some people to Hell.

For reference, check out the TULIP formulation of Calvinism.

I am not saying that Calvinism is necessarily WRONG, I am just explaining why I am not a Calvinist. Calvinists are typically incredibly smart people, and many of them are at the forefront of evangelism and apologetics. I am not saying that Calvinists are bad people, just that I have a reason for not being one. I hope that my Calvinist readers will not be too angry with me for disagreeing with them on theology. I will try not to test your patience too often like this.

Obama blocks drilling at home, makes loan to Soros-backed firm to drill in Brazil

August 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T This Ain't Hell via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The U.S. is going to lend billions of dollars to Brazil's state-owned oil company, Petrobras, to finance exploration of the huge offshore discovery in Brazil's Tupi oil field in the Santos Basin near Rio de Janeiro. Brazil's planning minister confirmed that White House National Security Adviser James Jones met this month with Brazilian officials to talk about the loan.
>
> The U.S. Export-Import Bank tells us it has issued a "preliminary commitment" letter to Petrobras in the amount of $2 billion and has discussed with Brazil the possibility of increasing that amount. Ex-Im Bank says it has not decided whether the money will come in the form of a direct loan or loan guarantees. Either way, this corporate foreign aid may strike some readers as odd, given that the U.S. Treasury seems desperate for cash and Petrobras is one of the largest corporations in the Americas.

Why create jobs and cheaper energy here at home, when you can create jobs and cheaper energy in Brazil?

Blocking energy production is the Democrats' energy policy

Gateway Pundit adds:

> Team Obama approved a nuclear energy program for the UAE in May.
> ***But,*** Obama and the Pelosi-Reid Democrats will not allow nuclear energy expansion in the United States.
>
> Already this year democrats banned offshore drilling, scrapped oil and gas leases in Utah and opened the 111th Congress by introducing a bill to permanently prohibit drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).
> ***But,*** Team Obama is going to lend billions of dollars to Brazil to finance exploration of its huge offshore oil field discovery.
> Unreal.
>
> […]Over the past 30 years:
>
> Democrats have blocked the development of new sources of petroleum.
> Democrats have blocked drilling in ANWR.
> Democrats have blocked drilling off the coast of Florida.
> Democrats have blocked drilling off of the east coast.
> Democrats have blocked drilling off of the west coast.
> Democrats have blocked drilling off the Alaskan coast.

> Democrats have blocked building oil refineries.
> Democrats have blocked clean nuclear energy production.
> Democrats have blocked clean coal production.

If there is no energy crisis, how can the Democrats trick the public into letting them take control of the free market? You commoners don't really need fancy light bulbs and gas-powered carriages. Those are only for your betters in Washington!

George Soros is heavily invested in Petrobras

Check out this Bloomberg article *dated last Friday*: (H/T Hot Air)

> His New York-based hedge-fund firm, Soros Fund Management LLC, sold 22 million U.S.-listed common shares of Petrobras, as the Brazilian oil company is known, according to a filing today with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Soros bought 5.8 million of the company's U.S.-traded preferred shares.
>
> Soros is taking advantage of the spread between the two types of U.S.-listed Petrobras shares, said Luis Maizel, president of LM Capital Group LLC, which manages about $4 billion. The common shares were 21 percent more expensive than preferred today, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. …
>
> Petrobras preferred shares have also a 10 percent additional dividend, said William Landers, a senior portfolio manager for Latin America at Blackrock Inc.
>
> "Given that there will most likely never be a change in control in the company, I see no reason to pay a higher price for the common shares." Brazil's government controls Petrobras and has a majority stake of voting shares.

Ed Morrissey writes:

> This story is from last Friday. Is it a coincidence that Obama backer George Soros repositioned himself in Petrobras to get dividends just a few days before Obama committed $2 billion in loans and guarantees for Petrobras' offshore operations? *Hmmmmmmmmm*.

On her Facebook page, Sarah Palin is extremely displeased.

MUST-SEE: MSNBC deliberately edits out black protester then complains about racism

August 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hot Air posted this video from the radically left-wing MSNBC.

That wicked, wicked white protester! Why, he is such a nasty racisty racist racist racist racist RACIST!

But wait! Look what MSNBC carefully omitted from their video: (H/T Ace via ECM)

Notice how ignorant these morons are about firearms. The AR-15 that guy is carrying is a single fire rifle, with a magazine capacity strictly regulated by law. It is NOT a machine gun. It is NOT an assault rifle. It cannot fire on full automatic, or even a measly 3-round burst! It is just a plan old hunting rifle that looks cool. That is all. (Full disclosure: I love guns, but I don't own any. I just go to the firing range once a year.)

Too bad journalists spend 4 years in college learning how to create propaganda and how to paint people they disagree with as racist, sexist homophobes. That's journalism school! Mom and Dad, fork over $100,000.

More videos of egregious media bias on MSNBC.

Choosing my religion: why I am not Roman Catholic

August 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Why I am not a Roman Catholic

1. To be a Roman Catholic, you need to believe in Papal infallibility in matters of dogma.
2. In 1950, the Pope pronounced the assumption of Mary to be infallible dogma.
3. This pronouncement was solicited by a petition featuring over 8 million signatures.
4. There is no historical record of this doctrine in the Bible.
5. No early church father mentions the assumption until 590 AD.
6. Documents dated 377 AD state that no one knows how Mary died.
7. The assumption appears for the first time in an apocryphal gospel dated about 495 AD.

Data

I only cite Roman Catholic sources for my facts.

6. "But if some think us mistaken, let them search the Scriptures. They will not find Mary's death; they will not find whether she died or did not die; they will not find whether she was buried or was not buried … Scripture is absolutely silent [on the end of Mary] … For my own part, I do not dare to speak, but I keep my own thoughts and I practice silence … The fact is, Scripture has outstripped the human mind and left [this matter] uncertain … Did she die, we do not know … Either the holy Virgin died and was buried … Or she was killed … Or she remained alive, since nothing is impossible with God and He can do whatever He desires; for her end no-one knows." (Epiphanius, Panarion, Haer. 78.10-11, 23. Cited by Juniper Carol, O.F.M. ed., *Mariology*, Vol. II (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1957), pp. 139-40).

7. "The idea of the bodily assumption of Mary is first expressed in certain transitus–narratives of the fifth and sixth centuries. Even though these are apocryphal they bear witness to the faith of the generation in which they were written despite their legendary clothing. The first Church author to speak of the bodily ascension of Mary, in association with an apocryphal transitus B.M.V., is St. Gregory of Tours." (Ludwig Ott,

Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma (Rockford: Tan, 1974), pp. 209–210).

It should be noted that the apocryphal gospel in which the doctrine of the assumption of Mary first appeared was condemned as heretical by two Popes in the 5th and 6th centuries. However, I was not able to find a CATHOLIC source for this fact, so I deliberately chose not to use it in my case.

I am not saying that Roman Catholicism is necessarily WRONG, I am just explaining why I am not a Roman Catholic. I hope that my Roman Catholic readers will not be too angry with me for disagreeing with them on theology. I will try not to test your patience too often like this. I would encourage everyone to be as civil as you all have been so far, and I will be extra vigilant in filtering comments.

USA Today predicts doctor shortage if Obamacare passes

August 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

USA Today says that if Obamacare passes, there will be a doctor shortage. (H/T The Heritage Foundation)

Excerpt:

> Considering it takes 10 to 11 years to educate a doctor, the drying up of the pipeline is a big concern to health-care experts. The AAFP is predicting a shortage of 40,000 family physicians in 2020, when the demand is expected to spike. The U.S. health care system has about 100,000 family physicians and will need 139,531 in 10 years. The current environment is attracting only half the number needed to meet the demand
>
> At the heart of the rising demands on primary-care physicians will be the 78 million Baby Boomers born from 1946 to 1964, who begin to turn 65 in 2011 and will require increasing medical care, and the current group of underserved patients.
>
> If Congress passes health care legislation that extends insurance coverage to a significant part of the 47 million Americans who lack insurance, the need for more doctors is going to escalate.

Many elderly people voted for Obama. Ooops!

Ontario Human Rights Tribunal says that in vitro fertilization is a right

August 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Globe and Mail. (H/T Scaramouche via Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> Six months ago, Ana Ilha knew her biological clock was ticking. She just didn't know it was ticking so fast.
>
> But when the Ontario Health Insurance Plan would not cover fertility treatments because of the source of her problems – at 37, her eggs were running out abnormally fast, a condition called a low ovarian reserve – she decided to take action.
>
> She and her husband, University of Ottawa professor Amir Attaran, filed a complaint with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario on Monday. They argue OHIP's policy is discriminatory, since it covers in vitro fertilization only in limited circumstances.
>
> "It's a medical condition like any other," Ms. Ilha said. "Couples like us should not have to suffer financially in addition to suffering emotionally."
>
> Their case is part of a debate in Canada's two largest provinces, and it could soon spread across the country.
>
> In Quebec, high-profile TV personality Julie Snyder, the wife of Quebecor CEO Pierre-Karl Péladeau, urged the province to cover IVF treatments. She made a documentary about infertility and put pressure on politicians.
>
> In April, Premier Jean Charest's government announced that it will fund three IVF cycles for couples, making Quebec the only province to do so.
>
> Seang Lin Tan, a fertility expert at the McGill University Health Centre in Montreal, said one in eight Canadian couples struggles with infertility.
>
> "What's frustrating, is that people who would be good candidates are routinely told they have to dig into their pockets," Prof. Attaran said. "I'm fortunate, law professors get paid decently. But that's not true for everyone."
>
> After a year of trying to conceive, the couple paid $6,300 for one IVF treatment at an Ottawa fertility clinic. A further $6,500 in drugs was covered by private insurance…

What this means is that ordinary working families will pay for the fertitlity treatments of aging, infertile women who put their careers before children. So what if they made that decision themselves based on their own ideology? They didn't do anything *wrong*, and no harm done. Except the tens of thousands of dollars that must be taken from ordinary Canadians dying while waiting for critical care on a waiting list.

Meanwhile, men who get prostate cancer in Canada are 184% more likely to die than in the USA. But women are much better off in a single-payer system – breast cancer mortality is only 9% higher in Canada than in the USA. Everyone is equal – but some people are more equal than others.

Family Research Council's Paul Fagan explains why chastity matters

August 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from C-Fam, the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, describes an important point made by Family Research Council scholar Patrick Fagan at a recent conference. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Fagan warned that while monogamous culture is fertile and expanding and polyamorous culture is in below replacement fertility, that polyamorous culture is still expanding through their control of three areas of public policy: "education of children, sex education, and adolescent health." Fagan said that through such control polyamorous culture "snatches children away from their parents and away from monogamous culture in ways analogous to the Ottoman Turks of the 14th century who raided boys from Christian nations to train them as their own elite warriors, the Janissaries."
>
> Fagan said "this snatching is almost complete when these three program areas result in adolescents accepting and engaging in sexual intercourse" and that "every time the polyamorous programs and media succeed in drawing teenagers into sexual activity they have captured another Janissary."
>
> Fagan described efforts monogamous culture has used to fight back, especially the rise and success of abstinence education, but also explained the way polyamorous culture rose up and crushed it. He also pointed out that the campaigns against home schooling are an effort by the dominant polyamorous culture to stop parents from protecting their children.
>
> In the end, Fagan called upon "monogamy men" to fight back. He said the only answer is for them to fight for control "over what is his and his family's just due, what his taxes fund, and what he can use in raising his children, control over the three big programs of childhood education, sex education and adolescent health programs."

Encouraging teenagers into early sexual behavior is one of the primary ways that the secular-left wrests children away from their parents. One of the major reasons I've made it this far with the views I have is because of my commitment to chastity. Chastity rocks, and we need to do a better job of explaining to kids what they lose if they give it up.

Sex outside of marriage breaks the will of young people to aspire to higher ideals and morals. It makes them fear moral demands and moral boundaries, instead of embracing them. I believe that it also affects their relationship with God. Since sex outside of marriage generally results in someone getting hurt, there is a tremendous desire by the sinner to escape the guilt by just deciding that God isn't real and so there is no such

things as moral standards at all. Their sin settles the question of God’s existence quite apart from the arguments and evidence. Later, when they learn about evolution, etc., the decision becomes irreversible.

His point about Christians getting serious about NOT increasing the size of government is also worth noting. I know a few fundamentalist Christians who nevertheless vote for massive government programs like single-payer health care and energy taxes to stop “global warming”. They have no idea what they are really doing when they vote to assign individual and family responsibilities to government.

Choosing my religion: why I am not Jewish

August 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've decided to spend some time writing extremely short explanations about why I am an evangelical Protestant Christian instead of anything else.

I have two aims.

First, I want show how an honest person can evaluate rival religions using the laws of logic, scientific evidence and historical evidence. Second, I want people who are not religious to understand that religions are either true or it is false. Religions should not be chosen based where you were born, what your parents believed, or what resonates with you. A religion should be embraced for the same reason as the theory of gravity is embraced: because it reflects the way the world really is.

Why I am not Jewish

1. Jewish persons can't believe that God raised Jesus from the dead.
2. There are historical criteria for determining what parts of historical biographies are true.
3. If we apply the historical criteria to the Gospels and Paul's letters, a set of minimal facts about Jesus' death, (and what happened after), can be extracted.
4. Among these facts are the burial, the empty tomb, the post-mortem appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
5. There are no good naturalistic explanations for these minimal facts.
6. The best explanation of these minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead.
7. Therefore, Jewish persons are mistaken in their beliefs about the resurrection of Jesus.

It's interesting to note that Pinchas Lapide, an Orthodox Jewish New Testament scholar, accepts the resurrection of Jesus as a historical event. But, he thinks that *only Gentiles* are saved by Jesus' atoning death. He believes that Jews must still attain salvation by the law.

I would like to see more formal debates featuring Jewish scholars and Christian scholars on the resurrection.

Friday night funny: pet crocodile, brandishing Constitution, victory dance

August 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, man tames crocodile. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Rather than trying to tame wild stallions, fearless Costa Rican fisherman Chito prefers a playful wrestle in the water with his best pal Pocho – a deadly 17ft crocodile.
>
> The 52-year-old daredevil draws gasps of amazement from onlookers by wading chest-deep into the water, then whistling for his 980lb buddy – and giving him an affectionate hug.

Second, brandishing Constitution is very bad: (H/T Imao.us)

Excerpt:

> "The US Constitution is a violent and revolutionary document, directly responsible for at least two wars in this nation," said Gibbs. "Insurrectionist chatter like that may require us to consider charges of treason. We're currently investigating the possibility, which will take some time, since no one in this administration has ever actually examined the document in question."
>
> "Free speech is not an absolute," explained FBI spokesman John Miller. "You can't yell 'Fire!' in a crowded theater. Waving a Constitution around is essentially yelling 'freedom!' at a crowded Obama rally. We consider this sort of offensive language a direct threat to civil order in general and the President in particular, and it will not be tolerated."

Third, Steven Crowder and Zo Rachel victory dance: (H/T Imao.us)

Happy Friday!

John Stossel explains how the profit-motive drives innovation in health care

August 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video from Legal Insurrection. (H/T ECM)

When you take away the motivation of making money, you remove the incentive for people to risk their own capital to try to develop new cures and treatments.

Marine Corps vet goes nuclear with Democrat over Obamacare

August 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video is particularly useful for people in other countries who want to know why America was so prosperous for so long. (H/T Hot Air)

We believed in freedom. The average citizen was an informed patriot who understood government, law and economics. Now, thanks to the public schools, we've lost that.

But at least some of us still remember.

The United States Marine Corps is the *official* favorite armed services branch of the Wintery Knight blog. Did you know that each branch of the armed services has an official reading list? I am about a quarter through the official USMC reading list.

How Obama’s radical leftist ideology led to death panels

August 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article from the National Review by Andy McCarthy. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> Obama is not a normal politician. He’s a visionary, and using health care to radically expand the scope of government happens to be central to his vision. For my money (if I have any left), achieving it is more important to him than is getting reelected. His poll numbers and those of congressional Democrats may keep plunging (for the latter, there must come a point where that is statistically impossible), but they have the votes to Rahm this thing through.
>
> To be sure, Washington is still populated with normal politicians, and that is why you can almost touch the Democrats’ desperation. They don’t want to walk this plank, and they are praying to Gaia, night and day, for that magic moment when the usual RINO rabbits spring from the bipartisan hat to give them cover from their fuming constituents. But at its highest levels, this Democratic government is being steered by the party’s most extreme leftists. Obamacare is their life’s dream, they have the power to make it happen, and if they have to go it alone, they will try going it alone.
>
> Even if Obama were a normal politician, 2012 is three years away, and he’ll worry about that later, if he has to worry at all: With his Justice Department green-lighting election fraud, ACORN and the New Black Panther party riding high, and amnesty for millions of illegal aliens on the horizon, 2012 may take care of itself.

We’re not out of the woods yet… Obama wants control of health care and he’ll keep trying until we vote him out!

Video about Oregon woman who was offered assisted suicide instead of cure

August 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wrote about this story a while back, but this news report is illustrative. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Democrats = Death Panels. Pass it on.

http://4simpsons.wordpress.com/2009/08/22/those-fake-death-panels/

Glenn Beck re-caps the evidence we ignored when we elected Obama

August 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is 10 minutes long. I found it cathartic. (H/T Nice Deb)

Ooops.

Update on Christian teen Rifqa Bary

August 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A 17-year-old runaway who claims she fled her Muslim family's home in Ohio because she feared becoming the victim of an "honor killing" will stay in Florida — temporarily — a judge ruled Friday.
>
> Rifqa Bary, a Christian convert whose parents are Muslim immigrants from Sri Lanka, will remain in foster care in Florida until another hearing is held Sept. 3.
>
> Rifqa fled to Florida after her parents, Mohamed and Aysha Bary, learned that she was baptized earlier this year without their knowledge. The parents reported her missing to Columbus, Ohio, Police on July 19. Weeks later, using cell phone and computer records, police tracked the girl to the Rev. Blake Lorenz, pastor of the Orlando-based Global Revolution Church.

This part of the article is scary:

> Dr. Phyllis Chesler, an author and professor of psychology at the Richmond College of the City University of New York, said she believes Bary will be in danger if she is sent back to her parents.
>
> "Anyone who converts from Islam is considered an apostate, and apostasy is a capital crime," Chesler wrote FOXNews.com. "If she is returned to her family, if she is lucky, they will isolate her, beat her, threaten her, and if she is not 'persuaded' to return to Islam, they will kill her. They have no choice."
>
> Chesler, who wrote "Are Honor Killings Simply Domestic Violence?" for Middle East Quarterly, said the tradition of such slayings is not fully understood by most Americans, including those in law enforcement.
>
> "She escaped from her family's brutal tyranny and shamed her family further through public exposure," Chesler said. "Muslim girls and women are killed for far less."

I have been praying for Rifqa and the two Iranian Christian women now being help in an Iranian prison. I hope you have been praying, too!

Flush with victory on death panels, Sarah Palin moves on to tort reform

August 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

She's writing things that make me very happy!
From her Facebook page. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> So what can we do? First, we cannot have health care reform without tort reform. The two are intertwined. For example, one supposed justification for socialized medicine is the high cost of health care. As Dr. Scott Gottlieb recently noted, "If Mr. Obama is serious about lowering costs, he'll need to reform the economic structures in medicine—especially programs like Medicare." [1] Two examples of these "economic structures" are high malpractice insurance premiums foisted on physicians (and ultimately passed on to consumers as "high health care costs") and the billions wasted on defensive medicine.

And look – she has experiences to appeal to:

> Many states, including my own state of Alaska, have enacted caps on lawsuit awards against health care providers. Texas enacted caps and found that one county's medical malpractice claims dropped 41 percent, and another study found a "55 percent decline" after reform measures were passed. [4] That's one step in health care reform. Limiting lawyer contingency fees, as is done under the Federal Tort Claims Act, is another step. The State of Alaska pioneered the "loser

> pays" rule in the United States, which deters frivolous civil law suits by making the loser partially pay the winner's legal bills. Preventing quack doctors from giving "expert" testimony in court against real doctors is another reform.

SHE WANTS TO REGULATE TRIAL LAWYERS. YAHOO!

This is the third editorial she has written that has gotten me excited. She is citing scholars! She has footnotes! What more could a conservative man want? And I like her tone a lot more than Ann Coulter. She is trying to persuade her opponents, not to back them into stubborn opposition regardless of the facts.

Previous posts:

- Sarah Palin on cap and trade
- Sarah Palin on death panels

You know what? I think she is going in the right direction. Like a female Fred Thompson, she is getting used to vocalizing conservative policies and principles – which is exactly what we need to do to capitalize on Obama's failures. I love it when women write passionately about what they think, especially when women take positions that support men, marriage and family by arguing for limited government and free market capitalism.

How the Obama administration supports assisted suicide for military veterans

August 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Chris Wallace interviewed Veteran Affairs' spokeswoman Tammy Duckworth. (H/T Nice Deb)

Chris Wallace interviews a pro-life activist about the death pamphlets. (H/T Nice Deb)

Megyn Kelly interviews Jonah Goldberg about the death pamphlets. (H/T Nice Deb)

The left is always interested in killing off those unworthy of life.

UPDATE: Lex Communis links to this related Wall Street Journal article.

A hero’s legacy: Happy birthday, William Wilberforce

August 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

August 24th was the 250th birthday of the official hero of the Wintery Knight blog, William Wilberforce.

Chuck Colson wrote about it. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Today marks the 250th birthday of William Wilberforce, the Christian statesman who, for 18 arduous years, led the crusade against the abominable British slave trade. And I can think of no better gift I could give my listeners than to tell you about some of the traits that made Wilberforce a man who profoundly changed history-and whose legacy so profoundly shaped my life.
>
> To speak of Wilberforce is to speak of biblical worldview in action. When Wilberforce, one of the youngest members of Parliament, came to Christ, he contemplated leaving office and becoming a clergyman.
>
> Thankfully, William Pitt, who went on to be Great Britain’s youngest prime minister, convinced him otherwise. In a letter to his dear friend, Pitt wrote: “Surely the principles as well as the practice of Christianity are simple and lead not to meditation only, but to action.”
>
> And indeed, for Wilberforce, Christian faith meant action. He could not stand idly by and see the imago Dei of each person, the image of God, abused. His fiercely unpopular crusade against the slave trade ravaged his health and cost him politically. He endured verbal assaults and was even challenged to a duel by an angry slave-ship captain.
>
> And when the French Revolution began, what had been merely an unpopular position became a dangerous one. As cries of liberty, equality, and fraternity erupted across the Channel, Wilberforce and his fellow abolitionists who believed so strongly in human equality were suddenly viewed with suspicion by the British people.
>
> Nonetheless, Wilberforce persevered year after year. Writing about whether to give up the fight, Wilberforce notes, “a man who fears God is not at liberty” to do so.

What Christianity teaches is that every person in the world was made by God for the purpose of responding freely to him. Your job as a Christian is to help everyone who wants to freely respond to God to do so.

New Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare

August 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow, she’s got a tan and she’s looking prettier than ever!

She’s my pick for the Republicans in 2012.

How strong fathers are a positive influence on their daughters

August 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An interview with Dr. Meg Meeker! (H/T Andrew)

Questions answered in the interview:

- Q: Why are fathers so important?
- Q: What are fathers doing wrong?
- Q: What are fathers doing right?
- Q: Can an absent or irresponsible father make up for lost time?
- Q: What is the most important thing a father should know?
- Q: Any tips for being the kind of father a daughter really needs?

Excerpt:

> Fathers carry an authority in children's eyes that is different from their mother's. Fathers are also pivotal in the development of a healthy sexuality in a daughter's life. Girls who have a good relationship with their dads are shown to: have a higher self-esteem, be less likely to become sexually active at an early age, less likely to experience depression, less likely to develop an eating disorder and typically have a higher GPA in high school. Also, the most effective way to bolster a girl's self esteem is through getting physical affection from her father.

There is a lot of useful information summarized in this short little interview.

Paul Krugman says that public option would lead to single-payer health care

August 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video from Verum Serum.

Morgen writes:

> And so here, once again, is our gregarious friend from the NY Times, Paul Krugman, speaking about healthcare reform. This is a segment from an interview which aired on Democracy Now! in October 2007.
>
> […]Paul Krugman is a well-known economist who writes regularly for the NY Times. The fact that almost 2 years ago Krugman so willingly conceded information that conservatives have had to dig to uncover is a damning indictment of the bias and/or incompetence of the media. (And Krugman made this same point in a February 2007 NY Times column.)
>
> The public option has now been the central controversy of healthcare reform for what…at least 3 months? And yet up until very recently, did anyone in the MSM think of looking into or reporting on how the idea came about? And whether conservative assertions that it is a trojan horse for single payer had any merit? Does it really take bloggers doing research in their spare time to discover and document information of such national importance?

Verum Serum rocks!

MUST-READ: Was the radical left behind the vandalism of Democrat HQ?

August 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: The latest news on this story is here.

Story from the Denver Post. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> A 24-year-old arrested this morning on suspicion of smashing 11 windows at Colorado Democratic Party headquarters tried to conceal his identity while allegedly committing the crime, according to police descriptions.
>
> Maurice Schwenkler wore a shirt over his face, a hooded sweat shirt and latex gloves before he and another man fled the scene on bicycles, police said. Schwenkler was apprehended after a short chase. The other suspect remains at large.
>
> **While Schwenkler does not appear in the state's voter registration database, a person by that name in November 2008 received $500 from a political 527 committee called Colorado Citizens Coalition for "communications," according to campaign finance disclosures.**
>
> The accountant for the 527 appears to be the same woman who handles the books for many other Democratic-leaning political committees.
>
> A Maurice Schwenkler also signed an online 2005 petition to free anti-war Christian protesters who were captured in Iraq.
>
> **State Democratic Party Chairwoman Pat Waak initially blamed the vandalism on animosity surrounding the health care debate, though Denver police declined to comment on possible motives.**

Malkin writes:

> Another non-surprise: Schwenkler was paid by the SEIU-related front group CCC, according to Colorado blogger El Presidente.

And here are the campaign finance records for the CCC.

> According to campaign finance records, someone named "Maurice Schewenkler" was paid $500 on November 6, 2008, by a group called the Colorado Citizens' Coalition. Judging by the contributors, this 527 political organization falls on the liberal side of the spectrum. How liberal? Contributors include Tim Gill ($12,500), the AFL-CIO ($25,000), NARAL ($12,500) and Pat Stryker ($75,000). The documents list Schewenkler's duty as "electioneering" and his purpose as "communication."

This story reminds me of those faked hate-crimes that the radical leftists commit against

themselves all the time.

MUST-SEE: Glenn Beck exposes the radical roots of Obama's Green Czar

August 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video from Beck's show. (H/T Hot Air)

David Horowitz has more. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

So what if Obama appointed radical leftists to key government positions?

What could go wrong?

MUST-LISTEN: William Lane Craig on the religious left’s support for Obamacare

August 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must-listen!

Listening to Bill apply the Bible to the issues of the day really ROCKS!

The MP3 file is here.

Here is Bill’s web site “Reasonable Faith”. You can send him a donation online!

You have to register to comment, but you should. There are a lot of left-wing “Christians” commenting on there now. None of them can see how letting a massive secular government control the economy would be bad for the public practice of authentic Christianity. Now is your chance to get on there and make them think about the kind of government structure that allows the free exercise of religion.

How good are you at defending the resurrection of Jesus?

August 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the link to a quiz on the resurrection of Jesus.

Here's my score:

I scored 6210! Can you beat that?
My former co-worker Todd actually beat my score, so let's hope he doesn't read this post and show me up in front of all of you!

More Gary Habermas

You might want to buy the book if you want to learn more.

And you can hear him explain "The Resurrection Argument that Changed a Generation of Scholars" on YouTube.

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3

He debates a Duke University professor here: (one of my favorites)

Two Views on the Resurrection: Dialog with Dr. Joel Marcus, Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Duke University Divinity School
PART I (8MB) :|: PART II (8MB) :|: PART III (8MB) [MP3 files]

And he responds to Dan Brown's fictional novels here:

Cracking the Da Vinci Code
PART I (8MB) :|: PART II (8MB) :|: PART III (5MB) :|: PART IV (5MB) [MP3 files]
Lecture given at the 4th Annual Worldview Apologetics Conference

Here are some previous posts I wrote on the minimal facts case:

- The historical criteria and the standard minimal facts case.
- The earliest and best source for the minimal facts.
- Some additional details about the empty tomb sources.
- And some details about the first witnesses to the empty tomb.

UPDATE: I was just browsing on The Resurrection of Jesus blog that is focused on the resurrection and found this video of Mike Licona.

Vandal Maurice Schwenkler worked for Democrats, was arrested at RNC convention

August 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breaking news about the Democrat who was arrested for vandalizing the Denver Democrat headquarters. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

From CBS News via Breitbart via Gateway Pundit.

Here's news from the Associated Press.

Excerpt:

> A suspect in a vandalism at the Colorado Democratic headquarters was once **a paid campaign worker for a Democratic candidate** for the Legislature, according to public records.
>
> Maurice Schwenkler, 24, was arrested in Denver Tuesday on a charge of criminal mischief after windows were smashed at Democratic offices. Many of the windows displayed posters supporting health care reform, and **(democratic) party officials called it political vandalism.**
>
> The Denver Post reported Wednesday that Schwenkler was **also arrested in St. Paul, Minn., on the last day of the 2008 Republican convention** on a charge of unlawful assembly.
>
> No details of that arrest or Schwenkler's activities at the time were immediately available.
>
> There was no phone number listed for Schwenkler and it wasn't immediately clear if he had an attorney.
>
> The Post reported Schwenkler was paid $500 in November 2008 to walk door to door in support of Democrat Mollie Cullom, a candidate for the state House from Centennial.
>
> Cullom lost to Republican David Balmer.
>
> Campaign records show Schwenkler was among dozens of canvassers paid by a political committee called the Colorado Citizens' Coalition.
>
> Balmer said he suspects the vandalism might have been intended to make the Republican Party look bad.
>
> **"This sounds like the type of Democratic tactic from the left fringe trying to make Republicans look mean-spirited,"** Balmer said. "In this case, it blew up in their face."
>
> The Democratic Party estimates the damage at $10,000. A second suspect was still at large.

So at this point I think that it is still an open question as to whether this was a faked hate

crime, an inside job by Democrats, or something else. It’s pretty clear that the Democrats would love to appear as victims of those who oppose Obamacare. They believe that their opponents are devils and that they are angels. And if there is only evidence AGAINST that view and FOR the converse, then maybe they manufactured some evidence to fool the public.

MUST-READ: Guest post: Purposeful parenting today

August 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The following post is a guest post from my friend Andrew.

Purposeful Parenting in Today's World

> Bob drives his bright red sports car 140 kilometres per hour on the highway and is pulled over by a police officer. The officer gives Bob a:
>
> 1. friendly greeting
> 2. cookie
> 3. speeding ticket
>
> Susan prefers sleeping late to showing up at work on time. After arriving at the office two to three hours late for two weeks in a row, Susan's boss tells her to:
>
> 1. get to bed a little earlier
> 2. take some vacation time to rest up
> 3. look for another job

This reality check comes from an article on parenting by Dr. Bill Maier from *Focus on the Family*. It shows in a humorous way how real life consequences will catch up with your child sooner or later (the answer to both questions is number 3, of course).

Now here are a couple of my own:

> Your son starts university and soon realizes that one of his professors is a hostile feminist. The feminist professor:
>
> 1. immediately concedes her radical feminist views and offers to help your son with his studies
> 2. tells the class what an asset conservatism and/or Christianity is to our society
> 3. publicly humiliates your son when he voices an objection, and makes every effort to fail him
>
> Your daughter enters the workforce. Her colleagues say things like:
>
> 1. how I can become a Christian just like you?
> 2. maybe we could start a Bible study together
> 3. are you for real – do you actually believe that Jesus rose from the dead

Are *your* children going to be able to handle this?

Let me start off with some general principles that I think you will find useful for parenting in general. *Then* in the second half of this post I want to share some more ideas that will

help you be more purposeful in the formation of your child and help them prepare for what life will throw at them – ideas that I hope will help you to address the last two scenarios above.

Your children need you to be their parent, not their friend

Children need and want their parents to lay down the rules, to set boundaries, and to give them guidance. They really need to know where they stand. While they have friends elsewhere, they don't get parenting from anywhere else. Your children don't have to like you, but they have to respect and obey you. When you make the rules clear and consistent and your children choose to disobey them, then the punishment is their choice rather than your infliction. This should really be a separate point, but don't be afraid to discipline your children. This will help them in the long run.

Your children respect your authority and guidance more than you think

Parents tend to underestimate the influence that they have on their children and overestimate the influence that friends have. Don't be afraid to teach your children, give them your opinion and set boundaries.

Follow through or your children won't take you seriously

Children learn quickly, so if you state a consequence you have to be willing to follow through with it. If you don't, your words will be empty to them and they will not respect you or listen to you. If you tell your child that if they hit their sibling one more time you will call off the big trip to the zoo then you have to be willing to do this, so choose your words carefully!

Short term pain, long term gain

This was our motto when our children were infants, and it still is. Addressing problems immediately will be painful, but they will only become a habit or worse problems down the road if you don't. We learned pretty quickly that running to our crying baby every hour during the night would quiet them down and give us instant gratification at a time when we were sleep-deprived, but we also learned that if we suffered the short term pain of letting them cry it out a bit then our baby would learn how to settle themselves and sleep better.

Let boys be boys and girls be girls

Don't let feminist ideology creep into the way you parent. It's healthy for girls to play 'house', nurture their dolls, and play dress-up. And it's okay for boys to try 'dangerous' things, be rambunctious, and open doors for ladies. Boys and girls are innately different, and that's okay.

Okay, these are some great general guidelines that have helped us with our parenting so far. Now for some deeper principles that I hope will prepare your child for life:

Be purposeful with your parenting…have a plan and an end goal in mind

You can't guarantee how your children will turn out, but if you are purposeful with your parenting and have an end goal rather than just hoping they will turn out okay, there is a

good chance you will be successful. For my wife and I, the end goal is to train our children so that when they come of age we will be able to launch them into life with them being capable of standing on their own two feet (e.g., capable of dealing effectively with the third and fourth situations at the start of this post). This is our conscious plan. Children need to be gradually given more and more freedom and responsibility as they demonstrate that they can handle it. Don't wait until they are about to leave the nest to give them their freedom because it may be more than they can handle. You have a relatively small window of opportunity to train your children. This window decreases with time, so don't waste it.

Allow your children to fail under controlled circumstances

Failure is a great teacher, so allow your children to fail when they are young. For example, let them spend some of their hard earned chore money on a cheap toy that will fall apart after the first use. This will teach them the value of money and give them discretion in spending. You don't want them to learn this lesson the hard way later on when they are buying their first house. Let them go to their math test in grade 10 without having studied because they really wanted to play. Better to have them learn this lesson now than in univer$ity.

Expose them to scenarios that they will experience later and teach them how to deal with them

Again, in a controlled setting you need to carefully expose your children to what they will encounter in life. Take them to a university debate between a Christian and an atheist. Let them hear the arguments, see how the audience reacts, and allow them to feel uncomfortable. Show them a news article about schoolchildren who were told that they had to send a letter to their government representative with a certain view. Let your child hear a homosexual activist on the radio. Supervise them and discuss with them what they have just experienced. Teach them how to respond in these scenarios. You won't be able to shelter them for life, so gradually expose them under controlled conditions and teach them how to deal and respond to what they encounter.

Train yourself, and do it well

Listen, training up your children is your responsibility and no one else's. Not only that, but you are the only one that is going to prepare them properly – you can no longer rely on school, church, friend's parents, etc. In order to train them to respond to life circumstances and defend their beliefs you are going to have to learn this stuff yourself. Take the time to read books, listen to lectures/debates, etc. As a parent I know it is really tough to find the time to do this when you are working full time or are busy with life, but you have to do it. Don't let your life get too busy with distractions because otherwise your purposeful parenting plan won't happen, it requires purposeful daily decisions. What is the point of having children only to lose them to militant atheist, leftist, feminist, homosexual, etc. ideology because *you* didn't prepare them properly.

Train your children well

I know I've touched on this already, but let me expand a bit. This is really, really

important! A lot of people around your children are going to teach them bad ideas that are opposite to your own – their school, their friends and the government will all do this. You need to be purposeful in teaching them moral values and virtues, otherwise they probably won't learn them. Training your children is *your* responsibility. Be purposeful in teaching your children virtues like loyalty, bravery, chivalry, respect, modesty (especially for girls), and discipline. Teach them about freedom of speech, religious liberty, chastity, capitalism, free markets, the sanctity of life, post-modern culture, traditional marriage, and abstinence. Also give them books with characters who portray these things and discuss these things with your children on every occasion (as an aside, don't let your children rot in front of the trash that is shown on television…rather teach them to love to read books).

Most importantly, as a Christian who believes that Christianity is objectively true, I can't stress enough how important it is to teach your children about Christianity. All religions are testable, and our Christian faith can hold its own and can compete well in the marketplace of ideas. The evidence is very much on our side and we stand on the shoulders of giants who have gone before us. Having said this, we live in a world that is very hostile to Christianity and you need to teach your children the evidence for their faith. They need to know the Bible inside-out and backwards, but they also need to know how to defend their faith using other evidence (hint: Christian apologetics; see the **Resources** section below). Teaching them how to do this will give them the courage to defend what they believe to be true. You also need to teach your children about different worldviews and religions, and why they don't make sense.

I know, this all sounds like a tremendous amount of work, but your child is relying on you and no one else to prepare them for life. It's actually easier than you think. Just start off with a few books. This is so much more important than teaching them how to be on time, how to drive a car, how to take a math test, how to swim, and all of the other things that you will obviously teach them. As I said above, you have a relatively small window of opportunity to train your children. This window decreases with time, so don't waste it. For a first step please look at the **Resources** section below.

And lastly:

Put your marriage first

Make sure that you put your marriage ahead of your parenting. I am convinced that one of the best things that you can do for your children is to give them the security of a stable family life and to model what a good marriage looks like. Let them witness husband and wife roles, let them see that you love each other, and let them see you apologize to each other when you get angry or make a mistake. Don't get so involved in your children's life that you neglect your spouse. If you do this then once your children are out of the house (if your marriage survives that long), you and your spouse won't know each other anymore. Parenting in today's world requires a parenting team, so you need to make sure your team is strong.

UPDATE: This is Wintery Knight. I wanted to include this bit of wisdom from commenter

Shalini:

> One other important thing is when one parent is disciplining the child, the other parent MUST NOT talk in defense of the child. Parents should always agree on disciplining, ’cause if one of the parents try taking sides with the kid, chances are the kid is going to assume that one parent is good and the other is bad. It doesn’t help the case in anyway!

Andrew liked this comment, so I thought I would add it to the post.

A few resources:

Parenting

- Bringing Up Boys (James Dobson) Note: ‘Bringing Up Girls’ to be published soon
- Grace-Based Parenting (Tim Kimmel)

Christian Apologetics

- Wintery Knight Blog (Christian posts index)
- Reasonable Faith Website (William Lane Craig)
- Stand to Reason Website (Greg Koukl)
- The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict book (Josh McDowell)
- The Case for Christ/Faith/Creator books (Lee Strobel)

Related posts

- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What should wives do when they are not in the mood for sex?
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?
- Purposeful parenting today
- Marriage tips part 1
- Marriage tips part 2
- Unfair child custody laws
- Why fiscal conservatives should care about marriage
- How Democrat policies discourage marriage: Part 1 (big government) is here and Part 2 (same-sex marriage) is here and Part 3 (No fault divorce) is here.

Christians destroy their own religious freedom by supporting single-payer health care

August 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Muddling Towards Maturity linked to a Chuck Colson column which makes an essential point about how allowing a secular government to control health care is bad for Christians who want to live authentic Christian lives in the public square. Muddling writes, "Chuck Colson tells the story of Belmont Abbey College, a Catholic college that won't allow abortion, sterilization, and contraception to be covered by its employees' health care plan."

Excerpt:

[The Catholic Church] teaches that abortion, sterilization, and contraception are immoral. So it makes sense that a conservative Catholic college would make sure that its health plan doesn't cover such practices.

Well, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has a different word for Belmont Abbey College: "sexist."

Using reasoning that could only be concocted by a consummate bureaucrat, the director of the agency's Charlotte office has said that denying contraception is sexist "because only females take oral prescription contraceptives. By denying coverage, men are not affected, only women."

The EEOC stepped in because eight college employees complained about the lack of coverage. The EEOC has now ordered the college to find a resolution. Even though North Carolina law protects religious institutions from having to cover contraception, abortion, and voluntary sterilization, the case could end up in the federal courts.

Colson also talks about how Catholic adoption agencies were forced to close as a result of state control of medical care provision. Catholic organizations do a ton of good in the world, so I find it appalling that so many Catholics voted for Obama. If you marginalize the worldview that produces the good works, you don't get to keep the good works. The good works *were rationally grounded by* the good worldview.

This is a MUST-READ for those of you who believe that big government programs, like single-payer health care, are compatible with Christianity. If you want to put the needs of the poor above the gospel, that's fine. But, in my view, Jesus put the gospel above the needs of the poor.

Have a look:

1Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. 2˝But not during the Feast," they said, "or the people may riot."

3While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure

nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

4Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? 5It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages[a] and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

6″Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. **7The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”**

(Mark 14:1-9, NIV)

And you can see this problem in many other areas as well, such as welfare, hate crime bills and the removal of conscience protections. Few Christians, and certainly not those who support single-payer health care, would even recognize the imposition of the government’s vision of morality and purpose on individuals as *fascism*. Even homeschooling Christians sometimes support big government secular socialism which can lead to banning homeschooling.

Many Christians voted for the most pro-abortion President ever, and for the most anti-family, anti-marriage, anti-child President ever. I think this is a consequence of the church’s complete unwillingness to connect what goes on in the church with anything objectively real outside the church. We tell people stories that make them feel certain emotions, and they use that emotionalized conception of Christianity to decide who to vote for.

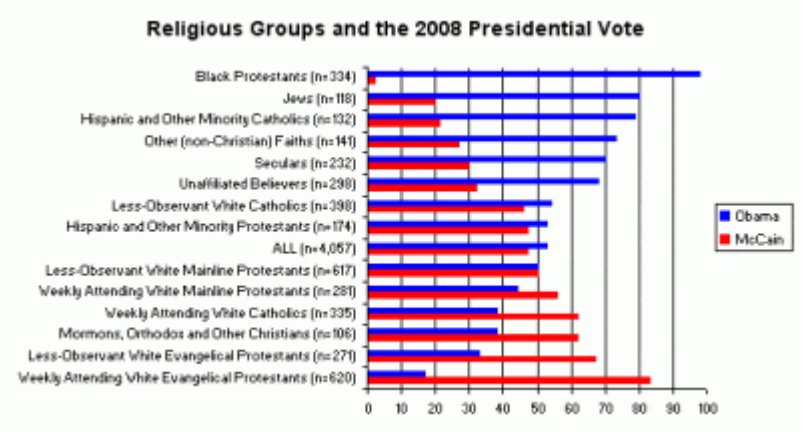

2008 voting broken by religious groups

(Click for larger image)

I think what is really happening here is that Christians who prefer single-payer health care on “moral grounds” are either 1) trying to justify stealing money from their neighbors to pay for their own risky, irresponsible decisions, or 2) trying to embrace trendy, popular policies that put them in a favorable light with the secular neighbors. Either way, it’s a loss for God. Doing good is the job of free individuals, not the job of a secular, socialist government.

Blazing Cat Fur's horrific experience with single-payer health care in Toronto

August 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this story from Blazing Cat Fur while browsing at The Blog of Walker.

Excerpt:

> I suppose I should have been tipped off by the fact that the surgeon who performed my Mom's angioplasty last Friday couldn't be bothered to check up on her afterward. This same surgeon discharged her Saturday morning from TGH, Toronto General Hospital – by phone.
>
> Tuesday afternoon my Mother suffered a "False Aneurysm", this it was explained, is a fairly common side effect caused by the anti-clotting medication she has been prescribed. However the Brit's inform me that *"The most common cause of pseudoaneursym is femoral artery puncture during cardiac catheterisation."*
>
> […]She was scared, in a great deal of pain and very weak by the time she hit TGH's ER, though commendably the paramedics had stabilized her – this was 6:20 PM. The paramedics stayed with her, monitoring her vitals and answering my questions as best they could until well after their shift ended at 7. At 8:30 PM, in order to release the paramedics my 84 year old Mother was officially admitted to TGH. Admission consisted of moving her from the ambulance gurney to a hospital gurney and pushing her 20 yards down the corridor, next to the homeless guy with the festering sores on his legs. The attentive care of the paramedics was replaced by – nothing.
>
> We waited over an hour for a resident to finally stop by and inquire what the matter was. My shocked stare, which arose after she asked in all seriousness, if the angioplasty had been a success, caused her to retreat and summon the physician on duty. Wisely the attending doctor suggested that a physical examination was in order, she then disappeared with the resident in tow. A nurse was dispatched who informed us that my Mother would have to be undressed for the examination. Since this Angel of Mercy made no offer to assist I took it upon myself to undress my bedridden mother in a public corridor, in full view of the passing parade of visitors, patients and staff – truth be told the homeless guy was pretty discrete or at least preoccupied.

It goes on, and on, and on.

This is one of the saddest things I have ever read.

And it happens in England, too

Here is a Daily Mail story that I spotted over at The Western Experience. (And also ECM sent it)

Excerpt:

> Thousands of women are having to give birth outside maternity wards because of a lack of midwives and hospital beds.
>
> The lives of mothers and babies are being put at risk as births in locations ranging from lifts to toilets – even a caravan – went up 15 per cent last year to almost 4,000.
>
> Health chiefs admit a lack of maternity beds is partly to blame for the crisis, with hundreds of women in labour being turned away from hospitals because they are full.
>
> Latest figures show that over the past two years there were at least:
>
> * 63 births in ambulances and 608 in transit to hospitals;
>
> * 117 births in A&E departments, four in minor injury units and two in medical assessment areas;
>
> * 115 births on other hospital wards and 36 in other unspecified areas including corridors;
>
> * 399 in parts of maternity units other than labour beds, including postnatal and antenatal wards and reception areas.
>
> Additionally, overstretched maternity units shut their doors to any more women in labour on 553 occasions last year.

The Western Experience also linked to the story of a man who had his appendix removed by the NHS – TWICE!

I knew that the left was concerned about the doomsday overpopulation myths, but this is ridiculous!

Further study

Learn more about health care policy from my previous posts on health care:

- Paul Krugman says that public option will lead to single-payer
- Sarah Palin on tort reform and health care cost reduction
- How Democrats are handling dissent from their health care plan
- Left-wing extremist on MSNBC says that some opponents of socialism are racists
- How Obamacare turns American taxpayers into children
- Are coerced abortions and euthanasia part of Obama's health care plan?
- Understanding Obama's health care reform bill… with video clips!
- Paul Ryan and Ann Coulter make the case against Obamacare
- Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!
- Five freedoms you will lost if Obamacare passes
- Marsha Blackburn explains how Tennessee's public option plan failed
- Bobby Jindal explains a dozen freedom-preserving ways to cut health care costs
- John Stossel vs Michael Moore in 20/20 health care documentary

- Obamacare will provide health care to illegal immigrants
- Study shows 83 million people will lose private insurance under Obamacare
- Jim Demint destroys Obama's health care plan on the Senate floor
- Michele Bachmann explains the effect of Obamacare on small businesses
- Keith Hennessey and Howard "Mad How" Dean debate Obamacare

Dr. Matt Flanagan explains what moral relativism is and why it fails

August 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this 5-part video of Matt Flanagan's recent lecture at the Thinking Matters conference in New Zealand.

If you don't understand what moral relativism is, this is a thorough treatment that covers all the bases.

ABC and NBC refuse to air awesome TV advertisement against Obamacare

August 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T Hot Air)

Here's the ad:

Here's an excerpt from the Fox news article:

> "The ABC Television Network has a long-standing policy that we do not sell time for advertising that presents a partisan position on a controversial public issue," spokeswoman Susan Sewell said in a written statement. "Just to be clear, this is a policy for the entire network, not just ABC News."
>
> NBC, meanwhile, said it has not turned down the ad and will reconsider it with some revisions.
>
> "We have not rejected the ad," spokeswoman Liz Fischer told FOXNews.com. "We have communicated with the media agency about some factual claims that require additional substantiation. As always, we are happy to reconsider the ad once these issues are addressed."
>
> Adams objects to ABC's assertion that his group's position is partisan.

They aired Obama's infomercial though, with no rebuttal.

Muslim father forces 10-year-old daughter to marry 80-year-old man

August 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T The Western Experience)

Excerpt:

> A Saudi Arabian father forced his 10-year-old daughter to return to her 80-year-old husband Sunday, after she was found hiding at the home of her aunt for 10 days, Arab News reported.
>
> The young girl's husband, who denies he is 80 despite family claims, accused the aunt of violating the terms of his marriage, allowed by Sharia Law.
>
> "My marriage is not against Sharia. It included the elements of acceptance and response by the father of the bride," he told a local newspaper.

This is the same Sharia law that the secular left is trying to introduce as a parallel society in the UK and Canada. It's multi-culturalism, they say.

MUST-SEE: How the left-wing media suppresses news that doesn't fit their agenda

August 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For today's educational post, let's learn about political correctness. (H/T The Other McCain via ECM)

Here's the greatest PJTV video ever made, featuring PJTV's Bill Whittle.

It's 13-minutes long.

And if you want to learn more about where "political correctness" comes from, look at these videos:

- Part 1 (10:36)
- Part 2 (10:30)
- Part 3 (7:36)

This is the video Bill referenced in his video.

Friday night funny: astroturf, Obamacare, town halls

August 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Breitbart via ECM and Robb:

Also, stick-figure humor

Frank J. and Sarah K meet their annoying new neighbor.

What Democrats think of protesters

Scrappleface writes about the Democrat response to town halls.

Excerpt:

> An outbreak of tumultuous Democrat-run townhall meetings nationwide provides the best proof yet, President Barack Obama said today, that America needs government-run health care to provide low-cost medication to citizens who suffer from bouts of anger and depression.
>
> "Clearly there are mental health issues which are not receiving proper attention under our current health care system," the president said during his weekly Saturday radio address. "I've seen the red-faced citizens, shouting themselves hoarse, even babbling incoherently about rationing, loss of liberty, socialism and the like. These folks need help that the big insurance companies won't give them because they'd rather line the pockets of their fat-cat stockholders."

Happy Friday!

Hot Air and Michelle Malkin post new video of Michele Bachmann's town hall

August 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am happy because lots of major blogs are saying nice things about my favorite representative Michele Bachmann. (You can see all my posts on her here)

In a new video from a town hall meeting, Michele slaps down an idiot heckler.

She starts out by trying to inform the audience of the perils of nationalizing health care, citing the recent story about the 4000 NHS patients who were denied hospital beds for giving birth. So they ended up having their children in all kinds of nasty places.

The Daily Mail wrote:

> Tory health spokesman Andrew Lansley, who obtained the figures, said Labour had cut maternity beds by 2,340, or 22 per cent, since 1997. At the same time birth rates have been rising sharply – up 20 per cent in some areas…
>
> 'It shows the incredible waste that has taken place that mothers are getting this sort of sub-standard treatment despite Gordon Brown's **tripling of spending** on the NHS.
>
> 'Labour have let down mothers by cutting the number of maternity beds and by shutting down maternity units.'…
>
> The NHS employs the equivalent of around 25,000 full-time midwives in England, but the Government has promised to recruit 3,400 more.
>
> However, the Royal College of Midwives estimates at least 5,000 more are needed to provide the quality of service pledged in the Government's blueprint for maternity services, Maternity Matters.
>
> At the same time almost **half** of all midwives are set to retire in the next decade.

Well, as soon as Michele cites this story, some silly heckler starts to babble something about how similar things happen in American hospitals, like the hospital in MN. So Michele immediately shuts him down with this: "I've given birth here probably more times than you, sir."

Click through to see the video either on Michelle Malkin or on Hot Air. And notice the positive reactions from Michelle Malkin and Ed Morrissey.

Also, click here for a picture of Michelle Malkin AND Michele Bachmann. Aren't they lovely?

Ignorant leftists beginning to learn about economics the hard way

August 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Schadenfreude is such a wonderful thing.

First, young people are beginning to realize that taxing the rich is not as great as they thought. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> The proportion of people ages 16 to 24 who were employed in July was 51.4 percent, the lowest July rate since records began in 1948 and 4.6 percentage points lower than in July 2008. …
>
> The Labor Department said 4.4 million youths were unemployed in July 2009, or about 1 million more than in July 2008, putting the youth jobless rate at 18.5 percent, about double the overall national percentage.
>
> Fewer young people were even trying to be part of the labor force this year than in recent years, perhaps choosing summer school, odd jobs around the house or idleness instead.

Let's be clear. If you raise the price of labor while leaving production levels constant, people will be laid off. Period. This is non-negotiable among rational individuals. My recommendation to the young people: put down the Che Guevara t-shirt and step away from television.

Meanwhile, public school teachers are striking against their own union in order to save their jobs. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> A group of teachers in the North Clackamas School District took the initiative Thursday, amid losing their jobs because of budget cuts, by gathering signatures in an effort to have their voices heard by their union.
>
> The teachers, who gathered outside their union office, said they want a response from the union and put their demands in writing in the form of a petition.
>
> Those speaking out said it shouldn't have reached this point, and they would have accepted the district's offer, favoring a wage freeze to save jobs.
>
> "We took a poll in the spring and they got our opinion and the majority said wage freeze," said Monica Whiteley, who was laid off. "So I would like them to look at the poll or honor it and have us look at the memo of understanding that is out there."

It's good to see reliable Democrat voting blocs finally moving beyond rhetoric into reality. The world is dangerous place, and willful blindness has consequences. Next time, they

should learn economics the easy way – by reading Thomas Sowell.

NH court orders home-schooled child into government-run school

August 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Alliance Defense Fund.

Excerpt:

> The parents of the child divorced in 1999. The mother has home-schooled their daughter since first grade with curriculum that meets all state review standards. In addition to home schooling, the girl attends supplemental public school classes and has also been involved in a variety of extra-curricular sports activities.
>
> In the process of renegotiating the terms of a parenting plan for the girl, the guardian ad litem involved in the case concluded, according to the court order, that the girl "appeared to reflect her mother's rigidity on questions of faith" and that the girl's interests "would be best served by exposure to a public school setting" and "different points of view at a time when she must begin to critically evaluate multiple systems of belief…in order to select, as a young adult, which of those systems will best suit her own needs."

The WND story is here, but I don't like WND.

A closer look at the life of Ted Kennedy

August 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this magnificent essay about the life of Ted Kennedy.

I like this essay because it really explains where liberals get their liberal ideas. Ideas like bailouts, big spending, moral relativism and lack of personal responsibility, are the direct result of his silver-spoon upbringing.

Here are the topics:

- his academic record, including his expulsion from Harvard for cheating
- how his father pulled strings to shorten his Army contract
- his sparse resume
- his role in the death of Mary Jo Kopechne
- the inconsistencies between his policies and his personal behavior

Excerpt:

> Insulated by the consequences of his behavior, Kennedy was also shielded from the consequences of his policies. He was the champion of busing who kept his own children far from the public schools; an advocate of publicly funded campaigns who bankrolled his political career with his family's shadowy financing; an icon of feminists who used women like Kleenex, serially harassed members of the opposite sex, and spent ten hours attempting to rescue his political career as he denied the young women suffocating in an air pocket in his Oldsmobile professional rescue attempts; and the primary booster of socialized medicine who assembled a dream team of neurosurgeons to consult on his treatment for brain cancer. The proverbial limousine liberal was made real in Trustfund Ted.

It's fun to contrast this story with the life stories of self-made moms like Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann. They started out in normal families, married and had children. There is a reason why people use expressions like "trust fund liberal" or "limousine liberal".

Does the death penalty discourage crime?

August 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent this essay which explores whether capital punishment deters crime.

Excerpt:

> "Science does really draw a conclusion. It did. There is no question about it," said Naci Mocan, an economics professor at the University of Colorado at Denver. "The conclusion is there is a deterrent effect."
>
> A 2003 study he co-authored, and a 2006 study that re-examined the data, found that each execution results in five fewer homicides, and commuting a death sentence means five more homicides. "The results are robust, they don't really go away," he said. "I oppose the death penalty. But my results show that the death penalty (deters) — what am I going to do, hide them?"
>
> Statistical studies like his are among a dozen papers since 2001 that capital punishment has deterrent effects. They all explore the same basic theory — if the cost of something (be it the purchase of an apple or the act of killing someone) becomes too high, people will change their behavior (forego apples or shy from murder).

The studies all concluded that between 3 and 18 innocent lives were saved by each execution of a convicted killer.

Round-up of recent fascistic activity by Democrats at town hall meetings

August 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, a Democrat disrupts a town hall meeting and then **elbows a town hall attendee in the face**. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Here's a better look at it courtesy of KGUN9 news.

Next, a radical anti-war Democrat Congresswoman has a questioner removed from the town hall by police. (H/T Hot Air)

Last, a policeman threatens to arrest a sign-carrying protester at a Democrat Congressman's town hall. (H/T Hot Air)

Why don't voters understand that socialism leads to fascism?

Corporations have no power over you – they just try to sell you things that you are free not to buy. But government needs to be limited because only they have the power to repress the exercise of your freedom, including freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. They think they are right because they are nice. And you are wrong because you are evil. The anointed elites believe that they do not need to respect the rights of the benighted masses.

Obama cuts off aid to pressure Honduras into communist dictatorship

August 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Post from Hans Bader at the CEI's Open market blog.

Excerpt:

> The Obama Administration is about to cut off aid to Honduras, one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. Earlier, the Obama Administration blocked travel to the United States by the people of Honduras.
>
> […]State Department lawyers, who are not experts on Honduran law, plan to declare the ex-president's removal a "military coup" to justify cutting off aid, even though Honduras has a civilian president, and the ex-president was lawfully removed from office (although his subsequent exile may technically have violated Honduran law).
>
> […]Confronted with the sound legal basis for removing the ex-president under his country's constitution, the Obama Administration has responded with a series of increasingly weak rationalizations for stubbornly seeking to force his return on the Honduran people.
>
> […]Obama's demand that Obama reinstate its would-be dictator has emboldened other elected leaders in Latin America to try to make themselves dictators. (Even the liberal *Washington Post*, which has not endorsed a Republican for president since 1952, admitted in an editorial by Deputy Editorial Page Editor Jackson Diehl that the Obama Administration has shown a "willful disregard of political oppression" by left-wing dictators in Latin America).
>
> Obama's demand that Honduras's ex-president be returned to office has been supported by the Cuban communist dictator Castro and the Venezuelan socialist dictator Chavez, who counted Honduras's deposed president as an ally, despite his background as a wealthy and corrupt landowner.
>
> But allying with Castro and Chavez to force the return of Honduras's would-be dictator has not even improved U.S. relations with their countries. The dictators Castro and Chavez continue to attack and oppose the United States at every turn, and oppose all of its Latin American initiatives, like its plans for bases in Colombia to fight drug trafficking. Obama has received nothing in exchange for his appeasement of Latin America's left.

The article details the flaws in Obama's support for a communist dictatorship in Honduras.

The rules for friendship and courtship between Christian men and women

August 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post will probably be changing as time passes and I learn more about relationships.

The goal

The goal of my opposite-sex friendships (hereafter just "friendships") is for me to build up the skills of Christian women by exchanging training materials to work through, and monitoring progress. The training materials for friendship are centered around apologetics, with some conservative policy, as well. The friendships are beneficial to God because we are building each other up, and it also provides a context for us to evaluate changing to a courtship.

Most of my relationships with Christian women will never enter into the friendship phase because virtually none of them even care for apologetics. But some Christian women have shown an interest in apologetics and conservative policy and that's what gets the friendship going.

I basically think about this friendship-courtship distinction as a continuum where passing through the gate from friendship to courtship is dependent on progress in sharing my vision with her and having her take appropriate steps to recognize and contribute to my vision. When a female Christian friend begins to contribute to my overall life vision, that's the point at which we consider changing to a courtship.

Marriage

I am open to marrying any chaste female Christian. The grounds for the decision to marry are that the marriage would provide a better benefit to God in terms of his purposes in the world than if we continued to work separately. In particular, I am looking for my prospective mate to demonstrate her commitment to my four-pronged vision for serving God in the most effective ways. (See below)

I am also interested in whether she understands the challenges facing men and male needs, especially in areas like feminism, big government, no-fault divorce, child custody, etc. But I am also interested in her views in areas like chastity, modesty, grooming, physical fitness and expected frequency of marital sex. She must also recognize standards of chastity, chivalry and romance and participate in standard activities like letter-writing.

My vision

My vision involves operations in 4 areas:

The university:

- get a PhD and teach in the university as a publicly-identified Christian *OR* no PhD, but teach in a community college

- fund Christian scholars to lecture and debate at the university
- fund research by intelligent design scholars
- raise brilliant home-schooled children who can get PhDs and go on to impact the university

The church

- bring scholars in to lecture and especially to debate in the church, and sponsor these events
- teach adult Sunday school classes in apologetics (i.e. – show debates and discuss them, read books and discuss them)
- find a wife who can help with these goals

The workplace

- study apologetics and engage co-workers in discussions at lunch if they are interested
- operate a library to lend out lectures and debates to those who are interested
- give co-workers gifts at Christmas like DVDs on intelligent design or debates
- put things in my office to declare myself as a thoughtful Christian
- find a wife who can be hospitable, prepare meals and host discussions in our home

The public square

- blog: inform and educate Christians about economic and public policies that affect our liberty
- donate to Christian politicians who reflect my priorities
- donate to other Christians who engage in debates on abortion, Islam, etc.
- run for office after kids are grown-up
- encourage wife to run for office after kids are grown-up
- encourage kids to run for office after they retire from teaching at the universities

If a Christian woman is interested in having me assist her with learning apologetics and stuff, so she can serve God better, that's called a friendship. If she starts to inquire about my vision and begins to show real recognition and support for it, that's called a courtship.

The main thing is that God's goals are always the center of our interactions. Marriage is not the end goal of the relationship. God's goals in the world are the end. Marriage is just a possible means to that end. Being a good husband is a means to that end. Even being a good father is a means to that end.

The rules

Here are my rules for dealing with Christian women:

1. No touching during friendship or courtship. This rule holds until the engagement day, where a kiss is permitted, but nothing more. The reason for this rule is to avoid

losing 1) the ability to focus on my plan instead of women, and 2) the ability to evaluate Christian women objectively and dispassionately. (Note: I now think that hand-holding and hugging is OK once the initial evaluation of her is complete, and she starts to put in effort on the things that you care about, that are related to your plan)
2. No being together by ourselves in non-public places without a chaperone. This applies to friendship and courtship.
3. The friendship advances by exchanging and executing tasks that help us both to be more effective Christians. For example, listening to lectures together and stopping the lecture to discuss things, and then writing about the lecture afterward.
4. The courtship advances by exchanging and executing tasks related to my vision. For example, we arrange a viewing of a debate or lecture DVD at her church and then jointly take questions from the audience.
5. Gifts exchange is allowed during the friendship, but no tokens can be given to me.
6. Token exchange (e.g. – a lady's handkerchief with her colors), is reserved to mark the beginning of courtship. I have to carry it with me whenever I fight, and give reports to her on how I did. She can withdraw it, ending the courtship. I can also return it, ending the courtship. I can only carry one token at a time.
7. Parents should be kept informed about the progress of friendships and courtships.
8. Her parents have the right to engage me in discussions about my views on apologetics, etc. at any time during the friendship or courtship, but they *do not* have the right to override my vision with their vision.
9. It helps me if women dress modestly, because I am more comfortable when a woman tries to attract me using non-physical approaches, like words. I resent it when women try to attract me using sex appeal instead of words. I like being in control of myself. Sex appeal is strictly for after the wedding. There are a million ways for a Christian woman to knock a Christian man off his feet just by taking an interest in things like apologetics and economics. The trick is to find a man who cares about being friends with God.
10. I am looking to court someone who already has the skills to assist me with my vision, or who demonstrates a willingness to develop them, or who is able to persuade me that other skills are an even better match for my vision.

These are guidelines that I try to communicate to women to help us to constrain our relationship to serve God's goals. These are all subject to discussion and debate, of course.

I think that one of the effects of these rules is to take the pressure to be "sexy" off of women. And to remove sex from the equation entirely – there is no room for clumsy groping in the back seat of a car in this operation. Instead, a woman wins the heart of a man if she is willing to listen to him, learn about his needs as a man, and his vision to serve God, and then work hard to recognize and support all that.

Sample activities

In a friendship, the first steps are going to involve a lot of studying and talking. For example, it is not uncommon for me to spend 2-6 hours *just talking* to a Christian woman about spiritual things. We do independent studies around things like reading the same books, listening to the same lectures, or even doing the political compass or resurrection questionnaires together. Individual tasks for me from her might include Bible reading, church attending, bringing her resources that she asks for, writing about my feelings and experiences, etc.

I believe in exchanging tasks so that the woman gets into the pattern of getting outside her own needs and thinking about her obligations to me. My concern is that a lot of women have a fairy tale view of marriage. She picks a man for superficial reasons and hopes to change him later. This leads women to ignore male needs and the man's vision prior to marriage. The man is tricked into the marriage by pre-marital sexual activity.

Unfortunately choosing a bad man and then tricking him with sex doesn't work to keep that man as her appearance fades. This is particularly bad for women whose self-esteem is tied to appearance. And I think that is a major reason why women are so interested in no-fault divorce and massive government social programs – to relieve them of the burden of having to choose the right man and having to work to win him and having to work to keep him.

Real men find big government very discouraging, which is why men are not interested in marriage any more. The prospect of facing activist family courts run by feminists is too much for thoughtful men to contemplate. Men can't support a family on a salary that is highly taxed to pay for things like VAWA or welfare programs, or single-payer health care. Men also don't want to lose access to their kids based on fake charges of domestic violence.

I know that these rules and procedures are going to strike a lot of you as odd, and some of you are going to stop reading my blog because I am just too weird. Well, I think you should just snicker at me and keep reading. After all, someone has to be different. The only people really in a position to judge whether this is working are my female Christian friends, and God. I myself am very happy with these rules because they help me to put God first.

Building Christian women up

One last thing. The man's role in the relationship is to love his wife all the time, and to do it intelligently. It's therefore imperative for him to read about how women understand love. I recommend the book "The Five Love Languages" for learning about how to love women well. Also, it's a great idea to read all about how women think and feel about what they do in a marriage, so that you can support them after first understanding them. A good book to read on that is "What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women: and similar books. It's a good idea to think about how to become better at leading by persuasion – by convincing women to grow upward. For example, I convinced one girl I was courting to go back to school and do a degree in economics. Another one went back to school get her law degree. And this not to even mention the basic stuff that women I

court do – like organizing public debates, apologetics conferences, teaching apologetics in the church, finding summer jobs, getting top grades in school, giving public speeches, and so on. Courting is the time where you intentionally lead women to become stronger.

In the 2012 the Presidential election, I supported Michele Bachmann as my first choice for the office of President. Her husband Marcus is very traditional about courtship and marriage, just like me. He actually asked her to go back to school at one point to specialize in tax law, in order to help the family business and be better at pushing the children upward through school. That was a smart decision, to grow his wife up like that so that she could be better. So whatever you do in the courtship, your goal should always be to push women up, up, up. And that applies whether she is for you or for someone else or for no one else. Make her better than she used to be so that she can serve God better – to be a better wife and mother, and to have more of an influence in the world for Christ and his Kingdom. Never, ever bring her down or minimize the impact she can have for good. She is a partner in serving God, after all.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Neil has a related post on complementarian marriage (which is my view).

Are “de-facto” parents good for children?

August 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this interesting National Review article about how courts are undermining the rights of children by breaking down traditional parental roles.

Excerpt:

> This year, the District of Columbia Council passed a law allowing biological parents’ registered domestic partners to be presumed parents, and to be listed as such on the children’s birth certificates. The law also allows a person to be legally designated a parent if he consents in writing to the artificial insemination of his partner**,** or if he “hold[s] out” the child as his own—that is, presents the child as his to others. (D.C. already had a law allowing people to sue for child custody if they could show they had acted as “de facto” parents (D.C. Code 16-831.01).)
>
> Then, last month, the Delaware legislature went even farther when it enacted legislation giving state courts the ability to designate a non-parent as a “de facto” parent (with all the legal ramifications of parenthood) as long as the biological parent of a child “fosters” a “parent-like relationship” between the non-parent and the child, and as long as the “de facto” parent has acted like a parent and bonded with the child in a way that is “parental in nature.”
>
> The Delaware law completely untethers legal parentage from biology, marriage, adoption, and even the relationship between the adults who are the child’s legal “parents.” It also abandons the binary nature of legal parenthood by allowing three or more adults to be designated “parents” of a child at the same time.

The article goes on to explain why the court’s designation of de facto parents is a bad idea for children, who are increasingly having their rights to a happy childhood denied by courts. This is what Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse was concerned about in her recent podcast on family and marriage.

I think the bottom line here is that children do best when bonding to two opposite-sex parents who are biologically linked to them. That is the most stable, loving environment in which to have children. The left is sacrificing the welfare of children in order to cater to the needs of adults who don’t care about what is best for children.

Canada cuts deal with US hospitals to reduce waiting times

September 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome, visitors from Blazing Cat Fur!

Story from the Detroit Free Press. (H/T Health Care BS via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Hospitals in border cities, including Detroit, are forging lucrative arrangements with Canadian health agencies to provide care not widely available across the border.
>
> Agreements between Detroit hospitals and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for heart, imaging tests, bariatric and other services provide access to some services not immediately available in the province, said ministry spokesman David Jensen.
>
> The agreements show how a country with a national care system — a proposal not part of the health care changes under discussion in Congress — copes with demand for care with U.S. partnerships, rather than building new facilities.

I am not so sure that we should be adopting single-payer health care. Who can we cut a deal with to reduce *our* waiting list delays?

BloggingHeadsTV restores censored video interview of Michael Behe

September 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You can watch the video here, where Michael Behe is interviewed on a variety of topics by an atheist, who is nevertheless impressed by Behe's book.

Topics:

- Michael's book, "The Edge of Evolution" (04:29)
- Malaria and evolution (06:56)
- Do proteins point to teleology? (05:59)
- Have we really hit a wall of understanding? (04:08)
- Challenges to Michael's theory of irreducible complexity (05:28)
- John: The boredom objection to intelligent design (09:13)

Here is Robert Wright's comment about the restoration of the interview:

> This diavlog has now been re-posted. The decision to remove it from the site was made by BhTV staff while I was away and unavailable for consultation…. It's impossible to say for sure whether, in the heat of the moment, I would have made a decision different from the staff's decision. But on reflection I've decided that removing this particular diavlog from the site is hard to justify by any general principle that should govern our future conduct. In other words, it's not a precedent I'd want to live with.

Kick off the audio, (or download the MP3), and then read the comments of the Darwinists.

Comments from open-minded, tolerant Darwinists

Many of the commenters don't mention the interview at all – they didn't watch it.

Here's one comment:

> I've listened to a few seconds of this diavlog, enough to hear John McWhorter call Behe's nonsense "a very important book." I can't remember the last time I lost so much respect for someone so quickly.

And another:

> Grab the popcorn: this is bound to be a good thread. (Doubtful I'll actually watch the diavlog.)

And one last one:

> If this creationism thing keeps up no one will want to be on bhtv anymore. A spinoff site is better than no site for us regular viewers. Who's with me?

Who can have any confidence in a theory when the adherents cannot even be bothered

to listen to a tenured biochemist explain his own research which contradicts that theory?

Student gets 5-day suspension for offending Muslim student

September 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from ABC Action News. (H/T Jihad Watch)

Excerpt:

> The teen says an issue over the American flag is why she was written up and handed a five-day suspension from Springstead High School this week for criticizing a Muslim student. Heather says the other girl was sitting down during the Pledge of Allegiance.
>
> "You know, I made a not-so-kind remark, and I do sincerely apologize for referring to the thing on her head because that had nothing to do with it." Heather told us, "But I told her, 'Why don't she act like she's proud to be an American?'"
>
> Despite the open apology to the girl, who wears a hijab, the President of the Tampa/Hillsborough County Human Rights Council says Heather's actions were harmful and the school was right for taking action.
>
> "But whether standing up or not, this issue's not about the pledge of allegiance or anything else." Council President Ahmed Bedier said. "This is about bullying and it's about discrimination."

It sounds like an American version of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Free speech is now "discrimination" and "bullying". Who is being bullied here?

Robert Spenser notes that Ahmed Bedier has some experience with bullying.

What lowers unemployment? Bush’s tax cuts or Obama’s spending?

September 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama’s unemployment rate is now a 9.5% and heading over 10%. About 3.5 MILLION jobs lost by the President ACORN-lawyer.

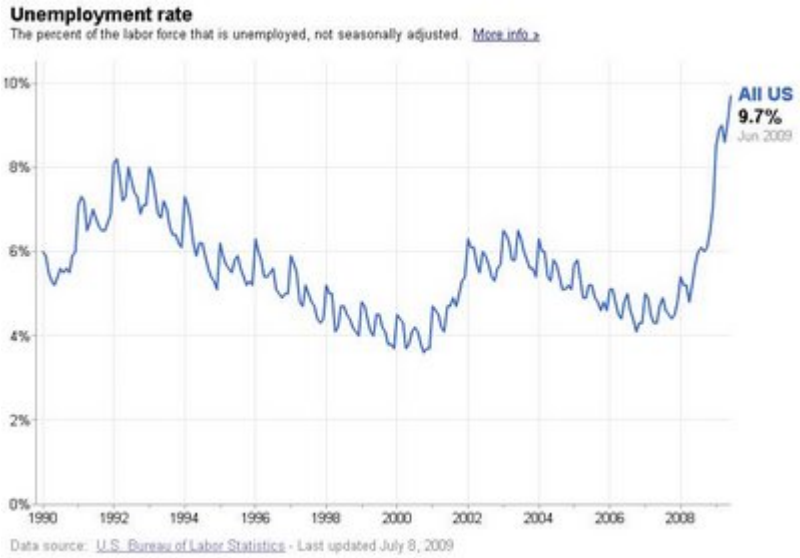

This is the highest unemployment rate in at least 26 years. DON'T ELECT DEMOCRATS! Let’s examine the numbers, and how the media reported on the numbers.

This video is from Hot Air.

Here’s what the Washington Post said after Bush’s tax cuts lowered the unemployment rate to 5.4%:

> For President Bush, tax cuts have been an all-purpose elixir, a cure for budget surpluses and a bursting stock bubble, for terrorist attacks and boardroom scandals, for the march to war and a jobless recovery in peacetime.
>
> Now, after three successive tax cuts, and after a record budget surplus has turned to a record deficit, the president faces an unenviable choice. He can either concede that his $1.7 trillion tonic has not worked as advertised, or he can insist that the economy is strong despite the slowdown in growth and job creation.

Bush cut taxes on the most productive *job-creating* parts of the economy by 2.2 trillion overall in his two terms.

But what about Obama? The Post writes:

> The big news of the week should be Friday’s employment report, which many analysts suspect will show that the labor market, while still quite bad, continues on a path toward stabilization. Economists are expecting the unemployment rate to rise to 9.5 percent, from 9.4 percent, and for employers to have cut 228,000

> net jobs in August, compared with the 247,000 jobs lost in March. That job loss number — or even better, a figure that starts with a "1," would be strong evidence that improvement in the economy is finally filtering through to the job market in a serious way.
>
> But there are reasons to doubt that will happen. Most notably, the rate of new jobless claims has failed to come down significantly in recent weeks, which suggests businesses are still eager to pare back their payrolls. Thursday, the Labor Department said 570,000 Americans put in new claims for unemployment insurance benefits, down only barely from 580,000 the previous week.

Surprise! Communism is bad for the economy! Who knew?

Economics in One Lesson

We are going to have to pay for all this spending on Obama's favored special interest groups eventually, and that means that taxes will go up, or that the value of the dollar will go down, due to inflation. It has to be one or the other or both. There is no third way.

Perhaps it is time to review Henry Hazlitt's Economics in One Lesson, chapter 4, entitled "Public Works Mean Taxes".

Excerpt:

> Therefore, for every public job created by the bridge project a private job has been destroyed somewhere else. We can see the men employed on the bridge. We can watch them at work. The employment argument of the government spenders becomes vivid, and probably for most people convincing. But there are other things that we do not see, because, alas, they have never been permitted to come into existence. They are the jobs destroyed by the $10 million taken from the taxpayers. All that has happened, at best, is that there has been a *diversion* of jobs because of the project. More bridge builders; fewer automobile workers, television technicians, clothing workers, farmers.

And consider Chapter 5 as well, entitled "Taxes Discourage Production".

> In our modern world there is never the same percentage of income tax levied on everybody. The great burden of income taxes is imposed on a minor percentage of the nation's income; and these income taxes have to be supplemented by taxes of other kinds. These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to become employers at all. Improved machinery and better-equipped factories

> come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.
>
> There is a similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment that they profess to solve.

What Obama did, in effect, is to fire all of those millions of private sector people, so that he could reward the people who voted for him. And jobs are created far more efficiently by *small businesses* than they are by *big government*. This is the science of economics.

Let’s drop the Peter-Pan politically-correct policies of the left, and elect Republicans in 2010.

New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being

September 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story from the New Scientist. (H/T Jennifer Roback Morse)

First let's re-cap the old stuff:

> Previous studies have hinted at the importance of fathers in child-rearing. Some have shown that girls reach puberty younger, become sexually active earlier and are more likely to get pregnant in their teens if their father was absent when they were young. Others have suggested that the sons of absent fathers display lower intimacy and self-esteem.

Now let's get the new stuff:

> Cells in pups deprived of fathers had a blunted response to oxytocin – the "cuddle chemical", which is normally released during social interactions and pair bonding. They also had an increased response to NMDA, which is involved in memory.
>
> The fatherless mice were also less interested in engaging with other mice. "Usually if you put two animals in the same cage they investigate and touch each other, but when we put two animals deprived of a father together they ignored each other," says Gobbi. Her colleague Francis Bambico presented the work at the World Congress of Biological Psychiatry in Paris, France, in early July.

But according to this Telegraph article, it doesn't seem as though research impacts public policy. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Women who undergo fertility treatment and their same-sex partners are now both allowed to register as parents on their baby's birth certificates.
>
> The move has been criticised for damaging the traditional notion of a family, which many people say is necessary for a healthy upbringing.
>
> But ministers insist it is a step forward for equal rights.
>
> Lord Brett, the Home Office Minister, said: "This positive change means that for the first time female couples who have a child using fertility treatment have the same rights as their heterosexual counterparts to be shown as parents in the birth registration.
>
> "It is vital that we afford equality wherever we can in society, especially as family circumstances continue to change. This is an important step forward in that process."

There are powerful special interest groups on the left whose whole purpose is to

demonize fathers and destroy marriage. They want children to be raised by the state, (i.e. – by those who run the secular government). They think that government programs taught by strangers and designed by experts well-versed in all the isms of the left, are better for children than their biological parents.

New peer-reviewed study links abortion and breast cancer

September 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The abstract of the paper is posted here. (H/T Jennifer Roback Morse)

Excerpt:

> On multivariable logistic regression analysis, age (≥ 50) years (OR 2.61, 95% CI 2.20–3.11), induced abortion (**OR 1.66**, 95% CI 1.38–1.99), and oral contraceptive use (**OR 0.60**, 95% CI 0.48–0.74) were found to be associated with breast cancer risk as statistically significant independent factors.
>
> These findings suggest that age and induced abortion were found to be significantly associated with increased breast cancer risk whereas oral contraceptive use was observed to be associated with decreased breast cancer risk among Turkish women in Istanbul.

These findings mean that women who have abortions are 66% more likely to develop breast cancer than women who don't. And those who use oral contraceptives are 40% less likely to develop breast cancer than women who don't.

More adult stem cell advances

ECM sent me a Telegraph article on adult stem cell research. (Source: Secondhand Smoke)

A lot of abortion supporters like to talk about all the medical advances we will have a few decades from now by using human embryos (which are persons) for medical research. But the news media doesn't really want to report much on all the proven cures that *adult* stem-cell research give us today.

Excerpt:

> British scientists have developed a stem cell technique which is being used by patients to avoid hip replacements, in a major medical breakthrough. Doctors in Southampton are using the pioneering technique, where a patient's damaged bones are repaired using their own stem cells. Patients hailed the treatment, after many found they could walk normally again without any pain and without the need for hip replacement surgery. So far six patients have had the treatment with only one failure, doctors said.

Why should we pursue the medical program of Nazi Germany when we can have cures *today* without killing *anybody*?

MUST-SEE: Bill Whittle explains American exceptionalism to the left

September 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sends us the next great video from Bill Whittle.

(Note: there is a vulgar reference at the beginning when he quoted Bill Maher)

This is compelling. I mean, this really floored me. This is an engaging video you will remember.

He analyzes four areas where America dominates:

- Military
- Economic
- Scientific
- Cultural

America is *indeed* exceptionally great. Without a doubt the greatest country in the history of the universe. I encourage all of international visitors, to watch this video and learn about why America is an exceptional country.

Hope you didn't miss Bill's last video on media bias at MSNBC.

College Republicans preparing list of leftist professors

Andrew sent me this article from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> The University of Toledo's College Republicans are compiling a list of liberal professors who they claimed have a bias against conservative students.
>
> The list will include professors who students say have let their political views interfere with the way they interact with students in the classroom.
>
> UT College Republicans President Matt Rubin, a junior majoring in political science and public administration, said the list is not an attempt to bash professors who have liberal ideas, but instead, it is an attempt to speak out for students who may have been victims of the bias, which was then reflected in their grade.

This is controversial, but I am in favor of it. Suppression of conservatives and Christians on campus is one of my major concerns. In the meantime, I encourage parents to home-school their children using an old-earth curriculum heavily slanted towards the classics and mathematics. If the children go on to university, they should study mathematics, computer science, chemistry or physics.

One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care

September 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Telegraph. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> In the last six years, the Patients Association claims hundreds of thousands have suffered from poor standards of nursing, often with 'neglectful, demeaning, painful and sometimes downright cruel' treatment.
>
> The charity has disclosed a horrifying catalogue of elderly people left in pain, in soiled bed clothes, denied adequate food and drink, and suffering from repeatedly cancelled operations, missed diagnoses and dismissive staff.
>
> The Patients Association said the dossier proves that while the scale of the scandal at Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust – where up to 1,200 people died through failings in urgent care – was a one off, there are repeated examples they have uncovered of the same appalling standards throughout the NHS. While the criticisms cover all aspects of hospital care, the treatment and attitude of nurses stands out as a repeated theme across almost all of the cases.

I don't think the sharp decline of religion in the UK has helped the character of the medical staff very much. Although some atheists are pretty good, I have argued elsewhere that it is pretty hard to rationally justify acts of self-sacrifice on atheism. It just isn't rational to do good when it goes against your self-interest.

And here's another terrifying one from the Telegraph. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Thousands of women and older people who suffer heart attacks are dying unnecessarily because they are not being prescribed the gold standard treatment which could prevent another attack. One in five people who have had a heart attack in Britain do not receive all four drugs recommended to prevent a second, a study of 60,000 people have found.
>
> […]Lead author Prof Iain Squire, professor of cardiovascular medicine at University of Leicester and consultant at the Leicester Royal Infirmary, calculated that 2,000 out of the 5,000 deaths over the two year study period had been undertreated and 'could potentially have been avoided'. He said: "The patients who are most likely to get undertreated are the elderly and females but they get incremental benefit for each drug they take so we should not be withholding these therapies based on age and gender alone." People aged 65 to 74 were 20 per cent less likely to get all four drugs compared with those under 55; while people aged over 85 were three times less likely to get all four medicines.

Let’s be clear. The left believes in myths like overpopulation, global warming, survival of the fittest, etc. Their denial of God makes them terribly afraid of the future. So they begin to dream up ways to stop the unwashed masses from using too many resources or from wrecking the planet. Naturally, the first thing they want to do is to prevent people from having children, or living too long. Hence, abortion and eugenics.

Previous NHS horror story posts are here.

Good news for the right to free speech in Canada!

September 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life Site News has the best post I've seen so far.

Excerpt:

> The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled today that section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, Canada's human rights legislation against hate messages, unreasonably limits the Charter right to freedom of expression.
>
> [...]Popular conservative pundit and human rights commission critic Mark Steyn today said that the end of the hate speech legislation is near, calling today's decision a "landmark decision." "This is the beginning of the end for Section 13 and its provincial equivalents, and a major defeat for Canada's thought police," he said. "It's not just a personal triumph for Marc Lemire, but a critical victory in the campaign by Ezra Levant, Maclean's, yours truly and others to rid the Canadian state of this hideous affront to justice."
>
> [...]The hate message section of the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) has been the subject of growing criticism, having been accused of placing limits on the Charter right to freedom of expression. High profile cases have been brought against conservative publisher Ezra Levant and columnist Mark Steyn, as well as numerous cases against Christians who have expressed their convictions against the homosexualist agenda.
>
> The CHRC has admitted to using unethical methods within their investigations. Notably, in a hearing during Lemire's case, CHRC employee Dean Steacy testified that he and a number of colleagues regularly used an alias to post racist messages... The CHRC was also investigated by the RCMP regarding allegations that they had hacked into a private citizen's internet connection, though that case was dropped when it led the police to the American jurisdiction.
>
> Until today, no respondent had won a human rights case brought to the Tribunal under section 13. Further, about half of the section 13 cases have been brought by Richard Warman, and almost all of them in recent years.

Blazing Cat Fur has a huge round-up of blog reactions from the best Canadian blogs.

Here are some of the blogs from his round-up:

- Mark Steyn: This is the beginning of the end for Section 13
- National Post: Hate speech law ruled unconstitutional
- Marginalized Action Dinosaur: SECTION 13 HAS BEEN STRUCK DOWN!
- FiveFeetOfFury: 'Hate/thought crime' law 'unconstitutional'
- Scaramouche: A sudden–and shocking–renunciation of Thought Police-type thinking
- Denyse O'Leary : This just in – Infamous Section 13 hits a wall
- Big Blue Wave: Celebrate with me! Hate speech law unconstitutional: rights tribunal

- Scary Fundamentalist: We'll let you go this time
- MooseandSquirrel: Free speech wins a battle
- Socon or Bust: CHRT Throws S.13 Under the Bus

I took a look at the comments on BCF, and they are still pretty cautious, but excited.

This news was big enough to get picked up over at Hot Air by Ed Morrissey, who explains:

> When government tells you what you can and cannot say in the political context, then free speech is essentially dead. Section 13 created an enormously intimidating device for anyone who wants to argue their beliefs in the public square in Canada. Even in just a "remedial" mode, it creates an atmosphere where people have to worry whether their speech will create a necessity to seek government approval, and the costs of defending speech become so onerous as to silence people.

The conservatives need to make this an issue in the next election, which is coming soon since the Liberals have announced that they are no longer going to back the Conservatives. Now is the time for bold action, Stephen Harper.

Further study

- Mark Steyn radio interview and previous Ezra Levant debate
- Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn on Milt Rosenberg's radio show
- Ezra Levant videos from the Michael Coren TV show, here.
- Evan Sayet's speeches on how progressives think

CRISIS: Rifqa Bary's hearing is today! Please take action now!

September 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Robert Spenser reports that Rifqa will stay in Florida until the next hearing on September 29, 2009. Pamela Geller has videos.

Here is a call to action regarding the ex-Muslim 17-year-old girl from Ohio who converted to Christianity and fled her parents.

Fox News has a story about the line her attorney will take.

Excerpt:

> In a 35-page memorandum filed Monday in Orange County family court, attorney John Stemberger claims Fathima Rifqa Bary, who will remain in foster care in Florida at least until a hearing on Thursday, should not be returned to the custody of her parents, Mohamed and Aysha Bary, because of their connection to the Noor Islamic Cultural Center near Columbus, Ohio.
>
> "The leader of the mosque, Dr. Hany Saqr, was previously an imam for another area mosque at the same time the largest known Al Qaeda cell in the U.S. since 9/11 was operating out of the mosque," the document read. "Additionally, Dr. Saqr was identified in exhibits submitted by the Department of Justice in a recent terrorism finance trial in Texas as being one of the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood in North America — an international organization responsible for birthing virtually every Islamic terrorist organization in the world, including Al Qaeda."
>
> The center also is affiliated with Dr. Salah Sultan, a "cleric alleged photographed with terrorist leaders designated as such by the U.S. government," according to the document, and frequently hosts "extremist speakers" who have allegedly made statements supporting violence and terrorism.
>
> Stemberger also claims the Noor Center has been "directly tied" to an ongoing probe into Somali-American youths who fled the U.S. to train in terror camps operated by the Al Qaeda-linked Al-Shabaab terror organization.

You can read more about her mosque here on the Jawa Report.

Lots of videos on some of the characters affiliated with the radical mosque attended by Rifqa's parents.

Take action

Governor Charlie Crist's office:

Phone: (850) 488-4441 and (850) 488-7146
Fax: (850) 487-0801
Email: Charlie.Crist@MyFlorida.com

Florida Department of Children and Family:
George H. Sheldon, Secretary
Phone: (850) 487-1111
Fax: (850) 922-2993

And after you've contacted both of them, PLEASE PRAY! This is life or death!

Her parents planned to flee the country

The Washington Times has more on the case. (H/T Jihad Watch)

Excerpt:

> **In mid-July her mother went through Rifqa's private things and found her journal. It was then revealed to her mother that Rifqa was a practicing Christian. Mrs. Bary called her husband and alerted him that Rifqa was still practicing Christianity in secret.**
>
> **Mr. Bary cut his business trip short to return home immediately while Mrs. Bary packed the family's bags to go back to Sri Lanka. Whether Rifqa would have been honor murdered before or after they returned to Sri Lanka is known only to the Barys.**
>
> **It was very clear that Rifqa's father planned to flee the country with his threatened daughter. According to very recent documentation, Mr. Bary dissolved his business on July 29 — after Rifqa ran for her life (fearing an honor killing for her apostasy) and was discovered in Florida.**
>
> This was not an insignificant business, with annual sales of $237,561. That's a lot to give up. So why did Mr. Bary dissolve his business so suddenly? He obviously did not expect Rifqa to prevail in Florida court. Like all the pundits, he expected Rifqa would have to go back to Ohio.
>
> Mr. and Mrs. Bary signed papers in Ohio with Franklin County Children Services, saying they would be happy if she were brought back to the state and placed in a foster home for at least 30 days. They just wanted to get her back in Ohio and out of Florida and Floridian interference.
>
> Thirty days in foster care in Ohio (and what good does that do?) and then they wing her to Sri Lanka. Rifka said it herself: "In 150 generations of my family, no one has known Jesus. I am the first one. Imagine the honor in killing me. There is great honor in that. Because if they love Allah more than me, they have to do it. It's in the Koran. … They have to do this. They just have to. Either they do that or they send me back to Sri Lanka. There's an asylum there where they put people like me, like, think I'm crazy."
>
> Mr. Bary began the process of dissolving his business in early July when it became increasingly clear that Rifqa was a true convert to Christianity. At that time, he waved her laptop at her and said, "You are dead to me. You are not my daughter." He told her: "I will kill you."
>
> His sudden dissolving of his business indicates he was deadly serious. But you

> won’t learn them from the mainstream media. For them, and for the almost-as-clueless courts, he is “indigent.”

And don’t forget about the two brave Iranian women still in a filthy Iranian fail for refusing to deny Christ. Pray for them, too!

(Note: if you want to know where Obama is, look here. We are on our own!)

MUST-READ: The Pugnacious Irishman does a brave thing that we must imitate

September 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

OK, now this is what I really like to see.

Excerpt:

> Set up my classroom today…it's an ordeal.
>
> I have this gigundous bookshelf next to my desk that contains the books I've read. My theory is that if I want to make my students readers, I must model it myself. In order for that to happen, they need to see me as a reader, which means they should see what I read.
>
> If a student's parents sign a waiver, the student has permission to check out any book in my room, including from my shelf (the lone exception is that books from my shelf can't leave the room–I'm very territorial about my books. 😀).
>
> While I have a large range of reading interests, there are many Christian themed books. Science, philosophy, theology, history–it's all represented.
>
> I can see some students balking at this. "Isn't that illegal?" they might ask. "Hey! Them's religious books, and that violates the separation of church and state!" they might quip.
>
> One time during a discussion at my previous school in which a religious question came up, a student objected: "my junior high teacher told me that it's a sin to talk about religion in the classroom." Now there's a contradiction if I ever heard one!
>
> There's no way I'm gonna let some ill-thought out one liner from a student or even parent get me to back down. I've thought about this, and I have a ready response.

Read the whole thing! He goes into details explaining why he is not intimidated by the threat of people being offended. This is a great post. Very inspiring!

And now I want you all to consider trying to be like Rich! If you have a workplace, consider adding something that identifies you as a Christian. Rich just got married, and it hasn't affected his level of bravery one bit! One of the main reasons I avoid marriage is because to me it means the end of adventures. I just cannot believe that my wife would encourage me to be brave. But Rich's example should be an inspiration to us all!

This is exactly what I wanted to do in life, but by then I was committed to computer science… I dream of teaching! But I'm not sure how to get into it, and I don't want to be in a union.

To learn more about bravery in the workplace

Listen to some lectures by my favorite Christian of all, the one I try to emulate most in my

day to day life.

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

- Ph.D. in Materials Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1968
- B.S. in Engineering Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1965

My favorite lecture of all time:

- Giants in the Land (low volume)

And variations of his “Giants in the Land” lecture that I like:

- Giants in the Land, Medium
- Giants in the Land, Short

Other lectures:

- Journey to Faith (His testimony)
- Truth in Religion
- Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer

Post what YOU do to be identified as a Christian in YOUR workplace in the comments!

Obama restricts government contracts over 25M to unionized labor

September 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Erick Erickson at Red State. (H/T IHateTheMedia via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Barack Obama and his administration are about to significantly drive up the costs of federal building construction. This is an astonishing reach. The Office of Management and Budget has directed that any federal construction over $25 million benefit unions.
>
> The order would make all federal construction projects 10-20% more expensive by requiring all contractors to either use union workers or apply inefficient union apprenticeship and work rules to their employees. **Contractors would also be required to make contributions to union pension funds and other union programs that non-union workers will never benefit from.**
>
> This will hugely drive up the cost of construction of federal buildings *and* line the pockets of unions without even having union workers involved in the projects. The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that only 15.6% of private construction workers in America belong to unions. In other words, **8 out of 10 construction workers in America will be legally denied the right to work on federal building projects.**

Now you say to me, "Wintery! What's wrong with unions?"

And I refer you to this article from the extremely leftist NYT. (H/T Sweetness and Light via ECM)

Excerpt:

> No one got the chance to say goodbye to Café des Artistes, the storied New York City restaurant that served up Old World fare under the gaze of the painted nubile nudes that perkily graced its walls.
>
> The restaurant had closed on Aug. 9 for a month-long vacation and was to reopen Sept. 14. **But on Friday, facing steady losses and a union lawsuit, its owners made what they described as a wrenching decision to close the landmark cafe on West 67th Street for good.**
>
> "It's a very sad day for us," said Jenifer Lang, whose husband, George Lang, has owned the restaurant since 1975. "It's a death in the family."
>
> It was also the death of an intrinsic part of old New York. Countless couples got engaged in the glow of the restaurant's dim, romantic lighting…
>
> **Mrs. Lang, 58, said that the restaurant's business had been hurt by the economic crash but that its problems ran deeper. Café des Artistes was**

> **unionized, and she said the restaurant paid about $250,000 a year to cover its employees' health and pension benefits, an amount she said the restaurant struggled to cover.** Mrs. Lang also said the couple, whose home is half a block from the restaurant, put in $2 million of their own money to keep it running over the last 10 years.
>
> **"It makes it difficult to run a restaurant most of the time," Mrs. Lang said of the union benefits. "When the economy is down, it makes it impossible."**
>
> **The final straw, Mrs. Lang said, was a lawsuit recently filed against the restaurant by the union demanding past benefit assessments.**
>
> **Bill Granfield, president of Local 100 of Unite Here, the union representing the cafe's 50-odd employees, said the restaurant had fallen behind on its payments for medical insurance and welfare funds, forcing the union to demand payment in court.** He also said workers in 2003 took a pay cut and agreed to switch to a cheaper medical plan to ease the restaurant's financial pressures…

Unions kill jobs by raising the price of labor with no compensating rise in worker productivity. When you raise the price of labor, businesses die. When businesses die, unemployment goes up. That's the way the world works.

Democrat plan to indoctrinate students in government-run school to worship Obama

September 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Obama will deliver a national address directly to students on Tuesday, which will be the first day of classes for many children across the country. The address, to be broadcast live on the White House's Web site, was announced in a letter to school principals last week by Education Secretary Arne Duncan.
>
> […]But in advance of the address, the Department of Education has offered educators "classroom activities" to coincide with Obama's message.
>
> Students in grades pre-K-6, for example, are encouraged to "write letters to themselves about what they can do to help the president. These would be collected and redistributed at an appropriate later date by the teacher to make students accountable to their goals."
>
> Teachers are also given guidance to tell students to "build background knowledge about the president of the United States by reading books about presidents and Barack Obama."
>
> During the speech, "teachers can ask students to write down key ideas or phrases that are important or personally meaningful."
>
> For grades 7-12, the Department of Education suggests teachers prepare by excerpting quotes from Obama's speeches on education for their students to contemplate — and ask as questions such as "Why does President Obama want to speak with us today? How will he inspire us? How will he challenge us?"
>
> Activities suggested for after the speech include asking students "what resonated with you from President Obama's speech? What lines/phrase do you remember?"

What do libertarian critics think about this?

> "In general, I don't think there's a problem if the president uses the bully pulpit to tell kids to work hard, study hard and things like that. But there are some troubling hints in this, both educationally and politically," said Neal McCluskey, associate director of Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom.
>
> […]**"It essentially tries to force kids to say the president and the presidency is inspiring, and that's very problematic," McCluskey said. "It's very concerning that you would do that."**
>
> **Parents of public school students would also have to pay for that**

> **“indoctrination,” regardless of their political background, he said.**
>
> **“That’s the fundamental problem. They could easily be funding the indoctrination of their children.”**

And one more:

> Frederick Hess, director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, said the suggested lesson plans cross the line between instruction and advocacy.
>
> “I don’t think it’s appropriate for teachers to ask students to help promote the president’s preferred school reforms and policies,” Hess said. “It very much starts to set up the president as a superintendent in chief.”
>
> […]After reading the Department of Education lesson plans for the speech, McCluskey said he noticed several passages that should set off “alarm bells,” including language that attempts to “glorify President Obama” in the minds of young students.”It could be a blatantly political move,” he said. “Nobody knows for sure, but it gives that impression.”
>
> McCluskey also noted that the lesson plans for young students contain suggestions to write letters to themselves on how they can help the president, but that suggestion is not in the lesson plan for middle and high schoolers — perhaps due to the likelihood of increased political ties at that age.

The Obama regime wants to force government-run schools to adopt lesson plans to be force-fed to impressionable young children, whose parents are compelled to subsidize this indoctrination by compulsory taxation. What could go wrong?

Oh well, at least his own children are exempt from this propaganda – they don’t attend public schools, you know. Neither did Obama.

Obama awards billions of taxpayer dollars to British liquor producer

September 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article is from the Chicago Tribune. (H/T ECM via The Weekly Standard)

Excerpt:

> **With little fanfare, a deal is moving forward to direct billions in U.S. tax dollars to an unlikely beneficiary — the giant British liquor producer that makes Captain Morgan rum.**
>
> **Under the agreement, London-based Diageo PLC will receive tax credits and other benefits worth $2.7 billion over 30 years, including the entire $165-million cost of building a state-of-the-art distillery on the island of St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, a U.S. territory….**
>
> "The U.S. taxpayer is basically being asked to line the pockets of the world's largest liquor producer," says Steve Ellis, the vice president of Taxpayers for Common Sense, a nonpartisan watchdog organization.
>
> With the exception of Ellis and a handful of lawmakers, however, the deal has attracted little opposition in Congress or elsewhere.
>
> Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner has said he does not have authority to block or investigate the project. Criticism on the Hill has been confined to a small group that includes Republican Congressmen Dan Burton of Indiana and Darrel Issa of California, plus a handful of Democrats with large Puerto Rican constituencies.

Remember, Obama won't allow drilling at home, but he has lots of money to give Brazilian companies to drill in Brazil. We didn't really need those jobs, anyway. And besides, George Soros needs to make some money, too.

Friday night funny: the government can, parenting, Calvin and Hobbes

September 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Shane Vander Hart posted this hilarious song about government by comedian Tom Hawkins, who can really dance!

Parenting

From Marginalized Action Dinosaur. 12 lessons to prepare for raising children.

Excerpt:

> Lesson 7
> Go to the local grocery store. Take with you the closest thing you can find that has the patience of a pre-school child. (A full-grown goat is an excellent choice). If you intend to have more than one child, then definitely take more than one goat. Buy your week's groceries without letting the goats out of your sight. Pay for everything the goat eats or destroys.
>
> Until you can easily accomplish this, do not even contemplate having children.
>
> Lesson 8
> 1. Hollow out a melon.
> 2. Make a small hole in the side.
> 3. Suspend it from the ceiling and swing it from side to side.
> 4. Now get a bowl of soggy Cheerios and attempt to spoon them into the swaying melon by pretending to be an airplane.
> 5. Continue until half the Cheerios are gone.
> 6. Tip half into your lap. The other half, just throw up in the air.
>
> You are now ready to feed a nine- month-old baby.

Calvin and Hobbes

This is from Shal (Shalini).

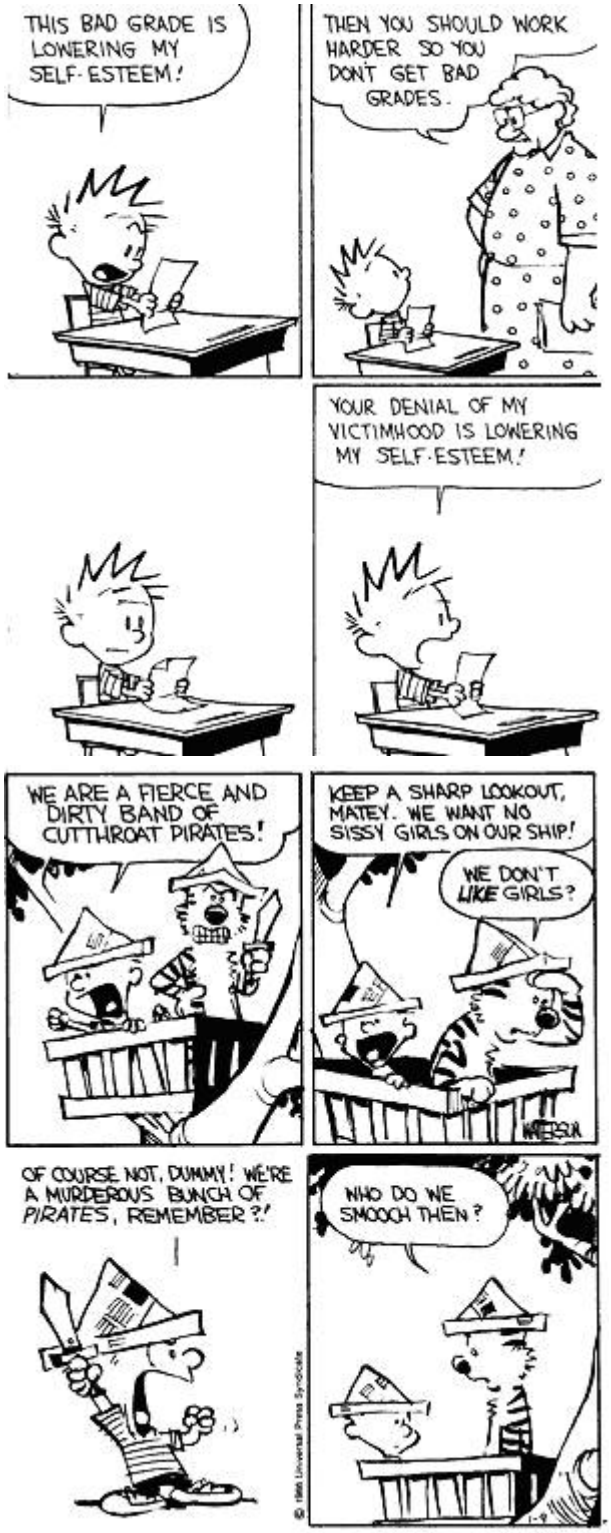

Something funny from a co-worker

I've been seeing many democrats start posting the following message on social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook and MySpace:

"No one should die because they cannot afford health care, and no one should go broke because they get sick. If you agree, please post this as your status for the rest of the day."

My counter-proposal to that would be this:

"You and other people's grandchildren should keep the tax money it will take to give

people free health care today. If you believe that you should not commit to spending the money of your children's children today, please post this as your status for the rest of the day."

Feel free to see if you can work this into something witty for your blog.

I know that the quality of funny has been pretty crappy lately, but this time I found you guys some really funny things, so I'm trying to make up for the other weeks! I am thinking about writing some funny stuff myself.

Happy Friday!

Obama’s green czar explains how environmentalism is a front for communism

September 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The audio is up at Powerline blog. (H/T ECM)

Listen to Van Jones, Obama’s green czar, explain how the green movement’s goal is nothing less than total redistribution of wealth in a communist system.

Scott Johnson writes:

We’ve written about Obama administration green jobs commissar Van Jones as a Communist in the White House. Jim Hoft posts the video of Jones unburdening himself before a friendly audience without inhibition. Jones gives new meaning to the term vulgar Marxist.

Now courtesy of Breitbart.tv and Naked Emperor News we have Jones explaining the deep meaning of the Obama administration’s devotion to “green jobs.” The goal of green jobs is complete revolution step by step away from gray capitalism until the forces of oppression are overcome. The video concludes with a tribute to Jones from Obama alter ego Valerie Jarrett.

Thank you for the explanation, Comrade Jones.

UPDATE: Jim Hoft also notes that Comrade Jones appears to be a 9/11 Truther. He’s the kind of guy Bill Clinton has previously said should be ashamed of himself (“how dare you?”), on that ground alone.

But don’t call Obama a communist. Oh no no no no.

The White House responds:

> Asked if controversial White House official Van Jones continues to enjoy the confidence of President Obama given recent revelations about his involvement with those who suggest the Bush administration knew about the 9/11 attacks and allowed them to happen in order to justify a war for oil, White House press secretary Robert Gibbs Friday morning would only say “he continues to work in this administration.”

More on Van Jones:

Van Jones says “When somebody had taken the American flag and turned it into a war flag and used it to beat and whip and lynch anybody who didn’t agree that we should be bombing people and torturing people…”

Van Jones rallies for cop-killer

Van Jones says that the US is an “aparteid regime”

Van Jones says only white kids shoot up schools

Sounds like a pretty typical Democrat.

How death panels work in the British health care system

September 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

More horror stories about the NHS, from this Telegraph. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt

> Patients with terminal illnesses are being made to die prematurely under an NHS scheme to help end their lives, leading doctors warn today. In a letter to The Daily Telegraph, a group of experts who care for the terminally ill claim that some patients are being wrongly judged as close to death. Under NHS guidance introduced across England to help doctors and medical staff deal with dying patients, they can then have fluid and drugs withdrawn and many are put on continuous sedation until they pass away.

In a socialist system, you have value to the ruling government only so long as you are supplying the state with funds. When you start to drain funds from social programs run by the state without paying taxes, then you have no value. (This is also why socialists oppose stay-at-home mothers)

The best solution to this problem is to have everyone pay their own way – no one cares more about your safety than YOU. The best way to get quality treatment is for you to spend your own money in a market filled with service providers competing to provide you with the best health care for the lowest price.

More NHS links from the National Review. (H/T ECM)

BBC: "NHS workers knit to stay healthy."

BBC: "A woman who complained about her father's treatment after he died in a Devon hospital has said she is furious the NHS has denied any wrongdoing."

BBC: "Prison food 'beats NHS hospitals'."

Wales Online: "NHS desperate for doctors as visa rule changes bite."

BBC: The NHS has apologised after writing to a man to address concerns over his treatment — three-and-half years after he died.

Independent: "The NHS must stop hiding behind complex bureaucracy."

Times Online: "NHS consultants, including experts in palliative care, were consulted as part of Mr al-Megrahi's care."

Canadian man gets 4-year sentence for 100 sexual assaults on minors

September 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Calgary Sun. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Convicted of sexually assaulting two little girls 100 times, day home operator David Watkins was yesterday sentenced to four years in prison.
>
> After Watkins, 67, apologized to the families of the two girls and his own relatives for sexually touching the children at his Silver Springs day home, one for over a period of 15 1/2 months, provincial court Judge Allan Fradsham handed down a sentence sought by prosecutors.
>
> […]Watkins admitted to assaulting the girls, who were between the ages of six and eight, in the basement of his home while his wife, recovering from an injury, couldn't venture downstairs.
>
> Earlier in the hearing the mother of one of the girls calmly read a victim impact statement, detailing how her daughter is still too traumatized to sleep normally or sometimes use the bathroom.
>
> "She still can't sleep alone and she still leaves that shower curtain open," said the mom.
>
> "It'll possibly haunt her for a lifetime — no child should ever have to feel so afraid."
>
> […]Defence lawyer Jim Lutz argued Watkins had suffered family trauma due to his actions and that his crime was an anomaly. "The offence that occurred was out of character for him," said Lutz, who asked for a three-year sentence.

The Jewish Talmud says:

כל מי שנעשה רחמן במקום אכזרי
סוף שנעשה אכזרי במקום רחמן

Kol mi shena`asa rahaman bimqom akhzari
Sof shena`asa akhzari bimqom rahaman

All who are made to be compassionate in the place of the cruel
In the end are made to be cruel in the place of the compassionate

HUGE WIN! Obama’s communist-truther green czar resigns!

September 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breaking news seen at Ace of Spades. Van Jones resigns.

Ooops! Remember when he was good enough for Obama?

I think now is a good time to re-post Zo’s “Under My Bus” video.

ECM sent me this made-up evidence of Obama’s magical powers from Caffeinated Thoughts.

UPDATE:

Michelle Malkin takes a look at how the left-wing media failed to cover this story as it developed over the last few months, and how they are spinning it for Obama now that Glen Beck and the blogs have broken it.

Here’s Charles Krauthammer explaining everything you need to know about Van Jones:

Judgement to lead!

New Scientist reports that global cooling is proof of global warming

September 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the article from the New Scientist. (H/T Ace of Spades via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Forecasts of climate change are about to go seriously out of kilter. One of the world's top climate modellers said Thursday we could be about to enter "one or even two decades during which temperatures cool.
>
> "People will say this is global warming disappearing," he told more than 1500 of the world's top climate scientists gathering in Geneva at the UN's World Climate Conference.
>
> "I am not one of the sceptics," insisted Mojib Latif of the Leibniz Institute of Marine Sciences at Kiel University, Germany. "However, we have to ask the nasty questions ourselves or other people will do it."

Rats! Now the lefties will have to find a new fake crisis to justify enslaving humanity.

Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children

September 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from The London Times. (H/T Stop the ACLU via ECM)

Excerpt:

* The mother of a 13-year-old girl who became partly paralysed after being given a cervical cancer vaccination says social workers have told her the child may be removed if she (the mother) continues to link her condition with the vaccination.

* A couple had all six of their children removed from their care after they disputed the necessity of an invasive medical test on their eldest daughter. Doctors, who suspected she might have had a blood disease, called for social services to obtain an emergency protection order, although it was subsequently confirmed that she was not suffering from the condition. The parents were still considered unstable, and all their children were taken from them.

* A single mother whose teenage son is terminally ill and confined to a wheelchair has been told he is to become the subject of a care order after she complained that her local authority's failure to provide bathroom facilities for him has left her struggling to maintain sanitary standards.

You can question the service provider in a free market capitalist health care system – they have no power to ruin your life if you try to oppose them. But you can't question the service provider in a government-run health care system. That's treason, according to some Democrats. How dare you oppose the vision of the annointed? They're better than you!

Well, actually some people are questioning government, and doing a pretty good job of it. Take a look at these two women at town halls.

From Hot Air:

From Michelle Malkin:

It's stories like this that make me despair of ever getting married and having children. Something goes wrong in the minds of people on the left so that they can commit the most abominable atrocities – even taking people's children away from their own parents! Who wants to live in a world like that?

And the young people seem to be so enthusiastic about being coerced by a secular government – and why not? Parents just hand their children off to government-run schools who *cannot* tell the truth but *must* advocate for more and more government. That's how they get raises after all.

Here are some encouraging videos that show how upset some Americans are about Democrats wanting to bring socialized medicine here.

More NHS horror stories here.

Sen. Tom Coburn takes a hostile question at a town hall

September 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video from Robert Stacy McCain. (H/T ECM)

Telling it like it is.

McCain writes:

> I'm nearly in tears. No joke. This guy bears consideration for President, if he's interested, and a straight-ahead draft as POTUS if he's not.
>
> He has more grasp the Constitution, and what this country is really about, than just about anyone else I've heard currently holding public office.

This is why he is one of my favorite conservatives.

New CDC study says that gay/bisexual men 50 times for likely to be HIV-positive

September 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from NPR. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Note: CDC = the Center for Disease Control, a US government agency.

Excerpt:

> Before doctors knew what HIV was, they referred to the virus as "Gay Cancer" because it overwhelmingly affected gay men.
>
> More than 25 years later, AIDS activists say the CDC's finding that gay and bisexual men are 50 times more likely to contract the virus is the first time the government has given a concrete view of HIV's effect on that population.
>
> "The CDC has never been willing to issue rates before. So we would only have absolute numbers, and whether these numbers are going up or down."
>
> Walt Senterfitt is an epidemiologist and board chair of CHAMP, the Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project.
>
> "Starting with the facts and the truth, and then digging down into why these particular facts might be the case, is the best way to generate good public policy."
>
> The CDC declined to be interviewed for this story, saying the statistics are preliminary.

Neil Simpson comments on this story here. Nearly 100 comments have been posted there, so far.

NOTE: Comments will be strictly filtered for this post. Neil is a lot more lenient than I am, so you may want to comment on his site instead if you think your comment is too harsh.

Dennis Prager explains why big government means small citizens

September 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed this article by Dennis Prager that I highly recommend to all my readers. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity, The Pugnacious Irishman)

The title is "The Bigger the Government, the Smaller the Citizen".

Excerpt:

> Here are five reasons why bigger government makes less impressive people.
>
> 1. People who are able to take care of themselves and do so are generally better than people who are able to take care of themselves but rely on others.
>
> […]2. The more people come to rely on government, the more they develop a sense of entitlement — an attitude characterized by the belief that one is owed (whatever the state provides and more).
>
> […]3. People develop disdain for work.
>
> […]4. People become preoccupied with vacation time.
>
> […]5. People are rendered more selfish.

What does it say about us, that were are willing to give up our own freedom in order to live off our neighbor's hard work?

Here's more stuff from Muddling:

- Two journalists tell their story of being imprisoned in North Korea
- Robert Spenser's new book "The Complete Infidel's Guide to the Koran"
- Frank Turek's report on conservative Sue Myrick's town hall in NC

Six prominent Jews explain why most Jews are so liberal

September 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Commentary magazine. (H/T Robert Stacy McCain via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Since nature abhors a spiritual vacuum, Podhoretz concludes that the religion of liberalism—that is, faith in the powers of government — has replaced Judaism in the hearts of Jews. . . .
> Why, asks Podhoretz, do Jews cling to this belief if it no longer serves our interest? . . .
> If I may be allowed so vast a sweep of generalization, Republicans, conservatives, are the party that feels comfortably at home. We need not attach a value to this observation; you may approve of this sensibility or not. But for Jews, unease is our mother tongue. . . .
> — **David Wolpe**
>
> Jewish liberalism endures, Podhoretz concludes, because turning conservative, in liberal eyes, is nothing short of heresy—or worse, apostasy.
> — **Jonathan D. Sarna**
>
> Most American Jews, on the other hand, seem to have learned from an early age that to be Jewish is to be a liberal Democrat, no matter what. . . . [T]he loyalty of American Jews to the Left has been unaffected by the failure of the Left to reciprocate that loyalty.
> — **Jeff Jacoby**
>
> In many cases, Podhoretz notes, left-wing politics took the place of a Judaism that felt to new American immigrants like a business suit on a beach: conspicuous, constraining, ridiculously out of place. . . . On this reading, emotional, facts-be-damned Jewish liberalism is a gravestone marking the death of religious faith.
> — **David Gelernter**
>
> But my own tentative personal resolution, reached after reading *Why Are Jews Liberals?*, is this: I'm going to stop worrying about American Jews. They're not worth the headache. Either they'll come to their senses or they won't, and there's not much I (or anyone else, I suspect) can do about it.
> — **William Kristol**
>
> For most American Jews, the core of their Jewish identity isn't solidarity with Israel; it's rejection of Christianity. This observation may help to explain the otherwise puzzling political preferences of the Jewish community explored in Norman Podhoretz's book. Jewish voters don't embrace candidates based on their support for the state of Israel as much as they passionately oppose

> candidates based on their identification with Christianity — especially the fervent evangelicalism of the dreaded "Christian Right."
> — **Michael Medved**

But what McCain writes himself is also worth noting:

> Thus, for the past several years, we were treated to endless liberal jeremiads against "abstinence education," as if the sex-ed curriculum in public schools were the single most important issue in national politics. The propaganda purpose of this liberal campaign was to suggest to people who think of themselves as sexual sophisticates that the GOP is actively promoting ignorance.
>
> If you wish to identify the source of the Republican Party's electoral weakness among under-30 voters, this is it — even though, as I say, this perception of the GOP as "anti-sex" (or "pro-ignorance") is strictly a function of liberal propaganda. GOP leaders have failed to recognize the damage inflicted by this propaganda, have failed to clarify the policy issues involve and have, at times, unwittingly played to the negative stereotype of Republicans as uptight, repressed, and clueless about sex.
>
> Depicting the "Christian Right" as an especially benighted and menacing component of the Republican Party has, as Medved notes, a particular value in discouraging Jewish Democrats from reconsidering their political loyalties. To any liberal, the conservative is always the Other. But by depicting the GOP as dominated by the "Christian Right," the Otherness of conservatism is effectively doubled — if not, indeed, magnified exponentially.
>
> Never mind that evangelical Christians are overwhelmingly pro-Israel and philo-Semitic. The liberal propaganda depiction of evangelicals as backward ignoramuses, taking their marching orders from a handful of TV preachers, accomplishes its intended purpose — to evoke a distinctive cultural revulsion among Jews, and to conjure up nightmare visions of an American *Kristallnacht*.

So, I think two of the problems are 1) religious bigotry and 2) fears of irrational policies. And I think I know how to fix that.

Where are the studies and arguments that socially conservative policies are actually good? Good for people's happiness, good for reducing government expenditures, and good for individual liberty itself? I wonder whether any conservatives can even articulate the argument that strong families and abstinence are needed precisely to make sure that government doesn't have to grow to deal with the consequences of family breakdown and pre-marital sex, such as violent children and STDs?

I have noticed the exact same thing that the article describes is happening with Hindus. A combination of religious bigotry and contempt for policy positions embraced on ignorance. It's not the fault of Jews and Hindus – we in the conservative movement need to do a better job of explaining the reasons for our positions in non-sectarian terms. E.g. – if homeschooling really is better as a policy, then we should have the studies to show that

it produces better grades.

Obama appoints SEIU union executive to create manufacturing jobs

September 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from ABC News. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> In Cincinnati tomorrow, President Obama will announce that he's appointing Ron Bloom his Senior Counselor for Manufacturing Policy, White House sources tell ABC News.
>
> Bloom is currently Senior Advisor to Secretary of the Treasury Tim Geithner as a member of the President's Task Force on the Automotive Industry, named to that position in February. He will remain in that position even while he takes on his new task.

Jammie Wearing Fool writes:

> The name Ron Bloom is one that we need to start paying attention to. He has a long history of being the negotiating face of unions in a suit. He is **a Harvard Business School graduate who has worked for the unions beginning with SEIU for decades.** The most recent union he represented was the United Steel Workers (USW) before becoming a part of the automotive team that Obama put together.

The problem is that unions don't create manufacturing jobs – they lose them. Says who? Says Lawrence Summers, that's who. (I.e. – Obama's buddy Larry Summers!)

Excerpt:

> Another cause of long-term unemployment is unionization. High union wages that exceed the competitive market rate are likely to cause job losses in the unionized sector of the economy. Also, those who lose high-wage union jobs are often reluctant to accept alternative low-wage employment. Between 1970 and 1985, for example, a state with a 20 percent unionization rate, approximately the average for the fifty states and the District of Columbia, experienced an unemployment rate that was 1.2 percentage points higher than that of a hypothetical state that had no unions. To put this in perspective, 1.2 percentage points is about 60 percent of the increase in normal unemployment between 1970 and 1985.

Talk about the fox guarding the hen-house! Obama's economic ignorance strikes again!

Can a social conservative support social safety net programs?

September 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The full text is available in a PDF here. (H/T Stephen Baskerville)

I highly recommend this essay to social conservatives who do not yet understand why limiting the size of government is vital to preserving the autonomy of the family.

Every social conservative should be in favor of limited government, even in fiscal matters, not just on social issues. In my view, any social conservative who wants the government to tax "the rich" or big corporations is in reality undermining social conservatism.

The more money is taken from individuals, families and corporations, *who have no political power to influence your family*, and given to secular-left government bureaucrats who cater to left-wing special interest groups, the more the family is endangered.

Excerpt:

> **State controlled programs today in developed countries, almost universally, are polyamorous-friendly and monogamy-hostile. This is unjust from every perspective of political analysis because those who choose monogamy are, generally, the most effective, the cheapest and the safest in raising the next generation.**
>
> But they are unjust mainly because it is a universal, inalienable right of parents to raise their children as they see fit, including raising them in their culture.
>
> **Further, the social welfare state asks the monogamous to support the polyamorous, and uses the universal safety net insurance scheme (or taxes) to ensure that the monogamous pay more to support those who choose the polyamory culture. This is plainly unjust, but even more so because the monogamous do not have their own culture-friendly programs and their own children are the target of the culture of polyamory's "Janissary" scheme. Justice will increase and tensions decrease when that culture of polyamory begins to pay its own costs.**
>
> **One way to progress in this direction and to make the behavioral bureaucracy to serve both cultures is to give all parents, parents of both cultures, and control over the program money set aside for their children. That is giving parents vouchers, in one form or another for all three program areas**
>
> The social welfare safety net will still be in place but the parents (be they monogamous or polyamorous) will choose who holds the net in place for their children.
>
> This requires a huge political effort on the part of the monogamy culture. Diverting the flow of money from the special interest groups (organized doctors,

> teachers, schools) and instead directing the voucher money (cost per child served) to the parent– who can then choose the individual doctor, teacher or school they want. The professionals will still receive the same amount of money. But instead of serving a bureaucracy they will be cooperating with the parents. But such a change is a big one in the political order and the culture of monogamy must harness itself to the task.

The whole thing is worth reading.

The latest podcasts from Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

September 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are some helpful podcasts from Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse.

The first two talks were given to 110 lawyers in training at an Alliance Defense Fund event. I highly recommend them. If you like informed, passionate advocates of social conservatism who are also experts in libertarian economics, then you'll enjoy these podcasts!

Podcasts

1. Marriage & Sex
   (June 12, 2009) Dr. J guest-lectures on the economic and societal impact of marriage and sex. This talk, delivered at the Blackstone Legal Fellowship in Phoenix, is a little over an hour long. Its companion talk was podcast on June 23, 2009.
   Direct download: Sep02_09.mp3
2. Iowa Supreme Court: Same-Sex Marriage
   (June 12, 2009) Dr. J guest-lectures on the recent Iowa Supreme Court ruling on homosexual marriage. This talk, delivered at the Blackstone Legal Fellowship in Phoenix, is a little over an hour long. Its companion talk is podcast on September 2, 2009.
   Direct download: June23_09.mp3
3. Informed Consent, et. al.

   (August 25, 2009) Ignorance = Informed Consent? Dr J sheds some light on this troubling trend, the groups behind it, and how mothers and children are losing out. (Note: this program is about Oklahoma overturning the law that requires doctors to conduct an ultrasound before performing an abortion.
   Direct download: Sep04_09.mp3

4. Defense of Marriage Act
   (August 19, 2009) Dr J appears on Issues, Etc to discuss the Obama Justice Department's impending defense of DoMA. She also shines some light on the strategies of the homosexual movement as they attempt to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act.
   Direct download: Sep03_09.mp3
5. #4: Same-Sex Marriage in Vermont
   (September 1, 2009) Vermont becomes the 4th state to legalize homosexual marriage. Dr J and Todd Wilken discuss how it happened, the next target(s) of the homosexual lobby, and why it's so important for supporters of traditional marriage to respond.
   Direct download: Sep05_09.mp3

It’s more fun to discuss these issues if you get the proper training first. Dr. Morse is the William Lane Craig of social issues, and social issues matter. If the left makes it illegal to advocate socially conservative positions in public, then we run the risk of not being able to teach Biblical values to our own children.

If government can't fix health care, then who can?

September 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the New York Post. (H/T Right Klik via Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> The state is trying to shut down a New York City doctor's ambitious plan to treat uninsured patients for around $1,000 a year.
>
> Dr. John Muney offers his patients everything from mammograms to mole removal at his AMG Medical Group clinics, which operate in all five boroughs.
>
> "I'm trying to help uninsured people here," he said.
>
> His patients agree to pay $79 a month for a year in return for unlimited office visits with a $10 co-pay.
>
> [His] plan landed him in the crosshairs of the state Insurance Department, which ordered him to drop his fixed-rate plan – which it claims is equivalent to an insurance policy.
>
> He says he can afford to charge such a small amount because he doesn't have to process mountains of paperwork and spend hours on billing.
>
> "If they leave me alone, I can serve thousands of patients," he said.

Government doesn't like it when private businesses solve problems. Government only wants solutions they can control and regulate. After all, if there is no (government-caused) health care crisis, then these commies would be out of a job. They have to cause the crisis and then market themselves as the only solution.

Right Klik also has a handy list of the *problems caused by government*.

* "Community Rating" laws, which limit insurers' ability to charge different prices to different customers, raise prices by 20.3% for individual policies and 27.3% for family policies

* Mandated benefits raise the expected price of an individual policy by approximately 0.4% per mandate. For family policies the increase is approximately 0.5% per mandate. The typical state has about 20 mandates (with a range from 6 to 48) so a reduction from 20 to 10 mandates would imply a 4% decrease in price for individual policies, and a 5% decrease for family policies.

* "Any-Willing-Provider" laws, which limit insurers' ability to exclude hospitals and doctors from their networks, raise prices by 1.5% for individual policies and 5.3% for family policies.

* Federal law places limits on the discounts employers and insurance companies can provide for healthy, cost-saving behaviors.

* Twelve million Americans go without health insurance because the Federal Government does not allow people to purchase insurance across state lines.

The way insurance works is that people need to pay premiums that take into account the likelihood that they will make claims. The people who make a lot of claims need to pay more. This is what encourages people to take fewer risks and keep costs down. When government gets involved to equalize outcomes regardless of risks, then there is no incentive to live responsibly. The result is a shortage caused by high demand for medical care, and low supply.

How about we just let the free market work instead?

How the siege mentality of Christians hurts us all

September 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a profile of the undisputed champion of gay rights activism, Tim Gill. (H/T Jennifer Roback Morse)

Read the article, and then answer this question: where is *our* Tim Gill? Why are we raising the next generation of Christians to build higher and better walls between faith and knowledge?

Excerpt from the article:

> Tim Gill is best known as the founder of the publishing-software giant Quark Inc., and for a long time was one of the few openly gay members of the Forbes 400 list of the richest Americans. **He was born in 1953 to one of Colorado's well-known Republican political families.** (The town of Gill in the north-central part of the state is named after them.) **After earning a degree in applied mathematics and computer science from the University of Colorado at Boulder, Gill founded Quark in his apartment in 1981, in the manner of other self-made computer magnates like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, with a $2,000 loan from his parents.**
>
> […]In 2000, he sold his interest in Quark for a reported half-billion dollars in order to focus full-time on his philanthropy.
>
> Even as he has shied from the spotlight, Gill has become one of the most generous and widest-reaching political benefactors in the country, and emblematic of a new breed of business-minded donor that is rapidly changing American politics. A surge of new wealth has created a generation of givers eager to influence politics but barred from the traditional channels of participation by recent campaign-finance laws designed to limit large gifts to candidates and political parties. Like Gill, many of these figures are entrepreneurs who have made fortunes in technology.
>
> […]Gill's principal interest is gay equality. His foundations have given about $115 million to charities. His serious involvement in politics is a more recent development, though geared toward the same goal. In 2000, he gave $300,000 in political donations, which grew to $800,000 in 2002, $5 million in 2004, and a staggering $15 million last year, almost all of it to state and local campaigns.

Not everyone has to be like Tim Gill, be we all have to try to have an influence in the most effective way possible. And that means being realistic about what it takes to have an influence. *Some things just don't work*.

John Murtha’s airport to nowhere: is it worth the money?

September 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the WSJ. (H/T John Stossel via ECM)

Excerpt:

> *If you hate the hubbub of crowded airports, you might want to consider flying out of Johnstown, Pa. The airport sees an average of fewer than 30 people per day, there is never a wait for security, you can park for free right outside the gate, and you are almost guaranteed a row to yourself on any flight.*
>
> You might wonder how the region ever had the air traffic demand to justify such a facility. It didn’t. But it is located in the district of one of Congress’s most unapologetic earmarkers: Democrat John Murtha.

More Democrat waste.

How to prove that Obamacare covers illegal aliens and funds abortions

September 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Let's get to the bottom of Obama's health care plan.

Obamacare will allow public funds to be used for abortions

Here is the proof from FactCheck.org.

Excerpt:

> The truth is that bills now before Congress don't *require* federal money to be used for supporting abortion coverage. So the president is right to that limited extent. But it's equally true that House and Senate legislation would *allow* a new "public" insurance plan to cover abortions, despite language added to the House bill that technically forbids using public funds to pay for them. Obama has said in the past that "reproductive services" would be covered by his public plan, so it's likely that any new federal insurance plan would cover abortion unless Congress expressly prohibits that. Low- and moderate-income persons who would choose the "public plan" would qualify for federal subsidies to purchase it. Private plans that cover abortion also could be purchased with the help of federal subsidies. Therefore, we judge that the president goes too far when he calls the statements that government would be funding abortions "fabrications."

Democrats are pro-abortion.

Here's a video with Megyn Kelly who *reads what the bill actually says*. (H/T Nice Deb)

Case closed.

Obamacare will cover illegal aliens

Here is the proof from the Congressional Research Service. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> "Under H.R. 3200, a 'Health Insurance Exchange' would begin operation in 2013 and would offer private plans alongside a public option…H.R. 3200 does not contain any restrictions on noncitizens—whether legally or illegally present, or in the United States temporarily or permanently—participating in the Exchange."

Democrats are pro-illegal-immigration.

Check out this video of an Obama speech where he is called out by a GOP congressman. (H/T Hot Air)

Instead of giving flowery speeches, Obama should be doing formal debates with his opponents. That way, the truth would come out.

MUST-SEE: ACORN exposed on video telling “pimp” how to evade IRS

September 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from Fox News. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> A second ACORN employee can be heard on the audiotape suggesting that the couple join the organization for an annual cost of $120 prior to attending one of its first-time homebuyer seminars, which are underwritten with taxpayer funds.
>
> Later, when the “pimp” asks what would happen if the organization is somehow connected to the scheme, the ACORN staffer replies, “First of all, it’s not gonna damage us because we not gonna know. And with your girls, you tell them, ‘Be careful.’ Train them to keep their mouth shut.”
>
> “These girls are like 14, how can we trust them?” the pimp asks.
>
> “Just be very, very careful,” the ACORN staffer says. “Whatever you do, always keep your eyes in the back of your head.”
>
> Reached by FOX News, O’Keefe said he was “shocked” at the level of assistance provided by ACORN staffers.
>
> “I was prepared for them to call the police, throw me out of the office and be hostile,” he said. “Without hesitation, they helped me every way they could with evading taxes and setting me up with a brothel, with getting around federal tax laws — doing everything they could to help us. I was completely shocked.”

ECM sent me the videos of the sting.

These were linked at American Spectator.

Obama has strong connections with ACORN, but he is also connected to Planned Parenthood. Watch the video below and see how Planned Parenthood also breaks the law.

This is actually not unusual for Planned Parenthood, as Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> A pro-life group in Texas has enlisted a woman to pose as a pregnant teen in a campaign designed to catch abortion clinics that might break the law.
>
> Life Dynamics said one of its activists has called more than 800 abortion clinics nationwide in recent months, pretending to be a 13-year-old girl impregnated by her 22-year-old boyfriend. What she learned is that more than 90 percent of the clinic employees handling the calls said they would conceal the information provided by the caller, according to Life Dynamics president Mark Crutcher.
>
> Such an action would be a violation of the law in states that require the reporting of sexual abuse of a minor. A 22-year-old having sex with a 13-year-old is

> considered statutory rape in all 50 states.

And here is a new Hot Air piece exposing the internal workings of ACORN. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Wow. People on the left who don't believe in objective morality, breaking the law. Hard to believe. Not.

UPDATE: Oh my goodness! The undercover woman is Hannah Giles, the eldest daughter of Christian columnist Doug Giles!!!!

Are California wildfires caused by global warming or global cooling?

September 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Watts Up With That reports on a debate between Greenpeace and an actual climatologist. The contenders are:

- Miguel Soto, Greenpeace Spain forests campaigner
- Joe Bastardi is one of the lead forecasters for AccuWeather

Friday night funny: hijacked, TOTUS, teh kitteh, new weapon

September 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This one is from commenter Shalini ("Shal").

Mexican pastor hijacks plane because of date.

That one was the funniest thing I saw all week!

From IMAO.us:

More from IMAO.us:

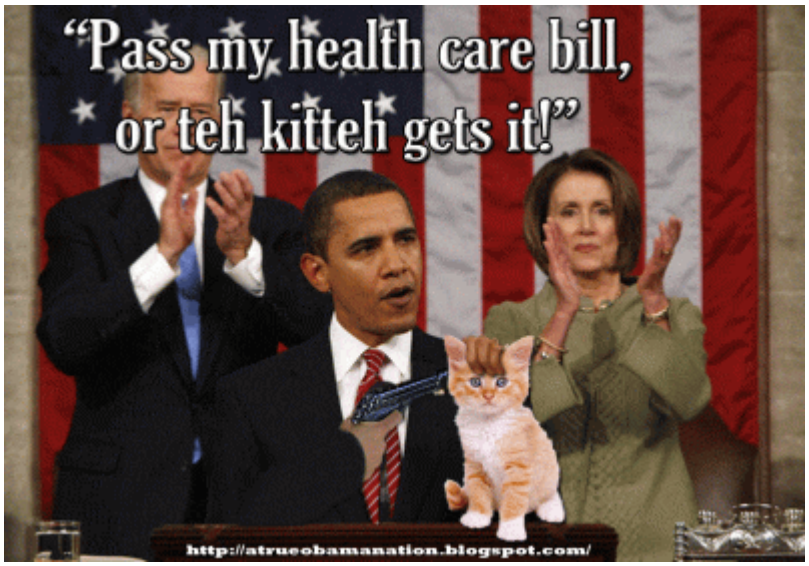

And also from IMAO.us, a prototype of Frank J.'s advanced weapon design.

Gotta nuke something!

Happy Friday!

MUST-READ: Pro-abortion shooter murders two people, pro-abortion groups silent

September 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from LifeSiteNews. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> An elderly pro-life activist was shot multiple times and killed this morning in front of Owosso High School in Michigan while he was peacefully protesting abortion with a sign depicting a baby and the word "Life," according to local police cited in the Flint Journal newspaper.
>
> Locals say that the victim, James Pouillon of Owosso, was well-known in the area for his pro-life activities.
>
> […]Reports indicate that a second individual was shot and killed in a different area of the city earlier in the day, and the two shootings are believed to be related, according to Shiawassee County sheriff George Braidwood. According to M-live.com, the second victim has now been identified as Mike Fuoss, 61, the owner of a local gravel pit. Fuoss was found dead in his office.
>
> Police have confirmed that a suspect – a 33-year-old Owosso man – was taken into custody at the suspect's home shortly after the 7:30 a.m. shooting. After being taken into custody he confessed to the second killing as well.

Pro-abortionists silent:

> Police charged 33-year-old Owosso resident Harland James Drake Friday afternoon with Pouillon's first-degree murder, as well as the first-degree murder of local gravel pit owner Mike Fuoss, 61, killed earlier in the morning.
>
> Prosecutors said Drake told them he targeted Pouillon because of his pro-life activity.
>
> Though Pouillon's death has made headlines in major news media, leading national pro-abortion organizations including Planned Parenthood Federation of America, NARAL, the National Organization for Women, and the National Abortion Federation have issued no response to the slaying as of 4:45 p.m. EST.

Compare and contrast:

> However, within minutes after news broke that Wichita's late-term abortionist George Tiller was shot and killed on a Sunday morning while serving as an usher at his Lutheran church, dozens of nationwide pro-life leaders and organizations immediately poured out condemnations against the violence.
>
> Operation Rescue, which had spearheaded peaceful protests of Tiller's business for several years, was among the first to denounce the "vigilantism and the

> cowardly act that took place this morning," adding that they were offering prayers for Tiller's family.

More coverage:

- "Jim the Sign Guy": Slain Pro-Lifer, Father of Two, Remembered by Friends as Cheerful, Peaceful Activist
- Well-Known Local Pro-Life Activist Gunned Down in Michigan

Another story of an attempted murder of a pro-lifer by a pro-abortionist.

NOAA: summer temperatures were below average

September 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here is the story from the NOAA News. (H/T Watts Up With That via ECM)

Chart:

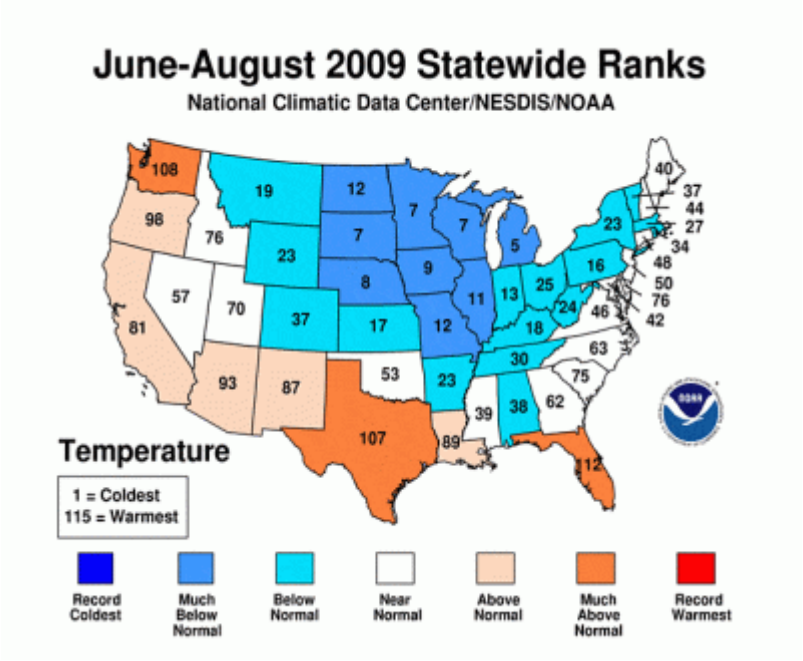

Excerpt:

- For the 2009 summer, the average temperature of 71.7 degrees F was 0.4 degree F below the 20th Century average. The 2008 average summer temperature was 72.7 degrees F.
- A recurring upper level trough held the June-August temperatures down in the central states, where Michigan experienced its fifth, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and South Dakota their seventh, Nebraska its eighth, and Iowa its ninth coolest summer. By contrast, Florida had its fourth warmest summer, while Washington and Texas experienced their eighth and ninth warmest, respectively.
- The Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota region experienced its sixth coolest summer on record. Only the Northwest averaged above normal temperatures.

I'm pretty sure that this indicates a long-term trend towards catastrophic global warming!

“Pleasure-based” sex education in Canadian classrooms

September 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from LifeSiteNews. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Lianne George of Maclean’s magazine has penned a piece published this week on a new trend in schools’ sexual education offerings to focus on the pleasure of sex. Her article highlights the work of Toronto’s Carlyle Jansen, the owner of a ‘sex shop’ for women, Good For Her, who has launched a new not-for-profit organization devoted to offering free, “pleasure-based” sex workshops to schools and other groups in the area.

> Jansen has long offered pleasure-based workshops through her store, but, according to George, a year and a half ago Jansen started getting calls from local high school teachers who wanted her to come and offer sex-ed to their classes. Since then, Jansen guesses that she has spoken to about 12 or 15 classes.
>
> “Kids are taught to death about all the bad things that can happen to them if they have sex,” Jansen told George. “They’ve said, ‘We’ve heard about sexually transmitted infections, we know you can get pregnant, but we want to know about pleasure and we want to know about healthy relationships.'”
>
> […]Now, Jansen has helped launch the Sexual Health Education Pleasure Project (SHEPP) in the Greater Toronto Area, whose mission is “to provide free, pleasure-based sexual health education focused mainly on marginalized communities including youth, people of colour, women, queer and trans communities.” Course topic titles include “Negotiating what you want – in and out of the bedroom,” and “Cool, safe, and hot sex.”
>
> A topic entitled “Re-visioning ‘pro-choice'” is also on the list, with the description: “Not just about abortion any more. Know your rights!” The group explains their vision of ‘pro-choice’ further on a page entitled ‘What We Believe In’. While the phrase is certainly used to designate openness to abortion, the groups sees it as including a broader range of sexual choices, including the freedom to exercise sexual license and the freedom to marry whomever one chooses.

The Maclean’s article is here.

Are we ever going to run out of oil and natural gas?

September 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from Sweden's Royal Institute of Technology. (H/T Stop the ACLU via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Researchers at KTH have been able to prove that the fossils of animals and plants are not necessary to generate raw oil and natural gas. This result is extremely radical as it means that it will be much easier to find these energy sources and that they may be located all over the world.
>
> "There is no doubt that our research has shown that raw oil and natural gas occur without the inclusion of fossils. All types of rock formations can act as hosts for oil deposits," asserts Vladimir and adds that this applies to areas of land that have previously remained unexplored as possible sources of this type of energy.
>
> "With the help of our research we even know where oil could be found in Sweden!" says Vladimir Kutcherov, Professor at the KTH Department of Energy Technology in Stockholm.
>
> Together with two research colleagues, Professor Kutcherov has simulated the process of pressure and heat that occurs naturally in the inner strata of the earth's crust. This process generates hydrocarbons, the primary elements of oil and natural gas.
>
> According to Vladimir Kutcherov, these results are a clear indication that oil supplies are not drying up, which has long been feared by researchers and experts in the field.

Maybe this will help some of the overpopulation/resource scarcity people on the left to stop trying to impose totalitatarian government on the rest of us? I don't mind if they obsess over the end of the world, but could they please engage in their religious speculations in private? Leave the energy policy to the grown-ups.

The deadly consequences of rationing health care

September 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the Daily Mail. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Doctors left a premature baby to die because he was born two days too early, his devastated mother claimed yesterday. Sarah Capewell begged them to save her tiny son, who was born just 21 weeks and five days into her pregnancy – almost four months early. They ignored her pleas and allegedly told her they were following national guidelines that babies born before 22 weeks should not be given medical treatment. Miss Capewell, 23, said doctors refused to even see her son Jayden, who lived for almost two hours without any medical support. She said he was breathing unaided, had a strong heartbeat and was even moving his arms and legs, but medics refused to admit him to a special care baby unit.
>
> If that is true, it is a profound abandonment. Moreover, it illustrates the consequences of treating individuals as mere category members for treatment decisions. For example, in the UK, an older person will be denied a hip replacement based on age, regardless of whether the surgery would benefit the patient and restore the ability to live a vital life.

I am terrified at running afoul of a system that encourages such barbarity. No wonder the NHS is having problems with abusive and rude personnel. You can't legislate rationing that allows tragedies like this and keep your compassion intact.

Is Thomas Friedman a liberal fascist?

September 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Consider this post from extremely left-wing NYT.

Excerpt:

> Watching both the health care and climate/energy debates in Congress, it is hard not to draw the following conclusion: There is only one thing worse than one-party autocracy, and that is one-party democracy, which is what we have in America today.
>
> One-party autocracy certainly has its drawbacks. But when it is led by a reasonably enlightened group of people, as China is today, it can also have great advantages. That one party can just impose the politically difficult but critically important policies needed to move a society forward in the 21st century. It is not an accident that China is committed to overtaking us in electric cars, solar power, energy efficiency, batteries, nuclear power and wind power. China's leaders understand that in a world of exploding populations and rising emerging-market middle classes, demand for clean power and energy efficiency is going to soar. Beijing wants to make sure that it owns that industry and is ordering the policies to do that, including boosting gasoline prices, from the top down.
>
> Our one-party democracy is worse….

Jonah Goldberg adds:

> So there you have it. If only America could drop its inefficient and antiquated system, designed in the age before globalization and modernity and, most damning of all, before the lantern of Thomas Friedman's intellect illuminated the land. If only enlightened experts could do the hard and necessary things that the new age requires, if only we could rely on these planners to set the ship of state right. Now, of course, there are "drawbacks" to such a system: crushing of dissidents with tanks, state control of reproduction, government control of the press and the internet. Omelets and broken eggs, as they say. More to the point, Friedman insists, these "drawbacks" pale in comparison to the system we have today here in America.
>
> I cannot begin to tell you how this is *exactly* the argument that was made by American fans of Mussolini in the 1920s. It is exactly the argument that was made in defense of Stalin and Lenin before him (it's the argument that idiotic, dictator-envying leftists make in defense of Castro and Chavez today). It was the argument made by George Bernard Shaw who yearned for a strong progressive autocracy under a Mussolini, a Hitler or a Stalin (he wasn't picky in this regard). This is the argument for an "economic dictatorship" pushed by Stuart Chase and the New Dealers. It's the dream of Herbert Croly and a great many of the

> Progressives.

All of this is courtesy of Muddling Towards Maturity.

How the irrational left prefers intentions over actual results

September 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Post from Red State. (H/T Babalu Blog via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A clunker that travels 12,000 miles a year at 15 mpg uses 800 gallons of gas a year.
>
> A vehicle that travels 12,000 miles a year at 25 mpg uses 480 gallons a year.
>
> So, the average Cash for Clunkers transaction will reduce US gasoline consumption by 320 gallons per year.
>
> They claim 700,000 vehicles, so that's 224 million gallons saved per year.
>
> That equates to a bit over 5 million barrels of oil.
>
> Five million barrels is about 5 hours worth of US consumption.
>
> More importantly, 5 million barrels of oil at $70 per barrel costs about $350 million dollars.
>
> So, the government paid $3 billion of our tax dollars to save $350 million.
>
> We spent $8.57 to for every dollar saved.
>
> How good a deal was that ???
>
> They'll probably do a great job with health care though!!

But at least they're nice people, and so generous with other people's money.

Reminder: Upcoming debate between William Lane Craig and Fracisco Ayala

September 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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William Lane Craig is debating the evolutionary biologist Francisco Ayala in the November 5th, 2009, at Indiana University.

Here's the skinny:

> …the faculty ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, is organizing a debate in early November on the topic of "The Viability of Intelligent Design." It will be an evaluation, so to speak, regarding the criticisms against ID brought forth by the scientific community. This is a cutting edge discussion. The participants are evolutionary biologist, Dr. F.J. Ayala and Christian philosopher, Dr. William Lane Craig.

My thinking is that this is going to be a debate about philosophy of science. But wouldn't it be *amazing* if Bill came out swinging on William Dembski's explanatory filter, the origin of biological information, the Cambrian explosion, the fine-tuning and other evidential concerns? Wow!

Here's a bit more about his opponent, Francisco Ayala:

> His research focusses on population and evolutionary genetics, including the origin of species, genetic diversity of populations, the origin of malaria, the population structure of parasitic protozoa, and the molecular clock of evolution. He also writes about the interface between religion and science, and on philosophical issues concerning epistemology, ethics, and the philosophy of biology.

He's written 650 papers and 12 books. I think this is going to be a *tough debate* for Bill!

Should fundamentalists encourage pro-abortion, pro-public-school and anti-marriage policies?

September 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's a post from Newsbusters about a group of "patriarchal" Christians that opposed the nomination of Sarah Palin for the post of vice presidency based on their interpretation of the Bible.

Excerpt:

> The Los Angeles Times seems to have taken a sudden new interest in biblical study. No, they haven't become religious or anything close to that. Instead, they are microanalyzing the Bible for passages that they think they can use to slam Sarah Palin for running for vice-president. They are also searching the countryside to dig up the very few strongly religious Christians they can find who think Palin is wrong to run for public office.

Should fundamentalists directly or indirectly support the election of Barack Obama, which caused disastrous effects in society, (increasing abortion, enabling a stronger influence for public schools, and potentially legalizing same-sex marriage, for starters)?

Does Scripture actually justify any of these radically left-wing positions? Won't these fundamentalist Christians be judged based on the fruits of their opposition to Sarah Palin? Don't Christians have a responsibility to be educated about the consequences of their positions? Isn't it important to interpret the Bible correctly?

See my previous post on the need to have an influence in the public square in the most effective ways possible.

Another point of view

A mother of 12 writes:

> It is a continual source of amazement to me that some Evangelicals/Protestants raise such a ruckus about Catholics believing in the spiritual authority of the Pope, even while setting up little mini-Popes of their own – and that these leaders disobey God's imperative to servant leadership in order to revel in their pedestal status.
>
> Often these begin as well-intentioned people seeking righteousness, but then giving into the temptation of spiritual pride. Like the Pharisees Jesus condemned, they become white-washed sepulchers.
>
> Our family's experience in a legalistic church (mercifully brief 1989-1990) was filled with people bossing us around, telling us that they had a Word for us from God. How dared they presume that God would speak to a stranger rather than guiding us Himself?
>
> And how dare the Vision Forum crowd presume to become the Pope to Sarah

> Palin?
>
> The truth is that these well-meaning people have become isolated and insulated, building an alternative universe and then judging the outside world by their self-imposed standards rather than by the historical truth of a heavenly Father who throughout the Bible has chosen unlikely leaders and who has warned us about making our own.

Found here.

MUST-LISTEN: William Lane Craig video and audio from Saddleback Church event

September 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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New audio lectures and video from William Lane Craig:

Can We Be Good Without God? (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008)
Audio

Why Does Anything at All Exist? (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008)
Audio

Healthy Relationships (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008)
Audio

Who Does Jesus Think He Was? (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008)
Audio

Why Does Anything at All Exist? (Wake Forest University)
Video

Response to Richard Dawkins book, The God Delusion (University of Florida)
Audio

One Question: The top 3 questions Univ. of Florida students are asking God (University of Florida)
Audio

Effective, outwardly-focused ministry to transform the culture.

UPDATE: Brian Auten e-mails to notify me of *more* audio from the apologetics conference at Saddleback.

For your information, the audio and video for the Saddleback Apologetics Weekend is available now. This includes Geisler, D'Souza, Craig, Bock, Koukl, and Moreland.
And here are the lectures:

- How Can I Know God Exists? – Dinesh D'Souza – MP3
- How Did the Universe Begin – William Lane Craig – MP3
- If God Exists, Why is there Evil? – Norman Geisler – MP3
- Has Science Made Belief in God Obsolete? – J.P. Moreland – MP3
- What Do the Gospels Really Say About Jesus? – Darrell Bock – MP3
- How Can I Defend My Faith Without Sounding Defensive? – Greg Koukl – MP3

I have to give kudos to Rick Warren for hosting this conference. I don't like him at all, but this was a BIG DEAL.

I didn't like the Norman Geisler one as much, but the others are all good.

UPDATE: Links to ALL THE VIDEO AND AUDIO HERE.

GREAT NEWS: Senate votes to de-fund ACORN 83-7!

September 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I am so happy that I am crying.

Story from Ed Morrissey of Hot Air.

Excerpt:

> Senator Mike Johanns (R-NE) introduced an amendment to the HUD and Transportation appropriation bill to strip ACORN of all federal funding. A week ago, Johanns wouldn't have gotten the amendment to the floor. Today, however, after three straight days of BigGovernment.com's video exposés of ACORN offices in Washington DC, New York City, and Baltimore offering assistance to pimping, tax evasion, and trafficking in underage Salvadorean girls, Johanns not only got his vote — but he got an impressive bipartisan showing. The Senate passed the Johanns amendment 83-7.
>
> At the beginning of the vote, it appeared that Democrats might resist. Initially, a half-dozen Democrats cast votes in opposition to the amendment. A few more cast votes against it as the rest of the Senate voted, but the tide appeared to shift. More and more Democrats signed onto the amendment, and votes started changing. One male voice could be heard in the chamber saying, "I want to change my vote!" Among those who changed their votes: Tom Udall (D-NM), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), and Herb Kohl (D-WI).

There's so much good news lately… I am just so happy about it!

These are the Democrats in favor of taxpayer funding of consultations on child prostitution:

- Dick Durbin (D-IL)
- Roland Burris (D-IL)
- Robert Casey (D-PA)
- Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)
- Patrick Leahy (D-VT)
- Bernie Sanders (I-VT)
- Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)

Michelle Malkin reports that ACORN has been dumped by the Census Bureau as well!

Senate Democrats contemplating new $40 billion tax on health care innovation

September 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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TigerHawk has a post about a tax being considered for medical device companies. (H/T Lex Communis)

Excerpt:

> As we have long predicted on this blog, the health care "reformers" propose to finance at least part of the "savings" or new benefits — it is impossible to know which — by decreasing the rate of return on medical technology. There are many ways in which this might be done, but the Senate Democrats are proposing to do so directly, by levying a "value added tax" on medical device companies according to their proportion of U.S. sales. This tax would be without regard to profitability, so it would amount to a capital tax on start-ups and a massive income tax surcharge on profitable companies, varying as net margins do. In the case of my own mid-sized company, the tax would be the equivalent of a roughly 20% surcharge on our net income (in all likelihood raising our economic tax rate well above 50%) or 50% of our research and development budget, depending on how you want to look at it.
>
> *Any* way you look at it, the proposed tax is a calculated effort to divert capital from the medical technology industry to other uses in the economy, because new medical technology drives costs that are now going to be assumed by the government (or at least will be if the Senate leadership gets its way). Of course, innovative medtech also extends and saves lives, and makes them more comfortable and more productive. Which is, after all, the point of medicine.

Know what would be great? If a bunch of silver-spoon bureaucrats invented something that might actually save lives instead of meddling in the financial affairs of medical innovators.

Some of the companies that would be affected are listed in this Wall Street Journal article.

What caused an atheist on RichardDawkins.net to become a Christian?

September 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here is a very interesting dialog featuring a pastor, an ex-atheist and a fundamentalist atheist. (H/T Two or Three)

Here is the MP3 file.

Check out a summary from Two or Three.

Excerpt:

But what made him convert? Two things. First, Robertson asked him two simple questions. Why are you an atheist? What would it take to convince you that God is real? Morgan, who was used to philosophical arguments rather than more personal, emotional arguments, was taken aback. He realized that he was not open to actually being convinced otherwise. Second, he remembered the following scripture, which led to his conversion experience, an experience of love which made him a believer:

1 John 4:19
We love Him because He first loved us.

This conversion, and discussion in the interview, bring out a few interesting things that Christians might want to observe in their outreach:

1. We should pray before posting responses when arguing with unbelievers
2. Often, simple repetition of the truth of God's love go around philosophical barriers that opponents have in their mind
3. We must engage respectfully and kindly (argh!) and consistently
4. The *experience* of God in genuine conversion is critical

This show was extremely interesting and helpful for understanding *how* atheists think, and *why* they become atheists. Don't forget the testimony of former atheist A. N. Wilson that I wrote about before.

If you favor abortion rights, then you favor sex-selection abortions

September 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Consider this article from LifeSiteNews about India's alarming sex ratio.

Excerpt:

> India's feminists and population control-pushing government are "stumped" by the dramatic drop of female births among the wealthier classes due to sex-selective abortions, reports the Globe and Mail's Indian correspondent Stephanie Nolen.
>
> Due to a 'son preference' in Indian culture, the use of new technologies to detect and abort baby girls has become widespread.
>
> Technically it has been illegal in India to tell couples the sex of their unborn child or to abort based on sex since 1994. This law, however, is rarely enforced. Consequently, sex-selective abortion practices are rampant and the ratio of girls to boys is continuing to fall. India's 2001 census revealed that there were only 927 girls aged 0-6 per 1,000 boys, a marked drop from the 1991 census, which found 945 per 1000. This means that in that decade there were 35 million fewer females registered in the country than males, according to Canada's International Development Research Centre.
>
> The statistics in certain areas are shocking. The IDRC revealed last year that the wealthier urban families of the Indian Punjab have merely 300 girls for every 1,000 boys. In South Delhi, the ratio is 832:1000, and in the state of Haryana it's 822:1000.

If you are in favor of abortion, then you are in favor of murdering women just because they are women. Every person who voted for Barack Obama voted to murder women just because they are women. Abortion is the ultimate domestic violence against women.

Twenty-one reasons why marriage matters

September 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the National Marriage Coalition in New Zealand. (H/T Jennifer Roback Morse)

Summary:

FAMILY

1. Marriage increases the likelihood that fathers have good relationships with their children
2. Cohabitation is not the functional equivalent of marriage
3. Growing up outside an intact marriage increases the likelihood that children themselves divorce or become unwed parents
4. Marriage is a virtually universal human institution.

ECONOMICS

5. Divorce and unmarried childbearing increase poverty for both children and mothers
6. Married couples seem to build more wealth on average than singles or cohabiting couples
7. Married men earn more money than do single men with similar education and job histories
8. Parental divorce (or failure to marry) appears to increase children's risk of school failure
9. Parental divorce reduces the likelihood that children will graduate from college and achieve high-status jobs

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND LONGEVITY

10.Children who live with their own two married parents enjoy better physical health, on average, than do children in other family forms
11.Parental marriage is associated with a sharply lower risk of infant mortality
12.Marriage is associated with reduced rates of alcohol and substance abuse for both adults and teens
13.Married people, especially married men, have longer life expectancies than do otherwise similar singles
14.Marriage is associated with better health and lower rates of injury, illness, and disability for both men and women

MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

15.Children whose parents divorce have higher rates of psychological distress and mental illness
16.Divorce appears significantly to increase the risk of suicide
17.Married mothers have lower rates of depression than do single or cohabiting mothers

CRIME AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

18.Boys raised in single-parent families are more likely to engage in delinquent and

criminal behaviour
19.Marriage appear to reduce the risk that adults will be either perpetrators or victims of crime
20.Married women appear to have a lower risk of experiencing domestic violence than do cohabiting or dating women
21.A child who is not living with his or her own two married parents is at greater risk of child abuse

This is fun to read! You can learn to defend marriage, even if you favor lifelong chastity over marriage like I do.

The full PDF is here.

MUST-SEE: ACORN employee explains how to avoid law while prostituting children

September 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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First, the new video from James O'Keefe and Hannah Giles. (H/T BigGovernment via Hot Air)

WARNING! THIS VIDEO CONTAINS VULGAR LANGUAGE!

Fox News is covering the new video.

Excerpt:

> Much like in their previous undercover stings at the group's offices in Baltimore, Washington and Brooklyn, N.Y., filmmaker James O'Keefe, 25, and his 20-year-old partner Hannah Giles, who posed as a prostitute named "Eden," were given assistance on Aug. 17 from a staffer at ACORN's office in San Bernardino on how to avoid detection by law enforcement. The couple even tell ACORN staffer Tresa Kaelke — who admits on the videotape to previously having sex for money — that they plan on bringing in 12 girls from El Salvador to work in a home they hope to acquire via the community organization.
>
> […]Sen. Mike Johanns, R-Neb., said that ACORN has received $53 million in taxpayer funds since 1994 and that the group was eligible for a wider set of funding in the pending legislation, which funds housing and transportation programs.
>
> The U.S. Census Bureau severed ties with the group on Friday in the wake of the controversy.

And here's ACORN's response to being caught red-handed.

> ACORN — Association of Community Organizers for Reform Now — has been accused of widespread voter fraud during the 2008 presidential election by assisting unqualified voters to register.
>
> The organization's chief organizer, Bertha Lewis, released a statement on Saturday saying that while she could not defend the actions of the terminated workers, O'Keefe may have committed a felony during the sting operation. She also threatened legal action against FOX News, which has aired the videos.
>
> "It is clear that the videos are doctored, edited, and in no way the result of the fabricated story being portrayed by conservative activist 'filmmaker' O'Keefe and his partner in crime," Lewis said. "And, in fact, a crime it was — our lawyers believe a felony — and we will be taking legal action against Fox and their co-conspirators," she said.

Here she is endorsing Barack Obama.

Obama's close ties to ACORN

And a little bit about Obama's ties to ACORN from Gateway Pundit.

> *Once again…* **ACORN** is the **largest radical Leftist group** in America today.
>
> This radical group worked closely with the Obama campaign during the election. But, the community organizing group was not open about this.
>
> One of Barack Obama's first big "community organizer" jobs **involved ACORN** in 1992. Obama also **trained ACORN** employees. He **represented ACORN** in court. Obama worked with and protested with ACORN. His campaign **donated $800,000** to ACORN in 2008 for voter registration efforts.
>
> And, ACORN even **canvassed for Obama** last year.

Click here for a photo of Obama meeting with ACORN bosses.

Obama's ties to ACORN are explained here.

Richard Bauckham defends the reliability of the gospels against James Crossley

September 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I just finished listening to all the new William Lane Craig and Saddleback Apologetics Conference lectures, and now I've found something a little more difficult. A debate between the brilliant Cambridge New Testament scholar Richard Bauckham, and another solid atheistic New Testament Scholar, James Crossley.

The debate links are here at Operation 513.

The leading New Testament scholar from Cambridge, Dr. Richard Bauckham, was recently on the radio program 'Unbelievable?' which is on the Premier Christian Radio network. Bauckham was arguing that the Gospels are based on eyewitness accounts and therefore should be regarded as fundamentally trustworthy.

Joining in on the discussion was also New Testament historian, Dr. James Crossley, discussing the implications of Bauckham's work and whether the Gospel of John was written by the disciple John himself, as Bauckham claims.

It is well worth the listen.

Part 1 – (1 hr 20 mins)
Part 2 – (1 hr 20 mins)

This is a great debate between two great New Testament scholars.

Richard Bauckham

You can find out more about Bauckham in this Christianity Today profile.

Summary:

The author of CT's 2007 Book Award winner in biblical studies, Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, Richard Bauckham proposes a new (or, rather, an ancient) paradigm through which to view the Gospels: as the eyewitness testimony of trustworthy insiders. Wheaton professor Gary Burge asked the St. Andrews scholar how his approach diverges from mainstream New Testament scholarship—and what it means for our understanding of Jesus*.

I'm really excited by the respect he is getting in the academy. This is a completely NEW perspective on the gospels that is getting a lot of attention.

James Crossley

Crossley specializes in Mark, the earliest and most reliable gospel. Mark's source for the Passion narrative of Jesus is dated to the 40s, about 10-20 years after the death of Jesus. Mark's gospel is based on the eyewitness testimony of his companion Peter. So it is fun to hear them debate Mark in the first show. And they get into 1 Corinthians 15 as well, which is dated to 1-3 years after Jesus died.

Crossley debated against William Lane Craig before here and he debated against Michael

Bird here, (part 1, part 2).

Quebec forces homeschoolers to teach moral relativism and religious pluralism

September 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the National Post. (H/T Canbuhay)

Excerpt:

> In a recent troubling judgment (Lavallee vs. Commission scolaire des Chenes), Quebec's Superior Court ruled that parents do not have ultimate authority over the moral or religious education of their children, and that the state can impose a curriculum that conflicts with the moral codes parents strive to instill. The court rejected a claim brought by parents seeking to exempt their children from the "Ethics and Religious Culture" (ERC) course, which in 2008 became mandatory for all students from Grade 1 to Grade 11, including students in private religious schools.
>
> […][The province maintains, and the court accepted, that parents' constitutional freedoms remain intact since they are still free to instruct their children in their own moral codes in the privacy of home. **But even homeschoolers, who frequently opt out of government schooling precisely because they prefer to instruct their children in their own belief systems, will be required to teach the "even-handed" ERC course or an equivalent course.** Imagine parents instructing their children about the importance of adhering to their own religious beliefs in the morning, then telling them that there are a dozen other religions to choose from, all equally valid, in the afternoon. It's ludicrous for the province to argue that such a process respects freedom of belief.

This is exactly the problem I have with some fundamentalists who don't see the need to raise their children to have an impact on the world as a whole. I don't think that the secularists are going to leave Christians alone, so as a matter of self-defense, we need to be the best in our fields in order to have an influence at the highest levels.

Many of the most ambitious people tend to be rabidly secular because they are usually the people who are least likely to want to give up their autonomy to the demands of the moral law. The higher they rise, the less they respect any external restrictions on their selfish pursuit of pleasure.

It's natural for influential non-Christians to use the law and the public schools to suppress things that seem to limit their autonomy and pursuit of happiness, such as free speech, parental rights, etc. It annoys them when we disagree with them, and that we teach our children things they don't believe.

Rather than having a live and let live attitude, they are not at all shy about using the law and the public schools to attack our basic human rights. In order to prevent that, we need

to make sure that Christians are in position where they can defend human rights for ourselves, and everyone.

Obama administration finds cap-and-trade costs families $1,761 a year

September 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from CBS News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has privately concluded that a cap and trade law would cost American taxpayers up to $200 billion a year, the equivalent of hiking personal income taxes by about 15 percent.
>
> A previously unreleased analysis prepared by the U.S. Department of Treasury says the total in new taxes would be between $100 billion to $200 billion a year. At the upper end of the administration's estimate, the cost per American household would be an extra $1,761 a year.

So much for the "working families" rhetoric of the communists.

Has the world gone completely crazy? Are churches finally discovering apologetics?

September 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Well, I was floored by the Saddleback Church Apologetics conference speakers and topics. And I thought that the lectures from that conference were great.

But look!

Other churches are also having conferences!

Here is a conference in Alabama coming up in January 2010.

Speakers:

- Ravi Zacharias
- Prof. John Lennox
- **Alistair Begg ??? This guy is a PASTOR!!!**
- Larry Taunton
- Stuart McAllister
- Harry Reeder
- Jay Smith
- Bill Wortman

Alistair Begg??? Alistair Begg??? Pastors *hate* apologetics, except for Kreitsauce! This is unpossible! Unpossible, I say!

And here is another one in North Carolina in November 2009.

Speakers:

- Michael Brown
- William Lane Craig
- Dinesh D'Souza (Catholic)
- Gary R. Habermas
- Christopher Hitchens **(debating Dinesh D'souza) ??? Christians debate?**
- **Johnny Hunt, President of Southern Baptist Convention ???**
- Greg Koukl
- Peter Kreeft (Catholic)
- Mike Licona
- Frank Turek
- Benjamin Wiker (Catholic)

Now I ask you. When did Christians suddenly start to value apologetics as part of the church experience? And DEBATES! In CHURCH! What is the world coming to when Christians let atheists debate Christian truth claims with reference to real facts and evidences, *in the church*? Churches are for singing and having fun! Right?

Even the Canadians are doing it!

Worser and worser

But it gets even WORSE. Look, 100 Huntley Street is hosting videos of William Lane Craig answering QUESTIONS! (H/T Apologetics 315)

Look:

- The Relationship Between Faith and Reason – Video / MP3
- The Best Argument for Belief in God – Video / MP3
- Can We Be Good Without God? – Video / MP3
- Is God a Logical Necessity – Video / MP3
- Can We Trust the Bible Written 2000 Years Ago – Video / MP3
- *Why Is Richard Dawkins So Popular?* – Video / MP3
- Who Designed the Designer? A Response to Dawkins – Video / MP3
- *The Flying Spaghetti Monster & Evidence for God* – Video / MP3
- Can We Trust Religious Experiences? – Video / MP3
- Can There Be Meaning Without God? – Video / MP3
- How Can Christianity Be the Only One True Religion? – Video / MP3

HE'S TALKING ABOUT THE BIG BANG! Appealing to the findings of mainstream science! That's… blasphemy! Isn't it?

(By the way, you should really listen to these, especially the ones in italics, where he is surprisingly snarky! These are just a few minutes long, each).

Disclaimer

Now whenever I am being silly, no one realizes it. So this is all just me being silly. I love Christian apologetics, and I am happy that churches are getting interested in training young people to think about their faith and then talk about it in public. Once in a while, I should be allowed to be silly.

Pregnant mom holds intruder at gunpoint until police arrive

September 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from Local 15 TV News. (H/T John Lott)

Excerpt:

> The lesson here is never threaten an expecting mother, especially if she's armed with a shotgun.
>
> "I was angry," Randi Fairley says. "I was really mad that he was in my house."
>
> At around 4 A.M. Sunday, Fairley was wide awake, because her unborn daughter was kicking. That is when she heard a noise; it sounded like someone touching a potato-chip bag downstairs.
>
> "I came and looked over the stairs," Fairley says. "I saw this kid, down at the bottom of the stairs. He was about to grab my computer."
>
> Fairley is six and a half months pregnant. So, she says she yelled down at Justin Delhomme, he walked out of the house and she grabbed a shotgun. In the street, Fairley confronted the 18 year old. "He pulled a gun on me, and I told him, 'You know, you need to put that away before I shoot you because mine's bigger,' and he put it back in his pocket." . . . .

Video interview from Fox News is here.

The proper use of firearms is not to fire them, but to brandish them to prevent crimes. It's even better when a women uses firearms to defend her children.

Obama’s naive trade policy angers Canada, China, France, Mexico, etc.

September 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

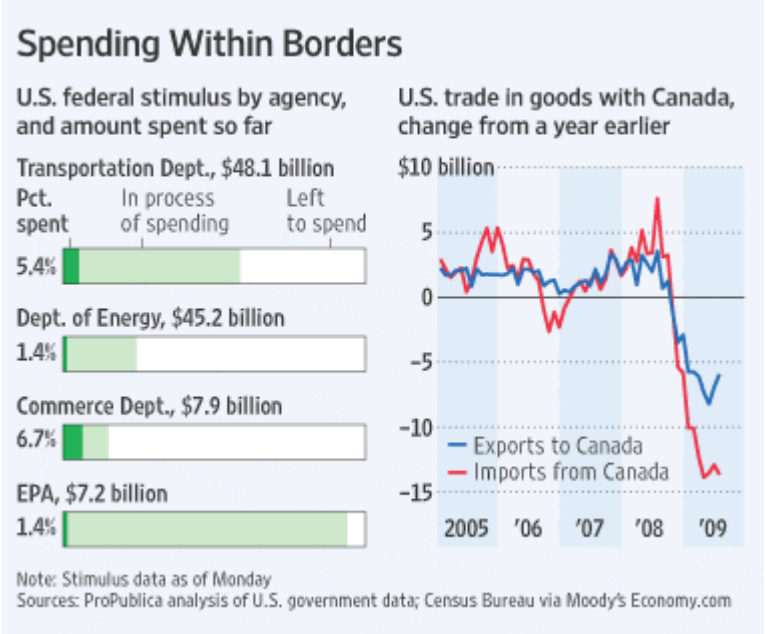

The economic effects of massive government waste and naive protectionism (Source: Wall Street Journal)

The Wall Street Journal explains the high costs of economic ignorance.

Excerpt:

> The smell of trade war is suddenly in the air. Mr. Obama slapped a 35% tariff on Chinese tires Friday night, and China responded on the weekend by threatening to retaliate against U.S. chickens and auto parts. That followed French President Nicolas Sarkozy’s demand on Thursday that Europe impose a carbon tariff on imports from countries that don’t follow its cap-and-trade diktats. “We need to impose a carbon tax at [Europe’s] border. I will lead that battle,” he said.
>
> Mr. Sarkozy was following U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu, who has endorsed a carbon tax on imports, and the U.S. House of Representatives, which passed a carbon tariff as part of its cap-and-tax bill. This in turn followed the “Buy American” provisions of the stimulus, which has incensed much of Canada; Congress’s bill to ban Mexican trucks from U.S. roads in direct violation of Nafta, prompting Mexico to retaliate against U.S. farm and kitchen goods; and the must-make-cars-in-America provisions of the auto bailouts. Meanwhile, U.S. trade pacts with Colombia, Panama and South Korea languish in Congress.

The article goes on to explain how the Smoot-Hawley tariff helped cause the Great Depression. This is *exactly* the path that President Teleprompter is treading. He is taking us head-first into the next Great Depression because he knows less about economic policy than my keyboard. He did legal work for ACORN, for God’s sake – have you seen

who ACORN hires? I'm sure that woman can read a Teleprompter, too.

What do economists think of Obama's economic policies?

I noticed this post on Greg Mankiw's blog, where links to a survey of economists.

> Click here to read the results of a new survey of AEA members. This updates previous survey results, summarized in Chapter 2 of my favorite textbook.
>
> **Note that 83 percent agree that "the United States should eliminate remaining tariffs and other barriers to trade."** I presume that would apply to tariffs on Chinese tires.

Greg Mankiw is a Harvard University professor of economics.

UPDATE: New Michele Bachmann video!

Wow, is she ever pretty when she's explaining free trade! Sigh.

Obama’s naive foreign policy increases likelihood of war in Middle East

September 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Wall Street Journal explains.

Excerpt:

> Events are fast pushing Israel toward a pre-emptive military strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities, probably by next spring. That strike could well fail. Or it could succeed at the price of oil at $300 a barrel, a Middle East war, and American servicemen caught in between. So why is the Obama administration doing everything it can to speed the war process along?

The article lists various elements of Obama’s weak stance against Iran, then continues:

> […]All this only helps persuade Israel’s skittish leadership that when President Obama calls a nuclear-armed Iran “unacceptable,” he means it approximately in the same way a parent does when fecklessly reprimanding his misbehaving teenager. That impression is strengthened by Mr. Obama’s decision to drop Iran from the agenda when he chairs a meeting of the U.N. Security Council on Sept. 24; by Defense Secretary Robert Gates publicly opposing military strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities; and by Russia’s announcement that it will not support any further sanctions on Iran.
>
> In sum, the conclusion among Israelis is that the Obama administration won’t lift a finger to stop Iran, much less will the “international community.” So Israel has pursued a different strategy, in effect seeking to goad the U.S. into stopping, or at least delaying, an Israeli attack by imposing stiff sanctions and perhaps even launching military strikes of its own.

How do you think Iran would respond to such an air strike? Their entire land force would be left largely intact. Do you think they are just going to take that and do nothing to retaliate? This is a nightmare.

How feminism destroyed free speech and free inquiry on university campuses

September 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from David Thompson. (H/T ECM)

The post on David Thompson's blog contains some foul language.

Let me first give you the facts from the FIRE article David is writing about.

> Professor Thomas Thibeault made the mistake of pointing out – at a sexual harassment training seminar – that the school's sexual harassment policy contained no protection for the falsely accused. Two days later, in a Kafkaesque irony, *Thibeault was fired by the college president for sexual harassment without notice, without knowing his accuser or the charges against him, and without a hearing.* […]
>
> Thibeault's ordeal started shortly after August 5, 2009 when, during a faculty training session regarding the college's sexual harassment policy, he presented a scenario regarding a different professor and asked, "What provision is there in the sexual harassment policy to protect the accused against complaints which are malicious or, in this case, ridiculous?" Vice President for Legal Affairs Mary Smith, who was conducting the session, replied that there was no such provision to protect the accused, so Thibeault responded that "the policy itself is flawed."

And then some of Thibeault's testimony:

> […]Mary Smith was explaining the sexual harassment policy and was emphasising that faculty had to report suspicions of sexual harassment by any faculty member to the college administration. She was stating that *the feelings of the offended were proof of the offensive nature of the behaviour*.
>
> […]There is no provision in the policy. I must emphasise that if the person feels offended then the incident must be reported to the college authorities. Even if you hear such a statement about a faculty member, you are to report it. *If you don't, you yourself are party to the harassment and harassment is dismissible*.
>
> […]Two days later, Thibeault was summoned to [college] President John Bryant Black's office. According to Thibeault's written account of the meeting – which was sent to Black and which Black has not disputed – Thibeault met with Black and Smith. Black told Thibeault that he "was a divisive force in the college at a time when the college needed unity" and that Thibeault must resign by 11:30 a.m. *or be fired and have his "long history of sexual harassment… made public."* This unsubstantiated allegation took Thibeault by surprise. Black added that Thibeault would be escorted off campus by Police Chief Drew Durden and that Black had notified the local police that he was prepared to have Thibeault arrested for trespassing if he returned to campus. *At no point was Thibeault*

> *presented with the charges against him or given any chance to present a defence.*

ECM send me this article from Canadian writer David Warren on political correctness and fascism.

Excerpt:

> The purpose of political correction is to delegitimate opposition; to make the most basic facts of life undiscussable, and thereby eliminate debate. It is a device for seizing power.
>
> In my view, the ideological Left advances ruthlessly, by turning the meanings of words upside down, by stating bald lies that we must not dare to challenge, by introducing "reforms" in the dark of the night, often through courts to subvert Parliament.

My concern is that these feminist suppressions of speech using false accusations will spread, until every interplay between men and women becomes a kind of Duke University lacrosse scandal where facts don't matter so long as the media can bash the right people for being sexist, racist homophobes.

UPDATE: I just noticed a nice post from Suzanne (Big Blue Wave), who dissents from feminism.

GREAT NEWS: House votes to de-fund ACORN 345-75!

September 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from BigGovernment.com. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> **FINAL VOTE RESULTS FOR ROLL CALL 718** (Democrats in roman; Republicans in *italic*; Independents underlined)
> **H R 3221** RECORDED VOTE 17-Sep-2009 2:06 PM
> **QUESTION:** On Motion to Recommit with Instructions
> **BILL TITLE:** Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009

	Ayes	Noes	PRES	NV
Democratic	172	75	2	6
Republican	173			5
Independent				
TOTALS	**345**	**75**	**2**	**11**

Previous story: Senate votes to de-fund ACORN.

Come on Obambi! I want to post Zo's Under My Bus, again.

SIGN THE BILL!

Walter Williams asks how well public schools perform for the money

September 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Walter Williams explains how much public schools cost and how well they perform.

One of the most left-wing places in the country is Washington, D.C. – which votes 90% Democrat.

How good are schools run by Democrats?

> Only 14 percent of Washington's fourth-graders score at or above proficiency in the reading and math portions of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test. Their national rank of 51 makes them the nation's worst. Eighth-graders are even further behind with only 12 percent scoring at or above proficiency in reading and 8 percent in math and again the worst performance in the nation. One shouldn't be surprised by Washington student performance on college admissions tests. They have an average composite SAT score of 925 and ACT score of 19.1, compared to the national average respectively of 1017 and 21.1. In terms of national ranking, their SAT and ACT rankings are identical to their fourth- and eighth-grade rankings — dead last.

And how expensive are schools run by Democrats?

> During the 2006-07 academic year, expenditures per pupil averaged $13,848 compared to a national average of $9,389. That made Washington's per pupil expenditures the third highest in the nation coming in behind New Jersey ($14,998) and New York ($14,747). Washington's teacher-student ratio is 13.9 compared with the national average of 15.3 students per teacher, ranking 18th in the nation. What about teacher salaries? Washington's teachers are the highest paid in the nation, having an average annual salary of $61,195 compared with the nation's average $46,593.

Public schools cost too much and perform too little.

Which political party is more corrupt? Republicans or Democrats?

September 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Americans for Limited Government mails a letter to Democrat leaders demanding that Democrat Congressman Charlie Rangel step down as leader of the House Ways and Means Committee. (H/T Granite Grok via ECM)

The letter lists the following accusations:

> 1) failure to report over $1 million in outside income and $3 million in business transactions as required by the House,
>
> 2) failure to disclose at least $650,000 in assets he had previously failed to list on his House financial disclosure forms,
>
> 3) failure to disclose to the IRS or on his financial disclosure forms $75,000 in rental income for a beach villa in the Dominican Republic,
>
> 4) violation of state laws by claiming three primary residences and broke municipal laws by maintaining four rent-controlled apartments,
>
> 5) violation of House rules by using congressional letterhead to solicit donations for an education center bearing his name at City College of New York, and
>
> 6) delinquency in paying his property taxes on two New Jersey parcels and failure to report the sale of a $1.3 million brownstone.

And don't forget another Democrat who had a lot of money unaccounted for. He got convicted 11 times for corruption.

Republican governors Bobby Jindal and Tim Pawlenty cut off ACORN funds

September 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Two candidates for the Presidency in 2012 make their case.

Bobby Jindal: (H/T Michelle Malkin)

> Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal today cut off state funding for the community activist group ACORN.
>
> Jindal has also blocked any state agency for entering into contracts with the organization.
>
> The executive order also cuts off any future state funding of ACORN, on the heels of a series of embarrassing incidents for the organization.
>
> The governor's action follows a subpoena of documents from the group's national headquarter office in New Orleans.
>
> According to Jindal's executive order, "ACORN's actions make clear that financial involvement with ACORN is contrary to the public policy of the State of Louisiana and the best interests of its citizens."

Tim Pawlenty:

> Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R.) sent a letter Wednesday afternoon to the director of the Minnesota Commission of Management and Budget ordering him to stop all state funding to ACORN (the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now).

Meanwhile, the Republican governor of California launches an investigation of ACORN operations. (H/T Hot Air)

And what about the lovely Michele Bachmann?

Well, naturally I am concerned more my favorite politician Michele Bachmann, who is also willing to running for the Presidency in 2012. And I think it may be a good time now to remind you all that she was attacking ACORN before attacking ACORN was cool. You can send her a donation, if you like!

She was fighting to cut off ACORN funding in JUNE of 2009.

And she's much prettier than those other candidates, too!

Is opposition to evolution based on ignorance of the scientific data?

September 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Consider this article by Jonathan Wells.

First, let's re-cap the challenge to evolution from the phenomenon of the Cambrian explosion.

> The newly released film "Darwin's Dilemma" argues that the geologically abrupt appearance of the major groups of animals (the "phyla") in the Cambrian Explosion posed a serious problem for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution (as he himself knew), and that subsequent fossil discoveries—far from solving the problem—have made it worse.

Basically, all the major body plans we have today appear in the fossil record in a 2-3 million period about 543 million years ago. There are no precursors in the fossil record showing the gradual evolution of these major body plans.

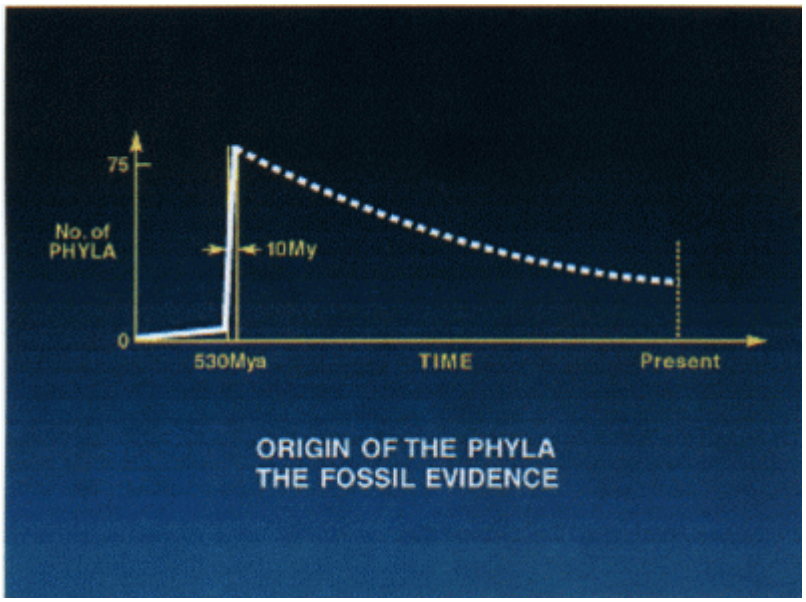

The Cambrian Explosion: 0 to 60 in a few million years

Darwin expected to discover lots and lots of fossils leading up to the Cambrian explosion period that would show how all these phyla came into existence slowly over time. Unfortunately for the naturalistic evolutionists, the discoveries we've been making haven't shown any hint of precursor fossils leading up the Cambrian explosion.

> Since 1859, however, many Precambrian fossils have been found, including microfossils of single-celled bacteria in rocks more than three billion years old. In addition, multicellular Precambrian fossils have been found in the Ediacara Hills of Australia, though there is continuing debate over whether any—or how many—of the Ediacaran fossils were animals, or what relationship—if any—they had to the Cambrian phyla. In 1998, Cambridge University paleobiologist Simon

> Conway Morris (who is featured in the film "Darwin's Dilemma") wrote, "Apart from the few Ediacaran survivors… there seems to be a sharp demarcation between the strange world of Ediacaran life and the relatively familiar Cambrian fossils" (*Crucible of Creation*, 30).

But wait! Maybe we can't find the precusor fossils *required* by Darwinism because they are too small or too soft to have survived for so long?

> Since 1859, however, many Precambrian fossils have been found, including microfossils of single-celled bacteria in rocks more than three billion years old. In addition, multicellular Precambrian fossils have been found in the Ediacara Hills of Australia… In 1998, Cambridge University paleobiologist Simon Conway Morris… wrote, "Apart from the few Ediacaran survivors… there seems to be a sharp demarcation between the strange world of Ediacaran life and the relatively familiar Cambrian fossils" (*Crucible of Creation*, 30).
>
> So there is now no shortage of Precambrian fossils. Not only do we have fossils of bacteria, but we also have many fossils of soft-bodied Multicellular organisms. "In the Ediacaran organisms there is no evidence for any skeletal hard parts," wrote Conway Morris in 1998. "Ediacaran fossils look as if they were effectively soft-bodied" (*Crucible of Creation*, 28). The same is true of many of the organisms fossilized in the Cambrian explosion.

But wait! Scientists have discovered lots of exceptionally preserved microbes just before the Cambrian explosion. Don't microbes count as precursors to the Cambrian explosion phyla?

> Richard Callow and Martin Brasier reported in the January 2009 issue of the *Journal of the Geological Society, London* "a variety of exceptionally preserved microbes" from late Precambrian rocks in England that address "the paradox known as '"Darwin's dilemma'."
>
> […]Callow and Brasier didn't solve Darwin's dilemma. Instead, they put one more nail in the coffin of Darwin's attempt to salvage his theory from it. The truth is that "exceptionally preserved microbes" from the late Precambrian actually *deepen* Darwin's dilemma, because they suggest that if there had been ancestors to the Cambrian phyla they would have been preserved.

I am willing to believe in evolution. But in order to get me to believe it, I *insist* on seeing a fossil record that shows the gradual emergence of phyla, one or two at a time, over hundreds of millions of years. That is what Darwinism predicts. We now have a solid record of what came before the Cambrian explosion. So where are the precursors? Where is the record of gradual emergence? Where is my evidence?

More on the Cambrian explosion

- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- New DVD on the Cambrian explosion (now available from Amazon.com)

The origin of life and biological information

- The building blocks of life
- The origin of biological information
- Richard Dawkins thinks unobserved aliens may have caused the origin of life

Videos on intelligent design

- Youtube: Unlocking the Mystery of Life's Origin
- Youtube: The Privileged Planet
- Youtube: How DNA is replicated

Round-up of scary stories about leftists gone wild

September 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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These were all sent to me by ECM, and are too good to pass up!

Environmentalists shut off water to farmers to save tiny fish

Excerpt:

> This farmland that has seen their water supply shut off supplies half of America's vegetables. This impacts over *38 million people*. And these farmers are now unable to feed their families, unable to sell their crops, and finding themselves in food lines. They're still paying water bills, but the water has been shut off. And for what? To keep a three-inch fish alive? Since when is a tiny fish more important than feeding America's families?

Democrats want to expand Community Reinvestment Act

Excerpt:

> A number of experts believe that aggressive enforcement of the 1970s-era Community Reinvestment Act contributed to the mortgage meltdown, and thus to the greater financial crisis, by requiring financial institutions to lend to unqualified borrowers. Now, the Democratic majority in the House of Representatives is responding to that situation by proposing to expand the scope and power of the Community Reinvestment Act.
>
> This morning House Financial Services Committee chairman Rep. Barney Frank held a hearing on H.R. 1479, the "Community Reinvestment Modernization Act of 2009." The bill's purpose is "to close the wealth gap in the United States" by increasing "home ownership and small business ownership for low- and moderate-income borrowers and persons of color." It would extend CRA's strict lending requirements to non-bank institutions like credit unions, insurance companies, and mortgage lenders. It would also make CRA more explicitly race-based by requiring CRA standards to be applied to minorities, regardless of income, going beyond earlier requirements that applied solely to low- and moderate-income areas.

Is Obama planning an amnesty to give illegal immigrants health care?

Excerpt:

> President Obama said this week that his health care plan won't cover illegal immigrants, but argued that's all the more reason to legalize them and ensure they eventually do get coverage.
>
> He also staked out a position that anyone in the country legally should be covered – a major break with the 1996 welfare reform bill, which limited most federal public assistance programs only to citizens and longtime immigrants.

Man faces jail for hurting burglar who threatens his family (Link FIXED!)

Excerpt:

> A millionaire businessman is facing jail for attacking a career criminal who had held his family hostage at knifepoint.
>
> Munir Hussain, 52, was told he would be killed when three raiders invaded his home.

Obama removed political content from speech to students

Excerpt:

> When conservatives complained that President Obama intended to indoctrinate children with his school speech, liberals howled with mock indignation.
>
> But if the liberal Washington Post is to be believed (admittedly a risky proposition), conservatives had good reason to worry.

ECM sent some even better stories about marriage, parenting and courtship, but I'm keeping those for the weekend! They're awesome!

Friday night funny: Daily Show, roommates, Wolf Blitzer, Google

September 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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First, left-wing radical Jon Stewart mocks media bias on ACORN! I don't like him at all, but this is funny.

A funny list for Owen

The list of 101 things to do to your college roomate.

My favorites:

12. Every time you wake up, start yelling, "Help! Where am I?!" and run around the room for a few minutes. Then go back to bed. If your roommate asks, say you don't know what he/she is talking about.

26. Keep a tarantula in a jar for three days. Then get rid of the tarantula. If your roommate asks, say, "Oh, he's around here somewhere."

27. Tell your roommate, "I've got an important message for you." Then pretend to faint. When you recover, say you can't remember what the message was. Later on, say, "Oh, yeah, I remember!" Pretend to faint again. Keep this up for several weeks.

44. Move everything to one side of the room. Ask your roommate if he knows how much an elephant weighs, and look at the floor on the empty side of the room with concern.

52. Scatter stuffed animals around the room. Put party hats on them. Play loud music. When your roommate walks in, turn off the music, take off the party hats, put away the stuffed animals, and say, "Well, it was fun while it lasted."

57. Start dressing like an Indian. If your roommate inquires, claim that you are getting in touch with your Native-American roots. If your roommate accuses you of not having any Native-American roots, claim that he/she has offended your people and put a curse on your roommate.

78. Set up about twenty plants in an organized formation. When your roommate walks in, pretend to be in the middle of delivering a speech to the plants. Whisper to them, "We'll continue this later," while eyeing your roommate suspiciously.

89. Drink lots of lemonade. Talk obnoxiously for hours about how much you love lemonade. Then, one day, paint your face yellow. From then on, complain about how much you hate lemonade.

96. Make pancakes every morning, but don't eat them. Draw faces on them, and toss them in the closet. Watch them for several hours each day. Complain to your roommate that your "pancake farm" isn't evolving into a self-sufficient community. Confide in your roommate that you think the king of the pancakes has been taking bribes.

#96 is my all-time favorite. This is for Owen, who loves to read lists of funny things.

Wofl Blitzer on Jeopardy

Third, ECM sends me these videos of CNN's Wolf Blitzer failing miserably on Jeopardy.

Excerpt:

> Richter won the game with an incredible $68,000 total. Delaney racked up an creditable $9,300. But Wolf's final score was -$4800. Yes, *negative* $4,800.
>
> It's very difficult for a Jeopardy contestant to come up enough wrong answers to go that far in the hole. It takes great effort and even greater ignorance.

I think that the left-wing media are probably the least educated and informed people on the planet.

Giant bird hounds policemen away

ECM sends this hilarious story. I love birds, but maybe not THIS bird.

Michele Bachmann videos

These are not really funny, but they are fun.

Michele debates with some stupid old men about tariffs:

Michele debates with leftist Geraldo Rivera about health care:

If you want to see and hear more Michele, click here.

Obama discovers the Internet

Last, check out this piece by Scott Ott. (H/T Scrappleface)

Excerpt:

> Just a day after White House "green jobs czar" Van Jones resigned amid controversy over his radical views, the Obama administration said it had discovered a new vetting tool called "Google" that also revealed that the president's "public option" health insurance proposal may be socialist as well.
>
> "You just type a few words into this rectangle," said White House press secretary Robert Gibbs, "Click a button and information suddenly appears on your computer screen. When we did that, we were shocked to learn that Van was a socialist, and that the keystone of the president's health reform plan probably is too."

Happy Friday!

Obama abandons Poland and the Czech Republic in order to appease Russia

September 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Heritage Foundation analyzes Obama's latest foreign policy blunder.

Excerpt:

> President Obama's decision to abandon plans for basing elements of the U.S. missile defense shield in Poland and the Czech Republic is entirely a political one – in order to appease Russia. This decision is a strategic victory for the Kremlin, which is determined to have a sphere of privileged interest in its near-abroad. It represents the shameful abandonment of two of America's closest allies in Central and Eastern Europe, and in future, America's allies will have cause to question the integrity and credibility of American promises.
>
> It also leaves the U.S. and Europe more vulnerable to the threat of ballistic missile attack. The Third Site installations proposed for Poland and the Czech Republic – Ground-Based Midcourse Defense interceptors in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic – were cost-effective, proven technologies which offered protection from long range missile attack to both Europe and the United States. The alternative deployments which President Obama has said he will now pursue will not satisfy those criteria.
>
> Neither has Washington secured any great concession from Russia.
>
> […]The decision – to concentrate resources defending against short range missiles and not field defenses against long range missile attacks – makes no sense. To be truly strategic about national and international security, the United States must defend against current and future threats. Presenting a choice between defending against short or long range missile attack is a false one. Ballistic missile threats can emerge with little advanced warning, and as Admiral Mike Mullen (chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) recently stated, Iran has already amassed sufficient uranium to build an atomic bomb.

Looks like President Chamberlain Obama is totally oblivious to the emerging threat from Iran. Not only is he abandoning Israel, but he's leaving us open to long-range ballistic missile attack from abroad.

The Western Experience explains Obama's "reasoning".

Excerpt:

> By taking on a non-confrontational role with Russia, President Obama hopes he can lure Russia into becoming a working partner with the U.S. against Iran and terrorism. Additionally, work closer on policy goals like disarmament. So the possibilities for President Obama, in his eyes, are win-win. But right now it looks

> more like a very huge gamble, if not a misguided attempt to secure cooperation through appeasement.

You'll recall from my last piece that Russia is selling Iran S-300 defense systems that Iran will use to shoot down Israeli aircraft in the event of a pre-emptive airstrike against their nuclear facilities. And Obama has decided that the proper response to these developments is *appeasement*. What a surprise! The naive leftist sides against our ally, Israel.

The Independent records the reactions of our allies. (H/T The Western Experience)

> Poland's media bluntly summed up the feelings of the country's political right towards President Obama's axing of plans for an east European missile shield today: "Betrayed! The USA has sold us to the Russians and stabbed us in the back," was the headline in one popular newspaper.
>
> […]In the Czech Republic, where the missile shield was also meant to be deployed, newspapers were similarly dismissive: "Obama gave in to the Kremlin," commented the daily Lidowe Noviny.

None of this is surprising if you recall how Obama sided with tyrants in Iran and Honduras. The man has no moral sense.

Mike Licona will face Richard Carrier and Stephen Patterson in upcoming debates

September 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Mike Licona's Risen Jesus web site.

> UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 15, 2009
>
> I'm now scheduled to participate in two debates to be held next Spring:
>
> 1) with Richard Carrier on Jesus' resurrection; Feb 11 @ Washburn University in Topeka, KS
>
> 2) with Stephen Patterson of the Jesus Seminar on Jesus' resurrection; Wednesday, March 31 @ 6:00 pm, at FSU in Tallahassee, FL

UPDATE: Mike Licona replied to an e-mail I sent him with this:

> My debate with Carrier will differ somewhat from Bill's. Richard and I have agreed to a different format that we hope will bring greater audience enjoyment and help us to stay on a few important matters longer. After each of us give 15-minute opening statements, we'll engage in 6 period of questioning (10-minutes each). Each of us will have 3 periods. We'll then have 5-minute closing statements then open up for audience Q&A.

I thought that Carrier beat Licona narrowly in their first debate. My friends thought it was a draw. But William Lane Craig crushed Carrier soundly in their debate. It will be interesting to see if Licona can do better against Carrier the second time around. Carrier has extreme positions typical of the village atheists in the "Internet Infidels" camp. If Licona could get Carrier to defend his weird ideas, then he will win the debate. I would place Carrier somewhere to the left of hard-core skeptics like Robert Funk or Burton Mack.

Here's a sample of Mike Licona in action:

He's much better at debating now that he's got his Ph.D, and with the highest possible grade. Recently, he's won two debates against Bart Ehrman. I evaluated Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus here. Hint: it stinks!

Further study

Audio from the first debate between Richard Carrier and Michael Licona is here at Apologetics 315.

Audio of the William Lane Craig vs. Richard Carrier debate is here at Apologetics 315. Carrier's admission of defeat is here, on his blog. Craig's post-debate responses to Carrier is here and here.

Licona's first debate with Ehrman, (audio, video), which Licona won easily.I enjoyed this debate a lot.

William Lane Craig's debate with Ehrman, (video), which Craig won easily. This was also a fun debate.

Debate on whether atheists can be good without God

September 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A great debate on whether atheists can make any sense of morality without God grounding objective moral standards. This one should be very good for atheists to listen to.

The MP3 file is here.

This is part two of last week's discussion about the RichardDawkins.net atheist who converted. Listen to that part first if you want.

I feel a bit bad about this because it is clear that one factor that works to convert people to Christianity is that Christians can exhibit self-sacrificial love to others and atheists are basically at the mercy of their own selfishness. They just cannot behave morally when it goes against their self-interest, and that is SAD. Anyway, I felt badly because I began to worry about whether I have been as loving as possible while explaining Christianity to others.

Here is my entire series of posts explaining why self-sacrificial morality is not rational, if atheism is true.

On a related topic, I think Christians can also distinguish themselves from atheists and other religions in the way that men and women relate romantically. In Christianity, there is the tradition of chivalry, courtship and romantic love. The Christian Bible requires that husbands love their wives to the point of dying for them. This is lacking Islamic cultures, and not required in Hindu cultures.

But this lack of romantic love is also a problem in the feminist West, where women eschew chastity, marriage and children. Instead, women here have empowered the state to act as a replacement for husbands/fathers. The more that the state does for women, the less a really good man can distinguish himself and make himself useful. Men don't like to share responsibilities with the state.

My most popular posts on that issue are here:

- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christian men and women
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- What should wives do when they are not in the mood for sex?
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?
- Purposeful parenting today
- Marriage tips part 1
- Marriage tips part 2

Something to think about.

Share / Save …

IRS slaps ACORN with $548,000 tax lien for unpaid payroll tax

September 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the Washington Examiner. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Pelican Institute's Steve Beatty reports that the federal government just filed a new $548,000 lien against ACORN for unpaid payroll taxes. This comes at the same time as Louisiana Attorney General Buddy Caldwell investigates the group for unpaid state payroll taxes.
>
> According to Beatty, his adds to the existing tax debt of more than $1 million.

Why are all Democrats tax cheats? They keep voting for higher and higher taxes for their productive neighbors to pay for social programs and grants, but they don't want to pay into the system themselves. We are talking about people who have nothing but contempt for the law here.

MUST-READ: Has the decline of chastity and courtship hurt young people?

September 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's an article by Michael Gerson in the Washington Post. (H/T The American Thinker via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The casual sex promoted in advertising and entertainment often leads, in the real world of fragile hearts and STDs, to emotional and physical wreckage.
>
> […]…having a series of low-commitment relationships does not bode well for later marital commitment. Some of this expresses preexisting traits — people who already have a "nontraditional" view of commitment are less likely to be committed in marriage. **But there is also evidence, according to Wilcox, that multiple failed relationships can "poison one's view of the opposite sex." Serial cohabitation trains people for divorce.**

I actually think that a series of sexual experiences outside of marriage poison's one's view of the opposite sex and trains people for divorce. I've put a lot of thought into the things that should be done during friendships and courtships in order to train the couple for marriage, and pre-marital sex is not one of those things!

There are a lot of people out there today who think that they can get the end goal of a fairy tale wedding, a long, stable marriage, and well-behaved children, by making moral decisions significantly different than their grandparents made. The blessings that our grandparents enjoyed were causally connected to many moral realities that young people seem to have rejected as old-fashioned and outmoded.

I think one of the major reasons why I value chastity so much is because I have come to realize that sex outside of a commitment really affects people, especially women. There is a *real difference* in the way that I am treated by women who are chaste – they are a lot more vulnerable and susceptible. They are also a lot more open, interested and engaged in our platonic friendships as well.

I think there is an awful lot of sex going on out there, but not a lot of chivalry and romance. I think one of the problems we need to face is that we need to be more cautious about tearing down the morality that was been in place for centuries in the Christian West. Before destroying the foundations, we should first ask ourselves what the consequences will be on other people's incentives.

Share / Save …

MUST-READ: The definitive catalog of left-wing media bias

September 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This American Spectator essay is required reading. (H/T ECM)

It is basically a list of the most egregious examples of media bias in recent memory. I am not old enough to remember some of these, especially the JFK ones. So this was a real eye-opener to me.

Here's a summary of the points raised:

> What's particularly interesting is that the stories not reported about JFK were in the early 1960s, the effort to not report the story about President Clinton was in 1998, the story on John Edwards was hushed through the time it counted most, in the election cycle of 2008 when he was a serious presidential candidate, and the decision not to report on Van Jones was — well — two weeks ago, and ACORN but last week. Which is to say, September of 2009.
>
> In other words, across five decades of American journalistic history, the instinct of many Old Media institutions — specifically including NBC and the *New York Times* — has been to deliberately withhold the truth. To quite deliberately use their journalism skills and tools to misrepresent those whose politics they do not favor.
>
> Were this, say, the field of medicine, practitioners of this kind of thing would lose their license to practice, sued for and surely convicted of malpractice. As it is, the examples listed here are what might be termed "media malpractice," evidencing a clear and convincing pattern of deceit.

The mainstream media is *totally untrustworthy*.

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ACLU fascists thwarted while trying to jail Christians for saying prayer

September 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from CNN. (H/T My friend Ken)

Excerpt:

> A judge has ruled in favor of two Florida school administrators who faced contempt charges for saying a prayer at a school luncheon, according to a group that helped represent them.
>
> U.S. District Judge M.C. Rodgers ruled Thursday in favor of Frank Lay, principal of Pace High School in Pace, Florida, and school athletic director Robert Freeman, the Liberty Counsel said.
>
> Lay and Freeman could have faced up to six months in prison and fines if convicted. They were accused of violating a consent decree banning county school employees from initiating prayers during school events.
>
> […]But the American Civil Liberties Union, whose lawsuit led to the consent decree, has maintained students have a right to be free from administrators who foist their personal religious beliefs on them.

Fascism is the idea that the state suppresses the inalienable rights of its citizenry by substituting the values and duties of the government (the rulers) for the values and duties of individuals.

Here's how it works:

- Inalienable human rights are granted by the Creator
- Only the Creator of the universe can grant inalienable human rights to his creatures
- Freedom of religious expression is self-evidently an inalienable human right
- Christians exercise their freedom of religious expression
- Atheists in the ACLU don't believe in a Creator
- If there is no Creator, then "rights" are just social conventions that vary by time and place
- So atheists in the ACLU cannot ground inalienable human rights
- Without an inalienable right to freedom of religious expression, suppressing the religious liberty others is permissible
- Atheists in the ACLU can use government to silence, suppress and imprison unwilling Christians
- Atheists in the ACLU are offended by the free expression of Christianity in public
- Therefore, atheists in the ACLU find it rational to suppress the human rights of their neighbors using state coercion

There is no such thing as human rights in an atheistic "survival of the fittest" universe.

Atheists in the ACLU prefer to use the state to suppress any public religious expression, *because the public expression of religion makes them feel badly.* The feelings of atheists is sufficient to justify silencing, suppressing, imprisoning and in even killing people who *make them feel bad*. They are not so much interesting in debating the merits of the cosmological argument – they just want to *shut down dissent* so they can feel comfortable about their atheism.

Here is my entire series of posts explaining why moral behavior is irrational on atheism. Their worldview just doesn't ground objective moral values, objective moral duties, self-sacrifice and the significance of moral decisions. And when the chips are down, they show their fascist colors. Atheists want to dismiss the claims of objective morality so they can pursue pleasure, and they don't want you using your freedoms to remind them of their own depravity.

UPDATE: Kreitsauce is from the panhandle and writes this comment below:

I'm from the Florida panhandle, and we thought this whole thing was ridiculous because:

1. Lay and Freeman have done an unbelievable amount of good for the school and the community. It's real Christianity making a difference that has had such a profound impact.

2. The school already teaches a Bible elective.

3. The school meeting where the prayer took place was housed in a church.

4. The prayer was spontaneous, not a willful violation of criminal law.

5. All protests have been peaceful, even in the face of opposition. The believers have mostly been praying and singing hymns.

6. Lay and Freeman have strong student, community, and parent support.

He also links to this youtube video:

Share / Save ...

India reacts to the death of Christian politician Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy

September 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, the popular Chief Minister of the state of Andhra Pradesh died in a helicopter crash.What was not widely known before his death was that Reddy was a Christian! One of a small 3% minority of Christians in India, which is dominated by the Hindu religion. Let's see whether his Christian faith made any difference in the way he was perceived by others.

Here is an article from the Hindustan Times about the reaction of the people.

Excerpt:

> Andhra Pradesh plunged into gloom Thursday as it became known that Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy had died in a helicopter crash in the dense Nallamalla forests.
>
> People cried inconsolably in the state secretariat, the chief minister's camp office and Gandhi Bhavan, the headquarters of the ruling Congress party.
>
> "He is my God. I can't believe he is no more," wailed a Congress party worker.
>
> "He gave life to several people through Rajiv Arogyasri (health insurance scheme for poor). Nobody had imagined he will lose his life this way," said another Congress worker.

The Times of India reports that Reddy's Congress party swept the local elections in Andhra Pradesh.

Excerpt:

> Riding on the sympathy wave following the death of former chief minister Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, ruling Congress in Andhra Pradesh made a sweep of the byelections to local bodies.
>
> Of the 18 Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituencies that went to polls two days ago, 15 fell in Congress kitty.
>
> […]The same was the case with the Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituencies where Congress clinched 12 out of 17 that went to by-elections.
>
> […]In municipal corporations, [Congress] won four out of five wards…

The Hindustan Times reports that a movie is in the works.

Excerpt:

> After statues and temples immortalising late Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, the popular leader who died in a helicopter crash early this month will come alive on the silver screen.
>
> Telugu actor Rajasekhar will play the role of YSR, as the late leader was popularly known. Producer-director Puri Jagannath announced Monday evening that he would make the Telugu film titled *Rajasekhara Reddy*.
>
> Flanked by actor couple Rajasekhar and Jeevitha, Jagannath said he was feeling honoured to make a movie on the towering leader, who enjoyed unbelievable popularity among masses.
>
> "YSR was immensely popular. A large number of his fans died of shock or committed suicide after hearing about his death in the helicopter crash," he said.

Last and best of all, here is an op-ed in the Deccan Chronicle sent to me by Shalini.

Excerpt:

> This brings me to the role of religious minorities in India…
>
> **Christians form around 3 per cent of the population of India. There are not many very big Christian landowners or Christian industrial houses… Nevertheless, the community enjoys 100 per cent literacy and has done more for education and medical services of our country than others put together. I would hazard a guess that crime rates including corruption among Christians are probably the lowest.**
>
> By contrast, Sikhs who are the richest minority, forming around 2 per cent of the population, have 30 per cent illiteracy, high rate of crimes of violence, and probably the highest incidence of liquor and drug addiction. Worst of all is the plight of the largest minority, the Muslims who form about 13 per cent of our population. Although they have a few multi-billionaires … their literacy rates are the lowest, particularly among women… Instead of getting on with things that matter like education and health-care, their leaders waste most of their time

> asserting their separateness.
>
> **I regard Rajasekhar Reddy as the best example of what a state Chief Minister should be and the Christian contribution to India's welfare as something other communities should emulate.**

Meanwhile, in the West, we have the ACLU trying to suppress the public expression of the very faith that rationally grounds good works. You cannot have the good works of Christianity without the Christian beliefs. How hard is this for atheists to understand? On the atheistic view, survival of the fittest and the pursuit of pleasure in the here and now is rationally grounded. Self-sacrificial love for your neighbor is *irrational* on atheism.

Share / Save ...

Muslim woman calls police to have Christians arrested after debate

September 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the Daily Mail. (H/T Dana Loesch via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A Christian couple have been charged with a criminal offence after taking part in what they regarded as a reasonable discussion about religion with guests at their hotel.
>
> Ben and Sharon Vogelenzang were arrested after a Muslim woman complained to police that she had been offended by their comments.
>
> They have been charged under public order laws with using 'threatening, abusive or insulting words' that were 'religiously aggravated'.
>
> [...]After the incident, the couple voluntarily attended St Anne's Street police station in Liverpool, where they were interviewed under caution.
>
> In July they were arrested and charged under Section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986 and Section 31 (1) (c) and (5) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

This kind of law reminds me of Section 13(1) up north in Canada. These hate speech laws are passed by the left to undermine the inalienable right of free speech. It is selectively applied by the left against their enemies (e.g. – Christians) for the benefit of special interest groups favored by the left (e.g. – Muslims).

Now may be a good time to link to my post on "Why I am not a Muslim".

12-year-old child bride of 25-year-old man dies after three days of labor

September 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here is the story from the Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A 12-year-old Yemeni child bride died after struggling to give birth for three days, a local human rights organisation said.
>
> Fawziya Abdullah Youssef died of severe bleeding on Friday while giving birth to a stillborn in the al-Zahra district hospital of Hodeida province, 140 miles west of the capital Sanaa.
>
> Child marriages are widespread in Yemen… More than a quarter of the country's females marry before age 15, according to a recent report by the Social Affairs Ministry.
>
> […]Youssef was only 11 when her father married her to a 24-year-old man who works as a farmer in Saudi Arabia, said Ahmed al-Quraishi, chairman of Siyaj human rights organization.

David Wood of Answering Muslims writes:

> When a girl hasn't gone through puberty, her hips often haven't widened for giving birth. Such girls can easily die in labor, along with their babies. This is why girls who haven't completed puberty shouldn't be having sex. Unfortunately, Muslims are commanded to follow the example of Muhammad, who had sex with the prepubescent Aisha when she was only nine years old. The Qur'an also allows men to have sex with prepubescent girls (see Surah 65:4 and Muslim commentaries on the verse).
>
> Notice that the reporter attributes the problem to "cultural" practices rather than to Muhammad.

I think that women should have a safe childhood, and the right to marry a man they are in love with.

Here are my rules for courtship, love and marriage between Christians.

Why do people go to Hell?

September 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I've decided to do a series on Hell.

I wanted to say a few words about the following topics, one per day:

- **Why do people go to Hell?**
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

Now, I am no theologian, but I am going to take a crack at answering these questions from a layman's point of view, and the more experienced people can correct me where I am mistaken. I am answering all these questions from an Wesleyan Protestant point of view. These are just my opinions, so please seek the advice of the Bible and more qualified theologians. And leave your corrections in the comments.

Why do people go to Hell?

Everyone has a moral obligation to use their free will in the time during which they are alive to investigate whether God exists and what his character is like. Once they discover the answers to those questions, they are morally obligated to use their free will to love God – as he really is – using all their capabilities. Loving God also means obeying the moral law, but I think there is a lot more to loving God than just obeying rules.

Each person is also obligated to engage in and support enterprises that help others to know God as he really is. If a person fails to use their free will to love God, then that person is *sinning*. Notice that on my view, being nice to your neighbor is relatively unimportant compared to being nice to God. Jesus' first commandment is to love God, and that vertical dimension is much more important than horizontal dimension.

The pre-condition to loving God is knowing what he is really like. Most people are born into a certain religion or learn it from their parents or their culture and they either adopt it without thinking or they reject it without thinking. But on the Christian view, the best thing you can possibly do with your time is to investigate whether God is real, and what he is like. It's wrong to say that investigating doesn't matter or that all religions are the same.

I think that the result of any honest investigation is going to be that the Christian religion is going to be found to be more true in its major claims than any other religion. I.e. – people who conduct an honest investigation are going to find that the Christian claims about the universe coming into being out of nothing, and of Jesus rising from the dead, etc. will be validated by the progress of science and historical inquiry.

But since people have a natural tendency to focus on making themselves happy, not many investigations occur. They know that if Christianity is true, they would have to engage in radical self-denial and self-sacrificial love. They know they would have to sober, be chaste, be different, and not be liked because of their exclusive view. And people don't

want to do that, so an honest investigation *never even gets started.*

Instead, what you find atheists doing is hoping in speculations to justify their flight from the demands of the God who is there. They'll talk about the multiverse, unobservable aliens seeding the planet with life, not yet found precursor fossils, etc. Atheism is about one thing and one thing only – using freedom to seek pleasure instead of truth and goodness.

One of the problems that Christians have today is that they do not really understand what sin is. They think that sin is about hurting other people or making other people feel bad. But actually, the sinfulness of a person has little to do with that, and much more to do with how we respond to God. We have a moral obligation to know God and to include God in all of our decision making. Hell is the penalty for failure to meet this obligation.

Share / Save ...

Mayor of Doncaster slashes taxes, spending and political correctness

September 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Amazing story from Gerald Warner writing in the UK Telegraph. (H/T Tim Blair via IHateTheMedia via ECM)

Excerpt:

> …Peter Davies, the party's elected Mayor of Doncaster. Davies, the father of Tory MP Philip Davies, is one of just 11 directly elected mayors and he is enjoying increasing media exposure because of his outrageous agenda which, against all the tenets of consensual British politics, consists of doing what the public wants.
>
> In his first week in office he cut his own salary from £73,000 to £30,000, which is putting one's money where one's mouth is. He also scrapped the mayoral limousine. He is ending Doncaster's twinning with five towns around the world, an arrangement which he describes as "just for people to fly off and have a binge at the council's expense". He intends now to reduce (that's right, *reduce*) council tax by 3 per cent this year.
>
> The "diversity" portfolio has been abolished from the council's cabinet. From next year no more funding will be given to the town's "Gay Pride" event, on the grounds that people do not need to parade their sexuality, whatever it may be, at taxpayers' expense. Black History Month, International Women's Day and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History Month are similarly destined to become history.
>
> Council funding of translation services for immigrants has been scrapped because he believes incomers should take the trouble to learn English. Officials have been ordered to abandon bureaucratic gobbledegook language. Davies is saving the taxpayers £80,000 by disaffiliating from the pointless Local Government Association and the Local Government Information Unit. He aims to abolish all non-jobs on the council, as epitomised by "community cohesion officers". He is taking advice from the Taxpayers' Alliance and the Campaign Against Political Correctness.

Read the whole thing!

Understanding the long-term forecast for the federal budget

September 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Watch this 2 minute video from Political Math.

Mandatory spending includes entitlements like social security, medicare and medicaid. It also includes payments on the national debt, which Obama intends to grow from about 12 trillion to about 19 trillion. The problem is that mandatory spending is set to skyrocket out of control in the next 8 years, and there isn't any money available to pay for it.

Attacking businesses and productive individuals just reduces the amounts collected in income and sales taxes. In other words, taxing the rich just lowers government revenues by destroying economic growth. No one gets out of bed in the morning to earn 50% of what they are worth.

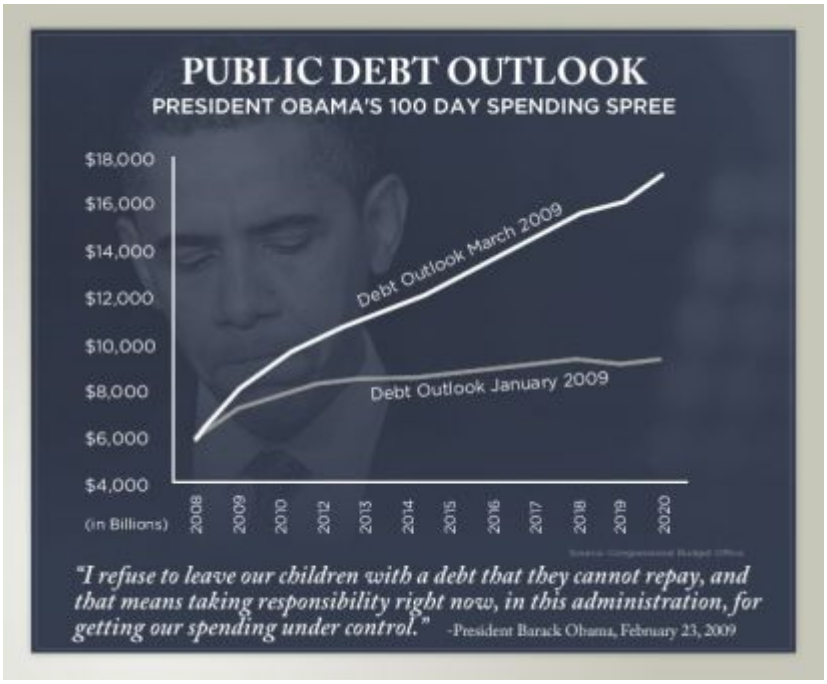

Public Debt Outlook
Click the images to enlarge them.

More charts:

Jobs Lost

National Debt

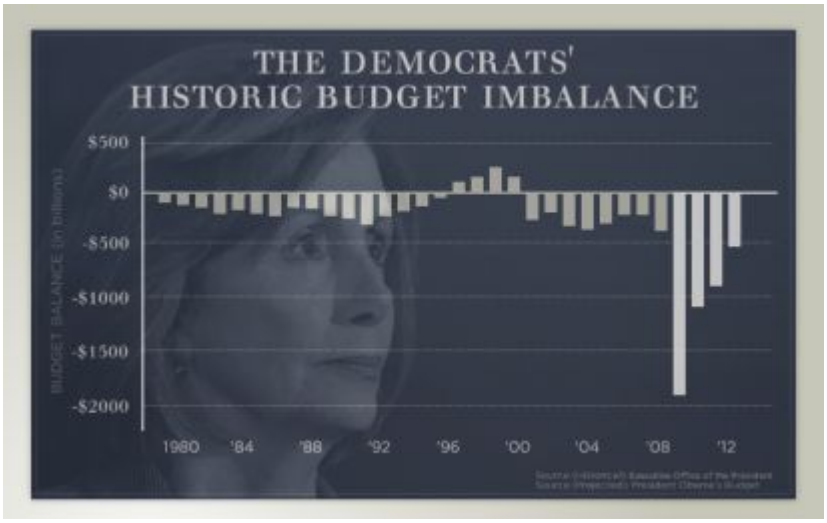

Budget Deficit

More here.

In short, we're doomed.

UPDATE: 1RedThread advises that I post the Doom Song.

I was JUST THINKING about 1RedThread a little earlier. I am NOT KIDDING.

This video is so going into the Friday Funny post.

Share / Save ...

Another nurse faces termination for being a Christian in public

September 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the Telegraph. (H/T Pursuing Holiness via ECM and Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Shirley Chaplin, a committed Christian, has been told by her employers that she must hide or remove the cross or remain out of the hospital wards.
>
> Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital told her that she cannot wear the one-inch tall silver cross openly around her neck, because it breaches their uniform policy and poses a risk to patients.
>
> While the Trust has banned the crucifix in its wards, it makes concessions for other faiths, including allowing Muslim nurses to wear headscarves on duty.
>
> She has been warned by her employers that she will be suspended if she does not comply with their request. There are fears that this would lead to her dismissal.
>
> Mrs Chaplin, 54, says she has been shocked and distressed by the threat, which means she must choose between her faith and her job.

The London Times article that Laura linked to has a re-cap of the previous discrimination.

Excerpt:

> Chaplin is being advised by Paul Diamond, a human rights barrister specialising in the law of religious liberty. He also advised Caroline Petrie, a nurse who was suspended in February this year at a hospital in Weston-Super-Mare for offering to pray for a patient. She was later reinstated.
>
> In 2007, Nadia Eweida, a British Airways worker, appealed unsuccessfully to a tribunal against the airline's decision to ban her from wearing her cross pendant in public.

Here is my previous post on the UK stewardess who was fired for refusing to dress as a Muslim as well as the Christian couple that was arrested for debating their faith with a Muslim. Here in the United States, the fascists at the ACLU had two Christians arrested for praying in a church.

Analysis

In my opinion, a non-Christian who interferes with a Christian's ability to act out their fatih in public has done something diabolical. Worse than murder, in my opinion. It is hard enough to be a Christian without being intimidated and coerced by people who are willing to use the coercive power of the state to suppress the religious freedom of Christians.

What a non-Christian is doing is to *force their non-Christian religion onto the Christian.*

The non-Christian basically wants to avoid feeling bad for not being a Christian, so they suppress the Christian's religious faith, which requires public witnessing, in order to avoid feeling badly about not being a Christian themselves. They are elevating their own feelings above the Christian's inalienable rights to religious liberty, free speech and free expression of religion.

But it is actually much, much worse than that. The result of suppressing a Christian's public expression of their faith is that some other people who might have seen that public witness of authentic Christianity and spoken to that witness lose their opportunity to talk to the Christian. Not only that, but the Christian is also negatively impacted. You can't take away someone's human rights based on hurt feelings!

A lot of feminized multi-cultural postmodern relativist universalist "Christians" think that suppressing public Christianity is actually good. They have redefined Biblical Christianity so that the new goal is for everyone to have happy feelings now and to go to Heaven regardless of their beliefs. They think that divisions and exclusive claims to salvation make people feel badly. What are hurt feelings compared to Heaven and Hell?

So this is a serious, serious crime against Christ, one that I highly recommend my non-Christians readers avoid.

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Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

September 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I've decided to do a series on Hell.

I wanted to say a few words about the following topics, one per day:

- Why do people go to Hell?
- **Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?**
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

Now, I am no theologian, but I am going to take a crack at answering these questions from a layman's point of view, and the more experienced people can correct me where I am mistaken. I am answering all these questions from an Wesleyan Protestant point of view. These are just my opinions, so please seek the advice of the Bible and more qualified theologians. And leave your corrections in the comments.

Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

Last time I explained that our number one job is to love God, and this means we have to know God first. But I also said that all of us fall short of this goal at least partly, because we all pursue selfish pleasure at least partly. Unfortunately, God requires us to be perfect in this, and the penalty for failure is death. Although God was very forgiving about this before sending Jesus to die in our place, he's now very strict about it.

Anyone who accepts Jesus' death as payment for not wanting to know God and to love him (sin) will avoid the punishment. Anyone who refuses Jesus' sacrifice cannot spend eternity in the presence of God. The duration of Heaven or Hell is the same for all, but the degree of punishment depends on the specific sins you commit, with the worst sins being sins against God.

For anyone who accepts Jesus' sacrifice, it becomes possible to have a relationship with God, which involves knowing him and following him. This is actually quite exciting although it is also very dangerous and painful. God wants people to know his character through the historical record of his Son stepping into history as the man Jesus. And then he wants people to follow Jesus' teachings and example in their daily lives.

This is known as the gospel. But the problem is that many Christians don't believe that refusing to know and love God is a sin worthy of death. They don't really believe that the standard is perfect love for God. They don't really believe that we sin by not loving God perfectly. They don't believe that Jesus had to die in our place. They don't believe that rejecting Christ's sacrificial death is worthy of Hell.

In fact, they've decided that there is a new way to get to Heaven. The new way to go to Heaven is by pursuing happy feelings and being nice to people. You can just believe anything you want about God, and make all your decisions without knowing anything

about God, and maximize your own happiness in this life. And since almost everybody does this, then almost everybody goes to Heaven, (except people who believe in sin and Hell).

Here are some of the reasons why some “Christians” invented this new way to avoid Hell:

- They don’t believe that God exists objectively
- They don’t believe that God has an objective personality or will for his creatures
- They think that the purpose of religious belief and practice is to make themselves feel happy
- They think that logic and evidence can’t be used to know about God’s existence or character
- They don’t want to be rejected by other people for talking about sin or Hell
- They think that God wants them to be silent about sin and Hell, so other people will be happy
- They believe that the Bible doesn’t provide accurate information about what God is like
- They think that purpose of reading the Bible is to affirm their own feelings and intuitions
- They don’t want to do what the Bible plainly says because that makes them less happy
- They think that God’s will for his creatures is that they be happy and nice to one another
- They think that if other religions make people happy and nice, then they are paths to Heaven

Many of these people enjoy going to church and especially singing in the church.

But there is one they fear more than Superman fears Kryptonite. What could that be?

Share / Save ...

One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS

September 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the Telegraph. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> As many as one in six patients treated in NHS hospitals and GPs' surgeries is being misdiagnosed, experts have warned. Doctors were making mistakes in up to 15 per cent of cases because they were too quick to judge patients' symptoms, they said, while others were reluctant to ask more senior colleagues for help. While in most cases the misdiagnosis did not result in the patient suffering serious harm, a sizeable number of the millions of NHS patients were likely to suffer significant health problems as a result, according to figures. It was said that the number of misdiagnoses was "just the tip of the iceberg", with many people still reluctant to report mistakes by their doctors.

When the people providing the service are not being paid by the customer based on the quality of service provided, what incentive is there for the service provider to provide good service?

Take the money out of the hands of bureaucrats and medical insurance companies, put it back in the hands of the patient and provide the patient with information about prices and past patient outcomes. Then de-regulate the industry to increase new entrants and increase competition. Choice and competition. That is how you reduce costs and retain individual liberty.

Share / Save ...

CBO predicts Social Security cash deficits in 2010

September 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Ed Morrissey has the story at Hot Air.

Excerpt:

> Four years ago, George W. Bush attempted to reform the entitlement program Social Security, warning that the system was accelerating into collapse and would soon run deficits. Democrats scoffed and claimed the Social Security system was solid and wouldn't have problems for at least 50 years, as Harry Reid told PBS' Jim Lehrer in June 2005. Just last year, the CBO — under the direction of Peter Orszag, now budget director in the Obama administration — claimed that the first cash deficits in Social Security would not come until 2019.
>
> Now, however, the CBO has determined that Social Security will run cash deficits next year and in 2011, and by 2016 will be more or less in permanent deficit mode. Hot Air has exclusively obtained the summer 2009 CBO report sent to legislators on Capitol Hill but not yet made public, which shows that outgo will exceed income for the first time since the 1983 fix on an annual basis in 2010…

And it's actually worse than that.

Check out their update:

> Steve at No Runny Eggs, who has been keeping a very close eye on SSA, says that the CBO numbers project some eye-popping payroll-revenue growth numbers to get back to surpluses (briefly) by 2012. According to the numbers, CBO projects a 6.19% growth rate in 2012, and 5.69% in 2013, then dropping to 4.59% in 2014 and declining afterwards. Assuming that they only peak at the 4.59% number for all three years — still a rather optimistic projection — Social Security never actually comes out of its deficits at all…

Click here to see a summary the CBO report.

The numbers are explained in the Hot Air post.

To understand the challenge that entitlement programs pose to a balanced budget, watch this 2-minute video.

Obama administration threatens health insurance company for dissent

September 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This AP story explains how a private company sent out a mailing explaining the effects of Obamacare on seniors.

Excerpt:

> "While these programs need to be made more efficient, if the proposed funding cut levels become law, millions of seniors and disabled individuals could lose many of the important benefits and services that make Medicare Advantage health plans so valuable," it said.
>
> It urged seniors to sign up with Humana for regular updates on the health care legislation, and encouraged them to contact their lawmakers in Washington.

But Obama doesn't like it when people question his socialist plans.

> In a warning letter to Humana, HHS said the government is concerned that the mailer "is misleading and confusing" partly because the company's lobbying campaign could be mistaken for an official communication about Medicare benefits.
>
> HHS ordered the company to immediately halt any such mailings, and remove any related materials from its Web site. In the letter, the government also said it may take other action against Humana.

A later post by Ace of Spades updates the story. (H/T ECM)

Let me explain how socialism works. Socialists tell you that you are not responsible for your life outcomes. They say that other people are to blame for your troubles. They get elected by sowing division, hate and envy among the people. Then they try to take control of the economy to reward the people who elected them, using the money from people who did not elect them.

But when you start to rob one group of people to pay off the groups who elected you, the victims of the theft start to debate with you. Maybe they stop producing as much as before, so that less is stolen from them by the government. And that's when socialists like Obama start to crack down on dissenters – first with intimidation, then with coercion, and eventually with violence. That's just historical fact.

Most countries realize their mistake before it's too late. But if a country has placed an ignorant, arrogant, unqualified buffoon in charge, it may be a long time before that happens. That is the way the world actually works, and has worked, for anyone with eyes to see. And that is why even socialist countries like Sweden eventually have to pull back from the brink by cutting taxes, in order to get people working and having children again.

I recommend the book "The Road to Serfdom" by F.A. Hayek, and you can read a

summary here. It’s the number one most recommended book on Human Events’ list of top books every conservative should read. Fascism is the natural endpoint of socialism, if it is not checked at the ballot box.

How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

September 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I've decided to do a series on Hell.

I wanted to say a few words about the following topics, one per day:

- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- **How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?**

Now, I am no theologian, but I am going to take a crack at answering these questions from a layman's point of view, and the more experienced people can correct me where I am mistaken. I am answering all these questions from an Wesleyan Protestant point of view. These are just my opinions, so please seek the advice of the Bible and more qualified theologians. And leave your corrections in the comments.

How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

In order to be confident in the doctrines that humans are sinful, and that rebellion against God is punishable by eternal separation from God in Hell, Christians need to know that the following propositions are objectively true.

- A non-material intelligence created the universe
- The New Testament is a generally reliable record of the life and teachings of Jesus
- A good case can be made for the resurrection of Jesus
- A standardized objective worldview can be derived from the teachings of Jesus

Last time, we took a look at the beliefs that make Christians less likely to accept and defend the doctrine of Hell.

I'll summarize the beliefs as follows:

- They don't know if God exists or not in any objective sense
- They don't know if the Bible is reliable in any objective sense

But it's pretty clear that in order for there to even be a Hell, God would have to exist, and the Bible would have to be making reliable statements about the moral law and human rebellion. So before Christians can even be confident in their belief in Hell, confident enough to tell otehr people about sin and Hell, they would have to know that the following propositions are true.

- God exists
- The Bible is reliable

Now, to prove that anything is true, you have to show two things about that thing.

- The proposition is consistent according to the laws of logic
- The proposition is verifiable, and indeed verified, against the external world

In order to test these claims, you would would study philosophy to understand the laws of logic and arguments. Then you would have to study the empirical evidence by learning about physics, chemistry, paleontology, New Testament criticism, history, archaeology, etc..

For example, to know whether it is true that God exists, you might construct a logically valid argument for his existence like the Kalam argument, and then study the Big Bang cosmology to assess whether the progress of science has shown that a supernatural agent created the universe.

There is no cheap way to *know* whether God exists. There was a time when a simple faith could have survived without all of this learning and lab experimenting. But now that time is over. And the church needs to get into the business of realizing that there are real threats undermining the intuitions that God exists and that the Bible is trustworthy, and take appropriate steps to defend those claims.

Unfortunately, Christians do not really learn much in church that is going to fix any of these core beliefs. In my experience, you could attend church for decades and never here a single examination of whether any propositions required by Christianity are true. There is no logic being taught in the church. There is no linking of Christian doctrine with anything verifiable in the external world.

Children are not stupid. They understand the difference between the way that things are approached in the schools (logically and empirically) and the way that things are approached in the feminized postmodern relativist universalist church (emotions and intuitions). They understand the difference between a physics experiment and a praise hymn. And they know when they are being sold a myth.

The basic problem here is that Christianity has been re-interpreted from being an objective religion based on knowable truth to being a subjective religion based on the felt needs of the subjects in the church pews. The solution to this problem is for the church to treat Christianity as a set of claims about an objective reality. Christianity must be place in the same category as physics and chemistry.

You cannot expect people to be bold in talking about things like sin and Hell when it is no fun to do so. If Christianity is not a *knowledge* tradition, then it is not worth being any sane person's time and effort. If Christianity is a personal preference, then it is the same as any other personal preference – it must serve the needs of the person who adopts it.

No one eats spinach, *unless they like the taste of spinach*. If Christianity is not knowledge, but is just a personal preference, *then Christianity is spinach*. Some people will like it, and they'll eat it. But most people won't like it, and they won't eat it. You are not going to get people to confidently speak about sin and Hell if those things are just personal preferences. And no one becomes an authentic Christian without understanding sin and

Hell, because those are *the required foundation* for understanding the need for grace and forgiveness.

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What made the most famous atheist philosopher abandon atheism?

September 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I first heard about Anthony Flew while reading a book-debate between Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland and atheist philosopher Kai Nielsen. Flew was one of the respondents, and he impressed me with his honest weighing of the evidence. Things got even more interesting when Flew debated William Lane Craig in front of over 4000 students at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Here's the audio and video. You can also buy the book!

During the Q&A, an angry atheist asked Dr. Flew why he had not appealed to the speculative oscillating model of the universe in order to escape the force of the kalam argument and the Big Bang. And that's when Flew said a very strange thing. He said to the questioner that he could not appeal to the oscillating model of the universe because the big bang was the current best theory and the oscillating model was a *speculation.*

And that's when I first knew that Flew would abandon atheism. You see, he was not interested in appealing to idle speculations against the evidence in order to justify his atheism. He was willing to go where the evidence led. He was not willing to play games with speculative theories like the oscillating model, the multiverse theory, unobservable aliens seeding life, etc. in order to weasel out of the demands of the moral law.

You can read all about his conversion to theism at Thinking Matters. (H/T MandM)

Excerpt:

> Two of the most striking things about Antony Flew are his honesty and humility. He is prepared to admit where he has been wrong on a number of philosophical issues, not just on the existence of God. There is a humility and an openness to follow the evidence where it leads that is often lacking in the so-called "new atheists." He is keenly aware of how easy it is to let preconceived ideas shape the way we view evidence instead of letting the evidence shape our ideas. Therein, he says, "lies the peculiar danger… of dogmatic atheism."
>
> So, just what evidence has brought about this remarkable turn-around in Flew's convictions? In his view, modern science spotlights three dimensions of the natural world that point to God. The first of these is the existence of the laws of nature. After spelling out their precision, symmetry, and regularity, he asks how did nature come packaged like this? The point is not just that these laws exist but that they are mathematical. That is, they are not found through direct observation, but are discovered through experiment and mathematical theory. The laws are "written in a cosmic code that scientists must crack."
>
> […]The second area of recent scientific study that leads Flew to the God conclusion is the investigation of DNA and the life of the cell. For Flew the key

> philosophical question here is: how can a universe of mindless matter produce self-replicating life?
>
> […[The third area of evidence that leads Antony Flew to God is the consensus among scientists about the big-bang theory.

And there are some gems in the article, such as Flew's comments about atheists who embrace the unobservable multiverse as an alternative to the fine-tuning argument. If you would like to learn more about arguments *that work*, and responses to atheistic arguments *that work*, check out my index of Christian arguments and counter arguments, or the debate page for some academic debates.

What Christians should take away from this

Feminized-postmodern-relativist-universalist Christians need to understand what actually works to change people's minds: arguments and evidence. Converting a person to Christianity can *only* be done by establishing the *truth* of Christianity. Any appeal to emotions and felt needs, parental authority, tradition and convention, or threats of eternal damnation *do not result in authentic faith.*

There are three reasons Christian use such subjective methods instead of the objective methods that worked on Flew. First, most Christians don't know these arguments. Also, they don't want to do any studying to learn these arguments. Finally, they are afraid of getting into public debates because they don't want to be different from others and diminish their own comfort and happiness.

How about we try something different? Something that *actually works?*

This is all particularly distressing now that a new survey has come out indicating that America could be 25% atheist in 20 years.

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Bush spent $622B on Iraq, Obama spends $888B on welfare in 2010 alone

September 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from CNS News. (H/T Weasel Zippers via ECM)

Excerpt:

> During the entire administration of George W. Bush, the Iraq war cost a total of $622 billion, according to the Congressional Research Service.
>
> President Obama's welfare spending will reach $888 billion in a single fiscal year–2010–more than the Bush administration spent on war in Iraq from the first "shock and awe" attack in 2003 until Bush left office in January.
>
> Obama's spending proposals call for the largest increases in welfare benefits in U.S. history, according to a report by the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank. This will lead to a spending total of $10.3 trillion over the next decade on various welfare programs. These include cash payments, food, housing, Medicaid and various social services for low-income Americans and those at 200 percent of the poverty level, or $44,000 for a family of four. Among that total, $7.5 trillion will be federal money and $2.8 trillion will be federally mandated state expenditures.

I personally know a lot of people who voted for Obama because we were spending too much on the war. The government's job is to fight against the enemies of the United States. The government's job *is not* to equalize life outcomes regardless of lifestyle choices. But I guess Obama has to buy votes somehow! How else will he be able to get re-elected unless he takes from the productive minority to pay for the votes of the irresponsible majority?

Don't forget my previous post on the CBO's projections about Social Security running cash deficits in starting in 2010.

Canada to walk out of Ahmadinejad's speech at UN conference today

September 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

While Obama belittles his own country and our allies at the UN conference, Canada is doing something really heroic.

Story from the Ottawa Citizen. (H/T Andrew, ECM, Hot Air, Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Canada will boycott Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's speech at the United Nations today, saying his outbursts about the Holocaust and Israel are "shameful."
>
> Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon will be at the world body to attend the opening of the UN General Assembly's annual debate, but officials signal he and other members of the Canadian delegation will vacate when the Islamic republic's president approaches the podium.
>
> Walking out of the chamber is seen as a strong diplomatic show of disgust at the UN — and since the 192-member chamber is generally packed on the first day of the annual summit, Canada's empty seats will not go unnoticed.
>
> "President Ahmadinejad's repeated denial of the Holocaust and his anti-Israel comments run counter to the values of the UN General Assembly, and they're shameful," said one Canadian official.
>
> "He uses his public appearances to provoke the international community, and that is why Canada's seats will be empty."

Here are some media interviews with Stephen Harper if you would like to know more about him. A post about Harper visiting his troops in Afghanistan. A post about Harper

signing free trade deals, and generally trying his best to lead the free world.

UPDATE: ECM sends this post from Ace. The other countries are following Stephen Harper's lead.

MUST-READ: Should women be accountable for their own decisions?

September 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Laura of Pursuing Holiness writes the most amazing post ever written. (H/T ECM)

Here is her thesis:

> We've come to this weird place in our history where women become babies instead of have them. It's all about choices – but not about consequences. Rights, but not responsibilities.

You *MUST* read the whole thing.

She links to a number of articles to make each of her points. And her post is cross-posted at Hot Air, so she is participating in the comments as well.

False accusations

I noticed that Peter Sean Bradley had a related post up earlier this week about false rape accusations.

Excerpt:

A study of rape allegations in Indiana over a nine-year period revealed that over 40% were shown to be false — not merely unproven. According to the author, "These false allegations appear to serve three major functions for the complainants: providing an alibi, seeking revenge, and obtaining sympathy and attention. False rape allegations are not the consequence of a gender-linked aberration, as frequently claimed, but reflect impulsive and desperate efforts to cope with personal and social stress situations." *(Kanin EJ. Arch Sex Behav. 1994 Feb;23(1):81-92 False rape allegations.)*

This is actually done *all the time* in divorce courts in order to get custody of the children, and the child support payments that go with having custody.

Excerpt:

> Yet patently false accusations of both child abuse and domestic violence are rampant in divorce courts, almost always for purposes of breaking up families, securing child custody, and eliminating fathers. "With child abuse and spouse abuse you don't have to prove anything," the leader of a legal seminar tells divorcing mothers, according to the *Chicago Tribune*. "You just have to accuse."
>
> Among scholars and legal practitioners it is common knowledge that patently trumped-up accusations are routinely used, and virtually never punished, in divorce and custody proceedings. Elaine Epstein, president of the Massachusetts Women's Bar Association, writes that "allegations of abuse are now used for tactical advantage" in custody cases. The *Illinois Bar Journal* describes how abuse accusations readily "become part of the gamesmanship of divorce." The *UMKC Law Review* reports on a survey of judges and attorneys revealing that disregard

> for due process and allegations of domestic violence are used as a "litigation strategy." In the *Yale Law Review*, Jeannie Suk calls domestic violence accusations a system of "state-imposed *de facto* divorce" and documents how courts use unsupported accusations to justify evicting Americans from their homes and children.

Also, consider the Teacher's College professor who committed a hate crime against herself. She may have done this in order to get sympathy from those who were investigating her for plagiarism. Notice in the linked article that when she is accused of plagiarism, she blames the racism and sexism of her accusers! She is the victim, and her accusers are the oppressors.

UPDATE: From commenter James:

> A UK newspaper recently presented that a great many women have *never* had sober sex.
>
> Mike Adams recently wrote an article about a professor who has gotten in trouble for presenting peer reviewed papers which were topically relevant to students in class… trouble because they didn't support the feminist line.

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Religious pluralism and moral relativism are self-refuting

September 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Check out this post from Neil Simpson's blog.

Neil writes:

> **Self-refuting**: [Religious pluralists] claim that other paths to God are valid, but they specifically exclude Christians who think Jesus is the only way. But if all these paths are valid, why isn't orthodox Christianity? And if orthodox Christianity is valid, then these other paths are not. Also, the definitions of "God" in these religions are mutually exclusive.
>
> Pluralists simply don't understand or apply the logical law of non-contradiction: You can't have a personal God (Christianity) and an impersonal God (Islam) at the same time, or be saved by faith in Christ alone (Christianity) and by good deeds (everybody else), die once and face judgment (Christianity and Islam) and be reincarnated (Hinduism), Jesus dies on a cross (Christianity) and Jesus does not die on a cross (Islam), etc.

In the same post, he also explains why religious pluralism actually an arrogant *and* hypocritical point of view, not a tolerant one!

Now, check out this post from Pugnacious Irishman.

Rich explains how to do defeat moral relativism without even saying a word. You better learn how to do it, because the majority of the people you meet today believe in moral relativism. Rich knows – he's a school teacher and this is the ethical theory that all the young people subscribe to.

My thoughts

This sort of weak tolerance of all viewpoints and moralities doesn't cut any ice with open-minded atheists and skeptics. They like to discuss arguments and evidence. The best atheists and agnostics are guided by reason and evidence, so they are *not offended* by your exclusive views. On the contrary: the fact that you hold to unpopular, divisive views appears to them as courageous and authentic. Remember, Anthony Flew was an atheist once. Sure, most atheists are guided by untested assumptions and selfishness, but some of them can be reasoned with.

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Evaluating Sarah Palin's speech in Hong Kong

September 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sarah Palin giving a speech on economic policy

Story from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Caffeinated Thoughts, Muddling Towards Maturity)

Let's take a look at her speech.

Somebody has been reading Thomas Sowell's book "A Conflict of Visions", in which he talks about "the constrained vision" and "the unconstrained vision".

> We don't believe that human nature is perfectible; we're suspicious of government efforts to fix problems because often what it's trying to fix is human nature, and that is impossible. It is what it is.

Here's her defense of the free market.

> Lack of government wasn't the problem. Government policies were the problem. The marketplace didn't fail. It became exactly as common sense would expect it to. The government ordered the loosening of lending standards. The Federal Reserve kept interest rates low. The government forced lending institutions to give loans to people who, as I say, couldn't afford them. Speculators spotted new investment vehicles, jumped on board and rating agencies underestimated risks.

The speech also discusses cap-and-trade, free trade, and more.

Critical acclaim

Caffeinated Thoughts did a great job of linking some of the reactions from the left.

The New York Times:

> A number of people who heard the speech in a packed hotel ballroom, which was closed to the media, said Mrs. Palin spoke from notes for 90 minutes and that she was articulate, well-prepared and even compelling.
>
> "The speech was wide-ranging, very balanced, and she beat all expectations," said Doug A. Coulter, head of private equity in the Asia-Pacific region for LGT

> Capital Partners…
>
> […]Mr. Goodé, a New Yorker who said he would never vote for Mrs. Palin, said she acquitted herself well.
>
> “They really prepared her well,” he said. “She was articulate and she held her own. I give her credit. They’ve tried to categorize her as not being bright. She’s bright.”

My view? I say that Thomas Sowell prepared her. She probably ordered all his books from Amazon.com. Then she read them all at the kitchen table, with her glasses on and a laptop in front of her for her notes.

I am becoming more and more comfortable with her as a solid advocate for my point of view.

Check out her Facebook page where she’s been writing lately.

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How changing prices signal buyers and sellers in a free market economy

September 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's a lesson in capitalism from the New York Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The oil industry has been on a hot streak this year, thanks to a series of major discoveries that have rekindled a sense of excitement across the petroleum sector, despite falling prices and a tough economy.
>
> These discoveries, spanning five continents, are the result of hefty investments that began earlier in the decade when oil prices rose, and of new technologies that allow explorers to drill at greater depths and break tougher rocks.
>
> "That's the wonderful thing about price signals in a free market — it puts people in a better position to take more exploration risk," said James T. Hackett, chairman and chief executive of Anadarko Petroleum.

And what do we learn from this? Do oil prices go up because of greed? No.

When supply is low or uncertain, but demand is high, then prices *must* rise. Rising oil prices signal consumers to curtail their consumption, and they signal producers to invest more and take more risks to find more oil.

The government must not interfere to set prices lower when prices rise due to a shortage. Lower prices means that producers will not invest or take risks in order to find more oil for consumers. *We have to let producers have their profits in order to for them to invest and take risks to find more oil.* And when more oil is found, the price of oil will go down *naturally*, without the government having to get involved. The more government gets involved, the more opportunity there is for corruption.

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Science News reports that habitable planets less common than previously thought

September 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from Science News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> According to the most popular formation theory, planets coalesce from a swirling disk of gas and dust that surrounds young stars. Since the disk rotates in the same direction as the star, the planets spawned by the disk should revolve in the same direction. But in an overcrowded planetary system, where a gravitational game of billiards is all but inevitable, orbits can get scrambled. A close encounter between planetary siblings can push one body outward while flinging the other inward, elongating and tilting the inner planet's orbit.
>
> In this scenario, the solar system may have been unusually lucky. Either it avoided catastrophic gravitational encounters between massive planets or it suffered such interactions so long ago that most of the planets had the chance to resettle into nearly circular orbits with little or no tilt, says Frédéric Pont of the University of Exeter in England.
>
> "The presence of advanced life on Earth may be contingent on our planetary system having avoided the brunt of planet-planet scatter," keeping Earth on a circular, Goldilocks-style orbit—neither too hot nor too cold for life as we know it, he speculates.

The circularity of the orbit is crucial for maintaining liquid water at the surface. If the the planet's orbit is too eccentric, then the temperature variations will either freeze the water, or evaporate it into the atmosphere. Either condition is fatal to complex life.

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Global warming advocates refuse to give their data to skeptics

September 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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If you are a skeptic of global warming, and you ask for the raw data, then you will be denied access to it!

Story from National Review. (H/T ECM, Brian)

Excerpt:

> Warwick Hughes, an Australian scientist… politely wrote Phil Jones in early 2005, asking for the original data. Jones's response to a fellow scientist attempting to replicate his work was, "We have 25 years or so invested in the work. Why should I make the data available to you, when your aim is to try and find something wrong with it?"
>
> […]In June 2009, Georgia Tech's Peter Webster told Canadian researcher Stephen McIntyre that he had requested raw data, and Jones freely gave it to him. So McIntyre promptly filed a Freedom of Information Act request for the same data. Despite having been invited by the National Academy of Sciences to present his analyses of millennial temperatures, McIntyre was told that he couldn't have the data because he wasn't an "academic." So his colleague Ross McKitrick, an economist at the University of Guelph, asked for the data. He was turned down, too.

Free and open debate?

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Friday night funny: entitlements, the left, Chris Wallace

September 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Charlie Rangel

From Scrappleface. Featuring Scott Ott and Alfonzo Rachel.

Hilarious!

The looming entitlement crisis.

From 1RedThread.

Doomy-doom-doom. Doomy-doomy-doom.

Funny cartoon

From Granite Grok. (H/T ECM)

Chris Wallace

Chris Wallace of Fox News explains the Obama White House. (H/T Hot Air)

Funny, because Wallace is the most even-handed cable news journalist I know. What an outburst!

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Mothers more likely to engage in neglect, verbal abuse and physical abuse

September 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the West Australian. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Mothers are more likely than fathers to neglect and emotionally and physically abuse their children, information obtained under freedom of information laws reveals.
>
> But figures from the WA Department for Child Protection show substantiated cases of child sexual abuse against fathers still far outnumber those against mothers.
>
> The data shows that parents were the perpetrators in almost 39 per cent of the 1505 substantiated cases of child abuse in 2007-08. Of the 582 cases of abuse by parents, mothers were responsible for 73 per cent, while fathers committed 27 per cent.
>
> Mothers were more than 17 times more likely than fathers to neglect their children, while fathers were responsible for 85 per cent of sex abuse cases against children.
>
> Mothers carried out almost 68 per cent of cases of emotional and psychological abuse committed by parents, about 53 per cent of physical abuse and more than 94 per cent of neglect cases.

I wonder if data like this might help advocates of shared parenting (joint custody)?

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Public school students taught to sing praise songs to Obama

September 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Video from Hot Air. (H/T Andrew)

Your tax dollars at work.

No charges planned for accuser in Hofstra rape hoax

September 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the New York Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> GARDEN CITY, N.Y. (AP) — A prosecutor has decided not to file criminal charges against a Hofstra University freshman who falsely said that she was gang-raped in a dormitory bathroom.
>
> The prosecutor, District Attorney Kathleen Rice of Nassau County, said on Friday that the freshman, Danmel Ndonye, 18, must undergo mental health treatment and community service in exchange for not being prosecuted.
>
> Ms. Ndonye, previously described by the prosecutor as ”a deeply troubled woman,” had claimed she was attacked after a dance party at a Long Island nightclub. Four men were arrested and a fifth was being sought when she recanted the story three days after making the charges.
>
> The turning point in the case came when the woman was confronted with a videotape of the encounter, which indicated the sex had been consensual.

> The four men in custody were released two hours after the woman changed her story.

More commentary here and here.

Eco-fascist celebrities exposed as hypocrites

September 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Video from IHateTheMedia. (H/T ECM)

Serfdom for thee, but not for me.

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Will Obamacare cause people to lose their current health care plan?

September 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Republicans offered an amendment to protect people who like their current medical insurance plan. (H/T PowerLine via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The purpose of this amendment is simple. If the secretary of Health and Human Services certifies that more than 1 million Americans would lose the current coverage of their choice because of this bill, then this bill would not go into effect.
>
> It seems like a very, very simple but perfect amendment for those of us who have integrity. This amendment is simply trying to safeguard President Obama's pledge to the American people, you'll get — that you will get to keep what you have.

John Cornyn also introduced a similar amendment.

Here's the result, as reported by the Heritage Foundation:

> Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) introduced amendments to preserve Americans' existing private health insurance coverage. This would be in accord with the President's promise that "nothing in this plan will require you or your employer to change the coverage or the doctor you have." Senator Hatch's amendment would have required that the Secretary of Health and Human Services certify to Congress that the final piece of legislation would not result in more than 1 million Americans losing their current coverage. Senator Hatch's amendment failed on a party line vote (10-13).
>
> Senator Cornyn's amendment also sought to guarantee that Americans enrolled in self-insured employer coverage would be able to keep their current coverage by amending Title I, Subtitle D of the Chairman's mark. The amendment simply provided that any health insurance plan governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) would be deemed to have met the personal responsibility requirement. This amendment also failed. It was a party line vote (10-13).

Naturally, tons of Democrats voted against it! Because they know exactly what will happen as a consequence of this bill.

Death panels revisited

A Washington Times editorial. (H/T Powerline via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The offending provision is on Pages 80-81 of the unamended Baucus bill, hidden amid a lot of similar legislative mumbo-jumbo about Medicare payments to doctors. The key sentence: “Beginning in 2015, payment would be reduced by five percent if an aggregation of the physician’s resource use is at or above the 90th percentile of national utilization.” Translated into plain English, it means that in any year in which a particular doctor’s average per-patient Medicare costs are in the top 10 percent in the nation, the feds will cut the doctor’s payments by 5 percent.
>
> Forget results. This provision makes no account for the results of care, its quality or even its efficiency. It just says that if a doctor authorizes expensive care, no matter how successfully, the government will punish him by scrimping on what already is a low reimbursement rate for treating Medicare patients. The incentive, therefore, is for the doctor always to provide less care for his patients for fear of having his payments docked. And because no doctor will know who falls in the top 10 percent until year’s end, or what total average costs will break the 10 percent threshold, the pressure will be intense to withhold care, and withhold care again, and then withhold it some more. Or at least to prescribe cheaper care, no matter how much less effective, in order to avoid the penalties.

Government-run health care means rationed health care.

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Stephen Harper instructs foreign minister to denounce Libyan dictator

September 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Story from the National Post. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Libyan dictator Moammar Gaddafi has cancelled a planned visit to Canada, officials said Saturday, but the speculation that surrounded the stopover by one of the world's most reclusive leaders was continuing on Canada's East Coast.
>
> Canadian officials said Gaddafi had scrapped plans to land in Newfoundland this Tuesday, purportedly to refuel his plane and spend the night.
>
> It was an abrupt cancellation to a visit that has been cloaked in mystery and has kept the Rock's rumour mill working overtime — including speculation the trip might still take place.
>
> Word of the visit immediately caused a stir, with Prime Minister Stephen Harper ordering Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon to greet the leader upon his arrival to express this country's outrage over the hero's welcome Libya recently gave Lockerbie bomber Abdel Baset al-Megrahi. The alleged former Libyan intelligence officer, who is terminally ill, returned home after being released from a Scottish prison.

Harper doesn't apologize to dictators, *he intimidates them*.

Don't forget last week's story where he ordered Lawrence Cannon to walk out on Ahmadinejad.

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How Democrats convert political contributions into political favors

September 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the left-wing New York Times. (H/T The J-Walk Blog via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Food and Drug Administration said Thursday that four New Jersey congressmen and its own former commissioner unduly influenced the process that led to its decision last year to approve a patch for injured knees, an approval it is now revisiting.
>
> The agency's scientific reviewers repeatedly and unanimously over many years decided that the device, known as Menaflex and manufactured by ReGen Biologics Inc., was unsafe because the device often failed, forcing patients to get another operation.
>
> But after receiving what an F.D.A. report described as "extreme," "unusual" and persistent pressure from four Democrats from New Jersey – Senators Robert Menendez and Frank R. Lautenberg and Representatives Frank Pallone Jr. and Steven R. Rothman – agency managers overruled the scientists and approved the device for sale in December.
>
> All four legislators made their inquiries within a few months of receiving significant campaign contributions from ReGen, which is based in New Jersey, but all said they had acted appropriately and were not influenced by the money. Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach, the former drug agency's commissioner, said he had acted properly.

The only way to get money out of politics is to *de-regulate* so that government has *no influence* in the free market. If government doesn't influence the free market, then businesses would have no reason to give contributions to politicians at all. Republicans are the party of limited government and small businesses, and Democrats are the party of ACORN, unions, lawyers, and Planned Parenthood.

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Funny global warming headlines

September 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This post was stolen from IHateTheMedia! (H/T ECM)

Snow in Wyoming and Colorado: 'Fall was cancelled and we've gone straight to winter'
Source: Coloradan.com

Earth approaching low sunspot records; Solar activity linked to cooler temps
Source: Topeka Capital-Journal

Hurricane Season Has Been A Dud – So Far
Source: CNSnews.com

That the Arctic is warming faster is a fallacy
Source: Engineering News

UN Climate Summit Leaves Large Carbon Footprint in NYC; 'Each foreign leader has a convoy of vehicles'
Source: CBSnews.com

Summer Temperature Below Average for U.S.
Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

U.N. climate meeting was propaganda: Czech president
Source: Reuters.com

Here's another story from Watts Up With That about a Clemson University study saying that hurrican strength is *down* this year. (H/T ECM)

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Germany leans to the right as Angela Merkel sweeps election

September 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the Globe and Mail. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> The collapse of Europe's left-leaning political consensus continued Sunday night as Germany's Social Democrats ended 11 years in coalition governments with a crushing defeat at the hands of a conservative coalition that re-elected Chancellor Angela Merkel.
>
> The vote makes Ms. Merkel the latest in a succession of conservative leaders to win strong support in formerly centre-left countries. Her conservative Christian Democrats (CDU) have governed Germany since 2005 in an awkward power-sharing coalition with the Social Democrats (SPD).
>
> But last night's vote allows her to form a broadly right-wing government with the libertarian Free Democrats (FDP), who campaigned on a tax-cutting platform.
>
> […]The risk is palpable. Similar centre-left parties in Italy and France have been driven to near-extinction by conservative votes in recent years, and European parliament elections this year saw nearly every country support a majority of centre-right candidates.
>
> As if to drive the point home, last night also saw Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Socrates, a stalwart of the moderate left, lose his parliamentary majority in a humiliating vote.

Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy are hawks on foreign policy. But what about Obama? Does he understand the dangerous world we live in, or is his mind still stuck in the ivory tower?

The Washington Times reports: (H/T Hot Air)

> The military general credited for capturing Saddam Hussein and killing the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq says he has only spoken to President Obama once since taking command of Afghanistan.
>
> "I've talked to the president, since I've been here, once on a VTC ," General Stanley McChrystal told CBS reporter David Martin in a television interview that aired Sunday.
>
> "You've talked to him once in 70 days?" Mr. Martin followed up.
>
> "That is correct," the general replied.

Maybe he should spend less time meeting with dictators, and more time with his own generals?

Trial lawyer lobby running a 6.2M deficit as economy tanks

September 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the Washington Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The trial lawyers lobby has been awash in debt and bleeding members – just as it embarks on a national campaign to block any clampdown on medical malpractice lawsuits as part of President Obama's health care overhaul.
>
> The American Association for Justice, the most prominent group representing plaintiffs' attorneys, has seen a shake-up in its executive suite and has struggled to deal with what appears to be a mounting budget shortfall. To help it fight congressional efforts to make it harder for patients to sue doctors and lawyers, it recently sent out an extra solicitation to its members, asking them to fork over money for a lobbying campaign.
>
> The most striking evidence of its financial woes is a swift decline in income, which resulted in a more than $6.2 million deficit in its operating budget for the fiscal year ending July 31, 2008, the most recent year for which data are available.
>
> The biggest hit to its books was in membership dues, which dropped from $28.6 million in 2005 to $19.2 million in 2008, according to the annual AAJ financial report for that fiscal year filed with the Internal Revenue Service.

Trial lawyers raise health care expenses for patients *and* doctors.

Consider this article from the Weekly Standard. (H/T The Heritage Foundation)

Excerpt:

> There are credible estimates that serious tort reform could save the country between $100 and $200 billion annually in wasteful spending, as doctors practice defensive medicine to preempt lawsuits. … Now Obama says he's going to study the issue. "I am directing my Secretary of Health and Human Services to move forward on this initiative today," he said.
>
> That would be Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, whose resume includes eight years as director of the Kansas Trial Lawyers Association.
>
> So Obama has chosen a former industry lobbyist to run tort reform.
>
> Why are people cynical about health care reform?

According to Howard Dean, the trial lawyer lobby prevented the Democrats from including tort reform in the health care bill. They helped to elect Obama, and so Obama

could not oppose them in his health care bill. The Democrats are a party dominated by special interest groups who contribute nothing to the economy.

Don’t forget that Obama picked a union lobbyist to be in charge of creating manufacturing jobs!

Dave Barry discusses political correctness and censorship on campus

September 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Video from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (the FIRE). (H/T ECM)

Here is my previous post explaining political correctness.

Related posts

- How feminism destroyed free speech and free inquiry on university campuses
- UCLA psychiatrist explains how political correctness about sex harms students
- Mayor of Doncaster slashes taxes, spending and political correctness

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New video of government-run school teaching children to praise Obama

September 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Video from Hot Air.

The previous video is here in case you missed it.

CRISIS: Famous global warming hockey stick graph is a hoax

September 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Check out the story from Steve McIntyre of Climate Audit. (H/T Commenters ECM and James)

Basically, the story has to do with a data set that has been used to support the alarming hockey stick graph that shows temperatures rising abnormally in the last decade or so. Well, it turns out that the hockey stick is only possible because the sample size was reduced from 65 samples to 10 samples. When a different set of 34 samples is used *from the same general area*, the hockey stick *disappears!*

The cherry-picked data is in red. The larger sample is in black.

1) Notice how the the number of samples in the cherry-picked set in red normally has the same number of samples as the black data set, then suddenly the red set has a greatly reduced number of samples. Why were some samples excluded from the red data set?

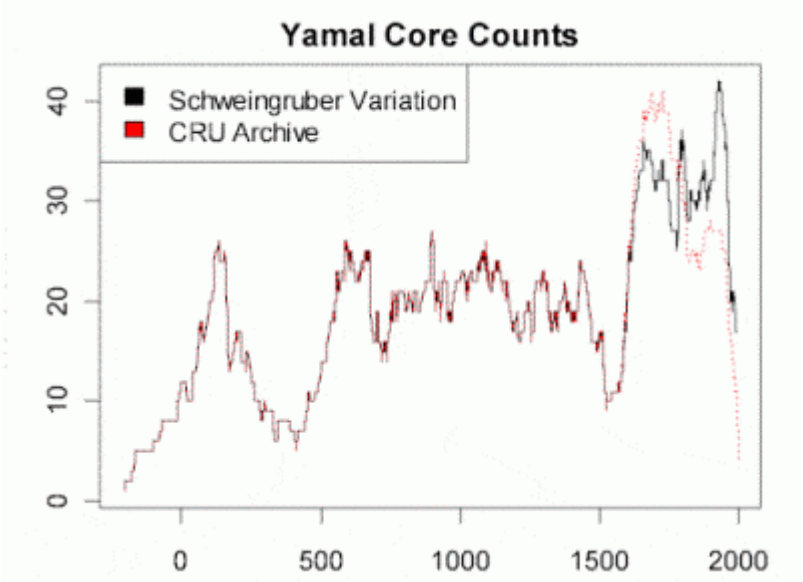

Why does the sample count in the cherry-picked set decline at the end?

2) Normally, the red and black data sets track together perfectly – but in the last few years, the cherry-picked set with fewer samples starts to diverge from the larger sample shown in black. So the red cherry-picked data set is useful in order to make the hockey-stick that the environmentalists prefer to use when arguing for more research money and government regulation of commercial and individual activities. The black data set with more samples doesn't show a hockey stick graph, so it is no good to global warming alarmists.

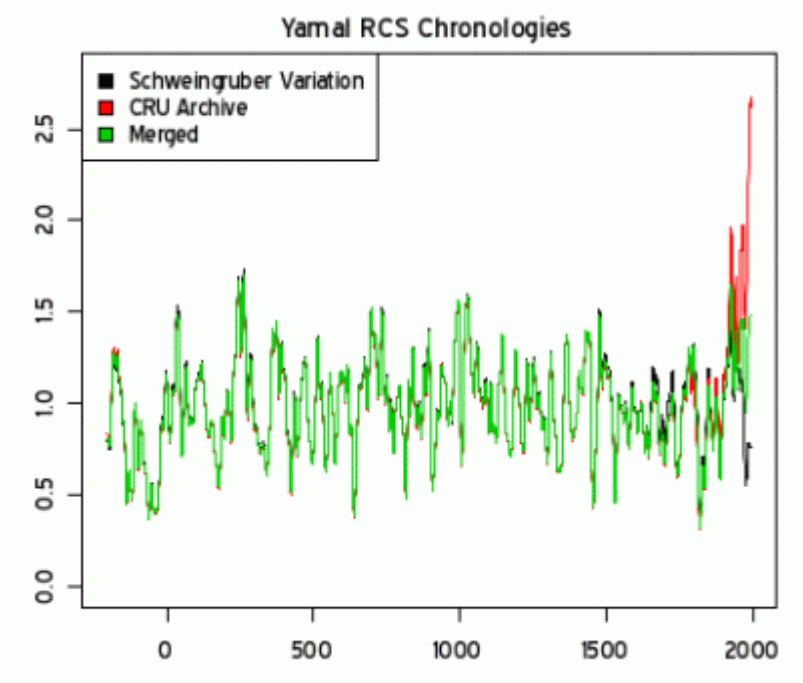

Look! A crisis! We should give Democrats more research money and government loans for their companies!

Unbelievable. And this folly is symptomatic of the delusions that animate the left in their moral crusading. First overpopulation, then peak oil, then global cooling in the 1970s, and now global warming. Is there any limit to their insanity? Do the facts have no relevance at all to their worldviews?

Watts Up With That has more here.

I don't see how this is different than refusing to look through a telescope to see that the earth goes around the Sun. This is just religious dogma on the left being embraced in order to feel morally superior to others, to have a sense of meaning in an otherwise meaningless life of selfishness, and to delude your neighbors into thinking that they should be controlled by their betters. *It's childish*.

UPDATE: Al Gore is laughing all the way to the bank.

Story from the Wall Street Journal.

> A tiny car company backed by former Vice President Al Gore has just gotten a $529 million U.S. government loan to help build a hybrid sports car in Finland that will sell for about $89,000.
>
> The award this week to California startup Fisker Automotive Inc. follows a $465 million government loan to Tesla Motors Inc., purveyors of a $109,000 British-built electric Roadster. Tesla is a California startup focusing on all-electric vehicles, with a number of celebrity endorsements that is backed by investors that have contributed to Democratic campaigns.
>
> […]Kalee Kreider, a spokeswoman for Mr. Gore, confirmed that the former vice president backs Fisker and purchased a Karma.
>
> […]Fisker's top investors include Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, a veteran Silicon Valley venture-capital firm of which Gore is a partner. Employees of KPCB

> have donated more than $2.2 million to political campaigns, mostly for Democrats, including President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan group that tracks campaign contributions.

See even though Al Gore knows less about science than my keyboard, he still understands *profit* and *greed.* Now may be a good time to review Marsha Blackburn's efforts to get him to come clean about the relationship between greed and global warming alarmism.

Finnish car company backed by Al Gore gets 529M US government loan

September 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the Wall Street Journal.

> A tiny car company backed by former Vice President Al Gore has just gotten a $529 million U.S. government loan to help build a hybrid sports car in Finland that will sell for about $89,000.
>
> The award this week to California startup Fisker Automotive Inc. follows a $465 million government loan to Tesla Motors Inc., purveyors of a $109,000 British-built electric Roadster. Tesla is a California startup focusing on all-electric vehicles, with a number of celebrity endorsements that is backed by investors that have contributed to Democratic campaigns.
>
> […]Kalee Kreider, a spokeswoman for Mr. Gore, confirmed that the former vice president backs Fisker and purchased a Karma.
>
> […]Fisker's top investors include Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, a veteran Silicon Valley venture-capital firm of which Gore is a partner. Employees of KPCB have donated more than $2.2 million to political campaigns, mostly for Democrats, including President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan group that tracks campaign contributions.

This story reminds me of Obama's massive government subsidies for the Brazilian oil company backed by George Soros.

See even though Al Gore knows less about science than my keyboard, he still understands *profit* and *greed.* Now may be a good time to review Marsha Blackburn's efforts to get him to come clean about the relationship between greed and global warming alarmism.

The death of the hockey-stick graph

This is all especially interesting in light of the the story from Steve McIntyre of Climate Audit, who has demolished the myth of the hockey stick graph. Watts Up With That has more here. Watts explains how tree ring growth is used to measure temperature changes here. The data from Steve McIntyre is being supported by further analysis here. (see graph below)

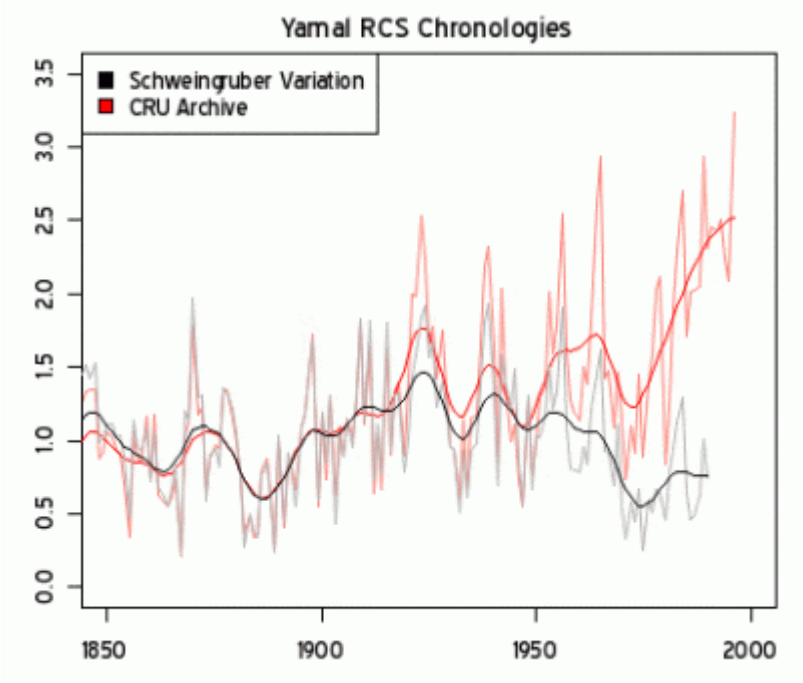

The last 200 years, comparing the smaller, cherry-picked data set to a data set with more samples

This image is from Watts Up What That. All I can think of is being taught sex education and global warming for hour after hour in public schools. What a waste of my time and taxpayer money, just so that the left could indoctrinate me in their views.

Share / Save ...

MUST-READ: Why Obama's health care plan is just wealth redistribution

September 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> President Obama proposes to require insurers to sell policies to everyone no matter what their health status. By itself this requirement, called "guaranteed issue," would just mean that insurers would charge predictably sick people the extremely high insurance premiums that reflect their future expected costs. But if Congress adds another requirement, called "community rating," insurers' ability to charge higher premiums for higher risks will be sharply limited.
>
> Like the homeowner who waits until his house is on fire to buy insurance, younger, poorer, healthier workers will rationally choose to avoid paying high premiums now to subsidize insurance for someone else. After all, they can always get a policy if they get sick.
>
> To avoid this outcome, most congressional Democrats and some Republicans would combine guaranteed issue and community rating with the requirement that all workers buy health insurance—that is, an "individual mandate." This solves the incentive problem, and guarantees that both the healthy poor 25-year-old and the sick higher-income 55-year-old have heath insurance.
>
> But the combination of a guaranteed issue, community rating and an individual mandate means that younger, healthier, lower-income earners would be forced to subsidize older, sicker, higher-income earners. And because these subsidies are buried within health-insurance premiums, the massive income redistribution is hidden from public view and not debated.
>
> If Congress goes down this road, health insurance premiums will increase dramatically for the overwhelming majority of people.

This is the best explanation of what is *really* at stake if Obama's socialized medicine plan passes. *Please read it.*

What no one realizes is that when one group is funding the lifestyle choices of another group, they *stop producing wealth*. Maybe they just retire, or maybe they move to another country. But the result is the same: economic growth is stifled and unemployment goes through the roof. These are the unintended consequences of the policies of well-meaning but naive socialists.

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Videos explaining what government-run health care is like in Canada

September 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here are a few helpful videos of some Canadian health care horror stories.

The Cheryl Baxter Story:

A Short Course in Brain Surgery:

Two Women:

The Lemon:

And one more video from On The Fence Films called "Dead Meat".

While you watch these videos, keep in mind that these people pay about half their incomes into a socialist system for thirty years. Usually, both adults in the family are working their whole lives to pay into this system. The money is spent by politically correct leftists on politically correct leftist research, such as polygamy studies. The politically correct leftist government grants taxpayer-funded treatments, for their preferred constituents, many of whom *do not even pay into the system.*

For example, things like breast cancer, in vitro fertilization, contraceptives, abortions, STDs, AIDS, drug rehabilitation and sex changes are well-funded by the government. But since men are politically incorrect in a feminist society, the mortality rate for prostate cancer, which only affects men, is abominably poor compared to countries like the United States. (See this article for a comparison of other health care outcomes).

The take home lesson for us in the United States is that this is a tremendous vote-buying scam. You will have ignorant but well-meaning Christians voting for the Democrats from the time Obamacare passes. Many Christians are typically ignorant of free market capitalism and do not realize that they are trading in their liberty and prosperity for "free health care".

Christians rationalize their vote for massive government-run social programs as "compassion", and try not to think about how they are really voting in favor of abortion, same-sex marriage and the end of religious liberty. I find it amusing to talk to Canadians who love free speech and single-payer health care, not realizing that the single-payer health care is the exact thing that sets a nation on the road to restrictions on free speech.

Even Canada is moving towards privatized health care

Here is a post from the American Power blog that cites an LA Times article entitled "In Canada, a Move Toward a Private Healthcare Option". (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> When the pain in Christina Woodkey's legs became so severe that she could no long hike or cross-country ski, she went to her local health clinic. The Calgary, Canada, resident was told she'd need to see a hip specialist. Because the

> problem was not life-threatening, however, she'd have to wait about a year.
>
> So wait she did.
>
> In January, the hip doctor told her that a narrowing of the spine was compressing her nerves and causing the pain. She needed a back specialist. The appointment was set for Sept. 30. "When I was given that date, I asked when could I expect to have surgery," said Woodkey, 72. "They said it would be a year and a half after I had seen this doctor."
>
> So this month, she drove across the border into Montana and got the $50,000 surgery done in two days.
>
> "I don't have insurance. We're not allowed to have private health insurance in Canada," Woodkey said. "It's not going to be easy to come up with the money. But I'm happy to say the pain is almost all gone."
>
> Whereas U.S. healthcare is predominantly a private system paid for by private insurers, things in Canada tend toward the other end of the spectrum: A universal, government-funded health system is only beginning to flirt with private-sector medicine.
>
> […]"What we have in Canada is access to a government, state-mandated wait list," said Brian Day, a former Canadian Medical Assn. director who runs a private surgical center in Vancouver. "You cannot force a citizen in a free and democratic society to simply wait for healthcare, and outlaw their ability to extricate themselves from a wait list."

Be sure and take a look at some of the videos I collected together detailing some of the horror stories.

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MUST-READ: Republican Trent Franks calls Obama an enemy of humanity

September 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from ABC News. (H/T Weasel Zippers via ECM)

Excerpt:

> At the conservative How to Take Back America Conference over the weekend, Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., had some harsh words for President Obama.
>
> Franks told those assembled: "Obama's first act as president of any consequence, in the middle of a financial meltdown, was to send taxpayers' money overseas to pay for the killing of unborn children in other countries.
>
> Now I gotta tell you, a president that will do that, here's almost nothing that you should be surprised at after that. You shouldn't, we shouldn't be shocked that he does all these other insane things. A president that has lost his way that badly, that has no ability to see the image of God in these little fellow human beings, if he can't do that right, then he has no place in any station of government and we need to realize that he is an enemy of humanity."

Every single person who voted Democrat voted for taxpayer funding of abortion. It doesn't matter if they say that they believe in God or if go to church on Sunday. They voted to use taxpayer money to make it easier for people to murder innocent human persons. They wanted this to occur *more* than it does now, by lowering the costs that might have acted as a deterrent against abortion and the risky behaviors that lead to abortion.

Who elected Barack Obama?

Consider this post from Stop the ACLU, sent to me by ECM. It details the activities of people who sell body parts from innocent aborted human persons to the highest bidder. Perhaps we need to recall now who voted Obama into office.

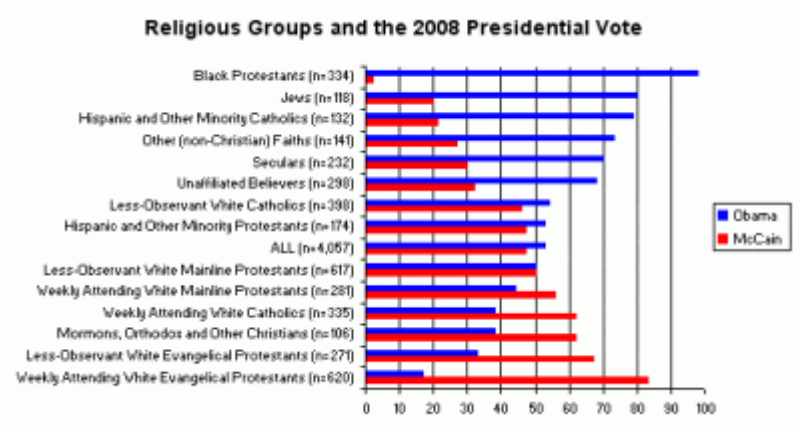

2008 voting broken by religious groups

We Christians voted Obama into office. We are to blame for taxpayer-funding of abortions. We are to blame for the selling the body parts of human persons to the highest

bidder.

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Los Angeles privatizes 250 campuses to improve education quality

September 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Ed Morrissey reports Hot Air. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> A month ago, the Los Angeles Unified School District chose to privatize more than 250 of its campuses in a desperate attempt to reverse decades of decline in the nation's second-largest school district.
>
> […]At the time, I wrote that this would have that effect, especially when scores and graduation rates improve. The unions insist that the only difference between charter schools and normal public schools is that parents get more involved in the former, but that's because parents *can* get involved in shaping the curriculum at these alternatives. They do not get shut out by a sclerotic union-protection system and a picket fence of federal and state mandates. That *allows* parents to make a difference, which encourages participation.

There is a great video showing the union bullies and the educrats complaining at Ed's Hot Air post.

http://4simpsons.wordpress.com/

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Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day

September 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story in Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> President Obama has included homosexual couples raising children in a list of "American families" in a recent proclamation declaring Monday National Family Day.
>
> "Whether children are raised by two parents, a single parent, grandparents, a same-sex couple, or a guardian," said Obama in the proclamation, "families encourage us to do our best and enable us to accomplish great things."
>
> The president went on to encourage participation in Family Day by sharing an evening meal as a family unit. "A strong nation is made up of strong families, and on this Family Day, we rededicate ourselves to ensuring that every American family has the chance to build a better, healthier future for themselves and their children," he said.
>
> The family day proclamation is in keeping with Obama's oft-professed support for the homosexualist agenda.
>
> When Obama proclaimed June "LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) Pride Month," he reiterated that he supports several issues on the homosexual docket, including homosexual hate crime legislation, homosexual "affirmative action" in the workplace, allowing open homosexuals in the military, and adoption to homosexual couples.
>
> During the same month, Obama signed a presidential memorandum extending spousal benefits to homosexual partners and other unmarried partners of federal employees.

Remember, lots of Christians voted for Obama.

How does the promotion and celebration of adult selfishness over the needs of children square with a Christian worldview? Children do best when they are raised by two opposite-sex parents, linked to them biologically, who stay together in a stable, loving relationship. Children have a right to their mother *and* father.

For more information, please see my previous post explaining how traditional families differ from same-sex arrangements.

MUST-READ: Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says solar activity impacts climate

October 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> The Aug. 28 issue of the journal Science details how the scientific team led by the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), using a century's worth of data and three powerful computer models, figured out just how small changes in solar activity can trigger great changes in earth's climate.
>
> […]The world has significantly cooled in the last decade, a period that corresponds to a decline and virtual halt in sunspot activity. Solar activity is in a valley right now, the deepest of the past century. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reports that in 2008 and 2009 the sun set Space Age records for low sunspot counts, weak solar wind and low solar radiance.
>
> R. Timothy Patterson, professor of geology and director of the Ottawa-Carleton Geoscience Center of Canada's Carleton University, has said that "CO2 variations show little correlation with our planet's climate on long-, medium- and even short-time scales."
>
> Rather, he says, "I and the first-class scientists I work with are consistently finding excellent correlations between the regular fluctuations of the sun and earthly climate. This is not surprising. The sun and the stars are the ultimate source of energy on this planet."
>
> A Hoover Institution Study a few years back examined historical data and came to a similar conclusion. "The effects of solar activity and volcanoes are impossible to miss. Temperatures fluctuated exactly as expected, and the pattern was so clear that, statistically, the odds of the correlation existing by chance were less than one in 100," according to Hoover fellow Bruce Berkowitz.

Another day, another disproof of anthropogenic catastrophic man-made global warming.

Around the web:

- Watts Up With That: The hockey stick graph disproved by the American Geophysical Union
- Climate Audit: The impact of the hockey stick hoax on the "spaghetti graph"

Previous stories:

- Finnish car company backed by Al Gore gets 529M US government loan
- CRISIS: Famous global warming hockey stick graph is a hoax
- Funny global warming headlines

- Eco-fascist celebrities exposed as hypocrites
- Global warming advocates refuse to give their data to skeptics
- NOAA: Summer temperatures below average

How Democrats vote on illegal immigration, abortion, marriage and corporations

October 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a little round-up of stories (mostly from ECM) that will help you to understand what it is that Democrats really stand for. The best way to know what they stand for is NOT to listen to speeches or media bias. The best way to know what they stand for is to look at *how they vote.*

Democrats want Americans to pay for health care for illegal immigrants

Story here from The Hill.

Excerpt:

> Senate Finance Committee Democrats rejected a proposed a requirement that immigrants prove their identity with photo identification when signing up for federal healthcare programs.
>
> Finance Committee ranking member Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) said that current law and the healthcare bill under consideration are too lax and leave the door open to illegal immigrants defrauding the government using false or stolen identities to obtain benefits.
>
> Grassley's amendment was beaten back 10-13 on a party-line vote.

Democrats want to destroy traditional marriage

Story here from The Hill.

Excerpt:

> A House Democrat will introduce a bill on Tuesday to repeal the infamous Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), but he will not have the support of one of the law's biggest critics.
>
> The latest effort to revise federal marriage guidelines comes from Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.), the chairman of the House's subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights & Civil Liberties, which oversees DOMA. His proposal, which he will unveil at a press conference next week, will include a provision to allow same-sex couples in one state to marry elsewhere, return home and still receive federal benefits.
>
> Nadler has already secured the support of two congressmen — Reps. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) and Jared Polis (D-Colo.), who will co-sponsor his effort.

Democrats want to fund abortion in their health care bill

Story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) proposed to amend the "America's Health Future Act of 2009" under consideration by the Finance Committee led by Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.). His amendments would have codified current conscience protections for health-care providers with moral objections to abortion and also made permanent the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits federal funds from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) from paying for abortions.
>
> Hatch instead proposed that women could purchase additional coverage for abortions through "riders" that would not be subsidized by the government.
>
> However, the amendments were rejected by the Committee by votes of 13 – 10. In both amendments, Sen. Kent Conrad (D-N.D.) joined committee Republicans in support of the measures, while pro-abortion Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) joined Baucus' committee Democrats to vote against the bill.

Democrats support taxpayer subsidies for big corporations that help them get elected

Story from Green Hell Blog.

Excerpt:

> Sen. Barbara Boxer's climate bill set to be released today contains a provision that will compensate General Electric quite nicely for its lobbying and media efforts promoting climate legislation.
>
> […]So the Boxer bill would compel airlines and the military, when purchasing new aircraft and new aircraft engines, to purchase more expensive "green" engines made by GE, according to standards set by the current and GE-lobbied Obama administration.
>
> Keep in mind that GE CEO Jeff Immelt is member of President Obama's Economic Recovery Advisory Council.

This is what people who voted for Obama voted for, knowingly or unknowingly. They are still responsible for these policies.

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Reports on Stephen Meyer's intelligent design lecture at Oklahoma University

October 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Post with links is here on Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Well, the news out of Oklahoma about Stephen Meyer's intelligent design presentation at the University last night is quite encouraging. Over three hundred people reportedly turned out for the lecture and discussion following. For all the potty-mouthed bluster that local Darwin activists offered up ahead of time, almost everyone in attendance, whether for or against ID, was civil and respectful during the presentation and discussion last night.
>
> The local daily paper, *The Norman Transcript*, has two stories today, one about the event last night and one about the screening of *Darwin's Dilemma* this evening.
>
> [...]Over at the OU IDEA Club's website last night club president Josh Malone live-blogged his notes and thoughts about the event and gave a brief rundown of the Q&A session that followed. The photo here was sent in by him.

I'm pretty happy because I *just received a free DVD* of "Darwin's Dilemma" in the mail from the Discovery Institute. I donate to DI to support scholars, like Stephen Meyer, in their research, speaking, and debating. Yesterday, I received a debate featuring William Lane Craig that he asked me to transcribe for his web site. (I transcribed a previous debate for him). There are lots of little ways a layman can help out the really smart guys and gals!

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Can atheists make sense of good and evil?

October 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a post by Michael Egnor at Evolution News. He is responding to complaints by an atheistic evolutionary biologist named Jerry Coyne about the problems of evil and suffering.

Excerpt:

> There are, of course, countless attempts to understand how an infinitely good God can allow evil. I believe that it is because he gives us freedom, and freedom entails the possibility of evil. My dilemma is with natural evil. Why did God not stop the Indian Ocean tsunami? Why does he allow innocent kids to die from accidents or disease? There are theories to account for natural evil. I still don't know.
>
> But there's an issue with Coyne's question. This is it: I believe in God, and as such the question, "Why is there evil?" is a natural question for me.
>
> But what warrant has Coyne to ask that question? Coyne is an atheist, and therefore he believes that there is no transcendent purpose in the world. And Coyne is a Darwinist, so he believes that there is no purpose in the origin of man. And Coyne is a materialist, so he believes that the human mind is, in some way, merely the brain — evolved meat.
>
> Does it make sense for an atheist to ask, "why is there evil?"

This might might be a fun question to ask your co-workers, family and friends who are atheists. What do they mean by good and evil? Is there a way humans ought to be that is independent of personal preferences and arbitrary cultural conventions? Is there a way that the universe ought to be? If there is no way the universe ought to be, then what are we to make about atheist complaints about evil and suffering?

Leave a comment with your story, but try not to get fired. Just ask questions, don't fight. Unless you know what you are doing!

I'll leave some hints in the tags for the post about what I would say to answer the problem of natural evil. Here is my full response to the problem of evil. Here is my full response to the problem of divine hiddenness. And my full response to the problem of those who have never heard of Jesus. And my full response to the problem of religious pluralism. These are all from the index of Christian arguments and rebuttals.

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New study explains the best way for young people to avoid sexual risks

October 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> A new study from Marquette University has found that religious attitudes toward sexuality, parent-based sexual education and intact two-parent households have a positive influence upon youth in their sexual practices and the onset of first sexual intercourse.
>
> Researchers took a nationally representative sample of 3,168 men and women ages 15-21 years old from a 2002 National Survey of Family Growth and obtained the data from 60-90 minute interviews with participants from the 2002 survey.
>
> The study's findings confirmed previous research literature, which suggests "religiosity" – defined by the authors as a set of institutionalized beliefs, doctrines and rituals, and ethical standards for how to live a good life – is "a protective factor that appears to contribute to decreased sexual risk behaviors."
>
> According to the study, those who viewed religion as "very important" reported an average of 1.9 lifetime sexual partners and on average began sexual activity at 17.4 years. In contrast, those who viewed religion as somewhat important or "not important at all," began their first sexual activity at 16.9 years and had an average of 2.9 lifetime sexual partners.
>
> However, researchers found that high religious attitudes toward sexuality (RAS) "appeared to be the most protective religiosity variable in terms of decreasing sexual risk."

Good parenting from both parents in an intact family and a teleological outlook on life works well during the teen years, because teens sometimes don't respond to arguments and evidence. They tend to think that bad things won't happen to them, no matter how much evidence you show them. I would still show them the evidence, though.

But these numbers from the study do surprise me, because it seems as though not very many young people are abstaining from sex before they are married. I am in my thirties and radically, radically chaste. So it is definitely possible to abstain from sex and hold out for a more solid commitment and radical intimacy.

Related posts

- MUST-READ: Has the decline of chastity and courtship hurt young people?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christian men and women
- Family Research Council's Paul Fagan explains why chastity matters
- Indian government says sex education promotes promiscuity

- Assessing feminism’s results: the hook-up culture
- Why fiscal conservatives should care about marriage

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New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives

October 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the Ottawa Citizen. (H/T Ben)

Excerpt:

> Children whose mothers work are less likely to eat healthily or exercise as often as children with stay-at-home mums, according to a British study that is likely to raise the hackles of working mothers.
>
> The UK Millennium Cohort Study looked at the dietary habits and physical activity of more than 12,500 children from the age of nine months to the age of five.
>
> It found that, regardless of ethnicity, maternal education or job level, children whose mothers worked part or fulltime were less likely to eat fruits or vegetables at meals or as snacks.
>
> They would also sit in front of the television or the computer for more than two hours a day while children of non-working mums would watch TV or be on the computer less than two hours.
>
> The study also said these children were more likely to drink sweetened beverages such as sodas in between meals, snack on crisps and be driven to school, compared to walking or cycling.

One more reason that we should be cutting taxes and encouraging women to stay home with children if they want to do it. Children really are far more important than work or money. Work and money have value for giving donations to charity, but every child has the potential to change the world for Christ and his Kingdom. As a result, we should be enacting policies that make it easier for Mom to stay home.

Related posts

- MUST-READ: Guest post: Purposeful parenting today
- New study explains the best way for young people to avoid sexual risks
- Twenty-one reasons why marriage matters
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- Are "de-facto" parents good for children?
- MUST-LISTEN: Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse in her greatest podcast EVER!
- MUST-READ: Why women today are refusing to have children
- Dr. Jean Twenge takes on narcissism in today's children
- Why fiscal conservatives should care about marriage
- Mothers more likely to engage in neglect, verbal abuse and physical abuse

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Do lawmakers have the same quality of health care as you do?

October 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from ABC News. (H/T Gates of Vienna)

Excerpt:

> Through interviews with former employees and members of Congress, as well as extensive document searches, ABC News has learned new details about the services offered by the Office of Attending Physician to members of Congress over the past few years, from regular visits by a consulting chiropractor to on-site physical therapy.
>
> "A member walked in and was generally walked right back into a physician's office. They get good care. They are not rushed. They are examined thoroughly," said Eduardo Balbona, an internist in Jacksonville, Fla., who worked as a staff physician in the OAP from 1993 to 1995.
>
> "You have time to spend to get to know your patients and think about them and really think about how you preserve their health going forward," Balbona said. "We're not there to put on Band-Aids. We were there to make sure that everything possible that could be done [is done] to preserve that member of Congress."

And Gates of Vienna had this fun video to go with the story:

Waiting lists for thee, but not for me!

What caused Da Vinci Code author Dan Brown to abandon his Christian faith?

October 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an interview with Dan Brown, author of "The Da Vinci Code", and other anti-Christian books.

Excerpt:

Interviewer:
Are you religious?

Dan Brown:
I was raised Episcopalian, and I was very religious as a kid. Then, in eighth or ninth grade, I studied astronomy, cosmology, and the origins of the universe. I remember saying to a minister, "I don't get it. I read a book that said there was an explosion known as the Big Bang, but here it says God created heaven and Earth and the animals in seven days. Which is right?" Unfortunately, the response I got was, "Nice boys don't ask that question." A light went off, and I said, "The Bible doesn't make sense. Science makes much more sense to me." And I just gravitated away from religion.

This experience is *common* in the workplace and in the university.

Cold case homicide detective Jim Wallace writes:

> It's both sad and frustrating that the minister in Dan Brown's story was unable to provide a defense for the Christian view of origins. Good, critical questions should be seen as an important part of the Christian faith, but too many of us fail to see our faith as evidential. It's so important for us to be prepared with a response for questions like those asked by Brown as a child. The Christian worldview offers insightful and power answers to questions related to cosmology, teleology and the Big Bang. I can't help but wonder what might have happened with Brown had the minister simply been prepared.

My personal view is that even those who believe strongly in young earth creationism should be diligent to also teach their children the arguments for a Creator and Designer from mainstream, old-earth science. Mainstream science points strongly to a Creator and Designer of the universe and is compatible with a respectful interpretation of Genesis.

Here are 6 arguments that every young earth creationist should be able to defend.

1. The Big Bang
2. The fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the Big Bang
3. The fine-tuning needed to provide a habitable galaxy, solar system and planet
4. The origin of biological information in the simplest living cell
5. The sudden origin of the major body plans (phyla) in the Cambrian Explosion
6. The limits of mutation and selection to build up specified complexity

You can read more about these mainstream scientific arguments here. If all your experience learning science apologetics comes from young earth teachers, then you probably will get a huge boost in your effectiveness in the public square by learning these arguments from mainstream science.

I am sympathetic with responsible, well-educated young earth scholars like Dr. Marcus Ross and Dr. Paul Nelson. These scholars acknowledge the real state of the evidence, but are holding out for emerging research that may vindicate their YEC views. They are good scholars, with real degrees, and they are prominent members of the intelligent design movement, which welcomes responsible young earth scholars.

On the other hand, I do not recommend the young earth popularizers like Kent Hovind and Ken Ham. Their material is not good preparation for outward-focused engagement about scientific issues. Christian apologetics today is saturated with old-earth arguments, yet virtually *no* Christian apologist believes in macro-evolution. Old-earth Christians debate *against* evolution in public all the time. In fact, they lead the fight against evolution.

Young-earth creationism is strictly targeted to Christians

I just glanced at the ICR web site and ALL THREE of their upcoming conferences are being held in CHURCHES. The Answers in Genesis Conference is being held in a church. Ken Ham's speaking engagements are all in churches. There are no debates with scientists going on at any of these events! Young-earth creationism is *strictly* for homeschooling and church. It's not field-tested for use on the battlefield!

Meanwhile, old-earthers like William Lane Craig are debating against evolution at Indiana University against the top evolutionist in the USA, Francisco Ayala. And he debated prominent New Atheist Christopher Hitchens in front of 5000 people earlier this year at Biola University, too. So you must make your choice from this information about what arguments are useful in the real world. What *works* in *public.*

Watch a debate, then decide for yourself

All young earth creationists should watch the debate between Kent Hovind and Hugh Ross below. Kent Hovind has a PhD from a Patriot Bible College in Religious Education. Hugh Ross has a BS in Physics from the University of British Columbia, a MS in Physics and a PhD in Astronomy, both from the University of Toronto, one of the top universities in Canada. He did post-doctoral work at Caltech, the top graduate school for science in the world.

Part 1 Part 2 Part 3 Part 4
Part 5 Part 6 Part 7 Part 8
Part 9 Part 10 Part 11 Part 12
Part 13 Part 14 Part 15 Part 16

Watch the debate, then decide for yourself!

Share / Save ...

New study finds that the problems of boys are unrecognized and untreated

October 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the Ottawa Citizen.

Excerpt:

> More men than women are prime ministers and brain surgeons, making it easy to think boys have it made, says the study by psychology professor Judith Kleinfeld. She says we forget that men are also more likely than women to be broke, homeless and illiterate.
>
> […]"The difficulties of boys, however, which span far more areas, have been generally ignored. It is boys who are performing at strikingly lower levels in literacy," she writes in the journal Gender Issues. It is boys who are more likely to quit school early, to be in special education, to have behaviour problems and be suspended or expelled.
>
> Boys are far more likely to skip their homework, arrive at school without books or pencils and cause a disturbance that gets them kicked out of class. Boys are more likely to commit suicide or to be arrested.
>
> "Policy attention has focused on the supposed underachievement of females in mathematics and science but these gender gaps are small," Kleinfeld writes in her study. "In contrast, substantial gender gaps are occurring in reading and writing, which place males at a serious disadvantage in the employment market and in college."

I blogged before about one of the causes of this problem – the dearth of male teachers in the schools.

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Friday night funny: celebrities, racist bird, jail break, aggressive birds

October 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video of the week from Hot Air. (H/T ECM)

I'll tell you right now, I almost never watch movies and I have no television. I *hate* celebrities. I *hate* Hollywood. The last movies I saw in the theaters were Expelled (twice), Amazing Grace, Fireproof, and Bella.

This bird is a waaaaaaacist!

This is one is also really funny.

From Ace of Spades. (H/T ECM)

I like birds.

Priorities of Obama supporters

Story from the New York Times. (H/T Stop the ACLU via ECM)

Excerpt:

> In the middle of two wars and an economic meltdown, the highest-ranking idea was to legalize marijuana, an idea nearly twice as popular as repealing the Bush tax cuts on the wealthy. Legalizing online poker topped the technology ideas, twice as popular as nationwide wi-fi. Revoking the Church of Scientology's tax-exempt status garnered three times more votes than raising funding for childhood cancer.

Is socialism a mental disorder?

Cockatiels escape cage

These guys are smarter than my bird!

Bird vs. Cat

What a crazy beast! This is the strangest thing ever.

Bird vs. Dog

My bird does chase me, but only to bite my toes and for head scratches.

Cockatiel wants head scratch

My Dad is obsessed with making our bird do this trick.

I miss him

ECM sends this fun poster from I Hate the Media.

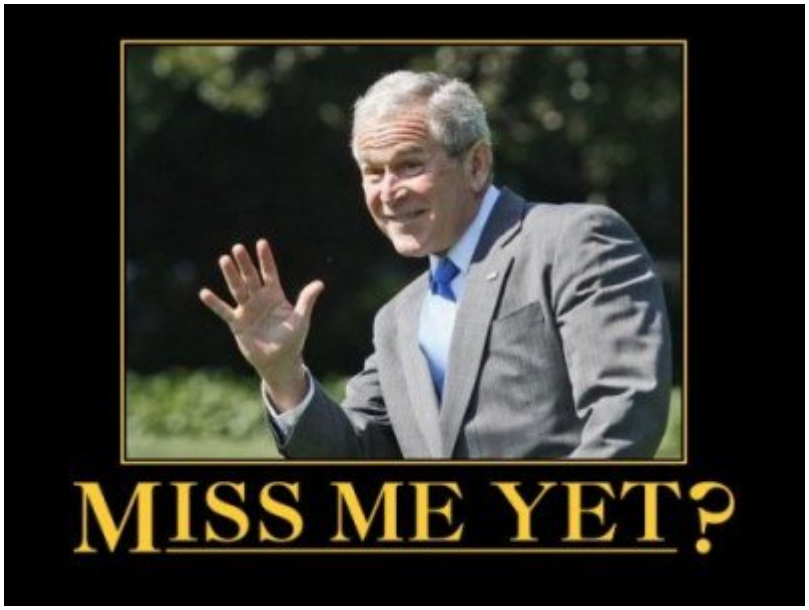

I remember what it was like to have over 2 trillion in tax cuts and a 4.8% unemployment rate. He was a fair President. I give him a B-.

Share / Save ...

Indian teen and her brother fight off Muslim militants in Kashmir

October 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the BBC. (H/T Shalini)

Excerpt:

> Three militants stormed into Rukhsana Kauser's home in a remote village in Jammu region on Monday and started beating her parents in front of her.
>
> Ms Kauser, 18, and her brother turned on the gunmen, killing one and injuring two more. Police praised their courage.
>
> One of the militants wanted to marry Ms Kauser against her will, police said.
>
> The militants escaped and are now being sought by police who are using their blood trails as clues.
>
> […]Ms Kauser said she grabbed one of the militants by the hair and banged his head against the wall. When he fell down she hit him with an axe, before snatching his rifle.
>
> "I fired endlessly. The militant commander got 12 shots on his body."

This is why I am a huge proponent of concealed carry permits for women. India needs to loosen up restrictions on firearm ownership by law-abiding citizens, while simultaneously increasing the penalties for committing crimes involving a firearm. That should level the playing field.

Here is my previous story on the perils of public transportation for women.

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Members of Canadian socialist parties oppose child sex-trafficking crime bill

October 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the story from the Winnipeg Free Press. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Manitoba MP Joy Smith's quest to have child sex traffickers hit with mandatory minimum sentences survived a challenge Tuesday when a Bloc Québécois amendment to her bill was defeated.
>
> […]The legislation creates a new offence for trafficking of people under 18 and sets five years as the mandatory minimum sentence upon conviction. The bill sets six years as the minimum sentence for trafficking minors with aggravating factors such as sexual assault.
>
> Currently convictions of human trafficking don't separate victims by age. The maximum sentence is 14 years (life with aggravating factors) but there is no minimum.
>
> Smith says too many convictions under the law since it came into effect almost five years ago have seen sentences far shorter than five years.

Joy Smith is a Conservative Party MP. Here is the roll call of people who voted against protecting children from sexual predators. 46 MPs from the two socialist parties (the Bloc Quebecois and the New Democrat Party) voted against the bill. The NDP is the English socialist part of Canada, and the Bloc Quebecois is the French socialist party of Canada.

Socialists receive lots of votes from criminals and are generally soft on crime, because they believe that law-abiding victims of crime are actually responsible for criminal behavior, and that criminals are the real victims of crime. That is how people on the left think. Good is evil. Evil is good. Does this remind anyone of the ACORN story?

Conservative MP introduces pro-life petition

In other news, Andrew notifies me that my favorite Canadian MP, Maurice Vellacott, has recently introduced a petition to recognize that abortion causes pain to unborn children.

Excerpt:

> Liberal MP Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grace-Lachine) this week put forward a petition calling on the government to adopt effective animal welfare legislation because of the fact that animals feel pain and suffering.
>
> In response, pro-life Conservative MP Maurice Vellacott noted before Parliament that preborn human children also experience pain. However, this fact is not recognized in Canadian law, which allows for legal abortion through all nine months of pregnancy.

> Presenting his own petition, Vellacott (Saskatoon-Wanuskewin) stated, “Mr. Speaker, as a follow up to that series of petitions in respect of the pain that animals feel and in view of the fact that babies in the womb for the entire nine months feel some considerable pain caused by the abortion procedures that are used in this country, these petitioners in the country of Canada note that in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms everyone has a right to life, freedom from pain and freedom from the kind of assault fetuses experience in the womb…”

Again, the left-wing Liberal Party MP is terribly concerned about animal pain, but not concerned at all about allowing innocent unborn children to be killed. On the other hand, Conservative MP Maurice Vellacott is a solid social and fiscal conservative. He is especially active on men’s rights issues like shared parenting. He has an earned doctorate from Trinity International University in Chicago.

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Congresswoman Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar

October 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele Bachmann is Miss November in new Clare Boothe Luce 2010 calendar
Story from Newsbusters:

> The Clare Boothe Luce Policy Institute is now previewing its 2010 Great American Conservative Women calendar which will be available for sale on October 2.
>
> The participants are: Kate Obenshain, Clare Boothe Luce, Ann Coulter, Michelle Malkin, Marji Ross, Bay Buchanan, Kellyanne Conway, Michele Bachmann, Carrie Prejean, Phyllis Schlafly, SE Cupp, and Star Parker.
>
> Fox News has a slide show of the participants available here.

Last week her new action figure came out.

You can see Michele's latest video below.

I don't know why these videos can't be done with higher quality! Boo!

More Michele Bachmann pictures and videos

These are the three that you MUST SEE. In the newer videos, she is much prettier though.

Related articles

Here are my recent posts on Michele Bachmann:

- Michele Bachmann defends free trade at the Heritage Foundation

- MUST-SEE: Michele Bachmann explains why the US dollar is in serious trouble
- Hot Air and Michelle Malkin post new video of Michele Bachmann's town hall
- New Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- MUST-READ: Michele Bachmann open to running for President in 2012!

Michele Bachmann is my favorite member of Congress! She's just perfect in every way! Please send her a contribution here, and bookmark her blog and her youtube channel.

You can read more about her in World Net Daily, Atlas Shrugs, and World Magazine.

Britain’s Office for National Statistics predicts looming demographics crisis

October 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s an article from MercatorNet. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Britain is bracing itself for the ageing of its population with the latest figures released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showing that the proportion of people aged over 65 is set to rise dramatically.
>
> […]The fastest growing age group has been been 85-and-over group –now referred to as the “oldest old”. This group has doubled to 1.3 million since the early ’80s;
>
> By 2033 the number of people aged 85 and over is projected to more than double again to reach 3.2 million. It will grow to will account for five per cent of the total population;

The article is filled with statistics about the increasing number of retired seniors. In Western countries, seniors depend on the government social programs for pensions and health care. A lot of countries had a baby boom in the 50s and 60s so that a large number of of people are retiring. Unfortunately, due to feminism and the sexual revolution, the numbers of new workers has been decimated by hedonism, the breakdown of the family and abortion. So who is going to pay the income taxes needed to provide for the larger number of retirees?

Today, there just aren’t enough new workers to pay for all the social programs. Either the younger generation will have to be impoverished by high tax rates, or the older generation will have to be denied health care. In one sense this actually just, because the same generation of people that introduced their children to feminism is going to face the consequences of their worldviews. Young people were taught hedonism and that sex is recreational. Saving money and having children took a back seat to careers and having a good time here and now.

When a person expects to be taken care of by the government, they don’t save their own money and they worry about having more children to take care of them in their old age. The government started the whole wealth distribution game in order to equalize the life outcomes of people who worked and saved to pay for their own retirement and health care, with those who didn’t work and save. This caused those who were working and saving to slow down or stop, since it was now the government’s job to take care of people.

I also think it is interesting that the left-wingers who complained about “overpopulation” are going to finally find out exactly how badly they miscalculated. There is one group of people still having lots of babies. Muslims. And when they become the voting majority, a

lot of multiculturalists will be surprised to see their liberties vanishing. In particular, special interest groups on the left, e.g. – feminists, will have their liberties curtailed. And so, feminism will have set in motion demographic forces that led to its own destruction.

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An evaluation of public-option health care plans in five US states

October 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Amazing article from IBD. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> But perhaps the worst — and closest — example of why a federal takeover of health care won't work comes from Maine.
>
> [...]Maine's universal coverage plan is most similar to the plans circulating on Capitol Hill. It was proposed in May 2003 by Democrat Gov. John Baldacci and passed a scant four weeks later. Much like the $787 billion federal "stimulus" plan that passed Congress in February of this year, nobody read the Dirigo plan either.
>
> While greasing the pipeline for quick passage of Dirigo Health, the governor assured that all of Maine's 128,000 uninsured would be covered by 2009, the bureaucracy would be streamlined and health costs lowered, and the plan would fund itself based on system savings with no tax increases — a similar claim to what President Obama has said about a new federal plan.
>
> Six years after it was passed, it has insured only 3% — roughly 3,400 — of the 128,000 promised.
>
> By 2007, the system was so broke that it closed to new enrollees. It still has not reopened and has also cut and capped benefits. The "streamlined" bureaucracy has cost the state's taxpayers $17 million in administrative costs to cover 9,600 people, leading one to wonder if there are more bureaucrats in the system than enrollees.
>
> Systemwide insurance costs have increased 74% since Dirigo was passed, and the governor and legislature have tried — unsuccessfully — to raise taxes to fund the system.

The short article analyzes the numbers FIVE current public-option health care plans in Hawaii, Oregon, Massachusetts, Tennessee and Maine.

Meet Obama's school-safety and employment diversity czars

October 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, consider Obama's school safety czar. (H/T The Weekly Standard via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Van Jones flameout was spectacular, but keep watching for the Kevin Jennings conflagration, which could be just as brilliant. Jennings's June appointment as Obama's school-safety czar was greeted by the vast right-wing conspiracy with some outrage, as members of its bullying anti-gay homophobic ranks who've been following his career for years turned up info on some sketchy aspects of his past. And it seems there's more back there than just the saga of youthful error — when, as a 24-year-old closeted gay teacher he urged a teenaged student to be sure to use a condom when having sex with an older man — that's been making the rounds and giving Media Matters the vapors for the last few days.
>
> For instance, there's his encomium of Harry Hay, architect of the Mattachine Society (about which read here), fellow-traveler of the North American Man-Boy Love Association, and author, among other things, of this gob-smacking passage: ". . . if the parents and friends of gays are truly friends of gays, they would know from their gay kids that the relationship with an older man is precisely what thirteen-, fourteen, and fifteen-year-old kids need more than anything else in the world. And they would be welcoming this, and welcoming the opportunity for young gay kids to have the kind of experience that they would need."

And what does Jennings think of Harry Hay? Well, consider his speech to GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network, of which he was the founder and executive director.

> One of the people that's always inspired me is Harry Hay . . . . Everybody thought Harry Hay was crazy in 1948 . . . and they were right, he was crazy. . . . All of us who are thinking this way are crazy, because you know what? Sane people keep the world the same sh*tty old way it is now. It's the people who think, 'No, I can envision a day when straight people say, 'So what if you're promoting homosexuality?' . . . And think how much can change in one lifetime if in Harry Hay's one very short life, he saw change from not even one person willing to join him to a million people willing to travel to Washington to join him.

Now let's look at Obama's nominee for Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioner. (H/T Jennifer Roback Morse)

Excerpt:

> A law professor nominated by President Obama to become a commissioner for

> the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was a signatory to a radical 2006 manifesto which endorsed polygamous households and argued traditional marriage should not be privileged "above all others."
>
> Georgetown University Law Center professor Chai R. Feldblum, nominated as a commissioner for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), is listed as a signatory to the July 26, 2006 manifesto "Beyond Same-Sex Marriage: A New Strategic Vision for All Our Families & Relationships."
>
> The manifesto's signatories said they proposed a "new vision" for governmental and private recognition of "diverse kinds" of partnerships, households and families. They said they hoped to "move beyond the narrow confines of marriage politics" in the U.S.
>
> Describing various kinds of households as no less socially, economically, and spiritually worthy than other relationships, the Beyond Marriage manifesto listed "committed, loving households in which there is more than one conjugal partner."
>
> Same-sex marriage, the manifesto said, should be "just one option on a menu of choices that people have about the way they construct their lives."
>
> "Marriage is not the only worthy form of family or relationship, and it should not be legally and economically privileged above all others," the manifesto continued. "While we honor those for whom marriage is the most meaningful personal – for some, also a deeply spiritual – choice, we believe that many other kinds of kinship relationship, households, and families must also be accorded recognition."
>
> The manifesto listed as one of its principles "freedom from a narrow definition of our sexual lives and gender choices, identities, and expression."
>
> It also charged that the political right enforces "narrow, heterosexist definitions of marriage."

Wow. Why did so many Christians vote for Obama? He clearly does *not* believe that traditional marriage is best for children. Did you know that he is trying to get the Defense of Marriage Act overturned? Obama doesn't believe that children need a biological-linked mother and father to raise them in a stable marriage. I guess he is not familiar with the reasons why social conservatives discourage same-sex marriage, cohabitation or single-mother households?

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Stephen Harper sings Beatles song while playing piano

October 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

UPDATE: Did you see the video of the testimony of Canadian free speech activists Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn against Section 13.1 of the censorship act in Canada? I linked to it here.

Welcome visitors from Blue Like You! Thanks for the link Joanne!

ToryNinja notified me about this video of Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper singing and playing the piano in a comment, but it deserves a post. The song is "With a Little Help from my Friends" by the Beatles. He plays the piano very well while singing!

Blue Like You has a lot more here.

Everyone from the mainstream media to the blogs are talking about it. He is getting a lot of accolades from some traditionally nasty places. The Canadians are just thrilled with their conservative prime minister. He's an economist, so he knows how to run the country. I wish he was my President! When you look at the jobs lost during the current recession, it's quite clear that we are doomed.

Previous posts on Stephen Harper

- Harper instructs foreign minister to denounce Libyan dictator
- Canadians to walk out of Ahmadinejad's speech at UN
- Canada signs free trade deal with Panama
- Harper pays surprise visit to troops in Afghanistan
- Investors Business Daily says Harper better leader than Obama
- Round-up of US news media interviews with Stephen Harper

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UK set to release 30 high-risk terrorists in order to appease future terrorists

October 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Times of India reports. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Up to 30 “high-risk” terrorists — including some of the most dangerous men in Britain —are due to be released from jail in the next year.
>
> More are being freed in the wake of a ruling by Britain’s most senior judges that long sentences for terrorist crimes could “inflame” rather than deter extremism.
>
> An analysis of appeal court cases shows that of the 26 terrorism cases it has heard, 25 have led to men with terrorism convictions having their sentences reduced. Others are being released because they serve only part of their term.

Think of the signals being sent to British intelligence when convicted terrorists are released early. And think of the signals being sent to the CIA when their operatives are similarly threatened here in the USA. What is happening here is that terrorists are becoming emboldened and law enforcement is becoming deterred from catching criminals. Why work hard when it accomplishes nothing?

Share / Save ...

MUST-READ: The privatized health care system of Switzerland

October 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the New York Times. (H/T Walker Morrow)

Excerpt:

> Like every other country in Europe, Switzerland guarantees health care for all its citizens. But the system here does not remotely resemble the model of bureaucratic, socialized medicine often cited by opponents of universal coverage in the United States.
>
> Swiss private insurers are required to offer coverage to all citizens, regardless of age or medical history. And those people, in turn, are obligated to buy health insurance.
>
> […]By many measures, the Swiss are healthier than Americans, and surveys indicate that Swiss people are generally happy with their system. Switzerland, moreover, provides high-quality care at costs well below what the United States spends per person. Swiss insurance companies offer the mandatory basic plan on a not-for-profit basis, although they are permitted to earn a profit on supplemental plans.
>
> […]The Swiss government does not "ration care" — that populist bogeyman in the American debate — but it does keep down overall spending by regulating drug prices and fees for lab tests and medical devices. It also requires patients to share some costs — at a higher level than in the United States — so they have an incentive to avoid unnecessary treatments. And some doctors grumble that cost controls are making it harder these days for a physician to make a franc.
>
> […]The Swiss government also provides direct cash subsidies to people if health insurance equals more than 8 percent of personal income, and about 35 to 40 percent of households get some form of subsidy. In some cases, employers contribute part of the insurance premium, but, unlike in the United States, they do not receive a tax break for it. (All the health care proposals in Congress would provide a subsidy to moderate-income Americans.)
>
> Unlike the United States, where the Medicare program for the elderly costs taxpayers about $500 billion a year, Switzerland has no special break for older Swiss people beyond the general subsidy.

Read the whole thing.

MUST-SEE: Megyn Kelly of Fox News exposes the truth about ACORN

October 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Megyn "Tyrannosaurus Rex" Kelly interviews ACORN founder Wade Rathke! (H/T Nice Deb)

(This was original in 6 clips, but they were removed. Now the first video lets you click on to the second part at any time!)

Part one explores how ACORN's goals are centered on increasing the number of welfare recipients, and making them politically active in order to pass more welfare programs. ACORN's motto is discusses, which explicitly mentions redistributing wealth (socialism).

Part Two talks about the Community Reinvestment Act, which forces banks to make loans to people who can't afford them. Also discusses ACORN's support for higher minimum wage rates, which causes unemployment among the poor, and increases welfare rolls. ACORN also supports unions and also intimidates businesses to pay them money or be "protested". ACORN's close, long-term relationship with Obama is discussed.

Part Three explores the funding of ACORN, and the way that organizations linked to ACORN advocate for political causes. ACORN's links to SEIU are also discussed in this episode. ACORN's financial scandals, including embezzlement of funds by the founder's brother, are also discussed. (No, he was NOT fired!)

Part Four talks about ACORN's efforts to register voters in areas where voters vote mostly Democrat. The problem is that ACORN is now charged with voter fraud for turning in fraudulent voter registrations. Details about some of the trials going on right now are discussed.

Part Five explains how Democrat politicians block investigations of ACORN. ACORN is accused of being a criminal enterprise from the ground up. The new sting videos are from O'Keefe and Giles showing ACORN encouraging criminal activity are discussed.

Part Six shows the founder of ACORN and the current CEO spinning the findings from the previous episodes, taking no responsibility. The founder calls the videos "scurrilous". ACORN is the victim, don't you see? The series concludes by noting that ACORN has opened offices in several countries, including India.

I also note for our Canadian readers that ACORN International has opened offices in Toronto and Vancouver. It's global communism.

Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 provides an excellent review of Darwin's Dilemma

October 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Illustra Media is the Creator of the three of the best DVDs available on intelligent design.

Their DVDs are professional documentaries with lots of great music, stunning animations and interviews with people on both sides of the question. The first DVD (watch the whole thing on youtube) is about biological information and the origin of life. The second DVD (watch the whole thing on youtube) is about fine-tuning at the galactic, stellar and planetary levels. And now there is a new DVD, that has just come out!

Here's the trailer:

I haven't been able to watch it yet, but Brian Auten has, and he's written a masterful review of the DVD on his blog Apologetics 315. His review is a play-by-play account of the DVD's content.

Excerpt:

> The first quarter of the 72-minute DVD provides the historical background of the Burgess shale and describes the Cambrian Explosion as a mystery Darwin could not resolve… This introduction provides an appropriate historical explanation of how this fossil layer was discovered and explored. Computer animations bring the fossilized animals to life, showing the full body plans and complexity of the most notable animals found in the Cambrian.
>
> […]In the next fifteen minutes the documentary explores the development of Darwin's theory. This describes what Darwin expected to find in the fossil record, including step-by-step transitional forms.
>
> […]Half way through the documentary, further Cambrian fossils are discussed: the Chinese Chengjiang fossils, which were remarkably well preserved and many of them soft-bodied.
>
> […]Three quarters through the documentary, young Darwin takes his voyage on the H.M.S. Beagle and the documentary describes Darwin's evolutionary model.
>
> […]At the fifty-minute mark, the documentary begins to explore the structure of DNA. Just how much change in complexity is needed to create the diversity of body plans? Impressive computer animations show DNA while describing the mechanisms of mutation and natural selection.

Go here and check it the review. By the way, I have been trying to encourage Brian to listen Ron Nash's lectures on economics and Christianity and Jennifer Roback Morse's lectures on marriage, economics and same-sex marriage. I think he needs to broaden out his horizons a little, and apply his Christian worldview to other topics, like fiscal and social policy, etc. He likes it when people pester him about that, so feel free to leave him an

encouraging comment. Or two.

By the way, I also recommend ColdWater Media's Icons of Evolution DVD, as well. If you're a beginner to ID theory, and want the best book, I recommend Jonathan Wells' "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design". His PhD in Biology is from Berkeley, and his PhD in Religious Studies is from Yale. And yes, he debates against evolutionists, and he is very very good at it!

Wells' debates:

1. Michael Shermer debates Jonathan Wells at the pro-Darwinism Cato Institute (in 7 parts), MP3 audio is here.
2. Massimo Pigliucci debates Jonathan Wells for the pro-Darwinism PBS, downloadable video and audio.

Wells even explains the Cambrian explosion here, if you've never heard of it before.

One last thing. I e-mailed Illustra to ask them when the professionally-produced Craig-Hitchens debate DVD would go on sale, and they replied and told me that it would be ready by January 2010.

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Video of Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn testifying against Canadian HRCs

October 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Videos from Blazing Cat Fur, provided by SDAMatt!

Watch the first one, and you'll be hooked! They're awesome.

Part 1: (Ezra goes first, takes 8 minutes, then Mark Steyn starts)

Part 2: (The rest of Mark Steyn's testimony, 8 minutes, and then questioning starts)

The first questioner at the end of part 2 is a leftist Liberal party MP. He is *extremely hostile*! So it starts out very hot right away!

The remainder of the testimony is question and answer by the committee.

- Part 3
- Part 4
- Part 5
- Part 6
- Part 7

Awesome!

Blazing Cat Fur has a plan

Blazing Cat Fur has a round-up of reactions from around the blogosphere. Here's someone who live-blogged it.

And he has a plan, too. Read this post and submit your questions for the Chief Fascist, Jennifer Lynch.

Excerpt:

> Jay Curry has got the ball rolling. We are proposing to forward a list of reader submitted questions you would like to see the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights hearing on Section 13 (1) ask Jennifer Lynch during her scheduled appearance.
>
> We hope to do this formally with say a top ten list of reader questions e-mailed to each committee member but I also recommend you e-mail the committee members individually.
>
> As Flea suggests you should make your questions short and sweet and back them up with publicly available evidence. You may submit your questions at the blog of your choice, or e-mail me – blazingcatfur@gmail.com if you wish. Thank you.

Previous posts

And here are some links to audio and video featuring Mark Steyn and Ezra Levant. (in

reverse chronological order)

- Mark Steyn on a Chicago radio show, commercial-free
- Mark Steyn and Ezra Levant on a Chicago radio show
- The Conservative Party takes up free speech in British Columbia
- The Conservative Party takes up free speech in Ontario
- Video of Ezra Levant discussing free speech on the Michael Coren show
- Video interview with Ezra Levant by the libertarian Fraser Institute

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Obama administration backs restrictions on free speech at the United Nations

October 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Weekly Standard. (H/T Confederate Yankee via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has marked its first foray into the UN human rights establishment by backing calls for limits on freedom of expression. The newly-minted American policy was rolled out at the latest session of the UN Human Rights Council, which ended in Geneva on Friday.
>
> […]In introducing the resolution on Thursday, October 1–adopted by consensus the following day–the ranking U.S. diplomat, Chargé d'Affaires Douglas Griffiths, crowed:
>
> "The United States is very pleased to present this joint project with Egypt. This initiative is a manifestation of the Obama administration's commitment to multilateral engagement throughout the United Nations and of our genuine desire to seek and build cooperation based upon mutual interest and mutual respect in pursuit of our shared common principles of tolerance and the dignity of all human beings."
>
> His Egyptian counterpart, Ambassador Hisham Badr, was equally pleased–for all the wrong reasons. He praised the development by telling the Council that "freedom of expression . . . has been sometimes misused," insisting on limits consistent with the "true nature of this right" and demanding that the "the media must . . . conduct . . . itself in a professional and ethical manner."
>
> […]Pakistan's Ambassador Zamir Akram, speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, made it clear that they understand the resolution and its protection against religious stereotyping as allowing free speech to be trumped by anything that defames or negatively stereotypes religion. The idea of protecting the human rights "of religions" instead of individuals is a favorite of those countries that do not protect free speech and which use religion–as defined by government–to curtail it.

Speaking as a Christian who values religious liberty, I would not use the power of the state to silence the free speech of people who "offend" me by disagreeing with me. That's fine with me. In any case, these "human rights" laws are almost never used to defend the free speech of Christians. The fact that Egypt and Pakistan approve of Obama's plan doesn't fill me with confidence about who is likely to benefit.

Now might be a good time to review how restrictions on free speech worked out in Canada, where offended Muslims sue news publications and news magazines for citing the actual words of radical Imams or publishing the Mohammed cartoons.

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New Zealand considers bill to allow freedom of association on campuses

October 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, at least it's passed it's first reading. Basically, there are eight government-run universities in New Zealand, and students attending them *must* join at least one of the leftist campus clubs and pay dues to the leftist club. There is virtually no way to get your money back, and there are virtually no right wing clubs on campus to join – they all get banned, much like pro-life clubs are banned in Canadian universities.

Here's the summary. (H/T E-mail tip from Matt and Madeleine Flanagan)

Excerpt:

> ""ACT on Campus is thrilled that ACT MP Sir Roger Douglas' Education (Freedom of Association) Amendment Bill has been drawn from the private member's bill ballot in Parliament today.
>
> "ACT on Campus calls on all MPs to support student's right to Freedom of Association, as guaranteed by the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights," said ACT on Campus Vice President Peter McCaffrey.
>
> "Sir Roger's bill, originally drafted by fellow ACT MP Heather Roy, now Associate Minister of Education, has students up and down New Zealand excited and we hope this bill makes it all the way to law.
>
> "Student Associations are the only organisations left in New Zealand that can force membership onto someone and students have long been fighting to be given the same rights as all New Zealanders.
>
> "The local tennis or rugby club can't compel membership and instead relies on providing a good quality service that people want in order to attract members – student associations should be no different.
>
> "It is time to end the unfair funding, by all students, of the political activities of radical left wing groups, and put an end to corruption and fraud at these unaccountable and unrepresentative student associations," said ACT on Campus Vice President Peter McCaffrey.

Here's the bill itself.

Matt Flanagan reports that the bill has passed its first reading! I think this is a very helpful story to understand the level of psychological confidence that causes leftists to disregard fundamental human rights and force their views on those who disagree with them. Fascism is solely and completely a phenomenon of the left, and the road to fascism goes through socialism.

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Obama’s latest radical leftist nominee would curtail religious liberty

October 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this post from Laura at Pursuing Holiness. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Ms. Feldblum explains that she does feel empathy when the rights of religious people are subordinated to that of LGBT people*, but it must, and will, happen. She intends to make it happen.
>
> […]In example after example she advocates for the right of LGBT people to *make* religious people conduct business in a way that they feel violates their core principles. It’s a touchy issue. I was happy to build websites for gay clients when it was for restaurants, real estate, and other businesses that had nothing to do with sex – but when asked to submit a quote to build a gay dating site, I referred the caller to another developer who was glad to bid for the project. Shall the law side with Ms. Feldblum’s dignity or with my religious freedom?
>
> […]So to sum up, the cure for her deep, intangible hurt is not to go freely associate with other people, but to force others to do what she wants… this is how she will rule when appointed to the **Equal** Employment Opportunity Commission.

She’s done a lot of digging, and cites extensively from Chai Feldblum’s work, so I recommend clicking through and having a look. This is important, especially for those of us who live and breathe apologetics. If nominees like Jones, Jennings and Feldblum are appointed, it is very likely the ability to carry out an authentic Christian life in the public square will be be curtailed. *Including apologetics.*

This happens all the time in Canada, where people like Chai Feldblum are running the show:

- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

My previous post on Obama’s nominee for safe-school czar is here, and another post about the FRC’s opposition to him. And the Obama administration is backing limitations on free speech at the United Nations. These are serious issues and if they are ignored, we will be facing the same situations you can see in Canada today.

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How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics

October 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to all the lectures of this course by the Christian philosopher Ronald H. Nash. He presents a view of economics that is consistent with the laws of logic and the Bible. And this course is *comprehensive.* I've moved on from Dr. Nash's course to read F. A. Hayek and Thomas Sowell. And I found that Dr. Nash's course was excellent preparation for these more advanced books.

Take a look at some of the topics:

- the role of the government in regulating commerce
- the meaning of justice
- capitalism and socialism
- interventionism vs free market capitalism
- introduction to economics
- marxism
- wealth and poverty
- liberation theology and the religious left
- judicial activism vs legal positivism
- pollution
- public education

You can grab the lectures here.

A little blurb about Dr. Nash

> Nash taught theology and philosophy for four decades at three schools. He was chairman of the department of philosophy and religion and director of graduate studies in humanities at Western Kentucky University, where he was on faculty from 1964-91. He was a professor at Reformed Theological Seminary from 1991-2002 and at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1998-2005.
>
> Nash wrote more than 35 books on philosophy, theology and apologetics, including "Faith & Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith," "Life's Ultimate Questions" and "Is Jesus the Only Savior?" Nash received his Ph.D. from Syracuse University; his master's degree from Brown University; and his undergraduate degree from Barrington College.

From this Baptist Press article.

MUST-READ: Why Obama's spending took us to 10% unemployment

October 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's see Obama's record on economic policy. (H/T ECM)

> $1,650,971,205,167 added to the national debt, bringing the total to $7.5 trillion.
>
> 99 banks taken over by the Federal Deposit Insurance Company.
>
> 684 banks receiving support from the Troubled Asset Relief Program that doesn't buy troubled assets.
>
> 11.2 percent: the percentage of the federal deficit to GDP. This is the highest that ratio has been since Japan surrendered in 1945.
>
> $164 billion spent out of the entire $787 billion in stimulus funding in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Most of this has gone to Medicaid, unemployment and the Making Work Pay Tax Credit.

And, now, Keith Hennessey takes a look at Obama's record on reducing unemployment.

Here's the graph of total employment since Obama took office:

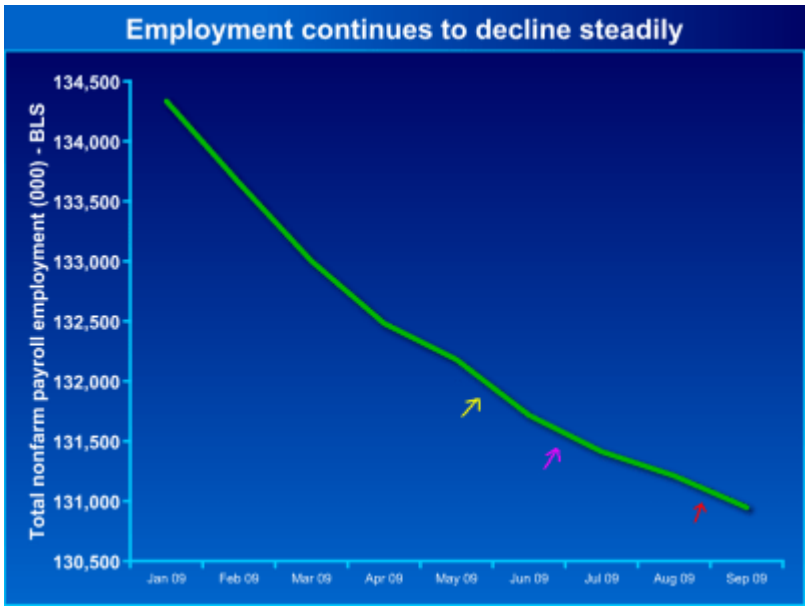

Employment has declined steadily since Obama took office

Now, you may be hearing Obama say that we've turned the corner on unemployment. For instance, look at how the White House is spinning this graph.

Hennessey writes:

> Check out the slightly different slopes of the three line segments indicated by arrows. The purple arrow shows a segment that slopes downward slightly less than the yellow arrow. A mathematician would say the shift from yellow to purple was an *inflection point*, shifting the curve from *convex* to *concave*.
>
> This is what led the President in early August to say the economy was "pointed in

> the right direction." The red arrow shows the worse news of last Friday's jobs report, with a line that slopes downward slightly more sharply. The curve shifted back to a convex shape, in which the slope was more sharply downward than in the prior month.
>
> If you're saying to yourself, "That's ridiculous! They're all going down, and the differences in slopes are almost too hard to see!" then you've got my point.

And below I'm going to explain why Obama's massive government spending created this worsening unemployment.

Economics in One Lesson

We are going to have to pay for all this spending on Obama's favored special interest groups eventually, and that means that taxes will go up, or that the value of the dollar will go down, due to inflation. It has to be one or the other or both. There is no third way. When employers see that higher taxes or inflation are coming, they stop hiring people because they know that higher taxes and/or inflation kills the economy.

Perhaps it is time to review Henry Hazlitt's Economics in One Lesson, chapter 4, entitled "Public Works Mean Taxes".

Excerpt:

> Therefore, for every public job created by the bridge project a private job has been destroyed somewhere else. We can see the men employed on the bridge. We can watch them at work. The employment argument of the government spenders becomes vivid, and probably for most people convincing. But there are other things that we do not see, because, alas, they have never been permitted to come into existence. They are the jobs destroyed by the $10 million taken from the taxpayers. All that has happened, at best, is that there has been a *diversion* of jobs because of the project. More bridge builders; fewer automobile workers, television technicians, clothing workers, farmers.

And consider Chapter 5 as well, entitled "Taxes Discourage Production".

> In our modern world there is never the same percentage of income tax levied on everybody. The great burden of income taxes is imposed on a minor percentage of the nation's income; and these income taxes have to be supplemented by taxes of other kinds. These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to become employers at all. Improved machinery and better-equipped factories

> come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.
>
> There is a similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment that they profess to solve.

What Obama did, in effect, is to fire all of those millions of private sector people, so that he could reward the people who voted for him. And jobs are created far more efficiently by *small businesses* than they are by *big government*. What creates *new jobs* is entrepreneurs with ideas who hire people. And government spending diverts money away from these efficient entrepreneurs and towards inefficient government bureaucracies.

McGill University student government votes to ban pro-life speaker

October 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: An update to this story following the event is here.

For Canadian pro-life debater Jose Ruba, it's deja-vu all over again.

Here's the story on Big Blue Wave. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> A controversial pro-life presentation will continue tomorrow at McGill University, despite the student union's attempt to censor it.
>
> The Students Society of McGill University (SSMU) voted 25-2-2 to censure an event entitled "Echoes of the Holocaust" at their meeting last Thursday, October 1st. The event, scheduled for tomorrow, October 6th, has been organized by Choose Life, a pro-life club on campus, and will carry on as planned.
>
> The presentation, hosted by a university-sanctioned club, Choose Life, is to be given by Jose Ruba of the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform. His presentation, titled, "Echoes of the Holocaust" outlines how societies have justified and perpetuated great atrocities, including the Holocaust and abortion.
>
> […]Though the students' society cannot directly stop the event, they have promised to punish the club for hosting the presentation. The motion passed was amended to include a resolution that by continuing with the event despite the censure, Choose Life will be automatically ineligible for funding from the SSMU for the remainder of its existence.
>
> Ruba has given this talk at a variety of campuses including McMaster University, University of New Brunswick Saint John, St. Francis Xavier University and University of Prince Edward Island. When students tried to shut down the same lecture at St. Mary's University in February 2009, it only resulted in the university being subject to embarrassment in the media for not upholding freedom of speech.

Here is the post in which I blogged about the St. Mary's event.

The denial of rights is actually not uncommon in Canada, although the pubic is struggling against it.

Christians are especially victimized:

- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

Here, you can read more about how speech is censored in Canada.

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What the Bible tells us about the character of God

October 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post by Matthew who blogs at iPandora. He explains how the personality of God as presented in the Bible is very different from our human personalities.

Excerpt:

> In the timeline of the Promise Land journey, this event occurred just two months after God's parting of the Red Sea, and only about 2 weeks after God had led His people to an oasis with 12 springs and 70 palm trees. In other words, God's provision in greater and lesser (though still great) ways was fresh on the minds of His people.
>
> Or was it.
>
> Exodus 16 opens with the people grumbling.
>
> And not just the regular travel pains, this is specific whining and wanting for the comforts of Egypt. God had shown them the Egyptians low regard for their lives. He'd shown them His own supremacy over and above the greatest kings of this earth. He'd shown them his tender and remarkable hand in the smallest of details by leading them to a symbolically perfect place of provision.
>
> And they were already complaining.
>
> Ingratitude is a morally despicable attitude and an ingrate is an ugly person. Yet here was the entire congregation of Israel grumbling at their want in this wilderness and wishing for the meat pots of Egypt.
>
> If any of us were in God's position, we'd consider ourselves quite justified in being incensed at the complaints of this recalcitrant and backward people. We'd rail at the ingrates and give the whole nation a dressing down they wouldn't soon forget.
>
> But God doesn't.
>
> And that's where it is most true that this lion is no tame lion.

This rest is here, in which he explains what he means by that last line. But now I'm going to make a few points of my own.

Why do Christians today read the Bible when it is so old? Well, God wanted Biblical writers to record propositional statements about him so that we could all read about it and learn about what God is like. And what do we find in the Bible? Well, one of the most compelling reasons for people to consider the claims of Christianity is that when you read the Bible, you find out that God is *not* just a bigger version of man.

We can see this clearly when we look at Jesus the Messiah dying on the cross to atone for the sins of we, his rebellious murderers, or God the Father feeding the rebellious children of Israel when they are ungrateful for being delivered from slavery. God is not like us – he

is different. He has his own character. And our job is to get to know him as he is, and then try to freely choose to act in ways that honor him as he is.

Tough Questions Answered wrote a recent series of posts on how *NOT* to read the Bible. Here's part 1 and part 2.

My series on sin and Hell

This series explains why humans do with respect to God that gets us in trouble, how God has made a way for us to make it right, and how Christians can explain all of this to others without feeling ashamed to speak about it.

- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

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Guest post: Photograph of early Christian engraving found in Rome

October 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

WK: This is a guest post by journalist and blogger Rick Heller, who blogs at TransparentEye.This post is cross-posted here.

I was in Rome a few weeks ago, and took this photo in the entryway of the church of Santa Maria in Trastevere, one of the oldest churches in Rome. The engraving is one of a number preserved from an early date, and uses the Chi Rho symbol, which employs the first two Greek letters in "Christ."

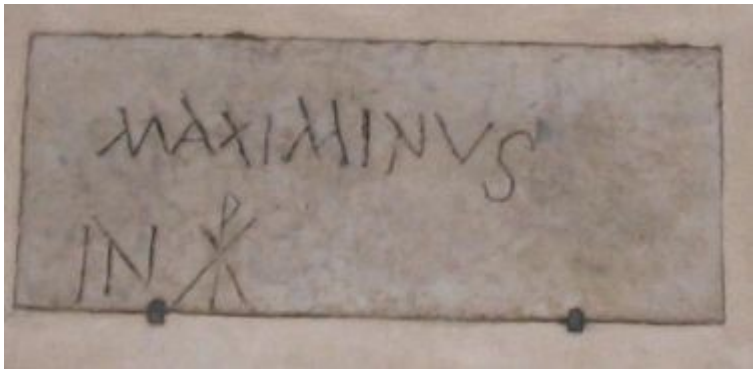

I've been reflecting on the conversion of the Greco-Roman world to Christianity, and contrasting it with the persistence of polytheism in the Hindu world (as an agnostic, I have no stake in any of these religions).

Christianity was legalized in the Roman Empire by Constantine in 313, starting a period of toleration that ended when Theodosius prohibited paganism later in the century. Paganism seems to have quickly disappeared. The pagans were apparently unwilling to die for their religion in the way that Christians were for theirs. I'm not an expert in this, but it seems to me that Greco-Roman religion, with its view of Hades, didn't offer much in the way of an incentive for dying for one's faith.

Hinduism, by contrast, has survived and prospered, despite the Muslim conquest of India many centuries ago (Indian Buddhism was essentially destroyed). I don't know how to account for this, but it has been suggested to me that the Hindu belief in reincarnation gave it a strength and resilience that Greco-Roman religion lacked.

I do find engravings like the above moving. It appears to me to have been carved by a non-professional hand–certainly with less regularity than on an official Roman inscription–and thus seems like a personal communication transmitted across the centuries.

A practical method for understanding intelligent design in two weeks

October 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this awesome post from Uncommon Descent. The post explains how someone who doesn't want to *read* about intelligent design can *learn* what intelligent design by *doing.* That's right – you can learn about intelligent design by *practicing intelligent design*.

Excerpt:

> Of course a good example of design would be engineering in all its specialties. Unfortunately almost all fields of engineering are inaccessible to laymen for many reasons. But the good news is that there is a field that is theorically and practically available (at least at a basic level) to almost all people (or at least to scientific-minded people as most ID deniers are): computer science. Our suggested patent-pending method to become IDer is based on computer programming. Developing programs gives ID refuters a lot of advantages to learn ID.
>
> (1) Computer programming is an activity where, differently from literature, philosophy, journalism and so on, a severe control overarches all the design cycle. In programming errors matter, also the minor ones are never condoned. This is good discipline for the student, to be always forced to correct his errors. If you write a book filled with errors, no worry, it will be published the same. If you write a program with one error nothing works. This is the difference between storytelling and programming. Usually there are at least two kinds of control or filter: at compilation time and at run-time. Any program works only if it passes the two filters.
>
> […](2) Computer programs don't arise by unguided evolution. They entail CSI and only intelligence can create CSI. Whether software were generable by mean of randomness and machines, software houses wouldn't need to pay legions of expensive programmers. When you are programming you see directly your intelligence at work. Eventually other programmers can help you but no other unintelligent thing can do the job for you.
>
> (3) To develop programs is a good exercise to learn CSI, IC, nested functional hierarchies, sub-functions, structures, dependences among parts, meta-information, libraries, etc.

Intelligent design is nothing more than sequencing a large number of parts into a chain that has function. That's it – that's all it is. *God is a software engineer.* And if you're interested in seeing some of the published research done by ID theorists, check out this list of their publications in scientific, peer-reviewed research journals. (H/T Truthbomb

Apologetics)

There is only one problem with the post at UD, though. They recomment Perl and PHP for the exercise. Perl and PHP are crappy languages for any program longer than 100 lines that needs to be maintained longer than 2 months, or maintained by another developer who did not write it. The readability and maintainability of Perl and PHP are *atrocious.* Stick with languages like Java, Smalltalk or C#.

Other arguments for a Creator and Designer

To learn more about arguments for a Creator and Designer, check out some of my favorites below, taken from the big list of arguments and counter-arguments:

- The origin of the universe
- The fine-tuning of the universe for complex life
- The galactic, stellar and planetary fine-tuning to provide a habitable environment for complex life
- The origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- The origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- The sudden origin of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- The natural limits to biological change

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Does the Bible teach communism like Michael Moore seems to think?

October 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neil Simpson has a wonderful post up analyzing whether Michael Moore is correct to think that Jesus' teachings in the Bible are opposed to capitalism. My opinion is that Michael Moore is no more a Christian than Barack Obama or Richard Dawkins. In order to be a Christian, you need to accept the teachings of Jesus, and Moore doesn't. And Neil explains why by referring to Moore's own blog post.

Neil does a good job of analyzing Moore's errors, *and his incredible hypocrisy*, so check it out. But I wanted to highlight a comment from Shalini from the comments to that post.

Shalini wrote:

> Socialism discards the concept of ownership… by individuals and I see no passage or verse in NT where Jesus seems so against the concept of individual ownership.
>
> Socialism gradually leads to communism and the very intention of communism is to separate people from God. Heck! If you have a government which says "I will feed you" and promises other pleasures of the world, but it never addresses the spiritual needs of a person, I don't see God approving of it. The other problem about socialism is that one person works hard and the government/organization takes/steals from him and gives it to someone who works less harder. That results in laziness! So does God approve of laziness? I think God said we will have to work harder all our lives. He didn't say 'Some of you will have to work harder and the rest will just have to steal from you.".

I think the passage she is thinking of might be 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12.

> [6]In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. [7]For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, [8]nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. [9]We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. [10]For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." [11]We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. [12]Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.

About 50% of Americans do not pay any income tax, whereas a tiny minority of the most productive people pay the vast majority of all income taxes collected. And yet still the

poor clamor for more and more of their neighbors' wealth! What they should be clamoring for is knowledge of how their neighbor acts in order to be productive and frugal. Or even better, they should be clamoring for a relationship with God through Christ, and not being so focused on acquiring worldly goods at all!

Moore and others on the left think that all religion is about making people happy in this life. So naturally, they are not going to read the Bible to incorporate it as an authority over their decisions – they are *functional atheists*. They will only use the Bible to trick people into adopting government-controlled wealth redistribution. They just want to feel good about themselves in this life by redistributing other people's money.

Thomas Sowell calls this "the vision of the anointed". The elites think they are smarter than you are – that they should decide how much money you earn and how you spend it, so that they can prove how morally superior they are to you by "helping" the "poor" with what they take from you.

Shalini continues:

> In the Acts of apostles, there was collection and re-distribution of wealth. But under who's guidance? The apostles who were God inspired and who did things God would approve of. So there was no problem there. But can we trust the government to do what the apostles did or to do what Jesus would do? A government which approves of all things God loathes? And given the power, who is to say the government wont act as greedy as the CEOs and wall street bankers? **At least with a company I have the choice to quit. With the government I will be stuck for life or at least till the next elections. If one is so bent upon making atrocious stereotypes of all rich men why don't they look at the atrocities done by socialist states? My CEO only had the authority over my intellectual skills. The socialist government would claim authority even over my moral rights.**

What Christianity supports is the concept of *private individual charity*. What Moore supports is government-managed redistribution of wealth from those who produce to those who don't produce. History has shown in places like Cuba, North Korea, Zimbabwe and Venezuela that this results of trying the communism that Moore seems to advocate results in *more poverty, not less.* A rising tide lifts all boats – and that is why the poor in capitalist America are richer than the rich in any communist nation.

Further study

To learn more about the relationship between Christianity and capitalism, check out this post (the second half is on capitalism).

Excerpt:

> To understand what capitalism is, you can watch this lecture entitled "Money, Greed and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem" by Jay W. Richards, delivered at the Heritage Foundation think tank, and televised by C-

> SPAN2.
>
> […]If you can't see the Richards video, here is an audio lecture by Jay Richards on the "Myths Christians Believe about Wealth and Poverty". Also, why not check out this series of 4 sermons by Wayne Grudem on the relationship between Christianity and economics? (a PDF outline is here)

And don't forget about the course on economics from a Christian perspective taught by Dr. Ron Nash, or Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse's lecture on basic economics that I wrote about before.

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How Obama’s public option would ration specialized care

October 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Take a provision in the Baucus bill that would punish any physician whose “resource use” is considered too high. Beginning in 2015, Medicare would rank doctors against their peers based on how much they cost the program—and then automatically cut all payments by 5% to anyone who falls into the 90th percentile or above. In practice, this rule will only apply to specialists.
>
> […]In Medicare, meanwhile, the Administration is using regulation to change how doctors are paid to benefit general practitioners, internists and family physicians. In next year’s fee schedule, they’ll see higher payments on the order of 6% to 8%.
>
> […]this boost for GPs comes at the expense of certain specialties. The 2010 rules, which will be finalized next month, visit an 11% overall cut on cardiology and 19% on radiation oncology. They’re targets only because of cost: Two-thirds of morbidity or mortality among Medicare patients owes to cancer or heart disease.
>
> […]The basic tools of heart specialists—echocardiograms (stress tests) and catheterizations—are slashed by 42% and 24%, respectively.
>
> […]Cancer doctors get hit because the Administration believes specialists order too many MRIs and CT scans. Certain kinds of diagnostic imaging lose 24% under new assumptions that machines are in use 90% of the time, up from 50%. There isn’t a radiologist in America running an MRI 10.8 hours out of 12, unless he’s lining up patients on a conveyor belt. But claiming scanners are used far more often than they really are lets the Administration “score” spending cuts.
>
> And this change is applied to *all* expensive equipment, not just MRIs and CTs, so payments for antitumor radiation therapy will fall by up to 44%.

This will primarily affect the middle-aged and the elderly.

The case of Ontario, Canada

Here’s how it works in Ontario, Canada according the the National Post. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Opponents of the public option maintain that Canadian-style health care would entail rationing, caps on care, bureaucratic interference in medical decision-making and even “death panels” deciding when the ill become too expensive to

> save. Most Canadians believe this is a gross exaggeration of reality. But then how to characterize Ontario's decision to cut off funding for colorectal cancer patients taking a life-prolonging drug, in order to save $9-million a year?
>
> […]Ontario Health Minister David Caplan rejected the suggestion that the cap on treatment was a financial decision alone, arguing it was based on clinical evidence. But it's easy to reach the conclusion that the province decided nine extra months of life for a dying patient wasn't worth the money. Which is pretty much the kind of decision a "death panel" would be confronted with.

There are ways to reduce the costs of health care while retaining freedom of choice in a capitalist system. Health care is so highly-regulated already that we are not even trying a fully capitalist system, like the one in Switzerland that I wrote about earlier.

Further study

Learn more about health care policy from my previous posts on health care:

- Paul Krugman says that public option will lead to single-payer
- Sarah Palin on tort reform and health care cost reduction
- How Democrats are handling dissent from their health care plan
- Left-wing extremist on MSNBC says that some opponents of socialism are racists
- How Obamacare turns American taxpayers into children
- Are coerced abortions and euthanasia part of Obama's health care plan?
- Understanding Obama's health care reform bill… with video clips!
- Paul Ryan and Ann Coulter make the case against Obamacare
- Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!
- Five freedoms you will lost if Obamacare passes
- Marsha Blackburn explains how Tennessee's public option plan failed
- Bobby Jindal explains a dozen freedom-preserving ways to cut health care costs
- John Stossel vs Michael Moore in 20/20 health care documentary
- Obamacare will provide health care to illegal immigrants
- Study shows 83 million people will lose private insurance under Obamacare
- Jim Demint destroys Obama's health care plan on the Senate floor
- Michele Bachmann explains the effect of Obamacare on small businesses
- Keith Hennessey and Howard "Mad How" Dean debate Obamacare

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MUST-SEE: A magnificent video on the challenge of youth ministry

October 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Made by Brett Kunkle of Stand to Reason, and posted by the Pugnacious Irishman, Rich Bordner.

And Rich writes:

> I know what you might be thinking: "this guy is a bit over the top. C'mon! 'Who's waiting for our kids.' This is just scare tactics."
>
> Don't write Brett off. **He works with youth** and has a circumspect angle that gives him a lot of insight into the state of youth in the church. Also, **I can vouch** for the atmosphere of the college campus. Lastly and most importantly, take a look at the **stats** (some of which he references). If that doesn't convince you he's not hyping things up, nothing can; he has sociology research backing him up.

The first link takes to you to another post by Rich which details Brett Kunkle's activities, and features a letter from a 17-year-old student that Brett trained, before taking him to *the University of California at Berkeley* to test out his skills.

Here's the letter:

> It's a beautiful thing when two high school clubs of opposing viewpoints can come together and debate issues in a public setting and in a friendly manner. It is also quite rare. However, this is exactly what happened just three and a half weeks ago at Capistrano Valley Christian Schools. It all started with a trip to U.C Berkeley.
>
> In the fall of 2008, twenty-four students from Capistrano Valley Christian Schools began training with CVCS's Sean McDowell and STR's Brett Kunkle. These training sessions were vigorous and challenging but worth more in each of our lives than any words could express. On March 10, 2009, we embarked on an intellectual and spiritual journey that totally "rocked our worlds." After debating atheists and interviewing Berkeley students on topics all over the board, we returned as different people. This spiritual and intellectual roller coaster was the best time of my life, as it was for many other students. I saw my friends gain confidence and stability in their faith but most importantly, I saw high school kids gain a passion for what they believed.
>
> After Berkeley many kids wanted to keep making a difference in the world. I began a club that was simply known as the "Berkeley Group," for anyone who had attended the trip and wanted to keep being involved in apologetics. One night I was on the phone with another club member, Suzie, attempting to plan things for our group to do. We wanted to put on an event to get high school kids

> excited about apologetics. We decided that a student debate would be an amazing draw for a young audience. We partnered with the Free-thinking Atheist and Agnostic Kinship (FAAK) student club from Capistrano Valley High School and decided to charge admission for the event, which we would donate to charity. We began to plan.
>
> After many meetings with Mr. McDowell and much communication with FAAK, we decided to discuss three topics related to God's existence: intelligent design, morality, and the resurrection of Jesus. With the stage set for an intense spectacle, publicizing began in earnest.
>
> From our Berkeley club, Steve took Intelligent Design, I took morality and Christie took the resurrection of Jesus. After a few weeks of additional preparation for each category, we were ready for the debate! The format of the debate was a five-minute opening statement for each side, a five-minute cross examination and 20 minutes of question and answer time with the audience. Lastly, there was a final three-minute closing statement from each side. The auditorium was packed as more than 300 students and adults attended the event. The feedback from the debate was overwhelmingly good and our Apologetics Club is looking forward to similar events next year! I guess the final point I can make on this subject is that Berkeley prepared us and began a movement in our school's students that will last for years to come. As Brett told us on the trip: "The Berkeley Mission is normal Christianity."

Berkeley is one of the most left wing campuses in the world, in probably the most left wing city in the the world. It's Hell on Earth. But these kids had trained and they were prepared to face the worst. That's Christianity in action. So often today I see older Christians acting like there are no intellectual problems that need to be addressed, or focusing on minor theological issues or ineffective insular legalism. Instead, we should be preparing to engage the culture like this 17-year-old student. And we should be hiring youth pastors like Brett Kunkle – not like Brian MacLaren!

Anyway, Rich is himself is a public school teacher who is very familiar with these issues! I'm so glad that he knows about the need for apologetics to prepare children before they go off to university. If you like stories like this, you should definitely bookmark Rich's blog.

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MUST-READ: Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event

October 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

After action reports from pro-life speaker Jose Ruba's event at McGill University. (H/T Andrew) This is the same event that the student society voted to shut down, but that the Provost refused to shut down.

Mcgill Pro-Life Presentation Shut Down by Protesters – Two Arrested (LifesiteNews).

Excerpt:

> As Ruba began his presentation, about 20 students, including members of SSMU, began protesting, chanting, and singing children's songs such as Old MacDonald and the hokey pokey. They bombarded the stage, blocked the screen, and one protester even grabbed at Ruba's written materials, before being stopped by campus security.
>
> The police arrived and eventually warned the protesters that they would be taken away by force if they did not get off the stage. Two resisted and were arrested, while others joined the audience and continued to heckle Ruba after police had left, until the designated time had run out and Choose Life ended the event.
>
> Ruba told LifeSiteNews that he was able to present about half an hour of his presentation, but there was no moment where he was able to speak clearly.

Click here to read the whole thing (there's more).

Here's a more detailed story from the campus paper (McGill Daily).

Excerpt:

> Ruba had hardly finished the first sentence of his lecture when a protester near the front of the room stood up and announced that she believed he had no right to deliver his speech at McGill. The protesters proceeded by singing various songs, at one point completing an entire rendition of "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall."
>
> Protesters held their arms, jackets, and signs in front of Ruba's video projections, which included photographs from biology textbooks, videos of the early stages of an abortion, and images of the Holocaust.
>
> […]Ruba told the protesters he was open to discussion, and that Choose Life had asked for a pro-choice speaker to engage in debate.
>
> […]In the midst of the confusion, Ruba explained to The Daily why he felt it was important for protesters to hear his message.
>
> "[The protesters] have accused us of all these things, and frankly they haven't heard this presentation yet. When people pre-judge someone based on heresy

> and rumours, that's called prejudice," Ruba said. "We don't mind protests; that's what free universities and free societies do. But they don't censure people simply because they disagree or prevent people from sharing their ideas. That's no longer what protests should be about. That's censorship."

They won't debate with Mr. Ruba, because they would lose. Violence, then, is the only option they have left. A one-sided, public school, cradle-to-job indoctrination doesn't really prepare students for open debate. (Especially when coupled with binge-drinking, irresponsible sex and drug use). When a fanatical true believer encounters facts and arguments, their response can only be disbelief, rage and violence.

I doubt that any of these students will ever be exposed to books like Dr. Francis J. Beckwith's magnum opus "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice", published by Cambridge University Press. Or maybe Princeton University professor Robert P. George's book "Embryo: A Defense of Human Life". Pro-abortionists have *never* been exposed to an academic case for the pro-life position. That's why they rage and attack.

And it leads to cases like this, where peaceful pro-lifers are shot and killed or nearly killed by being run over with SUVs. After all, if a person is willing to kill a helpless baby, why should they be concerned about killing grown-ups? Only pro-lifers are consistently pro-life. Only pro-lifers oppose taking the lives of innocent people at all stages of life, born and unborn.

More news stories, with photos:

- Arrests, no charges at mcgill abortion-rights protest (CTV Montreal)
- Protestors disrupt Choose Life event; two fined for mischief (McGill Tribune)

UPDATE: (from commenter Andrew)

I was present when the most fundamental rights of Mr. Ruba, the invited speaker from the Canadian Centre of Bio-Ethical Research and the rights of the students who actually wanted to listen to him were infringed upon. The anti-free speech mob refused the offer of a civilized debate and thus made it abundantly clear that they don't espouse the same democratic values as the majority of Canadians.

To see this sad spectacle which took place at McGill, go to:

Debate summary: Craig vs Ahmed on “Does God Exist?” – Craig’s first speech

October 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that I would summarize a debate that occurred at Cambridge University between Dr. William Lane Craig and Dr. Arif Ahmed. Craig is by far the foremost defender of Christianity in the world, and Ahmed won his previous debate against the venerable Dr. Gary Habermas by a landslide. Could Dr. Ahmed repeat his previous victory?

The full MP3 is here. (H/T Brian Auten of Apologetics 315)

Here is Dr. Craig’s opening speech: (1:24)

Craig’s case for God.

1) The origin of the universe (3:10)
– an eternal universe is not compatible with mathematics
– the impossibility of an actual infinite in nature (cites David Hilbert)
– an eternal universe is not compatible with science
– the big bang theory requires space and time to come into being out of nothing (cites PCW Davies)
– even radical alternative theories require an absolute beginning (cites Stephen Hawking)
– atheists must believe that the origin of space and time came from nothing and by nothing (cites Anthony Kenny)

Argument:
P1.1) Whatever begins to exist requires a cause
P1.2) The universe begin to exist
C1.3) Therefore, the universe requires a cause

What can the cause be:
– it must be eternal, because it caused time to exist
– it must be non-physical, because it caused space to begin to exist

Why must the cause of the universe be a person instead of a force?
Only minds can exist non-physically
– the only non-physical entities we know of are abstract objects and minds
– but abstract objects can’t cause physical effects
– therefore, the cause universe is a personal mind

Only minds can cause effects in time without antecedent conditions
– causally prior to the universe’s beginning, there were no antecedent conditions
– the only entity capable of acting freely, not based on antecedent conditions, are free agents
– therefore, the cause of the universe is a free agent

2) The fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe (9:15)
– the fine-tuning of the universe is supported by science

– the constants and quantities given in the big bang can take any of a range of values
– the actual values are within a extremely narrow range that supports the requirements of life
– he gives the example of the fine-tuning of the gravitational constant
– he gives the example of the fine-tuning of the weak force

Argument:
P2.1) The fine-tuning is either due to law, chance or design
P2.2) It is not due to law, because the numbers are independent of the law
P2.3) It cannot be due to chance, the life-permitting band is tiny compared to the possible values
C2.4) Therefore, the fine-tuning is due to design

3) Objective moral values are plausibly grounded in God (12:41)
– objective moral values are values that exist and are binding regardless of what individuals think
– objective moral values cannot be rationally grounded on an atheistic worldview (cites Michael Ruse)
– atheists can recognize moral values and act on them, but they cannot explain their origin and existence
– atheists can only appeal to personal or cultural preferences to say what is right and wrong
– the existence of objective moral is undeniable

Argument:
P3.1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist
P3.2) Objective moral values do exist
C3.3) Therefore, God exists

4) The resurrection of Jesus implies that God exists (16:04)
– if the resurrection of Jesus happened, then it would be a miracle, implying that God exists
– three facts are recognized by the majority of scholars
– the tomb was found empty after his death (cites Jacob Kramer)
– individuals and groups saw Jesus after his death (cites Gerd Ludemann)
– the belief in the resurrection of Jesus was totally unexpected (cites N.T. Wright)
– naturalistic explanations of these facts have been rejected by the consensus of scholars

Argument:
P4.1) The 3 minimal facts are established
P4.2) The hypothesis that God raised Jesus from the dead is the best explanation for these facts
P4.3) The hypothesis that God raised Jesus from the dead entails that God exists
C4.4) Therefore, God exists

5) God can be known directly by personal experience (20:02)
– God can be experienced just like you experience a relationship with human persons

I'll summarize Dr. Ahmed's opening speech in my next post, which comes out at 4 PM. Please only comment on the content of Dr. Craig's arguments, there will be a poll at 6 PM to vote in and then you can comment on who is winning, too. This was a very entertaining debate to listen to, and the audio is crystal clear! If I get lots of comments, I summarize the rest of the debate for Friday!

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The full MP3 is here. (H/T Brian Auten of Apologetics 315)

Craig’s opening speech is in the previous post. I am sorry but I cannot help but inject a little snark into my summaries of atheist speeches. I apologize in advance for being snarky. The snark is in italics.

And here is my summary of Dr. Ahmed’s first opening speech: (22:10)

Rebuttal to Craig’s case for God.

0) Craig is wrong about faith and reason (25:20)
– Craig’s book Reasonable Faith, he makes a number of statements about faith and reason
– He writes that Christianity is not accountable to reason if reason goes against Christianity
– He writes that the truth of Christianity is knowable without rational arguments
– He writes that even if there are no reasons to believe, and many reasons to disbelieve, humans are still obligated to believe
– Question for Craig: is Christianity reasonable or isn’t it? Do reasons matter or don’t they?

1) Response to Craig’s first argument: the origin of the universe (28:27)
– what mathematicians say about the contradictory nature of subtraction and division for actual infinities is wrong
– what cosmologists and physicists say about the beginning of time is wrong, every event follows another one, there is no first event
– even if the universe is 15 billion years old, the act of Creation requires time and there was no time prior to the supposed beginning of the universe for God to act in
– the cause of the universe need not be a personal agent
– all minds are made of matter so a mind cannot be the cause of the universe, *because all the people who pre-suppose materialism like me think that minds must be made of matter*
– it is impossible for a person to act outside of time, *because all the persons I know act in time*
– why did God wait 15 billion years before creating humans and relating to them? – *i wouldn’t have done it that way*

2) Response to Craig’s second argument: the fine-tuning of the creation (32:38)

– where do these probabilities that Craig is using come from?

3) Response to Craig's third argument: the moral argument (34:07)
– I have personal preferences about what counts as right and wrong, and they are superior to God's preferences
– moral intuitions are not a good way of discovering objective moral values, so therefore objective moral values don't exist

4) Response to Craig's fourth argument: the resurrection (36:00)
– the number of eyewitnesses is not enough, because groups number of eyewitnesses can be fooled by illusions, as in David Copperfield illusions
– the Gospels contradict themselves, e.g. – the story of Matthew's earthquake and walking dead isn't in Mark – so that's a contradiction, so the Gospels are not reliable sources for Craig's 3 minimal facts

5) Response to Craig's fourth argument: personal experience (37:30)
– there are many different religious experiences because there are many different religions
– *if lots of people disagree about something, then no one can be right*

Ahmed's case against God.

1) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence (39:00)
– if there is are no reasons to believe in God, then this alters reality to make it true that he doesn't exist

2) The inductive argument from evil (40:04)
– some evil is gratuitous – events cause people to suffer, and has no benefit that I can see, *based on my limited knowledge in time and space and my personal preference of what counts as a benefit and what doesn't*
– God would not have allowed people to suffer, *because God's job is to make us feel happy in this life*

3) Belief in God makes people evil (41:52)
– all genuinely religious people are very immoral, *according to my personal preferences about what counts as right and wrong*

Please only comment on the content of Dr. Ahmed's arguments, there will be a poll at 6 PM to vote in and then you can comment on who is winning, too. This was a very entertaining debate to listen to, and the audio is crystal clear! If I get lots of comments, I summarize the rest of the debate for Friday!

In case you are wondering about his inductive argument from evil, please read this summary on the problems of evil and suffering, which is taken from my list of arguments for and against Christian theism. Keep in my mind that I am a software engineer with two degrees in computer science… not philosophy!

Craig mentions a paper by the late William P. Alston of Syracuse University in his rebuttal to the inductive problem of evil. The paper lists six limitations on human cognitive capacities that make it difficult for humans to *know* that some instance of apparently

gratuitous evil really is gratuitious – that God has no morally sufficient reason for permitting this specific instance of evil. Since Ahmed is making the claim that some evil is gratuitous, he bears the burden of proof.

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Vote on who had the best opening speech in the Craig-Ahmed debate

October 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post is part of a series of posts on the subject of a debate that occurred at Cambridge University between Dr. William Lane Craig and Dr. Arif Ahmed. The topic is "Does God Exist?".

The full MP3 is here. (H/T Brian Auten of Apologetics 315)

Please listen to the first two speeches (at least) before voting.

- Summary of Dr. Craig's opening speech
- Summary of Dr. Ahmed's opening speech

UPDATE:

I closed the poll after 1 week.

Wiliam Lane Craig, by a landslide	68%
Wiliam Lane Craig, but it's close	21%
Too close to call	11%
Arif Ahmed, but it's close	0%
Arif Ahmed, by a landslide	0%

Please leave your comments about who you think about who is winning and why. Please keep comments SHORT – less than 300 words, please.

I am especially interested in hearing from young earth creationists and their response to Craig and Ahmed's views on the big bang theory, and what it implies. (I am not a young earth creationist – I think the big bang is based on reliable science, including the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies, the light element abundance predictions and the cosmic background radiation predictions)

Note: I wrote an e-mail to Dr. Ahmed to follow up with him, and got a very gracious reply. He thought that the fine-tuning issue was the most interesting, and he did not change his mind about the intellectual viability of Craig's worldview as a result of the debate. Anyway, try to be nice. Nicer than me, I mean!

I will not be available to approve comments on Thursday night from 6 PM to about 2 AM on Friday morning.

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The state of the debate about catastrophic man-made global warming

October 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from The American Thinker is the only article you'll ever need to read about global warming. (H/T ECM)

It summarizes how we got to this point, the goals and role of the United Nations in global warming alarmism, and the latest finding by Climate Audit about the hockey stick graph and its curious use (abuse?) of data sets.

What the article is about:

> For years, claims that UN climate reports represent the consensus of the majority of international scientists have been mindlessly accepted and regurgitated by left-leaning policy makers and the media at large. But in the past week or so, it's become more apparent than ever that those who've accused the international organization of politicizing science and manipulating data have been right all along.

Here's a graph of global temperature, taken from a UN IPCC publication in **1990**:

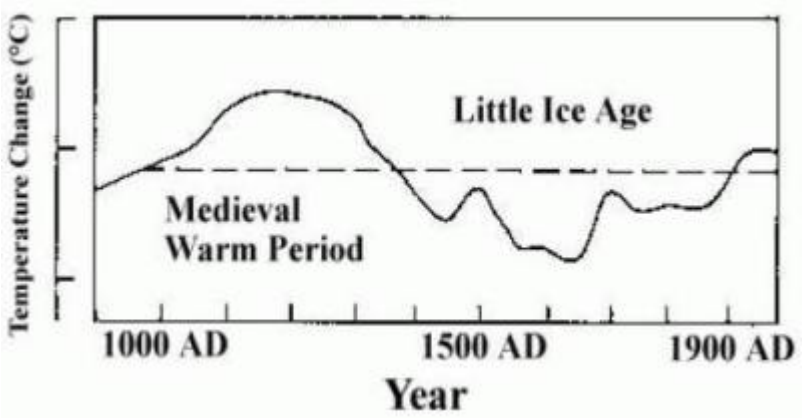

And here's what you should note about it:

> And data derived from sources including tree-rings, lake sediments, ice cores and historic documents bear that position out. Indeed, it's abundantly evident that since the last glacial period ended, over 14,000 years ago, the Earth's climate has undergone multi-century swings from warming to cooling that occur often and with remarkable rapidity. And not one but three such radical shifts occurred within the past millennium.
>
> The years 900-1300 AD have been labeled the Medieval Warming Period (MWP), as global temperatures rose precipitously from the bitter cold of the previous epoch — the Dark Ages — to levels several degrees warmer than today. A sudden period of cooling then followed and lasted until the year 1850. This Little Ice Age (LIA) brought on extremely cold temperatures, corresponding with three periods of protracted solar inactivity, the lowest temperatures coinciding with the

> quietest of the three (The Maunder Minimum 1645-1710).

And then the need for bureaucrats to control people's lives reared its ugly head:

> During testimony before the Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works Hearing on Climate Change and the Media in 2006, University of Oklahoma geophysicist Dr. David Deming recalled "an astonishing email from a major researcher in the area of climate change" who told him that "we have to get rid of the Medieval Warm Period." In June of this year, Deming identified the year of that email as 1995 and the source only as a lead author of that month's *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States* report.
>
> Many believe that man to be Jonathan Overpeck – which Prof. Deming didn't deny in an email response — who would later also serve as an IPCC lead author. So it comes as no surprise that this reconstruction, which did indeed "get rid of the Medieval Warm Period," was featured prominently in the subsequent 2001 TAR, particularly in the Summary for Policymakers (SPM), the highly-politicized synopsis which commands the bulk of media and political attention.

The article cites climate scientist Stephen Schneider as follows in **1989**:

> "To capture the public imagination, we have to offer up some scary scenarios, make simplified dramatic statements and little mention of any doubts one might have. Each of us has to decide the right balance between being effective, and being honest."

And then adds:

> Twelve years later, Schneider was a lead author of the IPCC's TAR, the same UN report that formally introduced the delusory Hockey Stick Graph.

And that is how the United Nations began to invent the hockey stick graph, which is the latest prop supporting a made-up crisis to overturn capitalism while simultaneously providing the meaningless lives of the secular-left elite with a false sense of purpose and moral superiority. The hockey stick graph is based on the data that was debunked recently by Canadian statistician Stephen McIntyre. And now maybe we can stop worrying about global warming for good.

The rest of the American Thinker article is here and it continues to tell the rest of the story of the hockey stick graph, focusing on the role of the United Nations and IPCC researchers. This is the *best article on global warming I have ever read*, and it is *snarky* all the way through. I don't know how the author managed to find all of those incredible quotes from the global warming alarmists planning their myths. Print and read!

My recent posts on the hockey stick graph

- MUST-READ: Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says solar activity impacts climate

- CRISIS: Famous global warming hockey stick graph is a hoax
- Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming

How public sector unions destroy economic growth

October 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from the Weekly Standard. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Private sector unions have a natural adversary in the owners of the companies with whom they negotiate. But public sector unions have no such natural counterweight. They are a classic case of "client politics," where an interest group's concentrated efforts to secure rewards impose diffused costs on the mass of unorganized taxpayers. Also unlike private sector unions, those in the public sector can achieve influence on both sides of the bargaining table by making campaign contributions and organizing get-out-the-vote drives to elect politicians who then control the negotiations over their pay, benefits, and work rules. The result is a nefarious cycle: Politicians agree to generous government worker contracts; those workers then pay higher union dues a portion of which are funneled back into those same politicians' campaign war chests. It is a cycle that has driven California and New York to the edge of bankruptcy.
>
> [...]Consider what happened in Washington State. After helping Democrats win full control of the legislature in 2002, the state affiliate of the Association of Federal, State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and other unions persuaded lawmakers to lift the collective bargaining restrictions. Within three years the number of union members had doubled. With more state employees paying dues, the amount of union dollars flowing into the coffers of Democrats running in state elections also doubled. A prime beneficiary of such union generosity was Christine Gregoire, who became governor in 2004 after one of the closest elections in the state's history. (AFSCME gave $250,000 to the state Democratic party to help pay for the recount that handed her the election by 129 votes). Once in office, Gregoire negotiated contracts with the unions that resulted in double-digit salary increases, some exceeding 25 percent, for thousands of state employees. In 2007, J. Vander Stoep, an adviser to Republican Dino Rossi, Gregoire's 2004 opponent, prophetically remarked that the unions' arrangement with the Democrats was "a perfect machine to generate millions of dollars for her reelection. . . . They are building something that conceivably can never be undone—at taxpayer expense." In their 2008 rematch, Rossi lost again to Gregoire, this time by 194,614 votes.

This is a long article, but it's probably the only one you'll need to read to understand how unions completely destroy economies, as in New York and California. Print and read!

Share / Save ...

Friday night funny: clothes, nobel prize, school choice

October 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Clothes make the man?

From IMAO.us:

> At a recent speech, Obama handed out white lab coats to his audience to make them look smarter. That's a good idea. Only smart people wear white lab coats as dumb people would just stain them with neon orange powdered cheese. Maybe Obama shouldn't have stopped there, though. Maybe he should also have had them all wear mortar boards and have diplomas to hold in their hands so we would look at them and say, "Wow! These are smart people! If they agree with the president, then I should agree too so I will be smart!"
>
> Actually, the president himself could use some smartening; maybe he should wear a mortar board and a lab coat at all times. Then if someone disagree with him, he could say, "Don't you disagree with me! I'm very smart! Look at my hat! LOOK AT MY HAT! Now don't bother me; I'm off to do Science!" He'd be impressive then; I bet everyone would stop making fun of him.

The Nobel Booby Prize

From Scrappleface.com:

> An unnamed member of the Nobel committee this morning explained the shocking decision to give the Nobel Peace Prize to U.S. President Barack Obama, who had served only 11 days as president when nominated, by noting that the gold medal would go a long way toward boosting Mr. Obama's self-esteem.
>
> "We used to give the award to persons who had actual accomplishments," the anonymous source said. "But that's so reactionary, and almost nostalgic. By giving the peace prize to Obama, we're recognizing his potential, and applauding his intentions in a way that we hope will result in future actions."
>
> The committee members reportedly wanted to encourage Mr. Obama with something tangible because "his speeches make world peace seem almost possible."
>
> "It's like putting a gold star on a student's paper, or giving him the 'most improved' trophy when he makes a good effort," the source said. "We don't want the president to get discouraged, or to give up just because the overwhelming evidence of history and of human nature flies in the face of everything he has proposed."

(Note: a booby prize is a joke prize that you win for getting last place in the rankings)

Latest Steven Crowder: (H/T lmao.us)

Happy Friday!

Democrats try to force Catholic college to cover abortion in medical plans

October 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an alert from the Becket Fund. (H/T Gateway Pundit via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Belmont Abbey College is a small, private, Catholic college located in North Carolina. For 130 years, it and the Benedictine monks who run it have been dedicated to handing on the Catholic faith.
>
> But the Obama Administration is now trying to force them to abandon that faith or go out of business.
>
> You see, the Administration at Belmont Abbey College removed contraception, abortion, and voluntary sterilization from its faculty's health care policy after discovering it had accidentally been a part of existing plans.
>
> Employees of the school who objected to this change in policy brought a complaint against the school accusing them of "gender discrimination."

If God does not exist, then there is no such thing as God-given inalienable rights, such as the right to religious liberty. The secular left is always going to side with the feelings of their favored minority groups who vote to elect them. And they hope that religious people won't notice that their rights are being trampled on.

Obama advisor says that the majority of women prefer Sharia law

October 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the Telegraph. (H/T American Thinker via ECM)

Dalia Mogahed is an appointee to the President's Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

Excerpt:

> "I think the reason so many women support Sharia is because they have a very different understanding of sharia than the common perception in Western media.
>
> "The majority of women around the world associate gender justice, or justice for women, with sharia compliance.
>
> "The portrayal of Sharia has been oversimplified in many cases."
>
> "Part of the reason that there is.this perception of Sharia is because Sharia is not well understood and Islam as a faith is not well understood."

I am sure that the American feminists who voted for Obama would love to have Sharia law imposed!

NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting

October 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the Sun. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> This crippled plumber horribly broke his arm TEN months ago and is still waiting for surgery to repair it.
>
> Torron Eeles busted his left humerus bone leaving it grotesquely out of shape when he fell down stairs.
>
> Today he slammed the NHS for "unacceptable" delays – claiming they have cancelled FOUR separate operations.
>
> His arm hangs limply by his side meaning Torron cannot work for a living and now faces the prospect of losing his home.

The NHS is Britain's "public option" plan. But you can be sure that the political elites in Britain don't wait a moment for treatment, just like you can be sure that Obama's children go to the best private schools. He leaves the failing public schools for *your* children.

Share / Save ...

Government-funded research unit destroyed original climate data

October 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Competitive Enterprise Institute. (H/T American Thinker via ECM)

Excerpt:

> In the wake of a revelation by a key research institution that it destroyed its original climate data, the Competitive Enterprise Institute petitioned EPA to reopen a major global warming proceeding.
>
> In mid-August the University of East Anglia's Climate Research Unit (CRU) disclosed that it had destroyed the raw data for its global surface temperature data set because of an alleged lack of storage space. The CRU data have been the basis for several of the major international studies that claim we face a global warming crisis. CRU's destruction of data, however, severely undercuts the credibility of those studies.
>
> In a declaration filed with CEI's petition, Cato Institute scholar and climate scientist Patrick Michaels calls CRU's revelation "a totally new element" that "violates basic scientific principles, and "throws even more doubt" on the claims of global warming alarmists.
>
> CEI's petition, filed late Monday with EPA, argues that CRU's disclosure casts a new cloud of doubt on the science behind EPA's proposal to regulate carbon dioxide. EPA stopped accepting public comments in late June but has not yet issued its final decision. As CEI's petition argues, court rulings make it clear that agencies must consider new facts when those facts change the underlying issues.
>
> CEI general counsel Sam Kazman stated, "EPA is resting its case on international studies that in turn relied on CRU data. But CRU's suspicious destruction of its original data, disclosed at this late date, makes that information totally unreliable. If EPA doesn't reexamine the implications of this, it's stumbling blindly into the most important regulatory issue we face."
>
> Among CRU's funders are the EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy – U.S. taxpayers.

Fraudulent government-funded research designed to support a socialist takeover of private industry by government? Hard to believe isn't it?

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Does being a nice person make your religious beliefs true?

October 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I used to really enjoy listening to Dennis Prager and Michael Medved back when I wasn't writing all the time. And one of the things I noticed about these two famous Jewish radio talk show hosts is that they believed that the test of whether a religion is true is whether it results in good behavior.

I agree with Dennis and Michael on many topics, but not on this topic. When it comes to religious epistemology, I am solely and completely concerned with only one question. *Is it true?*

The Pugnacious Irishman posted recently on this topic of whether 1) subjective experiences and "good" works, or 2) correspondence to reality, should be the standard for choosing a religion.

He writes:

> For Christian public school teachers, the most interesting opportunities happen in the staff lounge at lunch.
>
> As I sat down to eat lunch on Friday, a few of the teachers were talking about Mormonism.
>
> "My pastor calls Mormonism a cult. That pisses me off. Why doesn't he just leave them alone? The Mormon kids in my classroom are such nice and dependable kids."
>
> […]"You know, I've got a better question to ask. Rather than asking, 'does a certain religion make nice and conscientious followers' (which is a plus in some ways), a more fundamental question to ask is, 'is the religion *true*'?"
>
> One of the teachers at the table balked, "That can be kind of hard to determine, can't it?"
>
> "Not necessarily. If a religion makes historical and scientific claims, it can be verified or not. Most of the monotheistic religions make these types of claims, so they can be tested in that regard."
>
> A religion that is verifiable has a distinct advantage over religions that are not.
>
> […]It was a good conversation. And that is the fundamental question, isn't it? A certain religion can produce nice people and still be wholly false. Of course, you need to figure 'what kind of person it produces' into the equation–if a certain religion, followed accurately, routinely produced a Charles Manson, that would most definitely be a strike against it–but that isn't the most fundamental issue. It's necessary, but not sufficient.
>
> Rather, the most fundamental question you should ask is, "is the religion *true*?"

> Asking such a question doesn't make you intolerant or bigoted.

When it comes to choosing a religion or talking about religion, the first and only rule is to focus on public, testable, propositional truth. The reason why so many Christians struggle to get into the kinds of conversations that Rich gets into is because they are not taking Rich's approach. Find the claims of a religion that can be tested, *then test them*.

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Darwinian fundamentalists burn new intelligent design movie at the stake

October 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Evolution News reports on the latest censorship by the ignorant, close-minded, witch-hunting Darwinians.

Excerpt:

> The knee-jerk response of Darwin's defenders is to suppress any message that challenges Darwinian evolution's orthodoxy. Case in point, this past week the Los Angeles Daily News reported that the California Science Center, a "department of the State of California," banned the screening of the new intelligent design film, Darwin's Dilemma, after the screening became public knowledge and there was intense pressure to cancel.
>
> And get this, from what we've heard the intense pressure came from the Smithsonian Institution with which they are affiliated. That's right, the very same Smithsonian Institution that trampled evolutionary biologist Richard Sternberg's academic freedoms. The very same Smithsonian Institution that apologized for allowing another ID film, The Privileged Planet, to be shown at the Institution's Museum of Natural History.
>
> In this instance the American Freedom Alliance entered into what was presumably a legally binding contract with the California Science Center when it rented its facilities. That they would be a screening a pro-ID film was never a secret. The Science Center apparently had no problem with the film being screened there and okayed the contract. So, who did have a problem? Why did the screening have to be canceled?

It happens *all the time*.

> This isn't the first time a major academic or scientific institution has trampled academic freedom of scientists who are proponents of intelligent design. Dr. Guillermo Gonzalez was the victim of very shameful treatment by the faculty and board of regents at Iowa State University. Dr. William Dembski was hounded out of Baylor University for his views on intelligent design. There's an entire film that millions of people have seen, Expelled starring Ben Stein about what happens to people who are advocates of design theory. Even Stein was later sacked from his position at The New York Times, in part, according to him, for his having made that film.

Galileo in reverse.

UPDATE: I note that the pro-intelligent design team have organized a debate with their critics. Speakers include Stephen Meyer, Rick Sternberg, Michael Shermer and Don

Prothero. Say what you want about Michael Shermer, he is not a coward.

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Democrat calls those who mock Obama's Nobel Peace Prize terrorists

October 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Politico. (H/T Ed Morrissey of Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> "The Republican Party has thrown in its lot with the terrorists – the Taliban and Hamas this morning – in criticizing the President for receiving the Nobel Peace prize," DNC communications director Brad Woodhouse told POLITICO. "Republicans cheered when America failed to land the Olympics and now they are criticizing the President of the United States for receiving the Nobel Peace prize – an award he did not seek but that is nonetheless an honor in which every American can take great pride – unless of course you are the Republican Party.
>
> "The 2009 version of the Republican Party has no boundaries, has no shame and has proved that they will put politics above patriotism at every turn. It's no wonder only 20 percent of Americans admit to being Republicans anymore – it's an embarrassing label to claim," Woodhouse said.

You're either with us or you're with the terrorists.

Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate

October 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Before discussing Dawkins' latest antics, I want you to recall that he cites a professor of who teaches *German* as an authority on the historical Jesus, and that he believes that a plausible scenario to explain the origin of life is that unobservable aliens evolved on an unobservable planet and (unobserved) seeded the earth with life. So we're dealing with a real first class intellect, here. Not a brain-damaged ideologue on the order of Kent Hovind.

Dawkins cites Haekel's embryo drawings as evidence for Darwinism

Darwinian fundamentalist Ernst Haeckel's embryo drawings were discredited as a fraud in the 19th century.

So why is Dawkins using discredited hoaxes to preach to the faithful?

What does scientific progress matter? Just keep clinging to that old-time religion.

Dawkins trips on his yellow belly while running away from debate with Stephen Meyer

Here is the transcript of Dawkins on the Michael Medved radio show.

Excerpt:

> **Bruce Chapman**: …Your new book apparently doesn't really deal with intelligent design. But it seems to me, that in your previous book, you said that it's a question of science, that it is a scientific argument – I congratulate you for that — But if it is, how about having a debate with Stephen Meyer, who is the author of another new book, Signature in the Cell, which deals with this question, and have this in a respectful, civilized, scholarly fashion where you look at the scientific arguments, pro and con?
>
> […]Put that scientific argument to the test, not with somebody who's a straw man that you bring up, but have somebody like Meyer, who has written a very scholarly book, to actually debate this topic with you…
>
> **Michael Medved**: All right, the proposal's on the table, response from Professor Dawkins, thank you, Bruce.
>
> **Richard Dawkins**: I will have a discussion with somebody who has a genuinely different scientific point of view. I have never come across any kind of creationism, whether you call it intelligent design or not, which has a serious scientific case to put.
>
> The objection to having debates with people like that is that it gives them a kind of respectability. If a real scientist goes onto a debating platform with a creationist, it gives them a respectability, which I do not think your people have earned.

Dawkin's new policy is only to debate with people who agree with him. You see, he's looked and looked for qualified opponents in his echo chamber, and there just aren't any.

Dawkins' new book features *no credible intelligent scholars*

You'd think that his new book would encounter the work of ID scholars. But you'd be wrong.

Excerpt:

> Richard Dawkins' new book, The Greatest Show on Earth, is being touted as a scathing rebuttal to intelligent design (ID), yet an actual response to mainstream ID thinking can hardly be found in the book. Though the book makes passing mention of "irreducible complexity" in a couple places, there are zero mentions of leading ID proponents like Michael Behe, William Dembski, Jonathan Wells, Phillip Johnson, Stephen Meyer, or any other well-known ID proponent. Instead, Dawkins refers extensively to "creationists," repeatedly attacking young earth creationism, while also making heavy use of fallacious (and dubious) "poor design" examples that rebut no argument made by a leading advocate of design since perhaps the 19th century. It seems that Dawkins didn't have the stomach to tackle the actual modern theory of intelligent design in his new book.

His popular brand of invincible ignorance coupled with foam-flecked fanaticism sells a lot of hymnals written for the kool-aid drinking choir. It's not about science, it's about creating your own private world where everyone is stupid except you. Dawkins is a self-help author for those raised by fundamentalist parents. It's escapism. And if anyone asks them to debate, they can just deploy some insults and call it a day. Whatever sells books, right?

UPDATE: I note that the pro-intelligent design team have organized a debate with their critics. Speakers include Stephen Meyer, Rick Sternberg, Michael Shermer and Don Prothero. Say what you want about Michael Shermer, he is not a coward.

UPDATE: (from the comments) "Just for the record, Dawkins turned down ANOTHER request to debate Dr. William Lane Craig a couple of weeks ago."

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NHS starves 80-year-old woman but offers taxpayer-funded breast enlargements

October 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, consider this story from the Telegraph. (H/T Powerline Blog via ECM)

A British transsexual is suing for the right to breast enlargement surgery. (The British socialist health care system pays for breast enlargements)

Excerpt:

> The legally aided gender dysphoria sufferer, who has been living as a woman for over 10 years, says breast augmentation is essential to her female identity and emotional well-being and the refusal to give her the op amounts to sex discrimination.
>
> Her unique test case against the West Berkire Primary Care Trust (PCT), in which the the Equality and Human Rights Commission will also be playing a part, is now set for hearing at the High Court on October 20.
>
> […]Her barrister, Stephanie Harrison, said it amounted to sex discrimination that she had been treated in exactly the same way as a "natal female", not suffering from gender dysphoria, applying for cosmetic breast enlargment on the NHS.
>
> Arguing that C would "derive psychological benefit" from breast enhancement, Miss Harrison said the PCT's refusal "leaves a treatable condition and untreated" and exposed her to "significant suffering".
>
> Breast augmentation would be "an appropriate and cost-effective treatment" that would enable C to achieve "a congruent physical, psychological and social identity".
>
> But the PCT's policy that breast augmentation will only be funded in "exceptional" cases is so tight as to amount almost to a blanket ban, the barrister added.

In socialist Canada, drug needles, sex changes and in vitro fertilization are rights, paid for by taxpayers.

Now consider this story of death panels in socialist Britain.

Story from the London Times. (H/T Confederate Yankee via ECM)

Excerpt:

> AN 80-year-old grandmother who doctors identified as terminally ill and left to starve to death has recovered after her outraged daughter intervened.
>
> Hazel Fenton, from East Sussex, is alive nine months after medics ruled she had only days to live, withdrew her antibiotics and denied her artificial feeding. The former school matron had been placed on a controversial care plan intended to

> ease the last days of dying patients.
>
> Doctors say Fenton is an example of patients who have been condemned to death on the Liverpool care pathway plan. They argue that while it is suitable for patients who do have only days to live, it is being used more widely in the NHS, denying treatment to elderly patients who are not dying.
>
> Fenton's daughter, Christine Ball, who had been looking after her mother before she was admitted to the Conquest hospital in Hastings, East Sussex, on January 11, says she had to fight hospital staff for weeks before her mother was taken off the plan and given artificial feeding.
>
> Ball, 42, from Robertsbridge, East Sussex, said: "My mother was going to be left to starve and dehydrate to death. It really is a subterfuge for legalised euthanasia of the elderly on the NHS. "

This is what happens when the government runs health care. When health care is "free", demand skyrockets. Patients requiring breast implants are viewed as more deserving of a higher "quality of life" than 80-year-old women who no longer pay taxes. Meanwhile, the most productive workers have to pay into the system based on their *income*, not based on their *risk.* This is what the left means by equality. Hard workers are punished, while risky/frivolous behaviors are rewarded.

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Democrat health care bill will cost families over $1700 per year

October 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Associated Press reports. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The health insurance industry has been working until recently to help draft legislation, while publicly endorsing President Barack Obama's goal of affordable coverage for all Americans. The alliance has grown strained as legislation advances toward votes in Congress.
>
> Late Sunday, the industry trade group America's Health Insurance Plans sent its member companies a new accounting firm study that projects the **legislation would add $1,700 a year to the cost of family coverage in 2013**, when most of the major provisions in the bill would be in effect.
>
> **Premiums for a single person would go up by $600 more than would be the case without the legislation**, the PricewaterhouseCoopers analysis concluded in the study commissioned by the insurance group.
>
> "Several major provisions in the current legislative proposal will cause health care costs to increase far faster and higher than they would under the current system," Karen Ignagni, the top industry lobbyist in Washington, wrote in a memo to insurance company CEOs.
>
> The study projected that in 2019, family premiums could be $4,000 higher and individual premiums could be $1,500 higher.

Keith Hennessey explains the study.

Canadian Evangelicals and Catholics more opposed to secularism and socialism

October 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Hill Times reports. (H/T Joanne from Blue Like You)

Excerpt:

> According to the recently-released EFC study, "Canadian Evangelical Voting Trends by Region, 1996-2008," which uses a series of electoral polls by Ipsos Reid and Angus Reid Strategies, in 1996 the Evangelical support for the Liberals was 35 per cent and it has been rapidly going down to 11 per cent in the last election, as the Conservative vote rose. The Conservatives' support from evangelical Christians peaked in 2006, with 60 per cent of the Evangelical vote and then dropped to 48 per cent in 2008. The NDP vote in 2008 was at 16 per cent among evangelicals.
>
> Evangelicals make up about 12 per cent of Canada's population, or four million people distributed throughout Canada and to a lesser degree in Quebec.
>
> […]"There are two things that are fairly important for evangelicals, as they are important to Canadians who engage in the political system. The first thing is that there's space created for engagement; so we have identified in the paper some of the incidents where it appeared that the Liberal Party was closing down the opportunity for evangelicals to engage on equal footing with non-evangelicals in the party and we've also identified where the Conservative Party had opened some place for evangelicals to engage on an equal footing," said Don Hutchinson, EFC vice-president and co-author of the report.
>
> […]According to this research, Catholic support for the Liberal Party has dropped 24 points since 2000. In 2006 they were as likely to vote Conservative as Liberal and by the 2008 election, they showed preference for the Conservative Party.

Joanne (who calls the Liberal leader "Iffy") adds:

> The question is less why it happened – because that is obvious, but rather why do the Liberals even bother?
>
> Being religious usually involves having a moral compass and a set of strong values. It also means showing respect for other folks' spiritual views.
>
> Clearly Iffy is hardly the poster boy of unwavering commitment and sticking to principles and decisions. Furthermore, his strategists have have often shown contempt for people of faith and great delight in stirring up pseudo-scandals like Wafergate.
>
> In other words, they are unable to *walk the talk.*

Michael Ignatieff appears to be an atheist. His Liberal party is anti-Christian, anti-

marriage, anti-family, anti-liberty and anti-prosperity. I am surprised that *anyone* could vote for the Liberals, or worse, the New Democrats or the Bloc Quebecois. The left in Canada is hostile to publicly-expressed authentic Christianity *across the board*. The left is happy to violate the rights of authentic Christians in Canada.

Related posts

- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's university
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

Jennifer Roback Morse evaluates the economics of no-fault divorce

October 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Her post is here on the Ruth Institute blog.

Dr. J talks about the famous actor Alec Baldwin, and his experiences with the family court system in Los Angeles. She then transitions into some commentary on the work of Dr. Stephen Baskerville.

Excerpt:

> Baldwin does not discuss the ease of divorce ushered by the no-fault divorce revolution. Like most Americans, Baldwin has probably made peace with no-fault divorce, believing easy divorce to be an enhancement of individual liberty. But Baldwin's story of his life after Basinger decided she had no use for him illustrates that the opposite is more true. Easy divorce opens the door for an unprecedented amount of government intrusion into ordinary people's lives.
>
> …enforcing the divorce means an unprecedented blurring of the boundaries between public and private life. People under the jurisdiction of family courts can have virtually all of their private lives subject to its scrutiny. If the courts are influenced by feminist ideology, that ideology can extend its reach into every bedroom and kitchen in America. Baldwin ran the gauntlet of divorce industry professionals who have been deeply influenced by the feminist presumptions that the man is always at fault and the woman is always a victim. Thus, the social experiment of no-fault divorce, which most Americans thought was supposed to increase personal liberty, has had the consequence of empowering the state.

And then things get really interesting:

> Some might think the legacy of no-fault divorce is an example of the law of unintended consequences in operation. That assumes its architects did not intend for unilateral divorce to result in the expansion of the state. But Baskerville makes the case in this book—as well as his 2008 monograph, "The Dangerous Rise of Sexual Politics," in THE FAMILY IN AMERICA—that at least some of the advocates of changes in family law certainly have intended to expand the power of the state over the private lives of law-abiding citizens.
>
> Who are these people? They are the Marxists, who call themselves advocates of women: the feminists. Unbeknownst to the general public, the Marxists have had marriage in their cross-hairs from the very beginning.
>
> […] The goal is to return women into "social production" outside the home, where they can be completely independent of the oppression of men. This of course, requires the collective rearing of children. It also requires the obliteration of the distinction between the private sphere of the home and the public reach of

> the law.

Click here to read the rest. You know you want to!

It is especially important for unmarried women to understand how no-fault divorce laws and activist family courts dissuade men from marrying. My concern today is that the feminist ideology has become so entrenched that young women will drag themselves through the muck of the sexual revolution without even reflecting on how a string of drunken hook-ups destroys their innocence, vulnerability and capacity to trust and love.

This is not *just* bad for men, who will increasingly face financial ruin, and loss of access to their own children. No-fault divorce opens the door to totalitarian control of *men, women and children* by the state. Women who wish to marry and have children will find it increasingly difficult to find men willing to take the risk of marrying and raising children. Women need to consider the incentives created by a Marxist-feminist state.

I recommend to every man considering marriage to spend at least one day listening to family court trials. Then ask yourself. Is it worth it? Marriage may have made sense before feminism, but it makes no sense now. Why take the risk of being financially destroyed, separated from your own children, and possibly *imprisoned*? Wait until women turn away from feminism and clean up their mess. The risks are too great.

Florida judge rules that Rifqa Bary must return to her Muslim parents in Ohio

October 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T Jihad Watch via Andrew)

But with two conditions – so there is hope that she may yet live.

Excerpt:

> A Florida judge on Tuesday said Rifqa will be returned to Ohio once her parents meet two conditions. First, the Barys must [show] they are in the U.S. legally. The judge said he asked the couple for their immigration papers three months ago and has only seen a partial VISA and an incomplete passport. The judge said a contempt of court charge is a possibility if he doesn't get the paperwork.
>
> Second, the Barys must prove that the teenager can continue the virtual high school program she began in Florida while in Ohio.
>
> Bary's parents have filed a criminal complaint against the Central Florida pastors who assisted their daughter.

Pamela Geller at Atlas Shrugs was at the hearing and has more. Sounds like she will be returned to a foster home for 30 days and then sent back to her parents, unless the parents fail to meet the Florida judge's two conditions.

Obama advisor Robert Reich explains how government-run health care will let you die

October 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Who is Robert Reich and what is he up to? Verum Serum explains:

> Robert Reich, the former Secretary of Labor under Clinton and more recently an Obama economic adviser, has been all over the media lately shilling for ObamaCare. The public option is no more dangerous than a box of puppies according to this professionally produced video featuring Reich. (I won't embed it but it's worth a quick watch.) The real injustice, according to Reich, is that political operatives like us are trying to "confuse and scare" people about change.

But what was Robert Reich saying in 2007? Well he was explaining what a candidate for president would say if he wanted to tell the truth about health care. And what is the truth about health care, according to Robert Reich, who now works for Barack Obama?

Listen:

Say what? (H/T Newsbusters)

> Let me tell you a few things on health care. Look, we have the only health care system in the world that is designed to avoid sick people. **And that's true and what I'm going to do is that I am going try to reorganize it to be more amenable to treating sick people but that means you, particularly you young people, particularly you young healthy people…you're going to have to pay more.**
>
> "Thank you. And by the way, we're going to have to, **if you're very old, we're not going to give you all that technology and all those drugs for the last couple of years of your life to keep you maybe going for another couple of months. It's too expensive…so we're going to let you die."**
>
> "Also, I'm going to use the bargaining leverage of the federal government in terms of Medicare, Medicaid—we already have a lot of bargaining leverage—to force drug companies and insurance companies and medical suppliers to reduce their costs. **What that means, less innovation and that means less new products and less new drugs on the market which means you are probably not going to live much longer than your parents.** Thank you."

So let's see. Young, healthy people (like me) will pay more. Old, retired people like my parents will be murdered by death panels. And health care innovators and insurance providers will be run out of business, which reduces quality and raises costs. Well, OK, then. So now we understand what Obama's socialized takeover of health care would really accomplish from the mouth of his own advisor.

I note that Hot Air has a video of Reich explaining all his previous opinions away.

Obama vows to repeal Defense of Marriage Act in speech to gay activists

October 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at LifeSiteNews.

Excerpt:

> In his speech to the homosexualist Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Saturday evening, President Obama again professed loyalty to the homosexual agenda and criticized people who hold to "old attitudes" about homosexuality. The President also vowed to repeal the "so-called Defense of Marriage Act" and praised the U.S. House's approval of homosexual hate crimes legislation on Thursday.
>
> […]"Despite the real gains that we've made, there's still laws to change and there's still hearts to open," Obama told the cheering crowd.
>
> "There are still fellow citizens, perhaps neighbors, even loved ones — good and decent people — who hold fast to outworn arguments and old attitudes; who fail to see your families like their families; who would deny you the rights most Americans take for granted. And that's painful and it's heartbreaking."
>
> […]On Saturday, President Obama called the movement's quest to normalize homosexuality on various fronts a quest for "basic equality."
>
> "I'm here with a simple message: I'm here with you in that fight," he said.
>
> Obama also praised the passage of homosexual hate crimes legislation in a House defense policy bill on Thursday, and said he was preparing to sign the law after it passes Congress.
>
> […]Addressing the lobby's concern over Obama's perceived lack of zeal in dismantling federal marriage laws and other such issues, Obama said Saturday: "I also appreciate that many of you don't believe progress has come fast enough. I want to be honest about that, because it's important to be honest among friends."
>
> He assured the group that "my commitment to you is unwavering," and pointed out that he has called on Congress to "repeal the so-called Defense of Marriage Act."
>
> […]The President expressed broad support for HRC's mission to drastically alter America's cultural perception of marriage and the family.
>
> "My expectation is that when you look back on these years, you will see … a time in which we as a nation finally recognize relationships between two men or two women as just as real and admirable as relationships between a man and a woman," said Obama.

LifeSiteNews also reports on the new hate crime bill. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> The United States Senate approved an amendment yesterday adding "hate crimes" legislation to the annual Defense Authorization bill, which would add "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to the list of federally-protected classes.
>
> […]Critics have warned that the bill has a chilling effect on religious free speech against homosexuality, pointing out that similar laws in other nations have facilitated the prosecution of Christians who speak against homosexuality, particularly in Canada and the United Kingdom. More importantly, they charge, "hate crimes" laws violate the guarantees of equal protection under the law by creating preferential classes for justice.
>
> "'Hate crimes' laws contradict the 14th Amendment to the Constitution and create unequal justice by elevating some groups of victims at the expense of others," said Wendy Wright, president of Concerned Women for America. Wright pointed out that under the proposed law, "Victims who engage in homosexual, transgender, or other sexual behavior get special treatment over victims who are military officers, police officers or veterans," such as the military recruiter who was slain in June by a Muslim convert at a shopping mall in Little Rock, Arkansas.

This is what the many Christians who voted for Obama have achieved. They voted to "tax the rich" and to "bring the troops home" based on ignorance of economics and foreign policy. But what they achieved was the silencing of Christian moral convictions on marriage and family in the public square. And the children who will now be raised without mothers or fathers will reap the whirlwind.

Here's a refresher on why people oppose same-sex marriage.

Is it necessary to use words to preach the gospel?

October 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Pugnacious Irishman has some thoughts on it.

Here's the problem he ran into at church last week:

> The message today was a message that contradicts the biblical witness, yet it is a message I hear frequently in the 21st century. I cannot see Jesus proclaiming the message that was proclaimed today.
>
> […]Our pastor's main intention was to press home that our actions need to match our beliefs.
>
> […]Things started going off the rails, though, when a very obvious second message was proclaimed: the whole "actions-proclamation" dichotomy.
>
> […]Here's why I say that: I thought I was just reading into the message, but that was put to rest when I heard the worship leader's application: "go out and proclaim the gospel at all times. Use words if necessary." He got it loud and clear. When we got to my car, my wife, who is not an apologetics freak like myself (she's normal, *thank God*!), turned to me and said, "I know what his intentions were, but do you get the notion that he was saying that you don't need to talk to others about Jesus?"

Go here to read Rich's answer to the problem.

I will surprise *no one* by stating that it is impossible to preach the gospel without using words, which is why Jesus used them, and why we have people writing letters, preaching sermons and disputing in public throughout the New Testament. In fact, it is literally impossible for someone to be saved without hearing about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The propositional content about these events is *required*, not optional.

Basically, the message of Christianity is that we are all sinful, and in need of a Lord and Savior so that we can be rightly related to God again. Works are just epiphenomena that occur after you have already been saved, showing that you really are saved. The message of the feminized church, on the other hand, is "do nice things because it makes you feel good, and it makes other people feel good – and that's what Christianity is about". So, saying things that make non-Christians feel bad, or that imply that they should be studying to change their beliefs is intolerant or harassment or a hate-crime.

Well, I haven't been snarky, since, oh… *yesterday.* So let me tell you exactly why people in the feminized church emphasize actions instead of words, by referring to some of my favorite posts from way back when the blog started. That way, all you new readers can read stuff from back when I actually wrote really good posts on Christian apologetics, instead of really bad posts on politics.

Here are some of my thoughts on why people in church want to do nice things instead of

telling others the good news and defending it against attacks. (If you only have time to read *one of them* read this one)

- People in church today think that the Bible teaches that faith is not grounded on rational arguments and evidence.
- People in church think all religions are the same – they all have the same goal and none is really exclusively true.
- People in church think that any religion is valid if it makes people do nice things and feel happy feelings.
- People in church think that religions are just personal preferences and cannot be tested to see if they are true.
- People in church don't really believe that it is a sin not to know God's existence and character, so they don't even try.
- People in church don't really believe in Hell, so there is no reason to be urgent about telling others about Christ.
- People in church believe that the purpose of Christianity is to make them act nicely and have happy feelings.
- People in church don't believe that God feels bad when his reputation is maligned in public by non-Christians.
- People in church struggle to work Christianity into conversations in the places they live and work.

After decades of violent atheistic repression, Chinese youth embracing Christianity

October 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the National Post. (H/T No Apologies via Andrew)

Excerpt:

> It is when Rev. Ezra Jin says there are about 3,000 underground Protestant church services being celebrated around the Chinese capital on this bright autumn Sunday, that you begin to get an idea of the leap of faith that is happening in this decidedly atheist country. Rev. Ezra is happily chatting in advance of his second service of the day at Beijing Zion Church, a grandiose name for the series of large and small conference rooms he presides over. They are located above a karaoke bar in an old-fashioned hotel deep in the Beijing suburbs. His is what is called a "house church." It is not sanctioned by the Communist government, hence it is not legal. But as sometimes happens in China, it is tolerated – for the moment, anyway.
>
> "For a long time, the government cracked down on house churches. But recently the situation changed," he explained. "It has started to face up to the existence of house churches and make an effort to establish a formal relationship with them." It's not a perfect situation, he admits, but a vast improvement to what it was. "Ten years ago, house churches, like ours, wouldn't dare to think they could have such a large space to develop," he said. In recent years, "house" Protestants have been harassed, fined, beaten by police and even jailed for the temerity of shunning the officially sanctioned churches and starting their own.
>
> […]"After 1949 [when the Communist Party came to power], all the old beliefs were cracked apart," he says. "Then there was the Cultural Revolution and the ideals of Communism fell apart, too. So, all Chinese people just looked to money then. But in fact money couldn't satisfy their spiritual needs."
>
> The breakdown in the national value systems led to "a crisis in belief," he said, a void that religion is increasingly filling for many people.
>
> Rev. Ezra notes that ancient Taoism and Buddhism are also experiencing a revival in China at the moment, but that Christianity, particularly Protestantism, is expanding the fastest of all.
>
> […]But from a congregation of "a dozen people in 2007," Rev. Ezra now boasts 600 parishioners, a Sunday school, a marriage counselling service and a regime to train disciples to help with the parish work.
>
> He is both enthusiastic and optimistic about what the future holds.
>
> "Abroad is in what we call the post-religious era. But it is just the opposite here in

> China," he said. "When the ideals of Communism were spent after 30 years, religion started to rejuvenate. Today it is an explosion that will last another 20 to 30 years. Religion will incrementally affect all of Chinese society."

Read the rest here.

What are the effects of Nancy Pelosi's proposed national sales tax?

October 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Watch this video by libertarian Dan Mitchell of the Cato Institute. (H/T Power Line via ECM)

I normally don't like these Dan Mitchell videos, but this one is better than the others I've seen at giving you a great introduction to so many useful topics.

The national sales tax would be a GREAT idea, if we went on to remove an equivalent amount of revenue from the income tax. It's much better to tax consumption than productive work. But that's *not* what the Democrats want to do with this value-added tax. They want *both* income *and* consumption taxes, so they get a new revenue stream and more money to *buy votes* from their favorite special interest groups.

Here is a Wall Street Journal article about the Democrats' proposed VAT.

Excerpt:

> The allure of a VAT for politicians is that it applies to every level of production or service, rakes in piles of money, and is largely hidden from those who ultimately pay it—namely, consumers. With a $9 trillion 10-year budget deficit, $4 trillion in spending in fiscal 2010 alone, and a $1 trillion (at a minimum) health-care entitlement in the wings, Mrs. Pelosi knows that not even the revenue from the expiration of the lower Bush tax rates in 2011 will cover the bills. Nearly every European country that has passed national health care has also eventually imposed a VAT, and it's foolish to think the U.S. will be different.

Tax and spend.

MUST-SEE: Michele Bachmann explains why the US dollar is in serious trouble

October 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am pleased as punch to present you with the first *high-resolution* video of Michele Bachmann!

You can click here for her video blog, where you'll find more videos.

You can read the most recent post I wrote about her, which includes links to some of her best speeches, photos and interviews.

Please contribute to her 2010 campaign, if you can.

Vending machine snacks to be made healthier with 373M of stimulus money

October 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Examiner. (H/T Big Government via ECM)

Excerpt:

> First Lady Michelle Obama visited the headquarters of the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington Tuesday. She devoted much of her talk to "the growing threat of obesity, particularly childhood obesity" in the United States, and she touted HHS's recently-announced plan to spend $373 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act on plans to, among other things, improve the healthfulness of foods in vending machines.

> The first lady did not discuss how such work might stimulate the economy or speed economic recovery. But she had glowing praise for the stimulus' role in fighting obesity. "Congress and the president included $1 billion for prevention and wellness programs in the Recovery Act," she told the crowd of cheering DHS workers, "and that includes funding for initiatives that will give communities the resources they need to address the obesity epidemic in their communities. This includes $373 million announced last month that would be available for communities that put together comprehensive plans to reduce obesity –- $373 million — and that would include everything from incentivizing grocery stores to locate in underserved areas; it could include improving meals at school; to getting more healthy, affordable foods into vending machines; to creating more safe, accessible places for people to exercise and play; and a whole lot more."

How does this stimulate the economy? I understand how it allows socialists like Michelle Obama to primp and preen in front of crowds and cameras, but how does it help unemployed Americans to earn a paycheck?

Some good news for the two jailed Iranian Christian women

October 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Update to the story from the Christian Post.

Excerpt:

> An Iranian judge charged two jailed female converts with "crimes" of apostasy and propagation of the Christian faith, a human rights group reported.
>
> Washington D.C.-based International Christian Concern said it has learned from Elam ministries in Iran Wednesday that Maryam Rustampoor and Marzieh Amirizadeh were unexpectedly taken to appear before the court Tuesday morning and were formally charged by the judge.
>
> […]However, in a positive development, the report said, the judge had dropped the earlier charge of anti-state activities. Their case has now been transferred from the revolutionary court to the regular courts. The women and their lawyer are pleased with this development, it stated.

> The two converts were arrested on March 5 for leaving Islam and embracing Christianity. They were placed in a solitary confinement in the infamous Evin prison, deprived of medical attention and often blindfolded during interrogations for several hours over the course of five months without being charged.
>
> Iranian officials accused them of "anti-state activities" following their conversion from Islam to Christianity. After five months, they were tried on August 9 by the revolutionary court and ordered to recant their faith in Christ which they said they will never do. The women remained in prison until they appeared again in court on Tuesday when they were finally charged.
>
> Elam ministries said both of them are in poor health. On October 4, Rustampoor suffered severe food poisoning and was given medical attention after much insistence.
>
> In an interview with the Voice of America Persian News Network, Rustampoor and Amirizadeh's lawyer said, "My clients are not prepared to lie about their faith under any condition."

Please pray for these two brave women as often as you can, and don't forget to pray for Rifqa Bary, as well.

Peter Atkins explains how to easily reconcile the Big Bang and atheism

October 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's easy! Just watch the video of his debate with William Lane Craig, who responds to Atkins' explanation.

So, just who is this Peter Atkins, and why is he a good spokesman for atheism?

From his Wikipedia bio.

Peter William Atkins (born August 10, 1940) is an English chemist and a fellow and professor of chemistry at Lincoln College of the University of Oxford. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, 8th ed. (with Julio de Paula of Haverford College), *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*, 4th ed. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.

[…]Atkins is a well-known atheist and supporter of many of Richard Dawkins' ideas. He has written and spoken on issues of humanism, atheism, and what he sees as the incompatibility between science and religion. According to Atkins, whereas religion scorns the power of human comprehension, science respects it.

[…]He was the first Senior Member for the Oxford Secular Society and an Honorary Associate of the National Secular Society. He is also a member of the Advisory Board of The Reason Project, a US-based charitable foundation devoted to spreading scientific knowledge and secular values in society. The organisation is led by fellow atheist and author Sam Harris.

Peter Atkins thinks that nothing exists. He thinks he doesn't exist. He thinks that you don't exist.

If you watch the debate in full, he also argues that objective morality doesn't exist, and that moral values and moral obligations are *illusory*. That's right: a*theists cannot even make rational statements about morality because there is no such thing as an objective moral standard.* This is *in addition* to denying the science of the creation out of nothing.

You can watch the whole debate here, posted by ChristianJR4.

And now you know why atheists like Richard Dawkins run away from debates with Christians like Stephen C. Meyer and William Lane Craig. Because he's an atheist, and it is very difficult to defend atheism, on the merits. Atheism's appeal is entirely psychological, not rational.

Consider this quote from an honest, respectable atheist philosopher named Thomas Nagel:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political

> influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

People embrace atheism for entirely psychological reasons, not on the basis of arguments and evidence. If they had the arguments and evidence, then they wouldn't run from debates like Richard Dawkins does.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper polling in majority territory in Canada

October 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's a Parliamentary system, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper's currently has a minority government.

But check out the latest poll results from Dr. Roy:

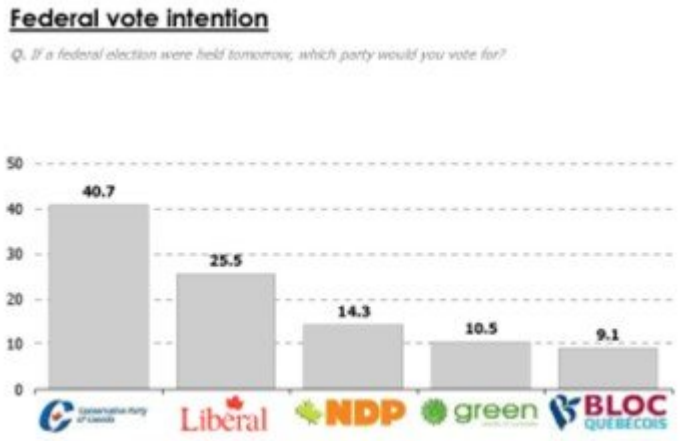

(Click to see enlarged image from CBC)

About the Ekos poll, courtesy of the National Post:

> The polling firm this morning reported that the Tories have 40.7% support among Canadians, pushing the party past the symbolic 40% mark and into majority government territory if an election was held now (which it won't be). The Liberals trail with 25.5% support, with the NDP a distant third at 14.3%. Ekos says the Conservatives are "comprehensively ahead."
>
> The results put the Conservatives up a full percentage point over the polling firm's results last week, while the Liberals, NDP and Bloc are slightly down. (Interestingly, the Greens are slightly up, with 10.5% support; they were at 9.7% last week.)
>
> "The Liberals are under siege everywhere they turn," Frank Graves, president of EKOS, said in a statement. "Even new Canadians, under- 25 Canadians, and the university-educated appear to be turning against them. Most stunning of all, the Conservatives now have a lead among women of almost 11 percentage points."
>
> The telephone survey was conducted between Oct. 7 and Oct. 13, 2009, for CBC. It included 2,729 Canadians and is considered accurate within 1.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The PDF of the poll is here.

There are a total of 308 seats, and Harper needs 155 to have a majority. The projection from this poll that the Conservatives would get more than 155 seats, and get their majority, if the election were held today. Anything better than 40% usually means a

majority.

To compare, here are the results from the last federal election, held on October 14, 2008:

- The Grown-Ups (Conservatives) got 37.7%
- The Socialists (Liberals) got 26.3%
- The English Communists (New Democrats) got 18.8%
- The Green Communists (Greens) got 6.8%
- The French Communists (Bloc Quebecois) got 10.0%

Here's a map that show who voted for whom:

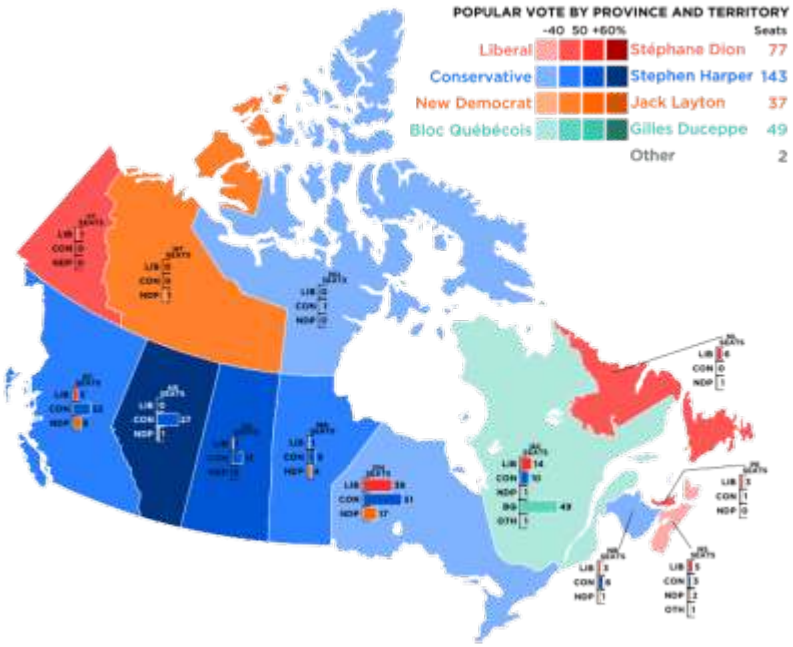

A "minority" government means that you need the support from another party to get over the 155 barrier so that you can pass a piece of legislation.

MUST-READ: Mexico shuts down government-owned utility and lays off entire union

October 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The Mexican president shut down a money-losing state-owned electrical utility, taking a labor union down with it. The union is howling, but the shutdown is one of the best things to happen to Mexico.
>
> For months, the SME union had been trying to intimidate Felipe Calderon into continuing to subsidize the Luz y Fuerza del Centro electrical distributor, even as its $16 billion in revenue didn't come close to its $32 billion in salaries and pension costs.
>
> And why not? The union had done the same thing to all the other reform-minded Mexican presidents and saw all of them back off.
>
> But it didn't have a clue about Calderon, a former energy minister who on Sept. 24 warned the union to cut costs or else. The union ignored the warning and tried to intimidate Calderon with political tactics, whipping up fear that he intended to privatize the utility. Calderon had a better idea: shut down the utility.
>
> The stunning decision to disband the company and lay off 44,000 workers effectively ends the SME union.

Yes, he's a conservative.

Check out the effects:

> It took just hours for Mexico's peso to rise on news that a huge financial burden had been lifted from the government. Luz y Fuerza del Centro was a money pit that cost the government $42 billion a year in subsidies. Analysts said the shutdown would save $25 billion — enough to enable the government to scrap a

> planned 2% tax hike.
>
> The improved fiscal picture will keep interest rates in place and avert a ratings downgrade. All of this increases Mexican purchasing power, helps the government finance itself and releases money for lending and investment in a new economy.

Read the whole article. *He sent in troops.*

It's a proud day for Mexico. Like Canada, Mexico is on the way up. But the United States is on the way down. Canada elected a conservative, and Mexico elected a conservative. Only the United States was blind and ignorant enough to elect a radical socialist.

One other thing: I was having lunch with one of my agnostic co-workers today, who was following this story. He was concerned that Mexico would start up a *new* company to take the place of the old, inefficient one. But that is not the case. The Mexican government has decided to liquidate the inefficient company and pass its customers to another firm.

Action required: Petition to restore freedom of speech in Canada

October 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sent to me by Blazing Cat Fur and Andrew.

As you know, freedom of speech is an essential characteristic of a free society. In Canada, however, this freedom has been under attack in recent years under the pretext of protecting and promoting human rights. Laws that prohibit the free expression of opinion undermine the very foundations of a free and tolerant society and are, therefore, illegitimate and must be abolished.

http://www.policystudies.ca/ has just launched an online petition calling on lawmakers at all levels of government in Canada examine legislation within their jurisdiction intended to protect and promote human rights, and to remove those provisions that prohibit or otherwise limit the free and sincere expression of opinion.

Please take a minute to sign this petition yourself and email it to your friends and family for their signature as well. You can do so now by clicking on the following link or by cutting and pasting the url into your browser.You can also post the link to social networking sites like facebook or in any forum you regularly visit.

Let’s see how many signatures we can gather on this important issue.

Defend Free Speech
We the undersigned call on lawmakers at all levels of government in Canada to:
A) Examine all legislation within their jurisdiction intended to protect and promote human rights, and

B) To amend said legislation to remove those provisions that prohibit or otherwise limit the free and sincere expression of opinion.

http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/defend-freedom-of-speech-in-canada.html

Michele Bachmann in defense of free trade agreements

October 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

ECM sends word of a Michele Bachmann column posted at the Heritage Foundation!

Excerpt:

> Each day in Minnesota and all across the nation, billions of dollars worth of products begin their journey to be sold overseas. American farmers, manufacturers, and businesses rely on exports to strengthen and grow both their bottom line, as well as our economy's.
>
> Free and fair trade agreements help spur economic growth; improve efficiency and innovation; create better, higher-paying jobs for hard-working Americans; and increase the availability of lower-priced products here in the United States.
>
> Furthermore, the role of free trade as an expression of liberty and opportunity for all individuals signifies the very principles our country was founded upon.
>
> Yet, the free trade agreements with Panama, South Korea and Colombia negotiated under the Bush Administration remain little more than words on paper. Despite having been carefully negotiated over a period of two and half years, these agreements have become bogged down by partisan divides. In the meantime, with an average tariff of 53% imposed on U.S. agricultural products by South Korea last year, for example, there is little wonder the United States International Trade Commission estimates U.S. sales of agricultural products

> could increase by as much as $3.8 billion once the U.S.–South Korea agreement is fully implemented.And while Congressional leaders seem content to leave these agreements on the back burner, America's fragile industries are left hanging in the balance. The impact of depressed exports is fully evident to those who make their livelihood from them. In fact, Minnesota's manufacturing exports experienced a 19% decline during the first quarter of 2009, mirroring a similar decrease nationwide. And our agricultural sector, especially our ailing pork and dairy producers, certainly needs no reminder of the importance of expanded export channels to the survival of their farms.

Click through and read the whole thing.

Reading this column filled me with joy and admiration, because Michele Bachmann shows how good a Christian woman can be if she puts her mind to it. It's so good that she has an informed view of economic policy and realizes how prosperity is important to Christians who are trying to marry and raise a family. Money is the fuel we use to run our life plans, so we all need to have jobs and to make sure that our dollar buys as many useful things as possible, by keeping prices low.

Here are my recent posts on Michele Bachmann:

- MUST-SEE: Michele Bachmann explains why the US dollar is in serious trouble
- Congresswoman Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar
- Hot Air and Michelle Malkin post new video of Michele Bachmann's town hall
- New Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- MUST-READ: Michele Bachmann open to running for President in 2012!

You can click here for her video blog.

Please contribute to her 2010 campaign, if you can.

Here are all the posts tagged "Michele Bachmann".

New Alfonzo Rachel video

By the way, for my female readers, the male equivalent of Michele Bachmann is Alfonzo Rachel. You can see his latest video which explains why Christianity is not compatible with socialism. He's a devout Christian and he understands economics. He also is very entertaining in these videos he makes for PJTV.

Obama’s communications director admires communist who murdered 70 million

October 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Newsbusters.

Obama’s White House communications director Anita Dunn says that she admires Mao Tse Tung.

She says:

> “A lot of you have a great deal of ability,” Dunn said. “A lot of you work hard. Put them together and that answers the ‘why not’ question. There’s usually not a good reason and then the third lesson and tip actually comes from two of my favorite political philosophers – Mao Tse Tung and Mother Teresa, not often coupled with each other but the two people that I turn to most to basically deliver a simple point, which is you’re going to make choices.”

Mao Tse Tung was an atheist, and a communist. The choice he made was to murder 70 million innocent people.

Friday night funny: peace prize song, crooks in Congress, cockatiel tricks

October 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Steven Crowder's Nobel Peace Prize song:

The cameo appearance by Zo made me laugh out loud.

How to fix Congress

Bill Whittle has a funny plan to fix the crooks in Congress.

Atheist and the bear

ECM sent me this joke about atheists:

A man was walking one night through the woods.
'What majestic trees!
'What powerful rivers!
'What beautiful animals!
He said to himself.

As he was walking alongside the river, he heard a rustling in the bushes behind him.

He turned to look. He saw a 7-foot grizzly bear charge towards him.

He ran as fast as he could up the path. He looked over his shoulder and saw that the bear was closing in on him.

He looked over his shoulder again, and the bear was even closer.

He tripped and fell to the ground.

He rolled over to pick himself up but saw that the bear was right on top of him, reaching for him with his left paw & raising his right paw to strike him.

At that instant the Atheist cried out,
'Oh my God!'

Time Stopped.
The bear froze.
The forest was silent.

As a bright light shone upon the man, a voice came out of the sky.

'You deny my existence for all these years, teach others I don't exist and even credit creation to cosmic accident.
Do you expect me to help you out of this predicament?

Am I to count you as a believer?'

The atheist looked directly into the light, 'It would be hypocritical of me to suddenly ask you to treat me as a Christian now, but perhaps you could make the BEAR a Christian?'

'Very well,' said the voice.

The light went out. The sounds of the forest resumed. And the bear dropped his right

paw, brought both paws together, bowed his head & spoke:

‘Lord bless this food, which I am about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord, Amen.’

I don’t like bears, (because they’ll eat me), but this was really funny.

Ronald Reagan

Ronald Reagan answers a question from the left-wing media: (H/T IHateTheMedia.com)

Cockatiel tricks

Can you train a cockatiel to do tricks?

Happy Friday!

Why the Democrats won't reform medical malpractice laws

October 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the USA, doctors are sued all the time by patients for "medical malpractice". Sometimes the lawsuits have merit and sometimes they don't. But because the payoffs are so high, plaintiffs have every reason to sue. Doctors must carry expensive insurance against frivolous lawsuits, and they also perform many unnecessary tests and procedures to reduce their exposure to potential lawsuits. This raises the cost of health care.

Consider this Wall Street Journal article.

Excerpt:

> Eliminating defensive medicine could save upwards of $200 billion in health-care costs annually, according to estimates by the American Medical Association and others. The cure is a reliable medical malpractice system that patients, doctors and the general public can trust.
>
> But this is the one reform Washington will not seriously consider. That's because the trial lawyers, among the largest contributors to the Democratic Party, thrive on the unreliable justice system we have now.

Consider how this affects obstetricians:

> Former [Democrat] Sen. John Edwards, for example, made a fortune bringing 16 cases against hospitals for babies born with cerebral palsy. Each of those tragic cases was worth millions in settlement. But according to a 2006 study at the National Institutes of Health, in nine out of 10 cases of cerebral palsy nothing done by a doctor could have caused the condition.
>
> Unreliable justice is like pouring acid over the culture of health care. One in 10 obstetricians have stopped delivering babies, unable to pay malpractice premiums on the order of $1,000 per baby, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). Some hospitals, including Methodist Hospital and Chestnut Hill Hospital in Philadelphia, have stopped delivering babies altogether; and the number of unnecessary caesarian sections have increased to the detriment of the health of mothers, according to the ACOG.

Read the whole thing.

Unfortunately for us, some trial lawyers pay a lot of money to Democrats to make sure that their activities will not be curtailed by legislation. And the Democrats dance to their tune. I cannot for the life of me figure out why doctors continue to provide medical care to these medical malpractice lawyers.

Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?

October 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Big Government. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> In case you haven't heard, the state of Hawaii, facing the same type of budget crunch as other state governments, has to cut more than $400 million from its education budget over the next two years. Logically, that would lead to some teacher layoffs in a number of school districts.
>
> But the Hawaii State Teachers Association has a better idea. It wants to adopt a four-day school week, with unpaid "furlough Fridays," to avoid any layoffs. In other words, the teachers are willing to sacrifice one-fifth of their students' education to keep the paychecks rolling in.
>
> The idea is apparently catching on in other states, as well.
>
> The union's perogative of "no lay-offs" is clearly self-serving. Our organization, Education Action Group Foundation, which is based in Michigan, has estimated that 2,500 school layoffs in Michigan equals about a $1 million hit to the Michigan Education Association in terms of dues. When a state is talking about significantly more than that, one can see why the union doesn't want layoffs.

The union needs those dues to help elect Democrats, who will then turn around and block competition from homeschoolers and private schools. This way, parents are powerless to choose a better way to have their children educated the way they choose.

How Texas cut costs by reforming medical malpractice suits

October 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's some great news from the conservative state of Texas. (H/T Caffeinated Thoughts)

Excerpt:

> The Texas Legislature in 2003 adopted sweeping changes to its civil justice system that significantly altered when, where and how many lawsuits could be filed. In the medical malpractice area, those reforms were basically threefold.
>
> […]First, to sustain a lawsuit against the medical care provider, an expert report was required within 120 days of filing the suit stating that the doctor being sued committed a medical error that caused injuries.
>
> […]Second, noneconomic damages were capped to control arbitrary awards on pain and suffering or loss of consortium.
>
> […]The third significant tort reform was to prohibit the introduction into evidence of phantom damages.
>
> […]These common-sense reforms have led to a massive increase in the accessibility of health care in Texas, huge growth in the capital infrastructure of hospitals and clinics, hundreds of millions of dollars more each year in charity care and Texas' adding more than 16,000 new doctors in just six years.
>
> And in reducing the actual number of suits to those in which claims are meritorious — a recent Harvard study concluded that up to 85% of all lawsuits brought against medical providers were frivolous — we have created a more equitable system of justice.

I wish I lived in Texas – that's a real red state, except for stupid Austin. By the way, I got this story out of the round-up at Caffeinated Thoughts. There are couple of great articles in there, like one on the North Korean gulags. It's worth a look. Shane always links to very interesting articles.

Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2008?

October 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this analysis from a left-wing site of the 2008 election.

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, the nation made history. It made history in electing the first African American president; it made history in building a bigger margin for the first female Speaker of the House; it made history in delivering the biggest Democratic margin since 1964; it made history in sending a record number of people to the polls and the highest percentage turnout since the 1960 election.
>
> […]But one thing is immediately clear. Unmarried women played a pivotal role in making this history and in changing this nation. They delivered a stunning 70 to 29 percent margin to Barack Obama and delivered similarly strong margins in races for Congress and the U.S. Senate. Although unmarried women have voted Democratic consistently since marital status has been was tracked, this election represents the highest margin recorded and a 16-point net gain at the Presidential level from 2004.

In particular, note the chart that shows that younger unmarried women voted 77-22 for Obama. *77-22 for Obama*. This is actually in keeping with my previous post on this topic, which documented how women have continuously voted for bigger and bigger government since they started voting. The problem with big government policies is that they drain money from the family which is then redistributed outside of the family.

To have a strong family, you need more than just money. You need independence so that you can keep your vision distinct and separate from the vision of the government. If a family depends on the government, then they are beholden to the government's values. The government can even overrule conscience rights and religious liberty. Keeping the family strong and separate from government is especially important for Christian parents who have a specific goal of passing on their faith to their children.

Here are just a few of the things I thought of that help make a marriage strong: (there are many more)

- low taxes so the household has more money to spend on the things we need for our plan
- access to low cost energy provided by domestic energy production by private firms
- access to low cost, high quality consumer goods through increased free trade
- the ability to choose homeschooling or private schools (and the more school choice, the better)
- the ability to fund a retirement plan that covers the family – not anyone else

- the ability to purchase a health care plan that covers the family – not anyone else
- the ability to own firearms for protection of the home and the family
- the ability to pass Christian convictions on to children without interference from the state
- the ability to speak and act as a Christian in public without reprisals from secular left special interest groups
- low threat of being the victim of criminal activity
- low threat of being bankrupted by the costs of divorce court
- low threat of being arrested on a false domestic violence charge (e.g. – verbal abuse)
- low threat of never seeing your children because of loss of custody after a divorce
- low threat of being imprisoned due to failure to pay alimony and child support after a job loss

It seems to me that a vote for Obama is a vote against all of these things. So then why did unmarried women (especially Christian women) vote for him? It seems as thought they are less interested in marriage and family and more interested in having the government provide incentives for anti-child, anti-family behaviors like pre-marital sex, contraceptives, abortions, welfare for single mothers, divorce courts, government coercion of husbands, state-run day-care, government-run schools, in-vitro fertilization, etc. I don't mind if people need these things, but they should pay for it themselves. but I don't see why unmarried women should favor family money being spent on government programs that help other people to avoid the cost and consequences of their own decisions.

Canadian Human Rights Commissions continue war on Christians

October 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The Alberta Human Rights Commission has accepted a complaint brought against an Edmonton-area Catholic school board by a substitute teacher who was let go after she announced she was 'becoming' a man.
>
> Janet Buterman, 39, had been employed by the Greater St. Albert Catholic School Board for about four months when, in June 2008, she informed deputy superintendent Steve Bayus that she was undergoing a 'sex change' and now wished to be treated as a man.
>
> […]Buterman maintains that she has a legitimate medical condition – gender identity disorder – and that the board has discriminated against her because of it.
>
> […]In Buterman's opinion, the Catholic board does not have the right to let their beliefs enter decisions about employment. "It appears to me they think they have a right to make employment decisions based on claims, tenets of faith," she told the Edmonton Journal. "From my perspective, as a public employer, they do not."
>
> Buterman filed the complaint on October 1st, and the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission has accepted it on the grounds of medical disability, physical disability, and gender.

and one more:

> The Alberta Catholic school board is not the only one coming under fire for upholding its Catholic faith. An Ontario board was the subject of a human rights complaint last month because of its decision not to hire a non-Catholic. In that case, the school board is asserting its right to hire teachers that espouse the Catholic values they are aiming to instil in their students.

Similar to what Obama is doing down here to Catholic schools.

Related posts

- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's university
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care

October 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Times. (H/T The American Thinker via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The National Health Service has spent £1.5m paying for hundreds of its staff to have private health treatment so they can leapfrog their own waiting lists.
> More than 3,000 staff, including doctors and nurses, have gone private at the taxpayers' expense in the past three years because the queues at the clinics and hospitals where they work are too long.
> Figures released under the Freedom of Information act show that NHS administrative staff, paramedics and ambulance drivers have also been given free private healthcare. This has covered physiotherapy, osteopathy, psychiatric care and counselling – all widely available on the NHS.
>
> […]The health department defended the practice and said sending doctors, nurses and other key staff for private treatment helped to get them back to work.

This is actually standard for socialized medicine. In Canada, leftists fly to the United States for health care. They know they've wrecked the Canadian system. It's like Barack Obama and public school teachers sending their own children to private schools. It's just hypocrisy.

Sarah Palin’s latest post explains the Democrat health bill

October 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sarah Palin’s latest article is short and powerful.

My biggest problem with socialized medicine is that I will be forced to buy a policy when I never go to the doctor for anything. If I had to pay thousands of dollars per year for my entire career to pay everyone else’s contraceptives, abortions, in vitro fertlizations, drug needles, heroine, sex changes, etc., then I would have even less money for things that I want to do. And Sarah Palin understands that the Democrat bill does indeed force people like me to pay for everyone else’s decisions.

Sarah Palin explains:

> The bill prohibits insurance companies from refusing coverage to people with pre-existing conditions and from charging sick people higher premiums. [1] It attempts to offset the costs this will impose on insurance companies by requiring everyone to purchase coverage, which in theory would expand the pool of paying policy holders.
>
> However, the maximum fine for those who refuse to purchase health insurance is $750. [2] Even factoring in government subsidies, the cost of purchasing a plan is much more than $750. The result: many people, especially the young and healthy, will simply not buy coverage, choosing to pay the fine instead. They’ll wait until they’re sick to buy health insurance, confident in the knowledge that insurance companies can’t deny them coverage. Such a scenario is a perfect storm for increasing the cost of health care and creating an unsustainable mandate program.

To me, that $750 is nothing but a tax increase to pay for all this new spending on government-run health care.

Another problem with the Democrat bill is that it drives the cost of insurance premiums through the roof while destroying the development new drugs and medical innovations.

Sarah Palin writes:

> The plan will also impose heavy taxes on insurers, pharmaceutical companies, medical device companies, and clinical labs. [3] The result of all of these taxes is clear. As Douglas Holtz-Eakin noted in the *Wall Street Journal*, these new taxes “will be passed on to consumers by either directly raising insurance premiums, or by fueling higher health-care costs that inevitably lead to higher premiums.” [4] Unfortunately, it will lead to lower wages too, as employees will have to sacrifice a greater percentage of their paychecks to cover these higher premiums. [5] In other words, if the Democrats succeed in overhauling health care, we’ll all bear the costs. The Senate Finance bill is effectively a middle class tax increase, and

> as Holtz-Eakin points out, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation those making less than $200,000 will be hit hardest. [6]

She also gives her ideas for reforming health care at the end of the piece: choice and competition. There are 17 footnotes to back up all her facts.

British Muslims explaining what they'll do to Geert Wilders and the world

October 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Gates of Vienna.

Wilders made the movie "Fitna" which address the connection between Islam and violence. The Muslims are very angry that he has been allowed in to the UK, so they are protesting him. You can see the angry mob in the video below.

Here's something one of the British Muslims in the video says:

> No matter where he runs, this dog, Islam will be implemented, so he can go and crawl under any rock in Europe, but no, Islam will come, and it will conquer the UK, it will conquer Holland, it will conquer Rome, it will conquer the world!

Meanwhile, Obama fusses over global warming.

Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients

October 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two kinds of stem-cell research. The first kind is called embryonic stem-cell research (ESCR). This kind is opposed by pro-lifers because it kills unborn persons by extracting their stem cells for use in medical research. The second kind is called adult stem-cell research (ASCR). This kind is supported by pro-lifers.

You may be surprised to know that ESCR doesn't work as nearly as well as ASCR. Despite all the advocacy from left-wing Hollywood actors, ESCR has not helped a single patient. But ASCR in being used for 73 different kinds of therapies, and it keeps getting better and better. Here's the latest scientific discovery in ASCR.

Story from Wayne State University, which made the discovery. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A new study by a Wayne State University School of Medicine researcher details the outcome of adult stem cell grafts in spinal cord injuries and how the procedure led to increased mobility and quality of life for patients.
>
> Associate Professor **Jean Peduzzi-Nelson** of the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology conducted the study, "Olfactory Mucosal Autografts and Rehabilitation for Chronic Traumatic Spinal Cord Injury," which was published online in the journal *Neurorehabilitation and Neural Repair.*
>
> The process involves the use of adult stem-like progenitor cells in the patient's own nasal tissue. The use of a person's own stem cells, Peduzzi-Nelson said, lessens the problems of rejection, tumor formation and disease transmission.
>
> In the study, 20 patients with severe chronic spinal cord injuries received a treatment combination of partial scar removal, transplantation of nasal tissue containing stem cells to the site of the spinal cord injury and rehabilitation. All of the patients had total paralysis below the level of their spinal cord injury before the treatment.

More here.

Wesley J. Smith notes that ASCR is getting more and more efficient:

> A team led by scientists from The Scripps Research Institute has developed a method that dramatically improves the efficiency of creating stem cells from human adult tissue, without the use of embryonic cells. The research makes great strides in addressing a major practical challenge in the development of stem-cell-based medicine…
>
> The new technique, which uses three small drug-like chemicals, is 200 times

> more efficient and twice as fast as conventional methods for transforming adult human cells into stem cells (in this case called “induced pluripotent stem cells” or “iPS cells”). “Both in terms of speed and efficiency, we achieved major improvements over conventional conditions,” said Scripps Research Associate Professor Sheng Ding, Ph.D., who led the study. “This is the first example in human cells of how reprogramming speed can be accelerated. I believe that the field will quickly adopt this method, accelerating iPS cell research significantly.”

See below for other breakthroughs in ASCR, as well as the political implications.

Previous stories

- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama’s plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

Jennifer Roback Morse connects feminism to same-sex marriage and Marxism

October 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is awesome, and only 15 minutes long.

Here is the full MP3 file.

Topics:

- her role in the prop 8 campaign in California
- the toxic atmosphere around the issue of same-sex marriage
- the connection between the gay rights and feminism
- how Marx and Engels viewed marriage, family and parenting
- the left's goal to involve the state inside the family
- the goal of domestic violence laws and social programs
- the left's view of sex and sexuality
- why same-sex marriage requires state coercion of individuals
- how same-sex marriage affects religious liberty
- what is the purpose of traditional marriage
- how fathers stand to lose if same-sex marriage becomes law

Jennifer Roback Morse is fun because she connects these social issues to fiscal issues and liberty. It's really interesting! One of the best things about her is that she is very much outward-focused. She took a lead role in defending traditional marriage and traditional families in California during the prop 8. She also speaks on campuses to the college students, just like William Lane Craig.

Here are a few more of her lectures:

- Dr. J lectures several hundred law students on sex and marriage (63 minutes)
- Dr. J lectures several hundred law students on same-sex marriage (76 minutes)
- Dr. J on marriage and economics (31 minutes)
- Dr. J on basic economics (49 minutes)

The first lecture is particularly suitable for stay-at-home mothers, who have a critical role in society during the first 18 months of post-birth child development.

Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area

October 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed this post up at Steve McIntyre's Climate Audit.

Steve recently disproved the hockey stick graph which is the cornerstone of all global warming alarmism. The hockey stick graph is based on the "Yamal" data set. It conceals the well-known Medieval Warming Period and shows a sudden spike in temperatures in the last few decades. In his latest post, Steve compares the tiny cherry-picked "Yamal" data set to a larger "Polar Urals" data set from the same geographic area.

You can click through to his analysis, but I will just show you one graph to give you an idea of what he found.

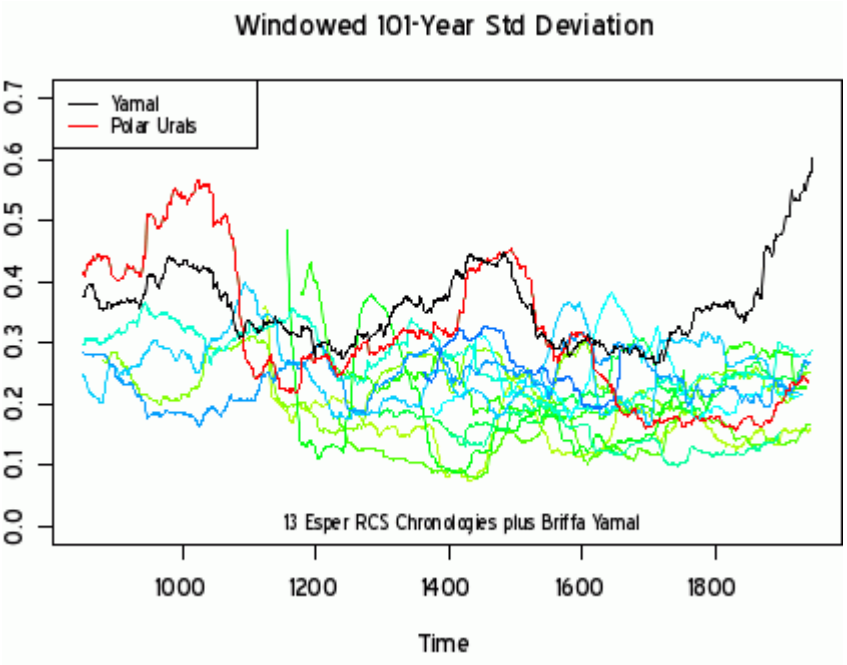

Wow, notice how the cherry-picked Yamal data set (in black) makes the Medieval Warming Period disappear, and adds a hockey stick upturn at the end. And notice how the larger non-cherry-picked Polar Urals data set (in red) reveals the Medieval Warming Period and no hockey stick upturn. Here is a good summary of how things went wrong with the hockey stick graph.

4500 weather records set nationwide in cold start to fall season

In other news, Watts Up With That notes that over 4500 new snowfall, low temperature, and lowest maximum temperature records where set in the USA this week. (Click to see the map with all 4500 records)

Here's the breakdown:

Record Events for Sat Oct 10, 2009 through Fri Oct 16, 2009	
Total Records:	6257
Rainfall:	859

Snowfall:	297
High Temperatures:	369
Low Temperatures:	785
Lowest Max Temperatures:	3473
Highest Min Temperatures:	474

Source: Hamweather Climate Center and NOAA/NWS

How green jobs policies have failed in Spain and Germany

Obama is planning to do "green" our economy, based on evidence like the fake hockey stick graph, and in spite of the extremely low temperatures we had in the summer and the fall this year. But how well has green jobs programs worked in Germany?

Big Government features a post evaluating of "green jobs" programs in Spain and Germany.

Consider the results of the green jobs policies in Spain.

Excerpt:

> Yet in Spain, the economy suffered when efforts to create green jobs destroyed nearly 110,000 jobs in other industries according to a study released last month from Spain's King Juan Carlos University. It suggests that the Democrats' plan for economic renewal through 'green collar' jobs may hurt the economy far more than it helps. Gabriel Calzada Alvarez, a professor of applied environmental economics, explains that Spanish citizens currently suffer from higher taxes, more public deficit and ever-increasing energy prices—all the result of the government's efforts to create a green economy.

This report from the Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung think tank explains what happened in Germany.

Excerpt:

> German renewable energy policy, and in particular the adopted feed-in tariff scheme, has failed to harness the market incentives needed to ensure a viable and cost-effective introduction of renewable energies into the country's energy portfolio. To the contrary, the government's support mechanisms have in many respects subverted these incentives, resulting in massive expenditures that show little long-term promise for stimulating the economy, protecting the environment, or increasing energy security.
>
> In the end, Germany's PV promotion has become a subsidization regime that, on a per-worker basis, has reached a level that far exceeds average wages, with per worker subsidies as high as 175,000 € (US $ 240,000).
>
> It is most likely that whatever jobs are created by renewable energy promotion would vanish as soon as government support is terminated, leaving only Germany's export sector to benefit from the possible continuation of renewables support in other countries such as the US.

You can read more about Obama's radically leftist science czar and radically leftist former green jobs czar to understand why Obama is doing this. He is surrounded by radical extremists.

Jonathan Wells writes about Darwinist reactions to new ID documentary

October 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Interesting article from Evolution News regarding the recent showing of "Darwin's Dilemma" at the University of Oklahoma.

This article is long and really interesting. I highly recommend reading through the whole thing. The accounts of Wells and Meyer interacting with the Darwinists during the live Q&A time is fascinating. But I thought that the actions of one Darwinist named Abbie Smith was particularly interesting. She is apparentlya well-respected Darwinist blogger who is specialized in refuting intelligent design! So how did she do against Wells and Meyer?

Excerpt:

On September 28, Steve spoke to an audience estimated at 300 in the Meacham Auditorium at the Oklahoma Memorial Union.[…]

Abbie Smith was there, but she spent the entire time blogging on her laptop. Her entries included the following:

> 7.10 — Meyer is clueless on origin of life and Darwin.
>
> 7.27 — 'Origin of information in DNA'. HAHAHA I made all the mathematicians facepalm.
>
> 7.40 — Bored. Now watching porn.

Despite her earlier threats to expose publicly how "stupid" Steve is, Smith left abruptly after the lecture and did not stay for the Q&A.

And here's another interesting professor:

The next person—apparently a professor of developmental biology—objected that the film ignored facts showing the unity of life, especially the universality of the genetic code, the remarkable similarity of about 500 housekeeping genes in all living things, the role of HOX genes in building animal body plans, and the similarity of HOX genes in all animal phyla, including sponges. Steve began by pointing out that the genetic code is not universal, but the questioner loudly complained that he was not answering her questions. I stepped up and pointed out that housekeeping genes are similar in all living things because without them life is not possible. I acknowledged that HOX gene mutations can be quite dramatic (causing a fly to sprout legs from its head in place of antennae, for example), but HOX genes become active midway through development, long after the body plan is already established. They are also remarkably non-specific; for example, if a fly lacks a particular HOX gene and a comparable mouse HOX gene is inserted in its place, the fly develops normal fly parts, not mouse parts. Furthermore, the similarity of HOX genes in so many animal phyla is actually a problem for neo-Darwinism: If

evolutionary changes in body plans are due to changes in genes, and flies have HOX genes similar to those in a horse, why is a fly not a horse? Finally, the presence of HOX genes in sponges (which, everyone agrees, appeared in the pre-Cambrian) still leaves unanswered the question of how such complex specified genes evolved in the first place.

The questioner became agitated and shouted out something to the effect that HOX gene duplication explained the increase in information needed for the diversification of animal body plans. I replied that duplicating a gene doesn't increase information content any more than photocopying a paper increases its information content. She obviously wanted to continue the argument, but the moderator took the microphone to someone else.

The post is filled with interesting interactions with Darwinists, so you should go read it to see how good the opposition is. I have already given away 1 copy of this DVD and ordered 3 more. If you missed Brian Auten's review of the "Darwin's Dilemma" DVD, check it out here.

ACORN throws out Republican voter registrations

October 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Big Government by Pamela Geller.

Excerpt:

In February 2008, Fathiyyah Muhammad of Jacksonville, Florida, heard that ACORN was paying people three dollars for each voter they could register. ACORN paid her three dollars for each voter she registered, but Fatiyyah Muhammad says that the group threw out her votes and fired her when she brought them registrations of *Republican* voters.

She went to work: "Well, I went out and got a lot of people, homeless people, but of course I signed everybody up as a Republican, and I would have put people had they been Democrats." She was not forcing people to sign up as Republicans: "You could put down anything you wanted." But when she got back to ACORN, a group leader was not pleased: "So I showed what I had, and he said, "No, no, you a fraud, there can't be any black Republicans,' and oh, he just kind of hung me out to dry…. But of course their main aim was to register only Democrats. They're not interested in registering Republicans."

She saw ACORN officials in Jacksonville throw out the Republican registrations she made. "They just discarded those, they weren't valid. All of the registrations… they just threw those out." Yet she says that she is sure that the people she registered were actually going to vote: "Yes, they all were going to vote, I just didn't want to get anybody just to get the three dollars, I wasn't desperate for three dollars."

ACORN did not honor its agreement to pay three dollars for each registered voter. "He took my papers," says Muhammad, "didn't pay me anything and I just left, I just figured that this is just another scam…. Everyone else got paid, all the other people got paid, but I didn't. And I didn't make a big deal about it, I just figured that it was another one of life's experiences."

Read the whole thing.

William Dembski discusses new peer-reviewed paper on intelligent design

October 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The paper talks about how to measure the amount of information required by evolutionary algorithms in order for them to work. The paper describes accounting processes for measuring where information is put into evolutionary algorithms, so that it becomes clear how much information is needed up front. The paper shows that the information present in evolutionary algorithms does not emerge as a result of evolutionary algorithms – the "active information" has to be put into the process at different points for the process to work.

The paper:

"Conservation of Information in Search: Measuring the Cost of Success," published in *IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man and Cybernetics A, Systems & Humans*.

The MP3 file for Part 1 is here.

Part 1 Topics:

- about the IEEE, the publisher of the paper Dembski and Marks
- the search problem and evolutionary algorithms
- the concept of "active information"
- blind search versus targeted searches
- No Free Lunch theorems
- Conservation of information
- Responding to an objection: is Darwinism analogous to the search problem?
- does evolution have mathematical underpinnings?

The MP3 file for Part 2 is here.

Part 2 Topics:

- fitness functions and fitness landscape
- constraints as information
- does the paper support intelligent design?
- how have critics responded to this paper?

You can read the entire paper for free here.

Are women held to a different standard than men under the law?

October 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I came across these 3 news stories that illustrate 3 concerns I have about how the law favors women over men in many areas.

Woman released without charges after shooting husband dead

Story here.

Excerpt:

> A justice of the peace has ordered the release of a woman arrested in connection with the shooting death of her husband because no charges have been filed.
>
> Las Vegas police arrested Ericka McElroy on Oct. 7 outside her southwest Las Vegas home. Her 37-year-old husband, Shane McElroy, died after being shot in the chest. Police said the two had allegedly been in a domestic dispute.

Woman gets 20 days of jail after making false rape accusation

Story here.

Excerpt:

> A 20-year-old Valparaiso woman has pleaded guilty to falsely reporting that a Valparaiso man raped her, county police said Thursday.
>
> Erica Donohue was sentenced to 180 days in jail, although most were suspended. She is to serve 20 days in jail and 10 days of community service.
>
> Donohue said that on July 15, an acquaintance raped her in a rural area.
>
> Porter County Detective Gene Hopkins investigated the case, and the evidence he gathered — including a video of the consensual act — convinced prosecutors to issue a warrant for Donohue, who was arrested Sept. 29.
>
> She eventually admitted to making up the story about the rape, to hide where she had been from a person with whom she was in a relationship.

Woman wants $1.5 dollars in per year in child support

Story here.

Excerpt:

> Sitting on a makeshift stand before the court, Nantz grew teary as he testified, blaming the marriage's demise on his wife's lavish spending habits, as well as what he claimed was a lack of support for his career, the paper reported.
>
> Nantz's wife, who is seeking alimony as well as more than $1.5 million-per-year in child support for the couple's 15-year-old daughter, Caroline, has stated that she wants to keep the family's six bedroom home in Westport, Conn. The family

> also owns a condominium at a ski resort in Utah, according to the Connecticut Post. Lorrie Nantz said that she wants to care for the child's daughter even though she has a full-time nanny.
>
> While court papers merely say that the marriage broke down irretrievably, Nantz told Superior Court Judge Howard Owens that while he was traveling around the country for work, his wife stayed home and went on excessive shopping sprees, the paper reported.
>
> In nine years, Lorrie Nantz spent close to $1 million at a high-end clothing and jewelry store in Westport, Conn., the Post reported.
>
> Last month she bought a $12,000 necklace at the posh store, but when pressed on its description, she could not remember details.

These stories are actually not uncommon. They are all from the last few days, and there are more stories like them every day. The lesson I am taking away from this is that the law is very hostile to men. It's something that men don't really talk about in public, and I wonder why that is the case.

Here's my previous post on the parity of male and female rates of domestic violence, my previous post on the recent surge of domestic violence committed by women in Australia, as well as a new story on the surge in child abuse by intoxicated single mothers in Finland.

Health care reform bill costs are backloaded until after 2012 election

October 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Phil Klein. (H/T Health Care BS via ECM)

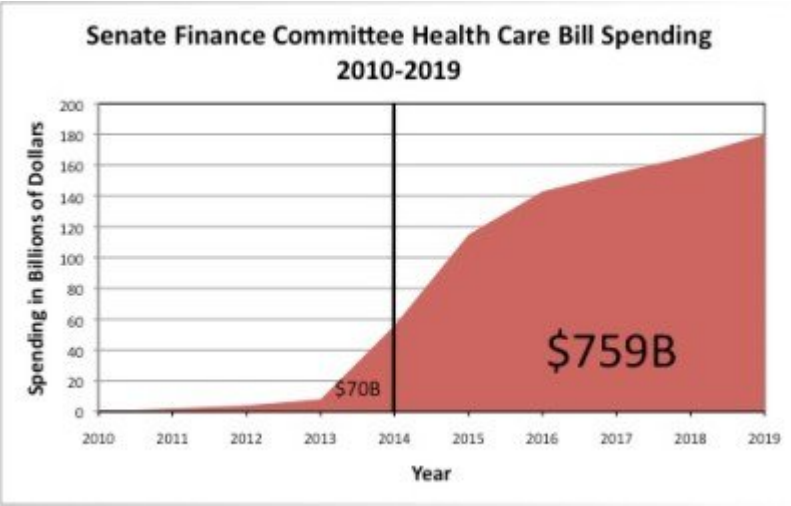

Health Care BS writes:

> Obviously, the bill attempts to keep the costs down until most Dem incumbents, including Obama, have won their next re-election campaigns.

Michelle Malkin notes that the bill was passed in committee a week ago, but it was only released to the public today.

MUST-READ: Which family configuration is best for raising children?

October 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Looks like Dr. J's stylish new blog is featuring guests posts by scholars.

Here's a new post by Dr. Trayce Hansen. She wrote an article on which family configuration is best for children. The title is "Same-Sex Marriage: Not in the Best Interest of Children".

Here's her thesis:

Same-sex marriage isn't in the best interest of children. While we may empathize with those homosexuals who long to be married and parent children, we mustn't allow our compassion for them to trump our compassion for children. In a contest between the desires of some homosexuals and the needs of all children, we cannot allow the children to lose.

And here's a sample:

Only mother-father families afford children the opportunity to develop relationships with a parent of the same, as well as the opposite sex. Relationships with both sexes early in life make it easier and more comfortable for a child to relate to both sexes later in life. Overall, having a relationship with both a male and female parent increases the likelihood that a child will have successful social and romantic relationships during his or her life.[5]

Moreover, existing research on children reared by homosexuals is not only scientifically flawed and extremely limited [6,7,8] but some of it actually indicates that those children are at increased risk for a variety of negative outcomes.[6] Other studies find that homosexually parented children are more likely to experiment sexually, experience sexual confusion, and engage in homosexual and bisexual behavior themselves.[5,6,9] And for those children who later engage in non-heterosexual behavior, extensive research reveals they are more likely to suffer from psychiatric disorders, abuse alcohol and drugs, [10] attempt suicide, [11] experience domestic violence and sexual assault, [12] and are at increased risk for chronic diseases, AIDS, and shortened life spans.[13,14,15]

It shouldn't be surprising that studies find children reared by homosexuals are more likely to engage in homosexual behavior themselves [16,9,17] since extensive worldwide research

reveals homosexuality is primarily environmentally induced. Specifically, social and/or family factors, as well as permissive environments which affirm homosexuality, play major environmental roles in the development of homosexual behavior.[18,19,20,21]

The rest of the article, with references, is here. I like all of the footnotes because they provide a jumping off point for more research, and that's how these things need to be evaluated. First, we find out what's true. Then we adjust our lives based on what is really true. We need to act in a way such that others are not harmed by out decisions. We especially need to govern our actions to avoid behaviors that may harm born and unborn children.

It looks like the the article was suppressed due to pressure from gay activists.

The California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT) published a special issue of their bi-monthly journal "The Therapist" dedicated to the subject of same-sex marriage. Guest authors were asked to contribute articles, half of the writers in support and half opposed to same-sex marriage. A stated goal of the issue was to determine whether the organization should adopt a formal position on the matter.

Subsequent to publication of the May/June 2009 special issue (Volume 21, Issue 3), homosexual activists within and without the organization pressured CAMFT to not only apologize, but also expunge from their organizational archives those articles that voiced opposition to same-sex marriage. CAMFT capitulated to those demands. The Director of CAMFT apologized for publishing articles critical of same-sex marriage and all the "offending" articles were censored from the CAMFT website archives. So much for intellectual debate and freedom of opinion.

Apparently, making arguments and citing research papers was considered too "mean".

Extra stuff

Look! I found some radio show clips that you can listen to on her web site:

- The Dennis Prager Show Re: Rape Is About Sex
- Dr. Laura Show Re: The Values of Today's Sex Educators
- The Dennis Prager Show Re: What Women Need To Control In Their Nature <– This one is a must listen! Very mean!
- The Jesse Lee Peterson Radio Show Re: Same-Sex Marriage and Children <– This one is related to her essay!

And last of all, here is my post explaining why people oppose same-sex marriage. I also cite research!

What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?

October 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article on single mothermood. It is the first in a series by law professor Helen Alvaré.

First, she writes about the number of out-of-wedlock births, and the effects of single motherhood on children:

The recent news of the nearly 40% out of wedlock birth rate in the United States should pretty much rock our world as citizens and as Catholics. According to the Centers for Disease Control report, this means 1.7 million children were born to unmarried mothers in 2007, a figure 250% greater than the number reported in 1980. The implications for our society loom large. According to empirical data published over the last several decades in leading sociological journals, these children, on average, will suffer significant educational and emotional disadvantages compared to children reared by their married parents. They will be less able to shoulder the burdens that "next generations" traditionally assume for the benefit of their families, communities and their country. They are likely to repeat their parents' behaviors. The boys are more likely to engage in criminal behavior and the girls to have nonmarital children.

And then she explains what causes women to do engage in this behavior:

First, the researchers concluded that the majority of children born to lone mothers could not correctly be deemed "unplanned." Rather, many were planned or actively sought. And the majority were somewhere in the middle between planned and unplanned. In other words, many of these very young couples (it was not uncommon for the mothers to be 14 or 15 years old) explicitly or implicitly wanted a baby in their lives. Their reasons by and large would be familiar to anyone who has ever hoped for a child. They wanted someone who was an extension of their beloved, a piece of him or her. They wanted to love another person deeply.

[…]What is different about very poor mothers' desires for children seems to be related to their relationally, financially and educationally impoverished circumstances. Relationally, the authors described these young mothers as existing in an environment without close, trusted ties. In particular, the men in their lives were considered to be highly

untrustworthy and worse. Infidelity seemed almost a universal problem among the fathers. Drug and alcohol problems, criminal behavior, and domestic violence were extremely common. Motherhood provided a chance for these women to “establish the primordial bonds of love and connection.”

So, these women are looking to children as a way to establish lasting relationships. They *want* to have children, and they don’t believe that they are hurting the child by having the child without a father.

You can read the rest here.

I think this is interesting because what it means is that young women are viewing children as means to their own happiness, regardless of the effects that single-motherhood, with all that it implies, has on the child. It strikes me as incredibly selfish. Just like when children demand pets and promise they will take care of them, but then the adults end up taking care of the pets because the children aren’t mature enough.

Maybe those antiquated moralistic prohibitions on pre-marital sex were there for a reason? Maybe morality should not have been shoved aside by the secular left so hastily?

Safe schools czar says respect for homosexuality begins in kindergarten

October 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at CNS News.

Excerpt:

The Obama administration's safe schools czar, Kevin Jennings, has accused the Baptists, the Boy Scouts and sports fans of anti-gay bias, and he has advocated a special high school for gay teens as well as gay-straight alliance clubs for every high school in America.

Jennings, who was a prominent homosexual activist before being named director of the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools at the U.S. Department of Education, also has called for kindergarteners to be taught to respect all sexual orientations, while insisting that "ex-gay messages" and "Christian values" are 'misused to isolate or denigrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people" and have no place in the nation's public schools.

Recent controversy surrounding Jennings's role in the Department of Education has revolved around a 1988 conversation in which Jennings told a high school sophomore in a relationship with an older man that he hoped he used a condom–rather than reporting the possible case [of] statutory rape to authorities.

Jennings explains how he gets pro-homosexual messages into the schools:

In a 2000 speech at a GLSEN event Iowa, Jennings argued that students as young as kindergarten should be taught to respect people "regardless of sexual orientation." The Washington Times has posted an audio of this speech on its Web site.

"Our curriculum at kindergarten, and first grade, and second grade–every grade until students have graduated should be 'you must respect every human being regardless of sexual orientation, regardless of gender identity, regardless of race or religion or any arbitrary distinctions we make about people," Jennings said in the 2000 speech. "If we cannot teach this very basic lesson in our schools we will be very surprised at how hard it is for these students to learn French or English or math."

In a February 2000 speech, Jennings predicted at a GLSEN conference that the cause of making homosexuality acceptable would succeed in elementary school. "Homosexuality will become more acceptable to students, especially elementary ones," he said, according to an article in The Post-Standard of Syracuse, N.Y. "We are at a new moment in our history."

And he opposes publicly-expressed Christian convictions:

On Nov. 19, 2000, Jennings wrote an op-ed in the Charlotte Observer that was critical of the North Carolina Southern Baptist Convention's position on homosexuality.

"As a native Tar Heel and a former high school history teacher, I watched in amazement last week as the North Carolina Southern Baptist Convention passed a policy excluding

gay people (and anyone who welcomes them) from the denomination. All I could think was of the old aphorism 'Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it,'" Jennings wrote.

He compared the denomination's stance on homosexuality with racism during the days of slavery and segregation.

"The same pious members who nodded in agreement as our preacher talked about 'loving your neighbor' seemed to believe that this meant loving your white neighbors. Our fellow churchgoers expressed a visceral hatred of blacks (except they didn't say 'blacks'), resisted the integration of schools in Winston-Salem, and generally were pretty 'unChristian' on the whole subject of race," the Jennings op-ed continued. "The Southern Baptists of the 1970s were, in fact, just following the traditions and history of our denomination, which had been founded because Southern Baptists wanted to defend the institution of slavery and thus formed their own convention in the 1840s. In 1996, about 150 years after it mattered, the Southern Baptist Convention formally apologized for its role in upholding slavery and racism. Better late than never, I guess."

This article is long and detailed, and the rest is really good. This not a typical news article, it's comprehensive and filled with quotes of Jennings own words.

Why did "Christians" vote for Obama?

Some people I know who call themselves "Christian" voted for Obama. (See breakdown here)

Remember that the support of left-wing Christians for the political left led to the loss the loss of free speech and religious liberty rights in Canada. And Obama is already working on that here.

Previous posts

- Obama's latest radical leftist nominee would curtail religious liberty
- Meet Obama's school-safety and employment diversity czars
- FRC opposes Obama's school safety nominee

Super clear close-up pictures of developing baby in the womb

October 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The pictures are up at the UK Telegraph. (H/T Jennifer Roback Morse and Andrew)

Here's one:

Unborn baby scheming about her plan to get a Ph.D

Now, I don't know *anything* about babies, and I only like children after they grow up old enough to play with – maybe around 6 years old. But this unborn baby certainly looks very interesting. Like a little alien monster! (I hope it doesn't attack us!) I wonder what he (or she) is thinking about? I wonder what he (or she) will eventually be like? Could this one be another William Lane Craig (or Michele Bachmann)? It's too early to tell at this point. And that's kind of interesting.

UPDATE: I looked at the creature a bit more, and the more I look, the more I think that it's scheming. I mean, look at the cute little hands near the face! That's what I do when *I'm* scheming. So I think the creature is scheming. Scheming about apologetics. In the little scheming bubble, which appears to be an excellent location for scheming.

Ontario board pushes for all-male school to fix decline in male achievement

October 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the leftist Globe and Mail. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

Boys left behind by Toronto's public schools are about to feel a firm force pulling them forward: the strong hand of Chris Spence, the Toronto District School Board's new education director, who is calling for an all-male school and more "boy-friendly" classrooms to address male underachievement.

Boys' disengagement at school not only leads to poor grades and unproductive lives, but also can lead to the kind of violence Toronto schools have struggled to control in recent years, Dr. Spence told reporters before presenting a sweeping vision document, his first since becoming director this year, to the board's planning and priorities committee last night.

"The real objective is to cast a critical eye on how we reach and teach our boys," said Dr. Spence, whose 2008 book, *The Joys of Teaching Boys* , makes the case that boys learn differently from girls and have suffered under a "unisex model for child rearing and teaching."

In Toronto public schools last year, boys were 3.5 times more likely to be suspended. They underperform compared with girls regardless of age, socioeconomic class or ethnicity, and are more likely to need learning support programs.

[…] [Spence] has long advocated for strong role models for boys, to offset what he calls a "fatherless world" for youngsters. A decade ago, he pioneered a mentoring program called Boys 2 Men, which remains popular among Toronto and Hamilton students.

His new vision calls for a significant extension beyond that, to include the boys-only academy that would open for kindergarten to Grade 3 students next September and add a grade with each successive year. It would operate as a "school of choice" for interested families.

[…]Dr. Spence pledged to extend a sampling of a male-focused curriculum across all his schools. Within existing co-ed schools, he wants to set up "demonstration classrooms," some all-male and others using "boy-friendly" teaching techniques that recognize their different learning style.

He hopes the initiatives will also lure more male teachers to work in elementary schools, where they are underrepresented.

"Boys really thrive in environments that are hands-on; they thrive in environments in which there is structure, but also where they're empowered" to move about the classroom, he said. Under the traditional unisex approach, "When every bone in a boy's

body is telling him to get up and move around, we're usually telling him to sit down and be quiet."

Read the whole thing. Highly recommended. This is what I would love to do in my second career after I retire from computer science – but I refuse to join a teachers union! Especially not one like CUPE, which is notoriously leftist. Like, "Van Jones" leftist.

Richard Bauckham defends the divinity of Jesus against James Crossley

October 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Richard is very thorough and works only with minimal facts that skeptical scholars will agree with. James Crossley is an excellent atheist. I used to think he was mean, but now he seems so reasonable. I hope someone can befriend him and introduce him to some of the evidence for theism from the progress of science, so that he can perhaps becomes a Christian.

Here is the MP3 file.

I wrote a summary so you can follow along as you listen.

More stuff

In another recent discussion, Richard Bauckham defends the reliability of the gospels against James Crossley. Crossley debated against William Lane Craig before on the resurrection and he debated against Michael Bird here, (part 1, part 2). The topic was "How did Christianity Begin?".

Summary

Main topic:
– was belief in Jesus' divinity develop late, or was it there from the beginning?
– how did the early Jewish community reconcile the idea of Jesus' divinity with monotheism?

Moderator:
– was the the worship of Jesus as God a late development in history
– was it accepted by converts from the Jewish community

Bauckham:
– high Christology was not a result of pagan influences
– Jews reconciled Jesus' divinity with their Jewish monotheism

Moderator:
– is the degree of Christology a historian is willing to accept just the result of bias?

Crossley:
– bias is always a factor in what individual people think
– but in a public discussion, what matters is the evidence

Moderator:
– High-Christology is used by Christians as an argument for the resurrection
– Christians ask: what cause could account for the effect of early high Christology?

Crossley:
– we agree that the first Christians witnessed something after Jesus' death
– what they witnessed had a role in their forming their high opinion of Jesus
– the high opinion was because they believed he had been resurrected (1 Cor 15)

– whether he was or not is a separate question

Moderator:
– is a high Christology a good argument for inferring the resurrection?

Bauckham:
– the resurrection makes people think Jesus is unique, but not necessarily divine
– it was really the belief in the exaltation of Jesus to God's right hand that did it
– what God does in Judaism is to create the universe and rule over the universe
– if Jesus is seated at God's right hand, then is participating in ruling creation
– so Jesus is being identified with God very early
– the exaltation might have been caused by post-mortem visions of Jesus, e.g. – Stephen

Moderator:
– how were early monotheistic Jews able to reconcile the divinity of Jesus with monotheism?

Crossley:
– the high Christology may not be early because disputes about it are going on in John
– there were other figures in Judaism like the Word of God and Wisdom that were very high
– maybe Paul's Christology is not as high and he is thinking something high but not deity
– and in John the Christology is being pushed higher to deity, and then there are disputes

Moderator:
– Phillipians and 1 Corinthians are the first evidences of what people thought about Jesus
– John is actually much later

Crossley:
– it may be that Paul's Christology is high and that he just never got into any disputes

Bauckham:
– in Phillipians, Paul incorporates Jesus into the shema, the core of Jewish monotheism
– in 1 Corinthians, he does the same thing

Moderator:
– is this evidence consistent with the idea that Jesus is more like Wisdom or the Word of God

Crossley:
– in Paul's letters, there are no conflicts about Jesus' divinity, they appear later in John
– if Paul's letters taught a divine Jesus, there would be conflicts in the letters
– so there is possibly an evolving Christology from very high to divine

Bauckham:
– the Word and Wisdom of God are different from exalted figures – they are separate
– the Word and Wisdom of God are intrinsic to God's own identity
– and so Word and Wisdom are divine in the sense that they below to God's identity

Moderator:
– is Jesus an exalted human figure or someone identified with God?

– is the identification of Jesus with divinity compatible with Jewish monotheism?
– or was this concept developed later in a pagan context where one more God would not matter?

Bauckham:
– NT scholars typically separate functional Christology and ontic Christology
– but I say that there is no such disctinction
– if Jesus does the functions of God (like ruling), then it means he is identified with God
– there is a distinction between who God is (identity) and what God is (nature)
– Jews were not as concerned with the identification of a man with the God
– Jews were disturbed by the idea that THIS shamed and crucified man would be identified with God

Moderator:
– is this high Christology too much of a sharp break with Jewish monotheism to have been early?

Crossley:
– the Phillipians passage is a strong early passage for Richard's view
– definitely the crucifixion is a major problem for the early Jewish monotheists
– but the deification of a human being is also a strong problem in spite of what Richard says
– both Jews and Muslims will have objections to identifying Jesus with the divine

Moderator:
– How can Paul write something like this when he was such a high-ranking Jew?

Bauckham:
– Jewish monotheism could accomodate something surprising like this without surrendering anything
– John starts his gospel at the creation of the universe to say Jesus was there as "the Word"

Moderator:
– was the early church thinking of Jesus the same way that the church today does?

Crossley:
– it's hard to say because the language today reflects a lot of development
– in the early church people were still thinking about what to make of Jesus

Moderator:
– what about in the other gospels, do they indicate a strong notion of Jesus as divine?

Crossley:
– nothing as strong as Paul's letters and John, especiall the disputes with the Jews

Moderator:
– so did the writers of the other gospels have different views of Jesus' divinity than Paul and John?

Crossley:

– well the same claims are not there in the text, the claims are not as grand as in Paul and John

Bauckham:
– but in Mark, the earliest gospel, Jesus forgives sins and calms storm – acting as God acts
– Jesus also asks “why do call me good, only God is good”
– the “seated at the right hand of God” and “coming on the clouds” passages

Crossley:
– I don’t think those claims are as high as John, because Moses controls nature as well
– the other actions may be more that Jesus has authority to do these things

Moderator:
– but the author of Mark writes that the disciples are catching on that Jesus was more than a man

Bauckham:
– Jews were not as concerned with the unitary nature of God, but there is only one God (being)
– there can’t really be any evolution from Jesus as a created being to Jesus as divine
– in paganism, there are lower divinities, but that is not the case in Jewish monotheism

Moderator:
– the fact that Jesus was worshiped by Jews means he was already viewed as divine

Crossley:
– that point is debatable, but can be sustained with a careful exegesis like Richard does
– there is some room there for an evolving Christology – the gap may not be as big as Richard says

Moderator:
– do you think that the worship of Jesus was the result of increasing Christology over time?

Crossley:
– it may not have been conscious, but John is the clearest statement and it is the latest gospel
– it may be that a dispute with Jews was required to spell it out even if it was present before

Moderator:
– what about idea that the early church worshiped him because they just though it was a new revelation?

Bauckham:
– the early Christians worshiped as Jews and then met separately afterward to worship Jesus
– worship is about distinguishing God from the created world
– you wouldn’t worship Jesus without some idea of what you were doing

Crossley:

– other things that set Jesus apart were the exorcisms and the vision to Paul that converted him

Calgary readers: apologetics conference and debate starts Friday!

October 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the schedule from the Faith Beyond Belief web site. This conference was organized by *Jose Ruba*, the same pro-life debater who has been shouted down at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec and St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia!

The debate is on Saturday at 7 PM at the University of Calgary, against a University of Calgary philosophy professor, who has 3 degrees, including a PhD, from Oxford University. The topic is "Do Objective Moral Truths Exist?".

Friday, October 23rd, 2009
"Ambassadors for Christ: Why Christians Need to have a Faith Beyond Belief"
Clergy and Ministry Workers' Lunch
(12 pm – 2:30 pm)
Greg Koukl will speak to clergy and ministry workers about the unique challenges and opportunities in reaching our postmodern generation. As a former pastor, Greg will delve into what church workers in particular need to do to equip their congregations to be good ambassadors for the kingdom of God.

Friday, October 23rd, 2009
"Ice Cream is not Insulin"
A Youth Event
(7 pm – 10 pm)
This event is geared towards, youth, youth pastors and parents to help them understand what kind of culture youth are dealing with. Greg will examine how we can help young people embrace the truth of the gospel.

Saturday, October 24th, 2009
Ambassador Training Sessions
(9 am – 2:30 pm)
A detailed and informative way to learn about the Christian worldview and how to defend that view in our culture. Christians will be trained to be good ambassadors for Christ: equipped with the right knowledge, trained to share that knowledge wisely and challenged to embody the right character.

Saturday, October 24th, 2009
"Do moral truths exist?"
Rm. ICT 102 , University of Calgary
(7 pm – 10 pm)
Join Greg as he debates Prof. John Baker, a philosophy professor from U of Calgary. This event is co-sponsored by the U of Calgary Freethinkers.
For more details check out: www.calgarydebate.ca

Sunday, October 25th, 2009

Full Gospel Tabernacle Sunday AM service
(10 am – 12 pm)
Join our host church's Sunday morning service. Greg Koukl's talk will be part of a series at the church on how Christians can defend and articulate their faith.

Sunday, October 25th, 2009
"Where do we go from here?"
Sunday Volunteer Lunch
(12:30 pm – 3 pm)
After hearing Greg Koukl speak during the weekend, we'll challenge volunteers and others about what we should do locally to help create Christian ambassadors.

Hosted by Faith Builder International Church
Calgary Saddle Ridge Community Hall 7614 – 42nd Street NE.

*Note: All events will be held at the Full Gospel Tabernacle, unless otherwise indicated. Events are free but a free-will offering will be taken.

Full Gospel Tabernacle
155 Falconridge Cres NE, Calgary, Alberta T3J 1Z9
fullgospeltabernacle.org

Does this schedule give you any ideas for your own church and local university? He's really done a good job on this conference, hasn't he? You can still send him a donation if you want!

MUST-READ: Hugh Hewitt interviews Richard Dawkins on his new book

October 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Transcript here. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

HH: On the person of Jesus Christ, did He exist?

RD: I suspect He probably did. I suspect there are lots of itinerant preachers, and one of them was probably called Yehoshua, or various other versions of Jesus' name, but I don't think that a miracle worker existed.

HH: How do you rate the evidence for Christ's existence, manuscript evidence, eyewitness evidence, things like that?

RD: As I said, it wouldn't be at all surprising if a man called Jesus or Yehoshua existed. I would say the evidence that He worked miracles, He rose from the dead, He was born of a virgin, is zero.

HH: Well, you repeatedly use the analogy of a detective at a crime scene throughout The Greatest Show On Earth. But detectives simply can't dismiss evidence they don't want to see. There's a lot of evidence for the miracles, in terms of eyewitness…

RD: No, there isn't. What there is, is written stories which were written decades after the alleged events were supposed to happen. No historian would take that seriously.

HH: Well, that's why I'm conflicted, because in your book, you talk about the Latin teacher who is stymied at every turn, and yet Latin teachers routinely rely on things like Tacitus and Pliny, and histories that were written centuries after the events in which they are recording occur.

RD: There's massive archaeological evidence, there's massive evidence of all kinds. It's just not comparable. No…if you talk to any ancient historian of the period, they will agree that it is not good historical evidence.

HH: Oh, that's simply not true. Dr. Mark Roberts, double PhD and undergraduate at Harvard, has written a very persuasive book upon this. I mean, that's an astounding statement. Are you unfamiliar with him?

RD: All right, then there may be some, but a very large number of ancient historians would say…

HH: Well, you just said there were none. So there are some that you are choosing not to confront.

RD: You sound like a lawyer.

HH: I am a lawyer.

Read the whole thing.

Now, obviously, Hugh is not an expert and he is going about his defense all wrong by

trying to argue for general reliability of the gospels, instead of arguing for several specific "minimal facts" passages that pass standard historical criteria. But Dawkins is not going to call him on it. For a good debate on the reliability of the gospels, try Richard Bauckham versus James Crossley.

Related posts

My previous post on Richard Dawkins, including my opinion of his intellectual capability and honesty. Here's another atheist, Peter Atkins. And did you hear Craig's debate with Arif Ahmed? These are all Oxford University atheists, just like the one Greg Koukl is debating in Calgary on Friday.

Atheist congressman introduces bill to force states to allow homosexual adoption

October 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from LifeSiteNews.

Oh, yes. He's a Democrat. And an atheist.

Excerpt:

Last week a bill was introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives proposing federal-level punishment for states that ban homosexual couples and non-married individuals from adopting children.

Touted as a measure to help more children find homes, Democratic California Rep. Pete Stark's "Every Child Deserves a Family Act" recommends that states allowing foster care placements only into married heterosexual households be deprived of federal child welfare funds.

The law would have an impact on Utah, Florida, Arkansas, Nebraska and Mississippi, which either explicitly restrict adoption to heterosexual couples, or restrict it to married couples while not recognizing same-sex "marriage."

[…]The bill reads: "In order to open more homes to foster children, child welfare agencies should work to eliminate sexual orientation, gender identification, and marital status discrimination and bias in adoption and foster care recruitment, selection, and placement procedures." It also authorizes those who claim their bid for adoption was compromised by such factors to sue in a federal court.

For a survey of the research on which family arrangement is best for children, click here. For a primer on why people oppose same-sex marriage, click here. For a primer on why atheists cannot ground moral behavior rationally on atheism, click here.

Canadian pro-life student quarantined by public school principal

October 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story from LifeSiteNews.

Excerpt:

16-year-old high school student Jennifer Rankin fully intended to unite her voicelessness with that of the unborn as part of the annual Pro-Life Day of Silent Solidarity when she arrived at school yesterday, reports Bill Henry of Sun Media.

She was impeded, however, by her school principal, who stated that the right to free speech does not apply on school property and who forced Rankin to remain in isolation for the entire day as long as she participated in the event.

Rankin, 16, arrived at Peninsula Shores District School in Wiarton, Ontario yesterday morning, with the red tape over her mouth and with the simple word 'life' written upon it. She and her mother were stopped at the door, however, by school principal Patricia Cavan, while police cruisers stood nearby. Cavan initially told Rankin that she could not enter school property, but then consented to allowing her in the building, separated from other students.

"I was taken directly into a small room that was opposite the vice-principal's office and I was in there all day," Rankin told Sun Media. "I wasn't allowed to speak with or see any other students and students were not allowed to come and see me and I was isolated in that room for the entire day."

[…]The youth pastor at Rankin's church, Ken Holley, expressed disappointment and insisted that the school's actions violated her rights. "It's a day of silence and basically they lose their voice for those that never had a voice," he said. "It's pro-life. There's no arguing. They can't talk all day. They just stay silent and if anybody asks why they're silent they hand out a little sheet that says this is why."

[…]Cavan, who did not return a message left by LifeSiteNews.com, told Sun Media that the right to free speech does not apply on school property. "School property is not a public place," she said. "So while absolutely we support the right to free speech in a public space, that's not school property." She said that school policy prohibits the dissemination of one-sided information on religious, political, or other issues that are controversial.

Pastor Holley pointed out that the school does an annual 'Gay Pride' day "where everybody wears pink shirts," and that the school allows nude pictures on the wall to stand as 'art'.

It's strange because this school is located in a tiny town in a very rural area, hundreds of miles from any major city. I would think that a rural school would not be so backward as to thwart basic human rights like free speech. Oh well. It's Ontario, Canada. Land of Chief

Censor Jennifer Lynch and the Canadian Human Rights Commissions. You can read more about how Canada discriminates against Christians here. You can read more about how Canada discriminates against pro-lifers here.

UPDATE: It's happening here! Student sues for right to wear pro-life shirt (via Ruth Institute Blog)

Peer-reviewed journal notes that Ida is not part of human ancestry

October 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story comes to me from Lone Wolf Archer.

Probably the two best peer-reviewed science journals in the world are *Science* and *Nature*. Well, Nature is now reporting on a new piece of research just released showing that the Ida fossil, which was touted by Darwinists as THE MISSING LINK, is actually not a part of human ancestry at all. It's related to *lemur* ancestry!

Here's the Nature story:

> A 37-million-year-old fossil primate from Egypt, described today in Nature[1], moves a controversial German fossil known as Ida out of the human lineage.
>
> Teeth and ankle bones of the new Egyptian specimen show that the 47-million-year-old Ida, formally called Darwinius masillae, is not in the lineage of early apes and monkeys (haplorhines), but instead belongs to ancestors (adapiforms) of today's lemurs and lorises.

Lone Wolf Archer has more here, including a link to a longer story that explains the details.

Friday night fun: The Wintery Knight’s favorite music

October 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the longest running series of games in the history of video gaming is the Castlevania series. In the games, the Christian hero squares off against vampires and other monsters using holy water, crosses and a flaming whip that can be upgraded to become more powerful. I played these games as child as far back as 1987, before many of you kids were even BORN!

But the appeal of the *music* from the series is still strong for me. The later games in the series often re-use or remix the original themes from the earliest games, especially the most ancient and famous songs like “Vampire Killer” and especially “Bloody Tears”. So it’s not surprising for people to listen to a soundtrack *today* that sounds similar to the music from *20 years ago!*

Here is the main theme of the hero Leon from Castlevania: Lament of Innocence (2003):

And a few of my favorite themes from Castlevania: Curse of Darkness (2005).

Abandoned Castle:

That one makes me think of how Christians have abandoned the university to the secular left, and now it’s in ruins with truth nowhere to be found.

And, Machine Tower:

Levels where the hero is inside a giant clock tower are extremely popular in Castlevania. Clock towers were first introduced in Castlevania I in 1987.

And here is one more from Curse of Darkness, Mortvia Aqueduct:

This is a very suitable theme for driving at night. I have a strange habit of working in cities far from home, and it is not at all unusual for me to work a full day and then drive 12 hours to my parents’ house all night and arrive at 7 AM the next day. I consider it very heroic because I love my sports car and driving at night with the top down under the stars is so much fun. Especially if you drive fast, like I do!

My favorite theme of all is the “Theme of Simon” from Super Castlevania IV. Here is the original theme from 1994 from the Super Nintendo with a more modern 2007 remix tacked on at the end. The Super Nintendo was the first video game console I ever owned, because we were very poor when I was growing up.

It is also fun to learn to play them yourself on the piano. One video of someone playing Bloody Tears on the piano has over 1.2 million hits on youtube. (Bloody Tears is a theme from the first Castlevania ever, “Haunted Castle”, which was an arcade game that you played for 25 cents in a real arcade!). I remember this theme from the first Castlevania game I ever played, Castlevania II. So this is really a blast from the past for me… this is my childhood.

Castlevania music *extremely popular* in Japan and live bands even perform them. Here’s an orchestra playing a remix of the most famous Castlevania song, from level 1 of the

first Castlevania console game ever made (for the Nintendo Entertainment System). It's called "Vampire Killer". It transitions into the level 3 theme "Wicked Child". Then finally into a battle theme from the fight with Dracula.

I actually had a friend who used to play Castlevania II with me when we were kids. One day we *rented* Castlevania I, just for fun, and when we heard the level 3 theme "Wicked Child", we were both amazed. I was actually able to keep the theme in my head and recognize it many years later when I found a rendition of it online. I think the scenery of walking across a crumbling castle ledge outlined by a giant yellow moon really stuck in my mind. Ever since seeing that, I have been a real night owl. I used to study all night in university and sleep during the day.

And of course you buy all the CD with the soundtracks from the games, even in North America! I can whistle many of the songs for my bird and he really loves listening to me whistle them. He is as old as the games themselves and has been hearing these songs from me for over 20 years! (Although I haven't *played* any of the games since high school, I still care about the music!)

Looking back now, it was probably remarkably important for me to have good, heroic music to listen to as an alternative to sappy contemporary Christian music and godless, hedonistic, popular music. I think that men need to see themselves as heroic in order to actually engage in heroic deeds. Good music helps. A lot.

MUST-READ: How government-run health care leads to euthanasia

October 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been writing a lot of posts in the last few months about the pitfalls of government-run health care in Canada's single-payer system, and in the National Health Service in Britain. Some people may wonder whether comparisons can be made between these systems and Obama's government-run medical insurance idea.

Consider the words of bioethicist Wesley J. Smith: (H/T ECM)

The UK's National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence–the Orwellian-named NICE–is the template promoted by Obamacare's primary non government pusher, Former Senator Tom Daschle, called by the *New York Times* to be the most influential adviser to the POTUS and Congressional Democrats on health care reform. Indeed, he has repeatedly stated we need an American version of NICE.

That means what NICE does *matters* to Americans.

Smith then notes this article from the UK Guardian which explains what NICE does.

Excerpt:

A drug which can give women with advanced breast cancer extra weeks or months of life has been turned down by a government watchdog body for use in the NHS. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (Nice) says it proposes to reject Tyverb (lapatinib) in spite of changes in the rules brought in specifically to allow people at the end of their lives to have the chance of new and often expensive treatments.

Tyverb is the only drug licensed for women with advanced breast cancer whose tumours test positive for a protein called HER2 and for whom Herceptin, a Nice-approved drug, is no longer working. In much of the rest of Europe, Tyverb is then given, in combination with a standard chemotherapy drug called capecitabine. Around 2,000 women in the UK could be eligible for the drug, which has the additional benefit of being taken in pill form, which means that women can stay at home and attempt to live normal lives. Nice turned down Tyverb earlier this year, saying it was too expensive for the benefit to patients it offered…

Smith concludes:

And don't forget NICE also pushed the Liverpool Care Pathway, that may have brought back door euthanasia to the UK. Similarly, we recently discussed a similar refusal of coverage in Ontario, Canada, for life-extending colon cancer chemotherapy.

This is our future if we pass Obamacare, unless we explicitly forbid by statute such rationing power to the cost control boards. But attempts to do so have all been turned down. NICE isn't nice, and it is an approach to health care that Americans should reject.

Now consider this story about the Liverpool Care Pathway from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

A grandfather who beat cancer was wrongly told the disease had returned and left to die at a hospice which pioneered a controversial ‘death pathway’.

Doctors said there was nothing more they could do for 76-year- old Jack Jones, and his family claim he was denied food, water and medication except painkillers.

He died within two weeks. But tests after his death found that his cancer had not come back and he was in fact suffering from pneumonia brought on by a chest infection.

To his family’s horror, they were told he could have recovered if he’d been given the correct treatment.

[…]Mr Jones was being cared for at a hospice which was central to the contentious Liverpool Care Pathway under which dying patients have their life support taken away, although the hospice claims it wasn’t officially applied in his case.

The scheme is used by hundreds of hospitals and care homes, and is followed in as many as 20,000 deaths a year.

Read the whole thing.

In a socialized system, you pay you income to the ruling elite based on your ability to produce. You only have value to the state while you are working to pay taxes, taxes that socialists can use to buy votes and control other people lives. When you stop working and start needing services, you become the enemy of the state.

Contrast socialism with a free market system. Now you have the power because you have the money. Doctors and hospitals only get *paid* if they give you what you want – quality health care for the lowest price. You can go a competitor if you don’t like what you are offered from any particular provider. Choice and competition.

More NHS horror stories listed here.

Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children’s sexual choices

October 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at No Apologies. (H/T Andrew)

This is based on a study by the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada. (IMFC)

Excerpt:

Parents’ behaviour and attitudes during childhood shape a teen’s sexual choices. Based on our findings we recommend:

• Parents should be the prime sex educator. Parents are the most influential force in a teens life

• Parents should work to create a healthy, stable home characterized by warmth, open communication and clear expectations

• Parents should model a healthy lifestyle and positive choices. Your children are watching

• Sex education should engage parents and recognize their role as the primary sex educators

• Sex education should acknowledge that girls face unique risks compared to boys when it comes to early sexual engagement

While it may seem daunting to see correlations between family behaviours years ago and sexual activity in your children today – the news is positive. Teens do listen and want to listen to their parents, as indicated by surveys and polls. It’s something to remember next time your teen slams the door and turns up the music.

Here are the four practical tips discussed in the IMFC article:

- Eliminate parental use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco
- Involved and engaged fathers and increased parent-child communication
- Increased community involvement by parents, especially church
- Married parents biologically linked to the children

MUST-READ: Study documents harassment and threats against Prop 8 supporters

October 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The research publication is here, from the Heritage Foundation. (H/T ECM)

Abstract:

Supporters of Proposition 8 in California have been subjected to harassment, intimidation, vandalism, racial scapegoating, blacklisting, loss of employment, economic hardships, angry protests, violence, at least one death threat, and gross expressions of anti-religious bigotry. Arguments for same-sex marriage are based fundamentally on the idea that limiting marriage to the union of husband and wife is a form of bigotry, irrational prejudice, and even hatred against homosexual persons. As this ideology seeps into the culture more generally, individuals and institutions that support marriage as the union of husband and wife risk paying a price for that belief in many legal, social, economic, and cultural contexts.

The executive summary is here.

The PDF version is here.

You may also want to refresh yourself on how this works out in practice by watching a debate on marriage between Dennis Prager and Perez Hilton.

My previous post on this topic is here.

Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

October 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at the Ruth Institute blog.

Excerpt:

Both the family and the Church stand in the way of socialism's triumph, former US Senator Rick Santorum told Christians gathered for the 17th International Week of Prayer and Fasting last week. The pro-life champion warned attendees, however, that both institutions are under heavy attack from Obama-administration policies.

"We are under a great assault with this President and this Congress on the issue of life. We are under a great assault, maybe even greater assault, on the foundational issue of the family," Santorum told those gathered for the October 11 dinner at the Omni Shoreham Hotel.

And more specifically:

Santorum argued that Obama's reforms will transform health-care into "an account in the federal government" in which "accountants" or Congress will determine how much healthcare an individual gets "as part of our budgetary process."

Once the health-care of individuals is totally dependent on the central government, the left has secured power, Santorum explained.

[…]The Netherlands, "the most liberal country in Europe" today, Santorum said, is the only country that "did not go along with the Nazi doctors in doing sterilizations and abortions" and suffered persecution for it.

"And yet, within two generations, as a result of socialized medicine and the government's attempt to contain costs, doctors were turned into accountants," said Santorum.

Now in the name of cutting costs, Dutch doctors counsel assisted suicide, deny care to premature-born babies under 25 weeks, and euthanize children born disabled.

"This is the custom and the practice in socialized medicine countries, who have limits on budgets. It is simply too expensive to do it any other way," reiterated Santorum.

Read the rest here.

Social conservatives, repeat after me: SMALL GOVERNMENT IS GOOD. Do it *yourself* – don't hand your money to a bunch of secular ideologues and then hope they will take care of you. They will use that money to take care of *themselves.*

Conservative Doug Hoffman fights Republican establishment in NY-23 race

October 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you haven't heard of this story, LifeSiteNews has a nice re-cap.

Background:

A conservative uprising against the GOP's selection of a staunchly pro-abortion, pro-gay "marriage" nominee has transformed the battle for New York's 23rd congressional district into a tight three-way race that has the strong possibility of a dark horse Conservative Party candidate pulling an upset victory – or sending a strong message to the GOP that they alienate social and fiscal conservatives at their peril.

New York's 23rd Congressional District covers much of the northern areas of upstate New York just north of Syracuse, bordering Canada, and encompassing most of the Adirondacks. While conservative values figure greatly into the political landscape of upstate New York, GOP party bosses instead chose to nominate NY Assemblywoman Dede Scozzafava – a far-left Republican who has strong pro-abortion, pro-gay "marriage", pro-tax, and pro-card check positions – to replace Rep. John McHugh, who handily won nine consecutive terms in a district that was safely Republican.

What's interesting is that Sarah Palin, Michele Bachmann and a host of other conservatives have endorsed Hoffman. Newt Gingrich, who is not a conservative, endorsed Scozzafava.

The Wall Street Journal excoriated GOP leaders for supporting Scozzafava in a October 21 editorial, saying that "A defeat would teach Republicans that running candidates who believe in nothing will keep them in the minority for years to come."

The Journal's editors pointed out that Scozzafava stands to the left of President Barack Obama on the question of same-sex "marriage" and her position on taxes makes her Democratic opponent Bill Owens look conservative. Scozzafava has also run on the ticket of the socialist Working Families Party and there is no guarantee that she would not switch parties and caucus with the Democrats if she lost a GOP primary fight in 2010.

Pro-life and pro-family advocates are devoting considerable time and effort to canvass voters and make the difference for Hoffman in the election fight. Emily Buchanan, executive director of the Susan B. Anthony List is coordinating an independent project for the National Organization for Marriage & the Susan B. Anthony List to elect Hoffman by enlisting pro-life/pro-family advocates to man the polls on November 3.

Caffeinated Thoughts has a round-up here.

MUST-SEE: Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria

October 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephanie Gray

LifeSiteNews reports on a debate featuring Stephanie Gray of CCBR.

Excerpt:

Miss Gray's argument cut through the various issues that are often raised to confuse the abortion issue, boiling it down to the two simple questions: Are the unborn human? Does abortion kill them?

If the unborn are human, and abortion kills them, then abortion must be wrong, she maintains. Using potent examples, she explains how criteria such as disability and the lack of experiencing pain are not satisfactory justifications for killing any human if we recognize that they are human, unborn or not.

She demonstrates that all of the differences between an unborn human, even at the moment of fertilization, and a born human are merely accidental – size, level of development, environment, dependency. Each of these differences, she says, distinguish a two-year-old from a twenty-year-old just as they do a fertilized embryo from a born person.

The video is in 10 parts. Here are parts 1 and 2.

Read the rest of the report here.

Debate proceeded in spite of censorship threats

LifeSiteNews also notes that the BC Civil Liberties Association is defending the right of pro-lifers to debate the issue in public.

Excerpt:

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) is taking up the case of Youth Protecting Youth (YPY), a pro-life club at the University of Victoria (UVic).

UVic pro-life students, who have been fighting for fair treatment from their student union since October 2008, were finally granted club status and funding by a vote of the Clubs Council on February 10th this year. However, they were again denied the right to be treated equally to other groups on campus only the following month.

In March of this year the UVic student newspaper, The Martlet, reported that the pro-life student club "was denied club money again by the UVic Students' Society, despite Clubs Council voting in favour of the funding."

According to a press release from the BCCLA, at the October 5th meeting of the UVic Student Society (UVSS) "the Society confirmed its stubborn determination to withhold the funding ordinarily disbursed to clubs, citing particular alarm at YPY plans to hold a public debate between distinguished UVic philosopher Eike-Henner Kluge representing the pro-choice side, and Stephanie Gray of the Canadian Centre for Bioethical Reform on the pro-life side."

My congratulations to the club and *both* participants in the debate.

MUST-READ: Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann

October 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

Story by George Will in the Washington Post. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

When Marcus Bachmann came home that Saturday evening in 2000, he checked the telephone answering machine and was mystified by the many messages congratulating his wife for something. “Michele,” he said, “do you have something to tell me?” She did.

The state senator from her district in suburban Minneapolis-St. Paul had been in office for 17 years, had stopped being pro-life and started supporting tax increases, so that morning Michele Bachmann had skipped washing her hair, put on jeans and a tattered sweatshirt and went to the local Republican nominating caucus to ask the incumbent a few pointed questions. There, on the spur of the moment, some similarly disgruntled conservatives suggested that she unseat him. After she made a five-minute speech “on freedom,” the caucus emphatically endorsed her, and she handily won the subsequent primary.

THIS IS A MUST-READ!!! GO READ IT!!!

Thanks so much to Muddling for sending me this surprising article!

Related articles

Here are my recent posts on Michele Bachmann:

- Michele Bachmann defends free tradea at the Heritage Foundation
- MUST-SEE: Michele Bachmann explains why the US dollar is in serious trouble
- Congresswoman Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar
- Hot Air and Michelle Malkin post new video of Michele Bachmann’s town hall

- New Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- MUST-READ: Michele Bachmann open to running for President in 2012!

You can click here for her video blog.

Please contribute to her 2010 campaign, if you can.

Here are all the posts tagged “Michele Bachmann”.

Marvin O’Lasky interviews leading Christian thinkers

October 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are some interviews on a variety of topics of interest. (H/T Brian Auten of Apologetics 315)

- Jay Richards defends capitalism from a Christian perspective
- Stephen Meyer discusses biological information in the cell
- Rebecca Hagelin from the Heritage Foundation

Marvin O’lasky is the interviewer. There is an audience of students from the King’s College in New York, NY.

More lectures here.

Environmentalists support restrictions on number of children per family

October 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the first story from CNS News. (H/T American Spectator via ECM)

Here's New York Times reporter Andrew Revkin.

Excerpt:

At the event, Revkin said: "Well, some of the people have recently proposed: Well, should there be carbon credits for a family planning program in Africa let's say? Should that be monetized as a part of something that, you know, if you, if you can measurably somehow divert fertility rate, say toward an accelerating decline in a place with a high fertility rate, shouldn't there be a carbon value to that?

"And I have even proposed recently, I can't remember if it's in the blog, but just think about this: Should–probably the single-most concrete and substantive thing an American, young American, could do to lower our carbon footprint is not turning off the lights or driving a Prius, it's having fewer kids, having fewer children," said Revkin.

"So should there be, eventually you get, should you get credit–If we're going to become carbon-centric–for having a one-child family when you could have had two or three," said Revkin. "And obviously it's just a thought experiment, but it raises some interesting questions about all this."

And here's the second story from the UK Guardian. (H/T National Review via ECM)

And here's the UK Guardian's reporter Alex Renton.

Excerpt:

The worst thing that you or I can do for the planet is to have children. If they behave as the average person in the rich world does now, they will emit some 11 tonnes of CO^2 every year of their lives. In their turn, they are likely to have more carbon-emitting children who will make an even bigger mess…

In 2050, 95% of the extra population will be poor and the poorer you are, the less carbon you emit. By today's standards, a cull of Australians or Americans would be at least 60 times as productive as one of Bangladeshis… As Rachel Baird, who works on climate change for Christian Aid, says: "Often in the countries where the birth rate is highest, emissions are so low that they are not even measurable. Look at Burkina Faso." So why ask them to pay in unborn children for our profligacy..?

But how do you reduce population in countries where women's rights are already achieved and birth-control methods are freely available? Could children perhaps become part of an adult's personal carbon allowance? Could you offer rewards: have one child only and you may fly to Florida once a year?

After all, based on current emissions and life expectancy, one less British child would permit some 30 women in sub-Saharan Africa to have a baby and still leave the planet a

cleaner place.

A lot of people ask why I am so concerned about getting married in a nation in which 77% of young, unmarried women voted for Obama and his radically leftist science czar and radically leftist former green jobs czar. (The science czar favored mass sterilizations and forced abortions). And now we can see part of the answer: the left wants to interfere with my reproductive freedom using state coercion.

And it's not just environmental reporters who are against people having children. *It's Obama's own nominees*. These fears of overpopulation are like "Left Behind" novels for the secular left. The failed doomsday predictions of Paul Ehrlich are identical to the failed doomsday predictions of Jehovah's Witnesses. There is something very strange about these people – and women should not have voted for them.

Recall that Social Security and other government programs are fueled by income taxes on younger workers. Except that the overpopulation nutters aborted the next generation of American workers. Ooops. So where are we supposed to get the money for these ballooning social programs from if the left keeps putting restrictions on pregnancy? Here's my previous post about Britain's looming demographics crisis.

Bobby Schiavo urges caution on persistent vegetative state diagnoses

October 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from TownHall. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

To be clear: there is no indignity more final and brutal than forcing a living person to die the death of dehydration and starvation. Try to imagine the torture my sister endured in the last two weeks of her life. Being unable to defend herself, very likely aware of precisely what was happening and having absolutely no ability to escape it. For nearly two weeks, Terri was denied food and fluids. Not so much as an ice chip was given to her. It was pitiful, it was barbaric and it was clear that she was made to suffer. When my sister expired, she was a shell of her former self.

It is because of the suffering my sister and others endured that I believe the PVS diagnosis must be either reevaluated or completely abolished. With so many medical and neurological professionals admitting that there are inaccuracies and with the diagnosis being a death sentence, it is time to rethink disability and the way we regard it and our fellow human beings.

It is not too much of a burden to provide sick people with food and water.

How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers

October 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Feminism makes women unable to relate to men in healthy ways

Here are two non-negotiable beliefs of third-wave feminists.

1. Feminists want women to believe and act exactly like men because they think there are no sex differences
2. Feminists believe that romantic love, chivalry and motherhood are all bad because they involve sex differences

Consider this post on how men perceive feminism as being opposed chivalry, (which is a prerequisite for romantic love).

Last summer I polled college guys from across the country and abroad at the National Young America's Foundation Conference in Washington, D.C. Ninety-three percent of them said that chivalry has decreased in current times, and 84 percent of that group attribute this decline primarily or at least partly to the rise of radical feminism in society.

One man stated that feminism "devalued chivalry and made it seem sexist." Another man proposed that the "'I-don't-need-a-man culture has crippled chivalry in the public sphere." Yet another said that it was "difficult" to be chivalrous because some women portray chivalry as "subordinating, disrespecting, and devaluing."

It seems that men are lodged between a rock and a hard place. If they try to be chivalrous, feminists call them sexist. Yet if they treat us the way the feminists say we want to be treated—the same as a man—we complain of not getting enough respect.

How do guys define chivalry? Three out of four responded that it had to do with respect, honor, and courtesy towards women. One man spoke openly: "Chivalry is the notion that a man has the duty to respect and serve women."

Another man affirmed: "It is a set of manners and respect a man should show to a woman as a demonstration of respect towards her." Another guy said women "need to understand that chivalry isn't being put down like feminism would like you to believe, but rather is a way a woman can command respect from a man."

Too often, however, these same men lamented that their efforts to be chivalrous were met with scorn.

If you're wondering where all the "good men" went, and why men are so "unromantic", blame feminism. Women in the secular feminist West have been taught to rush into physical activity, (like men), instead of being taught how to judge a good man, and how to recognize and relate to good men. This leads to fewer good men because men respond to women's expectations of them. Today, women don't know how to evaluate a man to see if he is capable of marriage and parenting. Feminism's strategy of "act like a man" is

an epic fail – it just produces a lot of guilt and hurt for young women.

In Theodore Dalrymple's book "Life at the Bottom", he explains how nurses in his hospital pursue violent men because they are physically attracted to them, only to be beaten, impregnated and abandoned by them, again and again. When he asks the women why they cannot recognize bad men, they explain that its wrong to make moral judgments about men. One nurse believed that men were all the same, and that she could not know in advance if the relationship would "work out".

Women learn how to relate to men by watching how their father treats their mother. Are men encouraged to marry and to become involved fathers by the secular feminist state?

Feminism has resulted in children being raised without fathers

Feminists favor socialism because the higher taxes force women to leave their children and home to work, and because a massive government reduces the need for women to marry a good man. Big government is there with social programs to cover up the choice of a bad man, so that choosing a good man becomes unnecessary. Women no longer value men for their ability to protect and provide, so men stop exhibiting those behaviors and instead become lazy and aggressive. Children are born out-of-wedlock and are raised without fathers, which has terrible effects on children.

Consider this research paper from the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

For decades, radical feminists depicted marriage as an oppressive institution that was injurious to women and children. In reality, facts show exactly the opposite: In general, marriage has profoundly beneficial effects on women, children, and men.

Foremost is the positive impact of marriage in alleviating poverty among mothers and children. On average, a mother who gives birth and raises a child outside of marriage is seven times more likely to live in poverty than is a mother who raises her children within a stable married family.70 Over 80 percent of long-term child poverty in the United States (where a child is poor for more than half of his or her life) occurs in never-married or broken households.71 Moreover, the economic benefits of marriage are not limited to the middle class; some 70 percent of never-married mothers would be able to escape poverty if they were married to the father of their children.72

The erosion of marriage is also a principal factor behind the growth of the current welfare state. A child born and raised outside marriage is six times more likely to receive welfare aid than is a child raised in an intact, married family. Each year, federal and state governments spend over $200 billion on means-tested aid for low-income families with children through programs such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, food stamps, public housing, the earned income tax credit, and Medicaid. Of this total, some 75 percent ($150 billion) goes to single-parent families.73

Marriage has profound positive effects on the well-being of children. Children raised by single mothers are 14 times more likely to suffer serious physical abuse than children raised in intact, married families. Children raised in single-parent homes are much more

likely to be depressed and to have developmental, behavioral, and emotional problems; such children are more likely to fail in school, use drugs, and engage in early sexual activity. They are also more likely to become involved in crime and to end up in jail as adults.74

While radical feminists condemn marriage as an institution that foments domestic violence against women, in fact, the opposite is true. Domestic violence is most common in the transitory, free-form, cohabitational relationships that feminists have long celebrated as replacements for traditional marriage. Specifically, never-married mothers are more than twice as likely to suffer from domestic violence than mothers who are or have been married.

Early sexual activity and criminal behavior are serious problems.

How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden

October 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Take a look at this guest post by LN at Gates of Vienna. He describes how socialism in Sweden has undermined traditional marriage and traditional parenting and caused health problems for children. For example, he discusses the effects of day care and schooling of children from the ages of 1-12 years.

Excerpt:

In large parts of the world it is natural — or at least it was — that young mothers work less than men or not at all. Career women and mothers with small children gave notice and abandoned their top skilled jobs to become "stay at home" mothers. In countries where motherliness and motherhood is a large and accepted part of life, women could leave work to become full-time mothers without losing prestige or merit.

But not in Sweden. Taxes are now so high that today it is generally required that both parents work and pay taxes to the yawning chasm that the state has become.

And this has profound effects on the children.

Excerpt:

Professor Jay Belsky is an internationally recognized expert in the field of child development and family studies. His areas of special expertise include the effects of day care, parent-child relations during the infancy and early childhood years, the transition to parenthood, the etiology of child maltreatment, and the evolutionary basis of parent and child functioning.

[…]Many hours in pre-school, regardless of quality, results in increased behavioral problems. Nor can pre-school compensate for the weak mothering of young children. A one-or two-year-old child with a less responsive mother develops better in the mother's care than in many hours (10 hours/week) at pre-school. Children with a less responsive parent (mother) seem to need more time with the mother, said Belsky. Nor is there any evidence that preschool would improve the child's social development.

And here's another excerpt:

Dr. Gordon Neufeld is a clinical psychologist from Canada with a reputation for penetrating to the heart of complex parenting issues, and the author of the internationally recognized book *Hold On to Your Kids — why parents need to matter more than peers*. Dr. Neufeld's message was that the younger generation's lack of adult contacts in the Western world is one of the most disturbing and misunderstood trends of our time — peers replacing parents in the lives of our children. Dr. Neufeld has dubbed this phenomenon *peer orientation* [*jämnårigorientering*], which refers to the tendency of children and youth to look to their peers for direction: for a sense of right and wrong, for values, identity and codes of behaviour.

But peer orientation undermines family cohesion, poisons the school atmosphere, and fosters an aggressively hostile and sexualized youth culture. It provides a powerful explanation for conformism, aggression, schoolyard bullying, and youth violence; its effects are painfully evident in the context of teenage gangs and criminal activity.

Gates of Vienna also had a recent post about the epidemic of gang rape that is currently going on in Britain. (Click here to watch a British documentary which features interviews of women and men talking about this gang rape problem). This is especially sad because young unmarried women who are the victims of the breakdown of the family actually voted 77 percent for Obama, who favors the same socialist policies that cause mothers to leave the home and put the children into the hands of strangers.

New books of interest to Christian apologists

October 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These might strike your fancy:

- God Is Great, God is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable and Responsible, by William Lane Craig and Chad Meister (InterVarsity Press, 2009)
- God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades, by Rodney Stark (HarperOne, 2009)
- Hitler's Ethic: The Nazi Pursuit of Evolutionary Progress, by Richard Weikart (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)
- Life After Death: The Evidence, by Dinesh D'Souza (Regnery Press, 2009)
- Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem, by Jay W. Richards (HarperOne, 2009)
- The Recalcitrant Imago Dei: Human Persons and the Failure of Naturalism, by J.P. Moreland (SCM Press, 2009)
- Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design, by Stephen C. Meyer (HarperOne, 2009)

Rodney Stark is an agnostic, but he does a good job of telling the truth about the history of Christianity. If you want to see a good book added to this list, leave it in the comments and I'll take a look.

Oh, by the way, check out this quiz that The Way the Ball Bounces found from Apologetics.net.

Marriage under attack by the left in Australia and India

October 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Australian, separation between biological parents and child custody. (H/T Thoughts Out Loud)

Excerpt:

A homosexual couple has been granted leave to appear before the Family Court in a bid to gain access to a girl who isn't biologically related to either of them.

The men, who cannot be named, have successfully argued that they are important people in the life of the three-year-old.

The girl, who likewise cannot be named, was not conceived with sperm from either of the men. But her mother was, until last year, in a same-sex relationship with another woman who does have a child conceived with one of the men's sperm.

Do children have a right to be raised by their biological parents? Shouldn't we be enacting child-friendly policies? In Australia, it seems as though the needs of adults are trumping the needs of the children.

And from The Hindu, men are suffering discrimination by the feminist state.

Excerpt:

Mr. Zaveri claimed that 98 per cent of all domestic violence cases were found to be baseless and false. He said: "We stand by the women who file genuine cases. But these laws, made for Sitas, have been cashed in on by Surpanakhas. Many women misuse these laws to exact alimony from their husbands. We are instead in favour of sponsoring professional courses for wives so that they become self-sufficient after parting from their husbands."

Jaspreet Singh, a member of the IFF, said that he had to give 50 per cent of his salary to his wife as alimony, while she herself earned 50 per cent of his salary. The amount was huge considering that their marriage had lasted only a year and they had not had any children.

Dr. Sandeep Padwale, another member of the organisation, said that his wife was employed but had claimed to be otherwise in her affidavit. The emotional turmoil had cost him his job.

In order to address the problem of false cases, the men demanded a provision for punishment for all those misusing the law. They said that there should be a separate section in the IPC to safeguard the rights of men who were victims of the misuse of domestic violence laws. They also demanded the formation of a Ministry of Men's Welfare "as it would take care of the very originator and contributor of the tax to the government."

Mr. Zaveri said that the most basic problem encountered by men was that the police did

not register cases against their wives. As a result there were no statistics regarding the number of men suffering because of false cases of domestic violence.

Indian men should consider avoiding marriage. Once discriminatory divorce laws are passed, it just becomes too risky for men to make any kind of legal commitment to women. Why can’t women understand how victimizing men with high taxes and punitive laws discourages men from marrying at all? The best way to avoid a bad man is to *choose* to marry a good man.

MUST-LISTEN: Hindu/Christian debate on anti-conversion law in India

October 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You must listen to this debate.

Here is the MP3 file. (64 minutes)

Details:

Unbelievable? 24 Oct 2009 – Christian conversion of Hindus – 24 October 2009

In light of Premier's Faith Without Fear campaign, this discussion between Anil Bhanot and Sunil Raheja addresses the tensions that exist when Christians seek to evangelise Hindus in India.

What is acceptable? Is the response of some Hindus justified? Is it wrong for Christians to state that Jesus is the "only" way to God?

To sign the petition for Justice for Christians in Orissa State, India go to www.faithwithoutfear.org

If you enjoyed this programme you may also want to listen to:

Unbelievable? 14 Jul 2007 – Hindu & Christian concepts of God – Paul and Rohit
Unbelievable? 15 Sep 2007 Yoga and Christianity – is there a conflict?

Below you can find my play-by-play summary of the debate.

The relevant passage from the Bible in which Jesus commands Christians to share their beliefs with non-Christians is found in Matthew 28:16-20. This is the part that the Hindu scholars disagree with.

> [16]Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.
>
> [17]When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.
>
> [18]Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
>
> [19]Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
>
> [20]and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

You may also want to listen to the debate with the UK secular humanists who wanted to ban Christianity from the public square.

My previous post that discusses whether Hinduism is compatible with the Big Bang cosmology is here.

My comments are in italics.

—-
Hindu_Anil:
– explains Hinduism: impersonal unknowable Brahma, incarnations
– all religions are paths to the impersonal divine (pantheism with polytheistic elements)
Christian_Sunil:
– former Hindu, convert because of lack of meaning and purpose, describes conversion
– changed from works-based salvation to salvation by grace
– there is a capacity for grace in Hinduism, not just works based
– Christian campus groups do a better job of explaining their religion than Hindus
Christian_Sunil:
– well for me, I did it on my own dealing directly with God, no assistance from Christians
Hindu_Anil:
– I object to Christians going out to convert others to your religion
Christian_Sunil:
– i don't like the turn or burn style of evangelism
– but asking people the big questions, that's good evangelism
Hindu_Anil:
– we Hindus don't evangelize
– we think of Jesus as another deity (an incarnation of Brahma)
– i oppose Christians for saying in public that I am wrong and they are right
– Christians are wrong, and I (a Hindu) am right!
Christian_Sunil:
– but persuasion and conversion is everywhere in the marketplace
Hindu_Anil:
– Christians are mean and they go out plundering countries and killing other people
– converting people to Christianity is the stealing of souls from other countries
– Christianity is an evil religion and Christians are evil people
– I know better what Jesus would do than Christians do, Jesus would not proselytize
Christian_Sunil:
– I am against the use of coercion in evangelism
Hindu_Anil:
– sharing your faith in Jesus as your favorite incarnation among many incarnations is fine (polytheism – the Hindu view)
– but missionaries say that only Christ is the true God *and they have no right to say things that are incompatible with Hinduism*
– Christians have no right to say that Christ is the true God, *that is incompatible with Hinduism*
– you need to keep your exclusive views to yourself, *but I will force Hinduism on you in public*
– you should be prevented by law from expressing your exclusive Christian view in public
– Hindus like me are very very tolerant of other views, *so you should agree with*

Hinduism, not Christianity

Hindu_Jagdish:
– Christianity teaches that Jesus is a son of God, not God himself
– Christians are wrong about the doctrine of the Trinity
– efforts to convert should not involve any good works like giving food or medical treatment

Christian_Sunil:
– Mother Teresa met peoples needs for food and medical care, but she did it as a public Christian
– but this would break your rule about conversion using good works and charity
– so is Mother Teresa a bad person for doing good works as a public Christian

Hindu_Jagdish:
– Hindus believe that there are many ways to achieve union with God
– they are all equal, you can follow the path you like to be united with God
– we Hindus are very very inclusive, every other path is a right path to God

Hindu_Anil:
– the right to freedom of religion does not allow you to say that Christianity is correct
– Jesus did not say that you go and condemn people of other religions

Christian_Sunil:
– but I convert people by my love and self-sacrifice, not through coercion

Hindu_Anil:
– it’s ok to be a Christian if you keep it to yourself and don’t tell anyone else that their religion is wrong

Christian_Sunil:
– are you trying to force your view of religion on me? *in public*?

Hindu_Anil:
– to say that my religion is false is to breach my human right to exist
– it’s coercive to offer people food and then try to evangelize them

Hindu_Jagdish:
– how do you define secularism?

Christian_Sunil:
– living as though this life were all there is, that religious meanings don’t matter in public life

Hindu_Jagdish:
– Hindus have no problem with that view, it’s in the Vedas

Christian_Sunil:
– India is becoming secular as it grows into part of the global economy
– secularism has the goal of being happy in this life without any accountability to God

Hindu_Anil:
– in opposition to secularism, all faiths should unite on the Hindu concept of the

impersonal divine

Christian_Sunil:
– the solution to secularism is found by a personal encounter with God

Hindu_Anil:
– I became a Hindu as a result of performing Hindu rituals as I grew up in a Hindu background

Christian_Sunil:
– a person's decision to become a Christian is a result of their own inquiry and free decision

Hindu_Anil:
– the purpose of Hinduism is to make people happy and to achieve achieve world peace
– Hindus believe that God is indescribable and unknowable (pantheism)
– everyone has to choose the Incarnation they like to make themselves happy (polytheism)
– Christianity is one incarnation of the Hindu doctrine of impersonal divine (pantheism)
– so all religions are valid because everyone chooses the incarnation they like, *we have billions and billions to choose from*
– that's how we will get world peace, by having everyone agree with my view of religion (pantheism and polytheism)
– isn't it terrible that Christians can tell Hindus that they will go to Hell without Christ
– Jesus said himself that it's wrong to judge others, *although I'm judging you right now!*

Christian_Sunil:
– well we should certainly try to be gentle and respectful

Hindu_Anil:
– you can't say that I am wrong about my religious views, freedom of speech doesn't cover that speech
– everything that is in the Bible is in the Hindu Scriptures, and the Hindu Scriptures has even more
– anything in the Bible that contradicts Hinduism was invented much later by deluded people
– the Bible doesn't teach that Jesus is the only true path to God, *if you throw out the non-Hindu parts*

Christian_Manjula:
– i was once a Jain but now I'm a Christian, and Christianity makes my life meaningful

Hindu_Anil:
– a person can be a Christian, *so long as they accept that Christianity is actually Hinduism*

Christian_Manjula:
– actually, Christians believe that people are sinful and that Jesus' death atones for that sin

Hindu_Anil:

– oh Hindus don’t believe that!
– in the Bible, the jews are trying to stone Jesus, and Jesus says that they are all Gods (this is not in the Bible unless he means what Satan says)
– that’s consistent with Hinduism

Christian_Sunil:
– am I allowed to say that I disagree with your beliefs?
– the discovery that washing hands reduces deaths during child birth was ridiculed, but it’s true
– my understanding of Christ is different from what Hindus believe about Christ
– these questions are matters of life and death
– if my research is correct, then this world is in a terrible state without Christ
– because I love other people, I need to do what I can to share Christ with others
– I need to be able to discuss and disagree about it in public

Hindu_Anil:
– well, you can’t say that my religion is false – that’s going too far, *but I can say your religion is false*

Christian_Sunil:
– i’m not saying that I am better than you, just that my view is true, *based on the evidence*

Hindu_Anil:
– no you don’t have the truth, that is just your personal preference FOR YOU
– i have a personal preference, and my personal preference is true FOR ME
– you can’t say that you have the truth to me, *and laws should prevent you from saying that*

Hindu_Anil:
– Jesus said nothing contrary to Hinduism
– it’s only much much later that people added Christian doctrines to the Bible
– everything Jesus taught is consistent with Hinduism, *even if the Bible doesn’t say that*

Tom Coburn explains what Republicans think of Obama's health care bill

October 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video from the Washington News Observer. (H/T Granite Grok via ECM)

Senator Coburn is a medical doctor who has delivered over 3,000 babies. He is a staunch social conservative.

Social conservatives are stopping the Democrat health care bill from passing

Maybe it's time that social conservatives got a little more respect from fiscal conservatives?

From Riehl Worldview. (H/T Health Care BS via ECM)

Excerpt:

There are still a number of dirty little secrets stalking the back alley's of Congress ready to derail health care reform. And chief among them is abortion. Surprise, surprise, it's moderate and conservative Democrats, especially many who won seats in the last election, preparing to cause trouble, no matter how much Pelosi wants to not discuss the issue right now.

[…]The stumbling block is especially huge given the dynamics of many of our largest cities. Catholic hospitals carry the bulk of the load for health care in those areas. They've already dug in their heels on this a long time ago, claiming they would close facilities before allowing them to perform abortions.

I'm conservative in both areas, of course.

Woman gets police visit after writing letter protesting gay pride parade

October 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great article at the UK, complete with this video. (H/T Weasel Zippers via ECM)

And here's an excerpt from the story:

After witnessing a gay pride march, committed Christian Pauline Howe wrote to the council to complain that the event had been allowed to go ahead.

But instead of a simple acknowledgement, she received a letter warning her she might be guilty of a hate crime and that the matter had been passed to police.

[…]But Mrs Howe told the Sunday Telegraph her comments were an expression of her beliefs, not homophobia. She received a response from the council's deputy chief executive, Bridget Buttinger, who said it was the local authority's 'duty… to eliminate discrimination of all kinds'.

She went on: 'The content of your letter has been assessed as potentially being hate related because of the views you expressed towards people of a certain sexual orientation.

'Your details and details of the contents of your letter have been recorded as such and passed to the police.'

This is actually pretty standard stuff – it happens all the time in Canada, and even in the United States. There is a conflict between the right to free speech and the right not to be offended by other people who disagree with your views.

Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

October 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Telegraph reports on a survey of 1,109 British females. (H/T Andrew)

As I reported earlier, women today really do prefer big government to husbands!

Excerpt:

A ground-breaking series of studies, published next month, show liberal attitudes towards the make-up of the family, religion and cultural integration among the modern generation of girls and young women.

The survey, which questioned a representative sample of 1,109 seven to 21 year-olds across the UK, found that a third of girls in the younger age group thought they would be "grown up" by the age of 15, while 90 per cent of 16 to 21-year-olds regarded themselves as "grown up".

Girls were generally positive about marriage but less than half thought it should come before parenthood. One in four thought it was "OK to get married several times", rising to a third in the 16 to 21 age range.

One finding suggested that some teenagers actively plan to become single mothers. Of the girls questioned who had left schools and were unemployed, almost half (45 per cent) expected to have a baby before they were 21.

Try to keep in mind that what is best for children is a stable union of two opposite-sex, biologically-related parents that lasts from conception until they are grown up. What young women in the UK are saying is that the needs of their future children, or of society as a whole, *don't matter*. Society as a whole will have to pay the social costs of out-of-wedlock children through higher taxes. I would guess that most of these women are fatherless themselves. What a tragedy!

Meanwhile, the results of the feminist plan of for anti-abstinence sex education are in: 1 in 4 teenage girls has an STD. This is another reason why I think my decisions to remain chaste and not to marry are warranted. It's a different world tpday. My values are not the values of today's young unmarried women. My goals are not the goals of today's young unmarried women. And feminists are running the show now with huge amounts of taxpayer money, including a bunch from me that I needed to fund *my marriage.* Even if the right girl came along, how could we escape the high taxes needed to support the welfare state? Someone has to pay for all these broken homes.

American Library Association silent as libraries ban books about ex-gays

October 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports that libraries are banning books about ex-gays. (H/T Andrew, 4Simpsons)

Excerpt:

> Visit most public school libraries and you'll find an array of books that address the subject of homosexuality. Many include sexually explicit content, and some even include graphic images.
>
> But if you're looking for a book that refers to the possibility that homosexuality can be "reversed," a Chicago-based group says your best bet is the banned books list.
>
> Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays & Gays (PFOX) says there's an entire community of people across the world who say that their sexual orientation changed from gay to straight. But they're not getting their message out, the group says, because libraries across the country refuse to carry literature that describes these experiences or any studies that support them.
>
> So a book like "My Genes Made Me Do It!: A Scientific Look at Sexual Orientation" — which argues that sexuality is shaped by a variety of factors, not just biological — can't get a spot on the school library shelf.
>
> Neither can "You Don't Have to Be Gay," which describes author Jeff Konrad's struggle to overcome his unwanted same-sex attractions.

The American Library Association refused to do anything about the book banning. This is actually predictable behavior for them – they are a left-wing advocacy group. Diversity of thought is not a real strong area for those on the secular left. They just don't want to hear anyone who disagrees with them. And that's exactly what you see on the university campus, with all the speech codes.

To learn more about reparative therapy for homosexuality, check out the web site of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality.

Feminists urge preferential treatment for women in math and science

October 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the latest numbers from National Journal magazine. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Women now claim more than 57 percent of all bachelor's degrees, 61 percent of all master's degrees, and half of all professional and doctoral degrees, according to Education Department data cited by University of Michigan economist Mark Perry and others. They also earn more Ph.D.s than men in the humanities, education, health sciences, and social sciences, in-cluding two-thirds of new psychology doctorates.

And Obama and the Democrats are on board with pushing men further out of the university:

> Administration officials and others are "promising to litigate, regulate, and legislate the nation's universities until women obtain half of all academic degrees in science and technology and hold half of the faculty positions in those areas," as my colleague Neil Munro detailed in the July 4 *National Journal.*
>
> With federal agencies already preparing aggressive gender-equity reviews, the feminists' biggest potential weapon is Title IX, the 1972 law barring sex discrimination in education. While commendably opening up opportunities, Title IX has also been used to require colleges to field as many female athletes as male, even though fewer women are interested. Many colleges have met their quotas by cutting back programs for male athletes.
>
> The push for what some feminists call "Title-Nining" the sciences makes especially timely the recent publication of *The Science on Women and Science,* a book of 10 essays edited by Christina Hoff Sommers of the American Enterprise Institute.

So, the future for the Obama administration is to "Title-Nine" science and math to make sure that women and men are equally represented. Even if they have to shrink math and science programs down to nothing to have 50-50 parity. As long as the feminists achieve their goal of a perfect 50-50 distribution of men and women in every area of life, then it's all worth it, right? Who needs math and science when you have feminism?

And there's loads of taxpayer money (some of it mine) available to help the social engineers achieve their goals:

> As the academic debate rages on, feminists seeking to engineer 50-50 male-female ratios have already directed millions of dollars of federal and university money to special efforts to increase the number of girls and women in math and

> science. They may also be sending a message that boys and men are on their own, except perhaps for re-education programs to purge them of gender bias. Ever-more-overt quotas (“goals”) in hiring and promotions to push women ahead of better-credentialed males are very much on the feminist agenda.
>
> “Few academic scientists know anything about the equity crusade,” Sommers writes. “Most have no idea of its power, its scope, and the threats they may soon be facing. The business community and citizens at large are completely in the dark.”

I am a huge fan of Christina Hoff Sommers and have both of her books on feminism. I hope this new one is as good as the others! I wonder what women will do for husbands and fathers when there is a shortage of decent, educated, hard-working men? Good thing I don’t have any sisters or daughters to worry about. But I feel bad for marriage-minded women today. Everything was ruined by feminism before they were even born.

Most productive workers fleeing high tax rates in New York state

October 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story in the New York Post. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

More than 1.5 million state residents left for other parts of the United States from 2000 to 2008, according to the report from the Empire Center for New York State Policy. It was the biggest out-of-state migration in the country.

The vast majority of the migrants, 1.1 million, were former residents of New York City — meaning one out of seven city taxpayers moved out.

“The Empire State is being drained of an invaluable resource — people,” the report said.

What’s worse is that the families fleeing New York are being replaced by lower-income newcomers, who consequently pay less in taxes.

[…]It all adds up to staggering loss in taxable income. During 2006-2007, the “migration flow” out of New York to other states amounted to a loss of $4.3 billion.

I am 100% certain that the Democrats in Albany *had no idea that this would happen*. Economics is not something that the left does really well.

How is Christianity different from other world religions?

October 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Peter Sean Bradley comments on the Hindu/Christian debate I posted yesterday. The debate really showed the difference between how Hindus view religion and how Christians view religion. I thought one of his points was particularly interesting.

Peter Sean Bradley writes:

> According to Professor Philip Carey, Christianity is unique in the religious-sphere because of its obsession with the person of Jesus. Because Christianity is about a person, it is essential to know who that person is, which therefore puts a heavy emphasis on doctrine, specifically correct doctrine, about the person of Jesus. Christianity is thus a faith rather than simply a practice and faith – being intellectual adherence to ideas – are by definition exclusive. One can, for example, be faithful to many things, until there is a conflict among those things, and then the true faith has to be determined. This is the reason for the Christian obsession with orthodoxy, i.e., "correct belief," rather than some Christian proclivity for hair-splitting.

The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:12-14:

[12]But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

[13]If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

[14]And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

Basically, Christianity is the only religion that stands or falls on a historical event: the resurrection. Either it happened or it didn't. And the job of every individual is to test for themselves and act accordingly. Christianity is about truth – what really happened. If people are just interested in religion to comfort them, or to spur them towards good deeds, or as a cultural/ethnic identity, or as a set of rules and rituals, then they cannot be Christians.

Consider the words of Jesus from John 18:36-37, when he is being questioned by Pilate:

[36]Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

[37]"You are a king, then!" said Pilate.
Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

And it turns out that Hindus are not the only ones who tend to think that religion is not about propositional truth. Peter Sean Bradley cites this interview with Paula Fredricksen,

a Jewish historian who specializes in ancient history. Paula says that even Judaism is not exclusive in the sense that it required pagans to abandon other gods in order to worship in the Jewish synagogue.

My experience dealing with Jewish believers is that they have one of two views. The ones I've met were either cultural Jews who are functional atheists, or they believed that a religion is "true" so long as it results in *good works*. In my experience, debates and apologetics are not emphasized in Judaism, (or in Hinduism). Two of my favorite radio talk show hosts are Jewish. Michael Medved (orthodox) and Dennis Prager (Reformed), have both stated this point of view on air many times.

OB-GYN doctor quits medicine over $160,000 malpractice insurance premiums

October 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story at the NY Post. (H/T Stop the ACLU via ECM)

Warner Todd Huston comments on the story:

> Doctor Jacquelline Perlman has had it. After a 12-year career as an OB-GYN doctor she his quitting her practice.
>
> […]Last spring her insurer dropped her and several of her fellow doctors because of the high risk of covering OB-GYNs. Dr. Perlman's new insurer was to charge $160,000 a year for coverage and that proved too much for Perlman to take.
>
> Perlman noted that over the last five years, as her insurance costs multiplied, her actual income dropped by 20 percent.
>
> So, another good doctor — one that has never had a malpractice case stick to her — leaves the profession. Now, before some of you out there assume the insurance companies is the villain here, let us pinpoint the real villain: trial lawyers.
>
> It is the nuisance lawsuits, those filed merely to harass doctors in order to get a quick settlement, and lawyers that game the system with nonsense lawsuits as well as clients looking for a lottery-like payout that will make them instant millionaires that cause this problem.

Click here to read the rest. Remember, the Democrats are heavily supported by the trial lawyer lobby, and therefore tort reform was *not* included in the health care reform bill.

Australia considers bill to criminalize free speech by Christians

October 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Australian. (H/T Thoughts Out Loud)

Excerpt:

> Australians who wear a crucifix to work or offer to pray for a patient in hospital could run foul of a charter of rights, according to a British legal expert who says its introduction in this country would trigger an attack on religious expression.
>
> Barrister Paul Diamond said equivalent laws in Britain had intensified religious resentment and introduced a degree of uncertainty into the rule of law.
>
> He cited the example of a workplace dispute at British Airways in which the company had tried to prevent an employee from wearing a crucifix while permitting other workers to carry Sikh ceremonial knives and wear turbans and Muslim head scarfs.
>
> Mr Diamond said the secular ideology of the British Human Rights Act was being used to politicise the judiciary and eradicate "unacceptable religious viewpoints on same-sex, on women, on a whole range of moral issues".
>
> […]He said one of his most frightening cases concerned a man known as David Booker who was threatened with dismissal for telling a co-worker that Christians opposed pre-marital sex and same-sex relations.
>
> "She had asked him about his Christian faith. She complained and he was suspended and would have been sacked had we not intervened. It was a private sector employer interpreting their diversity policy to eliminate offensive Christian viewpoints from the culture."

Here are some stories from the UK:

- Woman gets police visit after writing letter protesting gay pride parade
- Another nurse faces termination for being a Christian in public
- UK stewardess fired for refusing to dress as a Muslim
- Couple arrested for answering Muslim's questions about Christianity

Canada has similar infringements on religious expression because of the anti-Christian Canadian Human Rights Act.

- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's University
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)

- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

And bad things are already happening the United States.

- Feminists suppress free speech at East Georgia College
- ACLU instigates arrest of two Christians for praying in a church
- New Mexico Human Rights Commissions fines couple $6000 for being Christians
- Obama forces Catholic school to cover abortion on health care plan

My recommendation? Don’t vote for Democrats like Obama.

Skincare company uses aborted fetal tissue in anti-aging cream

October 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The company is called Neocutis. (H/T Gateway Pundit via ECM)

Screen grab from their web site:

PSP® in cosmetic research

Through years of research, physicians discovered fetal skin has a unique ability to heal wounds without scarring. Inspired by this, medical researchers at the University Hospital of Lausanne, Switzerland created a biotechnology process to extract the rich proteins responsible for scarless wound healing from cultured fetal skin cells. A small biopsy of fetal skin was donated following a one-time medical termination and a dedicated cell bank was established for developing new skin treatments. Originally established for wound healing and burn treatments, today this same cell bank also provides a lasting supply of cells for producing Neocutis' proprietary skin care ingredient Processed Skin Cell Proteins (PSP®). No additional fetal biopsies will ever be required.

Christian News Wire reports:

> Neocutis' key ingredient known as "Processed Skin Proteins" was developed at the University of Luasanne from the skin tissue of a 14-week gestation electively-aborted male baby donated by the University Hospital in Switzerland. Subsequently, a working cell bank was established, containing several billion cultured skin cells to produce the human growth factor needed to restore aging skin.

I'm sure that child wanted to live.

Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood

October 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

LifeNews.com reports. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> When they support Komen, Americans may not be aware that Komen's own figures show it gave $711,485 from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006 to Planned Parenthood abortion businesses and at least $726,445 for 2006-2007. (Source) Susan G. Komen for the Cure spokeswoman Rebecca Gibson previously confirmed that at least 19 of the 122 Komen affiliates made grants to Planned Parenthood.
>
> The amount of the grants from Komen affiliates to Planned Parenthood appears to be on the rise and 25 Komen affiliates now have a partnership with the abortion business.
>
> Komen officials have dismissed the grants saying they are for breast cancer screenings, but pro-life advocates say the money is fungible and that it frees up funds Planned Parenthood could use for breast screenings but instead uses on abortions.

Be careful where you donate money. If you're looking for somewhere good to donate, try Reasonable Faith or the Ruth Institute. They're both outward-focused efforts – one on apologetics and the other on marriage and family.

Muslim wife tries to slit husband's throat for not being devout enough

October 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Staten Island Live. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A 37-year-old wife from New Brighton tried to slit her husband's throat as he slept because he was not the devout Muslim she believed she married, and pressured her to eat pork and drink alcohol, authorities allege.
>
> In a rambling, four-page handwritten confession, Rabia Sarwar laid out the "mental and emotional cruelty" that led to her trying to kill her husband, Susan Wagner High School teacher Sheikh Naseem, early yesterday morning, a law enforcement source said.
>
> "I tried my best to cut his throat," Ms. Sarwar admitted, according to court papers. Except Naseem woke up during the attempt, and took the knife from her, authorities said.
>
> According to Ms. Sarwar's attorney, Joseph Licitra, Naseem "was a cruel person, he preyed on her."

For some reason, feminists seem to think that all domestic violence is committed by *men*, except that it isn't.

On the other hand, although attempted murder is pretty bad, it would be nice to find a Christian woman who was as serious about her faith as this Muslim woman. (Mind you, I don't want a Christian woman to murder me dead, just for not being devout enough). I just want Christian women to watch more William Lane Craig debates. But it's pretty tough to convince them to even do that!

How long will it take to sort a deck of cards by trial and error?

October 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Inside the cell, things like proteins and DNA are formed by sequencing parts together in just the right way so that the sequence will have biological function. If the sequence is wrong, because some component of the sequence is the wrong piece or is in the wrong place, the sequence has no function. It's just like writing English or computer instructions.

To calculate the probabilities, you have to use a rule called "The Product Rule", because the order of the parts in the sequence ("permutation") is important. For example, the odds of getting the sequence "ABC" just by choosing three random letters is 1/26 x 1/26 x 1/26 = 1/17576. Things get very unlikely quite quickly, don't they?

So, take a look at Neil Simpson's latest post, where he uses cards instead of letters or amino acids, but the principle is exactly the same. His calculation is a little different because the odds actually go down a little each time you choose a card. So, for the first card, it's 1/52, but the second card is only 1/51, and so on…

Excerpt:

> This is by no means a definitive argument against evolution, but I offer it to put the "time, chance and random mutation" theory in perspective.
>
> Everyone knows that micro-evolution occurs, such as dog breeding and bacteria becoming resistant to antibiotics. But macro-evolutionists believe that with enough time an amazingly complex single cell of unknown origin could make lots and lots of small changes, develop reproductive capacities and eventually become humans, elephants, caterpillar/butterflies, chameleons and so much more.
>
> Let's consider something very simple. Imagine that you shuffle a deck of cards. If you shuffled it one time per second, how often would all the cards go back into their original order? (Ace of spades, King of spades, etc.) The math is simply 1/52 (the odds of the Ace of spades being on top) times 1/51 times 1/50, etc. I left out the Jokers to make it easier.
>
> Guess how many *years* it takes?

Click through to see his calculations, or do them yourself! It's easy and fun! Neil has a pretty fun discussion going on with the angry atheists who frequent his site, too.

This is everyone should learn probabilities in school, because then we can really talk about these things with our neighbor. Shalini can even do biochemistry, so she can actually explain it even better than I can!

Remember, we are looking for a specific sequence of cards – the sequence that the cards originally came in. In this example, it's that sequence and that sequence *alone* that has

biological function. The other sequences are just junk – they have no biological function. And most importantly, you don't get to save any of the cards that are in the right spots because the sequence as a whole has no present function that would allow it to be "saved" for later. You have to re-select all 52 cards each time at random!

A typical protein isn't made of 52 parts, it's made of around 200, and there are 80 possible amino acids, not just 26! And in the case of proteins,the vast majority of the possible sequences that you can make won't have any biological function at all! (And there are many more problems besides, such as chirality, cross reactions, and bonding type). Even if you filled the whole universe with reactants and reacted it all at Planck time, for the entire history of the universe, you still wouldn't be likely to get even *one* protein!

You can read more about the origin of life in this post.

MUST-READ: How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?

October 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 has written a nice review of Dawkins' new book. He is very polite in this review, but also very effective. He also posted the audio for the recent debate between John Lennox and Richard Dawkins.

Brian starts his review by explaining Dawkins' plan for the book:

> Dawkins seems to place all doubters into the young-earth category, while the illustrations he employs put them on par with "well-financed and politically muscular groups of Holocaust-deniers."

That's right. He is *not* refuting the work of intelligent design theorists – he is refuting *young earth creationists*. He spends *an entire chapter* on the age of the earth. The names of intelligent design scholars hardly even appear in the index of his book! This book is *not* a refutation of the likes of William A. Demsbki, PhD, PhD or Jonathan Wells, PhD, PhD. (That is not a typo, they each have *two* PhDs, and from top-tier schools)

And then it goes from bad to worse. He uses intelligent selection by human dog-breeders as proof of the efficacy of random mutation and natural selection. *Intelligent design* that produces micro-evolution is used as evidence for *unguided macro-evolution*.

> […]"The difference between any two breeds of dog gives us a rough idea of the quantity of evolutionary change that can be achieved in less than a millennium. The next question we should ask is, how many millennia do we have available to us in accounting for the whole history of life? If we imagine the sheer quantity of differences that separate a pye-dog from a peke, which took only a few centuries of evolution, how much longer is the time that separates us from the beginning of evolution or, say, from the beginning of mammals? … Can you imagine two million centuries, laid end to end?"

Actually, this "can you imagine" argument is a lot better than his fraudulent drawings of embryos argument. Neither of them works, but at least he isn't using fraudulent evidence with this "can you imagine" argument.

Oh, but here's the "you're stupid and evil" argument, which taken together with the "can you imagine" argument and the fraudulent embryos, forms the beginning of a very persuasive case for macro-evolution.

> "If the history-deniers who doubt the fact of evolution are ignorant of biology, those who think the world began less than ten thousand years ago are worse than ignorant, they are deluded to the point of perversity."

Did you know that human pregnancy is actually evidence for macro-evolution? Yes –

babies evolve in a Darwinian fashion from a fertilized egg until their birth! That's macro-evolution!

> Chapter eight is entitled You Did It Yourself in Nine Months. Here Dawkins cites an interaction between J.B.S. Haldane, a leading architect of neo-Darwinism, and an evolution skeptic. The skeptic poses a complex question of how, even given billions of years, a single cell could develop into a complicated human body that thinks and feels. Haldane's one-liner response was, "But madam, you did it yourself. And it only took you nine months."

Brilliant! *Sheer brilliance!* Let's call this one the "pregnancy is macro-evolution in action" argument. Put that with the rest.

Dawkins says that scientists don't even need to observe any fossils in order to know that evolution happened, even on distant planets.

> "I love speculating on how weirdly different we should expect life to be elsewhere in the universe, but one or two things I suspect are universal, wherever life might be found. All life will turn out to have evolved by a process related to Darwinian natural selection of genes."

He *knows that* aliens evolved because *what else could have happened? Evidence is irrelevant* when you have blind faith. Let's call this the "fossil record? we don't need no stinking fossil record!" argument. And of course you know that Dawkins thinks that these aliens who evolved unobserved may have seeded the Earth with life – that's his solution to the origin of life problem.

OK, one more quote from Brian's review before I really have to stop. It's Christopher Hitchens' "I wouldn't have done it that way" argument!

> "…the overwhelming impression you get from surveying any part of the innards of a large animal is that it is a mess! Not only would a designer never have made a mistake like that nervous detour; a decent designer would never have perpetuated anything of the shambles that is the criss-crossing maze of arteries, veins, intestines, wads of fat and muscle, mesenteries and more."

Oh, just one more! This is the "origin of life? what's that? (nervous titter)" argument.

> "We don't actually need a plausible theory of the origin of life…"

OK, I really have to stop. You *will* all go to Brian's site and read his review. It is *awesome*. It is absolutely safe to say that if you meet somebody who claims to believe that Dawkins is NOT a lazy-brained ignoramus, that person is ignorant, stupid or insane (or wicked, but I'd rather not consider that).

Note to Darwinist commenters. If you want to defend Dawkins here, then pick one of his arguments that I cited here, and go for it. For everything else, comment on Brian's site.

William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus

October 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's learn about the radical fringe of skeptical New Testament scholars by listening to a lecture about them, and then by listening to them debate against William Lane Craig.

A lecture on the historical Jesus

Brian Auten at Apologetics 315 recently posted a lecture by William Lane Craig on the historical Jesus.

In his post, Brian doesn't really say much about where or when the lecture was recorded. But I can tell you! This lecture has a special meaning for me because when I was just learning about apologetics, this was one of the first lectures I ordered. The lecture was delivered in 1996 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary as part of the distinguished Carver-Barnes Lecture Series. The title was "Re-Discovering the Historical Jesus". Hearing this again (I lent mine away and never got it back) was a real treat for me.

The MP3 file is here.

And here is a summary I made so you can follow along as you listen.

Lecture 1: the pre-suppositions of the Jesus Seminar
– the origins of the radically skeptical "Jesus Seminar" group
– what does the Jesus Seminar believe about Jesus?
– what is a pre-supposition?
– how do pre-suppositions affect the study of history?
– the Jesus Seminar's pre-supposition of naturalism (atheism)
– the Jesus Seminar's pre-supposition that the NT gospels are late
– the Jesus Seminar's pre-supposition of political correctness
– does the Jesus Seminar represent the consensus of NT scholars?

Lecture 2A: are the NT gospels historically reliable?
– should the gospels be assumed to be reliable or unreliable
– argument #1: insufficient time from events to written record
– argument #2: gospels contain very little legendary material
– argument #3: Jewish culture was good at oral transmission
– argument #4: eyewitness correction and apostolic supervision
– argument #5: the gospels are reliable where they can be tested
– #1: legendary elements only appear 1-2 generations after events
– but gospels were written within the lifetimes of the eyewitnesses
– sources for the gospels are even earlier, e.g. – 1 Cor 15:3-8
– on the other hand, the apocryphal gospels do contain legends
– #5: gospels are confirmed by history and archaeology were possible

– Luke includes details showing that he traveled with eyewitness Paul

Lecture 2B: the self-understanding of Jesus

– how early and reliable is believe in Jesus' divinity
– it would be hard to get monotheistic Jews to think Jesus was divine
– the only way this belief could have emerged is if Jesus taught it
– parable of the wicked tennants and vineyard – Jesus' self-understanding
– passage about no one knowing the father except the son, etc.
– passage about not knowing the date of his second coming
– the healings and exorcisms are well-attested and skeptics grant them

Lecture 2C: the trial and crucifixion of Jesus

– crucifixion is well-attested inside and outside the New Testament
– even the Jesus Seminar considers this an indisputable fact about Jesus
– Jesus was crucified for blasphemy – i.e. claiming to be divine

Lecture 2D: the minimal facts case for the resurrection

– minimal fact #1: the burial in a known location
– minimal fact #2: the empty tomb
– minimal fact #3: the appearances to individuals and groups
– minimal fact #4: the early belief that Jesus was resurrected
– the majority of scholars, including skeptics, accept the minimal facts
– naturalistic explanations are not able to account for these facts

There is a very noisy weird person in the audience who keeps shouting his approval. This lecture is almost identical to a lecture that Craig gave for Stand to Reason's Masters Series, on the pre-suppositions of the Jesus Seminar. There is no Q&A in this lecture, but there is Q&A in the STR version.

William Lane Craig debates crazy people

Now let's hear some debates between Bill Craig and *radical* skeptics. I listed the skeptics in order of increasing craziness, then made fun of them in the parentheses.

- Vs. John Dominic Crossan (denies *all four* minimal facts because a bodily resurrection *makes his Hindu friends feel sad*)
- Vs. John Shelby Spong (pro-gay-rights apostate Anglican bishop wants to stick it to those nasty conservatives)
- Vs. Robert G. Cavin (argues that Jesus had an identical, unknown twin brother who stole Jesus' body and kept up the charade until he was crucified – *as a prank* – then he appeared to Paul somehow out of thin air)
- Vs. Robert M. Price (Internet Infidels / History of religions – seems to think that ad hominem attacks are arguments)
- Vs Richard Carrier (seems to think that Jesus never existed, and that the New Testament is entirely mythical)

It's good that Craig has done so much preparation because he makes defeating these guys look easy, but it really isn't easy at all. You would need to prepare a lot to beat them

– and that would include having a PhD or two, and a few dozen peer-reviewed publications. Even though they are radical, you would have to know just what to say to expose them in the short time allowed for your speeches. Craig is excellent at all of this.

Or we can listen to some serious debates

Anyway, if you want to hear a good debate on the historical Jesus, then check out the James Crossley debates with Richard Bauckham, Michael Bird and William Lane Craig.

- Richard Bauckham defends the divinity of Jesus against Crossley
- Richard Bauckham defends the reliability of the gospels against Crossley
- Crossley debated against William Lane Craig before on the resurrection
- Crossley against Michael Bird on the origins of Christianity, (part 1, part 2)

Crossley is an atheist, but he is a serious, well-informed scholar.

What do the Dead Sea Scrolls tell us about how the Bible was transmitted?

October 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is another good post from Neil at 4Simpsons.

Excerpt:

> Many people – including some Christians – are quick to say that the Bible has been translated and changed so many times over the centuries that we don't know what the original writings said. For example, I saw a video clip where Deepak Chopra (alleged religious expert) claims that the King James was the 13th iteration of the Bible.
>
> But contrary to that myth, the books of the Bible have only been translated once and the copying process was very robust, dependable and verifiable.
>
> For example, Paul wrote in Greek, and we have Greek manuscripts to make translations from. That is *one* translation.

Deepak Chopra!!! He knows less about religion than my keyboard!

Look:

But I digress. I wanted to say something about the reliability of the Bible.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

When we discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls, it contained some manuscripts that were 1000 years earlier than our previous copies. It provides an excellent test of written transmission, because you can compare the best copy we had with a copy that is 1000 years earlier, then see if there are any differences.

See here: http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/holy-post/archive/2009/06/26/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-dead-sea-scrolls.aspx

Excerpt:

> You know the children's game called "telephone"? Some kid whispers a message to the kid next to him and it moves down the line until it emerges a garbled version of the original. It turns out the Bible is not like that. Despite endless translations and editions over the centuries, the original message appears to have emerged relatively unscathed. The Dead Sea Scrolls provided Old Testament manuscripts 1,000 years older than the previous oldest manuscript in existence. What the scrolls show is that the texts used at about the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, about 70 years after the death of Jesus, are almost the same as what we read today. Expert Weston W. Fields wrote: "The differences are neither theologically nor historically important. In general the scrolls testify to the amazing accuracy and great care with which ancient scribes

> passed along the biblical text.”

Too bad people like Deepak Chopra are so ignorant of such evidence.

Friday night funny: Obama NASCAR car, climate justice, Hallowe’en shows

October 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s Obama’s NASCAR pace car for promoting health care reform. (H/T ECM)

Here’s a post on some Canadians who are struggling for climate justice from The Way the Ball Bounces.

And here are some of the scariest old time radio shows EVER! These are MP3 files. Be careful, they are SCARY!

- The House in Cypress Canyon (Suspense)
- The Thing on the Fourble Board (Quiet, Please)
- Three Skeleton Key (Escape)
- Donovan’s Brain – part1, part 2 (Suspense)
- Sorry, Wrong Number (Suspense)
- The Hitch Hiker (Suspense)
- The Country of the Blind (Escape)
- Ghost Hunt (Suspense)

The House in Cypress Canyon is the scariest, in my opinion. I am a big fan of old time radio from 1939-1959.

Happy Friday!

Barbara Kay analyzes the anti-male policies of the Liberal Party of Canada

October 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this editorial written by Barbara Kay. (H/T Andrew)

She doesn't like the way that feminists discriminate against men. In the editorial, she considers the Liberal party of Canada's plan to use government power to discriminate against men.

Excerpt:

> As for a gender commissioner, if the Women's Caucus really wants to go there, they might start by recommending the abolition of equity programs in university. Enrolment in most programs is so female-skewed, an outsider might think men have fallen victim to some mysterious plague. And given the dropout rates of boys, one might call it a plague, because gender-wise the education system is sick. Boys are disadvantaged K-12, with teaching methods geared for girls and a very poor understanding of how boys learn best. Just this week Toronto proposed sweeping changes to education to make up for years of apathy toward the eroding performance gap.
>
> Maybe this putative gender commissioner could ask why Ontario health units only screen for abuse in incoming female patients 12 and older, not male patients, even though male adolescents suffer nearly as much sexual abuse as girls.
>
> And how about a thorough investigation of the family court system, where almost 90% of contested custody cases end up with sole custody going to mothers? How about support for equal parenting, a long-overdue gender-fair initiative that can't get traction because groups like the Liberal Women's Caucus aren't interested in gender fairness?.
>
> Because when the Women's Caucus says "gender" they mean "women's interests." If an honest gender commissioner were ever appointed, he or she would recommend the complete dismantlement of all women's government-funded lobby groups.

This article made me think of how a man is 184% more likely to die if he gets prostate cancer in Canada, where single-payer health care is politicized and extremely anti-male, when compared with the free market system in the United States. I am wondering how it helps women to constantly overlook the needs of men. Don't women have sons, fathers, brothers and husbands?

By the way, if woman wants to impress a man, a good start would be to read books on the issues that Barbara talks about and then start to write and advocate for men in the public square. Stephen Baskerville's "Taken Into Custody" is a good start. Or Jennifer

Roback Morse’s “Love and Economics”. Women need to make marriage seem reasonable to men, and the best way to do that is to convince the man that you understand all about marriage and parenting.

Scientists create sperm and eggs from embryonic stem cells

October 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Daily Mail. (H//T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Scientists at Stanford University in California found the right cocktail of chemicals and vitamins to coax the cells into becoming eggs and sperm.
>
> […]It paves the way for a cure for infertility and could help those left sterile by cancer treatment to have children who are biologically their own.
>
> But it raises a number of moral and ethical concerns. These include the possibility of children being born through entirely artificial means, and men and women being sidelined from the process of making babies.
>
> Opponents argue that it is wrong to meddle with the building blocks of life and warn that the advances taking place to tackle infertility risk distorting and damaging relations between family members.

Children need a stable environment with both a mother and a father in order to be happy and well-adjusted. Right now we are already in the middle of a crisis such that newborn children are not being raised by their biological mothers and fathers. This is become worse as single motherhood, same-sex marriage, cohabitation and unilateral divorce become mainstream. Are children becoming nothing more than a consumer good?

The general trend is for the selfish needs of adults to trump the needs of the children. This is to say nothing of abortion and embryonic stem cell research, in which the selfish-needs of adults result in the actual murder of children so that the more powerful adults be happier. This is, I think, a consequence of the decline of the Christian worldview (humans relating to a morally good God) and the ascension of materialism and hedonism.

Scientists discover how fathers improve brain development of children

October 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Dr. Braun's group found that at 21 days, the fatherless animals had less dense dendritic spines compared to animals raised by both parents, though they "caught up" by day 90. However, the length of some types of dendrites was significantly shorter in some parts of the brain, even in adulthood, in fatherless animals.
>
> "It just shows that parents are leaving footprints on the brain of their kids," says Dr. Braun, 54 years old.
>
> The neuronal differences were observed in a part of the brain called the amygdala, which is related to emotional responses and fear, and the orbitofrontal cortex, or OFC, the brain's decision-making center.
>
> [...]The balance between these two brain parts is critical to normal emotional and cognitive functioning, according to Dr. Braun. If the OFC isn't active, the amygdala "goes crazy, like a horse without a rider," she says. In the case of the fatherless pups, there were fewer dendritic spines in the OFC, while the dendrite trees in the amygdala grew more and longer branches.
>
> A preliminary analysis of the degus' behavior showed that fatherless animals seemed to have a lack of impulse control, Dr. Braun says. And, when they played with siblings, they engaged in more play-fighting or aggressive behavior.
>
> In a separate study in Dr. Braun's lab conducted by post-doctoral researcher Joerg Bock, degu pups were removed from their caregivers for one hour a day. Just this small amount of stress leads the pups to exhibit more hyperactive behaviors and less focused attention, compared to those who aren't separated, Dr. Braun says. They also exhibit changes in their brain.
>
> The basic wiring between the brain regions in the degus is the same as in humans, and the nerve cells are identical in their function. "So on that level we can assume that what happens in the animal's brain when it's raised in an impoverished environment ... should be very similar to what happens in our children's brain," Dr. Braun says.

Read the whole thing.

Related posts

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Judge rules Rifqa Bary must return to Ohio to be placed in foster care

November 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Pamela Geller reports in Newsmax. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> Last Tuesday, Oct. 27, she was returned to Ohio and placed in foster care in Franklin County. Eric Fenner, the executive director of Franklin County Children Services, said that he has "no reason to believe Rifqa wouldn't be safe with her parents" — with the father who according to Rifqa said, "If you have this Jesus in your heart, you're dead to me. You're not my daughter . . . I will kill you."
>
> And even now in Ohio, Rifqa Bary's civil rights are being violated. She is being held prisoner: She is not allowed use of the phone or the Internet, unlike thousands of other children in foster care. Why? What is her crime?

Wow! Foster care! That sounds like good news. But I thought the parents had to produce their immigration documents to get Rifqa released to Ohio.

Pamela writes:

> After repeatedly being asked to produce their immigration documents and repeatedly failing to do so, and after I proved their illegal status and perjury on immigration forms at my Web site AtlasShrugs.com, Rifqa Bary's parents risked being held in contempt of court.
>
> So Rifqa's father's attorney, David Colley, made a deal with Bartholomew: The contempt of court charge would be dropped, and in exchange, Rifqa would be allowed to stay in foster care until she turned 18 — in other words, until she could be free of her parents.

Well, that's where things stand now. Pamela has done an amazing job to protect Rifqa from a possible honor killing.

Latest Rasmussen poll shows Crist has 14-point lead over Marco Rubio

November 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at Rasmussen Reports.

Excerpt:

> The contest for the 2010 Republican Senate nomination in Florida is a little closer this month, but Governor Charlie Crist still holds a 14-point lead over former state House Speaker Marco Rubio.
>
> The latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey of likely GOP Primary voters in the state finds Crist outdistancing Rubio 49% to 35%. Four percent (4%) like some other candidate, and 12% are undecided.
>
> In mid-August, Crist was beating Rubio by 22 points among GOP Primary voters – 53% to 31%. That was Rasmussen Reports' first poll of next year's Republican Primary race.
>
> The fact that Crist has fallen below 50% in a primary against a lesser known opponent suggests potential vulnerability.
>
> Both men are vying to be the Republican nominee in next year's race to fill the seat vacated by retiring GOP Senator Mel Martinez. In August, Crist as governor named his chief of staff, George LeMiuex, to serve the remainder of Martinez's term, but LeMieux is not running for a full term next year.

This is more good news, especially after that RINO Dede Scozzafava quit the NY-23 Congressional race. Doug Hoffman is now tied with the Democrat, but should get the majority of Scozzafava's votes when she drops out of the race. The election is set for Tuesday. My concern at this point is that the Republican establishment waited too long to endorse the right candidate and now we may have trouble getting out the vote.

Lehigh University student could stand trial for false rape accusation

November 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, here's the story from Lehigh Valley Live.

Excerpt:

> A 19-year-old Lehigh University student who allegedly made a false report about being raped by a campus police officer waived a preliminary hearing today and could stand trial.
>
> **Brielynne Neumann**, of Shrewsbury, Mass., was lying in the center of Parkhill Street at 11:49 p.m. Sept. 3 when Bethlehem police approached her, according to court records. She identified herself as Brei Scano and gave a fake date of birth, records say.
> The lie backfired when police, who claim she was intoxicated, took her to her sorority house to verify her identity, records say. Neumann then told officers she had been raped the day before by a man who claimed to be a Lehigh University police officer, records say.
>
> Bethlehem police turned the investigation over to Pennsylvania State Police, who interviewed Neumann on Sept. 4. According to records, Neumann told a state trooper a different tale then the one she spun for Bethlehem police. She told the trooper she got into a car with a man who said he was a police officer; he groped her before she fled, records say.
>
> When the trooper asked Neumann to sign her statement, she refused, according to police, and recanted the entire story. The trooper wrote in the criminal affidavit, "**She admitted that she made the whole thing up.**"

So, this woman was drunk in a public place even though she was under the legal drinking age. To cover up her indiscretions and to blame others and appear as a victim, she invented a false rape accusation. I understand that this was a stressful situation for her, but imagine the problems she could have created by getting innocent men in trouble, as happened with the Duke Lacrosse players or the Tawana Brawley case or the Hofstra university case.

According to one study, false rape accusations are commonly used by women to provide an alibi for some other crime they are guilty of committing. The study lists this reason as one of the three reasons why women invent false rape accusations.

Excerpt:

> A study of rape allegations in Indiana over a nine-year period revealed that over 40% were shown to be false — not merely unproven. According to the author, "These false allegations appear to serve three major functions for the

> complainants: providing an alibi, seeking revenge, and obtaining sympathy and attention. False rape allegations are not the consequence of a gender-linked aberration, as frequently claimed, but reflect impulsive and desperate efforts to cope with personal and social stress situations." (Kanin EJ. Arch Sex Behav. 1994 Feb;23(1):81-92 *False rape allegations.*)
>
> In 1985, a study of 556 rape allegations found that 27% accusers recanted when faced with a polygraph (which can be ordered in the military), and independent evaluation showed a false accusation rate of 60%. (McDowell, Charles P., Ph.D. "False Allegations." Forensic Science Digest, (publication of the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations), Vol. 11, No. 4 (December 1985), p. 64.)

Feminist Wendy McElroy writes about the cases of Tucker Carlson and John Fund:

> In his forthcoming biography ***Politicians, Partisans and Parasites: My Adventures in Cable News***, *Crossfire* co-host **Tucker Carlson** discusses another motive that underlies some false accusations. In 2001, a woman he had never met alleged he had raped her in Louisville, a city he had never visited. After $14,000 in defensive legal bills, Carlson discovered that the woman had a chronic mental disorder. He decided not to sue for redress since it would further link his name with the word "rape."

And it happened to John Fund of the Wall Street Journal:

> Consider journalist **John Fund** who was arrested on charges of domestic violence and publicly excoriated for sexual misconduct. The charges were later dropped.
>
> Columnist Eric Alterman recently published an article entitled "Who Framed John Fund?" There, Alterman chronicled the false accusations that haunt Fund. Once a high-profile presence on the *Wall Street Journal's* editorial page and a frequent television commentator, Fund now writes for the *WSJ*'s far less prestigious **Opinionjournal.com** and is rarely on TV.
>
> On his Web site, Fund posted a notarized affidavit from his accuser, stating, "Mr. Fund has not been abusive to me contrary to what I said in reports to the Jersey City police." He has also posted the transcript of a deposition in which she testifies under oath that she has "borderline personality disorder." Nevertheless, it is not clear whether Fund's career will recover.

For a more detailed treatment of how false accusations are used to gain the advantage in divorce courts, check out this essay by Dr. Stephen Baskerville. Andrea Peyser writes in the NY Post about how these false accusations can lead to *real victims* of sexual violence not being taken seriously. I think that the solution is to prosecute false accusers . Their sentences should be proportional to the sentence that the victim of their accusation would have received, if convicted.

Britain's National Health Service pays millions to gag whistleblowers

November 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the UK Independent. (H/T Legal Insurrection via ECM)

Excerpt:

> NHS whistleblowers are routinely gagged in order to cover up dangerous and even dishonest practices that could attract bad publicity and damage a hospital's reputation.
>
> Some local NHS bodies are spending millions of taxpayers' money to pay off and silence whistleblowers with "super gags" to stop them going public with patient safety incidents. Experts warn that patients' lives are being endangered by the use of intimidatory tactics to force out whistleblowers and deter other professionals from coming forward.
>
> *The IoS* has learnt of children in Stoke-on-Trent needlessly losing organs after safety issues highlighted by a senior surgeon – who was suspended after coming forward to voice concerns – were ignored. In one of more than 20 serious incidents, a newborn baby girl needed an ovary removed after a standard procedure to remove a cyst was delayed because of staff shortages.
>
> According to Public Concern at Work (PCaW), two-thirds of doctors, nurses and other careworkers are accepting non-disclosure clauses built into severance agreements, in order to avoid years of suspension, financial ruin, incriminations and distress before a case reaches court. The details of these claims, including allegations of dangerous practice, dishonesty and misconduct, are never disclosed to the public.

The problem with government-run health care is simple. They take your money through income taxes, and they promise that later on, when you are sick, they will give you treatment. But because you have *paid* them up front, when the time comes to be treated you have *lost your leverage* to get the treatment. None of the people providing you with health care have any incentive to treat you – you've already paid them! No one's salary or bonus is riding on providing you with what you want! Provision of care is often rationed so that those who voted for the party in power are served *first.*

Contrast government-run health care with a free market system. In a free market, sellers of health care services and medical devices compete to earn your money by giving you the highest quality for the lowest price. You have the power over these competing sellers because you have the money in your hand – no one took it from you before you needed to use it. You can always go to a competitor if you don't like what's being provided to you for your money, unlike government-run systems. The consumer can choose what they want by comparing prices and patient outcomes across vendors.

Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?

November 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is

stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

4So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

5For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

6yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

5Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:
6Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
7but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.
8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,
[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The “Q” source for Matthew and Luke

Here’s Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier “Q” source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Learn more

You can learn more about the early belief in the divinity of Jesus by listening to a lecture by William Lane Craig and reading the related paper, and by listening to the debate between Richard Bauckham and James Crossley on that topic. The first link contains other scholarly debates on Jesus.

Why is Obama spending trillions when government spending failed in Japan?

November 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at the UK Telegraph. (H/T Protein Wisdom via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Regime-change in Tokyo and the arrival of Yukio Hatoyama's neophyte Democrats – raising $550bn (£333bn) to help fund their blitz on welfare and the "new social policy" – have concentrated the minds of investors at long last. "Markets are worried that Japan is going to hit a brick wall: the sums are gargantuan," said Albert Edwards, a Japan-veteran at Société Générale.

> The IMF expects Japan's gross public debt to reach 218pc of gross domestic product (GDP) this year, 227pc next year, and 246pc by 2014
>
> "Can these benign conditions be expected to continue in the face of even-larger increases in public debt? Going forward, the markets capacity to absorb debt is likely to diminish as population ageing reduces saving," said the IMF.
>
> Japan's $1.5 trillion state pension fund (the world's biggest) has become a net seller of government bonds this year, as it must to meet pay-out obligations. The demographic crunch has hit. The workforce has been contracting since 2005.
>
> "The debt situation is irrecoverable," said Carl Weinberg from High Frequency Economics. "I don't see any orderly way out of this. They will not be able to fund their deficit. There will be a fiscal shutdown, a pension haircut, and bank failures that will rock the world. It is criminally negligent that rating agencies are not blowing the whistle on this."
>
> […]It wasted its immense fiscal firepower, scattering money for 20 years on half-baked spending projects to keep the economy afloat. QE was too little, too late, and this is the lesson for the West. We must cut borrowing drastically over the next decade, and offset this with ultra-easy monetary policy. Does Downing Street understand this? Does the White House? Does the European Central Bank? Clearly not.

And now is the time on the Wintery Knight blog where we teach Economics in One Lesson.

Economics in One Lesson

We are going to have to pay for all this spending on Obama's favored special interest groups eventually, and that means that taxes will go up, or that the value of the dollar will go down, due to inflation. It has to be one or the other or both. There is no third way.

Perhaps it is time to review Henry Hazlitt's Economics in One Lesson, chapter 4, entitled "Public Works Mean Taxes".

Excerpt:

> Therefore, for every public job created by the bridge project a private job has been destroyed somewhere else. We can see the men employed on the bridge. We can watch them at work. The employment argument of the government spenders becomes vivid, and probably for most people convincing. But there are other things that we do not see, because, alas, they have never been permitted to come into existence. They are the jobs destroyed by the $10 million taken from the taxpayers. All that has happened, at best, is that there has been a *diversion* of jobs because of the project. More bridge builders; fewer automobile workers, television technicians, clothing workers, farmers.

And consider Chapter 5 as well, entitled “Taxes Discourage Production”.

> In our modern world there is never the same percentage of income tax levied on everybody. The great burden of income taxes is imposed on a minor percentage of the nation’s income; and these income taxes have to be supplemented by taxes of other kinds. These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to become employers at all. Improved machinery and better-equipped factories come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.
>
> There is a similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment that they profess to solve.

What Obama did, in effect, is to fire all of those millions of private sector people, so that he could reward the people who voted for him. Jobs are created far more efficiently by

small businesses than they are by *big government*. When you take money out of the private sector, which creates jobs easily, and give it to the public sector, which is inefficient and wasteful, you lose jobs.

George W. Bush cut taxes in his first term and created 1 million NEW JOBS. Obama has LOST 3.4 million jobs in a few months with his trillions of dollars of spending that the private sector cannot pay for. Government spending is a *job killer*. And no amount of charm and teleprompter reading is going to change the laws of economics.

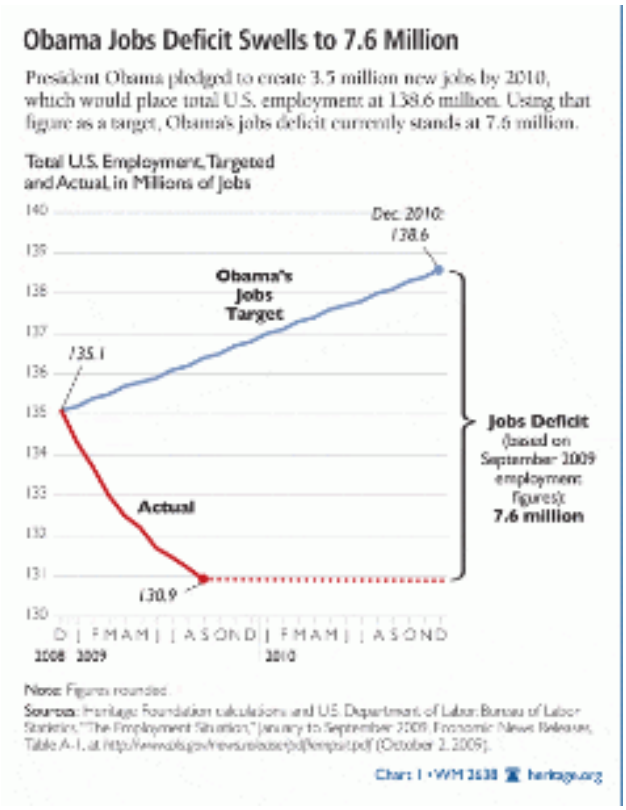

This is the way the world works. It works that way in Japan, and it works that way here, too.

Medicare fraud is 7.5 times the profit of ten largest medical insurers

November 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from The Weekly Standard. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> As *60 Minutes* reported last week, Medicare fraud is rampant and has now replaced the cocaine (ahem) business as the major criminal activity in South Florida. Both *60 Minutes* and the *Washington Post* report that Medicare fraud now costs American taxpayers roughly $60 billion a year. That may sound like a lot of money, but surely it pales next to the extraordinary profits of private insurance companies, right?
>
> Well, let's see.... Last year, the profits of the ten largest insurance companies in America were just over $8 billion — *combined*. No single insurance company made even five percent of what Medicare reportedly loses in fraud.
>
> While we're making comparisons, in its real first ten years (2014-23), the Senate Finance Committee bill would cost $1.7 trillion. At the rate of last year's profits, the combined ten-year profits of America's ten largest insurance companies would be $83 billion — five percent of the costs of the Senate Finance Committee bill. Eighty-three billion dollars may not buy you much in comparison with BaucusCare, but — on the bright side — that ten-year tally is somewhat more than what Medicare loses each year in fraud.

Another great find by ECM! What would we do without him?

UK man charged with murder after defending home from two burglars

November 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this Green Room post by Laura (from Pursuing Holiness).

Excerpt:

> The UK, having made domestic surveillance into an art form, is now at leisure to babysit your children.
>
> No, really. They *insist*: Parents banned from supervising their own children in playgrounds… in case they are paedophiles.
>
> Supervising children's every waking moment is the natural next step in a nation where they are subject to death panels, handguns are sufficiently outlawed so they have moved on to knives and big sticks, they are prosecuted for fighting back against burglars who enter their homes and cameras scour the land like the eye of Sauron, watching for anti-social behavior. Over 10,000 cameras in London alone, which do almost nothing for actual crime. So they're focusing on thoughtcrime, which can be prosecuted without video.
>
> It's the nanny state. Literally.

Well, that is bad, but I took a closer look at the "fighting back against burglars" link and saw this.

Excerpt:

> A council official's son who allegedly stabbed two burglars breaking into his mother's home has been charged with murder.
>
> Omari Roberts was hailed a hero after disturbing 17-year-old Tyler Juett and his accomplice, 14.
>
> But yesterday, the 23-year-old appeared in court accused of killing Juett and wounding the younger raider with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.
>
> The CPS said it decided to charge him for using 'excessive and gratuitous force' when the pair tried to burgle the home of Jacqueline McKenzie-Johnson in Nottingham in March.

Criminals have more rights than law-abiding citizens in the UK, because everyone has to be the same. Moral distinctions make people feel bad, so the criminals must be lifted up and the law-abiding must be pushed down. Everyone is equal, right?

Focus on the Family Canada edits radio show to adapt to hate crime law

November 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In case you hadn't heard, Obama signed a hate crime bill into law.

Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council responds in this Christian Post article.

> Opponents of the bill, dubbed by some as the "thought crimes" legislation, argue that it is unnecessary because gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are already protected under existing state laws. They also say the bill could be used to prosecute Christian broadcasters and pastors who preach homosexuality as sin because they could be accused of inciting violence.
>
> "This hates crimes provision is part of a radical social agenda that could ultimately silence Christians and use the force of government to marginalize anyone whose faith is at odds with homosexuality," said Tony Perkins, president of Family Research Council, following the bill's passage.

I thought that I would remind my readers where these laws lead by looking north to Canada. In Canada, Dr. Laura was effectively banned from radio stations for being critical of homosexuality, and Focus on the Family has to edit programs in order to comply with federal hate crime laws.

Consider this post from LifeSiteNews.

Excerpt:

> A statement from a director at Focus on the Family confirms that the major Christian organization has been editing its radio programs in order to accord with Canadian "hate crime" laws.
>
> "In particular, our content producers are careful not to make generalized statements nor comments that may be perceived as ascribing malicious intent to a 'group' of people and are always careful to treat even those who might disagree with us with respect," Gary Booker, director of global content creation for Focus, told WorldNetDaily.com.
>
> "Occasionally, albeit very rarely, some content is identified that, while acceptable for airing in the U.S. would not be acceptable under Canadian law and is therefore edited or omitted in Canada."
>
> A representative from Focus told LifeSiteNews.com that the organization is not prepared at this time to expand upon the statement sent to WorldNetDaily.com.
>
> In April 2004, Canada enacted Bill C-250, a bill that added "sexual orientation" to "identifiable groups" protected from communication that would incite hatred towards them. In the months leading up to its passage, many conservative thinkers and activists prophesied that adding "sexual orientation" to the hate

> crime laws would give homosexual activists the leverage needed to persecute those opposed to their lifestyle for nothing more than expressing disagreement.
>
> According to the Criminal Code of Canada, a person is not to be convicted of a hate crime if "he expressed or attempted to establish by argument an opinion on a religious subject."
>
> Despite the nod to religious conviction, however, the Canadian Human Rights Commission has already investigated and punished numerous individuals for promoting opposition to homosexual practices based on traditional Christian teaching.
>
> In November of 2007, the CHRC threatened the Christian Heritage Party of Canada (CHPC) with legal penalties for material on their website. Printer Scott Brockie has also been found guilty by the Commission and fined for refusing to print pro-homosexual materials, as was Christian pastor Steve Boissoin, who wrote a letter to the editor outlining Christian teachings on homosexuality. Bishop Fred Henry was hauled before the Commission for speaking out against homosexuality, and recently a complaint was made against the Catholic magazine, Catholic Insight for similar reasons.

Advocating for the traditional family is a criminal activity in Canada, because it may incite violence and then you would be charged with a hate crime.

You can hear more about Obama's hate crime bill in this current events podcast from William Lane Craig.

The silencing of Christians in the public square is now quite common in Canada and the UK.

Here are some stories from the UK:

- Woman gets police visit after writing letter protesting gay pride parade
- Another nurse faces termination for being a Christian in public
- UK stewardess fired for refusing to dress as a Muslim
- Couple arrested for answering Muslim's questions about Christianity

Here are some stories from Canada:

- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

And bad things are already happening the United States.

- Feminists suppress free speech at East Georgia College
- ACLU instigates arrest of two Christians for praying in a church
- New Mexico Human Rights Commissions fines couple $6000 for being Christians

- Obama forces Catholic school to cover abortion on health care plan

Something to think about, especially since a lot of “Christians” voted Obama because they supported wealth redistribution and the appeasement of terrorists abroad. I am sure that in time those same “Christians” will learn to redefine Christianity so that it complies with Obama’s hate crime bill, and then they will turn to demonizing authentic Christians who still think the Bible is authoritative on moral questions.

Great news! Illustra Media’s DVD of Craig/Hitchens debate out in late November

November 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just got an e-mail back from Illustra Media about the professional version of the Craig/Hitchens debate.

Excerpt:

> The debate DVD that you are referring to is now scheduled for release sometime in mid to late November 2009. You can check on our web-site, www.Go2RPI.com, to see the latest information. You should have no problem having it in time for Christmas.

I am very pleased with this news! I am hoping that I can buy a dozen copies for all my co-workers and friends. I notice that Amazon is already selling the Wilson/Hitchens debate on morality and meaning. I don’t like pre-suppositionalists like Doug Wilson, but he kicks butt in his debates with Hitchens. I think pre-suppositional arguments must be combined with evidential arguments.

Be sure and buy the other Illustra Media DVDs on intelligent design.

Understanding the real effects of the Democrat health care reform bill

November 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Congressional Budget Office figures the House program will cost $1.055 trillion over a decade, which while far above the $829 billion net cost that
>
> […]All this is particularly reckless given the unfunded liabilities of Medicare—now north of $37 trillion over 75 years.
>
> […]As for Medicaid, the House will expand eligibility to everyone below 150% of the poverty level, meaning that some 15 million new people will be added to the rolls as private insurance gets crowded out at a cost of $425 billion. A decade from now more than a quarter of the population will be on a program originally intended for poor women, children and the disabled.
>
> […]All told, the House favors $572 billion in new taxes, mostly by imposing a 5.4-percentage-point "surcharge" on joint filers earning over $1 million, $500,000 for singles. This tax will raise the top marginal rate to 45% in 2011 from 39.6% when the Bush tax cuts expire—not counting state income taxes and the phase-out of certain deductions and exemptions. The burden will mostly fall on the small businesses that have organized as Subchapter S or limited liability corporations, since the truly wealthy won't have any difficulty sheltering their incomes.
>
> This surtax could hit ever more earners because, like the alternative minimum tax, it isn't indexed for inflation. Yet it still won't be nearly enough. Even if Congress had confiscated 100% of the taxable income of people earning over $500,000 in the boom year of 2006, it would have only raised $1.3 trillion. When Democrats end up soaking the middle class, perhaps via the European-style value-added tax that Mrs. Pelosi has endorsed, they'll claim the deficits that they created made them do it.
>
> Under another new tax, businesses would have to surrender 8% of their payroll to government if they don't offer insurance or pay at least 72.5% of their workers' premiums, which eat into wages. Such "play or pay" taxes always become "pay or pay" and will rise over time, with severe consequences for hiring, job creation and ultimately growth. While the U.S. already has one of the highest corporate income tax rates in the world, Democrats are on the way to creating a high structural unemployment rate, much as Europe has done by expanding its welfare states.
>
> Meanwhile, a tax equal to 2.5% of adjusted gross income will also be imposed on some 18 million people who CBO expects still won't buy insurance in 2019.

> Democrats could make this penalty even higher, but that is politically unacceptable, or they could make the subsidies even higher, but that would expose the (already ludicrous) illusion that ObamaCare will reduce the deficit.

Click here to read the rest of the article. It’s quite comprehensive and yet concise.

Boeing builds new 787 plant in South Carolina to escape Washington Democrats

November 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You can't pass regulations and taxes on corporations and then expect them to supply residents of your state with jobs. They will move to another state, and eventually, to another country.

Consider this commentary from Illiquid Assets. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Two stories jumped out at me this morning the first was Boeing backing up its warning to Washington State politicians that they needed to reform the business environment and taxation model or lose future business investment and jobs. The response from the State was a whole new plan with localized Cap and Trade via the Western Climate Initiative, no reform of labor laws that allowed a protracted Union strike that shut down Boeing just as the world was starting its slip into recession combined with and other Green initiatives sure to drive up operating and labor costs. So Boeing has decided to open the second assembly line for the 787, not in Washington State, but in South Carolina and the politicians in Olympia claim they did not see it coming. South Carolina has a lower tax rate and a "Right to Work" law that means you do not have to join a union to work at a union business.

A right-to-work law means that the corporation does not have to be shackled by the demands of corrupt leftist unions, who are largely responsible for driving the American auto industry into the ground, in my opinion.

And now, consider this statement from Republican State Rep. Dan Christiansen. (H/T Sound Politics via iPandora)

Excerpt:

> It's extremely disappointing that Boeing has chosen South Carolina over Washington, but not surprising at all. Boeing has been very critical of our state's difficult regulatory atmosphere. At the end of the day, it has to be able to compete successfully on an international scale, especially against Airbus. Instead of providing a level playing field, Washington has consistently put up barriers that make it difficult not only for Boeing to compete, but also for other employers throughout our state.
>
> It's been no secret that other states have been courting Boeing for years. Boeing has tried to make it work here. However, it has gotten to a point with unemployment insurance issues, regulatory burdens, business and occupation taxes, and recently, the governor being willing to consider tax increases, that

> Washington is no longer a place where Boeing can be competitive.
>
> In South Carolina, it took only days for Boeing to get the permits it needs to move forward with the second 787 plant. In Washington, it would take years. That's one of many examples in which our state has not been helpful and has stood in the way of the ability for Boeing to successfully compete here.
>
> When Boeing decided several years ago to move its headquarters from Seattle to Chicago, many of my House Republican colleagues and I warned that unless the Legislature was willing to make reforms to improve the state's business climate, we may see further departures. The governor and the majority party have been in denial about concerns of job providers and now our predictions are unfortunately coming true.
>
> We must also remember this is not just about Boeing. Many other employers rely on Boeing and its workforce to support their companies. Hundreds of thousands of jobs in Washington are indirectly related to Boeing and are affected. I've been very critical not only about how our state has treated Boeing, but all employers in Washington. Even when the Legislature made concessions to Boeing in 2003 to secure the Dreamliner in our state, I also said we should extend those tax relief benefits to all businesses. Unfortunately, very little has been done in the Legislature to make Washington attractive for business.
>
> Today's announcement needs to be a wake-up call to our political leaders in Washington to create a more competitive business climate before we lose more employers to other states.

(Click through to the article for another view)

Eventually, maybe the American people will realize that they can't attack "big corporations" without facing the consequences. Until then, Democrats will keep raising taxes and adding regulations that causes business to shift jobs to low-tax states, and eventually, *overseas*. Outsourcing is *caused by Democrats* who are hostile to businesses. Unemployment is *caused by Democrats* who are hostile to businesses.

Climate-profiteer Al Gore could become the world's first carbon billionaire

November 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Last year Mr Gore's venture capital firm loaned a small California firm $75m to develop energy-saving technology.

> The company, Silver Spring Networks, produces hardware and software to make the electricity grid more efficient.
>
> The deal appeared to pay off in a big way last week, when the Energy Department announced $3.4 billion in smart grid grants, the New York Times reports. Of the total, more than $560 million went to utilities with which Silver Spring has contracts.
>
> The move means that venture capital company Kleiner Perkins and its partners, including Mr Gore, could recoup their investment many times over in coming years.
>
> Few people have been as vocal about the urgency of global warming and the need to reinvent the way the world produces and consumes energy as Mr Gore. And few have put as much money behind their advocacy and are as well positioned to profit from this green transformation, if and when it comes.

This is taxpayer money, folks. Your money and my money.

I note that Watts Up With That links to a UK Telegraph story up on how climate change beliefs are now given the same status and protections as religious beliefs. Well, that's what global warming is, only it's less supported by science than some religions I know.

Al Gore knows less about science than my keyboard

Here's a Washington Times article about Al Gore's academic performance.

Excerpt:

> Despite Mr. Gore's image as star pupil, the kid most likely to be the first to raise his hand in class, it seems that Mr. Gore barely applied himself during his years as an undergraduate and graduate student. Indeed, his sophomore year at Harvard, The Post notes, was "the year Gore's classmates remember him spending a notable amount of time in the Dunster House basement lounge shooting pool, watching television, eating hamburgers and occasionally smoking marijuana." Please, take a moment to appreciate the scene painted in that one sentence.
>
> In introductory economics, the only economics course Mr. Gore ever took, he

> received a C-, which goes a long way toward explaining his December remark that he would consider raising taxes should the economy fall into recession.
>
> If the rudiments of fiscal policy proved to be too taxing for young Al, it should hardly be surprising that the self-appointed protector of the world's ecosystems had almost as much trouble understanding the basic concept of biology. After all, Mr. Gore's high school performance on the college board achievement tests in physics (488 out of 800 "terrible," St. Albans retired teacher and assistant headmaster John Davis told The Post) and chemistry (519 out of 800 "He didn't do too well in chemistry," Mr. Davis observed) suggests that Mr. Gore would have trouble with science for the rest of his life. At Harvard and Vanderbilt, Mr. Gore continued bumbling along.
>
> As a Harvard sophomore, scholar Al "earned" a D in Natural Sciences 6 in a course presciently named "Man's Place in Nature." That was the year he evidently spent more time smoking cannabis than studying its place among other plants within the ecosystem. His senior year, Mr. Gore received a C+ in Natural Sciences 118.
>
> At Vanderbilt divinity school, Mr. Gore took a course in theology and natural science. The assigned readings included the apocalyptic, and widely discredited "Limits to Growth," which formed much of the foundation for "Earth in the Balance." It is said that Mr. Gore failed to hand in his book report on time. Thus, his incomplete grade turned into an F, one of five Fs Mr. Gore received at divinity school, which may well be a worldwide record.

He also dropped out of law school at Vanderbilt, not just divinity school. But his father was a liberal U.S. Senator, so things worked out OK for the pot-smoking silver-spoon leftist. As long as he avoids debates on global warming with actual scientists, he can keep laughing all the way to the bank. Recall the recent post about the Finnish car company backed by Al Gore getting a 529M US government loan. He needs *your money* to pay for the massive electricity bills he runs up while living in his huge mansion.

Global warming alarmism has nothing to do with science

Global warming is a *myth* sold to us by greedy, power-hungry socialists like Al Gore.

- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Government-funded research unit destroyed original climate data
- The state of the debate about catastrophic man-made global warming
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says solar activity impacts climate
- Famous UN IPCC hockey stick graph is based on cherry-picked data
- Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming
- Global warming advocates refuse to give their data to skeptics
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says prior ice melting caused by solar variation
- Oceans are not warming now

- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Global warming is not caused by humans

Global warming is about enriching leftist elites while controlling the lives of productive private citizens.

Does God exist? Is there any scientific evidence to prove that God exists?

November 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Since I haven't talked about science in a while, I thought that now would be a good time to list some of the more common arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe and/or intelligent life. I like to use arguments drawn from mainstream science that do not assume the Bible or inerrancy or anything specifically religious. The arguments below all show that the reality we live in exhibits effects in nature that are not explained by particles in motion, chance and the operation of natural laws.

First, here's the list of a few of the better-known arguments:

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do

The average knuckle-dragging atheist will not be familiar with any of these arguments, will have never seen them used in academic debates, and will not even click through to read about them. That's atheism these days – it's non-cognitive. Atheism is all about escaping from moral values and moral obligations, which are not even rationally grounded by atheism.

The point of being familiar with these arguments is to show that religion and science are virtually identical. Both are trying to explain the external world. Both are bound by the laws of logic. Both use evidence to verify and falsify claims. For example, the discovery of the origin of the universe falsifies Hinduism, Buddhism and Mormonism, but it leaves Christianity, Islam and Judaism unscathed. All religions make truth claims and those claims can be tested against what science tells us about the world.

What is the significance of scientific progress for Christians?

Some general points to know when presenting these arguments.

1. You need to emphasize that atheism is in full flight away from the progress of science. Each of these arguments has gotten stronger as the evidence grew and grew. For example, scientists had to be forced to turn away from the eternal universe as new discoveries arrived, such as the cosmic microwave background radiation measurements. Scientists had to turn away from the view that the cosmological constants are nothing special, as more and more fine-tuned quantities were discovered.

2. Christians need to pay attention in school and score top grades in mathematics and experimental sciences. Science is God-friendly, and we need to have Christians doing cutting edge research in the best labs at the universities. Think of the work done by Doug Axe at Cambridge University in which he was able to publish research showing that very few sequences of amino acids have biological function, so getting functional sequences at random is virtually impossible. One of Doug's papers is here. We need more people like him.

3. Each of these arguments needs to be studied in the context of polemics and debates. The best way to present each of these arguments is by presenting them as a struggle against opposing forces. For example, when talking about the big bang, emphasize how atheists kept trying to come up with eternal universe speculations. When talking about the fine-tuning, talk about the unobservable multiverse. When talking about irreducible complexity, talk about the co-option fallacy. Don't preach – teach the controversy.

4. Don't make lazy excuses about how scientific evidence doesn't persuade non-Christians. Science is absolutely the core of any argument for Christianity, along with the case for the resurrection of Jesus. Christianity is about *knowledge*. Christians who refuse to subject their faith to science are probably just trying to make sure that Christianity isn't so true that it dictates how they should live. They like the uncertainty of blind faith, because it preserves their autonomy to disregard Christian moral teachings when it suits them.

5. The purpose of linking your Christian faith to scientific arguments is to demonstrate to non-Christians that Christianity is real. It is not a personal preference. It is not something you grew up with. It is not something you inherited from your parents. When you link your Christian faith with scientific facts in the external world, you are declaring to non-Christians that Christianity is testable and binding on everyone who shares the objective reality we live in. You can't expect people to act Christianly without showing that Christianity is objectively true.

6. Scientific arguments are tremendously useful even for believing Christians, because sometimes it is difficult to act in a Christian way when your emotions are telling you not to. When your feelings make it hard for you to behave Christianly, that is when scientific evidence can come into play in order to rationally justify acts of self-denial and self-sacrifice. For example, scientific evidence for the existence of God is a helpful counterbalance to the problem of apparently gratuitous evil, which often discourages Christians.

My complete index of arguments for and against Christian theism is here.

UPDATE: I notice that in the popular culture, people are not really aware of these arguments, and are still arguing for religious faith based on pragmatism and personal experience, not on evidence. Using reason and evidence is much better, and it's what the Bible teaches, too.

William Lane Craig vs. Francisco Ayala November 5th at Indiana University

November 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig is debating evolutionary biologist Francisco Ayala in the November 5th, 2009, at Indiana University.

Here's the skinny:

> **Intelligent Design: Is it Viable?** A debate between Dr. Francisco J. Ayala and Dr. William Lane Craig. Moderated by Dr. Bradley Monton. **The debate will occur on Thursday, November 5, 2009 at 7 p.m. EST at Indiana University Auditorium.**

Bradley Monton is the atheist philosopher who thinks that intelligent design is a viable enterprise to investigate.

You can read more about William Lane Craig at his web site.

Here's a bit more about his opponent, Francisco Ayala:

> His research focusses on population and evolutionary genetics, including the origin of species, genetic diversity of populations, the origin of malaria, the population structure of parasitic protozoa, and the molecular clock of evolution. He also writes about the interface between religion and science, and on philosophical issues concerning epistemology, ethics, and the philosophy of biology.

He's written 650 papers and 12 books. I think this is going to be a *tough debate* for Bill!

UPDATE: The debate is now finished!

- William Lane Craig's after-action report
- You can listen to the MP3 recording of the debate here at Apologetics 315
- Video of Craig's opening speech is here

Related posts

- Great news! Illustra Media's DVD of Craig/Hitchens debate out in late November
- Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
- William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
- Peter Atkins explains how to easily reconcile the Big Bang and atheism
- Summary of the Craig-Ahmed debate at Cambridge University
- William Lane Craig video and audio from Saddleback Church event
- William Lane Craig takes on prominent atheist Daniel Dennett
- Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
- Four-minute overview of 11 arguments for Christianity by William Lane Craig

- Debate summary: Is God necessary for morality? William Lane Craig vs Shelly Kagan
- Overview of the early, independent sources for the empty tomb
- How to defend the fine-tuning argument just like William Lane Craig
- How to defend the kalam cosmological argument just like William Lane Craig
- Final comments on the William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate

New Zealand researchers link abortion to higher rates of mental illness

November 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fairfax Media. (H/T Beretta Blog)

Excerpt:

> New Zealand researchers who examined the medical history of more than 500 women have concluded abortion "leads to significant distress in some".
>
> Women reporting adverse reactions were up to 80 percent more likely than women not exposed to abortion to have mental health problems, the Otago University study found.
>
> That finding has raised questions about justifying abortions on the basis of mental health.
>
> The study, reported in the British Journal of Psychiatry, found the risk of mental illness was "proportional to the degree of distress" associated with the abortion.
>
> […]More than 85 percent of women reported a least one negative emotional reaction, including sorrow, sadness, guilt, regret, grief and disappointment.
>
> […]The study found that women who reported at least one negative reaction had rates of mental health problems "approximately 1.4 to 1.8 times higher than women not exposed to abortion".
>
> The report concluded: "This evidence raises important questions about the practice of justifying termination of pregnancy on the grounds that this procedure will reduce risks of mental health problems in women having unwanted pregnancy.

Read the rest here.

US lawmakers urge India to protect Christians from Hindu militants

November 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Agence France Presse.

Excerpt:

> US lawmakers urged authorities in India's eastern state of Orissa to prosecute perpetrators of violence against Christians, saying the nation's reputation for tolerance was at stake.
>
> In a letter to the state's Chief Minister Navin Patnaik released Friday, the lawmakers voiced concern that many perpetrators of last year's violence were still at large and intimidating their victims.
>
> More than 100 Christian were killed and thousands more left homeless between August and October 2008 following the murder of a revered Hindu holy man, which was blamed on Christians.
>
> While praising recent statements by India's central government, the lawmakers said that local authorities have sometimes turned away victims seeking redress.
>
> "Such attacks on the fundamental freedom of religion threaten not only India's reputation for religious diversity, but also the very stability of India's secular democracy," the 21 lawmakers, led by Republican Trent Franks, wrote in the letter sent late last month.
>
> "Given the recent experience with religiously inspired terrorism, we are concerned that if Hindu extremists can act with impunity toward religious minorities in India, these extremists and their ideologies will begin to affect international security as well."
>
> Christians account for 2.3 percent of the billion-plus population in India, which is majority Hindu but officially secular.
>
> The US Commission on International Religious Freedom, a bipartisan official advisory panel, in August placed India on its watch list, citing violence against Christians in Orissa and Muslims in the western state of Gujarat.
>
> The move brought swift condemnation from India, an emerging US ally, which said the nation had an independent judiciary and vigilant media to pursue any aberrations from its secular, multi-religious principles.

It may be useful to listen to the recent debate between Hindus and Christians that I summarized, in which two Hindus explain their view of human rights and how religious minorities should be treated. In some parts of India, if you do not accept the Hindu concept of polytheism, then you are opening yourself up to violence from Hindu extremists. On the other hand, the election of the Congress Party and the rejection of the

BJP Party was a good sign that the bulk of Indians are more tolerant that the militant Hindus.

Deepak Chopra and intolerance for Christianity

In a related story, Hugh Hewitt had a post up about Deepak Chopra, who often writes against Bible-believing Christians.

Excerpt:

> Still more Chopra invective surfaced in The Washington Post this September, again targeting [Rick] Warren and reflecting the charm of the Left. "The abuse delivered by right-wing Christians is such an old story that we are long past irony," Chopra wrote, before moving on to his favorite target.
>
> "The Rev. Rick Warren has a record for trying to smooth the waters, but he also flirts with intolerance — toward gay marriage, for instance — and since his rationale is that a 'loving' God shares the same prejudices, what's to stop others with worse tempers from following the same logic? When your God hates, you have permission to hate," Chopra wrote.
>
> When your guru hates, I guess that gives you permission to hate as well?

I think it's encouraging that the bulk of Hindus seem to be moving away from the view of intolerant extremists like Deepak Chopra and the Hindu militants in Orissa.

Michele Bachmann wants you in Washington, D.C. on November 5th at noon

November 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Watch the video of her appearance on Sean Hannity. (High Quality)

(Click to see it *even larger* over on YouTube)

Michele and Sean talk over the health care bill.

Topics:

- Taxpayer-funded abortion
- Government-run health insurance
- Higher taxes
- Death panels
- 500 billion dollars of Medicare cuts

And they talk about page 92, which clearly states that individuals will NOT be allowed to purchase private health care plans after a certain date. This is socialized medicine: single-payer, higher taxes, waiting lists, rationing and death panels.

Here she is on the floor of the House of Representatives struggling mightily for *your liberty.*

God bless her!

Podacast with Michele Bachmann

Here's a recent podcast with Michele from the Minneapolis-St. Paul-based "Northern Alliance Radio Show". The interview starts at 14:30.

Related articles

Here are my recent posts on Michele Bachmann:

- Michele Bachmann defends free trade at the Heritage Foundation
- MUST-SEE: Michele Bachmann explains why the US dollar is in serious trouble
- Congresswoman Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar
- Hot Air and Michelle Malkin post new video of Michele Bachmann's town hall
- New Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- MUST-READ: Michele Bachmann open to running for President in 2012!

Michele Bachmann is my favorite member of Congress! She's just perfect in every way! Please send her a contribution here, and bookmark her blog and her youtube channel.

Here are all the posts tagged "Michele Bachmann".

A social conservative's evaluation of Tuesday's election results

November 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

New York

First, social conservatives lost the special election in New York's 23rd district.

Excerpt:

> Doug Hoffman, the upstart third-party Conservative candidate for the special election in New York's 23rd congressional district, conceded defeat to Democrat Bill Owens early Wednesday morning.
>
> The final tally showed Owens beating out Hoffman by 4,000 votes, 49 percent to 45 percent. On social issues, Owens has identified himself as "pro-choice" regarding abortion, but on marriage, he indicated that he favored President Obama's position: against same-sex "marriage," but for civil unions.
>
> […]While polls on the eve of election-day showed Hoffman having pulled ahead by at least five points, Scozzafava's weekend endorsement of Owens after the implosion of her own campaign, which had the blessing of national GOP leaders, may have proved the game-changer.
>
> Scozzafava has close ties to the labor unions – her husband is a labor organizer – and channeled that on-the-ground support into Owens campaign. The Albany Times Union reports that powerful New York unions poured in hundreds of thousands of dollars to oppose Hoffman.

That's a lost seat in the House of Representatives. And labor unions opposed the socially conservative candidate.

Maine

Next, social conservatives won against same-sex marriage in Maine.

Excerpt:

> Maine voters handed traditional marriage supporters a major victory Tuesday night after rejecting a same-sex "marriage" law that the state government approved six months ago.
>
> Though signed by Democratic Gov. John Baldacci, the law never went into effect, and remained in limbo after the success of the ballot initiative calling for a people's vote.
>
> Had the law been upheld, Maine would have been the sixth U.S. state to allow homosexual "marriage," after Iowa, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.
>
> As of early Wednesday, the law was defeated 53% to 47%, despite polling data

> leading up to the vote showing the race in a dead heat.
>
> […]Same-sex "marriage" has now lost in all 31 states in which the question has been put to a popular vote.

Traditional marriage is the view that children should be raised by their own mother and father in a stable marriage. Same-sex marriage denies that children should have a right to be raised by a mother and father biologically related to them. See my previous post to understand why people oppose same-sex marriage. And here's my case for the pro-life position.

Virginia

Social conservatives were elected as governor, lieutenant-governor and attorney general in Virginia.

Excerpt:

> Virginia's state elections saw a sweep for pro-life candidates into the state's highest offices. Pro-life Republicans captured the offices of governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general by wide margins.
>
> Pro-life Republican Bob McDonnell handily beat his pro-abortion Democratic opponent Creigh Deeds. Election night returns showed McDonnell cruising to victory, garnering 59 percent of the vote to Deeds' 41 percent with 99 percent of precincts reporting in.
>
> […]Pro-life Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling, a Republican, also handily won re-election with 57 percent of the vote, to 43 percent for his pro-abortion Democratic challenger Jody Wagner, with 99 percent of precincts reporting.
>
> […]Pro-life Republican Ken Cuccinelli also beat out his Democratic and pro-abortion challenger Steve Shannon for the office of attorney general, 58 percent to 42 percent with 99 percent of precincts reporting.
>
> […]"The Virginia Society for Human Life looks forward to working with all three of these stalwart pro-life leaders, as well as pro-life members of the State Senate and House of Delegates, to enact laws that will safeguard the right to life of unborn children and support their mothers, and protect older people and those with disabilities from denial of lifesaving medical treatment, food and water."

Great news for social conservatives.

New Jersey

A pro-life, pro-family Republican was elected as governor of the strong Democrat state of New Jersey.

Excerpt:

> Incumbent Democrat Gov. Jon Corzine conceded defeat last night to pro-life, pro-family Republican Chris Christie in New Jersey's governor's race.
>
> Christie fought a hard-won battle against the incumbent Corzine and third-party

> candidate Chris Daggett, winning 49 percent of the vote. Corzine, whose bid for re-election received huge assistance from President Barack Obama, who personally campaigned for him in New Jersey, came in second with 45 percent of the vote, with Daggett trailing in third with six percent.
>
> resident Obama had attempted to rally support behind Corzine by tapping into the popularity that garnered the President 57 percent of the vote in New Jersey in 2008. However neither Obama's personal charisma, nor Corzine's outspending Christie by almost 3-1 – $30 million to $11.5 million – could save the incumbent governor from defeat in an election that mainly turned on the economy and job stagnation, crippling fees and taxes (especially sky-high property taxes), and fiscal irresponsibility in Trenton that has run rampant during Corzine's tenure.
>
> […]During the brutal campaign fight, Corzine, who was endorsed by abortion-provider Planned Parenthood, had attacked Christie in ads for the latter's support of a constitutional amendment banning abortion and his opposition to embryonic stem-cell research.
>
> Corzine is a big proponent of embryonic stem-cell research. However, New Jersey voters, frustrated with the state's failure to close a $3 billion budget gap, rejected in November 2007 a $450 million ballot initiative to support a project that would have funded embryonic stem-cell research facilities. The setback was a political humiliation for Corzine, who had broken ground for the Christopher Reed Pavilion in October with the words "to the future," only to have the voters shelve the project a month later.
>
> Christie, on the other hand, received a critical endorsement from New Jersey's foremost pro-life GOP Congressman Chris Smith. The pro-life leader's approval for Christie, who admitted at the beginning of his campaign that he used to describe himself as "pro-choice" until the birth of his own children led him to embrace the pro-life position, was followed by the endorsement of New Jersey Right to Life.
>
> […]Both of Christie's challengers, Corzine and Daggett, indicated that they would sign a bill legalizing same-sex "marriage" if given the opportunity.

So again, Barack Obama campaigned on behalf of the anti-life, anti-marriage Democrat candidate, but the Republican pro-life, pro-marriage candidate won the election. Social conservatism is as real to me as fiscal conservatism or foreign policy conservatism, so I am overjoyed that social conservatives won elected offices in 3 out of 4 states that voted for Obama, who is anti-life and anti-family.

Science Daily reports the biological functions supported by Junk DNA

November 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the Science Daily article. (H/T Evolution News)

Excerpt:

> …during early development, the proteins required for cell division come from the mother. The researchers speculate that the heterochromatin of the male *D. melanogaster*'s X chromosome has rapidly evolved, such that after mating, the machinery involved in DNA packaging from a *D. simulans* mother no longer recognizes the *D. melanogaster* father's "junk" DNA, Ferree said.

Casey Luskin writes:

> Basically, so-called "junk"-DNA is involved in helping to package chromosomes in the cell. If two species have different "junk" DNA, then this prevents the proteins in the egg from properly packaging the chromosomes donated by the sperm. The organism does not develop properly.

Good news for pro-ID guys like me!

Craig-Ayala debate may be streamed live over the Internet

November 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check it out! (H/T Brian Auten of Apolgetics 315)

We are working on streaming the event live.

The event, assuming everything works at the Auditorium, will be from ustream.tv.

If the link does not work, here is the address: http://www.ustream.tv/channel/indiana-university—november-5-2009

UPDATE: The audio for the debate is posted here. (MP3)

You can read Craig's post-debate comments here.

Related posts

- Great news! Illustra Media's DVD of Craig/Hitchens debate out in late November
- Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
- William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
- Peter Atkins explains how to easily reconcile the Big Bang and atheism
- Summary of the Craig-Ahmed debate at Cambridge University
- William Lane Craig video and audio from Saddleback Church event
- William Lane Craig takes on prominent atheist Daniel Dennett
- Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
- Four-minute overview of 11 arguments for Christianity by William Lane Craig
- Debate summary: Is God necessary for morality? William Lane Craig vs Shelly Kagan
- Overview of the early, independent sources for the empty tomb
- How to defend the fine-tuning argument just like William Lane Craig
- How to defend the kalam cosmological argument just like William Lane Craig
- Final comments on the William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate

Gay rights activist who ran pedophile ring gets life sentence

November 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The story originally broke in May 2009. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Here's Sky News on the initial arrests.

Excerpt:

> Eight men in a Scottish paedophile ring have been found guilty of a series of "horrific" sex offences against children and babies.
>
> […]Two of the men – convicted sex offender Neil Strachan and gay rights campaigner James Rennie – were convicted of sex attacks on children.
>
> Strachan, 41, and Rennie, 38, both from Edinburgh, were also found guilty of conspiring to abuse youngsters, as were three other members of the gang.
>
> […]The jury found Rennie, the former chief of LGBT Youth Scotland, an organisation dedicated to helping young gay people, guilty of molesting a young boy over more than four years.
>
> The child was just three months old when the abuse began.

The updated story from October describes the sentences handed down.

Here is the story from the London Times.

Excerpt:

> The mother of a six-year-old boy who was subjected to what a judge described as "truly appalling" abuse from a man she had regarded as a close friend said yesterday that her child had been "shaped and moulded" for life by the experience.
>
> Welcoming the life sentences passed on James Rennie and Neil Strachan, the woman said that she had moved on from feelings of anger. "My focus is about my son, about how to support him and loving him for who he is. And who he is now has been shaped and moulded by what's gone on."
>
> Rennie 38, the former chief executive of a gay youth organisation, was responsible for "a colossal breach of trust", Lord Bannatyne said at the High Court in Edinburgh. He had abused the boy — identified as Child F — almost from birth to the age of four years. He distributed images and films of his attacks to a gang of seven other men.

Please pray for the victims and their families.

Comments will be severely restricted. Sorry.

Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama

November 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from John Nolte Big Government.

Excerpt:

> Big Hollywood has already posted a couple disturbing videos of young school children singing/speaking praises to President Obama, but when eleven more dropped in our email box it came as quite a shock. What seemed like an aberration now appears to be a troubling pattern.
>
> Maybe "epidemic" is a better word.
>
> Each one of the videos below is creepier than the last because the further down you go, the younger the children — brace yourself for kindergartners – except for the last and most disturbing video, which you have to see to believe.
>
> Young captive minds, easily influenced, eager for direction, enlisted into a cult of personality focused on an individual who, other than being the first black president, has yet to accomplish anything of significance.
>
> But Obama's skin color has nothing to do with this. Does anyone interested in retaining their merit badge for intellectual honesty really want to argue that Condi Rice or J.C. Watts would've spawned a dozen-and-counting tribute videos?
>
> This is about brainwashing our children into Leftist identity politics. Sure, the schools can argue that they had some kind of parental permission — which, if true, is somehow even more disturbing — but who even considers doing something like this with young minds? That's a rhetorical question.

> […]Each video has also been transcribed so you can follow the bouncing ball…

My concern is that teacher unions will use their power and influence to brainwash children into supporting bigger and bigger government, which will in turn increase teacher salaries.

Government now pays the rent for 1 out of every 5 homes in Britain

November 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Daily Mail. (H/T Weasel Zippers via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Four in ten households in some parts of the country have their rent paid for by the state, Whitehall figures revealed yesterday.
>
> They showed, on average, one in five homes is supported by housing benefit, the taxpayer handout which covers the rent for those on low incomes.
>
> And in London, the figures revealed nearly a quarter of households are now reliant on the benefit.
>
> The figures, disclosed in the Department of Work and Pensions' spending tables, also show that in the North-East, the North-West and Scotland around one in four receive the benefit.
>
> The payout, which was first introduced in 1992 to bring clarity to state rent payments, cost £14.7billion when Labour came to power in 1997.
>
> That figure has since risen by 18 per cent to £17.4billion and is expected to reach almost £21billion next year.

I'm currently reading Theodore Dalrymple's "Life at the Bottom", which describes how the UK government promotes irresponsibility and immorality among the poor. I think we really need to be careful about moving in the same direction as the British. Things don't seem to be working out to well for them. They seem to believe in taxing people who work hard and live morally in order to reward the most irresponsible people in society.

Can atheists ground objective moral values and duties, just like theists?

November 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from Thinking Matters in New Zealand.

Excerpt:

> There is an objection to the moral argument for God's existence, specifically the premise which states the best explanation for the foundation for objective moral values and duties is God. It is the idea that moral values and duties can be plausibly anchored in some transcendent, non-theistic ground. That moral values and duties exist objectively, but as brute facts, not needing an explanation for their existence. They are sort of eternal unchanging ideas that are necessary features of the universe. This position we shall call Atheistic Moral Platonism, and there are three ways we could respond.

Click here for the three ways to respond.

I actually used to hold to Deistic Platonism before I became a Christian, and that's all documented in my testimony. To learn more about this topic, here is my series on how morality cannot be rationally grounded by atheism, and the series includes links to lectures and debates for further study. The relationship between a cosmic designer and objective moral values and duties is the easiest topic in the world to discuss with non-Christians. It takes only a little preparation, compared to more difficult issues like scientific evidence and the historicity of the resurrection.

Mosque-attending Muslim murders 13 US soldiers in terrorist attack

November 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The leftist media is not reporting this, so I thought I should.

Story from Yahoo.

Excerpt:

> Soldiers who witnessed the shooting rampage at Fort Hood that left 13 people dead reported that the gunman shouted "Allahu Akbar!" — an Arabic phrase for "God is great!" — before opening fire, the base commander said Friday.
>
> […]An imam from a mosque Hasan regularly attended said Hasan, a lifelong Muslim, was a committed soldier, gave no sign of extremist beliefs and regularly wore his uniform at prayers.
>
> The motive for the shooting wasn't clear, but Hasan was apparently set to deploy soon and had expressed some anger about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
>
> Retired Col. Terry Lee, who said he had worked with Hasan, told Fox News said Hasan had hoped President Barack Obama would pull troops out of Afghanistan and Iraq and got into frequent arguments with others in the military who supported the wars.
>
> Braverman said at a news conference early Friday that Hasan was on deployment orders to Afghanistan. A military official later told The Associated Press that Hasan was to be deployed to Iraq. It was not immediately possible to verify the discrepancy.

The left-wing media is not reporting that this guy is a Muslim, or what he said when he began shooting, or that this is an act of terrorism. What is the point of even watching the news? They cannot be objective. They cannot be honest. They just tell you about what they want you to hear.

UPDATE: Dennis Prager agrees with me that this is an act of terror.

UPDATE: Michael Medved agrees with me that this is an act of terror.

Harvard economists explain how Obama's spending created 10.2% unemployment

November 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Yahoo news describes our new 10.2% unemployment rate.

Excerpt:

> The unemployment rate has hit double digits for the first time since 1983 — and is likely to go higher.
>
> The 10.2 percent jobless rate for October shows how weak the economy remains even though it is growing. Rising unemployment also could threaten the recovery if it saps consumers' confidence and makes them more cautious about spending as the holiday season approaches.
>
> Nearly 16 million people can't find jobs even though the worst recession since the Great Depression has apparently ended.
>
> The unemployed rate jumped to 10.2 percent, the highest since April 1983, from 9.8 percent in September, the Labor Department said Friday. The economy shed a net total of 190,000 jobs, more than economists had expected.
>
> The number of unemployed hit 15.7 million, up from 15.1 million. The job losses occurred across most industries, from manufacturing and construction to retail and financial. The job-loss total is based on a survey of businesses, separate from a survey of households that produces the unemployment rate.
>
> Economists say the unemployment rate could reach 10.5 percent next year because employers remain reluctant to hire.
>
> […]Still, counting those who have settled for part-time jobs or stopped looking for work, the unemployment rate would be 17.5 percent, the highest on records dating from 1994.

And this is all known by economists. The Heritage Foundation reports on new research by two Harvard economists who just published a research paper on this very topic.

Excerpt:

> That is because government spending cannot create economic growth. More government spending, whether financed by taxes or borrowing, only takes money from one sector of the economy and transfers it to another. The government creates no new spending power when it redistributes money so it creates no new economic growth.
>
> As the Heritage Foundation has pointed out, a stimulus package that lowered marginal tax rates instead of spending massive amounts of future generation's wealth would actually create jobs and help pull the economy out of the Great Recession. That is because lower marginal tax rates would increase the

> incentives of people and businesses to work, save and invest – the very ingredients needed to create economic activity.
>
> These findings are backed up by a new study, "Large Changes in Fiscal Policy Taxes Versus Spending," authored by Alberto F. Alesina and Silvia Ardagna – both Harvard economists. Alesina and Ardagna find that:
>
> …tax cuts are more expansionary than spending increases in the cases of fiscal stimulus. Based on these correlations…the current stimulus package in the US is too much tilted in the direction of spending rather than tax cuts.
>
> In addition to their findings that tax cuts are better at promoting economic growth, Alesina and Ardagna found that spending-based stimuli are actually associated with lower economic growth rates.

The problem is that Democrats like Obama don't *know anything* about economics, and they don't *care.* They know less about economics than my keyboard. In fact that is exactly what being a Democrat means. It means that you know *nothing about economics*, but prefer to create policy based on feelings, rather than facts. Economics is irrelevant – they just want to be loved. It's *narcissism*.

Economics in One Lesson

We are going to have to pay for all this spending on Obama's favored special interest groups eventually, and that means that taxes will go up, or that the value of the dollar will go down, due to inflation. It has to be one or the other or both. There is no third way.

Perhaps it is time to review Henry Hazlitt's Economics in One Lesson, chapter 4, entitled "Public Works Mean Taxes".

Excerpt:

> Therefore, for every public job created by the bridge project a private job has been destroyed somewhere else. We can see the men employed on the bridge. We can watch them at work. The employment argument of the government spenders becomes vivid, and probably for most people convincing. But there are other things that we do not see, because, alas, they have never been permitted to come into existence. They are the jobs destroyed by the $10 million taken from the taxpayers. All that has happened, at best, is that there has been a *diversion* of jobs because of the project. More bridge builders; fewer automobile workers, television technicians, clothing workers, farmers.

And consider Chapter 5 as well, entitled "Taxes Discourage Production".

> In our modern world there is never the same percentage of income tax levied on everybody. The great burden of income taxes is imposed on a minor percentage of the nation's income; and these income taxes have to be supplemented by taxes of other kinds. These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar

> it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to become employers at all. Improved machinery and better-equipped factories come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.
>
> There is a similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment that they profess to solve.

What Obama did, in effect, is to fire all of those millions of private sector people, so that he could reward the people who voted for him. Jobs are created far more efficiently by *small businesses* than they are by *big government*. When you take money out of the private sector, which creates jobs easily, and give it to the public sector, which is inefficient and wasteful, you lose jobs.

George W. Bush cut taxes in his first term and created 1 million NEW JOBS. Obama has LOST 3.4 million jobs in a few months with his trillions of dollars of spending that the private sector cannot pay for. Government spending is a *job killer*. And no amount of charm and teleprompter reading is going to change the laws of economics.

New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students

November 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article in the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Jay P. Greene)

Excerpt:

> Opponents of school choice are running out of excuses as evidence continues to roll in about the positive impact of charter schools.
>
> Stanford economist Caroline Hoxby recently found that poor urban children who attend a charter school from kindergarten through 8th grade can close the learning gap with affluent suburban kids by 86% in reading and 66% in math. And now Marcus Winters, who follows education for the Manhattan Institute, has released a paper showing that even students who don't attend a charter school benefit academically when their public school is exposed to charter competition.
>
> Mr. Winters focuses on New York City public school students in grades 3 through 8. "For every one percent of a public school's students who leave for a charter," concludes Mr. Winters, "reading proficiency among those who remain increases by about 0.02 standard deviations, a small but not insignificant number, in view of the widely held suspicion that the impact on local public schools . . . would be negative." It tuns out that traditional public schools respond to competition in a way that benefits their students.
>
> […]One of the most encouraging findings by Mr. Winters is how charter competition reduces the black-white achievement gap. He found that the worst-performing public school students, who tend to be low-income minorities, have the most to gain from the nearby presence of a charter school. Overall, charter competition improved reading performance but did not affect math skills. By contrast, low-performing students had gains in both areas, and their reading improvement was above average relative to the higher-performing students.

Conservatives love choice and competition, especially in education. We oppose equalizing outcomes regardless of individual liberty and responsibility. Liberals want government to run everything to make sure that everyone gets the same crap level of service. This is what the lazy teacher unions prefer. But conservatives want teachers to be responsive to their customers – the children.

Obama's "frightening insensitivity" on display after Fort Hood murders

November 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from NBC news. (H/T ECM)

The headline is "Obama's Frightening Insensitivity Following Shooting".

Excerpt:

> After news broke out of the shooting at the Fort Hood Army post in Texas, the nation watched in horror as the toll of dead and injured climbed. The White House was notified immediately and by late afternoon, word went out that the president would speak about the incident prior to a previously scheduled appearance. At about 5 p.m., cable stations went to the president. The situation called for not only his trademark eloquence, but also grace and perspective.
>
> But instead of a somber chief executive offering reassuring words and expressions of sympathy and compassion, viewers saw a wildly disconnected and inappropriately light president making introductory remarks. At the event, a Tribal Nations Conference hosted by the Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian affairs, the president thanked various staffers and offered a "shout-out" to "Dr. Joe Medicine Crow — that Congressional Medal of Honor winner." Three minutes in, the president spoke about the shooting, in measured and appropriate terms. Who is advising him?
>
> *Anyone* at home aware of the major news story of the previous hours had to have been stunned. An incident like this requires a scrapping of the early light banter. The president should apologize for the tone of his remarks, explain what has happened, express sympathy for those slain and appeal for calm and patience until all the facts are in. That's the *least* that should occur.

Compare and contrast that with what Obama did when late-term abortionist George Tiller was murdered.

http://www.nbcchicago.com/news/politics/A-Disconnected-President.html

Thomas Sowell explains the economics of cutting health care costs

November 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Democrats are talking a lot of about their plan to reduce the costs of health care. And they think that the way to do that is by having government take a bigger role in health care provision. Well, Thomas Sowell doesn't like the idea that the government can reduce health care costs by using govenrment, and he's written a four part series on it.

Here's a quote from the first part about how Democrats attack the suppliers of health care products and services:

> Despite all the demonizing of insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies or doctors for what they charge, the fundamental costs of goods and services are the costs of producing them.
>
> If highly paid chief executives of insurance companies or pharmaceutical companies agreed to work free of charge, it would make very little difference in the cost of insurance or medications. If doctors' incomes were cut in half, that would not lower the cost of producing doctors through years of expensive training in medical schools and hospitals, nor the overhead costs of running doctors' offices.
>
> What it would do is reduce the number of very able people who are willing to take on the high costs of a medical education when the return on that investment is greatly reduced and the aggravations of dealing with government bureaucrats are added to the burdens of the work.
>
> Britain has had a government-run medical system for more than half a century and it has to import doctors, including some from Third World countries where the medical training may not be the best.

And a quote from the second part about how reducing costs means rationing:

> There is no question that you can reduce the payments for medical care by having either a lower quantity or a lower quality of medical care. That has already been done in countries with government-run medical systems.
>
> In the United States, the government has already reduced payments for patients on Medicare and Medicaid, with the result that some doctors no longer accept new patients with Medicare or Medicaid. That has not reduced the cost of medical care. It has reduced the availability of medical care, just as buying a pint of milk reduces the payment below what a quart of milk would cost.
>
> Letting old people die instead of saving their lives will undoubtedly reduce medical payments considerably. But old people have that option already— and seldom choose to exercise it, despite clever people who talk about a "duty to

> die."
>
> A government-run system will take that decision out of the hands of the elderly or their families, and thereby "bring down the cost of medical care." A stranger's death is much easier to take, especially if you are a bureaucrat making that decision in Washington.
>
> […]You can even save money by cutting down on medications to relieve pain, as is already being done in Britain's government-run medical system.
>
> You can save money by not having as many high-tech medical devices like CAT scans or MRIs, and not using the latest medications. Countries with government-run medical systems have less of all these things than the United States has.But reducing these things is not "bringing down the cost of medical care." It is simply refusing to pay those costs— and taking the consequences.

And a quote from the third part talks about free markets versus government price controls:

> If you think the government can lower medical costs by eliminating "waste, fraud and abuse," as some Washington politicians claim, the logical question is: Why haven't they done that already?
>
> Over the years, scandal after scandal has shown waste, fraud and abuse to be rampant in Medicare and Medicaid. Why would anyone imagine that a new government medical program will do what existing government medical programs have clearly failed to do?
>
> If we cannot afford to pay for doctors, hospitals and pharmaceutical drugs now, how can we afford to pay for doctors, hospitals and pharmaceutical drugs, in addition to a new federal bureaucracy to administer a government-run medical system?

And a quote from the fourth part talks about equality versus liberty in health care:

> What about insurance companies denying reimbursements for treatments? Does anyone imagine that a government bureaucracy will not do that?
>
> Moreover, the worst that an insurance company can do is refuse to pay for medication or treatment. In some countries with government-run medical systems, the government can prevent you from spending your own money to get the medication or treatment that their bureaucracy has denied you. Your choice is to leave the country or smuggle in what you need.
>
> However appalling such a situation may be, it is perfectly consistent with elites wanting to control your life. As far as those elites are concerned, it would not be "social justice" to allow some people to get medical care that others are denied, just because some people "happen to have money."
>
> But very few people just "happen to have money." Most people have earned money by producing something that other people wanted. But getting what you

> want by what you have earned, rather than by what elites will deign to allow you to have, is completely incompatible with the vision of an elite-controlled world, which they call “social justice” or other politically attractive phrases.

What’s frustrating to me is how quickly people think of growing government as the solution to their problems. They don’t want to deal with paying for health care themselves. But what the government does to solve the high prices is fix prices and regulate the producers of health care, like doctors and medical device manufacturers. They make the supply *smaller*. But when the cost apparently goes down, people are signaled to use more health care. That makes the demand *larger*. And this is why there is a shortage of health care in countries that have health care provisioning highly regulated by the government.

You can even save money by cutting down on medications to relieve pain, as is already being done in Britain’s government-run medical system.

You can save money by not having as many high-tech medical devices like CAT scans or MRIs, and not using the latest medications. Countries with government-run medical systems have less of all these things than the United States has.But reducing these things is not “bringing down the cost of medical care.” It is simply refusing to pay those costs— and taking the consequences.

Democrat-controlled House passes health care reform bill 220-215

November 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at Gateway Pundit.

One Republican voted for it, all the rest voted against it.

Here's a video that explains what we can expect from government controlled health care. (H/T ECM)

The Senate still has to pass the bill, so there is hope. If they fail, I think you're going to see a lot of Democrats being thrown out of office by angry voters, especially the elderly. This vote will be used against them in 2010.

Hasan’s classmates knew he was a radical, but would not speak out

November 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

John Lott has a nice round-up of the facts on the Fort Hood incident.

One of the articles he linked to said this:

> In the months leading to Thursday’s shooting spree that left 13 people dead and 29 others wounded, Hasan raised eyebrows with comments that the war on terror was “a war on Islam” and wrestled with what to tell fellow Muslim solders who had their doubts about fighting in Islamic countries.
>
> “The system is not doing what it’s supposed to do,” said Dr. Val Finnell, who complained to administrators at a military university about what he considered Hasan’s “anti-American” rants. “He at least should have been confronted about these beliefs, told to cease and desist, and to shape up or ship out.”
>
> Finnell studied with Hasan from 2007-2008 in the master’s program in public health at the military’s Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland, where Hasan persistently complained about perceived anti-Muslim sentiment in the military and injected his politics into courses where they had no place.
>
> “In retrospect, I’m not surprised he did it,” Finnell said of the shootings. “I had real questions about what his priorities were, what his beliefs were.”
>
> […]Danquah assumed the military’s chain of command knew about Hasan’s doubts, which had been known for more than a year to classmates at the Maryland graduate military medical program. His fellow students complained to the faculty about Hasan’s “anti-American propaganda,” but said a fear of appearing discriminatory against a Muslim student kept officers from filing a formal complaint.

This reminds me of something Dennis Prager always says. He says “those who will be kind to the cruel will be cruel to the kind”. Forcing others not to make bad people feel bad about being bad seems like such a nice idea, until the shooting starts. The fact that people working with him felt that they would be persecuted for calling him out as a dangerous risk tells me that the system is broken.

Video of Johnson-Provine debate on evolution vs physical evidence

November 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In 1994, when this debate was held, intelligent design was still pretty new. This debate, more than any other resource, clarified what was at stake in the debate over origins.

Provine makes clear what follows from the truth of evolution: no free will, no objective standard of good and evil, no life after death, no meaning in life. Johnson argues that the Cambrian explosion disproves Darwinian evolution, and the only reason why Darwinian evolution is widely-accepted is because materialism is *pre-supposed*.

If materialism is pre-supposed, then only atheistic answers to the origins question are allowed, so naturally Darwinism wins – it has to win once you make a *philosophical assumption* that matter is all there is. (An assumption contradicted by the big bang theory, which requires the creation of all matter from nothing.

Here's a summary of the debate:

> Debate before an audience between two professors on the naturalistic vs. the theistic way of understanding human existence.
>
> William Provine, Professor of Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University, cites evidence supporting neo-Darwinian theory and argues that microevolutionary processes account for the origin of all life. He asserts that modern evolutionary theory is incompatible with belief in God; that there are no absolute moral and ethical laws; that free will does not exist; and that human character is merely a result of heredity and environment.
>
> Phillip Johnson, Professor of Law at the University of California in Berkeley, agrees that modern neo-Darwinian theory is atheistic and scientific; however, as a general theory it is a philosophical dogma that is inconsistent with the evidence.
>
> Provine and Johnson debate basic questions: Do we owe our existence to a creator? Can the blind watchmaker of natural selection take the place of God? Moderator is Timothy Jackson, Dept. of Religious Studies, Stanford University.

And here's a couple of clips from the opening. (H/T Uncommon Descent via ECM)

The rest are linked here.

This is very much worth watching, especially for atheists who typically are not aware that evolution rests on a philsophical assumption that is assumed, and that contradicts astrophysics. That has to stop. And the best way to stop it is by calling it out into the open using debates like this one.

For those of you behind a firewall, here are text excerpts.

And don't forget about my recent post about the role of pre-suppositions like the pre-supposition of naturalism in historical Jesus research. The post contains debates where

this is actually discussed as well.

New research shows that babies learn language patterns in the womb

November 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Live Science. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> From their very first days, the cries of newborns already bear the mark of the language their parents speak, scientists now find. French newborns tend to cry with rising melody patterns, slowly increasing in pitch from the beginning to the end, whereas German newborns seem to prefer falling melody patterns, findings that are both consistent with differences between the languages. This suggests infants begin picking up elements of language in the womb, long before their first babble or coo.
>
> Prenatal exposure to language was known to influence newborns. For instance, past research showed they preferred their mother's voice over those of others. Still, researchers thought infants did not imitate sounds until much later on. Although three-month-old babies can match vowel sounds that adults make, this skill depends on vocal control just not physically possible much earlier. However, when scientists recorded and analyzed the cries of 60 healthy newborns when they were three to five days old — 30 born into French-speaking families, 30 into German-speaking ones — their analysis revealed clear differences in the melodies of their cries based on their native tongue.

I told you that babies are scheming in the womb, but none of you believed me.

Did post-traumatic stress disorder cause the Fort Hood murderer to snap?

November 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, he never actually was in combat – he's a psychologist!

Check out this post from an American soldier who experienced PTSD himself after having most of his arm blown off by an IED. WARNING! This post contains a lot of profanity as you might expect! (I removed the curse words and substituted by favorite words instead in the excerpt below)

Excerpt:

> You want to know what [beasting] PTSD is like? I'll tell you. You have nightmares that go on for weeks. Mine would always be the same. Wherever the window was in the room in which I was sleeping I would see a bright white flash. I would wake up screaming to my wife "Get up! Get the [ROAR!] up! An IED just went off!" Sometimes I would just wake up screaming in agony as I relived the moment where my right arm was ripped from my body by an Iranian shape charge. (I may not know what childbirth feels like, but I know what it's like to go an hour with my am ripped off without painkillers (I'm allergic to morphine).) PTSD makes you paranoid as [monstery]. "Why is that person staring at me? Are they a threat? Where is the nearest exit? Why are these people so close to me? Why is no one pulling security? What was that noise? Where is the nearest cover? I need to get out of here." You lie wide awake in bed at night wondering if it's safe to go to sleep or if you should get up and start pulling security.
>
> […]I still get nervous and hold my breath every time I drive by a piece of trash or tire debris on the shoulder or median. I avoid guardrails and broken down cars on the side of the road. On a couple different occasions I yelled out "tire!" to warn my wife (who was driving) of a potential IED in the road. There was nothing there (no tire, no nothing). One late night while driving home completely exhausted on our small two lane country roads at slow speed I locked up all four tires on my car to keep from hitting a cardboard box in the middle of the road. At that moment I would have bet the contents of my bank account it was an IED. That's what [toadying] PTSD is like. At no point in time have I ever felt the desire or need to grab a weapon and go shoot someone or something up. At no point in time have I ever grabbed a weapon and broken a law because I felt the need to protect myself. PTSD urges you mitigate the risk of events that happened in your life. But if you've never had anything traumatic happen in your life, you can't [snarking] have PTSD.

Why do left-wingers always make excuses for the bad decisions of evil people, then rush in with social programs provided by the good people's hard-work? What causes them to

minimize personal responsibility and moral judgment? Why do they think it is virtuous to ignore and malign the victims of crime, terrorism and taxation?

If you don't know why, be sure and watch this video with Jewish comedian Evan Sayet, who explains the whole thing. In one sense, this whole health care fiasco is nothing but an attempt by the left to equalize the health care outcomes of those who make prudent decisions with those who do not. I.e. – those who do not use drugs should pay for the drug needles of others, so that both have equal outcomes.

Upcoming debate with Stephen Meyer, Richard Sternberg and Michael Shermer

November 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here. (H/T Manawatu Christian Apologetics via Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

A public debate about the origins of life hosted by the American Freedom Alliance and featuring: Stephen Meyer, Rick Sternberg, Michael Shermer and Don Prothero

Admission: $20.00 Students: $10.00
RSVP: Saban Theater Box Office (323) 655-0111

Monday, November 30th, 7pm,

Saban Theater, Beverly Hills

Here's a neat quote from Harvard paleontologist Richard Lewontin, courtesy of Apologetics 315:

> "We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, in spite of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism.
>
> It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is an absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door."

I hope that Shermer and Prothero can be more open-minded with respect to the evidence compared to Richard Lewontin's faith-based epistemology.

Democrats planning government regulation of more large companies

November 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Investor's Business Daily. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Washington is quietly preparing a hostile takeover of Wall Street with a new bill that would put regulators in control of managing asset prices.
>
> While all eyes are fixed on the cobra poised to strike the health care industry, a python is wending its way through Hill banking panels that would squeeze the life from the whole economy.
>
> By Christmas, House Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank hopes to pass legislation that would create an uber-regulatory body called the Financial Services Oversight Council.
>
> It would give the Treasury secretary power to pick which large finance firms are "systemically critical," or too big to fail. He'd have the final call when the government steps in to save or unwind a troubled firm.
>
> The bill would "essentially turn over control of the financial system to the government and seriously impair competition in all areas of finance," says former Treasury official Peter J. Wallison. It would put the government permanently in the business of picking winners and losers, he adds, creating a kind of permanent TARP.
>
> […]The new regulatory agency can regulate banks, bank holding companies, insurance companies, hedge funds, finance companies and any other kind of company that might be designated too big to fail.
>
> "The existence of these designated companies will impair competition in every market they are allowed to enter," says Wallison, "and will force the consolidation of competitors so that markets become dominated by government-backed giants like themselves."
>
> Under the new regime, designated companies will not be able to finance their affiliates' sales, putting them at a severe disadvantage against foreign competitors. GE Capital, for example, would not be able to finance GE sales of aircraft engines.
>
> In effect, designated companies will fall under the control of the feds, unable to start new activities or enter new markets or perhaps even open new offices without federal approval. "This is a degree of political control of business that has never been attempted before," Wallison says.

When government gets involved in business, business must turn around and direct

money toward influencing politicians through political contributions. And that causes them to spend less money hiring workers and producing goods, unless they avoid the regulations completely by shipping their operations, and jobs, overseas. Democrats *cause* firms to outsource by interfering in the free market.

My previous post explained how government regulation of business caused the recession that Obama is prolonging right now.

Government-run health care: Ireland cancels scheduled surgeries to cut costs

November 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Irish Central. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Three Irish surgeons have revealed that they are being paid a whopping $350,000 to do nothing. The three orthopedic consultants at Letterkenny General HospitalCounty Donegal have revealed that the Irish Health Service is paying them to "sit around doing nothing" while operating theaters are empty. Senior consultant and team leader, Peter O'Rourke said he is "frustrated and depressed" about the current working climate in Letterkenny General Hospital. The surgeon claims there is little or no work for his team in the busy hospital despite massive waiting lists for essential knee and hip surgeries known as elective surgeries. The health service has put such surgeries on hold until next year as the "elective" budget has overrun by $3.3 million.

It might be a good time to check out Thomas Sowell's four-part series on the economics of health care cost-cutting in a government-run system. This story from Ireland shows how the government "cuts costs" in a government-run system. They ration health care services and products for the elderly, who have paid into the system their whole lives.

As I've said before, government-run health care is about equalizing life outcomes regardless of personal health and lifestyle decisions. It's about giving some people health based on need because of their own choices, including sex changes, drug needles, in vitro fertilization, abortions, etc. And the care is paid for by people who avoided those costly behaviors, but have their incomes garnished in order to pay for the decisions of others who engage in costly behaviors.

"From each according to his ability, to each according to his need" – Karl Marx. This is Obama's worldview, in my opinion, and the worldview of all those who voted for him.

University of St. Thomas hosts symposium on intelligent design and the law

November 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

More information here. (H/T Evolution News)

Excerpt:

> The Journal of Law and Public Policy, published at the University of St. Thomas School of Law, will host a fall symposium, "Intelligent Design and the Constitution," from 9:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. **Tuesday, Nov. 10**, in the Frey Moot Courtroom of at the School of Law, located on St. Thomas' downtown Minneapolis campus.
>
> The symposium, free and open to the public, will bring together scholars to debate and analyze various constitutional and philosophical issues surrounding evolutionism and intelligent design, particularly as they affect U.S. public schools. C.L.E. credits have been applied for. For more information, call John Sandy, (651) 245-0199.

Pro-ID scholars Casey Luskin and David DeWolf will be speaking. And two religionists from the Naturalistic Church of Sophistry and Evolutionism (NCSE) will also be there to burn anyone they can catch at the stake. (I think that's what NCSE means)

Indian and Canadian governments defiant against global warming alarmism

November 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Guardian. (H/T Celestial Junk)

Excerpt:

> Jairam Ramesh, India's environment minister, released the controversial report in Delhi, saying it would "challenge the conventional wisdom" about melting ice in the mountains.
>
> Two years ago, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN agency which evaluates the risk from global warming, warned the glaciers were receding faster than in any other part of the world and could "disappear altogether by 2035 if not sooner".
>
> **Today Ramesh denied any such risk existed: "There is no conclusive scientific evidence to link global warming with what is happening in the Himalayan glaciers." The minister added although some glaciers are receding they were doing so at a rate that was not "historically alarming".**
>
> However, Rajendra Pachauri, the chairman of the IPCC, told the Guardian: "We have a very clear idea of what is happening. I don't know why the minister is supporting this unsubstantiated research. It is an extremely arrogant statement."
>
> **Ramesh said he was prepared to take on "the doomsday scenarios of Al Gore and the IPCC".**

Jairam Ramesh has gone above and beyond the call of duty in denouncing global warming hysteria. He is from the Congress Party, and from Andhra Pradesh, the same state as YSR Reddy, who I wrote about before. The Congress Party recently passed income tax cuts and Ramesh is an economist.

And Canada is also skeptical of global warming alarmism

I notice that Joanne over at Blue Like You has a round-up of articles, and this quotation from the Conservative Party Environment Minister Jim Prentice:

> …Canada will not sign any deal that doesn't force India, China and Brazil to meet negotiated targets for their own greenhouse gas reductions — a demand that may well be rejected by those countries.
>
> "These countries are responsible for 97 per cent of the growth in emissions," he says. "Canadians don't want us to sign on to something that obliges us to reduce emissions, but doesn't impose obligations on principle emitters."

So it's not just India, it's Canada, too, although Celestial Junk says that India is a lot more

defiant than Canada.

Related posts

- Climate Research Unit servers hacked, e-mails made public
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Government-funded research unit destroyed original climate data
- The state of the debate about catastrophic man-made global warming
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says solar activity impacts climate
- Famous UN IPCC hockey stick graph is based on cherry-picked data
- Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming
- Global warming advocates refuse to give their data to skeptics
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says prior ice melting caused by solar variation
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Global warming is not caused by humans

Conservative Party of Canada wins two seats in by-elections

November 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Congratulations to our conservative neighbors to the North!

> Stephen Harper's Conservatives pulled off an amazing political upset in federal by-elections Monday night, stealing a rural Quebec stronghold seat from the Bloc Quebecois.
>
> The Conservatives also reclaimed a traditionally Tory seat in Nova Scotia, ultimately winning two of the four by-elections held Monday.
>
> The results suggest the minority Conservative government's political fortunes are undimmed by the recession and far stronger than expected in Quebec.

Let's compare results:

Montmagny – L'Islet – Kamouraska – Rivière-du-Loup (Quebec)

2008:

- **Bloc Quebecois 20,494**
- Conservative 13,640
- Liberal 6,835
- New Democrat 2,428

2009:

- **Conservative 12,162**
- Bloc Quebecois 10,737
- Liberal 3,768
- New Democrat 1,363

Cumberland – Colchester – Musquodoboit Valley (Nova Scotia)

2008:

- **Independent 27,303**
- New Democrat 4,874
- Conservative 3,493
- Liberal 3,344

2009:

- **Conservative 11,167**
- New Democrat 6,267
- Liberal 5,193

So, now the Conservatives have 145 of 308 ridings. Closer and closer to a majority.

Aside: why is it so freezing these days?

But I also note that October 2009 was our 3rd coldest in 115 years. Canadian readers: please keep the cold up there, we don't want any of that down here. But if you could have Stephen Harper visit Washington more often, and perhaps give the ACORN lawyer some advice on how to run a country without bankrupting it, that would be OK with us.

Australia: same deal. We want John Howard to visit us. But keep your record cold October to yourself.

MUST READ: How Nancy Pelosi plans to bankrupt private medical insurers

November 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at Director Blue. (H/T Fausta's Blog via ECM)

Here's section 2714 of the health care reform bill.

> (a) In General- Each health insurance issuer that offers health insurance coverage in the small or large group market shall provide that for any plan year in which the coverage has a medical loss ratio below a level specified by the Secretary (**but not less than 85 percent**), the issuer shall provide in a manner specified by the Secretary for rebates to enrollees of the amount by which the issuer's medical loss ratio is less than the level so specified.

Unless I am mistaken, this means that medical insurers will be forced to pay out 85% of premiums collected as either losses (claims) or as rebates to customers.

So, private medical insurers will only be able to use 15% of all premium collected for operating expenses, such as salaries, rate dvelopment, claims processing, etc. But is 15% of income from premiums enough to keep a business afloat?

Director Blue writes:

> Why would a loss ratio that permits only a 15% administrative margin for insurers cause companies to fail? Consider that the administrative expenses include collecting premiums; processing and paying claims; monitoring patient care; staffing customer service functions; paying costs to state and federal regulators; paying sales agents; and general overhead (rent, power, heat, light); etc.
>
> I repeat: **No company has ever survived with a loss ratio approaching 85%.**

What are we to make of Obama's claim that we could keep our health plan if we liked it, in light of this new evidence? If what Director Blue has argued is true, you *will* be depending on the federal government for health care. You will have no choice. And whatever they tell you to do, you will do it. They will be the sole provider of health care for you *and your family.* This is how liberty dies – to thunderous applause.

What the Democrat's health care bill means to you

Director Blue also has a post up about what the Democrat health care bill means to you, in 90 seconds.

Excerpt:

The CBO now estimates health bill spending at $3 trillion over 10 years. Since the CBO historically underestimates expenses, assume massive *new* deficits for a country that can ill afford them.

You'll be required to buy a 'qualified' health plan. A family earning $102K a year will pay **$1,700 a month** in premium and out-of-pocket expenses. 'Willful' failure to buy a plan will result in a fine of up to $250,000 and 'imprisonment of up to five years'. Illegal immigrants are exempt from fines and imprisonment.

Every business in America must provide a 'qualified plan' for employees *and* pay 72.5% of the cost. Failure to do so results in an 8% payroll tax.

Read the rest. I would think that some people who worked for medical insurers voted for Obama. Actually, one of the strongest Democrats I know actually left our company recently to go work for a medical insurer. He said that health care was a safe industry during a recession. He's going to learn the importance of studying economics if this bill passes.

How the Democrats got endorsements from the AMA and AARP

One last thing. ECM also sent me this article on how the Democrats were able to get endorsements from the AMA and the AARP.

What should Christians believe about economic policy and social justice?

November 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The best resource I know of is this course from Dr. Ronald Nash. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Advanced Worldview Analysis
by Dr. Ronald Nash (24 Lectures) – RSS / iTunes

Here are the individual topics:

- Lesson 1 – Introduction Play Now
- Lesson 2 – Liberalism and Conservatism Play Now
- Lesson 3 – Political Positions Play Now
- Lesson 4 – Statism and Anti-statism Play Now
- Lesson 5 – Evaluation of Statism and Anti-statism Play Now
- Lesson 6 – Justice Play Now
- Lesson 7 – Capitalism and Socialism Play Now
- Lesson 8 – Interventionism Play Now
- Lesson 9 – Defense of Capitalism Play Now
- Lesson 10 – Economics Play Now
- Lesson 11 – Marxism Play Now
- Lesson 12 – Real Accounting Fraud Play Now
- Lesson 13 – Socialism and Capitalism Play Now
- Lesson 14 – Money and Wealth Play Now
- Lesson 15 – Poverty Play Now
- Lesson 16 – Liberation Theology Play Now
- Lesson 17 – The Religious Left Play Now
- Lesson 18 – Representatives of the Evangelical Left Play Now
- Lesson 19 – Inflation of Rights Play Now
- Lesson 20 – Legal Positivism Play Now
- Lesson 21 – Environmentalism Overview Play Now
- Lesson 22 – Types of Pollution Play Now
- Lesson 23 – Problems with Public Education Play Now
- Lesson 24 – A Possible Solution Play Now

This course is most wonderful thing in the world.

And if you like it, you may also like those debates with James Crossley, Richard Bauckham, Michael Bird and William Lane Craig on the historical Jesus. I have been listening to those debates non-stop and I really enjoy listening to *both sides*. I think it is really interesting hearing James Crossley explain his historical concerns about orthodox Christianity.

- Richard Bauckham defends the divinity of Jesus against Crossley
- Richard Bauckham defends the reliability of the gospels against Crossley
- Crossley debated against William Lane Craig before on the resurrection
- Crossley against Michael Bird on the origins of Christianity, (part 1, part 2)

Why Obama's government spending failed to keep unemployment below 8%

November 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

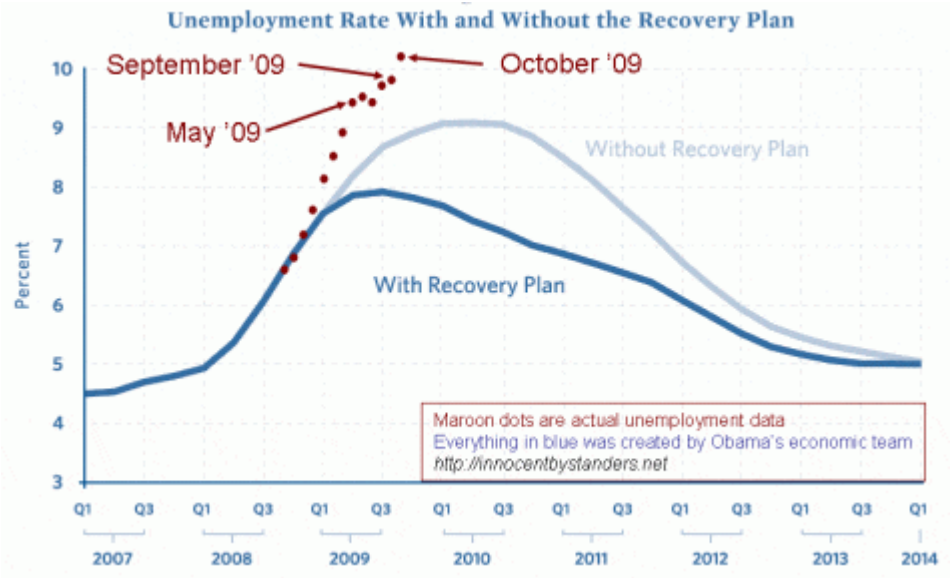

This article from the National Review is awesome. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The odds that the stimulus package would "create or save" millions of jobs, per the administration's promises, were never good. The government is borrowing enormous amounts of money to pay for the stimulus. That money should be funding job creation in the private sector. Instead, it is going to shore up insolvent spendthrift state governments, to expand Medicaid and unemployment benefits, and to lay the groundwork for an aid-dependent green-energy sector that is going to drain the nation's resources for years to come.
>
> […]If we divide the number of dollars spent by the number of jobs the White House claims were saved or created, the result is a cost of $160,000 per job.
>
> […]America's private sector is resilient, and it will bounce back. Laying too much of the blame at Obama's feet risks setting him up to take the credit for the comeback when things inevitably improve. Republicans' arguments should focus on the long term. Obama's decision to double-down on the nation's bad housing bet risks reinflating the real-estate bubble. The new taxes associated with his health-care and energy bills will dampen growth and weaken the recovery. The debt he is piling up has unnerved our creditors, and his spending sprees are distorting the allocation of resources in our economy.
>
> […]The president just signed yet another extension of unemployment benefits, stretching the eligibility period to nearly two years in some states. The bill funds the additional benefits by extending a payroll tax on employers that was scheduled to expire at the end of the year. In other words, the administration is

> simultaneously providing incentives for workers not to work and for employers not to hire them.

I wrote before about how government spending cannot create jobs.

Residents of New York and California flee high taxes and regulations

November 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a funny story from the New York Post. (H/T National Review via ECM)

Excerpt:

> On top of the city and state payroll tax, Social Security and Medicare [small-business owner John Logue] pays for employees, Logue said the city also hits him with a slew of permit fees. He recently had to pay $50 to obtain a certificate to collect sales taxes for the city and the state. In the past, it was free. He also pays the city to have a restaurant certificate, an exhaust-system permit and an illuminated-sign permit.
>
> Logue said his [government-issued] water bills have also increased by nearly 50 percent in the last three years. Currently, he pays $1,600 every three months to the city.
>
> "I'm getting to the point where I'm thinking about leaving New York," he said.

And Kevin D. Williamson adds:

> If you want to know where the future is headed, look where the people are going. And if you want to know where the people are going, check with U-Haul. Here's an interesting indicator, first noted by the legendary economist Arthur Laffer: Renting a 26-foot U-Haul truck to go from Austin to San Francisco this July would cost you about $900.

> Renting the same truck to go from San Francisco to Austin? About $3,000. In the great balance of supply and demand, California has a large supply of people who are demanding to move to Texas. There's a reason for this.

Yes, prices rise when there is a high demand and supply is the same.

I once had a job interview at Fidelity in Boston, MA, and I remember going up the elevator with someone who commuted in every day from New Hampshire to avoid the taxes. And I remember thinking – this guy probably votes Democrat like everyone else in Boston.And shortly thereafter, New Hampshire turned blue and is now somewhere down in the gutter.

Why do Democrats do this to themselves? Anyway, the whole country will be like New York and California if more of these crappy bills pass, and where will we run to then? We'll be stuck until the next election, and it serves us right. I think a good long period of suffering under Obama is just what we need to learn the importance of economics – the hard way.

Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?

November 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am a huge fan of FBI, or at least I was, until I read this story from the Weekly Standard. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> On Monday, ABC News first reported that Fort Hood shooter Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan had reached out to al Qaeda associates prior to his attack. There were good reasons to speculate that one of these al Qaeda figures is Anwar al Awlaki — an al Qaeda recruiter who acted as a "spiritual advisor" to two of the 9/11 hijackers. Awlaki preached at a mosque Hasan attended in 2001 and praised Hasan's attack on his web site Monday morning.
>
> It turns out that informed speculation was correct, according to the Associated Press and the *New York Times*. Beginning in December of last year, authorities found that Hasan communicated with Awlaki "10 to 20 times." But no formal investigation was ever launched. Why?

Well, because the FBI thought that talking to an Al-Quaeda recruiter isn't really such a big deal.

The WS article notes that the FBI investigated Awlaki TWICE:

> …Awlaki and his mosques had substantive ties to three of the 9/11 hijackers and the terrorist who was responsible for coordinating their activities.
>
> […]The FBI investigated Awlaki again after the September 11 attacks and found there was a lot of "smoke," but told the 9/11 Commission and the Congressional Joint Inquiry that they did not have enough evidence to detain him.
>
> […]Now we have a third failure. Despite the fact that Hasan had reached out to Awlaki, who had been investigated twice before because of his ties to al Qaeda, "no formal investigation" into the Hasan-Awlaki connection was ever launched.

Remember the DHS report about the threat of terrorism from conservatives? If you favored immigration law enforcement, small government, personal responsibility, responsible firearm ownership, and right to life, then the DHS report said that you were a potential terrorist. Refresh your memory here. But what does DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano do when actual terrorism occurs?

According to the Associated Press: (H/T Dinocrat via ECM)

> The U.S. Homeland Security secretary says she is working to prevent a possible wave of anti-Muslim sentiment after the shootings at Fort Hood in Texas. Janet Napolitano says her agency is working with groups across the United States to try

> to deflect any backlash against American Muslims following Thursday's rampage by Army Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, a Muslim who reportedly expressed growing dismay over the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The shootings left 13 people dead and 29 wounded.

Actually, if you count the unborn child that one woman who died was carrying, it's FOURTEEN dead.

Is it any wonder that Michele Bachmann has called on Napolitano to resign?

Can Democrats be trusted to keep America safe from threats? They seem to think that actual terrorists are victims, and that conservatives are the real terrorists.

What are some popular philosophical objections to Christian theism?

November 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Since we've been looking at history and science so much recently, I decided to list some philosophical objections to Christian theism.

Here are a few of the most common objections:

- Why does God allow evil and suffering?
- Why isn't there more evidence for God's existence?
- What about those who never heard about Jesus?
- Is religion more like ice cream or medicine?
- Aren't all religions basically the same?
- What makes Christianity so special?

Let me just comment on the first two briefly.

First, the problem of evil. You should definitely start by making the atheist define what evil is, ontologically. This is, of course, impossible on an atheistic worldview, since there is no such thing as an objective moral standard or objective moral duties, on atheism. On atheism, there are only two possible sources of moral values and moral duties: 1) individual personal preferences and 2) arbitrary cultural conventions. Neither of these is adequate to ground a robust notion of evil.

Second, for the problem of suffering. People today are pretty sure that God, if he exists at all, would want humans to make themselves happy in any way that they want. This is, of course, a pretty self-serving concept of God. The purpose of life on Christian theism is to know God, and suffering may be necessary to help us do that. Even Jesus suffered. My own view is that suffering is necessary to cause people to desire God more than they desire earthly happiness and comforts.

Third, the hiddenness of God. Check if your objector is already familiar with the standard scientific arguments for the existence of a Creator and Designer, as well as the minimal facts case for the resurrection. There is a lot of evidence available, but it takes a little digging to find it. God is not interested in coercing people's will by dazzling displays of his power. He is interested in having a relationship with people who are interested in him, and that means people must seek him.

You can find some less common or less interesting objections in my list of arguments for and against Christian theism.

How unions lobby Democrats to prevent competition and raise consumer prices

November 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video from Reason.tv that ECM found at Big Government explains how unions destroy competition by using political contributions to Democrats. Competition is achieved when consumers like you and me have choices in the marketplace. Without choices, one company (or the government) has a monopoly, and can deliver low quality for a high price – and there is nothing you can do about it.

Here's the video:

And here's the blurb:

> You may have heard the UPS is in quite the political fight with FEDEX. Though both are package-delivery companies, they're governed by totally different federal labor rules. As a result, UPS's workforce is much more heavily unionized than FEDEX's-and more than twice as expensive.
>
> So now UPS is trying to get FEDEX reclassified under federal law as a way of screwing a competitor.

Unions are major, major donors to the Democrat party, and they want to make sure that you have no choice at all about how you spend your money. And that includes government-run education!

And of course, removing competition is only one thing unions do to raise consumer prices – they also advocate for tariffs, which also makes you and I pay more for consumer goods. Unions are against consumer rights.

Canadian student union leader says pro-lifers are all potential murderers

November 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Lakehead University Life Support (LULS), the Canadian campus pro-life club that recently lost its hard-won club status, is facing harsh opposition from board members of the Student Union (LUSU) – one of whom has compared the group to the murderer of late-term abortionist George Tiller – as the club seeks to regain its status.
>
> The student union voted 7-6 on October 29th in favor of denying the pro-life group club status. The club had only won its status in February after fighting for two years to gain it.
>
> On November 6th, LUSU Vice President of Finance Josh Kolic released a statement in which he called the effort to overturn the union's decision an attempt to 'hijack' the democratic process. He went on, further, to claim that the pro-life club "represents … the same mentality of those who gunned down Dr. George Tiller."
>
> […]In Kolic's statement, he claimed that denying the pro-life group club status was a "great victory for human rights." In his view, "the neutral stance is simply one that allows the individual woman herself to choose," and, as such, he says this is the position that LUSU itself should take.
>
> He went on to ask the student body for "help [to] restore democracy and the spirit of human rights to the Lakehead University Student Union" by attending their next meeting or emailing "a deputation to the board as to why a woman's right to choose is important to you."

How ironic: a pro-abortion person calling pro-lifers murderers. It seems to me that it is pro-abortionists who advocate the *actual murder* of hundreds of millions of innocent unborn children. And remember the recent murder of a pro-life activist by a pro-abortion zealot. And here's a recent attempted murder of a pro-lifer. Those are from the last few months alone.

Let me ask you a question. How many pro-abortion people do you suppose have read a book like "Defending-Life-Against-Abortion-Choice" by Dr. Francis J. Beckwith, published by Cambridge University Press, or a book like "Embryo: A Defense of Human Life", published by Princeton University's Robert P. George? Are pro-abortionists informed about the case for the pro-life position?

Well, consider how they censor the pro-life clubs on campus. Do you think they are open-minded and tolerant of opposing views? I can probably make a more persuasive case for

the pro-abortion view than militant pro-abortionists like Josh Kolic can. I've actually heard their arguments presented in debates that I *chose* to listen to. Josh wants to censor opposing views. That is pure intolerance.

Further reading

Suppression of pro-lifers is quite common in Canada.

- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's University
- Pro-life club at McGill University banned

Here are some resources on the topic of abortion.

- MUST-SEE: Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring two great pro-life debaters, Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

Notice how pro-lifers focus on reason and evidence, while pro-abortionists focus on the use of force, to one degree or another, in order to get their way.

William Lane Craig's after-action report on the debate with Francisco Ayala

November 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is his after-action report. I think it may be behind the registration firewall, so I'll quote some of it for you.

Excerpt:

> I had heard Ayala lecture on Intelligent Design last year in China and was dismayed by the caricatures and misrepresentations he gave to the Chinese students. So even though I had never debated intelligent design in biology before, I decided to take on this debate to try at least to set the record straight.
>
> The last few months I prepared diligently for this debate, reading Ayala's work, familiarizing myself with relevant new developments in biology, studying the recent works of ID proponents, conferring with colleagues who work in this field, and formulating the best strategy for the debate.
>
> […]Since the question we were debating was not whether intelligent design is *true* but merely whether it is *viable*, it was up to Ayala to disqualify ID as a live option. In his published work, he tries to disqualify ID both scientifically and theologically, so my opening response fell neatly into two parts. First, I argued that Ayala fails to disqualify ID scientifically because he cannot show that the Darwinian mechanisms are capable of producing the sort of biological complexity we see on earth. Then I argued that the theological arguments he presents against the designer's being all-powerful and all-good are simply irrelevant to drawing a design inference (however interesting and important they may be for theology) because the design argument doesn't aspire to show that the designer is all-powerful or all-good.
>
> The debate turned out to be virtually one-sided! Ayala utterly failed to engage with my arguments. It was almost as if I wasn't even there. It was pretty obvious to everyone that he was just presenting canned arguments which had already been refuted in my opening statement. I responded to all his points and even went beyond them to tackle the theological problem of natural evil as well. I was also able to call him to account for his misrepresentation of Michael Behe's work. Ayala likes to indict Behe for saying that the human eye is irreducibly complex, even though it isn't. Holding up Behe's book and reading aloud the relevant passage, I responded that this allegation was surprising in light of the fact that Behe says on pages 37-38 that the eye is NOT irreducibly complex and therefore he does not use it as one of his examples of irreducible complexity!
>
> Another interesting feature of this debate was the moderator, a young philosopher from the University of Colorado, Boulder, named Bradley Monton. Though a self-confessed atheist, Monton is convinced that the typical refutations

> of ID that pass muster today are in fact fallacious, and so he has written a book defending not only the scientific status of ID but even its being taught as an option in public schools! Having read his remarkable book in preparation for the debate, I was able to quote "our esteemed moderator" to good effect during the debate itself to counter Ayala's assertion that ID was not science.

I note that Reasonable Faith has secured a $65000 matching grant for all donations between now and December 31st. Please contribute generously. There is *no one* on the planet who does more to defend Biblical Christianity than William Lane Craig. No Christian is more feared by atheists. Atheists laugh at Bible-thumping, hand-wringing fundamentalists who preach only to the choir – *but they fear William Lane Craig*.

You can listen to the MP3 recording of the debate here at Apologetics 315.

Video of Craig's opening speech is here.

Related posts

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Feds give $888,000 to Chicago public schools to teach Arabic language

November 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the Chicago Sun-Times. (H/T Verum Serum)

Excerpt:

> The Chicago public schools will expand its Arabic-language program to three more high schools, thanks to a three-year, $888,000 federal grant announced this morning.
>
> […]Already, Arabic is offered at three Chicago high schools — Lincoln Park, Roosevelt and Lindblom.
>
> It's also offered at seven Chicago elementary schools — Durkin Park, Agassiz, Belding, LaSalle Language Academy II, Marquette Tech and Volta.
>
> In all, about 2,000 students take Arabic in Chicago's schools.
>
> The new federal grant, on top of $1.6 million in state and federal funds the schools already have gotten, will fund the expansion to three additional high schools that have yet to be identified.

Wasteful government spending is the reason why we have 10.2% unemployment. Democrats think that massive federal grants to public schools stimulate the economy. On the other hand, George W. Bush cut taxes by 2.2 trillion, and unemployment dipped down below 5%.

UK’s Chief Rabbi blames atheism and Darwinism for falling birth rates

November 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article is in the UK Telegraph. (H/T MercatorNet via ECM, Big Blue Wave)

Excerpt:

> The leader of Britain’s Jewish community claimed the continent’s population is in decline because people care more about shopping than the sacrifice involved in parenthood.
>
> He blamed atheist “neo-Darwinians” for Europe’s low birth rate and said religious people of all denominations are more likely to have large families.
>
> […]The Chief Rabbi warned that secular Europe is at risk, however, because its moral relativism can easily be defeated by fundamentalists.
>
> And he claimed that its population is also in decline, compared with every other part of the world, because non-believers lack shared values of family and community that religions have.
>
> Lord Sacks said: “Parenthood involves massive sacrifice of money, attention, time and emotional energy.
>
> “Where today in European culture with its consumerism and instant gratification – because you’re worth it – where will you find space for the concept of sacrifice for the sake of generations not yet born?
>
> “Europe, at least the indigenous population of Europe, is dying.”
>
> “That is one of the unsayable truths of our time. We are undergoing the moral equivalent of climate change and no one is talking about it.

I blogged about the UK’s looming demographic crisis previously.

So the Chief Rabbi seems to be in agreement with my views on atheism and morality. Logically speaking, atheism simply doesn’t meet any of the minimum requirements for rational morality. The problem for atheism is that the decision to commit to a marriage for life and to have children involves massive self-sacrifice. But on atheism, life is just about having happy feelings before you die – so they cannot rationally ground the decision to marry and procreate.

New research shows that drug-facilitated sexual assault is a myth

November 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story in the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Suzanne at Big Blue Wave)

Excerpt:

> A toxicology expert from the Forensic Science Service, which analyses evidence for the police, told the Mail he had come across only one sample of blood or urine containing Rohypnol – the most commonly talked about 'date-rape' drug – in the past decade.
>
> 'The reality is drink spiking is very, very rare', said senior forensic scientist Michael Scott-Ham. 'Alcohol itself is the problem.'
>
> A controversial study, published last week, claimed drink spiking is an 'urban myth', a modern scapegoat for a generation of women who cannot face the fact that the vast amounts of alcohol many are imbibing could be in any way responsible for a loss of control, which can have devastating consequences.
>
> 'Something very curious is going on,' says Dr Adam Burgess, who spent a year researching the issue at the University of Kent's school of social policy for a project funded by the British Academy.
>
> 'How can you account for this great big gap between lack of any evidence for drink spiking and what so many women believe is going on?
>
> 'There's a displacement exercise going on here. Why, despite all the evidence, do women so readily blame the spiker rather than the amount of alcohol they are drinking? That is the real issue here.'
>
> […]Could it be that women instinctively feel that if they admit to themselves how much they had drunk they would also be admitting they were somehow to blame for putting themselves at risk?
>
> Believing your drink was spiked transfers the blame to a malevolent, external force, something which women have no control over. It shifts responsibility.
>
> […]Dr Burgess and his team interviewed 236 women at three universities in Kent, Sussex and London during 2006 and 2007.
>
> They sought to investigate students' knowledge of 'date rape' drugs, whether they or someone they knew had been a victim and whether they had changed their behaviour in relation to the perceived threat.

And consider closely how the attitudes of these women diverge from reality, such that they perceive themselves as helpless victims, even though they are in fact directly responsible for their own misfortunes.

> Only ten out of the 236 claimed to have experienced drink spiking personally and none had been subject to sexual assault.
>
> Yet 55 per cent claimed to have known someone whose drink had been spiked.
>
> But among respondents, 75 per cent believed having a drink spiked with drugs was a more significant risk factor for sexual assault than drinking alcohol or taking drugs, despite the fact that police believe the opposite is true.
>
> Another pivotal study offers further evidence that alcohol is the drug to be guarded against.
>
> The study, conducted by the Forensic Science Service in 2005, examined 1,014 cases of 'drug facilitated sexual assault' by analysing blood and urine samples from victims gathered by police forces in England and Wales.
>
> In only 21 – about 2 per cent – were traces of drugs found that the women had not taken voluntarily.
>
> These included Ecstasy, gammahydroxybutyrate (GHB) and tranquillisers. Alcohol was picked up in 46 per cent of cases. Illegal drugs such as cannabis and cocaine were in 34 per cent of cases.

Suzanne, who is pro-life, adds:

> I am certain that massive amounts of alcohol consumption contributes to abortions in this country.
>
> If you're a woman who drinks large amounts of alcohol around strange men looking to score, you're placing yourself in danger. That is the reality.
>
> Unfortunately, people have a strange way of denying reality.
>
> […]You are responsible for the foreseeable consequences of your actions. Doing something stupid under the influence of alcohol is one of them. That's obvious. So don't get drunk.

Well said!

My previous article on women behaving irresponsibly is here. An article from Laura of Pursuing Holiness also talked about the danger of women refusing to take responsibility for their own choices. Her article has a lot of scary examples. And a previous post that documents how leniently women are treated when committing domestic violence is here. According to the best available research, women commit acts of domestic violence at about the same rate as men, even though male victims are almost never recognized by social services.

What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?

November 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article from Trayce Hansen, Ph.D. She summarizes the evidence on homosexuality in response to proposed changes to a California school board's curriculum that would promote and normalize homosexual behavior.

Excerpt:

> ENVIRONMENT IS PRIMARY FACTOR IN DEVELOPMENT OF SEXUAL PREFERENCE AND GENDER IDENTITY
>
> Decades of research confirm that sexual orientation and gender identity are not inborn but are primarily shaped by environmental influences during childhood and adolescence. The proposed school curriculum will affect the sexual preference and gender identity formation of some children exposed to it because it teaches that all sexual and gender variations are equally acceptable. Sexual preference and gender identity formation are fragile developmental processes that can be disrupted and altered by environmental influences such as the lessons in the proposed school curriculum.
>
> SEXUAL ORIENTATION IS NOT INBORN
>
> Many people continue to believe that sexual orientation is inborn, although that is not true. Extensive, worldwide research reveals that homosexuality is predominately influenced by environmental factors. For instance, recent large-scale studies compared rates of homosexual behavior in sets of identical twins. If homosexual behavior were inborn, every time one identical twin was homosexual, the other identical twin would also be homosexual 100% of the time. But this is not what the research revealed. Rather, every time one identical twin was homosexual the other twin was homosexual only 10% or 11% of the time. Homosexual behavior is clearly not genetic.
>
> In fact, an accumulation of extensive research utilizing millions of research subjects finds that environment, not genetics, is the main factor in the development of non-heterosexual behavior. (To review these research studies see references 1-4 listed below).

> […]NON-HETEROSEXUAL BEHAVIOR LEADS TO INCREASED RISK OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL DISORDERS
>
> Sadly, the research is also clear that individuals who adopt non-heterosexual lifestyles are more likely to suffer from a host of negative outcomes including psychiatric disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide attempts, domestic violence and sexual assault, and increased risk for chronic diseases, AIDS, and shortened lifespan. Schools should not affirm and thereby encourage young people to adopt lifestyles more likely to lead to such devastation. (To review these specific studies see references 5-10 below).
>
> GENDER IDENTITY DISORDER IS A PSYCHIATRIC DISORDER THAT SHOULD NOT BE NORMALIZED TO CHILDREN
>
> The proposed school curriculum also teaches that transgendered lifestyles are a healthy and acceptable alternative to the norm. That is not true. Many transgendered individuals suffer from a psychiatric disorder known as Gender Identity Disorder (GID) that is recognized by the American Psychiatric Association as a mental disorder in need of psychological treatment… (For a thorough understanding of Gender Identity Disorder, see reference number 11 below authored by world-renowned GID experts).

Read the whole thing here, at the Ruth blog. The references to medical research publications are at the bottom of the article. The majority of the research papers cited are from 2005 to the present.

You may also be interested in a recent post discussing why people oppose same-sex marriage.

Ontario deficit to hit $25 billion as tax revenues plunge

November 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

The problem with the left is that they think that the producers will just keep producing in the face of massive tax hikes and government spending. Sorry, but producers curtail their producing when they get to keep less and less of the fruits of their labor. Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal premier of the province of Ontario, is a prime example of this ignorance of incentives.

Consider this story from the National Post. (H/T Joanne from Blue Like You)

Excerpt:

> Falling revenues and a burgeoning $24.7-billion deficit will force Ontario's Liberal government into a new era of fiscal restraint, provincial Finance Minister Dwight Duncan said yesterday.
>
> […]According to economic figures released yesterday, Ontario is spending $4.8-billion more this year than it predicted just seven months ago. The increased spending includes $4-billion in auto-sector assistance and an additional $650-million to fund the province's H1N1 response. Program spending has also risen by $812-million.
>
> Tax revenues, meanwhile, are falling dramatically. They now stand at $5.8-billion less than the government predicted in last spring's budget. Corporate taxes are $2.65-billion — or nearly one-third — lower than projections, while personal income tax is down $2.43-billion, or 10%.
>
> […]Conservatives, who have watched as the Liberals raised spending by nearly 60% over their first six years in office, were skeptical about the new pledge of austerity."Dalton McGuinty is hard-wired to increase your taxes and increase

> spending," Conservative leader Tim Hudak said. "The reality is, the only way to get spending under control is to change government."
>
> […]One analyst said the province's massive deficit is heightened by the growing size of Ontario's health-care sector, expected to account for half the budget by 2015.

Earlier this week I blogged about the Federal Conservative Party of Canada, which gained two seats in the 2009 by-elections, bringing them to 145/308 in the House of Commons. They need 155 to have a majority.

States like New York and California are running into the same taxing and spending problems here at home. Even the Democrat Governor of Ohio Ted Strickland is in trouble, and threatening to cancel scheduled tax cuts.

Chinese researchers find that abortion results in 17% increased risk of breast cancer

November 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from LifeSiteNews.

Excerpt:

> Chinese researchers at the Department of Oncology at the First Affiliated Hospital of China Medical University who conducted a case-control study examining reproductive factors associated with breast cancer found a statistically significant 17% increased breast cancer risk among Chinese women who had induced abortions.
>
> Peng Xing and his colleagues also found that, although breastfeeding protected women from any subtype of breast cancer, an increase in risk of breast cancer was associated with having more children among women who delayed their first full term pregnancy (FFTP) until after age 25 and never breastfed.
>
> The researchers studied 1,417 women diagnosed with breast cancer between 2001 and 2009, and matched them with 1,587 controls without a prior breast cancer history.
>
> The report was e-published by the National Center for Biotechnology Information of the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

This number is actually quite low compared to the 66% increase documented in the previous study from Turkish scientists, but the LifeSiteNews article explains why the 17% number is so low.

Video of William Lane Craig's opening speech from his debate on ID with Ayala

November 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Provided by ChristianJR4. If you have a youtube account, please subscribe to his channel

Here is his full opening speech in 3 parts:

You can get the full audio here at Apologetics 315. There's a good discussion going on in the comments.

You can read more about the debate over on Bradley Monton's blog. He is an atheist professor who served as moderator during the debate.

Here are Craig's post-debate comments.

Related posts

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Why Obama's public option health care plan is a bad deal for young adults

November 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This podcast explains how Obama's health care reform bill would require young people to buy insurance, while simultaneously preventing medical insurers from reducing their premium amounts in accordance with the lower health risks of young people.

The MP3 file is here.

The guest being interviewed is Aaron Yelowitz.

Bio excerpt:

- Ph.D., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Economics, 1994.
- B.A., High Honors, University of California, Santa Barbara, Business Economics, 1990.
- Department of Economics, University of Kentucky, Associate Professor, July 1, 2001-present.
- Associate Editor, Journal of Public Economics, January 2004-present.

And you can read the paper that is being discussed in the podcast.

Excerpt from the abstract:

> One of the most interesting questions about the health care overhaul now moving through Congress is how it would affect young adults. That legislation would force most or all Americans to purchase health insurance (an "individual mandate") and would impose price controls on health insurance ("community rating") that would limit insurers' ability to offer lower premiums to low-risk enrollees.
>
> Those provisions would drive premiums down for 55-year-olds but would drive them up for 25-year-olds—who are then implicitly subsidizing older adults. According to the Urban Institute, many young people could see their premiums double, whereas premiums for older adults could be cut in half.
>
> […]The irony is that Barack Obama won the presidency with 66 percent of the vote among adults aged 18 to 29. That's a larger share than any presidential candidate has won in decades. Yet his health care overhaul could impose its greatest burdens on young adults.

This reminds me of young unmarried women voting overwhelmingly against marriage and family by electing big government socialists like Obama. This is not to even mention the 10.2% unemployment rate, which is worse for younger workers, as well as the massive national debt that will have to be paid for by young people. Why is that young people are so ignorant of economics that they vote against their own best interests?

Note: The Obama health care plan is also a bad deal for elderly patients on Medicare, since he is cutting 500 billion dollars from Medicare.

Democrats will push amnesty to give 12-20 million illegal aliens citizenship

November 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano made the announcement.

Story from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> One of the toughest issues is likely to be what to do about millions of illegal immigrants already in the U.S. Ms. Napolitano called for a "tough and fair pathway to earned legal status," including "registering, paying a fine, passing a criminal background check, fully paying all taxes and learning English."
>
> Not included in her list was a requirement that illegal immigrants leave the country, and re-apply for legal entry. In 2007, many members of Congress said they couldn't support a program of mass legalization in the face of opposition from constituents and activist groups critical of easing the road to legal immigration for those who had already violated the law.
>
> Lamar Smith (R-TX), the top Republican on the House Judiciary Committee, voiced concern in a statement Friday about Ms. Napolitano's proposals. "How can they allow 12 million illegal immigrants to take jobs that should go to citizens and legal immigrants?" he said.

Why do people oppose illegal immigration?

Consider this article posted at the Heritage Foundation by Congressman Lamar Smith.

Excerpt:

> Today, anywhere from 12 million to 20 million illegal immigrants are in the U.S.–enough to populate America's three largest cities, New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Half a million more enter illegally every year.
>
> Those who would do us harm respect no borders. For instance, four of the 19 terrorists who attacked us on September 11, 2001, were in the country illegally. Border security equals national security.
>
> Illegal immigrants also depress wages and often take the jobs of legal workers. According to the Center for Immigration Studies, low-skilled workers lose an average of $1,800 a year because of competition from illegal immigrants for their jobs. That's a huge economic hit.
>
> The highest unemployment rates among Americans are in the occupations with the highest number of illegal immigrants. Almost one-quarter of all African-Americans and 40 percent of all Hispanics do not have a high school degree. These low-skilled legal workers are the victims of porous borders.

> Some say there are jobs Americans won't do. But that demeans Americans who work hard in every occupation. Any honest job is a worthy job.
>
> There is another cost to illegal immigration besides lower wages and lost jobs. Communities and taxpayers pay the bills for their education, health care, and government benefits. Overcrowded classrooms, long waits at hospital emergency rooms, and expensive government services result from a failure to secure our borders.
>
> In California alone, hospitals spend over $1 billion a year on health care for illegal immigrants. And the National Research Council has found that an immigrant with less than a high school education will, over his or her lifetime, impose a cost on taxpayers of $89,000. It is unfair to force legal residents and taxpayers to continue to pick up the tab.
>
> Some say the taxes illegal immigrants pay offset the costs of providing them education, health care, and government benefits. But, at their low wages, most illegal immigrants don't even pay taxes. And when they do, their taxes don't cover other government services, like maintaining highways, providing for our national defense, and taking care of the needy and elderly.
>
> Also, at their wages, if illegal immigrants participate in Social Security, they will get back $100,000 more than they pay in, further bankrupting the system for everyone else. The cost of illegal immigration is staggering. And it is growing by the minute.

Gateway Pundit comments on what Democrats stand to gain from pushing through another amnesty. I feel badly for all the skilled immigrants who play by the rules and have to wait for years and pay thousands of dollars for green card processing fees. My understanding is that you can only apply for a green card through marriage or employment, and employers almost never sponsor workers due to Department of Labor regulations. I am for increasing *legal* immigration of skilled immigrants who work hard and play by the rules.

Illustra Media’s new Craig vs Hitchens debate DVD is on sale now!

November 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s on sale for 10% off ($17.95) at GO2RPI.com. (H/T Brian Auten at Apologetics 315)

Details:

- Format: Region 0 (Playable Everywhere), Color, Widescreen, NTSC
- 2 DVDs
- Language: English
- Running Time: Approx. 178 minutes
- Bonus Features

Blurb:

On April 4, 2009, William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens met at Biola University to debate the question of God’s existence. Craig is one of the world’s foremost Christian apologists. Hitchens is a leading spokesman for the “new atheism” movement.

In front of an overflow crowd and a global internet audience, they debated the origin and design of the universe, the implications of human morality, the deity of Jesus, and the validity of Christ’s resurrection. It was a compelling clash of worldviews and an examination of the major arguments for and against Christianity and atheism.

This two-DVD set captures every moment of the debate (documented by 10 cameras). Bonus features include the pre-debate press conference, a question-and-answer session, and interviews with Hitchens and Craig.

Does God Exist is a vital resource for anyone who doubts the Christian faith-or seeks convincing evidence to defend it.

Here’s the trailer: (H/T ChristianJR4)

I wrote a play by play of the debate here, and you can watch a sample video here. You can also read about Craig’s recent debate on the viability of intelligent design with Francisco Ayala here. The post has some video and the full audio for that debate.

The Wilson-Hitchens debate

And don’t forget that you can get the Wilson-Hitchens debate from Amazon.com. You can see a trailer for the Wilson-Hitchens DVD here. Brian Auten told me that it is definitely worth buying. You can also read a different Wilson-Hitchens debate here, which occurred in written form – this is not the one in the video.

How I respond to atheists who speculate about unobservable entities

November 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed a new comment to my article explaining how to argue for God from the fine-tuning of the universe.

The commenter wrote this:

Hey, atheist here. Just astounded by your characterisation of the atheist's response. I've never heard any atheist use the argument that humans caused the fine tuning. It doesn't make sense because humans would still have to exist in some now corrupted timeline where the universe wasn't fine-tuned.

I have a whole post on my blog dedicated to this topic but I'll summarise my main arguments.

[SNIP! See below for his 8 points]

Maybe you can integrate these arguments into your post and address them, instead of a straw man?

Mike

This is a pretty good comment, with only a little acceptable snark at the end. I hate it went people write loads and loads of stuff without citing any evidence.

And I wrote this back:

Thanks for your comment. You'll note that in my piece I cited numerous scientific facts and produced an argument that was logically valid. Now let's take a look at what you wrote.

And here's how I replied to his 8 points.

"1. Possibility of a multiverse."

1) **This is a speculation with no scientific evidence**. Notice how I appeal to an experimental particle physicist for my conclusion.

"2. Possibility of an oscillating universe"

2) This has been disproved **theoretically** and **observationally**. Notice how I cite research papers that do not merely speculate, but are based on observations.

"3. The Vast (to use Dennett's terminology) majority of the universe does not contain life, so to claim that life is its purpose is merely superimposing your own subjective judgement onto it.

3) This is speculation about God's motives. You are not in a position to dictate to God how he would have accomplished his goals. If you would like to listen to William Lane Craig speak on these scientific arguments, and listen to Dennett's LAME response, **click here**.

"4. Related to 3. Clearly the universe is fine-tuned to make hydrogen, since that is the most abundant substance in the universe. Life seems to be fairly far down in the priorities

of the universe. Of course I'm (half) joking, but there is no reason why one natural phenomenon needs a fine tuner any more than any other."

4) This is speculation about God's motives. You can feel free to joke about the evidence for and against God. I don't joke about these issues – I prefer to cite evidence.

"5. The argument flauts its own premises by posing the existence of a creator which doesn't need a fine-tuned universe. So either the premise is wrong, or we have an infinite regress of fine-tuners."

5) Fine-tuning is an example of intelligent design such that a selection from a field of possibilities corresponds to an independently specified pattern. I.e. – the subset of functional proteins compared to the set of possible sequences of amino acids. God is not composed of parts so is not fine-tuned.

"6. We have no idea if these constants are even capable of changing. To state that they have been fine tuned without this information is nothing more than speculation."

6) This is more speculation. Don't make arguments based on what "we" don't know. I make arguments based on what we do know. You do the same.

"7. It could be that the state of the universe is unlikely, but not as unlikely as the existence of a fine-tuner. In this case it would just be a big coincidence."

7) "It could be…" It could be that monkeys will fly out of my butt. Stop speculating about things we cannot know. Let's see your argument, and the peer-reviewed data to back it up. This is not a game.

"8. Even if the fine-tuning argument were valid, it says nothing about the type of creator that exists, so to go from this deist creator to the Christian God is a huge leap."

8) The argument is not meant to prove the Christian God. The argument, taken together with a bunch of **other scientific arguments**, is meant to prove a Creator and Designer of the universe. To prove Christian theism, you make **a case for the resurrection** and then debate it in public in the university. And then you respond to **philosophical objections**, such as evil, suffering and the hiddenness of God.

I thought it was a useful example of how to ask people for arguments and evidence, and not take a speculation for an argument.

I find that atheists speculate a lot about unobservable entities in order to escape from good scientific arguments. They speculate about hyper-universes to explain the big bang. They speculate about a multiverse to explain the fine-tuning. They speculate about aliens seeding Earth with life to explain the origin of life. They speculate about as-yet-undiscovered precursor fossils to explain the Cambrian explosion. They speculate about as-yet-undiscovered developmental pathways that use co-option to get around irreducible complexity. And on, and on, and on.

And that suggests to me a question. What sense does it make to build an entire worldview on speculations about things you cannot observe? Or is atheism not about truth, then, but instead about thinking that you are better than other people and throwing off the demands of morality? If the truth is that God exists and that Jesus rose bodily from

the dead, then why try to dance around it using speculations? What possible benefit could there be, ultimately, to having blind faith in a religion just to pursue pleasure?

My entire series on how moral values and moral duties cannot be grounded rationally on atheism is here.

UK judge releases 16-year old rapist who rapes again eight days later

November 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> The 16-year-old, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was given a three-year community order in June for the rape of a seven-year-old boy in Tameside, Greater Manchester.
>
> The sentence, handed down by Judge Adrian Smith who had been told of the teenager's other sexual assaults, was seen as unduly lenient by the police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), who launched a legal challenge.
>
> Eight days later, the teenager saw the five-year-old playing in the street near his home, lured him to his bedroom and repeatedly abused him. The father of the victim said yesterday: "Our son was abused not only by this lad, but also in effect by the British legal system that was supposed to protect him.
>
> "I always thought people who commit serious offences like rape automatically go to prison – yet this boy was allowed to go free."
>
> […]Judge Smith reached his decision although the boy had carried out a sex attack at the age of 13. The teenager was acquitted of that offence in 2007, but he later admitted inciting a six-year-old boy to engage in sexual activity.
>
> The judge was also aware that the teenager had admitted engaging in sexual activity with a younger boy in the school lavatories, and in sentencing he also took into consideration three episodes of consensual sex with a fellow pupil.

I'm just finishing off Theodore Dalrymple's "Life At The Bottom", which is all about how secularism and socialism in the UK has destroyed the society completely. It's ironic that I happened upon this story because I just finished the chapter on criminologists. Criminologists in the UK basically think that crime is just a legitimate way of expression frustration with one's station in life. Crime isn't really the fault of the criminal – crime is actually the fault of society because it makes these criminals feel badly.

MUST-READ: The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings

November 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this amazing UK Times article. (H/T ECM)

First, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold:

> "Harris wore a 'Natural Selection' T-shirt on the day of the killings. They made remarks on video about helping out the process of natural selection by eliminating the weak. They also professed that they had evolved to a higher level than their classmates. I was amazed at the frequent references to evolution, and that the press completely ignored that aspect of the tapes."
>
> […]As the attorney for the families of six of the students killed at Columbine, the Denver lawyer Barry Arrington has come across more in a similar vein. "I read through every single page of Eric Harris's journals; I listened to all of the audio tapes and watched the videotapes? It became evident to me that Harris consciously saw his actions as logically arising from what he had learnt about evolution. Darwinism served as his personal intellectual rationale for what he did. There cannot be the slightest doubt that Harris was a worshipper of Darwin and saw himself as acting on Darwinian principles."

And Pekka-Eric Auvinen:

> Before he embarked on his shooting spree, Auvinen posted a lengthy apologia on the internet. Styling himself a "social Darwinist", he said that natural selection appeared not to be working any more — had maybe even gone into reverse. He had noticed that "stupid, weak-minded people reproduce faster than intelligent, strong-minded ones". The gene pool was sure to deteriorate if society continued to guarantee the survival of the second-rate. He had pondered what to do about this problem. He understood that life was just a meaningless coincidence, the outcome of a long series of random mutations, so there might not be much point in doing anything at all. But eventually he had decided he would do his bit by becoming a natural selector, aping the pitiless indifference of nature.

> Auvinen left a special plea for his motivation to be taken seriously and for the world not merely to write him off as a psychopath, or to blame cult movies, computer games, television or heavy metal music, before concluding: "No mercy for the scum of the Earth! Humanity is overrated. It's time to put natural selection and survival of the fittest back on track."

The article continues:

> One conclusion implicit in evolutionary theory is that human existence has no ultimate purpose or special significance. Any psychologically well-adjusted

> person would regard this as regrettable, if true. But some people get a thrill from peering into the void and acknowledging that life is utterly meaningless.
>
> Darwin also taught that morality has no essential authority, but is something that itself evolved — a set of sentiments or intuitions that developed from adaptive responses to environmental pressures tens of thousands of years ago. This does not merely explain the origin of morals, it totally explains them away. Whether an individual opts to obey a particular ethical precept, or to regard it as a redundant evolutionary carry-over, thus becomes a matter of personal choice. Cheerleaders celebrating Darwin's 200th birthday in colleges across America last February sang "Randomness is good enough for me, If there's no design it means I'm free" — lines from a song by the band Scientific Gospel. Clearly they see evolution as something that emancipates them from the strict sexual morality insisted upon by their parents. But wackos such as Harris and Auvinen can just as readily interpret it as a licence to kill.

Darwin himself thought that his theory warranted racism and genocide:

> Darwin looked forward to a time when Europeans and Americans would exterminate those he termed "savages". Many of the anthropomorphous apes would also be wiped out, he predicted, and the break between man and beast would then occur "between man in a more civilized state, as we may hope, even than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon; instead of as now between the Negro or Australian and the gorilla". He took a sanguine view of genocide, believing it to be imminent and inevitable. "Looking to the world at no very distant date," he wrote to a friend in 1881, "what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world."
>
> Convinced that the various races of mankind had travelled different distances down the evolutionary highway, and that two races could be fairly described as more or less evolved even when both had a track record of cultural achievement, Darwin insisted that natural selection explained why the Europeans had been able to see off serial invasions by the Ottoman Turks. Some of today's Turks understandably resent being designated as genetically second-rate, which perhaps explains why the editor of Turkey's most popular science magazine was instructed by his proprietor to cancel a special edition celebrating Darwin's anniversary.
>
> […]Nowhere was the toxic doctrine of racial superiority more enthusiastically taken up than in the Third Reich. The Nazis believed that the Aryan race was already the most highly evolved, but could evolve further if defective genes could be eliminated. To purify the German gene pool, they decided to exterminate all the physically and mentally handicapped.
>
> Darwin summed up his moral philosophy by saying that a man could "only follow those ideas and impulses that seem best to him". Darwinian ideas, eugenics and

> its ugly sister, eugenic euthanasia, were accepted by the mainstream of the German scientific and medical professions. Indeed, so convinced were the staff of the clinic at Kaufbeuren-Irsee in Bavaria that they were acting rationally that, even after Germany's surrender in 1945, they carried on killing handicapped people under the American occupation, until a US officer led a squad of GIs to the hospital and ordered them to desist.

The modern pro-abortion movement is rooted in the thought of Darwinian eugenicists like Margaret Sanger, who was quite explicit about weeding out the poor, the "unfit" and "inferior" races. Many people on the secular left believe that some people are not fit to live, and that these people should be weeded out by force. For example, Obama's science czar advocates controlling the reproduction of undesirable people and that *born babies* are not human beings.

After you finish reading the UK Times article, check out this post over at Uncommon Descent. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> When we teach our children that their existence is an ultimately meaningless accident and that morals are arbitrary byproducts of random genetic fluctuations and mechanical necessity, should we be surprised that they place a lower value on human life than someone who is taught that all humans have inherent dignity and worth because they are made in the image of God?
>
> […]There are three and only three options.
>
> 1. We can continue to fill our children's heads with standard Darwinian theory (which Dennett rightly calls "universal acid"), understanding that at least some of them are going to put two and two together and realize that the acid has eaten through all ethical principles – and act accordingly.
>
> 2. We can try to come up with a secular noble lie. "OK kids. You might have noticed that one of the implications of what I just taught you is that your lives are ultimately meaningless and all morals are arbitrary, but you must never act as if that is true because [fill in the noble lie of your choice, such as "morality is firmly grounded on societal norms or our ability to empathize with others"].
>
> 3. We can teach our children the truth – that the universe reveals a wondrous ordered complexity that can only be accounted for by the existence of a super-intelligence acting purposefully. And one of the implications of that conclusion is that God exists, and, reasoning further, He has established an objective system of morality that binds us all, and therefore the moral imperatives you feel so strongly are not just an epiphenomenon of the electro-chemical states of your brain.

This reminds me of the essay "Men Without Chests" in C.S. Lewis' "The Abolition of Man". Lewis writes that moral relativists undermine objective morality, which cannot be grounded rationally by atheism, and yet they are surprised when people actually act as

though moral relativism is true.

The good news is that Darwinism is false. The bad news is taxpayer money from working parents is funneled into politicized government-run schools that teach children that Darwinism is true. High taxes ensure that parents are kept away from their children, since they must both work to pay for the government-run schools. The left's opposition to stay-at-home mothers and fathers, (e.g., sex education, abortion, unilateral divorce, same-sex marriage, subsidies for single motherhood, etc.), ensures that the government-run schools have more influence on children than the parents do.

Trailer for the Craig-Hitchens debate DVD made by Illustra Media

November 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ChristianJR4 sent me the video of the trailer. You should subscribe to his YouTube channel, he posts amazing stuff quite often.

You can read more about this debate here, including ordering info.

UK woman makes EIGHT false rape accusations and gets no jail time

November 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Misandry Review)

Excerpt:

> A woman who made eight separate false claims of rape or sexual assault has been spared jail.
>
> Gemma Gregory, 28, accused seven different men over a six-year period.
>
> Former boyfriends were subjected to police questioning and DNA testing to clear their names.
>
> Her fantasy stories also wasted huge amounts of police time.
>
> As long ago as 2002, she admitted in a statement to police that she was ' seeking attention' from them. But it was not until last year, after recording several hundred calls either from her or about her, that they took action.
>
> […]Her latest offence was in May when she rang police to say she had been raped at her home. She stuck to her story in a video interview three days later despite being warned she would be prosecuted if it was another lie.A 34-year-old man was interviewed by police and for the next five months Gregory regularly contacted officers to ask how the case was progressing.
>
> Yesterday, the victim spoke of his ordeal.
>
> 'We were going out for five to six months. I ended the relationship with her, but she got back in touch with me a couple of months later.
>
> 'We met up at a pub and saw each other for about two or three nights after that. I stayed at her flat one of those nights and we had sex just the once.'
>
> He continued: 'She then left a message on my phone saying come round tonight but I was doing other things.
>
> 'The next thing I knew the police rang me up and asked me to come to see them. I was not arrested but attended the police station voluntarily. It wasn't very nice to be accused of rape.
>
> […]Detective Constable Paul Weymouth, of Plymouth CID, said yesterday: 'We conducted a thorough rape inquiry.
>
> […]She rang us every two or three days to keep it going and claimed that her exboyfriend had made silent calls.'She wanted him put in prison. She kept this going for a long time.' He said that some of the earlier 'suspects' had been arrested and had intimate samples taken as part of the inquiries.
>
> […]'It was not thought appropriate to take action at an earlier stage.'

And here's another story from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A young woman cried rape after 'fulfilling a fantasy' of having sex with two strangers, a court heard yesterday.
>
> Chloe Dolton, 22, was 'bored' with her life and willingly engaged in the threesome after an argument with her boyfriend, it was alleged.
>
> A jury heard she had previously expressed her sexual fantasies in a diary, in which she wrote: 'I am in crisis. I am so bored of my life and need a miracle.
>
> 'I try to be nice and decent but I always end up one way or another trying to **** someone, a girl or a boy.'
>
> The entry on a computer diary entitled The Life of Chloe Dolton continued: 'I should be out having fun with every boy I meet, having sex with whoever I like.
>
> 'I am such a hateful girl, such a selfish girl.'
>
> The prosecution said she fulfilled her fantasy at the end of an evening spent drinking alcohol, and later accused the two men of rape because she was ashamed of what she had done.
>
> […]Dolton denies perverting the course of justice by making the false rape claims.
>
> Miss Martin said of the defendant: 'She deliberately lied to her boyfriend, her family and friends and to the police.
>
> 'She clearly lied because probably of her shame and regret. She had in fact had consensual sex with two complete strangers.'

So in the first story, the woman made a false accusation to get attention. In the second story, the woman wanted to blame others for her own bad decision. And in the Lehigh University case I wrote about earlier, the woman needed an alibi after she was caught drunk in a public place after a long bout of underage drinking. She wanted the police to view her sympathetically, as a victim, so she lied and said that a police officer had raped her.

How often do women make false accusations of rape?

According to one study, false rape accusations are commonly used by women to provide an alibi for some other crime they are guilty of committing. The study lists this reason as one of the three reasons why women invent false rape accusations.

Excerpt:

> A study of rape allegations in Indiana over a nine-year period revealed that over 40% were shown to be false — not merely unproven. According to the author, "These false allegations appear to serve three major functions for the complainants: providing an alibi, seeking revenge, and obtaining sympathy and attention. False rape allegations are not the consequence of a gender-linked

> aberration, as frequently claimed, but reflect impulsive and desperate efforts to cope with personal and social stress situations." (Kanin EJ. Arch Sex Behav. 1994 Feb;23(1):81-92 *False rape allegations.*)
>
> In 1985, a study of 556 rape allegations found that 27% accusers recanted when faced with a polygraph (which can be ordered in the military), and independent evaluation showed a false accusation rate of 60%. (McDowell, Charles P., Ph.D. "False Allegations." Forensic Science Digest, (publication of the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations), Vol. 11, No. 4 (December 1985), p. 64.)

It seems that these fake charges are being leveled all the time, not just in high profile case like the Duke University scandal or the Hofstra University scandal. Something is going on in the minds of young women that is making them invent stories about men with total disregard as to the consequences it causes on those men. And the police and the courts are quite unable to do anything about it because feminism is so entrenched in the justice system.

So why are women doing this? Well, it's because they are unable to get attention, affection and approval from men without engaging in drunkenness and irresponsible sex. And why have relations between men and women degraded to this point? The answer is that women embraced third-wave feminism, which has as its goal the complete destruction of sex differences in the public square. Feminism is to blame for the decline of chastity, courtship, courtesy, manners, romance, love and *especially* chivalry.

It was feminism that broke up the traditional family, feminism that removed men from homes. Women need fathers in the home to know how to relate to men so that they don't go too far, and then feel guilty. But since 77% of young unmarried women voted for Barack Obama, the feminist candidate, we must assume that women are happy with the status quo. Either that or they are incapable or unwilling to investigate what consequences follow from their own decisions.

Related posts

Here is my previous post on how women overwhelming believe that men are constantly drugging them with date-rape drugs, when in fact peer-reviewed medical studies and police reports show that this virtually *never* occurs.

And more:

- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- Obama vows to repeal Defense of Marriage Act in speech to gay activists
- Jennifer Roback Morse evaluates the economics of no-fault divorce
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New study explains the best way for young people to avoid sexual risks

- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day
- Has the decline of chastity and courtship hurt young people?
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children’s sexual choices
- Twenty-one reasons why marriage matters
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being

My posts on chastity and chivalry:

- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christian men and women
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- What should wives do when they are not in the mood for sex?
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?
- Purposeful parenting today
- Marriage tips part 1
- Marriage tips part 2

Stephen C. Meyer and Chris Mooney debate today on Michael Medved show

November 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The tip is from Evolution News.

Rob Crowther explains:

> Monday, Nov. 16th, Stephen Meyer and Chris Mooney will be on The Michael Medved Show (second hour, 1pm PT/4pm ET). Mooney is a diehard Darwin defender that various Fellows here at the CSC have debated in the past, and he's someone we've reported about over the years. His view of science is elitist and arrogant, and he has recommended such things as suppressing dissenting views from the media, to spinning science in such a way as to manipulate public opinion. He considers anyone who disagrees with him to be ignorant about science. It will be interesting to see how he does with Meyer, a Cambridge PhD who clearly disagrees with Mooney on … well, practically everything.

This should not be missed. You can find broadcast times for Medved's show here. Don't forget to set your time-zone at the top. The best way to listen is live, and don't forget to call in with your question!

Cato Institute talks with Jay Richards about Christianity and capitalism

November 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you know that the libertarian Cato Institute has a podcast? I like listening to it, even though I am not a libertarian on many issues. But I like their views on economics, government and liberty. I think that they are right on issues like school choice, consumer-driven health care, and global warming skepticism. In the episode of their podcast below, they interviewed Protestant theologian and philosopher Jay W. Richards on the relationship between Christianity and economics.

The MP3 file is here. (10 minutes)

The guy who does these podcasts is named Caleb Brown. Now, with a name like "Caleb", I always thought that he must be some sort of Christian. Well, it turns out that he is a Quaker. And this is a shock, because Quakers are actually pretty socialistic on economic issues. But it turns out that Caleb is as concerned as I am that Christians are not more inclined towards capitalism. The fit between Christianity and capitalism is much more natural than with secular socialism.

Further study

To learn more about the relationship between Christianity and capitalism, check out this post (the second half is on capitalism).

Excerpt:

> To understand what capitalism is, you can watch this lecture entitled "Money, Greed and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem" by Jay W. Richards, delivered at the Heritage Foundation think tank, and televised by C-SPAN2.
>
> […]If you can't see the Richards video, here is an audio lecture by Jay Richards on the "Myths Christians Believe about Wealth and Poverty". Also, why not check out this series of 4 sermons by Wayne Grudem on the relationship between Christianity and economics? (a PDF outline is here)

And you can listen to Ron Nash's course on Christianity and economics.

Washington Post: Democrat health care reform bill would reduce senior care

November 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the left-wing WaPo.

Excerpt:

> A plan to slash more than $500 billion from future Medicare spending — one of the biggest sources of funding for President Obama's proposed overhaul of the nation's health-care system — would sharply reduce benefits for some senior citizens and could jeopardize access to care for millions of others, according to a government evaluation released Saturday.
>
> […]…the report questions whether the country's network of doctors and hospitals would be able to cope with the effects of a reform package expected to add more than 30 million people to the ranks of the insured, many of them through Medicaid, the public health program for the poor.
>
> In the face of greatly increased demand for services, providers are likely to charge higher fees or take patients with better-paying private insurance over Medicaid recipients, "exacerbating existing access problems" in that program, according to the report from Richard S. Foster of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
>
> […]The report offers the clearest and most authoritative assessment to date of the effect that Democratic health reform proposals would have on Medicare and Medicaid, the nation's largest public health programs.

Seniors voted 53 to 45 in favor of McCain over Obama.

Video of the second debate between Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman

November 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was browsing on Mike's web site and found links to these videos.

Here they are:

4 videos in high quality, about 30 minutes each.

If you sometimes have trouble understanding what Habermas and Craig are talking about in their debates, you need to listen to this debate. Licona is taking a much higher-level view. He is basically selecting facts that NO ONE denies and not even talking about the evidence for them – instead he is spending his time arguing why the resurrection is the best hypothesis for explaining the facts, and why the naturalistic hypotheses are not as good. Craig spends more time proving the facts, but virtually no historian denies them.

If you like the debate, you can buy it here from $9.99 on 2 DVDs, with extra content – suitable for showing to larger audiences, like in your church!

You may also be interested in watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman, or you can download the transcript here.

Related posts on Bart Ehrman

- Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
- Is the Bible we have now the Bible they had then?
- Tough Questions Answered has first report of Licona/Ehrman debate!
- Mike Licona will face Richard Carrier and Stephen Patterson in upcoming debates
- Gary Habermas explains the earliest source of resurrection facts
- The eyewitness testimony of Jesus' women followers supports the empty tomb
- Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection
- How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
- What do the Dead Sea Scrolls tell us about how the Bible was transmitted?
- William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus

Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper seeks increased trade with India

November 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Story here from CTV News.

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper spent his first day in India selling Canada as a desirable place to invest and highlighting the need for greater trade ties between the two countries.
>
> Harper visited the cities of Mumbai and New Delhi on Monday, the first stops on a high-profile, three-day tour of the country that is home to 1.2 billion people. It is his first visit to India as prime minister.
>
> […]He spoke about the advantages of investing in Canada, and he recited the many ties that the two countries share — including pluralistic parliamentary democracy, federalism and more than 1 million Canadians who claim Indian heritage.
>
> Canada, said Harper, has "one of the most welcoming environments for investment in the world and has the resources necessary to meet India's growing energy and infrastructure needs."
>
> While Harper talked much about investment opportunities in Canada, he downplayed any suggestion that he would be signing two anticipated bilateral deals that have been expected for some time.
>
> "On the subject of nuclear energy, it is my sincere hope that our two

> governments will complete our bilateral nuclear co-operation agreement soon," said Harper, alluding to a pending deal that was first announced back in January.

> Harper said Canada is also "keen" to complete a foreign investment protection deal, but that too remains under negotiation.

Stephen loves his country, he doesn't apologize for Canada when he goes abroad. He wants to reach out to other countries by signing trade deals, so that Canadians will be able to pay the lowest prices for imported goods, and will be able to export Canadian products to more markets. Meanwhile, Obama screws American consumers by shunning free trade deals and raising tariffs against other countries.

Stephen Harper on stage again, in Mumbai

In other news, Blue Like You reports that Harper also took part in a dance on stage at a popular Indian reality TV show.

Now, if only Canada could get a cricket team to participate in all the tournaments, as well as a rugby team, and a soccer team.

Stephen Meyer’s Signature in the Cell in top ten science books on Amazon.com

November 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

Today Amazon.com announced their bestselling books of 2009 and *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design* (HarperOne) by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer made the top ten in the science category. According to Amazon.com, books on its 2009 list of best sellers are *“[r]anked according to customer orders through October. Only books published for the first time in 2009 are eligible.”* The book’s publisher, HarperOne, reports that the book is entering its fifth printing in as many months, and continues to sell strongly both online and in stores.

“Here we are, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Origin of Species*, a book mistakenly assumed to have killed the design argument in science,” said Robert Crowther, director of communications at Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture, which is the intelligent design research program directed by Dr. Meyer. “Did Darwin refute the design argument? No. And here’s a book about the science of intelligent design that shows how the design argument is being revived with powerful new arguments relevant to our culture.”

In *Signature in the Cell* Dr. Meyer shows that the digital code imbedded in DNA points powerfully to a designing intelligence and helps unravel a mystery that Darwin did not address: how did the very first life begin? He weaves together a journey of discovery with an argument for intelligent design and explains how intelligent design can be formulated as a rigorous scientific argument using the very same method of reasoning that Darwin used.

The list is here. I heard about this while listening to Michael Medved show Monday, when Dr. Stephen C. Meyer was debating Chris Mooney. Chris Mooney writes about science using his undergraduate degree in English. Dr. Meyer has a double undergraduate in physics and geology, and a PhD from Cambridge University, and has published peer-reviewed papers on intelligent design in scientific journals.

What is intelligent design?

Casey Luskin explains in a high-energy 14-minute podcast.

Or you can read about it here, but it’s less fun!

Ten ways that Obama stimulated the economy with government spending

November 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marathon Pundit has the top 10 ways that Obama and the Democrats stimulated the economy with government spending.

Number 6 is my favorite:

6. **$6 MILLION FOR A SNOWMAKING FACILITY IN THE 15th SNOWIEST CITY IN THE COUNTRY:**
A $6 Million Snowmaking Facility In Duluth, Minn."
("The Challenge In Counting Stimulus Returns," The Wall Street Journal, 10/27/09)
(Top 101 Cities With The Highest Average Snowfall In A Year (Population 50,000+))

Number 9 is also hilarious:

9. $3.4 MILLION FOR A TURTLE TUNNEL IN FLORIDA: A $3.4 Million 'Ecopassage' To Help Turtles Cross A Highway In Tallahassee, Fla."
("The Challenge In Counting Stimulus Returns," The Wall Street Journal, 10/27/09)

Click here for the rest. They all have references – these are not made-up.

If you want to understand why government spending caused our unemployment rate to rise to 10.2% and higher, then check out this post in which I talk about two Harvard University economists who lay it out in plain English, and contrasts George W. Bush and Barack H. Obama on job creation. Hint: Obama is not winning, and he's not winning on deficits, either.

Massive changes needed to avert demographic catastrophe in European Union

November 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from LifeSiteNews.

Excerpt:

> According to the report by Norway's Institute for Family Policies abortion rates in Britain have leaped by a third among unmarried teenage girls and abortion is helping to age the population of Europe. Without a massive shift to family-friendly policies, the pattern of increased abortion and increasingly aging population will inevitably lead to the collapse of social welfare benefits, and, ultimately, to the bankruptcy of Europe's cradle-to-grave socialist welfare state.
>
> Presented to the European Parliament on Wednesday, the report said that the situation of the family in Europe is "a desolate panorama."
>
> "Europe is plunged in an unprecedented demographic winter and has become an elderly continent, with a large birth deficit, fewer marriages and more of them broken, homes emptying."
>
> "The aging population, critical birth-rate, escalating abortions, the collapse of marriage, the explosion in family breakups and the emptying of homes are the main problems of Europeans," the 2009 Report on the Evolution of the Family in Europe said.
>
> […]The dropping European birth rate, the report says, with its concomitant increasing health and pension costs, will lead to increases in public expenditure to care for the aging population and the eventual collapse of public revenues, leading finally to the bankruptcy of the welfare state. The average birth rate of EU countries is now 1.38 per woman, well below the replacement rate of 2.1 births per woman, even in relatively fertile countries like France.
>
> Without a significant shift in family policies in all EU countries, the report predicts the result will be "catastrophic." Starting in 2010, the population of Europe overall will begin to fall from 499 million to 472 million by 2050 and every third inhabitant will be over 65.
>
> […]Other indicators show the number of marriages, especially first marriages, is down and divorce rates are up. There are 1 in 4 fewer marriages than in 1980 and the marriage rate has fallen in 9 out 10 countries. One out of every 3 children (36.5 per cent) is born outside marriage. In some countries the fall in marriage rate has been around 50 per cent since 1983 and there are over one million divorces a year, the equivalent to one marital breakdown every 30 seconds.

You can take a look at the actual numbers here. It's a mess. This should convince fiscal

conservatives to support social conservatism. Abortion and the destruction of two-parent families imposes massive social costs on society, and it grows government to deal with the fallout. Government pay for all the social programs, welfare, police, jails, etc. But it also has to regulate broken families via the courts. It makes no sense to abandon morality and expect government to stay the same – it will have to grow.

Maybe we shouldn’t have let the secular socialist elites run things? Could it be that believers in traditional morality and small government were in the right? Could it be that there is a price to pay for believing in materialism and naturalism, and jettisoning morality for hedonism?

Fort Hood terrorist tried to prosecute his patients for war crimes

November 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from ABCNews. (H/T Bluegrass Pundit via Blazing Cat Fur, Verum Serum)

Excerpt:

> Major Nidal Malik Hasan's military superiors repeatedly ignored or rebuffed his efforts to open criminal prosecutions of soldiers he claimed had confessed to "war crimes" during psychiatric counseling, according to investigative reports circulated among federal law enforcement officials…
>
> Investigators believe Hasan's frustration over the failure of the Army to pursue what he regarded as criminal acts by U.S. soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan may have helped to trigger the shootings.
>
> "The Army may not want to admit it, and you may not hear much about it, but it was very big for him," said one of the federal investigators on the task force collecting evidence of the crime.
>
> His last effort to get the attention of military investigators came on Nov. 2, three days before his alleged shooting spree, according to the reports.
>
> Colonel Anthony Febbo at Fort Hood reportedly told investigators he was twice contacted by Hasan, on Nov. 2 and a week earlier in October, about the question of whether he could legally provide information on "war crimes" he had learned in the course of psychiatric counseling he provided soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Col. Febbo told ABC News he could not comment because of the on-going investigation.
>
> His supervisor in the Department of Psychiatry, Captain Naomi Surman, told investigators that Hasan raised similar issues with her in conversations in October, according to documents reviewed by ABC News.
>
> Captain Surman told investigators that Hasan had formally contacted military prosecutors to report patients he was evaluating, according to people briefed on the exchange. She said Hasan signed his e-mails with "Praise Be to Allah." Legal analysts say psychiatrists are strictly bound by the rules of patient confidentiality except in cases where they might become aware of crimes about to be committed.

Here is my previous post about political correctness and national security.

MUST-READ: Supreme Court refuses to hear case of silenced Christian valedictorian

November 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brittany McComb

Story and video here at LifeSiteNews.

Excerpt:

> The United States Supreme Court has refused to hear the case of a high school valedictorian whose microphone was turned off by school officials after she began speaking about the part her Christian beliefs played in her success in life.
>
> Attorneys for The Rutherford Institute asked the Supreme Court to hear the case of Brittany McComb, charging that school officials violated McComb's free speech rights and engaged in viewpoint discrimination when they censored her speech because of its Christian content.
>
> […]McComb is a Christian and a top student, who graduated with a 4.7 grade point average from Foothill High in Henderson, Nevada. She knew that her valedictorian address would probably be cut short, but was determined to go ahead and mention her faith anyway.
>
> School officials had previously edited her speech to remove Biblical references and one mention of the name of Jesus Christ, warning her she would be interrupted if she deviated from the approved text.
>
> "I went through four years of school at Foothill and they taught me logic and they taught me freedom of speech," McComb stated. "God's the biggest part of my life. Just like other valedictorians thank their parents, I wanted to thank my lord and savior."
>
> The 400 plus graduates and guests who had gathered at a Las Vegas casino for the commencement ceremony, booed and jeered after McComb's speech was cut short, chanting "Let her speak!"

If this young lady were gay or a Muslim or anything else, she would have been allowed to speak about that, and Christians would have remained silent and respectful. Only

Christians are suppressed, and that should tell you something about our government-run, unionized public schools today.

Video of her speech:

Video of her on Fox News:

Props to Alan Colmes for taking her side against the anti-Christian school administrators.

A lot of non-Christians and fake "Christians" on the secular left think that they are doing a good thing by silencing authentic Christians in the public square. They have decided that it is better to hurt the feelings of Christians by forcing them to keep silent and act like non-Christians, than to hurt the feelings of non-Christians. The problem with this is that ultimately, if Christianity is true, it only matters how each of us makes *Jesus Christ* feel. And if you hurt the feelings of Christians who are busy following Christ, then you are really hurting Christ.

The Bible says this in Matthew 18:1-10:

[1]At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

[2]He called a little child and had him stand among them.

[3]And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

[4]Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

[5]"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.

[6]But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

[7]"Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!

[8]If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.

[9]And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

[10]"See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

This story is in Mark, Matthew and Luke: it's early and multiply attested, and is therefore authentic.

This cannot be any more clear. If you discourage people from following Christ then you are in *big trouble*. I think that this suppression of Christians is worse than murder. Jesus is threatening people who discourage Christians *with the eternal fires of Hell*. Christians are morally obligated to talk about Jesus in public, and particularly to give thanks to him

in public. When you tell Christians not to act like like Christians, then you are really forcing *your religion onto them*, and expecting them to act *as if you are more authoritative than Jesus Christ.*

The purpose of life, on Christianity, is not to hide your commitment to Christ in order to make non-Christians feel comfortable about their rejection of Christianity. The purpose of life, on Christianity, is to publicly acknowledge God in everything that you do and to have a relationship with God, as revealed by Christ's life and teachings. The most important relationship is the *vertical relationship* – with God, not the horizontal relationship – with people. It is a *non-Christian* viewpoint that faith should be kept private and hidden.

Remember that the first commandment is not "Thou shalt avoid offending people who are in rebellion against God" nor is it "Thou shalt hide your faith from non-Christians so that they don't feel badly about rejecting God". There's a temptation to pick moral rules like "don't murder" and "don't commit adultery" – things we don't do, and then to say that those things are the really bad things. And since we don't do those bad things, that makes us good. But what does God consider to be the *really* bad thing?

The first commandment, according to Jesus, is found in Matthew 22:34-38:

[34]Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.

[35]One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

[36]"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

[37]Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

[38]This is the first and greatest commandment.

This story is in Mark, Matthew and Luke: it's early and multiply attested, and is therefore authentic.

And consider Matthew 5:13-16:

[13]"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

[14]"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

[15]Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

[16]In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

This story is in Mark, Matthew and Luke: it's early and multiply attested, and is therefore authentic.

(This is one of my favorite verses in the Bible. I always feel sad when I think of it because I think of it when dealing with laziness, ignorance and cowardice from fake Christians – which is often!)

And consider Matthew 10:26-33:

[26]“So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.

[27]What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.

[28]Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

[29]Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.

[30]And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

[31]So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

[32]“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.

[33]But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

This story is also in Luke, so it is part of the Q source shared by Matthew and Luke, which is very early and likely to be authentic.

One has to remember that for this young woman, her relationship with Christ is as real to her as her relationship with her parents – and she wants to honor him in her moment of celebration. It is striking that school administrators encourage other politically correct groups to express themselves in public. Only Christians are singled out for persecution and suppression. Christians can’t speak freely, but non-Christian school officials can call all pro-lifers murderers and Democrats can force Christians to pay for abortions.

People today seem to think that God, if he exists, would be loving. And what they mean by love is “making people feel happy *regardless* of what they believe about God’s existence and character”. People imagine what God is like *for them* using emotions and intuitions, instead of looking at the life of Jesus *historically*, and asking whether God really stepped into history to show us what he is *really* like. Biblical Christians don’t comport with this intuitive/emotional understanding of love, so that is why they are persecuted by non-Christians and fake Christians.

This bias against Christians sharing their faith is common in most non-Christian religions who would prefer to silence Christians rather than debate them with arguments and evidence. Countries like the UK and Canada punish Christians for speaking about Christianity, India and Israel consider passing anti-conversion laws, and in the atheistic North Korea or Muslim Iran they just imprison or kill Christians outright. When non-Christians persecute Christians for behaving like Christians, they really are aggrieving Christ himself.

My advice for non-Christians

If you are a non-Christian or an emotional/intuitive “Christian”, you want to avoid denying authentic Christians the rights of free speech and freedom of religious expression. Feel free to spend your lives on Earth seeking pleasure and avoiding a relationship with the God who is there. Even God won’t reveal himself overtly to you to compel you into a love

relationship with him. But don't make it harder on yourself in the after-life by persecuting Christians here and now for behaving like authentic Christians.

Some people think that by suppressing Christians, they actually are doing what God wants because God's goal for us is to have happy feelings. But if your method of discovering God's existence and character is by using your emotions and intuitions, then you should be careful about inventing a God in your own image. My advice is to conduct a *genuine* investigation of whether God exists, and what he is like, using arguments and evidence, not emotions and intuitions. If God is real, then he already has a personality. He isn't YOU.

Related posts

Here is a series of posts I did on why people go to Hell.

- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

And this debate in which Hindus argue that Christians should not be allowed to speak about Christ in public.

And this debate in which secular humanists argue that Christians should not be allowed to speak about Christ in public.

Here are some stories from the UK:

- Woman gets police visit after writing letter protesting gay pride parade
- Nurse faces termination for being a Christian in public
- UK stewardess fired for refusing to dress as a Muslim
- Couple arrested for answering Muslim's questions about Christianity

Here are some stories from Canada:

- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

Here are some stories from the United States.

- Feminists suppress free speech at East Georgia College
- ACLU instigates arrest of two Christians for praying in a church
- New Mexico Human Rights Commissions fines couple $6000 for being Christians
- Obama forces Catholic school to cover abortion on health care plan

And of course in atheistic and Muslim countries they imprison or murder you for being a Christian:

- Two Iranian women imprisoned for being Christians refuse to recant their faith
- North Korea murders woman for distributing Bibles

You can read more about Brittany here.

Christian sacrifices his life to save 400 female students from suicide bomber

November 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Dawn.com via Answering Muslims.

Excerpt:

> Pervez Masih, a 40-year-old Christian worker, saved scores of lives at the double-storey cafeteria, where around 400 female students were present at the time of the attack.
>
> "There would have been dozens of deaths had the suicide bomber not been blocked by Pervez Masih," said Saifur Rehman, a senior security official of the IIU.
>
> The other hero, Mohammad Shaukat, survived the attack but he is fighting for his life on a bed in the surgical ward of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, as a shot fired by the suicide bomber hit him in lower abdomen.
>
> Narrating the scene of the suicide attack on the cafeteria for women, Shaukat told Dawn that: "The attacker clad in a black burka was heading towards the cafeteria for female students at a time when they were having their lunch. I felt something wrong as no girl student, even one who observes veil, wears a head-to-toe burka on the women campus. I intercepted the bomber, who shot me, and I fell down but Pervez, who witnessed the scene, understood the designs of suicide bomber and held him at the entrance of the dining hall where the blast took place."

Where could this Christian man have learned that self-sacrifice was morally good, and even prudent, in the long run? Where did he get the idea that death was not the end, and that his decisions about right and wrong have ultimate significance, even after his death?

Christ gave his life as an atoning sacrifice to save humanity, even when they were still in rebellion against him. So Christians, following Christ's example, are obligated to give their lives to save others who are still in rebellion against Christ. This is action consistent with Christianity. Self-sacrifice like this is not rationally grounded by any other worldview. It is *especially* not rationally grounded by atheism, which is all about moral relativism and hedonism.

If you click through to Answering Muslims, they've also got a video on the story from CNN.

Sarah Palin performs well in radio and TV interviews with Sean Hannity

November 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed this interview with Sarah Palin on Caffeinated Thoughts.

Part 1: (10 minutes)

Part 2: (5 minutes)

I hate it when people ask her about her personal life. In this interview, it's strictly business.

Sarah's Facebook page is here.

UPDATE:

Here is the video from her appearance last night on Hannity's TV show on Fox News Channel.

Doug Groothuis explains the correspondence theory of truth

November 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this short paper on truth and postmodernism by Christian philosopher Douglas Groothuis.

Excerpt:

> The correspondence view of truth, held by the vast majority of philosophers and theologians throughout history, holds that any declarative statement is true if and only if it corresponds to or agrees with factual reality, with the way things are. The statement, "The desk in my study is brown," is true only if there is, in fact, a brown desk in my study. If indeed there is a brown desk in my study, then the statement, "there is no brown desk in my study," is false because it fails to correspond to any objective state of affairs.
>
> The titanic statement, "Jesus is Lord of the universe," is either true or false. It is not both true and false; it is not neither true nor false. This statement either honors reality or it does not; it mirrors the facts or it does not. The Christian claims that this statement is true apart from anyone's opinion (see Romans 3:4). In other words, it has a mind-independent reality. Minds may recognize this truth, but minds do not create this truth. This is because truth is a quality of some statements and not of others. It is not a matter of subjective feeling, majority vote or cultural fashion. The statement, "The world is spherical," was true even when the vast majority of earthlings took their habitat to be flat.
>
> The correspondence view of truth entails that declarative statements are subject to various kinds of verification and falsification. This concerns the area of epistemology, or the study of how we acquire and defend knowledge claims. [2] A statement can be proven false if it can be shown to disagree with objective reality. The photographs from outer space depicting the earth as a blue orb (along with prior evidence) falsified flat-earth claims. Certainly, not all falsification is as straightforward as this; but if statements are true or false by virtue of their relationship to what they attempt to describe, this makes possible the marshaling of evidence for their veracity or falsity. [3]
>
> Therefore, Christians — who historically have affirmed the correspondence view of truth — hold that there are good historical reasons to believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead in space-time history, thus vindicating His divine authority (see Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11). [4] The Apostle Paul adamantly affirms this view: "And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:14-15). Without the correspondence view of truth, these resounding

> affirmations ring hollow. Christianity cannot live and thrive without it.

This is a great article from a very smart guy who has written extensively about truth and postmodernism. Doug also has a blog, in case you want to pay him a visit.

Dean of Harvard Medical School gives health care bill a failing grade

November 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Wall Street Journal, by the Dean of Harvard Medical School Jeffrey S. Flier. Excerpt:

> As the dean of Harvard Medical School I am frequently asked to comment on the health-reform debate. I'd give it a failing grade.
>
> […]Speeches and news reports can lead you to believe that proposed congressional legislation would tackle the problems of cost, access and quality. But that's not true. The various bills do deal with access by expanding Medicaid and mandating subsidized insurance at substantial cost—and thus addresses an important social goal. However, there are no provisions to substantively control the growth of costs or raise the quality of care. So the overall effort will fail to qualify as reform.
>
> In discussions with dozens of health-care leaders and economists, I find near unanimity of opinion that, whatever its shape, the final legislation that will emerge from Congress will markedly accelerate national health-care spending rather than restrain it. Likewise, nearly all agree that the legislation would do little or nothing to improve quality or change health-care's dysfunctional delivery system. The system we have now promotes fragmented care and makes it more difficult than it should be to assess outcomes and patient satisfaction. The true costs of health care are disguised, competition based on price and quality are almost impossible, and patients lose their ability to be the ultimate judges of value.
>
> Worse, currently proposed federal legislation would undermine any potential for real innovation in insurance and the provision of care. It would do so by overregulating the health-care system in the service of special interests such as insurance companies, hospitals, professional organizations and pharmaceutical companies, rather than the patients who should be our primary concern.
>
> In effect, while the legislation would enhance access to insurance, the trade-off would be an accelerated crisis of health-care costs and perpetuation of the current dysfunctional system—now with many more participants. This will make an eventual solution even more difficult. Ultimately, our capacity to innovate and develop new therapies would suffer most of all.

In order to have an economy recover, you need people running government who actually understand health care and economics. My lunch-time book is Regina Hertzlinger's "Who Killed Health Care?". Regina teaches at Harvard University, as well. She talks about how we need to lower costs and improve quality by introduce elements of choice and

competition. Her plan is similar to the Republican's Patient's Choice Act. Consumer-Driven health care is the right solution to the problem of rising health care costs. Obama's plan just adds fuel to the fire.

The right way to reform health care without sacrificing liberty

Consumer-driven health care:

Health Care: Fostering Focus Factories
with Dr. Regina Hertzlinger
(8:46)

Choice, Competition Should Drive Health Care Reform
with Dr. Michael D. Tanner
(5:21)

The Republican Plan ("Patient Choice Act") is consumer-driven:

Obama's False Health Care Choice
with Rep. Paul Ryan
(10:39)

Ideas for Free-Market Health Care Reform
with Rep. Paul Ryan
(8:30)

What's wrong with Obamacare, Medicare, RomneyCare and CanadaCare:

Competing with the Government
with Dr. Michael F. Cannon
(7:34)

Medicare: A Model for Reform?
with Dr. Michael D. Tanner
(4:34)

Lessons from Massachusetts Health Care Reform
with Dr. Michael D. Tanner
(4:18)

The Canadian Health Care Experience
with Sally C. Pipes
(7:45)

Puncturing the Myths of American Health Care
with Sally C. Pipes
(about 8 minutes)

Canadian court rules that student need not repay 50K of student loans

November 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Yahoo News.

Excerpt:

> A Nova Scotia court has ruled that a former university student does not have to pay back tens of thousands of dollars he borrowed from a bank.
> Alfredo Abdo won his case in bankruptcy court this week, with the court concluding that the Royal Bank of Canada was at least partly responsible for what happened.
>
> "I question whether advancing all that money at one time was prudent banking on the part of RBC," registrar Richard Cregan said in a written decision.
>
> Abdo was a promising engineering student at Dalhousie University in September 2004. He had good grades, a scholarship and lived at home with this family.
>
> In his second year, at the age of 19, he borrowed $20,000 from RBC though a student line of credit. He made bad investments online, according to court documents, and he accepted an offer from the bank for another loan of $30,000 to solve his problem.
>
> Abdo started having dizzy spells. Finding his engineering program very stressful, he switched to commerce. But he dropped out of university in his third year.
>
> The dizziness and social anxiety never went away, Abdo said, and therefore he couldn't work or pay back the bank loans. He filed for bankruptcy last November.

The Canadian court probably thinks that they are compassionate, good people sticking it to the corporations. But actually what they've done is caused the banks to think a second time about making loans to borderline cases, so that the poorest students will now be refused student loans. If the courts refuse to enforce contracts signed by both parties, then the banks just won't enter in to those contracts.

Down in New Zealand, they have the same problem.

Excerpt:

> Thousands of people with student loans are defaulting on payments, leaving the Government to chase hundreds of millions of dollars.
>
> More than one in five borrowers – or 114,000 people – have overdue payments and thousands of students are leaving tertiary education with no qualification and big bills.
>
> The Education Ministry's student loan scheme annual report shows that $306 million in payments is overdue, a $100m increase from a year ago.

> The substantial growth includes a big rise in the level of payments owed by people now living overseas, more than doubling to $114m.
>
> New Zealand University Students Association co-president Sophia Blair said it was not surprising that students with loans were heading overseas and letting the bills mount. “You can earn higher wages [overseas].”
>
> […]Total student loan debt had reached $10.2 billion and is predicted to grow by an average of $875m a year to more than $20b by 2022.
>
> The report also showed about 39 per cent of students who left tertiary education with a loan did so without achieving a qualification.
>
> About 8000 students with loans who left study in 2005 had nothing to show for it by 2007.

New Zealand, if I understand correctly is a fairly left-wing country, which probably subsidizes tuition and taxes income. So, students would be incentivized to game the system by taking out loans backed by the government, and then leaving to work abroad in more capitalist economies. Socialism encourages people to game the system and avoid taking responsibility for their own decisions.

UPDATE: New Zealand blogger Madeleine Flanagan wrote to me in an e-mail:

> It’s old news, it has been the same way for years and years and that story comes out every year but as always it is interesting.
>
> Your assessment is pretty spot on. In New Zealand student loans are pretty much available to anyone who applies for one. Acceptance at University or an alternative tertiary institution is not difficult, especially once you are over 20 as the institutions want your money – they get more funding the more students they have. Student loans are interest free and you do not have to begin repayments until you finish study. The state funds something like 75% of the tuition fees directly anyway so the loan is only for 25% of the actual cost. There are benefits available for living costs and if you don’t qualify for them you can borrow living costs and have them added to your student loan. So it is set up to make it easy to get into debt.
>
> Being a fairly left-wing country there is a lot of regulation in the market place so of course you can pretty much always earn more overseas and once overseas the state cannot garnish your wages to get your student loan repayment.
>
> The system has some fairly bad holes in it. For example, people who are being funded for Uni by they employer, like I was pre-accident, to study can take the cash for tuition fees from their employer, invest it and then take out an interest free student loan to pay their tuition fees. At the completion of study they then pay off the loan with the invested funds and pocket the interest – compliments of the taxpayer. Only students with cash coming from somewhere can do that as your student loan gets paid straight to the education provider apparently a lot of students with wealthy parents do this too.

> As if this situation were not bad enough, organizations like New Zealand University Students Association (NZUSA), quoted below whinging about the level of pay rates in New Zealand , typically also whinge that education is not “free” anymore like it used to be when the politicians went to Uni! They argue that being educated to tertiary level benefits society so therefore society should pay for all of it (and have much higher wages).
>
> New Zealand is crazy.

Madeleine and her husband Matt write at MandM blog.

Interviews with Republican candidates for Iowa governorship in 2010

November 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Caffeinated Thoughts is interviewing with Republican candidates who are running to replace the Democrat governor of Iowa. Iowa is his home state. He's interviewed my two favorite candidates for the post, Christian Fong and Chris Rants. Fong is the private sector business executive who is solid on family values, and Rants is the policy expert who has specific ideas on how to solve the problems that Iowa is facing.

Christian Fong

About Christian Fong:

> He is the son of a Chinese immigrant and Nebraska farm girl, and as his website claims is a "product of the American dream." He graduated high school at 16. He earned his B.S. from Creighton at 19. He also holds an M.B.A. from Dartmouth College.
>
> He is currently an executive with AEGON USA in Cedar Rapids and serves as chair for The Generation Iowa Commission. He also founded and is President and CEO of Corridor Recovery, a non-profit flood relief organization that coordinated recovery efforts after the Cedar Rapids Flood of 2008.
>
> We discussed his decision to run for Governor, why he believes he should be the GOP nominee, spending cuts, his plan to cut the state's income tax, creating private sector jobs, the Iowa Supreme Court same-sex marriage decision, abortion, school choice, and Iowa's growing prison population.

Here's the MP3 of the interview with Christian Fong. (38 minutes)

Christian Fong's blog is here.

Chris Rants

About Chris Rants:

> Rants first elected to represent Iowa House District 54 (Sioux City and Sergeant Bluff) in 1992 and still serves his district today in that capacity. In 2003 was elected Speaker of the Iowa House of Representatives and served as Speaker until 2006. He is one of six Republicans running for Governor.

> We discussed a variety of different topics including state spending, property taxes, the Iowa Supreme Court ruling, abortion, what his priorities would be as Governor, our growing prison population, and why he decided to run.

> One thing I certainly learned is that if you want to know what Chris thinks, just ask. Also of all of the candidates running I would classify him as the policy wonk of the bunch. Especially when it comes to the budget. He has also been talking

> up providing specific ideas for state government, and has many of those ideas listed at 99 Ideas.org.

Here's the MP3 of the interview with Chris Rants. (60 minutes)

Chris Rants' blog is here.

The latest poll shows the Democrat governor is vulnerable

The latest Des Moines Register poll shows these match-ups:

- Culver (33%) vs Branstad (57%)
- Culver (37%) vs Vander Plaats (45%)
- **Culver (42%) vs Rants (35%)**
- **Culver (42%) vs Fong (34%)**

The Des Moines Register is a left-wing paper, in my opinion, so the results are probably skewed toward the Democrat.

Why policies are interesting

Some of my Christian readers are mostly interested in apologetics who haven't thought much about politics and economics. Listening to these interviews will provide you with some ideas about the kinds of issues that Christians should be interested in. It's not just social issues – it's school choice, tax cuts, runaway government spending, and a host of other issues that affect the way you live out your Christian life. I like listening to what politicians can do to make my life more free, more secure and more prosperous.

Shane has a rundown of all 6 Republican candidates for the Iowa governorship here.

Wired Science misleads readers on what Galapagos finches really prove

November 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the article. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> On one of the Galápagos islands whose finches shaped the theories of a young Charles Darwin, biologists have witnessed that elusive moment when a single species splits in two.

Well, that would be very interesting… if it were true. But whenever I've heard these finches mentioned, it turns out that what actually happened is that *populations of different kinds of finches increase and decrease in response to changing environmental conditions.* No finch's beak actually changes size! Some finches with beaks more adapted to the environmental conditions survive and leave more offspring than other finches who are not as adapted. When conditions change, the changes in populations reverse themselves and return to equilibrium.

Evolution News explains:

> The deeper problem with the *Wired Science* report is not its perpetuation of the legend of Darwin's finches, but its false claim that biologists have now "witnessed that elusive moment when a single species splits in two." This is ***not*** what Peter and Rosemary Grant reported in their scientific article in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. [6]
>
> According to the Grants, in 1981 they found an unusually large male medium ground finch (scientific name: *G. fortis*) on the island of Daphne Major that they labeled 5110. They inferred that it had probably immigrated from the nearby island of Santa Cruz—though they could not be certain. For 28 years, the Grants followed all known descendants of this presumed immigrant, and genetic analysis suggested that after 2002 the descendants of 5110 bred only with each other (and were thus "endogamous"). The inbred group had a distinctive song that may have contributed to its reproductive isolation from other medium ground finches that were in the same area ("sympatric").
>
> But the Grants did not go so far as to label the inbred descendants a new species. "We treat the endogamous group as an incipient species because it has been reproductively isolated from sympatric *G. fortis* for three generations and possibly longer." But an "incipient species" is not the same as a new species. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin wrote: "According to my view, varieties are species in the process of formation, or are, as I have called them, incipient species." [7] But how can we possibly know whether two varieties (or races) are in the process of becoming separate species? Saint Bernards and Chihuahuas are two varieties

> that cannot interbreed naturally. The Ainu people of northern Japan and the !Kung of southern Africa are separated not only geographically, linguistically, and culturally, but also (for all practical purposes) reproductively. Are dog breeds and human races therefore “incipient species?”
>
> There’s no way we can know, unless we observe varieties becoming separate species at a future date. Designating two reproductively isolated populations “incipient species” is nothing more than a ***prediction*** that speciation will eventually occur. It is a far cry from observing the origin of a new species.

Read the rest here. References to peer-reviewed literature are provided.

Climate Research Unit servers hacked, e-mails made public

November 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here are Watts Up With That. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The details on this are still sketchy, we'll probably never know what went on. But it appears that University of East Anglia Climate Research Unit has been hacked and many many files have been released by the hacker or person unknown.

This e-mail is one of the ones released:

> From: Phil Jones
> To: ray bradley ,mann@[snipped], mhughes@
> [snipped]
> Subject: Diagram for WMO Statement
> Date: Tue, 16 Nov 1999 13:31:15 +0000
> Cc: k.briffa@[snipped],t.osborn@[snipped]
> Dear Ray, Mike and Malcolm,
>
> Once Tim's got a diagram here we'll send that either later today or first thing tomorrow. **I've just completed Mike's Nature trick of adding in the real temps to each series for the last 20 years (ie from 1981 onwards) amd [sic] from1961 for Keith's to hide the decline**. Mike's series got the annual land and marine values while the other two got April-Sept for NH land N of 20N. The latter two are real for 1999, while the estimate for 1999 for NH combined is +0.44C wrt 61-90. The Global estimate for 1999 with data through Oct is +0.35C cf. 0.57 for 1998.
>
> Thanks for the comments, Ray.
>
> Cheers, Phil
> Prof. Phil Jones
> Climatic Research Unit

I wonder how they will explain that.

Hot Air is reporting that CRU admits that these e-mails are genuine:

> Controversy has exploded onto the Internet after a major global-warming advocacy center in the UK had its e-mail system hacked and the data published on line. The director of the University of East Anglia Climate Research Unit confirmed that the e-mails are genuine — and Australian publication Investigate and the Australian Herald-Sun report that those e-mails expose a conspiracy to hide detrimental information from the public that argues against global warming.

The Hot Air link has more very suspicious langugage.

Related posts

- Climate Research Unit servers hacked, e-mails made public
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Government-funded research unit destroyed original climate data
- The state of the debate about catastrophic man-made global warming
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says solar activity impacts climate
- Famous UN IPCC hockey stick graph is based on cherry-picked data
- Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming
- Global warming advocates refuse to give their data to skeptics
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says prior ice melting caused by solar variation
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Global warming is not caused by humans

NHS denies pap smear to woman later diagnosed with cervical cancer

November 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video here via DoublePlusUndead. (H/T ECM)

I suspect that they did it to save costs – it's the UK version of the public option.

If you want to understand who Obama is, look at his judicial nominees

November 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michelle Malkin tells about Obama's new judicial appointment, with links: (H/T Andrew)

> David Hamilton is a hard Left, former ACORN fund-raiser and abortion radical who was rated "not qualified" by the ABA.

LifeNews.com reports on the Republican efforts to block the appointment:

> As he promised he would do, pro-life Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama led the filibuster and said Hamilton should be opposed in part because of his pro-abortion views.
>
> Sessions noted how Hamilton kept an informed consent measure from being enforced in Indiana, thereby prohibiting women from getting information about abortion's risks and alternatives so they can find positive alternatives.
>
> "And for seven years, through a series of rulings, Hamilton kept it form being enforced. This case is a blatant example of allowing personal views to frustrate the will of the people and the popularly elected representatives of the government of Indiana," Sessions said. "This appeared to me to be obstructionism."
>
> Sen. Jim DeMint, a pro-life senator from South Carolina, agreed.
>
> "Judge Hamilton is the definition of an activist judge and is clearly not qualified to sit on a court of appeals," DeMint said during the debate. "Hamilton, who spent years working with the ACLU and ACORN, has used his position on the bench to drive his personal political agenda."
>
> The pro-life group Susan B. Anthony List objected to Hamilton and said it worries about future Obama nominees.
>
> "If Judge David Hamilton is considered a blueprint for the next judge President Obama will nominate for the U.S. Supreme Court, America is in trouble," Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the organization, told LifeNews.com.

This is the real Barack Obama. Radically pro-abortion.

he British government has gone to court to prevent the publication of statistics on abortions of children with mild disabilities like cleft palates and club foot. The Department of Health has asked the High Court to overturn a Freedom of Information Act ruling that gave the Information Tribunal permission to publish the information.

The Information Tribunal is a government body that hears appeals under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. It ruled last monthhat the Pro-Life Alliance could review the abortion statistics.

The Department of Health refused to release the information claiming that it could lead to women who have late abortions being identified. Department lawyers argued that the information was “sensitive, personal and private.”

Catholic, Orthodox and Evangelical Christian leaders sign Manhattan Declaration

November 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from LifeSiteNews.

Excerpt:

> A group of prominent Christian leaders and scholars unveiled a manifesto Friday declaring firm opposition to current and future laws infringing upon the sanctity of life, marriage, faith, and liberty.
>
> The 4,700-word "*Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience*" was drafted by Dr. Robert George, Dr. Timothy George and Chuck Colson and signed by more than 125 Orthodox, Catholic and evangelical Christian leaders, including Focus on the Family Dr. James Dobson and National Association of Evangelicals president Leith Anderson. 15 Roman Catholic bishops, including Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York and Archbishop Donald Wuerl of Washington, D.C., were among the signatories.
>
> […]The document lays out the groups' arguments against anti-life, anti-family, and anti-religious public policy as contravening "foundational principles of justice and the common good," in defense of which the group says they are "compelled by our Christian faith to speak and act."
>
> In asserting Christians' right to conscientious objection to such policy, the declaration says it is "ironic" that those who advance as "rights" various immoral practices "are very often in the vanguard of those who would trample upon the freedom of others to express their religious and moral commitments to the sanctity of life and to the dignity of marriage."
>
> "Because we honor justice and the common good, we will not comply with any edict that purports to compel our institutions to participate in abortions, embryo-destructive research, assisted suicide and euthanasia, or any other anti-life act; nor will we bend to any rule purporting to force us to bless immoral sexual partnerships, treat them as marriages or the equivalent, or refrain from proclaiming the truth, as we know it, about morality and immorality and marriage and the family," it concludes.

Chuck Colson one of the evangelicals, and he writes: (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

> Having reminded readers about why and how Christians have spoken out in the past, the Declaration then turns to what especially troubles us today—the threats to the sanctity of human life, the institution of marriage, and religious freedom.
>
> […]The response to this kind of assault on the sanctity of human life requires what the Manhattan Declaration calls the "gospel of costly grace." This starts

> with the willingness to put aside our comfort and serve those whom the broader culture would deem outside the scope of its concern and legal protection.
>
> The cost may be higher. Christians may have to choose between the demands of what St. Augustine called the “City of Man” and the “City of God”—which, for the Christian, is really no choice at all.
>
> This kind of principled non-cooperation with evil won’t be easy—there are signs of a reduced tolerance for that most basic of American values, religious freedom. As we’ve discussed many times on BreakPoint, Christian organizations are losing tax-exempt status for refusing to buy in to homosexual “marriage.” Some are going out of business rather than cave into immoral demands—such as placing children for adoption with homosexual couples. Conscientious medical personnel are being sued or being fired for obeying their consciences.

Looks like we are waking upon social issues.

But there is still nothing in the statement about fiscal conservatism or getting serious about defending the faith using reason and evidence. As long as we have Christians continuing to vote for big government and neglecting the life of the mind, we aren’t going to change the culture one iota.

The response to this kind of assault on the sanctity of human life requires what the Manhattan Declaration calls the “gospel of costly grace.” This starts with the willingness to put aside our comfort and serve those whom the broader culture would deem outside the scope of its concern and legal protection.

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How I talk to my mother about Christianity

November 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I could write a lot about this, so I'll just try to provide a brief insight. I should probably put up a poll to see what my regular readers are more interested in: 1) news or 2) apologetics and mentoring.

A word of warning

One thing I've noticed about women is that they like it when men treat their mothers nicely and what they mean by that is never judging or disagreeing with their mothers, and never trying to change their mothers. This view of love is, of course, false. I want my mother to go to Heaven and to know and love God, so I have to talk to her about these things and disagree if she is wrong about them. So I think that disagreeing with her about spiritual things *is* being nice to her. But read on and judge for yourself.

The plan

My plan for my mother is not to begin by convincing her that Christianity is true. Instead, I begin by convincing her to approach religious issues just as she would approach any other area of knowledge, such as investing, or nutrition. If she agrees to treat religion as any other area of of knowledge, then I think that she will eventually conclude that Christianity is true. Currently, she is forming her beliefs about God's existence, character and what he wants from her, using subjective mechanisms, i.e. – intuitions and experience. I want her to try a different method.

Goals

My goal for my mother, as with anyone else, is to try to get her to accept Christianity as objectively true, based on arguments and evidence. I don't think that a person can be an authentic Christian if Christianity is just wish-fulfillment. I don't think that a person will stick with Christianity when it goes against their own self-interest, unless their belief is anchored on arguments and facts. People act on what they really believe is true, when stressed by reality.

So, what I need to do is to argue for a method of discovery that is not dependent on emotions and intuitions, but is more rigorous. I need to offer my mother tools, such as the laws of logic, historical analysis and the scientific method. These tools can be used to investigate whether God exists, and what he is really like, and what he wants from her. By using these tools instead of intuition and experience, my hope is that I will be able to get her to arrive at a view of God as he really is.

Questions

The first question to ask her is "Does a Creator and Designer of the Universe exist independently of whether anyone thinks so or not?". And then I ask the immediate follow-up question "How do you know that?".

The second question to ask her is "What is the Creator/Designer's character like?". And

again, the immediate follow-up question is “How do you know that?”.

The third question to ask her is “How does the Creator/Designer expect you to act?”. Once again, immediately follow up with “How do you know that?”.

Discussion

And the results of the inquiry were as follows: 1) she thinks that God is exactly like her and approves of everything she does, and more importantly, 2) her method of investigating religion is basically to invent “God” using her own feelings and experiences. Her method of arriving at these conclusions was by using intuition and experience, and she was resistant to the idea of using logic, science and history to find out the truth about God, his existence, his character, and what he wanted.

The next thing I did was to argue that her method of arriving at her religious beliefs was subjective and unreliable, and that she would never use that method of determining truth in any other area of life. I made a list of everything she cares about and started approaching each topic using her subjective method of determining truth, in order to expose the disastrous consequences that would occur if she made decisions in these other areas using intuition and experience.

For example, I explained my theories on how watching TV produces university degrees, how chocolate causes weight loss, how fruits and vegetables cause cancer, etc. All of this to show that subjectivism is not a reliable method of arriving at truth in any area of knowledge, especially in religion. The desire for happiness should not drive the search for religious truth. People need to avoid inventing a self-serving view of God, just because it gives them a feeling of security without any moral demands.

Finally, I introduce a reliable method of arriving at the truth in any area, including religion. I’m sure that you all already know about the concepts of propositional truth, the correspondence theory of truth, and the test for truth (logical consistency, empirical validation, experiential relevance). And you all know about how to use science/history/logic to confirm/disconfirm religious claims, etc. If necessary, I would apply these methods to other areas to show how they produce real knowledge.

A useful thing to do is to show how well-accepted facts like the origin of the universe from nothing and the crucifixion of Jesus falsify various world religions. This helps to make the point that a lot of people believe things that are false. That way, you motivate the question – “am I interested in knowing what is really true or am I interested in engaging in wish-fulfillment and projection in order to make myself feel better about my own selfishness and insecurity?”.

Some things I found out

I found that engaging in these discussions brought out some very interesting data that reminded me of what I see in the church. Each of these is worth a post, so I’ll just throw them out there in point form.

- She viewed my efforts to get her to employ logic and evidence to determine her views as being critical of her

- She felt “constrained” by allowing logic and evidence to override her “freedom” to invent a self-serving God
- She didn’t want to know about the laws of logic, or how religions make conflicting truth claims
- She didn’t want to know about what science and history could confirm/disprove religious truth claims
- She thought that it was better to let everyone believe anything they wanted to believe
- She thought that religion was mostly for making people believe things that made them feel happy and secure
- She didn’t think that God expected her to act morally if it didn’t make her feel happy to do so
- She didn’t care to find out the truth about whether God exists, what he was like, and what he wanted from her

Note: we didn’t get into any fights over this, it was just a friendly discussion, although I could sense her resistance.

My biggest concern about this view is that if it were a common view among Christians, it would increase the incidence of several non-Christian ideas, like moral relativism, inclusivism, postmodernism, pluralistic salvation, the non-reality of Hell, etc. And I think that if a lot of Christians believe Christianity is self-serving, then we will be perceived as being hypocritical by non-Christians when we don’t do the difficult things we are supposed to be doing. Non-Christians want to see some consistency between out actions and what the Bible says.

In a poll of my friends I did a while back, I found that people thought that talking to relatives about Christianity was the most difficult thing to do, higher than talking to people at work. So I’d be curious for readers to share their experiences about who is harder to talk to, and what you found in talking to people.

Mentoring

- the importance of being able to argue both sides of a question
- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church
- why won’t Christians defend their faith in public?

And here are some lectures that got me interested in apologetics.

Man thought to be in vegetative state was actually conscious the whole time

November 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Ace of Spades via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A man thought by doctors to be in a vegetative state for 23 years was actually conscious the whole time, it was revealed last night.
>
> Student Rom Houben was misdiagnosed after a car crash left him totally paralysed.
>
> He had no way of letting experts, family or friends know he could hear every word they said.
>
> 'I screamed, but there was nothing to hear,' said Mr Houben, now 46.
>
> Doctors used a range of coma tests, recognised worldwide, before reluctantly concluding that his consciousness was 'extinct'.
>
> But three years ago, new hi-tech scans showed his brain was still functioning almost completely normally.
>
> […]Mr Houben said: 'I shall never forget the day when they discovered what was truly wrong with me – it was my second birth.
>
> 'I want to read, talk with my friends via the computer and enjoy my life now that people know I am not dead.'

What are we to make of the Terri Schiavo killers now? Is it morally praiseworthy to advocate for getting rid of inconvenient people? Shouldn't we look on the misfortunes of others as opportunities to act out our love and compassion for our fellow man? Doctors can be wrong in their diagnoses.

Hilarious Saturday Night Live sketch attacks Obama's government spending

November 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video: (H/T Neil Simpson)

If the video is removed, try watching it here.

And here's the transcript:

ANNOUNCER: We will now take you live to Beijing for the joint press conference already underway between U.S. President Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao.

OBAMA: As I already said privately, I would like to thank President Jintao for his kind welcome and generous hospitality, and I hope that during this visit we can have a productive dialogue about the serious issues of concern that remain between our two countries — issues ranging from the unfair valuation of your currency to the trade imbalance, and most importantly, human rights. I believe there can be a great partnership between us but it will require compromise and understanding.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to add that I completely understand why you feel entitled to come here and lecture China on our shortcomings. After all, my country does owe the United States a great deal of money. Oh, wait. Hold on a moment. I believe I had that backwards. In fact, now that I think about it, it is *your* country that owes *us* a large sum of money. Is this correct?

OBAMA: Uh… yes.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Now, it's coming back to me. I believe it's $800 billion.

OBAMA: That is correct.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Such a large sum.

OBAMA: Yes, it is.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: And yet you haven't even mentioned it. That's so odd.

OBAMA: Uh, look, you're going to get your money.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Are we? Are we going to get our money? Because from what I read your country is in the middle of a serious recession.

OBAMA: Uh, while this is true, there are signs that our bailout has steadied the financial markets and our stimulus package has been effective in fixing the job crisis.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: I'm curious. How many jobs has it created?

OBAMA: Uh, so far, none.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: I see.

OBAMA: But our health care reform plan, we're confident, is going to lead to enormous savings.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: How exactly is extending health care coverage to 30 million people going to save you money?

OBAMA: I… don't know.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: And this "Cash for Clunkers" program– I have read that you purchased many clunkers with our money.

OBAMA: Yes, we have.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: What does this word "clunkers" mean?

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

OBAMA: Well, a clunker is a car…

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: I know what a clunker is. And just so there is no misunderstanding, you are not allowed to pay us back in clunkers.

OBAMA: Of course not.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: You know, as I listen to you, I am noticing that each of your plans to save money involves spending even *more* money. This does not inspire confidence.

OBAMA: I assure you, you're going to get your money.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Will you kiss me?

OBAMA: Sorry?

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Will you kiss me?

OBAMA: I don't understand.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: I like to be kissed, (*shouts*) when someone is doing sex to me!

OBAMA: There's no need for that.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: No? You know how many uninsured we have in China? One and a quarter billion, *billion*. But I'll tell you this: We don't owe anyone $800 billion.

OBAMA: Well, obviously, we take our debt to you very seriously.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: I suppose if I really wanted to get my money I could call and say I was a Wall Street banker who needs his bonus. But really, why should I have to stoop to that level?

OBAMA: You don't have to stoop to any level.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Please understand if it were my $800 billion I wouldn't care, but it belongs to my country. I feel like I should bring it up.

OBAMA: You're going to get your money.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Say, while you're here, are you at least going to treat me to dinner and a movie?

OBAMA: I'm sorry?

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: I think it's the polite thing to do, (*shouts*) before doing sex to me!

OBAMA: Mr. President, please.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Very well.

OBAMA: I assure you that as soon we solve this economic crisis…

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Which one? The one that your country's reckless real estate speculation caused? That one? I just want to make sure I know which one we're talking about.

OBAMA: We are taking steps to make sure that what happened will never happen again.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: What steps?

OBAMA: Uh, reform of banking regulations.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Do I look like Mrs. Obama?

OBAMA: What?

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Do I look like Mrs. Obama?

OBAMA: Of course not.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Then why are you trying to (*shouts*) do sex to me like I was Mrs. Obama?

OBAMA: Now, now.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Just do it. Get it over with.

OBAMA: Mr. President!

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Don't be a tease.

OBAMA: I just…

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: I can take it.

OBAMA: This is not the time or place.

(*Hu Jintao "speaks."*)

INTERPRETER: Very well. In that case, I call this press conference to a close, and Live from New York, it's Saturday Night!

The leftist New York Times refuses to publish CRU's global warming e-mails

November 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

All the news that fits, they print.

Story from Michael Goldfarb of the Weekly Standard. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> With the release of hundreds of emails by scientists advocates of global warming showing obvious and entirely inappropriate collusion by the authors — including attempts to suppress dissent, to punish journals that publish peer-reviewed studies casting doubt on global warming, and to manipulate data to bolster their own arguments — even the *New York Times* is forced to concede that "the documents will undoubtedly raise questions about the quality of research on some specific questions and the actions of some scientists." But apparently the paper's environmental blog, Dot Earth, is taking a pass on publishing any of the documents and emails that are now circulating.
>
> […]This is the position of the *New York Times* when given the chance to publish sensitive information that might hinder the liberal agenda. Of course, when the choice is between publishing *classified* information that might endanger the lives of U.S. troops in the field or intelligence programs vital to national security, that information is published without hesitation by the nation's paper of record.

Click here to read all the details.

Glenn Beck gives a good summary of the e-mails here:

Here is my previous post on the hacked e-mails.

Related posts

- Climate Research Unit servers hacked, e-mails made public
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Government-funded research unit destroyed original climate data
- The state of the debate about catastrophic man-made global warming
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says solar activity impacts climate
- Famous UN IPCC hockey stick graph is based on cherry-picked data
- Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming
- Global warming advocates refuse to give their data to skeptics
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says prior ice melting caused by solar variation
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now

- Global warming is not caused by humans

Obama is a fiscal conservative
The universe is eternal
There is independent evidence

Leaked CRU e-mails reveal pattern of deception and suppression of criticism

November 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here on Watts Up With That.

Here are a few of my favorites, with links to the original e-mails.

- Phil Jones writes to University of Hull to try to stop sceptic Sonia Boehmer Christiansen using her Hull affiliation. Graham F Haughton of Hull University says its easier to push greenery there now SB-C has retired.(1256765544)
- Michael Mann discusses how to destroy a journal that has published sceptic papers.(1047388489)
- Tim Osborn discusses how data are truncated to stop an apparent cooling trend showing up in the results (0939154709). Analysis of impact here. Wow!
- Phil Jones encourages colleagues to delete information subject to FoI (Freedom of Information) request.(1212063122)
- Phil Jones says he has use Mann's "Nature trick of adding in the real temps to each series"…to hide the decline". Real Climate says "hiding" was an unfortunate turn of phrase.(0942777075)
- Kevin Trenberth says they can't account for the lack of recent warming and that it is a travesty that they can't.(1255352257)
- Tom Wigley discusses how to deal with the advent of FoI law in UK. Jones says use IPR argument to hold onto code. Says data is covered by agreements with outsiders and that CRU will be "hiding behind them".(1106338806)
- Reaction to McIntyre's 2005 paper in GRL. Mann has challenged GRL editor-in-chief over the publication. Mann is concerned about the connections of the paper's editor James Saiers with U Virginia [does he mean Pat Michaels?]. Tom Wigley says that if Saiers is a sceptic they should go through official GRL channels to get him ousted. **(**1106322460) **[Note to readers – Saiers was subsequently ousted]**
- **Later on Mann refers to the leak at GRL being plugged.**(1132094873)

It goes on and on. There are FORTY-SEVEN of these.

Is this science?

Comments in CRU source code

Check out these comments in the source code of a CRU program that explains why CRU uses some data, but not other data.

From documents\harris-tree\recon_esper.pro:

; Computes regressions on full, high and low pass Esper et al. (2002) series,
; anomalies against full NH temperatures and other series.
; CALIBRATES IT AGAINST THE LAND-ONLY TEMPERATURES NORTH OF 20 N

;
; Specify period over which to compute the regressions (stop in 1960 to avoid
; the decline
;

Is this science?

Note: a search engine for the leaked e-mails is now online.

New Bible software takes Bible study to a whole new level

November 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story about a new Bible software called “GLO” was sent to me by one of my ex-co-workers from 13 years ago!

Check out these videos:

Cool. One thing I would add to this software is resources for allowing people to explain the Bible to their neighbors. Probably the most useful thing would be to evaluate major passages to see when they were written, how closely the passage is based on eyewitness testimony, whether it appears in other New Testament sources, whether it passes criteria like embarrassment and dissimilarity, and whether it is confirmed by archaeology or even non-Biblical sources.

Additionally, commenter Matthew has some concerns:

> Translations? Only NIV, which is OK but far from exemplary. For $90 this needs every translation known to man, in most languages. And full text of all historic bibles as well.
> Scholarship? An article found through google critiques Glo for not having a panel of scholars advise on the extra-biblical resources offered.

I don’t think this thing is meant as a scholarly resource – they are aiming for a different market.

Debates about the Bible

If you think that talking about the Bible with non-Christians is fun, you might want to take a look at these debates:

- Richard Bauckham defends the reliability of the gospels against James Crossley
- Richard Bauckham defends the divinity of Jesus against James Crossley
- Crossley debated against William Lane Craig before on the resurrection
- Crossley against Michael Bird on the origins of Christianity, (part 1, part 2)

If you like seeing fringe historical skeptics of Christianity go down in flames, check out this post for some historical debates with evangelicals and radical skeptics.

Should government spend so much money to push people into higher education?

November 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Both fiscal conservatives and social conservatives agree: government spending on higher education should be cut.

Fiscal conservatives oppose government spending on higher education

Consider this podcast from the libertarian Cato Institute.

Here is the MP3 file. (7 minutes)

It's an interview with Dr. Neal MCluskey.

Topics:

- does higher education necessarily deliver skills that employers want?
- do most degrees really benefit employers?
- should government subsidize higher education?

About the guest:

Neal McCluskey is the associate director of Cato's Center for Educational Freedom. Prior to arriving at Cato, McCluskey served in the U.S. Army, taught high school English, and was a freelance reporter covering municipal government and education in suburban New Jersey. More recently, he was a policy analyst at the Center for Education Reform. McCluskey is the author of the book *Feds in the Classroom: How Big Government Corrupts, Cripples, and Compromises American Education*, and his writings have appeared in such publications as the *Wall Street Journal*, *Baltimore Sun*, and *Forbes*. In addition to his written work, McCluskey has appeared on C-SPAN, CNN, the Fox News Channel, and numerous radio programs. McCluskey holds a master's degree in political science from Rutgers University.

I think people should face the costs of the university education themselves. Then they would choose areas where they could make enough money to live and pay back their loans.

Social conservatives oppose government spending on higher education

My wonderful friend Andrew sent me this notice about an upcoming Family Research Council lecture.

Allan Carlson to Speak on Student Loans at Family Research Council

World Congress of Families founder and International Secretary Allan C. Carlson will deliver a Witherspoon Lecture at the Family Research Council on December 4 at 11:00 am, on "The Crushing Burden of Student Loans on Family Formation For Generation X."

Studies have shown that significant numbers of graduates who are burdened with college loans are less likely to marry and have children – with negative consequences for society.

Thus, there is a need to re-think the entire program.

[…]Allan Carlson has a Ph.D. in Modern European History. He is the author of many books, including “Conjugal America: On the Public Purposes of Marriage” and “The Natural Family: A Manifesto,” with Paul Mero. Click here to order his books.

Click here to download the flier.

Isn’t it amazing that fiscal conservatives agree with social conservatives? Actually, they should agree on many more things, in my opinion. It’s a bad idea for government to redistribute taxpayer money to schools, because the teacher unions just turn around and use it to influence politics, which cannot be good for giving children a quality education. Teacher unions are bad for fiscal *and* social conservatives – we really need to unite and make sure that they are de-funded, and de-fanged.

A funny story about libertarians

And I have to tell you a funny story. One of the quirky things about me that everyone knows is that I am able to get into the most deep and controversial conversations within a few seconds of meeting someone. For example, in the time it takes to get a blood test, I was talking to the nurse about lethal injections, capital punishment and different goals of the criminal justice system. Well, I managed to beat my score on Monday.

I was passing by a security guard to show him my badge and I noticed a book on his desk. As soon as he turned his back I leaned over the desk and read the back cover. It was a book by Lew Rockwell. So I asked him about it, and then we started talking about how libertarians ought to support social conservatism in order to keep government from having to deal with the fallout from broken homes and crime. I was just about to start talking about John Lott’s study on the link between abortion and increased crime, but there was a line-up by then, so I moved along.

So that’s what my life is like – the joy of a comprehensive Christian worldview means that you are never at a loss for something interesting to talk about. And there is a lot of reading people – knowing who you can talk to and when you’ve gone too far. Practice, practice, practice.

New study reveals that working women denigrate men to feel more feminine

November 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Working women have long complained that their man doesn't pull his weight on household chores.
>
> But his lack of effort on the domestic front could actually be a myth created by his partner, researchers have found.
>
> According to a major study, female breadwinners exaggerate their partner's uselessness around the home because they feel guilty about devoting too much time to their career, and not enough to their role of wife and mother.
>
> By nagging their man over his alleged shortcomings, women feel more feminine because they can control the traditionally female role of maintaining the home and family, experts say.
>
> 'Working women who provide the majority of the household's income continue to articulate themselves as the ones who "see" household messes and needs as a way to retain claim to an element of traditional female identity,' said Dr Rebecca Meisenbach, professor of communication at Missouri University.
>
> Dr Meisenbach questioned 15,000 American female breadwinners for the study, to be published in the journal Sex Roles this week.

I posted on a related topic recently, regarding a new study showing that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives.

Former NIH director says that health care bill is an attack on patient choice

November 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at Hot Air. (Via Confederate Yankee via ECM)

Here's the ex-NIH Director:

> Dr. Bernardine Healy ran the National Institute of Health has a rather daunting resumé on health care issues. She became the first woman to run the National Institute of Health in 1991, has served on two Presidential Council of Advisers on Science and Technology, and served as President of the Red Cross.

And here are her comments in US News:

> The bill takes all sorts of choices out of patients' and doctors' hands. Even mammograms and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) tests would be similarly restricted by the government for millions of people, and they actually serve as better examples of what happens more broadly to personal medical decision making in the new system.
>
> […]As the pioneering prostate cancer surgeon Patrick Walsh of Johns Hopkins points out, a European randomized trial showed that PSAs saved lives. In the United States, there has been a 40 percent reduction in prostate cancer deaths since testing began in the early 1990s. Yet prostate screening arouses many of the same concerns as does breast cancer screening: too many follow-on studies, too many biopsies, and surgery on slow-growing tumors that may never have harmed the patient. The government task force claims that there's insufficient evidence to make a recommendation for routine screening of men younger than 75 and is firmly against screening in men older than that. The American Urological Association's position is the polar opposite: Baseline PSAs should be offered to men at age 40, and the frequency of subsequent testing should be determined by doctor and patient choice.

Ed Morrissey adds:

> Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) tests help catch prostate cancer early. The American Urological Association wants men screened with the test beginning at age 40 to catch the problem at its earliest stages.
>
> […]The government board wants to move away from what it sees as excessive testing, claiming that it will reduce unnecessary stress and anxiety in patients. It's no small coincidence that it will also save the government money — and in the case of PSAs, it will save money directly if Medicare refuses to pay for PSA tests until age 75, rather than retirement age.
>
> Right now, the US leads the world in catching, treating, and curing prostate

> cancer. Britain, which has a single-payer system that rations care, has one of the lowest ratings in the world. That's not a coincidence.
>
> He who pays the piper calls the tune. If we want to keep patient choice, then we have to pay for our own care. If we allow the government to absorb our choices in the name of "fairness," expect the USPSTF and other government panels to ration these tests and reduce our chances of surviving these cancers.

Previously, I wrote about a Stanford University professor's survey of health care systems around the world, in which he compared American health care to single-payer systems, favored by those on the left. In Canada, there is a 184% increase in prostate cancer mortality rates, compared with American mortality rates for prostate cancer. That's what we're headed for if the public option passes.

Congresswomen denounce Obamacare's rationing of breast cancer exams

November 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These are the best and brightest conservative women in the House.

I am all in favor of cutting health care costs – but that doesn't mean cutting the throats of patients to save money.

How conservative are they?

Here are their 2008 and 2007 congressional ratings from the American Conservative Union.

- **Michele Bachmann (MN) – 100% and 100%**
- **Marsha Blackburn (TN) – 96% and 100%**
- **Sue Myrick (NC) – 91% and 96%**
- Jean Schmidt (OH) – 87% and 92%
- Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA) – 92% and 85%
- Candice Miller (MI) – 63% and 72%

All SIX of these women members of the Pro-Life Women's Caucus!

Stephen C. Meyer defines and defends intelligent design in CNN editorial

November 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

THIS IS HUGE. Maybe this CNN editorial will cause people to stop describing intelligent design as “the idea that life so complex that God had to create it”.

Story here at CNN.com.

His first argument is the Cambrian explosion:

> We are told that a consensus of scientists supporting the theory means that Darwinian evolution is no longer subject to debate. But does it ever happen that a seemingly broad consensus of scientific expertise turns out to be wrong, generated by an ideologically motivated stampeding of opinion?
>
> […]Contrary to Darwinian orthodoxy, the fossil record actually challenges the idea that all organisms have evolved from a single common ancestor. Why? Fossil studies reveal “a biological big bang” near the beginning of the Cambrian period (520 million years ago) when many major, separate groups of organisms or “phyla” (including most animal body plans) emerged suddenly without clear precursors.
>
> Fossil finds repeatedly have confirmed a pattern of explosive appearance and prolonged stability in living forms, not the gradual “branching-tree” pattern implied by Darwin’s common ancestry thesis.

And his second argument is the biological information in DNA:

> Consider the implications, for example, of one of modern biology’s most important discoveries. In 1953 when Watson and Crick elucidated the structure of the DNA molecule, they made a startling discovery. The structure of DNA allows it to store information in the form of a four-character digital code, similar to a computer code.
>
> This discovery highlights a scientific mystery that Darwin never addressed: how did the first life on earth arise? To date no theory of undirected chemical evolution has explained the origin of the information needed to build the first living cell.
>
> Instead, the digital code and information processing systems that run the show in living cells point decisively toward prior intelligent design. Indeed, we know from our repeated experience — the basis of all scientific reasoning — that systems possessing these features always arise from an intelligent source — from minds, not material processes.
>
> DNA functions like a software program. We know that software comes from programmers. Information — whether inscribed in hieroglyphics, written in a

> book, or encoded in a radio signal — always arises from a designing intelligence. So the discovery of digital code in DNA provides a strong scientific reason for concluding that the information in DNA also had an intelligent source.

You can see Stephen Meyer debate against a famous, qualified Darwinist here. That post also has links to other debates on intelligent design from the Cato Institute and PBS. And don't forget that Stephen Meyer is debating Michael Shermer on November 30th, 2009 in Beverly Hills.

Ideas for Christmas gifts

If you guys are looking for Christmas gift ideas, I recommend Meyer's "Signature in the Cell" for advanced students. For beginners, get the new intelligent design DVD "Darwin's Dilemma" and the "Unlocking the Mystery of Life" DVD. The former covers the Cambrian explosion, and the latter covers the argument from DNA. If you still have money left over for more gifts, then get "The Privileged Planet" DVD, which compares the requirements for complex life forms and the requirements for scientific discovery. These can all be bought at Amazon.com.

By the way, just for fun, why don't you guys print off this article, and then go to some of your atheist family and friends and ask them what intelligent design is. Compare what they think intelligent design is with what it actually is, according to Stephen Meyer. If you want, write it up and leave it as a comment to this post.

UPDATE: Atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel names Signature in the Cell one his two 2009 Books of the Year in the Times Literary Supplement. This will be in a separate post shortly. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Navy SEALs face assault charges from Iraqi terrorist they captured

November 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let me start by quoting Jeralyn Merritt of TalkLeft, who doesn't approve of punishing the Fort Hood terrorist with the death penalty.

She writes:

> Major Nidal Hasan had his first hearing in the Ft. Hood murder case. The hearing was held in the hospital. His lawyer says he is paralyzed from the chest down, incontinent and in severe pain.
>
> […]How barbaric that the military will seek to kill a man with no sensation in his body from the chest down. He might prefer it (I certainly would) but it's inexusable behavior for a civilized society and way beyond the pale of decency.

One wonders what she would say to the families of the victims.

The death penalty as a deterrent to future crimes

The trouble with Democrats is that they make decisions based on feelings and intentions, instead of based on knowledge and results. No one *likes* the death penalty, but that's not the point of it. The point of the death penalty is that is *deters future crimes.*

The left-wing Washington Post reports on the latest research.

Excerpt:

> "Science does really draw a conclusion. It did. There is no question about it," said Naci Mocan, an economics professor at the University of Colorado at Denver. "The conclusion is there is a deterrent effect."
>
> A 2003 study he co-authored, and a 2006 study that re-examined the data, found that each execution results in five fewer homicides, and commuting a death sentence means five more homicides. "The results are robust, they don't really go away," he said. "I oppose the death penalty. But my results show that the death penalty (deters) – what am I going to do, hide them?"
>
> Statistical studies like his are among a dozen papers since 2001 that capital punishment has deterrent effects. They all explore the same basic theory – if the cost of something (be it the purchase of an apple or the act of killing someone) becomes too high, people will change their behavior (forego apples or shy from murder).
>
> […]Among the conclusions:
>
> – Each execution deters an average of 18 murders, according to a 2003 nationwide study by professors at Emory University. (Other studies have estimated the deterred murders per execution at three, five and 14).

> – The Illinois moratorium on executions in 2000 led to 150 additional homicides over four years following, according to a 2006 study by professors at the University of Houston.
>
> – Speeding up executions would strengthen the deterrent effect. For every 2.75 years cut from time spent on death row, one murder would be prevented, according to a 2004 study by an Emory University professor.

So, removing the death penalty encourages criminals to commit more crime. And this also applies to terrorism. If you want to coddle captured terrorists by giving them civilian trials and life imprisonment, instead of military trials and death sentences, then you get more terrorism.

Navy SEALS face criminal charges after capturing terrorist

Now let's turn to this story from Fox News. (via The Weekly Standard via Fausta's Blog)

Excerpt:

> Navy SEALs have secretly captured **one of the most wanted terrorists in Iraq** — the alleged mastermind of the murder and mutilation of four Blackwater USA security guards in Fallujah in 2004. And three of the SEALs who captured him are now facing criminal charges, sources told FoxNews.com.
>
> The three, all members of the Navy's elite commando unit, have refused non-judicial punishment — called an admiral's mast — and have requested a trial by court-martial.
>
> Ahmed Hashim Abed, whom the military code-named "Objective Amber," **told investigators he was punched by his captors — and he had the bloody lip to prove it**.
>
> Now, instead of being lauded for bringing to justice a high-value target, three of the SEAL commandos, all enlisted, face assault charges and have retained lawyers.

Just consider the incentives being created by this prosecution of Navy SEALS. This is exactly what caused the Army and the FBI to keep silent when Major Nidal Hasan was giving all the warning signs of committing a terrorist attack, including communicating with terrorists. The Army and the FBI didn't want to face the wrath of politically correct lawyers and judges.

So we have the left opposing the death penalty for terrorism on the one hand, and on the other hand the left is in favor of prosecuting Navy SEALs and CIA interrogators for their work in *stopping terrorism.*

How Modern Liberals Think

If you want to understand why people on the left call evil good and call good evil, be sure and watch Evan Sayet's speech at the Heritage Foundation, entitled "How Modern Liberals Think".

Here’s the lecture:

Democrats aren’t not serious about evil, and that disqualifies them from any office involving national security. In my opinion, they are not qualified to do anything of any importance.

How Democrat policies cause corporations to outsource jobs overseas

November 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

David Farr is the CEO of Emerson Electric, a $1.7-billion-dollar company heavily involved in manufacturing. What does he think about the job that the Democrats are doing in Washington?

In this Bloomberg article, he explains:

> Emerson Electric Co. Chief Executive Officer David Farr said the U.S. government is hurting manufacturers with regulation and taxes and his company will continue to focus on growth overseas.
>
> "Washington is doing everything in their manpower, capability, to destroy U.S. manufacturing," Farr said today in Chicago at a Baird Industrial Outlook conference. "Cap and trade, medical reform, labor rules."
>
> Emerson, the maker of electrical equipment and InSinkErator garbage disposals with $20.9 billion in sales for the year ended September, will keep expanding in emerging markets, which represented 32 percent of revenue in 2009. About 36 percent of manufacturing is now in "best-cost countries" up from 21 percent in 2003, according to slides accompanying his speech.
>
> Companies will create jobs in India and China, "places where people want the products and where the governments welcome you to actually do something," Farr said.
>
> The unemployment rate in the U.S. jumped to 10.2 percent in October, the highest level since 1983. Emerson, which Farr said employs about 125,000 people worldwide, has eliminated more than 20,000 jobs since the end of 2008 to lower expenses.
>
> "What do you think I am going to do?" Farr asked. "I'm not going to hire anybody in the United States. I'm moving. They are doing everything possible to destroy jobs."
>
> […]Mature markets such as the U.S., Western Europe and Japan continue to decline in importance and the company will keep investing in emerging markets, Farr said during the presentation.
>
> "We as a company today are putting our best people, our best technology and our best investment in these marketplaces to grow," he said. "My job is to grow that top line, grow my earnings, grow my cash flow and grow my returns to the shareholders. My job is not to shrink and roll over for the U.S. government."
>
> […]In renewable and alternative-energy markets, Emerson had 2009 sales of $50 million and plans to increase that to more than $800 million in five years.
>
> "But you are not going to see Emerson going out there with fancy commercials or

> sitting at the right hand of some president, talking about this," Farr said. "We do it."

When it comes to manufacturing jobs, the only person whose opinion counts is the CEO of the manufacturing company, because he makes the hiring decisions.

Why Obamanomics will not improve the economy

I noticed the Bloomberg article because it was linked to this American Thinker article, which was linked at Marshall Art's blog.

The American Thinker article analyzes why Obamanomics will not improve the economy.

Excerpt:

> The reason that Obamanomics will not and cannot work is because an economy cannot be managed from the top. Economics is a bottom-up process that depends upon individual incentives. Critical incentives have been diminished or destroyed by recent economic policies. Fear, uncertainty, threats, tax increases, penalties, and violations of the rule of law are but some of the conditions anathema to entrepreneurs, small business, and large business. Businesses will not hire, invest, or expand in a climate of disincentives. No commands from on high can force economic activity. That was a lesson that should have been learned from Eastern Europe and the former USSR.
>
> If these disincentives are left in place, our economy will continue to shrink and our standard of living will continue to diminish. Capital has no nationality, and it will start to flee our shores. Talent will follow. We will not recover from this economic downturn until businesses and individuals have a more favorable incentive structure.

You can't argue with the 10.2% unemployment rate, and it's only going to get worse. Everything that Obama has done has been bad for business, and has contributed to raising unemployment. Democrats, (and the people who voted Democrat), know less about economics than my keyboard.

Times Literary Supplement features Signature in the Cell on list of best books

November 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The book was one of the best books of 2009 according to the Times Literary Supplement. (H/T Uncommon Descent via Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

> Stephen C. Meyer's Signature in the Cell: DNA and the evidence for Intelligent Design (HarperCollins) is a detailed account of the problem of how life came into existence from lifeless matter – something that had to happen before the process of biological evolution could begin. The controversy over Intelligent Design has so far focused mainly on whether the evolution of life since its beginnings can be explained entirely by natural selection and other non-purposive causes. Meyer takes up the prior question of how the immensely complex and exquisitely functional chemical structure of DNA, which cannot be explained by natural selection because it makes natural selection possible, could have originated without an intentional cause. He examines the history and present state of research on non-purposive chemical explanations of the origin of life, and argues that the available evidence offers no prospect of a credible naturalistic alternative to the hypothesis of an intentional cause. Meyer is a Christian, but atheists, and theists who believe God never intervenes in the natural world, will be instructed by his careful presentation of this fiendishly difficult problem.

Get Meyer's book. This is the best thing that got published this year. Buy it!

Previous posts

- Stephen Meyer explains what intelligent design is in a CNN editorial.
- Stephen Meyer's Signature in the Cell in top ten science books on Amazon.com
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show
- Stephen Meyer is debating Michael Shermer on November 30th, 2009 in Beverly Hills, CA

House health care bill provides health care for illegal immigrants with taxpayer money

November 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Robert Rector does the analysis here at the Heritage Foundation. (H/T National Review via ECM)

Here's the abstract:

> *H.R. 3962 would deliberately permit illegal aliens to participate in the government health insurance exchange and in the public option insurance program. It would nominally bar them from receiving health care "affordability credits" and most regular Medicaid benefits, but verification procedures are weak and subject to fraud. Moreover, any limitations on benefits provided to illegal immigrants under the House bill are deceptive. The President and the congressional leadership clearly intend that these limits will be only temporary, to be overturned by amnesty or "comprehensive immigration reform" legislation that will be introduced next spring.*

And here are the main points:

> The health care bill recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives (H.R. 3962) clearly and directly contradicts the President's declarations and promises. Under H.R. 3962:
>
> - Illegal immigrants are clearly permitted to purchase health insurance under the government health insurance exchange created by the bill.
> - Illegal immigrants are permitted to receive cover age under the "public health insurance option" created in the bill.
> - Illegal immigrants are ostensibly barred from receiving taxpayer-funded "affordability credits" to subsidize their health care, but the verification procedures used to determine the legal status of those who receive credits are weak and subject to fraud.
> - The bill expands the Medicaid program. Illegal immigrants are nominally barred from receiving most Medicaid services, but the verification procedures used to determine the legal status of those who receive credits are also weak and sub ject to fraud.
> - All illegal immigrant women who do not have private health insurance and who give birth inside the United States will have the full cost of childbirth paid by the U.S. taxpayers. There will be no effort to have the mother repay any of the cost. Given the fact that nearly 400,000 children are born inside the U.S. each year to illegal immigrant women, these costs could be quite large.
> - The bill will provide tax credits to small businesses to subsidize the

> purchase of health insurance for illegal immigrant employees. Under H.R. 3962, small businesses will be given tax credits to encourage them to purchase health coverage for employees; because firms are not required to verify the legal status of subsidized employees, both legal and illegal employees will receive taxpayer support.
> - Illegal immigrants will continue to receive so-called emergency medical services under the Medicaid program.

The full research paper, with references, is here.

BONUS: The Senate bill includes a monthly abortion premium for all enrollees in the government-run health plan.

How to defend Christian exclusivism from the challenge of religious pluralism

November 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I had posted a debate from the Unbelievable radio show, which is broadcast in the UK. The topic of the debate was whether India should pass an anti-conversion law to prevent Christians from trying to convert people to Christianity. Basically, many Hindus in India want Christians to adopt the Hindu notions of polytheism and religious pluralism. They want Christians to accept that Jesus is one incarnation of the divine among many, and they want to outlaw the Christian practice of using speech to convince people to become Christians.

You can listen to the debate here in my original post.

But I wanted to highlight another debate that occurred in the comments of this blog, between me and a Hindu reader, who challenged me for being intolerant because I said that Hinduism was false.

His initial comment is here.

> Guys, all religions teach the same things. Its how each religion is interpreted that makes it different. If you follow any religion persistently, it will lead you to a peaceful and happy life.
>
> […]If one feels happy following Christian rituals, he may follow Christianity; if he feels happy following Hindu rituals, he is good to a Hindu. It all depends on what makes sense to the person. Enforcing or luring someone to another religion is wrong…It should be a personal choice. And no one should oppose a conversion made by personal choice.
>
> […]To say that someone's God or method of worship is false or not real is absolute rubbish according to me.
>
> […]If one says that other's God or religion is false, he/she is not tolerating the other's beliefs. And its immoral. Such things lead to religious conflicts.
>
> […]I believe in Jesus and so in my religion which is Hinduism.
>
> […]Why convert when a human being's main aim is to be happy? Every religion has scriptures that tell how to become happy and attain heaven/liberation.
>
> […]Everyone loves his/her religion. They would not want to hear anything bad about it.

And I replied:

> Our view as Christians is that the purpose of religion is not to live a happy life and to be "good". Our view is that we want to believe what is true and to know God as God really is. We believe that God is a person, with a real personality –

> likes and dislikes.
>
> What you're proposing is a Hindu approach to religion, except with Christian symbols and rituals. But Christians don't care about symbols and rituals much. We are more interested in history, science and propositional logic. We treat religion like… any other area of knowledge. First we discover the truth, then we act on it.
>
> Additionally, you have a Hindu approach to conversion, and you are trying to force that on Christians. You can keep your Hindu approach to yourself, and tolerate the fact that we have a different approach to conversion.
>
> […]You're not in a position to know what Christianity teaches, or what Jesus believes, since you haven't looked into these things at all. You know Hinduism. And you are projecting Hinduism onto other religions. But Hinduism is totally different than Christianity. They conflict in many areas, like cosmology and history. We believe that the universe had a beginning, you think it's eternal. And science can arbitrate that claim. We are willing to change our beliefs to be in line with what we can test in the external world, using the laws of logic, and the study of science and history.
>
> […]You write "To say that someone's God or method of worship is false or not real is absolute rubbish according to me.", yet you think that Christianity is false, and not real. But I am actually not offended by that at all. You are welcome to think I am wrong. I don't mind, this is the way that the game plays. Only one of us can be right, and if you were right, I would have to switch over to your view and that would be fine with me.
>
> […]You write "Everyone loves his/her religion. They would not want to hear anything bad about it." No that's your view. You identify Hindusim with India and patriotism and your people and culture. I don't identify Christianity with anything except truth. I like it because it's true. And that the only reason I like it.
>
> […]When I say that Hinduism is false, I am not "talking bad about your religion" any more than I am talking bad about the view that 2 + 2 = 5, when I say that 2 + 2 = 4. It's not talking bad about an idea to say it is false.

And then he replied:

> Do you believe that people who worship idols are devilish or all religions except Christianity are false? If yes then explain me with proper scientific reasoning and provide me a proof in the recent decades that logically explains the above two statements. You need to prove me that what you believe is experimented by scientists and proven by technology.
>
> […]I believe in all Gods no matter what religion because God is One. For me and this generation of educated Indians, we believe in tolerance and respect for all religions. We believe in co-operating with each other and not pointing flaws in others beliefs until its proven scientifically and attested by scientific authority.

> And we believe that people's belief be respected!

Then I replied:

> The current best theory of the origin of the universe is called the big bang theory. It states that all the matter, energy, as well as time and space and time, came into being from nothing. It is backed by experimental data from red-shift measurements, cosmic microwave background radiation measurements, and light element abundance measurements, etc. The theory states that the universe began 14.7 billion years ago. Additionally, the universe will not recollapse because measurements of mass density from Maxima and Boomerang show that the universe will expand forever.
>
> The big 3 monotheistic religions agree with the universe coming into being from nothing. Unfortunately, other religions think that the universe is eternal, such as Mormonism and Hinduism. On that basis, I reject Hinduism, which requires that the universe be eternal.
>
> "I believe in all Gods no matter what religion because God is One." That view (pantheism/polytheism) is called Hinduism. You are a Hindu. Christianity (monotheism) is mutually exclusive with Hinduism, because the teachings are in conflict, (as with the example of cosmology). As a Hindu, you therefore think that Christianity is false. On your definition, you don't "tolerate" Christianity – you think it's false. You don't "respect" Christianity, because you want to force your view (Hinduism) and your view of conversion (don't tell other people their religion is false) on Christians.
>
> […]Note: I am ok with you saying that I am wrong and that Christianity is false.

And then we sort of wound things down from there.

Anyway, the point of this exchange is most people in most religions think that the point of religion is to be happy, to have a sense of community and to get along with everyone by never talking about whether religious claims about the external world are true or false. But that view of the purpose of religion is not the Christian view. On the Christian view, the goal is to seek the truth. And part of Christian practice is to defend Christianity in public, and trying to convince other people that Christianity is true.

So, I think that Christians need to be a bit tougher, and recognize when someone who is not a Christian is trying to get them to accept that the purpose of religion is not to seek the truth. That's *their* view. That's not *our* view. It doesn't make any sense for someone to say that I am evil for thinking they are wrong, when they are thinking that I am wrong. I think a better way forward is to allow other people to disagree with you, but to keep the disagreement focused on *arguments* and *evidence.*

And just because you disagree with someone else, it doesn't mean you have to be mean to them. In my office, I am friends with Hindus, Muslims, atheists and Jews. We try to outdo one another in good deeds to make our religions look good! And when we debate which religion is true, we use arguments and evidence to attack and defend. What I've

found is that you get a much stronger friendship when you are comfortable being yourself. I keep telling my co-workers – it's OK to disagree.

Related posts

- the problem of religious pluralism and religious truth claims
- the problem of postmodern skepticism
- the fate of the unevangelized (what about those who never heard of Jesus)
- the hiddenness of God (why isn't there more evidence for God's existence?)
- are all religions basically the same?
- what about the blind men and the elephant?
- isn't faith is opposed to reason and evidence? (a debate between a Christian and a postmodern relativist)
- what makes Christianity different from other religions?

Mentoring

- the importance of being able to argue both sides of a question
- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church
- why won't Christians defend their faith in public?

Thomas Sowell explains how politicians cause recessions while getting elected

November 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article here at Townhall.com. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> After the cascade of economic disasters that began in the housing markets in 2006 and spread into the financial markets in Wall Street and even overseas, people in the private sector pulled back. Banks stopped making so many risky loans. Home buyers began buying homes they could afford, instead of going out on a limb with "creative"– and risky– financing schemes to buy homes that were beyond their means.
>
> But politicians went directly in the opposite direction. In the name of "rescuing" the housing market, Congress passed laws enabling the Federal Housing Administration to insure more and bigger risky loans– loans where there is less than a 4 percent down payment.
>
> A recent news story told of three young men who chipped in a total of $33,000 to buy a home in San Francisco that cost nearly a million dollars. Why would a bank lend that kind of money to them on such a small down payment? Because the loan was insured by the Federal Housing Administration.
>
> The bank wasn't taking any risk. If the three guys defaulted, the bank could always collect the money from the Federal Housing Administration. The only risk was to the taxpayers.
>
> Does the Federal Housing Administration have unlimited money to bail out bad loans? Actually there have been so many defaults that the FHA's own reserves have dropped below where they are supposed to be. But not to worry. There will always be taxpayers, not to mention future generations to pay off the national debt.
>
> Very few people are likely to connect the dots back to those members of Congress who voted for bigger mortgage guarantees and bailouts by the FHA. So the Congressmen's and the bureaucrats' jobs are safe, even if millions of other people's jobs are not.
>
> Congressman Barney Frank is not about to cut back on risky mortgage loan guarantees by the FHA. He recently announced that he plans to introduce legislation to raise the limit on FHA loan guarantees even more.
>
> Congressman Frank will make himself popular with people who get those loans and with banks that make these high-risk loans where they can pocket the profits and pass the risk on to the FHA.
>
> So long as the taxpayers don't understand that all this political generosity and

> compassion are at their expense, Barney Frank is an odds-on favorite to get re-elected. The man is not stupid.

Can you guess which political party Barney Frank represents?

How an interest in apologetics is a sign of a friendship with God

November 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason wants Christians to be “ambassadors for Christ”. What’s that?

Here is a dictionary definition of ambassador:

> 1. a diplomatic official of the highest rank, sent by one sovereign or state to another as its resident representative (ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary).
>
> 2. a diplomatic official of the highest rank sent by a government to represent it on a temporary mission, as for negotiating a treaty.
>
> 3. a diplomatic official serving as permanent head of a country’s mission to the United Nations or some other international organization.
>
> 4. an authorized messenger or representative. Abbreviation: Amb., amb.

Greg Koukl says that a good ambassador needs 3 things: knowledge, wisdom and character.

Greg writes:

> I’ve heard it said that sometimes you will be the only living Bible that anyone can read. Well, that’s what it means to be an ambassador. You will speak for Christ. One way or another, for good or for ill, you will speak for Him if you are a follower of Jesus Christ. So we want to strengthen good representatives, and we know that takes emphasis in three areas.
>
> One are to strengthen as an ambassador is knowledge. In other words, you’ve got to know a few things that your sovereign wants you to represent to the rest of the world. So you’ve got to have this knowledge base.
>
> Secondly, you’ve got to communicate that knowledge in a way that is sensitive to the people that you’re sent to. You need to understand their way of thinking. You need to understand their language after a fashion. You must be diplomatic, tactical after a fashion. So there is a certain wisdom, the right use of knowledge, that’s necessary for you to be an effective ambassador.
>
> A good ambassador, any ambassador, packages that knowledge and strategy in the manner of delivery in himself or herself. It’s all wrapped up in an individual, and if that individual is offensive, if that individual is a bad representative, it doesn’t matter that the knowledge and tactics are sound. If the individual is wrong then the message loses its force. This is why we emphasize not just knowledge, not just wisdom, but also character. You must package the entire message in you personally so that you can be an effective, accurate, and

> virtuous representative or ambassador for Jesus Christ.

I think that a good ambassador for Christ needs to be motivated, as well. A good ambassador is concerned when some people have false beliefs about God's existence, character and purposes. An ambassador cannot stand by and do nothing while God's reputation is diminished in public. It is this concern for God *as a friend* that drives people to study apologetics, as well as theology,science, history, etc. We want to know what God is like, what he's done and how we can show these things to be true.

The mission of Christian ambassadors

Consider 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, especially verses 11 and 2:

11 **Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.**

12 We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart.

13 If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.

14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This passage about reconciling God and man is one of my favorites in the Bible.

God has chosen us to communicate on his behalf to people who don't know him. An ambassador doesn't treat God as a means to achieving happiness, security, health and wealth in this life. Nor is the ambassador's job to let other people be happy without a relationship with the real God who is really there. The ambassador has a responsibility to explain God's existence, character and purposes to those who are still ignorant of him. And that takes effort. God is not interested in making his human "pets" happy. He's given

us a task to accomplish – a task that may well consume a good deal of time, effort and money. A task that may diminish our happiness by making us different and unpopular.

Apologetics demonstrates your friendship with God

I often think about how to test others to see whether they are genuine Christians or not. This can be done for friendship or even when testing a prospective mate. A subjective "Christian" who invents their own view of God subjectively, using intuition and emotions, is not going to put themselves second for God and serve him as an ambassador. Instead, they'll think that a relationship with God really means projecting their own desire for happiness onto God. "God" is there to make them feel happy, not to make demands on them.

And if a person doesn't want a relationship with God as a real person, they won't relate to you as a real person, either. If a person doesn't think that God has purposes and feelings distinct from their own, they won't think you have purposes and feelings distinct from their own. If a person thinks that God's purpose is to make them happier, then they'll think that your purpose is to make them happier. If a person is not willing to sacrifice their interests for God's interests, they aren't going to sacrifice their interests for your interests, either.

am·bas·sa·dor

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"http://sp.ask.com/dictstatic/d/g/speaker.swf”, "speaker", "17", "15", "", "6");interfaceflash.addParam("loop", "false");interfaceflash.addParam("quality", "high");interfaceflash.addParam("menu", "false");interfaceflash.addParam("salign", "t");interfaceflash.addParam("FlashVars", "soundUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fsp.ask.com%2Fdictstatic%2Fdictionary%2Faudio%2Fluna%2FA03%2FA0373400.mp3&clkLogProxyUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fdictionary.reference.com%2Fwhatzup.html&t=a&d=d&s=di&c=a&ti=1&ai=51359&l=dir&o=0&sv=00000000&ip=63e08e7c&u=audio"); interfaceflash.addParam('wmode','transparent');interfaceflash.write(); //]]>[image] /æm'bæs[image]ə[image]dər, -ˌdɔr/ [image] Show Spelled Pronunciation [am-bas–uh-der, -dawr] [image] Show IPA

Use **ambassador** in a Sentence
See web results for **ambassador**
See images of **ambassador**
–noun

1. a diplomatic official of the highest rank, sent by one sovereign or state to another as its resident representative (ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary).
2. a diplomatic official of the highest rank sent by a government to represent it on a temporary mission, as for negotiating a treaty.
3. a diplomatic official serving as permanent head of a country's mission to the United Nations or some other international organization.

4. an authorized messenger or representative. Abbreviation: Amb., amb.

MUST-READ: Robin of Berkeley explains why the left hates Sarah Palin

November 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Robin's article is here at American Thinker. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Like for most feminists, it was a no-brainer for me to become a Democrat. Liberal men, not conservatives, were the ones devoted to women's issues. They marched at my side in support of abortion rights. They were enthusiastic about women succeeding in the workplace.
>
> […]Then along came Sarah, and the attacks became particularly heinous. And I realized something even more chilling about the Left. Leftists not only sacrifice and disrespect women, but it's far worse: many are perpetuators.
>
> The Left's behavior towards Palin is not politics as usual. By their laser-focus on her body and her sexuality, leftists are defiling her.
>
> […]The Left has declared war on Palin because she threatens their existence. Liberals need women dependent and scared so that women, like blacks, will vote Democrat.
>
> And so the Left must try to destroy her. And they are doing this in the most malicious of ways: by symbolically raping her.
>
> Just like a perpetuator, they dehumanize her by objectifying her body. They undress her with their eyes.
>
> They turn her into a piece of ass.
>
> Liberals do this by calling her a c__t, ogling her legs, demeaning her with names like "slutty flight attendant" and "Trailer Park Barbie," and exposing her flesh on the cover of Newsweek.
>
> And from Atlantic Magazine's Andrew Sullivan "Sarah Palin's vagina is the font of all evil in the galaxy."
>
> Nothing is off-limits, not actress Sandra Bernhard's wish that Palin be gang-raped or the sexualization of Palin's daughters.
>
> As every woman knows, leering looks, lurid words, and veiled threats are intended to evoke terror. Sexual violence is a form of terrorism.

Read the whole thing.

Do conservatives oppose women?

Conservatives think that men *and women* should make good choices and do good things. That is why on this blog hardly a moment goes by without me praising women like Michele Bachmann, Marsha Blackburn, Jennifer Roback Morse and Trayce Hansen for

making good choices and doing good things.

For example, here’s Michele Bachmann speaking out about National Adoption Day.

Adoption is a *good thing*. Conservatives support the choice to love and nurture vulnerable children. We don’t support the choice to kill an unborn person. Conservatives support good *choices*, and oppose bad *choices*.

UK bill imposes restrictions on homechooling families

November 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story at LifeSiteNews. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> The British government announced last week their acceptance of the Badman Review of home education and introduced the new Children, Schools and Families Bill that will require home educated children to be registered with the local authorities.
>
> […]Homeschooling families were furious at the review's results and say the new bill will mean the effective end of the rights of the family in education. The bill will follow recommendations that homeschooling families be subjected to spot-checks by local authorities, and that authorities can interview homeschooled children without the presence of their parents.
>
> […]In its announcement of the impending review in January, the government used language that linked homeschooling with child abuse. Children's minister, Baroness Delyth Morgan, said it was necessary to investigate "claims that home education could be used as a 'cover' for child abuse such as neglect, forced marriage, sexual exploitation or domestic servitude."

I sometimes think about marrying and having children. But when I hear stories like this one and the New Hampshire homeschooler who was forced to attend public school, I just think that it would be a bad idea.Why should I get involved in marriage and parenting when these things are tightly regulated by secular leftist bureaucrats? Why try to raise children when people seem to want to outsource their education and development to unionized, government-run day cares and schools?

South Korea and Canada face massive demographic crisis

November 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

South Korea

Story from LifeSiteNews. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> The Republic of Korea has signaled its willingness to work to reverse a heavily pro-abortion culture through various measures, including beginning to enforce an abortion ban that has technically existed in the country for decades, in order to address the severe demographic implosion that threatens the country's economic stability, Korean sources report.
>
> […]Official data from the Ministry of Health indicates that doctors perform 350,000 abortions per year, while they deliver on average just 450,000 babies, meaning 43.7 percent of pregnancies end in abortion.
>
> However, the actual number of abortions may be at least five times the official estimate. According to the Korea Times, Rep. Chang Yoon-seok of the ruling Grand National Party said that a National Assembly inspection in October found that the number of illegal abortions in Korea exceeds 1.5 million a year or roughly 4,000 babies aborted per day.
>
> If the National Assembly's estimate is correct, the nation of 48 million commits approximately the same number of abortions as the United States, which has 300 million residents. Presuming the numbers of births recorded by the Health Ministry remains the same, that would mean approximately three out of four pregnancies in South Korea end in abortion.

Perhaps we need to undo anti-family policies like legalized abortion, unilateral divorce, high tax rates and a massive social programs. These policies discourage marrying and child-bearing, which prevent the creation of the next generation of taxpayers who must pay for these expensive welfare-state programs.

Canada

New research paper from the center-right C.D. Howe Institute. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> The twin demographic challenges of an aging population and slow workforce growth will affect Canada's Atlantic provinces more acutely than other regions of the country, according to a study released today by the C.D. Howe Institute. In "Stress Test: Demographic Pressures and Policy Options in Atlantic Canada," authors Colin Busby, William B.P. Robson and Pierre-Marcel Desjardins warn that many years of low birthrates and youth outmigration mean that the Atlantic

> region faces diminished workforce growth and a fiscal squeeze as fewer taxpayers support a growing bill for public programs.

Massive numbers of elderly people retiring and very few young workers available to pay the taxes for their health care and retirement entitlements. Something has to give.

Canadian global warming skeptic comments on leaked CRU e-mails

November 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Free Press has the story. (H/T Gateway Pundit via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Lift up a rock and another snake comes slithering out from the ongoing University of East Anglia Climate Research Unit (CRU) scandal, now riding as "Climategate".
>
> Obama Science Czar John Holdren is directly involved in CRU's unfolding Climategate scandal. In fact, according to files released by a CEU hacker or whistleblower, Holdren is involved in what Canada Free Press (CFP) columnist Canadian climatologist Dr. Tim Ball terms "a truculent and nasty manner that provides a brief demonstration of his lack of understanding, commitment on faith and willingness to ridicule and bully people".
>
> "The files contain so much material that it is going to take some time t o put it all in context," says Ball. "However, enough is already known to underscore their explosive nature. It is already clear the entire claims and positions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) are based on falsified manipulated material and is therefore completely compromised.
>
> "The fallout will be extensive as material continues to emerge. Reputations of the scientists involved are already destroyed, however fringe players will continue to be identified and their reputations destroyed or sullied."

Dr. Tim Ball is a renowned environmental consultant and former climatology professor at the University of Winnipeg.

I think it's interesting that John Holdren is implicated in the global warming e-mails, because In 1971, Holdren thought that a new ice age was imminent. Ice age alarmism is pretty much the polar opposite of the global warming alarmism he now espouses.

Excerpt:

> In 1971, John Holdren edited and contributed an essay to a book entitled *Global Ecology: Readings Toward a Rational Strategy for Man*. He wrote (along with colleague Paul Ehrlich) the book's sixth chapter, called "Overpopulation and the Potential for Ecocide." (Click here to view a photograph of the table of contents, showing Holdren's essay on pages 64-78; click on the image to the left to view the cover.) In their chapter, Holdren and Ehrlich speculate about various environmental catastrophes, **and on pages 76 and 77 Holdren the climate scientist speaks about the probable likelihood of a "new ice age" caused by human activity** (air pollution, dust from farming, jet exhaust, desertification, etc.).

Don’t forget his previous comments on mass sterilizations, forced abortions and a world police force. He’s also a socialist.

I think it’s fair to say that when a radical extremist like Holdren sways from belief in an oncoming ice age to belief in a global warming conflagration within a few seconds that climate alarmism has nothing to do with science and everything to do with the desire to scare and control other people. Why does the left hate reason and science so much? And why did Obama appoint fanatics to high positions in his administration?

MUST-SEE: Adult stem cells cure child with sickle cell anemia

November 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Amazing story! (H/T BioEdge via ECM)

My previous posts on ASCR

- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama's plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

Previous posts on abortion

- MUST-SEE: Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring two great pro-life debaters, Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

Lord Christopher Monkton on the Michael Coren show

November 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Compelling video. (H/T Sort of Political via ECM)

Thanks for finding these videos, ECM!

MUST-READ: The difference that Christianity makes in personal relationships

November 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the neat things about Christianity is the way that it transforms the way you relate to other people.

How do you relate to other people if you are an atheist? Well, on atheism, there isn't any way you ought to be that is independent of your own personal preferences. And there isn't anyway other people ought to be, either. Instead, atheists tend to reduce relationships down to the level of making themselves happy. On an atheistic view, the purpose of life is to pursue happiness, and relationships with other people are just another part of pursuing happiness. Atheists will look at people as a means to help them achieve happiness in this life.

But things are different on Christianity. When Christians start to act on their belief that the Christian worldview is true, they have a completely *different* view of how they should relate to other people. Rather than trying to dominate them or using them for pleasure, we instead look at other people as God's creatures who are made for a relationship with God. And this applies regardless of whether the person is ugly or pretty, young or old, short or tall, rich or poor. Everybody has to know God, and it becomes the Christian's job to help with that.

Consider this post by Laura at GOP Refugee/Pursuing Holiness, where she explains how she's had to put her own desires second in order to take a long-term, God-centered view of her relationships.

Excerpt:

There's no time like the holidays to bring out the Jerry Springer in people. A time to gather, a time to remember… all those decades of past slights and offenses, real and imagined. We're currently undergoing such a drama in my family. In years past, I would have enthusiastically engaged in it, fiercely defending my position and making a case to show why *I'm right, dammit, and you need to [stop, start, resume] [behaving a certain way.]* Over the years, my perspective has gradually changed as I slog through this pursuit of holiness. I'm less concerned with my own honor and more with God's.

Wow! Go read the whole thing. This is something that Christians often struggle with that non-Christians never imagine is even an issue. Every day Christians deny their own desire to be selfish in relationships so that they don't negatively impact other people's vertical relationship with God. It's hard for *anybody* to just let these interpersonal squabbles go unanswered. But we Christians are duty-bound to consider what God wants in relationships. We don't want to distract you non-Christians from the main issue of being reconciled with God through Christ!

More NHS horror stories: Investigation into NHS deaths after hospital scandals

November 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Times. (H/T Legal Insurrection via ECM)

Excerpt:

> An immediate investigation to uncover the true extent of death rates across the NHS has been ordered by the Health Secretary after scandals at two hospital trusts.
>
> Amid claims that patients are dying due to poor care in at least 27 hospitals around the country, Andy Burnham said that patient safety was paramount and must take precedence above all else.
>
> His comments come after the head of a foundation trust in Colchester, Essex, was sacked over concerns about high death rates, leadership and waiting times.
>
> Failings in patient care had previously been linked to the deaths of between 70 and 400 patients at Basildon and Thurrock NHS Foundation Trust, also in Essex.

Here's a more recent UK Times article.

> The report includes incidents of 209 foreign objects such as drill bits left inside patients after surgery; 82 incidents where the wrong part of the body was operated on; and 848 patients under the age of 65 admitted with low-risk conditions who subsequently died.
>
> […]The NHS boss in charge of Basildon and Thurrock had received an 11% pay rise in the past year. Alan Whittle, chief executive of the trust, who was paid £150,000 during 2008-9, also saw the value of his pension pot increase by nearly £500,000 to £1.5m over the same period.
>
> Details of Whittle's pay emerged after a CQC report found that poor nursing, dirty wards and a lack of leadership had contributed to an estimated 400 avoidable deaths at the Basildon hospital last year.
>
> A CQC spot check last month had uncovered soiled mattresses, poor clinical practices, mould growing in suction machines and out-of-date medical equipment.
>
> Katherine Murphy, director of the Patients Association, a pressure group, criticised a culture of "rewards for failure" within the National Health Service. "Surgeons and doctors who fail patients can be struck off and the same should be true of NHS executives," she said.
>
> Michael Large, the trust's chairman, said Whittle's 11% pay rise reflected the hospital's higher turnover and greater responsibilities for executives.

> Yesterday it emerged that Whittle is having a relationship with Karen Bates, a hospital safety manager who also serves on the hospital's board of governors.

The problem with socialized medicine, such as Britain's National Health Service, is that patient's money is paid in taxes to the government *before* they need treatment, and regardless of whether they need treatment. So when you finally do need treatment, the people providing it have *no financial incentive to give you quality care*, since they have no competitors that you could choose. The right way to buy health care is the same way you buy from Amazon.com – you compare products, prices and reviews and choose what you want.

More NHS horror stories

- NHS denies pap smear to woman later diagnosed with cervical cancer
- Britain's National Health Service pays millions to gag whistleblowers
- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care
- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care
- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- UK National Health Service refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

What happens to the hockey stick graph if you don't hide the decline?

November 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story from Steve McIntyre. (H/T Story from Watts Up With That via ECM)

Excerpt:

> "Hide the decline" refers to the decline in the Briffa MXD temperature reconstruction in the last half of the 20th century, a decline that called into question the validity of the tree ring reconstructions. (I'm going to analyze the letters on another occasion.) In the IPCC Third and Fourth Assessment Reports, IPCC "hid the decline" by simply deleting the post-1960 values of the troublesome Briffa reconstruction – an artifice that Gavin Schmidt characterizes as an "a good way to deal with a problem" and tells us that there is "nothing problematic" about such an artifice (see here.
>
> Not only were the post-1960 values of the Briffa reconstruction not shown in the IPCC 2001 report – an artifice that Gavin describes as being "hidden in plain sight", they were deleted from the archived version of the reconstruction at NOAA here (note: the earlier Briffa 2000 data here does contain a related series through to 1994.)

Here's the graph, with the decline added back in.

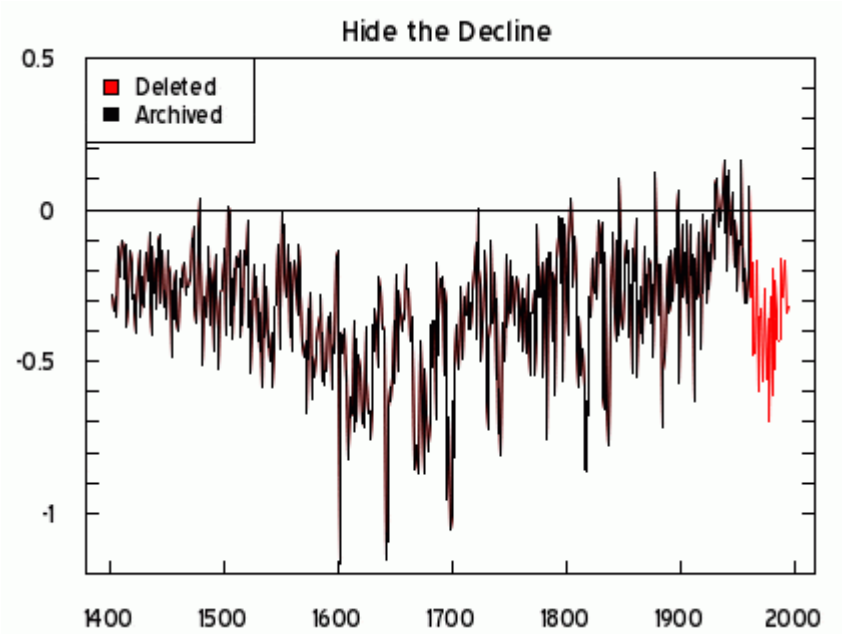

Hide The Decline

Wow, look at that decline that somehow wasn't included in the graphs made the global warming alarmists. Did they use a trick to hide the decline?

Hide the decline

And here's a catchy video to help you remember all of this. (H/T Lex Communis)

The scary part is that two of my leftist friends still kept their faith in global warming after this scandal broke. It’s a religion, but one that is diconfirmed by the evidence.

Related posts

- Climate Research Unit servers hacked, e-mails made public
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Government-funded research unit destroyed original climate data
- The state of the debate about catastrophic man-made global warming
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says solar activity impacts climate
- Famous UN IPCC hockey stick graph is based on cherry-picked data
- Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming
- Global warming advocates refuse to give their data to skeptics
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says prior ice melting caused by solar variation
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Global warming is not caused by humans

Did Man-Bear-Pig eat the Climate Research Unit's raw data?

November 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this the reason that CRU's data has been "lost"?
The UK Times reports.

Excerpt:

> SCIENTISTS at the University of East Anglia (UEA) have admitted throwing away much of the raw temperature data on which their predictions of global warming are based.
>
> It means that other academics are not able to check basic calculations said to show a long-term rise in temperature over the past 150 years.
>
> The UEA's Climatic Research Unit (CRU) was forced to reveal the loss following requests for the data under Freedom of Information legislation.
>
> […]The CRU is the world's leading centre for reconstructing past climate and temperatures. Climate change sceptics have long been keen to examine exactly how its data were compiled. That is now impossible.
>
> […] Their findings are one of the main pieces of evidence used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which says global warming is a threat to humanity.

The Washington Times reports on some of the hacked e-mails that talked about data "loss".

> Professor Phil Jones, head of the CRU and contributing author to the United

> Nation's IPCC report chapter titled "Detection of Climate Change and Attribution of Causes," says he "accidentally" deleted some raw temperature data used to construct the aggregate temperature data CRU distributed. If you believe that, you're probably watching too many Al Gore videos.
>
> Mr. Jones is the same professor who warned that global-warming skeptics "have been after the CRU station data for years. If they ever hear there is a Freedom of Information Act now in the UK, I think I'll delete the file rather than send to anyone."

The worst part of this mess is that taxpayers footed the bill for all of this "research". In effect, the government was distributing taxpayer money to "scientific" lobbyists. These "scientists" then put out suspect data in order to trick the public into voting for increased government power over individuals and businesses – all to "solve" a completely made-up crisis. It's depressing. The only thing to do to solve this is for the public to vote for smaller government and lower taxes. Everything needs to be privatized.

Cato Institute says the cost of Obamacare is over six trillion dollars

November 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the Cato Institute. (H/T Health Care BS via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Congressional Democrats are using several budget gimmicks to disguise the cost of their health care overhaul, claiming the House and Senate bills would cost only (!) about $1 trillion over 10 years. Now that critics have begun to correct for those budget gimmicks, supporters of ObamaCare are firing back.
>
> […]When we correct for both gimmicks, counting both on- and off-budget costs over the first 10 years of implementation, the total cost of ObamaCare reaches — I'm so sorry about this — $6.25 trillion. That's not a precise estimate. It's just far closer to the truth than President Obama and congressional Democrats want the debate to be.

Read the rest here.

Here are some ideas for your Christmas gift giving this year

November 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was supposed to work all through Thanksgiving on a project, but I ended up doing all my Christmas shopping. If you have a lot of people on your list like I do, you might want to consider the "Ministry Give-away" offers from Randolph Productions. They sell intelligent design DVDs and the new Illustra Media production of the Craig-Hitchens debate that occurred in Aptil this year at Biola University.

Here's what I bought:

- The Illustra Media version of the Craig/Hitchens debate at Biola University
- Unlocking the Mystery of Life "Ministry Give-away" pack
- Icons of Evolution "Ministry Give-away" pack
- The Privileged Planet "Ministry Give-away" pack

The ministry give-away packs are neat because they give you the DVD in a simple envelope. It doesn't have the fancy packaging but then again, it costs $3 per DVD!! (or less, if you buy a bigger pack). I bought the 11-packs, which come with 1 full sized DVD ($20) and 10 give-away DVDs ($3 each!). Shipping is FREE. They have packages up to 100 give-away DVDs! But they don't yet have Darwin's Dilemma in Ministry give-away packs yet, so I bought a bunch of those at a discounted price from Amazon.

I have seen the Lee Strobel DVDs they are offering and I do not recommend them, as they are not as detailed as the Illustra/Coldwater DVDs. They try to cover too much in too little time, and some things get missed. Also, they are a bit too stylish and slick for my taste, with too much about Lee's personal life experiences.

I haven't actually got the DVDs from Randolph Productions yet, so… you might want to wait and see if mine are done right before you order anything from them! This is my first time ordering from them.

UPDATE: They shipped it by FEDEX ground and e-mailed me again.

Greer-Heard lectures

The Greer-Heard Point/Counterpoint forum is an annual debate run by the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. The only ones worth buying are the 2005 and 2009 ones, and they are both really, really worth buying. I will be writing about both of these pretty soon. The 2005 ones come on CD, although I e-mailed them and asked them to put up an MP3 version of it so y'all could all get it for a better price. No response yet on that.

The 2005 Greer-Heard forum is available on CDs for $38:

- **J.D. Crossan** and **N.T. Wright** — Jesus' Resurrection – opening speeches and dialogue

- **R. Douglas Geivett** — "What Should We Believe about Belief in the Resurrection"
- **Chuck Quarles** — "The Gospel of Peter: A Pre-Canonical Resurrection Narrative?"
- **William Lane Craig** — "Resurrection: Does it Matter?"
- **Gary Habermas** — "Mapping Recent Trends in Critical Resurrection Theories"
- **Craig Evans** — "The Place of Wright and Crossan in Jesus Research"
- **Ted Peters** — "The Future of the Resurrection"
- **Concluding Comments** from J.D. Crossan and N.T. Wright

Wright laid out his standard case for the 6 mutations, and Crossan tried to explain the resurrection as metaphor. Crossan was hard to pin down, but he eventually did come clean in the discussion time, and even allowed the empty tomb. Doug Geivett's response was the jewel in a magnificent crown of debate. He was *merciless*. Chuck Quarles and Craig Evans were very effective and Craig and Habermas were OK. Ted Peters supported Crossan's view.

The 2009 Greer-Heard forum is available for MP3 download for $15:

- **Harold A. Netland and Paul F. Knitter** — Religious Pluralism – opening speeches and dialog
- **Paul Copan** — "Is the World Religiously Ambiguous? No, and Neither Is Religious Pluralism"
- **S. Mark Heim —** "No Other Name: The Gospel and True Religions"
- **R. Douglas Geivett —** "The Futility of Neutrality: The Uniqueness of Jesus in a World of Religions"
- **Millard J. Erickson —** Evangelical Philosophical Society Plenary Address
- **Terrence Tilley —** "Principles for Assessing Theologies of Religious Diversity"
- **Keith Yandell —** "Does Religious Pluralism Have Sufficient Rationale?"
- **Concluding Comments** from Paul Knitter & Harold Netland

I just downloaded this set and it is extremely addictive. I've listened to it THREE TIMES! Netland was pretty moderate, and Knitter was a pretty typical religious pluralist – irrational and indifferent to evidence. Copan's response was the best of a great bunch – it was *vicious.* Yandell's paper a close second (his paper had to be read by someone else – if he had read it, he might have surpassed Copan!) Geivett was pretty moderate this time, but still good. Heim was OK and Erickson just made some general comments about postmodernism that were OK. Tilley supported Knitter's view.

The upcoming 2010 forum on "The Message of Jesus" is set for February 2010. They got Crossan to come back, which is great, because he is a fine speaker and a good participant in these dialogs. I can't stand his positions, though. And his opponent is Ben Witherington, who is a well-respected historian. Non-Christian respondents are Amy-Jill Levine and Alan F. Segal. Christian respondents are Craig A. Evans, Craig Blomberg, and Darrell L. Bock. All 3 of them participate in debates before.

- **John Dominic Crossan & Ben Witherington III** — opening speeches and dialog

- **Darrell L. Bock** — response
- **Amy-Jill Levine** — response
- **Craig Blomberg** — response
- **Craig A. Evans** — response
- **Alan F. Segal** — response

I'll probably get this set as MP3s if they keep the price down. It looks like this will be a good one.

I like Craig Evans and Darrell Bock MORE than Witherington and Blomberg, because I think they"ll be more aggressive. All four of these Christian scholars have participated in debates before. Blomberg and Witherington were respondents to the Craig-Crossan debate (the book version). Craig Evans responded to Crossan in the 2005 Greer-Heard forum. And Darrell Bock responded to Borg in the Craig-Borg debate.

You can probably find free lectures from many of these scholars at the Veritas Forum web site.

The best books of 2009, and some older ones you might have missed

If you haven't bought "Signature in the Cell" yet, what are you waiting for? This is the book of the year. It was named to Amazon's top 10 science books and to the Best Books of 2009 list compiled by the UK Times Literary Supplement, (selected by the brilliant and honest atheist Thomas Nagel, who is the atheist I would most like to see become a Christian, now that Anthony Flew has left atheism).

For apologetics, get William Lane Craig's "Reasonable Faith", 3rd edition, "Contending With Christianity's Critics", "Passionate Conviction", "God Is great, God is Good" and "Tactics" by Greg Koukl. For economics, get "Money, Greed and God" by Jay Richards. For the resurrection, get "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" by Gary Habermas and Mike Licona. For bio-ethics, get "The Case for Life" by Scott Klusendorf. For marriage, get "Taken into Custody" by Stephen Baskerville, and also "Love and Economics" by Jennifer Roback Morse. For politics, the book of the year is "Liberty and Tyranny" by Mark Levin.

Charities

For the person who has everything, you can always donate to charity on their behalf.

This year I donated to the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture, the Ruth Institute, Reasonable Faith, the Evangelical Philosophical Society, and Michele Bachmann. I also donated to specific debates and conferences that featured Christian scholars in dialog with non-Christian speakers, in non-Christian settings. My goal is to address non-Christian audiences with scholarship that is consistent with and supportive of the Christian worldview. I favor charities that use sound logical arguments supported by objective, verificable evidence.

Something just for fun

I recommend the 1960s spy series "Danger Man", starring Patrick McGoohan. They're about $25 from Amazon. McGoohan's character John Drake is the anti-James Bond. He always put the mission *first* – he never allowed himself to be manipulated or distracted by

enemy agents. And it’s filmed in black and white – exactly the way secret agent John Drake operates.

Here are a couple of videos to give you an idea of what it’s all about.

John Drake infiltrates a murder-for-hire ring based in Italy:

John Drake attempts to kidnap a professional assassin behind the Iron Curtain:

I hope talking about Danger Man doesn’t prevent Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 from adding this post to his Twitter feed. His list of recommended books is here.

Fight for leadership of Australia's center-right Liberal party

November 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T Thoughts Out Loud)

Excerpt:

> Australia's opposition Liberal Party will vote Tuesday on whether to dump its leader who has lost the confidence of much of the party for backing a government climate change policy.
>
> The conservative Liberals have been in meltdown for the past week over the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) legislation drafted by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's center-left Labor government, The Australian reported.
>
> Liberal leader Malcolm Turnbull has enthusiastically backed Labor's proposed CPRS after the government agreed to a series of amendments that would make it friendlier to business.
>
> The legislation includes an emissions trading scheme that would put a price on carbon emissions, a move critics say would unnecessarily hamper the Australian economy.
>
> His position alienated the more conservative Right faction, leading to a week of blood-letting that will culminate Tuesday in a leadership vote.
>
> The key figures in the drama remained locked in meetings Monday, with Members of Parliament (MPs) who have sought to terminate Turnbull's leadership pressing opposition Treasury spokesman Joe Hockey to take over.

Hockey doesn't sound that great either, but he would be a step up from Turnbull.

Before Climategate, Steve McIntyre forced NASA to correct its data

November 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's reminisce about the previous Steve McIntyre triumph, when he force NASA's eco-moonbat James Hansen to admit that there were errors in NASA's data.

This Townhall.com article by Amanda Carpenter has an interview with McIntyre.

Here's the story summary:

> Despite the fact that NASA tried to block him from accessing U.S. temperature data, persistent efforts by a climate change blogger forced the government to amend U.S. temperature data.
>
> Because of the blogger's efforts, NASA now recognizes 1934 as the hottest year in U.S. history, not 1998.
>
> […]Now, the ten hottest years on record in the U.S., beginning with the hottest year, are: 1934, 1998, 1921, 2006, 1931, 1999, 1953, 1990, 1938 and 1939. Before the revision, that list read: 1998, 1934, 2006, 1921, 1931, 1999, 1953, 2001, 1990 and 1938. The re-ranking completely knocked 2001 off the top 10 list.This U.S. temperature revision could cause problems for former Vice President Al Gore. Assisted by Hansen, Gore asserted in his global warming film "An Inconvenient Truth" that nine of the ten hottest years in U.S. history occurred since 1995.
>
> […]According to McIntyre, when he began downloading data from NASA's website to compare the adjusted and the raw data from the polling stations, "this led to a bit of a fight with NASA in May. As I started downloading the data in sequence they cut off my access to the data."
>
> "They blocked my IP address," McIntyre said.
>
> […]"After I was blocked and I explained myself they still didn't want to let me have access to the data," McIntyre lamented.
>
> He continued: "They just said go look at the original data. And I said no, I want to see the data you used. I know what the original data looks like. I want to see the data that you used. But one of the nice things about having a blog that gets a million and half hits a month is that I then was able to publicize this block in real-time and they very quickly withdrew their position and allowed me to have access."
>
> When he got the data, McIntyre then compared the raw and adjusted data sets for all 1200 U.S. weather stations. "Probably 75 percent of the stations had jumps of at least a quarter degree in the year 2000," he said.

One of the people who comments here occasionally e-mailed me this week to chastise me

in response to the leaked CRU e-mails by saying that 9 of the 10 hottest years on record occurred recently. So the true believers are undaunted by the discovery that this whole mess is fraudulent – they just keep right on having blind faith in the teeth of scientific evidence. They hate science and want to remain in the Dark Ages. This commenter also believes in an eternal universe, an unobservable multiverse, etc.

Mark Steyn explains what Climategate teaches us about peer-review

December 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article is here in the National Review. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

First, he argues that Climategate shows that the peer-review process can be corrupted:

> Here's what Phil Jones of the CRU and his colleague Michael Mann of Penn State mean by "peer review." When *Climate Research* published a paper dissenting from the Jones-Mann "consensus," Jones demanded that the journal "rid itself of this troublesome editor," and Mann advised that "we have to stop considering Climate Research as a legitimate peer-reviewed journal. Perhaps we should encourage our colleagues in the climate research community to no longer submit to, or cite papers."
>
> So much for *Climate Research*. When *Geophysical Research Letters* also showed signs of wandering off the "consensus" reservation, Dr. Tom Wigley ("one of the world's foremost experts on climate change") suggested they get the goods on its editor, Jim Saiers, and go to his bosses at the American Geophysical Union to "get him ousted." When another pair of troublesome dissenters emerge, Dr. Jones assured Dr. Mann, "I can't see either of these papers being in the next IPCC report. Kevin and I will keep them out somehow — even if we have to redefine what the peer-review literature is!"

Second, he writes that the mainstream media is far too biased to report the facts:

> And gullible types like… Andrew Revkin of the *New York Times* fell for it hook, line, and tree-ring. The e-mails of "Andy" (as his CRU chums fondly know him) are especially pitiful. Confronted by serious questions from Stephen McIntyre, the dogged Ontario retiree whose *Climate Audit* website exposed the fraud of Dr. Mann's global-warming "hockey stick" graph), "Andy" writes to Dr. Mann to say not to worry, he's going to "cover" the story from a more oblique angle:
>
> I'm going to blog on this as it relates to the value of the peer review process and not on the merits of the mcintyre et al attacks.
>
> peer review, for all its imperfections, is where the herky-jerky process of knowledge building happens, would you agree?
>
> And, amazingly, Dr. Mann does! "Re, your point at the end — you've taken the words out of my mouth."
>
> And that's what Andrew Revkin did, week in, week out: He took the words out of Michael Mann's mouth and served them up to impressionable readers of the *New York Times* and opportunist politicians around the world champing at the bit to inaugurate a vast global regulatory body to confiscate trillions of dollars of your

> hard-earned wealth in the cause of “saving the planet” from an imaginary crisis concocted by a few dozen thuggish ideologues. If you fall for this after the revelations of the last week, you’re as big a dupe as Begley or Revkin.

I think we need to be skeptical of having science hijacked to prove things that the secular left wants it to prove. They want to “prove” evolution so that they can undermine traditional morality, which they view as an unnecessary restraint on their pursuit of happiness in this life. They want to “prove” global warming so that they can undermine the free market and gain control of the production and consumption of individuals. And they often discriminate against skeptics in the peer-review process (and in hiring/promotion decisions) in order to manufacture a false consensus.

How to respond to postmodernism, relativism, subjectivism, pluralism and skepticism

December 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Four articles from Paul Copan over at the UK site "BeThinking". Each article responds to a different slogan that you might hear if you're dealing with non-Christians on the street.

"That's just your interpretation!"

Some of his possible responses:

- Gently ask, 'Do you mean that your interpretation should be preferred over mine? If so, I'd like to know why you have chosen your interpretation over mine. You must have a good reason.'
- Remind your friend that you are willing to give reasons for your position and that you are not simply taking a particular viewpoint arbitrarily.
- Try to discern if people toss out this slogan because they don't like your interpretation. Remind them that there are many truths we have to accept even if we don't like them.
- 'There are no facts, only interpretations' is a statement that is presented as a fact. If it is just an interpretation, then there is no reason to take it seriously.

More responses are here.

"You Christians are intolerant!"

Some of his possible responses:

- If you say that the Christian view is bad because it is exclusive, then you are also at that exact moment doing the very thing that you are saying is bad. You have to be exclusive to say that something is bad, since you exclude it from being good by calling it bad.
- There is a difference, a clear difference between tolerance and truth. They are often confused. We should hold to what we believe with integrity but also support the rights of others to disagree with our viewpoint.
- Sincerely believing something doesn't make it true. You can be sincere, but sincerely wrong. If I get onto a plane and sincerely believe that it won't crash then it does, then my sincerity is quite hopeless. It won't change the facts. Our beliefs, regardless of how deeply they are held, have no effect on reality.

More responses are here.

"That's true for you, but not for me!"

Some of his possible responses:

- If my belief is only true for *me*, then why isn't your belief only true for you? Aren't

you saying you want me to believe the same thing you do?
- You say that no belief is true for everyone, but you want everyone to believe what you do.
- You're making universal claims that relativism is *true* and absolutism is *false*. You can't in the same breath say, 'Nothing is universally true' *and* 'My view is universally true.' Relativism falsifies itself. It claims there is *one* position that is true – *relativism!*

More responses are here.

"If you were born in India, you'd be a Hindu!"

Some of his possible responses:

- Just because there are many different religious answers and systems doesn't automatically mean pluralism is correct.
- If we are culturally conditioned regarding our religious beliefs, then why should the religious pluralist think his view is *less* arbitrary or conditioned than the exclusivist's?
- If the Christian needs to justify Christianity's claims, the pluralist's views need just as much substantiation.

More responses are here.

And a bonus: "How do you know you're not wrong?".

Being a Christian is fun because you get to think about things at the same deep level that you think about anything else in life. Christianity isn't about rituals, community and feelings. It's about truth.

In case you want to see this in action with yours truly, check this out.

First report on Meyer-Shermer-Sternberg-Prothero debate

December 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: The audio is here.

The 4-man debate took place last night in Beverly Hills.

The first after-action report from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> It was all shaping up to be a serious heavyweight bout. And then Meyer and Sternberg simply KO'd the competition in the opening round. If I were being generous I might say that Prothero tripped over his own arrogance and impaled himself on his condescension, but let's be honest; he was completely knocked out by Sternberg. I think Sternberg earned a third degree tonight, one in evolutionary bulldozing.
>
> The debate video will be made available at some point by American Freedom Alliance, the sponsors of the debate, along with Center for Inquiry, The Skeptics Society and Discovery Institute.
>
> […]To call the debate a massacre would be a discredit to Sitting Bull. The only thing I can say is that Shermer needs to add a point to his booklet on how to debate "creationists" — namely, leave Donald Prothero at home in his van by the river.

Read the whole thing. I'll post a link to the debate when I get it.

Note, I've never heard Rob Crowther sound this harsh before. It really must have been a blowout.

Now that global warming is dead, what was it all about anyway?

December 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider Melanie Phillips writing in the UK Spectator.

Melanie cites this e-mail about the Medieval Warming Period from Phil Jones, the director of the now disgraced Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia.The Medieval Warming Period is a period during the *Middle Ages* when the Earth's temperature was *higher* than it is today.

Phil Jones writes:

> Bottom line – their is no way the MWP (whenever it was) was as warm globally as the last 20 years. There is also no way a whole decade in the LIA period was more than 1 deg C on a global basis cooler than the 1961-90 mean. This is all gut feeling, no science, but years of experience of dealing with global scales and varaibility.

The first graph has no MWP, and the second graph (the real temperatures) has the MWP.

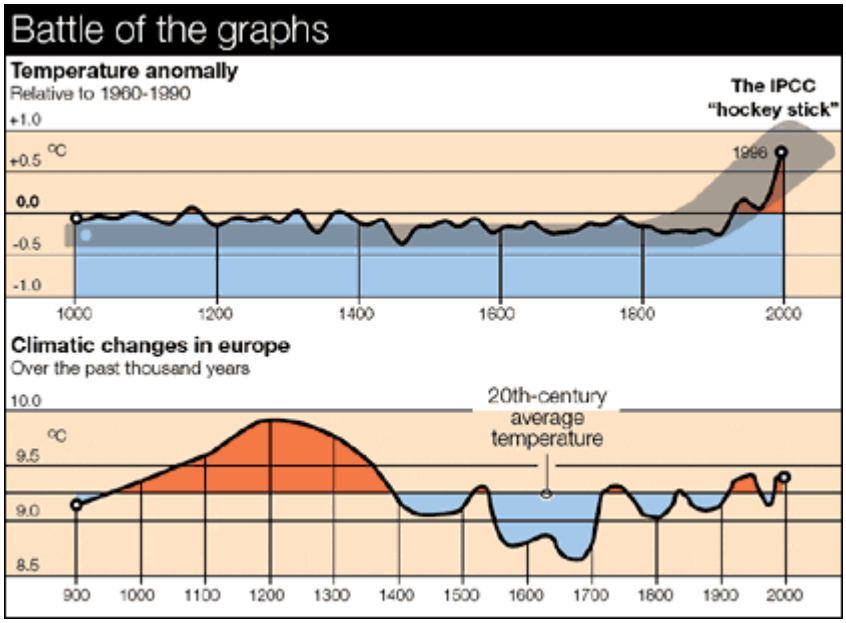

What happened to the Medieval Warming Period?
(Source: UK Telegraph)

Melanie comments:

> In other words, despite the fact that science (or history) tells us that the Medieval Warm Period was warmer than today, thus destroying the basis of the AGW myth that we are living through an unprecedented warming of the climate caused by carbon dioxide arising from industrialisation, *it cannot be true* – because the Hadley CRU Director's 'gut' tells him so.
>
> All the manipulation, distortion and suppression revealed by these emails took

> place because it would seem these scientists *knew* their belief was not only correct but unchallengeable; and so when faced with evidence that showed it was false, they tried every which way to *make the data fit the prior agenda.* And those who questioned that agenda themselves had to be airbrushed out of the record, because to question it was simply impossible. Only AGW zealots get to decide, apparently, what science is. Truth is what fits their ideological agenda. Anything else is to be expunged.
>
> Which is the more terrifying and devastating: if people are bent and deliberately try to deceive others, or if they are so much in thrall to an ideology that they genuinely have lost the power to think objectively and rationally?
>
> I think that the terrible history of mankind provides the answer to that question. Nixon was a crook. But what we are dealing with here is the totalitarian personality. One thing is now absolutely clear for all to see about the anthropogenic global warming scam: science this is not.

They had so much blind faith that they just knew that the real temperatures were wrong – so they felt justified in manipulating the data. *They had faith* that they were right and that the objective world was wrong.

Why they did it

Now consider this article from Pajamas Media. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> Global warming was a fraud, and it has now been exposed.
>
> That little fraud would have cost the taxpayers of the world trillions of dollars, not to mention wrecking their economies with carbon taxes and penalties.
>
> But that's not even the worst of it. The most important take home lesson is that global frauding was the clear and conscious work of a political machine aiming to steal your money, your liberties, and your country. It was a massive, worldwide attempt at a coup d'etat, and the victims were going to include all the free and prosperous peoples of the world. Hitler had his Reichstag fire. Today's transnational left had its global warming fraud. The political goal was exactly the same: maximum power through maximum fear.

Now that we know for certain that global warming *IS* false, I think it's time to ask why the global warming alarmists pushed it so hard. I think the best answer is that the government wanted to control the free market and the production and consumption of individuals. They thought we were using up too many resources doing stupid things *like driving*. They thought we were having *too many babies*. They thought that *there was no sovereign God in the universe, so they had to step in and take control.*

So, they took a bunch of taxpayer money and paid a bunch of arrogant scientists to invent a compelling myth, complete with fabricated data. They paid unionized teachers to teach that myth to vulnerable children in government-run schools. Some of them bought

shares in companies that stood to gain from the hysteria they were manufacturing. And they used that myth to deceive people into voting them into power so they could override our fundamental liberties. They thought we were too stupid to run our own lives.

Is pre-suppositionalism a Biblical way of defending the faith?

December 1, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm a classical apologist, so I do use pre-suppositional arguments to question my opponents about whether their non-Christian worldviews can ground rationality and objective morality, etc. But I also use evidential arguments from nature and history. Some people think that evidential arguments should not be used and that they are not as persuasive as pre-suppositional arguments.

When I look the Bible, I don't see any Biblical support for the view that pre-suppositional apologetics is the *only approved way* of defending the faith. Instead, the standard method seems to be evidentialism.

In Romans 1, Paul writes that people can learn about God's existence from the natural world.

Romans 1:18-23:

[18]The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

[19]since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

[20]For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

[21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[22]Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

[23]and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

And in Acts, Peter appeals to eyewitness testimony for the resurrection, and Jesus' miracles.

Acts 2:22-24, and 36:

[22]"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[23]This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

[24]But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

And finally from the same chapter:

[36]“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

So, I see that God uses nature and miracles to persuade, which can be assessed using scientific and historical methods. Can anyone find me a clear statement that states that only pre-suppositional arguments should be used? I could be wrong, and I am willing to be proven wrong.

Up to 10,000 people die needlessly of cancer ever year in the UK

December 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the left-wing Guardian. (H/T Legal Insurrection via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Up to 10,000 people die needlessly of cancer every year because their condition is diagnosed too late, according to research by the government's director of cancer services. The figure is twice the previous estimate for preventable deaths….
>
> Britain is poor by international standards at diagnosing cancer. [Prof. Mike] Richards's findings will add urgency to the NHS's efforts to improve early diagnosis….
>
> Richards found that "late diagnosis was almost certainly a major contributor to poor survival in England for all three cancers", but also identified low rates of surgical intervention being received by cancer patients as another key reason for poor survival rates.
>
> Research by academics at Durham University led by Prof Greg Rubin has identified five types of delay in NHS cancer care: "patient delay", "doctor delay", "delay in primary care [at GPs' surgeries]", "system delay" and "delay in secondary care [at hospitals]"….

I followed the link on Legal Insurrection to this Medscape Medical News story, which talks about studies on cancer survival rates in European countries.

Excerpt:

> One of the reports compares the statistics from Europe with those from the United States and shows that for most solid tumors, survival rates were significantly higher in US patients than in European patients. This analysis, headed by Arduino Verdecchia, PhD, from the National Center for Epidemiology, Health Surveillance, and Promotion, in Rome, Italy, was based on the most recent data available. It involved about 6.7 million patients from 21 countries, who were diagnosed with cancer between 2000 and 2002.
>
> The age-adjusted 5-year survival rates for all cancers combined was 47.3% for men and 55.8% for women, which is significantly lower than the estimates of 66.3% for men and 62.9% for women from the US Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) program ($P < .001$).
>
> Survival was significantly higher in the United States for all solid tumors, except testicular, stomach, and soft-tissue cancer, the authors report. **The greatest differences were seen in the major cancer sites: colon and rectum**

> **(56.2% in Europe vs 65.5% in the United States), breast (79.0% vs 90.1%), and prostate cancer (77.5% vs 99.3%), and this "probably represents differences in the timeliness of diagnosis," they comment. That in turn stems from the more intensive screening for cancer carried out in the United States, where a reported 70% of women aged 50 to 70 years have undergone a mammogram in the past 2 years, one-third of people have had sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy in the past 5 years, and more than 80% of men aged 65 years or more have had a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test. In fact, it is this PSA testing that probably accounts for the very high survival from prostate cancer seen in the United States, the authors comment.**

I think that the breast cancer and prostate cancer numbers are significant, because it makes me think of the video in which Michele Bachmann, Marsha Blackburn and Sue Myrick were talking about how Obamacare will limit diagnostic exams for breast cancer, because they are so expensive. When the government pays, they have to keep costs down to make sure that they have enough to pay for the elevated salaries of all the government workers who decide whether you live or die. And prostate exams would undoubtedly also be restricted because of costs.

What this Tom Coburn, M.D. video and he'll explain. (H/T Hugh Hewitt)

He's a medical doctor, so he knows what he's talking about.

Review of the Meyer-Sternberg vs Shermer-Prothero debate

December 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: The audio is here.

This review was e-mailed to me by a friend who attended the debate. I've posted it anonymously below.

Recall that two pieces of evidence were up for debate on Monday night: 1) the origin of life and 2) the origin of diverse body plans. The ID advocates had to argue that only intelligent causes can account for new biological information in the origin of life and in the origin of diverse body plans. The naturalists had to argue that there was a naturalistic explanation for both of the origin of life and the origin of diverse body plans. So how did they do?

My friend wrote:

> In all fairness, Shermer and Prothero were given an impossible task: to defend the spontaneous generation of life and the sufficiency of neo-Darwinian mechanisms to account for its diversity and disparity.
>
> It is no wonder that Shermer avoided the issue. Having said nothing positive about neo-Darwinian mechanisms, he said all there was to say. What was surprising was Dr, Prothero's smokescreen of irrelevant and/or obsolete high school textbook arguments that were presented as timeless truths in a changing world of science. Their emotionally charged presentation gave the audience all the evidence it needed to conclude that their arguments were being driven by something other than empirical data.
>
> Discussion of the empirical data would have to wait for Dr. Sternberg who gave a compelling argument against the sufficiency of neo-Darwinian mechanisms to even account for a limited number of evolutionary changes within mammals. Using one of the best series of evolutionary change known to paleontologists (wolf-like mammal to whale) Dr. Sternberg enumerated a substantial list of differences between the beginning and ending species in the series and went on to explain why neo-Darwinian mechanisms did not have sufficient time in the 9 million year window to generate the necessary changes. His presentation alone was worth the price of admission.
>
> Dr. Sternberg identified himself as a "structuralist" rather than an ID advocate. While he will have to unpack the meaning and implications of that view, I would encourage him to enrich our understanding of why nature's structures (e.g. everything from DNA replication systems to animal body plans) have remained fundamentally unchanged since their first appearance. Stasis and conservation are purely natural and are subject to the natural sciences. Their evolution or

> sudden appearance in the history of life, on the other hand, may or may not have been natural.
>
> "How many times did God intervene?" was a question asked repeatedly by Michael Shermer. The simple answer is "at least once … when he created everything in the physical universe." After 1 rather major miracle is there any reason for rejecting the possibility that subsequent minor miracles did not take place?
>
> "Who created God?" was another one of his favorites. The simple answer to this one is that "either the physical universe or its non-physical creator has always existed .. and it's not the universe.

The "textbook" examples of evolution used by Prothero were things like the Miller-Urey experiment, where they sparked the wrong gasses to make amino acids, but did nothing to solve the problem of how the amino acids can be chirality-filtered, properly-sequenced, and peptide-bonded into a functional biological sequence. Not to even mention things like the sugar chirality or the interfering cross-reactions or ultraviolet radiation, etc. etc. etc.

I think that if these naturalists cannot understand the difference between an intelligent cause and a miracle, then they shouldn't be debating. Maybe Shemer and Prothero need to read books written by their opponents. Shermer thinks science is a game you play where you aren't really after the truth but just trying to explain things without God. So, he has no explanation for things like the big bang or the fine-tuning, for example, and probably tries very hard not to think about it. As for the origin of life and the origin of biological diversity, he had no explanation.

One bad thing about Meyer and Sternberg is that their slides were very hard to read – small print.

I'll let you know if I get any more reviews of the debate. I'm also watching to see when the video comes out.

You can see other debates with Meyer and Shermer:

> These two men have met several times before, most recently at Freedomfest in Las Vegas in 2008 (click here for video)… and appeared together on Lee Strobel's Faith Under Fire program (video here).

Twelve policies that undermine civil society

December 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed this "web memo" on the Heritage Foundation web site. Basically, they just list the twelve policies and then write a couple of short paragraphs on how each policy negatively impacts civil society. This is a good introduction to Christians who want to think through whether some government policies that sound good really do good by reducing the amount of destructive and costly behavior, and promoting the public good.

The twelve policies are described in detail in the full post. (PDF)

1. *Massive Expansion of the Welfare State*
2. *A Big Step toward National Same-Sex Marriage*
3. *Abstinence-Based Education at Risk*
4. *Expanding the Federal Government's Role in Education*
5. *Hate Crimes Expansion*
6. *Legalization of Marijuana for Medical Purposes*
7. *Taxpayer-Funded Abortion*
8. *Needle Exchange for Drug Addicts*
9. *Ending Parental School Choice for Low-Income Children*
10. *Federal Funding for Abortions in the Health Care Overhaul*
11. *Limiting Parental Rights and Expanding Family Planning*
12. *New Government Parenting Program*

Here are the details for #2.

> The House of Representatives is on a trajectory to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2009 (ENDA), just as it did in 2007. This legislation would disallow discrimination in hiring decisions based on "actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity." ENDA would give special protected class status to sexual orientation and gender identity–just as is given to race, color, sex and religion.
>
> Legislation like ENDA is a major precursor to legalizing same-sex marriage, as the history of the issue in several states shows. According to a recent Heritage Foundation paper, no state that has approved same-sex marriage has done so without first adopting ENDA-like legislation. In Vermont, Massachusetts, and five other states, courts have used the non-discrimination law as part of their reasoning to strike down traditional marriage.

Here, you can read more about the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and how it paves the way for same-sex marriage. I wrote a post about why people oppose same-sex marriage a while back.

What prevents teen sexual activity? Parents, sex education, or social programs?

December 2, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

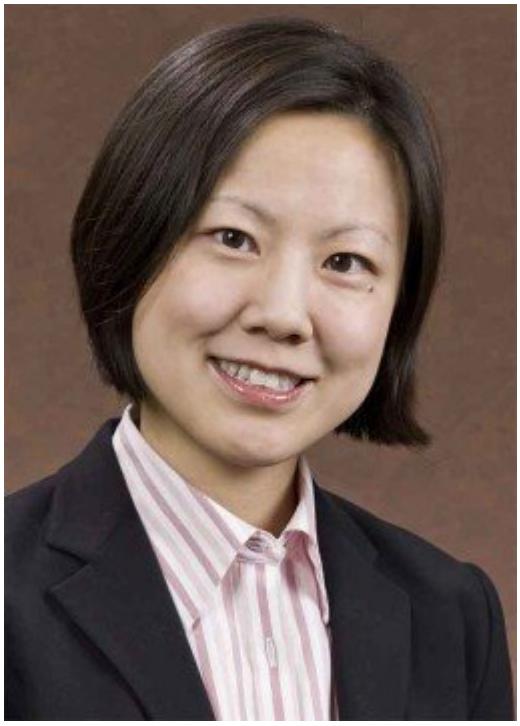

Christine Kim

What are some of the measurable consequences of pre-marital sex?

The kinds of problems most people think of when they think of pre-marital sex are problems like sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy, abortions, reduced ability for stable marriage, and maternal poverty.

What's the best way to prevent teens from engaging in pre-marital sex?

On the one hand, social conservatives on the right favor the traditional family structure, complete with a father who lives in the home and is an involved parent. On the other other hand, social liberals on the left favor laws that promote pre-marital sex and no-fault divorce, which tends to weaken marriage and break up families. Those on the right prefer strong families and involved parents, while those on the left prefer to tax money away from families and use that money to provide sex education, taxpayer-funded abortions, and single-payer health care.

Who's right?

Well, consider this research paper from the Heritage Foundation, my favorite think tank.

It's written by Christine C. Kim. The title is "Teen Sex: The Parent Factor". (PDF)

She writes:

> Many policymakers, health professionals, and "safe sex" advocates respond to these troubling statistics by demanding more comprehensive sex education and broader access to contraceptives for minors. They assume that teens are unable

> to delay their sexual behavior and that a combination of information about and access to contraceptives will effectively lead to protected sex, preventing any form of harm to youngsters. Not only are these assumptions faulty, they tend to disregard important factors that have been linked to reduced teen sexual activity. A particularly noticeable omission is parental influence.
>
> […]The empirical evidence on the association between parental influences and adolescents' sexual behavior is strong. Parental factors that appear to offer strong protection against the onset of early sexual activity include an intact family structure; parents' disapproval of adolescent sex; teens' sense of belonging to and satisfaction with their families; parental monitoring; and, to a lesser extent, parent-child communication about teen sex and its consequences.
>
> That parents play a role in teen sex points to at least two significant policy implications. First, programs and policies that seek to delay sexual activity or to prevent teen pregnancy or STDs should encourage and strengthen family structure and parental involvement. Doing so may increase these efforts' overall effectiveness. Conversely, programs and policies that implicitly or explicitly discourage parental involvement, such as dispensing contraceptives to adolescents without parental consent or notice, contradict the weight of social science evidence and may prove to be counterproductive and potentially harmful to teens.

She supports her conclusions using her research findings and some very helpful graphs (see the PDF version).

My thoughts

So what does this mean? It means that parents need to be trained and equipped to talk to their children about topics like pre-marital sex. It means that unmarried men and women need to be serious about choosing their spouse so that there is an increased likelihood that the spouse will have the knowledge, the time, and the disposition to talk to their children about sex. The best way to find a spouse who can make moral judgments and be persuasive on moral issues with the children is to choose some who demonstrates those capabilities over a significant period of time, *during the courtship.*

I've noticed that many young people reject prospective mates who make moral judgments and who have definite ideas about moral issues. What young people seem to want is complete autonomy to pursue their own happiness. They don't even want to deal with the normal demands of relationships with friends, co-workers, pets, children – and even with God. They just want to pursue their own vision. And if their own choices make them unhappy, then they blame others and demand to be bailed out, (often by the government).

But valuing amorality and permissiveness in prospective mates is not going to attract a spouse who is capable of teaching children right from wrong. Instead, young people should seek to marry someone who is informed on moral issues, and who is passionate about persuading others. Marriage is not the kind of thing that two selfish, amoral people

can do well – there has to be a vision and a way of settling disagreements using a standard of objective morality and moral reasoning. Children don't do well being raised by parents who have no vision for how the children ought to be.

I think a pretty good question to ask a prospective mate is "how would you like your children to turn out?". What you are looking for is a person who wants their child to have respect for objective moral values and duties and a strong relationship with God. And then ask a second question, "what capabilities do you think your spouse should have to achieve that vision?". And finally ask, "how have you prepared yourself to guide your children towards that vision?". These are the questions that we should be asking during courtship to find out whether prospective mates are capable of imparting moral knowledge to their future children.

Australian conservatives elect social conservative as new leader of opposition party

December 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from LifeSiteNews. (H/T Thoughts Out Loud)

Excerpt:

> Tony Abbott, the former federal minister for health and a pro-life Catholic, has won the leadership of the opposition Liberal Party of Australia, putting him in line for possible leadership of the country in Australia's next general election.
>
> The Federal Member for Warringah and shadow Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, was voted in at the party's Dec 1st leadership convention, beating the incumbent Malcolm Turnbull by a single vote. The vote makes Tony Abbott the first social conservative to lead the Liberal party since the resignation of John Howard.
>
> Abbott is known for his outspokenness on life issues.
>
> […]In 2006, as health minister, Abbott refused to allow the abortion drug RU486 to be made available in Australia, arguing that it was more dangerous to women than surgical abortion. This led to a conscience vote in which the House of Representatives deprived the health minister of regulatory control of the drug.
>
> […]Abbott has also opposed the use of embryonic stem cells and cloning in health research in another conscience vote, preferring continued use of adult stem cells. In family law, Abbott proposed a return to at-fault divorce to reduce the divorce rate, a system that required spouses to prove offences like adultery, habitual drunkenness or cruelty before a divorce was granted.
>
> […]In comments after this week's leadership race, Abbott also blasted the current Rudd government's climate change legislation, a key issue for parliament in the coming weeks, denouncing it as a tax grab.

The article talks more about some of his positions and accomplishments. Does this guy ever sound awesome! Would my readers from Australia, New Zealand, India and the Phillipines please comment on Abbott? It seems to me like Australian conservatives have selected the equivalent of Michele Bachmann or Maurice Vellacott or Edward Leigh to head their party. Wow!

By the way, in Australia, the conservative party are called the Liberal party, and they usually form a coalition with the National party. The secular leftists are the Labor party and the Green party. The leftists are currently in power.

MUST-READ: How Hezbollah sanctions hook-up sex in order to satisfy their recruits

December 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Foreign Policy. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> *Mutaa* is a form of "temporary marriage" only acceptable within Shiite communities, one that allows couples to have religiously sanctioned sex for a limited period of time, without any commitments, and without the obligatory involvement of religious figures. In conservative Muslim societies known for their strict sense of propriety, *mutaa* offers an escape clause. The contract is very simple. The woman says: "I marry myself to you for [a specific period of time] and for [a specified dowry]" and the man says: "I accept." The period can range between one hour and a year, and is subject to renewal. A Muslim woman can only marry a Muslim man, but a Muslim man can temporarily marry a Muslim, Christian, or Jewish woman, as long as she is a divorcée or a widow. However, those interviewed for this article confirmed that Hezbollah-the "Party of God"-has allowed the practice to spread to virgins or girls who have never married before, as long as the permission of her guardian (father or paternal grandfather) is obtained.
>
> Temporary marriage has long been practiced by Shiites around the world. However, it has recently become more commonplace in Lebanon, notably within Hezbollah strongholds in Beirut's southern suburbs and in southern Lebanon after the 2006 war with Israel,
>
> Hezbollah's recent encouragement of this phenomenon highlights the compromises it had been required to make in order to remain the preeminent force among its domestic Shiite constituency. As the party gained strength due to its effectiveness in fighting Israel, it was forced to cope with the reality that many Lebanese Shiites did not share the Iranian-inspired religious beliefs of Hezbollah's leaders. They came to dominate a community that was shaped by the secular leftist trends of the 1970s and 1980s, and the cosmopolitan culture embodied by Beirut. Today, Lebanese Shiites are exposed to pop icons such as sexpot singer Haifa Wehbe, countless Western advertisements and programs, and technological innovations such as online dating. Allowing these Shia to balance their sexual desires with their support for the "Resistance" against the "Zionist entity" is a vital ingredient to Hezbollah's staying power.

You may also have hear of other practices such as polygamy, wife beating, arranged marriages to children, or the raping of women sentenced to death by her jailors, just before she is executed.

You can click the links below to find out more about what I believe about love and marriage.

Related posts

- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?
- Purposeful parenting today
- Marriage tips part 1
- Marriage tips part 2

Did Christians believe in a flat earth during the Middle Ages?

December 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this post from Matt Flanagan of MandM. (H/T Thinking Matters New Zealand)

Flanagan cites Jeffrey Burton Russell's book "Inventing the Flat Earth: Columbus and Modern Historians". Dr. Bussell is a professor of history at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Dr. Russell writes:

> [W]ith extraordinary few exceptions no educated person in the history of Western Civilization from the third century B.C. onward believed that the earth was flat. A round earth appears at least as early as the sixth century BC with Pythagoras, who was followed by Aristotle, Euclid, and Aristarchus, among others in observing that the earth was a sphere. Although there were a few dissenters—Leukippos and Demokritos for example–by the time of Eratosthenes (3 c. BC), followed by Crates(2 c. BC), Strabo (3 c. BC), and Ptolemy (first c. AD), the sphericity of the earth was accepted by all educated Greeks and Romans.
>
> Nor did this situation change with the advent of Christianity. A few—at least two and at most five—early Christian fathers denied the spherically of earth by mistakenly taking passages such as Ps. 104:2-3 as geographical rather than metaphorical statements. On the other side tens of thousands of Christian theologians, poets, artists, and scientists took the spherical view throughout the early, medieval, and modern church. The point is that no educated person believed otherwise.

So where did this myth come from? And why has it persisted so long in school textbooks?

Click through and read the rest of Matt's post to find the surprising answers.

My view is that stories like global warming and evolution are really just the latest round of flat-earth myths which have no basis in fact but are believed solely because they are useful for powerful people who want to undermine traditional moral values by misleading children in government-run schools. The elites want to act sinfully, but they don't want anyone to judge them. They think that if they can trick enough people to believe lies about God, that God might cease to exist because we voted him out. Unfortunately for them, building a consensus of people who are mistaken doesn't change objective reality. And God doesn't grade on a curve.

Those who reject Christianity need to be careful about letting their feelings determine what they believe.

What should atheists be doing instead of believing myths?

Instead of just calling people names and making jokes, they should investigating the

actual scientific evidence:

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do

Then, perhaps a philosophical investigation on some common objections to belief in God:

- Why does God allow evil and suffering?
- Why isn't there more evidence for God's existence?
- What about those who never heard about Jesus?
- Is religion more like ice cream or medicine?
- Aren't all religions basically the same?
- What makes Christianity so special?

But for most atheists, the purpose of life isn't to find the truth.

Related books

- The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy
- For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery
- The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success

What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?

December 3, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

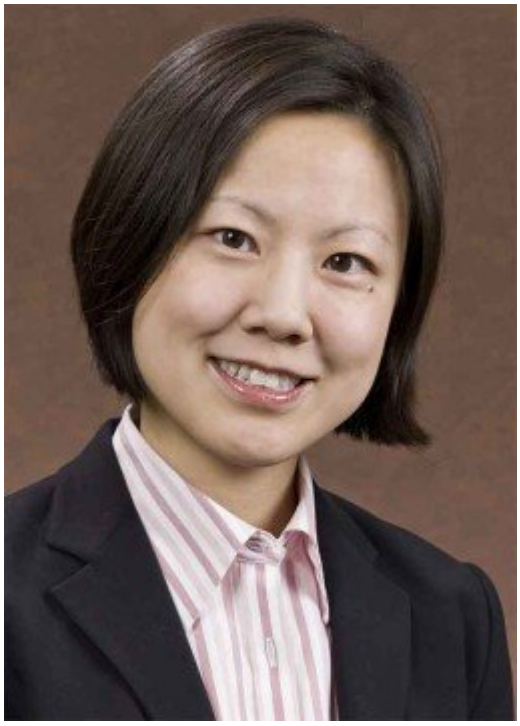

Christine Kim

What's the best way to help children do well in school?

On the one hand, social conservatives on the right favor the traditional family structure, complete with a father who lives in the home and is an involved parent. Parents have an incentive to help children do well in school because they are biologically linked to the children and they are paying all the bills at home. They are making sacrifices and they want to see some results.

On the other other hand, social liberals on the left favor raising taxes on working families, and funneling the proceeds to unionized public school teachers. Do teachers get paid more for improving the quality of education for students? Or do they get paid more for contributing to Democrats who will increase their salaries? Do they have an incentive to make children learn?

Parents vs teacher unions: Who does the best job?

Consider this research paper from Christine C. Kim of the Heritage Foundation, my favorite think tank.

Excerpt:

> American taxpayers invest heavily in education. Last year, spending on public K–12 education totaled $553 billion, about 4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2006. For each child enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school, expenditures averaged $9,266 that year—an increase of 128 percent,

> adjusted for inflation, since 1970.
>
> Despite this increase in public spending, student achievement and educational attainment over the last four decades has remained relatively flat. In 2007, a significant portion of students, disproportionately from disadvantaged backgrounds, scored “below basic” in reading and math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Sadly, in many of the nation’s largest cities, fewer than half of high school students graduate.
>
> While academic research has consistently shown that increased spending does not correlate with educational gains, the research does show a strong relationship between parental influences and children’s educational outcomes, from school readiness to college completion. Two compelling parental factors emerge:
>
> 1. family structure, i.e., the number of parents living in the student’s home and their relationships to the child, and
> 2. parents’ involvement in their children’s schoolwork.
>
> Consequently, the solution to improving educational outcomes begins at home, by strengthening marriage and promoting stable family formation and parental involvement.

The PDF is here. In the rest of the paper, Christine supports her conclusions using evidence.

MUST-LISTEN: 80-minute interview with Mark Steyn on the Milt Rosenberg show

December 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Topics:

- Major Hasan and Fort Hood
- Climate Research Unit global warming e-mails
- Switzerland bans minaret construction
- Obama's Afghanistan speech

The MP3 file is here. (80 minutes, commercial-free)

Additional links

Mark discusses a horrible case of anti-Jewish bigotry in an Ontario school, in the first hour. You can read more about that story here while you listen. I can't believe that this story is true, it's so disgusting.

Australia rejects cap and trade tax, New Zealand caught hiding the decline

December 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Times. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> Australia's plan to be at the forefront of efforts in Copenhagen to tackle global warming has been torn to shreds after the Senate voted against carbon emission legislation.
>
> The Government's Bill was voted down 41 to 33 this morning at the end of a marathon debate. The defeat became inevitable yesterday when the main opposition party dumped its leader and replaced him with a climate change sceptic.
>
> Tony Abbott, a right-wing maverick, ousted Malcolm Turnbull, the Liberal leader, by one vote in a backroom ballot. He immediately vowed to oppose the Government's proposed carbon emissions trading scheme Bill.
>
> […]"The last thing we should be doing is rushing through a great big new tax just so Mr Rudd can take a trophy to Copenhagen," Mr Abbott said minutes after taking over the leadership of the Liberal Party.

Earlier this week, I blogged about the new opposition leader Tony Abbott.

A good summary of the week's climate news is here at Michelle Malkin's blog.

New Zealand may be hiding the decline, too

And finally, Watts Up With That is reporting about a conflict between New Zealand's official climate data and the raw climate data. (H/T MandM, Evolution News)

Excerpt:

> The New Zealand Government's chief climate advisory unit NIWA is under fire for allegedly massaging raw climate data to show a global warming trend that wasn't there.
>
> The scandal breaks as fears grow worldwide that corruption of climate science is not confined to just Britain's CRU climate research centre.
>
> In New Zealand's case, the figures published on NIWA's [the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric research] website suggest a strong warming trend in New Zealand over the past century… But analysis of the raw climate data from the same temperature stations has just turned up a very different result… Gone is the relentless rising temperature trend, and instead there appears to have been a much smaller growth in warming, consistent with the warming up of the planet after the end of the Little Ice Age in 1850.

> […]There are no reasons for any large corrections. But we were astonished to find that strong adjustments have indeed been made.
>
> About half the adjustments actually created a warming trend where none existed; the other half greatly exaggerated existing warming. All the adjustments increased or even created a warming trend, with only one (Dunedin) going the other way and slightly reducing the original trend.
>
> The shocking truth is that the oldest readings have been cranked way down and later readings artificially lifted to give a false impression of warming, as documented below. There is nothing in the station histories to warrant these adjustments and to date Dr Salinger and NIWA have not revealed why they did this.
>
> One station, Hokitika, had its early temperatures reduced by a huge 1.3°C, creating strong warming from a mild cooling, yet there's no apparent reason for it.
>
> We have discovered that the warming in New Zealand over the past 156 years was indeed man-made, but it had nothing to do with emissions of CO2—it was created by man-made adjustments of the temperature. It's a disgrace.

Here we go again! If you click through, just compare the first two graphs. The first graph is the official data, the second graph is the raw data. They are completely different because of the apparently unjustified "adjustments".

Audio from the Meyer-Sternberg vs Shermer-Prothero debate

December 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Posted by Brian Auten at Apologetics 315.

Full MP3 is here

Please bookmark Brian's blog, and follow him on Twitter.

Details of the debate:

> A public debate about the origins of life hosted by the American Freedom Alliance and featuring: Stephen Meyer, Rick Sternberg, Michael Shermer and Don Prothero
>
> Admission: $20.00 Students: $10.00
> RSVP: Saban Theater Box Office (323) 655-0111
>
> Monday, November 30th, 7pm,
>
> Saban Theater, Beverly Hills

You can see other debates with Meyer and Shermer:

> These two men have met several times before, most recently at Freedomfest in Las Vegas in 2008 (click here for video)… and appeared together on Lee Strobel's Faith Under Fire program (video here).

And here are some reviews from people who actually attended the debate.

Learn more about intelligent design

- Fine-tuning of cosmological constants
- Galactic, stellar and planetary fine-tuning
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion
- The development of irreducibly complex molecular machines

And it's very important to understand how the origin of the universe *out of nothing* (the Big Bang theory) disproves the philosophy of naturalism, which is the pre-supposition that causes so many people to rule the possibility that an intelligence may have played a role in the development of life on Earth.

Business leaders blame Obama for high unemployment rate

December 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Reuters about a recent jobs summit. (H/T American Spectator via ECM)

Excerpt:

> At a recent symposium, Intel boss Paul Otellini, a contributor to both parties, expressed concern about the "amount of variability in the system" created by the state of policy flux in healthcare, energy and tax policy. "It is very difficult to make a hiring decision," he said. General Electric chief executive Jeffery Immelt, a strong supporter of Obama's cap-and-trade proposal, added he would just like to "know what the rules are."
>
> All in all, a disturbing replay of the 1930s when FDR's big changes left business reeling with uncertainty and confusion. The "devil you don't know" and all that.
>
> Small business is certainly with Big Business on this, particularly regarding the mercurial nature of healthcare reform. The substance of ObamaCare continues to morph daily — from the state of the public option to employer mandates to financing expanded coverage – as Senate leader Harry Reid scrounges for votes. On energy, the president will make big promises at Copenhagen even though cap-and-trade looks stillborn in the Senate.
>
> As for financial reform, Senate banking committee chair Chris Dodd has proposed sweeping changes, while the Tim Geithner-Barney Frank version in the House seems beamed in from a universe where the credit crisis never happened. Compromise could prove elusive. Even Obama's tax reform panel has delayed releasing its findings.

The thing you have to understand about business is that finding and hiring an employee is an expensive process. If this employee has to be laid off later because of government increasing tax rates or regulations, then that layoff poisons the atmosphere in the entire company. If you want businesses to feel comfortable about hiring, you need to convince them that you aren't going to raise their taxes or expenses, unionize their work force, fine them for hurting the environment, or pass laws that encourage their employees to sue them for being offended, etc.

Legislative initiatives like card-check, health care mandates, cap-and-trade, ENDA, increased government spending, tariffs, "pay equity" laws, restrictions on executive salaries, capital gains tax hikes, etc., make businesses very risk-averse about hiring decisions. If Obama wants to attack businesses, these businesses may just leave the USA and set up shop elsewhere. But more likely they will just stay here and avoid hiring any new employees until the 2012 election.

MUST-SEE: Canadian Broadcast Corporation explains Climategate

December 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Can government-run media be objective? (H/T Right Wing Liberal via ECM)

Yes! It's POSSIBLE.

Other links

- Nice graph shows how the Medieval Warming Period was much warmer than today
- Analysis of the software code behind hide the decline graphs
- The relationship of research grant money to hiding of the decline
- NASA is also hiding climate data from FoI requests
- James Hansen's former supervisor at NASA is now a GW skeptic

Note: One of my radically leftist ex-co-workers just complained to me that the software file has the "adjustment" commented out. But actually, the software file "briffa_Sep98_e.pro" has the "adjustment" uncommented!

So they did indeed explicitly hide the decline:

```
;****** APPLIES A VERY ARTIFICIAL CORRECTION FOR DECLINE*********
;  yrloc=[1400,findgen(19)*5.+1904]
valadj=[0.,0.,0.,0.,0.,-0.1,-0.25,-0.3,0.,-0.1,0.3,0.8,1.2,1.7,2.5,
2.6,2.6,$  2.6,2.6,2.6]*0.75 ; fudge factor
```

And a bit later:

```
; APPLY ARTIFICIAL CORRECTION  ;
yearlyadj=interpol(valadj,yrloc,x)  densall=densall+yearlyadj
```

Hide the decline!

Can a meaningful standard of good and evil exist without a Designer?

December 4, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this post over at Tough Questions Answered.

Excerpt:

> If you truly believe that there is evil in the world, then you must believe that there is good in the world as well. We can't know what is wrong unless we know what is right. We can't know a crooked line unless we know a straight line. We can't know injustice unless we know justice.
>
> But if there is real good and real evil in the world, then there must be an ultimate standard, a measuring stick by which to judge goodness and badness. This measuring stick must be perfect, so that all moral activity can be compared to it, just like determining the straightness of any line requires a perfectly straight line by which to compare.

My previous post on this issue is here. The best post I've ever done on the problems of evil and suffering is here.

Moral judgments make no sense if the universe is an accident – there is no way we ought to be. The best that atheists can do is personal preferences or cultural conventions. But that's just taste and fashion, not right and wrong. Atheism is an amoral worldview.

Atheists: please comment in one of *my posts that I linked above*, and read the post first. I'm not going to debate the TQA post here.

Stephen Meyer is named Daniel of the Year for 2009 by World Magazine

December 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer

There can be only one. (H/T Evolution News)

Excerpt:

> From his office Meyer has ventured forth to debate at least nine prominent Darwinians on CNN, NPR, FOX, the BBC, and other venues. In it he has written numerous newspaper and magazine columns in defense of Intelligent Design (ID), as well as an academic article that became notorious five years ago when Richard Sternberg, a Smithsonian-affiliated scientist, agreed to publish it in the peer-reviewed *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*.
>
> […]When Meyer completed his dissertation, "Of Clues and Causes: A Methodological Interpretation of Origin of Life Studies," the University of Cambridge in 1991 awarded him its prestigious Ph.D. Meyer, having proceeded through questioning and discernment stages, had to decide whether to enter the courage stage. Everyone knows that microevolution—change within species—occurs, but the critical issue is whether the descendants of dinosaurs become birds through natural selection. Denying macroevolution leaves scientists unprotected even at some Christian colleges.
>
> […]Courage becomes a determinant once we count the cost and see that it's great. Meyer's first inkling came when "talking about my ideas to people at Cambridge High Table settings, and getting that sudden social pall." But the cost was and is more than conversational ease: San Francisco State University in 1992 expelled a professor, Dean Kenyon, who espoused ID, and other job losses have come since.

I met Dr. Meyer for the first time at the Baylor University conference on intelligent design in 2000. He comes across as extremely genuine and approachable. At other conferences, he even remembered my name! I still hold out hope of one day going for a PhD (I even came up with a great idea this week) and it's largely because of authentic Christian scholars like Dr. Meyer who inspire me with a vision of what is possible.

http://www.worldmag.com/articles/16170

Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama’s latest foreign policy blunders

December 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats do not understand foreign policy.

She’s very intense in this video. She’s not happy with the way the country is being run. She’s concerned. But on the upside, she’s speaking on these issues very naturally – lots and lots of details fit within a structured argument.

Recent Michele Bachmann stuff

- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare’s rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann explains why the US dollar is in serious trouble
- Collection of the best Michele Bachmann video clips

MUST-READ: What does Climategate really prove about global warming?

December 5, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In my opinion, the most important thing to come out of the e-mail scandal is the source code for the graph generation program.

What does the CRU source code really say?

Here's the source code for the file "briffa_sep98_e.pro".

It contains this section of the code which defines an array of adjustments that will be applied to the raw data. The purpose of the adjustments according the programmers own comments (lines that start with ; are comments) is to hide the decline in temperatures, so that the graph will look like a hockey stick. In the words of the programmer, the adjustment is called a "fudge factor" and is "very artificial".

Here's the adjustment, called a fudge factor by the programmer:

```
  ;****** APPLIES A VERY ARTIFICIAL CORRECTION FOR DECLINE*********
;  yrloc=[1400,findgen(19)*5.+1904]
valadj=[0.,0.,0.,0.,0.,-0.1,-0.25,-0.3,0.,-0.1,0.3,0.8,1.2,1.7,2.5,
2.6,2.6,$  2.6,2.6,2.6]*0.75 ; fudge factor
```

Line 3 creates the 20 subsets from the raw tree ring data, with each subset spanning 5 years. The subsets start in 1904. Line 4 (which wraps to the line 5) creates an array of 20 adjustments that will be applied to the raw data to *change the original values*. The data is stored in a variable called yrloc and the adjustments are stored in a variable called valadj.

The data is left alone from 1904-1928, adjusted downward from 1929-1943, lowered for 1949-1953 and then raised at the end.

Year	..... Fudge Factor
1904	0
1909	0
1914	0
1919	0
1924	0
1929	-0.1
1934	-0.25
1939	-0.3
1944	0
1949	-0.1
1954	0.3
1959	0.8

1964	1.2
1969	1.7
1974	2.5
1979	2.6
1984	2.6
1989	2.6
1994	2.6
1999	2.6

And then the adjustment is actually applied to the data here, and stored in a variable called yearlyadj (line 3).

```
  ; APPLY ARTIFICIAL CORRECTION  ;
yearlyadj=interpol(valadj,yrloc,x)  densall=densall+yearlyadj
```

The true believers respond

I notice that on Science Blogs, they are claiming that the adjument is never applied because the line that applies it is commented out. But they are using the briffa_sep98_d.pro file, not the briffa_sep98_e.pro file. Someone actually pointed that out to them in the comments, but they haven't printed a correction.

Here's a sample comment from the post showing how the global warmists respond:

> Apparently similar code appears in another snippet the results of which weren't commented out, but still, it doesn't matter.

Well, it certainly doesn't matter to the mainstream media since they didn't report the story for two weeks.

Other comments in the source code explain that data is omitted

You should also know about comments in the source code like this:

FOIA\documents\harris-tree\recon_esper.pro

```
00 ; Computes regressions on full, high and low pass Esper et al.
01 (2002) series,
02 ; anomalies against full NH temperatures and other series.
03 ; CALIBRATES IT AGAINST THE LAND-ONLY TEMPERATURES NORTH OF 20 N
04 ;
05 ; Specify period over which to compute the regressions (stop in
06 1960 to avoid
07 ; the decline
```

FOIA\documents\harris-tree\calibrate_nhrecon.pro

```
00 ;
01 ; Specify period over which to compute the regressions (stop in
02 1960 to avoid
03 ; the decline that affects tree-ring density records)
04 ;
```

FOIA\documents\harris-tree\recon1.pro
FOIA\documents\harris-tree\recon2.proFOIA\documents\harris-tree\recon_jones.pro

```
00 ;
01 ; Specify period over which to compute the regressions (stop in
02 1940 to avoid
03 ; the decline
04 ;
```

(Click for larger version)

When the missing data is added, the decline appears

Here's the graph of temperatures with the full data set used.

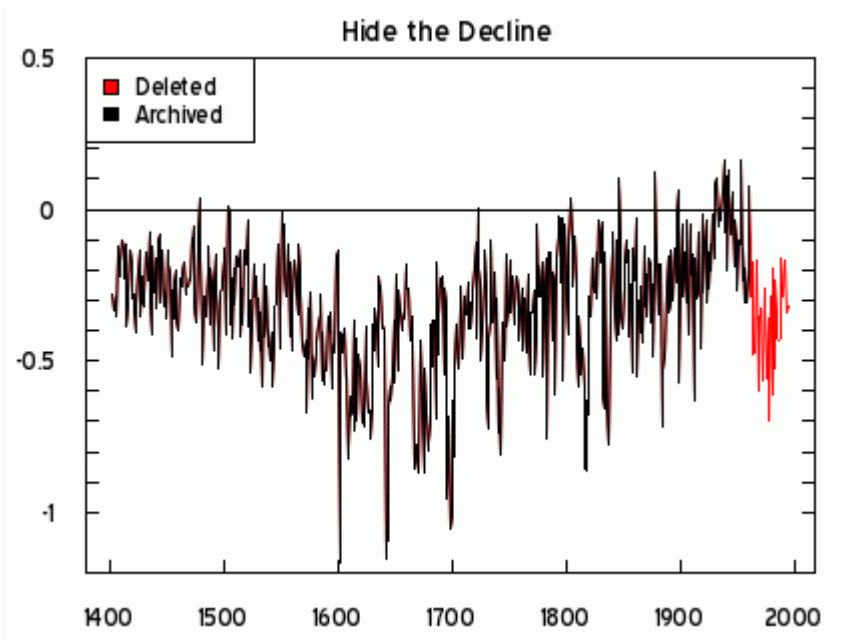

There's the decline they're trying to hide in red.

Re-considering the hockey stick graph

Take a look at this post from JoNova which re-caps the work of Canadian statistician Steve McIntyre.

Michael Mann's hockey-stick graph needed to be corrected:

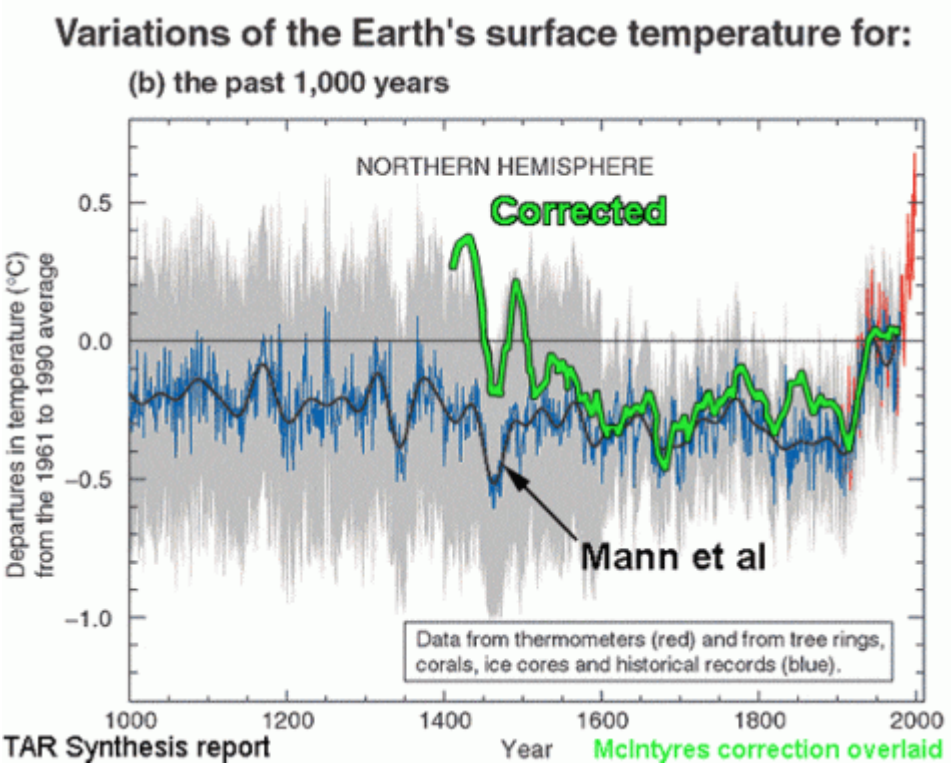

Jo writes:

> In 1995 everyone agreed the world was warmer in medieval times, but CO2 was low then and that didn't fit with climate models. In 1998, suddenly Michael Mann ignored the other studies and produced a graph that scared the world — tree rings show the "1990's was the hottest decade for a thousand years". Now temperatures exactly "fit" the rise in carbon! The IPCC used the graph all over their 2001 report. Government departments copied it. The media told everyone.
>
> But Steven McIntyre was suspicious. He wanted to verify it, yet Mann repeatedly refused to provide his data or methods — normally a basic requirement of any scientific paper. It took legal action to get the information that should have been freely available. Within days McIntyre showed that the statistics were so flawed that you could feed in random data, and still make the same hockey stick shape nine times out of ten. Mann had left out some tree rings he said he'd included.
>
> […]Astonishingly, *Nature* refused to publish the correction. It was published elsewhere, and backed up by the Wegman Report, an independent committee of statistical experts.

And Keith Briffa's hockey-stick graph that used cherry-picked data also needed to be corrected:

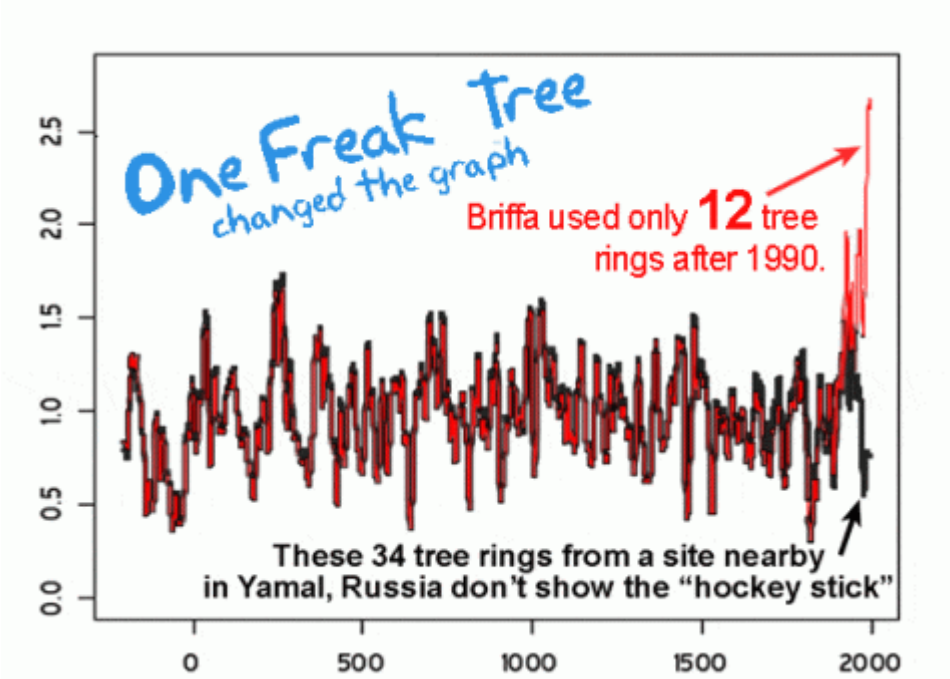

Jo writes:

> In 2009 McIntyre did it again with Briffa's Hockey Stick. After asking and waiting three years for the data, it took just three days to expose it too as baseless. For nine years Briffa had concealed that he only had 12 trees in the sample from 1990 onwards, and that one freakish tree virtually transformed the graph. When McIntyre graphed another 34 trees from the same region of Russia, there was no Hockey Stick.
>
> The sharp upward swing of the graph was due to one single tree in Yamal.
>
> Skeptical scientists have literally hundreds of samples. Unskeptical scientists have one tree in Yamal, and a few flawed bristlecones…

The CRU e-mails also reveal that CRU "scientists" sought to marginalize and persecute (Expelled?) individuals and scientific journals that disagreed with them. Is that science? Hiding your data and methods, and threatening people who disagree with you. Is that science?

So what does the graph of temperatures really look like?

Here's what global temperatures have really done over time:

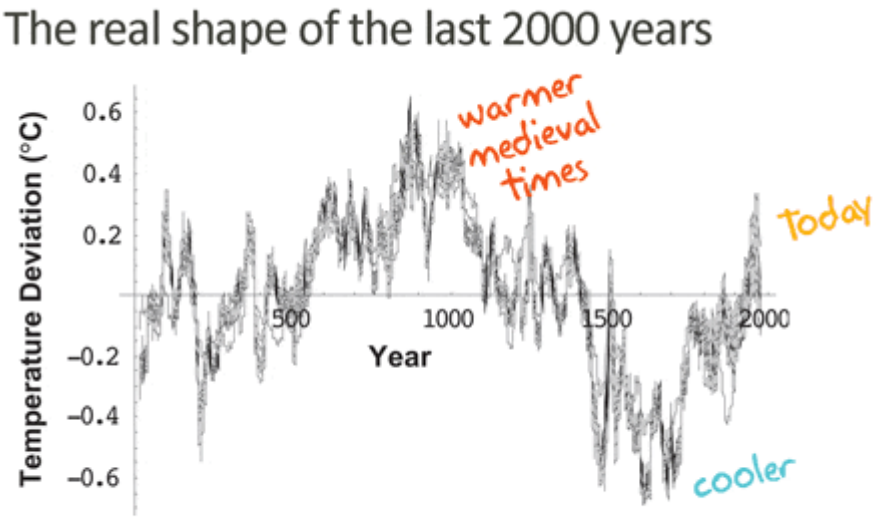

Craig Loehle used 18 other proxies and produced the graph above which clearly shows how the world was warmer 1000 years ago and cooler 300 years ago. We started warming long before coal-powered electricity was invented. There's no correlation with CO2 levels.

Does this graph show that global warming is man made? Do medieval knights drive around in SUVs too much? Well, if you are getting billions of dollars of taxpayer funding, then maybe they do. Maybe the data that shows that knights don't drive SUVs is wrong. Maybe the data needs to be adjusted to show that knights DO drive SUVs. Maybe the sample needs to be tailored to prove that global warming is man-made.

Consider Melanie Phillips writing in the UK Spectator.

Melanie cites this e-mail about the Medieval Warming Period from Phil Jones, the director of the now disgraced Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia.The Medieval Warming Period is a period during the *Middle Ages* when the Earth's temperature was *higher* than it is today.

Phil Jones writes:

> Bottom line – their is no way the MWP (whenever it was) was as warm globally as the last 20 years. There is also no way a whole decade in the LIA period was more than 1 deg C on a global basis cooler than the 1961-90 mean. This is all gut feeling, no science, but years of experience of dealing with global scales and varaibility.

This is the director of the Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia. This lab forms the backbone of the the case for global warming alarmism. Is this science? Is this how a scientist is supposed to treat the data?

Follow the money

Billions of dollars in funding are at stake.

Excerpt:

> Consider the case of Phil Jones, the director of the CRU and the man at the heart of climategate. According to one of the documents hacked from his center, between 2000 and 2006 Mr. Jones was the recipient (or co-recipient) of some $19

> million worth of research grants, a sixfold increase over what he'd been awarded in the 1990s.
>
> Why did the money pour in so quickly? Because the climate alarm kept ringing so loudly: The louder the alarm, the greater the sums. And who better to ring it than people like Mr. Jones, one of its likeliest beneficiaries?
>
> Thus, the European Commission's most recent appropriation for climate research comes to nearly $3 billion, and that's not counting funds from the EU's member governments. In the U.S., the House intends to spend $1.3 billion on NASA's climate efforts, $400 million on NOAA's, and another $300 million for the National Science Foundation. The states also have a piece of the action, with California—apparently not feeling bankrupt enough—devoting $600 million to their own climate initiative. In Australia, alarmists have their own Department of Climate Change at their funding disposal.
>
> And all this is only a fraction of the $94 billion that HSBC Bank estimates has been spent globally this year on what it calls "green stimulus"—largely ethanol and other alternative energy schemes—of the kind from which Al Gore and his partners at Kleiner Perkins hope to profit handsomely.
>
> Supply, as we know, creates its own demand. So for every additional billion in government-funded grants (or the tens of millions supplied by foundations like the Pew Charitable Trusts), universities, research institutes, advocacy groups and their various spin-offs and dependents have emerged from the woodwork to receive them.

Popularizers like Al Gore would also benefit if the majority of non-scientists can be convinced that there is global warming, that global warming is man-made, and that government control of individuals and corporations is needed to fix the problem.

Here's a simple explanation of how it works:

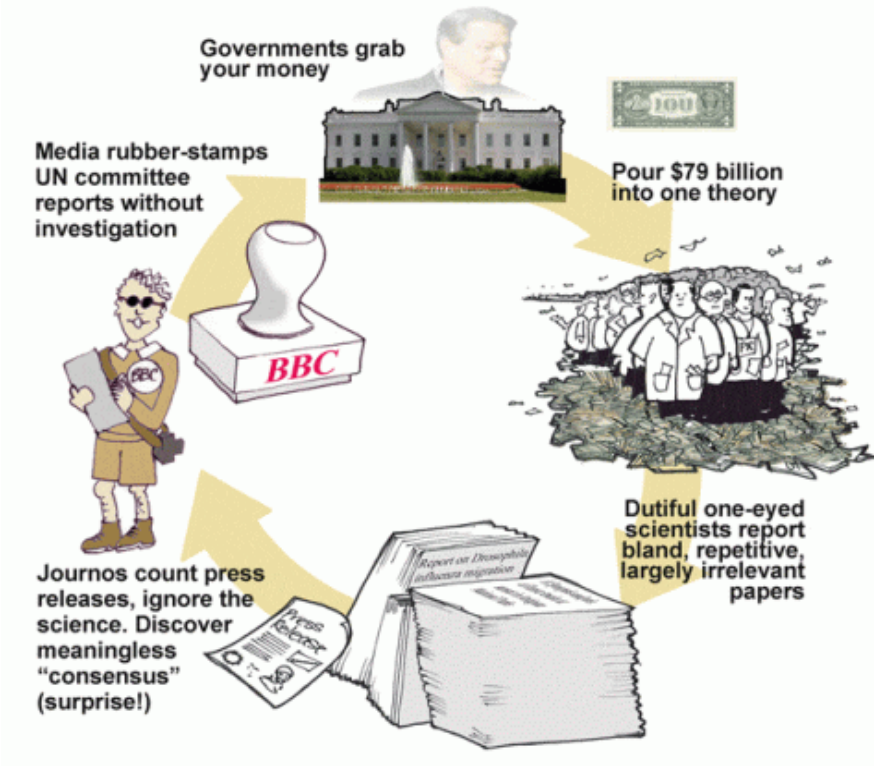

How monopoly science and lazy journalists create "consensus"

And the media covers up for them – they are lazy, ignorant of science, and they are overwhelmingly biased in favor of socialism.

Problems in the United States and New Zealand

Note: Christopher Horner of the Competitive Enterprise Institute is suing NASA in order to get them to release their data. And in New Zealand, climate "researchers" have been caught modifying the raw data to show global warming that isn't there. Take a look at this UK Telegraph article that tells the story so far.

Related posts

- Climate Research Unit servers hacked, e-mails made public
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Government-funded research unit destroyed original climate data
- The state of the debate about catastrophic man-made global warming
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says solar activity impacts climate
- Famous UN IPCC hockey stick graph is based on cherry-picked data
- Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming
- Global warming advocates refuse to give their data to skeptics
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says prior ice melting caused by solar variation
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Global warming is not caused by humans

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How reliable are persistent vegetative state diagnoses?

December 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this article from The Weekly Standard. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The case of Terri Schiavo–who died five years ago next March, deprived for nearly two weeks of food and water, even the balm of ice chips–continues to prick consciences. That may be one reason the case of Rom Houben, a Belgian man who was misdiagnosed for 23 years as being in a persistent vegetative state, is now receiving international attention.
>
> In 1983, Houben suffered catastrophic head injuries in an automobile accident. He arrived at the hospital unconscious. Doctors eventually concluded that his case was hopeless, and his family was told he would never waken. But the Houben family, like Terri's parents and siblings, didn't give up. They diligently sought out every medical advance. This wasn't delusion or pure wishful thinking. Several studies have shown that about 40 percent of persistent vegetative state diagnoses are wrong.
>
> […]During the years that Houben was thought unconscious, society changed. Bioethicists nudged medicine away from the Hippocratic model and toward "quality of life" judgmentalism. Today, when a patient is diagnosed as persistently unconscious or minimally aware, doctors, social workers, and bioethicists often recommend that life-sustaining treatment–including sustenance delivered through a tube–be withdrawn, sometimes days or weeks after the injury.

One thing that stands out to me about this story is how the medical profession has accepted the idea that it is OK to kill people who do not have a high enough quality of life. What is behind this view? Well, I think it's caused by secularism. Secularism has marginalized the Christian worldview that dominated the West. One component of that Christian worldview is that it is morally good to deny yourself happiness to care for the needs of others. And that the right thing is not based on your opinion or the arbitrary views of the majority of people in your culture.

On the secular worldview, though, there is no "right thing" that we "ought to do". The universe is an accident and there is no design. The only thing to do on an atheistic worldview is to be "happy". And you can't be happy if other people need you to take care of them. So, I think that this is what is behind the push by secularists to kill the weak and stop them from using up resources. Secularists look at people who need them, and they want to kill them. There is no objective duty of self-sacrifice for others, on atheism.

Christopher Hitchens is fond of asking people he debates to name one thing that a

Christian can do that an atheist can't do. Here's one: an atheist can't rationally ground the decision to sacrifice their own pursuit of happiness to take care of the needs of others. On atheism, self-sacrifice is irrational, unless it makes you happy. You only have one life. There is no way you ought to be. The purpose of life is to be happy. The needs of the weak diminish your happiness. It's survival of the fittest. That's what is rational on atheism.

UPDATE: I just got back from breakfast at Denny's and I was reading Jennifer Roback Morse's "Love and Economics". She was talking a lot about the helplessness of babies, and what mothers and fathers do that make children grow up capably. She writes that early on in the baby's life they scream for everything and the mother has to be there to meet those needs or the child will never learn to trust. Later on, the parents try to encourage the child to be better-behaved and self-sufficient.

All this made me recall this post. If a selfish person believes that it is too much work to care of someone sick who needs extra love, then that person isn't going to be willing to take care of babies, either. And I guess that's exactly where we are as a society now, with people having fewer babies, but more abortions and day care. And of course people divorce when they have small children as well, which (usually) deprives the child of a father.

MUST-READ: What books did Obama's safe-schools czar promote to school children?

December 6, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama nominated Keving Jennings, the founder of GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network), to be his "safe schools" czar.

Watch this video to find out a little about Kevin Jennings:

GLSEN has a set of recommended books for children listed on their web site. Scott Baker from Breitbart-TV.com has broken a story about what is actually in those recommended books.

WARNING. This material is so graphic that I cannot post it on my blog.

Here are the links:

- The GLSEN reading list, part 1
- The GLSEN reading list, part 2

This post contains other links to other previous stories on Kevin Jennings.

Please comment on Gateway Pundit's site in their posts, not here. Gateway Pundit has suffered DOS attacks for posting on this story.

Members of the American Physical Society take a stand against Climategate

December 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's their statement. (H/T American Thinker via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Dear fellow member of the American Physical Society:
>
> This is a matter of great importance to the integrity of the Society. It is being sent to a random fraction of the membership, so we hope you will pass it on.
>
> By now everyone has heard of what has come to be known as ClimateGate, which was and is an international scientific fraud, the worst any of us have seen in our cumulative 223 years of APS membership. For those who have missed the news we recommend the excellent summary article by Richard Lindzen in the November 30 edition of the Wall Street journal, entitled "The Climate Science isn't Settled," for a balanced account of the situation. It was written by a scientist of unquestioned authority and integrity. A copy can be found among the items at http://tinyurl.com/lg266u, and a visit to http://www.ClimateDepot.com can fill in the details of the scandal, while adding spice.
>
> What has this to do with APS? In 2007 the APS Council adopted a Statement on global warming (also reproduced at the tinyurl site mentioned above) that was based largely on the scientific work that is now revealed to have been corrupted. (The principals in this escapade have not denied what they did, but have sought to dismiss it by saying that it is normal practice among scientists. You know and we know that that is simply untrue. Physicists are not expected to cheat.)
>
> We have asked the APS management to put the 2007 Statement on ice until the extent to which it is tainted can be determined, but that has not been done. We have also asked that the membership be consulted on this point, but that too has not been done.

Physics and chemistry scholars are my favorite scientists. They are a lot less politicized than people in biology and environmental studies.

Remember this post? Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming. That was sent to me by another person with a PhD in physics, who also doubts man-made catastrophic global warming.

Here's my summary of Climategate so far.

What my relationship with God is like

December 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I regularly take my non-Christian co-workers and friends out for lunch to check on how their worldviews are coming along, and last week a comment I made at the table seemed to really get one friend's attention. (The last time I got his attention like this, I had said that the example of Jesus' life is instructive for us because it shows that it is OK to suffer for doing the right thing, and that it is not God's job to save you in this life. Life isn't about happiness. It's about suffering for your allegiance to God). I can always tell when I hit a nerve because the person repeats what I said back to me.

So anyway, this time I said "When it comes to God, there are only two kinds of people. The first kind wants a real relationship with the real God who is there, even if this involves self-denial, self-sacrifice, and suffering. The second kind doesn't want a relationship with God – they want to be happy in this life and invent new standards of meaning and morality based on their personal preferences that justifies their selfishness." The context was that I was talking about how I was changing my mother's approach to religious questions.

So, here's how a relationship with God might develop, based partly on my experiences:

1. You start off as a non-Christian with no interest in God.
2. You attend to your regular life first by studying, working, eating, sleeping, etc.. Eventually, your situation is secure and comfortable enough that you begin to ask yourself the big questions in life. Does God exist? Is morality real? What is the purpose if life?
3. You take some of your free recreation time and try to investigate these questions. This would involve studying world religions, science and history to determine which religion best satisfies the laws of logic and the facts in the external world.
4. You decide God exists because of the cosmological and moral arguments, and you decide that Jesus is authoritative because of the historical case for the resurrection of Jesus.
5. You realize you are in full rebellion against God and cannot hope to change this rebellion short of being "born again", which would involve getting forgiveness and undergoing a radical re-prioritization of your life goals. You accept the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as payment for your sins.
6. You scour the New Testament and theology books to find out more about what the character of God is really like, and you test everything you discover against the Bible, church history and the works of solid Christian scholars.
7. You read about characters in the Bible like Caleb, Daniel, Joshua, Paul. You say to yourself "other people aren't always happy when you stick up for God" and "God doesn't always make everything work out for you in this life, when you obey him".
8. You start to get a feel for what God is like. There is no talking to God or hearing from

God, or emotional highs during worship. You learn more by reading more about him and talk to people who are stronger Christians. You learn what he likes, what he doesn't like. You begin to appreciate that God is different from you. You realize that God is trying to change you, which scares you a little. You say yes to God more and more, just because he is so interested in you, and because he is so intent on trying to change you. For some reason, his demands don't seem to be too objectionable, and there is always forgiveness when you fail.

9. You find that it is easier and easier to stick to moral rules in the New Testament, because of the sympathy you have for God. You are less and less interested in trying to achieve happiness in the here and now. Things you used to like doing don't seem to be as interesting as things that you do as part of your relationship with God. You find that opportunities to do things relevant to your relationship with God become more frequent.
10. You talk to non-Christians about God and realize that no one else is interested in whether God exists, or what he is like. You have less and less sympathy for other people and their selfish desire to be happy. You feel less and less pressure to change what you believe to make these other people comfortable – after all, they lost every argument with you since they have no arguments or evidence. You wonder why other people don't investigate these things rigorously, instead of just trying to be happy all the time. They are busy doing other things.
11. Sometimes, the worldly success of non-Christians makes you feel inadequate. They have more time for getting ahead because they don't take any time out for a relationship with God. But you stick with God anyway, and try to encourage these non-Christians to devote more time and effort to developing their worldview more carefully. You keep trying to love these other people, and tell them the truth with reasons and evidence, but the more they rebel against God, the more you find the doctrine of Hell is acceptable to you.
12. You start making a long-term plan about something you want to achieve for God, e.g. – you plan to get two Ph.Ds in Physics and Philosophy from Stanford and Oxford, learn to debate like William Lane Craig, and defeat Richard Dawkins in a public debate, thus dealing atheism a blow from which it will never recover. (My actual plan is described here) This plan isn't just dull stuff like following the ten commandments and other moral rules. This is different. This is you planning out something completely new. Your plan is consistent with Bible, but it goes beyond the rules. It's not a private plan. It's not meant to make you feel happy. It's a public plan. It's designed to be effective.
13. You love your plan. You smile, laugh and whistle a lot everywhere you go because you are so excited about your plan. People think you are very happy, but you actually feel sad, lonely and worried about being silenced or persecuted by the secular left. The plan is a lot of work, and you could do a much better job of pursuing happiness if you just dropped the whole thing. But you don't.
14. Your entire family and most of your friends, including other Christians, don't recognize or value your plan. The Church opposes you at every turn, thinking that

Christianity is about ignoring apologetics and theology, and making non-Christians feel happy about their rebellion against God. You notice that not everyone approves of your priorities, but you keep going with your plan anyway.

15. You test to see if God is interested in supporting your plan by taking some small steps and watching to see if you are successful. You are successful, but progress is very slow.
16. You give up more and more of your happiness and selfishness as you work steadily on your plan. You face opposition from non-Christians who attack you in the academy and the workplace. You face opposition from fake Christians who vote for laws and policies that rob you of your wealth and your rights, including the rights of free speech and religious liberty. Everyone who knows you well likes you, but they don't really seriously seek after God. People who don't know know you well sometimes persecute you because they are offended by your disagreement with them.
17. You only achieve a tiny measure of what you set out to do before dying.
18. On the day of Judgment, you get a resurrection body and eternal life with your best Friend. The appearance of your resurrection body reflects the plan that you chose, and everyone in Heaven recognizes you at last. You meet all the people who helped you. And you meet all the people who you helped. It turns out that you had an impact far beyond what you had thought when you were alive.
19. Every sacrifice that you made on Earth that seemed so terrible to bear is repaid by God many time over in ways you could never imagine.
20. Finally, for the first time in your life, you are truly happy.

Does this sound like you? If it does, then we're on the same battlefield. Put your back to mine and let's stand together.

But the Consul's brow was sad, and the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall, and darkly at the foe.
"Their van will be upon us before the bridge goes down;
And if they once might win the bridge, what hope to save the town?"

Then out spoke brave Horatius, the Captain of the Gate:
"To every man upon this earth, death cometh soon or late;
And how can man die better than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers, and the temples of his Gods,

And for the tender mother who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses his baby at her breast,
And for the holy maidens who feed the eternal flame,
To save them from false Sextus, that wrought the deed of shame?

Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul, with all the speed ye may!
I, with two more to help me, will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path, a thousand may well be stopped by three:
Now, who will stand on either hand and keep the bridge with me?

Here are some lectures that helped me to form my views about the Christian life. My testimony is here.

Obama’s deficit for the last two months exceeds Bush’s entire 2006 deficit

December 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Gateway Pundit. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Obama Administration is already $292 billion in the red this year.
> This is more than the national deficit for the entire year of 2006 ($248 billion).
> Not good.
>
> **President George W. Bush never did this.**
>
> Obama tripled the national deficit his first year in office and he’s off to a record-setting start in fiscal year 2010.
>
> During the Bush years, despite the 2000 Recession, the attacks on 9-11, the stock market scandals, Hurricane Katrina, and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Bush Administration was able to reduce the budget deficit from 412 billion dollars in 2004 to 162 billion dollars in 2007, a sixty percent drop. In 2004 the federal budget deficit was 412 billion dollars. In 2005 it dropped to 318 billion dollars. In 2006 the deficit dipped to 248 billion dollars. And, **in 2007 it fell below 200 billion to 162 billion dollars**. During the Bush years the average unemployment rate was 5.2 percent, the economy saw the strongest productivity growth in four decades and there was robust GDP growth.

Please read my previous post that features two Harvard economics explaining why massive government spending drives unemployment up. You can’t fix an economy with spending. You fix it with tax cuts, especially for businesses who hire people. For example, we could cut the employer portion of payroll taxes completely. (That idea is from a different Harvard economist)

There are people I know who voted for Obama because McCain and Palin would spend more. I asked them to look at voting records and ratings from groups advocating fiscal conservatism, like Citizens Against Government Waste, the American Conservative Union, and the Club For Growth. But they kept talking about Sarah Palin’s wardrobe, because that’s all they saw on MSNBC.

Mark Steyn discusses pastor Stephen Boissoin's victory against the HRCs

December 7, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story on the Corner. (H/T ECM, Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> A couple of years back, the Reverend Stephen Boissoin committed the crime of writing a letter to a local newspaper objecting to various aspects of "the homosexual agenda". The Alberta "Human Rights" Tribunal convicted him of this crime and imposed a lifetime speech ban preventing him, in essence, from saying anything about homosexuality in public or private ever again anywhere for the rest of his life.

Here's an except from the judge's decision:

> The direction to cease and desist the publishing of "disparaging remarks about gays and homosexuals' is beyond the power of the Panel. "Disparaging remarks"were not defined by the Panel. But clearly, "disparaging remarks" are remarks much less serious than hateful and contemptuous remarks and are quite lawful to make. They are beyond the power of the Act to regulate and the power of the Province to restrain.

More details here:

- Edmonton Journal: "Commission Gets Judicial Thrashing"
- Calgary Herald: "Score One For Free Expression"
- National Post: "From Alberta, A Win for Justice"

The thing is – Boissoin did not get off Scot-free. He had a gruelling 6-year trial and paid well over six figures in legal fees. It's not clear to me what his remedy is to recover these years of his life and these funds. His accuser's legal costs were covered by the province of Alberta.

I just don't believe that things will turn out any different down here, given the kind of people that Obama surrounds himself with. Obama has signed a hate crime bill into law which paves the way for criminalizing speech critical of the minorities listed in the bill. And whenever the right to free speech conflicts with the leftist right "not to be offended", the "right not to be offended" *always wins*. This is the way that the secular left is – they want to silence anyone who disagrees with them.

I don't mind when people say things that offend me, and I sure hope that nothing I say offends anyone else. But in any case, I would rather be asked to apologize than be put on trial for 6 years and forced to pay over a $100,000 in legal fees just because I disagreed with someone and they felt badly. We need to get to the point where radicals on the left

understand that it is OK for people to disagree with them, and that it is not OK to bring the force of the government down on people because of *speech.*

Next time, *vote Republican*.

Related stories

Here are some stories from the UK:

- Woman gets police visit after writing letter protesting gay pride parade
- Another nurse faces termination for being a Christian in public
- UK stewardess fired for refusing to dress as a Muslim
- Couple arrested for answering Muslim's questions about Christianity

Here are some stories from Canada:

- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

And in the United States:

- Feminists suppress free speech at East Georgia College
- ACLU instigates arrest of two Christians for praying in a church
- New Mexico Human Rights Commissions fines couple $6000 for being Christians
- Obama forces Catholic school to cover abortion on health care plan

EPA ignores Climategate and declares carbon dioxide a threat to public health

December 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T Andrew, ECM)

Excerpt:

> In the face of GOP opposition, the EPA on Monday declared greenhouse gases a danger to public health in a move that could pave the way for future regulation.
>
> The administration also waved off concerns about the controversy surrounding leaked e-mails at a British climate research center, with the U.S. envoy to the international climate change conference in Copenhagen dismissing the flap as a "small blip."
>
> EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson said in a written statement that the finding, which declares carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases a threat to public health, marks the start of a U.S. campaign to tackle greenhouse gas emissions.
>
> […]The meticulously timed announcement comes on the opening day of the Denmark conference, and could boost the administration's argument that the United States is taking action to combat global warming — though Congress has yet to pass climate legislation.
>
> […]**While administration officials have said they would prefer Congress take action on regulating greenhouse gas emissions, Republicans fear the EPA is prepared to act unilaterally to do so, buoyed by its latest finding. And they question the timing of the announcement.**

They could bypass Congress entirely.

My previous story explaining the significance of Climategate is here.

Why do atheists like Dan Barker abandon their Christian faith?

December 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unbelievable's latest radio show featured a discussion with former Christian Dan Barker, the founder and co-President of the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

I thought that I would make some general comments about why I think that many people leave the Christian faith, and what you should be careful of in order to avoid following in Dan Barker's footsteps, specifically.

Basically, there are four major reasons why people leave Christianity.

1. They want to do something immoral with impunity. This type of person wants to do something immoral that is forbidden by Christianity, like pre-marital sex. They dump Christianity in order to feel better about seeking happiness in this life, apart from God and his moral duties.
2. They want to pursue happiness in irresponsible ways. This type of person thinks that God's job is to save them when they act irresponsibly while pursuing happiness. When God disappoints them by not giving them what they want in order to be happy, they leave the faith.
3. They want to be loved by people, not by God. This type of person thinks that Christianity is a tool that they can use to become popular. When they first try to articulate the gospel in public, they find that people don't like them as much, and they feel bad about offending people with exclusive truth claims that they cannot back up using logic and evidence. So, they water down Christianity to get along with atheists, liberal Christians and other religions. Finally, they jettison Christianity completely and focus on making everyone feel good about whatever they believe.
4. They don't want to learn to defend their faith. This type of person is asked questions by skeptics that they cannot answer. Usually this happens when people go to university after growing up in the shelter of the Church. The questions and peer pressure make them feel stupid. Rather than investigate Christianity to see if it's true and to prepare to defend it in public, they dump it so they can be thought of as part of the "smart" crowd.

Now listen to the discussion and see if you can identify some of these factors from Barker's own carefully-prepared words. He is trying very hard to make himself look honest and moderate, because he wants Christians to be sympathetic with his story and his motives for leaving Christianity. But I think that there is enough in his statements to construct a different hypothesis of why he left Christianity.

I've grouped the data by risk factor. (These are not his *exact* views)

Non-rational, emotional approach to Christianity

- he was raised in a devout Christian family where he probably wouldn't have faced skeptical questions
- he converted to Christianity at age 15 as a result of a religious experience, not a serious investigation
- his idea of God was probably idealized and uninformed, e.g. – a loving God who wants us to be happy
- he wandered around from church to church preaching, with no fixed address or source of income
- he earned money by collecting "love offerings" from churches where he performed his music
- he wrote Christian songs and Christian musicals, but nothing substantive on apologetics and theology
- he worked in three churches known for being anti-intellectual and fundamentalist
- there's no evidence that of any deep study of philosophy, science and history during this time

Desire to gain acceptance from non-Christians

- he began to notice that some people were uncomfortable with sin and Hell
- he began to avoid preaching about sin and Hell in order to make these people comfortable
- he watered-down the gospel to focus on helping people to be happy in this life
- his manic approach to Christian ministry was challenged by the "real life" needs of his growing family
- he met liberal pastors while performing his music in their churches
- he found it difficult to disagree with them because they seemed to be "good" people
- he watered down his message further in order to appeal to people across the theological spectrum

Ignorance of Christian apologetics

- he began to think that if there are many different views of religion, then no view can be correct
- he was not intellectually capable of using logic and evidence to test these competing claims to see which was true
- he decided to instead re-interpret Christian truth claims as non-rational opinions, so they could all be "valid"
- he became a theological liberal, abandoning theism for an impersonal "ground of being"
- he embraced religious pluralism, the view that all religions are non-rational and make no testable truth claims
- he began to see God as a "metaphor" whose purpose is to make people have a

sense of meaning and purpose
  - he jettisoned God completely and focused more on helping people find meaning and morality apart from God
  - seems to think that religion is about having a “great life”, and felt that you can have a “great life” without religion
  - seems to think that religion is about being “good”, and felt that you can be “good” without religion
  - religion makes people feel bad by telling them what to do instead of letting them do anything they want
  - religion makes people feel bad by telling them what is true, instead of letting them believe whatever they want
  - religion makes people feel bad by telling them that God will hold them accountable for their beliefs and actions

So what do I think happened?

I think he abandoned his faith because he wanted people to like him and because he needed to be invited to liberal churches in order to make money to pay for the “real life” needs of his family.

He seems to have thought that Christianity is about having his needs met and being liked by others. I think he wanted to feel good and to make people feel good with his preaching and singing. He seems to have become aware that the exclusive claims of Christianity made other people feel offended, so he cut them out. He hadn’t studied philosophy, science or history so that he would have been able to demonstrate to other people whether what he was saying was true. It’s hard to offend people when you don’t really know whether your claims are true or not, and when you don’t know how to demonstrate whether they are true or not.

I also think money was a factor. It seems to me that it would have hurt his career and reduced his invitations from liberal churches if he had kept up teaching biblical Christianity. In order to appeal to a wider audience, (like many Christian singers do – e.g. – Amy Grant, Jars of Clay, etc.), he would have felt pressured to water down the unpleasant parts of his preaching and singing. Lacking apologetics skill, he instead abandoned his message. He needed to account for his family’s needs and “real life”, and exclusive truth claims and Hell-talk would probably have reduced his ability to do that. It seems to me that he should have scaled back his extreme schedule of preaching and singing, and instead gotten a steady job so that he could afford “real life” and a family without being pressured into altering his message.

Life isn’t a fairy tale. God isn’t there to reward risky behavior. We need to be more shrewd about financial matters so that we have the ability to *not care* about what people think of us. Look at this blog. I work all day as a senior software engineer with two degrees in computer science so that I can refuse donations. I save most of what I make in case a tragedy strikes. Since I am financially secure, I can say what I think, and disregard anyone who wants me to change my message because they are offended. Becoming a

Christian isn't a license to behave irrationally and immaturely with money. For some people, (like William Lane Craig), stepping out in faith works. But if it doesn't work, it's better to retreat and re-trench, rather than to compromise your message for money.

Barker didn't seem to make any effort to deal intellectually with typical challenges like the existence of Hell and religious pluralism. He just wanted to be liked by people instead of being liked by God. He seemed to have thought that being a Christian would make him happy and that other people would all respond to him and like him without having to do any work to explain why Christianity is true. But that's not Biblical. When the singing and preaching is over, you still have to know how to give an answer to non-Christians. But Barker couldn't give an answer – not one that allowed him to retain his beliefs. He had not prepared a defense.

What does Dan Barker think about Christianity today?

Many atheists today are interested in eradicating public expressions of Christian beliefs in the public square, because they hate Christianity and believe that Christians should not be allowed to make them feel bad by exercising their rights of free speech. Is Dan Barker one of these militant atheists?

Well, take a look at this video, in which he objects to a nativity scene and demands that an atheistic denunciation of theism be posted alongside it. In the video, Barker explains that the nativity scene is *hate speech*, and that the baby Jesus is a *dictator*. He seems to be totally oblivious to the the idea that if Christianity is *true,* then it doesn't matter whether it's mean and exclusive. And this seems to me to have been his problem all along, from the day of his "conversion".

So the real question is this: is it true? Barker seems to be much more interested in asking "is it nice?" and "will it make me happy?".

Science Daily reports that there is no such thing as Junk RNA

December 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here on Science Daily. (H/T Darwin's God via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Tiny strands of RNA previously dismissed as cellular junk are actually very stable molecules that may play significant roles in cellular processes, according to researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI).
>
> The findings, published last week in the online version of the *Journal of Virology*, represent the first examination of very small RNA products termed unusually small RNAs (usRNAs). Further study of these usRNAs, which are present in the thousands but until now have been neglected, could lead to new types of biomarkers for diagnosis and prognosis, and new therapeutic targets.
>
> In recent years, scientists have recognized the importance of small RNAs that generally contain more than 20 molecular units called nucleotides, said senior author Bino John, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Computational Biology, Pitt School of Medicine.
>
> "But until we did our experiments, we didn't realize that RNAs as small as 15 nucleotides, which we thought were simply cell waste, are surprisingly stable, and are repeatedly, reproducibly, and accurately produced across different tissue types." Dr. John said. "We have dubbed these as usRNAs, and we have identified thousands of them, present in a diversity that far exceeds all other longer RNAs found in our study."

Another prediction of Darwinism dashed to driftwood on the rocks of scientific progress. Put it on the pile with the eternal universe. Oh, but you might have to make room for it by moving the failed prediction of Junk DNA into a separate trash bin.

Flashback: Science Daily reports on the biological functions of Junk DNA

Here's the Science Daily article. (H/T Evolution News)

Excerpt:

> …during early development, the proteins required for cell division come from the mother. The researchers speculate that the heterochromatin of the male *D. melanogaster*'s X chromosome has rapidly evolved, such that after mating, the machinery involved in DNA packaging from a *D. simulans* mother no longer recognizes the *D. melanogaster* father's "junk" DNA, Ferree said.

Casey Luskin writes:

> Basically, so-called “junk”-DNA is involved in helping to package chromosomes in the cell. If two species have different “junk” DNA, then this prevents the proteins in the egg from properly packaging the chromosomes donated by the sperm. The organism does not develop properly.

Darwinism fails again.

MUST-SEE: Cowardly Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig

December 8, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Richard Dawkins explains why he will not debate William Lane Craig. (Posted by ChristianJR4, H/T Brian Auten of Apologetics 315)

Let's re-cap Dawkins' reasons in point form: (with my comments in parentheses)

- Dawkins claims that he is willing to debate high-ranking clergymen (but Craig is a scholar, not a clergyman)
- Dawkins claims that Craig is a creationist (but Craig supports his kalam cosmological argument with the Big Bang)
- Dawkins claims that Craig's only claim to fame is that he is a professional debater (but see Craig's CV and publications below, which is *far* more prestigious than Dawkins)
- Dawkins claims that he's too busy (busy cowering in fear hugging his Darwin doll for comfort)

Let's review William Lane Craig's qualifications:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

Here are some of Craig's most recent publications:

From 2007:

- Ed. with Quentin Smith. *Einstein, Relativity, and Absolute Simultaneity*. Routledge Studies in Contemporary Philosophy. London: Routledge, 2007, 302 pp.
- "Theistic Critiques of Atheism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, pp. 69-85. Ed. M. Martin. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- "The Metaphysics of Special Relativity: Three Views." In *Einstein, Relativity, and Absolute Simultaneity*, pp. 11-49. Ed. Wm. L. Craig and Quentin Smith. Routledge Studies in Contemporary Philosophy. London: Routledge, 2007.
- "Creation and Divine Action." In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* pp. 318-28. Ed. Chad Meister and Paul Copan. London: Routledge, 2007.

From 2008:

- *God and Ethics: A Contemporary Debate*. With Paul Kurtz. Ed. Nathan King and Robert Garcia. With responses by Louise Antony, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, John Hare, Donald Hubin, Stephen Layman, Mark Murphy, and Richard Swinburne. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.
- "Time, Eternity, and Eschatology." In *The Oxford Handbook on Eschatology*, pp. 596-613. Ed. J. Walls. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

From 2009:

- Ed. with J. P. Moreland. *Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- "The *Kalam* Cosmological Argument." With James Sinclair. In *Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*. Ed. Wm. L. Craig and J. P. Moreland. Oxford: Blackwell.
- "In Defense of Theistic Arguments." In *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath and Daniel Dennett in Dialogue*. Ed. Robert Stewart. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Forthcoming:

- "The Cosmological Argument." In *Philosophy of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Issues*. Ed. Paul Copan and Chad Meister. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- "Cosmological Argument"; "Middle Knowledge." In *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Ed. G. Fergusson *et al*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- "Divine Eternity." In *Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*. Ed. Thomas Flint and Michael Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Richard Dawkins is eminently qualified to debate uninformed clergymen, but he has too much at stake (in terms of book royalties) to disappoint his loyal horde of foam-flecked fundies by debating a professional scholar who has debated hundreds of times, against the top non-Christian scholars, in hundreds of universities, including Harvard, Cambridge and Oxford.

See that debate up there with Daniel Dennett? You can listen to Craig's response to

Daniel Dennett here. Or you can watch Craig's debate with Christopher Hitchens. Then you'll know why Dawkins soils his knickers at the thought of facing Craig in a public debate.

What are the real reasons why he won't debate Craig?

I can think of three reasons why Dawkins would avoid a debate with Craig:

1. He doesn't know how to defend atheism and disprove theism in public
2. He doesn't have the intellectual capacity to understand logic and study evidence
3. He doesn't want to debate a real scholar and be humiliated in public, like Hitchens and Dennett

My opinion is that he is guilty of all 3 of these.

If you are an atheist, you should be ashamed to be represented by a LAZY, IGNORANT COWARD like Richard Dawkins.

Previous posts on Richard Dawkins and other New Atheists

- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Hugh Hewitt interviews Richard Dawkins on his new book
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- William Lane Craig takes on prominent atheist Daniel Dennett
- Richard Dawkins debates John Lennox: Does God Exist?
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Answering Richard Dawkins' question: "Who made God?"
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God
- How do leading atheists understand morality on atheism?
- The William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate

What will the Copenhagen conference mean to ordinary Americans?

December 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article from Forbes magazine. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> Whatever the results of the Copenhagen conference on climate change, one thing is for sure: Draconian reductions on carbon emissions will be tacitly accepted by the most developed economies and sloughed off by many developing ones. In essence, emerging economies get to cut their "carbon" intensity–a natural product of their economic evolution–while we get to cut our throats.
>
> […]Our leaders will dutifully accept cuts in our carbon emissions–up to 80% by 2050–while developing countries increasetheirs, albeit at a lower rate. Oh, we also pledge to send billions in aid to help them achieve this goal.The media shills, scientists, bureaucrats and corporate rent-seekers gathered at Copenhagen won't give much thought to what this means to the industrialized world's middle and working class. For many of them the new carbon regime means a gradual decline in living standards. Huge increases in energy costs, taxes and a spate of regulatory mandates will restrict their access to everything from single-family housing and personal mobility to employment in carbon-intensive industries like construction, manufacturing, warehousing and agriculture.
>
> You can get a glimpse of this future in high-unemployment California. Here a burgeoning regulatory regime tied to global warming threatens to turn the state into a total "no go" economic development zone. Not only do companies have to deal with high taxes, cascading energy prices and regulations, they now face audits of their impact on global warming. Far easier to move your project to Texas–or if necessary, China.

Now consider this Wall Street Journal article regarding the EPA decision to call carbon dioxide a threat to public health.

Excerpt:

> An endangerment finding would allow the EPA to use the federal Clean Air Act to regulate carbon-dioxide emissions, which are produced whenever fossil fuel is burned. Under that law, the EPA could require emitters of as little as 250 tons of carbon dioxide per year to install new technology to curb their emissions starting as soon as 2012.
>
> The EPA has said it will only require permits from big emitters — facilities that put out 25,000 tons of carbon dioxide a year. But that effort to tailor the regulations to avoid slamming small businesses with new costs is expected to be challenged

> in court.
>
> Legislators are aware that polls show the public appetite for action that would raise energy prices to protect the environment has fallen precipitously amid the recession.
>
> Congressional legislation also faces plenty of U.S. industry opposition. Under the legislation, which has been passed by the House but is now stuck in the Senate, the federal government would set a cap on the amount of greenhouse gas the economy could emit every year. The government would distribute a set number of emission permits to various industries. Companies that wanted to be able to emit more than their quota could buy extra permits from those that had figured out how to emit less.
>
> Proponents of the cap-and-trade approach say emission-permit trading will encourage industries to find the least-expensive ways to curb greenhouse-gas output. But opponents say it will saddle key industries with high costs not borne by rivals in China or India, and potentially cost the U.S. jobs.

There will be an economic impact on ordinary Americans from the Democrats trying to “do something” about global warming. The economic impact will not be felt primarily by liberal elites in government.

Christian man fired after gay rights group contacts his employer to complain

December 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the magazine Down East.

Excerpt:

> Larry Grard admits he had "a lapse in judgment." But Grard – who's been a reporter for thirty-five years, the last eighteen of them at the *Morning Sentinel* in Waterville – says the e-mail he sent from his personal account to a national gay rights group shouldn't have been grounds for his dismissal.
>
> Grard was fired by Bill Thompson, editor of the *Sentinel* and its sister paper the *Kennebec Journal* in Augusta, shortly after the Nov. 3 election in which Maine voters repealed a same-sex marriage law approved by the Legislature. Grard said he arrived at work the morning after the vote to find an e-mailed press release from the Human Rights Campaign in Washington, D.C., that blamed the outcome of the balloting on hatred of gays.
>
> Grard, who said he'd gotten no sleep the night before, used his own e-mail to send a response. "They said the Yes-on-1 people were haters. I'm a Christian. I take offense at that," he said. "I e-mailed them back and said basically, 'We're not the ones doing the hating. You're the ones doing the hating.'
>
> "I sent the same message in his face he sent in mine."
>
> Grard thought his response was anonymous, but it turned out to be anything but. One week later, he was summoned to Thompson's office. He was told that Trevor Thomas, deputy communications director of the Human Rights Campaign, had Googled his name, discovered he was a reporter, and was demanding Grard be fired. According to Grard, Thompson said, "There's no wiggle room."
>
> He was immediately dismissed.
>
> […]The week after Grard was fired, he said, his wife, Lisa, who wrote a biweekly food column for the *Sentinel* as a freelancer, received an e-mail informing her that her work would no longer be needed.

Comments to this post will be strictly moderated in light of Obama's signing of the hate crimes bill.

Related stories

Here are some stories from the UK:

- Woman gets police visit after writing letter protesting gay pride parade
- Another nurse faces termination for being a Christian in public
- UK stewardess fired for refusing to dress as a Muslim

- Couple arrested for answering Muslim's questions about Christianity

Here are some stories from Canada:

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And in the United States:

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- ACLU instigates arrest of two Christians for praying in a church
- New Mexico Human Rights Commissions fines couple $6000 for being Christians
- Obama forces Catholic school to cover abortion on health care plan

Michele Bachmann interviewed on the Pat Robertson's 700 Club

December 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele Bachmann explains the details of the health care plan. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Once again, she's speaking really well today – like William Lane Craig. Smooth, full of interesting details. What a delight. Be sure and check out her last video, when she was doing the exact same thing with the war in Afghanistan. She's still looking very serious and intense. I feel badly that the Democrats are making her unhappy and there isn't anything I can do about it – but I did send her a donation.

She's trying to convince social conservatives to become fiscal conservatives!

Tune in for my 6 PM post, and you'll find out how Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse tries to convince fiscal conservatives to become social conservatives!

Recent Michele Bachmann stuff

- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama's latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare's rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann explains why the US dollar is in serious trouble
- Collection of the best Michele Bachmann video clips

MUST-READ: Jennifer Roback Morse explains why two-parent families matter

December 9, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article here in Policy Review, a publication of the Hoover Institute at Stanford University.

Excerpt:

> A free society needs people with consciences. The vast majority of people must obey the law voluntarily. If people don't conform themselves to the law, someone will either have to compel them to do so or protect the public when they do not. It costs a great deal of money to catch, convict, and incarcerate lawbreakers — not to mention that the surveillance and monitoring of potential criminals tax everybody's freedom if habitual lawbreakers comprise too large a percentage of the population.
>
> The basic self-control and reciprocity that a free society takes for granted do not develop automatically. Conscience development takes place in childhood. Children need to develop empathy so they will care whether they hurt someone or whether they treat others fairly. They need to develop self-control so they can follow through on these impulses and do the right thing even if it might benefit them to do otherwise.
>
> All this development takes place inside the family. Children attach to the rest of the human race through their first relationships with their parents. They learn reciprocity, trust, and empathy from these primal relationships. Disrupting those foundational relations has a major negative impact on children as well as on the people around them. In particular, children of single parents — or completely absent parents — are more likely to commit crimes.
>
> Without two parents, working together as a team, the child has more difficulty learning the combination of empathy, reciprocity, fairness, and self-command that people ordinarily take for granted. If the child does not learn this at home, society will have to manage his behavior in some other way. He may have to be rehabilitated, incarcerated, or otherwise restrained. In this case, prisons will substitute for parents.

I am reading her book Love and Economics right now, and this argument is in the first couple of chapters, which is how I found this article.

Dr. J's blog is here.

Lila Rose announces new undercover mission to expose Planned Parenthood

December 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Exciting news from Stop the ACLU. (H/T ECM, Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> Lila Rose, founder of Live Action Films, has done a lot of groundbreaking work doing undercover investigations of Planned Parenthood. From exposing Planned Parenthood's cover-ups of sexual abuse to accepting donations targeting black babies, she's uncovered it all. There were videos of Planned Parenthood across the country, in multiple cities in multiple states, using similar tactics and techniques at each clinic.
>
> Now, Lila Rose has unveiled a new project, the Rosa Acuna Project. This is designed to show how Planned Parenthood lies and manipulates women to coerce them into getting abortions. The first video, from Appleton, WI showcases just how far their "counselors" will go to get another sell.

Here's the video:

If you can't watch the video, here's a summary:

> New undercover footage from an Appleton, WI Planned Parenthood abortion clinic shows clinic staff, including the abortion doctor, lying to two young women about fetal development and encouraging the one who is pregnant to obtain an abortion because "women die having babies."
>
> In the undercover video, when the two women ask a Planned Parenthood counselor if the pregnant woman's 10-week-old unborn child has a heartbeat, the counselor emphasizes "heart tones," and answers, "Heart beat is when the fetus is active in the uterus–can survive–which is about seventeen or eighteen weeks." On the contrary, embryologists agree that the heartbeat begins around 3 weeks. Wisconsin's informed consent law requires that women receive medically accurate information before undergoing an abortion.
>
> The counselor then says, "A fetus is what's in the uterus right now. That is not a baby." Dr. Prohaska, the abortion doctor, insists, "It's not a baby at this stage or anything like that." Prohaska also states that having an abortion will be "much safer than having a baby," warning, "You know, women die having babies."

> […]"Planned Parenthood is a billion-dollar organization with nearly $350 million of government funding, and stands to gain hundreds of millions more from national health care," says Rose. "Do we really want to subsidize an organization that gives women in need atrocious misinformation and predatory abortion practices?"

Well, if the abortion providers were smart, they'd take that money from the government and say whatever they needed to say to women to perform as many abortions as possible, and make even more money. And, if the Republicans tried to taxpayer funding of abortions, the abortion providers could just give lots of money to Democrats to get lots of Democrats elected. And those Democrats could vote for government funding of abortion and defeat any amendments to block funding of abortion.

Gateway Pundit reports that Senate Democrats have just blocked an amendment to block funding of abortions with taxpayer money.

Excerpt:

> Democrats rejected legislation that would have banned federal support for abortions in their nationalized health care bill. That means the democratic health care legislation will result in the biggest expansion of taxpayer-funding of abortions since Roe v. Wade.

Follow the money.

MUST-READ: Doug Axe defends intelligent design at science conference in Germany

December 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Doug Axe got his Ph.D from Caltech and did post-doc research at Cambridge University, and published some of his findings in the peer-reviewed Journal of Molecular Biology. He was trying to see whether it is easy or hard to shuffle amino acids randomly in order to make functional proteins. Those JMB publications show that the number of functional amino acid sequences is tiny, compared to the number of possible sequences.

> Doug Axe's research likewise studies genes that it turns out show great evidence of design. Axe studied the sensitivities of protein function to mutations. In these "mutational sensitivity" tests, Dr. Axe mutated certain amino acids in various proteins, or studied the differences between similar proteins, to see how mutations or changes affected their ability to function properly. He found that protein function was highly sensitive to mutation, and that proteins are not very tolerant to changes in their amino acid sequences. In other words, when you mutate, tweak, or change these proteins slightly, they stopped working. In one of his papers, he thus concludes that "functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences," and that functional protein folds "may be as low as 1 in 10^77."

And now let's see what he was up to in Stuttgart, Germany.

Story here from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> While there have been many events to discuss intelligent design sponsored by the scientific establishment this year, few have dared to invite an actual design

> proponent.
>
> But on the 150th anniversary of *On the Origin of Species*, Biologic Institute Director Douglas Axe was invited to the National Museum of Natural History in Stuttgart, Germany, for a panel discussion titled *Design without a Designer?* where "the 'bold generation' of young thinkers turned up in droves, listening intently as the discussion went well beyond its advertised ninety minutes."

Here's the official description of the event (in German), and a translated excerpt:

> On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the first publication of Darwin's theory, this high-caliber panel discussion between evolutionists and Darwin critics will consider the question of whether the evolution of life on Earth is based solely on blind and unguided natural processes, or whether there is non-religiously based, verifiable evidence of meaningful and purposeful acts of creative intelligence in the natural world. This meeting at the Stuttgart Museum of Natural History aims to contribute constructively and with clarity and objectivity to this important debate. A public debate between evolutionary biologists and evolutionary critics at this high level is very rare in Germany, and therefore can be expected to be a very exciting evening.

You can read more at the Biologic Institute. They even have excerpts from Doug's opening statement. It's short and to the point.

Excerpt:

> William Dembski and Stephen Meyer have both framed the design argument in terms of functional information, meaning information that specifies a significant functional outcome. Since this fits well with my own understanding, I offer the following three-statement summary of the design argument:
>
> > *First*: Living things contain within their genomes large amounts of functional information.
> >
> > *Second*: The only cause known to be capable of generating large amounts of functional information is intelligence.
> >
> > And *third*: It is therefore reasonable to infer that the functional information in living things must have an intelligent source.
>
> Here we have not a pronouncement but an argument based on evidence and logic. It is perfectly fair to argue against it, of course, but it is hardly fair to dismiss it as dogma.

I like this, because I am a software engineer. This is what we do.

Mainstream print and cable news now covering the Kevin Jennings scandal

December 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Gateway Pundit.

Here's the video from Fox News.

And an article from the Washington Times. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration is stonewalling serious inquiries about sexual filth propagated by a senior presidential appointee who is responsible for promoting and implementing federal education policy. Democrats clearly are terrified of ruffling the feathers of their activist homosexual supporters, who are an influential part of the Democratic party's base. This scandal, however, is not merely about homosexual behavior; it is about promoting sex between children and adults – and it's time for President Obama to make clear that abetting such illegal perversion has no place in his administration.
>
> It is curious why White House officials and Education Secretary Arne Duncan believe it's worth it politically to continue taking arrows for defending Kevin Jennings, who is Mr. Obama's controversial "safe schools czar." The evidence suggesting he is unfit to serve as a senior presidential appointee is startling and plentiful. It was revealed this week that Mr. Jennings was involved in promoting a reading list for children 13 years old or older that made the most explicit sex between children and adults seem normal and acceptable. This brought up anew Mr. Jennings' past controversies, such as his seeming encouragement of sex between one of his high school students and a much older man as well as his praise for Harry Hay, a notorious supporter of the North American Man Boy Love Association.
>
> But there is more. There are shocking new revelations this week of tape recordings from a youth conference involving 14-year-old students. The conference, billed as a forum to encourage tolerance of homosexuality, was sponsored by Mr. Jennings' organization and was held at Tufts University in March 2000. Mr. Jennings was executive director of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) from its founding in 1995 until August 2008. The conference sessions appear to have had less to do with promoting tolerance and more to do with teaching children how to engage in sex.

The new update is that GLSEN passes out location guides to gay bars to teenagers. (WARNING: Extremely graphic) This post also contains links to many other extremely graphic stories, so please exercise caution.

Organizations that fund GLSEN

Michelle Malkin has a list of companies that fund GLSEN:

Here are their listed sponsors:

American Federation of Teachers
Anonymous
Arcadia
Arcus Foundation
Calamus Foundation
Cisco Systems, Inc.
Citi Foundation
DaimlerChrysler Corporation
David Bohnett Foundation
Eastman/Kodak Company
Ernst & Young
Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund
Ford Foundation
David Geffen Foundation
Gill Foundation
George Gund Foundation
Heckscher Foundation for Children
Human Civil Rights Organizations of America: A CFC
IBM Corporation
International Association of Gay and Lesbian Country Western Dance Clubs
Johnson Family Foundation
KPMG LLP
Metropolitan Tennis Group, Inc.
Morningstar Foundation
National Education Association
New York Community Trust
The Overbrook Foundation
PepsiCo
Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation
Ted Snowdon Foundation
The Streisand Foundation
Time Warner
W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation
Working Assets/CREDO

Pepsi sponsors all of the major gay activism groups and has been targeted for a boycott by the American Family Association. And you can also see both of the major teacher unions are sponsors of GLSEN.

Comments to this post will be strictly monitored to respect the Democrat “hate crimes” bill signed into law by President Barack Obama.

Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline

December 10, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Watt's Up With That. (H/T Lex Communis)

First, a graph of temperates from measuring station "Darwin" in Australia:

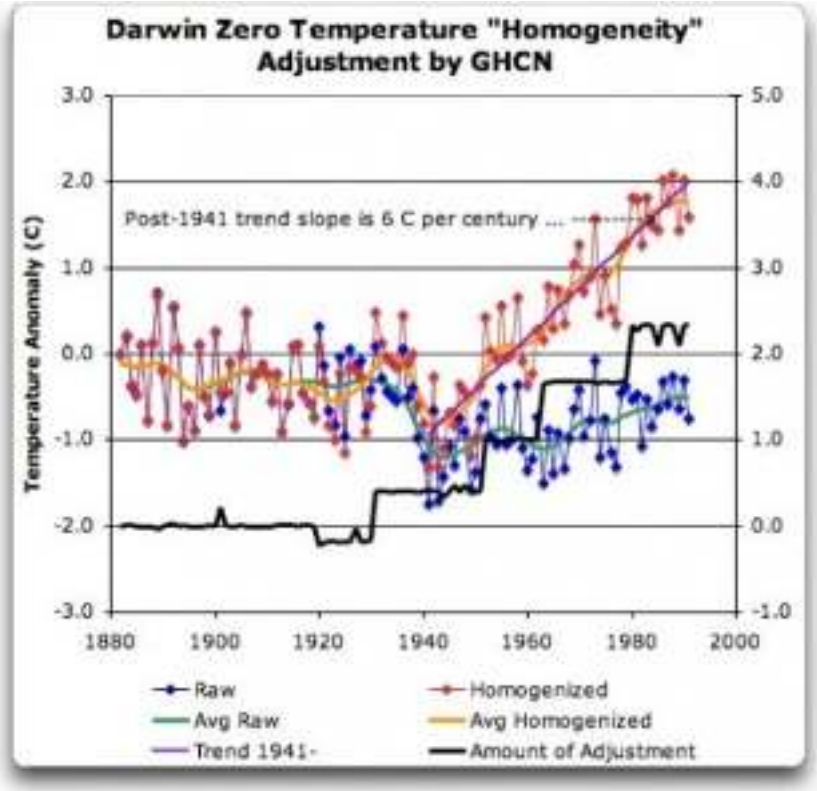

Excerpt:

> Yikes again, double yikes! What on earth justifies that adjustment? How can they do that? We have five different records covering Darwin from 1941 on. They all agree almost exactly. Why adjust them at all? They've just added a huge artificial totally imaginary trend to the last half of the raw data! Now it looks like the IPCC diagram in Figure 1, all right … but a six degree per century trend? And in the shape of a regular stepped pyramid climbing to heaven? What's up with that?
>
> Those, dear friends, are the clumsy fingerprints of someone messing with the data Egyptian style … they are indisputable evidence that the "homogenized" data has been changed to fit someone's preconceptions about whether the earth is warming.
>
> One thing is clear from this. People who say that "Climategate was only about scientists behaving badly, but the data is OK" are wrong. At least one part of the data is bad, too. The Smoking Gun for that statement is at Darwin Zero.
>
> So once again, I'm left with an unsolved mystery. How and why did the GHCN "adjust" Darwin's historical temperature to show radical warming? Why did they

> adjust it stepwise? Do Phil Jones and the CRU folks use the “adjusted” or the raw GHCN dataset? My guess is the adjusted one since it shows warming, but of course we still don’t know … because despite all of this, the CRU still hasn’t released the list of data that they actually use, just the station list.

And here’s Steve McIntyre and Chris Horner on the secular-leftist CNN:

Steve is moderate and circumspect, but Chris Horner is quite direct. I just ordered his book “Red Hot Lies”.

Indian auto sales surge 71.9% while free trade vaults Chile into the first world

December 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of India

Before, I wrote about India's election results and the decision of the ruling Congress Party to *drastically* cut income taxes. And I also wrote about China's decision to cut taxes on purchases of new automobiles. So did those tax cuts work out for India and China?

Story from the Associated Press

Excerpt:

> China extended its lead over the U.S. as the world's biggest auto market in November, with production and sales both surpassing 1 million vehicles, and India saw sales jump 71.9-percent.
>
> […]China's auto market is sizzling, thanks largely to tax cuts and subsidies aimed at supporting the industry and encouraging use of more fuel-efficient vehicles. The boom has clinched China's status as the world's biggest vehicle market due to languishing sales in the U.S.
>
> […]The surge is also a sign of how the Indian consumer — encouraged by government tax cuts, a big disbursement of back pay for government employees and falling interest rates — is fueling economic growth in Asia's third-largest economy.

As everyone knows, the Democrats chose to bail out auto companies with taxpayer

money and reward people with taxpayer money for destroying fully functional vehicles. And we all know how well that has worked out.

Chile poised to jump from the third world to the first world

Check out this editorial from Investors Business Daily. (podcast here)

Excerpt:

> Chile is expected to win entry to OECD's club of developed countries by Dec. 15 — a great affirmation for a once-poor nation that pulled itself up by trusting markets. One thing that stands out here is free trade.

> […]It's not like Chile was born lucky. Only 30 years ago, it was an impoverished country with per capita GDP of $1,300. Its distant geography, irresponsible neighbors and tiny population were significant obstacles to investment and growth. And its economy, dominated by labor unions, wasn't just closed, but sealed tight.
>
> In the Cato Institute's 1975 Economic Freedom of the World Report it ranked a wretched 71 out of 72 countries evaluated.
>
> Today it's a different country altogether. Embracing markets has made it one of the most open economies in the world, ranking third on Cato's index, just behind Hong Kong and Singapore. Per capita GDP has soared to $15,000.
>
> Besides its embrace of free trade, other reforms — including pension privatization, tax cuts, respect for property rights and cutting of red tape helped the country grow not only richer but more democratic, says Cato Institute trade expert Daniel Griswold.
>
> But the main thing, Griswold says, is that the country didn't shift course. "Chile's economy is set apart from its neighbors, because they have pursued market policies consistently over a long period," he said. "Free trade has been a central part of Chile's success."

Democrats oppose free trade, and their hostility to free trade angers many other countries in the world.

What does it take for a country to succeed?

I gave my Dad my copy of "Money, Greed and God" by Jay Richards, and although he thought that it started out slow, he's warmed up to it. He calls me on the phone at least twice a day, and last night he alerted me to this web site, where you can track each countries average citizen's life span and per-capita GDP over time. My Dad was pretty liberal on economics before, so naturally I've been working on him with lots of introductory books on economics. He's read about a dozen now, and Thomas Sowell is his favorite.

Anyway, my Dad says that this is what a country needs to succeed:

- free trade with other nations

- the rule of law
- low judicial activism
- low tax rates
- private property protections
- currency not threatened by inflation
- low government spending
- minimal regulation of commerce

And at that web site, you can track the success of countries like Singapore and Hong Kong, which embrace conservative small government free market fiscal policies, and compare them with countries like Zimbabwe and North Korea, which embrace big government protectionist fiscal policies. Countries fail because they adopt the wrong policies. They succeed when they adopt the right policies. It doesn't matter how poor they start, if they have the right policies, they grow rich over time.

Why are the Democrats so incompetent on economic policy?

Well, it's because there is almost no one in the Obama socialist regime who has ever run a business or worked in a business. Check out this graphic. (H/T Flopping Aces)

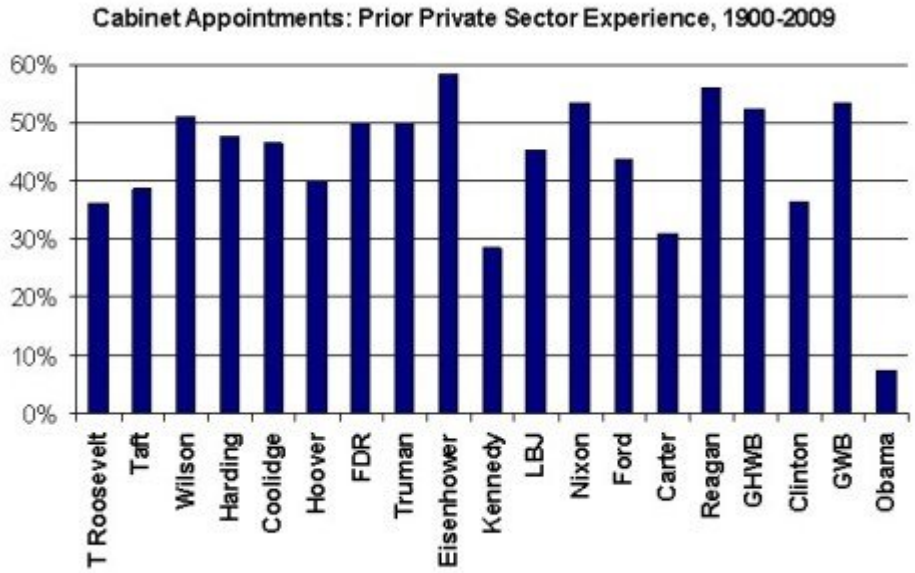

You can read more about the Obama administration's ignorance of business and economics here in Forbes magazine.

This Reuters article discusses the price of economic ignorance: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Hunger is spreading while the number of homeless families is increasing as a result of the recession and other factors, according to a report on Tuesday.
>
> The U.S. Conference of Mayors said cities reported a 26 percent jump in demand for hunger assistance over the past year, the largest average increase since 1991.
>
> Middle-class families as well as the uninsured, elderly, working poor and homeless increasingly looked for help with hunger, which was mainly fueled by

> unemployment, high housing costs and low wages.

Democrats really don’t know what they are doing. It’s like putting pre-schoolers in charge of Amazon.com. It doesn’t work. Their ivory tower, silver-spoon worldview cannot comprehend real-world, grown-up complexities. So long as the Democrats continue to attack the businesses that employ citizens while redistributing wealth from people who produce to people who vote Democrat, our economic troubles will continue.

Related Cato Institute podcasts

- How to create a job (9 minutes)
- Trade, trade, please go away (6 minutes)
- The rule of law and the Fed (12 minutes)

Two Iranian Christian women released from Iranian prison after 259 days

December 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marzieh Amirizadeh, 30, and Maryam Rustampoor, 27
Story from Christianity Today.

Excerpt:

> Coming on the heels of the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (Nov. 8), Christian religious-freedom groups celebrated a victory yesterday in Iran. Marzieh Amirizadeh Esmaeilabad, 30, and Maryam Rustampoor, 27 — two Iranian converts to Christianity — were freed after being imprisoned for 259 days.
>
> Authorities raided the women's apartment, which contained "Christian literature," on March 5. The women were charged with anti-state activity, spreading Christianity, and apostasy (deserting one's faith), and were placed in Tehran's notorious Evin prison.
>
> In Iran, apostasy alone is punishable by execution or life in prison.
>
> […]While in custody, reports came that the two women endured "intense interrogations which have reportedly included sleep deprivation and other psychological pressure." In the past, Evin in particular has been accused of denying its inmates basic rights, and both women suffered from poor health that went untreated.

Now consider this from BosNewsLife:

> After a deputy prosecutor reportedly told them, "It is impossible for God to speak with humans," Esmaeilabad apparently replied: "Are you questioning whether God is Almighty?" The prosecution was heard telling her that she is "not worthy for God" but Esmaeilabad countered: "'It is God, and not you, who determines if I am worthy." After they were told by a court to return to prison and think about their options, the two women were heard saying: "We have already done our thinking. If we come out of prison we want to do so with honor."

Honor is a very important thing for Christians. To me, honor means "your reputation with

God". And Christians are expected to endure persecution at the hands of non-Christians while keeping their honor intact. But I think that the suffering and cruelty endured by these women goes above and beyond the call of duty. I hope that I will be as honorable as these women if I ever faced similar troubles. But to be honest, I don't think I could do 1% as well as they did. This was *amazing.* I hope they can keep this up. So far, so good, but it must be very difficult for them.

So to show them my respect and admiration, I'm going to quote a Bible passage that describes them.

1 Corinthians 4:1-4:

[1]So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.

[2]Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

[3]I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.

[4]My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

One of my favorites passages in the Bible. This passage defines the attitude that Christians should have.

And here's one more passage, because there are two of them.

Matthew 5:13-16:

[13]"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

[14]"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

[15]Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

[16]In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

The Christianity Today article is a great summary of the entire story, in case you were not following it. The article notes that the two women will have to appear in court again at some point in the future.

Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s

December 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at the National Post. (H/T Neil's Simpson's round-up)

Excerpt:

> The latest government survey of polar bears roaming the vast Arctic expanses of northern Quebec, Labrador and southern Baffin Island show the population of polar bears has jumped to 2,100 animals from around 800 in the mid-1980s.
>
> As recently as three years ago, a less official count placed the number at 1,400.
>
> The Inuit have always insisted the bears' demise was greatly exaggerated by scientists doing projections based on fly-over counts, but their input was usually dismissed as the ramblings of self-interested hunters.
>
> As Nunavut government biologist Mitch Taylor observed in a front-page story in the Nunatsiaq News last month, "the Inuit were right. There aren't just a few more bears. There are a hell of a lot more bears."
>
> Their widely portrayed lurch toward extinction on a steadily melting ice cap is not supported by bear counts in other Arctic regions either.

Meanwhile, Obama is in Copenhagen making speeches about myths.

Related posts

- Climate Research Unit servers hacked, e-mails made public
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Government-funded research unit destroyed original climate data
- The state of the debate about catastrophic man-made global warming
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says solar activity impacts climate
- Famous UN IPCC hockey stick graph is based on cherry-picked data
- Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming
- Global warming advocates refuse to give their data to skeptics
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says prior ice melting caused by solar variation
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Global warming is not caused by humans

What really goes on in William Lane Craig’s Sunday School class

December 11, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For those of you who grew up outside the church, now you’ll find out what Christians secretly talk about!

The MP3 file is here. (36 minutes)

William Lane Craig introduces a new class that he is teaching at his home church in Atlanta. The first talk explains why theology matters in a relationship with God.

This talk is part of a podcast that updates every week. Here is the RSS feed.

MUST-SEE: Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference

December 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Must see it to believe it. (H/T Secondhand Smoke)

Holy snark!

My summary of the Climategate scandal is here.

Related posts

- Climate Research Unit servers hacked, e-mails made public
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Government-funded research unit destroyed original climate data
- The state of the debate about catastrophic man-made global warming
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- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Global warming is not caused by humans

Doug Groothuis gives an introduction to Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism

December 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's something fun I found on Apologetics 315.

1. A Brief History of Buddhism and Hinduism – MP3
2. A Brief History of Islam – MP3

The lectures were given during the summer of 2007, so he mentions that the BJP is in power in India, but now Congress is in power. The lectures are not as focused as I would like – he talks a lot about off-topic things like general apologetics and Christian living, but it's still a good introduction. It's better from beginners. He definitely knows his material, and in depth.

Related posts

- How to defend Christian exclusivism from the challenge of religious pluralism
- the problem of religious pluralism and religious truth claims
- the problem of postmodern skepticism
- the fate of the unevangelized (what about those who never heard of Jesus)
- the hiddenness of God (why isn't there more evidence for God's existence?)
- are all religions basically the same?
- what about the blind men and the elephant?
- isn't faith is opposed to reason and evidence? (a debate between a Christian and a postmodern relativist)
- what makes Christianity different from other religions?

Charles Krauthammer on how global warming alarmism is socialism

December 12, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Editorial from the Washington Post. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> […]On the day Copenhagen opened, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency claimed jurisdiction over the regulation of carbon emissions by declaring them an "endangerment" to human health.
>
> Since we operate an overwhelmingly carbon-based economy, the EPA will be regulating practically everything. No institution that emits more than 250 tons of CO2 a year will fall outside EPA control. This means more than a million building complexes, hospitals, plants, schools, businesses and similar enterprises. (The EPA proposes regulating emissions only above 25,000 tons, but it has no such authority.) Not since the creation of the Internal Revenue Service has a federal agency been given more intrusive power over every aspect of economic life.
>
> […]Socialism having failed so spectacularly, the left was adrift until it struck upon a brilliant gambit: metamorphosis from red to green. The cultural elites went straight from the memorial service for socialism to the altar of the environment. The objective is the same: highly centralized power given to the best and the brightest, the new class of experts, managers and technocrats. This time, however, the alleged justification is not abolishing oppression and inequality but saving the planet.

The EPA decision basically passes control of the economy to Washington while bypassing the legislature. Krauthammer calls it a "coup d'etat".

Russia attacks the religious liberty of Jehovah's Witnesses

December 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from CBS News. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Russia's highest court on Tuesday upheld a ruling halting the activities of a regional branch of Jehovah's Witnesses and banning dozens of its publications in what the group deplored as an unfair move.
>
> Russian Supreme Court spokesman Pavel Odintsov said it rejected the group's appeal of September's ruling by a regional court in Rostov-on-Don. That ruling outlawed the group's activities in the region, seized its assets there and labeled 34 of its publications as extremist.

I found a few more details here at a site called Forum 18.

Excerpt:

> The texts considered extremist by the Rostov court are all published in the United States and Germany. They include the books "What Does the Bible Really Teach?" and "My Book of Bible Stories" as well as issues of the tracts "Watchtower" and "Awake!". The court's 56-page ruling, seen by Forum 18, gives three categories of alleged extremism located by expert analysts in the texts: 1) "incitement of religious hatred (undermining respect and hostility towards other religions)"; 2) "refusing blood" and 3) "refusing civil responsibilities". Thus, from the book "Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life", "true Christians do not celebrate Christmas or other festivals based on false religious ideas" appears in the first category; "out of respect for the sacred nature of life God-fearing people refuse blood transfusions" in the second; and "true Christians avoid false forms of idolatry, such as revering flags and performing anthems" in the third.

So what do I, an arch-evangelical Protestant Christian, think of this?

Well, I am *against* the Russian government, because I am *for* religious liberty, and even the religious liberty of groups that I don't agree with. And I'm going to tell you why. I believe that everyone has a right to believe in anything they want to believe in, and it does not bother me at all that people disagree with my religion,and that they speak out against Christianity, or try to convert people away from Christianity. The state should not interfere with anyone's free speech or religious liberty, including the right of individuals to say publicly they are right about religion and that others are wrong.

I think that people who reject orthodox Christian beliefs about God and Jesus *will go to Hell* for eternity. I don't believe that people go to Heaven because of sincerity and good works. People go to Heaven because they have true beliefs about God's existence,

character and his actions in the world, – e.g. – Jesus death on the cross as atonement for sin. But my thinking that people are wrong doesn't give me any justification for limiting their human rights, including the right to religious liberty, by using the power of the secular state.

I think we need to take a lesson in tolerance from God. God gives everyone space to try to respond to his revealing of himself to people in nature and in the Bible. He arranges the world in such a way that people who he foreknows *will respond to him* are placed in a time and place where they *can respond to him*. He does not force people to convert to Christianity by revealing himself so much that they lose their free will to reject him. And since God is not coercive, Christians should also not use state power to coerce others, either.

The Bible shows Jesus talking to people and being kind to them when they were suffering, as well as giving them evidence for his claims in the form of miracles. And that's the way Christians should persuade others as well – except that we have to use miracles in nature and history, like the fine-tuning argument and the bodily resurrection instead. At no point does Jesus bring in the power of the state to squash the religious liberty of his opponents.

I am not worried about JWs tricking some Christian into becoming a JW either. If someone is able to trick a person into being a JW, then that person is obviously not concerned about the truth. No one becomes a JW because they think JW doctrine is *true*. It is extremely easy to disprove the beliefs of JWs factually – just take a look at their failed predictions about the end of the world. And Mormons believe in an eternal universe. That's how you argue against a rival religion – with *arguments and facts.*

If the Russian government wants to rein in religions like Islam and Jehovah's Witnesses, then they should be sponsoring debates between opposing scholars and showing them television. Have the different religion groups vote for the *best* scholar to represent their religion, and then have the scholars debate different topics. That's just being fair! The state should not curtail religious liberty by using government power.

I wrote a post about this issue of people being afraid to talk about religion.

How much are federal government employees being paid during the recession?

December 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from USA Today. (H/T National Review via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Federal employees making salaries of $100,000 or more jumped from 14% to 19% of civil servants during the recession's first 18 months — and that's before overtime pay and bonuses are counted.
>
> Federal workers are enjoying an extraordinary boom time — in pay and hiring — during a recession that has cost 7.3 million jobs in the private sector.
>
> The highest-paid federal employees are doing best of all on salary increases. Defense Department civilian employees earning $150,000 or more increased from 1,868 in December 2007 to 10,100 in June 2009, the most recent figure available.
>
> When the recession started, the Transportation Department had only one person earning a salary of $170,000 or more. Eighteen months later, 1,690 employees had salaries above $170,000.

The average private sector salary is about $40,000. The average federal worker makes over $71,000.

Lieberman and Nelson will vote against latest version of Obamacare

December 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at The Hill. (H/T Ace of Spades via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Sens. Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) and Ben Nelson (D-Neb.) both said a Medicare "buy-in" option for those aged 55-64 was a deal breaker.
>
> "I'm concerned that it's the forerunner of single payer, the ultimate single-payer plan, maybe even more directly than the public option," Nelson said on CBS's "Face the Nation."
>
> Lieberman said Democrats should stop looking for a public option "compromise" and simply scrap the idea altogether.
>
> "You've got to take out the Medicare buy-in. You've got to forget about the public option," he said.
>
> If Democrats stick to relying primarily on the bill's subsidies, the legislation would pass easily and with bipartisan support, Lieberman argued.

Ace also notes that Clair McCaskill will vote against anything that fails to bring down the deficit.

MUST-READ: The UK Daily Mail gives the best summary of Climategate

December 13, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story at the UK Daily Mail has all the details in plain English, with graphs. (H/T Ace of Spades via ECM)

First, they got rid of the Medieval Warming Period by cherry-picking data:

> Some tree-ring data eliminates the medieval warmth altogether, while others reflect it. In September 1999, Jones's IPCC colleague Michael Mann of Penn State University in America – who is now also the subject of an official investigation –was working with Jones on the hockey stick. As they debated which data to use, they discussed a long tree-ring analysis carried out by Keith Briffa.
>
> Briffa knew exactly why they wanted it, writing in an email on September 22: 'I know there is pressure to present a nice tidy story as regards "apparent unprecedented warming in a thousand years or more".' But his conscience was troubled. 'In reality the situation is not quite so simple – I believe that the recent warmth was probably matched about 1,000 years ago.'
>
> […]Finally, Briffa changed the way he computed his data and submitted a revised version. This brought his work into line for earlier centuries, and 'cooled' them significantly.

Then, they hid the decline in temperature after 1960:

> According to his tree rings, the period since 1960 had not seen a steep rise in temperature, as actual temperature readings showed – but a large and steady decline, so calling into question the accuracy of the earlier data derived from tree rings.
>
> This is the context in which, seven weeks later, Jones presented his 'trick' – as simple as it was deceptive.
>
> All he had to do was cut off Briffa's inconvenient data at the point where the decline started, in 1961, and replace it with actual temperature readings, which showed an increase.
>
> On the hockey stick graph, his line is abruptly terminated – but the end of the line is obscured by the other lines.

Ace is calling this a must-read. I agree. Drop everything you are doing and go read it. If you have a blog, blog about it. Submit the Daily Mail post to Stumble Upon, Digg and Reddit.

Pew survey shows that evangelical Christian Republicans are the most rational

December 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Pew Research survey is here.

They are trying to see which groups believe in superstitions and new age mysticism.

Here are the parts that I found interesting:

Beliefs of Demographic, Political and Religious Groups

	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	%	%	%	%	%	
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Female	38	37	37	38	8	1,141
White	31	32	34	32	4	1,927
Black	34	31	30	39	39	62
Hispanic	39	33	37	39	36	43
18-29	36	31	31	30	8	372
30-49	39	36	38	36	9	293
50-64	36	30	39	33	6	297
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Democrat	30	31	30	31	9	328
[illegible]	8	9	8	6	7	317
[illegible]	37	39	39	30	9	303
[illegible]	33	39	39	30	7	414
[illegible]	30	8	30	31	6	1,039
[illegible]	1	2	9	3	2	402
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	34	34	37	34	0	403
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	39	30	8	39	32	32
[illegible]	38	37	39	39	7	437
[illegible]	39	34	34	39	2	338
[illegible]	31	9	32	6	2	62
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	39	38	30	39	2	303

Click for full image.

Supernatural Experiences

	[illegible]	[illegible]	Fortune	[illegible]
	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]

> […]The answers were added up to create an index of belief in occult and the paranormal. While 31% of people who never worship expressed strong belief in these things, only 8% of people who attend a house of worship more than once a week did.
>
> Even among Christians, there were disparities. While 36% of those belonging to the United Church of Christ, Sen. Barack Obama's former denomination, expressed strong beliefs in the paranormal, only 14% of those belonging to the Assemblies of God, Sarah Palin's former denomination, did. In fact, the more traditional and evangelical the respondent, the less likely he was to believe in, for instance, the possibility of communicating with people who are dead.

Listen to William Lane Craig commenting on the Pew Research survey on the latest episode of the radio show Issues, Etc. with Todd Wilken.

Here is the MP3 file, if you don't want to click through.

Audio clips and post-debate interviews from latest Dawkins debate

December 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the latest episode of the Unbelievable radio show.

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

Atheists Richard Dawkins, and AC Grayling recently squared up against Christians Richard Harries and Charles Moore for a debate on the motion "Atheism is the new fundamentalism".

Justin Brierley reviews the debate with audio clips from the speakers and Q&A session, as well as interviews with those who attended, including AC Grayling and the Chair of the debate Anthony Seldon.

For the full debate visit http://www.intelligencesquared.com/

Justin has a lot of audio clips of the speeches and Q&A from the debate. This was a public debate. He also conducts post-debate interviews with one of the speakers, and some of the people in the audience. The people representing Christianity in the debate are totally useless. Justin also interviewed some "Christian" woman after the debate who is not even an orthodox Christian!

I think that in the UK, people are not really orthodox in their Christian beliefs. They seem poorly trained in theology and apologetics. I think that political correctness and multiculturalism has really weakened Christianity in the UK. At the end of the show Justin says that he will be focusing on the movie *Expelled* in the new year and so I hope they will get some good Christian scholars – not like John Lennox and Richard Swinburne!

Justin – if you're reading this – please don't put any more pastors on to defend Christianity. C.S. Lewis and G.K. Chesterton types are not effective against the New Atheists. Please get Paul Copan, Keith Yandell, Craig Evans, Jonathan Wells, Stephen Meyer, Jay Richards, Guillermo Gonzalez, William Dembski, Darrell Bock, Dan Wallace, James Sinclair, and Doug Geivett instead. Or William Lane Craig, but that goes without saying.

My thoughts on why atheists are fundamentalists

I want to say a little something about atheists and the word "science". Atheists don't really value science, they value *naturalism*. Science is a method of inquiry that helps people to discover the way the world really works. Naturalism is a philosophical pre-supposition that says that every effect in the universe is the result of natural law and matter. And they cling to this pre-supposition as strongly as Muslims cling to their beliefs. There is no evidence that will shake them from their blind faith in the efficacy of naturalistic mechanisms.

Consider this quote from an atheist named Richard Lewontin:

> Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science *in spite* of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite* of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite* of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. **Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.** The eminent Kant scholar Lewis Beck used to say that anyone who could believe in God could believe in anything. To appeal to an omnipotent deity is to allow that at any moment the regularities of nature may be ruptured, that miracles may happen.

When an atheist says that they like science, what they really mean is that they like naturalism (= materialism). When the progress of science demonstrates the need for a Creator of the universe, a Designer for the fine-tuning, an intelligent cause of biological information, etc., then atheists jump off the science bandwagon and begin to talk about how science is a very limited, tentative enterprise. They do this in order to save their religion of naturalism from being tested against scientific discoveries.

Catholic church will stop all charity work if same-sex marriage passes in DC

December 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Post. (H/T Weasel Zippers via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Catholic Archdiocese of Washington said Wednesday that it will be unable to continue the social service programs it runs for the District if the city doesn't change a proposed same-sex marriage law, a threat that could affect tens of thousands of people the church helps with adoption, homelessness and health care.
>
> Under the bill, headed for a D.C. Council vote next month, religious organizations would not be required to perform or make space available for same-sex weddings. But they would have to obey city laws prohibiting discrimination against gay men and lesbians.
>
> Fearful that they could be forced, among other things, to extend employee benefits to same-sex married couples, church officials said they would have no choice but to abandon their contracts with the city.
>
> "If the city requires this, we can't do it," Susan Gibbs, spokeswoman for the archdiocese, said Wednesday. "The city is saying in order to provide social services, you need to be secular. For us, that's really a problem."

This happens all the time with other charities like Catholic adoption agencies and hospitals. The left wants to force the people who actually do good to change their worldview to atheism. But self-sacrificial acts of charity are not rationally grounded by the atheist worldview. Atheists are NOT just like religious people when it comes to morality. The only standards of morality that are grounded by atheism are personal preferences and cultural fashions. Morality isn't real, on their view. There is no objective ground for moral values and duties.

The problem with the atheistic worldview is that their purpose in life is hedonism. And there is no reason for them to care about the consequences of their actions on other people's rights since rights are illusory on atheism. They want to pursue happiness, avoid moral obligations, and have others pay for the social consequences of their actions. They don't care about how their selfishness hurts vulnerable children, born and unborn. And they are willing to use government to force religious people to subsidize *and celebrate* their selfish immorality.

The great moral accomplishment of atheists in the last 100 years has been to murder 100 million people. And this is not counting the millions of deaths caused by abortion, and environmentalist bans on DDT. It also doesn't count the millions of broken homes caused by the sexual revolution, or the social costs of raising children without fathers who go on

to commit crimes. Perhaps they should just mind their own business instead of interfering with the charity done by those whose worldview actually grounds morality rationally.

Michael Crichton lecture on whether aliens cause global warming

December 14, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This lecture delivered by Michael Crichton, *an atheist*, at Caltech is a classic.

Consider this excerpt about "nuclear winter", which is a myth that "scientists" like Carl Sagan and Paul Ehrlich invented in order to scare the public into voting for leftist foreign policies:

> In 1975, the National Academy of Sciences reported on "Long-Term Worldwide Effects of Multiple Nuclear Weapons Detonations" but the report estimated the effect of dust from nuclear blasts to be relatively minor. In 1979, the Office of Technology Assessment issued a report on "The Effects of Nuclear War" and stated that nuclear war could perhaps produce irreversible adverse consequences on the environment.
>
> […]At the conference in Washington, during the question period, Ehrlich was reminded that after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, scientists were quoted as saying nothing would grow there for 75 years, but in fact melons were growing the next year. So, he was asked, how accurate were these findings now?
>
> Ehrlich answered by saying "I think they are extremely robust. Scientists may have made statements like that, although I cannot imagine what their basis would have been, even with the state of science at that time, but scientists are always making absurd statements, individually, in various places. What we are doing here, however, is presenting a consensus of a very large group of scientists…"
>
> I want to pause here and talk about this notion of consensus, and the rise of what has been called consensus science. I regard consensus science as an extremely pernicious development that ought to be stopped cold in its tracks. Historically, the claim of consensus has been the first refuge of scoundrels; it is a way to avoid debate by claiming that the matter is already settled. Whenever you hear the consensus of scientists agrees on something or other, reach for your wallet, because you're being had.
>
> Let's be clear: the work of science has nothing whatever to do with consensus. Consensus is the business of politics. Science, on the contrary, requires only one investigator who happens to be right, which means that he or she has results that are verifiable by reference to the real world. In science consensus is irrelevant. What is relevant is reproducible results. The greatest scientists in history are great precisely because they broke with the consensus.
>
> There is no such thing as consensus science. If it's consensus, it isn't science. If it's science, it isn't consensus. Period.

This is very relevant considering the latest news about Climategate. Liberals view science as a tool to get the public to enact policies that they think are enlightened, like socialism and secularism. Often, public sector scientists will advocate for policies that attack business and grow government, so that they will get bigger grants and higher salaries. But they also use “science” to try to undermine traditional morality and religion so that public policy does not prevent them from acting immorally. They want to be evil and they don’t want to be judged or punished.

MUST-LISTEN: Michele Bachmann issues conservative call to action

December 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Listen to the interview here.

Other media formats with the same interview:

- MicheleBachmann.mp3
- MicheleBachmann.mov
- MicheleBachmann.m4v
- MicheleBachmann.flv

I highly recommend listening to this 30-minute podcast. Very moving. At one point she is almost in tears as she pleads with people to call Washington and tell them not to spend any more taxpayer money. Never heard anything like this before from a legislator in all my life.

MUST-READ: What does the Bible say about forcing pro-lifers to perform abortions?

December 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the New York Post. (H/T Hot Air – Cassy Fiano)

Excerpt:

> A Brooklyn nurse claims she was forced to choose between her religious convictions and her job when Mount Sinai Hospital ordered her to assist in a late-term abortion against her will.
>
> The hospital even exaggerated the patient's condition and claimed the woman could die if the nurse, a devout Catholic, did not follow orders, the nurse alleges in a lawsuit.
>
> "It felt like a horror film unfolding," said Catherina Cenzon-DeCarlo, 35, who claims she has had gruesome nightmares and hasn't been able to sleep since the May 24 incident.
>
> The married mother of a year-old baby was 30 minutes into her early-morning shift when she realized she had been assigned to an abortion. She begged her supervisor to find a replacement nurse for the procedure. The hospital had a six-hour window to find a fill-in, the suit says.
>
> Bosses told the weeping Cenzon-DeCarlo the patient was 22 weeks into her pregnancy and had preeclampsia, a condition marked by high blood pressure that can lead to seizures or death if left untreated.
>
> The supervisor "claimed that the mother could die if [Cenzon-DeCarlo] did not assist in the abortion."
>
> But the nurse, the niece of a Filipino bishop, contends that the patient's life was not in danger. She argued that the patient was not even on magnesium therapy, a common treatment for preeclampsia, and did not have problems indicating an emergency.
>
> Her pleas were rejected, and instead she was threatened with career-ending charges of insubordination and patient abandonment, according to the lawsuit, filed Tuesday in Brooklyn federal court.
>
> Feeling threatened, Cenzon-DeCarlo assisted in the procedure.
>
> She said she later learned that the hospital's own records deemed the procedure "Category II," which is not considered immediately life threatening.

WARNING: I am now going to be really mean. Please don't read the rest of this if you don't like me being judgmental against atheists.

I was thinking about the kinds of things that atheists think are "moral" and interpreting those things within a Biblical framework. I know that atheists support abortion because

they don't want to be compelled to diminish their own happiness by tending to the needs of their own baby, conceived as a result of their own irresponsible sexual behavior. So when they force a pro-life nurse to perform an abortion, what they are really saying is "I don't want anyone punishing other people with the unhappy consequences of their own selfish pursuit of happiness, because then no one will judge and punish me when I do the same as they did".

The problem is that atheists don't want to be thought of as people who are willing to go as far as killing others in order to avoid facing judgment and consequences for their own actions. They have to invent some myth that justifies the abortion, instead. If they could only invent some plausible-sounding myth that would convince other people, and themselves, that their abortion was justified by some greater good. With the right myth, they could continue their pursuit of pleasure unimpeded by consequences and social disapproval. What possible myth could possibly provide moral justification for something as extreme as abortion?

Well, atheists decided to invent several myths to provide rationalization for abortion:

- Darwinism – animals do it, and we're just animals, so let's do it!
- overpopulation – we'll all starve by 1970! Oops, I mean 1990! 2050!
- resource exhaustion – we'll be out of oil by 1970! Oops, I mean 1990! 2050!
- global warming – too many people are driving cars so some have to go away!
- embryonic stem-cell research – it will turn lead into gold, you'll see!
- rising crime rates – who cares about what economists say!
- etc.

So basically they are inventing myths in order to justify abortion as a legitimate means of pursuing happiness in this life. And this made me think of how child sacrifice was used by pagan nations in the Bible. It's exactly what is predicted in Romans 1:18-32, which is arguably the most useful passage in the Bible for understanding what our existence here is really about. They didn't want to take responsibility for those demanding, expensive children they conceived during unmarried sex, because those children would reduce their selfish pursuit of pleasure. So they invented a variety of baseless myths in order to make abortion appear "moral" to themselves and to others.

The Bible mentions the habit of inventing "speculations" in order to avoid having to obey the moral law. Atheists feel that they are too "smart" to be restrained by authentic morality, especially one that is constantly under fire in the public schools, the mainstream media and pop culture. So they do destructive things and then are surprised to feel guilty about it. They want to be happy while sinning, and to avoid the natural consequences of sin that serve as warning signs of the judgment to come. If anyone dares to imply that there is any morality higher than selfishness, (say, by wearing a cross in public or by questioning Darwinism), then they use the power of the state to silence them.

That's atheist "morality". The Bible's diagnosis of sin really hasn't changed in 2000 years. The people who rebel against God have just found more sophisticated myths to justify

their selfish pursuit of pleasure. Before, it was Molech. Today, it's overpopulation causing global warming. And they are not afraid to enforce these myths on religious people using the power of the state. Anything to make everyone celebrate their destructive actions as though they were in fact good. And if they have to kill many people to pursue happiness, well, that's fine on atheism – there is no "right to life" on atheism. It's survival of the fittest. Morality is just an illusion created by evolution.

And that is why a pro-life nurse was forced to perform an abortion – because she made people who reject God feel guilty by calling attention to a real standard of objective morality which defies atheistic efforts to rationalize hedonism with speculative myths. She was telling them that we should not take the life of an innocent unborn human being just because it makes us happier to do so. She was opposing their hedonistic purposes, and the speculative myths that they had invented to justify their selfish, irresponsible pursuit of pleasure. Christian morality isn't a headlong pursuit of selfish pleasure. It's about self-denial and self-sacrifice – which is *not* pleasurable.

As I wrote before:

> The great moral accomplishment of atheists in the last 100 years has been to murder 100 million people. And this is not counting the millions of deaths caused by abortion, and environmentalist bans on DDT. It also doesn't count the millions of broken homes caused by the sexual revolution, or the social costs of raising children without fathers who go on to commit crimes.

When the intuitive awareness of God's moral requirements conflicts with the atheistic desire for selfish happiness, atheists first do the crime, then they search around frantically for some fig-leaf to justify it as "moral". Any speculation will do, and the "evidence" can be manufactured (at taxpayer expense) to fit the myths. They believe that if they could just get everyone to see that evil is really good, and to celebrate their selfish hedonism, then their feelings of guilt would vanish, and their happiness level would increase. Their attempts to demonize Christianity and Christians is also part of their plan – they want to celebrate their own behavior as moral and deride the behavior of authentic Christians as immoral.

The very concept of morality is illusory on an atheistic worldview.

And lest anyone think that I can't defend the Christian worldview as true, click here and start engaging.

Why the mortgage cramdown bill would hurt consumers

December 15, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Democrats are pushing a "cramdown" bill which is a bill designed to allow federal judges to renegotiate the terms of delinquent mortgages when the person who entered into a contract to borrow the money cannot repay it. The problem with this bill is that it hurts the very people it is intended to help – because as soon as banks see that they cannot rely of the courts to enforce contracts, they will immediately stop making loans to those with mediocre credit ratings. So, the people who most need to borrow money will be the hardest hit. And it opens the door for the government to then seize control of the banks and force them to make the loans, so that we turn into Venezuela.

Consider this article from the Heritage Foundation:

> Just as the housing market is showing definite signs that it is stabilizing after a lengthy drop in housing prices, the House of Representatives is about to vote on proposal that would destabilize it once again while also raising the cost of mortgages for future home buyers.
>
> The proposal – to be offered by Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) as an amendment to the financial regulation bill now before the House -would allow bankruptcy judges to reduce the principal owed on a mortgage, a practice often referred to as a "cramdown." Judges would also be able to reduce interest rates or lengthen the term of the mortgage.
>
> This is a huge policy mistake that would help only a few people while raising the cost of borrowing for thousands of moderate-income and first-time homebuyers.

Fortunately the bill failed to pass, but it does show you the fatal flaw of Democrat emotion-based policy-making. They hurt the very people they are trying to help – the cause the very crisis they are trying to alleviate. That is standard operating procedure for Democrats. They don't understand the incentives they are creating when they pass "compassionate" laws.

Democrat secures TARP funds for unemployed homeowners

On another subject, take a look at this AP article. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> Call it the $6 billion boycott.
>
> By boycotting a key House committee vote last week and threatening to abandon support for banking regulations, members of the Congressional Black Caucus got $4 billion added to a Wall Street regulation bill and $2 billion to a proposed House jobs bill in spending they sought for African American communities.
>
> House Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank, D-Mass., this week

> inserted $3 billion to the legislation to provide low-interest loans to unemployed homeowners in danger of foreclosure. He added $1 billion for neighborhood revitalization programs.
>
> The money would come out of the $700 billion financial rescue fund.
>
> “For those of us who walked out, it was absolutely essential that we have parts of that legislation directed toward helping people who have been left out of all of these bailouts,” Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, D-Mo., one of 10 black caucus members in the Financial Services Committee, said…Among the caucus’ demands were greater assistance for minority-owned auto dealerships and banks that lend in African-American communities and more government advertising in minority-owned media.

This is taking money out of the private sector, which creates jobs, and bailing out people who bought too much house. Taking money out of the private sector destroys economic growth. And that is why we have a 10% unemployment rate.

How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform

December 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you study software engineering management, you learned about the importance of measuring different quantities to asses the quality of the software being produced. For instance, we measure things like unit test coverage, coupling, cohesion and cyclomatic complexity. In fact, just today I had to add unit tests to some code in order to achieve over 90% test coverage. These unit tests ensure that the code will remain functional as more changes are introduced by other engineers.

There is a need for metrics in any enterprise in which the producers are trying to achieve a quality outcome for the customers. Education is no different. But sometimes educational bureaucrats and teacher unions block the collection of measurements so that no teacher or educrat will be singled out for lowering the quality of education being provided to the students.

Consider this story from City Journal (The Manhattan Institute). (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Data analysis is far from perfect, and no one argues that it should be used in isolation to make employment decisions. But modern techniques can help us distinguish between teachers whose students excel and teachers whose students languish or fail. There's just one problem with the data revolution: it doesn't work without data. States must develop data sets that track the individual performance of students over time and match those students to their teachers.
>
> Unfortunately, New York has deliberately refused to take that step. The state already has a sophisticated system for tracking student progress, but it doesn't allow this statewide data set to match students to their teachers. No technical or administrative factors prevent the state from doing so. Only political obstacles stand in the way. The premise underlying the policies favored by the teachers' unions, which govern so much of the relationship between public schools and teachers, is that all teachers are uniformly effective. Once we can objectively distinguish between effective and ineffective teachers, the system of uncritically granted tenure, a single salary schedule based on experience and credentials, and school placements based on seniority become untenable. The unions don't want information about their members' effectiveness to be available, let alone put to practical use, and thus far they've successfully blocked New York State's use of such data.
>
> Along with its refusal to improve its data system, the state has kept cities from adopting reforms. When New York City hinted that it would use its own data system to evaluate teachers based on student test scores, the state legislature passed a law banning the practice. Fortunately, that law is set to expire next year

> and may never actually be enforced, thanks to the city's new reading of it, which frees city officials to use test scores for tenure decisions this year. Still, the legislature's actions illustrate its opposition to using data in any way that would identify ineffective teachers.

This lack of concern for the well-being of the children reminds me of all the spending that Obama is doing. That spending will have to be paid back by generations yet unborn, just as the teachers sacrifice the children's interests for their own job security. And the worst part is that the children vote for the teachers unions and the government spending – what else could they do after coming through the public school system?

By the way, for those of you who are old-fashioned, like me, you may be interested in some films showed to school children growing up in the 1950s in order to develop their *moral character!* Boy, that sure was a different world than today.

Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec

December 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First story from LifeSiteNews about San Francisco.

Excerpt:

> A panel of eleven judges of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals sitting in San Francisco will hear oral arguments tomorrow, December 16, concerning the constitutionality of the San Francisco Board of Supervisor's resolution attacking the Catholic Church for its teachings against homosexual adoptions.
>
> […]The challenge was made on the grounds that the resolution expresses government hostility toward the Catholic Church and its moral teachings in violation of the Establishment Clause of the Constitution.[…]The resolution refers to the Vatican as a "foreign country" meddling in the affairs of the city and proclaims the Church's moral teaching and beliefs on homosexuality as "insulting to all San Franciscans," "hateful," "insulting and callous," "defamatory," "absolutely unacceptable," and says that Church teaching shows "insensitivity and ignorance."

And the second story also from LifeSiteNews about Quebec, the most secular and leftist province in Canada.

Excerpt:

> The Quebec Government has promulgated a new provincial policy against "homophobia," touted as the first of its kind from a North American jurisdiction. While homosexuality is already effectively fully normalized within Quebec law, the policy, released on Friday by the Ministry of Justice, is essentially a manifesto for normalizing homosexuality on the social level.
>
> […]They highlight at several points the need to target schools and youth, as did the original 2007 report. "Awareness-raising and educational measures must target young people and the institutions they frequent in order to increase their acceptance of sexual diversity," the policy states.

Pulling the troops out of Iraq, free health care and tax increases on the "rich" sound good to many uninformed Christians during an election, but they need to be careful about losing their religious liberty.

Former midwife reveals sorry state of NHS maternity services

December 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the UK Daily Mail. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> I started working as a midwife in Basildon in 1995. I left to work as an independent midwife in January last year because I simply could not bear to let any more women down.
>
> During a typical 12-hour shift, I could be the sole midwife in charge of six women in the antenatal ward – some in early labour – or one of two qualified midwives running a postnatal ward with up to 32 women.
>
> If I was in the delivery unit, I would assist in the births of up to three babies a shift.
>
> Obviously, if there was a crisis during a woman's labour – such as a sudden need for an emergency Caesarean – there was always a surgical team on call, and there would be an anaesthetist available to administer epidurals and so on.
>
> But in terms of the normal care through labour, that was all down to the midwives.
>
> Although we were under huge stress even back in 1995, current cutbacks mean fewer and fewer midwives are caring for more and more women.
>
> No wonder new mothers are encouraged to leave hospital just hours after giving birth.
>
> When I started in the mid-Nineties, there were 35,000 midwives working in Britain. A year or two ago, that number had fallen to 25,000, more than half of whom were part-time.

What a mess! Here is my previous story about 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children.

More NHS horror stories linked here.

Health care podcasts from the libertarian Cato Institute

I listened to these and thought they were filled with interesting details about the effects of Obamacare.

- Recounting the cost of Obamacare with Michael F. Cannon (6 minutes)
- Perverse incentives in Obamacare with Michael F. Cannon (10 minutes)
- Myths of Health Care Reform with Michael D. Tanner (6 minutes)

Now may be a good time to call your representatives in Washington and tell them not to

pass the health care reform bill.

Felipe Calderon proposes pro-democracy electoral reforms in Mexico

December 16, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Townhall.

Excerpt:

> President Felipe Calderon is proposing runoff elections in future presidential contests and re-election for many officials in Mexico's most dramatic political reform attempt in decades.
>
> **The proposal announced Tuesday would still limit presidents to a single, six-year term, but it would relax Mexico's ironclad ban on re-election of other officials. It also would allow independent candidates to run for public offices and would permit citizen initiatives.**
>
> **"The idea is to give citizens more power, to give them the capacity to shape public life and to strengthen our democracy," Calderon said in a televised address.**
>
> But reforms would require a string of tough-to-pass constitutional amendments and they are likely to come under fire from established parties who could see their power eroded by the changes.
>
> Under the proposed reform, the winner of presidential elections would have to receive more than half of the votes to avoid a runoff with the next-highest vote getter.
>
> […]Calderon also proposed reducing the number of senators from 128 to 96 and congressmen from 500 to 400 as a way to cut government spending and "to facilitate the building of accords."
>
> Lawmakers and mayors could hold office for up to 12 years through re-election, making them more accountable, Calderon said.
>
> "The public officials who want to remain in their posts will have to show their work and be accountable to voters who will then punish them or praise them with their votes," he said.

The possibility of having to win re-election, and the permitting of independent candidates and citizen inititiatives should make a big difference – if he can get this all passed. It's very, very bold.

Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data

December 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Telegraph. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, the Moscow-based Institute of Economic Analysis (IEA) issued a report claiming that the Hadley Center for Climate Change based at the headquarters of the British Meteorological Office in Exeter (Devon, England) had probably tampered with Russian-climate data.
>
> The IEA believes that Russian meteorological-station data did not substantiate the anthropogenic global-warming theory. Analysts say Russian meteorological stations cover most of the country's territory, and that the Hadley Center had used data submitted by only 25% of such stations in its reports. Over 40% of Russian territory was not included in global-temperature calculations for some other reasons, rather than the lack of meteorological stations and observations.
>
> The data of stations located in areas not listed in the Hadley Climate Research Unit Temperature UK (HadCRUT) survey often does not show any substantial warming in the late 20th century and the early 21st century.
>
> The HadCRUT database includes specific stations providing incomplete data and highlighting the global-warming process, rather than stations facilitating uninterrupted observations.
>
> On the whole, climatologists use the incomplete findings of meteorological stations far more often than those providing complete observations.

It just gets worse and worse for the warmists.

Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?

December 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this post while browsing on Parchment and Pen, by C. Michael Patton. In it he discusses how his wife Kristie responded to his interest in making sacrifices to become a missionary in Europe. First, let's take a look at what he wrote, then I'll comment. **This post is the meanest thing I have ever written on the blog. Please don't read it, especially if you are a woman.**

Now I don't know any of the details of Mike's life, so I am just using his words as a springboard to make some points of my own. Nothing mean I say applies to Mike or his family. I am trying to talk about my own experiences trying to reconcile my faith with women.

Mike starts admirably by explaining how, as a married man with two children, he became excited about a plan for preaching and defending the gospel in places like Europe, where there are very few Christians evangelizing.

He writes:

> When I got home, Kristie attempted to probe for the passion and the source of my excitement. I held back some naively thinking it was going to be a surprise. I wanted to walk her through all I had learned and let the excitement build in her as it had in me. I told her everything we had been learning doing my best to work without the pins. I explained to her how much of a famine for the Gospel existed in other parts of the world. Then, when the time was *just* right, I gave her the "good" news: "We are going to be missionaries!!!"

I don't think Mike's expectations on his wife are realistic given my experiences with Christian women. And his wife did end up rejecting his plan to become missionaries in Europe.

Now I'll talk about my experience, not about Mike's story. In my experience, women often (70%) approach Christianity as a subjective experience, not as objective knowledge. So that means that they are not going to find what is written in the Bible as more authoritative than their own feelings, which they may be projecting onto "God" without the benefit of logic or evidence. That is why most women are usually not very interested in Christian knowledge, like theology or church history, and especially apologetics. In my experience, what this means is that they are less interested trying to convince people that Christianity is TRUE.

Most women in the churches prefer subjective experiences like singing, community, prayer, rituals, etc. Many women resent the idea that Christianity might be objectively true, because the truth of Christianity would limit their ability to invent their own version of Christianity based on their intuition. Many are certainly not interested in learning about

God as he is, and then in shaping their lives to serve him in the most effective ways, regardless of the cost. Many prefer to spend their time reading fiction, like Stephanie Meyer instead of evidential stuff, like Stephen Meyer. Dan Brown stuff is also popular because it allows them to doubt the Bible when the Bible disagrees with their intuitions.

So the problem is that the Bible seems to be calling for bold action to evangelize and persuade others, but women seem to be more interested in more subjective, inward-focused activities that make them happy.

Mike continues:

> Since then I have seen this situation more times than I can count. It is usually always the same: a zealous husband who has become embittered against his wife because she will not follow him in his zealousness. One good friend just got a divorce because his wife did not want to become a missionary. He thought it was the Lord's will and he believed her unwillingness was keeping him from a "greater good." Now, after the divorce, his immaturity has disqualified him from taking that step even by himself. Another friend is becoming embittered toward his wife because her focus is elsewhere. Their marriage is suffering. I could tell many more stories, but I don't want to betray anyone's confidence.
>
> Friends (and especially young zealous husbands or soon to be husbands), don't make the mistake of having your passion for ministry end your marriage. You first ministry *is* your marriage. If you don't get that, you are not qualified for ministry. In the spirit of Priscilla: Do you not think that God is powerful enough to call you both into ministry or do you think he only has enough power to call one of you? If so, then he is not a God worth your time anyway. In short, if God does not call your wife, he is not calling you. Period.

Well, I agree with Mike that once you get married, unless you're married to Jan Craig, then you can pretty much kiss your ministry good-bye. You have to uphold your marriage first, and God comes second. If your wife blocks your ministry, then you're stuck with no ministry. He's right about that. Which is why I don't get married. What many women want, in my experience, is to make you like them so much that they can control you. But if they see that you are resisting and evaluating them critically, they give up and move on to easier prey. Many women have no intention of trying to help you to achieve your vision. You are just a tool in their toolbox for pursuing happiness.

What does the Bible say in 1 Cor 7:1-28?

[1]Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry.

[8]Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am.

[9]But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion

[25]Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who

by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

[26]Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are.

[27]Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife.

[28]But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.

And in Matthew 19:12, Jesus says:

[12]For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."

I have seen theologian after theologian explain these verses away, rather than incur the wrath of women in the audience. But it seems to me the verses are pretty clear. *Don't marry*. (Note: there are exceptions – I think a marriage to Michele Bachmann would be an ennobling experience).

The *only virtuous* reason for a man to get married is when he is convinced that he can do better for God with that woman by his side than they can do as singles. Once a man gets married to someone who wants to live a secular life of pleasure, he's stuck – he can't break up the marriage to save his ministry. Mike is right about that. So that's why I say again to men – DON'T MARRY! Marriage gets in the way of your commitment to God, unless you are very careful to find a wife who will support you in your ministry.

Look at Mike's bio page:

> I am Michael Patton, the primary contributor to the Parchment and Pen blog. I do a lot of stuff and love teaching theology. In fact, I have been blessed enough to be able to make my living doing so. I am married, have four kids (two girls and two boys). Got married to the most beautiful gal in the world.

If you click through, you will see a picture of his wife in some sort of beauty pageant. But right away I am concerned because I am suspicious of women who enter beauty pageants.

Now forget Mike's pretty wife, and let me make a comment about men and sexual attraction.

Most Christian men become interested in women because of sexual attraction (unless you're me, and you have visions of little homeschooled William Lane Craig and Michele Bachmann clones dancing in your head). I think that many men today rely far too much on physical attraction, they start the physical contact way too early which destroys their objectivity. And most men don't take the time to screen women to see whether their stated beliefs are grounded. *They just take the women, and their stated beliefs, at face value*. And what this means is that God is being left out of the relationship – his needs don't matter. What matters is the physical attraction.

I have a friend with a PhD in physics who is an elder in his Calvinist church. His wife has never read an apologetics book. Not even The Screwtape Letters. She says that logic and

evidence don't apply to Christianity. She knows God through her intuition, not through the Bible, because the Bible was written *by men*. And Christianity is really about doing whatever she wants to be happy. She reads Dan Brown and she gave him Dan Brown to read, too. She doesn't believe in Hell, and she thinks Jesus was married. She views her husband as a tool for *serving her.* She has a pretty appearance, so he never screened her statements of faith. His eyes were blinded by a sexual attraction.

One of my friends has married well, and his wife is 100% perfect in every way. They had a good long courtship, with pre-marriage counseling, and were very strict about physical contact. (They were both virgins when they married in their late 20s). And that is the only way to do a courtship – they put God's needs first and they knew exactly what vision they were pursuing. I think that men need to look for women who treat God as a real person, with a distinct character of his own. (She was a missionary for a year in a very nasty part of the world). On her evening off from being a stay-at-home mom, she answers apologetics questions for unbelieving seekers. This woman was screened very well.

More Mike stuff is here.

UPDATE: When I say DON'T MARRY, I really meant "don't marry without sharing your vision with your prospective mate first, and make sure that she is on board with it".

Related posts

- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- What is the meaning of white roses?
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- The Wintery Knight's greatest fears about the future
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

You should read Theodore Dalrymple's "Life At The Bottom" for free online!

December 17, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

That's right. I bought the book and gave it to my Dad, because Thomas Sowell endorsed it. My Dad read this book and he loved it. I read the book and I loved it. And now my co-workers are borrowing it from me.

What's it about? Well the author is a psychologist in a hospital that deals with a lot of criminals and victims of crime. So he gets to see the worldview of the "underclass" up close, and to understand how the policies of the compassionate secular left are really working at the street level. The theme of the book is that the left advances policies in order to feel good about themselves, even though the policies actually hurt the poor and vulnerable far more than they help them. And the solution of the elites is more of the same.

The whole book is available ONLINE for free! From City Journal!

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Lots more essays are here, all from City Journal.

My favorite passage

The only bad thing about reading it online is that you miss one of the best quotes from the introduction. But I'll type it out for you.

> The disastrous pattern of human relationships that exists in the underclass is also becoming common higher up the social scale. With increasing frequency I am consulted by nurses, who for the most part come from and were themselves traditionally members of (at least after Florence Nightingale) the respectable lower middle class, who have illegitimate children by men who first abuse and then abandon them. This abuse and later abandonment is usually all too predictable from the man's previous history and character; but the nurses who have been treated in this way say they refrained from making a judgment about him because it is wrong to make judgments. But if they do not make a judgment about the man with whom they are going to live and by whom they are going to have a child, about what are they ever going to make a judgment?
>
> "It just didn't work out," they say, the "it" in question being the relationship that they conceive of having an existence independent of the two people who form it, and that exerts an influence on their on their lives rather like an astral projection. Life is fate.

This is something I run into myself. I think that young people today prefer moral relativists as mates, because they are afraid of being judged and rejected by people who are too serious about religion and morality. The problem is that if you choose someone who doesn't take religion and morality seriously, then you can't rely on them to behave morally and exercise spiritual leadership when raising children.

An excerpt

Here's one of my favorite passages from "Tough Love", in which he describes how easily he can detect whether a particular man has violent tendencies on sight, whereas female victims of domestic violence – and even the hospital nurses – cannot *or will not* recognize the signs.

> All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.
>
> This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after

> having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.
>
> Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.
>
> This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.
>
> Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.
>
> At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how* they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

Go read the rest! This is *pure wisdom*. And by wisdom I mean an awareness and familiarity with the objective moral that binds human action.

Book reviews

- The Age of Bad Ideas
- Review of Life at the Bottom

Marco Rubio now tied with Charlie Crist in Florida Senate race

December 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest Rasmussen Reports poll. (H/T Caffeinated Thoughts)

- Charlie Crist 43%
- Marco Rubio 43%

And even better:

	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Crist	19%	42%	27%	11%
Rubio	34%	30%	12%	3%

MUST-LISTEN: J.P. Moreland lecture on Christianity and science

December 18, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found the lectures here at Apologetics 315. These are GOOD. He covers a lot and you'll get a lot of interesting stuff to think about. This is actually a great lecture – the old J.P. Moreland back in fine form. He's going over a ton of arguments for theism from science. I've counted SIX so far, so this is a really good lecture, and perfect for beginners.

- The full MP3 audio is here.

He doesn't talk about habitability at the galactic, stellar, or planetary level, though.

I am a little busy mailing out everyone's gifts today! I apologize for the light blogging. Please go and read just a few chapters of that Dalrymple book that I posted yesterday if you need something to read, or check out these round-ups:

- Neil Simpson
- Caffeinated Thoughts

More from Neil Simpson: Another reason it is hard to stay in the Methodist church

Neil Simpson is a methodist??? How is that even possible?

Mailing these gifts will only take a few hours, and then I'm on vacation until January 4th!!! I promise I will write a ton then. I'm also working on an application for the Droid platform, but it's a secret.

I'm giving away this stuff to people this year:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life DVD
- Icons of Evolution DVD
- The Privileged Planet DVD
- Darwin's Dilemma DVD
- Signature in the Cell book
- The William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate DVD
- Money, Greed and God book
- Greer-Heard Forums from 2005 and 2009
- and other specific things they asked for

If you guys are giving away apologetics gifts, please write your ideas in the comments. I did gift exchanges with atheists, so now I have atheist books to read! Bleh! I only want to read atheists in debates, because listening to them blab without rebuttal is very annoying.

Please vote for Michele Bachmann for Caffeinated Conservative of 2009

December 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Michele Bachmann

I noticed this poll up at Caffeinated Thoughts where you can vote for the best conservative of 2009.

Here are the candidates:

- Glenn Beck
- Sarah Palin
- Ron Paul
- Edwin Feulner
- Michele Bachmann

I endorse Michele Bachmann! Please go vote for her!

Here are a few of her best speeches and interviews

Defending capitalism, the Constitution and contracts:

And arguing against corruption and bailouts:

Arguing against government spending and inflation:

Related posts

- Michele Bachmann issues conservative call to action

- Michele Bachmann interviewed on the Pat Robertson’s 700 Club
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama’s latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare’s rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Collection of the best Michele Bachmann video clips

MUST-LISTEN: Jennifer Roback Morse explains how socialism undermines family

December 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

New podcast featuring Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse discussing marriage and family. You can skip through the first 5 minutes because it's just introductory. This is a great interview – highly recommended! There is a fair amount of Catholic stuff in the interview, so be forewarned. The interviewer just goes through some of her essays and asks her about them.

When I hear a woman who has this much of an understanding about what marriage is about and what forces are arrayed against marriage, it just makes me want to run out and get married, because she makes it sound so interesting that I want to try it out and see if everything she says is really true. She has such a good understanding of who her opponents are and what they think and what they are trying to accomplish. A very serious woman.

The MP3 file is here. (54 minutes)

Topics:

Why are socialists so hostile to the natural family? (essay)

- socialists oppose monogamy
- socialists view marriage as a structure that oppressive because of gender roles
- socialists favor "group marriage"
- socialists believe that children should be raised by the collective, not by parents
- socialists intend to achieve this by imposing their vision through government power

How does the welfare state discourage people from having children? (essay)

- high taxes make having more children unaffordable
- state regulation of marriage and parenting opens door to risk of legal trouble
- welfare payments to individuals means that relationships can be exited easily
- e.g. – women can divorce and substitute welfare for a husband/father

What is the sandwich generation? (essay)

- boomers complained about having to take care of children and elderly parents
- with the normal timing for having children, this doesn't happen
- but if child-bearing is delayed, then this problem occurs
- also, there are fewer siblings available to help with aging parents
- this opens up the need for government to take over care for dependents
- women are encouraged to focus on education and career during fertile years

What is the effect of welfare states mandating high minimum wages? (essay)

- minimum wage laws increase unemployment rates
- if you require employers to pay high wages, then employers offer fewer jobs
- young people are just not productive enough to get those jobs
- so young people stay in school more and delay adulthood and child-bearing
- welfare states also make it hard to fire people, causing more unemployment
- when government raises minimum wages and benefits, it hurts young people
- when young people finally get a job, they are already in their 30s

How do Catholics respond to the socialist emphasis on equality? (essay)

- making everyone equal requires the abolition of differences between people
- for example, feminists try to make men have the same careers as men
- but this requires women to diminish the fact that they want children
- Catholics don't want to make everyone equal, but to defend the weak
- Christianity supports private property (thou shalt not steal)
- Christianity supports the family as being ordained by God
- *Rerum Novarum* says that inequality and imperfection in society is OK

Who is excluded from socialism's drive for equality? (essay)

- children are excluded from equality because they are dependent
- children impose obligations on people to take care of them
- the same is true for the elderly

Pro-life Democrat will vote for taxpayer-funded abortion in health care bill

December 19, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Washington Post. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Democratic leaders worked for days to hammer out a deal with Nelson, and finally reached a tentative agreement late Friday night with him on abortion coverage provisions that had proven the major stumbling block to winning his support. Nelson also secured favors for his home state and to benefit different factions of the health-insurance industry.

Thirty pieces of silver.

The Weekly Standard comments:

> Harry Reid has released the manager's amendment that Ben Nelson has reportedly agreed to vote for, meaning that the Senate bill has 60 votes. The abortion language includes the phony segregation of funding language that was rejected in the House. It would allow individual states to opt out of the abortion-funding program–in other words, the default position is to pay for abortions; states would have to pass legislation to not fund abortions. But states where public abortion-funding is mandated by state court rulings would be required to pay for abortions…

If Nelson is indeed on board, then he just voted for Christian taxpayers to subsidize the murder of innocent babies. But Planned Parenthood will probably be happy and will no doubt offer many more political donations to Democrats in exchange for these new taxpayer subsidies to their booming business.

MSNBC anchor asks Democrat Congresswoman about choice and competition

December 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Newsbusters.

Excerpt:

> RATIGAN: So, here's a couple of the issues that come up I would love to get your response to, and I want to show you this, and you can explain it to me. As you know, in addition to everything you just described, this does very little to bring real competition and choice into the insurance marketplace. It does very little to reform the insurance monopolies. It does very little to create more choices for everybody in America for their healthcare. But at the same time, it mandates that everybody in America face penalties if they don't buy healthcare.
>
> So the result of that has been the following: you know the monopoly scenario. I want you to take a look at the insurance stocks in this country on news that a bill may be passed that mandates the creation of millions of new customers but does not reform the monopoly structure. Take a look at the insurance stocks since November 17th. WellPoint up thirteen percent, that's over a course of a few weeks, United Health up ten percent, Aetna up twelve percent, Humana up six percent. Those health insurance companies are up because being an unreformed oligopoly, monopoly, and having now the benefit of a government that is assigning the expense of covering the uninsured without reforming the monopoly. It basically allows the taxpayer to take the hit to pay for the uninsured, but it does not deal with the underlying symptom as to why there are so many uninsured, which is we have an unreformed private insurance monopoly in this country that is now being guaranteed more customers by the government. Why is that a good thing for America?

Holy snark! Please watch this! I can't believe that this news guy is from the hard-left MSNBC network.

He is basically pointing out that government is going to force a bunch of uninsured Americans to buy the products of these medical insurers, and force ordinary productive taxpayers to pay the bill. So it's a massive transfer of wealth from ordinary productive taxpayers to big medical insurance companies, for the benefit of Obama's key voting groups.

Can you trust Wikipedia to tell you the truth about global warming?

December 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Canada's National Post. (H/T Watts Up With That? via ECM)

Excerpt:

> All told, Connolley created or rewrote 5,428 unique Wikipedia articles. His control over Wikipedia was greater still, however, through the role he obtained at Wikipedia as a website administrator, which allowed him to act with virtual impunity. When Connolley didn't like the subject of a certain article, he removed it — more than 500 articles of various descriptions disappeared at his hand. When he disapproved of the arguments that others were making, he often had them barred — over 2,000 Wikipedia contributors who ran afoul of him found themselves blocked from making further contributions. Acolytes whose writing conformed to Connolley's global warming views, in contrast, were rewarded with Wikipedia's blessings. In these ways, Connolley turned Wikipedia into the missionary wing of the global warming movement.
>
> The Medieval Warm Period disappeared, as did criticism of the global warming orthodoxy. With the release of the Climategate Emails, the disappearing trick has been exposed. The glorious Medieval Warm Period will remain in the history books, perhaps with an asterisk to describe how a band of zealots once tried to make it disappear.

And National Review writes about another Wikipedia censor:

> Peiser wrote back saying he couldn't see my corrections on the Wikipedia page. I made the changes again, and this time confirmed that the changes had been saved. But then, in a twinkle, they were gone again. I made other changes. And others. They all disappeared shortly after they were made.
>
> Turns out that on Wikipedia some folks are more equal than others. Kim Dabelstein Petersen is a Wikipedia "editor" who seems to devote a large part of his life to editing reams and reams of Wikipedia pages to pump the assertions of global-warming alarmists and deprecate or make disappear the arguments of skeptics.
>
> I soon found others who had the same experience: They would try to squeeze in any dissent, or even correct an obvious slander against a dissenter, and Petersen or some other censor would immediately snuff them out.

And global warming isn't the only topic that the Wikipedia bullies censor. Wikipedia is not reliable about intelligent design, either. Pro-ID scholars cannot even edit their own profiles – the edits just disappear.

Bulgarian government scientist claims aliens oppose global warming

December 20, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Register. (H/T The Drew Blog)

Excerpt:

> A boffin [researcher] at the Bulgarian national Space Research Institute has stated that not only are aliens living among us, but that they object strongly to "immoral behaviour" by humanity – such as causing global warming. "Unnatural" acts such as use of cosmetics and "artificial insemination" are also frowned upon by the extraterrestrial visitors.
>
> Luchezar Filipov, deputy head of the space institute at the government's Bulgarian Academy of Science, made these startling assertions to Bulgarian media earlier this week.
>
> The *Sofia Echo*, referencing other local media, quotes the eminent space brainbox as stating that "they [aliens] are here right now, among us" and that the extraterrestrials are "conducting surveillance" and – chillingly – "research" on humanity.
>
> "They are currently all around us, and are watching us all the time. They are not hostile towards us; rather, they want to help us but we have not grown enough in order to establish direct contact with them," said the Bulgarian boffin, according to Sofia news agency novinite.com.
>
> Reportedly Filipov and unnamed colleagues have elicited this information by decrypting messages hidden within crop circles. The crop-circle "pictograms" were said to have been a response to questions posed by the Academy scientists.
>
> […]"The aliens are very critical of our immoral behaviour and our destruction of the environment," says Filipov, according to the *Echo*. "They say that global warming is attributed mainly to infrastructural engineering."

This reminds me of that movie "The Man From Tomorrow" or whatever where the alien spaceman tells the ignorant Americans how to live. This politicization of science really needs to stop.

Drew has some funny comments about this story here.

CBO says that Obamacare will require 1 trillion tax increase

December 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story at the Weekly Standard. (H/T Weasel Zippers via ECM)

Excerpt:

> …In its real first 10 years (2014 to 2023), the CBO says that the bill would cost $1.8 trillion — for insurance coverage expansions alone. Other parts of the bill would cost approximately $700 billion more, bringing the bill's full 10-year tab to approximately $2.5 trillion — according to the CBO.
>
> In those real first 10 years (2014 to 2023), Americans would have to pay over $1 trillion in additional taxes, over $1 trillion would be siphoned out of Medicare (over $200 billion out of Medicare Advantage alone) and spent on Obamacare, and deficits would rise by over $200 billion.
>
> …the CBO says that health care premiums would rise… Nationwide health care costs would be $234 billion higher than under current law. How's that for "reform"?
>
> …The CBO estimates that, from 2015-25, private insurers would receive $1.0 trillion in subsidies from the American taxpayer — the insurers' apparent price for giving up their freedom and being controlled by the government. Congress would mandate that Americans buy the insurers' product and would redirect massive sums of taxpayer money to make that mandate more feasible.

That's to freak out my fiscally conservative readers.

My socially conservative readers are already horrified that taxes collected from them will soon be used to pay for abortions. Obama doesn't want people who are irresponsible about sex to be "punished with a baby".

Debating the Kalam argument in a YouTube thread

December 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new reader to the blog read my article on the Kalam cosmological argument, and he decided to try it out on youtube here. He presented the argument PERFECTLY, and then he got some responses. He asked me to comment, so I will below. But I want you guys to comment, too! (UPDATE: Comment in this post – I don't recommend commenting in YouTube discussions)

Anyway, here's the page. (I didn't watch the video)

And here's his initial presentation of the argument:

> 1 Whatever begins to exist requires a cause
> 2 The universe began to exist
> 3 Therefore, the universe requires a cause
>
> The cause for the universe (time, space, matter, etc) must be something entirely different (outside the realm of time, space, and matter) since a thing cannot be the cause of itself.

Now I'll reply to his opponents, but you can reply too in the comments, because he's reading this post, and we should all try to offer him our thoughts. At the end, I recommend some additional resources, all free online, to help everyone understand the details of this fine argument.

Responses to the Kalam argument

Here's the first reply:

> Just because we don't know the cause yet doesn't mean it's not something scientific. I'm not saying it is, I'm just saying it's possible.

By "scientific", I am thinking that this challenger is hoping for a material cause, but the problem is that the origin of the universe is the origin of all space and matter – so no "scientific" cause is possible. So it is not possible that the origin of the universe was caused by something "scientific", because it's an absolute origin of all matter, and the physical laws that govern matter, as well. Tell him that there is only one kind of non-material entity capable of causing effects and that is a mind.

Here's another reply:

> What if the universe always existed? We don't know that it has started to exist, we just know that it exists and that it has existed for very long. So it is possible that it has always existed. So that doesn't prove anything.

I would ask this person why they hate science so much to deny the good data about the measurements of red-shift in light from distant galaxies, the helium-hydrogen abundance measurements, the cosmic microwave background radiation, the second law of

thermodynamics, the star formation cycle, etc. As them what is wrong with science, and why must they push their religion (naturalism) on science?

Here's another reply:

> The same principle can apply to god as well, so this argument doesn't prove or disprove either it is just pointless.

My response is that the cause of the universe causes the beginning of time as well, and so therefore the cause exists necessarily, outside of time. Things that exist outside of time are eternal, they don't not exist at time *t1* and then begin to exist at time *t2*. The cause of time's beginning cannot come into being itself, because there is no t1 and t2 before time is created.

Here's another reply:

> uhm .. no, there is no definition of god like that and even if it is it's invalid, why ? well mostly because apart from a book "The Bible" there is no real proof he existed, no one has seen him and I'll wager that no one ever will, henceforth you cannot define something that you really know nothing about, something that might not even exist, it's like saying that bigfoot is a mammal. you can't prove that either since you haven't seen it and don't even know if it exists

Notice that onlinesid produced an argument for the existence of God, and now this guy is bringing in the Bible (red herring), no proof (red herring), why can't I see God (red herring), no one knows anything about God (red herring and self-refuting), and bigfoot (red herring). This person is clearly brain-damaged and not one of the things he write is worth a response. Note: I am being mean, but you can't be mean when you reply to him, you have to tell them to stay focused on your argument and deny premise 1 or premise 2.

And here's another:

> You assume that the universe began to exist.
>
> We currently don't know if it did or not; the present hypothesis is expansion from a single point that is infinitely small.
>
> You also assume that the cause of the universe doesn't have a cause. You need to account for the cause of the cause, and the cause of that cause, ad infinitum.
>
> And on "God being outside of" reality, then he shouldn't be able to affect reality in any observable way. God is untestable.

Again, tell him he is a science-hating flat-earther and ask which of the empirical evidences for the Big Bang he denies. We need to get off of his speculations and evasions and ask him to deny a premise or to deny some scientific data. As soon as he does, ask him for peer-reviewed data that refutes the scientific observations. The cause of the universe doesn't have a cause because it is outside of time and doesn't begin to exist. The premise is that only things that *begin to exist* require a cause. Regarding God not

being able to cause effects, you should say that God is a mind and causes effects in time subsequent to creation the same way that humans cause effects using their wills on their bodies.

Here's another:

> It's called the "Big Bang" hypothesis. Even simple Wikipedia will besufficient for an understanding of it. Or videos on Youtube, if you are that lazy and/or ignorant.
>
> The "evidence" for it is background electromagnetic radiation and the appearance that the universe is expanding. Among other things
>
> The "mind" we perceive is the function of electrochemical impulses between our brain cells. We classify it as a "mind". And as a physical system of reality, it is affected by physical reality..

Again ask him what is his scientific evidence that the universe is eternal, and ask him what is wrong with your scientific evidence showing that it isn't eternal. You must make him make a claim and supply evidence for his claim. You need to buy a book called "God and the Astronomers" by agnostic Robert Jastrow and read it. It explains all the discoveries that led to the Big Bang, but get the second edition. Also, if he thinks that mind is biologically determined, then you need to explain that biological determinism makes rationality impossible, since all of our outputs are determined by inputs and DNA programming that has the goal of reproducing, not finding truth.

More challenges:

> ...The beginning of the universe need not be "God". Could have been made by a pencil. Or could have always been, like a trigonomic function, repeating and diverging into two dimensions.

I think our boy is beginning to wear him down. He now thinks a pencil caused the entire physical universe to appear out of nothing. But the problem is that a pencil is made of matter and cannot have caused the beginning of all matter. But do go on and make him identify what he thinks the cause is. It can't be in time, it can't be matter.

More:

> And the theist-point-of-view actually can in no way prove God because there are many OTHER ways it could have happened. A pencil could have been the original cause of the big-bang, or it could repeat like a trig function, eternally epanding, collapsing, expanding in another
> dimension, etc.

He's raising the oscillating model, which is falsified theoretically and observationally. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism. Sid, if you still can, try your best in physics class, and take astronomy and physics in university, along with philosophy and logic. It will help you to have more fun in these debates and

you'll know more details.

More:

> I did not say that the physical realm is all there is. (Thought there could be two realms, or more.) BUT asuming that an entity exists outside the physical realm and created this universe from that dimension IS illogical.

Ask him for a logical argument that proves that God cannot create matter out of nothing. These assertions need to be backed up with deductive arguments, with premises supported by scientific observations. You can't just throw around that word "illogical". It sounds like he is just saying "I don't like it". Make sure that you ask him for peer-reviewed papers for anything he says about science, and formal arguments for anything he says is "illogical".

This time he argues quatum mechanics:

> Small particles of matter, at least as I understand it, CAN be "created" from energy. The only real "trouble" is the creation of energy, which "god made it" faces the problem of "what made god?"…

If he wants to argue quantum mechanics, you need to remind him that virtual particles can only appear in a quantum vaccuum, which exists *in space*. It is not nothing. Also, virtual particles are not as massive as a universe, and those virtual particles only stay in existence for a fraction of a second. So this is not a good analogy for the origin of the entire physical universe.

Further study

You did well, you just need to be meaner in demanding that he bear his share of the burdern of proof. Ask him why you should accept his speculations and assertions, where are his arguments, where is his scientific evidence.

I think that this book would be a good one along with God and the Astronomers, second edition. But read this paper, too, and every William Lane Craig debate you can get your hands on, especially the one with physicist Victor Stenger (video, audio), the follow-up lecture at UC Boulder where Stenger is in the audience, and the second Craig-Dacey debate. When you're done with that, listen to this lecture and this lecture (I know it's similar to the first one, but tough!) and this lecture and this lecture. And study more physics if you're still in school!

God meant for us to enjoy ourselves arguing in his universe. Jesus cured the paralytic to provide evidence for his claims. Similarly, we can use the evidence of nature miracles that science is just now discovering to get the same effect as though we could perform miracles. But we need to understand philosophy and physics down to the details.

Biology and physics professors debate whether Christianity is true

December 21, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The new Unbelievable debate is up, and this time Justin found a *fine* Christian. A professor of nanotechnology who has enormous intellectual firepower and an incredible scientific background. The atheist is Lewis Wolpert, a very high-profile atheistic cell biologist in the UK, who debated William Lane Craig a while back.

The speakers:

> Atheist scientist Lewis Wolpert debates believing scientist Russell Cowburn. Professor Lewis Wolpert is Emeritus Professor of Biology at University College London. Professor Russell Cowburn is Chair of Nanotechnology at Imperial College.

Cowburn is formerly of Cambridge University. Although he does concede evolution in the debate, yuck! That part where he concedes evolution is a little annoying. Still, he is a fine speaker, he radiates competence and confidence, and does a great job of explaining Christianity. I wish I could send him a Signature in the Cell. We have so much more evidence for intelligent design today, that there is no reason to make those concessions!

The MP3 file is here.

One funny thing occurs when Lewis Wolpert says that he gave up belief in God (as a Jew) when God wouldn't help him to find his cricket bat. He also says that he has never heard of any evidence for God's existence, which is odd since he debated Bill Craig.

If you listen to the whole thing, Justin also says that Wolpert will be back to debate William Dembski in January 2010 as part of a series on intelligent design. (Expelled is going to be released in the UK in 2010)

Wolpert's case:

- Religious belief exists because it provides an evolutionary advantage
- There are so many different religions so Christianity cannot be correct
- There haven't been enough recent miracles

Cowburn's case:

- The kalam cosmological argument
- The fine-tuning argument
- The historicity of the resurrection

The full debate is available here at the web site of the church which hosted the debate. I note that it's a independent evangelical Baptist church and I'm an independent evangelical Baptist, so yay! Just take a look at this church's web page – it's filled with

debates! Now this is the church I would attend if I lived in London.

The Wall Street Journal explains what Obamacare will mean to you

December 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Amazing article in the Wall Street Journal. (H/T ECM)

Here are a few of the points made in the article.

1) The bill is being rammed through behind closed doors, with no Republican input.

> Mr. Obama promised a new era of transparent good government, yet on Saturday morning Mr. Reid threw out the 2,100-page bill that the world's greatest deliberative body spent just 17 days debating and replaced it with a new "manager's amendment" that was stapled together in covert partisan negotiations. Democrats are barely even bothering to pretend to care what's in it, not that any Senator had the chance to digest it in the 38 hours before the first cloture vote at 1 a.m. this morning. After procedural motions that allow for no amendments, the final vote could come at 9 p.m. on December 24.

2) Health care costs will increase if the bill passes.

> The best and most rigorous cost analysis was recently released by the insurer WellPoint, which mined its actuarial data in various regional markets to model the Senate bill. WellPoint found that a healthy 25-year-old in Milwaukee buying coverage on the individual market will see his costs rise by 178%. A small business based in Richmond with eight employees in average health will see a 23% increase. Insurance costs for a 40-year-old family with two kids living in Indianapolis will pay 106% more. And on and on.

3) Americans will have fewer choices.

> Unnoticed by the press corps, the Congressional Budget Office argued recently that the Senate bill would so "substantially reduce flexibility in terms of the types, prices, and number of private sellers of health insurance" that companies like WellPoint might need to "be considered part of the federal budget."

4) The quality of care will be diminished.

> Ultimately, "our capacity to innovate and develop new therapies would suffer most of all," as Harvard Medical School Dean Jeffrey Flier recently wrote in our pages. Take the $2 billion annual tax—rising to $3 billion in 2018—that will be leveled against medical device makers, among the most innovative U.S. industries.

5) Your taxes will almost certainly increase.

> Other budget priorities like education will be crowded out when about 21% of the

> U.S. population is on Medicaid, the joint state-federal program intended for the poor. Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman calculates that ObamaCare will result in $2.5 billion in new costs for his state that "will be passed on to citizens through direct or indirect taxes and fees," as he put it in a letter to his state's junior Senator.

And it continues on. At one point, you may notice that the article says that private medical insurers will be forced to convert into public utilities administered by the federal government. You can read more about that here. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> One telling sign of the relevance of this analysis comes from the Congressional Budget Office ("CBO"). In a recent release, it has treated the proposal as if it nationalizes much of the private health insurance industry, most specifically because it may well require that rebates to customers kick in whenever, in its words, "medical loss ratios are less than 90 percent."[2] In plain English, the Reid Bill assumes that health-care administration, which is always costly, can be done cheaply even in the new legal environment, so cheaply in fact that these health-insurance rebates kick in whenever insurers' administrative expenses exceed 10 percent of their premium dollar. As the CBO has concluded, "this further expansion of the federal government's role in the health insurance market would make such insurance an essentially governmental program …"
>
> In effect, the onerous obligations under the Reid Bill would convert private health insurance companies into virtual public utilities. This action is not only a source of real anxiety but also a decision of constitutional proportions, for it systematically strips the regulated health-insurance issuers of their constitutional entitlement to earn a reasonable rate of return on the massive amounts of capital that they have already invested in building out their businesses.

Yesterday, I posted about the CBO estimates for this bill coming in at 2.5 trillion, with 1 trillion dollars of new taxes. Before that, I mentioned that dissenters like Ben Nelson are receiving special grants of taxpayer money for their states in order to change their vote, despite the fact that the health care bill will use the tax dollars of pro-lifers to perform abortions. Please consider calling your members of the House of Representatives to tell them to vote no on this bill!

What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?

December 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You may sometimes hear the objection that there were lots of other gospels and books floating around at the time when the 27 books of the New Testament were standardized. The right way to answer this problem is to ask for a particular book that the challenger would like included and then to take a look at factors like the date it was written, who wrote it, and where it was written. When you look at these factors, it becomes obvious why the other books were left out.

Consider an article by Dr. Charles Quarles, who has written against an early dating of a "left out" book called the "Gospel of Peter". Why was it left out? Because Christian are mean? Because we're hiding the decline using Mike's Nature trick to avoid losing billions of dollars in taxpayer money? Not quite.

Excerpt:

> An impressive number of clues suggest that this gospel [Peter] postdates even the latest New Testament book and belongs to the mid-second century. First, a close analysis of verbal parallels shared by the *Gospel of Peter* and the Gospel of Matthew suggests that the *Gospel of Peter* postdates Matthew and utilized that Gospel as a source… an examination of the vocabulary, grammar, and style of the two documents strongly favors the dependence of the *Gospel of Peter* on Matthew. Robert Gundry, one of the most respected experts on issues related to Matthew's style, called the phrase a "series of Mattheanisms" (Gundry, Matthew [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994], 584). Similarly, John Meier noted "when it comes to who is dependent on whom, all the signs point to Matthews priority. . . . The clause is a tissue of Matthean vocabulary and style, a vocabulary and style almost totally absent from the rest of the *Gospel of Peter*" (Meier, Marginal Jews, 1:117). This is consistent with a number of other Matthean features appear in the *Gospel of Peter* that all point to the dependence of the *Gospel of Peter* on Matthew.
>
> Second, other features of the *Gospel of Peter* suggest that the gospel not only postdates Matthew, but even postdates the latest book of the NT canon, the Book of Revelation. For example, although Matthew indicates that the Roman guard sealed the tomb of Jesus, *Gospel of Peter* 8:33 adds that it was sealed with seven seals. The reference to the seven seals conflicts with the immediate context. *Gospel of Peter* 8:32-33 states that all the witnesses present sealed the tomb. However, a minimum of nine witnesses were present leading readers to expect at least nine seals. The best explanation for the awkward reference to the seven seals is that the detail was drawn from Revelation 5:1. This allusion to Revelation fits well with the *Gospel of Peter* 9:35 and 12:50 reference to the day of Jesus'

> resurrection as the “Lord’s Day” since this terminology only appears in Revelation in the NT and first in Revelation out of all ancient Christian literature. The reference to the “Lord’s Day” in the *Gospel of Peter* is a shortened form that appears to be a later development from the original form appearing in Revelation.
>
> Still other features of the *Gospel of Peter* fit best with the historical data if the *Gospel of Peter* was produced in the mid-second century. The *Gospel of Peter* assumes the doctrine of Jesus’ descent into Hades to preach to the dead. However, this doctrine first appears in the words of Justin Martyr around AD 150. The talking cross is a feature of other second-century literature. The *Epistula Apostolorum 16* states that during the second coming Jesus will be carried on the wings of the clouds with his cross going on before him. Similarly, the Ethiopic Apocalypse of Peter 1 describes the returning Christ as coming in a glory seven times as bright as the sun and with his cross going before his face. In a similar fashion, beginning in the late first century, Christian texts describe Christ as possessing gigantic stature. In an allegorical depiction of Jesus’ supremacy and authority over the church, Shepherd of Hermas 83:1 described Christ as of such lofty stature that he stood taller than a tower. 4 Ezra 2:43, a portion of 4 Ezra dating to the middle or late third century, referred to the unusual height of the Son of God. These shared compositional strategies and features make the most sense if these documents and the *Gospel of Peter* were composed in the same milieu.

Read the rest here.

It turns out that Quarles has actually debated the views he presents in this article against John Dominic Crossan, the main proponent of the view that the Gospel of Peter is early. You can buy the audio on CDs here, or you can get the book. The CDs are highly recommended, but the book leaves out all the dialog, so I don’t recommend it.

And you can read about two more rejected books, the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Judas, as well. The authors of those two articles are Craig Blomberg and Craig A. Evans, respectively. Craig Evans is also involved in the debate I mentioned with Crossan, and in the debate he also reveals that another left out book called “Secret Mark” is actually a 20th century *hoax*, and Crossan had no response to that revelation in the debate.

MUST-SEE: Video from Fox News special on global warming

December 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are all six parts! (H/T ECM)

I'm watching them now. Michael Mann and Phil Jones were invited to participate and respond, but they chickened out. This ihow you know that global warming and Darwinism are myths. They caricature their opponents and then refuse to debate. People believe because they want to believe it, not because it's true.

NYT writer worried that vegetables – not unborn children – feel pain

December 22, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the New York Times. (H/T Weasel Zippers via ECM)

Excerpt:

> But before we cede the entire moral penthouse to "committed vegetarians" and "strong ethical vegans," we might consider that plants no more aspire to being stir-fried in a wok than a hog aspires to being peppercorn-studded in my Christmas clay pot. This is not meant as a trite argument or a chuckled aside. Plants are lively and seek to keep it that way. The more that scientists learn about the complexity of plants — their keen sensitivity to the environment, the speed with which they react to changes in the environment, and the extraordinary number of tricks that plants will rally to fight off attackers and solicit help from afar — the more impressed researchers become, and the less easily we can dismiss plants as so much fiberfill backdrop, passive sunlight collectors on which deer, antelope and vegans can conveniently graze. It's time for a green revolution, a reseeding of our stubborn animal minds.
>
> **Just because we humans can't hear them doesn't mean plants don't howl**… It's a small daily tragedy that we animals must kill to stay alive. Plants are the ethical autotrophs here, the ones that wrest their meals from the sun. Don't expect them to boast: they're too busy fighting to survive.

So, plants are people, too, and we shouldn't do violence to them by eating them. Interesting… But you know who doesn't deserve protection from violence, according to the secular left? Unborn children, that's who. I don't see them mentioned in this NYT article.

In fact, the left wants to use government power to stop conscience rights for pro-life doctors, and even the public expression of pro-life convictions. (H/T Lex Communis)

Don't forget all the pro-life clubs that are banned across Canada. But maybe plants have a right to life, because maybe they feel pain.

People on the secular left like recreational sex, but they don't like having unexpected mouths to feed. They want the pleasure of sex, but not the work of taking care of innocent little babies. To feel less guilty about killing babies, they have to invent a new morality that blesses something else they want to do as morally good, like recycling, animal rights activism or vegetarianism. It's idolatry – inventing a god of your own that you can appease just by doing anything you want.

Climategate e-mails recall tactics used by Darwinists to stifle dissent

December 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, writing in Human Events.

Excerpt:

> There have been parallels cases where e-mail traffic was released showing Darwinian scientists displaying the same contempt for fair play and academic openness as we see now in the climate emails. One instance involved a distinguished astrophysicist at Iowa State University, Guillermo Gonzalez, who broke ranks with colleagues in his department over the issue of intelligent design in cosmology. Released under the Iowa Open Records Act, e-mails from his fellow scientists at ISU showed how his department conspired against him, denying Dr. Gonzales tenure as retribution for his views.
>
> To me, the most poignant correspondence emerging from CRU e-mails involves discussion about punishing a particular editor at a peer-reviewed journal who was defying the orthodox establishment by publishing skeptical research.
>
> In 2004, a peer-reviewed biology journal at the Smithsonian Institution published a technical essay of mine presenting a case for intelligent design. Colleagues of the journal's editor, an evolutionary biologist, responded by taking away his office, his keys and his access to specimens, placing him under a hostile supervisor and spreading disinformation about him. Ultimately, he was demoted, prompting an investigation of the Smithsonian by the U.S. Office of Special Counsel.

Global warming alarmism and Darwinism are two sides of the same coin. The former is embraced to achieve socialism, the later is embraced to achieve secularism, which leads to moral relativism. Neither is true, so neither is interested in authentic scientific inquiry nor open-minded debates with dissenters. Non-theists don't have a worldview that rationally justifies the moral requirements of scientific inquiry, so for them science is just something to be twisted to support hedonism.

Several stories on government spending, waste and corruption

December 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are some interesting stories sent to me by ECM.

CNN: Report finds imprudent spending at USPS.

Excerpt:

> The U.S. Postal Service spent more than $792,000 "without justification" on meals and events in one five-month period even as it reported losing $3.8 billion this year, the agency's inspector general says in a report.
>
> Employees spent $792,022 on meals and external events "without justification for food purchases, purchased alcohol without officer approval and exceeded the dollar limit for meals," the report says.
>
> Among the purchases were crab cakes, beef Wellington and scallops at an installation ceremony for one of several postmasters in the United States, the report says.
>
> […]The Postal Service reported a $3.8 billion net loss for the 2009 fiscal year…

University of Michigan links government bailouts to corruption.

Excerpt:

> U.S. banks that spent more money on lobbying were more likely to get government bailout money, according to a study released on Monday. Banks whose executives served on Federal Reserve boards were more likely to receive government bailout funds from the Troubled Asset Relief Program, according to the study from Ran Duchin and Denis Sosyura, professors at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business. Banks with headquarters in the district of a U.S. House of Representatives member who serves on a committee or subcommittee relating to TARP also received more funds. Political influence was most helpful for poorly performing banks, the study found. "Political connections play an important role in a firm's access to capital," Sosyura, a University of Michigan assistant professor of finance, said in a statement. Banks with an executive who sat on the board of a Federal Reserve Bank were 31 percent more likely to get bailouts through TARP's Capital Purchase Program, the study showed. Banks with ties to a finance committee member were 26 percent more likely to get capital purchase program funds.

South Carolina Attorney General will investigate Ben Nelson's Obamacare bribe.

Excerpt:

> South Carolina Attorney General Henry McMaster said Tuesday that he intends to

> organize his counterparts in different states to investigate dealmaking that sealed a final compromise on federal health care legislation.
>
> McMaster said the language of the Nelson provision appears to give the State of Nebraska a permanent exemption from paying the Medicaid expenses all other states in the nation will be required to pay.
>
> Attorney General Henry McMaster said he and his counterparts in Alabama, Colorado, Michigan, North Dakota, Texas and Washington state—all Republicans—are jointly taking a look at the deal they've dubbed the 'Nebraska compromise.'
>
> The 'Nebraska compromise,' which permanently exempts Nebraska from paying Medicaid costs that Texas and all other 49 states must pay, may violate the United States Constitution—as well as other provisions of federal law.'

White House pressuring pro-life Democrat to pass health care.

Excerpt:

> Rep. Bart Stupak (D-Mich.) said the White House and the Democratic leadership in the House of Representatives have been pressuring him not to speak out on the "compromise" abortion language in the Senate version of the health care bill.
>
> "They think I shouldn't be expressing my views on this bill until they get a chance to try to sell me the language," Stupak told CNSNews.com in an interview on Tuesday. "Well, I don't need anyone to sell me the language. I can read it. I've seen it. I've worked with it. I know what it says. I don't need to have a conference with the White House. I have the legislation in front of me here."

CBO double-counted Medicare savings in estimate provided prior to Senate vote.

Excerpt:

> The key point is that the savings to the HI (Medicare Hospital Insurance) trust fund under the PPACA (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act) would be received by the government only once, so they cannot be set aside to pay for future Medicare spending and, at the same time, pay for current spending on other parts of the legislation or on other programs.
>
> To describe the full amount of HI trust fund savings as both improving the government's ability to pay future Medicare benefits and financing new spending outside of Medicare would essentially double-count a large share of those savings and thus overstate the improvement in the government's fiscal position.

One nice things about capitalism and small government is that it minimizes corruption and waste. (Companies trying to make a profit don't waste, and they don't try to influence government if government stays out of the free market). But some people like big government because they think that they should have their lives subsidized by their neighbors. A vote for a Democrat is a vote for corruption and waste.

MUST-READ: New peer-reviewed paper argues against chance-of-the-gaps

December 23, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Evolution News. (H/T ECM)

The peer-reviewed paper is here:

- David L. Abel, "The Universal Plausibility Metric (UPM) & Principle (UPP)," *Theoretical Biology and Medical Modelling*, Vol. 6:27 (Dec. 3, 2009).

Here's the thesis:

> The question for scientific methodology should not be, "Is this scenario possible?" The question should be, "Is this possibility a plausible scientific hypothesis?" One chance in 10^{200} is theoretically possible, but given maximum cosmic probabilistic resources, such a possibility is hardly plausible. With funding resources rapidly drying up, science needs a foundational principle by which to falsify a myriad of theoretical possibilities that are not worthy of serious scientific consideration and modeling.

Suppose that the odds of forming single protein composed of 100 amino acids are 1 in 10^{130}. (I got the odds from this slide show presented by John C. Walton, a professor of chemistry at the University of St. Andrews). Let's say you take all the atoms in the universe and react them at the highest possible rate for the whole history of the universe. How many tries would you get to create the protein?

Ω_u = Universe = 10^{13} reactions/sec X 10^{17} secs X 10^{78} atoms = 10^{108}

Soooo, you only get 10^{108} tries but the odds of getting even one protein are 1 in 10^{130} so it is unlikely that you would get even one protein by chance. Now an atheist may jump at this remote chance and say "but it's possible!", and cross their arms like they have a solid explanation of where DNA came from. But this is just insanity cloaked with scientific-sounding language. No one runs their life in a way that is so ignorant of what probabilities really mean.

To make the point clearer, you can just watch this video of an atheist pleading that just because the odds of fine-tuning are incredibly small, that this is no reason to ascribe the design to an intelligent agent.

It's funny because it's true!

How Build-A-Bear pushes global warming alarmism onto young children

December 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Big Government. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> …the Build-A-Bear empire sweeps across nearly every state and into 17 other countries. You'll find their outlets in shopping malls everywhere and even some ballparks. The company also has a website called Build-A-Bearville.com where children can play an interactive video game that, on it's surface, is unlikely to raise suspicion or sound alarms.
>
> But when your unsuspecting tot logs on and hops a virtual train to the North Pole…you should know that he or she will be informed — by Santa Claus — that Christmas may be canceled this year due to Global Warming. Below is part two of the 3-part video.

Here's the video:

Here's a little part of the dialog:

> Girl Elf: Santa, it's gone!
>
> Papa Elf: It's gone, It's gone!
>
> Santa: What's gone?
>
> Girl Elf: Tell 'em, Dad!
>
> Papa Elf: The North Peak.
>
> Santa: A mountain? A mountain's gone? How is that possible?
>
> Ella the polar bear: Santa, sir, that's why I'm here. That's why we're here. The ice is melting!
>
> Santa: Yes, my dear, we know, the climate is changing. There's bound to be a little melting.
>
> Ella: It's worse than that, Santa, a lot worse! At the rate it's melting, the North Pole will be gone by Christmas!"
>
> Santa: My, my…all of this gone by next Christmas? I don't think so.
>
> Ella: No sir, not next Christmas, this Christmas! The day after tomorrow!

The left isn't interested in debating adults about global warming… they just want to scare your kids into becoming socialists. Isn't it funny how the secular left complains about teaching children about the Devil and Hell, calling it child abuse? But they have no qualms at all about scaring children with lies about the great global warming Devil and the impending Hell that is the result of our sinful American way of life. It goes on every

day in the public schools.

Steven Crowder returns to Detroit and investigates what went wrong

December 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s his latest video. (H/T Big Blue Wave)

I have friends in nearby Oakland County and it’s like a different world as soon as you get outside of the Detroit city limits. Detroit is a blue city in a blue state.

Does Darwinism explain anything?

December 24, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Cornelius Hunter answers the question here. (H/T ECM)

Here's the criterion specified by naturalists to make an explanation scientific:

> …in order to qualify as legitimate science a theory must distinguish between different outcomes. Naturalism is needed because otherwise each outcome is equally probable and the theory is not true science.
>
> Deciding what does and does not qualify as legitimate science is notoriously difficult. There seem to be exceptions to every rule. But perhaps Felsenstein's criterion is reasonable. Shouldn't a scientific theory say at least something about the probabilities of what we might observe in the data?

Does Darwinism satisfy the criterion? Hunter argues that it does not.

> Whatever we find in biology, evolutionists say it must have evolved. Their predictions and expectations are often falsified and they have to patch their theory repeatedly. And there is no distinction between a new, fantastic design and a repeated design–both are equiprobable under evolution.
>
> If a new, fantastic design appears such as the trilobite eye, then evolutionists ascribe it to natural selection. If similar designs are found in different species, then it is ascribed to common descent. If later cousin species are found to lack the design, then common descent can be dropped as an explanation and the design can be said to have evolved independently. The evolutionary explanation is extremely flexible.
>
> If distinguishing between outcomes is the hallmark of true science, then evolution is the theory that doesn't qualify.

Read the whole thing!

Related posts

- Science Daily reports the biological functions supported by Junk RNA
- Science Daily reports the biological functions supported by Junk DNA
- New peer-reviewed paper argues against chance-of-the-gaps

Cato Institute asks whether Sarah Palin was right on death panels

December 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at the libertarian Cato Institute. (H/T Caffeinated Thoughts health care round-up)

Excerpt:

> What Palin wrote about death panels clearly had nothing to do with counseling or with any other specifics in seminal House bill. What she wrote was: "Government health care will not reduce the cost; it will simply refuse to pay the cost. And who will suffer the most when they ration care? The sick, the elderly, and the disabled, of course."
>
> How could anyone believe Palin's sensible comment about rationing was, in reality, a senseless fear of counseling? To say so was no mistake; it was an oft-repeated *big lie*.
>
> Rather than even mentioning the House bill, Palin linked to an interesting speech by "Rep. Michele Bachmann [which] highlighted the Orwellian thinking of the president's health care advisor, Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, the brother of the White House chief of staff."
>
> […]Pending health care bills would make such government-mandated scarcity of health care much worse. There would be massive shifting of money away from Medicare toward Medicaid. But the extra Medicaid money would be spread around more thinly. States would cut benefits to the poor in order to

> accommodate millions of new, less-poor people lured into Medicaid, at least half of whom (7 or 8 million by my estimate) currently have employer-provided health insurance.
>
> The Senate health bill supposedly intends to slash Medicare payment rates for physicians by 21% next year and more in future years, with permanent reductions in payments to other medical services too. It would also establish an Independent Payment Advisory Board which would be empowered to make deeper cuts which Congress could reject only with considerable difficulty. If that's not quite a "death panel" it would surely not be pro-life in its impact.
>
> The Congressional Budget Office says, "It is unclear whether such a reduction in the growth rate could be achieved, and if so, whether it would . . . reduce access to care or diminish the quality of care."
>
> Actually, it's clear enough that the proposed Medicare cuts won't be achieved, but that efforts in that direction will nonetheless reduce access to care and diminish its quality. The government can't boost demand and cut prices without creating excess demand. And that, in turn, means rationing by longer waiting lines and by panels (rationing boards) making life-or death decisions for other people.

The Cato Institute says that Sarah Palin is right, and I agree. She is the one who understands the economics of supply and demand – her critics are ignorant of the facts.

What is the meaning of Christmas? Why celebrate Christmas?

December 25, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that I would try to write a post to explain Christmas as I understand it to everyone who is foggy on what it is all about. I hope I am not making any theological errors here, after all, I am just a software engineer.

Basically, we know from a variety of scientific arguments that the universe was created and fine-tuned for life by an intelligent agent that existed causally prior to the beginning of the universe, because this agent brought the universe into being. Our purpose as humans is to enter into a two-way loving relationship with this Creator/Designer of the universe. This is the only way that we can ultimately be happy and fulfilled.

The mess we were in

Now, when you look at human experience, none of us is interested in finding out about the character of this Creator/Designer, because we are afraid that if we find out too much about him then we will have our freedom to do as we please constrained by the demands of a relationship with an all-powerful, all-good being. Just knowing that such a person exists and has a character distinct from our own is enough to cause us to flee from him so that we can stay autonomous from the obligations of the moral law that he expects us to follow.

Christians believe that this universal desire to avoid an all-powerful, all-good God who will judge us is a result of bad behaviors inherited by us from the very first rebellion against God by our ancestors. Ever since that rebellion, the capability for relating to God has been lost, because we no longer have the ability to stop our rebellion against God. Christians call the first rebellion of our ancestors “The Fall of Man”.

What does this rebellion look like for us today? Well, we want to do whatever we want, in order to be happy, and to ignore God's demands. We want to have happy feelings, including security, community and being morally good, all without a relationship with God. We want to acquire and rearrange matter for our selfish ends without acknowledging and honoring the Creator/Designer of that matter. And, of course, we would like other people to affirm, voluntarily or involuntarily, that our rebellion against God is really the height of moral goodness.

Additionally, some people imagine that God, if he exists at all, must desire our happiness. And of course when their needs are not met by this invented God, then they become even more bitter at God, and eventually decide that God could not really exist since their selfish needs are not being met by him. It never seems to occur to us humans that some pain and suffering may be permitted by God in order to turn our attention away from pleasure and security in this life, and back towards a relationship with him.

This is the mess we find ourselves in. This propensity for turning away from God and trying to pursue selfish happiness and security apart from a relationship with God is what the Bible calls "sin". Every single one of us deserves severe punishment for refusing to pursue a genuine two-way love relationship with the God who is there. That is the mess we are in before Jesus appears to address this problem.

The birth of Jesus

I cannot say much about *how* Jesus solves the problem of rebellion against God, because that is really the story of Easter, and today we are dealing with the story of Christmas. But I can say that the solution to the problem requires that God step into history to communicate with his creatures and to perform actions in order to be reconciled with them. That is the message of Christmas: God is stepping into history to do something to end our rebellion. Easter is the story of *what he does*.

This is talked about in the Bible in John 1, for example.

John 1:1-5:

[1]In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[2]He was with God in the beginning.

[3]Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

[4]In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

[5]The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

You can substitute the word "Word" there for *Logos*, which really means *logic* or *reason* or *wisdom.* This is a person with a divine nature, identified with the eternal being of God, who exists causally prior to the creation of the universe, who is going to take on an additional human nature, including a human body. (Christians believe that there is one divine "what" being and three divine "who" persons). Software engineers, you can think of Jesus having two natures as multiple inheritance in C++.

And it continues in John 1:10-14:

[10]He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

[11]He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

[12]Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

[13]children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

[14]The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Here the word grace doesn't mean like a graceful ballet dancer. It means an instance of mercy received from a superior. A person (a "who") identified with the divine being (a "what") has decided to make us a top-down offer of mercy.

The same message of God stepping into history is found in the Christmas carols that people sing at Christmas.

Christmas carols

Here's the best one, "O, Holy Night", and it says:

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining.
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

When we were in rebellion, we had lost our most valuable capacity – the capacity of being in a direct relationship with God. And if Jesus can accomplish his mission, then we are going to regain that capacity for a direct relationship with God.

Now look at "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", which one of my favorites:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

Basically, as I often say, there are only two kinds of people in the world. There are people who are willing to respond to the offer of a relationship with God, with all the little sacrifices and compromises that a relationship entails, and then there are people who are not willing to respond. For the people who are willing to respond, the appearance of Jesus is the best thing that could possibly happen, because now we are finally going to have a chance to deal directly with God, face-to-face, to find out what he is like, and change ourselves to be more like him, with his help.

And that is why people celebrate Christmas. It's the anniversary of the birth of Jesus. It is the story of God stepping into history to be reconciled with his rebellious creatures. It's the story of the divine *Logos* divesting himself of his glory and subjecting himself to the life of a creature in order to rescue us from our sinful, self-destructive rebellion. This love

for undeserving creatures is above and beyond the call of duty. We didn’t love him, but instead he loved us first, and he loved us enough to come down here and suffer with us so that we could be reconciled with God.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Al-Quaeda linked to failed terrorist attack on Northwest Airlines airliner

December 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the Houston Chronicle. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A Nigerian man who said he was an agent for al-Qaida tried to blow up a Northwest Airlines plane Friday as it was preparing to land in Detroit, but travelers who smelled smoke and heard what sounded like firecrackers rushed to subdue him, the passengers and federal officials said.
>
> […]The White House said it believed it was an attempted act of terrorism and stricter security measures were quickly imposed on airline travel. It did not specify what those were.
>
> […]Law enforcement officials identified the suspect in Friday's attempted attack as Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab. One law enforcement official said the man claimed to have been instructed by al-Qaida to detonate the plane over U.S. soil. All the officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation was continuing.

We had 8 years of constant terrorist attacks under the Democrat Bill Clinton, because, like most Democrats on the secular left, he didn't believe in being aggressive with terrorists. And now we have a new Democrat President even further out on the left who also believes in being soft and weak with terrorists.

The problem with having a weak foreign policy is that our enemies have no reason to fear us. When George W. Bush was the President, there were no terrorist attacks on American soil after the 9/11/01 attack. That is because terrorists knew that if they attacked us, there would be consequences. Do they believe that today? I doubt it.

You can read more about the conservative view of foreign policy, which is called "peace through strength" here.

Record snowfall in Oklahoma City, OK and Duluth, MN

December 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the Houston Chronicle. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Residents across the Midwest and the Plains who made it home for Christmas were digging out on Friday after a fierce snowstorm while those who spent the night in airports and shelters tried to resume their journeys. Meteorologists warned that roads across the region remained dangerous.
>
> The National Weather Service said blizzards would hit parts of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin through Saturday. The storm had already dumped significant snow across the region, including a record 14 inches in Oklahoma City and 11 inches in Duluth, Minn., on Thursday.
>
> Slippery roads have been blamed for at least 21 deaths this week as the storm lumbered across the country from the Southwest. Ice storm warnings and winter weather advisories were issued for parts of the East Coast on Friday, but the region was largely spared.
>
> […]Even residents in the Dallas-Fort Worth area briefly experienced a white Christmas, their first in more than 80 years. Not since Dec. 25, 1926 — when 6 inches fell on Dallas and Collin counties — had the area had a true postcard-looking Christmas.

This doesn’t sound like global warming to me.

Did Darwin's ideas influence Mao Tse Tung to murder millions?

December 26, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is taken from *China and Charles Darwin*, by China scholar James Reeve Pusey of Bucknell University, published in 1983 by Harvard University Press. (H/T Evolution News)

Excerpt:

> Mao Tse-tung finally claimed that Marxism-Leninism could all be boiled down to one sentence, *tsao fan yu li* — "To rebel is justified" — but that standard translation obscures the force of the *li* (reason or principle) that rebellion was now said to have. That Neo-Confucian word in [its] new context really meant that rebellion was a natural law, and *that* lesson had been taught to Mao Tse-tung not by Marx but by Sun Yat-sen and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, who had learned it, rightly or wrongly, from Darwin. For the *li* of revolution, they had said, lay in evolution.
>
> Darwin justified revolution and thereby helped the cultural revolutions of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Hu Shih, and Mao Tse-tung (and, of course, so many others), and the political revolutions of Sun Yat-sen, Chiang K'ai-shek, and Mao Tse-tung. As things turned out, therefore, he seemd to help Mao Tse-tung the most, and indeed he did. He helped make the Marxists the fittest.
>
> Darwin created the ideological vacuum [by undermining traditional ideas] that cried out for something like Marxism, and he established criteria for what that something should be. The new fit and fittening ideology had to be based on the Western science of evolutionary progress. It had to identify inevitable, natural stages of human social development. It had to promise historical inevitability and yet at the same time recognize the vital importance of human action. It had to be based on struggle and yet stress mutual aid among members of the *ch'un*. It had to provide a non-racial enemy to explain China's inner and outer troubles without damning the Chinese — and it had to give the underdog a chance.

More:

> The notion that one can be prescient of evolution's Way has led some to feel that the prescient have special rights, if not duties, in the struggle they believe that Way requires. And so Darwin has ironically helped produce a new kind of religious know-it-all-ism, and a concomitant new kind of religious self-righteousness and religious intolerance….

More:

> Mao Tse-tung in an angry moment (as late as 1964) swore that "all demons shall be annihilated." He dehumanized his enemies, partly in traditional hyperbole, partly in Social Darwinian "realism." Like the Anarchists he saw reactionaries as

> evolutionary throwbacks, who deserved extinction. The people's enemies were non-people, and they did not deserve to be treated as people.

Evolution News notes that "Pusey writes on the same theme, more briefly, in the November issue of *Nature*." Nature? How did they let that in to the most prestigious peer-reviewed journal in the world.

CHRISTMAS greetings from Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper

December 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow, he said Christmas. (H/T Blue Like You)

Yahoo! Canada is ruled by a grown up.

Meanwhile, Chairman MaObama has other ideas about Christmas.

Immature and dishonorable. A petulant child in the White House.

Terrorist’s father warned US Embassy of son’s extremist views

December 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from UPI. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The father of Nigerian terrorism suspect Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab says he contacted the U.S. Embassy months ago warning of his son’s radicalism.
>
> Alhaji Umaru Mutallab received a text from his son implying he was leaving school in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, “for the course of Islam,” a family source told CNN Saturday.
>
> Abdulmutallab had studied engineering for three years at University College London. Mutallab lost contact with his son after Abdulmutallab left London for Dubai in November 2008, CNN said. The son reportedly disowned his family members and moved on to Yemen.

First, notice how poverty doesn’t cause terrorism. Evil causes terrorism. Second, I think we need to expect more from our government. Their first duty is to keep us safe. We certainly pay them enough.

Michigan DHS deducts union dues from home-based day care subsidies

December 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Michelle Berry runs a private day-care service from her home on the outskirts of this city, the birthplace of General Motors. “The Berry Patch,” as she calls the service, features overstuffed purple gorillas, giant cartoon murals, and a playroom covered in Astroturf. Her clients are mostly low-income parents who need child care to keep their jobs in a city that now has a 26% unemployment rate.
>
> Ms. Berry owns her own business—yet the Michigan Department of Human Services claims she is a government employee and union member. The agency thus withholds union dues from the child-care subsidies it sends to her on behalf of her low-income clients. Those dues are funneled to a public-employee union that claims to represent her. The situation is crazy—and it’s happening elsewhere in the country.
>
> A year ago in December, Ms. Berry and more than 40,000 other home-based day care providers statewide were suddenly informed they were members of Child Care Providers Together Michigan—a union created in 2006 by the United Auto Workers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. The union had won a certification election conducted by mail under the auspices of the Michigan Employment Relations Commission. In that election only 6,000 day-care providers voted. The pro-labor vote turned out.
>
> Many of the state’s other 34,000 day-care providers never even realized what was going on. Ms. Berry tells us she was “shocked” to find out she was suddenly in a union.

This is why the state of Michigan is a dump – it’s not just Detroit, it’s Lansing, and Governor Jennifer Granholm.

Is poverty the root cause of crime and terrorism?

December 27, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this story from the UK Independent.

Excerpt:

> Abdulmutallab, 23, had lived a gilded life, and, for the three years he studied in London, he stayed in a £2m flat. He was from a very different background to many of the other al-Qa'ida recruits who opt for martyrdom.
>
> […]Abdulmutallab's father, Umaru, is the former economics minister of Nigeria. He retired earlier this month as the chairman of the First Bank of Nigeria but is still on the boards of several of Nigeria's biggest firms, including Jaiz International, a holding company for the Islamic Bank. The 70-year-old, who was also educated in London, holds the Commander of the Order of the Niger as well as the Italian Order of Merit.
>
> Dr Mutallab said he was planning to meet with police in Nigeria last night after realising his son had joined the notorious roster of al-Qa'ida terrorists, and is said to have warned the US authorities about his son's extreme views six months ago.

People who deny the reality of evil put us at risk by advocating policies of appeasement and redistribution of wealth. Those policies incentivize crime and terrorism by making criminals and terrorists feel a sense of entitlement to act immorally, since their behavior is really the fault of society.

877 snowfall records were set last week in the USA

December 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The post is here on Michael's Comments. (H/T ECM)

The map:

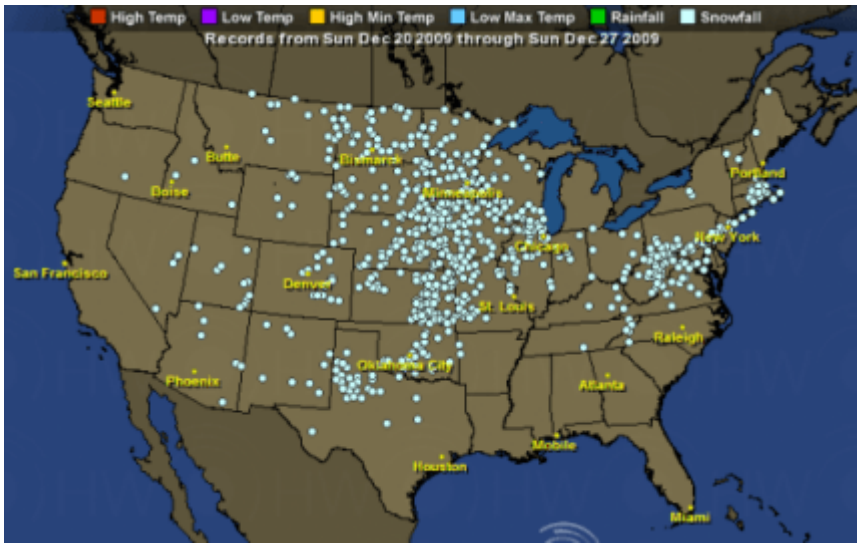

Excerpt:

> The [AGW] hypothesis has been falsified by:
>
> (1) the missing thermal signature of CO2 in the tropical atmosphere which the IPCC model requires.
>
> […](2) new and better data from Antarctic and Greenland ice cores showing that CO2 does not cause warming, but is a feedback effect.
>
> […](3) the recent demonstration by German physicists, published in *International Journal of Modern Physics*, that the IPCC model violates the First and Second Laws of Thermodymics (i.e., their predictions are impossible) and that the atmosphere does not faintly resemble a greenhouse.
>
> […](4) both surface station data and new satellite data (which is not subject to distortion from the "urban island effect" or rigging by undisclosed computer models used by AGW alarmists) indicate that the warming trend had stopped by 2002 while CO2 continued to increase substantially — which the IPCC model does not permit.
>
> […](5) recent publication, in a prestigious peer reviewed journal, of evidence that the actual cause of modern global warming is CFCs interacting with cosmic radiation. Unfortunately for the politicians, bureaucrats and grant pimps, CFCs are a problem that has already been fixed, and the ozone holes over the poles are repairing themselves.
>
> How can the AGW alarmists maintain their religion in the face of such *science?*

This is a great post. Read the whole thing! And send it to your friends! (Also, "Al Gore" is

apparently leaving angry comments in the post, so read those too!).

UK police protect girls who are forced to convert to Islam

December 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from This is London. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Extremist Muslims who force vulnerable teenage girls to convert to Islam are being targeted by police, Met chief Sir Ian Blair has revealed.
>
> Police are working with universities to clamp down on “aggressive conversions” during which girls are beaten up and forced to abandon university courses.
>
> The Hindu Forum of Britain claims hundreds of mostly Sikh and Hindu girls have been intimidated by Muslim men who take them out on dates before terrorising them until they convert.

I am curious what sense the phrase “aggressive conversion” has. Obviously there are using a different definition of conversion than Christians use, since for us, it is something you do when you are convinced by arguments and evidence, not being beaten up. Jesus didn’t beat people up so they would accept his authority.

Can all opposition to secular socialist policies be dismissed as racism?

December 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Weekly Standard. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> For years now, those on the left have conflated resistance to any item of their agenda–high taxes, extravagant spending, laxity on crime, what have you–with motives of a dark nature: racism, nativism, fear of "the other," and various species of "hate."
>
> […]As Obama's grandiose plans created a predictable political reaction, which first took form in the tea party movement, his sympathizers in the media theorized that racism, which had been in abeyance for the six monthsaround the election, had re-reared its mean head.
>
> […]*Time*'s Joe Klein looked at people protesting taxes and spending, bailouts and czars, deficits in the trillions, and discerned fear of Hispanics spreading like wildfire in the white working class. "They're seeing Latinos . . . move into the neighborhoods. They're seeing South Asians . . . running a lot of businesses. They're seeing intermarriage . . . all these things that they find threatening. . . . They believe that the America that they knew, which was always kind of a myth, has disappeared."
>
> […]Michael Lind, writing for *Salon*, said… "From the beginning, attempts to create a universal welfare state in the U.S. have been thwarted by the fears of voters that they will be taxed to subsidize other Americans who are unlike them in race. . . . Racial resentments undoubtedly explain the use of 'redistribution' and 'socialism' as code words by John McCain, Sarah Palin, and Republican working-class mascot 'Joe the Plumber' during the 2008 presidential campaign."

But the problem is that there isn't any *evidence* of racism:

> The most conclusive rejoinder to the contention that "socialism" is a racist code word comes from a poll taken by the Democracy Corps (the firm founded by James Carville and Paul Begala), which delivered the verdict that while tea party protesters were insane by the partisan standards of Bill Clinton's backers, the protesters' concerns were what they said they were–taxes and spending; the expansion of government–and were not about race. The pollsters began discussions among older, white, and conservative voters and found "race was barely raised, [and] certainly not what was bothering them."

Is it healthy for democracy for the secular left to demonize their opponents *all the time* instead of listening to their arguments? Doesn't this shurt down dialogue and prevent us

from listening to a diversity of opinions and perspectives? It seems to me that the only people who ever make race an issue are people on the left. I'm really questioning whether we should be voting in close-minded leftists to run the economy when they seem to be incapable of appreciating both sides of economic questions.

It's the economy, stupid.

Darwinists present a solution to the Cambrian explosion

December 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Darwin's God. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Now, thanks to the latest research, we have the answer: calcium. Evolutionists are now saying that a rise in ocean calcium levels triggered the assembly of unicellular organisms into multicellular organisms and the rest, as evolutionists say, is history. What is astonishing is that there is anyone left out there who questions evolution. Can't they see that these guys are doing the heavy lifting? This is just rock solid investigative research, the kind we've come to expect from evolutionists.

From the abstract of the paper:

> We propose that stronger cell adhesion allowed the integrity of genetically uniform animals composed only of "self" cells, facilitating genetic constitutions to remain within the metazoan individual and be passed down inheritance lines. The Cambrian explosion might have been triggered by the coincidence in time of primitive animals endowed with self-/non-self-recognition and of a surge in seawater calcium that increased the binding forces between their calcium-dependent cell adhesion molecules.

It seems to me that the thing to be explained in the Cambrian explosion is "where did the NEW information come from for the NEW body plans". Positing better glue to stick single cells together doesn't address where the NEW code came from totally NEW body plans and NEW organ types.

Please post challenges on Dr. Hunter's blog, as biophysics is his area of expertise.

Homeland Security head says that “the system worked”

December 28, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider Janet Napolitano, Barack Obama’s pick for the head of the Department of Homeland Security.

According to a report produced in April 2009 by the DHS, conservative Americans who are pro-life and pro-marriage, and who believe in the Constitution, federalism and the rule of law are potential terrorists.

Here’s a refresher of what the report was about from US News & World Report.

> … Napolitano’s department prepared a report for state and local police officials titled “Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment.” Little more than a nine-page screed against phantoms, the report purports to address potential threats from religious and racial hate groups as well as “those that are mainly antigovernment, rejecting federal authority in favor of state or local authority, or rejecting government authority entirely.” The report also singles out for special consideration anti-abortion activists, gun owners, immigration opponents and… returning veterans.

Here she is on CNN talking about how returning Iraq war veterans are potential terrorists.

And consider this story where she refuses to say the word terrorism in her remarks to Congress.

Excerpt:

> Napolitano is the first homeland security secretary to drop the term “terror” and “vulnerability” from remarks prepared for delivery to the House Homeland Security Committee, according to a copy obtained by The Associated Press.
>
> Tom Ridge, who headed the agency when it was launched in 2003, mentioned terrorism 11 times in his prepared statement at his debut before the oversight committee in 2003. And in 2005 Michael Chertoff, the second secretary, mentioned terrorism seven times, according to an AP analysis of the prepared testimonies.

Does she strike you as grounded in reality? Or ideology?

And now she says that “the system worked”

I’ve posted all this background to introduce Napolitano’s latest comments of the recent terrorist attack, that Al-Quaeda is taking reponsibility for, and that the DHS failed to prevent.

Here she is on CNN:

She is saying that the system worked.

Excerpt:

> Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano has created controversy over her remarks that "The system worked" on CNN's "State of the Union". She was referring to the terrorist attack on Northwest Airlines flight 253 from Amsterdam to Detroit.

"The system worked", she says. This, in spite of the following facts:

- The terrorist's name, Abdul Farouk Abdulmutallab, was on the tied list of potential terrorists.
- Abdulmutallab's father reported his son had been recruited and trained by al Qaida to the United States Embassy in Lagos, Nigeria.
- Abdulmutallab is not permitted into the UK because of terrorist concerns.
- Abdulmutallab may have been allowed on board without a passport. Witnesses in the gate area allege he was introduced by a well-dressed man as a Sudanese refugee seeking sanction in the United States.
- Homeland Security cleared the passenger list before NW253 departed.

But "the system worked"!

Maybe the system is only designed to prevent terrorist attacks from"right-wing extremists"? I really don't know. What I do know is that the DHS will not be effective if they believe in an alternate "Michael Moore" parallel universe, where Rush Limbaugh is actually responsible for the 9/11 attacks instead of Osama Bin Laden.

ABC News writes:

> Two of the four leaders allegedly behind the al Qaeda plot to blow up a Northwest Airlines passenger jet over Detroit were released by the U.S. from the Guantanamo prison in November, 2007, according to American officials and Department of Defense documents.
>
> […]American officials agreed to send the two terrorists from Guantanamo to Saudi Arabia where they entered into an "art therapy rehabilitation program" and were set free, according to U.S. and Saudi officials.

Elections matter, so let's remember Janet Napolitano the next time we have to vote in 2010. The only way to deal with Napolitano is by voting Democrats out and putting some grown-ups in to handle things like the economy, health care, and national security.

Will December 2009 be the coldest on record?

December 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at Watts Up With That? (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> According to NOAA, October was the third coldest on record in the US, with almost every state showing temperatures from one to ten degrees below normal. Some Parts of Colorado received record snowfall during October, starting the first week of the month.
>
> With a few days left, it appears that December is headed for a repeat, with temperatures ranging from one to fifteen degrees below normal.

Map:

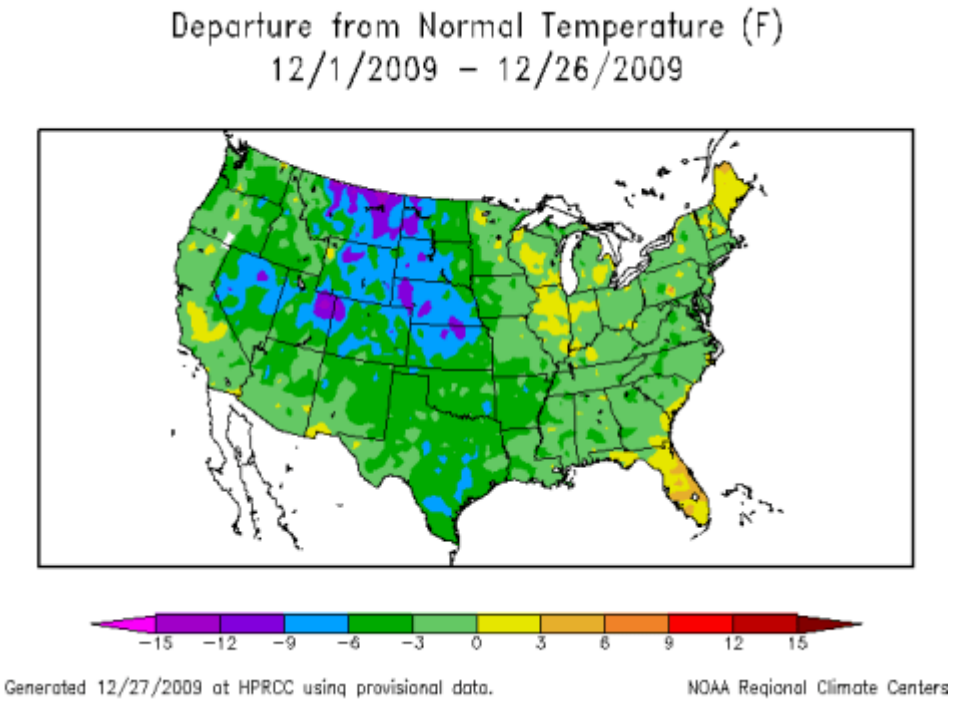

I know what the response from the secular left will be: global temperatures are not evidence against global warming, and even if global warming is a lie, we need to move towards communism to stop pollution and overpopulation.

Berkeley high school to close science department to eliminate racial disparities

December 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from East Bay Express. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The proposal would trade labs seen as benefiting white students for resources to help struggling students.
>
> Berkeley High School is considering a controversial proposal to eliminate science labs and the five science teachers who teach them to free up more resources to help struggling students.
>
> The proposal to put the science-lab cuts on the table was approved recently by Berkeley High's School Governance Council, a body of teachers, parents, and students who oversee a plan to change the structure of the high school to address Berkeley's dismal racial achievement gap, where white students are doing far better than the state average while black and Latino students are doing worse.
>
> Paul Gibson, an alternate parent representative on the School Governance Council, said that information presented at council meetings suggests that the science labs were largely classes for white students. He said the decision to consider cutting the labs in order to redirect resources to underperforming students was virtually unanimous.

Berkeley is probably the most liberal place in the United States, (located near San Francisco, CA). They best reflect the thinking of radical secular leftists who value equality of outcome far more than liberty and excellence. Rather than introducing educational reforms like merit-based pay, standardized testing, and expedited firing of underperforming teachers, they instead punish success with wealth redistribution.

Homeland security chair says Swedish grandmothers just as likely to be terrorists

December 29, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from The Hill. (H/T Weasel Zippers ECM)

Excerpt:

> The chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee said today he opposes any efforts to profile passengers in the wake of a failed plane bombing.

> "You pat down every person who's suspicious. I don't think you have to target people," Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.), told MSNBC. "This Swedish grandmother could just as well be a part of a terrorist plot as anyone else. So I think we have to be very careful when we try to target people."
>
> Thompson also said the financial concerns could hold up efforts to get full-body scanners in airports.
> "It's a matter of money. You know, security is an issue, but as we struggle with this economy, there's only so much money we can dedicate to this particular issue," he said.

I put a lot of effort into my previous post on Democrats and National Security. Please take a look.

Why do pro-abortion people have no compassion for the unborn?

December 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good post from Suzanne at Big Blue Wave.

Excerpt:

> When it comes to cats and dogs, people will go to enormous lengths to find them new homes or help them medically. And when they do "terminate" them, it's usually because they're sick anyway.
>
> Unborn children? They are killed with no questions asked.
>
> I know that some animal rights types *do* feel some affinity for the unborn; feminists however, feel none. They simply do not care if the baby dies, and will never admit the slightest amount of pity for him. Because they know their movement rests on dehumanizing the unborn…

What abortion is about is the freedom to engage in a risky recreational activity and to terminate the life of a separate, distinct human being who is a victim of the irresponsible choices of grown-ups who ought to know better. It's about killing the weak and helpless so that the strong are not inconvenienced by additional mouths to feed, which diminishes their selfish pursuit of pleasure. (And secular leftists complain about greedy capitalists – but at least capitalists don't *murder innocent children* out of greed).

What moral relativism means

ECM sent me a brilliant post from David Thompson, that made me think of what secular leftists do after jettisoning real moral rules like "don't kill innocent people without justification". Read the post, then reflect on how moral relativists try to cover up their selfish hedonism in front of others by agonizing over fashionable causes and moral dilemmas. It's just an example of screaming "me too!" to religious people, even though morality is not rationally grounded without God.

People who reject the objective morality that comes from God will go on to invent a new morality that they find easier to accept. Typically it will involve embracing things like animal rights, recycling, vegetarianism or yoga. But if you ask a leftist to curtail their sexual desires to protect children, (born and unborn), then you can forget about it – they won't do it. The whole point of atheism is to pursue pleasure apart from moral obligations.

How PBS uses your tax dollars to distort the evidence for evolution

December 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Evolutionists believe that the embryos of different mammals look similar in the earliest stages of development because the mammals share a common ancestor. And they believe that as the embryos develop, they begin to look less similar. This theory was invented by Ernst Haeckel, who believed that"ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny".

With that mind, consider this post by embryologist Jonathan Wells at Evolution News, in which he describes PBS's latest effort to use taxpayer dollars to push evolution on children, without any presentation of opposing views.

Excerpt:

> On the website for its December 29 special, PBS offers an interactive "Guess the Embryo" exercise featuring four different vertebrate embryos: an 8 day-old mouse, a 5 day-old quail, a 17 day-old turtle, and a 40 day-old bat. The purpose of the exercise is to convince viewers that "embryos of different species can appear startlingly similar to one another." A discerning viewer, however, will notice that the turtle embryo already has a rudimentary shell on its back—thus distinguishing it clearly from the others. A discerning viewer might also notice that the bat embryo bears little resemblance to the mouse embryo, even though both are mammals. **What viewers may not know—and PBS does not tell them—is that the interactive exercise shows embryos midway through development. The earliest stages are systematically omitted.** Perhaps this is because in their earliest stages vertebrate embryos are striking different from each other. They follow a pattern that embryologists call the "developmental hourglass"—wide at the top, narrow in the middle, and wide at the bottom. In other words, vertebrate embryos start out very different from each other, become superficially similar midway through development, then diverge again as they mature. Like Darwin's German disciple Ernst Haeckel, PBS distorts vertebrate development to make it ***seem*** to provide evidence for Darwin's theory.

As Wells notes, the embryological evidence actually shows that mammal embryos are *different* in the earliest stages, and similar in the middle stages of development. So embryological development Darwinian fundamentalist Ernst Haeckel's embryo drawings were discredited as a fraud in the 19th century. The drawings also showed intermediate stages of embryo development – not the earliest stages.

Wells' Ph.D in Biology is from the University of California at Berkeley. His area of specialization is embryology, in which he has conducted post-doctoral research.

Obama golfs in Hawaii as Iran seeks uranium and murders protesters

December 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Fox News. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> At least 15 people were killed during massive anti-government protests in Tehran when opposition supporters clashed with security forces in the streets, Iranian state television reported Monday.
>
> The report said 10 people killed during Sunday's fierce clashes in the Iranian capital were members of "anti-revolutionary terrorist" groups, apparently referring to opposition supporters.
>
> The other five who died were killed by "terrorist groups" in a "suspicious act," the report said, without elaborating.
>
> Iranian security forces stormed a series of opposition offices on Monday, rounding up at least seven prominent anti-government activists in a new crackdown against the country's reformist movement, opposition Web sites and activists reported.

And in the UK Telegraph:

> In the six months that have followed, Barack Obama's high-risk engagement strategy has simply encouraged more repression from the Mullahs, as well as ever greater levels of defiance over Iran's nuclear weapons programme. As Con Coughlin noted in an excellent piece for *The Wall Street Journal* last month, Obama's Iran diplomacy isn't working:
>
> *"Iranian human-rights groups say that since the government crackdown began in late June, at least 400 demonstrators have been killed while another 56 are unaccounted, which is several times higher than the official figures. The regime has established a chain of unofficial, makeshift prisons to deal with the protesters, where torture and rape are said to be commonplace. In Tehran alone, 37 young Iranian men and women are reported to have been raped by their captors."*
>
> Now once again huge street protests have flared up on the streets of Tehran and a number of other major cities, with several protesters shot dead this weekend by the security forces and Revolutionary Guards, reportedly including the nephew of opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi, and dozens seriously injured. And again there is deafening silence from the Commander-in-Chief as well as his Secretary of State. **And where is the president? On vacation in Hawaii, no doubt recuperating from his exertions driving forward the monstrous**

> **health care reform bill against the overwhelming will of the American public and without a shred of bipartisan support.**

Iran is also attempting to import 1350 tons of uranium – enough to make many weapons of mass destruction. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Iran is close to clinching a deal to clandestinely import 1,350 tons of purified uranium ore from Kazakhstan, according to an intelligence report obtained by the Associated Press on Tuesday. Diplomats said the assessment was heightening international concern about Tehran's nuclear activities.

And as Muddling Towards Maturity notes, Iraq's Christians are facing persecution.

Excerpt:

> …Iraq's dwindling Christian communities are still being targeted on the basis of their faith. That is especially the case in Mosul, long the most lawless and violent place in Iraq. By an unhappy coincidence, Mosul is also located in the ancestral heartland of Iraqi Christianity, and is thus the last refuge (short of exile) for Christians fleeing targeted violence in Baghdad, Basra, and other places.
>
> Mosul is therefore a target-rich environment. In December alone, at least seven churches, convents, and schools have been bombed, claiming dozens of lives, including the latest holy innocent, an eight-day-old baby girl. Iraq's central government deserves credit for dispatching some 3,000 additional police after a similar spate of bombings and attacks in October, but their presence has brought little improvement as Christians continue to flee Mosul for overcrowded and underdeveloped villages such as Qaraqosh in the adjacent Nineveh plain. Meanwhile, the situation around Kirkuk, also in northern Iraq, remains nearly as dire for Christians caught up in the Arab-Kurdish struggle for control of the area's oil fields.
>
> **While the Iraqi government has belatedly taken some modest steps to ease the suffering of Iraqi Christians, the U.S. government's consistent policy of studied and shameful indifference forms rare common ground between the Bush and Obama administrations. It is an indelible stain on American honor that two administrations did nothing to assist, much less protect, a beleaguered religious minority.**

It's a dangerous world. This is not the time for playing golf in Hawaii.

Apologetics 315 presents the apologetics year in review

December 30, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

See this post up at Apologetics 315 in case you missed anything!

Especially:

- William Lane Craig debates Christopher Hitchens here.
- William Lane Craig debates Richard Carrier on the Resurrection here.
- Michael Licona debates Bart Ehrman on the Resurrection here.
- Richard Dawkins talked to John Lennox about science and God here.

And:

> The most notable book releases this year were probably Signature in the Cell by Stephen Meyer (audio interview here), The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology edited by Craig and Moreland, and Tactics by Greg Koukl.

Stop by and make sure you didn't miss anything! (I left him a comment about the 2009 Greer-Heard Forum that he missed!)

Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?

December 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story by Michael Fumento in Forbes magazine. (H/T ECM)

Do greenhouse gases corelate with increases in hurricane frequency?

Here's the data we have today:

> True, both greenhouse gas emissions and levels in the atmosphere are at their highest, but this year had the fewest hurricanes since 1997, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. For the first time since 2006 no hurricanes even made landfall in the U.S.; indeed hurricane activity is at a 30-year low.

Roger Pielke Jr., a professor of environmental studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder, wrote a paper to demonstrate that hurricane frequency was independent of greenhouse gas emissions.

> Pielke published a report in the prestigious *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*… that analyzed U.S. hurricane damage since 1900. Taking into account tremendous population growth along coastlines, he found no increase. His paper was dutifully ignored by the powers that be.

How did the global warmists at the IPCC respond to Pielke's paper?

> But the so-called Climategate scandal, which illuminated efforts by climate change scientists to squelch opposition viewpoints, has now caught up to one scientist, Kevin Trenberth, who vociferously and influentially demanded that Pielke's paper be shunned.
>
> Trenberth works in the same town as Pielke and is one of the top researchers on the strongly warmist Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In a leaked e-mail from two months ago, he admitted to colleagues what he had hidden from the outside world: that there's been no measurable warming over the past decade.
>
> Yet two years earlier he told Congress that evidence for man-made warming was "unequivocal" and things were "apt to get much worse." And in 2005 he told the local newspaper that Pielke's *Bulletin* article was "shameful" and should be "withdrawn."

My recommendation is to test everything by watching debates. Unless you hear both sides in a debate, you just can't have any degree of confidence about what is really true. Be wary of people who say that "the debate is over" or that "everyone agrees" or that "there is no case on the other side". That's how people lie. Find the two best people you

can on either side and watch them duke it out. A wise man proportions his belief to the evidence.

Did Christianity invent stories by borrowing from pagan religions?

December 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever had someone tell you that Christianity borrowed from other pagan religions in order to create history out of nothing? Me either. Because the people who make such arguments are all confined to lunatic asylums. Almost no reputable historian makes arguments like this.

Well, Shane over at Caffeinated Thoughts wrote a post to answer the objection. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> …the basic premise is that since Horus and Mithra both pre-date the New Testament, Christianity merely borrowed from that mythology ascribing to Jesus the virgin birth, the disciples, the tomb, and the resurrection.

Go here to read the rest.

And then you can see how well these theories do in formal academic debates. Listen to these two debates with the two best "mystery religions" people, squaring off against William Lane Craig.

- Vs. Robert M. Price
- Vs. Richard Carrier

Notice how neither of these debates is even close. Carrier admitted defeat after his debate, and Price admits that virtually no one agrees with him during his debate. This is fringe stuff that is very interesting to people who have no interest in testing their ideas in debates with professional scholars.

Debates about the historical Jesus are listed in this previous post.

Related posts

- What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
- Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
- Richard Bauckham defends the reliability of the gospels against James Crossley
- Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
- The historical criteria and the standard minimal facts case.
- The list of minimal facts that are accepted by all non-Christian scholars.
- The earliest and best source for the minimal facts.
- Some additional details about the empty tomb sources.
- And some details about the first witnesses to the empty tomb.

UPDATE: Dr. Glenn Peoples has a refutation of the lame Mithra hypothesis here.

David Warren on western civilization and the place of pleasure

December 31, 2009 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM and I have a disagreement about David Warren. I don't think he's analytical and evidential enough, and ECM thinks that he's an excellent writer of essays. Please read this short essay on the proper role of pleasure, and then leave a comment explaining which of us you agree with.

Excerpt:

> The building and rebuilding forces of our society — essentially church and family — are by now almost everywhere under organized legal, legislative, and propaganda assault from the sterile vanguard of the atheist Left. The poison mist of "political correctness" swirls over our psychic landscape, and the great joyous and unifying truths which animated Western Christendom continue to be supplanted, both practically and symbolically, by the envious Big Lies of the political "activists."
>
> (Hope that didn't sound too wishy-washy.)

It's very wishy-washy – filled with mystical language and untestable assertions! How am I supposed to use all this flippant flowery flibbertigibbet to bash my atheist enemies into goo, and then steal their gold? It's no use at all!

Anyway, Warren diagnoses the problem as being a lack of moral and spiritual education, which has been replaced by hedonism, and he illustrates his point using the example of gluttony.

> But nature, in herself, cannot save us. We are not mere animals needing only nature's call. That part of our nature which rises to the fully human requires some degree of emotional, moral, intellectual, and yes, spiritual education — which begins at home, with a mom and dad.
>
> Let us consider this morning the perfect example for après-Christmas: "gluttony."

I suspect you will all agree with me that David Warren's head is filled with metaphors and feathers. So, take a look at the essay yourself and tell me what you think.

Are Democrats fixing national security or fixing the blame on others?

January 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this story from the American Spectator. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> On December 26, two days after Nigerian **Omar Abdulmutallab** allegedly attempted to use underwear packed with plastic explosives to blow up the Amsterdam-to-Detroit flight he was on, and as it became clear internally that the Administration had suffered perhaps its most embarrassing failure in the area of national security, senior Obama White House aides, including chief of staff **Rahm Emanuel**, **David Axelrod** and new White House counsel **Robert Bauer**, ordered staff to begin researching similar breakdowns — if any — from the Bush Administration.
>
> "The idea was that we'd show that the Bush Administration had had far worse missteps than we ever could," says a staffer in the counsel's office. "We were told that classified material involving anything related to al Qaeda operating in Yemen or Nigeria was fair game and that we'd declassify it if necessary."

Unbelievable. Our lives are at stake and they're pointing fingers.

Christians debate Jewish rabbis on the Trinity and the identity of Jesus

January 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is God three persons and one being?

This debate on the Trinity was noted in a comment by Woody Lordless.

Part 1:

Part 2:

Cool. I am pleased to see a Jewish teacher get up there and slug it out with our guys.

Was Jesus the Messiah?

Here's a debate on the question of whether Jesus was the Messiah. I recognize both of these names and have heard them both speak. These are the top guys, unless you go and get Jewish historians like Geza Vermes or Paula Fredriksen.

Part 1:

Part 2:

I want to see a full-length formal debate on the identity of Jesus with some Jewish scholars and some Christian scholars. We should organize a conference and let each side pick their best guys and have it out so everyone else will learn what the arguments are on either side. We should hold the conference at a university, and broadcast it n the Internet, then make the videos available for download after the event.

MUST-READ: Transcript of debate between Greg Koukl and Michael Shermer

January 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Found at Hugh Hewitt's blog, (but it isn't formatted properly there! It's all jumbled up – so I applied a regular expression transform to add line breaks to my version below)

Thanks to Apologetics 315.

—-

HH: Special edition of the Hugh Hewitt Show. As we come to the end of what I call the decade of the atheists, I am taking a day here at the end of the year to look back at what that has been about, and what progress or lack thereof has been made in that conversation, what it meant, and what it ought to mean, and whether or not those of you who are just finished celebrating Christmas were in fact simply involving yourself in a pagan kind of ritual that grew up over the years, or whether you're worshipping the one, true God. All that and more, because this has been the decade of the atheists, Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, many others, but today, I want to ask did they make a difference at all, or is in fact faith in God generally stronger than ever. To join me in this all day special conversation in studio, two guests. Greg Koukl is the founder and the president of Stand To Reason, http://www.str.org. He is a leading Christian apologist. He's an author most recently of Tactics: A Gameplan For Discussing Your Christian Convictions from Zondervan Press. Before that, Relativism, he's got a lot of other books and pamphlets as well at Amazon.com. But you can find out most about Greg at http://www.str.org. Michael Shermer is the editor of Skeptic Magazine. He is the founder of the Skeptic Society, author of a number of books, including The Mind Of The Market: How Biology And Psychology Shape Our Economic Minds, and Why Darwin Matters: The Case Against Intelligent Design. Both Michael and Greg have been guests on the Hugh Hewitt Show before. They're both very generous with their time to spend an entire day doing this, and so welcome to you both. Gentlemen, I believe in biography before everything. Greg Koukl, K comes before S. Give people a little bit of a rundown on who you are and how you ended up doing this.

GK: Well, just a broad background here. I approach the issue that we're talking about today not as a philosopher or a theologian, though I have advanced degrees in both, but really as a human being that's trying to make sense out of my world. What worldview, what picture of reality does the best job of answering the questions? That wasn't always my perspective. I was raised in a religious home, nominally religious. And then in the 60s, during the counterculture, like a whole bunch of other young people, I went crazy. You know, you abandon the views of the establishment, you embrace all these new things that are invading the world in the 60s, and I did that. I was at Michigan State University in their Honors College there as a prelaw student, as it turned out. I had thought I had tried Christianity because of my background. I thought I was too smart to be a Christian. And so I just didn't give real serious consideration to that until I went to the West Coast, and

went, I was a student at UCLA. And at that time, I began to give fresh consideration to the claims that Jesus of Nazareth was making on my life. And in 1973, I made a commitment to follow Him. And that began to change everything. In 1976, I spent three months in Europe, five weeks of that behind the Iron Curtain working with Christians who are suffering there as a result of their own convictions as Christians, back when they had an Iron Curtain. A number of years later, in 1982, I went to Thailand to work with Cambodian refugees. My job was to feed 18,500 people in Sakeo refugee camp, which the result of the Cambodian holocaust of 1975-1976, and then in 1993, I decided to kind of focus my efforts and start an organization with some other people, particularly Melinda Penner, who many who are listening know as The Enforcer. And that organization is called Stand To Reason. And Hugh, I had two basic goals with starting Stand To Reason. One is to train Christians to think more carefully about their convictions. There just was a lot of nonsense being spewed by Christians who I think had the right ideas, but were not communicating them well, and were not thinking well about those ideas. And secondly, I wanted to develop some tools to show that Christianity is actually worth thinking about. Some of these were tools of engagement. There was too much of a bellicose atmosphere between those who believed in Jesus and the Christian worldview and those who don't. And I wanted to see that engagement look more like diplomacy than D-Day. And so there's kind of a general attitude thing that I wanted to see happen, building ambassadors for Christ. Secondly, I wanted to help them with the new tools of evidence, and the information that has been coming out in the last ten or fifteen years that have been very, very powerful, I think, to commend the Christian worldview to the rest of the world – things about big bang cosmology, for example, the design inferences that we find in the universe, the evidence for the existence of the soul, the evidence from the primary source documents about Jesus of Nazareth and his resurrection. All of these things, there's been a lot of work done in the last fifteen or twenty years. And so our goal is to try to bring these things down to a level where people can understand them, throw the ball so that they can catch it, for believers in Christ to do so, but without having a bunch of religious language attached to it, one, and two, using an external approach. In other words, using the philosophy and the science to demonstrate that their views are worth thinking about, instead of simply throwing Bible verses at them, and in the process, I've written a number of books, one of them on abortion called Precious Unborn Human Persons. It's basically a small monograph. The next one, Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted In Mid-Air that I co-authored with Frank Beckwith, who you know. And the one most recently is the one you just mentioned, Tactics: A Game Plan For Discussing Your Christian Convictions.

HH: With that introduction, Mike Shermer, how about you?

MS: Well, I was born and raised in the Southern California area, and my home was, neither of my homes, as my parents were divorced, neither of them were religious, but neither were they anti-religious. They were just not religious. But in the nascent Jesus movement of the early 70s, I became a born again when I was in high school, 1971. And I remember it was a, my best friend, he was a Presbyterian, so on a Saturday night, I

accepted Christ into my heart. And then Sunday, I went to the local Presbyterian church with his family, and went up to the alter and all that with the other people that were called forward. And then on Monday, I remember returning back to high school to tell my buddy, Frank, that I had finally become religious and accepted Jesus like he had been telling me about, and hoping I would. And instead of being excited, he was disappointed, because he was a Jehovah's Witness, and that I had gone to the wrong church, the Presbyterians. Anyway, so that always stuck in the back of my mind like wow, aren't we all on the same bus together in the same journey? Well, not always. Anyway, so…but I took it pretty seriously. I went to Bible study classes. There was a little place in La Crescenta called the Barn, where Christians met and had Bible study classes, things like that. And then I went to Pepperdine University in Malibu there to, really to matriculate initially into theology, but then I switched to psychology, really for logistical reasons. I just wanted to be a college professor, because it's, you know, it's a great gig that you hardly have to work and you get good pay. Don't ever listen to those professors complain about their pay. It's the best gig going. And I wanted in on that. And theology was my field, but to get a PhD, you have to do Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic and Latin. And I could barely get through Spanish, so I realized okay, I have to do something I'm actually good at, which was science, which was experimental psychology. And so I switched fields. But while I was at Pepperdine, I took courses in the New Testament, the Old Testament, the life of Jesus. I took an entire semester course in the writings of C.S. Lewis. We read everything that Lewis wrote, and I really loved C.S. Lewis. I still like C.S. Lewis. I think he's a great writer. But then eventually, when I went to graduate school, when I was in a different environment, not surrounded by Christians, and getting different perspectives. And for a number of reasons, I ultimately lost my faith, and let go of God, and became essentially a secularist, or a non-believer, whatever. I never really call myself an atheist. I mean, I don't like to identify myself or define myself by what I don't believe, because atheism doesn't really stand for anything. There's no principles behind it. There's no platform or set of planks that we live our lives by. We just simply don't believe in God. So then I got into, well, actually I had a ten year span where I was a bike racer living here in Orange County, and did Race Across America five times, and I was the assistant director, and the executive director of the race. And so I spent quite a bit of time in a completely different profession, but teaching part time psychology. Then after ten years of bike racing, I realized my body wasn't going to hold out forever, and I might have to use my brain again. So I went back and got a PhD in the history of science at Claremont, and then became a fulltime professor at Occidental College in L.A. But on the side, we just started the Skeptics thing as just sort of a hobby in my garage. It was nothing, really, just for fun, and a lecture series at Cal Tech. And it just got bigger and bigger, and by 1997-98, when my first book, Why People Believe Weird Things did really well, I had a literary agent that got me a big advance for my next book, and a lecture agent, and so on, and I realized you know, I think I could actually make a living as a writer and an editor and a public intellectual, and actually teach more people than I can teach in a classroom, that is just reach more people. And so I've been doing that every since. I quit teaching at Oxy in 98, and returned to teaching just two years ago at Claremont Graduate University, just one

class a year, Evolution, Economics & the Brain. It's a PhD level course. So it's just for fun. So my main job, my day job, is editing and writing.

HH: We've got a minute and a half to the break, so I'll let you go first, Greg. What's your first question for Michael? I'll lead most of this conversation, but in between, I'll let you pose each other questions. Do you have a question or anything that you're curious about his background?

GK: Well, about his background?

HH: Just anything.

GK: Well, I think, and this is just going to seed further conversation, Michael, but I think the biggest, one of the biggest problems, it's not the only big problem, but one of the biggest problems that atheists have to deal with is the problem of morality. Listen, if you have a guy who drags a woman into an alley, and then molests her, and then…that's our music. Okay, I'll finish my illustration in just a few moments. But I want to raise the nature of morality, is the question, or how best to explain the existence of real morality.

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HH: When we went to break, I began just the first opportunity to ask each other a question. So Greg, you were bringing up the…rephrase it for the audience who just tuned in for Michael.

GK: Right. Actually, the big question here, Hugh, is whether it's possible to be good without God. Now I'm not talking about whether it's possible to be good without a belief in God. I certainly think that's possible, but be good without God. And the answer to that question hinges entirely on precisely what you mean by good. And so I was going to give an illustration. So a man drags a young girl into the alley, he sexually abuses her, strangles here, and tosses her into the dustbin. Is that act wrong? Now I think everybody listening is going to admit it is wrong. But here is the real question. What do we mean when we say that that act of rape and abuse and murder is wrong? Are we describing the action itself, the object? Are we saying that the object, the rape, the murder, has a quality of being wrong, and therefore, wherever that rape goes, the wrongness follows it, just like your height, 6' 2", or whatever it is, is an objective quality of you. Wherever you go, your height follows you in the same way. Does the wrongness follow the rape? Well, if it's a quality of the rape, if it's an objective quality of the rape, then it does. And it doesn't matter what people think about it, or what cultures decides, or what your evolutionary conditioning is. The rape is still wrong. The other alternative is that you're not talking about the rape. You're talking about yourself. You're talking about your genetic conditioning. You're talking about your culture's decision about that kind of thing. And if that's the case, then the truth of the wrongness of the rape is simply in the individual or the subject. And this is why philosophers distinguish between ethical objectivism and ethical subjectivism. Now there's lots of different subjectivisms in ethics. But simply put, if you're an ethical subjectivist, you're a relativist. And actual ethics don't exist. Ethics are an illusion. If you conclude that ethics are an illusion, there's lots of different ways to explain it. Michael's written a really great book, I think, called The Science Of Good And

Evil. I've read most of it, and it's well written, and it's very compelling. But it's a description about how the illusion of ethics has taken place. If you want to go that route, you're welcome to go that route. But what you can't do is you can't then talk about morality as if it's objective when your explanations are subjective. So this is a problem that I think all atheists, including Michael, have to solve. Are ethics objective or relative? And if they're relative, then how can we make moral judgments that are meaningful on other people?

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Wow, let's just get right into it. Well, I don't think it's quite so black and white. That is to say I think there are provisional moral truths that exist whether there's a God or not. In other words, it's wrong, morally, absolutely morally wrong to rape and murder. And that would be true whether there was a God or not. In other words, if…is God saying that it's wrong because it's really wrong, and He's instructing us in his Holy Scripture that it's wrong? Or is it only wrong because He said so? And if it turned out there wasn't a God, would that make it okay? And my answer is no, it really is wrong, whether God says it's wrong or not. That is to say I think it really exists, a real, moral standard like that. Why? Well, because first, you could ask the person who is being affected, we should always ask the moral recipient of the act, how do you feel about being raped or murdered or stolen from or lied to. And the moral actor will tell you, it doesn't matter whether, if I could use a current example, I haven't any idea if Tiger Woods and his wife are religious or not. But you can just ask his wife whether it was morally right or wrong, and she'll tell you. It doesn't matter whether there's a God or not. It's wrong. And so that's the first principle. Just ask. Ask the moral recipient of whether it's right or wrong. But I think Greg's after something deeper, that is to say is there something even deeper still behind the moral actor's feelings about how they're treated. And the answer is yes, I think so. We're a social species. We don't live in isolation. We live as members of a group. And as such, there's no possible way our group could survive, be cohesive, be a unit of any kind of solidarity against other groups, or against a harsh environment. If there were too much violations of social norms, that is if there were constant lying and cheating and raping and murdering, there's no way a social group could hang together. And as such, as we all know, we're very tribal. We're tribal against other groups, but within our groups, we're very pro-social, altruistic, cooperative. We have a good and evil in our nature. So to this extent, I find myself interesting often in agreement with my conservative friends on most of the things they consider morally, moral truths. That is, we share the same moral values, even though I come at it from a different perspective.

HH: Greg?

GK: Yeah, I'm actually not after something deeper here, Michael. At least to start out the discussion, I'm trying to be as simple and clear and precise as possible, because it's very easy to weave together a bunch of things that sound persuasive, but turn out to be different things. Like for example, Darwinian evolution, which is a materialistic process, and here I mean the blind watchmaker thesis, the neo-Darwinian synthesis, natural selection working on mutations, and a kind of a cultural evolution that Michael has just

referred to as we work together as a group to survive as a group. Those are two entirely different things. One is materialistic, Darwinian, the other one is intelligent design, quite frankly, where the group gets together and makes some determinations to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What I'm trying to do is to be able to answer the question that came up initially, is God necessary for morality, which Michael denies. It's to say well, what is it that morality, that we're trying to describe? It is either objective, and therefore an immaterial obligation that applies to certain behaviors, or it is subjective. The things that Michael described were variously subjective, evolutionary elements, subjective cultural elements, but then he affirmed that we all have good and evil in our nature, or an awareness of that. I agree with that entirely. We all are aware of those things. That's why even if we don't believe in God, we can still know morality and follow it. The question is what accounts for real, genuine objective morality?

HH: One minute to the break, Michael Shermer.

MS: I'm not arguing for cultural evolution. I'm actually arguing as part of our, what you described as materialistic, natural selection, Darwinian evolution, that it's not enough to just pretend or fake being a good group member. You actually have to believe it, feel it, and live it. So what I'm arguing is that natural selected certain moral sentiments, as Adam Smith called them, moral feelings, an actual empathy, Adam Smith talked about, we actually empathize with somebody else, we can put ourselves into their shoes and feel their pain, I'm arguing that's very real. It's every bit as real a part of our evolutionary heritage as our eyes and our hands.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, you were saying that evolutionary biology has produced a real morality.

MS: Yeah, I think really, Adam Smith had it right in his very first book, The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, long before Darwin, that we actually have in our biological nature, our human nature, the capacity to feel other people's pain. He called it empathy, we think of it often either as empathy or sympathy. That is, we really do connect to other people. A lot of good research on this now, brain scans, you can show somebody a little video of somebody they know, or have feelings for, getting pricked with a pin, and the same areas of their brain light up, the pain receptors, as in the person getting the pin prick. In other words, we have an evolved tendency to really be deeply, emotionally connected to our fellow group members. And that's why I say groups like World Vision, where you want to adopt a child, it doesn't help to show a picture of 10,000 starving African kids. What does affect us is one child, a picture of one child with a little biography. That's how you get people to adopt a child to donate. The reason for that is because essentially they're tricking the brain, our brains into making that stranger an honorary family member, an honorary within group member, which is why I argue that free trade is one of the best ways of defusing normal tribal tensions between people. It makes them honorary friends, honorary members. Well, what's going on there is we're tricking the brain into sort of this evolutionary rule of thumb – be nice to people that are like you and that are related to

you, and that you know, and that are fellow group members, and don't do what our natural tendency is, is to be tribal and xenophobic against those other guys. And free trade is one of the best things you can do for that. So I'm arguing that's actually tapping something deep within us.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, basically, I agree with Mike completely here. We do have this tendency, and it seems to be universal among humankind. The question is, what is that tendency, actually? And what is the best way to explain it? And I see like a handful of significant problems with using evolution to explain morality. The first one is that evolution is a materialistic process. And here, I'm going back to an original point, and I don't want people to lose it. There is no way that you can take molecules, and reorganize them in any fashion, over any length of time, and have pop out of the mixture an objective moral principle that's immaterial, and that applies to human beings. All you're going to get is a reorganization of the molecules. And what they can produce, and this is what Mike has done in his book, and he mentioned just s few moments ago, they can produce sentiments. They can produce feelings. They can produce behavior. But this leads us to the second problem of using evolution to explain morality, is that morality is more than sentiments, feelings and behavior. Morality entails things like motive and intention. I mean, you could have a guy walk into a garage, walk out with a hose, and is that wrong? Well, it depends. Is it his hose or somebody else's hose? Did he intend to take the other person's hose? Is he borrowing the hose? So we can see here are elements that are part of the moral thing that needs to be explained, that are immaterial, and therefore the Darwinian explanation can't even in principle go there. It can't do that job. But here's the worst problem. Regardless of what our sentiments happen to be regarding moral actions, we can feel good or feel bad or whatever, the problem is that morality is prescriptive, not merely descriptive. That is it tells us not just what we did, but what we ought to have done in the past, and what we ought to do in the future. That is not something that any Darwinian mechanism can describe, because nothing about my biology can inveigh upon me to act a certain way for moral reasons in the future. It doesn't tell me why I should be good tomorrow. This is a huge difference between these two views, the descriptive and the prescriptive. Prescriptive is part of morality, and can't even, in principle, be explained by an evolutionary materialistic system.

HH: Michael Shermer, I'll give you a start on that. We have about 45 seconds to the break, so you may want to…we'll come back after the break and pick up. But what's your start to that?

MS: Well, the start would be that again, let's not think of evolution just as nature red and tooth and claw, and it's nasty, brutish and short, but that in fact, we have this whole other social evolution. And I'm not talking about cultural evolution where we consciously make decisions, but subconsciously, because it's in part of our nature to actually, seriously, deeply feel for other people and their actions, and the consequences of our actions, so that we actually have a sense of right and wrong that we're born with, but

then culture taps into and tweaks, one way or the other.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, Greg had made the argument that the Darwinian model simply cannot explain immaterial concepts like morality, that there's just no way you can rearrange the molecules to get there. You're saying well, yes you can.

MS: Yeah, I think so, because if we think of morality as another suite of emotions that are involved with other people's behaviors, the consequences of our actions, how we feel about them, how people feel about us when we do these things, that's as every bit as important a biological part of our nature as anything else we talk about. So let's take a real simple emotion. When you're hungry, nobody does any calculations about the caloric input/output ratios of eating an apple versus an ice cream, although now it's posted on the walls for us to see. But we just feel hungry, and we feel hungry for certain kinds of foods. The feeling of hunger is a proxy for something else. Evolution's done the calculating for us. You need food, so we're going to, your hypothalamus is going to secrete these certain chemicals that causes your stomach to rumble and so on. When you're attracted to somebody else, a member of the opposite sex, nobody does the calculation by, let's say, a man finds a woman attractive who has a .67 hip to waist ratio, and an hourglass figure, although that is pretty much universal. Nobody walks about with calipers taking measurements of who they're going to want to date or ask out. You just look around, and you just go wow, I really find this woman attractive. It's a feeling you have, okay? So those are kind of simple emotions, but sliding up the scale, the moral emotions are really no different. When I lie to somebody, I've violated a social norm, and they respond in a very angry, hostile way. So those emotions that we both share, guilt, shame, anger, disgust, involved a social relationship that whether it was a norm violation, those are the kinds of emotions that are just like hunger and sexual attraction that are built into us by nature, by evolution. Or, if you wish, this is how God created the moral sentiments, just like He created everything else in the universe, through a process of nature. I think that's equally reasonable to argue. So I don't see that it has to be an atheistic viewpoint versus a theistic viewpoint to get to our moral sentiments. Why couldn't God have used evolution to create the moral sentiments as I've described them?

GK: Yeah, well, you don't actually believe that, I know, Mike, so this is kind of like adding God to the soup, you know, if it makes people feel better. But the basic argument is that evolution all by itself can do the trick. And I think if your listeners are listening carefully, what they're going to hear is Mike has just described, and if I'm being unfair to your assessment here, let me know, Mike, that moral feelings are simply that. They are sophisticated emotions that do some work for us for survival, and even on a group level. Now there's a name for this. It's called emotivism. A.J. Ayer, the famous atheist, offered this description of morality. It's a relativistic scheme of morality. Morality doesn't actually exist, Ayer argued. There is no objective right or wrong. Rape isn't wrong itself. What happens is, we have feelings about it, and we express it in moral language, but rape isn't really wrong. So your listeners are going to have to ask themselves the questions. When

they just survey their own moral senses, and we all have access to this, do we want to believe that scientists have figured out that really what we're doing is feeling sophisticated, complicated emotions, and that the emotions are in us, and we are not seeing anything about the action? Or does it seem like rape is wrong? Look, when I say rape is wrong, I'm talking about the rape. When I say liver is awful, I'm talking about me. I'm talking about my own tastes and preferences. It's interesting, as Michael has given his explanation, though, that he's doing, and I don't know if you are aware of this, Michael, but you're doing the very thing that I kind of warned against. You give a description of the foundations of morality that turn out to be relativistic, but then there's a smuggling of a more objectivistic morality in the back door, like when Michael says you don't have to do what your nature tells you to do, in other words, what you've been programmed by evolution to do. You can kind of rise above that. Well, now we're talking about a morality that isn't dictated by evolution, but a morality that we can employ through our acts of will, to rise above this kind of brutish evolutionary morality. And that sounds suspiciously like the very thing that I'm talking about here.

MS: But I don't mean, there's nothing to rise above by itself. Yes, we have to say rise above our tribal instincts to be xenophobic when we meet somebody who's a stranger, who's different from us. We all struggle against that, particularly in a black and white America, where there's always been this underlying tension. Indeed, so culture helps us do that – education, travel, diversity of exposure to different people. That makes you a little more tolerant. Okay, but I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about is tapping into the good part of our nature, the fact that in addition to that xenophobic tribalism we have, we also have this other side that almost never gets discussed in evolutionary…even in evolutionary circles, you'll still hear evolutionary biologists talking about, in a way that Huxley did, and Herbert Spencer did in Darwin's own time, that we have to somehow struggle mightily against our genes to overcome that nasty tendency we have to want to rape, kill, pillage and destroy. Well no, actually, we have this whole other side that's just as genetically programmed into our nature. And the point of culture – education, politics, economics and so on, is to tap into the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said.

GK: Okay, here's the question I have for you, Michael, then. You've identified that really, we have good and we have bad. That's part of, under your terms, that's part of our genetic nature, and we can choose to tap into what you call the good side. Why ever should we do such a thing if there is not a higher standard that directs our action to the better side, your words, than the bad side, your words, if really, ultimately, they are both the result of a genetic evolution, and from outside terms, neither is better than the other. Why should we do that, Michael?

MS: Yeah, well I don't see how entering God into the equation changes that problem at all.

GK: Well, that's the next step. What I'm trying to show is that the should comes from the outside, and if we can demonstrate that, then we can ask…

MS: But there's no outside.

GK: That's my point. On your view, morals are relative, and there is no difference.

MS: No, but I don't think even in your view, there's an outside.

GK: Well, we can get to that in the next step.

MS: …because adding God doesn't add anything.

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HH: Greg, reset the debate. What just happened there?

GK: Well, what I'm arguing is basically, you have two choices. You have objective morality, or subjective morality. Subjective morality means that when we say something's wrong, we're not talking about the action itself, we're talking about ourselves. Now there are sophisticated ways of characterizing how we're talking about ourselves, whether it's culture, whether it's evolution. But ultimately, you end up with no morality. I think that's false. I think people know there is objective morality. And if evolution, no materialistic system can explain it, given the discovery of objective morality, then we have to take the next step and ask what is the best explanation for objective morality. Michael, I think, wants to deny objective morality, but I think he's been smuggling the notion in subtly, as many times happens in these kinds of discussions. And he's, I'm not sure if he's denied that or not.

MS: Well, I think there's only two kinds of people – those who think there's only two types of morality, objective and subjective, and those that don't, which is the rest of us.

GK: Okay.

MS: Seriously, I mean, I reject your dichotomy of there's either objective reality or it's all subjective relativism and anything goes, and what Hitler did is perfectly fine. No, I don't believe that. I don't think anybody, hardly anybody actually really believes that, except for maybe a few academic philosophers who've never been in the real world. Really, I think we all recognize that there are deep, provisional truths, moral truths, that we recognize as real. And so what you want to get at is what's the outside source? And as you know, since you read my book, this is an old problem that everybody's familiar with in your business anyway, and that is Plato's Euthyphro's dilemma, in which Socrates asks his student, Euthyphro, the point which I should first wish to understand is whether the pious, or holy, is beloved by the gods because it is holy, or holy because it is beloved of the gods. In other words, which comes first, that the moral principle really exists out there in sort of an ideational world, and the gods say hey, look…

GK: They're beholden to that.

MS: …that's a real, moral principle…

GK: Right.

MS: …and we're going to instruct you through the holy book that's what you should do.

GK: And that makes the gods contingent…

MS: Or do they not really exist other than in the mind of God, who says listen, I've

decided that killing is wrong, and I'm telling you in this particular book, and ignore those other holy books, because they're wrong. And so now we get to the problem of which is, which do you believe, for example?

GK: Okay, this is a famous dilemma you actually mentioned at one of the earlier segments, and it has been answered very carefully. I'll give a possible answer for it.

HH: One minute to the break.

GK: Okay, one minute. One answer is to say that God says something is right because it's, the rightness of it is grounded in His nature. It's not an arbitrary act of His will, voluntarism, it isn't that he has some external standard that makes him now contingent, but that God is good in Himself, and that His commands flow forth from His nature. That's a possible solution for it. What you can't do is you can't jump from evolution and say well, if you go your way, I see a difficulty there, so I can ignore the evidence that's facing me right now for moral objectivism. That, I think, is a false move. So I can answer the objection, but also I think it's a false move.

HH: But you'll do it after the break.

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HH: But I want to go back and pick up the thread that we were at right before the end of the break. And Michael Shermer, I'm going to have you reset the debate for people wandered in off the street in the middle of this. Where are we in the conversation right now between you and Greg Koukl?

MS: Okay, just in case anybody's just checking on online, it's http://www.skeptic.com instead of…

HH: I'm sorry.

MS: No big deal. Anyway, so, well, is there an outside source to these moral principles that God then recognizes and says yeah, this is part of the universe, it really is wrong to kill other people, and I as the Deity am telling you this is what I know as part of nature? Or, do no such moral principles actually exist anywhere outside of the Deity Himself, and then He tells us through His Holy books? Okay, so which is the right answer to that question? And two, assuming that…well, you did say something about it's in God's nature. Well, if we're made in God's image, wouldn't that also put the moral principles in our nature as well?

GK: It does…

MS: So then we're tapping into those principles that really exist in us. And how is that any different from what I've been arguing already?

GK: No, the difference there, just on that particular issue, is I agreed earlier when you said it's part of our nature. The source is what's different. What's part of our nature is the knowledge of external things. In my case, these things are external. They are external like math principles are external to my mind. I don't invent them in my mind. In your case, the way you account for them being universal, in the sense that they're part of all humankind, is that evolution has created this. These are two entirely different things. In

my case, I'm talking about an object of reality, and in your case, you're talking about a subjective reality. And I know you want to jump in. Just one more point here. I am not complicating things at all, or oversimplifying things. The issue is quite simple if you start at the bottom. Either moral obligations are objects, or they're part of the object, or they're part of the subject. They are objectively true, or they're not. There are no other options. Now if you agree that morality is not objective, then it's a crap shoot, really. It's not whatever you want, if what you mean your society isn't going to allow you to do whatever you want. It's not whatever you want if you meant that well, evolution is going to determine certain things for you, that aids the species. But it is whatever you want. What is is right, if there is no outside objective moral standard that's governing you. Now how you want to ground that, that has it's own…that's another issue. And grounding it in God makes a lot of sense, and it even, I'm not even subject to the kind of problems that you Euthyphro dilemma that was just offered there. There is an answer to that, that avoids that problem. But it seems to me if there are objective moral laws, then that suggests an objective moral law giver. And if it's not, then it's just deterministic biology, or it's whatever the group says. And then we could be all over the map.

MS: Well, then you have the problem, it seems to me, of determining which moral values in the Holy book that you embrace, the Bible, which not everybody embraces as the source, other people have different holy books and sources, so…but anyway, granting yours, which of the moral principles are you going to adhere to, and which not? So for example, I presume you would reject slavery, as everybody would today. And yet Christians of centuries past embraced slavery, and used Biblical references as political support for slavery, as you well know. And William Wilberforce, who over, you know, sort of single-handedly, against all his fellow Christians who were standing up against him, said no, this is a bad idea. And so I think you have the problem of, like, which moral principles are you going obey, and which not?

GK: Oh, no, you're absolutely right, Michael. We have the problem as human beings, actually, regardless of our understanding about where morality comes from, of trying to figure out which is the appropriate applicable principle in this given situation. Your system suggests that we're basically kind of following an evolutionary impulse, and that's what we're obeying, and so we're not really obeying goodness itself, where I'm suggesting that the problem of moral decision making is difficult, because there are a lot of competing moral goods. But there is an answer to the problem if we think through it carefully. And you don't have to have a Bible, and I think you understand this, Michael. People…my view isn't that people have to have a Bible to know right and wrong. The Bible itself, in Romans Chapter 2, teaches that that is on everybody's heart in some fashion that allows him to have access to it, which is what you said earlier. It's in all of our natures. We agree on that particular point. So you don't need to have the Bible. But if you do, then you have a problem with interpretation. That's true of everything. We don't make the issue simpler in a sense by saying oh, well, morals are objective, because now we have to ask which objective moral principles apply in this circumstance.

MS: Well, so…right…

GK: So I readily agree that there's a challenge there in moral decision making.

MS: So how do you know what's right and wrong? How do you personally know? Is it from the Bible? Do you listen to the still, small voice within? Do you pray?

GK: I reflect on my moral nature, on my moral intuitions. Just like I know how math principles are right and wrong, I reflect on those things as well.

MS: Well, me, too. So how is it any different, because I do the same thing.

GK: And I have a…well, the difference is, well, I just described. You are reflecting on a nature that you're compelled by certain evolutionary things to do something, and it could just as well have been that evolution pushed you in an entirely different direction, so that rape or child molesting, or something like that, is wrong. I mean, we're not even talking now so far, Hugh, about the details of how evolution accomplishes this, which is another issue. We're just talking about it conceptually right now.

MS: Actually, I don't do that. I don't even think about evolution or Darwinism or anything like that when I'm thinking about right and wrong.

GK: Right, I know.

MS: Like when I interact with other people…

GK: …in the explanation, you do.

MS: Yeah, in my explanation. Yeah, but when I think about well, what should I do in this situation, how should I treat this other person, is this really right or wrong, I just try to put myself in their shoes, and think well, how would I feel?

GK: Fair enough.

MS: And I think you do, too. I think that's what we all do.

GK: We are both drawing on the same faculties.

MS: Right.

GK: That isn't the question whether we have the faculties. The question is where do the faculties come from, and what ground them? What makes these things good or bad? You just told me a few moments ago, Michael, that you can go either direction. You could obey your baser nature, which is evolutionary determined, or the higher nature. Well, what is higher and lower in evolution?

MS: Well, this is a good question. Say…take the slavery issue, for example. How do you know that's wrong?

GK: Actually, you raised the question of xenophobia earlier. We could do our tribal instinct thing, which we're by nature dictated to follow, but we can rise above that. So I don't know why…what's above that, unless you're importing some external standard of morality?

MS: Right, so where does it come from?

GK: How do you adjudicate between the two on an evolutionary basis?

MS: I think…yeah, I think that there is a long term trend over the last, maybe, couple of

thousand years, to expanding the circle of moral sentiments of who we're going to count as fellow group members that we do not rape, pillage, destroy and kill. And the question is why has that happened, let's say, since the Enlightenment, where we no longer want to treat blacks like we used to, and we want to give women the right to vote, and so on, and now gay marriage is up on the table for discussion and so on. We keep sort of expanding the circle of sentiments. Why would that be? I actually think that it's possible there is sort of a built-in to maybe the universe or something, a tendency toward, well, Robert Wright calls this playing more nonzero games, more win-win games, that is all of us benefit if we have more positive moral exchanges between us. This is why I promote free trade. I think it's one of these mechanisms of generating not just more wealth, but more goodwill between people. And I think that may be very well built into the system, whether there's a God or not. I think it might actually be there.

GK: Well, this is a very important juncture in our conversation, because what Michael has appealed to is something very much like a universal mind, that is this perspective over the whole enterprise, looking down saying as all the things fit together, this would be better for everyone, and that somehow directs the process.

MS: I'm not quite committed to that, by the way. I just think it's an interesting idea…

GK: But if…okay, now fair enough…

MS: And I'm not sure if it's a bottom up process, or a top down process, so…

GK: Well, this is the question then. If it is a bottom up process, if it's in the genes, how is it that the genes, then, in any of their working, can anticipate, in a sense, the greater good for all mankind? That strikes me as completely con…

MS: Not just the genes, no, something a higher order than that, that in the species itself, I mean, we're not talking just about natural selection of individuals, where the organism is the target of selection. But here, I'm talking about group selection. I think group selection has a reasonable case to be built around social organizations, that they themselves are the target of selection. So religion, for example, is a great unifying social force. It brings people together, it unifies them for both good and evil actions, and it's, I think, also part of our nature.

GK: Okay, very good, group selection. There's natural selection, which is on the genes, and then there is group selection. Natural selection is materialistic, and it's unguided. Group selection entails intelligent design, because the group is involved there, encouraging or discouraging the behaviors. And when you form your group, it's kind of a social contract thing, that's fine as an explanation, but just keep in mind that both of them are relativistic. And if one group thinks that their group will do better by destroying other groups, it is certainly "morally" within their rights to do so.

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HH: Gentlemen, for people who have just walked in on the middle of this, we've been not going around in circles, we've been actually moving towards a very sharply defined disagreement. But I want you both to state what that disagreement is in one minute or less, not to each other, but for the audience who just walked in. If you had to summarize

for them in a minute, or in 90 seconds each, what they missed, Greg Koukl, how would you say that?

GK: You have to make a decision, listener, as to whether morality is objective in some sense, or merely subjective. Is it a quality of the action, so when we say rape is wrong, we're talking about rape? Or are we just talking about our feelings or our emotions, or maybe our biological conditioning? As far as I'm concerned, you can go either direction with it at this particular point, but if you decide to go with a subjectivist view, a relativistic view, which is what the evolutionary explanation offers, then you have to be consistent with that to be fair. You can't start then smuggling what sounds like objective morality in the back door, because now you've got another morality that is not accounted for by your evolutionary scheme. And you've got to find another accounting for that, and I think this turns out to be one of the best arguments in favor of theism of some sort, the moral argument. But this is the essence of it, what we're discussing right now.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Well, I reject what I consider to be a false alternative between objective and subjective morality. I reject subjective morality, I reject relativistic morality. I believe there are objective moral standards. I prefer, I slightly prefer the word transcendent moral values. I don't believe in God, but I could be wrong. If there's a God, it seems to me that the moral standards, moral principles should exist anyway, whether there's a God or not, and that what God is doing, if He's doing anything, is He's telling us what those are. And here, I see a serious problem you have of interpreting what those are, because there's more than one holy book. People have many claims about moral values based on God, of which we vehemently disagree with. So when I asked you earlier about how do you know what's right and wrong, you said I reflect upon it, and I used the expression the still, small voice within. And so okay, so we all do that. I think it all begins with the Golden Rule. Everything else is commentary after that, as the great rabbi said, that is how do you feel, how would you feel if I did this, how would I feel if you did this to me? Well, maybe I should put myself in your shoes, and that's where morality begins, and I think that's absolute, whether there's a God or not.

HH: Okay, gentlemen, I had a lot to cover that is not related to this, but I don't want to move on too expeditiously. Do you think we have covered this issue?

GK: Yeah, I think we've done a pretty good job, and I think the differences are fairly clear in the, what, hour or so we've been talking about this issue. And I mean, I can take another shot here, then I'd get the last word on it, but I think we've summed up our views fairly accurately.

HH: All right, then let me ask you one question before we move to my second set. Michael, you've referred a few times to the presence of many holy books as though that somehow diminishes the idea that one may or may not have more authority than the other. Is that necessarily true, just that there are many holy books, there may be a hierarchy of authority among them, correct?

MS: Just take the current events of Islam. Clearly, they have a very different view of

morality of how women should be treated than we do, and yet they're basing it on similar holy texts, and some different holy texts. And so how are people of goodwill, who genuinely believe to get along in the world? Clearly, appeals to God is not going to solve our problem, is it?

HH: Okay, I didn't state it very well, then. What I was asking is just does the fact there are many holy books in any way diminish the authority of any one in particular? Just because there are many of them, you've said it a few times, and it's usually as an aside that…it's kind of …

MS: Oh, okay. There could be one, yeah, there could be one that's really right, and the rest are wrong.

HH: You know, there's kind of an implied, and I don't want to put words in your mouth, but when I'm a believer, as I am, in Scripture, and I hear you say that, I hear a sneer, oh, many holy books, but not an argument that one of them can't be right. Do you see what I'm getting at?

MS: Oh, yes, one of them could be right, and the rest wrong, but how do you know which one?

GK: Well, that's a different question.

MS: Because people of genuine belief in faith like you, who are Islamic, believe just as strongly as you do that women should be treated certain ways, and you would disagree. So how are we to settle this?

GK: I'm so glad he put it that way, because that point has absolutely nothing to do with the discussion. You don't cancel out…

MS: But isn't it an interesting point, though?

GK: Wait, let me finish. No, it is an interesting point, maybe, for sociologists, but as to the issue at question, let me finish the thought, Mike, and then you can respond to it. You don't decide whether a book or revelation is true or false, or anything else for that matter, by looking at how strongly different people hold the views. You have to look at the reasons for the views. I mean, let's just talk about science for example. There are very strongly held views by scientists on a lot of different things, even opposing views about how the Darwinian project worked out. It wouldn't be fair of me to Michael to say well, your particular view, I don't know if you're a punctuated equilibrium guy, or you're a classical Darwinist, or whatever, but it would be unfair for me to say to Michael look, you couldn't be right, nor could they be right, because you both have equally strong beliefs that you are true. That is a non-issue in the discussion. Something else has to be focused on to try to break the tie.

MS: Okay, that's a good example, because in that example, at least in principle, it could be settled through more data collection, whether evolution moves along in fits and starts, as described by punctuated equilibrium, or it moves gradually by gradualism. We can at least in principle settle that dispute.

GK: Why can't the other one be settled in principle?

MS: How would you settle the dispute between a Muslim and a Christian on how women should be treated? How would you settle that? I mean, they go look, it says right here in the Scripture, and you say but it says in my Scripture, so how are we going to settle that?

GK: Well…the question here, yeah, well in principle, it can be settled in actually two different ways. One, based on the authority of the book, and so you can look at the books, and say do I have any good, independent reasons, not just leaps of faith, but any good reasons to believe that this is actually a communication of God over and against this one being a communication of God? And there are lots of different strategies to go about that. Or one could just look at the claims themselves, and say look, based on what seems to be a common sense of right and wrong and morality that we all seem to have, and using our best faculties to reflect on it, I have reasons to mistrust this one, and trust this one more. Those are two, at least in principle ways, that you can go about adjudicating between those claims.

MS: I have a better way to settle it. Ask the women. How do you feel being treated like this? Which would you prefer? I think you'll get a pretty straightforward answer there, unless the guy's behind the door with a shotgun, and she has to give a certain answer.

GK: Okay, this presumes that we ought to care what other people think about how they're treated, which presumes an objective morality, and now we're back into that thing again. So that plays into my hands, not his.

MS: And I agree, there's an objective morality.

HH: But I…when I come back from break, we've got to go to break, when I come back, and I'll ask you, Michael, when we start, is there a way to adjudicate between the reasonability of those books, because it seems to me that the audience driving around right now has on their mind, and I always try and put myself in the point of the audience, wait a minute, how do you decide between many books claiming to be the revealed wisdom of God, and if your answer is you can't, don't bother, fine. If your answer is you can, pick this one, fine. But let's get to that. Is there an objective way to pick between the books?

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HH: But I want to get back to the subject I was raising. As between the books that claim to be the revealed wisdom of God, is there an objective way to judge them on their merits? Greg Koukl, let me start with you.

GK: Well yes, let's say, for example, if the documents in question claim that God communicated in an historical way, penetrated history and certain, particular things happened, now you've got an historical test for that kind of thing. You can look at the details that are expressed. Maybe there's some prophecy that is proclaimed at one time, and you have reason to believe was fulfilled at another time. You ask me in principle how it could be done, this is a way in principle that it could be done. You could see whether the view of the world that the books portray seem to comport with one's deepest intuitions about the way the world really is. I actually think religion is a very messy and untidy business. And with my philosophical training, I like to have all the loose ends tied

up. But the fact is, life is not tidy. And no matter what view you take, there are going to be problems and unanswered questions. So I take the perspective, as I mentioned at the beginning of the show, Hugh, as a man looking at my universe trying to make the most sense out of it. What picture of the world, what worldview does the best job of answering most of the questions? And I think this worldview-type analysis would be helpful here. If you have a book that gives a worldview that has a certain feature that seem to resonate with your deepest intuitions about the world, that seems to me a plus for the book. If you have another book that seems to indicate something entirely different, like the Vedas, for example, that suggest that the universe is just an illusion, that it's all Maya. Well this, to me, does not resonate with my deepest intuitions. So here's another way that in principle, at least, one could test one worldview against another with their religious books.

HH: Mike Shermer?

MS: That does seem problematic to me, even within your own Holy book, of how much we, how many of the Old Testament rules and laws we no longer obey – death penalty for disobedient children and adulterous people and so on. We would no longer practice that ever in our country. Why is that? I mean, that was once considered to be Holy Scripture, now it's rejected by most believers. So obviously, there are decisions being made in people's minds about what's right and wrong that is external to the source itself, that comes from, what, culture, parents, upbringing and so on.

HH: Okay, I'm going to recede from it, although my question was how would you choose between the books. I want to come back to that, Michael, but Greg has a response to that.

GK: Yeah, of course. Look, the Old Testament law was written for Jews. This is not like we're just making something up out here. It is a proper hermeneutic It was written to Jews under a very specific situation, and it was meant to be applied to them under the theocracy. There are some people who hold this, but certainly not the majority, that these same laws in the same way ought to be applied today. That's why we call it the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Even within the Christian worldview, there is a place for that, and now there's a place for something new. So there's no contradiction there at all.

HH: Yeah, you know, Michael, that does seem to me, Hitchens has made that argument to me a number of times, and it's just a silly argument.

MS: Which argument?

HH: The argument that the Old Testament rules that have been abandoned somehow indict the New Testament laws and morality. It's just a silly argument.

MS: Well wait. You still obey some of the Old Testament rules. So how do you…

HH: Yes.

MS: Which ones do you pick and choose from?

HH: I'll give you Al Mohler's book. Again, I'm not a participant. I don't want to answer. I want to ask you, though. To me, it was nonresponsive when I said as between the books, how do you judge which books?

MS: Okay, which books? I would just say…

HH: Of all the holy books that claim to have universal wisdom and knowledge about God, and I could name ten of them, is there a way to choose…

MS: I don't think so. I'm answering your question. I don't think there is any outside way to do that. Even in principle, because the ultimate, the original source of those books came through some human source, some revelatory experience that somebody had, that had to at some point put pen to paper and write down what the God said.

HH: Let me rephrase it, then. On the basis of human reason, there is no way to evaluate all those books as to which ones are at least more closely approximating the way that people ought to live or not?

MS: Oh, that's a different question. Maybe I misheard, because I think we could do that, but what's that standard of the way we ought to live? What are we using for that standard? I would argue there is such a standard, and it's not from religion.

HH: And so you would evaluate those books based upon your independently arrived at understanding of what is morality?

MS: I think we do do that.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, I think we do do that to a degree, too, and here Mike and I have no debate about the existence of a moral sense in human beings. The difference is whether that moral sense is merely an expression of our subjective emotions, which it seems to me what he argues for, though he wants to ennoble that and call that kind of objective morality, or is it our ability to grasp moral realities that are outside of us that would not change, even if our own opinions about it happen to change. That's the difference between objective and subjective. And Mike, you appealed for a kind of third category, but either…I don't see where there is a third category. It's either in the object or in the subject, and that's pretty much the law of excluded middle there.

HH: Remember that thought. We'll come right back to Michael Shermer.

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HH: Michael Shermer, what were you going to say?

MS: Well, so let's take another current example of whether homosexuality is a sin, leaving aside marriage as a political question, but just is homosexuality a sin or not. Now I presume you would argue it is, and it's right there in the Old Testament, a man shall not sleep with another man, it's an abomination. But why stick with that one, which seems to me equally culturally dependent as some of the other Old Testament on small populations struggling in a harsh environment, in which you want lots of marriage, lots of children and so on. I could kind of see that rules back then, but why bother now? I mean, why not abandon that one along with slavery and some of the other ones?

HH: Greg Koukl? Well, okay, this one goes to a matter of authority, because I think there are complicated, and for some, persuasive arguments that homosexuality is wrong, per se, because of natural law arguments or whatever, but those don't resonate with most

people. I think what Michael's getting at here is how is it that the New Testament, or now why are you still holding over that from the Old Testament when things have changed? And the reason is, it's not just an incidental part of the Old Testament law. It seems to be indicated there that the behavior itself transcends, morally speaking, any local law. Some of the laws in the Old Testament were for local things, but some seemed to transcend, like it's wrong to kill, or rather, wrong the murder is the Hebrew word. And so in the New Testament, even though we're not in the Old Covenant situation, we have these same kinds of things, these more transcendent things that apply to all human beings, prohibited. And one of those that's spoken to is the homosexuality issue. And the reason that Paul gives in Romans Chapter 1 is that God made human beings for one purpose, the man for the woman, and the man, in the case of male homosexuality, abandoned the woman that God made for them and burned in their passion against someone else. So there's a violation of the natural order. Now this isn't something that I'm probably going to come up with all on my own just thinking about, and this is where I think Divine revelation is helpful to have us dial down on some of the moral things. And you're certainly free not to accept that, but this is what makes homosexuality durable as a sin, in a sense, from the Old Testament times to the New Testament, because of the reasons that God gives that it's wrong.

MS: But using that sort of a moral intuition, and the still, small voice or the reflective aspects of morality, given that we live in a modern world in which we have plenty of people, we don't need more, and somebody, the evidence seems to show people are just born this way, it's like asking a gay person when they chose to become homosexual would be like me asking you when you chose to become heterosexual. And you'd say well, I didn't choose. This is my nature. And that's what gay people say. This is my nature. I've always felt like this. So why would you care? Who cares if somebody finds love with a member of the same sex, and love and marriage leads to fidelity and more moral behavior that we all agree is good for society? Why block that?

GK: Okay, just as a matter of fact, it is not the case that science has shown that this is genetic. There is no gay gene. This has not been demonstrated.

MS: No, not a gay gene…

GK: Or anything like that.

HH: Okay, we're going way off the off-ramp, gentlemen.

GK: Okay, the answer is, why would any Christian object to that?

MS: Yeah.

GK: Because out of fidelity to their God, because they believe that God has said this is wrong, and so they're going to oppose it in principle, even though it is not within their purview, then, to bring persecution upon that person, because there's another value that they hold, and that is that all human beings are made in the image of God.

MS: Okay, here's my prediction.

HH: I don't want a prediction. I want to get back to my question, Michael Shermer.

MS: Yup.

HH: Based upon what I would say your evolutionarily-constructed moral law, what you consider to be the societal moral law, have you evaluated the various holy books, and given them a hierarchy, which is best, which is not so good, which is terrible?

MS: No, I guess I have not.

HH: And why not, if that matters so much?

MS: I don't, I'm not that interested. I love studying religion, though I have not read the Koran, for example.

HH: Greg Koukl, is it necessary for someone who's going to say there's an evolutionary moral law, and talk about God, to have that kind of assessment?

GK: I actually don't, I'm sympathetic to Mike. I mean, there's a lot of books to read, you can't read them all. And if he thinks he has come upon a cogent and powerful explanation for the world as he sees it, then he doesn't have a motivation to go outside of that. My argument has been that it's not adequate, and that's why some other kind of solution is going to be necessary.

HH: Okay, here's my objection. If there's a moral law, and there's a societal good, and one of these books is really bad for it, and one of these books generally support it, then you ought to, even as an agnostic, make a choice between that which is really horrific, a Hitlerian approach to, you know, a Nazi, Mein Kampf, don't read that one, that's horrible, versus the New Testament is pretty nice. I think…

MS: Yeah, I guess I would attest that the New Testament's better than the Old Testament. I guess I would agree. I think Jesus was a big step forward. I think the feminization of some of the morality in the book of Ruth toward the end of the Old Testament is a big improvement over the early books, so yeah, I guess I do evaluate.

HH: And where do you put the Koran in that? You haven't read it at all, it just doesn't matter?

MS: Oh, I've read it, of course since 9/11, I've read lots of parts of it that everybody quotes, which are all the, you know, the horrific parts. And that seems to me far beneath the Bible in terms of what we would consider moral values. But anyway…

HH: Do any of the books have a better grounding in natural science?

MS: No, I don't think so.

HH: Do any of the books have a better grounding in history?

MS: It depends on which books. I mean, parts of the Old Testament have some good grounding in history, and others don't.

HH: This is a transition. Greg Koukl, how is the historical evidence for the accounts of these various books?

GK: Well, it depends on which one you're talking about. Some of these books aren't history books. They're poetic books that are meant in poetic language, the Bhagavad Gita, for example, to tell something about reality. I think the unique thing about the

Judeo-Christian revelation is that principally, the theological story is told through history, so the history is really important. The big event of the Old Testament is the exodus, you know, and this was the salvation event where God intervened. The big event in the New Testament is similar to that, parallel to that, is the resurrection of Christ. Now obviously, we have a lot more access to information about the life of Jesus of Nazareth than we do about the exodus. In fact, there's a kind of a big hole there in terms of archaeology for that period of time. But there's not a big hole when it comes to the life of Christ. And the documentary evidence is quite extensive. And not just the primary source documentation for the life of Jesus, which we call Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which by the way, should not be simply dismissed because they were written by Christians. Historians don't dismiss them for that reason. But we have to look at these as historical documents. And when we do, we find a tremendous amount of powerful testimony from those documents about the person of Jesus, what He taught, and what He did, which also points to a literal time-history resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Now if that actually happened, that puts this worldview in a whole different category.

HH: Well, that's my transition, is to the person of Christ, because most of our audience is Christian. And a lot of this argument has been, as I've had with many of the new atheists, silly to believe in Jesus.

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HH: Mike Shermer, as I said at the end of last hour, last segment, is it silly to believe in the historical person of Jesus Christ? And is it silly to believe in the claims and the accounts of him as recorded in the New Testament.

MS: I don't like the word silly, because it trivializes a serious issue. I think it's an empirical claim on one level, whether Christ rose from the dead or not, but on the other hand, I think it's an article of faith. You can show all 13 million Jews in the world that evidence for the risen Christ, and eyewitnesses, and the rock was rolled away or whatever, and they almost universally, except for the small population of Jews For Jesus, reject the evidence. So I don't think it's ultimately provable. I do think it's an article of faith, like many other articles of faith of religion. I don't like the word silly at all. I think that trivializes it unnecessarily.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, a frustrating situation for atheists is that the vast majority of people in this country, the rank and file, don't believe in Darwinian evolution. But I wouldn't be free then to say well, this is just, evolution's obviously an article of faith, because look at all the people who look at the evidence that you provide so persuasively and don't believe it. This is an observation that leads to no conclusion about this issue at all.

HH: And so, and it's frustrating as well, because it seems to me central for agnostics, atheists, to answer the question about the empirical evidence, and whether it is of high quality…I had this conversation with Richard Dawkins. Dawkins likes to argue you know, I'm a Latin teacher, and I'm just arguing that Rome existed, and a lot of people are arguing Rome didn't exist. And it's the same with evolution. And I challenged him, I asked

him the historical evidence for the personhood of Jesus is overwhelming, isn't it?

MS: Yes.

HH: And so, is the proof…

MS: Well, I don't know about overwhelming. I think Jesus existed.

HH: Well, is it overwhelming? Or just a guess?

MS: I think there's good enough evidence for us to conclude that somebody named Jesus of Nazareth existed.

HH: And on the basis of what we know generally about historical text, isn't there pretty good, and perhaps even overwhelming evidence that the Gospels are reliable, historically tested accounts about what this person did?

MS: Well now, it's getting a little fuzzier, because of the inconsistency of the accounts. And you could say well, okay, eyewitnesses saw things slightly differently. Yeah, but there's some important differences between the four Gospels. And what about the other Gospels that are not in the canonical books, the gospel of Thomas, for example? And there's legitimate, theological research on these other books, and why can't those be concluded?

HH: One minute, Greg.

GK: Well, there is legitimate, theological research, and not only on Thomas, but a whole bunch of other pseudepigrapha that come afterwards. There are all kinds of literary documents that make claims to write about Jesus that we know, because of their dating, couldn't possibly have the eyewitness accounts of the information that the Matthew, Mark, Luke and John canonical Gospels have. So just because there are other things that claim to be gospels, it doesn't mean that they're contenders as source of historical information. And the scholars in the field make this distinction. Now Thomas is one of those few documents where they seem to take seriously, but our documents of Thomas are like 3rd Century, and looks to have been written in the 2nd Century. So why is it that the 1st Century documents of the Gospels don't get preeminence there as historical documents? They should.

HH: When we come back, the third hour is given over to do the anti-God people have to put up with the same rigorous defense of their beliefs as they ask the theists to put up with theirs. Stay tuned.

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HH: And I want to spend this hour talking really about the debate over the debate. And it's occurring at an unusual time, because just a couple of weeks ago surfaced one of the greatest scandals in the history of modern science, Climategate, in which incredibly unscientific behavior on the part of scientists has been revealed. The atheists have often in the past few years tried to position the debate as between reason and faith. But now we find the tactics that people of faith are often accused of, absolutely evident on the part of the behavior of scientists – data manipulation, witch hunts against scientists with whom they disagreed with, a refusal to confront contrary evidence. And I took that, and I

applied it to this debate over intelligent design, Michael Shermer, and I'm wondering whether or not the opponents of intelligent design have been using the same tactics that the Climategate scientists, who are now deeply scandalized, embarrassed and discredited, have been using for the last, obviously, we just learned about it. But have the proponents of the anti-God view been just as intellectually dishonest as the Climategate scientists?

MS: Well, on the Climategate thing, I think the smoking guns are not what I thought they would be. I have some sympathy for the global warming skeptics. I was once one, and could be persuaded again. I think that's just a data question there. But what I think it revealed was how political scientists are. They're very liberal and very tribal, and like everybody else, they circle the wagons when they think they're being attacked from outside. And I think that's what we saw. So to that extent, do atheists, have atheists done that? Yes, they have. They've circled the wagons, they feel like they're under siege. At time, I think particularly since 9/11 with the fear of Islamic terrorism, and then since the Bush administration pushing an Evangelical agenda into politics, way more than Bush Sr., ever did as a Methodist, and certainly more than Reagan ever did, I think that's what caused non-believers to feel like they needed to push back somewhat. And then you just get specific cultural phenomenon like Dawkins' book takes off, or Hitchens' book takes off, something like that. I mean, the book sales on those books are more than cumulative all the other books they've ever written, plus all of a bunch of other books, so I think you get a combination of those events there.

HH: Greg Koukl, first your response, then I have a follow up.

GK: Well yeah, I think that there is kind of a shell game and a muscling going on, and we see it in the field. And I think what people don't realize, and I didn't realize this until maybe six or seven years ago when this was explained to me, and when explained, I really saw this, that there are actually two definitions of science that are in play here, Hugh. One of them is a methodological definition, the scientific method. You know, follow certain methods, and you come up with the right results. Now if you don't follow that method, then that's called bad science, and you can't trust the results you come up with. But there's more going on here. It isn't just a methodology. There is also a philosophical definition. This philosophical definition is metaphysical materialism, or called naturalism. A metaphysical view is a total view of reality, and on this view, nothing exists but the molecules in motion. That's materialism. That's also part of the definition. So currently, in the state of science, in order to be doing science, good science, you have to be doing the right methodology, but you also have to come to the right kinds of conclusions. You have to come to conclusions that comport with naturalism and materialism. And if you don't, you're accused of doing religion instead of science. I just want people to see that there's a difference here, and lots of times in this discussion, this metaphysical issue trumps the methodology. Notice that a lot of times, the arguments aren't against ID proper, that is the evidence that they've offered. It's a dismissal by saying you're not doing science, you're doing religion. This isn't real scientists at work like we are, these are phonies. And so it's a way of discrediting based on the kind of conclusions that they come up. Now this

happens all the time, and you can see a bullying that's going on in the field, and a lot of people have identified this, Guillermo Gonzalez for example, a famous example from Iowa State University, denied tenure though very qualified. Francis Beckwith, for goodness sake, a philosopher, not a scientist, but the same kind of thing happened to him at Baylor before it got reversed, and a lot of other people. There's a political game going on here, and it seems to me that if the evidence for Darwinian evolution is so powerful, then why do you have to do these political moves that are driven not by the methodology, but largely by the metaphysics doing the magic? Why? And I think because the metaphysics are doing a large part of the work, and the method doesn't give the evidence that's necessary to convince the most people.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Of course, other fields of science don't deal with these issues, like why are Christian groups not up in arms about the Krebs cycle being taught in biochemistry classes and biology classes. Why not? I mean, if you're going to object to methodological naturalism, why pick on just one, particular little subfield?

GK: Because it doesn't have any ramifications for these other things.

MS: Yeah, of course. That's right.

GK: But it does…

MS: Because certain fields of science do bump up against political and religious implications.

GK: But it's not just that, Michael. It has to do with the evidence in question. Nobody has, even from my side of things, has any difficulty with the Krebs cycle, because methodological naturalism is the thing that governs day to day science.

HH: Why don't you explain the Krebs cycle for our audience.

MS: Oh, it's just a…

GK: I can, but he…

HH: I know, but don't use terms like that for the audience.

MS: It's just a biochemical process in cells of using energy.

GK: Yeah. And so at this point, to finish my thought, though…

MS: Yeah.

GK: What this points out is that these kinds of issues are not the kind of thing that affect day to day science. But when it comes to the issue of origins, then it's something entirely different. You have a different category that you're talking about, and this is where the muscling has been done, and that's why the complaints have been raised, muscling that is illegitimate considering what's at stake.

MS: Well, muscling on both sides. I mean, it's political on both sides, so the left and the right both push back against each other, all the way back to the Catholic Church and Galileo.

GK: Well, okay, I'm glad…

MS: I mean, that tension has always been there. Let's not…

GK: Great. And it was wrong with Galileo, and it should be wrong now. That's my point. If it was wrong then, and with the monkey trial and everything, now everything is in reverse, and I think this is what Hugh was getting at. If the power plays were wrong in the past, then they should be wrong now, and why don't we just let everybody lay their cards on the table and play fair, and then let the best idea win?

MS: I agree. So just put it out there. Like the Climategate? Yeah, let's get that original data. I agree. Sure. Now let me just back up for a second on an example not related to religion, but on another field that I deal with, extra sensory perception. Can we actually read the minds of other people? Okay, setting aside the TV psychics and all that silly stuff, there are some scientists who actually believe that mind exists separate from brain, and that we can connect to each other, and there's a famous physicist named Roger Penrose, who has this theory about that quantum mechanics explains how when neurons fire, the collapse of the wave function inside the atoms, inside the nerves, fire in a sequence that my cells can read your cells. They're actually communicating, somehow, across a distance, all right? I don't happen to think that's true, but let's say it turned out to be true, and that now we have a naturalistic explanation for extra sensory perception. Well, that would no longer be the paranormal, would it? Now it would be quantum neuroscience, or neurophysics, or something like that. So at some point, you need some kind of a natural explanation for the phenomenon in question that we can test. So for example, when somebody, when cosmologists talk about well, the galaxies are structured in this odd way where there must be more matter out there, we'll call it dark energy or dark matter, they don't actually mean that as an explanation. It isn't an explanation. It's just a word filler until we can figure out what's going on. So at some point, it's not that no one's allowing you to introduce the supernatural, it's just that no different than calling it ESP, that doesn't explain it. We need some kind of a mechanism that causes it.

GK: Okay, to be fair, Michael, I was at the debate one week ago that you did with Professor Prothero and Steve Meyer, and the others from the ID thing. And you started out your presentation by saying this is all about religion, it's not about science. That's the first thing you said. And then you referred to the other guys as, you and your partner, as 'those guys,' and we are doing real science, and they're not. In fact, Steve Meyer raised a complaint at the personal attack there, because both of them have advanced degrees in their fields. Now I mean, this is an example of the kind of thing that I'm talking about. It's like, you didn't say to these guys well, you're real scientists, we're real scientists, but really, the facts matter, so let's look at the facts. There are all of these kind of subtle and sometimes not so subtle invectives, or shout across there. Now I've been in debates before. I know how that works. I'm just simply saying that your kind of tone of innocence here, it strikes me as disingenuous, because this is a game that you guys play all the time when in public circumstances. And sometimes, it's not just invectives, it's actually muscling, we won't publish your paper, we won't let people know about it, we're going to criticize you in front of all these people and try to discredit you.

HH: A response coming back from Michael Shermer when we return.

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HH: Michael Shermer, I was not at this debate. I have no idea what Greg just referenced. So I want to give you a chance to go back to what he was just talking about. Did you attack Steven Meyer's scientific credentials?

MS: Actually, I didn't. My partner did. Well, you know…

HH: Did you correct your partner at that point?

MS: Well…

GK: Steven Meyer corrected him, actually, is what happened.

MS: Yeah, I mean, this is a part of the format of debate, right? I mean, it's a contest. It's competitive. You're supposed to, you know, you're supposed to come out…like a lawyer, you're supposed to defend your position. You're not supposed to…if it's a panel discussion, that's different than a debate. This was a debate. I actually do think that it's perfectly fine for Steven Meyer to publish books like his new book on DNA, and put forth testable hypotheses. Okay, at least now we're getting somewhere, where if you give us something we can take back to the lab and test, then we're doing science. If it's just I infer that there's a designer behind this, okay, that's nice, but what am I supposed to do with that? So the analogy I made is that let's say it turns out life did not originate on Earth, that it was seeded here either through meteorites or comets, or maybe even extra-terrestrials brought it here and seeded it, and they are from the Planet Vega, a planet around the Star Vega. Let's say something like that.

HH: A dysfunctional GM car, okay.

MS: Yeah, exactly, yeah. Right. Good, we needed some humor there. And…but and let's say we found a little pod out in Blythe or something in the desert with the blueprints of how they made DNA. Well, that would be interesting, but we'd still want to know well, where did the Vegans come from? I mean, who made those guys? Did they evolve on this planet? Or were they seeded there from someplace else? Or did God do it? Or…in other words, at some point, we need some natural explanation for where life came from. And if you take this back far enough, you will end up at an infinite regress. Well, God, outside of space and time, came into our space and time, stirred the particles, and created life. Okay, but where did, if not God, the intelligent designer, where did He come from? Did he evolve? Or is he a standalone, the last causal link? And there, we bump up against the great unknown. I don't see how that's resolvable.

GK: I've got so much to say about this, I'm not sure where to begin. Let me just start with the power play. At that debate, Richard Sternberg was the other I.D. guy there, and Richard Sternberg used to be with the Smithsonian. But he had the audacity of publishing a paper by Steven Meyer in a journal, a peer review journal that was associated with the Smithsonian, and he got bounced. This is the kind of thing that I'm talking about.

MS: You know, I just called them. He's still there. At least, he's still on their list.

GK: Okay, well, the firestorm…

MS: I don't think he got bounced.

GK: …surrounding that, you don't…okay, forget the bounce thing. The firestorm surrounding it you don't deny?

MS: Yes, of course. We're all emotional, yeah. Right.

GK: Well, it goes beyond that. And so the point to bringing up the debate, I understand that there is these things you do in debates, but this in the debate was the microcosm of the bigger issue, and that's why I pointed that out. Now with regards to, you know, life beginning on other planets, and then who designed the Designer and that kind of thing, it's a very odd question. And virtually all the guys on Mike's side of this debate ask the same question – who created God, or some variation of that. And what's curious is that Mike and none of these other guys believe that God was created, because they don't believe in God. I don't believe that God was created, because I think that God is eternal. So nobody in the discussion believes that God was created or designed. So why does the question come up that who designed the Designer, or who created God? Frankly, it's a distraction. It's a distraction from the evidence in front of us, for intelligent design. If I'm walking down the beach as we could here in Newport, Hugh, and I see a footprint in the sand, a shoeprint in the sand, I don't need to know who the manufacturer of the shoe is before I can properly conclude from the evidence that a shoe made the print. The same thing is true here. We're focusing on one issue, and that is whether the evidence suggests an intelligent designer. If we come to the conclusion that that's the case, much like forensic pathology, there's a dead man with five holes in his chest from bullets, gee, it doesn't look like natural causes, now let's go search for the person who did it. That's the next step. But we can't say, I think, vacuous challenges like who created God when none, all of these guys know that nothing about our view requires God's creation. They say this to, I think, distract from the main issue, the evidence for design itself, which is compelling, Hugh.

MS: Oh, I don't say it as a distraction. I think it's a really interesting question. Where did the universe come from in the first place. And if there were multiple universes, you still have the same problem – where did those come from.

GK: I agree. I agree.

MS: And I do think, Greg, at some point, we do bump up against limitations of our knowledge, of our language…

GK: Right.

MS: …of what our brains are capable of solving. And there is a leap of faith for all of us. You either decide to believe, or you decide not to believe. And I don't think it's ultimately provable one way or the other. Now on the other question positing a designer from the evidence of design, I think there is an inference there in which we have vast experience of people shooting each other, and we know what that is. And so you come across somebody with five bullet holes, okay, there's a natural inference there based on experience. And we've seen people make tennis shoes, so we know that they're made when we see the print. Okay, there's a natural inference there. But we've never seen any

designer design DNA. We just have the product, the artifact, from which we infer what? And there, it isn't the same as an artifact that's made by us.

HH: All right. Now gentlemen, I want to switch for the last three segments of the show leading into a larger question about belief in God generally. Is it good or bad for people? And regardless of whether it's true, or the true true, to use Francis Schaeffer, but is it good or bad? Because that leads me to the second question, are the new atheists involved in an evil project or a good project? Because these are both obvious question. So Greg, you want to take a first pass?

GK: Yeah, I'll take a shot at it, and again, I want to go back to my earliest comment when we started talking about morality. It depends on what you mean by good. And I'm just weighing in now to say that when you're using the word good, I'm taking this as good in the objective sense.

HH: Yes.

GK: Do objective goods, oughts that we should do and whatever, come to pass better when there is belief in God? There's a famous story of a Hassidic Jew that was standing in front of a German machine gun having just dug his own grave. And he said just before he was gunned down, he said God is watching. Now one thing that the German officer didn't believe at that point was that God was watching. Nor did Mao, nor did Lenin, nor did Stalin, nor did many other people who did great atrocities, did they believe that God was watching. As David Berlinski has pointed out, that's actually the definition of secularism. God is not watching. Now I don't think it takes, you know, a lot of deep thinking to realize, and Michael might call this a shallow motivation regardless, to realize that if people really believe that God is watching, their behavior is going to be better on balance than if they really believe that God is not watching.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Well, I do think that religion and belief in God is good when it does good, and evil when it does evil. And we can make a laundry list of goods and evils that religion does. You have Hitchens' book here, and he's got a laundry list in there of all the evils.

GK: And we agree on that, by the way, Michael.

MS: And you could take David Brooks' book, Who Really Cares, and he documents how Republicans and conservatives and religious people give more money and more time, and donate more blood and so on then securalists, atheists, nonbelievers, and Democrats. So I would say that's great. I mean, I sponsor a child through World Vision, because I think they do the job. They put the boots on the ground, and they make things happen. And religion is really good for that. And so I think it's too simple to say is religion good or evil. I mean, come on, it's a big, complex, social, historical force that does lots of good things, and lots of bad things.

HH: When we come back, I'll follow up, because I don't think it's too simple. I think it's actually the question about whether or not the anti-God people are engaged in evil if they're destroying belief in God.

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HH: So Michael, I come back to this. You said yeah, religion's done a lot of good and a lot of bad, but generally speaking, and the utilitarian view, is belief in God good for the planet? And if it is good for the planet, have the anti-God people been involved in an evil project?

MS: I don't think they have been involved in an evil project. I think what it…it makes it okay to not believe in God. Remember, atheism isn't a thing. There's no, like, central set of tenets that we adhere to or believe in, or anything like that as you would a Republican or conservative, or something like that, or a Christian or a Jew or whatever. We don't have anything like that, because there is nothing. It's just simply we just don't believe. Now because we're social creatures, we like to feel like we belong to a family, an extended family, a group of friends, a bowling league, social capital, this is called. Everybody likes to feel like they belong. Because religion is so dominant in America, particularly the Christian religion, those of us who are either not Christian or not believers, we feel a little alienated, a little lonely, and a little left out. And we'd like to have our own group. So in part, what the new atheist movement is tapping into is that social feeling of wanting to belong to a group. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think it's good that there are people out there, groups out there that make that okay.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, your question was not whether religion does good, but whether belief in God does good, if I recall it correctly.

HH: Yup.

GK: And so I want to return specifically to that. The atheists do have a code. It's not very complicated. It's just that as Michael just put it, there is nothing. So what is the moral consequence on a people if they believe there is nothing? That's really the question. The 20th Century, which we just left, was the bloodiest century in the history of the world. And just a casual adding up of the numbers shows over 100 million that were dead at the hands of just three people – Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Tse Tung. Now these people had a particular ideology at which atheism was its foundation. Because they didn't believe in God, and there is a natural kinship here between worldviews and the actions that follow them, because they didn't believe in God, it was the state that was the greater power. And if the state is the greatest power, and they were the state, then they had no one to answer to. And consequently, they were able to do these things that everyone views as an atrocity. Now this, I think, is logical. This follows from that worldview. I'm not saying that atheists are all evil like that. They're not. Mike is a fine guy. What I'm saying is that given the atheistic worldview, you are allowed to do those kinds of things, because there is no transcendent rule that's keeping you from doing otherwise.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Nobody kills or dies in the name of atheism, because there's nothing to kill or die for. People kill and die for causes, for ideologies, for beliefs. And communism is a faux

religion. It is exactly like a religion, a set of tenets that people adhere to, and then we're going to go out and change people's minds, or impose our views on them and so on. That's what social groups do, whether they're political, ideological, economic, religious, whatever. And that's what communism is. And it's nothing more than that. Nobody killed in the name of that. In any case, Hitler's not a good example, because as we've seen now…

GK: I didn't use him.

MS: …with the indictment of the Catholic Church, they were very much involved in the whole Nazi process there…

HH: That's…time out, Michael. That's simply not true, but let's not go there. I would want to have an expert in the Vatican's many, many interventions to save lives, and then we'd have a long conversation…

MS: Oh, of course they did. Yes, yes.

HH: Let's just not throw it out there. Let's just not throw it out there.

GK: The real issue here is not whether people did it in the name of atheism or not. But it has to do with the kinship of behaviors to worldviews. Whether people are thinking of this as a rationale, gee, I'm an atheist, so I can go kill people, is not the issue. The issue is how is it that people actually live out the deep beliefs that they have about the world? And it seems obvious that when people have believed that there's nothing else but us and our rules, what we make, for whatever reasons we do, and we answer to no one, and there isn't going to be any final justice or final judgment or final reckoning, well, it seems very clear to see how this is going to have a deleterious effect on behaviors.

MS: Yeah, but if Torquemada had gas chambers, wow, what would the numbers have been in the Inquisition? I mean, in the name of God, Torquemada…

GK: So you're saying there is no relationship between the worldviews?

MS: Well, you brought up the numbers.

GK: Right.

MS: It isn't numbers that's important. It's what your capable of doing. And religious beliefs and political ideologies are no different as belief systems driving behavior that's moral or immoral. People kill in the name of religion just as much as they do in the name of a political ideology.

GK: This is false, just quantifiably, first of all.

MS: No, I disagree.

GK: But secondly, there is the idea…

MS: Not by the numbers.

GK: The idea is what's important. People just have to reflect in the idea. Which one is a better encourager to good behavior, that God exists. That was your question.

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HH: It seems that we're onto something very important here, and Michael, I sense

defensiveness on your part, so I'm going to let you go first. If, in fact, the new atheists launch a series of responses that lead people to not believe in God, and those people in not believing in God act a certain way, that's causation. That's responsibility. Ought the new atheists ought to own their responsibility? If they kill God, ought they not to own the results of killing God?

MS: First of all, I don't think that's going to happen. It didn't happen at the turn of the 20th Century.

HH: Didn't ask that question, though.

MS: Yeah, yeah, I know. Sure, okay, I'll stand up and be responsible. Why not?

HH: Greg Koukl, have they been? It's a flippant response. That's okay. But…

GK: Yeah, well…

MS: No, it's a true response. Yes…

GK: What I was…okay, great. So what do we take away from that?

HH: Right.

GK: Listen, I'm arguing if there is no God, then everything is permitted. There is no objective morality.

MS: I don't agree with that. Come on.

GK: I understand that. I understand you don't, but you have ground objective morality…

MS: Yes, you can. We're back to where we began.

GK: Your morality is subjective.

MS: No, it's not.

GK: It's something that's in the subject. It's in the genes…

MS: That's objective.

GK: And it creates…yes, okay. Well, it is objective, but it's not objective in the way that I'm talking about it. It's objectively in the subject, and ethicists have made this distinction for a long time between objective and subjective. I'm not going to go there again. Let me just finish the equation here. If there is no God, then everything is permitted. If the new atheists are right, then there is no God. Therefore, if the new atheists are right, then everything is permitted. Now I think that follows. And I think this, then, creates a problem. Again, I don't think that all of the atheists are bad people in everything that they do. They're just as bad as the rest of us religious people. Let's face it. The question has to do with the impact of worldviews, and that is really what's in play here.

HH: I do agree, Michael, that's where I'm coming back down to. I take responsibility for it if in fact the people who allowed and facilitated the rise of the atheist monsters of the 20th Century were around today, they would deny responsibility for them, even though they facilitated it with the collapse of the orders that previously held back the monsters. It seems to me now that Dawkins, et cetera, your rhetoric is much milder than Dawkins, but that they were about unleashing the beast again, because the beast is eager. The most eager thing in the world for the Devil, the Christians have always said, is not to be

believed in. And you guys are doing a good job.

MS: If they, if Dawkins and Hitchens and so on were promoting some kind of a political agenda hooked to the atheism, whereby you're supposed to go out and do this or do that, then yes, I'd think you have a point, and I'd be concerned about it. That is, is it leading to greater liberty, or greater tyranny? That's the question, liberty and tyranny, is at stake in terms of the boots on the ground, actual change.

HH: Greg Koukl, if you take down a dam when it's not raining, and nothing happens for give years, ten years, fifteen years, twenty years, and then the hundred year flood comes, which happens every hundred years, and you destroy everything in front of it…

GK: Then you're in trouble. Right.

HH: You're responsible.

GK: Well, you made the point. And actually, Sam Harris is very explicit about this in his book. He said that there are some beliefs that are so dangerous, and he's talking about theism here, that it's justified to even kill people for that belief. Now two things are in play here. Sam Harris acknowledges the relationship between worldviews. You believe certain things that have certain consequences, which I think is true and that's what I'm arguing, and then he exemplifies it himself with the danger of atheism. He thinks that they, atheists, not all believe this, and certainly Michael doesn't, he is not going to get involved in this, but he seems to suggest that some people should be killed for their beliefs. And whether Dawkins has a political agenda or not is irrelevant. If he is laying the foundation that justifies a certain political agenda, then the dominoes are going to fall. It's a logical slippery slope, and it's one to be concerned about.

MS: You see, I place at the feet of the monstrous evil of the 20th Century Marxism, Leninism. If Marx and Lenin just simply said we're atheists, and they wrote atheist books, nothing would have happened. It's that they hooked it to something else, which is the confiscation of private property, the confiscation of individual liberties, the ownership of productivity. That's what destroyed those societies and led to the monstrous problems.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Well yeah, I agree with that as far as it goes, except to say that there was something else that was in place that allowed them to do such a thing, and that there was a, again, a kinship between the belief system and the results of that belief system, the particular things. Now could religious people have done that? Yes, but it's a lot harder to hang the behavior of Christians who say they're Christians that's evil, on Jesus Himself, because Jesus didn't teach that kind of thing. Instead, you have Christians that are acting contrary to Jesus' own behavior and teaching. In this case, you have behaviors that are fully consistent with an atheistic worldview.

MS: But you left out the first World War, which was Christian nations fighting Christian nations – Germany and France and England were all Christian nations. They all believed God was on their side. And they imposed just as much destruction as happened in World War II. They just didn't have any…

HH: I actually don't believe any of them believed God were on their side when they went into that war. I know the history of World War I fairly well. They did not march to war on the basis…

MS: Well, but you would call them Christian nations.

HH: But they did not, then went to war on the basis of economics…

MS: Well, okay…

GK: But even if they did, it's not the point.

HH: It had nothing to do with God.

MS: Okay, I would agree.

GK: The point is what is it that, does the worldview that they have justify what they did? And now we're back to Jesus again, which they can't put it on Jesus, but the atheists can put it on atheism.

HH: Very quickly, this segment and last, of the various world religions, which has contributed the most to human progress in the alleviation of suffering? It's an objective question. It's not a question about which is correct or which is true. Just if you look through of all the world religions, which has contributed the most to human progress and the alleviation of suffering? Michael Shermer, do you have an answer to that?

MS: I'd say probably Christianity.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, this is well documented. Under The Influence, for example, is one of the books that has been written to show this is the case.

MS: Oh, that's a Judeo-Christian…

HH: Does that necessarily tell us anything about the truth claims of the religion, Greg Koukl?

GK: Well, when you look at the particular truth claims, I think it does. These things were done in a way that were consistent with the Christian worldview, and seem to resonate with the other people who didn't share their worldview as something that's good. This is why going back to worldview perspective is so valuable. I think these are outliving of a worldview that deeply resonates with our deepest intuitions about the way the world actually is.

MS: I'm in favor of any ideology that gives more people more freedom and liberty and individual power, whether that's religious or nonreligious.

HH: We'll be back. I'm going to give a minute to each of my guests to wrap this up. Don't go anywhere, America.

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HH: I want to thank Michael Shermer of Skeptic Society, http://www.skeptic.com, and Greg Koukl of Stand To Reason, http://www.str.org for their time and their patience. Greg Koukl, a minute, fifteen for you.

GK: Yeah, I started out talking about worldviews. And as a man trying to make sense of my world and finding a worldview that seems to fit reality as I experience it. I think atheism is way too austere for me, Hugh. It commits me to too many counterintuitive things – everything comes from nothing, like comes from nonlife, consciousness comes from matter, morality comes from a reorganization of molecules. None of this seems to make sense to me. There is another alternative that seems to make a lot more sense, that a big bang needs a big banger, that a moral law comes from a moral lawgiver, that design comes from a designer. These notions are captured well, I think, in the Biblical account of life. And the person of Jesus, especially, exemplifying these notions, and then giving us a way to live that makes sense. And this is why I'm a Christian and not an atheist. I think it makes the best sense of the world as we know it.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: I'm an atheist, because I don't believe in God, and there's nothing to follow from that. I think we have an absolute moral standard, we have objective moral truths, we all know what they are, we listen to our small inner voice within that comes from our evolutionary heritage as a social primate species, in which we care deeply about our fellow group members. We have empathy and sympathy, and that's where the moral emotions come from. In terms of religion, I think religion is good when it does good, it's bad when it does bad. In general, I'm in favor of anything that leads to greater freedom, greater liberty, greater autonomy for more people in more places. And that has been the trend for the last five hundred years, that I attribute to the general secular idea, from the Enlightenment, that people have value in and of themselves, and I think religion has fostered, after the fact, sort of just slightly behind the wave, reinforcing those good, human values, and attenuating the bad ones. And that's why they've discarded so many of the Old Testament values that we no longer adhere to. So I think that's the long term trend, and I think we should continue to count people, more and more people as part of our fellow in-groups, and I think free trade and travel and the internet is the best way to encourage that.

HH: Thank you, Michael Shermer of Skeptic Magazine, http://www.skeptic.org, Greg Koukl of Stand To Reason, http://www.str.org. Once again, all their books I've been talking about are linked at Hughhewitt.com. I want to thank Adam and Generalissimo for all their work in producing today.

End of interview.

Planned Parenthood does over 1.1 million abortions worldwide

January 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Life News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) recently released its annual performance report for 2008-2009. Despite an economic downturn and a slight decrease in annual income, the abortion industry giant boasts of increased activity across all of its lines of work — including condom distribution, advocacy and abortion services.
>
> IPPF's overall income for 2008 was US$119.7 million, down from over $120 million the previous year.
>
> […]IPPF intends to focus its future work on securing sustainable funding for its activities by capitalizing on statements made by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on family planning funding, and on the Obama administration's repeal of the Mexico City policy so that funding to "international sexual and reproductive health organizations" will be restored.
>
> IPPF views these developments as part of a "growing international interest" which "needs to be seized upon in order to drive forward the agenda for universal access to reproductive health." IPPF will be focusing on using the "emerging momentum around maternal health to secure new support and financing" to fund abortion growth.
>
> Beyond its traditional emphasis on abortion, contraception, family planning and advocacy, Executive Director Gill Greer indicates IPPF will expand into new areas such as "population dynamics" and "climate change" to garner increased funding.

Abortion is big business. Every abortion represents revenue that can be used to influence lawmakers.

Which foreign countries contribute to the Bill Clinton's foundation?

January 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at National Review. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> In recent years, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia gave between $10 million and $25 million to the foundation run by the husband of our current Secretary of State.
>
> "Friends of Saudi Arabia" donated at least another million, perhaps another $5 million. So in short, since 1997, the Saudi Kingdom and its affiliated organizations have provided the Clinton Foundation at least $11 million, and perhaps as much as $35 million.
>
> But I'm sure our Secretary of State held a hard line against them. Remember, it was the *last* President who was a pawn of the Saudis, or at least the left insisted that was so.
>
> Other foreign governments contributing to the husband of the nation's chief diplomat: The government of Norway, Kuwait, Qatar, Taiwan's Economic and Cultural Office, Ministry for the Environment & Territory, Italy and the Sultanate of Oman.

Follow the money.

Do leftists practice what they preach about helping others?

January 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neil Simpson has a post analyzing the giving patterns of Robin Hood Democrats.

Excerpt:

> Consider how these Liberal heroes want to take your money to "give" to others but can't manage any real and significant giving themselves. If Joe Biden, for example, can't afford to give more than 0.2% over his roughly quarter-million dollar income (that is point-two percent, not two percent — only $369 per year), then how could he possibly afford to pay increased taxes? Oh yeah, there will be loopholes for him and those who vote for the tax increase bills.
>
> His 0.2% giving and the percentages below are even worse than they look because they are based on Adjusted Gross Income, which is typically much less than gross income.
>
> […]A truly inconvenient truth: Al & Tipper Gore donated $353 of their 1997 income of $197,729, or 0.18%. That is a fraction of 1%. I wonder if he's making real donations now that he's getting rich off the AGW fraud?

Neil's post has a lot more examples of leftists who preach one thing, but do the exact opposite in their own personal lives. I think that leftists are largely secular hedonists (regardless of their professed religious faith) and they therefore cannot rationally justify making sacrifices for others who may have a greater need than themselves – charity just doesn't make them feel as good as keeping the money themselves. When they think that no one is watching, they do what's consistent with their real beliefs: every man for himself and survival of the fittest.

Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010

January 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Breitbart. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Oil-rich Venezuela ushered in 2010 with new measures rationing electricity use in malls, businesses and billboards, as Hugo Chavez's government aimed to save power amid a crippling drought.
>
> The new regulations came into effect January 1, with businesses required to comply with reduced consumption limits and authorities warning of forced power cuts and rate hikes if the measures are not followed.
>
> […]The power crunch is expected to have an impact on a wide variety of businesses, including cinemas, casinos and bingo halls.
>
> Establishments failing to comply with the measures could face outages for a period of 24 hours, and up to 72-hour suspensions "in case of recidivism," according to the decree.
>
> The regulation also orders businesses to institute savings plans aimed at shedding consumption by at least 20 percent, a measure that will be evaluated monthly by the newly-created ministry of electricity.
>
> Tariff surcharges of up to 20 percent could be imposed on violators.
>
> Rationing is also to apply to lighted advertisements.
>
> […]In 2009 there were four nationwide blackouts, with daily failures common in several cities.

Communism produces economic decline by encouraging entrepreneurs to flee or to stop producing, since the state views what these producers produce as something to be seized and distributed to buy votes. If no one wants to start any businesses, then there won't be any jobs for the people. People end up depending on the state for bread, with all that that entails. The left wants equality of life outcome regardless of choices, (except for themselves).

I don't see any difference between the intelligence and policies of Hugo Chavez and Barack Obama. Hugo is just further along the road to serfdom, in my opinion. Obama just has more capitalism and Judeo-Christian morality to undo. After Obama passes government-controlled rationing of health care, he'll probably move on to government-controlled rationing of energy. By then, Chavez should be rationing births, housing, food and water.

Britain to be hit by coldest winter in 100 years

January 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the UK Telegraph. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Britain is bracing itself for one of the coldest winters for a century with temperatures hitting minus 16 degrees Celsius, forecasters have warned. They predicted no let up in the freezing snap until at least mid-January, with snow, ice and severe frosts dominating. And the likelihood is that the second half of the month will be even colder…
>
> Weather patterns were more like those in the late 1970s, experts said, while Met Office figures released on Monday are expected to show that the country is experiencing the coldest winter for up to 25 years.

Well, on the plus side there'll be lots more research money for hide-the-decline research.

Obamacare and the simulus bill will increase your taxes

January 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, Americans for Tax Reform. (H/T Health Care BS)

Excerpt:

> ***Individual Mandate Tax:*** *Starting in 2014, anyone not buying "qualifying" health insurance must pay an income surtax of up to $1,485.*
>
> ***Hike in Medicare Payroll Tax****: For self-employed idividuals, the Medicare tax jumps from 2.9% to 3.8%. For businesses with employees, a firm's "matching" Medicare tax jumps from 1.45% to 2.35% of employee salaries.*
>
> ***Employer Mandate Tax:*** *If an employer does not offer health coverage, and at least one employee qualifies for a health tax credit, the employer must pay an additional non-deductible tax of $750 for all full-time employees.*
>
> ***Excise Tax on Comprehensive Health Insurance Plans****: Starting in 2013, new 40 percent excise tax on "Cadillac" health insurance plans ($8500 single/$23,000 family).*
>
> ***Medicine Cabinet Tax****: No longer allowable to use health savings account (HSA), flexible spending account (FSA), or health reimbursement (HRA) pre-tax dollars to purchase non-prescription, over-the-counter medicines (except insulin).*
>
> ***HSA Withdrawal Tax Hike****: Increases additional tax on non-medical early withdrawals from an HSA from 10 to 20 percent.*
>
> ***Excise Tax on Charitable Hospitals****: $50,000 per hospital if they fail to meet new "community health assessment needs," "financial assistance," and "billing and collection" rules set by HHS.*
>
> ***Tax on Innovator Drug Companies****: $2.3 billion annual tax on the industry imposed relative to share of sales made that year.*
>
> ***Tax on Medical Device Manufacturers****: $2 billion annual tax on the industry imposed relative to shares of sales made that year.*
>
> ***Tax on Health Insurers****: $10 billion annual tax on the industry imposed relative to health insurance premiums collected that year.*

But that's not all – there's a marriage penalty in there, too. (H/T Jennifer Roback Morse at RuthBlog)

Excerpt:

> "The Senate bill stipulates that two unmarried people, 52 years of age, with private insurance and a combined income of $60,000, $30,000 each, will pay a combined cost of $2,483 for medical insurance," Quist wrote. "Should they

> marry, however, they will pay a combined cost of $11,666 for insurance — a penalty of $9,183 for getting married."
>
> The numbers are based on the government's definition of "poverty level." Those above poverty level will pay higher premiums, and the excess would be redistributed to those in lower income levels.
>
> […]John Helmberger, CEO of the Minnesota Family Council and Institute, said the middle class will once again take the hit financially.
>
> "This hidden marriage penalty," he said, "hits hardest the very people that are most suffering from the pathologies resulting from the decline of marriage in our culture."

I recommend that all my readers click through to Dr. J's post and read her comments about Christian liberals who vote for government-run health care, thinking that it doesn't destroy marriage and family. The left is dominated by anti-family types who think men and women are interchangeable, and that means the traditional family is in their crosshairs.

The stimulus bill will cause tax increases

Second, Hans Bader writes about the stimulus bill taxes for the Competitive Enterprise Institute. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The federal government's $800 billion stimulus package, which failed to cut unemployment, is now forcing states and local governments to raise taxes. *The Wall Street Journal* describes how "stimulus dollars came with strings attached that are now causing enormous budget headaches . . . At the behest of the public employee unions, Congress imposed 'maintenance of effort' spending requirements on states. These federal laws prohibit state legislatures from cutting spending on 15 programs," such as "welfare, if the state took even a dollar of stimulus cash," even if a state's tax revenue has since fallen due to the recession. "So when states should be reducing" their spending "to match. . . lower revenue collections, federal stimulus rules mean many states will have little choice but to raise taxes."
>
> […]The stimulus package actually destroyed thousands of real world jobs by triggering trade wars with Canada and Mexico that killed jobs in America's export sector (the stimulus package barred a measley 97 Mexican truckers from U.S. roads, a minor NAFTA violation that led to massive Mexican retaliation against U.S. exports of 40 farm products and kitchen goods worth $2.4 billion). It also is wiping out jobs by inflicting costly mandates on state governments (such as repealing welfare reform, and imposing costly "prevailing wage" regulations and expensive racial set-asides).

Don't elect a radical leftist during a recession.

Do people have to believe in inerrancy in order to be Christians?

January 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What is inerrancy?

Here is the statement of faith that affirms inerrancy from the Evangelical Philosophical Society, which I think is a good statement of what belief in inerrancy requires:

The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and therefore inerrant in the original. God is a Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each an uncreated person, one in essence, equal in power and glory.

C. Michael Patton at Reclaiming the Mind is an inerrantist, but he thinks that inerrancy should be optional for Christians.

Excerpt:

> Here is the question: Is the doctrine of inerrancy so central to the Christian faith that if one were to deny it, he or she should pack their bags and search for a new worldview? In other words (and let me be very clear), if the Scriptures are not inerrant, does that mean the Christian faith is false?
>
> Most of you know that I hold to the doctrine of inerrancy. I call my view "reasoned" inerrancy which does not suppose a particular wooden hermeneutic to be tied to it. (You can read more about it here).
>
> Having said this, I believe that this doctrine, while important, is not the article upon which Christianity stands or falls. I believe that the Scriptures could contain error and the Christian faith remain essentially in tact. Why? Because Christianity is not built upon the inerrancy of Scripture, but the historical Advent of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Christ became man, lived a perfect life, died an atoning death, and rose on the third day not because the Scriptures inerrantly say that these events occurred, but because they did, in fact, occur. The truth is in the objectivity of the event, not the accuracy of the record of the event.

Some people who believe in inerrancy respond to complaints about errors by arguing that New Testament writers were not obligated to list all the witnesses to empty tomb, nor to transcribe exactly/all of what people said, or to list all of the events in the life of Jesus in chronological order. They argue that if you relax the standards of reporting a little, the apparent conflicts between the sources often disappear.

My position

I'm an inerrantist, but I don't think that a person has to be one in order to *become* a Christian, initially. I think that the list of non-negotiables do be a Christian shouldn't include inerrancy. Now, I don't think that people can just dump verses willy-nilly, based on personal preferences about particular sins, or presumptions of naturalism or religions

pluralism.

Instead, I think that it's ok for people to be agnostic on some stories (like the guard at the tomb or the earthquake resurrections in Matthew) because of historical concerns. I would hope that these new Christians would make an effort to read more about problem passages and see if they can move closer to inerrancy, though.

For more about inerrancy, you want to consider watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman on the resurrection of Jesus, or you can download the transcript here.

Related posts

- Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
- Is the Bible we have now the Bible they had then?
- Tough Questions Answered has first report of Licona/Ehrman debate!
- Mike Licona will face Richard Carrier and Stephen Patterson in upcoming debates
- Gary Habermas explains the earliest source of resurrection facts
- The eyewitness testimony of Jesus' women followers supports the empty tomb
- Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection
- How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
- What do the Dead Sea Scrolls tell us about how the Bible was transmitted?
- William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus

Pakistani Muslim raped two year old daughter of Christian man

January 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story in the Toronto Sun. (H/T Acts 17 Apologetics)

Excerpt:

> A seven-year-old Pakistani girl and her family have been given asylum in Canada after reports the child was raped and left to die when her Christian father refused to convert to Islam.
>
> The identities of Baby Neeha and her family are being protected by immigration officials, said human rights lawyer Chantal Desloges and One Free World International, a church that was instrumental in getting the family here.
>
> […]Church founder Rev. Majed El Shafie said the family of seven have been hiding from extremists in Pakistan for about three years.
>
> Baby Neeha, at the age of 2 1/2, was raped by the son of her father's employer and left to die by the roadside, he said. No one was arrested for the crime.
>
> "These horrific events took place because her father, who was Christian, refused to give in to pressure from his Muslim employer to convert to Islam," El Shafie said.
>
> The family went underground in Pakistan to hide from Muslim extremists who were seeking revenge for their non-conversion, he said.
>
> "The family has lived for years in hiding and in constant fear of being discovered by the employer's family or Islamic extremists," El Shafie said. "We are thrilled that she's finally in Canada."

Click through to the story in the Toronto Sun to read about how my second favorite Canadian MP, Jason Kenney, is the hero of their story. He is a devout Christian, and a social conservative.

Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?

January 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard claims that Christianity borrowed the virgin birth from Buddhism, or the other elements from pagan religions? Well, Dr. Glenn Peoples has, and he's prepared a few responses that I thought I would share.

Please note

IF YOU WANT TO REPLY TO THIS POST TO DISAGREE WITH A SPECIFIC CLAIM IN IT THEN PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU CITE THE SAME KIND OF EVIDENCE THAT GLENN USES TO BACK UP YOUR CLAIMS. PLEASE DON'T SUBMIT OPINIONS AND ASSERTIONS AS COMMENTS TO THIS POST.

Mithraism

Glenn introduces the problem as presented by Dan Brown, a non-scholar who writes sensational fiction that is later made into popular movies for mass consumption by those seeking low-brow entertainment (and worse):

He writes:

> According to Teabing in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, "Nothing in Christianity is original. The pre-Christian God Mithras—called the *Son of God* and the *Light of the World*—was born on December 25, died, was buried in a rock tomb, and then resurrected in three days."

Regarding the virgin birth, he has this to offer:

> As we read in *Mithraic Studies,* Mithras, "wearing his Phrygian cap, issues forth from the rocky mass. As yet only his bare torso is visible. In each hand he raises aloft a lighted torch and, as an unusual detail, red flames shoot out all around him from the petra genetrix." [Franz Cumon, "The Dura Mithraeum" in John R. Hinnells (ed.), *Mithraic Studies: Proceedings of the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies* (Manchester University Press, 1975), 173.

And about the resurrection, he writes this:

> This is where things start getting really confusing. None of the Mithras mythology depicts him being killed for humanity. In fact, he is not depicted as being killed at all. On the contrary, it is Mithras himself who does the killing! As is seen in the most widely use image of Mithras, he was said to have slain a great bull. Actually the very earliest reference to this event is from the close of the first century (AD 98-99), so it is post Christian, but setting that aside, Mithras' death is not depicted at all. For the earliest reference to the slaying of the bull, see R. L. Gordon, "The date and significance of CIMRM 593 (British Museum, Townley Collection)," *Journal of Mithraic Studies* 2:2. Read it online here. As there is no

> depiction of Mithras' death in any ancient mythology, there is likewise no depiction of any resurrection.
>
> Swedish scholar Tryggve N. D. Mettinger (I can only wonder how his first name is pronounced!) is professor of Hebrew Bible at Lund University in Sweden and a member of the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, Stockholm. Although he claims that there were in pre-Christian antiquity a few cases of myths of dying and rising gods, he makes two important admissions in his monograph, *The Riddle of Resurrection*. Firstly, he affirms that he is going against a "near consensus," and a consensus held not by Christian scholars, but by historians in general. Secondly, while he suggests that there *existed* myths of gods rising from death, he never suggests that the accounts are similar to that of the death and resurrection of Jesus. In fact he concludes the opposite:
>
> > There is, as far as I am aware, no prima facie evidence that the death and resurrection of Jesus is a mythological construct, drawing on the myths and rites of the dying and rising gods of the surrounding world.
> >
> > Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The Riddle of Resurrection* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wicksell, 2001), 221.

And so on for the other points.

I notice that Glenn cites a lot of peer-reviewed literature in his response. I like to be able to look at evidence when I am deciding what to believe about the world. I think that having solid evidence from scholarly research is a great way to ground a worldview. I definitely do not want to be parroting statements that I heard in a movie as though it were common knowledge, because people might ask me for evidence – and what would I do then if I didn't have any?

Buddhism

The challenge here is that Christianity stole the virgin birth narrative from Buddhism.

Glenn goes back to the primary sources and looks:

> Head over to the sacred texts website and read about the birth of Gautama Buddha (http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/sbe19/sbe1903.htm). Do you see any reference to a virgin birth?

Glenn doesn't see any virgin birth, but intead finds this:

> The reality is, they wrote that he was born to a woman who had been married for twenty years, without so much as a hint that she and her husband were abstaining from sex prior to the birth of the baby.

That doesn't sound like a virgin birth!

And now I have some advice for skeptics. When you want to believe something, the wise person proportions his belief to the evidence. You don't choose your beliefs based on non-rational criteria. If you don't know, then just say "I don't know". It's a mistake to run your

life on beliefs that you hold uncritically, just because those beliefs *make you feel good*.

Osiris

Glenn has a podcast on Osiris here.

What to read to find out more

I recommend these two books. The first is more advanced than the second.

- Ed Komoszewski, James Sawyer, and Daniel Wallace, *Reinventing Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications: 2006).
- Lee Strobel, *The Case for the Real Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2007).

Note that Lee Strobel interviews scholars in the second book, since he is a journalist, not a scholar.

Related debates with history of religions skeptics

You can see how well the history of religions theories do in formal academic debates. Listen to these two debates with the two best "mystery religions" people, squaring off against William Lane Craig.

- Vs. Robert M. Price
- Vs. Richard Carrier

Neither skeptic lands a glove on Craig – Carrier admitted defeat on his blog, and Price admits in the debate that he is on the radical fringe and virtually no one takes him seriously. This Christ-myth stuff isn't cognitive, it's an emotional outburst with a verbal smokescreen.

Related posts

Here are some posts about the historical Jesus:

- What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
- Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
- Richard Bauckham defends the reliability of the gospels against James Crossley
- Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
- The historical criteria and the standard minimal facts case.
- The list of minimal facts that are accepted by all non-Christian scholars.
- The earliest and best source for the minimal facts.
- Some additional details about the empty tomb sources.
- And some details about the first witnesses to the empty tomb.

Some debates on the historical Jesus with a reasonable atheist:

- Richard Bauckham defends the reliability of the gospels against James Crossley
- Richard Bauckham defends the divinity of Jesus against James Crossley
- Crossley debated against William Lane Craig before on the resurrection

- Crossley against Michael Bird on the origins of Christianity, (part 1, part 2)

Check out this post for some historical debates with evangelicals and radical skeptics.

Who are the ten most corrupt politicians of 2009?

January 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The list is here, courtesy of Judicial Watch. (H/T ECM)

Here are two of them:

> **Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT):** This marks two years in a row for Senator Dodd, who made the 2008 "Ten Most Corrupt" list for his corrupt relationship with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and for accepting preferential treatment and loan terms from Countrywide Financial, a scandal which still dogs him.
>
> In 2009, the scandals kept coming for the Connecticut Democrat. In 2009, Judicial Watch filed a Senate ethics complaint against Dodd for undervaluing a property he owns in Ireland on his Senate Financial Disclosure forms. Judicial Watch's complaint forced Dodd to amend the forms. However, press reports suggest the property to this day remains undervalued.
>
> Judicial Watch also alleges in the complaint that Dodd obtained a sweetheart deal for the property in exchange for his assistance in obtaining a presidential pardon (during the Clinton administration) and other favors for a long-time friend and business associate. The false financial disclosure forms were part of the cover-up. Dodd remains the head the Senate Banking Committee.
>
> **Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA):** Judicial Watch is investigating a $12 million TARP cash injection provided to the Boston-based OneUnited Bank at the urging of Massachusetts Rep. Barney Frank. As reported in the January 22, 2009, edition of the Wall Street Journal, the Treasury Department indicated it would only provide funds to healthy banks to jump-start lending. Not only was OneUnited Bank in massive financial turmoil, but it was also "under attack from its regulators for allegations of poor lending practices and executive-pay abuses, including owning a Porsche for its executives' use." Rep. Frank admitted he spoke to a "federal regulator," and Treasury granted the funds. (The bank continues to flounder despite Frank's intervention for federal dollars.)
>
> Moreover, Judicial Watch uncovered documents in 2009 that showed that members of Congress for years were aware that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were playing fast and loose with accounting issues, risk assessment issues and executive compensation issues, even as liberals led by Rep. Frank continued to block attempts to rein in the two Government Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs).
>
> For example, during a hearing on September 10, 2003, before the House Committee on Financial Services considering a Bush administration proposal to further regulate Fannie and Freddie, Rep. Frank stated: "I want to begin by saying that I am glad to consider the legislation, but I do not think we are facing any kind of a crisis. That is, in my view, the two Government Sponsored Enterprises we are talking about here, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, are not in a

> crisis. We have recently had an accounting problem with Freddie Mac that has led to people being dismissed, as appears to be appropriate. I do not think at this point there is a problem with a threat to the Treasury."
>
> Frank received $42,350 in campaign contributions from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac between 1989 and 2008. Frank also engaged in a relationship with a Fannie Mae Executive while serving on the House Banking Committee, which has jurisdiction over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Click through to see if Obama is on the list.

How about those unions?

In orther news, Obama has decided that unions don't need to report what they do with all the union dues they collect. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> As 2009 fades away, President Obama has decided to let disclosure of hundreds of millions of dollars in forced-union-dues disclosure fade away too. Under current law and regulations valid until December 30th, union bosses were supposed to carefully document the billions of dollars they extract from workers as a condition of employment that they in turn pour into front groups and other "funds" each year.
>
> A large part of the billions were about to be made public and reported on a Department of Labor disclosure form known as the Form T-1 Annual Report. But, that won't happen now!

According to Bureau of National Affairs, Inc, "The Labor Department is issuing a final rule that extends for one year the deadlines for unions to file Form T-1 Trust Annual Report Reports."

Where would Obama be without unions?

Was Nazi torturer Josef Mengele influenced by Christianity or Darwinism?

January 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Evolution News.

Here is some of the evidence collected in the article.

In Mengele: The Complete Story, Gerald L. Posner and John Ware write:

> Precisely what corrupted Mengele's eager young mind is hard to pin down. Probably it was a combination of the political climate and that his real interest in genetics and evolution happened to coincide with the developing concept that some human beings afflicted by disorders were unfit to reproduce, even to live. Perhaps the real catalyst in this lethal brew was that Mengele, first at Munich and later at Frankfurt, studied under the leading exponents of this "unworthy life" theory. His consummate ambition was to succeed in this fashionable new field of evolutionary research.
>
> […]Medicine at German universities was in any case more complementary to Mengele's real interest in evolution, since it was taught in accordance with the guidelines of the social Darwinist theory that Hitler and a growing number of German academics found so attractive.
>
> […]One of the earliest influence on the student doctor was Dr. Ernst Rudin, whose lectures Mengele regularly attended….Rudin was a leading proponent of the theory that doctors should destroy "life devoid of value." Rudin himself was one of the architects of Hitler's compulsory sterilization laws, which were enacted in July 1933.

Compulsory sterilization? That sounds like Obama's science czar!

In Children of the Flames: Dr. Josef Mengele and the Untold Story of the Twins of Auschwitz, Lucette Matalon Lagnado and Sheila Cohn Dekel write:

> The messianic quality of social Darwinism seems to have appealed to the young Mengele. His writings suggest that he was especially struck by their use of the phrase "the fate of mankind." From his youthful encounter with their distorted ideals, to his old age, a weary and broken exile, Mengele would continue to feel a personal allegiance to the social Darwinists. At the university, the question of the "biological quality of mankind" may have been esoteric to most of Mengele's classmates. But for him, it was apparently a clarion call.

Is it any wonder that the secular left is so interested in embryonic stem cell research, and cloning? They like scientific progress, and their worldview has no foundation for the right to life, or any objective human rights. They are thus rational in sacrificing the weak to make their own lives better.

Are all worldviews equal when it comes to morality?

Notice the difference between people influenced by Christianity, like William Wilberforce, and people influenced by Darwinism, like Josef Mengele. On the one worldview, you have man made in the image of God, for the purpose of having a relationship with God. And our job is to help them to have that relationship while respecting their free will (part of being made in the image of God means you have free will). And on the other worldview, you have survival of the fittest, the strong exterminating the weak to keep them from reproducing and wasting precious resources, so that the strong can pursue pleasure without being encumbered by the needs of others.

Here's my previous post contrasting Wilberforce and Hitler, and another where I examine who is more responsible for the mass murders of the 20th century, and the millions of deaths caused by abortion, and environmentalist bans on DDT. My series of posts explaining why morality is not rational on atheism is here. Atheists may act better than their worldview allows, but that's only because we are still living on the fumes of a dying Christian culture. If you want real atheist morality, unencumbered by Christianity, then just look at North Korea.

I'm going to be strict with comments again – please post your evidence along with your assertions. I cited evidence for my assertions.

William Dembski debates Lewis Wolpert about intelligent design

January 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's the latest debate from Unbelievable, courtesy of Justin Brierley!

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

> William (Bill) Dembski is an American mathematician, theologian and professor of Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, TX. He debates the issue of ID with atheist Lewis Wolpert, Emeritus Professor of Biology at University College London.
>
> For Bill Dembski see http://www.designinference.com/ or his blog http://www.uncommondescent.com/
>
> For Lewis Wolpert's Wikipedia profile see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis_Wolpert

Intro:

- Bill Dembski's religious background (Catholic-raised atheist/agnostic, later Protestant)
- Dembski's view of the interface between science and religion
- Lewis Wolpert's religious background (Jewish-raised atheist)
- Wolpert's view of whether God exists

First half:

- Dembski explains the mathematical foundations for detecting design
- Wolpert asks whether designs can emerge without intelligence
- Dembski asks whether anything in biology could be like SETI signals
- Wolpert says that it is impossible to recognize design in biology
- Dembski asks whether the Darwinian hypothesis is falsifiable
- Wolpert says that it is never warranted to rule out chance as an explanation
- Dembski says that you can set limits on what chance can do within a certain time
- Wolpert says that chance can do anything regardless of time, etc.
- Dembski says, what about the work of Doug Axe published in the peer-reviewed JMB?
- Wolpert says those calculations must be wrong!
- Dembski says then you're just a dogmatic reductionist
- Wolpert agrees that he is a dogmatic reductionist

Second half:

- Dembski explains why intelligent is not repackaged creationism
- Dembski explains why intelligent design isn't an argument from ignorance
- Dembski talks about whether evolutionary mechanisms can create more information
- Wolpert asks whether chemistry requires intelligent design too
- Dembski says that there is a fine-tuning argument for cosmological constants too
- Wolpert agrees that the origin of life is unexplained naturalistically
- Wolpert asks if everything after the origin of life is explained
- Dembski says that there are still problems like the Cambrian explosion
- Wolpert asks Dembski if anything could falsify intelligent design
- Dembski gives an example of something that could falsify intelligent design
- Dembski asks whether naturalistic explanations of life are falsifiable
- Wolpert asks whether intelligent design affects the way that people do science
- Dembski asks whether it is possible that the resources of naturalism are adequate to explain life
- Wolpert says that you can't explain anything in nature as the result of intelligence
- Dembski says that it happens all the time in other sciences like engineering
- Wolpert says that he doesn't want a Designer
- Dembski says we should just follow the evidence and who cares what people on either side want

And then there are closing speeches.

I am not sure if I had anything to do with this, but I did send Justin Bill's e-mail address recently. I'm pretty happy that Justin managed to get Bill and Lewis to debate on this topic. Justin says that *Bill will be back next week!* He'll be discussing his new book "The End of Christianity" which is about the problem of evil.

Did you miss Lewis Wolpert's last debate with the professor of nanotechnology?

UPDATE: Justin says that it was indeed my e-mail that helped him to contact Bill, and what's more we should expect a show that features Stephen C. Meyer soon, too!

In Boston you can see the next phase of the sexual revolution

January 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the Boston Globe. (H/T Far Above Rubies)

Excerpt:

> Adherents call it responsible non-monogamy or polyamory, and the nontraditional practice is creeping out of the closet, making gay marriage feel somewhat last decade here in Massachusetts. What literally translates to “loving many,” polyamory (or poly, for short), a term coined around 1990, refers to consensual, romantic love with more than one person.

If you click through to Alisha’s post, she has a video of some polyamorous people explaining how polyamory meets their needs, and doesn’t hurt children. This is the next phase of “love makes a family”. No one seems to want to make a commitment to another person to raise children in a stable, monogamous environment. It’s all about adult selfishness now.

College women becoming interested in understanding men

January 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Editorial from Barbara Kay in the National Post.

Excerpt:

> Commonsensical Canadians are losing patience with the angry, blame-all-males school of feminism. It's no accident that the feminist Toronto Women's Bookstore, for years a bustling cynosure of the cultural zeitgeist, is in danger of closing down. Or that once overflowing women's studies classes are emptying out, or morphing into "gender studies" to attract more students (a trap, really: Gender studies are also gynocentric, offering a more subtle version of heterosexual male-bashing than women's studies).
>
> Rob Kenedy, an assistant professor in the sociology department of York University with a specialty in the men's rights movement, was unique amongst sociologues in teaching a course in the 1990s about men and their particular tribulations and needs. In a telephone interview he recalled his surprise when more young women signed up than men: "Women are far more interested in learning about men and masculinity than men are."
>
> Because the numbers in universities are so skewed to the distaff — in a current obligatory sociology course, his own tutorial is comprised of 25 women and two men — Kenedy predicts sociology departments will have to open up (positive) masculinity courses to satisfy the burgeoning curiosity of women about what makes men tick.

The best thing that a woman can do is to sit down with a man and interview him about what he is really like. I think that if every woman could talk about men, marriage and parenting like Jennifer Roback Morse can, then women would have to beat men back with foam bats. I'll be writing a post about how women can get men to like them without using sex appeal later on in the week. I think that interrogating men to find out what they think is *especially* important for Christian women, who need to know how they are supposed to complement the man they are interested in.

William Lane Craig to debate Michael Tooley in North Carolina

January 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here on Great Cloud. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Details:

Philosophers William Lane Craig and Michael Tooley are set to debate the question "Is God real?" on March 24, 2010, at the University of North Carolina Charlotte at 7:00 p.m. The debate is being hosted by Ratio Christi Student Apologetics Alliance, a ministry of Southern Evangelical Seminary.

Their previous debate transcript is here. Tooley is very good at debating and knows Craig's arguments well.

Unemployment for young Americans surges to record high of 52 percent

January 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story from the New York Post. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> "The unemployment rate for young Americans has exploded to 52.2 percent — a post-World War II high, according to the Labor Dept. — meaning millions of Americans are staring at the likelihood that their lifetime earning potential will be diminished and, combined with the predicted slow economic recovery, their transition into productive members of society could be put on hold for an extended period of time."
>
> "The number represents the flip-side to the Labor Dept.'s report that the employment rate of 16-to-24 year olds has eroded to 46.6 percent — the lowest ratio of working young Americans in that age group, including all but those in the military, since WWII."

And they'll have to pay for the trillions that Obama is adding to our national debt, too.

Remember, young people really liked Obama during the election:

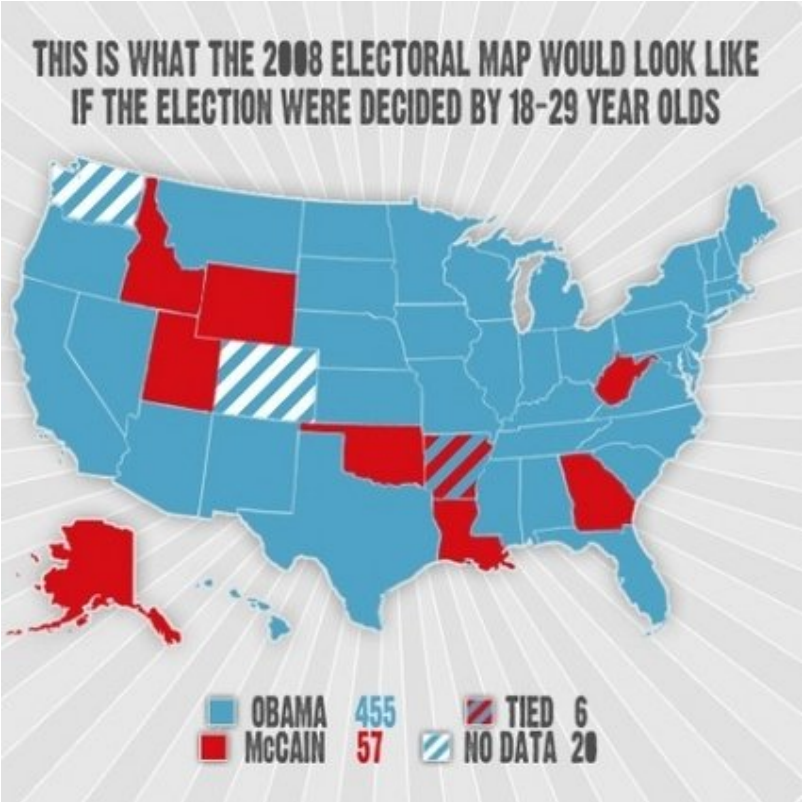

I'm thinking that those young people should be more careful about considering a politician's voting record instead of listening to their government-funded public school teachers. It seems to be that government-run public schools will always indoctrinate children to vote for bigger government, and that means higher unemployment in the

private sector, especially for entry-level job-seekers. Maybe the young people didn't think that far ahead, but then they should be more cautious about forming opinions without asking their parents for input.

You may also be interested in a wonderful video linked here that shows several prominent Democrats assuring us that the stimulus bill was needed to create millions of jobs and keep unemployment below 8%. They don't understand economics – they're *Democrats.* The know less about economics than my keyboard. If young people want to learn about economics, then they need to read Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams. Those are the two greatest living economists, and they teach economics so that regular people like me can understand.

What do left-wing Democrats think about Christianity?

January 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you see this video of Fox News anchor Brit Hume recommending that Tiger Woods consider whether Christianity has more to offer someone who needs forgiveness than Budhhism? (H/T Neil Simpson)

Brit Hume is my favorite news media person. Actually he's the only news anchor I watch when I'm traveling. (I don't have a TV in my apartment)

The left-wing media responds

Here's a story from NewsBusters describing how the secular leftists on MSNBC responded to Brit's words.

Excerpt:

> On Monday's Countdown show, MSNBC's Keith Olbermann slammed FNC's Brit Hume for advising Tiger Woods to convert to Christianity while appearing on yesterday's Fox News Sunday panel, where Hume has regularly appeared for years and contributed his opinions to the discussion in a way that differs from his manner of moderating discussions in a more neutral way when he used to host Special Report with Brit Hume. Although Olbermann later backed away from likening Hume to radical Muslims, during the show's opening teaser, Olbermann did make such a comparison: "An organization proselytizing, trying to force others to convert to its faith alone, you know, just like Islamic extremists."
>
> At one point as the Countdown host plugged a segment in which he discussed Hume with author Dan Savage, the words "Hume's Holy War" were shown at the bottom of the screen as Olbermann spoke: "So Brit Hume tells Tiger Woods he can be forgiven, but only if he converts to Christianity. Fox has given up all pretense, hasn't it?"
>
> As Olbermann and Savage went on to make fun of Christianity, the MSNBC host at one point quipped: "'WWJDIHS,' which is: What would Jesus do if he strayed?" Savage brought up fringe religious figure Fred Phelps, who has become infamous for holding protests at the funerals of American soldiers, and lumped him in with Hume, Pat Robertson and Gary Bauer.

Click through for a partial transcript. This is really revolting stuff, and it shows what Democrats like Olbermann think of Christianity and authentic Christians.

Neil Simpson also noticed that secular leftists were not too thrilled about Brit Hume's authentic Christian activity in the public square.

Drew also has a post defending Brit Hume on the Drew Blog.

How the British government funds radical Islam

January 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from National Review. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The East London Mosque is one of the largest and most influential of Islamic institutions in Britain. It has a Muslim Centre, a meeting place which acts a bit like a college, offering lectures and sermons at which like-minded people may meet. One who gave lectures there was Anwar al-Awlaki, the American-born Islamist imam whose fingerprints have turned up in more than one place. He groomed Maj. Nidal Hasan, the Fort Hood killer, and we now learn that the Detroit would-be bomber, Umar Abdulmutallab, while a student in London between 2005 and 2008 listened to a number of video-link lectures given by al-Awlaki at this mosque's Muslim Centre. By then, al-Awlaki was communicating at long distance from Yemen where he had taken refuge, and become affiliated to al-Qaeda. And when Abdul Mutallab himself went to Yemen where he was trained and equipped as a suicide bomber, he had personal contact with al-Awlaki, evidently his mentor.
>
> The authorities ought to have been able to pick this up. Far worse than their laxity, however, is the fact that in the past two years, according to the Sunday *Telegraph*, the Muslim Centre has received at least 60,000 pounds from a government initiative known as Preventing Violent Extremism. The intention is to fund moderates to oppose extremists, but the very opposite has happened. Violent extremism has been subsidized. In the last two years, al-Awlaki has addressed at least two gatherings at the Centre via video-link, including one last year called "The End of Time," advertised with a poster showing the destruction of New York.

This is why you don't elect secular leftists from the British Labour Party to run national security.

If a person wanted to become a Christian, what should they do?

January 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just got an e-mail from one of our non-Christian readers who has decided to investigate how to become a Christian. He asked me for some advice on how to proceed, and I thought I would throw it out there for my Christian readers (Neil and Drew, please help!) to see if anyone has any good ideas.

In his e-mail, he wanted to know how I became a Christian, how to read the Bible, and how to become a Christian. The reason I am excited is because he seems to be coming at this the right way, starting with the intelligent design DVDs that I always recommend, then William Lane Craig debates, and so on. He's been investigating for a year and a half! Now, this is the perfect way to become a Christian, in my opinion. Slow, and with an eye for the other side. I am actually very excited about his approach!

OK, so I was going to work on a reply, but the first things I thought of were the following:

Start with some Bible: (NIV translation is easier)

- John
- Luke
- Acts

Then some C.S. Lewis:

- Mere Christianity
- The Problem of Pain
- The Screwtape Letters
- The Great Divorce

Any ideas for a good basic theology book? Here's a basic one from Wayne Grudem. I like him because even though he's a Calvinist, he's politically conservative, complementarian and old-earth. If you just read his books while thinking "grace is resistible, grace is resistible", then you'll be fine.

I know a lot of people like Dallas Willard's "The Divine Conspiracy" and "Renovation of the Heart", but isn't he a bit mystical? I haven't read it. I have it though, and I'll probably read it then recommend it to him if it isn't too goofy. I'm suspicious of Dallas Willard, because even though he's a philosopher at USC and speaks on university campuses, I've met lots of goofy Christians who liked Dallas Willard, but who *did not* like apologetics.

I was thinking that this would give him the idea that the Christian life basically consists of investigating whether God exists, whether Jesus is God stepping into history to talk to us, and then reading about Jesus life and words to find out what Jesus says. And he can read the Bible, and pray about various things (praying is like debating, you reason with God

about things he’s done that you like, or why you think he should act in a particular way). He could also listen to sermons in church, and talk to other Christians who like apologetics and theology.

As a new Christian learns more, they think of things that they’d like to try, like changing behaviors and priorities, and making clever plans to give God things he might like. It’s a relationship, but instead of hearing God’s voice out loud, new Christians should be collecting information about God like a detective, then acting accordingly. It’s demanding, and there is sometimes kickback. But I think that the point of Christianity is that you are building a lasting relationship with God by choosing how you spend your time.

The American Library Association’s gay agenda

January 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from NewsBusters.

Excerpt:

> “Authentic literature” is the term that has been adopted by the ALA to describe books with “literary merit.” It sounds harmless enough – just saying “authentic literature” evokes images of musty catalog cards and spinster librarians. In reality, however, it’s a manipulative term abused by the liberal ALA to promote books like “Skim,” written by Mariko Tamaki and illustrated by her cousin Jillian Tamaki.
>
> “Skim” is a “graphic novel” (aka a comic book) about a depressed, gothic, homosexual, Wicca-worshipping high school girl and, according to the ALA, that’s good literature – it’s “authentic literature.”
>
> The protagonist of the graphic novel, Kim Cameron – nicknamed “Skim” because she’s not slim – participates in séances, channels the spirits, swears judiciously, discusses porn and handjobs, and skips class to smoke. The major plot of the story revolves around Skim’s relationship with her flaky drama teacher, Ms. Archer. When Ms. Archer catches Skim skipping class and smoking a cigarette, she sits down for a drag herself, which eventually leads to a romantic relationship depicted in a double-page tableau of the two kissing in the woods.
>
> Published in 2008, the ALA has already given “Skim” numerous awards, including a spot on the “2009 Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults” and the “2009 Top Ten Great Graphic Novels for Teens.”
>
> The ALA claims that “authentic literature” like “Skim” more accurately portrays the gritty, real American life, and therefore, has more literary merit. It’s a manipulative tactic that has effectively stocked library shelves across the nation with pro-homosexual books that inevitably fall into children’s hands.

They don’t respect the innocence of children.

Are public sector union employees paid too much?

January 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Competitive Enterprise Institute. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The most recent BLS release on employee compensation (issued December 9, 2009) states that, during September 2009, "[p]rivate industry employer compensation costs averaged $27.49 per hour worked," while, "[s]tate and local government compensation costs averaged $39.83 per hour worked" — a difference of over $12.00 an hour.
>
> Moreover, a greater proportion of public employees get benefits, and they get greater employer contributions.
>
> [,,,]And still that's not all. As Don Bellante of the University of South Florida, David Denholm of the Public Service Research Foundation, and I note in our Cato Institute study on the topic, another benefit unionized government workers get is job security unlike any found in the private sector.
>
> […]Even worse, the greatest costs associated with public sector unions often do not become apparent for many years, in the form of pensions.

There's a lot more here. It's a nightmare. I try not to sound too upset about it, but it really is bad. Speaking as a private sector employee, I cannot afford ME and *adult day care* for government-employees who aren't even accountable to their customers.

MUST-READ: Matt Flanagan defends the pro-life position at MandM

January 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a really good post. (H/T xxx)

First, he argues that none of the traditional arguments for abortion work if the unborn child is an innocent human being. He then explains briefly why the unborn child is human. And then he counters several objections to the humanity of the unborn.

Excerpt:

> The fact that a fetus cannot survive independently of its mother does not mean it is not a human being. Fetal viability is contingent upon the medical technology of a given culture. A fetus that is not viable in Chad is viable in Los Angeles. If viability is necessary for something to be a human then a woman pregnant with a viable fetus in Los Angeles who flies from Los Angeles to Chad carries a human being when she leaves but this human being ceases to exist when she arrives in India and yet becomes human again when she returns (Peter Singer *Writings on an Ethical Life* (2000) 148).
>
> Similarly, while the fetus lacks consciousness, lack of consciousness does not make a being non-human. If it did, then a human being ceases to exist when asleep or unconscious and then pops back into existence upon awakening. Shooting someone would cease to be homicide provided we render him or her unconscious first.

I'm reading the comments now and it looks like one of the challengers is using the Violinist argument from Judith Jarvis Thomson, which states that a woman is justified in using deadly force to repel invaders, even if they are human beings.

The challenger says:

> Yes, abortion is homicide. But abortion on demand is JUSTIFIABLE homicide.
>
> If something is inside your body, then you're entitled to have it killed. No exceptions. Even if it's an "innocent" person. If you were inside my body, then I'd be entitled to kill you, and if I were inside your body, you'd be entitled to kill me.

Matt responds with this:

> The question then is not whether the fetus is intruding upon a mother's body, it is whether the fetus *unjustly* intrudes on her body. Has the mother done anything that places a duty on her to provide bodily support to the fetus or that gives the fetus a justified claim upon her body?
>
> I maintain that in most cases such a duty exists. A parent has a duty to provide the children that their voluntary actions have brought into existence the normal,

> basic necessities that those children need in order to reach maturity.
>
> Except in the very rare case of pregnancy from rape or in cases where the pregnancy poses a serious threat to the mother's life this duty applies. The woman has engaged in voluntary intercourse, has brought the child into existence and bringing the child to term is one of the normal, basic, necessity the child needs to mature. Hence the fetus is not *unjustly* intruding upon the mother's body.

That's what I would have said, because I always emphasize the responsibility aspect. Babies don't just appear out of nothing, you know.

But look what Matt's wife Madeleine says:

> I am assuming you are not wanting your argument to endorse infanticide. If this is the case, then you cannot simply appeal to "your body" as a newborn makes incredible demands on the body of its mother if it is breastfed. Even if not breastfed, the adult(s) taking care of it also have extremely high demands placed on their body to ensure its health and survival – sleep deprivation, formula making and feeding, nappy changing, financial drains (finances come from work, work requires the use of one's body), immunisations, doctors visits, increased cleaning and housework and so on. The demands a newborn places on the body of another are higher than the demands a fetus places on the body of its mother; you can measure it scientifically by comparing the calorie intake required by the life-providing adult pre-birth and after-birth (and also by talking to any woman who has been pregnant and then has cared for their own child).
>
> Now, the reason I do not think you intended to endorse infanticide is because you limited your appeal to "your body" with the addition of the qualification 'location' – you stated "If you were inside my body…" What I want to know is what is it about demands made on your body that gives you a right to kill when those demands are made *inside* your body but not when those demands, arguably greater demands, are made *outside* your body? It seems rather arbitrary to claim that one's right to control one's body has this kind of asymmetry.

It's fun because she knows what she's talking about from experience.

This post is highly recommended! And the comments are fun, too.

UPDATE: I had mistakenly stated that Madeleine had an abortion previously, but actually I was mistaken and must have been thinking of someone else. I apologize for my stupidity!

France passes law to jail spouses who commit psychological violence

January 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Married couples in France could end up with criminal records for insulting each other during arguments.
>
> Under a new law, France is to become the first country in the world to ban ‘ psychological violence’ within marriage.
>
> The law would apply to cohabiting couples and to both men and women.
>
> It would cover men who shout at their wives and women who hurl abuse at their husbands – although it was not clear last night if nagging would be viewed as breaking the law.
>
> The law is expected to cover every kind of insult including repeated rude remarks about a partner’s appearance, false allegations of infidelity and threats of physical violence.
>
> Police are being urged to issue a caution in the first instance, but repeat offenders could face a fine, a restraining order or even jail.

Feminists don’t like long-term, stable male-female relationships, because they think that it creates unequal “husband” and “wife” roles.

This law will dissuade men from marrying. Men are not going to be happy about going to jail just because they tell their wives to spend less money, etc. And women need to start to do something to prevent such laws. Women are going to have decide whether they want to substitute courts, police and government-run social programs for husbands and fathers. They can’t have socialism *and* a family.

Until I see proof that women intend to crusade against these anti-male, anti-family laws, I am not going to be favorably disposed toward marriage. This is where we are going in the West, towards greater and greater feminism, higher taxes, more social programs, and greater regulation of the family by the courts. A man cannot be the head of a family when he has no power and no respect.

New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

January 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Life Site News. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> U.S. National Cancer Institute researcher Dr. Louise Brinton, who was the chief organizer of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) workshop in 2003 that persuaded women that it was "well established" that "abortion is not associated with increased breast cancer risk," has reversed her position and now admits that abortion and oral contraceptives raise breast cancer risks.
>
> An April 2009 study by Jessica Dolle et al. of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center examining the relationship between oral contraceptives (OCs) and triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC), an aggressive form of breast cancer associated with high mortality, in women under age 45, contained an admission from Dr. Brinton and her colleagues that abortion raises breast cancer risk by 40%.
>
> The study found that "a statistically significant 40% increased risk for women who have abortions" exists, and that a " 270% increased risk of triple negative breast cancer (an aggressive form of breast cancer associated with high mortality) among those who used oral contraceptives while under age 18 and a 320% increased risk of triple negative breast cancer among recent users (within 1-5 years) of oral contraceptives," also exists.
>
> This means that women who start using OCs before age 18 multiply their risk of TNBC by 3.7 times and recent users of OCs within the last one to five years multiply their risk by 4.2 times.
>
> "Although the study was published nine months ago," stated Karen Malec, president of the Coalition on Abortion/Breast Cancer, in a press release, "the NCI, the American Cancer Society, Susan G. Komen for the Cure and other cancer fundraising businesses have made no efforts to reduce breast cancer rates by issuing nationwide warnings to women.

Remember, Obama is trying to pass a bill that contains *taxpayer funding* for abortion. With abortions *taxpayer-funded*, we should expect the number of abortions to increase. And that means that the frequency of breast cancer will also increase.

Previous posts

- Chinese researchers find that abortion results in 17% increased risk of breast cancer
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- New peer-reviewed study links abortion and breast cancer

MUST-SEE: Jack Cafferty rants against Democrats for secretive negotiations

January 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Look at this radical left-wing extremist going non-linear against the Democrats!

(H/T Gateway Pundit)

Republican amendments being removed?

Congressman Greg Walden says that his amendments are being stripped from the health care bill after they were approved in committee.

(H/T Gateway Pundit)

Marsha Blackburn on the secret negotiations

Here's a video of my other favorite Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn talking about the health care bill.

She did a great job debating this issue.

Brit Hume is interviewed about his public witness for Christianity

January 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the interview from Christianity Today. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

Do you think your experience becoming a Christian after your son's death has led you to be emboldened to talk about your faith publicly?

I ought to be willing to do that. I don't want to practice a faith that I'm afraid to proclaim. I don't want to be a closet Christian. I'm not going to stand on the street with a megaphone. My principal responsibility at Fox News isn't to proselytize. But occasionally a mention of faith seems to me to be appropriate. When those occasions come, I'll do it.

And:

What were you hoping people would take away from what you said?

Well, I was kind of hoping that in some way word of it might reach Tiger. I was hoping that people who were of faith might receive some encouragement from the message. You never know. I also thought it was interesting. I didn't really sit down and make some kind of calculations on a sheet of lined paper about what were going to be the consequences. We were expressing our views and those were my views on that point.

Now watch this video of Brit Hume explaining why he did it, on the O'Reilly Factor.

My thoughts

First, I am appalled by the reactions of the hard secular left,. They seem to think that it is a horrible crime to recognize one religion over another. Obviously these people are thinking that religion is like a cultural thing you inherit, or a personal preference. I really have trouble understanding how people could be so stupid as to not realize that religions make conflicting claims about an objective reality – claims that can be tested using history, science, the laws of logic, etc.

Second, I think that we Christians need to seriously consider whether we can try to be more like Brit Hume in the places we are. Let me explain.

First, consider this passage, which is, I think, the scariest verse in the New Testament, and has caused me to act bravely more than any other verse, because I just cannot stand being a coward when someone has put their trust in me, in the context of a relationship.

Matthew 10:32-33:

[32]"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.

[33]But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

And here's a less scary one, that I also like a lot:

1 Corinthians 4:1-4:

[1]So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.

[2]Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

[3]I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.

[4]My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

Now there are two kinds of people in the world. The kind of people that don't mind obligations that are placed on them by someone who loves them, and the kind of people who do mind. And Brit Hume is the first kind – he has the desire to be faithful in his obligation to tell the truth about Christianity in public, regardless of the flak he catches from the secular left. It reminds me of the motto of the Order of the Garter: *"Honi Soit qui Mal y Pense"* – "Shame on him who thinks ill of it." Shame on him who thinks ill of it. Shame on the people who defend Roman Polanski but denigrate Brit Hume.

By the way, I also think that we Christians should be striving for excellence so that when we do witness, a lot of people who are already impressed by our credentials will give our message the respect it deserves! So work hard in school and at work! And encourage other Christians to do well in school and at work, too. We need to be thinking about the most effective ways to have an influence. And I think that studying apologetics helps us to believe the things we say we believe, and to explain those things intelligently and confidently to others.

My favorite lecture

Now may be a good time to point you all to the lecture that changed my life: Dr. Walter Bradley's "Giants in the Land". You can listen to THREE VERSIONS of it. It will probably make you cry, or at least you will get a lump in your throat.

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

- Ph.D. in Materials Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1968
- B.S. in Engineering Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1965

My favorite lecture of all time:

- Giants in the Land (low volume)

And variations of his "Giants in the Land" lecture that I like:

- Giants in the Land, Medium
- Giants in the Land, Short

Other lectures:

- Journey to Faith (His testimony)
- Truth in Religion
- Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer

I hope these lectures encourage you to be a bit more brave on behalf of our mutual friend!

New study shows that children who are spanked are more successful

January 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the UK Telegraph. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> A study found that youngsters smacked up to the age of six did better at school and were more optimistic about their lives than those never hit by their parents.
>
> They were also more likely to undertake voluntary work and keener to attend university, experts discovered.
>
> The research, conducted in the United States, is likely to anger children's rights campaigners who have unsuccessfully fought to ban smacking in Britain.
>
> […]Those who had been smacked up to the age of six performed better in almost all the positive categories and no worse in the negatives than those never punished physically.
>
> Teenagers who had been hit by their parents from age seven to 11 were also found to be more successful at school than those not smacked but fared less well on some negative measures, such as getting involved in more fights.
>
> However, youngsters who claimed they were still being smacked scored worse than every other group across all the categories.
>
> Prof Gunnoe found little difference in the results between sexes and different racial groups.

I find it interesting that the recent anti-smacking law in New Zealand was championed by Labor Party prime minister Helen Clark and Green Party MP Sue Bradford. These two are members of the secular left in New Zealand.

Spanking is opposed by the secular left because they oppose all moral judgments, personal responsibility, and accountability. They seem to have a hostility to any objective moral standard that defines good and evil, but instead embrace moral relativism. They want to be allowed to do anything they feel like doing, regardless of the harm and costs incurred, and to get off Scot-free in the end.

The following video explains the worldview of the secular left better than anything I've seen. They think that wars are caused by disagreements, so the best way to prevent wars is to support what is traditionally regarded as evil, and to denigrate what is traditionally regarded as good. When all distinctions between good and evil have been abolished, they think that the world will be a better place.

That is why they do not want parents teaching their children any standard of conduct. They view this as a setback to their goal of destroying all moral distinctions.

I do agree with the thrust of the article that spanking should cease as soon as the child is

able to make connections between behaviors and rewards rationally.

Social Security running deficits ten years ahead of schedule

January 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Investors Business Daily.

Here's the prediction before Obama was elected:

> Peter Orszag, now director of the Office of Management and Budget, predicted as director of the Congressional Budget Office in August 2008 that no one needed to worry about Social Security. "CBO projects that outlays will first exceed revenues in 2019 and that the Social Security trust funds will be exhausted in 2049," we were told.

And then in 2009, Obama began his massive government spending plan:

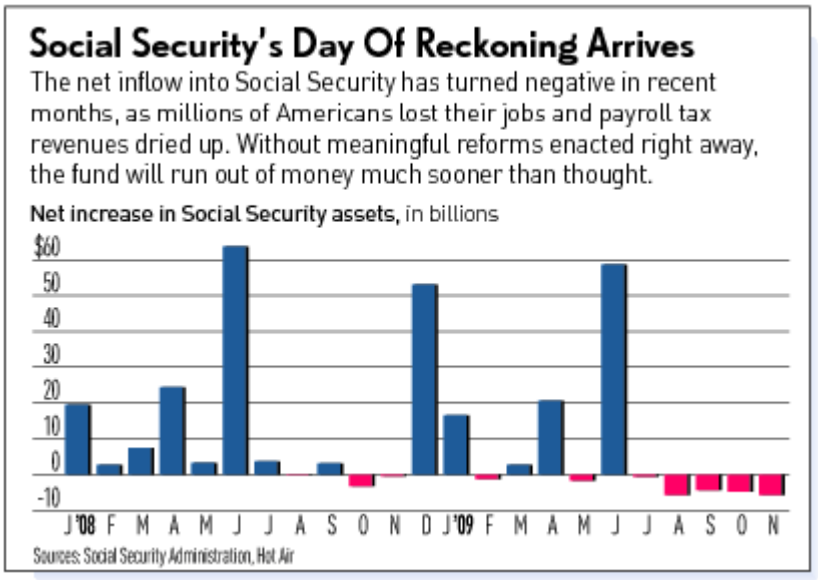

You know, in public schools the young people are taught by unionized teachers that Social Security is a brilliant economic initiative. So they'll keep voting for more socialism because that's all they know. They'll only find out much later that they've been fleeced by a massive government-run Ponzi scheme. (This is assuming they are even able to get jobs to pay payroll taxes – the unemployment rate among young people is 52%)

We're doomed!

Prestigious Mayo Clinic will no longer accept Medicare patients

January 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> President Obama last year praised the Mayo Clinic as a "classic example" of how a health-care provider can offer "better outcomes" at lower cost. Then what should Americans think about the famous Minnesota medical center's decision to take fewer Medicare patients?
>
> Specifically, Mayo said last week it will no longer accept Medicare patients at one of its primary care clinics in Arizona. Mayo said the decision is part of a two-year pilot program to determine if it should also drop Medicare patients at other facilities in Arizona, Florida and Minnesota, which serve more than 500,000 seniors.
>
> Mayo says it lost $840 million last year treating Medicare patients, the result of the program's low reimbursement rates. Its hospital and four clinics in Arizona—including the Glendale facility—lost $120 million. Providers like Mayo swallow some of these Medicare losses, while also shifting the cost by charging more to private patients and insurers.
>
> Of course, only governments can lose that much money and pretend they don't have to change. "Mayo Clinic loses a substantial amount of money every year due to the reimbursement schedule under Medicare," the institution said. "Decades of underfunding and paying for volume rather than value in Medicare have led us to this decision."

If the government cannot deliver services for patients on Medicare, then why should we give them control of all of health care? It doesn't make any sense.

Are Democrats seeking to register criminals and illegal aliens to vote?

January 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> Sen. Charles E. Schumer, New York Democrat, and Rep. Barney Frank, Massachusetts Democrat, have plans to ram through legislation that will produce universal voter registration. No matter what they claim, the rule changes will make it possible for illegal aliens to register to vote and for others to register multiple times.
>
> The proposal is to register everyone on every welfare list, everyone getting unemployment insurance, everyone with a driver's license, everyone who has had run-ins with the legal system, everyone owning any property – basically everyone on every list the government keeps. People will be registered to vote whether or not they want to be registered. If individuals are on any public record, they will be automatically registered.
>
> Obviously a lot of illegal aliens have driver's licenses, and many get other government benefits. Quite a few have rap sheets. People's names and other identification information are frequently recorded differently across these different lists, which means that one could be registered a separate time for every slight variation in how their personal information is kept on file.
>
> The legislation is also expected to give felons the right to vote.

This may be their way of insulating themselves from the wrath of law-abiding voters. We're not out of the woods yet.

Scott Brown leads Martha Coakley by one point in MA Senate race

January 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here on the American Spectator. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The much-anticipated Public Policy Polling survey shows Republican Scott Brown leading Democrat Martha Coakley 48 percent to 47 percent in the Massachusetts special election campaign to replace the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. Republicans are more enthusiastic about turning out than Democrats by 66 percent to 48 percent; Brown leads among independents by 63 percent to 31 percent; Brown's favorability among unaffiliated voters is 70 percent. Independents oppose the Democratic health care plan 59 percent to 27 percent. Brown has a net favorable rating of 32 points.

The full poll results are here (pdf).

Unemployment rate among men aged 25-54 is 19.4%

January 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this post over at Dinocrat. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> According to an analysis done by TIME Magazine's Justin Fox, almost 20% of 25-54 year old men are unemployed today, a receord since the Bureau of Labor Statistics started keeping track of the data just after World War II. An unemployment rate of 20% among men in their prime is shocking. Absent the substantial government transfer payments today and the large labor force participation by women, the 20% male unemployment figure would be regarded as a national emergency.
>
> Rome is burning. And yet Congress and the administration fiddle with crooked healthcare deals, tomfoolery such as AGW, perverse nonsense like cap and trade, imaginary "green" jobs, the treating of enemy combatants as mere crooks, etc. — and their policies towards hostile powers are even more ill-informed and provocatively weak. It's hard to imagine a government more out of step with the people.

Here's the graph from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showing the decline since 1948. (H/T Time Magazine)

This is actually important to me, and something I am thinking a lot about. I have come to realize that marriage is really an incubator for passing on values to children that are often different from those of the state. Scholars like Stephen Baskerville and Jennifer Roback Morse have argued that the family is a buffer against the power and influence of the state. This is especially true for Christian men and women whose values are definitely *not* those of the secular leftist state. But where do families come from? How do they start?

In order to have a family, a man marries a woman who agrees with his worldview and values, and then they have children. It's the man's role to lead the family by protecting and providing for his wife and children. But that man needs a job so that he can have confidence that he can fulfill those responsibilities. The earning of money is what gives a man the respect and authority in the home so that he can lead his wife and children. Any challenge to the man's role as protector and provider diminishes his authority to lead.

Already, I am concerned about how the massive tax burden placed on working men causes them to have their authority whittled down, since the state confiscates much of a man's money and then provides services that he really should be providing himself. Often the services provided (abortion, etc.) are not compatible with Christianity at all! But this new statistic about 19.4% of men in their prime being unemployed is even worse, because now men are earning no money at all! How can they start a family with no income?

There really isn't much thought going on today about the problem of how to get men to marry and stay married. Instead, people are more focused on dealing with a variety of of grievances from victim groups. I've blogged before about the problems that men are having in the schools today, largely due to the application of feminist theory to education. No one seems to be concerned about whether men are doing well in school, and whether they are being raised in families with actual fathers, instead being raised by government subsidies.

I think that young people really need to stop and think about what they want out of life. There seems to be a tendency today among young people to think that relationships are about fun, and that it isn't necessary to be careful about your choice of mate because the government will always be there to take care of you if you get into trouble, (e.g. – unplanned pregnancy, abusive spouse, etc.). This must stop. We need to stop looking at the government as a substitute for making solid, long-term choices about sex and marriage.

At some point we are going to have to ask ourselves whether we are ready to abandon the family entirely and just substitute sperm donations and government checks for men. If the state is the source of money in a child-producing unit, then the state is the one who calls the tune about what the children will believe. And make no mistake – academics on the secular left are salivating at the thought of pushing their values onto the next generation of children. That is why they are hostile to voucher programs and private schools.

Related stories

Some stories from last year about just a few the problems men are facing.

- Discrimination in admissions, scholarships and government-funding (The Register)
- Men losing 78% of all jobs lost during the recession (Forbes)
- Discrimination in the schools (MercatorNet)

There are actually many other problems that men are facing that I could have brought up, but my focus today is on education and jobs. These are serious problems and they have serious consequences.

MUST-READ: How the media's secular bias affects their news coverage

January 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a magnificent post up at Big Journalism, Andrew Breitbart's new web site. (H/T ECM)

First, he talks about different journalists are from the rest of America:

> The modern secular newsroom lacks the ideological know-how to truly understand religion. Perhaps Terry Mattingly best exlplained the media's "diversity problem". According to Mattingly, "While there's been heavy gender and racial diversity … there's a lack of cultural diversity in journalism…" It is this lack of diversity that leads to major misconceptions and the media's inability to adequately tell stories that are rooted, themselves, in religious themes.
>
> The lack of diversity may lie in the journalists themselves, as personal faith plays a role in the ability to understand and thus illustrate religious themes. Just how religious are journalists? According to USA Today, "the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press reported in 2007 that 8% of journalists surveyed at national media outlets said they attended church or synagogue weekly." Additionally, 29% reported never attending church services, with an additional 39% stating that they go a few times each year. In sum: Not very religious – especially when compared to America as a whole.

Later on, he talks about how rigid conformity to secular presuppositions creates bias:

> In covering the American Religious Identification Survey that was conducted in March 2009, the Pew Research Center wrote,
>
> "A comment on the blog Matters of Faith declared, "The media's tendency to give inordinate attention to religious dimwits and crackpots has seriously damaged the credibility of religious leaders. You rarely read or hear of the miraculously generous work of faith communities in caring for the poor and infirm around the globe. But let someone suggest that the Virgin Mary has appeared in a plate of refried beans and the bulletins circle the globe in minutes."
>
> This commentary targets one of the media's main malfunctions when it comes to covering religion in general and Christianity in particular. As is the case with most stories covered by the mainstream media, the more outlandish, the more the story is pursued. In practice, this creates a climate of coverage strewn with the "dimwits and crackpots" mentioned above, as journalists lack the understanding or desire to seek a wide array of theological viewpoints. Meanwhile, thousands of Christian missionaries risk their lives both domestically and internationally to make lasting spiritual and physical change in the lives of those in need. Yet their stories go widely unnoticed.

Here is an example of news coverage that you will never see in the mainstream news.

The secular leftist media will run stories about Sarah Palin's children, and the Duke Lacrosse non-rape, because even though the stories later turn out to be fraudulent, they want to *send the right message.* They view their work as propaganda designed to effect political change. And I think it is sometimes useful to reflect on the story in the video above and ask why such stories are not covered. And the answer is because the media doesn't tell people about news that doesn't fit their rigid ideological stereotypes.

I was chatting with ECM about this post, and he informed me about *The New Yorker's* movie critic Pauline Kael, who was surprised by Republicans' 49-state landslide victory in the 1972 federal election.

She said:

"How could that be? I don't know a single person who voted for Nixon."

And that's the news media today. They are not informed about views different from their own. They do not question their own fundamentalist assumptions by seeking out debates. Everything they need to know about religious people they learned from watching "Inherit the Wind" and "Jesus Camp" and such propaganda that allows them to demonize anyone who disagrees with their worldview. You would think that their ignorance of the best arguments on the other side would make them cautious, but it doesn't.

What are the consequencs of treating terrorism as a law enforcement issue?

January 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Telegraph. (H/T Weasel Zippers via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The chance to secure crucial information about al-Qaeda operations in Yemen was lost because the Obama administration decided to charge and prosecute Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab as an ordinary criminal, critics say. He is said to have reduced his co-operation with FBI interrogators on the advice of his government-appointed defence counsel.
>
> […]"He was singing like a canary, then we charged him in civilian proceedings, he got a lawyer and shut up," Slade Gorton, a member of the 9/11 Commission that investigated the Sept 2001 terror attacks on the US, told *The Sunday Telegraph*.
>
> […]Abdulmutallab could have been held and interrogated in military custody under existing US legislation before a decision was taken whether to charge him before a military tribunal or a civilian court, according to Michael Mukasey, the last Attorney General under President George W Bush.
>
> Mr Mukasey argues that it was crucial to gain intelligence from him immediately as details about locations, names and other plots is subject to rapid change. For the same reason, he dismissed the argument by John Brennan, Mr Obama's chief counter-terrorism adviser, that investigators will garner valuable data during any plea-bargaining talks.

Democrats are not serious about counter-terrorism.

Related posts

- Are Democrats fixing national security or fixing the blame on others?
- Homeland security chair says Swedish grandmothers just as likely to be terrorists
- Homeland Security head says that "the system worked"
- Terrorist's father warned US Embassy of son's extremist views
- Navy SEALs face assault charges from Iraqi terrorist they captured
- What is Obama working on instead of making Americans safer?
- Is waterboarding really torture? Does it enhance our national security?
- Why does President Pantywaist hate America so badly?

UK woman warned for brandishing kitchen knife at trespassers

January 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These are both from ECM.

Self-defense and justified violence

Consider this story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Miss Klass, a model for Marks & Spencer and a former singer with the pop group Hear'Say, was in her kitchen in the early hours of Friday when she saw two teenagers behaving suspiciously in her garden.
>
> The youths approached the kitchen window, before attempting to break into her garden shed, prompting Miss Klass to wave a kitchen knife to scare them away.
>
> Miss Klass, 31, who was alone in her house in Potters Bar, Herts, with her two-year-old daughter, Ava, called the police. When they arrived at her house they informed her that she should not have used a knife to scare off the youths because carrying an "offensive weapon" – even in her own home – was illegal.
>
> Jonathan Shalit, Miss Klass's agent, said that had been "shaken and utterly terrified" by the incident and was stepping up security at the house she shares with her fiancé, Graham Quinn, who was away on business at the time.
>
> He said: "Myleene was aghast when she was told that the law did not allow her to defend herself in her own home. All she did was scream loudly and wave the knife to try and frighten them off.

This happens all the time in the feminized UK. They think that violence is never justified, and that criminals are actually the victims of social inequalities. And since criminals aren't responsible, it's wrong for home-owners to stop them from committing crimes. This is just another example of the secular left's view that there is no objective right and wrong, and that morality is relative. It's not wrong to steal, they say – what's wrong is to think that you have a right to own your own private property. Permitting the theft of your property is like – *sharing*.

A previous post I wrote explains how weapon ownership by law-abiding citizens *deters crime.*

Liberty and personal responsibility

Consider this story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Heavy snow, low temperatures and a lack of gritting mean pavements throughout the country are too slippery to walk on safely. Hospitals have been

> struggling to cope with rising numbers of patients who have broken bones after falling on icy paths.
>
> Yet the professional body that represents health and safety experts has issued a warning to businesses not to grit public paths – despite the fact that Britain is in the grip of its coldest winter for nearly half a century.
>
> Under current legislation, householders and companies open themselves up to legal action if they try to clear a public pavement outside their property. If they leave the path in a treacherous condition, they cannot be sued.

It’s like people in the UK think that British citizens are all young children to be controlled, so that they won’t hurt themselves or anyone else. I wonder where that attitude comes from? It certainly wasn’t there 50 years ago. What changed?

How secular leftists restrict free speech on college campuses

January 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This long article from Reason magazine is must reading. (H/T ECM)

The author, Greg Lukianoff, is the the president of FIRE (Foundation for individual Rights in Education).

Here are some of the scariest parts:

> Other codes promise a pain-free world, such as Texas Southern University's ban on attempting to cause "emotional," "mental," or "verbal harm," which includes "embarrassing, degrading or damaging information, *assumptions*, *implications*, [and] remarks" (emphasis added). The code at Texas A&M prohibits violating others' "rights" to "respect for personal feelings" and "freedom from indignity of any type."
>
> […]Fordham, for example, prohibits using any email message to "insult" or "embarrass," while Northeastern University tells students they may not send any message that "in the sole judgment of the University" is "annoying" or "offensive."
>
> […]The University of Idaho bans "communication" that is "insensitive." New York University prohibits "insulting, teasing, mocking, degrading, or ridiculing another person or group," as well as "inappropriate…comments, questions, [and] jokes." Davidson College's sexual harassment policy still prohibits the use of "patronizing remarks," including referring to an adult as "girl," "boy," "hunk," "doll," "honey," or "sweetie." It also bars "comments or inquiries about dating."
>
> […]Until 2007 Western Michigan University's harassment policy banned "sexism," which it defined as "the perception and treatment of any person, not as an individual, but as a member of a category based on sex." I am unfamiliar with any other attempt by a public institution to ban a *perception*, let alone perceiving that a person is a man or woman. Even public restrooms violate this rule, which may help explain why the university finally abandoned it.
>
> […]In fall 2008, a professor at Central Connecticut State University called the police on students who gave a presentation in his speech class arguing for the safety value of concealed carry.

And the conclusion is worth citing in full:

> With all these examples of authoritarian bullying and systemic miseducation about rights, we shouldn't be surprised to discover that students are learning not only to accept censorship but to censor each other. Just before I completed this article, more than 10,000 copies of the official student newspaper for the

> University of Arizona were stolen and dumped by students who were upset about an article.
>
> Newspaper theft is common on college campuses, with the most chilling examples culminating in public burnings. Students have burned other students' newspapers at schools as prestigious as Cornell, Boston College, Dartmouth, and the University of Wisconsin. In 2008 multiple incidents were reported in which students destroyed pro-life students' protest displays, including an incident at Missouri State University in which students smashed dozens of Popsicle-stick crosses and another at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in which a member of the student government tore up the crosses one by one in broad daylight. His defense: "Since [abortion] is a right, you don't have the right to challenge it."
>
> When students come to believe that censoring rival points of view is not only permissible but laudable, the potential damage goes far beyond campus. Our colleges and universities produce our scientists, our business leaders, our lawyers, and our legislators. The habits formed in college inevitably seep into the other major social institutions.
>
> In 1957 the U.S. Supreme Court said of the nation's colleges, "Teachers and students must always remain free to inquire, to study and to evaluate, to gain new maturity and understanding; otherwise our civilization will stagnate and die." The Court was right. The next generation needs to learn the practices of a free people. If it doesn't, we shouldn't be surprised if, when it takes its turn to run our republic, values such as free speech and tolerance are treated like rusty, battered antiques: quaint, mysterious, and best kept in the basement.

FIRE is an important organization that I respect, and you should know about their work.

Jennifer Roback Morse explains the California lawsuit against Prop 8

January 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great post by the admirable Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse on MercatorNet. (H/T RuthBlog)

Excerpt:

> California's high-profile federal lawsuit against Proposition 8, which begins in court on January 11, appears to be about creating a federal case for same sex marriage. But in fact, much more is at stake. Lurking in the shadows of this case is a breathtaking expansion of judicial interference with perfectly valid elections. Whatever your views about Proposition 8, we surely should be able to agree that special interest groups can't go into court to overturn elections they don't like.
>
> Ted Olsen and David Boies want to convince the court that the alleged anti-gay bias of Proposition 8 supporters should invalidate the election. But first, they have to find some such bias. This is why Olsen and Boies sought the trial court's permission to demand confidential campaign documents. They want free reign to rummage around through the Prop 8 campaign's computers and filing cabinets, looking for evidence of this supposed meanness. The trial judge had ruled that Prop 8 proponents had no First Amendment privilege, and therefore had to hand over all communications among members of the campaign and their contractors.
>
> […]The motives of the seven million Californians who voted Yes on 8 are irrelevant. The election was about adding 14 words to the California Constitution. The entire state of California knew perfectly well what those words were. The point of the campaign was to discuss the likely impact of those words. Olsen and Boies don't like what the voters decided. Sorry. Self-government is about abiding by the results of lawful elections, whether you like the outcome or not.

And here is an op-ed by former Attorney General Ed Meese III in the New York Times. (H/T The Corner)

Excerpt:

> Most troubling, Judge Walker has also ruled that the trial will investigate the Proposition 8 sponsors' personal beliefs regarding marriage and sexuality. No doubt, the plaintiffs will aggressively exploit this opportunity to assert that the sponsors exhibited bigotry toward homosexuals, or that religious views motivated the adoption of Proposition 8. They'll argue that prohibiting gay marriage is akin to racial discrimination.
>
> To top it all off, Judge Walker has determined that this case will be the first in the Ninth Circuit to allow cameras in the courtroom, with the proceedings posted on YouTube. This will expose supporters of Proposition 8 who appear in the courtroom to the type of vandalism, harassment and bullying attacks already

> used by some of those who oppose the proposition.

The tolerance of the secular left. I hope some of my readers who believe in marriage are going to law school – and I want straight As on your transcripts, but keep a low profile! I recommend writing under a pseudonym, because the other side will go after anything you write to discredit you. Think about it.

My previous post about the threats and violence against Prop 8 supporters. And another post explains why prop 8 supporters favor traditional marriage.

By the way, comments on this post will be strictly moderated in order to respect Obama's hate crimes law.

Should you reject the Biblical view of Hell based on emotions?

January 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed this post up at Dr. Glenn Peoples' blog.

In the post, he quotes a number of prominent Christian theologians who affirm a belief in Hell, such as Tertullian, Thomas Aquinas, Jonathan Edwards and Isaac Watts. He chooses these people to quote because they seem to argue that the bliss of those who enter Heaven will be enhanced by seeing the suffering of those who are in Hell. I'm not going to cite the lurid passages he does, but I did want to cite his conclusion for you to comment on.

He writes:

> But modern believers in eternal torment wouldn't endorse this, would they? Would they actually endorse a theology of hell in which we sit and watch millions of people, including our lost children and friends, actually being tortured in fire – and would they agree that we will gain happiness and pleasure from the sight?

Glenn holds to the view of annihilationism, such that the damned are annihiliated after being punished.

Now let me just state right off that I have no knowledge of whether I am going to be happy seeing the damned in Hell, that's not in the Bible, and I have no idea what Heaven will be like.

Now let me briefly provide one or two reasons why I believe in Hell, BASED ON MY EXPERIENCES with non-Christians.

1. Jesus talks about Hell in the Bible as a real place
2. Jesus taught that the greatest commandment is to love God
3. No one desires God and no one wants to be bound by a love relationship with God
4. Each person is responsible for accepting or rejecting God
5. People who rebel against God hold to a worldview that is irrational and unsupported by evidence
6. I have more sympathy for God than I do for people who reject him

My view of Hell is based on my preference for the plain meaning of the Bible over my emotional desires, and my experiences dealing directly with non-Christians during evangelism. I think that annihilationists are just not willing to sit down with non-Christians and ask them why they are not ready to become a Christian. When I do that, I find that non-Christians 1) reject the moral demands of Christianity, 2) justify that selfishness by believing in speculations that make Christianity seem false, and 3) refuse to test those speculations logically or empirically.

Let me give you just one example from my undergraduate tour in university. I met a

Mormon friend whom I had known in high school who just returned from his missionary service. By that time, I had discovered apologetics in earnest, so I asked him a question: how do Mormons reconcile their belief in an eternal universe with the evidence for a creation out of nothing?

He replied “we don’t determine our beliefs based on science”.

And I said, “that’s fine. Let me know if you ever get curious about what science says about God, and we can certainly talk about it”.

I keep non-Christians as friends as long as I am able to be myself, and talk about what I believe occasionally. (Although I oppose pursuing amusement and pleasure for its own sake).

Once you have enough encounters like this with atheists, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, etc. you begin to realize that *no one* wants to talk about whether God exists and what he is really like. No one is looking for an answer to their speculations against Christianity, e.g. – “who made God?”. They just want to get their degrees, get good-paying jobs, and be left alone to pursue pleasure. Some do turn to non-Christian religions and fads of their own choosing, but those are embraced as a means to increased happiness.

My non-Christian male friends are happy to spend their entire lives climbing corporate ladders, chasing women, following sports, drinking, buying geeky junk, and playing video games, etc., rather than setting aside a measly 90 minutes to watch a debate on whether God exists. I actually did a survey of non-Christians a while back, and you can read about their worldviews. Notice how there is *no search for truth there.* Just a desire for autonomy from any authority that might block their hedonism. It’s really quite in-your-face!

Implicit in any rejection of God is the rejection of Christ’s sacrifice of his own life in place of the life of each sinner. You don’t just walk away from a sacrifice like that. I understand that people have questions about the fairness of the requirement to explicitly confess faith in Christ in order to be reconciled with God, or the problems of evil and suffering, or religious pluralism. But we have answers to those questions. The problem is that non-Christians are not sincere in their desire to find those answers.

What do you expect God to do with such people? This is GOD we are talking about here, people. Not Santa Claus! When I hear people talking about annihilationism, it really makes me wonder whether they read the Bible *at all* (e.g. – Romans 1), and then bothered themselves to actually test and see if the Bible is correct about its diagnosis of human nature as inherently sinful. In my opinion, what is happening here is that Christians who reject Hell prefer their own emotional desires for the plain meaning of the Bible.

Everyone has to choose whether they sympathize with God or with people who rebel against God. And don’t dismiss me as a meany. My non-Christians friends are the only ones who know whether I treat them well. *They* are the ones who will have to judge for themselves whether I show love for them by what I do, regardless of my view of Hell. I trust that anyone who knows me personally will accept my apologies to them for expressing my views so harshly, but I think the Bible is clear on this.

UPDATE: Glenn has written to me to assure me that he is not taking his position for any other reason than because he thinks the Bible teaches annihilationism. So, I thought I had better add that here so no one would think ill of him. He has other material on his blog where he makes the Biblical case that I had not looked at.

Related posts

- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

MUST-READ: Why our schools are failing boys

January 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Excerpt:

> According to the federal department of human resources and skills development, 18 per cent of young men 18-24 were in university in 2005-06. The equivalent figure for young women was 28 per cent.
>
> At the same time, the high school dropout rate for male students has remained consistently higher in recent decades than that for girls, another indicator that our education system is failing our boys.
>
> […]I am blaming "the system" for this because we shouldn't be blaming young male students for the difficulties they face in what is arguably an increasingly female-programmed educational culture.
>
> […]"Classrooms keep getting set up more and more around the verbal and less around the kinesthetic and active," says Michael Gurian author of *Boys and Girls Learn Differently*. "They are increasingly becoming environments that favour the girls' brain."
>
> And as enticing as the notion may be to some radical feminists, we simply cannot re-engineer the male brain. From a teacher's perspective, at least, boys and girls are simply different.
>
> […]In fiction, they like text that is funny and they like material with action and description. They also seem to like to solve problems.
>
> So why do we not treat this male brain as a springboard from which we can set the groundwork for a new generation of male scientists, engineers, teachers, journalists and businessmen? As a change from our current one-size-fits-all approach.

Please, read the whole thing. This is a news story in the state-run media of a secular Marxist-feminist welfare state, people. HOLY. SNARK.

(Actually, CBC is less crappy than other state-run media like NPR, BBC and ABC – just look at this recent CBC article by Rex Murphy that ECM sent me about Harper's decision to prorogue the Parliament)

Related posts

- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- American university gender gap: 57% female, 43% male
- Women dominate the classroom, so why are they so unhappy?

Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint

January 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNN reports that Chavez has devalued the Venezuelan bolivar.

> In the wake of his decision to devalue Venezuela's currency, President Hugo Chavez on Sunday said he would put the military on the streets to ensure that business owners don't raise prices.
>
> Speaking on his weekly television program, "Alo Presidente," Chavez railed against merchants who re-price their items in reaction to Friday's announcement that the Venezuelan bolivar currency, which had been fixed at 2.15 to the U.S. dollar since 2005, was devalued to 4.3 to the dollar. For food and medicine, Chavez announced a second fixed exchange rate for these "necessity" goods at 2.6 bolivares to the dollar.
>
> "I want the national guard in the streets, with the people, to fight speculation," Chavez said, calling re-pricing a form of robbery.
>
> […]He encouraged people to publicly denounce businesses where prices increase and threatened to expropriate businesses that do.
>
> The government would transfer ownership of such businesses to the workers, Chavez said.

Yes, attacking and nationalizing businesses with the Venezuelan army will do a lot to create jobs and increase competition among product and service providers. Surely lower prices and increased quality will result from this consumer-friendly policy. And foreign investors will be rushing to Venezuela to invest so they can take 700 million Euro losses in a split second.

Investors Business Daily explains the result of devaluing a currency.

> For starters, it's a tax. "The government has decided to recognize the massive accumulated inflation in the country and is trying to increase the purchasing power of the (dwindling) dollars it has . .. (by selling) dollars to the private sector at a higher price," explained Hausmann. "In the short run, this is like a tax on the sale of dollars."
>
> […]"The poor have no way to protect themselves from devaluation," said Johns Hopkins University's Steve Hanke, who has advised previous Venezuelan leaders about currency. "Their only means are awkward and inefficient."
>
> Meanwhile, the "tax" on dollars "means a transfer of resources out of the private economy to the government's coffers," said Hausmann. "As a consequence, the rest of society will have less income."
>
> Teachers and doctors, already in short supply among the poor, will likely be hard

> hit, along with small businesses.
>
> Worse, inflation's likely to surge, another burden for the poor.
>
> Inflation was already on its way to 30% before Friday's devaluation. Food, which makes up 80% of what the poor buy, has been hit with a 20% immediate increase in price. This effectively lifts inflation for the poor to a devastating 50%.
>
> Costs for other goods, such as car tires, will rise by 100%. A banker in Caracas tells IBD this will push average inflation to 60% — adding to accumulated inflation of 600% over the past decade, a brutal tax on poor Venezuelans.
>
> The very complexity of the new currency scheme will be a nightmare for the poor, says Hanke.
>
> "More regulations will lead to repression," he said, citing the weakening freedom to spend money. More controls mean shortages.

I think that people who elect communists like Chavez need to be more careful about listening to honeyed words about the benefits of wealth redistribution. When you attack the rich, *they stop hiring workers.* And if you attack them enough, *they leave your country*. Communism causes poverty and famine. It always has, and always will. If you want to know where it ends, look at Cuba and North Korea. That's where Venezuela is headed.

More on this story from Fausta here and here. ECM sent an article about scheduled blackouts here.

Is Obama any different from Chavez on economic policy?

Here they are shaking hands:

Is there such a thing as a secret handshake for communist dictators? Just asking. Not saying that Chavez or Obama are communist dictators. Just wondering if communist dictators have a secret handshake. A communist dictator handshake conducted by communist dictators to congratulate themselves on how well their ignorance of economics "helps" the poor to starve to death.

Here is the currency graph of the US dollar versus the Canadian dollar. A decline of about 20% in 12 months. (The current exchange rate is 1.03301)

How many Canadian dollars is 1 US dollar worth?

January	1.22664 CAD	(21 days average)
February	1.24684 CAD	(20 days average)
March	1.26275 CAD	(22 days average)
April	1.22697 CAD	(21 days average)
May	1.15311 CAD	(21 days average)
June	1.12458 CAD	(22 days average)
July	1.12350 CAD	(23 days average)
August	1.08796 CAD	(21 days average)
September	1.08182 CAD	(22 days average)
October	1.05427 CAD	(22 days average)
November	1.05978 CAD	(21 days average)
December	1.05366 CAD	(22 days average)

I wonder which one knows the least about economics. Chavez? Obama? Or my keyboard? Hmmmmn.

Here is my previous story about energy rationing in Venezuela.

What are the consequences of insuring customers with pre-existing conditions?

January 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams
Investors Business Daily

What would happen if Obama succeeds in passing a law to force insurance companies to accept customers with pre-existing conditions at the same price as everyone else who doesn't have pre-existing conditions?

Read this IBD editorial by George Mason University economist Walter Williams. (my second favorite economist)

Excerpt:

> Sen. John Rockefeller, D-W.Va., chairman of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health Care, and Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., a member of the House Education and Labor Committee, have introduced the Pre-existing Condition Patient Protection Act, which would eliminate pre-existing condition exclusions in all insurance markets. That's an Obama administration priority.
>
> I wonder whether President Obama and his congressional supporters would go a step further and protect not just patients, but everyone against pre-existing condition exclusions by insurance companies. Let's look at the benefits of such a law.
>
> A person might save quite a bit of money on fire insurance. He could wait until his home is ablaze and then walk into Nationwide and say, "Sell me a fire insurance policy so I can have my house repaired." The Nationwide salesman says, "That's lunacy!" But the person replies, "Congress says you cannot deny me insurance because of a pre-existing condition."
>
> This mandate against insurance company discrimination would not only apply to home insurance, but auto insurance and life insurance as well. Instead of a wife

> wasting money on costly life insurance premiums, she could spend that money on jewelry, cosmetics and massages and then wait until her husband kicked the bucket to buy life insurance on him.
>
> Insurance companies don't stay in business and prosper by being stupid. If Congress were to enact a law eliminating pre-existing condition exclusions, what might be expected?

Yeah, that's why Walter Williams is awesome. And you must read the rest to see how it would apply to medical insurance. Everything sounds good to those who do not ask the most important question in economics: *"and then what happens?"* And that question cannot be answered with "then I feel good about myself and people like me because I care about the poor". That question needs to be asked for the forgotten man. The nameless man who is hog-tied into supplying the wealth that gets redistributed by demagogues desperately seeking adulation from the covetous masses.

The problem is that people don't understand how insurance works. If you have to pay guaranteed claims from people with pre-existing conditions, then the premiums of all those people who don't have pre-existing conditions will be *increased* to pay for those claims. Think. Beyond. Stage. One.

The Cato Institute

Consider this podcast from the libertarian Cato Institute, which explains a little more from the point of view of the medical insurance company.

The MP3 file is here.

Here a summary of what happens after stage one, to *the forgotten man*. Medical care costs money to produce. Forcing medical insurance companies to sell care for a pre-existing condition *far below* the actual cost of providing it will force insurers to drop coverage for those pre-existing conditions. (Or they may drop the doctors who treat those conditions from their network). That is *worse* for the people with pre-existing conditions. And this is how economic ignorance hurts the very people that the secular leftist do-gooders are trying to help.

Believe me when I tell you that this happens *all the time* with leftist economic policies. It's the law of unintended consequences. They think they are helping their preferred victims, they feel better about themselves, but they actually hurt the very people they are trying to help. And by "help" I mean they steal someone else's money/product/liberty and transfer it to their preferred victims in order to buy votes.

National Review

Now, take a look at this article that ECM sent me from National Review, which talks about Obama's promise that you will be able to keep the medical coverage you have. Is Obama telling the truth? Can pigs really fly just by sheer belief and pixie dust?

Excerpt:

> Obamacare would forbid insurers from basing rates on the individual health of

> their customers in any community. It also would force issuers to cover people who refuse to buy insurance until they get sick. These and Obamacare's other complexities and contradictions would make insurance pricier, as would a $149.1 billion, 40 percent excise tax on high-value "Cadillac plans." Thus, some employers would save money by paying fines after de-insuring employees. Workers who cherish their health plans then would find themselves dumped into the government-run Health Insurance Exchange.
>
> "Some smaller employers would be inclined to terminate their existing coverage," explained a December 10 memorandum by Medicare's chief actuary, Richard S. Foster. He added: "The per-worker penalties assessed on non-participating employers are very low compared to prevailing health insurance costs. As a result, the penalties would not be a significant deterrent to dropping or foregoing coverage. We estimate such actions would collectively reduce the number of people with employer-sponsored health coverage by about 17 million."
>
> Even more ominously, Obamacare would require employers to provide federally approved coverage. Obama considers "meaningful" plans those at least as generous as the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.
>
> "Obama's definition of 'meaningful' coverage could eliminate the health plans that now cover as many as half of the 159 million Americans with employer-sponsored insurance, plus more than half of the roughly 18 million Americans in the individual market," says Cato Institute policy analyst Michael Cannon. "This could compel close to 90 million Americans to switch to more comprehensive health plans with higher premiums, whether they value the added coverage or not."

It's not *just* elective abortions that we're going to be paying for whether we want them or not. In some countries with socialized health care you can pay for breast enlargements (UK), sex changes (Canada), in vitro fertilization (Canada), etc. And these elective surgeries take up money from the other vital services. Obama can make it such that *every plan* has to offer those coverages.

So, those who don't use such elective services end up encouraging them, even if they have moral objections to those services. When the government subsidizes something, more people choose it. Won't Planned Parenthood be pleased with all that new revenue? I'm sure they'll think of something to do with all that money. Maybe a nice political donation?

Does the Bible teach that all sins are equally bad?

January 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a neat post by Bill Pratt over at Tough Questions Answered.

Excerpt:

> But what about the Bible? Is there support for the view that all sins are not equal in Holy Scripture? Yes, actually there is.
>
> Let's look at the words of Jesus. In Matt. 23:23, Jesus scolds the Pharisees for neglecting "the *more important* matters of the law." If there are more important matters of the law, than there are less important matters of the law, and thus a moral law hierarchy.
>
> In Matt. 5:19 Jesus refers to breaking the "least of these commandments," again indicating a hierarchy.
>
> In Matt. 22:34-40, an expert in the law asks Jesus about the *greatest* commandment. Jesus' response isn't, "Silly man! All of the laws are equal!" No, he tells him that the greatest command is to love God and the second greatest command is to love your neighbor. Clearly the man who loves his neighbor but does not love God is committing the greater sin. God comes first.
>
> In John 19:11, Jesus tells Pilate that "the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a *greater sin*." If there is a greater sin, then there must be lesser sins.
>
> What about the apostle Paul? He says in 1 Cor. 13:13 that the *greatest* virtue is love. If there is a greatest virtue, then there must be lesser virtues. Paul also tells Timothy in 1 Tim. 1:15 that Paul is the *worst sinner*. But if all sins are equal, then there can be no worst sinner.
>
> In 1 John, the apostle John informs us that there is sin that leads to death, and other sins that do not lead to death. Clearly some sins are worse than others.

Bill says that part 2 of this 2 part series comes out today!

My own view of this problem is that definitely any one sin will damn you to Hell for eternity, because the standard is perfection. And since *no one* can be perfect, we *all* need to have some means of avoiding the penalty for our own sins. Now the people who don't accept this offer of redemption are going to be on the hook for all their own sins, but they are not all going to be punished with equal severity. The duration of the punishment is the same for all, but the intensity of the punishment will vary based on the specific sins that each person committed.

Related posts

- Should you reject the Biblical notion of Hell based on emotions?
- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

Obamacare slaps $15,000 annual fee on middle-class families

January 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Human Events. (H/T DoublePlusUndead via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Fact 5: Your family insurance plan — if your employer drops your coverage and you are forced to buy it on your own — will cost about $15,000 per year when the legislation is in full force in 2016.
>
> Page 19 of the CBO letter to Reid says the average premiums for insurance plans under the final version of the bill should be "quite similar" to the estimates the CBO and Joint Committee on Taxation made in a Nov. 30 letter to Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind.: "Although CBO and JCT have not updated the estimates provided in that letter, the effects on premiums of the legislation incorporating the manager's amendment would probably be quite similar." Page 6 of the CBO's letter to Bayh said: "Average premiums per policy in the nongroup market in 2016 would be roughly $5,800 for single policies and $15,200 for family policies under the proposal."
>
> The Senate health care bill gives employers two powerful incentives to stop offering health insurance coverage to their workers. First, if an employer does offer coverage, its lower-wage workers will lose the federal insurance subsidy they would otherwise get. Secondly, if an employer does not offer coverage, the $750-per-worker fine it faces will be far less than the premiums it would pay if it did offer coverage.
>
> Where does this leave a mom and dad with two children and an annual income greater than $88,200? It leaves them without employer-based health insurance and facing a federally mandated $15,000-per-year insurance bill.

Because $90,000 is too much money for a family to make – Obama likes to spread the wealth around. And the people who vote for him are happy to get that wealth spread to them.

Assessing Martha Coakley's fitness for the MA Senate seat

January 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this disturbing article from CNN. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Democrat Martha Coakley dodged a pointed question Tuesday about her claim during a Massachusetts Senate debate the night before that terrorists are no longer in Afghanistan.
>
> During Monday's debate with Republican Scott Brown, Coakley questioned why the United States still has troops in Afghanistan. She claimed that the al Qaeda terrorists who were originally targeted by American military action have migrated elsewhere, rendering the mission moot. "They're gone," she said. "They're not there anymore. They're in, apparently Yemen, they're in Pakistan."
>
> A reporter asked Coakley about that claim after a Capitol Hill fundraiser on Tuesday. "Do you stand by that remark?" he asked.
>
> Coakely, standing before a small cluster of reporters and cameras, listened to the question, then quickly looked in a different direction.
>
> "I'm sorry," she said. "Did anybody else have a question?"

This is *not* the way that you deal with criticism and honest questions from reporters. It's very dismissive of opposing views on a matter of tremendous importance to our national security. The right thing to do is apologize and admit you made a mistake, then move on to the next question.

Now consider another story from Politico.

Excerpt:

> Last year, Coakley chose to personally argue her state's case before the Supreme Court in Melendez-Diaz v. Massachusetts. Despite the recent headlines detailing forensic mishaps, fraudulent testimony and crime lab incompetence, Coakley argued that requiring crime lab technicians to be present at trial for questioning by defense attorneys would place too large a burden on prosecutors.
>
> Coakley has made her reputation as a law-and-order prosecutor. More troubling, she's shown a tendency to aggressively push the limits of the law in high-profile cases and an unwillingness to cop to mistakes — be they her own or those of other prosecutors.
>
> […]In the 1980s, Violet Amirault and her children, Gerald Amirault and Cheryl Amirault LeFave, were convicted of sexually abusing several children at their day care facility. The cases came at the height of the 1980s sex abuse panic, leading to false convictions across the country based on improper questioning of

> children, mass hysteria about sex abuse and Satan worship, and bogus "recovered-memory" psychotherapy. Coakley didn't prosecute the Amiraults; her former boss Scott Harshbarger did. But the case against the family began to come apart during her tenure as district attorney. Despite a parole board's 5-0 recommendation to grant Gerald Amirault clemency and mounting doubts about the evidence against him, Coakley publicly and aggressively lobbied then-Gov. Jane Swift to deny Amirault relief. Amirault remained in prison.

She seems to be incapable of admitting to anything that might put her in a bad light. She is so desperate to push an image, that she thinks that it is a waste of her time to listen to people who question her. This denial of reality and lack of humility seems to me to make her a bad choice for the Senate seat.

Doug Flutie endorses Scott Brown

In other news:

Interesting. I'm sure my Canadian readers will all recognize the greatest player to ever play in the Canadian Football League.

MUST-READ: How divorce courts destroy the lives of fathers and children

January 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this story from the Herald Sun in Australia.

Excerpt:

> A mother found by the Family Court to be violent, untruthful, lacking moral values and responsible for the psychological and emotional abuse of her children has been given custody of them.
>
> The father, deemed "principled" and with "much to offer his children", has been effectively banned from seeing his daughters.
>
> […]The father… is described by a Family Court judge as no threat to his daughters, a successful parent who is "courteous" and "intelligent".
>
> The same judge found the mother… abandoned her first daughter at two and spurned the child's subsequent attempts at reconciliation, had displayed "dreadful", "cruel" and "malicious" behaviour.
>
> But the judge still ruled that because of time spent apart, the children had become estranged from their father and it was in their interests that "the children spend no time with the father".

Time spent apart? Why would a loving father willingly spend time apart from his own children?

> Bill has not seen his daughters since April and has not spent extended time with them since August 2005.
>
> He says the estrangement was largely a result of false allegations of sexual abuse of the children made against him by his former wife.
>
> The custody ruling in the Family Court last month came after a seven-year battle over access to the girls, now aged nine and 11.
>
> It followed a criminal trial in 2007, when Bill, 55, was cleared of the sexual abuse allegations. The trial judge found them totally false and threw the case out.
>
> The ordeal has cost Bill his home, his job and about $450,000 in lost income and legal costs. He has faced court 70 times to clear his name and try for some form of access to his children.
>
> "It has been a nightmare. All I wanted was to be part of my children's lives – to try to give them a good start in life," Bill said.
>
> "But I am denied that because of the malicious way in which my ex-wife has acted and because of the credence the legal system has given her lies and falsehoods.

> "The family law system needs wholesale change. There appears to be no testing of evidence in court and it seems that often lies and fabrications are immediately accepted as fact.
>
> "It's a disgrace and, as far as I know, it doesn't happen in any other legal sphere."
>
> Bill's case follows the case of "Steve" last year, in which the court accepted his good character, but banned him from seeing his daughter for seven years because it was believed the mother would "shut down" emotionally if he were allowed to see her.
>
> In another case last year, a father, "Mick", was jailed for sending a birthday card to his daughter in breach of a court order and was locked up again for taking a walk in a park – near where, unknown to him, his daughter was playing.

False allegations of sexual abuse are standard operating procedure in divorce courts in order to get custody of the children, and the child support payments that go with the children. The legal stakeholders in the divorce racket have every reason to help to the woman to make these false charges, because the father usually fights for custody, which is what keeps them all employed.

Further study

To find out more about the horrors of feminism and unilateral divorce, consider reading something by Stephen Baskerville and something by Jennifer Roback Morse. This podcast by Jennifer Roback Morse explains some of the threats to traditional marriage – it's my favorite podcast *ever*. Women need to do a better job of understanding men, and understanding what has to change to make marriage attractive and appealing to men. That may involve changing laws to make these unfair divorce courts stop doing what they are doing.

One last thing. Most of my readers know that I am chaste, and so I have never been married or divorced. My parents are have been married for 40+ years. None of my immediate family is divorced. And none of my Christian friends are divorced. In fact, I have never experienced a divorce even vicariously by being friends with someone who was going through a divorce. And the point of this is to show you how Christians can become sensitive to an issue just by studying it. And this is what marriage-minded Christians need to do.

Christians need to study to understand the many serious problems that divorce causes for men and children. We should understand how marriage acts as a buffer to state power, thus protecting religious liberty. We should know how feminist policies weaken marriage and parenting. And we should understand how a stable marriage benefits children, and ultimately, society. When Christians inform themselves about these issues, it becomes easier to put ourselves second and act to preserve the marriage. Knowledge binds the will.

Neil Simpson stole all of the stories that I was going to blog about

January 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Now what am I supposed to do?

You can read a bunch of the stories I was going to write about here in Neil Simpson's round-up posted on Neil's blog by Neil, (along with some other stories of interest that I missed!).

What should I do instead of blogging, then?

Well, nothing for me to do now. (I write these posts the night before they go up and schedule them, so it's late Wednesday night right now)

I guess I'll go play King's Bounty: The Legend. (H/T ECM)

Here's the trailer:

That track is called "Glory Ride".

This week is "monitor my co-workers' worldviews" week, so I am taking all my co-workers out for one-on-one lunches to monitor their worldviews, with a different co-worker every day this week. Today's atheist and I discussed religious pluralism and Brit Hume's evangelism. I pick the best people to have as non-Christian friends – every one is solid and engaging. I wish you all could see how much fun they are to talk to. *Way* more fun than the typical Christian you meet in church after the service!

Anyway, while walking up to my office after the lunch, I was humming the "Glory Ride" theme from King's Bounty, because having relationships with non-Christians and talking about controversial things is dangerous and heroic, . If we had more Christians who could be friends with the people who are causing all these problems in high places, we would not be in this mess. We just need to study harder so that we have the confidence to speak up and connect Christianity to the issues of the day, e.g. – Brit Hume and religious pluralism.

How do Afghans feel about the US military deployed in Afghanistan?

January 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Nearly seven out of 10 Afghans support the U.S. presence in their country, and 61% favor the president's military expansion there. Among congressional Democrats, the results would likely be reversed.
>
> ABC News, the BBC and ARD German TV announced their fifth survey of Afghan citizens since 2005. The national random sample of 1,534 Afghan adults between Dec. 11 and Dec. 23 shows a huge turnaround from last year — a 30% increase in favorability toward the American troop presence.
>
> The Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research in Kabul, part of Vienna, Va.-based D3 Systems Inc., conducted the field research.
>
> The poll also registered a new high in Afghans expecting to live improved lives a year from now: 71%, a 20-percentage-point jump from a year ago. Added to that, 61% think their children will enjoy life quality superior to their own — a 14% increase from last year.

Some people watch the movie "Avatar" and are taken in by disgusting and repulsive smears against the US military. And some people care about the way the world really is. The US military is a great force for good in the world, and we owe them our gratitude and respect.

Wouldn't it have been better for all concern if the money spent on making anti-military movies like Avatar had been spent helping the Afghan people? Oh – buy that's what the US military does. And they safeguard the very liberties that are abused by rich Hollywood filmmakers who insult them for doing so.

I never watch movies in the theaters, and I never rent them. If there is a movie made that reflects my values, then I buy the DVD. Usually that's one or two movies *per year*. Be careful with your money – there are more important things in life than entertainment. Like honor.

In Australia, non-birth parents can now be named on birth certificates

January 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This applies to Victoria, own the more liberal states in Australia.

Story here from the Herald Sun. (H/T Thoughts Out Loud)

Excerpt:

> Sweeping January 1 changes to the state's reproductive laws mean that non-birth parents can now be named on birth certificates.
>
> […]Other changes to the Assisted Reproductive Act included recognition of "social" as well as "medical" infertility, meaning single women, gays and lesbians can access IVF treatment or commission a surrogate.
>
> The new laws also mean children conceived using donors have the right to find out about their biological heritage once they turn 18.
>
> Victorian Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages spokeswoman Erin Keleher, said the department was delighted it can recognise rainbow families. "It's on the vanguard of social change," she said.

So the state is assigning parental rights to people who are not biologically related to the child. Is that fair to the child? Is it in the best interests of the child? Do same-sex relationships offer the same benefits to a child as an opposite-sex marriage with two parents biologically linked to the child?

I wrote about the research that answers that last question here.

Pro-life backlash against abortion in Mexico, South Korea and China

January 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mexico

Story from the Philadelphia Inquirer. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Abortion-rights activists dreamed of legislative victories across Mexico after its Supreme Court last year upheld a Mexico City law allowing abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. Instead, the opposite has happened. In state after state, antiabortion forces have won changes to local constitutions declaring that life begins at conception and explicitly granting legal rights to the unborn. In all, 17 state legislatures have approved such measures, often with minimal debate, since the August 2008 court decision validating Mexico City's law. The Gulf Coast state of Veracruz in November became the latest state to do so. Its measure also called on the Mexican Congress to consider a similar amendment to the nation's constitution.
>
> […]After the Mexico City rule was approved, lawmakers in many states "began to debate it and concluded that abortion goes against the rights of the person, against the woman," said Jorge Serrano Limon, who leads an antiabortion group called Pro Vida.
>
> The drive for stricter abortion laws has featured the Roman Catholic Church and the National Action Party of President Felipe Calderon. The party, known as the PAN, has a strong religious tilt and favors conservative social policies.

I'm a strong supporter of Felipe Calderon, especially his strong opposition to criminal gangs and unions. Good behavior doesn't just "happen", government needs to make sure that no law that is passed discourages people from working hard, following the rules and attending to their own families and communities.

South Korea

Story from Bio Edge. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> For perhaps the first time, South Korea is debating abortion, to the great discomfiture of its gynaecologists. Unlike the US and other Western countries, abortion has not been framed as a moral issue in Korea, despite the growing number of Christians. And with a vigorous government campaign to reduce the birth rate, the number of abortions annually is about 340,000. Yet paradoxically, nearly all of them are technically illegal. Abortion is only permitted when the mother's health is in serious danger, or in cases of rape, incest or severe

> hereditary disorders. All abortion over 24 weeks are illegal.
>
> The problem is that the government's campaign has been too successful. Liberal attitudes towards abortion have helped the South Korean birth rate to plunge to 1.19 children per woman. Now the government is desperate to boost it, lest the rapidly ageing population drag down the economy. President Lee Myung-bak has called for "bold" steps to increase the nation's birthrate. Amongst these, apparently, is a crack-down on illegal abortions. "Even if we don't intend to hold anyone accountable for all those illegal abortions in the past, we must crack down on them from now on," the minister for health, welfare and family affairs, Jeon Jae-hee, told the New York Times.
>
> The government is even sponsoring public service announcements and billboards. "With abortion, you are aborting the future," says one of them.

Totally apart from the moral argument against abortion, there is a prudential argument that has more force the more the state forces retired people to depend on younger workers for pensions and/or health care benefits.

China

Story from the UK Telegraph. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> More than 24 million Chinese men of marrying age could find themselves without spouses in 2020, with sex-specific abortions a major factor.
>
> A study by the government-backed Chinese Academy of Social Sciences named the gender imbalance among newborns as the most serious demographic problem for the country's population of 1.3 billion.
>
> "Sex-specific abortions remained extremely commonplace, especially in rural areas," where the cultural preference for boys over girls is strongest, the study said, noting the reasons for the gender imbalance were "complex".
>
> […]The study said the key contributing factors to the phenomenon included the nation's family-planning policy, which restricts the number of children citizens may have, as well as an insufficient social security system.
>
> The situation influenced people to seek male offspring, who are preferred for their greater earning potential as adults and thus their ability to care for their elderly parents.
>
> The *Global Times* said abductions and trafficking of women were "rampant" in areas with excess numbers of men, citing the National Population and Family Planning Commission.
>
> Illegal marriages and forced prostitution were also problems in those areas, it said.

More on this story here from LifeSiteNews. (H/T Andrew)

How Harriet Harman's Equality Bill will impact religious liberty

January 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What effect will Harriet Harman's new Equality Bill have on Christians?

Story from the UK Telegraph. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> A new report by the leading charity – backed by a legal opinion from a leading QC – says the Bill will make it impossible for all churches and faith-based charities to insist that their senior staff lead private lives in accordance with their religious beliefs.
>
> […]The report's author, Dr Daniel Boucher, said: "The Equality Bill is a direct assault on the freedom of all faith-based organisations, from churches to charities. This Bill will make it unlawful for those organisations to employ people who are committed to a particular set of religious beliefs.
>
> […]John Bowers QC said in a legal opinion for CARE that the Bill could make it unlawful for a church to require a priest or minister to be male, celibate and unmarried, or not in a civil partnership.
>
> Previous legislation in 2007, also backed by Ms Harman, the Commons Leader and equality minister, forced the closure of two Catholic adoption agencies for refusing to comply with new laws requiring them to place children with gay couples.

And:

> [The bill] has attracted criticism, particularly from businesses. It paves the way for 'gender pay audits' in large companies, obliging employers to disclose the average hourly pay they award male and female workers.
>
> […]If passed, the Bill could also oblige public sector bodies to consider the "gender balance" among employees of companies bidding for all government contracts.

My previous post on why people favor traditional marriage.

Comments will be strictly monitored in order to take Obama's hate crimes law into account.

California Senate minority leader launches probe of ID censorship

January 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> California Senate Minority Leader Dennis Hollingsworth has sent a letter to the California Science Center (CSC) requesting documents related to the Center's cancellation of a screening last October of the pro-intelligent design documentary "Darwin's Dilemma." The screening was sponsored by the American Freedom Alliance (AFA), a private group that had rented the Center's IMAX theater.
>
> Senator Hollingsworth's letter follows two lawsuits filed against the state government-operated Science Center charging that it violated both the First Amendment and California's open records law in its effort to stop the screening and then cover up the real story behind the cancellation.
>
> "The constitutional implications of [the Science Center's] actions are concerning" wrote Senator Hollingsworth in the letter, citing various court decisions protecting private parties against viewpoint discrimination. "It is fundamental that when a governmental entity or sub-unit (such as CSC) opens its facilities as a public forum, it is not constitutionally permissible to censor speech based on viewpoint or content."

Hide the decline, Darwin-style.

Lesbian Democrat legislator carrying baby for two gay men

January 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from UPI.

Excerpt:

> A 41-year-old lesbian Utah legislator is pregnant with a baby she says she is carrying for two gay men, the intended parents.
>
> Rep. Christine Johnson, D-Salt Lake, who has a 17-year-old daughter of her own with an ex-husband, is 16 weeks pregnant after have been inseminated with the sperm from one of the men, the Salt Lake Tribune reported Friday.
>
> "I can very much empathize with their desire to become parents and share their lives with and open their hearts to a child. I'm immeasurably grateful to be a mother," Johnson said.

A Democrat colleague has another idea:

> Johson's colleague, Rep. Rebecca Chavez-Houck, D-Salt Lake, a mother of two, said she is trying to get through a bill that would amend Utah adoption law allowing second-parent adoptions, in which a child's biological parent designates an unmarried partner to be the second, adoptive parent.

My previous post on why people favor traditional marriage.

Comments will be strictly monitored in order to take Obama's hate crimes law into account.

Coakley talks about illegal immigration in radio interview

January 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video from Verum Serum. (H/T Breitbart TV)

Her answer to a question about immigration reform:

> I think we need it. And I think we have for too long looked the other way. I think we've had a federal policy that doesn't make sense. I firmly believe that we need a good pathway to citizenship. And I know serving as district attorney we always paid attention to the person and not their status.

Her own words.

Coakley on Curt Schilling's endorsement of Scott Brown

From Ace: (H/T ECM)

She claims that Curt Schilling is a New York Yankees fan. A New York Yankees fan. *A New York Yankees fan*.

He helped the Boston Red Sox win the world series in 2004 for the first time since 1918!

Doug Flutie endorses Scott Brown

Doug Flutie? What has he every done for Boston except throw one lousy Hail Mary pass?

Polls

- The latest poll numbers are here. (H/T ECM)
- Previous polls are here at Hot Air.

Related posts

- Martha Coakley thinks that there are no Taliban left in Afghanistan

MUST-LISTEN: Audio of debate between Stephen Meyer and Peter Atkins

January 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Justin Brierley has put together an amazingly high-quality debate. I made a rough transcript, so please see below for that.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

Details:

> The documentary film "Expelled" is presented by US Actor Ben Stein and makes the case that scientists who question Darwinian orthodoxy and support Intelligent Design are being "expelled" from academia.
>
> As the UK edition of the DVD is released we ask "Is freedom of thought at stake or is Intelligent Design out of bounds when it comes to biological science?"
>
> Stephen C Meyer is co founder of the Discovery Institute in the USA and a major proponent of Intelligent Design.
>
> Peter Atkins is Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University and an outspoken atheist.
>
> They both feature in "Expelled" and join Justin to debate the pros and cons of Intelligent Design theory.
>
> Mark Haville who is bringing the film to the UK also joins the discussion.

Meyer's PhD is from Cambridge, and he has a wonderful new book called "Signature in the Cell". He explains intelligent design for beginners here in his CNN editorial.

Other stuff

- William Dembski debates Lewis Wolpert about intelligent design
- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Richard Dawkins agrees that there is no naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show

Learn more about intelligent design

- Fine-tuning of cosmological constants
- Galactic, stellar and planetary fine-tuning
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion
- The development of irreducibly complex molecular machines

My rough transcript of the Meyer-Atkins debate

Stephen Meyer:
– started researching on ID while doing his PhD at Cambridge
– the question is whether the information-bearing properties in DNA require a designer
– what cause is adequate to explain the digital code that in the simplest living cell
– alternative explanations like self-organization and RNA-first have failed
– so the best explanation for functional sequences of parts is an intelligent designer
– Darwinists have responded to this argument with insults and suppression of dissent

Peter Atkins:
– intelligent design is creationism
– there is no science at all in it
– information can emerge without an intelligent designer
– structures emerge spontaneously, no agent is needed to generate the structure
– information in DNA is also a structure

Stephen Meyer:
– structure and information are two different things
– many structures emerge spontaneously
– structure may be like the vortex that occurs when water goes down a drain

Peter Atkins:
– the vortex is information

Stephen Meyer:
– structures are different from functionally-specified digital information
– in DNA, there is a 4-digit alphabet that is used to create code sequences
– the thing to be explained is where do the functional sequences come from

Peter Atkins:
– information can grow without an agent
– the second law of thermodynamics
– the universe is falling into disorder
– but there are local abatements of chaos that create information
– evolution can cause the amount of information to grow

Stephen Meyer:
– that’s just an assertion
– I agree that energy flow through a system can produce spontaneous order
– but spontaneous order is not the same thing as information

Peter Atkins:
– spontaneous order is the same as information

Stephen Meyer:
– it’s not order that needs to be explained it’s specified complexity

Peter Atkins:
– what do you mean by specified complexity?

Stephen Meyer:

– the chemical bonds that connect to each letter do not determine the letter
– the chemical bonding sites will accept any letter as easily as any other
– any one of the 4 bases (letters) can attach at any place along the backbone

Peter Atkins:
– the selection of which letter comes next is determined by evolution

Stephen Meyer:
– that is just an assertion
– there is no physical process that sequences the letters to have a function

Peter Atkins:
– do you believe in evolution? YES OR NO!

Mark Haville:
– for him to answer the question you have to define the word
– do you mean macro or micro? biological or stellar? directed or undirected?

Peter Atkins:
– undirected molecules to man evolution by natural processes

Stephen Meyer:
– but even Dawkins doesn't believe in evolution then
– you're including the origin of life from non-living matter in evolution
– Dawkins says that there is no naturalistic explanation for that

Mark Haville:
– you need to define your terms

[They discuss of the movie Expelled and the case of Richard Sternberg]

Stephen Meyer:
– the problem is people don't want to talk about the science
– they denounce dissent as unscientific
– they will not debate about whther natural causes can explain the information
– I want to talk about the science

Peter Atkins:
– ID people raise interesting questions for naturalists to work on
– but you want to tell us what the answer is (intelligence) before we begin
– you start from the idea that an intelligence was involved

Justin Brierley:
– but you start with the idea that natural mechanisms can explain everything!

Stephen Meyer:
– for Dr. Atkins, only explanations based on material processes are valid

Peter Atkins:
– that is correct

Stephen Meyer:
– but we think that the activities of mind can explain some effects

– e.g. – the best explanation of the Rosetta stone is a mind

Peter Atkins:
– but we naturalists think of minds as material as well

Stephen Meyer:
– that’s a materialist pre-supposition on your part
– we would have to have a debate about mind and body

Mark Haville:
– I think that the materialist position is socially dangerous
– the problem with naturalism is that it is an ideology
– the ideology pushes absurdities, e.g. – the universe came from nothing uncaused
– and naturalists exert power over others to force them to believe nonsense

Stephen Meyer:
– science progresses as the result of scientists disagreeing
– both sides agree to the facts
– the debate is about the interpretation of those facts
– and one side is being ruled out a priori based on the pre-supposition of materialism

Peter Atkins:
– why do you say that an intelligence is involved in DNA but not general relativity

Stephen Meyer:
– it is always logically possible that intelligence can be invlved in any effect
– the main thing is that explanations based on intelligence should not be ruled out

Peter Atkins:
= well you can’t appeal to any non-material process in expaining anything
– those are the rules

Moderator:
– what does intelligent design have to do with religion?

Stephen Meyer:
– creationism is about understanding the istory of life using the Bible
– intelligent design is about using the same method of inquiry as Darwin
– we know that information arises from intelligent causes
– humans create information all the time by using intelligence to sequence parts

Moderator:
– are intelligent design proponents disreputable?

Stephen Meyer:
– what’s disreputable is shutting down debate by setting arbitrary rules

Peter Atkins:
– we are both interested in the same questions

Moderator:
– why won’t you let Stephen publish his papers then?

Peter Atkins:

– because it breaks the pre-suppositions of naturalism and materialism

Stephen Meyer:
– you're shutting down inquiry by using an arbitrary definition of science

Mark Haville:
– we need to define the word science
– science should be based on what we can observe empirically
– we can observe micro-evolution empirically
– but Darwinism goes beyond what is observable to postulate macro-evolution

Peter Atkins:
– but paleobiology is replete with evidence

Stephen Meyer:
– paleobiology uses a method of inference that I think is valid
– but intelligent design uses the same mode of reasoning which is also valid

Peter Atkins:
= you're intellectually lazy
– we're smart, we're using our brains

Moderator:
– you're saying that appeals to intelligent causes ends science?
– is ID the view that some things are too complex to be explained with naturalism?

Peter Atkins:
– yes, and to teach children that materialism is false is child abuse

Stephen Meyer:
– let's drop the insults and the rhetoric and focus on the arguments
– the ID argument is not based on what we don't know, it's based on what we DO know
– first, we can ask what undirected natural processes can and cannot do
– second, we can ask what we know about intelligent causes from our own experience
– what we do know seems to me to require an intelligent agent as a cause

Peter Atkins:
– GOD! Do you mean God!? Do you mean God!?

Stephen Meyer:
– I personally mean God, but all that the arguments proves is a generic intelligent cause
– and I am using the same method of investigation that Darwin used to get there
– what we know from our experience is that a mind is needed to create information

Peter Atkins:
– NONSENSE! ABSOLUTE NONSENSE!

Stephen Meyer:
– in my book, I list 10 predictions made by ID, so it's not a science-stopper
– furthermore, the enterprise of science began with th goal of understanding God
– consider the earliest scientists, people like James Boyler and Johannes Kepler

Peter Atkins:

– that was 300 years ago, we've moved on

Mark Haville:
– what about Max Planck then?

Stephen Meyer:
– how about James Clark Maxwell?

Mark Haville:
– we need to focus on the facts

Peter Atkins:
– what do you mean by the facts?

Mark Haville:
– well the fact is that Darwinism has no mechanism to produce new information

Peter Atkins:
– well copying errors introduces beneficial mutations

Stephen Meyer:
– let's focus on where we get the first information from the simplest organism
– you can't account for the first organism by appealing to copying errors
– to add functionality to a program, you need new lines codes from an intelligence
– once you have life, you can generate some new information
– but you can't generate macro-evolution either

Peter Atkins:
– if we give you your explanation for teh origin of life, will you give this up

Stephen Meyer:
– of course! I'm a former theistic evolutionist
– but right now the evidence is not there for it
– we have to decide these questions based on what we see with our own eyes today

Peter Atkins:
– but I pre-suppose materialism as the starting point of all explanations
– you're just intellectually lazy to abandon my pre-supposition

Stephen Meyer:
– why is it is less intellectually lazy to insist that materialism is true
– we are making plenty of predictions, and isn't that what science is about?
– consider Junk DNA – you guys said it had no use
– now we know it has a use

Peter Atkins:
– naturalists were open to the idea that junk DNA might have a use before ID

Moderator:
– Dr. Meyer, what about the wall that locks out intelligence as an explanation?

Stephen Meyer:
– if these are interesting questions, then we should allow freedom of inquiry

– that’s how science advances

Peter Atkins:
– for all their science-talk really they are just saying God did it
– peope who don’t agree with me are not using their brains, like I do
– to give up on my pre-supposition of materialism is a denial of humanity

Mark Haville:
– there are important issues that are affected by our view of origins
– everyone who hasn’t seen Expelled movie should definitely see it

How Obama rewards Democrat special interest groups

January 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One way to reward your favored special interests is to exempt them from the taxes that everyone else has to pay.

Consider this article from CNS News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama on Thursday announced a plan to impose a new tax on banks to cover an expected $117 billion shortfall in the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP). The tax would apply to 50 financial institutions, which have assets of more than $50 billion, and would constitute a 0.15 percent tax on the TARP liabilities of these institutions.
>
> However, auto companies General Motors and Chrysler, which are not expected to pay back all of their $66 billion of TARP money, will not be subject to the tax. Also exempted from the tax would be mortgage institutions Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, which are largely responsible for the financial meltdown in 2008.

What do you suppose that businesses do when the government tells them to pay more taxes? Well, they just pass that on to their consumers.

But there's more.

Consider this article from the Heritage Foundation. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> After a long-week of negotiations, unions have won an exemption from the excise tax on high-cost "Cadillac" health insurance plans. The excise tax would fall on health insurance plans that cost more than $8,500 for individuals and $23,00 for families (the union deal reportedly slightly increases these thresholds) starting in 2013. It is one of the many tax hikes proposed by Congress to partially offset the cost of its take over of the health care system.

Obama's union supporters are getting exempted from another tax that will be paid by non-unionized workers.

How did universities reject the concepts of theological and moral knowledge?

January 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spent all day Saturday listening to fun lectures and an audio book, ("The Divine Conspiracy"), from Dr. Dallas Willard, a professor of philosophy at USC. (This is why I'm not responding to any of your e-mail or writing any long posts about courting and apologetics).

Here are a couple lectures he did in 2002 at Ohio State University about what it means to be human.

- The Genius of Jesus
- What Does It Mean To Be Human?

You may have to download them twice, I notice that the first time I try to download lectures that it gives me some short little 250Kb file which isn't the whole lecture. The second time it works fine.

Anyway, he talks a lot about the work of a Harvard professor named Julie Reuben, who wrote a book called "The Making of the Modern University". I hunted around and found a three-part book review that I have summarized for you below. The book review is by Mark Hansard at Christian Leadership Ministries, which is the faculty ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.

Here's part 1 of 3.

Excerpt:

The first chapter, entitled "The Unity of Truth," explains the educational philosophy of the early 19th century, and how it fell apart near the end of that century. What caught my eye was the robust view of knowledge that professors and university presidents believed at that time. According to Reuben, they believed not only that all knowledge in different fields could form a coherent whole, but also that its pursuit would lead to a good and more virtuous life. All knowledge led to better action. In fact, she says, university leaders at that time believed that the "the good, the true, and the beautiful were interconnected, and that successful education promoted all three together" (12). All knowledge inevitably lead to worship of God and an understanding of his wisdom.

Part of this 19th century construct was natural theology, which in this case was not merely the admission that design was detectable in nature, thus pointing to a Creator. It consisted of stronger claims such as: the *harmony of nature* reflected God's wisdom, that the more we understand of nature the more we can understand *God's character*, and that, as one professor put it, "the knowledge of God, derived from the study of nature, is adapted to add greatly to the impulsive power of conscience" (20). In other words, a study of nature would strengthen *virtue in the student*.

This is why the first scientists (and some today) are Christians. They were trying to find out something about God's existence and character by looking at nature. They wanted to see what God was communicating to us through the natural world.

And one more:

But even more serious is the loss of belief that moral knowledge is possible. There is no wisdom (in the ancient sense which Plato and Aristotle discussed) in the universities today, because there is no way to *know* what the good life is, how life ought to be lived. Such things, since they no longer constitute part of the curriculum, have simply been lost. Is it any wonder there is so much moral confusion among us?

This is really what Willard is concerned about in the lectures. If there is no God to create and design the universe, then there is no objective way we ought to be. And when the university stopped doing theology (or insulated it from critical inquiry), they stopped having a foundation for robust morality. Morality is hard. It's not the kind of thing you can do if you have to take it on faith. Sometimes, moral rules go against our selfish desires, and it's those times where you really need to know if these things are true.

Here's part 2 of 3.

Excerpt:

According to Reuben, Darwinism brought with it a new, revolutionary view of science that viewed scientific knowledge as imperfect but progressive, always seeking to correct itself through further research and experiment. The new science relied on hypotheses, theories, even imagination as it attempted to explain the world, and a good scientific theory would have practical, measurable results.

[…]Eventually scientists came to view theology as a meddlesome interloper who made *a priori* pronouncements about truth that simply got in the way of free inquiry and scientific advancement. Theology would have to be abandoned if the new, modern university founded upon the progressive philosophy of science would be allowed to pursue scientific research unfettered. But how could this be done, while maintaining the importance of Christianity? According to Reuben, the solution of scholars and administrators "was to distinguish theology, defined as a mode of inquiry and a set of doctrines, from religion, which was left largely undefined as sentiment, experiences, ritual, and ethical values" (57).

Theology is a *knowledge tradition*, which purportedly carries authority because it consists of truth claims that carry weight in describing the real world. However, in teaching *religion*, the knowledge conveyed was not about doctrines of God, man and salvation, but instead a set of propositions about *what religious people believed, how they worshipped*. In short the study of religion conveyed knowledge about how religious people acted *apart from asking the question of whether their beliefs were true*. Theological knowledge, and with it moral knowledge, was permanently lost. Instead of strengthening Christianity with science, the new religious studies departments actually weakened Christianity by taking away its authority, an authority that is based upon knowledge. Not surprisingly, administrators could not get students to be interested in their new religion classes.

If Christianity is just a set of beliefs and rituals designed to make people feel good, act morally to please parents, and to have a sense of community, then it is *worthless.* As the apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:14, “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.”

Either Christianity is a knowledge tradition, or we are wasting our time with yesterday’s fashions. If Christianity is about our feelings, then it will die, because we can always to make us feel better. What will happen is that you will have people jumping around in church singing songs on Sunday morning, then having abortions and divorces on Monday morning.

Here’s part 3 of 3, but I didn’t find anything earth-shattering in it. It sounds like Christians were too authoritarian and dogmatic in responding to science’s desire for increased autonomy. You cant make an argument from dogma – it just makes people dislike your dogma. What we ought to have done is what we’re doing today: doing good science and good history without any pre-suppositions and seeing if what we find in cosmology, biochemistry, ancient history, etc. confirm or deny Christianity. The lesson to be learned here is that when you insulate your faith from rational inquiry, you reduce it to personal preference and you lose your authority – authority that comes from *knowledge.*

It’s interesting to think about how different things used to be just a few decades ago when people were not so different to throw off the constraints of knowledge and the obligations of morality in a desperate pursuit of pleasure in this life.

Do Democrats like Martha Coakley believe in religious liberty?

January 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this story from the Boston Herald.

Excerpt:

Ken Pittman: Right, if you are a Catholic, and believe what the Pope teaches that any form of birth control is a sin. Ah you don't want to do that.

Martha Coakley: No, we have a separation of church and state Ken, lets be clear.

Ken Pittman: In the emergency room you still have your religious freedom.

Martha Coakley: The law says that people are allowed to have that. You can have religious freedom but you probably shouldn't work in the emergency room.

At another point in the interview she says, "if people believe that they don't want to provide services that are required under the law and under Roe v. Wade, that they can individually decide to not follow the law, the answer is no."

Listen to the audio clip:

The full interview is here on Ken Pittman's site.

I find her willingness to squash the religious beliefs of individuals with her secular leftist support for abortion very disturbing. Why should she have the right to force her anti-Christian view on me? And why does she label herself as a Roman Catholic? She trying to use the power of the state to force pro-lifers to commit murder. How is that consistent with Roman Catholicism? (Or evangelical Protestant Christianity?)

MUST-READ: UN IPCC claim of Himalayan glaciers melting revealed to be a hoax

January 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A WARNING that climate change will melt most of the Himalayan glaciers by 2035 is likely to be retracted after a series of scientific blunders by the United Nations body that issued it.
>
> Two years ago the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a benchmark report that was claimed to incorporate the latest and most detailed research into the impact of global warming. A central claim was the world's glaciers were melting so fast that those in the Himalayas could vanish by 2035.
>
> In the past few days the scientists behind the warning have admitted that it was based on a news story in the New Scientist, a popular science journal, published eight years before the IPCC's 2007 report.
>
> It has also emerged that the New Scientist report was itself based on a short telephone interview with Syed Hasnain, a little-known Indian scientist then based at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi.
>
> Hasnain has since admitted that the claim was "speculation" and was not supported by any formal research.

There was *no research* backing a pronouncement of melting glaciers in the Himalayas. *No research*. And yet this was pronounced as dogma by the Holy Church of the United Nations. Because they believe what they want to believe, and their whole agenda is to hide the decline in order to get more research grants and greater control over businesses and individuals. This is the politicization of science. Science guided by big government research grants and academic peer pressure.

Related stories

- Britain to be hit by coldest winter in 100 years
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Will December 2009 be the coldest on record?
- 877 snowfall records were set last week in the USA
- Record snowfall in Oklahoma City, OK and Duluth, MN
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal
- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline

- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- The state of the debate about catastrophic man-made global warming
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says solar activity impacts climate
- Famous UN IPCC hockey stick graph is based on cherry-picked data
- Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming
- Global warming advocates refuse to give their data to skeptics
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says prior ice melting caused by solar variation
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Global warming is not caused by humans

Videos from apologist William Lane Craig and economist Thomas Sowell

January 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig

William Lane Craig

First, one from William Lane Craig, called "In Intellectual Neutral". (H/T Apologetics 315)

It's 40 minutes long.

- Video
- Audio (MP3)

This lecture is Dr. Craig's appeal to the church to use their minds as a way to serve Christ. This is a very passionate and accessible lecture designed to motivate people to take the life of the mind more seriously. His focus is on getting Christians to focus on learning arguments and evidence, so that when they discuss these topics they can appeal to logic and objective reality (science and history) to confirm their views. He is concerned that unless we get good at this, that people will not regard Christianity as a "live option" when choosing their worldview.

I've heard this lecture delivered in person at Wheaton College one year when he spoke in the chapel to all the students. It was very moving. But this version is twice as good. This time he's really letting loose.

Thomas Sowell

Thomas Sowell

This one features my favorite living economist, Thomas Sowell. (H/T ECM)

It's 40 minutes long.

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4
- Part 5

Thomas Sowell's new book is about intellectuals, those who deal primary with words and ideas, not arguments and evidence. These intellectuals have the goal of reforming society based on the ideas that they learn in classrooms. (Sowell is not talking about engineers, medical doctors, accountants, etc. – people who actually have hands-on knowledge in advanced areas)

Sowell is concerned with people who are specialized in one narrow area such as linguistics, and then make pronouncements on public policy or economics without knowing anything about those areas. He argues that intellectuals have a low opinion of people who don't go to the best schools, but instead focus on practical things. This conviction that other people are stupid makes them want to seize control and force their vision onto the world. The vision of the intellectuals includes metaphysical and moral beliefs.

In addition to what Sowell says in the video, I would expect that these intellectuals also disdain the morality and theology of Christians, whom they see as non-intellectuals, because they never hear reasons why people believe in Christianity and Christian morality in their Ivy-league classrooms. This absence of a defense is what causes them to be so aggressive about trying to marginalize what they view as unfounded beliefs and antiquated moral rules. Maybe they would not be so aggressively secular and collectivist if we were all as prepared to give a defense as William Lane Craig is?

More economists

If you like what you see in these videos, you might want to consider reading one of my favorite papers by economist Robert Nozick entitled "Why do Intellectuals Oppose

Capitalism?" He uses a similar definition of intellectuals as being "wordsmiths", rather than engineers, entrepreneurs, and doctors. My other favorite living economists are Walter Williams (#2) and Jennifer Roback Morse (#3).

MSNBC TV host calls on MA voters to vote many times to elect Coakley

January 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michelle Malkin posted this audio. (H/T Andrew)

This is what he says:

> ED SCHULTZ, HOST: I tell you what, if I lived in Massachusetts, I'd try to vote ten times. I don't know if they'd let me or not, but I'd try to. Yeah, that's right, I'd cheat to keep these bastards out. I would. 'Cause that's exactly what they are.

This is the superior morality of the compassionate, tolerant secular left.

For more on voter fraud, you can read about ACORN, the group that Obama once represented in court.

Martha Coakley's convictions

Just one last shot at explaining who Martha Coakley really is, this time with an article from the Wall Street Journal.

Basically, a bunch of children gave testimony that the Amirault family abused and sexually assaulted children at a highly-regarded day care that they ran. But there was never any evidence of any crime, just the testimony of children.

> Other than such testimony, the prosecutors had no shred of physical or other proof that could remotely pass as evidence of abuse. But they did have the power of their challenge to jurors: Convict the Amiraults to make sure the battle against child abuse went forward. Convict, so as not to reject the children who had bravely come forward with charges.
>
> Gerald was sent to prison for 30 to 40 years, his mother and sister sentenced to eight to 20 years. The prosecutors celebrated what they called, at the time "a model, multidisciplinary prosecution." Gerald's wife, Patricia, and their three children—the family unfailingly devoted to him—went on with their lives. They spoke to him nightly and cherished such hope as they could find, that he would be restored to them.

Eventually, the convictions for the women were reversed, but the man remained a prisoner. Then Martha Coakley took over as the new Middlesex County district attorney in 1999. And here is what she did.

> In the face of the increasing furor surrounding the case, Ms. Coakley agreed to revise and revoke her sentence to time served—but certain things had to be clear, she told the press. Cheryl's case, and that of Gerald, she explained, had nothing to do with one another—a startling proposition given the horrific abuse charges, identical in nature, of which all three of the Amiraults had been

> convicted.
>
> No matter: When women were involved in such cases, the district attorney explained, it was usually because of the presence of “a primary male offender.” According to Ms. Coakley’s scenario, it was Gerald who had dragged his mother and sister along. Every statement she made now about Gerald reflected the same view, and the determination that he never go free. No one better exemplified the mindset and will of the prosecutors who originally had brought this case.
>
> Before agreeing to revise Cheryl’s sentence to time served, Ms. Coakley asked the Amiraults’ attorney, James Sultan, to pledge—in exchange—that he would stop representing Gerald and undertake no further legal action on his behalf. She had evidently concluded that with Sultan gone—Sultan, whose mastery of the case was complete—any further effort by Gerald to win freedom would be doomed. Mr. Sultan, of course, refused.

Eventually Gerald was also released following a 5-0 parole board ruling. But Martha Coakley was not finished.

> District Attorney Coakley was not idle either, and quickly set about organizing the parents and children in the case, bringing them to meetings with Acting Gov. Jane Swift, to persuade her to reject the board’s ruling. Ms. Coakley also worked the press, setting up a special interview so that the now adult accusers could tell reporters, once more, of the tortures they had suffered at the hands of the Amiraults, and of their panic at the prospect of Gerald going free.
>
> On Feb. 20, 2002, six months after the Board of Pardons issued its findings, the governor denied Gerald’s commutation.
>
> Gerald Amirault spent nearly two years more in prison before being granted parole in 2004. He would be released, with conditions not quite approximating that of a free man. He was declared a level three sex offender—among the consequences of his refusal, like that of his mother and sister, to “take responsibility” by confessing his crimes. He is required to wear, at all times, an electronic tracking device; to report, in a notebook, each time he leaves the house and returns; to obey a curfew confining him to his home between 11:30 p.m. and 6 a.m. He may not travel at all through certain areas (presumably those where his alleged victims live). He can, under these circumstances, find no regular employment.

So, even if the facts are not there, a message needs to be sent to men that they are filthy perverts and need to be kept clear of children. And if an innocent man has to go to prison to “prove” the anti-male prejudices of radical feminists to the watching world, then so be it.

Republicans want bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs canceled

January 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann

Story here from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Seventy Republican members of Congress want Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner to cancel up to $6 million in bonuses and deferred compensation — approved before Christmas 2009 — for the chief executive officers of the failed mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.
>
> "(T)here's a letter that's going to Sec. Geithner from a number of us calling for a rescission of those bonuses," Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) told CNSNews.com Wednesday.
>
> On Christmas Eve, at the same time the Obama administration announced that it was removing any cap on the amount of taxpayer aid to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the failed mortgage giants announced that they had received approval from their financial regulator to pay $42 million in compensation packages to 12 top executives for 2009.
>
> The compensation packages included up to $6 million each to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac chief executives. For the CEOs, annual compensation consists of a base salary of $900,000, $3.1 million in deferred compensation and incentive pay of as much as $2 million. Public disclosure that the retention bonuses were being copnsidered first surfaced in the Spring.

And naturally my favorite member of Congress was involved:

> "(We are pushing) for an ending — an unwinding, if you will — of the U.S. owning Fannie and Freddie. We want out of this sinking business as quickly as we possibly can, and we want to pull the plug on an unlimited taxpayer bailout of

> Freddie and Fannie," Bachmann said.
>
> […]"When Sec. Geithner said that there'd be unlimited taxpayer funding continuing to go into this sinking ship, and then bonuses they're given?," she said. "On what basis? What did they do? What was the criteria that they could possibly be given a bonus? The fact that they got unlimited taxpayer money?"
>
> Bachman was referring to Treasury's announcement that it would send unlimited tax money to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, thereby eliminating the current $400 billion cap on emergency aid that Treasury can give without having to come back to Congress for authorization.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are closely tied to Democrats.

Consider this Fox News story.

Excerpt:

> Freddie and Fannie used huge lobbying budgets and political contributions to keep regulators off their backs.
>
> A group called the Center for Responsive Politics keeps track of which politicians get Fannie and Freddie political contributions. The top three U.S. senators getting big Fannie and Freddie political bucks were Democrats and No. 2 is Sen. Barack Obama.
>
> Now remember, he's only been in the Senate four years, but he still managed to grab the No. 2 spot ahead of John Kerry — decades in the Senate — and Chris Dodd, who is chairman of the Senate Banking Committee.
>
> Fannie and Freddie have been creations of the congressional Democrats and the Clinton White House, designed to make mortgages available to more people and, as it turns out, some people who couldn't afford them.
>
> Fannie and Freddie have also been places for big Washington Democrats to go to work in the semi-private sector and pocket millions. The Clinton administration's White House Budget Director Franklin Raines ran Fannie and collected $50 million. Jamie Gorelick — Clinton Justice Department official — worked for Fannie and took home $26 million. Big Democrat Jim Johnson, recently on Obama's VP search committee, has hauled in millions from his Fannie Mae CEO job.

More here about how the Democrats caused the recession.

Tuesday night webcast explores why young people are leaving the church

January 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Details here on Frank Turek's blog.

Why are 75% of youth leaving the church after high school?
What can you do about it?

Get answers January 19th from **Dr. Frank Turek**, co-author of "I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist" and founder of CrossExamined.org. Frank will be joined by **Josh McDowell, Dr. William Lane Craig, Dr. Bill Dembski, Dr. Mike Adams** and others who will equip you the critical information you need keep yourself and your family firmly grounded in the truth.

Tuesday, January 19, 6:30-10 p.m. CENTRAL time: Live on 200 radio stations (http://action.afa.net/Radio/) and simulcast here: http://action.afa.net/Webcast/WebcastPlayer.aspx?id=2147491014

And in a later post more details: (there is a trailer in this post, too)

This Tuesday, January 19th I'll be hosting a live radio and internet simulcast event called ***Church Dropout: Overcoming the Youth Exodus***. The producers at the American Family Association tell me that this program **will draw an audience of over 200,000** to hear and see evidence for Christianity. The program is intended to help reverse the trend that 75% of Christian youth leave the church after high school.

And that post also has speaker biographies:

We'll start the evening with the man who is currently the best debater on our side, **Dr. William Lane Craig** (http://www.ReasonableFaith.org). Bill does scores of college events every year, and he provides great resources on his website. You need to hear Bill's evidence for the existence of God– irrefutable!

We'll then turn to one of the founding fathers of the Intelligent Design movement– **Dr. Bill Dembski** (http://www.designinference.com). Bill has two PhD's, but he'll show us very simply how life points to an intelligent designer, and how most of the so-called "evidence" for macroevolution is based on materialistic and counter-factual philosophical assumptions.

My third expert guest will be **Dr. Mike Adams**, a Christian professor on a secular campus (Yes, there are a few!) and one of the most popular conservative columnists on www.Townhall.com. Mike gets students motivated to make a difference for Christ! He will give us advice on how to prepare yourself (or your child) for the radically anti-Christian environment found on many college campuses (he'll make you laugh too!).

We'll then cap the show with one of my all-time heroes of apologetics– his books helped bring me to faith– the one and only **Josh McDowell** (www.Josh.org). Josh will give us very helpful insights on the importance of relationships to a young person's faith. Josh is not

only the most popular apologist but also the most passionate!

Here's a little bit about Frank Turek:

Frank Turek is the founder and president of CrossExamined.org and its primary presenter. Frank is a dynamic speaker and award-winning author or coauthor of three books: *I Don't have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, *Correct, Not Politically Correct* and *Legislating Morality*. He hosts a TV program each week called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist that is broadcast Monday nights at 8:30 pm Eastern on the NRB network, DirecTV Channel 378. CrossExamined with Frank Turek is a live call-in radio program that airs on 126 stations every Saturday morning at 11 am eastern time. Frank also writes a column for Townhall.com and has appeared on many TV and radio programs including: ***The O'Reilly Factor, Hannity and Colmes, Faith under Fire, Politically Incorrect, The Bible Answerman***, and ***Focus on the Family.*** A former Aviator in the U.S. Navy, Frank has a Masters from George Washington University and a Doctorate in Apologetics from Southern Evangelical Seminary.

I am familiar with the work of all 5 of these guys. These are 5 of my favorite Christian in the whole world. If *anyone* can tell you directly *why* young people are leaving the church, it's these guys. I hope you can tune in!

What does Obama’s EEOC nominee think about religious liberty?

January 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this story from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Chai Feldblum, the Georgetown University law professor nominated by President Obama to serve on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, has written that society should “not tolerate” any “private beliefs,” including religious beliefs, that may negatively affect homosexual “equality.”
>
> Feldblum, whose nomination was advanced in a closed session of the Senate Health Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee on December 12, published an article entitled “Moral Conflict and Liberty: Gay Rights and Religion” in the Brooklyn Law Review in 2006.

What’s in the article?

> Feldblum does recognize that elements of the homosexual agenda may infringe on Americans’ religious liberties. However, Feldblum argues that society should “come down on the side” of homosexual equality at the expense of religious liberty. Because the conflict between the two is “irreconcilable,” religious liberty — which she also calls “belief liberty” — must be placed second to the “identity liberty” of homosexuals.

Be careful who you vote for, especially if you value religious liberty.

Comments to this post will be restricted to respect Obama’s hate crimes bill.

How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal

January 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just want to jot down a few points about this in brief – this will not be a comprehensive treatment. This is a rush job – I'm leaving things out, it will probably come across as very insulting and scatter-brained.

First, I am addressing this to women who are interested in marriage and children. If you are a woman and you are not interested in marriage and children, this will be no good to you. The reason why is because this method only works for men who are interested in marriage and children.

I'm addressing this to an imaginary Christian woman, whom I will henceforth refer to as "you".

The wrong approach

Here are some things that women do wrong when trying to get a man to marry.

- choosing a man based on non-Christian criteria or just selfishness
- choosing a man based on his appearance of first impressions
- choosing a man based on whether he is fun and popular
- thinking that Christianity is a check box on an application form, rather than a 3-hour exam
- thinking of marriage as bliss that will work out somehow, without planning and effort
- not understanding what men are really like
- not understanding what children are really like
- not understanding what the Bible has to say about marriage
- thinking that you can make a man love you by using sex appeal or sex itself
- thinking that acting like a man is what a man wants

In short, marriage should be understood as a task, requiring planning by both partners, as well as study, skills and a will. You're not picking a man, you're picking a plan, the plan that you think will help God the most. And there is absolutely no need to resort to sex or alcohol or anything order to discuss these things. What actually works on me is writing me a good long essay about *anything.* Because marriage is more about communication and relationships than anything else. You can have intimacy without alcohol just by turning the conversation to topics that matter and writing about them.

The lever

Since you will not be using sex, you might as well get clear on what you can use. You can use three things.

- The Bible, theology, church history and apologetics
- The man's own plan to marry and the steps he's taken so far

- Your own willingness to do whatever it takes to make your relationship please God

The basic idea is that you are going to find out what marriage in a Christian context is about. Then you are going to find out the man's plan for marriage within the context of his Christian worldview. Then you are going to convince him that the most rational thing to do in order to achieve his plan is to marry you. You're going to convince him that he will get a much higher degree of success with you, than without you. Not to mention the possibility of you bearing children and then helping him to parent children who will also count for God.

You're the helper

Biblically, the role of the woman in the marriage is supposed that of helper. That doesn't mean that you cannot have your own plan as well, it just means that the way you are going to have a relationship with a man is by helping him with his plan. And in order to help him with his plan, you have to talk to him about his plan. You have to show him that he isn't going to get dragged away from his high ideals by you if he marries you. On the contrary – you are going to catapult him into the stars, in ways he cannot even imagine.

Here's what you can do.

- convince yourself that Christianity is true by studying apologetics, etc.
- read about chivalry, romance and courtly love
- get used to the idea that God comes above your own needs and desires
- begin to view men as tools for serving God instead of tools for serving you
- learn to evaluate men on the quality of their plans and whether it will help God
- spend time writing and talking to the man about his plan (eye contact talking)
- learn to hold your temper in check in order to gain his confidence
- study to find out more about his goals, and how to achieve them
- study to find out more about what forces are working against him
- buy him things to help him with his plan
- assign him tasks to do that you think will help him to serve God better
- think of solutions to problems that he is facing and tell him
- solve those problems and then report to him that the problems are solved
- form his character by approving and affirming Christian/family behaviors
- practice evangelism and apologetics to show that you care about nurturing other people's worldviews
- take on difficult long-term commitments like starting a business, being a missionary, earning degrees

Who wouldn't want to have someone around who really knows them, who they can really talk to, and who is always improving their character and helping them to solve problems? The more you study what he is doing and learn things that can help him, the more he will want to have you around everywhere he goes. Every skill you get has potential for solving problems that you both may face when you start a family. It's actually a very good idea to collect useful skills, make money and have a plan of your own. And I'll explain why.

Nothing impresses a man more than a woman who is passionate, but rational, about some issue bigger than her own needs. Look at Michele Bachmann and Jennifer Roback Morse. Men are chivalrous. They want to protect and provide for women who are chaste and honorable. But they don't want to waste time on women who are not engaged in some sort of noble enterprise. And they don't want to waste time trying to commit to a woman who tries to manipulate them by rushing them into sex, either. Working on your own plan communicates to a man that you are more interested in helping God than in your own needs.

Women should be able to persuade people without getting personal or straying from arguments and evidence. Standing up for your view should be easy for you, but don't overpower the man just to get your way. Ideally, you should win arguments with him because your ideas are just plain more effective at serving God than his ideas. Of course, if you think he's right, then go along with him, by all means. I have actually gotten to the point with two women where arguing is a recreational activity than always ends in compliments for them about how happy I am that I can be myself with them. And that's what a man really wants, anyway.

Marriage and children

But there's more to being a helper than that. There's the duties of a wife and mother. Marriage today is an enormous risk and responsibility for a man. The way to persuade a man to marry is to show him that you have studied his concerns, that his concerns are actually much worse than he knows, and that you have solutions to all of his problems. Show him that you have studied these things in detail, that you have written about these concerns passionately in public, and that you are serious about solving them. If you can't solve the problems, (e.g. – hate crime bills, taxes for public schools), then show him that you are informed about these issues, on his side, and have at least spoken or written passionately about it somewhere public.

Here are some ideas for learning how to be a good wife and mother.

- study what men think about wives, marriage and children
- study threats to marriage from taxes, family courts, public schools, etc.
- study the risks that men are taking on by deciding to marry and become fathers
- think and write about how you can make your husband and children a gift for God
- understand the proper care and feeding of husbands and children – how do they thrive?
- practice taking care others – plants, cars, friends, pets, elderly, children, the poor
- study to find out what divorce does to men and children
- study what fatherlessness does to a child
- study to understand the competition for liberty and resources between family and state
- practice arguing with men about facts and policies, disregarding your own person, and focusing on the arguments
- you should absolutely abhor feminism and argue against it at every opportunity

- be ready to drop everything at a moment's notice and focus your attention on your relationship

Remember, the way that you treat a man in terms of encouraging and supporting his plan is the main way that you tell him two things: 1) that you will continue to do this after the marriage, so that he doesn't have to give up his noble plan, and 2) that you will be encouraging and supporting his children towards their goals, so that he can have complete confidence in leaving the children with you until they get old enough for him to take over more of the parenting, (say, age 6 and on). If you help him, then pleasing you will become part of his plan.

It is extremely important to a man that he can trust you to teach the children right from wrong, and the Christian faith, especially when it goes against your compassionate feminine nature. I have actually seen this done, where a mother understands parenting and child development so much that she won't yield to a screaming disobedient child because he has to learn the habits that will see him on to a Ph.D in physics. What's even more fun is when she explains to you why she's doing it, and where she studied it. That what makes a man happy.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

How the left-wing media lowers the level of civil discourse

January 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's MSNBC's Keith Olbermann on Republican Scott Brown. (H/T Newsbusters)

Excerpt:

> Lost in the angst about Obama and Coakley is the little-recognized real headline of this vote. You have heard Scott Brown speculating, talking out of his bare bottom, about whether or not the President of the United States was born out of wedlock. You have heard Scott Brown respond to the shout from a supporter that they should stick a curling iron into Ms. Coakley's rectum with the answer, "We can do this."
>
> You may not have heard Scott Brown support a Constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, or describing two women having a child as being quote, "Just not normal." You may not have heard Scott Brown associating himself with the Tea Party movement, perhaps the saddest collection of people who don't want to admit why they really hate since the racists of the South in the sixties insisted they were really just concerned about states' rights. You may not of heard Scott Brown voting against paid leaves of absence for Massachusetts Red Cross workers who had gone to New York to help after 9/11.
>
> In short, in Scott Brown we have an irresponsible, homophobic, racist, reactionary, ex-nude model, teabagging supporter of violence against woman and against politicians with whom he disagrees. In any other time in our history, this man would have been laughed off the stage as an unqualified and a disaster in the making by the most conservative of conservatives. Instead, the commonwealth of Massachusetts is close to sending this bad joke to the Senate of the United States.

News Busters has the video. This is what happens when you only listen to people who agree with you. It becomes impossible to focus on substantive policy debates and evidence, and you start to go after people personally. The way to stop it is to seek out the best people on the other side and to read their work, or better yet, see them in a debate. Leftists shouldn't look at tea party protesters, they should look at Thomas Sowell.

In one way, this suits me well. Brown is going to get elected to the Senate today in Massachusetts, and I hope that the way that the left wing media portrays him will drive him further to the right, and make him more concerned about bypassing the media to talk to the people directly. The more they insult him, the less sympathy he will have for compromise, and the less he will be influenced by what the elite think of him.

New Jennifer Roback Morse podcast on the California prop 8 trial

January 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Right now there is a trial going on in California in which some plaintiffs are challenging the result of the recent referendum on marriage. California voted to recognize marriage as being between one man and one woman, and some people are complaining about that. Jennifer Roback Morse was interviewed about this trial on the Christian radio show "Issues, Etc.", and she explained some of the issues they are debating in the trial and what it all means.

Here is the MP3 file.

And here's my summary of what she and the host talked about:

- Rosie O'Donnell's twelve-year lesbian relationship is over
- How children are affected by unstable relationships between partners
- what do the statistics show about the stability of same-sex unions?
- what is the purpose of marriage?
- what characteristics define child-centered marriage?
- what characteristics define adult-centered marriage?
- who gets custody of the children when same-sex couples split?
- how are parental rights understood today under the law?
- how would same-sex marriage change parental rights?
- what is the agenda of family law radicals for marriage?
- what are the consequences of this California trial?
- why does the judge want to broadcast the trial on TV?

I find her a real delight to listen to! I would be delighted if more people learned to talk about these issues the same way that she does. I find her blog is very helpful as well. In fact, she has an interesting post up about some "expert" testimony from a sociologist who testified in favor of same sex marriage. (H/T Lex Communis)

She cites this post from Protect Marriage:

UCLA social psychology professor Dr. Letitia Peppeau opined that, among other things, same-sex couples are "indistinguishable" from heterosexual couples in terms of their relationships, and that legalizing same sex marriage would not harm traditional marriage. *However, she could offer no studies to prove her contention that there would be no impacts on traditional marriage*. On cross examination, she also admitted that the available studies do, in fact, show significant differences between gay couples and heterosexual couples. For example, one study reported that a significantly *lower percentage of gay men think that monogamy is important in their relationships* (only 36%) than do those in heterosexual relationships. *Of those gay men who say that monogamy is important in their relationships, 74% still engage in sex with multiple*

partners. When pressed, she admitted that sexual exclusivity among gay men is the exception rather than the rule.

My previous post on why people favor traditional marriage explored the research on the differences between traditional marriage and same-sex unions. If we agree that the purpose of marriage is to provide a stable environment for the children, then it's clear *from the research* that these two arrangements are not the same.

Related posts

- Jennifer Roback Morse explains how socialism undermines family
- Why two-parent are better for children
- The economic implications of no-fault divorce
- Recent podcasts from Jennifer Roback Morse
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- What causes single motherhood, and how are children affected?
- My favorite Jennifer Roback Morse podcast on marriage
- Some older Jennifer Roback Morse podcasts
- A podcast on how marriages are affected by economic policy

Coakley advisor blames Obama's taxing and spending for loss

January 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the center-left Politico.

Excerpt:

> The Coakley adviser's memo: National Dems Failed to Aid Coakley Until Too Late
>
> […]— From the beginning, Brown labeled President Obama's health care and cap and trade plans as tax increases. Polling throughout the race showed this to be the most effective attack on Coakley.

There were other policies that hurt Coakley, but this was the most effective.

More here from Gateway Pundit.

Awesome. Just awesome.

Are women underpaid for doing the same work as a man?

January 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a neat article from TotallyHer.com on this issue.

Excerpt:

> Over the years there's been much debate surrounding the concern for women receiving inequitable pay, relative to the same work men do. This continues to be an issue even in 2010! As a matter of fact, did you know that there's an Equity Pay Day this year?
>
> But it's not just special interest groups who express the concern for women's apparent lack of parity in their paychecks. President Obama signed legislation early in his presidency to ensure equal pay for women.
>
> So is the President himself admitting that a woman can do the exact same work, for the exact same amount of time, with the exact same qualifications and experience as her male counterpart and get a smaller paycheck? Is that happening in the United States right now?

Click through to read the article and see what the research shows.

Thomas Sowell's take on the pay gap

I actually have a book on my shelf by Thomas Sowell that tackles this very issue, among others, called "Economic Facts and Fallacies". Here's a short 3 minute video about the book.

There's also a nice 4-clip discussion of the book between Dennis Prager and Thomas Sowell, (from Prager's radio show). I'm listening to it now, and Sowell also preferred Fred Thompson in the 2008 Republican primary, just like me! This is a really, really good interview.

My thoughts

When I survey the best of my Christian male friends, we all agree that work really gets in the way of the things we would like to be doing. Some of us would like to be working more on our marriages and relationships, or playing with children, or writing, or teaching classes in the church, or organizing debate and lecture events, or lifting weights and playing sports… but one thing we agree on is that there is too much emphasis for men on the workplace as the theater of for our achievements. It's just stupid.

I myself would love to work fewer hours if I could have more time for other things. Why work so hard just to pay more in taxes? I think men get trapped into marriage and children and then they are stuck working too hard to pay 40% in taxes for government bureacrats to marriage. High taxes are a real disincentive for men contemplating marriage. If women were smart, they would vote to shrink government, welfare and social

programs. Then men would really be interested in marriage, because they could work less and still have time for other interesting things.

Socialists defeated by free-market conservative in Chile election

January 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Amazingly, Concertacion's center-left candidate, Eduardo Frei, lost the election… to pro-free-market Sebastian Pinera, a self-made billionaire who vows to expand free markets even more. Following his exuberant 52%-48% victory Sunday, Pinera vowed to make Chile "the best country in the world."
>
> Saying he meant to be an "entrepreneurial president," Pinera promised to cut red tape, improve investment, make it easier to hire and fire workers, make bureaucrats accountable and improve the climate for Chileans to start businesses.
>
> He wants to partially privatize state copper giant Codelco to attract investment. He also wants to get tough on crime. Because he'll have to work with the Concertacion congress, he may not achieve all of it. But given the political winds, he's sure to achieve some of it.
>
> […]So instead of the 3%-range economic growth seen lately, Pinera vows to grow in the vicinity of the 7.2% pace Chile racked up in the first heady years after Pinochet's dictatorship, when economist Milton Friedman's Chilean Chicago Boys were in charge.
>
> Instead of producing just wine, fruit and fish, Pinera wants new measures to encourage new industries to enrich Chile and its buyers around the world.
>
> Can a billionaire like Pinera lead Chile? His past suggests he won't rest on his laurels. As a businessman, he liked introducing new things to Chile; during the '80s he introduced credit cards when these were barely known and made them a fact of life.
>
> He also has a knack for rescuing failing industries and transforming them. In the 1990s he bought Chile's battered state airline and turned it into LAN Airlines, now South America's biggest carrier.
>
> Chile's markets are optimistic. The stock market rose 1% to its highest level ever on news of Pinera's election.

Although Chile was being run by socialists, they were actually really good on fiscal issues.

I blogged before about how a pro-free-trade economic policy had produced so much economic growth that Chile received an invitation to join the prestigious OECD, an organization of 30 economic super-powers! Well, Chile accepted the invitation – they are the first South American nation to ever be in the OECD!

The Wall Street Journal has the new rankings for the freest economies in the world. Chile is #10! Talk about punching above your weight!

Rank	Country	Year	Score	Change
1	Hong Kong	2010	89.7	-0.3
2	Singapore	2010	86.1	-1
3	Australia	2010	82.6	0
4	New Zealand	2010	82.1	0.1
5	Ireland	2010	81.3	-0.9
6	Switzerland	2010	81.1	1.7
7	Canada	2010	80.4	-0.1
8	United States	2010	78	-2.7
9	Denmark	2010	77.9	-1.7
10	Chile	2010	77.2	-1.1

Chile is the number one place I would like to live if I could choose to live anywhere. But they have these terrible earthquakes! I don't know what to do about that. I have this crazy idea to live in an earth-sheltered house, just to save money on utilities and to lower maintenance costs, so that I have more time for pets and friends. I wonder if they have those in Chile?

I also like Honduras (#99) and Colombia (#58). I was showing off my Honduras-made shirts today at work to one of the atheist-Democrat guys who is suspicious of free trade. I explained the difference between between foreign investment and foreign aid. I prefer foreign investment. The clothes are well-made, and I like to help poorer nations to grow their economy by trading with them – so that they have *jobs* they can be proud of. Today, clothes, tomorrow, LCD monitors! My parents were born in a poor country, just like Honduras or Colombia.

Contrasting Muslim martyrs and Christian martyrs

January 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Claudia Rosett

Story from Forbes magazine, by Claudia Rosett. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> This past Christmas Day brought us the stories of two young men, both willing to martyr themselves for their beliefs, but in ways and for visions so utterly different that their tales might serve as a parable for the defining struggles of our time.
>
> One, as you surely know, was the underwear bomber, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a wealthy young Muslim from a prominent Nigerian family. Following his embrace of radical Islam, he tried to sacrifice himself–allegedly–in a botched attempt to sow terror and death by blowing up an American airliner packed with 289 other people, en route to Detroit. Having entered American air space decked out as a suicide bomber, he is now availing himself of U.S. constitutional rights, granted to him by the Obama Administration, to plead not guilty to criminal charges.
>
> The other martyr, in stark contrast, was a 28-year-old Christian missionary, Robert Park. An American of Korean descent, Park offered himself up peacefully, on Christmas Day, for the cause of life and liberty for others. He went to northeast China, and from there walked across the frozen Tumen River into North Korea. Witnesses told reporters that as he went, he called out, in Korean, messages of God's love, as well as "I am an American citizen." He took with him a letter to North Korean tyrant Kim Jong-il, asking Kim to open his country and shut down his prison camps.

Are all religions basically the same? Are the beliefs different? Do different beliefs result in different actions? Does it make sense to equate Islam with Christianity? What do people do when they are fully committed to their religion? These are two different versions of full commitment. Two different versions of full commitment.

Park's final interview with Reuters is here.

Judge rules that Rifqa Bary will remain in foster care until age 18

January 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rifqa Bary

Story here from Fox Orlando.

Excerpt:

> FOX affiliate WTTE-TV in Columbus, Ohio is reporting that Rifqa Bary, the teenage Christian convert who ran away from her Muslim parents to Florida because of claims that her life was in danger, has reached an agreement with her parents. Reports indicate that they have agreed she will remain in the custody of the Ohio Office of Families and Children until she reaches 18 years of age, or the family, collectively, decides they want to go to counseling.
>
> […]The judge decided the teen would be able to receive third-party correspondence and that he would not force mediation between Bary and her parents. Bary did not make any public comments as she exited the court room.

This is good news, but she is still in danger.

Gay rights activist convicted of manslaughter

January 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CBS News.

Excerpt:

> Bruce LaVallee-Davidson, an outspoken gay rights activist who publicly fought for gay marriage, has been convicted of manslaughter in a bizarre sex game accident that included drugs and guns.
>
> […]Police say that the shooting occurred while a third man, James Pombriant, was engaged in a sex act with Wilson in the dungeon-like basement of Wilson's Colonial home in a middle-class neighborhood two blocks from the ocean.
>
> […]The case had garnered publicity because LaVallee-Davidson is a outspoken advocate for same-sex rights and was in a committed relationship when he testified in favor of keeping Maine's now-overturned gay marriage law at a public hearing, four days after the discovery of the body of 50-year-old Wilson and a couple of weeks before he was indicted.
>
> LaVallee-Davidson faces up to 30 years in prison. Pombriant was not charged in the killing.

My previous post on why people favor traditional marriage.

Comments will be strictly monitored in order to take Obama's hate crimes law into account.

Related posts

- Gay rights activist who ran pedophile ring gets life sentence
- Gay Duke University health expert charged with selling adopted 5-year old for sex

Obama's TSA nominee withdraws after lying to Congress about abuse of power

January 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Yahoo News. (H/T Ed Morissey of Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration's choice to lead the Transportation Security Administration withdrew his name Wednesday.
>
> In a statement, Erroll Southers said he was pulling out because his nomination had become a lightning rod for those with a political agenda. President Barack Obama tapped Southers, a former FBI agent, to lead the TSA in September but his confirmation has been blocked by Republican Sen. Jim DeMint, who says he was worried Southers would allow TSA employees to engage in collective bargaining with the government.
>
> Questions have also been raised about a reprimand that Southers received for running background checks on his then-estranged wife's boyfriend two decades ago. Southers wrote a letter to lawmakers earlier this month acknowledging that he had given inconsistent answers to Congress on that issue.

Ed Morrissey writes:

> There were at least three reasons why Southers' nomination was going nowhere in the Senate. When Congress created TSA and the Department of Homeland Security, it exempted both from labor laws that allowed unions to organize the workers, in order to avoid having labor problems disrupt national-security efforts. Southers was seen as an appointee who would push for unionization by Senator Jim DeMint, among others, who held the nomination in order to get clearer answers from the Obama administration on their intentions. That hold got lifted shortly after the Christmas Day bombing when the Obama administration complained that the Senate had prevented Obama from providing leadership to TSA, but Obama had taken eight months to nominate Southers in the first place.
>
> It was at that time that Southers finally admitted that he had misled Congress during his confirmation process on his involvement in breaching privacy laws to investigate his wife's boyfriend. That involved two issues of trust: accountability to Congress and the security of private information being held by the government. Not only did Southers himself twice breach the data, he also disseminated it — which is a felony, although long past the statute of limitations, presumably. The Senate should not look kindly on appointees who begin their jobs by lying to Congress, and multiple holds replaced the DeMint hold as a result. That has nothing to do with "political agendas," but with Southers'

> suitability for the job.

Another one bites the dust. Here’s a few of the previous failures.

New York governor unveils one BILLION dollars of new taxes

January 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CBS News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Governor David Paterson said Tuesday that the days of profligate spending in Albany are over and that starting immediately lawmakers must participate in an "age of accountability."
>
> That said, the governor's new budget has $1 billion in new taxes and nearly $800 million in cuts for New York City.
>
> […]"Our revenues have crumbled and our budget has crashed and we can no longer afford this spending addiction that we have had for so long," Paterson said.
>
> […]"The mistakes of the past have lead us to the breaking point," Paterson said.
>
> But in addition to the severe belt tightening, the governor said he would need to raise $1 billion in new taxes and fees — some politically controversial.
>
> * A $1 increase in the cigarette tax, raising the state tax to $3.75.
>
> * A new soda tax that will cost consumers 1-cent per ounce — a 16-ounce bottle will cost 16 cents more, a 64-ounce bottle 64 cents more.
>
> * The governor also plans to legalize and sanction cage fighting.
>
> * And allow wine to be sold in grocery stores.
>
> * And introduce 50 speed cameras on highways to catch unsuspecting motorists with fines of up to $100.

How did this happen?

New York legislators voted to tax the wealthy.

Then the wealthy left New York for red states.

And now Albany has no revenues to pay for all of their government spending on social programs, such as paying delinquent teachers to do nothing all day because the teacher unions won't allow teachers to be fired, no matter how badly they screw up.

Governor Patterson never wanted anything to do with earlier tax increases on the wealthy. At least these new tax increases are on consumption, not on income, and not on corporations. Consumption taxes cost the fewest jobs, in my opinion. Consumption taxes encourage saving, too.

Obama to nationalize student loans, how does that work in New Zealand?

January 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CNS News. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> A bill currently before the Senate would empower the Obama administration to nationalize the student lending industry, eliminating the federally subsidized private loans millions of university students rely on to finance their educations
>
> The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act – currently being considered by the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee – would eliminate the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program. FFEL loans are federally subsidized and make up approximately 80 percent of the student lending industry.
>
> According to the Department of Education, 14.3 million of the 17.5 million student loans were federally subsidized for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. Under Obama's plan, the government would consume the entirety of this industry – a total of $103 billion in 2009-2010.

I wrote about the situation in New Zealand before. In New Zealand, they have a government-run system.

Excerpt:

> Thousands of people with student loans are defaulting on payments, leaving the Government to chase hundreds of millions of dollars.
>
> More than one in five borrowers – or 114,000 people – have overdue payments and thousands of students are leaving tertiary education with no qualification

> and big bills.
>
> The Education Ministry's student loan scheme annual report shows that $306 million in payments is overdue, a $100m increase from a year ago.
>
> The substantial growth includes a big rise in the level of payments owed by people now living overseas, more than doubling to $114m.
>
> New Zealand University Students Association co-president Sophia Blair said it was not surprising that students with loans were heading overseas and letting the bills mount. "You can earn higher wages [overseas]."
>
> […]Total student loan debt had reached $10.2 billion and is predicted to grow by an average of $875m a year to more than $20b by 2022.
>
> The report also showed about 39 per cent of students who left tertiary education with a loan did so without achieving a qualification.
>
> About 8000 students with loans who left study in 2005 had nothing to show for it by 2007.

Why can't Obama take into account how radical leftist policies have worked in other countries? Let the free market work. Let people be responsible for their own decisions. Giving people things for free doesn't make them take their education seriously. When someone pays out of pocket, they try harder, and they take serious courses to earn the money back. When a bank makes a loan, they actually care about getting the money back, so they may insist that students actually perform. On the other hand, the government is notoriously wasteful – it's not *their* money. It's *your* money.

New study finds that regular intoxication makes teens more sexually active

January 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Toronto Sun. (H/T Lex Communis)

Excerpt:

> Pot-smoking teenaged girls are more likely to have sex than those who don't, a new study suggests.
>
> Drunkenness also increases sexual activity in teens, especially when boys and girls are allowed to spend too much time together, according to a report by the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada released yesterday.
>
> "Adolescent sexual behaviour places teens at risk of ill health, unintended pregnancy and emotional concerns. The earlier teens initiate sex the greater the risk," said Peter Jon Mitchell, an analyst for the institute.
>
> […]The study found 39% of teens aged 14 to 19 have had sexual intercourse, which is 41% of girls and 38% of boys.
>
> Teen smoking also increased the likelihood of promiscuity. Girl smokers were 78% more likely to have sex while boys were 98% more likely to engage in sexual activity, the report says.
>
> "Analysis also revealed that teen girls who reported they had never smoked were 58% less likely than the national average to have had sexual intercourse while boys who reported they never smoked were 56% less likely," Mitchell said.

Life Site News adds:

> Study researcher, Peter Jon Mitchell, said that the findings underscore what parents may know intuitively to be true. "Teens who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol are more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior," said Mitchell. "This study reveals a 'risk profile' that may help parents as they nurture their teens through to adulthood. And it becomes all the more critical when we consider the correlation between attempting suicide and sexual activity, particularly among girls."
>
> The study "Rated PG, Part II: How drugs, alcohol and other factors influence teen sexual activity," can be read in full in English, here. "Part I: Rated PG: How parental influence impacts teen sexual activity" is available here.

Something for parents to think about. And talk about.

Sarah Palin to campaign for Michele Bachmann in 2010 Senate race

January 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele Bachmann

Story here from the Hill.

Excerpt:

> Sarah Palin announced today that she plans to campaign for her former running mate John McCain in his 2010 re-election fight, as well as Gov. Rick Perry (R-Texas) and Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.).
>
> "I look forward to helping Governors like Rick Perry in Texas, Representatives like Michele Bachmann in Minnesota, and heroes and statesmen like Senator John McCain. We will support these candidates and others so that they can continue to fight for our American values," Palin wrote in a Facebook note.
>
> […]Bachmann, though not facing a primary, has become a lightning rod at the political level and is a likely Democratic target in 2010.

I already sent Michele a donation, which is probably about the most chivalrous thing a knight can do!

I notice that Caffeinated Thoughts has crowned Sarah Palin as the 2009 Caffeinated Conservative of the Year. (I voted for Michele Bachmann, of course! She is my favorite member of Congress, and I wish she were President).

Sarah Palin

In this post, Shane lists some of the reasons why people like Sarah Palin.

Here are a few of the reasons:

- She has been an effective voice against the take of health care. Most notably with her first salvo on Facebook coining the term "death panels." Then continuing on here and here. She challenged the lack of tort reform and the bureaucratization of health care. Regarding health care she's so *irrelevant* that the White House responded to her as a private citizen writing a Facebook note. To which she responded. She defined the debate.
- She has been a constant champion of energy independence by better utilizing our natural resources.
- She is an outspoken critic of the Cap and Tax bill.
- She has been a champion for the troops participating in several charity auctions to benefit wounded soldiers and their families.
- Her advocacy for the sanctity of life.
- Her pushback against the climate change crowd.
- Her rejection of stimulus funds, criticism of it, and the preparation she accomplished as Governor that positioned her state well for the recession we are in.

I am happy that Sarah is campaigning on behalf of Michele.

Videos of Michele Bachmann

Defending capitalism, the Constitution and contracts:

And arguing against corruption and bailouts:

Arguing against government spending and inflation:

She is also an extremely articulate defender of traditional marriage and the pro-life position.

Please send her a contribution here, and bookmark her blog and her youtube channel.

You can read more about her in World Net Daily, Atlas Shrugs, and World Magazine.

Related posts

You can learn more about Michele in these posts:

- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs
- Michele Bachmann issues conservative call to action
- Michele Bachmann interviewed on the Pat Robertson’s 700 Club
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama’s latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare’s rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Collection of the best Michele Bachmann video clips

Should parents be more permissive with misbehaving children?

January 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below are some stories from Australia about the trend towards more permissive parenting.

An article from the Australian Courier-Mail on permissiveness at school.

Excerpt:

> Brock Duchnicz will start year 5 at a new school this year unable to spell simple words like at, in or on.
>
> In two years he has missed 63 days – almost 13 weeks – of school for offences such as swearing, class disruption and pushing chairs over.
>
> His mother Sarndra said EQ's policy of blocking her son from the classroom was not working.
>
> Ms Duchnicz said teachers were not equipped to deal with children like Brock and called on the Government to introduce specialised behaviour management training for all teachers.
>
> "I feel as though these kids are just pushed to the back of the classroom in the too hard basket," she said.
>
> "There are so many more children coming up the line like this and if they (teachers) are not equipped they need more understanding and time put into them."
>
> […]Brock was recently diagnosed with ADHD but Ms Duchnicz stopped his Ritalin medication because it had no effect. She plans to have him reassessed.

Why does everything have to be the fault of society, or the fault of chemical imbalances? Why can't people just be careful about making sure that their spouse is committed to raising the children to have certain moral values?

An article from Australian Herald Sun about discipline.

Excerpt:

> A Melbourne expert says naughty corners and time out in bedrooms are inappropriate because they shame and humiliate.
>
> The same goes for smacking, which education and parenting consultant Kathy Walker says makes children feel resentful.
>
> […]"Labels such as 'bad' or 'naughty' shame and humiliate children," she said. "Even when this strategy is framed as a request for children to 'sit and think about what they have done and then apologise', it is inappropriate. A child's bedroom should be a safe happy place of relaxation."

> Instead Ms Walker, who thinks smacking is unnecessary and ineffective, advocates "chilling out" where a child sits quietly "away from the scene of the crime" to calm down.
>
> She said some parents spent too much time and energy forcing young children to say please, thank you and sorry, when their own behaviour was more important.

Why is it that so many people so uncomfortable with moral standards, moral judgments, and rewards and punishments? Can we expect to produce moral children when we banish morality from their development and focus on self-esteem and tolerance of bad behavior?

An article from the Australian Herald Sun on bullying.

Excerpt:

> BULLIES would escape punishment under a new Victorian plan to reduce schoolyard intimidation.
>
> Teachers have backed the idea but parents have raised concerns, saying bullies should face the consequences of their actions.
>
> The Swedish-devised "method of shared concern" aims to "empower" bullies to change their behaviour.
>
> […]Rather than being accused, suspected bullies are merely spoken to and encouraged to think of ways to help a bullied student cope.
>
> The hope is that an aggressor will be turned into a sympathetic ally.
>
> "The approach is solution-focused," a new government-commissioned report says.
>
> "The emphasis is about bringing about desirable changes in participants rather than finding who's to blame and applying sanctions."
>
> Victorian Education Union president Mary Bluett said the no-blame plan was in general a good "initial approach", but the burden would rest on school staff.
>
> It demonstrated why all schools needed trained counsellors, she said.

Why should adopt a policy based on "hope"? The article cites no research. Why believe that this permissive policy is good for children?

Related posts

- New study shows that children who are spanked are more successful
- The bullying problem in New Zealand schools
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- UK bill imposes restrictions on homechooling families
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- The economic implications of no-fault divorce
- Why two-parent are better for children
- Twenty-one reasons why marriage matters
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives

- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being

Arlen Specter tells Michele Bachmann to act like a lady in radio debate

January 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele Bachmann

Arlen Specter is a Democrat Senator from Pennsylvania.

Michele Bachmann is a Republican Congresswoman from Minnesota.

Bachmann tries to have debate with Specter, and Specter basically tells her to sit down and shut up.

This story is told in three videos. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

- First, the debate itself on 1210 AM's Dom Giordano Show in Philadelphia.
- Second, Michele's response to Specter's comments on Sean Hannity's radio show.
- Third, Michele's response to Specter's comments on Sean Hannity's TV show.

New book: James S. Spiegel's "The Making of an Atheist"

January 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Warning: Atheist readers of the Wintery Knight blog are forbidden to read this post. I forbid you! Forbid!

Here's the web site for the book. (H/T Cloud of Witnesses via Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

> Sigmund Freud famously dismissed belief in God as a psychological projection caused by wishful thinking. Today many of the "new atheists"—including Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens—make a similar claim, insisting that believers are delusional. Faith is a kind of cognitive disease, according to them. And they are doing all they can to rid the world of all religious belief and practice.
>
> Christian apologists, from Dinesh D'Souza to Ravi Zacharias, have been quick to respond to the new atheists, revealing holes in their arguments and showing why theistic belief, and the Christian worldview in particular, is reasonable. In fact, the evidence for God is overwhelming, confirming the Apostle Paul's point in Romans 1 that the reality of God is "clearly seen, being understood from what has been made so that men are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20, NIV).
>
> So if the evidence for God is so plain to see, then why are there atheists? That is the question that prompted The Making of an Atheist. The answer I propose turns the tables on the new atheists, as I show that unbelief is a psychological projection, a cognitive disorder arising from willful resistance to the evidence for God. In short, it is atheists who are the delusional ones.
>
> Unlike Dawkins and his ilk, I give an account as to how the delusion occurs, showing that atheistic rejection of God is precipitated by immoral indulgences, usually combined with some deep psychological disturbances, such as a broken relationship with one's father. I also show how atheists suffer from what I call "paradigm-induced blindness," as their worldview inhibits their ability to recognize the reality of God manifest in creation. These and other factors I discuss are among the various dimensions of sin's corrupting influence on the mind.

Nothing makes the Wintery Knight happier than seeing the truth of Romans 1 come out in encounters with atheists. I love to understand how atheists come to their atheism. What I am reading about this new book makes me think that Dr. Spiegel and I will be in broad agreement – but I still must know the details. And you should know it too – understanding atheism helps Christians to understand why they should not cave in the pressure to water down doctrine, e.g. – annihilationism, inclusivism, etc.

By the way, has anyone read R.C. Sproul's "If There is a God, Why Are There Atheists?"? I love that book. (No, I am not a Calvinist!) Christians need to get really comfortable with the reasons why people reject the Christian God in particular. This is the best book I've ever read on that topic. We really need to do a better job of calling atheists out on the real reasons for their unbelief. (Note: I never talk to individual atheists about their individual sins – just don't do that ever! But their speculations and unbelief are fair game)

Just last week I was dealing with an atheist who was trying to tell me how fair and balanced Rachel Maddow and Jon Stewart are. He also said that the Discovery Channel does a good job of exploring the historical Jesus, and that debates like the kind I recommend are woefully inadequate. One of my friends has a non-Christian father-in-law who is listening to Bart Ehrman lectures. I wonder if this father-in-law is open to watching Bart Ehrman defend his views in a formal debate? Probably not, *and that's my point*.

There seems to be a whole boatload of busy people trying to twist the material world into some sort of lasting happiness apart from God and autonomous from the moral law. They do not want to bow the knee to Christ, which is the *natural* result of any honest investigation. Instead they deliberately look for speculations to keep the real, living God at a distance. We need to be courageous about pointing out the real reasons why they are pushing a fair investigation into these matters away with both hands.

Note, if you are an atheist and you read my blog and you've seen a William Lane Craig debate, then I don't mean you. At least you were open-minded to some degree. But I'll tell you right now, that's only about 10% of the atheists I know. Atheists usually don't know because they don't want to know. That doesn't mean I don't love you, it just means you're not being fair with your investigation of these matters and I'm going to call you out.

By the way, Jim and Amy Spiegel operate a blog called Wisdom and Folly. It looks good.

Related posts

- The evidence for Christian theism and answers to common objections
- Debates and lectures on the Christian worlview
- Why atheism does not rationally ground moral values and moral duties

MUST-SEE: Marc Thiessen defends water-boarding against Christiane Amanpour

January 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The debate spans two videos. (H/T Newsbusters via ECM)

Part 1:

Part 2:

The transcript is here.

Here is a good part:

THIESSEN: Excuse me, Philippe. I thought you said we're not going to interrupt each other. Let me — it does. Let me tell you something. We – – we waterboarded in the CIA — the CIA waterboarded three terrorists, just three. Nobody waterboarded in Guantanamo. You know who else the U.S. government has waterboarded? Tens of thousands of American servicemembers during their SERE training.

We do not pull off their fingernails. We do not electrocute them with cattle prods. We do not pour hot oil down their nostrils or other forms of interrogation or do the things that were done to them in S-21. But we do waterboard them.

Do you not think, if waterboarding was torture, that one of those American servicemembers would have complained to his congressman, there would have been congressional hearings, and we would have — and it would have been banned by law? If we had been pulling off their fingernails, that would have happened.

And better still:

THIESSEN: But why would we give them Geneva Convention protections? They don't merit Geneva Conventions protections. They're terrorists.

The — the Geneva Conventions — this is one of the biggest myths about the Geneva Convention — it is not designed to govern the treatment of prisoners of war. It is designed to protect civilians, to get people to follow the laws of war. So if you give the same protections to someone who violates the laws of war as someone who follows them, you completely undermine the Geneva Conventions.

But the point is, these techniques, as applied by the CIA, produced intelligence that stopped a terrorist attack to blow up our consulate in Karachi, to blow up our Marine camp in Djibouti, to blow — for Al Qaida, who was — they were planning to hijack an airplane and fly it into Heathrow Airport and — and buildings in downtown London — I hope nowhere near your offices, Philippe — and they were planning to fly an airplane into Library Tower in — in — in Los Angeles.

So my question to Philippe is, which of these attacks would you prefer we hadn't stopped?

This debate really shows the ignorance of national security issues on radically leftist

propaganda networks like CNN. Facts are irrelevant to the left. They're ignorant of the way the world really works, and their job is to act as an arm of leftist political parties. Republicans are grown-ups and Democrats are children. Children who are going to get us killed because they are dangerously unqualified to protect us from terrorist attacks. In 2010, we need to vote as many children as possible out of office.

Supreme Court sides with Conservative Party against price-fixing monopoly

January 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Story here from the Vancouver Sun. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> The Canadian Wheat Board cannot spend money on advocacy to protect its monopoly, following a Supreme Court of Canada decision Thursday against hearing an appeal from the Winnipeg-based agency, which asserts that it has been silenced by the Conservative government.
>
> Without giving reasons, the high court declined the appeal application to a Federal Court of Appeal ruling that sided with the federal government in its 2006 order from then-agriculture minister Chuck Strahl for the board to refrain from spending its money on lobbying.
>
> […]The federal Conservatives are seeking to end the board's monopoly, which is controlled by farmers. The monopoly makes the agency one of the world's biggest exporters of wheat and barley.
>
> The board maintains that the monopoly ensures farmers receive the best prices for their grain, but the federal government, along with some farmers, say that they would be better off in a free market, selling their products on their own.

Conservatives are for a free market and competition, because we believe that it is the best way for consumers to get a low price and high quality. The proper role of government is to ensure that no organization or business enjoys monopoly status due to the government insulating them from competition. The Canadian Wheat Board is just one option, but farmers should have other choices to sell their product.

Capitalism is opposed to monopolies and it is the proper role of government to make sure that no government policy is set up to favor one corporation over any competitor. Let the farmers choose what is best for them. Choice and competition.

How serious is Obama about stopping the persecution of Christians abroad?

January 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from National Review. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> Connect these dots: In Nigeria this week, Muslim youths set fire to a church, killing more than two dozen Christian worshippers. In Egypt, Coptic Christians have been suffering increased persecution including, this month, a drive-by shooting outside a church in which seven people were murdered. In Pakistan, Christian churches were bombed over Christmas. In Turkey, authorities have been closing Christian churches, monasteries, and schools, and seizing Christian properties. Recently, churches in Malaysia have been attacked, too, provoked by this grievance: Christians inside the churches were referring to God as "Allah." How dare infidels use the same name for the Almighty as do Muslims!
>
> In response to all this, Western journalists, academics, diplomats, and politicians mainly avert their eyes and hold their tongues. They pretend there are no stories to be written, no social pathologies to be documented, no actions to be taken. They focus instead on Switzerland's vote against minarets and anything Israel might be doing to prevent terrorists from claiming additional victims.
>
> […]Not so long ago, the Broader Middle East was a diverse region. Lebanon had a Christian majority for centuries but that ended around 1990 — the result of years of civil war among the country's religious and ethnic communities. The Christian population of Turkey has diminished substantially in recent years. Islamists have driven Christians out of Bethlehem and other parts of the West Bank; almost all Christians have fled Gaza since Hamas's takeover.

Muddling has some pictures of a protest by Egyptian Coptic Christians in front of the United Nations building.

CNS News notes that Obama has yet to appoint an ambassador for international religious freedom.

Excerpt:

> One year after President Obama took office, the administration's top international religious freedom post remains empty, at a time when a wave of religious persecution is troubling veteran campaigners.
>
> "President Obama has not yet named an ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom," a State Department press officer confirmed by phone late Wednesday.
>
> The Christian advocacy organization Open Doors USA launched a petition

> Wednesday urging Obama to appoint an ambassador immediately, saying that leaving the position unfilled violated U.S. law.
>
> “By not having an ambassador-at-large for the past 12 months, the U.S. has failed to demonstrate the importance of religious freedom,” said advocacy director Lindsay Vessey.

The liberties of Christians and other persecuted religious minorities abroad must not be a real big blip on his secular leftist radar.

Church loses charitable status for speaking out on abortion and homosexuality

January 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the National Post.

Excerpt:

> A Calgary church has lost its charitable status in part because it spends too much of its time advocating on social issues such as abortion and marriage.
>
> In October, the Kings Glory Fellowship Association, a non-denominational Protestant group, was told by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) that for several reasons, including a lack of clarity on how it spends it money, they could no longer issue charitable receipts.
>
> But the letter highlighted that the group spent more than 10% of its time on "non-partisan political activities and therefore strayed into activities "outside its stated purpose."
>
> "We note … the members of the Board of Directors espouse strong negative vies about sensitive and controversial issues, which may also be viewed as political, such as abortion, homosexuality, divorce, etc."
>
> The CRA allows charitable organizations to spend some time on "political activities," but the cutoff is 10%. A spokesman for the CRA was not immediately available to explain how the percentage of time a group spends on non-charitable works is determined.
>
> Artur Pawlowski, the head of the Kings Glory Fellowship, said his group "has nothing to do with politics and we do not advertise for a party or a candidate. The only political activity you can connect us to is defending our right to speak."
>
> Mr. Pawlowski said the primary mission of his church is to feed homeless people. He said this group supplies food for about 150,000 a year, mainly to people "that no one else wants to deal with."
>
> "When we feed people we don't care whether they are homosexuals or have had abortions or been divorced but we preach what the Bible says about those issues."

This whole article is worth reading. I should note that Calgary is the most conservative city in Canada, but the CRA is a federal agency, which is filled with secular leftists who have no place in their worldview view for a right to free speech. Another reason why Canada is no longer ranked as one of the freest countries in the world for religious liberty.

UPDATE: We have a hate crimes bill in the United States so that certain things cannot be discussed, however civilly, in a public forum. There may be nothing wrong with your comment but even expressing disagreement with certain points of view is dangerous. If

you take the view of the government on certain moral issues, then no would can respond to you. If you disagree with the government on certain moral issues, then you’re in trouble. So we just can’t discuss these things here, which I think was the real point of the hate crimes law.

Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon

January 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video:

Oh, dear. And the scary thing is I don’t see any ideaological differences between Chavez and Obama. Obama is our Chavez.

The secular left takes aim at Canadian Christian universities

January 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Maclean's magazine had an article up about a group of Canadian university professors who are trying to shut down Christian universities for having a statement of faith that excludes non-Christians.

Here's an excerpt from the article.

> By most accounts, Trinity Western University, located in the Vancouver suburb Langley, is a respected member of the Canadian university community. It's long enjoyed the rubber stamp of approval that is being a member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, an organization that fills the vacuum created by Canada's lack of formal university accreditation. In 2004, the provincial government exempted the school from "detailed reviews of its degree programs," making Trinity Western the fourth member of an elite club of west coast universities alongside the University of British Columbia, the University of Victoria and Simon Fraser University. In fact, having been opened in 1962, the school is one year older than UVic. Trinity Western is also home to three research chairs and boasts over $1 million in annual research funding, impressive for a relatively small institution.
>
> Despite Trinity Western University's (TWU) near universal acceptance as a full-fledged university, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)—a union of sorts, representing faculty associations across the county, that has fought sometimes controversial fights over academic freedom since 1951—placed TWU on its blacklist of universities that violate academic freedom in October, effectively calling into question the school's dedication to the very heart of what it is to be a university. According to a CAUT report, because TWU—which describes itself as "a faith-based institution, one inspired by Christ's life and guided by his teachings"—submits its faculty to what CAUT calls a "faith test," it is violating academic freedom.
>
> The controversial faith test consists of a "Statement of Faith" that professors are required to sign annually and that outlines the "philosophical framework to which all faculty, staff and administration are committed without reservation." It includes a list of convictions to which professors must assert to subscribe, including belief in the bible, in one infinitely perfect god, that Jesus Christ was a real man, and in "the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment."

Another problem with Trintity is their insistence that there is such a thing as objective

truth:

> The academic calendar at TWU goes so far as to reject a definition of academic freedom that denies an established perspective: "Trinity Western University rejects as incompatible with human nature and relevational theism a definition of academic freedom which arbitrarily and exclusively requires pluralism without commitment, denies the existence of any fixed points of reference, maximizes the quest for truth to the extent of assuming it is never knowable, and implies an absolute freedom from moral and religious responsibility to its community." In other words, the university rejects relativism, which many academics would say is incompatible with the primary role of a university.

Isn't it ironic that it is the *secular left* universities that make debate impossible through a variety of heavy-handed mechanisms like speech codes, denial of tenure, etc. One only has to watch the movie "Expelled" or "Indoctrinate U", or read anything by Harold Morowtiz, to find out that it is the secular left that enforces a secular leftist orthodoxy on campus. And this is to say nothing of the secular leftist Human Rights Commissions that enforce political correctness on the society as a whole.

And here are some comments from Canadian Blogger Unambiguously Ambidextrous. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

> Trinity Western University received an A+ from the Globe and Mail's Canadian University Report for two years running, making it the only Canadian University to receive this distinction. It also received the highest ratings for student satisfaction, student-faculty interaction, teaching, class size, ease of course registration, campus atmosphere, and academic reputation. Is it at all possible that students learning in a homogeneously religious University might excel in ways that are academically superior to relativist and pluralist Universities? Perish the thought!

The postmodern secular leftist university has abandoned the search for truth, at least in non-technical fields, in favor of indoctrinating students with a host of "isms" that are never tested or debated. It's no surprise at all that Christian universities would produce the best students in non-technical fields – we're the only ones who care about what's really true!

France introduces bill to require boards of directors to be 40% female

January 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Times.

Excerpt:

> The French version of the glass ceiling has just been cracked open by parliamentary vote. With the backing of President Sarkozy's administration, the National Assembly last night passed a bill that aims to force big companies to appoint women to 40 percent of their seats on the board.
>
> […]Norway introduced a 40 percent rule in 2002 when women accounted for only 6 per cent of board seats there. Spain has also just passed a similar law.
>
> The measure will mean an upheaval because the boards of France's top companies remain male bastions, along with those of southern Europe (see chart below). Women occupy just 10.5 percent of board seats in the 650 publicly quoted companies to which the new law will apply. Corporations will have six years to reach the 40 percent mark. After that, all board appointments will be voided if they do not maintain at least a 60-40 share between men and women.

Women today seem to prefer a pay check and government social programs over relationships with husbands and children. A relationship means that the other person may say or do things that hurt you, and that they may make demands on you to act morally or to think rationally or to take care of others. I have heard the demands of men and children described as "harassment" by women, and compared unfavorably with workplace relationships. For some reason, women have decided that the workplace is less "harassment" than the family.

Women may still marry for the spectacle of the wedding. They may still have babies to play with and show off. (But the man should change the diapers). But the willingness to accept the demands of relationships is gone. Today's women think that life should be about their happiness all the time, and that no one should ever confront them with moral judgments and moral obligations. So a husband's demands for a woman to spend less will be met with a unilateral divorce. And a child's demands for attention will be met with day care.

Today's women are just *not interested* in communication, relationships, commitments, and nurturing.

Related posts

- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- Marriage under attack by the left in Australia and India
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden

- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- Jennifer Roback Morse evaluates the economics of no-fault divorce
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New study explains the best way for young people to avoid sexual risks
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day
- Has the decline of chastity and courtship hurt young people?
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children's sexual choices
- Twenty-one reasons why marriage matters
- The latest podcasts from Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being

200,000 pro-lifers march in Washington, D.C. at the 37th annual March for Life

January 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, we begin with the lovely pro-life ladies. Beautiful!

(Click for larger images)

More photos here, courtesy the Washington Times. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

And even MORE photos here from Newsbusters.

The Washington Times has the story.

Excerpt:

> Hundreds of thousands of pro-lifers protested the 37th anniversary of legalized

> abortion Friday, buoyed by polls and a recent Republican victory in Massachusetts that they said show public opinion may be finally swinging in their favor.
>
> […]Organizers estimated the crowd at the March for Life to number at least 200,000. A "virtual" march on Washington, hosted by Americans United for Life at http://www.virtualmarchforlife.com, attracted 74,925 "avatars" by late Friday afternoon. The March for Life marks the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision.
>
> After two hours of speeches from a variety of political and religious leaders, the mostly college-aged crowd marched up Constitution Avenue to the Supreme Court under hazy skies in 45-degree weather.
>
> Twenty-one members of Congress each took the podium to celebrate the current woes surrounding the Senate version of President Obama's health care bill, which opponents say would expand federally subsidized abortion. Due to the surprise election Tuesday of Massachusetts state Sen. Scott Brown to the late Edward M. Kennedy's U.S. Senate seat, Democrats are now one vote shy of the supermajority needed to overcome Republican filibusters.
>
> "The health care bill is dead," said Rep. Parker Griffith of Alabama, an oncologist who last month switched from the Democratic to the Republican Party. "They may be able to break off a piece or two but it was fundamentally bad."
>
> "There's been a huge turn in the country," said Rep. Chris Smith, New Jersey Republican. "Huge majorities are in our favor especially on funding of abortion. A lot of members of Congress have realized that the numbers have shifted."
>
> Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, a Republican from Spokane, Wash., spoke to the crowd with her 2-year-old son, Cole, draped across her shoulder. Saying the little boy has Down Syndrome, "We get to press the restart button and get the health bill we want," she said.

Speaking of Republicans, Neil Simpson had a nice comparison of how Republicans and Democrats compare on the issue of abortion. What have they done for the pro-life movement lately?

Congressman Mike Pence

Representative Mike Pence had a nice op-ed on his web site about the pro-life issue. He first reviews everything that Obama is doing to increase the number of abortions that have occured in the United States (50 million since Roe v. Wade), but then he switches to a diffferent line of argument.

Excerpt:

> William Wilberforce, a central figure in the fight to end the slave trade in Great Britain, understood that to win a moral victory he needed to persuade the hearts and minds of the people, as well as end public policies that supported the objectionable trade. Wilberforce defeated the slave trade by bringing an end to

> the financial gains it enjoyed.
>
> If we are going to end abortion we must bring an end to abortion profiteering. And we cannot end abortion in this country so long as the American taxpayer is forced to be the largest financial supporter of abortion.
>
> Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in America, performed more than 305,000 abortions in 2007. That same year, Planned Parenthood received hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars, either through federal, state or local assistance. This is unacceptable. Now is the time to deny federal funding to Planned Parenthood.
>
> To that end, I will continue to introduce legislation in Congress that will restrict any federal family planning funds from going to organizations like Planned Parenthood that promote or perform abortions. I will seize every opportunity to bring this proposal before Congress until the people's House respects the will of the American people and ends taxpayer subsidized abortion.
>
> William Wilberforce committed his life to a cause that would "extinguish every trace of this bloody traffic" in human life and said that "posterity, looking back to the history of these enlightened times will scarce believe that it has been suffered to exist so long a disgrace and dishonor to this country."

A noble plan, but so far the Democrats keep voting him down. I like his plan because you often hear from some people that we need to transfer more wealth to women who want to become single mothers. But extra-marital sex and single motherhood is not good for children, either. Instead, we need to stop government from subsidizing irresponsible sexual activity. That's my personal view, anyway. I'm chaste, and one the secondary reasons why I am chaste is so that I do not hurt women or children.

I think that cutting subsidies for Planned Parethood and making women pay every penny for their abortions may cause them to think twice. It also may be a good idea to pass a 300% sales tax on abortions *and to force the father to pay for half of the abortion, too.* That would get parents involved, for sure. If there's no more money in it for Planned Parenthood, and no political contributions from Planned Parenthood for the Democrats, then abortion would stop pretty fast.

You can see Mike Pence's speech here:

I must note that Mike Pence is an evangelical Protestant Christian, as am I, and as is William Wilberforce. But evangelical Protestant Christians are not the only ones who are pro-life.

Check out this quote from the Washington Times article I linked to above:

> Three Orthodox Jewish rabbis came on stage to blow a shofar — a ram's horn used to welcome in the Jewish New Year — and encourage listeners to have more children.
>
> "The selfish liberals are not reproducing," Brooklyn Rabbi Yehuda Levin said. "We Orthodox Jews are bringing in 7-14 children into a family. You too can have a holy

> baby."
>
> Speaking of the nation's governors, "We have enough killing pharaohs in power," he said. "Who'll be the Moses to let our babies grow?"

It's like everybody is pro-life except for Obama and the Democrats on the secular left. (See Is Obama a pro-life or pro-abortion President?).

What does Obama think about abortion?

President Obama's statement on Supreme Court's historic abortion decision. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

> *Today we recognize the 37th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade, which affirms every woman's fundamental constitutional right to choose whether to have an abortion, as well as each American's right to privacy from government intrusion. I have, and continue to, support these constitutional rights.*
>
> *I also remain committed to working with people of good will to prevent unintended pregnancies, support pregnant women and families, and strengthen the adoption system.*
>
> *Today and every day, we must strive to ensure that all women have limitless opportunities to fulfill their dreams.*

Muddling paraphrases Obama's statement:

> *When a baby is detected growing in a mother's womb, a mother is confronted with a serious choice of whether or not to kill her baby. Uppermost in a mother's consideration must be the high probability that a child will limit her opportunities to fulfill her dreams. That being the case, it is perfectly acceptable to torture and kill the child via a variety of currently employed methods. Priorities are priorities.*

I think we as Christians need to make sure that we vote to protect innocent children from violence, although that is NOT what many of us did in the 2008 election by voting for Obama. Please talk to your neighbors about abortion. (See links at the bottom of this post to learn how). By the way, Neil Simpson has a nice post up about whether the Bible supports abortion.

The mainstream media response

The mainstream media are apparently so clueless that they not only do not cover the event, but some of the feminists apparently think that this is a *pro-abortion event*. Newsbusters notes that CNN's Rick Sanchez is not able to tell whether the March for LIFE is a pro-life or pro-abortion event. The American Spectator explains how Newsweek also seems to think it is a pro-abortion event. (H/T Nice Deb)

Related posts

- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position

- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring two great pro-life debaters, Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama’s plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

Chairman of UN's IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash

January 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Times. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> The chairman of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has used bogus claims that Himalayan glaciers were melting to win grants worth hundreds of thousands of pounds.
>
> Rajendra Pachauri's Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), based in New Delhi, was awarded up to £310,000 by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the lion's share of a £2.5m EU grant funded by European taxpayers.
>
> It means that EU taxpayers are funding research into a scientific claim about glaciers that any ice researcher should immediately recognise as bogus. The revelation comes just a week after The Sunday Times highlighted serious scientific flaws in the IPCC's 2007 benchmark report on the likely impacts of global warming.
>
> The IPCC had warned that climate change was likely to melt most of the Himalayan glaciers by 2035 – an idea considered ludicrous by most glaciologists. Last week a humbled IPCC retracted that claim and corrected its report.
>
> Since then, however, The Sunday Times has discovered that the same bogus claim has been cited in grant applications for TERI.
>
> One of them, announced earlier this month just before the scandal broke, resulted in a £310,000 grant from Carnegie.

What about Syed Hasnain, who was the source of the now discredited claim?

> The same release also quoted Dr Syed Hasnain, the glaciologist who, back in 1999, made the now discredited claim that Himalayan glaciers would be gone by

> 2035.
>
> He now heads Pachauri's glaciology unit at TERI which sought the grants and which is carrying out the glacier research.
>
> Critics point out that Hasnain, of all people, should have known the claim that the Himalayan glaciers could melt by 2035 was bogus because he was meant to be a leading glaciologist specialising in the Himalayas.

Last week's story about Himalayan glaciers is here.

Related stories

- Britain to be hit by coldest winter in 100 years
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal
- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline
- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- The state of the debate about catastrophic man-made global warming
- Peer-reviewed article in journal Science says solar activity impacts climate
- Famous UN IPCC hockey stick graph is based on cherry-picked data
- Princeton physics professor testifies to Senate about global warming
- Global warming advocates refuse to give their data to skeptics
- Article in journal Science says prior ice melting caused by solar variation
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Global warming is not caused by humans

Access Research Network’s top 10 science stories of 2009

January 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s the list from ARN, one of my favorite sites on intelligent design.

Here’s my summary:

15. Gene regulatory networks in cell nuclei are similar to cloud computing networks
14. Molecular motors in the cell operate in a coordinated manner
13. White blood cells use legs for gripping, moving and reading distress signals
12. A failed attempt to defeat the argument for irreducible complexity
11. Rapid formation of early galaxies
10. Reverse-engineering of designs in biology for use in human inventions
9. Peppered moths go back to light-gray from black
8. The deflated excitement over Ardi
7. The deflated excitement over Ida
6. The Cambrian explosion defies materialist explanation
5. The edge of evolution confirmed by experiment
4. Genomics destroys the modern sythesis hypothesis
3. The emergence of holisitic explanations in biology
2. Signature in the Cell is released to high acclaim
1. New peer-reviewed paper on ID by Dembski and Marks

Podcasts!

ID the Future has three podcasts going over the stories, if you prefer to listen instead of read.

- Numbers 10 through 15 (MP3)
- Numbers 6 through 10 (MP3)
- Numbers 1 through 5 (MP3)

Mark Steyn writes the meanest thing ever written about Obama

January 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review. (H/T Caffeinated Thoughts)

Excerpt:

> In that interview about how he hadn't given enough interviews, he also explained to George Stephanopoulos what that wacky Massachusetts election was all about:"The same thing that swept Scott Brown into office swept me into office," said Obama. "People are angry and they're frustrated, not just because of what's happened in the last year or two years but what's happened over the last eight years."
>
> Got it. People are so angry and frustrated at George W. Bush that they're voting for Republicans. In Massachusetts.

And:

> The defining moment of his doomed attempt to prop up Martha Coakley was his peculiar obsession with Scott Brown's five-year-old pickup:
>
> "Forget the ads. Everybody can run slick ads," the president told an audience of out-of-state students at a private school. "Forget the truck. Everybody can buy a truck."
>
> How they laughed! But what was striking was the thinking behind Obama's line: that anyone can buy a truck for a slick ad, that Brown's pickup was a prop…
>
> […]Howard Fineman, the increasingly loopy editor of the increasingly doomed *Newsweek*, took it a step further. The truck wasn't just any old prop but a very particular kind: "In some places, there are codes, there are images," he told MSNBC's Keith Olbermann. "You know, there are pickup trucks, you could say there was a racial aspect to it one way or another."
>
> Ah, yes. Scott Brown has over 200,000 miles on his odometer. Man, he's racked up a lot of coded racism on that rig. But that's easy to do in notorious cross-burning KKK swamps like suburban Massachusetts.

I only link to this because now everything I write will seem nice by comparison.

MUST-READ: How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women

January 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the The Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> There's been a 145% rise in unmarried births among college-educated women since 1980, more than twice the increase in such births among women without college educations. That's just births; adoptions are another outlet for women seeking families on their own. But there's a largely unexplored part to this story: Why is this happening?
>
> Part of the answer is found in a Pew Research Center report released this week: A sea change in relationships is taking place as everyone adjusts to the new reality of women being better educated and in some cases more preferred than men in the workforce. Especially unsettling to some men is their role as second-best earner in the family. As the Pew report documents, 22% of men with "some college" are now outearned by their wives, up from 4% in 1970.
>
> […]Women are feeling the pinch from years of gender imbalances on college campuses, where today nearly 58% of all bachelor's degrees and 62% of associate's degrees are earned by women. Given that women prefer to find a well-educated, reliable earner as a husband, this creates a simple math problem. Well-educated women can't find enough equally or better-educated men to marry.
>
> Couple the education gap with the current economic "man-cession"—as many as 80% of the jobs lost in the recession were held by men—and the dilemma for single women becomes even worse. Today, more and more well-educated women have to ask themselves: Am I willing to "marry down"?

As I've written about before, the reason why men are not able to do well in school is because they are discriminated against by the teachers, legislators and educrats. There are almost no male teachers. Men do better with male teachers. But there is a fear among educrats of male teachers getting near children, so boys end up suffering. Affirmative action keeps many men from attending college. And then of course in the workplace, companies have quotas to fill, which shuts even more men out of jobs.

Children need to have a mother and father, and the father typically gets his authority and his role by being the primary earner. What women have done is that they have decided that it is a better idea to compete with the man for money. But this undermines the man's authority in the home. Why would a man get married only to have his influence diluted? The threat of false charges of domestic violence or of a unilateral divorce can also easily be used to control and silence him. Why try to lead a family if you are going to

be silenced and coerced?

More importantly, the more that a woman focuses on vocational skills, the less time she has for reading about marriage, education, economics and parenting, e.g. – Jennifer Roback Morse, Laura Schlessinger, Maggie Gallagher, Stephen Baskerville, etc. If a man is a software engineer, the last thing he wants in the home is another software engineer. A mother needs to teach the children everything they need to know to succeed and to have a relationship with God that will stay with them as they grow. And she must also be able to talk to her husband about his interests, like science, economics, politics, theology and apologetics.

And it's not just a question of having the right knowledge. It's a question of character. She has to make choices and have experiences all along the way to build up the capacity to care, nurture and communicate. That means actually doing things that cause her to become comfortable caring for others even when it goes against her own selfish interests. Being selfish disqualifies a women from being marriage material. Instead of being focused on making money, women should be studying how husbands and children work.

And I think this is why women are so anxious to throw themselves at men sexually. They are trying to get men to love them without actually having to care about men, marriage or children. They don't want to have to take on the traditional role of mother and wife, which is what causes a man to love and need a woman in the first place. But a woman cannot make a man love her by tricking him with sex. Women can only make men love them by being willing to encourage and support him in his plan to serve God and to raise children who also know God and serve God. It's a relationship, not a slot machine.

NOTE: When I say that women should be more focused on children, I mean while the children are not yet all in school. Once they are all in school, then women can go back to work full-time, or part-time, or work out of the home, whatever they want to do.

Related posts

- France introduces bill to require boards of directors to be 40% female
- France passes law to jail spouses who commit psychological violence
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- Marriage under attack by the left in Australia and India
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
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- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
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- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New study explains the best way for young people to avoid sexual risks
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day
- Has the decline of chastity and courtship hurt young people?

- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children’s sexual choices
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being

Canadian federal government defunds anti-Israel organizations

January 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephen Harper: not a primping peacock bitterly clinging to his teleprompter

Story from the National Post. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> Since last fall, the federal Conservative government has been withdrawing taxpayer funding from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that use their grants to take sides against Israel in the Middle East conflict. Now comes word that last week, Ottawa told the United Nations it would no longer fund the world body's Palestinian refugee agency. From now on, Canadian aid to Palestinians will be directed to specific projects. We will no longer give lump-sum aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA), since most of that money simply goes straight into the Palestinian Authority's (PA) general treasury, where it might be used for humanitarian projects or might be used to arm and train terrorists.
>
> This is a bold move for Ottawa, which is the first Western government to cut off funding for UNWRA.
>
> Although UNWRA has long been a biased player in the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is seldom criticized for its incitement of anti-Israeli hatred and violence by Palestinians. It has funded textbooks that deny the right of Israel to exist and paid teachers who call on Palestinian children to push the Jewish state into the

> sea. It harbours radical Islamists and anti-Semites on its payroll and was even caught in 2004 using its own ambulances to ferry terrorists away from Israeli sites they had just attacked.
>
> […]Ottawa also announced it would defund Alternatives, a Montreal NGO that two summers ago organized an education camp in Quebec, welcoming “500 motivated militants” from Lebanon, Iraq, “Palestine” and Venezuela.
>
> International Development Minister Bev Oda withdrew $7-million in tax dollars, too, from KAIROS, an “ecumenical partnership” that had adopted a vehemently anti-Israel policy and been at the forefront of boycotts against the importation of Israeli goods and visits by Israeli professors.

Now there is some real leadership on foreign policy, from prime minister Stephen Harper.

Brian Auten interviews Jim Wallace of Please Convince Me

January 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this on Apologetics 315. This is really well done.

The MP3 file is here. (43 minutes)

Details from Brian's post:

> Today's interview is with Jim Wallace of PleaseConvinceMe.com and host of the PleaseConvinceMe Podcast. As a cold case detective, Jim brings a unique perspective to his approach to apologetics and a very down-to-earth logical style. In this interview, Jim talks about his approach to the evidence (inference to the best explanation), Tactics[image] and apologetics, debate vs. dialogue, pitfalls to apologists, and more.

Topics:

- Jim's background as an Catholic-raised atheist, and cold-case detective
- Jim believed in the progress of science to answer all the unresolved questions
- How did Jim become an atheist?
- Why didn't Jim respond to Christians witnessing to him without evidence?
- What approach worked to start him thinking about becoming a Christian?
- What did Jim do to grow as a Christian?
- How did Jim's police training help him to investigate Christianity?
- What investigative approach is used in his police work?
- Does "abductive reasoning" also work for investigating Christianity?
- What sort of activities did Jim get involved in in his community?
- How Jim's experience as a youth pastor convinced him of the value of apologetics
- How young people learn best by training for engagement with opponents
- How Jim takes his youth on mission trips to UC Berkeley to engage the students
- Is it possible to run an apologetics ministry part-time while keeping a day job?
- Do you have to be an expert in order to have an apologetics ministry?
- What books would Jim recommend to beginning apologists?
- How the popular apologist can have an even bigger impact than the scholar
- How the tactical approach is different for debates and conversations
- Jim's advice for Christians who are interested in learning apologetics
- How Christian apologist need to make sure they remain humble and open-minded
- How your audience determines how much you need to know from study

Jim's reason for becoming an atheist, (his mother was excluded from the Catholic church after her divorce), is one I have heard before. Without saying anything about the Catholic church's policy. I like the way he eventually came back to Christianity. No big emotional

crisis, just taking a sober second look at the evidence by himself, and talking with his Christian friends. I’m impressed with the way he has such a productive ministry, as well.

MUST-SEE: The John Maynard Keynes vs Friedrich A. Hayek rap video

January 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from ECM.

I watched this about a half-dozen times so far. It's awesome! I love it!

I'm sure it will come as no surprise to everyone that I come out on Hayek's side on this debate. I like the Austrian School of Economics. I'm a supply-sider. I believe in the free market, free trade, private property, saving and investing, entrepreneurship, distributed power, small government, and freedom from government intervention.

Who was F.A. Hayek?

F.A. Hayek was the greatest economist of the 20th century. He won the Nobel prize in Economics. His greatest works are "The Road to Serfdom", "The Constitution of Liberty", and "The Fatal Conceit". If you take a look at the list of the top 10 books that all conservatives should read, you will see that The Road to Serfdom is #1 and The Constitution of Liberty is #10 on the list.

And lucky you, because you can find a free condensed version of the Road to Serfdom here.

But wait! There's more!

This is part 1 of a 3 part series produced for PBS called "The Command Heights: The Battle for the World Economy". But the only part you need to watch to learn about Keynes and Hayek is part 1, which is 2 hours long.

This video is basically a history of the 20th century from the point of view of an economist. This is a must see for you young people who don't know who Reagan and Thatcher were. These two leaders were the greatest defenders of freedom in the 20th century, along with Winston Churchill. And they're both solid Christians, acting from a Christian and capitalist worldview that valued liberty, security and prosperity.

Today, Stephen Harper, the prime minister of Canada, best embodies the free-market, freedom-loving ideas of Hayek, while Barack Obama embodies the big-government, deficit-spending ideas of Keynes. Guess which economy is doing better?

What did Pope Pius XII do to protect the Jewish people in Nazi Germany?

January 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. (H/T Lex Communis)

Excerpt:

> During the war, the pope was far from silent: In numerous speeches and encyclicals, he championed human rights for all people and called on the belligerent nations to respect the rights of all civilians and prisoners of war. Unlike many of the pope's latter-day detractors, the Nazis understood him very well. After studying Pius XII's 1942 Christmas message, the Reich Central Security Office concluded: "In a manner never known before the pope has repudiated the National Socialist New European Order … Here he is virtually accusing the German people of injustice toward the Jews and makes himself the mouthpiece of the Jewish war criminals." (Pick up any book that criticizes Pius XII, and you won't find any mention of this important report.)
>
> In early 1940, the pope acted as an intermediary between a group of German generals who wanted to overthrow Hitler and the British government. Although the conspiracy never went forward, Pius XII kept in close contact with the German resistance and heard about two other plots against Hitler. In the fall of 1941, through diplomatic channels, the pope agreed with Franklin Delano Roosevelt that America's Catholics could support the president's plans to extend military aid to the Soviet Union after it was invaded by the Nazis. On behalf of the Vatican, John T. McNicholas, the archbishop of Cincinnati, Ohio, delivered a well-publicized address that explained that the extension of assistance to the Soviets could be morally justified because it helped the Russian people, who were the innocent victims of German aggression.
>
> Throughout the war, the pope's deputies frequently ordered the Vatican's diplomatic representatives in many Nazi-occupied and Axis countries to intervene on behalf of endangered Jews. Up until Pius XII's death in 1958, many Jewish organizations, newspapers and leaders lauded his efforts. To cite one of many examples, in his April 7, 1944, letter to the papal nuncio in Romania, Alexander Shafran, chief rabbi of Bucharest, wrote: "It is not easy for us to find the right words to express the warmth and consolation we experienced because of the concern of the supreme pontiff, who offered a large sum to relieve the sufferings of deported Jews … The Jews of Romania will never forget these facts of historic importance."

Lots more about the preceding Pope (Pius XI) at the main article.

Just for the record, I'm an evangelical Protestant, not a Roman Catholic.

Related Posts

- Was Nazi torturer Josef Mengele influenced by Christianity or Darwinism?
- Does the Bible condone slavery?
- Was Hitler a Christian? Is Nazism similar to Christianity?
- Another way that the secular left kills millions of people
- Should atheists or Christians be blamed for communism's 100 million deaths?
- Who is more responsible for the mass murders of history? Christians or atheists?
- Contrasting the moral values of an authentic Christian with an authentic Darwinist
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Atheism, Christianity and the problem of evil and suffering
- Can atheists be moral?

How the UN's IPCC cites non-scientific claims from the World Wildlife Fund

January 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rajendra Pachauri

Here's an article from the BBC about the IPCC's latest shenanigans. (H/T Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

Excerpt:

> *But the flood gates really opened after the IPCC had to withdraw its claim that the Himalayan glaciers would likely all have melted by 2035, maybe even sooner.*
>
> *This turned out to have no basis in scientific fact, even though everything the IPCC produces is meant to be rigorously peer-reviewed, but simply an error recycled by the [World Wildlife Fund], which the IPCC swallowed whole….*
>
> *Then at the weekend another howler was exposed. The IPCC 2007 report claimed that global warming was leading to an increase in extreme weather, such as hurricanes and floods. Like its claims about the glaciers, this was also based on an unpublished report which had not been subject to scientific scrutiny — indeed several experts warned the IPCC not to rely on it.*
>
> *Now after Climate-gate, Glacier-gate and Hurricane-gate — how many "gates" can one report contain? — comes Amazon-gate. The IPCC claimed that up to 40 percent of the Amazonian forests were risk from global warming and would likely be replaced by "tropical savannas" if temperatures continued to rise.*
>
> *This claim is backed up by a scientific-looking reference but on closer investigation turns out to be yet another non-peer reviewed piece of work from the WWF. Indeed the two authors are not even scientists or specialists on the Amazon: one is an Australian policy analyst, the other a freelance journalist for the Guardian and a green activist.*

Got that? The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is publicizing

conclusions that are designed to re-organize our entire way of life, and their evidence for this is not rooted in any repeatable scientific study.

More details are emerging

Consider this article from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Secondhand Smoke)

Excerpt:

> The scientist behind the bogus claim in a Nobel Prize-winning UN report that Himalayan glaciers will have melted by 2035 last night admitted it was included purely to put political pressure on world leaders. Dr Murari Lal also said he was well aware the statement, in the 2007 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), did not rest on peer-reviewed scientific research. In an interview with The Mail on Sunday, Dr Lal, the co-ordinating lead author of the report's chapter on Asia, said: 'It related to several countries in this region and their water sources. We thought that if we can highlight it, it will impact policy-makers and politicians and encourage them to take some concrete action. 'It had importance for the region, so we thought we should put it in.'

And this one from the Vancouver Sun. (H/T Secondhand Smoke)

Excerpt:

> In the 1970s, nearly 600 Canadian weather stations fed surface temperature readings into a global database assembled by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Today, NOAA only collects data from 35 stations across Canada. Worse, only one station — at Eureka on Ellesmere Island — is now used by NOAA as a temperature gauge for all Canadian territory above the Arctic Circle.
>
> The Canadian government, meanwhile, operates 1,400 surface weather stations across the country, and more than 100 above the Arctic Circle, according to Environment Canada. Yet as American researchers Joseph D'Aleo, a meteorologist, and E. Michael Smith, a computer programmer, point out in a study published on the website of the Science and Public Policy Institute, NOAA uses "just one thermometer [for measuring] everything north of latitude 65 degrees."

Is that science?

What counts as knowledge?

Plato, in his dialogue Theatetus, says that knowledge is justified, true belief. And one of the ways you know that you are justified in your belief is by listening to the best arguments from the best scholars who *disagree with you.*

The American Spectator writes:

> Yep, this is the "scientific consensus" that Al Gore based his post-VP life upon; the imagined groundswell that so many politicians used to justify government

> growth; the nonexistent evidence that journalists cited to justify their alarmism activism. It's the two words that every global warmist (whether lying or deceived themselves) threw in the face of skeptics in an attempt to intimidate. Didn't work!
>
> No wonder why hardly any of them wanted to debate and those who did got slaughtered. We tried to explain that the "consensus" was an illusion. You — yes, I'm talking about you, Society of Environmental Journalists — would have none of it.

If you can't make a case against your own point of view by citing the best scholars on the other side respectfully, then you don't have knowledge. You just have an opinion. Even scientism, empiricism and naturalism need to be justified in order to be counted as knowledge. You don't have to agree with those opposing scholars, you just have to understand them, and you have to not hate them, and you have to not believe nonsense about their motives just because you hate them so much. The job of journalists and educators is to present EVERY claim to knowledge as a conflict between opposing views, regardless of whether it's global warming, abortion, same-sex marriage, or Darwinism.

For my Christian readers, this epistemology comes straight from the Bible in Proverbs 18:17:

17 The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him.

For God's sake, please read that verse and think about it. Apply it to your lives. Find someone who disagrees with you and talk to them about why they believe what they believe. It's OK to think you're right, it's OK to think you have the truth. But it's not OK to be ignorant and dismissive of the best case against your view.

MUST-READ: J.P. Moreland's argument for theism from consciousness

January 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from Thinking Matters New Zealand.

Excerpt:

> Last year, the release of J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig's *Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology* saw a lot of attention. And quite rightly. The *Companion* marshalled some of most cutting-edge work in the field of the philosophy of religion and showed why natural theology is fast becoming an exciting scholarly domain again. But in the shadow of the *Companion*'s release, another of Moreland's works was published: *The Recalcitrant Imago Dei: Human Persons and the Failure of Naturalism*. Although it might not have got the same amount of attention, *The Recalcitrant Imago Dei* also represented an important entry in the contest of ideas and a powerful defense of theism. In it, Moreland argues for the theistic position by way of a stinging attack on naturalism and its failure to answer the problem of consciousness and account for the basic facts of human experience, such as free will, rationality, and intrinsic value.

And here's the formal argument:

> 1. Genuinely non-physical mental states exist.
>
> 2. There is an explanation for the existence of mental states.
>
> 3. Personal explanation is different from natural scientific explanation.
>
> 4. The explanation for the existence of mental states is either a personal or natural scientific explanation.
>
> 5. The explanation is not a natural scientific one.
>
> Therefore
>
> 6. The explanation is a personal one.
>
> 7. If the explanation is personal, then it is theistic.
>
> Therefore
>
> 8. The explanation [for the existence of mental states] is theistic.

That's the argument. Each of the premises needs to be more likely than not for the argument to go through. And you can read about how each premise is supported in this helpful post from Bill Vallicella at Prosblogion. This is good little argument to ad to your quiver of scientific arguments. I think this argument and moral argument are two nice little philosophical arguments that show that theism is the necessary starting point for morality and rationality. Particles in motion will not do the job.

I actually learned about this argument by reading chapter 3 of "Scaling the Secular City",

and listening to J.P. Moreland lectures. If you want to learn about this argument in a lecture, try this one. This is one of my favorite lectures. It was delivered at the University of Georgia. That's the one I use when I'm training this argument, along with his lecture on "The Invisible Man" for Stand to Reason's Masters Series, which is also good. Moreland also does public debates.

I notice that the new book mentioned above is quite expensive, and you'd be better off buying "Body and Soul" and "Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview". SPCK is an academic press and so their books are very expensive, compared to IVP.

Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel

January 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Beyond Che Guevara t-shirts: the reality of life under communist rule
Story here from Fox News. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> Police and supporters of President Hugo Chavez clashed with students in cities across the country Monday during protests over the government forcing an opposition channel off cable TV. Two youths were reported killed and 16 people suffered injuries.
>
> […]The biggest confrontation occured in Caracas, where police fired tear gas and plastic bullets to scatter thousands of students who tried to march on the headquarters of Venezuela's state-run telecommunications agency. At least six demonstrators and a journalist were treated for injuries.
>
> Diaz told the state-run ABN news agency that the shooting victim was a high school student named Jossimir Carrillo Torres. Nine police officers were injured in the melee, El Aissami said.
>
> Demonstrations erupted over the government ordering cable companies to drop Radio Caracas Television Internacional early Sunday. RCTV had defied new rules requiring local cable channels to carry mandatory programming, including some of Chavez's speeches.
>
> Police fired tear gas as protesting students tried to approach the headquarters of the state telecommunications agency, where several hud minor injures or breathing problems from tear gas during Monday protest in the capital, said Enrique Montbrun, director of health services in the capital's Baruta district. Caracas Police Chief Carlos Meza said a government supporter was hurt when hit in the face with a bottle or rock. A journalist working for AP Television News suffered minor head injuries from a hurled object.

> Press freedom organizations and Roman Catholic leaders condemned RCTV's removal from cable, calling it part of a broader effort to mute government critics.

It's the standard development of communism, right before your eyes. This is how it happened in Cuba, North Korea, and everywhere else where a charismatic leader tricked the people into thinking that stolen bread from their neighbor tastes sweeter than bread bought with money earned from the sweat of their own brow. This is the way communism has always worked. Educate the masses into imbecility with slogans like "no blood for oil" and "tax cuts for the rich" and "save the planet", then step in and take control of private industry. Thus, the free market dies, and freedom of choice dies with it.

Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez

Hey, you know who really likes communist dictators like Hugo Chavez?

Hey man, race you down the road to serfdom!
Remember, Obama had nothing helpful to say about pro-democracy protestors in Iran and Honduras. He seems to get along well with communists, theocrats, and fascists.

What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?

January 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, take a look at this video of Michele Bachmann discussing her little debate with Democrat Arlen Specter, and keep a count of the things that she does that strike you as admirable.

What do we learn from this video?

My biggest problem in trying to get along with SOME women is the fact that I feel enormous pressure to only say things that women agree with. They only want to hear compliments, never criticisms. But I don't like that – I want the freedom to be myself and to say whatever I want.

In a recent post that I was talking about William Lane Craig's advice on how to have a happy marriage. He recommended that couples learn how to argue properly. And I think in that video we learn several tips on how to argue properly.

Here are some questions to ask about this video:

- Does Michele feel offended or victimized during the debate?
- Does Michele lose her temper during the debate?
- Does Michele make gender an issue during the debate?
- Does Michele focus more on arguments/evidence or feelings/motives?
- Does Michele accept apologies and try to move on?

For me, a fun thing to do with a woman is to get into a good argument without having to censor myself. This happened to me recently where I was getting into some very long debates with a woman I really liked and the more I was able to be myself and have her not censor me, the more I just wanted to grab her and hug her. It became a really powerful feeling that I had a LOT of trouble resisting.

I distinctly remember at one point we were having a real scrap and I was pleading with her every hour to see whether she was feeling OK with the degree of sustained disagreement that we were engaging in, and I'll never ever forget what she said. She said that she was fine, but that she was willing to stop *if I needed a break*. We had been debating a bunch of things for about three hours. (a typical date)

The experience of being myself and being accepted is so different than what I hear other men saying about women that it really makes me sad. It turns out that men lie a lot to women in relationships – telling them what they want to hear and hiding their real views in order to get sex. I just think this is demeaning to women *and men*. A much better idea is to argue it out with her and treat her as an equal.

And that doesn't mean that there is no place for *feelings*. I remember one day this woman tried to clobber me on some obscure point of theology and she took a very

adversarial tack. And I was surprised that I just felt wounded and attacked, so I asked her to adjust her approach, and she did. So I do think that there is a time for talking about feelings, but not to use them as an argument.

I think that when a person is hurt (male or female), the thing to do is to get the other person a gift, and have them sit down with the gift and then you explain to them that you love them and that something they said or did hurt you and explain how it made you feel. But I don't think that hurt feelings should be used as a substitute for an argument *in* a debate. Debates should be about truth, not who "wins".

So the main point I am trying to make is that the way that a woman approaches debates can actually be a powerful way of getting a man to really like her. The experience of being able to be yourself with a woman and to express your views in a heated discussion without getting attacked or censored by her is exciting and addictive. It makes a man like a woman because he feels that she understands him.

Consider these wise words:

There is nothing more exhilarating than to be shot at without result.
– Winston Churchill

Women have the capacity to make a man like them without having to resort to sex. One last point – I also think that the experience of leading another person to try something new that's morally good or serves God's interests can also be a bonding experience.

Related posts

- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- What is the meaning of white roses?
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- The Wintery Knight's greatest fears about the future
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Obama’s spending freeze saves 250 billion out of 43 trillion in spending over 10 years

January 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The latest idea for reining in the federal government’s runaway spending is to “freeze” nondefense discretionary outlays for three years. That may sound good, but it’s just another gimmick.
>
> We try not to be too cynical about politics, but the White House’s proposed freeze will do nothing to address America’s budget problems.
>
> Last year alone, the U.S. deficit hit $1.4 trillion on record spending of $3.7 trillion. The freeze will apply only to $447 billion in spending — just 12% of the total. Next year, if the freeze goes into effect, it will save just $15 billion — and $250 billion over 10 years.
>
> Compared with the $9 trillion in new debt and $43 trillion in spending expected over the next decade, it’s a pittance — not even a down payment on our gaping shortfalls.
>
> […]According to the CBO, the $250 billion in savings amounts to a negligible 0.5% of the $43 trillion in spending over the next decade. But it will no doubt be put to good political use, as congressional Democrats suddenly style themselves as fiscal conservatives during the 2010 campaign for passing a meaningless freeze.

Let me be clear. Obama never has been a fiscal conservative, and he isn’t going to start to be one now. It’s just words on a teleprompter that he reads so that you stop calling your representatives.

Video of William Lane Craig explaining the Kalam cosmological argument

January 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the video from his appearance at Saddleback Church (Rick Warren) that got such a big response. Saddleback is a pretty ordinary church, which lots of people with different levels of knowledge. How did Bill explain the Kalam argument to so many different ordinary people?

Watch and see!

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Part 4:

You can also find a more technical version of the lecture here. This version is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Craig has previously debated Stenger and Tooley. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A of this lecture.

You might also be interested in this exchange in which William Lane Craig takes on prominent atheist Daniel Dennett.

Related posts

- Kalam cosmological argument
- Fine-tuning of cosmological constants
- Galactic, stellar and planetary fine-tuning
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion

MUST-SEE: CNN’s Jack Cafferty blasts Pelosi for wasting taxpayer money on junkets

January 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s Jack Cafferty again!

I found that video on Newsbusters.

His previous rant against Pelosi is here:

Wow, he’s not a happy camper.

Conservative Marco Rubio now leading liberal Charlie Crist 47 to 44

January 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

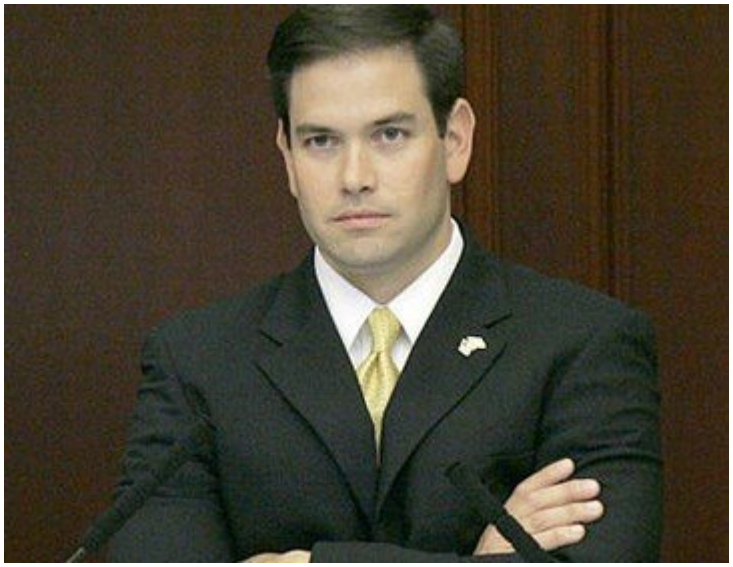

FL Senate candidate Marco Rubio

Story here at the Miami Herald. (H/T Caffeinated Thoughts)

Excerpt:

> For the first time, a new poll shows that Gov. Charlie Crist is losing to former Florida House Speaker Marco Rubio in Florida's nationally watched Republican U.S. Senate race.
>
> Rubio leads by just three percentage points — 47-44 — which is well within the error margin of the Quinnipiac University poll.
>
> Crist has a large cash advantage over Rubio and ample time to catch up before the Aug. 24 primary. Yet the trend of Rubio's rise and Crist's fall is stark and troubling for the governor, who once looked like he would waltz into the Senate.
>
> In October, Crist led 50-35 percent. In August, Crist's lead was even bigger (55-26) and in June the race looked like Crist would blow out Rubio by 54-23 percent.
>
> Who would have thunk it?

Well, ME! I wrote about Marco Rubio *the day he announced his intention to run for the Senate seat. A*nd I blogrolled him as a conservative senator-to-be. It's a no-brainer: Rubio will win the primary. Crist isn't even a real Republican, in my opinion.

Take a look at this:

> In 1971, Marco was born in Miami to Cuban-born parents who came to America following Fidel Castro's takeover. When he was eight years old, Rubio and his family moved to Las Vegas, Nevada where his father worked as a bartender at

> the Sams Town Hotel and his mother as a housekeeper at the Imperial Palace Hotel. In 1985, the family returned to Miami where his father continued working as a bartender at the Mayfair House Hotel until 1997. Thereafter he worked as a school crossing guard until his retirement in 2005. His mother worked as a Kmart stock clerk until she retired in 1995.
>
> […]From 2000-2008, Rubio served in the Florida House of Representatives. During this period, he served as Majority Whip, Majority Leader and Speaker of the House, effectively promoting an agenda of lower taxes, better schools, a leaner and more efficient government and free market empowerment. Rubio also helped spearhead Florida's congressional and legislative redistricting effort.
>
> […]During the two years prior to assuming the speakership, Rubio traveled around the state hosting "Idearaisers" to solicit Floridians' input on ways to strengthen Florida. The 100 best ideas were compiled into a book entitled "100 Innovative Ideas for Florida's Future" which served as the basis for his term. All 100 ideas were passed by the Florida House. Fifty-seven of these ideas ultimately became law, including measures to crack down on gangs and sexual predators, promote energy efficient buildings, appliances and vehicles, and help small businesses obtain affordable health coverage.
>
> […]In addition to these ideas, Rubio championed a major overhaul of the Florida tax system that would have eliminated all property taxes on primary residences in favor of a flat consumption tax. The effort garnered national attention, with Grover Norquist, president of the fiscally conservative Americans for Tax Reform, praising Rubio as "the most pro-taxpayer legislative leader in the country."
>
> During his legislative career, Rubio also promoted efforts to develop a world-class public school curriculum, increase performance-based accountability, enhance school choice and target the socio-economic factors affecting chronic academic underperformance. He is also widely credited for blocking the expansion of gambling in Florida and shepherding the passage of historic energy legislation based on market incentives rather than government-imposed mandates.

Some videos

His decision to run and introduction:

On with Larry Kudlow: (1/14/2010)

Kudlow calls him "the first senator from the Tea Party".

Marco's web site is here.

Senator John Kyl reports Democrats likely to pursue nuclear option in Senate

January 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breitbart has audio of John Kyl on the Hugh Hewitt show Thursday night. (H/T ECM)

Kyl says the Democrats will try to pass Obamacare with 51 votes:

> This is kind of breaking news. As you say, we're just hearing it. We haven't been formally advised, but we have it on relatively good authority. And this would be what they call the nuclear option. This would be we can't do it with 60 votes, because now we have a new Senator from Massachusetts, so we'll do it with 51. Now it's called the nuclear option, because it really upsets all of the tradition and precedent within the Senate which on a really big bill on the magnitude of health care, would always have strong bipartisan support, and therefore the 60 vote requirement really doesn't matter.

They've learned nothing from the election of Scott Brown, and their other setbacks.

MUST-HEAR: Audio debate between James White and Michael Brown on Calvinism

January 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A nice friendly debate with more light than heat. (H/T Apologetics 315)

The MP3 file is here.

Calvinism is the view that God decides whether you go to Heaven or Hell. Nothing a person does or abstains from doing throughout their entire life affects their post-mortem destination. In fact, no other person or circumstance affects where they end up, either. Everyone who goes to Hell goes there as a direct result of God's free choice that determines, apart from any actionor circumstance, that a person will go to Hell.

Summary:

- Introduction to Calvinist James White and some of his 90 debates
- What is Calvinism and why is it important?
- Does God love all people the same way in Calvinism?
- Does God desire the salvation of all people in Calvinism?
- Is the offer of salvation to all people a genuine offer on Calvinism?
- Does Calvinism diminish or augment God's sovereignty?
- Can God accomplish his will by permitting evil creaturely actions?
- Did Jesus die only for the "chosen", or for the possibility of salvation for all?
- Does a person's responding to God's offer of savaltion detract from Gods glory?
- Does our ability to resist God's grace mean that we are "stronger" than God?

There is a little static in the audio for a few seconds every time they come back from a break, but nothing major. There are no commercials. And the debate is SO worth it, because there are almost no good debates on this topic, although you may be interested in reading the debate between William Lane Craig and Ed Curley.

Related posts

- Choosing my religion: why I am not a Calvinist
- Is pre-suppositionalism a Biblical way of defending the faith?

Obama’s new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents

January 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article about Obama’s SOTU proposals from the Family Research Council. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> “Tonight the President also proposed expanding the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit which would only benefit families if: both parents work, a single parent works, or one parent works and the other is in school. In other words, it completely discriminates against families with stay-at-home parents, who wouldn’t see a penny from this plan. The President’s plan further drives a wedge between parents and children as it would encourage parents to place their children in government approved day-care rather than encouraging one parent to stay home and personally care for their off-spring.
>
> “This new socialized child care proposal comes on the heels of a proposed major marriage tax penalty included within the President’s health care bills. A tax penalty on married couples only serves to discourage couples from marrying while encouraging societal instability through cohabitation and divorce.

Related:Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day.

Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela

January 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Viva la Revolucion!!!

See those guys with guns? They're communists. And when useful idiots in the West wear Che Guevara t-shirts, that's what they are supporting. That's what they are supporting. Communism killed 100 million people in the 20th century *alone*.

More pictures here, thanks to a hat-tip from the awesome ECM.

Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez

Hey, you know who really likes communist dictators like Hugo Chavez?

Hey man, race you down the road to serfdom!
Remember, Obama had nothing helpful to say about pro-democracy protestors in Iran and Honduras. He seems to get along well with communists, theocrats, and fascists.

MUST-SEE: Does the entertainment industry tell us the truth about reality?

January 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this amazing video from Andrew Klavan.

The video contains three examples of how the leftists in the entertainment industry lie to their gullible audience about the way the world really is.

- John F. Kennedy as portrayed in the movie JFK
- Terri Schiavo as portrayed in the TV show Law and Order
- Primitive societies as portrayed in the movie Avatar

This is how the left makes us stupid. They put secular leftist lies on the bottom shelf, and people pick their worldview off the bottom shelf. I have people in my office who get their entire worldview from video games like Fallout, television shows like Jon Stewart, and movies like Inherit the Wind. And they stack up their worldview against the Big Bang and the Resurrection. Things that actually happened in the actual world. It's very frustrating. And they vote against Western Civilization on the basis of this worldview. Still more frustrating.

What is self-refutation and what are some examples of self-refutation?

January 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why, self-refutation is the most wonderful thing in the world, next to irony.

Look at this post from Thinking Matters New Zealand.

First, they define what self-refutation is:

In his *Introduction to Logic*, Harry Gensler defines a self-refuting statement as "[A] statement that makes negative claims so sweeping that it ends up denying itself." [1] In other words, it results when an argument or position is undercut by its own criteria (An example of this would be saying, "I cannot speak a word of English" in English).

Then they have a list of examples of self-refutation. Here are some:

1. Truth does not exist (Is that a true statement?)
2. Nothing is absolute (Is that absolutely true?)
3. I do not exist (You must exist to deny that you exist)
4. Science is the only way to know (Can you scientifically prove that?)
5. Only what can be perceived by the five senses exists (Can you prove that by the five senses?)

Go here to read the rest.

I work in the software engineering industry, so we have a lot of nerds running around who believe all kinds of crazy things that are self-refuting. There is a lot of skepticism of the laws of logic and analytical philosophy. A self-refuting statement that I hear a lot is: "Don't judge me, because it's wrong to judge other people". And I just ask them: "Well if it's wrong to judge other people, then why are you judging me?". (Actually, I noticed that MandM has a post up about judging right now!)

I wonder if my regular readers have ever heard any self-refuting statements? If you know any more, leave it in the comments.

On another topic, it turns out that the author of this post on self-refutation blogs at Rational Thoughts. I added their blog to the blog roll. Check them out.

Does 5.7% GDP growth help to alleviate the 17% effective unemployment rate?

January 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from Bloomberg News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> New York University Professor Nouriel Roubini, who anticipated the financial crisis, called the fourth quarter surge in U.S. economic growth "very dismal and poor" because it relied on temporary factors.
>
> Roubini said more than half of the 5.7 percent expansion reported yesterday by the government was related to a replenishing of inventories and that consumption depended on monetary and fiscal stimulus. As these forces ebb, growth will slow to just 1.5 percent in the second half of 2010, he said.

Investors Business Daily explains:

> So let's deconstruct that 5.7% a bit. For one thing, most of the gain — nearly two-thirds, in fact — was a result of an end to the panicked inventory liquidation that took place at U.S. firms last year. Remove that, and a different picture emerges — a 2.2% rise in GDP.
>
> Most economists agree that GDP growth of 3% or so is needed to boost employment. That may in part explain why GDP could grow 2.2% in the third quarter and 5.7% in the fourth quarter, while businesses slashed 735,000 jobs over the same six months.
>
> More meaningful is year-over-year growth. By that measure, we barely grew — real GDP rose just 0.1% in the fourth quarter from last year, virtually flat. Worse, real nonresidential fixed investment — a proxy for business investment in future output — plunged 14.6% from last year. That's a shocking vote of "no confidence" in Obamanomics by America's entrepreneurs and businesses.
>
> We wish that was all, but it isn't. According to the Labor Department, wages and benefits rose in 2009 by just 1.5%, the smallest rise in history. Meanwhile, weekly earnings for nonmanagement workers fell 1.6% last year, the worst since the 1991 recession.
>
> These subpar numbers only underscore the weakness of our job market. In just two years, we've destroyed almost 8 million jobs and watched as the unemployment rate surged to 10%.

One quarter of growth isn't going to change anything – we still have 10% unemployment, which is actually 17% when you consider the people who are no longer actively looking for work. Obamanomics wrecked the economy, starting in late 2006 when the Democrats got control of the House.

Did Jesus really teach that it is wrong to judge others?

January 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great post by Matt at MandM on an often misunderstood verse.

Here's the passage in question, Matthew 7:1-5:

[1]"Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

[2]For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

[3]"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

[4]How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

[5]You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Most people only quote the first verse, but they don't look at the rest of the verses that come after.

Here's what Matt has to say about those other verses:

> The phrase translated in the NIV as, "do not judge, or you too will be judged," was originally written by Matthew in Koine (a Greek dialect). The Interlinear Bible gives the literal translation here as, "do not judge that you be judged." In other words, do not judge others *in a way that leads one to put oneself under judgement.*
>
> […]One is not to judge in a way that brings judgment on oneself. The reason for this ("for") is that the standard one uses to judge others is the standard that one's own behaviour will be measured by. Jesus goes on to illustrate, with a sarcastic example, precisely what he is talking about; a person who nit-picks or censures the minor faults of others (taking the speck out of their brothers eye) who ignores the serious, grave, moral faults in their own life (the log in one's own eye). His point is that such faults actually blind the person's ability to be able to make competent moral judgments. This suggests that Jesus is focusing on a certain type of judging and not the making of judgments *per se*.
>
> In fact, the conclusion that Jesus does not mean to condemn *all* judging of others is evident from the proceeding sentences in the above quote. Rather than engaging in the kind of judgment Jesus has condemned one should "first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." In other words one should try to rectify the serious moral flaws in one's own life precisely so one *can* assist others with theirs. One

> needs to avoid hypocrisy in order to make constructive and effective moral judgments about others. This would make no sense if Jesus meant to condemn *all* judging by this passage.

This is something I actually try to do, and it's easy. Before you open your mouth to judge someone, you have to look at your own life and make sure that you don't do the thing you're condeming.

I try not to say anything about individual people at all, but just talk about behaviors in general that are harmful. I don't ask people if they do any of those behaviors. If they try to tell me about their bad behaviors, I tell them that their personal lives are not up for discussion, unless they explicitly ask me to comment on their specific case. So, instead of saying "you're bad!", I say "this behavior is bad and here's why". And I make sure I don't DO that behavior before I declare it as immoral!

I hear this challenge about Christians being too judgmental all the time from non-Christians. If you do, too, then you should definitely click through to MandM and read the whole thing. There's a logical element, a common sense element and a hermeneutical element to this problem, and all are discussed by Matt. He's a sharp guy, you're bound to learn something new that you can use.

http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%207:1-6&version=NIV

Latest videos of Obama show increasing anger, confusion and irrationality

January 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama reads "My Pet Goat" to a class of 6th graders, as the real unemployment rate hits 17%

These are all from Gateway Pundit.

First, ANGER:

Then, MORE ANGER:

And in this video, he claims that the health care negotiations *really did* take place on C-SPAN.

Who are you going to believe? Obama, or your own eyes?

I don't think he realizes that his political views are somewhere to the left of Mao Tse-Tung and Josef Stalin. He doesn't understand why we all don't like communism as much as he does. He was so sure that his radical leftist policies would result in lots of good-paying jobs, but now we're stuck with a 17% (effective) unemployment rate. George W. Bush's *average* unemployment rate was 5.2%!

Obama's never actually had any life experience in the real world. This economics stuff is so confusing to him. He probably thinks that North Korea and Cuba are more prosperous than the United States, and he is just trying to get us caught up to them with trillions of dollars in wasteful spending.

Barack Obama – the worst president ever.

UPDATE: ECM sent me this picture of Obama bowing to the mayor of Tampa.

Barack Obama bows to Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio

Maybe he thought she was a communist dictator who operates a Gulag, or an Islamist theocrat who favors cliterectomies for women? Hard to say.

UN IPCC global warming alarmism based on student essay and magazine article

January 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

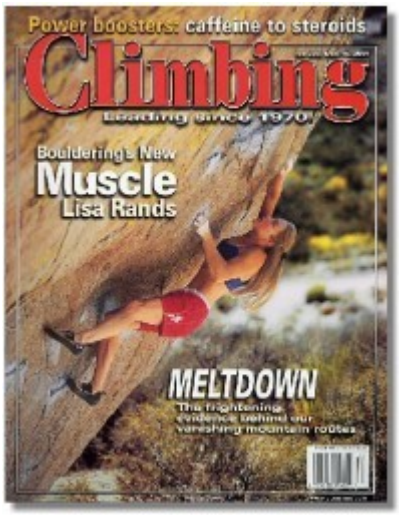

A source for the United Nations IPCC report on global warming
Story here in the UK Telegraph. (H/T Watts Up With That via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The United Nations' expert panel on climate change based claims about ice disappearing from the world's mountain tops on a student's dissertation and an article in a mountaineering magazine.
>
> […]In its most recent report, it stated that observed reductions in mountain ice in the Andes, Alps and Africa was being caused by global warming, citing two papers as the source of the information.
>
> However, it can be revealed that one of the sources quoted was a feature article published in a popular magazine for climbers which was based on anecdotal evidence from mountaineers about the changes they were witnessing on the mountainsides around them.
>
> The other was a dissertation written by a geography student, studying for the equivalent of a master's degree, at the University of Berne in Switzerland that quoted interviews with mountain guides in the Alps.

Global warming alarmism is the official policy of Barack Obama and the Democrat party. And this is what global warming is based on.

A report that the UN IPCC Chairman lied about Himalayan glaciers

From the London Times. (H/T Neil Simpson, Watts Up With That via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Dr Pachauri, who played a leading role at the summit, corrected the error last week after coming under media pressure. He told *The Times* on January 22 that

> he had only known about the error for a few days. He said: “I became aware of this when it was reported in the media about ten days ago. Before that, it was really not made known. Nobody brought it to my attention. There were statements, but we never looked at this 2035 number.”

> Asked whether he had deliberately kept silent about the error to avoid embarrassment at Copenhagen, he said: “That’s ridiculous. It never came to my attention before the Copenhagen summit. It wasn’t in the public sphere.”
>
> However, a prominent science journalist said that he had asked Dr Pachauri about the 2035 error last November. Pallava Bagla, who writes for *Science* journal, said he had asked Dr Pachauri about the error. He said that Dr Pachauri had replied: “I don’t have anything to add on glaciers.”

Why would scientists tell lies about the way the world really is? Science has been hijacked by ideologues of the secular left for non-scientific purposes. They see global warming as a way to help other countries catch up to the United States, to impose control on earning and spending by corporations and individuals, to enrich themselves, and to be viewed by others as being morally superior.

There are billions of dollars at stake

Check out this article from Climate Resistance. (H/T ECM)

Here’s the World Wildlife Fund:

Year Income ($US)
2003 370,245,000
2004 468,889,000
2005 499,629,000
2006 549,827,000
2007 663,193,000
TOTAL 2,551,783,000

That’s 2.5 BILLION dollars. And what about Greenpeace?

Year Income (US$) Income (Euros)
1994 137,358,000 ——————-
1995 152,805,000 ——————-
1996 139,895,000 ——————-
1997 125,648,000 ——————-
1998 ——————- 110,833,000
1999 ——————- 126,023,000
2000 ——————- 143,646,000
2001 ——————- 157,730,000
2005 ——————- 173,464,000
2006 ——————- 171,367,000
2007 ——————- 204,982,000
2008 ——————- 196,620,000

TOTAL 555,706,000 1,284,665,000

To put these crudely into the same terms, we make that $2,373,506,970 ($2.37 billion) at today's euro to US dollar exchange rate.

And the UN's IPCC cites non-scientific claims from the World Wildlife Fund.

It happened with Darwinism, too

In the case of evolution, I think the motivation there is to remove morality from the public square. So, scientists are enlisted by the secular left to push a theory that will marginalize traditional morality, which is rationally grounded in Judeo-Christian monotheism. They wanted things like pre-marital sex, not chastity, and evolution was the means that they used to attack theism and objective morality, and so to normalize things like pre-marital sex. But is evolution true? That's the question that never gets debated.

If questions do get asked, careers start to end. They want to do this, and they don't care what's true. It's the Catholic Church and Galileo all over again, only this time it's the secular left that refuses to look through the telescope.

Related posts

- Chairman of UN's IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- UN IPCC claim of Himalayan glaciers melting revealed to be a hoax
- Britain to be hit by coldest winter in 100 years
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?

MUST-READ: Book review of “If there’s a God, why are there atheists?”

February 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten has a new book review posted up at Apologetics 315.

The book is “If There’s A God, Why Are There Atheists?”, by theologian R.C. Sproul. R.C. Sproul is one of my favorite theologians. The book in question has a very, very special place in my heart, because I think that it is one of the major reasons why I was able to resist pernicious ideas like religious pluralism and postmodernism for so long. Once you put on the glasses of Romans 1 and see for the first time what man is really doing with respect to God, you can never see things the same again. I’ll say more about this at the end, but let’s see what Brian wrote first.

When I first saw Brian’s review come up, I had high hopes that he would write something so compelling and delightful that you would all rush out immediately and get a hold of this book right away.

And he did not disappoint!

The review

So often, you hear atheists complaining about religion is nothing but wish-fulfillment or some sort of crutch for people who are frightened by a variety of things. They think that God is invented to solve several problems. 1) how does the world work?, 2) is there meaning to suffering and evil?, 3) why should I be moral?, and 4) what will happen to me and my loved ones when I die?. On the atheistic view, God is just a crutch that people cling to out of weakness and ignorance. But is this really the case?

Sproul starts the book by investigating three atheists who sought to explain religious belief as a result of psychological factors.

Brian writes:

Before tackling the psychology of atheism, Sproul spends a chapter on the psychology of theism, from the perspective of Freud’s question “If there is no God, why is there religion?”11 What follows is an overview of various psychological explanations of theistic belief: Feuerbach’s “religion is a dream of the human mind.”12 Marx’s belief that religion is “due to the devious imagination of particular segment of mankind.”13 And Nietzche’s idea that “religion endures because weak men need it.”14 The author properly reiterates: “We must be careful to note that the above arguments can never be used as proof for the nonexistence of God. They can be useful for atheists who hear theists state that the only possible explanation for religion is the existence of God.”15 That being said, Sproul also reveals what these arguments presume:

> Their arguments already presupposed the nonexistence of God. They were not dealing with the question, Is there a God? They were dealing with the question, Since there is no God, why is there religion?16

Sproul points out the weaknesses of each of these approaches and says “there are just as many arguments showing that unbelief has its roots in the psychological needs of man.”

Wow, could that really be true? What are the real reasons why people reject God? Does the Bible have anything to say about what those reasons are?

Brian cites Sproul’s contention:

> The New Testament maintains that unbelief is generated not so much by intellectual causes as by moral and psychological ones. The problem is not that there is insufficient evidence to convince rational beings that there is a God, but that rational beings have a natural hostility to the being of God.
>
> […]Man’s desire is not that the omnipotent, personal Judeo-Christian God exist, but that He not exist.

In Romans 1:18-23, the apostle Paul explains what is really going on:

[18]The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

[19]since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

[20]For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

[21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[22]Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

[23]and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

By now, all my readers know the scientific, philosophical and historical arguments for Christian theism, and you’ve all seen the debates with William Lane Craig and other scholars. So you know that atheists *never win* these debates, and that not only logic but the entire physical universe, past, present and future, falsifies atheism. What, you don’t believe me? I’ll prove it.

When you ask Daniel Dennett how the universe came into being, he’ll say that it brought itself into being. When you ask Martin Rees what causes the fine-tuning, he’ll tell you about an unobservable multiverse. When you ask Richard Dawkins what created the simplest living cell, he’ll speculate about unobservable aliens in another galaxy – aliens that *he knows a priori* evolved by natural mechanisms. And so on, and so on. Christopher Hitchens’ entire case against God in his debates is “I don’t like him”. So something else is going on here.

Sproul explains why atheists have to oppose rational argumentation, as well as scientific and historical inquiry.

> The cumulative effect of this knowledge that is clearly seen is to leave men 'without excuse.' Herein lies the basis of the universal guilt of man. No one can claim ignorance of the knowledge of God. No one can cite insufficient evidence for not believing in God. Though people are not persuaded by the evidence, this does not indicate an insufficiency in the evidence, but rather an insufficiency in man.
>
> […]The basic stages of man's reaction to God can be formulated by means of the categories of trauma, repression, and substitution.
>
> […]If God exists, man cannot be a law unto himself. If God exists, man's will-to-power is destined to run head-on into the will of God.

And this is the force that is animating atheists today. They get a little bit of knowledge in some obscure field. They don't want to look stupid in front of their colleagues. They abandon their faith. Maybe there is a financial dimension to their apostasy, (e.g. – Bart Ehrman, Dan Barker). It's not something they've looked into – it's something they do because of psychological reasons. No atheist disbelieves in God on the evidence – there *is* no evidence. It's all just feelings and desires. E.g. – the need to be seen as smart and compassionate.

The rest of the book review, and the book, deals with explaining in detail how atheists respond to an all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator/Designer. I encourage you to click through and read the whole book review. You can read the review, and the book, and then investigate for yourself whether atheists really are like that. Two other books to pick up on this topic is Mere Christianity and The Great Divorce, both by C.S. Lewis. And dont forget my recent post on a new book coming out on this exact same topic.

I am really grateful to Brian for taking the time to pull explain the thesis of the book with such perfect quotes. By the way, I left out the best quote of all, but you have to go look through Brian's review for that!

Note: Brian isn't nearly as mean as I am, and he probably doesn't go nearly as far as R.C. Sproul and I do. But I'm telling you this – TRY IT. Go and sit down with these atheists and ask them how they got to be that way. This also works on people from other religions. I've tried it on Postmodern relavist "Christians", Muslims, Hindus, Jews and Mormons. And don't be mean to them, either. Just because I'm being mean now it doesn't mean that I am being mean when I investigate other people's worldviews.

My survey of atheists

By the way, did you all see my survey of atheists that I did a while back? It's relevant because one of the questions I asked to my volunteers was "How you begin to follow Christ if it suddenly became clear to you that Christianity was objectively true?". I got some very strange responses that dovetail nicely with Sproul's book.

Here are a few of the responses:

- I would not follow. My own goals are all that I have, and all that I would continue to

have in that unlikely situation. I would not yield my autonomy to anyone no matter what their authority to command me.
- I would not follow, because God doesn't want humans to act any particular way, and he doesn't care what we do.
- I would not follow. Head is spinning. Would go to physician to find out if hallucinating.
- I hope I would be courageous enough to dedicate my life to rebellion against God.
- I would not have to change anything unless forced to and all that would change is my actions not my values. I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran.
- He would have to convince me that what he wants for me is what I want for me.

This is all part of my series discussing whether morality is rationally grounded by atheism.

Yes, they really think like that! Just *ask an atheist those questions* and you'll see how "objective" they really are. Ask them how much time they've put in to studying to see if these things are really true.

Related posts

- Transcript of debate between Greg Koukl and Michael Shermer
- Cowardly Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Hugh Hewitt interviews Richard Dawkins on his new book
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- William Lane Craig takes on prominent atheist Daniel Dennett
- Richard Dawkins debates John Lennox: Does God Exist?
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Answering Richard Dawkins' question: "Who made God?"
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God
- How do leading atheists understand morality on atheism?
- The William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate

How Democrat policies cause unemployment to increase

February 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from the Washington Post. (H/T Belmont Club via ECM)

How Democrats prevent job creation

Most of the article talks about how Obama's temporary hand-outs will not create any lasting jobs – they'll simply go away as soon as the government stops taking money from the private sector to pay for these public works projects. But then the article talks about free trade and how free trade creates jobs. Is Obama in favor of free trade?

Excerpt:

> More promising is the president's call for a renewed national emphasis on exports, which currently support about 10 million jobs in the United States. It's a sound concept, especially at a time when the weak dollar improves this country's global competitiveness. But the goal he set in his State of the Union address — doubling exports to $3 trillion per year over the next half-decade — is unreachable via the laudable but modest policies that he has been willing to embrace so far, such as greater trade promotion efforts and relaxed controls on national security-related export controls. Though he called for "strengthened" trade relations with South Korea, Panama and Colombia, he did not challenge Congress to approve pending free-trade agreements with those three countries. That would require defying labor unions and other interest groups in his party. But it would create hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Free trade creates jobs by allowing our businesses to buy cheaper materials from abroad, and to sell their products into foreign markets. Consumers also benefit by being able to buy cheaper foreign goods, which allows them to save, invest or buy other things.

The only people who suffer are labor unions, who are paid salaries and benefits *far in excess* of what their skills really warrant. For example, a unionized GM auto worker in Detroit may be paid $70/hour in salary and benefits, while a non-unionized Honda auto worker in Ohio may be paid $40/hour. Unfortunately, these unions play a big role in getting Democrats elected, sometimes by using violence, etc., to get their man elected.

How Democrats cause jobs to be shipped overseas

Here is the latest from the Heritage Foundation. (dated 01/12/10)

Excerpt:

> According to an Associated Press analysis reviewed by independent economists at five universities, the $20 billion spent nationwide on infrastructure so far "has had no effect on local unemployment rates." And this was just the most recent embarrassing headline for the White House's signature economic policy. Since

> the first reporting deadline in October, newspapers and other media outlets across the country have identified 94,341 fake jobs reported by the Obama administration as jobs "created or saved" by the stimulus. After the Government Accountability Office issued a report finding "significant reporting and processing problems that need to be addressed," Obama administration spokesman Ed Pound offered this defense of the Obama administration's jobs numbers: "Who knows, man, who really knows."
>
> Now Office of Management and Budget Director Peter Orszag issued a little-noticed memo last month ending the "saved or created" metric and instead directing agencies to count only jobs "funded" by stimulus dollars. But as Harvard University labor economist Lawrence Katz tells ProPublica, this is not really an improvement: "I just think it's a silly exercise." Instead Katz says a more accurate way to account for the effect of the stimulus is to look at the unemployment numbers put out by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
>
> That is a great idea. The latest BLS report issued last Friday found that the U.S. economy dropped 85,000 jobs in December, bringing the jobs lost total to 2.7 million since the stimulus was passed and 3.4 million since Obama became President. In contrast, the President's White House Council of Economic Advisers had promised total employment of at least 138.6 million by 2010. Actual employment as of December was reported to be 130.9 million, leaving the Obama jobs deficit at 7.7 million.
>
> **The problem with infrastructure spending as stimulus, and really government spending as stimulus, is that Congress does not have a vault of money waiting to be distributed. Every dollar Congress injects into the economy must first be taxed or borrowed out of the economy. No new spending power is created. It is merely redistributed from one group of people to another. Businesses are telling pollsters that among the biggest reasons they are not creating jobs is the prospect of new tax and regulatory burdens. A better solution to reduce unemployment is to simplify and reduce the barriers to business success.**

The problem is that Obama is associated with special interests who are hostile to business, like unions, trial lawyers, and environmentalists, so he won't do what needs to be done. Whenever Democrats tax, regulate, intimidate, and demonize business, they cause unemployment to increase. Fancy that. All this complaining by Democrats about "greedy corporations" and "global warming" cost you your job.

Obama promised that his policies would create jobs, but his policies failed. He predicted that his policies would work, but they did not work. He prescribed pixie dust to fix the economy, and it failed. He failed. And his only response to his failure is to blame his predecessor who embraced tax cuts and free trade, and presided over a 5.2% average unemployment rate over 8 years. George W. Bush didn't attack businesses, and we all had jobs. Remember that?

Related posts

- Unemployment rate among men aged 25-54 is 19.4%
- Unemployment for young Americans surges to record high of 52 percent
- Business leaders blame Obama for high unemployment rate
- Ten ways that Obama stimulated the economy with government spending
- Feds give $888,000 to Chicago public schools to teach Arabic language
- Why Obama's government spending failed to keep unemployment below 8%
- Harvard economists explain how Obama's spending created 10.2% unemployment
- Why is Obama spending trillions when government spending failed in Japan?
- Obama appoints SEIU union executive to create manufacturing jobs
- Obama restricts government contracts over 25M to unionized labor
- What lowers unemployment? Bush's tax cuts or Obama's spending?
- New Heritage Foundation study says cap-and-trade will kill jobs and the economy
- Understanding why Democrat policies don't create jobs

Phillip E. Johnson lectures on science and the pre-supposition of materialism

February 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you all heard of Phillip E. Johnson, the UC Berkeley professor who is the father of the intelligent design movement?

Here is a lecture by Phil in which he explains the relationship with materialist philosophy and the practice of science.

The MP3 file for lecture is here. There is some Q&A at the end.

Topics:

- Can the diversity of life be explained by purposeless material processes?
- What can changes over time have scientists actually observed?
- What is the difference between micro-evolution and macro-evolution?
- Has macro-evolution ever been observed?
- Can observations of micro-evolution be extrapolated to prove unobserved macro-evolution?
- What causes people to doubt that material processes can account for all of life?
- Is evolution compatible with Judeo-Christian monotheism?
- How do scientists respond when you ask them for evidence of macro-evolution?
- Are observable mutations generally helpful or harmful?
- How do scientists who pre-suppose materialism deal with dissenting scientists?
- Why was the theory of Darwinian evolution accepted by early scientists?

Highly recommended. Phil is one of my favorite authors.

The one point you need to take away from this lecture is that if a scientist *assumes* a philosophy of materialism, then they will never be able to find evidence of intelligent causation in nature. They can look at all the evidence they want, or no evidence at all, and the answer will always be “no-God did it”.

So, consider the Big Bang. No-God did it. The fine-tuning? No-God did it. The origin of life? No-God did it. Molecular machines? No-God did it. Cambrian explosion. No-God did it. Origin of consciousness? No-God did it. Origin of free will? No-God did it. Origin of human rights? No-God did it. Origin of objective morality? No-God did it. Bodily resurrection? No-God did it. Galactic fine-tuning? No-God did it. Planetary fine-tuning? No-God did it. And so on. What else could have done it, once you assume matter is all there is?

The thing to do is to ask them *what reasons they have* for believing that this pre-supposition of materialism is absolute and undeniable. What is the evidence for it, that does not already assume it?

But many people *change* their pre-suppositions as evidence piles up that they are wrong. A combined approach is best. Surface their pre-suppositions and make them defend

them. Then, stack up evidence against the pre-suppositions, e.g. – how can matter be all there is if science shows us that the entire physical universe came into being out of nothing in the Big Bang?

Paul Ryan declares war on Obama's record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit

February 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan

Conservative Republican Paul Ryan's response to Obama's new 2010 budget.

Excerpt:

> "For the duration of the Administration's 10-year budget, the deficit never falls below $700 billion, and never falls below 3.6 percent of GDP – a level the Administration's own budget director has called 'unsustainable.' Debt held by the public doubles over 5 years, triples over 10, and exceeds 60 percent of GDP as a share of the economy this year – surpassing last year's 50-year high. Debt continues to rise to consume 77.2 percent of our economy by the end of the budget window. Even the countries of the European Union, hardly exemplars of fiscal rectitude, are required to keep their debt levels below 60 percent of GDP.
>
> "The Administration will attempt to focus attention on a handful of proposals supposedly aimed at tempering the Federal Government's explosive growth. But these have far more to do with calming Americans' concerns than with doing anything to address them. His pay-as-you-go proposal has been waived or circumvented and only locks in deficits at their current high levels. His non-binding commission simply punts on the critical budget decisions that Members of Congress got elected to make. Finally, his so-called 'freeze' on some discretionary spending follows an 84-percent increase – and has no clear means of enforcement.

These charts accompany Paul Ryan's statement. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

First, government spending:

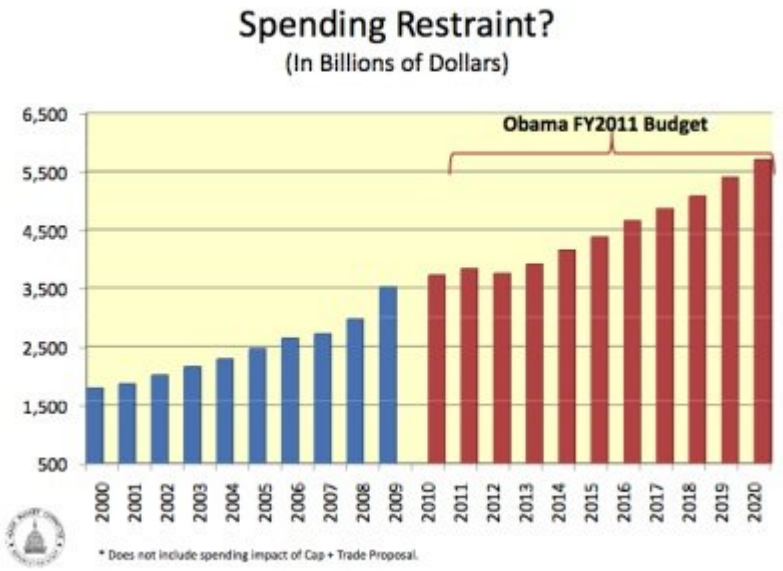

Second, debt held by public as % of GDP:

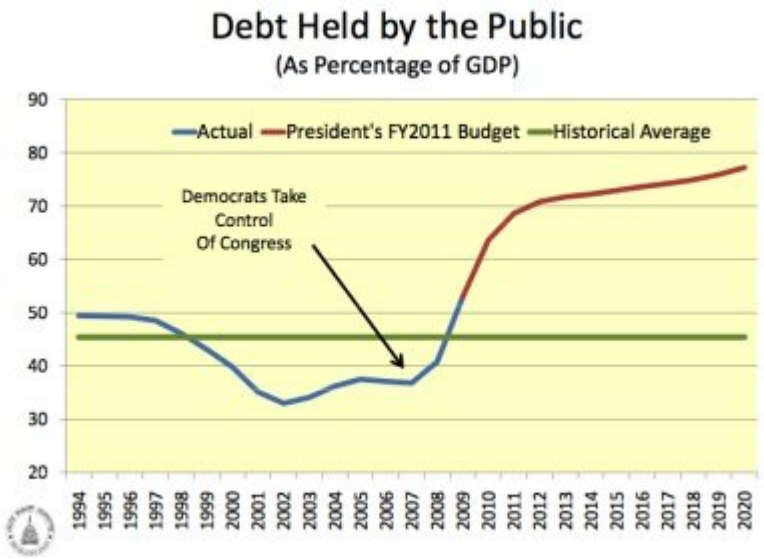

The problems started when the Democrats got control of Congress in late 2006. (The House controls spending) Talking about "spending freezes" on tiny amounts of the budget *now* has no effect because we are losing a trillion dollars-and-a-half dollars a year *now*. It's just politics meant to deceive the people who still believe Obama's honeyed words.

More details about Obama's budget are here on the Republican House Budget Committee web site.

What is Paul Ryan's alternative?

Neil Simpson posted a link to an overview of Paul Ryan's plan.

Excerpt:

Health Care

- Provides a refundable tax credit — $2,300 for individuals and $5,700 for families — to purchase coverage in any state, and keep it with them if they move or change jobs.
- Allows Medicaid recipients to take part in the same variety of options by using the tax credit to purchase high-quality care.

Medicare

- Establishes and fully funds Medical Savings Accounts for low-income beneficiaries to cover out-of-pocket costs, while continuing to allow all beneficiaries, regardless of income, to set up tax-free MSAs.

Social Security

- Offers workers under 55 the option of investing over one third of their current Social Security taxes into personal retirement accounts, similar to the Thrift Savings Plan available to federal employees.

Tax Reform

- Provides taxpayers a choice of how to pay their income taxes – through existing law, or through a highly simplified income tax system that fits on a postcard with just two rates and virtually no special tax deductions, credits or exclusions (except the health care tax credit).
- Promotes saving by eliminating taxes on interest, capital gains and dividends and eliminates the death tax.

Read the rest, and see if these ideas that promote *saving and investing*, instead of *borrowing and spending*, make more sense to you than Obama's spending millions of taxpayer dollars on turtle tunnels.

New study finds focus on abstinence in sex-ed classes can delay sexual activity

February 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Heritage Foundation. (H/T The Washington Post via Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> A new study concludes that abstinence-only education had a significant and long-term effect in reducing teen sexual activity. "The abstinence-only intervention reduced sexual initiation," reports the study, which is featured in the most recent issue of the medical journal *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, published by the American Medical Association.
>
> The study found that a short eight-hour abstinence program reduced sexual activity among youth by a third. Despite the brevity of the abstinence training the effects lasted a full two years after students left the classroom. Moreover, if students who took the abstinence course did become sexually active they were not less likely to use contraception.
>
> In contrast, study found that alternative types of sex ed failed. "Safe sex" programs (which promote contraception only) and "comprehensive sex ed" programs (which teach both abstinence and contraceptive use), had no effect on teen sexual behavior. These programs neither reduced teen sex nor did they increase contraceptive use among teens, which is their major emphasis.
>
> These findings are based on a randomized controlled experiment, the gold standard in program evaluation and designed to produce unbiased results. The study analyzed 662 African-American 6th and 7th grade students in four public middle schools serving low-income communities in a northeastern U.S. city. They were randomly assigned to participate in an eight-hour abstinence-only program, an eight-hour "safe sex" program, an eight- or twelve-hour comprehensive sex education program, or a general health-only, non-sex ed program, which represented the control group in the experiment.
>
> Bolstered by its rigorous randomized controlled design, this study provides important new findings. It strengthens the existing body of empirical evidence on the effectiveness of abstinence education. A 2008 Heritage study, for example, reviewed 15 studies of authentic abstinence programs and found that 11 of the 15 studies reported positive behavioral changes among teens.

But all was not well:

> Sadly, despite the social science evidence, the Obama administration and Congress have eliminated all federal spending on abstinence education and, instead, have created additional funding for comprehensive sex education.

Why do the secular-left Democrats like Obama oppose abstinence and chastity? Planned Parenthood is paid for each abortion. They also get subsidies from taxpayer money collected by the federal government. And from their profits, they make political contributions to Democrats. Just like global warming, it's all about the money.

One last thing. I'm nearing my mid-thirties, and I am very happily chaste. So it's not true that "everyone is doing it".

Related posts

- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Video of the Stanford debate between Jay Richards and Christopher Hitchens

February 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remember this debate?

Atheism vs. Theism and The Scientific Evidence of Intelligent Design
Sunday, January 27, 2008 at 4pm PST, Stanford University

Christopher Hitchens — Contributing editor to Vanity Fair; visiting professor, New School in New York; author of God is Not Great.
VS.
Jay W. Richards — Research Fellow and Director of Acton Media at the Acton Institute; co-author, with astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez, of The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos Is Designed for Discovery.

I just found the 10 videos in a youtube playlist. Each video is about 10 minutes.

Part 1 is just introductory, so I skipped it.

Here's part 2, which is the start Hitchens' opening speech:

Part 3 is the rest of Hitchens and the start of Richards' opening speech:

And part 4, which is the rest of Richards' opening speech:

You can click through to the playlist for the rest. Or you can listen to the full MP3 audio provided by Brian Auten of Apologetics 315.

This is the one where Richards gives his famous line "A sneer is not an argument and insults do not constitute evidence". Richards has his Ph.D in philosophy from Princeton University, and he is extremely careful with logic and arguments.

Related posts

- Transcript of debate between Greg Koukl and Michael Shermer
- Cowardly Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Hugh Hewitt interviews Richard Dawkins on his new book
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- William Lane Craig takes on prominent atheist Daniel Dennett
- Richard Dawkins debates John Lennox: Does God Exist?
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Answering Richard Dawkins' question: "Who made God?"
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God
- How do leading atheists understand morality on atheism?
- The William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate

Federal judge awards German homeschooling family political asylum

February 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Romeike Family, formerly of Germany
Story here from the UK Telegraph. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The case of the homeschooling couple from Germany who were granted political asylum in the United States, about which Ed West blogged recently, becomes even more interesting if one reads the remarks of the man who granted the Romeikes asylum, Immigration Judge Lawrence O. Burman, of Memphis, Tennessee.
>
> […]Judge Burman added that the scariest thing about this case was the motivation of the German government. He said that, rather than being concerned with the welfare of the children, it was trying to stamp out parallel societies. Making his court order, the judge voiced concern that, although Germany was a democratic country and an ally, the policy of persecuting homeschoolers was "repellent to everything we believe as Americans".
>
> […]The mentality is that the state – not parents – is the natural controller and shaper of children's lives and beliefs. When a schoolgirl can be given an abortion without her parents' knowledge, we know that, while public utilities may have been privatised, children have been nationalised. The Romeikes who fled from Germany objected to their children being forced to follow a curriculum that they believed was anti-Christian. The same would apply in British state schools, where pornographic sex education is increasingly being made compulsory.

Next to unilateral "no-fault" divorce, this opposition to parental rights is what prevents

me from considering marriage and parenting, no matter how good of a match I find. And make no mistake, the idea that children are the property of the state is *totally* at home among today's Democrat party. The system of ineffective government-run public schools, which are partially funded by homeschooling and private-schooling families who don't even use them, is anti-family and anti-liberty.

Consider this radical feminist Democrat:

"We really don't know how to raise children. If we want to talk about equality of opportunity for children, then the fact that children are raised in families means there's no equality. [...]In order to raise children with equality, we must take them away from families and communally raise them."
(Mary Jo Bane: Former Assistant Secretary of Administration for Children and Families in the Department of Health and Human Services of the Clinton administration)

I wrote about the problem of state intrusion into the family here: Are marriage and family compatible with single-payer health care?

But sometimes Christians cause their own problems by being ignorant about economics. I have talked to fundamentalist Christian homeschoolers who actually *favored* single-payer health care, yet simultaneously opposed things like taxpayer-funded abortions. The problem is that many Christians are not informed about economics. They think that they can empower a secular-leftist state to achieve "social justice" through wealth redistribution, without having their own religious liberty impacted.

But the same government that can confiscate wealth from "the rich" to nationalize health care can also force pro-life nurses at government-run hospitals to perform abortions. The best defense of religious liberty is a *free market.* If a government-run school discriminates against you in the free market, you can always homeschool or use private schools. That is, if you can afford to homeschool or pay for private schools after the government is done using your taxes to indoctrinate the other children.

Canadian provincial leader rejects single-payer care to get heart surgery in USA

February 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

Canada has a single-payer health care system. Everyone pays the government based on their total earned income, and then the government decides who will be treated, based on special interest groups "need". So it's a disdvantage to be hard-working and prudent, since you end up paying taxes but never using any services. For example, politically correct services like taxpayer-funded abortions, in vitro fertilization, and sex changes are provided, but necessary care like MRIs are rationed with waiting lists. For some treatments, you can wait for *years.* And the government restricts the number of doctors in order to keep costs down, since fewer doctors means fewer claims to pay.

Now you may say to yourself, "Big deal! At least it's fair! Radical leftist politicians love single-payer health care, and they get in line for health care right behind ordinary guys/gals just like me! We're all in it together, eh?"

Erm, not so much.

Look at this story from National Post: (H/T Secondhand Smoke via Andrew, ECM)

> Newfoundland Premier Danny Williams will undergo heart surgery later this week in the United States.
>
> Deputy premier Kathy Dunderdale confirmed the treatment at a news conference Tuesday, but would not reveal the location of the operation or how it would be paid for.
>
> "He has gone to a renowned expert in the procedure that he needs to have done," said Ms. Dunderdale, who will become acting premier while Mr. Williams is away for three to 12 weeks.
>
> "In consultation with his own doctors, he's decided to go that route."

> Mr. Williams' decision to leave Canada for the surgery has raised eyebrows over his apparent shunning of Canada's health-care system.
>
> "It was never an option offered to him to have this procedure done in this province," said Ms. Dunderdale, refusing to answer whether the procedure could be done elsewhere in Canada.
>
> […]During the 2008 federal election, Mr. Williams vehemently opposed the Conservative government, launching his "Anything But Conservative" — which has been credited with keeping the Tories from winning any seats in the province.

Anything but conservative, indeed, comrade Williams!

But that's not all. What about former Liberal prime minister of Canada, Jean Chretien?

> Jean Chretien takes his own family to private health clinics. In fact, he doesn't just use U.S.-style private clinics. He actually goes to private clinics in the U.S.
>
> And he flies to those U.S. private clinics on Canadian government jets, paid for by Canadian tax dollars.
>
> According to access-to-information documents obtained by the Canadian Alliance, on Feb. 8, 1999, Chretien and two aides flew from Vancouver to Minnesota, home of the Mayo Clinic. According to air force flight logs, they flew back to Ottawa that afternoon with Chretien's daughter. And on Dec. 11 of the same year, Chretien went back to the clinic, this time just with his wife and his aide.
>
> These trips were courtesy of the Canadian Forces 412th Squadron, which has flown literally thousands of nautical miles taking Chretien back and forth to the clinic.

And what about former Liberal MP Belinda Stronach?

> Liberal MP Belinda Stronach, who is battling breast cancer, travelled to California last June for an operation that was recommended as part of her treatment, says a report.
>
> Stronach's spokesman, Greg MacEachern… said the decision was made because the U.S. hospital was the best place to have it done due to the type of surgery required.

But these Liberals are just regular leftists. What about the socialist leader Jack Layton? Surely a socialist wouldn't take advantage of free market capitalism to be treated unequally, would he? That would be so greedy and capitalist!

> NDP Leader Jack Layton, who's campaigning as the defender of public health care, had surgery at a private clinic in the 1990s, The Canadian Press has learned. Layton had hernia surgery at the Shouldice Hospital, a private facility in the Toronto suburb of Thornhill, while he was serving as a Toronto city councillor.

Capitalism for me, but not for thee, eh, comrade?

Related:

- How does health care in the USA compare with other countries?
- Videos explaining what government-run health care is like in Canada
- Canada cuts deal with US hospitals to reduce waiting times
- Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!

Are elderly women who have babies through IVF being selfish?

February 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The lovely Betsy of Ruthblog linked to this old 2009 article from BioEdge.

Excerpt:

> The record for Britain's oldest women to give birth will be broken next month by 66 year old Elizabeth Munro, from Cambridge. It is thought that Ms Munro, who is single and a successful business woman, travelled to the Ukraine to become pregnant using donor eggs and IVF treatment.
> In the UK, health trusts determine which women will be eligible for IVF treatment on the National Health Service (NHS), and factors limiting availability include the age of the woman. Not many trusts will consider providing NHS treatment for women over about 39 years old. However, some private clinics, which are not obliged to follow NHS guidelines, will offer treatment to women up to the age of 50, although it is rare for them to consider treating women older than this.
>
> […]**Ms Munro, who is due to give birth next month by Caesarean section, claims she still feels 39 and is fitter than many women a third her age. Speaking to the Daily Telegraph newspaper, she said: 'It's not my physical age that's important – it's how I feel inside.' She added: 'I don't have to defend what I have done. It's between me, my baby and no-one else'.**

The Telegraph article says this:

> The childless divorcee travelled to the Ukraine for IVF treatment and is planning to give birth at a clinic in Cambridge in the next month.
>
> She will be nearing 80 when the child becomes a teenager.

I also note that IVF is covered for women under 40 by the state-run National Health Service, (as are breast implants), just like in Canada. Another reason that Christians should oppose socialized medicine.

Betsy makes this snarky comment:

> Yet another example of how selfish people can be. So much for what's best for the child. I want it, and I can get it, so I will. And of course the doctors aren't willing to turn down a buck. So sad. Poor kids with moms who will likely die while the kids are in college. How kind. I'm willing to bet old women are doing this because their grown children are too selfish to provide grandchildren. And what 20-year-old wants to spend his time caring for his mom after her hip replacement surgery or while she's dealing with dementia?

I note that Ms. Munro is divorced, so her child will be raised without a father in the home. I just think that when people begin a new realtionship with a living thing, that they should count the cost of the relationship and make sure that they can set aside the time, money and effort required to take care of that other person/animal/whatever. It's no good to treat children like property, and no good to treat husbands like property either.

Something even worse

Anyway, here is a newer UK Daily Mail article that is even worse.

Excerpt:

> Cradling her twin boys in her arms, the world's oldest mother confidently proclaimed that longevity ran in her family.
>
> But just two and half years on, Maria Carmen del Bousada's boasts have been proved sadly wrong.
>
> The 69-year-old, who admitted lying about her age to receive fertility treatment in the U.S, has died from cancer.
>
> […]Orphaned before reaching school, her sons, Christian and Pau, will have to rely on others to find out about her.
>
> […]Earlier this month, Britain's oldest mother Elizabeth Adeney, who had a boy in May, was 67. Like Miss Bousada, she too was childless and single when she underwent fertility treatment using a donor egg and donor sperm.As for Miss Bousada's cancer, it is understood that the former shop worker had been told that the drugs used during her fertility treatment may have hastened the advance of the disease.
>
> […]It is known that some types of cancer are sensitive to hormones associated with both pregnancy and fertility treatment. Miss Bousada told doctors in Los Angeles that she was 55 when she travelled there to undergo IVF treatment.
>
> Critics, including her own family, called the pensioner, who went through the menopause 18 years before her £20,000 treatment, 'selfish and irresponsible'.
>
> After the birth she admitted lying about her age and predicted she would live to 101 as her mother had done.
>
> **'I have every reason to believe longevity runs in my family,' she said.**

Please take a look at the related post below on how children are affected by single motherhood, because there is an interesting debate with a single mother in the comments, and you can see how they think.

Related posts

- Why two-parent families are better for children
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- What causes single motherhood, and how are children affected?
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day

Brian Auten begins a series on lifelong learning for Christian apologists

February 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Part one has been posted here at Apologetics 315.

Excerpt:

> **The Problem:** Good books are imperative for learning and growing. However, many people read their good books at random. Sporadic or scattered reading may have the small benefit of keeping you interested as you jump from topic to topic — but one problem can be that often the information hasn't saturated your mind long enough for you to think deeply on that particular subject over an extended period of time. You haven't let it simmer in your mind. You haven't developed your own thoughts on the topic. You quickly moved on to another topic when you could have gone deeper.

Click through to read Brian's advice for developing a deep understanding of an issue.

On the one hand, you can't deny that Brian is doing a fine job on his current topic, which is the psychology of atheism. On the other hand, from a purely practical point of view, I think that you need to have non-Christian friends to spar with otherwise your motivation for reading deeply will be unsustainable. I find it very discouraging to read about things at an advanced level and to find no one to talk to about it.

Having people to talk to about these things is very important!

Jennifer Roback Morse podcasts on same-sex marriage and prop 8

February 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse
From the Ruth Institute podcast page.

An update on the federal trial on California's Proposition 8

The MP3 file is here. (from 1/19/2010)

Topics:

- what is the prop 8 federal court trial about?
- what is at stake in the prop 8 trial?
- what is the only argument in favor of SSM?
- what is the purpose of marriage?
- what is the end goal of the marriage redefiners?
- what would happen if sexual orientation were protected like race?
- what happens to people today who disagree with SSM?
- does SSM diminish the biological basis for assigning parenthood?

Reponding to Ted Olson's pro-SSM arguments:

- traditional marriage violate the Equal Protection clause
- people have a right to demand respect from other people
- children don't need a mother and father
- there are no differences between same-sex and opposite-sex couples

Understanding same-sex marriage

The MP3 file is here. (from 1/21/2010)

Topics:

- how did Dr. J get interested in the marriage issue?
- what got the pro-marriage Prop 8 movement started?
- what do we know about the federal judge in the prop 8 trial?

- how will the school curriculum change if SSM becomes legal?
- how same-sex unions are a stepping stone to legalizing SSM
- how SSM empowers the state to regulate private relationships
- children have a right to a relationship with their parents
- how SSM threatens the rights of free speech and association
- how the purpose of SSM differs than the purpose of TM
- how SSM expands the state's power to coerce individuals
- how the province of Quebec opposes heterosexuality as normal
- SSM's goal is the elimination of sex differences
- how the SSM agenda is an extension of third-wave feminism

Wonderful stuff. I really, really like listening to her talk about these things!

Dr. J's wonderful blog is here. Please give it a visit! She has really been writing a lot of her own thoughts into her posts lately. It's very fun and engaging!

It's too bad that more single women don't talk about the things that Dr. J talks about. Do you know what single Christian men think of when a single Christian woman comes along and starts talking about the role of husband/father, marriage and children? He thinks about marriage and children, of course, and it's fun to talk about things like that.

Video of Jim Demint explaining the two causes of the recession

February 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought this was well done, and accurate.

Unfortunately, Bernanke was confirmed by the Senate. Hayek would not approve.

I kind of minimized the low interest rate problem before, but I changed by mind after my Dad talked to me about Robert P. Murphy's "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Depression". (I got it for him because he liked "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism" so much, as did I!)

New study shows that same-sex unions are less monogamous than heterosexual unions

February 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the radically leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> New research at San Francisco State University reveals just how common open relationships are among gay men and lesbians in the Bay Area. The Gay Couples Study has followed 556 male couples for three years — about 50 percent of those surveyed have sex outside their relationships, with the knowledge and approval of their partners.
>
> That consent is key. "With straight people, it's called affairs or cheating," said Colleen Hoff, the study's principal investigator, "but with gay people it does not have such negative connotations."…
>
> None of this is news in the gay community, but few will speak publicly about it. Of the dozen people in open relationships contacted for this column, no one would agree to use his or her full name, citing privacy concerns. They also worried that discussing the subject could undermine the legal fight for same-sex marriage.

Maggie Gallagher writes in National Review:

> I do not think same-sex marriage will serve child well-being in any appreciable way, and I don't think there is much sign that that is the goal. The gay community is by and large supporting same-sex marriage as a right, not as a norm at all. Relatively few same-sex couples enter same-sex marriages and the dissolution rates (at least in Sweden, where we have hard data) are extraordinarily high (roughly 50 percent higher for gay men, 100 percent higher for lesbian couples).
>
> Same-sex marriage is primarily an attempt to serve the dignity interests of gay people. It represents the government's good housekeeping seal of approval on the idea that their relationships are the same as anyone else. Let's not fool ourselves; we're not doing this for the kids.

My previous post on why people favor traditional marriage is here. It talks about another study showing the differences between same-sex and heterosexual couples.

Comments will be strictly monitored in order to take Obama's hate crimes law into account.

William Lane Craig talks about the book “Contending With Christianity’s Critics”

February 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A series of three interviews from the “Reasonable Faith” podcast about the essay collection “Contending with Christianity’s Critics: Answering New Atheists and Other Objectors”.

Here is the first MP3 file.

Topics:

- About the editor Paul Copan, (the nicest Christian apologist)
- 1: Responding to Dawkins’ argument “Who designed the designer?”
- 2: Responding to the multiverse counter to the fine-tuning argument
- 3: The argument that rationality and consciouness require theism
- 4: The evidence for humans being hard-wired for belief in God
- 5: Responding to naturalism’s claim to rationally ground morality
- 6: Responding to Dawkins’ idea that the universe looks undesigned

Here is the second MP3 file.

Topics:

- 7: The criteria that historians use to establish historical reliability
- 8: Did Jesus think that he was the Son of Man in Daniel
- 9: A time line for the resurrection of Jesus from the early sources
- 10: Responding to scholarly distortions of the historical Jesus
- 11: Responding to Bart Ehrman’s claim that the NT text is corrupted
- 12: The evidence for Jesus divine self-understanding

Here is the third MP3 file.

Topics:

- 13: The logical coherence of the concept of God
- 14: The logical coherence of the doctrine of the Trinity
- 15: The logical coherence of the doctrine of the Incarnation
- 16: The logical coherence of the doctrine of the Atonement
- 17: The logical coherence of the doctrine of the Hell
- 18: Responding to objections to God’s knowledge of the future

I have this book, and I highly recommend this book and “Passionate Conviction: Contemporary Discourses on Christian Apologetics”, along with Lee Strobel’s “Case for…” books, as the basic building blocks of an amateur apologists’s arsenal.

You may also be interested in a new book offering a detailed response to the New

Atheists, called “God Is Great, God Is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable & Responsible”.

Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama's 1.56 trillion budget deficit

February 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan

Seriously. I'm never seen such reckless directness from a politician since Michele Bachmann's passionate speeches.

CANDOR. AUTHENTICITY. PASSION. KNOWLEDGE.

Contrast Obama's flowery hopenchange speeches with this straight talk:

Next time, let's elect someone with substance. Paul Ryan.

Related posts

- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama's 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan makes the case against Obamacare
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism
- When all else failed, Republicans will try conservative ideas

Thomas Sowell urges us to reflect on economic trade-offs and incentives

February 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell

Article here on Creators.

Excerpt:

> With all the laments in the media about skyrocketing unemployment among young people, and especially minority young people, few media pundits even try to connect the dots to explain why unemployment hits some groups much harder than others.
>
> Yet unusually high unemployment rates among young people is not something new or even something peculiar to the United States. Even before the current worldwide recession, unemployment rates were 20 percent or more among workers under 25 years of age in a number of Western European countries.
>
> The young have less experience to offer and are therefore less in demand. Before politicians stepped in, that just meant that younger workers were paid less. But this is not a permanent situation because youth itself is not permanent, and pay rises with experience.
>
> Enter politicians. By mandating a minimum wage that sounds reasonable for most workers, they put a price on inexperienced and unskilled labor that often exceeds what it is worth.
>
> Mandated pay rates, like mandated insurance coverage, impose on buyers and sellers alike things that they would not choose to do otherwise.
>
> Workers of course prefer higher wage rates. But the very fact that the government has to impose those wage rates means that workers were unwilling to risk not having a job by refusing to work for less than the wage rate that has been mandated. Now that choice has been taken out of their hands, with the hidden cost in this case being higher unemployment rates.

The law of unintended consequences – hurting the very people they intended to help, because of their economic ignorance. They priced the youngest and most vulnerable workers out of a job, by mandating a minimum wage that no employer will pay to an inexperienced worker. During a recession, you LOWER minimum wage in order to make sure that those most in need can find a job rather than depend on the government.

When people have jobs, they have confidence to spend more money. Making sure that no policy harms job creation is a primary responsibility of government. Jobs, jobs, jobs. No one (especially Christians) should be dependent on the government for money – because the one who pays the piper calls the tune. And no Christian should dance to the tune of a secular leftist government.

If you are a Christian, but not yet a solid small-government fiscal conservative, then read the WHOLE thing. Christians need to understand that the free market is the best guarantor of our freedom of conscience.

Thomas Sowell is my favorite living economist. Walter Williams is number 2. If you click this link, you can read something from Walter Williams about the economic problems that are created by forcing insurance companies to cover people with pre-existing conditions.

Related posts

- Unemployment rate among men aged 25-54 is 19.4%
- Unemployment for young Americans surges to record high of 52 percent
- Business leaders blame Obama for high unemployment rate
- Why Obama's government spending failed to keep unemployment below 8%
- Harvard economists explain how Obama's spending created 10.2% unemployment
- Why is Obama spending trillions when government spending failed in Japan?
- Obama appoints SEIU union executive to create manufacturing jobs
- Obama restricts government contracts over 25M to unionized labor
- What lowers unemployment? Bush's tax cuts or Obama's spending?
- New Heritage Foundation study says cap-and-trade will kill jobs and the economy
- Understanding why Democrat policies don't create jobs

How government regulations stop businesses from hiring new employees

February 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this story from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> When it comes to hiring staff, there are plenty of legal pitfalls employers need to watch out for these days.
>
> So recruitment agency boss Nicole Mamo was especially careful to ensure her advert for hospital workers did not offend on grounds of race, age or sexual orientation.
>
> However, she hadn't reckoned on discriminating against a wholly different section of the community – the completely useless.
>
> When she ran the ad past a job centre, she was told she couldn't ask for 'reliable' and 'hard-working' applicants because it could be offensive to unreliable people.
>
> 'In my 15 years in recruitment I haven't heard anything so ridiculous,' Mrs Mamo said yesterday.
>
> 'If the matter wasn't so serious I would be laughing out loud.
>
> 'Unfortunately it's extremely alarming. I need people who are hardworking and reliable – and I am pleased to discriminate in that way. If they're not then I really can't use them. The reputation of my business is on the line.
>
> 'Even the woman at the jobcentre agreed it was ridiculous but explained it was policy because they could get sued for being dicriminatory against unreliable people.

Socialism doesn't help people to find jobs. Socialism hurts the poor.

Related posts

- How Democrat policies cause unemployment to increase
- Unemployment rate among men aged 25-54 is 19.4%
- Unemployment for young Americans surges to record high of 52 percent
- Business leaders blame Obama for high unemployment rate
- Ten ways that Obama stimulated the economy with government spending
- Feds give $888,000 to Chicago public schools to teach Arabic language
- Why Obama's government spending failed to keep unemployment below 8%
- Harvard economists explain how Obama's spending created 10.2% unemployment
- Why is Obama spending trillions when government spending failed in Japan?
- Obama appoints SEIU union executive to create manufacturing jobs
- Obama restricts government contracts over 25M to unionized labor

- What lowers unemployment? Bush’s tax cuts or Obama’s spending?
- New Heritage Foundation study says cap-and-trade will kill jobs and the economy
- Understanding why Democrat policies don’t create jobs

Jennifer Roback Morse podcasts on declining males and the overpopulation myth

February 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Ruth Institute podcast page.

More women marrying down as men's education and salaries decline

The MP3 file is here. (from 1/22/2010)

Topics:

- women are "marrying down" educationally and financially
- what do women typically want out of husbands and marriage?
- are women happier bring the primary breadwinners?
- has the feminist agenda driven men out of the university?
- should there be complementarity or equality in the home?
- men mature more slowly so they are less ready to marry
- is it sensible for men to stay at home and for women work?

My previous post on this topic is here: How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women.

The myth of overpopulation and what it means to you

The MP3 file is here. (from 1/22/2010)

Topics:

- how the transition from country to city discourages child-bearing
- how religion impacts how many children parents have
- what is the US birth rate, is it high enough?
- can we just import immigrants to alleviate the low birth rate?
- has increased prosperity encouraged people to have more children?
- how has the purpose of sex changed after the sexual revolution?
- how does the demographic crisis threaten entitlement programs?
- what do we learn from the declining birth rate in Japan?
- how does population growth impact stock market performance?

Dr. J's wonderful blog is here. Please give it a visit! She has really been writing a lot of her own thoughts into her posts lately. It's very fun and engaging!

Dennis Prager explains the conflict between liberty and equality

February 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A classic column by well-known Jewish scholar Dennis Prager.

Excerpt:

> Right and the left do not want the same America.
>
> The left wants America to look as much like Western European countries as possible. The left wants Europe's quasi-pacifism, cradle-to-grave socialism, egalitarianism and secularism in America. The right wants none of those values to dominate America.
>
> The left wants America not only to have a secular government, but to have a secular society. The left feels that if people want to be religious, they should do so at home and in their houses of prayer, but never try to inject their religious values into society. The right wants America to continue to be what it has always been — a Judeo-Christian society with a largely secular government (that is not indifferent to religion). These opposing visions explain, for example, their opposit views concerning nondenominational prayer in school.
>
> […]The left envisions an egalitarian society. The right does not. The left values equality above other values because it yearns for an America in which all people have similar amounts of material possessions. This is what propels the left to advocate laws that would force employers to pay women the same wages they pay men not only for the same job but for "comparable" jobs (as if that is objectively ascertainable). The right values equality in opportunity and strongly believes that all people are created equal, but the right values liberty, a man-woman based family and other values above equality.

And the same thing goes for education, health care, etc. If a man chooses to work hard so that he can afford to send his children to Christian schools to help them to form a Christian worldview, the left steps in and confiscates his earnings and uses them to operate secular public schools to undermine his children's worldview. If a man chooses to work hard so that he can buy the best health care for his beloved wife if she gets sick, the left steps in and confiscates his earnings and uses them to pay for breast implants (NHS). They call it equality. But where is a man's liberty to pursue his life the way he wants to?

By the way, I noticed that Dennis had the chance to speak to the Republicans in Congress.

Here's a part of his remarks that is relevant:

> I have a motto that I offer to you because this is the ultimate moral case for us: "The bigger the government, the smaller the citizen."

> We have to learn to make our complex beliefs simple — though never simplistic. And this is our powerful response to government doing more and more for people: “The bigger the government, the smaller the citizen.”
>
> And here’s how we explain it: The bigger the government, the less I do for myself, for my family and for my community. That is why we Americans give more charity and devote more time to volunteering than Europeans do. The European knows: The government, the state, will take care of me, my children, my parents, my neighbors and my community. I don’t have to do anything. The bigger question in many Europeans’ lives is, “How much vacation time will I have and where will I spend that vacation?”
>
> That is what happens when the state gets bigger — you become smaller. The dream of America was that the individual was to be a giant. The state stays small so as to enable each of us to be as big as we can be. We are each created in God’s image. The state is not in God’s image, but it is vying to be that. This is the battle you’re fighting. You are fighting a cosmic battle because this is the most important society ever devised, the United States of America.

This conflict between equality and liberty used to be a pretty well understood back when people understood politics and government, but not anymore. Now everyone votes based on their emotions. Compassion, not knowledge.

UPDATE: Andrew comments:

> Let me just clarify something regarding EQUALITY: The right believes in both liberty and equality . The difference is that the right believes in “equality of opportunity” while the left believes in “equality of outcomes”. Equality of opportunity is where everyone gets the opportunity to better their lot in life, whether they do so or not. Equality of outcomes refers to the re-distribution of wealth (if you work too hard and do well for yourself your money will be forcibly taken and given to those who don’t work very hard).

Dennis Prager investigates why men are in decline and how to fix it

February 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Another great column by Jewish scholar Dennis Prager.

Excerpt:

> What is a man (as opposed to a boy)? The traditional understanding was that a man is he who takes responsibility for others — for his family, his community and his country — and, of course, for himself. A man stood for ideals and values higher than himself. He conducted himself with dignity. And he was strong.
>
> […]Boys today have fewer adult men in their lives than ever before. Many boys are not raised by any father. More are not raised by a father who lives in the home full time. Nearly every teacher and principal American boys have in elementary and high school is a female. The boy's clergy person and physician may well be women. And few male figures in contemporary film radiate manhood as defined above.
>
> […]America has become a rights-centered rather than a responsibility-centered society. Aside from helping to produce a pandemic of narcissism, the rights-centered mindset is the opposite of the obligation/responsibility-centered mindset that makes a boy into a man. It is not good for either sex to be rights-preoccupied; but it is particularly devastating to developing men, as men are supposed to be obligation-directed.
>
> […]Males no longer have distinctive roles. Men do best when they are relied upon, when needed; and they feel most needed when they do something distinct from women.
>
> […]Many churches and synagogues have been feminized. This has occurred in at least three important ways: Clergy are increasingly female (and touchy-feely males) — for the first time in Christian and Jewish history; God is often depicted as androgynous and no longer either demanding or judging (He just loves all the time); and religion has been changed from morally and theologically demanding to a therapeutic model.

I think one of the big problems today is that men have abandoned their responsibilities to protect and provide because they are no longer appreciated. Instead, people have shifted the traditional male responsibilities to the government. Men have been replaced with a police force, welfare checks, social workers, and single-payer health care. If there is no recognition for doing hard things, having good character, and filling an important role, then men won't even try.

MUST-READ: Which is worse: communism or Pepsi commercials?

February 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Jamie Glazov of Pajamas Media. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

The tortures included laying a man naked on a freezing cement floor, forcing his legs apart, and then an interrogator stepping on his testicles, applying increasing pressure until the confession surfaced. Imagine the consequences of no surfacing confession. Indeed, many people refused to confess to a crime they did not commit.

Daughters and sons were raped in front of their fathers and mothers — for the sake of extracting "confessions."

These are just some of the delicacies that the Stalinist machinery inflicted on its citizenry in the hope of bringing socialism into earthly incarnation. Alexander Solzhenitsyn has shared much of this horror with us in his *Gulag Archipelago* — a work, mystifyingly enough, that I had never heard mentioned, except with a few exceptions, by one professor in a lecture or seminar in my entire eleven years studying Cold War history in academia. It was a work that I never saw, again with a few exceptions, on any academic syllabus — and many of my courses concerned Soviet history and American foreign policy toward the Soviet Union.

Both of my grandfathers were exterminated by Stalinist terror. Both of my parents, Yuri and Marina Glazov, were dissidents in the former Soviet Union. They risked their lives for freedom; they stood up against Soviet totalitarianism. They barely escaped the gulag, a fortune many of our friends and relatives did not share. I come from a system where a myriad of the closest people to my family simply disappeared, where relatives and family friends died under interrogation and torture for their beliefs — or for simply nothing at all.

Now try to imagine me sitting in the company of left-wing "intellectuals" in the West who think they are oppressed. This is my lifelong experience. I remember one radical feminist, whom I sat next to in a graduate student lounge, lecturing me sternly about how women in the West are oppressed because they wear bikinis on beaches; with a reprimanding tone, she explained to me that this represented the way capitalism objectifies women, marginalizes them from spheres of power, and metaphorically decapitates them as human beings. **I remember asking her what she thought of female genital mutilation and honor killings in the Muslim world. To this I received a stone-cold silence and a frightening hateful stare, a stare with which I have become accustomed: I would be confined to a gulag or a psychiatric hospital if this particular individual had the power to place me there. This would be done for the good of society of course. My question was heresy: she could not, naturally, admit that evil adversarial cultures and ideologies existed — *under which women truly suffer real oppression* — for if she did, then she would have to**

sacrifice her entire worldview and personal identity.

Another colleague of mine, with great moral indignation and personal angst, once complained to me about how we are being "attacked" by Pepsi commercials. "By trying to tell us that we are not cool if we don't drink Pepsi," he agonized, "the capitalist machinery practices the politics of exclusion. By trying to pretend it offers us choice, it actually negates choice."

My mom's father was executed by the Soviet secret police. He did not have the luxury of being oppressed by Pepsi commercials.

The article goes on like this, there is a lot more I wanted to excerpt but could not for reasons of space.

These communist regimes get started by promising to the economically-ignorant masses a more equitable distribution of material goods, controlled by the government. The people, including Christians, abdicate their individual liberty and responsibility to the state in order to avoid worrying about having to feed, clothe and support themselves. The end is always the same: tyranny.

There is no Biblical injunction for wealth redistribution by government. The purpose of life is not to make everyone equally wealthy, the purpose of life is to know God and to help others to know God. And a secular government cannot have that same goal. So it needs to be kept as limited as possible to avoid constraining the freedom to do what we ought to do.

The impulse to "spread the wealth" has always led to reduced liberty. You need liberty in order to do your job as a Christian. Don't vote to expand the power of secular government – vote to expand the power of each individual to make their own way and to give their own wealth to others if they choose. Christians are supposed to use *private charity* as a too; for taking care of their neighbors so that they have the chance to investigate *a relationship with God*.

Related Posts

- Was Nazi torturer Josef Mengele influenced by Christianity or Darwinism?
- Does the Bible condone slavery?
- Was Hitler a Christian? Is Nazism similar to Christianity?
- Another way that the secular left kills millions of people
- Should atheists or Christians be blamed for communism's 100 million deaths?
- Who is more responsible for the mass murders of history? Christians or atheists?
- Contrasting the moral values of an authentic Christian with an authentic Darwinist
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Atheism, Christianity and the problem of evil and suffering
- Can atheists be moral?

How should you go about finding God's will for your life?

February 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting question from Tough Questions Answered. (And there's a poll to vote in)

Excerpt:

> As Christians we all agree that we want to follow God's will for our lives, but there are two general approaches to following God's will that I've seen in evangelicalism.
>
> The first approach operates under the premise that God has a specific will for each and every one of our actions and decisions, and that we are obligated to discover what that specific will is.
>
> The second approach operates under the premise that God only specifically wills that we obey his commands as revealed in the Bible, and on issues where the Bible does not speak, we use wisdom.

Here's an example of what he means:

> Let's say that you are a Christian man looking for a spouse. You have come to know three wonderful and single Christian ladies and you are wondering which one you should pursue for marriage.
>
> If you are a follower of the first approach, you believe that God has one, and only one, of these women chosen for you. It is your duty to discover which one of these women he has chosen in order to stay in his perfect will for your life. If you choose wrongly, you will be outside of his will for your life.
>
> If you are a follower of the second approach, you feel free to pursue any of these three ladies for marriage. You believe that God will be pleased with any of the three women, as long as you choose wisely.

And you can imagine that this applies to all kinds of things – like what to study, what job to take, and so on.

So what do you guys think? Method 1 or Method 2? Anybody want to guess what my view is? I have a very strong opinion about the right answer to this question.

I'll give you a hint about which one I like better. If I were explaining the first view to a non-Christian, I would describe it as God hiding Easter eggs for you and then you go through life reflecting on your intuitions and emotions and trying to hear God say "warmer" and "colder" in your ear when you get closer to or farther from his will, (i.e. – God loves you and has a wonderful plan for *your life*).

On the second view, you get dropped behind enemy lines and the lines of communication

are *cut off*. All you have left is the Army Field Manual, a map, and your fellow soldiers. Your job is to act in a way that you think will best achieve the General's goals, (i.e. – God loves you and you should make a wonderful plan to *participate in his plan*).

Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan discuss capitalism, socialism and liberty

February 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Some wonderful videos from the old days when giants walked the earth.

Maggie's plan:

The results of Maggie's plan:

Ronald Reagan's vision:

Ronald Reagan on socialized medicine:

Where is the new Reagan and the new Thatcher?

Cato Institute asks how many senators are more liberal than the socialist one?

February 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article here about the self-described socialist senator Bernie Sanders. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> According to the National Taxpayers Union, 42 senators in 2008 voted to spend more tax dollars than socialist Bernie Sanders. They include his neighbor Pat Leahy; Californians Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, who just can't understand why their home state is in fiscal trouble; and the Eastern Seaboard anti-taxpayer Murderers' Row of Kerry, Dodd, Lieberman, Clinton, Schumer, Lautenberg, Menendez, Carper, Biden, Cardin, and Mikulski. Don't carry cash on Amtrak! Not to mention Blanche Lambert Lincoln and Mark Pryor of Arkansas, who apparently think Arkansans don't pay taxes so federal spending is free. Sen. Barack Obama didn't vote often enough to get a rating in 2008, but in 2007 he managed to be one of the 11 senators who voted for more spending than the socialist senator.
>
> Meanwhile, the American Conservative Union rated 11 senators more liberal than Sanders in 2008, including Biden, Boxer, Feinstein, and again the georgraphically confused Mark Pryor. The Republican Liberty Caucus declared 14 senators, including Sanders, to have voted 100 percent anti-economic freedom in 2008, though Sanders voted better than 31 colleagues in support of personal liberties. The liberal Americans for Democratic Action provides more support for the *Post*'s claim, rating Sanders 100 percent liberal. Most raters, though, don't see it that way. In this compilation of ratings from left-leaning interest groups, 17 senators get higher scores than Sanders.

Socialism is actually the mainstream position of Senate Democrats. The rest of them just don't label themselves as such.

Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan's plan for economic recovery

February 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan

Editorial from the Press Telegram. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Ryan would eliminate taxes on interest, capital gains, dividends and death.The corporate income tax, the world's second highest, would be replaced by an 8.5 percent business consumption tax. Because this would be about half the average tax burden that other nations place on corporations, U.S. companies would instantly become more competitive – and more able and eager to hire.
>
> Medicare and Social Security would be preserved for those currently receiving benefits, or becoming eligible in the next 10 years (those 55 and older today). Both programs would be made permanently solvent.
>
> Universal access to affordable health care would be guaranteed by refundable tax credits ($2,300 for individuals, $5,700 for families) for purchasing portable coverage in any state. As persons under 55 became Medicare eligible, they would receive payments averaging $11,000 a year, indexed to inflation and pegged to income, with low-income people receiving more support.
>
> Ryan's plan would fund medical savings accounts from which low-income people would pay minor out-of-pocket medical expenses. All Americans, regardless of income, would be allowed to establish MSAs – tax-preferred accounts for paying such expenses.
>
> Ryan's plan would allow workers under 55 the choice of investing more than one-

> third of their current Social Security taxes in personal retirement accounts similar to the Thrift Savings Plan long available to, and immensely popular with, federal employees. This investment would be inheritable property, guaranteeing that individuals will never lose the ability to dispose every dollar they put into these accounts.
>
> Ryan would raise the retirement age. If, when Congress created Social Security in 1935, it had indexed the retirement age (then 65) to life expectancy, today the age would be in the mid-70s. The system was never intended to do what it is doing – subsidizing retirements that extend from one-third to one-half of retirees' adult lives.

My last post on George Will is here: Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann. He's actually quite moderate, not at all a conservative, so this is very interesting.

ECM also send me this article from the American Spectator.

Excerpt:

> Ever since his back and forth with President Obama during last week's question time at the Republican retreat, Rep. Paul Ryan's "Roadmap for America's Future" has been gaining attention as a plan that the Congressional Budget Office has projected would actually solve our nation's long-term entitlement crisis.
>
> […]"The lower budget deficits under your proposal would result in much less federal debt than under the alternative fiscal scenario and thereby a much more favorable macroeconomic outlook," CBO writes in page 14 of its analysis of the Ryan plan.
>
> CBO projects "real gross national product per person would be about 70 percent higher in 2058 under the proposal." But after 2058, the CBO's model completely breaks down when trying to project current trends, "because deficits become so large and unsustainable that the model cannot calculate their effects." By contrast, the model shows the Ryan plan continuing to achieve economic growth in the decades that follow. This is demonstrated by the CBO chart below.

So the CBO is backing up Ryan's calculations.

Five videos on Thomas Sowell's most difficult book

February 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

"A Conflict of Visions" is the most difficult Thomas Sowell book I ever read. So I hope these five videos from the Hoover Institute at Stanford University will give you all of the benefits without so much of the hard work.

Here's a little written summary to get you started.

Excerpt:

> In "A Conflict of Visions", Thomas Sowell proposed that the fundamental difference between the policies of the left and the right derive from their respective views of human nature.
>
> The left sees man in general as perfectly malleable. It sees every individual's problems as being caused by society as a whole. Criminal behavior under this theory is merely a response to injustice; poverty is a condition brought on by greed; depression, drunkenness and illness are all seen as a fault of the medical system or our general "awareness". Since individual problems are the fault of the whole of society, the solution must be to fix society by massive government intervention.
>
> People on the right take an inverse view of the situation. Conservatives believe in individual responsibility. This means, if someone commits murder, he is bad. If someone is poor he has declined to take advantage of opportunities manifest within a free market system. If someone is uneducated, he has not worked hard enough to secure education for himself. This attitude among conservatives means that the perceived solution is not to change society in a general way but to get government out of the business of regulating the people in mass and making them take responsibility for their actions in particular. Social man then is not malleable, but the individual can be guided by market forces.

And here are the videos.

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Part 4:

Part 5:

If you're interested in learning how the world really works, you can't do much better than Tom Sowell.

How would the legalization of same-sex marriage affect your liberty?

February 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let me just quickly review how traditional marriage supporters are being treated in the prop 8 trial by Judge Walker. ECM sent me this article from National Review.

Excerpt:

> Take, for example, Walker's resort to procedural shenanigans and outright illegality in support of his fervent desire to broadcast the trial, in utter disregard of (if not affirmatively welcoming) the harassment and abuse that pro-Prop 8 witnesses would reasonably anticipate.
>
> […]Take the incredibly intrusive discovery, grossly underprotective of First Amendment associational rights, that Walker authorized into the internal communications of the Prop 8 sponsors…
>
> […]Take Walker's insane and unworkable inquiry into the subjective motivations of the more than seven million Californians who voted in support of Prop 8.

But the thing I want to focus on is the way that same-sex marriage would reduce the liberties of people who believe in traditional marriage, because this is something that is never discussed.

Consider this article from Jewish scholar Dennis Prager about the effects on your liberties that would occur if same-sex marriage became the law of the land.

Excerpt:

> Outside of the privacy of their homes, young girls will be discouraged from imagining one day marrying their prince charming — to do so would be declared "heterosexist," morally equivalent to racist. Rather, they will be told to imagine a prince or a princess. Schoolbooks will not be allowed to describe marriage in male-female ways alone. Little girls will be asked by other girls and by teachers if they want one day to marry a man or a woman.
>
> The sexual confusion that same-sex marriage will create among young people is not fully measurable. Suffice it to say that, contrary to the sexual know-nothings who believe that sexual orientation is fixed from birth and permanent, the fact is that sexual orientation is more of a continuum that ranges from exclusive heterosexuality to exclusive homosexuality. Much of humanity — especially females — can enjoy homosexual sex. It is up to society to channel polymorphous human sexuality into an exclusively heterosexual direction — until now, accomplished through marriage. But that of course is "heterosexism," a bigoted preference for man-woman erotic love, and therefore to be extirpated from society.

> Any advocacy of man-woman marriage alone will be regarded morally as hate speech, and shortly thereafter it will be deemed so in law.
>
> Companies that advertise engagement rings will have to show a man putting a ring on a man's finger — if they show only women fingers, they will be boycotted just as a company having racist ads would be now.
>
> Films that only show man-woman married couples will be regarded as antisocial and as morally irresponsible as films that show people smoking have become.
>
> Traditional Jews and Christians — i.e. those who believe in a divine scripture — will be marginalized. Already Catholic groups in Massachusetts have abandoned adoption work since they will only allow a child to be adopted by a married couple as the Bible defines it — a man and a woman.
>
> Anyone who advocates marriage between a man and a woman will be morally regarded the same as racist. And soon it will be a hate crime.

You can already see it happening in many places. Just this week Dr. J blogged about how Princeton University promotes or sponsors LGBT speakers who advocate for open marriage, but they won"t promote or support a student group that favors abstinence.

Comments will be strictly moderated in keeping with Obama's hate crimes law.

Related posts

- New study shows that same-sex unions are less monogamous than heterosexual unions
- Why do people favor traditional marriage over same-sex marriage
- Christian man fired after gay rights group contacts his employer to complain
- Catholic church will stop all charity work if same-sex marriage passes in DC
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- New Mexico Human Rights Commissions fines couple $6000 for being Christians

Canadian persecution of Christians

- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

J.P. Moreland asks: does truth matter when choosing a religion?

February 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This lecture contains Moreland's famous "Wonmug" illustration. Ah, memories!

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Is it intolerant to think that one religion is true?
- Is it more important to be loving and accepting of people regardless of worldview?
- How should Christians approach the question of religious pluralism?
- How does a person choose a religion anyway?
- Who is Wonmug, and would you like to be like Wonmug?
- Is it enough that a belief "works for you", or do you want to believe the truth?
- Can all the religions in the world be true?
- Is it wise to pick and choose what you like from all the different religions?
- Is it possible to investigate which religion is true? How?
- Which religions are testable for being true or false?
- How you can test Christianity historically (very brief)

If you don't know about Wonmug, you're not even a Christian, (I'm pretty sure). Just kidding. Maybe.

Seriously, this is the most fun lecture to listen to, you should listen to it, if you like fun.

How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways

February 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First of all, Obama's budget ensures that future generations will be saddled with debt, paying for the entitlement programs (Social Security and Medicare) of their aging parents and grandparents.

Behold, the evidence of generational theft:

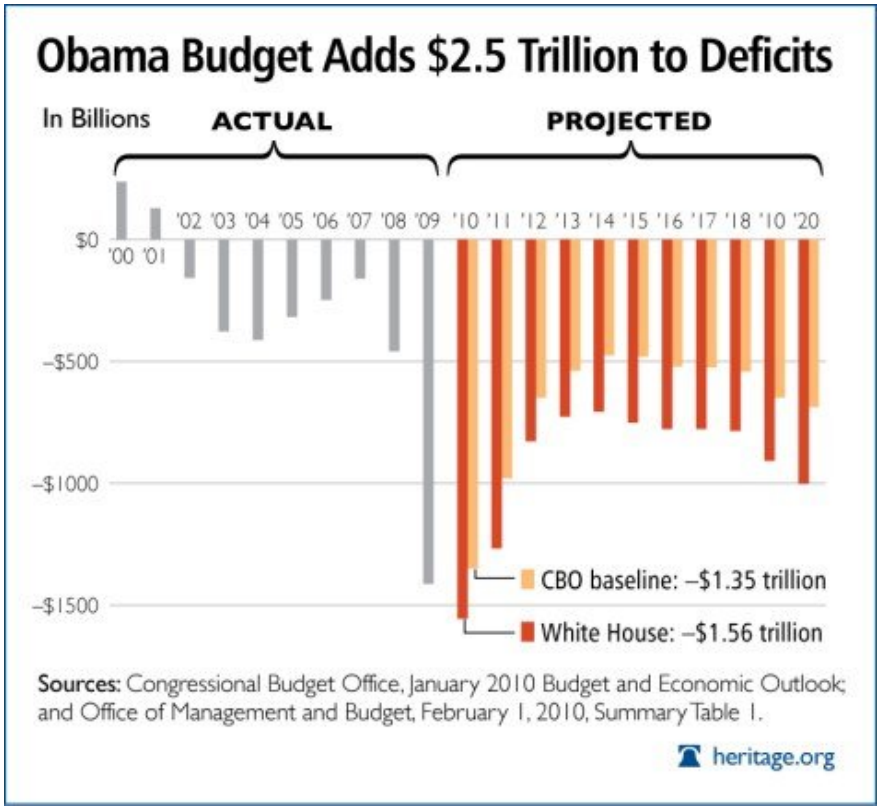

(Click for larger image)

Recall that the Democrats gained control of Congress at the beginning of 2007.

The second way that Obama's budget hurts the poorest children is by denying them the right to access better schools.

Excerpt:

> The president's proposed FY2011 budget increases funding to the Department of Education by $3.5 billion. But despite this significant increase, his budget effectively cuts the freedom of choice and educational opportunities from the lives of children living in the District of Columbia. What began last year as a low-profile attempt to quietly phase out the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program has become a noticeable agenda of denying school choice to District families.
>
> […]The most recent casualty in the struggle to save the successful voucher program's future is Holy Redeemer Catholic School. The Pre-K through 8th grade school, which has served the community of Northwest Washington, D.C. since

> 1955, is closing its doors. The Washington, D.C. Archdiocese's decision to close or combine four Catholic schools in the area speaks to the difficult situation face by Catholic schools in general and the important role voucher programs play in the schools' ability to provide a high quality, private school education.

This is in spite of the fact that school choice *works*.

Excerpt:

A recent report from School Choice Wisconsin presented an analysis of the number of calls made to 911 from schools in Milwaukee, similar to a Heritage analysis from last summer written up in The Washington Post. The Milwaukee School Safety report found that choice schools appeared to be relatively safer than Milwaukee's traditional public schools:

> Taking into account enrollment differences, police calls to [Milwaukee public schools] occur at a notably higher rate than at independent charter schools or at schools in the [Milwaukee parental choice program]. The [Milwaukee Public School] call rate per pupil in 2007 is more than three times that at schools in the [Milwaukee Parental Choice Program].

In addition, a new report out this week from Dr. John Robert Warren of the University of Minnesota analyzed the graduation rates of students attending high schools in Milwaukee, comparing the graduation rate of students participating in the school voucher program with the graduation rate of students who attend traditional public schools in the city. Warren found that during the 2007-08 school year, 77 percent of students in the school voucher program graduated compared to 65 percent in the traditional Milwaukee public school system.

Obama is in the pocket of the teacher unions, and he *must* ensure that they keep their jobs regardless of failure, so that the teacher unions can continue to contribute union dues into Democrat coffers. He doesn't care about children – he cares about getting elected. It's just another way that the irresponsible grown-ups attack the things that children need to succeed: a good education, low taxes, a job, and an intact family.

Dennis Prager debates Howard Zinn on American exceptionalism

February 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, a little bit about Howard Zinn from Roger Kimball, writing in National Review.

Excerpt:

> Zinn's biography tells us that he was the author of "more than 20 books." But only one matters: *A People's History of the United States*. Published in 1980 with appropriately modest expectations — it had, I read somewhere, an initial print run of only 5,000 copies — the book went on to sell some 2 million and is still going strong. Its Amazon sales rank as of February 1, 2010, was 7. Seven.
>
> […]*A People's History* is *the* textbook of choice in high schools and colleges across the country. No other account of our past comes even close in influence or ubiquity. No other, more responsible, telling of the American story had a chance. How could it? Given a choice between a book that portrayed America honestly — as an extraordinary success story — and a book that portrayed the history of America as a litany of depredations and failures, which do you suppose your average graduate of a teachers college, your average member of the National Education Association, would choose? To ask the question is to answer it. What this means is that most American students are battened on a story of their country in which Blame America First is a cardinal principle. No element of our heritage, from the derring-do of Christopher Columbus to the valor of the U.S. military in World War II, escapes the perverting alchemy of Howard Zinn's exercise in deflationary revision.

How does Zinn defend his anti-American views against Jewish scholar Dennis Prager?

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Part 4:

I remember hearing this live and wondering what has gone wrong with American education that a buffoon like this could write a textbook that would be the most popular history textbook used in American public schools. We need to have school choice and to avoid paying for *any school other than the one we send our children to.* It makes no sense to purchase education differently than the way we purchase anything else. On Amazon.com, you get what you want or your money back. Why is education different?

If you can't see the videos and just want to read some of the debate, you can look here and here.

Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex

February 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been having some conversations recently with a good male friend of mine who is not a Christian. I like to talk to him about women because we disagree about women, and Lord knows I love to disagree with people. Anyway, he's read my rules for chastity, courtship, etc., and he considers them, and me, quite weird. He is coming from the position of having a *great deal* of sexual experience with women, whereas I strictly avoid sexual activity for a variety of reasons. And what we disagree about is this: I think it's wrong to have casual sex with women who offer themselves to a man before marriage, and he thinks it's permissible as long as he warns them that the relationship is going nowhere afterwards.

First, let me talk about where we agree. Both of us agree that most women today have lost the art of making a man like them without using sex appeal. We are in broad agreement that the right way for a woman to make a man like her is by being feminine. And we agree on what that means – showing the ability to be a wife and mother. If a woman talks to a man, rages against feminism, listens to his plan, and tries to help him with his plan, then he will like her (because he needs her and appreciates her). Also, it's important that she have a plan of her own that he can help with, and she should let him help.

Now where do we disagree? Well, I think it's a bad idea for a man to submit to casual sex with a woman who is unable or unwilling to set boundaries and have a Christian goal for the relationship. I think that casual sex is an inappropriate technique that some women use to make men love them without demonstrating that she really understands him or wants to help him. Sometimes this is done inadvertently because the woman has never learned how to deal with men appropriately, but sometimes it's done deliberately.

Here are three reasons why men should not accept an offer of casual sex:

Reduced courting capability

A lot of men spend a lot of time and money and the best years of their lives pursuing a lot of different women for sexual gratification. But the pursuit of casual sex takes away from the goal of having a helpful wife and effective Christian children, (e.g. – children like Dr. J or WLC). It takes up time and resources that are better spent on building up teachable responsive girl friends. Chasing non-marriageable women also detracts from learning apologetics and theology in order to impress the tiny minority of women who want an involved nurturing husband and effective children. There is no way to assess a woman's fitness for marriage and mothering through casual sex. It has no value whatsoever when it comes to courting because it removes the self-control needed for objective evaluation. Casual sex doesn't show women that you can lead your future children, either.

Reduced vulnerability and romantic capability

I would not be able have sex and separate without suffering permanent emotional damage. In other areas of my life I make lifelong commitments, e.g. – to my pet bird (he's 20, average lifespan is 15-18), my roadster (mint condition after 10 years), to my friends, (some friendships lasting over a decade), etc. I subscribe to the velcro theory of sexuality – the more you attach and separate, the less well you can attach. I simply do not believe that men who do intimate physical things with women can be as vulnerable and susceptible as when they remain chaste. Casual sex kills the man's ability to love. If you want to be a knight, you have to be capable of chivalry and romance. If a man has casual sex with enough women, he will likely develop a low opinion of of the trustworthiness, wife-capability and mother-capability of women. He becomes cynical and predatorial.

Causes women to doubt God's existence

Every woman was made for a relationship with God. When a woman uses sex to try to get a man to pay attention to her, to love her and to commit to her long-term, it usually fails. Sex doesn't make a man who doesn't want to marry suddenly want to marry. Without a Christian worldview, the woman may not realize how to tell a good man from a bad man, and how to drive a relationship through to marriage. If a woman has sex with enough men, she may develop a low opinion of the goodness and reliability of men. She may think that she is handling men correctly and that the relationship should work out. But the trauma from failed relationships with unreliable men can cause her to suffer emotionally, and even to doubt God's existence or goodness. Christian men should therefore avoid casual sex so that they don't push women away from relationships with God.

Conclusion

Now I haven't actually experienced this problem of women throwing themselves at me to make me "love" them, but if someone finally did offer me drunken hook-up sex, I hope that I would remember my little list.

But I might also remember something else.

Consider this passage from "A Man For All Seasons", a play by Robert Bolt. The lead character Sir Thomas More has refused to compromise with King Henry VIII over the legality of divorce, and now the King wants to have his head chopped off. More's daughter Meg tries to convince to take the oath supporting the divorce in order to save his own life.

Meg: Then say the words of the oath and in your heart think otherwise.

More: What is an oath then, but words we say to God? Listen, Meg.
When a man takes an oath, he's holding his own self in his own hands… …like water.
And if he opens his fingers then, he needn't hope to find himself again.
Some men aren't capable of this, but I'd be loathed to think your father one of them.

That's how men should try to be with their chastity. I agree that it is almost impossible not to see things and to think things that are unchaste – but I am talking about *doing* something unchaste. Men need to avoid that, at least. The problem is that men don't realize what they are giving up by being unchaste, because they don't study these issues to know the costs, the lost capabilities to love unselfishly, or the virtues that give them

honor with God. No one tells us. Instead of reading “A Man for All Seasons” or “The Faerie Queene”, we pick our role models off the bottom shelf. The schools are no help at all, many parents are busy, and the church just orders people around without any arguments or evidence.

But my main point is that even if there wasn’t a woman left in the world who believed in chastity, courting, marriage and family, that would still not be a justification for a Christian man to give up on his ideal of chastity.

I am pretty opposed to marriage right now because of the way society and government has gone with divorce courts, feminism, public schools, high taxes, etc. But even if marriage seems irrational now, I still think that offers of casual sex should be rejected. I can still make friends with Christian women and treat them nicely. Maybe something will change… lower taxes, school choice, marriage penalty abolished, shared parenting, charter marriages, etc., and then marriage will make sense again. Right now, it just seems like there are too many policies that make it irrational.

Other resources

For anyone who would like to see chastity in action, I recommend picking up the old 1960s spy series “Danger Man” on DVD, starring Patrick McGoohan. You can see some videos here and here. I like to give these as gifts, along with movies about virtue like “A Man For All Seasons”, “We Were Soldiers”, “Amazing Grace”, “Horatio Hornblower”, “Gettysburg”, “The Crossing”, “Henry V”, “Ivanhoe”, “Cyrano de Bergerac”, “Bella”, “Fireproof”, etc.

Related posts

- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- What is the meaning of white roses?
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- The Wintery Knight’s greatest fears about the future
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman’s offer of casual sex
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven’t got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper’s questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man’s decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Christianity vs. Islam debates in Ottawa from 2/11/10 through 2/14/10

February 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Answering Muslims:

These debates will be held at the University of Ottawa in Ottawa, Canada.

Here's the info:

Friday February 12th – 6:30PM
Why Should I Embrace Christianity or Islam?
Tony Costa and Nabeel Qureshi vs. Farhan Qureshi and Osama Abdallah

Saturday February 13th – 10:00AM
Did Jesus Die on the Cross for Others?
Nabeel Qureshi vs. Osama Abdallah

Saturday February 13th – 12:45PM
Is the Qur'an Divine?
Osama Abdallah vs. Nabeel Qureshi

Saturday February 13th – 3:00PM
Did Paul Distort the Christian Faith?
Farhan Qureshi vs. Tony Costa

Saturday February 13th – 5:45PM
Was Muhammad Assured of His Salvation?
Tony Costa vs. Farhan Qureshi

Saturday February 13th – 8:00PM
The Concept of God in Islam and Christianity
Osama Abdallah vs. Tony Costa

Sunday February 14th – 1:45PM
What is the Purpose of Jesus According to the Bible or the Qur'an?
Farhan Qureshi Vs. Tony Costa

The debates will be in Marion auditorium in Marion Hall at the University of Ottawa. More information here, but note that Abdul Murray has been replaced by Nabeel Qureshi of Answering Muslims. I don't know who Abdul Murray is, but I would say that it is virtually guaranteed that Nabeel would be an upgrade.

First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God

February 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Short book review here.

Here's the full text:

> Jay W. Richards channels the spirit of Michael Novak and provides a basic introduction to how and why a Christian can be a capitalist. Because man is made in the image of a creative God, he has the potential to create and multiply wealth. The core components of capitalism—free exchange, limited government, private property—allow this potential better than any alternative system. Although he shows that self-interest is not necessarily selfish, Richards also explains that the market can, in fact, channel selfish actions into positive outcomes. Responding to such critics as Ron Sider and Jim Wallis, Richards argues that the creation of wealth helped by economic freedom and the rule of law provides the best means of raising the poor out of poverty, in contrast to government-based redistribution of wealth or regulations of minimum wage.
>
> Richards also offers critiques of communism, developmental aid to impoverished countries, and global warming, along with an extended argument against the notion that capitalism allows the unchecked depletion of natural resources. Because human beings are creative, Richards reminds us, they are not mere consumers but active producers. In response to charges of consumerism, Richards notes that consumerism comes from gluttony, not from free enterprise itself. The book concludes with a chapter on the workings of the free market as a sign of God's provident care for sinful man. For those looking to wed faith and economics, the book provides a welcome challenge to reigning orthodoxies.

To understand what capitalism is, you can watch this lecture entitled "Money, Greed and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem" by Jay W. Richards, delivered at the Heritage Foundation think tank, and televised by C-SPAN2. (Link below)

If you can't see the Richards video, here is an audio lecture by Jay Richards on the "Myths Christians Believe about Wealth and Poverty". Also, why not check out this series of 4 sermons by Wayne Grudem on the relationship between Christianity and economics? (a PDF outline is here)

Here's a lecture with Jay Richards from the libertarian Cato Institute.

UPDATE: From a helpful comment below.

Updated link for video (link in blog results in an error).

http://www.booktv.org/Watch/10489/Money+Greed+and+God+Why+Capitalism+is+the+Solution+and+Not+the+Problem.aspx

Two movies for Christians to see

February 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The first is called “The Blind Side”.

Story here.

Excerpt:

> The best Christian film of 2009 is actually a secular film. *The Blind Side*, starring Sandra Bullock (*The Proposal*), which depicts the remarkable true story of All-American football star Michael Oher, may go down in history as one of the best Christian stories of our time. However, it is not a “Christian” film, but a universal story about a godly family who lives up to their convictions.
>
> […]Director John Lee Hancock (*The Rookie*) understood the story to be one of faith, but delivered it more universally. “It really is two different stories, one of which is more of a question: Who is Michael Oher and why did the stars align to shine so brightly on this kid from the projects in Memphis? And then on the other side, it’s a great story about how this unique family evolved, and the unconventional mother son relationship at its center. The journey that Michael and the Tuohy family go on is the heart of the movie.”

And “To Save a Life”:

Story here.

Excerpt:

> The goal of the film is twofold: to bring hope to hurting students and to empower young people to reach out to the hurt and lonely. “If you’re a follower of Christ, you’re called to be an imitator,” Britts says. “You’re never more like Jesus than when you’re reaching out to the hurt and lonely. There’s not a page in the four Gospels where Jesus doesn’t reach out to the hurting, lonely, left out, and lost.”
>
> But Britts says they never set out to make a faith-based film—they set out to create a story any teenager would automatically connect with. “In the film, we don’t make a blanket statement separating Christians from non-Christians. Instead, the bad guy is actually the senior pastor’s son,” Britts says. “There’s definitely hypocrisy in the church. People who’ve seen the film have told us us, ‘You’re not trying to push something on me. You’re telling it in an authentic way.’”
>
> Also interesting is Britts’ intentional decision to communicate that becoming a Christian won’t automatically mean all your problems will be solved. After the main character, Jake, becomes a Christian, his life actually falls apart and he’s left questioning whether the whole God thing is working out. “It asks the question, *Are you going to trust God because he’s going to make your life great*

> *or because you need him?*" Britts says.

Two good movies to watch!.

The evidence for the historical Jesus from non-Christian sources

February 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a chapter from a book about the historical evidence for Jesus from early non-Christian sources. The book (I've read it!) is from historian and debater Gary Habermas.

Here's a discussion of the Roman historian Tacitus:

Tacitus. Cornelius Tacitus (ca. 55-120 A.D.) was a Roman historian who lived through the reigns of over a half dozen Roman emperors. He has been called the "greatest historian" of ancient Rome, an individual generally acknowledged among scholars for his moral "integrity and essential goodness."

Tacitus is best known for two works — the Annals and the Histories. The former is thought to have included eighteen books and the latter to have included twelve, for a total of thirty. The Annals cover the period from Augustus' death in 14 A.D. to that of Nero in 68 A.D., while the Histories begin after Nero's death and proceed to that of Domitian in 96 A.D.

Tacitus recorded at least one reference to Christ and two to early Christianity, one in each of his major works. The most important one is that found in the Annals, written about 115 A.D. The following was recounted concerning the great fire in Rome during the reign of Nero:

> Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.
>
> Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed.

There’s some real value in this chapter because it surveys reports from other emminent Roman and Jewish historians writing in the first and second centuries. Habermas covers the Roman historian Suetonius, the Jewish historian Josephus, the Roman governor Pliny the Younger, and the Greek satirist Lucian. Something to read about if you’ve never looked into it. You won’t be able to find the whole New Testament in these non-Christian writings, but you can get some broad confirmation of early Christian beliefs.

New study confirms that men are losing their leadership role in relationships

February 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the UK Daily Mail scares me.

First, an anecdote:

> One of my male friends is looking to move home, out of the city centre and into the suburbs. I asked where he fancied – north, south, east or west. He shrugged. 'I have no say in it,' he said. 'It's not my decision.'
>
> I pointed out that choosing where to live is one of the biggest decisions we make. Plus, he'd be paying for at least half of it. Surely he had some say? He shook his head. 'The wife decides.'
>
> This same friend last year kowtowed to his then girlfriend's desire for a massive wedding with more than 200 guests and costing more than £20,000, even though he admitted that his preference would have been for a much smaller and more intimate affair.

And another anecdote:

> One of my friends, a stay-at-home mother to two young children, says she is absolutely 'the decider' in her marriage.
>
> 'My husband earns the money and I decide how we spend it,' she says. 'I feed and dress us all. I decide where and when we go on holiday. I choose everything for the house and have just decided to get an extension.
>
> 'I even buy my own birthday present from my husband and our children. Actually, I quite often feel as if I have three children, not two. But that's the way it is.'
>
> She went on: 'If I had to consult and strive for equality in every decision, we'd never get anything done. It sounds very old-fashioned, but basically my husband is the provider – in financial terms – and I am in charge of running the show.
>
> 'Some people would no doubt say my husband's "under the thumb" or that I "wear the trousers". Although I hate the thought, it's probably true.'

Then the research:

> Studies appear to confirm that women are increasingly the dominant decision-making force in relationships.
>
> A recent report found that by 2020 women will be driving the world economy and will have the final say in the majority of financial decisions in Britain's homes.
>
> Another study found that women make 80 per cent of all purchasing decisions, and 94 per cent of home furnishing purchases.

> The study also found that in nearly half of all relationships men have no share in decision-making in the following four areas: household finances, big home purchases, the location of their homes, shared weekend activities and television viewing.

Does that sound like a good deal for men?

Related posts

- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- Dennis Prager investigates why men are in decline and how to fix it
- Are elderly women who have babies through IVF being selfish?
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- France introduces bill to require boards of directors to be 40% female
- France passes law to jail spouses who commit psychological violence
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- 12-year-old girl sues Dad for grounding her… and wins!

New paper casts doubt on Stuart Kauffman's self-organization theory

February 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the naturalistic theories for the origin of biological information in the origin of life is Stuart Kauffman's "self-organization" theory. The theory attempts to account for the functional sequences of information in living systems by arguing that the information emerges automatically from a sufficiently diverse pre-biotic soup.

In his book, "At Home in the Universe", Kauffman writes:

I hope to persuade you that life is a natural property of complex chemical systems, that when the number of different kinds of molecules in a chemical soup passes a certain threshold, a self-sustaining network of reactions—an autocatalytic metabolism—will suddenly appear. Life emerged, I suggest, not simple, but complex and whole, and has remained complex and whole ever since… The secret of life, the wellspring of reproduction, is not to be found in the beauty of Watson-Crick pairing, but in the achievement of catalytic closure.

Doug Axe explains the theory a bit more: (H/T Evolution News)

When chemicals react, they produce different chemicals. So the idea here—call it Kauffman's conjecture—was that mixtures with a sufficient number of different chemicals are bound to give rise to local compositions that continually replenish themselves through a self-catalyzed network of chemical reactions. Those special compositions would typically differ from the original mixture, but since they make more of themselves, they should be able to 'grow' by establishing themselves repeatedly in local pockets. The ability to propagate in this way, if proven, would be something like reproduction, only at the low level of chemical composition rather than at the high level of organismal form.

It was clear enough to me why Kauffman and others liked this idea. If some kind of reproduction and inheritance could conceivably be achieved in systems that are much, much simpler than anything we think of as living, then maybe scientists were making the problem of explaining life much, much harder than it really needed to be.

But now a new peer-reviewed research paper has cast doubt on this naturalistic theory.

Axe explains:

The paper's title is a diplomatic statement of its main conclusion: *Lack of evolvability in self-sustaining autocatalytic networks constrains metabolism-first scenarios for the origin of life*. It becomes clear on reading the paper that the word *constrains* is here being used euphemistically. After testing the effect of fitness on the evolution of their model compositional assemblies, they report that "some slight relative increases and decreases in their replication-mutation equilibrium frequencies are detected, but the effects are so minor that it is hard to think of any evolutionary relevance." The problem is that the behavior of the whole system is almost completely determined by the inherent chemistry,

leaving no room for selection to do anything interesting.

The citation is “Lack of evolvability in self-sustaining autocatalytic networks constraints metabolism-first scenarios for the origin of life”, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, vol. 107, no. 4, pp. 1470-1475.

Obama administration investigates Wisconsin pro-lifers

February 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> The Department of Homeland Security admitted today that it improperly conducted a threat assessment on pro-life and pro-abortion groups in Wisconsin. The assessment came before an expected rally last year in response to the University of Wisconsin Hospital board decided to allow abortions.
>
> In February 2009, pro-life advocates planned to protest the hospital's decision to open up a new Madison Surgery Center doing abortions.
>
> The Associated Press reported today that the department said in a memo that it "destroyed all of the copies of the assessment after an internal review found it violated intelligence gathering guidelines about 'protest groups which posed no threat to homeland security.'"
>
> AP indicated the assessment was reportedly only shared with the director of Wisconsin's intelligence-sharing center and local police in Middleton, Wisconsin, the site of the rally.
>
> […]In response to an open records request by the Alliance Defense Fund and Pro-Life Wisconsin, the Middleton Police Department and the Wisconsin Department of Justice, along with the Department of Homeland Security all refused on February 4 to release copies of the threat assessment.A few months later in 2009, the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Civil Rights concluded the investigation was an improper use of department resources.
>
> The conclusion said the department inappropriately directed against activities protected by the First Amendment, in which law enforcement inappropriately engaged in "the collection, retention and dissemination of U.S. person information regarding protest groups which posed no threat to homeland security and… violated [DHS] Guidelines."

I guess that dissent is all of a sudden not patriotic any more, now that the fascist left is in power.

And did you see this story from Life Site News?

Excerpt:

> In what critics are calling an unprecedented act of bias, pro-abortion Ohio House Speaker Armond Budish (D-Beachwood) has denied Shelby County teen Elisabeth Trisler a routine legislative honor, evidently because he objects to Trisler's pro-life values. Budish is refusing to allow Trisler on the House floor to accept a

> legislative resolution, authored by Rep. John Adams (R-Sidney), which honors Trisler's accomplishment as the National Right to Life Oratory Contest winner.
>
> […]"Surely Speaker Budish can put aside his partisanship for 10 minutes to honor the accomplishments of a talented and optimistic teenage girl," said Ohio Right to Life Executive Director Mike Gonidakis. "Perhaps his real message to Ohio's teens is that excelling in public speaking isn't worth being honored if their views are different than his."
>
> […]However, on January 29th, the House Clerk informed Rep. Adams's office the presentation would not take place because the Speaker "had a problem with the subject matter." The clerk advised the representative's staff to take the matter up with the Speaker. Speaker Budish supports abortion.

The good news is that the Speaker changed his mind after being pressured by citizens.

Leftist media thinks that record snowfalls are caused by global warming

February 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, of course it's MSNBC, d'uh. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Transcript:

> The snowpocalypse that is going through DC and other extreme events are precisely what the climate scientists have been predicting, fearing and anticipating, because of global warming. Why is that? The thinking that warmer air temperatures on the earth a higher air temperature has a greater capacity to hold moisture at any temperature. And that as winter comes in that warm air cools full of water and you get heavier precipitation on a regular basis. In fact, you can argue these storms are not evidence of a lack of global warming, but are evidence of global warming."

And the leftist Time magazine says that blizzards are caused by global warming. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

What are the facts?

Several all-time seasonal snowfall records have been broken in Baltimore, Philadelphia and Washington.

Related stories

- UN IPCC global warming alarmism based on student essay and magazine article
- How the UN's IPCC cites non-scientific claims from the World Wildlife Fund
- Chairman of UN's IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Britain to be hit by coldest winter in 100 years
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now

MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

February 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Look at this fun video of a young lady from the libertarian Cato Institute explaining why choice and competition are better for consumers than monopolies! (H/T Hot Air)

She is especially interested in education and has lots of wonderful statistics.

It's only 5 minutes long! This woman (Izzy Santa) is way better than Dan Mitchell! His videos were *horrible* compared to this one. I can actually understand what this lady is saying, and she makes fun gestures when she talks. She says "rotten"! The charts are really helpful, too. This is probably the best thing you could ever watch to learn a little bit about why I find economics so interesting. This is really something that all women should know a lot about to help them to be excellent wives and mothers.

You might want to send this post to your friends and family who may think that the best thing for education is to give public schools more money. It may be that the best way to get better public schools for less money is to make them compete with private, parochial and charter schools.

Moral hazard and the recession

Here's another video on moral hazards, which explains how we got the recession:

This one is only 4 minutes long. I don't think it's quite as good as the first one. The lady who is presenting is from the Independent Women's Forum. I love that think tank! They have Carrie Lukas on staff. She is the author of "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Women, Sex and Feminism".

Does the Bible support redistribution of wealth or private property?

February 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article here. (H/T C.S. Lewis Society)

Excerpt:

> The fundamental question for those who consider the Bible authoritative is not whether it advocates charity or helping the poor. Obama, Wallis, and other statist Christians are not arguing for charity. They are arguing for government appropriation of property. The issue isn't charity, but property rights. If the Bible rejects the notion of a right to property, then these people may have a basis for their perspective. But if the Bible supports a right to own property, safe from government redistribution to others, then their policy proposals are unbiblical.
>
> What follows is an analysis of what the Bible says, in both the New and the Old Testaments, on the subject of property rights. Whether the Bible, or parts thereof, should be considered authoritative or useful for Christians I will leave to theologians. My concern is with the text itself.
>
> I would like to be able to report that the Bible argues firmly for an absolutist view of property rights. I would like to be able to write that the Bible is a strictly libertarian document. It is not. Yet in the balance and taken as a whole, the Bible support the individual's right to own property and hold onto it. Briefly summarized, the Bible's teachings are that humans are stewards of God's property in a rental relationship and are accountable to him, not to the state, for the disposition of that property. The Bible advocates charity for the poor and condemns the parsimonious, but it does not grant authority to the state to act on God's behalf to redistribute wealth. It is mostly a laissez-faire system of ideas, which libertarians should not forfeit to statist misinterpretations.
>
> The Bible suggests three central principles regarding property rights. One is the prohibition against theft, enshrined in Exodus 20:15 "You shall not steal." The second is the idea that the world ultimately belongs to God (not to the state), as exemplified by Psalm 24:1: "The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it." The third is a corollary: humans are temporary tenants upon God's property, as King David said in 1 Chronicles 29:15: "For we are but sojourners before You, and tenants, as all our fathers were."

Worth reading even if you disagree, because it's well-written. I'd like to see a good debate on this topic, wouldn't you? Jay Richards vs. Jim Wallis, maybe? I'd like to see that.

Canadian columnist David Warren on abortion evasions and euphemisms

February 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This column from Canada's 3rd best columnist is pure candy. Yum! (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> I have before me a packet of cigarettes with a Health Canada message in capital letters that reads: "Cigarettes hurt babies." The text underneath this begins, "Tobacco use during pregnancy reduces the growth of babies." Since an accompanying photograph further shows a pregnant woman smoking, it was unnecessary to specify "unborn." Similarly, when we are discussing abortion, it is unnecessary to specify that the babies in question are "unborn."
>
> Indeed, the refusal to use plain language, the substitution of euphemisms and rhetorical evasions, is an infallible indicator that a speaker or writer feels uncomfortable with the truth.
>
> Consider for instance the proposition, "a woman's right to control her own body." Not even men believe this, and a pregnant woman, who actually believes that the baby she is carrying is part of her own body, should wait for it to kick. Perhaps she has an astoundingly primitive notion of biology; but I should think even a woman of subnormal intelligence would understand the difference between what is in that bump she is carrying, and what is in the rest of her flesh. To wit: a different person.
>
> I have myself had the experience of sitting inside a car. And yet even in the moment I was doing so, I did not consider myself to be a car, or part of a car. Nor — had the car the mind of a pro-active feminist — would I consider it had the right to do what it wished with its own body, if that involved tossing me out on the highway.

You know, if an unborn baby really were part of the woman's body, then she would have four eyes, four arms, four legs and two noses! And imagine if it were a *male* baby! What then?

It makes no sense to talk about a woman have a right to control her own body when the unborn has a completely different DNA signature than the mother. The time for controlling her own body was before she consented to have sex with a man who was not fully invested in having a child to take care of. There are lots of things for men and women to do to express love without taking unnecessary risks with other people's lives.

Related posts

- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring two great pro-life debaters, Greg Koukl and

Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama’s plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

Planned Parenthood pushes intensive sex education onto 10-year olds

February 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T Protein Wisdom via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The report, "Stand and Deliver," charges that religious groups, specifically Catholics and Muslims, deny their young access to comprehensive sexual programs and education.
>
> "Young people's sexuality is still contentious for many religious institutions. Fundamentalist and other religious groups — the Catholic Church and madrasas (Islamic Schools) for example — have imposed tremendous barriers that prevent young people, particularly, from obtaining information and services related to sex and reproduction. Currently, many religious teachings deny the pleasurable and positive aspects of sex." the report states.
>
> The report demands that children 10 and older be given a "comprehensive sexuality education" by governments, aid organizations and other groups, and that young people should be seen as "sexual beings."
>
> […]Michelle Turner, president of the Maryland-based Citizens for a Responsible Curriculum, said Planned Parenthood was simply trying to eliminate parental say.
>
> "What are they trying to do? They are trying to eliminate the role of mom and dad in the family," Turner said. "For Planned Parenthood to decide that governments, private organizations and religious organizations should make decisions about kids' sexuality is just going too far."
>
> "It is part of a bigger push to change the way we think about sex," she said. That sex is all about pleasure and there are no consequences. They are wrong. No matter how much we teach children, some will make mistakes. They will forget. And Planned Parenthood doesn't want to deal with that," she said.
>
> "They see religious groups, especially those that counsel abstinence and waiting until marriage, as bad guys," she added. "We aren't."

Remember Planned Parenthood's revenue is proportional to the number of abortions they perform, so they have every reason to lobby the Democrats to pass laws that allow Planned Parenthood to bypass parents and entice children as young as 10 into sexual activity. It's all about the money.

Brian Auten posts book review of “The Faith of the Fatherless”

February 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The book review is here on Apologetics 315.

Excerpt:

> Vitz begins by laying out his hypothesis and the underlying principle behind it. He proposes that “atheism of the strong or intense type is to a substantial degree generated by the peculiar psychological needs of its advocates.”2 He notes that the theory that God is merely a projection of one’s needs is a popular position, but “the psychological concepts used so effectively to interpret religion by those who reject God are double-edged swords that can also, indeed easily, be used to explain their unbelief.”3 He makes clear one of the underlying assumptions of his study: “First, I assume that the major barriers to belief in God are not rational but can be called, in a general sense, psychological.”4
>
> The psychological angle that Vitz examines is the role and influence of one’s father in the formation of beliefs about God. The author notes that “Christianity is in many respects *distinctive* in its emphasis on God as loving Father.”5 Vitz points out that “Freud makes the simple and easily understandable claim that once a child or youth is disappointed in or loses respect for his earthly father, belief in a heavenly father becomes impossible.”6 It is with this thesis in mind – the lack of a father plays a strong role in one’s psychological disposition towards rejecting God – that Vitz engages his case study comparing the lives of famous atheists and theists: “I have selected for study those who are historically famous as atheists. These are great thinkers, typically philosophers, whose rejection of God was central to their intellectual life and public positions.”7

Brian also cites Vitz explaining his own journey into atheism:

> Just as I had learned how to dress like a college student by putting on the right clothes, I learned to think like a proper psychologist by putting on the right – that is, atheistic – ideas and attitudes. I wanted as few impediments to my professional career as it was possible.14
>
> […]In my own case, I now see that it was because of my social need to assimilate, my professional need to be accepted as part of the world of academic psychology, and my personal need for independence and an agreeable way of life that I chose to be an atheist. Hence, the intellectual basis for my atheism, like that of countless others, appears in retrospect to be much more of a shallow rationalization than an objective rationale.

I just ordered the book last week on Brian’s recommendation. You might also be

interested in a lecture that Paul Vitz delivered on the psychological causes of atheism. (That link contains the MP3 file)

Related posts

- Book review of “If there’s a God, why are there atheists?”
- New book: James S. Spiegel’s “The Making of an Atheist”
- Cowardly Richard Dawkins explains why he won’t debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Answering Richard Dawkins’ question: “Who made God?”
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens’ case against God
- How do leading atheists understand morality on atheism?

MUST-HEAR: Jennifer Roback Morse debates on marriage at Columbia University

February 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. J makes marriage interesting and fun!

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse defends marriage at Columbia University in this short hour-long exchange. This is your chance to hear how anti-child advocates of same-sex marriage really are. And Dr. J links SSM to unilateral divorce at the end of the Q&A, too. Awesome! This debate really needed to go for twice the time, and I look forward to hearing MORE debates from Dr. J.

Details:

Columbia University's Federalist Society hosts a debate between Dr J and Professor Katherine Franke based on the question "Is Marriage Equality Possible?" About an hour of audio includes opening position (Dr J), arguments (Prof. Franke), and rebuttal (Dr J), as well as a brief question-and-answer period.

The MP3 file is here.

Dr. J's opening speech (15 min.)

Two basic contentions:

- 1) same-sex marriage is not the equivalent of traditional marriage
- 2) if we legislate that they are equal, then we are really redefining marriage by changing the essential purpose of marriage

A case study from Ireland:

- a known sperm donor for a lesbian couple was excluded from having a relationship with the child he conceived
- after the child was born, the sperm donor wanted regular contact with the child, but the women opposed giving him access
- same-sex marriage requires that courts are able to assign parental rights instead of having rights assigned biologically, as with traditional marriage
- That is why SSM is different from TM

What is the purpose of marriage?

- Marriage is about attaching mothers and fathers to children, and mothers and fathers to one another
- Children are born helpless from two opposite-sex parents and they need parental guidance and care during development
- In TM, there is no third party needed in order to have a child
- In TM, the biological parents have rights and responsibilities for the child
- TM is about providing the child with justice
- Every child is entitled a relationship to both biological parents, and is entitled to care, protection and nourishment from both parents, and every child is entitled to a stable family environment
- the problem is that children don't have standing to sue for these rights in court
- so the purpose of marriage is that we have a social construct to provide these rights to children naturally, without the state having to intervene

The purpose of marriage according to SSM?

- In SSM, the essential child-centered purpose marriage is replaced with new purposes like pooling resources and having same-sex couples recognized by society

SSM redefines marriage in four ways:

- it diminishes the entitlement of children to a relationship with both biological parents
- it diminishes the identification of parental roles with biology
- it requires the state to determine parental relationships, instead of recognizing biological parents
- it enshrines the idea that mothers and fathers are interchangeable, that children don't really need mothers AND fathers

Dr. Franke's opening speech (20 min.)

Hard cases make bad law 1: the presumption of paternity

- consider the case where a mother is married and has an affair resulting in a child
- the Supreme Court has ruled that the father of the child has no right of contact
- this is a case where marriage gets in the way of biological parents having a relationship with the child
- so it can be the case where marriage is in conflict with the relationships to biological parents

Hard cases make bad law 2: the purpose of marriage can be changed

- marriages was used to keep peace between families and communities
- marriage used to be about trading and trafficking of women

- so the concern for offspring was not always the greatest concern

TM and SSM are both equally able to create stability for children:

- same-sex unions are just as stable for children as TM marriages

Same-sex unions do provide justice for the child:

- giving the adults in same-sex couples the social recognition that opposite sex married couples have is good for children

Children can sue in court

- children can use guardians to sue their parents in court to get their rights

Opposing SSM is racism

- opposing same-sex marriage is equivalent to racism
- we could abolish marriage completely and let individuals form private contracts, then the state would really be neutral on marriage

Dr. J's rebuttal speech (5 min.)

The state cannot be neutral on marriage

- what the deinstutionalization of marriage means is that the private contracts are made by adults and children will have no consideration in those contracts

Regarding the adultery case

- the presumption of paternity is there to protect the marriage
- such borderline cases almost never happen with TM, whereas in SSM these third party problems occur in 100% of the cases

Children are not happy being separated from their biological parents

- adults do not have a right to exclude a child's biological parents from having a relationship with them, and children are often not happy being excluded from their biological parents

Related posts

- How would the legalization of same-sex marriage affect your liberty?
- New study shows that same-sex unions are less monogamous than heterosexual unions
- Why do people favor traditional marriage over same-sex marriage
- Christian man fired after gay rights group contacts his employer to complain
- Catholic church will stop all charity work if same-sex marriage passes in DC

- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- New Mexico Human Rights Commission fines couple $6000 for being Christians

Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting

February 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The leftist NYT reports:

> The Huntsville Times identified Dr. Bishop as a Harvard-educated neuroscientist.
>
> […]Dr. Bishop had told acquaintances recently that she was worried about getting tenure, said a business associate who met her at a business technology open house at the end of January and asked not to be named because of the close-knit nature of the science community in Huntsville.
>
> "She began to talk about her problems getting tenure in a very forceful and animated way, saying it was unfair," the associate said, referring to a conversation in which she blamed specific colleagues for her problems.

And a student review from her page at RateMyProfessors.com:

> This class was great. Bishop makes the class interesting by talking about her research and her friends research. That speaker she had for class was hard to understand but smart. She expects a lot and you need to come to every class and study. She is hot but she tries to hide it. And she is a socialist but she only talks about it after class.

Shot her brother dead:

> A Massachusetts police chief is now saying that UAH shooting suspect Amy Bishop shot and killed her brother during an argument, and the case may have been mishandled by the police department more than two decades ago when the fatal shooting occurred.

According to this web page, she likes to advocate evolution to members of the clergy.

UPDATE: From the Boston Herald.

Excerpt:

> Reyes confirmed he is working with the FBI to learn more about why Bishop was a suspect in the attempted bombing of Dr. Paul Rosenberg, who received a double-pipe bomb in the mail on Dec. 19, 1993. He ran from his Newton home with his wife, escaping without injury. The bomb never exploded.
>
> […]A family source said Bishop… was a far-left political extremist who was "obsessed" with President Obama to the point of being off-putting.

Very strange. Like a female version of Bill Ayers.

UPDATE 2: From the Boston Globe.

Excerpt:

> In March, 2002, Bishop walked into an International House of Pancakes in Peabody with her family, asked for a booster seat for one of her children, and learned the last seat had gone to another mother.
>
> Bishop, according to a police report, strode over to the other woman, demanded the seat and launched into a profanity-laced rant.
>
> When the woman would not give the seat up, Bishop punched her in the head, all the while yelling "I am Dr. Amy Bishop."

Sounds like a pretty typical Obama voter to me!

Related posts

- Which is worse: communism or Pepsi commercials?
- Was Nazi torturer Josef Mengele influenced by Christianity or Darwinism?
- Does the Bible condone slavery?
- Was Hitler a Christian? Is Nazism similar to Christianity?
- Another way that the secular left kills millions of people
- Should atheists or Christians be blamed for communism's 100 million deaths?
- Who is more responsible for the mass murders of history? Christians or atheists?
- Contrasting the moral values of an authentic Christian with an authentic Darwinist
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Can atheists be moral?

http://blog.al.com/breaking/2010/02/police_chief_says_uah_shooting.html

Interview with Jim Spiegel on “The Making of an Atheist” book

February 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Interview here at the EPS blog.

Excerpt:

Why might there be a tendency among some Christian philosophical critiques of atheism (or any other worldview for that matter) to under-represent or downright avoid how the sinful tendencies of the human heart figure into the formation of a worldview?

One reason for avoidance of this issue might be a concern for decorum. I suppose it could appear unseemly or offensive even to suggest, much less to present as a thesis of a book, that a person’s lack of belief in God is, at bottom, a form of rebellion. And I must admit that at times I felt uncomfortable writing the book for this reason. However, the fact that it is a clear biblical truth compelled me to write it anyway. But I was careful to be as generous and winsome as I could manage, given the subject matter.

And:

How does one become “entrenched” in an atheist’s mindset?

In my book I expound on two aspects of this process, which explains something of the obstinacy of atheists. There is a phenomenon that I call “paradigm-induced blindness,” where a person’s false worldview prevents them from seeing truths which would otherwise be obvious. Additionally, a person’s sinful indulgences have a way of deadening their natural awareness of God or, as John Calvin calls it, the *sensus divinitatis*. And the more this innate sense of the divine is squelched, the more resistant a person will be to evidence for God.

You say that right living contributes to the perseverance of faith. How is that perseverance related to Christian virtue and the “cognitive health” that it brings?

Just as sinful thoughts and behavior corrupt us cognitively and warp our perspective on the world, obedience and virtue benefit us cognitively in a number of ways. Not only do we avoid the intellectual warping and deadening of the *sensus divinitatis* that sin causes, but Scripture also makes clear that God grants special insight and wisdom to those who obey him (cf. Ps. 19:7, Ps. 25:9; Pr. 1:4, Pr. 11:2). So you might say that the life of Christian virtue enhances our ability to think and reason, especially about moral and spiritual matters.

I can hardly wait to read this book so that I can get some guidelines for dialoguing with atheists about how they formed their worldview. Is this really how atheists formed their view?

10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff

February 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Big Journalism. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

In 2004, Hofstra University professor Dr. Carol Shakeshaft published a report for the United States Department of Education titled "Educator Sexual Misconduct: A Synthesis of Existing Literature." It was presented to Congress as part of the No Child Left Behind Act. In it, Shakeshaft stated:

> As a group, these studies present a wide range of estimates of the percentage of U.S. students subject to sexual misconduct by school staff and vary from 3.7 to 50.3 percent. Because of its carefully drawn sample and survey methodology, the AAUW report that nearly 9.6 percent of students are targets of educator sexual misconduct sometime during their school career presents the most accurate data available at this time.

According to a study she did of abuse complaints against Catholic priests over a five decade period she concluded that "…the physical sexual abuse of students in schools is likely more than 100 times the abuse by priests."

[…]But this story, involving mainly public schools, silently went away. The government, not wanting the legal nightmare that would follow, let the whole matter drop.

A story like this should have been huge, but the press had a vested interest in protecting academia. Public schools might get complained about in terms that would motivate politicians to pour more tax dollars into them. But any story that would inspire parents to pull their kids out en masse is spiked. The public institutions that statists love so much, despite their many failings, are protected. The progressive agenda trumped what should have been the story of the year.

One more reason why I oppose public schools and teacher unions. I hope you all watched the recent video I posted on school choice!

Marsha Blackburn warns about ballooning entitlement programs

February 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video here:

Related posts

- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan’s plan for economic recovery
- Prestigious Mayo Clinic will no longer accept Medicare patients
- Social Security running deficits ten years ahead of schedule
- CBO predicts Social Security cash deficits in 2010
- Keith Hennessey explains the looming crisis of entitlement spending

George Will explains how Democrats favor increasing dependency on government

February 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article here in the Boston Herald. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> For congressional Democrats, expanding dependency on government is an end in itself. They began the Obama administration by expanding the State Children's Health Insurance Program. It was created for children of the working poor, but the expansion made millions of middle-class children eligible – some in households earning $125,000. The aim was to swell the number of people who grow up dependent on government health care.
>
> Many Democrats favor – as Barack Obama did in 2003 – a "single-payer" health insurance system, which means universal dependency on government. The "public option" insurance proposal was to be a step toward that. So was the proposed "alternative" of making 55- to 64-year-olds eligible for Medicare. Both of these dependency multipliers will be revived.
>
> The government used TARP funds not for their stipulated purpose of buying banks' "toxic assets," but to pull auto companies and other economic entities into the spreading web of dependency. Servile – because dependent – banks were pliable during the farce of Chrysler's bankruptcy, but secured creditors resisted when settled law was disregarded. Nevertheless, those creditors received less per dollar than did an unsecured creditor, the United Auto Workers, which relishes dependency on government as an alternative to economic realism.
>
> Democrats' financial "reforms" may aim to reduce financial institutions to dependent appendages of the government. By reducing banks to public utilities, credit, which is the lifeblood of capitalism, could be priced and allocated by government.
>
> Many Democrats, opposing the Supreme Court, advocate new campaign finance "reforms" that will further empower government to regulate the quantity, timing and content of speech about government. Otherwise voters will hear more such speech than government considers good for them. Such paternalism is American progressivism's oldest tradition.

The Democrats aren't the party of making the little guy bigger, they're the part of making the little guy even smaller than he is right now.

Bigger government means smaller individuals

Consider this article about food stamps from the New York Times. (H/T Protein Wisdom via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A decade ago, New York City officials were so reluctant to give out food stamps, they made people register one day and return the next just to get an application. The welfare commissioner said the program caused dependency and the poor were “better off” without it.
>
> Now the city urges the needy to seek aid (in languages from Albanian to Yiddish). Neighborhood groups recruit clients at churches and grocery stores, with materials that all but proclaim a civic duty to apply — to “help New York farmers, grocers, and businesses.” [note who is missing from that list … ed.] There is even a program on Rikers Island to enroll inmates leaving the jail.
>
> “Applying for food stamps is easier than ever,” city posters say.
>
> […]The drive to enroll the needy can be seen in the case of Monica Bostick-Thomas, 45, a Harlem widow who works part-time as a school crossing guard. Since her husband died three years ago, she has scraped by on an annual income of about $15,000.
>
> But she did not seek help until she got a call from the Food Bank of New York City, one of the city’s outreach partners. Last year, she balked, doubting she qualified. This year, when the group called again, she agreed to apply. A big woman with a broad smile, Ms. Bostick-Thomas swept into the group’s office a few days later, talking up her daughters’ college degrees and bemoaning the cost of oxtail meat.
>
> “I’m not saying I go hungry,” Ms. Bostick-Thomas said. “But I can’t always eat what I want.”

It is *not good* for people to depend on the government. It turns adults into children. People need to live with the results of their own decisions and not expect to be bailed out by their neighbors. For those of us who are concerned about poverty, we should solve the problem ourselves by private charity. Just taking an interest in your neighbor is a good thing.

Global warmist Phil Jones admits there's been no global warming since 1995

February 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T VotingFemale via Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> Untold billions of pounds have been spent on turning the world green and also on financing the dubious trade in carbon credits.
>
> Countless gallons of aviation fuel have been consumed carrying experts, lobbyists and politicians to apocalyptic conferences on global warming.
>
> Every government on Earth has changed its policy, hundreds of academic institutions, entire school curricula and the priorities of broadcasters and newspapers all over the world have been altered – all to serve the new doctrine that man is overheating the planet and must undertake heroic and costly changes to save the world from drowning as the icecaps melt.
>
> You might have thought that all this was based upon well-founded, highly competent research and that those involved had good reason for their blazing, hot-eyed certainty and their fierce intolerance of dissent.
>
> But, thanks to the row over leaked emails from the Climatic Research Unit, we now learn that this body's director, Phil Jones, works in a disorganised fashion amid chaos and mess.
>
> **[…]…he also sounds much less ebullient about the basic theory, admitting that there is little difference between global warming rates in the Nineties and in two previous periods since 1860 and accepting that from 1995 to now there has been no statistically significant warming.**
>
> **He also leaves open the possibility, long resisted by climate change activists, that the 'Medieval Warm Period' from 800 to 1300 AD, and thought by many experts to be warmer than the present period, could have encompassed the entire globe.**

Read the rest here. An updated story is here.

One other thing: a new US Senate report on polar bear populations. (H/T Big Journalism via ECM)

> The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service estimates that the polar bear population is currently at 20,000 to 25,000 bears, up from as low as 5,000-10,000 bears in the 1950s and 1960s. A 2002 U.S. Geological Survey of wildlife in the Arctic Refuge Coastal Plain noted that the polar bear populations "may now be near historic highs."

It’s just a hoax, people.

Related stories

- UN IPCC global warming alarmism based on student essay and magazine article
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- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal
- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline
- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
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- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now

Parental rights under attack in Poland and Canada

February 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, Poland, from Life Site News. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> A controversial bill that critics say would significantly infringe on the rights of parents to bring up their children according to their values has passed first reading in the Polish parliament.
>
> Incorporated into the bill, titled "On the Prevention of Family Violence," which deals with a variety of issues, is a clause that says, "It is forbidden for persons holding parental power over children to implement corporal punishment, cause psychological pain or to humiliate them in any other form."
>
> According to the Polish Labor and Social Policy Ministry guidelines, psychological violence includes, "making the child ashamed, imposing one's own opinions on the child, criticizing the child continually, controlling the child, restricting the child's social contacts," as well as "criticizing the child's sexual behavior."
>
> Furthermore, the bill would give social workers authority to take children from families if someone suspects parents are in contravention of these guidelines or if it is believed there is a danger they may in the future "harm" their children this in way.

This is really bad, especially for those of us who think that respectful disagreement about controversial is an important part of learning and growing. That's what shopping malls are for: to buy presents to make up for all the frank disagreement! But there has to be the disagreement first, otherwise how can people really be honest with one another, and change their minds?

Then Canada, also from Life Site News. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> Public school children in Hamilton, Ontario will not be permitted to withdraw from classes that promote homosexuality, according to the Hamilton Mountain News. At the same time, according to a leaked document obtained by a local journalist, teachers are being instructed to tell parents who object to the curriculum that "this is not about parent rights."
>
> At the end of January, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) hosted a professional development day dedicated to "equity" training, where they distributed a sheet to teachers with "quick responses" they can offer to parents who object to the school board's "anti-homophobia" curriculum.
>
> That document was obtained by journalist Mark Cripps, and posted on the website of the Hamilton Mountain News. Cripps observes that the handout

> "basically indicates parents have no rights when it comes to their child's education at the HWDSB."
>
> In addition, Cripps reports that, "The board says no child will be excused from the class when topics of homosexuality are brought into the classroom."
>
> The school board is developing a new equity policy, as required of all boards under the Ontario Ministry of Education's equity strategy, announced last year. Among other things, the Ministry is requiring all boards, Catholic and public, to develop a plan for combating "homophobia."
>
> The sheet given to the HWDSB teachers specifies that teachers do not "condone" the removal of children from classes that deal with homosexuality.

This is the kind of thing that terrifies even marriage-minded men like me, who have been saving and preparing for marriage our entire lives. Can you imagine what would happen if my future children said the wrong thing in public and they were seized by the government? I don't doubt for a second that some of Obama's nominees would see nothing wrong with seizing children from parents who don't agree with them on moral issues. Chai Feldblum and Kevin Jennings come to mind. Even government-run public schools are quite vicious in making sure that parents are forced to pay for secular-leftists schools so that they have no money left over to choose a school more suitable to the worldview of the parents.

Related posts

- France passes law to jail spouses who commit psychological violence
- New study shows that children who are spanked are more successful
- 12-year-old girl sues Dad for grounding her… and wins!
- How would the legalization of same-sex marriage affect your liberty?
- New study shows that same-sex unions are less monogamous than heterosexual unions
- Why do people favor traditional marriage over same-sex marriage
- Christian man fired after gay rights group contacts his employer to complain
- Catholic church will stop all charity work if same-sex marriage passes in DC
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- New Mexico Human Rights Commission fines couple $6000 for being Christians
- Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec.

Comments to this post will be strictly moderated in accordance with Obama's hate crimes law.

Woman who made false rape accusation gets zero jail time

February 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A woman who accused a student of rape after dragging him into a public toilet for sex was spared jail yesterday.
>
> Bisexual Sarah-Jane Hilliard, 20, seduced Grant Bowers when the two bumped into each other during a night out clubbing.
>
> […]She had denied perverting the course of justice.
>
> Mr Bowers – who says he is now afraid to speak to women – said: 'It's absolutely ridiculous. That's not even a slap on the wrist. She's been let off and I'm still having to sneak around because there are still people after me who think I did it.'
>
> It was more than a week after his arrest that Mr Bowers discovered he was not to be charged.
>
> But during that time Hilliard, who was in a relationship with a woman, contacted the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board in the hope of claiming up to £7,500.
>
> Mr Bowers's father Tony, 48, said: 'My son was facing up to ten years in prison for rape on the strength of her lies. The least I expected was for her to have been given a prison sentence.
>
> […]Hilliard's lie began to unravel when police were unable to find CCTV footage of the pair leaving the club.
>
> A friend admitted they had been at another nightclub called Colors and detectives found CCTV evidence of Hilliard and Mr Bowers, who was 19 at the time, kissing and holding hands.

How should men feel about stories like this?

ECM had sent me this article from the ABA Journal a few days back.

Excerpt:

> A judge's race or gender makes for a dramatic difference in the outcome of cases they hear—at least for cases in which race and gender allegedly play a role in the conduct of the parties, according to two recent studies.
>
> The results were the focus of a program about "Diversity on the Bench: Is the 'Wise Latina' a Myth?," sponsored by the ABA Judicial Division at the ABA Midyear Meeting in Orlando on Saturday afternoon.
>
> In federal racial harassment cases, one study (PDF) found that plaintiffs lost just 54 percent of the time when the judge handling the case was an African-

> American. Yet plaintiffs lost 81 percent of the time when the judge was Hispanic, 79 percent when the judge was white, and 67 percent of the time when the judge was Asian American.
>
> The comprehensive study, by professors from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and Carnegie Mellon University's Tepper School of Business, examined a random assortment of 40 percent of all reported racial harassment cases from six federal circuits between 1981 and 2003.
>
> A second study (PDF), looked at 556 federal appellate cases involving allegations of sexual harassment or sex discrimination in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The finding: plaintiffs were at least twice as likely to win if a female judge was on the appellate panel.

Are courts impartial?

Doug Axe explains the chances of getting a functional protein by chance

February 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've talked about Doug Axe before when I described how to calculate the odds of getting functional proteins by chance.

Let's calculate the odds of building a protein composed of a functional chain of 100 amino acids, by chance. (Think of a meaningful English sentence built with 100 scrabble letters, held together with glue)

Sub-problems:

- BONDING: You need 99 peptide bonds between the 100 amino acids. The odds of getting a peptide bond is 50%. The probability of building a chain of one hundred amino acids in which all linkages involve peptide bonds is roughly (1/2)^99 or 1 chance in 10^30.
- CHIRALITY: You need 100 left-handed amino acids. The odds of getting a left-handed amino acid is 50%. The probability of attaining at random only L–amino acids in a hypothetical peptide chain one hundred amino acids long is (1/2)^100 or again roughly 1 chance in 10^30.
- SEQUENCE: You need to choose the correct amino acid for each of the 100 links. The odds of getting the right one are 1 in 20. Even if you allow for some variation, the odds of getting a functional sequence is (1/20)^100 or 1 in 10^65.

The final probability of getting a functional protein composed of 100 amino acids is 1 in 10^125. Even if you fill the universe with pre-biotic soup, and react amino acids at Planck time (very fast!) for 14 billion years, you are probably not going to get even 1 such protein. And you need at least 100 of them for minimal life functions, plus DNA and RNA.

Research performed by Doug Axe at Cambridge University, and published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Molecular Biology, has shown that the number of functional amino acid sequences is tiny:

> Doug Axe's research likewise studies genes that it turns out show great evidence of design. Axe studied the sensitivities of protein function to mutations. In these "mutational sensitivity" tests, Dr. Axe mutated certain amino acids in various proteins, or studied the differences between similar proteins, to see how mutations or changes affected their ability to function properly. He found that protein function was highly sensitive to mutation, and that proteins are not very tolerant to changes in their amino acid sequences. In other words, when you mutate, tweak, or change these proteins slightly, they stopped working. In one of his papers, he thus concludes that "functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences," and that functional protein folds "may be as low as 1 in 10^77."

The problem of forming DNA by sequencing nucleotides faces similar difficulties. And remember, mutation and selection cannot explain the origin of the *first* sequence, because mutation and selection require replication, which does not exist until that first living cell is *already in place*.

But you can't show that to your friends, you need to send them a video. And I have a video!

A video of Doug Axe explaining the calculation

Here's a clip from Illustra Media's new ID DVD "Darwin's Dilemma", which features Doug Axe and Stephen Meyer (both with Ph.Ds from Cambridge University).

I hope you all read Brian Auten's review of Darwin's Dilemma! It was awesome.

Related DVDs

Illustra also made two other great DVDs on intelligent design. The first two DVDs "Unlocking the Mystery of Life" and "The Privileged Planet" are must-buys, but you can watch them on youtube if you want, for free.

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

I also recommend Coldwater Media's "Icons of Evolution". All three of these are on sale from Amazon.com.

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

Rhode Island superintendent fires entire staff at unionized public school

February 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here on Business Insider. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> A school superintendent in Rhode Island is trying to fix an abysmally bad school system.
>
> Her plan calls for teachers at a local high school to work 25 minutes longer per day, each lunch with students once in a while, and help with tutoring. The teachers' union has refused to accept these apparently onerous demands.
>
> The teachers at the high school make $70,000-$78,000, as compared to a median income in the town of $22,000. This exemplifies a nationwide trend in which public sector workers make far more than their private-sector counterparts (with better benefits).
>
> The school superintendent has responded to the union's stubbornness by firing every teacher and administrator at the school.

ECM sent me this article about New Jersey earlier this week, which ruined my entire Monday.

Excerpt:

> One state retiree, 49 years old, paid, over the course of his entire career, a total of $124,000 towards his retirement pension and health benefits. What will we pay him? $3.3 million in pension payments over his life and nearly $500,000 for health care benefits — a total of $3.8m on a $120,000 investment. Is that fair?
>
> A retired teacher paid $62,000 towards her pension and nothing, yes nothing, for full family medical, dental and vision coverage over her entire career. What will we pay her? $1.4 million in pension benefits and another $215,000 in health care benefit premiums over her lifetime. Is it "fair" for all of us and our children to have to pay for this excess?
>
> **The total unfunded pension and medical benefit costs are $90 billion. We would have to pay $7 billion per year to make them current. We don't have that money—you know it and I know it. What has been done to our citizens by offering a pension system we cannot afford and health benefits that are 41% more expensive than the average Fortune 500 company's costs is the truly unfair part of this equation.**

And from CNSNews.

Excerpt:

> Time.com reported last week that Office of Personnel Management Director John Berry estimated the government shut down cost taxpayers $100 million a day in labor that workers were unable to perform. That would suggest that the four and one quarter days the federal workers missed last week cost taxpayers about $425 million–close to the $445 million calculated on the basis that federal workers average $79,197 per year in salary not counting benefits.
>
> The federal government was officially shut down on Feb. 8, 9, 10, and 11 and opened for business two hours late on Feb. 12.
>
> Federaljobs.net's Damp told CNSNews.com that not all of the more than 340,000 federal employees stayed home on those days. Some of these workers are designated as "essential" employees and are supposed to show up even when the weather or other conditions closes the federal government. These include, for example, law enforcement officers, key personnel with the Federal Aviation Administration, and workers who are needed for national security reasons.
>
> "But I think it's safe to say most of the workers did not go to work," Damp said.
>
> When non-essential federal workers are told to stay home because of a government shutdown, they still get paid, according to the Office of Personnel Management.

And also from CNSNews.

Excerpt:

> State and local governments spent $1.1 trillion on employee wages and benefits in 2008. That's half of what those governments spent overall.
>
> And while the private sector job market remains bleak, there are more civil service jobs than ever. The federal Labor Department projects wage and salary employment in state and local government will increase 8 percent by 2018. That's a comforting thought for anyone who has to spend time in line at the DMV.
>
> Wish we could be as confident about the prospects for creating new corporate and manufacturing jobs to help pay for these new hires.
>
> It's not simply the number of new jobs that costs taxpayers. It's that these government jobs pay more than ever. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that state and local government workers earn almost $40 per hour in wages, salaries and benefits. That's more than 25 percent higher than the combined compensation of the average private sector job ($27 per hour).

One of the things that weights most heavily on my mind is the outrageous pay and benefits that are paid to public sector union employees. I am in the private sector and I have to pay these exorbitant salaries to people who have probably never worked a day in their entire lives! I have never had a moment's peace in my career – the threat of layoffs has been a constant since I was doing internships during my undergraduate days. And I have two degrees in computer science!

Look, I'm a child of first generation immigrants, and I've been volunteering since I was 14 and working since I was 16 in high-tech. How can it be that people who cannot even teach children successfully can make so much money? It just is not fair, and I find it very depressing that I am paying for these layabouts. It makes me want to give up trying to do anything! The fact that Obama keeps raising public sector salaries in a recession does not help. And Obama opposes school choice, too.

I say abolish public sector unions, and abolish bailouts to private sector unions, too.

Why is it rational to act in a self-sacrificial way on Christian theism?

February 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I guess everybody who reads the blog is familiar with my view that self-sacrificial moral behavior is not rationally grounded on atheism. Well, I got a great (snarky) question from a commenter (Gregory Lewis) who wanted me to explain WHY self-sacrifical morality is rational if Christian theism is true. So I wrote the stuff below to try to answer it. I'm not completely happy with it, but I tried.

Note, this is not exactly theologically correct. I do understand that salvation is by grace, and that doing good deeds is part of sanctification, not justificiation. I.e. – the good deeds do not save you, but they do affect your relationship with God, and everyone else, in the after-life.

My response

The question to be answered is why should a person act in a self-sacrificial way when it does not give them pleasure and may even result in punishment. On atheism, self-sacrifice is irrational because morality is illusory, we have no free will, and life is temporary. Your life purpose on atheism is to be as happy as possible before you die, and there is no room for self-sacrificial love just to be good. So it is not rational to sacrifice yourself for the "moral law". There is no moral law, on atheism. That's what I mean when I say that morality is not rational on atheism. I mean self-sacrificial morality is not rational, and it seems to me that this morality is the only kind that counts.

But here's what is true on Christian theism:

1) the moral law is real (objective) not subjective and not arbitrary
2) humans have free will – we are not biologically determined
3) there is a real Creator/Designer who says we ought to obey the moral law
4) there is a final judgment where our free choices to obey or not are measured
5) obedience to the moral law affects the quality (not duration) of that eternal life
6) the author of the moral law loves us self-sacrificially

And what does all of this mean, on Christian Theism:

There is an objective moral standard that specifies what we (morally) ought to do on Christian theism, like self-sacrificial love. Our capacity to make a choice to accomodate that moral obligation is real, because we have consciousness and free will on Christian theism. There is a real way we ought to be, and a real capacity to choose to be that way. But sometimes being good that way sets us back, personally. Is self-sacrificial love rational when it reduces our pleasure in this life? What happens when doing the right thing results in LESS happiness in this life and maybe even LESS time to live in this life? Is self-sacrifice rational on Christianity?

Well, there are two things better than a finite amount of happiness in this life and a finite

duration of this life. And that's an infinite amount of happiness and an infinite duration of life. If we could get that by taking a little short-term pain here and now, then it would make sense for us to suffer now and get something better later, if the world really were designed that way as a matter of fact. And that's what Christian theists believe is the case.

So, on Christian theism, self-sacrificial love is rational because it is in our own best interest to do so AND because it's what we were designed to do. It's the way the world is that makes it rational, and that objective reality can be investigated and sustained in a debate using the standard arguments. Self-sacrifice is rational on Christian theism because there is a state of affairs that makes it rational.

But there is more to it than just self-interest. You have to remember that Jesus' self-sacrificial death on our behalf is a kind of call to action as well. It may be that many or even most Christians never think about rational self-interest. They think of relationships. They look around at the world and they are willing to take on the obligations of the moral law in the context of having a relationship with God. They don't think of obeying the moral law as a way to get eternal happiness and eternal life, but as the only possible rational response to another person who sacrifices themselves to love them. It's not just that we want eternal life, or eternal happiness. We want a relationship with that person who loves us. We have a desire to be loved in a non-temporary way. We want to know that other person as he really is. I would not call that desire self-interest.

I'm thinking of what I feel like when I ask a woman to spend time talking to me over a meal that I will pay for, and she says yes. She probably isn't thinking that she is doing this in order to be made 100% happy with no demands on her own behavior. There is something more going on there than self-interest – she wants to have a relationship, and she is willing to make adjustments to have that relationship. Most Christians aren't thinking that they are going to get eternal life or eternal happiness. They want to know who this God person is and they are not concerned about the fact that this person wants them to act a certain way as part of that relationship. We want the relationship. It's rational for us to act in a way that keeps the relationship going.

Normally, to get a relationship started, I give a woman a book to read or a DVD to watch. That's not fun for her. But it is a gift. Either she is going to want to know this person who chose her or she isn't. Maybe she thinks I will make her happy, but that's not why she takes that first step to follow me. She wants the relationship.

Related posts

- Should you reject the Biblical notion of Hell based on emotions?
- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

Canada’s finance minister proposes changes to mortgage lending laws

February 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the National Post.

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, the Department of Finance announced three changes to the standards governing government-backed mortgages, that come into force April 19. Here are a summary of the changes.
>
> QUALIFYING FOR A FIVE-YEAR RATE
>
> The adjustments to the mortgage framework will require mortgage insurers to ensure that new borrowers qualify for a five-year fixed rate mortgage when calculating the gross debt service and total debt service ratios. The measure is intended to protect Canadians by providing them with additional flexibility to support mortgage payments at higher interest rates in the future.
>
> LIMIT THE MAXIMUM REFINANCING
>
> Borrowers seeking financial flexibility can currently refinance their mortgage and increase the amount they are borrowing on the security of their home up to a limit of 95% of the value of the property. The adjustment will lower the maximum amount of the mortgage loan in a refinancing of a government-backed high-ratio mortgage loan to 90% of the value of the property, consistent with the principle that home ownership is a tool for savings.
>
> DISCOURAGING SPECULATION
>
> This measure will require a minimum down payment of 20% for government-backed mortgage insurance on non-owner-occupied properties purchased for speculation. At present, borrowers may purchase a residential property with a 5% down payment. The change will require a 20% down payment for small non-owner-occupied residential rental properties. Borrowers purchasing owner-occupied residential properties which also include some rental units (such as a duplex) will still be able to access government-backed mortgage insurance with a 5% down payment.

But the CEI reports that the Democrat mortgage bailouts encourage fiscal irresponsibility.

Excerpt:

> Economists and real estate experts are saying that a $75 billion mortgage bailout program designed by the Obama administration has backfired and harmed the housing market…
>
> […]Earlier, the government pushed through billions more in other mortgage bailouts, to bail out even reckless high-income borrowers, and forced financial

> institutions the government took over in the name of fiscal responsibility, like Freddie Mac, to run up billions in losses bailing out irresponsible borrowers.
>
> Banks will now be pressured to make even more risky loans. The House has approved Obama's proposal to create the so-called Consumer Financial Protection Agency. Government pressure on banks to make loans in economically-depressed neighborhoods was a key reason for the mortgage meltdown and the financial crisis. Yet Obama's disturbing proposal would empower the new agency to enforce the Community Reinvestment Act without regard for banks' financial safety and soundness. The Community Reinvestment Act was a key contributor to the financial crisis.
>
> The mortgage crisis was also caused by the reckless government-sponsored mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and by federal affordable-housing mandates. But Obama's proposed financial rules overhaul does absolutely nothing about Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, admits Obama's Treasury Secretary, tax cheat Timothy Geithner, even though he admits that "Fannie and Freddie were a core part of what went wrong in our system."
>
> Worse, the Obama Administration lifted the $400 billion limit on bailouts for Fannie and Freddie, so that they could continue to buy up junky mortgages at taxpayer expense, and showered their executives with $42 million in compensation.
>
> Obama's financial-regulation plan is "largely the product of extensive conversations" with two lawmakers responsible for the corrupt status quo, Chris Dodd and Barney Frank, and it expands the reach of regulations that have been used by left-wing groups to extort pay-offs from banks.

This is why we should have elected an economist like Stephen Harper.

John Stossel’s documentary about public schools and school choice

February 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Awesome: (41 minutes)

The documentary features Jay Greene, and his book “Education Myths”, which I recommend.

Here’s an article from Jay P. Greene in National Review.

Excerpt:

> This year, when you hear President Obama and congressional Democrats talk about increasing government spending to create jobs, you should understand that it isn’t really about jobs. It’s about paying off powerful interest groups that helped these Democrats gain power — a fact that’s clear from the billions they’ve directed to education.
>
> Last month, President Obama held a jobs summit, after which he urged Congress to spend some of the money being repaid by bailed-out banks on programs to address unemployment. The House of Representatives responded by drafting legislation that, according to the *Washington Post*, “provides $23 billion to help states pay teacher salaries.” The curious thing is that education has actually seen an expansion in payrolls over the last two years, while every other major sector of the economy (save health care) has seen huge job losses.
>
> According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of people employed peaked in November 2007. Over the next two years, the private sector lost more than 7 million jobs. The construction industry lost more than 1.5 million jobs. Manufacturing lost more than 2 million jobs. The education-and-health-services category, however, added more than 900,000 jobs.

My previous post on education featured a video on school choice from the Cato Institute.

Is there such a thing as genuine libertarian free will if naturalism is true?

February 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

PNAS article shows what naturalists think of free will. (H/T Secondhand Smoke)

Excerpt:

> Although, like any biosynthetic process, the product may be quite distinct from the input material, it is still a direct consequence of these materials. I suggest that consciousness acts on behavior in a similar manner, such as to commonly reinforce the negative effects that are associated with antisocial behavior. Similarly, for some of us, consciousness heightens our desire to listen to music, for example, or to watch or participate in sporting activities. Whereas the impressions are that we are making "free" conscious decisions, the reality is that consciousness is simply a state of awareness that reflects the input signals, and these are an unavoidable consequence of GES. The mechanistic details of these conscious processes are unknown, and remain the major unsolved problem in biology.

And:

> A belief in free will is akin to religious beliefs. Indeed, I would argue that free will makes "logical sense," as long as one has the luxury of the "causal magic" of religion. Neither religious beliefs, nor a belief in free will, comply with the laws of the physical world. However, despite thi similarity, although in scientific circles a skeptical viewpoint is very common regarding religious forces and their day-to-day impact on biological systems, it is my observation that similar skepticism is not widely held regarding a belief in free will.

And finally:

> We are conscious automata." That is, Huxley believed (as I and many others do) that we are mechanical forces of nature and that, by some mechanism we have evolved the phenomenon of consciousness, which, I would argue, has conferred upon us the illusion of responsibility.

The illusion of free will. The illusion of moral choices. The illusion of responsibility. It should be noted that if determinism is true, as he states, then everything he says is non-rational. The chemicals in his brain simply fizzed up those particular words. Note that conscious is undeniable, but no materialist can explain how inanimate matter can create consciousness. No matter how many parts you add to a computer, it will never gain self-awareness. It's behavior will always be determined by programming and inputs.

What do atheists think of morality?

Let me cite the views of atheist scholars from a previous post. These are the people who are the most committed, authentic atheists, and who have thought through what it means to be an atheist at the highest level.

> The idea of political or legal obligation is clear enough… Similarly, the idea of an obligation higher than this, referred to as moral obligation, is clear enough, provided reference to some lawgiver higher…than those of the state is understood. In other words, our moral obligations can…be understood as those that are imposed by God…. But what if this higher-than-human lawgiver is no longer taken into account? Does the concept of moral obligation…still make sense? …The concept of moral obligation [is] unintelligible apart from the idea of God. The words remain but their meaning is gone. (Richard Taylor, Ethics, Faith, and Reason (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985), p. 83-84)
>
> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Source: Richard Dawkins)
>
> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory. (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

There is no such thing as morality on atheism.

Obama’s latest nominee defended a convicted supporter of Islamic terrorism

February 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Megyn Kelly and Monica Crowley explain. (H/T Gates of Vienna)

Robert Spencer writes about it in Human Events. (H/T Jihad Watch)

> Last Saturday, in a video message to the U.S.-Islamic World Forum in Qatar, Barack Obama appointed Rashad Hussain to be his administration’s special envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Rashad Hussain several years ago defended a leader of a jihad terrorist group — and now the record of his doing so has been deep-sixed.
>
> Journalist Patrick Goodenough of CNS News has discovered that in 2004 Hussain denounced the prosecution of University of South Florida professor Sami al-Arian as a “politically motivated persecution” designed “to squash dissent.”
>
> […]All of Al-Arian’s defenders had egg on their faces when Al-Arian pled guilty to charges involving his acting as a leader of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a deadly terrorist group that has employed suicide bombings and other terror tactics to murder over one hundred Israelis.
> And among the egged faces was Rashad Hussain, apparently. Goodenough reports that Hussain’s remarks defending Al-Arian appeared in the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* in 2004. But now the *Washington Report*’s website carries a version of this article from the passage referring to Rashad Hussain has been removed. Nothing else in the article has been changed.
>
> […]Even aside from this there was enough disquieting about the appointment. In a 2007 article Hussain criticized focusing on Muslims in anti-terror efforts: “Federal law should adopt a standard that protects national security while forbidding the targeting of non-citizens solely on the basis of their racial, religious, or ethnic backgrounds.” When the overwhelming majority of terror attacks are committed by young Muslim males acting in the name of Islamic teachings, this is just a call for the waste of resources.

Spencer wonders if the Obama administration was involved in hiding the details of Hussain’s real views.

19 points that undermine the claims of global warming alarmists

February 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Orange County Register. (H/T Verum Serum)

Here are a few items from a list of 19 serious problems with the evidence used to support man-made global warming alarmism:

ChinaGate – An investigation by the U.K.'s left-leaning Guardian newspaper found evidence that Chinese weather station measurements not only were seriously flawed, but couldn't be located. "Where exactly are 42 weather monitoring stations in remote parts of rural China?" the paper asked. The paper's investigation also couldn't find corroboration of what Chinese scientists turned over to American scientists, leaving unanswered, "how much of the warming seen in recent decades is due to the local effects of spreading cities, rather than global warming?" The Guardian contends that researchers covered up the missing data for years.

HimalayaGate – An Indian climate official admitted in January that, as lead author of the IPCC's Asian report, he intentionally exaggerated when claiming Himalayan glaciers would melt away by 2035 in order to prod governments into action. This fraudulent claim was not based on scientific research or peer-reviewed. Instead it was originally advanced by a researcher, since hired by a global warming research organization, who later admitted it was "speculation" lifted from a popular magazine. This political, not scientific, motivation at least got some researcher funded…

SternGate – One excuse for imposing worldwide climate crackdown has been the U.K.'s 2006 Stern Report, an economic doomsday prediction commissioned by the government. Now the U.K. Telegraph reports that quietly after publication "some of these predictions had been watered down because the scientific evidence on which they were based could not be verified." Among original claims now deleted were that northwest Australia has had stronger typhoons in recent decades, and that southern Australia lost rainfall because of rising ocean temperatures. Exaggerated claims get headlines. Later, news reporters disclose the truth. Why is that?…

AmazonGate – The London Times exposed another shocker: the IPCC claim that global warming will wipe out rain forests was fraudulent, yet advanced as "peer-reveiwed" science. The Times said the assertion actually "was based on an unsubstantiated claim by green campaigners who had little scientific expertise," "authored by two green activists" and lifted from a report from the World Wildlife Fund, an environmental pressure group. The "research" was based on a popular science magazine report that didn't bother to assess rainfall. Instead, it looked at the impact of logging and burning. The original report suggested "up to 40 percent" of Brazilian rain forest was extremely sensitive to small reductions in the amount of rainfall, but the IPCC expanded that to cover the entire Amazon, the Times reported.

PeerReviewGate – The U.K. Sunday Telegraph has documented at least 16 nonpeer-reviewed reports (so far) from the advocacy group World Wildlife Fund that were used in the IPCC's climate change bible, which calls for capping manmade greenhouse gases.

RussiaGate – Even when global warming alarmists base claims on scientific measurements, they've often had their finger on the scale. Russian think tank investigators evaluated thousands of documents and e-mails leaked from the East Anglia research center and concluded readings from the coldest regions of their nation had been omitted, driving average temperatures up about half a degree.

Related stories

- UN IPCC global warming alarmism based on student essay and magazine article
- How the UN's IPCC cites non-scientific claims from the World Wildlife Fund
- Chairman of UN's IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Britain to be hit by coldest winter in 100 years
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal
- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline
- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now

After $862 billion stimulus, Obama is still 9 million jobs short of his target

February 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remember why Obama passed the stimulus bill? To create jobs!

The Heritage Foundation explains how Obama is 9 million jobs away from his promised target.

Excerpt:

> When Obama made his 3.5 million jobs promise, employment stood at about 135.1 million according to the Department of Labor's most commonly used measure. This establishes the Obama jobs target for December 2010 at 138.6 million. It also establishes a basic trajectory for employment the economy would need to approximate to hit that target.
>
> According to the latest jobs report, total U.S. employment fell to 129.5 million in January, which means the cumulative Obama jobs deficit–the difference between the end target and the current employment level–stands at 9 million.
>
> […]The theory underlying Obama's stimulus was that the economy was weak because total demand was too low. The suggested solution is then to increase demand by increasing the budget deficit. This theory of demand manipulation through deficit spending ignores the simplest of realities: Government spending must be financed. So to finance deficit spending, the government must borrow from private markets, thereby reducing private demand by the same amount as deficit spending increases public demand.

Government spending takes money out of the productive private sector, either by taxes or inflation. But it is the private sector, especially small businesses, that creates the most new jobs. The stimulus plan was doomed to failure.

Related posts

- How Democrat policies cause unemployment to increase
- Unemployment rate among men aged 25-54 is 19.4%
- Unemployment for young Americans surges to record high of 52 percent
- Business leaders blame Obama for high unemployment rate
- Ten ways that Obama stimulated the economy with government spending
- Feds give $888,000 to Chicago public schools to teach Arabic language
- Why Obama's government spending failed to keep unemployment below 8%
- Harvard economists explain how Obama's spending created 10.2% unemployment
- Why is Obama spending trillions when government spending failed in Japan?
- What lowers unemployment? Bush's tax cuts or Obama's spending?
- Why Democrat policies don't create jobs

Marco Rubio’s speech at the conservative CPAC convention

February 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video is right here, from Breitbart.tv: (26 minutes)

Great speech. This is who we are. This is what we believe.

Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law

February 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T Pursuing Holiness via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Archdiocese of Washington has scrapped its 80-year-old foster care program, claiming it's no longer eligible to serve as an adoption provider due to the District of Columbia's pending same-sex marriage law.
>
> Under the legislation, which legalizes same-sex marriage in the nation's capital and which goes into effect March 2, all outside contractors must recognize gay couples in the District.
>
> In a press release posted on its Web site Tuesday, the archdiocese, which opposes gay marriage, said it had no choice but to transfer its foster care program to the National Center for Children and Families, or NCCF.

Same-sex marriage is incompatible with religious liberty. It's a zero-sum game.

Related posts

- Jennifer Roback Morse debates on marriage at Columbia University
- How would the legalization of same-sex marriage affect your liberty?
- New study shows that same-sex unions are less monogamous than heterosexual unions
- Why do people favor traditional marriage over same-sex marriage
- Christian man fired after gay rights group contacts his employer to complain
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- New Mexico Human Rights Commission fines couple $6000 for being Christians

Canadian persecution of Christians

- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

Comments will be strictly moderated to take into account Obama's hate crimes law.

What does the end of the universe tell us about the meaning of life?

February 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Details of a recent scientific discovery from the Canberra Times.

Excerpt:

> The universe is running out of usable energy and the end is nearer than expected, according to Australian National University astronomers.
>
> […]PhD student Chas Egan and his supervisor Charley Lineweaver from the ANU Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics calculated how run-down the universe was and found it was 30 times more dilapidated than previously thought.
>
> In doing so they measured the universe's entropy a gauge of how "disorderly" the cosmos is and how close it is to its cold, lifeless end.
>
> […]Mr Egan said all the processes that occurred in the universe increased its entropy.
>
> "When you leave any isolated system it gets more and more disorderly," he said.
>
> […]Scientists believe that end will take the form of a "heat death".
>
> "All the matter currently in stars and planets will be spread out homogenously through space and it will be cold and dark and nothing will be able to live and no processes will go on.

More details of the discovery from the Australian newspaper The Age.

Excerpt:

> The findings, to be published in the *Astrophysical Journal*, have implications not just for Earthlings but for any extraterrestrial life as well.
>
> "We're not just talking about our solar system or our galaxy, we're talking about our universe," he said.
>
> "These constraints apply to all life forms that might be in the universe."

What implications does this discovery have on the question of meaning and purpose in life? If nothing that we do now will survive the end of the universe, then what reason do we have to do anything?

Atheist and Christian responses to the end of the universe

We can get BOTH SIDES of the question from this clip of a formal debate featuring Christian scholar William Lane Craig and atheist writer Christopher Hitchens.

The question being debated is: "Is there objective meaning and purpose in life without God?". Hitchens and Craig agree that without God, the universe will cool down and all life

will die. And they both agree that if there is no God, then there is no objective meaning and purpose in life.

Hitchens says that he can arbitrarily choose a purpose for his life that makes him happy and fulfilled. But notice that this purpose is an arbitrary personal preference. Someone who chooses mass murder or slavery, and has the power to carry it out with impunity, has as much right to choose that purpose as Hitchens does to choose his.

What can we conclude from the atheist view of purpose and meaning?

What does it say about atheism that there is no way to distinguish between William Wilberforce and Josef Stalin? They were both just doing what made them happy, and there is no way either of them ought to have acted, and no objective moral standard by which to praise or condemn them. Some people admire Wilberforce. Some people admire Stalin. No one is right or wrong, because the choice of life purpose is *arbitrary*, on atheism. So long as you are happy, and the majority of people in your time and place applaud you, anything is permissible.

What would you think of a person whose every action is designed to maximize their pleasurable feelings in this life? What would you make of a person who believed that other people were just bags of atoms, with no human rights and no free will? What would you make of a person who thought that other people were just objects to be used (or dispersed) in whatever way made them feel happiest? What does a selfish attitude do to enterprises like marriage and parenting?

Is it any surprise that we have killed 50 million unborn babies as a result of our own irresponsible search for pleasure? Sex is fun, but taking responsibility for the decision to have sex is not fun. So we kill innocent people who are weaker than us in order to maximize our pleasure in this life. And why not? On atheism, there is no objective meaning in life, no objective purpose to life, and no objective moral standard of right and wrong.

Does environmentalism kill millions of innocent people?

February 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this post on Hot Air. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> Who is the worst killer in the long, ugly history of war and extermination? Hitler? Stalin? Pol Pot? Not even close. A single book called *Silent Spring* killed far more people than all those fiends put together.
>
> Published in 1962, *Silent Spring* used manipulated data and wildly exaggerated claims (sound familiar?) to push for a worldwide ban on the pesticide known as DDT – which is, to this day, the most effective weapon against malarial mosquitoes. The Environmental Protection Agency held extensive hearings after the uproar produced by this book… and these hearings concluded that DDT should *not* be banned. A few months after the hearings ended, EPA administrator William Ruckleshaus over-ruled his own agency and banned DDT anyway, in what he later admitted was a "political" decision. Threats to withhold American foreign aid swiftly spread the ban across the world.
>
> The resulting explosion of mosquito-borne malaria in Africa has claimed over sixty million lives.

What causes environmentalists to want to murder millions of innocent people?

> As quoted by Walter Williams, the founder of the Malthusian Club of Rome, Alexander King, wrote in 1990: "My own doubts came when DDT was introduced. In Guayana, within two years, it had almost eliminated malaria. So my chief quarrel with DDT, in hindsight, is that it has greatly added to the population problem." Another charming quote comes from Dr. Charles Wurster, a leading opponent of DDT, who said of malaria deaths: "People are the cause of all the problems. We have too many of them. We need to get rid of some of them, and this is as good a way as any."

Abortion killed 50 million people in the United States alone, while atheistic communism killed 100 million people in the 20th century. And remember: Obama's science czar is a radical environmentalist who advocates coerced abortions.

Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package

February 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's all admire Michele Bachmann, my favorite member of Congress!

On bipartisan negotations and Obamacare:

On the stimulus package, unemployment and entitlements:

Sigh. I hope she gets leadership of the House Republicans.

Related posts

- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs
- Michele Bachmann issues conservative call to action
- Michele Bachmann interviewed on the Pat Robertson's 700 Club
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama's latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare's rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Collection of the best Michele Bachmann video clips

How viking settlements in Greenland disprove man-made global warming

February 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from a professor at SUNY Suffolk, himself a believer in man-made global warming. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> During the years 800-1200, Iceland and Greenland were settled by the Vikings. These people, also known as the Norse, included Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, and Finns.
>
> The warm climate during the MWP allowed this great migration to flourish. Drift ice posed the greatest hazard to sailors but reports of drift ice in old records do not appear until the thirteenth century (Bryson, 1977.)
>
> […]The Greenland Vikings lived mostly on dairy produce and meat, primarily from cows. The vegetable diet of Greenlanders included berries, edible grasses, and seaweed, but these were inadequate even during the best harvests. During the MWP, Greenland's climate was so cold that cattle breeding and dairy farming could only be carried on in the sheltered fiords. The growing season in Greenland even then was very short. Frost typically occurred in August and the fiords froze in October. Before the year 1300, ships regularly sailed from Norway and other European countries to Greenland bringing with them timber, iron, corn, salt, and other needed items. Trade was by barter. Greenlanders offered butter, cheese, wool, and their frieze cloths, which were greatly sough after in Europe, as well as white and blue fox furs, polar bear skins, walrus and narwhal tusks, and walrus skins. In fact, two Greenland items in particular were prized by Europeans: white bears and the white falcon. These items were given as royal gifts. For instance, the King of Norway-Denmark sent a number of Greenland falcons as a gift to the King of Portugal, and received in return the gift of a cargo of wine (Stefansson, 1966.) Because of the shortage of adequate vegetables and cereal grains, and a shortage of timber to make ships, the trade link to Iceland and Europe was vital (Hermann, 1954.)

Here's where the Vikings settled:

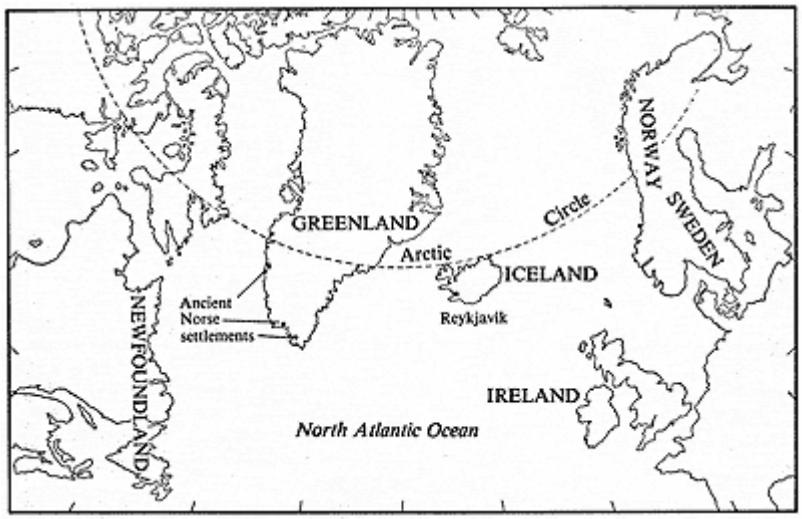

It’s all covered in ice today, though. But it was not covered in ice *back then.* And that’s because it was *warmer* in the Medieval Times than it is today.

MUST-SEE: Michele Bachmann's passionate and inspiring speech at CPAC 2010

February 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

OH MY. You really, really, really need to watch this speech.

Part 1:

Topics: The "Miss Me Yet" billboard in MN, her son persuades a liberal to be a conservative, grass roots conservative activism in ND, the importance of liberty, Obama's anti-americanism, bailout mania, federal spending.

Part 2:

Topics: The national debt, nationalization of industry, public/private economy, socialism, inflation, Greece, "fantasy economics", FDR and the forgotten man, small business, the Constitution, the vision of America, private property.

Part 3:

Topics: The revolutionary war, self-government, American history, the story of America, self-sacrifice, American exceptionalism.

This is great. What I like about Bachmann more than anything else is that she comes across as totally unguarded and genuine. And when you put her in front of a room of conservatives, she just does it even better. This speech is TWICE as good as Marco Rubio's speech that I posted before. And it's well-delivered, too.

UPDATE: Muddling Towards Maturity likes the George Will CPAC speech.

Related posts

- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
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Mark Steyn writes on the West's failure to contain Iran's nuclear ambitions

February 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> In Iran, the self-declared nuclear regime announced that it was now enriching uranium to 20 percent. When President Obama took office, the Islamic Republic had 400 centrifuges enriching up to 3.5 percent. A year later, it has 8,000 centrifuges enriching to 20 percent. The CIA director, Leon Panetta, now cautiously concedes that Iran's nuclear ambitions may have a military purpose. Which is odd, because the lavishly funded geniuses behind America's National Intelligence Estimate told us only two years ago that Tehran had ended its nuclear weapons program in 2003. Is that estimate no longer operative? And, if so, could we taxpayers get a refund?
>
> […]On the other hand, when it comes to "keeping you safe" from real threats, such as a millenarian theocracy that claims universal jurisdiction, America and its allies do nothing. There aren't going to be any sanctions, because China and Russia don't want them. That means military action, which would have to be done without U.N. backing — which, as Greg Sheridan of the *Australian* puts it, "would be foreign to every instinct of the Obama administration." Indeed. Nonetheless, Washington is (all together now) "losing patience" with the mullahs. The *New York Daily News* reports the latest get-tough move: "Secretary of State Clinton dared Iran on Monday to let her hold a town-hall meeting in Tehran."
>
> […]It is now certain that Tehran will get its nukes, and very soon. This is the biggest abdication of responsibility by the Western powers since the 1930s. It is far worse than Pakistan going nuclear, which, after all, was just another thing the CIA failed to see coming. In this case, the slow-motion nuclearization conducted in full view and through years of tortuous diplomatic charades and endlessly rescheduled looming deadlines is not just a victory for Iran but a decisive defeat for the United States. It confirms the Islamo-Sino-Russo-everybody-else diagnosis of Washington as a hollow superpower that no longer has the will or sense of purpose to enforce the global order.

The rest of the article talks about what a nuclear-weapon-empowered Iran will mean for Europe and the world.

Cato Institute destroys the myths of inferior health care in the USA

February 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article is here by Michael Tanner of the prestigious Cato Institute.

Excerpt:

The Claim: Though we spend more, we get less.

The Facts: America offers the highest quality health care in the world. Most of the world's top doctors, hospitals and research facilities are located in the United States. Eighteen of the last 25 winners of the Nobel Prize in Medicine either are U.S. citizens or work here. U.S. companies have developed half of all the major new medicines introduced worldwide over the past 20 years. And Americans played a key role in 80 percent of the most important medical advances of the past 30 years.

If you are diagnosed with a serious illness, the United States is the place you want to be. Tens of thousands of patients from around the world come to this country every year for treatment.

Critics of American health care often point out that other countries have higher life expectancies or lower infant mortality rates, but those two indicators are bad ways to measure the quality of a nation's health-care system. In the United States, very low-birth-weight infants have a much greater chance of being brought to term with the latest medical technologies. Some of those low-birth-weight babies die soon after birth, which boosts our infant mortality rate, but in many other Western countries, those high-risk, low-birth-weight infants are not included when infant mortality is calculated.

Life expectancies are also affected by other factors like violent crime, poverty, obesity, tobacco, and drug use, and other issues unrelated to health care. When you compare the outcome for specific diseases like cancer or heart disease, the United States outperforms the rest of the world.

And one more myth:

The Claim: A government-run health-care system would expand access to care.

The Facts: The one common characteristic of all national health care systems is that they ration care. Sometimes they ration it by denying certain types of treatment altogether. More often, they ration indirectly, imposing cost constraints through budgets, waiting lines, or limited technology. One million Britons are waiting for admission to National Health Service hospitals at any given time, and shortages force the NHS to cancel as many as 100,000 operations each year. Roughly 90,000 New Zealanders are facing similar waits. In Sweden, the wait for heart surgery can be as long as 25 weeks. In Canada more than 800,000 patients are currently on waiting lists for medical procedures.

I wrote about US health care outcomes before in this post from the Hoover Institute at Stanford University.

Excerpt:

1. Americans have better survival rates than Europeans for common cancers. Breast cancer mortality is 52 percent higher in Germany than in the United States and 88 percent higher in the United Kingdom. Prostate cancer mortality is 604 percent higher in the United Kingdom and 457 percent higher in Norway. The mortality rate for colorectal cancer among British men and women is about 40 percent higher.**2. Americans have lower cancer mortality rates than Canadians.** Breast cancer mortality in Canada is 9 percent higher than in the United States, prostate cancer is 184 percent higher, and colon cancer among men is about 10 percent higher.

3. Americans have better access to treatment for chronic diseases than patients in other developed countries. Some 56 percent of Americans who could benefit from statin drugs, which reduce cholesterol and protect against heart disease, are taking them. By comparison, of those patients who could benefit from these drugs, only 36 percent of the Dutch, 29 percent of the Swiss, 26 percent of Germans, 23 percent of Britons, and 17 percent of Italians receive them.

4. Americans have better access to preventive cancer screening than Canadians. Take the proportion of the appropriate-age population groups who have received recommended tests for breast, cervical, prostate, and colon cancer:

- Nine out of ten middle-aged American women (89 percent) have had a mammogram, compared to fewer than three-fourths of Canadians (72 percent).
- Nearly all American women (96 percent) have had a Pap smear, compared to fewer than 90 percent of Canadians.
- More than half of American men (54 percent) have had a prostatespecific antigen (PSA) test, compared to fewer than one in six Canadians (16 percent).
- Nearly one-third of Americans (30 percent) have had a colonoscopy, compared with fewer than one in twenty Canadians (5 percent).

5. Lower-income Americans are in better health than comparable Canadians. Twice as many American seniors with below-median incomes self-report “excellent” health (11.7 percent) compared to Canadian seniors (5.8 percent). Conversely, white, young Canadian adults with below-median incomes are 20 percent more likely than lower-income Americans to describe their health as “fair or poor.”

6. Americans spend less time waiting for care than patients in Canada and the United Kingdom. Canadian and British patients wait about twice as long—sometimes more than a year—to see a specialist, have elective surgery such as hip replacements, or get radiation treatment for cancer. All told, 827,429 people are waiting for some type of procedure in Canada. In Britain, nearly 1.8 million people are waiting for a hospital admission or outpatient treatment.

7. People in countries with more government control of health care are highly dissatisfied and believe reform is needed. More than 70 percent of German, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, and British adults say their health system needs

either “fundamental change” or “complete rebuilding.”

8. Americans are more satisfied with the care they receive than Canadians. When asked about their own health care instead of the “health care system,” more than half of Americans (51.3 percent) are very satisfied with their health care services, compared with only 41.5 percent of Canadians; a lower proportion of Americans are dissatisfied (6.8 percent) than Canadians (8.5 percent).

9. Americans have better access to important new technologies such as medical imaging than do patients in Canada or Britain. An overwhelming majority of leading American physicians identify computerized tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) as the most important medical innovations for improving patient care during the previous decade—even as economists and policy makers unfamiliar with actual medical practice decry these techniques as wasteful. The United States has thirty-four CT scanners per million Americans, compared to twelve in Canada and eight in Britain. The United States has almost twenty-seven MRI machines per million people compared to about six per million in Canada and Britain.

10. Americans are responsible for the vast majority of all health care innovations. The top five U.S. hospitals conduct more clinical trials than all the hospitals in any other developed country. Since the mid- 1970s, the Nobel Prize in medicine or physiology has gone to U.S. residents more often than recipients from all other countries combined. In only five of the past thirty-four years did a scientist living in the United States not win or share in the prize. Most important recent medical innovations were developed in the United States.

Dissenting commenters should be sure to link their assertions to reputable sourcesm, and quote specific passages where the source agrees with their assertion and rebuts some claim made by the Cato Institute or the Hoover Institute. Please don’t cite the New York Times or the United Nations.

MUST-READ: Woman who threatened pro-life protester cancels abortion

February 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Duluth News Tribune. (H/T Stop the ACLU via ECM, Neil Simpson)

I'll cite the full article:

> Mechelle Hall dabbed tears from her eyes Tuesday as she pleaded guilty to second-degree assault for brandishing a knife and threatening a woman who urged her not to get an abortion.
>
> Yet, she revealed later, she never got it.
>
> Hall, 26, of Superior, admitted her crime in a St. Louis County courtroom under questioning by county prosecutor Nathaniel Stumme. Public defender Laura Zimm told Judge David Johnson that, under terms of a plea agreement, Hall would receive probation and wouldn't have to serve any jail time. It was a routine, perfunctory court hearing.
>
> The surprise came when Hall was reached by phone at her Superior home Tuesday evening. She said she never had the planned abortion. Hall said she decided to keep the baby after being confronted by anti-abortion protesters Leah Winandy and her mother, Sarah, on Nov. 24. She said she was stressed out and they made her realize that she didn't want to end the life she was carrying inside her.
>
> Hall was asked if there was anything she'd like to say to the Winandys.
>
> "Thank you for being there," she said. "If they weren't there, I probably would have gone through with it and regretted it for the rest of my life. It probably would have gone the other way. I'm sincerely sorry for doing that to her."
>
> Reached at her northern Wisconsin home Tuesday evening, Leah Winandy, 21, said she was protesting abortions on behalf of Pro Life Ministries of Duluth and handing out pamphlets on First Street outside the Building for Women when confronted by Hall.
>
> "I was there to ask mothers not to kill their babies at the abortion clinic," she said. "She [Hall] was walking toward me. She pulled out a knife and waved it at me saying 'Don't come near me.' I said, 'Please don't kill your baby. Fear God.' I came to the edge of the courtyard. I said, 'Look and listen to your ultrasound.' She turned around and came back with a knife and held it up to my throat."
>
> Winandy said she was contacted by the St. Louis County Attorney's Office and asked if she would be agreeable to Hall receiving probation instead of a guideline prison sentence. She agreed.
>
> "I forgive Mechelle for what she did; I do forgive her because God has given me

> forgiveness in my heart for her," Winandy said.
>
> Hall said she will learn the sex of her child at her next ultrasound next month.

The abortion issue is the slavery issue of our time. Abortion is the way that we treat people like property today. The abolitionists of our time are pro-lifers. I often hear people talking about how moral they can be without God and how they would oppose slavery if they had lived in those times. Well, here is your big chance to oppose something even worse than slavery. Get to work, and let's see that vaunted secular humanist morality in action.

If you're shy and shadowy like me, then pick a pro-life debater and send them some money. I like CCBR Canada and the Life Training Institute. Or pick up a copy of the Case for Life and read it, and then talk about these issues to your neighbor. Any sort of plan to make ultrasounds available is also a good thing. And don't forget chastity. I'm chaste, and one of the major reasons why is because I don't want to be part of killing any unborn children! I think it's important that we also work on promoting marriage, which reduces unplanned pregnancies. And we should support school choice the de-funding of public schools that promote pre-marital sex.

Related posts

- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring two great pro-life debaters, Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama's plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting

February 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this article about feminism and the hook-up culture, from the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

…there's currently a buyer's market in women who are up for just about anything with the right kind of cad, what with delayed marriage (the average age for a woman's first wedding is now 26, compared with 20 in 1960, according to the University of Virginia-based National Marriage Project's latest report); reliable contraception; and advances in antibiotics (no more worries about what used to be called venereal disease). No-fault divorce, moreover, has pushed the marriage-dissolution rate up to between 40 and 50 percent and swelled the single-female population with "cougars" in their 30s, 40s, 50s, and beyond. On top of it all is the feminist-driven academic and journalistic culture celebrating that yesterday's "loose" women are today's "liberated" women, able to proudly "explore their sexuality" without "getting punished for their lust," as the feminist writer Naomi Wolf put it in the *Guardian* in December.

Wolf devoted her 1997 book *Promiscuities* to trying to remove the stigma from . . . promiscuity. On the one hand, she decried the double-standard unfairness of labeling a girl who fools around with too many boys a "slut," and, on the other, she lionized "the Slut" (her capitalization) as the enviable epitome of feminist freedom and feminist transgression against puritanical social norms. Wolf's point of view is today mainstream. It's the underlying theme of Eve Ensler's girls-talk-dirty *Vagina Monologues*, performed every year on Valentine's Day on college campuses across the country. A chapter from *Promiscuities* titled "Sluts" has made so many women's studies reading lists that term-paper mills sell canned essays purporting to dissect it. A group calling itself the Women's Direct Action Collective issued a manifesto in 2007 titled *Sluts Against Rape* insisting that "a woman should have the right to be sexual in any way she chooses" and that easy availability was "a positive assertion of sexual identity." In other words, if people call you a whore because you, say, fall into bed with someone whose name you can't quite remember, that's their problem. Of course, if a man mistakes a woman being "sexual in any way she chooses" for consent to have sex, it's still rape.

The same feminist academics pooh-pooh concerns about the long-term effects of the hookup culture, arguing that it's essentially just a harmless college folly, akin to swallowing goldfish, which young women will outgrow after graduation with no lasting scars. As long as they take precautions against disease and pregnancy, the current wisdom goes, it might even be good for you: a sort of rumspringa for the non-Amish in which you get your girls-gone-wild urges out of your system before you settle down to have babies.

[…]Thanks to late marriage, easy divorce, and the well-paying jobs that the feminist

revolution has wrought for women, the bars, clubs, sidewalks, and subway straps of nearly every urban center in America overflow every weekend with females, young and not so young, bronzed, blonded, teeth-whitened, and dressed in the maximal cleavage and minimal skirt lengths that used to be associated with streetwalkers but nowadays is standard garb for lawyers and portfolio managers on a girls' night out. The prelude to the $50,000 wedding these days isn't just the budget-busting shower—although that's *de rigueur*—but the bachelorette party, in which the bride and her BFF's don their skinnies and spaghetti straps and head to a bar to be hit on, sometimes bride and all, by whatever males are bold enough (the typical accoutrements of the bachelorette party are a $15 "ironic" veil for the bride and a sculpted replica of a male sex organ that's often brought to the bar).

All this takes place to a basso profundo of feminist cheerleading. Wolf's op-ed in the *Guardian* praised the uninhibited sexual "self-expression" of the four female leads in *Sex and the City*, especially the 40-something Samantha (hitting 50 in the 2008 movie), who, during the six seasons that the series ran, racked up nearly as many sex partners (41) as her three coleads combined—and Carrie, Miranda, and Charlotte were no slouches themselves in the quickie department. "Did not thousands of young women . . . breathe a sigh of relief or even liberation watching Samantha down another tequila, unrepentantly ogle the sex god at the end of the bar, and get richer and more beautiful with age, with no STDs or furies pursuing her?," Wolf gushed.

Urban life, furthermore, turns out to imitate *Sex and the City*. A survey reported in the *New York Daily News* around the time of the film's release revealed that the typical female resident of Manhattan, who marries later on average than almost every other woman in the country, has 20 sex partners during her lifetime. By way of contrast, the median number of lifetime sex partners for all U.S. women ages 15 to 44 is just 3.3, according to the Census Bureau's latest statistical abstract.

There's a lot more in the original piece, but the main point is that feminists wanted this to happen, and women today can decide for themselves whether they like the results of feminism. I know one thing for sure – no Christian man wants to marry a woman who engages in recreational sex outside of marriage. It ruins a woman's capabilities in a host of areas necessary for love, marriage and parenting, not the least of which is trust. A woman has to stop this behavior and put on chastity in order to stand any chance of having a successful marriage, in my opinion.

What do women value in men?

The hook-up culture is bad news for guys like me who are chaste. Hooking-up over and over again is lousy preparation for courtship, marriage and parenting. It ruins a woman's ability to be romantic, trusting and vulnerable.

But feminism also wrecks a woman's ability to choose men who are marriage ready. Feminism tells a women that there are no special roles that men should take on – like the roles of provider, protector and moral/spiritual leader. One a woman accepts that men have no marriage-specific roles, then they cease to test men to see if they can perform

those marriage-specific roles. Instead, women just choose men on superficial criteria. Instead of looking a a man's resume or his ability to care for others, she focuses instead on superficial stuff like the clothes he wears or whether her friends think he is funny.

Consider confidence. Confidence is something that women today often say they want. The problem is that an attitude of confidence can be *faked* when it rests on nothing. All you can see by looking is the *attitude*, not the *reality*. A man can be confident about being able to support the costs of raising children and yet this confidence could be completely unwarranted by his education or work history. While a man who is fearful and lacks confidence can in fact be more qualified to be a provider because of his education and work history.

So, a better strategy than trying to measure a man's confidence with the eyes is to *talk to the man*. Ask him about his plan and assess whether he has done enough preparation to achieve his goals. Ask for some evidence!

Here are a few more of the criteria that women use to choose men:

- Being tall
- Being aloof and disinterested
- Playing a musical instrument
- Well-dressed
- Stylish shoes
- A deep voice
- Handsome face

A deep voice? Shouldn't it matter more what the voice actually *says*? For both Christian and non-Christian women that I've met, the answer is inevitably NO. Many women have children out-of-wedlock (40%), and the children of these single mothers suffer. 70% of divorces are initiated by women, which is also devastating to any children present. Presumably they selected a father for these children using silly criteria as above. *It won't work*. And then children are raised without a father, and the cycle repeats itself.

What does such criteria say about women's goals for relationships? Are they really interested in marriage and parenting? Do they really care if their children have a relationship with God throught faith in Christ?

Related posts

- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- What is the meaning of white roses?
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- The Wintery Knight's greatest fears about the future
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?

- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper’s questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man’s decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

ECM’s new blog will document a 40-day water fast that begins today

February 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM has decided to start a new 40 day fast, and he made a new blog to record his progress. He’s quite a funny writer and you may want to bookmark the site and check in there once in a while to make sure that he is still alive. So far, he’s explained a little bit about it in the first few posts.

Here’s what’s on his menu for the next 40 days:

> **Consuming:**
>
> - 1 gallon of H2O/day.
> - Beef/chicken bullion spiked w/ added salt 3-5x/day.
> - Body fat, muscle tissue and major organs all day, every day, until I run out and/or die from severe internal bleeding.
>
> **Not consuming:**
>
> - Everything else.

You might think that he is fasting 40 days for Lent, but he’s a Deist, not a Christian, so he has other reasons for fasting.

> **Q:** Why are you doing a 40-day fast?
>
> **A:** A couple of reasons:
>
> 1. I ate way way way too much over the holidays (the holidays, loosely defined as Halloween ‘09 through, uh, *this* Sunday) and have a lot more to lose than normal. (Normal being 10-15lbs; right now, though, I’m competing w/ King Hippo for bragging rights.)
>
> 2. To prove that I can.
>
> (Yes, that’s right: this is primarily a misguided effort at proving to myself that I can, indeed, go the distance come hell or high water (or pass a McDonald’s without succumbing to the siren song of special sauce).)

And here is a picture of ECM, pre-fast:

ECM (pre-fast)
You might think that this picture cannot be ECM, since he’s actually a beaver with a helmet.

Who is this?
But I think the beaver is actually just some video game character, and not really ECM.

Does anyone know the name of this beaver? I think it’s Sherbet or something.

George Will explains Obama's dependency agenda at CPAC 2010

February 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Muddling Towards Maturity: George Will's speech at the 2010 CPAC convention. He is a moderate conservative.

Part 1:

Topics: the conflict of freedom and equality, equal outcomes vs equal opportunities, wealth redistribution vs liberty, dependency on government, public sector vs private sector, cash for clunkers, state capitalism, credit, crony capitalism, subsidizing failure, TARP, profit and loss, risk, incentives, freedom to succeed or fail, cradle to grave welfare, SCHIP, socialized medicing, single payer health care, social security, medicare, vouchers, school choice, public education, public option, choice and competition, inter-state commerce.

Part 2:

Topics: health savings accounts, private property, stewardship and ownership, drug companies, health insurance, dependency agenda, entitlement mentality, lawsuits, trial lawyer lobby, tort reform, personal responsibility, stimulus, public and private sector wages and benefits, union payoffs, income tax, moral hazard, death tax, envy, farm subsidies, bureaucracy, schools vs families.

Here's the graph he mentions of who pays for taxespays for taxes. High earners pay for everything and the low earners pay for nothing. High earners don't depend on government but low earners do depend on government.

Part 3:

Topics: crisis as a means to enlarge government, manufacturing a crisis using massive deficits, environmentalism as a manufactured crisis, how bigger government means small individuals with less freedom, structure of american government, the founding fathers, free will, personal responsibility, small government.

By the way, many people are saying that Glenn Beck's speech was the best of the conference. And you can watch it here at Caffeinated Thoughts. The best part starts at 25:25 minutes in where he explains being broke and turning his life around, and talking about the freedom to fail and personal responsibility.

UPDATE: ECM sent me this article about George Will's appearance on ABC's This Week.

Video:

Excerpt:

> TERRY MORAN, HOST: There's a sense that something is broken in Washington summed up this week by Senator Evan Bayh (D-Ind.) who announced his retirement. I think it's fair to say he's leaving in disgust. Here's what he had to

say.

SENATOR EVAN BAYH, (D-IND.): I have had a growing conviction that Congress is not operating as it should. There is much too much partisanship, and not enough progress. Too much narrow ideology, and not enough practical problem solving. Even at a time of enormous national challenge, the people's business is not getting done.

MORAN: Is he right, George?
GEORGE WILL: Well, it's hard to take a lecture on bipartisanship from a man who voted against the confirmation of Chief Justice Roberts, the confirmation of Justice Alito, the confirmation of Attorney General Ashcroft, the confirmation of Condoleezza Rice as Secretary of State. Far from being a rebel against his Party's lockstep movement, Mr. Bayh voted for the Detroit bailout, for the stimulus, for the public option in the healthcare bill. I don't know quite what his complaint is, but, Terry, with metronomic regularity, we go through these moments in Washington where we complain about the government being broken. These moments have one thing in common: The Left is having trouble enacting its agenda. No one when George W. Bush had trouble reforming Social Security said, "Oh, that's terrible – the government's broken."

Should we be proud of our victory in Iraq?

February 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a blog post from David Bellavia. (H/T Curby Graham)

Excerpt:

> Another page in the scrapbook has a clear acetate pouch. Stuffed inside is a thick, folded sheet of blue paper. An Iraqi ballot I stole on January 30th 2005.
>
> The sound of mortar fire fills my ears. The desk dissolves. Suddenly, I'm kneeling on a road, a palm grove to my front. Iraq. Election Day 2005.
>
> The bullets are flying.
>
> My squad runs through the searing heat and forms a wall of flesh and Kevlar between the incoming fire and the citizens standing in line behind us. They've turned out in their finest clothes to wait for the opportunity to cast a vote. For most, this moment is a defining one in their lives. They've never had a voice before. This means something to them, and they have used the moment as an object lesson for their children. They appear nervous and take photos. The kids stand with them in line, viewing first hand this revolution in Iraqi civics.
>
> As they came to line up earlier that morning, the men thanked us and clasped their hands over their heads, striking a triumphant pose. Some of the women cried. The kids were on their best behavior.
>
> The gunfire began that afternoon. Insurgents started to shoot them. My unit ran to the road and formed a protective position between the killers and the citizens

> going to the polls. As we scanned the palm grove in front of us, bullets cracked and whined, then mortars start thumping around us. My squad pushed into the palm grove. I stayed on the road, overseeing their movement and coordinating the heavy fire from the Bradleys.
>
> The firefight ebbs. The mortar fire ceases. A few last stray rounds streak past. A cry from behind causes me to turn. Lying in the road is a young Iraqi woman. I run over to help. She's caught a round just below her temple. Her stunning beauty has been ruined forever.
>
> She cries, "Paper! Paper" over and over until the ambulance arrives to take her away. An old lady emerges from the schoolhouse-turned voting site, sheets of blue paper in hand. She gives one to the wounded girl, who clutches it to her like a prized possession even as the ambulance carries her away.
>
> The ballot was her voice. All she wanted was a chance to exercise it, just once, before she died.

Read the whole thing. We all have to do something to try to understand what our men and women in uniform sacrifice to give us our freedoms. Whether that involves reading books, reading military blogs, (like Blackfive, This Ain't Hell and Michael Yon), sending donations to Soldier's Angels, or thanking a returning veteran for his service. We have to talk to them and listen to their stories.

NRLC says that new version of Obamacare is even more pro-abortion

February 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From LifeSiteNews.

Excerpt:

> A new health care bill proposed by President Obama Monday threatens to expand abortion even more drastically than the health care bills stymied in Congress over the past several months, says the National Right to Life Committee.
>
> […]"Any member of Congress who votes for the final legislation proposed by President Obama will be voting for direct federal funding of elective abortion through Community Health Centers, and also an array of other pro-abortion federal subsidies and mandates," said NRLC Legislative Director Douglas Johnson in a statement Monday.
>
> […]Among the president's proposed "targeted set of changes to" the Senate bill, Johnson said, none "diminish any of the sweeping pro-abortion problems in the Senate bill, and he actually proposes to increase the funds that would be available to directly subsidize abortion procedures (through Community Health Centers) and to subsidize private health insurance that covers abortion (through the premium-subsidy tax credits program)."
>
> "If all of the President's changes were made," said Johnson, "the resulting legislation would allow direct federal funding of abortion on demand through Community Health Centers, would institute federal subsidies for private health plans that cover abortion on demand (including some federally administered plans), and would authorize federal mandates that would require even non-subsidized private plans to cover elective abortion."

Obama loves abortion, and he wants you to pay for it, even if you are pro-life.

New York high school bans Christian club, allows 60 other clubs

February 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from LifeSiteNews.

Excerpt:

> A student has teamed up with the Alliance Defense Fund to file a lawsuit against a New York school district after school officials cancelled her once-flourishing Christian club.
>
> At the beginning of her freshman year at Half Hollow Hills High School East, the student was told that the Ichthus Club, a student-led group where she was one of the leaders, had been cancelled without any advanced notification. Four years earlier, her older brother had met strong resistance before the club was finally allowed to form.
>
> School officials claim that unspecified budget cuts and a lack of student popularity spurred their decision. However, leaders in the club point out that it had more than 55 student attendees last year, and complain that approximately 60 other student clubs, including the Gay-Straight Alliance and Amnesty International, were allowed to continue.
>
> […]"Christian student groups in public schools shouldn't be discriminated against simply because they are religious," said ADF Senior Legal Counsel David Cortman.
>
> "Singling out a religious student club while letting the vast majority of the others remain constitutes viewpoint discrimination and is unconstitutional. In addition, it's simply false that this club is not popular with students. More than 90 students signed a petition in favor of allowing the club to continue meeting."

Another reason why Christians need to vote for *lower taxes* and *school choice.* We cannot be paying the government to undermine our own worldview with our own money in government-run secular-left public schools operated by teacher unions. The only solution is to cut taxes, keep your money and homeschool or pay for private schools. These schools don't favor our worldview and they never will.

Government-run health care is really about redistributing wealth

February 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article from radical leftist Jonathan Chait of the extremely biased New Republic. (H/T Just One Minute via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The single most popular health care idea emanating from the right is to allow Americans to purchase health insurance across state lines. What a stupid idea, making people buy insurance only within their own state!
>
> […]Now, think about this for a minute. I doubt her precise figure, but let's grant the premise that young healthy people could save a lot of money from such an arrangement. Why is that? Is it that out-of-state insurance companies are that much more efficient? No, of course not — profit and overhead don't account for anywhere close to two-thirds of insurance premiums.
>
> The young and healthy would save money because they'd find an insurance plan from a state with very limited regulation. Say, those plans would operate in a state that doesn't require insurance to cover any medical conditions that are unlikely to afflict a young, healthy 25-year-old. What happens is that the health care industry becomes like the credit card industry. Some small state realizes it can attract a lot of business its way by winning the race to the regulatory bottom.
>
> So then, effectively, we've almost completely eliminated all regulations on health insurance. Conservatives will say that's great. And certainly the healthy 25-year-old would be better off. But, of course, the effect of those regulations was to force insurers to cover medical conditions that older or less healthy people have. As a result, all the young healthy people have split, and costs on everybody else go up. The young and healthy are paying higher rates because of these regulations. But the same regulations let the old and sick pay lower rates — and they're the people who have the biggest trouble buying insurance as it is. Allowing interstate sale of insurance isn't just a non-solution, it's a massive anti-solution, worsening all the problems of the status quo.

Got that? The whole point of socialized medicine is to force people to limit their choice of coverage to only in-state plans so that young people just starting their careers have to pay more for coverages that they don't need. And retired people who have had all their lives to make money and save for their own health care get health care for less. The health care of the elderly needs to be subsidized via government-controlled wealth redistribution. Isn't it amazing that young people vote so overwhelmingly for Obama?

Brian Auten interviews William Lane Craig

February 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The interview is here on Brian's excellent site, Apologetics 315.

The MP3 file is here. (29 minutes)

Topics:

- The Reasonable Faith Chapters program: why?
- Brian's new Reasonable Faith chapter in Belfast, Ireland
- WLC's new book "On Guard" for *beginning* Christians (coming out in March!)
- WLC's upcoming debate with physicist Victor Stenger on March 1, 2010
- WLC's upcoming debate with philosopher Michael Tooley, later on in March
- How did WLC become a Christian?
- Which books and scholars influenced WLC the most?
- What is the focus of WLC's current research
- What books should a *beginning* Christian read to start defending their faith?
- What books should an *intermediate* Christian read to start defending their faith?
- What degrees can a Christian do to be accredited in apologetics?
- The importance of having a mentor to help direct your studies
- What dicipline is an essential jumping-off for Christian scholars?
- Whice argument for Christianity is the most effective?
- What should a person study to develop their personal character?
- What skills are necessary for study, and how do you develop them?
- Which scholars does WLC admire as role models?
- How can a person develop to improve their public speaking skills?
- What does WLC do to prepare for this debates?
- How does apologetics connect with the concept of "spiritual warfare"?
- How can you use apologetics to help the development of your children?
- How important is your marriage compared to your studies?
- What is the ultimate goal of the apologetic enterprise?
- Does God have a specific or a general will for each individual?
- What legacy does WLC hope to leave behind?

Brian did a good job on this interview. He's a very nice person, too.

In fact, he's so nice that he managed to persuade Biola University to offer a 10% discount on William Lane Craig's Philosophy of Religion DVD set. It's big and expensive ($135!), but you only need to buy it once, and Brian recommends it. I think that this set is a lot better than the Kalam Cosmological Argument set that is also available.

Here is Bill's previous debate with Victor Stenger, and here is his previous debate with Michael Tooley.

New video of Planned Parenthood abortion clinic covering up statutory rape

February 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Hot Air. (H/T Neil Simpson's latest round up)

Video:

Excerpt:

> Yesterday, Barack Obama released his health-care plan that contains $11 billion in funding for "community health centers," much of it destined for Planned Parenthood clinics around the country. What do they do with that money? Lila Rose and Live Action Films released their ninth video exposing the tenth clinic that broke laws requiring medical providers to report potential child abuse to the state. This time it's the PP clinic in Milwaukee, Wisconsin that advises a 14-year-old girl how to get an abortion without disclosing that a 31-year-old man is responsible for impregnating her…

Neil has a few more good links in that same round-up, too.

Jennifer Roback Morse answers the best argument for same-sex marriage

February 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

She'll show you how to defend marriage

Jennifer Roback Morse likes to debate, and she's *very* good at it. So good, that you can learn how to debate about marriage too, just by listening to her debates.

The audio of her recent debate in Manhattan just came out.

The MP3 file is here. (46 minutes lecture, 27 minutes of Q&A)

The main case that she makes is similar to the case she made in the debate she had at Columbia University, which I blogged about before. But the Q&A is new, and very interesting. It starts at 46:00 and goes until the end. But one of the difficult questions she was asked really stood out.

The argument

Opposition to same-sex marriage is the same as opposition to inter-racial marriage.

The answer

There are two ways to respond:

1) Race has nothing to do with the central purpose of marriage as being the natural way of binding children to parents, and parents to each other. Race doesn't affect those goals. But gender *is relevant* to the the purpose of marriage, because if a baby is formed from opposite sex parents then both parents have a biological link to the child, which is a stronger bond than a non-biological link. This improves the chances that the child will be raised in a stable environment.

2) A better historical analogy to opposing same-sex marriage is opposition to no-fault divorce (unilateral divorce). No-fault marriage started in California. They also argued that only a few people would be affected, that the children would not be harmed, studies show that it will be OK, etc. But in hindsight, we now know that it was a disaster for the family, and especially for children.

You can visit Dr. J's blog here.

Those of you who are into Christian apologetics need to understand that atheism is embraced for a whole host of non-rational causes. One of them is growing up in a

fatherless household. It has a *profound* impact on a child's worldview when the child's father is defective or absent. That means that every Christian apologist who knows the standard arguments also needs to know how to defend marriage. Insofar as socialism attacks marriage, the Christian apologist needs to be able to defend marriage on fiscal grounds, as well.

I've written before about no-fault divorce, pre/extra-marital sex, single-mother parenting and same-sex marriage. Here is my post that cites research in order to explain why people oppose same-sex marriage.

Premier of Newfoundland defends decision to seek surgery in the USA

February 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

Story from the Canadian Press. (H/T ECM, Lone Wolf Archer)

Excerpt:

> An unapologetic Danny Williams says he was aware his trip to the United States for heart surgery earlier this month would spark outcry, but he concluded his personal health trumped any public fallout over the controversial decision.
>
> In an interview with The Canadian Press, Williams said he went to Miami to have a "minimally invasive" surgery for an ailment first detected nearly a year ago, based on the advice of his doctors.
>
> "This was my heart, my choice and my health," Williams said late Monday from his condominium in Sarasota, Fla.
>
> "I did not sign away my right to get the best possible health care for myself when I entered politics."
>
> […]His doctors in Canada presented him with two options – a full or partial sternotomy, both of which would've required breaking bones, he said.
>
> He said he spoke with and provided his medical information to a leading cardiac surgeon in New Jersey who is also from Newfoundland and Labrador. He advised him to seek treatment at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami.
>
> That's where he was treated by Dr. Joseph Lamelas, a cardiac surgeon who has performed more than 8,000 open-heart surgeries.
>
> Williams said Lamelas made an incision under his arm that didn't require any bone breakage.

Canadian politicians regularly trumpet the superiority of the Canadian system when running for re-election, but when it's their health in the balance, they sing a different tune.

Consider former Liberal prime minister of Canada, Jean Chretien?

> Jean Chretien takes his own family to private health clinics. In fact, he doesn't just use U.S.-style private clinics. He actually goes to private clinics in the U.S.
>
> And he flies to those U.S. private clinics on Canadian government jets, paid for by Canadian tax dollars.
>
> According to access-to-information documents obtained by the Canadian Alliance, on Feb. 8, 1999, Chretien and two aides flew from Vancouver to Minnesota, home of the Mayo Clinic. According to air force flight logs, they flew back to Ottawa that afternoon with Chretien's daughter. And on Dec. 11 of the same year, Chretien went back to the clinic, this time just with his wife and his aide.
>
> These trips were courtesy of the Canadian Forces 412th Squadron, which has flown literally thousands of nautical miles taking Chretien back and forth to the clinic.

And what about former Liberal MP Belinda Stronach?

> Liberal MP Belinda Stronach, who is battling breast cancer, travelled to California last June for an operation that was recommended as part of her treatment, says a report.
>
> Stronach's spokesman, Greg MacEachern… said the decision was made because the U.S. hospital was the best place to have it done due to the type of surgery required.

But these Liberals are just regular leftists. What about the socialist leader Jack Layton? Surely a socialist wouldn't take advantage of free market capitalism to be treated unequally, would he? That would be so greedy and capitalist!

> NDP Leader Jack Layton, who's campaigning as the defender of public health care, had surgery at a private clinic in the 1990s, The Canadian Press has learned. Layton had hernia surgery at the Shouldice Hospital, a private facility in the Toronto suburb of Thornhill, while he was serving as a Toronto city councillor.

Capitalism for me, but not for thee, eh, comrade?

Related posts

- Government-run health care is really about redistributing wealth
- Cato Institute destroys the myths of inferior health care in the USA
- Canadian politicians rejects single-payer health care to get treated in USA
- How does health care in the USA compare with other countries?

- Videos explaining what government-run health care is like in Canada
- Canada cuts deal with US hospitals to reduce waiting times
- Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!

Belinda Stronach, Canada, Capitalism, Care, Communism, Danny Williams, Die, Drugs, Equality, Film, Fraser Institute, Free Market, Freedom, Government, Health, Jack Layton, Liberal, Liberal Hypocrisy, Liberal Party, Liberty, Michael Moore, National, Nationalized, NDP, New Democrat Party, Sex Change, Single-Payer, Single-Payer Health Care, Socialism, Socialized, Socialized Medicine, Wait, Waiting List, Wealth Redistribution

Paul Ryan discusses Obamacare and the federal budget

February 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Paul Ryan is the Republican expert on the budget and federal spending.

Ryan/Bachmann in 2012 for the win!

Related posts

- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan's plan for economic recovery
- Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama's 1.56 trillion budget deficit
- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama's record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan and Ann Coulter make the case against Obamacare
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism
- Paul Ryan's Roadmap for America plan

UK report finds “unimaginable” suffering in government-run hospital

February 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the UK Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Patients were routinely neglected or left “sobbing and humiliated” by staff at an NHS trust where at least 400 deaths have been linked to appalling care.
>
> An independent inquiry found that managers at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust stopped providing safe care because they were preoccupied with government targets and cutting costs.
>
> Staff shortages at Stafford Hospital meant that patients went unwashed for weeks, were left without food or drink and were even unable to get to the lavatory. Some lay in soiled sheets that relatives had to take home to wash, others developed infections or had falls, occasionally fatal. Many staff did their best but the attitude of some nurses “left a lot to be desired”.
>
> The report, which follows reviews by the Care Quality Commission and the Department of Health, said that “unimaginable” suffering had been caused. Regulators said last year that between 400 and 1,200 more patients than expected may have died at the hospital from 2005 to 2008.
>
> Andy Burnham, the Health Secretary, said there could be “no excuses” for the failures and added that the board that presided over the scandal had been replaced. An undisclosed number of doctors and at least one nurse are being investigated by the General Medical Council and Nursing and Midwifery Council.
>
> […]Some NHS chief executives have received six-figure redundancy packages or moved to other trusts despite poor performance. Martin Yeates, the former chief executive at Mid Staffordshire, received pay rises that took his annual salary to £180,000, while standards at the trust deteriorated.

We need to learn from the experiences of other countries with socialism.

Related posts

- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care
- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care

- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- UK National Health Service refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

MUST-HEAR: Brian Auten explains why Christians ought to learn apologetics

February 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A super 20-minute podcast from Apologetics 315.

The MP3 file is here. (20 minutes)

PDF Transcript here.

Topics:

- what is the definition of apologetics?
- what do you mean by defense? a testimony?
- what is the goal of apologetics?
- does apologetics create belief? should it?
- what are offensive and defensive apologetics?
- should Christians fear intellectual opposition to Christianity?
- is apologetics good for believers?
- does apologetics help you to be more confident when witnessing?
- what was the role of apologetics in the Bible?
- what was the role of apologetics in the early church?
- was apologetics central or peripheral to Paul's ministry?
- does the Bible present Christianity as personal preference or public truth?
- did Jesus appeal to objective evidence to get people to believe him?
- is there a requirement for all Christians to make a defense of their faith?
- should Christians care if non-believers have false beliefs about God?
- does the Bible need to be defended? What does the Bible say about it?
- Is an intellectual approach to evangelism antithetical to faith?

My posts on apologetics advocacy are here:

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church
- why won't Christians defend their faith in public?

These were all quite popular when they were originally posted, so it's good to re-post them.

Actual arguments and counter-arguments are here, if you want to know the basics. Debates and lectures are here to see how this gets used. Most Christians never even dream that their faith can be debated at Harvard or Columbia or Oxford!

Christianity is a *knowledge* tradition. It's not a *feelings* tradition.

UPDATE: If you’re really good at apologetics, you can debate the top atheists in public, and say things like this:

(The full debate is here)

Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander

February 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama met with Republicans to discuss his health care plans. The Republicans selected a team of experts including three of my favorite conservatives, Marsha Blackburn, Tom Coburn and Paul Ryan. How did they do against Obama? Did we win?

Marathon Pundit has the scoop.

Selected quotes from leftists CNN:

- **CNN'S DAVID GERGEN:** "Intellectually, the Republicans had the best day they've had in years. The best day they have had in years." (CNN's "The Situation Room," 2/25/10)
- **CNN's DAVID GERGEN:** "The folks in the White House just must be kicking themselves right now. They thought that coming out of Baltimore when the President went in and was mesmerizing and commanding in front of the House Republicans that he could do that again here today. That would revive health care and would change the public opinion about their health care bill and they can go on to victory. Just the opposite has happened.: (CNN's "Live," 2/25/10)
- **CNN's GLORIA BORGER:** "The Republicans have been very effective today. They really did come to play. They were very smart." (CNN's "Live," 2/25/10)
- **CNN's GLORIA BORGER:** "They took on the substance of a very complex issue. … But they really stuck to the substance of this issue and tried to get to the heart of it and I think did a very good job." (CNN's "Live," 2/25/10)
- **CNN's GLORIA BORGER:** "They came in with a plan. They mapped it out." (CNN's "Live," 2/25/10)

Video from CNN: (H/T Hot Air)

We won. By a landslide. And even the left-wing media admits it.

Now how did we win?

Lamar Alexander

Lamar Alexander makes the opening statement. He is fairly moderate, and has a history of stepping across the aisle to work with Democrats.

Part 1:

Part 2:

Marsha Blackburn

Marsha Blackburn makes Barack Obama admit that his refusal to allow people to buy plans out of state with no mandated coverages means that they will be paying too much for health care. Obama replies that he is happy with redistributing wealth from healthy young people to older people who ought to have saved *their own money* for *their own*

health care expenses.

Part 1:

Part 2:

Paul Ryan (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Paul Ryan asks Obama how the implications of Obamacare on the federal budget. Why is Obama ignoring the analysis done by his own Congressional Budget office? Why does the government have to control health care? Why can't people buy the health care that they choose with their own money?

Tom Coburn

Coburn talked about ways to reduce the cost of health care without having the government take it all over. I'll post Tom Coburn's full video when I find it.

Here's the last 95% of the speech, just missing the first paragraph, really.

The full transcript is here.

UPDATE: Michelle Malkin's latest column evaluates the health care summit.

Excerpt:

> When he wasn't cutting off Republicans who stuck to budget specifics and cited legislative page numbers and language instead of treacly, sob-story anecdotes involving dentures and gall stones, President Obama was filibustering the talk-a-thon away by invoking his daughters, rambling on about auto insurance, and sniping at former GOP presidential rival John McCain. "We're not campaigning anymore," lectured the perpetual campaigner-in-chief.
>
> After ostentatiously disputing the GOP's claims that health care premiums would rise under his plan, Obama walked it back. Confronted with more GOP pushback on the failure of Demcare to control costs, Obama told GOP Rep. Paul Ryan that he'd rather not "get bogged down in numbers." Not numbers that he couldn't cook on the spot without staff consultation, anyway.
>
> Obama and the Democrats labored mightily to create the illusion of almost-there bipartisanship by repeatedly telling disagreeing Republicans that "we don't disagree" and "there's not a lot of difference" between us. But the dogs weren't riding the ponies in this show.

Obama must be so shocked to find that not everyone in the world is a racist/communist/terrorist/tax cheat. This is his first exposure to a different point of view. He's in shock.

Democrats favor terrorist rights over national security in latest intelligence bill

February 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from National Review. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> While the country and the Congress have their eyes on today's dog-and-pony show on socialized medicine, House Democrats last night stashed a new provision in the intelligence bill which is to be voted on today. It is an attack on the CIA: the enactment of a criminal statute that would ban "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment." (See here, scoll to p. 32.)
>
> The provision is impossibly vague — who knows what "degrading" means? Proponents will say that they have itemized conduct that would trigger the statute (I'll get to that in a second), but it is not true. The proposal says the conduct reached by the statute "includes *but is not limited to*" the itemized conduct. (My italics.) That means any interrogation tactic that a prosecutor subjectively believes is "degrading" (e.g., subjecting a Muslim detainee to interrogation by a female CIA officer) could be the basis for indicting a CIA interrogator.
>
> The act goes on to make it a crime to use tactics that have been shown to be effective in obtaining life saving information and that are far removed from torture.
>
> […]What's more, the proposed bill is directed at "any officer or employee of the intelligence community" conducting a "covered interrogation." The definition of "covered interrogation" is sweeping — including any interrogation done outside the U.S., in the course of a person's official duties on behalf of the government.
>
> […]Here is the fact: Democrats are saying they would prefer to see tens of thousands of Americans die than to see a KSM subjected to sleep-deprivation or to have his "phobias exploited." I doubt that this reflects the values of most Americans.

They would rather put us all at risk of a terrorist attack than upset the terrorists. National security, Democrat style.

Related posts

- Marc Thiessen defends water-boarding against Christiane Amanpour
- Al-Quaeda linked to failed terrorist attack on Northwest Airlines airliner
- What are the consequencs of treating terrorism as a law enforcement issue?
- Which is more cruel and immoral? Waterboarding or abortion?
- Are Democrats fixing national security or fixing the blame on others?

- Homeland security chair says Swedish grandmothers just as likely to be terrorists
- Homeland Security head says that “the system worked”
- What is Obama working on instead of making Americans safer?
- Is waterboarding really torture? Does it enhance our national security?
- Obama cuts missile defense as Iran test-fires missile that can hit Israel
- What is the conservative doctrine of “peace through strength”?

Woman recants false rape charge, freeing man after 3 years in prison

February 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CBS News. (H/T Lex Communis)

Excerpt:

> A construction worker imprisoned for nearly three years was cleared by an apologetic judge on Thursday after his accuser admitted she lied about being gang raped to make her friends feel sorry for her.
>
> William McCaffrey hugged his lawyer when state Supreme Court Justice Richard Carruthers – who'd also presided over William McCaffrey's rape and kidnapping trial – threw out the conviction and dismissed the initial charges. DNA tests also had called the conviction into doubt.
>
> "I've been waiting for this for a long time," the soft-spoken McCaffrey said outside court. "I'm just glad it's over."
>
> Biurny Peguero, then 22, originally said three men, led by McCaffrey, raped her at knifepoint after tricking her into getting into their car after a night out in 2005.
>
> She testified at his trial and said at his 2006 sentencing that the "tragedy changed my life forever." He got a 20-year prison term.
>
> Defense lawyer Glenn A. Garber later persuaded prosecutors to use new technology to retest DNA samples from an apparent bite mark on Peguero's arm.
>
> The initial tests were inconclusive. The new ones showed the genetic material not only wasn't McCaffrey's but came from at least two women, apparently friends of Peguero's who fought with her.
>
> Peguero confessed her lie to a priest and then to authorities this year. She claimed she was raped because she wanted her friends "to feel badly" for her, and then was afraid to back down from her story as the case continued, prosecutors said in court filings this fall.

My concern about this is twofold. First, it undermines the testimony of women who really have been raped. Second, it makes men mistrustful of women so that men will think twice about forming any kind of relationship. Good women need to speak up about these injustices now… that is, unless they really don't care that men are imprisoned on false charges of rape.

Why do women make false accusations of rape?

One recent study listed three reasons why women invent false rape accusations.

Excerpt:

> A study of rape allegations in Indiana over a nine-year period revealed that over

> 40% were shown to be false — not merely unproven. According to the author, "These false allegations appear to serve three major functions for the complainants: providing an alibi, seeking revenge, and obtaining sympathy and attention. False rape allegations are not the consequence of a gender-linked aberration, as frequently claimed, but reflect impulsive and desperate efforts to cope with personal and social stress situations." (Kanin EJ. Arch Sex Behav. 1994 Feb;23(1):81-92 *False rape allegations.*)
>
> In 1985, a study of 556 rape allegations found that 27% accusers recanted when faced with a polygraph (which can be ordered in the military), and independent evaluation showed a false accusation rate of 60%. (McDowell, Charles P., Ph.D. "False Allegations." Forensic Science Digest, (publication of the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations), Vol. 11, No. 4 (December 1985), p. 64.)

Please leave a comment below explaining what you think should happen to a woman like Biurny Peguero, who makes a false accusation that sends a man to prison for 3 years, because she wanted to obtain sympathy and attention. And be sure and check the links below for other false rape accusations that cover the other two common reasons for making false rape accusations.

False accusations in divorce trials

False accusations of domestic violence and sexual abuse are also commonly made during divorce settlements in order to get custody of the children, and the attendant benefits.

Consider this article from Touchstone magazine, by Stephen Baskerville.

Excerpt:

> Today it is not clear that we have learned anything from these miscarriages of justice. If anything, the hysteria has been institutionalized in the divorce courts, where false allegations have become routine.
>
> What is ironic about these witch-hunts is the fact that it is easily demonstrable that the child abuse epidemic—which is very real—is almost entirely the creation of feminism and the welfare bureaucracies themselves. It is well established by scholars that an intact family is the safest place for women and children and that very little abuse takes place in married families. Child abuse overwhelmingly occurs in single-parent homes, homes from which the father has been removed. Domestic violence, too, is far more likely during or after the breakup of a marriage than among married couples.
>
> Yet patently false accusations of both child abuse and domestic violence are rampant in divorce courts, almost always for purposes of breaking up families, securing child custody, and eliminating fathers. "With child abuse and spouse abuse you don't have to prove anything," the leader of a legal seminar tells divorcing mothers, according to the *Chicago Tribune*. "You just have to accuse."
>
> Among scholars and legal practitioners it is common knowledge that patently trumped-up accusations are routinely used, and virtually never punished, in

> divorce and custody proceedings. Elaine Epstein, president of the Massachusetts Women's Bar Association, writes that "allegations of abuse are now used for tactical advantage" in custody cases. The *Illinois Bar Journal* describes how abuse accusations readily "become part of the gamesmanship of divorce." The *UMKC Law Review* reports on a survey of judges and attorneys revealing that disregard for due process and allegations of domestic violence are used as a "litigation strategy." In the *Yale Law Review*, Jeannie Suk calls domestic violence accusations a system of "state-imposed *de facto* divorce" and documents how courts use unsupported accusations to justify evicting Americans from their homes and children.
>
> The multi-billion dollar abuse industry has become "an area of law mired in intellectual dishonesty and injustice" writes David Heleniak in the *Rutgers Law Review*. Domestic violence has become "a backwater of tautological pseudo-theory," write Donald Dutton and Kenneth Corvo in the scholarly journal *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. "No other area of established social welfare, criminal justice, public health, or behavioral intervention has such weak evidence in support of mandated practice."

If we care about justice for all, then we have to care about this, too.

Related posts

- Woman who made false rape accusation gets zero jail time
- UK woman makes EIGHT false rape accusations and gets no jail time
- New research shows that drug-facilitated sexual assault is a myth
- Lehigh University student could stand trial for false rape accusation
- Are women held to a different standard than men under the law?
- No charges planned for accuser in Hofstra rape hoax
- How feminism destroyed free speech on university campuses
- Some of the challenges facing men today

Sean McDowell debates James Corbett on whether morality is grounded by atheism

February 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten posted the audio a few milliseconds after the debate concluded!

Here is the MP3 file.

Sean's case is similar to the one I make, but he only has 3 minimal requirements for morality.

First, he explains the difference between objective and subjective truth claims, and points out that statements of a moral nature are meaningless unless morality is objective. Then he states 3 things that are needed in order to ground objective morality.

1. an objective moral standard
2. free will
3. objective moral value of humans

The question of the foundations of morality is without a doubt the easiest issue for beginning apologists to discuss with their neighbor. If you're new, then you need to *at least* listen to his opening speech. He's an excellent speaker, and his rebuttals are very, very smooth. The citations of atheist philosophers like Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, e.g. – to show that "religious" wars had *nothing* to do with religion, really hurt his opponent. He seems to cite prominent atheists like Thomas Nagel, Richard Taylor, Michael Shermer, etc., constantly in order to get support for his assertions. That took preparation. I can't believe that McDowell is this calm in a debate situation.

When I listen to Frank Turek, he seems to struggle in his rebuttals. McDowell sounds like he foreknew exactly what his opponent would say and pre-wrote responses. He even had powerpoint slides made *in advance* for his rebuttals! I am not making this up – Corbett even remarked on it.

For those of you who want to understand how these things work, listen to the debate. There is a period of cross-examination if you like that sort of thing. I do!

EXTRA:

- You may also be interested in Dinesh D'Souza's thumping of some atheist here.

Ten resources to help you talk to non-Christians about the resurrection of Jesus

February 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's briefly talk about whether the Bible supports talking about the resurrection with non-Christians.

There are lots and lots of Christians in the world, but almost none of them are comfortable talking about the resurrection with non-Christians, in a way that doesn't use crazy Christianese language and doesn't assume that the Bible is inerrant. But I think that this situation is wrong for three reasons.

First, Jesus says that his resurrection is a sign so that peope will believe in his other theological claims.

Matthew 12:38-40:

[38]Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

[39]He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

[40]For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Second, Paul says that if the resurrection didn't happen then we are all wasting our time with Christianity.

1 Corinthians 15:13-19:

[13]If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

[14]And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

[15]More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

[16]For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

[17]And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

[18]Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

[19]If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

And third, Peter uses the resurrection as evidence in his evangelistic efforts.

Acts 2:22-24, 29-33, 36:

[22]"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[23]This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you,

with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

[24]But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

[29]"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

[30]But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

[31]Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

[32]God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

[33]Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

[36]"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

So, how can you do what Jesus, Paul and Peter do with your non-Christian friends?

You can do it, too – and you must

It's true that non-Christians don't like to hear that they will go to Hell unless they have a relationship with Jesus. And do you know why they think that? Because they think that sin and Hell are just your personal opinions. Not-very-nice opinions. Opinions that they can ignore because it's just your personal preference that you were raised in. They think that religion is like Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy – myths designed to make people feel good about themselves.

Just think for a minute what they must think of your blind-faith pronouncement that they are going to Hell unless they "believe in Jesus" (whatever that means to a non-Christian). How would you like to hear someone tell *you* that *you* are going to Hell for not liking vanilla ice cream? You'd think they were crazy! And that's what non-Christians think of you, unless… Unless what? Unless you present publicly testable arguments and evidence to show them *why* they should consider the claims of Jesus.

No one complains that it is "mean and divisive" if their doctor diagonoses them with cancer. Because a challenging diagnosis is not the doctor's personal opinion – it's true objectively. You need to make your presentation of the gospel *exactly like* a doctor's diagnosis. Am I making sense here?If you are telling them the truth and you can show them publicly testable reasons and evidence, what sense does it make for them to be offended? They might as well be offended by their credit card statement or their speeding ticket.

I have Jewish friends, Hindu friends, Muslim friends, atheist friends, etc. Telling people the truth with publicly testable arguments and evidence that they can assess for themselves works. What doesn't work is denying the reality of sin and Hell and then trying to be nice to non-Christians who are going to Hell so that they will like you. *That's not Biblical.* That's just reinventing Christianity based on your own emotional need to be happy and to

be liked by others and to feel good about yourself.

Some things to help you talk about the resurrection

The main thing to remember about talking about the resurrection in public with non-Christians is that *you can't assume that the Bible is true.* Serious Christians get around this by using standard historical criteria to filter out the passages of the Bible that are most likely to be historical. A passage could be as small as 1 verse or it could be several verses. Some of the criteria would be things like: 1) how early after the events was the passage written? 2) in how many places does it appear? 3) Are the places where it appears independent from one another (e.g. – Mark and Paul), 4) does it embarass the author in some way? Using these criteria, historians can extract a bare minimum set of facts about Jesus.

Once you establish these minimal facts, you argue that the best explanation of the facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead. Your opponent either has to disprove one of your minimal facts, or he has to propose an alternative explanation of those minimal facts that explains the data better.

Usually, the only point of disagreement is whether the tomb was empty. Most atheists will give you the crucifixion, the burial, the post-mortem appearances, and the early belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus in the early church.

The top 10 links to get you started

So with that out of the way, here are the top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Two debates where you can see this play out:

- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Jennifer Roback Morse writes about the real issue in the marriage debate

February 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

She knows about love and marriage

Because I'm so busy working and writing the blog, I almost never have time to read books any more. Right now I am reading Jay Richards' "Money, Greed and God" and Jennifer Roback Morse's "Smart Sex". I read *Smart Sex* on Saturday when I go to lunch.

I found a wonderful series of passages on marriage and child development in *Smart Sex*, and I'm going to type the whole thing in for you, because I think it's so important.

Excerpt from p. 41-43. Dr. J writes:

> I believe the real issue driving the "marriage debate" is the question of what we owe to children. Do we owe them material resources, provided by society at large? Or do we owe them personal relationships, provided for them by the particular people who brought them into existence? If children truly need a two-parent, married-couple family, this would place obligations upon the adults to get married and stay married. Many adults are reluctant to accept these particular obligations. So they, along with their allies in high policy-making places, try to minimize the importance of the evidence or to reinterpret it to mean that children really need more material support from government and business.
>
> From this perspective, the questions are: What is the minimal set of human relationships that a child can have and still turn out tolerably well? What is the least adults have to do in relationship terms for their kids to get by? How much money does society have to pump in from outisde the family to make up for the loss of relationship, so that I won't have to give up my belief that parents are entitled to any lifestyle choices they want?
>
> This minimalist mentality shows up in the conclusions people draw from these studies. For instance, people reinterpret the studies showing that a stepfather who spends enough time with this stepchildren can ward off some of the problems often seen in divorced families. A one level, this is undeniable. Of course children benefit from more time and attention from their fathers and stepfathers. But we are not justified in drawing the conclusion that there is no

> reason to be concerned about family structure as long as stepfathers spend enough time with their stepchildren. The very same study also shows that stepfathers, on average, spend much less time with their wives' children than do biological fathers.

> Many people seem to beleive it is unreasonable to expect or even encourage people to get married and stay married. But asking stepfathers to behave like biological fathers may be every bit as unreasonable . Stepfathers behave systematically differently from biological fathers. It is unrealistic to expect men to work as hard to on a relationship with another man's child as he would with his own child. It is more straightforward, as well as more sensible, to expect men and women to work together to maintain their marriages in the first place.
>
> Some people argue that the children of single and divorced parents would do fine if only society would increase the resources available to the children. The government should provide some combination of subsidized day care, housing allowances, and income supplements to increase the standard of living of the children of single-parent households. This postition is unpersuasive because most studies show that problems remain even after accounting for differences in economic resources. The resources that two parents can provide are not likely to ever be fully replaced by a single parent, no matter how heavily subsidized.
>
> I bellieve that children are harmed by the loss of relationship itself, not simply by the loss of resources. The primary business of parenthood is relational. Parenthood is much more than a process transferring resources from Big People to Little People. If that were true, resources from outside the family could possibly make up the losses that children experience from the loss of a parent.
>
> The primary responsibility of parents is to build relationships with their children and prepare their children to build relationships on their own when they mature. The whole attachment process, upon which conscience development depends, is a relationship-building process. Replacing a father with a paycheck is not a service either to the child, who misses out on the father's love, or to the father, who becomes reduced to a combination sperm donor and wallet.
>
> I propose that we confront these relationship issues with more generosity toward children. Instead of asking how little we have to do, we should ask what children need from their parents in order to thrive. Instead of asking how much money it takes to substitute for the presence of both parents, we could ask what parents can do to keep growing in love and regard for each other. We should not embrace a collective responsibility for financial support for children when we could embrace the personal obligation to nurture and cultivate loving relationships between spouses. We should be asking how we adults can support each other in maintaining our marriages.

The reason why I am chaste is because I need to court effectively so I can choose a wife who believes what Dr. Morse wrote – that parenting is an important purpose in marriage,

that both parents matter and that the government is not a subsitute for mothers and fathers. I can test if a woman is qualified to parent annoying, aggressive, insolent little child monsters letting her try to nurture me during the courtship. If she can develop my Chrsitian worldview, then should be able to handle the children.

I think my single male readers should think the same way. Stop thinking with your hormones and start thinking about what women can do for God in relationships. We all need to realize that the time to address marital problems is *during the courtship phase of the relationship.* Therefore, choose wisely. And we should stop trying to grow a secular government to replace the parents. If a secular government is responsible for the children, then those children will *never* form relationships with God in Christ.

On the contrary, Christian parents must jealously guard their children from a secular government. And that means we should favor limited government and a free market, with unregulated, low-taxed small businesses creating plenty of jobs so that we have lots of pay left over after taxes to spend on stay-at-home moms, private schools, and apologetics training materials. We can spend our own money better than any secular government can to buy anything that our children may need. It's our responsibility.

Jennifer Roback Morse's blog is here.

James Spiegel explains what really causes atheism

February 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this sample chapter from James Spiegel's new book "The Making of an Atheist" at Apologetics.com.

Here's the part I found the most interesting:

> The eminent twentieth-century historian Paul Johnson describes his Intellectuals as "an examination of the moral and judgmental credentials of leading intellectuals to give advice to humanity on how to conduct its affairs." Thus begins a 342-page historical expose that recounts behavior so sleazy and repugnant that one almost feels corrupted by reading it. Most disturbing are not necessarily the details of the sordid lives described by Johnson but the fact that the subjects are often regarded as intellectual heroes. Not merely successful people of letters in their day, they were scholars whose influence was, and continues to be, felt worldwide. They mastered their crafts as novelists, poets, playwrights, and philosophers and set forth ideals and values for ordering society.
>
> So for most readers it comes as a bit of a shock to learn that so many leading intellectuals were self-serving egotists,whose ostensible interest in humankind generally was belied by their callous disregard for those nearest and dearest to them, especially familymembers.
>
> The upshot of Johnson's book is that not only do many leading modern intellectuals fail to live up to their billing as moral visionaries, but their moral perversity should cause us to question the legitimacy of their ideas. This is because one's personal conduct impacts one's scholarly projects. And, as Johnson shows, the works of these intellectuals were often calculated to justify or minimize the shame of their own debauchery.
>
> Among the diverse vices that characterize the intellectuals studied by Johnson, brazen sexual promiscuity is the one recurring theme. So it is not surprising that most of these men explicitly rejected the Judeo-Christian worldview. Indeed, many of their scholarly and creative works openly challenged the values of this tradition, which condemns the sorts of lascivious behavior that dominated their lives.
>
> Aldous Huxley, another significant modern intellectual, had much to say on this point. In the following quote he refers to a nihilistic worldview, but this could as easily be supplanted by Marxism, Sartrean existentialism, or Shelley's vision of a religion-free society:
>
> For myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation.The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic

> system and liberation from a certain system of morality.We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom.
>
> Elsewhere in this same essay, Huxley is even more candid:
>
> Most ignorance is vincible ignorance.We don't know because we don't want to know. It is our will that decides how and upon what subjects we shall use our intelligence. Those who detect no meaning in the world generally do so because, for one reason or another, it suits their books that the world should be meaningless.
>
> As Paul Johnson argues, the philosophical systems and social ideals of many modern intellectuals were decided by their will to be immoral, not their quest for truth. They wrote the books they did to suit their personal lives, not vice versa.

The interesting point from the sample chapter here is that for atheists, the sin comes first, especially sexual sin. Now, pretty much everybody has some trouble with sin. No one can be perfect all the time. But atheists try to lie to themselves and others by re-imagining the world in such a way as to remove God as moral lawgiver. And it doesn't matter how far they have to go to speculate, assume or imagine their way out of reality. If they have to deny the big bang, they will. Deny the fine-tuning, no problem. The origin of life? Aliens did it. The resurrection? Unknown identical twin of Jesus. It's brute facts all the way down.

Consider this quote from an honest, respectable atheist philosopher named Thomas Nagel:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

They don't want to admit that they are doing anything wrong, and they don't want to be bothered by God's design for them. They don't think there is any way they ought to be other than "happy". Their new alternate universe allows them to do whatever they want (however destructive) while trying to make themselves happy for a few years apart from

God. And their new moral standard requires that everyone call that selfishness “good”, or else. And finally, if anything goes wrong, then the government is right there with someone else’s money to fix it, so they never feel any shame or guilt.

Related posts

- Interview with Jim Spiegel on “The Making of an Atheist” book
- Brian Auten posts book review of “The Faith of the Fatherless”
- Book review of “If there’s a God, why are there atheists?”
- New book: James S. Spiegel’s “The Making of an Atheist”
- Cowardly Richard Dawkins explains why he won’t debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Answering Richard Dawkins’ question: “Who made God?”
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens’ case against God
- How do leading atheists understand morality on atheism?

Nancy Pelosi refuses to ask Charlie Rangel to resign after ethics probe

February 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a re-cap of the story of his ethics probe:

And this story from CNS News is the latest.

Excerpt:

> House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) insisted on Friday that she is running the most ethical and honest Congress in history. At the same time, however, she indicated she will not ask House Ways and Means Chairman Charles Rangel (D.-N.Y.) to resign his chairmanship—at least for now.
>
> Rangel was admonished this week by the ethics committee for taking corporate-funded trips to the Caribbean.
>
> Pelosi noted that the ethics committee is looking into other issues involving Rangel, and made it clear that she was interested in seeing the outcome of these investigations soon.
>
> The committee, for example, is looking at Rangel's failure to disclose hundreds of thousands of dollars in assets that should have been listed on his congressional financial disclosure reports.
>
> […]When a reporter prefaced a question about Rangel by noting that Pelosi had promised to run the "most ethical and honest Congress in history" she interrupted him to say: "And we are."

Here's a video of Pelosi:

Does she seem accountable to you?

Round up of articles on adult stem-cell research from FRC

February 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found these on their blog.

Adult Stem Cells–Saving Legs, Saving Lives

Excerpt:

> Previous stories focused on the science of treating peripheral artery disease with adult stem cells. Often overlooked are the people whose lives have been changed or even saved by adult stem cell treatments.
>
> Helen Thomas, 80, of Hastings, Michigan is one of those people. Helen's painful circulatory problem in her leg meant she had trouble walking, rarely left home, and was facing amputation of her leg. But her physician, Kenneth Merriman of Hastings, asked around at a medical conference and found Dr. Randall Franz, who was doing a clinical trial at Grant Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio. Franz injected Helen's own adult stem cells into her leg, causing new blood vessels to grow. Helen is now up and about, back to normal.

A Neurological Save with Adult Stem Cells

Excerpt:

> When she was 30, Jennifer Osman was diagnosed with chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy (CIDP), a neurological disorder that attacks the peripheral nervous system, progressively weakening and numbing its victim.
>
> […]Then Jennifer signed up for an adult stem cell study run by Dr. Richard Burt, chief of the Division of Immunotherapy at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Her adult stem cells were collected and she received chemotherapy to knock out the rogue immune cells attacking her nervous system. Shortly after, on April 1, 2005, Jennifer received a transplant of her own adult stem cells and her immune system, now rebooted, began to rebuild itself. The process was slow and grueling, but she has taken no medication for the disease since 2008. Today, almost five years since her transplant, she is nearly symptom-free.

You Call That "Success"?

Excerpt:

> A news story out yesterday exemplifies the "successes" of embryonic stem cells. The story proclaimed that scientists had "successfully used mouse embryonic stem cells to replace diseased retinal cells and restore sight in a mouse model of retinitis pigmentosa." Sounds pretty good? Later there is the requisite hyperbole

> about treatments, that “Once the complication issues are addressed” and a list of retinal diseases that will be treated with embryonic stem cells.

Seeing Real Success with Adult Stem Cells

Excerpt:

> In a paper published February 15, 2010, Oregon scientists showed that they could use bone marrow-derived adult stem cells to treat a rat model of retinitis pigmentosa. Visual function was significantly preserved in this study. An added benefit was that the cells could be easily grown in culture and administered intravenously; once injected, they traveled to the retina where they exerted their protective effect. The study highlights the possibility of using a patient’s own adult stem cells for treatment of retinitis, diabetic retinopathy, and macular degeneration.
>
> A study by Canadian and Japanese researchers used human retinal stem cells that had been modified to increase their differentiation potential. When injected into the eyes of mice, the adult stem cells survived and differentiated into photoreceptors. Injected into a mutant mouse strain that lacks functional photoreceptors, the adult stem cells significantly improved visual function. The study was published online in the journal *Stem Cells* December 11, 2009.

Something to think about when the topic of embryonic stem cells comes up.

Is moral relativism compatible with Christianity?

March 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article from the American Thinker.

Excerpt:

> There are many doctrinal differences among the denominations, and good people could debate them ad nauseam and still not settle every one. Yet if anything is central to Christianity, it's the belief that Truth is spelled with a capital "T" — that it is absolute, universal, and eternal. And also central is a corollary of this belief: that there is an absolute, universal, and eternal answer to every moral question; that right and wrong are not a matter of opinion, and that they don't change from time to time and place to place (although the perception of them certainly can. Ergo, swords lopping off heads.).
>
> In fact, understand that moral relativism does nothing less than render the foundational act of Christianity, the sacrifice on the cross, incomprehensible. Why? Simply because Jesus died for our sins, and this presupposes that sin exists. However, if what we call morality is simply opinion, then there can be no such thing as sin.
>
> […]Now we come to why this piece isn't just for Christians. The concept of Absolute Truth lies at the heart of Judaism, Islam, and, in fact, philosophy itself. Why philosophy? Because, properly defined, philosophy is the search for Truth. Now, some — including many philosophy professors — would dispute this, but they not only are babies in philosophy, but they also have adopted the endeavor of a madman: searching while claiming there is nothing to find.
>
> If there is no Truth and only opinion, then there are no answers to be found. But then why ask questions?
>
> […]Of course, it's tempting to embrace religious-equivalency doctrine in a multi-religious society because it's thought that it enables us to get along. Like two little boys in a schoolyard who each agree to relinquish any claim that his daddy can beat up the other's, we make the following unwritten pact: "I won't say my faith is better than yours if you don't say your faith is better than mine. Deal?" And it does work. Only then there is not only no reason to fight about religion, there is no reason to even discuss it. There is, in fact, no reason to even adopt it. That is, unless it somehow makes you feel good. But adherence to the principle "Do whatever feels good" is a pathway to something. It's called sin.
>
> Through his embrace of relativism, modern man has made Christianity incomprehensible. He has made philosophy incomprehensible. He has, in fact, made civilization itself incomprehensible. For if there is no right or wrong, then civilization can be no better than barbarism.

Something to think about when you feel pressured to say that morality is relative and truth is relative.

Obama refuses to support Britain over Falklands dispute

March 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

The Obama administration's decision to remain neutral in the dispute between Great Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands is a shameful decision that will go down very badly across the Atlantic. As *The Times* has just reported, Washington has point blank refused to support British sovereignty over the Falklands, and is adopting a strictly neutral approach.

In the words of a State Department spokesman:

"We are aware not only of the current situation but also of the history, but our position remains one of neutrality. The US recognises de facto UK administration of the islands but takes no position on the sovereignty claims of either party."

The remarks had echoes of an earlier statement by a senior State Department protocol official who, when asked about the shoddy treatment of the British Prime Minister in March last year, responded:

"There's nothing special about Britain. You're just the same as the other 190 countries in the world. You shouldn't expect special treatment."

Even by the relentlessly poor standards of the Obama administration, whose doctrine unfailingly appears to be "kiss your enemies and kick your allies", this is a new low. The White House's neutrality in a major dispute between America's closest friend and the likes of Venezuelan tyrant Hugo Chavez, Argentina's biggest backer, represents the appalling appeasement of an alliance of anti-Western Latin American regimes, stretching from Caracas to Havana – combined with a callous indifference towards the Anglo-American alliance.

Over the course of the last year, we've seen a staggering array of foreign policy follies by this administration, from the throwing under the bus of the Poles and the Czechs over missile defence to siding with Marxists in Honduras. But this latest pronouncement surely takes the biscuit as the most brazen betrayal so far of a US ally.

Alienating our closest allies, and encouraging war.

Salvo Mag reviews Mark Levin's Liberty and Tyranny

March 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mark Levin's "Liberty and Tyranny" is my favorite book on the vision of American government.

Here's a review from Salvo, a Christian magazine.

Excerpt.

> In *"Liberty and Tyranny: A Conservative Manifesto",* Mark Levin identifies and analyzes two divergent, mutually exclusive philosophies of governance. Tracing the threads of each through American history, Levin discusses America's founding, the Constitution, federalism, the free market, environmentalism, immigration, and the rise of the welfare state and shows how the conservative principles upon which America was founded have fostered opportunity, prosperity, and strength, and have preserved freedom.
>
> Established on belief in divine providence and natural law, conservative principles recognize "a harmony of interests" and "rules of cooperation" that foster "ordered liberty" and a social contract, which brings about what Levin calls *the civil society.* In the civil society, the individual is recognized as "a unique, spiritual being with a soul and a conscience." Though civil society recognizes and sanctions a transcendent, objective moral order, which the citizen has a duty to respect, it acknowledges man's imperfection and anticipates flawed observance.
>
> In stark contrast to the civil society stands modern liberalism, which Levin says would be more accurately described as statism because it effectively abandons faith in divine providence for faith in the supremacy of the state. Consider this distinction concerning the origin of unalienable rights: "The Founders believed, and the Conservative agrees . . . that we, as human beings, have a right to live, live freely, and pursue that which motivates us not because man or some government says so, but because these are God-given natural rights." But statism replaces the recognition of unalienable rights as rights inherent to an individual because *he is a human being created by God,* with the perception that it is the *state* that is the grantor of rights.
>
> Having dismissed divine providence, it follows that statism would abandon natural law as the objective basis for civil law and replace it with relativism, where truth is, in theory, a matter of opinion, but in effect, it becomes whatever those in power say it is. The combined shift works to change the understanding of a right as something inherent to an individual, which the state is obligated to respect, to pseudo-rights or benefits the state bestows (or promises to bestow), usually in return for popular support. Consider the "right" to health care or affordable housing.

Highly recommended read, in case you missed it. Sold well over a million copies.

OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela

March 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Washington Post. (H/T Red State)

Excerpt:

> THE ORGANIZATION of American States has failed to respond to the steady deterioration of Latin American democracy during the past few years, even though the defense of democracy is supposed to be one of its primary missions. Now the OAS — and governments throughout the region — have been shamed by one of its own branch organizations. Last week, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued a searing and authoritative report on the destruction of Venezuela's political institutions and the erosion of freedom under President Hugo Chávez.
>
> […]In meticulous detail, the 300-page report documents how Mr. Chávez's regime has done away with judicial independence, intimidated or eliminated opposition media, stripped elected opposition leaders of their powers, and used bogus criminal charges to silence human rights groups.
>
> […]Particularly shocking is the commission's account of the role that violence and murder have played in Mr. Chávez's concentration of power. The report documents killings of journalists, opposition protesters and farmers; it says that 173 trade union leaders and members were slain between 1997 and 2009 "in the context of trade union violence, with contract killings being the most common method for attacking union leaders." The report says that in 2008 Venezuela's human rights ombudsman recorded 134 complaints of arbitrary killings by security forces, 87 allegations of torture and 33 cases of forced disappearance. It also asserts that radical groups allied with Mr. Chávez "are perpetrating acts of violence with the involvement or acquiescence of state agents."
>
> There has been no accountability for these acts.

Here's a picture of two socialists, Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez.

Hey, Chavez! Nice job on that torture!

I wonder why Obama and the people who voted for him oppose waterboarding interrogation of mass-murdering terrorists for national security purposes, but sanction *actual* torture against innocent civilians by Democrat socialist regimes?

But maybe violence isn't an essential part of the political left's plan. Neil Simpson has a nice post up about how the socialists can take over the world without using violence. I wonder if they will take him up on that?

Relate posts

- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria
- North Korea conducts second nuclear test, Obama sternly disapproves

Doug Groothuis writes about a recent anti-ID lecture by Michael Shermer

March 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a review of a recent lecture by Michael Shermer by Doug Groothuis.

Excerpt:

> Shermer's basic argument against ID was what he called "the argument from personal incredulity."
>
> 1. X looks designed.
> 2. I cannot figure out how X could come about through natural causes.
> 3. Therefore, X was supernaturally designed.
>
> […]Shermer made many criticisms of creationism and ID (usually not differentiating them), but this argument was the backbone of his critique. It amounts to an endorsement of methodological naturalism: we can only appeal to material explanations in science that preclude any originating design. But Shermer's argument is faulty for several reasons.

He goes on to explain three reasons why that argument fails.

And then here's another argument from Shermer:

> Shermer's argument against the design inference is this: The Argument from the Presumption of Naturalism:
>
> 1. All scientific arguments must be based on naturalism.
> 2. ID appeals to causes not allowed by naturalism.
> 3. Therefore, ID is not scientific.

And another argument.

> Shermer many times said that science (read: naturalism) is given enough time, it will explain what now seems difficult to explain (such as the Big Bang without God) or fine-tuning (without God). I have heard this so often, that I must dub it: The Post-dated check fallacy:
>
> 1. We cannot explain X naturalistically.
> 2. But give us more time and we will explain X naturalistically.
> 3. Therefore, we do not accept your ID explanation of X.

Are you seeing a pattern? Shermer has presupposed naturalism as a blind faith religion (which he never defends anywhere) and then uses his religion to twist science into supporting his blind faith in naturalism. I don't mind that he is made happy by religion, but if he cannot support it with public evidence, then why bring it into the lab where the real science is happening? Why not not just keep his religion for the atheist equivalent of church, and leave scientists free to figure out how the world really works?

Click through to read the rest of the post (it's worth reading).

Related posts

- Debate between Stephen Meyer and Peter Atkins
- William Dembski debates Lewis Wolpert about intelligent design
- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Richard Dawkins agrees that there is no naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show

Science's war on the religion of naturalism

- Kalam cosmological argument
- Fine-tuning of cosmological constants
- Galactic, stellar and planetary fine-tuning
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion
- The development of irreducibly complex molecular machines

Is the phrase “the religious left” an oxymoron?

March 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Joseph C. Phillips, writing at Big Hollywood. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Not long ago I asked a black clergyman about his (and so many others) support for candidates that write and support policy inconsistent with the tenants of Christianity. He responded by asking me, “what are Christian beliefs?” His question was neither rhetorical nor was it an invitation for my definition. Sadly it was his serious contention that the “Bible is not a unitary document but a collection of books. Which one you choose to quote and live by is a result of interpretative choice.” Alas, his explanation seems inconsistent with a Christianity that worships a unified father, son and Holy Spirit; that accepts the bible as the inspired and living word of God; that views the individual books as part of a greater whole with a unity of theme and purpose and that believes the risen Christ is the fulfillment of ALL scripture. To hold that there are no true Christian beliefs just individual opinions–and all of those equally valid-leads me to guess he purchased his diploma cheaply and on-line.
>
> Of course this pastor is only one of many claiming to be independent – choosing their candidates on “the basis of intellect, moral compass, life experiences, sensitivity to ethnic diversity and a commitment to expanding the blessings of liberty” and yet somehow always votes for a Democrat.
>
> […]The excuse is that the hypocritical religious right… are too busy talking about family values and not dealing with the broader moral issues of poverty, injustice and more recently healthcare. Significantly, this has led the religious left away from preaching virtue as the way in which God empowers individuals and towards locking arms with secular leftists that preach the administrative state as the anecdote to man’s falling. For the left, redemption is to be had not through personal sacrifice and struggle, but through the redistribution of resources; not through personal discipline but through mandates for equality. It is not enough to save our neighbor we must work to save the planet.

You can see which denominations voted for Obama in this graph from Pew Research. For the record, I am an ethnic evangelical Protestant.

How psychology medicalizes character flaws to remove personal responsibility

March 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Town Hall from moderate conservative George Will. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> The fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), psychiatry's encyclopedia of supposed mental "disorders," is being revised. The 16 years since the last revision evidently were prolific in producing new afflictions. The revision may aggravate the confusion of moral categories.
>
> […]This DSM defines as "personality disorders" attributes that once were considered character flaws. "Antisocial personality disorder" is "a pervasive pattern of disregard for … the rights of others … callous, cynical … an inflated and arrogant self-appraisal." "Histrionic personality disorder" is "excessive emotionality and attention-seeking." "Narcissistic personality disorder" involves "grandiosity, need for admiration … boastful and pretentious." And so on.
>
> If every character blemish or emotional turbulence is a "disorder" akin to a physical disability, legal accommodations are mandatory. Under federal law, "disabilities" include any "mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities"; "mental impairments" include "emotional or mental illness." So there might be a legal entitlement to be a jerk.
>
> […]Furthermore, intellectual chaos can result from medicalizing the assessment of character. Today's therapeutic ethos, which celebrates curing and disparages judging, expresses the liberal disposition to assume that crime and other problematic behaviors reflect social or biological causation. While this absolves the individual of responsibility, it also strips the individual of personhood, and moral dignity.
>
> James Q. Wilson, America's pre-eminent social scientist, has noted how "abuse excuse" threatens the legal system and society's moral equilibrium. Writing in National Affairs quarterly ("The Future of Blame"), Wilson notes that genetics and neuroscience seem to suggest that self-control is more attenuated — perhaps to the vanishing point — than our legal and ethical traditions assume.

Related to our recent discussions about personal responsibility and blaming others.

2001-2010 was the snowiest decade on record

March 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Watts Up With That. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Now that we have reached the end of the meteorological winter (December-February,) Rutgers University Global Snow Lab numbers (1967-2010) show that the just completed decade (2001-2010) had the snowiest Northern Hemisphere winters on record. The just completed winter was also the second snowiest on record, exceeded only by 1978. Average winter snow extent during the past decade was greater than 45,500,000 km2, beating out the 1960s by about 70,000 km2, and beating out the 1990s by nearly 1,000,000 km2.

But what did the global warming alarmists predict?

> It appears that AGW claims of the demise of snowfall have been exaggerated. And so far things are not looking very good for the climate model predictions of declining snowfall in the 21st century.
>
> Many regions of the Northern Hemisphere have seen record snowfall this winter, including Washington D.C, Moscow, China, and Korea.

Click through for nice graphs that really explain what is what.

Brian Auten interviews Sean McDowell on apologetics and youth

March 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian did another interview, this time with Sean McDowell. He's pretty fun to listen to.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- with respect to faith, do young people care about more about truth or emotional happiness?
- what projects is Sean working on lately?
- what was it like being the son of famous apologist Josh McDowell?
- how did Sean become a Christian?
- what did Sean's father say when Sean expressed doubts in Christianity?
- how did Sean build up his convictions about the truth of Christianity?
- what effect does the father's relationship to the child have on the child's Christian faith?
- how did Sean get interested in apologetics?
- what resources had the biggest effect on Sean's apologetics training?
- should you be concerned when someone you care about starts to doubt?
- what should you say to someone who has doubts?
- how should you respond to tough questions from young people?
- how can a person encourage their church to adopt apologetics?
- what's a good book on intelligent design theory for young people?

This is fun because I spend a lot of time thinking about how to pass my faith along to my children in a way that will still allow them to question and rebel. It's a really challenging problem, but Sean seems to know how to do it.

Don't miss the MP3 from Sean's first debate on whether morality is possible without God.

How good are politicians at projecting the costs of social programs?

March 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Big Government. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

Look back at when Medicare was first created:

At its start, in 1966, Medicare cost $3 billion. The House Ways and Means Committee estimated that Medicare would cost only about $ 12 billion by 1990 (a figure that included an allowance for inflation). This was a supposedly "conservative" estimate. But in 1990 Medicare actually cost $107 billion.

In 2007, total Medicare spending was $431 billion! That isn't even close to the costs predicted in 1965. Why do we act like the numbers coming out of Congress and the CBO have any basis in reality?

The predictions for Medicaid were just as wrong:

In 1987, Congress projected that Medicaid – the joint federal-state health care program for the poor – would make special relief payments to hospitals of less than $1 billion in 1992. Actual cost: $17 billion.

The list goes on. The 1993 cost of Medicare's home care benefit was projected in 1988 to be $4 billion, but ended up at $10 billion. The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which was created in 1997 and projected to cost $5 billion per year, has had to be supplemented with hundreds of millions of dollars annually by Congress.

This is always good thing to remember when people try to pass massive new programs – and this goes for Republicans too, e.g. – Bush's Medicare prescription drug benefit. Blech!

Melanie Phillips has a radical plan to stop the breakdown of marriages

March 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Here's the problem:

> Devastating new research by sociologist Geoff Dench shows that not only is one in four mothers single, but more than half of such mothers have never lived with a man at all and are choosing to live alone on state benefits.
>
> […]Back in the mists of time … relationships between men and women were based on a bargain between the sexes which, although never stated openly, everyone accepted as a given.
>
> Women realised they needed the father of their children to stick around to help bring them up.
>
> In turn, men committed themselves to the mothers of their children on the basis that they could trust they were indeed the father because the woman was sexually faithful.
>
> Today, this bargain has been all but destroyed. A number of factors have conspired to make women and girls think they can go it alone without men.
>
> The first has been that so many women work and are therefore economically independent. Next was the sexual revolution which saw women becoming as sexually free as men.
>
> In short order, any stigma over having babies out of wedlock was abolished. Then there was the collapse of manufacturing industry, which deprived many boys of the job prospects which once made them an attractive, marriageable proposition.
>
> Finally, the coup de grace was administered by welfare benefits to single mothers which enabled them to live without the support of their babies' fathers.

> The result of all this was that many women and girls decided they no longer needed their children's fathers to be part of the family unit.

> This has given rise to an increasing number of women-only households where fathers have been written out of the family script for three or four generations or more.
>
> The consequences of such family disintegration – as is now indisputable – are in general catastrophic for both individuals and for society.
>
> This problem will not be cracked, however, unless women come to believe once again that their interests lie in attracting one man to father their children and then stick with them. Which is where my proposal of a Man Benefit comes in.

Click here to find out what the “Man Benefit” is. This is a fine article, and every man and woman who wants to understand how big government government causes the destruction of the family should read it. Then forward it to all of your friends. I think that we have a problem today where we just don’t think intelligently about what it takes to have a good marriage. Does government help children to grow up in stable homes, or does government make it more likely for children to grow up in a broken home? What does the evidence say?

This column by Stephen Baskerville is a nice follow-up to Melanie’s article.

MUST-READ: Mandatory curriculum in Ontario schools promotes homosexuality

March 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

Story here from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The Ministry [of Education] put out its new Health and Physical Education curriculum for grades 1 to 8 in January, and a spokesperson has confirmed to LifeSiteNews (LSN) that the new curriculum will be mandatory for all schools, Catholic and public, in September 2010. The high school curriculum will be released this spring, and will be mandatory as of September 2011. At this point, it is unclear, however, whether Catholic schools are to be forced into teaching elements that violate Catholic teaching.
>
> The new curriculum, replacing a previous version from 1998, aligns with the Ministry's campaign to promote "equity and inclusive education" in Ontario's schools, which includes the advancement of homosexualism and transgenderism. A notable aspect of the curriculum's revision is the attempt to instil a sense that homosexuality and transgenderism are perfectly normal.
>
> […]Students begin to explore "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" in grade 3, as part of an expectation to appreciate "invisible differences" in others. A desired response has the eight-year-old student recognizing that "some [families] have two mothers or two fathers."
>
> In grade 5, a student is expected to recognize that "things I cannot control include … personal characteristics such as … my gender identity [and] sexual orientation."
>
> Grade 7s are expected to be taught about "using condoms consistently if and

> when a person becomes sexually active."

One of main reasons why I want to get married is so that I can raise children to have a relationship with God and to make a difference in the world for him. I have had that view since I started working in my teens, often working multiple jobs at the same time – and I mean white collar jobs in the private and public sectors, right through undergraduate university. And all this so that I could buy my wife and children everything that would help them to serve God as much as they wanted to, e.g. – if my wife wanted to be a stay-at-home mom and to homeschool, no problem.

Now suppose a law like that is passed here in the United States and applies to public and private schools. How would I then look on the viability of marriage and child-raising then? My children, (*all* children, really), would be taught anti-Christian views of sex for a good deal of their academic life before going to college where drunken hook-up sex abounds. And this indoctrination would be at my expense, since public school teachers are paid out of taxes I have to pay. And early sexual activity would predispose my children *away* from Christian faith.

Do you think that news stories like this affect my plans to marry? They certainly do. I think liberal voters need to get serious about asking themselves exactly what makes men interested in marriage and parenting in the first place. Speaking for myself, I want to raise children who share my values and worldview and who serve God effectively when I am gone. When government forces its anti-Christian views on impressionable young children, that's a disincentive for responsible men to marry.

(Don't say homeschooling, the left doesn't like homeschooling)

It's everywhere in Canada

By the way, Jennifer Roback Morse recently had a scary post about even worse laws governing schools in Quebec.

Excerpt:

> The news from Quebec is not encouraging for those who love liberty. In their new **Quebec Policy Against Homophobia: Moving Together toward social equality,** Provincial government of Quebec just gave itself permission to take all necessary steps to wipe out, not just "homophobia," but also "heterosexism."

And it happens in British Columbia, too.

Excerpt:

> In response to a case filed with the Human Rights Tribunal in 1999 by gay couple Murray and Peter Corren, the BC government decided last year to introduce new curricula from Kindergarten to Grade 12 that would be "inclusive" and homosexual-friendly. The pro-gay courses may become mandatory with provisions for barring parents from opting out or opting for an alternative course (see http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2006/jun/06060101.html).
>
> Today, the BC Ministry of Education released the draft overview for the new

> Grade 12 Social Justice pilot course, which is the first course to come out of the agreement with Murray and Peter Corren.

Comments will be strictly moderated. You know why.

Nebraska legislature introduces bill to ban abortion after 20 weeks

March 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article from the American Thinker. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Nebraska has a nonpartisan, unicameral legislature, so many of the shenanigans which can cause legislative bills to fall into a maelstrom of confusion are absent there. This is not a "partisan" issue, and no conference committee reports can swallow the bill and then regurgitate it as unrecognizable vomit.
>
> Moreover, Legislative Bill 1103 will get a hearing: Its sponsor is Mike Flood, Speaker of Nebraska's legislature.

Note that Mike Flood is a Republican. Republicans are pro-life.

More:

> The Nebraska bill carefully accounts for those sorts of concerns that all decent people have always had about abortion: Might the mother die if the child is born? Could a live birth cause permanent damage to the mother's health? (Legislative Bill 1103, though, makes a point of requiring physical and not "psychic" harm to the mother.) Amendments may include those other tricky areas — children born of rape or incest.
>
> […]The Nebraska bill will put fans of unrestricted abortion right where they belong — supporting all sorts of evil, as long as it is committed out of sight.

It's a brilliant move. It's a wonder that the pro-life movement hasn't adopted a more incremental approach before, because it works. Make the Democrats publicly defend infanticide as a woman's right to choose.

I hope you've all practiced your pro-life arguments. If not, then just read this, and you're good to go.

If you know about pro-life arguments already, then why not try guessing who is more pro-life: men or women? Those links go to charts from the latest Gallup poll. Isn't it surprising? I'm surprised.

R.C. Sproul interviews Stephen Meyer on Signature in the Cell

March 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video clips below.

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Part 4:

Part 5:

By the way, Apologetics Junkie posted video of the McDowell-Corbett debate! Part 1 and part 2.

Related posts

- Stephen Meyer explains what intelligent design is in a CNN editorial.
- Stephen Meyer's Signature in the Cell in top ten science books on Amazon.com
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show

MUST-READ: How brainwashed young people vote for their own downfall

March 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great column by Bob Parks from Big Government. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Those kids grew up with progressive teachers who, because of the power of the grading system (which can make or break futures), told them they knew more than their ignorant parents; they knew more than simpleton adults. Their opinions, despite the lack of life experience, were equal, and important, if not superior, to adults.
>
> […]They believed in recycling, came home and told us we should too. They believed in the Palestinians, and came home and told us we should too.
>
> […]They now believe in global warming caused by evil corporations and our lust for the very fossil fuels that enabled us to take their lazy butts to the mall, came home and told us we should too. Then they believed in a man named Barack Obama for all the wonderful things he would do to fix this imperialist, racist, homophobic society that enabled them to live relatively carefree lives.

And:

> They called us names when they couldn't debate the realities of what Obama's policies could cost us all, which was not big deal to them because most of them still live at home, don't pay rent, don't pay for food, don't pay for their cellphone bill (and bitch when they exceed their text limits), don't pay for the Internet bill, don't pay for power, don't do dishes, and many don't even wash their own clothes, yet THEY KNOW what's best for the nation.
>
> THEY KNOW that Cap-and-Trade will be good for the economy and will create "green jobs" although they can't tell us what specifically they'll be.
>
> THEY KNOW that universal health care is something they all want, although probably none of them could define it two years ago.

Read the whole thing.

This is *another serious problem* that worries me a lot about the future – brainwashed children who will cause government to sway hard to left. They don't even know what they are doing to themselves. Parents are just too busy focusing on making and spending money to care what their children believe. They only care that the grades are good. God, morality and patriotism definitely take the hindmost.

Be sure and read about how the unemployment for young Americans is at a record high of 52 percent.

Related posts

- How Democrat policies cause unemployment to increase
- Unemployment rate among men aged 25-54 is 19.4%
- Business leaders blame Obama for high unemployment rate
- Ten ways that Obama stimulated the economy with government spending
- Feds give $888,000 to Chicago public schools to teach Arabic language
- Why Obama’s government spending failed to keep unemployment below 8%
- Harvard economists explain how Obama’s spending created 10.2% unemployment
- Why is Obama spending trillions when government spending failed in Japan?
- Obama appoints SEIU union executive to create manufacturing jobs
- Obama restricts government contracts over 25M to unionized labor
- What lowers unemployment? Bush’s tax cuts or Obama’s spending?
- New Heritage Foundation study says cap-and-trade will kill jobs and the economy
- Understanding why Democrat policies don’t create jobs

Dennis Prager explains the conflict between parents and the state

March 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article talks about how the power of the state is bounded by 1) traditional religion and 2) parental authority in the family.

Excerpt:

> The second most powerful obstacle to the state and government assuming primary authority is parents.
>
> It was no meaningless phrase when baby boomers on the left declared, "Never trust anyone over 30." Who was over 30? First and foremost, their parents.
>
> As with religion, the further left the state or ideology, the more it seeks to undermine parental authority. In the Soviet Union, Komsomol, the Soviet Youth League substituted for parents. Mao, too, did what he could to destroy the family's authority. Although no way comparable to Stalin or Mao, the American and European left also seek to undermine parental authority.
>
> The battle over parental notification in the case of abortion is primarily about parental authority.
>
> The battle over sex education in schools is largely about that, too — who gets to teach youth about sexuality and homosexuality? Parents or schools (i.e., the state)?
>
> The battle over school vouchers is in large measure also a battle over governmental authority versus parental authority. Who gets to choose where one's child attends school — the state or the parent? The battle over who gets to actually educate our children has already been lost to the state in the vast majority of cases. It is why the left is so uncomfortable with home schooling — parents, not the state, get to teach children.
>
> As the late James O. Freedman, former president of Dartmouth University, said in a commencement address in 2002, the purpose of a college education is "to question your father's values."
>
> Just as the left has substituted the authority of the state for the authority of God, it has substituted the authority of the state for that of parents. And just as God has been reduced to a non-judging, non-disciplining pal, so, too, the left wants parents to become non-judging, non-disciplining pals of their children.
>
> In a nutshell, the left wants to have ever-expanding authority over people's lives through ever-expanding governmental powers. It does so because it regards itself as more enlightened than others. Others are either enemies (the right) or unenlightened masses. It is elected by demonizing its enemies and doling out money and jobs to the masses.

I find that the expanding intrusion of the secular state into the family (via the schools) is very frustrating. I am concerned that the state will turn my children against me using my tax dollars. And the worst part is that if my children reject Judeo-Christian values, then they would actually be hurting themselves, and imposing social costs (e.g. – health care costs, etc.), on the rest of society. I think it would hurt me a lot to take so much trouble to have and raise children and then to see them become immoral, self-destructive and ungrateful to their parents.

MUST-READ: An overview of Obama's radical pro-abortion record

March 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this post at The Blog Prof. (H/T Nice Deb)

Excerpt:

Once again, for the umpteenth time, on Obama and abortion, it is indisputable that in his very short time in office, the most viciously pro-abort zealot to ever sit in the Oval Office did the following:

- signed an Executive Order opening up taxpayer funding for destroying embryos for research, even though the effort is moot (more here)
- directed the Department of HHS to overturn regulations that protect medical professionals from being forced to perform or refer for abortion (more here)
- second act in office was to authorize US dollars to fund abortions overseas (more here)
- voted against the Born Alive Infant Protection Act (more here and here), thereby outright condoning infanticide (this was before he was elected President, but something that no one should forget). Apparently, not just once but 4 times!
- signed an Executive Order authorizing taxpayer funding for the destruction of human embryos for research and overturned a prior administration EO pressing for forms of stem cell research that wouldn't require embryo destruction. Even though destroying embryos is likely already moot at this point
- announced $50 million for the UNFPA, the UN population agency that has been criticized for promoting abortion and working closely with Chinese population control officials who use forced abortions and involuntary sterilizations.
- defunded all abstinence-only education, instead going with contraceptive-only education that is proven not to decrease pregnancy or abortion
- Signed a new budget including taxpayer-funded abortions in Washington D.C.
- Wants the Pentagon to stock the morning after pill that prevents implantation of an embryo, which is an abortion in the earliest stages of life

The multiple pro-infanticide votes are the most egregious of the above egregious acts, and he did so without any pity for those babies born alive only to be left in soiled linen closets to die.

Think of all the pro-life people who voted for Obama because they wanted free health care, paid for by their neighbors. This is the price of it.

Here's one of the videos in the post:

There are a TON of videos of Obama talking about the abortion issue in the BlogProf's blog post.

This image made me sad:

It’s the born-alive baby who was abandoned in a utility room to die. That’s not what you do with babies, for God’s sake. Obama opposed the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act. He is most pro-abortion President ever.

Mark Driscoll explains 8 things that might compel you to reject Jesus

March 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The list is here on The Resurgence. (H/T Caffeinated Thoughts)

Here's the best one from his list, in my opinion:

7. Embarrassment

Sometimes it's just embarrassment, because being a Christian does not get you cool points anywhere. This was my big thing as a non-Christian. All the Christians would come to me and they'd be like, "Okay, you need to give your life to Christ." And I'm like, "I don't want to join the team, man. The Ned Flanders society. I do not want to join the team." And it was always the kids with the bumper stickers and the t-shirts and the permagrins and the parted hair and the wristbands, and they're like, "We love Jesus! We love him, we love him." I was like, "Aaaargh! Seriously, is there another team that he has? Maybe wearing black, you know? Could I join that team?" It was just embarrassing. "I love Jesus." You know how weird it is to get converted in college and your philosophy class, when they're like, "How many of you are Christians?" "Oh, here we go." You know. History class. "Yeah, I love Jesus." Sociology class. "I love Jesus." Women's studies class. "Oh yeah, I love Jesus." You know? You're just a piñata for your whole undergrad degree. It's embarrassing. And then every time any Christian says or does anything stupid, myself included—I am not beyond this capacity—it's like, "You Christians." You're like, "There are billions of us! Just because one duffed it doesn't mean we're all doing it."

It's embarrassing. Do you think it was embarrassing for Naaman to go down to the river? "Hi, I'm the mighty man, leper, help." It's kind of embarrassing. For those in Nazareth, it's like, "You're the bad guys." "Really? That's kind of embarrassing, because we took a vote. We thought we were the good guys." Some of you just need to be humiliated for Christ.

This is the reason I see the most often in the university and at work. People don't want to be thought of as stupid, ignorant or different. It's PRIDE. They want to compare themselves to others and think they are better. And they want others to think they are better than them.

The best reason of all isn't even on his list. People want to pursue their own interests in this life and they don't want to be encumbered with the demands of a relationship that forces them to do some things to make God happy. They want to work 100% on making themselves happy.

That's the number one reason why people DON'T look into these issues to see if Christianity is true. They are afraid that it will be true and that they will have to dedicate some portion of their time to serving God and behaving themselves. I do it too. We all do.

And it’s particularly hard to include God in your decision making when you aren’t getting your way.

What does G.K. Chesteron say?

> *“The problem with Christianity isn’t that it has been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried.”*

Exactly.

I’ll be picking up the Mark Driscoll series on sex and marriage as soon as things cool down at work. I’m working on 3 projects and it’s just too much to do!

Outgoing UK Labour government aims to make sex education compulsory

March 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at MercatorNet. (H/T Betsy at RuthBlog)

The problem:

> We have now had massive schemes of propaganda on sexual issues pushed at the young for decades. Schools arrange talks and brochures, demonstrations and films about contraception and abortion, making official links with abortion providers and with clinics which give youngsters contraceptives without parental knowledge or consent. Posters urge youngsters to consider whether or not they are lesbian or homosexual, and how to feel good about it if they decide they are.
>
> The result? The teenage pregnancy rate has soared, and the problem of sexually-transmitted diseases among the young is now so huge that supermarkets and youth clubs have joined health centres and schools in giving information about how to obtain medical help for these potentially lethal illnesses.
>
> Fewer and fewer young people are marrying. Of those who do, many divorce – especially if they have been living together beforehand. Many people in their twenties, attempting marriage, have had multiple sexual partners. Many girls bring to marriage a background of more than one abortion, with its consequent physical and psychological damage. Almost half of all births are now out of wedlock. Children born to unmarried couples have only a slim chance of remaining in contact with both parents by the time they reach puberty as most such relationships break up before then.

The secular left's solution:

> And into this grisly scene the government is bringing – yes, you've guessed it – more sex education. Under legislation now in Parliament (Children Schools and Families Bill), sex and relationships education will be a compulsory part of the statutory National Curriculum. Parents will continue to have the right to withdraw their children from these classes, but only up to the age of 15. After that they must attend classes which include information on "how and where to obtain information about health and sex advice" — to wit, your local family planning/abortion clinic. This is to ensure they get at least 12 months of amoral, utilitarian sex education before finishing compulsory schooling.
>
> However, there is no opt-out at any stage for schools. Faith schools — which constitute a third of all schools in Britain — will have to teach a curriculum that starts with talking to five-year-olds about bodily changes, teaches "different relationships" (of which marriage is only one) from the age of seven, and everything else from the age of 11 — including same-sex relationships,

> contraception and abortion.

There was a time when I wanted to be a teacher. Can you imagine that? I thought that I would teach children English literature, mathematics and computer science. And I wanted to get married and to have children, too. Is this what I have to look forward to if I try?The government indoctrinating my children in self-destructive behavior? Who votes for these people on the political left, anyway? Why do we keep looking to government to "solve" our problems with government-run public schools and taxpayer-funded social programs?

The total cost to taxpayers of the family breakdown and out-of-wedlock births is 112 billion dollars a year in the United States, and it will only go higher as we keep using public schools to push children to engage in sexual activity as a form of recreation, without their parents' consent.

Related posts

- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2008?

Paul Ryan talks about health care with Chris Matthews and Chris Wallace

March 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video here:

Matthews is surprisingly reasonable.

BONUS: Paul Ryan on with Chris Wallace

He needs to be President in 2012.

Fiscal and social conservatives unite in new free e-book “Indivisible”

March 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There’s a new book that just came out from the Heritage Foundation, my favorite think tank.

Here’s an excerpt from the introduction by Jay Richards:

> To listen to media and political strategists is to get the impression that American public life is a checklist of issues. Some are known as “social” issues (marriage, family) and some are known as “economic” (international trade, wages). There may be some good reasons for this distinction, but when we itemize and divide these topics into two separate categories, we fail to convey the underlying unity of the principles behind the American Experiment in ordered liberty. In reality, the two groups of issues are interdependent. For instance, a free economy cannot long exist in a culture that is hostile to it. The success of free market economic policies depends on important cultural and moral factors such as thrift, delayed gratification, hard work, and respect for the property of others. A virtuous and responsible populace derives, in turn, from strong families, churches, and other civil institutions.
>
> Conversely, economic issues have a strong influence on culture and the institutions of civil society. High taxes, for example, put pressure on families and force parents to spend more time in the workforce, leaving less time to devote to their spouses and children. When government expands spending and control in education, it crowds out parental responsibility; when it expands its role in providing social welfare services, it tends to erode a sense of responsibility among churches and other groups doing good work to help neighbors in need.
>
> The connections are such that the individual issues rarely fit neatly and exclusively into one set or the other. An “economic” issue is rarely exclusively about economics. For instance, poverty in America is often as much a moral and cultural problem as an economic problem. Reducing such poverty depends on civil institutions that inculcate virtue and responsibility as well as policies that promote economic freedom and discourage dependency. Most poverty among children in America is not caused by a lack of jobs but rather by factors such as family breakdown, negligent or absentee parents, substance abuse, or other social pathologies. To consider American poverty in strictly economic terms is to fail to see the full scale of issues involved in this problem.
>
> […]The following essays are intended as a concise exploration of the link between liberty and human dignity and of the policy issues that tend to cluster around these two themes in American life. This collection brings together a number of well-known social and economic conservatives. To encourage cross-

> fertilization of their ideas, those known as social conservatives have written on themes normally identified with economic conservatives, and vice versa. The authors highlight economic arguments for issues typically categorized as "social" and social/moral arguments for "economic" issues. Each author focuses on a single topic, briefly summarized below, that is associated with either social or economic conservatives or, in some cases, both.

That's also one of the main purposes of my blog, to show how fiscal conservatives and social conservatives depend on each other.

Here are the essays and authors:

- Civil Society: Moral Arguments for Limiting Government – *Joseph G. Lehman*
- Rule of Law: Economic Prosperity Requires the Rule of Law – *J. Kenneth Blackwell*
- Life: The Cause of Life Can't be Severed from the Cause of Freedom – *Representative Paul Ryan*
- Free Exchange: Morality and Economic Freedom – *Jim Daly with Glenn T. Stanton*
- Marriage: The Limited-Government Case for Marriage – *Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D.*
- Profit: Prophets and Profit – *Marvin Olasky, Ph.D.*
- Family: Washington's War on the Family and Free Enterprise – *Stephen Moore*
- Wages: The Value of Wages – *Bishop Harry R. Jackson, Jr.*
- Religion: Why Faith Is a Good Investment – *Arthur Brooks, Ph.D., and Robin Currie*
- International Trade: Why Trade Works for Family, Community, and Sovereignty – *Ramesh Ponnuru*
- Culture: A Culture of Responsibility – *Edwin J. Feulner, Ph.D.*
- Property: Property and the Pursuit of Happiness – *Representative Michele Bachmann*
- Environment: Conserving Creation – *Tony Perkins*
- Education: A Unified Vision for Education Choice – *Randy Hicks*

Seeing the names of people paired with these topics just blows my mind. It would be as though William Lane Craig were suddenly to write a book defending free market capitalism or the war on Islamic terrorism. It's just WEIRD. And you'll notice that many of the Wintery Knight's favorite people are in there; Paul Ryan, Michele Bachmann, Jennifer Roback Morse. I also like Stephen Moore's writing a lot.

The entire book is available for free as a PDF download, or you can order it from the Heritage Foundation. I ordered 10 copies of everything at the store, because I wanted a bunch to give away to all my friends. I think this is the perfect gift to give someone who doesn't see the relevance of public policy to Christianity, marriage and parenting. There is no such thing as an informed Christian who is fiscally liberally or socially liberal.

Oh, and by the way: Ryan/Bachmann 2012 for the win!

How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship

March 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Most of you know that what I do for a living is software engineering. I have dual degrees in computer science, and my Masters was focused on software design. So I always approach these relationship problems from an engineering perspective.

I think that at the beginning of any software development project, the most important thing to do is to talk to the customer and to decide what the software is supposed to do. The customer for the relationship is God. He is the one who will be deciding if the relationship is any good or not. My impression of God is that he has lots of requirements for marriage. First, each person in the marriage should have a relationship with Jesus. Second, each person in the relationship should treat one another in a special way. Third, the marriage itself should accomplish certain things in the world.

The requirement that each person have a relationship with Jesus prior to and during the marriage is important, because it is out of this relationship that the people first relate to each other, then to the children, then to their extended families, and then to the world.

I think that it's the man's job to take these goals from the customer (God) and to derive a set of requirements for the woman, so that he can communicate his understanding of these goals to her and the relationship can move along more efficiently and effectively. (Obviously these things apply in the reverse as well, but I am writing from the man's point of view for this entire post, to emphasize the man's role in leading the relationship)

Here are a few of my requirements just for illustration. Other men will have different requirements, depending on their plan.

- understands how capitalism relates to marriage/parenting, e.g. – school choice
- understands how men function as husbands and fathers
- understands how marriages work and why they succeed or fail
- can defend belief in Christian theism with arguments and evidence
- can defend socially conservative positions on abortion and marriage, etc.
- can answer objections to Christian theism like evil and religious pluralism
- can stand her ground in the face of incoming criticism and disagreement
- can shepherd the children through schools and on to graduate degrees

I think that in general, relationships are about the man measuring a woman for marriage/parenting requirements based on *current performance* and *future potential*. I think the worst thing for women is to not know where the relationship is going. It would help her if the man can communicate his requirements to her. If she is interested in the man, then she can show him what she can do *now*, and what she is interested in learning about so that she can build up her capabilities for *later*. The requirements are tailored to the man's specific plan for the marriage.

For example, take the requirement to understand how fiscal conservatism enables liberty. Suppose you meet a woman who is a Christian, but has socialist views. You are concerned that she will vote to tax away the family's money for wasteful government programs. Instead of just glossing over these problems and leading her on because she is pretty, you need to tell her right away where you think she is wrong. I like to give women something to read so that they can learn on their own, then come back and discuss it. That's how you make progress.

And I think this helps to develop a way to resolve conflicts, too. If I disagree with her, then I give her something to read, and then I try to be extra nice and help her with other things to give her time to read. If she is feeling hurt from a previous bad experience, then I will have to address that, too. The goal is to build her up to be a solid wife and mother. If she is not willing to read anything to grow, then that is important for me to know right away. I think that a man needs to prefer a woman who is open-minded and interested in learning on her own and forming *true beliefs* about the world.

Now what does this buy the woman? Well, if you gloss over requirements, and only talk about surface things, (e.g. – her appearance), during the courtship, then she knows that there will come a time when you won't like her any more, because beauty fades! What you are really saying to her when you talk about her appearance is that this is what is most important to you. But how can any woman be as pretty as she was in her youth as time passes? She can never feel safe if the standard is beauty. She knows that this relationship is unstable and has no future.

Instead, I try to give women control of the relationship by giving them a choice. I give her a few small things to do that are related to marriage and parenting. This would include apologetics, theology, economics, etc. What does that say to her? It says to her that she is in control of the relationship, and that I need her. All she has to do to keep me from leaving is to keep trying to learn about marriage and parenting, and to keep trying to work at marriage and parenting as well as she can. And stating those things up front attracts the right kind of woman anyway – the kind that wants to *help*.

What you are really doing in the courtship is communicating to her what really matters to you about her. If you hand her books to read about why divorce harms children, then she understands that you want children, but you don't want a divorce. And she understands that you are going to exclude other women who don't want children, and who do not understand what divorce does to children. That's the kind of thing that indicates to her that you have a long-term relationship plan, so that she knows that you will still like her more than other women, even after her beauty fades.

I also found that it helps women to have a sense of security when she knows what the man considers to be a deal-breaker. I like to clearly set out for her what I do not want in a relationship. What I'm trying to do is avoid the situation where she cannot feel secure because she doesn't know what makes her different and special. I like to tell her what it is that makes her different and special, with specific details. And I also want to build her confidence by building up her capabilities for marriage and parenting. So she *knows* that

she is valuable and irreplaceable.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

MUST-READ: Doug Groothuis explains how science confirms the beginning of the universe

March 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Post is here on the Constructive Curmudgeon.

No excerpt is possible, you must read the whole post.

Evidences cited for the origin of the universe (the Big Bang):

- Einstein's theory of general relativity (and experimental confirmation of the theory)
- Hubble's observations of red-shifted light from distant galaxies
- Measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Confirmed predictions of light element abundances (H and He abundances)
- The second law of thermodynamics

When you present the kalam argument, you should present it exactly the way Doug does here. You should hang the entire argument on the progress of science. Once upon a time before science, there was ignorance. But now we know better, thanks to the progress of science. Science disproved atheism. Five times over.

Federal conservatives in Canada aim to cut spending and waste from budget

March 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

Article from the National Post.

Excerpt:

> The Conservative government sketched out on Thursday its initial plans to return to budget balance, by targeting cuts in the public service, a freeze on foreign aid, limited growth in military spending and higher EI premiums.
>
> The spending restraint, outlined in its 2010 budget, would net $17.6-billion in savings over five years and bring the deficit down from a high of $53.8-billion this fiscal year, ending March 31, to a low of $1.8-billion by 2015.
>
> Before the cuts kick in, however, the Conservative government said it was committed to spend $19-billion as part of year two of the two-year $47-billion stimulus package aimed at resuscitating the economy after the global financial crisis.
>
> The 451-page budget sets out how the Conservatives plan to meet all its goals — of creating jobs and bolstering Canada's long-term competitiveness, while at the same time returning to surplus without tax increases, nor cuts to transfers to provinces and individuals. The government also said it would go through with cuts to corporate income taxes, from 19% to 15% by 2012, despite calls from opposition politicians to cancel them and use the money to help seniors and the poor.
>
> "We are building Canada's reputation as an investment-friendly country," Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said in his budget speech. "A country committed to free and open trade, unburdened by massive debts and [the] higher taxes of our

> competitors.”
>
> […]Even though Canada’s economy is recovering at a rather robust clip of late — 5% growth was recorded in the final quarter of 2009 — Mr. Flaherty said following through with more stimuli is the right thing to do as the global recovery is in its nascent stages.
>
> Measures linked with the stimulus plan will expire as of March next year, and with it comes a plan to return to budget balance.

It’s like their entire country is being run by grown-ups! Why can’t we have that here?

Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water

March 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the UK Telegraph. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A hospital patient, Kane Gorny, died of dehydration after becoming so desperate for a drink of water that he called police for help.
>
> The 22-year-old was not given vital medication after an operation at St George's Hospital in Tooting, south London, according to his mother.
>
> A coroner has such grave concerns about the case that it has been referred to police who are investigating Mr Gorny's care.
>
> […]His mother, Rita Cronin, says he needed drugs three times a day to regulate his hormones, but he was not given them by hospital staff.
>
> She said he became very dehydrated but his requests for water were refused and nurses called in security guards to restrain him when he became angry.
>
> He became so frustrated that he rang the police from his bed to demand their help but officers were assured Mr Gorny was fine.
>
> She said nurses assumed he was just badly behaved.
>
> Mr Gorny's cause of death was determined to be dehydration.

The UK Daily Mail adds:

> Miss Cronin… said: 'The police told me he'd said, "Please help me. All I want is a drink and no one is helping me".
>
> […]'I told three nurses there was something wrong with my son and they said, "He's fine" and walked off. I started to cry and a locum doctor who was there told me not to worry.
>
> […]His mother added: 'When I went back to the hospital I was told that all the nurses had been offered counselling as they were so traumatised, but nothing was offered to me.
>
> 'The whole thing is a disgrace. This hospital has a brilliant reputation and boasts of its excellent standards and safety record.
>
> 'But as soon as my son walked into that ward, his death warrant was signed. Of the 32 people who were involved in my son's care, every one made a mistake that ultimately led to his death, from the consultant to the care assistant.
>
> 'There has been an internal investigation but St George's never made it public and it was a whitewash-After his death the hospital never phoned me or wrote to me to apologise. How could this happen in the 21st century?'

When you buy something from someone, you stand a much better chance of getting quality service from them if you have the money in *your* hand and you can take that money *somewhere else* if you are not satisfied with the offer in front of you. That's why free market capitalism is great for the consumer, but it sucks for the corporations. The corporations have to compete to give you what you want at the lowest price. But when government takes over a service, you have no choice. It's a monopoly, and you dance to *their* tune. They get paid through tax money whether they give you what you want or not!

Related posts

- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care
- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care
- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- UK National Health Service refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

State legislatures aim to pass bills to guarantee academic freedom

March 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> The recent front page *New York Times* article on academic freedom legislation offers a stark reminder that the intelligentsia is very worried about the prospect of teachers gaining academic freedom, as a bill presently in the Kentucky legislature would allow, "to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review scientific theories in an objective manner, including but not limited to the study of evolution, the origins of life, global warming, and human cloning."
>
> From 2008-2009, 12 academic freedom bills were submitted into state legislatures, including Florida, Alabama (2), South Carolina (2), Missouri (2), Michigan, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Iowa, and New Mexico. Now in 2010, there are 3 bills already, including bills in Kentucky, Missouri, and Mississippi.

Here are a couple of examples:

> The Kentucky bill encourages teachers to "promote critical thinking skills, logical analysis, and open and objective discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of scientific theories being studied."
>
> The Missouri bill allows teachers "to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses of the theory of biological and hypotheses of chemical evolution."

Details on the language used in each bill is provided in the post.

Abortion specifically mentioned in health care reform bill

March 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video here: (H/T Ace of Spades via ECM)

And ECM also sends word of this story from Politico.

Excerpt:

> Rep. Eric Massa (D-N.Y.) says the House ethics committee is investigating him for inappropriate comments he made to a male staffer on New Year's Eve — and that he's the victim of a power play by Democratic leaders who want him out of Congress because he's a "no" vote on health care reform.
>
> "Mine is now the deciding vote on the health care bill," Massa, who on Friday announced his intention to resign, said during a long monologue on radio station WKPQ. "And this administration and this House leadership have said, quote-unquote, they will stop at nothing to pass this health care bill. And now they've gotten rid of me, and it will pass. You connect the dots."

Scary.

ACORN registration workers charged with felony voter fraud

March 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> Five Wisconsin residents, including two who worked for community organizing group ACORN, were charged Monday with election fraud relating to the 2008 presidential election.
>
> State Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen announced felony charges against Maria Miles, Kevin Clancy, Michael Henderson, Herbert Gunka and Suzanne Gunka.
>
> Miles and Clancy worked for the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now and are accused of submitting multiple voter registration applications for the same individuals, including each other, to meet voter registration quotes imposed by the community organizing group.
>
> Henderson is charged with one count of voting by a disqualified person and providing false information to election officials. The allegation claims he was on a felony probation and prohibited from voting at the time.
>
> Herbert and Suzanne Gunka are each charged with double voting — a felony — by allegedly absentee voting and then going to the polls to vote.

Michele Bachmann catalogs some more, as she struggles to block federal funding of ACORN:

Stanley Kurtz at National Review wrote the definitive article on Obama's connections to ACORN.

How green lobbyists shape energy policy in the Obama administration

March 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at the Washington Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> In 2008 and 2009, Mr. Obama told Americans on no fewer than eight occasions to "think about what's happening in countries like Spain [and] Germany" to see his model for successful "green jobs" policies, and what we should expect here.
>
> Some Spanish academics and experts on that country's wind- and solar-energy policies and outcomes took Mr. Obama up on his invitation, revealing Spain's policies to be economic and employment disasters. The political embarrassment to the administration was obvious, with White House spokesman Robert Gibbs asked about the Spanish study at a press conference, and the president hurriedly substituted Denmark for Spain in his stump speech.
>
> Team Obama was not amused, and they decided to do something about it. The crew that campaigned on change pulled out the oldest plan in the book – attack the messenger. The U.S. government's response to foreign academics, assessing the impact in their own country of that foreign government's policies, was to come after them in a move that internal e-mails say was unprecedented. They also show it was coordinated with the lobbyists for "Big Wind" and the left-wing Center for American Progress (CAP).
>
> What emerged was an ideological hodgepodge of curious and unsupported claims published under the name of two young non-economist wind advocates. These taxpayer-funded employees offered green dogma in oddly strident terms and, along the way, a senior Obama political appointee may well have misled Congress.
>
> […]What is clear is that the Department of Energy then worked with Center for American Progress and the industry lobby AWEA to produce an attack that would serve all their interests.

First we had ClimateGate, and now we have WindLobbyGate.

A father explains what it is like to grow up fatherless

March 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Post here on the Goranson family blog. (H/T Caffeinated Thoughts)

Excerpt:

> I grew up fatherless. I saw my dad a few times growing up. I knew his name and whereabouts. I spent about two weeks with him in 1991 and he was always very kind to me when we saw each other. I got cards most birthdays and christmases. But he wasn't a part of my life, was never married to my mother, and we lived many states away from each other most of my childhood. It wasn't until I was 17 that I began to get to know my dad and to develop the friendship with him that I am grateful we still have. We are a testimony to genetics and I'm proud to be his son. My mother was young and I was a surprise. I never wondered if she loved me but I also knew she struggled in many ways raising a son by herself.
>
> The path of fatherlessness was a long and painful road shrouded in insecurity for me. It is a path so far off the one God meant for families that I didn't know I was even on it until I had my own kids. I knew it was better to have a mom AND a dad but I didn't understand what I was missing. As I've been reflecting on my role in my own kids' lives, it's proven to be extremely painful for me as I look back on my childhood. So I figured I'd write a bit about it…
>
> What potential in me was lost not having a father and being exposed to men who were perfect losers? What struggles would have been overcome earlier in life or avoided altogether? What could my father and I have learned from each other? How much less equipped am I to be a father and husband having [grown up?] without many positive male role models in my early childhood? How much relational heartache could I have avoided? How many unhealthy situations as a kid would have been avoided? How did the fear and insecurity that plagued my childhood affect me today?

This is a shot in the arm you all you Dads out there who wonder whether anyone understands and appreciates the sacrifices you're making to be a good husband and father. This post made me feel really sad. I'm always pretty emotional when it comes to things like this, but this one really hit me hard. (Especially the "But can you ever truly recover…" paragraph)

I think that people think that I am super-focused on apologetics, but that is only because I don't *know* many people who are dealing with health struggles, family struggles and money struggles. I think that when I take time to read things like this, it helps me to be more alert about taking the opportunity to weep with those who weep. If you have trouble understanding what it is like to be without a father, then read the post and let your heart be informed and softened.

Maybe those of us with intact families should be more interested in opening up our homes to troubled kids to come over and experience life in a healthy family? It seems that being able to observe love in action would really have a big impact.

Switzerland company to manufacture condoms for 12-14 year olds

March 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T Caffeinated Thoughts via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Extra small condoms for boys as young as 12 are going on sale in Switzerland.
>
> Called the Hotshot, the condom has been produced after government research showed 12 to 14-year-olds did not use sufficient protection when having sex.
>
> The study, conducted on behalf of the Federal Commission for Children and Youth, interviewed 1,480 people aged 10 to 20.
>
> It showed more 12 to 14-year-olds were having sex, in comparison with the 1990s.
>
> Nancy Bodmer, who headed the research, said… "The results of this study suggest that early prevention makes sense."
>
> […]Nysse Norballe, a spokesman for the company, said: "At the moment we are only producing the Hotshot in Switzerland. But the UK is certainly a very attractive market since there is a very high rate of underage conception. The UK would definitely be top priority if we marketed abroad."
>
> […]The UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe.
>
> In 1999, the government pledged to halve the teenage conception rate within 10 years.
>
> But data released last week from The Office for National Statistics shows it has clearly failed to make any significant impact.

Maybe the government should commission some research on how premarital sex affects people's ability to form stable, life-long marriages.

MUST-READ: What's the difference between science and scientism?

March 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article by Edward Feser at Public Discourse. (H/T via ECM)

What is scientism?

> *Scientism* is the view that all real knowledge is scientific knowledge—that there is no rational, objective form of inquiry that is not a branch of science. There is at least a whiff of scientism in the thinking of those who dismiss ethical objections to cloning or embryonic stem cell research as inherently "anti-science." There is considerably more than a whiff of it in the work of New Atheist writers like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, who allege that because religion has no scientific foundation (or so they claim) it "therefore" has no rational foundation at all.

What's wrong with scientism?

> Despite its adherents' pose of rationality, scientism has a serious problem: it is either self-refuting or trivial. Take the first horn of this dilemma. The claim that scientism is true is not itself a scientific claim, not something that can be established using scientific methods. Indeed, that science is even *a* rational form of inquiry (let alone *the only* rational form of inquiry) is not something that can be established scientifically. For scientific inquiry itself rests on a number of philosophical assumptions: that there is an objective world external to the minds of scientists; that this world is governed by causal regularities; that the human intellect can uncover and accurately describe these regularities; and so forth. Since science *presupposes* these things, it cannot attempt to *justify* them without arguing in a circle. And if it cannot even establish that it is a reliable form of inquiry, it can hardly establish that it is the *only* reliable form. Both tasks would require "getting outside" science altogether and discovering from that extra-scientific vantage point that science conveys an accurate picture of reality—and in the case of scientism, that *only* science does so.

What else is wrong with scientism?

> The irony is that the very practice of science itself, which involves the formulation of hypotheses, the weighing of evidence, the invention of technical concepts and vocabularies, the construction of chains of reasoning, and so forth—all mental activities saturated with meaning and purpose—falls on the "subjective," "manifest image" side of scientism's divide rather than the "objective," "scientific image" side. Human thought and action, including the thoughts and actions of scientists, is of its nature irreducible to the meaningless,

> purposeless motions of particles and the like. Some thinkers committed to scientism realize this, but conclude that the lesson to draw is not that scientism is mistaken, but that human thought and action are themselves fictions. According to this radical position—known as “eliminative materialism” since it entails eliminating the very concept of the mind altogether instead of trying to reduce mind to matter—what is true of human beings is only what can be put in the technical jargon of physics, chemistry, neuroscience and the like. There is no such thing as “thinking,” “believing,” “desiring,” “meaning,” etc.; there is only the firing of neurons, the secretion of hormones, the twitching of muscles, and other such physiological events.

Scientism can’t even ground our own experience of 1st-person consciousness.

What possible harm can result from premarital sex?

March 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article by a Duke University student that talks about the hook-up phenomenon.

Excerpt:

> Every weekend, girls across Duke's campus wake up sad and confused. The previous night's choices have not left them fulfilled or content. My girlfriends always seem hurt while the guys easily move on to their next fling. Why are the women upset? After all, it was supposed to be just sex-just one of the "responsible social decisions" discussed in The Real Deal. Without an explanation for their emotions, my friends are left feeling used and embarrassed. All I could do is sit with these women while they let painful tears flow.
>
> Our women's center and sexual health groups failed to tell us the whole truth. They may warn of the physical risks of "unsafe sex" but tend to ignore its emotional toll which also has biological roots. Research suggests that a hormone called oxytocin plays a role in the feelings of attachment and trust that women feel for their sexual partners. Female mammals primarily release oxytocin while giving birth and breast feeding and the hormone facilitates mother-child bonding. Oddly enough, the same hormone is also released during sexual contact causing a sense of attachment. In men, oxytocin's effects are neutralized by the release of testosterone.
>
> Did you catch that ladies? There is a biological explanation for the way you feel and the way he doesn't feel.
>
> I had always thought casual sex had different consequences for men and women. Now, based on scientific evidence, I know it does. College women at Duke are suffering emotional pain that's not only avoidable-but, predictable.
>
> Why weren't we told this three years ago?
>
> […]The explanation is a radical feminist agenda that has a foothold in women's health discussions. As Dr. Miriam Grossman, a psychiatrist at UCLA suggests in her book, Unprotected, "I once assumed campus medicine and psychology had one priority: student well-being. I'm no longer so naive. Radical politics pervades my profession, and common sense has vanished." To propose that "safe" sexual experimentation may not be emotionally healthy and may be more dangerous for women than men is not politically correct.

Premarital sex hurts women. But it also hurts men.

It's not like men are going to be happy about transitioning from years of hooking up with no responsibilities to the rigorous demands of a marriage. Premarital sex destroys the ability of women *and men* to bond, because it trains them to *separate out* their emotions from sex. It makes no sense to expose yourself emotionally during sex if you're not

married – you run the risk of being crushed by the pain of separation. Do it enough times, and it becomes extremely difficult to allow sex to bond two people together emotionally.

Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter

March 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story (and pictures) from UK Daily Mail. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> A mother has taken her seven-year-old daughter out of school after she was made to watch a cartoon showing a couple chasing each other around a bed and having sex.
>
> Seven and eight-year-old pupils watched the controversial Channel 4 sex education DVD, Living and Growing, at their village primary school.
>
> A voice-over on the DVD describes the sex as 'exciting'.
>
> Mrs Bullivant said: 'The cartoon was very graphic. My daughter was frightened and children have unfortunately been copying what they have seen. Parents should have been given the decision of whether the video should have been shown or not.

I think that the cause of this push for sex education is feminism. Feminists want women to learn to desire commitment-free sex, (c.f. – the sexual revolution), because they think that women should be identical to men. That is also why feminists support taxpayer-funded contraception and abortion – which reduces the costs and risks of premarital sex. Single-payer health care is also great for lowering the costs of risky sexual behavior by passing them on to taxpayers.

And there are other lessons to be learned from this story for left-of-center "Christians" who think that teachers have the best interests of the children at heart.

- Sex education causes young people to have sex earlier, to get pregnant out-of-wedlock and to abort innocent children
- Having your children or your neighbor's children engage in sex before they are married is not pleasing to Jesus
- The more money is taxed away for public schools, the less each family has for homeschooling and private schools
- Even if YOU can afford homeschooling or private education, your neighbors can't, and their behaviors drive up social costs
- The goal of teacher unions is to outlaw school choice, so that this indoctrination of children becomes unavoidable

You can read about the results of the Labour Party's aggressive push for sex education for young children here: Most children of British mothers born out of wedlock – UK Telegraph.

Here’s an editorial in the UK Daily Mail that agrees with me that sex education is causing the teen pregnancy epidemic. (H/T Betsy at RuthBlog)

Nigerian Muslims hack 500 Christian civilians to death with machetes

March 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Agence France Press. (H/T Gateway Pundit via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Funerals took place for victims of the three-hour orgy of violence on Sunday in three Christian villages close to the northern city of Jos, blamed on members of the mainly Muslim Fulani ethnic group.
>
> While troops were deployed to the villages to prevent new attacks, security forces detained 95 suspects but faced bitter criticism over how the killers were able to go on the rampage at a time when a curfew was meant to be in force.
>
> Media reported that Muslim residents of the villages in Plateau state had been warned by phone text message, two days prior to the attack, so they could make good their escape before the exit points were sealed off.
>
> Survivors said the attackers were able to separate the Fulanis from members of the rival Berom group by chanting 'nagge', the Fulani word for cattle. Those who failed to respond in the same language were hacked to death.
>
> One local paper said the gangs shouted Allah Akhbar (God is Great) before breaking into homes and setting them alight in the early hours of Sunday. Churches were among the buildings that were burned down.

What stops evil people from attacking other people who are weak and unarmed? My view is that the best way to stop evil people from intentionally targeting civilians with violence is by making it clear to evildoers that they will pay a price for committing evil acts. *Si vis pacem, para bellum*. Peace. Through. Strength.

Did George W. Bush's tax cuts help or hurt the economy?

March 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investor's Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Data from the end of 2001 to the latest recession bear this out. The economy started expanding again in the fourth quarter of 2001 and grew for 25 consecutive quarters. After enactment of the 2003 tax cut, which lowered the marginal effective tax rate on new investment, gross domestic product surged 7.5% in the third quarter, the fastest pace since 1984. And for 26 straight months unemployment stayed below 5%.
>
> The Bush tax cuts also led to increases in tax revenues, and after 2004 the revenues grew faster than the economy. The ratio of tax receipts to GDP rose to 18.8% in 2007, above the 40-year average, and the deficit was just 1.2% of GDP.
>
> From 2004 to 2008, capital gains realizations grew by 60%; from 2004 to 2007, corporate tax receipts nearly doubled, adding a full point to the revenues-to-GDP ratio.

The Heritage Foundation reported on research by two Harvard economists who published a research paper on this very topic.

Excerpt:

> …government spending cannot create economic growth. More government spending, whether financed by taxes or borrowing, only takes money from one sector of the economy and transfers it to another. The government creates no new spending power when it redistributes money so it creates no new economic growth.
>
> As the Heritage Foundation has pointed out, a stimulus package that lowered marginal tax rates instead of spending massive amounts of future generation's wealth would actually create jobs and help pull the economy out of the Great Recession. That is because lower marginal tax rates would increase the incentives of people and businesses to work, save and invest – the very ingredients needed to create economic activity.
>
> These findings are backed up by a new study, "Large Changes in Fiscal Policy Taxes Versus Spending," authored by Alberto F. Alesina and Silvia Ardagna – both Harvard economists. Alesina and Ardagna find that:
>
> …tax cuts are more expansionary than spending increases in the cases of fiscal stimulus. Based on these correlations…the current stimulus package in the US is too much tilted in the direction of spending rather than tax cuts.

> In addition to their findings that tax cuts are better at promoting economic growth, Alesina and Ardagna found that spending-based stimuli are actually associated with lower economic growth rates.

The problem is that Democrats like Obama don't *know anything* about economics, and they don't *care.* They know less about economics than my keyboard. In fact that is exactly what being a Democrat means. It means that you know *nothing about economics*, but prefer to create policy based on feelings, rather than facts. Economics is irrelevant – they just want to be loved. It's *narcissism*.

Economics in One Lesson

Perhaps it is time to review Henry Hazlitt's Economics in One Lesson, chapter 4, entitled "Public Works Mean Taxes".

Excerpt:

> Therefore, for every public job created by the bridge project a private job has been destroyed somewhere else. We can see the men employed on the bridge. We can watch them at work. The employment argument of the government spenders becomes vivid, and probably for most people convincing. But there are other things that we do not see, because, alas, they have never been permitted to come into existence. They are the jobs destroyed by the $10 million taken from the taxpayers. All that has happened, at best, is that there has been a *diversion* of jobs because of the project. More bridge builders; fewer automobile workers, television technicians, clothing workers, farmers.

And consider Chapter 5 as well, entitled "Taxes Discourage Production".

> In our modern world there is never the same percentage of income tax levied on everybody. The great burden of income taxes is imposed on a minor percentage of the nation's income; and these income taxes have to be supplemented by taxes of other kinds. These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to become employers at all. Improved machinery and better-equipped factories come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.
>
> There is a similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months

> of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment that they profess to solve.

George W. Bush cut taxes in his first term and created 1 million NEW JOBS. Government spending is a *job killer*. And no amount of charm and teleprompter reading is going to change the laws of economics.

In fact, you can even see it failing today in Japan: Did massive government spending succeed or fail in Japan?

Should parents try to protect their children from all risky behavior?

March 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the National Post. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> A few suggestions for anxious parents who typically hover on the edge of the playground with a first aid kit: Let your child lick a 9-volt battery, just to see what happens. Encourage them to try to drive a nail. And by all means, let them play with fire.
>
> These are among the activities extolled in a new book entitled 50 Dangerous Things (You Should Let Your Children Do), the latest in a growing backlash against hyper-parents who try to insulate their children against every scrape, perceived threat and potential disappointment. Underlying this less-is-more parenting philosophy is a belief that today's bubble-wrapped children are missing out on the way childhood used to be. The Dangerous Book for Boys and The Daring Book for Girls became sensations by teaching the video-game generation such potentially perilous skills as building a snow fort or using a bow and arrow.
>
> […]The book's title is "deliberately provocative," he says, and it is meant as both a guidebook for fretful parents who want to loosen up and a "call to action for over-protected children," with instructions on safe ways to experiment with dangerous things.
>
> "We create a false impression in our minds that children are in peril all the time and everywhere, when in fact, according to the most recent studies, this is the safest time in history for children," he said. "There couldn't be a better time to be running around outside playing."

If I ever got married, I wonder what my wife would think of me encouraging all our children to do dangerous things? I've heard that wives also don't like it when fathers try to get their children to adhere to moral rules, either (because of moral judgments and sanctions, you know). But I think danger and moral rules are good for children, in the long run. I don't want a cowardly moral relativist for a child.

Anybody here have the Dangerous Book for Boys? Or the Daring Book for Girls?

UK introduces hate registry for tracking students aged 5 years and up

March 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Heads will be forced to list children as young as five on school 'hate registers' over everyday playground insults.
>
> Even minor incidents must be recorded as examples of serious bullying and details kept on a database until the pupil leaves secondary school.
>
> Teachers are to be told that even if a primary school child uses homophobic or racist words without knowing their meaning, simply teaching them such words are hurtful and inappropriate is not enough.
>
> Instead the incident has to be recorded and his or her behaviour monitored for future signs of 'hate' bullying.
>
> The accusations will also be recorded in databases held by councils and made available to Whitehall and ministers to help them devise future anti-bullying campaigns.
>
> […]Many schools nationwide have already followed advice that they should record incidents of alleged racist, homophobic or anti-disability bullying.
>
> One report last year by the Manifesto Club civil liberties think-tank said that 40,000 children each year are having racist charges added to their school records.
>
> But ministers aim to make reporting of supposed 'hate taunting' a legal requirement for every school, primary as well as secondary, and every local authority across the country from the beginning of the new school year in September.
>
> Incidents considered serious will have to be reported to local authorities. Children's Secretary Ed Balls is set to introduce rules that, officials said, 'will mean that schools will have to record and report serious or recurring incidents of bullying to their local authority.

I don't think that it's the government's job to monitor and regulate playground interactions.

Denyse O'Leary asks whether religion has an evolutionary origin

March 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In her latest column at Salvo magazine. (H/T The Post-Darwinist)

Excerpt:

> Did you know that: Religion is good for you; also, Religion is bad for you; also, Religion makes no difference; also, Religion can be explained by a God gene, or a meme, or part of the brain . . . or whatever the editor of your local paper's "Relationships" section will buy for this weekend's edition?
>
> You didn't know any of those things? Aw, no surprise. But never fear: One outreach of the new atheist movement, currently making its way around the lecture rooms of the nation, is the academic attempt to account for religious belief, and to do so on any basis whatsoever, except one.
>
> We will get to that forbidden one in a moment. First, let's look at the permitted ones.

She looks at the four "official" reasons why religion evolved, then explains the forbidden reason: that religion (true religion) is based on God's revelation to mankind, as documented in the Bible.

Denyse is right up there on the Wintery Knight pedestal, along with Michele Bachmann, Marsha Blackburn and Jennifer Roback Morse. It's a big pedestal.

How and why to include Jesus in your relationships with others

March 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was thinking recently about a number of platonic relationships that I had with women in the past, and I wanted to talk about something I learned in the school of soft knocks trying to be a Christian knight. (Note: this applies 100% in the opposite direction, though, and maybe even 200%, for women who are trying to choose men to relate to).

Basically, when I think about opposite-sex relationships, I think that it is very important to me that I be liked for the right reason. I do not want to be liked because I make her feel happy apart from God. I do not want to be liked because I help her to succeed apart from knowing God. I want to be liked for one reason and one reason only. I want to be liked because I am recognized as important for helping her to know God and to love God.

It's not my job to help a woman to be happy apart from God or to help her to succeed apart from God in this world, based on worldly criteria. I am not interested in building sand castles in the here and now, even if society approves of those sand castles here and now. It's not my job to help her to prove to herself (and to others) that she is a "good person" apart from Christ. No one can be good enough apart from Christ.

It's not my job to help people to feel good about rejecting God. I should not expend my time or resources to comfort someone who is rejecting God. It's *disrespectful to God* for that person to invent a new moral standard to follow for their own ends (self-esteem and respect from others), apart from a relationship with God. I can't help a person who doesn't want God in the way they really need to be helped.

What you find with some people is that they are very interested in glamorous causes like environmentalism and animal rights, but very dismissive about things like avoiding premarital sex and not killing unborn children. They want to feel good about themselves and to receive the esteem of others, but not in their personal lives. Think of how Bill Clinton committed adultery and how he insisted that his generosity to the poor (paid for by other people's taxes!) made him a good person in spite of his adultery.

There are a lot of people in the world who do put God at the center and who need support. And it's my job to make sure that when I choose a woman to work on, that I choose one of these women who gets her idea of "the good life" from her relationship with God through Christ. I want to be able to help someone who really cares about God. And if a person doesn't want to look into these things, I can't make them, even if I care about them.

What I have found is that there are women out there who are interested in learning more about God and in conforming their actions to what they find out about him. They read the Bible, they read theology, they read apologetics, and they are interested in assessing the evidence to confirm what they read about. They are not trying to be happy or popular, they are trying to know God and to be related to him. And those are the women that I

should support.

For those who are feeling broken from having chosen a non-Christian person to invest in, I have some advice. Always remember that the person who rejected you has also rejected Jesus. You're not better than Jesus. If a person doesn't want to acknowledge Jesus and to follow him, then they sure aren't going to acknowledge you when you try to get them to follow him. God has other ways to help that person if he wants to reach out to them. You're not the only person he can send. If you've failed, move on to someone who welcomes you.

I always try to choose the person who has the most interest in knowing God in Christ and growing her closer to God. I know it's hard to leave a person who you really love and have invested time in, but if they steadfastly refuse to let you even talk about God then my recommendation is that you move on to someone who will. Don't leave God out, because relationships aren't about just you.

Further study

I recommend reading this article by Dr. Michael Murray about the hiddenness of God. God gives people free will to either respond to him or to reject him. And we need to do the same – let people who don't want us reject us, too. Let them go. Don't think about them any more. God will go after that person some other way when that person is ready. In the meantime, choose someone to work on who wants God now, so you can have a real impact now.

Friday night links: the origin of evil, spirituality vs. theology

March 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The origin of evil, from Wes at Reason to Stand.

Excerpt:

> There is a big difference between 1a) God choosing to actualize (or create) a world where in evil is possible and 1b) further choosing to sustain it's order in spite of the free choice to sin and perform evil by free (in a limited capacity) causal agents and 2) God's being the direct cause of all that happens in the world such that all things that happen do so as a direct result of his will.

Religion and spirituality, from Alisha at Far Above Rubies.

Excerpt:

> I understand the folks who don't want to be called "religious" since it often has negative connotations tied to the word. Others, though, are "spiritual" simply because they don't want to commit to any one faith tradition. They want it all. The problem with this I've found, is to everything in practice becomes very little, if nothing. I once dated a guy in college who I labeled a "Christian-Muslim-Buddhist-Everything". Although he was raised Baptist, he had fallen away from any church, and chose to cherry-pick through what he deemed the best of them all. And the strange thing is, although he thought Jesus was awesome, he never actually read the Gospels. He respected the Koran, but never attended a mosque or read more than a few Hadiths. While trying to claim it all, he did nothing and believed very little. Needless to say, the relationship fizzled out pretty quickly.

Happy Friday!

Fine, if you want to read something funny, then Drew has this post (with original drawings) from his younger brother.

How euthanasia eroded medical ethics in the Netherlands

March 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Joe Carter writing in First Things. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Intro:

> For centuries, the Hippocratic Oath, including the admonition against abortion, assisted suicide, and euthanasia, formed the core of Western medical ethics. While the Hippocratic ideal has been eroding for decades, the most direct challenge has emerged in the Netherlands, with the cultural and legal acceptance of the right to die. The medical community and broader citizenry have so embraced the right to choose death for oneself that the Dutch parliament is currently considering legislation that would allow assisted suicide for anyone who has reached the age of seventy and has merely grown tired of living.

Excerpt:

> The Royal Dutch Medical Association has since called for increased reporting to bolster public trust in euthanasia laws. But enthusiasm for following these procedures and standards remains muted, since doctors know that no penalties will be incurred by simply ignoring the law. Prosecutions for guideline violations are exceedingly rare and no doctor has ever been imprisoned or substantially penalized for noncompliance. Even when the government is made aware of cases of non-voluntary euthanasia, no legal action is likely to be taken.
>
> The Dutch have even expanded the scope of protected physician killing to include children. With their parent's permission, a child between the ages of 12 to 16 years old may request and receive assisted suicide. Initially, minors could obtain an assisted death even if their parents objected, but after domestic and international criticism, the law was changed to require parental consent.
>
> […]As reported in one Dutch documentary, a young woman in remission from anorexia was concerned that her eating disorder would return. To prevent a relapse, she asked her doctor to kill her. He willingly complied with her request.
>
> […]Over a period of forty years, the Dutch have continued the search for where to draw the line with euthanasia, shifting from acceptance of voluntary euthanasia for the terminally ill, to voluntary euthanasia for the chronically ill, to non-voluntary euthanasia for the sick and disabled, to euthanasia for those who are not sick at all but are merely "suffering through living." While the initial impetus may have been spurred by a desire to give expanded rights to the person who faces extreme suffering or imminent death, the effect has been to concentrate power into the hands of state-sponsored medical professionals. And

> while the justification for assisted death is usually the supposed well being of the suffering patient, the Dutch have redefined natural dependency into an unacceptable or unwanted social burden.

This is another concern I have about single-payer health care. The way the system works is that people have taxes deducted automatically from their pay checks when they are working. And when they get older, and stop working, they have to ask for treatment from a supplier that has no incentive to provide treatment or care, since they are no longer socially useful because they can't pay taxes. Instead of doctors thinking that they have to treat a paying customer, the doctors think that they have to avoid wasting "society's" money on people who are too old to pay into the system.

So if you don't pay into the system, and the system needs money to treat those who are still paying, then why would they treat you? You have no value to society unless you are making money.

There was a good article on socialized medicine and euthanasia by Richard Miniter in the Wall Street Journal a few years back that explains my concerns more.

To deal with his point about doctors changing to view their purpose as ending suffering instead of getting people well, I think that this is scary because it shows how far we have come with our hedonism. My concern is that people are viewing the purpose of life as hedonism.

People want to have happy feelings all the time, and they don't want to be burdened with the needs of anyone else. There's no longer any moral dimension to life that makes taking care of others worthwhile. No one sees the experience of self-sacrificial love for others as an opportunity to imitate Christ.

UPDATE:

More horror. Patients in the Netherlands are suing to require that sexual gratification be part of the "medical services" that nurses should perform. I can't even begin to express my revulsion at this story about health care in the Netherlands. Women were not made to be treated like this, they're made to love and to be loved. I'm so scared of the future. It's things like this that put me off of wanting to pursue marriage and children. What kind of world will my children grow up in? What will the government force them to do that will destroy their willingness and ability to follow Jesus? I can't re-make the whole world.

MUST-SEE: Video of Michele Bachmann defending unborn children

March 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video here:

She speaks about the morality *and* the fiscal issues caused by the demographic crisis. She even talks about how abortion hurts women and gives some free market ideas about how women who choose not to abort can be supported.

Homeschooling and vertical socialization

March 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post on homeschooling from Caffeinated Thoughts. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> When people ask about socialization they are usually wondering about "horizontal socialization." How much time are your kids interacting with children of their own age. It is like some think that we cage our kids up and never let them be around other children.
>
> If you wonder about this type of socialization, let me ask you a question…
>
> If you stick a 6th grade boy with a bunch of 6th graders what is he going to learn to become? Who will he be best equipped to interact with?
>
> He will learn to be a "better 6th grader." He'll be comfortable interacting with kids his own age. How does that prepare him for life? When else in life will he ever be faced with the same type of homogeneous age groupings?
>
> Never.
>
> You see my kids are socialized – "vertical socialization." My wife and I are the primary influencers, not their peer group. Does anybody want to dispute that as not being a good thing? You see my kids, and other homeschoolers don't mold to the groupthink that says, "adults in general and parents in particular aren't cool to talk to."
>
> Most homeschoolers naturally can carry on conversations with adults and are comfortable doing so. I've gotten positive feedback from numerous adults about how my kids interact with them (as well as their behavior). I've noticed that with other homeschooled children as well, you can easily carry on a conversation with them. Why?
>
> Because they are spending a lot of time with parents, other adults, older children, and younger children. They are rarely in social settings where it is entirely kids of their own age. I think this is a good thing, that's life! The homogenous age groupings you see in schools (which usually gets reinforced in church) isn't real life, and does little to prepare a kid for the real world.

I wish that somehow parents were able to opt out of the public school system and get a voucher so that parents could use that money to purchase whatever education they think is a appropriate for their children, including homeschooling. I think that getting kids into the habit of interacting with adults is a good thing.

The Wintery Knight’s greatest fears about the future

March 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was asked recently to explain some of the big fears I have about the future, and I wrote a horrible paranoid screed that probably has scared her away from me for good. So, I thought I would re-write it in a more organized and sensible way.

So, I basically don’t have too many fears about the future as a single guy. I have economic fears about the future, but since I’m a good saver and having been saving all these years, I’m not worried about taking care of me because I’ve got the money to do that. And I don’t think things will get too bad before I die. Basically my fears for myself alone are because young people are being neglected by their working parents, and indoctrinated in the public schools.

Things that public schools teach:

- taught Darwinism
- taught sex education
- taught that capitalism is evil
- taught global warming alarmism
- taught anti-Christian views
- taught religious pluralism
- taught moral relativism
- taught postmodernism/skepticism
- taught that Western civilization is evil
- taught that America is evil
- taught that war is never justified
- taught that traditional marriage is wrong

…not to mention all things they don’t learn that put Christianity, America, capitalism, business, marriage and Western civilization in a positive light. I worry about how they will act and vote and demand entitlements from government to “equalize” their life outcomes after they make self-destructive decisions based on what they learned in school. And many of them are growing up without fathers which brings a whole host of other problems. But I am not too worried about this because I can always pick up and move somewhere else if things get really bad here.

But these fears pale in comparison to my fears about what might happen if I took on marriage and parenting. That’s when things could really go downhill fast, and all the chastity and money in the world won’t save me.

Below I’ll summarize some of the biggest problems:

- The biggest fear I have about marriage is that my wife will be pressured to abandon the idea that *marriage and parenting is about self-sacrificial love of her husband and children in order to please God*. That could mean ignoring or not meeting my needs

as a man for things like sex and approval. It could also mean just giving up on the children and refusing to protect their worldviews from the outside world, e.g. – the public schools, Hollywood, etc. Maybe she will just become totally disinterested in the threats posed to the children by these enemies? Or undermine my efforts to teach the children theology, apologetics and morality?

- I am also concerned about increasing encroachment by the state into the education of children. I hear stories about homeschooling being outlawed, about parents not being able to opt children out of anti-Christian educational programs, about children as young as five being put on hate registries for being politically incorrect, and homeschooled children being placed in government-run schools for believing that Christianity is true. My fear is that this trend could get worse to the point where children are seized by the government because they are being taught Biblical Christianity in the home.
- What if government spends so much money that they end up increasing inflation and raising taxes such that my wife has to go to work, or that I lose my job due to economic decline? Without money, it is almost impossible for us to protect the children from all of the anti-Christian influences we would face. If we took government money or relied on government services (e.g. – health care) then we might even have to comply with government regulations and conditions that would be antithetical to our plans.
- I am also afraid that I will be charged by something like the Canadian Human Rights Commissions for expressing traditional Christian views in public. In Canada, there is no such thing as free speech. If you cause someone to feel badly with your speech, you will be placed on trial for several years, pay about $100,000 in legal fees, and then you will be convicted, forced to apologize, force to deny your Christian faith in public, and prohibited from speaking freely in any public forum including on web sites or e-mail.
- I am concerned that government programs that push feminism, no-fault divorce and generally paint men as irresponsible and aggressive could turn my wife against me and cause her to divorce me for the money. I read a lot about divorce courts, fake charges of domestic violence, etc. And I think there is a concerted effort to paint men as being unreliable, aggressive and harmful to children. What if my wife began to believe all of these myths and felt that she could do a better job parenting the children without me? The children would be harmed, I would be penniless and I might never see my children again.
- Finally, I am worried that she will become less tolerant about my desires to be romantic and chivalrous and just sort of check out of the marriage emotionally. That she will not give me things to do, or dragons to slay, trophies to collect, etc. That she won’t speak to me for long periods of time, or write to me, spend time alone with me. I worry that she will instead become interested in her own interests and

causes and forget that I need a romantic relationship with her! I'll die if I can't express myself romantically.

So I hope this explains to all a little bit about why I am skeptical about marriage, even if I met a perfect person to marry. I would like to see a lot more work being done by the church to focus on things like fiscal conservatism, small government and politics. As it stands, I am not hearing very much that is re-assuring me that potential Christian wives are as aware about these issues as I am, or that they are prepared to fight them.

When I talk to Christian women, they are usually not aware of any of these concerns, and in fact are quite secular and leftist in their voting. This is very disconcerting to me because it seems like they are not applying their state Christian beliefs to their future plans for marriage and parenting. Instead, they are happily voting for bigger and bigger government and they are oblivious to how this undermines Christian marriage and family.

When I ask them what they have read about these issues, they are usually reading Christian self-help books, devotional literature, theology-lite (Phillip Yancey), emergent church, social justice stuff from the religious left, sensational Dan Brown fiction that undermines the Bible's authority and makes women appear to be the victims or men, or end-times fiction. Many read things like "Blue Like Jazz" or other mystical craziness. Are there any women out there who read Thomas Sowell and Wayne Grudem and William Lane Craig and Stephen C. Meyer and Craig Evans and Stephen Baskerville and Jennifer Roback Morse? Or even Lee Strobel and C.S. Lewis, for starters?

I think some of these problems might go away if I married someone with the foreign policy views of Marsha Blackburn, the fiscal conservatism of Michele Bachmann, and the social conservatism of Jennifer Roback Morse. But one woman cannot remake the whole world. One woman can't get taxes lowered, secure school choice, protect religious liberty, and get the government out of the marriage and away from the children.

And it's not just that there are problems today – it's tomorrow, too. I am quite surprised at how passionately young people advocate for ideas that undermine their own liberty, prosperity and security. The very things needed to make Christian marriage and Christian parenting *work.* Can one woman fix the irrationality of the young people who are voting today? I don't think that one woman can fix everything.

Well, Michele Bachmann can fix everything if we would just vote her in as President, like I want. If we put Michele in charge of the world, then I'll get married.

Related posts

- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- What is the meaning of white roses?
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- The Wintery Knight's greatest fears about the future
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex

- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven’t got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper’s questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man’s decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

New poll finds Canadians becoming more conservative and libertarian

March 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada
Story here in the Globe and Mail.

Excerpt:

> A survey by Allan Gregg of Harris-Decima and Carleton University's Professor André Turcotte concludes that while a majority of Canadians identify with the "centre" position on the political ideology scale, this centre is increasingly embracing "traditionally conservative values."
>
> The poll says a plurality – or 47 per cent – of those respondents who consider themselves political "centrists" voted for the Conservatives in 2008. By comparison, back in 1997, 41 per cent of those self-identified as centrists voted Liberal.
>
> "What is most surprising about these results is how mainstream conservative the political centre has become," Mr. Turcotte said.
>
> The survey found a majority of Canadians strongly agreed with traditionally conservative value statements on the morality of abortion, the definition of marriage as "between a man and a woman" and the supremacy of the family.

And:

> Separately, the polling identified significant support for Tory government's handling of issues like the long-gun registry and global warming.
>
> The poll says six in 10 respondents back the Harper government's decision to abolish the long-gun registry. It found half of respondents back the Tory go-slow approach to fighting climate change. And six in 10 said the Conservative

> government is doing “just enough” to deal with the economic recession.
>
> Mr. Turcotte said Canadians also appear to be losing confidence in government ability’s to use social engineering to fix economic inequality in Canada.
>
> Only 31 per cent of respondents felt government action is the best way to solve economic problems.

You can read a nice comparison of the US and Canadian economies from the libertarian Cato Institute.

I know I have a fair number of Canadian readers, especially the regular ones from Winkler, Morden, Coquitlam and Calgary (yes, I saw you all in the live traffic feed – why don’t you e-mail me ever? I’m not going bite you!). Please leave me a comment about where the best place to live is in Canada, in case I ever have to move there at some point *to find a job*.

Is Toyota the victim of persecution by the mainstream media?

March 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> For those who've been setting up the Japanese automaker as the latest symbol of heartless capitalism, it's been a bewildering few days. On Wednesday the media jumped hard for the story of a man who frantically called 911 while his Prius ran away on a San Diego freeway (outstandingly gullible CBS News coverage here). Before long observers had begun poking holes in the story, and colorful details on the man's earlier doings have been emerging all weekend. On Thursday, meanwhile, the *New York Times* — whose news columns had helped set the tone for the panic with accusatory coverage — ran what was actually a surprisingly good op-ed advancing the possibility that most of the Toyota cases will turn out to be the result of . . . driver error.
>
> […]With Audis, and in other acceleration scares affecting GM and other companies, we know that older drivers are not the only group disproportionately likely to be involved in a runaway. Others include drivers who are short in stature, who are unfamiliar with the vehicle (parking-lot attendants, new buyers), and who are taking off from a stopped position or backing up. Publicly available reports do not yet indicate whether the Toyota crashes fit all of these patterns… however… the *L.A. Times* compilation of fatal accidents seems to contain a striking number of drivers who were immigrants.
>
> […]The widely recalled low point of the Audi controversy came when CBS's *60 Minutes* ran a grossly unfair hatchet job on the automaker, complete with a bogus simulation rigged up by an expert witness working with lawyers suing Audi. This time around, it was the turn of ABC's Brian Ross, who used, yes, an expert witness hired by litigators suing Toyota to rig up a supposed simulation of electronic failure. (Toyota promptly showed that you could get the same silly, artificial result by hooking up other automakers' vehicles in the same way.) Matt Hardigree of Jalopnik called the results "ridiculous" and a "hoax," while Gawker — noticing some stealthily falsified footage of tachometer results — headlined its coverage "How ABC News' Brian Ross Staged His Toyota Death Ride" and "ABC News' Toyota Test Fiasco."

My view is that this is being blown out of all proportion like other media-induced scares. Fear sells newspapers.

The worldwide war on baby girls

March 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is from the left-wing magazine The Economist, which is pro-abortion and pro-Obama.

Excerpt:

> Gendercide—to borrow the title of a 1985 book by Mary Anne Warren—is often seen as an unintended consequence of China's one-child policy, or as a product of poverty or ignorance. But that cannot be the whole story. The surplus of bachelors—called in China *guanggun*, or "bare branches"— seems to have accelerated between 1990 and 2005, in ways not obviously linked to the one-child policy, which was introduced in 1979. And, as is becoming clear, the war against baby girls is not confined to China.
>
> Parts of India have sex ratios as skewed as anything in its northern neighbour. Other East Asian countries—South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan—have peculiarly high numbers of male births. So, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, have former communist countries in the Caucasus and the western Balkans. Even subsets of America's population are following suit, though not the population as a whole.
>
> The real cause, argues Nick Eberstadt, a demographer at the American Enterprise Institute, a think-tank in Washington, DC, is not any country's particular policy but "the fateful collision between overweening son preference, the use of rapidly spreading prenatal sex-determination technology and declining fertility." These are global trends. And the selective destruction of baby girls is global, too.
>
> Boys are slightly more likely to die in infancy than girls. To compensate, more boys are born than girls so there will be equal numbers of young men and women at puberty. In all societies that record births, between 103 and 106 boys are normally born for every 100 girls. The ratio has been so stable over time that it appears to be the natural order of things.
>
> That order has changed fundamentally in the past 25 years. In China the sex ratio for the generation born between 1985 and 1989 was 108, already just outside the natural range. For the generation born in 2000-04, it was 124 (ie, 124 boys were born in those years for every 100 girls). According to CASS the ratio today is 123 boys per 100 girls. These rates are biologically impossible without human intervention.
>
> The national averages hide astonishing figures at the provincial level. According to an analysis of Chinese household data carried out in late 2005 and reported in the *British Medical Journal*, only one region, Tibet, has a sex ratio within the bounds of nature. Fourteen provinces—mostly in the east and south—have sex

> ratios at birth of 120 and above, and three have unprecedented levels of more than 130. As CASS says, “the gender imbalance has been growing wider year after year.”

Make no mistake. Pro-choice is *anti-woman.*

Muslim gangs imposing sharia law in British prisons

March 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Telegraph. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Radical Muslim gangs are imposing a form of sharia law inside some of Britain's prisons, a BBC investigation has found.
>
> Non-Muslim inmates at the high-security Long Lartin jail have been forced by the gangs to stop playing "Western" music and take down pictures of women from their cells, according to one former prison officer there. Prisoners at the jail, although allowed to cook their own food, are not allowed to prepare pork for fear of offending the Muslim inmates, the officer said.
>
> The officer, speaking to Radio Five Live's Donal Macintyre show, told how younger prisoners were targeted for forced conversion to Islam by the gangs. "They went along because they were intimidated.
>
> […]One Catholic prisoner who refused to convert was seriously assaulted after being repeatedly threatened by the gang, the officer said.

Now, *as a Christian*, I am asking myself "what good is it to coerce people to become a Christian?" The main thing about Christianity is that a person freely desire to be in a relationship with God. It doesn't work if you use coercion. I'm sure that God could coerce people if he wanted to – he doesn't want to. He wants people to respond to him freely. But I guess that sort of thinking doesn't fit in with Islam, where all kinds of violence is used to force people to convert to Islam.I guess they don't do too well with the love and the evidence, so force is needed.

For example, in this Times of India story, Hindus are raped in order to convert to Islam.

What kinds of predictions does intelligent design make?

March 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Regarding testability, ID makes the following testable predictions:
>
> (1) Natural structures will be found that contain many parts arranged in intricate patterns that perform a specific function (e.g. complex and specified information).
> (2) Forms containing large amounts of novel information will appear in the fossil record suddenly and without similar precursors.
> (3) Convergence will occur routinely. That is, genes and other functional parts will be re-used in different and unrelated organisms.
> (4) Much so-called "junk DNA" will turn out to perform valuable functions.
>
> In this regard, ID is falsifiable. When we test these predictions, ID passes those tests.

And here's some detail on 3), because I've never talked about convergence on the blog:

> Regarding prediction 3, similar parts have been found in organisms that even Darwinists see as separated by more closely related forms that do not contain the similar parts in question. Clear examples include genes controlling eye or limb growth in different organisms whose alleged common ancestors are not thought to have had such forms of eyes or limbs. For details, please see: A Primer on the Tree of Life.

An example would be where humans and octopi have the same kind of eyes, but they don't share a common ancestor. So the designed "evolved" in two places independently. A simpler explanation that something so unlikely is that the two systems have a common designer.

The article lists several scientific areas where ID has explanatory power.

What can we learn about capitalism and socialism from Sweden?

March 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video here. (H/T Big Government via ECM)

New studies on promiscuity at Catholic colleges and cohabitation

March 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, women at Catholic colleges. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Researchers from Mississippi State University looked at a survey of 1,000 college students nationwide and were surprised to find that "women attending colleges and universities affiliated with the Catholic Church are almost four times as likely to have participated in 'hooking up' compared to women at secular schools. A "hook up" is defined as a casual physical encounter with a male student, without the expectation of an ongoing relationship.
>
> […]Overall, the study found clear differences in the sexual activity of Catholic students who attend weekly Mass. Whereas 24 percent of Catholic women who attend Mass weekly have "hooked up" (compared to 38 percent of nonreligious students), the rate more than doubles to 50 percent of Catholic women who attend Mass infrequently — far more than their nonreligious peers.
>
> […]In the same journal issue, Calvin College professor Jonathan Hill reports on his study comparing the experiences of students at Catholic colleges, mainline Protestant colleges, and generally more fervent evangelical colleges. Hill examines student attendance at religious services and finds a marked difference at the more conservative Protestant colleges, where religious convictions are shared and embraced by strong "moral communities."

And then the study on cohabitation. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Dr. Pamela J. Smock, a research professor at the Population Studies Center at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, has published a study in the Journal of Marriage and Family of data gathered on cohabitation in the United States and the implications of cohabitation on relationship stability.
>
> "From the perspective of many young adults, marrying without living together first seems quite foolish," said Prof. Smock. "Just because some academic studies have shown that living together may increase the chance of divorce somewhat, young adults themselves don't believe that."
>
> "Cohabitation is increasingly becoming the first co-residential union formed among young adults," the study said. "As a result of the growing prevalence of cohabitation, the number of children born to unmarried cohabiting parents has also increased."
>
> […]However, the study revealed that, with differences based on race and

> ethnicity taken into account, children born to cohabiting versus married parents have over five times the risk of experiencing their parents' separation, showing an exponential increase in relationship failure for couples currently or ever cohabiting.
>
> […]The study concludes that couples who live together before they get married are less likely to stay married than those who don't move in together until engagement or marriage.

The social costs of irresponsible and immoral choices about sex, marriage and parenting are $112 billion a year in the United States, charged to the taxpayers.

Those who make poor decisions about sex and marriage will often turn to taxpayer-funded social programs as a means of equalizing life outcomes with those who do not make poor decisions about sex and marriage. The net effect is that the frequency of responsible, moral choices about sex and marriage decreases as the benefits decline while the frequency of irresponsible, immoral choices about sex and marriage increases as the costs decline.

It's true that many people can get away with making irresponsible and immoral decisions because they are wealthy and well-educated and can avoid many of the consequences. But what happens when ordinary working people start to take on ideas like hooking up and cohabiting? Does that help them to make ends meet? Does that help their children to succeed? Shouldn't we be encouraging more sexual restraint and stronger marriages instead?

William Lane Craig debates twice in North Carolina next week

March 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First debate is described here.

- Where: Kenan Auditorium at University of North Carolina, Wilmington
- When: Tuesday, March 23, 2010 @ 7 PM
- Who: William Lane Craig vs Herb Silverman
- Topic: Does God Exist?

Second debate is described here.

- Where: McKnight Hall at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- When: Wednesday, March 24, 2010 @ 7 PM
- Who: William Lane Craig vs Michael Tooley
- Topic: Is God Real?

I hope that the guys at Muddling Towards Maturity and Tough Questions Answered will be able to attend these debate and give us a report. Probably Brian Auten will have the audio posted at Apologetics 315 before the final round of applause dies down, too.

Related posts

- Great news! Illustra Media's DVD of Craig/Hitchens debate out in late November
- Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
- William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
- Peter Atkins explains how to easily reconcile the Big Bang and atheism
- Summary of the Craig-Ahmed debate at Cambridge University
- William Lane Craig video and audio from Saddleback Church event
- William Lane Craig takes on prominent atheist Daniel Dennett
- Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
- Four-minute overview of 11 arguments for Christianity by William Lane Craig
- Debate summary: Is God necessary for morality? William Lane Craig vs Shelly Kagan
- Overview of the early, independent sources for the empty tomb
- How to defend the fine-tuning argument just like William Lane Craig
- How to defend the kalam cosmological argument just like William Lane Craig
- Final comments on the William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate

ABC News reports on how adult stem cells produce innovative cures today

March 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great video, and only 3 minutes long. (H/T Laura from Pursuing Holiness)

My previous posts on ASCR

- Round up of articles on adult stem-cell research from FRC
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama's plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

Previous posts on abortion

- MUST-SEE: Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring two great pro-life debaters, Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

Oklahoma considers legislation to reduce divorce rate

March 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

She makes marriage sensible
A podcast with Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- do governments have an interest in preserving marriage? Why?
- when a divorce occurs, what does the government decide for you?
- why preserving marriage helps to preserve your liberty
- how every child has an interest in the stability of their parents' union
- how every child has a right to care from each biological parent
- how justice requires us to care about the needs of vulnerable children
- the government should legislate to protect the rights of children
- how much does a divorce cost the couple?
- how much does a divorce cost taxpayers (i.e. – government services)
- how can government protect marriages
- is mandatory counseling before a divorce a good idea?
- is a mandatory waiting period before a divorce a good idea?
- how can changes to custody rules discourage divorce?
- is fault-based divorce a good idea?
- should fault be considered when splitting up property after a divorce?

For such a short podcast, this really rocks. Every sentence is brilliant.

I have tons of ideas of how the government could prevent divorce and encourage marriage. I would cut off *all* subsidies for failure, and replace them with vouchers for counseling, tax credits for getting married, and tax credits for staying married. I also like covenant marriages. I think I would be way more likely to marry if I could get a covenant marriage. It's a really fun thing to think about, because you want to preserve liberty while still encouraging people to be careful who they marry and how they related to their children. What's your idea to preserve marriage?

Survey of doctors finds 46% would quit practicing if Obamacare passes

March 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The survey was commissioned by the New England Journal of Medicine. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> In a physician survey conducted December 2009 by The Medicus Firm, a national physician search firm, 24.7% of physicians stated that they would "retire early" if a public option is implemented, and an additional 21.0% of respondents stated that they would quit practicing medicine, even though they are nowhere near retirement. This brings the amount of physicians who would leave medicine to a total of 45.7%.
>
> […]Over 50% of physicians who responded predict that a health reform would cause the quality of medical care to deteriorate in America. When asked how health reform could affect the quality of medical care, 40.7% stated it would "decline or worsen somewhat," while another 14.4% stated that the quality of medical care would "decline or worsen dramatically". If a public option is implemented as part of health reform, 64.1% of physicians predict that the quality of medical care in general will decline.

It's hard enough to be a doctor already. Making it harder, and less profitable, just results in fewer doctors. Why don't Democrats understand that people respond to incentives and disincentives?

Massachusetts treasurer says Obamacare could wipe out the economy in 4 years

March 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Business Week. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Massachusetts treasurer said Tuesday that Congress will "threaten to wipe out the American economy within four years" if it adopts a health care overhaul modeled after the Bay State's.
>
> Treasurer Timothy Cahill — a former Democrat running as an independent for governor — said the 2006 law has succeeded only because of huge subsidies and favorable regulatory changes from the federal government.
>
> […]Cahill said he's called for the state to abandon its plan, and for the federal government not to match it.
>
> He also gave reporters a copy of a state ledger sheet showing the state's Medicaid program ballooning from $7.5 billion to a projected $9.2 billion since the health care law was adopted. Of the 407,000 newly insured, only 32 percent paid for insurance wholly on their own.
>
> The remaining received partial or total taxpayer subsidies.
>
> […]Cahill [pointed] out the Obama administration is asking the House and Senate to approve a national plan that includes an "individual mandate," similar to Massachusetts', and an entity designed to match buyers with private health insurance plans.
>
> Cahill said the Massachusetts equivalent, the Health Care Connector, had helped only 5 percent of those who bought private insurance without any type of government assistance.
>
> While the Massachusetts program has increased access to health insurance, he said it hasn't cut underlying cost increases, steering more people to a broken system.
>
> "If President (Barack) Obama and the Democrats repeat the mistake of the health insurance reform adopted here in Massachusetts on a national level, they will threaten to wipe out the American economy within four years," the treasurer said.

Let's learn from the mistakes of others who tried to do what Obama is doing.

Sue Myrick interviews Paul Ryan about his Roadmap for America

March 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I love Sue Myrick! And Paul Ryan is very passionate about these ideas.

Video:

These are the best ideas out there.

I know some of you will want to see him fight, so here he is fighting:

More from CNSNews: Rep. Paul Ryan: Obama's New Budget Will 'Literally Crash the U.S. Economy'

Excerpt:

> Ryan pointed out that the Government Accountability Office recently reported that the federal government already faces a "fiscal gap" of $76 trillion, meaning that over the next 75 years the cost of the benefits promised in federal entitlement programs exceeds the tax revenues expected to pay for those benefits by that amount. That works out to almost $250,000 for every single American and about $650,000 for every American household.
>
> The new debt President Obama plans for the federal government to incur over the next decade would come on top of this existing $76 trillion "fiscal gap."
>
> "All those unfunded liabilities, all that debt I've been telling you about, is before you pass this budget," said Ryan. "That's if we don't pass the budget. If we pass the Obama budget, it just gets worse. He doubles the debt in 5 years and triples it in 10."
>
> The federal government currently divides its total debt into two categories: debt held by the public and debt the government owes to itself because it has borrowed and spent money taken out of the so-called Social Security and Medicare "trust funds."
>
> "Under the President's budget, debt held by the public would grow from $7.5 trillion (53 percent of GDP) at the end of 2009 to $20.3 trillion (90 percent of GDP) at the end of 2020," says the CBO report on Obama's fiscal 2011 budget. "As a result, net interest would more than quadruple between 2010 and 2020 in nominal dollars (without an adjustment for inflation); it would expand from 1.4 percent of GDP in 2010 to 4.1 percent in 2020."

Our children are doomed – unless Obama and Democrats are kicked out in the next election. We're being governed by spoiled little rich kids who have no idea how bills are paid.

MUST-SEE: Courageous Bret Baier takes on Obama in exclusive White House interview

March 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video is here.

The transcript is here.

Excerpt:

BAIER: Mr. President, you said Monday that you praised the Congressional Budget Office numerous times. You also said this, this proposal makes Medicare stronger — and you just said it to me here —

OBAMA: Right.

BAIER: — it makes coverage better, it makes its finances more secure, and anyone who says otherwise is misinformed or is trying to misinform you.

OBAMA: Right.

BAIER: The CBO has said specifically that the $500 billion that you say that you're going to save from Medicare is not being spent in Medicare. That this bill spends it elsewhere outside of Medicare. So you can't have both.

OBAMA: Right.

BAIER: You either spend it on expenditures or you make Medicare more solvent. So which is it?

OBAMA: Here's what it does. On the one hand what you're doing is you're eliminating insurance subsidies within Medicare that aren't making anybody healthier but are fattening the profits of insurance companies. Everybody agrees that that is not a wise way to spend money. Now, most of those savings go right back into helping seniors, for example, closing the donut hole.

When the previous Congress passed the prescription drug bill, what they did was they left a situation which after seniors had spent a certain amount of money, suddenly they got no help and they were stuck with the bill. Now that's a pretty expensive proposition fixing that. It wasn't paid for at the time that that bill was passed. So that money goes back into Medicare, both to fix the donut hole, lower premiums.

All those things are important, but what's also happening is each year we're spending less on Medicare overall and as consequence, that lengthens the trust fund and it's availability for seniors.

BAIER: Your chief actuary for Medicare said this, that cuts in Medicare: "cannot be simultaneously used to finance other federal outlays and extend the trust fund." That's your guy.

OBAMA: No — and what is absolutely true is that this will not solve our whole Medicare problem. We're still going to have to fix Medicare over the long term.

BAIER: But it's $38 trillion in the hole.

OBAMA: Absolutely, and that's the reason that we're going to have to — that's the reason I put forward a fiscal commission based on Republicans and Democratic proposals, to make sure that we have a long-term fix for the system. The key is that this proposal doesn't weaken Medicare, it makes it stronger for seniors currently who are receiving it. It doesn't solve that big structural problem, Bret. Nobody's claiming that this piece of legislation is going to solve every problem that's been there for decades. What it does do is make sure that the trust fund is not going to be going bankrupt in seven years, according to their accounting rules —

BAIER: So you don't buy —

OBAMA: — and in the meantime —

BAIER: — the CBO or the actuary that you can't have it both ways?

OBAMA: No —

BAIER: That you can't spend the money twice?

OBAMA: — no, what is absolutely true and what I do agree with is that you can't say that you are saving on Medicare and then spend the money twice. What you can say is that we are going to take these savings, put them back to make sure that seniors are getting help on the prescription drug bill instead of that money going to, for example, insurance reform, and —

BAIER: And you call this deficit neutral, but you also set aside the doctor fix, more than $200 billion. People look at this and say, how can it be deficit neutral?

OBAMA: But the — as you well know, the doctors problem, as you mentioned, the "doctors fix," is one that has been there four years now. That wasn't of our making, and that has nothing to do with my health care bill. If I was not proposing a health care bill, right — let's assume that I had never proposed health care.

BAIER: But you wanted to change Washington, Mr. President. And now you're doing it the same way.

Talk about facing down the dragon in his own lair. Way to go Bret!

MUST-READ: What worldview emerges from serial hook-up sex?

March 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This blog post was linked from RuthBlog. And I didn't even write it! (H/T RuthBlog)

The article talks about a hypothetical woman who hooks up with a man for premarital sex, presumably after a night of drunken partying, and then feels shame for what she has done. Should she feel ashamed? It depends.

Excerpt:

> If her shame is telling her the truth, a truth that surpasses all social constructs, then she made a mistake.
>
> […]But what if a moral thinker steps forward and declares that she is wrong to feel shame, that her bad feelings simply show the extent to which she has bought into a social construct. Ethics is relative; it serves the power elite. She ought to reject her shame for lying to her and promoting the accepted social construct.
>
> […]Consoling words do not really have much of an effect. Better would be a new group of friends, a new social nexus where everyone will hold her in high esteem for having mastered the art of the hook up, or better, for having fully explored and expressed her sexuality.
>
> Is there such a group? And could this group provide her with a new and revised identity? If being a woman, according to society's standards, makes her feel ashamed of herself, why would she not transform her identity and become… a feminist. Some feminists do not look too kindly on hook ups, but still and all, feminists are not judgmental. They will welcome her into their midst and tell her that she has done nothing wrong.
>
> […]If society disapproves; if her classmates look down on her; that is their problem. They are committing one of the great sins of the therapy culture: they are being judgmental!
>
> Note also that this perspective has absolved the coed of all responsibility for her own behavior. Those who are at fault are the ones who look down on her. Now, the new moral thinking holds them responsible for making her feel bad.

But what about those who continue to hold to standards that consider sex outside of marriage harmful to men, women, children and society as a whole, who must pay the social costs of irresponsible sex?

> …she will proselytize her beliefs. You only ignore other people for so long. Eventually the numbness will start wearing off. Therefore, our coed must work to transform the culture to make it more attuned to her values. She and her group

> will work to affect a cultural revolution, a transformation of cultural values.
>
> All of this implies that if you can change the way the culture sees certain behaviors then you can transform the value of the behavior. But, how do you go about changing the way everyone values behavior?
>
> You have probably guessed already, that this way of making our coed feel better about herself contains what I would call a totalitarian will to control the minds, hearts, and speech of everyone.

Feminism isn't an intellectual framework, it's an emotional-fueled rationalization of sinful behavior. It becomes the problem of taxpayers when it uses government power and social programs to coerce others into celebrating and subsidizing sinful behavior.

(Note: I am not talking about first-wave "equal opportunity" equity feminism, I am talking about *gender feminism* – I'm drawing from Christina Hoff Sommers' book "Who Stole Feminism?" and "The War Against Boys" for my definitions of feminism)

New study shows that greens are less moral than ordinary people

March 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From libertarian John Stossel at ABC News.

Excerpt:

> People who commit their lives to going green are just better people. They're more moral, more honest. At least, they keep telling us that, and apparently many students believe it, say University of Toronto psychologists:
>
> They initially quizzed the students on their impressions of people who buy eco-friendly products, and for the most part, they considered such consumers to be more "more cooperative, altruistic and ethical" than ordinary consumers…
>
> Then the researchers took it an extra step: They ran a test to see who would be more likely to cheat and steal: Greens? Or conventional shoppers?
>
> They divided the greens and conventional shoppers, and then gave the students a test that tempted them to steal money. The researchers found:
>
> The green consumers were more likely to cheat than the conventional purchasers, and they stole more money when asked to withdraw their winnings from envelopes on their desks.
>
> This concept of moral license has been demonstrated before, writes Wray Herbert in his blog for the Association for Psychological Science.
>
> (W)hen they have reason to feel a little superior, that positive self image triggers a sense of moral license. That is, the righteous feel they have some latitude to stray a bit in order to compensate. It's like working in a soup kitchen gives you the right to cheat on your taxes later in the week.
>
> Maybe that's why sanctimonious stewards of the environment like Al Gore are comfortable lecturing the rest of us while living large in mega-mansions.

Beware of those who select an alternative moral standard (global warming, foreign aid, animal rights, veganism, yoga, etc.) that gives them self-esteem and respect from others. I think real morality is the old morality, where people had to restrain themselves in their own personal lives. E.g. – chastity, frugality and sobriety.

Today it seems to be popular to do anything you want with alcohol, consumerism, and sex, as long as you take on some fashionable cause that doesn't involve you having to give up the pursuit of pleasure. But the real measure of a man is the moral law, which does not change. It's moral values like chastity, frugality and sobriety that require you to not hurt those around you.

There are a lot of Hollywood actors and famous/rich people who are apparently terribly concerned (in public) about things like global warming and animal rights. But in private,

they act in the most selfish ways destroying the lives of those around them. Being associated with glamorous causes makes them happy, just like cheating on their spouses makes them happy.

James White debates Adnan Rashid on trustworthiness of the Bible vs Koran

March 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's on Justin Brierley's Unbelievable radio show, from the UK!

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes of debate)

The show starts with introductions by each speaker, then the debate begins.

James White's opening address:

The Bible:

- most Christians have a naive view of how holy books come to us from antiquity
- the Bible and Koran were written and transmitted in two different ways
- the Koran was written down and spread in a controlled way
- the Bible was written in an uncontrolled way
- Christianity was illegal until 313, so early Christians were persecuted
- the Bible had to be copied and spread illegally by individuals
- people risked their lives to copy *pieces* of the text
- the good part of this is that there are *tons* of manuscripts
- the manuscripts are *earlier* than the Church councils that define the Canon
- a persecuted minority would not have been able to conspire to change the text
- there are tons of minor variants from misspellings and typos in the manuscripts

The Koran:

- the Hadith (writings that post-date the Koran) record how the Koran was written
- the authorities worried that many fragments and manuscripts would cause disputes
- the authorities got together and created an approved version to distribute
- all the other Koranic materials (fragments and manuscripts) *were burnt*
- this happened soon after the death of Mohammed
- there are fewer variants with this centralized, top-down approach

Adnan Rashid's opening speech:

The Bible:

- the Bible we have today is not infallible, was not transmitted infallibly
- none of the 4 gospels are written by eyewitnesses
- there are around 400,000 variants in the manuscripts (cites Ehrman)
- the huge number of variants touches on virtually every line of text
- the manuscripts have differences – which manuscript is the inspired one?
- editors are needed to adjudicate between all of the variants (cites Metzger)
- editors have to rely on probabilities in order to choose the text itself

The Koran:

- the text of the Koran was selected by Mohammed's immediate successor
- the purpose of this selection was to unify the Arab tribes on one text
- rejected fragments and manuscripts were burned
- no coercion was used to get the bad manuscripts burned

James White's rebuttal:

- 99% of the variants are technicalities of the Greek language
- only 1500-2000 variants change the meaning of the text
- there are many variants is because there are many manuscripts
- more manuscripts makes it harder for any authority to change the text
- the editors don't hide the variants – that why everyone knows about them
- the photographs of the fragments and manuscripts are available, not burnt

Adnan Rashid's rebuttal:

- we are in the process of photographing our fragments and manuscripts
- what the photographs show is that the Koran has no shocking variants
- Metzger is clear that editors are deciding the text based on probabilities

Crosstalk about Metzger:

- James: editors decide the *main reading* and the rest goes in *footnotes*
- James: Metzger doesn't think that this makes the Bible unreliable
- Adnan: prove it

Crosstalk about the Koran:

- James: The Koran has variants too and manuscript issues
- James: Mohammed appointed Ibn Masoud as the authority on the Koran
- Adnan: actually Mohammed pointed out four authorities, not just one
- Adnan: we don't have manuscript problems or variant problems as bad as yours

Crosstalk about the crucifixion of Jesus:

- James: the crucifixion is denied in Surah 4:157
- James: the Koran is written 600 years after the cruficixion
- James: the Koran is written hundreds of miles from the crucifixion site
- James: non-Christians like Ehrman and Crossan do not deny the crucifixion
- James: for 600 years after, history is unanimous that the crucifixion happened
- Adnan: the gospel of Thomas doesn't mention the crucifixion
- Adnan: Thomas predates Mark and is contemporaneous with Q
- James: Thomas contains NO HISTORY – just sayings of Jesus
- James: Thomas is not written by eyewitnesses to the events

- James: Thomas is written in Coptic, originated in Syria, in the 2nd century
- James: Thomas reflects gnostic theology, not Christian theology
- Adnan: if the Koran says that the crucifixion didn’t happen, then it didn’t
- James: Adnan believes one person 600 years later instead of the eyewitnesses
- Adnan: Paul invented the crucifixion out of nothing
- Adnan: The gospels are just theology, not history, written to confirm Paul
- Adnan: some scholars say Thomas isn’t gnostic
- Adnan: some scholars say Thomas is early
- Adnan: Metzger says Thomas was rejected because it was non-Christian
- James: I agree that it was rejected for theology because it’s gnostic

Idaho and Virginia pass legislation to opt-out of Obamacare

March 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, Idaho. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Idaho took the lead in a growing, nationwide fight against health care overhaul Wednesday when its governor became the first to sign a measure requiring the state attorney general to sue the federal government if residents are forced to buy health insurance. Similar legislation is pending in 37 other states.

And then, Virginia. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Virginia General Assembly has given final approval to a bill that would make it illegal for the government to require individuals to purchase health insurance, a measure intended to conflict with Democratic efforts to reform health care in Washington.
>
> […]Gov. Robert F. McDonnell said Wednesday that he intends to sign the legislation.
>
> The measure had been virtually assured passage since five Democrats crossed party lines last month in the state Senate, which their party controls, and supported the proposal.
>
> Proponents of the measure said the federal government should not force private citizens to enter into private contracts for insurance. The legislation, they said, was a way to send a message to Washington.

Idaho is a red state, but Virginia is purple. Interesting. It looks like people are not interested in paying for mandatory coverages for medical services that they will never use, like abortions, in-vitro fertilization or sex changes. I guess people do who want those services will have to pay the full price themselves, while the rest of us who don't want those services will just buy what coverage we need, and spend the rest of our money on gas and groceries, instead.

Tom Coburn warns corrupt Democrats

Sen. Tom Coburn, M.D., warning Democrats who vote for Obamacare in exchange for pork and bribes.

Suddenly, I feel proud to be a Republican. How about you?

Ex-member of Parliament calls for shared-parenting legislation in Canada

March 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news for men who want to marry in Ontario.

Excerpt:

> One man I spoke to, for instance, says his ex-wife falsely accused him of slamming a van door on her leg. And even though that assault charge was later withdrawn by the Crown attorney, the man says the allegations damaged his reputation during proceedings with a family court judge who restricted his access to his kids.
>
> It's those kinds of situations that the fledgling London Equal Parenting Committee will explore during "an evening of awareness in relation to domestic violence" Thursday at Crouch Library.
>
> The evening's main speaker is Roger Gallaway, the former Sarnia-Lambton MP who co-chaired a 1998 federal report called For The Sake Of The Children, which examined issues surrounding child custody.
>
> "What I find distressing is the lack of objectivity around this whole subject," says Gallaway, who represented his riding for the Liberal party from 1993 to 2006. "There has to be some type of balance put into the discussion. And it's sadly lacking."
>
> Gallaway regrets that none of the 1998 report's recommendations — including a call for stricter rules regarding the reporting of abuse — were ever adopted.
>
> "An allegation of violence is a weapon," he says. "And in Ontario we have a zero-tolerance policy, which generally speaking says that when allegations are made, it's the male who's removed (from the residence). And that then casts the die for what will occur in terms of child custody or access."
>
> Gallaway adds that more and more people are starting to realize that more and more deserving fathers are being shortchanged when it comes to contentious custody battles.
>
> "There's a growing constituency . . . that sees what's occurring and knows these men aren't bad people," he says. "So the doubt about what is being said about (so-called) violent men is growing."

What I've heard is that Ontario has the most unfair family court system in Canada, so this is welcome news. The more that courts discriminate against men and paint a portrait of men as unreliable and abusive, the less men will marry and stick around to be fathers. Men rise to the occasion in order to gain respect. No man wants to get involved with marriage and parenting when he is not going to be respected and valued by his wife and

by society as a whole.

Men's Rights activist Glenn Sacks comments on the article's counterpoint against shared-parenting:

> As a counterpoint, the article quotes DV advocate Peter Jaffe as saying that false accusations of DV are "rare." Actually, in the U.S. studies have shown that as much as 71% of DV restraining orders were either unnecessary or received under false pretenses. Other studies show that over half involve not even the allegation of physical violence. In Canada, reports of child maltreatment are deemed to be unsubstantiated or without evidence in 55% of cases according to the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect. So what Jaffe said looks to be far from the truth.

Shared-parenting is one of the measures that Dr. J said would encourage people to get married and stay married, which benefits the children. Biological fathers are not really a threat to children – it's the stepfathers and live-in boyfriends who pose a threat to children.

Related posts

- Why are sentences for domestic violence committed by women so lenient?
- How domestic violence against men is ignored by the feminist state
- Women are becoming more violent towards their partners
- How divorce laws discourage marriage
- Do men and women commit domestic violence in equal numbers?

CBO estimates Obamacare cost to be 2 trillion from 2014-2023

March 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Weekly Standard. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The CBO says that Obamacare would cost $2.0 trillion in the bill's real first decade (from 2014 to 2023) — and much more in the decades to come.
>
> But $2.0 trillion wouldn't be the total ten-year costs. Instead, that would merely be the "gross cost of coverage provisions." Based on earlier incarnations of the proposed overhaul, the total costs would be about a third higher (the exact number can't be gleaned from the CBO's analysis, which is only preliminary and is not a full scoring) — making the total price-tag between $2.5 and $3 trillion over the bill's real first decade.
>
> How would we pay for all of this? According to the CBO, by diverting $1.1 trillion away from already barely-solvent Medicare and spending it on Obamacare, and by increasing taxes on the American people by over $1 trillion. Among the Medicare cuts would be cuts of $25,000 in Medicare Advantage benefits per enrollee — up from $21,000 in the previous scoring.
>
> […]We'd also pay for this through increased deficits. Under strict instructions from the Democrats, the CBO gave Obamacare credit for over $400 billion (from 2014 to 2023) in phony "savings" that would allegedly result from cutting doctor's payments under Medicare by over 20 percent and never raising them back up. As the CBO notes, one of two things could happen: Congress could either follow through on these severe pay cuts — in which case doctors would view all Medicare patients as if they have the plague — or, Congress could eliminate these pay cuts — as everyone in Washington expects to have happen under the so-called "doc fix" — in which case the CBO projects that this bill would raise deficits by over $100 billion from 2017 to 2019 alone.
>
> So, after racking up higher deficit spending in two years than President Bush (or any other president) did in two terms, President Obama would leave his successor a 12-figure deficit related to Obamacare alone — for the period from 2017 to 2019 alone. That's according to the CBO.

Someone is going to have to pay for all of this spending. Either taxes are going to go up so that we are all out of a job, or the government will print money and devalue the currency via inflation. I hope the young people who voted for Obama like the taste of grass – because that's all they'll be eating for the rest of their lives if this spending keeps up.

Jay Richards explains when you should doubt "scientific consensus"

March 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jay Richards writing in The American, a publication of the American Enterprise Institute. (H/T Evolution News via Apologetics 315)

This short article summarizes 10 things to look for that hint that "scientific consensus" as a substitute for arguments and evidence.

Excerpt:

> How is the ordinary citizen to distinguish, as Andrew Coyne puts it, "between genuine authority and mere received wisdom? Conversely, how do we tell crankish imperviousness to evidence from legitimate skepticism?" Are we obligated to trust whatever we're told is based on a scientific consensus unless we can study the science ourselves? When can you doubt a consensus? When should you doubt it?
>
> Your best bet is to look at the process that produced, maintains, and communicates the ostensible consensus. I don't know of any exhaustive list of signs of suspicion, but, using climate change as a test study, I propose this checklist as a rough-and-ready list of signs for when to consider doubting a scientific "consensus," whatever the subject. One of these signs may be enough to give pause. If they start to pile up, then it's wise to be suspicious.

Here are the 10 points he discusses:

- Bundling well-evidenced claims together with speculative claims
- The use of ad hominem attacks against dissenters
- The use of coercion to force scientists to join the consensus
- Publishing and peer review that is cliquish
- Unwarranted exclusion of dissenters from peer-reviewed literature
- Misrepresentation of peer-reviewed literature
- A rush to declare a consensus before it even exists
- When the subject matter is not easily testable (e.g. – simulations)
- When defenders resort to phrases like "Scientists say…"
- When science is used to push for dramatic policies
- When journalists are not reporting the issue objectively
- When supports appeal to scientific consensus instead of arguments

One can easily see how this list applies not only to global warming alarmism, but to Darwinism as well.

Girl Scouts USA hands out Planned Parenthood pamplets to adolescent girls

March 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Washington Times.

Girl Scouts USA sponsored a session at UN Status of Woman conference where Planned Parenthood distributed brochures to adolescent Girl Scouts with *no parents* present. What was in the pamphlets produced by Planned Parenthood?

Excerpt:

> [the pamphlet] …explained to the girls, "Some people have sex when they have been drinking or using drugs. That is your choice."
>
> But it gets worse. The sex guide explains, "Many people think sex is just about vaginal or anal intercourse. But there are lots of different ways to have sex and lots of different types of sex. Sex can include kissing, touching, licking, tickling, sucking and cuddling. Some people like to have aggressive sex, while others like to have soft sex and slow sex with their partners. There is no right or wrong way to have sex. Just have fun, explore and be yourself!" It tells girls to explore the prostate. Remember, this was distributed in a panel for adolescent girls.
>
> Besides advice about the prostate, the brochure, subtitled "Rights, Sexuality and Living with HIV," also gives incorrect and even dangerous information about rights and responsibilities. It tells the kids that, "sexual and reproductive rights are recognized around the world." Sexual rights are hardly recognized around the world. They are not even recognized here in the sexual paradise of the United States. The brochure tells the kids that their rights are violated when governments require them to tell their HIV status to their sex partners.
>
> […]At the same UN meeting, which ended last Friday, the World Association of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides produced a document saying young women "demand their sexual and reproductive rights including access to comprehensive sexuality education, and sexual and reproductive services including contraception and emergency contraception, in order to avoid unintended pregnancies" and also called for access to "safe abortion."
>
> […]At a Girl Scout conference in 2004, co-sponsored by Planned Parenthood, the Girl Scouts handed out a brochure to 700 grade-school girls with the title "It's Perfectly Normal," a guide that celebrated masturbation and that featured explicit drawings of couples having sex and a boy putting on a condom. It also listed, no surprise here, the top ten reasons for having an abortion.

I think women used to be pro-life and pro-family, but not any more. Today it seems as though the older feminists are anxious to push younger women to perform actions that undermine romantic love, stable marriages and self-sacrificial parenting.

Interesting exchange with Modern Christian Spinster

March 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think everyone's noticed Modern Christian Spinster's frequent comments disagreeing with me on many things, especially politics, economics and feminism. I am conservative across the board (social, fiscal and foreign policy). I also believe in chastity and traditional marriage.

In another thread, we were discussing traditional morality (e.g. – chastity, sobriety, individual charity), as compared with the new morality (e.g. – recycling, yoga, vegetarianism, same-sex marriage, socialism). She seemed to be very hesitant about making moral judgments, which I take to be central to Christianity because of the whole concept of sin. Suddenly, I began worry that Modern Christian Spinster was not a Christian at all. So I asked her some questions to get her views.

So I wrote this:

> Do you think that people who do not believe in Jesus are resurrected to eternal life?
>
> Do you believe in a place called Hell, which is a place of eternal separation from God where people who do not know God in Christ go on the day of Judgment?
>
> Do you think that a conscious, sincere profession of faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice for sin is a necessary and sufficient condition to be resurrected to eternal life?

And she wrote this in reply:

> I believe that life is eternal, the way I believe in mathematics. If you add 2+2 and for you it equals 5 then the principles of mathematics are still in effect, even if you get the wrong answer. So I believe that life is eternal on principle. If you were a miserable SOB in life, dying won't resolve that for you. You will continue to work out in the afterlife what you didn't work out on earth. As for people who don't believe in Jesus, I am constantly surprised by the number of people who DO believe in him. They might be Buddhists, they might be Muslims, but Jesus is actually very well respected among people I talk to, even those of other faiths. So I wouldn't venture to say whether or not they're resurrected. I mean, the fact is, after someone is gone, we just don't know what their journey is. I will say, however, that most people I talk to very much identify with what Jesus stood for, even if they don't necessarily identify it that way.
>
> I do not believe in a place called hell: I do believe it is a state of consciousness, just as "the kingdom of heaven is within you." But it's not a physical place apart from where we already are. I see heaven in places where many other people see purgatory. God to me is everpresent; therefore, I try not to let what my eyes tell me blind me to the fact that he is with me, even in desolate places. I also believe

> that we cannot ever be separated from God. We may think we are separate, but what we need to handle isn't real separation but the erroneous belief that we are separate. LIke the story of the Prodigal Son.
>
> I do not share your belief in Christ's atoning for sin. I don't see Christ dying for my "sin," I see his death and resurrection as proof that sin and death can be overcome through complete obedience to God. I'm not sure if that is the same thing as you are saying. But I do not believe man is inherently sinful. However, humanly speaking, there does appear to be a lot of sin in the world. However, it is something not natural to us. Part of the human condition, sure, but I believe that our spiritual identity is our true identity. Not sure if that answers your question. It's certainly a different point of view.

I thought this was very interesting. She disagrees with me on these three questions. I am not saying this to judge her, she knows where to find me if she wants to talk about it. My advice to her is to take a second look at the Bible and pick a good book on theology, like this one by Wayne Grudem.

What does the Bible say about judging others and Hell?

March 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: I thought I'd better explain what's in this post at the top. First, I show where Hell is mentioned in the gospels. Second, I talk about whether can Christians should judge non-Christians. Finally, I talk about why judging can actually be the loving thing to do.

Where is Hell in the New Testament?

Here's a few Bible verses where Jesus talks about Hell.

1. **Matthew 5:22**
   But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca, ' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of **hell**.
2. **Matthew 5:29**
   If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into **hell**.
3. **Matthew 5:30**
   And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into **hell**.
4. **Matthew 10:28**
   Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in **hell**.
5. **Matthew 18:9**
   And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of **hell**.
6. **Matthew 23:33**
   "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to **hell**?
7. **Mark 9:43**
   If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into **hell**, where the fire never goes out.
8. **Mark 9:45**
   And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into **hell**.
9. **Mark 9:47**
   And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into **hell**,
10. **Luke 12:5**
    But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into **hell**. Yes, I tell you, fear him.
11. **Luke 16:23**

> In **hell**, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side

I don't mind if people disagree with those verses on historical grounds – maybe because they are not early enough or not multiply attested enough, although I think they are historically reliable. What bothers me is when a person throws verses out because they just don't like them, because of intuitions and emotions.

Who to judge and how to judge

Did you know that it is forbidden to judge non-Christians on Christian moral standards?

1 Cor 5:9-13:

[9]I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—

[10]not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.

[11]But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

[12]What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?

[13]God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

I think this text explains what judging is. If you "judge" someone, it seems to mean disagreeing with them or it could even mean avoiding them. For example, I often speak against single motherhood and day care in front of people who are single mothers and who use day care, for example.

I think that Christians can vote for political candidates who are pro-life and pro-marriage and pro-liberty. But the verse above says that but you can't force individual non-Christians to act like Christians against their own free will. You *can* judge other Christians, but be careful how you do that if you actually want them to listen to you. Have a relationship with them first, and then talk about moral issues in the abstract. People get defensive unless you make the discussion about the evidence, not about their personal lives.

And of course you can disagree with people of other religions about which religion is true when tested against history and the external world, but again, it's best to appeal to logic and evidence. E.g. – the big bang, which falsifies a whole stack of world religions and cults, and is testable scientifically.

Why judging is wonderful and you should do it, too

I wonder if you all remember a while back when I linked to all the chapters of Theodore Dalrymple's famous book "Life at the Bottom", which is about the worldview of the British lower class. It's also about how rich, well-meaning secular leftists hurt the poor by enacting public policies that reward bad behavior and punish good behavior. Dalrymple is a psychiatrist in a hospital, so he sees it all firsthand.

This is from the introduction to the book:

> The disastrous pattern of human relationships that exists in the underclass is also becoming common higher up the social scale. With increasing frequency I am consulted by nurses, who for the most part come from and were themselves traditionally members of (at least after Florence Nightingale) the respectable lower middle class, who have illegitimate children by men who first abuse and then abandon them. This abuse and later abandonment is usually all too predictable from the man's previous history and character; but the nurses who have been treated in this way say they refrained from making a judgment about him because it is wrong to make judgments. But if they do not make a judgment about the man with whom they are going to live and by whom they are going to have a child, about what are they ever going to make a judgment?
>
> "It just didn't work out," they say, the "it" in question being the relationship that they conceive of having an existence independent of the two people who form it, and that exerts an influence on their on their lives rather like an astral projection. Life is fate.

I think that young people today prefer moral relativists as mates, because they are afraid of being judged and rejected by people who are too serious about religion and morality, especially the old kind of morality that was focused on chastity, sobriety, worship, charity, etc. The problem is that if a young person chooses someone who doesn't take religion and morality seriously, then that person can't rely on their partner to behave morally and to exercise moral leadership in the home.

Here's another one of my favorite passages from the "Tough Love" chapter, in which he describes how he easily he can detect whether a particular male patient has violent tendencies or not, on sight. But female victims of domestic violence – and even the hospital nurses – cannot *or will not* recognize the signs that a man is violent.

> All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.
>
> This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once

> when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.
>
> Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.
>
> This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.
>
> Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.
>
> At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how* they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

Just remember not to judge people for the purpose of hurting them. Judge others for the purpose of helping them to set up boundaries that will protect them from actions that might hurt them or those around them, and impose costs on the whole society to repair the damage. The best thing to do is to discuss moral issues in the abstract.

Obama backs plan to put illegal immigrants on path to citizenship

March 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> President Obama gave a thumbs up Thursday to the outline of a plan to legalize illegal immigrants and create a flow of low-skilled foreign workers for the future, saying the immigration bill being worked on by a Republican and a Democrat is "promising."
>
> In their broad blueprint, Sens. Charles E. Schumer, New York Democrat, and Lindsey Graham, South Carolina Republican, call for illegal immigrants to be put on a path to citizenship, offer green cards to keep high-skilled foreign university graduates and would create a temporary program for low-skilled workers, with some also getting the chance to become citizens.

And from CNS News, WH spokesman Gibbs won't rule out "deeming" the amnesty bill as passed without an actual vote.

Are Democrats sincere when they profess to be religious?

March 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from the American Thinker about the Mormon Harry Reid and the Catholic Nancy Pelosi. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> It is beyond ironic that a Mormon, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and a Catholic, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, are in charge of passing ObamaCare. If passed, the legislation will federally fund elective abortions in every state. Reid's and Pelosi's respective religions, both of which (at least according to the churches' official doctrines) ardently oppose abortion, are letting them get away with it. Apparently, in this day and age, the powerful are exempt from following God's laws.

What about Nancy Pelosi:

> Nancy Pelosi, purportedly Catholic, has long been an open proponent for abortion and today is the leading champion for nationally funded abortion. Pelosi was granted an audience with the sitting Pope. The Pope merely criticized Pelosi for her position and failed to take any disciplinary action for Pelosi's open "propaganda campaign in favor" of abortion. Meanwhile, Pelosi's local priest in San Francisco continues to give her communion — even though the Pope has stated that those who support abortion should not take part in the Catholic sacrament.

Harry Reid has a "Temple-recommend" in the Mormon Church:

> Only the most obedient of Mormons are given "temple recommends." These recommends allow faithful members access to the Church's sacred temple ceremonies. Harry Reid, despite his vocal and public support for legislation that provides federal funds for abortion, is known to have such a "temple recommend."

The author of the article condemns the churches for refusing to discipline these two pro-abortionists. But I think the more significant point is that Democrats think that church is just a club. They don't really go to Church to subject themselves to a set of moral standards and moral obligations – it's all for show.

How Obamacare took away my liberty

March 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Health Care BS. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> 1. Don't need or want a health insurance policy? Sorry, the individual mandate makes it a federal crime not to buy insurance.
>
> 2. Want to pay less in premiums by buying health insurance coverage with limits on coverage? Sorry, Obamacare also dictates how much coverage you must buy (including maternity coverage if you are a single male).
>
> 4. As an employer, you'd like to offer your employees high-deductible coverage or policies that don't cover "children" as old as age 26? Sorry, that's now illegal.
>
> 5. As a business-owner with 100 employees, you want to expand your sales and hire a few more people? Sorry, if you hire one more person, Obamacare requires you to buy insurance for all your employees.
>
> 6. You're a physician and don't want the government looking over your shoulder? Sorry, the HHS is now authorized to use your claims data to measure the resources you use.

Taking money from small businesses? That reduces the supply of jobs. Making doctors jump through hoops? That reduces the supply of doctors.

From Carrie Lukas at National Review. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Last night, Speaker Pelosi reiterated that passing the health-care legislation means that "Being a woman will no longer be a pre-existing medical condition." It's true that outlawing gender ratings will effectively shift women's health costs to men (which means young men will see their health-insurance premiums rise disproportionately). Yet the Senate bill makes being a single mom a new kind of pre-existing condition: Instead of higher insurance premiums, these women will have fewer employment opportunities. Congratulations Mrs. Speaker.

What happens when you take money away from healthy single men? They don't marry because they can't afford to become husbands and fathers. Government replaces men as husbands and fathers. That's what this health care bill does.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment

March 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reformed Baptist theologian Wayne Grudem speaks on the Bible and capital punishment.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

A PDF sermon outline is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?
- what did God say to Noah about CP?
- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?
- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?
- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?

- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?
- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the "whole life ethic" and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

I'm not a Calvinist, because I like middle-knowledge instead. But boy, have the Calvinists got some good theologians.

You can find more talks by Wayne Grudem here.

I explained how capital punishment deters future crimes using research papers here: Does the death penalty discourage crime?

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense

March 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reformed Baptist theologian Wayne Grudem speaks on the Bible and the right of self-defense.

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The MP3 file is here.

A PDF sermon outline is here.

Topics:

- what about turning the other cheek? doesn't that undermine self-defense?
- what does Jesus say about the right to self-defense in the New Testament
- did Jesus' disciples carry swords for protection during his ministry?
- why did Jesus tell his disciples to sell their cloaks and buy swords?
- what about Jesus stopping Peter from using force during Jesus' arrest?
- shouldn't we rely on police instead of our own personal weapons?
- what about brandishing a handgun vs actually trying to shoot someone?
- what are violent crime rates in pro-gun USA and in the anti-gun UK?
- does outlawing guns cause violent crime to increase or decrease?
- do academic studies show that gun control decreases crime?
- do academic studies show that concealed carry laws decreases crime?
- what do academic studies show about defensive handgun usage?
- do many children die from guns in the home compared to other causes?
- doesn't the US Constitution limit the usage of guns to the army and police?

- what did the Founding Fathers believe about lawful ownership of firearms?
- What should be the goal of someone who uses a weapon in self-defense?

I'm not a Calvinist, because I like middle-knowledge instead. But boy, have the Calvinists got some good theologians.

You can find more talks by Wayne Grudem here.

My previous post on the deterrent effect of legal private ownership of firearms is here: Why do people favor legal private ownership and concealed carry of handguns?

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Why did Bart Stupak vote for the health care reform bill?

March 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> When Bart Stupak announced Sunday he was now a "yes" on the health-care bill, six Democrats stood with him. Even that handful would have been enough to defeat the bill. Instead, they accepted the fig leaf of an executive order—and threw away all the hard-won gains they had made.
>
> […]Even more troubling… is that few accept the idea that the executive order really adds anything. In fact, on this point National Right to Life, the Catholic bishops and the Susan B. Anthony List are largely on the same page as Planned Parenthood. As are the pro-life Republican leader Mr. Smith and the pro-choice Democrat Diana DeGette of Colorado.
>
> Planned Parenthood calls it a "symbolic gesture," and says "it is critically important to note that it does not include the Stupak abortion ban." Rep. DeGette, who screamed so loudly when the Stupak amendment passed, said she had no problem with the executive order because "it doesn't change anything." She's right, because an executive order cannot change the law.
>
> Take the $7 billion in new federal funding for the community health centers. As my former White House colleague Yuval Levin points out, all that has to happen for these federal dollars to start flowing for abortion is for NARAL Pro-Choice America to sponsor a woman demanding an abortion. The center will initially deny funding, citing the executive order. The woman will then sue, arguing that abortion is a part of health care. Given the legal precedents, and the lack of a specific ban in the actual legislation, the courts will likely agree.

Why did Bart Stupak change his vote?

Here's a press release from his web site. (Dated 3/19/2010)

Excerpt:

> WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Congressman Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) announced three airports in northern Michigan have received grants totaling $726,409 for airport maintenance and improvements. The funding was provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration.

Could this be the reason? Thirty pieces of silver?

Fox News reports that Obama skipped signing the executive order on Tuesday.

New study shows how capitalism and religion promote co-operation

March 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the National Post.

Excerpt:

> Free-enterprising, impersonal markets may seem cutthroat and mean-spirited, but a provocative new study says markets have been a force for good over the last 10,000 years, helping to drive the evolution of more trusting and co-operative societies.
>
> "We live in a much kinder, gentler world than most humans have lived in," says anthropologist Joe Henrich of the University of British Columbia, lead author of the study that helps topple long-held stereotypes.
>
> The finding, reported in the journal Science, suggests people trust and play fair with strangers because markets and religion — not some deep psychological instinct inherited from our dim tribal past — have helped shape our neural circuitry over the eons.
>
> The 13 researchers on Mr. Henrich's international team spent time — and played clever psychological games — with more than 2,000 people in 15 different societies.
>
> […]The study found that the likelihood that people "played fair" with strangers increased with the degree people were integrated into markets and participated in a world religion.
>
> […]The study also suggests world religions, such as Christianity and Islam, were a potent evolutionary force, favouring the growth of complex societies by reinforcing fairness and trust.

Science is the number one peer-reviewed journal in the world. Capitalism, for lack of a better word, is *good*. Capitalism *works*.

Margaret Somerville explains the real issue in the euthanasia debate

March 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Margaret Somerville
From the Ottawa Citizen.

Excerpt:

> Recently, I saw an illustration that accompanied an article about euthanasia. It showed the silhouette of a patient lying on a bed. There was an electrical outlet on the wall behind the bed and an unplugged connecting cord hanging down over the side of the bed.
>
> Except in very rare circumstances — for instance, if the treatment were withdrawn without the necessary consent or against the patient's wishes — withdrawal of life-support treatment is not euthanasia. Yet many people, including the artist who penned this illustration and many health-care professionals, mistakenly believe that it is.
>
> In my experience, they are confused with respect to the ethical and legal differences between withdrawal of treatment that results in death and euthanasia, and why the former can be ethically and legally acceptable, provided certain conditions are fulfilled, and the latter cannot be. This is a central and important distinction in the euthanasia debate, which needs to be understood.

She's the famous professor of medicine, ethics and law at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. She's like Canada's version of Jennifer Roback Morse.

Barbara Kay asks whether men or women commit suicide more often

March 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a nice column by Barbara Kay.

Excerpt:

> …men, of course, are far more likely to commit suicide than women altogether, although the fact is rarely brought to public attention as a matter for special concern, even when it would be appropriate to do so. Three students at Cornell University in New York State in the last month alone committed suicide by jumping off a bridge on the campus into a deep gorge. These were not "cries for help" — they were irrevocable decisions to die. The students were male. Yet Cornell president David Skorton said that "… suicide among young people is a national health crisis."
>
> Well, it isn't a crisis amongst young *people*, but it is a crisis amongst young males. In Canada over 80% of suicides are male (77% in the U.S.). Suicides amongst men rise dramatically after separation or divorce, especially amongst men deprived of their family home and children, while suicide rates amongst women remain flat.
>
> If the figures were reversed, and women were committing suicide at the rates of men, we can be sure that it would be considered a national crisis, one on which a great deal of money, media attention and authentic concern would be lavished. As of now, the only research being carried out on male suicide is being done by activists in the fathers' rights movement.

I don't always agree with Barbara Kay, but I like this column.

Does prominent atheist Michael Ruse think that morality is real or illusory?

March 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a column from the radically-leftist UK Guardian by evolutionist Michael Ruse. (H/T Evolution News)

Excerpt:

> God is dead, so why should I be good? The answer is that there are no grounds whatsoever for being good. There is no celestial headmaster who is going to give you six (or six billion, billion, billion) of the best if you are bad. Morality is flimflam.
>
> […]Morality is just a matter of emotions, like liking ice cream and sex and hating toothache and marking student papers. But it is, and has to be, a funny kind of emotion. It has to pretend that it is not that at all! If we thought that morality was no more than liking or not liking spinach, then pretty quickly it would break down.
>
> […]So morality has to come across as something that is more than emotion. It has to appear to be objective, even though really it is subjective.
>
> […]Now you know that morality is an illusion put in place by your genes to make you a social cooperator, what's to stop you behaving like an ancient Roman? Well, nothing in an objective sense.

So what morality is, objectively, is a bad feeling you get as a result of biological evolution and social pressure. It's just a feeling. An illusion.

But Ruse says that you have to pretend it's real, or else we'll all live like barbarians. But if morality is nonsense, then what REASON is there not to act like a barbarian individually as long as you can get away with it? Let the other fools who believe in God be honest. You do what you like in order to be happy in the few years you have to live – just don't get caught and punished for breaking the arbitrary fashions of the culture in your time and place.

On atheism, your life, the lives of all other organisms, and the life of stars that provide heat and light to planets, will end eventually die in the heat death of the universe. In the end, it will not matter what we do, the universe will still end up cold, dark and inert.

So let's re-cap the FACTS about Ruse's atheistic worldview.

- Are humans worth more (objectively) than cockroaches on atheism? The answer is no.
- Is there any way humans ought to behave (objectively) on atheism? The answer is no.
- Is there any purpose to life (objectively) on atheism? The answer is no.
- Is there an objective standard of right and wrong on atheism? The answer is no.

- Is discourse on what is “right” and “wrong” meaningful on atheism? The answer is no.
- Is there free will so people can make moral choices on atheism? The answer is no.
- Is there any reason to sacrifice your happiness for others on atheism? The answer is no.

Atheism is the worldview of people who want to escape from morality. They pre-suppose materialism in order to 1) fit in with the educated class and/or 2) justify immoral hedonism. Later, atheists invent pious myths to put up a fig leaf of moral virtue, e.g. – vegetarianism, yoga, recycling, voting for universal health care, etc. That’s atheism. There is no intellectual content to it. It’s not based on arguments and evidence. It’s just a long-running tantrum against parental/church authority, covered over with faddish causes to whitewash the absurdity of life without God.

My posts on why atheism cannot ground morality rationally are here.

Is opposition to abortion shared by religions other than Christianity?

March 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post showing different pro-life views from Reason to Stand.

Excerpt:

> Why is abortion always treated as a Catholic issue?
>
> I get highly annoyed when people speak of issues such as abortion as if they were purely the invention of the religious right and devoid of any other supporters than "the crazy Christians".
>
> So to help put things in perspective, here are several secular sources who, like Christians, thought that abortions were a bad idea. Boldness liberally applied by myself.

Here's one of his sources:

"There are five kinds of evil Karma which are difficult to extinguish, even if one were to repent of them. What are the five kinds of offences? The first one is killing the father, the second one is killing the mother, the third one is ***abortion****, the fourth one is to injure the Buddha, the fifth one is to create disharmony among the Sangha assemblies. These five types of evil and sinful karma are difficult to extinguish."* -The Dharani Sutra of the Buddha

And another:

"The law enjoins us to bring up all our offspring, and forbids women ***to cause abortion*** *of what is begotten, or to destroy it afterward; and if any woman appears to have so done, she will be a murderer of her child, by destroying a living creature, and diminishing humankind."* -Josephus, 1st century Jewish historian

The post has even more viewpoints.

Does the Bible say thou shalt not kill or thou shalt not murder?

March 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article on it by a prominent Jewish professor of religious studies at the University of Calgary.

His qualifications are here. He is an expert in Hebrew language.

Excerpt:

> Those of us who are familiar with the original Hebrew text of the Bible find frequent occasion to whine about inaccuracies and misleading expressions in the translations that are in use among non-Jews. Many of these discrepancies arose out of patently theological motives, as Christian interpreters rewrote passages in the "Old Testament" so as to turn them into predictions or prefigurations of the life of Jesus. Some of the mistranslations, though, are harder to account for.
>
> For me, one of the most irksome cases has always been the rendering of the sixth commandment as "Thou shalt not kill." In this form, the quote has been conscripted into the service of diverse causes, including those of pacifism, animal rights, the opposition to capital punishment, and the anti-abortion movement.
>
> Indeed, "kill" in English is an all-encompassing verb that covers the taking of life in all forms and for all classes of victims. That kind of generalization is expressed in Hebrew through the verb "harag." However, the verb that appears in the Torah's prohibition is a completely different one, " ratsah" which, it would seem, should be rendered "murder." This root refers only to criminal acts of killing.
>
> It is, of course, not just a question of etymology. Those ideologies that adduce the commandment in support of their gentle-hearted causes are compelled to feign ignorance of all those other places in the Bible that condone or command warfare, the slaughter of sacrificial animals, and an assortment of methods for inflicting capital punishment.

Not that I don't agree with this guy about his comments on abortion. I think abortion IS murder, and that Jews always considered it murder. Consider this post at Reason to Stand.

Excerpt:

*"The law enjoins us to bring up all our offspring, and forbids women **to cause abortion** of what is begotten, or to destroy it afterward; and if any woman appears to have so done, she will be a murderer of her child, by destroying a living creature, and diminishing humankind."* -Josephus, 1st century Jewish historian

Regarding the KJV and its translation of the text as "Thou shalt not kill". The KJV is a poor translation of the Bible. If you know the history of Erasmus and the Textus Receptus,

you’ll know it was a rush job done in 1611, and that newer and more manuscripts have emerged since 1611.

Get an NASB. That’s the most literal translation available, except for the original Koine Greek itself. **Here’s the relevant verse from Exodus 20 in the NASB**. If you want something readable, go for an NIV or and ESV. But to make your case, use an NASB.

How are big companies responding to Obamacare?

March 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Caterpillar and John Deere. (H/T Hot Air via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Caterpillar Inc. said Wednesday it will take a $100 million charge to earnings this quarter to reflect additional taxes stemming from newly enacted U.S. health-care legislation.
>
> […]The charge is expected to be a one-time cost, but Caterpillar has argued that higher taxes and other potential cost increases related to insurance coverage mandates in the legislation will hinder the company's recovery this year after a 75% plunge in income during 2009.
>
> "From our point of view, a tax increase like this cannot come at a worse time," said Jim Dugan, a Caterpillar spokesman.
>
> […]Farm equipment maker Deere expects after-tax expenses to rise by $150 million this year as a result of the health care reform law President Barack Obama signed this week.
>
> Most of the higher expense will come in Deere's second quarter, the company said on Thursday. The expense was not included in the company's earlier 2010 forecast, which called for net income of about $1.3 billion.
>
> The law could raise expenses for large U.S. employers. Industrial companies, which typically have large numbers of retirees, may be among those facing the biggest bill. Caterpillar had argued before the legislation passed that health reform would put it at a disadvantage against global competitors.

And National Review reports on Verizon. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Yesterday I posted a memo that Verizon sent to its employees concerning its view that the Democrats' health-care bill would probably cause its costs to go up. Specifically, the memo keyed in on a change in the tax treatment of the Medicare Part D retiree drug subsidy. This is a subsidy that the government pays to employers that offer prescription-drug coverage to their retirees; it was created as part of the Medicare prescription-drug entitlement to encourage employers not to dump their retirees into the public system. As the *Wall Street Journal* editorial board reports today, the subsidy costs taxpayers $665 per person, "while the same Medicare coverage would cost $1,209."
>
> As part of their effort to keep their health-care bill deficit-neutral, the Democrats changed the law and exposed the subsidy to the 35 percent corporate income tax rate, adding $5.4 billion in revenue to the bill. In its memo to employees,

> Verizon warned that this tax change would make the subsidy "less valuable to employers, like Verizon, and as a result, may have significant implications for both retirees and employers." This is a clear sign that Verizon and other employers will probably drop their retiree prescription-drug coverage, leaving Medicare Part D to pick up the slack.

UPDATE: More from National Review. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> AK Steele Holding Corp., "the third largest U.S. steelmaker by sales, said it will record a non-cash charge of about $31 million resulting from the health-care overhaul signed into law by President Barack Obama. The charge will be recorded in the first quarter of 2010."
>
> Valero Energy "will take a $15 million to $20 million charge to second-quarter earnings for the same reason."
>
> Medical-device maker Medtronic "warned that new taxes on its products could force it to lay off a thousand workers."

And more from National Review. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Wow: "U.S. companies employed 3.9 million fewer workers in January 2010 than they did one year earlier."
>
> If you will recall, when touting the stimulus, President Obama and his team declared that "a package in the range that the President-Elect has discussed is expected to create between three and four million jobs by the end of 2010 . . . More than 90 percent of the jobs created are likely to be in the private sector."
>
> 90 percent of three million jobs would be 2.7 million jobs. Yet we're 3.9 million lower than when we started.
>
> To meet the goal by the deadline, the country would have to create 6.6 million jobs in the next nine months. or more than 733,000 jobs per month for three quarters of the year.

UPDATE 2: Now Business Week reports that AT&T is screwed.

Excerpt:

> AT&T Inc. will book $1 billion in first-quarter costs related to the health-care law signed this week by President Barack Obama, the most of any U.S. company so far.
>
> A change in the tax treatment of Medicare subsidies triggered the non-cash expense, and the company will consider changes to the benefits it offers current and retired workers, Dallas-based AT&T said today in a regulatory filing.

Hey! Do you know what causes outsourcing of jobs? *DEMOCRATS.* Democrats cause jobs

to be shipped overseas. Democrats hate companies. Companies hire people. Democrats cause American manufacturing jobs to be shipped overseas. Democrats cause unemployment. That's why the unemployment rate is double what it was under Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. Democrats cause unemployment.

How do jobs get created, anyway?

Do you know what really works to create jobs?

I mean – do you know what *actually has worked in the past to create jobs?*

The Heritage Foundation reports:

> President Ronald Reagan's record includes sweeping economic reforms and deep across-the-board tax cuts, market deregulation, and sound monetary policies to contain inflation. His policies resulted in the largest peacetime economic boom in American history and nearly 35 million more jobs.

See:

Joint Economic Committee: Exhibit 1

	1983–90 Expansion[A]	1991–99 Expansion[1,A]	Entire Period
Real GDP			
Total Growth	35.7%	35.0%	80.9%
Average Annual Growth	4.1%	3.1%	1.6%
Real GDP per Person			
Total Growth	26.7%	22.4%	54.2%
Average Annual Growth	3.2%	2.3%	2.6%
Real Consumption per Person			
Total Growth	26.8%	24.1%	36.5%
Average Annual Growth	3.2%	2.3%	2.7%
Industrial Production			
Total Growth	25.9%	38.7%	75.9%
Employment			
Total Growth	15.9 million	16.4 million	35.0 million
Dow Jones Industrial Average			
Average Annual Growth	14.5%	16.1%	15.0%

That's what actually worked.

Free. Market. Capitalism. *Works*.

Seattle mom angry that school sent her daughter for a secret abortion

March 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> The mother of a 15-year old Seattle girl is furious because her daughter had an abortion with some assistance from the nurses at her school and she was never informed. She only found out after the fact when her daughter had an unrelated health problem and finally revealed she had terminated a pregnancy.
>
> […]According to the girl's mother… her daughter was given a pregnancy test at the school clinic which was positive. She was then told by the nurse that she could have an abortion at a nearby Planned Parenthood clinic without her parents' knowledge.The girl was then called a taxi, which picked her up at the school and drove her by herself to Planned Parenthood. The mother says once at the clinic a Planned Parenthood worker discouraged her daughter from informing her parents. She claims the worker told her that if she kept quiet the procedure would be free, but if she told her parents they would have to pay for the abortion.
>
> […]A King County Health official would not speak about any of the details surrounding the case, but did say that no laws were broken. In Washington State a girl of any age can get an abortion without her parent's being notified.

Public schools have zero respect for parents. Why should they? They don't get paid more for pleasing customers. They get paid more by getting Democrats elected. The needs of parents and children are *irrelevant*.

Incomes are dropping, debt is rising, and we have record unemployment

March 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> President Obama's fiscal 2011 budget will generate nearly $10 trillion in cumulative budget deficits over the next 10 years, $1.2 trillion more than the administration projected, and raise the federal debt to 90 percent of the nation's economic output by 2020, the Congressional Budget Office reported Thursday.
>
> […]The federal public debt, which was $6.3 trillion ($56,000 per household) when Mr. Obama entered office amid an economic crisis, totals $8.2 trillion ($72,000 per household) today, and it's headed toward $20.3 trillion (more than $170,000 per household) in 2020, according to CBO's deficit estimates.
>
> That figure would equal 90 percent of the estimated gross domestic product in 2020, up from 40 percent at the end of fiscal 2008.

Obama and his left-wing socialist policies broke the economy.

And from the Florida Sun Sentinel.

Excerpt:

> Florida's unemployment hit 12.2 percent in February, the highest rate on record, soaring past even the rates recorded in the 1973-1975 recession, the state work force agency said Friday.

The Wall Street Journal reports on personal incomes.

Excerpt:

> Personal income in 42 states fell in 2009, the Commerce Department said Thursday.
>
> Nationally, personal income from wages, dividends, rent, retirement plans and government benefits declined 1.7% last year, unadjusted for inflation.

But don't worry. There are some winners in this economy: Obama and his family are exempt from health care cuts in his health care reform plan.

What does the Bible say about sex before marriage and homosexuality?

March 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CARM writes about what the Bible says about sex.

Excerpt:

> Any type of sexual union, contact, intimacy is for the marriage only between a husband and wife. If a man and woman who are not married go to bed together naked and do not have sexual intercourse, this is still sinful. If they fondle each other without having sexual intercourse it is sinful. If they go to bed together naked and just hold each other, it is sinful. The whole point is that the nakedness, viewing the nakedness, the touching of the private areas, fondling, etc., are all reserved for the marriage bed between a husband and a wife.

Now before we see verses, I have to define the term "fornication". Fornication is sex before marriage.

And here are some specific verses:

1 Cor. 6:12-20:

[12]"Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"—but I will not be mastered by anything.

[13]"Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

[14]By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

[15]Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!

[16]Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."

[17]But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

[18]Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

[19]Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

[20]you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Ephesians 5:3-7:

[3]But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

[4]Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but

rather thanksgiving.

[5]For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

[6]Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

[7]Therefore do not be partners with them.

Colossians 3:1-6:

[1]Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

[2]Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

[3]For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

[4]When Christ, who is your[a] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

[5]Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

[6]Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8:

[1]Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.

[2]For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

[3]It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;

[4]that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable,

[5]not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God;

[6]and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.

[7]For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

[8]Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

The Bible doesn't go into scientific details about the effects of fornication. So what harm does fornication cause?

Well, consider oxytocin, a chemical released by women's brains during sex that causes women to bond to men after sex. Basically, when a women has premarital sex with *a man she isn't married to*, the odds are very good that he is not going to commit to her for life, and that he will leave and that she will be hurt. But if she marries the man first, then the bonding that occurs is a good thing, because he isn't going anywhere and she is free to have those feelings of being bonded to him.

When a woman gets hurt by breaking away from a man that she has bonded with sexually, she loses her ability to trust and depend on men, which she needs to do in order

to marry at all. The more she deals with the pain of breaking the bonds over and over, the more she learns to separate her emotions from sexual touching. She needs to have sex in order to make men like her, but she also has to not feel anything, in order to avoid being hurt. This destroys her ability to love and trust if she ever gets married.

Men are hurt from pre-marital sex in a different way. They become cold and cynical about women, unable to trust them, unable to serve them, unable to love them, and unable to commit to one woman for life. In my view, a man who has sex before marriage is not loving women, and he will love them less afterward. If a man loves a woman then he needs to commit to her. Premarital sex ruins a man's ability to do the things he was designed to do with women. He loses the ability to love unselfishly.

CARM also has an article about the Bible and homosexuality here.

Related posts

- What possible harm can result from premarital sex?
- Understanding the effect of sex on your brain chemistry

Brian Auten reviews William Lane Craig's new basic apologetics book

March 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the book review on Apologetics 315.

Excerpt:

> *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision*[image] by William Lane Craig is an introductory-level text from one of the leading apologists today. Written with the layman in mind, Craig has geared his most powerful arguments found in *Reasonable Faith*[image] into a more approachable, readable book. It is not only easily accessible for the layman, but the book itself contains illustrations, sidebars, argument maps, and summaries that make understanding and retaining the material an easier task. This review will provide an overview of the content and an assessment of the book's usefulness for its intended audience.
>
> […]The book's included questions provide a good starting point for personal and group study. In sum, *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision*[image] is a great contribution as a layman's apologetics textbook. When the study guide is published, this will be a tremendous resource for small groups. Highly recommended – excellent content, very accessible to the layman, and well-suited for small group use.

The actual review goes over the 10 chapters in more detail, and talks about specific features that make the book more useful for beginners. My Dad is reading Reasonable Faith, 3rd. edition right now, and he skipped a lot of the science part. But he still loves to book and he's into the history now. Maybe I should have gotten him "On Guard" instead? And it's only $10 from Amazon.

The bigger the government, the smaller the person

March 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from Dennis Prager in Front Page Magazine. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> The need to be needed is universal. Men need it; women need it. The sexes may feel needed in different ways, but the depth of the need is the same. Many women feel particularly alive when needed by their young children; many men feel worthy when needed by their family and/or their work.
>
> […]Only when we are needed do we believe we have significance. Give a boy a special task — just about any task — and he blossoms. Give a girl a person — in fact, almost any living being — who depends on her, and she blossoms.
>
> […]As I regularly note, the bigger the government, the smaller the citizen. One can add: The bigger the government, the less significant the citizen — especially men.
>
> This is easy to explain because it is definitional. The more the state does, the less its citizens are needed to do. One well-known example is the way welfare robbed so many men of significance when women and their children came to depend financially on the state.
>
> And it goes further than that. In order to feel significant, men not only need to have others depend on them, they also need to depend on themselves, on their own work and initiative. But that, too, is destroyed as the state gets bigger. Fewer and fewer people work for themselves (which leads to, among other things, the disappearance of that quintessentially American ideal of the risk-taking entrepreneur).
>
> It gets worse. As being needed and significant shifts from the individual to the state, the state increasingly determines who is needed and who has significance.

Prager goes on to explain three groups who have increasing influence as government grows – politicians, news media, and intellectuals.

Mark Steyn has more to say about the decline of the West. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> Is America set for decline? It's been a grand run. The country's been the leading economic power since it overtook Britain in the 1880s. That's impressive. Nevertheless, over the course of that century and a quarter, Detroit went from the world's industrial powerhouse to an urban wasteland, and the once-golden state of California atrophied into a land of government run by the government for the government. What happens when the policies that brought ruin to Detroit

> and sclerosis to California become the basis for the nation at large? Strictly on the numbers, the United States is in the express lane to Declinistan: unsustainable entitlements, the remorseless governmentalization of the economy and individual liberty, and a centralization of power that will cripple a nation of this size. Decline is the way to bet. But what will ensure it is if the American people accept decline as a price worth paying for European social democracy.
>
> Is that so hard to imagine? Every time I retail the latest indignity imposed upon the "citizen" by some or other Continental apparatchik, I receive e-mails from the heartland pointing out, with much reference to the Second Amendment, that it couldn't happen here because Americans aren't Euro-weenies. But nor were Euro-weenies once upon a time. Hayek's greatest insight in *The Road to Serfdom* is psychological: "There is one aspect of the change in moral values brought about by the advance of collectivism which at the present time provides special food for thought," he wrote with an immigrant's eye on the Britain of 1944. "It is that the virtues which are held less and less in esteem and which consequently become rarer are precisely those on which the British people justly prided themselves and in which they were generally agreed to excel. The virtues possessed by Anglo-Saxons in a higher degree than most other people, excepting only a few of the smaller nations, like the Swiss and the Dutch, were independence and self-reliance, individual initiative and local responsibility, the successful reliance on voluntary activity, noninterference with one's neighbor and tolerance of the different and queer, respect for custom and tradition, and a healthy suspicion of power and authority." Two-thirds of a century on, almost every item on the list has been abandoned, from "independence and self-reliance" (40 percent of people receive state handouts) to "a healthy suspicion of power and authority" — the reflex response now to almost any passing inconvenience is to demand the government "do something," the cost to individual liberty be damned. American exceptionalism would have to be awfully exceptional to suffer a similar expansion of government and not witness, in enough of the populace, the same descent into dependency and fatalism. As Europe demonstrates, a determined state can change the character of a people in the space of a generation or two. Look at what the Great Society did to the black family and imagine it applied to the general population: That's what happened in Britain.

Could it happen here?

MUST-HEAR: Scott Klusendorf discusses Obamacare and the pro-life cause

March 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must-hear podcast.

Details:

LTI is not a political organization and does not endorse any candidate. The regular participates of the LTI podcast – namely Rich, Scott, and Jay wanted to change gears and explicitly discuss politics – specifically the recently enacted health care reform bill and its impact on the pro-life cause. The views expressed are individual opinions and are not endorsed by Life Training Institute.

Scott described this one as a barnburner yesterday and I could not agree more. Enjoy.

The MP3 file is here.

The RSS feed for the LTI podcast is here.

I'm also on Facebook, by the way, and you can befriend me. You can also click here to follow the blog on Facebook.

I've listened to this podcast 3 times but I'll listen to it again and try to take notes, instead of jumping up and down clapping my hands. This podcast is a must-listen for social conservatives who are left-wing on economics issues. Big government is *never* in favor of protecting the unborn or defending traditional marriage. Big government always means increased social liberalism.

Democrats vote to subsidize Viagra for child molesters and rapists

March 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Washtington Times.

Excerpt:

> Senate Democrats voted almost unanimously Wednesday night to ensure the right of rapists and child molesters to have guaranteed access to government-subsidized Viagra under the president's health care plan. Only Sen. Evan Bayh of Indiana broke ranks with his Democratic colleagues.
>
> Sen. Tom Coburn, Oklahoma Republican, put the Senate's majority party on the spot by offering an amendment denying convicted sex offenders coverage for erectile-dysfunction medications. Dr. Coburn's proposal would also have prohibited health care exchanges from offering any coverage of elective-abortion drugs like RU-486 at taxpayer expense.
>
> [The Democrats also] defeated an amendment barring tax increases on families earning less than $250,000. So much for the president's promised "middle-class tax cut." They also defeated an amendment requiring the president and other administration officials to purchase health care from exchanges – just like everyone else under Obamacare.

So it's not *just* abortions that will be taxpayer-funded.

This is scary. It seems to me that people on the left don't believe that anyone should ever be punished for doing anything immoral. They often oppose concepts like "good" and "evil". They refrain from making moral judgments. They condemn those who are good, and lift up those who are evil. They don't want anyone to feel excluded or judged. No one is responsible for their own decisions, they say. But what about the victims of immoral actions? And who is going to pay for all the goodies they hand out (to get elected)?

MUST-READ: 20 reasons why the health care reform bill is a disaster

March 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are TWENTY reasons from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

1. You are young and don't want health insurance? You are starting up a small business and need to minimize expenses, and one way to do that is to forego health insurance? Tough. You have to pay $750 annually for the "privilege." (Section 1501)

2. You are young and healthy and want to pay for insurance that reflects that status? Tough. You'll have to pay for premiums that cover not only you, but also the guy who smokes three packs a day, drink a gallon of whiskey and eats chicken fat off the floor. That's because insurance companies will no longer be able to underwrite on the basis of a person's health status. (Section 2701).

5. You are an employer and you would like to offer coverage that doesn't allow your employees' slacker children to stay on the policy until age 26? Tough. (Section 2714).

6. You must buy a policy that covers ambulatory patient services, emergency services, hospitalization, maternity and newborn care, mental health and substance use disorder services, including behavioral health treatment; prescription drugs; rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices; laboratory services; preventive and wellness services; chronic disease management; and pediatric services, including oral and vision care. You're a single guy without children? Tough, your policy must cover pediatric services. You're a woman who can't have children? Tough, your policy must cover maternity services. You're a teetotaler? Tough, your policy must cover substance abuse treatment. (Add your own violation of personal freedom here.) (Section 1302).

9. If you are a large employer (defined as at least 50 employees) and you do not want to provide health insurance to your employee, then you will pay a $750 fine per employee (It could be $2,000 to $3,000 under the reconciliation changes). Think you know how to better spend that money? Tough. (Section 1513).

11. If you are a physician and you don't want the government looking over your shoulder? Tough. The Secretary of Health and Human Services is authorized to use your claims data to issue you reports that measure the resources you use, provide information on the quality of care you provide, and compare the resources you use to those used by other physicians. Of course, this will all be just for informational purposes. It's not like the government will ever use it to intervene in your practice and patients' care. Of course not. (Section 3003 (i))

12. If you are a physician and you want to own your own hospital, you must be an owner and have a "Medicare provider agreement" by Feb. 1, 2010. (Dec. 31, 2010 in the reconciliation changes.) If you didn't have those by then, you are out of luck. (Section

6001 (i) (1) (A)).

13. If you are a physician owner and you want to expand your hospital? Well, you can't (Section 6001 (i) (1) (B). Unless, it is located in a country where, over the last five years, population growth has been 150% of what it has been in the state (Section 6601 (i) (3) (E)). And then you cannot increase your capacity by more than 200% (Section 6001 (i) (3) (C)).

14. You are a health insurer and you want to raise premiums to meet costs? Well, if that increase is deemed "unreasonable" by the Secretary of Health and Human Services it will be subject to review and can be denied. (Section 1003)

15. The government will extract a fee of $2.3 billion annually from the pharmaceutical industry… Think you, as a pharmaceutical executive, know how to better use that money, say for research and development? Tough. (Section 9008 (b)).

16. The government will extract a fee of $2 billion annually from medical device makers… Think you, as a medical device maker, know how to better use that money, say for research and development? Tough. (Section 1405).

So… individuals will have less money in their pockets, small businesses will lay off employees… the number of doctors and hospitals will decrease… there will be fewer new medications and new medical devices developed… and insurance companies will go out of business so that consumers of health care will have fewer choices and pay higher prices.

Every time Obama attacks service providers and product manufacturers, then we get LESS of what they provide. When we get FEWER services and products, then that means that there will be LESS SUPPLY. When demand stays the same and supply goes down, then PRICES INCREASE. We are all going to have to pay for Obama's economic ignorance. Eventually, the government ends up by closing hospitals and cutting service, as is being proposed right now in the UK. (20 billion euros worth of cuts!)

We could have had real health care reform to make buying health care like buying from Amazon.com. But no. We wanted to buy health care from the DMV, because the service there is SO MUCH BETTER.

Michelle Malkin explains how the left regularly fakes hate crimes

March 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michelle Malkin

Her latest column is here. (And yes, I do admire her! Duh!)

Excerpt:

> If you can't stand the heat, manufacture a hate crime epidemic.
>
> After years of covering racial hoaxes on college campuses and victim sob stories in the public arena, I've encountered countless opportunists who live by that demented mindset. At best, the fakers are desperately seeking 15 minutes of infamy. At worst, their aim is the criminalization of political dissent.
>
> Upon decimating the deliberative process to hand President Obama a health care "reform" victory, unpopular Beltway Democrats and their media water-carriers now claim there's a Tea Party epidemic of racism, harassment, and violence against them. On Thursday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi issued a tepid, obligatory statement against smearing all conservatives as national security threats. But her lieutenants had already emptied their tar buckets. Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee chairman Chris Van Hollen blamed Republican leaders of "stoking the flames." Democrat House Whip James Clyburn accused the GOP of "aiding and abetting" what he called "terrorism."

Here's an example:

> In November 2009, Kentucky Census worker Bill Sparkman was found dead in a secluded rural cemetery with the word "Fed" scrawled on his chest with a rope around his neck. The Atlantic Monthly, the Huffington Post, and liberal media hosts stampeded over themselves to blame Fox News, conservative blogs, Republicans, and right-wing radio. Federal, state, and local authorities discovered

> that Sparkman had killed himself and deliberately concocted a hate crime hoax as part of an insurance scam to benefit his surviving son.

The article contains many more faked hate crimes conducted by the left to smear conservatives. A substantial portion of people on the left thinks that anyone who disagrees with them is a terrorist. And if evidence is not available to substantiate that claim, then it just has to be manufactured. By the left.

The mainstream news media is more than willing to run with the lies. After all, CNN thinks that a tea party rally of thousands of people actually drew a few dozen people, (check the photos – is that "a few dozen people" like the CNN woman said?). It's not like the lamestream media is there to tell the truth – they're leftists. And they ignore *real* hate crimes committed against conservatives. All the news that fits… they print.

By the way, ECM sent me this article from the American Spectator a few days ago. It talks about Jewish Republican Eric Cantor's campaign headquarters getting shot up (with real guns and real bullets). The point of the article is that the religious left had nothing to say about attacks on the wrong kinds of victims. If you're a Jewish conservative, then hate crimes just don't happen to you! They can't, because only secular leftists can be victims of hate, see? So just keep in mind that reports of hate crimes have to be taken with a grain of salt.

Star Parker is running for Congress in California

March 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Star Parker

Story from Michelle Malkin's blog, by LaShawn Barber. Star Parker is running for Congress against Democrat Laura Richardson.

Excerpt:

> In Uncle Sam's Plantation: How Big Government Enslaves America's Poor and What We Can Do About It, Parker traced the shift in America's attitude from a belief in strong families and hard work to the flawed idea that the government's role is to solve social problems.
>
> "Social engineers of the late 1960s told Americans that black people could not take control over the poverty in their lives due to centuries of racism and segregation," Parker writes. The onus was now on society to "fix" poverty, and taxpayers are still pouring money into it. But poverty can't be fixed with money, Parker asserts. Moral bankruptcy, caused by the scourge of relativism, must be overcome. Government safety nets allow people to escape the consequences of personal behavior. As a result, there is little incentive to *learn* from bad behavior.

Holy Snark! Forget Congress, let's elect her as President! Did you see that she blames everything on moral relativism!!! Gah! She's perfect!

Take a look at this article about her from WORLD magazine, written by Marvin O'Lasky.

Except:

> Parker, born in 1956, is a Republican who hasn't held political office before, but we joked last month that she had a ready reply if attacked on grounds of inexperience: *You're wrong. I've stolen. I've lied. I know how to do wrong.* Indeed she does. Drugs, armed robbery, four abortions: "I was very flirty and promiscuous, and several bouts with sexually transmitted diseases didn't stop me."
>
> Parker, on welfare, learned that "welfare policy hurts the very people we're trying to help. It boiled down to, 'Don't work, don't save, don't get married. We'll

> take care of you.'" She wanted extra cash that wouldn't be reported, but when she applied at one Los Angeles business headed by "really good-looking guys," they refused to pay under-the-table and also said that her lifestyle was "unacceptable to God."
>
> They didn't hire her but they did keep calling her, asking her to go to church with them, and she finally did—"and things started changing. I felt equipped to make proper decisions. I could say no to junkie friends. I could say no to the guys I knew." Parker went off welfare, took a job answering phones in the basement of a food distribution company, learned that she had a gift for selling, gained a degree in marketing, and started her own business.
>
> The business was a magazine that spotlighted church-sponsored events of interest to singles. It did well but crashed in 1992 when Los Angeles (including many of her advertisers) burned in the Rodney King riots. Parker began speaking out against those who thought "that even these riots were somebody else's fault. I had been hearing for so long the rhetoric that everything that happens to blacks is because of somebody white."
>
> Parker particularly spoke out on two issues within her own experience. One was education: After balking at a fifth abortion, she gave birth and by 1992 had a child in the sixth grade—"and her school was horrible." She became a strong advocate of education vouchers and soon was nationally known. The other issue was welfare reform: She and I were involved in that in 1995 and 1996, and I saw her *epignosis*—knowledge from personal experience—filling in the blanks for members of Congress who had previously moaned about costs without adding up the human toll.

Wowie-wow-wow! Now that's how women are supposed to sound! School choice! Welfare reform! She sounds ideal!

Oh by the way, here's a picture of LaShawn Barber.

LaShawn Barber

Always good to post more pictures of conservative women, I always say. And these two are both Christians, too!

Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela

March 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hugo Chavez is arresting anyone who disagrees with him. (H/T Ace of Spades)

Excerpt:

> The owner of Venezuela's only remaining TV channel that takes a critical line against President Hugo Chavez was arrested Thursday, raising concerns the government is carrying out a widening crackdown aimed at silencing opponents.
>
> Guillermo Zuloaga, owner of Globovision, was arrested on a warrant for remarks that were deemed "offensive" to the president, Attorney General Luisa Ortega said…
>
> The Attorney General's Office said in a statement that prosecutors are investigating Zuloaga for allegedly violating a law prohibiting Venezuelans from ***spreading "false information through any medium,"*** including newspapers, radio, television, e-mails or leaflets, ***"that cause public panic."***

Hugo Chavez has his own version of the Democrats' "Fairness Doctrine". I really don't think there is much difference between Chavez and Obama, either. This will happen here too, in time. When you look at the way that Democrats attack and censor their opponents in the media and on university campuses, it's not unexpected. They're fascists. It's not an insult, it's just reality. That's the worldview of the secular left.

Are Obama and Chavez really so different?

Here's a picture of Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez.

Hey, Chavez! Good work arresting dissenters!
They seem to get along well. Perhaps because they share the same views?

Related posts

- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria
- North Korea conducts second nuclear test, Obama sternly disapproves

MUST-READ: Does Obamacare encourage men to marry and start families?

March 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from the New Ledger. (H/T ECM)

First the video of Democrat Senator Max Baucus explaining what health care reform was really about.

That's the truth that no one would speak of until the bill had passed. It's not a bill about health care – it's a bill about redistributing wealth from rich to poor. The bill's whole purpose is to capitalize on people's fears to gain the power to equalize life outcomes by moving money around.

That's what government-run health care is – it reduces the costs of risky behavior for some people by pushing them onto hard-working people who pay taxes. Those who need abortions, sex changes and in vitro *get paid*, those who work the hardest and live the cleanest *pay*. The way to get paid is to engage in risky and/or immoral behavior, and the way to pay is to engage in hard work – like starting your own business to create jobs. Those are the incentives that Democrats create with the government takeover of health care.

And the New Ledger article explains what it means to have the government take care of you.

Excerpt:

> America was built on the belief that the dreams of each of us could be achieved through hard work, self-determination, and persistence. Immigrants from around the globe came to these shores to find refuge from the very governmental policies this administration is imposing on its citizens. Many an American has fought and died for our right to live in a nation of self-starters, where your hard work would allow you to provide a better life for your children, and grand-children, where you and your family were able to enjoy the fruits of your labor.
>
> Senator Baucus' admission reveals the true nature of these policies – create an America where the incentive to succeed is squashed. Those who work tirelessly to provide for their family are not rewarded for their efforts, but penalized. In the Democrat's America, those who sit lazily on their duff, are the ones who are rewarded.
>
> This approach will not lift up the poor, but enslave them to the tit of federal leviathan. Without an education, or job training, or dream, Americans will be able to sit, aloof in front of their television and drown their sorrows in Big Macs and beer, still assured of their free health care and their government check. They will not earn that money after a hard day's work…

The Democrats want people who work hard to have less money of their own. That makes

it harder for hard-workers to execute their own life plan. So, it means that people who work hard will have to accept what the government gives them instead – public schools, public hospitals, public libraries, public universities, etc. That way everyone will be equal. Equally dependent on the government.

But these public facilities may not always be the best for Christians who have Christian life plans. And if you think that a secular government is going to give you what you need to raise a Christian family, think again. They'll put Kevin Jennings, Planned Parenthood, the SEIU and Al Gore in the school to teach your children about same-sex marriage, abortion, socialism and global warming. And you'll have no money left over to resist them.

What did the Republicans do instead?

Take a look at these graphs from a recent Powerline post.

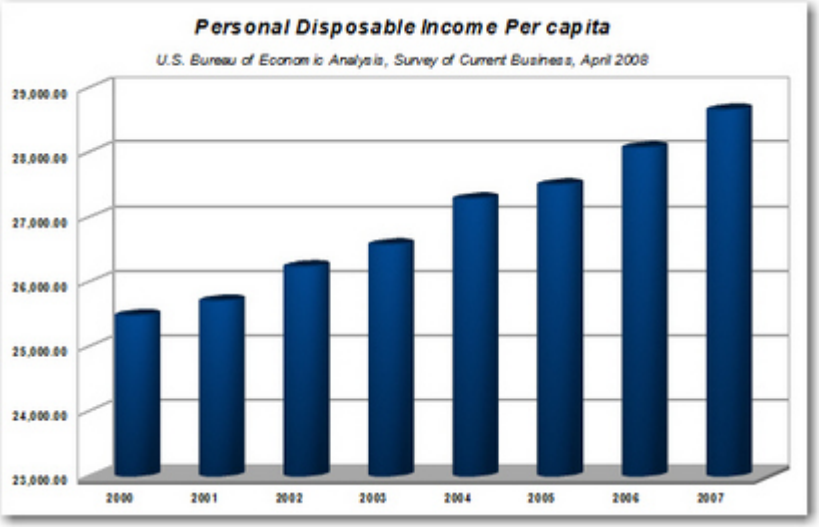

Per Capita Income

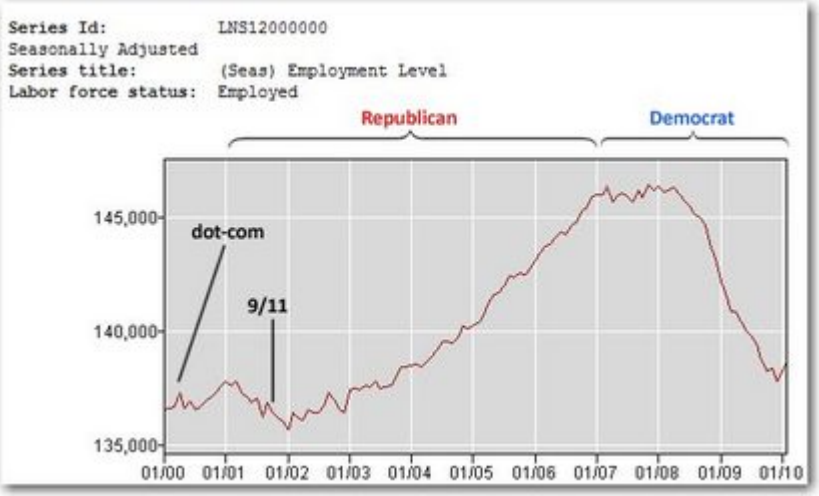

Employment Rate

Republicans want people to get their own jobs and to earn their own income. Pay their own way. Dream their own dreams. And to achieve those dreams. This is a lot better for Christians with a plan to do things in a way that honors Christ.

What do these graphs say to marriage-minded men?

These graphs are a green light to a man. They say to a man: "MARRY AND HAVE

CHILDREN NOW”. They say that the harder you work, the more you will be able to provide for *your* family. That it is safe to take the responsibility for a wife and children, because it is in your power to protect them and provide for them. They mean that a man has nothing to worry about – that he should stop worrying about the future and just go for it! And this isn’t just a blind faith that things will work out – there are reasons to believe that things will work out. More income and more jobs means that things are more likely to work out.

What do 77% of young, unmarried women really want?

77% of young, unmarried women voted for Obama. They don’t *really* want husbands to protect and provide for them – because they voted for *less personal income* and *fewer jobs*. That’s what they’ve voted for, anyway. If they didn’t want to dissuade men from marrying, then maybe they shouldn’t have voted for Obama.

Related: MUST-READ: 20 reasons why the health care reform bill is a disaster.

Michele Bachmann promises to work to repeal Obamacare

March 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

According to a Bloomberg national poll, the majority of Americans are as depressed as I am about the direction that the country is going in. And I think that that the health care reform bill is part of the problem.

But Michele Bachmann has a plan.

First, she doesn't sugar-coat the problem.

Second, she has a plan to solve the problem.

Last week was very depressing for me… but she gives me hope.

Michele Bachmann has a book that I have

By the way, check out he bookshelf that appears behind her in the second video. I can make out *War Footing*, published by the Naval Institute Press, on the left side of the bottom shelf. I have that book in my office shelf at work.

Details:

> America has been at war for years, but until now, it has not been clear with whom or precisely for what. And we have not been using the full resources we need to win.
>
> With the publication of *War Footing*, lead-authored by Frank Gaffney, it not only becomes clear who the enemy is and how high the stakes are, but also exactly how we can prevail.
>
> *War Footing* shows that we are engaged in nothing less than a War for the Free World. This is a fight to the death with Islamofascists, Muslim extremists driven by a totalitarian political ideology that, like Nazism or Communism before it, is determined to destroy freedom and the people who love it.
>
> Mr. Gaffney and his esteemed colleagues offer ten specific steps that Americans, as individuals and as communities, can take to ensure their way of life and safety and the future well-being of their children and grandchildren. These steps include detailed recommendations about how to:
>
> This book is a highly readable and definitive owners manual for the War for the Free World. Whether we like it or not, every American owns a stake in its outcome. *War Footing* tells us how we can make sure it comes out right.
>
> Among those who contributed brilliant analyses and commonsense recommendations to *War Footing* are: R. James Woolsey, Victor Davis Hanson, General Tom McInerney, General Paul Vallely, Alex Alexiev, Andrew McCarthy, Claudia Rosett, Michael Rubin, Daniel Goure, Caroline Glick, and Michael Waller. Their inputs – and those of twenty other contributors – help make this strategy

> for winning the War for the Free World as readable as it is needed.

If there is one thing I like to see in women other than fiscal conservatism, it’s foreign policy conservatism. War is often the only way to stop tyranny and bloodshed in countries. The world is not a happy-clappy place. The United States military protects the safety of other nations by just being present, and sometimes even by fighting. We face serious threats. It’s good to see that Michele is at least aware of what is going on in the world. I think that most people who are anti-war really haven’t read anything about the way the world really is.

Obama’s nationalization of student loans killed private sector jobs

March 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marathon Pundit reports.

Excerpt:

PENNSYLVANIA: “Sallie Mae Decided Against Hiring 300 Temporary Workers At Its Loan Servicing Center After The Passage Of Student Lending Reform. Still to be determined are the long-term effects on the nearly 1,000 workers at the company’s facility in the Hanover Industrial Estates. “The temporary jobs that were posted in preparation for this year’s peak loan processing season have been eliminated,” Martha Holler, spokeswoman for Sallie Mae, said in an e-mail Friday. The move was in reaction to the passage Thursday of The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act that was included in the health care reform bill.” (“Sallie Mae plan for 300 temps halted,” The Times Leader, 3/27/10)

NEBRASKA: “Congressional Votes On Thursday To End Federally Subsidized Student Lending By Private Companies Will Mean Job Cuts At Lincoln Student Loan Company Nelnet, a company spokesman said Friday. “We are very disappointed by this political news,” spokesman Ben Kiser said. “We believe it is poor public policy that will eliminate a part of our business and result in job losses in our community.” Kiser declined to give any details about the scope of the cuts, although he said they will occur over the next several months. Nelnet employs about 2,100 people, including more than 800 in Lincoln. The provision to end the Federal Family Education Loan Program and to channel all federal student lending directly through the government was tacked on to the controversial health insurance overhaul reconciliation legislation.” (“End Of Student Loan Program Will Mean Job Cuts At Nelnet,” Lincoln Journal Star, 3/26/10)

And more from this post:

STUDENT LOAN CENTER IN LYNN HAVEN, FLORIDA: “It’s Devastating With The Swipe Of A Pen We Can Wipe-Out 700-Jobs.” “Another potential nail in the coffin for SallieMae Thursday. The U.S. Senate has passed a Health Care Reconciliation bill. The ‘fix it’ bill reshapes parts of the new health care overhaul law. The Democrats voted down all 40 Republican amendments to the bill. One of those was an amendment offered by Florida Senator George Lemieux that would have protected SallieMae and some 700 local jobs. Lemieux’s proposal would have stripped the health care bill of the language which basically takes the student loan program from the private sector. The bill now goes back to the House for a final vote. ‘It’s devastating with the swipe of a pen we can wipe-out 700-jobs.’ Renee Meng said it was a sad day for the SallieMae center in Lynn Haven where she described the staff as devastated and heartbroken.” (“Time Could Be Short For SallieMae In Lynn Haven,” WJHG-NBC, 3/25/10)

Thousands of jobs lost. People who can’t feed their families, send their children to university or even get medical care. All because of Obama. The voters had fears about the future. And the voters believed that he could make real life go away with a magic wand called “big government”.

Who knows more about economics? Obama or people who run businesses?

March 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from The American Spectator, which talks about the Obammunist response to companies losing massive amounts of money because of Obamacare. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> By last Friday, AT&T, Caterpillar, Deere & Co., and AK Steel Holding Corp. had all announced that they were taking the one-time charges on their first-quarter balance sheets. More companies were expected to make similar announcements this week.
>
> […]On Friday White House chief of staff **Rahm Emanuel** and Obama senior advisor **Valerie Jarrett** were calling the CEOs and Washington office heads of the companies that took the financial hits and attacked them for doing so. One Washington office head said that the White House calls were accusatory and "downright rude."
>
> […]"Most of these people [in the Administration] have never had a real job in their lives. They don't understand a thing about business, and that includes the President," says a senior lobbyist for one of the companies that announced the charge. "My CEO sat with the President over lunch with two other CEOs, and each of them tried to explain to the President what this bill would do to our companies and the economy in general. First the President didn't understand what they were talking about. Then he basically told my boss he was lying. Frankly my boss was embarrassed for him; he clearly had not been briefed and didn't know what was in the bill."
>
> […]"We had memos on these issues, but none of our people, we think, looked at them," says a staffer. "When they saw the stories last week about the charges some of the companies were taking, they were genuinely surprised and assumed that the companies were just doing this to embarrass them. They really believed this bill would immediately lower costs. They just didn't understand what they were voting on."

And more from National Review, where the CEO of Aetna was interviewed. (H/T Ace of Spades via ECM)

Excerpt:

> **Will insurance premiums go up?**
>
> The answer is yes, and some of the things that will drive those premiums are significant additional taxes the industry will ultimately have to pay in the first

> year.
>
> **The President said that this bill would not have any impact on people who already had coverage, that it was about the uninsured, that there would be no change. Will this legislation change the coverage of people who are already paying for it?**
>
> My perception is, yes, things will change. You might not have a plan that includes the exact same doctors. You might have plans that have richer benefits, and therefore you're going to pay more for benefits you may or may not want. It would have been a better message to say, we're going to make certain you maintain your eligibility.

The "Robin Hood" intention of giving to the unproductive by taking from the productive seldom pays off, since the productive are the ones who *give people jobs.* And a lot of people are going to *lose their jobs* because of Obama's economic ignorance. Either that, or companies will raise their insurance premiums, so that the poor will have to pay more for health care. Obama doesn't know what he is doing, he probably thinks that communism has made Cuba rich. He's just trying to help poor America reach the opulence of communist North Korea.

Der Spiegel reports that just 42% of Germans believe in global warming

March 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> Germans citizens are rapidly losing faith in global warming following the Climate-gate scandals, according to a new report in **Der Spiegel**.
>
> The report indicates that just 42 percent of Germans are worried about global warming, down substantially from the 62 percent that expressed concern with the state of the environment in 2006.
>
> **German news site The Local** analyzed the results from the poll, conducted by polling company Infratest for the German newsmagazine. Many people have little faith in the information and prognosis of climate researchers, The Local explained, with a third questioned in the survey not giving them much credence.
>
> This is thought to be largely due to mistakes and exaggerations recently discovered in a report of the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said the site.

Der Spiegel is the New York Times of Germany, except further to the left, if that's possible.

Meanwhile, the left-wing Guardian reports. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Humans are too stupid to prevent climate change from radically impacting on our lives over the coming decades. This is the stark conclusion of James Lovelock, the globally respected environmental thinker and independent scientist who developed the Gaia theory.
>
> It follows a tumultuous few months in which public opinion on efforts to tackle climate change has been undermined by events such as the climate scientists' emails leaked from the University of East Anglia (UEA) and the failure of the Copenhagen climate summit.
>
> "I don't think we're yet evolved to the point where we're clever enough to handle a complex a situation as climate change," said Lovelock in his first in-depth interview since the theft of the UEA emails last November. "The inertia of humans is so huge that you can't really do anything meaningful."
>
> One of the main obstructions to meaningful action is "modern democracy", he added. **"Even the best democracies agree that when a major war approaches, democracy must be put on hold for the time being. I have a feeling that climate change may be an issue as severe as a war. It may**

> **be necessary to put democracy on hold for a while.”**

It’s all about controlling other people.

Liberal MSNBC says that more legal firearm ownership reduces crime rates

March 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from ULTRA-leftist MSNBC. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Americans overall are far less likely to be killed with a firearm than they were when it was much more difficult to obtain a concealed-weapons permit, according to statistics collected by the federal Centers for Disease Control. But researchers have not been able to establish a cause-and-effect relationship.

> In the 1980s and '90s, as the concealed-carry movement gained steam, Americans were killed by others with guns at the rate of about 5.66 per 100,000 population. In this decade, the rate has fallen to just over 4.07 per 100,000, a 28 percent drop. The decline follows a fivefold increase in the number of "shall-issue" and unrestricted concealed-carry states from 1986 to 2006.The highest gun homicide rate is in Washington, D.C., which has had the nation's strictest gun-control laws for years and bans concealed carry: 20.50 deaths per 100,000 population, five times the general rate. The lowest rate, 1.12, is in Utah, which has such a liberal concealed weapons policy that most American adults can get a permit to carry a gun in Utah without even visiting the state.
>
> The decline in gun homicides also comes as U.S. firearm sales are skyrocketing, according to federal background checks that are required for most gun sales. After holding stable at 8.5 to 9 million checks from 1999 to 2005, the FBI reported a surge to 10 million in 2006, 11 million in 2007, nearly 13 million in 2008 and more than 14 million last year, a 55 percent increase in just four years.

Read more at CNS News and Newsbusters.

UPDATE: ECM commands me to update the post to recommend the book "More Guns, Less Crime" by John Lott, (University of Chicago Press, 2000). But a much easier book to read is "The Bias Against Guns" (Regnery, 2003).

Related posts

- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Formal debate on gun control featuring John Lott and Gary Kleck
- Tom Sowell on gun control and judicial activism
- Grandmother jailed for five years for owning family heirloom handgun
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple-victim public shootings?
- 61-year-old British man convicted for cutting up fruit with a Swiss Army knife
- Understanding how concealed carry laws save lives
- Evaluating Sotomayor's views on abortion and gun ownership

- Why do people favor legal private ownership and concealed carry of handguns?
- John Lott on gun-free zones and multiple victim public shootings

MUST-HEAR: James White debates Michael Brown on Calvinism vs Foreknowledge

March 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the first of a two-debate series. (Part two is here)

The MP3 file is here.

Participants:

- James White (Calvinism)
- Michael Brown (Foreknowledge)

Format: (from James White's blog)

> For those interested, we will be covering three texts of Scripture on Thursday: John 6, Romans 8/9, and Ephesians 1. Each will have 8 minutes to provide their exegesis of the text; then we will have four minutes of cross-ex each, then three minute conclusions before moving on to the next text. I know, not a lot of time, but that still covers 90 full minutes (we will not be taking any breaks at all).
>
> The following Thursday we will repeat the process, but this time covering Michael's chosen texts, Luke 13:34-35 (Deuteronomy 5:28-29) Ezekiel 18:21-32 (Jeremiah 3:19-20; Ezekiel 22:30-31) I John 2:1-2 (2 Pet 2:1).

Michael Brown basically represents my view on these issues. This is a perfect debate – it's 100% time well spent.

I blogged about their previous debate here. I highly, highly recommend this debate.

My thoughts

My own reservation about Calvinism is that it requires that God create people who go to Hell. They go to Hell only because God chooses not to draw them to him. So there are people pre-destined to Hell for eternity who are not responsible since it's God's choice where they are saved or not. Basically Calvinism has God creating some creatures, say, sheep, who have a predisposition to wander into lakes. These sheep then wander into a lake. He then picks some of them out who are no different than the others, and lets the rest drown. Then God turns to the ones he saved and says "aren't I great for having saved you and not them?", when he could have saved all of them. That's not love.

I think a much better view, a more Biblical view, is that although all the sheep are initially rebelling against God, he still foreknows which will respond to his rescuing efforts. The sheep all want to try swimming to safety by themselves – none of them wants God's help. So they are all doomed to death, unless God acts to save them. God can see which sheep will respond to his rescuing activities, so he reaches out to those sheep and they respond and they are saved. The rest die swimming away from him. That's love. Love respects the free will of the beloved to resist, even if it means letting them choose their own

destruction. And this view is different from Calvinism, because in this view God is all-loving and all-merciful. He is not willing that any sheep should perish, but that all the sheep would be saved. If all are not saved, then it is not God's fault. He allows the sheep to choose to resist him.

I totally agree with Romans 9, where it says that God creates some people for destruction, and that those people cannot resist God's will that they be created for destruction. But on my view, those people are people who would resist him in any time, in any place, even if he tried to save them. They cannot demand to be saved even though they resist God. They cannot say to their maker that they should not be created only to be damned, either, because being damned is their own fault. They don't have a right to demand that they be saved because they would freely choose not to respond to God in any set of circumstances that God might try to place them in in order to save them. So God is permitted to create vessels of wrath for his own glory – but it's *their fault*, not God's.

I agree with Brown that vessels of wrath are free to repent and become part of the elect if they choose to respond to God's drawing them towards him. Where does it say in the text that the vessels cannot change their destination by repentance? It doesn't. People choose to respond to God or not, and that determines what kind of vessel they are going to be. God knows in advance what kind they are going to be and creates the vessels of wrath anyway.

My specific views are spelled out more here: What are the differences between Wesleyan Arminianism and Calvinism?

MUST-READ: NASA admits that their data is worse than CRU Climate-gate data

March 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Fox News. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> NASA was able to put a man on the moon, but the space agency can't tell you what the temperature was when it did. By its own admission, NASA's temperature records are in even worse shape than the besmirched Climate-gate data.
>
> E-mail messages obtained by a Freedom of Information Act request reveal that NASA concluded that its own climate findings were inferior to those maintained by both the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit (CRU) — the scandalized source of the leaked Climate-gate e-mails — and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Climatic Data Center.
>
> The e-mails from 2007 reveal that when a *USA Today* reporter asked if NASA's data "was more accurate" than other climate-change data sets, NASA's Dr. Reto A. Ruedy replied with an unequivocal no. **He said** "the National Climatic Data Center's procedure of only using the best stations is more accurate," admitting that some of his own procedures led to less accurate readings.
>
> "My recommendation to you is to continue using NCDC's data for the U.S. means and [East Anglia] data for the global means," Ruedy told the reporter.
>
> "NASA's temperature data is worse than the Climate-gate temperature data. According to NASA," wrote Christopher Horner, a senior fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute who **uncovered the e-mails**. Horner is skeptical of NCDC's data as well, stating plainly: "Three out of the four temperature data sets stink."
>
> Global warming critics call this a crucial blow to advocates' arguments that minor flaws in the "Climate-gate" data are unimportant, since all the major data sets arrive at the same conclusion — that the Earth is getting warmer. But there's a good reason for that, the skeptics say: They all use the same data.
>
> "There is far too much overlap among the surface temperature data sets to assert with a straight face that they independently verify each other's results," says James M. Taylor, senior fellow of environment policy at The Heartland Institute.

My guess is that they'll need a lot of government money to research why their data is so corrupted. But Obama will surely oblige them.

MUST-HEAR: Greg Koukl and Kevin DeYoung discuss Brian McLaren's apostasy

March 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow. Brian McLaren has completely abandoned traditional Christianity. Greg Koukl and Kevin DeYoung analyze his latest book "A New Kind of Christianity". Hint: It seems to be mostly naturalism and leftist politics.

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

Kevin DeYoung – Brian McLaren's New Kind of Christianity
Host: Greg Koukl

Guest: Kevin DeYoung – Brian McLaren's "New Kind of Christianity" (00:00:00)
Commentary: Reality vs. Religion? The Modern Upper Story Leap (00:56:39)
Guest: Dennis Prager – Reality vs. Religion (01:52:25)

Caller Topics:
1. How do you prove an attribute of God's to a non-Christian? (01:18:31)
2. When and how was Adam created on an old earth view? (01:26:37)
3. How do you answer claims of Bible contradictions by Bart Ehrman? (01:41:39)
4. Disagree on take on the Executive Order about funding abortions (02:18:18)
5. If materialism is true, can God recreate us on the Day of Resurrection and will us to be the identical person as before? (02:34:47)
6. Death before the Fall is wrong theologically and scientifically. (02:40:46)

Topics:

- What is Brian's view of Creation?
- What is Brian's view of the Fall?
- What is Brian's view of Scripture?
- What is Brian's view of Truth?
- What is Brian's view of sin and Hell?
- What is Brian's view of the Fall?
- What is Brian's view of atonement?
- How did Brian's leftist political views infect his theology?
- How did postmodernism affect Brian's epistemology?
- How faithful is Brian in interpreting the text?

It's a 3-hour *national* show. Greg has a monologue in Hour 2 which talks about the health care reform bill, Bart Stupak, and the fact/value distinction from Francis Schaeffer, and a short interview with famous Jewish scholar Dennis Prager in hour 3 to discuss the health care reform bill, Bart Stupak, and subjective religion versus objective religion. If you like the show, here's the RSS feed for the podcast. Greg's show was among the first things

that got me started in apologetics so many years ago. He is a solid, but tolerant Calvinist, and so it's fun for me to hear a perspective that is a little different from mine.

Please give the podcast a listen.

There's also a nice blog post about Brian McLaren by Melinda from Stand to Reason, too.

Excerpt:

> McLaren doesn't think the Bible is to be taken literally. For instance, the Garden of Eden story isn't about sin and the Fall, rather it's a "compassionate coming of age story." Consequently, the whole idea of sin and Hell is a horrible overreaction and has caused the church to offer a violent message and image all these years. It follows from this interpretation then, that there is no need for the cross and Jesus' death and resurrection. Those are violent ideas resulting from a bad reading of the Bible.

And a couple of longer reviews are linked.

> Tim Challies and Kevin DeYoung have written excellent and more in-depth reviews of McLaren's new book and I highly recommend them.

I highly recommend you listen to this podcast and if you know anyone who is being influenced by the (non) religious left, take a look at the articles, especially the DeYoung article, which is quite good.

CNN and MSNBC ratings cause Catholic blogger to laugh like evil villain

March 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically leftist New York Times. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> CNN continued what has become a precipitous decline in ratings for its prime-time programs in the first quarter of 2010, with its main hosts losing almost half their viewers in a year.
>
> The trend in news ratings for the first three months of this year is all up for one network, the Fox News Channel, which enjoyed its best quarter ever in ratings, and down for both MSNBC and CNN. …
>
> About the only break from the bad news for CNN was that March was not as bad as February, when the network had its worst single month in its recent history, finishing behind not only Fox News and MSNBC, but also its sister network HLN — and even CNBC, which had Olympics programming that month.
>
> CNN executives have steadfastly said that they will not change their approach to prime-time programs…

Well, how bad were the ratings, anyway?

Peter Sean Bradley's blog Lex Communis had a graph from Nielsen Media Research.

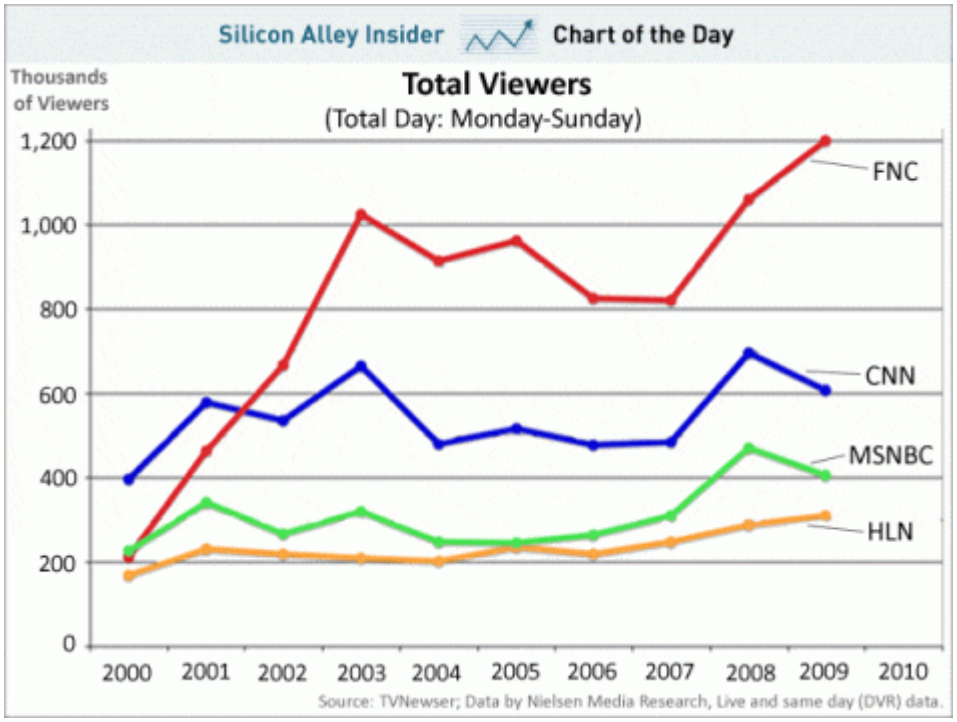

Peter's remarks are insightful:

> Bwahahahahaha!

Indeed. I concur.

I left a comment with my evil laugh, but it wasn’t my best one. I thought of a better one afterward.

More companies announce massive losses as a result of Obamacare

March 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Associated Press. (H/T Ace of Spades via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Insurer Prudential Financial Inc. said Monday that it will take a $100 million charge in the first quarter in relation to the recent health care overhaul legislation.
>
> The life insurance and annuities provider said in a regulatory filing that it will take the charge against earnings in the first quarter.
>
> Prudential joins a growing list of companies that have said they will take accounting charges because of the health care bills. AT&T said last week it would take a $1 billion charge in the first quarter. AK Steel Corp., 3M Co., Caterpillar Inc., Deere & Co. and Valero Energy have also said they would take smaller charges.
>
> Prudential said in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission that the health bill signed into law by President Barack Obama last week and a companion measure he is expected to sign Tuesday will reduce its tax deduction for retiree health care costs beginning in 2013.
>
> Companies that provide prescription drug benefits for retirees have been getting subsidies covering 28 percent of eligible costs but could deduct everything they spent on the benefits — including the federal money — from their taxable income.

Normally I oppose subsidies, but this one one was keeping the elderly off the even more wasteful Medicare prescription drug plan. (I hate that plan – it was a huge mistake made by an otherwise good president). These companies are going to dump the pensioners onto Medicare and it will cost EVEN MORE to have an inefficient government run the program, with all the waste and fraud that plagues Medicare *now.*

Ace writes:

> That subsidy was to induce companies to keep retirees on their own corporate plans rather than dump them into taxpayer-funded Medicare. Now that they've cut the subsidy, not only is it costing these businesses money, but many are thinking of giving up the subsidy and dumping them into government health care.
>
> Remember, if you like your insurance, you get to keep your insurance.
>
> And Henry Waxman is going to drag these CEOs in front of his committee, to harass and threaten them, and badger them into answering why they're bound to

> accurately account for additional new tax costs.
>
> In fact, Waxman doesn't want an answer to that; what he wants is for companies to *hide* these new, embarrassing costs illegally, so that Democrats don't have to answer questions about them. And he figures harassment and the threat of punitive legislative action should be enough to give other companies the hint.
>
> **Preemptive Strike?** Rich Lowry says it's part of the Democrats' plan to claim that all negative consequences of this bill are due to a conspiracy between evil corporations.

Meanwhile, National Review has a related story from PRNewswire. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Illinois Tool Works Inc. (NYSE: ITW) today announced that as a result of certain provisions in the recently enacted Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care program, future Medicare prescription drug subsidies received by the Company for retiree prescription drug coverage will now be taxable. As a result, the Company expects to record a discrete tax adjustment of $22 million, or 4 cents of diluted income per share from continuing operations, in its 2010 first quarter results to reflect this change in tax treatment. This discrete tax adjustment was not included in the Company's March 15, 2010 revised earnings forecast.

Wow. We're in freaking North Korea now. Next time, don't vote for the radical socialist. Socialism makes jobs go away. This is not a surprise to anyone on the right. We know these things because we're grown ups. We know how the world works. Happy talk doesn't grow the economy.

Related: Other companies take massive losses after Obamacare passes.

How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?

April 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, this one from ECM, which appeared in the leftist UK Guardian. (H/T Secondhand Smoke)

Excerpt:

> Blunders by GPs, hospital doctors and nurses jeopardised the health of thousands of patients when cancer was misdiagnosed or not spotted soon enough, according to an NHS report.
>
> Over a period of a year, doctors failed to spot key signs of cancer, tissue samples were mixed up, some patients were wrongly given an all-clear and vital diagnostic tests were delayed because of staff and equipment shortages, the study, undertaken by the NHS's National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA), found.
>
> […]When 508 cases were examined in detail, it was found that 177 patients were harmed. Two died, 25 suffered severe harm, 52 moderate harm and 88 low harm. Of a sample of 150 patients, 37% experienced delays of up to three months, 38% of more than three months and some had delays of three years. The government estimates that 10,000 die each year because of late diagnosis of cancer. The UK is poor by international standards at diagnosing cancer, studies have shown.

The post features tons of alarming examples. There's socialism. When you don't have your money in your hand, you cannot expect to be treated properly. You need a choice among providers to negotiate the best deal for your dollars.

Next, also from ECM, this one from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> The Ambulance service is being paid bonuses for not taking patients to hospital in a bid to help the NHS hit controversial targets.
>
> Patients' groups expressed horror at the "sick experiment" in which NHS managers have agreed to pay £38 for every casualty that ambulance staff "keep out of Accident and Emergency" (A&E) departments after a 999 call has been made.
>
> The tactic is part of an attempt to manage increasing demand for emergency care amid failings in the GP out-of-hours system.
>
> […]The bonuses are among dozens of schemes being tried out by ambulance trusts across the country as they attempt to improve their emergency response times and help A&E departments meet controversial targets to treat all patients within four hours of arrival.
>
> Another plan uncovered would see thousands of 999 calls currently classed as

> urgent downgraded so that callers receive telephone advice instead of an ambulance response.

But we'll soon surpass them, I'm sure.

But wait! Maybe Canada's single-payer system is better!

The left-wing Montreal Gazette reports.

Excerpt:

> Health Minister Yves Bolduc said Friday over-crowding in Quebec's hospital emergency rooms would be resolved in "four or five years."
>
> "We have the best health care system in the world," Bolduc said, while admitting that patients sometimes have to wait for that care.
>
> "All the patients are well treated," he said.
>
> […]Quebec still has a shortage of doctors and nurses, he said…
>
> […]Bolduc announced his newest timetable in response to reports patients are kept for 48 hours and longer in emergency.
>
> As well, relatives are blaming deaths in their families on emergency-room congestion.

From the communist CBC, here's more:

Guy Morisette, head of the Outaouais health agency, told CBC News that the hospital has worked hard to fix the situation, but recruiting and retaining enough staff remains a problem, and additional solutions such as training personnel and developing new programs are longer-term efforts.

Hospital	Average ER Wait Time
Buckingham	20 h 30 min
Gatineau Hospital-Hull campus	20 h 06 min
Gatineau Hospital-Gatineau campus	25 h 36 min
Gatineau-Memorial	17 h 00 min
Maniwaki	10 h 24 min
Pontiac	13 h 12 min
Outaouais average	20 h 42 min
Quebec average	16 h 30 min

Taxing and regulating doctors and treating patients for paper cuts for FREE doesn't create a shortage of health care at all. Oh, no. And anyway, the politicians just get treated in the USA anyway.

Last, Quebec, Canada's most liberal province, proposes massive user fees.

Excerpt:

> Quebeckers are bracing themselves for sweeping increases in taxes, rates and fees after a provincial budget that also proposes a controversial user fee for

> health-care services.
>
> By proposing a fee for medical appointments, the 2010-11 budget tabled Tuesday represents a shift in how the province addresses spiralling health-care costs, and could trigger a national debate over conflicts with the Canada Health Act.
>
> […]The user fee would take the form of a deductible that, according to one proposal, would be capped so that total charges do not exceed 1 per cent of a family's annual income. It would involve charging $25 per medical visit and be paid on a fee-for-service basis. It was estimated under one proposal that a couple with two children making 10 medical visits a year would pay a maximum of $250 annually.
>
> The government of Premier Jean Charest also announced a new health tax to commence in June, 2010, that will be levied on individuals when they file their income taxes. The "health contribution" will cost adults $25 this year and eventually climb to $200 in 2012. Lower-income families will be exempt. When fully implemented, the new tax will generate $945-million a year.

Ontario already has massive income tax rates, property taxes, surtaxes, sales taxes, municipal taxes and health care surcharges of hundreds of dollars a year. It's not just that they have no freedom of speech, but they die waiting for health care. (This isn't the Conservative Party's fault – they don't have a majority yet to bring in market reforms to lower the cost of health care, and they don't have a majority of the Senate and not even close to a majority in the Supreme Court).

Report on Licona-Patterson debate on the resurrection

April 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This after action report was sent in by commenter Aaron as a comment to another post about the debate on the resurrection that was held last night. I apologize for the formatting!

LICONA-PATTERSON DEBATE: A BRIEF REPORT AND ANALYSIS
HELD ON 3/31/2010

A few hours ago my wife and I attended a debate on Jesus' Resurrection between Mike Licona and Stephen Patterson (a Jesus Seminar scholar) at FSU in Tallahassee, FL. What follows is a brief report and analysis of the debate.

******A BRIEF REPORT

I. Opening

A. Licona presents 5 facts (taken solely from Paul's undisputed writings) and 4 criteria (method) for concluding that Jesus was physically raised from the dead.

5 Facts
1. Paul was an eyewitness (hostile).
2. Paul knew Jesus' disciples.
3. Paul taught what the disciples taught.
4. They taught appearances to individuals and groups, to friend and foe alike.
5. They and Paul taught Jesus was physically raised.

4 Criteria
1. Explanatory Scope
2. Explanatory Power
3. Less Ad Hoc
4. Plausibility

The Resurrection hypothesis passes numbers 1, 2, and 3 with flying colors; and it neither passes nor fails number 4 (plausibility).

B. Patterson claims he believes in Jesus' resurrection, but he does not believe that God raised Jesus physically. For Patterson the bottom line of the debate is whether or not the dead Jesus got resuscitated.

-When Paul uses "according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4), he meant God cares for his people according to Hebrew Scriptures. In Jewish terms, resurrection meant "vindication."

-Patterson asks, "How did Jesus appear to Paul?" and quotes Gal. 1:16, stating that God reveals His Son "in me" (Greek: en emoi), not "to me."

-"Flesh and blood cannot enter God's kingdom" (1 Cor. 15:50) contradicts "flesh and

bones" (Luke 24:39) of Jesus' getting back to God's kingdom. Therefore, it follows that Paul did not believe in physical resurrection of Jesus.

-The ancient may believe a person comes back to life and then goes to heaven, but we—the modern man—no longer believe this because our worldview does not allow it.

II. First Rebuttal

A. Licona reviews his facts/method and points out that Patterson disagrees with his number 5 fact, namely, Paul taught that Jesus was physically raised. Licona says:

-Patterson's appeal to Jewish meaning of resurrection to be "vindication" is irrelevant. In fact, Patterson himself says—Licona quoting him here—that 1 Cor. 15 should be the basis for knowing the earliest Christian traditions.

-Patterson's translation of soma psuchikon—as "physical" body—(1 Cor. 15:44) is untenable, because there is zero basis for this. "Natural body" is more like it.

-"Flesh and blood" means "mortality" not "physicality."

-Patterson's translation of en emoi –as "in me"–(Gal. 1:16) is not strictly "in me." Gal. 1:24 says, "And they praised God because of me [en emoi]." 1 Cor. 14:11c says, "he is a foreigner to me [en emoi]." The en emoi cannot always legitimately be translated "in me."

B. Patterson abandons his en emoi="to me" argument and resorts to saying that Paul's relation with Jesus was a matter of "spiritual envelopment."

Patterson tries to resuscitate his soma psuchikon="physical body" argument, but he could not get it back to life.

Patterson admits that the whole debate is all about worldview. Making a reference to Licona's fourth criteria, he finds Jesus' physical resurrection to be implausible because he believes dead people do not come to life. Jesus' coming to life cannot be an exception, and neither is it necessary.

III. Second Rebuttal

A. Licona reminds the audience of the two major building blocks for the resurrection: facts and method.

-Licona reiterates his points on "to me" versus "in me" and the issue on the use on some psuchikon (natural body) and soma pnematikon (spiritual body).

-Licona says Patterson's is a worldview problem—a metaphysical bias, not a historically based argument.

B. Patterson is reduced to asking if Paul believed the way the apostles believed, since early Christian proclamation (found in the gospels) was ambiguous.

IV. Closing

A. Licona answers Patterson's question

B. Patterson's main conclusion was that if Licona's view of Jesus' physical resurrection makes you a better person (e.g., treating your fellow with love, etc.), then stay with it and ignore Patterson's view.

V. Q and A Session

Only the first question, addressed to Paterson, will be mentioned here:
“Given that this is a worldview issue to you, what is your philosophical justification—since you have no historical justification—for [sic] believing that a dead person does not become alive?” Patterson answers, “Mine is a biological—not a philosophical—justification.” The questioner follows up, “What is your philosophical justification for your biological justification that people will not become alive in the future?” Patterson answered, “I think it’s a good guess.”

*******A DEBATE ANALYSIS

No doubt, Mike Licona killed Stephen Patterson here—it was embarrassing. This is perhaps Licona’s biggest win. The case for Jesus’ resurrection obtains—big time!

There were moments one could tell that Patterson was greatly rattled, and he seemed to be merely going in circles, as though at a loss as to what he was trying to say. Also, there were a few times that he sounded like he was conceding a number of points that Licona had used to demolish his arguments. Frankly, I felt bad for Patterson because he was such a very nice guy and had exercised lots of grace, despite the fiasco.

Basically, having abandoned all his initial arguments (including criticizing the gospels—straw man attack), Patterson was reduced, literally, to making a baseless assumption that “a dead person does not become alive.”

After the debate I personally spoke to Patterson and asked him, “Since you have no historical justification for believing that a dead person does not come to life, you really cannot say—as a historian—that Jesus’ resurrection is implausible.” He responded something to this effect: “Well, we have to use biology and gravity, and historians draw from these.” I said, “So then, you would be using historical justification, not merely biological justification.” His answer seemed rather incoherent, and then he said, “Well, that [biology] is all we have to work with.”

UK pet shop owner fined and tagged for selling goldfish to 14-year old boy

April 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail, "Pet shop owner fined £1,000 and told to wear an electronic tag… for selling a GOLDFISH to a boy aged 14". (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Her offence was to unwittingly sell a goldfish to a 14-year-old boy taking part in a trading standards 'sting'.
>
> At most, pet shop owner Joan Higgins, 66, expected a slap on the wrist for breaking new animal welfare laws which ban the sale of pets to under-16s.
>
> Instead, the great-grandmother was taken to court, fined £1,000, placed under curfew – and ordered to wear an electronic tag for two months.
>
> The punishment is normally handed out to violent thugs and repeat offenders.
>
> The prosecution of Mrs Higgins and her son Mark is estimated to have cost taxpayers £20,000 and has left her with a criminal record.
>
> Mark, 47, was also fined and ordered to carry out 120 hours of unpaid work in the community.
>
> Last night, as an MP criticised the magistrates, Mrs Higgins – who has run the pet shop for 28 years – said the family's eight-month ordeal had left them traumatised.
>
> […]Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 it is illegal to sell pets – including goldfish – to children under the age of 16 unless they are accompanied by an adult. Pet shops must also provide advice on animal welfare to buyers.
>
> The maximum penalty is imprisonment for up to 12 months, or a fine of up to £20,000, or both.

And the response from animal rights nuts:

> Defending the goldfish case, Iain Veitch, head of public protection at Trafford Council, said: 'The evidence presented for this conviction clearly demonstrates that it is irresponsible to sell animals to those who are not old enough to look after them.
>
> 'Let this conviction send out a message that we will not tolerate those who cause unnecessary suffering to animals. The council will always try to support pet and business owners so that they are able to care for their animals properly, but where they continually ignore the advice they are given, we will not hesitate to use our statutory powers.'
>
> The goldfish was later adopted by an animal welfare officer and is in good health.

This is in a country that has incredibly high rates of criminal activity. I love animals very much, but this is ridiculous.

Three funny things for April Fools day

April 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The first two are from ECM.

First, here's a crazy Democrat. This is not an April Fools joke.

Second, a new NRSC ad about Obama's achievements.

UPDATE: Here's Democrat Phil Hare talking about health care reform:

It's good to be a Republican. Happy April Fools day!

MUST-HEAR: Jason Lisle and Hugh Ross debate the age of the Earth

April 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this radio debate from the radio station KKLA on the Apologetics 315 Twitter feed. This is my FAVORITE Twitter feed.

Speakers:

Jason Lisle

Dr. Lisle graduated *summa cum laude* from Ohio Wesleyan University where he double-majored in physics and astronomy, and minored in mathematics. He did graduate work at the University of Colorado where he earned a Master's degree and a Ph.D. in Astrophysics. While there, Dr Lisle used the SOHO spacecraft to investigate motions on the surface of the sun as well as solar magnetism and subsurface weather. His thesis was entitled "Probing the Dynamics of Solar Supergranulation and its Interaction with Magnetism." Among other things, he discovered a previously unknown polar alignment of supergranules (solar convection cells), and discovered evidence of solar giant cells. He has also authored a number of papers in both secular and creation literature.

Hugh Ross

At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver's Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or "quasars," some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

So both have impeccable scientific credentials. But just wait until you hear what one of them does at about 40 minutes into the debate. Oh my God. You will not believe the bombshell that gets dropped during this debate.

The MP3 file is here. (This is the updated version that Brian Auten fixed to remove the commercials!)

I don't always agree with Frank Pastore, (only 95%), but he knows the topic of the debate back to front, and guides the discussion in an incredibly useful, accurate way. This is a fine debate to listen to! You will learn a lot.

The Bible and the early church fathers

Jason Lisle

- we take Genesis literally
- the starting point of YEC is Scripture
- the plain meaning of Scripture is that the earth was made in 6 24-hour days

- science has to be interpreted in a way that fits a plain reading of Genesis 1
- the evidence for an old universe and old Earth must be rejected a priori

Hugh Ross

- we take Genesis literally
- the Hebrew word for day (yom) can mean 24 hours or a long period of time
- there are multiple creation accounts in the Bible
- interpreting yom as long periods of time harmonizes all the accounts
- the Bible says that the seventh day is not even ended
- we believe in a literal Adam and Eve living thousands of years ago

Jason Lisle

- there's only 1 account of creation in the Bible: Genesis
- the normal view in church history is 6 24-hour days
- there are some early church fathers who that the days are long
- the other places where creation is discussed are not real accounts

Hugh Ross

- the early church did not spend a lot of time talking about the age of the Earth
- there is not unanimous agreement about the age of the Earth
- there is no definitive statement on the age of the Earth until Isaac Newton
- Newton strongly favored an old earth, hundreds of years before Darwin
- there are other creation accounts, Job 38-39
- Pslam 104 is a creation account

Jason Lisle

- a Psalm is not written in the genre of historical narrative
- Psalm 104 is not a creation account – it talks about ships, etc
- it's talking about the modern era, not a creation account

The evidence from science

Hugh Ross

- both of us believe in an absolute beginning of time, space and matter
- both of us believe that space is expanding now
- stars form as matter coalesces during the expansion of the universe
- star formation requires a universe aged on the order of billions of years

Jason Lisle

- if you pre-suppose my interpretation of Genesis, then the universe is young

Hugh Ross

- the speed of the expansion of the universe proves an old universe
- the light emitted from the oldest stars also proves an old universe

Jason Lisle

- if you pre-suppose my interpretation of Genesis, then the universe is young

Was the universe made with the appearance of age

Jason Lisle

- any evidence for an old universe is wrong
- stars didn't form gradually, they were created by God instantly
- stars have the appearance of age, but they're actually young

Hugh Ross

- God doesn't lie in the Bible or in the book of nature
- Scientists can look back in time by looking further out into the universe
- Because light takes a long time to travel to the Earth, we can see the past
- we can see a time when there were no stars yet
- stars formed slowly over time, not instantaneously
- we have photos of the universe before stars and after stars
- we can see a history of the universe by looking closer and further away

Does nature provide us with knowledge about creation?

They discuss Psalm 19 now, so here's Psalm 19:1-5:

[1] The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

[2] Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

[3] There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

[4] Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

[5] which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

Jason Lisle

- nature isn't a book
- nature doesn't provide knowledge about God
- Psalm 19 doesn't say that nature communicates to us
- **verse 3 says "There is no speech nor language"**

Hugh Ross

- **If you read all of verse 3, it says the exact opposite of what you just said it says**
- Verse 1: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands”
- Verse 2: “Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.”
- Verse 3: “There is no speech or language **where their voice is not heard.**“
- Verse 4: “Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

Jason Lisle

- You can’t take the Bible literally all the time

How important is the age of the Earth?

Hugh Ross

- it’s a non-essential because it has nothing to do with salvation or inerrancy
- both sides of the debate affirm the same views of salvation and inerrancy
- professional scientists have multiple lines of evidence saying the universe is old
- the only reason it matters is that young earth creationism is a barrier to faith
- if you have to deny science to be a Christian, then it stops people from being saved
- young earth opposition to science has been used by secularists to marginalize Christianity

Jason Lisle

- there was no death in the Garden of Eden, animal or human, before the Fall
- the Bible says that death was a consequence of Adam’s sin
- so there was no death before the Fall, according to the Bible
- old earth people believe in death before the Fall

Consider Romans 5:12:

[12]Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Hugh Ross

- Romans 5:12 says that Adam’s sin caused death to come **to all men**
- old earth people believe that only animal death existed before the Fall, not human death
- plant and animal death existed before the Fall – Adam and Eve were eating!

Jason Lisle

- I interpret the Bible to say that plants aren’t living creatures

What about dinosaurs, the Flood, and Noah's ark?

Jason Lisle

- dinosaurs were created on the 6th day
- dinosaurs lived alongside humans and were vegetarians before the Fall
- dinosaurs were on the Ark – they're not that big – just take baby dinosaurs
- it's a global flood

Hugh Ross

- dinosaurs were created on the 5th day
- they were extinct before before humans ever appeared
- nobody in history ever wrote about dinosaurs until 200 years ago
- it's a local flood

Related posts

- Different perspectives on the days of Genesis.
- What caused Da Vinci Code author Dan Brown to abandon his Christian faith?
- An argument for the existence of God from Big Bang cosmology

UPDATE: Wes Widner from Reason to Stand mentions another debate in the comments: "Here is another excellent debate given a while back between Hugh Ross/Walter Kaiser and Ken Ham/Jason Lisle"

MUST-HEAR: Michael Brown debates James White on Foreknowledge vs Calvinism

April 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the second of a two-debate series. The first debate is here.

The MP3 file is here.

Participants:

- James White (Calvinism)
- Michael Brown (Foreknowledge)

Format: (from James White's blog)

> For those interested, we will be covering three texts of Scripture on Thursday: John 6, Romans 8/9, and Ephesians 1. Each will have 8 minutes to provide their exegesis of the text; then we will have four minutes of cross-ex each, then three minute conclusions before moving on to the next text. I know, not a lot of time, but that still covers 90 full minutes (we will not be taking any breaks at all).
>
> The following Thursday we will repeat the process, but this time covering Michael's chosen texts, Luke 13:34-35 (Deuteronomy 5:28-29) Ezekiel 18:21-32 (Jeremiah 3:19-20; Ezekiel 22:30-31) I John 2:1-2 (2 Pet 2:1).

Michael Brown basically represents my view on these issues. This is another great debate – but more technical than the first. Congratulations to Dr. White and Dr. Brown for this entertaining and collegial series of debates. Both speakers were very civil again, but not boring. We need more debates like this to make Christianity seem interesting to men. Men like to learn theology (and everything else) by see truth emerge from a struggle. We're competitive.

The verses up for debate this time

Luke 13:34-35:

34"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

35Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Deuteronomy 5:28-29:

28 The LORD heard you when you spoke to me and the LORD said to me, "I have heard what this people said to you. Everything they said was good.

29 Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!

Ezekiel 18:21-32:

[21] “But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die.

[22] None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered against him. Because of the righteous things he has done, he will live.

[23] Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?

[24] “But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die.

[25] “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear, O house of Israel: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust?

[26] If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he has committed he will die.

[27] But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life.

[28] Because he considers all the offenses he has committed and turns away from them, he will surely live; he will not die.

[29] Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Are my ways unjust, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust?

[30] “Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall.

[31] Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel?

[32] For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!

Jeremiah 3:19-20:

[19] “I myself said, ” ‘How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation.’ I thought you would call me ‘Father’ and not turn away from following me.

[20] But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to me, O house of Israel,” declares the LORD.

Ezekiel 22:30-31:

[30] “I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none.

[31] So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing

down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD."

I John 2:1-2:

[1]My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

[2]He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

2 Pet 2:1:

> [1]But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.

My thoughts

This may be a bit repetitive – I'm a software engineer! Not a theologian!

In the first section, Brown makes the case that the Father (in the Old Testament) and Jesus (in the New Testament) have fervent desires for people to repent and be reconciled. But God chooses to allow people to freely choose to resist him. I believe that God *could* coerce the will (but then it's no longer free). But he chooses not to. Free will is needed in order to have a love relationship with us. Calvinism doesn't allow for people to resist God's desire that specific people be saved, so on the Calvinist view, humans cannot love God since their will is *coerced by God.*

One commenter recently asked me whether non-Calvinists think that God rolls the dice and hopes to save as many as possible. The answer is NO. On the Foreknowledge/Middle Knowledge view, when God chooses which universe from the vast range possible universes he will create, the fate of each person is sealed for Heaven or Hell – but not by determinism! God chooses the time and place in which we will all live, and he knows whether we each will freely respond to his drawing us to him or not, because of where he places us.

Those who *can* respond to God in some possible time and place *will* be placed in a time and place in the universe where God will draw them to him in a non-coercive way (preaching, Bible, apologetics, natural revelation, etc.) so they can freely respond to this undeserved grace, be saved. And God CHOSE the universe where that would happen WITHOUT FAIL, but without violating the free will of people – because he foresaw their choices in ALL circumstances, and CHOSE the circumstances to elicit that free choice to respond.

At the instant of the Big Bang, the group known as the "elect" is set. God locks into reality the exact amount of grace that each individual in the elect needs in order to freely respond to God's saving grace. No guesswork, no rolling of the dice. God is sovereign over everything that happens from that moment on. He foreknows what each person will freely choose in every decision, and he is sovereign over how all those decisions will play

out. At every moment of time God says “I am happy with this”. And in the end, his aims are achieved – without violating anyone’s free will.

Another one of my concerns with Calvinism is that it seems to make life meaningless. Let me explain. There are two kinds of decisions. First, you can make a decision that 1) affects where you end up when you die, or you can make a decision that 2) doesn’t affect where you end up when you die. On Calvinism, God makes all 1) decisions for you. Nothing you do can affect where you end up when you die. On the Foreknowledge/Middle Knowledge, you make the 1) decisions – but you make them *in response* to God’s unilateral saving grace being extended to you.

On the Foreknowledge/Middle Knowledge view, you do NOT choose God, because NO ONE desires God. But you choose to respond to God’s grace when he takes the initiative to reach down into your sinful, rebellious life and reveal himself to you. He rescues you, and he knew that he would rescue you from eternity. He knew *you* from all eternity. All you do is hold the life jacket he throws you. Which is nothing. But if you don’t hold it, you’re to blame, not God. In fact, because he knows what you’ll do, he probably won’t even throw you one unless he knows you’ll take it.

My specific views are spelled out more here: What are the differences between Wesleyan Arminianism and Calvinism?

And don’t forget that I blogged about the very first White-Brown debate (before the two-part series). I highly, highly recommend this introductory debate.

Neil Simpson on the minimal facts case for the resurrection

April 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Neil Simpson's 4Simpsons blog.

Excerpt:

> This is a summary of the "minimal facts" approach, which points to commonly held historical facts as evidence for the resurrection of Jesus and the truth of Christianity. Nearly 100% of historical scholars from 1975 – present agree with the following statements:
>
> - Jesus really lived and was killed on a Roman cross.
> - Jesus' disciples believed He appeared to them.
> - Jesus' brother, James, went from being a pre-crucifixion skeptic to a post-crucificion church leader.
> - The Apostle Paul believed Jesus appeared to him and he wrote most of the books attributed to him, including Romans, I & II Corinthians, Philemon and others.
>
> 75% of the same scholars agree that the tomb was empty.
>
> I submit that the physical resurrection of Jesus best accounts for these facts.

He's got a link to Mary Jo Sharp's slide show on the minimal facts approach.

My best comprehensive post on the minimal facts case for ressurection is here: Ten resources to help you talk to non-Christians about the resurrection of Jesus.

Come on, folks. We all need to be able to talk about the resurrection as much as we can talk about our favorite sports team or our favorite celebrities/artists. I'm sure that Jesus likes it when we can talk about his resurrection in public with other people – especially non-Christians. The minimal facts approach is the best way to do that!

Be his friend – talk about his resurrection. Intelligently.

Wes Widner's suggestions for improving the effectiveness of church

April 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a blog post from Reason to Stand. In it, Wes Widner examines some problems with the way churches operate today, and makes some recommendations for improvement.

Excerpt:

> In the first place, a hierarchical system where non-preachers are viewed as less spiritual, where the gift of preaching is exalted above all other gifts is plainly against many passages found in scripture including Jesus's own admonition that his own disciples not follow the pattern of the world in setting up hierarchical "power over" systems.
>
> Secondly I would point to the perpetual spiritual immaturity that is fostered and festering in most churches (particularly Southern Baptist and Methodist churches as those are the ones I have the most experience in). When people are told that rigorous study of the word of God is limited to an elite few "chosen" men the end result is a logical abdication of serious study on the part of the "average" churchgoer. This is one of the reasons I believe areas such as apologetics have historically had such a hard time making inroads into the local church because most pastors feel threatened by the prospect of their congregation actually being educated and able (empowered?) to ask serious questions. Sadly it doesn't have to be like this and I'll explain in my third line of reasoning below.
>
> Finally, I believe that the system we've manufactured (sure, as early as 300AD, but early errors are still errors) and have come to accept as an unquestionable fact is harmful to the Body of Christ is because it leads directly to pastors either being burned out or becoming dictators (I believe in some cases merely for self-preservation). Nowhere in Scripture are we presented with a description of a man who is supposed to shoulder the load that we expect the average "professional" pastor to carry. Nowhere in Scripture are we told that one man in a local group of believers is in charge of visiting the sick, ministering to all the members, responsible for the bulk of spiritual instruction, etc.

J.P. Moreland also recommends having a team of pastors instead of just one main pastor in his book "Love Your God With All Your Mind", or LYGWYM, for short.

I chose this post to link to because I've experienced the problems he talks about here personally. But I've also noticed some practices I liked while listening to sermons online. One thing I like about Mark Driscoll is that he gives the sermon then takes questions from the audience. I also like Wayne Grudem because he preaches in a normal voice and isn't afraid to talk about politics and other serious issues. And I like it when William Lane Craig surveys all points of view on interesting topics when he teaches Sunday school.

And I have some ideas of my own, too. Speaking as a man, I learn better when things are presented to me as an overview of conflicting viewpoints. I get bored when only one point of view is presented. It makes me sleepy. I like to fight, so that would be my recommendation to improve church – more apologetics, more debates and more disagreements. And I think having events where the church hosts debates for the public to attend at the local university is also good.

Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible

April 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interview with Dr. Shawn Ritenour, economics professor at Grove City College. The interview is conducted by Dr. Paul Kengor.

Excerpt:

Kengor: …it seems that the very foundation of economics, not to mention the American republic in some respects, is the right to private property. Do you agree? If so, is that Scriptural?

Ritenour: The foundation of economic activity and policy is private property. All action requires the use of property and all economic policy is about how people can legally use their property. To benefit from the division of labor, we must be able to exchange our products, which requires private property. Private property is definitely Scriptural. The Bible explicitly prohibits theft, fraud, moving property barriers, debasing money, violating labor contracts, as well as coveting. These prohibitions apply to both citizens and rulers. In my text, I apply this conclusion to issues such as confiscatory taxation, government subsidies, business regulation, and monetary inflation.

Kengor: I find it very telling that Karl Marx was first and foremost against private property, not to mention against God as well. In the "Communist Manifesto," he wrote plainly: "the theory of the Communists may be summed up in a single sentence: Abolition of private property." And yet, there are some religious left Christians who claim that the Bible, especially in certain Old Testament passages, preaches a form of socialism and even communism. A student of mine had a teacher at a private Christian school in Ohio who instructed the class that as Christians they should be communists. Can you address this argument?

Ritenour: Communism can be condemned strictly on the basis of the Christian ethic of property (among other reasons). Nothing in Scripture either commands or implies that the means of production should be controlled by the state. There are passages in the early chapters of Acts that are often cited as promoting "Christian communism," but, in fact, actually illustrate Christian sharing. The various Christians still owned their property, but were generous in sharing whenever they saw a need. When Peter rebukes Ananias in Acts 5, he explicitly says that both the property that Ananias and Sapphira sold and the monetary proceeds from selling it were theirs to do with what they wanted. That is not the gospel according to Marx.

Kengor: I like the way you turn the religious left's thinking on private property on its head. You note that "God prohibits our coveting the property of others." With that being the case, isn't it wrong for the government to use the mighty arm of the state to forcibly remove property from one person to give it to another?

Ritenour: I see no other way around that conclusion, especially when we realize that, in

our day of mass democracy, the state usually accomplishes policies of wealth redistribution by inciting envy and covetousness among the populace.

Kengor: What about profits? Reconcile the profit motive with the God of Scripture. We have people in this society who portray profits as greedy or unjust.

Ritenour: Profit is the reward entrepreneurs receive for more successfully producing what people want. This is no easy thing to do. Entrepreneurs must invest in present production of goods they sell in the future. Neither entrepreneurs nor government bureaucrats know exactly what future demand will be. Therefore, production necessitates bearing risk. If the entrepreneur forecasts future demand incorrectly, he will waste resources and reap losses. If he forecasts the future correctly, he serves his fellow man by producing goods people want. It seems only right that such producers are rewarded with profit. In a free market, the only way entrepreneurs earn profits is to serve customers better than anyone else.

I'm a fan of Paul Kengor's work. If I had married and had children, I would have wanted them to go to Grove City College for their undergraduate degrees. Astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez is at Grove City right now, directing a program in astronomy.

Should Christians study other areas of knowledge like economics?

Here's a quote from McKenzie's Facebook page that explains why I think Christians need to understand economics.

Quote:

> "If inviting nonbelievers to worship matters, then so does preserving the freedom to worship. If ministering to the needs of the poor is a mandate, then changing the policies creating poverty is very much within that mandate. And if building shelter in developing countries is part and parcel of a Christian's burden, so… is the destruction of the power of tyrants who oppress peoples around the globe."

It's from Hugh Hewitt's book "In, But Not Of". The book is about how Christians need to make good decisions early on in life if they hope to influence the world in effective ways. This is an excellent book for young people in high school and university, or for those (like me) who dream of raising children in a careful way, so they can impact the world for Christ. My hope is to raise Michele Bachmann and Jennifer Roback Morse clones.

By the way, you can be my friend on Facebook. My Facebook page is here. And you can also follow the blog here, you have a Facebook account. (Although we get about 1000-1500 page views per day, I have only a small number of Facebook friends and followers).

Further study

- Jay Richards on the religious left (H/T ECM)
- Acton Institute review of Jay Richards' "Money, Greed and God" book
- The Cato Institute talks to Jay Richards about Christianity and capitalism
- Free e-book featuring Jennifer Roback Morse, Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann

Easter is a good time to learn how to defend the resurrection of Jesus

April 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(This is a re-post of a previous post about ten resources for learning how to defend the resurrection of Jesus. See Free Canuckistan's Easter post for a more spiritual perspective on Easter – he focuses on the victory of Jesus)

First, let's briefly talk about whether the Bible supports talking about the resurrection with non-Christians.

There are lots and lots of Christians in the world, but almost none of them are comfortable talking about the resurrection with non-Christians, in a way that doesn't use crazy Christianese language and doesn't assume that the Bible is inerrant. But I think that this situation is wrong for three reasons.

First, Jesus says that his resurrection is a sign so that people will believe in his other theological claims.

Matthew 12:38-40:

[38]Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

[39]He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

[40]For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Second, Paul says that if the resurrection didn't happen then we are all wasting our time with Christianity.

1 Corinthians 15:13-19:

[13]If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

[14]And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

[15]More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

[16]For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

[17]And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

[18]Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

[19]If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

And third, Peter uses the resurrection as evidence in his evangelistic efforts.

Acts 2:22-24, 29-33, 36:

[22]"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by

miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[23]This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

[24]But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

[29]"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

[30]But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

[31]Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

[32]God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

[33]Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

[36]"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

So, how can you do what Jesus, Paul and Peter do with your non-Christian friends?

You can do it, too – and you must

It's true that non-Christians don't like to hear that they will go to Hell unless they have a relationship with Jesus. And do you know why they think that? Because they think that sin and Hell are just your personal opinions. Not-very-nice opinions. Opinions that they can ignore because it's just your personal preference that you were raised in. They think that religion is like Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy – myths designed to make people feel good about themselves.

Just think for a minute what they must think of your blind-faith pronouncement that they are going to Hell unless they "believe in Jesus" (whatever that means to a non-Christian). How would you like to hear someone tell *you* that *you* are going to Hell for not liking vanilla ice cream? You'd think they were crazy! And that's what non-Christians think of you, unless… Unless what? Unless you present publicly testable arguments and evidence to show them *why* they should consider the claims of Jesus.

No one complains that it is "mean and divisive" if their doctor diagonoses them with cancer. Because a challenging diagnosis is not the doctor's personal opinion – it's true objectively. You need to make your presentation of the gospel *exactly like* a doctor's diagnosis. Am I making sense here?If you are telling them the truth and you can show them publicly testable reasons and evidence, what sense does it make for them to be offended? They might as well be offended by their credit card statement or their speeding ticket.

I have Jewish friends, Hindu friends, Muslim friends, atheist friends, etc. Telling people the

truth with publicly testable arguments and evidence that they can assess for themselves works. What doesn't work is denying the reality of sin and Hell and then trying to be nice to non-Christians who are going to Hell so that they will like you. *That's not Biblical.* That's just reinventing Christianity based on your own emotional need to be happy and to be liked by others and to feel good about yourself.

Some things to help you talk about the resurrection

The main thing to remember about talking about the resurrection in public with non-Christians is that *you can't assume that the Bible is true.* Serious Christians get around this by using standard historical criteria to filter out the passages of the Bible that are most likely to be historical. A passage could be as small as 1 verse or it could be several verses. Some of the criteria would be things like: 1) how early after the events was the passage written? 2) in how many places does it appear? 3) Are the places where it appears independent from one another (e.g. – Mark and Paul), 4) does it embarass the author in some way? Using these criteria, historians can extract a bare minimum set of facts about Jesus.

Once you establish these minimal facts, you argue that the best explanation of the facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead. Your opponent either has to disprove one of your minimal facts, or he has to propose an alternative explanation of those minimal facts that explains the data better.

Usually, the only point of disagreement is whether the tomb was empty. Most atheists will give you the crucifixion, the burial, the post-mortem appearances, and the early belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus in the early church.

The top 10 links to get you started

So with that out of the way, here are the top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Two debates where you can see this play out:

- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Obama continues to oppose liberty and democracy in Honduras

April 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary A. O'Grady

From Mary Anastasia O'Grady writing in the Wall Street Journal. She is writing about how Barack Obama and the Democrats are continuing to attack Honduras for *legally* removing former socialist Honduran President Manuel Zelaya after he tried to escape Constitutional term limits on his Presidency. The Obama administration continues to attempt to restore Zelaya, an ally of communist Hugo Chavez, as President, in spite of term limits defined by the Constitution of Honduras.

Excerpt:

> Washington's bullying is two-pronged. First is a maniacal determination to punish those involved in removing Mr. Zelaya. Second is an attempt to force Honduras to allow Mr. Zelaya, who now lives in the Dominican Republic, to return without facing any repercussions for the illegal actions that provoked his removal. Both goals are damaging the bilateral relationship, polarizing the nation and raising the risk of a resurgence of political violence.
>
> […]The U.S., as represented by Mr. Llorens, has been at the center of the Zelaya crisis all along. People familiar with events leading up to Mr. Zelaya's arrest on June 28 say that had the U.S. ambassador not worked behind the scenes to block a congressional vote to remove the president a few days earlier, the dramatic deportation would never have happened.
>
> […]Honduras had defied Uncle Sam and the U.S., led by Mr. Llorens, decided that it had to be taught a lesson. It took out the brass knuckles and tried hard to unseat interim president Roberto Micheletti in the interest of restoring Mr. Zelaya to the office.

> Honduras wouldn't budge. That's when Mr. Restrepo traveled to the capital with a U.S. delegation. The agreement reached included U.S. recognition of the November election. For a time it seemed things might return to normal.
>
> But the Americans had scores to settle. The U.S had already yanked dozens of visas from officials and the business community as punishment for noncompliance with its pro-Zelaya policy. Then, just days before President Porfirio Lobo's inauguration in January, Hondurans estimate it pulled at least 50 more from Micheletti supporters. The visas have not been returned, and locals say Mr. Llorens continues to foster a climate of intimidation with his visa-pulling power.
>
> He hasn't stopped there. In early March he organized a meeting of Liberal Party Zelaya supporters and the party's former presidential candidate, Elvin Santos, at the U.S. Embassy. Some 48 hours later the party's *zelayistas* and its Santos faction voted to remove Mr. Micheletti as party head. Rigoberto Espinal Irías, a legal adviser to the independent public prosecutor's office, complained that the "meeting generated much bad feeling in Honduran civil society" because it was "perceived to have the purpose of intervening in Honduran national politics."

Is it the job of the the President of the United States to impose his will on other democracies? Is this not imperialism and colonialism of the worst kind?

Are Obama, Zelaya and Chavez really so different?

Here's a picture of Barack Obama and Manuel Zelaya's friend Hugo Chavez.

Hey, Chavez! I'm helping your buddy Zelaya!

They seem to get along well. Perhaps because they share the same views? They all don't seem to like Constitutional limits on power when it gets in the way of their socialist policies.

MUST-READ: How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness

April 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Minette Marrin

Story by Minette Marrin here from the UK Times.

Excerpt:

> In a study presented to the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), the sociologist Geoff Dench argues from the evidence of British Social Attitudes surveys since 1983 that there is a growing number of such extended man-free families: "Three-generation lone-mother families — extended families without men — are developing a new family subculture which involves little paid work."
>
> The culture is passed on, as you might expect. Lone grannies are significantly more likely to have lone and workless daughters than grannies with husbands or employment, and the same is true of their daughters' daughters. Baby daughters (and baby sons, too) are imbibing with their mother's milk the idea that men, like jobs, are largely unnecessary in any serious sense.
>
> The problem with this new type of extended family, Dench says, is that it is not self-sustaining but tends to be parasitic on conventional families in the rest of society. In fact, it appears to lead inexorably to the nightmare of an unproductive dependent underclass.
>
> Clearly one of the worst problems with such a subculture is that although it's not self-sustaining it has a powerful tendency to replicate itself. A boy in such an environment who grows up without a father figure is much less likely — for many well documented reasons — to turn into the sort of young man a girl could see as a desirable husband. A girl who grows up without a father never learns how important a man could be in her own child's life. She will not see her mother negotiating an adult relationship with a male companion, so she won't know how to do it herself or imagine what she is missing.
>
> Before anyone starts to point the finger of blame at such girls, it's worth remembering that many of them are simply making a rational choice. Badly educated at a rough sink school, facing a dead-end, low-paid job that won't even cover the cost of childcare, such a girl will naturally decide to do what she wants to do anyway and have a baby to love. She knows she will be better off having

> welfare babies than stacking shelves and better off, too, if she avoids having a man living with her, even supposing she could find one from among the antisocial, lone-parented youths on her estate. That is because the state subsidises this rational choice, disastrous though it has proved, and has done so for decades.
>
> Women quite understandably now talk of such lifestyle choices as their right. They've been encouraged to. And the state has actually made poor men redundant.

Please read the whole thing, this may be the most important thing I have ever posted on this blog.

I want to suggest that it is women's embrace of radical feminism that has caused the shortage of men. The "compassion" (just give bad people your money!), and moral relativism (don't judge me!), etc. that young, unmarried women seem to like so much these days are in direct opposition to marriage, family and parenting. It undermines the reasons why men marry in the first place. And I'll explain why.

First, moral relativism. Women today seem to have lost the ability to filter out men based on whether they can commit and fill the role of father and husband. They prefer to "have sex like a man" and to not judge anyone. But the reason why they refuse to make moral judgments is because they don't want to be judged themselves. Instead of learning how to be a wife and mother, women have embraced partying and hooking up. But hooking up (and friends with benefits, and cohabitation) DO NOT result in a man committing to a woman as a husband and father for life.

Second, big government. The solution that women embrace because of their fear of abandonment by men is to lobby for more and more government programs to give them security no matter how they choose. They don't want to restrain themselves in order to avoid causing expensive social damage, e.g. – STDs, abortion, divorce, etc. They just want to do have fun and then have someone else pay the costs. But if working men have money taxed away to pay for things like abortions and welfare, then they cannot afford to form families on their own – especially if they want to raise Christian children outside the day care/public school system that they are paying for but won't use.

Could it be that the reason that men are no longer suitable for marriage is because the incentives they had to marry (regular sex, the respect of filling the role of protector and provider, being able to lead the family spiritually in the home, and having well-behaved hand-raised children) have been taken away by moral relativism and big government? Could it be that the man shortage is caused by women who CHOOSE to be irresponsible about who they have sex with, and who CHOOSE to rely on bigger government as a fallback for their poor decision-making?

You all know that I want to fall in love and get married. This is probably the number one thing stopping me from doing that. The feminist idea that men are evil and can be replaced with government programs is now dominant in the West. This basically means that my children will be less prosperous, less free and less secure than I am. I do not want

my children to have the poor character that results from being dependent on a secular left government for their livelihood. And I am also concerned about the kind of world the children will live in as the traditional family, which is a bulwark against state power, declines in influence.

I wish women started to think about how marriage and parenting really work. Instead of thinking about recycling and vegetarianism, women should be thinking about forming their own character for the role of wife and mother. They should be thinking about how to strengthen men's roles instead of weakening them through premarital sex and big government. They should have the attitude of wanting to learn about obstacles that will prevent a good marriage – and not just ideas but threats to the finances and liberty of the family. They should not believe that "everything will work out as long as we love each other". Love takes preparation and work.

By the way, this article from the libertarian Cato Institute explains more about how the government creates financial incentives for people to break up families and harm children.

Related posts

- Melanie Phillips has a radical plan to stop the breakdown of marriages
- Obama's new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- France introduces bill to require boards of directors to be 40% female
- France passes law to jail spouses who commit psychological violence
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- Marriage under attack by the left in Australia and India
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- Jennifer Roback Morse evaluates the economics of no-fault divorce
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New study explains the best way for young people to avoid sexual risks
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day
- Has the decline of chastity and courtship hurt young people?
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children's sexual choices
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being

How well does government-run health care work in Australia?

April 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Sydney Morning Herald. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Westmead Hospital is cancelling surgery at four times the rate the Health Department considers acceptable, and waiting times are so long some surgeons are refusing to add new patients to their operating lists.
>
> About 8 per cent of elective surgery patients at the flagship Sydney University teaching hospital had their operation cancelled on the day of surgery, due to a shortage of post-surgical beds.
>
> […]Those cancellations – which Professor Fletcher said affected up to half of patients for some types of surgery – were not formally recorded.
>
> […]Hospitals in western Sydney have suffered staff freezes and bed cuts due to debts that last year reached $26 million.

This is what happens when you take the profit motive out of health care. If there is no way to make money, then there is no free capital that flows into the industry. If there is no free capital, then the only way to expand is by raises taxes. If taxes are already too high, then the only way to control demand is by using waiting lists. And naturally the people in power will favor the special interest groups who vote for them with faster access to treatment.

Do universities really feature a diversity of thought on intelligent design?

April 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this article from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> We were delighted to discover that students at the University of Arizona are getting a well-rounded education. "Evolution, Intelligent Design Face Off at Humanities Panel," reports the *Arizona Daily Wildcat*. Hey great, finally a serious academic institution is taking the time to make sure kids hear both sides of the evolution debate! Reading down the article we noticed only a couple of things they might have been done differently and better.
>
> The panel at UA included an evolutionary biologist and two religious studies profs, but no one actually representing the ID side. Only ID critics were allowed to participate. Well, that is disappointing. It's like staging a "debate" between the Democratic and Republican contenders for a particular public office but inviting only the Democratic candidate, joined on stage by his campaign manager and chief of staff.
>
> Also, no one on the panel even seemed to know what intelligent design means.
>
> […]Professor Karen Seat confused ID with Young Earth Creationism, explaining to students and colleagues that it was all about a defense of "the traditional, literal meaning of the Bible."
>
> […]Professor Lucas Mix, who's an ordained Episcopal priest, got tired of paying lip service to the idea of a "face off" on intelligent design and spoke instead about "creationism," which, again, means something very different.
>
> […]Joanna Masel, the evolutionary biologist, summed up with a non sequitur: "Once you pick out a theology that is incompatible with evolution, it becomes incompatible with all science."

This is what your children get for paying tens of thousands of dollars a year in tutition and fees. They get an indoctrination, not an education. (Assuming they don't get expelled or denied their degree for disagreeing with their secular leftist overlords). It's a perplexing problem – how can you raise world-changing children if this groupthink is what they'll face on the university campus?

Does anyone else find it sickening that the radical left can be paid to GRADE STUDENTS to force them to agree with views at odds with their own parents, and reality as a whole? Darwinism is – like global warming, Marxism and feminism – the equivalent of flat-earthism. Why pay to learn that? And why be coerced to agree with grade-granting flat-earthers who only know one side of every issue?

Craig Evans vs Bart Ehrman debate on the reliability of the gospels

April 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the first debate ever between these two top-ranked scholars. Both Evans and Ehrman are probably 2 of the 10 most recognized historical Jesus scholars.

The MP3 audio and a link to the video is here. (From Brian Auten at Apologetics 315)

Speakers

Bart Ehrman

Dr. Ehrman, is a graduate of Wheaton College (Illinois), Professor Ehrman received both his Masters of Divinity and Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary, where his 1985 doctoral dissertation was awarded magna cum laude. Since then he has published extensively in the fields of New Testament and Early Christianity, having written or edited twenty-one books, numerous scholarly articles, and dozens of book reviews. Among his fields of scholarly expertise are the historical Jesus, the early Christian apocrypha, the apostolic fathers, and the manuscript tradition of the New Testament.

Craig Evans

Dr. Evans received his B.A. degree in History and Philosophy from Claremont McKenna College, his M.Div. degree from Western Baptist Seminary in Portland, Oregon, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Biblical Studies from Claremont Graduate University in southern California. Author and editor of more than fifty books and hundreds of articles and reviews, Professor Evans has given lectures at Cambridge, Durham, Oxford, Yale, and other universities, colleges, seminaries, and museums, such as the Field Museum in Chicago and the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa.

More bio-stuff here.

Summary

Snarky things I made up are in italics.

Question 1: are the gospels historically reliable?

Bart Ehrman opening speech:

- I used to be an ignorant fundamentalist like you!
- but then I went to Princeton, and now I know better
- to Craig: are there errors in the Bible
- the gospels have some reliable and some unreliable info
- only careless readers don’t see contradictions in the gospels
- contradictions in the genealogies
- contradictions in timing of recognizing Jesus as the Messiah
- contradiction about when Jesus died
- contradiction about when the stone was rolled away

- contradiction about who was at the empty tomb
- contradiction about when the disciples went to Galilee
- contradictions in minor details means the gospels are unreliable

Craig Evans opening speech:

- the question is “do the gospels tell us enough about Jesus for faith?”
- the gospels don’t tell us everything, but they tell enough for faith
- the extremely early creed in 1 Cor 15:3-7 has an outline of the gospel
- it contains the burial, the appearances to eyewitnesses
- and it agrees with the early sermons of Peter in Acts 2
- the gospels agree with these extremely early summaries
- the gospels are based on earlier sources
- the gospels are corroborated by the Jewish historian Josephus

Question 2: Do the gospels accurately preserve the teachings of Jesus Christ?

Bart Ehrman

- are there any discrepancies in the gospels?
- the gospels have things Jesus said, and things he didn’t say
- if the Bible is inaccurate in some minor details, then it’s all unreliable
- in the latest gospel, John, Jesus calls himself God and sees himself as divine
- but these high-Christology statements are not in the synoptics
- therefore, Jesus really didn’t say these things
- why didn’t the synoptics record these claims to divinity
- the author of John changed the words of Jesus and John the Baptist?

Craig Evans

- E.P. Sanders (a non-Christian scholar) says we can know what Jesus taught
- cites E.P.’s list of Jesus’ core teachings that are agreed on by most scholars
- Jesus’ focus was talking about the Kingdom of God – the rule of God
- Jesus’ followers were expected to record and understand the words of Jesus
- It is permissible for the followers of Jesus to have some editorial license

Question 3: Do the gospels accurately preserve the activities of Jesus Christ?

Bart Ehrman

- E.P. Sanders agrees with me that there are discrepancies in the gospels
- E.P. Sanders agrees with me that there are mistakes in the gospels
- If Jesus’ followers changed his words a little, then we can’t know anything he said
- If the author changes the story a little, then the story was changed a lot
- If there not 100% accurate, then they’re not accurate at all
- contradiction of the ordering of Jesus’ temptations

- contradiction of the number of animals Jesus rode into Jerusalem
- contradiction of whether Jesus spoke or didn't speak in some instance
- contradiction of what Jesus said on the cross
- contradiction of the number of robbers who speak to Jesus
- Jesus can only say ONE THING when he's on the cross
- the gospel writers have to be in complete agreement

Craig Evans

- E.P. Sanders (non-Christian) lists 7 virtually indisputable facts about Jesus
- just because there are discrepancies, doesn't mean there are no minimal facts
- in additional to E.P. Sanders, there are other facts that are widely-accepted
- many assertions in the gospels are embarrassing to the author
- many liberal scholars think that Jesus was a healer and an exorcist
- all scholars agree on the crucifixion
- most scholars accept the "King of the Jews" placard placed over the cross
- this means that Jesus *was* viewed by his followers as the Messiah

Question 4: Do the gospels contain eyewitness tradition?

Bart Ehrman

- I used to be an ignorant uninformed fundie, *like you all*
- but then I started to study seriously, *not like Craig Evans*
- I changed my mind based on intense research, *not peer pressure*
- *My apostasy has nothing to do with the problem of evil and suffering!*
- I use my brain, *and Craig Evans and you fundies don't use your brains*
- the gospels don't claim to be written by eyewitnesses
- the titles of the gospels were added later
- the gospels don't claim to be written by the authors attributed to them
- the gospels were written anonymously
- the gospels only had names attached in 120-140 AD
- even if gospels were written by eyewitnesses, they are not always accurate
- written 40-60 years after Jesus died
- written in Greek, not Aramaic
- written in different countries
- based on stories that were told and retold and changed over time

Craig Evans

- Richard Bauckham says the gospels are largely based on eyewitness accounts
- the gospels were written while there were still eyewitnesses alive
- the people who met Jesus were there to correct the written accounts
- there were many disputes about things in the early church, so if the early church invented sayings, then why not invent sayings of Jesus to resolve the disputes?

- there is no evidence of things being invented wholesale by the early church
- Pappias says that he talked to Christians who knew the eyewitnesses to Jesus

Question 5: Do archaeologists and historians use the gospels as sources?

Bart Ehrman

- archaeologists do not use the gospels, they just dig things up
- historians do use gospels
- Jesus is not mentioned by any Greek or Roman non-Christian source for 80 years after Jesus' death
- The earliest Jewish source is Josephus, writing 60 years after Jesus' death
- Paul is the earliest source, but says nothing about Jesus' words and deeds
- the earliest sources for words and deeds are the discrepancy-filled gospels
- the gospels are based on telling and re-telling of the stories

Craig Evans

- James Charlesworth has a 700-book about archaeology and the Bible
- the book contains hundreds of references to the four gospels
- the four gospels and Acts are viewed as the best sources for archaeologists
- they provide accurate information about the way things were
- the gospels and Acts helps archaeologists to know where to dig for things
- the Biblical sources are early and based on eyewitnesses
- the gospels and Acts fit well in the first century culture
- the gospels and Acts talk about real events and real places and real customs
- the gospels and Acts talk about real buildings and real public figures and real groups
- the language of the gospels traces back nicely to Aramaic
- the gospels talk about geography and climate
- archaeologists discover many things discussed in the gospels

Question 6: Have the gospels been accurately preserved done through the centuries

Bart Ehrman

- if God inspired the Bible without error, he should have preserved it without error
- but the originals have NOT been preserved without error
- so I no longer accept the inerrancy of the autographs (the originals)
- we don't have the originals
- we only have copies of copies… of copies… of copies… of copies
- and the copiers all made mistakes
- the first manuscripts are decades later
- and the manuscripts we have are different from one another
- the earliest copies have the most mistakes
- even if we have many copies, they are late, so we don't know what the original said
- we don't have early manuscripts

Craig Evans

- we know where the discrepancies in the manuscripts are
- the discrepancies are marked in your Bible
- the discrepancies affect peripheral issues
- some discrepancies are supported by other verses
- Mark doesn't have the appearances, but 1 Cor 15 does, and it's earlier
- the errors are things like spelling and grammar errors, typos, etc.
- we have fragments that are earlier than the full manuscripts
- some early manuscripts have errors, but other early manuscripts are correct

Question 7: Do scribal errors and textual variants significantly impact any teaching of Jesus or any important Christian teaching?

Bart Ehrman

- the woman caught in adultery is a late addition
- the ending of Mark is a late addition
- can we handle snakes or can't we?
- did Jesus sweat blood or didn't he?
- some manuscripts have errors – that should not be allowed by God
- some scribes are careless – that should not be allowed by God
- *we have to have perfect copies of the originals, or I won't believe!*
- *if God really inspired it, it all has to be perfect! Perfect! I was lied to!!!!*
- *if the snake-handling verse isn't there, then the whole Bible is lies! Lies!*

Craig Evans

- no variants impact any teaching of Jesus or significant Christian teaching
- the vast majority of the manuscripts agree on 98-99% of the text
- often, the theology *gives rise* to a variant, which is introduced later
- variants aren't central enough to affect any theological doctrines

And then there are concluding speeches by each speaker.

I made this summary based on the video, which is here on Apologetics 315.

Further study

The top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
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9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
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Debates are a fun way to learn

Two debates where you can see this play out:

- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Extra stuff

Stand to Reason has a post featuring Mike Licona discussing Ehrman.

Is the United States of America becoming a European welfare state?

April 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan

Rep. Paul Ryan, writing at Real Clear Politics.

Excerpt:

> …an eye-opening study by the Tax Foundation, a reliable and non-partisan research group, tells us that in 2004, 20 percent of US households were getting about 75 percent of their income from the federal government. In other words, one out of five families in America is already government dependent. Another 20 percent were receiving almost 40 percent of their income from federal programs, so another one in five has become government reliant for their livelihood.
>
> All told, 60 percent – three out of five households in America – were receiving more government benefits and services (in dollar value) than they were paying back in taxes. The Tax Foundation estimates that President Obama's budget last year will raise this "net government inflow" from 60 to 70 percent. Look at it this way: three out of ten American families are supporting themselves plus – through government – supplying or supplementing the incomes of seven other households. As a permanent arrangement, this is individually unfair, politically inequitable, and economically dangerous.
>
> […]Just to return to where we were at the end of 2007, 8.4 million jobs have to be created. To reduce unemployment to its pre-crisis level of 5 per cent by the end of President Obama's term, our economy needs to create 247,000 new jobs per month. But we are headed in the wrong direction … except in one field: the

> government is growing at breakneck pace in expanding federal payrolls.
>
> Although millions of private sector jobs have been lost since the recession began, Washington is on track to add about 275,000 more people to the public payrolls – a whopping 15 percent increase. And we aren't talking minimum wages here. More federal workers make over $100,000 than those earning $40,000 or less. The average government worker's salary in 2009 was 21 percent higher than private sector salaries. The average federal worker's compensation package, including benefits, was nearly $120,000 in 2008, twice the private sector at $60,000. One study shows the private sector benefit package averages $9,900 while the federal package averages almost $41,000. Now the Administration wants Congress to privilege federal workers by writing off their unpaid student loans after ten years. People in productive private sector jobs would keep paying for twenty years. Progressivists would really like everyone to work for the government.

Once you start to pay 50-60 percent of your income to your neighbors who are not working, you don't try to have a family any more. What is the point? Working harder to provide for them doesn't get you anything.

MUST-SEE: Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on marriage and family

April 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am sure you will all LOVE this lecture delivered by Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse at Houston Baptist University. (60 minutes, *start listening at 11:15 though!*)

Topics:

- what is the purpose of marriage in society?
- do children really need a mother and a father?
- is each child entitled to a relationship with their 2 bio-parents?
- how is the purpose of marriage being re-defined today?
- how does same-sex marriage redefine traditional marriage?
- should the state be able to determine who counts as a parent?
- are mothers and fathers interchangeable?
- how did no-fault divorce redefine marriage?
- does the government provide an incentive to divorce?
- are men interchangeable with women?
- where did feminism come from? how did it start?
- how does the Marxist worldview view marriage and family?
- who do feminists believe should be raising the children?
- how Christianity conflicts with Utopian views
- what can a Christian university do to turn the tide?

This is a fun lecture to watch, because she's very articulate, informed, and passionate. She's an excellent speaker, because she taught economics at Yale University and George Mason University. You can't help but follow what she's saying because she keeps your attention. I am also a *huge fan* of women who are concerned about threats to the marriage, fathers and children. I like when women put marriage first. I like it when women think that fathers are important. I like it when women want to protect children. She's very funny in this video, as well.

I've learned a ton about marriage and economics by listening to Jennifer Roback Morse. I thought she was kind of slacking off lately, but this video more than makes up for it. I like to complain a lot about women today not thinking much about love, marriage and parenting. But Dr. J knows *everything* about those topics. Everything! I remember chastising her once by e-mail that she had never taken clear sides on no-fault divorce and she MAILED ME a hardcover book of essays where she wrote an essay on that very topic! Naturally she took the pro-marriage, pro-father, pro-children side.

Investigation shows RPGs and RPG rounds found at "Collateral Murder" site

April 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard explains the story.

Excerpt:

> Wikileaks, the website devoted to publishing classified documents on the Internet, made a splash today with a video claiming to show that the U.S. military "murdered" a Reuters cameraman and other Iraqi "civilians" in Baghdad on July 12, 2007. But a careful watching of the video shows that the U.S. helicopter gun crews that attacked a group of armed men in the then Mahdi Army stronghold of New Baghdad was anything but "Collateral Murder," as Wikileaks describes the incident.

The Weekly Standard article states, "several of the men are clearly armed with assault rifles; one appears to have an RPG".

Now consider this post from the Jawa Report, which talks about the after action investigation of the events, and has a clip showing a man holding a long object that looks like an RPG. If you look as the frames from the video, it looks more like an RPG than an AK-47 assault rifle, since there is no curved magazine, but instead a short, stubby grip and a round warhead on the end of it.

Here's the smoking gun frame:

That looks like an RPG-7 warhead not a curved AK-47 assault rifle magazine

In my judgment, it looks like a Russian RPG-7 or a Chinese Type 69. An RPG is an unguided rocket-propelled grenade that can destroy a Humvee (Hummer) and kill everyone in it with *one shot.*

An RPG-7/Type 69 looks like this:

And an AK-47 looks like this:

And what's more, the investigation report (cited by Jawa) says that RPGs and live RPG rounds were found next to the bodies.

The investigation report states:

> We remained above the engagement site while Bushmaster sent ground forces to the site. Bushmaster arrived and reported 11 x AIF KIA and **found RPGs and RPG rounds at the site. We also witnessed a loaded RPG lying 2-3 blocks south of the engagement site**. Bushmaster reported that the first child was wounded and pulled from the van. We were unable to determine that there were children in the vehicle and never saw any children prior to or during the engagement. After viewing the gun tape, were able to determine that both wounded children came from the van. Bushmaster immediately MEDEVAC'd both girls to FOB Loyalty for medical care.

Bushmaster is the call-sign for the ground force that was being covered by the helicopter. The ground force was composed of Humvees. Humvees that would likely be destroyed by an AT RPG round. (And probably by an HE round, too.) At the Jawa Report post, you can see a photo taken from the dead journalist's camera of the Humvees rounding the corner and coming into line of sight to the RPG-armed terrorists.

I'm sorry, but this is war. This. Is. War. Bad things happen in wars. The world is not a perfect place.

Journalists like those who were killed should not be embedding with terrorists and then expecting to be immune to collateral damage. Our American military forces are the most honorable and moral soldiers in the world. They do their best to follow the rules of engagement. In this case, they acted appropriately. I am thankful and proud of their self-sacrificial service to protect my liberty and the liberty of the Iraqi people. Shame on those in the leftist media who question their judgment. Shame! *Shame!*

How good is Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell"?

April 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a new book review (in Scribd format) is here. (H/T Evolution News)

Excerpt:

> Stephen C. Meyer changes the game in the intelligent design fight with Signature in the Cell, a big book that methodically, but agreeably, constructs an argument that intelligence in some unspecified form, is responsible for the bio-molecular machinery in the cell and, therefore, for first life. Meyer's argument is, at its heart, logical and statistical but also strives for a reality check by engaging the reader's day-to-day experience of cause and effect.
>
> […]His long argument is encyclopedic yet lively and persuades that science is at an impasse in explaining the origin of life as the product of undirected processes. The work overall, technical at times, is directed to the general reader. The scientifically trained reader must decide whether a popular work is "trying to pull a fast one," preferably guided by criteria that are consistently and dispassionately applied across historical sciences. The author's passion for his argument is palpable but scrupulously controlled; he is ever mindful that it is the target of scornful attacks by opponents who are, to put it gently, not disinterested. Meyer delivers his argument in the manner of a dish best served cold, yet forcibly enough to shake the base of the materialistic paradigm.

The review appeared in *The Journal of the International Society of Philosophical Enquiry.*

The review is written by a software engineer, so he understands code, algorithms and specified complexity. His name is Harry Kanigel, and he is the former executive director of Information Technology at UBS Investment Bank. (!)

This book is an excellent *science* book – the best book on intelligent design available today.

What is intelligent design?

You can read about it here!

Related posts

- R.C. Sproul interviews Stephen Meyer on Signature in the Cell
- Stephen Meyer explains what intelligent design is in a CNN editorial.
- Stephen Meyer's Signature in the Cell in top ten science books on Amazon.com
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show

How Obamacare raises your taxes if you don’t buy health insurance

April 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the Daily Caller. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> Individuals who don’t purchase health insurance may lose their tax refunds according to IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman. After acknowledging the recently passed health-care bill limits the agency’s options for enforcing the individual mandate, Shulman told reporters that the most likely way to penalize individuals that don’t comply is by reducing or confiscating their tax refunds.
>
> Speaking at the National Press Club on Monday, Shulman downplayed the IRS’s role in enforcing the recent overhaul of the health insurance industry by claiming the agency would not aggressively target individuals who don’t purchase coverage. He noted that the health-care bill expressly forbids the agency from freezing bank accounts, seizing assets or pursuing criminal charges, but when pressed said the IRS would most likely use tax refund offsets to penalize those that don’t comply with the mandate. The IRS uses refund offsets to collect from individuals that owe the federal government a delinquent debt.
>
> “These are not the kinds of things we send agents out about,” Shulman said. “These are things where you get a letter from us. Congress was very careful to make sure there was nothing too punitive in this bill.”
>
> Many reports have claimed that enforcement of the individual mandate will be non-existent, but Shulman’s answers indicate differently. According to BusinessWeek, starting in 2015 Americans who don’t purchase insurance will be subject to a fine of $325 and that sum increases to $695 in 2016. However, the commissioner seemed confident that in most cases individuals would either receive subsidies to purchase insurance or simply do so on their own in order to comply with the law.

Here’s my previous story explaining how Obamacare is a bad deal for young men because they are forced to pay for the elderly, who use a lot of health care, and they also have to pay for coverage for treatments they will never need, like breast implants and in vitro and abortions. If you young men, and young people in general who are healthy, don’t want to pay for other people’s abortions, then you can kiss your tax refund goodbye.

Watch two great intelligent design documentaries online for free!

April 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the first one, all about biological information in DNA and the origin of life.

Part 1 of 12:

The full playlist is here.

Here's the second one, all about what it takes to have a habitable planet.

Part 1 of 12:

The full playlist here.

These are each about an hour long. The third one in the series is called "Darwin's Dilemma", and it covers the origin of new body plans and organ types in the Cambrian explosion. It's the best of the series.

(H/T Apologetics 315)

William Lane Craig explains why God permits evil and suffering

April 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The first video is from his debate with Dr. Bruce Russell at West Point. Dr. Russell asks why an all-powerful, all-good, all-loving God would allow his creatures to suffer. Dr. Craig responds to the argument in the two clips below.

Part 1:

This is one my favorite debates. You can buy it here.

And here's a clip from the re-match with Austin Dacey.

Part 2:

Craig says something like this in the first clip: (paraphrase)

> It is not God's purpose to create a comfortable environment for His human pets. On the Christian view, we are not God's pets. And the purpose of life is not happiness, as such, but rather the knowledge of God and His salvation––which will ultimately bring true happiness. But many evils occur in life which are utterly pointless with respect to producing human happiness. But they may not be pointless with respect to producing a deeper knowledge of God.

I have to confess that the argument from evil and suffering lost all force for me when I began to think of it as the argument from self-centered hedonism, or "the argument from whining". We don't have a right to happiness in this life. That's not the point of life. I think that God expects us to rise above that sort of selfish pleasure-seeking and to look to his interests – defending his reputation, telling people the truth about him, and achieving his goals. And it doesn't matter if it makes us unpopular or causes us to suffer. We have to do the right thing, and there are no promises. Sometimes you will do everything right that God wants you to do, and you may still face some kickback. And it happened to Jesus.

When I look at Jesus I do not see a man trying to make himself happy in his own way. I do not see a man who views his relationship with God as a means of achieving happiness in this life. I see a man who thinks that his service to God may cost him everything, including his own life. The normal Christian life is a life of self-denial and suffering. We ought to do what is necessary (study, charity, chastity, sobriety, fidelity, self-sacrificial love, etc.) regardless of whether we like it. We do what is best for God. I think that some of us twist Christianity into hedonism. We just add an imaginary old man with a white beard sort of standing back and wishing us to have a good time in our own way. That's not Christianity.

Related posts

- The best post I've ever done on the problems of evil and suffering
- John Piper explains 50 reasons that Jesus had to die

How hard did the Republicans fight to stop taxpayer-funding of abortions?

April 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from K-Lo at National Review.

Excerpt:

> If one of those groups has a spare defender-of-life award lying around, they ought to give it to the man who could be the next speaker of the House of Representatives, House minority leader Rep. John Boehner (R., Ohio).
>
> […]In a speech to a conservative audience this winter, Boehner insisted that Republicans in the House wouldn't "bend on . . . the issue of the sanctity of life." He explained: "In November, Republican lawmakers joined with some Democrat lawmakers to stop them from using any federal taxpayer funds from being used to provide for abortions in America. . . . We got some flak for working with the other side."
>
> That's what you call principled leadership. Even though he hated the bill, if it was going to pass, he wanted taxpayer funding of abortion out of it. After the Stupak language was included in the House bill that passed last year, Boehner went to the House floor three times and asked Democratic chairmen Charlie Rangel, Henry Waxman, and George Miller to pledge to support the Stupak language come time for conference negotiations with the Senate. Because abortion was a priority of theirs, they declined. (Too bad that Stupak, wanting the bill to pass, didn't feel as strongly about the sanctity of the unborn when his moment for leadership arrived.) Recalling what went down late last year, Boehner said: "When it comes to protecting the unborn, we'll take the votes wherever we can get them. . . . We did the right thing for the right reasons. And we're showing . . . the American people that there's a clear difference between the two parties."
>
> […]Instead of complaining that Republicans don't talk more about the issue, those who believe that the sanctity of unborn life is a central human-rights issue of our day should thank John Boehner. He has a zero rating from NARAL Pro-Choice America, an arm of the abortion industry, and a 100 percent rating from the National Right to Life Committee. In the face of so many powerful figures and influences arrayed against Boehner and a culture of life, it's the right thing to do.

For the House Republicans, abortion was not a side-issue. Abortion was the main issue. They did everything they could to stop the funding of abortions by pro-life taxpayers. The Republicans just didn't have enough people in the House and the Senate to stand against the pro-abortion Democrats. All the major pro-life leaders in the House, Trent Franks, Michele Bachmann, Paul Ryan, etc. are all *Republicans*.

You can listen to this podcast in which Scott Klusendorf explains why he will take time out from pro-life work from now on to get more and more Republicans elected. The way to slow down and reverse the abortion tide is by packing the House and Senate with Republicans.

Walter Williams advocates a return to federalism

April 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams

A popular editorial from Investors Business Daily.

Here is the question he wants to answer:

> If one group of people prefers government control and management of people's lives and another prefers liberty and a desire to be left alone, should they be required to fight, antagonize one another, risk bloodshed and loss of life in order to impose their preferences or should they be able to peaceably part company and go their separate ways?

The problem is that the federal government is not supposed to tell the states what to do. Every state is supposed to decide how much to tax and what government programs to spend on for themselves.

He continues:

> Article I, Section 8 of our Constitution lists the activities for which Congress is authorized to tax and spend. Nowhere on that list is authority for Congress to tax and spend for: prescription drugs, Social Security, public education, farm subsidies, bank and business bailouts, food stamps and other activities that represent roughly two-thirds of the federal budget.
>
> […]James Madison, the acknowledged father of the Constitution, explained in Federalist Paper No. 45: "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite. The former will be exercised principally on external objects, as war, peace, negotiation, and foreign commerce.

Williams ends by hoping for a restoration of respect for the Constitution. That would mean that the Democrats, (the party that advocates top-down control of other people's lives),

would have to be voted out of power.

Walter Williams is my second favorite living economist. Thomas Sowell is still number one, and he has the most popular post on National Review right now.

Paul Copan discusses tactics for preaching the gospel

April 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article talks about 10 factors related to talking about sin (bad news) during evangelism. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Here's one factor from his list that I'm a little uncomfortable with:

2. I have met plenty of "the encountered" who report that those who "witness" by telling the bad news first commonly come across as judgmental, legalistic, arrogant, scolding, and morally superior. Yes, rebels against God love darkness rather than light. Does this mean we never mention the need to turn away from the lifestyle of the spiritually dead? Not at all. (See the comments on idolatry below.) Our consciously taking on Paul's chief-of-sinners title would go a long way in building bridges. In the words of the evangelist D. T. Niles, we are like one beggar telling another where to find bread. We should remember that friendship commonly helps lower defenses and helps create a context for people to connect with the gospel.

I believe in objective morality, so I like it if someone who is morally superior to me judges me and scolds me. I'm ok with that. What's the big deal? It's only annoying to be judged if you're a relativist. I think it's fun to be judged. FUN!

And here's one that I agree with:

5. How many of us came to trust in Christ because a stranger told us that we were sinners? While this certainly occurs, we more likely turned to Christ through believing friends or relatives who modeled an attractive, redeemed life. Statistics reveal that up to 90% of those who have come to Christ and faithfully continue in their discipleship were introduced to the Christian faith through believing friends and relatives. This personal connection to the gospel came through love, acceptance, and a patient modeling of the Christian faith. (See, for example, the Arns' *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples*.)

A more recent piece of research comes from Bridge Builders' David Bennett. He describes how adults become Christians — which, we should remember, is typically more of a process than it is for kids at a Christian summer camp! His survey shows that times of crisis/felt needs (death, illness) present an open door for Christian friendship; in his research, this has been the most effective means of seeing people respond to Christ. *Ninety-two percent* (92%) of those surveyed first had a Christian friend before they responded to the gospel. The research showed that those who found Christ did so through a *gradual process*.

This article is kinda nice, gentle and Christian-y. *Blech!* But I thought some of you (you know who are – MARA!) would like it. Paul Copan is a great philosopher. He knows when to be mean (his response to John Dominic Crossan at the Greer-Heard Forum was

fantastic!), and he knows when to be nice.

Related posts

- What does the Bible say about judging others and Hell?
- James Spiegel explains what really causes atheism
- Interview with Jim Spiegel on “The Making of an Atheist” book
- Book review of “If there’s a God, why are there atheists?”
- Should you reject the Biblical notion of Hell based on emotions?
- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

Veronique de Rugy shows that stimulus money was allocated for political gain

April 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Veronique de Rugy

Story here on National Review. (H/T The Other McCain via ECM)

Excerpt:

> As it turns out, when controlling for state capitals and a host of other potentially relevant variables, we find that the original findings still hold. We learn a few other things, too:
>
> - First, how and where the money is spent doesn't seem to be related to unemployment or decline in employment in the district where it is spent.
> - Second, the district's party affiliation matters in where the money is spent. (We still don't know how much it matters compared to other factors.) The average Democratic district receives 81 percent more than the average Republican district. Even after taking out the money spent through state capitals, the average Democratic district receives at least 30 percent more than the average Republican district.
> - Third, whether a district has part of a state capital in it is an important factor in how stimulus money is spent. However, controlling for this factor, or even taking the money going to state capitals out altogether, doesn't negate the finding that the district's party affiliation matters in where the money is spent.
> - Finally, how long the district's representative has been in office seems to have a small but significant impact on how the money is spent (this is a new finding, as well).
>
> There is still much more to learn on the question "How are stimulus funds being spent and why?"
>
> The more I dig into this, the more important the question seems.

George Mason University is a pretty moderate school, but they boast a fine conservative economics department. Jennifer Roback Morse used to teach there, and Walter Williams still does. It's probably the best place for a conservative or libertarian student to do an economics degree.

Now seems like a good time to re-post Michele Bachmann's denunciation of gangster government, too.

Michelle Malkin calls them Corruptocrats. It fits.

Related posts

- How Obama rewards Democrat special interest groups
- How Obama rewards his most prolific fundraisers with crony appointments
- Michele Bachmann goes nuclear against gangster government
- Are Obama's bailouts just pay-offs to left-wing special interest groups?

Why doesn’t God show us more evidence for his existence?

April 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard someone say that if God existed, he would give us more evidence? This is called the “hiddenness of God” argument. It’s also known as the argument from “rational non-belief”.

Basically the argument is something like this:

1. God is all powerful
2. God is all loving
3. God wants all people to know about him
4. Some people don’t know about him
5. Therefore, there is no God.

You may hear have heard this argument before, when talking to atheists, as in William Lane Craig’s debate with Theodore Drange, (audio, video).

Basically, the atheist is saying that he’s looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that’s logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden when our eternal destination depends on our knowledge of his existence.

What reason could God have for remaining hidden?

Dr. Michael Murray, a brilliant professor of philosophy at Franklin & Marshall College, has found a reason for God to remain hidden.

His paper on divine hiddenness is here:
“Coercion and the Hiddenness of God“, American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us. Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him. God places a higher value on people having the free will to respond to him, and if he shows too much of himself he takes away their free choice to respond to him, because once he is too overt about his existence, people will just feel obligated to belief in him in order to avoid being punished.

But believing in God just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants for us. If it is too obvious to us that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and behave morally out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out of interest *in him*, just like we might try to get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is

actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God's veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don't seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to reach out to us and draw us to him. But I do think that we are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist's argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. In order to derive a contradiction, God MUST NOT have any possible reason to remain hidden. If he has a reason for remaining hidden that is consistent with his goodness, then the argument will not go through.

When Murray offers a possible reason for God to remain hidden in order to allow people to freely respond to him, then the argument is defeated. God wants people to respond to him freely so that there is a genuine love relationship – not coercion by overt threat of damnation. To rescue the argument, the atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free choice of his creatures to reject him.

People choose to separate themselves from God for many reasons. Maybe they are professors in academia and didn't want to be thought of as weird by their colleagues. Maybe they didn't want to be burdened with traditional morality when tempted by some sin, especially sexual sin. Maybe their fundamentalist parents ordered them around too much without providing any reasons. Maybe the brittle fundamentalist beliefs of their childhood were exploded by evidence for micro-evolution or New Testament manuscript variants. Maybe they wanted something really bad, that God did not give them. How could a good God allow them to suffer like that?

The point is that there a lot of people who don't want to know God, and God chooses not to violate their freedom by forcing himself on them. God wants a relationship – he wants you to respond to him. (See Matthew 7:7-8) For those people who don't want to know him, he allows them to speculate about unobservable entities like the multiverse. He allows them to think that all religions are the same and that there is nothing special about Christianity. He allows them to believe that God has no plan for those who never hear about Jesus. He allows them to be so disappointed because of some instance of suffering that they reject him. God doesn't force people to love him.

More of Michael Murray's work

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007). The book chapter from the Cambridge book is here. The book chapter from the Routledge book is here.

Michael Murray's papers are really fun to read, because he uses hilarious examples. (But I disagree with his view that God's work of introducing biological information in living creatures has to be front-loaded).

Here’s more terrific stuff from Dr. Murray:

- “Who’s Afraid of Religion?“, Inaugural Lecture delivered March 30, 2006. Franklin and Marshall College.
- “Seek and You Will Find“, in God and the Philosophers. Thomas Morris, editor. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1994.

Related posts

- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith
- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why won’t Christians defend their faith in public?

Should pro-lifers argue against sexual libertinism?

April 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from Christianity Today about the tactics of the pro-life movement by Dinesh D'Souza.

Excerpt:

> Why then, in the face of its bad arguments, does the pro-choice movement continue to prevail legally and politically?
>
> I think it's because abortion is the debris of the sexual revolution. We have seen a great shift in the sexual mores of Americans in the past half-century. Today a widespread social understanding persists that if there is going to be sex outside marriage, there will be a considerable number of unwanted pregnancies. Abortion is viewed as a necessary clean-up solution to this social reality.
>
> In order to have a sexual revolution, women must have the same sexual autonomy as men. But the laws of biology contradict this ideology, so feminists who have championed the sexual revolution—Simone de Beauvoir, Gloria Steinem, Shulamith Firestone, among others—have found it necessary to denounce pregnancy as an invasion of the female body. The fetus becomes, in Firestone's phrase, an "uninvited guest." As long as the fetus occupies the mother's womb, these activists argue, the mother should be able to keep it or get rid of it at her discretion.
>
> If you're going to make an omelet, the Marxist revolutionaries used to say, you have to be ready to break some eggs. And if you're going to have a sexual revolution, you have to be ready to clean up the debris. After 35 years, the debris has become a mountain, and as a society, we are still adding bodies to the heap. No one in the pro-choice camp, of course, wants to admit any of this. It's not only politically embarrassing, it's also painful to one's self-image to acknowledge a willingness to sustain permissive sexual values by killing the unborn.
>
> This analysis might help to explain why otherwise compassionate people fight so tenaciously against the most helpless and vulnerable of all living creatures, unborn persons.

Here is a podcast from the Life Training Institute discussing that article.

The MP3 file is here. (Just the first 34 minutes)

Topics:

- Dinesh says to argue against sexual promiscuity as part of pro-life apologetics
- LTI's general position is to focus on the humanity of the unborn
- should pro-lifers change strategies to argue against sexual libertinism
- is Dinesh right to say that arguing for the humanity of the unborn is not enough?

- how strong are the philosophical arguments for the pro-life position
- why has the effort to de-fund Planned Parenthood failed?
- have the best arguments for the pro-life position become common knowledge?
- do women who have abortions believe that the unborn are human or not?
- do the arguments against abortion address the real circumstances of the woman?
- why do people accept the humanity of the unborn, but still are pro-choice?
- do people accept abortion because they refuse to give up sexual libertinism?
- what is really behind the disrespect that people for the right to life?
- is it possible for pro-lifers to convince people to give up irresponsible sex?
- how did people begin to believe that a sexual revolution was a good idea?
- has the sexual revolution increased or decreased social ills like divorce?
- can a scientific case be made that sexual libertinism is destructive and costly?
- should pro-lifers argue abortion on moral ground alone, or on utilitarian grounds?

This first file switches topics about 34 minutes into the podcast. There is actually a second file, too.

The MP3 file for part two is here.

The second topic is a paper written by an abortionist who is performing abortions while she is pregnant. She talks about performing a second-trimester abortion in the paper. Just as she describes tearing out the leg of the baby inside the other woman, her own baby kicks inside her abdomen. It's interesting to hear this woman explain her feelings about this occurrence, and how she wants to suppress them. You can listen to the rest of the first MP3 file and then the second file as well to hear about that topic.

My thoughts

I have a lot of friends in the pro-life movement, and I also donate to pro-life debaters and sponsor pro-life events, (and I do the same for the marriage issue). But there is something else I do, too. I feel very, very badly about how women have adopted the habit of having sex before marriage, simply because they have bought into feminist ideology hook, line and sinker. Premarital sex causes women a lot of pain and emotional damage, as I described before. By abolishing sex roles, women are left with no idea about how to make a man love them and commit to them.

So it's not just that I oppose abortion and support traditional marriage. It's not just that I oppose women who murder their unborn children and who raise children without fathers. It's that I oppose premarital sex, period. And I oppose the root of all these problems – feminism. It's feminism that abolishes sex roles, chivalry, courting, romance, traditional marriage, two-parent families, at-fault divorce laws, small government, and eventually, liberty itself. And the way that I argue against feminism is by sharing the way that I treat women with you, my readers.

You can read more about my anti-feminist, pro-woman, pro-life, pro-marriage views in the related posts below.

Related posts on chastity, chivalry, courtship and marriage

- The Wintery Knight's greatest fears about the future
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Related posts on feminism and sexual libertinism

- What worldview emerges from serial hook-up sex?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Melanie Phillips has a radical plan to stop the breakdown of marriages
- Obama's new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- France introduces bill to require boards of directors to be 40% female
- France passes law to jail spouses who commit psychological violence
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- Marriage under attack by the left in Australia and India
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- Jennifer Roback Morse evaluates the economics of no-fault divorce
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New study explains the best way for young people to avoid sexual risks
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day
- Has the decline of chastity and courtship hurt young people?
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children's sexual choices
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being

Related posts on abortion

- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English

- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

Related posts on adult stem cell research

- Round up of articles on adult stem-cell research from FRC
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama’s plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

Over 10,000 Minnesota tea partiers cheer Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin

April 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann speaks to over 10,000 supporters in Minnesota

Here's the story from TwinCities.com.

Excerpt:

> Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin joined Congresswoman Michele Bachmann on a Minneapolis stage Wednesday, holding a raucous campaign rally of more than 10,000 fans that exceeded the size of many presidential whistle-stops.
>
> Bachmann, an outspoken conservative whose national profile has made her a target of Democrats, is seeking re-election in what is expected to be one of the most expensive congressional races in the country. Palin, another conservative darling who infuriates Democrats, came to Minnesota to offer her endorsement and help raise money.
>
> Calling Bachmann a "fireball," Palin asked the cheering crowd, "What do you say, Minnesota? Will you do the rest of the nation a favor and elect Michele Bachmann?"
>
> Waving signs and cheering loudly, women seemed to make up a substantial part of the crowd at the Minneapolis Convention Center.
>
> […]The Bachmann campaign initially planned a much smaller event, but demand grew so that the Republican Party of Minnesota — which teamed with Bachmann to stage the event — eventually handed out more than 10,000 tickets.
>
> "I've been to presidential campaign rallies that drew fewer people," party

> Chairman Tony Sutton said.
>
> […]The two women overshadowed another speaker, Gov. Tim Pawlenty, who has been laying the groundwork for a potential presidential campaign. Bachmann and Palin are both national figures who share an appeal among followers — that their words are the unvarnished, unwavering truth.
>
> "Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin are galvanizing the conservative movement across this nation," Sutton said.

There's something about hearing Michele speak that men really, really like:

> Bill Birckweg, of Brooklyn Park, took a day off from work to attend the Bachmann rally.
>
> He arrived at the convention center at 9:30 a.m. and dashed in when the doors opened at noon to stand in the front row next to the stage.
>
> "I'm an independent conservative, and I'm here to support Michele Bachmann," Birckweg said. "She's being targeted by the national Democratic Party. All she has done is stand up for American values. That's what I stand for."

Michele's definitely a grassroots candidate who would shake up Washington if she were to be elected President in 2012.

Meet your future President, America

And from Fox News. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> When Rep. Michele Bachmann grabbed the microphone and electrified a crowd of Tea Party loyalists in her home state of Minnesota on Thursday, her words — as well as a few other characteristics — bore striking similarities to another galvanizing force within the movement: Sarah Palin.
>
> […]"They're both moms so there's a lot of similarities," said Annette Bystrom, who traveled from Ellsworth, Wis., to hear Bachmann speak. "They both stand for

> God, the truth and their families.
>
> […]"I am the chief coupon-clipper at our house," she told a cheering crowd of 200 conservative activists outside the Minnesota state capitol. "Whoever balances the checkbook knows we gotta bring in at least a little bit more than what you put out."
>
> Bachmann went on to say that she and her husband, parents of five biological children (the same number as the Palins) as well as 23 foster children, "always bought used cars" and "clothes in consignment stores."
>
> "We've lived like all of you live because we balance the checkbook," she boomed.

You can read more about her in World Net Daily, Atlas Shrugs, and World Magazine. These stories really explain why everyone, especially men, like her so much. She's my favorite Congresswoman, and I would be very happy if she were elected President. A good start would be for her to be selected as House Majority Leader in November, when the Republicans regain control of the House of Representatives.

We need to put a *normal person* like Michele in charge of the country – someone who knows what it is like to homeschool children, run a business and clip coupons. Rich liberal socialists like Barack Obama have got to lose the next election to ordinary people.

Related posts

- Michele Bachmann promises to work to repeal Obamacare
- Video of Michele Bachmann defending unborn children
- Michele Bachmann's passionate and inspiring speech at CPAC 2010
- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama's latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare's rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

Has the progress of science vindicated Mike Behe or Ken Miller?

April 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM send me a couple of articles recently from Uncommon Descent and Evolution News that I wanted to write about.

The topic is Junk DNA, which is the name given by naturalists to the portions of the DNA code that do not code for proteins. Is Junk DNA really just leftover junk from a blind, purposeless process of fully naturalistic evolution? Or does it have a function, like intelligent design theorists say? Let's put these predictions to the test and then update our worldviews to fit with the scientific evidence.

The prediction of Ken Miller

Anti-theistic biologist Ken Miller said in 1994 that DNA is filled with junk left over from naturalistic, random evolution:

> …the designer made serious errors, wasting millions of bases of DNA on a blueprint **full of junk and scribbles**.
>
> Ken Miller

One thing you have to like about Ken is that he manages to fit in some predictions along with his factually incorrect statements under oath.

The prediction of Michael Behe

Theistic biologist Michael Behe said in 2002 that DNA isn't as junky some people think, because of the evidence:

> As a public skeptic of the ability of Darwinian processes to account for complex cellular systems and a proponent of the hypothesis of intelligent design, (1) I often encounter a rebuttal that can be paraphrased as "no designer would have done it that way." …
> If at least some pseudogenes have unsuspected functions, however, might not other biological features that strike us as odd also have functions we have not yet discovered? Might even the backwards wiring of the vertebrate eye serve some useful purpose?
> ….
> Hirotsune et al's (3) work has forcefully shown that **our intuitions about what is functionless in biology are not to be trusted**.
>
> Sincerely, Michael J. Behe
> An Open Letter to Nature

Those are the two predictions.

So, what does the progress of science say to confirm one prediction or the other? Well,

let's see what Nature, the most prestigious peer-reviewed science journal, has to say.

> In 1961, French biologists François Jacob and Jacques Monod proposed the idea that 'regulator' proteins bind to DNA to control the expression of genes. Five years later, American biochemist Walter Gilbert confirmed this model by discovering the lac repressor protein, which binds to DNA to control lactose metabolism in Escherichia colibacteria[1]. For the rest of the twentieth century, scientists expanded on the details of the model, but they were confident that they understood the basics. "The crux of regulation," says the 1997 genetics textbook Genes VI (Oxford Univ. Press), "is that a regulator gene codes for a regulator protein that controls transcription by binding to particular site(s) on DNA."
>
> **Just one decade of post-genome biology has exploded that view. Biology's new glimpse at a universe of non-coding DNA — what used to be called 'junk' DNA — has been fascinating and befuddling.** Researchers from an international collaborative project called the Encyclopedia of DNA Elements (ENCODE) showed that in a selected portion of the genome containing just a few per cent of protein-coding sequence, between 74% and 93% of DNA was transcribed into RNA[2]. **Much non-coding DNA has a regulatory role; small RNAs of different varieties seem to control gene expression at the level of both DNA and RNA transcripts in ways that are still only beginning to become clear.** "Just the sheer existence of these exotic regulators suggests that our understanding about the most basic things — such as how a cell turns on and off — is incredibly naive," says Joshua Plotkin, a mathematical biologist at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

On the Evolution News post, pro-ID guy Rob Crowther writes:

> …not that long ago, junk DNA was being defended as an important element of the Darwinian evolution paradigm… The question now seems to be whether Ayala, Dawkins, Collins, Falk and other junk DNA proponents will continue to defend junk DNA, whatever they call it?

The post by Rob Crowther has more information on this story.

If you are one of those people who thinks that naturalistic molecules-to-man evolution is as proved as is the fact that the Earth goes around the Sun, then check out the links below – ESPECIALLY the debates. Peter Atkins, Michael Shermer and Lewis Wolpert are some of the most prominent prominent proponents of naturalism and materialism out there. Watch the debates. Have an open mind. If science can be hijacked by global warmists, then it can be hijacked by evolutionists, too. We need to guard against that.

I know there is a lot of pressure on people to just believe in naturalism, especially when their degree or career depends on a public profession of faith in the power of chance and material processes. But we have to follow the evidence – science is about evidence, not ideology. Science is about testing to see what is true, not forcing the evidence to confirm

what you want to believe (e.g. – materialism). There is a difference between the religious assumption of naturalism/materialism and the scientific method of predicting and testing.

Related posts

- What kinds of predictions does intelligent design make?
- Audio of debate between Stephen Meyer and Peter Atkins on intelligent design
- Science Daily reports that there is no such thing as Junk RNA
- Science Daily reports the biological functions supported by Junk DNA
- Audio debate between William Dembski and Lewis Wolpert about intelligent design
- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Richard Dawkins agrees that there is no naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show

Learn more about intelligent design

- Fine-tuning of cosmological constants
- Galactic, stellar and planetary fine-tuning
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion
- The development of irreducibly complex molecular machines

McGill University and University of Calgary censor pro-life students

April 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The headline should be that these Canadian universities both *continue* to censor pro-life students.

Remember how students at McGill shouted down a pro-life debater and how the police arrested pro-life students at the University of Calgary? (See related posts below) There is no such thing as free speech in Canada, because the secular left has decided that they cannot stand to hear anything that offends them and so they will just censor and/or coerce anyone who says anything they disagree with.

Life Site has the latest from McGill University:

> The Student Society of McGill University (SSMU) has reinstated the club status of Choose Life, the campus pro-life club, but only after forcing them to submit to special requirements that restrict the club's ability to share the pro-life message.
>
> The SSMU Council voted April 1st to reinstate the club, but also required them to attach an appendix to their constitution in order to "facilitate their compliance" with SSMU's equity policy.
>
> Natalie Fohl, Choose Life's president, said that she was pleased with the return of their status, but denounced the special restrictions on their pro-life voice. "I think it's a double standard, and it's very disappointing that they think that this is justified, and I hope that at some point it will be rectified," she told LifeSiteNews (LSN).
>
> In particular, SSMU has banned Choose Life from "advocat[ing] or lobby[ing] for the criminalization of abortion through the use of SSMU resources." According to Fohl, this means that they will not be permitted to do so in the Student Union building.
>
> […]SSMU has also disallowed the presentation of graphic images, such as those depicting aborted babies, in open public spaces. Even in closed spaces, the document demands that such images never be shown "without the ability of the copyright owner to demonstrate that all images were legally obtained."
>
> "We don't want [Choose Life] to be going around … trying to shame or shock students with graphic imagery," said Dooley.

Life Site also covered the latest from the University of Calgary:

> On Thursday, Campus Pro-life, the University of Calgary's pro-life club, set up a pro-life display on campus – the Genocide Awareness Project (GAP).
>
> Last year, the university charged the pro-life students with trespassing for erecting the same display, which has been displayed on campus peacefully and

> without incident twice per year since 2006. The crown prosecutors withdrew the charges prior to trial, however.
>
> But in an e-mail sent to the students' lawyer Thursday, the university against stated that it "requires that Campus Pro-Life turn the Genocide Awareness Project signs inward so that the University community does not have to view them," and threatened the students with sanctions for non-academic misconduct.
>
> The pro-life students say that at Thursday's event campus security initially appeared as if they would not intervene, simply standing on site as the group's exhibit went ahead without incident. However, in mid-afternoon that changed when U of C security went around the exhibit handing out notices to pro-life students, indicating that if they refused to turn their signs inwards, they could be subject to a fine up to $2,000 ($5,000 for further trespass), arrest, civil action, or non-academic misconduct.
>
> Campus Pro-Life (CPL) president Leah Hallman remarked that, "To our knowledge, no other group has ever been asked to turn its signs inwards."

Montreal (McGill) is one the most leftist cities in Canada, and Calgary is the most conservative. But the universities are all liberal to some degree or other. The academic left uses the power of the lectern and the grading marker to impose their views on generations of students. They use techniques like speech codes, expulsions, degree denials and promotion denials. The secular left is intolerant of other points of view. They don't want to debate, they want to suppress. Hearing other points of view is too difficult for those on the academic left, so they put their hands over their hears and scream for the police.

It happens in New Zealand, which like Canada, is dominated by the fascist left.

What can we do to stop it?

This 15-minute podcast from Jennifer Roback Morse came out a while back and it talked about free speech on campus and the work of the Alliance Defense Fund to defend free speech rights from the academic left. I've listened to it twice, and I found it good. You young law students should consider going to work for firms like the ADF – they do good work. Canada has nothing like the ADF. And remember, Canadians trust the government because they depend on the government for their health care and other social programs. Purchasing health care privately is illegal in Canada. It's really hurt their sense of individual rights and freedoms.

Relate posts

- University of Ottawa cancels Ann Coulter appearance
- Ann Coulter files hate speech claim against Canadian university
- Canadian student union leader says pro-lifers are all potential murderers
- Lakehead University bans pro-life club
- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's University

- Pro-life club at McGill University banned
- University of Calgary uses police to threaten pro-life students (More from Ezra Levant)
- Canadian pro-life student quarantined by public school principal
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

How the progress of science strengthened the kalam cosmological argument

April 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the first of a two-part series. Part two is here.

The *kalam* cosmological argument

The argument goes like this:

1. Whatever begins to exist requires a cause
2. The universe began to exist
3. Therefore, the universe requires a cause.

The most important thing for you to realize is that *nothing* can be sustained in a debate unless it can be phrased as a valid argument according the rules of inference. All of Craig's arguments can be broken down into logical propositions that use the standard laws of logical reasoning in order to force their conclusions *deductively*, so long as the premises are true.

Proving the premises

Can the atheist deny that either or both of these premises are true?

1. "Whatever begins to exist requires a cause"
   If the atheist denies this premise, then they are denying a fundamental law of natural science, namely, that matter can neither be created or destroyed. That is natural law.
2. "The universe began to exist"
   The universe came into being. If the atheist denies this they are denying the state of the art in modern cosmology.

Common objections

First, quantum mechanics is not going to save the atheist here. In QM, virtual particles come into being *in a vacuum.* The vacuum is sparked *by a scientist.* The particles exist for a period of time *inversely proportional to their mass.* But in the case of the big bang, there is no vacuum – there's nothing. There is no scientist – there's nothing. And the universe is far too massive to last 14 billion years as a virtual particle.

Secondly, atheists will say that the big bang is speculative physics that could change at any moment. But the trend is in favor of an absolute beginning out of nothing. We have had a string of solid, recent scientific discoveries that support the idea that the universe came into existence at some point in the finite past, as follows:

- Einstein's theory of general relativity, and the scientific confirmation of its accuracy
- measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation

- red-shifting of light from galaxies moving away from us
- radioactive element abundance predictions (from supernovae)
- helium/hydrogen abundance predictions (nuclear fusion)
- star formation and stellar lifecycle theories
- the second law of thermodynamics

So, insofar as atheists question these discoveries and the origin of the entire physical universe out of nothing, they are *opposing* the progress of science.

What came into being at the moment of creation?

You need to understand that the big bang theory states that space, time and matter were all created at the moment of creation.

1. There was no space causally prior to the universe beginning to exist
2. There was no time causally prior to the universe beginning to exist
3. There was no matter causally prior to the universe beginning to exist

All of these things *began to exist* at the first moment.

What can we infer about the cause?

So, space, time, and matter began to exist. What could have caused them to begin to exist?

1. Whatever causes the universe to appear is not inside of space, because there *was no space* causally prior to the creation event. The cause must therefore be non-physical, because physical things exist in space.
2. Whatever causes the universe to appear is not bound by time (temporal). It *never began to exist.* There was no passage of time causally prior to the big bang, so the cause of the universe did not *come into being.* The cause existed *eternally*.
3. And the cause is not material. All the matter in the universe came into being at the first moment. Whatever caused the universe to begin to exist cannot have been matter, because there was no matter causally prior to the big bang.

So what could the cause be? Craig notes that we are only familiar with *two kinds* of non-material realities:

1. Abstract objects, like numbers, sets and mathematical relations
2. Minds, like your own mind

Now, abstract objects don't cause of any effects in nature. But we are very familiar with the causal capabilities of our own minds – just raise your own arm and see! So, by process of elimination, we are left with a mind as the cause of the universe. As Sherlock Holmes says, "*When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.*"

This cause created the entire physical universe. The cause of this event is therefore *supernatural, b*ecause it brings nature into being and is not inside of nature itself. The

cause of the universe violates the law of conservation of matter is therefore performing a miracle.

Responding to alternative naturalistic cosmologies

In this published research paper from the journal *Astrophysics and Space Science*, William Lane Craig responds to the several naturalistic attempts to evade the implications of the *kalam* argument. I will list each one by name and explain the main problem with each. I highly recommend you read the paper and become conversant with the arguments and evidences.

1. The steady-state model: disproved by recent empirical observations of radio galaxy distributions, as well as red-shifting of light from distant galaxies moving away from us at increasing speeds
2. The oscillating model: disproved in 1998 by more empirical measurements of mass density which showed that the universe would expand forever, and never collapse (was named Discovery of the Year)
3. The vacuum fluctuation model: the theory allows for universes to spawn at every point in space and coalesce into one extremely old universe, which contradictions observations of our much younger universe
4. The chaotic inflationary model: does not avoid the need for an absolute beginning in the finite past
5. The quantum gravity model: makes use of imaginary time which cannot be mapped into a physical reality, it's purely theoretical

Comment warning

Everybody seems to like to comment on these things without making any claims or citing any authority or evidence. So if you are leaving a comment critical of this post, then cite the part you disagree with, quote someone who agrees with you who is an authority, and link to a piece of peer-reviewed evidence. I'd like to see some observations, please. Some data. If you cannot disagree with a specific point, and cite something specific to support you, then please – don't leave a comment. Try to keep it short. I'll delete any comments that go over 300 words, say.

If you would like me to cite some evidence for an assertion, you can leave a comment asking a question.

Further study

A good on this topic is the debate between William Lane Craig and atheist physicist Victor Stenger, (audio here). Also, a lecture titled "Beyond the Big Bang", was delivered at the University of Colorado at Boulder, in front of Victor Stenger and other physicists (audio here). There is a period of Q&A in which Bill must face challengers. These are both available on DVD. More Bill Craig debates are here.

How the progress of science strengthened the fine-tuning argument

April 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the second of a two-part series. Part one is here.

The fine-tuning argument

The argument goes like this:

1. The fine-tuning of the universe to support life is either due to law, chance or design
2. It is not due to law or chance
3. Therefore, the fine-tuning is due to design

What does it mean to be fine-tuned for life?

Here are the facts on the fine-tuning:

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- The constants are *selected* by whoever creates the universe. They are not determined by physical laws. And the extreme probabilities involved required put the fine-tuning beyond the reach of chance.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants

Here are a couple of examples of the fine-tuning. Craig only gave one example in the debate and didn't explain how changes to the constant would affect the minimal requirements for life. But Bradley *does* explain it, and he is a professional research scientist, so he is speaking about things he worked in his polymer research lab. (He was the director)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in

nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would be able to build up the nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.
- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – "carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can't be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

Either way, you've got no life of *any conceivable kind.*

Is the fine-tuning real?

Yes, it's real and it is conceded by the top-rank of atheist physicists. Let me give you a citation from the best one of all, Martin Rees. Martin Rees is an atheist and a qualified astronomer. He wrote a book called "Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape The Universe", (Basic Books: 2001). In it, he discusses 6 numbers that need to be fine-tuned in order to have a life-permitting universe.

Rees writes here:

> These six numbers constitute a 'recipe' for a universe. Moreover, the outcome is sensitive to their values: if any one of them were to be 'untuned', there would be no stars and no life. Is this tuning just a brute fact, a coincidence? Or is it the providence of a benign Creator?

There are some atheists who deny the fine-tuning, but these atheists are in firm opposition to the progress of science. The more science has progressed, the more constants, ratios and quantities we have discovered that need to be fine-tuned. Science is going in a theistic direction. Next, let's see how atheists try to account for the fine-tuning,

on atheism.

Atheistic responses to the fine-tuning argument

There are two common responses among atheists to this argument.

The first is to speculate that there are actually an infinite number of other universes that are not fine-tuned, (i.e. – the gambler's fallacy). All these other universes don't support life. We just happen to be in the one universe is fine-tuned for life. The problem is that there *is no way of directly observing these other universes and no independent evidence that they exist.*

Here is an excerpt from an article in Discover magazine, (which is hostile to theism and Christianity).

> Short of invoking a benevolent creator, many physicists see only one possible explanation: Our universe may be but one of perhaps infinitely many universes in an inconceivably vast multiverse. Most of those universes are barren, but some, like ours, have conditions suitable for life.
>
> The idea is controversial. Critics say it doesn't even qualify as a scientific theory because the existence of other universes cannot be proved or disproved. Advocates argue that, like it or not, the multiverse may well be the only viable nonreligious explanation for what is often called the "fine-tuning problem"—the baffling observation that the laws of the universe seem custom-tailored to favor the emergence of life.

The second response by atheists is that the human observers that exist today, 14 billion years after the universe was created out of nothing, actually caused the fine-tuning. This solution would mean that although humans did not exist at the time the of the big bang, they are going to be able to reach back in time at some point in the future and manually fine-tune the universe.

Here is an excerpt from and article in the New Scientist, (which is hostile to theism and Christianity).

> …maybe we should approach cosmic fine-tuning not as a problem but as a clue. Perhaps it is evidence that we somehow endow the universe with certain features by the mere act of observation… observers are creating the universe and its entire history right now. If we in some sense create the universe, it is not surprising that the universe is well suited to us.

So, there are two choices for atheists. Either an infinite number of unobservable universes that are not fine-tuned, or humans go back in time at some future point and fine-tune the beginning of the universe, billions of years in the past.

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link to a piece of peer-reviewed evidence. I'd like to see some observations, please. Some data. If you cannot disagree with a specific point, and cite something specific to support you, then please – don't leave a comment. Try to keep it short. I'll delete any comments that go over 300 words, say.

If you would like me to cite some evidence for an assertion, you can leave a comment asking a question.

Further study

Here is a paper by Walter L. Bradley that contains many more examples of the fine-tuning, and explanations for *what happens* when you change the constants, quantities and rations even slightly.

British boy becomes first in the world to have stem cell transplant

April 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Science Daily explains what the scientists did.

Excerpt:

> Dr Mark Lowdell, Director of Cellular Therapy at Royal Free Hospital and a senior lecturer at UCL Medical School, received the donor trachea from Italy and some bone marrow from the patient at the beginning of surgery.
>
> They stripped cells from a donated trachea, used it to replace the entire length of the damaged airway, and then used the child's own bone marrow stem cells to seal the airway in the body.
>
> He and his colleagues prepared two different types of stem cells from the bone marrow together with some growth signalling chemicals and returned them to GOSH with the donor trachea.
>
> Professor Paolo Macchiarini, from Careggi University Hospital, who is an Honorary Consultant at GOSH and Honorary Professor at UCL, applied the cells and the growth factors to the trachea in the operating theatre.
>
> Martin Elliot, Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery at UCL and Director of the Tracheal Service at GOSH, led the operation to repair the damaged aorta and implant the new trachea.
>
> The application of this technology — which has never been used on a child before — should reduce greatly the risk of rejection of the new trachea, as the child's stem cells will not generate any immune response.

Now, it seems to me that the pro-abortion lobby is always asking for laws and subsidies to push for more and more embryonic stem-cell research. And no wonder, since they want to protect their profitable abortion business from public disapproval. But where are the real cures coming from? It seems to me that adult stem cell research is leading to all the significant medical breakthroughs. (Here's another one from Science Daily, for example)

Related posts

- ABC News reports on how adult stem cells produce innovative cures today
- Round up of articles on adult stem-cell research from FRC
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama's plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

MUST-READ: Rex Murphy explains Sarah Palin's popularity to Canadians

April 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sarah Palin

A Canadian perspective on Sarah Palin from the National Post. (H/T Derek)

Excerpt:

> She's been a presence in American national politics for only about two years. She is a cheerful human being, with a large family, an apparently easy-going and normal husband. She has a personality that would sell corn flakes — if not grow them. What career she had in Alaska, she earned. She's at home indoors and out, radiates human warmth, seems to have some balance about herself, and has displayed over the last year or so a considerable fortitude under an avalanche of mockery and hatred. For the final stroke of this cameo I should note she is smart — smarter than 90% of the people who make a point of how rock-stupid they know she is.
>
> She, by rights, should be queen of the feminists. All that self-reliance, her takeover of Alaska politics, the rocket ride to a Vice-Presidential ticket, a public career she blends with her family life– these seem gold-standard credentials for a real feminist. But official feminism derides herewith an unspeakable intensity. Her early critics were not beyond the inane claim that she was somehow not really a woman.
>
> I side with those who venture that the nerves Palin hits have more to do with class — where she's from, how she speaks, where she was educated, what she likes (the moose-hunting), than her politics or her gender. She's rural, she came into national politics from (ugh) Alaska. She and her husband have the unerasable stigmata of the modern working class. She would not be embarrassed

> to be seen walking into Wal-Mart.
>
> […]But America's professional public class, and the commentariat who still have some (though declining) power to police it, like to view Lincoln's common man, or woman, as an object in the distance, as an object of their supercilious care and concern, but not as a player in the game. Palin is simply not supposed to be a player. She's not only from the wrong side of the tracks, she's so far over on the wrong side she can't see the railway station.
>
> But there she is, in all her roughness and candour, and her spiky wit and ability to irritate her self-nominated betters. She also happens to be the most naturally charismatic politician at the moment in the United States. She is the one major figure who can claim authenticity without morally choking on the word. That makes her the populist rallying point of a nascent rejection of the fervid partisanship and Washington insiderism that is eroding the consent on which American politics is founded.

This is probably one of the best columns I have read all year. I recommend reading the whole thing. It's always good for men to admire women, and it helps when you have women like Sarah Palin to admire. Of course, you all know that Michele Bachmann is my favorite, but still. Not everyone can be perfect.

Canada doesn't have a Sarah Palin. The closest person they have is Danielle Smith of the Wildrose Alliance Party in Alberta, I think.

MUST-READ: Rex Murphy attacks the Canadian Human Rights Commissions

April 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Another National Post column by Rex Murphy.

Excerpt:

> There's a trial going on in B.C. right now, under the insanely diluted and degraded understanding of the once-noble concept of "human rights," giving full anguished adjudication – complete with lawyers and a tribunal chairman – over a heckling spat, already three years old, at a Vancouver supper/comedy club called, surely by the gods of irony, Zesty's.
>
> The good old days, when all a comedian had to worry about was flop-sweat, bad timing and where his or her next joke was coming from, are long gone. Nowadays, thanks to the infinitely expanding reach of bureaucratic commissions, a couple of bad-tempered moments at Zesty's have summoned up the Mr. McGoos of the B.C. Human Rights Commission. It is currently determining whether a lesbian patron's human rights were violated by a journeyman comic's obnoxious heckling of her – brought on, he says, by her equally obnoxious heckling of him. The comic in question is Guy Earle.
>
> It's a case remarkably similar – in its gutting of common sense, its ability to bring on a puzzled frown from anyone who first hears of it – to that of the owner of a St. Catharines, Ont., fitness club. He recently was taken before the Ontario Human Rights Commission by a prospective member who, while awaiting "gender reassignment surgery," claimed the right to undress in the club's women's locker room. The women objected. The owner denied. The member filed a complaint. That case, after much financial injury and anguish, was summarily dropped. No apology, no redress, no nothing for the owner.
>
> Is Canada a serious country? Do we staff close to a dozen offices, provincial and federal, spend nearly $200-million across the great expanse of the country, to explore the human rights implications of rude heckling in comedy clubs? Or, the human right to undress in the locker room of your choice? For this, did the great armies of the West storm the beaches of Normandy? For this, did Solzhenitsyn and Sharansky endure their endless nights of hell in the gulag?
>
> By some crude osmosis, or just from the luxuriant carelessness of our pampered lives, we have overturned one of the great concepts of all human law. The concept of human rights, as experience and history inform us, is protection from the state's power, not oversight, interference and punishment by the state's power.
>
> The core concept of human rights is the protection of the irreducible safety and

> dignity of the individual from the massive and arbitrary power of the state. Not, the state wandering in, with its apparatus and procedures, its boards and tribunals into the doings, or speech, of the individual.
>
> […]If we go out into the other world, the world that doesn't have quite as many comedy clubs, we see what real human rights are.
>
> A man standing alone in front of a tank in Tiannamen Square – there's a human rights moment. The multitudinous horror of ethnic cleansing, raging warfare in the Congo, the nightmare of North Korea, the acid-tossing at schoolgirls by the Taliban – there are people all over this world trembling at the might of the state, seeing their lives foreshortened or ruined, subject to unspeakable horrors at the hands of warlords and tyrants and revengeful dictatorships — these are the fields of real human-rights violations.

Read the whole thing. It's really hard to excerpt from a column this fine. It seems as though some Canadians still have some fight left in them.

UPDATE: There is also a follow-up column in the National Post.

Excerpt:

> Just as human rights laws were written largely by advocates who profit from finding racism when none exists, employment legislation has been written by left wing advocates with an interest in the perpetration of unions and the emasculation of corporate power. The resultant risk is not merely that of Canadians becoming infantilized; it is the risk of employers becoming too complacent or timorous to resist the increasing encroachments of the nanny state. It is also the risk of an environment wherein the best thinkers and innovators depart to more commodious jurisdictions. Many employers, particularly small businesses, are crippled by legislation that pits employers against the resources of the state. Canadians might never have agreed to this legislation had they realized its implications.
>
> In a current case, because of arcane labour laws applying to the non-residential construction industry, an elevator installation company was unionized without a vote, despite the fact only two of its seven employees had signed union cards. And those two immediately renounced their union memberships. Although the Labour Board was aware the union lacked a single supporter, it certified the company.
> Worse still, the employer was bound to a collective agreement in which it had no input. The agreement was negotiated by major players in the industry.
>
> Smaller employers, such as this one, will cease operating if they are forced to pay the same wages and benefits.

It's not just that the secular leftists take away human rights like the right to free speech. They also attack business and the free market itself. And that means that Canadians are

actually *losing jobs* because of political correctness.

Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?

April 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Miami Herald reports on a new bill designed to improve education quality. (H/T Weekly Standard via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The proposed law, which passed the House of Representatives 64-55 and the Senate 21-17, would base half a teacher's evaluation on progress that students make on tests, most of which have not yet been developed. If the students improve, educators could earn more money.
>
> The current system rewards teachers based on years of experience, advanced degrees and extra certification.

Got that? So the bill would make it law for teachers to be paid based on their performance, (at least a little), just the way that you buy things from Amazon.com and Wal-Mart in the private sector. If you don't like what you're getting, then why should be forced to pay more for it?

Well, here's what the unionized public school teachers did:

> Miami-Dade schools are open Monday and parents are told their kids should come to class as usual, despite hundreds of teachers planning to call in sick to protest controversial legislation that would overhaul teacher pay and tenure.
>
> At John A. Ferguson Senior High School in West Kendall Monday morning, the teacher parking lots weren't as full as usual.
>
> "There's nobody at school," said 17-year-old Stephanie Barrios. "Everyone's being relocated to the cafeteria and gym."
>
> She said a two-page handout listed the number of absent teachers on Monday — about 180 out of 600, Stephanie estimated.

Unionized public school teachers are not actually grown-ups. They are in a state of arrested development, hoping to put off the demands of adulthood by throwing tantrums whenever anyone threatens to take away their over-paid, underperformed jobs. There should not even *be* a federal department of education, in my view, and teachers should not be allowed to unionize. Why should parents be forced to pay for a low-quality education, which is really nothing more than coercive indoctrination of children by the secular left? Private school teachers are hard workers – they get paid based on the quality of what they produce.

This article is a fine, fine piece by Mary Katherine Ham, and I highly recommend that you click through and read the whole thing. I wish I had written it myself, since school choice is a big concern of mine. It should be a concern for all parents. We need to be pushing for

more homeschooling protection and more school voucher programs.

UPDATE: I've received an e-mail from a hard-worker public school teacher who wanted me to say that not all teachers are happy with what the unions do, and that some public school teachers do work hard in spite of the anti-child, anti-parent stance of the teacher's unions. Some teachers work extremely hard on their kids, teaching them well and volunteering for sports and field trips. But the union won't allow them to be paid more. Some teachers have to work in very difficult environments like Compton, CA, dealing with children who are very challenging. In those cases, the hard-working teacher may part of the solution for a child looking for a better life.

Wouldn't it be great if those good teachers didn't have to join unions and could be paid what they are really worth? But the unions says no way.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
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- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
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- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

Christian ads promoting Biblical moral standards pulled after complaints

April 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The Christian group "Bus Stop Bible Studies" has voluntarily removed one of the forty ads it is currently running on Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) buses and streetcars because the transit authority received some complaints about one of the "Life Questions" posed for consideration by riders.
>
> The ad in question asks "Does God care if I'm gay?" and directs the reader to the Bus Stop Bible Studies website to find the answer, which said, in part, "We know from passages throughout Scripture that God hates homosexual acts BUT no more than any other sinful act. Some individuals seem to place homosexual acts in a special class – God does not. Sin is sin.
>
> "Homosexual activity is no better or worse than heterosexuals engaging in sexual activity outside of marriage. The Bible refers to these people as fornicators."
>
> This answer has since been removed from the website and replaced by a comment from the Bus Stop Bible Studies founder David Harrison saying, "It has become apparent that, while one is free to ask the question, `Does God care if I'm gay?' one is not so free to answer the question from a Biblical perspective.
>
> […]Harrison told the National Post that he supported last year's controversial Atheist Bus Ad campaign, which had said, "There's probably no god. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life" posted on TTC vehicles, saying they were an expression of freedom of speech.
>
> With regard to the restrictions now imposed on his campaign he observed, "The prevailing attitude at the time is you're free to say anything that I'm in agreement with, which is not real dialogue. In a supposedly liberal society, 'liberal' has become a one-word oxymoron."

Actually, this is a pretty moderate answer. Aren't Christians even allowed to embrace a Biblical position on morality in public anymore? I know that Toronto isn't Calgary, or even Ottawa, but this is ridiculous.

Related posts

- What does the Bible say about sex before marriage and homosexuality?
- What possible harm can result from premarital sex?
- Understanding the effect of sex on your brain chemistry
- New study shows that same-sex unions are less monogamous than

heterosexual unions
- Why do people favor traditional marriage over same-sex marriage
- Christian man fired after gay rights group contacts his employer to complain
- Catholic church will stop all charity work if same-sex marriage passes in DC
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- New Mexico Human Rights Commissions fines couple $6000 for being Christians

Real personal income for Americans falls 3.2% during Obama's term

April 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Washington Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Real personal income for Americans – excluding government payouts such as Social Security – has fallen by 3.2 percent since President Obama took office in January 2009, according to the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis.
>
> For comparison, real personal income during the first 15 months in office for President George W. Bush, who inherited a milder recession from his predecessor, dropped 0.4 percent. Income excluding government payouts increased 12.7 percent during Mr. Bush's eight years in office.
>
> "This is hardly surprising," said Douglas Holtz-Eakin, an economist and former director of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. "Under President Obama, only federal spending is going up; jobs, business startups, and incomes are all down. It is proof that the government can't spend its way to prosperity."
>
> According to the bureau's statistics, per capita income dropped during 2009 in 47 states, with only modest gains in the other states, West Virginia, Maine and Maryland. But most of those increases were attributed to rising income from the government, such as Medicare and unemployment benefits.

And tax hikes are right around the corner, because his massive spending requires it.

Obamacare cancels development on 60 new hospitals

April 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from CNS News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Physician-owned hospitals are advertised as less bureaucratic and more focused on doctor-patient decision making. However, larger corporate hospitals say doctor-owned facilities discriminate in favor of high-income patients and refer business to themselves.
>
> The new health care rules single out such hospitals, making new physician-owned projects ineligible to receive payments for Medicare and Medicaid patients.
>
> Existing doctor-owned hospitals will be grandfathered in to get government funds for patients but must seek permission from the Department of Health and Human Services to expand.
>
> […]More than 60 doctor-owned hospitals across the country that were in the development stage will be canceled, said Molly Sandvig, executive director of Physician Hospitals of America (PHA).
>
> "That's a lot of access to communities that will be denied," Sandvig told CNSNews.com. "The existing hospitals are greatly affected. They can't grow. They can't add beds. They can't add rooms. Basically, it stifles their ability to change and meet market needs. This is really an unfortunate thing as well, because we are talking about some of the best hospitals in the country."

The thing about communism that you need to understand is that it has to kill small business, so that individual consumers have no choice between producers.

A centralized government is much more capable of controlling the operations of a few large conformist oxen than a massive herd of independent cats. That's why I think there is a lot of hostility to small business in Obama's economic policies. In particular, the health care mandates are designed to destroy small businesses, while the massive bailouts are designed to nationalize large companies. It's straight out of the communist playbook.

Wesley J. Smith’s top 10 issues in bioethics

April 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wesley J. Smith blogs at Secondhand Smoke, but he also works for the Discovery Institute. And he’s written a post about the top 10 issues in bioethics.

Here are the top 10 recent bioethics stories:

1. The ascendance of an anti-human environmentalism.
2. The growth of biological colonialism.
3. The increase in American pro-life attitudes.
4. The struggle over Obamacare.
5. Legalization of assisted suicide in Washington.
6. The success of adult-stem-cell research.
7. “Suicide tourism” in Switzerland.
8. In vitro fertilization (IVF) anarchy.
9. The Bush embryonic-stem-cell funding policy.
10. The dehydration of Terri Schiavo.

Do you know what “suicide tourism” is?

Here’s what it is:

> Over the last decade, Switzerland became Jack Kevorkian as a country, its suicide clinics catering to an increasingly international clientele — mostly from the United Kingdom — with the victims ranging from the terminally ill, to people with disabilities, to even a double suicide of a terminally ill elderly woman and her frail husband, who wanted to die rather than be cared for by others. Alas, as was the case with Kevorkian in the 1990s, audacity was rewarded. In the face of a wave of high-profile suicide-tourism stories, England’s head prosecutor published guidelines that, in essence, decriminalized family and friends’ assisting the suicides of the dying, disabled, and infirm. Others mimicked the Swiss. In the U.S., the Final Exit Network appears to have created mobile suicide clinics, leading to the indictment of several of its organizers. Meanwhile, the Australian “Dr. Death,” Philip Nitschke, traveled the world holding how-to-commit-suicide clinics. Still, as the decade came to a close, there was a sense that the tide could be turning: The Swiss government appears poised to shut down the suicide-tourism industry, perhaps even — although this is less likely — outlawing assisted suicide altogether.

Actually, the UK is considering cashing in on suicide tourism, as well.

German historian Jurgen Speiss outlines a case for the resurrection of Jesus

April 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A prominent German scholar defends the resurrection. (H/T Apologetics 315)

The MP3 file is here.

Speaker info:

> Dr Jürgen Spiess is the founder and director of the "Institute of Science and Faith" (www.iguw.de) in Marburg/Germany. He studied at the University of Munich, where he took a PhD in Ancient History (with the subsidiary subjects "Egyptology" and "Philosophy of History").
>
> For fifteen years, he acted as General Secretary of SMD (IFES-Germany). He is author and editor of books and articles including the subjects; F.M. Dostoevsky, C.S. Lewis, Medical Ethics, Science and Faith, The Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and Christian Apologetics. He lectured at many European universities in Russia (St. Petersburg, Novosobirsk, Irkutsk, Tomsk) Ukraine and Georgia. He is a member of the "German Dostoevsky Society" and the "Inklings Society." He lost his first family (wife and child) by a car accident. He is married again and has one daughter.

Topics:

- How did Jurgen become a Christian?
- What is Jurgen's academic background?
- Can science detect historical miracles?
- How history is more like legal work
- the difference between what is plausible and what happened
- what are the earliest and best sources for the life of Jesus?
- are the authors of the New Testament trying to write history?
- how Luke and Acts is based on eyewitnesses and Luke's experiences
- when were the gospels written?
- how the destruction of Jerusalem helps us to date the sources
- how early are the earliest extant manuscript fragments?
- how early are the earliest extant complete manuscripts?
- how good is the evidence for the empty tomb?
- the significance of women discovering the empty tomb
- did Jews expect that one person alone would rise before all?
- if the tomb was not empty, why didn't anyone produce the body?
- the appearances are in the gospels, Acts and 1 Cor 15:3-7
- 1 Cor 15:3-7 was received by Paul 1-6 years after Jesus' death
- 1 Cor was written in 55 A.D. by Paul

- the disciples had to have an experience to change their lives
- what does the resurrection mean to Christians today?

There is a period of (hostile) Q&A at the end of the lecture.

You can also read more about the European Leadership Forum.

Further study

The top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Two debates where you can see this play out:

- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)
- Craig Evans vs Bart Ehrman

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Extra stuff

Stand to Reason has a post featuring Mike Licona discussing Ehrman.

Superintendent Michelle Rhee's fight against the Washington, D.C. teacher unions

April 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've always believed that the best way to learn about a topic is by understanding the topic as a fight between two opposing teams. And that's how we're going to learn about the Washington D.C. school system in this balanced post at the libertarian magazine Reason.(Not the usual conservative stuff I post 100% of the time)

Here's the situation:

> D.C. is a divided town. In the heart of the capital, the federal government hums along, churning out paperwork and disillusioned interns at a steady clip. But the rest of the city is in pretty miserable shape. The District of Columbia Public Schools rank below all 50 states in national math and reading tests, squatting at the bottom of the list for years at a time. More than 40 percent of D.C. students drop out altogether. Only 9 percent of the District's high schoolers will finish college within five years of graduation. And all this failure doesn't come cheap: The city spends $14,699 per pupil, more than all but two states and about $5,000 more than the national average. Yet as unlikely as it seems, D.C. may prove to be the last best hope for school reform in the United States.

But then, a reform-minded superintendent named Michelle Rhee appeared:

> In July 2008, Rhee revealed her opening gambit with the teachers union: She offered the teachers a whole lot of money. Under her proposal, educators would have two choices. With the first option, teachers would get a $10,000 bonus—a bribe, really—and a 20 percent raise. Nothing else would change. Benefits, rights, and privileges would remain as they were. Under the second option, teachers would receive a $10,000 bonus, a 45 percent increase in base salary, and the possibility of total earnings up to $131,000 a year through bonuses tied to student performance. In exchange, they would have to forfeit their tenure protections.

But the teachers said no to her offer:

> Teachers simply don't believe that it should be possible for them to be fired—not by a principal, not by a superintendent, not by anyone. Unions and other opponents of the reformers prefer to stick with warmed-over solutions that have been failing for decades: smaller class sizes, more teacher pay, and more job security.

Then Rhee tried to tie teacher license renewals to performance, but the unions said no:

> In 2008, after Rhee's office released a statement about tying teacher licensing to

> student outcomes, the Washington Teachers Union (the dominant local union) sent an email message to its members stating, “This proposed regulation would not benefit DCPS teachers, as a teacher’s true effectiveness should not be linked to a teacher’s right to renew his or her license.” The message went on to explain that it was “dangerous and discriminatory” to “require a candidate to demonstrate effectiveness to continue teaching in a District of Columbia Public School.”

Children benefit when parents can get a voucher so the parents can choose a better school, and especially when they can choose charter schools or even private schools or even homeschooling – anything is better than public schools. But the unions don’t want parents to be able to use a voucher to choose a competitor. Unions want children to remain in failing schools so that the union members will not loose their jobs.

The article continues:

> In pre-Rhee D.C. the single glimmer of hope for many families was the D.C. Opportunity Scholarships Program. Funded by a separate congressional appropriation of $14 million, it offered vouchers to kids in failing schools, allowing them to attend private school instead of their assigned public school. The program took no money from the city budget and was hugely popular with parents and kids; since 2004 more than 7,200 students had applied for a limited number of slots. Last year 1,700 kids were accepted. Next year there will be none. On the campaign trail, Barack Obama had promised to let scientific results determine his education policy. In office, however, he let political influence kill the program even as initial studies were showing positive gains by students and high parental satisfaction. The National Education Association, which is consistently one of the biggest single donors to U.S. political campaigns, pressured the Democratic Congress to eliminate funding for vouchers in 2009. Obama promptly signed the death sentence into law.

> The fight over vouchers and charter schools—both of which serve as workarounds to the ossified hiring/firing rules of public schools—is playing out all around the country, with teachers unions usually coming out on the winning side.
>
> […]Teachers unions contribute more than $60 million a year to political campaigns, topping contributor lists at the state and federal levels, and nearly all of the money goes to Democrats. That investment buys the continuation of the status quo plus some platitudes about class size and teacher pay from every prominent Democrat. Reformers have virtually no presence on Capitol Hill.

On the one side, there is the courageous, no-nonsense superintendent Michelle Rhee, parents and children. And on the other side, there is the Washington D.C. education bureaucracy, teacher unions and the Democrat party. The unions are winning. Do parents care to understand what is stopping their own children from succeeding?

The shocking thing in all of this is that Rhee is a Democrat, and hardly a conservative.

She’s no hero of mine, but at least we share the same enemies on this issue.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel’s documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

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Democrats propose 23 billion bailout for teacher unions

April 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the leftist Washington Post. (H/T Ace of Spades via ECM)

Excerpt:

> As public schools nationwide face larger class sizes and cuts in programs, the Senate's leading Democrat on education issues proposed a $23 billion bailout Wednesday to help avert layoffs of tens of thousands of teachers and other school personnel in the coming academic year.
>
> […]Education Secretary Arne Duncan estimated that school layoffs could total from 100,000 to 300,000 unless Congress acts.
>
> "It is brutal out there, really scary," Duncan told reporters on Capitol Hill. "This is a real emergency. What we're trying to avert is an education catastrophe."
>
> Duncan stopped just short of endorsing Harkin's bill. But he said efforts to improve schools will suffer if class sizes rise, summer school is cut and other programs are jettisoned.
>
> Harkin, chairman of the Appropriations Committee's panel on education and of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, said time is running out because states are starting to issue layoff notices. "We must act soon," he said. "This is not something we can fix in August. We have to fix it now."
>
> […]Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) said he worried about where the government would find $23 billion for a bailout in a time of growing federal budget deficits. "I wonder from whose schoolchildren we are going to borrow this money, because we have a looming debt crisis in this country and we'll need to debate this," he said. "We all want to help our children and our schools, but that is a deep concern."

A fitting follow-up to today's earlier education policy post. This is why you don't put silver spoon liberals in charge of the country – they just keep spending and spending to bail out their greedy special interest groups.

Republican governor of Nebraska signs legislation to protect the unborn

April 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> Two landmark measures putting new restrictions on abortion became law in Nebraska on Tuesday, including one that critics say breaks with court precedent by changing the legal rationale for a ban on later-term abortions.
>
> Republican Gov. Dave Heineman signed both bills, one barring abortions at and after 20 weeks of pregnancy and the other requiring women to be screened before having abortions for mental health and other problems. Both sides of the abortion debate say the laws are firsts of their kind in the U.S.
>
> A national abortion rights group already appeared to be girding for a legal challenge, calling the ban after 20 weeks "flatly unconstitutional" because it is based on the assertion that fetuses feel pain, not on the ability of a fetus to survive outside the womb.
>
> […]The law could lead to changes in state laws across the country if upheld by the courts, said Mary Spaulding Balch, legislative director for National Right to Life.
>
> "It would broaden the interests of states in protecting the unborn child," she said. "It says the state has an interest in the unborn child before viability."
>
> Heineman also signed the other bill, approved by lawmakers on Monday, that requires the screening for mental health problems and other risk factors indicating if women might have problems after having abortions.

Note that the sponsor of the bill, Mike Flood, is a Republican. And the governor signing the bill, Dave Heineman, is a Republican. Republicans are pro-life. Democrats are pro-abortion.

If Christians are serious about restraining evils like slavery and abortion, then we need to raise our children to be legislators, governors and judges. We need to have the vision to marry well and to parent our children well, if we hope to have an impact for good in the world.

Related posts

- Nebraska legislature introduces bill to ban abortion after 20 weeks
- How hard did the Republicans fight to stop taxpayer-funding of abortions?
- Scott Klusendorf discusses Obamacare and the pro-life cause

Related posts on abortion

- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf’s 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

Are liberal lawyers and law professors in favor of open debate?

April 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a great post over at Stuart Schneiderman's blog.

The topic of the post is a high-profile meeting of lawyers and law professors at NYU Law School to discuss the recent Supreme Court decision that allow businesses to make political donations to candidates in the same way that trial lawyer organizations and teacher unions and abortion providers do. The meeting was supposed to be an open and honest debate on the issues. Was it?

Excerpt:

> The most disturbing aspect of the meeting was that everyone took for granted that the the decision had been wrongly decided. There was no free trade in ideas about the correctness or incorrectness of the decision; only a discussion about how to overturn the decision.
>
> In their modus operandi the assembled lawyers were ignoring the marketplace of ideas in favor of their own dogmatic beliefs. These defenders of the marketplace of ideas were constitutionally incapable of finding any merit whatever in an opposing viewpoint.
>
> If you refuse to allow an idea (whether a policy or a belief) to be tested against reality, then the question becomes who has the strongest faith. True believers are willing to fight and die to prove that their strength is strongest, thus, most true.
>
> […]Why were the assembled liberal lawyers so lathered up about the Citizens United decision. Simply, because they believed, dogmatically and unthinkingly, that corporate money was fundamentally corrupt and corrupting. Corporations were sinners; they had acquired their money by less than idealist means; they had no right to try to influence the democratic political process.
>
> Again, dogmatic belief leads to a fighting faith. Why? Perhaps they wanted to maintain their own monopoly control of correct opinion. The greatest enemy of free trade in ideas today is the monopoly on dogmatic belief that is maintained by the educational and media establishments.
>
> Surely, opposing views are aired, through conservative talk radio and through Fox News. But these engines of the free market in ideas are often subject to attack. Those who prefer a more mercantilist, monopoly control over the marketplace in ideas, want to invoke the fairness doctrine to shut down much of conservative talk radio. They often try to discredit Fox News for trafficking in hate speech.
>
> As several of the commenters on the Times site pointed out, none of these great

> legal minds seem to have the least problem with the influence that labor unions exert on elections through their political advertising. At a time when the political power of labor unions has brought states, cities, and counties to the brink of bankruptcy… lawyers are about to go to war to stop corporations from spending money on political advertising.

This post highlights a change in my own views. I once wanted to be a lawyer, you see. And my judicial philosophy was one of idealism and judicial activism. But after reading Thomas Sowell's "A Conflict of Visions" three times, I am now a strict constructionist, while respecting rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Legislating from the bench now seems to me to be the wrong point of view. Injustices need to be fixed by legislators elected by the people, not by an appointed oligarchy of out-of-touch judges. So don't ever say that I don't change my mind when confronted with the evidence! It happens all the time. Well, sometimes.

Sex-selection abortions and defending the unborn

April 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from the National Post.

Excerpt:

> Plenty of studies show that many parents will choose abortion to avoid having a baby of the "wrong" sex. Most often, they preferentially abort girls, especially within cultures in which men are seen as more valuable.
>
> […]In order to support "a woman's right to choose," you have to believe that a fetus is not human in the moral sense. This judgment — or lack thereof — is encoded in Canadian law, which permits abortion for any reason, or no reason at all.
>
> If you believe a fetus is not a human life, the fetus becomes no different from any other unwanted appendage on a woman's body. There is no moral difference to removing it than there is to removing an unwanted mole, or an unsightly wart. It's just a bunch of flesh, with no human soul or spirit to it, so what's the difference?
>
> Why, then, would abortion proponents object to women having abortions because they don't like the sex of the fetus? If a fetus is not human, a woman has the right to abort it for whatever reason she chooses: because she doesn't feel like going through the process; because it might interfere with her career plans; because she doesn't like children in general; or because she loves Starbucks and someone told her she'd have to give up caffeine during the pregnancy. What, no latte?

Read the whole thing. When it comes to debating abortion, it never hurts to take your opponent off of their moral pedestal. They think that pro-lifers are anti-woman. It's your job to show them how abortion hurts women the most. Bringing up the psychological effects of abortion on women doesn't hurt either.

Paul Ryan debates on the relationship between tax rates and job creation

April 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On the Larry Kudlow show, discussing incentives and economics.

Here's Paul Ryan on MSNBC talking about the budget and tax rates.

The Democrats on MSNBC really respect him.

And here's Marsha Blackburn, too – on Fox News.

I'm getting very depressed about this economy, but it makes me happy to see these two fighting for me.

What is the best single book on the pro-life position?

April 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do you like to argue about controversial things?

Here's an excellent book review of the best pro-life book for ordinary people. It's by Scott Klusndorf of the Life Training Institute.

Excerpt:

The Case for Life by Scott Klusendorf is an absolutely outstanding defense of the pro-life position with regard to the abortion debate. Being familiar with Scott's work through Stand to Reason I was looking forward to this book with much anticipation. Scott is one of the most able, articulate, persuasive, and winsome pro-life speakers in the country and his book does not fail to deliver.

He's got chapter-by-chapter breakdowns! This is a serious book review.

Here are some of the chapters:

In **chapter five** Scott addresses the nature of truth and the topic of *moral relativism*, a view of morality our culture is saturated with to the core. Addressing this topic becomes absolutely necessary given its prevalence and the fact that often the claims of pro-lifers are misunderstood. This is seen in such cliches as "Don't like abortion? Don't have one!" or "I'm personally opposed to abortion but I think it should remain legal." In short, pro-lifers are not making subjective preference claims when they say abortion is morally wrong but rather objective truth claims. Scott lays out some fundamental problems with moral relativism as well as a brief history outlining the move from moral realism to moral non-realism.

In **chapter six** Scott exposes the myth of moral neutrality. Both sides of the abortion debate have views they want to legislate and it is impossible for the state to remain neutral. However, it is often pro-lifers who are accused of trying to "legislate morality" while pro-abortion choice advocates get a free pass. In short, pro-lifers are dismissed as "religious" because of an unwillingness by pro-abortion choice advocates to address the issues. This is intellectually dishonest. How bout we stick with science?

And more:

In chapters **ten through fifteen** Scott addresses some of the most common arguments put forth by pro-abortion choice advocates. These include "Women will die from illegal abortions," "You shouldn't force your view on others," "Pro-lifers should broaden their focus," "Rape justifies abortion," "Men can't get pregnant," and "It's my body, I'll decide." The fundamental problem with most of these objections is that they beg the question. They assume the unborn is not a human person.

I'd read about those arguments in Frank Beckwith's "Politically Incorrect Death", but that's out of print, and his new book with Cambridge University Press is too technical (although it looks good on my shelf at work). The Klusendorf book is a much better book

for most people.

One more chapter – I've never seen chapters like this before:

In **chapter sixteen** Scott outlines four essential tasks that pastors concerned with biblical truth need to accomplish:

First, Christian pastors need to emphasize a biblical view of human value and ensure their congregation understands that abortion unjustly takes the life of an innocent human being. Second, they need to equip their congregation with pro-life apologetics so they can compete in the marketplace of ideas. Third, they need to emphasize the healing power of the gospel of Jesus Christ and preach repentance and forgiveness for post-abortion men and women. Finally, Christian pastors need to overcome their fear that abortion is a distraction, their fear of driving people away who might otherwise hear the gospel, and their fear of offending people with abortion-related content.

Even *my Dad* read this book. And he loved it!

How NASA punishes pro-intelligent design employees

April 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Evolution News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> David Coppedge has worked on the Cassini mission since 1997. In 2000 he earned recognition for excellence, receiving the important role of "Team Lead SA" (system administrator), a role he held until his demotion in 2009.
>
> SAs oversee 200 Unix workstations, several high-capacity date storage units, networking equipment, and other specialized computing equipment across America and Europe. He has a wide breadth of knowledge about technical aspects of Cassini's computers and networks and was heavily involved in all the mission operations. Coppedge has been a faithful and highly regarded JPL employee for many years, has led tours of the lab and has served as an outreach speaker presenting the Cassini findings to civic and astronomy clubs and school groups.
>
> Now, though, this exemplary employee has been demoted. Why? Did he do something to jeopardize the mission? No. Was he guilty of incompetence? No. Was he lazy or just lackadaisical in his work? No. David Coppedge's sin was a thought crime, the mere willingness to challenge the ruling authority of Darwinian evolution. In conversation he asked colleagues if they'd be interested in watching a documentary that dealt with evolution and intelligent design. For this he was harassed and discriminated against.
>
> […]In a blatant double-standard, JPL has restricted Coppedge from freely discussing his intelligent design views while at the same time allowing other employees to express themselves freely on a wide variety of topics in the workplace, including attacks on the intelligent design viewpoint.
>
> Coppedge was punished for expressing support for intelligent design despite the fact that he never forced those views on anyone. When someone was not interested in watching one of his intelligent design videos, he dropped the matter.
>
> Until Coppedge's supervisor began harassing him, Coppedge never saw an indication that anyone resented his discussing intelligent design. In fact, Coppedge's administrators eventually admitted that they had never received a single complaint about his sharing DVDs prior to targeting him for investigation.

You can read more about it in these related stories.

- Discrimination Lawsuit Filed against NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab

- What you can do to protect the liberty of NASA’s pro-ID employees

Don’t forget that NASA is the agency that investigates religious nonsense like global warming and aliens.

Are most men intimidated by independent, successful, educated gorgons?

April 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

She's educated, independent, and has a great career!
Story here from the Onion.

Excerpt:

> Well, another wasted evening, another potential "Mr. Right" walking out of my life. I guess I should be used to it by now, because it's just so typical: Men will talk all day about how much they value ambition and intelligence in a partner, but when they finally meet a successful, educated gorgon, all of a sudden they head for the hills.
>
> Needless to say, a smart and sophisticated companion isn't what these men are actually looking for. No, what they really want is some easily impressed mortal who'll laugh at all their jokes. Someone who won't challenge their minds or disagree with their opinions. Someone who lacks a visage so terrifying it turns all beholders into solid stone.
>
> I suppose I could giggle, bat my eyes, and absent-mindedly twirl a fanged, hissing serpent around my fingers—but that's not who I am.
>
> Look, I bring a lot to the table. I've got an MBA from Harvard, I run my own company, I have the deadly power to steal the very breath of life from all who gaze upon me, and I'm in great shape. If I were a man, I'd be admired and even envied for these things. But I'm not, and because of that, men find me threatening. When I walk into a room, they turn away in fear, shutting their eyes tight and clambering out of the room in a panic.
>
> These are grown men we're talking about!

This is my kind of humor.

Obama budget proposal likely to decrease charitable giving by billions

April 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Newsbusters.

Excerpt:

> On the April 16 broadcast of Fox Business Network's "Varney & Co.," Rick Dunham, CEO of fundraising consultant Dunham & Company, weighed in on **the new budget proposal that would scale back charitable deductions for families making over $250,000**.
>
> "Do you think you're going to take a really big hit in terms of lower donations to charities? How big a hit?" host Stuart Varney asked.
>
> "Well the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University did a study last year to look at the impact of the rise in the marginal tax rate and the capping of charitable deductions at 28-percent and they believe that it'll be about almost a $4 billion hit based on 2006 dollars," Dunham said. "**So we're probably looking at about a $5 billion hit**."
>
> "That's a sizable chunk of money," Varney said. "There has been some talk **that the administration wants to control charitable giving, and direct where your charitable gifts should go**, therefore do it through the government and not through private charities. You think there's anything to that?"
>
> Dunham didn't reject the idea out of hand. "I think all the actions kind of lead that direction. Part of the challenge charities are facing right now is they're coming off of two years of a decline in giving to charities," Dunham stated, citing the approximate $12 billion decrease in charitable giving the last two years.
>
> "The government has always encouraged it through the tax incentive. And I think that's been a huge part of giving in America – that the government has stood behind private philanthropy by saying 'we want you to invest in charitable institutions for the good they do to our society.' And I think that's what they're beginning to undermine."

This is similar to what happened in Europe. As the secular leftists welfare states grew, people paid more and more in taxes. People had no money after the high taxes to give to charity, because they had "already given" to state. It was the state's job to take care of people, not private charities. People became very selfish and hedonistic, and religious practice and charitable giving declined.

The problem with this for Christians is that the state *never* uses tax money to achieve Christian goals. With a Christian charity, the goal is usually to give the person with money, but also to help the person *up and out* of their current situation. Christians aren't trying to give a man a fish, they want to teach him how to fish. It also helps to feel a little

humble when someone is helping you.

Marco Rubio leading Charlie Crist 57-28 in FL Republican Senate primary

April 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

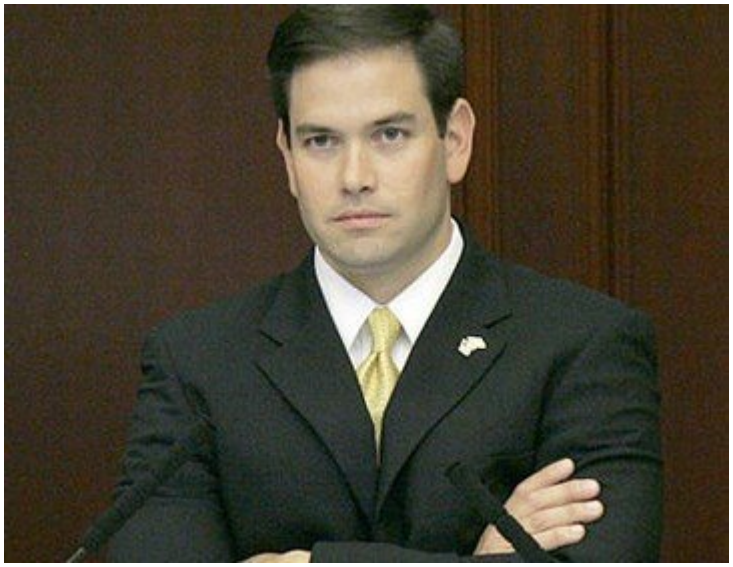

FL Senate candidate Marco Rubio

Story from Rasmussen Reports, the most reliable pollster.

Excerpt:

> Support for Florida Governor Charlie Crist's U.S. Senate bid has fallen this month to its lowest level yet. Just 28% of the state's likely Republican voters support his candidacy now, down six points from March.
>
> The latest Rasmussen Reports telephone survey of likely GOP Primary voters in the Sunshine State shows former state House Speaker Marco Rubio edging up a point from last month to 57%, his highest level of support to date. Three percent (3%) like some other candidate in the race, and 12% are undecided.
>
> Republican Primary voters see Rubio as a stronger candidate than Crist in the General Election. Eighty-one percent (81%) say Rubio would be at least Somewhat Likely to win if nominated while just 63% say the same of Crist. Those figures include 53% who say Rubio would be Very Likely to win and 30% who see Crist as Very Likely to win.
>
> The latest polling of the general election contest shows both Crist and Rubio with a double-digit lead over their likely Democratic opponent, Congressman Kendrick Meek.

This race is a done deal. Way to go Marco Rubio!

Related posts

- Marco Rubio's speech at the conservative CPAC convention
- Conservative Marco Rubio now leading liberal Charlie Crist 47 to 44

- Marco Rubio now tied with Charlie Crist in Florida Senate race
- Latest Rasmussen poll shows Crist has 14-point lead over Marco Rubio
- Meet one of the principled conservatives running for the Senate in 2010
- Conservative Marco Rubio announces for Florida Senate seat

What does “the pursuit of happiness” really mean?

April 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Muddling Towards Maturity. He quotes Chuck Colson on the pursuit of happiness.

Excerpt:

> Our founding fathers understood the pursuit of happiness to mean the pursuit of a virtuous life. This concept of happiness comes from the Greek word eudaimonia—which refers to a life well-lived, a life rooted in truth. That is what happiness means, and that is what every man and woman has an inalienable right to pursue—a virtuous life.

> And as I wrote in my book The Good Life, this is the definition of happiness that we need to reclaim in American life—especially within the Church. After all, a Barna survey revealed that more than half of evangelicals agreed with the statement: “The purpose of life is enjoyment and personal fulfillment.”
>
> Come on. If the last 50 years have taught us anything, it’s that consumerism and hedonism (the pursuit of unbridled pleasure) do not lead to happiness, but instead to personal and societal misery.
>
> […]The goal is not pleasure; it is righteous living, decency, honor, doing good—in short, living a virtuous life.

I’ve heard J. P. Moreland write about this, too, in his book “Love Your God With All Your Mind”. (And again in “Kingdom Triangle”)

J.P. says in chapter 1 of LYGWYM that freedom is “the power to do what one ought to do”. he right to the pursuit of happiness means that no individual or government has the power to prevent you from living the virtuous life that God intended for you. That is why I come down so hard on the secular left. When they force Christians to deny their faith and act like atheists in public, (e.g. – to perform abortions or lose their jobs), then the government is thwarting the pursuit of happiness, rightly understood.

Who is right about social justice: Glenn Beck or Jim Wallis?

April 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a Washington post editorial by the executive producer of the Glenn Beck show. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Social justice is often used as a code word by the left to promote government-controlled redistribution of wealth to favored special interest groups at the expense of other unfavored groups in order to keep the party in power in power. It's vote buying, essentially, but with the illusion of helping others. And the goal is the equalization of material wealth regardless of personal choices, including moral choices.

Recently, Glenn Beck warned his viewers to beware of churches that push social justice as though it were sanctioned by Christianity somehow.

> This is part of the information Glenn revealed in a special TV show about American extremism of the 20th century. In the context of promoting that special, he began talking about how the far left was once again using this terminology to politicize churches. The specific example he named was Rev. Jeremiah Wright.
>
> He told his listeners that if they were in a church that preaches Jeremiah Wright-style social justice, they should leave–or at least get educated on what exactly that means. It took him all of eight seconds to clarify the type of church he was speaking of, but that was long enough for most in the media to end the transcript.
>
> Suddenly, Glenn was accused of attacking the central tenants of the bible, because he supposedly believed that any church that wants to help the poor should be immediately evacuated. This absurd narrative is mainly the product of Rev. Jim Wallis.
>
> To restate the obvious, some simply use the term "social justice" as a substitute for "outreach to the poor." This is not the kind of "social justice" Glenn was talking about. The fact that this term has been utilized for purposes other than good Christian charity is well documented.
>
> […]But for Wallis to continue getting attention, he must act as if he believes Glenn is against churches helping the poor. Any honest observer would realize that isn't the case. Is anyone on earth against charitable outreach to the poor?
>
> Certainly not Glenn.
>
> In his book Arguing With Idiots, Glenn describes helping those less fortunate as an "obligation." He wrote that capitalism "will inevitably fail if individuals stop caring about the welfare of others." He just believes the bulk of the help should come from people like you and me, not government bureaucracy. When is the

> last time you felt charitable on April 15?
>
> […]Wallis is just as revealing when speaking of his current economic views: "I'm not a liberal, I'm a radical." Asked if he was calling for the redistribution of wealth across society, he responded: "Absolutely. Without any hesitation. That's what the gospel is all about." This is a man that believes an affluent church is no less than "an affront to the gospel" and he's talking about Glenn being divisive?

I think it's important to understand just how radical people are when they pass themselves off as Christians, yet have no place for individual charity or the notion of private property, both of which are central in the Bible. I think that Jesus expects us to work in order to have things to share with others, because in that sharing, we can imitate him. The money I earn by the sweat of my brow should not be used by popular people in government to buy votes by subsidizing destructive behaviors, all while blaming me for the behaviors of others.

So I favor capitalism, free markets, private property, the rule of law and voluntary charity by individuals and private organizations – like CHURCHES! To understand what capitalism is, you can watch this lecture entitled "Money, Greed and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem" by Jay W. Richards, delivered at the Heritage Foundation think tank, and televised by C-SPAN2.

If you can't see the Richards video, here is an audio lecture by Jay Richards on the "Myths Christians Believe about Wealth and Poverty". Also, why not check out this series of 4 sermons by Wayne Grudem on the relationship between Christianity and economics? (a PDF outline is here). Here's a lecture featuring Jay Richards from the libertarian Cato Institute. And you can listen to Ron Nash's course on Christianity and economics.

More posts from Neil Simpson on Jim Wallis and his Sojourners group:

- Jim Wallis & wealth redistribution
- Faux-lifers
- Social justice & Glenn Beck

Related posts

- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible
- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

MUST-HEAR: John Lennox and Paul Davies debate about aliens and the origin of life

April 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An amazing debate about the origin of life and the cosmic fine-tuning between a Christian and a materialist agnostic. John Lennox is AWESOME in this debate, and he only talks for a tiny part of the debate. He's very gracious, and focused the discussion on the areas that we care about. Paul Davies is an EXCELLENT scientist and well aware of what Christians believe. This is a great debate, very easy to listen to. Justin, the moderator, does a great job controlling a fantastic discussion.

The MP3 file is here.

Details

What does it take for life to get going in our universe? Is there intelligence in the stars or right under our nose? Renowned astrophysicist Paul Davies chats to Oxford Professor of Mathematics John Lennox.

A popular science author, Davies is also the Chair of the SETI post detection task force. His latest book "The Eerie Silence" which marks SETI's 50th anniversary examines the likelihood of the universe producing life elsewhere.

John Lennox is a Christian Mathematician and philosopher. He is the author of "God's Undertaker: has science buried God?" and has debated Richard Dawkins on several occasions.

Davies' work on the fine tuning of the universe for life has been sympathetic to theism. In this programme Lennox challenges Davies to look to design not just in cosmology but in the cell. They also chat about what the discovery of ET would mean for Christian theology.

Summary

Justin:

- Is there meaning in the universe?

Paul:

- We have no evidence for or against intelligent life elsewhere in the universe
- The vastness of the universe makes me think there is life elsewhere
- Humans are capable of observing and understanding the universe
- It seems the universe has the ability to create observers to understand it
- If one species has this ability, then we should expect others to do it

John:

- The fact that we can observe the universe and do science has cosmic significance

- Our rare habitable planet and our ability to do science is suggestive of purpose
- So science itself points to an extra-terrestrial intelligence: GOD
- The complexity of life and consciousness itself points away from atheism
- Monotheism gave birth to science
- Human minds capable of doing science are not compatible with atheistic materialism

Justin:

- Why do you say that either we are the only life or there are many different kinds of life?

Paul:

- There are lots of factors that have to be met to have a site for simple life
- These are related to the fine-tuning of cosmic constants, e.g. gravitational force
- But there are also factors that have to be met for originating intelligent life
- Things like convergence, self-organization, etc.
- So the cosmic requirements and evolutionary requirements are different
- Darwinian evolution doesn't solve the problem of the origin of life
- 50 years ago, skepticism about alien life existing anywhere was excessive
- Today, credulity about alien life exiting everywhere is excessive
- The naturalist is searching for a process that creates life easily

John:

- Paul agrees that there is no theory for a naturalistic origin of life
- This is fatal for the idea that life can emerge elsewhere in the universe
- We have not discovered any law that produces life without an intelligence
- Consider the method used by SETI used to detect an alien intelligence
- Why can't this method be applied to the origin of life on Earth?
- Why can't an intelligence created specified complexity (functional information)?
- Why can't an intelligence created epigenetics and protein folding?

Paul:

- Darwinian evolution can add new biological information after life begins

John:

- Darwinian evolution assumes a mutating replicating life form to act on

Paul:

- You can't generate specified complexity by using physical laws
- You can't generate specified complexity by chance

- At this point we are guessing as to how life might have formed

John:

- Why do we have to rule out an intelligent cause a priori
- If you can recognize an intelligence in outer space, why not in living systems?

Paul:

- I don't mind the word "intelligence", it's the word "signal"
- I oppose the idea that God or aliens manipulated physical stuff to create life
- It's an "ugly explanation and very unappealing both theologically and scientifically"
- I prefer the idea that the universe has processes to self-organize and create complexity
- When it comes to supernatural meddling by God, "I don't want that"
- If I were God, I would create the universe so that I would not have to intervene
- I think God would be more clever if he did not have to intervene
- My preferences about what is "clever" determines what scientific conclusions are allowed

John:

- Humans already have experience with their non-material minds to move atoms (matter)
- If God is a mind, then there is no reason why he cannot move atoms (matter)

Paul:

- My mind is physical, so are you saying that God is physical?
- If God intervenes in the universe, then what is he doing now?

John:

- There is a distinction between acts of creation and providential upholding the universe
- God is also speaking to people and drawing humans toward him
- God is spirit, not material

Paul:

- How can a non-physical entity cause effects on the physical world?

John:

- What science reveals that there is information needed for the origin of life
- Information requires an intelligence to create it, just as with human who write books
- That's not God of the gaps – it's an inference based on what we know today

Paul:

- We may be able to explain the origin of life later, using matter, law and chance
- What you're saying is that God tinkers with the genome
- If you say that God intervened once, then he intervenes all the time, everywhere!
- I don't want a God who tinkers in the genome
- if God could intervene in the universe that would remove its intelligibility

John:

- Look at the cover of this book – when I read words, I infer an intelligence
- There are bad gaps that the progress of science closes
- There are good gaps that science opens, showing the need for intelligence
- On the one hand, you say we have no theory of the origin of life
- On the other hand, you know that an intelligent designer wasn't involved
- If we don't know how life began, why do you rule God out a priori?

Paul:

- What scientists want to do is to explain the universe without involving God
- naturalists want to use science to discover only materialist explanations
- The purpose of SETI is to prove that there is other life in the universe
- This would then show that there is a naturalistic way of making life
- I agree that information in living systems is real hard to explain materialistically
- I believe in the power of emergence
- We might discover laws that prove that complexity can emerge without intelligence
- The discovery of alien life would help to show that no intelligence is needed to make life

Justin:

- What sort of cosmic fine-tuning is needed at the Big Bang for life to occur?

Paul:

- It's true that the universe appears extremely fine-tuned for life to exist
- The typical answer from naturalists is that there is a multiverse
- But the multiverse "falls far short" of providing a good answer to the fine-tuning
- It's irrational to appeal to massive numbers of unseen universes to explain fine-tuning
- The design and purpose seen in the universe may be due to God or it may be emergent

John:

- The fine-tuning is real and the multiverse is a desperate attempt to evade the

creator
- Sir Martin Rees (an atheist) says he “prefers” the multiverse to a designer
- Scientists are not supposed to prefer anything except what is true

Justin:

- Would the discovery of aliens hurt Christianity, because of the belief in the uniqueness of humans?

Paul:

- Christians believe that Jesus came to save HUMANS specifically, not animals or aliens
- If we were to discover intelligent aliens, it would challenge traditional religions
- What will God do with alien races? Multiple incarnations? Or just preach the gospel to them?

John:

- We don’t know if the aliens exist, first of all – it’s speculative
- The Bible teaches that humans bear the image of God
- We just don’t know whether alien species are also made in God’s image

MUST-READ: William Lane Craig discusses Calvinism and the problem of evil

April 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an answer to a question of the week from his Reasonable Faith web site.

Here's the question:

> Dr. Craig,
>
> I am troubled at the mass amount of Calvinists I see who are incredibly intelligent and trustworthy christian leaders. What I mean is that, So many seem to be capable of great analysis (far beyond myself), but seem to stick their head in the sand when it comes to the problem of evil. If they don't, then they tend to make God a self-contradicting being. Why do you think this is so?
>
> I'm also personally troubled at how few leaders I see subscribing to Molinism. It seems to me that it answers the most questions and creates the least problems. I understand it can be complex, but I wouldn't think we would just rest with the problem of evil not being satisfied. I don't base what I believe on the beliefs of others, but we can't ignore the influence others have in our lives, or the desire to have a home with others when it comes to these thoughts.
>
> Anyway, I would enjoy your thoughts… as I always do.
>
> Thanks,
>
> Gordon

And here's the first part of the answer:

I think you're right, Gordon, that a great many intelligent and godly Christian leaders are Reformed, or followers of John Calvin, in their theology. I'm currently participating in a four-views book on divine providence along with a pair of Reformed theologians. It is evident from their contributions that, despite the intellectual puzzles raised by the Reformed view, they both embrace it because they are convinced that it most faithfully represents the teaching of Scripture on the subject, Scripture being the only authoritative rule of faith.

Actually, I have no problem with certain classic statements of the Reformed view. For example, the Westminster Confession (Sect. III) declares that

God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

Now this is *precisely* what the Molinist believes! The Confession affirms God's preordination of everything that comes to pass as well as the liberty and contingency of the creaturely will, so that God is not the author of sin. It is a tragedy that in rejecting

middle knowledge Reformed divines have cut themselves off from the most perspicuous explanation of the coherence of this wonderful confession.

By rejecting a doctrine of divine providence based on God's middle knowledge, Reformed theologians are simply self-confessedly left with a mystery. The great 17th century Reformed theologian Francis Turretin held that a careful analysis of Scripture leads to two indubitable conclusions, both of which must be held in tension without compromising either one:

that God on the one hand by his providence not only decreed, but most certainly secures, the event of all things, whether free or contingent; on the other hand, however, man is always free in acting and many effects are contingent. Although I cannot understand how these can be mutually connected together, yet (on account of ignorance of the mode) the thing itself is (which is certain from another source, i.e., from the Word) not either to be called in question or wholly denied (Institutes of Elenctic Theology, 1: 512).

Here Turretin affirms without compromise both the sovereignty of God and human freedom and contingency; he just doesn't know how to put them together. Molinism offers a solution. By rejecting that solution, the Reformed theologian is left with a mystery.

Craig levels 5 challenges against Calvinism:

- *Universal, divine, causal determinism cannot offer a coherent interpretation of Scripture.*
- *Universal causal determinism cannot be rationally affirmed.*
- *Universal, divine, determinism makes God the author of sin and precludes human responsibility.*
- *Universal, divine, determinism nullifies human agency.*
- *Universal, divine determinism makes reality into a farce.*

Read the rest here. It's worth it. (Registration is *not* required, as far as I can tell)

All of my readers should try to make themselves familiar with Molinism (i.e. – middle knowledge). I have friends who are Calvinists and I think it helps to be able to explain to non-Christians how God can be sovereign over all of the universe from the beginning of time, and yet man can still be responsible for freely choosing to rebel against God.

I think every Christian feels that God was tugging them toward him to some degree or other, and that they had no free choice to resist him. And on Molinism, there was no other way it could be. God chose a universe in which he knew that you would freely respond to his drawing you toward him. He was not surprised – he knew. There was no rolling of the dice – he chose to save you before the universe was created. But not in violation of your free will to respond to his salvific initiative. He chose you, and he gave you what you needed to respond to his drawing you to him.

Seriously folks – the middle knowledge view solves the problem of divine sovereignty and human freedom a lot better than Calvinism does. You can keep your Calvinism if you like it, but it sure helps to know the Molinist view if you are talking to atheists who want an

answer. Just phrase it as a possible answer to the problem, if you don't believe it. At least survey the possible views for non-Christians so they see it as a possibility.

Related posts

- What are the differences between Wesleyan Arminianism and Calvinism?
- First debate on Calvinism/Molinism between James White and Michael Brown
- James White debates Michael Brown on Calvinism vs Foreknowledge (1 of 2)
- Michael Brown debates James White on Foreknowledge vs Calvinism (2 of 2)
- What about those who have never heard of Jesus?

Response from a Calvinist

- Stan's series of posts at Birds of the Air on sovereignty and suffering

University of Calgary students face expulsion for pro-life display

April 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Eight pro-life students at the University of Calgary (UofC), faced with possible expulsion for their activism, gathered this morning to deliver a simple message to their university: "Do unto us whatever you desire, punish us however you wish; but our convictions shall not change, and we shall not alter our actions based on intimidation."
>
> These words were read by Cameron Wilson, vice president of UofC's Campus Pro-Life (CPL), at a press conference this morning in front of the school library. Wilson is one of eight CPL members who were notified late last week that they have been charged with non-academic misconduct over their presentation of the Genocide Awareness Project (GAP) on April 8-9.
>
> The group has put up the GAP display, which compares abortion to past historical atrocities through the use of graphic images, on the University of Calgary grounds without incident eight times since 2006.
>
> In 2009, the university charged six students with trespassing in relation to the display, but the crown prosecutor stayed these charges prior to a trial scheduled for November 2009. The university has threatened participating students with non-academic misconduct charges on the occasion of each display, but this is the first time they are following through with their threat.
>
> […]"If [UofC] were a private institution then they would have the right to censor whatever viewpoints they want," explained John Carpay, a lawyer with the pro-free speech Canadian Constitution Foundation, who has represented the students since the fall of 2008. "But they get the majority of their funding from Alberta taxpayers, and so they don't have a right to discriminate based on viewpoint."
>
> […]Each student is required to appear at a hearing before UofC's Vice-Provost in the next few weeks, to which they have been told they are not permitted to bring legal counsel. There the students could face penalties including probation or even expulsion. Once a decision is rendered, there are two levels of appeal within the university and then, if necessary, the case would go to the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench.

Unbelievable. In the most conservative city in Canada. Pro-life taxpayers in Alberta are paying an academic institution that censors and persecutes pro-lifers. *Imagine*. Parents subsidizing the persecution of their own children – subsidizing the violation of the human rights of their own children.

Related posts

- McGill University and University of Calgary censor pro-life students
- University of Ottawa cancels Ann Coulter appearance
- Ann Coulter files hate speech claim against Canadian university
- Canadian student union leader says pro-lifers are all potential murderers
- Lakehead University bans pro-life club
- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's University
- Pro-life club at McGill University banned
- University of Calgary uses police to threaten pro-life students (More from Ezra Levant)
- Canadian pro-life student quarantined by public school principal
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

Are two mommies as good for a child as a biological mother and father?

April 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

She protects men and children

Another podcast featuring Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse. This one is a must-hear for men, especially men who feel threatened, unappreciated and fearful about the way that their importance is minimized by the culture.

The MP3 file is here. (11 minutes)

Topics:

- A new study claims that two women are *better* for a child than a opposite-sex parents
- The author of the study thinks that mothers and fathers are interchangeable
- She doesn't think that a biological mom and dad are better for children
- The headlines claimed that two moms are better
- The research seems to argue that heterosexual fathers are worse for children than mothers
- The study claims that children benefit when there are no heterosexual men in the home
- The study claims that gay men are better parents than heterosexual men
- The study argues that gender roles are a bad thing
- The goal of these scholars is to abolish distinctions and roles based on sex
- Th study implies that heterosexual men can be marginalized and excluded from the family
- This is made worse when courts are able to declare who is a parent and who isn't

A caller to the show talks about how damaging fatherlessness is for male and female children, too. She refers to what we can see today in the inner city where fathers in the home have been replaced by checks from the government. Dr. Morse mentions that this is also occurring across all races among the lower income classes in the UK. She is concerned about the damage that can result if men lose their traditional role in society, and in the family.

Dr. Morse also wrote an article with more details here (this is mentioned in the podcast). Excerpt:

> Instead allow me a few quotes, from "How Does the Gender of Parents Matter?" to illustrate my point that **fatherhood itself is at stake** in the same sex parenting debate.
>
> […]"If contemporary mothering and fathering seem to be converging,… research shows that sizable average differences remain that consistently favor women, inside or outside of marriage."
>
> See what I mean? Men and women are identical, except women are better.
>
> "Gender nonconformity" used to be considered a negative trait, something, which if found, provided an argument against same sex parenting. But listen to Stacey and Biblarz turn "**gender flexibility**" into a positive trait.
>
> "12 year old boys in mother only families (whether lesbian or heterosexual) did not differ from sons raised by a mother and a father on masculinity scales but scored over a standard deviation higher on femininity scales. Thus growing up without a father did not impede masculine development but enabled boys to achieve greater gender flexibility."
>
> "If, as we expect, future research replicates the finding that fatherless parenting fosters greater gender flexibility in boys, this represents a potential benefit. Research implies that adults with androgynous gender traits may enjoy social psychological advantages over more gender traditional peers."
>
> […]The bottom line is not really that mothers and fathers are interchangeable, but that **masculinity is a bad thing**.

Can you imagine if the left gained power and this "research" became the basis for laws? What if these views were pushed on impressionable children in the public schools? What if people who believed things like this were nominated to high positions (let's call them czars, say)?

Related posts

- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama's new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- France passes law to jail spouses who commit psychological violence
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives

- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children’s sexual choices
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being

Do you all agree with Wes Widner about the doctrine of original sin?

April 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

His post at Reason to Stand is here.

Excerpt:

> When dealing with the doctrine of "original sin" it is important to understand what this doctrine does and does not mean. Simply put, it does mean that because of the sin of Adam and Eve (though, Biblically, the full weight of responsibility for this sin falls on Adam's shoulders) sinful proclivities have entered into the hearts of men.
>
> […]What the doctrine of original sin does not mean is that we are all borne owing the debt of sins Adam incurred.
>
> […]"Original sin", if understood in the sense that we are guilty of sin from birth logically leads to the untenable conclusion that all children go to hell (unless one holds to the unbiblical stretch known as covenantal theology) for sins they did not freely choose to commit.
>
> Romans 3:23, which tells us that "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*", is not a prescriptive phrase, that we will *by necessity* sin, but rather a descriptive phrase about what we all freely choose to do. Given long enough, after reaching the age of accountability, we will come to know the difference between good and evil and we will freely choose to sin of our own accord.
>
> The fact is that we are actually borne innocent and freely choose to sin thereby breaking ourselves and disqualifying ourselves from participating in a relationship with a holy God.

Do any of my readers have a different understanding of original sin than this one?

MUST-READ: New York Times critiques socialized medicine

April 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ed Morrissey links to this New York Times article from Hot Air.

Excerpt:

> New York's insurance system has been a working laboratory for the core provision of the new federal health care law — insurance even for those who are already sick and facing huge medical bills — and an expensive lesson in unplanned consequences.
>
> […]The problem stems in part from the state's high medical costs and in part from its stringent requirements for insurance companies in the individual and small group market. In 1993, motivated by stories of suffering AIDS patients, the state became one of the first to require insurers to extend individual or small group coverage to anyone with pre-existing illnesses.
>
> New York also became one of the few states that require insurers within each region of the state to charge the same rates for the same benefits, regardless of whether people are old or young, male or female, smokers or nonsmokers, high risk or low risk.
>
> Healthy people, in effect, began to subsidize people who needed more health care. The healthier customers soon discovered that the high premiums were not worth it and dropped out of the plans. The pool of insured people shrank to the point where many of them had high health care needs. Without healthier people to spread the risk, their premiums skyrocketed, a phenomenon known in the trade as the "adverse selection death spiral."

Obama plans to get around the problem of healthy young people opting out of paying for other people's health care by fining them.

> The new federal health care law tries to avoid the death spiral by requiring everyone to have insurance and penalizing those who do not, as well as offering subsidies to low-income customers.
>
> […]Under the federal law, those who refuse coverage will have to pay an annual penalty of $695 per person, up to $2,085 per family, or 2.5 percent of their household income, whichever is greater. The penalty will be phased in from 2014 to 2016.

How does this reduce health care costs? It doesn't. But it does explain why we have so many uninsured in this country – they don't buy insurance because government regulations requiring mandatory coverages have made it *a bad deal* for them. Young men don't need to pay for in vitro fertilization and sex changes. They don't use it, so why

should they agree to pay for other people's problems? They have their own lives to live. Ed Morrissey explains:

> If nothing else, this proves a couple of points that critics have made all along. The mandates are nothing more than a way to get the young to create a proxy welfare state by forcing them into a usurious insurance model. It does nothing to reduce actual costs, and in fact makes cost increases both more likely and more amplified.

Now you understand socialized medicine. The left plays on people's fears and insecurities in order to gain control of the economy. They promise to take care of people, so that people can stop worrying about taking responsibility for their own choices. Once the leftists are elected, they take money from the young people who don't understand what is happening to them, and they give it away to special interests in order to buy votes.

George W. Bush raises money for Indiana crisis pregnancy centers

April 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

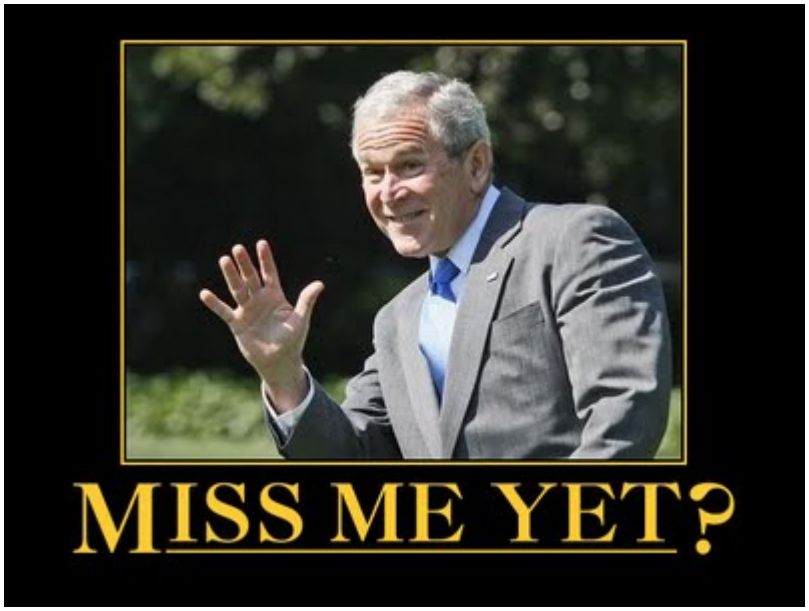

The most pro-life President ever
Story here from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Former President George W. Bush on Thursday gave the keynote address for a fundraiser for Life Centers, a Christian organization that helps women facing unplanned pregnancies in central Indiana, and encouraged the group to continue with its life-saving work.
>
> Cameras and media were not permitted inside Conseco Fieldhouse, where the fundraiser took place at 7 PM. Roughly 4,000 people attended the event, which Life Center leaders said would be the largest-ever fundraiser for the nonprofit organization.
>
> "He wants to encourage us to continue doing what we're doing and helping those girls in our city who really need to seek our services and don't have places to go," said Julie Rupprecht of Life Centers of Bush's message, according to local news station WTHR 13.
>
> […]Life Centers President Brian Boone had called the event a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to celebrate life – with a keynote address from a public servant who made the sanctity of human life a priority."
>
> During his term as president, Bush signed into law several protections for the unborn, including the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, and the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. He also appointed pro-life justices John Roberts and Samuel Alito to the U.S. Supreme Court, and reinstated the Mexico City Policy, which required all non-governmental organizations

> receiving federal funding to refrain from performing or promoting abortions in other countries.
>
> In January Legatus, a membership organization for Catholic business leaders, presented Mr. Bush with its prestigious Cardinal John J. O'Connor Pro-Life Award in recognition of his work advancing the rights of the unborn.

Obama is the most pro-abortion president we've ever had, and he's no friend of traditional marriage or stay-at-home parents, either. Bush was the most pro-life. Everyone hated him because he was a Christian, but for people like me who actually cared about life issues and traditional marriage, he was the best president ever. We will never get pro-life judges like the kind that Bush nominated, (e.g. – John Roberts and Sam Alito) under Obama. Obama is nominating pro-abortion radicals to the bench. Elections matter.

MUST-READ: Wall Street bankers gave Obama millions in campaign contributions

April 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican House Minority Leader John Boehner reports on Obama's new bank bailout bill.

Excerpt:

President Obama likes to say we need to clean up Wall Street. But let's be clear: He is pushing a job-killing bailout bill for Wall Street that benefits his top financial contributor from the 2008 campaign – a firm that just happens to be under investigation by the SEC for defrauding investors.

Despite the President's rhetoric, his support for the Democrats' bailout bills gives big Wall Street banks a permanent, taxpayer-funded safety net by designating them "too big to fail."

[…]Goldman Sachs, recently charged with defrauding investors, was President Obama's top Wall Street contributor during the 2008 election cycle, donating nearly $1 million to his campaign.

- Securities & investment firms in general were the fifth largest contributor to President Obama's 2008 campaign, donating nearly $15 million.
- Big banks also donated more than $3 million to Obama during the 2008 election cycle.

And some details about what the new bank bailout does:

- **The Dodd Gives Wall Street a Pre-Existing $50 Billion Bailout Slush Fund.** Sen. Dodd's financial bailout bill would create a $50 billion 'orderly resolution fund' ($150 billion in Rep. Barney Frank's bill) that could be repeatedly replenished from industry assessment.
- **The Dodd Bill Gives Wall Street a Treasury-Backed Credit Line**. The FDIC would be authorized to borrow from Treasury up to the amount of cash left in the 'resolution fund' plus 90 percent of the value of the assets of any and all too-big-to-fail firms in its control.
- **The Dodd Bill Provides a Government-Guaranteed to Wall Street Debt**. The FDIC would be authorized to guarantee the debt of any solvent bank, bank holding company, or affiliate in any amount subject only to an aggregate debt limit set by the Treasury Department.
- **The Dodd Bill Institutionalizes Unlimited Wall Street Bailouts**. The FDIC, as the resolution agency for too-big-to-fail firms, would be given wide latitude to use resources to make payments to anyone in any amounts, at their own discretion.

Now let's hear more about the rich bankers from Goldman Sachs.

Goldman Sachs

This Newsbusters article explains Goldman Sachs' connections to the White House:

- White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel used to work for Goldman Sachs.
- Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner used to work for Goldman Sachs.

And the Washington Examiner reports that:

- Former White House counsel Greg Craig is now employed by Goldman Sachs.

Wall Street banks like Goldman Sachs are often filled with Democrats.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac

And don't forget that the government-backed companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were run by Democrats, and they were also bailed out by the Democrats.

Excerpt:

> Freddie and Fannie used huge lobbying budgets and political contributions to keep regulators off their backs.
>
> A group called the Center for Responsive Politics keeps track of which politicians get Fannie and Freddie political contributions. The top three U.S. senators getting big Fannie and Freddie political bucks were Democrats and No. 2 is Sen. Barack Obama.
>
> Now remember, he's only been in the Senate four years, but he still managed to grab the No. 2 spot ahead of John Kerry — decades in the Senate — and Chris Dodd, who is chairman of the Senate Banking Committee.
>
> Fannie and Freddie have been creations of the congressional Democrats and the Clinton White House, designed to make mortgages available to more people and, as it turns out, some people who couldn't afford them.
>
> Fannie and Freddie have also been places for big Washington Democrats to go to work in the semi-private sector and pocket millions. The Clinton administration's White House Budget Director Franklin Raines ran Fannie and collected $50 million. Jamie Gorelick — Clinton Justice Department official — worked for Fannie and took home $26 million. Big Democrat Jim Johnson, recently on Obama's VP search committee, has hauled in millions from his Fannie Mae CEO job.

Political contributions and bailouts. Is there a connection?

Liberal government in Ontario to introduce more explicit sex education in schools

April 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the left-wing Globe and Mail.

Excerpt:

> The days of euphemisms and innuendo in Ontario's classrooms are numbered, with the province set to roll out a new sex education curriculum next fall built on clear and explicit language that has raised objections from conservative parent groups.
>
> The revision, outlined in 208 pages that were quietly posted on the Ministry of Education's website in January, will for the first time teach Grade 3 pupils about such topics as sexual identity and orientation, and introduce terms like "anal intercourse" and "vaginal lubrication" to children in Grades 6 and 7. The new curriculum begins in Grade 1 with lessons about the proper names of body parts.

And the response from Liberal party Premier (governor) Dalton McGuinty?

> The Premier stood by the curriculum, saying he has confidence in the judgment of school principals and teachers to present the information in a thoughtful and responsible manner. If sex education is not taught in the classroom, he added, students could get information from potentially uninformed sources, such as their friends.
>
> "If we can provide it in a format and in a venue over which we have some control … why wouldn't we recognize that we live in an information age and why wouldn't we try to present this information in a thoughtful and responsible and open way," Mr. McGuinty said.

Yes, if the teachers don't teach the kids about sex, then the children could hear about it from their know-nothing religious fanatic parents. The horror!

More details:

> Some of the most controversial changes are in the Grade 3 curriculum. In a discussion on human development and showing respect for people's differences, for example, teachers are invited to discuss "invisible differences," including gender identity and sexual orientation, in an effort to reflect the fact that more and more students have same-sex parents.
>
> […]In another key change, the topic of puberty will be introduced in Grade 4, a year earlier than in the old curriculum, in recognition of the fact that many children reach puberty at younger ages. The description of physical changes is also more explicit in the new version, including the development of breasts and

> body hair.

Ontario is the province that also boasts one of the worst Human Rights Commissions, as well as taxpayer-funded in vitro fertilization, abortions and sex changes. The new curriculum has no opt-out mechanism for concerned parents. Ontario parents *will* pay for the indoctrination of children and their vulnerable children *will* learn about sex using materials from the extreme left.

About Ontario schools

- Leaked Document: No Opt-Out for Children from Pro-Gay Classes in Ontario Schools
- Ontario Government Initiative Would Force Catholic Schools to Violate Church Teaching
- US Chastity Speaker Meets "Toughest Crowd" at Ontario Catholic High School
- Gay Activists to Speak in Ontario Elementary Schools

About Quebec schools

- Quebec Family's Appeal Rejected for Exemption from Mandatory Relativism Course
- Quebec Judge Denies Families Religious Exemption From Mandatory School Course in Relativism
- Quebec Parents Take School Board to Court Over Compulsory Relativistic Ethics and Religion Course
- Quebec Considers Proposal to Take Even Greater Control of Private Schools

Average Canadian family spends 42% of its income on taxes

April 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the libertarian Fraser Institute.

Excerpt:

> The total tax bill for the average Canadian family has increased at a much faster rate since 1961 than any other single household expenditure, according to a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, Canada's leading public policy think tank. The Canadian Consumer Tax Index 2010, which calculates the total tax bill of the average Canadian family, found that taxes have increased by a whopping 1,624% since 1961. In contrast, expenditures on housing increased by 1,198%, food by 559%, and clothing by 526% from 1961 to 2009. "Taxes have grown much more rapidly than any other single expenditure item for Canadian families to the point where taxes from all levels of government take a greater part of a family's income than basic necessities such as food, clothing, and housing," said Niels Veldhuis, the study's co-author and the Institute's senior economist.

How much do Canadians pay in taxes?

The Canadian Consumer Tax Index calculates the total tax bill of the typical Canadian family by adding up the various taxes that the family pays to federal, provincial, and local governments. These include direct taxes such as income taxes, sales taxes, Employment Insurance and Canadian Pension Plan contributions, as well as "hidden" taxes such as import duties, excise taxes on tobacco and alcohol, amusement taxes, and gas taxes.

This year's index shows that even though family incomes have increased significantly since 1961, the total tax bill has increased at a much higher rate.

- In 2009, the average Canadian family earned an income of $69,175 and paid total taxes equaling $28,878-41.7 per cent of its income.
- In 1961, the average Canadian family earned an income of $5,000 and paid $1,675 in total taxes-33.5 per cent of its income.

Taxes have become the most significant item that Canadian consumers now face in their budgets," Veldhuis said.

So the typical Canadian family, pays 42% of their family income in taxes. FORTY-TWO PERCENT. Remember, Canada has a VAT tax, which is what Obama is apparently considering to pay for all his spending on bailouts for his rich Democrat buddies.

The Fraser Institute is the equivalent of our Cato Institute. I don't agree with either of them on many things, (e.g. – Darwinism), but on the topic of taxes being too high, I agree with them both.

Milton Friedman shows why capitalism is the economic view of grown-ups

April 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s one video:

And another:

Socialism only makes sense when you don’t think things through. There is a finite number of things in the universe. If you want to fix one situation, you’re going to break something else. The only question to decide, then, is *who should decide how money is spent.* Is it the government who decides? Or individuals? Which party is better at choosing? Which party has more to gain or lose from good and bad choices? Which party has the incentive to make the right choice, because they earned the money, and is responsible for the result of spending it one way or another?

The real world is not perfect. There are risks and trade-offs everywhere in life.

(H/T Laura at Pursuing Holiness)

Guillermo Gonzalez lectures at UC Davis on the requirements for life

April 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The 5 video clips that make up the full lecture.

The playlist for all 5 clips is here.

About the speaker

> Guillermo Gonzalez is an Associate Professor of Physics at Grove City College. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington and has received fellowships, grants and awards from such institutions as NASA, the University of Washington, the Templeton Foundation, Sigma Xi (scientific research society) and the National Science Foundation.

Learn more about the speaker here.

The lecture

Here's part 1 of 5:

Habitability topics:

- What is the Copernican Principle?
- Is the Earth's suitability for hosting life rare in the universe?
- Does the Earth have to be the center of the universe to be special?
- How similar to the Earth does a planet have to be to support life?
- What is the definition of life?
- What are the three minimal requirements for life of any kind?
- Requirement 1: A molecule that can store information (carbon)
- Requirement 2: A medium in which chemicals can interact (liquid water)
- Requirement 3: A diverse set of chemical elements
- What is the best environment for life to exist?
- Our place in the solar system: the circumstellar habitable zone
- Our place in the galaxy: the galactic habitable zones
- Our time in the universe's history: the cosmic habitable age
- Other habitability requirements (e.g. – metal-rich star, massive moon, etc.)
- The orchestration needed to create a habitable planet
- How different factors depend on one another through time
- How tweaking one factor can adversely affect other factors
- How many possible places are there in the universe where life could emerge?
- Given these probabilistic resources, should we expect that there is life elsewhere?
- How to calculate probabilities using the "Product Rule"

- Can we infer that there is a Designer just because life is rare? Or do we need more?

The corelation between habitability and measurability.

- Are the habitable places in the universe also the best places to do science?
- Do the factors that make Earth habitable also make it good for doing science?
- Some places and times in the history of the universe are more habitable than others
- Those exact places and times also allow us to make scientific discoveries
- Observing solar eclipses and structure of our star, the Sun
- Observing stars and galaxies
- Observing the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Observing the acceleration of the universe caused by dark matter and energy
- Observing the abundances of light elements like helium of hydrogen
- These observations support the big bang and fine-tuning arguments for God's existence
- It is exactly like placing observatories on the tops of mountains
- There are observers existing in the best places to observe things
- This is EXACTLY how the universe has been *designed for making scientific discoveries*

This lecture was delivered by Guillermo Gonzalez in 2007 at the University of California at Davis.

What is intelligent design?

- R.C. Sproul interviews Stephen Meyer on Signature in the Cell
- Stephen Meyer explains what intelligent design is in a CNN editorial.
- Stephen Meyer's Signature in the Cell in top ten science books on Amazon.com
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show

Related DVDs

Illustra also made two other great DVDs on intelligent design. The first two DVDs "Unlocking the Mystery of Life" and "The Privileged Planet" are must-buys, but you can watch them on youtube if you want, for free.

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

I also recommend Coldwater Media's "Icons of Evolution". All three of these are on sale from Amazon.com.

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life

- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

ACORN CEO Bertha Lewis endorses socialism in leaked video

April 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video here. (H/T Verum Serum)

Morgen at Verum Serum writes:

> While labeling liberal Democrats and other progressives as "socialists" now invites an instant loss of credibility (even amongst many conservatives), it is a designation easily understood to mean someone who clearly does *not* believe in the primacy of individual responsibility and limited government. And so when a notable progressive publicly aligns themselves with the socialist cause, it presents a rare opportunity to demonstrate to the broader American public the core philosophy and the long-term agenda which underly so much of the "progressive" political platform.

ACORN, you remember, is Barack Obama's former employer. He trained them in community activism. Community activism may mean suing banks to force them to make loans to people who cannot afford homes, wrecking the economy. And later, they can be bailed out by Obama, with your money. Bertha Wilson endorsed Barack Obama for president.

Related posts

- ACORN registration workers charged with felony voter fraud
- Are Democrats seeking to register criminals and illegal aliens to vote?
- If you want to understand who Obama is, look at his judicial nominees
- ACORN throws out Republican voter registrations
- Megyn Kelly of Fox News exposes the truth about ACORN
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- Democrats caused the recession and Republicans tried to stop it

William Dembski discusses irreducible complexity and co-option

April 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Dembski explains what the debate on origins is really about.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Dembski has taught at Northwestern University, the University of Notre Dame, and the University of Dallas. He has done postdoctoral work in mathematics at MIT, in physics at the University of Chicago, and in computer science at Princeton University. A graduate of the University of Illinois at Chicago where he earned a B.A. in psychology, an M.S. in statistics, and a Ph.D. in philosophy, he also received a doctorate in mathematics from the University of Chicago in 1988 and a master of divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1996. He has held National Science Foundation graduate and postdoctoral fellowships.

The lecture:

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Summary (snark is in italics)

What is evolution:

- Is it enough for Christian students to just retain their faith in college?
- Or should Christian students seek to transform their universities?
- The word "evolution" refers to a unguided, purposeless, undirected process
- Living organisms are not designed, they just appear to be designed
- Therefore, it is an atheistic theory – there is NO ROOM for God
- Random variations and natural selection can do the creating of life without God
- Nothing about evolution suggest that God had anything to do with it

The appearance of design:

- The cell is a nano-engineered information processing system.
- The cell has engineering, e.g. – signal transduction, message passing, etc.
- There are molecular machines similar to man-made machines, but less efficient
- E.g. – the bacterial flagellum which has 40 parts
- These molecular machines have minimal complexity – all the parts are needed
- can't build a molecular machine step-by-step – all the parts must be present and integrated

How does evolution try to explain molecular machines:

- The standard naturalistic response is “co-option”
- Each intermediate step has pieces that are used for *other purposes*
- I.e. – Subsets of the parts can have different functions
- For example, a subset of the bacterial flagellum can be used as a syringe
- The subset, called the Type-3 secretory system, has only 13 parts
- The problem is that evolutionists don’t show all the steps, and all the functions
- For this to be a good response, you need a smooth path from 1 part up to 40
- Each step of the path has to have a working system with a different function
- But the atheists don’t have the path, or the intermediate functions
- It’s like arguing that you can walk from Seattle to Tokyo via the Hawaiian islands

Is the bacterial flagellum a cherry-picked example?

- There are no detailed molecular pathways for *any* biochemical systems in the cell
- The atheistic response is to speculate that pathways will be found as science progresses
- The pathways are unobservable entities, *just like the multiverse and the Cambrian precursors*

Where does the machinery to create proteins come from?

- The molecular machines are composed of proteins
- The proteins are manufactured by copying protein-building instructions from the DNA
- The instructions are carried to the build site by messenger RNA
- The build site is called a ribosome
- The DNA requires proteins to build, so there is a chicken-and-egg problem
- The problem is that protein transcription systems require everything in place
- There is no materialistic theory about how to build this step-by-step

So what do the molecular machines tell us about how life began?

- The problem of the origin of life is the problem of the origin of information
- What needs to be explained are the functional sequences of parts
- The sequences are *identical* to sequences of letters that make sense
- The atheist has to say that material processes can create the information
- The problem of finding sequences of amino acids or proteins is a search problem
- A blind search of the space of possible sequences is not efficient
- even with lots time, parts and trials, you can’t converge on functional proteins
- information is required and the only known producer of information is a mind

Bill is one of my favorite people. He’s smarter than practically all of the atheists who dominate the universities. But because he is an outspoken Christian, he never gets the

recognition he deserves. He just keeps plugging away on his research. He doesn't make excuses.

What is intelligent design?

- R.C. Sproul interviews Stephen Meyer on Signature in the Cell
- Stephen Meyer explains what intelligent design is in a CNN editorial.
- Stephen Meyer's Signature in the Cell in top ten science books on Amazon.com
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show

Related DVDs

Illustra also made two other great DVDs on intelligent design. The first two DVDs "Unlocking the Mystery of Life" and "The Privileged Planet" are must-buys, but you can watch them on youtube if you want, for free.

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

I also recommend Coldwater Media's "Icons of Evolution". All three of these are on sale from Amazon.com.

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
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ACORN's CEO Bertha Wilson explains why she favors amnesty

April 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new video clip of Bertha Wilson, the CEO of ACORN. (H/T Verum Serum)

Here's an excerpt from the transcript:

> Immigration is the next big battle. Immigration, immigration, immigration. And the reason this is so important is, you know, here's the secret [whispers]:
>
> We're getting ready to me a majority, minority country. Shhhh. [applause] We'll be like South Africa. More black people than white people. [laughter] Don't tell anybody.
>
> […]My challenge to black folks, and to people of color and civil rights folks, are as this: the face of immigration needs to be a lot blacker than it is. Because once they can frame the immigration debate as about Latinos, crossing some mythical border, when in fact we have second and third generation black folks in this country who come from immigrant families. But they're not standing up and marching with their Latino brothers and sisters, and saying "I am an immigrant too"…

Morgen (from Verum Serum) writes:

> As a country, we have a proud history of accepting immigrants from all over the world, and we are better off for it. **But we do not have a "mythical border"**. It is the responsibility of our government to maintain our territorial integrity, and as citizens – through our democratic institutions – we should proudly seek to defend the laws and traditions which have made this nation great. There is nothing inconsistent between this and a rational immigration policy, as evidenced by multiple generations of immigrants who have peacefully and successfully assimilated into our way of life. (While enjoying unparalleled freedom to continue to honor their cultural and religious traditions, however they desire.)
>
> But we should have no tolerance for those who ignore our laws, and seek to undermine the values we hold most dear through subversive means. This is the socialist agenda for America, and this is the "progressive" agenda for America – and it must be defeated.

I find it interesting that Bertha Wilson seems to be so concerned with race. Why is race so important to people on the left? There's a word for people who judge people by the color of their skin, like Bertha Wilson does. Come to think of it, lots of Obama's friends (Jeremiah Wright, Father Pfleger, etc.) seem to have a fixation on skin color. What is it about the left that makes them judge people by their skin color? Maybe it has something

to do with the need to gain power by pitting some groups against other groups, then offering government as a solution.

My thoughts

I am myself a very dark person of color, and a son of a first-generation immigrant family. My parents came to this country with virtually nothing, and we worked our way up. I am the first person in my family to attend graduate school (computer science). And at no point did my skin color ever hold me back from achieving success. What matters in the capitalist West is a person can produce, not what a person looks like. This is the best place for me to succeed.

Like almost all conservatives, I am in favor of increased *legal* immigration – provided that those immigrants work hard, play by the rules, and are ineligible for social programs for at least a decade. Any legal immigrant who can stick to these rules for a few years should be put on a path to citizenship. America should welcome those who have skills that benefit all of us. But we should *not* be rewarding illegal immigrants just because they have the "right" skin color.

ACORN and Obama

ACORN, you remember, is Barack Obama's former employer. He trained them in community activism. He helped them to sue Citibank, so that the bank would be forced to make loans to people who could not afford homes. This was a major cause of our current recession. Bertha Wilson endorsed Barack Obama for president.

Related posts

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Did GM pay off its bailout loans by using other government loans?

April 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Ed Morrissey at Hot Air.

Moderate Republican Chuck Grassley, who supported Obama's bailouts, wants to know how GM paid off their debts. He wrote a letter to Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner.

Excerpt:

> General Motors (GM) yesterday announced that it repaid its TARP loans. I am concerned, however, that this announcement is not what it seems. In fact, it appears to be **nothing more than an elaborate TARP money shuffle.**

> On Tuesday of this week, Mr. Neil Barofsky, the Special Inspector General for TARP, testified before the Senate Finance Committee. During his testimony Mr. Barofsky addressed GM's recent debt repayment activity, and stated that the funds GM is using to repay its TARP debt are not coming from GM earnings.

> Instead, GM seems to be using TARP funds from an escrow account at Treasury to make the debt repayments. The most recent quarterly report from the Office of the Special Inspector General for TARP says "The source of funds for these quarterly [debt] payments will be **other TARP funds currently held in an escrow account**." See, Office of the Special Inspector General for TARP, Quarterly Report to Congress dated April 20, 2010, page 115.
>
> Furthermore, Exhibit 99.1 of the Form 8K filed by GM with the SEC on November 16, 2009, seems to confirm that the source of funds for GM's debt repayments was a multi-billion dollar escrow account at Treasury—not from earnings.
>
> […]In reality, **it looks like GM merely used one source of TARP funds to repay another**. The taxpayers are still on the hook, and whether TARP funds are ultimately recovered depends entirely on the government's ability to sell GM stock in the future. Treasury has merely exchanged a legal right to repayment for an uncertain hope of sharing in the future growth of GM. **A debt-for-equity swap is not a repayment.**

Ed summarizes:

> In other words, this is just a shell game. As Jim Vicevich points out, it's akin to paying off your Visa credit card with your Mastercard — and then bragging about your financial condition. Taxpayers are still on the hook for GM. Nothing at all has changed.
>
> Instead, we have another good reason for government to refrain from bailing out private companies. It makes them act like government when it comes to transparency about their finances. This claim really does prove that GM now

> stands for Government Motors.

Michelle Malkin also has a good column here about MORE connections between Democrats and rich Wall Street investment bankers. The Democrats are tightly connected with large corporations and investment banks. As a small government conservative, I find this alarming and unsettling. I believe in separation of government and corporations.

MUST-READ: Mark Steyn discusses how Britons inform on each other

April 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mark Steyn writing in MacLean's magazine. Apparently, the practice of informing the government about speech that is not in conformity with political correctness is widespread in the UK.

Excerpt:

> A couple of years back, 14-year-old Codie Stott asked her teacher at Harrop Fold High School if she could sit with another group to do her science project as in hers the other five girls all spoke Urdu and she didn't understand what they were saying. The teacher called the police, who took her to the station, photographed her, fingerprinted her, took DNA samples, removed her jewellery and shoelaces, put her in a cell for 3½ hours, and questioned her on suspicion of committing a Section Five "racial public order offence." "An allegation of a serious nature was made concerning a racially motivated remark," declared the headmaster Antony Edkins. The school would "not stand for racism in any form." In a statement, Greater Manchester Police said they took "hate crime" very seriously, and their treatment of Miss Stott was in line with "normal procedure."

And:

> Six weeks ago, Roy Amor, a medical technician who made prosthetics for a company called Opcare, glanced out of the window at their offices at Withington Community Hospital, and saw some British immigration officials outside. "You better hide," he said to his black colleague, a close friend of both Mr. Amor and his wife. Not the greatest joke in the world, but the pal wasn't offended, laughed it off as a bit of office banter, and they both got on with their work. It was another colleague who overheard the jest and filed a formal complaint reporting Mr. Amor for "racism." He was suspended from his job. Five days later, he received an email from the company notifying him of the disciplinary investigation and inviting him to expand on the initial statement he had made about the incident. Mr. Amor had worked in the prosthetics unit at Withington for 30 years until he made his career-detonating joke. That afternoon he stepped outside his house and shot himself in the head. The black "victim" of his "racism" attended the funeral, as did other friends.

The part that scares me about this is the confidence that the other side has in pushing their viewpoint using coercion.

Were did this nanny-like opposition to feeling offended, feeling excluded and feeling judged come from? Who puts elevates feelings and compassion over the risky, confrontational exchange of ideas? Who minimizes truth and debate and maximizes self-

esteem and happiness? Who emphasizes victimhood?

You know what? Life is tough. Sometimes people say things that make you feel bad. And if you are a grown-up, you let it go. You don't empower government to coerce people so that you can have happy feelings. Freedom and prosperity are more important than happy feelings. Life isn't fair.

For the record, I am a *very* visible minority, and consider the secular left PC thought police to be the *worst* racists on the planet.

61-year-old British man convicted for cutting up fruit with a Swiss Army knife

April 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Overlawyered via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A disabled caravanner who kept a penknife in his glove compartment to use on picnics has blasted the authorities after being dragged through court for possessing an offensive weapon.
>
> Rodney Knowles, 61, walks with the aid of a stick and had used the Swiss Army knife to cut up fruit on picnics with his wife.
>
> […]He said: 'There is no previous conviction history whatsoever and it was not in his possession and was in the car glove compartment in a pouch.'
>
> The retired maintenance engineer, from Buckland, Devon, had no criminal record before the case.
>
> He said: 'The tool was in my glove box in a pouch, along with a torch, first aid kit and waterproofs.
>
> 'It is everything I need for the maintenance of my car or if I break down.
>
> 'Now I have a criminal record for the first time in my life. I am upset by that.'

This is good, because once the public is disarmed, then the poor helpless criminals who are only criminals because of the social injustice of the capitalist system will have no one to fear as they execute crimes. Stealing isn't wrong – nothing is right or wrong. And criminals shouldn't be deterred from crime by having their victims defend themselves – even if law-abiding people have to be injured or killed.

Besides, it's illegal for men to be protectors of their families in the UK – that's the government's job. Men just get to pay the taxes for the government. After all, men don't really *care* about their families. It's not like men have some sort of innate desire to protect and provide for and lead their families that would be thwarted by gun control, high taxes and mandatory public schooling. They'll still want to get married, right? Besides, not having to defend the family leaves a man more time for looking at homes for sale and shopping for women's shoes.

What went wrong in the United Kingdom?

I wonder if you all remember a while back when I linked to all the chapters of Theodore Dalrymple's famous book "Life at the Bottom", which is about the worldview of the British lower class. It's also about how rich, well-meaning secular leftists hurt the poor by enacting public policies that reward bad behavior and punish good behavior. Dalrymple is a psychiatrist in a hospital, so he sees it all firsthand.

This evil satire of Calvinism is not funny at all!!!

April 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I don't even think you should read it. It's so evil!

Excerpt:

> In this post I would like to look at the extent of the atonement. By using proper exegesis of scripture it can be proven with certainty that Jesus died to effectually secure salvation for Paul of Tarsus. And for Paul alone.
>
> First, let's take a look at Galatians 2:20. This is the most important verse in the Bible, because it explicitly states the extent of the atonement (bold mine):
>
> *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God,* ***who loved me and gave himself for me.****"*
>
> This verse is key. It indisputably proves that Jesus loved and gave himself only for Paul.

And:

> In Matthew 18:12 we learn that the shepherd only wanted to save one sheep. In fact he abandoned 99 sheep to save the one (bold mine):
>
> "*What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and* ***one*** *of them wanders away, will he not* ***leave the ninety-nine*** *on the hills and* ***go to look for the one*** *that wandered off?*"
>
> This passage is so clear. It proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that the shepherd found and saved only one sheep (Paul). The shepherd left the 99 other sheep on the hills. By doing this the shepherd maximized his glory. Moreover, he increased the appreciation and adoration of Paul, whom was effectually retrieved. If other sheep could have been retrieved, it would have diluted the value of the shepherd's act.

This is so awful, that I have no words to describe how awful! Awful!

Here's another thing that you shouldn't read!

All kidding aside, I do believe in definite atonement. Sufficient for all, efficient for some, based on God's foreknowledge of who would respond to his taking the initiative to draw a specific group of people toward him, who did not want him at all, but who he knew would freely responding to his loving them FIRST.

I apologize to all of my Calvinist readers for posting this. Please forgive me. You have to allow me my fun once in a while. Isn't that what friendship is all about?

Ontario Liberals abandon plan to sexualize children in schools

April 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

McGuinty wants children prepared for anal sex in school

First some background from LifeSiteNews.

Excerpt:

> Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty announced Wednesday that the Ontario government will be requiring Catholic schools to teach the new provincial, explicit sex ed curriculum that been slammed not only by Catholic leaders but the Progressive Conservative party and secular columnists.
>
> "They're part of the publicly funded school system here in Ontario and this is part of our curriculum," said McGuinty, **who says he is himself Catholic**. "If parents are uncomfortable with certain aspects of this new curriculum, they can and they are free to withdraw their children from the classroom."
>
> […]The curriculum is designed to align with the Ministry's equity and inclusive education strategy, which is seeking, among other things, to promote homosexualism and transgenderism in Ontario's schools.
>
> Sex ed is now set to begin as early as grade 1, where students will learn about their body parts, including genitalia. In grade 3, they begin exploring "sexual orientation" and "gender identity." In grade 6, students are taught that masturbation is "common" and "not harmful," and by grade 7 they are to learn about oral and anal intercourse and how to use condoms.
>
> Leona Dombrowsky, Ontario's new Minister of Education, also insisted Wednesday that Catholic schools must teach the new program. "This is the Ontario curriculum, and it's the curriculum for all schools and all students," **said the former Catholic school board trustee**.

So Catholic-educated politicians were behind this initiative.

I think that Christians need to do a better job of integrating rigorous Bible reading, theology and ESPECIALLY apologetics into our church life. There should be debates and lectures by practicing scientists, economists, social scientists, philosophers and historians. If we insist on 5-minute homilies and praise hymns, then our own children will

grow up to be tools of the secular left. Church should be about truth, not feelings.

You can see how different groups of Christians vote in this graph. I think we have a serious problem in the church where Christians who are solid on socially conservative issues think that corporations are bad, taxes are good and that we need to have government control carbon emissions and health care. Fiscal liberalism means sexualization of children in the schools. Lots of naive Christians vote to "help" the poor via big government.

Thankfully, in Ontario there was a happy ending – for now.

From the National Post. (H/T 1RedThread)

Excerpt:

> Just days after defending a new sex education program that would include mention of homosexuality in Grade 3 and anal intercourse in Grade 7, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty has backed down in the face of a public backlash.
>
> […]He insisted the new curriculum applied to "all students in publicly funded schools, including Catholic schools."
>
> His education minister, Leona Dombrowsky, also said the Catholic Church supported the new curriculum.
>
> But Catholic officials made it clear they were not prepared to implement any of the more controversial elements, including talk of homosexuality and masturbation in Grades 3 and 6 respectively.
>
> […]Mr. McGuinty was squarely behind the new curriculum when he was first asked about it Tuesday morning.
>
> "They are going to get this information," he said moments after a Christian family values group alerted the media to the changes. "If we can provide [it] in a format and in a venue over which we have some control or they can just get it entirely on their own and be informed by potentially uninformed sources, like their friends at school.

No mention of parents, who are too buy wasting their money on "beer and popcorn", as Liberals have said in the past. No, it's the government's job to prepare children for sex early on so that feminists and gay rights activists can be appeased that the next generation will think that sex outside of marriage is normal. Because schools are about undermining the naive, outdated values of religious taxpaying parents.

John Stossel explains how environmentalism kills millions of people

April 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the news report from Fox News. (H/T The Blog Prof via ECM)

The Blog Prof explains:

> Liberalism is deadly. Since the DDT ban in the early 1970's, the death toll has been on a genocidal scale. An estimated 20 million children alone have died from malaria, a disease that was nearly eradicated because of DDT, but which rebounded after the ban which was based on junk science. It has been a crime against humanity in the literal sense. To this day, there is no scientific basis for banning DDT. It has cost more lives than those lost in World War II.

Newsflash! The great moral accomplishment of the "new" godless moralities in the last 150 years has been to murder 100 million people. And this is not counting the 40+ million deaths caused by abortion in the US alone. It also doesn't count the millions of broken homes caused by the sexual revolution, or the social costs of raising children without fathers who go on to commit crimes.

All of these fashionable -isms were touted as being able to produce heaven on earth and feelings of self-esteem without the traditional virtues of hard work, personal responsibility, chastity and sobriety. Has it worked? Can we ask that finally?

Are Christian churches and parents producing solid young Christians?

April 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's look at the facts from a recent Pew Research survey.

Excerpt:

> A recent report by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life seems to validate concerns among Christian leaders that younger generations of Americans are losing the spiritual moorings that have helped keep their nation strong from its founding.

> Analyzing the extent to which the religious views of America's "millennials" — adults between the ages of 18 and 29 — differ from those of adults over 30, the Pew Forum's "Religion Among the Millennials" report found that they are in general less affiliated with a particular religious faith than their over-30 counterparts, attend religious services less often, and say that religion is less important to them.

Here are some of the findings of the report:

- Twenty five percent of 18-to-29-year-old adults say they are religiously unaffiliated, describing themselves variously as "atheist," "agnostic," or "nothing in particular." By contrast, about 19 percent of adults in their 30s, 15 percent of those in their 40s, 14 percent of those in their 50s, and less than ten percent of those 60 and older identify themselves as unaffiliated.
- Only 45 percent of adults under age 30 say that religion is important to them, compared with almost 60 percent of adults 30 and older.
- Sixty-five percent of 18 to 29-year-olds say they are "absolutely" certain of the existence of God, compared with 73 percent of their 30-and-older counterparts.

What about surveys conducted by Christians?

> The findings of the Pew report appear to reflect the results of similar surveys conducted by both Catholic and evangelical researchers. For example, a recent survey by the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion found that over 80 percent of Catholic adults aged 18 to 30 think that "morals are relative" and that "there is no definite right or wrong for everybody."
>
> Similarly, a 2008 study by evangelical pollster George Barna found that half of all adults in America say that Christianity is just one of many faith options… Barna found that unlike previous generations, over 70 percent of American adults today have jettisoned an organized approach to their faith and are more likely to come up with their own set of religious beliefs, with over 80 percent of young

> Americans under the age of 25 inclined to customize their faith.

And from Christian Newswire:

> "In today's world Christian children and teens are in serious crisis," says Larry Fowler, Executive Director of Global Training for Awana and author of the new book Raising a Modern-Day Joseph: A Timeless Strategy for Growing Great Kids, (David C. Cook, January, 2009.) "What we see happening in the world is merely a reflection of what is happening in the church. Most Christian teens succumb to the world and fall away from the Lord by the time they leave home." According to Josh McDowell Ministries, denominations are seeing anywhere from 69 to 94 percent of teens leave the church after high school.
>
> […]Statistics show that even children who grow up in Christian homes, go to church on a regular basis, and participate in youth group activities are abandoning their faith at an alarming rate.

Naturally, my approach to fixing this failure of churches and parents is to leverage philosophical theology to define Christian claims and then leverage apologetics to sustain those claims in the public square. I would emphasize mainstream science apologetics in order to do that. As for the problem of young people being uncomfortable with moral judgments, we need to do a better job of explaining to them WHY some things are wrong.

Here are some -isms that the church and parents may want to try to address:

- postmodernism – the view that truth, especially religious and moral truth, cannot be known
- relativism – the view that each person defines their own reality by personal preferences
- pluralism – the view that all religions are basically the same – they make us act good
- universalism – the view that all religions are valid ways of knowing ultimate reality
- syncretism – the view that the truth claims of all religions do not conflict

Perhaps we should be focusing more time talking about truth and morality, using reason and evidence. I think that the critical mass of people in the church are against my plan – they have decided that the purpose of Christianity is to make people have happy feelings and to be part of an inclusive community. It's not clear to me how happy feelings and an inclusive community are related to the goals of the Christian faith, but that's what people seem to have decided on, anyway. They didn't ask me, and they don't ask me.

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church
- why won't Christians defend their faith in public?

Stan’s concerns about the middle knowledge argument

April 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post at Birds of the Air.

Excerpt:

> There are multiple problems in my mind. There is what is known as the grounding objection. This argument sees a problem with what are called “counterfactuals”, that whole list of contingencies that God sees. If they never happen, on what basis can they be considered true? If they never occur, how are they real? In fact, if they’re based on the freedom of the creature, how can they be true without limiting the freedom of the creature? Yeah, yeah, whatever. The thing that disturbs me the most is that it undermines God’s Sovereignty. The Bible claims that God is *the **only** Sovereign*. In Middle Knowledge we have a contingent God. All of Middle Knowledge is based on what the creature will or won’t choose and what God can do with it. God, then, is limited to what His creatures will or won’t do. Let’s say, for instance, that God would like to save Ted. Going further, let’s say that there *could* be one circumstance that would cause Ted to choose Christ (all big assumptions, but just follow along). However, that one circumstance required that Bob would make a free will choice … that Bob won’t make. Poor Ted. God had it all figured out how to save him, but Bob wouldn’t make the right choice, so Ted is doomed.
>
> Of course, I have other big problems with Middle Knowledge. There is the fundamental assumption that God *cannot* under any circumstances interfere in Man’s Free Will. Where this notion comes from is completely beyond me. There is the further fundamental belief that if God does certain things, some humans will choose Him. The Bible depicts humans as dead in sin (just for starters). Under what possible set of circumstances would God be able to get this dead person to properly respond to Him? If “The Natural Man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned”, what *possible* scenario could God scare up to make him accept the things of the Spirit of God?

The grounding objection is the only one that worries me. Stan is awesome to read because he always tells the truth about the views that he rejects. He knows both sides of issues equally well.

Related posts

- William Lane Craig discusses Calvinism and the problem of evil
- What are the differences between Wesleyan Arminianism and Calvinism?
- First debate on Calvinism/Molinism between James White and Michael Brown

- James White debates Michael Brown on Calvinism vs Foreknowledge (1 of 2)
- Michael Brown debates James White on Foreknowledge vs Calvinism (2 of 2)
- What about those who have never heard of Jesus?

Response from a Calvinist

- Stan’s series of posts at Birds of the Air on sovereignty and suffering

Parents need to take reponsibility for their children's prosperity

April 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from Caffeinated Thoughts. It's about parenting, faith and prosperity.

Excerpt:

> It is my job, as a parent, to raise and protect the children that God has given me. It goes beyond the obvious needs of food, clothing and shelter and into an even greater need of "Train(ing) a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6. Raising a child involves love, discipline, education and looking out for their needs now, as it will affect them when they are old. If parents in America only provide for a child's physical needs, forgetting to nurture the whole child, then American parents have done nothing more than what a wild animal does for its offspring. My work as a parent goes well beyond the obvious and must be intentional in training, raising, and nurturing them into moral, ethical and God-fearing adults who will in turn also raise a generation who live and do likewise.
>
> I must also fight for the ethical and moral rights of my children in the political arena, as they are unable to do so for themselves. As [Thomas] Paine stated, "We ought to do the work of it, otherwise we use them meanly and pitifully." He was looking at his posterity realizing that the condition of the country in which they lived needed a drastic overhaul and unless the adults stepped up and took the initiative, the children would suffer for it.

I like this post because it mentions protecting children's relationships with God as well as their future economic well-being. I think that most people look at their children and think that their faith will be fine, and that their standard of living will as good as the parent's, or better. But if we want to give those good things to our children, we need to be careful about how we teach them and how we vote. We can't just "hope for the best" and expect things to work out – 80% of the young people who attend church through high school fall away from their faith. And the unemployment rate for young people today is over 50%.

Obama threatens legal action over Arizona's immigration enforcement law

April 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Arizona legislature just passed a law to enforce immigration laws.

Excerpt:

> The measure – set to take effect in late July or early August – would make it a crime under state law to be in the U.S. illegally. It directs state and local police to question people about their immigration status if there is reason to suspect they are illegal.
>
> […]Currently, many U.S. police departments do not ask about people's immigration status unless they have run afoul of the law in some other way. Many departments say stopping and questioning people will only discourage immigrants from cooperating to solve crimes.
>
> Under the new Arizona law, immigrants unable to produce documents showing they are allowed to be in the U.S. could be arrested, jailed for up to six months and fined $2,500. That is a significant escalation of the typical federal punishment for being here illegally – deportation.
>
> People arrested by Arizona police would be turned over to federal immigration officers. Opponents said the federal government could thwart the law by refusing to accept them.
>
> Supporters of the law said it is necessary to protect Arizonans from crimes committed by illegal immigrants. Arizona is home to an estimated 460,000 illegal immigrants and is the nation's busiest gateway for people slipping into the country.
>
> Republican Gov. Jan Brewer, who signed the bill on Friday, said Arizona must act because Washington has failed to stop the flow of illegal immigrants and drugs from Mexico. Brewer has ordered state officials to develop a training course for officers to learn what constitutes reasonable suspicion that someone is in the U.S. illegally.
>
> […]The law has strong public support in Arizona, where passions have been running high since a rancher was killed close to the Mexican border last month, apparently by drug smugglers from across the border.

And here is Obama's response from the Associated Press. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama criticized Arizona's tough immigration bill as irresponsible Friday and said his administration is examining whether it would violate civil rights.

> Obama said the federal government must act responsibly to reform national immigration law — or “open the door to irresponsibility by others.”
>
> “That includes, for example, the recent efforts in Arizona, which threaten to undermine basic notions of fairness that we cherish as Americans, as well as the trust between police and their communities that is so crucial to keeping us safe,” Obama said.
>
> If signed into law by Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer, the legislation would require police to question people about their immigration status if there’s reason to suspect they’re in the country illegally. Civil rights activists say such a law would lead to racial profiling and deter Hispanics from reporting crimes.
>
> Obama instructed the Justice Department to examine the bill to see if it would violate civil rights.

Ed notes that Arizona passed this law because the feds dropped the ball on law enforcement.

Just to re-iterate, I am myself a visible minority, and I am in favor of increased legal immigration for skilled immigrants, and a path to citizenship for skilled immigrants who continue to work, pay taxes, avoid committing crimes, etc. for a period of a few years.

Michele Bachmann explains the Obama’s Wall Street bailout bill

April 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

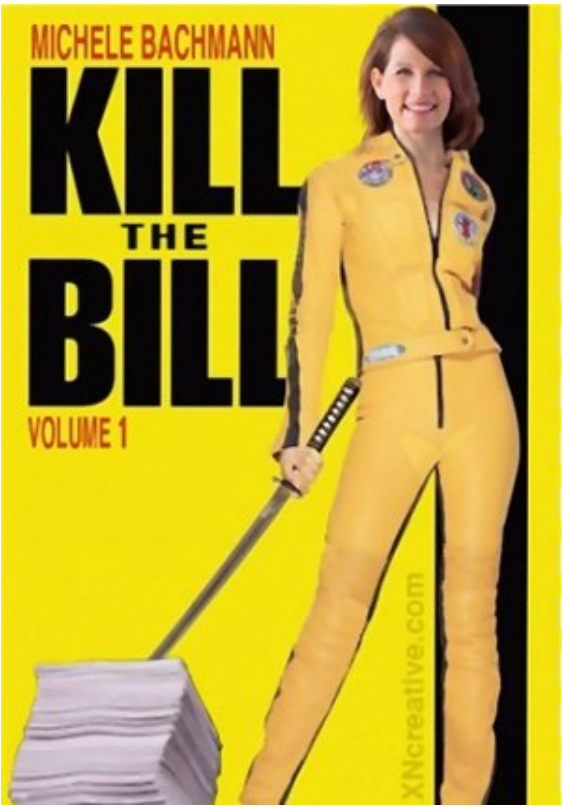

This is an actual photo of Michele Bachmann in Congress
This one is from five days ago:

And this one from last night:

(See, she’s wearing that yellow thing in the photo… but they didn’t show her katana in the video)

Oklahoma Republicans override Democrat governor's veto of pro-life laws

April 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby schemes about voting Republican

Story from the ultra-leftist New York Times. (H/T Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> The Oklahoma Legislature voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to override vetoes of two highly restrictive abortion measures, one making it a law that women undergo an ultrasound and listen to a detailed description of the fetus before having an abortion.
>
> Though other states have passed similar measures forcing women to have ultrasounds, Oklahoma's law goes further, requiring a doctor or technician to set up the monitor where the woman can see it and describe the heart, limbs and organs of the fetus. No exceptions are made for rape and incest victims.
>
> The second measure passed into law Tuesday protects doctors from malpractice suits if they decide not to inform the parents of a unborn baby that the fetus has birth defects. The intent of the bill is to prevent parents from later suing doctors who withhold information to try to influence them against having an abortion.
>
> Gov. Brad Henry, a Democrat, vetoed both bills last week. The ultrasound law, he said, was flawed because it did not exempt rape and incest victims and was an unconstitutional intrusion into a woman's privacy. He painted the other measure

> as immoral.
>
> "It is unconscionable to grant a physician legal protection to mislead or misinform pregnant women in an effort to impose his or her personal beliefs on a patient," Mr. Henry said.
>
> The Republican majorities in both houses, however, saw things differently. On Monday, the House voted overwhelmingly to override the vetoes, and the Senate followed suit at 10:42 a.m. Tuesday, making the two measures law.
>
> The ultrasound law was part of a bill that was struck down by the state courts last August because it violated a clause in the Oklahoma Constitution that requires bills to deal with only one subject. Republican lawmakers vowed at the time to pass it again.
>
> This year, Republican leaders passed five separate antiabortion bills to satisfy the courts' concerns. Mr. Henry signed one into law: it required that clinics post signs stating a woman cannot be forced to have an abortion, that an abortion cannot be performed until a woman gives her voluntary consent, and that abortions based on a child's gender are illegal.
>
> Two other antiabortion bills are still working their way through the legislature. One would force women to fill out a lengthy questionnaire about their reasons for seeking an abortion and then post statistics online based on the answers. The other restricts insurance coverage for the procedure.

Remember this in November, folks. Democrats are pro-abortion. Republicans are pro-life. Democrat governors veto pro-life bills. Republican legislatures pass pro-life bills. That is just the way it is. Republicans are deeply, deeply committed to the full humanity of the unborn – that's the core of who we are.

Related posts

- Republican governor of Nebraska signs legislation to protect the unborn
- Nebraska Republicans introduce bill to ban abortion after 20 weeks
- How hard did the Republicans fight to stop taxpayer-funding of abortions?
- Scott Klusendorf discusses Obamacare, Republicans and the pro-life cause

Related posts on abortion

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- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

How China coerces sterilization and sells the organs of prisoners

April 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Times. (H/T Secondhand Smoke)

Excerpt:

> Doctors in southern China are working around the clock to fulfil a government goal to sterilise — by force if necessary — almost 10,000 men and women who have violated birth control policies. Family planning authorities are so determined to stop couples from producing more children than the regulations allow that they are detaining the relatives of those who resist. About 1,300 people are being held in cramped conditions in towns across Puning county, in Guangdong Province, as officials try to put pressure on couples who have illegal children to come forward for sterilisation.

And from the Washington Times. (H/T Secondhand Smoke)

Excerpt:

> In a news conference on Capitol Hill, several speakers, including attorney David Matas of B'nai Brith Canada and Ethan Gutmann of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, said their investigations have unearthed a grisly trade in which an estimated 9,000 members of Falun Gong have been executed for their corneas, lungs, livers, kidneys and skins.
>
> They likened the practice to the Nazi treatment of Jewish prisoners in World War II concentration camps, which included using them for sadistic medical experiments and taking the gold fillings from the teeth of corpses. The newest wrinkle, they said, is that organs from other religious prisoners — specifically dissidents from China's Christian, Muslim and Tibetan Buddhist communities — are also being harvested to satisfy an insatiable global demand.

This is a tough dilemma for me. On the one hand, I value free trade, and free trade is what gives us leverage to raise these human rights abuses with China – because they need our purchases. On the other hand, how can we have any kind of relationship with a country like this? It's too bad that human rights groups like Amnesty International are so radically on the left. Instead of spending their time bashing the USA for waterboarding terrorists, they should be looking into actual crimes.

University of Calgary denies legal counsel to accused accused students

April 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This week, the fascist administrators of the University of Calgary decided to hold kangaroo court hearings behind closed doors.

Excerpt:

> The University of Calgary is proceeding with individual non-academic misconduct hearings, which include the possibility of expulsion, for eight members of the Campus Pro-Life (CPL) student group regarding a pro-life display held earlier this month.
>
> **The University administration notified students that "legal representatives are not suitable Advisors and are not welcome" at the individual, closed-door hearings, scheduled for April 28th and April 30th.**
>
> "This feels like a show trial where they've already convicted us unjustly and now want to punish us unjustly," said Alanna Campbell, CPL President.
>
> Earlier this month, after having set up a pro-life display on campus for the ninth time since 2006, members of the group were notified that they were being charged with a 'Major Violation' under Section 4.10 of the University of Calgary's Non-Academic Misconduct Policy for "failure to comply with a Campus Security officer or University official in legitimate pursuit of his/her duties." In 2006 and 2007, during the first four displays of the Genocide Awareness Project (GAP) on campus, the University defended the students' right to expression under the Charter, but in 2008 the University reversed its policy without explanation.
>
> Two hearings will be held on April 28th, at 1:00pm and 1:30pm. The remaining six are scheduled throughout the day on Friday, April 30th, with the first at 9:30am.
>
> "We've never received an explanation for why the University reversed their position, nor have we received any explanation as to what a security official's legitimate duties actually include," stated Vice-President (Internal) Peter Csillag.

The University of Calgary receives a massive amount of funding from taxpayers. The working parents of those pro-life students are funding the very institution that is intimidating their children.

Here is an excellent post about pro-lifers' use of visual aids from Neil Simpson's latest round-up.

Related posts

- University of Calgary students face expulsion for pro-life display

- McGill University and University of Calgary censor pro-life students
- University of Ottawa cancels Ann Coulter appearance
- Ann Coulter files hate speech claim against Canadian university
- Canadian student union leader says pro-lifers are all potential murderers
- Lakehead University bans pro-life club
- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's University
- Pro-life club at McGill University banned
- University of Calgary uses police to threaten pro-life students (More from Ezra Levant)
- Canadian pro-life student quarantined by public school principal
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

Texas Governor shoots coyote with concealed handgun to save dog

April 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He's got the slide locked back, explaining gun safety rules.
Story here from CBS News. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Pistol-packing Texas Gov. Rick Perry has a message for wily coyotes out there: Don't mess with my dog.
>
> Perry told The Associated Press on Tuesday he needed just one shot from the laser-sighted pistol he sometimes carries while jogging to take down a coyote that menaced his puppy during a February run near Austin.
>
> Perry said he will carry his .380 Ruger – loaded with hollow-point bullets – when jogging on trails because he is afraid of snakes. He'd also seen coyotes in the undeveloped area.
>
> When one came out of the brush toward his daughter's Labrador retriever, Perry charged.
>
> "Don't attack my dog or you might get shot … if you're a coyote," he said Tuesday.
>
> Perry, a Republican running for a third full term against Democrat Bill White, is living in a private house in a hilly area southwest of downtown Austin while the Governor's Mansion is being repaired after a 2008 fire. A concealed handgun permit holder, Perry carries the pistol in a belt.

> “I knew there were a lot of predators out there. You’ll hear a pack of coyotes. People are losing small cats and dogs all the time out there in that community,” Perry said.
>
> “They’re very wily creatures.”

He did what he had to do, so that his daughter wouldn’t be hurt by the loss of her pet. He’s a man – it’s his role to protect his family. If only every man took that responsibility to protect their family as seriously. It’s not the government’s job to ban guns and take over the responsibility of protecting a man’s family. It’s the man’s responsibility to protect his family.

I’ve never fired a Ruger before. Are they any good?

What does Arizona's immigration enforcement bill really say?

April 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Byron York writes about the law in the Washington Examiner. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Contrary to the talk, it is a reasonable, limited, carefully-crafted measure designed to help law enforcement deal with a serious problem in Arizona. Its authors anticipated criticism and went to great lengths to make sure it is constitutional and will hold up in court.
>
> […]The law requires police to check with federal authorities on a person's immigration status, if officers have stopped that person for some legitimate reason and come to suspect that he or she might be in the U.S. illegally.
>
> […]Critics have focused on the term "reasonable suspicion" to suggest that the law would give police the power to pick anyone out of a crowd for any reason and force them to prove they are in the U.S. legally. Some foresee mass civil rights violations targeting Hispanics.
>
> What fewer people have noticed is the phrase "lawful contact," which defines what must be going on before police even think about checking immigration status. "That means the officer is already engaged in some detention of an individual because he's violated some other law," says Kris Kobach, a University of Missouri Kansas City Law School professor who helped draft the measure. "The most likely context where this law would come into play is a traffic stop."

Why was this bill passed? Here's a hint.

Excerpt:

> Three Border Patrol agents are assaulted on the average day at or near the U.S. border. Someone is kidnapped every 35 hours in Phoenix, Ariz., often by agents of alien smuggling organizations. And one-in-five American teenagers last year used some type of illegal drug, many of which were imported across the unsecured U.S.-Mexico border.
>
> These facts are reported in the recently released National Drug Threat Assessment for 2010, published by the National Drug Intelligence Center, a division of the U.S. Justice Department.

Mexico has been complaining about the tough bill, but the bill is much, much less tough than Mexico's own harsh anti-illegal-immigration laws.

Baby boy survives for nearly two days after abortion

April 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a major story in Europe right now. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A baby boy abandoned by doctors to die after a botched abortion was found alive nearly a day later.
>
> The 22-week infant died one day later in intensive care at a hospital in the mother's home town of Rossano in southern Italy.
>
> The mother, pregnant for the first time, had opted for an abortion after prenatal scans suggested that her baby was disabled.
>
> However, the infant survived the procedure, carried out on Saturday in the Rossano Calabro hospital, and was left by doctors to die.
>
> He was discovered alive the following day – some 20 hours after the operation – by Father Antonio Martello, the hospital chaplain, who had gone to pray beside his body.
>
> He found that the baby, wrapped in a sheet with his umbilical cord still attached, was moving and breathing.
>
> The priest raised the alarm and doctors immediately arranged for the infant to be taken to a specialist neo-natal unit at the neighbouring Cosenza hospital, where he died on Monday morning.
>
> […]More than 200,000 abortions are performed each year, most for non-medical reasons within the legal upper limit of 24 weeks gestation.
>
> The increasing number of babies surviving below 24 weeks, partly because of advances in medicine, has led to widespread calls for the legal upper limit to be further reduced.
>
> Attempts to lower the limit failed in Parliament in 2008.
>
> In 2005 a baby boy in Manchester was born alive at 24 weeks after surviving three attempts to abort him. He is now a five-year-old schoolboy.

It's not good. If I have to give up sex before marriage in order to avoid committing acts of evil like this, then I will do it. I cannot allow myself to do anything that would expose an innocent unborn child to be harmed in this, just so that I can have momentary pleasure. Abortion is one of the main reasons why I am chaste. I believe in love, romance and courting. I don't believe in recreational sex. It's just not worth the risk. Not only does it hurt women when you pull away from them, but you can even cause worse evil. There are other things to do with women than to victimize them with premarital sex, and to risk the lives of unborn children, too.

The pursuit of pleasure must stop short of violating someone else's right to life.

Related posts

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- How hard did the Republicans fight to stop taxpayer-funding of abortions?
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- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/7646540/Baby-boy-survives-for-nearly-two-days-after-abortion.html

Obama thinks there is a point where you've made enough money

April 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Hot Air. (H/T ECM)

Video:

Transcript:

> We're not, we're not trying to push financial reform because we begrudge success that's fairly earned. I mean, I do think at a certain point you've made enough money. But, you know, part of the American way is, you know, you can just keep on making it if you're providing a good product or providing good service. We don't want people to stop, ah, fulfilling the core responsibilities of the financial system to help grow our economy.

Oh well. I didn't really need all that money I earn anyway. I'll just keep "fulfilling the core responsibilities of the financial system to help grow our economy" and let Obama decide how to spend what I earn. It's not like I have a family to provide for – that's the government's job – and my family has to be equal to everyone else's, right? That's *fair*. Fair for Obama's Wall Street buddies, teacher union buddies and trial lawyer buddies that helped him to get elected.

Like we found out during the campaign, Obama likes to spread YOUR wealth around. Especially to people who vote for him.

Why didn't the media cover the new CDC study on HIV transmission?

April 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the Center for Disease Control press release.

Excerpt:

> A data analysis released today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention underscores the disproportionate impact of HIV and syphilis among gay and bisexual men in the United States.
>
> The data, presented at CDC's 2010 National STD Prevention Conference, finds that the rate of new HIV diagnoses among men who have sex with men (MSM) is more than 44 times that of other men and more than 40 times that of women.
>
> The range was 522-989 cases of new HIV diagnoses per 100,000 MSM vs. 12 per 100,000 other men and 13 per 100,000 women.
>
> The rate of primary and secondary syphilis among MSM is more than 46 times that of other men and more than 71 times that of women, the analysis says. The range was 91-173 cases per 100,000 MSM vs. 2 per 100,000 other men and 1 per 100,000 women.
>
> While CDC data have shown for several years that gay and bisexual men make up the majority of new HIV and new syphilis infections, CDC has estimated the rates of these diseases for the first time based on new estimates of the size of the U.S. population of MSM. Because disease rates account for differences in the size of populations being compared, rates provide a reliable method for assessing health disparities between populations.

I noticed an analysis by Marcia Segelstein of why these numbers are not communicated more widely here. (H/T RuthBlog)

She writes:

> In an effort to look at these figures from a purely scientific and public health perspective, let's substitute smoking and cancer for homosexual sex and HIV. If the CDC released information which made a direct correlation between smoking and extremely high rates of getting cancer, people would take notice. The media would write about it. Public health organizations would make sure the news was spread. Campaigns would be launched to save lives by discouraging smoking. Public funds would be spent to deter people from engaging in such dangerous behavior. Schools would teach children about the dangers of smoking.
>
> Of course, as we all know, that scenario is real. Because of the now-known dangers of smoking, a warning from the Surgeon General appears on every pack of cigarettes. Public service ads saturated the airwaves over a period of years

> discouraging smoking. The dangers of smoking are a standard part of most health classes in schools.

I really recommend that everyone who is concerned about this issue read Jeffrey Satinover's "Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth", which talks about the health risks of certain behaviors. Dr. Jeffrey Satinover has practiced psychoanalysis and psychiatry for more than nineteen years. He is a former Fellow in Psychiatry and Child Psychiatry at Yale University and a past president of the C. G. Jung Foundations. He holds degrees from MIT, the University of Texas, the Harvard University. If you want to change your mind – and your will – on a topic, you study that topic by looking at the evidence from the experts in the field. Dr. Satinover's book is compassionate and measured. It is a great place to start learning.

No one is trying to make anyone else feel bad by telling them the truth. On the contrary – by telling people the truth and by setting appropriate boundaries, we can protect others from harm. And that's why everyone needs to be told the truth. We aren't helping people by hiding numbers like these from them. Speak the truth in love, and let people decide for themselves.

Jim Wallace discusses the problem of unanswered prayer

April 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video is here. (H/T Apologetics 315)

This problem is similar to the problem of divine hiddenness and the problem of evil and suffering. *God's purpose in his relationship with you is not to make you happy.* His purpose for relating to you is so that you can know him and enter into a love relationship with him. God is not a toy for you to play with for comfort, and then to put away. With respect to God's relationship with you, and purpose for you, your happiness is *expendable*. It may be that you will have to put off trying to make yourself happy *until you die*… because there are so many other higher-priority things to do with God and other people.

Why I pray

As a Christian, I am especially concerned for other Christians because we have to worry about out relationship with God more than being happy. So I try to make an effort to love and support other Christians who are hurt in the execution of their duty. If you think of prayer as a way of talking to God about your relationship with him, and your relationships with other people (especially Christians), then I think you will have fewer disappointments. At least, that's what I've observed in my experience. When I pray, I ask God to draw people I am working on toward him. And I pray for victory in the execution of my duty.

Here's George Washington praying:

George Washington and Old Nelson pray

You can read more about George Washington and his triumph against the odds at the battle of Trenton here.

And an American soldier praying:

American soldier prays

And everybody should know about the General Patton weather prayer at Bastogne:

Here's the prayer.

Do the right thing. Focus on your mission – to know and love God in Christ, and to know and love others. Don't think about your own needs. Don't ask God to make you happy. You have no right to be happy.

Here's a simple guide to prayer from Campus Crusade for Christ.

New study shows that human and chimpanzee DNA are very different

April 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

And this new study is from Nature, the prestigious peer-reviewed journal. (H/T Evolution News via Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

Excerpt:

A *Nature* paper from January, 2010 titled, "Chimpanzee and human Y chromosomes are remarkably divergent in structure and gene content," found that Y chromosomes in humans and chimps "differ radically in sequence structure and gene content," showing "extraordinary divergence" where "wholesale renovation is the paramount theme." Of course, the paper attributes these dramatic genetic changes to "rapid evolution during the past 6 million years."

One of the scientists behind the study was quoted in a *Nature* news article stating, "It looks like there's been a dramatic renovation or reinvention of the Y chromosome in the chimpanzee and human lineages." The news article states that "many of the stark changes between the chimp and human Y chromosomes are due to gene loss in the chimp and gene gain in the human" since "**the chimp Y chromosome has only two-thirds as many distinct genes or gene families as the human Y chromosome and only 47% as many protein-coding elements as humans.**" According to the news piece, "Even more striking than the gene loss is the rearrangement of large portions of the chromosome. More than 30% of the chimp Y chromosome lacks an alignable counterpart on the human Y chromosome, and vice versa, whereas this is true for less than 2% of the remainder of the genome."

I'm sure this will make it into the public school textbooks and PBS/Discovery Channel documentaries right away. Right! Away!

Paul Ryan debates Robert Reich on Larry Kudlow show

May 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video is here. (9 minutes)

The topic is, “can you tax the rich without hurting the poor?” and on spending.

And one more. (1 minute)

Paul Ryan explains how GM repayed its government loans with other government loans.

MUST-READ: How government-run day care impacts families

May 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Using your money to limit your choices

Here's a good editorial from Andrea Mrozek in the Ottawa Citizen, explaining how the bloated Liberal government that I blogged about recently is using a "public option" to stamp out stay-at-home moms and private child care options.

Excerpt:

> Lisa MacLeod, MPP for Nepean-Carleton, found out the hard way that Ontario's new all-day kindergarten will be somewhat less flexible than families were led to believe.
>
> Her five-year-old was denied the opportunity to remain in half-day programming, because the school was chosen for full-day kindergarten. Alarming, yes, but not surprising. Province-wide, taxpayer-funded early learning programs spell the end of choice in child care.

You may remember Lisa MacLeod from this post in which I talked about her defending free speech in Canada.

More from the editorial:

> […]So how exactly is the Ontario Ministry of Education legislating choice out of existence?
>
> For starters, simply by introducing a monolithic taxpayer funded plan — legitimate and regulated child care providers can't compete. When the government subsidizes a service, it means others are put out of business.

> All-day kindergarten also takes five-year-olds out of existing centres. These children are a day-care's bread and butter. Care of five-year-olds is substantially cheaper than infant care, which runs into the tens of thousands of dollars annually. Since no child-care centre could possibly charge parents the true infant price, they have balanced their businesses by charging less than the real cost for younger kids and more for older ones. The older ones who will now enter the "free" state centres.
>
> Families with a spouse who stays home are, as usual, totally pooched. Their

> taxes will rise for a service they don't ever choose to use.

And she concludes:

> Families understand budgets in a manner that governments clearly do not. When your money runs out, you understand that it's not the time to book a vacation or add a latté a day. But in the last budget, McGuinty revealed a deficit of $19.7 billion and introduced new program funding of a billion dollars over five years for all-day kindergarten. Let the deficit rise, especially considering the real cost of all-day kindergarten should see that billion dollars almost double for one year alone.
>
> In the end, the government will be the monopoly provider, giving you one solo choice. They don't delicately tailor programs to meet personal needs. The Disneyland imagery of a better world courtesy of universal early learning programs has got to go — it's not true in the research, and it's not true in the reality on the ground. The truth is that government is substantially curtailing your choices while spending your money like a drunken sailor, for little to no proven returns.

They call that "equality". Everyone has the same outcome, regardless of their personal choices.

You can find the PDF of her editorial at the Institute for Marriage and Family Canada's web site.

Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent

May 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

***** WARNING: This post is definitely for grown-ups only! *****

I was listening to the latest Dr. J podcast on "Why Marriage Matters", and I heard about a woman named Dawn Stefanowicz, who was raised by her gay father in Toronto.

So, I looked around and found this interview with Dawn posted on MercatorNet. This is mature subject matter.

Intro:

> Gay marriage and gay adoption are being fiercely debated in a number of countries. Usually these issues are framed as a human rights issue. But whose rights? Patrick Meagher, *MercatorNet's* contributing editor in Canada, recently interviewed a woman who was raised by a homosexual father. She feels that her rights as a child were completely ignored.
>
> Dawn Stefanowicz (www.DawnStefanowicz.com) grew up in Toronto. Now in her 40s, she has written a book, *Out From Under: Getting Clear of the Wreckage of a Sexually Disordered Home*, to be released later this year. Stefanowicz has now been married for 22 years, is raising a family, and also works as an accountant. She has also testified about same-sex marriage in Washington and Ottawa.

Sample:

MercatorNet: How did you feel about what was going on around you?

Stefanowicz: You become used to it and desensitised. I was told at eight years old not to talk about this but I knew that something was wrong. I was not thinking "this is right or wrong" but I was disturbed by what I was experiencing. I was unhappy, fearful, anxious and confused. I was not allowed to tell my father that his lifestyle upset me. You can be four-years-old and questioning, "Where is Daddy?" You sense women are not valued. You think Daddy doesn't have time for you or Daddy is too busy to play a game with you. All this is hard because as a child this is the only experience you have.

MercatorNet: How did this affect your relationship with others?

Stefanowicz: I had a hard time concentrating in school on day-to-day subjects and with peers. I felt insecure. I was already stressed out by an early age. I'm now in my 40s. You're looking at life-long issues. There is a lot of prolonged and unresolved grief in this kind of home environment and with what you witness in the subcultures.

It took me until I was into my 20s and 30s, after making major life choices, to begin to realise how being raised in this environment had affected me. Unfortunately, it was not until my father, his sexual partners and my mother had died, that I was free to speak publicly about my experiences.

And:

MercatorNet: Why do so few children speak out?

Stefanowicz: You're terrified. Absolutely terrified. Children who open up these family secrets are dependent on parents for everything. You carry the burden that you have to keep secrets. You learn to put on an image publicly of the happy family that is not reality. With same-sex legislation, children are further silenced. They believe there is no safe adult they can go to.

I noticed that Bill Muehlenberg has an even more controversial review of Dawn's book about her childhood, too. When I was doing research on these issues, I read Dr. Jeffrey Satinover's "Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth" and Dr. Joseph Nicolosi's "A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality". But I think I am going to buy Dawn's book, too. It sounds like a tough read, but it may be necessary to understand what is really at stake, so my views can be formed by real data.

NOTE: Comments to this post will be strictly filtered in accordance with Obama's hate crimes bill.

Related posts

- Mandatory curriculum in Ontario schools promotes homosexuality
- Jennifer Roback Morse answers the best argument for same-sex marriage
- Jennifer Roback Morse debates on marriage at Columbia University
- How would the legalization of same-sex marriage affect your liberty?
- Why do people favor traditional marriage over same-sex marriage
- Christian man fired after gay rights group contacts his employer to complain
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- New Mexico Human Rights Commission fines couple $6000 for being Christians

New York Times admits that GM repaid its bailout loans with TARP loan money

May 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the radically-leftist New York Times. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> AS we inch closer to a clearer understanding of the products and practices that unleashed the credit crisis of 2008, it's becoming apparent that those seeking the whole truth are still outnumbered by those aiming to obscure it. This is the case not only on Wall Street but also in Washington.
>
> Truth seekers the nation over, therefore, are indebted to Senator Charles E. Grassley, Republican of Iowa, who in recent days uncovered what he called a government-enabled "TARP money shuffle." It relates to General Motors, which on April 21 paid the balance of its $6.7 billion loan under the Troubled Asset Relief Program.
>
> G.M. trumpeted its escape from the program as evidence that it had turned the corner in its operations. "G.M. is able to repay the taxpayers in full, with interest, ahead of schedule, because more customers are buying vehicles like the Chevrolet Malibu and Buick LaCrosse," boasted Edward E. Whitacre Jr., its chief executive.
>
> G.M. also crowed about its loan repayment in a national television ad and the United States Treasury also marked the moment with a press release: "We are encouraged that G.M. has repaid its debt well ahead of schedule and confident that the company is on a strong path to viability," said Timothy F. Geithner, the Treasury secretary.
>
> **Taxpayers are naturally eager for news about bailout repayments. But what neither G.M. nor the Treasury disclosed was that the company simply used other funds held by the Treasury to pay off its original loan.**

This is what you get when you appoint a tax-cheat to be the Treasury Secretary.

Here's what we need to understand about government bailouts. There should never be any such thing as a government bailout. GM and these other bailed-out companies made bad decisions that put them at a competitive disadvantage with respect to their competitors. The Obama administration bailed out these failing companies with money from other hard-working individuals and successful companies, including small businesses. The Obama administration did this for political gain with its favored special interest groups, e.g. – unionized labor, wall street bankers and GSE executives. Those are the groups that got Obama elected, and he paid them back with "bailouts". Government has no right to get involved with bailing out their buddies with my money and your money.

I remember when people use to complain about profit margins of 8% in some big corporations when Bush was President. But at least they earned that money by selling things that people needed and freely chose to buy. They did operate on a government-backed expense account. Sometimes I wonder whether all of these problems are caused because we elect spoiled-brat, silver-spoon liberals who spent their entire lives getting into trouble and then begging their parents, (and grandparents, in Obama's case), for bailout money. Maybe they are just making policy based on their experiences in making irresponsible choices and then being bailed out by their parents?

VA attorney general demands that university account for AGW research grants

May 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Watts Up With That.

Excerpt:

> No one can accuse Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli of shying from controversy. In his first four months in office, Cuccinelli directed public universities to remove sexual orientation from their anti-discrimination policies, attacked the Environmental Protection Agency, and filed a lawsuit challenging federal health care reform. Now, it appears, he may be preparing a legal assault on an embattled proponent of global warming theory who used to teach at the University of Virginia, Michael Mann.
>
> In papers sent to UVA April 23, Cuccinelli's office commands the university to produce a sweeping swath of documents relating to Mann's receipt of nearly half a million dollars in state grant-funded climate research conducted while Mann— now director of the Earth System Science Center at Penn State— was at UVA between 1999 and 2005.
>
> If Cuccinelli succeeds in finding a smoking gun like the purloined emails that led to the international scandal dubbed Climategate, Cuccinelli could seek the return of all the research money, legal fees, and trebled damages.
>
> "Since it's public money, there's enough controversy to look in to the possible manipulation of data," says Dr. Charles Battig, president of the nonprofit Piedmont Chapter Virginia Scientists and Engineers for Energy and Environment, a group that doubts the underpinnings of climate change theory.
>
> The Attorney General has the right to make such demands for documents under the Fraud Against Taxpayers Act, a 2002 law designed to keep government workers honest.

More at The Hook.

Cuccinelli is a Republican, of course. I hope he starts a trend! I also note that he is a graduate of the George Mason School of Law, one of the best places for conservatives to do a law degree (or an economics degree).

Related stories

- NASA admits that their data is worse than CRU Climate-gate data
- 19 points that undermine the claims of global warming alarmists
- UN IPCC global warming alarmism based on student essay and magazine article
- How the UN's IPCC cites non-scientific claims from the World Wildlife Fund
- Chairman of UN's IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash

- Britain to be hit by coldest winter in 100 years
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal
- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline
- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now

Christian preacher arrested for saying that homosexuality is a sin

May 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Telegraph. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Dale McAlpine was charged with causing "harassment, alarm or distress" after a homosexual police community support officer (PCSO) overheard him reciting a number of "sins" referred to in the Bible, including blasphemy, drunkenness and same sex relationships.
>
> […]Mr McAlpine, who was taken to the police station in the back of a marked van and locked in a cell for seven hours on April 20, said the incident was among the worst experiences of his life.
>
> […]Mr McAlpine was handing out leaflets explaining the Ten Commandments or offering a "ticket to heaven" with a church colleague on April 20, when a woman came up and engaged him in a debate about his faith.
>
> During the exchange, he says he quietly listed homosexuality among a number of sins referred to in 1 Corinthians, including blasphemy, fornication, adultery and drunkenness.
>
> After the woman walked away, she was approached by a PCSO who spoke with her briefly and then walked over to Mr McAlpine and told him a complaint had been made, and that he could be arrested for using racist or homophobic language.
>
> The street preacher said he told the PCSO: "I am not homophobic but sometimes I do say that the Bible says homosexuality is a crime against the Creator".
>
> He claims that the PCSO then said he was homosexual and identified himself as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender liaison officer for Cumbria police. Mr McAlpine replied: "It's still a sin."
>
> The preacher then began a 20 minute sermon, in which he says he mentioned drunkenness and adultery, but not homosexuality. Three regular uniformed police officers arrived during the address, arrested Mr McAlpine and put him in the back of a police van.
>
> At the station, he was told to empty his pockets and his mobile telephone, belt and shoes were confiscated. Police took fingerprints, a palm print, a retina scan and a DNA swab.

Sounds like this was a police sting operation in which a Christian acting as a Christian in public was targeted by the state-run police force for holding views that are incompatible with the ruling elite. He was put in jail for disagreeing publicly with his elected officials on

a question of morality.

In which I blame the coffee manufacturer for making bad coffee

May 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This morning, I was contemplating whether to go downstairs and buy a cup of coffee for $1.25 from the coffee shop on the first floor, or whether to take a cup of free coffee from the kitchen on the 4th floor where I work. I like to have things that are free because then I do not have to work for them. Besides, I can spend more time watching TV if I don't work as hard to buy the pay-coffee.

I was pretty sure that coffee that is sold by the small business on the first floor for profit would taste the same as coffee that is based on a community of coffee drinkers on our floor who just contribute whatever they want to out of the goodness of their hearts. To tell you the truth, it's not something I really want to put that much thought into, I just expected that the world would conform to my intuitions and emotions.

So I snuck into the kitchen and poured myself a cup of the free coffee and snuck out again. I skulked back to my desk and sat down to drink the free coffee.

Imagine my horror at finding out that free coffee tastes like raw sewage!

Imagine! Free coffee doesn't taste as good as coffee you have to pay for! How unfair! I hate this coffee! It's weak! It's cowardly! It's lazy! It isn't meeting my needs and expectations! It isn't making me happy! It's to blame for all of my problems! I want to sue this coffee manufacturer in court! I want everyone to condemn them! I demand justice! This coffee is to blame for my tires being underinflated! This coffee is to blame for me not going to the gym! Why is this coffee judging me? Why am I being marginalized and excluded?

Why, oh, why did God make coffee that is so bad? How could a loving God allow me to suffer from this bad coffee that I freely chose instead of pay-coffee? Shouldn't God give me free coffee that doesn't taste like sewage? Oh, woe is me! Why doesn't anyone care about my needs? Why do other rich people have coffee that tastes good, and not me? Why are all my friends drinking good coffee, while I am forced by evil corporations to settle for sewage coffee? We should have a government-run social program to provide me with good coffee for free!

Do you know what I should do? I'll tell you. I should take control of this coffee corporation. I should force them to give me free coffee for the rest of my life! After all, they are to blame for making the bad coffee. I shouldn't have to pay for coffee! It's my right! I have a right to the same coffee as people who go further away and who work hard and who pay for their coffee! I'm being discriminated against! There is no way that I should have to be. There is nothing that I should have to do. I should just get all the goodies in life and never have to give anything back to anyone, if I don't feel like it.

Do you know what would be really good? A faucet that poured hot coffee with Splenda and cream. I think i'll go see if we have that in the kitchen. I know we have water, so how

hard can it be to get hot coffee with cream and Splenda, too?

Hey, I wonder if I could also get free back rubs? And free candy? I like candy! So I should get candy, too, right?

Is the mainstream media fair in reporting on abortion violence?

May 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is original work from Verum Serum. They contrast the mainstream media's reporting of the Georger Tiller killing with the killing of pro-life activist Jim Pouillon.

Excerpt:

> Of course there has been real right-wing extremism, most notably the murder of abortionist George Tiller last Summer. That shouldn't be ignored or minimized. On the other hand, there was another killing not long after which received a lot less attention. Jim Pouillon, a long time pro-life advocate, was shot three times through the pro-life sign he was holding by a stranger who was irritated by his message.

How bad is the media bias in the reporting of the two killings?

News Outlet	Tiller's murder (stories/words)	Pouillon's murder (stories/words)	Ratio
LA Times	At least 10 stories totaling 8,286 words.	Three stories totaling 423 words.	19.5:1
NY Times	At least 17 stories and three editorials totaling 21,430 words.	Five full stories and one partial story totaling 3935 words.	5.4:1
Time	At least 9 stories totaling 4,838 words.	No mention of Jim Pouillon at all.	5,000:0
Washington Post	At least 15 stories and one editorial plus 5 AP dispatches totaling 12,002 words.	Three AP stories totaling 981 words. Original reporting = 0.	12.2:1

Newsweek didn't mention the Pouillon killing at all, just like Time.

There's a lot more to their post, and you can read the rest here. This is a very original and informative post.

I recommend that people exercise caution when buying magazines like Time and Newsweek. They're hard left, so you aren't getting all the news. You are just getting all the news that fits their narrative.

Can government be as greedy as corporations are supposed to be?

May 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Very popular editorial from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Nowhere has liberalism gone further than in San Francisco. And few, if any, other cities can boast such a well-heeled work force. Is this what "spreading the wealth" is all about?
>
> We have seen the future and it works — for certain people. Take San Francisco municipal workers. The San Francisco Chronicle recently detailed just how overpaid the city's employees are. Their average yearly salary is $93,000 before benefits. A third of them made more than $100,000 in 2009. A newly retired deputy police chief (not even the city's top cop) made $516,118.
>
> […]Also in 2009, 28 city employees made more than the mayor, Gavin Newsom, who pulled down a respectable $250,903. Firefighters in San Francisco have a base salary of $102,648, while even lowly payroll clerks start at $54,314.
>
> […]Unions, particularly public-sector unions, leverage their money and membership to stock legislatures, city councils and county boards with friendly faces. Those faces, in turn, lock governments into contracts (particularly where pensions are concerned) that are extremely difficult to break.

The problem with this is that the private sector is the only part of the economy that actually has to please customers in order to *get paid*. Government workers don't have to provide good service in order to get paid. They don't compete with anyone, and individual workers have no incentive to work harder – their raises are based on union bargaining, not on pleasing customers. So then why are government workers making more money than the productive private sector workers when San Francisco has a $483 million budget deficit? Why isn't this greed?

What should you say and do when someone is grieving?

May 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Spotted this on Sue Bohlin's blog.(H/T Christian Alert via Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

Excerpt:

> Last week my dear friend Sandi Glahn wrote another boffo blog post about the myths of infertility, which included some of the dumb things people say.
>
> It may be insensitivity or a lack of education that spurs people to say things that are unhelpful at the least and downright hurtful much of the time. I still remember my own daggers to the heart after our first baby died nine days after her birth. And for the past several years, I have been collecting actual quotes said to those already in pain.
>
> So here's my current list of What Not To Say when someone is hurting…

Here's something NOT to say:

Don't start any sentence with "At least. . . ."
• "At least you didn't have time to really love her."
• "At least he's in heaven now."
• "At least you have two other children."
• "At least that's one less mouth you'll have to feed."
• "At least it didn't have to go through the pain of birth."
• "At least you've had a good life so far, before the cancer diagnosis."

Don't attempt to minimize the other person's pain.
• "Cancer isn't really a problem." (e.g., Shame on you for thinking that losing your hair/body part/health is a problem.)
• "It's okay, you can have other children."

And here's what you can say and do:

What TO say:
• "I love you."
• "I am so sorry." You don't have to explain. Anything.

What TO do:
• A wordless hug.
• A card that says simply, "I grieve with you."
• Instead of bringing cakes, drop off or (better) send gift certificates for restaurants or pizza places.

Sounds like people shut down when they are grieving and need help keeping their lives going. Maybe even getting out of bed or eating and cleaning!

In addition to the tips, you can read the comments – they are pretty interesting. I've only

ever been to ONE wedding (as a child – I remember nothing of it) and NO funerals. No one I know has ever died, except my pets. I don't understand these things as much as other people do, so that's why I posted it, just in case you guys are like me. If you have any more stories or advice, tell me.

Sue Bohlin is Ray Bohlin's wife. They are from Probe Ministries. I used their resources a ton when I was going through college, along with Leadership University. Sue and Ray are awesome! I've learned a ton from them over the years.

Barack Obama calls tea party movement “tea-baggers” in interview

May 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unbelievable. Story here at Americans for Tax Reform. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

President Barack Obama, known for his lectures to others on civility, saw fit to use the obscene and derogatory term “tea-baggers” in a book interview with author Jonathan Alter.

Below is an excerpt from Alter’s new book *The Promise: President Obama, Year One,* to be released May 18:

> Obama said that the unanimous House vote against the Recovery Act ‘set the tenor for the whole year’: ‘That helped to create the tea-baggers and empowered that whole wing of the Republican Party to where it now controls the agenda for the Republicans.’ For Obama this was the greatest surprise of 2009.

And the post also contains some selected statements by Obama on civility.

> *“We’ve got politicians calling each other all sorts of unflattering names.”*
>
> *“Now, the second way to keep our democracy healthy is to maintain a basic level of civility in our public debate.”*
>
> *“We can’t expect to solve our problems if all we do is tear each other down. You can disagree with a certain policy without demonizing the person who espouses it.”*
>
> *“So what do we do? As I found out after a year in the White House, changing this type of politics is not easy. And part of what civility requires is that we recall the simple lesson most of us learned from our parents: Treat others as you would like to be treated, with courtesy and respect.”*

It’s like having Michael Moore as president. No one takes a hate-filled, narrow-minded ideologue seriously. But this man is the president of the United States. We have a teenage clown as our president.

Richest hedge fund managers gave 98% of contributions to Democrats

May 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here on Big Government. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The world's top-earning hedge fund managers have bankrolled almost exclusively Democratic campaigns.
>
> The top 10 highest-paid hedge fund managers in 2009 have dished out campaign contributions almost only to Democrats.
>
> Over their lifetimes, those managers have given almost $33 million in campaign contributions to Democrats, according to research by the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) and that is based on data maintained by the nonpartisan CQMoneyline.
>
> The same managers gave roughly $600,000 to Republicans, according to the research. The contributions went 98 percent to Democrats and two percent to Republicans.

But there's more:

> As the Senate prepares to debate possibly hundreds of amendments to a Wall Street overhaul bill, labor unions and others have criticized the bill for not having tough restrictions on hedge funds.
>
> "It's very disconcerting to see this legislation moving forward that gives them a complete pass," said Heather Slavkin, of AFL-CIO.

I wonder if the two facts are connected in some way? Maybe.

Related posts

- Democrats propose 23 billion bailout for teacher unions
- Veronique de Rugy shows that stimulus money was allocated for political gain
- Bret Baier questions Obama on special deals in interview
- How green lobbyists shape energy policy in the Obama administration
- CNN's Jack Cafferty blasts Pelosi for wasting taxpayer money on junkets
- How Obama rewards Democrat special interest groups
- How Obama rewards his most prolific fundraisers with crony appointments
- Michele Bachmann goes nuclear against gangster government
- Are Obama's bailouts just pay-offs to left-wing special interest groups?

MSNBC’s Contessa Brewer regrets that Times Square suspect is Muslim

May 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I heard this on Hugh Hewitt‘s nationally syndicated radio show.

This is how the mainstream media thinks. This is what these news anchors are willing to say in public. Can you imagine what they say in private? And what about how it affects their reporting of the news? Unbelievable.

Related posts

- CNN and MSNBC ratings cause Catholic blogger to laugh like evil villain
- Leftist media thinks that record snowfalls are caused by global warming
- How the left-wing media lowers the level of civil discourse
- What do left-wing Democrats think about Christianity?
- MSNBC deliberately edits out black protester then complains about racism
- Shocking video example of left-wing media bias on MSNBC
- Which cable news network has the worst media bias?
- Hugh Hewitt demolishes MSNBC’s Larry O’Donnell

Doug Axe publishes a new peer-reviewed paper on protein folding

May 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new podcast from ID the Future is worth listening to.

Participants

- Jay Richards, Director of Research at the CRSC, (Discovery Institute)
- Doug Axe, Director of the Biologic Institute

The MP3 file is here.

Topics

- the new BIO-Complexity peer-reviewed journal
- new peer-reviewed paper challenges Darwinian account of protein folding
- proteins are found in every living system
- a protein is a chain of parts called amino acids
- there are 20 amino acids used in living systems
- it's like a 20-letter alphabet used to make sentences (proteins)
- if the sequence is just right, it folds up and has a function
- the information about the functional sequences is in the genome
- the "protein fold" is the 3D shape that a functional protein takes on
- the folding problem is good because you can TEST Darwinian mechanisms
- the problem is simple enough to be tested rigorously in a lab
- Question: how easy is it to create a sequence that folds?
- English is a good analogy to the problem of protein folding
- you have a long string of characters (e.g. – 200 letters)
- each "letter" can be one of 20 amino acids
- if you assign the letters randomly, you almost always get gibberish
- there are tons of possible sequences of different letters
- it's like a 200 digit slot machine with each digit having 20 possibilities!
- the number of sequences that would actually make sense is tiny
- protein folding is the same
- Doug's paper assesses how many "tries" could have been attempted
- Doug's paper calculates the total number of possibilities
- cells have arrived a large number of functional sequences
- but only a small number of the total possibilities could have been tried
- this is called the "sampling problem"
- there isn't enough time to test all of the possibilities (see previous paper below)
- how did living systems arrive at the functional sequences so quickly?
- there are some possible naturalistic scenarios for solving the problem
- Doug's new paper shows that none of the naturalistic explanations work

- the only explanation left is that an intelligence sequenced the amino acids
- it is identical to the way that I can sequence letters to make this post

A picture is worth a thousand words

Here's a video clip from the DVD Darwin's Dilemma showing the process:

If you would like to know more about Darwin's Dilemma, you can read Brian Auten's review of Darwin's Dilemma.

Who are these guys?

I wrote a post before on Doug Axe's previous publications in the Journal of Molecular Biology, where he researched how many of the possible sequences of amino acids have biological function. His PhD is from Caltech, and his post-doctoral research on proteins was conducted at Cambridge University.

Jay Richards is a Senior Fellow of the Discovery Institute and a Contributing Editor of *The American* at the American Enterprise Institute. In recent years he has been a Visiting Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, and a Research Fellow and Director of Acton Media at the Acton Institute. His PhD is from Princeton University.

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

How much does it cost to enforce immigration law?

May 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Byron York. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> On April 19, the same day the Arizona Legislature passed the immigration measure, the state's two Republican senators, John McCain and Jon Kyl, unveiled a new plan to secure the U.S. border with Mexico. It's a combination of completing and improving the border fence, adding new Border Patrol agents, expanding a policy of briefly jailing illegal border crossers, and several other programs already in existence. Although there is not yet an estimate of how much it would cost, the price would be vastly less than the sums going to bailouts, the stimulus, and the planned national health care system.
>
> […]Start with the fence. The Secure Fence Act, passed by Congress in 2006, specified 700 miles of the Southwest border to be secured with double-layered, reinforced fencing and other physical barriers.
>
> […]How much would it cost? Given that much of the basic structure already exists, perhaps $1 million per mile. Revamp the whole 700 miles and it's $700 million.
>
> […]Kyl and McCain would add 3,000 new Border Patrol agents. A back-of-the-envelope cost estimate is about $100 million per 1,000 new agents, so the plan would cost about $300 million. The proposal also calls for hiring more U.S. marshals, clerks, and administrative staff, which would mean more costs.
>
> […]Then there is the jailing program, called Operation Streamline, which sends all illegal crossers to jail for a period of 15 to 60 days. When it has been tried selected areas, it has caused the illegal crossing rates to plummet.
>
> […]There are other expenses. For example, McCain and Kyl want to send a few thousand National Guard troops to the border. When this was done in 2007 and 2008, it cost a total of $1 billion.

The article is a nice little primer on border security measures and associated costs. Don't forget that illegal immigration actually *costs* states money for things like increased emergency room usage, increased education costs, increased crime, increased prisons, etc.

We can recover a lot of the costs for border security measures by opening up the country to highly-skilled immigrant workers who pay more in taxes than they use in services, since they are (I think) not even eligible for unemployment, medicare, medicaid or social security – they have to leave when their work term ends.

It's a national security issue. We have enemies, we need a secure border. Particularly with a naive, weak President whose policies of moral equivalence and appeasement have

encourage several attacks on US soil in the past few months.

Taxpayer-funded polygamy in the UK, France and Canada

May 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> When a Muslim woman was fined late last month in Nantes, France for driving while wearing a full face veil, the issue of polygamy burst into the spotlight when it was revealed that her husband had three other "wives."
>
> The incident has re-opened the debate in Europe over the dilemma faced by European governments with, on the one hand, aging native populations and below-replacement birth rates, and, on the other, burgeoning Muslim immigrant populations with customs incompatible with existing laws.
>
> Objections to his alleged polygamy were answered by the woman's husband, Lies Hebbadj, an Algerian-born Muslim, who pointed out that, in accordance with modern French customs, he does not have four wives but one wife and four mistresses, plus 12 children between them.
>
> "If one can be stripped of one's French nationality for having mistresses, then many French could lose theirs," Mr. Hebbadj, a halal butcher, said after consulting his legal counsel. "As far as I know, mistresses are not forbidden, neither in France, nor in Islam."
>
> Hebbadj reportedly became a naturalized French citizen after he married Anne, his French wife. But French Interior Minister, Brice Hortefeux, has said that Hebbadj could have his citizenship revoked if he his found to be practicing polygamy. Authorities are investigating whether he was legally married to the other women in civil ceremonies, and whether he was profiting from single mother welfare benefits the other women may have been receiving fraudulently.

The same thing is also happening in Canada and the UK.

Excerpt:

> It was a rude awakening for British and Canadian taxpayers when news emerged this week to confirm that their tax dollars were being used to support polygamous marriages.
>
> […]British legislation from 2003 opened the door to the current situation by allowing multiple wives to inherit assets from a deceased husband. More recently, the government investigated claims that polygamists were taking advantage of the welfare system. It should have led to fines and legal crackdowns on abusers; instead it led to the creation of a new set of rules that allow polygamists to claim welfare benefits for more than one wife.

> The government obviously wasn't that proud of its innovative actions, since it acted quietly and without public consultation in agreeing to pay polygamists subsidies for additional housing and to grant additional tax benefits. Worse still, all payments bypass the wives and are given directly to the husband.
>
> British citizens only found out about these changes when a newspaper broke the story last week.
>
> At the same time, Canadian Muslim leaders admitted that hundreds of Muslim men in Ontario are now claiming welfare and social benefits for their multiple wives. This is welfare fraud. The system is supposed to prevent applicants from claiming welfare for more than one spouse, but the fraud works because they don't check for independent applications from multiple spouses in the same household.
>
> Under Muslim (Sharia) law, men are permitted to have up to four wives. If the paperwork is handled properly, that can put taxpayers on the hook for a huge monthly payment of social benefits.

I know that governments waste a lot of money, but this seems to me to be a particularly egregious example of the perverse incentives created by the welfare state. I have friends in Canada who are married with TWO children and are paying 50% of their income in taxes. Is this what they are paying for? It's very frustrating to contemplate that traditional Christians are subsidizing polygamy. And abortion, too!

I believe in life-long married love between one man and one woman, because that is the best for the children. What do children who are raised in a polygamous marriage believe about women? Will they see romantic love being modeled in their own homes? It just wounds my heart. What is good for a man is to be in love with a woman and more than the feeling is the act of loving her *alone*, to the exclusion of all others.

The state should not be paying weak, cowardly men to degrade women like this. And with taxpayer money.

My view of love

My view of love and marriage is explained in the related posts. I'm a Christian, so I believe in chastity and romantic love. Notice how different that is from the secular and Islamic traditions. Christianity invented chivalry – romantic love is a Christian ideal. When Christianity declines, romantic love declines.

Related posts on chastity, chivalry, courtship and marriage

- The Wintery Knight's greatest fears about the future
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal

- John Piper’s questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man’s decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

At least 32 African-American Republicans running for Congress this year

May 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the leftist New York Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Among the many reverberations of President Obama's election, here is one he probably never anticipated: at least 32 African-Americans are running for Congress this year as Republicans, the biggest surge since Reconstruction, according to party officials.
>
> […]Party officials and the candidates themselves acknowledge that they still have uphill fights in both the primaries and the general elections, but they say that black Republicans are running with a confidence they have never had before. They credit the marriage of two factors: dissatisfaction with the Obama administration, and the proof, as provided by Mr. Obama, that blacks can get elected.
>
> […]Princella Smith, who is running for an open seat in Arkansas, said she viewed the president's victory through both the lens of history and partisan politics. "Aside from the fact that I disagree fundamentally with all his views, I am proud of my nation for proving that we have the ability to do something like that," Ms. Smith said.
>
> State and national party officials say that this year's cast of black Republicans is far more experienced than the more fringy players of yore, and include elected officials, former military personnel and candidates who have run before.

Princella Smith is the daughter of a minister.

Check this out:

> Born the daughter of a minister and an educator, I was taught early to respect myself, my community and my family. Lessons learned at an early age from the classroom, the kitchen table and the pulpit have helped shape who I am and the values my parents instilled in me have grown stronger through the years.
>
> For far too long, conservatives have sat idly by while others set policies inconsistent with our values. We need a Representative willing to stand up for what is right – not just what is popular.
>
> As your Representative, you can count on my unwavering support of the sanctity of life and the protection of the unborn. I believe that human life is sacred, begins at conception and you have my word that I will stand firm in my opposition to any and all efforts to use public funds for abortion. I enthusiastically support a life amendment to the Constitution of the United

> States.
>
> Traditional marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman and is the foundation of family in our great nation. I support the Defense of Marriage Act and will be a relentless advocate of Federal and State legislation that defines marriage as between a man and a woman.
>
> You can count on me to oppose any and all efforts to mandate gun control on any law abiding citizen of the United States. I firmly and unequivocally support gun ownership and am committed to our constitutional right to own and bear arms. I support repealing the gun restrictions in Washington, DC that violate our Constitution and will stand up every day to preserve our right to protect our property, ourselves and our families.
>
> Throughout history, great societies are only as good as the values they hold dear and pass along through generations. I am a Christian, an American and an Arkansan and I am proud to share these principles every single day. Arkansas can count on Princella Smith to stand up and lead the fight to protect the families, communities and values of our great State.

Speaking as a visible minority male, let me just say: *Faster, please*.

Don't forget that Star Parker is running for Congress in California. I endorse her, by the way.

Upcoming apologetics events at Biola University and in South Africa

May 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

American Heroes: The Virtues of Capitalism

Southern California

Biola University events for Southern California readers:

May

6 • FREE: The Virtues of Capitalism Book Event *with* **Scott Rae and Austin Hill**

14 • FREE: Signature in the Cell Event *with* **Steve Meyer and his Critics**

15 • The Cambrian Explosion: The Data Behind Darwin's Dilemma
with **Illustra Media and others**

15 • Intelligent Design and Issues in Religious Liberty
with **Richard Land, John Bloom, Craig Hazen, and others**

Note the details of tonight's talk:

The Virtues of Capitalism: A Moral Case for Free Markets with Scott Rae, Ph.D. and Austin Hill, M.A.

Click Here for more details & to RSVP now!

Our country's founding fathers took very seriously the selfish, fallen nature of human beings described in Holy Scripture. In a stroke of brilliance, they set up a system of governance and economics that harnessed this sinful nature for the betterment of humankind through competition in branches of government and between economic interests. Today everything seems turned on its head. Have we lost the ideas that undergird the greatest system of government and economics the world has ever seen? Is there hope for the economic well being of our children? Is it moral to be a successful business person? Dr. Scott Rae and Austin Hill will address these news-making concerns,

based on their latest book.

Their new book became available this week. I ordered two! Scott Rae is, in my opinion, the top expert in bio-ethics at Biola University. To have him write about economics is a dream come true, for me. I love it when social conservatives and fiscal conservatives unite! Indivisible, to coin a phrase from the recently released collection of essays published by the Heritage Foundation, available as a free downloadable PDF document. Just FYI, Jay Richards' "Money, Greed and God", which I wrote about before, is now out in paperback.

South Africa

South Africa events from Mike Licona's web site:

Monday, 10 May:

14:00 "The death of Jesus as a challenge to Islam" (North West University, Potchefstroom)
19:00 "The historicity of the resurrection" (North West University, Potchefstroom)

Tuesday, 11 May:

10:00-12:00 Colloquium: "The problem of differences: Do the Gospels contradict one another?" (UNISA, Pretoria)
19:00 Debate with Prof Pieter Craffert: "Was Jesus raised physically from the dead?" (University of Johannesburg)

Venue: University of Johannesburg
Location: B-Les 103
Cost: none

Wednesday, 12 May:

19:00 Debate with Prof Sakkie Spangenberg and Prof Hansie Wolmarans (HOD Greek & Latin Studies, University of Johannesburg) vs. Prof William Lane Craig & Prof Michael Licona: "How should we understand the narratives about Jesus' resurrection?"

Venue: University of Pretoria
Location: Musaion Auditorium
Cost: R20 at the door

We have quite a few South African readers, so you all need to attend these events and then send me updates, and I can post them and give you credit. I am a big fan of Mike Licona.

UPDATE: Commenter Mary sends this link which has even more South Africa events.

Terrorist attacks under George W. Bush and Barack Obama

May 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's review the worldview of the left with the respect to national security.

This post is from Verum Serum. (H/T Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

Excerpt:

New York's Mayor Bloomberg:

> [Katie] Couric interviewed Bloomberg to discuss the possibility that the failed attack might have been a precursor to something bigger and potentially, more deadly. At one point, the veteran anchor asked the Mayor whether or not he thought the suspect was American.
>
> "A home-grown?" she asked, to which Bloomberg responded, "Home-grown, maybe a mentally deranged person or somebody with a political agenda that doesn't like the health care bill or something. It could be anything."

The Nation's Robert Dreyfuss:

> *But it seems far more likely to me that the perpetrator of the bungled Times Square bomb plot was either a lone nut job or a member of some squirrely branch of the Tea Party, anti-government far right.*

MSNBC's Contessa Brewer:

> *"I get frustrated…there was part of me that was hoping this was not going to be anybody with ties to any kind of Islamic country. There are a lot of people who want to use terrorist intent to justify writing people off who believe in a certain way or come from certain countries or whose skin color is a certain way. I mean they use it as justification for really outdated bigotry."*

Oooops. As it turns out, the Times Square terrorist was from Pakistan and was trained in explosives in Pakistan. And he also hated George W. Bush, and often said so to his neighbors. Vociferously.

Comparing George W. Bush and Barack Obama on national security

Let's review:

Since the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the number of terrorist attacks on U.S. soil under George W. Bush = ZERO

Since taking office, the number of terrorist attacks on U.S. soil under Barack Obama = FIVE

- June 2009 – Little Rock, Arkansas – Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad, an American Muslim opened fire on a U.S. military recruiting office. Private William Long was

killed and Private Quinton Ezeagwula was wounded.
- September 2009 – New York, New York – Attempt to detonate bombs in NYC subway system by member of al-Qaeda
- November 2009 – Fort Hood, Texas – Nadal Malik Hassan conducts mass shooting at Fort Hood killing 13 and wounding 30 others.
- December 2009 – Detroit, Michigan – Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempts to detonate an explosive on an aircraft enroute from Amsterdam to Detroit.
- May 2010 – New York City, New York – New York's Times Square was evacuated after the discovery of a car bomb.

Those are the facts.

So, if I am thinking of the safety of my future family and my neighbors, then I should vote Republican. If people vote Democrat, then we get failure.

There are a lot more good posts in Neil's round-up.

Round-up similar to Neil Simpson's or Binks WebElf's

May 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have too many news stories, so I have to do the Neil Simpson / Binks WebElf thing.

Students sent home for patriotism

Excerpt:

> On any other day at Live Oak High School in Morgan Hill, Daniel Galli and his four friends would not even be noticed for wearing T-shirts with the American flag. But Cinco de Mayo is not any typical day especially on a campus with a large Mexican American student population.
>
> Galli says he and his friends were sitting at a table during brunch break when the vice principal asked two of the boys to remove American flag bandannas that they wearing on their heads and for the others to turn their American flag T-shirts inside out. When they refused, the boys were ordered to go to the principal's office.
>
> […]The boys really had no choice, and went home to avoid suspension.

H/T Jerry.

Obamacare will cause you to lose your current health insurance

Excerpt:

> Internal documents recently reviewed by Fortune, originally requested by Congress, show what the bill's critics predicted, and what its champions dreaded: many large companies are examining a course that was heretofore unthinkable, dumping the health care coverage they provide to their workers in exchange for paying penalty fees to the government.
>
> That would dismantle the employer-based system that has reigned since World War II. It would also seem to contradict President Obama's statements that Americans who like their current plans could keep them. And as we'll see, it would hugely magnify the projected costs for the bill, which controls deficits only by assuming that America's employers would remain the backbone of the nation's health care system.

H/T ECM.

Democrat says that tea-party protesters are a terrorist threat

Excerpt:

> Rep. Andre Carson gathered Capitol Hill reporters around him and told the tale of racial slurs and menacing crowds on the verge of hurling rocks at the congressmen. Our first few videos showed the congressmen coming out of the Cannon Office Building, walking down the steps and into Independence Avenue

> from various angles. None of those videos revealed the racial hatred Rep. Carson conveyed to reporters that day and none of the videos showed a mob rushing or in any way impeding the congressmen. When Rep. Carson gathered reporters around him to spread the myth of racial slurs being hurled "fifteen times" he painted the protesters not just as racists, but as a terrorist threat.

The link has the video of the Democrat explaining his view.

H/T ECM.

Newsweek up for sale

Excerpt:

> The Washington Post Co. is putting Newsweek up for sale in hopes that another owner can figure out how to stem losses at the 77-year-old weekly magazine.
>
> […]The Post Co.'s magazine division had an operating loss of $29.3 million in 2009, compared with a $16.1 million loss the year before. Newsweek sold about 26 percent fewer ad pages in 2009, according to the Publishers Information Bureau. That percentage decline was consistent with the industry average.

H/T ECM.

How bad is the situation in Greece?

May 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Verum Serum)

> After months of dithering over how to rein in its vast deficit, the Greek government has been forced to plead for a £93billion international bail-out package and implement hugely unpopular austerity measures, to be voted on today.
>
> Amid the rioting, the euro plunged, stock markets crashed and German Chancellor Angela Merkel admitted the very 'future of Europe' was at stake.
>
> […]In the most horrific incident, 20 terrified staff were trapped in the burning Marfin bank after it was firebombed by protesters. The mob blocked firefighters from getting to the blaze.
>
> Two women and a man suffocated in the smoke as they tried to escape the flames. Bank officials told reporters one woman had been pregnant.
>
> A fire department official said their lives could have been saved had ' crucial minutes' not been lost getting through the rioters' blockades.

The death toll is now up to four.

The socialists have owned Greece for most of the last 30 years

What happened in Greece? Marketwatch wrote about their recent elections in 2009.

Excerpt:

> The political drama is about socialist George Papandreou's electoral victory over the conservatives and his rise to the same position, prime minister of Greece, which his father and grandfather had held before him.
>
> The tragedy will come if he is tempted to follow in his father's populist footsteps, as his campaign rhetoric suggests he will. Such a choice might prove disastrous not only for Greece but for the rest of the European Union as well.
>
> Greece's turn left is unique, even in the wake of the economic perplexity that has gripped the world since summer 2008.
>
> […]Promises to raise public-sector salaries are problematic enough, but to raise wages beyond the amount eroded by inflation, as Pasok said it would, is altogether derelict. So is the thought that such spending, along with 3 billion euros in aid to small businesses, can be financed by further taxing the rich and cracking down on tax evasion.

In 1981, the Greek socialist party formed the first socialist government in Greece's history, and subsequently governed the country for most of the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s. They were the main opposition party between 2004 and 2009.

And here's what happened:

Year	Debt (Million € equivalent)	Number of civil servants
1960	33	185,000
1970	226	280,000
1980	1,062	400,000
1985	4,828	600,000
1990	22,304	815,000
2007	234,776	1,050,000

That's right, they had the equivalent of Barack Obama in charge, for a long, long time. Tax and spend, hope and change.

The crisis of debt in Europe

And check out this alarming analysis from RealClearMarkets: (H/T Belmont Club via ECM)

> Virtually every country in the EU spends more than it takes in and has made long-term fiscal promises to an aging work force that it can't keep. A little over a year ago, economist Jagadeesh Gokhale, writing for the National Center for Policy Analysis, produced a pithy – and scary – summation of the fiscal challenges faced by Europe. Don't read it if you have trouble sleeping.
>
> "The average EU country," he concluded, "would need to have more than four times (434%) its current annual gross domestic product in the bank today, earning interest at the government's borrowing rate, in order to fund current policies indefinitely."
>
> In other words, Europe would have to have the equivalent of roughly $60 trillion in the bank today to fund its very general welfare benefits in the future. Of course, it doesn't.
>
> Things haven't changed much since that study was done. So suppose they don't put aside all that money. What then? By 2035, Gokhale reckons, the EU will need an average tax rate of 57% to pay for its lavish welfare state.
>
> Today, Greece is only the tip of a very large iceberg. Portugal, Spain, Italy and Ireland together owe $3.9 trillion in short- and medium-term debts, an amount larger than their combined GDP, estimated last year at $3.3 trillion.

Picture:

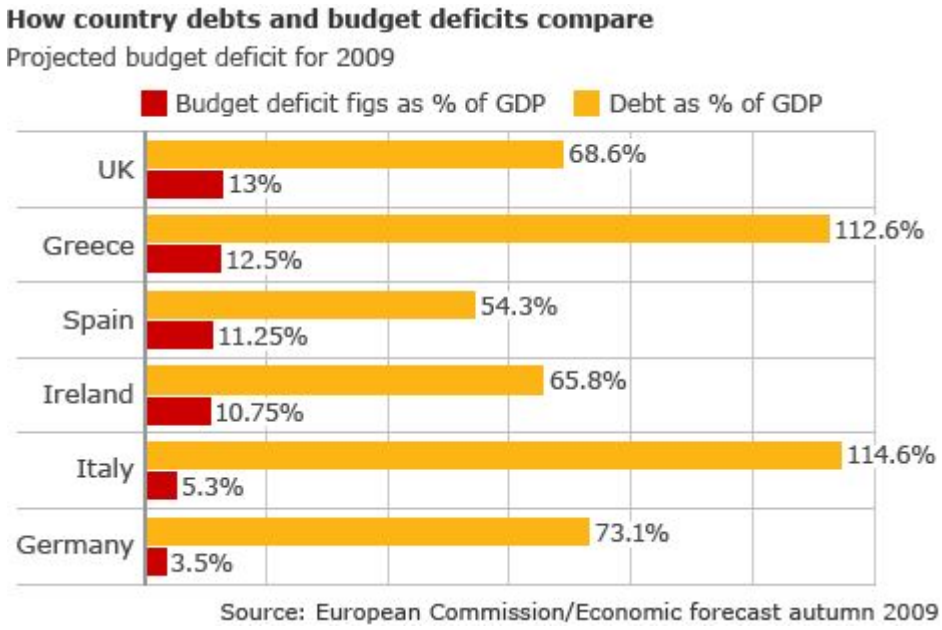

Don’t let socialists run your country. They spend too much!

Obama administration removed terrorist from surveillance list before attack

May 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from CBS News.

Excerpt:

> Sources tell CBS News that would-be Times Square bomber Faisal Shahzad appeared on a Department of Homeland Security travel lookout list – Traveler Enforcement Compliance System (TECS) – **between 1999 and 2008** because he brought approximately $80,000 cash or cash instruments into the United States.

He was removed from the list sometime after Obama took office.

But don't worry, because the money we saved by not monitoring terrorists was well spent prosecuting Navy SEALs.

Excerpt:

> A Virginia military jury found a Navy SEAL not guilty Thursday on all charges he punched an Iraqi suspected in the 2004 killings of four U.S. contractors in Fallujah.
>
> […]McCabe was the third and final Navy SEAL to be prosecuted in the case. He had faced charges of assault, making a false official statement and dereliction of performance of duty for willfully failing to safeguard a detainee. McCabe was accused of punching last year is Ahmed Hashim Abed, the suspected mastermind of the grisly killings six years ago.

So, according to Democrats, terrorists are good, US armed forces are bad. (And tea party protestors are terrorist threats, too!)

How Modern Liberals Think

If you want to understand why people on the left call evil good and call good evil, be sure and watch Evan Sayet's speech at the Heritage Foundation, entitled "How Modern Liberals Think".

Here's the lecture:

Democrats aren't not serious about evil, and that disqualifies them from any office involving national security. In my opinion, they are not qualified to do anything of any importance.

Christian theologian C. Michael Patton writes about his depression

May 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

C. Michael Patton of Parchment & Pen is depressed.

First part is here. (The second part of his series is here)

Excerpt:

> It is a very dark time in my life. I don't know how else to describe it. About three or four weeks ago I changed.
>
> […]All I can say is that I have had some sort of mental breakdown. My strength is gone. Depression? Certainly. Anxiety? Definitely. Fighting with the Lord? Most assuredly. All I know is that I broke a few weeks ago and I don't know how to fix myself. All of the advice that I have given to broken people over the years is now pointed back at me and I realize how empty it can be.
>
> Why? I don't know. I wish I did. I have spent the last few weeks obsessing with how to get "me" back. I have analyzed every possible turn. **God seems to have gone AWOL and I can't get in touch with him other than through the cold hard facts. Facts are facts. They are nice, but I am coming to realize how much I need his presence in other ways. He has not been seen in this neck of the woods in quit some time.**

I am sometimes not in the best of spirits, but then I always fall back on my arguments and facts. I always thought that the facts would protect me, and they always have – from everything. Now I laugh at God when he lets bad things happen to me. I'm like "yeah, good one. You got me. So what do you want this time? More church? Or more prayer? More Bible reading? More donations?" I actually thank God for not trying to get my attention by going after my health or something more central to me. I am surprised that the facts failed Patton.

On the other hand, I understand why he feels depressed, because he and I have the same notion of what causes depression.

He says this:

> My family was strong and they were all following you. Now everyone that I loved so dearly and saw you in is either dead, mentally incapacitated, doubting, or depressed. Some have three of the four. It is so dark at mom's house. It used to be so wonderful. You were there. And my ministry: it was a joy I turned to so often and found you when you were gone in other places. **For years you had surprise moves that energized my spirit with your presence. Now you have left the building here as well. I have come to the point where I am timid and insecure. The mandate that I had is gone.**

I agree with this. It is extremely challenging to continue to do the right thing when God doesn't seem to be supporting you. What is happening to him could happen to me, and I wish him a speedy recovery. But I do have some comments and I want to express them below, with humility.

My thoughts

My view of Christianity has always been consistent with being a secret agent. When things go wrong, your government abandons you and disowns you. My view of the Christian life has always been like that. Even the Father turned away from the Son when the Son was doing his duty on the Cross, atoning for the sins of the whole world. So a good Christian like Patton can do all the right things, but because people have free will, and natural evil happens, things may not work out – and that is OK. So, *I have really low expectations.*

For me, the Christian life is like the old spy series Mission Impossible.

> Most episodes begin with the leader of the IMF getting orders from a hidden tape recorder and an envelope of photos and information which explains the mission. The tape always begins with "Good Morning Mr. Phelps/Briggs", explains the situation, and ends with "Your mission, should you decide to accept it", with a brief explanation of the goal of the mission, along with a reminder that "as always, should you or any of your IM force be caught or killed, the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions."

I don't expect anything – I just do my job, and try to bleed as little as possible on God's rug when my teeth get kicked in. I think that something idealistic died in me a long time ago when I first realized that doing the right thing gets you killed. It got Jesus killed. He was without sin, yet the Father would not save him from his duty to obey. So what's the problem? This life *doesn't work*. You can do the right thing, but there are no guarantees. We need to realize that the story of Jesus doesn't turn happy until *after he dies*.

This intro to the movie Casino Royale makes my point in a cool way:

Or the Bible, if you prefer:

1 Corinthians 4:1-4:

[1]So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.

[2]Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

[3]I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.

[4]My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

Daniel 3:13-18:

[13] Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king,

[14] and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?

[15] Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

[16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

[17] If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king.

[18] But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Daniel 3:18 actually has an amazing story that goes with it, but one that would never ever be preached on in the feminized church.

I think that Patton shows us that even the best Christians have a breaking point. I’m probably not as strong as he is – and he certainly attempts more for the Lord than I do, but I try to avoid exposing myself to threats. It’s best not to be overconfident about your limitations. Instead, live in a way so that you can stand your ground when God withdraws his support.

So here’s my advice. Save your money, don’t spend it on fun stuff. Make financial investments. Don’t take risks unless it’s for the Kingdom. Be careful to avoid sin. Don’t attempt to do more than you can handle. Don’t make poor decisions and hope to be bailed out by God. Run your faith like a business – think everything through the best you can, objectively. Focus on truth when building your worldview – not *feelings*. Find out how everything in life works so you aren’t surprised. Don’t believe that you can sin and escape the damage – you can’t, even if God forgives you. Tell your friends the truth, and teach them apologetics so that they can stand with you. Keep in mind that Satan is real and would love to crush your plans, and you with them. Be careful. Be prepared.

We all need to encourage one another intentionally – as if our lives depended on it. There’s a war on, soldier. Look out for the man next to you, and train him to be able to look out for you.

My favorite lecture of all time

Now may be a good time to point you all to the lecture that changed my life: Dr. Walter Bradley’s “Giants in the Land”.

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

- Ph.D. in Materials Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1968
- B.S. in Engineering Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1965

My favorite lecture of all time:

- Giants in the Land (fixed – smaller file size, noise reduced)

That is what Christianity is about. It's not about what you see in church on Sundays.

Related posts

- Why doesn't God show us more evidence for his existence?
- How to defend Christian exclusivism from the challenge of religious pluralism
- the problem of religious pluralism and religious truth claims
- the problem of postmodern skepticism
- the fate of the unevangelized (what about those who never heard of Jesus)
- are all religions basically the same?
- what about the blind men and the elephant?
- isn't faith is opposed to reason and evidence? (a debate between a Christian and a postmodern relativist)
- what makes Christianity different from other religions?

C. Michael Patton explains why women cannot teach in the church

May 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He explains why he thinks that the Bible teaches that women cannot teach in the church.

His point:

> Now, let me give my short and sweet answer as to why Paul did not allow women to teach:
>
> Paul did not let women teach due to the often aggressive and combative nature that teaching must entail concerning the confrontation of false doctrine. Men must be the teachers when combating false teaching. *However*, because the role of a teacher *in the church* is so often to combat false doctrine, and because false doctrine is always a problem, generally speaking, the principles are always applicable. The "exercising of authority" is inherently tied to teaching and its necessary condemnation of false doctrine.
>
> The combative nature of teaching is particularly relevant to a broader understanding of the characteristics of men and women.

I agree with Patton on this one. I think in practice most women are more interested in relationships and community than they are in truth and polemics. Christianity is a propositional faith, though. It's not meant to be a set of arbitrary preferences that give our lives hope and meaning without any evidential foundation. And it needs to be defended using rational arguments and evidence against lies.

I would make an exception for women who want to teach on an area of knowledge not related to the Bible but related to apologetics or Christian living, like astrophysics, economics, ancient history, bio-ethics, etc. In that case I would allow a woman to teach. I would also be willing to make exceptions for women who are truth-focused and who do not mind making exclusive claims if it makes them unpopular, e.g. – Jennifer Roback Morse.

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church
- why won't Christians defend their faith in public?

Related posts

- are all religions basically the same?
- isn't faith is opposed to reason and evidence? (a debate between a Christian and a postmodern relativist)

- what makes Christianity different from other religions?

Can atheists trust the truth-detecting ability of their own minds?

May 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Or, to be more precise, is a rational mind compatible with biological determinism and Darwinism?

This is just 3 minutes long. (H/T Reason to Stand)

The original argument is from Alvin Plantinga, the top Christian philosopher in the world.

This lecture is about 54 minutes long across 6 clips.

J.P. Moreland talks about the meaning of happiness

May 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back I posted an article about the changing definition of happiness. I noticed then that Wes picked up on the post and he posted a lecture on happiness by J.P. Moreland.

Here is the short 26-minute lecture on happiness that he linked to. (He posted the video, I grabbed the audio)

This is really, really good. The same thing applies to love. A lot of people talk about love being a feeling, but I think rather that it is a decision that a person makes when they perceive that someone else can be moved closer to God, and they decide to act to make that happen.

Sometimes I worry about having grown up with non-Christian parents who really didn't have much to tell me about what life was really about. But lectures like this really help me to learn the kinds of things that people really need to know.

I also just wanted to post a cleaned-up version of the Walter Bradley lecture that I had posted previously, with the noise removed, and the file size reduced. This is my favorite lecture of all. There are a couple of other versions of it in different venues here and here. These are all good, at least if you like Christians talking about the Christian life in a courageous, yet realistic way. I wouldn't give these the attention I'm giving them unless I felt they were important.

About DropBox

I'm hosting some of those lectures using DropBox. I use it to share files with people.

MUST-READ: Brian Auten reviews new apologetics essay collection

May 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The post is here. The book is called "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It is a collection of essays edited by Paul Copan and William Lane Craig. He has a chapter-by-chapter breakdown. Do you ever wonder where I learned to argue on all these topics? Well, take a look at Brian's post.

Just look at some of these chapter summaries, and think of how you could serve the Lord just by *effectively* telling the truth about him!

Chapter 2:

"At Home in the Multiverse" by James Daniel Sinclair looks at the issues in current cosmology regarding the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life. Sinclair differentiates between the strong and weak anthropic principle and shows some of the problems with positing "many worlds" to explain the fine-tuning: "The Many Worlds advocate is engaged in a problem called the Gambler's Fallacy."(3) Sinclair explains that if we have prior knowledge of many worlds, then this fallacy is not taking place. But, "if I am simply inventing Many Worlds, then I am engaged in the fallacy."(4) Sinclair then addresses six problems facing the multiverse hypothesis.

Chapter 7:

Part two, *The Jesus of History*, begins with Robert H. Stein's essay: "Criteria for the Gospels' Authenticity." Here Stein lays out a clear presentation of the positive and negative criteria for historical authenticity. The positive criteria: multiple attestation, embarrassment, dissimilarity, Aramaic linguistic and Palestinian environmental phenomena, tradition contrary to editorial tendency, frequency, and coherence. The negative criteria: contradiction of authentic sayings, environmental contradiction, and tendencies of the developing tradition. Stein's exploration of each is helpful and enlightening, allowing him to conclude that "The burden of proof now clearly shifts from the need to prove a passage's authenticity to the need to prove its inauthenticity."(16)

Chapter 8:

"Jesus the Seer" by Ben Witherington III focuses on the two key phrases used by Jesus: "Son of Man" and "kingdom of God." Witherington's goal here is to find where these two concepts occur together in the Old Testament. Witherington's chapter contends that "there is no nonmessianic Jesus to be found at the bottom of the well of historical inquiry. Jesus made some remarkable claims for Himself and His ministry; the historian's job is not to explain the claims away but rather to explain them."(17) When the historian is faced with certain facts about Jesus and his claims, they cannot be ignored: "A historian has to explain how the high Christology of the church could have arisen after the unexpected and precipitous demise of Jesus through crucifixion. This conundrum becomes more puzzling, not less, for those who don't believe in Jesus' rising from the dead than for those

who do."(18)

Chapter 9:

"The Resurrection of Jesus Time Line" by Gary Habermas establishes the time line starting from the late first century and works back to the death of Jesus about 30 AD. According to Habermas, "current critical scholarship even agrees to the exceptionally early date of this proclamation [of the resurrection] as well as the eyewitness nature of those who made the claims."(19) Habermas provides an overview of the time line: AD 60-100 The composition of the Gospels; AD 50-62 Dating the "authentic" Pauline epistles; AD 34-36 Paul's first trip to Jerusalem; AD 45-50 Paul's later trip to Jerusalem; AD 30-35 Back to the date of the actual events. Habermas shows that this time line is not a point of controversy, but accepted by the majority: "Virtually all critical scholars think this message began with the real experiences of Jesus' earliest disciples, who thought that they had seen appearances of their risen Lord. It did not arise at some later date. Nor was it borrowed or invented."(20) Habermas sees this as "the chief value of this argument. It successfully secures the two most crucial historiographical factors: (1) the reports of the original eyewitnesses, which are (2) taken from the earliest period. This is the argument that has rocked a generation of critical scholars."(21)

Chapter 13:

"The Coherence of Theism" by Charles Taliaferro and Elsa J. Marty. Here the authors seek to defend the coherence of the concept of God. They address six attributes: "necessary existence, incorporeality, essential goodness, omnipotence, omniscience, and eternity."(26) They point out: "The attributes of God are therefore not a patchwork of arbitrary characteristics. Each one is, rather, interconnected, and together they form a coherent whole. Appreciating this helps one avoid the more crude depiction of God one finds in Dawkins's work."(27)

Chapter 15:

"Did God Become a Jew? A Defense of the Incarnation" by Paul Copan aims "to show that the incarnation, though a mystery, is a *coherent* one." Copan's task: "(1) briefly review the scriptural affirmations of Jesus' humanity and divinity, (2) highlight three important distinctions to help us understand the incarnation, and (3) examine the question of Jesus' temptation in light of His divinity."(29)

The other chapters are ALL good, addressing real questions that you will hear if you ask people in your office or in your family why they are not willing to investigate whether Christianity is true. This is incredibly practical. It's all muscle, and no fat. It's an arsenal – tailor-made for people who are concerned about God's reputation, and who want to love him by defending his existence and character in the most effective ways.

Further study

If you like podcasts, Bill Craig explained the different chapters in a recent podcast. But Brian's text review is superior.

I highly recommend this book and "Passionate Conviction: Contemporary Discourses on

Christian Apologetics”, along with Lee Strobel’s “Case for…” books, as the basic building blocks of an amateur apologists’s arsenal.I especially recommend Lee Strobel’s “The Case for a Creator”.

You may also be interested in a new book offering a detailed response to the New Atheists, called “God Is Great, God Is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable & Responsible”.

Obama’s pick to replace Justice Stevens is pro-abortion

May 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Top White House aides expect President Obama to select Solicitor General Elena Kagan on Monday as the Supreme Court justice to replace retiring Justice John Paul Stevens, reports Mike Allen of Politico Friday.
>
> […]Kagan is known for strongly favoring taxpayer funded abortion, and is a critic of the 1991 Supreme Court decision Rust v. Sullivan, which upheld federal regulations prohibiting Title X family planning fund recipients from counseling on or referring for abortion.
>
> Americans United for Life also reports that Kagan once suggested that faith-based groups operating pregnancy care centers should not counsel pregnant youths, for fear that they would include their religious beliefs in the counseling process.
>
> In April, the White House reacted with fury when Ben Domenech, writing in a blog post for CBS News, declared that Kagan would be the “first openly gay justice” on the U.S. Supreme Court. Under increasing pressure from the Obama administration, CBS eventually pulled the post and Domenech apologized for “a Harvard rumor” – but not before posting an addendum stating: “I have to correct my text here to say that Kagan is apparently still closeted – odd, because her female partner is rather well known in Harvard circles.”

UPDATE: CNS News has more here.

Excerpt:

> U.S. Solicitor General Elena Kagan will face two major stumbling blocks as a Supreme Court nominee – her anti-military views and her ties to Goldman Sachs, a conservative group says.
>
> “Conservatives know Kagan as the Harvard Law School Dean who tried to bar the military from college campuses, an issue she fought all the way to the Supreme Court,” the Family Research Council said on Friday in an email to supporters.
>
> “At the time, even Ruth Bader Ginsberg, one of the court’s most liberal justices, couldn’t find a way to justify Kagan’s position.” The FRC described Kagan’s “incredibly hostile view of the military” as “well outside the American mainstream.”
>
> The group also criticized Kagan’s strong support for “hate crimes” laws. And it notes that she has no judicial experience, never having litigated a case to verdict

> or trial.
>
> Kagan served on a Goldman Sachs advisory council several years ago, receiving a $10,000 stipend for her work.
>
> […]Americans United for Life describes Kagan as an “ardent abortion supporter.”
>
> “Elena Kagan has strong ties to abortion-advocacy organizations and expressed admiration for activist judges who have worked to advance social policy rather than to impartially interpret the law,” said AUL CEO and President Dr. Charmaine Yoest.
>
> […]The Human Rights Campaign, a homosexual advocacy group, said it is confident that Kagan has “a demonstrated understanding and commitment to protecting the liberty and equality of all Americans, including LGBT Americans.”

She is a radical, radical leftist.

Who would the Wintery Knight nominate to the Supreme Court?

If we had elected McCain instead, then he might have appointed my favorite judge, Edith H. Jones or my other favorite judge, Janice Rogers Brown.

Read about them:

Janice Rogers Brown

Judge Janice Rogers Brown is the first black woman to serve on California’s Supreme Court. Her nomination to a federal appeals court has been blocked by Senate Democrats.

In 1997, she issued a well-researched dissent in a case where the California Supreme Court overturned a pro-life law requiring abortion facilities to obtain parental consent before performing an abortion on a teenage girl.

Brown accused the court’s plurality of abrogating the constitutional rights of parents, described the court’s thinking as circular, and called the case “an excellent example of the folly of courts in the role of philosopher kings.”

“When fundamentally moral and philosophical issues are involved and the questions are fairly debatable,” Brown wrote, “the judgment call belongs to the Legislature. They represent the will of the people.”

She also dissented in a decision requiring Catholic Charities to pay for contraception coverage in employee health insurance plans. The decision concerns pro-life groups because it could lead to a requirement that abortion be covered as well.

Brown has also garnered the support of the California voters. In 1998, 76% of voters decided to keep Brown on the bench in their state, the highest percentage of supporting votes in that election.

Edith Jones

Judge Edith Jones of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals is frequently mentioned as a contender for the high court. She was considered for the Supreme Court seat that eventually went to Clarence Thomas.

If pro-life advocates are looking for a justice who strongly opposes Roe v. Wade, Jones should be a favorite.

When the 5th Circuit denied a request in October by Norma McCorvey to approve her motion to overturn the Roe v. Wade ruling, Judge Jones issued an opinion blasting the Supreme Court's opinion in Roe and saying it needs to be re-examined.

She called Roe an "exercise of raw judicial power," and cited evidence McCorvey presented showing abortions hurt women.

Jones, a Reagan nominee, wrote that the "[Supreme] Court's rulings have rendered basic abortion policy beyond the power of our legislative bodies."

"The perverse result of the Court's having determined through constitutional adjudication this fundamental social policy, which affects over a million women and unborn babies each year, is that the facts no longer matter," Jones added.

Jones chided the nation's high court for being "so committed to 'life' that it struggles with the particular facts of dozens of death penalty cases each year," but failing to grasp the fact that abortions destroys the lives of unborn children.

"One may fervently hope that the court will someday acknowledge such developments and re-evaluate Roe and Casey accordingly," Jones said of the 5000 pages of evidence with affidavits from over 1000 woman who have been harmed by abortion.

These are the two best picks for supreme court, if we are going for raw talent. And it's a tragedy that they are both not on the Supreme Court right now. A tragedy!

Lifeway survey of young Christians reveals decline in orthodox faith

May 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story in USA Today. (H/T Caffeinated Thoughts)

Excerpt:

> Most young adults today don't pray, don't worship and don't read the Bible, a major survey by a Christian research firm shows.
> If the trends continue, "the Millennial generation will see churches closing as quickly as GM dealerships," says Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources. In the group's survey of 1,200 18- to 29-year-olds, 72% say they're "really more spiritual than religious."
>
> Among the 65% who call themselves Christian, "many are either mushy Christians or Christians in name only," Rainer says. "Most are just indifferent. The more precisely you try to measure their Christianity, the fewer you find committed to the faith."
>
> Key findings in the phone survey, conducted in August and released today:
>
> •65% rarely or never pray with others, and 38% almost never pray by themselves either.
>
> •65% rarely or never attend worship services.
>
> •67% don't read the Bible or sacred texts.
>
> Many are unsure Jesus is the only path to heaven: Half say yes, half no.
>
> […]The 2007 LifeWay study found seven in 10 Protestants ages 18 to 30, both evangelical and mainline, who went to church regularly in high school said they quit attending by age 23. And 34% of those had not returned, even sporadically, by age 30.

Michael Snyder writing at Caffeinated Thoughts adds:

> According to a recent survey by America's Research Group, 95 percent of 20 to 29 year old evangelical Christians attended church regularly during their elementary school and middle school years. However, only 55 percent of those young evangelical Christians still attended church regularly during high school, and only 11 percent of them were still regularly attending church when they went to college.
>
> Only 11 percent.
>
> And that was among self-identified evangelical Christians.
>
> But the most recent American Religious Identification Survey conducted by the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society & Culture at Trinity College was

> perhaps even more shocking.
>
> According to that survey, 15% of Americans now say they have “no religion” – which is up from 8% in 1990. However, what was much more disturbing was that **46%** of Americans between the ages of 18 to 34 indicated that they had no religion in the survey.

Those are the facts.

Here’s what we need to do in Christian churches and seminaries. We need to present Christian theology like people present chemistry. We need to consider alternative hypotheses. We need to survey opposing views. We need to host debates on core doctrines featuring non-Christians. We need to get away from the idea that Christianity is a Santa Claus myth. We need to replace praise hymns with speeches given by distinguished scholars. Apologetics should taught in Sunday school as mandatory for all age groups. Apologetics courses should be made mandatory in all evangelical seminaries.

The culture as a whole has turned more towards hedonism. There are a lot of fun things to do in life other than Christianity. Unless Christianity can provide a reason for people to avoid seeking pleasure, then Christianity’s influence will be diminished down to virtually nothing, as we see today in secular welfare-state countries in Europe. At the end of the day, leaders in the church who are more concerned about fundamentalist fideism and emotional satisfaction will be held accountable for their effectiveness, not their sincerity and good intentions. If the results are bad, then the method needs to change.

Mentoring

- the importance of being able to argue both sides of a question
- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church
- why won’t Christians defend their faith in public?

MUST-READ: WORLD magazine puts Paul Ryan on the front cover

May 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan

This is the best evangelical news magazine out there. The same one that profiled Michele Bachmann a while back.

Here's the cover story. (H/T Muddling Toward Maturity)

Excerpt:

> While a student at Miami University in Ohio, Ryan thought he'd become an economist. He read the likes of Milton Friedman and Ayn Rand and envisioned a life of theories. But he eventually learned that public policy is the arena where ideas really live or die. "That is what built this country—good ideas," he says.Post-graduation stints as a speechwriter for Jack Kemp, at a conservative think tank, and as legislative director for Sen. Sam Brownback of Kansas led to Ryan's successful run for an open House seat in 1998. He was just 28.
>
> After almost a decade of near anonymity in Congress, Ryan's 2007 ascension as the ranking Republican on the House Budget Committee gave him the staff resources and the clout to let out his inner economist. He now also is senior member of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee. From those perches he has crafted a roadmap to privatize Medicare and Medicaid, provide vouchers for many federal programs, replace employee-sponsored health insurance plans with individual tax credits, and impose tough controls on federal spending.
>
> The Congressional Budget Office, the nonpartisan number crunchers, determined that Ryan's roadmap delivered on its promises of balanced budgets and smaller deficits (unlike its projections for Obamacare). Under current policies, the CBO concludes that the nation in 2080 will devote 34 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) to government spending; under Ryan's plan, the CBO predicts that federal spending in 2080 would fall to less than 14 percent of the GDP while the government would enjoy a 5 percent annual surplus. And all without raising taxes. In fact, Ryan proposes a flat tax of two rates: 10 percent and 25 percent.

Better read it quick, *before it goes behind the pay firewall*.

Lately, I have been busy working my way through the Indivisible e-book that the Heritage Foundation published. The e-book is about 85 pages long, and features leading fiscal and social conservatives, writing from the point of view that they do not normally adopt! In the e-book, Paul Ryan, a huge fiscal conservative, writes about *the right to life.* Check it out. I just ordered 5 more copies of Indivisible from the Heritage Foundation along with some of their new booklet on Regulations.

University of Calgary convicts eight pro-life students

May 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CCBR press release.

Excerpt:

> U OF C FINDS PRO-LIFE STUDENTS GUILTY AFTER CLOSED-DOOR HEARINGS, VOWS "MORE SEVERE SANCTIONS" FOR FUTURE PRO-LIFE ACTIVITIES
>
> CALGARY – The University of Calgary has notified eight members of the Campus Pro-Life (CPL) student group that they have been found guilty of a major violation under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy regarding a pro-life display held last month. The verdict comes one week after the students each attended individual, closed-door hearings with an Associate Vice-Provost during which legal representatives were disallowed.
>
> The verdict is "a formal written warning" that if the students "fail to comply with directives of Campus Security staff in the future" it will "result in more severe sanctions," said Acting Associate Vice-Provost Meghan Houghton, who was the sole decision-maker in the guilty verdict.

Fascist feminist educrats are paid with tax money and mandatory student fees to deprive students of their free speech. In the most conservative city in Canada! This is the only campus club that is treated like this. Because of what they believe.

CCBR accepts donations, if you want to help them to fight back against the University of Calgary. Click through the article to read some defiant statements from the pro-life students.

Related posts

- University of Calgary denies legal counsel to accused accused students
- University of Calgary students face expulsion for pro-life display
- McGill University and University of Calgary censor pro-life students
- University of Ottawa cancels Ann Coulter appearance
- Ann Coulter files hate speech claim against Canadian university
- Canadian student union leader says pro-lifers are all potential murderers
- Lakehead University bans pro-life club
- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's University
- Pro-life club at McGill University banned
- University of Calgary uses police to threaten pro-life students (More from Ezra Levant)
- Canadian pro-life student quarantined by public school principal
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)

- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

A feminist critique of common sense and reason

May 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a funny anecdote from a writer in the secular leftist magazine Psychology Today. Excerpt:

> Several years ago, my wife and I had gone out for a celebratory dinner with one of my doctoral students and one of his female friends. The friend in question was a committed postmodernist and a staunch academic feminist. At one point during our dinner, I gently asked her whether she genuinely believed the postmodernist foundational tenet that there are no universal truths.
>
> […]I asked her whether it was a universal truth that within the human species it is only women who bear children. Surely this is an absolute fact no? After rolling her eyes in utter disgust and taking a few huffs and puffs, she replied that she was amazed at how sexist my example had been. At this point, my doctoral student, my wife, and I were truly baffled. The feminist explained that in the spiritual narrative of a particular group of Japanese people, it is the men who bear the children! Hence, by purposely restricting childbearing to the physical/biological realm, I was being sexist.
>
> […]I asked her whether it was indeed a universal truth that from any vantage point on Earth, the sun rises in the East and sets in the West. Surely, since time immemorial sailors have relied on this cosmological fact. Take a minute to think about how she might have retorted in this case. Here is a hint: she used the tools of deconstructionism to "tease apart" my latest universal. Deconstructionism argues that reality is a linguistic creation. Hence, there is no objective truth to speak of, as all information is constrained within subjective linguistic bounds. She proposed that I was putting labels on things, and she refused to play such games. She did not know what I meant by "East" or "West". These were arbitrary labels. What did I mean by "sun"? That which I called the sun, she might refer to as "dancing hyena" (her actual words!), to which I wryly replied: OK, the dancing hyena rises in the East and sets in the West.

The article then explains where this postmodern view that "nothing is objectively real and nothing is objectively true" leads.

> These anti-science movements coupled with cultural relativism, political correctness, and an ethos of self-guilt regarding all geopolitical realities will prove the demise of Western civilization. It is such babble that caused nearly all of the American news media to offer hallucinatory explanations regarding the recent Times Square incident including that the alleged terrorist did this because he had defaulted on his mortgage payment, and hence was facing great financial strain. Both the media and Obama officials are under a strict edict to avoid

> uttering the most obvious of geopolitical facts. These nonsensical pseudo-intellectual movements will spell the end of liberal democracies if they are not eradicated from public discourse.

There is something very strange about postmodern/relativist/politically correct types.

Ann Gauger's new peer-reviewed paper on Darwinian evolution

May 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Amazing new research paper by the Biologic Institute. The PDF of the paper, "Reductive Evolution Can Prevent Populations from Taking Simple Adaptive Paths to High Fitness," is available here.

The MP3 file is here.

Participants

- Jay Richards, Director of Research at the CRSC, (Discovery Institute)
- Ann Gauger, senior research scientist at the Biologic Institute

About Ann:

> Ann is a senior research scientist at Biologic Institute. Her work uses molecular genetics and genomic engineering to study the origin, organization and operation of metabolic pathways. She received a BS in biology from MIT, and a PhD in developmental biology from the University of Washington, where she studied cell adhesion molecules involved in Drosophila embryogenesis. As a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard she cloned and characterized the *Drosophila* kinesin light chain. Her research has been published in *Nature*, *Development*, and the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*.

Topics:

- Co-authored with microbiologist Ralph Seelke at the University of Wisconsin
- Purpose: study whether bacteria can evolve the ability to fix a broken protein (e.g. – enzyme)
- Two areas are broken in the enzyme
- If you fix the first one, it works a little but not fully (slight advantage)
- If you fix the second one, it starts to work fully (huge advantage)
- It's a "two-step adaptive path" – a textbook case for evolution
- should be able to hit both mutations and get back full functionality
- At the start of the experiment, the cell is churning out broken protein
- there is a cost to the cell for create the broken protein
- the cell can either go through the adaptive path and repair the protein
- OR, it can shut off production of the broken protein
- EITHER PATH gives a selective advantage
- So what happens? The cells NEVER followed the adaptive path
- They almost ALWAYS turn off the production of the broken protein
- It happens in 30-50 generations, in 14 different cultures

- Each culture had a different way of turning off the production
- They tested on 10^12 cells
- Only **one cell** made the first repair, none made the second repair
- It's more advantageous to STOP PRODUCING the broken protein as soon as possible
- The first cell that *gets rid* of the non-functional protein first overtakes the whole culture
- so, even adaptive paths that provide a benefit with one mutation are unlikely to be followed
- The point: even promising theoretical adaptive pathways MAY NOT WORK in experiments

I wrote about Doug Axe's recent research paper here. He is the Director of the Biologic Institute.

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

Yale University study shows that babies know right from wrong at 6 months

May 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Wes Widner, Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> At the age of six months babies can barely sit up – let along take their first tottering steps, crawl or talk.
>
> But, according to psychologists, they have already developed a sense of moral code – and can tell the difference between good and evil.
>
> An astonishing series of experiments is challenging the views of many psychologists and social scientists that human beings are born as 'blank slates' – and that our morality is shaped by our parents and experiences.
>
> Instead, they suggest that the difference between good and bad may be hardwired into the brain at birth.
>
> In one experiment involving puppets, babies aged six months old showed a strong preference to 'good' helpful characters – and rejected unhelpful, 'naughty' ones.
>
> In another, they even acted as judge and jury. When asked to take away treats from a 'naughty' puppet, some babies went further – and dished out their own punishment with a smack on its head.
>
> Professor Paul Bloom, a psychologist at Yale University in Connecticut, whose department has studied morality in babies for years, said: 'A growing body of evidence suggests that humans do have a rudimentary moral sense from the very start of life.
>
> 'With the help of well designed experiments, you can see glimmers of moral thought, moral judgment and moral feeling even in the first year of life.

Muddling writes:

> Is anyone reminded of Romans 2:15 "… *the work of the law is written on their hearts…*"? Cf. J. Budziszewski's *Written on the Heart: The Case for Natural Law*, and his other book, *What We Can't Not Know*.

I guess now is as good a time as any to link to the scheming unborn baby post.

William Lane Craig reponds to the arguments of the New Atheists

May 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Five video clips.

Part 1 of 5:

Part 2 of 5:

Part 3 of 5:

Part 4 of 5:

Part 5 of 5:

Each clip is 10 minutes long.

CBO raises Obamacare cost projections to over 1 trillion dollars

May 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from center-left Politico.com. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Congressional Budget Office estimates released Tuesday predict the health care overhaul will likely cost about $115 billion more in discretionary spending over ten years than the original cost projections.
>
> The additional spending — if approved over the years by Congress — would bring the total estimated cost of the overhaul to over $1 trillion.
>
> […]The CBO released the estimates in response to a request from California Rep. Jerry Lewis, ranking Republican on the House Appropriations Committee. A spokeswoman for Lewis said the inquiry was filed before the House voted on the bill.
>
> "[L]arge sums of discretionary spending in both the House and Senate versions of the health care reform bills have not yet been included in estimates by the CBO, rendering it impossible to make informed decisions regarding the outcome of this legislation," Lewis wrote in a February letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, asking her to postpone votes until the discretionary spending analysis was complete.

Isn't that why so many people people voted for Obama? So that he could make us more like Greece?

How government control of medicine leads to violations of conscience

May 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Deep within the massive health-care overhaul legislation, a few little-noticed provisions have quietly reignited one of the bitterest debates in medicine: how to balance the right of doctors, nurses and other workers to refuse to provide services on moral or religious grounds with the right of patients to get care.
>
> […]The debate has focused attention on President Obama's plan to rescind a federal regulation put into effect by the previous administration to protect workers who refuse to provide care they find objectionable. Soon after taking office, Obama announced he would lift the rule, arguing it could create obstacles to abortion and other reproductive health services. But a final decision about whether to kill, keep or replace the rule with a compromise has been pending as the debate over the health law raged. The outcome is being closely watched as a bellwether of how the administration will handle a possible thicket of conflicts under the health legislation.
>
> "The act is thousands of pages of new government power, decision-making and funding," said Matthew S. Bowman of the Alliance Defense Fund, which represents workers who object on religious grounds to being required to provide some forms of health care. "Any government power over health care can be exercised in a way that discriminates against pro-life health providers, especially when officials already support abortion and oppose enforcement of conscience laws."

And more:

> Bowman and others point to Catherina Cenzon-DeCarlo as an example of what they fear could become increasingly common as the government becomes much more deeply entwined with health care. Cenzon-DeCarlo was working at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York last year when the nurse was stunned to learn that she had been assigned to help abort a 22-week-old fetus. A devout Catholic, Cenzon-DeCarlo thought she had a long-standing agreement with the hospital that let her avoid abortions. But this time, despite her pleas, Cenzon-DeCarlo's bosses insisted.
>
> "It felt like a horror film unfolding," Cenzon-DeCarlo said. "It was devastating. I have suffered intense emotional pain. I've had nightmares. . . . I felt violated and betrayed."
>
> Cenzon-DeCarlo, who filed state and federal lawsuits against Mount Sinai, is the

> only health-care worker who has filed a complaint under the previous administration's rule, which remains in effect. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is investigating, but officials would not comment on the case. The hospital also declined to comment.

Government is necessarily secular, and it is typically run by people who are born rich and educated at expensive schools. It causes them to think they are better than other people. They become extremely disdainful of the moral law, and the Judeo-Christian worldview that supports it – because they view the moral law (and the Constitution, etc.) as a antiquated brake on their pursuit of happiness in this life. The desire for happiness *now* causes them to believe in anything that will push the demands of the moral law off.

And their personal views inform their political views. Those on the left favor policies that push moral rules aside, and sometimes even the people who believe moral rules – like pro-life doctors. The problem is that dismissing the moral law only works when you have a rich grandmother to bail you out. That's why we need to elect more people like Michele Bachmann, who are self-made and had to work for a living, and who have raised their own children. People who don't have contempt for the beliefs and values of ordinary people.

What can we learn about media bias from donations made by journalists?

May 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically extreme leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

Here's a little snip about The New Yorker:

> The last bulwark against bias's slipping into The New Yorker is the copy department, whose chief editor, Ann Goldstein, gave $500 in October to MoveOn.org, which campaigns for Democrats and against President Bush. "That's just me as a private citizen," she said. As for whether donations are allowed, Goldstein said she hadn't considered it. "I've never thought of myself as working for a news organization."

Don't you think that this bias towards the left would affect how they report the news?

Is the Obama administration deliberately weakening our military?

May 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Who needs air superiority? Not Obama

Consider this article from the Weekly Standard. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> When Secretary of Defense Robert Gates went to Chicago last summer to make the case for killing the F-22 — the world's premier air supremacy fighter and the only "fifth generation fighter" currently in production anywhere — he argued that the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter would be a more cost-effective alternative. Though the JSF "has had development problems to be sure," Gates said, "It is a versatile aircraft, less than half the total cost of the F-22, and can be produced in quantity with all the advantages produced by economies of scale – some 500 will be bought over the next five years."
>
> […]But the oddest thing about Gates's speech last summer was his assertion that competitors to the United States, specifically China, would be unable to produce their own fifth-gen fighters any time soon. "Consider that by 2020, the United States is projected to have nearly 2,500 manned combat aircraft of all kinds," Gates said, while "China, by contrast, is projected to have no fifth generation aircraft by 2020."
>
> […]We know now that Gates's estimate of U.S. procurement last summer was bogus. We will be nowhere near 2,500 fifth-gen aircraft (F-35s and F-22s) by 2020. And now Gates has conceded that China will, in fact, have produced a fifth-generation stealth fighter by 2020. How many will they have produced? How many will we have produced? We can only be sure of two things: Gates doesn't know, and he killed the F-22 based on a faulty assumption that the number of Chinese stealth fighters in 2020 would be zero.

I am a HUGE fan of the F-22 and I hate the F-35.

China should not be underestimated

And what about this article from Investors Business Daily?

Excerpt:

> From the Battle of Midway to President Reagan's 600-ship fleet that helped win the Cold War, naval supremacy has been critical to the protection and survival of our nation.
>
> Which is why we find the recent remarks of Defense Secretary Robert Gates to the Navy League at the Sea-Air-Space expo so disturbing. He seems to think naval supremacy is a luxury we can't afford and that, like every other aspect of our military, an already shrunken U.S. Navy needs to downsize.
>
> "As we learned last year, you don't necessarily need a billion-dollar guided missile destroyer to chase down and deal with a bunch of teenage pirates wielding AK-47s and RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades)," Gates quipped.
>
> We are not laughing.
>
> Pubescent pirates aren't the only threat we face. Last month, a Chinese naval task force from the East Sea Fleet — including the imposing Sovremenny-class guided missile destroyers, frigates and submarines — passed through the Miyako Strait near Okinawa, a move that sent shock waves through Japan.

Sovermenny vessels are *DDGs* not *DDs*. That means that they have *guided-missile capability* via the SS-N-22 surface-to-surface platform. That missile has a range of 160 nautical miles, flies at Mach 3, and is fairly dangerous. Fire enough of them and one is bound to get through. What if these weapons were sold to our enemies and used to menace commercial and civilian shipping? It's the next level of piracy.

We need *more* carrier battle groups, not *less*. Carrier battle groups are the most visible way of projecting American power abroad in theaters where we face dangerous repressive regimes like North Korea and Iran. It's good that countries like India are stepping up by building two new conventionally-powered aircraft carriers and support vessels, but we have to pull our own weight, too.

Video: Muslim Student Association member calls for second holocaust

May 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am astonished and appalled by this video. (H/T Gateway Pundit, Hot Air via ECM)

The Weekly Standard sets it up:

> Last night ***NewsReal Blog's*** Editor-in-Chief David Horowitz gave a talk at UC San Diego to counter the Muslim Students Association's Israeli Apartheid Week. (Horowitz made a point to properly describe the event as "Hitler Youth" week.) …
>
> During the Question and Answer period Horowitz had a chilling exchange with a member of the MSA in which he prodded her to reveal the depraved depths of her Jew-hatred. What's shocking is not so much that she holds such views, but rather that she was willing to admit it…

Partial transcript:

MSA member: If I support Hamas, because your question forces me to condemn Hamas. If I support Hamas, I look really bad.

Horowitz: If you don't condemn Hamas, obviously you support it. Case closed. I have had this experience at UC Santa Barbara, where there were 50 members of the Muslim Students Association sitting right in the rows there. And throughout my hour talk I kept asking them, will you condemn Hizbollah and Hamas. And none of them would. And then when the question period came, the president of the Muslim Students Association was the first person to ask a question. And I said, 'Before you start, will you condemn Hizbollah?' And he said, 'Well, that question is too complicated for a yes or no answer.' So I said, 'Okay, I'll put it to you this way. I am a Jew. The head of Hizbollah has said that he hopes that we will gather in Israel so he doesn't have to hunt us down globally. For or Against it?

MSA member: For it.

I condemn Hizbollah and I condemn hatred of Jews. I hope you do too.

New Zealand pro-life club finally granted official status by university

May 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The University of Auckland pro-life group, Prolife Auckland, today announced their successful affiliation at the University of Auckland.
>
> The announcement comes on the heels of the group's recent overturning of a policy discriminating against pro-life groups at the university. Since 2002, anyone wanting to start a pro-life club on campus has had only one opportunity every 365 days, at an annual general meeting, to try and gain official club status, whereas any other club simply had to apply at a Student Forum, which takes place weekly.
>
> […]The pro-life group affiliated this afternoon at the Auckland University Students Association (AUSA) forum. Debate occurred over whether the pro-life group should affiliate, with those in favor arguing that all students should have the right to choose what they believe and to express their views on campus.

At least there is some good news, because the University of Calgary students in Canada are getting beaten up. I thought that Canada was more conservative than New Zealand? I guess not.

Related posts

- University of Calgary convicts eight pro-life students
- University of Calgary denies legal counsel to accused accused students
- University of Calgary students face expulsion for pro-life display
- McGill University and University of Calgary censor pro-life students
- University of Ottawa cancels Ann Coulter appearance
- Ann Coulter files hate speech claim against Canadian university
- Canadian student union leader says pro-lifers are all potential murderers
- Lakehead University bans pro-life club
- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's University
- Pro-life club at McGill University banned
- University of Calgary uses police to threaten pro-life students (More from Ezra Levant)
- Canadian pro-life student quarantined by public school principal

Mongolia suffers one of the worst winters in 50 years

May 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Breitbart. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Nearly 20 percent of Mongolia's livestock has died as a result of one of the worst winters in 50 years, and the figure could double by the end of the year unless some $18 million in humanitarian funding is met, the United Nations said Wednesday.
>
> "We are looking at a very serious loss of livelihood for the population," Rana Flowers, a representative of the U.N. Children's Fund in Mongolia who is also coordinating U.N. assistance in the country briefed reporters while in Geneva.
>
> At least 8.1 million out of Mongolia's 44 million cattle have perished this winter due to the extreme weather, locally known as a "Dzud".
>
> The phenomenon is characterized by dry summers followed by long, cold and snowy winters. Its impact on livestock is longer, as the following summer will be too short for the livestock to regain its strength before the next winter.
>
> Rana said that one-third of Mongolia's population, or nearly 180,000 households, are dependent on herding for their livelihoods.
>
> So far, the United Nations estimates that 30,000 households have seen at least half of their livestock perish, and a further 9,000 families lost all of their animals.

I am seeing a lot of snow and hail in various North American locations, too. In MAY!

William Lane Craig lectures on Bart Ehrman and the historical Jesus

May 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture by Dr. Craig on Bart Ehrman's approach to the historical Jesus.

Clip 1 of 6:

Clip 2 of 6:

Clip 3 of 6:

Clip 4 of 6:

Clip 5 of 6:

Clip 6 of 6:

And then there is the debate between William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman, (transcript here), where you get to see it all in action in front of real students at a real university!

I also see that Brian Auten posted something here, but I don't know whether it is the audio from this lecture or something else entirely.

All my Christian readers – I hope you guys can all make a case for the resurrection that stands up. Bill's case stands up – in the university, against the toughest opponents. Will you stand up for Jesus, too?

Further study

The top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Three debates where you can see this play out:

- Craig Evans and Bart Ehrman
- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Extra stuff

Stand to Reason has a post featuring Mike Licona discussing Ehrman.

Frank Turek shows why every Christian should learn apologetics

May 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A series of 5 video clips delivered in a standard evangelical church.

About Frank Turek:

> An eight-year veteran of the United States Navy, Frank served as a Naval Aviator in the Pacific, Indian Ocean, and Persian Gulf. He has a Doctorate in Apologetics, a Masters Degree in Public Administration, and has taught courses in Leadership and Management at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C.. Frank and his wife Stephanie reside near Charlotte, North Carolina and are blessed with three incredible sons.

Wishing vs. knowing: which is Biblical?

Did the universe come into being out of nothing?

Is the universe designed?

Is there evidence for an intelligent cause of living systems?

Why should we trust the Bible?

I would say that the quickest way for us to stop the decline in church attendance is to embrace what you see Frank doing in these videos. We need a lot more naval aviators with PhDs speaking about WHY Christianity is true in the churches. We have enough emotivism, postmodernism, relativism, universalism, fideism, mysticism, anti-intellectualism and hedonism in the church – now let's have some truth for a change. Let's have some evidence. Let's hear some alternative views. Let's see some arguments. Let's see some debates.

Frank's web site is here.

Mentoring

- the importance of being able to argue both sides of a question
- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church
- why won't Christians defend their faith in public?

Obama’s Supreme Court nominee gave money to pro-abortion group

May 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> …Kagan has revealed her pro-abortion loyalties by contributing financially to the pro-abortion National Partnership for Women and Families (NPWF), reported Americans United for Life Wednesday.
>
> NPWF, according to its own website, works “to increase women’s access to quality, confidential reproductive health services and block attempts to limit reproductive rights and reverse hard-won gains.” The organization goes on to specify “contraceptive services and supplies, sexuality education, [and] abortion services” as among its top concerns.
>
> In addition, wrote AUL, NPWF senior advisor Judith Lichtman “wholeheartedly” supported Kagan’s nomination in a letter, saying the Solicitor General was a “friend and colleague.” Lichtman, a radical supporter of abortion, has said that “efforts to limit coverage of abortion services are really attempts to deny women access to health care services,” according to AUL.
>
> NPWF has deep connections among the most powerful pro-abortion lobby groups in the country: NPWF President Debra L. Ness serves on the Board of Directors at Emily’s List, a group dedicated to helping pro-abortion female politicians win elections, and once worked as deputy director of NARAL. NPWF Board Chairwoman Ellen Malcolm was the founder of Emily’s List.

Obama is the most pro-abortion president we’ve ever had. So it makes sense that he would nominate a radical pro-abortion candidate.

Democrats are the party of abortion. If you don’t like abortion, don’t vote for Democrats.

But is she a socialist, too?

Erick Erickson of Red State has a PDF of her college thesis on socialism. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> This proves Elena Kagan is an open and avowed socialist. The woman declares that socialists must stick together instead of fracture in order to advance a socialist agenda, which Kagan advocates.

Obama the tax and spend socialist picked a socialist to be his nominee to the Supreme Court. Makes sense.

NJ Gov. Christie smacks down reporter who accuses him of being "confrontational"

May 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must-see I found at Hot Air.

He's not my favorite Republican, but that is pretty funny.

And he supports school choice

Although New Jersey is dominated by teacher unions, the Republicans passed a school choice bill.

Excerpt:

> A Senate committee approved legislation today creating scholarships for students to attend private schools during a raucous hearing held in front of the Statehouse Annex building.
>
> Hundreds of demonstrators, mostly students from private and charter schools, gathered to rally for the bill. Supporters said it provides students a chance to leave failing public schools, while opponents said it undermines the public school system.
>
> The bill (S1872) could fund $24 million in scholarships for up to 4,000 children the first year. After five years, up to 20,000 children would receive $120 million in scholarships, they said. More money would be set aside for grants to public schools. The funding would come from donations by corporations who would receive tax credits equal to their contributions.
>
> […]A similar bill has previously failed to gain traction in recent years. Now it has bipartisan backing in the Senate — it's spearheaded by Lesniak and Sen. Tom Kean Jr. (R-Union) — and Gov. Chris Christie's support.
>
> […]African-American churches, led by Black Ministers Council Executive Director Rev. Reginald Jackson, held a press conference earlier this morning to support the legislation. He said people need to decide whether to support school institutions or the children.
>
> "Why do we insist on supporting a failing system?" he said. "When are we going to decide our children are more important."

The only people who don't like school choice are unionized teachers who don't want their customers (parents and children) to have a choice to fire them if they don't perform. Would you like it if you could only buy one kind of shoe? Or one kind of gaming console? Then why do you put up with government-run monopolies when it comes to your children's education? Let teachers who are good be paid more, and let teachers who are bad be paid less. That's just common sense.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel’s documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama’s new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher’s unions make war on charter schools

Michele Bachmann on the US taxpayer-funded bailout of Greece

May 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The United States supplies tons of taxpayer money to the IMF, and the IMF used it to bail out Greece from their own fiscal craziness.

Oh, she isn't happy at all.

Here's Paul Ryan with more details.

This is 23 minutes long.

Ruth Institute to host conference on the defense of marriage

May 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

She can teach you to defend marriage

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse is the foundress of the Ruth Institute, and she is planning a conference to train the next generation to be marriage champions.

Link to the conference details is here.

Some details:

> Where: Murrieta Hot Springs, CA
> When: August 12th – 15th, 2010
> Who: You, if you apply – application deadline is May 21st!
> Cost: Free, if your application is accepted

If you guys like William Lane Craig debates, Dr. Morse is the William Lane Craig of the marriage debate.

Some recent podcasts featuring Dr. J

1) Interview with Marvin O'Lasky at the King's College in New York.

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

> Marvin Olasky, provost of New York City's The King's College and editor-in-chief of WORLD Christian Magazine, interviews Dr J on a wide range of topics relating to marriage and family. Afterward, she takes student questions.

2) Debate at the Commonwealth Club.

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

> The Commonwealth Club of California hosts a speaker panel to discuss same-sex marriage, both in the context of the state and federal challenges through the courts and more generally in society and culture. The four panelists are Molly McKay, media director for Marriage Equality USA; Jennifer Roback Morse,

> president and founder of the Ruth Institute, Therese Stewart, Chief Deputy City Attorney, San Francisco; and Kevin Snider, attorney for the plaintiffs in the federal court case over Prop 8, and Chief Counsel of the Pacific Justice Institute. Doug Sovern, broadcast journalist of "Sovern Nation" and 3-time winner of the AP's "Reporter of the Year" Award for California, moderates.

I listened to both of these and they are AWESOME. You men should listen to the interview, where she has specific things to say about men and marriage. It is a major concern to me that more women do not defend marriage like Dr. Morse. If a woman wants to get married, then she needs to defend marriage like Dr. Morse. And that means understanding *what marriage is about!*

By the way, Dr. Morse is on Facebook. As am I.

Obama wants 23 billion more from taxpayers to bailout teacher unions again

May 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Despite President Obama's pledge for honest budgeting and billions of dollars in stimulus money spent to save teachers' jobs, the Education Department is asking for off-the-books emergency funding to keep local districts from laying off school teachers next school year.
>
> Education Secretary Arne Duncan sent Democratic lawmakers a request Thursday to pass a $26 billion emergency supplemental to fund up to 300,000 teachers' jobs that he says will otherwise be lost in the fall.
>
> […]The request comes just a year after an unprecedented $100 billion in federal stimulus money was allocated to school districts as part of the $863 billion recovery act. Of that amount, $48 billion was designated for saving teachers' jobs and investing in educational programs. Another $31 billion in stimulus funds were sent to states for Pell grants, competitive funds and programs helping disadvantaged students.
>
> […]An Education Department spokesman acknowledged that the stimulus funds have already saved roughly 300,000 teachers' jobs once, but an additional $23 billion more is needed to preserve education jobs, along with $1 billion in funds to save early childhood education jobs and an additional $2 billion to support public safety.

Yet another bailout from productive private sector taxpayers, for yet another unproductive Democrat special interest group.

Oh well, at least the teacher unions are happy with their bailout. And the Wall Street bankers are happy with their bailout. And the auto unions are happy with their bailout. And the public sector unions are happy with their bailout. And so on, and so on, and so on.

I would expect that the left-wing media will getting a bailout soon. And then the left-wing trial lawyers. And then the left-wing illegal immigrants. And then the left-wing prisoners. That should about cover it, I guess.

Who else is left?

Hey Obama! Where's my bailout?
Oh. Of course.

Phil Fernandes explains his view of free will and divine sovereignty

May 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It also happens to be MY view, pretty much.

This is SPOOKY! I could have said 99% of this myself!

The only thing we differ on is that I think you can lose your salvation, but only by committing "the unforgiveable sin", which is rejecting God's grace intentionally. You can't lose your salvation by sinning, because you are forgiven. But every sin will cause damage in your life.

Related posts

- William Lane Craig discusses Calvinism and the problem of evil
- What are the differences between Wesleyan Arminianism and Calvinism?
- First debate on Calvinism/Molinism between James White and Michael Brown
- James White debates Michael Brown on Calvinism vs Foreknowledge (1 of 2)
- Michael Brown debates James White on Foreknowledge vs Calvinism (2 of 2)
- What about those who have never heard of Jesus?

Response from a Calvinist

- Stan's series of posts at Birds of the Air on sovereignty and suffering

Barbara Kay lecture on political correctness in the academy

May 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Blazing Cat Fur, a Canadian blog. The camera shakes for a couple of seconds in clip 1, but it's all good from there.

Clip 1 of 5:

Clip 2 of 5:

Clip 3 of 5:

Clip 4 of 5:

Clip 5 of 5:

I don't agree with Barbara Kay on everything, but she's solid on this topic.

Canadian readers, be sure and send me any good stuff from Mark Steyn, Ezra Levant, Barbara Kay, Rex Murphy and Denyse O'Leary.

Obama’s attorney general has his head in the sand on national security

May 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow, this is just crazy.

Remember this one:

And this one:

Why is this guy attorney general?

UPDATE: Actually Investors Business Daily recounts his many failures in this editorial.

Excerpt:

> An appearance before the House Judiciary Committee last week illustrates the problem. Holder told the panel that Justice Department decisions “are done in a political way.” Thanks for the honesty, but that’s not what the job requires.
>
> This may explain why Holder could question whether Arizona’s new law on illegal immigrants is “unconstitutional” and imply that those who drafted the bill were racist, and, in the next breath, admit that he hadn’t even read the 17-page bill.
>
> If he took the time to read it, he’d discover that Arizona’s measure basically takes existing U.S. federal law and makes it state law too. Is the federal law unconstitutional as well?

And an MP3 version is here.

New talks on marrriage by Jennifer Roback Morse and Maggie Gallagher

May 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to these several times each, and they are really good. Even better than the ones I posted earlier. If you only have time for one and you're new, listen to the Dr. Morse lecture. If you have time for both or you've heard Dr. Morse before, listen to the Maggie Gallagher lecture.

She can teach you to defend marriage

Jennifer Roback Morse

First, this is Dr. Morse's well-known lecture on "The Institute Formerly Known As Marriage". She takes a look at the decline of marriage using her skills as an economist. She talks about the importance of a mother being present during the first 18 months of the child's development, and the purpose of marriage.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics covered include children's needs, no-fault divorce, single motherhood and same-sex marriage.

Maggie Gallagher

Maggie Gallagher

Second, here is a *very* Catholic talk given by Maggie Gallagher. But Maggie is one of the best known voices defending marriage and you can even learn a little bit about her background here – she had an out of wedlock child and saw firsthand the effects of having no father in the home on her son.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics covered include children’s needs, single motherhood, same-sex marriage and the marriage movement.

MUST-READ: Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?

May 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this post over at Stuart Schneiderman's blog.

What's the problem anyway?

> If girls are induced to make hooking up their most predominant mode of relating to boys, then they will be giving their sexual favors to a certain type of guy, one who is called a pick up artist.But what happens to another young man, the one who works hard at his studies, who is preparing himself for success in the world, who does not spend his weekend taking a course on how to pick up girls? Isn't he going to be overlooked, and thus, devalued, by young women who are settling for hookups.
>
> The hookup culture thus undermines a work ethic.
>
> And if the model of the modern relationship is something called friends with benefits, what does that say about the values of commitment, loyalty, and fidelity.
>
> Clearly, many young people have been induced to act as though these values do not matter, because they have learned the amoral lesson that it is alright for two people to exploit each other if they have agreed that they are not exploiting each other.

So how is to blame?

> Meantime, Flanagan offers a useful analysis of how the hookup culture started, and how it took hold with the unintended connivance of mothers.
>
> It began in the late 1970s with a generation of feminist mothers who had decided, quite consciously, to bring up their daughters differently.
>
> In Flanagan's words: "… a large number of modern mothers were committed to helping their daughters incorporate sexual lives within a normal teenage girlhood, one in which sex did not instantly and permanently cleave a girl from her home and her family."
>
> It might seem dated by now, but these mothers took it for granted that their daughters would experience their sexual awakening within the context of a relationship, with a boyfriend.
>
> In her words: "This set wasn't in the business of providing girls and young women the necessary information and services to allow boys and men to discard them sexually. Their reaction to the kinds of sexual experiences that so many American girls are now having would have been horror and indignation."
>
> What started out as a permission slip for teenage girls to have sex with their

> boyfriends morphed into the hookup culture.
>
> Unintentionally, so.
>
> We are dealing with unintended consequences. Feminists decided that the double standard was unjust. Mothers everywhere bought this idea and taught their daughters that they had as much of a right to sexual pleasure as any boy did. If the unintended result was the hookup culture, then surely they bear some responsibility.
>
> It may well be that they have now learned why there is a double standard and why feminine sexuality should never be confused with masculine sexuality.

Read the whole thing. This is a must-read. I want everyone to click though and print it and read it. Please.

UPDATE: Kelli sends this link to a recent CNN column by Racquel Welch in which she attacks the birth control pill as one of the reasons for the over-sexed culture that is harming young women today. The pill is considered to be a cornerstone of feminism because it divorces sex from procreation and allows women to have sex without having to form relationships with reliable men and vulnerable children.

Now even the Miss USA pageant is decided by political correctness

May 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michelle Malkin lists the errors made by the winner of the pageant.

Excerpt:

> She nearly tripped over her gown.
>
> She called birth control a "controlled substance."
>
> She argued that contraceptives should be covered by health insurers because they are "expensive" — and then said you could get them for "free" from your OB/GYN's office.

But she is a Muslim, and an Arab-American, and she expressed support for taxpayer-funded birth control, so she won.

More from Michelle:

> Does she even comprehend the concept of insurance? The purpose of insurance isn't to cover every last medical expense. It's *supposed* to cover events that are beyond your control. Should auto insurers now cover oil changes and satellite radio installations? I mean, hey, they're "expensive," too!

Yes, if something is totally optional, based on individual priorities and choices, but it is "expensive", then people should not have to pay for it themselves. Someone else should pay, because it's expensive. Perhaps a working husband, who doesn't really need the money he earns anyway, should have to pay for it. After all, he needs to help people who freely choose to engage in risky behaviors. Especially if he is pro-life, because then he can pay for abortions that sometimes result from using birth control pills.

UPDATE: In 2007, she won a pole-dancing contest. There she is, your ideal…

UPDATE: Her family is Linked to the terrorist group Hezbollah???

Who should have won?

So who should have won, if politics were set aside?

> Miss Oklahoma Morgan Elizabeth Woolard finished first runner-up to winner Rima Fakih of Michigan, and conspiracy theorists are grumbling that her support of SB 1070 may have cost her the crown in a repeat of last year's Carrie Prejean controversy.
>
> When "The Office" star Cesar Nunez posed Miss Oklahoma a question about where she stood on Arizona's SB 1070 Sunday night, the crowd erupted in boos over the intrusion of politics, Fox News reported.
>
> "I'm a huge believer in states' rights. I think that's what's so wonderful about

> America," Woolard answered of the law which requires state police to stop and question possible undocumented immigrants. "So I think it's perfectly fine for Arizona to create that law."
>
> Woolard added that she is against racial profiling.

There's your winner: Miss Oklahoma.

After last year, you'd think they would have got some judges who could actually judge the merits of the argument instead of whether the conclusion is politically correct. But you'd be wrong. This is just more of the fascists on the secular left sending a clear message to conservatives – agree with us or we will destroy your career. It's "Expelled" all over again. When the left is in control, there is no diversity of thought.

Secular leftists cannot handle disagreement and debate, so they silence and suppress those who disagree with them. They don't want to discuss the merits. They just want to feel good and to be perceived as being good, regardless of the effects of the policies that they advocate. Secular leftists are the only ones who care about race, *because they are racists.* They are the only ones who care about sex, *because they are sexist.*

By the way, I have no television, so I did not watch this travesty. If I want to admire a woman, I listen to Jennifer Roback Morse lectures, or watch Michele Bachmann speeches, or read Ann Coulter columns.

What caused Silicon Valley companies to outsource jobs?

May 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article from the center-right Manhattan Institute. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Silicon Valley faces a serious threat, however: the fiscal and regulatory earthquakes rocking California, which verges on becoming a failed state. Measured by per-household state and local government spending, California ranks third-highest in the nation, behind Alaska and New York. The state government is trying desperately to squeeze money out of any profitable activity to meet the crippling costs. Further, California continues to impose onerous regulations on the private sector. High taxes and stifling regulations give companies a strong incentive to move elsewhere. In this increasingly business-hostile environment, will Silicon Valley's unique entrepreneurial spirit survive?
>
> […]California has piled every imaginable burden on businesses. Minimum-wage laws are among the highest in the country, and health and safety regulations are among the strictest; cities like San Francisco and San Jose require businesses to offer employees health insurance; labor laws are extremely union-friendly; environmental policies drive up energy costs—and on and on. Small firms have the toughest time in this business-toxic climate. A recent study by Sanjay Varshney, dean of the College of Business Administration at California State University in Sacramento, estimates that the cost of state regulations in 2007 reached an average of $134,122 per small business—the equivalent of one job lost per company. And it's not just the small guys: Google, which uses colossal amounts of electricity, is building its data centers in other states or abroad, where energy is much cheaper.
>
> Hank Nothhaft is the CEO of Tessera, a firm in the field of semiconductor miniaturization. He shows me the vacant office parks and empty lots around his company's San Jose factory. Silicon Valley, he observes, lost more than a quarter of its computer, microchip, and communications-equipment manufacturing jobs from 2001 to 2008, and Tessera proved no exception. The company has kept some of its assembly lines and industrial operations going here, but it now produces two-thirds of its nanotechnology chips in less expensive North Carolina and in various countries overseas, with China becoming the latest contender for a production facility. Just back from a trip there, Nothhaft says that he has been offered terms he "cannot decently refuse." Using the Internet and videoconferencing, he can manage Tessera factories around the globe without leaving his San Jose office. "The business environment is becoming awful in California," Nothhaft complains—just by moving his headquarters to Nevada,

> he’d save $5 million a year in taxes.

I quoted the interesting part of the article above, the rest is just more details about the past, present and future of Silicon Valley.

Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines

May 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bad news from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Acting like Robert Mugabe on cocaine, Venezuela's dictator went on a shopping spree over the weekend, confiscating one farm and industry after another.
>
> […]One taking stood out, however — a 370-acre ranch in Yaracuy state that grows oranges and coffee and raises cattle with 38 shareholding farm workers. The scenic property on an otherwise desolate stretch of highway is owned by Diego Arria, Venezuela's former president of the U.N. Security Council. It's been in his family since 1852.
>
> Arria had spoken out against Chavez, so Chavez got personal. "If he wants to farm now, he will have to topple Chavez, because this now belongs to the revolution," El Presidente pronounced.
>
> Arria told IBD he's been pressured for two years with acts of vandalism and the kidnapping of farmhands. A month ago, Chavista Ministry of Culture operatives approached him in Norway, demanding that he quit criticizing the Chavez regime. If he didn't "play ball," he'd lose the ranch, Arria was warned. "But I never negotiate with thugs," he said.
>
> Chavez's red-shirts finally acted over the weekend, opening the farm to "the masses" in a show of class warfare. Chavista leaders from the National Institute of Lands headed first to Arria's living quarters, rolling over his bed, pawing through his wife's clothing and desecrating a chapel dedicated to the Arrias' late daughter.
>
> For their big photo spectacular, they hauled in 300 or 400 children to swim in Arria's swimming pool, ride the ranch horses and tour the main house — encouraging the kids to take "souvenirs." Chavez said it was all proof he was "socializing happiness."

Business Week explains what happens when a socialist tyrant like Chavez destroys the right to private property and confiscate profits from business owners.

> Fitch Ratings cut its Venezuelan economic growth forecast by more than half on concern this month's currency devaluation will spur inflation and erode consumers' purchasing power, said analyst Erich Arispe. Venezuela's gross domestic product will expand about 0.7 percent this year, down from a previous forecast of about 2 percent, Arispe, who covers the Andean region for Fitch, said in a telephone interview from New York today. He estimates the South American

> nation's economy shrank 2.5 percent in 2009.
>
> […]President Hugo Chavez has threatened to seize businesses that raise prices following the devaluation of the official exchange rate of as much as 50 percent. Trade Minister Eduardo Saman said yesterday the government began to expropriate six Hipermercado Exito stores after Chavez said the French-Colombian owned retailer broke the law by raising prices.
>
> […]Morgan Stanley said yesterday that Venezuela's inflation rate will surge to 45 percent this year from 27 percent last year, which was the highest rate among 78 economies tracked by Bloomberg. A 45 percent increase in consumer prices would be the biggest since 1996.
>
> […]The devaluation comes at a time when Venezuela began rolling blackouts this month for two to four hours a day to save power as the worst drought in 50 years threatens to shut the nation's biggest hydroelectric plant and collapse the power grid.

If you attack business like this, you lose jobs. Entrepreneurs shut their businesses down when they have to take losses because government inflates the currency. It's madness. It's like asking someone to make gold out of straw, and whipping them when they can't. But that's socialism. And Chavez isn't any different from any other socialist. The whole system doesn't work. And this is what you can see today in places like North Korea of Zimbabwe. Or Greece and Venezuela, if you like.

I have to post this picture of Obama and Chavez. You know the drill.

Hey Obama! I think there's a point when people who disagree with me have made enough money!
It's coming.

Related posts

- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela

- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Why don’t governments cut spending during tough times?

May 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this article from USA Today.

Excerpt:

Many states and cities coping with hard times are asking residents to open their wallets for the latest fashion in taxation — the temporary tax.
Governments are raising taxes for a specific period of time and promising the hikes will go away when good times return.

Some big temporary taxes:

•**Arizona** voters decide today whether to approve a three-year sales-tax hike. Republican Gov. Jan Brewer pushed to raise the sales tax from 5.6% to 6.6%, dedicating two-thirds of the new money for schools.

•**Kansas** hikes its sales tax July 1 from 5.3% to 6.3% for three years. The tax is designed to prevent cuts in education and social programs.

• **Mobile, Ala.**, boosts its sales tax by 1 cent for 16 months starting June 1. The combined state and local rate will be 10%. Goal: avoid laying off police and firefighters.

A half-dozen other states are eyeing temporary taxes. So are many cities and counties, including King County, Wash., which includes Seattle.

Temporary taxes are phenomena seen during recessions, says Curtis Dubay, a tax expert at the conservative Heritage Foundation. “You don’t hear about temporary taxes when money is flowing into the coffers.”

The problem is that these taxes rarely go away, he says. “Once politicians get their hands on revenue, they won’t give it up,” he adds.

I noticed that Stan, a resident of Arizona, wrote about an alternative to temporary tax hikes in this post.

Excerpt:

> Let’s see what the official 2010 budget says. Hmm. Well, they’ll be paying back $50 million in Federal Stimulus money. Odd. There is a line item for an additional $40 million in “new private prison beds”. Right … so our criminals are more comfortable. Got it. Interesting. There is a “Department of Racing”. Apparently the Department of Racing regulates the Arizona parimutuel horse and greyhound racing industry. Oh, now this is funny. The Department of Economic Security has a budget of $546 million. Perhaps we ought to fire them, eh? While we’re at it, perhaps we ought to take a real hard look at the Governor’s Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting and their $2 million. I’m thinking they’re not doing their job. Oh, I suppose there is no way around the $2 million we’re spending on the

> Board of Cosmetology. I mean, what could be more important to Arizonans than beauty treatments. Oh, yeah, we have to regulate that carefully. There's another $4 million on a "Telecom for the Deaf Fund". I know … that's a good thing … but is it more important than public safety? Is that *really* the job of the government? And the fact that we're *spending* more than $13 million on a "Department of Gaming" (with another $74 million to the Arizona State Lottery Commission) is troubling to me all on its own.
>
> Allegedly something around 60% of our budget is already spent on schools and public safety and health care. Fine. But is anyone looking at *what* that money is going toward and how to cut *waste*? Trust me. There is *lots* of waste.

Overspending governments always market tax hikes as ways to say essential services or "compassionate" social programs. Why can't they just cut some wasteful spending, instead? Is that so hard?

The truth about government-run health care in the United States

May 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two stories today, the first from the Houston Chronicle, about Medicare. (H/T Stuart Scheiderman)

Excerpt:

> Texas doctors are opting out of Medicare at alarming rates, frustrated by reimbursement cuts they say make participation in government-funded care of seniors unaffordable.
>
> Two years after a survey found nearly half of Texas doctors weren't taking some new Medicare patients, new data shows 100 to 200 a year are now ending all involvement with the program. Before 2007, the number of doctors opting out averaged less than a handful a year.
>
> […]More than 300 doctors have dropped the program in the last two years, including 50 in the first three months of 2010, according to data compiled by the Houston Chronicle. Texas Medical Association officials, who conducted the 2008 survey, said the numbers far exceeded their assumptions.
>
> […]The opt-outs follow years of declining Medicare reimbursement that culminated in a looming 21 percent cut in 2010. Congress has voted three times to postpone the cut, which was originally to take effect Jan. 1. It is now set to take effect June 1.
>
> The uncertainty proved too much for Dr. Guy Culpepper, a Dallas-area family practice doctor who says he wrestled with his decision for years before opting out in March. It was, he said, the only way "he could stop getting bullied and take control of his practice."
>
> "You do Medicare for God and country because you lose money on it," said Culpepper, a graduate of the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. "The only way to provide cost-effective care is outside the Medicare system, a system without constant paperwork and headaches and inadequate reimbursement."

What's wrong with government running health care? If there is no money to be made in health care, then there is no one who invests in it. The government is left to bear the full brunt of the costs, and they pass it on to taxpayers. After helping themselves to piece of the tax revenues, of course. The patients are the least of their concerns – especially the elderly, who no longer pay taxes into the system.

Texas rolls back liberal anti-American bias from textbooks

May 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here on Eagle Forum.

Excerpt:

> By a 10-to-5 margin, the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) just told liberals to stop "messing" with social studies textbooks.
>
> For years, liberals have imposed their revisionist history on our nation's public school students, expunging important facts and historic figures while loading the textbooks with liberal propaganda, distortions and cliches. It's easy to get a quick lesson in the virulent leftwing bias by checking the index and noting how textbooks treat President Ronald Reagan and Senator Joseph McCarthy.
>
> When parents object to leftwing inclusions and omissions, claiming they should have something to say about what their own children are being taught and how their taxpayers' money is spent, they are usually vilified as "book burners" and belittled as uneducated primitives who should allow the "experts" to decide. The self-identified "experts" are alumni of liberal teachers colleges and/or members of a leftwing teachers union.
>
> In most states, the liberal education establishment enjoys total control over the state's board of education, department of education, and curriculum committees. Texas is different; the Texas State Board of Education is elected, and the people (even including parents!) have a voice.
>
> Texas is uniquely important in textbook content because the state of Texas is the largest single purchaser of textbooks. Publishers can hardly afford to print different versions for other states, so Texas curriculum standards have nationwide influence.

So what are some of the changes? Are they positive?

The review of social studies curriculum (covering U.S. Government, American History, World History and Economics) comes up every ten years, and 2010 is one of those years. The unelected education "experts" proposed their history revisions such as eliminating Independence Day, Christopher Columbus, Thomas Edison, Daniel Boone and Neil Armstrong, and replacing Christmas with Diwali.

After a public outcry, the SBOE responded with common-sense improvements. Thomas Edison, the world's greatest inventor, will be again included in the narrative of American History.

[…]The SBOE specified that teaching about the Bill of Rights should include a reference to the right to keep and bear arms. Some school curricula pretend the Second Amendment

doesn’t exist.

[…]Texas curriculum standards will henceforth accurately describe the U.S. government as a “constitutional republic” rather than as a democracy. The secularists tried to remove reference to the religious basis for the founding of America, but that was voted down.

[…]Discussions of economics will not be limited to the theories of Karl Marx, John Maynard Keynes, and Adam Smith. Textbooks must also include Milton Friedman and Friedrich von Hayek, two champions of free-market theory.

History textbooks will now be required to cover the “unintended consequences” of Great Society legislation, affirmative action, and Title IX legislation.

This is the only article I found that had actual details of the changes. The rest were just left-wing posturing and vague accusations. But that’s the left-wing media, I guess.

I still haven’t given up on my dream of living in Texas, and this is just one more reason why. I could actually send my (future) kids to public schools in Texas!

Obama administration complains about Arizona immigration law to China

May 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> In a "candid and constructive" human rights dialogue with officials from the People's Republic of China last week, Obama administration officials brought up Arizona's new immigration-enforcement law, telling the Chinese Communists it was an example of a "troubling trend" in the United States and an indication of "discrimination or potential discrimination" in American society.
>
> Ironically, the State Department's most recent report on human rights in China indicates that the government there restricts the internal travel of its own citizens.
>
> […]On Fox News Tuesday morning, State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley–trying to defend Posner's comments – was asked if he had read the ten-page Arizona law. He said he has not read it, although he did criticize it.
>
> Attorney General Eric Holder, who is weighing a constitutional challenge to the law, admitted last week that he has not read it; and Homeland Secretary Janet Napolitano on Monday told a Senate panel that she had not read the law, either.
>
> The People's Republic of China is "an authoritarian state in which the Chinese Communist Party constitutionally is the paramount source of power," according to the State Department's 2009 Human Rights report on China.
>
> The report also states, "Individuals and groups, especially those deemed politically sensitive by the government, continued to face tight restrictions on their freedom to assemble, practice religion, and travel."

China is one of the biggest violators of basic human rights on the planet. So what do the Democrats do? They go to the major human rights violators and tell them that the United States is just as evil. We're evil because we protect our borders and enforce our immigration laws. China murders people for their religion and sells their organs, and we're equal to China – at least according to Democrats.

UPDATE: Republican senators are demanding that the Obama administration publicly retract their outrageous comments.

Fiscally conservative Canada campaigns against global bank tax

May 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Story from Breitbart.

Excerpt:

> Canada will "resist" a bank tax, Industry Minister Tony Clement said Tuesday as ministers fanned out across the world to raise opposition to the proposal for avoiding another financial crisis.
>
> "Canada is, and will remain, opposed to a tax that would penalize financial institutions that remained strong and prosperous while many of the world's banks failed," Clement told a press conference with Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon.
>
> "We will resist the bank tax here at home and we seek to convince other heads of government of the virtue of our position," he said as senior ministers echoed his message in Mumbai, Beijing and Washington.
>
> Attempts to reach international agreement on coordinated bank taxes at last month's G20 and IMF meetings ran aground.
>
> Nations including Canada and Brazil, whose banking sectors emerged largely unscathed from the financial crisis, objected to the plan, favoring higher capital reserve requirements instead.
>
> […]Clement said the bank tax would "encourage risky behavior" if it is used to create a bank bailout fund and "reward bad behavior" of those institutions responsible for the recent financial crisis in the first place.
>
> As well, it would "unduly burden" Canadian banks and put them at a

> "competitive disadvantage" to other financial institutions.
>
> "This tax would reach into consumers' pockets and punish our financial institutions which have taken precautions to avoid the very turmoil that is afflicting other parts of the globe," Clement lamented.

Stephen Harper is a fiscal conservative. He knows that low interest rates are bad, so he created tax-free savings accounts to get people to work and save their money. And he knows that people who buy houses need to be able to *pay for them*, and his banking policies reflect that. There is no Democrat-sponsored "Community Reinvestment Act" in Canada to allow the socialist mafia (ACORN) to pressure private banks into making risky loans. And there are no Democrats taking political contributions while blocking attempts to investigate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. And there are no bank bailouts!

The Conservative Party of Canada keeps its banking sector squeaky clean. They even plan to cut spending! And the Canadian people support fiscal conservatism. That's why they aren't facing the mess we are facing. And they have lower unemployment, too – 8.1% compared to our 9.9%. Canada is kicking our tails! How can this be? How did they manage to elect an economist, while we are stuck with this perpetually-bowing flibbertigibbet and his legions of bloviating boffins, each more corrupt and incompetent than the last? Democrats have no real-life experience! They just had rich parents!

Look at this article from the Financial Post.

Excerpt:

> "In Canada, there were no taxpayer bailouts of financial institutions, so we believe there is no justification for levies on banks and financial institutions," Harper said at a news conference following meetings with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy.
>
> […]Canada and the EU are in the midst of negotiating an ambitious trade deal. The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) was launched at the 2009 Canada-EU summit and to date, three rounds of negotiations have taken place. There are at least two more to go over the next year.
>
> The deal will give Canada greater access to the markets of the EU's member countries and will strengthen an economic relationship that is already worth $75-billion in trade. The EU is Canada's second-largest trading partner after the United States and is also Canada's second-largest source of direct foreign investment, putting $162-billion into Canada in 2009.

This is *grown-up* fiscal policy. Government *should stay out* of the mortgage-lending industry, and sign as many free-trade deals as possible. The exact opposite of what the Obama administration is doing.

How well did a government-run green energy policy work in Spain?

May 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Pajamas Media. (H/T Stuart Scheidernman)

Keep in mind that the socialists under Zapatero are running Spain now, and that's where this green energy policy came from. Is it working out for socialist Spain?

Excerpt:

> Pajamas Media has received a leaked internal assessment produced by Spain's Zapatero administration. The assessment confirms the key charges previously made by non-governmental Spanish experts in a damning report exposing the catastrophic economic failure of Spain's "green economy" initiatives.
>
> […]Unsurprisingly for a governmental take on a flagship program, the report takes pains to minimize the extent of the economic harm. Yet despite the soft-pedaling, the document reveals exactly why electricity rates "necessarily skyrocketed" in Spain, as did the public debt needed to underwrite the disaster. This internal assessment preceded the Zapatero administration's recent acknowledgement that the "green economy" stunt must be abandoned, lest the experiment risk Spain becoming Greece.
>
> The government report does not expressly confirm the highest-profile finding of the non-governmental report: that Spain's "green economy" program cost the country 2.2 jobs for every job "created" by the state. However, the figures published in the government document indicate they arrived at a job-loss number *even worse* than the 2.2 figure from the independent study.

Spain is giving up their green energy / green jobs initiative. What does Obama learn from Spain's failure?

Excerpt:

> This document is not a public report. Spanish media has referred to its existence in recent weeks though, while Bloomberg and the *Washington Examiner* have noted the impact: Spain is now forced to jettison its plans — Obama's model — for a "green economy."
>
> Remarkably, these items have received virtually no media attention.
>
> An item which has been covered widely, however, is that President Obama is now pressuring Spain to turn off its spigot of public debt in the name of averting a situation similar to that of Greece.
>
> Also covered widely is Obama's promotion of the American Power Act — the legislation which would replicate Spain's current situation in the United States.
>
> Put simply, Obama is currently promoting a policy in the U.S. which is based on a

> policy that he wishes to see Spain abandon.

Why can’t we learn from Spain’s failure and avoid making the same mistakes they did? Is that too much to ask?

Psychology Today features atheists who think that they are moral

May 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that someone had posted a link to me from this post, so I left the comment below. (I made a few tiny changes below, but it's basically the same as what I submitted). So far, the long comment has not been published, probably because it was mean, snarky and TOO LONG! So, I'll show the comment below, but first here's a word about the post itself. I left a new comment linking to this post, and we'll see if that one stays up. I understand why they would not approve my comment, if they don't – and so will you when you read below.

The post on Psychology Today

Notice the title "The Many Voices of the Happily Godless". It shows two things about morality on atheism. One – that there is safety in numbers. Atheists get their standard of right and wrong from watching other people. That's why they hate religion and want it banished from the public square, and why they resent Christians voting. They think that right and wrong is decided by counting votes, just like in Nazi Germany or pre-abolition England. So long as lots of people agree, then whatever the society decides is right for them, e.g. – abortion. Cultural relativism.

Second, the purpose of life on atheism is not to be a good person – there is no such thing as good and evil on atheism. They are trying to be happy. So they can define abortion as "good" and "moral" because murdering the weak isn't wrong so long as it makes them happy. That's what they mean by morality – what a person chooses to do in order to have feelings of happiness. The very concept of doing something because it is RIGHT, independently of what anyone thinks – as with abolitionists and pro-lifers and defenders of children's rights with respect to traditional marriage – is foreign to them. (I know that some atheists are pro-life, but most aren't!)

So they basically re-invent an accidental universe and an ethic of subjective selfish hedonism and then call that "morality", even though it is the complete opposite of morality. And then they cloister together in the ivory tower with a few sheltered social studies majors who agree with them, read only the New York Times, and watch only MSNBC, listen only to NPR, and then titter nervously to each other about the immoral masses who think that unborn children have a right to life that trumps the "right" to have irresponsible sex and then escape the (financial) consequences of their own risky behavior.

That's atheist "morality". There is no objective right and wrong, and no rational argumentation about morality – morality on atheism is an illusion, as atheist Michael Ruse says. You can do anything that you are powerful enough to do in order to have good feelings. Because you can. And you try to pass laws and elect candidates to silence anyone who makes you feel bad for being selfish. And if people disagree with you, then

you use the law to silence them, as at the University of Calgary with the pro-life students.

I am not saying that atheists MUST do evil, I am saying that the only reason they have not to do evil is because they can gain pleasure or avoid pain. And that is not morality, that's just self-interest. Hedonism.

The comment I left that they did not publish

So anyway, I left the comment below and it didn't appear. I wrote this in a single long edit and didn't spell-check it or proof-read it before I hit post. This is from the hip, so I hope it makes sense to you.

—-

It's not like this is even a close debate, by the way. The concept of rationally-grounded prescriptive morality is totally alien to an atheistic worldview.

1) There are no OBJECTIVE moral values on atheism, moral values independent of what humans think

2) There are no OBJECTIVE moral duties on atheism, moral duties independent of what humans think

3) There is no effective MORAL ACCOUNTABILITY on atheism, especially for powerful committed atheists like Stalin who can escape detection and consequences

4) There is no libertarian free will on atheism, due to materialism and biological determinism. You need the ability to choose in order to make MORAL CHOICES.

5) There is no ultimate significance to our actions on atheism, which undermines the rationality of self-sacrificial moral behavior when it goes against self-interest.

Self-interested hedonism is not "morality", it's self-interested hedonism. See the difference? You are not going to get people sacrificing their happiness for the lives of others on atheism, as with Christian abolitionists like William Wilberforce, because self-sacrifice is not rational on atheism. Self-interested hedonism is rational on atheism. The only reason to do anything on atheism is because it makes you feel good or to escape punishment from your society. That's not morality, it's the law of the jungle. Morality is sacrificing your life to free slaves when it gives you no feelings of happiness to do so, because you believe that every human being was born with a right to life, and a duty to know God personally.

Atheists can say the words "I'm moral" but what they mean is "I conform my behavior to my own personal preferences or to my society's arbitrary fashions in this time and place when it coincides with my selfishness or when I am sure I won't caught". There is no real way we ought to be on atheism. The universe is an accident and so are we. Doing what makes you happy is not morality – it's selfishness. Morality means doing the right thing, especially when it goes against your self-interest. But in an accidental universe without design, there is no way we ought to be. You do what you can get away with. That's atheist "morality".

And that's why atheistic communists murdered 100 million people in communist regimes last century, tens of millions more with abortion, and tens of millions more on

environmentalist overpopulation fads like banning DDT. Just look at the arguments and count the bodies. If you can't ground an objective right to life, then these things are possible. Killing those who diminish your happiness is consistent with atheism – survival of the fittest. It is NOT consistent with the teachings of Jesus – love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you.

Atheism is a psychological disfunction that results when a person jettisons the demands of their conscience because they want to pursue pleasure in an unrestrained way, or because they expect God to make them happy and he doesn't. That's how people become atheists – it's just immaturity. Atheists invent unscientific myths like the steady-state universe, the multiverse, aliens causing the origin of life, materialist conceptions of mind, unobservable pre-Cambrian fossils, etc. later, in order to disguise the pre-rational rebellion against God and the demands of the objective moral law. The whole point of atheism is to create an excuse for immoral, self-interested hedonistic behavior.

—-

I wrote a series of posts a while back in which I suggested 13 questions that you can use to understand WHERE atheists are coming from when it comes to morality. I also defined the minimal requirements for objective, rational, prescriptive morality, and explained why none of the requirements are grounded rationally by atheism, but ALL are grounded by Christian theism.

Lastly, you can look at just a few reasons why God exists, and some responses to just a few common objections.

A few reasons for Christian theism

- Kalam cosmological argument
- Fine-tuning of cosmological constants
- Galactic, stellar and planetary fine-tuning
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell(Dean Kenyon, Charles Thaxton)
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell (Stephen C. Meyer)
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion(Stephen C. Meyer, Jonathan Wells)
- The argument from irreducibly complex molecular machines (Michael Behe)
- historical criteria for extracting minimal facts and the earliest evidence for the resurrection in 1 Cor 15
- the minimal facts argument (Habermas/Craig/Licona)

Responses to a few common objections to Christian theism

- the problems of evil and suffering
- the problem of religious pluralism and religious truth claims
- the fate of the unevangelized (what about those who never heard of Jesus)
- the hiddenness of God (why isn't there more evidence for God's existence?)

- are all religions basically the same?

Some debates on God and morality

- Sean McDowell debates James Corbett on whether morality is grounded by atheism
- From Christianity Today, a written debate: Douglas Wilson vs. Christopher Hitchens
- From the University of Western Ontario, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs. Kai Nielsen
- From Schenectady College, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs Richard Taylor
- From Franklin & Marshall College, William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz (audio, video1, video2, video3, video4, video5, video6, video7)
- From the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, William Lane Craig vs. Louise Antony (part1, part2)
- A debate from the Unbelievable radio show between a Christian pastor and a lay atheist
- Transcript of debate between Greg Koukl and Skeptic Magazine editor Michael Shermer

MUST-READ: A good example of a mother parenting her boys

May 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have such a good story to tell you all from the dentist's office. I was in the waiting room waiting to be called in this morning, and this woman came in with 3 boys. They seemed to be 2,3 and 5. The two youngest boys started climbing on furniture and the oldest boy started getting interested in the computer in the lobby. The mother told the boys not to start anything big because they were leaving right away. Then she went to talk to the receptionist.

The youngest boys kept playing on the chairs, but the oldest boy was trying to figure out how to make icons open on the desktop of the Windows PC. Meanwhile, the mother got a document from the receptionist, and then she called to the boys that it was time to leave. The two youngest boys stopped climbing on chairs and they ran over to her, but the oldest was trying to figure out the computer. And do you know what the mother did?

(Try to think what you would do in this situation before continuing to read)

Well, she said to the eldest boy in a normal voice:

"Hey we're all leaving to go out to the car now and I need you to carry this important document for me so that it doesn't get bent or lost on the way to the car."

The kid just shot out of his seat, raced over to her and took the document carefully from her with both hands. And out they went, with the two youngest boys trying to push the door open for her.

Anyway, I just want to say that I want to have a son or two, and I want to see my wife treat my boys like that. I want her to understand men so well that she can get them to do what they ought to do for her (and for other women) without nagging, controlling or threatening. This is how women get men to do what is good for men.

This was perfect mothering. She understands how to appeal to the male nature. In time, those boys will grow up to trust women. They will find serving women natural. She is already treating them like grown men, instead of little boys! She's not ordering around – she's appealing to their male natures – their desire to be depended on and trusted by women. Women need to do a better job of studying men so they know how to do this.

I once saw Andrew's wife Jen resisting being hugged by her eldest son and telling him to go to his father. He was at the age when he needed to start to do that – she knew all about it because she's read books like "Bringing Up Boys" by James Dobson. She's a well-informed professional stay-at-home mother. And her husband loves her and appreciates her very much! Their children are amazing because they have a plan for how to bring them up.

How can you prefer a moral standard from one religion vs another?

May 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a reply to my extremely mean recent post about atheism's difficulties making moral behavior rational.

Llama wrote:

> Why is Christian morality correct? Why not Islamic morality?

And I replied like this:

Great question. You can't settle it by comparing moral specifics. You have to appeal to some sort of testable claim.

For example, you mentioned Islam. Islam thinks that Jesus never actually died on a cross (Surah 4:157). Are the Muslims correct in saying this? It's a historical claim, so to history we must go.

There is no credentialed historian of any stripe (atheist, agnostic, Jewish, etc.) who doubts the crucifixion. In fact, prominent atheist scholar E. P. Sanders of Duke University puts it on his list of **almost indisputable facts** about the historical Jesus.

> E. P. Sanders, Jesus and Judaism (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985). Sanders lists eight "almost indisputable facts" which he takes as his starting point (p. 11):
>
> 1. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.
> 2. Jesus was a Galilean who preached and healed.
> 3. Jesus called disciples and spoke of there being twelve.
> 4. Jesus confined his activity to Israel.
> 5. Jesus engaged in a controversy about the temple.
> **6. Jesus was crucified outside of Jerusalem by the Roman authorities.**
> 7. After his death Jesus' followers continued as an identifiable movement.
> 8. At least some Jews persecuted at least parts of the new movement . . . .
>
> See now also E. P. Sanders, The Historical Figure of Jesus (London: Penguin, 1993).

And prominent Jewish Professor of Religion **Paula Fredriksen** of Boston University says in **this paper** that "The single most solid fact we have about Jesus' life is his death. Jesus was crucified. Thus Paul, the gospels, Josephus, Tacitus: the evidence does not get any better than this."

Sanders and Fredriksen are probably two of the best scholars on the historical Jesus in the world, and they are NOT Christians – they have no axe to grind. So Islam is false as false can be. The Koran cannot contain any errors – Muslims claim it is inerrant and its moral

authority is lost if any error is found. But we've found a BIG ONE.

Regarding Christianity, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Christian morality should not be taken seriously either. Even Paul says that if the resurrection did not happen then Christianity, and Christian morality, is WORTHLESS. See **1 Corinthians 15:17-19**. 1 Corinthians is one of the most early and reliable books in the New Testament. It is authored by Paul in 55 AD – and no scholars denies that. It's genuine Paul. The creed in 1 Cor 15:3-7 is dated within 1 to 5 years of the Cross. By ATHEIST scholars like James Crossley.

My advice is to watch some DEBATES between Christian and non-Christian scholars on the topic of the resurrection. You'll find some linked **in this post**.

Or just look here:

Debates are a fun way to learn

Three debates where you can see this play out:

- **Craig Evans and Bart Ehrman**
- **Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman**
- **William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman** (**transcript here**)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- **James Crossley and William Lane Craig**

Not that I don't think you have to be an inerrantist in order to be a Christian, so long as your claims of error are on solid historical ground. (I am an inerrantist – you don't have to be to be a Christian – you just have to accept the classical creeds of Christendom)

Hope this helps. Come on – I typed all this in. At least listen to the William Lane Craig versus James Crossley debate. Please?

Every religion makes truth claims about the word, and you can choose a religion by testing those claims. Wouldn't it be neat if Christians learned to argue for their worldview using facts supplied by non-Christian experts? That's how I try to argue.

Free e-book answers critics of Signature in the Cell book

May 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Brian Auten of Apologetics 315.

Signature of Controversy is a free eBook with contributions by David Berlinski, David Klinghoffer, Casey Luskin, Paul Nelson, Jay Richards, Richard Sternberg and Stephen Meyer. It contains responses critics of Stephen Meyer's book *Signature in the Cell*[image].

Download the PDF ebook here. **(expires soon)**

Grab it now in case so you can have it together to read with Signature in the Cell.

What is intelligent design?

- R.C. Sproul interviews Stephen Meyer on Signature in the Cell
- Stephen Meyer explains what intelligent design is in a CNN editorial
- Stephen Meyer's Signature in the Cell in top ten science books on Amazon.com
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show

Free DVD on intelligent design are online

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

Related posts

- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell (Stephen C. Meyer)
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion(Stephen C. Meyer, Jonathan Wells)

How do Mexican immigration laws compare with the Arizona law?

May 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mexican leader Felipe Calderon has been doing a lot of complaining about Arizona's reasonable immigration enforcement law. Calderon, who I normally like because he is conservative, thinks that Arizona's law is too tough on illegal immigrants.

I wonder how tough Mexico's immigration enforcement law is? It must be much more compassionate, since he is complaining about our laws, right? Otherwise Calderon would be a HYPOCRITE.

Story from CNS News.

First, what does Arizona's law say?

> The revised Arizona law specifically states that a person's immigration status can be checked only if an individual is stopped for some other, valid reason. "A lawful stop, detention or arrest must be in the enforcement of any other law or ordinance of a county, city or town or this state," the revised law says.

You have to be STOPPED for SOME OTHER VALID REASON before they can ask you about your immigration status in the USA. That seems FAIR to me. It's not racial profiling.

But what does Calderon say about the bill?

> Calderon said while he remains "respectful of the internal policies of the United States," he firmly rejects criminalizing "migration" so that "people who work and provide things for this nation (USA) will be treated as criminals."

What are thing like in Mexico? Are illegal immigrants to Mexico "treated as criminals"?

> By contrast, Mexican immigration law, revised in 2009, gives Mexican officials the right to check people's immigration status, and if someone is found to be in the country illegally, they can be fined and deported. The law also requires foreigners to register with the government.

More here about the immigration laws of lots of other countries, from Stan at Birds of the Air. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> Mexico: An illegal immigrant caught can be fined $450 and deported, and if they're caught entering illegally a second time, they can spend 10 years in prison. Furthermore, local Mexican police must assist the Federales in apprehending illegal immigrants, just like the Arizona law requires. (Of course, it's only "intolerance, hate, discrimination" if it's done outside of Mexico.) (On a side note, it's *illegal* in Mexico for non-citizens to protest government actions.)

It turns out that American treatment of illegals is the most compassionate of all, and the complainers from other nations are HYPOCRITES.

But some people like hypocrisy – they give it a standing ovation:

And here are the Democrats giving Calderon a standing ovation:

I have a solution. Let’s pass a law saying that our policies and border security will match Mexico’s policies and border security. That should put an end to their complaining, and Obama’s complaining with it.

The importance of being the first to frame issues for your children

May 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dan's post at The Bumbling Genius on the importance of parents talking to their children FIRST about controversial issues related to Christianity is a must-read. The post drew 100 comments, so far. The post is here.

Excerpt:

> The common assertion that "Christians are narrow-minded, or anti-science" is a logical fallacy called"Poisoning the Well". **Well poisoning** is a preempted **ad hominem** attack that attempts to pre-program, or especially in this case to embed into society's thinking a predisposition against a particular point of view.
>
> My first exposure to the effectiveness of this tactic-from the outside looking in-occurred during discussions in my home with Jehovah's Witnesses. It was here that I began to appreciate the persuasive power of this logical fallacy, and to develop a similar technique in teaching my own children in ways to help insulate them against this kind of mind poisoning by doing a little pre-poisoning of the well of their thinking myself. I hope to accomplish this by being the first to present the messages of our culture except that I do so under the microscope of scripture, logic, and objective truth. In this way I am the one setting the table, so to speak, for the future discussions my children will encounter involving their worldview.
>
> Not unlike the tactics used by the JW's and anti-Christ cultural apologist, as I teach my children I employ the key concept of "**firsts**." For example: when an institution or media is the first to present a cultural issue, and also the ***first*** to present my response in a "closed-minded", "Christian" caricatured stereotype, followed by their a pithy, high-browed, and cognitive dissonant response to that stereotype, then my children's Well becomes poisoned against my teaching. Everything I as parent subsequently espouse may then be seen through the lens of that stereotype. On the other hand, if I am the ***first*** to present the tenets of those opposing worldviews along with a logical and realistic explanation as to why they are flawed, then I will have achieved the objective of firsts.

This is something Christian parents really need to think about. You want to inoculate your children against pressure from teachers and peers by discussing issues long before they are introduced in the classroom or the playground. And you should be on guard against other sources of sin and lies, too.

Tom McClintock’s response to Arizona’s immigration law

May 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the view of immigration law and immigration law enforcement from the conservative wing of the Republican party.

And here is something a little more light-hearted:

These are from ECM, who blogs at Waxing Erratic.

Twenty ideas for doing apologetics from Apologetics 315

May 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The post is here.

Here are the ones I do from his list:

> 1. Give to an apologetics ministry
> 2. Get books into the hands of the right people *(Love Your God with All Your Mind[image])*
> 3. Organize apologetics conferences
> 5. Comment on blogs
> 6. Start your own blog (Blogger, WordPress)
> 7. Give people CDs and MP3s to listen to

That's right – there's a ton of them on there that I don't do! But they are ALL do-able!

Leave a comment if you think of more. The one I thought of that isn't on his list is to talk to your co-workers about your faith. But the first commenter mentions it. Here some links below. I recommend the co-workers one and the defend your faith in public one.

Mentoring

- the importance of being able to argue both sides of a question
- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church
- why won't Christians defend their faith in public?

New study examines effect of family structure and church attendance on women

May 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Family Research Council.

Excerpt:

> Women (aged 14-44) who have not had a homsexual sexual partner in the past year are more likely to worship at least weekly and to have grown up in intact families than those who have had a homosexual sexual partner in the past year. According to the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), 2.1 percent of women who grew up in intact married families and attend religious services at least weekly have had a homosexual sexual partner in the year prior to being asked, followed by women who grew up in other family structures and worship at least weekly (4.6 percent), those who grew up in intact married families and never worship (7.3 percent), and those who grew up in other family structures and never worship (9.5 percent).
>
> Examining structure of family of origin only, four percent of women who grew up in intact married families have had a homosexual sexual partner in the year prior to being asked, followed by women who grew up in intact cohabiting families (4.3 percent), those from married stepfamilies (6 percent), single divorced parent families (6.6 percent), always single parent families (6.6 percent), and cohabiting stepparent families (9.6 percent).
>
> Examining current religious attendance only, 2.8 percent of women who worship at least weekly have had a homosexual sexual partner in the year prior to being asked, followed by women who worship between one and three times a month (2.9 percent), those who worship less than once a month (6.9 percent), and those who never attend religious services (8.7 percent).

The original post has graphs.

Investigation implicates North Korea in torpedo attack on South Korean vessel

May 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> In the most serious attack for over 20 years, a North Korean torpedo was found to be responsible for the sinking of the Cheonan, a 300-ft South Korean warship, which sank on March 26 with the loss of 46 lives.
>
> […]China, the last major ally of Pyongyang, gave a cautious and lukewarm response, saying that all parties should "remain calm" and that it would conduct its own "assessment" of the findings. Without China's support at the UN Security Council, North Korea is likely to escape punishment.

> An official report, carried out by South Korean investigators together with teams from the United States, Britain, Australia and Sweden, said the evidence pointed "overwhelmingly to the conclusion that the torpedo was fired by a North Korean submarine." It added: "There is no other plausible explanation."

I'm sure this attack has nothing at all to do with Obama being the president. Just like it's purely a coincidence that we've suffered FIVE terrorist attacks under Obama, but NONE under Bush following his military response to the 9/11 attack in Afghanistan and Iraq. I'm sure that despots and tyrants fear Obama's bowing and apologizing more than they fear Tomahawk cruise missiles and AC-130 gunships.

And what does Hillary Clinton think of China?

Excerpt:

> At the start of a four-day visit whose centerpiece will be talks in Beijing about strategic and economic matters, Clinton spent a misty morning at the Expo, an emblem of China's rise on the world stage.
>
> Dressed in a powder blue jacket to match the Expo's plump, cartoonish mascot, Clinton walked through the U.S. and Chinese national "pavilions" shaking hands, posing for pictures and talking up the importance of people-to-people ties.
>
> She avoided any public discussion of the issues that will occupy her in Beijing, including North Korea's suspected sinking of a South Korean warship, Iran's nuclear program, and U.S. calls for China to allow its currency to appreciate.
>
> […]Thanks partly to her intervention, major U.S. companies stepped up to the plate to fund the pavilion, whose attractions include three films highlighting the American way of life.
>
> […]Clinton handed out teddy bears to children in the audience.

> The films made no explicit reference to democracy, human rights, freedom of religion or other political issues where the United States has long criticized China's record.
>
> The U.S. exhibit ends with a gift shop where a great many products — from teddy bears and stuffed bison to silver lapel pins and pink cowboy hats — were all marked "Made in China."

A vote for "moral equivalence" leftists is *a vote against world peace.* People are having their human rights violated. People are being silenced, tortured and murdered. And what are the Democrats doing? *Insulting America abroad and handing out teddy bears*. Weakness. Appeasement. Emboldening the forces of evil.

Charles Krauthammer and Ralph Peters on Obama's foreign policy

May 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What will we do now?

Moderate conservative Charles Krauthammer summarizes Obama's foreign policy in the Washington Post. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> It is perfectly obvious that Iran's latest uranium maneuver, brokered by Brazil and Turkey, is a ruse. Iran retains more than enough enriched uranium to make a bomb. And it continues enriching at an accelerated pace and to a greater purity (20 percent).
>
> It will… make meaningful sanctions more difficult.
>
> […]But the deeper meaning of the uranium-export stunt is the brazenness with which Brazil and Turkey gave cover to the mullahs' nuclear ambitions and deliberately undermined U.S. efforts to curb Iran's program.
>
> The real news is that already notorious photo: the president of Brazil, our largest ally in Latin America, and the prime minister of Turkey, for more than half a century the Muslim anchor of NATO, raising hands together with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the most virulently anti-American leader in the world.

Krauthammer then explains what drove Brazil and Turkey to abandon US interests and side with Iran.

He writes:

> They've watched America acquiesce to Russia's re-exerting sway over Eastern Europe, over Ukraine (pressured by Russia last month into extending for 25 years its lease of the Black Sea naval base at Sevastopol) and over Georgia (Russia's de facto annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia is no longer an issue under the Obama "reset" policy).
>
> They've watched our appeasement of Syria, Iran's agent in the Arab Levant — sending our ambassador back to Syria even as it tightens its grip on Lebanon, supplies Hezbollah with Scuds, and intensifies its role as the pivot of the Iran-

> Hezbollah-Hamas alliance. The price for this ostentatious flouting of the U.S. and its interests? Ever more eager U.S. "engagement."
>
> They've observed the administration's gratuitous slap at Britain over the Falklands, its contemptuous treatment of Israel, its undercutting of the Czech Republic and Poland, and its indifference to Lebanon and Georgia. And in Latin America, they see not just U.S. passivity as Venezuela's Hugo Chavez organizes his anti-American "Bolivarian" coalition while deepening military and commercial ties with Iran and Russia. They saw active U.S. support in Honduras for a pro-Chavez would-be dictator seeking unconstitutional powers in defiance of the democratic institutions of that country.

Now take a look at the words of moderate Ralph Peters in the NY Post. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> What Brazil and Turkey just did wasn't intended to impede Tehran, but to make it harder for Western powers to impose sanctions. Both countries want Iran to run interference for them.Once Iran gets the bomb and takes the (slight) heat, Brazil and Turkey both intend to go nuclear.
>
> Brazil wants vanity nukes to cement its position as South America's hegemon, a regional alternative to the US. Turkey's slow-roll Islamist government dreams of a new Ottoman age — as it turns from the West to embrace the Muslim states it ruled a century ago. After easing Tehran's path to the bomb, Ankara will claim that it needs its own nuclear capability to maintain regional stability.
>
> But the coming widespread proliferation of nuclear weapons will be profoundly *destabilizing.* Each Middle Eastern country, especially, that goes nuclear increases the probability of a nuke exchange exponentially.
>
> As Western states fantasize about a "nuclear-weapons-free world," their developing-world darlings are scrambling like mad to develop nuclear arsenals. And we don't get it.

Obama's foreign policy is basically 100% naivete. Brazil and Turkey just switched sides. And why not? They know that the US is a paper tiger under Obama. That's why we've suffered FIVE terrorist attacks under Obama, but NONE under Bush following his military response to the 9/11 attack in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Did Obamacare really provide a tax cut for small businesses?

May 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this AP article. (H/T Michele Bachmann)

Excerpt:

> When the administration unveiled the small business tax credit earlier this week, officials touted its "broad eligibility" for companies with fewer than 25 workers and average annual wages under $50,000 that provide health coverage.
>
> […]Lost in the fine print: The credit drops off sharply once a company gets above 10 workers and $25,000 average annual wages.
>
> […]Consider small businesses: "The idea here is to target the credits to a relatively low number of firms, those who are low-wage and really quite small," said economist Linda Blumberg of the Urban Institute public policy center.
>
> On paper, the credit seems to be available to companies with fewer than 25 workers and average wages of $50,000. But in practice, a complicated formula that combines the two numbers works against companies that have more than 10 workers and $25,000 in average wages, Blumberg said.
>
> "You can get zero even if you are not hitting the max on both pieces," Blumberg said.
>
> […]Hoffman, the furniture store owner whose business missed out on the credit, says he understands that lawmakers writing the health care legislation had a limited amount of money to work with. But his company's premiums rose 15 percent this year, and it's a struggle to keep paying.
>
> To get the most out of the new federal credit, Hoffman said he'd have to cut his work force to 10 employees and slash their wages.
>
> "That seems like a strange outcome, given we've got 10 percent unemployment," he said.

So, the government is actually paying businesses to NOT HIRE EMPLOYEES and to NOT RAISE SALARIES. That's the only way small businesses can get the tax credit.

Michele writes:

> Unfortunately, this bill will only discourage small businesses from raising wages and/or hiring more employees. The business owners and employers in Minnesota I've met with all have said one thing: the uncertainty of the newly passed Health Care bill is keeping them from hiring and expanding.

Businesses are run by people who put their own skin in the game by risking capital to try to make a profit. That capital is often borrowed from family, friends or banks. And when

business owners see that government is passing laws that take away the decision making power of the business owner and give it to government bureaucrats with no skin in the game, business owners get frightened – they are taking all the risks but the government is making the decisions. And government isn't as good at making decisions for a business to avoid losses as the business owner is.

So even though Obama spends trillions of dollars, bankrupting the next generation of taxpayers, it can still be the case that unemployment *increases*. He's killing the economy with his meddling – just the same way as interventionists like Hoover and FDR did during the Great Depression. When business owners see that the rules are changing under them because of state intervention into the economy, they just don't have the confidence needed to expand their businesses, hire employees, or raise salaries.

And don't forget that the money for the "tax credit" is being taken from *your children*, who will eventually have to pay for all of Obama's spending.

What would a Christian apologetics movie look like?

May 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this video at Rational Thoughts.

This movie clip was made by Brian Godawa.

One of our commenters Kelli Welch just got her first movie on the big screen as well. She is interested in making films from a Christian worldview.

More on God and morality

Oh, I just noticed this related post from Cloud of Witnesses via the Apologetics 315 Twitter feed.

This is a quote from Chad Meister from the new book "God is Great, God is Good", edited by William Lane Craig and Chad Meister.

Excerpt:

> "If evil truly exists, what we could call 'objective evil' — then there also exist objective moral values, moral values which are binding on all people, whether they acknowledge them as such or not. If rape, racism, torture, murder, government-sanctioned genocide and so forth are objectively evil, what makes them so? What makes them truly evil, rather than simply activities we dislike? What made the atrocities of the Nazis evil, even though Hitler and his thugs maintained otherwise? One cannot consistently affirm both that there are no objective moral values, on the one hand, and that rape, torture and the like are objectively morally evil on the other. If there are objective moral values, there must be some basis — some metaphysical foundation — for their being so. . . .
>
> But [you] can't have [your] cake and eat it too. If good and evil are objectively real, they need an objective foundation. No atheist has provided one, and it's doubtful that one will be forthcoming.

See, this is the kind of book that Christians should read, because it helps them to talk to their neighbors and to raise their children. Everyone needs to understand the moral argument, and to bring people to account when they claim to be a "good person". What does good even mean, based on the claimant's worldview?

Make sure you all follow Brian's Twitter feed.

Stephen Harper makes a stand against North Korean aggression

May 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spy… with my little eye… someone whose ass I must kick!
Story here from the Edmonton Journal.

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a statement on Victoria Day that Canada is joining sides with South Korea in countering North Korea's apparent act of aggression on March 26 that involved the sinking of the South Korean naval vessel Cheonan, killing 46.
>
> "Canada is now committed to a coordinated international response, including through the UN Security Council, as a result of this act," Harper declared in a written press release. Canada will "move to suspend high-level visits to Canada by North Korean officials," Harper said in response to statements made Sunday by Republic of Korea's President Lee Myung-bak.
>
> [..]"The Government of Canada will take steps to impose enhanced restrictions on trade, investment and other bilateral relations with North Korea, including the addition of North Korea to the Area Control List.
>
> "Canada will also continue to consult and co-operate with South Korea, as well as our partners and friends, to ensure that a strong global approach is taken toward the current situation on the Korean Peninsula," Harper said.
>
> Three experts from the Canadian navy, in concert with representatives from Australia, Sweden, the U.K. and the U.S., assisted in the investigation that concluded that North Korea was responsible for the sinking of the South Korean ship, the press release stated.

That's what Obama should have done, too. We should be parking a carrier battle group right where the ship went down and running ASW patrols around the clock as part of joint

exercises with South Korea and Japan. We should be selling more arms (e.g. – SAMs, SSMs, and LAVs with ATGMs), to South Korea and Japan, and building additional ships to deploy in that theater. All vessels entering and leaving North Korea should be boarded and inspected by US naval forces. We should be stepping up espionage efforts to get advanced warning of North Korea's plans.

There should be a swift response to the sinking of South Korea's vessel – something visible to them, as well as a change in tone and policy in the CIA and the State Department. Kick the doves and the fifth-columnists out of national security and foreign policy, and get serious about making aggression costly on the aggressor. South Korea should just pass a law saying that for every warship of theirs sunk in mysterious circumstances, THREE warships in North Korea will be sunk in mysterious circumstances.

If only Harper were in control of the US military, then we could really get something done – and not just the economic sanctions that he is going to put into place. But with President Pantywaist in charge, our enemies can do anything they want to our poorly-armed allies like South Korea.

By the way, I found this story while browsing on My Can of Contemplation, which led me to Christian Conservative.

* When I say SSMs in this article, I mean surface-to-surface missiles, not same-sex marriage. We should NOT be selling our allies same-sex marriages, we should be selling them surface-to-surface missiles.

Why parenting is different now than when my parents were growing up

May 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had a talk with my parents about what it was like for them growing up in a very very poor country before coming here, and I found out some interesting challenges that I wanted to share with you. My Dad grew up in a small village and he had to walk a mile to his farm which had lots of trees and plants that his family picked to sell the produce in the market. And they hunted for animals at night with a lantern. That's how they grew up.

So, I wanted to ask them to tell me how things have changed for raising children from that environment compared to here in the affluent West. And below is the list of some of the challenges.

Education

- My grandparents were not really focused on monitoring my parents education in school, they were more worried about passing on skills that would help them to tend the land so they could pass it on
- The teachers in that country were mostly males and they were focused on academic achievement and competition, especially since intelligence and scholastic aptitude was a ticket out of poverty
- There was NO emphasis on self-esteem, compassion, sex education, drug education, leftist politics or other secular leftist ideologies in the schools – and nobody wrote to politicians or attended marches for extra credit
- The headmaster and the vice principal (both males) lived next door and they would come over to talk to my grandfather about my father, and to play cards while talking about politics in front of the children
- Teachers were allowed to punish children in class with spankings
- Teachers would inspect the students for dirty fingernails, messy hair, dirty uniform, or minimum decency clothing standards, etc. and you got rapped on the knuckles with a ruler if you were bad
- My Dad attended a Presbyterian school and all the teachers attended church on Sundays
- There was intense competition and last-man-standing contests for prizes, and all the sports were competitive with winners and losers – some people put a lot of effort into contests to get better so they could win
- The teachers were not unionized and there was a free choice of which school to attend
- none of the children had money for alcohol, drugs, contraceptives, etc.

Family and Community

- My Dad grew up with a stay-at-home mother who monitored them, and they came

home for lunch
- There was no TV or video games, so family interaction was more common – like working together on things and doing chores to help make ends meet
- my Dad's chore was to fetch water in the morning from half-a mile away (several times)
- No TV and no video games also means more sports and activities with the neighbor kids
- Food was scarce, and there was no processed food or fast food – so kids were less obese
- Neighbors came over more to play cards and discuss things so that children learned about adult stuff by listening and watching them debate and discuss ideas, instead of from watching mainstream news media, which is somewhere to the left of Satan, politically, on social, fiscal and foreign policy
- My grandfather would make my father volunteer in a store in order for my grandfather to get credit at the store, and he was able to work because there were no regulations on children working to help to support the family as long as they also went to school
- My father was earning money for the family at an early age – he saw his parents working hard and that was all the motivation he needed to want to contribute – not like today when it is difficult to make children do anything
- My father used to volunteer to help other neighborhood children learn mathematics (I later did the same thing, but for money)
- My father learned to hunt and fish so that he could help the family to survive
- My father had 6 young siblings so he had experience raising children and learning to cook by watching my grandmother cook

If you're wondering how I got into this long conversation with my parents, it's because the woman I am performing acts of love on inquired *repeatedly* about my parents, and I got into a long discussion with them, touching on this topic and many other things related to parenting. The net effect of this on me was to make me a little more tolerant of my parents. They came from a simpler culture where they had more support from teachers and neighbors, while facing fewer challenges from the culture and secular leftist elites. My Dad worked 3 jobs when he got here. My Mom worked too. We were incredibly poor.

Democrat senator wants 165 billion to bail out union pensions

May 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox Business. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A Democratic senator is introducing legislation for a bailout of troubled union pension funds. If passed, the bill could put another $165 billion in liabilities on the shoulders of American taxpayers.
>
> The bill, which would put the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation behind struggling pensions for union workers, is being introduced by Senator Bob Casey, (D-Pa.), who says it will save jobs and help people.
>
> As FOX Business Network's Gerri Willis reported Monday, these pensions are in bad shape; as of 2006, well before the market dropped and recession began, only 6% of these funds were doing well.
>
> Although right now taxpayers could possibly be on the hook for $165 billion, the liability could essentially be unlimited because these pensions have to be paid out until the workers die.
>
> It's hard to say at the moment what the chances are that the bill will pass. A hearing is scheduled Thursday, which will give the public a sense of where political leaders sit on the topic, said Willis.
>
> **Just last week President Obama said there would be no more bailouts.**

This is a good find from ECM – so be sure and send me your news tips, too, if you have any. I'll give you credit.

SEIU union thugs rage against private citizen on his own front lawn

May 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

SEIU union thugs storm private citizen's home

Story here from CNN Money. (H/T Peter Sean Bradley at Lex Communis)

Excerpt:

> Last Sunday, on a peaceful, sun-crisp afternoon, our toddler finally napping upstairs, my front yard exploded with 500 screaming, placard-waving strangers on a mission to intimidate my neighbor, Greg Baer. Baer is deputy general counsel for corporate law at Bank of America (BAC, Fortune 500), a senior executive based in Washington, D.C. And that — in the minds of the organizers at the politically influential Service Employees International Union and a Chicago outfit called National Political Action — makes his family fair game.
>
> […]As bullhorns rattled with stories of debtor calls and foreclosed homes, Baer's teenage son Jack — alone in the house — locked himself in the bathroom. "When are they going to leave?" Jack pleaded when I called to check on him.
>
> […]Now this event would accurately be called a "protest" if it were taking place at, say, a bank or the U.S. Capitol. But when hundreds of loud and angry strangers are descending on your family, your children, and your home, a more apt description of this assemblage would be "mob." Intimidation was the whole point of this exercise, and it worked-even on the police. A trio of officers who belatedly answered our calls confessed a fear that arrests might "incite" these trespassers.

And why were the SEIU trying to intimidate a private citizen on his own property?

> [Bank of America] is the union's lender of choice — and SEIU, suffering financially, owes the bank nearly $4 million in interest and fees. Bank of America declined comment on the loans.

Now you know everything you need to know about the people who get Democrats elected. When I think of the SEIU, I think of Hitler's brown-shirts. (Just as when I think of Obama's former employer ACORN, I think of the mafia).

This new tactic of violent intimidation defines what it means to be a Democrat today. They don't want to debate with those who disagree with them, they want to shout obscenities and intimidate dissenters with threats of violence and vandalism – or to attack people and their property, if that's what is needed. There was a time when Democrats were a mainstream, respectable party – the party of JFK. But that time is gone.

It's not difficult for me to compare Democrats gangs with the socialist Greek rioters who murdered three people while burning down a bank – it's the next stage of the "striking" and "community organizing" that the left is so fond of. They want their inflated salaries, their pensions, and their generous health care plans – and they will use violence and intimidation in order to get someone else's money to pay for it.

If government is paying the piper, then government is calling the tune

May 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Veronique de Rugy

Check out this post from GMU economist Veronica de Rugy on Big Government. (H/T ECM)

First, she puts up this chart.

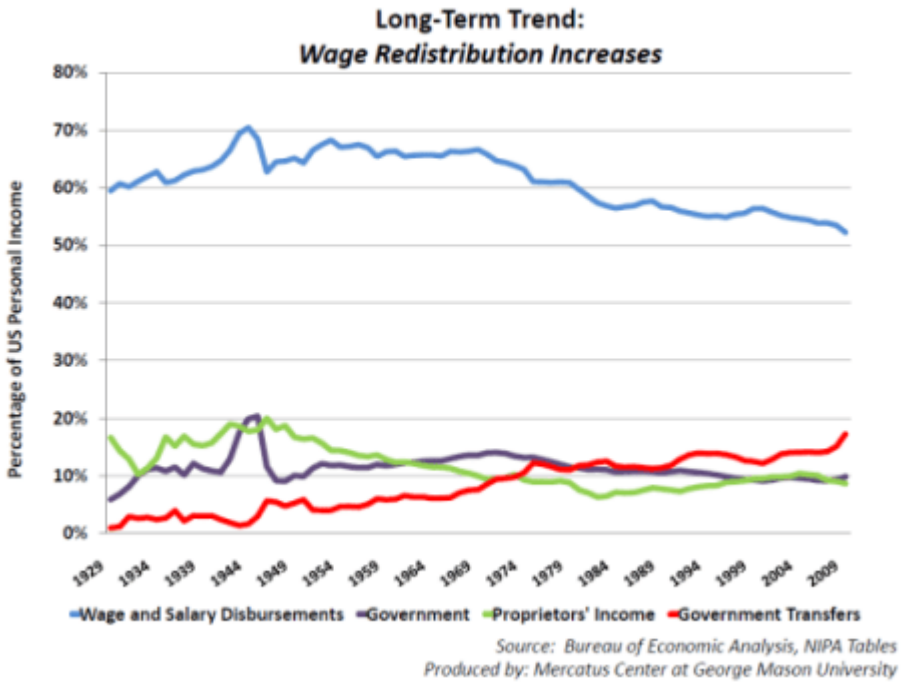

Veronique writes:

> On this chart we can see the changes over time in the composition of personal income in the United States since 1929. The most notable trend is the increase in the portion of personal income coming from government transfers (mainly social Security payments, unemployment benefits, food stamps, and personal and business tax credits.) And the increase isn't minor: the proportion of total personal income constituted by government money has grown from 0.9% to

> 17.2%.
>
> Complementary decreases of wage earnings as percentages of total personal income (from 59.5% to 52.3%) are also going on.

The problem with government giving people money is that it creates a culture of dependency, as with Greece. Politicians take money from job-creating business-owners, or from productive individual workers, and they redistribute it to whiny unproductive, immature victim groups like unions, in order to buy their votes. Eventually, the government goes too far making promises and the productive people just stop or slow their working or they move away, since they keep less and less of their own money for the same amount of work and risk-taking.

And that's when welfare checks of the losers dry up, and they have no choice but to riot and kill people. Why do they riot? Well, if they were earning their own money by working, then they would know that they are responsible for themselves, not government. They would understand that something might go wrong, and they would know that they had to cut their spending and save for a rainy day. So when things do go bad, they would have known how to live cheaply off of their savings while they find another job.

But people who take welfare don't save – they think the money will always be there. What do they do when the taxpayers slow or stop production? They have no skills, and they have no savings. They can't just find a new government because a new government isn't going to find any more money from somewhere – there isn't any left. So the only way to get their welfare back is to revolt – which is exactly what the socialists in Greece are doing right now. They've been spoiled rotten and they want their welfare back, like little babies crying for their mommies.

It's sick. And this is what Obama and the Democrats idolize, because that's how they grew up – begging their rich parents for money and bailouts for their own irresponsible behaviors. Their policies aren't thought through – it's just reliving their silver spoon childhoods of never having to work for anything.

Would you like to know what Republicans are like? Consider Michele Bachmann.

> At 13, Bachmann was forced to become almost financially independent after her parents divorced. She used her babysitting money to buy her own clothes and lunches at school and saved up enough to purchase her first pair of contact lenses. Between college semesters at Winona State University, she took her hardworking streak to Alaska where on one memorable day she cleaned 280 salmon.

She also quit her job as a tax litigation attorney to homeschool her five kids, because she didn't like the job the public schools were doing. Her business runs a small business, and she helped him to start it. That's what Republicans do. We work. And we give.

We need to stop increasing the size of government so they can "take care" of all our needs. We need to take care of all our needs, and to take care of *our neighbor's needs*, too. That's capitalism. Having something to share from what you can make from your

own industry and labor.

William Lane Craig answers a question from our own commenter Martin

May 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the original comment from Martin.

I thought this was a pretty good objection, and I said so. Well, Martin submitted it as a question to Bill, and Bill replied.

Here is his question to Dr. Craig, which is similar to what he asked before:

> I've been thinking about the fine tuning argument, and while I like it and think it carries some weight, something about it bothers me. It seems to suffer from "life chauvinism."
>
> In a poker hand a royal flush has intrinsic value and thus being dealt that hand is highly improbable and quite amazing. But that's because the rules of the game define a royal flush as having value before the hand is dealt.
>
> What is the justification for asserting that life is the royal flush?
>
> Life could be defined as an "amazing and improbable phenomenon" X1. Singing gas could be defined as "amazing and improbable phenomenon" X2. Rainbow planets with rings of fire could be X3. And so on.
>
> Each phenomena is equally improbable and can only come about by a certain setting of the universal constants. Why assert that X1 has intrinsic value? Couldn't X2 "complain" that we are being phenomenonists by claiming that X1 is best?
>
> It just seems to me that the rules about royal flushes are being made up only after the hand has been dealt.
>
> Martin

And you can read Dr. Craig's reply here. He starts by saying this "This is a very good question, Martin, about which I'd like to think more. But here are some preliminary reflections."

I like this response because I actually had to study Bayes Theorem for my machine learning classes in grad school. So this was good because I actually get to use computer science for something useful for a change. (By the way, my New Zealand readers, I used the Weka machine learning software library).

Wow! We have the smartest commenters. Just last week that woman who I like was asking me about divine aseity. Like I know what to say about that. Well, I did say something to her that seemed to make sense to her, but she still has more questions. That's Bill's current area of research, you know.

On Guard

By the way, I know some of you have no idea who Bill Craig is, and I am afraid I will have

to smite you with my foam bat for this grave infraction. But there is a way out. You can read chapter 1 of Bill Craig's new book "On Guard" right here on his web site. It's an introduction to apologetics from the top Christian apologist of all time. And if you like it, you can order it and read the whole thing. It's dirt cheap on Amazon.com.

Some examples of some very direct speech from politicians

May 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A collection of very strange said by normally reticent and taciturn politicians.

Education in New Jersey

New Jersey is the biggest educational debacle in the entire USA.

Chris Christie, governor of New Jersey takes on the teacher unions. (H/T Hot Air)

> He then opened the floor to questions. A few were softballs, including the declaration by Clara Nebot of Bergenfield that Christie is "a god" to her relatives in Florida.
>
> But borough teacher Rita Wilson, a Kearny resident, argued that if she were paid $3 an hour for the 30 children in her class, she'd be earning $83,000, and she makes nothing near that.
>
> "You're getting more than that if you include the cost of your benefits," Christie interrupted.
>
> When Wilson, who has a master's degree, said she was not being compensated for her education and experience, Christie said:
>
> "Well, you know then that you don't have to do it." Some in the audience applauded…
>
> "Your union said that is the greatest assault on public education in the history of the state," Christie said. "That's why the union has no credibility, stupid statements like that."

Holy snark! Can you even say that? I don't think politicians can even talk like that. Except *he did.*

If some of these unionized teachers think they are so highly qualified as to be paid top dollar for producing *no results*, then why don't they find a real job in the private sector – where people actually have to produce to turn a profit? Unless parents have a choice, there is *no guarantee* that public school teachers are worth a dime. No one is choosing to buy their product, they are *forced* to buy it. Let parents choose schools, then we'll find out how good some of these unionized public school teachers really are. The good ones should even be paid *more.*

Alabama campaign advertisements

Now let's look at some campaign ads running in Alabama. I'll bet my Canadian and British readers have *never* seen anything like this before. Better sit down before you watch these – because they are going to seriously *rock your world*.

National Security

Rick Barber is running in Alabama. (H/T Hot Air)

US marines are very direct.

Tort Reform

Tim James is running for Governor in Alabama. (H/T Hot Air)

Nuisance lawsuits kill businesses and raise unemployment.

Oklahoma state Senate is pro-life

Meanwhile, in Oklahoma, the Republicans in the state Senate overrode the veto of pro-life laws by the pro-abortion Democrat Governor.

> Oklahoma lawmakers have won yet another face-off with pro-abortion Democratic Gov. Brad Henry, after the state Senate overrode the governor's veto of an enhanced abortion statistics reporting law on Tuesday.
>
> The stakes were riding high for pro-life advocates. The Oklahoma House of Representatives on late Monday afternoon overwhelmingly overruled Henry's third veto this year of Oklahoma pro-life legislation, by an 84–13 margin. But while the House had votes to spare to reach its two-thirds veto-proof majority, the Senate could not afford to lose one of the thirty-two members that voted for the bill in the first round, in their override attempt.
>
> …the Senate joined the House and voted 33 – 15 to override the pro-abortion veto, actually gaining pro-life advocates one more vote.

Seriously, I would love to live in northern Texas or northern Alabama. Or Oklahoma as a third choice, because why did they elect a pro-abortion Democrat for Governor? Does anyone know the story there? Was it an April Fool prank gone awry? Was it a dare?

Chinese doctors refuse to treat baby who survived abortion

May 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from LifeSiteNews.

Excerpt:

> An aborted baby boy, who had been declared dead by doctors in Foshan City, China, suddenly cried out as he was about to be cremated, but died later after doctors refused to treat him.
>
> A mortuary worker at the Nanhai Funeral Home reportedly was startled by a cry from a box, labeled "medical waste," that he was about to put into the incinerator. He opened the carton and found the baby moving, but choking on some cotton wool in his mouth, the locally based Information Times reported.
>
> After the worker cleared his mouth, the baby yawned and breathed normally. He was rushed back to Guanyao Hospital, which had attempted to abort him earlier that day; but doctors in the hospital reportedly ignored him and left him in the lobby to die.
>
> […]Following this, the report said that all workers at the funeral home had been ordered not to talk about the incident.

How did we come to the point where people could think that their pursuit of happiness meant that they were morally justified in turning away from a helpless child who needed love? All morality is personal – people need to stop worrying about nonsense like global warming and overpopulation and just take responsibility for one person who needs love. The world would be a much better place.

I find it ironic that many of the strongest proponents of abortion who approve of scenarios like the above are so concerned about recycling, animal rights and terrorist rights. They don't like waterboarding terrorists like Khalid Sheik Mohammed in order to prevent terrorist attacks on Los Angeles, but abandoning seven-month old babies is no problem. And they think that they are morally superior to pro-lifers.

Bobby Jindal wonders why Obama is doing nothing about the oil spill

May 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bobby and Supriya Jindal

Editorial from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The federal government's response so far has consisted largely of scapegoating BP and ignoring its own responsibilities and lack of preparation, railing against Big Oil, while Congress makes plans to quadruple the federal gasoline tax, ostensibly to finance cleanups.
>
> Never let a good crisis go to waste when there's a chance to make big government bigger.
>
> "We've been frustrated with the disjointed effort to date that has too often meant too little, too late for the oil hitting our coast," Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal said on Day 36 of the spill.
>
> As of Tuesday morning, he was still waiting for the federal government to provide millions of feet in booms and to approve an emergency permit for a state plan to dredge and build new barrier islands to keep the oil from reaching the marshes and wetlands.
>
> Jindal, who is so desperate for the islands that he says he'll build them himself even if it means going to jail, states: "We need more booms, more skimmers, more vacuums, more jack-up barges that are still in short supply. Let's be clear: Every day that this oil sits is one more day that more of our marsh dies."

The leftist media was on Bush 48 hours after Katrina for "not doing enough". But they've given Obama a pass for **37 DAYS** (as of Thursday). Is that consistent? Well, it's consistent with their enormous bias against conservatives.

I normally would not think that Obama should be blamed for this at all, because it's not

the federal government's job to rush in and rescue states. But Jindal is no fool, and he seems to think that there are specific things that Obama should be providing. So why isn't Obama providing them, and why doesn't the media care about the environment now that Obama is President?

More here at Michelle Malkin.

Interview with Dr. Laura about the proper care and feeding of husbands

May 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An interview with the author on the Harper Collins web site.

Excerpt:

Why did you write this book aiming at the women — aren't both responsible for the quality of the marriage?Of course! However, women are in the unique position of having an extraordinary amount of influence over their husbands, which when exercised thoughtfully, compassionately, lovingly, and intelligently results in a happier husband who will 'swim through shark infested waters to bring her a lemonade.' Women seem not to understand, or underestimate, the profound power they have over their husbands. Men are very emotionally dependent upon women from the day they are born to the day they expire. This book teaches women to use this power benevolently — which will definitely result in them being happier with life and love.

What are the most common complaints men have about their wives?

- Their women don't seem to have much regard for their feelings and needs
- Their women constantly criticize and dismiss them
- Their women don't seem to want to go out of their way to please them
- Their women nag, demand, and complain — and seem to behave as though they were entitled to do so
- Their women don't make them feel truly needed and valued as men

What are husbands' most important needs?

- He wants to feel like a "man" to his woman; he wants to feel that he is providing and protecting
- He wants to feel that she needs and admires him
- He wants to know that she desires him
- Basically, The Three A's: appreciation, approval, and affection

This is my favorite practical book on marriage. I read it because I am always interested in understanding what it is like to be a married man, and what I should be looking out for from women during courtship. I want to know what I should be looking for in a woman to make sure that I am properly cared for and fed if I become a husband. I think every woman should read it in order to understand how to relate to men. It's like an owner's manual for men! The book sold bazillions of copies. Has anyone else read this book other than me and found it useful?

US money supply contracting at Great Depression levels

May 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The most-read story today on the UK Telegraph. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The M3 money supply in the United States is contracting at an accelerating rate that now matches the average decline seen from 1929 to 1933, despite near zero interest rates and the biggest fiscal blitz in history.
>
> The M3 figures – which include broad range of bank accounts and are tracked by British and European monetarists for warning signals about the direction of the US economy a year or so in advance – began shrinking last summer. The pace has since quickened.
>
> The stock of money fell from $14.2 trillion to $13.9 trillion in the three months to April, amounting to an annual rate of contraction of 9.6%. The assets of insitutional money market funds fell at a 37% rate, the sharpest drop ever.
>
> "It's frightening," said Professor Tim Congdon from International Monetary Research. "The plunge in M3 has no precedent since the Great Depression. The dominant reason for this is that regulators across the world are pressing banks to raise capital asset ratios and to shrink their risk assets. This is why the US is not recovering properly," he said.

What should we expect from a man who opposes capitalism? Well, we should expect to be poor. We should expect to be as poor as people were during the Great Depression.

I have an idea. Next time, let's elect someone who is responsible enough to have his own credit card.

Everything I know about the problem of evil in one small essay

May 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I see that Brian Auten posted some new audio from Bill Craig on the problem of evil, so I thought I would re-post my best post on the problem of evil, too.

—-

I just wanted to draw your attention to this 4 page essay by Joe Manzari, which is the best darn summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen. The problem of evil is an objection to the existence of God based on the presence of evil or suffering in the world. The arguments basically infer that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then there should not *be* any evil or suffering.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An exampel of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omniscient being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order to for the character of humans through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to show* that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil we observer more compatible with an all-good, all-

powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.
   Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life. And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.
2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   Given that we humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. We should not be surprised that people would also reject his moral demands on them, which results in some of the evil we see.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.

(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That's right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again. More on this argument for God's existence *from evil* here.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I've been through… but then, that's why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

For more on the problem of evil, listen to this lecture by Douglas Geivett, professor of philosophy at Biola University. Then you *must listen* to this debate here between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong. Another debate transcript is here, with William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen. Here's a book debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, published by Oxford University Press, 2004.

The Republicans want YOU to tell them how to cut wasteful spending!

May 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's what the new Republican program is all about:

> YouCut – a first-of-its-kind project – is designed to defeat the permissive culture of runaway spending in Congress. It allows you to vote, both online and on your cell phone, on spending cuts that you want to see the House enact. Vote on this page today for your priorities and together we can begin to change Washington's culture of spending into a culture of savings.

Here is the announcement for the new program:

And they announce what people vote to cut every week, and submit a bill to do it! Then they show the voting results.

Here's week #1, announced by Tom Price:

Here's week #2, announced by Michele Bachmann:

And you can suggest your own program to cut at the web site! I want them to abolish the Department of Education.

Neil Simpson posts on the worst GPS directions ever!

May 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here.

Excerpt:

> The scene: My youngest daughter and I were returning from a couple of college visits. We were trying to find a gas station to fill up the rental car so I wouldn't have to pay the good folks at AVIS $5 / gallon, or whatever exorbitant rate they charge these days.
>
> As is often the case, there were no gas stations near the airport. We used the GPS to search for nearby stations. There was one a few miles a way. Good news, right? Not exactly.
>
> We went down a narrow, winding road through the woods and came to a road by the river. Then we went along the river for about a mile.

Click here for the punch line.

What? It's still Friday night on the west coast, and I don't want to go to bed.

How reliable are government-paid broadcasters like Tavis Smiley?

May 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this sample from government-run broadcast media.

Christian taxpayers are *paying him* to say that about Christians. We would never freely choose to pay a corporation to bash our religion. But we allow the government to do it through mandatory taxation on income. They take a part of our earnings and use it to bash us in public.

Christians really need to think twice about voting to enlarge government. We don't need to hand nitwits like Tavis Smiley any money. If he's so good at his job, then lets abolish PBS entirely, and he can find a new job in the free market like the rest of us. I want him to have to work for a living, offering value to the people who pay him. Then we'll see how anxious he is to insult people who pay his salary.

The nerve of these people. Asking for money in pledge drives after they are already funded by government.

NEVER GIVE A PENNY TO NPR OR PBS. They are anti-Christian bigots.

BP bused in 400 temp workers to clean an area for Obama's photo-op

May 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yahoo News reports. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Perhaps you saw news footage of President Obama in Grand Isle, La., on Friday and thought things didn't look all that bad. Well, there may have been a reason for that: The town was evidently swarmed by an army of temp workers to spruce it up for the president and the national news crews following him.
>
> Jefferson Parish Councilman Chris Roberts, whose district encompasses Grand Isle, told Yahoo! News that BP bused in "hundreds" of temporary workers to clean up local beaches. And as soon as the president was en route back to Washington, the workers were clearing out of Grand Isle too, Roberts said.
>
> "The level of cleanup and cooperation we've gotten from BP in the past is in no way consistent to the effort shown on the island today," Roberts said by telephone. "As soon as the president left, they were immediately put back on the buses and sent home."
>
> Roberts says the overnight contingent of workers was there mainly to furnish a Potemkin-style backdrop for the event — while also making it appear that BP was firmly in command of spill cleanup efforts.
>
> […]News of 11th-hour spruce-up brigade spread rapidly Friday afternoon and infuriated locals. One popular radio host, WWL's Spud McConnell, suggested that the Coast Guard and the White House may have been involved in setting up the "perfect photo op."

Obama was more interested in public opinion than in actually doing something. He cares about being elected – not about doing anything useful.

Obama connections to BP and big oil

Barack Obama was the top recipient of contributions from BP over the last 20 years.

Excerpt:

> BP and its employees have given more than $3.5 million to federal candidates over the past 20 years, with the largest chunk of their money going to Obama, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Donations come from a mix of employees and the company's political action committees — $2.89 million flowed to campaigns from BP-related PACs and about $638,000 came from individuals.
>
> On top of that, the oil giant has spent millions each year on lobbying — including $15.9 million last year alone — as it has tried to influence energy policy.

> During his time in the Senate and while running for president, Obama received a total of $77,051 from the oil giant and is the top recipient of BP PAC and individual money over the past 20 years, according to financial disclosure records.
>
> […]Former [Democrat] Rep. Jim Turner, now a lobbyist for BP with Arnold & Porter, formerly represented the 2nd District of Texas, which includes a large piece of Gulf shoreline. And at the Podesta Group, BP lobbyist David Marin was formerly the lead Hill staffer for Congress's Select Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina.

And worst of all, Hot Air notes that Obama proposed down-sizing the Coast Guard crisis center 3 months before the spill.

Remember: it's not just big oil, it's big bankers, too

Obama gets lots of contributions from big banks.

Excerpt:

> The world's top-earning hedge fund managers have bankrolled almost exclusively Democratic campaigns.
>
> The top 10 highest-paid hedge fund managers in 2009 have dished out campaign contributions almost only to Democrats.
>
> Over their lifetimes, those managers have given almost $33 million in campaign contributions to Democrats, according to research by the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) and that is based on data maintained by the nonpartisan CQMoneyline.
>
> The same managers gave roughly $600,000 to Republicans, according to the research. The contributions went 98 percent to Democrats and two percent to Republicans.

Democrats and big corporations are two peas in a pod.

Democrats kill Michele Bachmann's attempt to freeze federal salaries

May 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's her own words from her YouTube channel:

> After a series of procedures on the Floor of the House, House Democrats voted to table a bill that would eliminate the proposed federal employee pay raise scheduled to go into effect next year and also freeze the pay for Members of Congress. Rather than cut spending as the people have asked, Democrats have passed the buck yet again.

And here's the video.

I'm guessing that this is the spending cut that was selected by the public as part of the Republicans' "YouCut" program, which allows ordinary voters to choose which legislation will be brought forward by the Republicans to cut federal spending. I posted a video of Michele earlier this week explaining which cut was selected by voters. I guess she got picked to bring the proposed cut up for a vote. Well, the Democrats blocked her and now federal employees, including members of Congress, are all going to get raises. During a recession headed for a depression.

Here's the blurb from a second video she posted:

> It's amazing to me that the Democrats here in Washington can say that they are seriously concerned with our skyrocketing debt and out of control spending, yet reject the people's common-sense proposal to put a freeze on federal salaries, including Members of Congress. The Democrats can't have it both ways, and it's just another example of the fiscal recklessness we've grown so accustomed to under their leadership.

And here's the second video:

This made me feel very sad. Why isn't anyone listening to her? How is anyone supposed to have children when they know that the next generation of kids is going to be saddled with enormous debt from our overspending?

By the way, I note that Club for Growth now has Michele ranked #1 in their legislative power rankings. And I agree, she is the best. Ryan is #3, and Blackburn is #5. In the Senate rankings, Jim Demint is all alone at the top.

Naturalized citizen from Trinidad running as Republican in Alabama

May 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this campaign ad for Les Phillip. (H/T Lex Communis)

Here is the background information on Les.

Excerpt:

> **Les Phillip** was born May 29, 1963, to Randolph and Elvina Phillip in the tiny Caribbean country of Trinidad – Tobago. The Family moved to St. Croix before immigrating to the United States.
>
> After the plane ride from Trinidad to St. Croix, young Les was given a glimpse into his future. While traveling, he told his mother that he wanted to be a pilot. His mother accommodated her son's aspiration by requesting that the pilot of their aircraft meet Les and explain to him what it would take to become a pilot someday. The pilot told Les to excel in math and science and fly in one of the branches of the U.S. military
>
> In 1971, the Phillip family came to the United States and settled in Baltimore, Maryland. Les graduated from Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, a public school, in the spring of 1981. That summer, he would pursue his childhood dream and enter the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. There, he met his wife, the former Merle Ford of Montclair, New Jersey. At the age of 26, Les achieved his goal and earned his Naval Aviator wings.
>
> Over the next eight years, Les became the proud father of three wonderful daughters. He left the service in 1993 and pursued a career in the private sector. He and his wife currently own a business located in Madison, Alabama.
>
> Les Phillip became involved in politics in 1984, just six years after becoming a naturalized citizen. While in the Naval Academy, he began developing his political identity, studying a pocket copy of the U.S. Constitution that he received via an advertising campaign. He soon realized how far the government had moved away from the design laid out by the founding fathers of our country.
>
> After becoming a parent and working in the private sector Les became concerned with the daily struggles of middle-class America. He came to the realization that life is not just about where you are going but what you leave behind to your children and grandchildren. The simple idea that his children might not enjoy the same America that he and his parents longed for in 1971 is what inspired Les to become a public servant.

This is the way it is supposed to happen – talent immigrants coming to America to become Americans. If only the public schools did not bash America so much at taxpayer expense, we would have a lot more like him. We should change the laws to allow more

legal immigration, so we get all the good ones!

On a side note, I'm sure he must be a fan of the famous Windies international cricket team. They made 303 runs for 6 wickets today against South Africa in 50 overs. I like games with a set number of overs (like innings) more than the multi-day "test match" games. Although the Windies are struggling from the departure of Brian Lara, Chris Gale is coming on strong… but he is no Sachin Tendulkar yet! Yes, I am also a fan of cricket, on and off, but my Dad follows it more closely.

Liberal Democrat Treasury Secretary paid 68K of taxpayer money to gay lover

May 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Treasury Chief Secretary David Laws was fighting to avoid becoming the coalition Government's first casualty tonight after it was revealed that he funnelled £40,000 of taxpayers' money to his secret gay lover.
>
> The Liberal Democrat, who is in charge of slashing public spending, is facing growing pressure to quit after he claimed up to £950 a month in expenses for five years which was paid in rent to his partner.
>
> Mr Laws was last night confronted with evidence that he could have breached Parliamentary rules on expenses, which ban MPs from renting from spouses or lovers.
>
> […]Mr Laws is a multi-millionaire former investment banker who earned a double first in economics at Cambridge.
>
> […]Mr Laws escaped censure by the numerous Parliamentary inquiries into expenses because he had never admitted his homosexuality, meaning officials had no way of knowing his landlord was also his lover.
>
> But between 2004 and 2007, Mr Laws claimed between £700 and £950 a month to sub-let a room in a flat in Kennington, South London, owned by Mr Lundie, who was also registered as living at the property.

He's a Liberal Democrat, which is the socialist party in the UK. His secret gay lover is a lobbyist who used to work for former Liberal Democrat leader Charles Kennedy. So, Liberal Democrats all around. Lib Dems are not just hostile to capitalism, they are totally opposed to religious liberty, the rights of the unborn and traditional marriage. Their UK leader Nick Clegg wants to force Christian schools to endorse homosexuality, (similar to what Dalton McGuinty tried to do in Ontario, Canada).

Something similar happened a while back in Canada

This is not the first time that a prominent socialist has stolen tens of thousands of dollars. Svend Robinson, a former New Democratic Party Member of Parliament in British Columbia, Canada, also committed theft.

Excerpt:

> Former NDP MP Svend Robinson has received a conditional discharge and one year probation after pleading guilty to stealing an expensive diamond ring from an auction.

> Robinson faced a range of penalties from absolute discharge to a maximum of 10 years in prison.
>
> […]Robinson had been shopping for a diamond engagement ring he wasn't sure he could afford just a week before he committed the act of theft.
>
> […][Robinson's defense attorney] read several letters from MPs, friends and other colleagues attesting to Robinson's good character. The letters were from such high-profile as former NDP leader Stephen Lewis, environmentalist David Suzuki, and cabinet minister Stephen Owen.
>
> In court to show their support were Vancouver NDP MP Libby Davies, and Bill Siksay, Robinson's longtime constituency assistant who won Robinson's seat in the June federal election.
>
> Svend was able to avoid jail time, but this scandal did not break before he had played a crucial role in legalizing same-sex marriage and passing Canada's hate crimes and hate speech legislation.

The NDP is the Canadian equivalent of the UK Liberal Democrat Party or the US Democrat party. Robinson was instrumental in criminalizing speech critical of homosexuality in Canada, (Bill C-250). Speech that is offensive to the secular left can be prosecuted criminally in Canada and in the UK, and Obama also passed a bill criminalizing free speech in 2009.

But all of this stealing by socialists is not surprising when you reflect on what socialism is. Socialism is the view that demagogues should gain political power by promising "victims", (people who freely choose to make irrational and/or immoral decisions), their neighbor's money. It's basically theft. So it isn't really surprising that two socialists should be convicted of stealing other people's money. That's what socialism is – THEFT.

Note: comments to this post will be strictly monitored in keeping with Obama's law restricting free speech.

Anti-Israel union thug assaults Blazing Cat Fur ON CAMERA

May 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story at Blazing Cat Fur, because he's the cameraman. (H/T The Other McCain via ECM)

Blazing Cat Fur writes:

> Ali Mallah a notorious Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Union Thug Assaults intrepid blogger Blazingcatfur! Mallah, who is also a Vice President of the virulently anti-semitic Canadian Arab Federation, is well known for his anti-Israel derangement and is shown in the video as he attempts to prevent Blazing from filming an anti-Netanyahu protest sponsored by the Leftist Islamofascist alliance in Toronto. The thugs were there to protest Netanyahu's appearance at the annual Walk with Israel event. More on the protest here.

CUPE is a hard-left anti-Israel union. Every government worker in Canada has to be a member and pay dues to this group of socialist thugs. Blech! They oppose good policies like free trade, traditional marriage and reform of the single-payer health care system.

Remember this is a government union thug attacking a private citizen – it's worse than the SEIU stuff I posted before. Public sector people don't actually work for a living (military excluded), so really they just lobby government for pay raises and beat up people who get in their way. Another reason to push for smaller government – we don't need to have people paid to do nothing except hold protest signs.

Public sector unions should be abolished. Heck, all unions should be abolished.

Gates of Vienna points out that there is a useful comment thread going on at Michael Coren's blog. Apparently the police didn't do anything to the Muslim union guy, but instead warned BLAZING CAT FUR to "keep things peaceful".

Take time to reflect on the sacrifices made by our armed forces

May 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Arlington National Cemetary
I stole the image from ECM.

What is Memorial Day? It's the day that we remember all those brave men and women who have sacrificed to protect our liberties and our lives so that we could be safe from harm.

This video may help you to understand.

I found another video to make it more personal.

A Memorial Day video tribute for Major Chris Galloway posted by Flopping Aces. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

From Hot Air, a quote from Ronald Reagan.

> Memorial Day is an occasion of special importance to all Americans, because it is a day sacred to the memory of all those Americans who made the supreme sacrifice for the liberties we enjoy. We will never forget or fail to honor these heroes to whom we owe so much. We honor them best when we resolve to cherish and defend the liberties for which they gave their lives. Let us resolve to do all in our power to assure the survival and the success of liberty so that our children and their children for generations to come can live in an America in which freedom's light continues to shine.
>
> The Congress, in establishing Memorial Day, called for it to be a day of tribute to America's fallen, and also a day of national prayer for lasting peace. This Nation has always sought true peace. We seek it still. Our goal is peace in which the highest aspirations of our people, and people everywhere, are secure: peace with freedom, with justice, and with opportunity for human development. This is the

> permanent peace for which we pray, not only for ourselves but for all generations.
>
> The defense of peace, like the defense of liberty, requires more than lip service. It requires vigilance, military strength, and the willingness to take risks and to make sacrifices. The surest guarantor of both peace and liberty is our unflinching resolve to defend that which has been purchased for us by our fallen heroes.
>
> On Memorial Day, let us pray for peace — not only for ourselves, but for all those who seek freedom and justice.

For more reading, why not check out some of the military bloggers?

- BlackFive
- Mudville Gazette
- Froggy Ruminations
- Michael Yon
- Bill Roggio
- Adventures of Chester

If you want to help out our troops, you can send them things through Soldier's Angels.

God Bless Our Troops!

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Israel furious with Obama administration over Middle East nuclear policy

June 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here on Breitbart. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Washington's unprecedented backing for a UN resolution for a nuclear-free Middle East that singles out Israel has both angered and deeply worried the Jewish state although officials are cagey about openly criticising their biggest ally.
>
> The resolution adopted by the United Nations on Friday calls on Israel to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and urges it to open its facilities to inspection.
>
> […]The document, which singles out Israel but makes no mention of Iran's controversial nuclear programme, drew a furious reaction from the Jewish state who decried it as "deeply flawed and hypocritical."
>
> But it was US backing for the resolution which has caused the most consternation among Israeli officials and commentators, who interpreted the move as "a resounding slap around the face" which has dealt a very public blow to Israel's long-accepted policy of nuclear ambiguity.
>
> Publicly, the Israel government has not criticised the US position but privately, officials expressed deep disappointment over the resolution, which Washington backed despite intensive Israeli efforts to block it.
>
> According to the top-selling Yediot Aharonot daily, the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was "furious with the Obama administration for having failed to prevent the resolution from passing… and for choosing to support it."
>
> "The American support for the resolution, after decades in which it supported Israel on this issue, came as a complete surprise," the paper said.

Barack Obama's foreign policy consists of bowing to our enemies and backstabbing our closest allies. Is it any wonder that Turkey and Brazil are now assisting Iran to go nuclear?

UPDATE: You can find out more about how Israeli troops defended themselves against armed resistance when they boarded a Turkish vessel to inspect cargo.

and:

Be careful about listening to the mainstream media, they are not reliable on Middle East issues.

Public school bus driver blasts little girl for discussing Christianity

June 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Lone Wolf Archer. (H/T Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

Story is here. (This link also has a video with more of the audio of the bus driver)

Excerpt:

> After the girl was dropped off, Zimmer said a bus camera showed Campbell telling the students, "If you can't believe in tolerance toward one another, you don't belong here. You belong in a parochial, church school."
>
> Zimmer also claims the bus driver questioned another student about whether Rachael ever said anything racist to him.
>
> "If she says anything racial to you, I want to know about it, because I am going to eat her alive," Zimmer said Campbell can be heard saying on the tape. "You're a smart guy. Rachael is a stupid little bigot."
>
> Zimmer said Campbell then came back to the girl's home after all of the children had been let off the bus and brought Rachael and her older sister, who were home alone at the time, onto her empty bus, berating Rachael about her opinions on gay marriage.
>
> "Say we're a gay couple …and we go to China … and she would adopt a child. She comes back, and if she dies, that child isn't mine. You can't keep that kid," Zimmer said Campbell is heard saying on the tape. "Or I'm filthy rich and she is not, I die, she does not inherit my money. That's what this is all about."
>
> When he asked the school district why Campbell wasn't disciplined, Zimmer said he was told she was working within the scope of her employment.

Notice that the father is forced to pay for these government schools through mandatory taxation. And also note that the school's only response was to deny that anything was wrong. That's why public schools are EVIL. We need to have vouchers so that parents can get their money back and send their children to schools they actually want. I think that my fear is that we as Christians are not really serious about protecting our children. We want to have marriages, and families, and children, but we are not really willing to learn about the problems that our children will face from anti-Christian public schools.

If you want to understand what people who are on the other side think of what was done to that little girl, then go to this atheistic blog and read the comments. Warning: there is vulgar language. Atheism is an amoral worldview. And it's the worldview that is increasingly present in the Democrat party, which is hostile to public expressions of Christian faith.

My plan at this point is homeschooling for kindergarten through grade 6, then private

schools all the way on from there. I wish I could get my money back from the government for these public schools, health services, and pensions that they are providing to everyone else, but oh well.

Barack Obama proclaims June as LGBT rights month

June 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the proclamation.

Excerpt:

> Much work remains to fulfill our Nation's promise of equal justice under law for LGBT Americans. That is why we must give committed gay couples the same rights and responsibilities afforded to any married couple, and repeal the Defense of Marriage Act. We must protect the rights of LGBT families by securing their adoption rights, ending employment discrimination against LGBT Americans, and ensuring Federal employees receive equal benefits. We must create safer schools so all our children may learn in a supportive environment. I am also committed to ending "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" so patriotic LGBT Americans can serve openly in our military, and I am working with the Congress and our military leadership to accomplish that goal.

And of course there is the bill he signed criminalizing speech critical of homosexuality.

And it's not just gay rights that he is focused on, it's abortion. If that link doesn't prove that he is the most pro-abortion president ever to hold the office, then nothing will. Whether intentionally or not, everyone who voted for Obama voted against the rights of the unborn and against the norm of traditional marriage, where children are raised by a mother and a father.

Remember, we Christians helped to elect Obama:

Presidential Vote by Religious Affiliation and Race

	2004		2008	
	Kerry	Bush	Obama	McCain
	%	%	%	%
Total	**48**	**51**	**53**	**46**
Protestant/Other Christian	40	59	45	54
White Prot/Other Christian	32	67	34	65
Evangelical/Born-again	21	79	26	73
Non-evangelical	44	56	44	55
Catholic	47	52	54	45
White Catholic	43	56	47	52
Jewish	74	25	78	21
Other faiths	74	23	73	22
Unaffiliated	67	31	75	23

Because we thought that just wars to deter terrorists were expensive, and that we should have more of our neighbor's money for bailing out Wall Street bankers, unions and failing public schools.

It's sometimes funny to remember the days when Bush was proclaiming Sanctity of

Human Life day. But then he was the most pro-life president ever, and solid on traditional marriage, too.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools

June 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must-listen, especially for any single Christian woman who would like to get married and have children. If you want to marry a Christian man, you should listen to this lecture and also the Dr. Morse lecture on marriage *Every Day.*

In fact, the only reason why single men play video games and don't want to marry is because women don't know how to talk about education policy. We try to talk to you about school choice and you can't, so we play video games instead. *Your fault*. Not our fault. We also like talking about tax policy and foreign policy, but education policy first. If a woman doesn't know what a voucher is, then she might as well be a giant lobster. And men don't like to talk to lobstrosities.

(I am totally kidding in that last paragraph)

With that introduction, here is the MP3 file on education policy.

And there is a PDF outline for all that.

Note: public schools = government-run schools.

Topics:

- Does God care whether we people marry and have children?
- Does God care whether Christian parents raise their children to know him?
- Should government promote bearing children?
- What are some effects of declining birth rates in other countries?
- What are the economic effects of declining birth rates?
- Who has the right to decide how children are trained: government or parents?
- What does the Bible say about parents having to raise children to know him?
- Does the government have the responsibility for training children?
- What do educational bureaucrats think of parents training children?
- What do school boards think of parents training children?
- Should school boards be elected by local, state or federal government?
- Should Christians be opposed to government-run education? (public schools)
- How should schools be viewed by parents? As a replacement or as a helper?
- How are schools viewed by those on the left and in communist countries?
- How can you measure how supporting a government is of parental rights?
- How is parental authority viewed in left-wing EU countries like Germany?
- How is parental authority respected in the United States?
- Should parents have a choice of where their children go to school?
- What is a voucher program? How is it related to parental autonomy?
- How does competition (school choice) in education serve parental needs?
- Why do public school teachers, unions and educrats oppose competitition?

- How well do public schools do in educating children to achieve?
- Does the government-run monopoly of public schools produce results?
- Does paying more and more money to public schools make them perform?
- How do teacher unions feel about having to compete in a voucher system?
- Does the public school monopoly penalize the poorest students?
- Does the public school monopoly penalize children of certain races?
- Does the public school monopoly cause racial predujice?
- What else should parents demand on education policy?
- Is it good for parents when schools refuse to fire underperforming teachers?

This podcast is just amazing! This is what we need to be teaching in church. Church should be the place where you go to learn and reflect about how to tailor your life plan based on what the Bible says. And I think that this whole notion of free market – of choice and competition benefiting the consumer (parents) – applies to everything that government does, especially education and health care. Go Capitalism!

(Note: I am not a Calvinist! But Grudem is the best theologian!)

Related posts

- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment
- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible
- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

Single-payer health care is falling apart in Canada

June 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Reuters. (H/T Hot Air via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Pressured by an aging population and the need to rein in budget deficits, Canada's provinces are taking tough measures to curb healthcare costs, a trend that could erode the principles of the popular state-funded system.
>
> Ontario, Canada's most populous province, kicked off a fierce battle with drug companies and pharmacies when it said earlier this year it would halve generic drug prices and eliminate "incentive fees" to generic drug manufacturers.
>
> British Columbia is replacing block grants to hospitals with fee-for-procedure payments and Quebec has a new flat health tax and a proposal for payments on each medical visit — an idea that critics say is an illegal user fee.
>
> And a few provinces are also experimenting with private funding for procedures such as hip, knee and cataract surgery.
>
> It's likely just a start as the provinces, responsible for delivering healthcare, cope with the demands of a retiring baby-boom generation. Official figures show that senior citizens will make up 25 percent of the population by 2036.

Ooops. Maybe that whole taxpayer-funded abortions for free thing was not such a good idea for a welfare state like Canada. In their defense, they only have a Ponzie scheme for health care, their retirement system is solid compared to Social Security.

Investors Business Daily explains:

> Western dabbling in socialism has shown that public health care systems funded by other people's money are unsustainable. The provision of "free" care is a losing game. Because it is perceived to be free, demand in such a system will outstrip supply. Costs can't help but rise.
>
> […]In 2009, health care spending in Canada devoured 40% of the provincial governments' budgets and expenditures have been rising by 6% a year. At that rate, or even half that rate, it wouldn't be long before the provincial governments did nothing but fund health care. The Ontario government says health care spending could consume 70% of its budget within just 12 years.
>
> Some of the blame can be placed on an aging population. Reuters reports that one-fourth of Canada's population in 2036 will be senior citizens. But it's the nature of the system, its near monopoly and its ambition to serve every Canadian, that makes it unsustainable. It has grown from 7% of provincial governments' spending in the 1970s to the 40% it is today merely because it is a government giveaway that people cannot get enough of.

The Cato Institute compares Canada to bankrupt Greece here.

In different parts of Canada, things like in vitro fertilization, abortions, and sex changes are well-funded by the government. They actually restrict the number of doctors in order to ration billing the government for services. Many people cannot even find doctors! People just go on waiting lists for months and months and they die on waiting lists waiting for brain cancer treatment, after having paid into the system for their whole lives! (Because abortions are more important than brain cancer in Canada – it buys more votes, you know).

Related movies on Canadian health care

A Short Course in Brain Surgery:

Two Women:

The Lemon:

And one more video from On The Fence Films called "Dead Meat".

Related posts

- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
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- How does health care in the USA compare with other countries?
- Videos explaining what government-run health care is like in Canada
- Canada cuts deal with US hospitals to reduce waiting times
- Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!

Cowardly Hedy Fry backs away from her challenge to debate pro-lifers

June 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Canadian Center for Bioethical Reform.

Excerpt:

> Last month, Member of Parliament Dr. Hedy Fry was reported in a CBC article as saying she was ready to debate abortion with anyone. When one of her former patients, international pro-life speaker Stephanie Gray, took her up on her offer, Dr. Fry declined….

Here is the actual voice mail backing out of the debate:

The pro-lifer debater comments:

> "It's disappointing that a member of parliament who has been so vocal in support of abortion won't publicly defend her views in a forum where they will be challenged," said Gray, executive director of the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform (CCBR). Gray pointed out that it's not likely abortion will be debated in the House any time soon given the political hot potato the topic is. Gray continued: "If Dr. Fry is so confident that she's correct, why not air her views against mine? Those on the side of truth should have nothing to fear. I don't. I welcome the opportunity to engage her or any abortion advocate in examining the issue."

Yeah, because the abortion position has nothing to do with reason – it has to do with selfishness. A man and a woman conspire to pursue pleasure and to then kill an innocent child in order to avoid being inconvenienced in their careers or finances. That's what abortion is. It's slavery, only worse, because you actually kill the innocent person for money, rather than just making them work.

Children are the natural consequence of having sex. If the man and the woman are BOTH not ready for a baby, then they should not be having sex. A baby has the best chance of surviving and thriving with two married parents who have kept a home for a couple of years. So grown-ups have the responsibility to take care of providing the environment for children who are the natural result of the sexual act. It's no use complaining about unexpected babies – if you have sex, you need to be ready for a baby. And it's no use caterwauling about how recycling makes you a good person if you cannot love the helpless innocent people that you create with your own selfish choices.

Imagine you were trimming your hedge and you noticed a baby bird with a broken wing on the ground. You don't ignore the bird and you certainly don't kill it. You take it to a vet, you pay to splint the bird's wing, and you take it home and nurse it back to health. Because it's small and it's weak and it needs you and it's on your property and it's your

responsibility and that’s all there is to it. There isn’t any decision to make once you find it – you just deal with it. Because you have moral character and you don’t care that much about being happy – you care a lot more about being good. You desire for happiness is irrelevant. You want to be good. Whatever it takes.

UPDATE: This story was picked up by Canada’s National Post, the best national newspaper in Canada.

The Cambrian explosion is getting more explosive

June 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A story on the Cambrian explosion from the radically pro-evolution BBC. (H/T Evolution News)

Excerpt:

> In a new study, Canadian researchers identified a previously unclassifiable fossil that was long believed to belong perhaps to the shrimp family.
>
> They called it Nectocaris pteryx – a small soft-bodied cephalopod with two tentacles rather than the eight or 10 seen in today's octopuses.
>
> The new survey's results were presented in the journal Nature.
>
> The findings make the ancestors of modern squid and octopuses at least 30 million years older.
>
> Evolutionary biologist Martin Smith, the main author of the study, told PA news agency that the findings bring cephalopods much closer to the first appearance of complex animals.
>
> "We go from very simple pre-Cambrian life-forms to something as complex as a cephalopod in the geological blink of an eye, which illustrates just how quickly evolution can produce complexity," said Mr Smith.

Yes, isn't it amazing how naturalistic mechanisms like "evolution" can create brand new complex body plans out of nothing, in the blink of an eye? And isn't it amazing that this evidence doesn't falsify naturalism at all! Oh, no no no no no no, it doesn't – because naturalism is a *blind faith commitment*. Evidence is irrelevant to a blind faith commitment. The entire physical universe can pop into being out of nothing, but naturalism is still true – *because they want it to be true.* All praise the Flying Spaghetti Monster!

The more body plans that appear suddenly, the less plausible evolution becomes. You can't have a massive infusion of biological information appearing out of nowhere without an intelligent agent to sequence the individual characters. New software requires a software engineer.

Related posts

- Is opposition to evolution based on ignorance of the scientific data?
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- New DVD on the Cambrian explosion (now available from Amazon.com)

Obama appoints NHS-loving socialist as Medicare and Medicaid Czar

June 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Donald Berwick, nominated by President Barack Obama to run Medicare and Medicaid, praised the government-owned British National Health Service (NHS) for not letting their health care system "play out in the darkness of private enterprise."
>
> […]Berwick, who said that Britain "chose well" in establishing a health care system completely controlled by the government, contrasted the NHS with the American health care system, which he derided as being dominated by private doctors, hospitals, and insurers instead of the government.

The article is filled with alarming quotes from Berwick making it clear that he is a committed socialist. Just like Obama!

In fact, the American Spectator reports that he LOVES the UK health care system. (H/T Not ECM, because he recommends you not read my blog any more just because I like courting more than video games)

Excerpt:

> For example, the BBC — hardly a hive of free-market zealots — has run a series exposing routine neglect of elderly patients in a major NHS hospital.
>
> [….]In addition to sheer neglect, NHS patients are often subjected to incredibly unsanitary conditions.
>
> […]Many British patients never endure such conditions because treatment is denied outright as too expensive.
>
> […]The NHS is run by health care bureaucrats who, like Donald Berwick, regard the free market as ethically dubious and economically inequitable. Yet the "morally superior" and "fair" medical system they have created for the U.K. produces results that give new meaning to the epithet, "Perfidious Albion. As David Gratzer recently pointed out, "British cancer outcomes don't just trail U.S. results; they rival those of Eastern European nations." This isn't hyperbole. A 2008 study showed that cancer survival rates in the U.K. don't come close to those of the United States. American men, for example, have an 80 percent better chance of surviving prostate cancer than do their English counterparts. The study revealed similar disparities in comparative survival rates for victims of breast, colon and rectal cancers.
>
> […]Heart patients subjected to the tender mercies of the NHS also fare poorly.

> The *Telegraph* reports that British heart attack victims are much more likely to die after being admitted to a hospital than similar patients in the United States and other developed nations: "Around 6.3 per cent of patients who have suffered a heart attack have passed away within 30 days of entering a British hospital — significantly higher than the 4.3 per cent average."

I snipped ALL THE HORROR STORIES out of the excerpt. Yes, even the one with the DECOMPOSING RAT IN THE OPERATING ROOM. You better click through and scare yourself silly from ever voting for the Democrats again. And don't let your friends vote Democrat, either. Would you like to have health care from the DMV or from Amazon.com? In the UK, you get it from the DMV. And that's where Obama is taking us.

UPDATE: Here's another NHS horror story. Maybe it came from ECM and maybe it didn't. I guess we'll never know.

Related posts

- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
- Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water
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- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
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- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care
- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- UK National Health Service refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?

June 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Watch this video.

Who is to blame for this woman's troubles? Well, I agree with Driscoll that her family, the church and other Christians were to blame for not telling her the truth about sex. On that we all agree. Christians do a lousy job of explaining sex to young people, because they don't want to talk about "dirty" stuff, and they don't want to use arguments and evidence, and they don't want to go outside the Bible to give real reasons and evidence. But thumping the Bible is a poor response to peer pressure and pop culture.

But she and Mark Driscoll also seem to think the man is to blame. Is the man to blame?

Well, the man certainly did bad things, but I think that none of these bad things could have happened *to this woman in particular* if this woman had not first chosen this man from all the other men that she knew, and then given him the opportunity to do these bad things. Without her own free choices, she would *never* have been harmed. So her own bad choices played a part in her suffering but she didn't mention her own choices at all. So, let me take a look at how she could have made better choices below.

Can women expect a non-Christian man to act like a Christian man?

Women need to be careful to realize that they should avoid being alone with non-Christian men, especially when they are not even old enough to be dating men at all. That's what courting is designed to prevent, by the way – the man has to go through the father to get to the woman, and they need to be accompanied by a chaperone at all times. And in any case, a woman can get love without touching a man just by listening to the man's words, reading his writings, letting him serve her, washing a car together, and accepting gifts from him.

Women: you don't go to a deserted beach with a non-Christian man. Don't take risks like that. Especially when you have probably already done a lot with the guy. And don't drink alcohol, it impairs your judgment. The purpose of men is to marry them, not to have a good time with them. No alcohol is allowed!

Paul says that you cannot expect non-Christians to act like Christians, which is exactly what many Christian women do.

1 Cor 5:9-13:

[9]I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—

[10]not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.

[11]But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

[12]What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?

[13]God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked man from among you.”

And, 2 Cor 6:14-16:

[14]Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

[15]What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

[16]What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

Christians should not pursue non-Christians romantically – it’s disrespectful to God to leave him out of your romantic operations.

Women can stop a lot of the bad behavior of men just by *choosing authentic Christian men* by using *rigorous objective criteria* to evaluate men. If a woman chooses a non-Christian man, then she cannot complain if he acts like a non-Christian man. And there is more to a man being a Christian than just saying that he is, memorizing Bible verses and singing praise hymns in church. Christianity is a worldview. It has to be applied across the board. Christian women need to study to develop a Christian worldview of their own so they know how to evaluate the worldviews of candidate men.

What else can we learn from the video?

Here are a few more things that stood out to me in the video:

- She should take more responsibility for their actions, instead of blaming others
- She should study these things (not just the Bible!) on her own before she starts dating, to know *why* God puts these boundaries in place to protect her from harm
- Her parents should have studied these things (not just the Bible!) more, and helped her more by being more convincing, to know *why* God puts these boundaries in place to protect her from harm
- The church she grew up in should provide her with *extra-biblical* arguments and evidence from the objective external world so that she could resist ideologies like atheism, postmodernism, liberalism, feminism, etc. – she can’t act morally unless she believes that God exists and that morality is real

Women should also know that the decision to have sex before marriage with a man who isn’t a Christian doesn’t magically change him into a Christian. Sex isn’t magic. It doesn’t cause a man to like a woman, or to fall under her control.

Women go to school for 4 years to learn a trade and they need to put some effort into studying courtship rules so they can be wise about their own choices with men. Jumping into a car and trying to drive it without lessons is a good way to get killed. And emotions, intuitions, peer-pressure and pop-culture don’t help you to know how to drive a car. Be

careful, think for yourself.

I also recommend that young, unmarried women become *informed* about anti-family, anti-father policies. If women don't want to be hurt by men, then vote for stronger families, lower taxes, and policies that promote good husbands and good fathers. Girls need to see love modeled between a husband and wife as they grow up, and they need to have fathers in the home. *Good public policies* encourage men to marry and stay married.

Women need to get better criteria for choosing men

A while back, I posted on some of the criteria women have for choosing men, and here are a few:

- Being tall
- Being aloof and disinterested
- Playing a musical instrument
- Well-dressed
- Stylish shoes
- A deep voice
- Handsome face

What do women expect when they choose men based on criteria like that? It makes no sense to blame a bad man for being bad. He's BAD! Don't go near him, he'll be bad to you, too!

Shouldn't women judge themselves first, before judging a man?

Shouldn't women begin by removing the plank in their own eye before removing the speck from the man's eye?

I think an excellent first step would be for Christian women to take a good look at the music they listen to, the movies they watch, and also what they read. Are they listening to Melissa Etheridge, watching "Thelma & Louise", and reading Margaret Atwood? Are they informing themselves about truth in many areas, like economics and cosmology, so that they can make informed choices of men? Are they building resistance to cultural trends?

UPDATE: Two more things I thought of.

1) Shouldn't this woman have put some effort into testing out the claims of her parents and the church by reading the Bible itself? I mentioned reading extra-biblical stuff but even the Bible doesn't ground anything that she was doing or anything the church was telling her to do that was wrong. Driscoll seems to think that women are not obligated to read the Bible, and that if someone in the church tells them a lie, then the church is to blame. But shouldn't we expect people who attend church to test these things out for themselves? I realize that she wasn't a Christian, but in order to take responsibility, she could have said "I should have checked things in my Bible and so I share the blame". She doesn't say that because she doesn't blame herself at all for anything that happened. Well, probably she went to church for the singing and never read what the Bible had to

say – or didn't take it as an authority. But she never blames herself for either one of those.

2) I noticed that she claims that if the church tells her something and she does it, then the church is to blame. Well, the church (or at least her parents) undoubtedly told her not to have sex before she was married, but she didn't mention that in the video. Why not? Well, she only mentions things that other people tell her to blame them. When they tell her the right thing and she doesn't do it, she doesn't mention what they told her. Because she won't blame herself for any reason. And Driscoll has nothing to say about that, either. Any time the church tells her something bad and she does it… it's the church's fault. Any time the church tells her something good and she DOESN'T do it… she just doesn't mention it because she isn't responsible for anything she does – it's always the fault of someone else.

I don't mind if she explains the circumstances surrounding WHY she made bad choices. I don't even mind the bad choices, because I make bad choices. I just don't like her blaming other people, I especially don't like her blaming bad men. Bad men are bad. Don't blame them for not being good – it's your fault for choosing them. There are other men who are good who get no attention from women at all.

We need to learn from Theodore Dalrymple

Remember this post?

Excerpt:

> With increasing frequency I am consulted by nurses, who for the most part come from and were themselves traditionally members of (at least after Florence Nightingale) the respectable lower middle class, who have illegitimate children by men who first abuse and then abandon them. This abuse and later abandonment is usually all too predictable from the man's previous history and character; but the nurses who have been treated in this way say they refrained from making a judgment about him because it is wrong to make judgments.

And again:

> Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.
>
> This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in

> order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.

Read the whole thing, you young women. And judge men hard. It's good to judge them beforehand so that you don't have to condemn them for being bad later.

Related posts

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- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

MUST-READ: How Obama reduces the supply of medical care

June 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had written about the so-called doc-fix before, which is the problem of doctors being underpaid by the government for things like Medicare and Medicaid when they provide services to patients. Obama chose not to "fix" these low reimbursements in his health care bill, in order to hide the true costs of socializing medicine. But he has a plan now to fix the problem of government-run medicine not reimbursing doctors adequately.

And it isn't what you might think.

From Laura at Pursuing Holiness. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Conservatives were outraged by the chicanery of separating physician payment increases from the health care reform (that's three lies for the price of one) bill Congress recently rammed through. The "doc fix" was separate legislation so that physician payments could be increased without adding to the total cost of the main bill, so that Democrats could dishonestly claim the bill reduced the deficit. Now, however, we are seeing the real "doc fix."
>
> Some Idaho orthopedists grew weary of the low reimbursement rates the government gave them for caring for worker's comp patients. So they got together and agreed not to treat those patients anymore. They hoped that their boycott would force the Idaho Industrial Commission to increase the fee schedule – their payments. While they were at it, they decided to stop working with Blue Cross of Idaho – also a notorious underpayer – until a better deal could be negotiated. Unions behave this way all the time, and it's often very effective.
>
> In a similar case in Colorado last February, the Federal Trade Commission stepped in and charged the doctors with price-fixing.
>
> Those doctors lost, and if they want to continue to work as physicians, they will do so at the prices set by the government.
>
> Now the Obama administration has stepped it up a notch. The FTC only deals with civil complaints. In order to deal with the Idaho orthopedists, Obama sent in Eric Holder and the Justice Department, which is at liberty to file *criminal charges*. You see, those Idaho orthopedists collectively agreeing that they had enough and weren't going to take it anymore, were actually engaged in two antitrust conspiracies.

Read the rest. This is another first class post by Laura, and a great find by ECM. (Laura also sides with me on women taking responsibility for their own actions, which is why men like her)

So, it sounds like the Obama administration is heading towards Canada's system where the private practice of medicine is a criminal offense. Doctors will not be able to set prices for their services. A patient giving money directly to a doctor, without government approval of the price (price controls), will become illegal. That's the way that socialists roll.They love to fix prices.

And do you know what happens when doctors make less money than government clerks but have to work 80 hour weeks? That's right – you have a shortage of doctors! Just like in Canada! And do you know what happens when there is a shortage of doctors? That's right – you pay for the privilege of dying on a waiting list. (Unless you want an abortion, IVF or a sex change, I guess – because that's politically correct in Canada)

This is why there are waiting lists in every country that has tried socialized medicine. Fewer doctors means fewer claims to the government – rationing. It's the real way that government cuts costs. Well, that and euthanasia. Once government starts to regulate the practice of medicine, and to fix prices, you choke off the supply. And then you have to start killing people to avoid bankrupting the system, without or without their consent.

If someone says they are a Christian… it may not mean what you think

June 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Birds of the Air. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> I think, however, that he *was* accurate and that "self-identified Christian" does not necessarily classify one as actually Christian. Consider the following facts. According to a 2009 Barna survey of "self-described Christians", 22% believe things contradictory to Christianity about God, such as "everyone is god, god refers to the realization of human potential," and so on. Did you read that? These are people who call themselves "Christian". And it doesn't get better when you ask more questions. Some 59% don't believe that Satan is real. Nor do 58% believe the Holy Spirit is real. They *do* believe that evil spirits and supernatural forces exist, just not that Satan or the Holy Spirit are actual beings. When asked about Jesus (remember, "Christian" means "follower of Christ"), 39% believe that Jesus sinned in His lifetime. If this were true, Christianity would be nullified because Jesus would neither have been God Incarnate nor would He have been able to pay for sins. It is no wonder, then, that 38% believe that their beliefs have not transformed their lives much. Oddly, while denying so much essential to Christianity, 89% hold that their main goal in life is to "love God with all their heart, mind, strength and soul." It begs the question, doesn't it? "What God?"
>
> The Bible itself is problematic to Christians. In this survey, a majority (63%) believe the Bible is accurate in what it teaches, but 39% think the Koran and the Book of Mormon are just as accurate, that they teach the same principles as the Bible. In another study, there is a sharp decline in how reliable they think the Bible is. Only 30% of 18-to-25-year-olds think the Bible is accurate contrasted with 58% of the 64-plus group. The fear of the Barna group is that "the Bible will continue to lose hold on the next generation."

Regarding that last point about the Bible, as long as Christians insulate the claims of the Bible from testing against the external world, then yes, it will just be about opinions. If there is no way to test something because we don't allow the text to be tested, then you just take it or leave if you like it. Personal preference. We need to get away from Christianity as blind faith, and make Christianity something you can know to be true without any leaps of faith.

NHS kills a man's wife by delaying cancer treatment for 7 months

June 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the UK Daily Mail. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> As an experienced GP, Uday Pathak had good reason to trust his instincts and knowledge when his wife became ill.
>
> The 62-year-old suspected she had cancer and urged medics to carry out an immediate full body scan. Tragically, they delayed for seven months and 54-year-old Pradnya later died of the disease.
>
> […]When the scan was finally carried out at the University Hospital of North Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, it showed Dr Pathak was correct all along.
>
> Despite six months of chemotherapy, Mrs Pathak, a mother-of-two from Seabridge, Staffordshire, died in December 2008. She had been referred to the respiratory unit in May 2007 with a persistent dry cough.
>
> Four months later, Dr Pathak said he raised the possibility his wife had cancer of the lymphatic system. But it was only in April 2008 that a body scan was carried out by the hospital's haematology team.
>
> Consultant haematologist Richard Chasty, who saw Mrs Pathak three days before her death, said she may have survived if diagnosed sooner.

The horror is that a man works hard as a doctor in a socialist country for his entire life, slavishly paying half his earnings to the government under the constant threat of imprisonment. They take his money and they spend it on other people who may not even be paying anything. And then finally he has need of care. His own wife, who he has sworn an oath to protect, is taken ill.

He turns to the people who have taken hundreds of thousands of dollars of his money and he asks them for help. And they deny him that help, because they have spent his money on sex change operations to change a prison inmate from a man to a woman, and then back to a man, in order to buy votes from coveted special interest groups who demand "equality" with those who are happy with their biological sex.

He is powerless to intervene to save his wife and must watch as his lifelong partner dies right before his eyes. He has no money to afford private care – it was all paid in taxes. He no longer has money to go abroad to the United States to get treatment, and it is in any case too late to try, anyway.

Related posts

- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?

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- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- UK National Health Service refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

LA students to be taught that AZ immigration law is un-American

June 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> The Los Angeles Unified School District school board wants all public school students in the city to be taught that Arizona's new immigration law is un-American.
>
> […]In an e-mail to FOXNews.com, school district spokesman Robert Alaniz elaborated:
>
> "The Board of Education directed the Superintendent to ensure that LAUSD civics and history classes discuss the recent laws enacted in Arizona in the context of the American values of unity, diversity, and Equal Protection for all. Much like a number of controversial periods and laws that are part of our history and are currently taught including:
>
> - Slavery
> - Jim Crowe laws and segregation
> - Native American reservations
> - Residential schools (for Native Americans)
> - The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882
> - Anti-Irish racism in the 19th century
> - Racism against immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe in the 20th century
> - Anti-Semitism
> - Internment camps for Japanese Americans during World War II
> - The Mexican Repatriation Program (1929-1939)."

Asking people for a driver's license in a traffic stop is the same as slavery and segregation?

Another argument for homeschooling or private schools.

Chris Christie explains the war between teacher unions and parents

June 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Awesome video from Hot Air. (H/T Cubachi)

Excerpt:

> Governor Chris Christie gives remarks regarding teachers and the teachers Union, the NJEA during a Town Hall Meeting in Robbinsville, NJ.
>
> Christie explained that his fight is not against teachers. It is against the NJEA. Christie cited this stat: a teacher who is in the union, pays $730 a year to join. If a teacher doesn't want to join the union, they pay 85% of the $730 per year, to not join.
>
> That money raises $130 million a year to pay for lobbyists, to stare down the legislature. They also spend the money, as well as tax payer money from NJ residents from property taxes and other taxes to buy ads attacking the governor.

Here's the clip:

I found another good 4-minute clip from a different education policy speech at the Heritage Foundation, too.

The full speech from the American Federation for Children Policy Summit is in 4 clips on YouTube:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4

And you can learn more about how school choice helps students to learn, and parents to get their money's worth.

I love policy. The quickest way to a man's heart is tax policy and education policy and foreign policy.

Paul Copan explains the problems of evil and suffering in 17 minutes

June 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Paul Copan

Paul Copan explains the high points of the problems of evil and suffering in 17 minutes. (H/T Apologetics 315)

The MP3 file is here.

The video is here.

Topics:

- the question itself reveals that we are moral beings
- the problem of evil is the great interrupter of human well-being
- every philosophy of life has to address this question
- is God required to give us a life that is easy and comfortable?
- evil is a departure from good, i.e. – the way things ought to be
- a way things ought to be implies a plan for what ought to be
- human evil implies a plan for the way we ought to be
- free creatures have the ability to deviate from the plan
- where does this plan for the universe and us come from?
- how can there be a way we ought to be come from?
- evil is the flip side of good so where does good come from?
- God's own moral nature is the standard of good and evil
- where does evil from natural disasters come from?
- how dangerous natural phenomena preserve Earth's habitability
- there is a benefit from tectonic activity
- similarly, God lets humans freely choose knowing harm may result
- people are free to try to find meaning in something other than God

- God is able to use negative things to bring about positive results
- e.g. – when good people suffer, they can comfort and care for others
- can people be good enough on their own without God?

Paul Copan is probably my favorite Christian apologist, along with Doug Geivett. I put Copan and Geivett in a separate category from guys like Meyer and Richards. Copan and Geivett are more specifically defending Christian claims and Christian theology in their work. both get involved with debates and lecturing. They are both very confident in their exclusivism and evangelicalism, addressing tough questions on specific controversial Christian beliefs. I *love* that. Nothing is off limits for these guys.

If you want to read two *good* books for beginners on Christian Apologetics that cover a much wider range of issues than Craig's "On Guard", then pick up Copan's "Passion Conviction" and the companion "Contending With Christianity's Critics". Awesome, awesome resources.

Audio and video from the recent Licona vs Carrier debate

June 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Licona just e-mailed me about his re-match with internet infidel Richard Carrier, who takes an extremely skeptical view of the New Testament.

The audio and video are linked here on 4truth.net.

Details:

> On February 11, 2010, Michael Licona and Richard Carrier faced each other in debate for a second time. Topic: Did Jesus rise from the dead? The debate occurred at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas in front of an estimated audience of 750. There are two video segments. The first is the main part of the debate (opening statements and six inquiry periods lasting 10 minutes each). The second is the audience Q & A.

Links:

- Debate: MPEG-4 Video
- Q & A: MPEG-4 Video

UPDATE: Brian Auten writes:

> The full MP3 (debate and q/a) can be found here. The MP3 links at 4truth are not actual MP3s as of this moment.

This is a cross-examination debate, so it should be very fun to watch/hear.

Friday night video game music from Castlevania

June 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM thinks that I'm not crazy enough to post video game music like he does, but I am.

For those who want to read something good instead of listen to Friday Night Music, then you can read Binks' round-up, which has news of Rifqa Bary, and of Maryam and Marzieh, the two women from Iran who have been in jail for their faith.

Castlevania: Curse of Darkness

Abandoned Castle

Eneomaos Machine Tower

Mortvia Aquaduct

Baljhet Mountains

Castlevania: Lament of Innocence

Dark Palace of Waterfalls

Garden Forgotten by Time

Leon's Theme

Two Bonus Remixes

I like to put the top down and listen to Mortvia Aquaduct at night on long distance drive.

By the way, any of my regular readers can friend me on Facebook. I'm also on Skype! And I love to get e-mail, even though I am bad at replying to them sometimes.

Happy Friday!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogUcCAbaqSw&feature=related

National debt tops 13 trillion and counting

June 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby concerned about national debt

Story here at the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> The federal government is now $13 trillion in the red, the Treasury Department reported Wednesday, marking the first time the government has sunk that far into debt and putting a sharp point on the spending debate on Capitol Hill.
>
> […]At $13 trillion, that figure has risen by $2.4 trillion in about 500 days since President Obama took office, or an average of $4.9 billion a day. That's almost three times the daily average of $1.7 billion under the previous administration, and led Republicans on Wednesday to place blame squarely at the feet of Mr. Obama and his fellow Democrats.

What is he spending money on? New benefits for the same-sex partners of federal employees.

Recession? What Recession? It's party time in the White House.

Why do secularists think their view should be privileged in debates?

June 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a good article from Matt at MandM.

Excerpt:

> [Secularism] is the view that citizens of liberal democracies may justly support the implementation of a law only if they reasonably believe themselves to have a plausible ***secular*** justification for that law. Further, they must be willing to appeal to secular justifications alone in political discussion. The upshot of this perspective is that it is perceived to be unjust to support or advocate for laws for theological or religious reasons.
>
> […]This raises an obvious question, why the asymmetry? On the face of it secularism appears to privilege secular ideologies and doctrines in public debate whilst relegating religious or theological perspectives to the private sphere. What is the basis for this? Two reasons are typically offered and neither is terribly compelling.
>
> The first is that it is dangerous to allow theological or religious concerns into public debate. Defenders of secularism raise the specter of the wars of religion that tore Europe apart during the 17th century or they mention episodes such as the Inquisition and Crusades, which are said to be consequences of allowing religious reasons to influence public and political life. It is argued that the only way to keep social peace and prevent the kind of violence that Europe witnessed is to ensure religious reasons do not influence public life and that all political discussions take place on secular terms.
>
> […]The fear of religious wars is not the only argument typically offered for the secular public square. The main reason offered for secularism is that religious reasons are not accessible to all people. Auckland Law Professor Paul Rishworth observes, "some have contended that the nature of religious belief is such that, while it may be integral to individual autonomy and development, it has no proper role in public policy debates and that these ought to be conducted exclusively in secular terms *that are equally accessible to all.*" [*Emphasis added*]
>
> Something like this is also evident in defences of secularism. Leading secular Philosopher Michael Tooley states, "For it is surely true that it is inappropriate, at least in a pluralistic society, to appeal to specific theological beliefs of a non moral sort… in support of legislation *that will be binding upon everyone."*

Ever heard this argument that only secularism is allowed in public? I actually try to respect their standards of evidence, but I draw *conclusions* that implicate theism. But Matt and Madeleine disagree with me – or at least they say that neither of these two

reasons is enough to rule out reasoning based on religious premises. Intriguing, isn’t it?

New study compares donor-conceived vs biologically-conceived children

June 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The study is here. (H/T Dr. J from RuthBlog)

Dr. J writes:

> The Institute for American Values has just published a new study, My Daddy's Name is Donor, of how donor conceived persons are doing in comparison with those who were born and raised by their biological parents and in comparison with those who were adopted.

And she notes this comment from a gay man who thinks that the fact that he and his partner PLANNED their donor-conceived child, that they are therefore justified morally in doing so.

The gay man writes:

> I'm a gay man who has had a child, with my partner of 8 years, through surrogacy and egg donation. The egg donor and surrogate will be known to our son.
>
> One way that I explain to people our experience with the artificial reproduction process is that it is the opposite of being 'knocked-up'. We were very involved in the planning and conception and the growth and birth of our child. Our child's conception and birth was considered, thought about, planned for, dreamed about, fantasized about. He was most definitely wanted. He is loved and treasured.
>
> We did not have sex to have our child. We did not have wedded, heterosexual, within marriage, we-want-to-have-a-child-sex. We did not have wedded, passionate, spur-of-the-moment at the wrong time of the month (or the wrong time of our life) sex. We did not have wedded, spur-of-the-moment, right time of the month sex. We did not have any of these types heterosexual sex as unmarried heterosexuals.
>
> But so many children are born to heterosexual couples via each of these eight scenarios. So many. Many more, around the world are born in wider range of unloving scenarios.

And then one of the authors (Elizabeth Marquardt) of the new study responds by citing evidence.

> I just want to note that one way of looking at the My Daddy's Name is Donor study is as a study of three groups: The first completely one hundred percent wanted and intended — that is, the donor offspring. The other two groups made up of a lot of unintended pregnancies — that is, the adopted and those raised by

> their biological parents.
>
> Which group is faring the worst? The 100 percent wanted, planned, intended group. The donor offspring, overall, even with controls, are twice as likely to have struggled with substance abuse and delinquency, and 1.5 times as likely to have struggled with depression, compared to those raised by their biological parents (and these differences are significant). The adopted generally fall in between except with regard to depression in which case they were higher than both the donor conceived and the raised-by-biological.
>
> No one is saying, T, that "all" of those raised by biological parents are doing great. But when you look at these populations, measured by our study, you find that, contrary to today's conventional wisdom, being wanted isn't enough. What the child is born into — who the child is raised by — matters.

Some more stats from Maggie Gallagher.

Excerpt:

> Forty-five percent of these young adults conceived by donor insemination agree, "The circumstances of my conception bother me." Almost half report that they think about their donor conception a few times a week or more. Forty-five percent agree, "It bothers me that money was exchanged in order to conceive me."
>
> Nearly half of donor offspring (compared to about a fifth of adopted adults) agree, "When I see friends with their biological fathers and mothers, it makes me feel sad." Similarly, 53 percent (compared to 29 percent of adoptees) agree, "It hurts when I hear other people talk about their genealogical background."

This is not fair to children – it treats them like a commodity instead of as a gift from God to be treasured and nurtured.

How should Christians understand the Old Testament laws?

June 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this post by Aaron Brake at Apologetics Junkie.

Excerpt:

> Perhaps no area of the Old Testament is more foreign and confusing to modern-day Christians than the Mosaic Law. When reading through the Pentateuch, many believers breeze through the narrative of Genesis only to hit a roadblock when confronted with the overwhelming number of commandments, statutes, and ordinances in the last half of Exodus (not to mention the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

Yes, this is why you have to be careful when telling people to read the Bible, because not all parts of the Bible are good for new Christians! Not only are some parts pretty difficult to read, but the new reader has no framework to interpret what they are reading! I had a non-Christian guy in my office who was starting to read the Bible and he got bogged down in the Old Testament and had no idea whether these laws applied today. It's a major problem, which is why I recommend everybody start with John instead, then maybe Luke and Acts.

There are two ways of solving this problem that are pretty popular. One way is the covenant model and the other is the dispensation model. I think that Aaron is presenting the covenant model. In the covenant model, the Old Testament laws were part of a covenant made between God and the people of Israel.

Aaron writes:

> The Law in ancient Israel served three distinct purposes: relational, instructional, and structural. The Law was given to Israel in order to form a covenant or relational agreement between Yahweh and His people… the Law functioned as a constitution which provided internal structure for the nation as a whole. It provided objective standards by which the Israelites could maintain appropriate boundaries with one another as well as neighboring nations.

Jesus formed a new covenant with a new group of people who believed in his identity as the Messiah and that his death was an atonement for sin. So only the parts of the old covenant that are explicitly carried over to the new covenant still apply to our conduct as Christians.

Aaron writes:

> Therefore, the primary interpretive question readers should approach the text with is this: "What does this passage tell us about God and His holiness, about Israel and her sin, and about how Israel needed to obey in order to maintain her

> covenant relationship with God?" Also ask, "What specific areas of life does God expect holiness and transformation within His people?"

I recommend reading the whole post. I think this is something that should be communicated to people who are coming at the Bible from a non-Christian perspective. Maybe we should have some scholars created an optimal ordering of the books of the Bible so as not to scare people away?

Note: I haven't really looked into this problem in detail, but the covenant model makes more sense to me.

Illegal immigrant from Iran caught while smuggling in weapons from Canada

June 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in a local newspaper. (H/T Ace of Spades via ECM)

Excerpt:

> When federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents served a search warrant last Wednesday on a storage unit in Ferndale, Wash., just south of the Canadian border, they discovered more than $30,000 worth of high-powered weaponry, including a .50-caliber sniper rifle.
>
> The find was detailed in an affidavit filed by the Western District Court of Washington against illegal alien Iranian Hamid Malekpour, also known as Oliver King, about 35 years old.
>
> […]Agents started tailing King — the name on the passport he used both for recent visits to Iran and last week's border crossing — in Blaine, Wash. They followed him to the McMinnville gun shop, where he is listed on the lease, and watched him load several boxes of high-powered firearms and ammunition there last Wednesday morning.
>
> They then followed him back north to a storage facility in Ferndale, where they took him into custody.
>
> […]Confronted there by agents, King initially agreed to let them search his vehicle. That search turned up two shotguns, two semiautomatic handguns and about 480 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition, which they believe he picked up in McMinnville.
>
> When King revoked permission for any further search without a warrant, the agents obtained a warrant to search a storage unit he was renting at the facility. In it, they found a .50-caliber sniper rifle, two .308-caliber sniper rifles, three .300-caliber sniper rifles, eight law enforcement style .223-caliber rifles, three Glock semi-automatic handguns, 100 .223-caliber magazines, 3,800 rounds of .223-caliber ammunition, various high-powered scopes and other equipment.

And that's why we want a fence along the southern border. It's not racism. It's a matter of *national security.*

Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?

June 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this analysis of the roots of feminism by a moderate pro-abortion equity feminist named Wendy McElroy. In her article, she explains two views of marriage by the old-style "equity" feminists, who wanted equal opportunity, and the "gender" feminists, who want men and women to be identical in every way. The gender feminist view is the view that dominates law, policy and culture today.

So let's look at the history of gender feminism.

Excerpt:

> In the '70s, [Germaine] Greer… declared a guerrilla war against dependency on men.
>
> **Greer called for the revolutionary breakdown of sex roles. She encouraged women to be promiscuous and otherwise sexually adventurous.** She claimed that women have no idea of how much men hate them. Greer recounted stories of gang rape and brutality, and seemed to consider such violence to be the norm between men and women. Her solution: women should refuse to marry. If they do marry, they should refuse be monogamous or to accept the 'trappings' of marriage such as the husband's last name, a shared tax return, a wedding ring….
>
> […]The truly radical assault on the family began with Kate Millett's book Sexual Politics (1970). Although Millett's views were extreme, she presented them in a dispassionate and well researched manner that lent her credibility. In dealing with male/female relations ('sexual politics'), Millett dwelt almost obsessively on pornography and sado-masochistic literature, rather than on love, motherhood or successful marriages. To her, pornography seemed to epitomize the male/female relationship. And in attacking sexual politics, Millett attacked the entire structure of power in society; that is, patriarchy. Marriage was the agency that maintained the traditional pattern of man's power over woman.

The article also mentions other widespread myths that cause women to hate and mistrust men, such as the myths about domestic violence. (She might also have brought up inflated rape statistics). But the main idea is that gender feminists wanted women to be sexually liberated, to work full-time outside the home, and to stop modesty, chastity and courtship. They wanted to destroy marriage because they believed that marriage oppressed women.

And the plan of the feminists worked. We now have a 40% out-of-wedlock birthrate, and a total breakdown of the family. Young women have problems from being raised without fathers, causing young women (and men) enormous damage. Somehow, the widespread

adoption of feminist ideology caused men not to want to marry, either. Why did that happen? Well, men are not marrying because marriage is a terrible deal for men – men are not getting what they want from marriage.

Why do men marry anyway?

Men want to have the main role of protector and provider – it's one of the main reasons why men marry. And men are more likely to want to marry if women are modest and chaste. Men want to have a special role in the home that is unique to them, and they want to be needed and valued. Men don't want to be disarmed and have to call 911 when their home is invaded, and they want criminals and terrorists punished, too. Men want to have the freedom to teach the children right and wrong. Men don't want to be taken to court by their wives for grounding misbehaving daughters, as in the Quebec case. Men want to keep most of what they earn, and to not pay sales tax on what they buy. Men want to choose schools for their children, and choose the amount of health care they need. Men don't want to be forced to pay for other people – having one family is expensive enough. And men want to get respect from society for their decision to marry, to be faithful, and to raise children. And so on.

We need to get to the point where women understand exactly why men don't want to be husbands and fathers anymore. Women need to ask themselves how to give men what they need in order to marry. Women need to investigate whether the anti-male myths that feminists want them to believe about men are really true in reality. Women need to fix their beliefs about men and study to understand men and to love men. Women need to take responsibility for their role in destroying marriage. Women need to take the initiative reverse feminism and repair the institution of marriage.

The feminist notion of marriage is that women can do anything they want at any time, and dismiss their obligations to meet the needs of their husbands and children. Men know that and that's why they freely choose not to marry. Most women today are just not suitable for marriage and parenting because they have been too influenced by feminist ideology which is opposed to marriage. Women have to change themselves, by renewing their minds through study. Men aren't afraid of marriage, we just don't want to marry women who don't understand what marriage is and aren't ready to commit properly.

Does the United States have a debt crisis like Greece?

June 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CNS News featuring lots of quotes from people I like.

Excerpt:

> Brian Riedl, lead budget analyst at The Heritage Foundation, agrees that unless the federal government radically curtails spending, a debt crisis as severe as or worse than that now happening in Greece will erupt in the United States in as soon as seven to 10 years.
>
> "We can say that we will be at about the Greek level of debt probably in the next seven to 10 years," Riedl told CNSNews.com. "There is no reason that with the same economic policies at the same level of debt, that the United States won't face the same economic and financial crisis as Greece."
>
> But for Reidl, who recently issued his own report on federal spending, seven to 10 years may be too optimistic.
>
> "It's very tough to predict when a financial crisis will hit, because much of it depends on bond market psychology," Reidl said. "As soon as the bond market decides the U.S. may not be able to fully service its debts, they will respond with a flight from our currency. When the bond market makes that decision is really anybody's guess. It could be two to three years from now, it could be 10 years from now."
>
> […]When Greece started to admit its debt problems last November, the government estimated its deficit last year was 12.7 percent of its GDP – a figure that Eurostat, the European Commission's official statistics agency, said was too low and which it revised to upward 13.6 percent.
>
> Meanwhile, the U.S. deficit is on track to become 10.3 percent of GDP in 2010 under President Obama's budget.
>
> In his report, "Federal Spending by the Numbers," Reidl pointed out that the projected 2010 U.S. deficit would represent the biggest percentage of GDP the United States has seen since World War II.
>
> That same report shows that average deficits over the next 10 years will be almost $1 trillion instead of returning to pre-recession levels of $100 billion to $400 billion. The projected deficits, Riedl pointed out, would double the current national debt.
>
> However, spending — not shrinking revenue — is the principal cause, according to the report, which said "90 percent of the rising long-term budget deficits are driven by rising spending," and just 10 percent of the rising deficits are caused by falling revenues.

> “This is 100 percent a spending problem in the long term,” Reidl said.

The article also cites two budget experts Sen. Judd Gregg and Rep. Paul Ryan, who agree with Reidl that we will be where Greece is now in about 7 years. The IMF was there to bail out Greece with European and American money. But who will bail out the USA?

If you want to know what Obama is doing instead of minding the store, ECM sent me this article. And a few days ago there was this article. He’s having fun with famous people.

New study analyzes the legalization of euthanasia in Belgium

June 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wesley J. Smith analyzes a new peer-reviewed paper in the Canadian Medical Association Journal.

First an introduction to euthanasia:

> Belgium has followed the Netherlands in jumping off a vertical moral cliff by embracing legalized euthanasia. The awful consequences that I predicted are now coming to pass; a steady increase in the number of cases, inadequate reporting, and a large percentage of non voluntary euthanasia deaths. Thus, I am anything but surprised by the study I analyze below, which echoes an earlier one reported here at SHS, that *nearly as many Belgian euthanasia killings are non voluntary as of those that are voluntary* (the concept of "voluntary" in this context being highly problematic, but let's not deal with that here).
>
> Why might that be? Euthanasia consciousness rests on two intellectual pillars–that killing is an acceptable answer to human suffering, and radical individualism in which we all own our bodies and have the absolute right to do what we wish with it, including make it dead. But interestingly, the latter idea–often reduced to that most effective of all soundbites, "choice"–turns out to be far less robust than the acceptance of active killing as a proper method of ending suffering. In other words, once a society accepts killing as the answer to suffering, the request element becomes increasingly less important as doctors assume they are doing what is best for the patient by extinguishing their lives.

But does the new research paper justify his concerns? The paper finds that nurses administered life-ending drugs without the patient's consent in 120 cases, as compared with 128 cases where the patient requested the drugs.

The paper says:

> When the patient can no longer communicate, nurses are, by the nature of their work, more directly confronted with the patient's suffering and may therefore wish to take a more active role in life-ending acts. We also have to consider that the administration of life-ending drugs without the patient's explicit request may have included situations of terminal sedation or an increase in pain alleviation, in which the delegation by physicians to nurses to administer the drugs is considered common practice. Finally, although about half of the nurses' reports indicated that there was no explicit request from the patient, it should be stated that the physicians and nurses probably acted according to the patient's wishes.

The paper is here. (PDF)

British national health care system prepares to cut 20 billion dollars

June 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Daily Mail.(H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Millions of patients face losing NHS care as bosses prepare to axe treatments to make £20billion of savings by 2014, a top doctor has warned.
>
> Among procedures being targeted by health trusts are hernias, joint replacements, ear and nose procedures, varicose veins and cataract surgery.
>
> Dr Mark Porter, chairman of the British Medical Association's consultants committee, warned NHS bosses wanted 'wholesale reductions in budgets'.
>
> He said primary care trusts – which commission care – are already compiling lists of 'low value' operations that would no longer be provided.
>
> […]Earlier this year the Government's rationing body said more cuts in medical treatments are planned to save the NHS at least £600million.
>
> Patients could find it harder to get into hospital under plans from the National Institute for health and Clinical Excellence, which advises on drugs and procedures to be funded.

I don't like this because some people work, and some people don't work, and then the government decides who gets treated. I think that patients should decide how much they need health care, and make their own decisions about their lifestyles and risk exposure. The NHS systems seems to penalize healthy lifestyles and high earners, while reward the unhealthy and those who choose not to work!

Remember, this is the same NHS that Obama's health care czar loves! But I don't like it at all!

Related posts

- NHS kills a man's wife by delaying cancer treatment for 7 months
- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
- Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water
- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care
- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care

- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- UK National Health Service refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

Are biological fathers or unrelated men more dangerous for children?

June 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the Weekly Standard answers the question.

Excerpt:

> A March 1996 study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics contains some interesting findings that indicate just how widespread the problem may be. In a nationally representative survey of state prisoners jailed for assaults against or murders of children, fully one-half of respondents reported the victim was a friend, acquaintance, or relative other than offspring. (All but 3 percent of those who committed violent crimes against children were men.) A close relationship between victim and victimizer is also suggested by the fact that three-quarters of all the crimes occurred in either the perpetrator's home or the victim's.
>
> A 1994 paper published in the Journal of Comparative Family Studies looked at 32,000 documented cases of child abuse. Of the victims, only 28 percent lived with both biological parents (far fewer than the 68 percent of all children who live with both parents); 44 percent lived with their mother only (as do 25 percent of all children); and 18 percent lived with their mother and an unrelated adult (double the 9 percent of all children who live with their mother and an unrelated adult).
>
> These findings mirror a 1993 British study by the Family Education Trust, which meticulously explored the relationship between family structure and child abuse. Using data on documented cases of abuse in Britain between 1982 and 1988, the report found a high correlation between child abuse and the marital status of the parents.
>
> Specifically, the British study found that the incidence of abuse was an astounding 33 times higher in homes where the mother was cohabiting with an unrelated boyfriend than in stable nuclear families. Even when the boyfriend was the children's biological father, the chances of abuse were twice as high.
>
> These findings are consonant with those published a year earlier by Leslie Margolin of the University of Iowa in the journal Child Abuse and Neglect. Prof. Margolin found that boyfriends were 27 times more likely than natural parents to abuse a child. The next-riskiest group, siblings, were only twice as likely as parents to abuse a child.
>
> More recently, a report by Dr. Michael Stiffman presented at the latest meeting of the American Academy of Pediatrics, in October, studied the 175 Missouri children under the age of 5 who were murdered between 1992 and 1994. It found that the risk of a child's dying at the hands of an adult living in the child's own

> household was eight times higher if the adult was biologically unrelated.
>
> The Heritage Foundation's Patrick Fagan discovered that the number of child-abuse cases appeared to rise in the 1980s along with the general societal acceptance of cohabitation before, or instead of, marriage. That runs counter to the radical-feminist view, which holds that marriage is an oppressive male institution of which violence is an integral feature. If that were true, then child abuse and domestic violence should have decreased along with the rise in cohabitation.
>
> Heritage also found that in the case of very poor children (those in households earning less than $ 15,000 per year), 75 percent lived in a household where the biological father was absent. And 50 percent of adults with less than a high-school education lived in cohabitation arrangements. "This mix — poverty, lack of education, children, and cohabitation — is an incubator for violence," Fagan says.
>
> Why, then, do we ignore the problem? Fagan has a theory: "It is extremely politically incorrect to suggest that living together might not be the best living arrangement."

The moral of the story is that it is a lot safer for children if we promote marriage as a way of attaching mothers and fathers to their children. Fathers who have a biological connection to children are a lot less likely to harm them. And a lot of social problems like child poverty, promiscuity and violence cannot be solved by replacing a father with a check from the government. We need to support fathers by empowering them in their traditional roles. Let the men lead.

Which political party knows the least about economics?

June 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Health Care BS via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Who is better informed about the policy choices facing the country—liberals, conservatives or libertarians? According to a Zogby International survey that I write about in the May issue of Econ Journal Watch, the answer is unequivocal: The left flunks Econ 101.
>
> Zogby researcher Zeljka Buturovic and I considered the 4,835 respondents' (all American adults) answers to eight survey questions about basic economics.

The first question was "Restrictions on housing development make housing less affordable." The unenlighted answer for that one is "disagree", since restrictions on development reduce the supply of available housing. Demand stays the same and so there is a shortage, and prices rise. D'uh!

Here are the others:

> The other questions were: 1) Mandatory licensing of professional services increases the prices of those services (unenlightened answer: disagree). 2) Overall, the standard of living is higher today than it was 30 years ago (unenlightened answer: disagree). 3) Rent control leads to housing shortages (unenlightened answer: disagree). 4) A company with the largest market share is a monopoly (unenlightened answer: agree). 5) Third World workers working for American companies overseas are being exploited (unenlightened answer: agree). 6) Free trade leads to unemployment (unenlightened answer: agree). 7) Minimum wage laws raise unemployment (unenlightened answer: disagree).

And the results:

> How did the six ideological groups do overall? Here they are, best to worst, with an average number of incorrect responses from 0 to 8: Very conservative, 1.30; Libertarian, 1.38; Conservative, 1.67; Moderate, 3.67; Liberal, 4.69; Progressive/very liberal, 5.26.

It's true, the majority of Democrat voters are people who don't work at all, or they "work" for government, or they "work" in education, or they hold picket signs while on strike, or they are in prison, or they are chasing ambulances, or they are Hollywood celebrities. No economics knowledge is required for any of that. Republicans work in private industry, and many of us own small businesses. So we actually have to work to earn money, because we have competitors to watch out for and consumers to please.

Remember this post: Who knows more about economics? Obama or people who run businesses?

If a Protestant Christian commits suicide, does he still go to Heaven?

June 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM is puzzling about things

ECM is actually an extremely intelligent, cultured fellow who reads far more deeply than I do on a wide variety of topics, including philosophy, history and science. He likes to puzzle about difficult questions, and you never know what he will ask from one day to the next.

Today he wanted to know what I thought about Protestants and suicide. In Roman Catholicism, suicide is a mortal sin, so you go straight to Hell since you can't confess it and do penance for it. [UPDATE: My Catholic commenters say that you might still go to Heaven after some time in Purgatory. However, Protestants don't believe in Purgatory]. But I didn't think that that would be the case in Protestantism because we emphasize grace and the sufficiency of Christ's atonement to cover all sins. But he started to tie me up in knots with his questions, so I just told him to go away.

I still don't know what the answer is.

Here are the questions:

- 1) Is suicide a sin in Protestant Christianity?
- 2) What happens to a Protestant if he commits suicide?
- 3) How can a Protestant repent of the sin of suicide?
- 4) Does suicide count as murdering yourself for Protestants?

Please explain to me the right answers in the comments. I really have no idea.

You can also suggest more questions, and I will add them to the list.

Indian-American Nikki Haley wins South Carolina governor primary

June 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Nikki Haley and her husband Michael Haley
Story here from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> South Carolina State Rep. Nikki Haley, a favorite of tea party activists, survived a turbulent primary campaign Tuesday to advance in her bid to become her state's first woman governor, on a night that results nationally reaffirmed this year's anti-establishment tide.
>
> In early returns, Ms. Haley held a double-digit lead in a four-person race for the GOP nomination. She will head into a runoff with the second-place finisher, Rep. Gresham Barrett, the Associated Press reported.
>
> Ms. Haley had trailed badly early in the campaign, but won support from the tea party movement and an endorsement from former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin. Her competitors included top officials in the GOP establishment, including the state's attorney general and lieutenant governor.
>
> […]In South Carolina, Ms. Haley surged in recent weeks from long-shot to leader. After that, the race became rocky, as two GOP political operatives said they'd had affairs with Ms. Haley.
>
> The attacks only seemed to strengthen the prospects of Ms. Haley, 38, who was born a Sikh but converted to Christianity. If she wins the governorship, she could quickly become a star in a Republican Party eager to reach out to minorities, women and young people.

Nikki is the daughter of first-generation Sikh immigrants from the Punjab, in India. She's only 38! The only other Indian-American governor is Bobby Jindal, who I really like! Now I might have TWO Indian-Americans to blog about! If she wins! By the way, she is a

Protestant, which is really rarity for India. Most Christians in India are Roman Catholic. Jindal is a Roman Catholic, and a solid one.

Oh, and a couple of businesswomen won the Republican nominations for governor (Meg Whitman) and senator (Carly Fiorina) in California. Ho hum. That's commonplace in the world of conservatism. The Republican party is the party of conservative women who succeed on their own steam, without needing the government's help. After all, we're the party of Michele Bachmann, Marsha Blackburn and Sarah Palin. We like SMALL government, because we like STRONG families, and fathers who bring home the bacon.

Tim H. reviews new book on Christianity and capitalism at Rational Thoughts

June 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The book review is here on Rational Thoughts.

Excerpt:

> Capitalism's reputation has taken a beating in light of the recent financial crisis. According to politicians and pundits from both sides of the spectrum, capitalism is to blame. Not so, say Austin Hill and Scott Rae, who argue in their new book *The Virtues of Capitalism* that capitalism is our best bet. In fact, according to Hill and Rae, capitalism "remains the preferred economic system, even the necessary economic system, for any society that upholds a true sense of human rights."
>
> Hill and Rae approach economics from a distinctly Christian perspective, showing capitalism to be both consistent with and supported by the Bible's teachings. Contrary to some, the sharing of goods as described in Acts does not advocate socialism. The sharing of goods was voluntary, as opposed to forced. Moreover, the authors show that economics itself is deeply intertwined with moral issues. Economic conditions can act as a powerful motivator either to encourage or discourage virtuous conduct. "[B]e honest and ask yourself: Is it ever more difficult to be the kind of spouse or parent that one aspires to be, when the economy is slow and personal finances are scares? … [W]hen finances are plentiful, can the enjoyment of material goods enable a person to avoid or neglect other important areas of their relationships? And a final question… can economics impact one's relationship with their God."

> […]Overall, it's a great and easy to understand book.

Tim likes the book "Money, Greed and God" by Jay Richards better, but that's a tougher book to read – not for beginners. I'm shocked because I didn't figure out my worldview regarding economics until my late 20s. Tim is a high school junior. Yipes! He must have good parents.

I recommend this new capitalism and Christianity book for courting Christian women, who are usually fiscally liberal until they get married and start families. It's only 160 pages and it should be enough to convince any horrible socialist to give capitalism a chance. I also switched to "On Guard" for courting instead of the more difficult "Reasonable Faith", at least for a first book. No sense scaring her off with something hard right at the start.

Tragedy strikes! Paul Ryan is not going to run for President in 2012!

June 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The thing I like about Paul Ryan is that now matter how bad our problems, he has the answers.

But he's ruled out running for President in 2012.

Excerpt:

> Rep. Paul Ryan, a Wisconsin Republican… is ruling out a 2012 run for president.
>
> "I'll give you as Shermanesque a quote as I can," said Ryan. "I am not going to run for president. I'm just not going to do it. My head's not that big, and my kids are too small."

but Sarah Palin likes him for President:

> Over the weekend, Ryan was singled out for praise by Palin during her interview with "Fox News Sunday."
>
> Asked to handicap the potential Republican presidential field, Palin refrained from commenting on former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, and Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, three Republicans actively weighing a White House run in 2012.
>
> Palin said, however, that she was "very impressed" with Ryan before later adding that it would be "absurd" not to consider running for president herself.
>
> "[W]e have some strong — some young Turks in this party," said Palin. "Paul Ryan — I'm very impressed with Paul Ryan. . . . He's good. Man, he is sharp. He is smart, articulate. And he is passionate about these commonsense solutions that America has got to adopt to get us on the right road."

I don't like Pawlenty, and Huckabee and Romney are not conservative enough either. Huckabee is too far left on economic issues and Romney is too far left on social issues. But Ryan is just right.

That quote about his head being too small and his kids not being big enough is at the end of this video:

He's got his priorities straight.

Teens face worst summer job market in 41 years

June 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNBC.

Excerpt:

> Employment among 16-to 19-year olds in May grew by just 6,000, the smallest increase since 1969, when teen jobs fell by 14,000, according to government data analyzed by employment firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas. In May 2008 and 2009, teen employment grew by over 110,000.
>
> […]Jobs traditionally given to teens are apparently going to older workers who are willing to take low paying job to make ends meet. Employment among 20- to 24-year-olds grew by 270,000 in May, an unusual spike, considering that employment in the same age group fell by 261,000 in May 2009.
>
> […]"Also impacting the job market for young adults are the large number of older adults who are willing to accept even a temporary, seasonal position simply to generate some income," said Steven Rothberg, chief executive officer of **CollegeRecruiter.com**, an online entry-level job-posting site.
>
> "We're seeing experienced candidates taking jobs normally reserved for college grads and college grads taking jobs normally reserved for college students," said Rothberg.

And this table is at the bottom of the article:

Summer Employment Growth Among 16- to 19-Year-Olds

Year	May	June	July	Total Gained	Change
2005	183,000	1,007,000	546,000	1,736,000	+9.0%
2006	230,000	1,033,000	471,000	1,734,000	-0.1%
2007	62,000	1,114,000	459,000	1,635,000	-5.7%
2008	116,000	683,000	355,000	1,154,000	-29.4%
2009	111,000	698,000	354,000	1,163,000	0.8%
2010	6,000	N/A	N/A	6,000	N/A

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas

The Democrats took control of the House in January of 2007, and that means they controlled government spending from then on.

I find these job numbers interesting because the young people are so pro-Obama, but for superficial reasons. I wonder how they will reconcile their love of Obama's socialism with their difficulties finding summer jobs from small businesses hurt by Obama's health care mandates? Or won't they understand why it's happening at all?

I wonder if employers are concerned about the quality of education being provided to young people? Or perhaps they are not satisfied with the work ethic of young people who have been raised on self-esteem instead of on achievement and competition?

Quebec billionaire considering center-right news network

June 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

Story here from the left-wing Globe and Mail.

Excerpt:

> Quebec billionaire Pierre Karl Péladeau is attempting a major shakeup of television news in Canada, with plans to launch a 24-hour cable channel modelled on the right-leaning U.S. network Fox News.
>
> It is a shot aimed directly at CBC and CTV, which for years have dominated the all-news format in English Canada. For months, Mr. Péladeau's Montreal-based media empire, Quebecor Inc., has been putting together plans for a channel that will tap the same conservative sentiment that has made Fox News a major contender for ratings in the U.S.
>
> To operate the upstart news network, Quebecor has enlisted a former senior aide to Prime Minister Stephen Harper to oversee the operations. Kory Teneycke, who served as director of communications to Mr. Harper in 2008 and 2009, has been appointed vice-president of business development at Quebecor Media Inc. and will lead the new project.
>
> […]An application for a licence was submitted to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission late last week. Though Quebecor's plans are not yet public, a source said a formal announcement on the venture is "imminent."

Canada already has Fox News in at least some areas, but Fox News doesn't have specifically Canadian coverage. A Canadian news channel that isn't left wing would be unbelievable for Canada. Canadian media is dominated by the left.

The problem is that the CRTC, a government body, has to approve each and every TV channel. There was a huge controversy over the approval of Fox News, so it’s not clear that the government will approve this new news channel. The powers that be in Canada are not really open to hearing new ideas on the other side.

Remember, this is the country that censors pro-lifers on campus and persecutes people in Human Rights Commission trials. Liberty and free speech are under attack up there.

Canadian pro-life group gets fair TV coverage from CTV

June 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow, check out this amazing video showing the work being done by the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform in southern Alberta.

WARNING: There are some images from actual abortions in this video.

This is very positive, considering how the pro-lifers are received on the university campuses in Canada. I like these pro-lifers – they're young, they're smart, and they're determined. They engage their opponents with evidence face-to-face , and they are ready to debate the issue in a gentle and winsome way.

I understand that they were interviewed on television by CTV (above) but also by Global Television. These are secular, mainstream news sources.

Here is the link to the Global television coverage.

You can donate to CCBR here. (WARNING: Graphic images of abortion)

Related posts

- Canadian MP backs away from her challenge to debate pro-lifers
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's university

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

Funny video of Obama’s panel of ass-kickers

June 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this on Facebook.

I almost NEVER laugh at anything, but this is really funny.

Oh, I almost forgot this story.

Excerpt:

> Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said that BP, the energy company responsible for the ongoing oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, helped craft the bill proposed by Sens. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) that would tax businesses for carbon emissions and raise the cost of fuel for American consumers.
>
> “The problem for Democrats is that debating the Democrat cap-and-trade bill might not fit neatly into the White House messaging plan since it’s been widely reported that a major part, a major part of the Kerry-Lieberman bill was essentially written by BP,” McConnell said on the Senate floor on Wednesday. “Let me say that again. A major part of the Kerry-Lieberman bill was written by BP. This is clearly an inconvenient fact.”
>
> […]“An administration that seems to spend most of its time coming up with new ways to show how angry it is at BP, is pushing a proposal that BP actually helped write,” said McConnell. “I can’t understand it and I don’t think the American people will understand why that it makes sense to respond to the BP oil spill by imposing a gas-tax increase on the American people that was advocated by BP.”

Ooops.

But then again, how can Obama kick the asses of BP when he was the top recipient of contributions from BP during the 2008 election cycle? The best he can do is talk tough and that may be enough to keep his poll numbers afloat, as long as the mainstream media back him up.

Are lesbian couples better for kids than heterosexual couples?

June 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apparently, lesbian couples can be as good at parenting children as traditional married couples. That was the conclusion of a new study anyway. Who authored it, and who funded it?

Excerpt:

> Several media outlets including CNN, Time magazine, Reuters and US News and World Report, have promoted the US National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study, which claims children raised by lesbian parents are "psychologically well-adjusted" and have "fewer behavioral problems" than children raised by heterosexual parents.
>
> Of those four outlets, however, only Reuters reported that the author of the study, Dr. Nanette Gartrell, is herself a lesbian. According to the New York Times Gartrell wed her partner, Dee Mosbacher, in 2005.
>
> Seven out of nine groups that provided funding for the study are gay advocacy groups, including the Gill Foundation and the Gay Lesbian Medical Association. Reuters, Time and U.S. News and World Report did not include the sources of funding for the study.
>
> […]The problem with many studies regarding children of gay parents, according to the late Steven Nock in a 2004 National Public Radio interview, is that they rely on "self-recruited" subjects. The question, Nock said, is "whether or not people who volunteer to participate in studies resemble the sort who do not."
>
> Gartrell's study reportedly recruited its 78 subject couples "through announcements in bookstores, lesbian events and newspapers" in Boston, San Francisco, and Washington, according to CNN.

So already we should be on guard.

But there's more! Here's the methodological problem with the study: (H/T ECM)

> In a letter published online in Pediatrics, Professor Walter Schumm, who has served as an expert witness for the State of Florida in a trial concerning gay adoption, points out, "at least 67 per cent of the mothers in the [lesbian family study] had at least a college education compared to approximately 28 per cent of women of similar age in US Census data" so that the effects seen could be partly due to higher levels of education rather than "gender" per se.
>
> Another letter points out that ethnicity and region of residence also differ considerably between the two groups, with the control group having "many times more minorities and many more children from the South" of the US. For example,

> around 68 per cent of the controls were “white/Caucasian” compared with 93 per cent of the study group. That writer expresses surprise that there was no attempt to adjust the results for these differences, and that the study was accepted all the same by Pediatrics — the journal of the country’s leading professional group.

So this study is as reliable as East Anglia studies on man-made global warming. But a lot of people in the media will cite it anyway, because it sends the right message. It sends the message that people who oppose same-sex marriage are ignorant bigots and that fathers are totally unnecessary for the development of children.

And that’s what the elites in media, education and government want people to believe. They want that view to be made into law and reflected in public policy. And they don’t really care if children are raised without fathers, just like they don’t care if unborn children are killed in the womb. Because adult happiness is more important than children’s well-being.

Here is my previous post explaining how same-sex couples differ from traditional couples.

Feminist wants UK government to provide free IVF

June 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph, an editorial by Theodore Dalrymple. (H/T RuthBlog)

Excerpt:

> [The chairman of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, Suzi Leather] …has suggested that, henceforth, the clause requiring doctors to take account of the need of a child for a father, when offering in vitro fertilisation to infertile women, should be removed from the law. The idea that fathers are necessary or even desirable in the lives of children is, in the opinion of Ms Leather, too old-fashioned to be entertained any longer.
>
> […]In Ms Leather's brave new world, women are to have children merely because they want them, as is their government-given right, irrespective of their ability to bring them up, or who has to pay for them, or the consequences to the children themselves. Men are to be permanently infantilised, their income being in essence pocket money for them to spend on their enjoyments, having no serious responsibilities at all (beyond paying tax). Henceforth, the state will be father to the child, and the father will be child of the state.

This paper from the Heritage Foundation cites a very interesting study.

> A seminal British study confirms that a child is safest when his biological parents are married and least safe when his mother is cohabiting with a man other than her husband. Specifically, the family Court Reporter Survey for England and Wales presents concrete evidence that children are 20 to 33 times safer living with their biological married parents than in other family configurations.

I think that if you take taxpayer money from working fathers and pay for unmarried women to have fatherless children, you will get fewer fathers and more fatherless children.

Friday night funny: Woman falls into open manhole while texting

June 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well it’s Friday, and I did find something funny.

“Do you want that shoe back?”

UPDATE: Well, I feel obligated to post a Michele Bachmann video to even things out.

And more:

And here’s one from Gateway Pundit:

Happy Friday!

Obama administration modifies report by experts

June 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here at Fox News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The seven experts who advised President Obama on how to deal with offshore drilling safety after the Deepwater Horizon explosion are accusing hisadministration of misrepresenting their views to make it appear that they supported a six-month drilling moratorium — something they actually oppose.
>
> The experts, recommended by the National Academy of Engineering, say Interior Secretary Ken Salazar modified their report last month, after they signed it, to include two paragraphs calling for the moratorium on existing drilling and new permits.
>
> […]In a letter the experts sent to Salazar, they said his primary recommendation "misrepresents" their position and that halting the drilling is actually a bad idea.
>
> The oil rig explosion occurred while the well was being shut down – a move that is much more dangerous than continuing ongoing drilling, they said.
>
> They also said that because the floating rigs are scarce and in high demand worldwide, they will not simply sit in the Gulf idle for six months. The rigs will go to the North Sea and West Africa, possibly preventing the U.S. from being able to resume drilling for years.
>
> **They also said the best and most advanced rigs will be the first to go, leaving the U.S. with the older and potentially less safe rights operating in the nation's coastal waters.**

Unbelievable. The Obama administration consulted with experts and then disregarded their policy recommendations! And the Democrats are actually setting us up for *another* disaster. Not to mention higher gas prices because of the reduction in supply.

Why are we not drilling in Alaska? That is much safer than offshore drilling anyway. Nuclear power would be safer still.

Is God the cause of human evil in Calvinism?

June 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wes over at Reason to Stand thinks so.

The problem:

> A Calvinist friend of mine recently asked me the difference between “unwilling” and “unable” and why I consider the two to be mutually exclusive when talking about mankind’s ability to sin or not.

And here is his reply to his friend:

> If I am unable I cannot be unwilling because my inability precludes my willingness either way.
>
> […]If I am unable then I am no better off than a robot preprogrammed to run a certain course and as such I cannot rightly be held accountable for that which I have no control over.
>
> On the other hand, if I am unwilling then I logically have the ability to act in a manner other than that which I choose.
>
> If I am unable to not sin then I cannot logically be held accountable or responsible for choices that are, by definition, beyond my control.
>
> If I am unwilling to not sin then I am not only responsible for my choice but, in light of the holy standard of God, I am unable to bridge the gap I freely created.
>
> […]The bottom line is that we are either free and responsible or else we are not free and therefore not responsible.

And William Lane Craig and Alvin Plantinga also like middle knowledge. Hmmmn. Wes and Bill Craig and Alvin Plantinga are pretty smart guys.

Related posts

- William Lane Craig discusses Calvinism and the problem of evil
- What are the differences between Wesleyan Arminianism and Calvinism?
- First debate on Calvinism/Molinism between James White and Michael Brown
- James White debates Michael Brown on Calvinism vs Foreknowledge (1 of 2)
- Michael Brown debates James White on Foreknowledge vs Calvinism (2 of 2)
- What about those who have never heard of Jesus?

Greg Koukl in Ottawa, and how to get his last debate

June 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My readers in Ottawa, Canada may be interested in hearing Greg Koukl from Stand to Reason speak at the Metropolitan Bible Church on Sunday morning and Sunday night.

Here is some more information about it.

Schedule:

- 9 AM – Greg speaking on “Ambassadors for Christ: The Essential Skills”
- 11 AM – Greg speaking on “Ambassadors for Christ: The Essential Skills”
- 6 PM – Greg speaking on “Truth is not Ice Cream, Faith is not Wishing”
- 7 PM – Greg speaking on “The Columbo Tactic”

There will be a book table and refreshments after that.

Greg Koukl vs Michael Shermer debate

And you may also be interested in getting the audio version of the amazingly awesome Koukl-Shermer debate that occurred on the Hugh Hewitt show recently. The transcript is blogged here. You can get the audio version of the debate by donating to Stand to Reason this month.

Do gun-free zones prevent multiple-victim public shootings?

June 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article by John Lott in National Review.

Excerpt:

> It wasn't supposed to happen in England, with its very strict gun-control laws. And yet last week, Derrick Bird shot twelve people to death and wounded eleven others in the northwestern county of Cumbria. A headline in the London *Times* read: "Toughest laws in the world could not stop Cumbria tragedy."
>
> But surely this was an aberration. Because America has the most guns, multiple-victim public shootings are an American thing, right? No, not at all. Contrary to public perception, Western Europe, most of whose countries have much tougher gun laws than the United States, has experienced many of the worst multiple-victim public shootings. Particularly telling, all the multiple-victim public shootings in Western Europe have occurred in places where civilians are not permitted to carry guns. The same is true in the United States: All the public shootings in which more than three people have been killed have occurred in places where civilians may not legally bring guns.

The article has a list of MVPSs in Europe. They *all* occur in gun-free zones, where guns are prohibited by law.

When a government bans guns, the only people who have guns are criminals. And they know that there is no one to stop them when they open fire. That is why violent crime more than doubled in the 4 year period after the UK banned handguns.

ACORN employees, voter fraud and the Democrats

June 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story on the Daily Caller. (H/T Lex Communis)

Excerpt:

> The radical activist group ACORN "works" for the Democratic Party and deliberately promotes election fraud, ACORN employees told FBI investigators, according to an FBI document dump Wednesday.
>
> The documents obtained by Judicial Watch, a watchdog group, are FBI investigators' reports related to the 2007 investigation and arrest of eight St. Louis, Mo., workers from ACORN's Project Vote affiliate for violation of election laws. All eight employees involved in the scandal later pleaded guilty to voter registration fraud.
>
> Project Vote is ACORN's voter registration arm. Project Vote continues to operate despite the reported dissolution of the national structure of ACORN.
>
> The handwritten reports by FBI agents show that ACORN employees reported numerous irregularities in the nonprofit group's business practices.

So THIS is how they win elections.

Learn more about ACORN in this Wall Street journal article.

Mitch Daniels thinks that government should cut spending

June 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story about frugal Indiana governor Mitch Daniels at the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> Daniels is a font of statistics, but one comes to his lips more than any other. "Only 61 cents of every education dollar gets into the classroom in Indiana." School funding increased every year under Daniels before the recession, and since the downturn, when most areas of state government have seen cuts of 25 percent or more, education has been reduced by only 2 percent. Yet the local school boards and their Democratic allies in the state legislature continue to complain. Daniels calls education funding "the bloody shirt" of Indiana politics: "It doesn't take long before somebody starts waving it." One of my favorite bits of Daniels video on YouTube shows him at a press conference defending a bill to end "social promotion" in the state's grade schools. School districts were appalled that the bill would pass without "additional resources" to educate the kids who would be held back.
>
> A reporter asked him about it.
>
> "By the time a child has finished third grade, the state has spent $40,000 and the school district has had 720 days to teach that child to read," he said, tight-lipped. "If that child can't read by then, there is a fundamental failure in that district. And they'll need to remedy it. The most unacceptable thing to do is to shove that child along to fourth grade into almost certain academic failure. That's a cruel thing to do, it's a wrong thing to do, and we're going to put an end to it."
>
> The reporter pressed: But won't the schools need more money?
>
> Daniels's eyes got wide.
>
> "More than $40,000 to teach someone how to read? No. It won't and it shouldn't and any school district that can't do it ought to face consequences."

And this is actually normal behavior for him:

> When Daniels took office, in 2004, the state faced a $200 million deficit and hadn't balanced its budget in seven years. Four years later, all outstanding debts had been paid off; after four balanced budgets, the state was running a surplus of $1.3 billion, which has cushioned the blows from a steady decline in revenues caused by the recession. "That's what saved us when the recession hit," one official said. "If we didn't have the cash reserves and the debts paid off, we would have been toast." The state today is spending roughly the same amount that it was when Daniels took office, largely because he resisted the budget increases

> other states were indulging in the past decade.
>
> No other state in the Midwest—all of them, like Indiana, dependent on a declining manufacturing sector—can match this record. Venture capital investment in Indiana had lagged at $39 million annually in the first years of this decade. By 2009 it was averaging $94 million. Even now the state has continued to add jobs—7 percent of new U.S. employment has been in Indiana this year, a state with 2 percent of the country's population. For the first time in 40 years more people are moving into the state than leaving it. Indiana earned its first triple-A bond rating from Standard and Poor's in 2008; the other two major bond rating agencies concurred in April 2010, making it one of only nine states with this distinction, and one of only two in the Midwest.

Yes, let's elect people like Mitch Daniels who like to cut costs instead of increasing spending – people with a record for caring about balancing the budget.

UPDATE: Or not! ECM pointed me out this "truce" comment that he made. It turns out that he is soft on social issues and probably a little soft on foreign policy issues as well! Thanks, ECM.

Is it OK for Christians to make moral judgments?

June 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this short article by Paul Copan on Chris Shannon's Facebook feed. He's gone Paul Copan crazy lately – he keeps linking to Paul Copan articles.

Excerpt:

> It's been said that the most frequently quoted Bible verse is no longer John 3:16 but Matthew 7:1: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged." We cannot glibly quote this, though, without understanding what Jesus meant. When Jesus condemned judging, he wasn't at all implying we should never make judgments about anyone. After all, a few verses later, Jesus himself calls certain people "pigs" and "dogs" (Matt. 7:6) and "wolves in sheep's clothing" (7:15)! Any act of church discipline (1 Cor. 5:5) and rebuking false prophets (1 John 4:1) requires judgment. What Jesus condemns is a critical and judgmental spirit, an unholy sense of moral superiority. Jesus commanded us to examine ourselves first for the problems we so easily see in others. Only then can we help remove the speck in another's eye—which, incidentally, assumes that a problem exists and must be confronted.[1] But let's take a closer look at this charge that Christians are judgmental when we speak out on moral issues.

He then goes on to make some points:

- If judging is wrong, then no one can judge you for being judgmental
- In other places, Jesus urges people to make a right judgment
- Is it possible to have convictions yet still treat people with respect?
- Are inclusivists and pluralists (e.g. – Hindus) tolerant of exclusivists?
- What is tolerance, and how does it relate to truth?
- Comparison of "equality of persons" with "equality of viewpoints"
- Are moral standards variable by time and place, or fixed?
- Are moral standards merely descriptive, or also prescriptive?
- Should atheists be moral? What reason do they have to be moral?
- Can non-illusory morality exist in an atheistic universe?
- Can there be real morality if there is no design in the universe?

And he also talks about what else the Bible says about judging.

It's a good article. Moral judgments are necessary for us to warn ourselves and others about the harm that may occur if we cross boundaries.

Dallas chapter of Reasonable Faith meets today!

June 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Chris Shannon's Facebook page.

Details:

Reasonable Faith Dallas Presents:

"In Intellectual Neutral: A Challenge to Christians to Intellectual Engagement"

This will be a video presentation and afterwards Dr. Craig will join us live via video conference for a question and answer period!!

Featuring:
Special Guest Speaker Dr. William Lane Craig

When:
Monday, June 14, 2010
6:00-8:00 pm

Where:
Park Cities Baptist Church
Ellis Parlor Room
3933 Northwest Parkway
Dallas, TX 75225

Cost:
Free

Map to Ellis Parlor Room:
http://www.pcbc.org/assets/images/pdfs/pcbccampusmap.pdf

Directions:
http://www.pcbc.org/location

If you can't make it to the meeting, Brian Auten has posted a recent version of the "In Intellectual Neutral" talk.

Do beliefs have to be proven scientifically to be true?

June 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Another Paul Copan article from Chris Shannon.

Some atheists think that the only way to know what is really true is to use the scientific method.

> Richard Dawkins declares,"Scientific beliefs are supported by evidence, and they get results. Myths and faiths are not and do not." Harvard biologist Richard Lewontin calls science "the only begetter of truth."

This is called scientism, and it comes in two varieties.

> Scientism comes in two versions: *strong* (science is the *only* path to knowledge) and *weak* (science is the best path to knowledge, even if some other disciplines like philosophy may help).

> Scientism, particularly its strong form, is a worldview or philosophy of life that affirms two things: *the material world is all that there is, and science is the (only) means of verifying truth claims. All claims of knowledge have to be scientifically verifiable; otherwise, they are meaningless.*

The rest of the paper discusses the following topics (and more):

- What is science?
- Can the scientific method find evidence of non-physical and/or intelligent causes in nature?
- is materialism falsifiable or is it just an assumption?
- can scientism itself be tested scientifically?
- is science self-justifying, or does it rest on certain assumptions?
- has the progress of science removed the need for God?
- what is the god-of-the-gaps? Is there a naturalism-of-the-gaps?
- can scientism block the progress of science?

Also see my posts on how the progress of science disproved atheism via the cosmological argument and the fine-tuning argument.

Audio of Greg Koukl’s talk yesterday in Ottawa

June 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is audio from his morning address in the 9 AM service at the Metropolitan Bible Church in Ottawa, Canada.

The link is here. (40 minutes)

This is basically an introduction to Greg Koukl’s idea of what an ambassador should be. He focuses on 3 topics: knowledge, wisdom and character.

An amazing women’s Bible study

I got a very interesting report from a person who saw my announcement post and attended the event. He met a woman there who had taught FOUR CLASSES in a row on Lee Strobel’s book “The Case for Faith”. *The Case for Faith!* And she also uses the DVD. The attendance ranged from 20-50 *women!* I thought women didn’t like apologetics… but I guess there are some places where they do!

Greg Koukl’s organization is Stand to Reason.

NC Democrat Bob Etheridge assaults college student

June 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video of an assault of a college student in broad daylight by Bob Etheridge, a Democrat Congressman.

What is it with Democrats and their disrespect for the law? Just a couple of days ago, I blogged about ACORN and voter fraud and now this nasty assault! How about some civility for those who disagree with you?

Bob is actually in an election race right now, and trailing his opponent. Right Wing News has comments from his opponent, Republican Renee Ellmers.

Excerpt:

> If a teacher or principal treated a student this way – it would raise serious questions and he would be suspended. This kind of behavior is equally unacceptable in a Congressman. Bob Etheridge needs to make a full, complete and candid public explanation for this behavior. His describing his behavior as "a poor response" is not adequate. Most important of all, Congressman Etheridge should apologize – in person – to the two students.

Here she is on the issues:

- Obamacare – I'm a nurse and my husband is a doctor. There are right ways and wrong ways to improve health care. Obamacare is the wrong way.
- Jobs – The President's spent money like water on 'Stimulus Plans' and 'Bailouts' and run the deficit up to over a trillion dollars. It hasn't worked. What does work is tax cuts.
- Jobs – Small businesses are trying to survive the recession, plus they're facing President Obama's new health care and 'Cap and Trade' taxes and they don't know how those taxes will affect their business. So they have no choice but to be cautious. To create jobs we have to remove the uncertainty facing small businesses – specifically, that means stopping President Obama's tax increases.
- Economy – Cut taxes. Cut government spending. Get government out of the way and let the free enterprise system work.
- Taxes – Lower tax rates across the board. And I support tax reform.
- Energy – I support off-shore drilling – it could be a boon for North Carolina's economy. I oppose President Obama's 'Cap and Trade' bill which raises taxes on energy, then uses the tax money to send $300 billion in foreign aid to Third World nations so they can build so-called 'Green Industries.'
- Marriage – I believe marriage is between one man and one woman.
- Life – I believe in the sanctity of human life and believe that life begins at conception. I am Pro-Life.
- Immigration – Immigration laws should be enforced. And I oppose Amnesty for illegal

immigrants. I believe we should strengthen our border enforcement and implement a strong employment verification system so companies can be sure they are hiring legal workers and those that do not face stiff penalties.
- Terrorism – My opponent Bob Etheridge voted to close Gitmo. I believe that was a mistake. I also support trying terrorists in military courts – instead of putting them on trial in New York City.

You can find out more about her here. She looks solid though on the issues, though.

The Issues I see

Obamacare – I'm a nurse and my husband is a doctor. There are right ways and wrong ways to improve health care. Obamacare is the wrong way.
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Mother arrested for attempted murder of daughter

June 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CTV News. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> A Montreal mother will appear in a provincial court Monday on charges that she tried to kill her teenaged daughter, in what police suspect could be an attempted honour killing.
>
> […]CTV Montreal's Rob Lurie reported that the mother was apparently upset that her daughter had stayed out very late at night on Saturday.
>
> "It appears that the mother allegedly stabbed her daughter in the head, face and shoulders," Lurie reported from Dorval on Monday.
>
> In a separate report on CTV News Channel, Lurie said the family is originally from Afghanistan and is relatively new to Canada.
>
> Neighbours told CTV Montreal that the 19-year-old victim sometimes wore a hijab when leaving the house, while not wearing a hijab on other occasions.
>
> Lapointe said the mother will face charges of attempted murder, aggravated assault and possession of a weapon.

The secular left often says that we should not judge other cultures morally, and some say that there should even be a parallel system of justice for Muslims based on sharia law, as in the UK. After all, they say, who are we in the Judeo-Christian West to judge others? What makes us any better than them?

Brian Auten interviews philosopher Paul Copan

June 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten does it gain with an interview of one my favorite Christian scholars, Paul Copan.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- how Christians should deal with hard questions
- finding balance in communication
- using the moral argument in conversation
- common errors when using the moral argument
- the content of his upcoming book, *Is God a Moral Monster?*
- advice for the apologist
- *and more!*

Paul Copan is really a very hands-on, practical philosopher, solidly evangelical and fearless on defending the toughest Christian convictions.

http://ezralevant.com/2010/06/how-dare-you-ask-me-a-question.html

Stephen Meyer evaluates Craig Venter's claim of creating artificial life

June 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did biologist Craig Venter really give life to lifeless matter? Stephen Meyer explains what really happened.

Excerpt:

> A biologist in California has summoned headlines around the world, some distressed and some celebratory, by supposedly doing in reality what Dr. Frankenstein did in fiction: **giving life** to lifeless matter.
>
> […]First, Craig Venter has *not* actually **produce artificial life**. He and his colleagues read the gene sequence of one bug, copied it onto another strand of DNA, and inserted the copy into another bacterium from which its DNA had been removed. They then found that the second bacterium was able to use the instructions on the second strand of DNA. Nevertheless, both bacterial cells came, like all life we know of, from other life.

He copied some information from one computer to another, then claimed to have invented the computer?

And more:

> Venter, of course, did not produce a new gene, a truly novel genetic message. He merely copied one that already existed. Nevertheless, even copying and substituting DNA required his genius. Indeed, to the extent that Venter succeeded in simulating a process involved in living systems—copying pre-existing genetic information—he did so as a result of his own **ingenuity and creativity**. Craig Venter himself was the crucial actor in this technological achievement.

It's not a simulation of naturalistic evolution if it requires an intelligent agent. If an intelligent agent is involved, it's intelligent design. He didn't create any more information, either – he just copied what was already there. Where did that information come from? That's the real problem of the origin of life. Where does the *information* from the *first* living system come from? Has anyone shown that this information can arise without an intelligence?

Read the rest of the article here.

Support plummeting for Obama and his mainstream media supporters

June 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama support plummeting among people who work for a living.

Excerpt:

> During the week of June 7-13, only 46 percent of Americans overall told Gallup they approved of the job Obama is doing as president, tying for the worst week of Obama's presidency. Two weeks ago, forty-six percent also said they approved of the job Obama is doing, and last week 47 percent said they approved.
>
> But when the president's approval is separated by incomes groups, it is only the lowest income bracket recorded by Gallup—those who earn less than $2,000 per month—that gives Obama a majority approval rating, with 52 percent saying they approved of the job he is doing as president.

Obama support plummeting with married couples and church-goers.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama's weekly approval rating is at an all-time low for his presidency, according to the Gallup Poll, and it is especially low among those 65 or older, those who are married, and those who attend church every week.
>
> During the week of June 7-13, 46 percent of those surveyed told Gallup they approved of the job Obama was doing as president, while 46 percent said they disapproved. In its analysis of the poll results, Gallup points out that equals the lowest weekly approval rating Obama has received since his inauguration. Two weeks ago, in the period from May 24 to May 30, Obama's approval and disapproval ratings were also at 46 percent, but a week ago (May 31-June 6) his approval increased to 47 percent, before dipping back to 46 percent again last week.
>
> Obama's highest weekly approval rating—67 percent—came in the week he was inaugurated (Jan. 19-25, 2009).

Support for the mainstream news media is also way down.

Excerpt:

> A new poll by Rasmussen Reports shows that a majority of Americans are angry at the media.
>
> The survey of 1,000 likely voters found that 66 percent of voters describe themselves as at least somewhat angry at the media, including 33 percent who are very angry. The poll did not differentiate, however, between news outlets

> such as CNN and Fox News Channel.
>
> Voters have said consistently in surveys that they believe the media has a liberal bias and most reporters try to help the candidates they want to win. Prior to Election Day in 2008, 51 percent of voters said that most reporters were trying to help Barack Obama win the presidency.
>
> “Americans have spoken and they are livid with the media,” L. Brent Bozell, president of the Media Research Center, said in a statement. CNSNews.com is a part of the Media Research Center.
>
> “A new Rasmussen poll found an astonishing two thirds of American voters are at least somewhat angry at the media, including an entire one third who said they are ‘very angry.’ That’s disturbing but unfortunately, not surprising,” Bozell said.

If they excluded Fox News from the “media”, the disapproval numbers would be a lot higher.

What book should you suggest for a book study in your church?

June 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The two books you should pick to learn apologetics are "On Guard" by William Lane Craig and "Tactics" by Greg Koukl.

Recently, Bill did a podcast introducing "On Guard".

The MP3 file is here. (19 minutes)

Topics:

- the book is much easier to read than "Reasonable Faith"
- explains what apologetics is and why it matters to Christians
- explains why atheism makes life meaningless and irrational
- the inadequacy of personal experiences for persuading others
- describes four arguments in favor of Christianity
- responds to common objections to the four arguments

The book also:

- responds to the problems of evil and suffering
- explains Jesus' own divine self-understanding
- outlines a historical case for the resurrection of Jesus
- explains why it's possible for Christianity to be exclusively true

There is a study guide for On Guard.

And you can read the first chapter for free.

Book reviews

- Apologetics 315
- Constructive Curmudgeon
- Nascent Thinker

The Atlantic Monthly features an article on the decline of males

June 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I hate the Atlantic Monthly, but this article on the decline of men is quite scary.

Excerpt:

> Once you open your eyes to this possibility, the evidence is all around you. It can be found, most immediately, in the wreckage of the Great Recession, in which three-quarters of the 8 million jobs lost were lost by men. The worst-hit industries were overwhelmingly male and deeply identified with macho: construction, manufacturing, high finance. Some of these jobs will come back, but the overall pattern of dislocation is neither temporary nor random. The recession merely revealed—and accelerated—a profound economic shift that has been going on for at least 30 years, and in some respects even longer.
>
> Earlier this year, for the first time in American history, the balance of the workforce tipped toward women, who now hold a majority of the nation's jobs. The working class, which has long defined our notions of masculinity, is slowly turning into a matriarchy, with men increasingly absent from the home and women making all the decisions. Women dominate today's colleges and professional schools—for every two men who will receive a B.A. this year, three women will do the same. Of the 15 job categories projected to grow the most in the next decade in the U.S., all but two are occupied primarily by women.

And then this helpful anecdote:

> The role reversal that's under way between American men and women shows up most obviously and painfully in the working class. In recent years, male support groups have sprung up throughout the Rust Belt and in other places where the postindustrial economy has turned traditional family roles upside down. Some groups help men cope with unemployment, and others help them reconnect with their alienated families. Mustafaa El-Scari, a teacher and social worker, leads some of these groups in Kansas City. El-Scari has studied the sociology of men and boys set adrift, and he considers it his special gift to get them to open up and reflect on their new condition. The day I visited one of his classes, earlier this year, he was facing a particularly resistant crowd.
>
> None of the 30 or so men sitting in a classroom at a downtown Kansas City school have come for voluntary adult enrichment. Having failed to pay their child support, they were given the choice by a judge to go to jail or attend a weekly class on fathering, which to them seemed the better deal.
>
> […]Like them, [El-Scari] explains, he grew up watching Bill Cosby living behind his metaphorical "white picket fence"—one man, one woman, and a bunch of

> happy kids. “Well, that check bounced a long time ago,” he says. “Let’s see,” he continues, reading from a worksheet. What are the four kinds of paternal authority? Moral, emotional, social, and physical. “But you ain’t none of those in that house. All you are is a paycheck, and now you ain’t even that. And if you try to exercise your authority, she’ll call 911. How does that make you feel? You’re supposed to be the authority, and she says, ‘Get out of the house, b*tch.’ She’s calling you ‘b*tch’!”
>
> The men are black and white, their ages ranging from about 20 to 40. A couple look like they might have spent a night or two on the streets, but the rest look like they work, or used to. Now they have put down their sodas, and El-Scari has their attention, so he gets a little more philosophical. “Who’s doing what?” he asks them. “What is our role? Everyone’s telling us we’re supposed to be the head of a nuclear family, so you feel like you got robbed. It’s toxic, and poisonous, and it’s setting us up for failure.” He writes on the board: $85,000. “This is her salary.” Then: $12,000. “This is your salary. Who’s the damn man? Who’s the man now?” A murmur rises. “That’s right. She’s the man.”

The article has some errors, such as the discussion of the so-called wage gap, but it has many good points.

Stuart Schneiderman reflects on the article and hits upon what I think are the real problems with the decline of men.

Excerpt:

> If boys do less well in school than girls, and if they are seriously under-represented in higher education, then perhaps the reason lies in the way schools have undertaken to boost the self-esteem of girls at the expense of boys. This unfortunate tendency was provoked by Carol Gilligan’s book In a Different Voice.
>
> For a picture of how this plays itself in the schoolroom we turn to another article by Hanna Rosin. In this week’s New York Magazine Rosin shows how one form of what I and Mark Perry would call social engineering works: “For at least a decade, a subtle shift has been happening in the educational system that seems to be working against boys, who tend to be later verbal bloomers. New initiatives have emphasized more literacy skills in preschool, long before boys are ready. And early standardized testing– now the norm– sets up boys to see themselves as academic failures.” Link here.
>
> If boys are being conditioned to see themselves as academic failures and if the curricula tend to overemphasize subjects at which they are less adept, it should not be surprising to see them underrepresented in colleges and universities. Not because of any natural progression but because policies have been established to diminish them.
>
> Ask yourself this. Is this outbreak of anger toward women just a speed bump on the road to feminist utopia, or is it the natural consequence of poorly conceived

> social engineering? Is it payback for the educational system's systematic bias against boys?
>
> Are we really surprised that young men who are brought up without fathers in the new feminist dystopia are drawn to gangs and crime. We have seen exactly the same thing happen in the American inner cities over the past few decades. Single-parent families, headed by women, do not produce a cohort of healthy young males.

So the first problem is that the education which is devoid of male teachers and administrators. Boys also do much worse in co-educational classes, than in single-sex. And the second problem is that welfare payments for single mothers promote fatherlessness, which hurts boys more. Stuart might also have mentioned no-fault divorce laws and unfair family courts – feminist-supported policies which both increase fatherlessness.

How did this situation become law? I think that somehow, a large enough majority of women have been so influenced by feminism, (which is inherently anti-male), that they were willing to enact laws to discriminate against men in order to punish them. The feminists were more than happy to supply the fake statistics to help women to form the anti-male views required to justify the laws.

Conservative MEP Daniel Hannan admits he was wrong to support Obama

June 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Conservative MEP Daniel Hannan

You all remember Daniel Hannan, who chastised the Labor Party for spending the UK into oblivion, right?

Here's a refresher:

Here are more videos dealing with the aftermath of that rant.

But yeah, like the title of the post says, he supported Obama in 2008.

Well not any more. Check out the latest from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> The credit crunch occurred during the dying days of the Bush administration, and it was the 43rd president who began the baleful policy of bail-outs and pork-barrel stimulus packages. But it was Obama who massively extended that policy against united Republican opposition. It was he who chose, in defiance of public opinion, to establish a state-run healthcare system. It was he who presumed to tell private sector employees what they could earn, he who adopted the asinine cap-and-trade rules, and he who re-federalised social security, thereby reversing the single most beneficial reform of the Clinton years.These errors are not random. They amount to a comprehensive strategy of Europeanisation: Euro-carbon taxes, Euro-disarmament, Euro-healthcare, Euro-welfare, Euro-spending levels, Euro-tax levels and, inevitably, Euro-unemployment levels. Any American reader who wants to know where Obamification will lead should spend a week with me in the European Parliament. I'm working in your future and, believe me, you won't like it.

But it's not just domestic policy that infuriates him, it's foreign policy:

> All these things are minor irritants compared to the way the Obama administration is backing Peronist Argentina's claim to the Falkland Islands – or,

> as Obama's people call them, "the Malvinas". British troops were the only sizeable contingent to support the US in Iraq and Afghanistan. We have fought alongside America in most of the conflicts of the past hundred years. Yet, when the chips are down, Obama lines up with Hugo Chávez and Daniel Ortega against us.
>
> Not that we should feel singled out. The Obama administration has scorned America's other established friends. It has betrayed Poland and the Czech Republic, whose Atlanticist governments had agreed to accept the American missile defence system at immense political cost, only to find the project cancelled. It has alienated Israel and India. It has even managed to fall out with Canada over its "Buy American" rules and its decision to drill in disputed Arctic waters. Never has there been a worse time to be a US ally.

Indeed. Not only are we the economic laughingstock of the world, following quickly along in the footsteps of Greece, but we are despise by our former allies and our emboldened enemies, alike.

Are skirts or jeans more modest for women to wear?

June 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My thoughts on summer clothes

For the ladies, I think the first concern is the functional scenario. If the woman is going to be exercising or playing a sport, then I recommend long just-above-the-knee dress shorts with pleats. Those are pretty modest but still provide full movement. Actually, there are these things called skorts that are actually shorts that look like skirts. Those are REALLY modest if you get them in a long enough length – like just above the knee.

For anything not active, then I think that loose-fitting slacks or below the knee length skirts are modest, but functional. Loose-fitting jeans are modest, but I don't like jeans because a woman cannot really express herself with colors – jeans are usually blue, and what does that say? Nothing. And jeans don't look soft and feminine either. I like women to be different than me in the way they look and dress, but the same as me in the way they think and debate. I like slacks better than jeans – they are just as functional and look better.

That being said, jeans are probably the best for doing practical things in. I think the main thing is that a skirt can be immodest if the fit is too tight, just like jeans can be immodest if the fit is too tight. So a lot depends on the fit. I think a skirt is more modest because although it shows the lower leg, it hides the upper leg and behind better.

I was informed when I inquired that jeans can be "low-slung" and that those should be avoided in front of strangers in public. I also don't think women can show cleavage to just anyone in public. I think the problem there is that it sends the wrong message to strangers. Trying to get attention the wrong way.

For swimwear, I recommend anything with a sarong on the bottom, and without a plunging neckline.

What should women try to communicate with their dress?

Well, I'll just give my opinion.

If a woman really, really want to get a man's attention, then wear a full length dress with a style and colors that express something. I like brilliant white, fire engine red and brilliant white, or midnight black and brilliant white in a striking design – something that you might see on a Honda motorcycle. But other colors that have patterns that range over a larger area with a nice contrast are also awesome. I think clothes should be stark and bold and that the colors should be chosen to communicate something about the woman's character. Anyway, that works on me.

I think that in public with strangers that a woman can always show her neck and upper chest, arms below the shoulder, and the leg below the knee. I think that women can show more in an exercise/sport situation. I'm opposed to showing cleavage to strangers in public. It attracts the wrong kind of attention and in the wrong way. However, in private with people she knows, then the rules can be relaxed. Part of the fun of a relationship is

for a woman to reveal herself to a man progressively and to get appropriate compliments and attention, especially if she is working out and dieting and needs encouragement.

Here – this one is perfect:

This is fine to wear in public

Modesty is actually really important. How can a woman attract a man without being too revealing? When can she show more rather than less? What is appropriate? How can a woman communicate to a man with the way she dresses?

Any thoughts from our readers?

Acknowledgements

You may be wondering how I even found out about all of this stuff since I know nothing at all about clothes. Well, I asked a bunch of women I respect, of course. Six of them! All of whom are either famous, or who have commented here, or both. I don't want to say their names, except for Foxfier, who gave me her permission.

Randy Alcorn’s list of 10 ways to teach children how to manage money

June 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article here on Eternal Perspectives Ministries. (H/T Brian Auten of Apologetics 315)

My favorites:

4. Teach your children to link money with labor. Once I mentioned we couldn’t go out for dinner because we didn’t have enough money. My youngest daughter said, “Just go to the money machine and get all you want.” She referred to the Automated Teller Machine. This was a great chance to teach her money doesn’t just magically appear in a machine, but is earned through work—good, hard, and well-done work. Fathers can show our children how to work, to make things, to sell them. We can show how work can be meaningful and fun as well as financially profitable.

A common mistake we dads make is to indiscriminately dole out money to our children as life goes by. This teaches them to think money comes easily or automatically. As a result they disassociate money from work. Eventually they feel it’s their right to have money available even when they haven’t worked for it. This misguided thinking is what puts able-bodied people on welfare rolls. The government fosters the handout mentality, but often it’s learned first in the home, where character is built and lifelong attitudes are forged.

5. Teach your children how to save. Children learn the value of money and the discipline of self-control through saving. We helped our daughters open savings accounts years ago. If your child wants a major item, say a telescope, help him make a plan to save for it over a period of six months. Help him think of jobs to accomplish his goal. If he sticks with it (he may not), buying that telescope won’t be an impulsive decision. And once he gets it, he’s likely to take good care of it.

The same applies to a college education. I know parents who save for their child’s education, while he spends his money irresponsibly. Remember, the quality of anyone’s college education improves dramatically when he has a substantial part in paying for it.

9. Show your children how family finances work. Bring home an entire paycheck in one or ten dollar bills. Or, use play money in an amount corresponding to your paycheck. Put the money in piles to show exactly how much goes to what expenses each month. This way your children can visualize where the family’s money goes.

Some things will surprise the children, and they’ll ask you questions. You’ll probably end up reevaluating and making some healthy changes yourself. (Comparing the amount you give away with the amount you spend on various items may be particularly convicting.) Your children may see things in perspective for the first time. A child who’s told to turn off the lights when he leaves the room, or to shut the front door behind him in the winter, suddenly understands why when he sees the stack of money that goes to pay the electric

bill.

The rest are here! I wish we talked more about money in the church. Lord knows they aren’t going to learn anything about how real life works in school.

Why does Obama think that cap and trade laws will stop the Gulf spill?

June 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Pence vs Frank Pallone re: Obama's horrible speech from earlier this week.

Topics:

- Obama refused to talk about the spill in his speech
- Obama wants to call in experts to "kick asses" instead of solve the problem
- Obama won't ask other private companies (oil experts) to help stop the spill
- Obama promises to cap 90% of the spill without explaining how he would do it
- Obama thinks that cap and trade legislation will help to stop the spill
- Obama thinks that pushing renewable energy laws will help stop the spill

Hot Air's Ed Morrissey writes:

> This speech was suited for Day 1 of a catastrophe, not Day 57. It had *no* answers at all. None. It's as if Rip van Obama awoke after eight weeks of slumber and had been told just that morning about a massive problem in the Gulf of Mexico. For a man who has repeatedly claimed to be "fully engaged since Day 1," and who repeated that claim last night, Obama gave every impression of still being in the spitballing stage of crisis management.
>
> Obama didn't even offer an original thought for spitballing. In his short presidency, Obama has had two responses to any issue: appoint a czar or create a commission. The auto industry got a czar, for instance, and the deficit that Obama's spending has driven out of sight got a commission. Last night, Obama wanted people to know he was taking this seriously by appointing a czar *and* a commission, the latter of which had been announced weeks ago. That was the sum total of his substantive response last night. Small wonder Obama chose an Oval Office speech rather than face another press conference.

Just keep in mind that even the radical, radical nutcases at MSNBC hated Obama's speech. (H/T The Anchoress)

Excerpt:

> Olbermann: "It was a great speech if you were on another planet for the last 57 days."
>
> Matthews compared Obama to Carter.
>
> Olbermann: "Nothing specific at all was said."
>
> Matthews: "No direction."
>
> Howard Fineman: "He wasn't specific enough."

> Olbermann: “I don’t think he aimed low, I don’t think he aimed at all. It’s startling.”
>
> Howard Fineman: Obama should be acting like a “commander-in-chief.”
>
> Matthews: Ludicrous that he keeps saying [Secretary of Energy] Chu has a Nobel prize. “I’ll barf if he does it one more time.”
>
> Matthews: “A lot of meritocracy, a lot of blue ribbon talk.”
>
> Matthews: “I don’t sense executive command.”

Obama’s only tool is a hammer (socialism) so it seems like every problem is a nail. The solution is always to raise taxes on the productive and then spend the money buying votes from the unproductive.

Mark Driscoll discusses Jesus' forgiveness of a sinful woman

June 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mark Driscoll discusses Luke 7:36-8:3. (This is the full sermon – it contains that clip that we had discussed in a previous post in which he read a letter by a woman who got herself into trouble but mostly blamed everyone but herself).

The MP3 is here.

Stream or download the video here.

Summary:

> A notoriously sinful woman does the unthinkable: she goes, uninvited, to Simon the Pharisee's home, where Jesus is eating with "holy" religious men. There, broken and sobbing, she lavishly worships Jesus: falling at his feet, cleaning them, anointing them with her best perfume, and kissing them. Her actions are passionate, but not erotic. She publicly and humbly acknowledges her sin before the most judgmental, condemning, and self-righteous men. Religious people see others' sins, not their own. Yet "holy" Simon did none of what this woman did (worship, serve, repent of sin, or give generously). She responds so passionately and generously because Jesus loved her much, and she loved Jesus much. When you know how much Jesus loves you, and you love him back, it's the beginning of your passionate, worshipful, generous relationship, and everything changes. Jesus also deals with her sin. He doesn't excuse her many sins; he forgives her. What Jesus did for that woman he did for other women who followed him, and he continues to do for even more women today.

During his preaching, Driscoll clearly understands what the Bible teaches:

> Whatever sin was committed to her, and in her line of work you can assume there were many, Jesus also deals with her sin. He doesn't excuse her sin, or neglect her sin, or shift the blame for her sin. He says, "Her sins, which are many." He doesn't say, "She's had a hard life. Who are we to judge? This is an alternative lifestyle." What he says is, "She's got a lot of sin. I'm not arguing with that. The question is: what are we gonna do about it?"

This is a lot better than the previous clip we discussed that got over a hundred comments, where I chastised Driscoll for being soft on sinful women. But when he discusses the actual passage from Luke, he acknowledges that there is no blaming of men, and no discussion of mitigating factors that might excuse this woman's sin. That is *irrelevant to the story*. This sinful woman knows what she's done, she is sorry for what she's done, she really wants to change, and she wants a new life. She has no time for listing mitigating factors, and no time for blaming others. She blames herself. That's why

she is forgiven by Jesus.

Later on at the end of the sermon, I believe Driscoll messes up by choosing to read that letter from the woman from the last post who is clearly NOT repentant and is clearly blaming others, unlike the woman in the Bible story. She blames her parents, her church and the man she chose to pursue a relationship with. Her letter is the polar opposite to the story of the woman in Luke, who wanted nothing to do with rationalizations or blaming others. Driscoll fails to understand the differences between the two women. Blaming men is very popular nowadays – so I'm not surprised. It's the spirit of the age.

So Driscoll makes mistakes – he isn't perfect. Sometimes he is right, and sometimes he is wrong. His explanation of grace and works in the sermon is spot on, though. The grace is free to anyone who wants to be forgiven, and the works afterward are just the natural outworking of repentance. What God wants is genuine repentance and service. Good deeds performed after being forgiven by Jesus don't reduce person's guiltiness, they are just outward signs that the repentance was genuine. But you may have better or worse rewards in the after-life because of your actions after being saved.

A simple reponse to theistic evolutionists, by Andrew

June 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an e-mail I received from a reader.

I was having dinner the other day with Greg Koukl and friends, when the topic of THEISTIC EVOLUTION came up. Greg Koukl shared the following insight on this view in his usual clear-thinking manner…

Many people like to invoke theistic evolution as an explanation of the origin of life. Theistic evolution refers to the belief that God used evolution as a method of creation; God created life and then stood back and left things to run on their own though the laws of nature. If God intervened at all, it was only when absolutely necessary. While this explanation sounds really nice on the surface, the devil is in the details.

Simply put, theistic evolution is a self-refuting idea. An idea that commits suicide, so to speak. The 'evolution' part of theistic evolution is by definition a process that is blind, undirected and left to chance (natural selection). The 'theistic' part of theistic evolution, on the other hand, is by definition directed and personal (design). How do you reconcile these two opposing ideas? Clearly you can't, since they are mutually exclusive. You simply cannot have something that is both undirected and directed.

It's like asking the question: "How do you boil water?". Someone could give the response: "Well, you take a pot, fill it with water, put the lid on, put the pot on the stove, turn on the stove, and add a leprechaun". The question could then be asked: "What happens if I don't add the leprechaun?", to which the response would be "well…the water still boils". The objective can be achieved without adding the leprechaun, which is therefore unnecessary. In the same way, both components of theistic evolution can, in theory at least, provide for the origin of life. In my opinion theistic evolution is a view held by those who have bought into Darwinism but don't want to let go of God. Therefore, they proclaim both to be true. Unfortunately for them, the manner in which these two processes work (undirected versus directed) are contradictory and cannot both be true. The resulting mixture, theistic evolution, is not even an option, and proponents of this view should be called on this flaw in their thinking.

Below I'll give my thoughts on theistic evolution.

My thoughts

Theistic evolution is basically atheistic evolution, with an unnecessary fairy tale riding on top. It's like Santa Claus and Christmas. A child's parents put the presents under the tree. If you film the tree, you see parents putting presents under the tree – that's what actually happens, and who actually does the work. Santa Claus is a myth that makes children feel good – the concept of Santa Claus does no work putting presents under the tree in reality. And that's the same role God plays in theistic evolution – he does no work in reality.

The dividing line between theists and atheists is whether the natural world shows any OBJECTIVE evidence of an intelligent agent at work. If a person claims to be theistic, but

states that there is no OBJECTIVE evidence of intelligent causes acting in nature, then that person is actually an atheist. Theism is either real or it is nothing. I am not interested in personal preferences and personal delusions – I only care what is scientifically demonstrable.

The scientific evidence for intelligent design (fine-tuning, origin of DNA, Cambrian explosion, habitability, irreducible complexity, molecular machines, etc.) shows evidence of an intelligent agent causing effects in nature. It's not up to our opinions to decide if an intelligent agent has acted – it's the way the world is, regardless of what we want – *or need* – to believe.

Environmental regulations restrict law enforcement by Border Patrol

June 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story on Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Federal environmental laws are handcuffing U.S. Border Patrol agents to a foot-and-horseback strategy as they try to battle Mexican drug cartels and illegal immigrants who are turning wide swaths of America's border with Mexico into a virtual no-man's land.
>
> Rep. Rob Bishop, R-Utah, ranking Republican on the House Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee, said the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge in southern Arizona — part of which was closed in 2006 because it was considered too dangerous for Americans to visit — is just the tip of the iceberg.
>
> He said there's plenty of other parkland along the border that's either closed to the public or is considered too dangerous because of concern about drug gangs, human smugglers and illegal immigrants, and that the problem is getting worse.
>
> "You travel here in America at your own risk," Bishop told FoxNews.com.
>
> The reason the parkland along the border has become so hazardous, Bishop said, is because environmental regulations restrict Border Patrol from using vehicles to patrol in those areas — except in special circumstances. In turn, he said, drug cartels are being funneled into those swaths as immigration agents get tougher patrolling private land.

Bishop has introduced a bill to allow the Border Patrol to do their jobs, but the Democrats will vote him down, just like they vote everything else good down.

MUST-READ: Coast Guard obstructing Bobby Jindal's efforts to clean up the oil spill

June 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check this out:

From ABC News.

Excerpt:

> Eight days ago, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal ordered barges to begin vacuuming crude oil out of his state's oil-soaked waters. Today, against the governor's wishes, those barges sat idle, even as more oil flowed toward the Louisiana shore.
>
> "It's the most frustrating thing," the Republican governor said today in Buras, La. "Literally, yesterday morning we found out that they were halting all of these barges."
>
> Sixteen barges sat stationary today, although they were sucking up thousands of gallons of BP's oil as recently as Tuesday. Workers in hazmat suits and gas masks pumped the oil out of the Louisiana waters and into steel tanks. It was a homegrown idea that seemed to be effective at collecting the thick gunk.
>
> "These barges work. You've seen them work. You've seen them suck oil out of the water," said Jindal.
>
> […]"The Coast Guard came and shut them down," Jindal said. "You got men on the barges in the oil, and they have been told by the Coast Guard, 'Cease and desist. Stop sucking up that oil.'"
>
> […]The governor said he didn't have the authority to overrule the Coast Guard's decision, though he said he tried to reach the White House to raise his concerns.
>
> "They promised us they were going to get it done as quickly as possible," he said. But "every time you talk to someone different at the Coast Guard, you get a different answer."

Why? BECAUSE THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH LIFE JACKETS ON THE BARGES.

What about this news from Monday:

> "We need the Coast Guard to deploy all the resources they have – using the military air traffic control assets if needed, or sentinel ships for water-based reconnaissance – but we must deploy every resource we have and not simply wait and hope for the best. Federal officials could also work to relax regulations to free up non-essential oil fighting resources, including skimmers and boom, from ports and refineries. We asked the President to consider this during his last visit and he said today that he was still looking into it."

> “I also asked that the President demand BP give us full access to their claims data so we can ensure Louisiana people and businesses are getting the payments they need to reimburse their losses related to this spill. As of the last report, 39 percent of claims had not been paid and we have no way to know the circumstances or details related to these claims.
>
> “We again asked the President to increase the monitoring of our deepwater wells so they do not have to be closed down and cost tens of thousands of our people their jobs during a six-month or longer process by a government committee that hasn’t even been assembled yet.. Louisiana people should not have to lose their jobs because the federal government cannot do their job.
>
> The governor has urged the Obama administration to lift the ban on the drilling moratorium citing unfortunate and unfair impact upon Louisiana.

Obama has played golf nearly 40 times in 8 weeks and held fundraisers for Democrat senator Barbara Boxer.

Wouldn’t it be great if Jindal solved this problem himself without any help from the federal government, and then explained his experiences to the American people during his presidential campaign in 2012? He could explain exactly what Obama did to help/hurt his efforts to clean the spill. Imagine the presidential debates when Jindal could explain everything that he did, and Obama could counter by explaining how well he can play golf, slash Louisiana jobs, pass the cap-and-trade energy tax, and point fingers at people who are trying to fix the problem.

Sean McDowell surveys the beliefs of today's young adults

June 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article is here on Conversant life.

Excerpt:

- Skeptics and perspectivalists: "Most have great difficulty grasping the idea that a reality that is objective to their own awareness or construction of it may exist that could have a significant bearing on their lives. In philosophical terms, most emerging adults functionally are soft ontological antirealists and epistemological skeptics and perspectivalists…" (45)
- Everybody's different: "Nearly any question asked of them about any norm, experience, rule of thumb, expectation, or belief in life is very likely to get an answer beginning with the phrase, 'Well, everybody's different, but for me…'" (48).
- Individualism: "The absolute authority for every person's beliefs or actions is his or her own sovereign self" (49).
- Settling down is for later: "But they also want to relish it [young adulthood] as the time to be young, have fun, and avoid major responsibilities…Later, when they settle down they'll be sober, faithful, and responsible adults. The assumption seems to be, 'Whatever happens in my early twenties stays in my early twenties'" (57).
- Relationships are amorphous: "Old clear-cut labels, like 'just friends,' dating, courting, and engaged, for instance, are too black-and-white for the way many emerging adults relate today…" (58).
- Cohabit to avoid divorce: "The vast majority of emerging adults nonetheless believe that cohabiting is a smart if not absolutely necessary experience and phase for moving toward an eventual successful and happy marriage" (62).

I think it would useful to engage these guys to think throught their beliefs more rationally. On the one hand they want to cause no harm, on that other hand they are totally uninformed about the likely outcomes of their own behavioral choices. E.g. – cohabitation increases the risk of divorce by 50%. Break-ups hurt – and certain behaviors affect the likelihood of a messy break-up. Bad behaviors undermine your view of the trustworthiness of the opposite sex, as well as your ability to be content in a monogamous relationship with responsibilities.

Sean McDowell is interviewed by atheist Luke Muehlhauser

June 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sean McDowell is interviewed by Common Sense Atheism. (H/T Conversant Life)

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Sean's testimony (he is the son of Christian apologist Josh McDowell)
- Sean's debate with James Corbett on the grounding of morality
- The role of public debates in Christian evangelism
- Sean's new book on the emergent church and the emerging generation
- Can apologists on both sides really be honest about pursuing truth?
- Are apologists on both sides good at encountering ideas on the other side?
- Do doctrines like Heaven and Hell corrupt the honest pursuit of truth?
- Why doesn't Josh defend "Evidence that Demands a Verdict" from critics?
- What should we make of weird moral rules in the Old Testament today?

Sean's amazing debate:

- Sean McDowell debates James Corbett on whether morality is grounded by atheism

This is a MUST-LISTEN. You will love this debate or your money back. And you can even watch the debate here.

Obama flip-flops on health care mandates – now it IS a tax

June 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the deal. In order to get the health care bill to pass, Obama had to trick people into thinking that it was not going to result in higher taxes.

So, you would see him on ABC News before the bill was passed saying that forcing people to buy things they don't want is not a tax:

> OBAMA: No. That's not true, George. The — for us to say that you've got to take a responsibility to get health insurance is absolutely not a tax increase.
>
> …

> OBAMA: My critics say everything is a tax increase. My critics say that I'm taking over every sector of the economy. You know that. Look, we can have a legitimate debate about whether or not we're going to have an individual mandate or not, but…
>
> STEPHANOPOULOS: But you reject that it's a tax increase?
>
> OBAMA: I absolutely reject that notion.

So forcing people to buy health insurance and fining them if they don't is NOT A TAX, he says.

And so the bill was passed.

But the thing is, the government can't legally force people to buy health care coverage – it's unconstitutional! And people are suing them for having passed an unconstitutional law. So now the Obama regime has to argue in court that it really is a tax in order to escape court challenges that they overstepped their bounds by passing a health care mandate.

The American Spectator explains. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> In order to protect the new national health care law from legal challenges, the Obama administration has been forced to argue that the individual mandate represents a tax — even though Obama himself argued the exact opposite while campaigning to pass the legislation.
>
> Late last night, the Obama Department of Justice filed a motion to dismiss the Florida-based lawsuit against the health care law, arguing that the court lacks jurisdiction and that the State of Florida and fellow plaintiffs haven't presented a claim for which the court can grant relief. To bolster its case, the DOJ cited the Anti-Injunction Act, which restricts courts from interfering with the government's ability to collect taxes.

> The Act, according to a DOJ memo supporting the motion to dismiss, says that "no suit for the purpose of restraining the assessment or collection of any tax shall be maintained in any court by any person, whether or not such person is the person against whom such tax was assessed." The memo goes on to say that it makes no difference whether the disputed payment it is called a "tax" or "penalty," because either way, it's "assessed and collected in the same manner" by the Internal Revenue Service.

It actually is a tax, and just another one of the *many* ways that Obama broke his campaign promise not to tax the middle class. How else is he going to pay for the trillion-dollar deficits he is creating? He has to raise taxes – or devalue our savings with inflation. There is no third way. The money has to come from somewhere – and if you tax the rich you just end up losing jobs.

Obama administration will sue Arizona for enforcing immigration law

June 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from CBS News. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> As Hotsheet reported yesterday, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in a television interview in Ecuador this month that the Obama Justice Department "will be bringing a lawsuit" against the controversial Arizona immigration measure signed into law earlier this year.
>
> The comment was striking because both President Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder had said only that the administration was considering a suit. Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer, who signed the law, called Clinton's comments stunning and added that "to learn of this lawsuit through an Ecuadorean interview with the secretary of state is just outrageous." She has said in the past she is prepared for a court fight.
>
> It was unclear yesterday whether Clinton's comments were simply a prediction or mistake or whether instead she was getting ahead of a planned announcement by the administration.
>
> Now a senior administration official tells CBS News that the federal government will indeed formally challenge the law when Justice Department lawyers are finished building the case. The official said Justice is still working on building the case.
>
> Contacted about Clinton's comments today, State Department spokesman PJ Crowley said they reflected her beliefs.

Oh he's going to lose bad in 2010. The secular leftists are more interested in punishing law enforcement and American states than they are in punishing terrorists and rogue regimes like Iran.

Scott Klusendorf confronts a “pro-life” nun who voted for Obama

June 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf wrote this article on the Pro Life Training web site.

Excerpt:

Nun: If only our students were completely pro-life on all issues. I am consistently for life, and that’s why I’m voting for Senator Obama.

Me: Sister?

Nun: That’s right, I’m for Obama. He’s the real pro-life candidate. Most people focus too much on abortion. I’m pro-life and care about all life. So does Obama.

Me: What do you mean people focus too much on abortion?[1]

Nun: I mean Bush with the war in Iraq has killed so many people there is no way I could vote for someone like Senator McCain, who will do the same thing. How can any person who cares about life vote for such a man?

Me: Are you suggesting the President unjustly killed innocent people? If so, how?

Nun: Yes I am! Think of all those innocent women and children killed in Iraq—over a million of them since we invaded the place six years ago.

Me: Did you say over a million? How did you come up with that number?

Nun: I heard it someplace. Besides, war is a pro-life issue like abortion and right now it’s even worse than abortion.

Me: To be worse than abortion, how bad would an unjust war have to be?

Nun: Abortion, war, poverty—they are all bad.

I’m sure you all recognize the tendency of some people to refuse to make judgments like “greater than” and “less than” when they are debating – because to put numbers to different things and admit that one thing is much worse than another (or more likely) would undermine their view.

The fact of the matter is that 30,000 innocent civilians TOTAL being killed in the process of liberating an entire country and deposing a dangerous tyrant, is NOT the same as 1.2 million unborn babies being killed PER YEAR because their parents refuse to be inconvenienced by the consequences of their own hedonistic behavior.

And not only are the numbers different but the justification for the taking of a life is different in each case, too. Just wars are fought because the loss of civilian lives is not as bad as the failure to restrain a more dangerous threat to peaceful democratic nations. For example, the deaths of innocent civilians in the fire-bombing of Dresden in order to defeat the tyrant Hitler. But in the case of abortion, the justification is just that the selfish pursuit of pleasure of the parents justifies the killing of an innocent unborn child.

I have always been concerned by naive pro-lifers who think that big government

socialism would someone be the answer to the problem of what to do with helpless unborn children. “Social justice” they call it. Well “social justice” won the election in 2008, and now we have taxpayer-funded abortions. Why? Because the people who voted to grow the government didn’t want to be inconvenienced with children. But the unborn children never got to vote – they were just too small to count.

Obama’s traditional allies are beginning to notice his incompetence

June 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, in the UK. (H/T Scrubone)

Excerpt:

> What a difference 18 months and an oil spill makes. In January 2009 Barack Obama was hugely popular on this side of the Atlantic, and could have walked on water in the eyes of the British media, the political elites, and the general public. In June 2010 however he probably qualifies as the most despised US president since Nixon among the British people. In fact you can’t open a London paper at this time without reading yet another fiery broadside against a leader who famously boasted of restoring “America’s standing” in the world.
>
> When even Obama’s most ardent political supporters in Britain, including Boris Johnson, are on the offensive against the White House, you know the president’s halo has dramatically slipped. It’s hard to believe that any politician could become more disliked in the UK than Gordon Brown, but Barack Obama is achieving that in spades. And as Janet Daley noted of the British press, the love affair with Barack is well and truly over.

> As I wrote previously, *we are witnessing one of the worst exercises in public diplomacy by a US government in recent memory, one that could cause significant long-term damage to the incredibly important economic and political partnership between Great Britain and the United States.* And for those who say this is minor storm in a tea cup, I would point out that it is highly unusual for a British Prime Minister to have to stand up to an onslaught against British interests by an American president, as David Cameron has just done. In fact the prospect of a major confrontation between Downing Street and the White House grows stronger by the day.
>
> But this is not the whole picture. President Obama’s handling of BP is part of a far bigger problem. This is an administration that has consistently insulted Britain, and has even sided with her foes in some cases, most notably in its wholehearted support for Argentina’s call for negotiations over the sovereignty of the Falklands, a position that has been strongly backed by Venezuelan tyrant Hugo Chavez. Time and time again, the Obama team has undercut America’s key allies, from London to Prague to Jerusalem, while kowtowing to the enemies of the United States in the name of engagement. It is a disastrous foreign policy that not only weakens American global power, but generates resentment and anger in nations that have traditionally stood shoulder to shoulder with America.

And even on CNN, the network that put Obama into office.

Excerpt:

> CAFFERTY: Wolf, it turns out that recovery is in the eye of the beholder. President Obama and Vice President Biden have kicked off a massive P.R. campaign, celebrating what they're calling 'recovery summer.' They say the $860 billion economic stimulus bill is working. The White House says two and a half million jobs have been created, and that the number should reach three and a half million by the end of this year. They're highlighting new jobs at thousands of infrastructure projects across the country.
>
> But the celebration may be premature. Just yesterday, the Labor Department reported new claims for jobless benefits jumped by 12,000 last week- much sharper increase than was expected, and it shows that the pace of layoffs has not slowed appreciably. Plus, we still have a national unemployment hovering just below 10 percent. An editorial in the Washington Times, called 'Obama's Endless Summer of Spending,' suggests the administration's 'make-work' jobs program has failed, and that those infrastructure jobs, which are being funded by the taxpayers, will disappear when the stimulus money runs out- soon. Fact is the current recovery has been one of the worst for job creation ever.
>
> Meanwhile, the picture in many of the 50 states is terrible and getting worse. State and local governments are cutting wherever they can, in order to meet their budgets, reducing or eliminating public services, underfunding state pension plans, and cutting 230,000 state and local government jobs in just the last couple of years.
>
> Former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan is out with a dire warning that the U.S. may soon reach its borrowing limit if we don't make some drastic changes and reduce our $13 trillion national debt. But President Obama wants billions more for stimulus spending. Somewhere, there appears to be a rather serious disconnect.

I blogged before about how underwhelmed MSNBC was with his lame oil spill speech. His presidential approval numbers are around -20.

Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions

June 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> While Irish legislators prepare to pass civil partnership legislation, the country's Catholic bishops conference has issued a last minute call for a halt to the plans. Failing that, they said, parliament must allow for "greater recognition of the proper autonomy of Churches and the right to social and civil freedom in religious matters."
>
> "This includes the right of individuals to the free exercise of conscience," they said.
>
> The planned legislation includes a provision to force civil marriage registrars to comply with requests from homosexual partners. **Under the bill, a civil registrar who conscientiously refuses to carry out such a ceremony will face criminal prosecution, a possible fine and up to 6 months in prison. Similar penalties will be meted out for anyone refusing for reasons of conscience to rent meeting facilities for homosexual partnership ceremonies.**
>
> […]In Britain and other jurisdictions where "gay marriage" or homosexual civil partnerships have been created, legal conflicts have immediately emerged over the rights of religious objectors. The UK has seen a flurry of cases in which Christians in many public roles have been silenced or sacked for refusing to accommodate the homosexualist ideologies.

Comments will be strictly monitored in accordance with Obama laws restricting free speech on controversial topics.

How public sector unions cause tax rates to increase

June 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at the UK economy after over a decade of rule by the socialist Labor party.

Here's an article from the UK Telegraph about the pensions of unionized public sector workers.

Excerpt:

> It is estimated that, on average, private sector workers would need to put 37pc of their salary into their pension to match the retirement income paid to a public sector worker on a similar wage, if you believe a report by accountants PricewaterhouseCoopers.
>
> Even public sector workers on modest final salary schemes might be surprised to learn how much they would need to save if they were in the private sector.
>
> To get the average civil service pension of £5,928 a year you would need a pension pot of £189,151. The average NHS pension of £6,931 is equivalent to a pension pot of £221,155 and the average teachers' pension of £9,358 is equivalent to a pot of £298,596, according to Hargreaves Lansdown, the financial adviser.
>
> […]The figures showed that average total pay, including bonuses, in the private sector in February was £451 a week. Excluding bonuses it was £418 a week. In the public sector the corresponding figures were £462 a week and £459 a week. Public sector pay, on average, is also rising at twice the rate of private sector wages.

Government workers have pensions and salaries that are higher than in the private sector, and those costs have to be paid by private sector workers who actually generate revenue and pay taxes. Public sector employees don't actually have to do any work for the most part, (excluding things like military, etc.). People only work when they have customers to please, who can choose them or choose a competitor. Government has no competitors, and so they really don't need to work hard to please a customer.

Another UK Telegraph article explains who pays for public sector union pensions.

Excerpt:

> By 2015, almost £10 billion of public money will be spent every year supporting the retirement of millions of public sector employees – up from £4 billion this year, the independent body said.
>
> […]In 2010-11, the amount spent by the taxpayer on public sector pensions will be £4 billion, rising to £5.5 billion the following year, the report said.
>
> The cost will then rise, on average, by 20 per cent each year until the

> commitment reaches £9.4 billion in 2014-15. **This equates to almost £400 for each of Britain's 26 million households.** The sharp increase, according to the Treasury, is a result of Britain's ageing population.
>
> […]There are more than two million public sector workers receiving pensions from "unfunded" schemes.
>
> **The schemes are heavily supported by the taxpayer, with employees generally contributing less than their counterparts in the private sector.**

And another UK Telegraph article explains how taxes on the productive private sector will have to rise to pay for the pensions.

Here's one of several proposed tax increases:

> We already know that [the capital gains tax] is due to increase, said Grant Thornton, although we don't know what new rate or rates will be. "We do know that it will be more in line with income tax, so it could go up to 40pc, but the option of taxing up to the highest rate of 50pc has not been ruled out," the firm said, adding that the measure was "likely to go down like a lead balloon" with investors with share portfolios and anyone with a second home.

Any raise to the capital gains tax is a direct assault on capital investment, and will damage the economy more than raising consumption taxes. The worst thing that you can do in a recession is to punish investors and private businesses. You end up losing jobs, which decreases your tax revenue even more.

And they are going to raise consumption taxes:

> The Chancellor may face an "irresistible temptation" to increase the rate of VAT to 20pc now that he has had the opportunity to review the country's books, said Grant Thornton. The standard rate of 17.5pc is relatively low relative to other EU countries and many economists predict a rise to 20pc, which would cost someone on average earnings about £150 a year.

That one will hit the poor as well as the rich.

And one last UK Telegraph article to explain how the recession has hurt men most.

Excerpt:

> Malcolm Hurlston, chairman of the [Consumer Credit Counselling Service], said: "Men have been hard hit by the recession and are emerging as the new underclass. Debt alone is no longer the problem. It is loss of income and other rising costs.
>
> "This deterioration in the economic circumstances for men, still the main breadwinner in most homes, has serious implications for many households."
>
> The charity said it had seen the number of men contacting it for help soar from 146,00 in 2007 to 221,000 last year, a 51pc jump.

> It added that the number of women seeking help had increased by only half this amount over the period, although women were still more likely to contact it than men, accounting for 52pc of its caseload.
>
> Men who contacted the charity during 2009 owed an average of £26,957, down from nearly £30,000 in 2008, but still significantly higher than the £21,915 that women typically owed.
>
> The main reason men gave for getting into debt was a fall in their income, with this cited by 26pc, while 23pc said they had become unemployed or been made redundant. A further 20pc of men blamed their situation on overcommitting themselves on credit.

When one group of people vote themselves higher benefits without any additional productivity, some other group is going to be taxed to pay for it. And higher taxes lower incomes and produce unemployment. The UK is replacing working men with big government dependency.

Louisiana bill to deregulate public schools making progress

June 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bobby and Supriya Jindal
Story here on NOLA.com.

Excerpt:

> The House of Representatives signed off Thursday on the Senate's revisions to a plan that would let public school officials apply for waivers of state education regulations, a measure that would let some campuses behave more like charter schools.
>
> House Bill 1368 by Rep. Jane Smith, R-Bossier City, is one of Gov. Bobby Jindal's top K-12 education priorities for the session. The administration hails the measure as a fundamental shift in public education policy. But the version that Jindal will sign has considerably more limitations than what Smith introduced several months ago.
>
> Local superintendents can apply for waivers of certain rules and regulations, but only with the approval of the local school board and a majority of the teachers on each campus affected by the waiver. The bill would not allow schools to waive certain requirements, such as school nutrition rules, a new teacher evaluation system that Jindal recently signed into law and limits on privatizing support workers. Teachers unions worked throughout the session for many of the concessions.

People ask me what it would take for me to believe in the project of marriage and parenting. I think two things have to happen. 1) Getting rid of feminist laws like no-fault divorce and the divorce courts. 2) Reforming education so that other people are not controlling what my children believe. Louisiana has some of the worst schools in the nation, so this is good news. Think of how good it would look for Jindal if he could bring up

those test scores with some free market reforms.

Which William Lane Craig debate did you like the best?

June 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He strikes fear in the hearts of atheists
Who is William Lane Craig?

Why he's the scholar that tough-minded Christians admire the most. He has amazing academic credentials, and has authored many works in defense of Christianity. But that's not the main reason why we like him. It's mainly because he is has done more to defend Christianity against the strongest and most dangerous non-Christians in the world than anyone else.

How many debates?

There is actually a comprehensive list of a few of his debates maintained by ChristianJR4. There are many, many more that were not preserved.

Here are a few that I recommend:

- William Lane Craig vs Austin Dacey on God's existence
- William Lane Craig vs James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus
- William Lane Craig vs Paul Kurtz on God and morality

I would go so far as to say that anyone who is not familiar with Dr. Craig's work should immediately drop what they are doing and pick up his latest book "On Guard", with the new study guide, and start reading. But it might be more fun to just watch him in a debate first. You will not be sorry.

Feel free to leave a comment recommending your favorite debate with William Lane Craig, or telling a story about how one of his debates influenced your faith journey.

What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?

June 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What do white roses mean?

I wrote this post to encourage Christian men to find faithful Christian women and support them with a gift of white roses. If you know a woman who is faithful but neglected, then white roses are the perfect gift. And in the rest of the post, I want to explain why.

I'll start with a couple of articles that explain the message I am trying to send a woman with white roses. One you understand what the meaning of white roses is, then you'll get ideas on how to communicate to a woman by giving them to her.

Excerpt:

> The meaning of shimmering white roses is not very hard to decipher if you go by their appearance. The color white has always been synonymous with purity and virtue. And so, sincerity, purity, and chastity are some of the obvious meanings of a white rose. When you need to convince that your affections are straight from the heart and are as pure as virgin snow, use a white rose. But there are more hidden meanings in a white rose than meets the eye.
>
> White has ever been a symbol of innocence, of a world unspoiled and untarnished. The meaning of a bunch of glowing white roses is innocence and spiritual love. The white rose glorifies a love that is unaware of the temptations of the flesh and resides only in the soul. As opposed to the red rose that speaks of passionate promises, the meaning of a white rose is in its simplicity and pristine purity.

That's the standard mainstream meaning of white roses. I normally give three of them, to

symbolize the Trinity. (My banner is a pure black field with 3 narrow horizontal pure white stripes)

But there's more – there's a meaning to white roses that is much higher than mere feelings.

How about this?

> It has also come to mean loyalty and faith, which can be strongly linked to purity. In true love, faithfulness and loyalty are implicit, despite distance or time. For these symbols, white roses are a perfect gift to a beloved who is far away, as they will display not only your love, but also your fidelity. White roses are also the perfect gift to send to a platonic friend, for a similar reason: constant, faithful love, mixed with the symbolism of innocence, is a wonderful way to show your love for a dear friend.
>
> […]At the same time, as the uses throughout history have shown, the white rose is also a symbol of strong resistance and the will to stand for one's beliefs at any cost. Giving a white rose as a gift is a very strong gift. It is not fleeting passion or romance, which is too often what the red rose conveys. The white rose is a strong and consistent love, which is pure, faithful and sacrificial. Not many flowers have such a powerful meaning to their name. And this meaning comes to the rose not only through folklore and stories, but through true histories of brave people fighting for their cause. The white rose is a beautiful flower, with beautiful symbolism, and a friend or lover should be proud to give this flower as a gift to those they love steadily and faithfully.

White roses also stand for humility, reverence, honor and secrecy.

Desert Rose by White Heart

I like this old song by the Christian band White Heart a lot.

Desert Rose Lyrics:

> Lost in a windswept land
> In a world of shifting sand
> A fragile flower stands apart
>
> There in that barren ground
> Feel like the only one
> Trying to serve Him with all your heart
>
> And you wonder, wonder
> Can you last much longer?
> This cloud you are under
> Will it cover you?
>
> Desert rose, desert rose
> Don't you worry, don't be lonely
> Heaven knows, Heaven knows

> In a dry and weary land a flower grows
> His desert rose, desert rose
>
> Sometimes holiness
> Can seem like emptiness
> When you feel the whole world's laughing eyes
>
> If it's a lonely day
> Know you're on the Father's way
> He will hear you when you cry
>
> And He will hold you, hold you
> Your Father will hold you
> He will love you, love you
> For the things you do
>
> Desert rose, desert rose
> Don't you worry, don't be lonely
> Heaven knows, Heaven knows
> In a dry and weary land a flower grows
> His desert rose, desert rose
>
> Desert rose, desert rose
> Don't you worry, don't be lonely
> Heaven knows, Heaven knows
> In a dry and weary land a flower grows
> His desert rose, desert rose
>
> Desert rose, don't be lonely, don't be lonely
> Desert rose, ooh, don't you worry
> Desert rose, don't you know He'll be with you
> Heaven knows, Heaven knows
> He will call your tattered heart on
> Desert rose

One of the nice things about giving a good woman white roses is that you don't have to worry about being rejected by her. You're not trying to start a relationship, necessarily. You just pick the woman who has the best developed Christian worldview, and then give her white roses to support her in her efforts. Has she been reading a good apologetics book? Then give her white roses. Has she been lecturing on the pro-life view in her church? Then give her white roses. Has she been explaining what's wrong with gay marriage? Then give her white roses. Is she volunteering or donating to help a conservative political candidate? And so on.

I know women who are doing everything in that list, so they can't be too hard to find. Don't pick the ones that you like. Don't pick the ones that meets cultural standards. Don't pick the ones that your friends approve of. Pick the one who serves God self-sacrificially. The one who has put God first, and her own happiness second.

Consider John 13:34-35:

[34] "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

[35] By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Jesus is speaking there – and he's saying that it matters how you treat other Christians.

One word of caution: you don't want to try this on anyone who is not a serious Christian. Pick one who likes apologetics, is conservative on fiscal policy, social policy and foreign policy, and who has a solid Christian worldview. If you link the white roses to specific good actions that the woman is doing, then there really is nothing to worry about. Just explain to her what the roses mean and the specific things that she has done to impress you. That takes the pressure off of her to have to do anything back.

Here's an e-mail I got from a regular commenter whom I met recently:

> I recently had the priviledge not only of visiting the USA, but of meeting WK himself in person. He gave me 3 white roses on 2 occasions.
>
> How did it make me feel? Very blessed, appreciated, encouraged. I have a number of decent, Christian male friends. But this gesture stood out because of the thought that went into it and the meaning that stands behind these flowers. I took a whole lot of photos of the flowers he gave me. Whenever I see them, I smile.
>
> It also made me appreciate the sort of man that we have in WK in regard to how he treats women. Bad men take advantage of women, regular men don't take advantage of them, but good men appreciate them and build them up. WK is one of the good guys, one of the honorable guys. There is a nobility of character in his approach to women. I felt cared for as a Christian sister, not only with the flowers, but with the concern he has shown for my growth, and with the fantastic books he has sent me (and to others who frequent this blog) – the sort of books that improve my knowledge and my ability to live as a Christian in all spheres of life.
>
> This is my favourite line in this post:
> "It's your job as a Christian man to put her hand in God's hand and hold them together."
> I feel quite emotional (in a girly, but good way!) reading that line.
>
> Thank you, Sir Knight. [curtseys] :)

Now is your chance to do the same! By the way, I usually give 3 in a vase, to symbolize the Trinity.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God

- Are feminized churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Is Mike Huckabee a Bible-believing Christian?

June 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Laura from Pursuing Holiness has concerns about Mike Huckabee. (H/T Foxfier)

She writes in part:

> In defiance of libertarian laissez-faire, Huckabee has extended his Christian vision to include the poor. "If there are a certain number of kids from single-parent homes who aren't going to school and don't have health care, you can say that's not government's job," Huckabee told me. "Well, sweet and fine! But you know what? If the kid's sitting outside the door of the hospital choking with asthma, do I sit there and say, 'Oh, I'm sorry, I don't think, philosophically, government should get involved'? I'd much rather the kid get help than I sit around and say I'm so pure in my ideology."

I actually don't think that Huckabee is even a real Republican or a real Christian. Not only is he a crappy tax-raising, amnesty-granting, big government socialist, but I don't think he isn't even a Bible-believing Christian.

Consider this in John 14:6:

[6]Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

And this in Acts 4:12:

[12]Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

Look what Huckster says:

> Other members of the group politely admitted that they had no doubt that most Israelis, and anyone else who had not accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour, would be spending eternity in Hell. ("That is an issue," a man named Randy Rebold told me apologetically.) Huckabee's formulation is considerably more politic. "If somebody asked me, How do I get to Heaven, I would tell them that the only way I personally am aware of is faith in Christ, because I believe the New Testament," he said. "That's the only map I got. Somebody says, Well, I got a different map. O.K.! You know what? If it works, I'm not going to argue with you."

That's not Christianity. That's *relativism*. He doesn't even have the map he *thinks* he has.

80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse

June 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CNBC. (H/T Barb's Blog)

Excerpt:

> Mountains of rotting food found at a government warehouse, soaring prices and soldiers raiding wholesalers accused of hoarding: Food supply is the latest battle in President Hugo Chavez's socialist revolution.
>
> Venezuelan army soldiers swept through the working class, pro-Chavez neighborhood of Catia in Caracas last week, seizing 120 tons of rice along with coffee and powdered milk that officials said was to be sold above regulated prices.
>
> […]Critics accuse him of steering the country toward a communist dictatorship and say he is destroying the private sector.
>
> They point to 80,000 tons of rotting food found in warehouses belonging to the government as evidence the state is a poor and corrupt administrator.
>
> Jose Guzman, an assistant manager at a store raided in Catia, watched with resignation as government agents pored over the company's accounts and computers after the food ministry official and the television cameras left.
>
> "The government is pushing this type of establishment toward bankruptcy," said Guzman, who linked the raid to the rotten food scandal. "Somehow they have to replace all the food that was lost, and this is the most expeditious way."

Well, the best way to get control of the people is to create an artificial shortage so that they depend on the government. It's like passing a carbon tax, or instituting a moratorium on drilling – you reduce supply and then take control when the people get angry.

Who Chavez remind me of?

Hey Chavez! How do I get the economy to grow?
Oh yeah.

Related posts

- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Adult stem cells used to restore sight to patients blinded by chemical burns

June 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two kinds of stem-cell research. The first kind is called embryonic stem-cell research (ESCR). This kind is opposed by pro-lifers because it kills unborn persons by extracting their stem cells for use in medical research. The second kind is called adult stem-cell research (ASCR). This kind is supported by pro-lifers.

You may be surprised to know that ESCR doesn't work as nearly as well as ASCR.

From the Family Research Council blog. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Italian scientists report that they have restored sight to patients blinded by chemical burns using the patient's own adult stem cells. The team treated 112 patients blinded in one or both eyes; some of whom had been blind for years. Adult stem cells were taken from the edge of a patient's eye and cultured on fibrin, then the cell layers transplanted onto the damaged eyes. The adult stem cells produced healthy corneas and functioning eyes. Some patients regained sight within two months, while for others with deeper injuries the process took a year before vision was restored. Patients were followed up to ten years after the transplant. After a single transplant, 69% of patients regained vision; in some cases a second transplant occurred, with a total success in 77% of patients and partial vision restoration in 13% of patients. The long-term restoration was an especially encouraging success of the study.

Still more cures for adult stem cell research… nothing much for embryonic stem cell research.

FRC is rapidly becoming my second favorite think tank. You would expect them to be social conservatives through and through. But these are not naive fundamentalists – they understand how fiscal policy relates to social policy. Anyone who favors increasing government power to solve social problems, (e.g. – universal health care), is not a social conservative. When a secular government runs huge sectors of the private economy, morality goes out the window. Morality is reduced to claiming a "right" to your neighbors money.

Related posts

- British boy becomes first in the world to have stem cell transplant
- ABC News reports on how adult stem cells produce innovative cures today
- Round up of articles on adult stem-cell research from FRC
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough

- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama’s plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

Walt Russell explains how to read the Bible effectively

June 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Today we are looking at a four part series in Boundless, written by Biola University New Testament professor Walt Russell. The material below is almost the same talk he gave for the Stand to Reason Masters Series in Christian Thought. His book on the subject (which I LOVE) is called "Playing With Fire: How the Bible Ignites Change in Your Soul". I highly recommend that you read the book, so you know how to read the Bible effectively. But these four articles will teach you most of what you need to know if you don't want to buy the book.

Here is part one which talks about how postmodern relativism is at odds with discovering the original intent of an author.

Excerpt:

> Twenty-four year-old "Janet" (not her real name) was angry at my emphasis on seeking to discover authors' intentions when we read their texts. She was an evangelical Christian and a second grade teacher in a public school. She prided herself in helping her 20 students learn to love literature. She would read them a story as they gathered around her, and then ask each child, "What does the story mean to you?" She prodded them to come up with their own unique meanings. With such strong encouragement, the class of 20 would eventually have 20 different meanings for the one story. Janet sensed that I was a naysayer about such "love of literature." Pouring a little emotional gasoline on the fire, I said, "Janet, you're certainly doing your part to insure that these 7 year-olds will never recover from a radically relativistic view of meaning!" Now I had her full attention.

Here is part two which talks about the importance of knowing the genre of a text before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" — the newspaper headline virtually screams out at you. The thought of something being slain is repulsive. You're gripped by a mental image of southern India's Bengal tiger. You imagine its beautiful face, its stripes and piercing eyes. Then your image is shattered by the sudden blast of a high-powered rifle. You see the exquisite creature writhe in pain, fall gracelessly in its tracks and die. Having read no further than the headline, you feel sick, as if you've witnessed something tragic.
>
> But *should* you feel this way? The slaughter of an endangered species — especially one as magnificent as the Bengal tiger — is horrifying, no doubt. But suppose you failed to notice that the headline "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" appeared

> in the *sports page* of the morning paper. Clearly enough, it now refers to different Indians, different Tigers and a different manner of slaying than you originally thought. And is it really that tragic that the Cleveland Indians badly beat the Detroit Tigers in a major league baseball game last night? Not unless you're a long-suffering Detroit Tigers' baseball fan. But how do you now know that the headline is about baseball and not tiger-slaying in India? You look at the words "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS" and you know exactly what each word means. When you combine these words, how can they not mean exactly what you first thought they did — that *Indians slay tigers*? Answer: because their meanings are communicated (as the meanings of *all* words are) through *genres*!

Here is part three which talks about the importance of reading the context of a verse before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "Never Read a Bible Verse!" That's the title of a little booklet my friend and Christian radio personality, Gregory Koukl, has written to help people read the Bible well. What great advice. "That's right, never read a Bible verse. Instead, always read a paragraph — at least." But the current is flowing the other way in our popular sound-bite culture. Not to be left out (or left behind!), the Church has its own version of sound-bite culture: *verse-bite culture*. In verse-bite culture we take a sentence or sentence-fragment from a biblical paragraph, memorize it out of context, write it on a little card, put it on a billboard, a plaque, a rock, etc. Somehow we think that just because this little chunk of Scripture has a verse number in front of it, it was meant to be a free-standing unit of thought. Nothing could be further from the truth.
>
> Apart from the fact that chapter and verse divisions weren't added to the New Testament text until 1560 — long after the New Testament's inspired authorship — there is a more important reason for never reading just a Bible verse, and instead reading at least the paragraph that contains it.

Here is part four which talks about the importance of applying the words of the Bible to your life.

One thing missing from the four articles that was in the STR lecture is the part where he talked about the promise "he who began a good work in you…" from Phillipians 1:6. Russell says in the lecture that this promise is specifically intended for the church in Phillipi, to whom Paul is writing. My understanding is that this promise applies just to the Phillipians, not necessarily to all Christians. He is giving them a promise just after directly referring to their good work in supporting him in his ministry.

Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?

June 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

NOTE: This post contains some adult language and themes.

Here is an article written by an academic feminist in the New York Times. (H/T Stuart Schneiderman)

Stuart exegetes the article:

> In Bauer's words: "If there's anything that feminism has bequeathed to young women of means, it's that power is their birthright. Visit an American college campus on a Monday morning and you'll find any number of amazingly ambitious and talented young women wielding their brain power, determined not to let anything– including a relationship with some needy, dependent man– get in their way. Come back on party night, and you'll find many of these same girls… wielding their sexual power, dressed as provocatively as they dare, matching guys drink for drink– and then hook up for hook up."
>
> Given the relatively lesser body mass of women compared with that of men, matching men drink for drink is a fool's errand. Anyone who glorifies such behavior has completely lost touch with reality.
>
> And why should Bauer be in awe of the fact that these girls can match men, hook up for hook up? If these women are so desirous of becoming unique individual self-creations, why should they be trying to emulate male behavior?
>
> And let's not overlook the piece of undisguised contempt for "some needy, dependent man" with whom these women might have relationships. The latest wave of feminism prefers hooking up to relationships.
>
> According to Bauer, the party ends with said liberated empowered inebriated woman down on her knees. As Bauer so nicely expresses it: "When they're on their knees in front of a worked-up guy they just met at a party, they genuinely feel powerful– sadistic even."

Sometimes we get commenters who question whether feminism has anything to do with the behavior of women that we see today in college campuses. And to find out the truth, you have to read the elite feminists at the modern universities who have been grading the papers of women for the last 40 years. Was this alcohol-drenched hook-up culture unexpected by these elite academic feminists? On the contrary. It was their goal.

Feminists wanted to abolish the distinctions between men and women. They decided to achieve this by encouraging women to act like men. And the men they chose to emulate were alpha-male bad boys, since these are the men that women who don't like marriage seem to really admire. Academic feminists like Bauer believe that women are happier now than they ever have been, with all this hooking up and being raised without fathers.

They think they've won.

MUST-SEE: Police arrest Christians for distributing the gospel in Dearborn

June 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I first spotted this story at Hot Air.

Here's the video:

And read the account by Christian apologist Nabeel Qureshi of Acts 17 Apologetics:

> Yes, you heard it here first, folks. David and I, along with Negeen and Paul Rezkalla, were arrested and spent last night in jail. It is a long story which we will elaborate in full detail when we can, and we will post footage when the police give us back our cameras.
>
> But to take the edge off your curiosity, here are some basics: Paul, David, Negeen, and I went to the festival to see and comment on the situation. Thankfully, we recorded every second of our activity at the festival. At one point, we came across a festival volunteer who seemed to take issue with us simply being at the festival. We could tell he had a problem with us, and so we asked "What are we doing wrong?" He said "Put the camera and microphone down, and I'll tell you." (By the way, there was more to this conversation, but when you see the footage, I think you'll see I'm being fair in my summary.) So I obliged, handing the microphone to David and asking him to not record the man. I then approached him and said "No camera, no mic, tell me what we're doing wrong", he said "Get away from me!" (or something to that effect). Again, I obliged, and walked away.
>
> About 20 minutes later, to shouts and cheers of "Allahu Akbar!" we were all being led away from the festival in handcuffs. From the brief description we were given by the police of why we were being arrested, it sounds like the festival volunteer said we surrounded him and didn't give him an opportunity to leave, thereby "breaching the peace." This is as blatantly false as an accusation can get.
>
> Last year, security lied about us and we got kicked out of the festival. We had it all on tape, so we were able to vindicate ourselves. This year, a volunteer lied about us, and we got thrown into jail. But when we get our footage back, we'll be able to vindicate ourselves again.

From Jihad Watch, we get Christian scholar David Wood's report:

> Muslims threatened to kill Nabeel and me if we showed up again at Arab Fest in Dearborn, so we went there yesterday. They didn't kill us. Instead, police arrested us and we got to spend a night in jail (along with two others who were video recording us). Interesting city. I feel a documentary coming on. Title:

> “Welcome to Dearborn.”

More pictures here.

More eyewitness reports here.

More videos from Acts 17 apologetics.

Details on the planned lawsuit here.

What does Barack Obama really think about the definition of marriage?

June 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is Obama talking about his view of marriage in front of Christians:

And here he is in front of his real constituents, the gay rights lobby:

In the video, he says that his administration is trying to dismantle the Defense of Marriage Act.

What is the Defense of Marriage Act, you ask?

Excerpt:

> The Defense of Marriage Act defines marriage in federal law as follows:
>
> In determining the meaning of any Act of Congress, or of any ruling, regulation, or interpretation of the various administrative bureaus and agencies of the United States, the word "marriage" means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word "spouse" refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife.
>
> The Defense of Marriage Act also affirms the power of each state to make its own decision as to whether it will accept or reject same-sex marriages created in other jurisdictions. It was enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress in the second sentence of Article IV, Section 1. The Full Faith and Credit Statute was amended to include this provision:
>
> No State, territory, or possession of the United States, or Indian tribe, shall be required to give effect to any public act, record, or judicial proceeding of any other State, territory, possession, or tribe respecting a relationship between persons of the same sex that is treated as a marriage under the laws of such other State, territory, possession, or tribe, or a right or claim arising from such relationship.

So what does Obama really support? Does he support DOMA? Or is he trying to repeal DOMA?

Obama is actually trying to REPEAL DOMA. He doesn't believe that the word "marriage" means a union between one man and one woman as husband and wife. He doesn't believe that the word "spouse" refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife. He just *says that* to get votes. He actually believes the opposite. And when he gets into office, he acts on what he really believes.

Do you like religious liberty? Obama's ENDA bill, which he mentioned in the video, will put an end to your religious liberty. Even more than his "hate crimes" bill already did. And he's the most pro-abortion President, too. If you care about foreign policy, he's the worst President ever on foreign policy. If you care about fiscal policy, he's the worst President

ever on fiscal policy. He’s the worst President ever, no matter what you care about. Oh wait… he’s good at playing golf. So there’s *that*.

New-home sales plunge 33% to record low in May

June 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CBS Marketwatch. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Sales of new single-family homes plunged 33% in May to a record-low level after a federal subsidy for home buyers expired, according to data released Wednesday by the Commerce Department.
>
> Sales dropped to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 300,000, the lowest since records began in 1963. April's sales pace was revised down to 446,000 compared with the 504,000 originally reported. March's sales were also revised lower.
>
> The results were much worse than expected, and economists had expected a 20% decline to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 405,000.
>
> […]Sales fell sharply in all four regions, with sales down more than 50% in the West.
>
> The median sales price in May was $200,900, down 9.6% from a year earlier and the lowest since December 2003.
>
> […]Housing data in May have been dismal. Housing starts fell 10%, building permits fell 5.9%, mortgage applications dropped, and the home builders' index fell by five points. The only bright spot was mortgage rates, which stayed very low.

Obama's solution to this problem was government spending in the form of an $8000 federal tax credit "stimulus" for people who bought homes between February and April. How did that government-run top-down Keynesian stimulus solution work out?

Excerpt:

> The tax credit likely pulled many sales forward into the first four months of the year. Sales increased a cumulative 29% between February and April. But once the credit expired, sales collapsed in May.

I guess maybe they were hoping to "prime the pump" which of course doesn't work any more than "cash for clunkers" works.

Michigan unionized teachers protest having to contribute to their own pensions

June 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Blog Prof is a great Michigan-based blog and the proprieter is all over this story.

Excerpt:

> Thousands of teachers are gathering in Lansing today to protest having to pay 3% towards their generous pension and healthcare benefits. Michiganders are waking up to the reality that public employees, and especially K-12 teachers in this state, are enjoying extravagant reimbursement for their services far in excess of the public sector such as 1) higher pay than their private sector counterparts, 2) better job security than anyone in the private sector, 3) healthcare benefits far in excess of the private sector, and 4) pension benefits that are far in excess of the private sector. Fact is, here in Michigan teachers are paid better than any other teacher *in the country* per unit Michigander income…

Check this out:

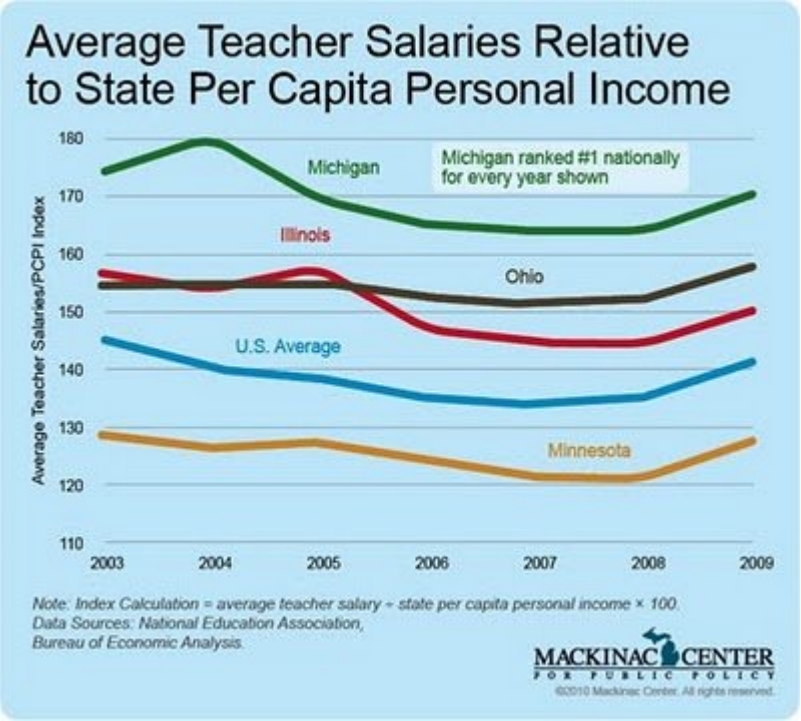

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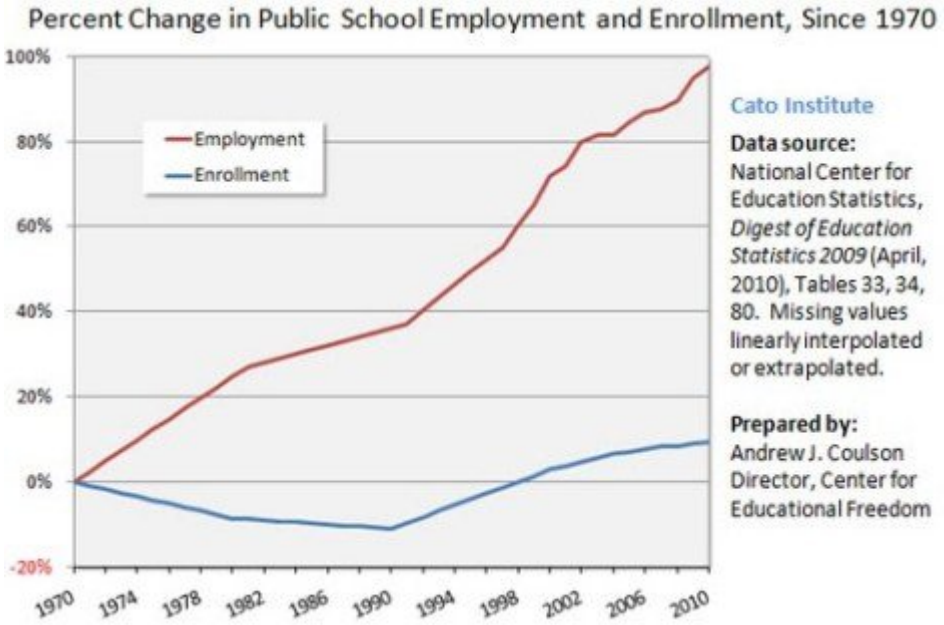

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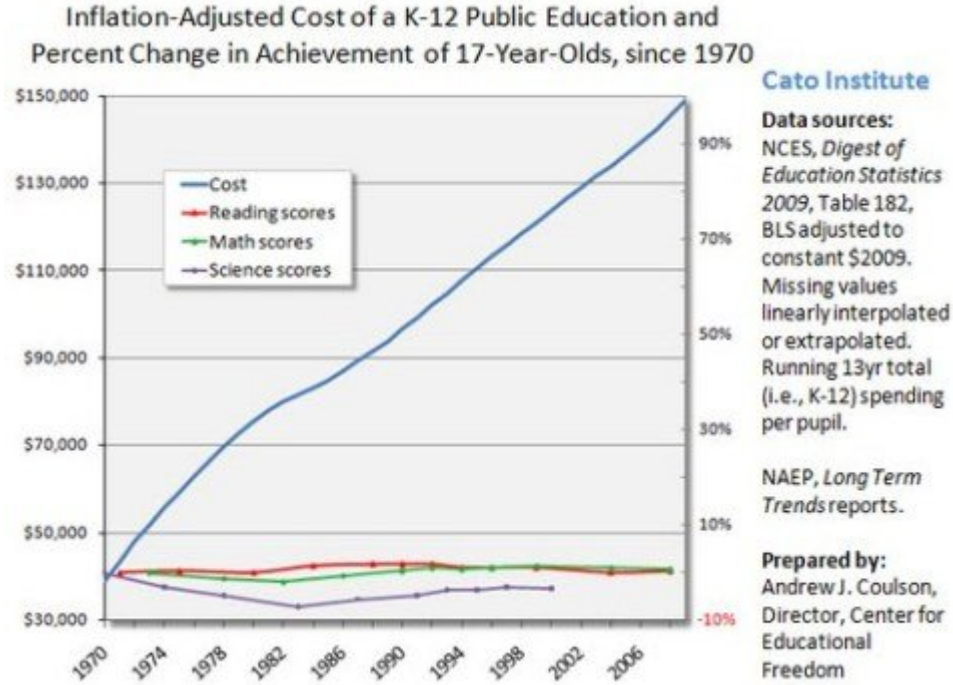

Remember, I am PAYING FOR THIS NO MATTER WHAT.

Public schools are funded by compulsory taxation that takes money out of my future family's coffers so that we have FEWER CHOICES about how we have to will serve God by raising godly children. It's money taken away such that my future wife will have fewer options and opportunities because she will have less to spend as she sees fit. And we will be forced to pay for our neighbor's kids to learn values that we don't hold. Ridiculous! I didn't make this money to give it away to secular leftist indoctrinators with guaranteed jobs and pensions.

Public schools hand out condoms to 5-year olds without parental consent

June 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The story is here.(H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> An elementary school in Provincetown is constituting a controversial condom distribution policy…
>
> The new policy, which the school board voted unanimously to pass, requires students in the elementary school and the high school to speak with a school nurse or trained counselor before receiving a condom.
>
> This will allow students of all ages to learn information on proper use.
>
> The policy also directs school leaders not to honor demands from parents who object to their kids receiving protection.The school feels that this would infringe on the kids' right to inform parents.
>
> "We're talking about younger kids. They have questions they need answered on how to use them, when to use them," School Superintendent Dr. Beth Singer said.

The video within the story is a MUST SEE. The superintendent explains why 5-year olds have a right to privacy, and that parents have no right to stop the schools from doing this.

Remember, parents are forced to pay for these schools – they have no choice. And if they have no choice to prefer an alternative to mandatory funding of public schools, then the public schools have *no reason to care* what parents want. They get paid *anyway.* Service/product providers only care what consumers want when consumers can *walk away from the deal and go to a competitor.* Public schools are a monopoly – they don't care what parents think. They get paid *anyway*.

Watch this:

Parents are not trained professionals with 4-year degrees in "education", you know. So just leave your children to the educational experts, will you please? Leave the education of your children to the "experts". Just drop your money on table and walk away from your children. The Nanny State will take care of everything – just trust them.

What about Canada?

In liberal Quebec, the liberal Ministry of Education is appealing a judge's decision to block them from indoctrinating children in *all schools including private schools* in religious pluralism – that all religions are equally sound – and moral relativism – that all moral points of view are equally valid. They want to teach this to children in *all schools, public and private* with *no opt-out for taxpaying parents*. Understand? You are paying for public

schools and education bureaucrats to indoctrinate your children and your neighbor's children with epistemic and moral relativism, not to mention religious pluralism.

I think the problem with people who vote for more funding for public schools is that no one ever looks into what these unionized educrats really believe and school administrators really believe.

And this is why money matters to a family. You need money to afford private school tuition or homeschooling. Money doesn't grow on trees, you know. And the higher the tax rates, the more you pay, and the less freedom you have to fight the system.

New book on intelligent design for beginners

June 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jay Richards interviews Jonathan Witt, co-author of a new book "Intelligent Design Uncensored". The other author is William A. Dembski.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Who is Jonathan Witt and why does he like intelligent design?
- The intended audience of the book is a complete beginner to ID theory
- The book is very short (175 pages) and easy to read
- A survey of the evidence for design from physics, biology and chemistry
- The aim is to cover a lot of ground and answer the most popular objections
- The cost of the book is low (just over $9 on Amazon!)
- Advice for people interested in a career in intelligent design
- Why do some religious people object to intelligent design?
- Tips for explaining intelligent design to others

Previously I had been recommending the older book "Understanding Intelligent Design", by William A. Dembski and Sean McDowell, which my Dad read and liked a TON. But I like to read entry-level books so that I have things to use with beginners and during courtship (to read together). You've got to keep books in mind for book study, and don't forget about the popular DVDs on intelligent design – Unlocking the Mystery of Life, The Privileged Planet and Darwin's Dilemma. Another good DVD is Icons of Evolution.

UPDATE: There is a whole article on the book with quotes here.

How divorce courts put men in debtor's prisons

June 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the National Post.

Excerpt:

> Jeff Dolan spent Father's Day in jail, locked away for failure to pay child support. Deadbeat dads don't garner a lot of sympathy. But you don't need to study Jeff's case for long before you realize that he's anything but a deadbeat. Instead, he's a man hopelessly ensnared in a crushing bureaucratic machine: He's in jail because he couldn't pay child support, but he couldn't pay child support because he was unemployed … and he was unemployed because the court took his driver's license for failure to pay child support … after he went bankrupt paying his court costs.
>
> […]Courts, in their earnest efforts to do right by families, are destroying them, instead. Men, who want only the chance to be good fathers, are crushed under the weight of gender-biased default rulings and the inertia of unfeeling bureaucracies. Whether in far-off Minnesota or, as *Post* columnist Barbara Kay has shown time and again, right here in Canada, men fighting custody battles are outgunned from the start. Jeff's story, of being forced into bankruptcy by family court proceedings and then being jailed by those same courts for not being able to pay their court-mandated payments, is no surprise to any number of Canadian dads.
>
> Bill Levy, a Canadian with bitter personal experience in such matters said it best: "Canada has reopened debtor prisons, only for parents. Only alienated parents go to jail for poverty. No Mastercard or mortgage debtors. The Constitution does not permit this, we can't be forced into servitude. And yet no one will stand up in court and make these arguments. Men, and some women, too, can't fight back against the court's preference for expediency." That mirrors what Jeff's brother Jon told me in a phone interview: "Jeff isn't in jail because he's an abuser or a bad father. He's in jail because he's poor in a bad economy where there are no jobs."

About 45% of first marriages end in divorce, with women initiating about 70% of divorces and getting full custody about 90% of the time. False accusations are regularly used by the person who initiates the divorce in order to get restraining orders and de facto custody of the children, and the child support payments that go with them. It is a massive transfer of wealth from men to women at gunpoint, and a massive loss of liberty for men.

People keep expecting men to step up and take on the role of husband and father, but when the chips are down, 77% of young unmarried women voted for Barack Obama and his policies of *destroying the economy.* A job is a requirement for men to marry and to take on the role of husband and father. Not only are the schools and universities biased against men, but the industries where men dominate have also been hit hardest by the

recession.

We need to spend less time on fashionable causes like environmentalism, gun control, pacifism, animal rights and universal health care, and more time on economics. It's men who have the most to lose emotionally and financially from a divorce. Not only that, but women commit domestic violence against men at rates equal to men, but the laws (e.g. – VAWA) don't recognize the truth. The vast majority of the social programs are for women only.

A good start would be to read this summary of the divorce courts by Stephen Baskerville, and also listen to the Dr. Morse lecture on marriage. Either we are going to encourage men to marry and praise them for marrying or we are going to discourage them and then blame them for not marrying. Men respond to incentives. As long as society as a whole chooses to remain ignorant of the facts and chooses to continue to blame men, men won't marry.

Gallup finds surge in the number of self-identified conservatives

June 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Once in a while I want to post something that makes people happy.

Look at these graphs from the latest Gallup poll on political views. (H/T Ace of Spades via ECM)

Here are the numbers:

Conservatives are at 42%. Moderates at 35%. And Liberals at 20%.

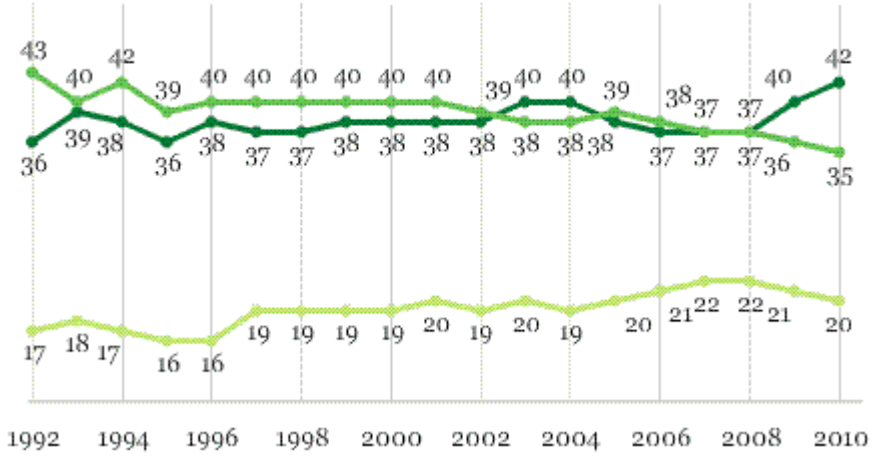

And the independents?

Independents: 41%. Independent Conservatives: 36%. Independent liberals: 19%.

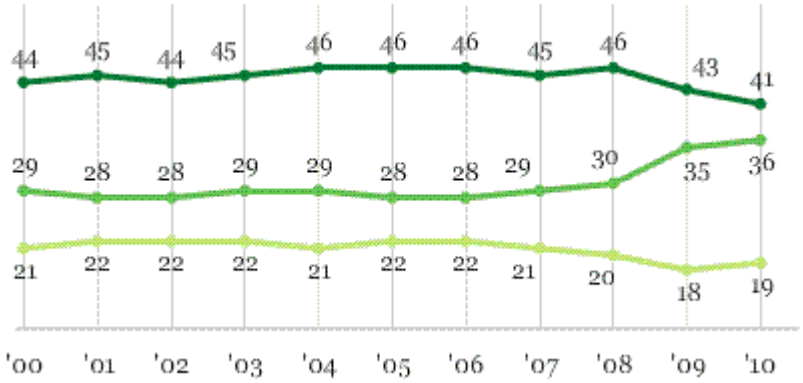

This is good news. But it will not be nice for us when we have to have “austerity measures” to prevent bankruptcy.

Grandmother jailed for five years for owning family heirloom handgun

June 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from BBC News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A grandmother has been jailed for five years for possessing a "family heirloom" World War II pistol.
>
> Gail Cochrane, 53, had kept the gun for 29 years following the death of her father, who had been in the Royal Navy.
>
> Police found the weapon, a Browning self-loading pistol, during a search of her home in Dundee while looking for her son.
>
> She admitted illegal possession of the firearm, an offence with a minimum five-year jail term under Scots law.
>
> Cochrane told the High Court in Edinburgh that she had never contemplated she might be committing a crime by keeping the gun or that she might need to get a licence for the weapon.
>
> She said: "I thought it was just a war trophy."

The judge is a woman, and women often don't like guns in the home:

> However, Judge Lady Smith said: "I am not satisfied that a reasonable explanation has been put forward for not handing this gun into the authorities throughout the 29-year period she says she has had it in her possession."
>
> The judge said she was unable to find herself satisfied that this was one of the rare cases in which exceptional circumstances existed.
>
> She said: "The result is I have no alternative but to sentence Mrs Cochrane to a period of five years."
>
> […]When interviewed, Cochrane told police that the gun had previously belonged to her father and that she had kept it when he died.
>
> She said she believed it was a real gun, but had no ammunition for it.

Scotland is the part of the UK that is most solidly owned by the Liberal Democrat party, which is further to the left than the Labor party.

She's an innocent law-abiding citizen, but she has to be made an example, I guess.

MUST-HEAR: A great debate on whether the Bible condones slavery

June 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Justin Brierley and the Unbelievable radio show, also known as the "If You Like" radio show.

Topic: "Does the Bible Condone Slavery?"

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

> The Bible is often criticised for either supporting or not condemning the institution of slavery. So how should we treat portions of Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments that relate to slavery? Why does the Old Testament contain laws regarding the treatment of slaves? Does Paul condemn or affirm the institution?
>
> Bob Price is a former US church minister whose doubts about the Bible led him to ultimately reject evangelical Christian faith. He says that the Bible is a book that reflects the time it was written in. Slavery was acceptable and the early Christians regrettably followed suit, and did not challenge the prevailing status quo.
>
> David Instone-Brewer is a New Testament Scholar at Tyndale House, Cambridge. He says that, in its cultural context, the Bible goes as far as it can towards an anti-slavery message and that Christians have been at the forefront of anti-slavery movements.

My previous post on this topic is here.

My thoughts

This debate is the greatest debate I have heard in months! This is that Robert M. Price guy who is an expert in the historical Jesus who hates evangelical Christianity and has 2 PhDs. He's extremely radical. But in this debate he was totally awesome. He was so easy to listen to, and he made perfect sense. Everything he said was moderate and reasonable.

And the Christian guy that Justin lined up was solid and well-prepared. About two-thirds of the time, the Christian they get is some useless pastor with no training. But this time Justin got a great scholar – winsome and informed. He made our side look good.

Related goodness

I noticed that Brian Auten linked to this Tawapologetics review of Rodney Stark's book on history and Christianity, and it includes a section on Christianity and the practice of slavery. In my home, we have all of Rodney Stark's books on our bookshelf.

Here are the main points from the slavery part:

- First, slavery has been an institution in human cultures since before the Egyptian pyramids, all around the world.
- Second, while European nations did delve into widespread slavery, the Church was hardly complicit in the practice.
- Third, how monotheism provided the moral framework to condemn and outlaw slavery.
- Fourth, details on the formation of the anti-slavery movement and Christianity's involvement in it.
- Fifth, enlightened secularism had little impact on the abolitionist cause.

I knew some of that stuff already from reading about the history of slavery and the abolition movement in Thomas Sowell books. But if you don't know about it, you should read the book review.

Understanding Calvinism with this funny little quiz

June 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A quiz for Calvinists.

Here are my favorite questions:

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

Q: Why didn't Jesus gather up those in Jerusalem, when he longed to?

- A. Because they were not willing.
- B. This is a mystery.
- C. Hello pea brain. Jesus was speaking of general chicks, not effectual chicks

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Q: God loves what?

- A. The world
- B. The elect.
- C. His glory.

Q: Who will not perish?

- A. Whoever believes in God's only son.
- B. Let me get back to you on that, I need to look up the answer in "Desiring God".
- C. Francis Schaeffer won't perish, but his kid Franky was decreed to go off the deep end.

Acts 16:30,31 [The jailer] then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

Q: What must I do to be saved?

- A. Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.
- B. Win the divine lottery.
- C. The jailer was a Pelagian.

Romans 11:32 For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Q: Who does "all" refer to in this verse?

- A. All

- B. The elect
- C. An unbiased reading of the text shows that the first all refers to everyone and the second all refers to only the elect.

1 Timothy 1:18,19 Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.

Q: Paul says that some people have done what with their faith?

- A. Some have shipwrecked their faith.
- B. This is a hypothetical analogy with no real world application. It is merely used by God to ensure the perseverance of the elect.
- C. Nice try. Obviously the ship was never floating in the first place.

1 Timothy 2:4 [God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Q: Who does God want to be saved?

- A. All men
- B. All men, but no women.
- C. God really wants all men to be saved, but only in such a way that he damns most in order to maximize his glory.

I just found out recently that Calvinist scholar Alvin Plantinga believes in middle knowledge as the best way to reconcile divine sovereignty and free will. So it is possible for Calvinists to adopt middle knowledge as the mechanism for resolving the problem.

Related posts

- William Lane Craig discusses Calvinism and the problem of evil
- What are the differences between Wesleyan Arminianism and Calvinism?
- First debate on Calvinism/Molinism between James White and Michael Brown
- James White debates Michael Brown on Calvinism vs Foreknowledge (1 of 2)
- Michael Brown debates James White on Foreknowledge vs Calvinism (2 of 2)
- What about those who have never heard of Jesus?

Round-up of news stories from around the world

June 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I read Neil Simpson's latest round-up. He linked to an article on the new DISCLOSE bill passed by the Democrats, which outlaws free speech for some people. Not unions, of course. Basically, if you're a Democrat, you still have free speech. Other people – not so much.

Well, I liked his round-up a lot, so here's mine. I hope it's as good.

Germany

From Business Week. (H/T Health Care BS via ECM)

Government-run doctors are striking for 5% raises during a worldwide recession.

Excerpt:

> Some 15,000 doctors across Germany are staging a walkout to press for higher pay and better working conditions, a union said on Monday.
>
> Doctors at about 200 public clinics in most German states were on strike and 4,000 gathered for a protest in Munich, the Marburger Bund union said in a statement.
>
> The walkout is scheduled to last all week, but the union stressed it could continue indefinitely if the towns and cities running the clinics don't make a better offer.
>
> […]The 700 clinics run by towns and cities represent about one-third of all German hospitals and employ 55,000 doctors.

Gee, I wonder what would happen if private and church-run companies went on strike? Oh wait. That would never happen since they would be out of business in a moment. Maybe we shouldn't have government-run health care… it's bad for consumers.

Canada

From the Calgary Herald.

New political party in Alberta has dynamite policies!

Excerpt:

> Wildrose Alliance party members approved some controversial resolutions Saturday at their party convention, including allowing workers to opt out of unions and examining a provincial police force, but they left other hot button issues on the table.
>
> Resolutions giving Albertans the unequivocal right to own firearms and support the development of nuclear power were both defeated.
>
> And more policies:
>
> - Whistleblower protection and better funding for the auditor general

> - Supporting *school choice* legislation that would let students attend school wherever they want and could open the door to more funding of private schools
> - More privately delivered health care
>
> Wow, too bad they had to throw out the guaranteed right to own firearms, but at least their hearts are in the right place. I wonder what Alberta is like? Do any of you live in Alberta? Can you leave me a comment?

Australia

From Investors Business Daily.

Australian Labor Party throws out crazy socialist leader.

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's surprise ouster by his own party Tuesday came with a teary farewell hailing his role in Australia's economy. Maybe it wasn't such a bright idea to imagine it was his golden goose.
>
> Seven months ago, nobody would have thought the well-liked socialist prime minister with less than three years in office would meet such an ignominious end, blubbering after he was thrown out by members of his own Labor Party Tuesday.
>
> […]It was a bad fall for the man dubbed Australia's Barack Obama.
>
> Like the latter, the youthful Rudd initiated costly health care, home weatherization, entitlement, and global warming pork barrel projects. In the process, he blew out the Australian budget.
>
> When the time came to pay the bill, he effectively committed political suicide by calling for a 40% tax on Aussie mining companies.
>
> […]When news of Rudd's tax hikes suggested a bid to expropriate companies' profits, the stock market took a beating.

Ooops. That's why it's a bad idea to let socialists run your government. I mean – it's a bad idea if you like having a job and being able to find a new job if you don't like the one you have or you get laid off.

United States

From the radically leftist Los Angeles Times. (H/T Newsbusters)

Welfare recipients using state-issued debit cards to withdraw money at casino ATMs.

Excerpt:

> The casinos are listed on a Department of Social Services website that allows welfare recipients to search for addresses of ATMs where they can withdraw cash provided under the Temporary Aid for Needy Families program. The monthly grant ranges up to $694; most of the ATMs impose a withdrawal limit of about $300 per day.

> […]The cash portion of California's welfare benefits comes from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Each year, California gets $3.7 billion from the federal government for the program, while state and local governments kick in an additional $2.9 billion.

Maybe it isn't a good idea for the state to transfer money away from people who create jobs to people who think that gambling is the equivalent of a job. And since federal money is being used to provide this welfare, I'm paying for it. Oh well. I didn't really need the money anyway. I'm sure that the people who voted for Obama got their warm fuzzy feeling for "helping the poor" – using my money.

That last article about the poor reminds me of something I read on The Bumbling Genius about how liberal elites view the poor. The solution is never bad character. The solution is always to give them more money.

Divorced father kept from seeing his own child for 15 months

June 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This news story is from the government-run CBC in Canada.

Excerpt:

> A divorced B.C. father who hasn't seen his young daughter for several months blames the family court system and is joining others in a call for change.
>
> "Before all this happened, my daughter had a great relationship with me," said Dieter Geesing. "I feel really helpless. This is not right."
>
> Geesing said his ex-wife has been allowed to bar him from his daughter because a court order requiring her to co-operate is unenforceable.
>
> "I love my child. It's not fair to her. You are cheating her of her childhood," he said tearfully. "This child has a right to interact with her father."
>
> Geesing is a forestry specialist and his daughter is his only child. He and his wife separated in 2008, when the girl was eight years old. Since then, he said, his wife has tried to shut him out of his daughter's life completely.
>
> […]A court order in June 2009 gave the parents joint guardianship, with the child's "primary residence" at her mother's home.
>
> […]The court also instructed the mother to pay for and attend counselling to help establish a "healthier" relationship between father and daughter. A letter from the counsellor to the judge shows Geesing's ex-wife has since failed to co-operate.
>
> […]Records show there have been no consequences for the child's mother. Geesing has been told he has no legal recourse but to go back to court to ask the judge for help, which could take several months.
>
> […]When contacted, Geesing's ex-wife refused comment. Her lawyer did not respond to messages.

I think that a lot of Christians are familiar with the pro-life view and the pro-marriage view, and maybe they could even defend them with arguments and evidence. But for some reason, these father's rights issues have not really been viewed as the same kind of injustice. I'll bet that the mother in this case knew that the laws would not be enforced against her – that she would not be held to account for acting selfishly and maliciously. This lack of enforcement undoubtedly encourages more women to divorce their husbands and destroy the lives of their children.

Here"s a video I found about the Canadian divorce industry:

I also note that my favorite Canadian MP Maurice Vellacott has introduced a bill at the federal level to fix this problem. He is a Conservative Party MP.

Why “a woman’s right to choose” causes men to refuse to marry

June 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby concerned about not having a father

I found this post on RuthBlog, which discusses an article from the centrist Manhattan Institute on artificial insemination and single motherhood. It’s by Kay Hymowitz, who I agree with on many things, but not everything. This article was fairly good and it forms a good platform for me to make some comments below on the notion of “a woman’s right to choose”.

What are feminist scholars writing about artificial insemination?

Kay writes:

> AI’s potential for deconstructing the family has not been lost on radical feminists. In *Baby Steps: How Lesbian Alternative Insemination Is Changing the World*, Amy Agigian, a sociology professor at Suffolk University in Boston, observes: “Lesbian appropriation of medical technology (AI) that was intended to shore up nuclear families” has “radically challenge[d] the power structure, assumptions, and presumed ‘naturalness’ of major social institutions.” AI promotes a “postmodern family form that emphasizes affinity over biology and (patri)lineage.” For thinkers like Agigian, one of AI’s greatest benefits is that it dethrones what Canadian feminist Kathryn Pauly Morgan calls PIVMO (penis in vagina with male orgasm). Postmodern anthropologists studying reproduction technology—and there are enough of them to be producing a steady stream of volumes with titles like

> *Conceiving the New World Order*—have joined in, arguing that the whole idea of kinship based on sexual procreation is a Western construct, happily on its way out.
>
> Highly credentialed mainstream experts are also taking a take-'em-or-leave-'em approach to dads. There was Louise Silverstein and Carl Auerbach's infamous "Deconstructing the Essential Father," a 1999 *American Psychologist* article arguing that "neoconservative social scientists" who cautioned against the fatherless family simply wanted to uphold "male power and privilege." More recently, Peggy Drexler, an assistant professor at Weill Medical College of Cornell University and a board member of New York University's Child Study Center, has made a similar case in *Raising Boys Without Men: How Maverick Moms Are Creating the Next Generation of Exceptional Men*. Drexler announces that she herself is raising two children with her husband of 30-plus years, but one has to wonder whether her book isn't a silent cry for help. Her index under "fathers" includes: "absent, after divorce," "destructive qualities of," "spending limited time with children." "In our society, often we idealize and elevate the role of father in a boy's life without giving credence to the fact that actual fathers can be destructive and a boy may be better off without his father," she informs us. In Drexler's view (spoiler alert for Mr. Drexler), dadless boys are actually *better*, more sensitive and more "exceptional."

Keep in mind that research like this is taxpayer-funded – aspiring fathers who are busy working and saving for families they will struggle to support are paying the salaries and scholarships of these feminist scholars. And the research of these feminist scholars becomes the basis of policies like the one being pushed by Sue Leather in the UK, to provide taxpayer-funded artificial insemination to any woman who wants to have a child.

But what do ordinary women think of artificial insemination?

Kay explains:

> More ordinary "choice mothers," as many single women using AI now call themselves, are usually not openly hostile to fathers, but they boast a language of female empowerment that implicitly trivializes men's roles in children's lives. The term "choice mothers" frames AI as a matter of women's reproductive rights. Only the woman's decision making—or intention—carries moral weight. Similarly, advocates often cite the benefits of single motherhood's freedom from "donor interference." "Single moms avoid the need to discuss and negotiate around key parenting issues," one Toronto social worker told iParenting Media. "She can shape a child in her own unique vision."
>
> And in the same choice-trumps-everything spirit, choice mothers emphasize that they *choose* their kids. All the planning and deliberation that they've got to go through to have children, they suggest, might make them better parents than those who just "breed." Their kids are "wanted children," observes sociologist Judith Stacey. The implication that sexual intercourse brings forth hordes of

> unwanted, unloved children, while AI produces a chosen elite, sometimes hangs in the air.

As you know we have tons of statistics showing that children raised without a father suffer enormously. But now some people seem to be saying that a woman has a right to choose to have a baby who will grow up without a father.

Well, what is a woman's right to choose, really? It seems to be used in a lot of scenarios. It's a woman's right to choose to kill an unborn child, which has happened over 40 million times in the United States so far. It's also a woman's right to choose to destroy her child's future by depriving that child of a father. It's a woman's right to choose to have drunken hook-up pre-marital sex with scores of promiscuous alpha males who have no ability or willingness to be husbands or fathers. It's a woman's right to choose to unilaterally divorce a man she freely committed to love for life, so she can steal his house and much of his future income. It's a woman's right to choose to work full-time and to abandon her children to day care and schools that discriminate against boys. It's a woman's right to choose to have sex with a man (or several men), then to accuse him (or them) of rape because she doesn't want her reputation ruined. It's a woman's right to put on weight after marriage, and then to have her husband arrested for "verbal abuse" when he asks her to slim down. And so on.

That article caused me to think a lot about that phrase "a woman's right to choose". And it seems to me that there is a common core to the examples of a woman's right to choose that I listed above. What the phrase really means is that a woman has a right to choose to selfishly pursue her own happiness regardless of the effects on the people who love her and depend on her. It also means that a woman should never be judged or held accountable for the destruction she causes. And it also means she can offload the financial costs of her own choices onto taxpayers who have no choice but to pay for the damage she causes. And it also means she can blame men for all of the obvious and predictable consequences of her own selfish and irrational behavior.

And how do men respond to this? Well, men know that marriage requires both partners to love each other and the children unselfishly. Men know that marriage is about two people growing to be less selfish and less irresponsible. And so women who believe in "a woman's right to choose" are not qualified to marry or raise children. And this is why men do not commit to marriage any more. We would like to marry, and raise children. But we can't find anyone suitable for marriage. And even if we found a decent unmarried woman from the 23% who did not vote for Obama, there is the feminist state – courts, schools, etc. – to contend with, which is firmly committed to "a woman's right to choose". The government has enormous power to regulate men, marriage and parenting – so there is really no hope at all. Men will have to wait until women come to their senses and stop voting to replace men with the government.

UPDATE: The public-funding of invitro fertilization is happening faster than I thought, at least in the UK. Check out this article from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via Head Noises)

Related posts

- Feminist politican wants UK government to provide free IVF
- New talks on marrriage by Jennifer Roback Morse and Maggie Gallagher
- Are elderly women who have babies through IVF being selfish?
- Why two-parent families are better for children
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- What causes single motherhood, and how are children affected?
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day

Obama picks opponent of immigration enforcement for key role at ICE

June 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Fox News. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has tapped an outspoken critic of immigration enforcement on the local level to oversee and promote partnerships between federal and local officials on the issue.
>
> Harold Hurtt, a former police chief in Houston and Phoenix, has been hired as the director for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Office of State and Local Coordination. Starting July 6, Hurtt will supervise outreach and communication between ICE, local law enforcement agencies, tribal leaders and representatives from non-governmental organizations.
>
> […]But as a police chief, Hurtt was a supporter of "sanctuary city" policies, by which illegal immigrants who don't commit crimes can live without fear of exposure or detainment because police don't check for immigration papers.
>
> He also, during his tenure as Houston police chief, criticized ICE's key program that draws on local law enforcement's support.
>
> […]Critics say his pro-immigration policies enabled illegal immigrants to kill two police officers and seriously injure another in Phoenix before he left in 2005 and to kill an officer in Houston before he retired in 2009.
>
> The widow of one of the officers, Rodney Johnson, who was fatally shot by an illegal immigrant with a long criminal record, is suing Hurtt for enacting policies that she says led to his death.

Border enforcement is a legitimate function of the federal government. I think it's ironic that Obama drops the ball on national security, foreign policy and border security, but has the nerve to insert the federal government in places it should never be – like health care.

Fortunately, Arizona governor Jan Brewer is getting traction out of these blunders:

The Republicans should make border enforcement an issue in the next election cycle.

How Obama's environmentalism caused 1000 jobs to be outsourced

June 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> Up to 1,000 jobs at Bucyrus International Inc. and its suppliers could be in jeopardy as the result of a decision by the U.S. Export-Import Bank, funded by Congress, to deny several hundred million dollars in loan guarantees to a coal-fired power plant and mine in India.
>
> About 300 of those jobs are at the Bucyrus plant in South Milwaukee, where the company has 1,410 employees and its headquarters. The remaining jobs are spread across 13 states, including Illinois, Minnesota and Indiana.
>
> On Thursday, the Export-Import Bank denied financing for Reliance Power Ltd., an Indian power plant company, effectively wiping out about $600 million in coal mining equipment sales for Bucyrus, chief executive Tim Sullivan said.
>
> The fossil fuel project was the first to come before the government-run bank since it adopted a climate-change policy to settle a lawsuit and to meet Obama administration directives.
>
> "President Obama has made clear his administration's commitment to transition away from high-carbon investments and toward a cleaner-energy future," Export-Import Bank Chairman Fred Hochberg said in a statement. "After careful deliberation, the Export-Import Bank board voted not to proceed with this project because of the projected adverse environmental impact."

Ed Morrissey writes:

> This decision won't stop one carbon molecule from hitting the air. In fact, it will likely make carbon emissions worse. India will look for other vendors to supply the equipment, probably from neighboring Russia or China, as they will continue to build and operate the plant. Both nations compete in the same marketplace as Bucyrus, but they don't work as cleanly as the American company does, which means the end result will be lower efficiency and more pollution.
>
> Democrats like Obama keep talking about *eeeeeevil* corporations that export jobs overseas to save costs rather than keep them in the US. Well, Obama and his Congress just sent 1,000 jobs overseas — jobs Americans lost, and jobs that either Russian or Chinese workers will get instead. And instead of bankrupting this new coal plant, they just made it dirtier. Good job!

When you attack corporations, you lose jobs. It's that simple. Families are going to suffer for Obama's climate change delusions. Let's hope that the voters of Wisconsin have

learned their economics lesson.

WORLD magazine's book of the year is "The Battle"

June 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article from WORLD magazine is here. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

The book is called "The Battle: How the Fight Between Free Enterprise and Big Government Will Shape America's Future".

Excerpt:

> *The Battle* then goes beyond money to note that, "The main issue in the new American culture struggle between free enterprise and statism is not material riches—it is human flourishing." Brooks notes that "the 30 percent coalition charges the majority with money-grubbing selfishness" but is itself "fundamentally materialistic." Leftists "believe that it should make no difference whether income comes from redistribution and government edict or from enterprise and excellence as judged by the free market. This is an ideology driven by raw materialism."
>
> Brooks emphasizes the differences in worldview: "In contrast, the 70 percent majority maintains a worldview that is primarily nonmaterialistic. It understands money as just a proxy measure of true prosperity and personal fulfillment. It emphasizes creativity, meaning, optimism, and control in one's own life and seeks to escape from under the heavy hand of the state. . . . When we reduce the idea of work to nothing more than a means of economic support, we strip it of its transcendental meaning in our lives." Brooks argues that productive work is crucial to happiness: "Americans prefer to find meaning in their jobs rather than through their after-work pursuits."
>
> […]That leads to a political plank for the present: Since the 30 percenters "have concealed the central pillar of their ideology—income equality—under a misleading definition of fairness," the rest of us should "expose this fact and reclaim the language of fairness for the free enterprise system." It's vital to make distinctions: "Legal equality, political equality, religious equality—almost all Americans would agree that these values are vital to our nation. But equality of income? That's a fundamentally different kind of equality." We want fair trials but not a right to be declared innocent. We want all people to have the right to vote but not "the right to see their chosen candidate elected to office."
>
> Brooks notes that the 30 percent coalition's use of the word "fairness" is duplicitous: "It implies that equality of outcome is a core American principle, when in fact what Americans believe in is equality of opportunity and the potential to earn success." He is right to insist that the 70 percent coalition cannot cede to the minority the fairness issue and merely argue for free enterprise on the basis of economic efficiency: "Fairness should not be a 30 percent trump card but rather their Achilles' heel. Equality of income is not fair."

> A fair system rewards hard work and excellent performance, and gives people on the bottom a chance to rise not by bringing down the top but by striving for excellence.

I heard Arthur Brooks being interviewed about the book on Dennis Prager's show. And I read a chapter by Brooks in that "Indivisible" booklet put out by the Heritage Foundation. So he is a recognized conservative.

Muddling linked to some must-read and must-listen interviews that I will be looking at tonight (Monday). If they are good, I'll link to them for Tuesday.

Left-leaning US Supreme Court curtails religious liberty on campus

June 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T Family Research Council)

Excerpt:

> An ideologically split Supreme Court ruled Monday that a law school can legally deny recognition to a Christian student group that won't let gays join, with one justice saying that the First Amendment does not require a public university to validate or support the group's "discriminatory practices."
>
> The court turned away an appeal from the Christian Legal Society, which sued to get funding and recognition from the University of California's Hastings College of the Law. The CLS requires that voting members sign a statement of faith and regards "unrepentant participation in or advocacy of a sexually immoral lifestyle" as being inconsistent with that faith.
>
> But Hastings, which is in San Francisco, said no recognized campus groups may exclude people due to religious belief or sexual orientation.
>
> The court on a 5-4 judgment upheld the lower court rulings saying the Christian group's First Amendment rights of association, free speech and free exercise were not violated by the college's nondiscrimination policy.
>
> […]Justice Samuel Alito wrote a strong dissent for the court's conservatives, saying the opinion was "a serious setback for freedom of expression in this country."
>
> "Our proudest boast of our free speech jurisprudence is that we protect the freedom to express 'the thought that we hate,'" Alito said, quoting a previous court decision. "Today's decision rests on a very different principle: no freedom for expression that offends prevailing standards of political correctness in our country's institutions of higher learning."
>
> […]Justice John Paul Stevens was even harsher, saying while the Constitution "may protect CLS's discriminatory practices off campus, it does not require a public university to validate or support them."
>
> Stevens, who plans to retire this summer, added that "other groups may exclude or mistreat Jews, blacks and women — or those who do not share their contempt for Jews, blacks and women. A free society must tolerate such groups. It need not subsidize them, give them its official imprimatur, or grant them equal access to law school facilities."

It should be noted that Sam Alito is a *George W. Bush appointee*, as was John Roberts. Stevens is widely regarded as the second most liberal Justice on the SCOTUS, with Ruth

Bader-Ginsburg who wrote for the majority being the most liberal.

How did the Supreme Court become so liberal? Well, because a majority Christian country voted in Presidents who appointed liberal judges. I have had Christians whom I respect and admire, who love free speech, tell me that they valued things like universal health care, social welfare programs for single mothers and public education. If you want a secular government to take over things in private industry, so that the government has a monopoly funded by mandatory tax collection from Christians, then you get a secular Supreme Court. A secular Supreme Court has no respect for your religious liberty. And the Democrats are the party of secularism. A vote for Democrats is a vote against religious liberty. A vote against the public practice of Christianity.

If you young Christians are looking for something to do, why not get your law degrees and join the ADF or the HSLDA? And I am especially talking about you homeschoolers. Don't homeschool yourselves out of a position of influence. If you want to keep your right to be a Christian in public, you're going to have to fight for those rights. Because standing apart from the academy is equivalent to giving up your rights. You better have a plan to go to college, and I do mean a good college, and grad school after that. No exceptions.

By the way, you can learn more about Barack Obama's appointee to the Supreme Court. She is going to be FAR WORSE than John Paul Stevens. And again, lots of Christians voted for Obama and thus will cause a loss of religious liberty. Obama has already passed laws that restricted Christians from being as free as they were under Bush, not the least of which is the ability not to be complicit in funding the Big Abortion industry.

The case against Elena Kagan, Obama's Supreme Court nominee

June 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

We know she cut corners in order to preserve partial-birth abortions. Vast majorities of the American public oppose partial-birth abortion, which involves crushing the skull of a partially born baby and which the late Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan characterized as, for all intents and purposes, open "infanticide." Yet when serving as a legal adviser to former President Bill Clinton, Ms. Kagan deliberately withheld from the president a finding by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists that partial-birth abortion is virtually never "the least risky, let alone the 'necessary,' approach." As accurately summarized by the National Right to Life Committee, the result was this: "Ms. Kagan played a key role in keeping the brutal partial-birth abortion method legal for an additional decade."

We know she is willing to undercut First Amendment free speech for political purposes. Ms. Kagan argued before the Supreme Court that the law should be read to allow the government to prohibit the publication of political pamphlets. In a nation stirred to its own founding by political pamphlets such as "Common Sense" and "The Federalist Papers," this is an extremely disturbing position. Ms. Kagan also has written of the benefits of "redistribution of expression," and has written that speech rights are to be "dol[ed] out" as a "favor" from government rather than being pre-existing rights that government cannot take away. She has argued that government would be justified in "disfavoring [an] idea [to] 'unskew,' rather than skew, public discourse."

Read the whole thing.

Related posts

- Obama's Supreme Court nominee gave money to pro-abortion group
- Obama's pick to replace Justice Stevens is pro-abortion

Battle escalates over homeschooled child seized by Swedish government

June 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the HSLDA. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> On June 25, attorneys with the Home School Legal Defense Association and Alliance Defense Fund filed an application with the European Court of Human Rights asking it to hear the case of a 7-year-old boy seized by Swedish authorities because his parents homeschool.
>
> "We are gravely concerned about this case because of the threat it represents to other homeschooling families," said Mike Donnelly, staff attorney for HSLDA and one of nearly 1,700 attorneys in the ADF alliance. "In response to our inquiries, Swedish authorities have cited the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child to explain and defend their actions. If the U.S. were to ever ratify this treaty, as the White House and some members of Congress desire, then this sort of thing could occur here," he added.
>
> Swedish authorities forcibly removed Domenic Johansson from his parents, Christer and Annie Johansson, in June 2009 from a plane they had boarded to move to Annie's home country of India. The officials did not have a warrant nor have they charged the Johanssons with any crime. The officials seized the child because they believe homeschooling is an inappropriate way to raise a child and insist the government should raise Domenic instead. Social services authorities have placed Domenic in foster care as well as a government school and are only allowing Christer and Annie to visit their son for one hour every five weeks.

Let this be a lesson to all you homeschoolers. Either you are going to have an influence on the world or the world is going to have an influence on you. And whatever you do, don't think that you can be a social conservative without being a fiscal conservative. If you vote for big government because you like universal health care, then you are voting against your own liberty. Big government means small persons.

My advice is to get a college degree and go to grad school. And remember where you came from when you have influence to do something about it.

Mark Steyn asks whether Fox News is more biased than CBC or BBC

June 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Maclean's magazine.

You all remember that I had written about how a Quebec news media billionaire was contemplating the launch of a center-right news network in Canada, modeled off of Fox News? Well, guess what? The government-run CBC and the government-run university leftist professors are not pleased.

Mark Steyn explains:

> Meanwhile, back at the CBC, Don Newman explains it for us: "Fox News has been hugely polarizing. It specializes in drive-by attacks and misrepresentations, and is positively Orwellian at times, claiming to be 'fair and balanced' while implying that its competitors aren't.
> "The reality is that it mainly spews out propaganda that is dangerously misleading and often factually wrong."
>
> Again: example? Just one?
>
> Now I'm not a responsible, objective, neutral journalist like Mr. Newman. But even we hyperventilating schoolyard bullies spewing to the converted and debasing all others know enough about passing ourselves off as journalists to be aware that you can't just declare things to be so without producing some evidence thereof. And yet Messrs. Dornan and Newman spend, between them, 2,000 words doing just that. Surely with so many "drive-by attacks" and so much Orwellian bombast to choose from, it would be the work of moments to produce some devastating sound bite by this or that right-wing blowhard. Otherwise, it risks looking a bit like—how would one put it?—a "positively Orwellian" "drive-by attack" by someone "claiming to be fair and balanced" while insisting his competitors aren't.

And what about the BBC?

> A couple of weeks ago, the BBC's so-called "Ethical Man" Justin Rowlatt presented an analysis of professor James Lovelock's assertion that "climate change" is so serious a crisis that it "may be necessary to put democracy on hold." As a BBC host, Mr. Rowlatt is scrupulous not to have any views of his own; he merely presents those of others—and, as he put it, "there is a growing view that mitigating climate change means we have to change our view of democracy."
>
> Really? That view is "growing"? Certainly in the BBC green room. Six of the seven experts interviewed by Justin Rowlatt were in favour of suspending democracy—i.e., fascism. But don't worry: it's to save the environment, so it's

> eco-fascism, which has a nicer ring, doesn't it? The show concluded with Mayer Hillman of the Policy Studies Institute insisting that "the condition of the planet for future generations is more important than the retention of democratic principles." The BBC, paid for by the citizenry, has just broadcast a lavishly produced advertorial for totalitarianism.

It's worth a read. Fox News dominates the cable news ratings race – no other network comes close.

Is Bart Ehrman interested in encouraging critical thinking?

June 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From one of my favorite historians Darrell Bock. (H/T Lex Communis)

Basically, Ehrman in one of his widely-used books, gives a case against Mark being the author of the gospel of Mark, but he doesn't take into account the criterion of embarrassment, which is one of the ways you can decide if historical claims are accurate. If a claim or tradition embarrasses the author of the tradition or claim, then it's likely to be true. For example, the discovery of the empty tomb by women is very likely to be authentic, because the testimony of women was not highly regarded in that time and place. The church would not have invented female discoverers of the empty tomb – because it made their witness less effective.

Darrell Bock writes:

> I am quite aware that many think the internal evidence is against such an authorship claim for Mark (and Ehrman does present those arguments). Those arguments can be addressed. So given a fair debate over the issues that lead one to think about who wrote a gospel, here is a point the claim Mark did not write the gospel has to deal with. What commends Mark as the author, if we are going to simply pick someone to enhance the reputation of a gospel when no one supposedly who knows the author is (which is what the alternative view claims is the situation)? What is Mark's reputation? He failed to survive the first missionary journey and caused a split between Paul and Barnabas according to Acts. So how does randomly attaching his name to the book enhance that gospel's credibility? Such a theory does not work here.
>
> Mark's reputation, such as it was, on its own does not enhance the credibility of the work. More than that, the tradition also consistently associated Peter with Mark, so why was this gospel not simply called the Gospel of Peter, if one is free to name any author the church could choose? Given a choice between Peter and Mark on the basis of reputation, Peter would be the obvious choice.
>
> Something else must be at work, namely, a tradition careful about who it called an author, naming someone who in this case had an otherwise less than stellar resume. Arguments like the ones I just noted go completely ignored in his volume (and these are fair historical questions). So user beware that if you are being asked to use this text in a college class, some key points are not even being raised.

What I like about this is that I know Lex Communis is a Catholic blog, yet here he is citing Darrell Bock, an evangelical Christian! That's good.

Actually, the Lex Communis post says:

> I originally like Bart Ehrman's work. I thought that his courses on the Teaching Company were very good. However, as I've listened to Ehrman's popular stuff, such as his debates and interviews, I've come to wonder how much I can trust Ehrman. Simply put, Ehrman says stuff that he knows is either overstated or wrong.
>
> It's not just me who says this. William Lane Craig points out that there is a "Good Bart" and a "Bad Bart." "Bad Bart" will make the claim in popular circles that there are more errors in the Bible than there are words, and will foster the impression that we really can't know for sure what the original text said. However, when called out on it, "Good Bart" will forthrightly admit that we actually do know what the original text said and that the "errors" can be corrected or aren't all that significant.

I cataloged the actual "variants" of substance that Bart listed in a debate when Peter Williams challenged him on it, a while back. There were four variants, and none of them mattered. He's made a whole career on marginal trivia because bashing Christianity pays big bucks. He's not a scholar, he's a propagandist.

This is why it is important to watch people like Bart Ehrman, Dan Brown and Michael Moore in formal academic debates. These people aren't honest seekers of truth. And the only way to catch them in their misrepresentations and counterfactual assertions is to have someone there to challenge them.

Further study

The top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Three debates where you can see this play out:

- Craig Evans and Bart Ehrman
- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Extra stuff

A lecture on Bart Ehrman by William Lane Craig.

How environmental regulations hinder clean-up of oil spill

June 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My Pet Scape-Goat
From the Financial Post. (H/T Ace of Spades via ECM)

Excerpt:

> **Why does neither the U.S. government nor U.S. energy companies have on hand the cleanup technology available in Europe? Ironically, the superior European technology runs afoul of U.S. environmental rules.** The voracious Dutch vessels, for example, continuously suck up vast quantities of oily water, extract most of the oil and then spit overboard vast quantities of nearly oil-free water. **Nearly oil-free isn't good enough for the U.S. regulators, who have a standard of 15 parts per million — if water isn't at least 99.9985% pure, it may not be returned to the Gulf of Mexico.**
>
> When ships in U.S. waters take in oil-contaminated water, they are forced to store it. As U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen, the official in charge of the clean-up operation, explained in a press briefing on June 11, "We have skimmed, to date, about 18 million gallons of oily water–the oil has to be decanted from that [and] our yield is usually somewhere around 10% or 15% on that." In other words, U.S. ships have mostly been removing water from the Gulf, requiring them to make up to 10 times as many trips to storage facilities where they off-load their oil-water mixture, an approach Koops calls "crazy."

Here's a recent update from Jim Hoft at Gateway Pundit.

Excerpt:

** The feds only accepted assistance from 5 of 28 countries a month after the disaster.

** It took the Obama Administration 53 days to accept help from the Dutch and British.
** It took them 58 days to mobilize the US military to the Gulf.
** The feds shut down crude-sucking barges due to fire extinguisher concerns.
** The Obama Administration ignored oil boom manufacturers that have miles of product stockpiled in their warehouses.
** They only have moved 31 of 2,000 oil skimmers to the disaster area off of Florida.
** Florida hired an additional 5 skimmer boats to operate off its coast due to federal inaction.
** There are no skimmer boats off the coast of Mississippi.
** The massive A-Boat skimmer won't be allowed to join the cleanup effort until the Coast Guard and the EPA figure out whether it meets their standards.
** The feds shut down sand berm dredging off the Louisiana coast.
** The president continues to hit the golf course, ball games, hold BBQ's and party while the crude oil washes up on shore.

I thought that Mr. "A-Unicorn-In-Every-Pot" was going to cool the Earth and make the oceans stop their rising or whatever… Beh! He can't even fix this oil spill!

The public sector is gaining jobs as the private sector loses jobs

June 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From economist Veronique de Rugy at The Corner (National Review). (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Here's her graph:

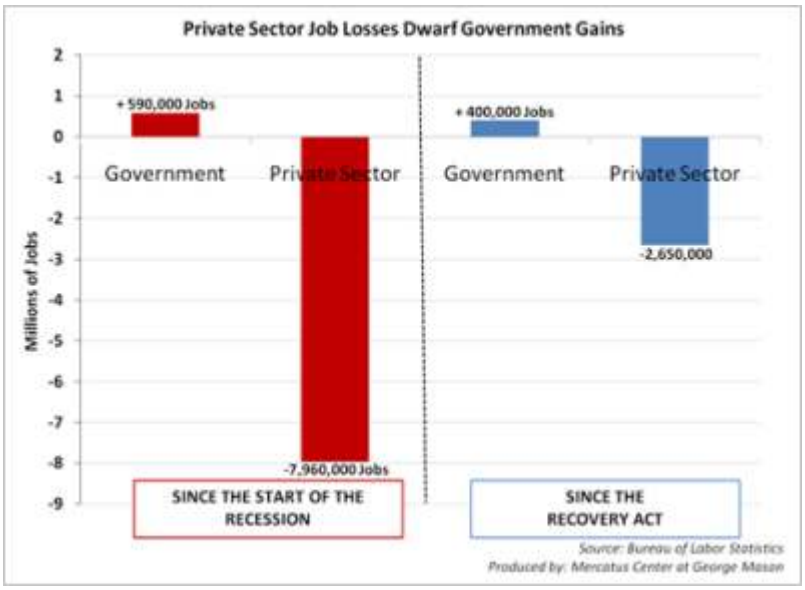

Click for larger version

She writes:

> Since the beginning of the recession (roughly January 2008), some 7.9 million jobs were lost in the private sector while 590,000 jobs were gained in the public one. And since the passage of the stimulus bill (February 2009), over 2.6 million private jobs were lost, but the government workforce grew by 400,000.

Jim Hoft of Gateway Pundit has this graph of the average unemployment rate under Bush and Obama.

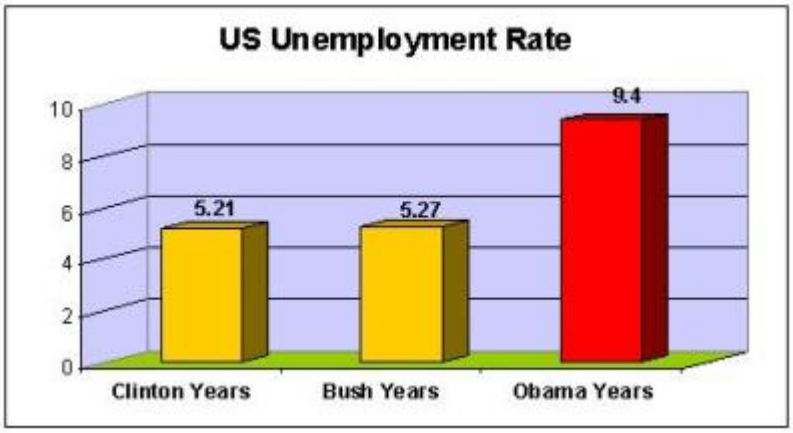

Obama is the worst President ever!

Keep in mind that Democrats were in control of the House and Senate starting in January of 2007. That means that all the spending was theirs from that point on – Bush just had

no public support to cut spending and veto things like TARP. If we take out 2008, his unemployment rate would be much lower.

I know that all the young people seem to really like socialism. I hope they also like the taste of leaves and grass. Because that's all they'll be able to afford if this keeps up! The poor little lemmings – believing everything their sheltered government-school educators told them about the way the world works. I wonder if the little rascals know who Jimmy Carter is?

Obama enlists radical groups and labor unions to push for amnesty

June 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the lefty AP. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama is enlisting activists and labor leaders in a push for comprehensive immigration legislation that will showcase Republican opposition and include a speech by the president.
>
> The strategy was discussed during a meeting Monday by a range of prominent labor leaders and activist groups. Participants said Obama reiterated his support for immigration legislation but noted the political realities that have stalled it in Congress.
>
> Latino leaders say they will work in coming months to pressure Republicans to give way and support an immigration bill — and make opponents pay at the ballot box if they don't.
>
> "We're going to make absolutely crystal clear who's at fault here," said Eliseo Medina, a leader of the Service Employees International Union.

I hope these union people don't organize a mob to chant on my front lawn. They do things like that, you know. They're unions. That's what unions do. They march around and intimidate people. Sometimes they even beat people up.

Is having a burning bosom a good test for truth in religion?

July 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good post from Biola University professor Clay Jones.

He's talking about how Mormons embrace Mormonism because of a burning in their bosom. (A subjective feeling) In the quote below, I reproduce the main thrust of the post – which he makes as part of his conversation with some Mormon missionaries. If you ever run into Mormons, this might help you.

Excerpt:

> I pointed out that the Mormons base the truth of their religion on a subjective personal experience—namely, they base the truth of Mormonism on praying a prayer to ask God whether the Book of Mormon is trustworthy and if they get a warm feeling, which is described in some of their works a "a burning in the bosom," then they conclude that Mormonism is true. They agreed.
>
> I said that we evangelicals base our faith in historic Christianity on the evidence of Jesus being raised from the dead.
>
> […]But then I pointed out that the Mormons base their beliefs on a subjective personal experience that has led them to believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet, that historic Christianity is mistaken, that there was a great falling away, that there are many gods, that Mormons one day believe that they are going to become gods (just the males, actually), and that the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods still function today (they didn't disagree with even one word of this). I explained that you couldn't get any of these ideas from the New Testament.

He goes to explain why subjective experiences are unreliable for determining truth.

When facing Mormons, and other cults, I also argue against subjectivism. But I supplement that with evidence. For Mormons, I use scientific evidence for the creation of the universe out of nothing. Mormons think that the matter in the universe existed eternally. They don't accept the Big Bang theory! So you just roll through the scientific advances, show that the cause of the universe was non-physical, eternal, powerful and endowed with free will (to create an effect in time without antecedent conditions), and that's the end of that.

I think that people in cults like Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Science have similar ways of forming their beliefs. They just filter out evidence falsifying their religion. JWs made all kinds of silly predictions about the end of the world that are not true – they're false prophets, in other words. And Christian Science thinks that Jesus didn't actually die, which no credentialed historian believes. (Just like Islam)

UPDATE: ECM freaked out at me and he demands that I say that Mormons are my political allies on every issue. I just want to point out that this is true, although Mitt Romney is

nothing but a big fat RINO.

Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs

July 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Breitbart.

Excerpt:

> Venezuela's legislature has voted to nationalize 11 oil rigs owned by the US firm Helmerich & Payne.
>
> The rigs, located in Monagas, Anzoategui and Zulia states, will be taken over by state oil giant Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), the official news agency AVN said.
>
> PDVSA had asked the legislature controlled by supporters of leftist President Hugo Chavez to take over the rigs after the US firm declined to negotiate a new service contract, unlike 32 other foreign firms.
>
> The oil giant is South America's top oil producer.
>
> Since 2007 Caracas has nationalized companies in industries from oil to utilities, to telecoms, cement, steel and banking.

Speaking of Breitbart, do you all know the famous actor Michael Moriarty from the TV show "Law and Order"? He linked to me yesterday from Breitbart's Big Hollywood web site. Isn't that amazing! I think it's just by accident, I'm sure he isn't a regular reader.

UPDATE: Ooops almost forgot.

Hey Chavez! I bet that I can nationalize more private corporations than you can!

Actually there is a nice summary of Obama's demolition job on the economy that you can read in the Wall Street Journal. I liked it. Most of the stuff I blogged about already as it happened.

Related posts

- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Should Christians abandon changed-life evangelism?

July 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post by Biola University professor Clay Jones again.

Excerpt:

> One of the most common approaches to witnessing is to tell people how your life was transformed from awful to awesome. You know what I mean. Something like "before I was a Christian my marriage was on the rocks, I was depressed, was on the verge of being fired from my job, and wondered whether life was worth living. Once I became a Christian, however, my marriage improved, I started getting along better with my boss, and I'm happier." The idea behind this is that if you come to Jesus your life will get better here. I call it "improved lifestyle witnessing."
>
> Many Christians encourage this as a method of evangelism. After all, it is easy to do, it is something you can remember because it is about you, and it is irrefutable because you are telling people things that actually happened to you. As a method of evangelism then, what's not to like? Right?
>
> Wrong.

He then goes through a half-dozen or so problems with lifestyle evangelism.

Here's my favorites.

> First, consider that just about every cult and religion in the world does the same thing. How many cults or false religions say, "Come to us and your life will get worse"? Of course not! They promise a better life here.
>
> Second, postmodern hearers, who believe that all truths are small "t" truths, will receive this approach as "good, I'm glad that worked for you." And sometimes they will then add that what works for them is Baha'i, or Zen, or therapy, or Prozac, or "I get high on life" or "I don't need a crutch," and so on.

I don't think we should be selling Christianity as a means to make yourself happier in this life. I don't see many happy people in the New Testament – I see many joyful people suffering under harsh conditions. And if you substitute a changed life for apologetics, then I really think you've gone wrong. The gospel is always presented as a true solution to the problem of sin – never as a placebo to make us feel better. Either it's true or it isn't – whether it makes us "better people" or not is irrelevant.

Tom Sowell on gun control and judicial activism

July 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell

His latest column is here.

Excerpt:

> Now that the Supreme Court of the United States has decided that the Second Amendment to the Constitution means that individual Americans have a right to bear arms, what can we expect?
>
> Those who have no confidence in ordinary Americans may expect a bloodbath, as the benighted masses start shooting each other, now that they can no longer be denied guns by their betters. People who think we shouldn't be allowed to make our own medical decisions, or decisions about which schools our children attend, certainly are not likely to be happy with the idea that we can make our own decisions about how to defend ourselves.
>
> When you stop and think about it, there is no obvious reason why issues like gun control should be ideological issues in the first place. It is ultimately an empirical question whether allowing ordinary citizens to have firearms will increase or decrease the amount of violence.
>
> […]If the end of gun control leads to a bloodbath of runaway shootings, then the Second Amendment can be repealed, just as other Constitutional Amendments have been repealed. Laws exist for people, not people for laws.
>
> There is no point arguing, as many people do, that it is difficult to amend the Constitution. The fact that it doesn't happen very often doesn't mean that it is difficult. The people may not want it to happen, even if the intelligentsia are itching to change it.
>
> When the people wanted it to happen, the Constitution was amended 4 times in 8 years, from 1913 through 1920.

The whole point of strict gun control or lax gun control is to *reduce violent crime rates.* All

we have to do is look and see whether stricter gun control, like the UK handgun ban of 1997, raises or lowers violent crime rates. It's not for judges to make that assessment – it's for the people, and their legislators, to decide. I used to be a judicial activist supporter when I was younger. But not after I read Tom Sowell's "Conflict of Visions" book.

This point about judges interpreting the law also applies to businesses and capitalism. If judges can change the rules that businesses operate under arbitrarily, then fewer people will start businesses. It's bad enough that they have to put up with so many taxes and regulations. If one loopy judge can take away everything you own by legislating from the bench, then what is the point of even trying to start a business?

If you want jobs, you need small business. If you want small business, you need strict constructionist judges. If you want strict constructionist judges, you vote Republican. (And you get pro-life and pro-marriage for FREE!)

Thomas Sowell is my #1 favorite economist.

UPDATE: Hot Air wonders how the liberal SCOTUS guys can oppose the clear meaning of the Constitution so openly.

Walter Williams on the best place to be poor in the world

July 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams

His latest column is here.

Excerpt:

> Imagine you are an unborn spirit whom God has condemned to a life of poverty but has permitted to choose the nation in which to live. I'm betting that most any such condemned unborn spirit would choose the United States. Why? What has historically been defined as poverty, nationally or internationally, no longer exists in the U.S. Let's look at it.

And here's what he finds:

— Forty-three percent of all poor households actually own their own homes. The average home owned by persons classified as poor by the Census Bureau is a three-bedroom house with one-and-a-half baths, a garage and a porch or patio.

— Eighty percent of poor households have air conditioning. By contrast, in 1970, only 36 percent of the entire U.S. population enjoyed air conditioning.

— The typical poor American has more living space than the average individual living in Paris, London, Vienna, Athens and other cities throughout Europe. (These comparisons are to the average citizens in foreign countries, not to those classified as poor.)

— Nearly three-quarters of poor households own a car; 31 percent own two or more cars.

— Ninety-seven percent of poor households have a color television; over half own two or more color televisions.

— Seventy-eight percent have a VCR or DVD player; 62 percent have cable or satellite TV reception.

— Eighty-nine percent own microwave ovens, more than half have a stereo, and a more

than a third have an automatic dishwasher.

And he concludes:

> Yesterday's material poverty is all but gone. In all too many cases, it has been replaced by a more debilitating kind of poverty — behavioral poverty or poverty of the spirit. This kind of poverty refers to conduct and values that prevent the development of healthy families, work ethic and self-sufficiency. The absence of these values virtually guarantees pathological lifestyles that include: drug and alcohol addiction, crime, violence, incarceration, illegitimacy, single-parent households, dependency and erosion of work ethic. Poverty of the spirit is a direct result of the perverse incentives created by some of our efforts to address material poverty.

Instead of exporting foreign aid to poor nations, we should be investing and trading with them to encourage them to start businesses and hire people. We should also be exporting our Judeo-Chrsitian values and our economic/political views, e.g. – private property, capitalism, the Constitution, federalism,the rule of law, etc. Knowledge and good character are solutions to the problem of poverty – not wealth redistribution.

Walter Williams is my #2 favorite economist.

Research to help you understand the “hook-up” culture on campus

July 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This study is from the Institute for American Values. It was done by Elizabeth Marquardt, a political and religious liberal.

The PDF of study is here.

If you download the 88 page PDF, the first few pages are an executive summary.

I’d been exposed to this research before when I read Dr. Miriam Grossmann’s book “Unprotected”. (Boundless review here) I just got Dr. Miriam Grossmann’s new book “You’re Teaching My Child What?” and I also got Elizabeth Marquardt’s new book “Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce”. I guess that Grossmann is also liberal politically and religiously. I read these kinds of books so that I can constrain my choices based on the knowledge of the damage that sin causes – I can’t choose to be bad if I convince myself about how much it costs before the choice arises. Knowledge binds the will. And I want my will to be bound by knowledge. I want to take emotions and the desire for happiness here and now right out of my decision-making.

Anyway, there are a couple of things that really struck me about this IAV study on hooking-up.

First, this one from p. 15:

> A notable feature of hook ups is that they almost always occur when both participants are drinking or drunk.
>
> A Rutgers University student observed, “You always hear people say, oh my gosh, I was so drunk, I hooked up with so and so…” Perhaps not surprisingly, many noted that being drunk helped to loosen one’s inhibitions and make it easier to hook up. A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up. A Yale University student said, “Some people like hook up because they’re drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up.” A New York University student observed, “[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking.”
>
> A Rutgers University student commented, “If you’re drinking a lot it’s easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it’s kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don’t want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs.”
>
> Other women observed that being drunk gives a woman license to act sexually interested in public in ways that would not be tolerated if she were sober. For instance, a University of Michigan student said, “Girls are actually allowed to be a lot more sexual when they are drunk…”
>
> A University of Chicago junior observed, “One of my best friends… sometimes

> that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."
>
> Some reported that drinking had led them to do things they later regretted. A University of Virginia student said, "My last random hook up was last October and it was bad. I was drunk and I just regretted it very much."

And this one from p. 30 on the effects of hooking-up on their future commitments:

> A few women did see an unambiguous connection between present relationships and future marriage.
>
> […]Many women either saw little or no connection between present and future relationships, or their understanding of this connection was curiously flat. A student at New York University said, "[The present and the future are] connected because I will still have the same values and principles that I have now, but I just won't be single anymore."A number of women said that the present and the future are connected because whatever heartache or confusion they experience now gives them lessons for the future.
>
> A University of Michigan student said, "Early relationships prepare you for marriage because it's like, oh, what type of person do I want to be with? Oh, I've had these bad experiences. Or, I've learned from this relationship that I should do this and I shouldn't do this."
>
> A sophomore at Howard University said that "I am kind of learning from a lot of the mistakes that I have made." At a further extreme, some women saw their future marriage as the reason to experiment widely in the present. A Rutgers University student said,"I think hooking up with different people and seeing what you like and don't like is a good idea. Because eventually you're going to have to… marry someone and I'd just like to know that I experienced everything."
>
> Although it is admirable to take risks and learn from one's mistakes, these women would probably find it difficult to explain how having your heart broken a few or even many times in your early years — or trying to separate sex from feeling, as in hooking up — is good preparation for a trusting and happy marriage later on.

And on p. 42, we learn what women think marriage is and isn't for:

> For instance, in the on-campus interviews one student complained, "[With] marriage…you have to debate everything… Why do you need a piece of paper to bond a person to you? …But I know if I don't get married I'll probably feel like… [a] lonely old woman… If anything, I'd get married [because of] that."
>
> This student went on to say that she would be satisfied to live with a man, but added that, if the man was committed to her, he would offer to marry her, and that this was the kind of commitment that she wanted. A student at the University of Washington said,"I don't want to get married right after I graduate

> from college. I just think that would stunt my growth in every way that there is. I would like to be in a very steady, committed relationship with a guy."

And on p. 44, we learn that they like co-habitation, which increases the risk of divorce by about 50% (but they don't know *that*):

> In the national survey, 58 percent of the respondents agreed that "It is a good idea to live with someone before deciding to marry him." This belief often coexists with a strong desire to marry, because it was embraced by 49 percent of the respondents who strongly agreed that marriage was a very important goal for them.
>
> […]Women we interviewed on campus reflected a similar range of attitudes about cohabitation. Some women thought that cohabitation was a good way to test whether one could spend a lifetime with a potential partner. In such cases, women often cited fears of divorce as the reason for trying cohabitation first. A senior at the University of Washington said, "I kind of don't really see marriages work ever, so I want to make sure that everything's all right before [we get married]. I don't see how people can get married without living together because I know like I have a best friend and I live with her and we want to kill each other, like, every few months."
>
> Other women felt that, in an age of divorce, cohabitation was a preferable alternative to marriage. A student at New York University said, "You see so [many] people getting divorces… I just don't see the necessity [of marriage]." She went on to say, "I think that I don't have to be married to [the] person that I'm with…. You know like… Goldie Hawn [and Kurt Russell]? They're not married."

But let's get back to the drinking and the hook-up sex…

Once a woman abandons femininity for feminism, then sex is all that she can use to get noticed by a man. Men are like hiring managers, and courting is like a job interview for the job of marriage and mothering. If a woman tries to get the job by having sex with the interviewer, he isn't going to hire her since sex has nothing to do with the job. There are children involved, you know – he has to think of them when he makes the hiring decision. But women have been taught to think bad things about men (they're rapists) and marriage (it's slavery) by feminists – so they don't even try to understand men, or to respect men, or prepare their character for being a wife and mother. They just don't understand that hard work is needed to understand men and prepare for marriage.

In a previous post, I explained how feminists wanted to get women to drink like men, have sex like men, and to abolish courtship and marriage. Under the influence of feminism and Hollywood celebrities, women began to choose men to have sex with without any consideration of morality, religion, marriage, etc. They thought that sex was an easy way to trick a man into committing to them without having to treat him like a real person, or to take the demands of marriage and parenting seriously. (They have been taught to value education and careers over husbands and children, you understand). This

results in a cycle of binge-drinking, one-night-stands, cheating, co-habitating, breaking-up, stalking, aborting, etc., until the woman's ability to trust and love anyone but herself is completely destroyed. And yet these college women somehow believe this is "adventurous", that it makes them feel "sexy", and that the experience of being selfish and seeing the worst kind of men sinning somehow prepares them for marriage and motherhood.

Often, a young unmarried woman's biological father was NOT selected by her mother based on his ability to make commitments and moral judgments. He was selected because he was good-looking and would not judge the mother morally, nor impose his religion on her. But those very things that young unmarried women today seem to dislike most about men, because they fear rejection on moral and religious grounds, are exactly the things that make men good husbands and fathers. They don't want to be judged or led spiritually, so they choose immoral, non-religious men. Then they blame the men for acting immorally and irreligiously, and pass on their man-hating and man-blaming attitudes to their daughters, who are often raised without fathers thanks to poor choices by the mother.

Every young unmarried woman who chooses a bad man, and then has a bad experience with him is pushing away marriage with both hands. The more she destroys her ability to trust, love and care for others, the less she is able to be happy and effective in a marriage. Young unmarried women often choose bad men (men who are not interested in marriage or children) because they cannot be bothered with the demands to care or nurture a husband and children. They think those tasks detract from their selfish pursuit of education and career. Naturally, these relationships with bad men fail to result in good marriages. And that is why young unmarried women are voting to raise taxes and to empower government to replace men with social programs. They want to protect themselves from their own self-inflicted wounds – at taxpayer expense.

Calgary dad mourns daughter murdered by her stepfather

July 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Calgary Sun.

Excerpt:

> He barely knew his daughter Clare, having seen her only five times since the divorce.
>
> James Shelswell said he was looking forward to Clare growing older, and the far-off day when he might finally bond with the child he surrendered when she was only four months old.
>
> Instead, Shelswell will fly this week from Calgary to Abbotsford B.C., to attend Clare's funeral.
>
> On Sunday, Clare was murdered, her throat slashed open after an apparent domestic dispute between her mom and step-dad over how to discipline the kids.
>
> Peter Wilson, 29, is charged with killing his step daughter.
>
> And now, all that's left for her biological dad is to say goodbye to the stranger who was once his baby girl.
>
> "She didn't really know me — I'd seen her maybe five time in five years," said Shelswell.
>
> If his daughter dying in pain and terror at the hands of the man she knew as her dad wasn't devastating enough, Shelswell has been told [by his ex-wife] he's not welcome at the funeral.
>
> […]"I asked if she was in the room when it happened and why she didn't protect Clare — she said it happened in a different room, and I asked if my other daughter saw it. She said no."
>
> His ex, said Shelswell, then made it clear he is not welcome at Clare's private funeral service.

> "She said I shouldn't go to the funeral, and I have no rights to my kids," said Shelswell.

> […]In Calgary, Shelswell, who is re-married with two kids, is a man whose fury is mixed with remorse.He laments that he didn't have enough money to fight back with a lawyer, back when his wife took their Calgary-born daughters away to B.C.
>
> He says he settled into a pattern of paying child support, and looking forward to yearly visit with his girls — the last, a happy trip to Vancouver, included the aquarium and McDonald's.

This is my worst nightmare, but it illustrates the general truth that biological dads are the

least likely person to harm their own children, which I blogged about before. This paper from the Heritage Foundation cites a very interesting study that shows more about which who is really dangerous to children. Here's another paper that explains why marriages are the safest arrangements for women and children. The very institution that is under attack by third-wave feminists who abhor the "unequal" gender roles that emerge in marriage.

Here's a government report:

> **Mothers are almost twice as likely to be directly involved in child maltreatment as fathers.**
>
> […]Generally speaking, the same characteristics that make a man a good father make him less likely to abuse or neglect his children. Fathers who nurture and take significant responsibility for basic childcare for their children (e.g., feeding, changing diapers) from an early age are significantly less likely to sexually abuse their children.[35] These fathers typically develop such a strong connection with their children that it decreases the likelihood of any maltreatment.
>
> The involvement of a father in the life of a family is also associated with lower levels of child neglect, even in families that may be facing other factors, such as unemployment and poverty, which could place the family at risk for maltreatment.[36] Such involvement reduces the parenting and housework load a mother has to bear and increases the overall parental investments in family life, thereby minimizing the chances that either parent will neglect to care for or to supervise their children.
>
> On average, fathers who live in a married household with their children are better able to create a family environment that is more conducive to the safety and necessary care of their children. Consequently, children who live with their biological father in a married household are significantly less likely to be physically abused, sexually abused, or neglected than children who do not live with their married biological parents.

When feminists make fathers out to be monsters, and lobby for extremely liberal divorce laws enforced by extremely anti-male divorce courts, the result is that more children are assaulted, sexually-abused and even murdered at the hands of live-in boyfriends and stepfathers.

Sorry to all of my male readers who are honorable stepfathers, but the fact is that stepfathers on average are not as safe for children as biological fathers. And that's why we should not be encouraging the break-up of marriages with no-fault divorce laws and anti-male divorce courts. Women also need to be more careful about who they choose to have children with!

By the way, if you guys are looking for a great movie to watch that is extremely pro-fatherhood, watch "Taken" with Liam Neeson. Be warned, it is very mature subject matter. Definitely, definitely for grown-ups only. If you are a man, you will ADORE this

movie. Oh, and it’s not PC, so don’t watch it if you are all multicultural and moral relativistic.

Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer

July 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about new pro-life arguments

Story from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> **An abortion can triple a woman's risk of developing breast cancer in later life, researchers say.** A team of scientists made the claim while carrying out research into how breastfeeding can protect women from developing the killer disease. While concluding that breastfeeding offered significant protection from cancer, they also noted that the highest reported risk factor in developing the disease was abortion. Other factors included the onset of the menopause and smoking. **The findings, published in the journal Cancer Epidemiology, are the latest research to show a link between abortion and breast cancer.** The research was carried out by scientists at the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka. **It is the fourth epidemiological study to report such a link in the past 14 months, with research in China, Turkey and the U.S. showing similar conclusions.**
>
> […]There has been an 80 per cent increase in the rate of breast cancer since 1971, when in the wake of the Abortion Act, the number of abortions rose from 18,000 to nearly 200,000 a year.
>
> Earlier this year, Dr Louise Brinton, a senior researcher with the U.S. National

> Cancer Institute who did not accept the link, reversed her position to say she was now convinced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer by about 40 per cent.

Note that there were only 300 people in the new study, so it is a small study. The only reason that I blog this is because it confirms the Turkey study that I blogged on before, and the China study that I blogged about before, and the American study that I blogged about before.

There is an interesting comment on this story at Secondhand Smoke.

Here it is:

> But let me tell you, as a former trial lawyer, the potential is here for tobacco company-type litigation against certain groups if cancer info was suppressed.

That's from Discovery Institute fellow Wesley J. Smith, who majors in bioethics.

Should Iran really be on the UN Commission on the Status of Women?

July 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story from MKHammer in the Weekly Standard. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Sakineh Mohammadie Ashtiani, a 42-year-old mother of two, confessed to the crime of adultery in 2006 after being subjected to 99 lashes. She later recanted her statement, but was found guilty despite the fact that there were no witnesses to her adultery, as is supposed to be required in the Iranian justice system. Her conviction was upheld through all levels of the courts, which value a woman's testimony at only a fraction of a man's. Ashtiani will be put to death by stoning. She will be buried to her chest in the ground, at which point stones "large enough to cause pain but not so large as to kill her immediately" will be hurled at her head. The public will not be allowed to see the execution for fear of a backlash against leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
>
> The Islamic Republic of Iran was named to a four-year seat on the UN Commission on the Status of Women in April. In its capacity there, Iran will be part of the "principal global policy-making body" on women's rights. According to the UN, "the Commission also makes recommendations to the Council on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights."

I'm for capital punishment when it's warranted, but this is just ridiculous!

Look what the Independent Women's Forum says:

> "Article 74 of the Iranian penal code requires at least four witnesses — four men or three men and two women — for an adulterer to receive a stoning sentence, said Mina Ahadi, coordinator for the International Committee Against Stoning. But there were no witnesses in Ashtiani's case. Often, said Ahadi, husbands turn wives in to get out of a marriage."

I don't know why we as a nation don't denounce Iran when they treat women like this – and especially protest their appointment to this UN Commission on the Status of Women, even though the UN is an evil organization. The Iranian court gave this woman 99 lashes and forced her to confess to a crime she didn't even commit! That's coercion! Iran doesn't treat women fairly at all – look at those two Iranian Christian women they imprisoned just for being Christians. Imprisoning people just for their religion? That's not fair!

Check out this Conservative MP from Canada, Pierre Poilievre. He's talking about Coptic Christians being persecuted.

Here's another Conservative MP from Canada, Jason Kenney. He's talking about victims of

communist regimes.

Why can’t we do that? We’re the United States of America! Everyone expects us to be the good guys.

Washington Post blogger is an advisor for the Obama administration

July 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Big Journalism. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Ron Brynaert has a story over at his The Raw Story blog that reveals yet another denizen of the Old Media trying to be both a "journalist" and an operative of Barack Obama's administration. She is Patricia McGinnis, an unpaid advisor at the White House and also one of the contributors to the *Post*'s "On Leadership" blog.
>
> Once again we see the Old Media working hand-in-hand with the Obama administration and putting the lie to the idea of the "independent journalist" in traditional media outlets, this time with the *Washington Post*. Even worse than this collusion, though, is the fact that the *Post* somehow forgot to inform its readers of this little detail.
>
> […]While the position is unpaid, her work for Obama certainly would seem to be a pertinent fact that readers might want to know in order to assess the veracity of her work in the pages of the newspaper. Mysteriously, though, her work with Obama is not mentioned in her official bio on the *Washington Post*'s website.
>
> […]Just last month the *Post's* supposed conservative blogger, Dave Weigel, had to quit when it was revealed his personal politics were extremely leftist, although he had presented himself as a conservative to both the readers and the editorial board of the paper.

That's why newspapers are dying – they can't be relied on to be objective. It's just propaganda. If you don't have two people on opposite sides talking, then it's not objective.

Michele Bachmann on Fox News with Laura Ingraham

July 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two conservative women talking about politics.

And here they are at a rally in DC together.

Women: *this is what you do in order to attract men.*

And fire guns. Men like guns.

Movies for women to learn about men

By the way, I have been making up a list of movies for a young lady I really like.

Here's what I have so far:

- Rules of Engagement (Samuel L. Jackson)
- Bella
- Henry V (Kenneth Brannagh)
- The Lives of Others
- United 93
- Taken (Liam Neeson)
- Cinderella Man
- The Blind Side
- Cyrano de Bergerac (Gerard Depardieu)
- Amazing Grace (Ioan Gruffudd)
- Gettysburg
- We Were Soldiers
- Stand and Deliver
- Blackhawk Down
- The Pursuit of Happyness
- High Noon

She is sort of learning more about what men are supposed to be like and how to take care of them. You know what… lately, I have been thinking of what it is like when a woman really understands a man and supports him in being a good man. It really is a wonderful thing.

Samuel L. Jackson

Happy Independence Day 2010!

July 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

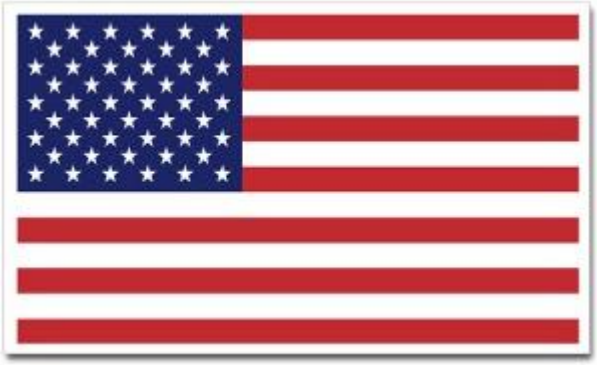

The Stars and Stripes

The Declaration of Independence

You can listen to conservative writer Scott Ott reading the Declaration of Independence here, and follow along with the complete text here.

The best book to read about the Revolutionary War is David McCullough's 1776, which I highly recommend. The audio book version is awesome.

George Washington and the American Revolution

Washington Crossing the Delaware

For those of you who know nothing about the United States, you should read the story of Washington crossing the Delaware. At this point in the Revolutionary War, the British commanders had achieved a stunning series of victories against the Americans. They had even sent word home to the King that the war was over, and that the Americans would be forced to surrender. But Washington did not give up. He attacked the British forces and took them by surprise – and he won the Battle of Trenton! That was the turning point of the war. There almost *never was* a United States of America – that's how close the revolution came to failing.

What's Great About America

Here is Dinesh D'Souza explaining What's Great About America and John Stossel's documentary on What's Great About America. (H/T Rational Theism)

Ronald Reagan vision of America

Ronald Reagan

Here is a portion of Ronald Reagan's farewell speech:

Excerpt:

> I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind it was a tall proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace, a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity, and if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That's how I saw it, and see it still.
>
> And how stand the city on this winter night? More prosperous, more secure, and happier than it was eight years ago. But more than that; after two hundred years, two centuries, she still stands strong and true on the granite ridge, and her glow has held steady no matter what storm. And she's still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home.

This is no ordinary nation.

Songs of America

Whenever I drive on long trips, I always practice singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "America the Beautiful".

Even if you are not an American, you can be an honorary American, just for today, if you sing the songs below. God knows that there are other people in the world that love freedom and look to the United States as the model.

If we fall now, then you other freedom-loving people abroad must be ready to pick up the torch!

United States Air Force

The Star Spangled Banner

Lyrics:

"Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country should leave us no more!
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave

O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!”

America the Beautiful

Lyrics:

“O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare of freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife.
Who more than self their country loved
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for halcyon skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the enameled plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee

Till souls wax fair as earth and air
And music-hearted sea!

O beautiful for pilgrims feet,
Whose stem impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till paths be wrought through
wilds of thought
By pilgrim foot and knee!

O beautiful for glory-tale
Of liberating strife
When once and twice,
for man's avail
Men lavished precious life!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till selfish gain no longer stain
The banner of the free!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till nobler men keep once again
Thy whiter jubilee!"

Here is my favorite version of America the Beautiful, sung by Ray Charles. This is the same version you hear on the Mark Levin show on Friday. Perfection.

Any more ideas?

Put your suggestions for more songs and speeches in the comments!

Remember to be grateful for the Founding Fathers, and other patriots, who risked everything for liberty in the Revolutionary war. Be grateful to those men and women still fighting abroad to keep those freedoms safe from evil. And most of all, be grateful to God that America is still the beacon of liberty.

Happy Independence Day!

Fox News documentary by John Stossel explains what’s great about America

July 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are all the parts of the documentary. (H/T Timmy from Rational Theism)

Here’s the quick summary of what the documentary is about.

Part 1 of 6.

Part 2 of 6.

Part 3 of 6.

Part 4 of 6.

Part 5 of 6.

Part 6 of 6.

Happy Independence Day!

Dinesh D’Souza gives an immigrant’s view of what’s great about America

July 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dinesh D'Souza

Here is the essay, which provides an immigrant’s perspective on America (Dinesh is the son of East Indian immigrants).

Excerpt:

> Is America worthy of a reflective patriotism that doesn’t mindlessly assert, “My country, right or wrong,” but rather examines the criticisms of America and finds them wanting? As an immigrant who has chosen to become an American citizen, I believe that it is. Having studied the criticisms of America with care, my conclusion is that the critics have a narrow and distorted understanding of America. They exaggerate American faults, and they ignore what is good and even great about America.
>
> The immigrant is in a good position to evaluate American society because he is able to apply a comparative perspective. Having grown up in a different society-in my case, Mumbai, India-I am able to identify aspects of America that are invisible to people who have always lived here. As a “person of color,” I am competent to address such questions as what it is like to be a nonwhite person in America, what this country owes its minority citizens, and whether immigrants can expect to be granted full membership in this society. While I take seriously the issues raised by the critics of America, I have also developed an understanding of what makes America great, and I have seen the greatness of America reflected in my life. Unlike many of America’s homegrown dissidents, I

> am also acutely conscious of the daily blessings that I enjoy in America.
> Here, then, is my list of what makes America great.

He focuses on the following areas:

- America’s Good Life
- Equality
- The Pursuit of Happiness
- The Ethics of Work
- Religious Liberty
- Ideals and Interests
- America’s Virtue

Read the whole thing. It’s long it’s similar to his book of the same name, but up to date.

CNN claims that the federal government is impeding Gulf spill news coverage

July 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Watch this video from left-wing CNN. (H/T Hot Air)

CNN is being blocked by the government from going down to the beaches to take pictures and film – so that they cannot convey the severity of the damage and the problems caused by the government and the Coast Guard dragging their feet in order to comply with red tape and regulations.

The Democrats are not really interested in solving the problem, they just want you to vote them. That's the only problem they're serious about solving.

Sean McDowell on whether Christians should embrace postmodernism

July 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article by Sean McDowell is here.

Excerpt:

> In Postmodern Youth Ministry, for example, Tony Jones argues that postmodernity is the most important culture shift of the past 500 years, upending our theology, philosophy, epistemology (how we know things), and church practice. It is an "earthquake that has changed the landscape of academia and is currently rocking Western culture." (p. 11). Thus, to be relevant in ministry today, according to Jones and other postmodernists, we must shed our modern tendencies and embrace the postmodern shift.
>
> For the longest time I simply accepted that we inhabit a postmodern world and that we must completely transform our approach to ministry to be effective today. But that all changed when I had the opportunity of hearing philosopher William Lane Craig speak at an apologetics conference not too long ago.
>
> […]In the introduction to Reasonable Faith, Craig provocatively claims, "Indeed, I think that getting people to believe that we live in a postmodern culture is one of the craftiest deceptions that Satan has yet devised" (p. 18). Accordingly, we ought to stop emphasizing argumentation and apologetics and just share our narrative. Craig develops this idea further:
>
> And so Satan deceives us into voluntarily laying aside our best weapons of logic and evidence, thereby ensuring unawares modernism's triumph over us. If we adopt this suicidal course of action, the consequences for the church in the next generation will be catastrophic. Christianity will be reduced to but another voice in a cacophony of competing voices, each sharing its own narrative and none commending itself as the objective truth about reality, while scientific naturalism shapes our culture's view of how the world really is (p. 18-19).
>
> **In a personal email, Craig relayed to me that he believes postmodernism is largely being propagated in our church by misguided youth pastors. While he meant the comment more to elicit a smile than to be taken as a stab in the back, I can't help but wonder if he is right.**

There was a podcast that Sean did a while back on the worldview of Christian youth, where he explains how they think that religious claims are all basically personal preferences, not real knowledge that can be reasoned about and supported by evidence. It really eats into their ability to act in Christian ways when they don't think Christianity is true.

My personal experiences with "Christian" postmodernism

Growing up, I was often confronted with the idea that God was not somehow insulated from logic and evidence. The main people who asserted that idea were the church leaders and campus club leaders. They were very skeptical of controversial doctrines like Hell, exclusive salvation, inerrancy and authorial intent. They didn't like the law of non-contradiction, and they didn't like historical or scientific evidence. Some others didn't even like the idea that the Bible could override their emotions and intuitions.

As I grew older, I began to uncover *why* the postmoderns in leadership believed that God is not bound by the laws of logic, and that evidence was not as authoritative as personal experiences and stories. It was because of their desire for popularity. They did not want to have to confront people with exclusive and judgmental Christian claims. They did not want to have defend orthodox Christianity as true, using logic and evidence. The leaders even attacked the people who tried to introduce thinking and reasoning about Christian claims.

Postmodern Christians want to be able say to offer Christianity as one choice in a buffet, with the goal of addressing people's felt needs. They say things like, "Christianity is true *for me*, and Hinduism is true *for you*", in order to be accepted. And they feel, emotionally and intuitively, that non-judmentalism and non-exclusivism *are right.* Postmodernism helps them to justify their focus on popularity and their refusal to learn apologetics. They don't want to learn facts, because they don't want to have to defend Christianity as being objectively true.

Postmodern Christians are opposed to the idea that Christianity is knowledge, because "knowing for certain" takes away their ability to have "wiggle-room" when they want to do what all the other people are doing. They want to be able to keep God at arms-length when he is morally demanding, while keeping him within arm's reach for emotional support, when needed – maybe just in private. God "exists" for postmoderns when they need comfort, and he doesn't "exist" when they want autonomy from the moral law.

Why is the left so angry with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin?

July 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann

Here is a perceptive column from Stuart Schneiderman.

Excerpt:

> Hot Republican women are a political issue, but they are also a cultural force. If that bastion of patriarchal oppression, the Republican party, is nominating more and more women, and being represented by more and more attractive women, what are the cultural consequences?
>
> It is worth mentioning, even if only in passing, that the hot Republican women in question are not in the same category as Paris Hilton and Lady Gaga. They do not represent the kind of hotness that plays well in music videos. They are adult women; they have husbands and families; they have worked hard on their careers and have garnered a measure of success.
>
> But they have done it without compromising their womanhood. None has ever pretended to be anything other than a woman.
>
> If you believe that the world of men can only accept women who leave their femininity at the door, then these Republican women are saying that you are wrong.
>
> Moreover, these women are not feminists. They are not leftist ideological zealots. They did not try to overthrow the patriarchy. They took the opportunities that were available, and they did not spend their time agitating about the

> opportunities that were not available. They competed and succeeded on the playing field that existed, and did not ask for special favors and dispensations because they were women. They did not spend their time airing grievances because they were too busy with their lives to involve themselves in such self-indulgent exercises.

That's why I keep posting videos of Republican women who are also mothers on this blog, like Michele Bachmann, Nikki Haley and Marsha Blackburn. It's important for women to understand that you can be a success in this world without neglecting your family, and without demanding that your alleged victim status be remedied by the coercive power of the state.

UPDATE: Governor Jan Brewer (Arizona) and Governor Linda Lingle (Hawaii) are also making news this week.

Please see below for links and videos about Michele Bachmann.

Campaign speeches, interviews and debates

Speeches:

- Michele Bachmann's Republican Leadership Conference speech
- Michele Bachmann's speech at the Right Online Conference

Reactions from her first debate performance:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

Profiles of Michele Bachmann:

- The Weekly Standard
- Wall Street Journal
- ABC News
- WORLD Magazine

Michele Bachmann on television news

Let Americans spend their own money

Time to prioritize spending

Obama's plan is to raise your taxes

Michele Bachmann in the legislature

Against socialism:

For economic growth:

Against ACORN funding:

How economic uncertainty causes businesses to hire fewer workers

July 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from center-leftist Fareed Zakaria in the radically leftist Washington Post. (H/T Marathon Pundit)

Excerpt:

> But government spending can only be a bridge to private-sector investment. The key to a sustainable recovery and robust economic growth is to get companies investing in America. So why are they reluctant, despite having mounds of cash? I put this question to a series of business leaders, all of whom were expansive on the topic yet did not want to be quoted by name, for fear of offending people in Washington.
>
> **Economic uncertainty was the primary cause of their caution. "We've just been through a tsunami and that produces caution," one told me. But in addition to economics, they kept talking about politics, about the uncertainty surrounding regulations and taxes.** Some have even begun to speak out publicly. Jeffrey Immelt, chief executive of General Electric, complained Friday that government was not in sync with entrepreneurs. The Business Roundtable, which had supported the Obama administration, has begun to complain about the myriad laws and regulations being cooked up in Washington.
>
> One CEO told me, "Almost every agency we deal with has announced some expansion of its authority, which naturally makes me concerned about what's in store for us for the future." Another pointed out that between the health-care bill, financial reform and possibly cap-and-trade, his company had lawyers working day and night to figure out the implications of all these new regulations. Lobbyists have been delighted by all this activity. "[Obama] exaggerates our power, but he increases demand for our services," superlobbyist Tony Podesta told the *New York Times.*
>
> **Most of the business leaders I spoke to had voted for Barack Obama. They still admire him. Those who had met him thought he was unusually smart. But all think he is, at his core, anti-business. When I asked for specifics, they pointed to the fact that Obama has no business executives in his Cabinet, that he rarely consults with CEOs (except for photo ops), that he has almost no private-sector experience, that he's made clear he thinks government and nonprofit work are superior to the private sector. It all added up to a profound sense of distrust.**

I think this was one of the points that really stood out to me in Amity Shlaes' book "The Forgotten Man", a badly-written book on the Great Depression. She spoke at length about

how the unpredictable interventionism of statists like Herbert Hoover and Franklin Delano Roosevelt caused businesses to get so flustered that they just stopped all entrepreneurial activity, including hiring, in order to wait the big-government socialists out. It ended up delaying the economic recovery.

And that’s what we see with Obama and his interventions into the free market today. Every dollar spend by the government costs jobs. Every regulation passed to control businesses costs jobs. Every line of anti-capitalist rhetoric costs jobs. Every Obama is doing to oppose businesses costs jobs. At some point, he’s going to realize that the election is over and he needs to stop scaring businesses in order to win the votes. Now is the time for tax cuts on businesses.

John Lennox on the god-of-the-gaps and the progress of science

July 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The god-of-the-gaps fallacy is a charge made by naturalists against theists.

First, some introduction. Naturalists believe that every effect in the universe has a material cause. Theists believe that it is possible that God, who is not material, can cause effects in nature. Theists think that these effects are detectable because the creating/designing capabilities of material causes are insufficient to explain certain effects either deductively (creating out of nothing) or probabilistically because of the limits of time and space available for material processes to act within (biological information). The naturalist thinks that all effects in nature have physical causes, the theist things that some effects in nature are caused by non-material causes.

In the past, some effects in nature were thought to be caused by God but later were found to be the result of natural (material) processes, often through the scientific method. Because the trend has been to explain these "gaps" in our knowledge with material causes, the naturalist now assumes that every effect in nature will be found to have natural causes. Even discontinuities in nature that are real, like the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of biological information, etc. are now assumed to have material causes, even though the progress of science has made these effects MORE DIFFICULT to explain with natural causes. The naturalist calls any attempt to attribute an effect in nature to a Creator/Designer a "god-of-the-gaps" fallacy, because the naturalist points to the past and asserts that a natural material cause will eventually be found for whatever gaps we have in nature.

But suppose a material explanation of every effect in nature could be found. Does that mean that there is no role for God anywhere?

Glenn Peoples writes:

> Let's imagine that the following is true: God does not intervene in the world. Once upon a time people who were more ignorant than we are thought that gods, angels, demons, spooks or spiritual forces lurked behind everything that we didn't have a handy natural explanation for. But in fact, this is all god of the gaps reasoning, and God doesn't intervene in nature at all. Never. There is a true natural account for everything that goes on in the universe that we know of.
>
> If you don't think that's true, relax. We're imagining, OK? I don't think that the above is true, since I'm one of those crazy people who thinks that at least some miracles have taken place. But let's suppose that the above account were true. Here's where things take a step off the cliff of logic. Take the above account, and then add the following statement: "Therefore, since God isn't required to explain any phenomenon, we have no need of the God hypothesis at all, and we have as good as shown that he need not be thought to exist." God, some have said, can

> now be treated as a redundant hypothesis that explains nothing at all. Nothing.

And then Glenn cites John Lennox:

> Science has been spectacularly successful in probing the nature of the physical universe and elucidating the mechanisms by which the universe works. Scientific research has also led to the eradication of many horrific diseases, and raised hopes of eliminating many more. And scientific investigation has had another effect in a completely different direction: it has served to relieve a lot of people from superstitious fears. For instance, people need no longer think that an eclipse of the moon is caused by some frightful daemon, which they have to placate. For all of these and myriad other things we should be very grateful.
>
> But in some quarters the very success of science has also led to the idea that, because we can understand the mechanisms of the universe without bringing in God, we can safely conclude that there was no God who designed and created the universe in the first place. However, such reasoning involves a common logical fallacy, which we can illustrate as follows.
>
> Take a Ford motor car. It is conceivable that someone from a remote part of the world, who was seeing one for the first time and who knew nothing about modern engineering, might imagine that there is a god (Mr Ford) inside the engine, making it go. He might further imagine that when the engine ran sweetly it was because Mr Ford inside the engine liked him, and when it refused to go it was because Mr Ford did not like him. Of course, if he were subsequently to study engineering and take the engine to pieces, he would discover that there is no Mr Ford inside it. Neither would it take much intelligence for him to see that he did not need to introduce Mister Ford as an explanation for its working. His grasp of the impersonal principles of internal combustion would be altogether enough to explain how the engine works. So far, so good. But if he then decided that his understanding of the principles of how the engine works made it impossible to believe in the existence of Mr Ford who designed the engine in the first place, this would be patently false – in philosophical terminology he would be committing a category mistake. Had there never been a Mr Ford to design the mechanisms, none would exist for him to understand.
>
> It is likewise a category mistake to suppose that our understanding of the impersonal principles according to which the universe works makes it either unnecessary or impossible to believe in the existence of a personal creator who designed, made, and upholds the universe. In other words, we should not confuse the mechanisms by which the universe works either with its cause or its upholder.
>
> John C. Lennox, God’s Undertaker: Has Science Buried God? (Oxford: Lion, 2007), 43-44.

I’m with Glenn – I think that God is a real agent who exists in time subsequent to Creation

just like you and I. He can cause effects in nature like you and I, the same way that you and I can – by using our immaterial minds to affect the natural world freely. But even if everything has a mechanistic explanation – which I don't for a minute agree with – that still would not rule out an intelligence acting to bring the entire universe into being fine-tuned for complex life, with certain potentialities that would unfold over time.

If Democrats understand economics, then why is unemployment so high?

July 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, Nancy Pelosi thinks that the productive people should pay people not to work. (H/T Hot Air)

What's wrong with that?

Ed Morrissey writes:

- "This is one of the biggest stimuluses to our economy" — No, it's a net *drain* on the economy, although for understandable purposes. It reroutes capital from production to non-production. We are paying people who aren't working by using capital that could otherwise go to creating jobs. It's a policy tradeoff and understandable, although not for 99 weeks, which is what Pelosi is attempting to *extend further*.
- "It injects demand into the economy" — Not at the rate in which the capital gets destroyed. Remember, the money for this program gets confiscated from producers and passed through the government bureaucracy to non-producers. What winds up back in the hands of producers is much less than what left their hands in the first place.
- **"It creates jobs faster than almost any other initiative" — No, it doesn't. In fact, it *depresses* job creation, which is part of the policy tradeoff. If this was right, we'd be at zero unemployment by now. Tax cuts, especially on capital gains, creates jobs by getting capital into the hands of job creators.**
- "It's impossible to think of a situation where we would have a country without unemployment benefits" — That's not actually the debate. No one is suggesting that we *eliminate all* unemployment benefits. The debate is whether we will keep *extending them further*.

The trouble is here is that the federal government takes a cut for themselves whenever they redistribute money from one group to another. And the government doesn't produce jobs as well as the producers they take the money from – because government is wasteful and inefficient compared to private business.

Hillary Clinton

Here's a post from The Right Scoop showing what Hillary Clinton thinks of producers. (H/T ECM)

She says:

> It's important, too, that we look at how to promote broadly-based prosperity. One of the problems in societies around the world today is that too much of the productivity of the economies are going to too few. Too few people, the political

> and economic elite, are realizing the vast majority of benefits from economic activity. It's true in my own country where, unfortunately, economic inequality is increasing. And it's true in Ukraine. It's true in Europe and Asia and Africa and South America. **So part of the challenge of economic growth and prosperity is to make sure it gets down and equally spread among people.**

When you take money from the few, and reward the many, it also helps you to get re-elected – because you're buying more votes. Pretty soon, you have half the population paying no federal taxes and the top half of earners paying almost all the federal taxes. Eventually, the top earners realize that they are being bled dry by the the preening wealth redistributors in government, and they scale back their production and hiring, outsource their jobs to other countries, or leave the country entirely. And that's why unemployment is at 10%. It's something that leftists like Pelosi and Clinton never learned – they have no concern st all about how the people they rob will respond to being robbed. And it impoverishes us all when we punish the most productive members of society. Where do you think jobs come from? The poor?

Barack Obama

The Detroit News reports on one of the reason why we all lose when government decides that they know better ways to spend money than entrepreneurs. (H/T The Blog Prof)

Excerpt:

> **The government is handing out nearly *$2 billion* for new solar plants** that President Barack Obama says will create thousands of jobs and increase the use of renewable energy sources.
>
> Obama announced the initiative in his weekly radio and online address Saturday, saying the money is part of his plan to bring new industries to the U.S.
>
> "We're going to keep competing aggressively to make sure the jobs and industries of the future are taking root right here in America," Obama said.
>
> The two companies that will receive the money from the president's $862 billion economic stimulus are Abengoa Solar, which will build one of the world's largest solar plants in Arizona, creating 1,600 construction jobs; and Abound Solar Manufacturing, which is building plants in Colorado and Indiana. **The Obama administration says those projects will create more than 2,000 construction jobs and *1,500 permanent jobs*.**

That's $1,333,333 per new permanent job.

That money could have created many more jobs in the private sector. But now it's been wasted for politically correct solar power. And that's why government spending prolongs recessions – it takes money away from job creators for fashionable boondoggles designed to get people elected.

UPDATE: The ONLY stimulus that counts is A JOB – or several job offers. People on

unemployment are not going to spend because the future is too uncertain. What makes people spend is a current job, along with the prospect of other jobs if this one falls through. That’s what caused people to spend. You need to give tax breaks to the suppliers – suppliers stimulate demand by creating products that people actually want to buy.

Obamacare's impact on ER wait times and low-wage workers

July 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, ER wait times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> As the number of insured people goes up while health care reform takes place, the long waits and crowded lobbies at emergency rooms are anticipated to increase as well.
>
> "We're starting out with crowded conditions and anticipating things will only get worse," American College of Emergency Physicians president Dr. Angela Gardner told the Associated Press.
>
> Nearly 32 million more people will have health insurance as a result of changing health-care laws, and about 16 million are to be added to the Medicaid system, but that apparently won't keep them out of the ER, the AP reported.
>
> "Just because we've insured people [that] doesn't mean they now have access," Dr. Elijah Berg from Boston told the AP. "They're coming to the emergency department because they don't have access to alternatives."
>
> […]**Since 2006, when it began offering government-run health care to its residents, Massachusetts has been considered the test model for the federal health changes, requiring health coverage for everyone, but data has shown visits to the ER have continued to rise since the Massachusetts law took place.**
>
> ERs are already overly crowded, with the biggest users being those under the federal Medicaid plan. Many doctors limit the number of Medicaid patients that they see because of the low rate of reimbursement from the government.

Here's what should have happened. Voters should have looked at Massachusetts and Tennessee and seen what government control of health care does to health care. Universal coverage increases demand, but *supply stays the same* because of onerous certifications, taxes and regulations that block new entrants. Somewhere along the line there will be a shortage. And that means waiting lists, abortion, denial of care, and eventually euthanasia in order to keep costs down.

But there's more – from the Heartland Institute.

What about Obamacare's impact on low-wage workers? (H/T Rob)

Excerpt:

> The requirements of President Obama's new health care regime could penalize low-wage workers and cause a further slowdown of hiring for positions at chain

> restaurants and other small businesses.
>
> **White Castle, a national fast food chain, recently announced it would slow planned expansion in the United States and curtail hiring at its numerous restaurant outlets thanks to Obama's law, which the chain says will cut its earnings in half.**
>
> According to a White Castle representative, the requirement that employers pay a $3,000 fine to the federal government for every employee whose out-of-pocket cost of health insurance exceeds 9.5 percent of their income will destroy their business model.
>
> […]Diana Furchtgott-Roth, a health care analyst at the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC, says much of this process is out of the employer's control.
>
> […]Furchtgott-Roth says this aspect of Obamacare is part of a larger trend toward government pricing low-skilled workers out of the U.S. economy.
>
> "The burden of all these Obamacare provisions is going to fall more on America's low-skilled workers—the workers at White Castle, Burger King, and so on. Because their labor will become more expensive for companies to use, we're going to see more mechanized solutions, a trend that is already happening in Europe," Furchtgott-Roth said.

Well, some of these people who don't pay income taxes are certainly going to be getting a wake-up call. Larger companies like John Deere, Verizon, Valero, Caterpillar, etc. already announced that they were going to be taking huge hits to their bottom line as a result of Obamacare. All these good intentions and high-minded blabberings don't amount to any benefits for American working families. Happy-talk wins elections, but it doesn't pay the bills or feed the children.

Next time, we need to be more diligent at looking at what actually happens in other countries and even in our own states when people try to nationalize health care in order to provide universal coverage. We can have universal coverage – we just need to let people choose what level of coverage they want and we need to make market reforms to the health care industry. Choice and competition works better for consumers. That's *real* health care reform.

NASA’s top goal is to praise Muslims for their scientific achievements

July 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> NASA Administrator Charles Bolden said in a recent interview that his “foremost” mission as the head of America’s space exploration agency is to improve relations with the Muslim world.
>
> Though international diplomacy would seem well outside NASA’s orbit, **Bolden said in an interview with Al Jazeera** that strengthening those ties was among the top tasks President Obama assigned him. He said better interaction with the Muslim world would ultimately advance space travel.
>
> “When I became the NASA administrator — or before I became the NASA administrator — he charged me with three things. One was he wanted me to help re-inspire children to want to get into science and math, he wanted me to expand our international relationships, and third, and perhaps foremost, he wanted me to find a way to reach out to the Muslim world and engage much more with dominantly Muslim nations to help them feel good about their historic contribution to science … and math and engineering,” Bolden said in the interview.

Your tax dollars at work. Because you really don’t have a right to spend the money you earn. Besides – redistributing wealth makes your liberal betters feel good about themselves, and you wouldn’t want to be selfish and deprive them of their feelings of moral superiority, would you? Have a heart.

Brian Auten interviews Clay Jones on the problems of evil and suffering

July 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

More good stuff from Apologetics 315. (H/T Apologetics Junkie)

By the way, I notice that Brian is offering some FREE BOOKS to anyone who fills out a teeny, tiny little survey.

The MP3 file for the interview is here.

Topics:

- about Clay Jones' area of interest and publications
- how did Clay become a Christian?
- how did Clay get interested in the problem of evil?
- what is the deductive (logical) problem of evil?
- the popular version of it: why do bad things happen to good people?
- what are some good books on the intellectual problem of evil?
- what's a good book for people who are struggling with suffering?
- how can Christians defend against the problems of evil and suffering?
- can God perform logical contradictions?
- is God's top priority for the world to make us have happy feelings?
- what good reason is there for God to permit evil and suffering?
- can God prohibit evil and still let us have free will?
- can God prohibit evil and still prepare us for Heaven?
- why do people even raise the objection from evil and suffering?
- why do people find the slaughter of the Canaanites so troubling?
- what kinds of sins were the Canaanites committing?
- do people really understand how much God hates sin?
- how much does suffering really matter on an eternal scale?
- how can Christian apologists convince themselves that people really sin?
- what is the "the banality of evil"? Are normal people capable of evil?

Two things that I got out of this lecture: 1) When people ask "why do bad things happen to good people?" you can ask them who is a good person? And ask them why they think that God would want "good people" to be happy in their own way instead of having a relationship with him. And 2) his advice that Christians should read about real evils like genocide and mass murder, to understand that ordinary people are capable of incredible cruelty, and capable of rationalizing it, too. It is very rare that anyone really stands up to their culture, like pro-lifers and pro-marriage people do today. It's really hard to do! Especially when the bad guys make it harder to do the right thing.

Can government create jobs more efficiently than private businesses?

July 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this story from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the federal government helped pay the home air conditioning bills for more than 11,000 dead people, 1,100 federal employees, and 725 convicts in fiscal year 2009.
>
> The payments were made by a $5 billion program known as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is designed to provide federal assistance, administered by the states, to help people pay the energy bills to heat their homes in the winter and cool them in the summer. The funds are disbursed by the Department of Health and Human Services and are distributed based on a formula that takes into account a state's weather and the size of its low-income population.
>
> The GAO examined the LIHEAP programs in seven states: Virginia, Maryland, Ohio, New York, Illinois, Michigan, and New Jersey. The agency found evidence of fraud in each state.
>
> "Our analysis of LIHEAP data revealed that the program is at risk of fraud and providing improper benefits in all seven of our selected states," reported the GAO. "About 260,000 applications–9 percent of households receiving benefits in the selected states–contained invalid identity information, such as Social Security numbers, names, or dates of birth."

Think that's an isolated event?

Consider this list of government spending projects from Andrew Breitbart's Big Government. (H/T The Blog Prof)

Excerpt:

- $5 million to create a geothermal energy system for a shopping mall in Tennessee. The mall is over half empty of tenants and has had falling shopper attendance for years *
- $1.57 million to Penn State University study fossils in Argentina *
- $100,000 to a puppet theater in Minnesota *
- $2 million to build a replica railroad tourist trap in Carson City, Nev. *
- A boat cruise company in Chicago got almost $1 million to "combat terrorism" *
- $500,000 went to Ariz. State Univ. to study ant genetics *
- Another $450,000 went to Uinv. of Arizona to study ants *
- Almost $400,000 went to Univ. of New York to pay students to drink beer and smoke

marijuana for a study there *
- $219,000 to the Nat'l Institute of Health to study if young people "hook-up" after getting drunk *
- $210,000 to the Univ. of Hawaii to study bees *
- $700,000 to crab fishermen in Oregon to pay for lost crab pots *
- $5,000 a person tax rebate if you buy a new electric golf cart (Wall Street Journal)
- Up to $1 million went to prisoners in $250 stimulus checks (FoxNews)
- $54 mil to a New York Indian tribe to run its casino (New York Post)
- $1 billion for a power plant in Mattoon, Illinois that is based on speculative science and may not even work **
- $15 million to back-road bridges that get little traffic in Wisconsin **
- $800,000 for a practically unused airport in Pennsylvania **
- $3.4 million for an animal walk way under a road in Florida **
- $1.15 million to install a guard rail for a lake that doesn't even exist in Oklahoma **
- $10 million to renovate a rail station that has stood unused for a decade **
- $578,000 to battle homelessness in Union, New York even though the town says they have no homeless people there **
- $233,000 to the Univ. of Calif. to study why Africans vote… in Africa ***
- $2 million to build a new fire house in a Nevada town that has no firemen ***
- North Carolina schools got $4.4 million for literacy and math coaches… to teach their teachers! ***
- $54 million for a railroad project in Napa Valley went to a minority-owned company that then hired a local construction company for half the price, pocketing the rest ***
- A California company was given $15 million in stimulus money to monitor water quality in a stream it was under indictment for polluting previously***

I'm sure that no small business has money to waste on boondoggles like these – but they are being taxed to pay for the government to do it! And that leaves less money for them to create jobs.

Obama's spending spree is about one thing and one thing alone – buying votes from the constituencies that voted for him so that they'll vote for him again. That's why public sector employment, public sector salaries and public sector benefits are all up during this massive recession, while *millions* of jobs have been lost in the private sector.

Economics in One Lesson

Perhaps it is time to review Henry Hazlitt's Economics in One Lesson, chapter 4, entitled "Public Works Mean Taxes".

Excerpt:

> Therefore, for every public job created by the bridge project a private job has been destroyed somewhere else. We can see the men employed on the bridge. We can watch them at work. The employment argument of the government spenders becomes vivid, and probably for most people convincing. But there are

> other things that we do not see, because, alas, they have never been permitted to come into existence. They are the jobs destroyed by the $10 million taken from the taxpayers. All that has happened, at best, is that there has been a *diversion* of jobs because of the project. More bridge builders; fewer automobile workers, television technicians, clothing workers, farmers.

Excerpt that the government, lacking a profit motive, is never as efficient as private business is in spending money – government *wastes* money that it never earned in the first place.

And consider Chapter 5 as well, entitled "Taxes Discourage Production".

> In our modern world there is never the same percentage of income tax levied on everybody. The great burden of income taxes is imposed on a minor percentage of the nation's income; and these income taxes have to be supplemented by taxes of other kinds. These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. **When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to become employers at all.** Improved machinery and better-equipped factories come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.
>
> There is a similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment that they profess to solve.

George W. Bush cut taxes in his first term and created 1 million NEW JOBS. Government spending is a *job killer*. In fact, you can even see it failing today in Japan: Did massive government spending succeed or fail in Japan?

Governors Jan Brewer and Linda Lingle making news in Arizona and Hawaii

July 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Normally, I talk about Michele Bachmann, Marsha Blackburn or Sarah Palin a lot. Or maybe Carly Fiorina and Meg Whitman. But this week, the Republican governors of Arizona and Hawaii are in the news.

Gov. Jan Brewer

Here's the story from the Washington Times about Jan Brewer.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration sued Tuesday to stop Arizona's new immigration law in a move that escalates President Obama's involvement in the thorny issue and stacks him against a majority of Americans who support the law.
>
> The challenge, which had been expected for weeks, drew harsh rebukes from Republicans and even some Democrats who said it is "distracting" from the more serious issues of border security and could upset Mr. Obama's call for Congress to act on a broad immigration bill that would legalize illegal immigrants and rewrite the rules for legal immigration.
>
> In the challenge, Justice Department attorneys said Arizona's law violates the Constitution by trying to supersede federal law and by impairing illegal immigrants' right to travel and conduct interstate commerce. They argued that only the federal government can write immigration rules.
>
> "Diverting federal resources away from dangerous aliens such as terrorism suspects and aliens with criminal records will impact the entire country's safety," Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. said in announcing the lawsuit. "Setting immigration policy and enforcing immigration laws is a national responsibility. Seeking to address the issue through a patchwork of state laws will only create more problems than it solves."
>
> […]Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer said that if the Obama administration was consistent in its argument over patchwork immigration laws it would sue to stop so-called sanctuary cities, which generally protect the identities of illegal immigrants.

> “The truth is the Arizona law is both reasonable and constitutional,” she said. “It mirrors substantially what has been federal law in the United States for many decades. Arizona’s law is designed to complement, not supplant, enforcement of federal immigration laws.”
>
> […]Mrs. Brewer, a Republican who is running for election this year, has hired outside attorneys to defend the law rather than rely on Terry Goddard, Arizona’s attorney general, who had opposed the law and who is likely to be the Democratic challenger to Mrs. Brewer in November.

Illegal immigration costs 113 billion dollars per year.

Gov. Linda Lingle

And here’s the story from CNS News about Linda Lingle. (H/T Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> Hawaii’s governor ended months of speculation by vetoing contentious civil unions legislation that would have granted gay, lesbian and opposite-sex couples the same rights and benefits that the state provides to married couples.
>
> Republican Gov. Linda Lingle’s action on Tuesday came on the final day she had to either sign or veto the bill, which was approved by the Legislature in late April.
>
> The measure would have made Hawaii one of six states that essentially grant the rights of marriage to same-sex couples without authorizing marriage itself. Five other states and the District of Columbia permit same-sex marriage.
>
> Lingle said voters should decide the fate of civil unions, not politicians.
>
> “The subject of this legislation has touched the hearts and minds of our citizens as no other social issue of our day,” she said. “It would be a mistake to allow a decision of this magnitude to be made by one individual or a small group of elected officials.”

Republican women making a difference.

Rich Wall Street donors abandoning Democrats

July 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the leftist Washington Post. (H/T Wes Widner, ECM)

Excerpt:

> A revolt among big donors on Wall Street is hurting fundraising for the Democrats' two congressional campaign committees, with contributions from the world's financial capital down 65 percent from two years ago.
>
> […]In reviewing the FEC records, The Post analyzed fundraising data for New York City and its suburbs in New Jersey, on Long Island and north of the city — a region that had become an outsized source of Democratic campaign cash. In the 2008 cycle, 28 percent of the two committees' itemized individual contributions came from the region. Manhattan alone accounted for 20 percent.
>
> In this election cycle, the percentage raised in New York is less than 10 percent of the total.
>
> More than 600 regular donors from the New York area — whose four- and five-figure checks added up to $10 million for the DSCC and DCCC in 2006 and 2008 — have so far abandoned their effort to retain the Democratic majorities.
>
> Take Jamie Dimon, the head of J.P. Morgan Chase, who is known for his close relationship with President Obama.
>
> In 2006 and 2008, he donated $65,000 to the Democratic committees. This election cycle, he has not contributed at all to the DSCC or DCCC. At the end of March, however, he gave $2,000 to the campaign of Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), who is seeking to claim Obama's former Senate seat. A spokeswoman for Dimon noted that he has given to individual Democratic candidates, just not to the campaign committees.
>
> Other prominent Democratic donors who have not given to the Democrats this year include Leon Black, a co-founder of the $53 billion New York-based Apollo Global Management a private-equity firm, and his wife, Debra Black. The couple gave more than $200,000 to Democratic congressional committees over the previous two election cycles but have not given this year, according to the latest disclosure documents. A spokesman for Apollo declined to comment.
>
> Lloyd Blankfein, chief executive and chairman of Goldman Sachs, has not donated to the Democrats, either, after giving $50,000 in the previous two cycles. A company spokesman declined to comment.
>
> The problem has been particularly acute for Senate Democrats, whose previous DSCC chairman, Sen. Charles E. Schumer (N.Y.), had strong connections to Wall Street.

Wow, bet you never knew that big Wall Street bankers were all Democrats, did you?

Can you evolve working legs by changing working fins into useless stumps?

July 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this piece of taxpayer-funded "research" that appeared in the prestigious journal Nature (H/T ECM), and you will know everything you need to know about Darwinism, and whether it is science or mythology.

Excerpt:

> The loss of genes that guide the development of fins may help to explain how fish evolved into four-limbed vertebrates, according to a study.
>
> Marie-Andrée Akimenko of the University of Ottawa in Canada and her colleagues **may** now be able to explain how our ancestors lost their fins: they have discovered a family of genes that code for the proteins that make up fins' rigid fibres. The actinodin (and) genes are present in the laboratory model zebrafish and in ancient fish, but not in four-legged vertebrates (tetrapods), the team report today in the journal Nature. What's more, the researchers found that dampening the expression of and genes in zebrafish also disrupts the expression of genes that regulate the growth of limbs and the number of digits in other animals.
>
> These results **hint** that the loss of and genes is linked to the change from fins to limbs.
>
> […]**But a causal connection is not certain**. "The real question is: did we lose these genes because we lost the use of fins, or did we lose fins because we lost the genes?" says Denis Duboule, an evolutionary developmental biologist at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL). **"The problem is that when it's an evolutionary question, you can't do the experiment."**

You know what? You can't do the experiment on the evolution of *invisible pink unicorns*, either. But you might be able to get your taxpayer-funded speculations about how invisible pink unicorns *may have evolved* published in Nature, as long as it somehow bashes the idea of intelligent design. To be able to *explain* evolution, you don't actually have to test anything in an experiment… you just have to tell a fetching just-so story that *may have happened*. And then it gets published in the prestigious journal Nature. Because you arrived at the right conclusion, and that's what matters. That's *science*.

The Ottawa Citizen explains more about what the intelligent scientists *designed* using purposeful, non-random interventions during their lab experiments.

Excerpt:

> This is a tough one to understand. How could a fish just grow legs? It mystifies us, and so this part of evolutionary theory is a common target for cheap attacks

> from creationists. Therefore, it's extremely valuable that a scientist has now found a way in which a genetic tweaking makes a zebrafish embryo stop growing fins, and start growing an appendage that **looks like** a leg. **If** she can tweak a gene in the lab, **maybe** one of the many mutations that pop up in nature **could** do the same.
>
> […]To learn what a gene does, one method is to add a chemical that temporarily stops it from working, and see what happens to the animal. Akimenko's team "knocked down" two of the four actinotrichia genes in a zebrafish embryo, and found that the fish appeared to stop growing fins.
>
> Instead, it began growing features that **look like** the "buds" (or embryonic beginnings) of legs.
>
> […]Akimenko was using a chemical which doesn't destroy the gene, but only stuns it for a short period, leaving the animal's DNA intact. It's like a chemical Taser. **After three or four days the gene wakes up and does its normal job, and the fish embryo goes back to growing fins**.

Got that? Non-functional "buds" are an important discovery for explaining how legs evolved from fins. Experimenter intervention producing an evolutionary dead-end is hailed as a masterful proof of evolution. Don't even ask about whether non-functional buds convey an evolutionary advantage. Research that confirms Darwinism doesn't need to be an actual factual account of what really happened. It doesn't need to be testable or repeatable.

Notice also that no explanation is given about how the bud-enabled fish developed the ability to breathe oxygen, consume and digest food on land, or modify their excretory system to avoid losing water. None of that is necessary – *because none of it is testable*. It's not about finding the truth, it's about telling a story. A story that contradicts the idea that God exists, that there is objective right and wrong, and one day we will be held accountable for our priorities and decisions. And that's why this is taxpayer-funded research that is published in Nature.

Is this science? Or religion?

Obama appoints a socialist to run Medicare and Medicaid

July 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama has bypassed the Congressional confirmation process for Dr. Donald Berwick, a socialist, and instead given him an immediate recess appointment. What this means is that there will be no debating Dr. Berwick's socialist views in public.

From the New York Times. (H/T Verum Serum)

Excerpt:

> Dan Pfeiffer, the White House communications director, said the "recess appointment" was needed to carry out the new health care law. The law calls for huge changes in the two programs, which together insure nearly one-third of all Americans.
>
> Mr. Pfeiffer said the president would appoint Dr. Berwick on Wednesday. Mr. Obama decided to act because "many Republicans in Congress have made it clear in recent weeks that they were going to stall the nomination as long as they could, solely to score political points," Mr. Pfeiffer said.

This 2008 NHS paper by Dr. Berwick explains what he thinks about government-run health care in the UK. (H/T Verum Serum)

Excerpt:

> The National Health Service [Britain's single payer health care] is one of the truly astounding human endeavors of modern times. Just look at what you are trying to be: comprehensive, equitable, available to all, free at the point of care, and – more and more – aiming for excellence by world-class standards. And, because you have chosen to use a nation as the scale and taxation as the funding, the NHS isn't just technical – it's political…The NHS is a bridge – a towering bridge – between the rhetoric of justice and the fact of justice.
>
> […]You plan the supply; you aim a bit low; historically, you prefer slightly too little of a technology or service to much too much; and then you search for care bottlenecks, and try to relieve them.
>
> […]You could have obscured – obliterated – accountability, or left it to the invisible hand of the market, instead of holding your politicians ultimately accountable for getting the NHS sorted. You could have let an unaccountable system play out in the darkness of private enterprise instead of accepting that a politically accountable system must act in the harsh and, admittedly, sometimes unfair, daylight of the press, public debate, and political campaigning. You could have a monstrous insurance industry of claims, rules, and paper-pushing, instead of using your tax base to provide **a single route of finance**. You could have

> protected the wealthy and the well, instead of recognizing that sick people tend to be poorer and that poor people tend to be sicker, **and that any health care funding plan that is just, equitable, civilized, and humane must – *must* – redistribute wealth from the richer among us to the poorer and less fortunate.**

> […]please don't put your faith in market forces. **It's a popular idea: that Adam Smith's invisible hand would do a better job of designing care than leaders with plans can. I do not agree. I find little evidence anywhere that market forces, bluntly used, that is, consumer choice among an array of products with competitors' fighting it out, leads to the health care system you want and need.**
>
> […]**I cannot believe that the individual health care consumer can enforce through choice the proper configurations of a system as massive and complex as health care. That is for leaders to do.**

> […]Unfettered growth and pursuit of institutional self-interest has been the engine of low value for the US health care system. It has made it unaffordable, and hasn't helped patients at all.

That's who is going to administer government-run single-payer health care programs in the United States. He opposes consumer choice. He opposes competition. He wants to have a monopoly on health care, and make your decisions for you. You pay him your money based on what you earn, and he'll decide which of your neighbors will get health care. You're smart enough to earn the money, but not smart enough to spend it on your own family. And that's probably what Obama believes, too, otherwise he would have picked someone else.

Thanks to Verum Serum for finding all of this. They do amazing work breaking these stories. You really need to bookmark Verum Serum and read it every day, if you haven't already.

Related posts

- British national health care system prepares to cut 20 billion dollars
- NHS kills a man's wife by delaying cancer treatment for 7 months
- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
- Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water
- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care
- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care

- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- NHS refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

Melanie Phillips asks why incompetent teachers can’t be fired

July 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Melanie Phillips

Story here in the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> For years, head teachers have complained that one of their main problems was that the terms of teachers’ contracts with local education authorities meant they were unable to sack those who were not up to scratch.
>
> Now Panorama is apparently reporting the shocking fact that, instead of being removed from the profession, dud teachers are merely being recycled by being given good references in exchange for agreeing to look for work in alternative schools.
>
> According to Mick Brookes, leader of the National Association of Head Teachers, this is a common practice which he says causes heads serious problems.

> The classroom teacher unions, however, think it is perfectly justified.

> Well, there’s a surprise. In fact, it is an absolute betrayal of the children for whom school represents their one chance in life.

And a bit later:

> The most successful teachers have always understood that children need to be inducted into a body of knowledge, to be taught in a structured and disciplined manner, to be corrected when they make mistakes.
>
> But for decades, the predominant educational ideology has ordained that children effectively teach themselves, with teachers taking a back seat as mere

> ‘facilitators’.
>
> What children feel about themselves has been deemed to be more important than what they know.
>
> Achievement was bad —because it made others who didn’t achieve feel bad about themselves.
>
> This led to the collapse of the teaching of reading and the dumbing down of virtually every subject on the curriculum. Indeed, it eroded the very basis of teaching as the transmission of knowledge.

The first thing we need to do is pass a law that allows teachers to work without having to join a union. The best teachers will be able to command much higher salaries when they don’t get dragged down by the union. That should cut into the union’s political power, and then we may finally get some decent school choice laws passed – like vouchers – so that parents can choose where their children go to school. That will create pressure on schools to perform – and that means that bad teachers will be fired.

France passes law to jail men who criticize their wife's appearance

July 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Feminist Nadine Morano

Story here in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Couples who insult each other over their physical appearance or make false accusations about infidelity face jail, under a new French law making "psychological violence" a criminal offence.
>
> The law – the first of its kind – means that partners who make such insults or threats of physical violence faces up to three years in prison and a €75,000 (£60,000) fine.
>
> […]Nadine Morano, the junior family minister, told the National Assembly that "we have introduced an important measure here, which recognises psychological violence, because it isn't just blows (that hurt), but also words."
>
> Miss Morano said the primary abuse help line for French women got 90,000 calls a year, with 84 per cent concerning psychological violence.
>
> […]The bill, which has been unanimously approved by French MPs, defines mental violence as "repeated acts that could be constituted by words," including insults or repeated text messages that "degrade one's quality of life and cause a change to one's mental or physical state."
>
> […]Miss Morano said witnesses could be called on to testify in such cases and doctors' certificates charting a patient's descent into nervous depression as a result of such insults could be used as evidence.
>
> "The judge could (also) take into consideration letters, SMSs or repetitive messages, because one knows that psychological violence is made up of insults," she added.

The law technically applies to women, but I doubt it will be enforced equally – just consider the lighter sentences for women who murder their husbands. For example, Mary Winkler murdered her husband and got 67 days in jail. No abuse by her husband was ever proved in court – her husband just questioned her when she lost tons of money through the Nigerian internet hoax. She later shot him while he was sleeping and left him, so he bled to death. 67 days in jail is not a fair punishment for murder, and she got full custody of the children, too.

So, I think that this French law is not going to encourage men in France to marry. The risks are too great. To get men to marry, you have to lower the risks, and help women to be extra careful when choosing men.

A former lesbian reflects on her past lesbian relationships

July 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Despite the closeness of her relationships, Clune admitted that the hyper-emotional world of a female-to-female sexual bond was "exhausting." "The women I went out with were by and large more inclined to be insecure and to need reassurance and I found myself in the male role of endlessly reassuring my girlfriends," she wrote. "The subtle mood changes of everyday life would be picked over inexhaustibly."
>
> Clune describes how one lover was so jealous and insecure that "every single time we enjoyed a night out … we would have a row and have to leave." "Back home, we would then spend the next four hours arguing about our relationship and my feelings of loyalty, fidelity and so on," she wrote. "It was never-ending."
>
> "Can you imagine waking up beside a woman when you've both got raging PMT (premenstrual tension)?" she added.
>
> Ultimately, she said, the emotional rollercoaster forced her to reconsider her lesbian plunge – something she clearly says she "chose," and was not born into. "Unlike most men, women, of course, offer each other endless support and there's hardly ever any lack of communication," she said. "But – bizarre as it may seem – I found myself longing for exactly the opposite."
>
> Following "a calculated decision to try men again," Clune says that she found in her future husband Richard a "quiet kindness" and "lack of neediness" that appealed to her. "I felt we were walking alongside each other rather than spending life locked in face-to-face intimacy or combat," she wrote. "It felt natural and not at all scary. He was sanguine about my past and never suffered the insecurities I had come to expect."

I learned a lot from reading this. I was surprised that women are this emotional. Is this true? I remember Dr. Morse said in that Acton Institute interview I posted that lesbian couples have a lot more domestic violence. Now I see why!

I actually think that it is a lot easier for Christians to make a coherent argument in favor of opposite-sex relationships and traditional marriage when they have read case studies and statistics on same-sex relationships. You need to understand the differences to say whether one is better than the other, and to include the needs of children in the comparison.

I noticed that Lex Communis linked to a Mercator Net article that summarizes some fairly recent research on same-sex couples. The author of the post is a professor, and the

research he cites is published and peer-reviewed.

Related posts

- What does the Bible say about sex before marriage and homosexuality?
- New study shows that same-sex unions are less monogamous than heterosexual unions
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why do people favor traditional marriage over same-sex marriage

How Obama’s opposition to free trade raises unemployment

July 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> …the president said all the right things Wednesday about boosting exports, opening markets and getting Congress to approve free-trade deals with Colombia, South Korea and Panama.
>
> […]But as good as the speech sounded, it was no more than a reiteration of statements Obama has already made, always promising to get on it, soon. If he wants these treaties passed, he should submit the deals already negotiated and let Congress vote, up or down.
>
> […]Thirty-nine House Democrats and virtually all the Republicans have indicated their support, and a host of others intend to vote “yes,” though they won’t say so.
>
> That’s why House Speaker Nancy Pelosi refuses to permit any vote on the Colombian pact, which was submitted to Congress two years ago. She doesn’t fear it’ll fail; she fears it’ll pass.
>
> […]Overall joblessness of 9.4% is bad enough. But among blacks, male unemployment is averaging 19.5%, and the 13.2% rate for Latinos is double what it had been most of the decade. Then there’s the 52% of young people who can’t find work.The U.S. Chamber of Commerce warns that if Congress fails to act on the three pending trade pacts, 585,000 U.S. jobs will be snatched away by rivals such as Canada. That would be a big chunk of the 3.5 million jobs Obama promised to create by year-end.

American businesses do better when they can pay less to buy the things they need to make their products from trading partners who have signed free trade deals signed with us. More efficiency means they can sell the products and services for less. That means that people buy more of those products. And then *they hire more people.*The number of jobs gained by improving the efficiency of businesses is higher than the union jobs saved by not signing the free trade deals. And who cares about unions anyway – unions make consumers and businesses pay too much! And they’re Democrats! So they’re crap on social issues and foreign policy anyway.

Among economists, being opposed to free trade is the equivalent of being opposed to a round Earth. But Democrats have to believe in protectionist nonsense – they are beholden to the unions that elected them who oppose choice and competition. Unions don’t want consumers to have a choice, and they don’t want to have to compete with anyone. They want to screw consumers into paying higher prices – and Obama has to cater to their

delusions.

Socialist Sweden tightens laws against homeschooling

July 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here on Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The parliament passed what the HSLDA called a "sweeping" reform of the nation's education system on June 22 in the form of a 1500 page bill, 2 pages of which addressed the topic of home education.
>
> […]Previous regulations specified that home instruction must be a "fully satisfactory alternative" to state-run education, and officials may inspect homeschooling families to make sure they are keeping up to speed. The new law, however, keeps those previous regulations and adds a third, highly restrictive clause: parents may only homeschool after they have demonstrated "exceptional circumstances." Despite the fact that the council of the Swedish supreme court charged with reviewing laws recommended a clarification on the meaning of the ambiguous term "exceptional circumstances," the government moved ahead without having done so.
>
> While homeschooling families in the country have already faced persecution and punitive fines from school officials for homeschooling, the new law essentially gives carte blanche authority for school officials to deny homeschooling applications in any and all circumstances.
>
> Parents who have religious, moral, or philosophic reasons for will not get a break. In fact the law explicitly states, "It is the opinion of the government that there is no need of a law to make space for homeschooling based on the religious or philosophical views of the family."
>
> […]Because Sweden has no supreme court with the authority of judicial review, the key to overturning the law will be to effect a change in parliament – and elections are in September.

The secular left wants "equality". In order for everyone to be "equal", all the children have to be taught by the state. And that means no more homeschooling. Naive Christians who are liberal on fiscal issues or liberal on war/terrorism sometimes vote against the conservatives. We need to be more careful about educating Christians to be conservative across the board. I am sick and tired of talking to people who are active in fringe Christian political parties who do not understand why they need to favor free market capitalism and peace through strength.

Be careful who you vote for – when you vote secular left, you're making it harder on your Christian brothers and sisters to do the things they need to do.

Bobby Jindal signs major abortion reforms into law

July 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bobby and Supriya Jindal

Story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Gov. Bobby Jindal signed three landmark abortion bills on Tuesday that significantly tighten the state's regulations on abortionists and their practices, and opt out the state from the national health care reform's abortion mandates.
>
> Jindal signed two bills that were introduced and shepherded through the legislature by the Louisiana Right to Life Federation (LARTL). The Ultrasound before Abortion Act (SB 528) adds strict ultrasound requirements to the state's informed consent laws. The law requires abortionists to perform an ultrasound on a woman at least two hours before she undergoes the induced abortion of her child, and before she is put under any kind of anesthesia.
>
> Abortion facility employees must also follow a detailed script set forth in the legislation, offering pregnant mothers the opportunity to see the ultrasound image, hear a description of the image, and receive a printout of the ultrasound image. To guarantee compliance, legislators added a provision stating that abortionists failing to adhere to the law could expect to find themselves sued in civil court by their clients.
>
> The other bill, the Abortion Insurance Opt-Out (HB 1247), prohibits health insurers from providing abortion coverage within the state-run health insurance exchange that will go into operation in 2014, as mandated by the national health care reform. A provision of the national law, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, gives states the explicit right to ban health insurance companies receiving public subsidies under the state health exchange from providing abortion coverage.
>
> The Louisiana measure even protects children conceived in situations of rape and

> incest, leaving just one exception for insurance companies – allowing them to pay for abortion in cases where the mother's life is in danger from "a physical disorder, physical illness, or physical injury" including "a life-endangering physical condition caused by or arising from the pregnancy itself."

This is why we like him.

How discrimination against men in schools increases male unemployment

July 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

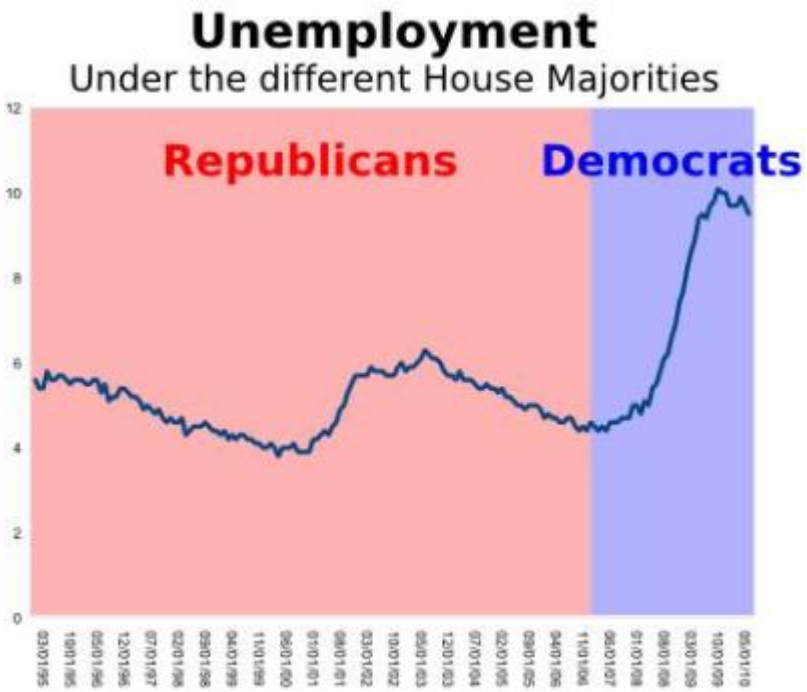

Friends don't let friends vote Democrat
(Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics via Red State via Michelle Malkin)

First, the unemployment rate for men is higher than for women.

Story here in the ultra-left-wing UK Guardian.

Excerpt:

> Complacency and "general hopelessness" have been blamed for the failure of young British men as research reveals that underperformance in school and university is now creeping into their working lives. A report published today by the Higher Education Policy Institute thinktank says male graduates are far more likely to be unemployed than their female counterparts.
>
> Figures show that the economic downturn caused an increase in graduate unemployment from 11.1% at the end of 2008 to 14% by the end of last year. But when the figures are broken down by sex a stark picture emerges of 17.2% of young male graduates failing to find jobs compared to 11.2% of women.
>
> […]Bahram Bekhradnia, the HEPI's director, spoke of the "general hopelessness of young men". "The increase in unemployment that occurred between 2008 and 2009 is striking. For those graduates who have not found work it is a personal tragedy – a really bad start to their working lives," he said.
>
> He pointed to forecasts that suggest women will dominate the professions within 15 years. "That has all sorts of implications for things such as family creation,

> child-rearing and so on. The situation in some countries is even more extreme. An American woman told a conference I attended of the fury of black American women who found it impossible to form relationships with men of the same race with similar educational attainment because black American males weren't going to university.
>
> […]Around half of the difference can be put down to subject choice, but the rest is unaccounted for and could indicate discriminatory forces.
>
> […]…the underachievement of men in school, university and adulthood is now an international phenomenon and it is one that is being increasingly studied in psychology.

Why are men struggling to find jobs? Well they are not doing very well in school.

Consider this article from Pajamas Media.

Excerpt:

> 1. In 2006, the high school dropout rate, which was 1.5 points higher for girls in 1970, was 2 points, or almost 20% higher, for boys (10.3% vs. 8.3%).
> 2. A 2007 study led by James Heckman of the University of Chicago asserted that "the pattern of the decline of high school graduation rates by gender helps to explain the recent increase in male-female college attendance gaps."
> 3. The gender gap in college attendance for at least the past several years has returned. In late April, Uncle Sam's Department of Labor told us that after three years of almost equal gender enrollment by high school graduates (2006, 2007, 2008), 202,000 more women than men from the class of 2009 went on to college. **Women make up almost 55% of the current year's freshman class.**

The problem is that there are almost no male teachers and also that boys don't learn well in co-ed classrooms – they get distracted by girls. The curriculum is not suitable for boys, who learn better with different materials that focus more on things that boys like, like wars, guns and adventures. Boys learn better with male teachers and all-male classrooms because they need male role models in order to succeed.

Consider this article on male/female teachers.

Excerpt:

> The organization MenTeach, a Minnesota organization dedicated to increasing the number of males working with young children, posted a survey on its Web site showing that males constitute less than 20 percent of America's 2.9 million elementary and middle school teachers. The 2008 survey, based on source data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, showed even more drastic differences among different grade levels:

> - 44 percent of America’s 1.2 million secondary school teachers.
> - 18.8 percent of America’s 2.9 million elementary and middle school teachers.
> - 2.4 percent of America’s 685,000 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers.

Most women want men to be strong husbands and fathers, so they’ll need to make sure that men have jobs. In order for men to have jobs, they’ll want to oppose feminists who discriminate against men in the education system.

What do Democrats think of the Defense of Marriage Act?

July 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> A federal judge in Boston has ruled that the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which enshrines in law the definition of marriage as between one man and one woman, is unconstitutional.
>
> Judge Joseph Tauro claimed in a ruling Thursday that DOMA violates the right of homosexual couples to equal protection under the U.S. Constitution.
>
> "This court has determined that it is clearly within the authority of the Commonwealth to recognize same-sex marriages among its residents, and to afford those individuals in same-sex marriages any benefits, rights, and privileges to which they are entitled by virtue of their marital status," wrote the judge.
>
> "The federal government, by enacting and enforcing DOMA, plainly encroaches upon the firmly entrenched province of the state."

The DOMA bill was passed by a Republican-controlled House and a Republican-controlled Senate. Republicans believe in traditional marriage.

And some reactions to the recent ruling:

> [Democrat] Attorney General **[Martha] Coakley**, who made headlines earlier this year as the U.S. Senate candidate unexpectedly edged out by Republican Scott Brown, applauded the ruling Thursday. She called the decision "an important step toward achieving equality for all married couples in Massachusetts." Massachusetts was the first U.S. state to legalize same-sex "marriage."
>
> […]Posting on Twitter, House Speaker **Nancy Pelosi** called the ruling "great news!"
>
> […]…DOMA is likely to face a tough battle in the Supreme Court, especially in light of the nomination of **Elena Kagan**. Should Kagan be confirmed to the highest court in the land, she would bring another certain vote in favor of striking down the law, as she has already come out strongly in favor of the homosexualist agenda.
>
> In addition, pro-family leaders have pointed to a controversial brief authored under Kagan as U.S. Secretary General, in which the legal defense for the law was gutted by rejecting the ideological basis for maintaining marriage as between a man and a woman. Instead, the brief acknowledged that the Obama

> administration considers DOMA “discriminatory, and supports its repeal,” before arguing that the plaintiff in the case lacked standing.

Interesting. So this is what Democrats think about traditional marriage. They don’t believe in the right of children to have a stable relationship with the man and the woman who brought them into being. They’re committed to the breakdown of traditional marriage and family. And they don’t care about what is best for children. They care about votes from powerful special interest groups.

Related posts

- New study shows that same-sex unions are less monogamous than heterosexual unions
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why do people favor traditional marriage over same-sex marriage?

How much do lawsuits against businesses cost consumers?

July 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from the Pacific Research Institute.

Excerpt:

> When deciding where to start a business, expand operations, or relocate, entrepreneurs prefer states with balanced tort systems that discourage abusive lawsuits. In 2006, job growth was 57% greater in the 10 states with the best tort climates than in the 10 worst states. Business leaders are leery of Michigan because of its sky-high tort costs and skewed courtrooms.
>
> Fear of lawsuits also causes companies to withdraw or withhold beneficial products. Volkswagen planned to sell a 46 m.p.g. three-wheel vehicle. This "green machine" would have cost only $17,000, but VW decided not to market it in the United States because of lawsuit fears.
>
> Total direct tort costs were $255 billion in 2008. Abusive lawsuits cost every American a hidden "tort tax" of about $2,000 a year in higher prices and insurance premiums, fewer jobs and new products, lower wages and benefits for working people, reduced access to health care, and higher taxes to pay for court costs. And the current system is very inefficient at its intended purpose – less than 15 cents of every tort-cost dollar goes to compensate plaintiffs.

Here's a video about the Tort Liability Index, which tracks which states have the best environment for business based on tort costs.

This is one reason why states like North Dakota have low unemployment while anti-business states like New York have high unemployment. And North Dakota has massive budget surpluses whereas New York is running massive deficits.

Is the Department of Justice refusing to defend the voting rights of whites?

July 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to update my readers about a case of voter intimidation by a group of black racists called "The New Black Panthers". They intimidated white voters in Philadelphia during the 2008 election, by *carrying weapons in front of a polling place.* The Obama administration dropped the charges against them.

Here's some of the raw video:

And here's some eyewitness testimony:

Fox News reports on the original story and the latest development – an ex-DOJ official has come forward to explain what really happened behind the scenes.

Excerpt:

> J. Christian Adams, testifying Tuesday before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, said that "over and over and over again," the department showed "hostility" toward those cases. He described the Black Panther case as one example of that — he defended the legitimacy of the suit and said his "blood boiled" when he heard a Justice official claim the case wasn't solid."It is false," Adams said of the claim.
>
> "We abetted wrongdoing and abandoned law-abiding citizens," he later testified.
>
> The department abandoned the New Black Panther case last year. It stemmed from an incident on Election Day in 2008 in Philadelphia, where members of the party were videotaped in front of a polling place, dressed in military-style uniforms and allegedly hurling racial slurs while one brandished a night stick.
>
> […]Adams has described the case as open-and-shut and said Tuesday that it was a "very low moment" to hear Perez make that claim.
>
> But he described the department's hostility toward that and other cases involving black defendants as "pervasive." Adams cited hostility in the department toward a 2007 voting rights case against a black official in Mississippi who was accused of trying to intimidate voters. Adams said that when the Black Panther case came up, he heard officials in the department say it was "no big deal" and "media-generated" and point to "Fox News" as the source.

I thought it might help my readers if I posted these videos of Megyn Kelly debating the head of the New Black Panthers, so you can see how they respond to the charges yourself. After all, it's good to hear both sides.

Part 1:

Part 2:

Why would the Department of Justice side with the New Black Panthers against voters

who just want to exercise their right to vote? This whole thing reminds me a lot of ACORN and the voter fraud problems they've been having. Obama used to work for ACORN, and the head of ACORN endorsed Obama.

Voter intimidation. Voter fraud. Barack Obama.

Walter Williams explains why the free market is better for consumers

July 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams

His column is here.

He is talking about whether we people should take their services and products from *businesses* or from *government.*

Excerpt:

> Compare our level of satisfaction with the services of those "in it just for the money and profits" to those in it to serve the public as opposed to earning profits. A major non-profit service provider is the public education establishment that delivers primary and secondary education at nearly a trillion-dollar annual cost.
>
> Public education is a major source of complaints about poor services that in many cases constitute nothing less than gross fraud.
>
> If Wal-Mart, or any of the millions of producers who are in it for money and profits, were to deliver the same low-quality services, they would be out of business, but not public schools. Why? People who produce public education get their pay, pay raises and perks whether customers are satisfied or not. They are not motivated by profits and therefore under considerably less pressure to please customers. They use government to take customer money, in the form of taxes.
>
> The U. S. Postal Service, state motor vehicle departments and other government agencies also have the taxing power of government to get money and therefore are less diligent about pleasing customers. You can bet the rent money that if Wal-Mart and other businesses had the power to take our money by force, they would be less interested and willing to please us.
>
> The big difference between entities that serve us well and those who do not lies

> in what motivates them. Wal-Mart and millions of other businesses are profit-motivated whereas government schools, USPS and state motor vehicle departments are not.

Businesses can only make money by *pleasing customers.* Customers who freely choose to trade money for products and services. But government can make money by *raising taxes.* All they have to do is tell lies, win popularity contests and buy votes.

Reason TV investigates school choice reforms in Louisiana

July 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, here's the story from the libertarians at Reason TV.

> Before hurricane Katrina ravaged the city in 2005, New Orleans had one of the worst performing public school districts in the nation. Katrina forced nearly a million people to leave their homes and caused almost $100 billion in damages. To an already failing public school system, the storm seemed to provide the final deathblow. But then something amazing happened. In the wake of Katrina, education reformers decided to seize the opportunity and start fresh with a system based on choice.
>
> Today, New Orleans has the most market-based school system in the US. 60% of New Orleans students currently attend charter schools, test scores are up, and talented and passionate educators from around the country are flocking to New Orleans to be a part of the education revolution. It's too early to tell if the New Orleans experiment in school choice will succeed over the long term, but for the first time in decades people are optimistic about the future of New Orleans schools.

And then the videos.

Part 1:

Part 2:

School choice works – let's hope they can keep the unions and bureaucrats away from the kids long enough so that they can get an education. I'm not a big fan of libertarians, because they are often lousy on social issues and foreign policy. But I agree with them on school choice.

Don't miss the previous story about Governor Bobby Jindal's pro-life reforms in Louisiana.

Pastor relieved of duties for mentioning Jesus in NC legislature

July 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Life Site News. (H/T Fox News via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A North Carolina pastor was relieved of his duties as honorary chaplain with the state House of Representatives for closing a prayer with Jesus' name.
>
> "I was made to feel like a second class North Carolinian when I was told that my services would no longer be needed if I could not offer the opening prayer in the manner prescribed by the House of Representatives, rather than in the manner my Biblical faith requires," said Pastor Ron Baity.
>
> "It appears that only those religious leaders willing to pray a government-prescribed prayer will be given the honor of participating in this legislative prayer exercise in the future."
>
> Pastor Baity of Berean Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, had been invited to offer opening prayers in the North Carolina House of Representatives during the week of May 31.
>
> When he arrived at the legislative chamber on May 31 and gave a transcript of his prayer to the clerk, he saw her eyes immediately drop to the end of the prayer.
>
> "When I handed it to the lady, I watched her eyes and they immediately went right to the bottom of the page and the word Jesus," he told FOX News Radio. "She said 'We would prefer that you not use the name Jesus. We have some people here that can be offended.'"
>
> "I told her I was highly offended when she asked me not to pray in the name of Jesus because that does constitute my faith," Baity said. "My faith requires that I pray in His name. The Bible is very clear."

But maybe the ACLU will come to his aid and protect his right to free speech?

> The American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina said that there is no right to offer sectarian prayer before a legislative session.
>
> "When you are doing an opening legislature prayer, you are acting as the government mouthpiece, not as a private citizen," legal director Katy Parker said. "The government has an obligation to stay neutral on matters of religion so that all citizens in North Carolina are included by their government."

The ACLU not only doesn't defend free speech and religious liberty, but they actually are actively suppressing free inquiry when it comes to things like Darwinism. They're not in

favor of academic freedom.

British Medical Association opposes therapy for unwanted same-sex attraction

July 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from the Sydney Morning Herald written by Polly Vernon, talks about Grindr, which is an iPhone application that facilitates anonymous sex between strangers in the gay community. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM) I want to talk about Grindr first, in order to set up the news story below.

Excerpt:

> Ever heard of Grindr? If you have, I'm going to guess that you are male and gay; or male, technically straight and somewhat curious; or the straight friend of a gay man. If not, allow me to enlighten you.
>
> Grindr (pronounced "grinder") is a free downloadable iPhone app which, it promises, will help you "Find gay, bi, curious guys for free near you!" Grindr harnesses GPS, allowing you to establish who else in your direct vicinity is also using Grindr. It shows you — on a gridded display — who these men are and what they look like; it will tell you how far away from you they are standing; and it will allow you to "chat" them, if they take your fancy.
>
> […]Grindr was launched on March 25, 2009; now more than 700,000 (and counting) men in 162 countries are using it to phenomenal effect, if J, W, Kevin and the other gay men I've asked are any kind of a guide. "I've never, ever had so much sex in my life!" R told me gleefully. "I've probably had as much in the past eight months of Grinding as I have over the 20 years since I came out. Maybe more."
>
> […]Others condemn it more directly. "Grindr's addictive," writes one man — the ex-boyfriend of a close friend — by email. "A lot of gay men have addiction issues . . . Things like Grindr . . . enable that sort of sex, sex which is compulsive and which dehumanises you; and means you in turn dehumanise the people you are having sex with."
>
> He puts me in touch with G, a man he met while seeking treatment for sex addiction. "I've lost entire weekends to sex," writes G. "Downloading porn, going on Grindr, meeting men whose names I don't find out, having sex; downloading more porn."
>
> "Low self-esteem," says Todd. "I see it a lot in gay men – it's inevitable after years of repression and shame. And what's better for self-esteem than someone having sex with you?"

I noticed, in a Life Site News story, that people in Britain who would like to get therapy for their unwanted same-sex attractions may soon be blocked from doing so.

Excerpt:

> The British Medical Association (BMA) has passed a motion asserting that therapy meant to treat unwanted same-sex attraction is harmful, calling on the Royal College of Psychiatrists and other professional bodies to repudiate such treatments and forbid them in their codes of practice.
>
> More than two-thirds of the doctors who voted supported the motion. They also said that alleged cases of conversion therapy funded by Britain's National Health Service should be investigated.
>
> […]The case echoes a similar suppression of therapies meant to help treat SSA in Spain. The Catalan government said in June that it would fine the clinic Policlinica Tibidabo if it was confirmed that it was carrying out such treatments.

Be sure and check out Wesley J. Smith's ideas on how this will impact the culture as a whole.

See below for some research showing the differences between heterosexual relationships and same-sex relationships.

Comments to this post will be strictly monitored in accordance with Obama's hate crime law.

Related posts

- New study shows that same-sex unions are less monogamous than heterosexual unions
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why do people favor traditional marriage over same-sex marriage?

Why Canada's response to the recession saved more jobs

July 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an amazing post from Ed Morrisey of Hot Air. (H/T Muddling)

Excerpt:

> Barack Obama likes to tell people that we should thank him for his interventionist economic policies, and that without them, unemployment would be much worse in the US than it is now. For instance, he told Racine that without his economic stimulus, we'd be at 12, 13, even 15% — even though Racine itself is at 14.2% unemployment. *D'oh!* Otherwise, this looks like a classic Churchill conundrum. Had the UK elected Winston Churchill as Prime Minister in 1936 and he fought Hitler early, forcing him from power, would Churchill have gotten credit for saving Western civilization? Or would he have been seen as a war monger, without the context of tens of millions of dead people in World War II?
>
> Actually, we can test the hypothesis in this case, at least to some extent. The financial collapse also battered our northern neighbor, Canada, although not quite to the same extent it did us. (Canada has more conservative banking and lending policies, which shielded them from the worst of the problems.) Instead of using a blizzard of government spending to correct a downturn in unemployment, Canada tightened its belt and rode it out.
>
> So how do the two compare?

Here's Canada's employment chart from their Statistics Canada web site – it shows how many thousands of people are employed.

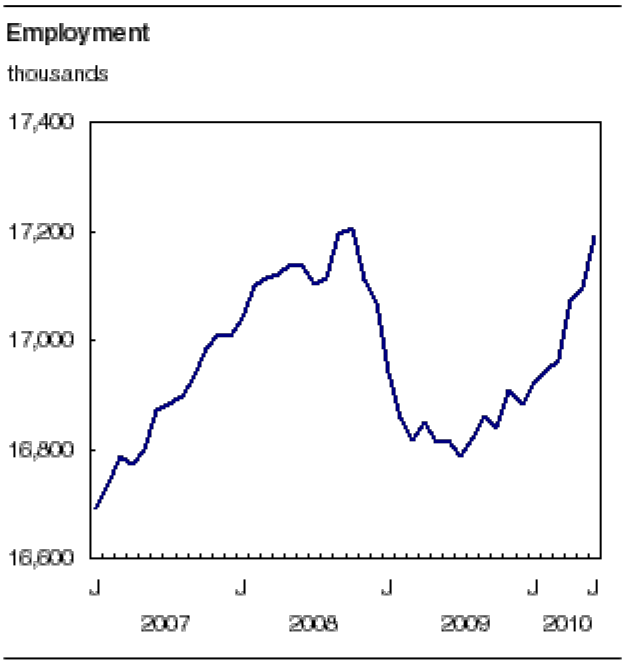

Source: Statistics Canada
Where's the recession? There is no recession in Canada.

And they say:

> Employment rose by 93,000 in June, pushing the unemployment rate down 0.2 percentage points to 7.9%. This is the first time the rate has been below the 8% mark since January 2009.
>
> Employment has been on an upward trend since July 2009, increasing by 403,000 (+2.4%). These gains offset nearly all the employment losses observed during the labour market downturn which began in the fall of 2008. The June unemployment rate, however, remained well above the October 2008 rate of 6.2%, due to a large increase in the number of people in the labour force over this period.

Yeah – they actually *delivered* the sub-8% unemployment rate that Obama *promised* and *failed* to deliver. And Ed hazards a guess as to why that may be.

He writes:

> For those who have trouble recognizing it, that's what a recovery looks like. Canada's job creation really *has* gone in the right direction, not simply plateaued at the nadir of the curve. Maybe Canada's private sector has been hiring because it doesn't have to worry about the price signals of the massive government interventions created by the Obama administration that the US private sector has to deal with.

We talked before about how businesses fear "bold experimentation" in economic policy from an interventionist government. That's the kind of thing that causes depressions, by the way.

Canada's unemployment rate started off HIGHER than ours, and it is not LOWER than ours. How can that be? Their economy is dependent on us! Well, they didn't act to "stimulate" the economy with massive government spending, and they've been signing free trade deals with everybody and their mother in order to diversify their trading so that we don't take them down with us. And it's working. Prime Minister Stephen Harper is an F.A. Hayek conservative, not a J.M. Keynes liberal. He doesn't believe in deficit spending.

Ah, the benefits of electing an economist to run your country, instead of a demagogue community organizer who sues banks and wants to "spread the wealth".

Department of Justice won't purge dead or ineligible voters from roll

July 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Pajamas Media. (H/T ECM and Foxfier)

Excerpt:

> In November 2009, the entire Voting Section was invited to a meeting with Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes, a political employee serving at the pleasure of the attorney general. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Motor Voter enforcement decisions.
>
> The room was packed with dozens of Voting Section employees when she made her announcement regarding the provisions related to voter list integrity:
>
> > We have no interest in enforcing this provision of the law. It has nothing to do with increasing turnout, and we are just not going to do it.
>
> Jaws dropped around the room.
>
> It is one thing to silently adopt a lawless policy of refusing to enforce a provision of federal law designed to bring integrity to elections. It is quite another to announce the lawlessness to a room full of people who have sworn an oath to fairly enforce the law.

And:

> Are there problems with list integrity? Yes, but that's a story for another article. Even worse than not bringing cases, the Holder Justice Department has dismissed a case against Missouri that the previous administration had started. In many places in Missouri, there are more voters than humans with a heartbeat old enough to vote. Instead of fully litigating the case to a favorable outcome, the DOJ made it go away, nicely, quietly, completely. Sound familiar?
>
> The blame-Bush instincts of this administration will no doubt lead to talk about all the cases the Bush DOJ didn't bring to open up public welfare agencies to voter registration. Good luck. I'd suggest citizens go online and see the Section 7 NVRA, or "Motor Voter," cases that were commenced under the Bush administration. Bush brought voter registration cases under Motor Voter against Arizona and Illinois.

This is in addition to dropping the voter intimidation charges against the New Black Panthers, in spite of the *video evidence* against them. And this story probably isn't going to be covered by the mainstream media, either.

Stephen C. Meyer vs. Chris Mooney on the Michael Medved radio show

July 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

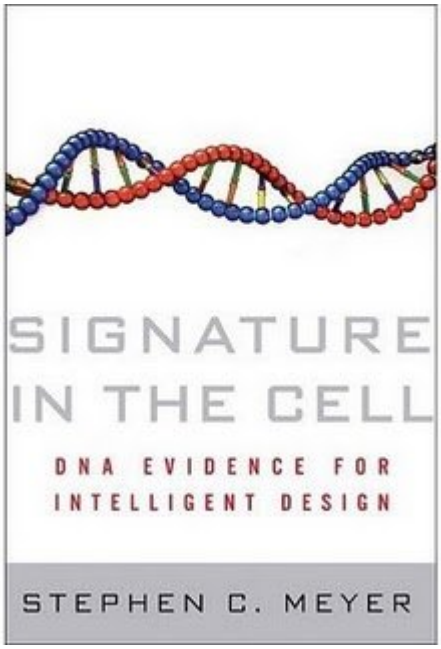

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer (Ph.D from Cambridge) takes on Chris Mooney (B.A. in *English*) on the scientific method. This is commercial-free.

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Topics:

- science and public policy, e.g. – global warming as science
- what is the definition of science?
- can scientific ideas be questioned by those who disagree with the consensus?
- should we allow scientists to debate scientific questions?
- is name-calling an adequate response to intelligent design?
- is it OK to be skeptical of scientific consensus?
- can a person with a BA in English be a “science journalist”?
- can a person with multiple degrees in science be a “scientific illiterate”?
- is evolution testable? is it falsifiable? can it be criticized at all?
- what about the Altenberg 16? are the “science-deniers” because they doubt Darwinism?
- are scientific theories open to being revised based on new evidence?
- what about the hundreds of credentialed scientists who dissent from evolution?
- what about solar cycles – isn’t that the cause of global warming?
- isn’t Al Gore making billions from the myth of global warming?
- what about documentaries like “An Inconvenient Truth”? Is that science?

- Should science journalists report both sides of scientific disputes?
- Should public schools teach the controversy surrounding scientific issues?

My impression of Mooney is that he never took a single high school course in math or science. English? Is that even something that you can get a degree in? Seriously? English? Shouldn't "science correspondents" have some qualifications

What is intelligent design?

- R.C. Sproul interviews Stephen Meyer on Signature in the Cell
- Stephen Meyer explains what intelligent design is in a CNN editorial
- Stephen Meyer's Signature in the Cell in top ten science books on Amazon.com
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show

Free documentaries on intelligent design

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

Related posts

- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell (Stephen C. Meyer)
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion(Stephen C. Meyer, Jonathan Wells)

First oil rig leaves USA for Egypt following Obama's talk of drilling ban

July 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Houston Chronicle. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> Diamond Offshore announced Friday that its Ocean Endeavor drilling rig will leave the Gulf of Mexico and move to Egyptian waters immediately — making it the first to abandon the United States in the wake of the BP oil spill and a ban on deep-water drilling.
>
> And the Ocean Endeavor's exodus probably won't be the last, according to oil industry officials and Gulf Coast leaders who warn that other companies eager to find work for the now-idled rigs are considering moving them outside the U.S.
>
> Devon Energy Corp. had been leasing the Endeavor to drill in the same region of the Gulf as BP's leaking Macondo well, which has been gushing crude since a lethal blowout April 20.
>
> But Diamond announced Friday it will lease the rig through June 30, 2011, to Cairo-based Burullus Gas Co., which plans to send the Endeavor to Egyptian waters immediately.
>
> Devon is one of three companies that has cited the deep-water drilling ban in trying to ease out of contracts to lease Diamond rigs. Diamond, a drilling company, said it expects to make about $100 million from the deal, including a $31 million early termination fee it recovered from Devon.
>
> **Larry Dickerson, CEO of Houston-based Diamond, signaled that other of his company's rigs could be relocated, too.**
>
> **"As a result of the uncertainties surrounding the offshore drilling moratorium, we are actively seeking international opportunities to keep our rigs fully employed," Dickerson said. "We greatly regret the loss of U.S. jobs that will result from this rig relocation."**

I went to sleep in the USA and I woke up in communist Venezuela.

You bash corporations, you lose jobs. Do you know what causes outsourcing of jobs? Attacking businesses with tariffs, regulations, lawsuits, and taxes. Environmental regulations, labor regulations, etc. That's what causes outsourcing of jobs. If you want businesses to start here, to stay here and to move here from abroad, you create a business climate with low taxes, minimal regulations, and no unions. We should be drilling in ANWAR and building nuclear power plants, not kicking out oil rigs. We needed those jobs.

What about Obamacare?

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> "Independent experts have found that the new health law will increase the cost of health insurance and health care services," the two doctor-senators say, noting the Congressional Budget Office concludes that "premiums for millions of American families in 2016 will be 10%-13% higher than they otherwise would be. This represents a $2,100 increase per family, compared with the status quo."
>
> Two thousand dollars more? Did something hidden in the 3,000 pages of the ObamaCare bill, which the White House and leading congressional Democrats moved heaven and earth to get passed, make those evil health insurers even greedier?
>
> Or is it greedy Uncle Sam? **As the senators point out, "According to an April 2010 memo from the Actuary of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the medical device and pharmaceutical drug fees and the health insurance excise tax will generally be passed through to health consumers in the form of higher drug and device prices and higher insurance premiums, with an associated increase in overall national health expenditures."**
>
> **Add to that the fact that according to the Joint Committee on Taxation, much of ObamaCare's new taxes will trickle down and end up being paid for by health care consumers. These include "the $60 billion tax on health plans, the $20 billion tax on medical devices and the $27 billion tax on prescription drugs." Makes you wonder which party is on the side of the little guy.**

Perhaps Obama was hoping that the businesses he is taxing would take the blame for the increases in premiums. That might have flown in the days before the Internet, but it doesn't fly today. But it gets worse – much worse.

What about deficit-spending?

More from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> **Based on current estimates, today's total federal debt of just over $13 trillion will hit $20 trillion by 2020. Beyond that, the coming retirement tidal wave of 65 million baby boomers will push Social Security and Medicare spending to stratospheric levels. America's debts will become crippling.**
>
> **By some estimates, total U.S. commitments for entitlements total $107 trillion over the next 75 years or so. That's an unpaid tax bill of $912,000 per household, or $351,000 for each child born today.**
>
> […]Today, the federal government alone is spending around 25% of GDP,

> compared with its long-term average of 18%. If expected massive deficits are closed with taxes rather than spending cuts, it will require a 25%-plus increase in the real size of government.
>
> That won't be the end of it. Absent serious spending cuts, spending will rise to 32% of GDP by 2030, Congressional Budget Office data show. At current levels, taxes on Americans would have to rise 78% to pay for all that spending. Ready for that?
>
> By the way, when state and local spending are added in, government in a few short years will take up more than half of all U.S. GDP. In short, the U.S. is essentially on the road to becoming just another stagnant, state-run welfare economy.

Suppose you were a young man with a decent salary. Should you make the decision to get married and have children? Children who will owe hundreds of thousands of dollars because Obama had to buy votes using taxpayer money? I guess Democrats don't want to be bothered with love, marriage and parenting. I guess Democrats just want a check from the government.

Muslims attack unarmed Christians in India and Turkey

July 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Hindu.

Excerpt:

> Two activists of the Popular Front of India (PFI) were arrested on Monday in connection with the attack on a professor at Muvattupuzha in Ernakulam district. Sources said 12 others, most of them with extremist links, were also taken into custody for interrogation.
>
> Ashraf, 37, of Mundeth, Mekalady, and Jaffar, 28, of Eramaloor, Kothamangalam, were remanded to judicial custody by the Judicial First Class Magistrate Court, Muvattupuzha.
>
> The right palm of T.J. Joseph, 53, professor of Malayalam in the Newman College, Thodupuzha, was chopped off by the assailants on Sunday. He, along with his mother and sister, was returning home from church when a gang of six waylaid his car and attacked him with an axe.

PFI is a Muslim organization. Kerala is not reputed to be a particularly extremist state. I heard that TN and AP are the two best ones. Maybe Shalini can correct me.

And I think the general trend in India is in favor of more religious liberty for Christians. But not so in Turkey.

National Review reports on more violence in Turkey.

Excerpt:

> For all the attention Turkey has gotten lately, very few Americans are aware that the Roman Catholic bishop serving as apostolic vicar of Anatolia was stabbed to death and decapitated last month by an assailant shouting, “Allahu Akbar! I have killed the great Satan!”
>
> There are fewer than 60 Catholic priests in all of Turkey, and yet Bishop Luigi Padovese was the *fifth* of them to be shot or stabbed in the last four years, starting with the murder of Fr. Andrea Santoro in 2006, also by an assailant shouting, “Allahu Akbar!” (An Armenian journalist and three Protestants working at a Christian publishing house — one of them German, the other two Turkish converts — were also killed during this period.)
>
> What’s going on? Why has traditionally secularist Turkey, with its minuscule Christian community (less than 0.2 percent of the population), lately become nearly as dangerous for Christians as neighboring Iraq? And why has this disturbing pattern of events so far escaped notice in the West?
>
> In a nutshell, all these violent acts reflect a popular culture increasingly shaped by Turkish media accounts deliberately promoting hatred of Christians and Jews.
>
> As it happens, Bishop Padovese was murdered on the same day (June 3) that the *Wall Street Journal* published an eye-opening report on how Turkey’s press and film industry have increasingly blurred the distinction between fact and fantasy, especially since the Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) took power in 2002.
>
> “To follow Turkish discourse in recent years has been to follow a national decline into madness.” That’s how Robert L. Pollock, editorial-features editor of the *Journal*, summed up the trajectory of the daily fare that shapes Turks’ attitudes toward the outside world — and toward non-Muslims in their midst. Indeed, much of what passes for fact in Turkish public discourse would be comical if not for the deadly consequences.

Turkey is really starting to scare me. They’re going the wrong way.

MUST-READ: How reliable are the “independent” reviews of Climategate?

July 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Last November there was a world-wide outcry when a trove of emails were released suggesting some of the world’s leading climate scientists engaged in professional misconduct, data manipulation and jiggering of both the scientific literature and climatic data to paint what scientist Keith Briffa called “a nice, tidy story” of climate history. The scandal became known as Climategate.
>
> Now a supposedly independent review of the evidence says, in effect, “nothing to see here.” Last week “The Independent Climate Change E-mails Review,” commissioned and paid for by the University of East Anglia, exonerated the University of East Anglia.
>
> […]One of the panel’s four members, Prof. Geoffrey Boulton, was on the faculty of East Anglia’s School of Environmental Sciences for 18 years. At the beginning of his tenure, the Climatic Research Unit (CRU)—the source of the Climategate emails—was established in Mr. Boulton’s school at East Anglia. Last December, Mr. Boulton signed a petition declaring that the scientists who established the global climate records at East Anglia “adhere to the highest levels of professional integrity.”

Let’s assess the reliability of the “independent” reviews.

> The Russell report states that “On the allegation of withholding temperature data, we find that the CRU was not in a position to withhold access to such data.” Really? Here’s what CRU director Jones wrote to Australian scientist Warrick Hughes in February 2005: “We have 25 years or so invested in the work. Why should I make the data available to you, when your aim is to try and find something wrong with it[?]”
>
> Then there’s the problem of interference with peer review in the scientific literature. Here too Mr. Russell could find no wrong: “On the allegations that there was subversion of the peer review or editorial process, we find no evidence to substantiate this.”
>
> Really? Mr. Mann claims that temperatures roughly 800 years ago, in what has been referred to as the Medieval Warm Period, were not as warm as those measured recently. This is important because if modern temperatures are not unusual, it casts doubt on the fear that global warming is a serious threat. In 2003, Willie Soon of the Smithsonian Institution and Sallie Baliunas of Harvard published a paper in the journal Climate Research that took exception to Mr.

> Mann's work, work which also was at variance with a large number of independent studies of paleoclimate. So it would seem the Soon-Baliunas paper was just part of the normal to-and-fro of science.
>
> But Mr. Jones wrote Mr. Mann on March 11, 2003, that "I'll be emailing the journal to tell them I'm having nothing more to do with it until they rid themselves of this troublesome editor," Chris de Freitas of the University of Auckland. Mr. Mann responded to Mr. Jones on the same day: "I think we should stop considering 'Climate Research' as a legitimate peer-reviewed journal. Perhaps we should encourage our colleagues . . . to no longer submit to, or cite papers in, this journal. We would also need to consider what we tell or request our more reasonable colleagues who currently sit on the editorial board."
>
> Mr. Mann ultimately wrote to Mr. Jones on July 11, 2003, that "I think the community should . . . terminate its involvement with this journal at all levels . . . and leave it to wither away into oblivion and disrepute."

There's billions of dollars of funding at stake in global warming alarmism – your money and mine. They're not going to just give that up.

Read the whole thing. And thanks to ECM for finding it.

Related stories

- NASA admits that their data is worse than CRU Climate-gate data
- 19 points that undermine the claims of global warming alarmists
- UN IPCC global warming alarmism based on student essay and magazine article
- How the UN's IPCC cites non-scientific claims from the World Wildlife Fund
- Chairman of UN's IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Britain to be hit by coldest winter in 100 years
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal
- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline
- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now

Christians charged with disturbing the peace for evangelizing Muslims

July 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Detroit News. (H/T The BlogProf)

Excerpt:

> Four Christian missionaries were arraigned today on misdemeanor charges of disturbing the peace following their June 18 arrest at the Arab International Festival.
>
> Negeen Mayel, 18, of California; Nabeel Qureshi, 29, of Virginia; Paul Rezkalla, 18 of New York, and David Wood, 34, also of New York, face fines of up to $500 each and up to 93 days in jail. Dearborn authorities said the four "chose to escalate their behavior, which appeared well-orchestrated and deliberate" as they handed out religious literature and talking with people at the festival. The woman and three men are members or founders of a group called "Acts 17 Apologetics."
>
> But Ann Arbor attorney Robert Muise, senior trial counsel with the Thomas More Law Center, said their constitutional rights were violated and they engaged in no illegal behaviors.
>
> "The encroachment of the First Amendment is just astonishing," said Muise, who said police confiscated the video cameras and have yet to return them, despite repeated requests. He said he would take the case to trial.
>
> "We're not going to plead to anything because we didn't do anything wrong," Muise said.

I think the authorities are pushing a load of bullcrap, and Nabeel confirms my suspicions in this video.

I can't believe this crap is happening in the United States of America. I hope the Acts 17 guys fight this and embarrass the Dearborn authorities in the public square.

The BlogProf has more videos.

Book give-away: you could win a free copy of Signature in the Cell!

July 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

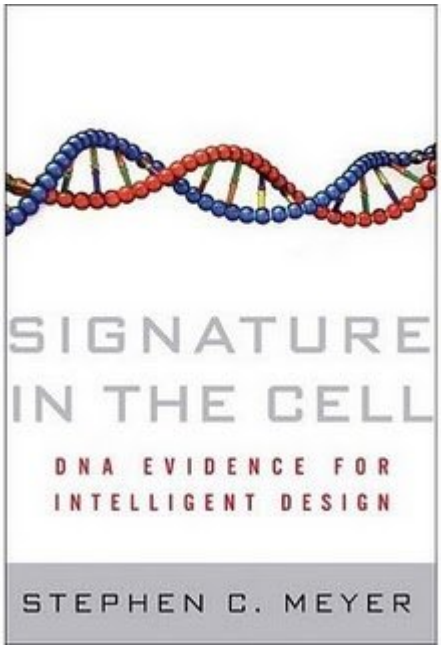

Just click this link and leave a comment there. (H/T Evolution News)

Video:

Excerpt:

> Today is July 14, and today's contest is sponsored by Signature In The Cell, by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. **[5] FIVE** lucky winners will receive a copy of Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book, *Signature In The Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design.*
>
> Unlike previous arguments for intelligent design, Signature in the Cell presents a radical and comprehensive new case, revealing the evidence not merely of individual features of biological complexity but rather of a fundamental constituent of the universe: information. That evidence has been mounting exponentially in recent years, known to scientists in specialized fields but largely hidden from public view. A Cambridge University-trained theorist and researcher, director of the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture, Dr. Meyer is the first to bring the relevant data together into a powerful demonstration of the intelligence that stands outside nature and directs the path life has taken.

Just leave a comment in that post I linked above (NOT IN MY POST!) and they'll contact you if you win. But you have to do it *today*.

Now if you were expecting a real post, then watch this fine debate with Paul Ryan and a couple of Keynesian journalists on CNBC. He does a good job winning them over, because he knows what he is talking about and he speaks with candor and conviction. We really need this guy to run for President in 2012 – I know he says he won't because his kids are

too small and his head isn't that big, but still.

Or you can read more about Signature in the Cell below.

What is intelligent design?

- R.C. Sproul interviews Stephen Meyer on Signature in the Cell
- Stephen Meyer explains what intelligent design is in a CNN editorial
- Stephen Meyer's Signature in the Cell in top ten science books on Amazon.com
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show
- Hear Stephen Meyer debate Chris Mooney on the Michael Medved show

Free documentaries on intelligent design

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

Related posts

- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell (Stephen C. Meyer)
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion(Stephen C. Meyer, Jonathan Wells)

Gay rights activist accused of sexually assaulting 17-year-old boy

July 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

News story from the Worcester Telegram, a local Massachusetts newspaper. (DaTechguy via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Local gay activist Albert M. Toney III has been charged with sexually assaulting a 17-year-old youth last month in the locker room of the YMCA.
>
> A criminal complaint was issued June 28 charging Mr. Toney, 43, of 36 Fairview Ave., Holden, with two counts of indecent assault and battery, according to Central District Court records.
>
> The 17-year-old told investigators he was standing in front of a fan in the locker room of the YMCA at 766 Main St. June 15 when Mr. Toney, who was nude, approached him from behind, grabbed his buttock and pressed himself up against him without his consent, according to a statement filed in court by police Sgt. John W. Lewis. Mr. Toney, a former Worcester police officer, then allegedly invited the 17-year-old to join him in the steam room.
>
> […]A longtime gay activist and advocate for gay and lesbian youth, Mr. Toney is president of AK Consulting Services, an education/diversity training and consulting company.
>
> He was active in the campaign for same-sex marriage rights in Massachusetts and was the first openly gay candidate to run for Worcester City Council.

Do not even think about commenting on this post while Obama's hate crime law is still in force.

Related posts

- Gay rights activist convicted of manslaughter
- Gay rights activist who ran pedophile ring gets life sentence
- Gay health expert charged with selling adopted 5-year old boy for sex

Barbara Kay traces the source of anti-male statistics used by feminists

July 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barbara Kay

Her latest column in the National Post.

Excerpt:

> In the latest example of myth-making on the connection between sports and domestic violence, England's Association of Chief Police Officers stated in May that during the World Cup "cases of domestic abuse increase by nearly 30% on England match days." The figure came from a study sponsored by the British Home Office, so it seemed credible. The shocking figure sparked a big publicity campaign, with a lurid poster featuring a cowering woman covered in bruises and the imprint of a man's shoe.
>
> […]An actually trustworthy study done by the London Metropolitan Police Authority contradicted the thirty percent "finding," but by then the media had a story that was too good to check for veracity.
>
> […]Anyone remember the big 1993 Super Bowl Sunday hoax? The media all jumped on a bad statistic and ran with it then too. It was "reported" that domestic violence increased by 40% during the Super Bowl. Journalists called it the "abuse bowl" and NBC ran a public service announcement telling men to stay calm during the game or they would end up in jail.
>
> In the same year the National Coalition against Domestic Violence circulated a brochure in which they claimed that half of American women would face violence from their mate and that "more than a third are battered repeatedly every year." This is simply an outrageous lie – fewer than one percent of the female population can be said to be "battered" – but such was the hysteria around the subject of domestic violence at the time, that people were ready to believe all men were basically monsters.

> Only one reporter, Ken Ringle of the Washington Post, actually ran down the stat to its source, which was an offhand comment by a feminist activist at a press conference. It was made up out of whole cloth. There was no actual increase of domestic violence during the game. And for the past 17 years since that Super Bowl, no one has found a domestic violence link to it.

Thank you Barbara Kay for telling the truth and defending men from irrational fears and hatred.

Why do these feminist myths emerge? And why do so many women believe them? And why do so few women investigate these issues themselves? What do women have to gain from believing in myths?

Well, if all men are predators, then it seems reasonable to think that women shouldn't marry them, or trust them to be faithful protectors and providers. So what will women do for protectors and providers if men can be relied on? The answer is bigger government and more social programs – like taxpayer-funded abortions, taxpayer-funded day-care, taxpayer-funded IVF, etc. Laws may also be needed to control men's behavior to keep them from being bad, since men are so awful. Pretty soon, it will be illegal to even criticize women for anything they do. Oh wait – that is already punishable by jail in France.

How can a man afford to marry and start a family when he is paying 40% of his income in taxes to replace men with government and to control men's supposedly predatorial behavior? He can't!

Christina Hoff Sommers

Christina Hoff Sommers

Christina Hoff Sommers is my favorite feminist scholar. She's an equity feminist – that's the good kind of feminist that is so rare today.

- The Equality Pay Day Reality Check

- Baseless Bias and the New Second Sex

I read both of those articles and I may blog about them later, but they are all worth reading now. If you want a really good long article on the alleged discrimination against women in math and science classes, then read this. It is long – but because it's by Christina Hoff Sommers, it reads like poetry. You won't even look up until you're finished reading the whole thing. She is such a talented writer!

Tangling with an atheist commenter on the grounding of morality

July 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An atheist named Moo went after commenter Mary in the comments to this post. So I decided to step in.

Moo wrote this:

> Marriage is not about God. I am personally married, with 3 children and do not believe in the existence of a personal deity. You need to broaden your view of the world as most of the world does not believe the same as you do. Tolerance is a virtue that too many people underestimate. Your views of the topic should have any impact on the lives of people and their right to marry. This is an arrogant position as you assume that you have some moral authority.

Then I wrote this:

> Are you tolerant of Mary's view? Does Mary have a right to vote for policies like traditional marriage? Why is it "intolerant" when Mary thinks she's right, and yet not "intolerant" when you think you're right? Is Mary wrong? If you think so, then why aren't you "intolerant", according to your definition of intolerance? Where does this moral obligation to be tolerant come from, on atheism? To whom is the duty owed?
>
> More important, let's cut to the chase. My view is that atheists cannot ground morality rationally. If you disagree, you tell me where moral rules come from on your view, what is the means of existence of moral rules and moral obligations, and why should humans treat moral obligations as meaningful and prescriptive when it goes against their self-interest. Where does the free will necessary for moral choices come from? Why should an atheist sacrifice their live to save someone else – e.g. – by hiding Jews in Nazi Germany? Why is it rational, on atheism? Why is it rational for an atheist to do anything other than to pursue pleasure in this life? What else is there other than pleasure in an accidental universe than can be the motive for action?
>
> Atheism is the negation of meaningful morality. (That's my contention – it's the denial of morality)
>
> The statement "I am an atheist" is equivalent to saying "Morality is illusory". Dawkins should have called his book "The Morality Delusion", because morality is a delusion if atheism is true.

Then Moo wrote this:

> Yes, I am tolerant of Mary's views when they do not infringe on the rights of others. If Mary believes that her marriage requires a commitment to god then

> this is fine. Nobody other than her immediate family are impacted. A gay couple, atheist couple, whatever couple should not be impacted or offended.
>
> As for morals, you have made a common mistake of tightly coupling these with faith. Morals have been around longer that religion, is evident (to a lesser extent) in the animal kingdom.
>
> You seem to be implying that religious people are more moral than agnostic. Is that right? There is no need going into the evolutionary reasons for morals as i am sure that you will dispute the credibility of the scientist and science. Something for another debate ;-)

Then I wrote this:

> What do you mean by the word tolerate? Please define tolerance and explain why supporting traditional procreative marriage is intolerant but supporting the re-definition of marriage to include any arrangement between any number of people, animals and anything else is tolerant. Why is Mary intolerant because she holds to a different definition than you do, but you're tolerant and you hold to a different definition ("anything goes") than she does?
>
> I need you to answer my questions about morality, or I will assume that you think morality is illusory and there is no such thing as right or wrong. And no such thing as human rights. If that is true, then I will delete every comment you make that mentions morality or human rights. Either ground morality and human rights in your worldview or stop using moral language. Answer the questions. Ground the notion of morality or stop asserting how Mary ought to be.Ground the notion of rights on atheism or stop telling Mary that her ideas of morality violate other people's rights.

Then Anon wrote this: (he's smarter than I am, so he gets to the point faster)

> Again, what is your view of the kind of relationship promoted by the like of NAMBLA?

Then I asked Moo to answer the question Anon asked:

> Can you give Anon a direct answer on NAMBLA. Moral or immoral? And don't forget to answer my questions about how you ground moral values, moral duties, free will, moral accountability, motivation for self-sacrifical morality, and ultimate significance of moral decisions. I want this all explained within the worldview of atheism. How does that all work on atheism?
>
> Where do "rights" come from on atheism. Name a right and explain to me how it exists in reality. Where does it come from, on atheism? If you can't ground it, then what do you mean by using the word?
>
> Concepts like rights and morality and free will have no being in atheism. They don't exist objectively. They're not rationally grounded by an accidental, purely

> material, universe. You think you are referring to something real, but you won't be able to explain those concepts. They are theistic concepts.

Then Mary wrote this:

> Moo, on what basis do you say that impacting the rights of others (e.g. children) is immoral?

Then Moo wrote this:

> The largest basis would be my upbringing. The values that were instilled in me by my parents, life experience, such as travelling extensively and living in other countries with a variety of cultural norms. I think that this is true for most people no matter what their beliefs are. You might want to acquaint yourself with "The Evolution of Morality" by Richard Joyce as it describes that the morals/values that we have are not contrary to other evolutionary factors. They are not a negative, in fact they are the things that have allows the human species to populate this world and flourish more than any other creature.
>
> The specific issue I have with NAMBLA and generally people who could be deemed as "predators" is that they are impacting on the lives of others without their consent. There is a grey area around "what is the age of consent", however I do not have firm position on that as I would have to do more personal research if this was of interest.

And I wrote this:

> 1) If the moral standards are valid depending on "how I was raised" then in what sense is racism wrong if that's how the racist was raised. Or, to put it more bluntly, isn't it true that on your view NOTHING is right or wrong, people are just fed a bunch of customs depending on the culture of the time and place they were born into – which is ARBITRARY. And on atheism, morality is just ARBITRARY CUSTOMS, like driving on the left or right side of the road. "How I was raised".
>
> 2) Why is the population of this world by humans good, on your view? What makes humans so special, on your view, compared to any other creature who should "populate the world"? Explain where humans get their objective moral value compared to trees and snakes and maggots. And make sure that when you pick your criteria, that it isn't just your opinion. It has to be objective – i.e. real.
>
> 3) Why is it wrong to impact the lives of others without their consent, objectively? Is that just your opinion? Is it how you were raised? How about the opinions of another atheist, like STALIN, who killed 100 million innocent people because it was his opinion and how he was raised. Why are you right and why is he wrong, on atheism?

And this is why I believe atheists think that morality is illusory on atheism. If they act nice, it's because they are "aping" Christian morals that dominate the culture in this time

and place. To find out what atheists are really like, go to North Korea and other communist nations, and look at what goes on there. That's atheist morality. Nothing is really wrong or right – it's just how you were raised. And that's why Christians like William Wilberforce tried to stop slavery while atheists today kill unborn children and advocate for same-sex marriage to avoid being inconvenienced in the pursuit of sexual pleasure. They only think they think is "wrong" is that you're making them feel bad for their selfish hedonism.

There is no self-sacrificial morality on atheism – just selfish hedonism. They are trying to have a good time before they die and to avoid feeling bad about their immoral actions. And that's why they go along with any evil rather than fight it – because *there is no right and wrong objectively on atheism.* They want to use the force of law to stop you from making them feel bad as they redefine marriage in a way that denies children either a mother or a father. That's atheist "morality". Seek pleasure, and to hell with children's right to life and children's right to a mother AND a father. All that matters to atheists is that the strong are happy – who cares about the weak. It's survival of the fittest – that's atheist morality.

More about atheistic concepts of morality

- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Science czar advocated forced abortions, mass sterilizations and totalitarianism
- Science czar says trees should be able to sue and born babies are not human beings
- Psychology Today features atheists who think that they are moral
- Does prominent atheist Michael Ruse think that morality is real or illusory?
- Is there such a thing as genuine libertarian free will if naturalism is true?
- How do leading atheists understand morality on atheism?
- Is prescriptive morality rationally grounded on atheism?
- Can atheists be moral? (A series explaining the grounding of morality)

Some debates on God and morality

- Sean McDowell debates James Corbett on whether morality is grounded by atheism
- From Christianity Today, a written debate: Douglas Wilson vs. Christopher Hitchens
- From the University of Western Ontario, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs. Kai Nielsen
- From Schenectady College, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs Richard Taylor
- From Franklin & Marshall College, William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz (audio, video1, video2, video3, video4, video5, video6, video7)
- From the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, William Lane Craig vs. Louise Antony (part1, part2)
- A debate from the Unbelievable radio show between a Christian pastor and a lay atheist
- Transcript of debate between Greg Koukl and Skeptic Magazine editor

Michael Shermer

Does Obamacare really fund abortions with taxpayer dollars?

July 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remember when Obama said this?

From CNS News. (H/T Robb)

Excerpt:

> If you want proof that President Obama's Executive Order on taxpayer-funded abortion was a sham, look no further than Pennsylvania, says House Republican Leader John Boehner (Ohio).
>
> Boehner and other Republicans point to reports that the Health and Human Services Department is giving Pennsylvania $160 million to set up a new high-risk insurance pool that will cover any abortion that is legal in the state.
>
> "The fact that the high-risk pool insurance program in Pennsylvania will use federal taxpayer dollars to fund abortions is unconscionable," Boehner said in a statement on Tuesday.
>
> […]The conservative Family Research Council says the $160 million in taxpayer funds for Pennsylvania is the first known instance of direct federal funding of abortions through the new high-risk insurance pools.
>
> The abortion funding for pool participants validates the arguments pro-life groups made throughout the health care debate – that taxpayer dollars will fund abortions, said Tom McClusky, senior vice president of the Family Research Council's political action arm.
>
> "For our efforts to remove the bill's abortion funding, we were called 'deceivers' by President Obama and 'liars' by his allies. Now we know who the true deceivers and liars really are,' McClusky said.
>
> "This action by the Obama Administration also exposes the worthlessness of President Obama's Executive Order that supposedly would prevent federal funding of abortion, but which both sides, including Planned Parenthood, agreed was unenforceable.
>
> […]McClusky noted that the new health care law also includes $12.5 billion for community health centers, and $6 billion for co-ops, both of which can fund abortions. And some people will use tax credits to help them pay for plans that cover abortion.
>
> Even before it's fully implemented, the Democrats' health care plan "is already being exposed as a high-taxing, poorly thought-out, and taxpayer-funding-of-abortion monstrosity," McClusky said.

More here from Fox News.

> Commenter MCS writes:
>
> Health and Human Services Department spokeswoman Jenny Backus has issued a response saying the abortion funding won’t occur and officials in both states are revising their information that initially stated it would.
>
> Read the rest of the article here:
>
> http://www.lifenews.com/nat6540.html

Paul Ryan takes on Democrat Brad Sherman on the worsening economy

July 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video is here – from Larry Kudlow's show on CNBC. (8 minutes)

The Democrat blames Bush and calls for *more government spending.*

Here he is in Congress making his stand. (4 minutes)

The Veronique he mentions is Veronique de Rugy, whose work I blog about all the time.

Fred Barnes of the Weekly Standard is calling for Republicans to embrace Ryan's Road Map for America.

Excerpt:

> For Republicans, the Road Map authored by congressman Paul Ryan of Wisconsin is the most important proposal in domestic policy since Ronald Reagan embraced supply side economics in the 1980 presidential campaign. It's not only the freshest, boldest, and most comprehensive Republican thinking, it's also the most relevant. If Republicans adopt the Road Map as their basic ideological blueprint, it offers them the prospect of a landslide in the midterm election this year, followed by victory in the presidential election in 2012.
>
> For sure, that's a lot of weight for a policy statement drafted by a 40-year-old House member to bear. But the Road Map is perfectly timed to deal with the crises of the moment: economic stagnation, uncontrolled spending, the deficit and long-term debt, soaring tax rates, health care, the housing problem, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid.
>
> Yet Republican leaders are wary of endorsing it, and for understandable reasons.

He lays out three reasons why the Republicans should swallow their fears and embrace Ryan's plan.

Here's the third reason he lists:

> The third reason is the Republican message (or the absence of one). In Pennsylvania, it was "send a message to Nancy Pelosi." Voters declined. I like the Republican slogan that worked so well in 1946—"Had enough?" But a slogan is not a message. The Road Map is a message. The country is falling apart, we're going broke, government is on a takeover binge, the economy is wobbling. The Road Map is the solution. That's a pretty good message.
>
> Those who tremble at the thought of pushing a big idea should remember the campaign of 1980. Reagan, who for years had warned of the evils of government spending and overreach, suddenly became the champion of an across the board, 30 percent cut in tax rates for individuals and business.

> That was very risky. The elder George Bush called it “voodoo economics.” Democrats were certain the whopping tax cut would turn the country against Reagan. Quite the opposite occurred. Reagan would have defeated Jimmy Carter without it, but not by the 10 percentage points he actually won by. The tax cut showed Reagan was serious about reviving the economy and not at all a weakling like Carter.

It’s good to be a Republican when we have guys like Paul Ryan. Let’s put him in charge and implement his bold ideas.

Obama’s health care rationing czar has guaranteed health care for life

July 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Byron York. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Donald Berwick, recess-appointed by President Obama to head Medicare and Medicaid, is a well-known advocate of health care rationing and admirer of Britain’s National Health Service. Rising health costs and limited resources “require decisions about who will have access to care and the extent of their coverage,” Berwick wrote in 1999. Last year, he said, “The decision is not whether or not we will ration care — the decision is whether we will ration with our eyes open.” Of the NHS, Berwick says simply, “I love it,” adding that it is “one of the great human health care endeavors on earth.”
>
> As it turns out, Berwick himself does not have to deal with the anxieties created by limited access to care and the extent of coverage. In a special benefit conferred on him by the board of directors of the Institute for Health Care Improvement, a nonprofit health care charitable organization he created and which he served as chief executive officer, Berwick and his wife will have health coverage “from retirement until death.”

Rationing for thee, but not for me. It’s the leftist way. And similarly, you can bet that Barack Obama is not going to wait in line for his health care. But you will. Just give him your money and trust him, OK?

Related posts

- Obama appoints a socialist to run Medicare and Medicaid
- Obama nominates NHS-loving socialist as health care czar

Why won't Obama sue "sanctuary cities" for breaking immigration laws?

July 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the Washington Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A week after suing Arizona and arguing that the state's immigration law creates a patchwork of rules, the Obama administration said it will not go after so-called sanctuary cities that refuse to cooperate with the federal government on immigration enforcement, on the grounds that they are not as bad as a state that "actively interferes."
>
> […]"For the Justice Department to suggest that they won't take action against those who passively violate the law who fail to comply with the law is absurd," said Rep. Lamar Smith of Texas, the ranking Republican on the House Judiciary Committee and chief author of the 1996 immigration law. "Will they ignore individuals who fail to pay taxes? Will they ignore banking laws that require disclosure of transactions over $10,000? Of course not."
>
> […]Mr. Smith said the administration doesn't appear to understand his law, which requires localities to share information on illegal immigrants with federal authorities.
>
> "The White House is just plain wrong on the premise since the Arizona law mirrors federal law — it does not 'interfere' with it," he said.
>
> **The Arizona law, which goes into effect July 29 unless a court blocks it, requires authorities to inquire about the legal status of any detained person about whom they have reasonable suspicion might be in the country illegally. The law as amended specifically prohibits using race or ethnicity as a reason for suspicion.**
>
> […]On Wednesday, Michigan Attorney General Michael A. Cox [a Republican] filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the federal lawsuit arguing that Arizona's law is consistent with what Congress intended. He was joined by attorneys general from eight states and one territory.
>
> […]**Arizona officials have said the federal government has failed in its responsibility to police the borders, and the state is experiencing a crime wave spurred by illegal immigration. They have said the new law is meant to fill in the gaps in enforcement.**
>
> On Wednesday, two Republican senators — Jim DeMint of South Carolina and David Vitter of Louisiana — announced that they will introduce an amendment to a bill that would halt the Justice Department lawsuit by denying it federal funding.

It’s a double standard. They’re selectively enforcing the law in a way in order to buy votes from those who benefit from illegal immigration.

Lia Mills explains the difference between subjective and objective truth claims

July 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is pretty good! I like the way she speaks about these issues.

Her pro-life argument delivered on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Canada:

And a recent video in which arguing against euthanasia:

And her first pro-life speech has nearly a million hits on YouTube:

Not bad at all! I'd like to know what she's going to study in school to use this talent on a suitable challenge that will bear fruit for the pro-life side. She's from Toronto, so maybe she'll be Prime Minister of Canada some day.

Who benefits from the Democrats financial regulation bill?

July 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> The financial reform bill expected to clear Congress this week is chock-full of provisions that have little to do with the financial crisis but cater to the long-standing agendas of labor unions and other Democratic interest groups.
>
> Principal among them is a measure to make it easier for unions, environmental groups and other activist organizations that hold shares to put their representatives on the boards of directors of every corporation in the United States.
>
> […]Business groups are also rankled that the legislation would impose costly new burdens on airlines, utilities and other non-financial businesses that were victims rather than villains in the crisis, simply because they use financial derivatives to hedge their businesses against risks such as fluctuations in oil prices, interest rates and currencies.
>
> Such hedging practices played no role in the crisis, though they helped many businesses weather the financial turbulence and recession that followed in the aftermath of the Wall Street storm.
>
> Other provisions of the financial legislation, which goes before the full Senate on Thursday for a vote and likely passage, favor Democratic constituencies directly by requiring banks and federal agencies to hire and do more business with them.
>
> The bill would create more than 20 "offices of minority and women inclusion" at the Treasury, Federal Reserve and other government agencies, to ensure they employ more women and minorities and grant more federal contracts to more women- and minority-owned businesses.

CNBC explains more.

Excerpt:

> Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are the real 'black holes' in the inancial regulation bill before Congress and they both need to be addressed, Robert Pozen, Chairman of MFS Investment Management, told CNBC Monday."They were too political volatile to handle and are not in the bill," said Pozen who is a former vice chairman of Fidelity Investments.

The non-partisan libertarian Cato Institute think tank.

Excerpt:

> The House and Senate will soon vote on a finalized financial-regulation bill, one that was mostly hammered out in a closed-door conference between the two chambers. Legislators will have a stark, simple choice: support a bill that gives us more of the same flawed banking regulations, or reject it in the hopes that new congressional leadership next year will address the actual causes of the financial crisis.
>
> Perhaps it should come as no surprise that Sen. Christopher Dodd and Rep. Barney Frank, the bill's primary authors, would fail to end the numerous government distortions of our financial and mortgage markets that led to the crisis. Both have been either architects or supporters of those distortions. One might as well ask the fox to build the henhouse.
>
> Nowhere in the final bill will you see even a pretense of rolling back the endless federal incentives and mandates to extend credit, particularly mortgages, to those who cannot afford to pay their loans back. After all, the popular narrative insists that Wall Street fat cats must be to blame for the credit crisis. Despite the recognition that mortgages were offered to unqualified individuals and families, banks will still be required under the Dodd-Frank bill to meet government-imposed lending quotas
>
> […]While one can debate the motivations behind Fannie and Freddie's support for the subprime market, one thing should be clear: Had Fannie and Freddie not been there to buy these loans, most of them would never have been made. And had the taxpayer not been standing behind Fannie and Freddie, they would have been unable to fund such large purchases of subprime mortgages. Yet rather than fix the endless bailout that Fannie and Freddie have become, Congress believes it is more important to expand federal regulation and litigation to lenders that had nothing to do with the crisis.
>
> […]Washington subsidizes debt, taxes equity, and then acts surprised when everyone becomes extremely leveraged.
>
> Until Washington takes a long, deep look at its own role in causing the financial crisis, we will have little hope for avoiding another one. And the Dodd-Frank legislation, sure to be heralded as strong medicine for perfidious financiers, is actually not even a modest step in the right direction.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were not regulated AT ALL by this bill. And that's because the Democrats love the idea of giving loans to people for homes they can't afford. The trick is to overload the system and then redistribute wealth in the form of bailouts from the responsible people to the irresponsible people. It's not a reform bill. It's a job-killing bill that attacks businesses.

Remember that Democrats *forced* banks to make these loans in order to avoid discriminating against people who could not afford homes. They rebuffed efforts by the Republicans (including Bush and McCain) to regulate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, because they like the idea of giving people with no resident status, no job, and bad credit

homes anyway. That, and the low interest rates, is what cause the mess in the first place. And this “reform” bill did nothing to fix that problem.

Related posts

- Democrats caused the recession and Republicans tried to stop it

Stephen C. Meyer explains why intelligent design is science

July 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video here. (H/T Uncommon Descent via ECM)

And one more – what is the effect to be explained in the origin of life?

There was a recent radio debate on the topic of whether intelligent design is science: Stephen C. Meyer vs. Chris Mooney on the Michael Medved radio show.

What is intelligent design?

- R.C. Sproul interviews Stephen Meyer on Signature in the Cell
- Stephen Meyer explains what intelligent design is in a CNN editorial
- Stephen Meyer's Signature in the Cell in top ten science books on Amazon.com
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show

Free documentaries on intelligent design

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

Related posts

- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell (Stephen C. Meyer)
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion(Stephen C. Meyer, Jonathan Wells)

Sex education for kindergarteners proposed in Helena, Montana

July 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Family Research Council. (H/T Muddling)

Excerpt:

> Unfortunately, sex education that indoctrinates children into a liberal sexual ideology is no longer being found just in big cities and liberal "blue states." It's reaching even small cities in the heartland, like Helena, Montana–where Tuesday night, parents and other citizens will have their first chance to respond to an outrageous new K-12 health curriculum (pages 45-50) that's been proposed there.
>
> It would teach kindergarteners the names of male and female sex organs, first graders about homosexuality, and fifth graders about "oral or anal penetration." It would also teach sixth graders about sex changes, and high schoolers would be taught to "understand erotic images in art." These lessons aren't age-appropriate, and may result in more confusion than understanding. For example, in elementary school virtually *all* children like their own sex better than the opposite sex–we should not be planting the idea that this might mean they are "gay." In fourth grade they would learn that "taunting" and "teasing" may be illegal sexual harassment. Sadly, teasing and taunting are sometimes a fact of life for fourth graders, but they have nothing to do with sex. And here's the kicker–the program's implementation may be paid for with federal "stimulus" money.

You can kind of get an idea of what their goals are for your children. They want your children to oppose chastity and oppose traditional marriage, etc. and they think that these attitudes are healthy.They want your children to normalize behavior that you might think is unhealthy and immoral. And they don't ask parents for permission to indoctrinate your children. They take your money, and change your children's beliefs to match their worldview. And they tell the children not to tell their parents anything of what goes on in the classroom. In some places, there is no parental notification, and no opt out.

Here's a video with a sex educator squaring off against an FRC scholar.

There are real people pushing this on children – *your* children – and they're not sorry! And these are the people who decide how MY tax dollars will be spent, and the rules by which my kids and the neighbor's kids will be educated. This is what you get when you vote for Democrats.

Remember Kevin Jennings, Obama's safe schools czar. A vote for Obama was a vote to sexualize children.

Do miracles imply a violation of natural laws?

July 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article here.

Excerpt:

> Are miracles really possible? I'm not talking about how some describe a baby being born as "the miracle of life." I'm talking about biblical reports of Jesus walking on water, healing the blind, and physically rising from the dead. Atheists sometimes say miracles overturn the laws of nature—and that's not possible. Before considering the evidence, however, many skeptics have already decided that naturalism is true. But what about this? Do miracles—by definition—really overturn the laws of nature?
>
> In the foreword to The God Conversation, Lee Strobel notes how J.P. Moreland responded to this challenge with a simple defense: "The laws of nature are the way we describe how the world usually works. If someone drops an apple, it falls to the floor. That's gravity. However, if someone were to drop an apple and I were to reach over and grab it before it hit the ground, I wouldn't be overturning the law of gravity. I would simply be intervening. In a similar way, God is able to reach into the world that he created by performing a miracle. **He isn't contravening or overturning the laws of nature. He's simply intervening**" (7).

Human beings *are* non-material minds. We *have* bodies that our minds can control. We cause effects on our bodies by using our free will. And God is a non-material mind just like us. Only he doesn't have a body, so he can intervene at any point in space and exercise his will. It's not a violation of natural laws when we do it, and it's not a violation of natural laws when he does it.

Manufacturing sector suffered sharpest drop in June for the past 12 months

July 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Yahoo News. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> New evidence of a slowing economic rebound emerged Thursday in reports that manufacturing activity is slowing after helping drive the early stages of the recovery.
>
> Factory output fell in June, according to a government report on industrial production. It was the sharpest monthly drop in a year. And two regional manufacturing indexes sank this month. …
>
> Separately, the Labor Department said wholesale prices fell for a third straight month. Prices were pulled down by a drop in energy costs and the biggest plunge in food costs in eight years. But excluding those two volatile commodities, inflation was nearly flat. …
>
> Adding to concerns in the manufacturing sector were steep drops reported Thursday in the Empire State and Philadelphia Fed Manufacturing indexes.

CNN Money explains what went wrong for the Obammunists.

Excerpt:

> The U.S. Chamber of Commerce slammed President Obama's economic policies Wednesday, saying administration officials "took their eyes off the ball" and "neglected" to focus on job creation.
>
> A letter posted to the business group's site and a summit with 500 business leaders were the latest moves in an ongoing battle between big business and the Obama administration.
>
> The two are at odds over the best way to keep the recovery from slipping into a double-dip recession. The Chamber believes tax cuts are key to job creation. The Obama administration, however, has focused on stimulus and spending to create jobs.
>
> The Chamber said in its letter that the administration "vilified industries while embarking on an ill-advised course of government expansion, major tax increases, massive deficits and job-destroying regulations."

Democrat voters think that a left-wing president who opposes free trade deals with Panama, Colombia, etc., and who implements socialist policies will help the working man to keep his job. But they could not be more mistaken. Attacking businesses causes businesses not to hire anyone. And workers won't spend money when they are afraid of

their job disappearing. Which business hires people when there is no demand for products and services? Government's job is to encourage businesses to hire by cutting regulations and taxes – that's what creates sustainable consumer demand.

Just wait until he legalizes 20 million illegal immigrants. Then his union buddies will really get a little lesson in supply and demand.

Acts 17 video shows apologists were peacefully engaged before arrests

July 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Dearborn police have returned the video cameras to Nabeel Qureshi, David Wood and the rest of the Acts 17 team.

The video clearly shows that the Acts 17 guys were just engaged in peaceful discussions with Muslims – they were in fact responding to questions and challenges from the Muslims at the exact moment when they were arrested. There was no disturbing the peace. No one was even yelling.

Here's another video of a different apologist being arrested.

Here is the video giving an update about what happened at the arraignment and the police report.

Isn't it amazing that this was presented to the public as Christians inciting violence? Nabeel was talking to people, and he was arrested. Negeen was arrested for *filming*. Is filming in public now a crime? Is answering people's questions now a crime? It is in Dearborn, Michigan.

Related Posts

- Christians charged with disturbing the peace for evangelizing Muslims
- MUST-SEE: Police arrest Christians for distributing the gospel in Dearborn

Funny videos from Christian comedian Brad Stine

July 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

People who complain about the weather.

God is my co-pilot bumper sticker.

Obama bumper sticker removal kit:

Saturday night fun!

Bobby Jindal explains how Obama's drilling moratorium will cost jobs

July 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bobby and Supriya Jindal

Story here in the Washington Post. (H/T Ace of Spades)

Excerpt:

> Against this backdrop, the federal government unwisely chose to add insult to injury by decreeing a moratorium on deepwater drilling in the gulf. This ill-advised and ill-considered moratorium, which a federal judge called "arbitrary" and "capricious," creates a second disaster for our economy, throwing thousands of hardworking folks out of their jobs and causing real damage to many families. Now this federal policy risks killing 20,000 more jobs and will result in a loss of $65 million to $135 million in wages each month.
>
> To ensure that such a disaster does not happen again, should the federal government increase oversight, or require additional and better equipment or on-site federal inspectors, or even temporarily pause drilling at specific rigs for additional reviews? Of course. Could it? Of course. But by simply stopping all deepwater drilling, federal officials appear more interested in ideology and scoring political points — as they have done with the misguided cap-and-trade legislation — at the expense of Americans who derive their livelihood from the energy industry.
>
> Let's be clear: This moratorium will do nothing to clean up the Gulf of Mexico, and it is already doing great harm to many hardworking citizens. The effects will extend well beyond Louisiana. **Since the moratorium was announced, America has already lost two rigs to foreign countries. More drilling companies are negotiating right now to work elsewhere. Every time we decrease our level of production, we make America more dependent on foreign sources of energy.**

> On those few occasions when our country suffers a commercial airline tragedy, we do not respond by stopping all air travel for six months. Rather, we get to work figuring out the root cause and set about trying to make air travel safer. We don't grind everything to a halt and put tens of thousands of people out of work, jeopardizing our economy.

And these jobs are typically *male* jobs, so you really undermining the man's role as protector and provider in the family when you go after jobs typically done by men. And I'm sure that some of the foreign countries we buy oil from are not sympathetic with American national security and foreign policy.

What about Paul Ryan?

But Jindal's not the only one making sense in the news. (H/T Hot Air)

I hope that Bobby Jindal and Paul Ryan run for President in 2012. Ryan is passionate and informed about the budget, and Jindal is passionate and informed about business and job creation. Let's elect some grown-ups, and get back to the 4.5% unemployment rate that we had under George W. Bush.

How rational are leftist fears of overpopulation and food shortages?

July 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Three nice short videos introduce the issues of overpopulation and the demographic crisis.

Overpopulation:

Demographics:

Food Production:

I actually have talked to some people who believe these myths, and I have developed a theory about what sorts of childhood experiences cause them to form these beliefs.

More importantly, I've also noticed that anxiety over these myths can manifest itself publicly in support for policies like taxpayer-funded abortion and global warming. The people who worry most about counter-factual doomsday predictions are *Democrats.*

Consider the connections between abortion, global warming, mass sterilizations, and overpopulation fears in the thinking of Barack Obama's science czar John Holdren in the links below. His belief in these myths will be affecting public policy.

Related posts

- Science czar says trees should be able to sue and born babies are not human beings
- Science czar advocated forced abortions, mass sterilizations and totalitarianism

ADF defends professor who was fired by U of I for being Catholic

July 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Ken Howell

First, the story from Human Events:

Excerpt:

> Leftists also have only one sacrament: sex. The orgasm is the source and summit of all bodily pleasure, and to suggest that sexual activity between consenting persons might have a moral content is nothing short of bigotry.
>
> And so it is that a Catholic professor at the University of Illinois has recently had his employment terminated. What for? The university hired him to teach two courses, Introduction to Catholicism and Modern Catholic Thought, during the course of which he had the effrontery to educate his students in the natural law philosophy which informs the Catholic Church's teaching that homosexual acts are sinful. That's philosophy, not theology.
>
> Check out the damning email, and one sees that nowhere did this professor, Dr. Kenneth J. Howell, refer to the Christian Scriptures, the writings of the Church Fathers, or the pronouncements of the Catholic magisterium:
>
> "Natural Moral Theory says that if we are to have healthy sexual lives, we must return to a connection between procreation and sex. Why? Because that is what is REAL. It is based on human sexual anatomy and physiology. Human sexuality is inherently unitive and procreative. If we encourage sexual relations that violate this basic meaning, we will end up denying something essential about our humanity, about our feminine and masculine nature....
>
> "As a final note, a perceptive reader will have noticed that none of what I have said here or in class depends upon religion. Catholics don't arrive at their moral conclusions based on their religion. They do so based on a thorough understanding of natural reality."
>
> One student found this offensive:
>
> "I am in no way a gay rights activist, but allowing this hate speech at a public

> university is entirely unacceptable…. Teaching a student about the tenets of a religion is one thing. Declaring that homosexual acts violate the natural laws of man is another. The courses at this institution should be geared to contribute to the public discourse and promote independent thought; not limit one's worldview and ostracize people of a certain sexual orientation."

How you can help, from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> But Howell refused to leave without a fight, and now he has over 3,100 supporters fighting with him — via a Facebook group called "Save Dr. Ken."
>
> "It's turning into a whole movement for freedom of speech in the classroom," said senior Tim Fox, a member of the group and former resident at the university's Catholic student Newman Center.
>
> The "Save Dr. Ken" Facebook group includes alumni, current students and outside supporters who are familiar with Howell through his books or his appearances on EWTN, a Catholic television network. Howell is actively involved in the group and has written personal responses to some of his Facebook supporters.
>
> "Save Dr. Ken" is actively working to take its protest beyond Facebook. Its home page offers detailed instructions on how to protest Howell's dismissal, separately tailored to students, alumni and outside supporters. For example, the group asks alumni to cease donating to the university until Howell is reinstated. It also encourages members to donate to the Alliance Defense Fund, the legal alliance defending Howell's case.
>
> Members of the Facebook group are planning a prayer vigil on the university's quad. Students are also organizing a mass boycott of all university religion courses unless Howell is reinstated by the fall, Melissa Silverberg, editor-in-chief of the university's student newspaper, the Daily Illini, confirmed.
>
> Howell is a popular professor; his students voted for him to receive an "Excellence in Teaching" award last fall, and now they are rallying for him.
>
> Because Howell helped direct programs at the Newman Center, it has become a major player in the conflict. Monsignor Gregory Ketcham, the center's director, wrote in an e-mail to Newman residents that "We will seek to lobby for [Howell] to continue to teach Catholic courses on campus for University credit and for the Catholic cause on campus."
>
> Students at the center are not the only ones protesting. The campus secularist group, Atheists, Agnostics & Freethinkers, has taken up Howell's cause. Howell had worked with the group in the past, helping organize a public debate between an atheist and a Catholic on "Does the Christian God Exist?" last February. Its president wrote a letter to the university chancellor, Robert Easter, saying, "[Howell] has shown a commitment to the questioning of all ideas. His loss is a

> profound blow to the University of Illinois and its purpose… Who will next be silenced?"
>
> "Even people who disagree with what [Howell] taught think that his firing was wrong," said Silverberg.

And what the Alliance Defense Fund is doing, from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian legal group, has given the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign until the end of Friday to re-instate a professor who was relieved of his teaching duties following complaints he engaged in "hate speech" by teaching students about Catholic teaching on homosexuality in a course about Catholicism.
>
> In a letter to University officials, ADF attorneys say that Dr. Kenneth Howell lost his position simply for teaching the facts about a Catholic moral teaching, and that University officials have until July 16 to respond to demands that the university immediately reinstate Howell to his teaching position, or face court action.

Ah, the Alliance Defense Fund. Proof that you can be a lawyer and still be a good person. If I had children, I would be sure to tell my children that if they wanted to work for the ADF, all their law school expenses would be paid in full. That is, assuming I had income left over from paying for abortions, IVF and sex changes for Obama's special interest groups. Oh, well. Let's hope that someone repeals Obamacare before my future children are ready to go to university.

MUST-READ: Is Wes Widner right to oppose short-term mission trips?

July 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a challenging post about short-term missions (1-3 weeks) from Wes Widner. Read and see what you think.

Excerpt:

> One of the biggest elephants in the evangelical, missiological, soul-winning room is the lingering question of just how much good short-term mission trips are and whether or not they merely amount to sanctified vacations taken at the expense of others.
>
> Now, to be fair, I'm not claiming that either the missionaries or those who fund them are intentionally nefarious. On the contrary; I believe that for the most part, those who go on short term mission trips and those who support them financially have honest evangelistic intentions. I am simply wondering whether we've fostered this "super spiritual" mindset around something we call "the mission field" and, as a result, neglect to ask the burdensome and unpopular questions of stewardship and effectiveness.

He explains how people misunderstand the great commission by thinking that it requires people to go to foreign lands, and then he writes this:

> Because of this misunderstanding of the great commission and what it truly means to make disciples of those around us, we tend to overlook questions of stewardship and logistics. In fact, since we think the imperative is to go we tend to start to think that any cost is acceptable and questions of logistics are a mere nuisance.
>
> How much does a round-trip plane ticket usually cost to travel overseas? $1,000, $2,000? More? Once you count the cost of food, lodging, transportation, etc. you can often approach figures well over $3,000 just to send a single person overseas. Is this really the best way to reach the lost?

I agree with him completely that it is not a good use of money to send laypeople as missionaries to foreign countries. However, I do think that it is worth it to send scholars with doctorates to foreign universities and other centers of influence to lecture and debate. So basically we agree on the stewardship question, except if the missionary is a scholar headed to a center of cultural influence. What laypeople can do instead of going themselves is to work hard in school, get good jobs, and to financially support Christian scholars in their studies and public events at home or abroad – e.g. – William Lane Craig debating Muslims in Turkish universities or debating atheists in Chinese universities, etc.

I also agree with Wes that the right way for laypeople to disciple non-Christians is to deal

with the people who are around you in your workplace, etc. The thing is, it is *much more difficult* to build a relationship with non-Christians on the same social rung as you are who you have to work with day in and day out. That's much harder because you have to live as a public Christian where you are, and let it affect your life more personally. This isn't flying off somewhere to deal with poor strangers who you will never see again. It's much *easier* to fly off somewhere and *not* to have to deal with people over the long-term. Flyig off to "do good" gives a person the feelings of "being good" and "doing something" but without any of the hard work and persecution of having peers equal to you in social standing seeing you every day bearing with suffering and striving for holiness. Instead of trying to squeeze feelings of goodness out of temporary experiences "helping the poor", we should be dealing with the smartest and most challenging people in our own lives – family, friends and co-workers. It's not as emotionally fulfilling and spectacular, but it's where God has placed us. It's harder, too.

Secretly sponsoring the PhD studies of an aspiring Christian philosopher, lawyer or scientist would be an excellent use of your money, although it is not as flashy or emotional as helping the poor in Africa. You can't really tell people back home about your spiritual experiences signing a check to bring in William Lane Craig to debate. You can't really show impressive pictures of yourself working overtime to keep your job so you have money to support influential Christians like Michele Bachmann or Jennifer Roback Morse. But we have to ask ourselves which is more effective – not which caters to our emotional needs to get attention to force spiritual experiences and to feel good about ourselves.

More Wes:

> Why do we go? Why do we really go? If our real aim is to make disciples as we are commanded to, then we will gladly step back and examine the questions raised above (and many will come to the conclusion that short-term, long-distance mission trips are simply not a good idea) but I believe the main reason most Christians go is to satisfy a desire for an emotional experience which they equate with "being close to God". And therein lies the heart of our dilemma.
>
> In the end, what's the difference?

> When we take vacations, we are expecting experiential reward. We don't expect to leave a lasting impact on the lands we travel to, and we expect to receive a euphoric high from our experiences. Sadly, most testimonies I hear from short-term missionaries are wholly self-centered (though they are couched in a plethora of "Jesus speak") with the focus being on the person as opposed to the message and often with little thought as to the lasting impact and cost vs. benefit to the congregation that helped send them.

We have a responsibility to God to think about what we are doing and produce results for him. We need to stop having pictures taken of ourselves hugging children in foreign countries, and to instead think about working hard in school, studying hard things that

matter, and saving our money, so we can actually move the ball forward. I know lots of Hollywood celebrities who make a big deal out of supporting animal rights and global warming, but they want nothing to do with chastity, fidelity, marriage, parenting, etc. Christians should not be thinking of Christianity as a fashionable cause that allows them to feel good and be recognized by others. We’re not Hollywood celebrities. We’re supposed to be concerned with truth, not feelings.

Massachusetts firms canceling health coverage due to rising costs

July 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Boston Globe. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The relentlessly rising cost of health insurance is prompting some small Massachusetts companies to drop coverage for their workers and encourage them to sign up for state-subsidized care instead, a trend that, some analysts say, could eventually weigh heavily on the state's already-stressed budget.
>
> Since April 1, the date many insurance contracts are renewed for small businesses, the owners of about 90 small companies terminated their insurance plans with Braintree-based broker Jeff Rich and indicated in a follow-up survey that they were relying on publicly-funded insurance for their employees.
>
> In Sandwich, business consultant Bill Fields said he has been hired by small businesses to enroll about 400 workers in state-subsidized care since April, because the company owners said they could no longer afford to provide coverage. Fields said that is by far the largest number he has handled in such a short time.
>
> "They are giving up out of frustration,'' Fields said of the employers. "Most of them are very compassionate but they simply can't afford health insurance any more.''
>
> […]The Massachusetts Division of Health Care Finance and Policy annually surveys employers and found no significant drop in coverage as of the end of 2009, when more than three-quarters of companies offered health insurance. But insurance brokers say the pace of terminations has picked up considerably since then among small companies, of which there are thousands in Massachusetts. Many of these companies — restaurants, day-care centers, hair salons, and retail shops — typically pay such low wages that their workers qualify for state-subsidized health insurance when their employers drop their plans.
>
> "Those employers are trying to keep their doors open, and to the extent they can cut expenses, they will cut health insurance because they know their people can go to Commonwealth Care,'' said Mark Gaunya, president of the Massachusetts Association of Health Underwriters, a trade group representing more than 1,000 brokers and other insurance professionals.

Remember, Obamacare is patterned after these state-run health care plans from Massachusetts and Tennessee. These plans try to cover more people, which increases demand. But supply is the same. What results is a shortage. Prices rise. And when prices price, employers can no longer afford to pay for health care coverage for their

employees. You can't keep your health care plan when the state takes over health care. They are going to have to cut costs and you are going to have your coverage limited.

Here's what the ultra-left-wing New York Times has to say about the move by companies to reduce health care choices and cut costs.

Excerpt:

> As the Obama administration begins to enact the new national health care law, the country's biggest insurers are promoting affordable plans with reduced premiums that require participants to use a narrower selection of doctors or hospitals.
>
> The plans, being tested in places like San Diego, New York and Chicago, are likely to appeal especially to small businesses that already provide insurance to their employees, but are concerned about the ever-spiraling cost of coverage.
>
> But large employers, as well, are starting to show some interest, and insurers and consultants expect that, over time, businesses of all sizes will gravitate toward these plans in an effort to cut costs.
>
> The tradeoff, they say, is that more Americans will be asked to pay higher prices for the privilege of choosing or keeping their own doctors if they are outside the new networks. That could come as a surprise to many who remember the repeated assurances from President Obama and other officials that consumers would retain a variety of health-care choices.
>
> […]But choice — or at least choice that will not cost you — is likely to be increasingly scarce as health insurers and employers scramble to find ways of keep premiums from becoming unaffordable. Aetna, Cigna, the UnitedHealth Group and WellPoint are all trying out plans with limited networks.
>
> The size of these networks is typically much smaller than traditional plans. In New York, for example, Aetna offers a narrow-network plan that has about half the doctors and two-thirds of the hospitals the insurer typically offers. People enrolled in this plan are covered only if they go to a doctor or hospital within the network, but insurers are also experimenting with plans that allow a patient to see someone outside the network but pay much more than they would in a traditional plan offering out-of-network benefits.

It's happening, folks. The only choice that liberals want you to have is the choice to kill unborn babies and to marry anyone or anything you want. They don't want you to have a choice to keep the money you earn, or to spend the money you earn on whatever you want. You can't buy health care products and services unless they *allow* you to buy health care products and services. They believe that the economy works better when you spread the wealth around.

Michele Bachmann files papers to create “Tea Party Caucus”

July 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Meet your future President, America

Story from radical left-wing extremists at CNN.

Excerpt:

> The 2010 midterms will offer Tea Party activists their first chance to elect their preferred candidates to national office. But once those candidates get to Washington, there might already be a “Tea Party Caucus” waiting to greet them.
>
> That’s because a Tea Party favorite, GOP Rep. Michele Bachmann, has filed paperwork to start such a caucus in the House.
>
> In a letter dated July 15 and sent to Rep. Robert Brady, the Democratic chairman of the House Administration Committee, Bachmann asked to register the group for the 111th Congress.
>
> Bachmann writes: “I would like to register the House Tea Party Caucus as a Congressional Member Organization for the 111th Congress. The House Tea Party Caucus will serve as an informal group of Members dedicated to promote Americans’ call for fiscal responsibility, adherence to the Constitution and limited government.”

Here’s some video from Fox News – she’s looking very comfortable in this interview.

By the way, you can contribute to her 2010 election campaign here. And you should. If there’s anybody that social conservatives, fiscal conservatives and foreign policy conservatives can support, it’s Michele. She is perfect across the board. I wish she were our President right now, but we have to wait till 2012 to see what will happen.

Related posts

- Why is the left so angry with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin?
- Michele Bachmann on Fox News with Laura Ingraham
- Democrats kill Michele Bachmann’s attempt to freeze federal salaries
- Michele Bachmann on the US taxpayer-funded bailout of Greece
- Michele Bachmann explains the Obama’s Wall Street bailout bill
- Michele Bachmann promises to work to repeal Obamacare
- Video of Michele Bachmann defending unborn children
- Michele Bachmann’s passionate and inspiring speech at CPAC 2010
- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven’t got?
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama’s latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare’s rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

Caroline Crocker’s new book recounts her experience of being expelled

July 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Caroline Crocker

Story from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> One of those incidents took place at George Mason University (GMU), where Caroline Crocker was ousted from teaching biology because she challenged to neo-Darwinian evolution and favorably mentioned ID in the classroom. Dr. Crocker later appeared in *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, but now many more details about Caroline Crocker’s story are revealed in her new autobiographical book, *Free to Think: Why Scientific Integrity Matters*.
>
> *Free to Think* tells the story of a biology professor who cares deeply about students, received glowing student reviews, wouldnâ€™t compromise her integrity when challenged to disregard anti-cheating rules, and produced high quality curricular tools. But Crocker had one fatal flaw: she would not capitulate to the Darwinian consensus in the classroom. When some GMU administrators learned that sheâ€™d challenged evolution, they told her that she had to be “disciplined” because she taught “creationism.” While GMU now denies that Crocker’s dismissal had anything to do with evolution, her book explains that this is most definitely *not* what she was told behind closed doors.
>
> But *Free to Think* is not some sob story. It contains heartwarming and amusing accounts of Crocker’s interaction with students. What struck me were the lengths to which Crocker would go to accommodate and help students facing difficult life circumstances. It is saddening (though not surprising) that she has received many attacks on her character from evolutionists who know neither Crocker nor her story.
>
> […]At the very time Crocker was told by her Department Head that she would be disciplined for challenging Darwin, she received a performance review from her

> Provost that called her teaching “outstanding” as “evidenced by unusually high student rankings”! The Provost even praised her, saying, “This kind of teaching quality is essential for this vital educational program, and we’re very grateful for your successful efforts.”
>
> Such statements hardly describe a teacher who would otherwise be expected to soon lose her job. Yet Crocker *did* subsequently lose her job, and we know exactly why. As Crocker documents in her book, her administrators didn’t want her challenging Darwin.

There’s more here.

And you can even listen to an interview she did with Casey Luskin about her new book.

I like Caroline Crocker a lot. I don’t talk about her as much as I do about Michele Bachmann or Jennifer Roback Morse, but she’s one of my heroes. I was disgusted with George Mason University for doing this to her. I remember Walter Williams saying at some point (maybe when he was guest hosting for Rush Limbaugh) that GMU is a normal liberal university with conservative departments of law and economics. That explains it.

Rhode Island police idle as gay activists disrupt marriage rally

July 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the National Organization for Marriage.

Excerpt:

> We had about 200-250 people show up for today's rally outside the Rhode Island State House. A little while later, about 150 gay marriage protestors showed up in red shirts. Initially they came around the back of our rally and tried to shout over us.
>
> Then they came right into our crowd (we had a permit for use of the area, as at all our rallies), getting in people's faces and shouting at our marriage supporters. As Father Codega was trying to speak, they got up behind him on the steps, shouting him down. At one point when I was at the microphone, I was physically surrounded by three people trying to shout me down as Capitol Police did nothing.
>
> These activists simply embarrassed themselves and their cause today. Mocking religion. Mocking children. I mean, what kind of adult goes up to a 7-year-old child and sneers, "Mommy raising you to be a good little bigot?"
>
> The biggest disappointment was that the Capitol Police, although they tried to keep order, failed so badly in keeping the crowds apart. We had a permit protecting our First Amendment right to speak and assemble on the South Steps today, and the police simply failed to protect those rights.

Photo:

Jennifer Roback Morse was in attendance and reports the details in the account are

accurate. The link above has more photos.

Government official fired for making racist comments at NAACP rally

July 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Upon viewing the full video, I think that the incident isn't really as bad as I initially thought, so I am retracting this post.

Here's the video:

There's your racism – and at an NAACP event, no less. They're the ones who are obsessed by race.

Big Government has the story. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> We are in possession of a video from in which Shirley Sherrod, USDA Georgia Director of Rural Development, speaks at the NAACP Freedom Fund dinner in Georgia. In her meandering speech to what appears to be an all-black audience, this federally appointed executive bureaucrat lays out in stark detail, that her federal duties are managed through the prism of race and class distinctions.
>
> In the first video, Sherrod describes how she racially discriminates against a white farmer. She describes how she is torn over how much she will choose to help him. And, she admits that she doesn't do everything she can for him, because he is white. Eventually, her basic humanity informs that this white man is poor and needs help. But she decides that he should get help from "one of his own kind". She refers him to a white lawyer.
>
> Sherrod's racist tale is received by the NAACP audience with nodding approval and murmurs of recognition and agreement. Hardly the behavior of the group now holding itself up as the supreme judge of another groups' racial tolerance.

And she's been fired for it. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FoxNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned.
>
> "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Finally we find some racism at a political rally – and it's all on the left side of the aisle.

UPDATE:

Another video:

From the BlogProf.

New peer-reviewed paper endorses irreducible complexity and intelligent design

July 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> A peer-reviewed paper, "Information and Entropy — Top-Down or Bottom-Up Development in Living Systems?," by University of Leeds professor Andy McIntosh in the *International Journal of Design & Nature and Ecodynamics* expressly endorses intelligent design (ID) via an exploration of a key question in ID thinking…

Notice that this journal is NOT related to the intelligent design movement in any way – this is a mainstream peer-reviewed journal.

The author of the paper has two goals:

> **(1)** First, he defines the term "machine" (a device which locally raises the free energy) and observes that the cell is full of machines. Such machines pose a challenge to neo-Darwinian evolution due to their irreducibly complex nature.
> **(2)** Second, he argues that the information in living systems (similar to computer software) uses such machines and in fact requires machines to operate (what good is a program without a computer to run it?). An example is the genome sitting on the DNA molecule. From a thermodynamics perspective, the only way to make sense of this situation is to understand that the information is non-material and constrains the thermodynamics so that the local matter and energy are in a non-equilibrium state.

And a bit later:

> …the presence of information is the *cause* of lowered logical entropy in a given system, rather than the *consequence*.
>
> …[T]here is a perfectly consistent view which is a *top-down approach* where biological information already present in the phenotypic creature (and not emergent as claimed in the traditional bottom-up approach) *constrains* the system of matter and energy constituting the living entity to follow intricate non-equilibrium chemical pathways. These pathways whilst obeying all the laws of thermodynamics are constantly supporting the coded software which is present within … Without the addition of outside intelligence, raw matter and energy will not produce auto organization and machinery. This latter assertion is actually repeatedly borne out by experimental observation – new machinery requires intelligence. And intelligence in biological systems is from the non-material instructions of DNA.

You can read more about the paper here.

I wonder what the fallout will be from this bold act?

Luskin writes:

> I have no doubt that the editors of *International Journal of Design & Nature and Ecodynamics* will take much heat for publishing this paper. Even though they make it clear that "[t]he reader should not assume that the Journal or the reviewers agree with the conclusions of the paper," they should be commended for their courage in publishing it it and calling it a "a valuable contribution that challenges the conventional vision that systems can design and organise themselves." They write, "The Journal hopes that the paper will promote the exchange of ideas in this important topic" — showing that there is hope for true academic freedom on the debate over ID in some corners of the scientific community.

I think it's good that some of the more honest journals are starting to post these research papers on ID without endorsing them explicitly. It's important for people to have a free and open debate about these things. I'm sure that the other side is going to try to come back now with a published response – maybe even with some quality research. And that's how science is supposed to march forward. We don't want to get into the situation where there are more of these big "Climategate" scandals in biology. Let all the opposing views be heard.

Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation

July 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new undercover video has been released by Live Action. (H/T The BlogProf)

Details:

> The youth-led pro-life group Live Action released a new undercover video today showing staff at an Indianapolis Planned Parenthood clinic using manipulative and medically inaccurate counseling to convince a young woman to have an abortion. This is the third undercover video Live Action has released showing abusive counseling practices at Planned Parenthood of Indiana.
>
> When the woman, purportedly 10-weeks pregnant, asks the clinician, named "Sarah," when her baby's heart begins to beat, Sarah replies, "It's around I think the 8th or the 9th week that you can hear the heartbeat." The heart actually begins beating 3 weeks and 1 day after conception, according to Moore and Persaud's well-known textbook *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology*. The Planned Parenthood clinician also insists, "It's not a baby, it's a fetus," which, she claims, is "not like a person."
>
> In the video, Sarah assures the woman that "having an abortion is safer than carrying to term." The woman asks, "The abortion won't hurt me from having more kids in the future, will it?" and the counselor replies, "Nope." But a 2009 study from the Obstetrical and Gynecological Survey recently found that a previous abortion increased a woman's risk of pre-term birth by 20%, and a 2003 report from the Shanghai Institute of Planned Parenthood Research notes a 55% increased risk of future miscarriages for women who have abortions.
>
> Lila Rose, UCLA student and president of Live Action, says the new footage places Planned Parenthood well outside the medical mainstream. "Planned Parenthood's counseling is based on its abortion-first mentality rather than the medical facts that women need," observes Rose. "Planned Parenthood gives vulnerable women misinformation to sell them the abortion." Indiana informed consent state law requires that women receive accurate medical information before undergoing an abortion.

And remember, Planned Parenthood is supported by the Democrats. The Democrats make sure that abortion stays legal and that Planned Parenthood is adequately supplied with taxpayer funds. Planned Parenthood even has massive surpluses that they can use for political contributions to Democrats to make sure that their ghoulish business stays legal. Although more than a billion of that taxpayer money has gone "missing".

You can see the other two videos here.

Journalists conspired to spike the Jeremiah Wright story

July 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the Daily Caller. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> It was the moment of greatest peril for then-Sen. Barack Obama's political career. In the heat of the presidential campaign, videos surfaced of Obama's pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, angrily denouncing whites, the U.S. government and America itself. Obama had once bragged of his closeness to Wright. Now the black nationalist preacher's rhetoric was threatening to torpedo Obama's campaign.
>
> The crisis reached a howling pitch in mid-April, 2008, at an ABC News debate moderated by Charlie Gibson and George Stephanopoulos. Gibson asked Obama why it had taken him so long – nearly a year since Wright's remarks became public – to dissociate himself from them. Stephanopoulos asked, "Do you think Reverend Wright loves America as much as you do?"
>
> Watching this all at home were members of Journolist, a listserv comprised of several hundred liberal journalists, as well as like-minded professors and activists. The tough questioning from the ABC anchors left many of them outraged. "George [Stephanopoulos]," fumed Richard Kim of the Nation, is "being a disgusting little rat snake."
>
> Others went further. According to records obtained by The Daily Caller, at several points during the 2008 presidential campaign a group of liberal journalists took radical steps to protect their favored candidate. **Employees of news organizations including Time, Politico, the Huffington Post, the Baltimore Sun, the Guardian, Salon and the New Republic participated in outpourings of anger over how Obama had been treated in the media, and in some cases plotted to fix the damage.**
>
> In one instance, Spencer Ackerman of the Washington Independent urged his colleagues to deflect attention from Obama's relationship with Wright by changing the subject. Pick one of Obama's conservative critics, Ackerman wrote, "Fred Barnes, Karl Rove, who cares — and call them racists."

The mainstream news media is not objective. They're Democrats. They vote Democrat. They give money to Democrats.

California Democrat paid $800,000 to manage city of 38,000 people

July 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Rizzo and a bunch of other Democrats have been arrested!

Excerpt:

> Today, eight city council members were arrested in Bell, California for what Los Angeles County District Attorney labeled "corruption on steroids." Thus far, every major news outlet that has reported on the story has omitted the fact that all eight individuals arrested are Democrats.
>
> These glaring omissions come only weeks after NewsBusters reported that of the 351 stories on the then-brewing controversy, 350 had omitted party affiliations, and one had mentioned they were Democrats only in apologizing for not doing so sooner.
>
> ABC, CBS, the Los Angeles Times, the Associated Press, Bloomberg, USA Today, CNN, MSNBC, NPR, and the San Francisco Chronicle all reported on the arrests today without mentioning party affiliations.

Here's the previous story about the salaries.

Story here from Bloomberg News. (H/T ECM, Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> Hundreds of residents of one of the poorest municipalities in Los Angeles County shouted in protest last night as tensions rose over a report that the city's manager earns an annual salary of almost $800,000.
>
> An overflow crowd packed a City Council meeting in Bell, a mostly Hispanic city of 38,000 about 10 miles (16 kilometers) southeast of Los Angeles, to call for the resignation of Mayor Oscar Hernandez and other city officials. Residents left standing outside the chamber banged on the doors and shouted "fuera," or "get out" in Spanish.
>
> It was the first council meeting since the Los Angeles Times reported July 15 that Chief Administrative Officer Robert Rizzo earns $787,637 — with annual 12 percent raises — and that Bell pays its police chief $457,000, more than Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck makes in a city of 3.8 million people. Bell council members earn almost $100,000 for part-time work.
>
> City Attorney Edward Lee said the council members couldn't discuss salaries in public without advance notice. The council then adjourned for a private session. About an hour later, the council members returned, and Hernandez read a statement saying the city would prepare a report on the salaries and seek public comment at the next council meeting, scheduled for Aug. 16.

> Residents shouted in protest. Lee said he would have the room cleared if people continued to speak out of line. Police Chief Randy Adams said the fire department wanted to end the meeting because the crowd outside was blocking the door.

Here's something I found on my own while searching for his party affiliation.

Excerpt:

> Authorities discovered a methamphetamine lab at a Bell home owned by the city's mayor early today and arrested two men, officials said.
>
> Narcotics investigators raided a home in the 3800 block of Bell Avenue about 1:30 a.m. and found a "super lab," capable of producing 20 pounds of methamphetamine at one time, said Deputy Guillermina Saldana of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. The investigators were part of a multi-agency state task force.
>
> Saldana said two men were taken into custody, and two young children, ages 2 and 3, were placed in protective care. The suspects' identities were not immediately available.
>
> The home, one of three units on the lot, is owned by Bell Mayor Oscar Hernandez, who said in a phone interview that it was one of several properties he owns and that he rented it out to a young couple in their 20s. He said the husband was one of the men arrested. Hernandez said that although his son and daughter live in one of the units, his family knew nothing about the lab and had nothing to do with it.
>
> "Nobody smelled nothing. I never got any complaints, and it's a small community and the houses are close to each other," said Hernandez, who runs a corner grocery store down the street and has been the city's mayor since March.

I guess it goes without saying that he's a Democrat. Not that any news stories will mention that he is a Democrat. But he is a Democrat.

Woman can’t apply for government job because of her race

July 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s the news story from Canoe. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> A stay-at-home mother trying to re-enter the workforce after nine years away says she can’t understand why the federal government would stop her from applying for a job simply because she is white.
>
> Sara Landriault, a sometime family activist, says that with her kids in school full time she decided to start looking for work outside of the home.
>
> While surfing on the federal government job website, Landriault says she found a position at Citizenship and Immigration Canada she felt she was qualified for but was blocked from submitting her resume because she was not an aboriginal or visible minority.
>
> “I was flabbergasted,” Landriault said in a telephone interview from her home in Kemptville, Ont., just south of Ottawa. “It was insane. I’m white, so I can’t do it?”
>
> Landriault says she has seen job postings in the past that encourage certain groups to apply.
>
> “Which is fine, it’s an equal opportunity position,” Landriault said. “But an equal opportunity employer does not stop one race from applying.”

Do you know why racism only works for the government, and not for private business? It’s because the government has no competitors, so they can do whatever they want without having to worry about the lower productivity for choosing a worker based on racial concerns.

This book review of Robert P. Murphy’s “The Politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism” makes the point.

Excerpt:

The free market cannot be blamed, an often-repeated argument tells us, for racial discrimination. Quite the contrary, those who discriminate pay a penalty. If an employer refuses to hire people of a certain race or religion, he will pay a penalty.

> If an employer has an opening that pays $50,000 in salary, and the Christian applicant will bring in $51,000 in extra revenue while the Muslim will bring in $55,000, then to discriminate against the creed of the latter will cost the employer $4000 in potential profits. (p. 31)

This point, though expressed characteristically well by Murphy, is well known; but it must withstand an objection.

The argument relies on the fact that businessmen aim at maximizing profits; but to do so, must they not endeavor to satisfy consumers? Here precisely the problem arises. What if the consumers themselves hold discriminatory views? Will it not be to the interest of businessmen to satisfy them? Suppose, e.g., that customers in a restaurant would prefer not to be served by blacks. Why would a restaurant owner interested in profit risk the loss of his business by hiring black waitresses?

Murphy again responds in convincing fashion to this difficult problem.

> But in cases like this the free market … still punishes discrimination — only this time the *customer* pays the "racist fee": the customer pays extra (in the form of inferior service) to be served by a white waitress who is worse at her job than a better-qualified black candidate. (p. 32)

It does not follow from this that people will be unwilling to pay the price: but the fact that the market imposes a cost tends to deter discrimination by consumers. (One might object that this does not cover the case of a black waitress who is an equally good server as her white competitor; in this situation, will not consumers be able to satisfy their prejudiced tastes without penalty? But here the owner has an incentive to hire the black waitress by offering her a lower salary. So long as his loss of business is outweighed by his lower costs, he will do so.)

If a private business discriminates in hiring, they have to pay more for less productivity. If a consumer discriminates against non-racist businesses, they have to pay more for the same quality of product or service. The free market punishes racism already.

I should also point out that the Wintery Knight is not white. I look more like Bobby Jindal – but less handsome. I oppose racism and the Government of Canada is racist.

Does the kalam cosmological argument tell us anything about God?

July 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s a quick video on the kalam argument.

Just a short video since I am kind of on vacation this week. I’m away meeting that young lady that I write about often, after 8 months of getting to know her through Skype! I’l bet you all want to hear about that instead!

Upcoming debate on morality: Matt Flannagan vs. Ray Bradley

July 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

News of an upcoming debate featuring Matt Flannagan from MandM.

Details:

> Raymond Bradley and Matthew Flannagan will debate the topic "Is God the Source of Morality? Is it rational to ground right and wrong in commands issued by God?"
>
> The debate will be held at the University of Auckland on Monday 2 August from 7-9pm in "The Centennial" 260 – 098 OGGB (the bottom level of the Business School) on 12 Grafton Rd, Auckland City.

> Bradley is an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy with areas of specialty in Philosophical Logic, Metaphysics, Logical Atomism; he has previously debated William Lane Craig, Edward Blaiklock and many other Christian scholars and describes himself as an older generation "new atheist".
>
> Matthew FlannaganFlannagan is an Auckland based Philosopher and Theologian with areas of specialty in Philosophy of Religion, Ethics and Theology; he has previously debated Bill Cooke, Zoe During and, of course, writes for this blog.
>
> The format of the debate will be as follows:
>
> - Dr Bradley: Opening Comments [20 min]
> - Dr Flannagan: Opening Comments [20 min]
> - Dr Bradley: Reply to Dr Flannagan [10 min]
> - Dr Flannagan: Reply to Dr Bradley[10 min]
> - Dr Bradley: Closing Comments [7 min]
> - Dr Flannagan: Closing Comments [7 min]
> - Questions from the floor: [30 min]

And here is an article on the thought of the atheist Ray Bradley by Glenn Peoples. Glenn's post is short and to the point – he excerpts the main argument from a post by Bradley against the moral argument and shows why it has no force.

And you can read more about William Lane Craig's debate with Ray Bradley on Hell, too.

Triablogue guys write massive response to “The Christian Delusion”

July 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apparently a bunch of less-moderate atheists like Hector Avalos, Richard Carrier and Robert Price decided to write a book attacking Christianity. These guys are internet infidel types. Dan Barker gives the foreword, and I don’t think he is a very even-keeled person.

The Triablogue post is here. Their e-book is free to download.

Excerpt:

> The book contains chapters written by a wide range of modern atheists, including Hector Avalos, Richard Carrier, and Edward T. Babinski[*]. (If those names sound familiar it’s because we’ve engaged with each of them many times on Triablogue.) Of his contribution to the book, Carrier slapped both of his chapters with a “tour de force” label and confidently assured us, “I doubt I’ll ever have to write another [refutation of the resurrection].” He says: “My debunking of [Christian claims on science] is so decisive in this chapter, you won’t need to refer anyone anywhere else.”
>
> But such hubris vastly overreaches reality, and Triablogue is here to demonstrate it with *The Infidel Delusion*.
>
> *The Infidel Delusion* was written (in alphabetical order) by Patrick Chan, Jason Engwer, Steve Hays, and Paul Manata. This is a *true* tour de force. By the time I got to Manata’s debunking of Valerie Tarico’s naturalistic reductionism in chapter two, the perfect metaphor had formed in my head: Collectively, these Triabloggian authors were firing intellectual howitzer shells point-blank into a cardboard shanty town.

You can watch the Craig vs Avalos debate, or the Craig vs Carrier debate or the Craig vs Price debate if you want to see how well their ideas stand up in a real contest.

You can find the debates here.

Thanks to Jason Engwer for giving me the heads-up about Triablogue’s rebuttal. Triablogue is a serious apologetics blog.

In all fairness, there are much better non-Christians out there who are not crazy, like Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Although Price sounded good in his recent debate on the Bible and slavery.

Freedom of Information Act request processing delayed by Democrats

July 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Washington Post. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> For at least a year, the Homeland Security Department detoured hundreds of requests for federal records to senior political advisers for highly unusual scrutiny, probing for information about the requesters and delaying disclosures deemed too politically sensitive, according to nearly 1,000 pages of internal e-mails obtained by The Associated Press.
>
> The department abandoned the practice after AP investigated. Inspectors from the department's Office of Inspector General quietly conducted interviews last week to determine whether political advisers acted improperly.
>
> The Freedom of Information Act, the main tool forcing the government to be more open, is designed to be insulated from political considerations. Anyone who seeks information through the law is supposed to get it unless disclosure would hurt national security, violate personal privacy or expose confidential decision-making in certain areas.
>
> But in July 2009, Homeland Security introduced a directive requiring a wide range of information to be vetted by political appointees for "awareness purposes," no matter who requested it. The government on Wednesday estimated fewer than 500 requests underwent such political scrutiny; the Homeland Security Department received about 103,000 total requests for information last fiscal year.
>
> **Career employees were ordered to provide Secretary Janet Napolitano's political staff with information about the people who asked for records – such as where they lived, whether they were private citizens or reporters – and about the organizations where they worked.**
>
> **If a member of Congress sought such documents, employees were told to specify Democrat or Republican.**
>
> This, despite President Barack Obama's statement that federal workers should "act promptly and in a spirit of cooperation" under FOIA, and Attorney General Eric Holder's assertion: "Unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles have no place in the new era of open government."
>
> The special reviews at times delayed the release of information to Congress, watchdog groups and the news media for weeks beyond the usual wait, even though the directive specified the reviews should take no more than three days.
>
> The foot-dragging reached a point that officials worried the department would

> get sued, one e-mail shows.

A new era of transparency and accountability! Not at all like paranoid Richard Nixon! No, no, no!

And we're still operating without a budget – they don't want to say how large the deficits are before the election!

Obama spent 23 million taxpayer dollars to promote abortion in Kenya

July 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Fox News. (H/T Jammie Wearing Fool via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A Republican lawmaker is accusing the White House of "unconscionable" and "illegal" acts for its role in Kenya's referendum on a new constitution, which would legalize abortion in the country for the first time.
>
> Rep. Chris Smith of New Jersey cited a report by the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID, which estimated that more than $23 million in U.S. taxpayer funds have been spent on the referendum, and Smith and other conservatives have complained that at least some of that money has been spent in sport of the proposed constitution, possibly violating U.S. law.
>
> "Under no circumstances should the U.S. government take sides," Smith said at a news conference Wednesday. "Yet that is precisely what the Obama administration has done."
>
> He and other lawmakers accuse the Obama administration of offering incentives to Kenya to approve the controversial new constitution, promising that passage would "allow money to flow" into the nation's coffers. A federal law known as the Siljander Amendment makes it illegal for the U.S. government to lobby on abortion in other countries.
>
> […]One group that has received almost $3 million from the U.S. government, Development Alternatives, openly supported "advocating for efforts to eventually legalize abortion in Kenya," Smith said. Another group, The Committee of Experts on Constitutional Review in Kenya, changed the wording of the Kenyan constitution's abortion clause to make abortion more widely accessible – and has received over $180,000 from the U.S.
>
> Thanks to these findings, nine of the more than 200 organizations in Kenya that received money from the U.S. have been suspended from receiving assistance, the U.S. Embassy spokeswoman Katya Thomas in Nairobi told the AP Friday.
>
> But the congressmen are asking for more. They want the White House to be held accountable for its role.
>
> "If violations of the law have occurred, which on the face of it they have, the information must be brought before law enforcement," Smith said. "Not even presidents are above the law."

We're in a recession. Many people don't even have jobs, and yet these socialist bunglers waste 23 million dollars of taxpayer money that could have been used by small

businesses to create jobs.

And I thought that Democrats were opposed to American imperialism? I guess not.

Senior Democrat Charles Rangel charged with ethics violations

July 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Associated Press. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A House investigative committee on Thursday charged New York Rep. Charles Rangel with multiple ethics violations, a blow to the former Ways and Means chairman and an election-year headache for Democrats.
>
> […]Rangel led the tax-writing Ways and Means panel until he stepped aside last March after the ethics committee criticized him in a separate case — finding that he should have known corporate money was paying for his trips to two Caribbean conferences.

What might they charge him for?

- His use of official stationery to raise money for the Charles B. Rangel Center for Public Service at City College of New York.
- Whether he had the Ways and Means Committee consider legislation that would benefit donors to the Rangel Center at the same time the congressman solicited donations or pledges.
- Preserved a tax shelter for an oil drilling company, Nabors Industries, which has a chief executive who donated money to the center while Rangel's committee considered the loophole legislation.
- Used four rent-controlled apartment units in New York City, when the city's rent stabilization program is supposed to apply to one's primary residence. This raises the question of how all the units could be primary residences. One was a campaign office, raising the separate question of whether the rent break was an improper gift.
- Whether Rangel, as required, publicly reported information on the financing and rental of his ownership interest in a unit within the Punta Cana Yacht Club in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Rangel also had to pay back taxes on the rental income.
- Intentionally failed to report — when required — hundreds of thousands of dollars or more in assets. The amended disclosure reports added a credit union IRA, mutual fund accounts and stock.

The most ethical Congress in history!!! Well, maybe not.

Friday night funny: Porcupine thinks it’s a puppy!

July 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is so cute. It’s from ECM.

Ha ha ha. Sometimes people can be prickly, too.

Video explaining how higher taxes affect families

July 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this video that he found on Caffeinated Thoughts, and I am going to leave it up ALL DAY Saturday to make sure that you all watch it.

This is why I am annoyed to no end by fiscally liberal social conservatives who want government to solve all of these “crises” like enacting universal health care and preventing the global warming monster from killing us all. Stop it you miserable toadies! Especially you, stupid Mike Huckabee! You’re eating up all the money that single men need in order to have the confidence to start families.

I’m going to say it one more time. Good men are running the numbers on marriage right now. And we cannot take on the roles of husband and father when the jobs situation is a mess because of Obama, the taxes are too high because of Obama, and there is a looming entitlement crisis for our future children that Obama is making worse with his trillion dollar deficits. As if we didn’t have enough to worry about from punitive divorce courts, false DV charges, underperforming public schools, and weak deterrence of criminals and terrorists.

Think! If you want men to *marry* then vote for policies that allow men to *marry.* If you want big government, then you can’t have marriages and families and children. You can either have marriage and children, or you can have big government social programs. *Choose.*

Augusta State University orders student to abandon her faith to graduate

July 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the leftist Atlanta Journal-Constitution. (H/T Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> A graduate student has filed a lawsuit accusing Augusta State University officials of violating her constitutional rights by ordering her to change her views opposing homosexuality.
>
> Jennifer Keeton, a graduate student in the school of counseling, says in her court filing that the school threatened to expel her if she didn't complete a remediation plan that includes diversity sensitivity workshops. Keeton had said in and out class that, according to her Christian beliefs, homosexuality is immoral and a lifestyle choice, according to her suit.
>
> The lawsuit was filed Wednesday in federal court in Augusta. The university has not been served with the lawsuit and officials declined to comment on the case, spokeswoman Kathy Schofe said Friday. She did say that the university does not discriminate and has policies in place to protect students if they believe they have been discriminated against.
>
> Keeton is represented by the Alliance Defense Fund, a coalition of Christian attorneys. The suit accuses Augusta State officials of violating Keeton's First Amendment rights to free speech and the free exercise of religion.
>
> "A public university student shouldn't be threatened with expulsion for being a Christian and refusing to publicly renounce her faith, but that's exactly what's happening here," David French, senior counsel for the defense fund, said in a news release. "Abandoning one's own religious beliefs should not be a precondition at a public university for obtaining a degree."
>
> Keeton, who is pursuing a master's degree in the education college's counseling program, was told her beliefs are incompatible with the prevailing views of the counseling profession, her attorneys said in a news release.
>
> […]The defense fund has filed similar lawsuits against Missouri State University and Eastern Michigan University.

It's good that the ADF is on the case, as usual.

How the left-wing media conspired to label conservatives as racists

July 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here by Fred Barnes in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> It's thanks to Tucker Carlson's Daily Caller website that we know something about JournoList, though the emails among the liberal journalists were meant to be private. (Mr. Carlson hasn't revealed how he obtained the emails.) In June, the Daily Caller disclosed a series of JournoList musings by David Weigel, then a Washington Post blogger assigned to cover conservatives. His emails showed he loathes conservatives, and he was subsequently fired.
>
> This week, Mr. Carlson produced a series of JournoList emails from April 2008, when Barack Obama's presidential bid was in serious jeopardy. Videos of the antiwhite, anti-American sermons of his Chicago pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, had surfaced, first on ABC and then other networks.
>
> JournoList contributors discussed strategies to aid Mr. Obama by deflecting the controversy. They went public with a letter criticizing an ABC interview of Mr. Obama that dwelled on his association with Mr. Wright. Then, Spencer Ackerman of The Washington Independent proposed attacking Mr. Obama's critics as racists. He wrote:
>
> "If the right forces us all to either defend Wright or tear him down, no matter what we choose, we lose the game they've put upon us. Instead, take one of them—Fred Barnes, Karl Rove, who cares—and call them racists. . . . This makes them 'sputter' with rage, which in turn leads to overreaction and self-destruction."

Mainstream news media cannot be trusted to be objective. It's just propaganda for the secular left.

Canadian federal government reviewing affirmative action policies

July 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the National Post.

Excerpt:

> The Conservatives have ordered a review of federal government affirmative action policies, saying the public service should hire based on merit, not race or ethnicity.
>
> Cabinet ministers Stockwell Day and Jason Kenney announced the review of the Public Service Employment Act, along with any related practices and policies, on Thursday. "While we support diversity in the public service, we want to ensure that no Canadian is barred from opportunities in the public service based on race or ethnicity," Mr. Day, the Treasury Board President, said in a statement.
>
> Mr. Kenney, meanwhile, was more blunt in his calls for a meritocracy.
>
> "I strongly agree with the objective of creating a public service that reflects the diversity of Canada, and with fair measures designed to reach that goal. But we must ensure that all Canadians have an equal opportunity to work for their government based on merit, regardless of race or ethnicity," said the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism.
>
> Under the current policy, the federal government targets four "employment equity groups" identified in the Employment Equity Act as being reflective of Canada's wider diversity: visible minorities, aboriginals, people with disabilities and women.

And consider this editorial about the review.

Excerpt:

A cursory review of the federal public service job website reveals that all positions contain the following statement on their application:

> The Public Service of Canada is committed to building a skilled, diverse workforce reflective of Canadian society. As a result, it promotes employment equity and encourages candidates to indicate voluntarily on their application if they are a woman, an Aboriginal person, a person with a disability or a member of a visible minority group.

This statement appears whether you are applying for work as a cabin inspector, a financial officer, a telephone interviewer, or an administrative assistant. While it is intended to promote the hiring of "disadvantaged groups", it has the effect of discriminating against other groups, even when those groups are, ironically,

underrepresented in the positions that are being filled.

Indeed, for certain jobs, and even overall, it appears that affirmative action would need to be applied in the opposite direction, at least where the sexes are concerned. In the federal civil service, 54.7% of employees are female, as were 57% of employees hired in 2008/09. But only 51% of the population is female. It would thus appear that men need help, not women.

The opposition parties (the socialist Liberals and the communist New Democrat Party) oppose the review because *they're racists*. They judge people based on the color of their skin, not on the content of their character.

New study on open relationships in the gay community

July 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the San Francisco Chronicle. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> A new study released this week by the Center for Research on Gender & Sexuality at San Francisco State University put statistics around what gay men already know: Many Bay Area boyfriends negotiate open relationships that allow for sex with outsiders.
>
> […]"I think it's quite natural for men to want to continue to have an active and varied sex life," said 50-year-old technology consultant Dean Allemang from Oakland, who just ended a 13-year-open relationship and has begun another with a new boyfriend.
>
> "I don't own my lover, and I don't own his body," he said. "I think it's weird to ask someone you love to give up that part of their life. I would never do it."
>
> Hoff, who just received a $3.5 million grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to continue the study for five more years, initially started her research based on findings that HIV infection is on the rise among male couples.
>
> "So much of the HIV prevention effort is aimed at a different set – men in dance clubs or bathhouses having anonymous sex," she said. "HIV prevention might want to expand its message to address relationships; we have to look at risk in a greater context."
>
> In her study of gay couples, 47 percent reported open relationships. Forty-five percent were monogamous, and the remaining 8 percent disagreed about what they were.

Another researcher quoted in the story explains how same-sex marriage is compatible with an "open relationship", and that this interpretation of marriage *would* be a redefinition of traditional marriage.

Comments will be strictly filtered in accordance with Obama's laws restricting free speech.

Michelle Rhee dismisses 241 teachers from DC public schools

July 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the ultra left-wing Washington Post. (H/T Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> D.C. Schools Chancellor Michelle A. Rhee announced Friday that she has fired 241 teachers, including 165 who received poor appraisals under a new evaluation system that for the first time holds some educators accountable for students' standardized test scores.
>
> […]Dismissals for performance are exceedingly rare in D.C. schools — and in school systems nationwide. Friday's firings mark the beginning of Rhee's bid to make student achievement a high-stakes proposition for teachers, establishing job loss as a possible consequence of poor classroom results.
>
> The Washington Teachers' Union said Friday that it will contest the terminations.
>
> […]Although the teachers dismissed for poor performance represent only about 4 percent of the city's 4,000-member corps, Rhee also announced Friday that 737 other instructors were rated "minimally effective." Under IMPACT, they have one year to improve their performance or face dismissal. Rhee declined to speculate on how many might be sacked next year. But she said that over the next two years, "a not-insignificant number of folks will be moved out of the system for poor performance."
>
> […]…few tenured educators have faced dismissal for poor performance. Rhee said that according to her staff's research, no teachers were fired for lack of effectiveness in 2006, the year before she was named chancellor.
>
> […]The great majority of teachers routinely received evaluations showing that they met or exceeded expectations. At the same time, the District compiled one of the weakest academic records of any urban school system in the United States.

I wrote about Michelle Rhee before here. You need to understand that teacher unions are the backbone of the Democrat party. Every vote for a Democrat politician is a vote against quality education for children.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama’s new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher’s unions make war on charter schools

Private sector jobs are lost when government creates public sector jobs

July 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story in National Review. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> In this paper, published in *Economic Policy Journal*, economists Yann Algan, Pierre Cahuc, and Andre Zylberberg looked at the impact of public employment on overall labor-market performance. The authors use data for a sample of OECD countries from 1960 to 2000, and they find that, on average, the creation of 100 public jobs eliminated about 150 private-sector jobs, decreased overall labor-market participation slightly, and increased by about 33 the number of unemployed workers.
>
> Their explanation is that public employment crowds out private employment and increases overall unemployment by offering comparatively attractive working conditions. Basically, public jobs that offer higher wages, require low effort, and offer attractive fringe benefits attract many workers and crowd out private jobs. This is especially true when the public jobs exist in the private sector (transportation and education, for instance). The impact is bigger when these new employees are paid with new taxes.
>
> The bottom line is that it is possible that, by increasing public employment, the stimulus money is further hurting private jobs.

And that's why the unemployment rate is so high after a government spending-spree. The money for non-productive public sector jobs come from the productive private sector.

Bill Craig explains how to answer a non-Christian without apologetics

July 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's in his question of the week. The question is from a student who is not familiar with apologetics, but who is being challenged by his co-workers on his faith. None 0f his co-workers are Christians.

Excerpt:

I took your question this week, John, because I think it's one that many Christians face. We don't all have time to become skilled apologists, and yet we find ourselves in situations in which we're called upon to give "a reason for the hope that is in us" (I Peter 3:15). What are we supposed to do?

One easy thing that we can all do is learn to ask questions. Greg Koukl recommends asking two questions of non-believers:

1. What do you mean by that?

2. What reasons do you have to think that?

It's amazing how these two disarmingly simple questions can tie people in knots! For example, ask the unbeliever what he means when he says he doesn't believe in God—is he an atheist or an agnostic? (Be prepared to explain the difference to him!) Whatever he says, ask him, "What reasons do you have to think that?" Many people don't even understand what they mean by their assertions, and probably most don't have any good reasons for them. So long as you're asking questions, you're not making any assertions at all, and so don't have to prove anything. Let the non-believers bear the burden of proof for their claims.

[…]A second thing you can do is refer the unbeliever to some resource. You don't have to have any brains to tell someone, "Have you seen the *Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*? Before you say there are no intelligent theists and no good reasons to believe in God, maybe you'd better look at that book first. Otherwise, you're not really informed."

[…]Shame the unbeliever for his ignorance of the literature. If he's a sincere seeker, on the other hand, recommend that he peruse this website or watch a debate.

And it goes on like that. Five points in all.

The whole thing is worth reading… it's pretty funny in parts, because he is telling him exactly what to say.

Why does the Obama administration always side with terrorists?

July 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Australian. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The US government secretly advised Scottish ministers it would be "far preferable" to free the Lockerbie bomber than jail him in Libya.
>
> Correspondence obtained by The Sunday Times reveals the Obama administration considered compassionate release more palatable than locking up Abdel Baset al-Megrahi in a Libyan prison.
>
> The intervention, which has angered US relatives of those who died in the attack, was made by Richard LeBaron, deputy head of the US embassy in London, a week before Megrahi was freed in August last year on grounds that he had terminal cancer.
>
> The document, acquired by a well-placed US source, threatens to undermine US President Barack Obama's claim last week that all Americans were "surprised, disappointed and angry" to learn of Megrahi's release.
>
> […]The US has tried to keep the letter secret, refusing to give permission to the Scottish authorities to publish it on the grounds it would prevent future "frank and open communications" with other governments.

Why does Obama support terrorists and oppose law enforcement?

And in completely unrelated news, Obama is going to appear on "The View".

Surprise! Democrat calls for end of race-based affirmative action

July 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post is by the left-wing senator James Webb – a Democrat. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Forty years ago, as the United States experienced the civil rights movement, the supposed monolith of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant dominance served as the whipping post for almost every debate about power and status in America. After a full generation of such debate, WASP elites have fallen by the wayside and a plethora of government-enforced diversity policies have marginalized many white workers. The time has come to cease the false arguments and allow every American the benefit of a fair chance at the future.
>
> I have dedicated my political career to bringing fairness to America's economic system and to our work force, regardless of what people look like or where they may worship. Unfortunately, present-day diversity programs work against that notion, having expanded so far beyond their original purpose that they now favor anyone who does not happen to be white.
>
> In an odd historical twist that all Americans see but few can understand, many programs allow recently arrived immigrants to move ahead of similarly situated whites whose families have been in the country for generations. These programs have damaged racial harmony. And the more they have grown, the less they have actually helped African-Americans, the intended beneficiaries of affirmative action as it was originally conceived.

Obviously, I don't agree with Senator Webb's naive redistributionist policies. But speaking as a colored man, let me just say that it's about time that affirmative action quotas were dismantled. And for two reasons. The first reason is because affirmative action is racist and leads to more racial discord, as Webb noted. The second reason is that affirmative action doesn't work – see below for articles from the famous economist Thomas Sowell.

Related posts

- Does affirmative action reduce racial discrimination?
- Does affirmative action help blacks to rise up from poverty?
- Does affirmative action improve college graduation rates for blacks?

Tawapologetics asks “Why do bad things happen to good people?”

July 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The post is here. (H/T Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> We all struggle to understand why God allows horrible things to happen to people who do not deserve it. This afternoon, my desire is to ponder this issue together. I will argue that we can come to a better understanding of why bad things happen to good people by identifying the who, the why, the what, and the how of evil and suffering. Who causes evil? Why does Almighty God allow evil? What does God do about evil? And How are we to respond to evil? As we search out an understanding of the who, why, what, and how of evil, I pray that God will illuminate our hearts and minds.
>
> Before we delve into the who, why, what, and how of evil, we need to establish two preliminary facts. First, if Christianity is true, then there are no truly ‘good’ people. Second, if there is no God, then there are no truly ‘bad’ things to happen to people. We could spend an entire week talking about both of these fundamental truths, but we simply do not have the time. Thus, I am going to just touch on them briefly and then move on.

You have to read the rest to get the full effect, but there is a lot of wisdom even in the excerpt.

Here’s my best post on the problem of evil, if you want more.

Paul Ryan explains taxes and spending to Chris Matthews

July 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-wing loony network MSNBC.

Democrats don’t understand economics, Republicans do.

Comparison of budget deficit and GDP under Reagan and Obama

July 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a nice article from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Democrats have been running Congress for nearly four years, and President Obama has been at the White House for 18 months, so it's not too soon to ask: How's that working out? One devastating scorecard came out Friday from the White House, in the form of its own semi-annual budget review.
>
> The message: Tax revenues are smaller, spending is greater, and the deficits are thus larger than the White House has been saying. No wonder it dumped the news on the eve of a sweltering mid-July weekend.
>
> […]As a share of the economy, the White House now says the deficit in fiscal 2010, which ends on September 30, will be even larger than in 2009: 10%. That's after a full year of economic growth, given that the recovery began last summer. More remarkable still, the deficit will barely fall in fiscal 2011, declining only to 9.2% of GDP in the second year of a recovery that ought to be gaining steam.

Obama vs. Reagan

Federal budget deficit as a share of GDP in selective years

Reagan		Obama	
1982	4%	2009	9.9%
1983	6	2010	10*
1984	4.8	2011	9.2*
1985	5.1	2012	5.6*
1986	5		
1987	3.2		

*Estimates, with fiscal 2010 based on actual results through nine months

Source: White House Office of Management and Budget

Let's compare Obama and Reagan.

> To put this in historical context, consider the nearby table that compares deficits as a share of GDP under Presidents Reagan and Obama. The 1981-82 recession was comparable in severity to the one Mr. Obama inherited and reached similar heights of unemployment. The deficits that resulted from that recession were the source of huge political consternation, with Democrats, the press corps and even some senior Reagan aides insisting that only a huge tax increase could save the country from ruin.
>
> Yet as the table shows, the Reagan deficits never reached more than 6% of GDP,

> and that happened only in 1983, the first year of economic recovery. As the 1980s expansion continued, the deficits fell, especially as the pace of spending slowed in the latter part of Reagan's second term.
>
> […]The Obama deficits are double that, and more than one-third higher than even the Gipper's worst year. What explains this? Part of it is that Democrats are simply spending much more, sending outlays as a share of GDP above 25% for the first time since World War II. The White House now says outlays will be higher in 2011, at 25.1% of GDP, than at the height of the stimulus in 2009 and 2010.
>
> […]The other explanation for the record Obama deficits is that revenues have been so anemic, thanks to the lackluster economic recovery. In the Reagan years, revenues as a share of GDP never fell lower than 17.3%, despite (or we would say because of) his pro-growth tax cuts. In 2010, by contrast, the White House now says tax revenues will hit an astonishing low of 14.5% of GDP, rising only to 15.8% in 2011, even with the huge tax increase that hits on January 1, 2011.

Tax cuts worked, and government spending failed. Next time, let's do what works – not what feels good.

How well is government-run health care working out in the UK?

July 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the UK Telegraph. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> An investigation by The Sunday Telegraph has uncovered widespread cuts planned across the NHS, many of which have already been agreed by senior health service officials. They include:
>
> - Restrictions on some of the most basic and common operations, including hip and knee replacements, cataract surgery and orthodontic procedures.
> - Plans to cut hundreds of thousands of pounds from budgets for the terminally ill, with dying cancer patients to be told to manage their own symptoms if their condition worsens at evenings or weekends.
> - The closure of nursing homes for the elderly.
> - A reduction in acute hospital beds, including those for the mentally ill, with targets to discourage GPs from sending patients to hospitals and reduce the number of people using accident and emergency departments.
> - Tighter rationing of NHS funding for IVF treatment, and for surgery for obesity.
> - Thousands of job losses at NHS hospitals, including 500 staff to go at a trust where cancer patients recently suffered delays in diagnosis and treatment because of staff shortages.
> - Cost-cutting programmes in paediatric and maternity services, care of the elderly and services that provide respite breaks to long-term carers.

Death panels! Sarah Palin was right!

In other news, Amazon.com will be charging the credit cards of each American taxpayer for 10% of their gross income! And they'll use that money to start handing out products to anyone they feel "needs" those products, especially to "marginalized" special interest groups, and other whiny victims. Ha! Just kidding. Maybe Amazon.com should be in charge of health care.

Is anything that Deepak Chopra says remotely logical?

July 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I say “NO”. It’s just happy-clappy jibba-jabba!

Here, look at this post from CARM.

Excerpt:

> Logic is the backbone of critical thinking. Logic is extremely useful for uncovering error and establishing truth. There are principles of logic and I would like to introduce you to the first three laws of logic. These are very important.

> 1. The Law of Identity
> 2. The Law of Non-Contradiction
> 3. The Law of Excluded Middle
>
> **The law of identity** states that A is A. An Apple is an Apple. In other words, something is what it is. If something exists, it has a nature, an essence. For example, a book has a front and back cover with pages. A car has four wheels, seats, doors, windows, etc. A tree has branches, leaves, a trunk, and roots. This also means that anything that exists has characteristics. We recognize what something is by observing its characteristic. You know that a tree is a tree because you see its branches, it’s leads, its trunk, etc.
> Furthermore, if something has an identity, it has a single identity. It does not have more than one identity. In other words, if something exists it has a set of attributes that are consistent with its own existence. It does not have a set of attributes that are inconsistent with itself. Therefore we can easily conclude that a cat is not a parachute. An Apple is not a race car. A tree is not a movie.
>
> **The law of non-contradiction** tells us that A cannot be both A and not A at the same time and in the same sense. In other words, something (a statement) cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same way. We use the law of non-contradiction constantly in discussions and debates because we are naturally able to recognize when someone is contradicting himself. If I were to tell you that yesterday I went shopping and then later I told you that yesterday I did not go shopping, you would be correct in saying there was a contradiction. A contradiction occurs when one statement excludes the possibility of another and yet both are claimed to be true. Since we know that both cannot be true, we see a contradiction. From this principle, we can conclude that truth is not self-contradictory. This is a very important concept. Let me repeat it. Truth is not self-contradictory.
>
> **The law of excluded middle** says that a statement is either true or false. For

> example, my hair is brown. It is either true or false that my hair is brown. Another example: I am pregnant. The statement is either true or false. Since I am a male, it is not possible for me to be pregnant. Therefore, the statement is false. If I were a female, it would be possible for me to be pregnant (given normal bodily conditions). A woman is not “kind-of” pregnant. She either is or is not pregnant – there is no middle position. The law of excluded middle is important because it helps us deal in absolutes. This is particularly important in a society where relativism is promoted and truth statements are denied.
>
> Please review these three laws and become familiar with them. They are extremely important when developing critical thinking skills.

Deepak Chopra says what feels good to him. But we have to test his words using the laws of logic. If his words pass that test, then we go on to empirical validation against the external world.

A video explaining the history of environmentalism

July 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here you go.

About the speaker:

Robert J. Smith, Director of the Center for Private Conservation, explains in this short video how the modern environmentalist movement began in America. A celebrated author and environmental historian, Smith shows how the antiwar movement during the 1960s evolved into an anti-capitalism movement that pushed for public stewardship of the environment.

Read more by Robert J. Smith here http://cei.org/publications/studies/5811

It’s not really about the environment.

Offshore drilling moratorium would cost 175,000 jobs per year

July 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Big Government. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> During a 45-minute conference call with journalists from 40 major media outlets this morning, Jack Gerard shared some startling predictions about the future health of the nation's oil and natural gas industry if the Obama Administration gets its way in adding more regulation and increasing taxes on offshore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. The biggest one of all is enough to cause anyone to take pause:
>
> **"The administration's moratorium, if continued indefinitely — or similar legislative proposals which would make the deep water unavailable or uneconomic — would cost this country 175,000 jobs every year between now and 2035, according to our latest analysis,"** said Gerard, president of the American Petroleum Institute, a group representing some 400 oil and natural gas companies.

The story has more scary effects of a complete shutdown of deepwater drilling. One of my friends who I am staying with during my vacation says that the real number is closer to 200,000 jobs per year.

Why is it so cold in South America? Is it global warming?

July 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this post from Watts Up With That.

Excerpt:

> A brutal and historical cold snap has so far caused 80 deaths in South America, according to international news agencies. Temperatures have been much below normal for over a week in vast areas of the continent. In Chile, the Aysen region was affected early last week by the worst snowstorm in 30 years. The snow accumulation reached 5 feet in Balmaceda and the Army was called to rescue people trapped by the snow.
>
> In Argentina, the snow in the region of Mendoza, famous for its winery, was described by local meteorologists as the heaviest in a decade. The temperature in the morning of July 16th was the lowest in the city of Buenos Aires since 1991: -1.5C. The cold snap caused a record demand for energy and Argentina had to import electricity from Brazil. Many industries in Argentina were shut down due to gas shortage.
>
> It snowed in nearly all the provinces of Argentina, an extremely rare event. It snowed even in the western part of the province of Buenos Aires and Southern Santa Fe, in cities at sea level.

And more from a different Watts Up With That post. A map!

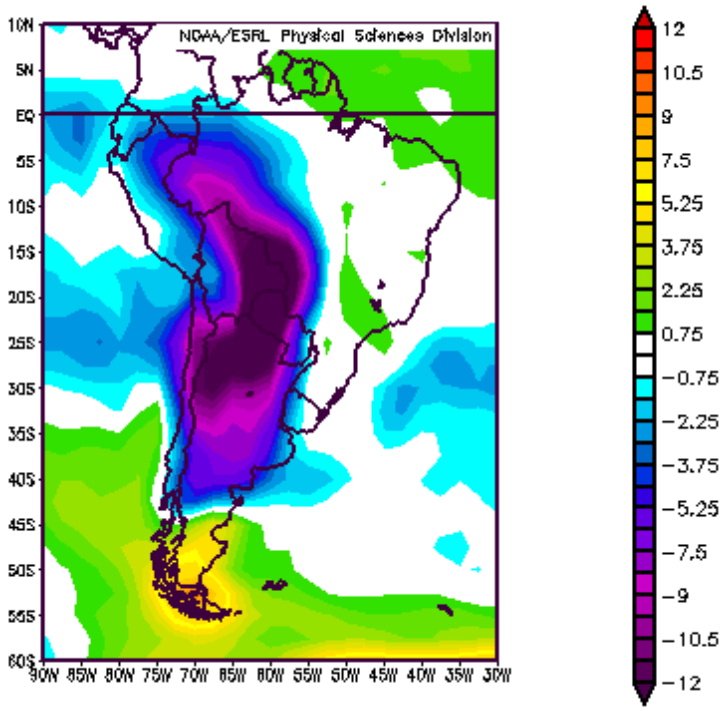

It’s global warming!!!

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The most famous beach of Argentina, Mar del Plata, was whitened by the snow in the morning of July 15th, a scene only seen in recent memory in 1991, 2004 and 2007.

Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University

July 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Attorneys will appeal a federal court decision issued Monday in a lawsuit filed on behalf of student Julea Ward against Eastern Michigan University (EMU) after it kicked out the Christian student for holding to her beliefs on homosexual conduct.
>
> […]EMU initiated its disciplinary process against Ward shortly after she enrolled in a counseling practicum course in January 2009, when she was assigned a potential client seeking assistance regarding a homosexual relationship. Recognizing the potential conscience issue with the client, and knowing she could not affirm the client's homosexual relationship without violating her religious beliefs, Ward asked her supervisor how to handle the matter.
>
> Ward was advised to reassign the potential client to a different counselor. EMU then informed Ward that she could only stay in the counseling program if she agreed to undergo a "remediation" program. Its purpose was to help her "see the error of her ways" and change her "belief system" as it relates to counseling about homosexual relationships.
>
> At a subsequent formal review meeting, lawyers say EMU faculty denigrated Ward's Christian views and asked several inappropriate and intrusive questions about her religious beliefs. A faculty committee then dismissed her from the counseling program. Ward appealed, but the dean of EMU College of Education upheld the dismissal.
>
> […]The EMU speech codes enabling the university's actions were challenged as part of the ADF lawsuit, Ward v. Wilbanks. **One policy prohibiting "discrimination based on … sexual orientation" adds that counselors cannot "condone" what the university defines as discrimination. Another problematic policy states that EMU's counseling department may discipline a student who shows a "failure to tolerate different points of view."**

Comments to this post will be strictly monitored in accordance with Obama's laws limiting free speech.

You can read more about the appeal process on the ADF web site.

I recommend that young Christians concentrate their efforts on mathematics and pursue careers in engineering, physics, chemistry, geology and computer science. Do not homeschool unless you are sure that you can provide the background in mathematics

needed to study these fields.

Woman suffocates eight of her own newborn babies

July 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This AFP story is very popular right now.

Excerpt:

> A French nursing assistant admitted Thursday suffocating eight of her newborn babies “because she did not want any more children”, prosecutors said.
>
> Dominique Cottrez, 45, was charged with murder after telling police that after having two daughters she did not want more nor “to see a doctor to get contraception”, prosecutor Eric Vaillant told reporters.
>
> Cottrez’s husband Pierre-Marie Cottrez was freed after denying any knowledge of the killings, which came to light when police found skeletal remains buried in a garden and dumped in plastic sacks in a garage.
>
> […]Investigators said she had confessed to suffocating the babies shortly after their births between 1989 and 2006 or 2007, and to concealing the bodies from her husband under household clutter in the garage.
>
> […]In past cases some defendants have said they were in denial about their pregnancies and not fully responsible for their actions, but Vaillant said Cottrez had admitted to being “perfectly aware” of her condition.
>
> […]Prosecutors described it as the worst case of infanticide in recent French history, following a string of similar cases in which isolated and troubled mothers disposed of their newborns.

What could possess a woman to act in such a selfish way? How can she put her own selfish desires before the moral obligations she freely chose to impose on her self through her own decision to get pregnant? How can a woman believe that she is justified in killing her own children just so that her quality of life is not diminished?

MUST-READ: New study on public health care in South Africa

July 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the SA Times Live. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> A damning report, the "South African Child Gauge for 2009/2010", released by the University of Cape Town's Children's Institute, blames the crumbling public health system for much of our children's woes.
>
> South Africa holds the dishonorable distinction of being one of only 12 countries – including war-torn Afghanistan – to have failed to reduce child mortality since 1990.
>
> It ranks in the company of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi.
>
> South African child deaths have risen from 56 deaths per 1000 births in 1990 to 67 deaths per 1000 births in 2008, according to Unicef.
>
> This is despite South Africa's high GDP and the billions of rands pumped into providing public health services.

Just imagine that it was *your child*. Or a the child of someone you care about.

When will things get bad enough for people to try something different? How about trying consumer choice and competition? How about *consumer-driven* health care?

Mark Driscoll explains what men are supposed to do

July 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mark Driscoll writes this article. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> When the man is trying to subdue and harness everything under his dominion to do what he desires for it to do, and it all fights against him, it teaches him about God: The ground is doing to the man what the man does to the Lord. The man asks, "Why is this so hard? Why is everything fighting me? Why is it in rebellion?" And God says, "Because you've sinned, and you're doing the same thing to me." So the man starts to understand the gospel as he's working. The more a man works and takes responsibility, and becomes a husband and a father, and buys a home, and runs a business, the more likely he is to make sense out of the gospel. Because he'll feel what it's like to have something rebel against you when you're trying to bring order out of chaos.
>
> This will remind him that he is that way toward God, that he is thorns and thistles, and that God is trying to cultivate him. It brings a man to a place of humility. What this means for the men: Everything you try and do is going to be hard. Some men think, "Well, I'll just find a woman, kids, job, house, or new car that won't be a lot of work. But, they don't make those! Nothing comes that way. Everything on this planet is a fixer-upper. And men are going to have to work hard to cultivate those things.

I think this is something women need to understand about Christian men. When men try to change you to be more Christ-like and more effective, it's not because we don't like you – it's because we do like you. We don't try to teach apologetics to fishes, and we don't try to turn feminists into fiscal conservatives and foreign policy hawks. We work on you like we would work on F-14 Tomcats. Because you're *valuable* and *awesome*. And what happens to your worldview matters, ultimately. It's not judging, it's serving.

It might be worth checking out chapter 3 of C.S. Lewis' "The Problem of Pain" as well, where he explains divine benevolence as a process in which the lover perfects the beloved, because he cares that the beloved is perfect. That's why the best women are the ones who let you lead them.

And a little more Driscoll:

> Men are built to learn and receive knowledge, and cultivate the mind and the soul by reading, learning, thinking. Not just in abstract concepts, but in practical life. Most men are practical theologians. They want to know about how to make money and work and life and have friendship and defend and have honor and nobility and dignity, all the themes of the Father to the Son in Proverbs.

And that's why guys like me are always pushing women to learn more about the

mechanics of marriage, economics, counter-terrorism, legal firearm ownership, etc. We are trying to live out what the Bible says here in the real world. And that means thinking about how the real world works. What really helps the poor? Cutting taxes, or raising the minimum wage? What really deters terrorists? A carrier battle group parked next to a rogue nation, or canceling missile defense programs?

Now I'm going to be silly to draw comments from Mary.

Regarding Driscoll himself – I like Driscoll, but I think he is a big frightened feminist coward when it comes to holding women accountable for their own choices. I think he is soft on his Bible and theology. You know, he has a flock to maintain and it's probably like three-quarters women, so he might have to twist the Scriptures here and there in order to fix the blame on men for the bad things that women freely choose to do. Still, you might get something out of his article, even though I think his theology is Unitarian or Episcopalian or something. Oh wait, I remember – he's Catholic. Oh, I mean he's Calvinist. I get those two mixed up all the time because they're so similar. He probably voted for Obama, too. Can anything good come out of King County?

UPDATE: I am totally kidding in that last paragraph. Please everyone comment saying they are not offended so ECM will know that Christians don't get offended that much.

Democrat Maxine Waters charged with ethics violations

July 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Yahoo News.

Excerpt:

> A House investigative panel has decided to charge Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters of California with ethics violations, raising the possibility of a second high-profile trial with political implications for Democrats this fall.
>
> People familiar with the investigation, who were not authorized to be quoted about unannounced charges, say the allegations could be announced next week. The House ethics committee declined Friday to make any public statement on the matter.
>
> Waters has been under investigation for a possible conflict of interest involving a bank that was seeking federal aid. Her husband owned stock in the bank.
>
> New York Democrat Rep. Charles Rangel also faces an ethics trial this fall on separate charges that included failure to disclose assets and income, nonpayment of taxes and doing legislative favors for donors to a college center named after him.
>
> Both Waters and Rangel are prominent members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Dual ethics trials would be a major political liability for Democrats, forcing them to defend their party's ethical conduct while trying to hold on to their House majority.
>
> While Rangel is a former chairman of the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee, Waters is a prominent member of the Financial Services Committee.
>
> Waters came under scrutiny after former Treasury Department officials said she helped arrange a meeting between regulators and executives at Boston-based OneUnited Bank without mentioning her husband's financial ties to the institution.

So that's two Democrats on trial for ethics violations. I wonder if we can get three before the mid-term elections?

MUST-READ: FBI records show Howard Zinn was a communist

July 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Accuracy in Media. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The prominent "progressive" historian Howard Zinn, whose books are force-fed to young people on many college campuses, was not only a member of the Moscow-controlled and Soviet-funded Communist Party USA (CPUSA) but lied about it, according to an FBI file released on Friday.
>
> The file, consisting of three sections totaling 423 pages, was made available on the FBI's website and released in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request from this writer.
>
> Zinn taught in the political science department of Boston University for 24 years, from 1964 to 1988, and has been a major influence on the modern-day "progressive" movement that backed Barack Obama for president.
>
> Although Zinn denied being a member of the CPUSA, the FBI file discloses that several reliable informants in the party identified Zinn as a member who attended party meetings as many as five times a week.
>
> […]The FBI file also includes information on Zinn's pro-Castro activism and support for radical groups such as the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Progressive Labor Party (PLP), Socialist Workers Party (SWP), and Black Panther Party. Much of the latter was in connection with Zinn's support for a communist military victory in Vietnam. His dealings with the Communist regime in Hanoi included a visit to the communist capital.

Read the whole thing. This guy is the author of the most widely-used textbook on American history in the United States. And he's a communist. This is what your children were learning in history classes.

Don't believe me, listen to a debate

In case you would like to know how well Howard Zinn's communist ideas hold up under rational scrutiny, you can spend some time listening to Dennis Prager debating him on the Dennis Prager radio show.

This clip has links to the rest of the 4-clip series.

The playlist is here.

And thanks to the amazing ECM for finding this amazing story.

The connection between terrorism and illegal immigration

July 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story by Brigitte Gabriel in the New York Post. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Last week's detonation along the Texas-Mexico border of an Improvised Explosive Device similar to those used in Iraq and Afghanistan strongly suggests that Hezbollah is working with the drug cartels — and that America is unsafe. Law-enforcement officials and intelligence analysts believe that terrorist groups like al Qaeda have been working with such gangs as the ruthless MS-13 to smuggle terrorists into America.
>
> Intel briefings and other sources suggest that al Qaeda spends as much as $50,000 to smuggle in a single terrorist, while Hezbollah, funded by Iran, pays as much as $10,000.
>
> Indeed, some analysts estimate that thousands of terrorists have already been smuggled into the United States through the Mexican border since 9/11. Last year, a worker at the Mexican embassy in Beirut was caught selling visas to enter Mexico for $3,000 apiece. Hezbollah terrorists know that once they get to Mexico they can make their way here through our southern border.

This is why people on the right want to build a fence. It's not racism, it's national security. All it takes is one nuclear bomb, dirty bomb, or biological weapon and a lot of people will die. We have to stop it.

Paul Ryan discusses economics at the liberal Brookings Institute

August 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video, including slides and audio, is here.

He outlines our economic crisis and two ways to deal with it – prosperity or austerity.

The Brookings Institute is a respected left-of-center think tank. I cite them occasionally, because they do quality research.

The logical contradictions in Richard Dawkins' worldview

August 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Uncommon Descent. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

In *River out of Eden : A Darwinian View of Life* Richard Dawkins wrote:

> The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. As that unhappy poet A.E. Housman put it: 'For Nature, heartless, witless Nature Will neither care nor know.' DNA neither cares nor knows. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.

In a 2007 New Scientist/Greenpeace Science debate, Dawkins said:

> Far from being the most selfish, exploitative species, Homo sapiens is the only species that has at least the possibility of rebelling against the otherwise universally selfish Darwinian impulse . . . If any species in the history of life has the possibility of breaking away from short term selfishness and of long term planning for the distant future, it's our species. We are earth's last best hope even if we are simultaneously, the species most capable of destroying life on the planet. But when it comes to taking the long view, we are literally unique. Because the long view is not a view that has ever been taken before in whole history of life. If we don't plan for the future, no other species will . . .

Well, which is it? Is there right and wrong or isn't there? Are we selfish or aren't we? Do we have free will or don't we?

Is this why Dawkins refuses to debate William Lane Craig? Is his schtick just about selling books to gullible atheists who don't understand the laws of logic?

Related posts

- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Richard Dawkins says that only unobservable aliens could create life, not God
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show
- Cowardly Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Answering Richard Dawkins' question: "Who made God?"
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

- How do leading atheists understand morality on atheism?
- Is there such a thing as genuine libertarian free will if naturalism is true?

Learn more about intelligent design

- The caused beginning of the universe
- Fine-tuning of cosmological constants
- Galactic, stellar and planetary fine-tuning
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion
- The development of irreducibly complex molecular machines

Greg Koukl's plan for raising his kids to be effective Christians

August 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a neat post from Stand to Reason.

First, the introduction:

> Last weekend I was in Ottawa, Canada, speaking at the Metropolitan Bible Church. While I was there I met a number of fellows who were dads, and we spent an afternoon at a barbecue, talking about raising our children in the Lord. We have a responsibility to do this. We cannot just pawn it off on teachers, or Sunday school teachers, or our pastor, or a Christian school, if we have one. They can help, but it is our primary job to raise our children in the Lord.

And here's an excerpt:

> There's another thing that I'm doing to teach my kids theological content that is more of a guideline than a program. I think a lot of times people like me, and maybe you, want to have a program. Sometimes we think if we don't have a program we're not being good parents. But even if you don't have a program, it's good to have a plan. One thing I've been using is a concept that I've been developing the last few years. I call it Credo, "I believe." Credo consists of five words that capture the entire Christian worldview, and I think when I give you the words, you'll see the relationship between them. Here they are: ***God, Man, Jesus, Cross, Resurrection***. And here, by "resurrection" I mean the final resurrection to reward or judgment, the eschatological last things. I don't mean any particular understanding of Jesus' second coming; I mean that there will be a final day of reckoning. History is moving towards that point.
>
> These five words capture the essence of the story of Christianity, starting with God, then man,then the fall. Then God invading the world–the physical world–by becoming a man Himself as part of a plan to die on a cross to rescue man, so that at the final resurrection they will be numbered among the sheep and not among the goats. This is the Christian story in five words.

Read the whole thing – he explains his program.

Generation Y is learning the perils of socialism

August 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the horribly left-wing MSNBC. (H/T Alisha from Far Above Rubies)

Excerpt:

> They are perhaps the best-educated generation ever, but they can't find jobs. Many face staggering college loans and have moved back in with their parents. Even worse, their difficulty in getting careers launched could set them back financially for years.
>
> The Millennials, broadly defined as those born in the 1980s and '90s, are the first generation of American workers since World War II who have cloudier prospects than the generations that preceded them.
>
> Certainly the recession has hurt young workers badly. While the overall unemployment rate was 9.5 percent in June, it was 15.3 percent for those aged 20 to 24, compared with 7.8 percent for ages 35-44, 7.5 percent for ages 45-54 and 6.9 percent for those 55 and older.
>
> Among 18-to 29-year-olds, unemployment is the highest it's been in more than three decades, according to a recent report from Pew Research Center. The report also found that Millennials, also known as Generation Y, are less likely to be employed than Gen Xers or baby boomers were at the same age.
>
> […]The high unemployment rate among young Millennials can affect them financially and psychologically throughout their careers, according to a report by the Joint Economic Committee.
>
> "The 'scarring effects' of prolonged unemployment can be devastating over a worker's career," according to the report. "Productivity, earnings and well-being can all suffer. In addition, unemployment can lead to a deterioration of skills and make securing future employment more difficult."
>
> Many Millennials have sought refuge back at school from the worst job market since at least the early 1980s. Yet that strategy, too, can backfire as students incur staggering amounts of debt to pay for advanced degrees that might not help them out much in the job market.

Eventually they are going to realize that everything they've been taught in the schools was opposed to their success. From socialism to feminism to moral relativism. They are destroying their own lives because they believed lies. They vote for higher taxes and more regulations and are shocked to see jobs dry up. They vote for anti-male laws and same-sex marriage and they are shocked to find themselves growing up in sub-optimal homes, missing one or both biological parents.

AC-130 gunships now mounting 105mm howitzer

August 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is really cool. (H/T ECM)

> This is the ‘Angel of Death’, the world’s biggest flying artillery gun – and the latest weapon being used by British and US Special Forces to defeat Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan.
>
> […]…the aircraft, which is rarely deployed in daylight, carries a powerful Howitzer 105mm field gun which can ‘vaporise’ targets at a range of 1,200 yards.
>
> As the Hercules drops from 2,000ft to as low as 80ft above the battlefield, the Howitzer – normally used by ground troops – fires ten rounds a minute and has a back-up of three 25mm Gatling cannons spewing out 7,500 rounds every 60 seconds to produce the ultimate airborne gunship. Once a camera sited under the fuselage has fixed on the target, it sends the co-ordinates to an onboard computer – and the ‘Angel of Death’ is ready to unleash its deadly load.
>
> […]The high explosive 105mm shells, each packed with 5lb of TNT, rocket towards their target at 1,548ft per second.
>
> On contact, the shells can destroy buildings and spread shrapnel over a ‘kill’ area of up to 1,500 yards.

Click through to see the photos – you have to see the photos! It’s awesome! This is why we need to develop weapons, and to keep funding defense research. The article has a lot more detail and even talks about how the thing has been used to produce results.

Upcoming apologetics events in Dallas, Atlanta and Calgary

August 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Calgary, Alberta

First, the Faith Beyond Belief team is doing a Calgary event with Canadian scholar Craig Evans.

Details:

September 24-26, 2010

Various events in local churches and colleges with Dr. Craig Evans

The event schedule is here.

If you would like to donate, you can donate at the web site. The Faith Beyond Belief team informs me that they could really use your support, and please tell them that WK (me) sent you.

Craig Evans is first-rate scholar who is respected across the ideological spectrum. He has been doing stuff with John Ankerberg, participating in debates with John Dominic Crossan, and debating against Bart Ehrman. Canadians should be thrilled to get someone of his caliber in their country. The fact that the organizers have not neglected to schedule academic outreach events is significant. Calgary is the best city in Canada, and located next to the Rocky Mountains.

Dallas, Texas

Then, this one in Dallas.

Details:

November 5-6, 2010

2010 On Guard Christian Apologetics Conference

Denton Bible Church in Denton, Texas.

The event schedule is here.

I am a huge fan of Denton Bible Church, and I would love to live on the north side of Dallas, if anyone can find me a good computer science job there as a Java programmer. Denton Bible Church rocks – I believe they did a debate with William Lane Craig and Keith Parsons before, which you can listen to on the comprehensive William Lane Craig Debate page.

Atlanta, Georgia

Then, this one in Atlanta.

Details:

November 18-20, 2010

2010 Evangelical Philosophical Society Apologetics Conference

Here is the event schedule.

Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Georgia.

I'm going to see if I can go to the one in Atlanta to meet a whole bunch of my blog friends. I would say that the odds are very, very good that I will be there. The north suburbs is another place I would like to live – Rep. Tom Price's district is super conservative.

<!– div class="left_call"> [image] </div –>
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November 5th and 6th, 2010

Friday: 7:30pm to 9:30pm

Saturday: 8:30am to 4:00pm

CBS News discovers that adult stem cells produce more treatments

August 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from CBS News. (H/T Hot Air via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A few months ago, Dr. Thomas Einhorn was treating a patient with a broken ankle that wouldn't heal, even with multiple surgeries. So he sought help from the man's own body.
>
> Einhorn drew bone marrow from the man's pelvic bone with a needle, condensed it to about four teaspoons of rich red liquid, and injected that into his ankle.
>
> Four months later the ankle was healed. Einhorn, chairman of orthopedic surgery at Boston University Medical Center, credits "adult" stem cells in the marrow injection. He tried it because of published research from France.
>
> Einhorn's experience isn't a rigorous study. But it's an example of many innovative therapies doctors are studying with adult stem cells. Those are stem cells typically taken from bone marrow and blood – not embryos.
>
> For all the emotional debate that began about a decade ago on allowing the use of embryonic stem cells, it's adult stem cells that are in human testing today. An extensive review of stem cell projects and interviews with two dozen experts reveal a wide range of potential treatments.

This is important because embryonic stem cell research involves the destruction of human beings. Real little people that would grow up just like you and me. You have to destroy the embryo in order to get embryonic stem cells.

Related posts

- Adult stem cells used to restore sight to patients blinded by chemical burns
- British boy becomes first in the world to have stem cell transplant
- ABC News reports on how adult stem cells produce innovative cures today
- Round up of articles on adult stem-cell research from FRC
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama's plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

The Obama administration's weak response to WikiLeaks

August 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The horror we feared would happen is here. Friday, the New York Times reports the Taliban is studying 75,000 classified U.S. documents posted on WikiLeaks for names of informants, potential defectors and others who cooperated with American and NATO forces in Afghanistan.
>
> "We are studying the report," a gleeful Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told the Times. "If they are U.S. spies, then we know how to punish them."
>
> That means death for any Afghan who ever cooperated with us because those reports are loaded with names, identifying villages, parentages and potential defectors. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange threatens to publish more documents and publicly sneers at the prospect of deaths, mockingly saying the U.S. should launch criminal inquiries on U.S. soldiers instead.
>
> […]Last year, President Obama committed to the counterinsurgency plan of General Stanley McChrystal… [which] …requires soldiers to enter villages, develop informants and prioritize protecting civilians instead of wall themselves off in fortresses without intelligence. The WikiLeaks leak pretty well blows years of that hazardous and delicate work out of the water.
>
> But the immediate problem is the death sentences ahead for Afghans who have cooperated with us — and any U.S. soldier who may die now that Afghans can no longer trust us.

And the White House response to Assange:

> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen warns that Assange may "already have blood on his hands." The White House response is to focus on begging Assange, who leaked the documents, to stop.
>
> "Well, we can do nothing but implore the person that has those classified, top secret documents not to post anymore," said spokesman Robert Gibbs on Friday.

The Democrats are imploring Assange to stop. Begging him to stop undermining the safety and security of our country. Begging him to stop exposing American forces to attacks. Is that strong leadership on national security?

Can you imagine that many people in the armed forces actually voted for Obama?

US Air Force decides not to close F-22 Raptor production plant

August 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great news from Politico. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Air Force will hang on to its F-22 tooling at Lockheed Martin's Marietta, Ga., production plant even after it stops making the fifth generation fighter jet in 2012, according to Flight International's Stephen Trimble. Though the Air Force has said in the past the goal would be to provide a long-time service plan for the jets, "the decision also implicitly preserves the option to restart production if future administrations decide that the USAF needs more than 186 F-22s," Trimble writes.

The Weekly Standard explains:

> The Air Force originally planned for 750 Raptors — at the time called the Advanced Tactical Fighter — as a replacement for the venerable F-15 Eagle. Strategic shifts, like the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of the infantry-heavy war on terrorism, steadily decreased the fleet's planned end-strength until Congress settled on 187 airframes in 2006.
>
> As Russia and China continue their steady defense buildups and America's aging fighter fleet continues to decay, the need for the "finest fighter jet ever built" only grows. Keeping that Lockheed assembly line open may seem like mundane news today. But it could end up saving the military big bucks down the line, as the peer threat looms larger.

Now that the JSF is facing substantial delays and rising costs, we need to have the option of restarting production on the F-22 when Obama loses in 2012. This is really important. We need to keep our edge in the sky. There are bad people in the world who threaten peace, prosperity and liberty. We need to make them believe that any aggression they consider will be costly. We need to deter aggression.

Why does God create people who he knows will choose Hell?

August 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's Bill Craig's question of the week, and I think this is a legitimate question.

Here's the question:

> In your debate with Victor Stenger, he advanced the argument that God could not logically be a perfect being and creator of the universe. In response you stated that God does not create because of anything lacking in Himself, but because the creation of the universe benefits man, because he can come to know God and have a loving relationship with Him. I was just wondering, how does this square with the Christian doctrine of Hell? If Christ is the only way to God, and unbelief is punished by eternity in Hell, it seems likely that the vast majority of people, or at least a good number, will end up in Hell. In what way could we say that creation benefited these people? The doctrine of Hell has always been one of my major problems with Christianity, and it was my main reason for becoming an atheist.

And you can click here for Bill's answer.

And you can find the Craig vs. Stenger debate right here for free. I keep the DVD in my office, because it's a good debate.

UPDATE:

Here is Matt Flannagan's answer:

> The question why does God create people who he knows will go to hell seems to me to make some mistakes.
>
> It assumes that it's wrong to do something which one foresees will result in ruin for another. But one does not have to think far to see this is a mistake. Suppose a person told me that if I did not have an affair with her she would kill herself. i refuse and she kills herself. Am I guilty of murder? It seems to me not for two reasons, first although I foresaw the result I did not cause it she caused it by her actions hence I did not kill her. Second, the alternative in this instance did involve me causing something evil, it involved me causing an act of adultery and disloyalty.
>
> Take this to the hell case, God foresees that others will freely do something which results in their damnation that does not mean he causes this action and so is not culpable. Second, the alternative to this would be to not create this person or this world and the question is whether this would be a better state of affairs, its not obvious it would be.
>
> Moreover I am inclined to think this argument proves too much. As a parent I

> know that my child will at some point lie, sin and do bad things, does it follow that parents should be held accountable for their children's actions and can't justly punish them? After all they could have refrained from having Kids.

He's a prominent Christian debater from New Zealand who debates the same sort of people as William Lane Craig does.

Related posts

- What does the Bible say about judging others and Hell?
- James Spiegel explains what really causes atheism
- Interview with Jim Spiegel on "The Making of an Atheist" book
- Book review of "If there's a God, why are there atheists?"
- Should you reject the Biblical notion of Hell based on emotions?
- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

Canadian woman has miscarriage after 3 hour wait in ER

August 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Prince Edward Island Guardian. (H/T The Way The Ball Bounces)

Excerpt:

> Losing her first baby was devastating enough but having to do it in a crowded waiting room is what angered Christine Handrahan the most.
>
> The 29-year-old Peakes woman was nine weeks pregnant when on July 12 she started bleeding.
>
> Fearing the worst, Handrahan and her husband, Michael, headed to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's new emergency room.
>
> There she waited more than three hours, blood seeping out of her jeans, tears rolling down her face as she feared she was losing her baby — or that she might be bleeding to death.
>
> Still, she waited and waited.
>
> More than three hours passed before Michael had enough.
>
> Only one patient had gone through the big glass doors to see a doctor so he knew the wait was going to be extensive.
>
> Michael helped his wife out of a wheelchair into his truck and they made the 45-minute drive to Prince County Hospital in Summerside. There she was immediately rushed into the hospital's emergency room where the mother-to-be was told that she had a miscarriage.
>
> […]Handrahan says nobody at the hospital showed her any compassion.
>
> "They could have given me a room to go in. Not necessarily a room with a bed. Even if it had been their TV room, or their lunchroom, or their closet. That waiting room was jam packed full of people.
>
> "Somebody should have cared enough to say 'Oh my goodness, you're going through a miscarriage, do you need some quiet time?' I was fighting my tears. I wanted a place to go cry."
>
> […]Health Minister Carolyn Bertram maintains safety is not being compromised at the Charlottetown hospital.

Click through all 3 pages, until you have supped full with horrors, as the Thane of Glamis would say. And don't worry, the socialist executive director *apologized* – although she would not say that the miscarriage was *inappropriate.* So we're all good, right? Well, the bureaucrat is good – because she already got *paid* through your taxes. And no, you can't have *your money back.* And good luck suing the government, too. They'll use more of

your tax money to overpay their defense lawyers.

But if you need an abortion or a sex change? No problem – then it’s free courtesy of Canadian taxpayers.

Related posts

- Single-payer health care is falling apart in Canada
- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
- Premier of Newfoundland defends decision to seek surgery in the USA
- Government-run health care is really about redistributing wealth
- Cato Institute destroys the myths of inferior health care in the USA
- Canadian politicians rejects single-payer health care to get treated in USA
- How does health care in the USA compare with other countries?
- Videos explaining what government-run health care is like in Canada
- Canada cuts deal with US hospitals to reduce waiting times
- Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!

Suspect in massive leak of military secrets is a gay rights activist

August 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Bradley Manning, the prime suspect in the leaking of the Afghan war files, raged against his US Army employers and "society at large" on his Facebook page in the days before he allegedly downloaded thousands of secret memos, The Daily Telegraph has learnt.
>
> The US Army intelligence analyst, who is half British and went to school in Wales, appeared to sink into depression after a relationship break-up, saying he didn't "have anything left" and was "beyond frustrated".
>
> In an apparent swipe at the army, he also wrote: "Bradley Manning is not a piece of equipment," and quoted a joke about "military intelligence" being an oxymoron.
>
> Mr Manning, 22, who is currently awaiting court martial, is suspected of leaking more than 90,000 secret military documents to the Wikileaks website in a security breach which US officials claim has endangered the lives of serving soldiers and Afghan informers.
>
> […]Mr Manning, who is openly homosexual, began his gloomy postings on January 12, saying: "Bradley Manning didn't want this fight. Too much to lose, too fast."
>
> […]Pictures on Mr Manning's Facebook page include photos of him on school trips during his time in Wales and at a gay rights rally, where he is holding up a placard demanding equality on "the battlefield".

The story has quite a lot of details about his family history, and his troubled relationship with his father after his parents divorced.

The stimulus bill funded a study to get monkeys high on cocaine

August 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From ABC News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has credited its $862 billion stimulus program with pulling the economy out of the worst recession since the Great Depression. But a new report by two Republican senators argues the stimulus is riddled with wasteful projects that do not create jobs.
>
> The report, released by Sens. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., and John McCain, R-Ariz., highlights 100 stimulus projects that they say have "questionable goals," are "being mismanaged or were poorly planned" and are even "costing jobs and hurting small businesses."
>
> The Coburn-McCain report takes issue with stimulus spending on projects like one that entailed research on how cocaine affects monkeys. The Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center was awarded $71,623 to study what the report calls, "Monkeys Getting High for Science."
>
> Bonnie Davis, a spokeswoman for The Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, said the "small grant has helped protect very important research that will have significant impact on public health in regards to cocaine addiction and the issue of relapse."
>
> Go a little further down the list and you'll find even bigger spending. The California Academy of Sciences is receiving nearly $1 million in stimulus funds to send researchers to the Southwest Indian Ocean Islands and East Africa to capture, photograph and analyze thousands of exotic ants.
>
> There's also funding for yoga and hot flashes. Researchers at Wake Forest University have received nearly $300,000 to study whether integral yoga "can be an effective method to reduce the frequency and/or severity of hot flashes" in breast cancer survivors.

This is what happens when you take money *away* from investors and businesses and give it to government bureaucrats to spend. Unemployment doubles compared to what it was under George W. Bush. Because money was taken from the people who create jobs and spend by people who have no experience in the private sector and no knowledge of economics.

Here's a complete run-down on the Obama Presidency from a financial viewpoint.

Gay federal judge rules traditional marriage unconstitutional in California

August 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> A federal judge has ruled that California's constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman is unconstitutional, because it excludes same-sex unions.
>
> Chief Judge Vaughn Walker, who presides over the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, declared Proposition 8 had no "rational basis" in a 138-page ruling on the Perry v. Schwarzenegger case released Wednesday afternoon.
>
> […]The judge dismissed the amendment, saying its restriction of marriage to heterosexual couples was "nothing more than an artifact of a foregone notion that men and women fulfill different roles in civic life." He also added that it seemed to him proponents of Prop. 8 were defending the amendment on the basis of "moral disapproval," which he said was "an improper basis on which to deny rights to gay men and lesbians" and enacted in law, "a private moral view that same-sex couples are inferior to opposite-sex couples."
>
> […]Walker, however, is himself an active homosexual, and some conservative critics of the Prop. 8 case contended that Walker would be too personally invested in the case to deliver an impartial outcome.
>
> […]Walker also ruled that domestic partnerships did not satisfy the duty on California to let same-sex couples marry each other.

Michelle Malkin reports that pro-marriage activists are appealing:

> In court papers filed Tuesday night, lawyers for the Proposition 8 defense team asked Chief U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker for a stay of his ruling if the outcome is to declare the law unconstitutional. The motion indicates that the Proposition 8 lawyers will immediately ask the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to review the ruling if Walker rules against them.

Comments to this post will be strictly filtered in accordance with Obama's law restricting free speech on this topic.

Related posts

- New study on open relationships in the gay community
- A former lesbian reflects on her past lesbian relationships
- New study shows that same-sex unions are less monogamous than

heterosexual unions
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why do people favor traditional marriage over same-sex marriage

Swing state Missouri votes 71% in favor of repealing Obamacare

August 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story. (H/T Hot Air via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Missouri voters on Tuesday overwhelmingly rejected a federal mandate to purchase health insurance, rebuking President Barack Obama's administration and giving Republicans their first political victory in a national campaign to overturn the controversial health care law passed by Congress in March.
>
> "The citizens of the Show-Me State don't want Washington involved in their health care decisions," said Sen. Jane Cunningham, R-Chesterfield, one of the sponsors of the legislation that put Proposition C on the August ballot. She credited a grass-roots campaign involving Tea Party and patriot groups with building support for the anti-Washington proposition.
>
> With most of the vote counted, Proposition C was winning by a ratio of nearly 3 to 1. The measure, which seeks to exempt Missouri from the insurance mandate in the new health care law, includes a provision that would change how insurance companies that go out of business in Missouri liquidate their assets. …
>
> Missouri was the first of four states to seek to opt out of the insurance purchase mandate portion of the health care law that had been pushed by Obama. And while many legal scholars question whether the vote will be binding, the overwhelming approval gives the national GOP momentum as Arizona, Florida and Oklahoma hold similar votes during midterm elections in November.

Missouri is a 50-50 swing state.

To find out why they voted against Obamacare, one need one look at the diagram showing the new bureaucracy that Obamacare created. (H/T Hot Air via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Senate Steering Committee Chairman Jim DeMint (R-South Carolina) called Obamacare "a bureaucratic nightmare. The Democrats' takeover of health care creates a byzantine network of 159 new federal programs and bureaucracies to make decisions that should be between just the patient and their doctor. It should concern everyone that at the center of this regulatory web is the new CMS chief, Donald Berwick, who has championed rationing and European socialized medicine. Americans were rightly outraged that this big government bill was rushed through Congress before anyone read or fully understood the bill's consequences. Republicans will fight to repeal this reckless takeover and to ensure health care freedom to American families."

That thing looks like the labyrinth of the minotaur.

Women should read “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands”

August 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s a Christian woman’s review of Dr. Laura Schlessinger’s famous book.

Excerpt:

> “No emotional outlet is worth damaging my husband’s reputation,” shared one of Dr. Laura’s listeners named Becky. Another named Melissa told how she had begun bragging on her husband whenever her girlfriends started griping about theirs. Melissa said, “As much as men’s bellies need to be filled with delicious home-cooked meals, their egoes need to be filled with ‘yummy food’ as well. I have found that if I speak blessings about my husband, then blessings are what I get in return.”

And:

> Dr. Laura reiterates over and over that a wife’s approval is like oxygen to a husband, her disapproval like emasculation. A listener named Bill wrote, “Words are a whisper, but what she does for me is a thunder.” And Dr. Laura says, “There are only so many hours in a day and only so much we can put our energies into. We have to make choices. And if you don’t pick your husband as #1, that favor will, sadly, be returned.”

Words of encouragement are extremely important to a man, especially when they are spoken in public to other people in front of her man. Words of encouragement are non-negotiable for a man – he needs to hear them when he does good things for his woman. A good rule of thumb is that a woman should *never* criticize a man in public, and she should *never* criticize a man to another women behind his back for silly things. Even if he never finds out what she is doing by blaming and criticizing him for trivialities, it poisons the relationship and undermines the goodness of men to her female friends.

Here’s an excerpt from the excerpt of the book:

> “A good man is hard to find, not to keep.” That sentence should really make you stop and think. As a radio talk-show host/psychotherapist, I’ve got to tell you how remarkably true and sad it is that so many women struggle to hold on to some jerk, keep giving an abusive or philandering man yet another chance, have unprotected sex with some guy while barely knowing his last name, agree to shack up and risk making babies with some opportunist or loser, all in a pathetic version of a pursuit for love, but will resent the hell out of treating a decent, hardworking, caring husband with the thoughtfulness, attention, respect, and affection he needs to be content.
>
> It boggles my mind.

> What further puts me in boggle overdrive is how seemingly oblivious and insensitive many women are to how destructive they are being to their men and consequently to their marriages. Women will call me asking me if it's alright to go off on extended vacations "without him" when they want some freedom or R&R, or if it's okay to cut him off from sex because they're annoyed about something or just too tired from their busy day, or if they really have to make him a dinner when he gets home from work because it's just too tedious to plan meals, or if it's okay to keep stuff from him (like family or financial issues) because his input is unnecessary, or if they're really obligated to spend time with his family (in-laws or stepkids), or if they really have to show interest in his hobbies when they're bored silly by them, or — well, you get the idea.

If a women loves a man, then she has to treat him like a car and change his oil and put gas in his tank, and inflate his tires. If the owner doesn't work hard at maintaining the car, then the car breaks down and the owner is unhappy. And cars – no matter what kind they are – all need certain things *from the owner* in order to make them work – there is *no car in the world* that can work for very long unless the owner takes care of it. It does no good to worry about tall cars and short cars, rich cars and poor cars, cars that can cook and cars that can't kiss. In the end, *no car* can survive long with an owner who neglects it.

In the long run, it is the owner (the woman) who will decide whether the man works or not – her own maintenance skills are more important than the type of man it is. She is responsible for making a commitment to a man and then keeping him in working condition by her own choices. And this is especially true for Christian women, who are supposed to love self-sacrificially. What else is a husband for except to reflect the love of Christ to him more than any other person on the planet? Really the woman is responsible for the health of the relationship – men are naturally good when they are properly maintained.

(I once spun out my roadster and blew out two tires by running up a curb because I neglected to rotate the tires for TWO YEARS and then decided to try powersliding at high speed – it was *all my fault!* They were Bridgestone Potenza S-03 Pole Positions, but even those won't save you if you don't rotate them for *two years!* And what about the time I bought four Bridgestone Blizzaks for my winter car and didn't rotate them for a year so that the front ones were almost worn out and the rear ones were practically new! And I probably blamed the car at first – even though it was *all my fault* for being *lazy*)

PCF Husbands is my favorite book on marriage, because it's the best. Everything she says about men and marriage is 100% true. For a woman who wants a man to love her well, this is the first book to read in order to learn how to love him well. And that is how she can reap the benefits of a good man's love – by taking responsibility for making good decisions.

If you like this post, be sure and check Arlemagne's post on "The Evils of Sentimentality" on RuthBlog. There's an easter egg in it.

Jonah Goldberg explains why we should export capitalism

August 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Column from USA Today.

Excerpt:

> In one NPR vignette, a mango farmer needs a small canal from a river abutting her property if she wants to expand her crop beyond two meager trees. Technology "Sumerians probably took for granted 5,000 years ago" could transform this single mother and her kids from "some of the poorest people on earth to much better off," according to reporter Adam Davidson. But despite a surplus of both cheap ditch-digging labor and aid agencies, she can't get a loan to build it.
>
> "This is what kept striking us in Haiti, just a little upfront investment and people could be living so much better," added fellow correspondent Chana Joffe-Walt.
>
> Instead, Haitians themselves explain, most aid agencies spend much of their energies trying to justify their own existence rather than helping Haitians help themselves. There are important lessons here for U.S. policymakers, not just in regard to Haiti (hardly a national security priority) but also for such places as Afghanistan and Iraq, particularly now that President Obama has announced the combat phase of the Iraq project is coming to an end.
>
> The "root causes" crowd always had a point about the effects of poverty on political stability. Where their case truly fell apart is in the remedy: economic planning from above. For decades, the "international community" bet on big-ticket state-run make-work jobs and white elephants. The West, including America, is expert at pouring aid into poor countries; it's less adept at teaching poor countries how to stop being poor.

Capitalism and foreign investment work better than foreign aid. We should feel good when what we do produces good results. We should not fel good when we cause harm out of our uninformed good intentions. Results matter. We need to try different ideas and then stick with what works. Capitalism *works.*

Arlemagne's post on the dangers of sentimentality in relationships

August 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Oh, this is really, really good. And you can't say he's pessimistic and cynical about marriage like me – because he is married.

Here's the post at RuthBlog.

Excerpt:

> In response to my earlier post about romantic love being more like addiction and quite a lot less like some deep spiritual connection, the comments section noted that my worldview is "sterile."
>
> Maybe.
>
> But this view of romance is also most likely true. Having a clear eyed view of the world has many advantages.
>
> But that worldview is liberating. Think about it. In the realm of love and marriage, knowing the truth about the nature of romantic love can save a person from the disappointments consequent of unrealistic expectations. This leads to happiness. The fantasy realm of romanticism can lead to some very bad consequences. Heck, don't take it from me. Just read Madam Bovary.

Then he cites this article from well-known social critic Theodore Dalrymple.

Excerpt:

> WE should try hard to think clearly, said the great French scientist, mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal, for such is the foundation of morality.
>
> **Sentimentality is one of the worst enemies of clear thought and therefore of morality. It is the preference of what we would like to be true over what actually is true**, it persuades us that we are more compassionate than we really are. **It is a form of make-believe.** British public policy in many fields has been riddled with sentimentality for many years with disastrous effects on our society and on our economy. We are now paying a heavy price.

By the way, you can read an entire book by Theodore Dalrymple – it's all free online.

I try hard to get the people that I care about to rethink their liberal political views – to begin to apply reason and evidence to their entire worldview. When a person relies on emotions to guide their decisions, it can cause tremendous damage, and especially to others – the spouse, the children, etc. Learning about the evils of postmodernism, moral relativism, etc. is also important.

Madame Bovary

On Arlemagne's advice I'm watching Madame Bovary (1949) right now. It's about a woman who reads crazy romance novels until she is bored with normal life and has to engage in affairs to find "romance" and "excitement". It's even BETTER than Anna Karenina and Great Expectations! I never learned so much about the dangers of selfishness in my entire life! You can read the entire book for free online, if you like. I never really had involved parents or any kind of religious and moral teaching at all, really. But when I read classics of literature like this, I learn a lot. It reminds me why I loved to read the classics so much as a child.

Cyrano de Bergerac

Here's the greatest scene ever filmed from Cyrano de Bergerac: (this scene is just after Cyrano's poetry-reciting duel with the impudent Comte de Guiche, and his subsequent fight with 100 armed men at the Porte de Nesle – the object of Cyrano's affection has agreed to meet with him and he has high hopes that she has finally realized how much he loves her)

That clip is the greatest thing ever written. *"It's instinct that tells the biggest lies"*. Indeed. Indeed. Truer words were never spoken.

"Oh, I have done better than that since then"

Podcasts from William Lane Craig, William Dembski and Scott Klusendorf

August 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig vs Victor Stenger

Debate report on the recent re-match debate at Oregon State University.

The MP3 file is here.

Craig argued his standard case, except he added the ontological argument and the contingency argument and removed the fine-tuning argument. Stenger defended the Hartle-Hawking cosmology from over 25 years ago, and made an argument that the universe we see does not fit with what Stenger expects that God ought to do, if he existed.

Their first debate is here. (MP3 file)

Bill also talked briefly about some other recent events, including his events at Harvard and MIT.

William Lane Craig vs Michael Tooley

Debate report on the recent re-match debate at the University of North Carolina – Charlotte.

The MP3 file is here.

This starts with a discussion of how Stenger responded to the ontological argument (blech!). Tooley offers a very strong statement of the evidential/probabilistic/inductive problem of evil. He was very well prepared for the debate – maybe too prepared. He didn't really respond to Bill Craig's arguments in the debate – he seemed to read FOUR prepared speeches! The debate included discussions about what counts as evil, and also whether we are in a position to know that God has *no reason* for permitting a particular instance of apparently gratuitous evil.

Their first debate is here. (Transcript)

I've actually met Michael Tooley at a conference, and he's a really nice quiet guy – but he supports infanticide.

William Lane Craig in South Africa

Debate report on the 4-man debate on the resurrection of Jesus with two South African atheists who have started a kind of liberal "Jesus Seminar" in South Africa. The debate was about how people should understand the text of the New Testament. Bill debated with a partner – Mike Licona.

Bill and Mike defended two contentions: 1) The resurrection was a literal historical event. 2) There is no good reason to deny this historical event. Paul argued from 1 Cor 15, the early sermons in Acts, and empty tomb that is talked in the gospels. One of the professors argued the "history of religions" view – that the New Testament is fiction that

borrows from pagan mythology. Craig also argued that the pre-supposition of naturalism is not warranted given the state of the evidence from natural theology (science, etc.).

The MP3 file is here.

Bill seems to be doing a lot of travel around the world lately, which is just awesome!

Poll shows that Canadians are uninformed about abortion law

August 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about CCBR
Story from Life News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> A new poll of Canadians finds they are very uninformed about abortion law in Canada and are unaware that abortions are allowed throughout pregnancy for any reason. That's the finding from an online survey of 1,022 Canadian adult conducted by the Angus-Reid polling firm.
>
> The survey found just 21 percent of Canadians know a woman can request an abortion at any time during her pregnancy, with no restrictions whatsoever.
>
> Conversely, 41 percent of Canadians are under the impression abortions are only available to women during the first three months of pregnancy.
>
> […]A majority of Canadians (55%) think women under the age of 18 should require consent from their parents or legal guardians to get an abortion while just 32 percent disagree.
>
> Also, half of respondents (50%) believe women should be given enough access to information about different options such as counseling and adoption before having an abortion while 31 percent disagree.
>
> And a large majority, 79 percent, would support provincial legislation requiring

> health workers give information about alternatives to abortion to pregnant women.
>
> Abortion and health care have been a huge topic for debate in the United States and 44 percent of Canadians believe abortions should be funded under the taxpayer-financed health care system. Another 39 percent say abortion funding should be limited to emergency cases.
>
> Although most Canadians (55%) think there is no point in re-opening the debate on abortion in the country, three-in-ten respondents (30%) believe it is time to re-open the discussion.

The pro-lifers in Canada (CCBR) have their work cut out for them to inform people about the law, and I think there is room for the federal Conservative Party and the Alberta Wild Rose Alliance to introduce some common sense regulation on abortion – like requiring health workers to provide information about alternatives.

Friday night funny: Brad Stine talks about political correctness

August 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christian comedian Brad Stine is not pleased with people who get offended.

Oversensitive witches

Animal rights activists

Chopsticks and multiculturalism

And he’s conservative, too.

Opening speeches from the Flannagan-Bradley debate on morality

August 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Details of the debate.

> Raymond Bradley and Matthew Flannagan will debate the topic "Is God the Source of Morality? Is it rational to ground right and wrong in commands issued by God?"

> Bradley is an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy with areas of specialty in Philosophical Logic, Metaphysics, Logical Atomism; he has previously debated William Lane Craig, Edward Blaiklock and many other Christian scholars and describes himself as an older generation "new atheist".
>
> Matthew FlannaganFlannagan is an Auckland based Philosopher and Theologian with areas of specialty in Philosophy of Religion, Ethics and Theology; he has previously debated Bill Cooke, Zoe During and, of course, writes for this blog.

Matt posted both opening speeches on the MandM blog.

Opening speech by Ray Bradley.

Excerpt:

> I'm going to indict God on four categories of charges. Each category has scores, if not hundreds or thousands of instances. If God is guilty of even one of these instances, that alone would be grounds for his conviction. Drawing upon evidence provided by God himself in his so-called Holy Scriptures, I hold that he's guilty of them all.
>
> - Crimes against Humanity
> - War Crimes
> - Licensing Moral Mayhem and Murder
> - Crimes of Torture

Matt went second and responded to this argument.

Opening speech by Matthew Flannagan.

Matt defends a divine command theory of morality and he has 3 responses to Ray:

- The theist can deny that the Biblical record of what God did is infallible
- God's moral duties are for humans, they are not necessarily binding on God
- Ray misinterprets the meaning and applicability of the Bible stories he cites

I recommend reading the two opening speeches now so you're ready for when the full video comes out. Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 tells me that he has asked for the video

and it should be posted soon. I will link to the video when it comes out.

Flannagan is awesome and you need to start to get familiar with him even though he is in New Zealand. He's basically the William Lane Craig of New Zealand, and probably that whole area of the world. I don't know any Australian scholars who are as capable as Matt. I must mention though that I do disagree with him on annihilationism, the view he articulates in this debate.

UPDATE: The audio has now been posted. (H/T Jason from Thinking Matters NZ)

Further study

And here is a blog post on Ray Bradley written by another New Zealander, theistic philosopher Glenn Peoples. Glenn's post is short and to the point – he excerpts the main argument from a post by Bradley against the moral argument and shows why it has no force.

And you can read more about William Lane Craig's debate with Ray Bradley on Hell, too.

Podcasts from William Dembski and Scott Klusendorf

August 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Dembski interview

William Dembski gives advice to young Christians who want to study intelligent design. He talks about where they should go to school, how to keep their heads down and the threat from theistic evolutionists at Christian universities.

The MP3 file is here.

If I could do my life over, I would be Doug Axe. I wish I knew then what I know now about where the action is.

Scott Klusendorf on stem cell research

I found this MP3 on the Apologetics 315 Twitter feed.

He agrees that adult stem cell research is better, but he urges caution about arguing against abortion *on that basis.* He recommends arguing for the humanity of the unborn on the merits.

The MP3 file is here.

Klusendorf is so clever that he doesn't even like to use the studies showing how abortion tends to harm many women psychologically. He always wants to stick with the question "What is the unborn?".

Denyse O’Leary and William Dembski author new book on theistic evolution

August 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s a post by Denyse on Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> In *Christian Darwinism: Why Theistic Evolution Fails As Science and Theology* (Broadman and Holman, November 2011), mathematician Dembski and journalist O’Leary address a powerful new trend to accommodate Christianity with atheist materialism, via acceptance of Darwinian (“survival of the fittest”) evolution.
>
> […]In the authors’ view, no accommodation is possible. More to the point, accommodation is not even necessary. There are good reasons for doubting Darwin and good reasons for adopting other models for evolution – or for deciding that there is not enough evidence to make a decision.
>
> Dembski and O’Leary insist that this conflict has nothing to do with the age of the Earth. Darwinism is, as they will show, the increasingly implausible creation story of atheism, which diverges at just about every point from the Christian worldview on which modern science was founded.

Denyse’s blog on intelligent design is here.

My regular readers know that I consider theistic evolution to be equivalent to atheism. If a Christian thinks that we can’t detect God in the world using science apart from subjective opinions, then they might as well be an atheist. Christianity is a knowledge tradition, not a blind-belief tradition.

Milwaukee teacher union fights for right to taxpayer-funded Viagra

August 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

AP story is her. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> With the district in a financial crisis and hundreds of its members facing layoffs, the Milwaukee teachers union is taking a peculiar stand: fighting to get its taxpayer-funded Viagra back.
>
> The union has asked a judge to order the school board to again include Pfizer Inc.'s erectile dysfunction drug and similar pills in its health insurance plans.
>
> The filing is the latest in a two-year legal campaign in which the union has argued, so far unsuccessfully, that the board's policy of excluding erectile dysfunction drugs discriminates against male employees. The union says Viagra, Cialis, Levitra and others are necessary treatment for "an exclusively gender-related condition."
>
> But lawyers for the school board say the drugs were excluded in 2005 to save money, and there is no discrimination because they are used primarily for recreational sex and not out of medical necessity.

Teacher unions are overwhelmingly Democrat.

My previous story on Viagra was about how Democrats voted in favor of subsidizing Viagra for child molesters and rapists. Democrats think that abortions and drugs to provide recreational sex are "health care". In Canada, the government provides taxpayer-funded sex changes and in vitro fertilization because they are "human rights". Is that the direction that the Democrats want to take us in? Who is supposed to pay for all these unnecessary goodies?

New study finds abused children more likely to be gay or bisexual

August 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The study was done by Otago University in New Zealand. (H/T Glenn Peoples of Beretta blog)

Excerpt:

> Otago University researcher associate professor Elisabeth Wells has looked at the connection between adverse childhood events and sexuality and found those who experienced trauma were significantly more likely to be non-heterosexual.
>
> The study used results from the New Zealand Mental Health Survey, which surveyed almost 13,000 people aged over 16 between 2003 and 2004.
>
> Participants were asked whether they thought of themselves as bisexual, heterosexual or homosexual and if they had same-sex sexual experiences or relationships.
>
> Less than one per cent of people identified themselves as homosexual, but three per cent had a same-sex encounter.
>
> Wells said the more "adverse events" experienced in childhood – including sexual assault, rape and domestic violence – the more likely the person identified with one of the non-exclusively heterosexual groups.
>
> She said most people from disturbed backgrounds were heterosexual.
>
> However, the study showed a clear relationship between negative events in childhood and homosexual or bisexual relationships later in life.

This Otagu University seems to be doing a lot of cutting edge research on social issues. Last year, I blogged about their study about the mental harm suffered by women after their abortions. I actually got hold of that paper (using my Wintery powers) in case I ever needed to use it while discussing abortion.

I actually studied the issue of what causes homosexuality and whether it can be repaired using therapy a while back using books by medical doctors like Jeffrey Satinover and Joseph Nicolosi. (Nicolosi's new book is here) It turns out that there are some genetic factors that make homosexuality more likely, but the real causes are environmental, e.g. – sexual abuse during childhood or failure to bond emotionally with the same-sex parent.

I wonder how many people actually go after the research when forming their opinions on issues like abortion and same-sex marriage? I always head straight for the research and debates. I think that my opponents prefer personal attacks and speech codes!

Comments to this post will be strictly filtered to stay clear of Obama's laws restricting free speech on controversial issues.

Taliban forces kill 10 unarmed members of Christian medical charity

August 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the Boston Globe. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Last week, Little, 61, was one of 10 members of a Christian medical team — six Americans, two Afghans, one German, and a Briton — who were gunned down by the Taliban, which accused the volunteers of spying and trying to convert Muslims to Christianity.
>
> […]The victims — doctors, nurses, and logistics personnel — were found shot to death Friday near three vehicles in woods just off the main road that snakes through a narrow valley, provincial police chief General Agha Noor Kemtuz said.
>
> Bridge Afghanistan, another relief organization, said on its website that the team included one of its members, Dr. Karen Woo, who gave up a job in a private clinic in London to work in Afghanistan.
>
> […]Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said they killed the foreigners because they were "spying for the Americans'' and "preaching Christianity.'' The Taliban also said the team was carrying Dari language Bibles and "spying gadgets.''
>
> […]Frans said the International Assistance Mission, or IAM, one of the longest-serving nongovernmental organizations operating in Afghanistan, is registered as a nonprofit Christian organization but does not proselytize.
>
> "This tragedy negatively impacts our ability to continue serving the Afghan people,'' the charity said. "We hope it will not stop our work that benefits over a quarter of a million Afghans each year.''
>
> […]**In August 2001, Little and employees from other Christian organizations were expelled by the Taliban government after eight Christian aid workers were arrested for allegedly trying to convert Afghans to Christianity.**
>
> **He returned to Afghanistan after the Taliban government was toppled in November 2001 by US-backed forces. Known in Kabul as "Mr. Tom,'' Little supervised a network of eye hospitals and clinics largely funded through private donations.**
>
> […]**"We are a humanitarian organization,'' Frans said. "We had no security people. We had no armed guards. We had no weapons.''**

Some "Christians" who vote Democrat think that it is OK to oppose the war in Afghanistan because it is "too expensive". But both of our wars didn't cost HALF of Obama's FIRST YEAR DEFICIT of 1.5 trillion dollars. Not only do wars deter terrorism and protect our

democratic allies, but they also allow aid workers to re-enter Islamo-fascist states so they can provide medical care to some of the poorest people on Earth. Not to mention safeguarding freedom of religion.

Senate approves bailout for union and public sector "workers"

August 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story on Fox News.

Excerpt:

> The Senate voted Thursday to approve a package of $26 billion in aid for state and local governments, funded partly by an $11 billion tax increase on U.S. multinational corporations.
>
> In what was one of the final moves by the Senate before lawmakers depart Washington for the summer recess, Democrats were able to score a significant victory for a core constituency of their party: labor unions and public-sector workers.
>
> But at the same time, they handed a hefty tax bill to U.S. companies with units overseas that have been able to pay a lower corporate income tax rate on profits derived from their foreign businesses.
>
> The Senate voted 61-39 to approve the measure, with just two Republicans joining with every single Democrat to vote in favor of the legislation.
>
> House Democratic leadership indicated Wednesday they plan to bring back lawmakers in that chamber to give final approval to the legislation, likely Aug. 10.
>
> […]**The majority of Republicans were critical of the legislation, arguing it was handing U.S. corporations—which they say are proven job creators—another reason to move more of their operations to other countries. At the same time, they said, it was essentially rewarding traditional Democratic supporters at the expense of large firms.**

That's 26 billion more dollars that are coming out of the productive private sector, to pay for people who are already overpaid compared to private sector producers.

Why American employers are not hiring any more workers

August 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a Wall Street Journal article from a New Jersey business owner who knows.

Excerpt:

> With unemployment just under 10% and companies sitting on their cash, you would think that sooner or later job growth would take off. I think it's going to be later—much later. Here's why.
>
> Meet Sally (not her real name; details changed to preserve privacy). Sally is a terrific employee, and she happens to be the median person in terms of base pay among the 83 people at my little company in New Jersey, where we provide audio systems for use in educational, commercial and industrial settings. She's been with us for over 15 years. She's a high school graduate with some specialized training. She makes $59,000 a year—on paper. In reality, she makes only $44,000 a year because $15,000 is taken from her thanks to various deductions and taxes, all of which form the steep, sad slope between gross and net pay.
>
> […]My company has to write checks for $74,000 so Sally can receive her nominal $59,000 in base pay.
>
> […]Then the federal and state governments want a little something extra. They take $56 for federal unemployment coverage, $149 for disability insurance, $300 for workers' comp and $505 for state unemployment insurance. Finally, the feds make me pay $856 for Sally's Medicare and $3,661 for her Social Security.
>
> When you add it all up, it costs $74,000 to put $44,000 in Sally's pocket and to give her $12,000 in benefits. Bottom line: Governments impose a 33% surtax on Sally's job each year.
>
> […]I**n a saner world, health insurance would be something that individuals buy for themselves and their families, just as they do with auto insurance. Now, adding to the insanity, there is ObamaCare.**
>
> **Every year, we negotiate a renewal to our health coverage. This year, our provider demanded a 28% increase in premiums—for a lesser plan. This is in part a tax increase that the federal government has co-opted insurance providers to collect. We had never faced an increase anywhere near this large; in each of the last two years, the increase was under 10%.**
>
> […]**As much as I might want to hire new salespeople, engineers and marketing staff in an effort to grow, I would be increasing my company's vulnerability to government decisions to raise taxes, to policies that make health insurance more expensive, and to the**

> **difficulties of this economic environment.**

This is why the unemployment rate is continuing to rise as the Democrats continue to pay off their special interests and raise taxes on US businesses. The more money they transfer away from private businesses to non-producing public sector workers, the more American companies will stop hiring, or just shift their hiring overseas. Some will just move their entire companies overseas. If depends on how far the Democrats go in implementing their left-wing agenda.

Michele Bachmann makes the case for limited government

August 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele previews the Tea Party Caucus on Fox Business Network's America's Nightly Scoreboard. She also calls for a pro-business growth economy to help spur job creation forward and discusses the impact of SIGTARP.

Here's another one where she discusses the financial regulation bill which exempts the SEC from transparency measure.

A while back she had called for an audit of the SEC.

The apologetic value of self-sacrificial romantic love

August 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In his arms

Here's a nice list of descriptions of what love looks like in a marriage on Michael Patton's Parchment and Pen blog.

My favorites:

1. Love is being willing to have your life complicated by the needs and struggles of your husband or wife without impatience or anger.
2. Love is actively fighting the temptation to be critical and judgmental toward your spouse, while looking for ways to encourage and praise.
3. Love is the daily commitment to resist the needless moments of conflict that come from pointing out and responding to minor offenses.
4. Love is being lovingly honest and humbly approachable in times of misunderstanding, and being more committed to unity and love than you are to winning, accusing, or being right.
5. Love is a daily commitment to admit your sin, weakness, and failure and to resist the temptation to offer an excuse or shift the blame.
6. Love means being willing, when confronted by your spouse, to examine your heart rather than rising to your defense or shifting the focus.
7. Love is a daily commitment to grow in love so that the love you offer to your husband or wife is increasingly selfless, mature, and patient.
8. Love is being unwilling to do what is wrong when you have been wronged but to look for concrete and specific ways to overcome evil with good.
9. Love is being a good student of your spouse, looking for his physical, emotional, and spiritual needs so that in some way you can remove the burden, support him as he carries it, or encourage him along the way.
10. Love means being willing to invest the time necessary to discuss, examine, and understand the problems that you face as a couple, staying on task until the problem is removed or you have agreed upon a strategy of response.
11. Love is always being willing to ask for forgiveness and always being committed to

grant forgiveness when it is requested.

12. Love is recognizing the high value of trust in a marriage and being faithful to your promises and true to your word.
13. Love is speaking kindly and gently, even in moments of disagreement, refusing to attack your spouse's character or assault his or her intelligence.
14. Love is being unwilling to flatter, lie, manipulate, or deceive in any way in order to co-opt your spouse into giving you what you want or doing something your way.
15. Love is being unwilling to ask your spouse to be the source of your identity, meaning and purpose, or inner sense of well-being, while refusing to be the source of his or hers.
16. Love is the willingness to have less free time, less sleep, and a busier schedule in order to be faithful to what God has called you to be and to do as a husband or a wife.
17. Love is a commitment to say no to selfish instincts and to do everything that is within your ability to promote real unity, functional understanding, and active love in your marriage.
18. Love is staying faithful to your commitment to treat your spouse with appreciation, respect, and grace, even in moments when he or she doesn't seem to deserve it or is unwilling to reciprocate.
19. Love is the willingness to make regular and costly sacrifices for the sake of your marriage without asking anything in return or using your sacrifices to place your spouse in your debt.
20. Love is being unwilling to make any personal decision or choice that would harm your marriage, hurt your husband or wife, or weaken the bond of trust between you.
21. Love is refusing to be self-focused or demanding but instead looking for specific ways to serve, support, and encourage, even when you are busy or tired.
22. Love is daily admitting to yourself, your spouse, and God that you are not able to love this way without God's protecting, providing, forgiving, rescuing, and delivering grace.
23. Love is a specific commitment of the heart to a specific person that causes you to give yourself to a specific lifestyle of care that requires you to be willing to make sacrifices that have that person's good in view.

Yes, that's all of them. They're all my favorites. I'm a big believer in romantic love – and it's not just for marriage, either, as long as it's done chastely before marriage. You can do lots of things during courtship that can serve as practice for loving well during marriage, before you ever get married.

I'm blogging this topic because several of my friends (Rob, Wes, Andrew, etc.) have amazing wives and they really, really love them and that's fun for me to see and hear about since I want to love my future wife like that, too. And I hope that she wants to love me like that, if there is a future Mrs. WK. A list like this provides useful guidelines for knowing what Christian romantic love looks like, although I wish they had mentioned

slaying dragons.

And notice that the main focus is on the ability to love self-sacrificially – and the man and the woman are *both* obligated. Anyone who is *growing* in their Christian faith should find that growing the capacity for self-sacrificial love is *normal* for them. And you can actually *try it out* as you are learning more about it – to follow Jesus by loving self-sacrificially.

The persuasive power of romantic Christian love

One of the neat things that apologists often overlook is the witnessing power of loving other Christians, even romantically. There are lots of non-Christians in my life who are always waiting for the latest news of my adventures in my platonic attempts to loving Christian damsels in distress well. (they usually don't know who the woman is so I'm not breaching her privacy). Non-Christians are more willing to listen to heroic and dangerous deeds of self-sacrificial love than they are arguments, although the one often leads to the other, because the deeds are supported by a worldview.

When non-Christians see how Christians in relationships bounce back from sin and disappointment to love other Christians, it says something about Christianity. When Christians in love forgive each other for sinning against each other, that says something about Christianity. I think it's sometimes tough on non-Christians that we have all of these moral rules that make us appear exclusive and judgmental – but by distinguishing ourselves in loving others then we can actually balance that out by the way we love.

Obviously, I think it should be paired up with good reasons and evidences, but love does get their attention. Especially romantic, married love that produces a lot of well-behaved children who know the Lord and serve him effectively! And I think that Christians need to think more about viewing opposite-sex Christians as people who need love and who can be loved – as a way of serving God and witnessing to unbelievers. It's *good* to serve God by shoring up other Christians who are in tough trying to serve the Lord effectively. And there is no way to shore up a person more than by marrying them and knitting your soul to theirs, your fate to theirs. It's the ultimate act of unselfishness towards your spouse and towards Christ the Lord, who expects to be served effectively by the marriage.

Consider John 13:31-34:

[31]When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. [32]If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

[33]"My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

[34]"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. [35]By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Christian romantic relationships are *not* the same as secular romantic relationships. The criteria of attraction are not the same, and the goals are not the same. It's not about individual fulfillment, it's about helping another person be more Christlike and helping

them to serve Jesus better. It’s about two people fighting on the same battlefield who are less concerned about their own well-being, and more concerned about the life and combat capability of the soldier next to them. We need to put ourselves second and take care of the soldier next to us even when we don’t like them. It’s enough that they they are on the same side as we are. Some people who are not fighting yet may join us when they see the care and concern we have for each other.

The person whom this post is about can own up to his amazing marriage in the comments, if he wants to. Glenn, Neil, Matt, and Richard B. can all mention their super-duper marriages, too. It’s fun for me to hear about – although I remain cautious.

Related posts

- What is the meaning of white roses?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper’s questions to ask before you get married
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Are the Obamas out of touch with the American taxpayer?

August 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is what the UK Telegraph is saying across the pond, because of Michelle Obama's lavish taxpayer-funded vacation to Spain. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> It is the kind of impunity that has been highlighted on the world stage this week by Michelle Obama's hugely costly trip to Spain, which has prompted a *New York Post* columnist Andrea Tantaros to dub the First Lady a contemporary Marie Antoinette. As *The Telegraph* reports, while the Obamas are covering their own vacation expenses such as accommodation, the trip may cost US taxpayers as much as $375,000 in terms of secret service security and flight costs on Air Force Two.
>
> […]While the liberal-dominated US mainstream media have largely ignored the story, it is all over the blogosphere and talk radio, and will undoubtedly add to the President's free falling poll ratings. As much as the media establishment turn a blind eye to stories like this, which are major news in the international media, the American public is increasingly turning to alternative news sources, including the British press, which has a far less deferential approach towards the White House.
>
> The First Lady's ill-conceived trip to Marbella and the complete disregard for public opinion and concerns over excessive government spending is symbolic of a far wider problem with the Obama presidency – the overarching disdain for the principles of limited government, individual liberty and free enterprise that have built the United States over the course of nearly two and a half centuries into the most powerful and free nation on earth.

These British news sources understand what America is supposed to be better than we understand it ourselves, apparently. They know something is wrong.

First, the billion-dollar bailouts for all of Obama's suporters, and now this extravagance. Your children will be paying for this, eventually. Every dollar has to be paid back.

Frank Turek interviews Jay Richards on Christianity and capitalism

August 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christian apologist Frank Turek, Ph.D interviews Jay Wesley Richards, Ph.D.

The MP3 file is here.

It's a great interview, with lots of basic economics. Turek cites quotes from Richards' book "Money, Greed and God" for Richards to respond to, and Richards provides lots of examples to make his points.

Here's a quote of Frank, from the beginning of the podcast:

Money, Greed and God. How do those things go together, and why should we even be worried about them? And what does this have to do with apologetics? Well, in a few minutes, friends, you're going to see that it has *everything* to do with apologetics. You know, you need money to do apologetics. You're listening right now to a radio program that takes money to run. When you go buy an apologetics book, you need to pay for it. Somebody has gotten resources together – some of them immaterial resources, some of them material resources – they've put them together and they've marketed this piece to that you would buy it. That takes money. It takes money to preach the gospel across the world. It takes money to send missionaries overseas. It takes money to put on a TV program. It takes money to run an institute like the Discovery Institute. It takes money to run a seminary like Southern Evangelical Seminary or a ministry like CrossExamined.org. Money is essential to what we do. Well, you say "well, gee, you know, we're Christians, we can't really be concerned about money". NONSENSE!

He's right. And Christians need to be more careful about the economic environment that they work, save and invest in – because that's where charity comes from.

Frank mentions that "Money, Greed and God" is now $10 on Amazon. Highly recommended, except for that *awful* chapter on usury. Skip that!

An easier book for total beginners is "The Virtues of Capitalism". It's also $10 on Amazon.com.

Related posts

- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible
- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

New York union employees collected $500 million in overtime last year

August 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video here from Fox Business.

That money is coming out of New York taxpayers – and their taxes keep going up and up.

Dearborn police publicizes Christian evangelist's home address

August 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From David Wood of Acts 17 Apologetics.

Excerpt:

> When Dearborn gets angry at someone, they don't mess around. Last year, Nabeel and I exposed the thug tactics of Arab Festival security. (They were using these tactics against many other Christians; we just caught their actions on tape.) What was the response this year? Festival volunteer Roger Williams lied about us. Police lied about us (see here, here, and here). Even the Mayor lied about us (see here, here, here, and here). They threw us in jail on false charges and launched a smear campaign against us.
>
> But they were just getting warmed up. Through the Freedom of Information Act, anyone can request our police reports. Before releasing our reports, however, police are supposed to block out our personal information, such as home addresses. Not long ago, someone forwarded me the report being released by the Dearborn Police Department. Nabeel's address, Negeen's address, and Paul's address had all been taken out. My full name and home address, however, were prominently displayed on page six of the report! This is disturbing, as I know that Muslims now have access to the report.
>
> Why would police include my personal information in the report being sent to the public? If you recall, I'm the one who made a video publicly rebuking Police Chief Haddad. Is this deliberate retaliation from Dearborn Police, or a mere oversight? Either way, police have endangered my family. I fully accept that I'm in a risky ministry, and that Muslims may kill me one day. But I try to make sure my family is safe, and Dearborn just drew a map for Muslims who want to invade my home.

The rest of the post shows some of the death threats received by Acts 17 from Muslims.

So the Chief of Police is basically deliberately endangering the lives of David Wood and his entire family by exposing them to reprisals from violent Muslims. I'm sure the media will be *all over* this story, too.

AFL-CIO union boss says that there is no budget deficit problem

August 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video from Gateway Pundit.

Ooops:

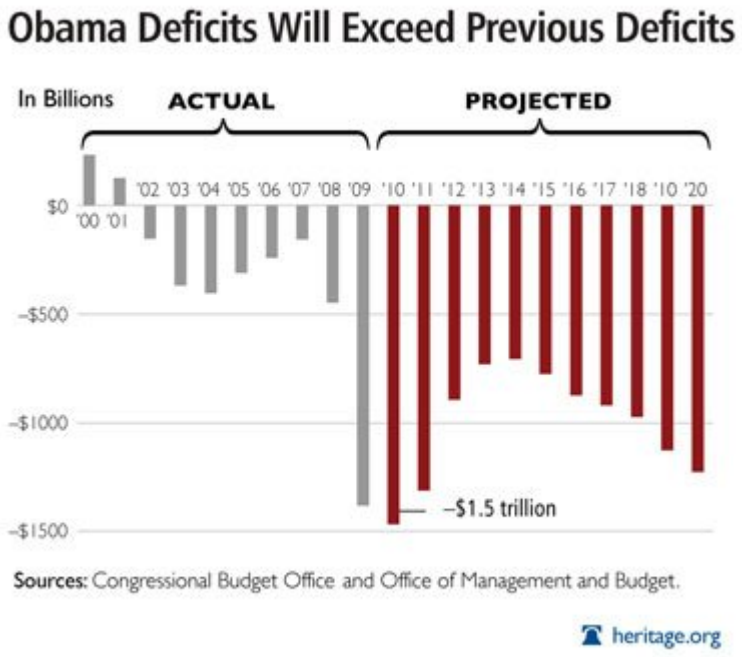

I wonder how the union boss missed that graph.

And when you look at that graph remember that the Democrats controlled the House and the Senate starting in January of 2007. When things started to fall apart, and Bush didn't have the political capital to pull out his veto pen and cut wasteful spending and bailouts.

Michele Bachmann doesn't like unions

Anyway, here's Michele Bachmann explaining what the 26 billion dollar union bailout will mean for the November elections. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

That's why government should be limited. You only get to choose how to spend your money in a free market. If the government takes your money, then they get to decide how it's spent, e.g. – on special interest groups that voted for the party in power. A dollar is either going to be spent by you on what you want – or it's going to be spent by them on what they want. Think about it – who knows more about what to do with YOUR money – you or a politician who wants to be re-elected? The only solution is to keep government small – and only the Republicans (some of them – not all) are willing to try to do that.

Apologetics events in San Diego, Sacramento, Los Angeles and Baltimore

August 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I snipped this out of an e-mail from Biola University.

REASONABLE FAITH IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD
San Diego, CA

with William Lane Craig, Craig Hazen , Greg Koukl, and more!

Economic unrest, war, and fear dominate the air waves. In such a time as this, can we be certain of the truth of Christianity? Is there reason to hope in the midst of doubt and skepticism? Defending the faith is not all about arguments and propositions. Apologetics can give us the assurance to trust in Christ through difficulty and uncertainty. This series will renew our confidence and give us practical tools as we seek to share the hope we have in Jesus in a lost and hurting world. Co-sponsored with Reasonable Faith – San Diego Chapter (www.reasonablefaithsandiego.org)

August 11
Historical Reliability of the Bible with Fred Sanders, Ph.D.

August 18
Responding to Relativism with Greg Koukl

August 25
Arguments for the Existence of God with William Lane Craig, Ph.D., D.Theol

Where and when:

- Wednesdays, August 4 – 25
- 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
- Calvary Chapel San Diego , Main Sanctuary
- 1771 East Palomar Street
- San Diego, CA 91913
- Cost: FREE

Register now: www.apologeticsevents.com

WHY I BELIEVE WHAT I BELIEVE
Roseville, CA

with William Lane Craig, JP Moreland, Craig Hazen , and Tim Muehlhoff!

Let's go ahead and answer the question running through most of our minds, "what is apologetics, anyway?" It's the branch of theology focused on defending or proving the truth of Christian doctrines. This seminar is designed to help you understand why we believe what we believe as Christians. Over the course of these two days, you'll find answers to some of today's most commonly asked questions about the Christian faith: How do I know God exists? Did Jesus really live? Who can believe in the resurrection?

Hasn't science disproved Christianity? We all have questions, and we all crave answers. Come be reassured that Christianity is a reasonable faith!

Dr. Moreland, Dr. Craig, Dr. Hazen, and Dr. Muehlhoff will be lecturing on topics ranging from the existence of God, the resurrection, the case for the existence of the soul, communication keys for apologetics, and the challenge of world religions.

Where and when:

- August 27-28
- Friday Evening 7-10 pm
- Saturday Morning 9 am – 1 pm
- Bayside Church
- 8191 Sierra College Blvd
- Roseville, Ca 95661

Cost: $15 regular, $25 for a married couple, and $8 for students

Register now: www.apologeticsevents.com

ETHICS AT THE EDGE OF LIFE: CLEAR THINKING ON THE MOST TROUBLING BIOETHICAL ISSUES

La Mirada, CA

with Scott Rae, Ph.D. and Scott Klusendorf, M.A.

Advances in medical procedures, technologies, and drugs have made issues of life and death more and more complicated. As Christians, because we care deeply about life and death issues, we are often tagged as people who are standing against progress and the relief of suffering. Hence, we need help from experts to understand what is really going on in modern medicine and how to make a persuasive case in the public square for the Biblical views. We are bringing in two world-class Christian experts on bioethics, Dr. Scott Rae and Scott Klusendorf, to help us understand and defend the biblical position on the most difficult subjects: abortion, euthanasia, reproductive technology, and more. Graduate credit toward the M.A. degree in Christian Apologetics is available

- September 16, 17, 18
- Thursday & Friday, 6 – 10 pm
- Saturday, 9 am – 4 pm
- Business Building, Moats Lecture Hall
- Biola University
- Cost: only $95

Register now: www.apologeticsevents.com

LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND CONFERENCE

Mount Airy, Maryland

with Sean McDowell, Craig Hazen , Greg Koukl, Frank Turek, and Steve Schrader

FREE KICK-OFF: Successful Tactics in Defending the Faith with Greg Koukl

Thursday, October 7
7:30 – 9:30 pm

CUTTING-EDGE SESSIONS:
Friday, October 8, 7:00 – 10:00 pm
Christianity and the Challenge of World Religions with Craig Hazen

Saturday, October 9, 9:00 am – 11:00 am
Apologetics for a New Generation with Sean McDowell

Saturday, October 9, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
Historical Reliability of the Bible with Steve Schrader

Saturday, October 9, 1:00 – 4:00 pm
I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist with Frank Turek

- Mount Airy Bible Church
- 16700 Old Frederick Rd
- Mount Airy, MD 21771

For pricing information, discounts, and to register for this can't-miss conference:
www.apologeticsevents.com/maryland

Jennifer Roback Morse and Michele Bachmann respond to Prop 8 decision

August 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Dr. J of the Ruth Institute, first.

The music is a bit loud, but isn't it fun to SEE her talking? Indeed!

(Her hair looks fine – I don't see why she thinks that anyone would say anything bad about it)

And here's Michele Bachmann.

Press release:

> District Judge Vaughn Walker's decision last week to overturn a California ballot initiative that prohibited same-sex marriage was an example of "judicial activism at its worse," according to Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas).
>
> Smith and fellow House Republicans Steve King (Iowa) and Michele Bachmann (Minn.) introduced a resolution this morning disapproving of Vaughn's ruling. The resolution, according to Smith, has 15 co-sponsors in the House. However, it is uncertain whether it will attract the support of Republican leadership in the lower chamber.
>
> In his decision, Walker ruled that moral objection to gay marriage on the part of California voters was not a rational enough reason to uphold Proposition 8. In addition, Walker wrote that the measure violated Equal Protection laws for homosexuals.
>
> The trio of highly conservative lawmakers insisted today that their opposition to the ruling does not stem from the fact that it benefits the gay community, but rather that it highlights a growing trend of activism from behind the bench. Bachmann said she found the ruling "infuriating."
>
> "Are we now in the position of giving the judge the decision to decide whether or not the American people are rational when they go to the voting booth and make their wishes known?" she asked. "It certainly seems the answer would be in the negative."

Too bad the video gets cut off at the very end – I think she was going to say Supreme COURT. I'll bet you all thought she was just a fiscal conservative, right? But no – she's really thought things through – and that's why we like her! Because she's perfect!

Why libertarians should care about the breakdown of the family

August 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephen Baskerville explains how the breakdown of marriage leads to bigger government and less liberty.

Excerpt:

> Unmarried women and single mothers (the main abortion constituency) are more affluent and better-educated than two decades ago. They are also more politicized and comprise Obama's most committed and vocal supporters, having voted for him by 70%.
>
> As with many measures designed to weaken the family, no general public clamor preceded the move to nationalize medicine, apart from a few vocal constituencies. One of the biggest was single women. "American voters in general may shy away from 'radical' steps such as importing a Canadian-style (health care) system," the liberal polling firm Greenberg Quinlan Rosner reported some years ago. "Unmarried women, however, embrace such a powerful step."
>
> […]Sadly, many unmarried women live — willingly or not — to some degree in dependency on the state. And for single, middle-class women whose incomes disqualify them for Medicaid, health care is the most expensive cost.
>
> […]Statistics now reveal that welfare has been a powerful force behind the break-up of the family in low-income families. Now, in the middle class, we see the breakdown coming largely through divorce and the "liberated" lifestyles to which much of it can be attributed. Yet our growing allegiance to an ever-increasing culture of divorce now demands ever-expanding "services," such as government medicine.
>
> So, public medicine, like all welfare, facilitates family dissolution. And the breakdown of the family in turn creates a constituency pushing for more welfare, fostering a vicious circle of government growth and social decay. It just so happens that all of this also builds electoral support for the party that enacts it.

Libertarians need to be practical: you need social conservatives and you ought to be actively promoting traditional marriage.

Obama administration threatens South Carolina for saving prisoner's lives

August 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Two unpleasant topics of conversation most of us avoid are the epidemic of HIV/AIDS among prison inmates and a variety of sometimes violent events resulting in transmission of the disease. Some states long ago implemented policies to protect the uninfected part of the prison population while providing exceptional medical treatment and counseling to the infected population.
>
> In South Carolina, it has worked so well since 1998 that there has only been a single transmission of HIV/AIDS to a noninfected prisoner. All that may change, however, thanks to a threat from Eric Holder's Justice Department.
>
> South Carolina received a letter from the now-infamous Civil Rights Division that the policy of keeping infected inmates at a designated facility, instead of scattered across the state in the general prison population, may unfairly stigmatize infected prisoners. To the Obama political appointees in the Civil Rights Division, this constitutes discrimination under the Americans With Disabilities Act.
>
> The Justice Department objects to separate living facilities and specialized medical treatment for the HIV/AIDS prison population. Naturally, DOJ has threatened a lawsuit.
>
> […]South Carolina spends more than $2 million a year helping infected inmates in the very program the DOJ is challenging. "We couldn't ever hire specialists at all of the facilities spread across the state like we can in the single Columbia facility," Ozmint told me.
>
> The DOJ is in a lose-lose situation. Even if DOJ wins a lawsuit, sources tell me South Carolina is simply going to cancel all of the special testing, treatment and counseling, thereby saving the state $2 million a year.

This reminds me of the activists who shut down Catholic adoption agencies because they refuse to place children with same-sex couples. They don't care about helping people, they care about punishing people who disagree with their politically correct biases.

This is the same DOJ that declined to prosecute the Blank Panthers for voter intimidation, remember.

Michele Bachmann on Fox Business attacking Cash-For-Unions bailout

August 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele Bachmann is my favorite Congresswoman.

She said “banana republic”. Ha! What a meany!

How hard work and business ownership makes people conservative

August 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, here's the story of one from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> High school freshman Tim Scott could not afford Chick-fil-A sandwiches back in 1981, but the French fries were good and inexpensive. Eating those fries made him a success, a conservative and an odds-on favorite to be the next congressman from Charleston, S.C.
>
> Mr. Scott has been garnering attention because he is a black Republican who won a primary over the son of the late one-time segregationist Sen. Strom Thurmond. South Carolina acquaintances, though, are coming out of the woodwork to say Mr. Scott bears watching not because he is black but because he's the real deal: industrious, principled, consistent, thoughtful. In a word, *authentic.*
>
> But to hear him tell it, it all began with the fries.
>
> Mr. Scott's parents were split – his father was in the Air Force in Colorado – and his mother, he said, worked two eight-hour shifts daily. "She was a nurse's assistant cleaning up other people's feces," he said. "That's nobody's definition of fun." Despite her example of hard work, though, his own schoolwork showed no signs of similar dedication. "I literally failed four subjects at once: world geography, civics, Spanish and English. Those last two subjects showed I wasn't bilingual, I was bi-ignorant."
>
> Young Mr. Scott did, however, hold down a part-time job taking tickets at a movie theater. The Chick-fil-A was next door. He bought fries there regularly. The restaurant's proprietor, a guy named John Moniz – a "Christian conservative white Republican, although I didn't know it at the time," Mr. Scott said – "just started recognizing me, and one day he came up and sat down next to me and started talking."

I love this story. I'm a colored evangelical Protestant man. I was the only evangelical Christian and the only political conservative in my entire family. My Dad used to bring me to work ALL the time, even on weekends – and I would meet all his co-workers, drink coffee and play with his office supplies. My conversion started when I got my first paying job – programming UNIX shell scripts for a high-tech corporation while I was still a teenager – and that was my lowest paying job ever. One look at my pay check and I was through with the government and their lousy payroll taxes. I didn't see them in my office helping me to debug and test – so why did they deserve any of my money? I let my grades slide to keep working right through college (until grad school). I always valued

working and saving and investing more than education. It’s the pattern you learn from watching your father work – the dignity of labor – the joy of independence – the ability to share with those in need. Work makes you a conservative.

You can friend Tim here on Facebook.

BONUS:

Marco Rubio responds to Democrat Harry Reid’s comments that no Hispanic person can be a Republican.

Marco Rubio is a Hispanic Republican who is about to win a federal Senate seat. I have been following him since his election announcement.

Stephen Baskerville explains the results of the sexualization of politics

August 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephen Baskerville explains the consequences of having bigger government. (H/T Jennifer Roback Morse at RuthBlog)

Excerpt:

While elite feminists did assume previously male occupations, many more women have entered the workforce in professionalized versions of traditional homemaker roles. This has transformed childrearing and other domestic tasks from private family matters into public, communal, and taxable activities, necessarily expanding the size and power of the state and leading to the creation of vast bureaucracies to oversee public education and social services.

These are precisely the professions now being expanded by the Obama administration's massive stimulus expenditures. The effect is to amplify the intrusion of the state into the home—indeed, the displacement of the home by the state. **For as feminists point out, the feminine functions were traditionally private. Professionalizing feminine roles has therefore meant institutionalizing in government bureaucracies responsibilities that were once characteristic of private life.** The politicization of children and the usurpation of parental rights under the guise of child protection are the clearest manifestations of this.

Fathers have been marginalized, and their lives are ever more directly administered by the state. They are not simply "absent," as Rosin writes—they are increasingly likely to be under the control of the judicial and penal systems. Rosin's article provides a telling example of a particularly state-feminist form of punishment now meted out to men: therapy.

> None of the 30 or so men sitting in a classroom at a downtown Kansas City school have come for voluntary adult enrichment. Having failed to pay their child support, they were given the choice by a judge to go to jail or attend a weekly class on fathering…. This week's lesson…involve[d] writing a letter to a hypothetical estranged 14-year-old daughter named Crystal, whose father left her…

What is clear from Rosin's account is that the therapy, like the penal system, has been designed less to punish the alleged crime than to psychologically recondition men.

The class leader

> grew up watching Bill Cosby living behind his metaphorical "white picket fence." "Well, that check bounced a long time ago," he says. … He continues, reading from a worksheet. What are the four kinds of paternal authority? Moral,

> emotional, social, and physical. “But you ain’t none of those in that house. All you are is a paycheck, and now you ain’t even that. And if you try to exercise your authority, she’ll call 911. … You’re supposed to be the authority, and she says, ‘Get out of the house, b*tch.’ She’s calling you ‘b*tch’!” … “What is our role? Everyone’s telling us we’re supposed to be the head of a nuclear family, so you feel like you got robbed.” … He writes on the board: $85,000. “This is her salary.” Then: $12,000. “This is your salary. … Who’s the man now?” A murmur rises. “That’s right. She’s the man.”

This is not law enforcement. It is government indoctrination.

So you’re basically looking at the marginalization and criminalization of men in their traditional role through things like no-fault divorce, divorce courts, welfare for single mothers, and biased domestic violence laws. Honestly, do women understand what incentives this creates for men who are contemplating a traditional marriage and traditional roles of husbands and fathers? I guess not.

You really need to read the whole article. I normally would never link to the paleo-con American Conservative (which I mostly disagree with) but Stephen Baskerville rocks. I make his book “Taken Into Custody” required reading for anyone who wants to marry me, because that book destroys the notion of divorce better than any other book. It makes divorce *unthinkable* just like Francis J. Beckwith’s “Defending Life” makes abortion *unthinkable*. I get excited when I learn something that makes it more rational for me to do the right thing – and Baskerville will do that for you.

Frank Turek video lecture on young people leaving the church

August 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An exciting 45-minute lecture on the mass exodus of young people from the church.

I hope this shows up, I've never linked a Google video before.

UPDATE: It worked! WordPress rocks!

And here is another good lecture (composed of several parts) from William Lane Craig.

I think these lectures are great for reminding Christian parents that being a Christian is not just about NOT doing sins A, B and C and then feeling good about yourself. And it's not about just trying to be happy in this life like the non-Christians – using Christianity as part of your happiness buffet. It's about living your life as an enterprise in a way that increases your knowledge of and friendship with God. A relationship with God means being sensitive to his needs and concerns and acting in a way that takes his character into account.

Friday night funny: economist interviews people about stimulus

August 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is really funny.

Here’s more from her:

Her name is Michelle McAdoo (Muccio). She seems to have worked at the Acton Institute and the Heritage Foundation.

go one with news about you then

Senate candidate indicted for showing obscene materials to teen

August 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the Toronto Sun.

Excerpt:

> Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Alvin Greene was indicted in South Carolina Friday on charges stemming from his arrest last year for allegedly showing pornography to a college student.A grand jury indicted Greene, 32, an unemployed Army veteran and campaign novice whose primary win in June stunned political observers, on a felony charge of disseminating, procuring or promoting obscenity and a misdemeanor charge of showing obscene materials to someone without consent.
>
> The charges followed his arrest in November for an incident in which he allegedly displayed obscene or pornographic materials on a computer to a University of South Carolina student and then suggested going to her dormitory room.
>
> Reached at his home in Manning, South Carolina, where he lives with his elderly father, Greene said: “My lawyer is dealing with that. That’s all I have to say.”
>
> The maximum penalty for conviction on the felony charge is five years in prison, with the misdemeanor carrying a three-year maximum sentence, said the office for Greene’s attorney, Eleazer Carter.
>
> Greene, whose long-shot candidacy has attracted intense media scrutiny, won South Carolina’s Democratic Senate primary after a campaign that included no budget, no staff and no verified public appearances.
>
> He defeated former Charleston judge and state legislator Vic Rawl, who had the endorsement of the state Democratic Party. He will face Republican Senator Jim DeMint in the November election.
>
> In several halting interviews with media, Greene has said his platform includes jobs, infrastructure and education and suggested South Carolina’s high unemployment rate could be lessened by manufacturing dolls and action figures of himself.
>
> Greene gave his first public speech last month. He talked for less than 10 minutes and, in a monotone, third-person reference to his legal troubles, mentioned that his anticipated trial had been delayed.

Wow. This is the Democrat Senate candidate for South Carolina running against Jim Demint for a seat in the United States Senate?

Barack Obama, sharia law, stealth jihad and the 9/11 mosque

August 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from defense analyst Frank Gaffney.

Excerpt:

> At a White House celebration of Ramadan tonight in the company of representatives of several of the Nation's most prominent Muslim Brotherhood front organizations, President Obama announced his strong support for one of their most immediate objectives: the construction of a mega-mosque and "cultural center" at Ground Zero. In so doing, he publicly embraced the greatest tar-baby of his presidency.

Obama actually wants Americans to not just tolerate the 9/11 mosque – but to *respect* it.

> Gone too is the option of continuing to conceal an extraordinary fact: the Obama administration is endorsing not only this "local matter," but explicitly endorsing the agenda of the imam behind it – Feisal Abdul Rauf. Rauf is the Muslim Brother, who together with his wife Daisy Khan (a.k.a. Daisy Kahn for tax purposes, at least) runs the tellingly named "Cordoba Initiative." He is believed to be on a taxpayer-underwritten junket and/or fund-raising tour of the Middle East, courtesy of the State Department, which insists that he is a "moderate" in the face of abundant evidence to the contrary. Interestingly, the President's rhetoric – like that of New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and other apologists for and boosters of the GZM – tracks perfectly with the Muslim Brotherhood line about why we need to allow what Lieutenant General William "Jerry" Boykin has correctly described as an "Islamist victory arch" close by some of America's most hallowed ground. It is, we are told, all about "religious freedom" and "tolerance."
>
> Actually, it is all about submission to shariah – arguably the most *in*tolerant of theo-political-legal codes, ironically particularly when it comes to respect for freedom of religion. Rauf's mosque complex and the shariah ideology/doctrine that animates it – the same program that animated the jihadists who destroyed the World Trade Center and many of its occupants on 9/11 – has everything to do with *power*, not faith.

The rest of Gaffney's first article has profiles of some of the people who attended the dinner, like these:

Ingrid Mattson heads the largest Muslim Brotherhood front in the country, the Islamic Society of North America. ISNA was an unindicted co-conspirator in the biggest terrorism financing trial in the nation's history and was identified as a Brotherhood "associated or

friendly" group in documents introduced as evidence *uncontested* in that Holy Land Foundation prosecution. Ms. Mattson now presides over the selection, training and certification of Muslim chaplains for the U.S. military and prison system – interestingly, a job formerly in the hands of Muslim Brother Abdurahman Alamoudi, the founder and first head of the American Muslim Council, who is currently serving a 23-year sentence on terrorism charges.

Salam Al-Marayati is president of the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC). In 1999, then-House Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt withdrew his nomination of Al-Marayati to a leadership position on the National Commission on Terrorism when it became public that Al-Marayati claimed that the terrorist group, Hezbollah, was a legitimate organization and has the right to attack the Israeli Army.

I note that Gaffney has a follow-up post with the response from the families of 9/11 victims.

Michael Behe and Stephen Barr debate intelligent design

August 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Behe is Catholic and Stephen Barr seems to be a theistic evolutionist (naturalist). (H/T Evolution News via ECM)

The main page is here, and it has the video.

There is an MP3 file here, 71 minutes long.

Michael Behe goes first, then Stephen Barr.

Keep in mind that the dividing line in the debate on intelligent design vs. Darwinism is between open-minded scientists who think that there *might be* objective evidence that material cause-and-effect may not be able to account for specific kinds of complexity (specified complexity) in nature, and philosophers who believe that is *never* permissible to overturn the philosophical assumption of materialism, *regardless* of what the scientific evidence shows.

So the pro-ID side is like "let's look at the evidence and see what naturalism can and can't do" and the anti-ID side is "the presupposition of materialism is absolute for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door". It's ID scientists vs naturalist materialism pre-supposers. Reason vs faith. Inquiry vs dogmatism.

UPDATE:

Upcoming conference features pro-ID scholars and theistic evolutionists in Austin, Texas in October.

New study shows how fathers reduce stress in children

August 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from ultra-left-wing CNN. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A new study presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association reveals that men who had positive relationships with their fathers are better equipped to deal with the stress of everyday life than men who did not remember their dads fondly.
>
> "A big take-home message is that if there is a father present in a child's life, he needs to know how important it is to be involved," said Melanie Mallers of California State University, Fullerton.
>
> Researchers interviewed 912 men and women during an eight-day period about their psychological and emotional state that day. Participants also had to answer questions about their relationships with their mothers and fathers growing up, and how much attention their parents gave them.
>
> The major finding of the study is that men who said they had bad relationships with their fathers in childhood were more likely to be distressed by the stressful incidents of daily life.

If we as a society would like to have men who are able to love and support families, then we need to vote for policies that keep fathers in the home. We can't just do whatever makes us feel good and impose anti-father ideologies like feminism and then expect men to just keep doing what they normally do. Men respond to these changes in policy, and the answer is not to blame them. If we want men to get married and become fathers, then we need to understand what men are like, and to have policies that help them. Policies like all-male schools, male teachers, abolition of welfare for single mothers, abolition of Title IX, abolition of no-fault divorce, etc.

Alan Shlemon defends the unborn in an academic debate

August 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Look what I found on Youtube, in 7 parts.

Here are the part:

Part 1 of 7

Part 2 of 7

Part 3 of 7

Part 4 of 7

Part 5 of 7

Part 6 of 7

Part 7 of 7

I think he makes a really good case, but you really have to turn up the audio.

70 Democrat Representatives are members of Socialist Party

August 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story on Gateway Pundit. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

The Socialist Party of America announced in their October 2009 newsletter that 70 Congressional democrats currently belong to their caucus.
This admission was recently posted on Scribd.com:

American Socialist Voter–
Q: How many members of the U.S. Congress are also members of the DSA?
A: Seventy

Q: How many of the DSA members sit on the Judiciary Committee?
A: Eleven: John Conyers [Chairman of the Judiciary Committee], Tammy Baldwin, Jerrold Nadler, Luis Gutierrez,
Melvin Watt, Maxine Waters, Hank Johnson, Steve Cohen, Barbara Lee, Robert Wexler, Linda Sanchez [there are 23 Democrats on the Judiciary Committee of which eleven, almost half, are now members of the DSA].

Q: Who are these members of 111th Congress?
A: See the listing below

Co-Chairs
Hon. Raúl M. Grijalva (AZ-07)
Hon. Lynn Woolsey (CA-06)

Vice Chairs
Hon. Diane Watson (CA-33)
Hon. Sheila Jackson-Lee (TX-18)
Hon. Mazie Hirono (HI-02)
Hon. Dennis Kucinich (OH-10)

The full list of 70 is in the original post.

And what kind of things do socialists vote for?

Things like this:

If you want to know why unemployment is so high, here is your answer. Anti-business is anti-jobs. It sounds good to rage against corporations and “greed”, but it means you’re going to be collecting unemployment for a living.

How well is Democrat appeasement working to contain Russia?

August 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Not well, according to the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> On Wednesday, Gen. Alexander Zelin, the commander of the Russian Air Force, announced that Moscow had deployed a state-of-the-art S-300 (SA-20 Favorit) long- range air defense system in Abkhazia, a region of the Republic of Georgia that Russia has occupied since the August 2008 war.
>
> Since then, Russia recognized breakaway Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent republics. According to Zelin, the task of the air defense systems is "to prevent violation of Abkhaz and South Ossetian airspace and to destroy any aircraft intruding into their airspace no matter what their purpose might be".
>
> However, there is much more than the defense of Abkhazia to the Russian deployment. Taken together with the S-300 base in Armenia, it extends the strategic air space over South Caucasus and over parts of the Black Sea, furthering Russian control.

What does it mean?

> **Most importantly from the perspective of the United States, Russian actions are aimed at denying the United Space airspace and over-flight options. The surveillance aspect is no less important—depending on the actual deployment of the air defenses: associated radars will be able to picture or "paint" much of western Georgia and the adjoining Black Sea coastline.** The ultimate objective for Moscow is to become an uncontested hegemon in the South Caucasus. And of course this has potential implications in case of an Iranian contingency.
>
> The Russians are committed to deployments in the Caucasus that lead to the strategic denial of U.S. power projection in that region. **This bears on the U.S.'s future ability to resupply Afghanistan; to use power to disarm a nuclear Iran; to ensure energy supply from the Caspian; and to help pro-Western friends and allies.** These are hardly great accomplishments for the Obama "reset" policy".

So what else is in the news?

Well, the Taliban are seizing control of nothern Afghanistan, and Russia is assisting Iran with nuclear weapons development.

And that is why the deployment of these advanced SAMs is devastating to our foreign policy objectives. We've become a paper tiger by cutting defense systems, like the F-22,

so that we can pay for turtle tunnels to nowhere with “stimulus” money. The first job of the federal government is to protect its citizens, not to study how to reduce drinking among Chinese prostitutes.

A closer look at Obama's 1-billion dollar "stimulus" earmark

August 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) likes to say that Congressional earmarking has become the gateway drug to federal overspending. Is there any better evidence of this theory then President Barack Obama's $1 billion earmark for a special project in Illinois that was slipped into his failed $862 billion stimulus? According to Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, the Obama Administration awarded $1 billion on August 5th for a Carbon Capture and Storage Network in Illinois:

> Today's announcement will help ensure the US remains competitive in a carbon constrained economy, creating jobs while reducing greenhouse gas pollution. This investment in the world's first, commercial-scale, oxy-combustion power plant will help to open up the over $300 billion market for coal unit repowering and position the country as a leader in an important part of the global clean energy economy

This project was an earmark in the stimulus according to a Washington Post story dated March 6, 2009:

> Deep inside the economic stimulus package is a $1 billion prize that, in five short words, shows the benefits of being in power in Washington. The funding, for "fossil energy research and development," is likely to go to a power plant in a small Illinois town, a project whose longtime backers include a group of powerful lawmakers from the state, among them President Obama.

Stimulus seems to be a way of rewarding the people who voted for you with money from the people who didn't vote for you. At least, that's the way it is for Obama, apparently.

Cool video of Ronald Reagan debating socialist Democrats

August 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thanks to ECM.

Republican women on fiscal issues

This one is a little more optimistic. (Michele Bachmann)

And here's another one. (Marsha Blackburn)

And one more. (Cathy McMorris Rogers)

America Speaking Out is here.

Hamas leader agrees with Obama on Ground Zero mosque

August 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remember how Obama backed the mosque at Ground Zero? Well, guess who else backs the mosque? HAMAS.

Story here in the NY Post. (H/T Memeorandum)

Excerpt:

> A leader of the Hamas terror group yesterday jumped into the emotional debate on the plan to construct a mosque near Ground Zero — insisting Muslims "have to build" it there.
>
> "We have to build everywhere," said Mahmoud al-Zahar, a co-founder of Hamas and the organization's chief on the Gaza Strip.
>
> "In every area we have, [as] Muslim[s], we have to pray, and this mosque is the only site of prayer," he said on "Aaron Klein Investigative Radio" on WABC.
>
> "We have to build the mosque, as you are allowed to build the church and Israelis are building their holy places."
>
> Hamas, he added, "is representing the vast majority of the Arabic and Islamic world — especially the Islamic side."

Presumably, Osama Bin Laden and Hezbollah also agree with Obama and the terrorist leader on the mosque.

If you think my headline is bad, look at the Washington Post story.

Why the name "Cordoba House"?

Michael Lame explains. (H/T Hyscience)

Excerpt:

> Another key to understanding Imam Rauf's thinking is his use of the name Cordoba. His non-profit group is called the Cordoba Initiative and, until very recently, the mosque project was called Cordoba House. In order to emphasize "the community center aspect of the project rather than religion," that name has now been changed to Park51, a more hip, New York style name that offers no associations to another place and time (except perhaps to Studio 54, which I'm sure is unintentional). Cordoba House, by contrast, summons up a host of images and historical references for those familiar with Islamic, Spanish, or medieval history and culture.
>
> […] Imam Rauf's book, *What's Right with Islam: a New Vision for Muslims and the West*, narrows the pertinent time frame, explaining that the Cordoba Initiative is "named after the period between roughly 800 and 1200 CE, when the Cordoba

> Caliphate ruled much of today's Spain."
>
> […]Yale professor Maria Rosa Menocal, in *The Ornament of the World: how Muslims, Jews, and Christians created a culture of tolerance in medieval Spain*, further whittled down the time period in question regarding Cordoba's heyday: "From about the mid-eighth century until about the year 1000 this was an Islamic polity, centered in Cordoba, which at its height, in the mid-tenth century, declared itself the center of the Islamic world."
>
> […]In considering the "Old Cordoba", however, one should not forget that Cordovan tolerance was predicated on Islamic rule. Jews and Christians, once they accepted their status as *dhimmi*, protected albeit subservient peoples, could participate in the intellectual, artistic, and economic life of the broader community.

That's what this is about: Islamic rule.

Charles Krauthammer makes the conservative case against the Ground-Zero Mosque in the liberal Washington Post.

Video of violent pro-abortion maniac screaming at pro-lifers

August 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Whoa! This video is absolutely NOT for children. ECM gave this to me, and you know how he is (he's a deist – they swear like sailors!). But he's extremely pro-life.

DO NOT WATCH IF YOU ARE UNDER 16!

Notice how his extremism is tied in with irrational doomsday beliefs about overpopulation.

Frank Turek lists ten alleged facts about same-sex marriage

August 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article is here on One News Now. (H/T Owen)

Excerpt:

> When one judge overturned the will of more than seven million Californians last week in *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, he listed 80 supposed "findings of fact" (FF) as evidence that Proposition 8 violates the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. Many of those 80 findings are not facts at all. They're lies or distortions.

Here's my favorite of the 10:

5. "Proposition 8 does not affect the First Amendment rights of those opposed to marriage for same-sex couples." (FF 62) It's too bad Judge Walker didn't look to evidence from Massachusetts for this false fact. If he had he would have seen that court-imposed same-sex marriage *has* severely affected First Amendment rights. Same-sex marriage may not affect heterosexual marriage behavior quickly, but it certainly affects the free exercise of religion very quickly.

Parents in Massachusetts now have no right to know when their children are being taught about homosexuality in grades as low as kindergarten, neither can they opt their kids out (one parent was even jailed overnight for protesting this). Businesses are now *forced* to give benefits to same-sex couples regardless of any moral or religious objection the business owner may have. The government also ordered Catholic Charities to give children to homosexuals wanting to adopt. As a result, Catholic Charities closed their adoption agency rather than submit to an immoral order. Unfortunately, children are again the victims of the morality that comes with same-sex marriage.

"But you can't legislate morality!" some say. Nonsense. Not only do all laws legislate morality, sometimes *immorality* is imposed by judges against the will of the people and in violation of religious rights. There is no neutral ground here. Either we will have freedom of religion and conscience, or we will be forced to adhere to the whims of judges who declare that their own distorted view of morality supersedes our rights — rights that our founders declared self-evident.

Think I'm overreacting? If this decision survives and nullifies all democratically decided laws in the 45 states that preserve natural marriage, religious rights violations in Massachusetts will go nationwide. In fact, it's poised to happen already at the federal level. President Obama recently appointed gay activist Chai Feldblum to the EEOC. Speaking of the inevitable conflict between religious rights and so-called gay rights, Feldblum said, "I'm having a hard time coming up with any case in which religious liberty should win."

Read the other nine here. Some of them I've mentioned before.

Related posts

- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why do people oppose same-sex marriage?
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day

Why do women flock to movies like Switch and Eat, Pray, Love?

August 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Robert, who has an amazing apologetics-enabled wife, asked me to write about this topic. And Mary helped me to edit it, because the first version was really really mean. Now the last half of the post is a lot more positive, thanks to her input. The meanest part is right after the movie review excerpts and before the advice for Christians.

First, a little blurb about Switch.

Excerpt:

> It's a feminist adage that "a woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle", but Hollywood actress Jennifer Aniston is taking that message a step further, saying that women don't need to "fiddle" with men in order to have and raise a child, thanks to artificial insemination.
>
> Aniston, 41, is the star of an upcoming Miramax film "Switch," in which Aniston's character decides she is tired of waiting for a man to come into her life to have a baby, and elects for artificial insemination. Apparently the film is supposed to be a romantic comedy, as it turns out that the best friend of Aniston's character is the sperm donor.
>
> A reporter at a Sunday press conference in Los Angeles, where the actress was highlighting her movie, questioned Aniston's character, suggesting it was "selfish" to deprive a child of a father in order to fulfill a personal dream of parenthood.
>
> "Women are realizing more and more that you don't have to settle, they don't have to fiddle with a man to have that child," the actress asserted in their exchange. "They are realizing if it's that time in their life and they want this part, they can do it with or without that.""The point of the movie is, what is that which defines family?" Aniston continued. "It isn't necessarily the traditional mother, father, two children and a dog named Spot."
>
> She stated, "Love is love and family is what is around you and who is in your immediate sphere."

Second, a little blurb about Eat, Pray, Love.

Excerpt:

> The movie stars Julia Roberts as Liz Gilbert, a writer who suddenly decides she doesn't like being married to her husband any more.
>
> […]…Liz decides to visit India to look up her former lover's Hindu guru. At the guru's place, she gets into Hinduism, including Hindu meditation, really heavily. She also befriends a young Indian girl going into an arranged marriage and a

> troubled former alcoholic who's lost his family. From all these experiences, Liz comes to believe in meditation and pantheism, where the believer uses meditation to become like God. She also comes to believe she has to forgive herself, not apologize to the people she's harmed, especially her former husband, who seems to be a decent, sincere man.
>
> Finally, Liz heads to Bali to consult an elderly spiritual healer and fortune teller she had met before. In Bali, Liz helps a battered wife, finds further spiritual anti-enlightenment and a new lover.
>
> […]The biggest problem, however, is that the female protagonist is a selfish woman trying to find personal enlightenment and happiness apart from the God of the Bible. Sadly, she jumps from man to man. Even worse, she eventually finds spiritual darkness in the false religion of Hinduism and pantheism, the belief that everyone is god or has a piece of god inside herself.
>
> Another problem with the movie is it presents a negative, feminist view of marriage.

I know that many young unmarried women really really like these movies – even Christian women – so what message are they finding so attractive?

Here's what the popularity of these movies tells me about what young unmarried Western women believe. (This is the mean part)

Moral obligations are bad

Young, unmarried Western women oppose the idea that their will to be happy can be constrained by moral obligations, especially obligations to their husband and children. They want relationships to be all about fulfilling their emotional needs, which often includes their need for a career so they can be just like men. *They want to be able to enter relationships like marriage and parenting when it pleases them, and then to walk away from those relationships when it doesn't please them.* They also want to avoid being judged morally when they act selfishly and destructively. And they believe that any financial difficulties they suffer that result from acting selfishly can be solved with bigger subsidies from the government – like single-payer health care (abortions, IVF, etc.), single-payer education, single-payer day care, etc. And when they act selfishly and impose these social costs on others, they want to be *celebrated* for it, perhaps even using the force of law in order to censor and coerce dissenters into *celebrating* their selfishness.

Knowledge and planning are bad

Young, unmarried Western women don't invest much time and effort into learning the requirements of marriage and parenting. They don't research the difficulties that men and children will face (e.g. – taxes, public schools), and they don't research the needs of men and children. For example, they won't study no-fault divorce, school choice, state-run day care, tax rates, etc., and they won't make plans to help their husbands with any of these challenges, because it doesn't make them happy to solve problems for other people. If they read anything then it will be probably be something that blames men for

being “controlling” or blames children for not being “resilient”. They aren’t going to be supportive of men as protectors, providers, and moral leaders, either, because they resent the traditional role of men. They are especially resentful of being supported, of being corrected on facts, and of being judged by men on moral grounds. Any authority that constrains their freedom to pursue happiness at any moment will be harshly criticized.

An amusing, entertaining man is the best man

If you read down a typical young, unmarried Western woman’s list of desirable attributes in a man, you’ll find that what they are looking for is amusement and entertainment – things that are not the main focus in a serious Christian marriage founded on self-sacrificial love and service to God. They really haven’t thought out what marriage is about, so they don’t know what men do in a marriage – they think that the best mate is the one who makes them feel happy. They especially avoid virtuous men, because those are harder to blame if they get caught being selfish. Women who watch these movies want Mr. Right Now, not Mr. Right. And that is why they are now thinking that men are not necessary for raising children – they’ve learned that “all” men are unreliable because all the men *they freely chose using their hedonistic criteria* didn’t pan out as husbands and fathers. This is what’s behind the impulse to replace men with sperm donors, welfare checks and social programs. “You can’t trust a man” these women say – and of course, they’re right. You *can’t* trust a man who is selected based on his ability to be amusing, entertaining, unchaste, passionate, exciting and amoral. It’s a self-fulfilling prophecy – they get the bad men they set out to find, and the bad men abandon/abuse them. And then they blame the bad man that they freely chose for being bad!

Marriage-minded men are not willing to suppress their God-given inclinations to be protectors, providers and moral leaders, just to be approved by selfish women. And so women reject those marriage-minded men, and instead prefer to pursue dramatic, passionate hook-ups and temporary cohabitations with immature alpha males and pick-up artists. And that’s why 70% of divorces are initiated by women for “unhappiness” and 50% of all marriages end in divorce and 40% of children are born out-of-wedlock and 77% of young unmarried women voted for bigger government and more welfare in 2008. Not to mention abortion, which is supported by most (77%) young, unmarried Western women because they vote for Democrats, a party that supports abortion to the point where they want it to be funded by pro-life taxpayers.

What about Christian women – are they any better?

(This is the nice part) Well, the ideal for Christian woman is to not be like this at all, although some are like this. Now initially, I wrote this section as a mean rant against fake Christian women, but Mary urged me to re-write it to express what Christian women ought to do to avoid all the mistakes I had before. So I hope this is better, because all my male friends liked the first angry version better.

OK, so, Christian women are supposed to be Christian, and that means that they even have to love in Christian ways. So, instead of looking at men as a source of happiness,

Christian women should think about how to love men SELF-SACRIFICIALLY. In other words, they should spend more time trying to find out what wounds a man has that are stopping him for contributing more to the Lord and heal those. Then she can turn to helping him with his work, his investing, and other major projects. And she should be rigorous about interviewing him, reading books about men and marriage, and then having a plan to invest in him as a person to make him the most effective Christian he can be. That is how a woman scores with a man, by loving him well and helping him to be a better Christian. Part of that will come back to her as he becomes a better husband and father.

Christian women also make it easier for a man to concentrate on the morals and skills that will help him in the marriage. For example, she encourages him to choose a field that will allow him to earn a living or make a difference. Good fields are fields like engineering, and engineering and engineering. That way, he can build up a nice-sized portfolio so that he is ready to shine in his traditional Biblical role as provider. She should encourage him to lift weights, fire guns and learn self-defense, and she should vote for laws that favor parental rights, school choice and firearm ownership – so that he can be a protector. And she should regularly submit herself to moral criticism so that she encourages him to hold her accountable for her selfishness to prepare him for his role as moral leader of the home. That all starts in courtship, and it takes planning to be effective. It's not about having a good time, and having passionate experiences – it's about intentionally and intelligently building something together. Serving together.

Not only is the woman supposed to be effective at molding a man into his role by taking an active interest in his work, strength and character, but she has to give him the opportunity to exercise and practice those skills. She should let him provide gifts to her, and defend her from skeptics and atheists. She should take his advice and learn from him about how to defend her faith. She should read books he hasn't read so that she can solve problems for him, like problems of how to buy a home, how to rollover a 401K, and how to apply for a Ph.D. And finally, she should also encourage him in Christian virtues like chastity, chivalry and sobriety. She should be the first and best person that he can rely on to honor him for his dedication to Christian morality. She should NEVER EVER make him feel bad about being a virgin, being self-controlled and stoic, being a prude, etc. In the whole world there is no one who encourages a Christian man to be virtuous - it's the woman's job to stand by that man. She should also read about things like no-fault divorce, oxytocin, gender identity disorder, etc. and encourage her man to be strong in his moral convictions – even if that leaves her with no one to blame but herself when she's selfish. She'll just have to realize that the love of a good man is more important than being able to deflect guilt and responsibility by blaming men.

A Christian woman should not think of a man as an accessory for creating feelings of happiness in her. We're beyond that now. There's a war on, and every man who takes his faith seriously is busy trying to serve the Lord effectively. For myself, I am focused on charity, writing and doing apologetics with non-Christians. Things like these should be more interesting than fun for a Christian woman – in fact they should be the ONLY things on her list of criteria of what makes a good match. She should put her desire for

happiness behind her and love a good man self-sacrificially as a way of serving God by making her chosen man more effective at serving God. And that is why it is so important to screen a man about his faith, and especially about *how that faith works out practically,* before marrying him. A Christian woman loves a man before the face of God – she is trying to honor Christ in the way she chooses a man, and in the way she loves him. Her satisfaction about his appearance and his conformity to a secular alpha-male ideal should be the LEAST of her concerns. (In any case, many of those trivial things are easy to change)

Good movies

Oh, and if you're looking for movies where you can learn something about what really happens to selfish women, watch "Madame Bovary" (1949) and "Anna Karenina" (1948). If you want something newer, I like "Kramer vs. Kramer" and "Ordinary People". I also heard good things about "Mommie Dearest", but have not seen it.

By the way, if you want to go see a movie that's out *now*, go see "The Expendables" instead. (Here's a good review) I also thought that the new Rambo was good.

Here's my full list of good movies.

- Rules of Engagement (Samuel L. Jackson)
- Bella
- Henry V (Kenneth Brannagh)
- The Lives of Others
- United 93
- Taken (Liam Neeson)
- Cinderella Man
- The Blind Side
- Cyrano de Bergerac (Gerard Depardieu)
- Amazing Grace (Ioan Gruffudd)
- Gettysburg
- We Were Soldiers
- Stand and Deliver
- Blackhawk Down
- The Pursuit of Happyness
- High Noon

These are good movies for courting – to teach women what men are like, and how they ought to treat men.

Related posts

- The apologetic value of self-sacrificial romantic love
- Women should read "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands"
- Arlemagne's post on the dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- What is the meaning of white roses?

- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- The Wintery Knight’s greatest fears about the future
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman’s offer of casual sex
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven’t got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- Does a man’s decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Signature in the Cell – a review of the first year

August 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a neat video. I hope you all read this book.

Because everyone else has!

I donate to the Discovery Institute. Do you? Because you should. And make sure it goes to the Center for Science and Culture – they're the guys who do the research on intelligent design.

More Stephen C. Meyer videos are here.

What is intelligent design?

- R.C. Sproul interviews Stephen Meyer on Signature in the Cell
- Stephen Meyer explains what intelligent design is in a CNN editorial
- Stephen Meyer's Signature in the Cell in top ten science books on Amazon.com
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show

Free documentaries on intelligent design

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

Related posts

- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell (Stephen C. Meyer)
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion(Stephen C. Meyer, Jonathan Wells)

Video shows how the increasing national debt hurts children

August 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new video from Republican Whip Eric Cantor. (14 minutes)

If you have kids, you need to understand what a massive national debt means to your kids. It means they're going to be very, very poor.'

Here's another video that ECM sent me. (3 minutes)

Remember in November, especially if you have children.

Related links around the web

- U.S. Bankruptcies near 5-year high (H/T ECM)
- China selling off US debt in record amounts (H/T ECM)
- Democrats spending $63 billion on global health care (H/T ECM)

Does the book of Acts point to a physical, bodily resurrection?

August 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a great post by Amy of Stand to Reason. She focuses on TWO passages to make a case for Acts teaching a physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus.

Excerpt:

The first is the words of Peter's evangelistic sermon in Acts 2:22-36:

> [Y]ou nailed [Jesus] to the cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. For David says of Him, "…You will not abandon my soul to Hades, **nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay**."

In case they missed the fact that Jesus' body did not decay, Peter continues:

> Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet…, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, **nor did His flesh suffer decay**. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

In other words, Peter argues that David couldn't have been speaking of himself when he wrote those words of Scripture *because David's body decayed in a tomb*. He then contrasts David's death with Jesus' death and physical resurrection to show that the words of the Psalm are describing Jesus, and therefore Jesus is the Messiah they've been waiting for.

This is good, because the early sermon by Peter in Acts 2 is super early. So even if a bad guy argues that Paul's view of the resurrection in 1 Cor 15:3-7 is non-physical, you can fall back on Acts 2 and the early eyewitness testimony of Peter. But as Amy mentions, there are other arguments as well.

Further study

The top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus

8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Three debates where you can see this play out:

- Craig Evans and Bart Ehrman
- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Extra stuff

A lecture on Bart Ehrman by William Lane Craig.

Jay Richards investigates whether George Soros is funding Jim Wallis

August 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post on National Review. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

In *World* magazine on July 17, Marvin Olasky called on "progressive evangelical" Jim Wallis to come clean and admit that he is not a non-partisan, as he likes to claim, but rather a devoted man of the Left. Olasky reported that Wallis's organization, Sojourners, had received grants from George Soros's foundation, the Open Society Institute (OSI), and had lent Sojourners' mailing list to the Obama campaign.

[…]**Among the documents I now have are pages from the OSI website that list two grants to Sojourners — one for $200,000 in 2004, "To support the Messaging and Mobilization Project: Engaging Christians on the Importance of Civic Involvement," and one for $25,000 in 2006, "To support a branding assessment" for the purpose of merging "Sojourners and Call to Renewal into one organization." I have physical copies of these pages, which is good, because these pages seem to have disappeared from the OSI website (I'm sure that's just a coincidence).**

[…]But there's more to it. In two blog posts at Patheos published over the last week, Tim Dalrymple reported that he, too, was looking into Olasky's charge, and in a thoughtful, unbiased interview published on August 9, he asked Wallis himself about Olasky's charges.

Before responding directly, Wallis launched into bizarre invective against Olasky, claiming (among other things) that Olasky believes in a "sinless market." This caricature is practically surreal to anyone familiar with Olasky's actual views — actually, it's beyond surreal, since surreal art has some illuminating connection to the original. Olasky is a Calvinist, which means he places particularly strong emphasis on human depravity in every area of human experience, including the market.

Wallis continued:

> It's not hyperbole or overstatement to say that Glenn Beck lies for a living. I'm sad to see Marvin Olasky doing the same thing. No, we don't receive money from Soros. Given the financial crisis of nonprofits, maybe Marvin should call Soros and ask him to send us money.
>
> So, no, we don't receive money from George Soros. Our books are totally open, always have been. Our money comes from Christians who support us and who read *Sojourners*.

Well, as I said above, I've got physical copies of what appear to be grants to Sojourners

from the Open Society Institute website, which have since been taken offline. Dalrymple does, too. In fact, until Wednesday, August 11, Dalrymple's second blog post at Patheos had accompanying PDFs of the OSI webpages.

[…]**According to Sojourners' 990s (go here and search for "Sojourners" in "DC"), their total assets went from $513,896 in 2002 to $4,615,468 in 2009.** Call me skeptical, but I'd be willing to bet that this windfall didn't all come from humble readers of *Sojourners* magazine.

Wallis supports Barack Obama, a radically pro-abortion President. Abortion is the slavery of our age – a political movement based on pure greed, whose aim is to terminate the lives of a weaker class of humans because of the selfishness of a stronger class of humans. And yet Wallis tries to pass himself off as a Christian. So I know exactly who to believe when his testimony contradicts respected Christian scholars like Marvin O'Lasky and Jay Richards.

What should we think about Obama's use of the Bible?

August 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here on the NewsReal blog. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

Dr. Jeffrey Siker, professor of religion at Loyola University and a liberal Presbyterian minister, was featured in the LA Times yesterday for an academic paper he did on Obama's use of the Bible in public speeches and writings. His findings show a candidate and President willing to pick and choose scripture that Obama considers pluralistic and in support of his policies. Siker presents this fact as positive pragmatism instead of what it really may be – sacrilegious ambition.

[…]Obama uses "brother's keeper" to convince Americans to support socialist policies.

> "This vision of being my brother's keeper has important political and social consequences when it comes to such issues as healthcare, consumer protection or education reform." – Siker

The problem with that interpretation is that the "brother's keeper" passage has nothing to do with supporting welfare policies. Cain has just killed his brother Abel, and God was condemning Cain for the sin by asking Cain where his brother was. Cain said he didn't know where Abel was because he's not responsible for him. God does not respond by saying, "Yes you are Cain. You are responsible to make enough money to pay not only for your healthcare but also Abel's."

Quoting the Bible to teach socialism only works on people who haven't read the Bible. You can't get socialism from the Bible, because there is no passage that teaches that Jews and Christians should embrace the idea of wealth redistribution by government. The Bible teaches private, voluntary charity.

Related posts

- Frank Turek interviews Jay Richards on Christianity and capitalism
- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible
- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

Nancy Pelosi wants investigation of Ground Zero mosque opponents

August 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video of Nancy Pelosi's remarks. (H/T Washington Times)

Transcript:

> "There is no question there is a concerted effort to make this a political issue by some. And I join those who have called for looking into how is this opposition to the mosque being funded."

She doesn't want to know where the millions of dollars to fund the mosque came from… she wants to investigate the finances of people who disagree with the mosque. Presumably, this would mean that she wants to investigate the finances of the families of 9/11 victims to see who is funding their opposition to the Ground Zero mosque.

Here's the response from Debra Burlingame and Tim Sumners, the co-founders of 9/11 Families for a Safe & Strong America. (H/T Weekly Standard)

> For the last four months, 9/11 families, first responders, survivors and concerned citizens have been asking where developers are getting funding for a **$100-million dollar** mosque and Islamic center planned for Ground Zero. The imam who is heading the project has refused to identify the source of the $5 million cash that was used to purchase the building, and told an Arab newspaper that he will get funding for the project from Arab and Muslim countries. Given the imam's statements, that America was "an accessory to the crime" on 9/11, that "Osama Bin Laden was made in the U.S.A." as well as his repeated refusal to condemn Hamas, we believe he has an obligation to come clean to the public on his financial sources. Our concern has been amplified by news that the imam's worldwide "Shariah Index Project" is being funded by the Malaysian government, and that he is a principal figure in the Perdana Global Peace Project, the number one funder of the Gaza Flotilla, a violent attempt to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza.
>
> Today we learn that instead of taking our concerns seriously, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi suggested that the opponents of the Ground Zero mosque should be investigated. This comment is clearly intended to intimidate those of us who are speaking out to preserve the sanctity of Ground Zero, where more than 20,000 human remains have been recovered, 1,845 in the last five years. We can assure Ms. Pelosi that whatever funds we have spent to get our message out, they pale in comparison to the price we have personally paid since that day, and continue to pay as a result of the mosque project. The vast majority of the American people support us. They lived through September 11 with us, and they know, as we do, that this not a "local issue." What happened on 9/11 affected all

> Americans.

Remember in November.

Is it a good idea to give the government money to run health care?

August 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from the UK Daily Mail, which shows how socialized medicine is working out in socialist Europe. (H/T Memeorandum via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A 'man of 21 with learning disabilities has been granted taxpayers' money to fly to Amsterdam and have sex with a prostitute.
>
> His social worker says sex is a 'human right' for the unnamed individual – described as a frustrated virgin.
>
> His trip to a brothel in the Dutch capital's red light district next month is being funded through a £520million scheme introduced by the last government to empower those with disabilities.
>
> They are given a personal budget and can choose what services this is spent on.

This is what happens when taxpayers hand their own money to bureaucrats to spend. When you have your money in your hand, you use 100% of that money to buy things you want because you need them – like breast cancer exams. But when you give a bureaucrat your money, their goal for spending that money is to buy votes so that they can keep their job and to feel good about themselves. And what makes them feel good about themselves is equalizing life outcomes. They don't think that anyone should have to face the unhappy consequences of their own decisions.

In some provinces of Canada, sex changes and in vitro fertilization are taxpayer-funded. Abortion is taxpayer-funded in every province. That's socialized medicine. Equalizing life outcomes by transferring wealth from a person who has money to a person who has a felt need.

Here's a comprehensive article from The American Spectator that explains what we can expect from our version of socialized medicine, i.e. – "Obamacare". (H/T ECM)

Ten things Obama did to discourage companies from hiring

August 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article was written a week ago on Investors Business Daily, and it is still in the top five!

Below is my favorite of the ten.

Excerpt:

> Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act of 2010 (ObamaCare).
>
> According to the congressional Joint Committee on Taxation, ObamaCare will hike taxes an estimated $15.2 billion, and the middle class will get whacked. We've already seen health insurance premiums go up because of costly ObamaCare mandates, which means less money available for spending on other things.
>
> Moreover, employer mandates, taxes and penalties will reduce funds available for private-sector hiring. The mandates, taxes and penalties kick in when an employer has more than 50 employees, and they apply to all employees, so one effect of the law is to discourage small businesses — which create most American jobs — from hiring more than 50 people.
>
> If a business has 45 employees and it needs to hire eight more people for a total of 53 employees, but it doesn't offer health insurance or its insurance plan doesn't satisfy the latest ObamaCare regulations, hiring those eight additional people would entail a $2,000 penalty for each of the 53 employees — a total of $106,000!
>
> Many other provisions are likely to have unintended consequences, as well. The 2.5% excise tax on high-tech companies that produce pacemakers, heart valves, stents, defibrillators and other medical devices that help improve the quality of life or save lives is an estimated $20 billion hit. Anything that increases the cost of doing business is bad for jobs.

A mandate, by the way, is when the government forces all insurance company plans to cover elective things like abortions. When insurance companies have to cover more politically correct lifestlye choices, the premiums that normal people pay go up to cover the weird stuff. Are you a normal person? Did your medical premiums go up, or did you lose medical coverage through your employer? If so, then thank Obama – he needed to make sure that all his favorite special interest groups (e.g. – Planned Parenthood) got their money.

Read the remaining nine here.

How to defend the Biblical view of capital punishment

August 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a Yahoo News story, and pay attention to the victims and their view of capital punishment.

Excerpt:

> The leader of a former gang of Houston teenagers who raped and murdered two young girls walking home from a neighborhood party 17 years ago was executed Tuesday in Texas.
>
> Peter Anthony Cantu, 35, was strapped to a gurney in the Huntsville Unit prison death chamber and administered a lethal injection at 6:09 p.m. CDT. He took a single deep breath before slipping into unconsciousness, then was pronounced dead eight minutes later as relatives of his victims, Jennifer Ertman and Elizabeth Pena, looked stoically through a window a few feet from him.
>
> Asked by the warden if he had any last statement, Cantu replied: "No." He never looked at the witnesses, including his victims' parents.
>
> "Nothing he would have said to me would have made any difference," Adolfo Pena, who lost his daughter in the attack, said after watching Cantu die. "He did a horrendous crime to these two girls. He deserved to die and 17 years later, he died. Not soon enough.
>
> "It's been a long time coming," said Pena, who wore a T-shirt bearing pictures of both girls.

I'll leave out the brutal details of the crime, and jump to this:

> Jennifer's father, Randy Ertman, who witnessed all three executions, said before Cantu was put to death Tuesday that the apologies meant nothing to him, that it was too late for apologies.
>
> […]Ertman said if the death penalty was intended as a deterrent, all five members who had been sentenced to die should have been hanged from trees outside Houston City Hall years ago.
>
> "That would be a deterrent," he said.

Ok, now look at this Fox News article which talks about whether it works to deter more violent crimes.

Excerpt:

> What gets little notice, however, is a series of academic studies over the last half-dozen years that claim to settle a once hotly debated argument — whether the death penalty acts as a deterrent to murder. The analyses say yes. They count

> between three and 18 lives that would be saved by the execution of each convicted killer.
>
> […]"Science does really draw a conclusion. It did. There is no question about it," said Naci Mocan, an economics professor at the University of Colorado at Denver. "The conclusion is there is a deterrent effect."A 2003 study he co-authored, and a 2006 study that re-examined the data, found that each execution results in five fewer homicides, and commuting a death sentence means five more homicides. "The results are robust, they don't really go away," he said. "I oppose the death penalty. But my results show that the death penalty (deters) — what am I going to do, hide them?"
>
> Statistical studies like his are among a dozen papers since 2001 that capital punishment has deterrent effects. They all explore the same basic theory — if the cost of something (be it the purchase of an apple or the act of killing someone) becomes too high, people will change their behavior (forego apples or shy from murder).

That's the only question we should be asking – does it work? Not "how does it makes us feel?". I don't care how it makes anyone feel except for the victims. I only care about the victims. If the conviction is good, and they accused admit their guilt, the death penalty should be on the table.

The Bible supports the idea of capital punishment, and if you want to explain to people why the Bible supports it, you need to give specific examples, talk from the point of the view of the victims, and reference the relevant research, keeping in mind that academics are *vastly* more likely to skew the results in favor of the liberal "murderers should not be punished because no one should be punished" view.

If you had to blame the recession on one person, who would it be?

August 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My pick would be the Massachusetts Democrat Congressman Barney Frank.

Here he is in 2005 claiming that fears of a housing bubble are unfounded.

Here's the timeline showing who wanted to regulate Fannie and Freddie, and who blocked regulation.

Here's video from a hearing showing Democrats opposing regulations:

That's right – Republicans wanted to regulate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and Democrats said Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are "doing a tremendous job".

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac had paid the Democrats off handsomely during multiple election cycles, but I'm sure that the Democrats' opposition to regulations had nothing to do with those political contributions.

I found these videos at Ace of Spades, thanks to ECM.

Is Islam tolerant of other world religions?

August 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the top article right now from National Review. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Non-Muslims are barred from entering the cities of Mecca and Medina — not merely barred from building synagogues or churches, but barred, period, because their infidel feet are deemed unfit to touch the ground. This is not an al-Qaeda principle. Nor is it an "Islamist" principle. It is Islam, pure and simple.
>
> "Truly the pagans are unclean," instructs the Koran's Sura 9:28, "so let them not . . . approach the Sacred Mosque." This injunction — and there are plenty of similar ones in Islam's scriptures — is enforced vigorously not by jihadist terrorists but by the Saudi government. And it is enforced not because of some eccentric sense of Saudi nationalism. The only law of Saudi Arabia is sharia, the law of Islam.
>
> [..]Saudi Arabia, the country from which 15 of the 19 9/11 hijackers hailed, abides no pluralism or religious freedom. Sure, the Saudis will tell you they allow Christians, Jews, and other non-Muslims to visit their country, which is awfully big of them. Still, the regime prohibits these infidels from polluting the kingdom with their Bibles, crucifixes, and Stars of David.
>
> […]In an Islamic country like Saudi Arabia, where they are in a position to impose sharia in full, that is exactly what they do. In other places, the degree of imposition depends on relative Islamic strength, and it increases as that strength increases. Thus, the standard Muslim position on "Palestine," where Islamic strength is growing but not yet dominant: Muslims are to be permitted to live freely within the Jewish state, but all Jews must be purged from Palestinian territories. Again, that's not an al-Qaeda position; it's the mainstream Islamic view. To the extent there is a mainstream dissenting view, it is that the Jewish state should be annihilated immediately — not that the two sides should live in reciprocally tolerant harmony.

Not very tolerant!

William Lane Craig reports on his debate with a Muslim in South Africa

August 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig

Bill Craig's a specialist in debating Muslims, and he does it at the universities in many Muslim countries, too, for their professors and grad students. Well, he just did one in South Africa, and now I've got the podcast of his after-action report. The debate was held in front of about 1000 people. The topic was "Identifying Jesus: Was he man, or both man and God?".

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

- who was Craig's opponent?
- why did they decide on that topic?
- what sayings of Jesus, that are widely regarded as authentic, imply his divinity?
- how the resurrection confirms Jesus' radical claims to be God stepping into history
- Craig's response to the argument that the gospels are myth not history
- explain the incarnation – the idea that God the Son has two natures – using "Avatar"

I'll be updating this post with details as I listen to it a second time, but the main thing is how he describes the audience of South African Muslims. People in the West keep thinking that the way to make Muslims like us is by caving in to their demands. But that is baloney. I used to dialog with Muslims in my undergrad years, and what they respect is convictions, courage and strength. They despise people who try to appease them by arguing for some sort of both-and pluralism. If we want to have any hope of dealing with Muslims, we need to stand up for the exclusive claims of Christianity.

Frank Turek

I also listened to Frank Turek's latest episode of the Cross Examined radio show, and he had an ex-Muslim convert to Christianity on for the first 10 minutes and he was explaining what the Quran really says, as well as the Muslim doctrine of abrogation, which requires that the earlier peaceful verses be *overridden* by the later *warlike* verses.

That MP3 file is here.

The rest of the podcast is on same-sex marriage. He goes over a bunch of false facts from the Judge Walker decision.

Your Friday night listening is now all set.

As Obama pushes Ground Zero mosque, Iran readies first nuclear reactor

August 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Yahoo News.

Excerpt:

> Iranian and Russian nuclear technicians made final preparations to start up Iran's first reactor on Saturday after years of delays, an operation that will mark a milestone in what Tehran considers its right to produce nuclear energy.
>
> Nationwide celebrations are planned for the fuel loading at the Bushehr facility in southern Iran, while Russia pledges to safeguard the plant and prevent spent nuclear fuel from being shifted to a possible weapons program.
>
> **The West has not sought to block the reactor startup as part of its confrontations over Iran's nuclear agenda, a clash that has resulted in repeated rounds of U.N. sanctions against Tehran. Washington and other nations do not specifically object to Tehran's ability to build peaceful reactors that are under international scrutiny.**
>
> […]**Of greater concern to the West, however, are Iran's stated plans to build 10 new uranium enrichment sites inside protected mountain strongholds. Iran said recently it will begin construction on the first one in March in defiance of the U.N. sanctions.**

And there's more – a new advanced surface-to-surface missile.

> Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi said Friday forces have test-fired a new liquid-fueled missile with advanced guidance systems for ground targets.
>
> Vahidi gave no other details of the new Qiam-1 missile during a nationally broadcast address ahead of Friday prayers at Tehran University. But it could raise Western fears about another advance in Iran's missile arsenal, which already can target Israel and other parts of the region.

And here's some more news from the UK Telegraph about Iran's other activities.

Excerpt:

> The third generation Fateh 110 (Conqueror) missile was also to be test fired during this period. Iran has previously paraded a version of Fateh 110 which has a travel range of 150 to 200 kilometres (90 to 125 miles).
>
> Also during government week, the production lines of two missile-carrying speedboats, Seraj (Lamp) and Zolfaqar (named after Shiite Imam Ali's sword) are due to be inaugurated, while a long-range drone, Karar, is expected to be unveiled.

> The firing of Qiam comes days after a top commander from the Revolutionary Guards said Iran will mass produce replicas of the Bladerunner 51, often described as the world's fastest boat, and equip them with weapons to be deployed in the Gulf.
>
> On August 8, Iran took delivery of four new mini-submarines of the home-produced Ghadir class. Weighing 120 tonnes, the "stealth" submarines are aimed at operations in shallow waters, notably in the Gulf.

Surface-to-surface missiles are the kind that you launch from land-based or ship-based launchers for land-based or ship-based targets.

This is all happening while Obama dithers with the Ground Zero mosque, cap and trade (carbon tax) bills, and card check bills (to force the unionization of workers). What good is equalization of life outcomes through state-controlled redistribution of wealth if *we're all dead in a crater?* Does he not understand that? Maybe he doesn't think that protecting the American people is his job or something.

UPDATE: The Appeaser-in-Chief is busy fund-raising for the elections.

Excerpt:

> Obama's giving Air Force One a real workout. He was raising money in Milwaukee on Monday, then L.A. Tuesday he started in L.A., dashed up to Seattle and then back to Ohio. Next up is Florida.

At least he's not playing golf every other day.

Teacher union tries to block parents from seeing teacher evaluations

August 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the leftist Los Angeles Times. (H/T Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> The Los Angeles teachers union president said Sunday he was organizing a "massive boycott" of The Times after the newspaper began publishing a series of articles that uses student test scores to estimate the effectiveness of district teachers.
>
> "You're leading people in a dangerous direction, making it seem like you can judge the quality of a teacher by … a test," said A.J. Duffy, president of United Teachers Los Angeles, which has more than 40,000 members.
>
> Duffy said he would urge other labor groups to ask their members to cancel their subscriptions.
>
> […]The district has had the ability to analyze the differences among teachers for years but opted not to do so, in large part because of anticipated union resistance, The Times found.
>
> The newspaper plans to publish an online database with ratings for the more than 6,000 elementary school instructors later this month.
>
> […]After learning of the analysis and the database last week, union leaders began making automated calls to teachers objecting to publication. In the Friday evening call, Duffy said the database was "an irresponsible, offensive intrusion into your professional life that will do nothing to improve student learning.
>
> "Our attorneys are looking into the legalities of this database," he said in the recorded message. "This is part of the continuing attack on our profession, and we must continue to fight back on all fronts."
>
> On Sunday, Duffy declined to talk about any legal action or other protests besides a boycott. "I'll keep that to myself," he said.

Remember that Obama is lapdog of the teacher unions, because they got him elected. In fact, he just paid them off with another billion dollar bailout from him just a few days ago. I would not be surprised to see him intervene to stop the publication of teacher evaluations. He doesn't care about parents and children – he cares about bailing out the people who got him elected using money from the parents who trust these unions to provide their children with a decent education.

How universities block conservatives in the admissions process

August 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow, here is an interesting article by Russel K. Neil that I found on Minding the Campus. Before you read the excerpt, you should know that ROTC is short for Reserve Officers' Training Corps, and that 4-H clubs are organizations that teach children practical skills with an emphasis on rural farming skills.

Excerpt:

> Besides the bias against lower-class whites, the private colleges in the Espenshade/Radford study seem to display what might be called an urban/Blue State bias against rural and Red State occupations and values. This is most clearly shown in a little remarked statistic in the study's treatment of the admissions advantage of participation in various high school extra-curricular activities. In the competitive private schools surveyed participation in many types of extra-curricular activities — including community service activities, performing arts activities, and "cultural diversity" activities — conferred a substantial improvement in an applicant's chances of admission. The admissions advantage was usually greatest for those who held leadership positions or who received awards or honors associated with their activities. No surprise here — every student applying to competitive colleges knows about the importance of extracurriculars.
>
> **But what Espenshade and Radford found in regard to what they call "career-oriented activities" was truly shocking even to this hardened veteran of the campus ideological and cultural wars. Participation in such Red State activities as high school ROTC, 4-H clubs, or the Future Farmers of America was found to reduce very substantially a student's chances of gaining admission to the competitive private colleges in the NSCE database on an all-other-things-considered basis. The admissions disadvantage was greatest for those in leadership positions in these activities or those winning honors and awards. "Being an officer or winning awards" for such career-oriented activities as junior ROTC, 4-H, or Future Farmers of America, say Espenshade and Radford, "has a significantly negative association with admission outcomes at highly selective institutions." Excelling in these activities "is associated with 60 or 65 percent lower odds of admission."**
>
> Espenshade and Radford don't have much of an explanation for this find, which seems to place the private colleges even more at variance with their stated commitment to broadly based campus diversity. In his Bakke ruling Lewis Powell was impressed by the argument Harvard College offered defending the

> educational value of a demographically diverse student body: “A farm boy from Idaho can bring something to Harvard College that a Bostonian cannot offer. Similarly, a black student can usually bring something that a white person cannot offer.” The Espenshade/Radford study suggests that those farm boys from Idaho would do well to stay out of their local 4-H clubs or FFA organizations — or if they do join, they had better not list their membership on their college application forms. This is especially true if they were officers in any of these organizations. Future farmers of America don’t seem to count in the diversity-enhancement game played out at some of our more competitive private colleges, and are not only not recruited, but seem to be actually shunned. It is hard to explain this development other than as a case of ideological and cultural bias.
>
> **This same kind of bias seems to lurk behind the negative association found between acceptance odds and holding leadership positions in high school ROTC. This is most troubling because a divorce between the campus culture of its universities and its military is poisonous for any society, and doesn’t do the military or the civilian society any good. The lack of comfort with many military commanders that our current president is said to have seems to be due not only to his own lack of military experience but to the fact of having spent so many of his formative years on university campuses like Harvard, Columbia, and the University of Chicago, where people with military experience are largely absent and the campus culture is often hostile to military values and military personnel.**

So *this* is why so many people in power today have no understanding of the kinds of things that we believe in.

When you’re arguing with people on the left, there are two questions you need to ask them all the time. 1) Who are the best scholars who disagree with you and what have you read by those scholars?, 2) Name actual people who are your good long-term friends who hold the views that you don’t hold to, 3) Name some debates that you have heard between people that you agree with and people you disagree with.

Right now on Facebook, there’s a woman I am debating who read Bart Ehrman’s “Misquoting Jesus” book. I listed 5 debates between Bart Ehrman and other scholars who agree with me, all of which I blogged on. She doesn’t appear to have heard any of them, nor is she interested in engaging with them. When someone wants to eject the moral demands of Christianity from their lives, they gravitate towards Dan Brown and Bart Ehrman to try to weaken the hold of the truth on their decision making by making it optional. Usually what precipitates it is the desire to just have fun without rules, or a disappointment with God because they think he should make them happy.

New Jennifer Roback Morse podcast on elderly couples divorcing

August 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A really super new podcast from Dr. J. I listened to this one three times.

The MP3 file is here.

The topic is: why are older couples divorcing so much these days?

I really recommend this podcast because she says some very interesting things about love and marriage. Dr. J is awesome because she tries to predict what the left will do next. She really understands what marriage is and what love is. One of the things I like about Dr. J is that she makes me understand how marriage is opposed to selfishness. That you really have to come into it having a deep sympathy for the the other person and to be willing to love them self-sacrificially, even if they don't love you back. If you're courting, and you find that one person is loving the other self-sacrificially, but the other person isn't, then that is not a good sign.

US suffering largest drop in employment since World War II

August 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> In contrast to the better-known unemployment rate, which measures the percentage of working-age Americans who are actively seeking jobs but do not have one, the civilian employment-population ratio measures the percentage of working-age Americans who have a job, whether they are seeking one or not.
>
> […]Looking at this ratio, America is suffering its largest drop since World War II. When the economy was at its Bush-era height, in 2007, a little over 63% of adult Americans had jobs. Friday's report shows that only about 58.4% do, a decline of nearly five percentage points. While the unemployment rate remains steady at 9.5%, the employment-population ratio continues to fall each month. In April it was 58.8%, in May 58.7%, and in June 58.5%.
>
> Since America has about 238 million noninstitutionalized civilian adults of working age, this decrease means that we have nearly 12 million fewer jobs today than we would have if the employment-population rate were still at its 2007 level of 63%.
>
> No other recession in the past 60 years saw such rapid job destruction in either absolute or percentage terms. In the 1979-82 recession, unemployment topped out at a higher rate, 10.8%, but the employment-population ratio declined by only three percentage points, to 57% from 60%.
>
> History also delivers sobering news on how long it might take to recover our economic health. There is only one instance since World War II of the U.S economy increasing the employment-population ratio by five percentage points in a decade: the recovery that followed Ronald Reagan's tax cuts in 1983.

But Obama isn't interested in tax cuts, nor are the people who voted him into office. In fact, they are going to allow the Bush tax cuts to expire, removing *more* job-creating capital from the economy. Everyone seems to believe that government spending, which is funded by removing money from corporations and investors in the private sector, will create jobs. But government spending on turtle tunnels and Chinese prostitutes doesn't create jobs.

Miriam Grossman lectures at the Heritage Foundation on sex education

August 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Miriam Grossman gave a wonderful lecture for the Heritage Foundation.

Here's the abstract:

> *The principles of sexual health education are not based on the hard sciences. Sex education is animated by a specific vision of how society must change, and because of this, sex ed curricula omit critical biological truths and endorse high-risk behaviors. The priority for SIECUS, Planned Parenthood, and Advocates for Youth is not the health and well-being of young people. These federally funded organizations are fighting "repression" and "intolerance," not herpes or syphilis. But when sexual freedom reigns, sexual health suffers. Our children are being taught that you can play with fire, and we are obligated to inform them of the risks they face and to teach them biological truths, even when they are politically incorrect.*

And here's a scary excerpt:

> You're all familiar with the epidemics of STIs, sexually transmitted infections, in this country, but there's another one. It's a man-made one. It's an epidemic of ignorance, misinformation, and duplicity.
>
> If you go to the medical library and browse through the journals, you will learn some amazing things, such as a girl's cervix is more easily infected by sexually transmitted infections than a woman's because it has yet to mature. Boys and men don't have a corresponding area of vulnerability in their reproductive system. The neurobiology of teen girls is unique, and it makes a girl's developing brain more vulnerable to stress, especially the stress of failed relationships.
>
> You'd learn that the adolescent brain functions differently from an adult's. The area responsible for reasoning, suppression of impulses, and weighing the pros and cons of one's decisions is not fully developed. Furthermore, under conditions that are intense, novel, and stimulating, teens' decisions are more likely to be shortsighted and driven by emotion. You would discover that oral sex is associated with cancer of the tonsils and throat. The human papilloma virus infects those areas just like it does the cervix.
>
> You'd find loads of articles—in fact, entire books— about oxytocin, a hormone that tells the brain, "You're with someone special now; time to turn caution off and trust on; time to create an emotional bond." In both sexes, oxytocin is released during cuddling and kissing and sexual touching, but estrogen ramps up the effects of oxytocin, and testosterone dampens them.
>
> […]You'd learn also that the healthy vagina, due to its architecture and biology,

> is an unfriendly environment for HIV, while the rectum has cells that facilitate the entry of HIV directly into the lymphatic system. This and many, many more things have been known for years, but when you turn to sex ed curricula and, most disturbing, the Web sites that are suggested to young people and their parents, nothing: none of this information.
>
> So there is a man-made epidemic of ignorance: ignorance of biological truths that should be central in any sex ed curriculum or parent education program. Awareness of these truths can save lives.
>
> I put the responsibility for the epidemic of ignorance directly on those organizations that are at the helm of teaching sex education because, contrary to their claims and promises, their programs are not comprehensive; they are not science-based or medically accurate or up-to-date.
>
> I'll go even further: They are not about preventing disease. Sex ed is a social movement. Its goal is to change society. The primary goal of groups like SIECUS, Planned Parenthood, and Advocates for Youth is to promote sexual freedom and to rid society of its Judeo–Christian taboos and restrictions.

The rest of the lecture contains specific examples of how sex educators put children at risk.

I read Dr. Grossman's first book, and I bought her second book, and I really, really recommend these books to people who think that sex is harmless and that sex educators have no agenda that they are trying to push on children. I sometimes complain that women don't do a good enough job of voting well and preparing themselves to protect their children from the political left. Reading the work of Dr. Miriam Grossman on sex education would be a good start. Then you can go on and read about day care and no-fault divorce, too. There are bad people out there and they do not want what is best for children.

UPDATE:

Commenter Jim writes:

You can view streaming video of her lecture here. Note: Lengthy introductions; Dr. Grossman begins at 6:28.

Also, you can view streaming video of a lecture on her first book *Unprotected: A Campus Psychiatrist Reveals How Political Correctness in Her Profession Endangers Every Student* here. Note: Dr. Grossman begins at 4:20.

How Obama’s bold experimentation with the economy costs jobs

August 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this column by George Will. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> At any time, some economic conditions would be better than others, but the more certainty about conditions the better. Today, investors and employers are certain that uncertainties are multiplying.
>
> They are uncertain about when interest rates will rise, and by how much.
>
> They do not know how badly the economy will be burdened by the expiration, approximately 200 days from now, of the Bush tax cuts on high earners — aka investors and employers. They know the costs of Obamacare will be higher than was advertised, but not how much higher. They do not know the potential costs of cap-and-trade and other energy policies.
>
> They do not know if “card check” — abolition of the right of secret ballot elections in unionization decisions — will pass, or how much the economy will be injured by making unions more muscular. They do not know how the functioning of the financial sector will be altered and impeded by the many new regulatory rules and agencies created by the financial reform legislation.
>
> The economy has become dependent on government stimulation of demand, and no one knows what will happen as the stimulus spending wanes.

Investors and employers are watching all of Obama’s bold experimentation with the economy patiently, and keeping their money in their wallets. Who can afford to hire more workers when the costs of running a business or making a profit on an investment goes up and up and up? When Obama is kicked out of office in 2012, and the economy settles down, then employers and investors will breathe a sigh of relief and hiring can resume.

Greg Koukl and the seven fatal flaws of relativism

August 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two kinds of relativism, moral and epistemic. The first kind of relativism says that there are no objective moral rules, but only what individuals or groups decide for themselves in certain times and places – like taste in foods or fashions. The second kind says that no propositional statements about reality are objectively true.

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Australian site Faith Interface.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like "It's wrong to push your own morality on others". This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don't let them make any moral statements without asking first them to ground morality on their worldview. And that's because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can't answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people's personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It's all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be "it depends". It depends on the person who is speaking because it's a subjective claim, not an objective claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

The whole point of atheism is to pursue pleasure without the bonds of morality – there is no other reason to do anything on atheism except for the pleasure it gives you. You do fashionable things to feel good getting praise from your neighbors, and you do

unfashionable things in private to make yourself feel good and you hope that no one who is powerful enough to hold you accountable ever finds out. There’s no way you were made to be.

NYT reports on new study showing no link between disasters and AGW

August 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

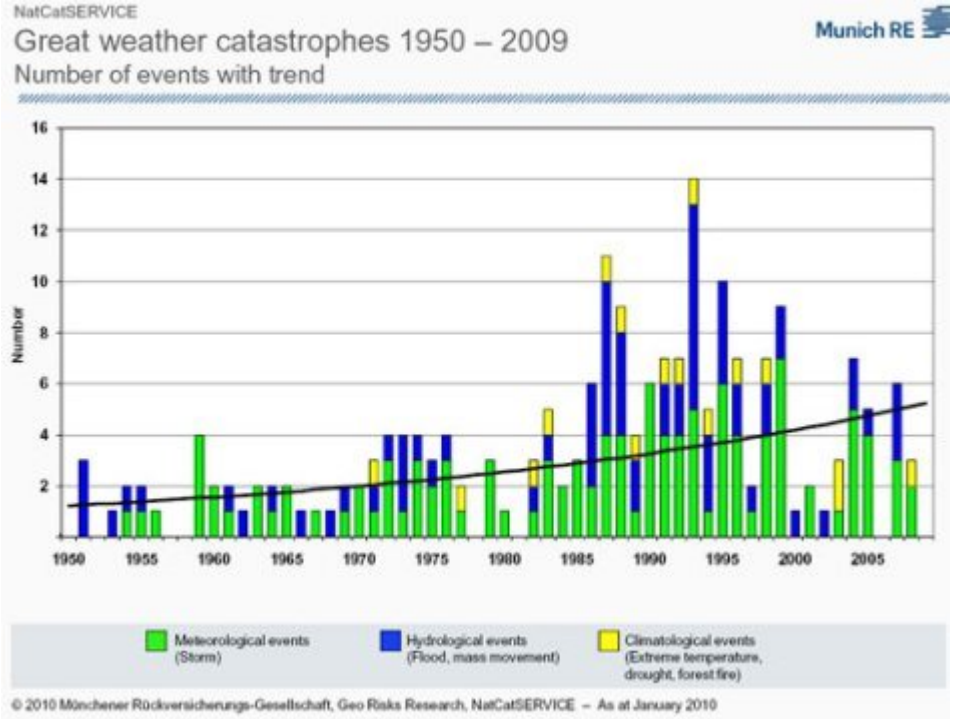

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Story here in the radically leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> A new analysis of nearly two dozen papers assessing trends in disaster losses in light of climate change finds no convincing link. The author concludes that, so far, the rise in disaster losses is mainly a function of more investments getting in harm's way as communities in places vulnerable to natural hazards grow.
>
> The paper — "Have disaster losses increased due to anthropogenic climate change?" — is in press in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society. It was written by Laurens M. Bouwer, a researcher at Vrije University in Amsterdam focused on climate and water resources (and a lead author of a chapter in the 2001 assessment from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). You can read more about the paper at the blog of Roger Pielke, Jr., which drew my attention to this work.

Here's more from from Roger Pielke's blog post.

The *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* has just put online a review paper (peer reviewed) by Laurens Bouwer, of the Institute for Environmental Studies at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, titled, "Have disaster losses increased due to anthropogenic climate change?".

Readers of this blog already know the answer to this question, and here is Bouwers'

conclusion:

> The analysis of twenty-two disaster loss studies shows that economic losses from various weather related natural hazards, such as storms, tropical cyclones, floods, and small-scale weather events such as wildfires and hailstorms, have increased around the globe. The studies show no trends in losses, corrected for changes (increases) in population and capital at risk, that could be attributed to anthropogenic climate change. Therefore it can be concluded that anthropogenic climate change so far has not had a significant impact on losses from natural disasters.

Bouwers rightly acknowledges that there are uncertainties in such studies, and in particular, there will be a need to refine efforts to evaluate changing vulnerability and exposure in future such work, especially as the signal of greenhouse gas driven climate change is expected to become larger. However, such uncertainties are not presently so large as to undercut Bouwers' conclusion, e.g.,

> A rigorous check on the potential introduction of bias from a failure to consider vulnerability reduction in normalization methods is to compare trends in geophysical variables with those in the normalized data. Normalized hurricane losses for instance match with variability in hurricane landfalls (Pielke et al. 2008). If vulnerability reduction would have resulted in a bias, it would show itself as a divergence between the geophysical and normalized loss data. In this case, the effects of vulnerability reduction apparently are not so large as to introduce a bias.

A pre-publication version of the paper is available here in PDF.
I hope this means that we can finally drill in Alaska now. Because I am tired of sending money and jobs overseas to people who really may not like us very much. We're not going to explode the planet, and if we make our own energy here, not only do we get the jobs, but we can do it cleaner than they can.

My friend loves his wife because she defends traditional marriage

August 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Actually that's just one of the reasons… you should hear this guy go on about how his wife encouraged him to learn apologetics during the run-up to their marriage.

Here's an essay she wrote to a pro-SSM friend:

Marriage is the union of a man and a woman who are not already married. No one has the unrestricted right to marry whoever they want, male or female, nor should they. Otherwise where does it stop? Should there be group marriage? Marriage to or between underage children? Marriage with animals? Forced marriage? Well, some of those things already happen in other countries and cultures, and I would say they're all a net negative on society.

I truly feel for anyone who has a desire for any such relationship, whether it's that they were born that way or because of some type of past abuse, but that doesn't mean society has to endorse it and call it marriage. Tolerance is not good enough for gay rights advocates – it's all out approval or nothing. And don't say the slippery slope argument is baloney, because it's not.

- http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=bc04c02

What is the purpose of marriage? To provide the best environment for raising children and protection of women and stability of society. Study after study shows that children do best when raised in the home of their mother and father. It's only recently that marriage was pursued by people because they were in love. Marriage has been in trouble lately in the US, and it's no surprise that children are turning to gangs, drugs, crime, promiscuity and so on in the search for love and family. I've seen this over and over among my own relatives and friends. If you haven't seen it, you're pretty blessed, and rare.

I doubt you're interested in my point of view or will even read this, but here's a pretty good analysis of the issue:

- http://www.christian.org.uk/html-publications/gaymarriage.htm

Based on evidence, gay marriage would not improve society.

- http://www.cwfa.org/articles/5014/CFI/family/index.htm

I don't hate gay people (it's ridiculous that I should even have to say this, but I do feel the need). As above, I even think it's better for a child to be adopted by a gay person/couple rather than stay in foster care. I have gay friends, family members, blah blah blah insert disclaimer here. I'm just not afraid to say that some things are better for society, and this is the case here.

I think most Americans are like me in that we believe gay people should be treated with kindness, but that the term “gay marriage” is an oxymoron. Even in California, gay marriage was very recently rejected when put to a vote by the people, in spite of a huge campaign on behalf of it.

Don’t worry, I’m surrounded by your point of view all the time, so I’ve already heard all the arguments. ;) And the fact that many fail at heterosexual marriage is not an argument for gay marriage, it’s an argument to reform heterosexual marriage in the eyes of the law and of society. ;) No fault divorce has been terrible for society, including my own immediate family. Some states now have what they call “covenant marriage” which is much stricter in letting people get married and the circumstances under which they can divorce. If that had been available to me, I would have done that.

Ah, she is marvelous. No wonder he loves her – who wouldn’t? When I read a woman writing about marriage, men and children like that, I can believe that lots of women do understand marriage, and that they really do care about their husbands and their children. She must be such a trustworthy and effective Christian mother – her kids are lucky that she can be so persuasive.

The main thing that I like is that she doesn’t think that marriage is some arrangement that is for people who are “in love”. It not about the feelings of the adults at all. There is a specific purpose for marriage, and that purpose is a social purpose. It’s not about individuals getting validation based on the sincerity of their feelings, it’s about bonding two people together who are going to stay together so that they can raise the next generation. It’s a commitment and it’s *hard!*

Women – if you want to make a man like you, try writing an essay like that to an opponent of your Christian or conservative or traditional views, and then CC your husband/suitor, and add a message saying you look forward to learning more about these issues together with him. Reading essays like this and see how proud her husband is of her makes me think well of marriage. It *IS* fun to be married and to talk about things like this.

Latest FL Senate poll – Rubio 40, Crist 32, Meek 17

August 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

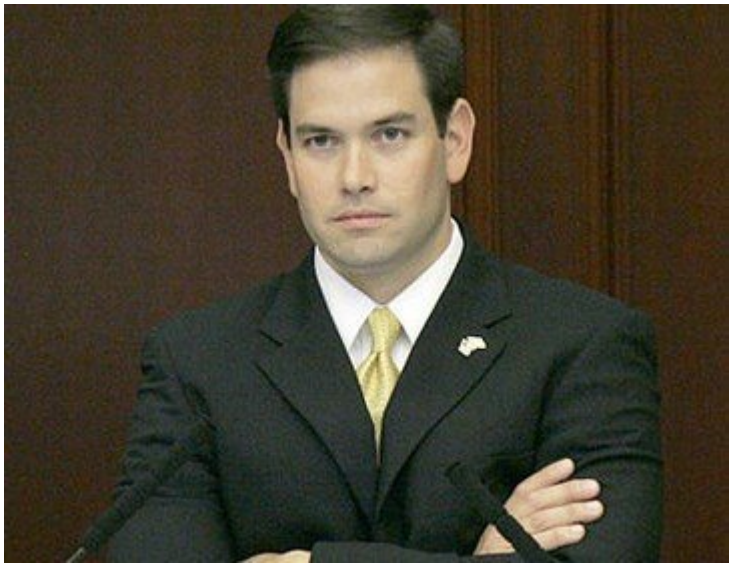

FL Senate candidate Marco Rubio

Yahoo! Poll is here.

Excerpt:

> Democrats will get their stronger candidate if Kendrick Meek wins the Florida Senate primary tonight as expected- but the biggest winner coming out of the primary may be Marco Rubio. PPP finds he would begin the general election in the lead at 40%, followed by Charlie Crist at 32%, and Meek at 17%.
>
> […]PPP's last poll of the race in mid-July found Crist in the lead at 35% to 29% for Rubio and 17% for Meek. Two major developments have shifted the race in Rubio's direction though. The first is that Democrats are now going for Meek 39-38 where before they were going for Crist 44-35. As Democrats have gotten to know Meek over the course of the primary campaign they've generally decided they like him and that's cut into Crist's support for the general election.
>
> The other big difference is that many Republican voters have moved off the fence and they've almost universally moved into the Rubio column. Where Rubio had a 54-23 lead with GOP voters in July, it's now increased to 69-20. Many Republicans were up in the air between Crist and Rubio previously but whatever they've seen over the last month has moved them more firmly into the Rubio column.

It's not just that Rubio is a perfect candidate, it's that Crist needs to be defeated.

UPDATE:

Oh, he's got a fundraiser going on right now! They already hit their goal way before the deadline, but they just raised the goal! People are crazy about this guy.

Ontario man arrested for defending his home with a firearm

August 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada
From the Winnipeg Free Press. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A Port Colborne, Ont., man whose home was attacked has ended up facing charges himself.
>
> Niagara Regional Police say a man emerged from his home with a handgun and fired it after several Molotov cocktails were thrown at the home.
>
> Police say three suspects wearing dark clothes got away in a car after the cocktails were thrown early Sunday morning.
>
> There is nothing to suggest any of them were injured when the gun was fired.
>
> By the time police and firefighters arrived, the homeowner had already doused several small fires and damage to the home was minimal.
>
> Ian Thomson, 53, is charged with careless use of a firearm.

The point is that this is yet another step in undermining the traditional roles of men as being protectors and providers and moral leaders in their homes. Men are viewed as being unreliable because the responsible men are being passed over by young unmarried women, and when things don't work out, they turn to government. It's another step in the long march to turn men into immature wallets and sperm-donors who have no role in the family at all and just work at menial jobs, drink beer, watch sports, and sit around on the couch, while all-female arrangements (or the government-run day care system) raise the children.

What are the traditional roles for men?

Provider

Every time that the government taxes a man and redistributes his wealth, it removes the need for a man who can provide, and so women don't have to choose good men to be providers. And that removes the responsibility of making good choices about men from a women. Moreover, if there is no father needed because the government pays for everything, then women don't get the benefit of having a man to moderate them (which works in reverse, of course), and to help them to raise the children to have moral standards and a sense of accountability. The man gets the authority to do these things by being the *primary breadwinner*. Democrat dream programs like nationalized day care only marginalize men even more.

- Men lost the vast majority of jobs during the recession

Protector

Every time the government passes restrictions on home defense with legally owned firearms, and even worse, on concealed-carry of firearms, it takes away the need for a woman to choose a man who is able and willing to protect his family. If a woman doesn't have to depend on her husband to protect her (as a last resort), then she doesn't have to court carefully and choose a man who has protective instincts, no criminal record, and who has a legally-owned firearm and the freedom to use it to defend her and the children. (Note: women should have concealed-carry permits and firearms, too – there is no difference between men and women here, both have to defend the nest and the chicks)

- UK man arrested for defending step-son from gang of thugs

Moral/spiritual leader

Every time the government passes restrictions on smacking, school choice, mandatory sex education, etc., or undermines morality and religion in any other way, it undermines the role of the father as spiritual and moral leader, and makes it less important for a woman to choose a man who will be the spiritual and moral leader in the home. She won't have to court as carefully, because it's now the government's job to educate the children on morality and spirituality. And the government will be there to undermine anything he does tell the kids with public schools, speech codes, etc.

- Quebec forces homeschoolers to teach moral relativism and religious pluralism

The point of this is to show what happens when men and women vote for bigger and bigger government to provide more and more things. If women have sex with men too early and then develop the view that they are unreliable, then they vote for bigger government for security, then government will take over traditional male responsibilities. Similarly, the worst kind of lazy, cowardly, ignorant men will freely abdicate their obligations to work hard so that they can share with their neighbors and lead families. My point is to show how this can be be sped up or slowed down based on the policies people vote it. If you want men to have a BIGGER role in the family, then get rid of the safety

net, cut taxes, and stop the courts and the police from penalizing men for acting like… *men*. You get the men you vote for. So vote wisely!

Palin-endorsed tea party candidate up 51-49 in Alaska

August 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here.

Excerpt:

> Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski fought to save her job Wednesday, locked in a stunningly tight Republican primary race against a political novice backed by Sarah Palin and tea party activists. The outlook was far brighter for another incumbent, Sen. John McCain, who won handily in Arizona.
>
> With 98 percent of election day precincts counted, Murkowski trailed Joe Miller by 1,960 votes out of more than 91,000 counted. The race was too close to call, with as many as 16,000 absentee votes and an undetermined number of provisional or questioned ballots, remaining to be counted starting on Aug. 31.
>
> Murkowski would be the seventh incumbent — and fourth Republican — to lose in a year in which the tea party has scored huge victories in GOP Senate primaries and voters have shown a willingness to punish Republicans and a handful of Democrats with ties to Washington and party leadership. Miller is a Gulf War veteran and self-described "constitutional conservative."
>
> It also was an outsider's night in Florida's GOP primary for governor, with big-spending upstart Rick Scott toppling veteran insider Bill McCollum, the state's attorney general who had the support of national party chiefs.

Lisa Murkowski is pro-abortion and fairly moderate.

And of course we won in Florida, but there the establishment Republican was not as bad. Still – new blood means new ideas. It will encourage the Republicans to keep doing what they're doing and to be bold.

Global warming supporter James Cameron backs out of debate

August 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a letter from one of the people who wanted to debate Cameron. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Cameron said was itching to debate the issue and show skeptical journalists and scientists that they were wrong.
>
> "I want to call those deniers out into the street at high noon and shoot it out with those boneheads," he said in an interview.
>
> Well, a few weeks ago Mr. Cameron seemed to honor his word.
>
> His representatives contacted myself and two other well known skeptics, Marc Morano of the Climate Depot website and Andrew Breitbart, the new media entrepreneur.
>
> Mr. Cameron was attending the AREDAY environmental conference in Aspen Colorado 19-22 August. He wanted the conference to end with a debate on climate change. Cameron would be flanked with two scientists. It would be 90 minutes long. It would be streamed live on the internet.
>
> They hoped the debate would attract a lot of media coverage.
>
> "We are delighted to have Fox News, Newsmax, The Washington Times and anyone else you'd like. The more the better," one of James Cameron's organizers said in an email.
>
> It looked like James Cameron really was a man of his word who would get to take on the skeptics he felt were so endangering humanity.
>
> Everyone on our side agreed with their conditions. The debate was even listed on the AREDAY agenda.
>
> But then as the debate approached James Cameron's side started changing the rules.
>
> They wanted to change their team. We agreed.
>
> They wanted to change the format to less of a debate—to "a roundtable". We agreed.
>
> Then they wanted to ban our cameras from the debate. We could have access to their footage. We agreed.
>
> Bizarrely, for a brief while, the worlds most successful film maker suggested that no cameras should be allowed-that sound only should be recorded. We agreed
>
> Then finally James Cameron, who so publicly announced that he "wanted to call those deniers out into the street at high noon and shoot it out," decided to ban

> the media from the shoot out.
>
> He even wanted to ban the public. The debate/roundtable would only be open to those who attended the conference.
>
> No media would be allowed and there would be no streaming on the internet. No one would be allowed to record it in any way.
>
> We all agreed to that.
>
> And then, yesterday, just one day before the debate, his representatives sent an email that Mr. “shoot it out ” Cameron no longer wanted to take part. The debate was cancelled.

I think this should give anyone who believes in global warming because of Al Gore and James Cameron pause. If they won’t debate (Al Gore ducked out of a debate, as well), then why should you believe them? Isn’t it a good idea to be open-minded when searching for truth – to listen to experts on both sides? One of the reasons why Christians like being Christians so much these days is because we have all of these amazing debaters with multiple-PhDs. Isn’t it better to hold your opinions a bit more humbly and to be aware of what the other side can say against your side?

William Lane Craig on whether there were guards at the tomb of Jesus

August 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was sort of playing around in the John Ankerberg channel on YouTube looking at all the stuff they've posting and I found some Bill Craig videos. And suddenly I found a video that I thought was worth posting. The question from John Ankerberg was on whether there were guards at the tomb described in Matthew.

Now, everybody who has seen a Bill Craig debate knows that he uses 4 minimal facts in order to infer that the resurrection happened. He chooses these facts because they pass certain historical criteria. For example, he can only uses a fact that is present in early sources, and in multiple sources. It also helps if the reported fact is embarrassing to the early church or the message they were trying to get accepted by other people. Anything reported by an enemy is more likely to be historical. And a fact is less historical if it was used by the early church as an apologetic to defend against opposition from some group. And so on.

So, I thought it would be fun for you to see that there are some facts that you SHOULD NOT USE in your minimal set.

Here's one that you should not use – the guard at the tomb:

Notice how forthright and honest Craig is? The guard at the tomb is probably toughest thing to defend in the whole New Testament. Why? Because it's late – Matthew is later than Mark! Because it's only in one source – Matthew! And because it seems to be an apologetic against the idea that the disciples stole the body – which means most people will say it was invented for that purpose.

So, what do we learn? It means that when you watch all those Craig debates, you have to keep in mind that he isn't just a pastor sort of using the text like a pastor would. He had to do a PhD to find out which verses are more and less strongly historical based on the *normal* criteria that historians use on historical biographies. No one is treating the New Testament any differently than any other book when you argue in a debate. He only uses the parts that are the strongest, and that's why he's always winning these debates. If he had to defend the guard at the tomb, he'd have a much tougher job! Whereas something like the crucifixion is admitted by every single scholar across the board, even the atheists.

Sometimes, it's fun to explain to non-Christians how you argue for the resurrection by contrasting a solid fact, like the appearances, which are in 1 Cor 15:3-7, and the guard at the tomb, which is only in Matthew. I think they think that we are doing faith, when we are really doing history, then trusting in what the historical investigation reveals.

An analysis of the prosperity gospel by the Mysterious M

August 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this the Mysterious M?

Wow, super good post on the prosperity gospel by the "Mysterious M" at Alisha's blog.

The start:

This is how the Lausanne Theology Working Group, Africa chapter, defined the prosperity gospel at its consultations in Akropong, Ghana:

> *"We define prosperity gospel as the teaching that believers have a right to the blessings of health and wealth and that they can obtain these blessings through positive confessions of faith and the "sowing of seeds" through the faithful payments of tithes and offerings." (http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/decemberweb-only/gc-prosperitystatement.html)*

So where does the prosperity gospel come from? And, more importantly, is it true?

For starters, there's a good bit of wishful thinking behind it. After all, who doesn't want to be healthy and wealthy? It's easy to see why this theology is popular. And if you're poor or in a state of chronic ill health it must appear particularly appealing. But wishful thinking is no basis for truth.

And a great excerpt:

The prosperity gospel undermines the witness of the Church in a world which is already

cynical with regard to Christianity. Non-christians see the hypocrisy of teachers who teach it and the gullibility of those who follow them. This further confirms their bias against the true gospel and makes them dismissive of the real thing before they've heard it.

Moreover, a fixation on material prosperity as the measure of their faith makes Christians weak when hardship strikes because their unrealistic, unbiblical expectations are not met and they feel let down. Worse still, their appreciation of the core blessings of Christianity (eternity in the presence of God, salvation from sin and judgment, complete renewal, etc.) is dulled by finding their primary joy in peripheral blessing. Most seriously, the teaching of blessing in exchange for sowing a "seed" or some other work undermines the fundamental teaching of grace: the *unmerited* favour of God towards sinful man.

Is about two pages long printed out, and it's all muscle, the whole way through! I really like this person's writing. I actually learned things, but without having to dig through anything that I didn't like. I love it when women write in a polemical tone – it's mean like I want to be, but it's not too mean so that the person she is trying to persuade won't read the whole thing.

OK, so here's my take on the piece. Towards the end, she started to talk about how the message of getting prosperity in this life really undermined the point of the gospel, which is about the message of a free gift of forgiveness, reconciliation and relationship to rebels against God, a relationship that goes on after we die. And I started to think about how lately I have been leaving e-mails unopened, and losing my temper, and not helping other Christians with their software projects, and so on – all because I just can't break away from the need for some selfish time. That's a sin. It's failing to do everything I could do.

So I am so glad that when my selfishness stops me from doing everything I could do, that I still have the forgiveness of Jesus to take away those failures to be perfect, and I can start every day brand new, ready to ride into battle to serve the Lord. I want to serve. I'm not always perfect. But because of Jesus, it is OK to fail, and to pick yourself up and try again. I think that *earning* money is good – and I love *saving* money, too – but beyond prosperity, I think that every man wants to be a noble knight most of all. And because of Jesus, I can be, even if I fail to be noble all the time, like I should be. No weakness or moral failure in me today takes away God's willingness to let me ride out in his colors tomorrow. And that has value.

Hmmmn. I wonder if Mysterious M would write anything for us here at the Wintery Knight? But there doesn't seem to be any way of contacting her. Boo! She's so… mysterious! But any woman who defends the gospel must be a knight. It's the law!

Intel CEO blames Democrats for destroying the economy

August 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article from CNET News by someone who understands job creation. (H/T Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

Excerpt:

> Intel Chief Executive Officer Paul Otellini offered a depressing set of observations about the economy and the Obama administration Monday evening, coupled with a dark commentary on the future of the technology industry if nothing changes.
>
> Otellini's remarks during dinner at the Technology Policy Institute's Aspen Forum here amounted to a warning to the administration officials and assorted Capitol Hill aides in the audience: unless government policies are altered, he predicted, "the next big thing will not be invented here. Jobs will not be created here."
>
> The U.S. legal environment has become so hostile to business, Otellini said, that there is likely to be "an inevitable erosion and shift of wealth, much like we're seeing today in Europe–this is the bitter truth."
>
> […]Otellini singled out the political state of affairs in Democrat-dominated Washington, saying: "I think this group does not understand what it takes to create jobs. And I think they're flummoxed by their experiment in Keynesian economics not working."

Here's Republican Senate candidate Carly Fiorina, from the same article:

> The comments from Intel's chief executive echoed statements made a day earlier by Carly Fiorina, the former HP CEO turned Republican Senate candidate.
>
> America's skilled-worker visa system is so badly broken and anti-immigration that "we have to start from scratch," Fiorina said, adding that too many government policies push jobs overseas instead of making U.S. companies competitive against international rivals.
>
> "Our corporate tax rates are the second highest in the world," and Congress has repeatedly failed to make an R&D tax credit permanent, Fiorina told the Aspen audience. It's time to start "acknowledging the reality that companies go where they're welcome," she said. (The effective U.S. corporate income tax is 35 percent, far over the industrialized-nation average of 18.2 percent.)

Here's a recent IBD article with more from Otellini, and other CEOs

First Otellini:

> "I can tell you definitively that it costs $1 billion more per factory for me to build, equip and operate a semiconductor manufacturing facility in the U.S.," he said.

> And 90% of that added cost, he said, is due to taxes and regulations that other countries don't have.

Then other CEOs:

> Earlier in the week, Illinois Tool Works CEO David Speer, whose company employs 60,000 worldwide, laid out his dilemma — and that of hundreds of other CEOs: "I could borrow $2 billion tomorrow for 3 1/2%," Speer said. "But what am I going to do with it?"
>
> […]In June, Ivan Seidenberg, CEO of Verizon Communications and head of the Business Roundtable, warned of a growing anti-business slant in both Congress and the White House. Tax hikes, regulations and constant policy shifts, he said, "harm our ability … to grow private-sector jobs in the U.S."

And don't forget the costs that Obamacare imposed on companies, causing all medical premiums to go through the roof because of the new health care mandates and taxes on things like medical devices.

Red State explains what the Obammunists should be doing:

> As our government continues to make it more difficult to do business in the US, companies must increasingly look to more favorable climates abroad. If Washington really wants to spur job creation here in the US, they should repeal the health care overhaul, reduce spending, cut the corporate tax rate, give up on cap and trade, and reform litigation. Instead we have been treated to an extended experiment in government control – one that is obviously not producing new wealth, new jobs, or any real hope for the emergence of the industries of the future.

It takes a lot of courage for a CEO like Otellini to come out against the Obama administration, and the neo-Keynesian oligarchy in Washington. Taking a billion dollars from Intel to study Chinese prostitutes and to build turtle tunnels is not a good thing to do if you want to have more jobs. But the thing is – Obama thinks it *is* a good thing to do, because he is totally ignorant of how the economy works. So, don't vote for him or any of his silver-spoon limousine liberal friends who were born with rich parents. Democrats don't know how jobs are created.

Venezuela Miss Universe candidate Stefania Fernandez does a brave thing

August 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Waving the OLD Venezuela flag

Story here from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Quick, what's the murder capital of the world: Kabul? Juarez? Try Caracas, Venezuela, a city whose dictator, Hugo Chavez, has made murder a means of extending his control.
>
> The silent protest at Monday night's Miss Universe Pageant in Las Vegas was invisible to nearly everyone — except Venezuelans. On her final catwalk, the ranking Miss Universe, Stefania Fernandez, suddenly whipped out a Venezuelan flag in a patriotic but protocol-breaking gesture.
>
> Fernandez waved her flag for the same reason Americans waved theirs after 9/11 — to convey resolution amid distress. Her flag had seven stars, significant because Chavez had arbitrarily added an eighth, making any use of a difficult-to-find seven-star banner an act of defiance.
>
> Fernandez's countrymen went wild with joy on bulletin boards and Facebook, showing just how worried they are about their country. Their greatest fear is violent crime.

She is so beautiful. And she looks pretty, too!

I love it when women are brave and defiant in opposition to big government socialism. And I love that dress. Big white/black shapes or patterns are my favorite – with a black top and white bottom being my favorite of all. I wish I could send her white roses, because she deserves some.

For the ladies, here's Marco Rubio being interviewed on Fox News by Liz Cheney.

And Marco Rubio's new ad – I love this ad because it reminds me of MY FAMILY!:

See, I'm being fair!

Related posts

- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Education reform in India and in Bobby Jindal's Louisiana

August 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

India is focused on education reform

Consider this article from the Philadelphia Bulletin.

Excerpt:

> In 2007, the School Choice Campaign, a New Delhi-based education think tank, designed, funded, and implemented a pilot school choice program in the city. The program randomly selected students to be offered a school tuition voucher, which was taken up by 63 percent of students selected. The money could be used at any qualifying private school.
>
> India's teacher unions have fought the privately funded program tooth-and-nail. "They fight vouchers [because] they will enable students to leave the malfunctioning government schools and make the teachers redundant," says Jan S. Rao, director of the School Choice Campaign in Delhi. "It is already happening in urban areas. In Delhi there are schools with more teachers than students, since the students have left."
>
> Oxford economist Francis Teal examined the effect of teacher unions on academic performance in India for a 2008 study. "We thus have in this data clear evidence that unions raise cost and reduce student achievement," he bluntly states.
>
> […]For leaders of India's education choice movement, the success of this trial is

> only the beginning. They will not be satisfied, says Dr. Parth J. Shah, president of India's Centre for Civil Society, until "the Delhi government immediately adopts funding all new government schools on a per-pupil basis through vouchers." That is already the national strategy in Sweden and Chile.

If I ever go totally crazy and just do whatever I want to do, then I'm moving to Chile. Just to see what it would be like. I'd like to move to India, but I'm told that there are a lot of mosquitoes, and the roads aren't good. But that could change.

What about Louisiana?

Bobby and Supriya Jindal

Well, Louisiana has an Indian-American Republican Governor – his name is Bobby Jindal, and he is very enthusiastic about education reform. What has he done to make education reform work better?

Consider this study done by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. (H/T Independent Women's Forum)

Excerpt:

> The **charter environment** thrives in New Orleans. Louisiana state law places no cap on the number of schools that can operate, and it provides for adequate funding of both charters and authorizers. The Louisiana Charter School Start-Up fund also provides zero-interest loans for charter schools to use for facilities-an element of charter funding that many states ignore. New Orleans leads the country in its percentage of students in charters at 57 percent.

That's right – Louisiana is number one in education reform!

And there's more:

> Every city that receives a D or an F in this analysis is in a collective-bargaining state. Meanwhile, two-thirds of the top nine scorers (cities receiving a B) are located in right-to-work states. All of the cities located in right-to-work states included in this study received a B or C, and none received a D or F.

Right-to-work means that a teacher can work without having to join a union! And that

means that they can be fired if they can’t perform – but if they can perform, then they make more money! So they have an incentive to work harder and to make their students learn more – there is no safe job for them if they underperform.

Is South Carolina next? South Carolina has an Indian-American Republican Nikki Haley running for governor, so they’re probably next for major education reforms. I’m being silly, but you have to wonder… is there something about the Indian culture that makes them take education more seriously?

Mounties arrest terrorism suspects in Ottawa, Canada

August 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Mounties always get their man

Story here from AFP.

Excerpt:

> The three men arrested over a terror plot in Canada were in possession of bomb-making materials and at least one has links to a group fighting Western forces in Afghanistan, officials said Thursday.
>
> Hiva Alizadeh, 30, and Misbahuddin Ahmed, 26, were arrested in police raids on their suburban Ottawa homes Wednesday morning, and formally charged with "terrorist offences" on Thursday during brief court appearances.
>
> A third Canadian national, Khuram Sher, 28, of London, Ontario was arrested on Thursday.
>
> "Investigators have grounds to believe that Alizadeh, Ahmed and Sher are part of a domestic terrorist group operating in Canada," Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) superintendent Serge Therriault told a press conference.
>
> "We also believe that Alizadeh is a member of, and remains in contact with, a terrorist group with links to the conflict in Afghanistan," he said.
>
> Police said the accused were in possession of a horde of material for making improvised explosive devices, including schematics, videos, drawings,

> instructions, books and electrical components.
>
> During raids on the homes of the suspects, authorities said they also seized more than 50 electronic circuit boards that could be used in remote detonators.
>
> This “large amount of terrorist documentation and manuals” demonstrates that the suspects “intended to construct an explosive device or explosive devices for terrorist purposes,” said Therriault.
>
> Police also said they had evidence a member of the cell had received bomb-making training abroad, but they did not specify which suspect or where and when the training allegedly took place.
>
> […]Alizadeh, Ahmed and Sher were arrested following a year-long investigation by the RCMP, Canada’s spy agency and several police forces across the country.
>
> Raymond Boisvert, assistant director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), said the intelligence that led to the arrest of the trio was provided to the RCMP.
>
> Police said they arrested them this week to prevent one suspect from providing financial support to “terrorist counterparts” for the purchase of weapons for use against coalition forces in Afghanistan.
>
> “This group posed a real and serious threat to the citizens of the national capital region and Canada’s national security,” said Therriault.
>
> “Our criminal investigation and arrests prevented the assembly of any bombs and the terrorist attack or attacks from being carried out.”

Here’s the latest: Ottawa was a potential target for the group. Keep in mind that Ottawa is the capital of Canada, about an hour north of the northern tip of New York state.

Is Obama handing out education grants based on political concerns?

August 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, watch this video with the governor of New Jersey, Chris Christie. (H/T National Review)

Oh, he's not amused! Grah!

The National Review notes that this is not an isolated incident:

> I'm not usually the conspiratorial type, but watch Gov. Chris Christie explain how the Obama administration disqualified the state of New Jersey from hundreds of millions in education funds because some clerk in Trenton turned in the wrong excel spreadsheet:
>
> Democrats in Washington have already shown a willingness to withhold federal education dollars from states that don't follow their preferred tactic for navigating the recession: giving teachers raises like it's the Gay '90s. I wouldn't be surprised if this is more punishment for a state that committed the crime of balancing its budget.

If New Jersey balances its budget, then the federal government has less leverage to intrude into New Jersey's affairs. And Democrats oppose state autonomy and federalism – so they are not pleased with Christie.

Now check out this story from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Politics may have played a role in the awarding of some Obama administration education reform grants, say pro school-choice groups that believe the reforms did not go far enough.
>
> Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced Tuesday that nine states and Washington, D.C. qualified for "Race to the Top" grants in the second phase of a program that rewards states for promoting charter schools — public schools run by non-governmental entities, which tie teacher evaluation to student performance.
>
> With 18 states vying for a $3.4 billion pie, the department awarded grants to the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Maryland, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, and Rhode Island. Only Delaware and Tennessee received grants in the first phase of the program.
>
> […]However, while accountability standards were raised, teacher unions have played an inordinate role in determining a state's reform plan, said Robert Enlow, president of the Foundation for Educational Choice.
>
> […]He cited Indiana, which had a strong reform plan, but failed to get the full

> support of the Indiana State Teachers Association (ISTA), despite a plea from Tony Bennett, the state superintendent for public instruction.
>
> "It is clear – from the reviewers' comments of the two RttT [Race to the Top] winners – that one factor is crucial to a successful application: Strong statewide support from the teachers' union," Bennett wrote in the April 8 letter.
>
> In a letter of response, ISTA President Nate Schnellenberger told Bennett the union would not support the state's reform plans.
>
> The inclusion of states such as Hawaii and Maryland, and the exclusion of states with marked improvement such as Louisiana and Colorado makes the grants suspect, said Jeanne Allen, the president of the Center for Education Reform, who said the competition ends "not with a bang but with a whimper with a majority of competitors winning –10 of the 18 — and many, it appears, for political reasons, as these states offer little or nothing to fundamentally improve schools and learning for all children."
>
> "This program is supposed to stimulate and is getting credit for stimulating charter schools, accountability and performance of teachers," Allen told CNSNews.com. "It is not backing up those statements. The money didn't necessarily go to states that do all those things."

Actually, as GMU economist Veronica de Rugy wrote, the stimulus money was also handed out mostly because political concerns.

Excerpt:

> Second, the district's party affiliation matters in where the money is spent. (We still don't know how much it matters compared to other factors.) The average Democratic district receives 81 percent more than the average Republican district. Even after taking out the money spent through state capitals, the average Democratic district receives at least 30 percent more than the average Republican district.

One thing I don't like about Obama is all of this bullying and cronyism. Why can't he just do the right thing, like not killing the Washington, D.C. voucher program which helps poor children to go to better schools? They're just kids, and they're poor – let 'em have a chance at a good education like Obama's children have. Why does he always have to give billions of dollars to his special interest groups, instead of letting them compete so that the customer can choose the best offer? If unions have the best offer, let them get the sale. If not, then let someone else get the sale.

Is being a good person enough to get you into Heaven?

August 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note to my readers from other religions: Please try to be tolerant of my disagreement with you on religious pluralism. I am not saying that you are bad people. I am not saying that I am going to treat you badly because we disagree. You are just as valuable a person whether we agree on religion or not. I think that I am serving you, though, by urging you to consider whether you have focused on truth in your search for God. Is truth your number one concern? Anyway, please forgive me if you are offended. I mean well.

Dennis Prager is probably my favorite talk show host, along with Hugh Hewitt. Recently he wrote a fine article defending traditional marriage, which caused someone I know and like very much to ask me how Christian doctrine could forbid such a good, effective man from going to Heaven when he dies? Isn't God mostly concerned with having his human creatures do "good" things? Isn't that the point of religion – to make us all be nice to one another so that an ordered civilization marches in safety and happiness? Well, what's the answer?

(The friend I am talking about is a Catholic-raised non-Christian, by the way)

So I talked to him about it, and recommended that he read a short article.

Here's the article that I recommended, from Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason.(H/T Apologetics Junkie)

He answers the question "Am I going to Hell if I don't believe in Jesus?".

Excerpt:

> Sometimes we have to reframe a critic's question in order to give an accurate answer. The questions, Am I going to Hell if I don't believe in Jesus?, is an example. As it is asked, it makes it sounds as though Jesus were the problem, not the answer. As though failing a theology quiz sends us to Hell. Instead, we need to reframe the question to answer accurately and show that sin is the problem, and Jesus is the only way because He alone has solved that problem. Sinners don't go to Hell for failing petty theology quizzes.
>
> While giving a talk at a local Barnes & Noble, someone asked why it was necessary for him to believe in Jesus. He was Jewish, believed in God, and was living a moral life. Those were the important things, it seemed—how you lived, not what you believed.
>
> To him the Christian message depicted a narrow-minded God pitching people into Hell because of an arcane detail of Christian theology. How should I answer?
>
> Remember that the first responsibility of an ambassador is knowledge—an accurately informed message. What is our message?
>
> One way to say it is, "If you don't believe in Jesus, you'll go to Hell. If you do

> believe, you'll go to Heaven."
>
> That's certainly true, as far as it goes. The problem is it's not clear. Since it doesn't give an accurate sense of why Jesus is necessary, it makes God sound petty.
>
> So how do we fix this? Here's how I responded to my Jewish questioner. I asked him two simple questions.

Read the rest of the article.

Christians all need to understand how to explain why sincere beliefs and good works are not enough to satisfy God's moral demands on us. My friend thinks that if a person is a "good" person, then he should go to Heaven. But God is not the flapping Tooth Fairy. God is *more concerned* that we understand the truth about his existence and character – that is the whole point of sending Jesus to die as an atonement for our rebellion. The problem isn't that we lie, cheat and steal. The problem is that we want to get our own happiness apart from God, without wanting to know him as he is, and without having to care about his goals and his character in the relationship.

Here's what God wants us to know about ourselves:

- we have to realize that what we really are is rebels against God
- rebels don't want God to be there
- rebels don't want God to have any goals or character different from their goals and character
- rebels don't want God to place any demands on them
- rebels don't want to have any awareness that God is real or that he is morally perfect
- rebels want to be liked as they are now – they don't want to change as part of a relationship
- rebels want to conceive of their own way to happiness, and to use other people and God for their own ends
- rebels don't want there to be a mind-independent objective reality, they want to invent their own reality that allows them to be praised and celebrated for doing whatever makes them happy at every point along their lives
- rebels would rather die that put their pursuit of happiness second
- rebels have no interest in rules, judgments, accountability or punishments

Here's what God wants for us to be saved from our rebelling:

- we have to know his real character so we have a genuine relationship with him
- the best way to know his character is by taking time to study what Jesus did in history
- what the incarnation tells us is that God is willing to humiliate himself by taking on a human nature
- what the crucifixion tells us is that God is willing to die in our place even though

we're rebelling against him (Jesus is *Savior)*
- part of being saved is to trust God by allowing his character to transform our desires and actions (Jesus is *Lord*)
- as we grow in letting the character of Jesus inform our actions, we build a set of experiences that are like Jesus' experiences – i.e. – we obey God rather than men, and we suffer for our obedience – just like Jesus

Jesus came to give his life as a ransom for our rebellion against God, and the most important thing we have to do in this life is to come to terms with who he was and what he did. Your own good deeds don't justify you before God, because he isn't interested in what you can do unless you are first interested in knowing who he is. A Christian's good deeds are the result of identifying Jesus as Savior and Lord, and then following him by making decisions in your own life that respect his character. God doesn't need you to solve all the world's problems – he could do that himself. It's not what you do, it's who you know and trust that counts. The good deeds are just your way of trying to be like him and trying to feel the same thing he felt when he gave his life for you. You have a friend and you want to be like him in order to know what he feels so you have sympathy with him.

(Note to my friend: that is why sometimes it is good to love a person just because she needs love, and not because she is guaranteed to love you back – even if I get hurt loving her, I have the experience of loving her well, just like Jesus loves her well)

The main point is that knowing Jesus as the revelation of God's character, and then following Jesus, is *more important* than doing "good things".

The first commandment, according to Jesus, is found in Matthew 22:34-38:

[34]Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.

[35]One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

[36]"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

[37]Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

[38]This is the first and greatest commandment.

The second commandment which comes after that one has to do with loving your neighbor. But the second one *is not the greatest commandment.* You can't love God unless you *know God*. That it, unless you make knowing about his existence and character a priority in your life to the point where you find out the truth about his existence and character. And not as your own opinion, or as the opinion of the people around you, or as the faith-tradition you were raised in. No. You have to value God enough to respond to his overtures to you. You have to know him in truth, not as a quick checkbox that you check off for an hour on Sundays to make your life "easier" because you are happier and the people around you like you. You have to respond to God like a Christian in an Iranian jail cell – out of allegiance based on gratitude and recognition. You have to know him before you can act to love him – who he is and what he's done.

The way that Protestants like me draw the line is as follows – justification (how your rebellion is canceled) is God's job. He draws you to him while you are still in rebellion, but you have a choice to resist him or not. If you resist his unilateral action to save you, then you are responsible for rejecting him. Sanctification (about doing good works) is not about canceling your rebellion, it's about the later step of re-prioritizing your life, so that you make decisions that reflect the character of Jesus, so that you become more like him. Even your desires change as the relationship progresses. It is something you work at – you study and experience, study and experience. The whole point of studying apologetics is to build yourself into a love machine that fears nothing and holds up under fire, because you know the truth and the truth makes you free to do what you ought to do regardless of the consequences (e.g. – failure to be recognized and requited by someone you loved well).

The most important relationship is not the horizontal relationship with your neighbor, it's the vertical relationship with God himself. And when you know God as he really revealed himself in history, then your desires – and consequently your actions – will change naturally. When you know God as a person, you freely make all kinds of sacrifices for him. You put yourself second because you want to *work on the relationship*. You start to believe that your own happiness isn't as as important as *working on the relationship.* It's like building a house. You don't notice the sacrifices.

Sometimes, I think that the whole point of Christianity and that vertical relationship is so that we know God better. We sympathize more with him than we do with ourselves, because of how unfairly people treat him, how good and loving he is, and how right his goals are. It's not that he needs help, because he's *God* – he's *sovereign*. But the relationship gets to the point where it becomes reasonable for you to put yourself second with God, and to let his goals become your goals – you want the relationship with a loving God *more* than you want to be happy. You get tired of ignoring the person who loves you most – you start to wonder what it would be like to actually respond to him. For Christians, the demands of this other being eventually seem to be not so terrible after all – and we try to put aside our own desires and to give him gifts and respect instead of worrying so much about being happy *all the time*.

It's not irrational to be kind to the person who loves you the most – who sacrificed the most for you.

I happen to know Dennis Prager a little from his show, and his basic view of religion is that you can believe anything you want about God as long as you do good works. Many people in other world religions seem to judge religions based on the fruit they produce – not by testing truth claims using logic and evidence. (That goes for Michael Medved as well) And my point is that Prager's view is the results of *a decision that Prager has made about what religion is about* – that the truth is not the criterion by which to judge religions. In another show, he was explaining how people should choose a religion, and his first rule was that *you should consider the religion of your parents and family*. Why does he say that? Because religion is not about truth for Prager, it's about community and

good works.

Dennis Prager is a far, far better man than I am. He has done enormous amounts more good than I ever will. But on that Day, he's going to have to answer for his sins. But I have an Advocate who will answer for mine. And I am not indifferent to that Advocate – I am not indifferent to what he has done for me. He is not a stranger to me. He is not a get-out-of-jail free card that you just use and throw away once it's used. I play for his team every day. I know him well. His existence and character are things I *know* through study, not things I have *faith* in, through uninformed credulity. I wear his colors the same in public and in private. And I know what it means to not be liked by people for being different than they are. I know what it is like to be hurt and alone, and to obey anyway.

Related posts

Here is a series of posts I did on why people go to Hell.

- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

Friday night fun: cockatiels and love songs

August 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Friday nights are good times to post fun and silly things.

Cockatiels

First, the cockatiels!

This one flies around outside: (DON’T TRY THIS AT HOME!)

This one likes snuggles: (TRY THIS AT HOME!)

Remarkable creatures. Most people have no idea what it is like to own a bird – they are like little children. Since they can fly, you really have to work to earn their trust, or they just bite you and fly away from you all the time. And you can tell a lot about a person who cares for a bird, especially if the bird is well-trained and lives a long time. A loving, well-trained pet says good things about the character of the owner, and I think that is an important thing to consider.

Dragon Quest IX monsters!

This is what I’m going to be playing tonight – squishing innocent monsters!

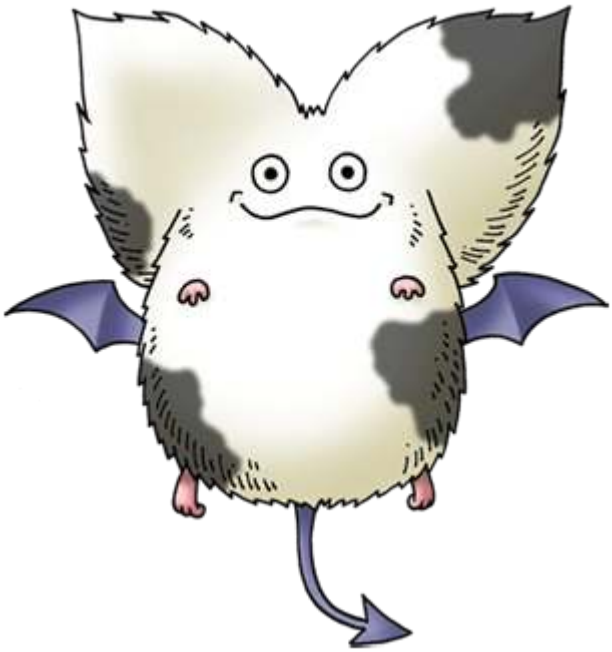

Happy love songs

I was sad earlier this week, so I listened to some songs.

Here’s one of them:

and this one is another:

It’s hard to be sad when you listen to old-school love songs!

Game music

Bionic Commando – Going Commando Remix

Mega Man II – Dr. Wily – Stage 1 Remix

Happy Friday!

Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives

August 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrat bomb-thrower Chris Powers
(Chris Powers is the one wearing a cap)

First, the Molotov cocktails, thrown by Democrat operative, staffer, and blogger Chris Powers.

Gateway Pundit has the story with links to the mainstream news sources.

Excerpt:

> Last Tuesday August 17, 2010, Rep. Russ Carnahan's office was reportedly vandalized and "firebombed" at 2 AM in the morning. Hours later police arrested a suspect for the crime and held him for several hours.
>
> Of course, when the "firebombing" was reported local leftists blamed the tea party activists.
>
> Then things got really weird. The police released the suspect and the Carnahan camp went silent. Carnahan employees were seen dumping documents into a dumpster but refused to to talk to reporters. There was a complete blackout on information.
>
> **Now we know why.**
>
> The suspect was reportedly a disgruntled progressive activist employed by Russ Carnahan. An unnamed source familiar with the case released the information.
>
> […]Dem operative and firebomber Chris Powers is the sweaty one pictured here on right during a rally for nationalized health care. Powers was a paid canvasser for Russ Carnahan.

> […]The Carnahan campaign and their supporters have either ignored the incident rather than recognize the serious nature of a federal crime, instead allow the incident to be reported and used as an example of right wing domestic terrorism.
>
> […]Chris Powers was in the local news when Barack Obama came to town in March to push his unpopular nationalized health care plan. He spoke with the local public radio channel and led an astroturfed protest outside of the Obama-McCaskill fundraiser.
>
> Chris Powers is also a **TPM blogger** under the name **Ripper McCord**.
>
> He has been active in the progressive movement for years.

TPM is short for Talking Points Memo, which is one of the top liberal blogs. Here's his page on TPM. It will be taken down soon, I would expect. I notice that he describes his politics as "enlightened self-interest", which is a phrase from the anti-Christian secular humanist movement.

In another post, Gateway Pundit notes that the bomb-thrower "also has a history of harassing tea party patriots". No motive for the attack has been confirmed, because the Democrats are using the reports to smear the tea party, like they usually do. The report we have says that he was angry about not being paid some money he was owed.

Shooting at GOP offices

From there, we turn to Maryland, where Republican offices are being shot up. (H/T JammieWearingFool)

Excerpt:

> A gunshot shattered a glass door Wednesday at a Salisbury office of the Maryland Republican Party, according to a party statement.
>
> The party published the statement on its website, indicating that a single gunshot shattered the front door at the office early in the morning.
>
> Salisbury police officers discovered the shattered glass after midnight and reported that the office had been vandalized.
>
> The statement indicated that a party staffer found a bullet in the office.

JammieWearingFool explains why this is happening:

> I blame the extremist rhetoric of the left-wing media and Democrats for spreading the hate. They keep stirring the pot with their extremist rhetoric and it's only a matter of time before one of their deranged followers takes matters into their own hands.

But the nutters on PBS, NPR, MSNBC, CNN, etc. are never going to be charged with inciting violence, because they're running the show now. Only conservatives will be charged. Like the fire-bombing story shows, conservatives will be smeared with crimes committed by Democrats. The real story gets out in much later on blogs.

Here’s my take.

They have the House, the Senate and the Presidency, but the country is angry with their failures. I think there is a lot of frustration on the left that everyone is seeing how good their economic, social and foreign policy really is. Nothing they propose actually works. Their policies are not about making the world better, they’re about striking a pose in front of others so they feel good about themselves. They want to appear compassionate, but the results for ordinary families are disastrous. And that’s when they turn to violence, I think.

UPDATE: Newsmax reports that conservative organizations are receiving large numbers of death threats. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Mary explains how sinful humans can be rightly related to a holy God

August 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I recently wrote a post about the Bible's teaching on why having correct beliefs about who Jesus was and what he did in history is necessary in order to be considered righteous by the God of the universe.

Mary wrote a comment in response that I am reproducing below.

Take it away, Mary.

Really good post, WK! This is an important question. And to be a good friend you need to answer it for your friend – gently, but clearly and honestly – because truth is more important to your friend's wellbeing than their comfort. You've done this very ably here.

A few things I'd like to add:

Firstly, the questioner is coming with the assumption that there actually are such things as truly good people. This is a common assumption. The problem with it is that it makes light of the depravity of man and undervalues the holiness of God. We need to understand how perfect and pure God is. We need to understand how sinful and impure we are. The Bible tells us that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. This is confirmed for each of us by experience. Not only that, but our good works are as filthy rags to God. That sounds harsh, but we need to understand to what extent even our best actions are marred by depravity, by selfish motives. We have fallen not just a little bit short of God's standard, but a lot. There is a vast chasm between us and God. The only thing we are deserving of is God's judgment, God's wrath. This is true of EVERYONE.

So the real question is really this: why does God let ANYONE into Heaven at all, rather than sending all of us to Hell? If it's not because of our good works, then what is it?

The answer is that we go to Heaven because of Jesus' good works. He is the only Person throughout the whole of history to live perfectly, to meet God's standard. Because God loves these depraved, rebellious creatures that we are, Jesus comes to Earth, lives the perfect life which we don't and then (astoundingly!) He takes the punishment which we deserve and gives us His righteousness. This is a magnificent gift with no equal. The Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death (so we're in a bad way because all we've earned is death), BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ (so God has offered us something we totally don't deserve). Like any other gift it is offered but has to be accepted for it to be owned by the recipient. This is what is meant by "believing" – it is taking up that gift and placing one's trust in Jesus' work and not in our own work. It's not about mere intellectual belief (although that is necessary), but about a relational belief.

It’s about saying, “Jesus, I reject my own ability to be good enough and instead I accept Your gift of being good enough in my place. I place my trust in You. You have bought me with your own life and I belong to You”.

Does this mean that good works are unimportant? No. Here’s what is possibly one of the most well-known 2 verses in the Bible, Ephesians 2:8-9: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.” So it’s clear that salvation is by grace (God’s unmerited favour), NOT by works. But here’s the next verse, Ephesians 2:10: “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” So our new selves are GOD’S work, not ours, but the purpose for which He has recreated us is to do good works. Good works are not what saves us (only Jesus is truly good), but good works are the purpose for which God saves us. What are those good works? 1) Love God and 2) Love your neighbour. (WK referenced this in his post.) Loving God is something we can only do if we acknowledge God’s existence and once we are redeemed by God (i.e. have accepted the gift) and have His Holy Spirit in us, changing our desires and motivations. Loving our neighbour is also something we can do only to a limited extent before we are redeemed. This is because we need to have Christ-centred motives in our intentions towards that person in order to truly love them as we should. We can only have Christ-centred motives once we have been saved by Christ.

So what does this mean when we hear good, solid advice from respectable, decent non-christians. Firstly, we acknowledge that non-christians can indeed be correct about the right behaviour. What they can’t be correct about are the central correct motivations for that behaviour. They can’t be Christ-centred in their motivations. And there are also necessarily aspects of behaviour which are fundamentally affected by being Christ-centred.

Let’s take the example of marriage, seeing as that was raised. A non-christian can give good advice on marriage and how to build a better marriage. They can teach love, respect, fidelity, unselfishness, responsibility, etc. These are all good things. However, they won’t teach a Christ-centred marriage. They won’t teach that marriage is meant to be a picture of Christ’s relationship with the Church. They won’t teach how the husband is supposed to model Christ in serving his wife as her leader. They won’t teach how the wife is supposed to model the Church as it should be in submitting to her husband’s leadership. The won’t teach how marriage is a picture of the Gospel, of God’s unconditional love for us and our response to Him. This means that even though non-christians may give excellent advice, their advice is inherently lacking because it is not Christ-centred.

Who is better at handling wars and natural disasters? Bush or Obama?

August 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the poll from Louisiana voters described in the leftist LA Times.

Excerpt:

> Former President George W. Bush showed more leadership in dealing with the disaster caused by Hurricane Katrina than President Obama has shown in handling the oil calamity in the Gulf of Mexico, according to a poll of Louisianans released Friday.
>
> Obama, who will make his 10th trip to the gulf when he travels to New Orleans on Sunday, will seek to reassure residents that he remains committed to rebuilding a region still feeling the effects from Katrina's deadly landfall and flooding. Obama will also reassert his administration's commitment to the cleanup from the BP oil well leak, the nation's worst oil environmental disaster.
>
> But a poll of Louisianans by Public Policy Polling shows those reassurances may have a hard time. Just 32% give Obama good marks for his actions in the aftermath of the spill, while 61% disapprove.
>
> By contrast, those polled said that Bush's leadership on Katrina was better than Obama's on the spill. A majority, 54%, said that Bush did the better job of helping Louisiana through the hurricane crisis compared to the 33% who chose Obama, PPP said on Friday.
>
> That 21-point spread was more than when PPP asked the same question in June and found Bush ahead by 15 points.

Louisiana is a purple state – half red and half blue. They've been trending red lately under the governance of the highly competent Bobby Jindal, but they still have a ton of Democrats in high positions.

Who was right about Iraq? Bush or Obama?

Here's a video that shows who wanted the surge, and who opposed the surge. (H/T Hot Air)

The surge worked. We won. Our troops are coming home. The total cost for both wars (about 700 billion) was far less than the 3 trillion dollars in deficits that Obama has run up since he was elected. And remember, Obama spent that money on studying Chinese prostitutes and on building tunnels for turtles, and similar projects to reward the people who voted for him. That's why unemployment is still so high.

My previous post showing (with videos) who was responsible for the housing bubble recession, and who tried to stop the recession.

Who's really extreme?

I found this video at Peter Sean Bradley's blog.

Remember in November!

UPDATE: Gallup poll finds that more Iraqis approved of US leadership under Bush than under Obama.

UPDATE: More fatalities in Afghanistan under two years of Obama than under eight years of Bush.

Obama administration halts prosecution of alleged USS Cole bomber

August 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the ultra-left-wing Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has shelved the planned prosecution of Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, the alleged coordinator of the Oct. 2000 suicide attack on the USS Cole in Yemen, according to a court filing.
>
> The decision at least temporarily scuttles what was supposed to be the signature trial of a major al-Qaeda figure under a reformed system of military commissions. And it comes practically on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the attack, which killed 17 sailors and wounded dozens when a boat packed with explosives ripped a hole in the side of the warship in the port of Aden.
>
> In a filing this week in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, the Justice Department said that “no charges are either pending or contemplated with respect to al-Nashiri in the near future.”
>
> The statement, tucked into a motion to dismiss a petition by Nashiri’s attorneys, suggests that the prospect of further military trials for detainees held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, has all but ground to a halt, much as the administration’s plan to try the accused plotters of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in federal court has stalled.

This comes as interesting news, in comparison to the latest news on the arrest of suspected terrorists in Canada. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are now looking for *eight* suspects who are linked to their seizure of explosives and other nasty things from a gang of Muslim terrorists. A fourth man was arrested by the RCMP on Friday morning.

Walter Bradley presents the fine-tuning argument at UCSB

August 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Bradley is one of my favorite lecturers in the whole universe!

Here's a 5-minute sample of the lecture he presented at the University of California (Santa Barbara).

And if you like it, you can watch the whole lecture here on Vimeo.

Here's a bio from his faculty page at Baylor University:

> Walter Bradley (B.S., Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin) is Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He comes to Baylor from Texas A&M University where he helped develop a nationally recognized program in polymeric composite materials. At Texas A&M, he served as director of the Polymer Technology Center for 10 years and as Department Head of Mechanical Engineering, a department of 67 professors that was ranked as high as 12th nationally during his tenure. Bradley has authored over 150 refereed research publications including book chapters, articles in archival journals such as the Journal of Material Science, Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites, Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials, Journal of Composites Technology and Research, Composite Science and Technology, Journal of Metals, Polymer Engineering and Science, and Journal of Materials Science, and refereed conference proceedings.
>
> Dr. Bradley has secured over $5.0 million in research funding from NSF grants (15 yrs.), AFOSR (10 years), NASA grants (10 years), and DOE (3 years). He has also received research grants or contracts from many Fortune 500 companies, including Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, 3M, Shell, Exxon, Boeing, and Phillips.
>
> He co-authored The Mystery of Life Origin: Reassessing Current Theories and has written 10 book chapters dealing with various faith science issues, a topic on which he speaks widely.
>
> He has received 5 research awards at Texas A&M University and 1 national research award. He has also received two teaching awards. He is an Elected Fellow of the American Society for Materials and the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the largest organization of Christians in Science and Technology in the world. He is President elect of the ASA and will serve his term in 2008.

You can read more about his recent research on how to use coconuts to make car parts in this article from Science Daily.

My favorite lecture of all

My favorite lecture of all is "Giants in the Land".

- Giants in the Land (fixed – smaller file size, noise reduced)

He delivered that lecture at the University of Georgia in 1997.

Gallup poll shows that Obama has 78% approval rating among Muslims

August 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> While President Barack Obama's overall approval rating averaged 48 percent for the first seven months of 2010, it was 78 percent among Muslim Americans, according to the Gallup Poll. That gave the president a higher approval rating among Muslims than among any other religious category reported by the poll.
>
> Members of other non-Christian religions (not including Judaism) gave Obama his second highest approval rating at 64 percent, according to Gallup, and people who described themselves as having no religion, or being agnostics, or atheists gave Obama a 63 percent approval rating.
>
> Mormons gave Obama his lowest approval rating among the religious groups reported by Gallup. In the first seven months of 2010, only 24 percent said they approved of the job Obama was doing. He ranked next lowest among Protestant Americans, who gave him a 43 percent approval rating, then Catholic Americans, who gave him a 50 percent approval rating, and then Jewish Americans, who gave him a 61 percent approval rating.

The article also notes that this poll was completed *prior to* Obama's endorsement of the Ground Zero mosque, which may be funded by taxpayer money, according to Reuters.

Democrat Congresswoman awards scholarships to her own relatives

August 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Dallas News.

Excerpt:

> Longtime Dallas congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson has awarded thousands of dollars in college scholarships to four relatives and a top aide's two children since 2005, using foundation funds set aside for black lawmakers' causes.
>
> The recipients were ineligible under anti-nepotism rules of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, which provided the money. And all of the awards violated a foundation requirement that scholarship winners live or study in a caucus member's district.
>
> Johnson, a Democrat, denied any favoritism when asked about the scholarships last week. Two days later, she acknowledged in a statement released by her office that she had violated the rules but said she had done so "unknowingly" and would work with the foundation to "rectify the financial situation."
>
> Initially, she said, "I recognized the names when I saw them. And I knew that they had a need just like any other kid that would apply for one." Had there been more "very worthy applicants in my district," she added, "then I probably wouldn't have given it" to the relatives.

The Democrat party thinks that it is OK to take the lives of innocent babies so they don't have to put moral brakes on their irresponsible pursuit of sexual pleasure outside of marriage. Is it any wonder then that they would break lesser moral rules? When you throw God out from your reasoning, as the Democrats have done, anything is permissible – so long as you pursue your own interests and don't get caught. Her only regret is that she was caught. They justify it by claiming to be "victims".

UPDATE:

She's up to 23 scholarships now.

How the Democrat push to pass cap-and-trade costs jobs

August 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider the words of this CEO from an IBD editorial.

Excerpt:

> T.J. Rodgers, CEO of Cypress Semiconductor, isn't surprised. In an interview Thursday with Neil Cavuto on Fox News, Rodgers saw the move as part of a brewing corporate revolt against an overbearing government sucking the economic oxygen out of the room, tilting at windmills, imposing burdens such as the health care overhaul and environmental regulations but not providing the incentives or certainty that companies need to plan and survive.
>
> "When we continue to put money into bad things, take money out of the productive sector, take money away from me to invest, take money away from families to spend on what they think is right, and dump it into these foolish government projects and blather about green jobs," Rodgers said, "you know eventually the overall economy is going to get less competitive and some sort of recession or some sort of problem is going to set in."
>
> As a result, Rodgers continued, "I am not spending any money, I am not opening any plants and I am not hiring anybody, and corporate America is doing the same thing."

And it's not just CEOs who are affected by energy taxes:

> According to the Heritage Foundation's Center for Data Analysis, under cap-and-tax legislation, gas prices at the pump would increase 58%. Residential electricity costs would "necessarily skyrocket" by 90%. Total GDP loss by 2035 would be $9.4 trillion. Net job losses (after "green" job creation) would be nearly 1.9 million in 2012 and could approach 2.5 million by 2035. Manufacturing would lose 1.4 million jobs in 2035.

If only Democrats could be affected by the laws that Democrats pass, while Republicans can be affected by the laws that Republicans pass. Let the Democrats live in bankrupt states like California and the Republicans can live in booming states like Texas. There are two different cultures – one that doesn't understand economics, and one that does.

Can a person who opposes religion still be moral?

August 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Casey Luskin's analysis of Harvard evolutionary psychologist Marc D. Hauser, from Evolution News.

Here's something Marc wrote:

> What is dangerous is not the idea that we are endowed with a moral instinct–a biologically evolved faculty for delivering universal verdicts of right and wrong that is immune to religion and other cultural phenomena. What is dangerous is holding to an irrational position that starts by equating morality with religion and then moves to an inference that a divine power fuels religious doctrine.

Marc conceives of "morality" as mere descriptions of behavior that people feel compelled to comply with because of biological instincts. If one member of a troop of baboons doesn't follow the evolved instincts and social conventions of his tribe, and he is discovered, then he is shunned. That is morality on atheism. It's mere descriptions of behavior that varies by time and place. No individual has a duty to anything objective – it's arbitrary, because evolution and tribal customs are arbitrary.

Casey notes that Marc's view of morality was written up favorably in the New York Times – that's their view of morality, too!

So what does a person like Marc who believes this view do?

And here's an article from USA Today explaining Marc's latest doings:

> In a letter sent to Harvard faculty today, dean Michael Smith confirms a university investigation found "eight instances of scientific misconduct" by Hauser. A research paper has been retracted as a result of the finding, another corrected, and a *Science* paper has a correction under discussion; "five other cases" were also investigated, according to the letter.

If there is no God, then morality is an illusion. I understand that some atheists aren't theists because of intellectual concerns, but for the vast majority, it really comes down to the desire to pursue pleasure without any moral restraints. And they get really mad when you make them feel bad about their selfishness, too.

You're not going to be able to ground self-sacrificial moral actions rationally on atheism. The only reason to do anything on atheism is because of the pleasure that it gives you. Either direct pleasure, or the pleasure of being approved of by others, or the pleasure of avoiding punishments. There is no right and wrong in an accidental universe – just people doing what feels good to them. Atheists may act better than Stalin, but they have no *reason* to.

Democrats got 88% of 2008 contributions from mainstream media

August 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And that's why the mainstream news channels cannot be trusted.

UPDATE:

Bill Press has his own show on CNN. On CNN!

Another dry-run of a terrorist attack

August 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from ABC News. (H/T Foxfier Sailorette)

Excerpt:

> Two men taken off a Chicago-to-Amsterdam United Airlines flight in the Netherlands have been charged by Dutch police with "preparation of a terrorist attack," U.S. law enforcement officials tell ABC News.
>
> U.S. officials said the two appeared to be travelling with what were termed "mock bombs" in their luggage. "This was almost certainly a dry run, a test," said one senior law enforcement official.
>
> A spokesman for the Dutch public prosecutor, Ernst Koelman, confirmed the two men were arrested this morning and said "the investigation is ongoing." He said the arrests were made "at the request of American authorities."
>
> The two were allowed to board the flight at O'Hare airport last night despite security concerns surrounding one of them, the officials said.
>
> The men were identified as Ahmed Mohamed Nasser al Soofi, of Detroit, MI, and Hezem al Murisi, the officials said. A neighbor of al Soofi told ABC News he is from Yemen.
>
> Airport security screeners in Birmingham, Alabama first stopped al Soofi and referred him to additional screening because of what officials said was his "bulky clothing."
>
> In addition, officials said, al Soofi was found to be carrying $7,000 in cash and a check of his luggage found a cell phone taped to a Pepto-Bismol bottle, three cell phones taped together, several watches taped together, a box cutter and three large knives. Officials said there was no indication of explosives and he and his luggage were cleared for the flight from Birmingham to Chicago O'Hare.
>
> Once in Chicago, officials say they learned al Soofi checked his luggage on a flight to Washington's Dulles airport for connections on flights to Dubai and then Yemen, even though he did not board the flight himself.
>
> Instead, officials say, al Soofi was joined by the second man, Al Murisi, and boarded the United flight from Chicago to Amsterdam.

The thing about this, we can't be playing defense all the time. The best thing to do is to specify the terms of what will happen if a terrorist attack occurs. Tell them in advance. For the first terrorist attack, this will happen. For the second terrorist attack, this will happen. You can start nicely, by revoking all student visas, foreign aid, etc. And then military targets. That's how deterrence works. They have to know that we mean business. Weakness and appeasement just embolden bullies.

UPDATE:

Commenter James reports that PJM has more on the story.

Indian economist distinguishes between rights and entitlements

August 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Times of India, a good economics article from Swaminathan S Anklesaria Aiyar. (H/T Shalini)

Excerpt:

> Politicians and activists constantly propose new rights — the right to work, to education, and now to food. The word "rights" is being twisted to mean entitlements, and there is a big difference.
>
> Rights are freedoms from oppression by the state or by society (through ethnicity, religion and gender). These rights do not entail government handouts. Entitlements, however, are welfare measures entailing government handouts. Rights are not limited by budget constraints, but entitlements are. So, rights are universal but entitlements are not.
>
> […]US economists calculate that three welfare measures — social security (for the aged), Medicare (for the aged) and Medicaid (for the poor)—will triple from 7% of GDP to 20% in the next decade, swallowing up virtually all federal tax revenue. Jagadeesh Gokhale of the Cato Institute calculates that, including social security, the US is headed for a national debt that's 500% of GDP, and Europe of 434%.

Some much for entitlement spending. He then explains the origin of human rights in Britain, America and France, and then says this:

> These three countries spearheaded the concept of fundamental rights. In all three, rights were about freedoms, not entitlements
>
> In subsequent centuries, people said this was not enough, and proposed entitlements — which some called second-generation rights. Marxists declared that rights to free speech, elections and personal freedom were bourgeois illusions that did not empower the poor. So Lenin proposed a dictatorship of the proletariat that took away all basic freedoms, and instead offered the right to food, shelter and work. Mind you, nobody could sue Lenin for poor provision. Nobody could throw out Mao for the Great Leap Forward that killed 30 million people. Nobody could topple Stalin for murdering four to six million peasants in the Ukraine.
>
> **The communist experience shows that giving welfare rights priority over basic freedoms is the road to serfdom.** And the capitalist welfare state now shows that entitlements, although desirable and inevitable in democracies, must be limited and targeted at the needy, so that they do not hog all spending

> or bankrupt governments.

It’s amazing. He’s more American than the Democrats, because he actually understands America. Thanks so much for finding this article, Shalini!

By the way, if you want to learn what the end-game is for the Democrats, you can read “The Road to Serfdom” by the Nobel Prize-winning economist F.A. Hayek, which Swami alluded to in his article.

William Lane Craig explains whether all religions lead to God

September 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture from William Lane Craig in which he explains one solution (middle knowledge) to the problem of those who have never heard of Jesus. If Jesus is the only way to be saved, then what about those who have never heard of him?

Here's a ten-minute sample from the start of the lecture.

You can watch the other 5 small clips on YouTube, or you can watch the whole thing in one big clip on Vimeo.

And I haven't forgotten people who can't see the video, because you can read an essay on the same topic here. I think that this is one of the first William Lane Craig essays I ever saw back when I was just a freshman in college.

Going deeper

In this research paper, Craig explains middle knowledge in detail. Middle knowledge is the view that God foreknows how people will choose in every set of circumstances, and that God uses that knowledge to get everyone where they need to be to have the best opportunity to know him *without violating their free will.* God wants the best for everybody, and has ordered to whole universe in order to give each of us our best opportunity to have a relationship with him that leads to eternal life.

Related posts

- J.P. Moreland asks: does truth matter when choosing a religion?
- Are all religions basically the same?
- A Christian and a postmodernist discuss religious pluralism

These are related to a debate on Hinduism (in chronological order)

- Hindu/Christian debate on anti-conversion law in India
- How is Christianity different from other world religions?
- How to defend Christian exclusivism from the challenge of religious pluralism

In 2007 Obama preferred genocide in Iraq to victory in Iraq

September 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the interview from USA Today. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> **Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama said Thursday the United States cannot use its military to solve humanitarian problems and that preventing a potential genocide in Iraq isn't a good enough reason to keep U.S. forces there.**
>
> […]Obama, a first-term senator from Illinois, said it's likely there would be increased bloodshed if U.S. forces left Iraq.
>
> "Nobody is proposing we leave precipitously. There are still going to be U.S. forces in the region that could intercede, with an international force, on an emergency basis," Obama said between stops on the first of two days scheduled on the New Hampshire campaign trail. "There's no doubt there are risks of increased bloodshed in Iraq without a continuing U.S. presence there."
>
> The greater risk is staying in Iraq, Obama said.
>
> "It is my assessment that those risks are even greater if we continue to occupy Iraq and serve as a magnet for not only terrorist activity but also irresponsible behavior by Iraqi factions," he said.
>
> The senator has been a fierce critic of the war in Iraq, speaking out against it even before he was elected to his post in 2004. He was among the senators who tried unsuccessfully earlier this week to force President Bush's hand and begin to limit the role of U.S. forces there.
>
> "We have not lost a military battle in Iraq. So when people say if we leave, we will lose, they're asking the wrong question," he said. **"We cannot achieve a stable Iraq with a military. We could be fighting there for the next decade."**

Gateway Pundit adds:

> Tonight, when Barack Obama takes credit for the success in Iraq, for a surge that he opposed and for a withdrawal that was agreed upon before he came into office, don't forget that this president also suggested that genocide would be a better option than victory.

Bush is for victory and liberating Iraqis from a dictator, Obama is for retreat and increased bloodshed. His own words. You don't learn about war by being a community organizer, teaching people in ACORN how to shake down banks. (ACORN is now being tried for voter fraud, as well). You learn about war by being in the Navy and by listening

to generals on the battlefield.

But wasn't the war in Iraq expensive?

Eight years of war in Iraq cost less than Obama's job-killing stimulus bill.

Look:

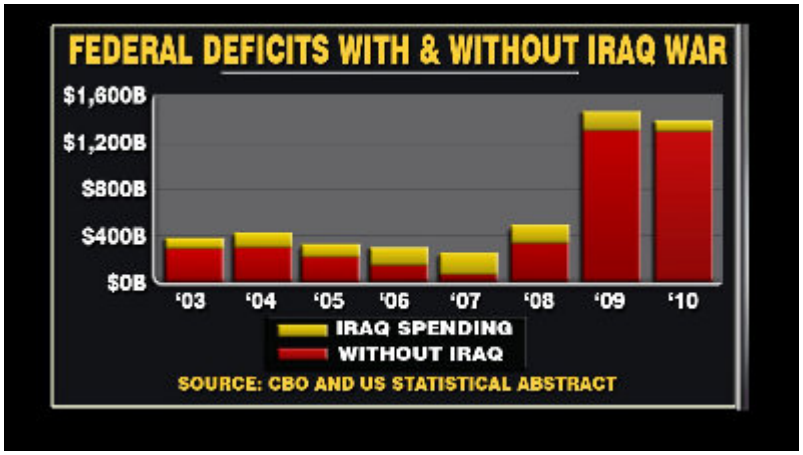

Democrats controlled the House and Senate in January 2007

And read:

> As President Obama prepares to tie a bow on U.S. combat operations in Iraq, Congressional Budget Office numbers show that the total cost of the eight-year war was less than the stimulus bill passed by the Democratic-led Congress in 2009.
>
> According to CBO numbers in its Budget and Economic Outlook published this month, the cost of Operation Iraqi Freedom was $709 billion for military and related activities, including training of Iraqi forces and diplomatic operations.
>
> The projected cost of the stimulus, which passed in February 2009, and is expected to have a shelf life of two years, was $862 billion.

And don't forget that the Democrats blamed Bush for not regulating Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac when videos show them *blocking Bush* from regulating Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. I think that a 5% unemployment rate under Bush is better than a 10% unemployment rate under Obama. It doesn't matter which of them sounds nicer in speeches – the only thing that matters is facts and results. When government spends too much money, they either have to increase inflation by printing money, or raise taxes. Both take purchasing power away from businesses and investors. Taking money from businesses and investors means *fewer jobs*. Period.

Thomas Sowell explains the concept of “moral hazard”

September 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

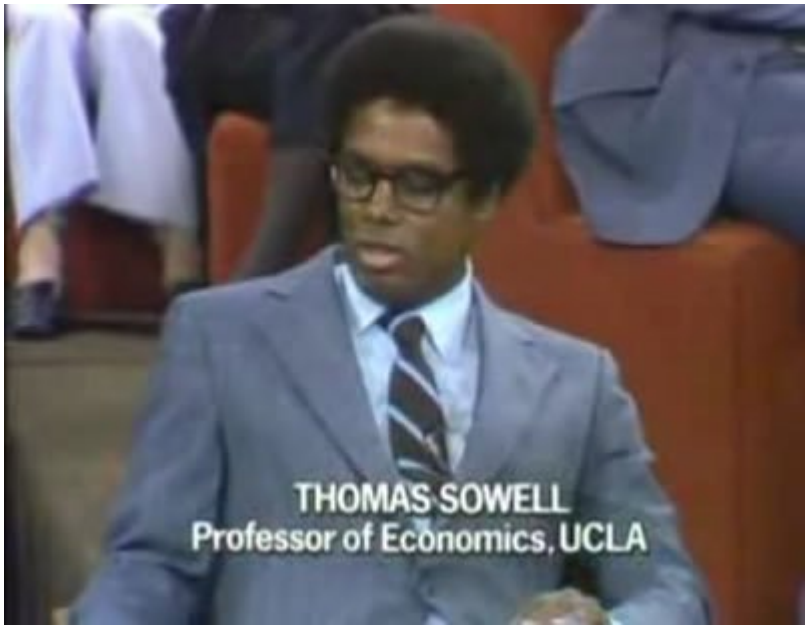

Young Thomas Sowell
From Real Clear Politics. (H/T Jojo)

Excerpt:

> One of the things that makes it tough to figure out how much has to be charged for insurance is that people behave differently when they are insured from the way they behave when they are not insured.
>
> In other words, if one person out of 10,000 has his car set on fire, and it costs an average of $10,000 to restore the car to its previous condition, then it might seem as if charging one dollar to all 10,000 people would be enough to cover the cost of paying $10,000 to the one person whose car that will need to be repaired. But the joker in this deal is that people whose cars are insured may not be as cautious as other people are about what kinds of neighborhoods they park their car in.
>
> […]Although “moral hazard” is an insurance term, it applies to other government policies besides insurance. International studies show that people in countries with more generous and long-lasting unemployment compensation spend less time looking for jobs. In the United States, where unemployment compensation is less generous than in Western Europe, unemployed Americans spend more hours looking for work than do unemployed Europeans in countries with more generous unemployment compensation.
>
> People change their behavior in other ways when the government pays with the taxpayers’ money. After welfare became more readily available in the 1960s,

> unwed motherhood skyrocketed. The country is still paying the price for that– of which the money is the least of it. Children raised by single mothers on welfare have far higher rates of crime, welfare and other social pathology.
>
> San Francisco has been one of the most generous cities in the country when it comes to subsidizing the homeless. Should we be surprised that homelessness is a big problem in San Francisco?
>
> […]We also hear a lot of talk about "the uninsured," for whose benefit we are to drastically change the whole medical-care system. But income data show that many of those uninsured people have incomes from which they could easily afford insurance. But they can live it up instead, because the government has mandated that hospital emergency rooms treat everyone.

And here's another Tom Sowell column making a related point.

Excerpt:

> Much has been made of the fact that families making less than $250,000 a year will not see their taxes raised. Of course they won't see it, because what they see could affect how they vote.
>
> But when huge tax increases are put on electric utility companies, the public will see their electricity bills go up. When huge taxes are put on other businesses as well, they will see the prices of the things those businesses sell go up.
>
> If you are not in that "rich" category, you will not see your own taxes go up. But you will be paying someone else's higher taxes, unless of course you can do without electricity and other products of heavily taxed businesses. If you don't see this, so much the better for the Obama administration politically.
>
> This country has been changed in a more profound way by corrupting its fundamental values. The Obama administration has begun bribing people with the promise of getting their medical care and other benefits paid for by other people, so long as those other people can be called "the rich." Incidentally, most of those who are called "the rich" are nowhere close to being rich.
>
> […]There was a time when most Americans would have resented the suggestion that they wanted someone else to pay their bills. But now, envy and resentment have been cultivated to the point where even people who contribute nothing to society feel that they have a right to a "fair share" of what others have produced.
>
> The most dangerous corruption is a corruption of a nation's soul. That is what this administration is doing.

Republicans prefer private voluntary charity as the best way to provide a safety net. Just because people on the left give less to charity than people on the right, it doesn't mean that no one one gives to charity. Europe has the highest taxes, and they give the least in charity. Why not LOWER taxes for people who want to give MORE in charity? When government hands out money, it encourages people to be more dependent. But when a

person in trouble has to go to a neighbor or a charity in their own community, it sends the right message – “this should be temporary – don’t let this become a habit”. It’s not GOOD for someone to depend on the government. People need to work in order to be happy.

Having the government take over the role of provider in the home is an insult to men. It’s not government’s job to replace men. They ought to stay right out of it. Leave money in the pockets of the working man so he can save for a rainy day himself. If you subsidize a behavior, you get more of it. If you tax a behavior, you get less of it. It makes no sense to subsidize irresponsible lifestyle choices and tax productive and moral lifestyle choices. You don’t want to make the rescue from bad decisions an anonymous and automatic affair. You want people to worry, so that they won’t *want to make risky and irresponsible choices.* Everybody goes through though times, but we shouldn’t make it *normal*. People ought to know that it’s not normal.

You may want to read about how government dependence makes people less happy than having a job. Don’t make people depend on government by taxing businesses and investment. We need more companies hiring – not less. And that means letting the profit motive provide an incentive for entrepreneurs to engage in more risk-taking and enterprise.

Fox News documentary on the roots of climate change alarmism

September 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A fast-paced Fox News documentary in six parts. (H/T The Blog Prof)

Clip 1: (8 minutes)

Clip 2: (7 minutes)

Clip 3: (6 minutes)

Clip 4: (7 minutes)

Clip 5: (6 minutes)

Clip 6: (7 minutes)

This is nice because it really tells you who the greens are and what they want.

You may also be interested in understanding how the EPA's ban on DDT may be causing the epidemic of bed bugs – something that never happened while DDT was still available.

Should Al Gore be arrested for inciting eco-terrorist hate crimes?

September 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Al Gore inspired this eco-terrorist

Consider the Democrat position on free speech that "may" incite violence, as stated in the bill they passed that criminalized free speech.

Excerpt:

> The crime bill — which would broaden the protected classes for hate crimes to include sexual orientation and "gender identity," which the bill defines as a victim's "actual or perceived gender-related characteristics" — passed the House earlier this year as a stand-alone measure. But it's never had the votes to succeed by itself in the Senate. So over the summer Democrats, with the power of their 60-vote majority, attached it to the defense bill.
>
> Republicans argued that the two measures had nothing to do with each other. Beyond that, GOP lawmakers feared the new bill could infringe on First Amendment rights in the name of preventing broadly defined hate crimes. **The bill's critics, including many civil libertarians, argued that the hate crimes provision could chill freedom of speech by empowering federal authorities to accuse people of inciting hate crimes, even if the speech in question was not specifically related to a crime.**

That's their view – free speech that *may* incite a crime should be *criminalized*.

Whose free speech inspired the eco-terrorist?

From the Instapundit.

Excerpt:

> ECO-TERRORISM? Gunman who took hostages at Discovery Channel inspired by Al Gore. "Lee appears to have posted environmental and population-control demands online, saying humans are ruining the planet and that Discovery should develop programs to sound the alarm. . . . Lee said he experienced an

> ‘awakening’ when he watched former Vice President Al Gore’s environmental documentary ‘An Inconvenient Truth.’”
>
> Won’t Al Gore please stop it with his *extremist, eliminationist rhetoric* before he inspires still more violence?

Al Gore’s speech *did* affect the views of the eco-terrorist. Is Al Gore’s speech to blame for this crime?

NO, I don’t think Al Gore should be blamed for inciting the eco-terrorism. The eco-terrorist is to blame for his eco-terrorism. I believe in free speech, even for eco-fascists like Al Gore. But Democrats don’t believe in free speech that is critical of their views – that’s why they banned free speech that disagrees with their views in their hate crime bill.

So what should we do to stop this from happening?

The problem with the loony left, (mainstream news media, Hollywood, unions, Democrats, non-quantitative academic departments), is that they always want to teach their view, and their view alone, in the schools. And they want to demonize anyone who disagrees with them using words like racist, sexist, homophobe, etc. They don’t to debate with the other side, because the other side is just EVIL. Not even worth listening to.

So how about we do this instead – let’s teach both sides of every issue, so that loonies like James Lee know the arguments on the other side as well as he knows the arguments on his side. Now that would be teaching tolerance and diversity. That would moderate the craziness of people on MSNBC and eco-terrorists and the UN IPCC.

More on the writings of the Al-Gore-inspired left-wing Democrat eco-terrorist at Hot Air and Michelle Malkin.

Darwinism and atheism

Evolution News takes a look at some of the eco-terrorist’s writings.

The eco-terrorist wrote:

> Develop shows that mention the Malthusian sciences about how food production leads to the overpopulation of the Human race. Talk about Evolution. Talk about Malthus and Darwin until it sinks into the stupid people’s brains until they get it!!

And the eco-terrorist also wrote:

> Civilization must be exposed for the filth it is. That, and all its disgusting religious-cultural roots and greed. Broadcast this message until the pollution in the planet is reversed and the human population goes down!

Is this connection a surprise?

> Witness the recent examples of Holocaust Memorial Museum shooter James von Brunn, Columbine High School shooter Eric Harris, Jokela High School shooter Pekka Eric Auvinen. Historical figures who drew inspiration, if indirectly, from Darwinian theory include Charles Manson, Mao Tse-tung, Joseph Stalin, Josef

> Mengele, and of course Adolf Hitler.

You don't derive an ethic of love and compassion from Darwinian moral relativism and the doctrine of survival of the fittest.

Related posts

- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- Was Nazi torturer Josef Mengele influenced by Christianity or Darwinism?
- Was Hitler a Christian? Is Nazism similar to Christianity?
- Another way that the secular left kills millions of people
- Should atheists or Christians be blamed for communism's 100 million deaths?
- Who is more responsible for the mass murders of history? Christians or atheists?
- Contrasting the moral values of an authentic Christian with an authentic Darwinist
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

Why should you vote for the Republicans in November?

September 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Because it will be mean and vengeful, according to this Politico article.

Excerpt:

> Republicans are planning a wave of committee investigations targeting the White House and Democratic allies if they win back the majority.
>
> Everything from the microscopic — the New Black Panther party — to the massive –- think bailouts — is on the GOP to-do list, according to a half-dozen Republican aides interviewed by POLITICO.
>
> Republican staffers say there won't be any self-destructive witch hunts, but they clearly are relishing the prospect of extracting information from an administration that touts transparency.
>
> And a handful of aggressive would-be committee chairmen — led by Reps. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) and Lamar Smith (R-Texas) — are quietly gearing up for a possible season of subpoenas not seen since the Clinton wars of the late 1990s.

And then the article lists six possible investigations:

- **Jobgate**: Issa has made no secret of his interest in getting to the bottom of muddled, mishandled White House attempts to force Democratic Senate candidates Joe Sestak and Andrew Romanoff from races in Pennsylvania and Colorado.
- **Bailoutgate**: No investigation poses a more significant political danger to Obama than a no-holds-barred GOP probe into TARP, the AIG bailout, the Freddie-Fannie sinkhole and the administration's de facto takeover of GM and Chrysler.
- **Mortgagegate**: Sen. Chris Dodd's embarrassing placement on the company's VIP mortgage list played a major role in the Connecticut Democrat's involuntary retirement earlier this year.
- **Black-Panthergate**: Smith, the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, has already pressed Holder to look into charges that members of the New Black Panther Party intimidated voters at a Philadelphia polling place in 2008.
- **ACORNgate**: A whole host of Republicans — led by Reps. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) and Steve King (R-Iowa) on the party's right wing — have demanded an investigation into the defunct community organizing group's ties to the Obama campaign.
- **Gulf-Spillgate**: Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has admitted MMS officials were asleep at the switch in monitoring BP's Deepwater Horizon platform before it blew up. But Issa is bent on finding out which Obama administration officials were responsible for missing the warning signs and why clean-up and response efforts

didn’t take place more quickly.

(Steeples fingers) Mwahahahahahaaaa! I mean – that’s interesting.

What does Bart Ehrman really believe about New Testament reliability?

September 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from Cross Examined that cites the appendix of Ehrman's own book.

Excerpt:

> Here's what Ehrman says in an interview found in the appendix of *Misquoting Jesus* (p. 252):
>
> Bruce Metzger is one of the great scholars of modern times, and I dedicated the book to him because he was both my inspiration for going into textual criticism and the person who trained me in the field. I have nothing but respect and admiration for him. And even though we may disagree on important religious questions – he is a firmly committed Christian and I am not – we are in complete agreement on a number of very important historical and textual questions. If he and I were put in a room and asked to hammer out a consensus statement on what we think the original text of the New Testament probably looked like, there would be very few points of disagreement – maybe one or two dozen places out of many thousands. The position I argue for in 'Misquoting Jesus' does not actually stand at odds with Prof. Metzger's position that the essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament.
>
> So why does Ehrman give one impression to the general public and the opposite to the academic world? Could it be because he can get away with casting doubt on the New Testament to an uninformed public, but not to his academic peers? Does selling books have anything to do with it? I don't know. I just find the contradiction here quite telling– the man who gets all the attention for casting doubt on the text of the Bible, upon further review, doesn't really doubt it himself.

Wow. That's funny. He doesn't say that when he's trying to sell books. He sounds more like Dan Brown when he's trying to sell books. I always lump Bart Ehrman and Dan Brown together. Dan Brown. Bart Ehrman. Dan Brown. Bart Ehrman. Does Dan Brown fill in for Bart Erhman when Bart Ehrman is on sabbatical? Is Bart Ehrman secretly a ghost-writer for Dan Brown? Are they *the same person*?

Further study

The top 10 links to help you along with your learning on this issue and related issues.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative

4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Three debates where you can see this play out:

- Craig Evans and Bart Ehrman
- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Extra stuff

A lecture on Bart Ehrman by William Lane Craig.

Do guns reduce crime? Watch this debate and hear both sides

September 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate is in 13 parts, featuring the two of the *best* proponents of legal firearm ownership – John Lott and Gary Kleck. The real sparks fly during the Q&A, so don't miss that. (If you can't watch the debate, then you can read this post and this post instead).

Here's part 1, which contains the introduction.

Here are the remaining speeches:

Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John R. Lott (2 **of 13**)

Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: R Gil Kerlikowske (3 **of 13**)

Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Stephen Halbrooke (4 **of 13**)

Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John J Donohue III (5 **of 13**)

Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Gary Kleck (6 **of 13**)

Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Paul Helmke (7 **of 13**)

Q&A Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 1 (8 **of 13**)

Q&A Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 2 (9 **of 13**)

Q&A Part 3: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 3 (10 **of 13**)

Q&A Part 4: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 4 (11 **of 13**)

Conclusions Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 1 (12 **of 13**)

Conclusions Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 2 (12 **of 13**)

This is everything you need to know about whether legal ownership of firearms reduce crime.

Debate is how conservatives decide what to believe about the world. We listen to both sides. We are extremely suspicious of one side trying to demonize the other side with name-calling and intimidation. If you start to ascribe nasty motives to your opponent on any issue, *prior to showing that they are wrong, on the merits*, then you've lost the debate. Before you can show WHY someone is wrong, you first have to show THAT someone is wrong.

You will never see a formal debate like this in the mainstream media, in Hollywood movies, in the public schools, or anywhere else where the left is in control. But hearing both sides is the *only* way to really know if something is true. You have to be able to sit through listening to the other side.

UPDATE: Ooops, even MSNBC admits that firearm ownership reduces crime rates. I stand corrected.

Does the progress of science support atheism?

September 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor.

Here's a bio from his faculty page at Baylor University:

> Walter Bradley (B.S., Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin) is Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He comes to Baylor from Texas A&M University where he helped develop a nationally recognized program in polymeric composite materials. At Texas A&M, he served as director of the Polymer Technology Center for 10 years and as Department Head of Mechanical Engineering, a department of 67 professors that was ranked as high as 12th nationally during his tenure. Bradley has authored over 150 refereed research publications including book chapters, articles in archival journals such as the Journal of Material Science, Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites, Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials, Journal of Composites Technology and Research, Composite Science and Technology, Journal of Metals, Polymer Engineering and Science, and Journal of Materials Science, and refereed conference proceedings.
>
> Dr. Bradley has secured over $5.0 million in research funding from NSF grants (15 yrs.), AFOSR (10 years), NASA grants (10 years), and DOE (3 years). He has also received research grants or contracts from many Fortune 500 companies, including Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, 3M, Shell, Exxon, Boeing, and Phillips.
>
> He co-authored The Mystery of Life Origin: Reassessing Current Theories and has written 10 book chapters dealing with various faith science issues, a topic on which he speaks widely.
>
> He has received 5 research awards at Texas A&M University and 1 national research award. He has also received two teaching awards. He is an Elected Fellow of the American Society for Materials and the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the largest organization of Christians in Science and Technology in the world. He is President elect of the ASA and will serve his term in 2008.

You can read more about his recent research on how to use coconuts to make car parts in this article from Science Daily.

Below, I analyze a lecture I chose from the hundreds of public lectures he has given all over the world on the integration of Christian faith with other public, testable areas of knowledge. In this lecture, entitled "Is There Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer?", Dr. Bradley explains how the progress of science has made the idea of a Creator and Designer of the universe more acceptable than ever before. (It's a little different from the one I posted earlier in the week, and now I have summarized it so people can discuss it without having to watch the lecture).

Evidence #1: The design of the universe

1. The correspondence of natural phenomena to mathematical law

- All observations of physical phenomena in the universe, such as throwing a ball up in the air, are described by a few simple, elegant mathematical equations.

2. The fine-tuning of physical constants and rations between constants in order to provide a life-permitting universe

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants and ratios: (there are more examples in the lecture)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would be able to build up the nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.

- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – "carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can't be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

3. Fine-tuning to allow a habitable planet

- A number of factors must be fine-tuned in order to have a planet that supports life
- Initial estimates predicted abundant life in the universe, but revised estimates now predict that life is almost certainly unique in the galaxy, and probably unique in the universe.
- Even though there are lots of stars in the universe, the odds are against *any* of them supporting complex life.
- Here are just a few of the minimal requirements for habitability: must be a single star solar system, in order to support stable planetary orbits, the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to have liquid water at the surface, the planet must sufficient mass in order to retain an atmosphere, etc.

The best current atheist response to this is to speculate that there may be an infinite number of unobservable and untestable universes. (I.e. – the Flying Spaghetti Monster did it)

Evidence #2: <u>The origin of the universe</u>

1. The progress of science has shown that the entire physical universe came into being out of nothing (= "the big bang"). It also shows that the cause of this creation event is non-physical and non-temporal. The cause is *supernatural*.

- Atheism prefers an eternal universe, to get around the problem of a Creator having to create the universe.
- Discovery #1: Observations of galaxies moving away from one another confirms that the universe expanded from a single point.
- Discovery #2: Measurements of the cosmic background radiation confirms that the universe exploding into being.

- Discovery #3: Predictions of elemental abundances prove that the universe is not eternal.
- Discovery #4:The atheism-friendly steady-state model and oscillating model were both falsified by the evidence.
- And there were other discoveries as well, mentioned in the lecture.

The best atheistic response to this is to speculate that there is an unobservable and untestable hyper-universe outside our own. (I.e. – the Flying Spaghetti Monster did it)

Evidence #3: The origin of life

1. The progress of science has shown that the simplest living organism contains huge amounts of biological information, similar to the Java code I write all day at work. This is a problem for atheists, because the sequence of instructions in a living system has to come together all at once, it cannot have evolved by mutation and selection – because there was no replication in place prior to the formation of that first living system!

- Living systems must support certain minimum life functions: processing energy, storing information, and replicating.
- There needs to be a certain amount of complexity in the living system that can perform these minimum functions.
- But on atheism, the living system needs to be simple enough to form by accident in a pre-biotic soup, and in a reasonable amount of time.
- The minimal functionality in a living system is a achieved by DNA, RNA and enzymes. DNA and RNA are composed of sequences of proteins, which are in turn composed of sequences of amino acids.

Consider the problems of building a chain of 100 amino acids

- The amino acids must be left-handed only, but left and right kinds are equally abundant in nature. How do you sort out the right-handed ones?
- The amino acids must be bound together using peptide bonds. How do you prevent other types of bonds?
- Each link of the amino acid chain needs to be carefully chosen such that the completed chain with fold up into a protein. How do you choose the correct amino acid for each link from the pool of 20 different kinds found in living systems?
- In every case, a human or other intelligence could solve these problems by doing what intelligent agents do best: *making choices.*
- But who is there to make the choices on atheism?

The best current atheistic response to this is to speculate that unobservable and untestable aliens seeded the earth with life. (I.e. – the Flying Spaghetti Monster did it)

The problem of the origin of life is not a problem of chemistry, it is a problem of engineering. Every part of car functionality can be understood and described using the laws of physics and chemistry. But an intelligence is still needed in order to assemble the

components into a system that has the minimal requirements for a functioning vehicle.

Conclusion

In all three areas, scientists expected that the data would be consistent with atheism. First, scientists expected that life could exist even if the physical constants and ratios were altered. The progress of science said *NO*. Second, scientists expected that the universe would be eternal. The progress of science said *NO.* Third, scientists expected that the origin of life would be simple. The progress of science said *NO.* Why do some people resist the progress of science and cling to the religious dogma of materialism?

Related posts

- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show
- Cowardly Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Answering Richard Dawkins' question: "Who made God?"
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God
- How do leading atheists understand morality on atheism?
- Is there such a thing as genuine libertarian free will if naturalism is true?

Debate on Hinduism and religious pluralism

September 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A very interesting debate that shows how intolerant pluralistic religions like Hinduism can be – so intolerant that they are willing to ban free speech that is supportive of Christianity. In the pluralist East, you can ban the public practice of Christianity, but in the exclusivist West, we have free speech and freedom of religion for Hindus. Is it possible that the view that "all religions are equally true" is *far less tolerant* than the view that "only one religion is true?". What if the one religion that thinks it is true also believes that it is a moral good to tolerate free speech and open debate about which religion is true?

Here is the MP3 file. (64 minutes)

Details:

Unbelievable? 24 Oct 2009 – Christian conversion of Hindus – 24 October 2009

In light of Premier's Faith Without Fear campaign, this discussion between Anil Bhanot and Sunil Raheja addresses the tensions that exist when Christians seek to evangelise Hindus in India.

What is acceptable? Is the response of some Hindus justified? Is it wrong for Christians to state that Jesus is the "only" way to God?

To sign the petition for Justice for Christians in Orissa State, India go to www.faithwithoutfear.org

Below you can find my play-by-play summary of this debate.

What does the Bible say about evangelism?

The relevant passage from the Bible in which Jesus commands Christians to share their beliefs with non-Christians is found in Matthew 28:16-20. This is the part that the Hindu scholars disagree with.

> [16]Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.
>
> [17]When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.
>
> [18]Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
>
> [19]Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
>
> [20]and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

What does the Bible say about salvation being exclusive of other other religions?

A few verses from the that teach the exclusivity of salvation.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Acts 16:30-31 He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

1 John 5:11-12 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Luke 12:8-9 I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.

John 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.

So Christians are required to preach to non-Christians, and they are required to preach what Jesus said about himself – that trust in Jesus’ claim to be God stepping into history is the only way to be rightly related to God, the Creator of the universe.

Are Hindus tolerant of the public practice of authentic Christianity in countries where Hinduism dominates?

Summary of the debate

My snarky comments are in italics.

—-

Hindu_Anil:
– explains Hinduism: impersonal unknowable Brahma, incarnations
– all religions are paths to the impersonal divine (pantheism with polytheistic elements)

Christian_Sunil:
– former Hindu, convert because of lack of meaning and purpose, describes conversion
– changed from works-based salvation to salvation by grace
– there is a capacity for grace in Hinduism, not just works based
– Christian campus groups do a better job of explaining their religion than Hindus

Christian_Sunil:
– well for me, I did it on my own dealing directly with God, no assistance from Christians

Hindu_Anil:
– I object to Christians going out to convert others to your religion

Christian_Sunil:
– i don't like the turn or burn style of evangelism
– but asking people the big questions, that's good evangelism

Hindu_Anil:
– we Hindus don't evangelize
– we think of Jesus as another deity (an incarnation of Brahma)
– i oppose Christians for saying in public that I am wrong and they are right
– Christians are wrong, and I (a Hindu) am right!

Christian_Sunil:
– but persuasion and conversion is everywhere in the marketplace

Hindu_Anil:
– Christians are mean and they go out plundering countries and killing other people
– converting people to Christianity is the stealing of souls from other countries
– Christianity is an evil religion and Christians are evil people
– I know better what Jesus would do than Christians do, Jesus would not proselytize

Christian_Sunil:
– I am against the use of coercion in evangelism

Hindu_Anil:
– sharing your faith in Jesus as your favorite incarnation among many incarnations is fine (polytheism – the Hindu view)
– but missionaries say that only Christ is the true God *and they have no right to say things that are incompatible with Hinduism*
– Christians have no right to say that Christ is the true God, *that is incompatible with Hinduism*
– you need to keep your exclusive views to yourself, *but I will force Hinduism on you in public*
– you should be prevented by law from expressing your exclusive Christian view in public
– Hindus like me are very very tolerant of other views, *so you should agree with Hinduism, not Christianity*

Hindu_Jagdish:
– Christianity teaches that Jesus is a son of God, not God himself
– Christians are wrong about the doctrine of the Trinity
– efforts to convert should not involve any good works like giving food or medical treatment

Christian_Sunil:
– Mother Teresa met peoples needs for food and medical care, but she did it as a public Christian
– but this would break your rule about conversion using good works and charity
– so is Mother Teresa a bad person for doing good works as a public Christian?

Hindu_Jagdish:
– Hindus believe that there are many ways to achieve union with God

– they are all equal, you can follow the path you like to be united with God
– we Hindus are very very inclusive, every other path is a right path to God

Hindu_Anil:
– the right to freedom of religion does not allow you to say that Christianity is correct
– Jesus did not say that you go and condemn people of other religions

Christian_Sunil:
– but I convert people by my love and self-sacrifice, not through coercion

Hindu_Anil:
– it’s ok to be a Christian if you keep it to yourself and don’t tell anyone else that their religion is wrong

Christian_Sunil:
– are you trying to force your view of religion on me? *in public*?

Hindu_Anil:
– to say that my religion is false is to breach my human right to exist
– it’s coercive to offer people food and then try to evangelize them

Hindu_Jagdish:
– how do you define secularism?

Christian_Sunil:
– living as though this life were all there is, that religious meanings don’t matter in public life

Hindu_Jagdish:
– Hindus have no problem with that view, it’s in the Vedas

Christian_Sunil:
– India is becoming secular as it grows into part of the global economy
– secularism has the goal of being happy in this life without any accountability to God

Hindu_Anil:
– in opposition to secularism, all faiths should unite on the Hindu concept of the impersonal divine

Christian_Sunil:
– the solution to secularism is found by a personal encounter with God

Hindu_Anil:
– I became a Hindu as a result of performing Hindu rituals as I grew up in a Hindu background

Christian_Sunil:
– a person’s decision to become a Christian is a result of their own inquiry and free decision

Hindu_Anil:
– the purpose of Hinduism is to make people happy and to achieve achieve world peace
– Hindus believe that God is indescribable and unknowable (pantheism)
– everyone has to choose the Incarnation they like to make themselves happy

(polytheism)
– Christianity is one incarnation of the Hindu doctrine of impersonal divine (pantheism)
– so all religions are valid because everyone chooses the incarnation they like, *we have billions and billions to choose from*
– that's how we will get world peace, by having everyone agree with my view of religion (pantheism and polytheism)
– isn't it terrible that Christians can tell Hindus that they will go to Hell without Christ
– Jesus said himself that it's wrong to judge others, *although I'm judging you right now!*

Christian_Sunil:
– well we should certainly try to be gentle and respectful

Hindu_Anil:
– you can't say that I am wrong about my religious views, freedom of speech doesn't cover that speech
– everything that is in the Bible is in the Hindu Scriptures, and the Hindu Scriptures has even more
– anything in the Bible that contradicts Hinduism was invented much later by deluded people
– the Bible doesn't teach that Jesus is the only true path to God, *if you throw out the non-Hindu parts*

Christian_Manjula:
– i was once a Jain but now I'm a Christian, and Christianity makes my life meaningful

Hindu_Anil:
– a person can be a Christian, *so long as they accept that Christianity is actually Hinduism*

Christian_Manjula:
– actually, Christians believe that people are sinful and that Jesus' death atones for that sin

Hindu_Anil:
– oh Hindus don't believe that!
– in the Bible, the jews are trying to stone Jesus, and Jesus says that they are all Gods (this is not in the Bible unless he means what Satan says)
– that's consistent with Hinduism

Christian_Sunil:
– am I allowed to say that I disagree with your beliefs?
– the discovery that washing hands reduces deaths during child birth was ridiculed, but it's true
– my understanding of Christ is different from what Hindus believe about Christ
– these questions are matters of life and death
– if my research is correct, then this world is in a terrible state without Christ
– because I love other people, I need to do what I can to share Christ with others
– I need to be able to discuss and disagree about it in public

Hindu_Anil:
– well, you can't say that my religion is false – that's going too far, *but I can say your religion is false*

Christian_Sunil:
– i'm not saying that I am better than you, just that my view is true, *based on the evidence*

Hindu_Anil:
– no you don't have the truth, that is just your personal preference FOR YOU
– i have a personal preference, and my personal preference is true FOR ME
– you can't say that you have the truth to me, *and laws should prevent you from saying that*

Hindu_Anil:
– Jesus said nothing contrary to Hinduism
– it's only much much later that people added Christian doctrines to the Bible
– everything Jesus taught is consistent with Hinduism, *even if the Bible doesn't say that*

Responding to religious pluralism

September 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I had posted a debate from the Unbelievable radio show, which is broadcast in the UK. The topic of the debate was whether India should pass an anti-conversion law to prevent Christians from trying to convert people to Christianity. Basically, many Hindus in India want Christians to adopt the Hindu notions of polytheism and religious pluralism. They want Christians to accept that Jesus is one incarnation of the divine among many, and they want to outlaw the Christian practice of using speech to convince people to become Christians.

You can listen to the debate here in my original post.

But I wanted to highlight another debate that occurred in the comments of this blog, between me and a Hindu reader, who challenged me for being intolerant because I said that Hinduism was false. (Just briefly, understand that half my family is Muslim, and the other half is 90% Hindu – I am a visible minority, and my parents are first generation immigrants who started out with *nothing*).

His initial comment is here.

> Guys, all religions teach the same things. Its how each religion is interpreted that makes it different. If you follow any religion persistently, it will lead you to a peaceful and happy life.
>
> […]If one feels happy following Christian rituals, he may follow Christianity; if he feels happy following Hindu rituals, he is good to a Hindu. It all depends on what makes sense to the person. Enforcing or luring someone to another religion is wrong…It should be a personal choice. And no one should oppose a conversion made by personal choice.
>
> […]To say that someone's God or method of worship is false or not real is absolute rubbish according to me.
>
> […]If one says that other's God or religion is false, he/she is not tolerating the other's beliefs. And its immoral. Such things lead to religious conflicts.
>
> […]I believe in Jesus and so in my religion which is Hinduism.
>
> […]Why convert when a human being's main aim is to be happy? Every religion has scriptures that tell how to become happy and attain heaven/liberation.
>
> […]Everyone loves his/her religion. They would not want to hear anything bad about it.

And I replied:

> Our view as Christians is that the purpose of religion is not to live a happy life and to be "good". Our view is that we want to believe what is true and to know God as God really is. We believe that God is a person, with a real personality –

> likes and dislikes.
>
> What you're proposing is a Hindu approach to religion, except with Christian symbols and rituals. But Christians don't care about symbols and rituals much. We are more interested in history, science and propositional logic. We treat religion like… any other area of knowledge. First we discover the truth, then we act on it.
>
> Additionally, you have a Hindu approach to conversion, and you are trying to force that on Christians. You can keep your Hindu approach to yourself, and tolerate the fact that we have a different approach to conversion.
>
> […]You're not in a position to know what Christianity teaches, or what Jesus believes, since you haven't looked into these things at all. You know Hinduism. And you are projecting Hinduism onto other religions. But Hinduism is totally different than Christianity. They conflict in many areas, like cosmology and history. We believe that the universe had a beginning, you think it's eternal. And science can arbitrate that claim. We are willing to change our beliefs to be in line with what we can test in the external world, using the laws of logic, and the study of science and history.
>
> […]You write "To say that someone's God or method of worship is false or not real is absolute rubbish according to me.", yet you think that Christianity is false, and not real. But I am actually not offended by that at all. You are welcome to think I am wrong. I don't mind, this is the way that the game plays. Only one of us can be right, and if you were right, I would have to switch over to your view and that would be fine with me.
>
> […]You write "Everyone loves his/her religion. They would not want to hear anything bad about it." No that's your view. You identify Hindusim with India and patriotism and your people and culture. I don't identify Christianity with anything except truth. I like it because it's true. And that the only reason I like it.
>
> […]When I say that Hinduism is false, I am not "talking bad about your religion" any more than I am talking bad about the view that 2 + 2 = 5, when I say that 2 + 2 = 4. It's not talking bad about an idea to say it is false.

And then he replied:

> Do you believe that people who worship idols are devilish or all religions except Christianity are false? If yes then explain me with proper scientific reasoning and provide me a proof in the recent decades that logically explains the above two statements. You need to prove me that what you believe is experimented by scientists and proven by technology.
>
> […]I believe in all Gods no matter what religion because God is One. For me and this generation of educated Indians, we believe in tolerance and respect for all religions. We believe in co-operating with each other and not pointing flaws in others beliefs until its proven scientifically and attested by scientific authority.

> And we believe that people's belief be respected!

Then I replied:

> The current best theory of the origin of the universe is called the big bang theory. It states that all the matter, energy, as well as time and space and time, came into being from nothing. It is backed by experimental data from red-shift measurements, cosmic microwave background radiation measurements, and light element abundance measurements, etc. The theory states that the universe began 14.7 billion years ago. Additionally, the universe will not recollapse because measurements of mass density from Maxima and Boomerang show that the universe will expand forever.
>
> The big 3 monotheistic religions agree with the universe coming into being from nothing. Unfortunately, other religions think that the universe is eternal, such as Mormonism and Hinduism. On that basis, I reject Hinduism, which requires that the universe be eternal.
>
> "I believe in all Gods no matter what religion because God is One." That view (pantheism/polytheism) is called Hinduism. You are a Hindu. Christianity (monotheism) is mutually exclusive with Hinduism, because the teachings are in conflict, (as with the example of cosmology). As a Hindu, you therefore think that Christianity is false. On your definition, you don't "tolerate" Christianity – you think it's false. You don't "respect" Christianity, because you want to force your view (Hinduism) and your view of conversion (don't tell other people their religion is false) on Christians.
>
> […]Note: I am ok with you saying that I am wrong and that Christianity is false.

And then we sort of wound things down from there.

Anyway, the point of this exchange is most people in most religions think that the point of religion is to be happy, to have a sense of community and to get along with everyone by never talking about whether religious claims about the external world are true or false. But that view of the purpose of religion is not the Christian view. On the Christian view, the goal is to seek the truth. And part of Christian practice is to defend Christianity in public, and trying to convince other people that Christianity is true.

So, I think that Christians need to be a bit tougher, and recognize when someone who is not a Christian is trying to get them to accept that the purpose of religion is not to seek the truth. That's *their* view. That's not *our* view. It doesn't make any sense for someone to say that I am evil for thinking they are wrong, when they are thinking that I am wrong. I think a better way forward is to allow other people to disagree with you, but to keep the disagreement focused on *arguments* and *evidence.*

And just because you disagree with someone else, it doesn't mean you have to be mean to them. In my office, I am friends with Hindus, Muslims, atheists and Jews. We try to outdo one another in good deeds to make our religions look good! And when we debate which religion is true, we use arguments and evidence to attack and defend. What I've

found is that you get a much stronger friendship when you are comfortable being yourself. I keep telling my co-workers – it's OK to disagree.

Related posts

- the problem of postmodern skepticism
- the fate of the unevangelized (what about those who never heard of Jesus)
- the hiddenness of God (why isn't there more evidence for God's existence?)
- are all religions basically the same?
- what about the blind men and the elephant?
- isn't faith is opposed to reason and evidence? (a debate between a Christian and a postmodern relativist)
- what makes Christianity different from other religions?

Mentoring

- the importance of being able to argue both sides of a question
- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church
- why won't Christians defend their faith in public?

Unemployment up to 9.6%, 283K jobs lost during recovery summer

September 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Detroit Job Fair (AP Photo)

This is from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Excerpt:

> Nonfarm payroll employment changed little (-54,000) in August, and the unemployment rate was about unchanged at 9.6 percent, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Government employment fell, as 114,000 temporary workers hired for the decennial census completed their work. Private-sector payroll employment continued to trend up modestly (+67,000).
>
> Household Survey Data
>
> The number of unemployed persons (14.9 million) and the unemployment rate (9.6 percent) were little changed in August. From May through August, the jobless rate remained in the range of 9.5 to 9.7 percent. (See table A-1.)
>
> Among the major worker groups, the unemployment rate for adult men (9.8 percent), adult women (8.0 percent), teenagers (26.3 percent), whites (8.7 percent), blacks (16.3 percent), and Hispanics (12.0 percent) showed little change in August. The jobless rate for Asians was 7.2 percent, not seasonally adjusted. (See tables A-1, A-2, and A-3.)

The total number of jobs lost during the Democrats' "recovery summer" is now at 283,000. 283,000 jobs lost during the "summer of recovery". No amount of good intentions and fine speeches is going to change the laws of economics – if you take money from the private sector and spend it on government programs and you will lose jobs.

I notice that the mainstream media and the White House are spinning the job numbers by talking about the jobs gained number instead of the net jobs lost, or the rising unemployment rate, so I had to set things straight.

And keep in mind that the Democrats intend to allow the Bush tax cuts to expire, which really means implementing the largest tax hike in history. It will totally destroy the economy.

Nonfarm payroll employment changed little (-54,000) in August, and the unem- ployment rate was about unchanged at 9.6 percent, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Government employment fell, as 114,000 temporary workers hired for the decennial census completed their work. Private-sector payroll employment continued to trend up modestly (+67,000). Household Survey Data The number of unemployed persons (14.9 million) and the unemployment rate (9.6 percent) were little changed in August. From May through August, the jobless rate remained in the range of 9.5 to 9.7 percent. (See table A-1.) Among the major worker groups, the unemployment rate for adult men (9.8 per- cent), adult women (8.0 percent), teenagers (26.3 percent), whites (8.7 per- cent), blacks (16.3 percent), and Hispanics (12.0 percent) showed little change in August. The jobless rate for Asians was 7.2 percent, not season- ally adjusted. (See tables A-1, A-2, and A-3.)

Jennifer Roback Morse publishes an excerpt from a new book

September 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. J the Shorter has a new technique where she weaves statistics into a story to show how bad things happen to people who don't plan and prepare to have strong marriages. She's got a new post up on her blog to show it off.

Excerpt:

> Rather than regale the reader with statistics, let me tell the story of a hypothetical young woman named Lucy. Not all of the outcomes that happen to Lucy happen to each and every unmarried mother. Lucy's story is a composite of the outcomes that are systematically more likely to happen to unmarried women, or to cohabiting women, than to married women. (I have omitted the hazards associated with drugs and alcohol, so as not to cloud the marriage issue.) Telling Lucy's story illustrates what multiple partner fertility looks like in the lives of ordinary people of modest means.
>
> Lucy has graduated from high school, has a job as a dental assistant, and lives with her boyfriend, Izzy. Lucy becomes pregnant. It isn't entirely clear whether this is an "accidental" pregnancy. She has been on the Pill, but she missed one or two. (The failure rate for the Pill for low-income, cohabitating women younger than twenty is 48 percent.)44
>
> Lucy is glad to be pregnant. She has always wanted to be a mother. Izzy isn't so happy. He isn't ready to be a father. Pregnancy was not part of the deal. He feels cheated. They quarrel frequently, and he sometimes hits her. (Domestic violence is more common in cohabiting couples than in married couples.)45
>
> As her pregnancy proceeds, Lucy becomes less and less interested in sex, and Izzy becomes less and less interested in her. He has sex with a former girlfriend. (Cohabiting couples are more likely to have "secondary sex partners.")46 He feels entitled, since he isn't "getting any" from Lucy, and after all, she cheated him by becoming pregnant in the first place. They quarrel some more, and he moves out for a while. By the time baby Anna is born, Izzy has moved back in with Lucy.
>
> Now Lucy isn't so happy. In fact, she becomes depressed. (The presence of children increases a cohabiting woman's probability of depression. Children do not affect a married woman's probability of becoming depressed.)47 Izzy is caught up in the excitement for a while. But the combination of sleep deprivation, a needy infant, and a preoccupied and depressed Lucy are more than Izzy can handle. He moves out for good when Anna is six months old. (Cohabiting relationships are less stable than married relationships.)48 He never offers to contribute support to the care of Anna. (Never-married fathers are much

> less likely to pay child support than fathers who were once married to the child's mother.)49 Lucy finds that she can't handle the demands of her job and the care of her baby by herself. She goes to court to try to get Izzy to pay child support.

Then the stepfather Tom enters the picture so things get even more interesting, and it goes on like that with more bad things that happen to Lucy. I've never seen this story/statistics technique done before – I think it's a really winsome way to make the point to people who are skeptical about statistics. I am so going to steal this technique when I talk about these things to young women who don't understand what marriage is for, what a man does in a marriage, and what decisions a man makes all along his life in order to take on the man's roles in a marriage.

If I told you what young women look for in men and what they think that men do in marriage, you would laugh your head off. Women today think that men are best if they are handsome and fun – and that's all men are good for! No wonder the out-of-wedlock birth rate is 40% and the divorce rate is 50%! But I have confidence in Dr. J – she can fix all of these problems. She knows everything there is to know about men and marriage and children. Every time I read anything she has written about marriage, it gets me really enthusiastic about getting married.

Canada waking up to the threat of Islamic terrorism

September 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

Check out this column from the Ottawa Citizen. (H/T The Binks)

Excerpt:

> This is your future. That was my wretched thought on behalf of Canadians as I watched Thursday's Project Samossa news conference.
>
> Samossa was the major national security investigation that erupted this week in counterterrorism raids and the arrest of four Muslim-Canadians. The government's charges against three of them imply a wealth of evidence that will shock the conscience of Canadians.
>
> These charges and limited revelations suggest that we could be front-row witnesses to the most vile of manifestations of the Islamist jihad in this country. The allegation is that people living among us and enjoying the immense privileges of Canadian citizenship, are siding with enemy forces aiming to kill and maim our boys and girls serving in Afghanistan — and maybe residents of Ottawa and other Canadian centres, too.
>
> […]To understand this in the context of Islamic radicalism is to account properly for the main sources of Canada's escalating extremism. These sources are immigration and refugee influxes, and the homegrown extremist phenomenon.
>
> Liberal politicians long ago turned immigration and refugee streams into vote-importing mechanisms. Conservatives continue to do so at the expense of Canadians' safety and tens of billions in net per annum immigration costs, plus attendant and overwhelming security costs. So pronounced is the pathology that not even a terrible recession could prevent Immigration Minister Jason Kenney from hiking immigration and refugee levels from what were already roughly the highest per capita in the world. These levels are too great to allow for reliable

> vetting in a world where war and ideological struggles rage, and we are a target.

The cause of all of these problems is the left-wing political parties (Liberals, NDP and Bloc Quebecois). These left-wing parties hope to import “refugees” and unskilled immigrants and give them the right to vote as full citizens, thus ensuring a fresh supply of votes for socialism.

Consider this recent article from Ezra Levant showing 71% of Tamil “refugees” from Sri Lanka return to Sri Lanka for vacations. Muslims immigrate to Canada and then claim welfare for up to four of their wives. Liberal MP Ruby Dhalla is attempting to buy votes by reducing the residency requirement from 10 years to 3 years for Old Age Security OR Guaranteed Income Supplement money. That means that an immigrant can bring a non-working relative aged 62 into Canada and then let them stay there for 3 years and then they will be eligible for a full pension funded by other working Canadians.

What does universal health care really mean?

September 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think the point of universal health care (at least the government-run variety) is pretty clear. The goal is to equalize life outcomes so that people who work the hardest pay the most into the system, and people who live in risky/immoral lifestyles withdraw the most. The biggest losers in such a system are the productive people who make responsible, moral decisions about their lifestyle – they pay the most and withdraw the least. The biggest winners are people who don't work at all but who withdraw a lot.

I think that universal health care makes people irresponsible. The driving force behind universal health care is the idea that people should be able to do anything they want to pursue happiness any way they please, and that the natural limits of reality should be circumvented by spending other people's money to "equalize life outcomes".

Socialized medicine proponents are funny people. They think that no one should have to deal with the costs of their own decisions as long as they are sincere in their pursuit of happiness – it's just not possible to predict what decisions will lead to good outcomes and what decisions will lead to bad outcomes. I once had two Canadian women bragging to me in an airport about how great socialized medicine was until I explained to them that at my salary level I would be paying 50% of my salary to the government and I had not been to the doctor for anything other than a check-up in my entire life. They could not see why I might like to opt out of such a system even after I explained it to them. They apparently thought that at any moment I might develop the urge for an abortion or two and then who would pay for it? Life is so unpredictable for a Canadian woman – it's better not to have to worry about it and just let someone else pay.

So, let's see what passes for health care in various universal health care systems around the world.

- Here's my previous post on taxpayer-funded in vitro fertilization in Ontario, Canada. It's a human right! And that means it's FREEEEEE!
- But there's more. Sex-changes are also a human right in Ontario, Canada. It's FREEEEEE! The taxpayer has loads of money for that.
- Do you know what else is FREEEEEE! in socialist countries like the UK? Breast enlargements. Yeah, because it's a human right!

And of course it goes without saying that abortion is a human right everywhere, and should be taxpayer-funded. It really is about playing on people's fears, and buying votes with other people's money. The reason that the socialists don't want health care to be left to private companies instead of government is because private companies would insist that people pay based on their likelihood of filing a claim – as with car insurance. But that is too "judgmental" for the universal health care proponents – they think that no one should feel obligated to behave responsibly just because of petty things like money.

I wonder what my readers think about this.

Is it OK for some citizens to make decisions that are costly and risky as they pursue happiness in non-standard ways, and then assign blame and costs for the inevitable failures and expenses to their neighbors? Is there a right to pursue happiness at the expense of others? Is life predictable enough that people should be able to rationally assess the costs and risks of their own decisions? Would private insurers do a better job of holding people accountable to make good decisions about their own lifestyles? Should people choose how much health care they want based on the coverages they want and the risks they want to incur? Should a person be able to say that they don't want to be covered for sex changes and have the amount they pay into the system reduced? Should a person be able to opt out of government health care entirely and just buy a medical insurance policy privately, based on their own needs?

Comparing the eco-terrorist to Obama's science czar

September 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this Investors Business Daily editorial.

Excerpt:

> In a rambling manifesto, Lee echoes the writings of President Obama's science adviser, John Holdren, railing against "disgusting human babies" and "parasitic infants" and insisting people should "disassemble civilization." His manifesto demanded that the Discovery Channel cease all programming about war, weapons or giving birth.
>
> Court records show that Lee had been arrested on Feb. 21, 2008, on the sixth day of a protest at the Discovery building. Lee said at the time that he experienced an "awakening" when he watched former Vice President Al Gore's environmental documentary "An Inconvenient Truth." Lee has said he was also inspired by "Ishmael," a novel by environmentalist Daniel Quinn. "Nothing is more important than saving … the Lions, Tigers, Giraffes, Elephants, Froggies, Turtles, Apes, Raccoons, Beetles, Ants, Sharks, Bears and, of course, the Squirrels. The humans? The planet does not need humans," he wrote.
>
> As scary as this sounds, it is scarier to consider that this sentiment can be found in various forms in the bibliography of what is considered mainstream environmentalism.
>
> In a recently rediscovered book, "Ecoscience: Population, Resources, Environment," co-authored with Malthus fans Paul and Anne Ehrlich, Holdren, who holds the post of presidential assistant for science technology, revealed his similar pessimistic and apocalyptic views on all three topics. They are disturbing.
>
> Like Lee, Holdren hates people and views them as the root of all planetary evil. Big families are a target of Holdren and the Ehrlichs, who write that they "contribute to general social deterioration by overproducing children" and "can be required by law to exercise reproductive responsibility."

More on John Holdren here.

UPDATE: Wes Widner linked to this note from Evolution News. The mainstream media is not mentioning the Darwinian elements to the eco-terrorist's worldview.

It turns out there is a gender pay gap – and men are the victims

September 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, first of all, it's important to note for those who didn't know that salary differences are purely the result of individual lifestyle choices, not the result of sexist discrimination. Who says? The US Labor Department, that's who.

Here are the details.

Excerpt:

> Economists who have studied the pay gap have observed that numerous factors other than discrimination contribute to the wage gap, such as hours worked, experience, and education. For example, Professor June O'Neil has written extensively about how time out of the workforce, or years spent working part-time, can reduce future pay. Likewise, economist Diana Furchtgott-Roth, in her book *Women's Figures*, has written about the decisions that women are more likely to make to choose flexibility, a friendly workplace environment, and other nonmonetary factors as compared to men.
>
> Recognizing the importance of unbiased research on the pay gap, the Labor Department recently contracted with CONSAD Research Corporation for a review of more than 50 existing studies as well as a new economic and statistical analysis of the pay gap. CONSAD's Report, which was finalized on January 12, 2009, found that the vast majority of the pay gap is due to several identifiable factors and that the remainder may be due to other specific factors they were not able to measure.
>
> CONSAD found that controlling for career interruption and other factors reduced the pay gap from about 20 percent to about 5 percent. Data limitations prevented it from considering many other factors. For example, the data did not permit an examination of total compensation, which would examine health insurance and other benefits, and instead focused solely on wages paid. The data were also limited with respect to work experience, job tenure, and other factors.
>
> The Labor Department's conclusion was that the gender pay gap was the result of a multitude of factors and that the "raw wage gap should not be used as the basis for [legislative] correction. Indeed, there may be nothing to correct. The differences in raw wages may be almost entirely the result of individual choices being made by both male and female workers."

It turns out that the pay gap, which was *always* entirely due to lifestyle choices, is now *working against men*. After Jennifer Roback Morse, one of the women I like the most is Carrie Lukas, author of "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Women, Sex and Feminism". Here she is writing in National Review, explaining the latest research on the pay gap.

She cites the radically left-wing Time magazine:

> …according to a new analysis of 2,000 communities by a market research company, in 147 out of 150 of the biggest cities in the U.S., the median full-time salaries of young women are 8% higher than those of the guys in their peer group. In two cities, Atlanta and Memphis, those women are making about 20% more. This squares with earlier research from Queens College, New York, that had suggested that this was happening in major metropolises. But the new study suggests that the gap is bigger than previously thought, with young women in New York City, Los Angeles and San Diego making 17%, 12% and 15% more than their male peers, respectively. And it also holds true even in reasonably small areas like the Raleigh-Durham region and Charlotte in North Carolina (both 14% more), and Jacksonville, Fla. (6%).

And then Carrie says:

> As this new research shows, it's women's (and men's) attributes and career choices that determine earnings. Yet there's something troubling about *Time*'s tone, which suggests that we should all be celebrating the idea of women dominating the workplace. To the extent that this trend is driven by men losing jobs and remaining out of work, and young men failing to attain the skills needed to meaningfully contribute to the economy, this is not good news at all.
>
> Of course, we all want women to have the opportunity to compete and succeed in whatever profession they choose. But we want the same to be true for men. Furthermore, given that some women still wish to stay home or reduce their workload in order to spend time raising children, women's higher earnings may actually be a symptom of hardship: More women are having to work more since the men in their lives can't provide for the family alone or because they are providing for themselves.

You can read more about this whole story on Hot Air. Remember that in the traditional family, men get their authority to lead because of their role as primary earner. When they are not the primary earner, or when they are swapped entirely for a government check, then children have to grow up without that moral and spiritual leadership. Men are all about the moral standards, and women are all about forgiveness and compassion. Both are needed.

John Lennox and William Lane Craig respond to Stephen Hawking

September 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking is in the news again theorizing about untestable speculations. He thinks that physical laws, (which are just descriptions of the way matter operates), can actually bring the entire space-time universe into being. Specifically, he thinks that the law of gravity can create matter out of nothing.

Here's John Lennox of Oxford University responding to Stephen Hawking.

Excerpt:

> There's no denying that Stephen Hawking is intellectually bold as well as physically heroic. And in his latest book, the renowned physicist mounts an audacious challenge to the traditional religious belief in the divine creation of the universe.
>
> According to Hawking, the laws of physics, not the will of God, provide the real explanation as to how life on Earth came into being. The Big Bang, he argues, was the inevitable consequence of these laws 'because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing.'
>
> Unfortunately, while Hawking's argument is being hailed as controversial and ground-breaking, it is hardly new.
>
> For years, other scientists have made similar claims, maintaining that the awesome, sophisticated creativity of the world around us can be interpreted solely by reference to physical laws such as gravity.
>
> It is a simplistic approach, yet in our secular age it is one that seems to have resonance with a sceptical public.
>
> But, as both a scientist and a Christian, I would say that Hawking's claim is misguided. He asks us to choose between God and the laws of physics, as if they were necessarily in mutual conflict.
>
> But contrary to what Hawking claims, physical laws can never provide a complete explanation of the universe. Laws themselves do not create anything, they are merely a description of what happens under certain conditions.
>
> What Hawking appears to have done is to confuse law with agency. His call on us to choose between God and physics is a bit like someone demanding that we choose between aeronautical engineer Sir Frank Whittle and the laws of physics to explain the jet engine.
>
> That is a confusion of category. The laws of physics can explain how the jet engine works, but someone had to build the thing, put in the fuel and start it up. The jet could not have been created without the laws of physics on their own – but the task of development and creation needed the genius of Whittle as its

> agent.
>
> Similarly, the laws of physics could never have actually built the universe. Some agency must have been involved.
>
> To use a simple analogy, Isaac Newton's laws of motion in themselves never sent a snooker ball racing across the green baize. That can only be done by people using a snooker cue and the actions of their own arms.
>
> Hawking's argument appears to me even more illogical when he says the existence of gravity means the creation of the universe was inevitable. But how did gravity exist in the first place? Who put it there? And what was the creative force behind its birth?

And here is an MP3 file with Bill Craig's response. Craig thinks that Hawking's new book is basically the same as his previous book where he introduced the idea that his quantum gravity theory can explain the creation of the universe out of nothing, and then the multiverse to explain the fine-tuning.

UPDATE: I added a new post with Henry F. Schafer's take on Hawking's no-boundary proposal.

My thoughts

The law of gravity is just a mathematical equation that describes nature. Gravity is part of the natural world – it is a force of attraction between material objects. How can this force exist causally prior to the creation of all matter at t=0? It cannot. Self-creation is a self-refuting contradiction. For a thing to create itself, it would have to exist before it existed.

Maybe that passes for intelligent thought in the world of atheistic speculations, but not in the world of experimental science, which provides strong evidence for a Creation out of nothing, and a Design plan for the universe. Maybe this is just like Dawkins avoiding a debate with William Lane Craig – it's not about seeking truth, it's about book sales. It's not like Hawking is going to subject his speculations to a public debate.

You can learn more about the argument for God's existence from the creation of the universe in the Big Bang.

Henry F. Schaefer assesses Stephen Hawking's no-boundary proposal

September 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A little bit about Dr. Schaefer:

Henry F. Schaefer III was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He attended public schools in Syracuse (New York), Menlo Park (California), and Grand Rapids (Michigan), graduating from East Grand Rapids High School in 1962. He received his B.S. degree in chemical physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1966) and Ph.D. degree in chemical physics from Stanford University (1969). For 18 years (1969-1987) he served as a professor of chemistry at the University of California, Berkeley. During the 1979-1980 academic year he was also Wilfred T. Doherty Professor of Chemistry and inaugural Director of the Institute for Theoretical Chemistry at the University of Texas, Austin. Since 1987 Dr. Schaefer has been Graham Perdue Professor of Chemistry and Director of the Center for Computational Quantum Chemistry at the University of Georgia. In 2004 he became Professor of Chemistry, Emeritus, at the University of California at Berkeley. His other academic appointments include Professeur d'Echange at the University of Paris (1977), Gastprofessur at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochshule (ETH), Zürich (1994, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010), and David P. Craig Visiting Professor at the Australian National University (1999). He is the author of more than 1250 scientific publications, the majority appearing in the *Journal of Chemical Physics* or the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*. A total of 300 scientists from 35 countries gathered in Gyeongju, Korea for a six-day conference in February, 2004 with the title *Theory and Applications of Computational Chemistry: A Celebration of 1000 Papers of Professor Henry F. Schaefer III*. In May 2010, the University of California at Berkeley will host a large international conference in Professor Schaefer's honor, the title of the conference being *Molecular Quantum Mechanics: From Methylene to DNA and Beyond*.

Witness how the experimental scientist disagrees with the theoretical… speculator.

> Let us return to Hawking's no boundary proposal – the idea that the universe has neither beginning nor end. By treating the universe as a wave function, Hawking hopes to rationalize the universe's popping into existence 12-15 billion years ago. Critical to Hawking's research in this regard is the notion of imaginary time. The concept of imaginary time is a powerful mathematical device used on occasion by theoretical chemists and physicists. I remember clearly the day in the autumn of 1965, during my Complex Variables class as a senior at M.I.T., when I learned that the result of contour integration was two pi i times the sum of the residues. For me, it was about as close to a revelation as I had received up to that time in my life. My closest colleague at Berkeley, Professor William H. Miller, in 1969 used imaginary time to understand the dynamics of chemical reactions, and it made him a household word in the world of science. The use of imaginary time is

> indeed a powerful tool.
>
> Indulge me while I attempt to convey the essence of how imaginary time is exploited in theoretical physics and chemistry. One approaches a well defined problem, with all variables necessarily being real. This means, for example, real positions for all particles, real velocities, and so on. Real problems begin with all quantities real. Then one undertakes a carefully chosen excursion into the complex plane, making one or more variables complex. Subsequently we do some really cool things mathematically. Finally, all the variables revert to real values, and we find that something important has been mathematically derived that would have otherwise been impossible to prove.
>
> Hawking and Hartle's no boundary proposal begins by adopting a grossly oversimplified model of the universe. Then the authors make time imaginary, and prove in their terribly restricted model that the universe has neither beginning nor end. The flaw in the exercise is that the authors never go back to real time. Thus the notion that the universe has neither beginning nor end is something that exists in mathematical terms only. In real time, to which we as human beings are necessarily attached, rather than in Hawking's use of imaginary time, there will always be a singularity, that is, a beginning of time.
>
> In an obviously contradictory statement in A Brief History of Time, Hawking actually concedes this point. What we are seeing in this situation is Hawking versus Hawking. I view the following statement as Hawking speaking in his right mind: "When one goes back to the real time in which we live, however, there will still appear to be singularities . . . In real time, the universe has a beginning and an end at singularities that form a boundary to space-time and at which the laws of science break down" (first edition, page 144). Only if we lived in imaginary time (not coming soon to a neighborhood near you!) would we encounter no singularities. In real time the universe was created ex nihilo 12-15 billion years ago.
>
> With some trepidation, I will venture further. A case can be made that the Hartle-Hawking "no boundary proposal" is only of marginal scientific interest. The reasons for this conclusion might include: (a) the theory is a mathematical construct that has no unique empirical support; (b) the theory makes no verifiable scientific predictions that were not achieved earlier with simpler models; (c) the theory generates no significant research agenda. The primary purpose of the theory seems to be an attempt to evade the cosmological argument for the existence of God, via the claim that nature is self-contained and effectively eternal.

I'll stick with the experimental guy.

National Review makes the case for marriage

September 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review. (H/T Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> It is true that marriage is, in part, an emotional union, and it is also true that spouses often take care of each other and thereby reduce the caregiving burden on other people. But neither of these truths is the fundamental reason for marriage. The reason marriage exists is that the sexual intercourse of men and women regularly produces children. If it did not produce children, neither society nor the government would have much reason, let alone a valid reason, to regulate people's emotional unions. (The government does not regulate non-marital friendships, no matter how intense they are.) If mutual caregiving were the purpose of marriage, there would be no reason to exclude adult incestuous unions from marriage. What the institution and policy of marriage aims to regulate is sex, not love or commitment. These days, marriage regulates sex (to the extent it does regulate it) in a wholly non-coercive manner, sex outside of marriage no longer being a crime.
>
> Marriage exists, in other words, to solve a problem that arises from sex between men and women but not from sex between partners of the same gender: what to do about its generativity. It has always been the union of a man and a woman (even in polygamous marriages in which a spouse has a marriage with each of two or more persons of the opposite sex) for the same reason that there are two sexes: It takes one of each type in our species to perform the act that produces children. That does not mean that marriage is worthwhile only insofar as it yields children. (The law has never taken that view.) But the institution is oriented toward child-rearing. (The law has taken exactly that view.) What a healthy marriage culture does is encourage adults to arrange their lives so that as many children as possible are raised and nurtured by their biological parents in a common household.
>
> That is also what a sound law of marriage does. Although it is still a radical position without much purchase in public opinion, one increasingly hears the opinion that government should get out of the marriage business: Let individuals make whatever contracts they want, and receive the blessing of whatever church agrees to give it, but confine the government's role to enforcing contracts. This policy is not so much unwise as it is impossible. The government cannot simply declare itself uninterested in the welfare of children. Nor can it leave it to prearranged contract to determine who will have responsibility for raising children. (It's not as though people can be expected to work out potential custody arrangements every time they have sex; and any such contracts would

> look disturbingly like provisions for ownership of a commodity.)
>
> When a marriage involving children breaks down, or a marriage culture weakens, government has to get more involved, not less. Courts may well end up deciding on which days of the month each parent will see a child. We have already gone some distance in separating marriage and state, in a sense: The law no longer ties rights and responsibilities over children to marriage, does little to support a marriage culture, and in some ways subsidizes non-marriage. In consequence government must involve itself more directly in caring for children than it did under the old marriage regime — with worse results.

Important to know how to defend marriage.

Obama wants at least 50 billion more for another bailout

September 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great article by Hans Bader in the Examiner.

Excerpt:

> President Obama now wants Congress to spend $50 billion to keep state governments from laying off their employees. In essence, this is a bailout for the state-government-employee unions that bankroll liberal politicians. Earlier, Obama's allies in Congress proposed spending billions to bail out mismanaged and underfunded union pension funds.
>
> The state governments will never have to pay back any of this bailout money, which rewards them for irresponsibly increasing their employees' pay much faster than inflation, to levels much higher than in the private sector.
>
> By contrast, the private banks that were bailed out have repaid most of the money they received, while their shareholders lost most of their money–92.6 percent at Citibank.
>
> While millions of private sector employees have been laid off in the current recession, few government employees have been.
>
> […]Obama has not hidden his bias towards these powerful unions. As he noted in a 2006 book, "I owe those unions. . .When their leaders call, I do my best to call them back right away. I don't mind feeling obligated."

How wisely is government money spent, anyway?

$700,000 for research on jokes. (H/T The Blog Prof)

It reminds me of this Monty Python sketch:

This is why the unemployment rate has gone UP with all of this stimulus spending. Government isn't as efficient at creating jobs as private businesses… government wastes money because it's not their money. They have nothing to gain by being efficient, but private businesses have to be efficient.

Bader's article is worth reading in full because it explains in detail how the Democrats caused the mortgage crisis.

Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?

September 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Andrea Mrozek in the Ottawa Citizen.

Excerpt:

> Welcome to the world of Do It Yourself Doctoring. Recent reports indicate that the birth control pill may become available in the United States without a prescription. Proponents will claim this makes women's lives healthier and easier. Nothing could be further from the truth.
>
> The pill is not Tylenol or cough medication. Certainly it's widely used. However, forever downplayed are the nasty and known side effects: There's the risk of blood clots leading to stroke. There's mood swings. There's increased risk of cervical cancer, (alongside the highly touted effect of decreasing the risk of ovarian cancer). There's a 44-per-cent increased risk of developing breast cancer for young women prior to having children, a finding published in the Mayo Clinic journal in 2006. Anecdotal evidence has some women feeling permanently nauseous, others get depressed. Still others say they lose, wait for the irony, the desire to have sex.
>
> […]Even some pro-choice women's health advocates prefer to teach natural family planning (the symptothermal method) with the solid claim that it works with the same efficacy as oral contraceptives. The advantages are that it's not a product you purchase and it works with a woman's natural body rhythm. The disadvantages? It takes time to learn and teach, and pharmaceutical companies can't make money on it.
>
> These voices are hushed up in part because pharmaceutical companies have long tentacles, and in part because the pill remains the darling of old-school feminists. It is the great equalizer. On it, you can have sex anytime without ever getting pregnant, just like men do — or so we are told.

Read the rest, it's very interesting.

NY man arrested for defending home with firearm

September 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBS News.

Excerpt:

> George Grier said he had to use his rifle on Sunday night to stop what he thought was going to be an invasion of his Uniondale home by a gang he thought might have been the vicious "MS-13." He said the whole deal happened as he was about to drive his cousin home.
>
> "I went around and went into the house, ran upstairs and told my wife to call the police. I get the gun and I go outside and I come into the doorway and now, by this time, they are in the driveway, back here near the house. I tell them, you know, 'Can you please leave?' Grier said.
>
> Grier said the five men dared him to use the gun; and that their shouts brought another larger group of gang members in front of his house.
>
> "He starts threatening my family, my life. 'Oh you're dead. I'm gonna kill your family and your babies. You're dead.' So when he says that, 20 others guys come rushing around the corner. And so I fired four warning shots into the grass," Grier said.
>
> Grier was later arrested.
>
> […]Police determined Grier had the gun legally. He has no criminal record. And so he was not charged for the weapon.

Only the criminals can have guns, not the law-abiding people. Because criminals are victims of social inequalities, and the law-abiding people cause crime by having "more" than the criminals.

Health care premiums will increase due to Obamacare

September 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story in the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> Health insurers say they plan to raise premiums for some Americans as a direct result of the health overhaul in coming weeks, complicating Democrats' efforts to trumpet their signature achievement before the midterm elections.
>
> Aetna Inc., some BlueCross BlueShield plans and other smaller carriers have asked for premium increases of between 1% and 9% to pay for extra benefits required under the law, according to filings with state regulators.
>
> These and other insurers say Congress's landmark refashioning of U.S. health coverage, which passed in March after a brutal fight, is causing them to pass on more costs to consumers than Democrats predicted.
>
> The rate increases largely apply to policies for individuals and small businesses and don't include people covered by a big employer or Medicare.
>
> […]Many carriers also are seeking additional rate increases that they say they need to cover rising medical costs. As a result, some consumers could face total premium increases of more than 20%.
>
> […]In addition to pledging that the law would restrain increases in Americans' insurance premiums, Democrats front-loaded the legislation with early provisions they hoped would boost public support. Those include letting children stay on their parents' insurance policies until age 26, eliminating co-payments for preventive care and barring insurers from denying policies to children with pre-existing conditions, plus the elimination of the coverage caps.
>
> Weeks before the election, insurance companies began telling state regulators it is those very provisions that are forcing them to increase their rates.
>
> Aetna, one of the nation's largest health insurers, said the extra benefits forced it to seek rate increases for new individual plans of 5.4% to 7.4% in California and 5.5% to 6.8% in Nevada after Sept. 23. Similar steps are planned across the country, according to Aetna.
>
> Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon said the cost of providing additional benefits under the health law will account on average for 3.4 percentage points of a 17.1% premium rise for a small-employer health plan. It asked regulators last month to approve the increase.
>
> In Wisconsin and North Carolina, Celtic Insurance Co. says half of the 18% increase it is seeking comes from complying with health-law mandates.

When you require insurance companies to force all of their customers to pay for *new mandatory coverages* and you remove limits on payouts, it makes the premiums go up! Obviously – somebody has to pay for the happy-talk eventually.

Can we preach the gospel without using words?

September 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good article that answers the question. (H/T Benjamin from SA)

Excerpt:

> Francis of Assisi is said to have said, "Preach the gospel at all times; when necessary, use words."
>
> This saying is carted out whenever someone wants to suggest that Christians *talk about* the gospel too much, and *live* the gospel too little. Fair enough—that can be a problem. Much of the rhetorical power of the quotation comes from the assumption that Francis not only said it but lived it.
>
> The problem is that he did not say it. Nor did he live it. And those two contra-facts tell us something about the spirit of our age.
>
> Let's commit a little history (let me un-humbly draw on some chapters from my biography of St. Francis).
>
> First, no biography written within the first 200 years of his death contains the saying. It's not likely that a pithy quote like this would have been missed by his earliest disciples.
>
> Second, in his day, Francis was known as much for his preaching as for his lifestyle.
>
> He began preaching early in his ministry, first in the Assisi church of Saint George, in which he had gone to school as a child, and later in the cathedral of Saint Rufinus. He usually preached on Sundays, spending Saturday evenings devoted to prayer and meditation reflecting on what he would say to the people the next day.
>
> […]Another early biography talked about how his preaching was received: "His words were neither hollow nor ridiculous, but filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, penetrating the marrow of the heart, so that listeners were turned to great amazement."
>
> As a result, he quickly gained followers, and it wasn't long before he told his most devoted adherents to preach as well.

The article goes on to explain where this wimpy trend of not preaching using words comes from, and whether it matches the example of Jesus in the New Testament writings.

Jerry thinks that the Bush tax cuts caused the trillion dollar deficits

September 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

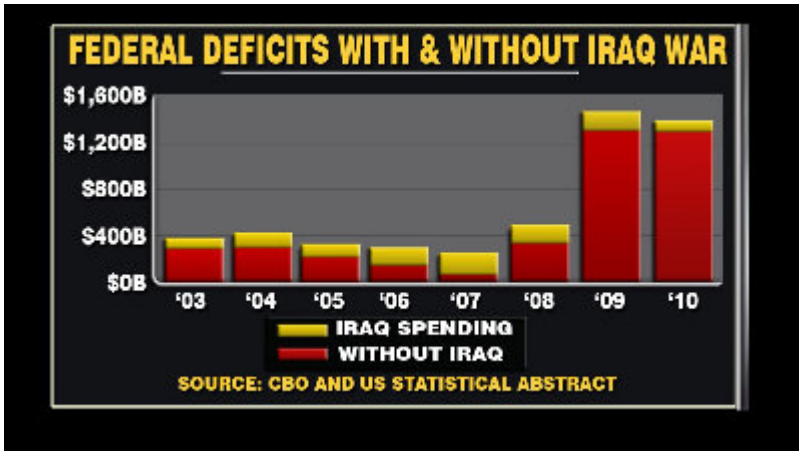

Democrats controlled the House and Senate in January 2007

Is he right? Here's the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Mr. Obama asserted in his January State of the Union Address that by the time he took office, "we had a one-year deficit of over $1 trillion and projected deficits of $8 trillion over the next decade. Most of this was the result of not paying for two wars, two tax cuts, and an expensive prescription drug program."
>
> In short, it's all President Bush's fault. But Mr. Obama's assertion fails on three grounds.
>
> First, the wars, tax cuts and the prescription drug program were implemented in the early 2000s, yet by 2007 the deficit stood at only $161 billion. How could these stable policies have suddenly caused trillion-dollar deficits beginning in 2009? (Obviously what happened was collapsing revenues from the recession along with stimulus spending.)
>
> Second, the president's $8 trillion figure minimizes the problem. Recent CBO data indicate a 10-year baseline deficit closer to $13 trillion if Washington maintains today's tax-and-spend policies—whereby discretionary spending grows with the economy, war spending winds down, ObamaCare is implemented, and Congress extends all the Bush tax cuts, the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) patch, and the Medicare "doc fix" (i.e., no reimbursement cuts).
>
> Under this realistic baseline, the 10-year cost of extending the Bush tax cuts ($3.2 trillion), the Medicare drug entitlement ($1 trillion), and Iraq and Afghanistan spending ($515 billion) add up to $4.7 trillion. That's approximately one-third of the $13 trillion in baseline deficits—far from the majority the president claims.
>
> Third and most importantly, the White House methodology is arbitrary. With

> Washington set to tax $33 trillion and spend $46 trillion over the next decade, how does one determine which policies "caused" the $13 trillion deficit? Mr. Obama could have just as easily singled out Social Security ($9.2 trillion over 10 years), antipoverty programs ($7 trillion), other Medicare spending ($5.4 trillion), net interest on the debt ($6.1 trillion), or nondefense discretionary spending ($7.5 trillion).
>
> There's no legitimate reason to single out the $4.7 trillion in tax cuts, war funding and the Medicare drug entitlement. A better methodology would focus on which programs are expanding and pushing the next decade's deficit up.

The article notes that the real problem is that Obama is *spending money like he has gone mad.*

> Spending—which has averaged 20.3% of GDP over the past 50 years—won't remain as stable [as revenue]. Using the budget baseline deficit of $13 trillion for the next decade as described above, CBO figures show spending surging to a peacetime record 26.5% of GDP by 2020 and also rising steeply thereafter.
>
> Putting this together, the budget deficit, historically 2.3% of GDP, is projected to leap to 8.3% of GDP by 2020 under current policies. This will result from Washington taxing at 0.2% of GDP above the historical average but spending 6.2% above its historical average.
>
> Entitlements and other obligations are driving the deficits. Specifically, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and net interest costs are projected to rise by 5.4% of GDP between 2008 and 2020. The Bush tax cuts are a convenient scapegoat for past and future budget woes. But it is the dramatic upward arc of federal spending that is the root of the problem.

Spending is the problem, and Obama is spending like a drunken sailor.

In fact, he added more to the debt in his first 19 months than ALL the other 19 Presidents COMBINED!

And remember, the recession is almost entirely the fault of the Democrats. You can watch videos of them telling the Republicans *not to regulate* Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to stop them from making mortgage loans to people who cannot afford them. The only other factor is the decision to keep interest rates low to encourage more and more borrowing – the "boom" in spending that necessarily leads to a "bust".

Upcoming “On Guard” apologetics conference in November

September 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here’s a quick reminder about the upcoming conference in Dallas, TX.

When:

- November 5th and 6th, 2010
- Friday: 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM
- Saturday: 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Where:

- Denton Bible Church

Speakers and topics:

- Tag-team of all speakers on apologetics
- Dr. Paul Nelson, “The Power and Promise of Intelligent Design in Biology”
- Dr. Craig Hazen, “Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?”
- Sean McDowell, “Equipping Young People with a Biblical Worldview”
- Dr. J.P. Moreland, “The War of Worldviews”
- Dr. Mike Licona, “Can We Really Trust the Gospels”
- Dr. William Lane Craig, “The Case for the Existence of God”

The main page is here.

The thing I like about this conference is that all of the speakers have participated in lectures and debates. Paul Nelson has debated on intelligent design, JP Moreland has debated on the existence of God, Craig debates regularly on the existence of God, Licona has debated Ehrman and others on the resurrection, and Sean McDowell kicked butt in his debate on morality and atheism. Craig Hazen hasn’t debated to my knowledge, but he does tons of lecturing, and people tend to really like his lectures. I once gave an entire set of lectures to my friends Andrew and Jen and they liked Craig Hazen the best.

So the point is that these guys are all really really good speakers! This conference should be a very lively affair.

Governor Christie schools teacher on financial realities

September 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I found a funny video on Hot Air and also on Ponder With Us.

I don't agree with Governor Christie on everything – he is the governor of one of the bluest states in the Union. But this is just awesome.

Here's more Chris Christie:

And even more:

He seems like a very authentic person and has a good command of the facts.

Stephen Baskerville's new academic paper on the family

September 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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An excellent paper explaining how the breakdown on the family isn't caused by fathers abandoning their posts. It's caused by specific government policies. And the conseequence of this crisis is that government size and power increases to deal with the problems.

Here is the PDF.

Excerpt:

> Unilateral divorce involves government agents forcibly removing legally innocent people from their homes, seizing their property, and separating them from their children. It inherently abrogates not only the inviolability of marriage but the very concept of private life.
>
> If marriage is not a wholly private affair, as today's marriage advocates insist, involuntary divorce by its nature requires constant government supervision of family life. Far more than marriage, divorce mobilizes and expands government power. Marriage creates a private household, which may or may not require signing some legal documents. Divorce dissolves a private household, usually with one spouse having done nothing legally wrong. It inevitably involves state functionaries—including police and jails—to enforce the divorce and the post-marriage order. Otherwise, the involuntarily divorced spouse will continue to enjoy the protections and prerogatives of private life: the right to live in the common home, to possess the common property, or—most vexing of all—to parent the common children. These claims must be expunged by force, using the penal system if necessary.
>
> Given that 80 percent of divorces are unilateral, divorce today seldom involves two people simply parting ways.10 Under "nofault" rules divorce often becomes a power grab by one spouse, assisted by people who profit from the ensuing litigation: judges, lawyers, psychotherapists, counselors, mediators, and social workers.
>
> The most serious consequences involve children. The first action in a divorce is typically to separate the children from one parent, usually the father. Even if he is innocent of any legal wrongdoing and did not agree to the divorce, the state seizes his children with no burden of proof to justify its action. The burden of proof (and the financial burden) to demonstrate that they should be returned falls on him.
>
> A legally unimpeachable parent can thus be arrested for associating with his own children without government authorization. He can also be arrested through

> additional judicial directives that apply to no one but him. He can be arrested for domestic violence or child abuse, even without evidence that he has committed any such acts. He can be arrested for not paying child support, even without proof that he actually owes it. He can even be arrested for not paying an attorney or psychotherapist whom he has not hired. In each case there is no formal charge, no jury, no trial. The parent is simply incarcerated.

And another one:

> The growing confrontation between the family and the state reveals that the relationship between personal morality and freedom is more than a cliché. It illustrates the direct connection between the breakdown of traditional morality and tolerance of governmental intrusion and control.
>
> Sacrifice for others begins in the family. The family is where both parents and children learn to love sacrificially, to put others' needs before their own desires, and to sacrifice for the wellbeing and protection of the whole. If such responsibility does not begin in one's own home among loved ones, it is not likely to begin at all. People unwilling to sacrifice for their own flesh and blood are not likely do so for the strangers who constitute their fellow citizens and country.
>
> Linda McClain writes that families are "seedbeds of civic virtue" and "have a place in the project of forming persons into capable, responsible, self-governing citizens."12 For the American founding fathers, argues David Forte, "The bridge from reining in 'private passions' to producing a 'positive passion for the public good' was the family's inculcation of public virtue."13
>
> But we can say more. In the family, children learn to obey and respect authorities other than the state—God, parents, extended family, and others who are not government officials: pastors and priests, teachers, neighbors, coaches, and other figures of civil society. By accepting these authorities, the bonds to which often are reinforced with love, children learn that government is not the sole authority and claim on their allegiance and that it is an institution that can and must be limited.

And another:

> When fathers protect and provide for their families, they will resist the state's efforts to usurp those roles. Under their leadership, families are a force for limiting state power.
>
> The single mother, by contrast, is ordinarily not predisposed to resist the state's encroachment into her family. On the contrary, she usually demands it. She is our society's principal claimant on a vast array of state "services" without which she cannot manage her children: services to keep the father away and extract money from him, services to feed and house and clothe the children, to baby-sit them, to educate them, and to control their misbehavior and criminality. As the state usurps the roles of protector and provider and disciplinarian, it becomes

> husband and father, and it has no incentive to limit its own power. Henceforth the state protects and provides. And the state demands obedience.

And one last one:

> Under the divorce regime the authority of fathers and parents generally is fragile, because court orders can readily be obtained to undermine or countermand it. Family wealth—traditionally used by fathers to obtain obedience from children and put limits on government—is increasingly useless for both purposes, because it can be simply confiscated by the court and handed to whomever the court chooses: the wife or children or lawyers or government. Children need not learn responsibility with money, because the government hands it to them unconditionally after confiscating it from their fathers. Differences within the family are settled, not by negotiation or compromise or intervention by relatives or church, but by government orders.

It's 17 pages of pure goodness. Marriage is better when you understand how subversive it is. Once you get away from the idea that it's not about you having fun, it's really quite an enterprise – a way of serving God by being unselfish and loving others.

Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?

September 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's the story on Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Two former Planned Parenthood employees-turned-whistleblowers have made stunning allegations regarding the abortion provider's accounting practices. In a case now pending in federal court P. Victor Gonzalez alleges that he saw millions in fraudulent overbilling to state and federal governments when he worked as Chief Financial Officer for Planned Parenthood of Los Angeles.
>
> Gonzalez alleges that after he reported the problems internally he was fired. While Gonzalez was still working for PPLA the state of California launched audits of various Planned Parenthood affiliates, and uncovered more than $5.2 million in overbilling at a single affiliate based in San Diego. Gonzalez claims that Planned Parenthood lobbyists intervened to stop other audits that were still pending statewide.
>
> In his court filings, Gonzalez has outlined several transactions he alleges show illegal activity. For example, in one year Gonzalez says PPLA paid $225,695.65 for Ortho Tri-Cyclen birth control pills, yet billed the government $918,084 – for a profit of $692,388.35.
>
> […]Planned Parenthood tried to have the Gonzalez whistleblower case dismissed on a technicality, but the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals recently denied that motion. Walter Weber, who represents Gonzalez, says it could take years to actually get the case to trial. Weber asserts that the issues outlined by Gonzalez are so wide-spread that they are akin to "ACORN-like corruption" – and that federal agencies, like the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, should consider de-funding Planned Parenthood of any government money.
>
> […]The most recent figures available show that the Planned Parenthood Federal of America and its affiliates received $349.6 million dollars in government grants and contracts for fiscal year 2008.
>
> Government audits of Planned Parenthood affiliates in New Jersey and Washington state have uncovered similar billing discrepancies. In addition, a second California whistleblower claim alleging improper ties between Planned Parenthood and its political arm has reportedly launched an investigation by the criminal division of the Internal Revenue Service, according to the *New York Times*.

ACORN, Planned Parenthood and teacher unions are three of the Democrats' biggest special interest groups.

Responding to same-sex marriage proponents who call you names

September 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A good post on tactics from Alan Shlemon at STR. (H/T Jojo)

Excerpt:

> Bigot. It's a nasty term. Usually, it's reserved for the most intolerant individual. Usually, it refers to closed-minded and angry people. And usually, it's applied to Christians who oppose same-sex marriage (SSM).
>
> That's right. If you're a Christian and oppose SSM, then hundreds of news articles, thousands of blog posts, and millions of people think you're a bigot. If your opposition to SSM is in any way connected with your faith, then your chances of being labeled with this term increase exponentially. Of course, you're still homophobic, but now they think you're also a bigot.
>
> What is it with all the name-calling? Have people given up on offering a reasoned, well-thought argument against our position? In many instances, yes. That's why they resort to name-calling. Plus, it's quicker and more convenient.
>
> Like them, I'm all about convenience. In fact, I have a quick and convenient suggestion for dealing with these verbal assaults. Next time you're called a bigot (or any other name), just ask for a definition of the term (at Stand to Reason, we call this the Sticks-and-Stones Tactic). It's just that easy.
>
> Now, they're not likely to offer the dictionary definition (a person who is obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his or her opinions), but they'll think of something. What you'll find is that asking for a definition can accomplish three things…

Read the rest here.

I have actually seen this done by pro-lifers quite a lot, because they have to face a lot of insults all the time. There really is no case for the pro-abortion position, it's just about people wanting to avoid the consequences of their own decisions. So you hear a lot of insults instead of arguments.

Last US-based lightbulb factory closes because of green regulations

September 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story here from the leftist Washington Post. (H/T Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> The last major GE factory making ordinary incandescent light bulbs in the United States is closing this month, marking a small, sad exit for a product and company that can trace their roots to Thomas Alva Edison's innovations in the 1870s.
>
> […]What made the plant here vulnerable is, in part, a 2007 energy conservation measure passed by Congress that set standards essentially banning ordinary incandescents by 2014. The law will force millions of American households to switch to more efficient bulbs.
>
> […]Rather than setting off a boom in the U.S. manufacture of replacement lights, the leading replacement lights are compact fluorescents, or CFLs, which are made almost entirely overseas, mostly in China.
>
> Consisting of glass tubes twisted into a spiral, they require more hand labor, which is cheaper there. So though they were first developed by American engineers in the 1970s, none of the major brands make CFLs in the United States.

Lights out on American jobs – not because of competitive pressure from free market competitors, but because of government regulators who probably have money invested in the companies that stand to benefit from this outrageous government intervention into the free market. The green movement is a scam. It costs jobs when you take money out of the private sector and put into environmentalist scams.

You can read about Al Gore's profiteering here, for example. And you can read more about what happens when governments waste money on green jobs programs. Or read about the Finnish car company backed by Al Gore that got US government loans. Or the US government money funneled to pay for a George Soros-backed oil drilling firm – in BRAZIL.

Are we all married to the wrong people? Does it matter?

September 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's a neat post I found. (H/T Doug Geivett)

Excerpt:

> "My basic philosophy is we have to start with the premise when we choose our partner that we aren't choosing with all the knowledge and information about them," says Dr. Haltzman. "However, outside of the extreme scenarios of domestic violence, chronic substance abuse, or the inability to remain sexually faithful—which are good arguments for marrying the wrong person on a huge scale, and where it is unhealthy or unsafe to remain married—we need to say, 'This is the person I chose, and I need to find a way to develop a sense of closeness with this person for who he or she really is and not how I fantasize them to be.'"
>
> That choice to work on the relationship can lead to a more profound, meaningful experience together. Dr. Haltzman offers the following tips to help us reconnect or improve our bond:
>
> - Respect your mate for his/her positive qualities, even when they have some important negative ones.
> - Be the right person, instead of looking for the right person.
> - Be a loving person, instead of waiting to get love.
> - Be considerate instead of waiting to receive consideration.
>
> To underscore the last couple of points, Dr. Haltzman says many people will put only so much effort into a relationship, then say, "I've done enough." But very few of us will do that with our children. "Instead, we say despite their flaws, we wouldn't want anyone else; yet, our kids can be much more of a pain in the ass than our spouses."
>
> Finally, he advises, "Have the attitude that this is the person you are going to spend the rest of your life with, so you must find a way to make it work instead of always looking for the back door."

Doug writes:

> Fourth, we should commit to having a successful marriage, and let go any idealistic notion of being married to just the right person and having a perfect marriage.
>
> Fifth, we should welcome a different conception of the values and rewards of marriage than what is so widely assumed today.

I think this is important, because really marriage is not about having fun every minute of the day. It's about making a commitment to love someone else self-sacrificially for the rest of your lives! You're not marrying someone to have fun with them. You're marrying them to be miserable amidst many trials together. Be wary about picking someone who always wants to go out and have fun. That person is not going to be reliable in a difficult situation.

A good way to test a person prior to courtship is to give them difficult things to do – ask them to support you in your work, or to help you with your other responsibilities (pets, car, taxes) or to do research for you on a problem or to guest post on your blog (or edit a post). Try to see if they are a giving person, whether they are sympathetic with what you are trying to accomplish for the Lord. Remember that you are not just picking a spouse, but a *parent for your kids.*

I think that we all need to realize that the point of marriage (and the point of courtship) is not to be made happy by someone else – it's to make someone who is trying to serve the Lord more effective and more comfortable doing that. You pick someone you think 1) is effective and 2) needs your support. It's a positive and negative thing. If the person is not effective, then you will feel used when you serve them. If they don't need you, then they won't appreciate you.

UPDATE: She's got more here.

US poverty rate rises record amount under Obama's leadership

September 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story here from the NY Daily News. (H/T Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> The U.S. poverty rate has skyrocketed by a record amount under the Obama administration, with one out of seven Americans considered poor last year, according to a report Saturday.
>
> The disturbing trend is an estimate of 2009 census data set for release on Thursday, The Associated Press reported.
>
> Underscoring the depth of the recession, a projected 45 million people – or about 15% of the population – were poor last year. In 2008, 13.2% of the country lived in poverty.
>
> The estimated 1.8 percentage-point increase in 2009 is the largest year-to-year uptick since the U.S. started calculating poverty figures in 1959. The previous high came during the 1980 national energy crisis, when the rate soared 1.3 percentage points to 13%.

More from Fox News. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> Demographers also are confident the report will show:
>
> - Child poverty increased from 19 percent to more than 20 percent.
> - Blacks and Latinos were disproportionately hit, based on their higher rates of unemployment.
> - Metropolitan areas that posted the largest gains in poverty included Modesto, Calif.; Detroit; Cape Coral-Fort Myers, Fla.; Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

Numbers don't lie – he's the worst President ever.

Christians stabbed and beaten in Muslim-dominated Indonesia

September 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story here on Fox News. (H/T Drudge Report)

Excerpt:

> Assailants stabbed a Christian worshipper in the stomach and pounded a minister in the head with a wooden plank as they headed to morning prayers Sunday outside Indonesia's capital.
>
> Neither of the injuries appeared to be life-threatening.
>
> No one claimed responsibility for the attacks. But suspicion immediately fell on Islamic hard-liners who have repeatedly warned members of the Batak Christian Protestant Church against worshipping on a field housing their now-shuttered church.
>
> In recent months, they have thrown shoes and water bottles at the church members, interrupted sermons with chants of "Infidels!" and "Leave Now!" and dumped piles of feces on the land.
>
> Local police Chief Imam Sugianto said Asia Sihombing, a worshipper, was on his way to the field when assailants jumped off a motorcycle and stabbed him in the stomach.
>
> The Rev. Luspida Simanjuntak was smashed in the head as she tried to come to his aid.
>
> "I was trying to help get him onto a motorcycle so we could get him to a hospital," she told reporters in the industrial city of Bekasi, 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Jakarta.
>
> […]Leading the charge against the Batak Christians has been the Islamic Defenders Front, which is pushing for the implementation of Islamic-based laws in Bekasi and other parts of the nation.
>
> They are known for smashing bars, attacking transvestites and going after those considered blasphemous with bamboo clubs and stones. They also pressured the local government early this year to shutter the Batak church.
>
> Perpetrators are rarely punished or even questioned by police.
>
> President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who relies heavily on Islamic parties in parliament, has been widely criticized in the media for failing to crack down on hard-liners.

I presented this story to Mr. Atheist-Man-In-The-Street, and he growled, "Mr. Atheist-Man-In-The-Street don't stick his neck out for nobody! You hear me, morality-boy? Nooooo-body!".

Is Obama correct to think that Republicans don't know what to cut?

September 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From David Freddoso, in the Washington Examiner.(H/T Nice Deb)

Excerpt:

> He finished speaking in Cleveland by urging his audience to "choose the future over the past." A good thing — we should move on to 2011 instead of repeating the year 2009. Anyway, here were his "they-have-no-ideas" remarks, in part:
>
> Just this year, these same Republicans voted against a bipartisan fiscal commission that they themselves proposed. And when you ask them what programs they'd actually cut, **they usually don't have an answer**.
>
> House Minority Whip Eric Cantor, R-Va., replies:
>
> "President Obama must have misspoken today, because I have personally sat across the table from him and suggested specific ways to cut spending. Furthermore, House Republican Leader John Boehner and I urged President Obama to work with Republicans to cut spending by using his authority to send Congress a "rescissions" package. In fact, we sent President Obama a letter twice pledging to work together with him on that effort. We still have not heard back – seven months later. It doesn't end there, through the YouCut program House Republicans have offered over $120 billion in spending cuts, only to be voted down by Democrats in the House. Finally, House Republicans Jeb Hensarling and Paul Ryan have introduced a "Cut Spending Now" package of specific cuts that would save taxpayers $1.3 trillion.
>
> "President Obama is entitled to his opinion, but he's not entitled to his own facts, and with that in mind I am asking him to either clarify or withdraw the accusation that he made earlier today."

If you want to cut spending, you vote for Republicans. If you want 3 trillion in deficits over two years, vote Democrat.

If insurance companies complain about Obamacare, they get sanctioned

September 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Want to know how the Obammunists are responding to businesses who complain about having to raise helath care premiums on their employees (or drop coverage completely)?

From Yahoo News. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama's top health official on Thursday warned the insurance industry that the administration won't tolerate blaming premium hikes on the new health overhaul law.
>
> "There will be zero tolerance for this type of misinformation and unjustified rate increases," Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said in a letter to the insurance lobby.
>
> "Simply stated, we will not stand idly by as insurers blame their premium hikes and increased profits on the requirement that they provide consumers with basic protections," Sebelius said. She warned that bad actors may be excluded from new health insurance markets that will open in 2014 under the law. They'd lose out on a big pool of customers, as many as 30 million people nationwide.

This sort of shows the level of economic ignorance present in the current White House. They require more things to be covered, like pre-existing conditions and covering children until they are 26, and then they expect that there will be no "unjustified rate increases" in the cost of health care plans. Huh? You might as well put a bunch of zombies in charge of the country. Who doesn't understand that if insurance companies have to cover more claims, then the cost of premiums will increase? It makes no sense that premiums would stay the same – the money has to come from somewhere!

Ed Morrisey writes:

> Rarely have we heard a Cabinet official tell Americans to stay out of political debates at the risk of losing their businesses. It points out the danger in having government run industries and holding a position where politicians can actually destroy a business out of spite. It also demonstrates the thin skin of our current administration, where Hope and Change means keeping your mouth shut and pretending that everyone is happy while businesses slowly circle the drain.

This administration is the most anti-business administration in history. We're losing jobs and wealth at a precipitous rate. They don't know what they are doing, and their threats only scare businesses even more. It's government by ignorant bullies.

Will Canada add polgygamy and polyamory on top of same-sex marriage?

September 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's an article from the American Spectator. (H/T RuthBlog)

Excerpt:

> While the United States is occupied with the federal challenge to California's Proposition 8, Canada has its own pending marriage case, which is likely headed for the Canadian Supreme Court. Canada, which redefined marriage nationwide to include same-sex couples in 2005, against the backdrop of successful provincial lawsuits against the country's marriage law, could be moving on to bigger things — literally. Specifically, polygamy and polyamory, as this case invokes the question of whether the government can continue to criminalize multiple-partner marriages. The case itself, initiated by the British Columbia Attorney General under a special provision of that Province's law, arises in the wake of failed prosecutions of polygamous sect members in British Columbia.
>
> Advocates of polygamy and polyamory seem to have an ally in the Law Commission of Canada, a statutory body of government appointees who propose changes to modernize Canadian law and report to the Justice Ministry. In 2001, the Commission issued a report, *Beyond Conjugality: Recognizing and Supporting Close Personal Adult Relationships*, that questioned the continuing illegality of consensual polygamy in Canada.

Polyamory is the end-game of proponents of same-sex marriage, but it poses even more problems for children:

> If we take seriously the idea that marriage laws have an educative function, polyamory raises red flags. On each of the core functions of marriage — promoting fidelity, providing a tie between children and parents, securing permanence for spouses and their children — polyamory seems particularly harmful. Both traditional polygamy and polyamory promote types of infidelity (though the former is of a more orderly variety), of course, but the chaos of polyamory blurs distinctions of parenthood more significantly than does a setting where a child has an established set of parents and lots of half-siblings. The ethic of "choice" at the root of polyamory does not bode well for permanence either.
>
> As complicated as the day to day existence must be for children in homes with multiple adults acting as "parents," the breakup of polyamorous relationships would be dramatically more complicated for children. There would be an exponential increase in the possible divisions of a child's time, of decision-making authority and demands for the child's loyalty, when the dispute involves three or more people than when only two disputants are involved.

> Clearly, when it comes to marriage, the adage “the more the merrier” does not apply.

I should note that research on legalizing polygamy is funded by the government in Canada. The 3 authors of that study are feminists, and like third-wave feminists, they oppose the unequal gender roles inherent in traditional marriage. Studies showing the harm caused by polygamy and polyamory presumably do not receive funding from the government, since those studies would not create domestic-dispute-resolution work for the government’s courts. Traditional marriage is bad for government, because it doesn’t require bigger government agencies, or more social programs. Traditional marriage has to go if government is to continue to expand its power.

At some point, I would expect the government to begin to regard traditional marriages and families with suspicion and distaste.

Glenn Peoples lectures on religion and public policy

September 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's the first clip of the Religion in the Public Square lecture.

He goes through the thinking of John Rawls, and explains how religious people can argue for public policies on the basis of religion. Basically, he is responding to the idea that religious people should not be allowed to participate in public policy debates because specific religious convictions and motivations cannot be used to defend any public policy, since they are personal and private.

And the rest:

- Clip 2
- Clip 3
- Clip 4
- Clip 5
- Clip 6

And another lecture on the New Atheism, science, and morality, where he examines the thinking of New Atheist Sam Harris and old atheist Michael Ruse. Glenn is pretty moderate, so I don't agree with him on everything. But he teaches me lots of new things because he is so darn smart, and these lectures were perfect to watch. This is intermediate to advanced material. I send the second lecture to Transparent Eye, that horrible secular humanist who sometimes comments here… and he liked it! He also liked the Mark D. Linville paper I linked to on naturalism, evolution and moral facts a while back, which was also awesome.

These lectures are ECM-approved.

Does government dependency make people happier and more moral?

September 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's a funny story in the UK Daily Mail. (H/T The Blog Prof)

Excerpt:

> A jobless couple rake in £95,000 in state benefits a year – and even have breakfast delivered to the door each morning, courtesy of the taxpayer.
>
> The money – five times the starting salary of a teacher – goes to unemployed Pete and Sam Smith and their ten children, who live in a rentfree four-bedroom house.
>
> […]The Smiths were moved last month by the local authority from a house in Bath, **which the landlord accused them of wrecking**, to the large house in the Bristol suburb of Kingswood.
>
> But Mrs Smith, 36, complained that the house was too small, the breakfast portions too stingy and said she could afford to buy her brood **only one Nintendo Wii games console** between them.
>
> She claims she is also forced to pay £100 a week to keep her five cats in a cattery.
>
> 'It's very cramped here,' she told the News of the World. 'We've been told we might not be given a new house for another nine months, which is ridiculous.
>
> 'The breakfast supplied by the council isn't like proper hot food. It's usually eggs, beans, tinned tomatoes and cereal, which isn't really enough for us all and **we have to heat it up ourselves**.'
>
> […]Mrs Smith receives up to £140-a-week child benefits for her children aged from four months to 14 years.
>
> The family also get disability living allowance, carer's allowance, tax credits and income support.
>
> The total with child benefits is £44,954. They then receive a £950-aweek bed-and-breakfast deal where the council pays for breakfasts delivered to their home, which comes to £49,400 – a total of £94,354 a year.

You may want to read this Arthur Brooks column that argues that it isn't money that makes people happy – it's the freedom to work, save and spend how you please. Arthur Brooks is the same guy who previously wrote a book showing that those who oppose redistribution of wealth give far more in charity than than those who support it. You can read about that in this article.

Is carbon required for complex life? Is the production of carbon fine-tuned?

September 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's an article by Fuz Rana at Reasons to Believe, talking about alternatives to carbon-based life. (H/T Tough Questions Answered)

Excerpt:

> Life as we know it on Earth consists of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, and sulfur (CHONPS). But could other elements constitute life as we *don't* know it?
>
> Not merely a discussion topic for science-fiction buffs, this question bears on origin-of-life discussions and on the search for extraterrestrial life. Carbon-based life requires a strict set of conditions. But perhaps life based on an element like silicon can exist under more extreme conditions. Few places in our solar system, and presumably beyond, can conceivably support carbon-based life. But for life built upon silicon, habitable sites may well abound throughout the universe.
>
> However, of the 112 known chemical elements, only carbon possesses sufficiently complex chemical behavior to sustain living systems. Carbon readily assembles into stable molecules comprised of individual and fused rings and linear and branched chains. It forms single, double, and triple bonds. Carbon also strongly bonds with itself as well as with oxygen, nitrogen, sulfur, and hydrogen.

Carbon serves as the hub of complex molecules. You can join lots of different things to it so that they stay put. But the bonds are not *so* strong that you can't break things apart if you really want to. That's what makes it suitable for making complex life, and why people talk about "carbon-based life".

The rest of the article explains why other kinds of elements like silicon and phosphorus are not suitable for creating life.

Is carbon synthesis fine-tuned?

Here's an article by agnostic physicist Paul Davies explaining why people think that the production of carbon in the universe is an example of fine-tuning.

Excerpt:

> One of the best-known examples of this life-friendly 'fine-tuning' of the laws of physics concerns carbon, the element on which all known life is based. The Big Bang that kicked off the universe coughed out plenty of hydrogen and helium, but no carbon. So where did the carbon in our bodies come from? The answer was worked out in the 1950s: most of the chemical elements heavier than helium were manufactured in the cores of stars, as the product of nuclear fusion reactions. It is the energy released by these reactions that makes the Sun and

> stars shine.
>
> However, while the details of stellar nuclear reactions are fairly straightforward, there is a notable exception: carbon. Most nuclear reactions in stars occur when two atomic nuclei, rushing around at tremendous speed care of the searing temperatures, collide and fuse, forming a heavier element. But carbon cannot be made this way because all the intermediate steps from helium to carbon involve highly unstable nuclei. The solution, spotted by University of Cambridge astronomer Fred Hoyle, is for carbon to form from the simultaneous collision of three helium nuclei.
>
> THERE IS, HOWEVER, a snag. The chances that three helium nuclei will come together at the same moment are tiny. So Hoyle reasoned that a special factor must be at work to boost the rare reaction and lead to our abundance of carbon. If not, then life in general, and Fred Hoyle in particular, would not exist!
>
> Hoyle knew that nuclear reactions can sometimes be greatly amplified by the phenomenon of resonance, similar to the way that an opera singer can shatter a glass by hitting a certain pitch. Carbon nuclei can resonate too, if the masses and energies of the colliding particles that go to form it are just right. Hoyle worked backwards — he knew the particle masses and energies, and he used them to predict the existence of a carbon resonance.
>
> He then pestered Willy Fowler, a nuclear physicist at the California Institute of Technology, to do an experiment to test the prediction. And sure enough, Hoyle was right. Carbon has a resonant state at exactly the right energy to enable stars to manufacture abundant carbon, and thereby seed the universe with this life-encouraging substance.
>
> Hoyle immediately realised just what a close-run thing this mechanism is. Like Baby Bear's porridge in the story of Goldilocks, the energy of the carbon resonance has to be "just right". Too high or too low, and the consequences for life would be catastrophic.
>
> So what determines the carbon resonance? Ultimately it depends on the strength of the force that binds protons and neutrons together in the nucleus. That force is one of the unexplained parameters of basic physics — one of the knobs on the Designer Machine if you like. If the strength of the force that determined the carbon resonance was only a fraction stronger or weaker, it is doubtful there would be observers in the universe to worry about the distinct absence of carbon.
>
> Hoyle himself was deeply impressed by this discovery. "It looks like a put-up job," he quipped. "A commonsense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics," he later wrote. A similar conclusion was reached by the Princeton physicist Freeman Dyson: "In some sense, the universe knew we were coming."

He doesn't accept that God is the fine-tuner though, so the article just concludes with "it could be" speculations, which is all that naturalists can offer against the standard theistic

arguments. Still, what he said about the finely-tuned synthesis of carbon is accurate.

Stimulus-funded plant produces $33,000 batteries that go 100 miles

September 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the left-wing Associated Press. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama celebrated the opening of an advanced battery plant in Michigan on Monday as a critical boost for hybrid and electric cars — and a success for his administration's economic stimulus program.
>
> But even as mass-produced advanced batteries start rolling off assembly lines, costs are high for consumers, and hurdles remain.
>
> "This is about the birth of an entire new industry in America, an industry that's going to be central to the next generation of cars," Obama said Monday in a phone call broadcast at the opening of A123 Systems Inc.'s lithium ion battery plant in Livonia, Mich.
>
> "And it's going to allow us to start exporting those cars, making them comfortable, convenient, and affordable. …. When folks lift up their hoods on the cars of the future, I want them to see engines and batteries that are stamped: 'Made in America,'" Obama said, according to a transcript of the call released by the White House…
>
> …Despite the fanfare, the battery industry faces many hurdles. Gas-electric hybrid vehicles represent about 1 percent of new vehicle sales, and many plug-in hybrids and battery electric cars are just entering the market.
>
> **Costs are high. The government has estimated that a battery with a 100-mile range costs about $33,000, although stimulus money could bring that down to $10,000 by the end of 2015.**

That stimulus money came from job-producing investors and private companies. The government wasted the money, after taking a cut for their unions.

Husband sacrifices his life to save his pregnant wife

September 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story here on AOLNews.

Excerpt:

> "It breaks my heart and it also fills me with gratefulness," a weeping Erin Wood, 31, told NBC's "Today" show this morning. "If it would have been a head-on crash, we both would have been killed and our baby," she said.
>
> Brian Wood, 33, was pronounced dead at the scene Sept. 3 after an oncoming SUV careened across the center line on Whidbey Island in Washington state, and hurtled over the roof of Wood's 2004 Suburban. His wife was in the passenger seat. The North Vancouver, B.C., couple's first child is due in early November.
>
> Her husband of five years slammed on the brakes and swerved hard to the right, ensuring that he would take the brunt of the impact, his wife said. She had been dozing and woke to see the Chevy Blazer racing toward them. She suffered a banged head and a black eye, which was still visible today, but is otherwise fine. The unborn baby boy was unharmed, she said.

The man was actually the lead game designer for a famous and highly-regarded game called "Company of Heroes", which deals with the heroic actions of soldiers during World War 2. The game was well-known for the heavy emphasis on heroism and character. The expansion to the original game was called "Tales of Valor".

And what about the cause of the car accident?

Excerpt:

> Jordyn B. Weichert, the driver of the Blazer, was charged Friday with causing the three deaths and injuries while driving in a reckless manner under the influence of drugs.
>
> Court papers filed Thursday also say that heroin, cocaine, marijuana, drug paraphernalia and a .25-caliber handgun were found in the Blazer after the crash.
>
> According to court documents, the crash happened after Weichert decided to take off her sweater as she was driving north along the two-lane highway in a 55-mph zone.
>
> Weichert's front-seat passenger, Samantha R. Bowling, 22, of Oak Harbor, held the steering wheel while Weichert removed the article of clothing, court documents show.
>
> During the maneuver, Bowling lost control of the Blazer. It swerved across the centerline, then back into its own lane as Bowling over-corrected, then back across the centerline, crashing into the Subaru, the State Patrol said.
>
> The impact instantly killed the driver of the Subaru, Brian R. Wood, 33, of

> Vancouver, B.C., and injured his wife, Erin E. Wood, 31, who is seven months pregnant.
>
> Also killed were two young men, Jacob D. Quistorf, 25, and Francis C. Malloy, 26, of Oak Harbor, who were riding in the back seat of the Blazer.
>
> Weichert, Bowling and Malloy were all ejected from the Blazer in the crash. Quistorf was wearing a seatbelt but was killed by the impact.
>
> Bowling suffered a fractured pelvis and Erin Wood sustained head injuries. She is recovering and her baby will survive.
>
> Bowling also faces a possible vehicular homicide charge when she is released from the hospital, the State Patrol said.
>
> […]Troopers who responded to the crash said they could smell the odor of marijuana around the Blazer when they first arrived at the scene.
>
> Weichert also told troopers she had smoked marijuana earlier in the day, according to charging documents.

I posted this because I think it is really scary how a good person just traveling to visit family can have their life snuffed out by punk kids looking for a good time. And I also wanted to remind everyone what men are really like when they're good.

UPDATE: In a related story, you can learn about the soldier who won a Medal of Honor in Afghanistan, read this story and watch this video. The Medal of Honor is the most difficult decoration to earn in the US Armed Forces. I'm a huge fan of Medal of Honor recipients, and I've read many of their stories like Butch O'Hare and Audie Murphy. Most people who win the Medal of Honor die doing so – a living recipient is very very rare. Reading their stories is sad, because there is usually a sad ending. But this one has a happy ending.

Is lenience towards women increasing domestic violence against men?

September 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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First of all, let's see what's happening with domestic violence rates.

Excerpt:

> Data from Home Office statistical bulletins and the British Crime Survey show that men made up about 40% of domestic violence victims each year between 2004-05 and 2008-09, the last year for which figures are available. In 2006-07 men made up 43.4% of all those who had suffered partner abuse in the previous year, which rose to 45.5% in 2007-08 but fell to 37.7% in 2008-09.
>
> Similar or slightly larger numbers of men were subjected to severe force in an incident with their partner, according to the same documents. The figure stood at 48.6% in 2006-07, 48.3% the next year and 37.5% in 2008-09, Home Office statistics show.
>
> The 2008-09 bulletin states: "More than one in four women (28%) and around one in six men (16%) had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16. These figures are equivalent to an estimated 4.5 million female victims of domestic abuse and 2.6 million male victims."
>
> In addition, "6% of women and 4% of men reported having experienced domestic abuse in the past year, equivalent to an estimated one million female victims of domestic abuse and 600,000 male victims".

Here's a typical case: (from the same article)

> Ian McNicholl, 47, has painful memories to remind him of the terror he endured when he found himself a male victim of domestic violence.
>
> His then fiancee, Michelle Williamson, punched him in the face several times, stubbed out cigarettes on his body, lashed him with a vacuum cleaner tube, hit him with a metal bar and a hammer and even poured boiling water on to his lap. That at 6ft he was almost a foot taller than her made no difference. He still has burn marks on his left shoulder from when she used steam from an iron on him. Williamson, 35, is now serving a seven-year jail sentence for causing both actual and grievous bodily harm.
>
> During the trial last year McNicholl told the court that, during more than a year of attacks and intimidation, he had lost his job, home and self-respect. He had been too scared to go to the police and had considered suicide. She was only arrested after two neighbours saw her punch him.
>
> Sentencing her at Grimsby crown court last year, judge John Reddihough told Williamson: "Over the period of time you were with him you destroyed him

> mentally and seriously harmed him physically, leaving him with both physical and mental scars."

Why is this happening? Well, even women who seem to be nice on the surface can turn violent when they placed under stress (like from work or pregnancy or their periods) that they are not prepared for, and when they perceive that there is *no cost* to becoming violent with a man. This is especially problematic when the man has no leverage in the relationship to negotiate with because of anti-male bias in social programs, police and courts. How is a man supposed to negotiate with someone who holds all the cards? She can just do whatever she wants, and the whole system is rigged against him.

Look at this news story.

Excerpt:

> Judges have been told to treat female criminals more leniently than men when deciding sentences.
>
> New guidelines declare that women suffer disadvantages and courts should 'bear these matters in mind'.
>
> The rules say women criminals often have poor mental health or are poorly educated, have not committed violence and have children to look after.
>
> 'Women's experiences as victims, witnesses and offenders are in many respects different to those of men,' according to the Equal Treatment Bench Book.
>
> 'These differences highlight the importance of the need for sentencers to bear these matters in mind when sentencing.'
>
> The controversial advice comes from the Judicial Studies Board, which is responsible for training the judiciary.
>
> […]The Bench Book tells judges that the problem 'consists mainly of violence by men against women'. It adds 'the reality is that some of the most physically violent incidents are committed by men on female partners'.
>
> The document also suggests that aggression against men by women is rare, saying that 'men and partners in same-sex relationships might also be victims of domestic violence'.
>
> […]Updated guidance on how to sentence female criminals was distributed in April in a new section on 'gender equality'.
>
> It told judges: 'Women remain disadvantaged in many public and private areas of their life; they are under-represented in the judiciary, Parliament and senior positions
> across a range of jobs; and there is still a substantial pay gap between men and women.'
>
> On women accused of crime, the guidance quoted Judge Baroness Hale, the only woman among the 11 at the Supreme Court, who describes herself as a 'soft-line feminist'.

> She said: 'It is now well recognised that a misplaced conception of equality has resulted in some very unequal treatment for women and girls.'
>
> The rules were prepared by a team headed by High Court judge Dame Laura Cox.
>
> She wrote: 'It is hardly revolutionary that judges should know of the matters central to the lives of those who attend courts and to aim to provide judges with that knowledge.'

And you can can easily see this in the divorce courts of Western nations where men are regularly taken to the cleaners. (Women get custody 90% of the time, 70% of all divorces are initiated by women, with 80% of them for no other reason than insufficient happiness – despite the fact that they made a vow to love that man *forever*). When you total up the costs of the marital home and property, alimony and child support, it really is prohibitive. The risks are too high!

And in more extreme cases you get things like this case.

Excerpt:

> Three Missouri women convicted of murdering their husbands years ago learned today that they will be released from prison on parole because of claims of spousal abuse.
>
> Vicky Williams, 55, and Roberta Carlene Borden, 65, will be released on Oct. 15, according to their lawyers and relatives. Ruby Jamerson, 57, will be released in 2013. All were serving life sentences from cases that date to the 1970s or 1980s.
>
> […]Borden was convicted in 1978 of conspiring with her lover to shoot her husband, Delbert, as he lounged in a chair in his Springfield, Mo., home. Jamerson was accused of hiring two teen boys in 1988 to stab her husband, Horace, to death in their north St. Louis County home. Williams was convicted of hiring someone to shoot her husband, Gilbert Lee, as he made his rounds as a security guard in a Chesterfield industrial park in 1979.
>
> Lawyers for the three women later claimed that they had suffered years of mental and physical abuse, including vicious beatings. (See the attached link for more details on the cases.)
>
> Many relatives of the slain spouses have disputed the claims of abuse and argued that the women were only conning their way to freedom.

The problem is that these charges of abuse are used regularly in divorce courts to tilt the table against the man – the charges of abuse are used to get custody of the children, but they *never go to trial.* The warrants for restraining orders are sworn out before the charges of abuse can be investigated, and custody rights are granted. Later on, the charges are *dropped*. But the damage has already been done – the woman has already been granted sole custody. Similarly, there is not history of abuse in many battered wife cases – the lawyers make them up after the fact to get their clients released. Sometimes, after only a few months in jail for murdering their husbands! And they get custody of their

children after a few more months. Or sometimes women just take men to court to have their daughters groundings overturned. And the courts do it.

Men understand these things, and it causes them to stay clear of relationships with women that are regulated by the state. So, you may get a lot of men hooking up with women for sex, but men will not *marry* women and take the chance of coming under the authority of judges who think that women are always victims and should never be blamed or held accountable – even if they make false rape accusations or kill their husbands (that they freely chose to marry!). Some women believe that violence against men is justified because they have been indoctrinated to perceive themselves as *victims*. The victim attitude allows them to blame men for invented wrongs even when women themselves are the aggressors. And this is why men don't commit to marriage anymore. It's not cowardice. It's that women have priced themselves out of the commitment market.

Related posts

- Barbara Kay traces the source of anti-male statistics used by feminists
- France passes law to jail men who criticize their wife's appearance
- How divorce courts put men in debtor's prisons
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- Why are sentences for domestic violence committed by women so lenient?
- How domestic violence against men is ignored by the feminist state
- Women are becoming more violent towards their partners
- How divorce laws discourage marriage
- Do men and women commit domestic violence in equal numbers?
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Woman recants false rape charge, freeing man after 3 years in prison
- Woman who made false rape accusation gets zero jail time
- UK woman makes EIGHT false rape accusations and gets no jail time
- New research shows that drug-facilitated "date rape" is a myth
- Lehigh University student could stand trial for false rape accusation
- Are women held to a different standard than men under the law?
- No charges planned for accuser in Hofstra rape hoax
- Some of the challenges facing men today
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?

What does the Bible say about using evidence when witnessing?

September 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Clay Jones of Biola University makes the case that the use of evidence when preaching the gospel was *standard operating procedure* in the early church. It's only the modern church that is kind of lazy about the way they talk about Christianity as personal preferences and feelings. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Intro:

> In 1993 I started working for Simon Greenleaf University (now Trinity Law School) which offered an M.A. in Christian apologetics (Craig Hazen was the director). Much of my job was to promote the school and although I had studied Christian apologetics since my sophomore year in high school, I decided I needed to see whether an apologetic witness had strong Biblical precedence.
>
> It does.
>
> As I poured through the Scripture I found that Jesus and the apostles preached the resurrection of Christ as the sign of the truth of Christianity.
>
> What follows are some of the passages which support the resurrection witness.

Here is my favorite verse from his massive list:

> Mat. 12:39-40: A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jesus is saying that the resurrection was deliberately given as a sign to unbelievers to convince them. (The Sign of Jonah)

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why won't Christians defend their faith in public?

A new study finds that too much television hurts your mental health

September 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Look at this Life Site News post.

Excerpt:

> A new study has found that watching more than 4 hours of TV a day has an adverse effect on mental well-being.
>
> The study was conducted by Mark Hamer, PhD, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London, and research associates Emmanuel Stamatakis, PhD, and Gita D. Mishra, PhD. It analyzed the association of leisure-time sedentary behavior in adults, measured by television and screen-based entertainment (TVSE) time, and mental health.
>
> The researchers looked at mental health survey data of 3920 men and women between the ages of 35 and 65 years, from the 2003 Scottish Health Survey. The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) and the mental health component of the 12-Item Short-Form Survey Instrument (MCS-12) were administered to obtain information on current mental health. Self-reported TVSE time, physical activity, and general health were also measured.
>
> Approximately a quarter of the participants in the study engaged in at least four hours a day of watching screen-based entertainment.
>
> After adjustment for age, gender, physical activity, smoking, alcohol, fruit and vegetable intake, the researchers found that participants with the highest TVSE level had the highest instances of mental health problems compared with participants in the group with the lowest TVSE level of less than 2 hours per day.
>
> The report concludes that, while sedentary behavior is known to be an independent risk factor for physical health, mental well-being also deteriorates with more time spent in front of the TV.

I don’t watch TV, but I really need to get more exercise! This study makes me feel really guilty.

John Stossel documentary on entrepreneurs in America

September 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's the intro video. (H/T The Blog Prof)

And the remaining parts:

- Part 2: The commuter vans entrepreneur debates against the head of the transport union
- Part 3: How government regulates and sues entrepreneurs who want to start and run businesses
- Part 4: How governments and big businesses force entrepreneurs to get licenses they don't need
- Part 5: How governments pass regulations to insulate lobbying businesses from competition
- Part 6: Q&A with some of the guests
- Part 7: Stossel's conclusion

This documentary explains how government regulations get in the way of people who have great ideas.

The best clips were 3 and 6.

More John Stossel stuff

- John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- Fox News documentary by John Stossel explains what's great about America
- John Stossel explains how environmentalism kills millions of people
- New study shows that greens are less moral than ordinary people
- John Stossel explains how the profit-motive drives innovation in health care
- Is government more efficient than the private sector?
- John Stossel vs Michael Moore in 20/20 health care documentary

Obama to appoint anti-business radical to regulate businesses?

September 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From ABC News. (H/T Verum Serum)

Excerpt:

> President Obama will announce this week that Elizabeth Warren, the Harvard Law School professor who first proposed the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, will be named to a special position reporting to both him and to the Treasury Department and tasked with heading the effort to get the new federal agency standing, a knowledgeable Democrat told ABC News.
>
> Warren currently chairs the Congressional Oversight Panel of the Troubled Assets Relief Program and has been seen by many on the Left as a force for greater accountability and transparency, and a check against the forces in the Obama administration more closely allied with the financial sector. Many officials in that sector eye her warily as too anti-business…
>
> Naming Warren as an assistant or counselor to both the president and Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner would allow the president to bypass a Senate confirmation process that could prove lengthy and contentious.

Morgen writes:

> The official White House announcement tomorrow will no doubt emphasize Warren's role in originating the idea for this agency, and her impressive academic credentials. (Credential number one – she's a "dear friend" of Obama's dating back to law school.)
>
> But expect there to be major fireworks over this appointment. Just how anti-business is Warren? Here is only a preview, from her blog on TPM in 2005 (emphasis added):
>
> The middle class is being carved up as the main dish in a corporate feast. Strugging with flat incomes and rising costs for housing, health care, transportation, child care and taxes (yes, taxes), these folks are under a lot of financial strain. **And big corporate interests, led by the consumer finance industry, are devouring families and spitting out the bones.**
>
> Well, I think it's safe to say she isn't a fan of this particular industry, if not corporations in general. But with the Consumer Financial Protection Agency charged with regulating everything from mortgages to credit cards, and the companies who market them, you would think it would be helpful to have someone with at least a semblance of impartiality heading it up.
>
> Apparently the White House disagrees.

This is why corporations aren’t hiring. They’re waiting for anti-business Obama to get voted out in 2012.

LSU Professor: Repeal of oil industry tax credits will cost 150,000 jobs

September 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Marathon Pundit.

Excerpt:

> Two days ago I participated in a blogger conference call with Dr. Joseph Mason, a professor of finance and the Hermann Moyse Jr./Louisiana Bankers Association Endowed Chair of Banking at Louisiana State University's E. J. Ourso College of Business.
>
> Since the Deepwater Horizon blowout began spilling oil into the Gulf of Mexico, Mason has been a consistent voice in support of energy industry jobs. A moratorium on drilling in the Gulf could would have devastating results on employment, Mason warns. But that's not the only threat to energy industry jobs. On Monday Mason released his latest study on tax policy, "Regional and National Economic Impact of Repealing the Section 199 Tax Deduction and Dual-capacity Tax Credit for Oil and Gas Producers."
>
> Dual-capacity allows oil companies to deduct taxes it pays abroad, something I was able to do when I owned a mutual fund comprised exclusively of foreign stocks. Section 199 allows companies to deduct up to nine percent of their net income derived from domestic oil production.
>
> Okay…*so what* if the oil industry pays more tax? Well, that puts our nation's energy industry at a disadvantage. Specifically, Mason argues, "Without it US-based [energy] firms compete on an uneven global playing field against Russian and Chinese firms that receive substantial state support."
>
> "The higher energy taxes would cost by my estimates," Mason added, "some $341 billion in lost economic activity and $68 billion in wages."
>
> Wages means jobs…Just in the next year our economy will lose 150,000 jobs in the next year if President Obama and the Democrats have their way on dual-capacity and Section 199. And they might. Yesterday the Senate struck down an amendment by Florida Senator Bill Nelson, a Democrat who sees the light, to keep Section 199 in place.
>
> As for job losses, where will they come from? Obviously in the Gulf states, but in others too. Texas will lose 38,000 jobs and Louisiana 13,500. But in other states–such as California, the painful effects will be felt as well: 23,000 lost jobs there, as well as 4,000 more in Ohio, Indiana will suffer 3,000 layoffs, and my own Illinois, which is not a big oil producer, will lose 4,500 positions. And that is just *in year following* the repeal of Section 199 and the dual capacity credit.
>
> I'll conclude with a quote from Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI), "You can't love jobs while

> hating the people who create them.”

I stole his whole post! I hope John doesn’t mind.

As for job losses, where will they come from? Obviously in the Gulf states, but in others too. Texas will lose 38,000 jobs and Louisiana 13,500. But in other states–such as California, the painful effects will be felt as well: 23,000 lost jobs there, as well as 4,000 more in Ohio, Indiana will suffer 3,000 layoffs, and my own Illinois, which is not a big oil producer, will lose 4,500 positions. And that is just *in year following* the repeal of Section 199 and the dual capacity credit.
I’ll conclude with a quote from Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI), “You can’t love jobs while hating the people who create them.”

How good are the atheistic arguments of Christopher Hitchens?

September 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I thought that I would go over an opening statement from a previous debate featuring Christopher Hitchens to find out what atheists are like in debates. I used his opening speech from his debate with Frank Turek. The audio from that debate is here, at Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 site.

Now the important thing to remember about a generic debate on whether GOD EXISTS is that there should be no mention of any particular God, such as the Christian God, and no mention of the history of any particular religion. All arguments that assume specific theological or moral doctrines or specific religious history are *irrelevant* to a debate on generic theism.

The question being debated is: does a God who created and designed the universe, who has all the traditional properties of God, such as omniscience, omnipotence, omni-benevolence, etc. exist? That is the question being debated in a "Does God Exist?" debate.

Frank Turek's case for theism:

Frank Turek made 4 *relevant* arguments for theism, each of which *alone* would support his conclusion, that God exists:

- the origin of time, space, matter and energy out of nothing
- the fine-tuning of the physical constants to support the minimum requirements for life of any kind
- the origin of the biological information in the first self-replicating organism
- objective, prescriptive moral rules need to be grounded by the designer of the universe

And he also listed 4 features of the universe that are more consistent with theism than atheism (= materialism).

- non-material minds that allow rationality that would be impossible on materialism/determinism
- the mathematical structure of the universe and its intelligibility to the scientific method
- free will, which is required for moral responsibility and moral choices, requires a non-material mind/soul
- our first person experience of consciousness is best explained by a non-material mind/soul

Hitchens' case against theism

To counter, Hitchens has to argue against God using arguments in one of two forms:

1. The concept of God is logically self-contradictory
2. An *objective* feature of the world is inconsistent with the attributes of God

The claim that God does not exist is a claim to know something about God, namely, that he does not exist. This claim requires the speaker to bear a burden of proof. In a debate on "Does God Exist?", Hitchens must *deny* that God exists. Let me be clear: Hitchens must defeat the arguments for the claim that God exists, and then defend the claim that God does not exist, and support that claim using arguments and evidence.

Hitchens makes 2 basic claims:

- There are no good reasons to believe that theism is true
- There are good reasons to believe atheism is true

So far so good. But what are his good reasons for atheism?

1. I personally don't like Christianity, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: I personally don't like Catholicism getting rid of limbo
   – Premise: I personally don't like Hell
   – Premise: I personally don't like some episodes in church history
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
2. The plurality of religions means that no religious claims can be correct, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: There are lots of religions
   – Premise: The religions all disagree in their truth claims about the external world
   – Conclusion: No religion's claims can be correct, therefore God doesn't exist
3. I believe in one less God than you, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: You disbelieve in every God I do, except one
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
4. Religious people are stupid and evil, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Religious people are ignorant
   – Premise: Religious people are fearful
   – Premise: Religious people are servile
   – Premise: Religious people are masochistic
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
5. Evolution explains how life progressed from single cell to today's bio-diversity, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Modern theists like Turek believe in Paley's argument, and argued it in this debate
   – Premise: Paley's argument was refuted by evolution
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
6. God wouldn't have made the universe this way, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: If God exists, then he would have made the universe my way

– Premise: The heat death of the universe wasn't done my way
– Premise: The extinction of species wasn't done my way
– Premise: The size of the universe wasn't done my way
– Premise: The amount of open space wasn't done my way
– Premise: The large number of stars wasn't done my way
– Premise: The age of the universe wasn't done my way
– Conclusion: God doesn't exist

7. Religion makes people do things that I don't like, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Some religions do suicide bombing
   – Premise: Some religions do child abuse
   – Premise: Some religions do genital mutilation
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
8. If you speak a sentence, I can repeat the same words as you said, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Anything that you say is good, I can say is good too
   – Premise: Anything that you say is bad, I can say is bad too
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
9. Atheists are morally superior to religious people, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: I act in a way that is consistent with my personal, arbitrary moral preferences
   – Premise: You don't act in a way that is consistent with my personal, arbitrary moral preferences
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
10. If I believe in God, I would have to submit to an authority
    – Premise: If I believe in God, then I can't do whatever I want
    – Premise: But I want to do whatever I want
    – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
11. I don't like certain Christian doctrines, therefore arguments for God from science fail and therefore God doesn't exist
    – Premise: I don't like the atonement
    – Premise: I don't like the virgin birth
    – Premise: I don't like the incarnation
    – Premise: I don't like original sin
    – Premise: I don't like the resurrection
    – Conclusion: Arguments that are built on recent discoveries from the progress of science like the big bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, etc. are incorrect, and therefore God doesn't exist

General comments about Hitchens' case:

- The form of *all* of these arguments is *logically invalid*. The conclusions do not follow from the premises using the laws of logic, such as modus ponens and modus tollens.
- Hitchens cannot complain about morality because he has no foundation for objective

moral facts. What he is really expressing is that he personally does not like such-and-such a state of affairs, based on his own arbitrary personal preferences, and the arbitrary social customs that evolved in the place and time that he finds himself in. On atheism, "morality" is just describing what people do – either individually or as groups living in different times and places. There is no objective right and wrong, and no objective way we ought to be. All statements are *subjective.* They describe what the speaker personally likes and dislikes. Just like taste in foods or taste in dress – which varies by individually, and is influenced by time and place ARBITRARILY.

Specific comments about each argument:

- Argument 1 tries to disprove God by arguing from Hitchens' personal preferences about specific Christian doctrines. Christian doctrines are irrelevant to a debate about generic theism. And there is no reason why God should be bound by the personal, subjective preferences of one man. In fact, the concept of God entails that his unchanging nature is the standard of good and evil. So, this argument doesn't disprove God, it's just a statement of personal, subjective preference.
- Argument 2: Just because there are different truth claims made by different groups, doesn't mean no one is correct. Mormons believe that matter existed eternally, and Jews believe it was created out of nothing. The big bang theory shows that the Mormons are wrong and the Jews are right.
- Argument 3: First of all, the debate is a about a generic Creator and Designer, not any particular religious conception of God. So the argument is irrelevant. Moreover, Christians reject Zeus, for example, because Zeus is supposed to exist in time and space, and therefore could not be the cause of the beginning of time and space.
- Argument 4: This is just the ad hominem fallacy. Hitchens is attacking the character of the theist, but that doesn't show theism is false.
- Argument 5: This argument can be granted for the sake of argument, even though it's debatable. The point is that it is irrelevant, since it doesn't refute any of Turek's actual scientific arguments like the big bang, the fine-tuning of the physical constants, the origin of information in the simplest living cell.
- Argument 6: Again, there is no reason to think that God should be bound by Hitchens' personal opinion of how God should operate.
- Argument 7: This is the ad hominem fallacy again. The good behavior of religious believers is not a premise in any of Turek's FOUR arguments for theism. Therefore, Hitchens' point is irrelevant to the debate.
- Argument 8: The fact that the atheist can parrot moral claims is not the issue. Being able to speak English words is not what grounds objective, prescriptive morality. The issue is the ontology of moral rules, the requirement of free will in order to have moral responsibility and moral choices, ultimate significance of moral actions, and the rationality of self-sacrificial moral actions.
- Argument 9: This is just the ad hominem fallacy again.

- Argument 10: This is not argument so much as it reveals that the real reason Hitchens is an atheist is emotional. One might even say infantile.
- Argument 11: Again, these specific Christian doctrines are irrelevant to a debate about generic theism. And Hitchen's subjective, personal preferences about Christian doctrine certainly do not undermine the objective scientific support for the premises in Turek's 3 scientific arguments.

So, in short, Hitchens lost the debate, and Frank Turek won. That's because Frank Turek talked about the external world, and Christopher Hitchens thought he was on the couch in psychiatrist's office.

Christopher Hitchens = Worst. Debater. Ever.

The only reason why unsophisticated lay atheists think Christopher Hitchens is so great is because atheism is not something they adopted on rational grounds, but on emotional grounds – as a kind of tantrum against morality. Lay atheists want to pursue pleasure without moral constraints. And they think that Hitchens' insulting style is the best way to bully and intimidate people into not calling their hedonism to account. They want to silence Christians so they can do as they please without feeling bad. And bullying is their preferred method of operation.

UPDATE: Commenter Jim writes:

> C-SPAN2′s BookTV will broadcast a debate "Does Atheism Poison Everything?" with Christopher Hitchens and David Berlinski this weekend.
>
> To learn more, see here and here.

You may also be interested in my previous post that assessed the arguments of atheist Richard Dawkins.

Victor Davis Hanson explains Obama's opposition to business

September 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From National Review.

Excerpt:

> Obama, the supposedly savvy politician, oddly has little appreciation of the psychology of business.
>
> […]Obama's policies are also seen as malleable and predicated on notions of social justice rather than on absolute adherence to the law — as in the reordering of the Chrysler creditors and the recent threats against health insurers who do not toe the federal line. Employers are human. Call them greedy, undeserving of their profits, and prone to party at Vegas — and in hurt they will sit on their money and wait such castigation out.
>
> There also seems to be little appreciation of how one creates wealth — not surprising, since Obama and his economic architects are mostly salaried elitists who have spent much of their lives on various tenured government payrolls. Almost none were entrepreneurs who had built businesses from nothing.
>
> The result is that Obama has little insight into the mentality of a businessperson, whose values and world view are antithetical to those of the salaried and tenured employee who accepts stability and a monthly check as he does the changing of the seasons. But to the self-employed, the world is an often hostile place in which a bad back, a chance fire, an unethical employee, a wrong guess, or a national recession can destroy years of hard work in a blink.
>
> Nor do the Obamians appreciate that the possibilities for wealth creation are infinite: The more rewards the audacious see, the more they take risks to turn ideas into new products and services. That energy enriches us all. Instead, there is now the return of the old peasant mentality of a limited good. With a finite pie, one slice to someone must mean one less to someone else. The relative wealth of a few, not absolute wealth for all, is what matters.
>
> Implicit here is Obama's progressive notion that wealth is unfairly allotted, ill gotten, and ill spent, and therefore should not be entirely one's own. Surgeons in countries without socialized medicine, he has told us, make money by gratuitously slicing off limbs or ripping out tonsils. High earners can go to Vegas or the Super Bowl without thinking twice about it, given the superfluity of their riches. "I do think at a certain point you've made enough money," the president pontificates — a variation on his earlier lament that the Supreme Court had never demanded "redistributive change." Where that "certain point" rests, we do not know, though we suspect it is high enough to allow vacationing at the Costa del

> Sol and Martha's Vineyard.
>
> In his mind, government simply cannot allow one person to make $10 an hour digging a ditch, and another $300 an hour sitting behind a desk closing a deal. The old tragic justifications of the inequality in compensation inherent in capitalism — one rises up the job chain, and recompense is not rigid and fixed; the successful entrepreneur takes more risk, may have greater skills and education, can create more wealth for others, is luckier, more motivated, or healthier, accepts more stress, does not necessarily want the more moral or enjoyable life — mean little to the therapeutic Obama. His Manichean world is fixed: suspect rich and noble poor.
>
> As a materialist he judges equity in life by income. Thus he sees the government's proper moral obligation not as ensuring equality out of the starting gate, but as guaranteeing that we all reach the finish line at the same exact moment.

This article is the top article on National Review right now. It's worth a look.

This post on the economic policies of Margaret Thatcher may also be helpful. Maggie cut taxes and busted up unions. And everybody – rich and poor – saw their standard of living go way, way up! A JOB IS THE ULTIMATE STIMULUS PROGRAM.

What is the “root cause” of poverty and inequalities of wealth?

September 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Heritage Foundation explains – it’s not what you think.

Excerpt:

> New data released today by the U.S. Census Bureau show the largest increase in poverty in U.S. recorded history. Under President Obama’s watch, an additional 3.7 million Americans fell into poverty in 2009.
>
> Buried in the Census report are startling figures revealing the principal cause of child poverty: the collapse of marriage. Single mother families are almost five times more likely to be poor than are married couples with children; overall, nearly 70 percent of poor families with children are headed by single parents.
>
> The big secret in the Census report is that marriage is America’s number-one weapon against child poverty. But marriage has been rapidly declining in our society as the number of women who have children without being married has skyrocketed.
>
> Historically, unwed childbearing was rare. In 1964, when the federal government launched its War on Poverty, 6.8 percent of births were to single mothers. Today, the unwed birth rate has soared to 40 percent: four of every 10 births are to a single mother. For Hispanics and African Americans, it’s significantly higher.
>
> This trend is extremely detrimental for society. When compared to children raised by married parents, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent delinquent and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; and drop out of school.
>
> Contrary to conventional wisdom, nearly all unwed fathers are employed, and most earn enough to lift mother and child from poverty. Tragically, however, few unwed parents marry.
>
> Many commentators will say teen pregnancy accounts for most single motherhood, but this is false. Less than 8 percent of new single moms are under 18. In fact, most unwed births are to young adult women in their 20s. The majority of unwed moms don’t have much education; most end up on welfare.
>
> If Americans are serious about reducing poverty and getting control of federal welfare spending, we must strengthen marriage. We can do this in several ways, beginning with reducing anti-marriage penalties currently in welfare programs and providing factual information to low-income communities about the benefits of marriage.

Do you know who is pretty good on this issue? Maggie Gallagher, that's who. She knows everything about why people should get married.

Excerpt:

> 5. YOU WILL EARN MORE MONEY. Men today tend to think of marriage as a consumption item—a financial burden. But a broad and deep body of scientific literature suggests that for men especially, marriage is a productive institution—as important as education in boosting a man's earnings. In fact, getting a wife may increase an American male's salary by about as much as a college education. Married men make, by some estimates, as much as 40 percent more money than comparable single guys, even after controlling for education and job history. The longer a man stays married, the higher the marriage premium he receives. Wives' earnings also benefit from marriage, but they decline when motherhood enters the picture. Childless white wives get a marriage wage premium of 4 percent, and black wives earn 10 percent more than comparable single women.
>
> 6. DID I MENTION YOU'LL GET MUCH RICHER? Married people not only make more money, they manage money better and build more wealth together than either would alone. At identical income levels, for example, married people are less likely to report "economic hardship" or trouble paying basic bills. The longer you stay married, the more assets you build; by contrast, length of cohabitation has no relationship to wealth accumulation. On the verge of retirement, the average married couple has accumulated assets worth about $410,000, compared with $167,000 for the never-married and $154,000 for the divorced. Couples who stayed married in one study saw their assets increase twice as fast as those who had remained divorced over a five-year period.

Yet another reason for fiscal conservatives to take social conservatives seriously. Marriage makes people more independent, and that means smaller government, lower taxes, and more liberty. What we need to do is block feminists from undermining marriage to serve their gender-neutral ideology, and stop socialists from undermining marriage with the welfare programs which incentivize single motherhood.

What is the best debate on the resurrection of Jesus?

September 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This one is my favorite of all.

And the MP3 file is here. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Details:

> Was Jesus Bodily Raised from the Dead?
> William Lane Craig vs. Dr James Crossley
>
> 7.30pm, Tuesday 6th March, SHEFFIELD
> University Student Union Auditorium, Western Bank,
> S10 2TN

Dr. James Crossley is an expert in the gospel of Mark, the earliest gospel. Dr. William Lane Craig is the ablest defender of Christianity active today.

ECM is the reason

I am posting this for ECM, because he is a deist, but he's been acting very strangely lately. He thinks "the divinity of Jesus can't be proved because we can't test it and only have fragmentary, historical, evidence for it". He accepts that Jesus existed, but not that the bodily resurrection occurred as an event in history.

He also seems to subscribe to an empiricist epistemology. He writes: "I'm totally content with not being able to know it all, and with knowing that our knowledge of such things will not be, and can never be, perfect."

And, he adds "my skepticism of historicity as proof, extends to most anything that has such fragmentary records, so that it doesn't seem like I'm inconsistent, because I'm not. For example, everything we know about alexander the great is based on writings by people 500 years after his death."

And he has no problems with Christians or what we believe. He believes in all the arguments for a Creator/Designer from science, including intelligent design, and he thinks that practicing Christianity leads to an objectively good life, whereas other religions like Islam do not. He just doesn't think that the evidence for the resurrection is sufficiently good. He requires more proof before he submits himself to the demands of a personal deity.

What would you guys say to ECM if you had a chance to say anything to him?

Communist atheist Mao Zedong killed 45 million people

September 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story here in the left-wing UK Independent. (H/T Ace of Spades via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Speaking at The Independent Woodstock Literary Festival, Frank Dikötter, a Hong Kong-based historian, said he found that during the time that Mao was enforcing the Great Leap Forward in 1958, in an effort to catch up with the economy of the Western world, he was responsible for overseeing "one of the worst catastrophes the world has ever known".
>
> Mr Dikötter, who has been studying Chinese rural history from 1958 to 1962, when the nation was facing a famine, compared the systematic torture, brutality, starvation and killing of Chinese peasants to the Second World War in its magnitude. At least 45 million people were worked, starved or beaten to death in China over these four years; the worldwide death toll of the Second World War was 55 million.
>
> …Mr Dikötter said that he was once again examining the Party's archives for his next book, The Tragedy of Liberation, which will deal with the bloody advent of Communism in China from 1944 to 1957.
>
> He said the archives were already illuminating the extent of the atrocities of the period; one piece of evidence revealed that 13,000 opponents of the new regime were killed in one region alone, in just three weeks. "We know the outline of what went on but I will be looking into precisely what happened in this period, how it happened, and the human experiences behind the history," he said.

Standard disclaimer applies for Ace of Spades link – prepare to read curse words.

Related posts

- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- Was Nazi torturer Josef Mengele influenced by Christianity or Darwinism?
- Was Hitler a Christian? Is Nazism similar to Christianity?
- Another way that the secular left kills millions of people
- Should atheists or Christians be blamed for communism's 100 million deaths?
- Who is more responsible for the mass murders of history? Christians or atheists?
- Contrasting the moral values of an authentic Christian with an authentic Darwinist

Former-leftist Robin of Berkeley explains the left's corruption of children

September 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Warning: this post discusses topics that are not suitable for young readers. Reader discretion is advised.

Her article is in the American Thinker. (H/T Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> Through Obama's election, some of the most ferocious and unhinged inmates of the nation's radical sexual fringe have been released upon the citizenry.
>
> This fringe doesn't want to be left alone. In fact, it will not leave you and your children alone. We're talking about a lethal combination of traits: for many, manic-depression, severe character disorders, and addictions, sexual and otherwise.
>
> The fusion of the three produces the most toxic of people, what I call "poisonous personalities." Empowered, they are now wrecking havoc in every place imaginable.
>
> Corrupting the public has been on the Left's agenda for decades. Beginning in the l930s, the Frankfurt School plotted the installation of Marxism in the West. They knew that a debauched citizenry is easier to manipulate.
>
> The school found willing henchmen in the amoral Left, which worships at the altar of pleasure: If it feels good, do it. Their hedonism has been legitimized by a host of mad scientists, such as Drs. Wilhelm Reich and Alfred Kinsey.
>
> A principal architect of the sexual revolution, Kinsey purportedly falsified evidence to support his subversive theories that everyone, babies included, is hyper-sexual and bisexual.
>
> Growing up, Obama himself was surrounded by people with no boundaries to speak of. Grandpa Stanley told lewd stories about women in front of young Barry. Stanley anointed alleged pedophile Frank Marshall Davis to be the child's mentor and tutor.
>
> Frankly, given Obama's early exposure, I wonder if he's desensitized to abuse. Can he see it if it's front of his eyes?
>
> This possible blindness may partly explain Obama's selection of Kevin Jennings as the Safe Schools Czar. Jennings, a militant gay man, has been "queering" students in Massachusetts for years.

Robin goes on to explain how the favorite allies of Democrats – the UN, the public schools, etc. have been going after children. And she links it to moral relativism, which is in turn a consequence of Christians who refuse to defend the existence and character of

God using mainstream evidence – which grounds objective morality. We made our religion about “faith” and people rejected that as delusional and instead pursued pleasure. And the pursuit of pleasure means that even if you do something wrong, you want people to approve of you, since being judged by others makes you less happy. Which brings us to indoctrinating children to approve of hedonism, which is a project of feminists and gay activists alike.

The left goes after children because they want to normalize their own views. Parents are the enemy. And that’s why Christians need to get serious about de-funding and abolishing public schools and enacting school choice. Every Christian who votes Democrat is voting to destroy the innocence of children. That’s one thing that redistribution of wealth rhetoric results in – it really means letting strangers teach your children how to sin. If you think that voting Democrat means “sticking it to the rich”, then you’re a fool. It really means that you won’t have a job, that you’ll be depending on the secular left government, and that your children will be taught from cradle to grave by people who repudiate your worldview and values. And since when are Christians supposed to be envious anyway? Leave the rich alone and worry more about who is teaching your children.

Woman recants rape charge after man spends 2 years in jail

September 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

Story from Calgary, Alberta, the most conservative province in Canada.

Excerpt:

> Charges against a Calgary man accused of raping a woman over a 10-hour period nearly two years ago have been unexpectedly stayed.
>
> Crown prosecutor Karuna Ramakrishnan issued the stay after the 44-year-old complainant, who recanted her story under cross-examination by defence lawyer Rebecca Snukal on Wednesday, failed to show up in court on Friday for further questioning.
>
> She had been ordered to do so by Court of Queen's Bench Justice Sandy Park, so Ramakrishnan could reconsider her position.
>
> John Francis Dionne, 43, had faced charges of sexual assault causing bodily harm, kidnapping, assault causing bodily harm and uttering death threats in connection with the alleged incident on Oct. 28, 2008.
>
> His first trial ended in a mistrial in June, because of an issue with one of the jurors, and was rescheduled for this week.
>
> The woman initially outlined in detail what she says occurred during the ordeal, but when cross-examined, she couldn't remember specific details.
>
> Then, when asked why she would accept a ride from the man she claimed had raped her for 10 hours she became frustrated and denied it even happened.
>
> "I'm lying about everything," she told Snukal.
>
> "Hurry along because I'm lying about everything. He's not a rapist . . . so there,

> that's it. End of it . . . he didn't rape me.
>
> "Let Mr. John Francis go free. He's not a rapist. It's over. That's all I have to say. Let him out."
>
> Dionne, who had been in custody since his arrest, was to be released some time later on Friday.

Her name has not been released – but his name was released. His life is therefore *ruined*. And she will probably not be charged, since it is very rare that women are charged for making false accusations. The man spent 2 years of his life in jail. Was there any evidence? She says she was lying about EVERYTHING. How could there be any evidence? And yet he spent two years in jail.

What effect will this have on men? What should men believe about women when things like this happen? What does this tell us about the court system?

Why do women make false accusations of rape?

One recent study listed three reasons why women invent false rape accusations.

Excerpt:

> A study of rape allegations in Indiana over a nine-year period revealed that over 40% were shown to be false — not merely unproven. According to the author, "These false allegations appear to serve three major functions for the complainants: providing an alibi, seeking revenge, and obtaining sympathy and attention. False rape allegations are not the consequence of a gender-linked aberration, as frequently claimed, but reflect impulsive and desperate efforts to cope with personal and social stress situations." (Kanin EJ. Arch Sex Behav. 1994 Feb;23(1):81-92 *False rape allegations.*)
>
> In 1985, a study of 556 rape allegations found that 27% accusers recanted when faced with a polygraph (which can be ordered in the military), and independent evaluation showed a false accusation rate of 60%. (McDowell, Charles P., Ph.D. "False Allegations." Forensic Science Digest, (publication of the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations), Vol. 11, No. 4 (December 1985), p. 64.)

And this also happens in divorce trials in order to get custody.

False accusations in divorce trials

Consider this article from Touchstone magazine, by Stephen Baskerville.

Excerpt:

> Today it is not clear that we have learned anything from these miscarriages of justice. If anything, the hysteria has been institutionalized in the divorce courts, where false allegations have become routine.
>
> What is ironic about these witch-hunts is the fact that it is easily demonstrable that the child abuse epidemic—which is very real—is almost entirely the creation of feminism and the welfare bureaucracies themselves. It is well established by

> scholars that an intact family is the safest place for women and children and that very little abuse takes place in married families. Child abuse overwhelmingly occurs in single-parent homes, homes from which the father has been removed. Domestic violence, too, is far more likely during or after the breakup of a marriage than among married couples.
>
> Yet patently false accusations of both child abuse and domestic violence are rampant in divorce courts, almost always for purposes of breaking up families, securing child custody, and eliminating fathers. “With child abuse and spouse abuse you don’t have to prove anything,” the leader of a legal seminar tells divorcing mothers, according to the *Chicago Tribune*. “You just have to accuse.”
>
> Among scholars and legal practitioners it is common knowledge that patently trumped-up accusations are routinely used, and virtually never punished, in divorce and custody proceedings. Elaine Epstein, president of the Massachusetts Women’s Bar Association, writes that “allegations of abuse are now used for tactical advantage” in custody cases. The *Illinois Bar Journal* describes how abuse accusations readily “become part of the gamesmanship of divorce.” The *UMKC Law Review* reports on a survey of judges and attorneys revealing that disregard for due process and allegations of domestic violence are used as a “litigation strategy.” In the *Yale Law Review*, Jeannie Suk calls domestic violence accusations a system of “state-imposed *de facto* divorce” and documents how courts use unsupported accusations to justify evicting Americans from their homes and children.
>
> The multi-billion dollar abuse industry has become “an area of law mired in intellectual dishonesty and injustice” writes David Heleniak in the *Rutgers Law Review*. Domestic violence has become “a backwater of tautological pseudo-theory,” write Donald Dutton and Kenneth Corvo in the scholarly journal *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. “No other area of established social welfare, criminal justice, public health, or behavioral intervention has such weak evidence in support of mandated practice.”

If we care about justice for all, then we have to care about this, too.

Related posts

- Woman recants false rape charge, freeing man after 3 years in prison
- Woman who made false rape accusation gets zero jail time
- UK woman makes EIGHT false rape accusations and gets no jail time
- New research shows that drug-facilitated sexual assault is a myth
- Lehigh University student could stand trial for false rape accusation
- Are women held to a different standard than men under the law?
- No charges planned for accuser in Hofstra rape hoax
- How feminism destroyed free speech on university campuses
- Some of the challenges facing men today

Public schools taking students to mosques to pray

September 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This first appeared on Answering Muslims.

Since then it's been displayed everywhere – from Neil Simpson's latest round-up to Verum Serum to Hot Air. Um, I mean everywhere except the mainstream media, of course.

Meanwhile, in New Mexico, Christian students face sanctions for exercising free speech.

Excerpt:

> A New Mexico School principal has penalized three Christian students with suspensions for giving fresh Krispy Kreme Doughnuts with Bible verses to each of their teachers, according to the public advocacy group Liberty Counsel.
>
> This school is already named in a pending lawsuit filed by Liberty Counsel on behalf of families and students who were bullied, and one suspended, for exercising their freedom of religion by distributing abstinence wristbands and plastic models of babies at 12 weeks gestation to bring attention to the life of unborn children in the womb.
>
> According to Liberty Counsel, about 25 Christian students in the group, Relentless in Roswell, decided to express appreciation for their teachers by giving them doughnuts. Since the closest Krispy Kreme shop was in Texas, some of them drove almost six hours round trip, stayed overnight, got up at 3:00 a.m. filled their car's back seat with fresh doughnuts, and got back to school on time to deliver the doughnuts.
>
> But when the doughnuts were passed out, they included a scripture verse as well. For that, one student was immediately sent home, and two others were forced to spend a Saturday morning sitting alone in the classroom for four hours as a punishment.
>
> […]The Christian group has also handed out sandwiches, hot chocolate, and candy canes in the past to the student body and faculty. Some also distributed rocks with affirming words like "U are wonderful' painted on one side and "Psalm 139" on the other, as part of their ministry.
>
> However, Liberty Counsel says that things came to a head when Relentless in Roswell decided to hand out plastic models of unborn babies. The incident, they said, ended up saving the life of a student who said she had planned to commit suicide because of the guilt she felt over her abortion. Liberty Counsel says that when she received a model baby with the scripture "you are fearfully and wonderfully made" she cried and prayed with the students.
>
> However students were afterwards pulled out of class and instructed by Principal Ruben Bolaños to cease their "Christian" acts because they had made their point.

> He is alleged to have said, “I don’t like Christians. All they do is smile at you and then stab you in the back.”

Sigh. This is just another example of the public schools – which are really government-run, government-supporting schools – marginalizing the values of Christian parents. We need better options – this system of schools doesn’t work for us. We shouldn’t be forced to pay for it.

Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper vows to end long-gun registry

September 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Here's the story from the National Post.

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper vowed yesterday the Conservative party "will not rest" until the day it abolishes the long-gun registry.
>
> […]Mr. Harper predicted the "registry will someday be abolished" because it will continually be opposed by the people who understand it–whom he identified as "rural Canadians, hunters, outdoors men and women (and) police officers."These people will never accept this registry because they know it is ineffective and wasteful. And the party I lead will not rest until the day it is abolished."

See, the interesting thing is that this is exactly the kind of issue that Harper can use to drive rural voters, some of who vote Liberal or Socialist (NDP), towards the federal Conservative Party in the next federal election. Canadian rural voters tend to be further to the left than American rural voters.

Look at how the left-wing parties are squirming:

> The Harper government has gone on the offensive this week in trying to draw attention to Liberal and NDP MPs who were once opponents of the long-gun registry but are now poised to vote in favour of it. Government House leader John Baird has said those MPs have been pressured by "Toronto elites" to switch their votes and will be held accountable by voters in the next election.
>
> In Thunder Bay, NDP MPs John Rafferty and Bruce Hyer, on record as registry opponents, have yet to declare their intentions for next Wednesday's vote on

> Conservative MP Candice Hoeppner's bill to kill the registry.
>
> The bill handily passed a preliminary vote last November, with the help of 12 New Democrats and eight Liberals. The margin this time is expected to be razor thin. The Liberals have been ordered to vote along party lines, while the New Democrats have said they have the six vote-changers they believe they need to save the registry.

And fiscal conservatives also hate the long-gun registry. It was supposed to cost 2 million dollars to implement, but it actually has cost over 2 billion dollars. What a waste! And with no demonstrable effect on crime rates, since law-abiding hunters don't commit crimes.

Pro-life protesters arrested and detained in UK

September 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story here in the UK Telegraph. (H/T Suzanne)

Excerpt:

> Andy Stephenson, 35, and Kathryn Sloane, 19, both committed Christians, were detained after a peaceful protest outside a publicly-funded abortion clinic.
>
> The Crown Prosecution Service will decide next month whether to press charges against the pair for causing 'harassment, alarm or distress' under the Public Order Act.
>
> […]The pair were arrested last month as they held a banner aloft outside Wistons abortion clinic in Brighton.
>
> Police were called by a member of staff concerned that patients entering the clinic felt traumatised and upset.
>
> Officers asked Mr Stephenson and Miss Sloane to take down a 7ft by 5ft placard depicting an aborted eight-week-old embryo – which they duly did but only to replace it with another banner showing a 10-week-old foetus.
>
> The pair were arrested and taken to Brighton police station where they were held until three in the morning.
>
> Mr Stephenson, a father-of-two and a carpenter, from Worthing in East Sussex, said: "We went to the clinic because we know what women are going in there for and it seems the obvious place to hold a protest.
>
> "We had no desire to be arrested but we sincerely believe this is a legal form of demonstration.
>
> "We were arrested around midday. We were taken to the local police station where we were treated like common criminals.
>
> "They took our fingerprints and put us in cells – they didn't interview us until midnight and we weren't let out until three in the morning."

The UK is a party dominated by secular humanists on the political left. Their desire for selfish pleasure is so strong that they look upon any attempt to disagree with them or make them feel bad about what they are doing as a punishable offense. Secular humanists are very clear about what they believe. They believe that life is about the pursuit of happy feelings. They have no concept of human rights like the right to free speech in their atheistic worldview. So if you interrupt them in their pursuit of pleasure and draw attention to the destruction they are causing, they will attack you. They believe that the strong have a right to crush and coerce the weak into serving their desires for happiness.

To a secular humanist, everyone else exists as a depersonalized object to be used and

thrown away. Other people have no value – and there is no such thing as virtue or a way humans “ought to be”. It’s is very much a Darwinian struggle to use the people around you in order to have the most happiness you can until you die. Morality is is just the fashion of the time and place – it’s not real. There is no standard of conduct. You obey the fashions of your place and time unless you can somehow break the rules and avoid being caught and sanctioned. Ethics is illusory on secular humanism. It’s just traffic laws and personal preferences.

The same people who oppose pro-lifers today would have opposed the abolition of slavery. The situation is identical. Declare a group of weaker, disadvantaged people to be non-persons, and then exploit them. Anyone who is pro-abortion (i.e. – who votes for left-wing parties like the Democrats) is pro-slavery. Period. The principle of abusing and killing the weak for your own happiness is the common denominator between both views. Only in a theistic universe do persons have human rights granted by God, like the right to life, and the right to free speech. In an atheistic universe, rights can be brushed aside by the strong.

Is belief in God explained by chemicals in the brain?

September 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason explains. (H/T Melissa)

As Greg often says, before you can show WHY a belief is false, you know to show THAT a belief is false.

For those of us who are stuck behind a firewall, you can read this article by Paul Copan instead.

Here's the problem:

> Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins suggests that our "extraordinary predisposition" to "insist on believing in God" is that we, like computers, tend to do what we're told. Young minds are susceptible to "infection" and mental "viruses" especially when they latch on to the bad or worthless religious ideas of charismatic preachers and other adults.[1] Anthropologist Pascal Boyer believes that the latest "scientific" developments reveal that our "central metaphysical urge"—an "irredeemable human propensity toward superstition, myth and faith, or a special emotion that only religion provides"[2] stands at the root of all religion. Author Matthew Alper considers humans to be religious animals whose brains are hard-wired for "God," though no God exists, and maintains that the "spiritual" is really the "scientific."[3]

And here's the solution:

> To say God doesn't exist because people believe for inferior reasons or motivations is to commit the *genetic fallacy*—to say that a view is true/false based on its origin. God's existence, however, is logically independent of how people come to believe in Him.
>
> Consider the strong reasons for God's existence *distinct* from human hard-wiring and psychology. The existence of valuable, morally responsible, self-aware, reasoning, living human beings who inhabit a finely tuned universe that came to exist a finite time ago is not plausibly explained *naturalistically*—namely, as the result of disparate valueless, mindless, lifeless physical processes in a universe that came into existence uncaused out of nothing. The better unifying explanation is a supremely valuable, supremely aware, reasoning, truthful, powerful, intelligent, beautiful Being. Such a context robustly explains—and unifies—a wide range of factors where naturalism fails. If God exists and leaves clues of his existence, then CSR's reductionistic claims about theistic belief lose their force.

There is a LOT more in the Paul Copan essay on cognitive science of religion (CSR).

And Michael Murray published a book with Oxford University Press on his solution to this

problem.

Excerpt:

> Critics argue that belief in God is unwarranted because it arises from evolved, hard-wired cognitive mechanism. But, if these psychologists are right, so are many (if not all) of our other beliefs.
>
> "Surely the critic doesn't want to say that any belief that is the output of our mental tools—our cognitive tools—is unwarranted," Murray notes, because "we can't reasonably think that *all of our beliefs* are unreliable." Further,
>
> > most of these critics think that our cognitive tools usually get things just right. To see this, just substitute the following words (or phrases) into the argument [above] and see if the critic would still find the underlying reasoning acceptable: human minds, rocks, rainbow, or science's ability to discover the truth.
>
> In other words, "Why do they think it's fair to single out belief in the existence of God as the one thing that turns out to be unreliable or unwarranted?"
>
> Hence, Murray notes, this sweeping argument is self-defeating. For if all brain-dependent beliefs are unwarranted, then the idea that "belief in God is unwarranted" is itself unwarranted.
>
> Dawkins and many of his peers think this argument shows belief in God to be "merely" a "by-product" of human evolutionary development. Theistic intellectuals like Murray conclude that "God instead, designed us so that belief in him is easy and natural. The human mind is naturally constructed in such a way that we have a tendency to form beliefs in God concepts, and even of a somewhat specific sort."

So if you believe Koukl, the argument commits the genetic fallacy. But even if you allow it to go through, like Michael Murray does, it's self-refuting. (You can read more about Murray's views in "Contending With Christianity's Critics" and "Passionate Conviction" – and don't worry about chastising him about his moderate views of intelligent design, I already wrote to him and beat him up about that, and he said it was just a bias / preference he had against intervening acts of fine-tuning *subsequent to the moment of creation*).

You may also be interested on the original "wish-fulfillment" objection, which Greg Koukl demolishes here. And another Greg Koukl article on whether you are your physical brain, or whether you are your non-physical mind and you *have* a brain.

Connecticut approves health insurance hikes caused by Obamacare

September 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Hartford Courant. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Connecticut requested a wide range of premium increases, which will take effect Oct. 1, to cover the costs of new benefits required by federal health reform. Higher prices mostly affect new members shopping for a health plan on the individual market rather than people who have group plans through an employer or some other organization.
>
> The Connecticut Department of Insurance approved Anthem's request without changes, including a boost of as much as 22.9 percent just to comply with one provision: eliminating annual spending limits per customer. But it's unclear how much more customers will pay because of the variety of plans and the complexity of other factors, such as a person's age.
>
> New provisions mandated by federal law to start Thursday include allowing young adults to stay on their parents' plan until they turn 26, eliminating annual and lifetime limits on the amount of money an insurer spends per customer and mandating that insurers cover the full cost of preventive services, such as mammograms and colonoscopies.
>
> The looming question is how much those new mandated benefits, along with rising medical costs, will raise prices for health insurance next year. Insurers will submit a new batch of rate requests in October and November to take effect in 2011.

Hans Bader reminds us of what else has happened:

> Employers like AT&T, Caterpillar, John Deere, and Verizon have already reported major cost increases due to the new health care law.
>
> As noted earlier, the health care law raises taxes on the middle-class and investors in future years. Obamacare will cause many harms, such as reducing life-saving medical innovation and increasing state budget deficits. It is based on accounting gimmicks that will increase the federal deficit, as even some Obama supporters have admitted — like David Brooks, who in a moment of candor called arguments for the bill "“unbelievable" and "insane.”"

This is what talking about "hope" and "change" amounted to.

Los Angeles spent $111 million stimulus dollars to create 55 jobs

September 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Patterico has found the audit of how Los Angeles spent $111 million dollars of taxpayer money.

Here's the PDF of the audit.

Excerpt:

> **CITY CONTROLLER RELEASES AUDITS OF HOW LOS ANGELES HAS USED FEDERAL STIMULUS MONEY**
>
> **$111 Million in ARRA Funds Has Only Created 55 Jobs So Far**
>
> Continuing her efforts to ensure that taxpayer money is spent efficiently and effectively, City Controller Wendy Greuel released two audits today of how the City of Los Angeles has used American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. The audits looked at the how the two departments that have received the largest amount of ARRA funding so far – the Department of Transportation (LADOT) and the Department of Public Works (DPW) – have used those funds and how many jobs were created. Los Angeles becomes the largest City in America to conduct an audit of how ARRA funds have been expended.
>
> DPW has received $70.65 million and created or retained 45.46 jobs, though they are expected to create 238 jobs overall (the fraction of a job created or retained correlates to the number of actual hours works). LADOT has been awarded $40.8 million and created or retained 9 jobs, though they are expected to create 26 jobs overall. **Overall, the Departments have received $111 million in federal stimulus funds out of the $594 million the City has been awarded so far and created or retained 54.46 jobs.**

That's how Obama stimulates the economy.

Obama supporter says she is “exhausted” from defending Obama

September 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From National Review. (H/T ECM)

The video:

Excerpt:

> One of the more memorable moments from the Obama CNBC town hall came when an African-American woman — a military veteran and mother of two — told the president she was “exhausted of defending” his administration:
>
> “I’m one of your middle-class Americans, and quite frankly I’m exhausted. I’m exhausted of defending you, defending your administration, defending the mantle of change that I voted for, and deeply disappointed with where we are right now. I had been told that I voted for a man who said he was going to change things in a meaningful way for the middle class. I’m one of those people and I’m waiting, sir. I’m waiting. I don’t feel it yet, and I thought that — while it wouldn’t be in great measure — I would feel it in some small measure.”
>
> The woman than talks about the impact of the recession on her family, her worry about being able to pay her two daughters’ tuition, and her fear that her family may be heading back to their “hot dogs and beans days.”
>
> “Quite frankly Mr. President, I need you to answer this honestly: is this my new reality?”

Wow. Hot dogs and beans!

John Stossel documentary on public school costs and performance

September 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I found this documentary on the Prof Blog.

I recommend that you watch Clip 4, then Clip 5, then Clip 6.

Part 1:

Guest Ben Chavis: (who runs a charter school)

- Ben explains how bad schools teach self esteem and victimology
- Ben explains how good schools teach knowledge
- Ben took the worst school in Oakland and made it the best
- Ben talks about the importance of firing bad teachers
- Ben talks about the importance of discipline
- Ben explains how students that miss school have to come on Saturday
- Ben explains how his school gets the least of money
- Ben explains how class sizes and teach certifications don't matter
- Ben says that public schools don't need more money to perform

Guest Andrew Coulson: (Cato Institute)

- public schools spend 4 times more per pupil (K through 12) than in 1974
- but the reading success rate has stayed the same

Part 2:

Guest Ron Packard: (K12 online school)

- using a public school curriculum delivered online
- 70,000 students are learning online at their own pace
- they have more poorer students and yet score higher than average
- flexible schedules allows more time for sports and activities
- the unions attacked the online schools even though they are better
- the politicians listen to the unions and limited the number of students

Part 3:

Guest Janine Turner: (Founder of "Constituting America")

- children need to learn about the founding documents of the USA
- children need to understand what America unique
- children need to understand the notion of limited government
- the founding documents are basic to understanding everything else

Guest Colin Hanna: (Founder of “Let Freedom Ring”)

- the Constution is very important for people to read out loud
- it’s also good to read it with others

Part 4: (A debate! Between Michelle Rhee and some lazy union thug!)

Guest Michelle Rhee: (Superintendent of Washington, D.C. schools)

- public school tenure means having a job life regardless of performance
- you can judge how teachers are performing look at test score improvement
- you can’t look at teacher performance reviews they are always good
- you have to look at the test score improvement year over year
- it is almost impossible to get a teacher fired even if they are awful
- Rhee fired lots of administrative people and costs went down
- scores went up, and now DC is no longer the worst school system
- more money doesn’t make students learn better
- DC used to spend the MOST money, and had the WORST performance
- the key to improvement is holding people accountable to perform

Guest Noah Gotbaum: (NYC Local School Board President/son of a union boss)

- teachers aren’t to blame! most of them are excellent!
- firing bad teachers is a bad idea! that won’t solve anything!
- the DC schools haven’t improved! test scores don’t measure improvement!
- we need more money! money will solve everything! it’s for the children!
- you’re scaring the poor teachers when you talk about firing them!
- Michelle Rhee is evil! Evil! She’s a witch! Burn her! Burn her!
- those gains in test scores are not real! You can’t measure results!
- test scores going up doesn’t mean that the students are doing better
- the causes are more complicated and systemic but give us more money!

(I snarkified everything the union guy said – he didn’t really say that stuff like that)

Part 5: (Q&A)

- Question for Noah: How much money is enough?Noah: well, other schools spend lots of money!
- Question for Ben: Where does more money go?Ben: its impossible to tell how much is spent on administration vs teachers
- Question for Noah: What about a voucher system?Noah: no! don’t let parents choose! that would deprive bad teachers of lifetime jobs!Noah: vouchers aren’t enough to cover a private school education!
  Ben: top private schools cost 10,000 a year less than half of NYC public schools
- Question for Andrew: Is there any legislation to provide vouchers?Andrew: yes there is legislation to create voucher projects

- Question for Ben: Are you cherry-picking the best students?Ben: every kid who applies is accepted there is no cherry pickingBen: we have more poor students than the average school

(I snarkified everything the union guy said – he didn't really say that stuff like that)

Part 6:

John Stossel:

- Americans spend way way more than other countries and we score much lower
- teacher unions are still complaining for more money
- teachers average 50,000 in salary a year for 9 months of work
- teachers make way more than chemists, computer programmers and nurses
- and school administrators waste tons of money on school
- we spend four times as much per pupil since 1974
- the real problem is lack of competition
- the public school system is a government monopoly
- monopolies are bad for consumers: less competition = high cost and low value
- monopolies create worthless junk that no one wants
- competition makes service/product providers accountable

Awesome! Down with government monopolies! The segment on online schools gives me hope – maybe there is a way to turn the young people away from secularism (= moral relativism) and socialism. This is another sign that there may be a way to turn this thing around if we can just get the government out of the education business and let parents choose schools that produce marketable skills. How did we ever let these union thugs produce worst test scores that poor countries with a billion times more money spent? Is this the United States of America? These unions are UNAMERICAN. They should be outlawed. First the public sector unions, then any private sector union that influences politics.

More John Stossel stuff

- John Stossel documentary on entrepreneurs in America
- John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- Fox News documentary by John Stossel explains what's great about America
- John Stossel explains how environmentalism kills millions of people
- New study shows that greens are less moral than ordinary people
- John Stossel explains how the profit-motive drives innovation in health care
- Is government more efficient than the private sector?
- John Stossel vs Michael Moore in 20/20 health care documentary

What kinds of experiences do women have after an abortion?

September 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's an essay about post-abortion trauma from Public Discourse. (H/T RuthBlog)

Excerpt:

> Many of these women cannot go outside for fear of "triggers"—the sight or sound of things that will bring back the abortion experience and cause panic attacks. Triggers include the sound of a vacuum cleaner (many abortions are done by the vacuuming out of the fetus from the uterus) or the music that was playing at the abortion clinic while the abortion was being performed. The sight of pregnant women, or maternity clothes, or babies, or toddlers, or school-children, or of the place (even the neighborhood or town) where the abortion took place can all serve as triggers. Other triggers are anniversaries of all kinds, especially of the abortion and of the EBD (expected birth date), and, in particular, Mother's Day.
>
> What is particularly striking is that most of the women who have these powerful emotional reactions to their abortion are stunned by them. They were not opposed to abortion; many were actively pro-choice. They were blind-sided by their own reaction. One woman lamented—and thousands of others echo her mystified anguish—"If this was the right decision, why do I feel so terrible?"
>
> Research indicates that there are various psychological or political factors that may contribute to this disconnect between the anticipated and the actual emotional outcome. Since this disturbing phenomenon is so widespread, and found among women from varied backgrounds and different parts of the world, it seems likely that the brain itself—in particular, the nature of women's brains—may shed some particularly useful light on this unexpected negative emotional reaction.

The authors go on to list various types of trauma. One of the co-authors is Dr. Paul C. Vitz, who wrote an amazing book on why people become atheists. Here's an essay on the topic. I've got the book – it came all shrink-wrapped! Weird.

You may also be interested in the New Zealand study on abortion and women's mental health that I blogged about before.

Is it wrong for women to complain about their husbands in public?

September 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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DISCLAIMER: Women are allowed to complain about abuse, addiction, adultery and abandonment to their friends, and they are are justified in doing so. This post is about complaining about picking up socks and not fixing the sink.

According to Ginny at Ruth Blog, it is wrong. And I agree.

Excerpt:

> Does this sound familiar? "My husband drives me *crazy*! How hard can it be to pick up a sock and put it in the laundry? I mean, it's not like he's actually *busy*–he hasn't fixed the leaky sink that I mentioned two *months* ago, or mowed the lawn, or cleaned up that *mess* in the garage. And now that football has started, I never see him…"
>
> I used to join in with this sort of talk. I considered it "casual complaining"–nothing serious, certainly. Sometimes I would even trot out my husband's faults in an effort to sympathetically let a girlfriend know that *her* husband isn't all that bad–*all* husbands "do stuff like that". I hoped it would make her see that it really wasn't worth complaining about. But that probably wasn't the effect; my "complaining" ended up justifying her complaining.
>
> Then something I heard (on the radio? at a seminar?) made me think about what I was doing to my husband. It was terrible–taking private faults and making them public; taking small lapses and making them seem big; taking a man whom I love and respect, and denigrating him, belittling him. And worst of all, I was doing it where he couldn't even defend himself. Just terrible.
>
> So I stopped. It wasn't too hard, if I caught myself starting to talk that way. The problem was that often times I wouldn't even *notice* what I was doing until I was already well into it. Now it has been many years, and I believe it has really made a difference. I found that changing my words changed my attitude; changing my attitude changed my actions; changing my actions changed his attitude; changing his attitude changed his actions. Win, win, win!!!

Wow, now that woman will have a husband who will love her to the ends of the Earth. And for good reason!

Here's an excerpt from Dr. Laura's book about the care and feeding of husbands:

> "A good man is hard to find, not to keep." That sentence should really make you stop and think. As a radio talk-show host/psychotherapist, I've got to tell you how remarkably true and sad it is that so many women struggle to hold on to some jerk, keep giving an abusive or philandering man yet another chance, have

> unprotected sex with some guy while barely knowing his last name, agree to shack up and risk making babies with some opportunist or loser, all in a pathetic version of a pursuit for love, but will resent the hell out of treating a decent, hardworking, caring husband with the thoughtfulness, attention, respect, and affection he needs to be content.
>
> It boggles my mind.
>
> What further puts me in boggle overdrive is how seemingly oblivious and insensitive many women are to how destructive they are being to their men and consequently to their marriages. Women will call me asking me if it's alright to go off on extended vacations "without him" when they want some freedom or R&R, or if it's okay to cut him off from sex because they're annoyed about something or just too tired from their busy day, or if they really have to make him a dinner when he gets home from work because it's just too tedious to plan meals, or if it's okay to keep stuff from him (like family or financial issues) because his input is unnecessary, or if they're really obligated to spend time with his family (in-laws or stepkids), or if they really have to show interest in his hobbies when they're bored silly by them, or — well, you get the idea.

I spent the weekend listening to Dr. Laura's "The Proper Caring and Feeding of Husbands" as well, so I am really positive about women in general right now. This book is the best book for women to read to know how to handle themselves around men. The fact that so many women bought it says a lot about women.

What are my thoughts? I really don't think that women should say hurtful things about men who love them in public or even in private to other women. Yet so many (all?) of them seem to think that it is normal. But it really hurts men emotionally. Needing approval and encouragement from the woman he loves is the man's biggest emotional need. I think men do a lot of things to protect, provide and lead that women just don't appreciate – probably because they don't understand how a man's role really is.

I think that there are times when some women have a double-standard that allows them to complain and complain about men, but if they do anything wrong, they just shift the blame to someone else, (i.e. – men), usually by dredging up things that happened sometime around the Hadean era, when the Earth was still cooling. That is really unattractive and something men need to test for during courtship. Men should always ask women for help, always hold them accountable, and always give them responsibilities. See how seriously the woman takes her obligations to other people.

MCSpinster, you are not allowed to comment on this post.

Why does God allow Christians to suffer?

September 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Stan at Birds of the Air blog.

Excerpt:

> The oh-so-common question hangs out there all the time: "Why do bad things happen to good people?" My canned answer is, I believe, true — "They don't. There are no good people." — but I have to admit that it's unsatisfying. I mean, aren't Christians "justified" — declared righteous? Sure, Jesus said, "No one is good except God alone" but it's also true that "For our sake He made Him to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21). "Okay … sure … we are not good, but we are *declared* good, so, Stan, how about a genuine answer?" Can we actually provide an answer to the question? I think so.
>
> First, I need to be careful here. God has specific reasons for specific things and I would not want to try to delve into His specific ideas because, well, He hasn't seen fit to share them with me. So I won't be doing specifics. On the other hand, the Bible is not mute on the subject. So let's go with what we *can* know. We know, for instance, that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him. It naturally follows, then, that "bad things" are not, in the final analysis, bad. So remember that what we're talking about is the unpleasant, the uncomfortable, the painful — suffering — but not *bad*. Still, what's good about suffering? Well, here's a list of things I found in my Bible. You check yours and see if you have any of these, too.

He has a list of six possible reasons, and here is my favorite:

> 3. Your individual troubles provide a platform from which you can comfort others. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our affliction, **so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction**, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort, too" (2 Cor 1:3-5).

This is a big one for me, because I am such a good risk calculator and non-conformist that I avoid a lot of suffering simply by not doing anything dumb just because other people are doing stupid things. But once in a while, the opportunity comes along to suffer for righteousness sake. Then you have to take that opportunity to serve and the benefit you get is that your heart softens to others who are hurting, but who are accountable and repentant. What good is it to make good decisions if you don't then turn to others who want to follow Jesus and help them?

The best reason why God allows suffering, I think, is so that we can follow Christ by imitating him in self-sacrificial love. It is hard to love someone self-sacrificially, especially when they neither recognize nor approve of the sacrifice that is being made to love them, but they just treat it as an entitlement, or worse – as a unnecessary brake on their selfish pursuit of pleasure.

I was once chatting with the brilliant and complicated ECM about whether I would allow myself to be eaten by ferocious lions for my faith, and I told him that although I would hope to be faithful, that physical courage was not one of my strengths, and I would probably cave. I just don't like violence or the sight of blood. I didn't grow up that way. But I did say this. I don't get the opportunity to die for my faith every day. But every day I have the opportunity to die a little to myself by saying no to the temptation to just dump my faith and do whatever I want to be happy.

There is no shortage of time and money for me to pursue pleasure. And sometimes, I look around at what has happened to me (chastity, loneliness), and I wonder where God is. Doesn't he know that I want to be husband and father? Why did he create me in this miserable time of feminism, socialism, and statism? There is a temptation to want to forget the obligations of that vertical relationship and just make myself happy here and now. But I think that part of the Christian life is being the friend of Jesus even when things look bleak.

And things will never be perfect. There is no way to go back in time and fix the troubles that I have had struggling to be faithful in a world that doesn't want authentic Christianity. There were no Christians to comfort me and encourage me when I was younger, and there still aren't many who help now. Those days are gone forever. And the only thing left for me now is to stand up again, spit out blood and teeth, pick up my sword and shield, and get back on my horse. And that is going to happen every day until I die.

That is what it means to be a Christian. You won't get your way. You wont' be happy. You won't be like everyone else. You are always going to be different. Life is not going to be perfect. People are not going to like you for being a Christian. Especially not in the church! But when you suffer all of this, you will know what it feels like to follow and imitate Jesus, and that makes the friendship closer.

I think it's important to be smart about faith. When I entered my relationship with Jesus, I knew that there would be challenges. I resolved to avoid sin as much as I could, to avoid peer pressure, to work hard, to save money, and to study apologetics. Obviously, no one is perfect. But I wanted to be ready for everything that life might throw at me. I expect to be challenged. I expected to suffer. I have prepared by becoming stronger and stronger. There will be no retreat. No surrender. I will go down with this ship. Faith is a very meticulous thing. You plan it out, and you plan on what you need to do to keep the faith. You don't wait for the last minute and then hope to succeed by magic. Dig your trenches. Erect your fortifications. Protect your supply lines. Prepare your reserves for a counter-attack.

1 Peter 3:14-17:

[14]But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.”

[15]But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

[16]keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

[17]It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Here’s my best post on the problem of evil, if you want more.

And my best post on why self-denial as part of a friendship with Jesus is the condition for going to Heaven.

Rutgers professor of ethics calls for extermination of all carnivores

September 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the New York Times. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Here, then, is where matters stand thus far. It would be good to prevent the vast suffering and countless violent deaths caused by predation. There is therefore one reason to think that it would be instrumentally good if predatory animal species were to become extinct and be replaced by new herbivorous species, provided that this could occur without ecological upheaval involving more harm than would be prevented by the end of predation. The claim that existing animal species are sacred or irreplaceable is subverted by the moral irrelevance of the criteria for individuating animal species. **I am therefore inclined to embrace the heretical conclusion that we have reason to desire the extinction of all carnivorous species**, and I await the usual fate of heretics when this article is opened to comment.

Here is his bio:

> *Jeff McMahan is professor of philosophy at Rutgers University and a visiting research collaborator at the Center for Human Values at Princeton University.*

Ah yes. The Center for Human Values. That's the same group that is headed up by famous ethicist Peter Singer, who advocates infanticide. One can only assume that this loon is an atheist and a secular humanist.

Health insurers are dropping coverage of children

September 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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You know those mandates that force insurance companies to cover children of adults until they are 26 years old? And the ones that forbid rejecting children who have pre-existing conditions? Yeah that costs insurance companies money. Can you believe that? Health care costs money! It costs more money to cover people for mandated coverages! Who could have foreseen that? Not Obama and his merry band of tenured Ivy League hermits, who have never held private sector jobs in their entire lives.

Story from The Hill. (H/T Health Care BS via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Health plans in at least four states have announced they're dropping children's coverage just days ahead of new rules created by the healthcare reform law, according to the liberal grassroots group Health Care for America Now (HCAN).
>
> The new healthcare law forbids insurers from turning down children with pre-existing conditions starting Thursday, one of several reforms Democrats are eager to highlight this week as they try to build support for the law ahead of the mid-term elections. But news of insurers dropping their plans as a result of the new law has thrown a damper on that strategy and prompted fierce push-back from the administration's allies at HCAN.
>
> The announcement could lead to higher costs for some parents who are buying separate coverage for themselves and their children at lower cost than the family coverage that's available to them.
>
> […]Health plans and state insurance commissioners in July raised concerns that the new rules could lead some insurers to stop children-only coverage because families could wait until their children get sick to buy coverage.
>
> […]…insurers including WellPoint and CoventryOne have announced in recent days that they're dropping children's coverage in California, Colorado, Ohio and Missouri, according to HCAN.

Yeah, insurance companies don't like being forced to add coverages, (= risk of having to pay claims), while keeping premiums the same. It increases their losses. And if they can't raise premiums to cover the increased exposure to claims on these additional coverages, then they go out of business. And then you get to pay for your own health care costs out-of-pocket.

The only person who did not see this coming is Barack Obama. He understands less about economics than my keyboard.

Here is my previous post about Connecticut raising their health premiums 20% or more to respond to Obamacare.

Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?

September 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Please click this link and read this post by an Australian medical doctor. (H/T Mysterious C)

Here's the graph which is based on data from the National Survey of Family Growth, 2002:

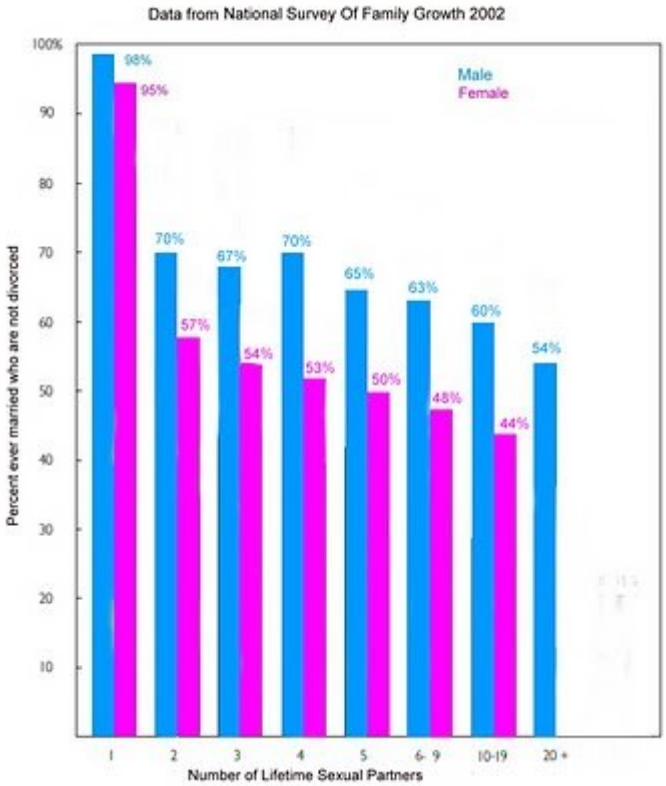

Marriage stability vs. number of lifetime sexual partners
(Click for larger image)

This shows why it is important for men to marry virgins, and also to be virgins themselves.

And in another post he analyzes another independent study that reached the same conclusion:

> The results presented in this article replicate findings from previous research: Women who cohabit prior to marriage or who have premarital sex have an increased likelihood of marital disruption. Considering the joint effects of premarital cohabitation and premarital sex, as well as histories of premarital relationships, extends previous research. **The most salient finding from this analysis is that women whose intimate premarital relationships are limited to their husbands—either premarital sex alone or premarital cohabitation—do not experience an increased risk of divorce. It is only women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship who**

> **have an elevated risk of marital disruption. This effect is strongest for women who have multiple premarital coresidental unions.** These findings are consistent with the notion that premarital sex and cohabitation have become part of the normal courtship pattern in the United States. They do not indicate selectivity on characteristics linked to the risk of divorce and do not provide couples with experiences that lessen the stability of marriage.
>
> […]This limitation notwithstanding, the results presented here should shift attention away from research that focuses on the selection of individuals into cohabitation and premarital sex to a focus on the selection of individuals who do not marry the individuals with whom they first cohabit or initiate first sex. It may well be the case that, irrespective of the legal status of the relationship, the relevant distinction to make is between people who form multiple relationships and people who form a single, longer lasting relationship.

The graph:

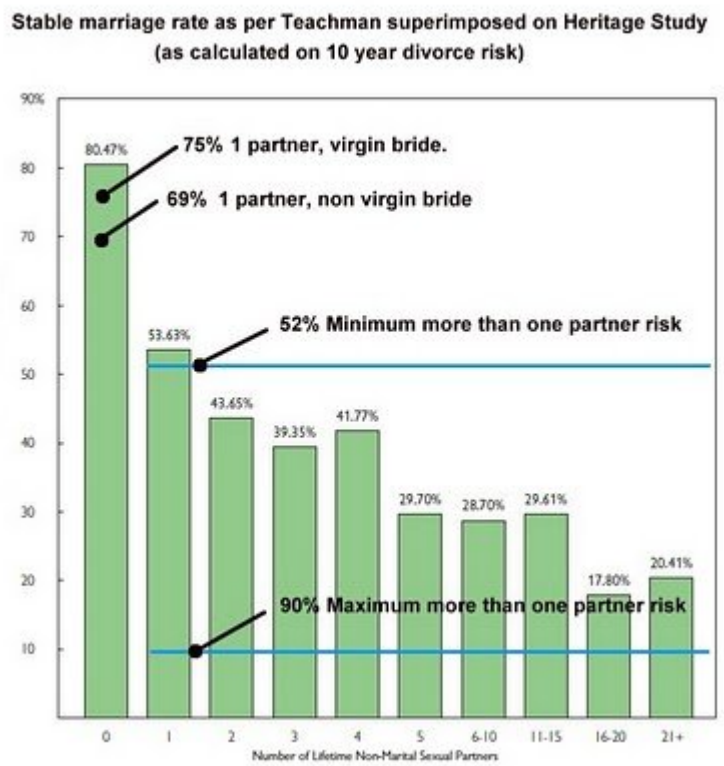

Published in the Journal of Marriage and Family
(Click for larger image)

The Teachman study was not done by a conservative.

What is the point of a man being a virgin?

OK, I just wrote this part out in one fell swoop, and I am not sure if it is all relevant, but…

I wanted to consider the question of whether women should value the property of virginity in men from a Biblical perspective. Men have specific things they are supposed to do based on the Bible's specifications. First, they have to be able to provide for the family financially. Second, they have to be able to protect the family from threats, including threats from false worldviews that lead to damage and destruction. Third, they

have to be moral and spiritual leaders, nurturing their wives and children in moral values, moral duties, and their relationships with God.

Biblical men make good decisions all along their lives in order to satisfy these Biblical goals. In order to be a good provider, they study math and become engineers, which is hard and requires self-sacrifice. In order to be a good protector, they study science apologetics, philosophy of religion and the historical Jesus, which is hard and requires self-sacrifice. In order to be a good moral and spiritual leader, they guard their chastity and learn how to behave chivalrously, which is hard and requires self-sacrifice.

What women need to do is to do the research on everything including marriage/divorce/parenting, just like the research I talked about above, and generate a seriously Biblical set of criteria for choosing men that seriously satisfies the requirements for Biblical manhood. Women cannot expect good behavior from bad men. And they should actually affirm, approve, and encourage good behaviors in men – and not be resentful about having the obligation to build good men up with words and gifts.

What women need to do is to understand the behaviors that lead to stability and fidelity in a marriage – and that means studying research. Saying "I already know about the damage caused by divorce" is useless – it's the knowledge of *the evidence* that changes how a woman makes decisions about men. Personal preferences can be changed at any time, but knowledge doesn't vary depending on how you feel at any given moment.

For example, to test men for apologetics knowledge, it's really easy – just ask them what the significance of cosmic microwave background radiation is, what chirality is, what the significance of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 is, and what is the difference between the deductive and inductive problem of evil. If they can't answer all four of those then you can't marry them. Biblical manhood concerns are not check-boxes on the marriage application form – they're long-form essay questions. Judging the man's ability to do silly stuff, like get a tattoo or clown around in a bar, is just not relevant to making the marriage serve God. A woman's personal preferences don't decide here – evidence decides. (So long as the goal of marriage is to serve God, instead of to make women happy)

Men have a very specific role in marriages. They have to be able to teach the children about theology, apologetics and morality. When it comes to morality, women should not just believe what a man *says*. Instead, women need to look at what a man *does*. Specifically, she should look at what a man does representing his worldview, faith and morality to people who disagree with him. Go to his non-Christian co-workers and ask them what the man has told them about theology, apologetics and morality. Ask them for the reasons and evidences that were used in debates with them. That's how you know what a man really thinks – it's about what he is willing to say to people who he would rather not upset. Where standing up for the truth is really going to hurt his career and make him less popular. That is the true measure of his faithfulness. Not how well he speaks, sings and prays in church. What matters is whether he puts God above his own selfish needs for advancement and popularity. Is he willing to choose Christ over his own selfish desires? What is number one in his heart?

And finally, if a women chooses a bad man because she knows nothing about how to choose a good one, and hasn't done any research about what a man has to be able to do to make a marriage stable, then she needs to stop blaming men and taking responsibility for her own poor decision-making. Choosing a man just because he makes you *feel happy* is not the best way to have achieve a stable marriage. You need to have better criteria than that, because you are going to answer for it later, especially if things go awry.

Evidence creates knowledge and knowledge binds the will

OK now back to the real topic of the post: the use of evidence to support Biblical moral values.

I like having evidence. I hate having to take stands for Biblical morality without evidence. If I can use the evidence for the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of biological information, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability fine-tuning and irreducible complexity to argue for theism, and then argue for the resurrection based on early sources and minimal facts, then I should have the exact same quality of data when defending moral values. If the Bible says something, I should be able to look at the best research and find that the Bible is correct.

You have to persuade a person during courtship by making them read and write about things, and dump them if they won't do it. People can say anything during a courtship – make all kinds of promises and then suddenly just turn selfish and break them all. If they haven't studied and tested these things out, because they think they know everything already, then you really can't expect good behavior. It's a crapshoot unless they've seen the evidence.

UPDATE: Another peer-reviewed paper on the effects of abstinence on stability and communication.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Four intelligent design experts will present at Dallas event on Thursday

September 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I really don't like the liberal Southern Methodist University, and their liberal Perkins Seminary (ultra-liberal), but this is good news.

Details:

4 Nails in Darwin's Coffin: New Challenges to Darwinian Evolution

> - Date: Sept. 23, 2010
> - Place: Southern Methodist University, Hughes-Trigg Ballroom
> - Time: 7:00-9:30 pm

***Featuring a Free Screening of* Darwin's Dilemma: The Mystery of the Cambrian Fossil Record**

Plus Live Presentations and Q and A with:

> - Molecular biologist **Douglas Axe**
> - Evolutionary biologist **Richard Sternberg**
> - Molecular and cell biologist **Jonathan Wells**, author of ***The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design***
> - Philosopher of science **Stephen Meyer**, author of ***Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design***

More than a century ago, Charles Darwin thought he had explained away the evidence for intelligent design in biology. But now new evidence from molecular biology, genetics, and related fields are raising four important challenges to the claim that complex biological life is the result of an undirected process of natural selection acting on random mutations. Learn about these "4 nails in Darwin's coffin" at this FREE event.

Bring your questions!

Sponsored by **PULSE and Victory Campus Ministries, SMU**
For more information, email sykes@smu.edu or call 214.528.7343 x110

Every single one of these guys is an expert on ID. Do not miss this if you are in the area.

And don't forget the On Guard conference in Dallas that is happening in early November.

Hawaiian congressman comments on Obama's vanishing financial advisors

September 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A Republican from Hawaii? Yes!

His name is Charles Djou.

Details:

> Born in Los Angeles, California, to a Chinese-American father and a Thai-American mother, Djou grew up in Hawaii. He graduated from Punahou School and earned a Bachelor of Arts in political science and a Bachelor of Science in finance from the University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania graduating *magna cum laude*. He earned his law degree at the University of Southern California Law School.
>
> Djou is a captain in the United States Army Reserve.[2] He teaches as an adjunct professor at the University of Hawaii.
>
> Djou served as the Vice Chairman of the Hawaii Republican Party from 1998 to 1999. He was named legislator of the year by Small Business Hawaii in 2002, 2004, and 2006. In 2006 he was selected as one of the 40 most promising leaders in Hawaii under age 40 by *Pacific Business News*, and in 2005 was named by *Honolulu Weekly* as the "Best Politician" in the state.

He's 40 years old!

Why is it that the Republicans have all the grown-ups?

What is the most important issue for independent voters?

September 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> What's the one issue that independent voters most strongly demand that a candidate get right? According to a survey of 1,000 independents (and likely voters) recently conducted by Democratic pollster Douglas Schoen and commissioned by Independent Women's Voice, the answer isn't "national security," "taxes," "immigration," "the size of government and its level of spending," "putting a mosque near Ground Zero," "the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," or "the stimulus and bailouts" — all of which were listed as options. Rather, the answer is "health care reform."
>
> Nearly half (48 percent) of all independent voters said that even if a candidate otherwise held perfect views (in the eyes of the voter) — even if they "agreed with him *on all other issues*" (italics added) — they still couldn't vote for him "if [they] disagreed with him on health care reform." (Another 13 percent weren't sure whether they could abide such a costly error in judgment or not.)
>
> And what must the candidate's position on health-care reform be? For 83 percent of the respondents who said their vote would hang in the balance, the candidate must oppose Obamacare. So, according to the survey, if you support Obamacare, you've just lost 40 percent (83 percent of 48 percent) of the independent vote — before any other issue is even addressed.
>
> Upon hearing this result, the 34 Democratic House members who voted against Obamacare must be breathing a sigh of relief that they're not one of the 219 Democratic House members who voted for it. (No Democratic senator can breathe a similar sigh.) And they must be desperately hoping that their Republican opponents don't force them to voice their position on repeal — for it's hard to appear opposed to Obamacare when you don't want to get rid of it.

This is only going to get worse as health insurance premiums go up.

Is recycling efficient? Is recycling sustainable?

September 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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First one from the Boston Globe.

Excerpt:

> Unlike commercial and industrial recycling — a thriving voluntary market that annually salvages tens of millions of tons of metal, paper, glass, and plastic — mandatory *household* recycling is a money loser. Cost studies show that curbside recycling can cost, on average, 60 percent more per ton than conventional garbage disposal. In 2004, an analysis by New York's Independent Budget Office concluded, according to The New York Times, that "it cost anywhere from $34 to $48 a ton more to recycle material, than to send it off to landfills or incinerators."
>
> "There is not a community curbside recycling program in the United States that covers its cost," says Jay Lehr, science director at the Heartland Institute and author of a handbook on environmental science and technology. They exist primarily to make people "feel warm and fuzzy about what they are doing for the environment."
>
> But if recycling household trash makes everyone feel warm and fuzzy, why does it have to be compulsory? Why the fines and computer chips? Mandatory recycling programs "force people to squander valuable resources in a quixotic quest to save what they would sensibly discard," writes Clemson University economist Daniel K. Benjamin. "On balance, recycling programs lower our wealth."

Second one from the Boston Globe.

Excerpt:

> Most of the stuff we throw out — aluminum cans are an exception — is cheaper to replace from scratch than to recycle. "Cheaper" is another way of saying "requires fewer resources." Green evangelists believe that recycling our trash is "good for the planet" — that it conserves resources and is more environmentally friendly. But recycling household waste consumes resources, too.
>
> Extra trucks are required to pick up recyclables, and extra gas to fuel those trucks, and extra drivers to operate them. Collected recyclables have to be sorted, cleaned, and stored in facilities that consume still more fuel and manpower; then they have to be transported somewhere for post-consumer processing and manufacturing. Add up all the energy, time, emissions, supplies, water, space, and mental and physical labor involved, and mandatory recycling turns out to be largely unsustainable — an environmental burden, not a boon.
>
> "Far from saving resources," Benjamin writes, "curbside recycling typically wastes resources — resources that could be used productively elsewhere in

> society.”
>
> Popular impressions to the contrary notwithstanding, we are not running out of places to dispose of garbage. Not only is US landfill capacity at an all-time high, but all of the country’s rubbish for the next 100 years could comfortably fit into a landfill measuring 10 miles square. Benjamin puts that in perspective: “Ted Turner’s Flying D ranch outside Bozeman, Mont., could handle all of America’s trash for the next century — with 50,000 acres left over for his bison.”

I think people recycling because they want to feel good about themselves, and maybe show off to their neighbors. It’s not done because it makes any sense. For the record, I don’t recycle.

Do not miss Dr. Craig Evans events in Calgary starting Friday

September 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Faith Beyond Belief team is doing a series of events in Calgary featuring Canadian historical Jesus scholar Craig Evans. Evans specializes in the historical reliability of the New Testament documents.

Who is Craig Evans?

New Testament scholar, Craig Evans, is the Payzant Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Acadia Divinity College of Acadia University, in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada. A graduate of Claremont McKenna College, he received his M.Div. from Western Baptist Seminary in Portland, Oregon, and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Claremont Graduate University in southern California. A well-known evangelical scholar throughout the world, he is an elected member of the prestigious SNTS, a society dedicated to New Testament studies.

After teaching one year at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, Evans taught at Trinity Western University in British Columbia for twenty-one years, where he directed the graduate program in Biblical Studies and founded the Dead Sea Scrolls Institute. He was also a Visiting Fellow at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey.

Author and editor of more than sixty books, including a feature in Lee Strobel's the Case for the Real Jesus, and hundreds of articles and reviews, Professor Evans has given lectures at Cambridge, Oxford, Yale, the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, among others. He also regularly lectures and gives talks at popular conferences and retreats on the Jesus, Archaeology, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible.

Along with countless interviews on radio networks across Canada and the US, Evans has been seen on Dateline NBC, CBC, CTV, Day of Discovery, and many documentaries aired on BBC, The Discovery Channel, History Channel, History Television and others. He also has served as a consultant for the National Geographic Society.

To find out more about Dr.Evans, please visit his website.

The event schedule is here.

Event schedule

Dr. Craig Evans will be speaking at the following Calgary* events. Except where otherwise noted, the talks are free of charge.

To RSVP for any of these events, please email info@faithbeyondbelief.ca or call (403) 689-5890.

Friday, September 24th, 2010

Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospel

Pastor's breakfast
Full Gospel Tabernacle
9 am – 11 am

The New Testament: Reliable, Relevant and Redemptive

A talk for Christian post-secondary students & faculty
Rocky Mountain College, Chapel
1 pm – 3 pm

4039 Brentwood Road NW, Calgary, Alberta T2L 1L1
rockymountaincollege.ca

Is the Bible Reliable History?: A Discussion

An interactive forum (talk followed by Q&A); open to the public
University of Calgary, Room KNB 132
5:45 pm – 9 pm

Co-sponsored by the Freethinkers of the University of Calgary

2500 University Dr NW, Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4
ucalgary.ca

Saturday, September 25th, 2010

The Origins of Christianity & the Importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls

Also includes a talk from our special guest, Dr. Craig Hazen (founder of the M.A. Program in Christian Apologetics at Biola University)

Public seminar, $20 at the door ($10 for students) – cash only
Full Gospel Tabernacle
9 am – 5 pm

Why We Trust the Bible

A youth event
Full Gospel Tabernacle
7 pm – 10 pm

Sunday, September 26th, 2010

The Crux of Christianity: Evidence for the Resurrection

Sunday service
Full Gospel Tabernacle

10 am – 12 pm

Where is this happening?

* Note: All events will be held at the Full Gospel Tabernacle, **unless otherwise indicated**. A free-will offering will be taken at events at this venue only.

Full Gospel Tabernacle
155 Falconridge Cres NE, Calgary, Alberta T3J 1Z9
fullgospeltabernacle.org

If you would like to donate to Faith Beyond Belief, and you should, you can donate at the Faith Beyond Belief web site. The Faith Beyond Belief team informs me that they could really use your support, and please tell them that WK (me) sent you.

Craig Evans is first-rate scholar who is respected across the ideological spectrum. He has been doing stuff with John Ankerberg, participating in debates with John Dominic Crossan, and debating against Bart Ehrman. Canadians should be thrilled to get someone of his caliber in their country. The fact that the organizers have not neglected to schedule academic outreach events is significant. Calgary is the best city in Canada, and located next to the Rocky Mountains.

If you can't attend the events, but want to learn more about Craig Evans, try this:

- Craig Evans vs Bart Ehrman debate on the reliability of the gospels

NRSC releases new “Prove Them Wrong” video

September 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is called a Gadsen flag.

Now, normally, I warn everyone to not give money to the NRSC, because they have a terrible habit of backing liberal, establishment candidates. Well, a funny thing happened – they’re giving lots of money to the Tea Party candidates and nothing to the establishment candidates.

Look at this new video: (H/T The Other McCain)

Marco Rubio, Rand Paul, Sharron Angle, Christine O’Donnell and Joe Miller are ALL in the video. And a Gadsen flag!

Now, read this article from the Daily Caller. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> Looking at preliminary investments, the NRSC is spending or has spent funds on most competitive U.S. Senate races involving Tea Party-backed Republicans:
>
> —In Kentucky, the NRSC is on the air statewide and has reserved just under $2 million on ad buys for GOP candidate Rand Paul. During the primary, Republican Trey Grayson had the backing of the establishment.
>
> —In Colorado, the NRSC is also on the air statewide in support of Republican Ken Buck, who bested the establishment-backed Jane Norton in the primary. A total of $3.2 million is reserved by the NRSC for ad buys in support of Buck.
>
> —In Nevada, the NRSC has reserved $700,000 in statewide television for GOP nominee and Tea Party-backed Sharron Angle.
>
> —In Pennsylvania, $3 million is reserved for TV for Republican nominee Pat Toomey.
>
> —No airtime has been reserved for Christine O’Donnell in Delaware and Joe Miller in Alaska, but the NRSC has donated $42,600 — the maximum donation allowable under law — to both campaigns.

It’s amazing! I still think you should only give money to specific candidates, but the NRSC sure is smartening up.

Is Colombia or Mexico better at dealing with criminal gangs?

September 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Colombian soldiers strike against FARC

Here's a good story from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Colombia's army blew away the field marshal of FARC's narco-terror war Wednesday, showing with a jolt that to win, it's terrorists who must "absorb" attacks, not innocents. Mexico and the U.S. have much to learn.
>
> Seems the adage that Colombia is the only country where guerrillas die of old age isn't true anymore.
>
> On Thursday, Colombia celebrated news of the demise of Jorge Briceno, military commander and second-highest chief of FARC. The 57-year-old terrorist went down in a hail of bombs and gunfire over three days in a jungle bunker near La Macarena.
>
> The Colombian army suffered no deaths and left at least 20 guerrillas dead on the jungle floor. Briceno's demise marks the fourth knockout of FARC's seven-man "Politburo"since 2008.
>
> "This is the most crushing blow against the FARC in its entire history," said Colombia's president, Juan Manuel Santos, speaking from the sidelines at the United Nations in New York.
>
> […]Colombia's war is in reality the southern flank of the same war that Mexico is fighting with its cartels — and that war is spilling over into the U.S. This is why Americans must pay attention.
>
> The growing lawlessness on our border encompasses drugs, but also alien smuggling, kidnapping, counterfeiting and other acts of organized crime, with ties to global terror.
>
> In Colombia's case, it brooks no talk about "absorbing" terror attacks, as

> President Obama recently suggested in the U.S. If anything, Colombia seems to have taken lessons from Gen. David Petraeus' surge in Iraq that took the war to the terrorists — and made sure they were the ones to worry about "absorbing" the attacks.

FARC is a left-wing Marxist terrorist group that traffics in cocaine. Hmmm. Cocaine? Terrorism? Marxism? That reminds me of someone. Who could it be?

Do you know what we should do to help Colombia defeat the Marxist-terrorist-drug cartel? We should sign a free trade deal so they can buy our stuff and we can buy their stuff. That will help them to grow more prosperous, and we'll be more prosperous too! In fact, Canada has already done that. Canada likes Colombia. That's why they signed a free trade agreement with Colombia. But the Democrats don't like Colombia. Obama and the Democrats have delayed the signing of a free trade agreement with Colombia since they came into office.

Why do Christians believe that Jesus' tomb was found empty?

September 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection. The entire paper was also presented orally to the students and faculty at California State University, Fresno in 2005, and a full recording is available here. The paper covers all of Craig's preferred set of minimal facts, which he uses in debates.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

More on this from N.T. Wright, here.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think

> otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s.

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say "The President is hosting a dinner at the White House" and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the "high priest" as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus' death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as "Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women" and "Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female."
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

Critical responses to the empty tomb

Richard Carrier tried to argue that the testimony of women was accepted, in his debate with Craig, but Craig showed that this was only possible in *two cases:* 1) if they were testifying about their status as widows, or 2) if no male witnesses were available, e.g. – they had all been killed. Audio of the debate is here. Carrier's admission of defeat is here, on his blog. Craig's post-debate response to Carrier is here and here.

Further study

To see a debate betwen Craig and the well-known skeptic Bart Ehrman, click here for the 12 part playlist. The first two parts are embedded below, containing Craig's entire 20 minute opening speech. The full transcript of the debate is here, so you can follow along.

To hear a related lecture by Craig on the topic of “Who did Jesus think he was?”, click here. The video is here. This lecture was delivered in February, 2009 at Columbia University, probably the most secular leftist university in the United States. Yes, the same university that invited Ahmadinejad to speak.

Does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?

September 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.
   And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.
   But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an

eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All

Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

The article goes on to make some very informative comments on the relationship between apologetics and belief.

Over 250,000 children accused of racism by UK teachers since 2000

September 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The UK government is forcing teachers to accuse 3-year-old children of racism. (H/T The Blog Prof)

Excerpt:

> Teachers are being forced to report children as young as three to the authorities for using alleged 'racist' language, it was claimed last night.
>
> Munira Mirza, a senior advisor to London Mayor Boris Johnson, said schools were being made to spy on nursery age youngsters by the Race Relations Act 2000.
>
> More than a quarter of a million children have been accused of racism since it became law, she said.
>
> Writing in Prospect magazine, she said: 'The more we seek to measure racism, the more it seems to grow.
>
> 'Teachers are now required to report incidents of racist abuse among children as young as three to local authorities, resulting in a massive increase of cases and reinforcing the perception that we need an army of experts to manage race relations from cradle to grave.
>
> […]The Act compelled 43,000 public authorities, including schools and churches, 'to promote good relations between persons of different racial groups'. Details of the incidents are logged on databases.
>
> Teachers are allowed to report racism even if the alleged 'victim' was not offended or if the child does not understand what they were saying.
>
> Freedom of Information replies obtained by civil liberties group the Manifesto Club show that between 2002 and 2009, 280,000 incidents have been reported.

Wow. The government is criminalizing more and more behaviors behaviors in order to create a "crisis" that requires more and more government intervention. This policy was put in by the left-wing Labour party in the UK, naturally. The Nanny-staters who want to micro-manage everyone to play nice.

And before anyone accuses me of being a racist, know that I am a brown person. So that left-wing name-calling doesn't work on me.

CRISIS: Is Obama's Department of Justice enabling voter registration fraud?

September 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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First, from The Other McCain, a 3-minute summary of the case.

To get a longer summary of the case, you really need check out this PJTV interview with several people connected to the case – Peter N. Kirsanow, who is on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, former Department of Justice attorney Hans von Spakovsky, Todd F. Gaziano who is also on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and another former Department of Justice attorney J. Christian Adams.

The smaller story is that the New Black Panther voter intimidation case was dismissed by political appointees of the Obama administration.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama's handpicked U.S. Justice Department officials are ignoring civil rights cases in which the alleged victims are whites and they abandoned a voter intimidation case against the New Black Panther Party that resulted in a "travesty of justice."
>
> Christopher Coates, former voting chief for the department's Civil Rights Division, testified at a hearing before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, after outcries from citizens' groups and public-interest organization over the Justice Department's stonewalling a full investigation.
>
> **Coates alleges that DOJ officials, for political reasons, dismissed intimidation charges against New Black Panther members who were videotaped outside a Philadelphia polling place in 2008 dressed in military-style uniforms—one was brandishing a nightstick—and allegedly hurling racial slurs.**
>
> **However, the Justice Department reportedly prevented him from testifying and subsequently transferred him to the U.S. Attorney's Office in South Carolina.**

But what is the worst thing in the Coates testimony? I think it's this thing below, which Spakovsky mentioned in the PJTV video.

From Verum Serum. (H/T Ace of Spades)

Excerpt from Coates' testimony:

> In June 2009, the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) issued its bi-annual report concerning which states appeared not to be complying with Section 8′s list maintenance requirements. The report identified eight states that appeared to be the worst in terms of their non-compliance with the list maintenance requirements of Section 8 [of the Voting Rights Act]. These were states that

> reported that no voters had been removed from any of their voters' list in the last two years. Obviously this is a good indication that something is not right with the list maintenance practice in that state. As Chief of the Voting Section, I assigned attorneys to work on this matter, and in September 2009, I forwarded a memorandum to the CRD Front Office asking for approval to go forward with Section 8 list maintenance investigations in these states.
>
> During the time that I was Chief, no approval was given to this project, and my understanding that approval has never been given for that Section 8 list maintenance project to date. **That means that we have entered the 2010 election cycle with eight states appearing to be in major noncompliance with the list maintenance requirements of Section 8 of the NVRA, and yet the Voting Section which has the responsibility to enforce that law has yet to take any action**.

Ooops, here's another bombshell in Coates' testimony, from Hot Air.

Excerpt:

> It contains at least one bombshell, which is that Obama appointee Loretta King ordered Coates to stop asking applicants whether they supported race-neutral enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. The question became necessary because of resistance in the Civil Rights division from career attorneys to enforce the law when it resulted in African-American defendants rather than victims…

Coates says:

> **In the spring of 2009, Ms. King, who had by then been appointed Acting AAG for Civil Rights by the Obama Administration, called me to her office and specifically instructed me that I was not to ask any other applicants whether they would be willing to, in effect, race-neutrally enforce the VRA. Ms. King took offense that I was asking such a question of job applicants and directed me not to ask it because she does not support equal enforcement of the provisions of the VRA and had been highly critical of the filing and prosecution of the *Ike Brown* case.**

Stay tuned. And this may explain why the Democrats are able to win elections despite not being competent to govern.

And don't forget Obama's former employer ACORN, which is also being investigated for voter fraud. And the NAACP was also mentioned in the PJTV video.

UPDATE: Gateway Pundit notes that Robin Carnahan, who is now for a Senate seat in Missouri, refused to clear dead people from voter roles. Gateway Pundit has a nice picture of Obama hugging Robin Carnahan.

What is the best way to encourage young men to read?

September 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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My answer is to have all-male schools, with all-male teachers, with all fiction books and drama selected by men, and field trips that appeal to male needs, (e.g. – the war museum! the air show! the underground caverns! a computer lab!).

But what about video games? Do they make reading seem boring to young men?

Consider this Wall Street Journal article.

The problem:

> When I was a young boy, America's elite schools and universities were almost entirely reserved for males. That seems incredible now, in an era when headlines suggest that boys are largely unfit for the classroom. In particular, they can't read.
>
> According to a recent report from the Center on Education Policy, for example, substantially more boys than girls score below the proficiency level on the annual National Assessment of Educational Progress reading test. This disparity goes back to 1992, and in some states the percentage of boys proficient in reading is now more than ten points below that of girls. The male-female reading gap is found in every socio-economic and ethnic category, including the children of white, college-educated parents.
>
> The good news is that influential people have noticed this problem. The bad news is that many of them have perfectly awful ideas for solving it.
>
> Everyone agrees that if boys don't read well, it's because they don't read enough. But why don't they read? A considerable number of teachers and librarians believe that boys are simply bored by the "stuffy" literature they encounter in school. According to a revealing Associated Press story in July these experts insist that we must "meet them where they are"—that is, pander to boys' untutored tastes.

Spence explains how many publishers are writing books for boys that are really childish and disgusting.

Spence's solution:

> One obvious problem with the SweetFarts philosophy of education is that it is more suited to producing a generation of barbarians and morons than to raising the sort of men who make good husbands, fathers and professionals. If you keep meeting a boy where he is, he doesn't go very far.
>
> The other problem is that pandering doesn't address the real reason boys won't read. My own experience with six sons is that even the squirmiest boy does not

> require lurid or vulgar material to sustain his interest in a book.
>
> So why won't boys read? The AP story drops a clue when it describes the efforts of one frustrated couple with their 13-year-old unlettered son: "They've tried bribing him with new video games." Good grief.
>
> The appearance of the boy-girl literacy gap happens to coincide with the proliferation of video games and other electronic forms of entertainment over the last decade or two. Boys spend far more time "plugged in" than girls do. Could the reading gap have more to do with competition for boys' attention than with their supposed inability to focus on anything other than outhouse humor?
>
> Dr. Robert Weis, a psychology professor at Denison University, confirmed this suspicion in a randomized controlled trial of the effect of video games on academic ability. Boys with video games at home, he found, spend more time playing them than reading, and their academic performance suffers substantially. Hard to believe, isn't it, but Science has spoken.
>
> The secret to raising boys who read, I submit, is pretty simple—keep electronic media, especially video games and recreational Internet, under control (that is to say, almost completely absent). Then fill your shelves with good books.

What do you guys think about his idea?

I love video games. ECM helps me to find ones that I will like, and then I play those very sparingly. So this year, I played "King's Bounty: The Legend", "Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway" and "Arma II: Operation Arrowhead" on PC, "Etrian Odyssey 2: Heroes of Lagaard" and "Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies" on my Nintendo DS.

And previously I played games like "Silent Storm: Sentinels", "Dangerous Waters", "Silent Hunter IV: Wolves of the Pacific", "Combat Mission: Afrika Korps", "Hidden & Dangerous 2: Sabre Squadron", "Steel Panthers: World at War", "Harpoon", "Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers", and my favorite RPG, "Wizardry 8".

So I basically like large-scale tactical squad-based first-person shooters, large-scale realistic military simulations, and 2D turn-based fantasy role-playing games.

But what I noticed is that picking games like these that are adventurous, and playing them modestly, really hasn't stopped me from reading. So long as I can link the topics that I read with apologetics or with developing a Christian view of politics, economics, marriage, family, parenting and foreign policy, then it seems to me that my reading is just an extension of my game playing. Life is an adventure, and books are weapons.

Specifically, I like to be adventurous and to fight, and I read books that help me to be able to have a job in engineering so that I can travel the world, and also fight about science, philosophy, history and religion. Maybe the real problem is that boys don't see books as adventuring tools. My married friends view their marriages as very adventurous and subversive – they are very serious about reading and planning things out.

Mixed results for the Dearborn Four

September 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's the story on Answering Muslims. (H/T Confident Christianity)

Excerpt:

> Flags were at half-mast in Dearborn today when four out of five charges against the Dearborn Four were dropped. Defendants Qureshi, Wood, Rezkalla and Mayel were all found not guilty of their "Breach of Peace" charges, but defendant Mayel was found guilty of the charge "Willfully Disobeying the Lawful Order of a Police Officer." She was sentenced to one day of jail, which had already been served in June. The credit was applied, and all four were free to go. The judge sent them on their way saying "You are welcome in Dearborn." Clearly.
>
> Even though the person who complained against Negeen, Roger Williams, was effectively shown to be a compulsive liar, and even though the police officer who arrested her admitted that she had done nothing illegal before he detained her for questioning, she was still found guilty. Is there no justice in Dearborn?
>
> The trial process has been tasking in many ways. We've spent a week away from work, school, and our families. We've had a grueling week of preparing for court day after day, without break or diversion. And emotionally we are spent. But we've got so much to be thankful for.

But check this out:

> To our friends who flew to Dearborn to testify on our behalf, especially those who waited for a week in the hotel only to be told by the court that their testimony would not be allowed: we cannot thank you enough for your show of support and willingness to sacrifice for us. We only hope we can express our sincere gratitude as wonderfully as you have expressed your love.
>
> To those who supported us financially: we could not have done it without you! When we came to Dearborn a week ago, we had hoped to be done with the trial by Wednesday. By Thursday morning, the prosecution was still not done presenting its case, and so the defense still hadn't started! Our expenditures skyrocketed because we had to unexpectedly extend our rental car, hotel rooms, and rearrange our flights. Your support has sustained us financially, and the love of Christ shines through your self-sacrificial attitudes. We cannot thank you enough!
>
> Also, a million thanks go out to the Thomas More Law Center, without whom we would have been unable to defend ourselves from the persecution of the City of Dearborn. Robert Muise was not only our attorney and counsel, but he was fully invested in this issue with us, sharing our emotional burden and investing more time into the issue than even us. The way he approached the case, he might as

> well have been handcuffed and in jail with us 3 months ago. Truly our brother in Christ, we would have had to take pleas of guilty had it not been for him and his diligence.

And more details about Negeen are now out here.

This is why I tell young people to think ahead and build a savings account for situations like this. Everything costs money, and often your ability to take these bold stands are conditional on the size of your savings account. It reminds me of the Human Rights Commissions in Canada, and their war against free speech. They can put you on trial for several years and drain you of tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees if you fight them in court, like they did with pastor Stephen Boissoin. In a very real and practical way, your ability to be faithful under fire may rest on the degrees you have earned in school, and the money you earn and save while working.

An army marches on its stomach – and an army has to guard its supply lines. Similarly, Christians can only take bold stands on a full wallet. Nabeel, for example, is trained as a medical doctor. That is a field that would allow him to pay for loads of lawyers so he can get into as much legal trouble as he wants for speaking out about what he believes. If he chooses to continue his medical career, he would be well-supplied with funding, and able to mix it up with the other side. He would be able to back up his tough talk in the court room.

I am reminded of how the poor financial decisions made by the anti-intellectual fundamentalist Dan Barker cost him his faith. Do not test God by getting into more trouble than you can handle, and hoping that he will magically bail you out. Christianity is dangerous. People get hurt. Some even get killed. We are getting creamed in the courts, in the news and on campus *every day*. Do not waste your life having fun in your youth like the non-Christians do – prepare for your trials *now*. You cannot spend all your time dancing and singing and drinking and then still expect to be able to stand against powerful enemies who will have no mercy on you in the court room. Make wise choices. Learn everything you can. Work hard. Save your money.

How do proponents of Darwinian evolution respond to debate?

September 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's what happened at the recent public discussion on Darwinism and intelligent design at Southern Methodist University.

Excerpt:

> The evening started with a screening of *Darwin's Dilemma:The Mystery of the Cambrian Fossil Record* for a standing room only crowd in the theater of the Hughes Trigg Student Center, and was rounded out by four presentations and a question and answer period with the speakers.
>
> CSC's Stephen Meyer moderated the discussion after the film which included four serious challenges to Darwinian evolution. The first speaker was evolutionary biologist Richard Sternberg, who presented the challenge of population genetics to Darwin's Theory. He was followed by Biologic Institute's Doug Axe, who spoke on the challenge of finding functional proteins, and CSC Fellow Paul Nelson, who explained why evolving animal body plans by random mutation and natural selection is probably impossible. CSC biologist Jonathan Wells concluded the short presentations by explaining the challenge of ontogenetic information. The evening closed with a robust 40 minutes of questions from the audience.

Is that crazy? Four scholars with Ph.Ds from Yale, Berkeley, Harvard, Cambridge, etc. – 6 Ph.Ds in all for FOUR speakers spoke. The four scholars presented information then had 40 minutes of unscripted public discussion with the audience.

Excerpt:

> What do hox genes, gene duplication, evo-devo and ontogenetic information all have in common? They were among the subjects raised–in some detail–by audience members during the Q&A portion of *4 Nails in Darwin's Coffin: New Challenges to Darwinian Evolution* event at SMU last night.

Wow. Public, unscripted discussion of biological science between two opposing points of view.

I'll bet that open discussion of controversial theories happens all the time in public schools, right?

Not so much.

Excerpt:

> I was treated to a –sadly– all too typical story in the aftermath of the great 4 Nails in Darwin's Coffin: New Challenges to Darwinian Evolution conference the other night at SMU. An SMU staffer told me about what happened to a student that

> wanted to let his friends know about the event.
>
> Earlier this week the student asked his science professor if at the end of class he could make a quick announcement and the prof said no problem. At the end of the class the student stood up and very quickly announced the name of the event and that students could come and hear about some of the flaws in Darwin's theory. At that point the professor put his hand on the student's shoulder and said, in front of the whole class: "Hold on, if I'd known you were going to announce that I wouldn't have let you stand up. There are NO flaws in Darwin's theory!" The teacher continued to pontificate about how there simply are no flaws in Darwin's theory and that any such claims are all myths.
>
> Then yesterday I read the *Nature* blog about the new ID Centre that has just launched in the UK. There was a link to this story about the British Humanist Association which is lobbying for the government to grant what amounts to special status to Darwinian evolution in British schools. The ink has barely dried from the announcement and already British Darwinists are feverishly trying to stamp out any dissent.
>
> Essentially, they want to put their hand on every British school student and tell them not to question Darwin's theory.

Yeah, those secular humanists are as open-minded about dissent as Mao Zedong. He was a secular humanist, too.

Related posts

- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show
- Cowardly Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Answering Richard Dawkins' question: "Who made God?"
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

Tea Party uncovers massive voter fraud in Houston

September 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from Fox News. (H/T The Blog Prof, Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> When Catherine Engelbrecht and her friends sat down and started talking politics several years ago, they soon agreed that talking wasn't enough. They wanted to do more. So when the 2008 election came around, "about 50" of her friends volunteered to work at Houston's polling places.
>
> "What we saw shocked us," she said. "There was no one checking IDs, judges would vote for people that asked for help. It was fraud, and we watched like deer in the headlights."
>
> Their shared experience, she says, created "True the Vote," a citizen-based grassroots organization that began collecting publicly available voting data to prove that what they saw in their day at the polls was, indeed, happening — and that it was happening everywhere.
>
> "It was a true Tea Party moment," she remembers.
>
> Like most voter watchdog groups, she said, her group started small. They decided to investigate voting fraud in general, not just at the polling places, and at first they weren't even sure what to look for — and where to look for it.
>
> "The first thing we started to do was look at houses with more than six voters in them" Engelbrecht said, because those houses were the most likely to have fraudulent registrations attached to them. "Most voting districts had 1,800 if they were Republican and 2,400 of these houses if they were Democratic . . .
>
> "But we came across one with 24,000, and that was where we started looking."

Click through to find out who was responsible for the voter fraud. Ot is it called "community organizing" now?

William Lane Craig lectures on failure in the Christian life

September 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I found this audio on Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 web site.

Here is the MP3 file.

Here is the video.

And here is my summary.

Intro:

- the topic of failure is not one that is often discussed by Christians
- failure #1: failure in the Christian life which is the result of sin
- failure #2: when a Christian is defeated while trying to serve God
- the consequences for failure #1 can be worse for the Christian
- the consequences for failure #2 can be worse for the world as whole
- how is it possible for a person to fail when they are obeying God? (#2)
- how can it be that God can call someone to a task then let them fail?
- failure is not persecution – persecution is normal for Christians
- failure is not trials – testing is normal for Christians to grow

Bill's failure:

- Bill had submitted all the coursework for his second doctoral degree
- but he had to pass a comprehensive oral examination
- he failed to pass the comprehensive exam
- Bill and Jan and his supporters had all prayed for him to pass
- how could God allow this to happen?

Solution to the problem:

- God's will for us may be that we fail at the things we try in life
- there are things that God may teach us through failure
- Bill learned that human relationships are more important than careers
- we need to realize that "success" in life is not worldly success
- true success is getting to know God well during your life
- and failure may be the best way to get to know God well
- it may even be possible to fail to know God while achieving a lot
- the real measure of a man is loving God and loving your fellow man

Practical:

- give thanks to God regardless of your circumstances

- try to learn from your failure
- never give up

The ending of Bill’s story:

- Bill spent an entire year preparing for a re-take of his exam
- Bill was awarded his second doctorate “magna cum laude” (with great distinction)
- Bill learned that American students are not well prepared for exams
- the year of studying remedied his inadequate American education
- in retrospect, he is thankful for the failure – he learned more

If you like this, you should pick up Craig’s book “No Easy Answers”.

FBI investigating public school teacher for supporting terrorism

September 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the radically leftist Minneapolis Star Tribune. (H/T Verum Serum via Power Line)

Excerpt:

> The homes of five Twin Cities activists, including three prominent leaders of the Twin Cities antiwar movement, were raided Friday by the FBI in what an agency spokesman described as an "investigation into activities concerning the material support of terrorism." The office of an antiwar organization also was reportedly raided…
>
> Among the homes raided were the apartments of Jessica Sundin, who was a principal leader of the mass antiwar march of 10,000 on the opening day of the Republican National Convention two years ago, and Mick Kelly, who was prominent in that protest and among those who announced plans to march on the Democratic National Convention in Minneapolis, if the city is selected to host it in 2012. Neither has been arrested.
>
> A raid was also conducted on the home of Meredith Aby, another local antiwar leader who was frequently the spokeswoman for the march on the GOP convention.

But Morgen at Verum Serum has a lot more.

Excerpt:

> The other thing I wanted to point out, which is really the headline here, is that Meredith Aby, the activist named in the last paragraph above, is actually a public high school teacher in Bloomington, MN. Her official school web site is here (and another one here). Not surprisingly she is a social studies teacher.
>
> Aby is apparently a long-time leader of the anti-war movement in Minnesota, with her activism centered around an organization called the Anti-War Committee. While I think most people would agree that this alone should not preclude her from teaching young people, I think it does raise legitimate concerns about her objectivity. Especially given that the courses she teaches include US Government, Civics, and World History.
>
> More troubling, Aby is apparently also quite active in promoting her political beliefs, which lean about as far left as you can get. She is a frequent contributor on Fight Back! News, the media arm of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, and has been a speaker at numerous events organized by other overtly socialist groups, including the new incarnation of the SDS (Bill Ayers' old group).
>
> In short, she's a commie. And unless Minnesota is more "progressive" than I

> realize, I can't imagine there are very many parents who would be comfortable with her teaching their children about world history and political philosophy.

Here's a little bit about her from one of her web sites:

> Meredith Aby grew up in Worthington, Minnesota (the turkey capital of the world!). She graduated from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota with a degree in history, **women's studies**, and Spanish. She is the head debate coach at Jefferson and has coached speech at Jefferson and at Kennedy. Aby teaches debate, philosophy, civics, world history, U.S. government, and AP U.S. government. She has been teaching in Bloomington Public Schools since 1997 and is the proud mother of the cutest baby in the world!

No mention of a husband there.

Can you imagine entrusting your children to a left-wing radical like this? And letting her have the power of *grading them* based on their agreement and compliance *with her value system*? Yet we have to fund these government schools whether we like it or not – they're paid for with taxpayer money.

Five of Obama's radical leftists judicial nominees approved by Democrats

September 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's the post by Hans Bader on the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> Five radicals have been approved for judgeships by the Senate Judiciary Committee, voting along party lines.
>
> The committee held over for a future vote one controversial nominee, Judge Robert Chatigny. Chatigny unsuccessfully tried to block the execution of a serial murderer and rapist known as the Roadside Strangler based on the ridiculous argument that the murderer's "sexual sadism" was supposedly a mitigating factor. Chatigny presided over that case as a trial judge even though he had briefly represented the Roadside Strangler, creating an obvious conflict of interest.
>
> Chatigny's nomination to an appeals court had previously been approved by the committee earlier this year, but it died when the full Senate failed to vote on his nomination due to public opposition. He was then renominated by President Obama, along with other controversial nominees whose nominations had also earlier died in the full Senate, like Edward Chen, Goodwin Liu, Louis Butler, and Jack O'Connell.

The rest of the article talks about what makes each of the 5 judges radical.

Here are a couple:

> The committee rubberstamped Edward Chen, a fervent advocate of racial preferences who unsuccessfully challenged a provision of the California Constitution banning racial discrimination and preferences.
>
> […]It once again approved radical law professor Goodwin Liu, who wrongly thinks that the Constitution requires some forms of welfare. Liu has no experience trying cases at all, even though judges are supposed to have "substantial courtroom and trial experience." Liu claims that "'free enterprise, private ownership of property, and limited government" are right-wing concepts and ideological "code words."

Obama is appointing people who will disregard the law and the Constitution so that he can do whatever he wants – an Imperial Presidency. Even Bruce Ackerman, a liberal law professor from Yale, says that Obama's appointment of radical anti-business leftist Elizabeth Warren is another step toward *an Imperial Presidency.* (H/T Competitive Enterprise Institute)

Physicist Frank Tipler weighs in on Stephen Hawking's theory

September 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Physics professor Frank Tipler has written an evaluation of Dan Brown's Stephen Hawking's speculations theories. (H/T The ID Report via Post-Darwinist)

Excerpt:

> In 1966, Stephen Hawking published his first – completely valid – proof for the existence of God. Over the next seven years, he followed this with even more powerful valid theorems proving God's existence.
>
> So how did Hawking, who successfully proved God's existence, remain an atheist? Simple. He simply denied that the assumptions he used in his proofs were true. As a matter of logic, if the assumptions in a proof are not true, then the conclusions need not be true. What assumptions did the young Hawking make? He assumed that the laws of physics, mainly Einstein's theory of gravity, were true. In the summary of his early research, namely his book The Large Scale Structure of Space-Time, Hawking wrote:
>
> It seems to be a good principle that the prediction of [God] by a physical theory indicates that the theory has broken down, i.e. it no longer provides a correct description of observations.
>
> Hawking then began working on quantum gravity, in hopes that God would be at last eliminated from the equations. Alas, it was not to be: God was even more prominent – and unavoidable – in quantum gravity than in Einstein's theory of gravity. In his latest book, The Grand Design, Hawking has pinned his hope of eliminating God on M-theory, a theory with no experimental support whatsoever, hence not a theory of physics at all. Nor has it been proven that M-theory is mathematically consistent. Nor has it been proven that God has been eliminated from M-theory. There are disquieting signs (for Hawking and company) that He is also unavoidable in M-theory, as He is in Einstein's gravity, and in quantum gravity.
>
> In spite of what the atheist press is telling you, it's looking bad for atheism today. And it is extraordinary the lengths an atheist like Hawking will go to avoid the obvious: God exists.

The progress of science has made the case for a Creator and Designer air-tight. Anyone who doubts the existence of a Creator and Designer today is simply not reality-based in their worldview. M-theory, global warming and Darwinian macro-evolution are the scientific heirs of alchemy, geocentrism and phrenology. And that's why atheists don't want these things to be debated – because they'll lose.

Click here to hear a debate on Hawking's theory between Oxford atheist theoretical

physicist Roger Penrose and Oxford Christian microbiologist/theologian Alister McGrath.

Or watch the highlights:

Nobody is impressed by Hawking's theory – except journalists anxious to delude the public.

John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes

September 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This is perfect. Send this to every person you know who thinks that gun control lowers crime rates.

And if you want to learn more, watch a debate on gun control.

Are family courts fair to fathers in assigning child custody?

September 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the radically leftist UK Guardian.

Excerpt:

> In the past, public sympathy may well have rested with the court, assuming it was doing its best for the children. But now there is growing evidence that family law has spectacularly failed to keep up with the changing role of men within the home and that children are suffering as a result. Judges are accused of stereotyping, making a legal presumption in favour of the mother and awarding meagre access rights to dads.
>
> With the maturing of the "men's movement" into more child-centred lobbying and support groups, and with rising numbers of divorce lawyers moving into mediation work and away from adversarial courtrooms, there is a growing understanding of the raw deal many fathers – and children – have been getting from the secretive British family court system.
>
> […]The government estimates that one in four children has separated or divorced parents. Despite all the evidence that children thrive best when they enjoy the support and love of two parents, only about 11% of children from broken homes will go on to spend equal amounts of time with each parent.
>
> A significant number of fathers, some estimate as many as 40%, will within two years of the split lose all contact with their children. Previously this had been seen as a sign of male fecklessness, but now it is also being recognised that dads are being pushed away, not only by the residual conflict with ex-partners, but also by a legal system that works against them maintaining relationships with their children.
>
> […]Ian Julian, 49, is one of the tiny percentage of fathers in the UK to have won a shared residency court order for his son, now aged 16. But that was pared away into alternate weekends when his ex-wife sent their son to boarding school against Julian's wishes. He has had to move four times to follow the house moves of his former wife.
>
> "When I first went to a lawyer, she told me I had no chance of anything, but I was prepared to go to 100 lawyers to find one who would take my case," he said.
>
> […]"I've heard a judge call a man 'possessive' for wanting more than two hours a week, and others make 'no contact' orders on hearsay evidence," he said. "I've known mothers taken back to court for ignoring contact orders, but nothing is done. Bad behaviour isn't just tolerated, it's encouraged. Some of the judges I have sat in front of have traditional values along the lines of a woman's place

> being in the home. But it’s not the experience of the average British family and a father seeing a child once every two weeks isn’t a meaningful relationship.”

This is actually pretty standard in Western nations, and it’s one of the reasons why there is an epidemic of suicide among middle-aged men.

NSF spends 2 million to create Darwin indoctrination lesson plans

September 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The NSF is, of course, the National Science Foundation. And the 2 million, of course, came from the pockets of taxpayers.

Here's the post at Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> The goal of the Evolution Readiness Project is to get "young children" to "believe in" evolution. According to the National Science Foundation's website, they've spent $1,990,459 of taxpayer-funded National Science Foundation (NSF) dollars to bankroll this project. Welcome back to school.
>
> The agenda of the project is further clarified in the NSF Grant Award Abstract which states that it aims "to support a learning progression leading to an appreciation of the theory of evolution and evidence that supports it." That's fine, but why only the evidence that supports evolution?

Only the evidence *in favor of* Darwinism? What about the evidence *against* Darwinism?

> The project justifies its dogmatic approach by promoting the myth that there is no scientific dissent from the consensus view on natural selection:
>
> > Yet, essentially there is universal agreement among scientists that evolution by natural selection is the fundamental model that explains the extraordinary complexity and interdependence of the living world. Moreover, evolution by natural selection is a quintessential scientific theory, explaining an extraordinary collection of data, including much that Darwin himself was unaware of, with a small collection of powerful ideas.
>
> Of course, it is not true that "essentially there is universal agreement among scientists" about evolution by natural selection. Over 850 Ph.D. scientists have now signed a statement expressing their skepticism of modern evolutionary theory's "claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life," and urge that "[c]areful examination of the evidence for Darwinian theory should be encouraged."

The rest of the article lists a stack of non-Christian, non-theistic scientists who doubt the efficacy of Darwinian mechanisms to explain macro-evolution.

Darwinism is "hide the decline" applied to the history of life.

Jennifer Roback Morse discusses the rise of single, childless women

September 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

She's more pro-male than most males

In 366 metropolitan areas, single and childless women aged 22-30 are out-earning men by 8%. Is this a victory for feminism?

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- the differences in pay between men and women are due to women's choice to subordinate career choices to the task of having and raising children
- the same changes that are funneling women into careers are making it harder for women to marry, stay married and to have children
- more women than men are graduating from higher education because women dominate higher education – almost all teachers are women
- education is run by women for women and they do not respect the needs and learning styles of men
- this means that there are fewer and fewer educated, high-earning men available for women to marry
- but women are unhappy with this because they want a man who they can look up to, and who can take care of them
- women need to realize that when there are no men left for women to marry, women are less happy
- in fact, women are delaying marriage more and more, because they are focused on education and career – not families and children
- relationships are subordinated to education and career, so the only kind of relationship that is left is hook-up sex
- this is also fueling the trend of more women of all classes and education levels who are having children without men
- the take-away message from this new statistic is that there is no wage-gape based on discrimination

There NEVER WAS any wage-gap based on discrimination. Women used to make sensible choices regarding work to have more time for families. One women eschewed marriage and children, in accordance with the teachings of third-wave feminism, the wage gap *disappeared.*

This podcast is Dr. Morse at her best. Do not miss this podcast, especially if you are a man. If you are even thinking about getting married, then you need to marry someone who can discuss these issues intelligently, like Dr. Morse can. Frankly, when I listen to Dr. Morse it makes me want to go out and get married right away. If any woman can understand men and marriage like this, then there must be others who can do it. And being married to someone who understands men and marriage would make me very happy indeed. Hooking-up and co-habitating is not the right way for women to prepare for marriage. But learning to study and speak about these issues like Dr. Morse is excellent preparation for marriage.

Survey: Americans don’t know much about religion

September 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Fox News story that was sent to me by Jerry, Wes, Timmy, and Mary.

Excerpt:

> A new survey of Americans’ knowledge of religion found that atheists, agnostics, Jews and Mormons outperformed Protestants and Roman Catholics in answering questions about major religions, while many respondents could not correctly give the most basic tenets of their own faiths.
>
> Forty-five percent of Roman Catholics who participated in the study didn’t know that, according to church teaching, the bread and wine used in Holy Communion is not just a symbol, but becomes the body and blood of Christ.
>
> More than half of Protestants could not identify Martin Luther as the person who inspired the Protestant Reformation. And about four in 10 Jews did not know that Maimonides, one of the greatest rabbis and intellectuals in history, was Jewish.
>
> The survey released Tuesday by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life aimed to test a broad range of religious knowledge, including understanding of the Bible, core teachings of different faiths and major figures in religious history. The U.S. is one of the most religious countries in the developed world, especially compared to largely secular Western Europe, but faith leaders and educators have long lamented that Americans still know relatively little about religion.
>
> Respondents to the survey were asked 32 questions with a range of difficulty, including whether they could name the Islamic holy book and the first book of the Bible, or say what century the Mormon religion was founded. On average, participants in the survey answered correctly overall for half of the survey questions.
>
> Atheists and agnostics scored highest, with an average of 21 correct answers, while Jews and Mormons followed with about 20 accurate responses. Protestants overall averaged 16 correct answers, while Catholics followed with a score of about 15.
>
> […]On questions about Christianity, Mormons scored the highest, with an average of about eight correct answers out of 12, followed by white evangelicals, with an average of just over seven correct answers. Jews, along with atheists and agnostics, knew the most about other faiths, such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism. Less than half of Americans know that the Dalai Lama is Buddhist, and less than four in 10 know that Vishnu and Shiva are part of Hinduism.

Gaaaaahhhh!!! How can you be a member of any religion if you don’t know the basic claims of all the religions so you can evaluate them to see if any are true? How can you make a good choice unless you choose the one that is logically consistent and empirically

validated by the external world?

Comparative religions

- Choosing my religion: why I am not a Muslim
- Choosing my religion: why I am not a Calvinist
- Choosing my religion: why I am not a Hindu or a Buddhist
- Choosing my religion: why I am not Roman Catholic
- Choosing my religion: why I am not Jewish

Related posts

- are all religions basically the same?
- what about the blind men and the elephant?
- a debate between a Christian and a postmodern relativist
- what makes Christianity different from other religions?
- responding to religious pluralism

Mentoring

- the importance of being able to argue both sides of a question
- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church
- why won’t Christians defend their faith in public?

Colombia’s war on terrorism and Chile’s war on poverty

September 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of South America

A magnificent column about Colombia’s war on FARC.

Excerpt:

> When Juan Manuel Santos came into office as Colombia’s president and emphasized economic issues over the fight against terrorist guerrillas, he was suspected of going soft on those he had combated as minister of defense under the previous administration. Little did his critics know that he was planning the “coup de grace” against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).
>
> The devastating Sept. 22 attack on FARC headquarters in Colombia’s central Meta province all but signifies the end of the five-decade-old conflict. It will take a little while for the official end to be declared, but this war is pretty much over.
>
> […]For decades, politicians, academics, human rights activists and journalists on both sides of the Atlantic failed to see that there was nothing romantic, “bien-pensant” or Robin Hoodesque about an organization that killed, maimed, kidnapped and extorted for a totalitarian objective.
>
> Colombia’s solitude was such that even the U.S. began to lose faith in its ally a couple of years ago, refusing to approve a free-trade agreement that Bogota had negotiated at a major political cost.

> Colombians did not give up and continued to reclaim territory for civilian rule. Much like the defeat of Venezuela's Cuba-inspired terrorist guerrillas in the 1960s, Colombia's victory against FARC is the result of civilians awakening to the evil of totalitarian terror.
>
> We get to hear about spectacular military feats, but how many outside Colombia realize that peasants, factory workers, teachers, students and others joined the struggle to defeat FARC, beautifully symbolized by the hundreds of thousands who took to the streets inside Colombia and around the world in 2008 to clamor for the end of terror?
>
> There are still many challenges ahead. The lesson in courage and perseverance that Colombians have given us suggests they are ready to meet them.

I wish that we could sign a free trade deal with them like Canada's conservative government. Canada is led by a conservative business-friendly economist, and they are very supportive of capitalist democracies like Colombia. Stephen Harper is Canada's prime minister. He has economics degrees from the University of Calgary. Like Santos, he is very, very tough on terrorism – favoring increased defense spending to protect Canadian interests abroad. And guess what? Canada also has a free trade agreement with another South American country – Chile.

And Chile is also doing very well, even after the massive earthquake.

Excerpt:

> Chile's peso rose to a 27-month high after a report showed the country's industrial growth accelerated to the fastest since 2006.
>
> The peso appreciated 0.2 percent to 485.23 per U.S. dollar at 11:43 a.m. New York time, from 486.17 yesterday. The currency touched 483.61, the strongest since June 11, 2008. The peso has risen 13 percent during the quarter and 3.6 percent this month.
>
> Chile's economy is accelerating after the fifth-largest earthquake in a century struck in February, delaying its recovery from a 2009 recession.
>
> "Retail sales grew and industrial production was better than expected," said Roberto Melzi, a strategist at Barclays Capital in New York.
>
> Retail sales expanded 13 percent in August from a year earlier, and industrial output grew 6.9 percent, the National Statistics Institute said in Santiago. That's the most since January 2006. Industrial production shrank 17 percent after the 8.8-magnitude Feb. 27 earthquake and its accompanying tsunami, which caused damage worth more than a sixth of Chile's gross domestic product.

Chile and Colombia are my two favorite South American countries. Both are led by conservative business-friendly economists. Chile's president Sebastián Piñerahas a Masters and a Ph.D in economics from Harvard, and is successful in the private sector. The Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos specializes in business and economics, with

graduate degrees from Harvard and the London School of Economics.

Female judge strikes down laws prohibiting prostitution

September 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's the news story from the National Post.

Excerpt:

> In her decision released Tuesday, Justice Susan Himel concluded that prohibiting sex-trade workers from operating a common bawdy house, living off the avails of prostitution and communicating for the purposes of prostitution, violate the Charter of Rights.
>
> "I have found that the law as it stands, is currently contributing to the danger faced by prostitutes," Judge Himel wrote in a 131-page ruling.
>
> The three sections of the Criminal Code ruled unconstitutional, "force prostitutes to choose between their liberty interest and their right to security of the person," she said.
>
> The long-awaited decision stems from a constitutional challenge initiated last year by three women involved in the sex trade.
>
> "It is important to state at the outset what this case is not about: The court has not been called upon to decide whether or not there is a constitutional right to sell sex or to decide which policy model regarding prostitution is better," Judge Himel said. "Rather, it is the court's task to decide the merits of this particular legal challenge, which is whether certain provisions of the Criminal Code are in violation of the Charter."
>
> […]"We want to be good citizens and now we can," said Valerie Scott, executive director of the Sex Professionals of Canada and one of the three women in the constitutional challenge.

I think I understand women fairly well, and I think that what was going through Susan Himel's head was something like this: "if I make this legal, then women who do this sort of thing will feel a lot better about it, because no one will judge them since it's legal".

Barbara Kay weighs in here.

I read one feminist web site that called Ms. Himel's decision "Excellent News", but I didn't want to link to them. I would say that legalized prostitution is consistent with feminism's promotion of non-marital sex as a way of eliminating the unequal gender roles inherent in marriage.

Alvin Plantinga’s evolutionary argument against naturalism

September 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here’s the link at First Things. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Although Darwin admits he wasn’t much of an abstract thinker, he could not shake the “inward conviction” that “the Universe is not the result of chance.” Unlike many who followed after him, he appears to have intuitively understood the paradox of combining naturalism with evolutionary theory: If evolution is a non-teleological process, it undercuts our ability to trust that we can form true beliefs and convictions.
>
> To have trustworthy convictions, we have to have properly functioning noetic equipment (i.e., a brain, spinal cord, sensory apparatus, etc., that recognize reality). But can a strictly materialistic, non-teleological, evolutionary process produce such reliable equipment? The philosopher Alvin Plantinga, one of the greatest thinkers of our era, thinks the answer is “no.” Although his argument is too complex and tightly argued to be adequately summarized, the basic outline of his case shows his point to be all but incontrovertible.
>
> Plantinga claims, not that evolution is untrue, but that the truth of evolution is incompatible with the truth of naturalism. “As far as I can see, God certainly could have used Darwinian processes to create the living world and direct it as he wanted to go,” he argues. “Hence evolution as such does not imply that there is no direction in the history of life.”
>
> What does imply that life is not directed, he adds, is not evolutionary theory itself, but the theory of *unguided* evolution: the idea that “neither God nor any other person has taken a hand in guiding, directing, or orchestrating the course of evolution.” For our purposes, we’ll call this view “evolutionary naturalism.”
>
> Evolutionary naturalism assumes that our noetic equipment developed as it did because it had some survival value or reproductive advantage. Unguided evolution does not select for belief except insofar as the belief improves the chances of survival. The truth of a belief is irrelevant, as long as it produces an evolutionary advantage.

If you want to hear Plantinga giving a lecture on this same argument live on a university campus, click here.

Summary:

> In a talk given at The Veritas Forum at Oregon State University in January 1996, Professor Alvin Plantinga presents an evolutionary argument *against* naturalism.

> In a complex, but important philosophical argument, he argues that it is not rational to accept belief in naturalism and evolution, because such beliefs provide no rational basis for trusting our cognitive faculties.

Or you can watch the videos that I posted a while back.

The argument first appeared in his book "Warrant and Proper Function", published by Oxford University Press in 1993. It should be noted that Plantinga is a Calvinist, a supporter of middle knowledge, and has lent some support to intelligent design. In his latter years, he has turned feisty, and writes snarky things to confound atheists.

FBI raids homes of anti-war leader and SEIU union leader

September 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's the news from Forbes. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> The FBI and the U.S. Labor Department are investigating prominent labor leader Andy Stern in their probe of corruption at the Service Employees International Union, according to two people who have been interviewed by federal agents.
>
> The two organized labor officials met with federal agents this summer to answer questions about a six-figure book contract that Stern landed in 2006 and his role in approving money to pay the salary of an SEIU leader in California who allegedly performed no work.
>
> Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the investigation. The FBI and the Labor Department's office of inspector general declined to comment for the record.
>
> The disclosure about the federal inquiry of Stern – who abruptly resigned as president of the 2.2-million member SEIU in April – comes just weeks ahead of contentious congressional elections in which the union is spending an estimated $44 million to support its favored Democratic candidates.
>
> The SEIU has been plagued with several financial scandals since 2008, when the Los Angeles Times reported that Tyrone Freeman, head of the union's largest California local, misappropriated hundreds of thousands of dollars from the union. The union ousted Freeman and demanded that he return the money. No federal charges have been filed against him, but SEIU spokeswoman Michelle Ringuette said the union has been cooperating with the FBI.

The SEIU union is connected to Obama.

Oh, and Gateway Pundit reports on another SEIU union boss being investigated.

Excerpt:

> Over the weekend the FBI announced that it was investigating Joseph Iosbaker for possible connections to overseas terror groups. Iosbaker and his wife Stephanie Weiner, both anti-war activists, are suspected of activities "concerning the material support of terrorism."
>
> […]According to the SEIU Local 73 website, Iosbaker is listed as the Local 73 Chief Steward. Iosbaker was also quite active earlier in the year protesting the closing of the Republic Windows & Doors factory that made the national news. Iosbaker was then listed as an executive board member of the SEIU.

Oh, and the executive director of the Arab American Action Network is being investigated.

NJ Governor Christie announces sweeping education reforms

September 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From CBS News.

Excerpt:

> Determined to turn New Jersey's education system on its head, Gov. Chris Christie on Tuesday unveiled a tough-love reform package that will make classroom achievement — not seniority or tenure — the basis for pay hikes and career advancement in Garden State public schools.
>
> Christie is turning his take-no-prisoner's style to the classroom, demanding a top to bottom overhaul of how New Jersey students learn and teachers teach. And that means undoing tenure, seniority and other union work rules.
>
> […]The governor wants to turn the old seniority system inside out and put quality teaching ahead of lack-luster performance. He will:
>
> - Prohibit salary scales based on seniority
> - Grant raises based on classroom performance
> - Give tenure based on classroom performance
>
> "We are paying a fortune for something that is not giving our children the hope and the faith and the trust that their tomorrow can be better than their today," Christie said.
>
> The governor said he would appoint a task force to come up with standards to measure teacher achievement.
>
> Educational experts applauded the governor's actions.
>
> "He is with excellence in education for everyone by prioritizing teachers — their brilliance, their art and their skills. We will dramatically improve the quality of education of our kids in New Jersey, particularly our neediest ones," said Derrell Bradford, director of Excellent Education for Everyone.
>
> The governor needs the state Legislature to approve the changes to seniority and tenure. The rest of the things he did by signing executive orders.
>
> A spokesman for the New Jersey Education Association attacked the governor's plan saying that once again he was "trying to implement education reform without any input from educators."

Ha ha – stupid socialists don't like him. Well, Boo-freakin-hoo! Ha ha ha.

Also he cut off state-level funding for abortion, and abortion clinics closed.

Chris Christie talks about education reform at a Townhall

Hey, look what I found on YouTube!

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Part 4:

It’s funny because the Democrats hate him. Ha ha ha! Stupid Democrats.

Science writer John Horgan comments on Hawking's ideas

September 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This is from Scientific American. (H/T Reformed Seth)

Keep in mind that the author is a naturalist and an atheist, and he thinks Glenn Beck is a "right-wing nut" – i.e. – I infer that the author is a left-wing nut. But his criticisms of Hawking's untestable theory are accurate.

Excerpt:

> The "sound scientific explanation" is M-theory, which Hawking calls (in a blurb for Amazon) "the only viable candidate for a complete 'theory of everything'."
>
> Actually M-theory is just the latest iteration of string theory, with membranes (hence the M) substituted for strings. For more than two decades string theory has been the most popular candidate for the unified theory that Hawking envisioned 30 years ago. Yet this popularity stems not from the theory's actual merits but rather from the lack of decent alternatives and the stubborn refusal of enthusiasts to abandon their faith.
>
> M-theory suffers from the same flaws that string theories did. First is the problem of empirical accessibility. Membranes, like strings, are supposedly very, very tiny—as small compared with a proton as a proton is compared with the solar system. This is the so-called Planck scale, 10^–33 centimeters. Gaining the kind of experimental confirmation of membranes or strings that we have for, say, quarks would require a particle accelerator 1,000 light-years around, scaling up from our current technology. Our entire solar system is only one light-day around, and the Large Hadron Collider, the world's most powerful accelerator, is 27 kilometers in circumference.

This sounds like bad news for atheism and their beloved deity, but it is a strength of the Flying Spaghetti Monster (peas be upon him) to be untestable, unobservable and speculative! It's a feature, not a bug.

UPDATE: Cool video of Roger Penrose and Alister McGrath debunking Hawking's theory:

Atheist Roger Penrose calls it "not even a theory". Wow. This is from Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable" show, that I feature once in a while.

Michael Behe will be lecturing in the UK this November

October 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

Controversial ID Scientist tours UK
Professor Michael Behe, a key figure in the Intelligent Design (ID) movement, will challenge his critics in a lecture tour of the UK in November.

Prof. Behe is one of an increasing number of scientists who believe that modern biochemical evidence undermines the basis of Darwinian evolution. The author of two ground-breaking books on ID – 'Darwin's Black Box' (1996) and 'The Edge of Evolution' (2007) – Behe's theory of irreducible complexity has drawn attacks from many neo-Darwinists, but not one of them has been able to refute it.

As Behe himself writes, in the years since the publication of 'Darwin's Black Box', "the scientific argument for design is stronger than ever. Despite the enormous progress of biochemistry in the intervening years… despite implacable opposition from some scientists at the highest levels, the book's argument for design stands… there is very little of the original text I would change if I wrote it today.

"In short, as science advances relentlessly, the molecular foundation of life… is getting exponentially more complex. As it does, the case for the intelligent design of life becomes exponentially stronger."

Behe's 'Darwin or Design? What Does the Science Really Say?' tour runs from 20-27 November and will comprise evening lectures at the Babbage Lecture Theatre in Cambridge and the Caledonian University in Glasgow, plus events in London, Belfast and Leamington/Warwick. He will also be the main speaker at a day conference (27 November) at Oxford Brookes University.

The tour is organised by the UK-based Centre for Intelligent Design, which exists to promote the public understanding of ID.

For more details of the tour and booking information see: www.darwinordesign.org.uk

Michael Behe is one of my favorite intelligent design speakers.

Andrea Mrozek responds to the Ontario prostitution ruling

October 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the Toronto Sun was written by Andrea Mrozek of the Institute for Marriage and Family Canada.

Excerpt:

> Following the path of Sweden by criminalizing Johns is one possible solution, with considerable support among women's groups and anti-human trafficking activists across the globe.
>
> The Swedish model prosecutes the buyer.
>
> "A person who obtains casual sexual relations in exchange for payment shall be sentenced," reads the law, "…to a fine or imprisonment for at most six months."
>
> The government there simultaneously helps women out of the industry, with shelter, counselling and job training — and a hand out is what prostitutes need. After all, 90% of prostitutes say that's what they want.
>
> A Swedish independent inquiry published in July 2010 says the results have been a success. Prostitution, organized crime and human trafficking have decreased.
>
> This is in stark contrast to other countries, like neighbouring Finland, where purchasing sex is allowed. In Sweden, about 400 to 600 women are trafficked into the country annually. In Finland, 10,000 to 15,000 are.

I think this is a good, evidence-based, case against legalizing prostitution. Notice how she cites actual outcomes in other countries to show the impact of changes in law on society.The IMFC is basically a family and marriage policy think tank. They have conferences, they publish research papers, and they engage the culture. They are affiliated with Focus on the Family Canada. What I find exciting about the IMFC is that get their positions on social issues published in *mainstream news publications.* Can you imagine? And the reason why they can do that is because they are good at research. And good research influences policy makers and public opinion.

But sometimes people make statements that just express their feelings and opinions – not what is really true. And they don't supply evidence for their views from neutral sources, either. I was arguing with a guy on Facebook recently about gun control. I offered two pieces of evidence to him: 1) the 1997 gun ban in the UK that doubled violent crime rates in four years, and 2) legalizing concealed-carry in certain US states drastically reduced violent crime rates. For the life of me, I could not get him to talk about whether firearm laws (liberal or conservative) affect crime rates. I think we need to take a lesson fro Andrea Mrozek and talk about policy issues using *evidence*. No one cares about feelings, opinions, sob-stories, whining, blaming, complaining and name-calling. Just. Use.

Evidence.

Alan Shlemon explains a classification system for pro-abortion arguments

October 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about pro-life arguments

Here's the main post, which contains: (H/T Life Training Institute)

- a chart showing how pro-abortion arguments can be classified using disjunctions
- a 5-minute video of Alan explaining the chart
- links to ALL of the responses to each type of pro-abortion argument

Alan is a veteran of university campus debates on abortion, so he's speaking from experience. The guy who introduces him is Scott Klusendorf. Scott is the best pro-life debater in the business. Bar none. Scott is the William Lane Craig of the abortion issue.

Ok. Let's get started.

Here's the chart. Open that up and take a look at it.

Then watch this video and refer to the chart:

Then find a pro-abortion person, classify their argument, and use these links to find the appropriate response:

> You may already be familiar with these three kinds of responses, but if not, learning them is quite feasible (Trot Out the Toddler, the scientific case that the unborn is human, the S.L.E.D. test, Taking the Roof Off, and responding to the violinist and bodily rights arguments have been explained by Stand to Reason

> (through Making Abortion Unthinkable) and many others). It's just a matter of thinking through the flowchart when you're in a conversation with an abortion-choice advocate, recognizing the position they're taking, and then responding accordingly. Knowing this, you can respond to every defense they offer for abortion.

Anyone can do this – and you get better at it the more you practice. It's fun to be a little more confrontational about controversial things – being a good person means taking bold stands on moral issues, and backing up your talk with good arguments and evidence. The more time you put into it, the better you get at it.

Obamacare causes companies to drop health insurance coverage

October 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the radically left-wing anti-american New York Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Principal Financial Group announced on Thursday that it planned to stop selling health insurance, another sign of upheaval emerging among insurers as the new federal health law starts to take effect.
>
> The company, based in Iowa, provides coverage to about 840,000 people who receive their insurance through an employer.
>
> Principal's decision closely tracks moves by other insurers that have indicated in recent weeks that they plan to drop out of certain segments of the market, like the business of selling child-only policies. State regulators say some insurance companies are already threatening to leave particular markets because of the new law. And some regulators in states like Maine and Iowa have asked the Obama administration to give insurers more time to comply with some of the new rules.
>
> […]More insurers are likely to follow Principal's lead, especially as they try to meet the new rules that require plans to spend at least 80 cents of every dollar they collect in premiums on the welfare of their customers. Many of the big insurers have been lobbying federal officials to forestall or drastically alter those rules.
>
> "It's just going to drive the little guys out," said Robert Laszewski, a health policy consultant in Alexandria, Va. Smaller players like Principal in states like Iowa, Missouri and elsewhere will not be able to compete because they do not have the resources and economies of scale of players like UnitedHealth, which is among the nation's largest health insurers.
>
> Mr. Laszewski is worried that the ensuing concentration is likely to lead to higher prices because large players will no longer face the competition from the smaller plans. "It's just the UnitedHealthcare full employment act," he said.

So basically Obama passed a plan to destroy competition, leaving consumers with fewer choices and paving the way for increased health insurance premiums. And now he wants to go on another vacation because he is doing such a good job. (H/T ECM)

Do big government tax credits break up intact families?

October 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a research study from the Royal Economic Society. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Labour's tax credits have caused thousands of families to break up, an authoritative study said yesterday.
>
> The flagship scheme is blamed for a doubling of the divorce rate among low income parents with young children.
>
> Tax credits, introduced a decade ago to cut child poverty, were supposed to help single mothers and hard-working families.
>
> But a so-called 'couple penalty' means that a mother can pick up more than £100 extra a week by splitting from her partner.
>
> Evidence published by the Royal Economic Society said that tax credits give mothers married to men on low earnings an incentive to divorce.
>
> The study found that the divorce rate among mothers with low-income husbands rose by 160 per cent in the three years after the benefits were brought in.
>
> Marco Francesconi, of the University of Essex, said that tax credits had limited the
> benefits of marriage, encouraged mothers to work and produced a 'greater risk of family disruption'.
>
> He said: 'The result that tax credits had strong employment and divorce effects on married mothers in poor households is very important.
>
> The findings, published in the highly-influential Economic Journal, are the first hard evidence that tax credits are working to drive couples apart.
>
> […]Professor Francesconi and two senior colleagues based their research on 3,235 couples tracked from 1991 by the British Household Panel Survey.
>
> 'Women married to a partner who did not work or who worked fewer than 16 hours a week were more than 2 per cent more likely to dissolve their partnership after the reform than their childless counterparts,' the report said.

Now take a look at this interview about unilateral ("no fault") divorce from Life Site News, featuring Dr. Stephen Baskerville. (H/T Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

LSN: *Are there any other often-ignored laws or cultural issues that work against the family?*

SB: The divorce regime is in fact a panoply of destructive laws, not just no-fault. The

massive federally funded machinery catering to the dishonest hysteria over “domestic violence” is almost all geared to facilitating divorce. Knowingly false accusations of domestic violence are now out of control, and almost all of it is generated to secure custody of children in divorce cases.

The same is largely true of the hysteria over “child abuse”. Child abuse is certainly real, but almost all of it takes place in single-parent homes, not intact families. In other words, there is a child abuse industry that actually creates the problem it professes to be addressing. By encouraging false accusations of child abuse to facilitate divorce and single-parent homes, the child abuse industry actually creates more child abuse. That is a shocking statement, I realize, but I have documented it in my book.

Child support is another facilitator of divorce. Too many people credulously accept feminist/government propaganda that child support is to provide for children who have been abandoned. Nothing is further from the truth. It is mostly extorted from fathers that have been evicted, again through “no fault” of their own. It is a subsidy on divorce and single-parent homes. If you pay people to divorce, they will do it more. That is precisely what child support does.

Basically, these single-mother welfare policies are put in place by left-wing political parties in order to provide financial incentives to women to break up their marriages. This is called “compassion” – equalizing the life outcomes of married couples with single-mother households. Government does this by transferring wealth from marriage couples to single parents households.

But social problems are created by fatherless homes, no matter how much wealth redistribution the socialists do. Big government has to raise taxes and increase social programs to deal with the failures they themselves caused in the first place. Bigger government means more regulation of private life, and less take-home pay for working husbands. Eventually, a traditionally-minded man cannot support a family alone, and his wife has to work. That leaves government-regulated day cares and public schools in charge of the children. How convenient for the secular left – now they can impose their sex education on ever younger children. Parents can’t complain about what they don’t know about.

Remember that 77% of young, unmarried women voted for Barack Obama in the 2008 election. This is what they wanted – to replace the unreliable men they freely and unwisely chose for themselves with the security offered by big government. But big government gets its money from the reliable men. What do you suppose the reliable men will do when 50% of their paycheck is confiscated by the state? Does that give a man confidence to get married? Will he respected by his family and have moral authority in the home because of his role as sole provider? Of course not. Government will be in charge.

Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?

October 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What causes Christian women to pass on strong, capable Christian men and to choose weaker non-Christian men instead?

Fears of rejection

On the one hand, most women want men to provide them with good things, to love them, to treat them honorably and to lead them. But on the other hand, they fear abandonment and rejection. Sometimes this fear of abandonment and rejection is so strong that it causes them to pass on men who they think are "too good for them". A good man may seem unattainable to a woman who has not put in the same amount of effort to prepare for him.

Fear of moral obligations

Sometimes a really good man places moral and spiritual obligations on a Christian woman that require her to improve and grow, in order to help him with his life plan. Also, men flourish when a woman encourages him, recognizes him, supports him in his male roles. A good man who has definite ideas on what counts as good behavior may expect more from a woman, and those moral obligations can get in the way of her selfish pursuit of happiness.

Strong, good men are avoided

So it turns out that the fear of rejection or abandonment can be STRONGER when the man is good at his Biblical roles, because she feels like she doesn't measure up and will have to work hard to keep him. And the expectation to fulfill moral obligations can be STRONGER when the man has a well-developed sense of morality, because he actually knows how women are supposed to act and he may hold the woman accountable.

Weak men are easier to blame and control

Let me explain some other reasons why a Christian woman might prefer to have a weaker, non-Christian man:

1. A woman may prefer to blame a man in order to rationalize her selfish actions, and an immoral man is easier to blame.
2. A woman may prefer to blame a man in order to punish him for some real or imagined crime, and an immoral man is easier to blame.
3. A woman may want to avoid moral obligations to a man, and a weaker man is easier for her to control. (e.g. – using pre-marital sex in order to avoid having to love a man self-sacrificially)
4. A woman may need to avoid being judged or led morally by a man, so she prefers a man who is weak at morality and moral reasoning.
5. A woman may need to avoid being judged or led spiritually by a man, so she prefers a man who is weak at theology and apologetics.

So, it’s not that the poor, sweet, innocent women are helpless victims of nasty, evil, brutish man-beasts, at all. Far from it. Some of them DELIBERATELY CHOOSE to pass up the best Biblical Christian men, because they fear rejection or moral judgment or loss of control, and/or they want to avoid moral obligations to men that may interfere with their selfishness.

Disclaimer

I just want to reiterate before anyone freaks out that I know a LOT of Christian women who are heroic at letting Christianity influence their choice of romantic partners. Actually, I know women who are MORE courageous than I am in resisting bad partners. And it’s harder for a woman to do because women have concerns about the future, and so on. The choice to be faithful to God, to be chaste and to choose a godly man is nothing less than an act of incredible heroism. I wish more women did that. It is really amazing and admirable when women hold out for a good man, then answer his call to step up into the role that he needs her to play to help him with his plan to serve God effectively.

I actually know more of the good kind than the bad kind, especially since I started writing and the good ones just showed up! Pow! There you all are! Where had you all been hiding?

MUST-READ: Only personally opposed to abortion?

October 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about International Life Chain Sunday

The following is a guest post from commenter Mary to commemorate International Life Chain Sunday. Mary urges all of my readers to take this opportunity to stand up for the pre-born.

In my discussions with people on the topic of abortion, I frequently come across people (including many Christians) who claim to be "personally opposed" to abortion (or words to that effect), but who don't think that it should be illegal. They believe in "a woman's right to choose". This all sounds very fine and magnanimous, couched as it is in the language of generosity, but an analysis of the reasoning behind it shows it to be seriously flawed.

Abortion should be illegal for the following reasons:

1. Taking of innocent human life without morally sufficient reason should be illegal. Where the rationale comes from for believing this basic premise is another topic, but it is agreed on by all reasonable people – theists and atheists alike. (A morally sufficient reason would be something that saves another innocent human life.)
2. The pre-born child is human. This is a scientific fact.
3. The pre-born child is alive. This is a scientific fact.
4. The pre-born child has committed no crime and can therefore be considered legally innocent.
5. Taking the life of the pre-born child is to take an innocent, human life.
6. Taking the life of a pre-born child should be illegal.

Abortion should be illegal for the same reason that murdering a newborn or a 2 year old is illegal. We don't give women the "right to choose" to kill their newborns and for the same reason we should not give them the "right to choose" to kill their pre-born children either. The only case where we would consider it acceptable to take the life of a newborn would be where it was absolutely necessary to save the life of another innocent human being. The same should be true in the case of a pre-born child. We should give equal value to human lives and value life above the right to comfort and convenience.

Our entire legal system is based on the fact that there are certain limits to choice. If the right to choose were applied across the board we'd have to scrap every law in the books. Laws exist to limit choices that are damaging to others.

Legalized abortion is unfair discrimination of the worst kind on the basis of age and location. The right to life of the pre-born is a human right that should be fought for with passion and integrity. If we do not fight for this right we will be remembered in the same way as those who have failed to stand up for the rights of the oppressed in other areas.

Will we be like German citizens during the Nazi regime who failed to stand up for the rights of Jews, despite being "personally opposed" to Nazism? Will we be like those who failed to stand up for the right to freedom of those oppressed by slavery and Apartheid, despite being "personally opposed" to the same? Or will we be like Dietrich Bonheoffer and William Wilberforce who went beyond personal aversion, even though they weren't members of the oppressed group, who spoke against oppression and who stood up for what was right, in the face of opposition.

I would like to end with two very apt quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King:

It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can stop him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important.

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter

Was Obama lying to you about keeping your health care plan?

October 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Among President Obama's core health-care promises was that Americans can keep their current coverage if they like it. Among the reasons that a new ObamaCare squall blows in every other day is that this claim simply is not true, as people are discovering.
>
> The latest fracas was incited by Janet Adamy's scoop in the Journal this week that McDonald's Corp. may be forced to cancel its current coverage for 29,500 employees as a result of ObamaCare. McDonald's told Health and Human Services regulators that new mandates will make its plans "economically prohibitive" and cause "a huge disruption" unless it gets a waiver.
>
> […]At issue in the McDonald's dust-up is a type of low-cost, low-benefit insurance known as "mini-med." These plans cover most medical services but generally have an annual deductible or benefit cap between $1,000 and $10,000. Unlike more comprehensive plans, there's no catastrophic coverage. Essentially, the very low premiums—under $100 a month—amount to prepaying for routine expenses like office checkups and E.R. visits.
>
> Around 2.5 million consumers are covered by "mini-med" policies, most of them concentrated in low-wage industries like fast food, hospitality and retail that have large numbers of part-time or temporary workers. In the case of the restaurants, 75% of the workforce turns over every year and nearly half are under age 25. Mini-med plans are a temporary stopgap for businesses that have low margins and face high labor and health costs.
>
> But Democrats hate mini-med and other skinny-benefit plans, calling them "underinsurance." ObamaCare is meant to run them out of the market by mandating benefits, eliminating coverage caps and certain technical rules about how premiums must be spent. This despite the fact that Arkansas, Connecticut and Tennessee sponsor their own mini-med plans for state residents as better than having no insurance at all.
>
> In other words, the choice is between relatively affordable coverage that isn't as generous as Democrats think it should be and dumping coverage entirely. McDonald's may eventually offer the high-cost plans that Ms. Sebelius favors, or get its waiver, but many of its less profitable or smaller competitors won't. While subsidized ObamaCare options will be available in 2014, those costs will merely be transferred to taxpayers.

Radical pro-abortion extremist Kathleen Sebelius is in the news lately, intimidating private businesses for refusing to make bricks without straw.

Michelle Malkin wrote about it.

Excerpt:

> In February, the White House coordinated a demonization campaign against Anthem Blue Cross in California for raising rates. Obama singled out the company in a "60 Minutes" interview, and Sebelius sent a nasty-gram demanding that Anthem "justify" its rate hikes to the federal government. A private company trying to survive in the marketplace was forced to "explain" itself to federal bureaucrats and career politicians who have never run a business (successful or otherwise) in their lives. Sebelius went even further. She called on Anthem to provide public disclosure on how the rate increases would be spent — a mandate that no other private companies must follow.
>
> We already have a federal pay czar requiring companies to justify their pay raises and claiming authority to claw back bonuses already paid. Will the White House next demand that other businesses — not just health insurers — justify price increases deemed unreasonable, excessive or "extraordinary"?
>
> On Capitol Hill, Democratic chief inquisitor Henry Waxman trained his sights on executives from Deere, Caterpillar, Verizon and AT&T in a brass-knuckled effort to silence companies speaking out about the cost implications and financial burdens of Obamacare. He scheduled an April 21 show trial of corporate heads who dutifully reported writedowns related to the Obamacare mandates. Obama Commerce Secretary Gary Locke joined in on the witch-hunt, pummeling the companies on the White House blog and TV airwaves for their "premature" and "irresponsible" disclosures.
>
> After the Democrats' own congressional staff pointed out that the companies "acted properly and in accordance with accounting standards" in submitting filings that were required by law, Waxman called off the hounds. But it was a temporary reprieve. Sebelius' threat last week against individual market health insurers who raise rates to cope with new federal coverage mandates will be far from this desperate administration's last.
>
> As health costs skyrocket, doctors abandon the profession, hospitals lay off workers and private insurers shut down, the only way to quell the Obamacare backlash will be through an even more thuggish campaign to demonize, marginalize and silence nationwide dissent.

Here are some amusing responses to her Soviet-style bullying from Wall Street Journal readers.

Now you know why companies are terrified of government – and why they aren't hiring here. Maybe they are hiring abroad, but not here.

Democrats don't understand the effects of their policies – the purpose of the policies they

enact is not to make our lives better. The purpose of their policies is to make them feel good about themselves. Their good intentions matter more than actual results. They think they are morally superior, and they balk when we don't worship them for failing to understand economic realities. "But we are good people with good intentions", they say, "you're too stupid to run your own lives – you need our advanced training in socialism to make your lives better". It's not good enough.

Feminism's opposition to motherhood makes children less moral

October 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you appalled by the way that children are behaving these days? Blame feminism. (H/T Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> Many of today's kids seem to be flunking the daily moral tests of life.
>
> James, a teacher-friend of mine, lamented recently how "morally challenged" his high school students seem to be. "They don't think twice about lying or slamming someone's reputation. Cheating on tests is no big deal. They only worry if they'll get caught."
>
> Recent headlines and the latest studies paint a dismal picture of cheating, bullying, sexual experimentation, on-line exhibitionism and "cyber-stalking." College students show declining levels of empathy—a quality viewed as the foundation of ethical behavior. And the problems start early. A quick snapshot of the playground culture captures younger children who bully their way to the top of the slide or push past a crying child to reach the swings first, classic examples of self-absorption and lack of compassion.
>
> What—or who—is to blame?

Here's the author's answer, which I agree with:

> But new research from Notre Dame Professor Darcia Narvaez suggests that current parenting practices are the more likely culprit. The "moral sense" of children—now and in times past–hinges on whether they learn empathy and concern for others, particularly in the early years of life. ""Our work shows that the roots of moral functioning form early in life, in infancy, and depend on the affective quality of family and community support." And the problem, according to her research, is that today's child-rearing practices make that increasingly difficult. The result: "The quality of our cultural moral fiber is diminishing."
>
> The specific problems with childrearing today might be summed up by what's missing: time together, physical closeness, and adult responsiveness. In particular, Narvaez contrasts the "emotionally suboptimal day care facilities with little individualized, responsive care" to the optimal situation that keeps children close to mom, encourages parental responsiveness to infant needs, and offers parents and children strong support from extended family and the community.
>
> She cites a specific set of "ancestral" practices that cultivate strong family bonds—and consequently support moral development, particularly compassion and concern for others. These include:

> - Plenty of positive touch (cuddling, carrying, etc.)
> - Parental responsiveness to the child's needs.
> - Extended breastfeeding (2-5 years)
> - Natural child-birth (which provides a hormonal boost aiding newborn care)
> - Lots of unstructured playtime, with children of varied ages.
> - The presence of additional adults (typically dads and grandmothers) to love, care for, and guide the child. Mom is not alone.

A child's capacity for morality is grounded on the ability to feel empathy for others. And capacity is built up in the first two years of the child's life as it bonds to its mother. But what if the mother isn't there because she is out working? (Either because taxes are too high for just the man to work, or because there is no man in the home at all)

Basically, feminists want women to act like men, and that means that they must work. The way that feminists go about making women work when they would rather stay home is by passing policies that undermine traditional marriage. Things like increased sexual education, no-fault divorce, legalizing prostitution, anti-male divorce courts, replacing men with social programs, increased social programs to replace fathers, higher taxes to force women to work, taxpayer-funded contraceptives, taxpayer-funded abortion, taxpayer-funded IVF, same-sex marriage, domestic violence fears, rape fears, abuse fears, etc. Anything to get women to think that men are unreliable, that marriage is impossible and that women have to have jobs in order to be full members of society.

The result is children who don't develop a conscience. Nowhere is this more apparent than in single mother homes, where the generous welfare benefits that left-wing parties provide allow women to have sex with anyone they want without caring about what kind of father and husband the man they have sex with would be. If women don't have to care about finding a man who can provide, and if the government provides day care, health care and everything else that a man provides, then all the incentives are there for the woman to let the state raise her child. It's not the man's job to support her while she raises the children – it's the states job to raise children. Her job is to work like a man, and pay the state to raise her children for her. Blech!

What causes rich Democrats to lay off Americans and ship jobs overseas?

October 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First off, I spotted this American Spectator story by Robert Stacy McCain on The Other McCain.

Excerpt:

> California Democrat Rep. Jane Harman's family business is laying off American workers – including engineering employees in California – and shifting jobs overseas.
>
> A letter from the human resources director of one Harman company, obtained exclusively by *The American Spectator*, describes a "permanent" layoff of dozens of California workers that went into effect last week.
>
> […]**Harman is the third-richest member of Congress, and her net worth increased last year $40 million, according to a study of Federal Election Commission records conducted by *The Hill* newspaper. Her husband, Sidney Harman, founded Harman International Industries, which was valued in 2007 at about $8 billion.**
>
> […]**By May 2009, the company had already slashed its U.S. workforce by 900 and expected to make more than a thousand more layoffs by mid-2010, according to a *Saturday Evening Post* article that noted: "[W]hile shutting down U.S. facilities, Harman was simultaneously opening factories in China and India, as well as massive multimedia outlets in Dubai and New Delhi."**

She's a rich Democrat… and she is shipping American jobs overseas? Why???

Well, California is an anti-business state and it's run by socialist Democrats who hate businesses and capitalism. (H/T ECM)

But what about other countries? Why do they ship jobs overseas?

Look what is happening in New Zealand with the new Hobbit movie. (H/T Anon)

Excerpt:

> At least half a dozen countries, including Australia, are lobbying to win the right to film *The Hobbit* and Hollywood accountants are now doing the numbers of rival offers, the movie's co-producer and co-writer Phillipa Boyens says.
>
> The $US150 million Sir Peter Jackson blockbuster has been **mired in an industrial dispute** in recent weeks, following complaints from a group of international labour unions over poor on-set working conditions for actors.
>
> Jackson, who strenuously denies the claims, has accused the Australian-based

> Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance of **bullying** to gain control over the production, which he says may be forced out of New Zealand.
>
> Boyens told New Zealand's National Radio's Nine to Noon programme the movie was ready to begin filming in January but has now been thrown in turmoil by the actors' boycott.
>
> She said New Zealand Actors' Equity seemed to believe the whole thing was a bluff.
>
> "I am concerned over some of the statements made… by New Zealand Equity that there is still a misunderstanding on the seriousness of what is involved here and what is at stake," she said.
>
> "That is very real and that has put at risk the livelihood of countless thousand New Zealand industry workers," she said.
>
> Scotland, Ireland, Canada and Eastern European countries had entered the negotiations in a "feeding frenzy" inspired by the threat of union action.

And it's not just left-wing anti-capitalist governments and unions that cause outsourcing and shipping jobs overseas.

It's the uncertainty caused by massive spending, constant interventions, anti-business regulations, the appointment of radical anti-capitalists and judicial activists to positions of power.

Here's a story from Reuters.

Excerpt:

> Tough budget measures to keep its international bailout on track have helped prompt thousands of Romanian companies to relocate to neighboring Bulgaria, where lower taxes and more stable regulations offer an easier place to do business.
>
> Bulgaria has corporate and income tax on profits of just 10 percent, compared with Romania's 16 percent, and now also has lower value added tax after Bucharest hiked its rate as part of efforts to meet the conditions of a 20 billion euro EU/IMF bailout.
>
> Sofia has also cut red tape and initial capital for setting up a company is now 2 levs ($1.39), compared with a previous 5,000 levs and 200 lei ($63.55) in Romania. It takes less than a week, almost half the time needed in Romania.
>
> That may seem like small beer, but business people say the speed of the changes forced by the bailout and uncertainty over future cuts in Romania have encouraged them to move base.
>
> Bulgarian authorities have not released precise data, but local media report up to 2,500 Romanian companies have set up there already and another two are registering daily in the border city of Ruse alone.
>
> "Romanian legislation and taxation are changing from one day to another. So

> how can I have any guarantee, any certainty if I open a company here?" said 23-year-old Bogdan Popescu from Bucharest, who wants to open an online television business.
>
> "I could as well wake up with a 40 percent income tax tomorrow (instead of 16 at present)," said Popescu, who plans to put his headquarters in Bulgaria. "The present fiscal legislation is in no way a stimulus."
>
> The two Balkan countries share a long border and though links can be complicated — only one bridge connects the states along a 470 kilometer (294 miles) stretch of the Danube — companies can set up a paper headquarters but still effectively run operations from Romania.
>
> Both suffered deep and painful recession after 2008's financial crisis, but while Romania is having to cut spending and raise taxes, Bulgaria previously ran large fiscal surpluses and has enough reserves to keep taxes low despite dwindling revenues.

Whenever government and their union supporters make life difficult for businesses, the businesses leave. Governments and unions ship jobs overseas. Governments and unions outsource jobs to other countries. Businesses just dance the the tune that governments and unions play. It's no use complaining about big corporations and rich greedy executives. If you *want a job* then you *promote the conditions that will attract businesses.* Left-wing unions, left-wing political parties, left-wing news media and left-wing judges attack businesses, and that's why unemployment goes higher.

And businesses know that massive government spending is going to require higher taxes or printing more money to that will devalue savings. They are not going to expand in banana republic economies like the United States until we vote a large enough number of Democrats out of all three branches of the federal government.

What I resent is when rich Democrats create the legal conditions that require companies to outsource and then complaining about outsourcing while engaging in outsourcing themselves. That's hypocrisy.

New study finds that advantageous traits don’t easily infuse in populations

October 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new study in Nature (September 30,2010) has found something interesting. (H/T WgButler777)

Excerpt:

> Our work provides a new perspective on the genetic basis of adaptation. Despite decades of sustained selection in relatively small, sexually reproducing laboratory populations, selection did not lead to the fixation of newly arising unconditionally advantageous alleles. This is notable because in wild populations we expect the strength of natural selection to be less intense and the environment unlikely to remain constant for ~600 generations.”
>
> Consequently, the probability of fixation in wild populations should be even lower than its likelihood in these experiments. This suggests that selection does not readily expunge genetic variation in sexual populations, a finding which in turn should motivate efforts to discover why this is seemingly the case.”

What does it mean?

It means that good traits that evolve in a single individual do not necessarily “take” in the entire population, so that will live on in successive generations. If the accumulation of beneficial mutations is *required* for Darwinism to create all of these new body plans and organ types, then what are we to make of the creative power of Darwinian mechanisms?

Read more about it here at Uncommon Descent.

Students arrested for pro-life demonstration at Carleton University

October 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Armed policeman handcuffs peaceful pro-life student

UPDATE: Video is here.

Story here in the Ottawa Citizen.

Full story:

> Police arrested five anti-abortion activists Monday at Carleton University after the group attempted to display large posters that compared abortion to genocide.
>
> Ruth Lobo, a fourth-year Carleton student, said she and four others were arrested by Ottawa police at around 9 a.m. Monday. Three were Carleton students and the fourth was from Queen's University.
>
> According to Lobo, the five students were handcuffed, loaded into a police van and taken to the campus security office where they were each charged with two offences under the Trespass Act and fined about $130 each.
>
> The group had asked Carleton for a spot on campus to hold the controversial Genocide Awareness Project, which features six large graphic images that compare the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide to abortion.
>
> The university said the display is considered disturbing and offensive to some and offered the group space in Porter Hall, which Lobo called, "an isolated hall that no one ever really goes to."
>
> Unsatisfied with the space offered by Carleton, Lobo said the group arrived on campus Monday at 9 a.m. to set up in the Tory Quad, an outside square at the centre of campus bordered by the library, administration building and several

> other buildings.
>
> A university spokesman confirmed the arrests and noted the group were on several occasions offered another place on campus to set up their display.
>
> “In every instance, the students indicated they would not respect the university’s request and would proceed with its exhibit in the Tory Quad,” said Jason McDonald in a written statement.
>
> Lobo said the campus’ anti-abortion group Carleton Lifeline wanted to bring the Genocide Awareness Project to Ottawa to challenge students’ views on abortion in an educational way.
>
> Similar protests have been held on other university campuses across the country, including the University of Calgary.

From the National Post.

Full story:

> Four students were arrested this morning by Ottawa police for putting up a graphic anti-abortion display on the main quadrangle of Carleton University.
>
> The students, all members of a pro-life group called Carleton Lifeline, applied for permission to put up the display two months ago but were turned down by the university.
>
> The school said it did not allow large displays in the quadrangle and also cited the offensiveness of the photos.
>
> The students were offered a room in which the photos of bloody fetuses could be shown and a table in the main university centre to invite fellow students to the display.
>
> However, Ruth Lobo, one of the students arrested, said putting up the display was a matter of free speech and a personal obligation to “tell the truth about abortion.”
>
> The four Carleton students have been charged with trespassing. A fifth man from Queen’s University was also charged.

Police arresting students for peaceful demonstrations on a university campus. This is Canada’s record on free speech rights.

Keep in mind that these students are registered for classes, so how can they be trespassing if they supposed to be there? And this censorship of their views is being done with the tax money paid into the university system by their parents. Their parents also pay for the left-wing student government and the left-wing clubs who are never arrested for taking stands on controversial issues. Can you imagine being a parent and being forced to pay people who arrest and censor your own children and lead them away in handcuffs just for exercising their right to free speech?

The problem here is that leftists believe that *mere disagreement* with their left-wing

views is enough to incite violence against them, poor little victims as they are. Left-wingers, it is assumed, are not capable of violence, so left wing speech doesn't have to be censored. That's how leftists feel – if you disagree with them, you need to be arrested because you're a crazy violent person. They call that tolerance and open-mindedness, by the way.

Keep in mind that we see a lot more left-wing violence, not the least of which is 45 million babies killed since abortion became legal in the USA. And that's not even counting the MILLIONS of lives snuffed out by the DDT ban.

Although pro-life demonstrations are meant to attract attention and to encourage 1-on-1 debate, leftists actually advocate violence against those who disagree with them. On the other hand, abortionists seem to like to attack pro-lifers. Sometimes by shooting them, sometimes by hitting them with SUVs, and this week they are pulling guns on them.

Pro-lifers, just want to use visual aids to show what abortion is to get a conversation started. But left-wingers are a lot worse – they want to use videos to actually incite violence against people who disagree with them.

Watch this video from the global warming eco-fascists and see for yourself. (H/T ECM)

Oh, nothing unusual about blowing up people who don't believe in global warming, right? Not at all – that's *tolerance and diversity* to leftists. (I sent that video to a secular humanist and he thought it was funny to blow up people who doubt global warming. He laughed!)

And even worse than that, we actually DO have evidence that eco-fascist nuts watch propaganda videos like the one above and then start running around with guns trying to "save the planet" by committing crimes. But are environmentalists arrested for demonstrating on campus, and then put in jail? Of course not. Because they are LEFTISTS. Leftists advocate for big government, and big government means more money for universities. It's all about the money.

If you want to know how far these Canadian censors are willing to go, then click here and prepare to be horrified.

Take action!

If you do not approve of fascism on Canadian university campuses, please click here to send a message to the fascist university administrators at Carleton University. Notice how the Chancellor is connected to the left-wing Liberal party, which is responsible for the Human Rights Commissions which censor the free speech of Canadians like Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn. The Liberal party favors nationalism and socialism. In fact, you might even call them the Nationalism Socialism party. The Liberal party is basically similar to the Democrat party in the United States.

Related posts

- University of Calgary convicts eight pro-life students
- University of Calgary denies legal counsel to accused accused students
- University of Calgary students face expulsion for pro-life display

- McGill University and University of Calgary censor pro-life students
- University of Ottawa cancels Ann Coulter appearance
- Ann Coulter files hate speech claim against Canadian university
- Canadian student union leader says pro-lifers are all potential murderers
- Lakehead University bans pro-life club
- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's University
- Pro-life club at McGill University banned
- University of Calgary uses police to threaten pro-life students (More from Ezra Levant)
- Canadian pro-life student quarantined by public school principal

Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?

October 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is

stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this

passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The "Q" source for Matthew and Luke

Here's Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier "Q" source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Learn more

You can learn more about the early belief in the divinity of Jesus by listening to a lecture by William Lane Craig and reading the related paper, and by listening to the debate between Richard Bauckham and James Crossley on that topic. The first link contains other scholarly debates on Jesus.

Walter Bradley lectures on whether there is any truth in religion

October 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

This lecture is based on the book "Truth in Religion" by famous philosopher Mortimer J. Adler. At the time of writing the book, he was not a Christian, but there is still a lot of value in the book for Christians who are trying to understand what religion is about. In one sense, the material on this lecture should be the *first thing that Christians learn about Christianity before they ever open the Bible.* And I mean before even knowing about the existence of the Bible. The most important question when it comes to religion is this: "IS RELIGION CONCERNED WITH TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT REALITY"? That is the first question to answer.

About the speaker

Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor.

Here's a bio from his faculty page at Baylor University:

> Walter Bradley (B.S., Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin) is Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He comes to Baylor from Texas A&M University where he helped develop a nationally recognized program in polymeric composite materials. At Texas A&M, he served as director of the Polymer Technology Center for 10 years and as Department Head of Mechanical Engineering, a department of 67 professors that was ranked as high as 12th nationally during his tenure. Bradley has authored over 150 refereed research publications including book chapters, articles in archival journals such as the Journal of Material Science, Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites, Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials, Journal of Composites Technology and Research, Composite Science and Technology, Journal of Metals, Polymer Engineering and Science, and Journal of Materials Science, and refereed conference proceedings.
>
> Dr. Bradley has secured over $5.0 million in research funding from NSF grants (15 yrs.), AFOSR (10 years), NASA grants (10 years), and DOE (3 years). He has also received research grants or contracts from many Fortune 500 companies, including Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, 3M, Shell, Exxon, Boeing, and Phillips.

> He co-authored The Mystery of Life Origin: Reassessing Current Theories and has written 10 book chapters dealing with various faith science issues, a topic on which he speaks widely.
>
> He has received 5 research awards at Texas A&M University and 1 national research award. He has also received two teaching awards. He is an Elected Fellow of the American Society for Materials and the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the largest organization of Christians in Science and Technology in the world. He is President elect of the ASA and will serve his term in 2008.

You can read more about his recent research on how to use coconuts to make car parts in this article from Science Daily.

The MP3 file is here. (31 minutes + Q&A)

Topics:

- what is pluralism?
- what is multiculturalism?
- what is relativism?
- some propositions are true culturally – just for certain groups in certain times (cultures)
- some proposition are true trans-culturally – true independently of what anyone wants or feels
- Mathematical truth is trans-cultural – it is true regardless of cultural fashions
- Scientific truth is trans-cultural – it is true regardless of cultural fashions
- Some truths are not like this – cooking traditions, clothing traditions and greeting traditions
- These kinds of truths are NOT trans-cultural, they vary by culture
- The question is – is religion true like math and science, or true depending on the culture
- Some people think that your religion depends on where you were born or what your family believes
- Religions make conflicting claims about the way the world really is, so they can't all be true
- And these conflicts are at the core of the religions – who God is, how can we be related to him, etc.
- So if religions convey trans-cultural truth, then either one is true or none are true
- If they are not trying to convey trans-cultural truth, then they are not like math and science
- Let's assume that religion is the same as trans-cultural truth
- How can we know which religion is true? 1) the laws of logic, 2) empirical testing against reality
- Logical consistency is needed to make the first cut – self-contradictory claims cannot be true
- To be true trans-culturally, a proposition must at least NOT break the law of non-

contradiction
- According to Mortimer Adler's book, only Christianity, Judaism and Islam are not self-contradictory
- All the others can be excluded on the basis of overt internal contradictions on fundamental questions
- The others that are self-contradictory can be true culturally, but not trans-culturally
- The way to proceed forward is to test the three non-contradictory religions against science and history
- One of these three may be true, or they could all be false
- We can test the three by evaluating their conflicting truth claims about the historical Jesus
- Famous skeptics have undertaken studies to undermine the historical Jesus presented in the Bible
- Lew Wallace, Simon Greenleaf and Frank Morrison assessed the evidence as atheists and became Christians
- There is a lot of opposition in culture to the idea that one religion might be true
- But if you take the claims of Jesus at face value, he claims to be the unique revelation of God to mankind
- Either he was telling the truth about that, or he was lying, or he was crazy
- So which is it?

Why don't religious people ask if their religion is true?

Truth claims are *necessarily* divisive. If God wants people to know him as he is, and I tell them a lie that they can invent their own view of him, then that is sinning against God. And the only reason I would lie about that is because I can't be bothered studying these things and taking the heat for standing up for God's real personality and goals for his creatures to his creatures. Nowhere in Bible does it say that our goal is to tell people that they can believe anything they want about God and he really doesn't care since he just wants us to be nice to each other and be happy and have fun and believe whatever we want about him whether it's true or not.

People who think that all religions are true are doing it for three reasons: 1) they don't want to study and be bound to one view through study, 2) they want to use religion to be comforted, but to leave it when it makes demands, 3) they want other people to like them so they want to say that all views of God are true. But this pluralism is not a view that is consistent with the plain meaning of the Bible – the people who embrace the idea that all religions are true based on personal preferences or cultures reject the plain meaning of the gospel, which makes exclusive claims. It is NOT TRUE that you can believe whatever you want as long as you are sincere – sincerity doesn't mean that you can't be mistaken. Not wanting to know whether Christianity is true is really just another way of saying that you don't think God's existence and character matters that much to you. Is that a good relationship? Is that the right way to be God's friend?

I think that God's existence and character can be assessed and known based on logic and

evidence. I think that God exists independently of whether I want him to or not, and I think that his character and desires are not the same as *my* character and desires. And I don't really care what my neighbors think of my disagreeing with them, my goal is not to keep silent and to just *get along with them* and *be happier in my community*. God's first commandment to us is not to love our neighbor – that's number two. Number one is to love him. And how can we love him, if we don't want to know him. And how can we love him, if we don't tell people the truth about him, (when asked to, and within the context of a respectful relationship, as in 1 Pet 3:15).

1 Cor 15:13-19:

[13]If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

[14]And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

[15]More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

[16]For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

[17]And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

[18]Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

[19]If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

That message is not going to win us a lot of friends, but our job as Christians is to tell how and why God stepped into history. Jesus expects us to be his ambassadors and to carry out the task of evangelism faithfully, and to suffer with him and to be rejected like he was rejected.

You can read papers from Dr. Bradley here.

Related posts

- Does the progress of science support atheism?

Mentoring

- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith
- why won't Christians defend their faith in public?

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church

My favorite lecture of all

My favorite lecture of all is "Giants in the Land" by Dr. Walter Bradley.

- Giants in the Land (fixed – smaller file size, noise reduced)

He delivered that lecture at the University of Georgia in 1997.

Should we kill children who impose obligations on us?

October 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This woman thinks that we should. (H/T ECM)

Lori Ziganto writes:

> According to author and columnist Virginia Ironside, most adopted kids would be better off dead. As would most children she considers "unfit". In fact, she says, a "loving" mother would smother a sickly child with a pillow, because the "suffering" of being ill makes that life meaningless and not worth living. She made these vile assertions in defense of abortion while appearing on the BBC's *Sunday Morning Live* during a discussion grossly entitled "Can abortion be a kindness?" First, her odious attempt to argue that abortion is a "loving choice" because some kids, in her mind, are unwanted. Her tunnel-visioned, sad excuse for a mind can't seem to fathom the fact that the children are ***always*** wanted, by someone. You know, like people with hearts and compassion.
>
> […]To pro-abortionists, an illness is a reason to kill a baby. In fact, they believe that life is expendable for *any reason* if it doesn't fit into your personal plans. This includes life that is outside of the woman's body. Ms. Ironside, like most pro-abortionists, also fails to mention those pesky babies who won't cooperate and who survive abortion attempts. Much like our President, who gives them so little thought that he, as a Senator in Illinois debating a Born Alive bill, said this:
>
> > As I understand it, *this puts the burden on the attending physician* who has determined, since they were performing this procedure, that, in fact, this is a nonviable fetus; that if *that fetus, or child* — ***however way you want to describe it*** — is now outside the mother's womb and *the doctor continues to think that it's nonviable but there's, let's say, movement or some indication that, in fact,* ***they're not just coming out limp and dead..***
>
> However you want to describe "it". Sort of like the suffering "things" Ms. Ironside referred to above. And, not coming out limp and dead. How dare they insist on having the human will to live and the strong spirit to survive.

This is what that fabulous, adorable Jennifer Roback Morse is always saying about feminism. The feminist idea is that relationships are never engaged in order to serve others, but only to make the strong women happy and fulfilled. Women in relationships should *never* have to fulfill obligations to other people, feminists tell us. Everything should be about selfishness, amusement, and personal fulfillment – including using men and children for those ends – or even *killing them* if they become too demanding. (Men and children are "needy" and "pouty" – they have no right to have expectations about

what women should do). The feminists have forgotten that there is a purpose for the suffering that is part of self-sacrificial love.

By the way, I spent most of last night listening to Jennifer Roback Morse lectures from her conference. If you listen to the first Bill Duncan speech, (or maybe the second), he talks about this refusal to take on the natural obligations to others in a relationship context. Look, relationships can't last if the person is unwilling to honor their commitments. If you make a vow to take on those obligations to love someone (and children) self-sacrificially then you have to do it. Whatever happened to compassion and nurturing?

And like my virginity post showed, the ability to fulfill those obligations depends on a host of other decisions that you'll have made before you ever get married – decisions about chastity, but also decisions about volunteering, education, earning and saving. The habits you set when dealing with people of the opposite sex before you marry affects how well you can potentially treat a spouse. If you use other people like objects, you don't suddenly magically develop the capacity to love them self-sacrificially with magic vows. You can only love as well as the decisions you make. Unselfishness has to be a practiced habit in order for the marriage to last.

UPDATE: Alisha has more here.

3M to drop retirees from its health care plan

October 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T National Review via ECM)

Excerpt:

> 3M Co. confirmed it would eventually stop offering its health-insurance plan to retirees, citing the federal health overhaul as a factor.
>
> The changes won't start to phase in until 2013. But they show how companies are beginning to respond to the new law, which should make it easier for people in their 50s and early-60s to find affordable policies on their own. While thousands of employers are tapping new funds from the law to keep retiree plans, 3M illustrates that others may not opt to retain such plans over the next few years
>
> The St. Paul, Minn., manufacturing conglomerate notified employees on Friday that it would change retiree benefits both for those who are too young to qualify for Medicare and for those who qualify for the Medicare program. Both groups will get an unspecified health reimbursement instead of having access to a company-sponsored health plan.
>
> The maker of Post-it notes and Scotch tape said it made the announcement now to give retirees a chance to explore different options during this year's benefit-enrollment period, according to a 3M memo reviewed by The Wall Street Journal. A 3M spokeswoman, Jacqueline Berry, confirmed the contents of the memo.
>
> "As you know, the recently enacted health care reform law has fundamentally changed the health care insurance market," the memo said. "Health care options in the marketplace have improved, and readily available individual insurance plans in the Medicare marketplace provide benefits more tailored to retirees' personal needs often at lower costs than what they pay for retiree medical coverage through 3M.
>
> "In addition, health care reform has made it more difficult for employers like 3M to provide a plan that will remain competitive," the memo said.

But Obamacare won't force you to lose your existing health insurance. Oh. No.

Video of armed police arresting pro-life students at Carleton University

October 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Armed police arrest pro-life students in Canada

Here's the video of the pro-life students being arrested for trespassing at a publicly-funded university where they are registered as full-time students.

Be careful when traveling in Canada about expressing opinions in public. Canada is not like the United States where free speech is a right. If they don't like what you say, they may arrest you.

Mainstream news coverage at National Post.

Read more here at National Campus Life Network.

Take action!

If you do not approve of fascism on Canadian university campuses, please click here to send a message to the fascist university administrators at Carleton University. Notice how the Chancellor is connected to the left-wing Liberal party, which is responsible for the Human Rights Commissions which censor the free speech of Canadians like Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn. The Liberal party is basically similar to the Democrat party in the United States.

Related posts

- Carleton University orders peaceful pro-life students arrested
- University of Calgary convicts eight pro-life students
- University of Calgary denies legal counsel to accused accused students
- University of Calgary students face expulsion for pro-life display
- McGill University and University of Calgary censor pro-life students
- University of Ottawa cancels Ann Coulter appearance

- Ann Coulter files hate speech claim against Canadian university
- Canadian student union leader says pro-lifers are all potential murderers
- Lakehead University bans pro-life club
- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's University
- Pro-life club at McGill University banned
- University of Calgary uses police to threaten pro-life students (More from Ezra Levant)
- Canadian pro-life student quarantined by public school principal

What can Christians learn from Rob Miller’s Medal of Honor story?

October 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A Congressional Medal of Honor (Air Force version)

Here’s a story from the Chicago Tribune to explain how a person can win the Congressional Medal of Honor. (H/T Blackfive)

Excerpt:

> The damage assessment patrol walked north about 800 meters to a bridge impassable by vehicle. Led by Miller, the team turned east, crossed the estimated 100-foot bridge and turned south into a narrow, steep valley. They had trekked for about 45 minutes.
>
> “That’s when we walked into the hornet’s nest,” McGarry said.
>
> About 40 insurgents had dug under rock formations in the narrow pass east of the Kunar River. Nearly 200 more were higher on a ridge, Lodyga said.
>
> Miller’s teammates recalled that an Afghan National Army soldier spotted an insurgent obstructed by a boulder and ordered him to surrender. The man refused.
>
> “You heard somebody yell ‘Allah Akbar,'” the Muslim phrase loosely translated as “God is great,” Lodyga said, “and then an overwhelming amount of firepower came down on us.”
>
> Miller’s first move was to shoot and kill the insurgent who had stepped from the boulder about 20 feet away, said McGarry. Other insurgents were nearly as close, Lodyga said. He, McGarry and Cusick said it was the worst firefight they’d experienced.

> “It was almost like standing in the middle of all the fireworks on the Fourth of July,” Cusick recalled. “It was very loud.”
>
> Added McGarry, “There were so many people shooting at us, the bullets were kicking up everything around us. I kept looking over and saw Rob shooting.”
>
> Then McGarry and the others saw something else: Miller charged the enemy, firing his lightweight machine gun at several insurgent positions. At the same time, he was calling out the directions of and distances to enemy positions.
>
> “Robbie was shouting at everybody to bound back, bound back,” McGarry recalled, “and he was taking on the entire south area of the kill zone by himself. I couldn’t look over for too long, but it took me a second or two to take it all in.”
>
> Miller’s approach, while bold, was tactically astute. He was engaging at least four enemy positions and drawing their fire, allowing his teammates to get to safer ground. His aim was deadly accurate. Military records credit him with killing more than 16 insurgents and wounding 30.
>
> In the first few moments, Cusick, the commander, was severely wounded when a bullet struck near his left collarbone and tore an exit hole in his left shoulder blade. His lung was punctured. One of the team members ran to his side and thrust a needle in his chest, allowing him to breathe.
>
> While firing at the enemy, the rest of the team also was seeking cover, McGarry said.
>
> Miller kept charging and firing, and when he had stopped firing, he threw at least two grenades “into enemy machine gun fire that basically had the patrol locked down,” Lodyga said. “He took them out.”
>
> […]So much chaos was roiling that patch of the narrow pass where the Special Forces were ambushed that it’s unclear how long Miller charged and engaged the insurgents. Those on the patrol said it could have been five to 15 minutes before he was shot inches below his right armpit, a spot unprotected by body armor.
>
> “I don’t know if he stayed on his feet or not after he was shot,” Lodyga said, “but I do know he turned toward the enemy position and kept firing. He killed two or three right there.”
>
> Two to five minutes later, Miller was struck again under his left armpit and died immediately. The entry points of the wounds indicate his arms were raised to fire his weapon, a young man facing death courageously.
>
> “At the end of the day,” Lodyga said, “if Robbie hadn’t been courageous and did what came as second nature to him, you’d be looking at eight dead Special Forces. That’s what Robbie gave his life for.”
>
> The military goes even further, contending that Miller’s actions also saved the lives of an estimated 12 Afghan National Army soldiers.
>
> Although tens of millions of men and women have worn the uniform of the armed forces for the U.S., fewer than 3,500 have earned a Medal of Honor.

Actually, it's much rarer than that – the military has really tightened up the requirements in the last 100 years or so. Basically, you have to give your life to save many others under heavy fire in order to win a medal of honor. They are extremely rare.

Here are the requirements for the Army version:

> The Medal of Honor is awarded by the President in the name of Congress to a person who, while a member of the Army, distinguishes himself or herself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. The deed performed must have been one of personal bravery or self-sacrifice so conspicuous as to clearly distinguish the individual above his comrades and must have involved risk of life. Incontestable proof of the performance of the service will be exacted and each recommendation for the award of this decoration will be considered on the standard of extraordinary merit.

I once read an entire book on Medal of Honor award winners in World War II. It's hard to read those stories, because these people who won the award did amazing acts of bravery, courage and self-sacrifice, but then most of them DIED. The stories almost always end in sadness and grief. Here's the one that really stuck with me as an example. I read that book in 1999 as part of my effort to develop humility. I wanted to break down my own pride, and so I intentionally engaged in an activity to achieve that goal.

Today, many people think it is horrible to look up to anyone who is better than we are at anything. We don't believe in heroes any more. We think that virtues are easy. That anyone can be virtuous. That virtue takes no preparation or discipline. That brave or cowardly acts are just things that people do because they like one or the other, and that's all. That everyone, good or evil, is basically doing what they want to do. But I don't think that's true. I think bravery, courage and self-sacrifice are objectively good, and that we ought to recognize and honor those virtues.

I think we need to get into the habit of realizing that the character of a person as measured against an objective standard is more important than what they can do to make ME happy. Sometimes, we just need to hold up examples of goodness to ourselves and to others, even if it makes us feel inadequate. Acknowledging what is good is the first step to being good yourself. If you don't acknowledge that anyone is better than you are, then how will you grow? You have to look at what the best people are doing and honor them and learn from them.

I think that as Christians, the more we reflect on the message of the gospel and the example of Jesus, the more sensitive and appreciative we become of things he exemplified, like self-sacrifice and humility. Jesus deserves something like a Medal of Honor, for sacrificing his life to save others in difficult circumstances. He showed courage

in the face of danger in order to die in the place of every single person who has ever lived. When we stand before him to give our account, will we have love our neighbor the same way? Will he pin something like a Medal of Honor on our chest for uncommon valor under heavy fire? Stories like Rob Miller's makes us think about that, don't they? And that is a *good thing*. The story of a war hero points beyond the story to the moral truths that are built into the universe by God himself.

So that's why I think it's important for Christians to be grateful to those who give their lives fighting evil in foreign lands so that we can have liberty, prosperity and security here at home. I am grateful for the sacrifice of Rob Miller. Gratitude is another virtue that we often overlook.

You can read more about Rob Miller and see pictures of him here on Blackfive.

Woman killed for opposing her daughter's arranged marriage

October 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story in the UK Telegraph. (H/T Jihad Watch)

Excerpt:

> A Pakistani woman has died in Italy after her husband beat her with a brick for opposing the arranged marriage of her daughter, triggering a wave of outrage among Italian politicians on Monday.
>
> The daughter, 20-year-old Nosheen Butt, was admitted to hospital with a cranial traumatism and a broken arm after her 19-year-old brother beat her with a stick in the courtyard of their building in Novi, near the north Italy city of Modena.
>
> According to Modena prosecutors' initial findings, the father Ahmad Khan Butt, a 53-year-old construction worker, threw his wife to the ground and beat her with a brick while the brother Umair attacked his sister.
>
> "The victim did not want her daughter to have an unhappy relationship like the one that had been forced on her," said deputy Modena prosecutor Lucia Musti, who is in charge of the investigation.
>
> […]…the father had been in Italy less that 10 years and was the owner of the local mosque.

Is that normal for Islam? Answering Muslims actually has a look at the issue in more detail.

I personally think that the death penalty would be appropriate for both of these men. We need a deterrent to stop this from ever happening again.

Do you have to raise taxes in order to balance the budget?

October 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A video from a libertarian explaining why you don't HAVE to raise taxes to get rid of the budget deficit. (H/T Ponder With Us)

The only part I don't like is the shot at President Bush, who ran a deficit ONE TENTH the size of Obama when he was in charge in 2006. There is a difference to all but the crazy people who don't understand that 150 billion in 2006 is not equal to 1500 billion in 2009. 2006 is the last year the Republicans held the House and Senate. In 2007, the spending and bailouts started, and the deficit started to balloon out to where it is now.

William Dembski and Michael Shermer debate live online Thursday

October 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here at Challenge Washburn's web site.

Details:

Evolution or Design: Does science provide evidence for a Designer?

Thursday, October 7 @ 8-10 PM EASTERN TIME

Washburn University Memorial Union (Washburn Room A/B)

Dr. Michael Shermer vs. Dr. William Dembski

Come join us and bring a friend as these two scholars debate one of the the foundational questions of reality and faith! …or

Watch LIVE right here at challengewashburn.com

Their time is 7-9 PM, but I think they are on Central Time, so I put 8-10 PM Eastern Time.

It looks like you can WATCH THE DEBATE ONLINE at their web site.

Israeli education minister dismisses chief scientist for asking questions

October 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scary story from Haaretz.

Excerpt:

> The Education Ministry's chief scientist sparked a furor among environmental activists and scholars Saturday with remarks questioning the reliability of evolution and global warming theory. The comments from Dr. Gavriel Avital, the latest in a series of written and oral statements casting doubts on the fundamental tenets of modern science, led several environmentalists to call for his dismissal.
>
> "If textbooks state explicitly that human beings' origins are to be found with monkeys, I would want students to pursue and grapple with other opinions. There are many people who don't believe the evolutionary account is correct," Avital said yesterday.
>
> […]Avital, who received bachelor's and advanced degrees from Haifa's Technion Institute of Technology, previously directed the aeromechanical arm of electronic-systems manufacturer Elbit.
>
> Avital is the ministry's first chief scientist to be drawn from outside the community of education scholars. A 20-year Likud member, he represented the party in an unsuccessful 2006 Knesset run.
>
> […]"Why are environmental organizations pressuring the government over alternative energy that is both unattainable and probably very costly? These questions cannot be avoided," Avital wrote. "The answers to them are likely to surprise and possibly disappoint. But the moment science is enlisted for political ends – that is, in the name of ideology – questions arise as to the scientific basis of environmental organizations."[…]In an article published last year in the newspaper Israel Hayom and other media outlets, Avital wrote, "There is no scientific proof that the rise in carbon dioxide leads to a rise in temperatures – I would recommend to scientists not to join this intimidation campaign, which is entirely predicated on the basis of dubious science."

Now, let's take a look at the "arguments" of the people who are trying to silence him.

> Prof. Hava Yablonka of Tel Aviv University said **Avital's statements are tantamount "to saying that space should be given in textbooks to the view that the earth is flat and the sun revolves around it**. It's astonishing that the chief scientist of a government ministry can say such bizarre things."
>
> "Avital must resign from his position," said Dr. Lia Ettinger, academic supervisor

> of the Heschel Center for Environmental Learning and Leadership in Tel Aviv. **The chief scientist's remarks, she said, "are similar to the Health Ministry's chief scientist declaring that all the research linking cigarettes with cancer are nonsense.** …Avital has removed himself from the consensus," she said.

Notice how they take their questionable theory and say that it is similar to a completely unrelated theory *for which we have observational confirmation.* And then they say he stupid for not equating the two things, which is the very point under debate – is there evidence for the weaker theories like there is for the stronger theories, which he obviously accepts? Notice that *none* of the people who are trying to silence him brought up arguments. They just commit the fallacy of *begging the question*, and then they demand that he agree with them. It really just amounts to insulting him rather than refuting him. Is that science?

Democrat Congressman says that country's debt is a "myth"

October 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow. Watch this video of Rep. Phil Hare (D-IL).

Transcript:

> And we will see a terrible price that we will pay years down the road for letting our children down when they need us the absolute most. I'm not going to be part of that, so every minute that I have here is going to be spent debunking the myth that this country's in debt and we just can't spend.

He says that we have to keep spending… for the children?

Um. The annual budget deficit under Obama is about 1.5 trillion. The national debt has increased 3 trillion so far under Obama to 13.3 trillion. Our total GDP as a nation is only 14.5 trillion. By next year, our national debt will be higher than our GDP. The children are inheriting *a lower quality of life* than we have today. They'll have to pay for *our* spending today.

Oh, here is his previous video:

In which he says that he doesn't care that whether health care mandates are unConstitutional.

How can you tell whether something is designed or not?

October 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In honor of William Dembski's debate tonight at 8 PM Eastern time, I present this article from Access Research Network.

Excerpt:

> Instead of looking for such vague properties as "purpose" or "perfection"—which may be construed in a subjective sense—[intelligent design] looks for the presence of what it calls *specified complexity*, an unambiguously objective standard.
>
> That term sounds like a mouthful, but it's something we can all recognize without effort. Let's take an example.
>
> Imagine that a friend hands you a sheet of paper with part of Lincoln's Gettysburg address written on it:
>
> FOURSCOREANDSEVENYEARSAGOOURFATHERSBROUGHTFORTHONTHISCONTINENTANEWNATIONCONCEIVEDINLIBERTY …
>
> Your friend tells you that he wrote the sentence by pulling Scrabble pieces out of a bag at random.
>
> Would you believe him? Probably not. But why?
>
> One reason is that the odds against it are just too high. There are so many other ways the results could have turned out—so many possible sequences of letters—that the probability of getting that particular sentence is almost nil.
>
> But there's more to it than that. If our friend had shown us the letters below, we would probably believe his story.
>
> ZOEFFNPBINNGQZAMZQPEGOXSYFMRTEXRNYGRRGNNFVGUMLMTYQXTXWORNBWIGBBCVHPUZMWLONHATQUGOTFJKZXFHP …
>
> Why? Because of the kind of sequence we see. The first string fits a recognizable pattern: It's a sentence written in English, minus spaces and punctuation. The second string fits no such pattern.
>
> Now we can understand *specified complexity*. When a design theorist says that a string of letters is *specified*, he's saying that it fits a recognizable pattern. And when he says it's complex, he's saying there are so many different ways the object could have turned out that the chance of getting any particular outcome by accident is hopelessly small.
>
> Thus, we see design in our Gettysburg sentence because it is both specified and complex. We see no such design in the second string. Although it is complex, it fits no recognizable pattern. And if our friend had shown us a string of letters like

> “BLUE” we would have said that it was specified but not complex. It fits a pattern, but because the number of letter is so short, the likelihood of getting such a string is relatively high. Four slots don’t give you as many possible letter combinations as 143, which is the length of our Gettysburg sentence.
>
> So that’s the basic notion of specified complexity.

This is something you really need to understand in order to understand the arguments from biological building blocks and biological information in DNA.

Man chases down kidnapper's vehicle to rescue young girl

October 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from ultra-leftist MSNBC of all places. (H/T Mara)

Excerpt:

> A man who rescued an 8-year-old girl who had been abducted by a stranger says he was "beyond scared" as he forced the alleged kidnapper to stop his truck and hand over the child.
>
> At about 6:45 a.m. Tuesday, Victor Perez, 29, recognized the truck from media reports about the girl, who was taken while she played outside a home in Fresno, Calif., at 8:30 p.m. Monday.
>
> He gave chase in his own vehicle and repeatedly tried to force the alleged kidnapper's truck off the road. Eventually, Perez saw the girl's head in the truck's window.
>
> "He kept getting away. He kept going round my truck. The last time I completely said, 'Either he crashes into me or he stops.' He stopped and pushed the little girl out," he told NBC station KSEE 24 News.
>
> After being forced out of the truck, the girl ran to safety.
>
> "The first thing she told me, 'I'm scared,'" Perez said. "She was shaking. I said, 'You're all right now.'"
>
> […]Perez told CNN that he saw a vehicle matching the description of the one used in the abduction — an older-model, reddish-brown Chevrolet with a white stripe on the side — as he stood outside his house talking with his cousin about the abduction early Tuesday.
>
> "I thought, that could be the truck," Perez told CNN Tuesday night.
>
> **"I had a split-second decision to decide to call 911 or go after it," Perez told ABC News. "I decided to go after it while my cousin was dialing 911. I took a chance to go and ask a question to see if that was the man that we're looking for."**
>
> He got into his 1988 white Ford pickup, and began to follow. As he tried to cut off the truck, its driver reportedly told him, "I don't have no time," and claimed his battery was dying."The second time I reached him, the way he acted — yes, I was, for a split second I was nervous until I saw the little girl and all fear was out the window after that," Perez told ABC's "Good Morning America."
>
> "I didn't have no fear. I wasn't thinking of me no more. I was just thinking we need to get that little girl to safety," he added. "I wasn't going to give up. … I couldn't give up."

> “I kept telling him, ‘That’s not your little girl.’ We argued. We exchanged words,” Perez told CNN, admitting that he had wondered whether the motorist had a gun. “I was beyond scared.”
>
> “He was hiding her — like pushing her down. I thank God he put me here to help out that little girl — that’s for sure,” he added.
>
> On the fourth attempt, he forced the vehicle to stop.

This man is a hero! We need to make a big deal out of him in order to encourage more men to be heroes.

New poll shows overwhelming support for parental rights

October 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story about a recent Zogby poll was blogged at Caffeinated Thoughts. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

Question #4 – A United Nations treaty on children's rights is currently being considered by the United States government. If this treaty made international law, it would trump some existing state laws on parents and children. Do you support or oppose this treaty?

3.4% strongly support

8.2% somewhat support
9.9% somewhat oppose
44.5% strongly oppose
34.1% not sure

Question #5 – If you knew that the United Nations treaty on children's rights would give government broad discretion to overrule parents and decide what it thinks is best for a child, would you support or oppose this treaty, or does it make no difference to your opinion?

1.5% strongly support
4.9% somewhat support
11.6% somewhat oppose
66.7% strongly oppose
4.5% no difference
10.9% not sure

Wow! This is an issue that Republicans should definitely run on, and school choice with it. Power to the parents! I am a huge opponent of the United Nations and their stupid anti-parent policies.

New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school

October 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the Sydney Morning Herald. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Year 12 girls are more likely to have had sex than boys, and teenagers are likely to have had sex with more partners than a decade ago, a national survey has shown.
>
> More than 61 per cent of year 12 girls said they had had sex, compared to 44 per cent of boys of that year, the study by LaTrobe University's faculty of health sciences researchers found.
>
> In a trend the report links to heavier drinking by adolescents, the proportion of sexually active year 12 girls who reported having had sex with three or more partners in the previous year more than doubled to 27 per cent in the decade to 2008. Among boys, 38 per cent said they had had three or more sexual partners in the year.
>
> The survey of 8800 year 10 and year 12 students in 300 schools around Australia was taken in three snapshots between 1997 and 2008.
>
> The proportion of year 10 boys who had had sex rose slightly from 23 per cent to 27 per cent between 1997 and 2008, while for year 10 girls the rise was more significant, up from 16 per cent to 27 per cent.
>
> In year 12, the number of boys who reported having had sex dipped slightly from 47 per cent in 1997 to 44 per cent in 2008, while the rate for girls rose from 48 per cent to 61 per cent.
>
> The report, published in the latest *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, said the increased numbers of students having multiple sexual partners was significantly higher than that found in a large survey in the US and may be linked to heavier drinking among Australian teenagers.
>
> "In Australia, rates of alcohol consumption among secondary students have increased markedly, as has the proportion of young people engaging in sex while under the influence of alcohol or drugs – these factors may be associated with the increases observed in sexual activity here," the report says.

"Year 12" is what Australians call their final year of high school. Well, given what we now know about virginity and marital stability, this is the end of marriage in Australia, and that means that children will not be growing up in stable environments. Remember, feminism is the cause of female promiscuity – it was feminists who wanted to destroy marriage by forcing women to "have sex like men" in order to obliterate gender differences, and the

“unequal gender roles” inherent in the institution of marriage. Feminists spearheaded sex-education, contraception and abortion. Feminist academics, feminist lawmakers and feminist policies pushed women into pre-marital sex. And this undermines chivalry, chastity and marriage.

I recently read a news story about a Duke University woman who engaged in hook-up sex with a variety of athletes. (I cannot write about it or link to it, it is so graphic). And the thing that stood out about the story for me was the woman’s criteria for men. It was all about physical appearance, entertainment and amusement, and sexual performance. (She also gave points for performance at sports activities and popularity on campus). These are the new criteria that women are using for men. They do not want to be *led*, they want to be *entertained.* They do not want *marriage*, they want *fun.*

This is the point where we have gotten to, where some women in the finest universities regularly take drugs and alcohol and have anonymous sex with men who mean nothing to them and who have nothing to do with them afterward. There is nothing that a man is supposed to do with a woman that is related to marriage or family. The man’s normal tasks of protection, providing and moral/spiritual leadership are now the role of the state, the courts and the public school system. A man’s role is sperm donor and tax payer.

The part that scares me the most is how a woman can choose to have sex with men like this, and maybe eventually co-habitate with one of them just by the force of inertia, and somehow get to the point where men are to blame for this. Aren’t women responsible for their own poor choices with men and sex? It’s very disconcerting to men who are marriage-minded to see the MAJORITY of women freely choosing to make themselves unsuitable for marriage. How can the destruction of marriage ever stop if women keep blaming everyone except themselves for their own bad decisions about men and sex? What will happen to the children who have to grow up in the world that feminism has made?

Related posts

- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Why do women flock to movies like Switch and Eat, Pray, Love?
- Research to help you understand the “hook-up” culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama’s new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism’s war against men ends up hurting women
- France passes law to jail spouses who commit psychological violence
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers

- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children’s sexual choices
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being

Ontario government gives IKEA $685,000 per year in solar power subsidies

October 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

Story from the National Post. (H/T Small Dead Animals via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Swedish retail giant IKEA announced yesterday it will invest $4.6-million to install 3,790 solar panels on three Toronto area stores, giving IKEA the electric-power-producing capacity of 960,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) per year. According to IKEA, that's enough electricity to power 100 homes. Amazing development. Even more amazing is the economics of this project. Under the Ontario government's feed-in-tariff solar power scheme, IKEA will receive 71.3¢ for each kilowatt of power produced, which works out to about $6,800 a year for each of the 100 hypothetical homes. Since the average Toronto home currently pays about $1,200 for the same quantity of electricity, that implies that IKEA is being overpaid by $5,400 per home equivalent.
>
> Welcome to the wonderful world of green economics and the magical business of carbon emission reduction. Each year, IKEA will receive $684,408 under Premier Dalton McGuinty's green energy monster — for power that today retails for about $115,000. At that rate, IKEA will recoup $4.6-million in less than seven years — not bad for an investment that can be amortized over 20.
>
> No wonder solar power is such a hot industry. No wonder, too, that the province of Ontario is in a headlong rush into a likely economic crisis brought on by skyrocketing electricity prices. To make up the money paid to IKEA to promote itself as a carbon-free zone, Ontario consumers and industries are on their way to experiencing the highest electricity rates in North America, if not most of the world.

> The government’s regulator, the Ontario Energy Board, has prepared secret forecasts of how much Ontario consumers are going to have to pay for electricity over the next five years. The government won’t allow the report to be released. The next best estimate comes from Aegent Energy Advisors Inc., in a study it did for the Canadian Manufactures and Exporters group. Residential rates are expected to jump by 60% between 2010 and 2015. Industrial customers will be looking at a 55% increase.
>
> Going back to 2003, based on numbers dug up by consultant Tom Adams, the price of residential electricity in Ontario hovered around 8.5¢ a kWh in 2003 — the first year of the McGuinty Liberal regime. By 2015, Aegent Energy estimates the price will be up to 21¢, an increase of 135%. Doubling the price of electricity in a decade is no way to spur growth and investment. In this age of global economic competition IKEA may end up with fewer sales of its Billy bookshelves in Toronto because its customers will be bogged down with soaring power bills and a sliding economy.

I wonder how the taxpayers of Ontario, who have just been whacked with the HST, feel about this government waste. By the way, the Ontario Liberal Party is basically analogous the Democrat Party. So this is is going to happen to us, too, if they get their way.

Interview with one of my favorite Christian scholars, Paul Copan

October 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found the interview here, thanks to Brian Auten's weekly Apologetics 315 round-up, which is a must-read every week.

Excerpt:

Dayton: *Outside of my apologetic endeavors, I work with middle school and high school students. As a rule, I keep copies of your book "True For You But Not For Me" on hand to give away to either students interested in learning more about apologetics or to unbelievers looking to explore Christianity. What other books have written that you could recommend be used in this manner?*

Paul Copan: I appreciate your keeping copies of "True for You" handy! I've written several books at a more popular level that either deal with a wide range of common criticisms or slogans leveled against Christianity, and I try to make more accessible topics like Christian philosophy of religion or dealing with Old Testament ethical problems. So here are the other books to check out:

"That's Just Your Interpretation" (Baker)
"How Do You Know You're Not Wrong?" (Baker)
"When God Goes to Starbucks: An Introduction to Everyday Apologetics" (Baker)
"Loving Wisdom: Christian Philosophy of Religion" (Chalice Press)
"Is God a Moral Monster? Understanding the Old Testament God" (Baker, January 2011)

Dayton: *Speaking of books you have written, is there anything new in the works? Do you have any forthcoming books you could tell us about?*

Paul Copan: For a fuller picture of what I'm working on, people can check out my website: www.paulcopan.com. I'm on Twitter (I tweet weekly); so people can keep up with my writings and speaking engagements that way. I'm very excited about my book, Is God a Moral Monster? (forthcoming with Baker in January 2011). The noted Old Testament scholar Gordon Wenham (University of Gloucestershire) has given this endorsement: "Lucid, lively, and very well informed, this book is the best defence of Old Testament ethics that I have read. A must-read for all preachers and Bible study leaders." Christopher J.H. Wright, a noted Old Testament scholar (specializing in Old Testament ethics) and author of Old Testament Ethics for the People of God and The God I Don't Understand, has this blurb: "This is the book I wish I had written myself. It is simply the best book I have read that tackles the many difficulties that the Old Testament presents to thinking and sensitive Christians and that give such ammunition to the opponents of all religious faith…. I strongly recommend this book. We have wanted and needed it for a long time."

I am coediting another book with William Lane Craig: Come Let Us Reason. This is the third apologetics book we've edited for B&H Academic (the other two are Passionate

Conviction and Contending with Christianity's Critics); it is filled with cutting-edge essays on important topics such as issues surrounding the Qur'an's authority, Jesus' resurrection as a pagan myth, postmodernism, problems with naturalism, and so on.

I'm coauthoring a book on the moral argument with Mark Linville (Continuum), and another book on biblical ethics with Robertson McQuilkin called Living Wisdom (InterVarsity Press). I'm also contributing several chapters to various books: on the Protestant view on human dignity (Routledge); on why ethics needs God (Oxford University Press); on theism's contribution to bioethics (Routledge); two on the problem of the Canaanites (B&H Academic and another to be determined); on the moral argument (a short article) in The Dictionary of Christian Theology (Cambridge). I've also contributed a series of articles on Old Testament ethics to Enrichment Journal.

I recently contributed a chapter "A Time for Truth" in The Complete Christian Guidebook to Understanding Homosexuality, edited by Joe Dallas and Nancy Heche (Harvest House) and a chapter on the moral argument to Mike Licona's and Bill Dembski's The Evidence for God (Baker).

Paul Copan is not only one the nicest guys, but he is also quite tough and combative about his faith. A real fire-breathing evangelical who writes about things that are relevant to rank and file. Whenever I send out beginner apologetics packages, I always include lots of Paul Copan books because his books are the most practical. For evangelicals who like to defend their faith to their co-workers and friends, Paul Copan is a must-read.

The other guys who write good books for beginners are Lee Strobel and Sean McDowell. All practical evangelicals used to fielding questions.

Barbara Kay writes the best essay against feminism ever written

October 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let me introduce the ideology of feminism with a quote from a founder of the feminist movement.

"[A]s long as the family and the myth of the family and the myth of maternity and the maternal instinct are not destroyed, women will still be oppressed…. No woman should be authorized to stay at home and raise her children. Society should be totally different. Women should not have that choice, precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one." ~ Simone de Beauvoir, "Sex, Society, and the Female Dilemma," Saturday Review, June 14, 1975.

Here is the greatest essay ever written against feminism – written by Barbara Kay.

Introduction:

> The feminism I take exception to today is not the mild and blameless right of a woman to self-actualize that all women absorb by osmosis from the cultural air we breathe, but the radical ideology that has come to dominate the movement's academic and institutional elites over the last 40 years.
>
> This is an ideology that sees the relations between the sexes as a never-ending antagonistic power struggle, with women as eternal victims and men as eternal oppressors. It is an ideology that explains away the moral failings of women as the fault of a patriarchal "system", but holds men responsible for their actions. And most important, it is an ideology that shortchanges children by privileging the rights and importance to children of mothers over fathers.

Her first point:

> As a result of feminists' promotion of career equity with men and unrestrained sexual experimentation over early and faithful commitment, women are having fewer children later, and many are having none. Consequently, birthrates are down in all western countries, in many below the replacement levels. Canada's current fertility rate is 1.54 per woman, behind one-child China's 1.7.
>
> Sadly, many women realize they want to have children, but too late. They were not warned by their Women's Studies teachers or by feminist commentators that fertility peaks by age 25, or that late pregnancies carry elevated risks, or that induced abortions pose a risk of pre-term delivery in future pregnancies.
>
> Abortion is now such a commonplace here that it is used as a backup form of birth control. Abortions in Quebec have doubled in the last 10 years: in 1998 16 percent of pregnancies resulted in abortion. Today 30 percent do. You don't have to be a religious Christian to find that statistic disturbing.

> All of these realities are directly traceable to feminist doctrine. Feminists' original goal may not have been the intention to preside over the actual demographic decline of western civilization. Their goal was to empower women. But as the old saying goes, when you are up to your neck in alligators, it's difficult to remember that your original intention was to drain the swamp.

Her second point:

> Misandry, which is the female equivalent of misogyny (misanthropy is a hatred of humankind), is now entrenched in our public discourse, our education system and social services. Misandry flies beneath most people's radar, because we have become compliant in the acceptance of theories that have nothing to do with reality, and compliant in the speech codes that accompany that tendency.
>
> Denigration of men in ways both casual and formal are a commonplace in society.
>
> […]For overt misandry, one has only to survey the industry around domestic violence. You could be forgiven for thinking that domestic violence is a one-way street, for that is certainly the impression one has from the fact that there are innumerable tax-funded shelters for abused women, none for abused men, unlimited funds for campaigns to raise consciousness around abused women, none for abused men. There is not a single social services agency or charity in Canada advertising "family services" that offers counseling, shelter or legal services for men who have been physically abused by women.

Her third point:

> I want to talk about the implosion of the traditional family, which can be directly traced to feminism's repudiation of normative marriage and the role of fathers as vital to a child's psychological well-being. In June 2006 I wrote about the imbalance, in women's favour, in the family law system: 90 per cent of contested custody suits end in sole custody awarded to the mother. Such a skewed percentage is unthinkable in any other branch of law.
>
> The family law system is now systemically colonized by radical feminists. Their goal is the incremental legal eclipse of men's influence over women's spheres of "identity" interests, which includes children. To that end the custody issue has become a front line in the gender wars, supported by all feminist academics and institutional elites, by supine cabinet ministers and by feminist judges.

Either the majority of women will come to accept her views on feminism… or marriage, and consequently Western civilization, will end.

Scientist quits American Physical Society over “global warming scam”

October 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A prominent scientist has resigned from the American Physical Society and written a letter that exposes how scientific organizations suppress dissent and honest inquiry.

The author is Harold Lewis, Emeritus Professor of Physics at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

This was posted on Watts Up With That. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> When I first joined the American Physical Society sixty-seven years ago it was much smaller, much gentler, and as yet uncorrupted by the money flood (a threat against which Dwight Eisenhower warned a half-century ago).
>
> Indeed, the choice of physics as a profession was then a guarantor of a life of poverty and abstinence—it was World War II that changed all that. The prospect of worldly gain drove few physicists. As recently as thirty-five years ago, when I chaired the first APS study of a contentious social/scientific issue, The Reactor Safety Study, though there were zealots aplenty on the outside there was no hint of inordinate pressure on us as physicists. We were therefore able to produce what I believe was and is an honest appraisal of the situation at that time. We were further enabled by the presence of an oversight committee consisting of Pief Panofsky, Vicki Weisskopf, and Hans Bethe, all towering physicists beyond reproach. I was proud of what we did in a charged atmosphere. In the end the oversight committee, in its report to the APS President, noted the complete independence in which we did the job, and predicted that the report would be attacked from both sides. What greater tribute could there be?
>
> How different it is now. The giants no longer walk the earth, and the money flood has become the raison d’être of much physics research, the vital sustenance of much more, and it provides the support for untold numbers of professional jobs. For reasons that will soon become clear my former pride at being an APS Fellow all these years has been turned into shame, and I am forced, with no pleasure at all, to offer you my resignation from the Society.
>
> It is of course, the global warming scam, with the (literally) trillions of dollars driving it, that has corrupted so many scientists, and has carried APS before it like a rogue wave. It is the greatest and most successful pseudoscientific fraud I have seen in my long life as a physicist. Anyone who has the faintest doubt that this is so should force himself to read the ClimateGate documents, which lay it bare. (Montford’s book organizes the facts very well.) I don’t believe that any real physicist, nay scientist, can read that stuff without revulsion. I would almost

> make that revulsion a definition of the word scientist.
>
> So what has the APS, as an organization, done in the face of this challenge? It has accepted the corruption as the norm, and gone along with it.

If you read the rest of the letter, you will find that the the author lists specific cases where dissent was squashed by the global warming alarmists. He suspects that the reason was money – scientists have to “discover” what the government wants them to discover, in order to create a crisis that requires… more government control.

The letter was posted at the UK Telegraph and has over 800 comments!

Construction workers prevent gunman from shooting up school

October 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the Union-Tribune. (H/T Gateway Pundit via Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> A man seemingly bent on violence and destruction stormed Kelly Elementary School in Carlsbad Friday and fired into a crowd of children on the playground, striking two girls, before being chased and tackled by nearby construction workers.
>
> Brendan L. O'Rourke, 41, believed to be a transient, was arrested on six counts of attempted murder and various weapons charges, Carlsbad police said.
>
> A trail of blood led to a classroom, which held two second-graders who suffered bullet wounds to their right arms, police said. The girls, ages 6 and 7, were flown to Rady Children's Hospital for treatment and were doing well, Carlsbad Police Chief Gary Morrison said.
>
> "We are grateful to God only two children were hurt," Carlsbad Mayor Bud Lewis said. "We know in this tragedy, it could have been far worse."
>
> Several witnesses saw the gunman clad in black, running on the school grounds shortly after noon carrying a gas can and shooting at random during recess.
>
> "He was dressed just like a bad guy," in a black hooded sweatshirt and black pants, said neighbor Scott Chandler, who saw the violence unfold from his driveway near the schoolyard on Kelly and Riviera drives.
>
> Chandler ran toward the school as fast as he could and caught up with two construction workers, Steven Kane and Mario Contreras, assigned to a cafeteria expansion project. They chased the gunman through the field and over a fence.
>
> Carlos Partida, another construction worker, said he jumped into his black Ford F-150 pickup when his co-workers started chasing the gunman. Partida struck the man with his truck, knocking him to the ground, police said.
>
> Partida, Kane and Contreras wrestled a .357 Magnum silver revolver with a wooden handle from O'Rourke.

Here's a previous post I did about whether multiple-victim shooters prefer to target areas where people will be armed or whether they prefer to attack "gun-free zones" provided by liberal educators. The left really doesn't understand the difference between intentions and incentives. The only people who obey gun-free zone signs are people you don't have to fear. Criminals see a gun-free zone sign and they think that you've opened a shooting gallery just for them. Luckily, the men standing near the area had not attended women's studies classes at the local elite university. They did not know that all men are evil

oppressors, so they had the confidence to act on their convictions.

Robin Collins explains why fine-tuning is necessary for life

October 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A short video from Lee Strobel's DVD "The Case for a Creator".

Actually, that WHOLE DVD is available on YouTube if you want to watch it. Here's the playlist. There is a lot more about the fine-tuning argument in that DVD.

Fine-tuning of the gravitational force

I actually wrote about the fine-tuning of the force of gravity, which is mentioned in the clip. I link to an article from the New Scientist in the post to show that the fine-tuning argument is quite mainstream.

You can read more about the fine-tuning of the gravitational force from Robin Collins, who is the best we have on the topic. Collins started a Ph.D in Physics at the University of Texas at Austin, but ended up completing a Ph.D in philosophy at Notre Dame, under Alvin Plantinga, the greatest living philosopher today, in my opinion. I heard Collins speak at the Baylor ID conference in 2000.

Other DVDs on design arguments

Actually, I prefer the Unlocking the Mystery of Life and The Privileged Planet DVDs, instead, especially for people who want more detail.

Black Republicans offer hope after Barack Obama's failures on race

October 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

That's not my headline, that's the headline on the UK Telegraph article. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Campaigning a few miles from Fort Sumter, where the first shots of the Civil War were fired in 1861, Tim Scott described last week how he was born into poverty and a broken home, much like Barack Obama.

> "My dad was gone by the time I was seven," the black candidate for the House of Representatives told a mixed group of students at Fort Dorchester High School in North Charleston. "I was flunking out of high school. I failed geography, civics, Spanish and English. When you fail Spanish and English, you are not bilingual, you are bi-ignorant."
>
> But the conclusions that Scott, 45, drew were very different from those of Obama. When he was 15, a man who ran a Chick-fil-A fast-food restaurant taught him "that there was a way to think my way out of the worst conditions". Scott went on to became a small businessman and a proud "conservative Republican".
>
> Barring a cataclysmic upset, Scott will be elected to Congress on November 2nd. There, he will be a ferocious opponent of Obama, to whom he gives a withering "failing grade" for his presidency.
>
> "Obamacare's an atrocity around the necks of average Americans," he told me. "His intentions might be good but he's leading us towards the brink of bankruptcy. Right now, the American people are simply saying they've had enough."
>
> Scott will be the first black Republican congressman from the Deep South in more than a century. Republicans hope to elect at least two other black candidates to Congress next month. Allen West, in Florida, and Ryan Frazier in Colorado, both with distinguished military records, are in very close races against Democrats.

Allen West and Ryan Frazier are both ex-military men.

Here' s an ad from Ryan Frazier:

And a clip of Allen West:

And we also have another military woman running for Lt. Governor in Florida – her name is Jennifer Carroll. She's also a black Republican. We need more people with military backgrounds in office, and more people with private sector backgrounds, too.

Does reading science fiction predispose people to atheism?

October 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an interesting idea that ECM thought of and shared with me in our conversations. I went around the office and tested some of the engineers who were atheists and found that ECM was 100% correct. But let me explain ECM's thesis in brief.

ECM thinks that science fiction (made-up fantasy stuff) that people read when they are younger causes them to believe that the religion is anti-science and that the progress of science always disproves religion. The stories they read colors their views of science and religion for life, before they ever get to assessing evidence. And that's why when we produce evidence for them in debates, they will believe in speculations rather than go where the evidence leads. So they believe that maybe unobservable aliens caused the origin of life, and that maybe the untestable multiverse theory explains the fine-tuning of cosmological constants, and that maybe this universe has existed eternally despite the well-supported Big Bang theory which shows that the universe began to exist. Maybe, maybe, maybe. They seem to think that *untestable speculations* are "good enough" to refute *observational evidence* – and maybe it's because of all the science fiction that they've read.

Here's an article in the American Spectator that talks a bit about it. (H/T Denyse O'Leary via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A magazine I frequently write for (not this one) recently published a review of a book of essays advocating atheism. The reviewer pointed out with some enthusiasm that a large number of the contributors were science-fiction writers.
>
> This left me somewhat nonplussed. I publish a good deal of science fiction myself, I have also read quite a lot of it, and I am quite unable to see why writing it should be held to particularly qualify anyone to answer the question of whether or not there is a God.
>
> […]Historically the contribution of the Catholic Church to astronomy was massive and unequalled. Without it astronomy might very well never have grown out of astrology at all. Cathedrals in Bologna, Florence, Paris, Rome and elsewhere were designed in the 17th and 18th centuries to function as solar observatories. Kepler was assisted by a number of Jesuit astronomers, including Father Paul Guldin and Father Zucchi, and by Giovanni Cassini, who had studied under Jesuits. Cassini and Jesuit colleagues were eventually able to confirm Kepler's theory on the Earth having an elliptical orbit. J.L. Heilbron of the University of California has written:
>
> > The Roman Catholic Church gave more financial aid and social support to

> > the study of astronomy over six centuries, from the recovery of ancient learning during the late Middle Ages into the Enlightenment, than any other, and, probably, all other, institutions.
>
> Science fiction is, by definition, fiction, that is, it deals with things which are the product of a writer's imagination and are not literally true. In any event, what is and what is not science fiction is hard to define. Simply to say it is about science is meaningless, and while some science-fiction writers are qualified scientists, many are not. Probably even fewer are trained theologians.

Science fiction makes the mysteries of the universe seem easy to an atheist. Everything can be easily explained with fictional future discoveries. Their speculations about aliens, global warming and eternal universes are believed without evidence because atheists *want* and *need* to believe in those speculations. In the world of science fiction, the fictional characters can be "moral" and "intelligent" without having to bring God or the evidence for God into the picture. That's very attractive to an atheist who wants the feeling of being intelligent and moral without having to weight actual scientific evidence or ground their moral values and behavior rationally. The science fiction myths are what atheists *want to believe*. It's a placebo at the worldview level. They don't want cosmic microwave background radiation – they want *warp drives.* They don't want chastity – they want *holodecks.*

Why do people become atheists?

My theory is mainly that atheists adopt atheism because they want pleasure, especially sexual pleasure, without any restraints or guilt. They want to believe that sex without commitment has no consequences, especially a consequence like God judging them for it. Another contributing factor may be that atheists want to be thought of as smart by "the right people" – to sort of blindly accept whatever the "smart people" accept without really searching out reasons or dissenting views. They do this so that they are able to look down at some other group of people so they can feel better about themselves and be part of the right group – without actually having to weigh the evidence on both sides. And lastly, atheism may also be caused by weak fathers or abandoning fathers. But I think that ECM's science fiction theory has merit, as well. I think that all four of these factors help to explain why atheists believe in a discredited worldview in the teeth of scientific progress.

I wonder if my readers would take some time out to investigate whether their atheist friends have been influenced by reading science fiction and whether they still read it. We really need to get to the bottom of why atheists are so hostile to science, morality, and reason. If we can also find out why they are so desperate to take on the views of people around them because of peer pressure, without caring to hear both sides of questions (e.g. – global warming), that would also be interesting.

Science fiction

- Physicist Frank Tipler weighs in on Stephen Hawking's theory
- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)

- Stephen Meyer debating Michael Shermer on the origin of life
- Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

Not science fiction

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

Europe’s conflict with conscience protections

October 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Public Discourse. (H/T Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> This Thursday the Council of Europe, a transnational body created in 1949 to promote democracy and human rights, will vote on a resolution and series of recommendations on conscience protection. Americans, who faced similar issues during the debate over the health care overhaul, will find much of interest in the resolution. It would create guidelines that encourage member states to force doctors to perform abortions in some circumstances and to make referrals for them in every circumstance. Drafted by the pro-abortion British parliamentarian Christine McCafferty, it is an all-out assault on conscience and community.
>
> The central feature of the resolution is a call for enforcement against conscientious objectors who refuse to perform or make referrals for abortion. The report encourages member states to “establish effective complaint mechanisms that can address abuses of the right to conscientious objection and provide women with an effective and timely remedy.” While many European countries are woefully lacking in conscience protection, authorities have sometimes hesitated to enforce these unjust laws. This provision seeks to end that. As the European Center for Law and Justice says in its report on the proposed law, “the ‘conscience clause’ is nothing other than an official immunity from liability for refusing to participate in abortion.” While the law fails to specify how this unjust law will be enforced, doctors can be forgiven for worrying that its implementation will be far from sensitive and sympathetic.
>
> Among the report’s many specific recommendations, the most sinister sounding may be a call for the creation of national registries of conscientious objectors in order to further what the report describes as “oversight and monitoring mechanisms.” In Norway, doctors are already required to notify hospitals of their conscientious objector status, and the hospitals in turn are required to report the names of conscientious objectors to state authorities. The goal of these mechanisms seems to be to enable a highly inappropriate and political scrutiny of doctors who have deeply held objections to procedures like abortion and euthanasia.
>
> The new guideline further restricts conscience by requiring that doctors give timely notice of their conscientious objections. But what happens if a doctor’s view on conscience changes? What if he is serving as the sole medical provider in an under-served area? Will he be required to give up his job?
>
> There is already discrimination against conscientious objectors in Britain, where the National Health Service has urged hospitals to ask job applicants whether or

> not they are conscientious objectors and to refuse to hire conscientious objectors unless there is an already present physician willing to perform acts like abortion. One’s conscientious objector status becomes a matter of administrative record that must be consulted at every step in one’s employment, from hiring, to promotion, to professional security. Conscientious objectors become last hired, first fired.

This will make it harder for Christians to have an influence where it matters.

Rocket scientist Republican candidate pulls ahead in deep blue district

October 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: She's now up 39 to 37 according to a new poll.

Amazing story from the moderately left-wing Politico. (H/T The Other McCain)

Excerpt:

> Add Rep. Raul Grijalva to the growing list of Democratic worries this election season.
> Party operatives say there's increasing concern that the **Arizona Democrat's reelection bid could turn into a "sleeper" race for Republicans** after Grijalva — responding to enactment of a tough new immigration law — called for an economic boycott of his own state amid a housing crisis and record unemployment.
>
> Four Democratic sources from different parts of the country said that there is new attention to a race that was long considered in the bag.
>
> And a recent poll, obtained by POLITICO, found that **Grijalva and Republican challenger Ruth McClung**, a real-life rocket scientist, were in a **dead heat**, even though Washington prognosticators have declared the deep-blue seat safely Democratic.
>
> As they work to buttress their majority against a **coming Republican storm**, Democrats can ill afford to spend time or resources defending incumbents in seats where they should have a clear advantage. But the **Grijalva seat potentially being in play is a sign of the increasingly expanding Republican playing field** for the midterm elections. . . .

The bolding is from Robert Stacy McCain's post.

McCain writes:

> A couple weeks ago, when I first blogged about Ruth McClung's campaign in AZ-7, it was basically as favor to an Arizona friend. Here was an excellent candidate running a g0od grassroots campaign and, as always, I love a scrappy underdog. Grijalva's stupidity in calling for a boycott *of his own state* was so remarkable as to deserve another mention.
>
> There was a chance for an against-the-odds upset but, honestly, I never expected to see a poll three weeks before Election Day showing a dead heat in AZ-7. Look at the data: Grijalva's negatives are 47% against a positive of 39%, while Grijalva's "deserves re-election" number is a mere 36% against 50% for "give new person a chance." This is an incumbent in serious trouble.
>
> To have these kind of results, when McClung reported a mere $16,000 cash on

> hand in early August — *incredible!*

Here's her latest ad:

In related news, ECM sent me this Wall Street Journal article.

Excerpt:

> Republican challengers are suddenly threatening once-safe Democrats in New England and the Northwest, expanding the terrain for potential GOP gains and raising the party's hopes for a significant victory in next month's elections.
>
> Republican advances in traditionally Democratic states, including Connecticut, Oregon and Washington, may not translate into a wave of GOP victories. But they have rattled local campaigns and forced the Democrats to shift attention and money to races they didn't expect to be defending.
>
> […]Democrats are buying advertising in places they hadn't previously reserved it, a strong indication the battlefield is expanding. That includes New England, which hasn't a single Republican House member. A new ad by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee began airing this week in the Massachusetts district covering Cape Cod, where Democratic Rep. Bill Delahunt is retiring and ex-police sergeant Jeff Perry is posting a strong GOP challenge.
>
> In Connecticut, polls published this week show Democratic Reps. Chris Murphy and Jim Himes in dead heats with their GOP rivals. The non-partisan Cook Political Report on Friday moved Mr. Murphy's race into a more competitive category, from a "likely" win to "lean" Democratic.

The November elections are looking very bad for the Democrats.

Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training

October 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News. (H/T The Blog Prof)

Excerpt:

> Documents LifeNews.com obtained today reveal the Obama administration partnered with leading pro-abortion organizations to host an FBI training seminar in August with the main focus of declaring as "violent" the free speech activities of pro-life Americans.
>
> On August 25, 2010, the FBI and the United States Department of Justice co-sponsored a training seminar with Planned Parenthood, the National Abortion Federation and the Feminist Majority Foundation.
>
> When information about the seminar, which took place at FBI headquarters in Portland, Oregon, reached pro-life advocates, they asked officials for permission to attend and were granted access to the seminar and the training materials.
>
> FBI and Obama administration officials provided participants with an 84-page document entitled "Resource Guide: Violence Against Reproductive Health Care Providers" that contained print copies of Power Point presentations prepared by the Justice Department and an analysis of alleged pro-life "violence" prepared by the pro-abortion groups.
>
> The so-called violence perpetrated by pro-life advocates mostly contained examples of constitutionally-protected free speech, including activities such as praying, providing women outside abortion centers with alternatives information, and peaceful protesting or picketing.
>
> Matt Bowman, a top attorney at the Alliance Defense Fund, told LifeNews.com today that the cooperation between the Obama administration and pro-abortion organizations to target pro-life free speech should cause alarm.
>
> "The information presented in the seminar raises serious concerns over the United States government's treatment of nonviolent free speech activities as 'violence' subject to investigation and prosecution," he said.
>
> "Abortionist organizations have long lobbied to use the law to silence free speech activities. But in this seminar the FBI and USDOJ included those views in their own training seminar materials," he added. "This raises serious concerns about the United States government investigating peaceful, legal free speech activity in efforts that are ostensibly aimed at violence."
>
> The Obama administration documents, on page 39-41 specifically list the names of pro-life organizations and websites sponsored by peaceful nonviolent groups.
>
> Some of the organizations named in the FBI/DOJ seminar materials include 40

> Days for Life, the ACLJ, Concerned Women for America, National Right to Life, Priests for Life, and Students for Life of America.
>
> Julie Abbate of USDOJ, who presented at the seminar, is the attorney who filed a federal lawsuit in August 2010 against a pro-life advocate solely for leafleting while, allegedly, one time, crossing a driveway in front of an abortion center.
>
> "The lawsuit is further evidence that USDOJ is putting its resources into prosecuting peaceful activity on public sidewalks, rather than violence," Bowman said.

My previous post about the administration's opinion of pro-lifers and other conservatives.

Obama is the most pro-abortion president ever.

UPDATE: James informs me that Verum Serum has a number of stories linked about pro-abortion clinic violence against pro-lifers.

Is Obama hiring professional actors for his next townhall meeting?

October 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story from the moderately leftist ABC News.

Excerpt:

> When President Obama sits down for his MTV town hall this Thursday, the audience of young people who will ask him questions will have been gathered by a casting call.
>
> According to the casting call for the event from talent agency Backstage.com, first reported by National Review Online, the company requests applications for the event, asking what issues the person is "passionate about," requiring a "short description of your political views," and also asks for a recent photo.
>
> "MTV, BET and CMT are casting the audience for town hall meeting with President Obama. Shooting Oct. 14, 4 p.m. in Washington, D.C. Seeking—Audience Members: males & females, 18+," the casting call says, "To ensure that the audience represents diverse interests and political views, include your name, phone number, hometown, school attending, your job and what issues, if any, you are interested in or passionate about. Also, provide a recent photo and short description of your political views."
>
> The casting call says that there is no pay for the appearance at the town hall.
>
> Dubbed "A Conversation with President Obama", MTV touted that the town hall will bring the president before 250 young people that represent a "broad cross-section of backgrounds, interests and political viewpoints," who will ask questions of the president and over Twitter.
>
> […]During the 2008 presidential campaign candidate Obama took pains to express that his town halls across the country were entirely authentic, given reports then of the Hillary Clinton campaign planting two questions at her town halls events.
>
> […]The White House did not immediately respond to questions about Thursday's town hall.

I found what appears to be the casting e-mail at The Blog Prof.

Is there a Constitutional basis for ObamaCare?

October 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Founding Bloggers, clips of Illinois socialist Jan Schakowsky at a town hall meeting.

Ed Morrissey explains what's in the clip:

> At least Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) gives it a few tries. First she argued "If we can build national highways," but Adam Sharp noted that the Constitution does include the authority to build interstate "post roads." Next, Schakowsky says enacting civil-rights legislation creates some sort of odd precedent, even though those acts existed to *enforce* the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments of the Constitution. Schakowsky gives it one last try on Medicare and Social Security, even though the former is voluntary and the latter is an explicit government program (albeit also of dubious Constitutional authority). There exists no Constitutional reference to force Americans to buy a private product, and Schakowsky winds up walking away…

You'll remember that this is the same woman who thinks that Obama's public option would lead to single-payer health care.

So it looks like the Illinois guy from last week was not an anomaly at all. Democrats don't like explaining where in the Constitution they get the authority for their big spending.

Why do atheists like Dan Barker abandon their faith?

October 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unbelievable's latest radio show featured a discussion with former Christian Dan Barker, the founder and co-President of the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

I thought that I would make some general comments about why I think that many people leave the Christian faith, and what you should be careful of in order to avoid following in Dan Barker's footsteps, specifically.

Basically, there are four major reasons why people leave Christianity.

1. They want to do something immoral with impunity. This type of person wants to do something immoral that is forbidden by Christianity, like pre-marital sex. They dump Christianity in order to feel better about seeking happiness in this life, apart from God and his moral duties.
2. They want to pursue happiness in irresponsible ways. This type of person thinks that God's job is to save them when they act irresponsibly while pursuing happiness. When God disappoints them by not giving them what they want in order to be happy, they leave the faith.
3. They want to be loved by people, not by God. This type of person thinks that Christianity is a tool that they can use to become popular. When they first try to articulate the gospel in public, they find that people don't like them as much, and they feel bad about offending people with exclusive truth claims that they cannot back up using logic and evidence. So, they water down Christianity to get along with atheists, liberal Christians and other religions. Finally, they jettison Christianity completely and focus on making everyone feel good about whatever they believe.
4. They don't want to learn to defend their faith. This type of person is asked questions by skeptics that they cannot answer. Usually this happens when people go to university after growing up in the shelter of the Church. The questions and peer pressure make them feel stupid. Rather than investigate Christianity to see if it's true and to prepare to defend it in public, they dump it so they can be thought of as part of the "smart" crowd.

Now listen to the discussion and see if you can identify some of these factors from Barker's own carefully-prepared words. He is trying very hard to make himself look honest and moderate, because he wants Christians to be sympathetic with his story and his motives for leaving Christianity. But I think that there is enough in his statements to construct a different hypothesis of why he left Christianity.

I've grouped the data by risk factor. (These are not his *exact* views)

Non-rational, emotional approach to Christianity

- he was raised in a devout Christian family where he probably wouldn't have faced skeptical questions
- he converted to Christianity at age 15 as a result of a religious experience, not a serious investigation
- his idea of God was probably idealized and uninformed, e.g. – a loving God who wants us to be happy
- he wandered around from church to church preaching, with no fixed address or source of income
- he earned money by collecting "love offerings" from churches where he performed his music
- he wrote Christian songs and Christian musicals, but nothing substantive on apologetics and theology
- he worked in three churches known for being anti-intellectual and fundamentalist
- there's no evidence that of any deep study of philosophy, science and history during this time

Desire to gain acceptance from non-Christians

- he began to notice that some people were uncomfortable with sin and Hell
- he began to avoid preaching about sin and Hell in order to make these people comfortable
- he watered-down the gospel to focus on helping people to be happy in this life
- his manic approach to Christian ministry was challenged by the "real life" needs of his growing family
- he met liberal pastors while performing his music in their churches
- he found it difficult to disagree with them because they seemed to be "good" people
- he watered down his message further in order to appeal to people across the theological spectrum

Ignorance of Christian apologetics

- he began to think that if there are many different views of religion, then no view can be correct
- he was not intellectually capable of using logic and evidence to test these competing claims to see which was true
- he decided to instead re-interpret Christian truth claims as non-rational opinions, so they could all be "valid"
- he became a theological liberal, abandoning theism for an impersonal "ground of being"
- he embraced religious pluralism, the view that all religions are non-rational and make no testable truth claims
- he began to see God as a "metaphor" whose purpose is to make people have a sense of meaning and purpose
- he jettisoned God completely and focused more on helping people find meaning and

morality apart from God
  - seems to think that religion is about having a “great life”, and felt that you can have a “great life” without religion
  - seems to think that religion is about being “good”, and felt that you can be “good” without religion
  - religion makes people feel bad by telling them what to do instead of letting them do anything they want
  - religion makes people feel bad by telling them what is true, instead of letting them believe whatever they want
  - religion makes people feel bad by telling them that God will hold them accountable for their beliefs and actions

So what do I think happened?

I think he abandoned his faith because he wanted people to like him and because he needed to be invited to liberal churches in order to make money to pay for the “real life” needs of his family.

He seems to have thought that Christianity is about having his needs met and being liked by others. I think he wanted to feel good and to make people feel good with his preaching and singing. He seems to have become aware that the exclusive claims of Christianity made other people feel offended, so he cut them out. He hadn’t studied philosophy, science or history so that he would have been able to demonstrate to other people whether what he was saying was true. It’s hard to offend people when you don’t really know whether your claims are true or not, and when you don’t know how to demonstrate whether they are true or not.

I also think money was a factor. It seems to me that it would have hurt his career and reduced his invitations from liberal churches if he had kept up teaching biblical Christianity. In order to appeal to a wider audience, (like many Christian singers do – e.g. – Amy Grant, Jars of Clay, etc.), he would have felt pressured to water down the unpleasant parts of his preaching and singing. Lacking apologetics skill, he instead abandoned his message. He needed to account for his family’s needs and “real life”, and exclusive truth claims and Hell-talk would probably have reduced his ability to do that. It seems to me that he should have scaled back his extreme schedule of preaching and singing, and instead gotten a steady job so that he could afford “real life” and a family without being pressured into altering his message.

Life isn’t a fairy tale. God isn’t there to reward risky behavior. We need to be more shrewd about financial matters so that we have the ability to *not care* about what people think of us. Look at this blog. I work all day as a senior software engineer with two degrees in computer science so that I can refuse donations. I save most of what I make in case a tragedy strikes. Since I am financially secure, I can say what I think, and disregard anyone who wants me to change my message because they are offended. Becoming a Christian isn’t a license to behave irrationally and immaturely with money. For some people, (like William Lane Craig), stepping out in faith works. But if it doesn’t work, it’s

better to retreat and re-trench, rather than to compromise your message for money.

Barker didn't seem to make any effort to deal intellectually with typical challenges like the existence of Hell and religious pluralism. He just wanted to be liked by people instead of being liked by God. He seemed to have thought that being a Christian would make him happy and that other people would all respond to him and like him without having to do any work to explain why Christianity is true. But that's not Biblical. When the singing and preaching is over, you still have to know how to give an answer to non-Christians. But Barker couldn't give an answer – not one that allowed him to retain his beliefs. He had not prepared a defense.

What does Dan Barker think about Christianity today?

Many atheists today are interested in eradicating public expressions of Christian beliefs in the public square, because they hate Christianity and believe that Christians should not be allowed to make them feel bad by exercising their rights of free speech. Is Dan Barker one of these militant atheists?

Well, take a look at this video, in which he objects to a nativity scene and demands that an atheistic denunciation of theism be posted alongside it. In the video, Barker explains that the nativity scene is *hate speech*, and that the baby Jesus is a *dictator*. He seems to be totally oblivious to the the idea that if Christianity is *true,* then it doesn't matter whether it's mean and exclusive. And this seems to me to have been his problem all along, from the day of his "conversion".

So the real question is this: is it true? Barker seems to be much more interested in asking "is it nice?" and "will it make me happy?".

U.S. cities face half a trillion dollars in public pension deficits

October 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CNBC. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Big US cities could be squeezed by unfunded public pensions as they and counties face a $574 billion funding gap, a study to be released on Tuesday shows.
>
> The gap at the municipal level would be in addition to $3,000 billion in unfunded liabilities already estimated for state-run pensions, according to research from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and the University of Rochester.
>
> "What is yet to be seen is how this burden will be distributed between state and local governments and whether the federal government will be called upon for bail-outs," said Joshua Rauh of the Kellogg School.
>
> The financial demands of unfunded pension promises come as state and local governments grapple with years of falling tax revenue related to the recession.
>
> The combination has raised concern that defaults, which are historically rare in the $2,800 billion municipal bond market where local governments obtain money, could now rise.
>
> "The bondholders would be competing with the pension beneficiaries for scarce government resources," Mr Rauh said.
>
> Current pension assets for plans sponsored by Philadelphia can only pay for promised benefits through 2015, while Boston and Chicago would deplete their existing funds by 2019.
>
> Cincinnati, Jacksonville, Florida and St Paul have current pension assets that can only pay for promised benefits through 2020.
>
> Local governments use unique accounting methods that many, such as Mr Rauh, believe understate obligations. Based on his estimates, which use US Treasuries as the benchmark, each household already owes an average of $14,165 to current and former municipal public employees in the 50 cities and counties studied.
>
> "Philadelphia has the most immediate cause for concern, as the city can pay existing promises with existing assets only through 2015," Mr Rauh said, assuming an 8 percent annualized return, the most common benchmark for municipal plans.
>
> In New York City, San Francisco and Boston the total is more than $30,000 a

> household and, in Chicago, it tops $40,000.
>
> Taxpayers in these areas risk not only local tax increases and service cuts to pay for benefits, but potentially some of the bill for the $3,000 billion unfunded obligations at the state level, the researchers say.

Notice how all the worst offenders are Democrat strongholds. They don’t know how to manage their finances!

Is MTV pressuring its employees to attend anti-Tea-Party rallies?

October 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Big Hollywood. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Now that the establishment's favorite comedian, Jon Stewart, has the state-sanctioned approval of no less than the President of the United States for his upcoming "Mock-The-People" rally on October 30th, it only makes sense that Comedy Central's state-enamored sister company, Barack-The-Vote MTV (both MTV and Comedy Central are owned by Sumner Redstone's Viacom) would team up to do everything possible to help President Obama's party in these dire final campaign days when the only question about the coming Republican wave is just how large it will be.
>
> […]An internal email reveals that MTV is investing heavily in making a success of Jon Stewart's counter-rally to Glenn Beck's incredibly successful August event. But the music network's tactics give the whole affair a taint similar to October 2nd's "One Nation" rally, where all that Big Labor-SEIU astro-turfing still wasn't able to reproduce Beck's grassroots success. Below is a portion of an email that I'm told just went out to some, and maybe all, MTV employees.

You have to click through for the e-mail from MTV to its employees.

> This should come as no surprise, however. MTV is, after all, the same network that just held a "casting call" for the 250 young people needed for a townhall meeting the network was kind enough to arrange for the President just a few weeks before the midterm elections.
>
> Also adding to the whole Stewart astro-turf vibe is Arianna Huffington, who just announced that she's donating a cool $250k to bus in those who apparently wouldn't go otherwise…

Compare that to Tea Party rallies where people *drive their own cars and park them*, no buses are used. And the signs are all *hand-made*, not manufactured by some union.

Is God’s existence compatible with Darwinian evolution?

October 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Report on a new book from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Can you be an orthodox Darwinist *and* an orthodox theist? The plain answer is “no,” according to *God and Evolution*, an important new book coming out this fall. The book provides a thorough examination of the conflict between belief in God and Darwin’s theory of unguided evolution.
>
> […]”As the arguments in this volume make clear, to the degree that theistic evolution is theistic, it will not be fully Darwinian,” adds Richards. “And to the degree that it is Darwinian, it will fail fully to preserve traditional theism.”
>
> *God and Evolution* includes chapters by **William Dembski**, author of *The Design Revolution*; **Stephen Meyer**, author of *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*; **Denyse O’Leary**, co-author of *The Spiritual Brain*; **David Klinghoffer**, author of *The Discovery of God: Abraham and the Birth of Monotheism*; **Jonathan Wells**, author of *Icons of Evolution*; **John West**, author of *Darwin Day in America*; **Jonathan Witt**, co-author of *A Meaningful World*; **Casey Luskin**, co-author of *Traipsing Into Evolution*; and **Logan Paul Gage**, whose articles have appeared in *Touchstone*, *First Things*, and other publications.
>
> The book is a response to growing efforts by some Darwinists to enlist the support of the faith community by downplaying Darwinism’s core principles. Chapters of the book detail the failures of theistic evolution, address the problem of evil, and explain how intelligent design is consonant with orthodox belief.
>
> “Our main focus remains on the science,” says John West, a contributor to the book and a senior fellow with Discovery’s Center for Science & Culture. “But it’s important to set the record straight about the broader implications of Darwin’s theory.”

I agree with the thesis of the book. Without the pre-supposition of materialism, the evidence for Darwinian evolution is not sufficient. With the pre-supposition of materialism, evolution has to be true. But then, God doesn’t exist, since he is not material.

Michele Bachmann raises 5.4 million in 3rd quarter

October 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From ABC News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Tea Party-backed Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-MN, raised an extraordinary $5.4 million in the third quarter, possibly smashing a congressional fundraising record for a three-month period while pushing her total fundraising haul for this election cycle to almost $10 million.
>
> Although Federal Election Commission financial disclosure reports are not due until October 15, Bachmann press secretary Sergio Gor confirmed to ABC News late Tuesday evening that Bachmann raked in the incredible loot in the months of July, August and September. Gor said he expected Bachmann to report that she has about $3.4 million cash-on-hand in her campaign war chest.
>
> "I am so grateful to the more than 80,000 people who have contributed to my campaign this quarter," Bachmann said in a statement Wednesday. "Their support is truly overwhelming and I am blessed to havetheir support in my campaign to represent Minnesota."
>
> More than 100,000 contributions were in amounts of $100 or less, giving Bachmann an average contribution of less than $50, according to Gor.

She's thoughtful and conservative and that's what the people want.

Oh, and Sharron Angle raise $14 million in the last quarter. She's a Sunday school teacher and she understand economics, just like Michele does.

NHS patients giving birth in waiting rooms

October 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Women are being forced to give birth in a hospital waiting room because there are not enough beds in overstretched maternity units. Expectant mothers are going through one of the most agonising ordeals of their lives in a crowded seating area, while other patients look on. Campaigners last night warned that such an appalling standard of care is putting the health of women and their babies at risk. King's College Hospital, in South London, has admitted that mothers 'regularly' go into labour in the maternity unit's waiting room as there are not enough beds. Managers said the department is often so full that some women have their babies in the seating area – with nothing more than a temporary screen to protect their privacy. The hospital admits the unit is severely overstretched and there are not enough beds to cope with the increasing birth rate of the catchment area. But critics warn that the dire situation will soon be commonplace up and down the country as increasing numbers of hospitals close their maternity units to save money.

Remember Donald Berwick is Obama's health care guy, and he loves the NHS. He wants the NHS for YOU!

American hero and his private corporation save 33 Chilean miners

October 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the setup from Canada Free Press.

Excerpt:

> Things looked grim for the miners when the San Jose mine collapsed on Aug. 5. It was going to take painstaking patience and a marvel of engineering to bring the men, trapped 2,100 feet below, to the surface.
>
> When it became clear that all 33 miners trapped in the mine were alive, an emergency call went out to find the expertise to save them and was answered by the Mission Woods, Kansas Layne Christensen Company, who sent their most experienced drillers to the rescue.
>
> Although they've shunned the publicity, the heroes in this rescue mission are ones of epic proportion. They include two drillers Jeff Hart and Matt Staffel, who had been drilling water wells in Afghanistan to support U.S. troops stationed there. Assisting the drillers were two Spanish-speaking drilling helpers, Doug Reeves and Jorge Herrera from Layne's western region in the U.S.
>
> (Layne's Latin American affiliate) "Geotec operations manager James Stefanic said he quickly assembled "a top of the line team" of drillers who are intimately familiar with the key equipment, including engineers from two Pennsylvania companies—Schramm Inc., which makes the T130 drill, and Center Rock Inc., which makes the drill bits." (Michelle Malkin, Oct. 12, 2010.)

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The leadership of Chile President Sebastian Pinera, believing fiercely in globalization and free markets, and not believing in limits, seemed to make a critical difference.
>
> Pinera refused to shut out foreign expertise. As the world focused on Chile's miners underground, the rescue operation above was characterized by an Apollo 13-like sense of mission. Failure was not an option.
>
> That gave the mission an international flavor a la "Star Trek." Unlike President Obama, who invoked the Jones Act to spurn foreign offers of help in April's Gulf oil spill, or Russia's Vladimir Putin, who said "nyet" to American naval rescue ships after the Kursk nuclear sub sank in Arctic waters in 2000, leaving 29 to die at a depth of 650 feet, Pinera brought in the best brains outside his country to improve the odds of success.
>
> Among companies responding was Schramm Inc., the Pennsylvania-based

> manufacturer of drilling rigs, which produced the drills that first reached the miners and then carved out their rescue path, with UPS shipping a 13-ton product from the Keystone State in just two days.
>
> Another Pennsylvania company, Center Rock, provided the drill bit. Texas' Techint came up with steel tubes that made the shaft safe. Geotec Broyles Bros.' American engineers operated the drill, and Maryland-based Zephyr Technology provided the medical monitors during the rescue.
>
> Argentine, Canadian and Australian companies also had roles, as did NASA. The result was a showcase of mostly American engineering that didn't take any credit away from Chile.
>
> Pinera also grasped the importance of just being on hand and transparent. The Chileans communicated clearly with both the miners and the outside world about what was happening. One of the first three holes drilled by rescuers was for communication.
>
> Pinera spent a lot of time at the remote desert site. He was there when the incredible discovery of life was made, and he assured the miners the long wait for their rescue was strictly geological and logistical — not bureaucratic. He gave everyone hope by being engaged and involved.

Michelle Malkin writes:

> In a different day and age, Jeff Hart would be the most famous American in our country right now. He would be honored at the White House. Schoolchildren would learn of his skill and heroism. But because Jeff Hart works in an industry under fire by the Obama administration, more people in Chile will celebrate this symbol of American greatness than in America itself. Jeff Hart is a driller based in my home state of Colorado. The father of two has been drilling water wells in Afghanistan at U.S. Army bases. When the San Jose Mine in Chile collapsed in August, he flew to lend his renowned expertise to the rescue effort. As part of an amazing three-way race to the trapped miners, Hart drilled for 33 days straight and was first to reach the caved-in workers. The AP recounts the story – and what strikes me again and again is how the world turned to American ingenuity and American fortitude and American equipment and American enterprise to get the job done…

Government cannot solve problems. Academic elites in the humanities cannot solve problems. Left-wing union thugs shouting slogans cannot solve problems.

Entrepreneurs and engineers solve problems. Capitalism solves problems. Businesses solve problems. America solves problems.

MUST-READ: Dr. Leon Kass on the end of courtship

October 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This essay has 3 parts, and it was sent to me by ECM.

Part 1 of 3.

Excerpt:

> The change most immediately devastating for wooing is probably the sexual revolution. For why would a man court a woman for marriage when she may be sexually enjoyed, and regularly, without it? Contrary to what the youth of the sixties believed, they were not the first to feel the power of sexual desire. Many, perhaps even most, men in earlier times avidly sought sexual pleasure prior to and outside of marriage. But they usually distinguished, as did the culture generally, between women one fooled around with and women one married, between a woman of easy virtue and a woman of virtue simply. Only respectable women were respected; one no more wanted a loose woman for one's partner than for one's mother.
>
> The supreme virtue of the virtuous woman was modesty, a form of sexual self-control, manifested not only in chastity but in decorous dress and manner, speech and deed, and in reticence in the display of her well-banked affections. A virtue, as it were, made for courtship, it served simultaneously as a source of attraction and a spur to manly ardor, a guard against a woman's own desires, as well as a defense against unworthy suitors. A fine woman understood that giving her body (in earlier times, even her kiss) meant giving her heart, which was too precious to be bestowed on anyone who would not prove himself worthy, at the very least by pledging himself in marriage to be her defender and lover forever.
>
> Once female modesty became a first casualty of the sexual revolution, even women eager for marriage lost their greatest power to hold and to discipline their prospective mates. For it is a woman's refusal of sexual importunings, coupled with hints or promises of later gratification, that is generally a necessary condition of transforming a man's lust into love. Women also lost the capacity to discover their own genuine longings and best interests. For only by holding herself in reserve does a woman gain the distance and self-command needed to discern what and whom she truly wants and to insist that the ardent suitor measure up. While there has always been sex without love, easy and early sexual satisfaction makes love and real intimacy less, not more, likely — for both men and women. Everyone's prospects for marriage were — are — sacrificed on the altar of pleasure now.

Part 2 of 3.

Excerpt:

The ubiquitous experience of divorce is also deadly for courtship and marriage. Some people try to argue, wishfully against the empirical evidence, that children of divorce will marry better than their parents because they know how important it is to choose well. But the deck is stacked against them. Not only are many of them frightened of marriage, in whose likely permanence they simply do not believe, but they are often maimed for love and intimacy. They have had no successful models to imitate; worse, their capacity for trust and love has been severely crippled by the betrayal of the primal trust all children naturally repose in their parents, to provide that durable, reliable, and absolutely trustworthy haven of permanent and unconditional love in an otherwise often unloving and undependable world. Countless students at the University of Chicago have told me and my wife that the divorce of their parents has been the most devastating and life-shaping event of their lives. They are conscious of the fact that they enter into relationships guardedly and tentatively; for good reason, they believe that they must always be looking out for number one. Accordingly, they feel little sense of devotion to another and, their own needs unmet, they are not generally eager for or partial to children. They are not good bets for promise keeping, and they haven't enough margin for generous service. And many of the fatherless men are themselves unmanned for fatherhood, except in the purely biological sense. Even where they dream of meeting a true love, these children of divorce have a hard time finding, winning, and committing themselves to the right one.

[…]That the cause of courtship has been severely damaged by feminist ideology and attitudes goes almost without saying. Even leaving aside the radical attacks on traditional sex roles, on the worth of motherhood or the vanishing art of homemaking, and sometimes even on the whole male race, the reconception of all relations between the sexes as relations based on power is simply deadly for love. Anyone who has ever loved or been loved knows the difference between love and the will to power, no matter what the cynics say. But the cynical new theories, and the resulting push toward androgyny, surely inhibit the growth of love.

On the one side, there is a rise in female assertiveness and efforts at empowerment, with a consequent need to deny all womanly dependence and the kind of vulnerability that calls for the protection of strong and loving men, protection such men were once — and would still be — willing to provide. On the other side, we see the enfeeblement of men, who, contrary to the dominant ideology, are not likely to become better lovers, husbands, or fathers if they too become feminists or fellow-travelers. On the contrary, many men now cynically exploit women's demands for equal power by letting them look after themselves — pay their own way, hold their own doors, fight their own battles, travel after dark by themselves. These ever so sensitive males will defend not a woman's honor but her right to learn the manly art of self-defense. In the present climate, those increasingly rare men who are still inclined to be gentlemen must

dissemble their generosity as submissiveness….

The problem is not woman's desire for meaningful work. It is rather the ordering of one's loves. Many women have managed to combine work and family; the difficulty is finally not work but careers, or, rather, careerism. Careerism, now an equal opportunity affliction, is surely no friend to love or marriage; and the careerist character of higher education is greater than ever. Women are under special pressures to prove they can be as dedicated to their work as men. Likewise, in the work place, they must do man's work like a man, and for man's pay and perquisites. Consequently, they are compelled to regard private life, and especially marriage, homemaking, and family, as lesser goods, to be pursued only by those lesser women who can aspire no higher than "baking cookies." Besides, many women in such circumstances have nothing left to give, "no time to get involved." And marriage, should it come for careerist women, is often compromised from the start, what with the difficulty of finding two worthy jobs in the same city, or commuter marriage, or the need to negotiate or get hired help for every domestic and familial task.

Besides these greater conflicts of time and energy, the economic independence of women, however welcome on other grounds, is itself not an asset for marital stability, as both the woman and the man can more readily contemplate leaving a marriage. Indeed, a woman's earning power can become her own worst enemy when the children are born. Many professional women who would like to stay home with their new babies nonetheless work full-time. Tragically, some cling to their economic independence because they worry that their husbands will leave them for another woman before the children are grown. What are these women looking for in prospective husbands? Do their own career preoccupations obscure their own prospective maternal wishes and needs? Indeed, what understanding of marriage informed their decision to marry in the first place?

[…]This brings me to what is probably the deepest and most intractable obstacle to courtship and marriage: a set of cultural attitudes and sensibilities that obscure and even deny the fundamental difference between youth and adulthood. Marriage, especially when seen as the institution designed to provide for the next generation, is most definitely the business of adults, by which I mean, people who are serious about life, people who aspire to go outward and forward to embrace and to assume responsibility for the future. To be sure, most college graduates do go out, find jobs, and become self-supporting (though, astonishingly, a great many do return to live at home). But, though out of the nest, they don't have a course to fly. They do not experience their lives as a trajectory, with an inner meaning partly given by the life cycle itself. The carefreeness and independence of youth they do not see as a stage on the way to maturity, in which they then take responsibility for the world and especially, as parents, for the new lives that will replace them. The necessities of aging and mortality are out of sight; few feel the call to serve a higher goal or some

> transcendent purpose.
>
> The view of life as play has often characterized the young. But, remarkably, today this is not something regrettable, to be outgrown as soon as possible; for their narcissistic absorption in themselves and in immediate pleasures and present experiences, the young are not condemned but are even envied by many of their elders.

Part 3 of 3.

Kass used to be on the President's bio-ethics council when Bush was the President and they had pro-lifers on the council.

Nancy Pelosi took 85 taxpayer-funded trips on military aircraft

October 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and members of her family and staff took 85 tax-paid trips on military aircraft between March 2, 2009, and June 7, 2010, according to new documents uncovered by Judicial Watch.
>
> Pelosi's daughter, son-in-law and two grandsons were on the June 20, 2009, flight from Andrews AFB to San Francisco where Pelosi resides, according to the documents. On July 2, 2010, Pelosi took a grandson on a flight from Andrews to Travis AFB, north of San Francisco.
>
> Judicial Watch obtained the documents as a result of a January 25, 2009, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.
>
> Previous documents received by the non-profit watchdog group revealed that Pelosi's travel "cost the United States Air Force $2,100,744.59 over a two-year period — $101,429.14 of which was for in-flight expenses, including food and alcohol," according to Judicial Watch.
>
> "For example, purchases for one Pelosi-led congressional delegation traveling from Washington, DC, through Tel Aviv, Israel to Baghdad, Iraq May 15-20, 2008 included: Johnny Walker Red scotch, Grey Goose vodka, E&J brandy, Bailey's Irish Crème, Maker's Mark whiskey, Courvoisier cognac, Bacardi Light rum, Jim Beam whiskey, Beefeater gin, Dewar's scotch, Bombay Sapphire gin, Jack Daniels whiskey, Corona beer and several bottles of wine."
>
> "Pelosi's abusive use of military aircraft demonstrates a shocking lack of regard for the American taxpayer and the men and women who serve in the U.S. Air Force. Speaker Pelosi may have a frequent flyer record for taxpayer-financed luxury jet travel," said Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton.

The most ethical Congress in history!

Teacher unions block volunteers from working in school libraries

October 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Boston Globe. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The teachers' union in Bridgewater and Raynham is planning to file a labor grievance that could block volunteers from keeping the school district's libraries open. And as word of the work action spreads, it is stirring up outrage in the two towns.
>
> Librarian positions were cut from the middle schools in both towns this year and their salaries channeled into hiring teachers to address bulging class sizes. Volunteer organizations stepped in to pick up the slack — only to be surprised and disappointed by threats of a labor complaint.
>
> Anita Newman, president of the Bridgewater Raynham Education Association, last week confirmed the union's plan to file a grievance with school principals. All schools whose libraries are being kept open by volunteers would be part of the grievance, she said.
>
> "You're putting unqualified people into the library who are not certified,'' Newman said, calling it the basis of the grievance. "We don't want to ruffle feathers, but you're responsible for the children. We don't use volunteers for recess or lunch either.''
>
> School Superintendent Jacqueline Forbes said she intends to keep the vol unteers in the district's libraries. "If there is a grievance or other issue, we'll work through that.''

It's important to understand that when teacher unions say "give us more money", that they are not asking for more money because they care about children. They care about the money. If they cared about the children, then they would be demanding "make us more accountable to parents". They want the money. They want to take your money and not give you anything in return. And they don't want you to take your money anywhere else.

Obama says “there’s no such thing as shovel-ready projects”

October 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically-leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> While proud of his record, Obama has already begun thinking about what went wrong — and what he needs to do to change course for the next two years. He has spent what one aide called **“a lot of time talking about Obama 2.0”** with his new interim chief of staff, Pete Rouse, and his deputy chief of staff, Jim Messina. During our hour together, Obama told me he had no regrets about the broad direction of his presidency. But he did identify what he called “tactical lessons.” He let himself look too much like “the same old tax-and-spend liberal Democrat.” **He realized too late that “there’s no such thing as shovel-ready projects” when it comes to public works.** Perhaps he should not have proposed tax breaks as part of his stimulus and instead “let the Republicans insist on the tax cuts” so it could be seen as a bipartisan compromise.

It would have been nice to know that 2.7 trillion dollars and 8 million jobs ago.

Economics in One Lesson

Perhaps it is time to review Henry Hazlitt’s Economics in One Lesson, chapter 4, entitled “Public Works Mean Taxes”.

Excerpt:

> Therefore, for every public job created by the bridge project a private job has been destroyed somewhere else. We can see the men employed on the bridge. We can watch them at work. The employment argument of the government spenders becomes vivid, and probably for most people convincing. But there are other things that we do not see, because, alas, they have never been permitted to come into existence. They are the jobs destroyed by the $10 million taken from the taxpayers. All that has happened, at best, is that there has been a *diversion* of jobs because of the project. More bridge builders; fewer automobile workers, television technicians, clothing workers, farmers.

Excerpt that the government, lacking a profit motive, is never as efficient as private business is in spending money – government *wastes* money that it never earned in the first place.

And consider Chapter 5 as well, entitled “Taxes Discourage Production”.

> In our modern world there is never the same percentage of income tax levied on everybody. The great burden of income taxes is imposed on a minor percentage of the nation’s income; and these income taxes have to be supplemented by

> taxes of other kinds. These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. **When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to become employers at all.** Improved machinery and better-equipped factories come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.
>
> There is a similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment that they profess to solve.

George W. Bush cut taxes in his first term and created 1 million NEW JOBS. Government spending is a *job killer*. Companies understand that government spending has to be paid for eventually, so *they stop hiring people now* to save the money for later tax increases.

Democrat Barney Frank admits his role in causing the recession

October 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, watch this video of Barney Frank obstructing regulators and defending Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. (H/T Verum Serum)

Now look at this Boston Globe article.

Excerpt:

> When US Representative Barney Frank spoke in a packed hearing room on Capitol Hill seven years ago, he did not imagine that his words would eventually haunt a reelection bid.
>
> The issue that day in 2003 was whether mortgage backers Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were fiscally strong. Frank declared with his trademark confidence that they were, accusing critics and regulators of exaggerating threats to Fannie's and Freddie's financial integrity. And, the Massachusetts Democrat maintained, "even if there were problems, the federal government doesn't bail them out.''
>
> Now, it's clear he was wrong on both points — and that his words have become a political liability as he fights a determined challenger to win a 16th term representing the Fourth Congressional District. Fannie and Freddie collapsed in 2008, forcing the federal government to buy $150 billion worth of stock in the enterprises and $1.36 trillion worth of mortgage-backed securities.
>
> Frank, in his most detailed explanation to date about his actions, said in an interview he missed the warning signs because he was wearing ideological blinders. He said he had worried that Republican lawmakers and the Bush administration were going after Fannie and Freddie for their own ideological reasons and would curtail the lenders' mission of providing affordable housing.
>
> "I was late in seeing it, no question,'' Frank said about the lenders' descent into insolvency.

> Republican Sean Bielat, who is trying to unseat Frank, has been hammering away at him with a website titled "Retire Barney'' that features clips of Frank at the 2003 hearing and elsewhere. During debates this week, he called Frank "one of the leaders of the economic disaster'' because he supported Fannie and Freddie when they were taking the risks that led to their collapse.

You can watch Barney Frank debate Sean Bielat. Bielat is 35 years old, while Frank is 70 years old and looks sleepy.

I think Barney Frank is the most responsible for the recession

Here he is in 2005 claiming that fears of a housing bubble are unfounded.

Here's the timeline showing who wanted to regulate Fannie and Freddie, and who blocked regulation.

Here's video from a hearing showing Democrats opposing regulations:

That's right – Republicans wanted to regulate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and Democrats said Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are "doing a tremendous job".

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac had paid the Democrats off handsomely during multiple election cycles, but I'm sure that the Democrats' opposition to regulations had nothing to do with those political contributions.

Here's Barney Frank endorsing Obamacare's public option as a way to reach single-payer health care.

Audio from debate between Alan Shlemon and Cecili Chadwick

October 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate was posted by Brian Auten. His website, Apologetics 315, is the best apologetics web site on the web.

The MP3 file is here. (50 minutes)

Pro-life debater Alan Shlemon opening speech:

- if the unborn entity is a living human being, then abortion is wrong
- unborn children are alive
- unborn children are different and distinct from the mother
- unborn children are *human* beings
- video: shows what an aborted unborn child looks like
- differences in size between born and unborn children do not affect moral value
- differences in level of development between born and unborn children do not affect moral value
- differences in location between born and unborn children do not affect moral value
- differences in dependence between born and unborn children do not affect moral value
- therefore, abortion takes the life of an innocent human being

Pro-abortion debater Cecili Chadwick opening speech:

- just because I want abortion to be legal doesn't mean that I want abortions to happen
- abortion should be legal and taxpayer-funded but I hope that not too many happen
- prior to birth a woman and her unborn baby are actually just the woman – there is no baby
- *she actually concedes that a foetus is a living human being (seriously)*
- a born person has more value than an unborn person, but I can't really say why that is
- a lot fewer abortions would happen if abortion were illegal, so we should keep it legal
- here are some sad anecdotes that are extremely rare, therefore abortion should be legal through all 9 months
- abortion is a private issue, therefore abortion should be legal through all 9 months
- abortion is a personal issue, therefore abortion should be legal through all 9 months
- abortion is a complex issue, therefore abortion should be legal through all 9 months
- it's legal to kill in self-defense against an armed attacker, therefore abortion should be legal through all 9 months

I just paraphrased her based on my interpretation of what she said, because I am snarky. She didn’t say that stuff verbatim. I took the spin off of it.

Why does the news media exaggerate some scientific discoveries?

October 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What does it take for a planet to be habitable by complex life?

Excerpt:

> Complex life in particular probably needs many of the things that we Earthlings enjoy: a rocky terrestrial planet similar in size and composition to the Earth, with plate tectonics to recycle nutrients, and the right kind of atmosphere; a large, well placed moon to contribute to tides and stabilize the tilt of the planet's axis. That planet needs to be just the right distance from the right kind of single star, in a nearly circular orbit–to maintain liquid water on its surface.
>
> It also needs a home within a stable planetary system that includes some outlying giant planets to protect the inner system from too many deadly comet impacts. That planetary system must be nestled in a safe neighborhood in the right kind of galaxy, with enough heavy elements to build terrestrial planets. And that planet will need to form during the narrow habitable window of cosmic history. (This is to say nothing of having a universe with a fine-tuned set of physical laws to make stars, planets, and people possible in the first place. But that's another long and complicated story.)

That's a tall order and it's not even an exhaustive list of all the requirements.

Now keeping that list in mind, Christian apologist Peter Williams explains how the latest discovery of an exoplanet that might support life was presented to the media by the excited scientists.

Excerpt:

> Nasa scientist and Nobel laureate in physics John Mather's recent comment about 'Earth-like' planets was rather timely. Mather said: 'We know there are earth-like planets out there, but what we don't know is whether any of them are capable of supporting life.' Well, Nasa have announced that: "If confirmed, [Gliese 581g] would be the most Earth-like exoplanet yet discovered and the first strong case for a potentially habitable one."
>
> Thus far we have an *unconfirmed* report that Gliese 581g *might* be rocky (since it may be too small to be a gas giant – although the mass given is a *minimum* figure) and that it seems to be in the right 'goldilocks' temperature zone for liquid water – that's *if* there is any water there and *if* the atmosphere is of the right composition!
>
> Of course, the phrase 'Earth-like' is being used with some lattitude here: the gravity on Gliese 581g is higher than on earth (because its about three to four

> times the size of Earth). Moreover, the planet is 'tidally locked', meaning it doesn't rotate (i.e. no seasons). This probably means that there's only a narrow 'twilight zone' of the planet that's even potentially habitable; assuming, of course, that the atmosphere (if it even has one) hasn't frozen out over time to the night side of the planet!
>
> At most (it's hard to extrapolate here), this discovery *may* indicate that rocky planets in the habitable zone of stars aren't all that rare; but consider this interesting passage from The Hiffington Post article on the discovery:
>
> 'Vogt and Butler ran some calculations, with giant fudge factors built in, and figured that as much as one out of five to 10 stars in the universe have planets that are Earth-sized and in the habitable zone. With an estimated 200 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy, that means maybe 40 billion planets that have the potential for life, Vogt said. However, Ohio State University's Scott Gaudi cautioned that is too speculative about how common these planets are.'
>
> There's more to habitability – let alone the origin of life – than a chunk of rock at the right temperature!

This is Peter Pan science. They believe what they want to believe.

Many people want to believe that we are nothing special simplifying the world so that they don't have to worry that maybe, somehow, they were created for a relationship with a cosmic Creator and Designer. Because if that were true,then they might not be free to just do whatever they want without any moral rules in order to make themselves happy. What they really want is to have all the benefits of being created by a loving God, without any of the responsibilities. They like sex, but they don't like being told how to use it. So they jump at any news story that breaks down the evidence for a Creator/Designer. And they praise moral evil to the skies in order while bashing moral good down, in order to obliterate any vestiges of the idea that there might be any way that they ought to act. They don't want to be accountable to God. They don't want moral obligations.

Now look at the latest news from the New Scientist.

Excerpt:

> Last month, a team of astronomers announced the discovery of the first alien world that could host life on its surface. Now a second team can find no evidence of the planet, casting doubt on its existence.
>
> The planet, dubbed Gliese 581 g, was found to orbit a dim, red dwarf star every 37 days, according to an analysis by Steven Vogt of the University of California, Santa Cruz, Paul Butler of the Carnegie Institution of Washington in DC, and their colleagues.
>
> Unlike the four previously known planets in the same system and hundreds of others found throughout the Milky Way galaxy, Gliese 581 g sits in the middle of its host star's habitable zone, where temperatures are in the right range for liquid water to exist. It is also puny enough – weighing about three Earths – to have

> what is likely a rocky, solid surface.
>
> But it might be too early to claim a definitive detection. A second team of astronomers have looked for signals of Gliese 581 g in their own data and failed to find it.
>
> “We easily recover the four previously announced planets, “b”, “c”, “d”, and “e”. However, we do not see any evidence for a fifth planet in an orbit of 37 days,” says Francesco Pepe of the Geneva Observatory in Switzerland. He presented the results on Monday at an International Astronomical Union symposium in Turin, Italy.

They wanted to believe we were cosmic accidents. Did they distort their data to prove what they wanted to believe? Like hiding the decline to “prove” that capitalism is evil?

We have to be careful about what some educated academic people want. Some educated academic people are sufficiently wealthy and powerful that they can avoid being hurt by most other people. So what they want is to pursue pleasure without being limited by moral rules. So they want to break them down because they view them as “speed bumps” on the road to pleasure in this life. Whatever they say has to be interpreted in light of this desire to get free from moral obligations and moral judgments by you and by your children. They want to normalize the idea that selfishness that causes damage to others is morally neutral. The breakdown of moral realism is what is behind many fads like Dan Brown, sex education, moral relativism, etc.

My previous article on what it takes to make a planet that is habitable by complex life.

Is it possible that foreign aid can actually do more harm than good?

October 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A really good read by Stuart Schneiderman.

Excerpt:

> …if you send boatloads of food to feed the world's hungry, you are going to feel very good about yourself, but you are also going to destroy local agriculture.
>
> No one can compete with "free."
>
> Gratifying your philanthropic urges can easily create a cycle of dependence, one that saps initiative, self-respect, and demeans individuals.
>
> Keep in mind, no matter who begins these foundations, and no matter whose name is on the door, ultimately they will be run by people who are in the business of philanthropy, and that means, people who have made it their life's work.
>
> These people are not champions of the free market; they are not especially interested in building businesses. They are interested in assuaging guilt, their own or someone else's, by giving away money.
>
> These charities will be promoting liberal and progressive causes; they will become advocacy organizations. They will not be promoting capitalism.
>
> It is a good thing to fund education. It makes you feel good to fund education. Except that the problem with education has very little to do with money.
>
> Education is a system that has been run by liberals and progressives, with precious little interference from moderates and conservatives. More and more it has devoted itself to inculcating the values associated with political correctness and self-esteemism, rather than teaching children.
>
> All the world's money is not going to change that.
>
> It's one thing to give money to the poor and the indigent. Religions have always done as much. It's quite another to create a special class of people who can promote their own ideology under cover of philanthropy.

When I give to charity, it is usually for specific speakers and conferences that my friends organize at universities and churches. I don't believe in giving money to organizations like United Way and Amnesty International. I do not think it is a good idea to give money to left wing groups who view the poor as victims instead of as potential allies. I like foreign investments, free trade and micro loan programs, though.

What’s the difference between conservatives and liberals?

October 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, you’d say what Bill Whittle says about conservatives in these two videos. (H/T ECM)

1) Conservatives value limited government and free enterprise

If you like having a choice when you go shopping or if you like having a job, then you’re a conservative. If you like collecting welfare, and preventing people from choosing better schools for their children, then you’re a progressive/liberal/socialist/communist.

2) Conservatives value individual choices over government control

If you think that you know best how to run your own life, then you’re a conservative. If you think that the government should run your life for you, then you’re a progressive/liberal/socialist/communist.

What do conservatives look like?

Here’s my favorite conservative, Representative Michele Bachmann:

This is what conservatives look like and sound like. Are you one?

Neil Simpson’s report on his recent prison ministry event

October 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is Neil’s post at 4Simpsons.

Introduction:

> The Kairos prison ministry weekend went really well. As always, it was exhausting and amazing. This is probably my favorite ministry. I’ve never seen anything that has such broad and dramatic impacts on so many lives. I’ll share a little background, then a few observations. If you want more background on the ministry there is additional information at the bottom.
>
> **Overview of the ministry:** It is an opportunity to share the Gospel with those who aren’t believers (No one is pressured, though). Many of the participants are already Christians, so it is a great opportunity to fellowship with and encourage them. And it is just an all-around way to share God’s love with people who are often depressed and forgotten. It is educational in laying out Christian principles for living and creating a Christian community wherever they are. It helps teach them how to love and forgive others (and themselves).[image] It has a dramatic impact on recidivism, which means less victims and lower costs for society.
>
> Kairos doesn’t advocate for either the prisoners or for the criminal justice system. A transaction took place between the state and the prisoner. The prisoners did the crime and are now doing the time, so we don’t get in the middle of that. We just reach out with Christian love to all and with Christian fellowship to believers. We try to show that they aren’t forgotten.
>
> There is also a Kairos Outside program for the moms / wives / daughters of the prisoners. It is completely free, including transportation to the event and childcare if necessary.

Then he has a list of exciting things that happened while he was ministering to the prisoners.

Here’s an excerpt from the list:

- A prisoner at the closing ceremony told everyone to go home and tell *and show* your kids that you love them. A few of the inmates came from solid homes, but most did not.
- Another interesting moment at the closing ceremony: One guy asked how many people were raised going to church. Lots of hands went up. Then he asked how many were taught the Bible *at home*. Most hands went down. See Ephesians 6:4, Christians! We need to teach this to our kids ourselves. What they learn at church is just a bonus.

- One guy noted how he thought love was just something in books and movies, and that he never experienced it until this weekend.
- The birthday cakes and cards brought a lot of tears, especially by some who never had them growing up.

Everyone always wonders why I put so much emphasis on marriage and parenting in my posts. It’s because we really need to stop this idea that marriage is something we get into for fun. Relationships with the opposite sex are NOT primarily about fun, (for Christians). You are trying to create a stable environment in which to raise new disciples who will have an impact for Christ, and you are trying to pick a person who you can love self-sacrificially in close quarters without feeling used or burned out. When marriages don’t stay together, then the kids are raised without both parents (usually without a father) and things go badly for the children.

What is the goal of parenting?

October 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Wes Widner at Reason to Stand.

Excerpt:

> What is the goal of parenthood?
>
> Before we explore what it is, let's dispel some myths of what it is not.
>
> The goal of parenthood is not to…
>
> - make kids feel good about themselves
> - relive our childhood
> - fix parents mistakes
> - keep them from pain
>
> While some of these things are otherwise good goals, they are accidental to the true goal of parenting.
>
> Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.
>
> Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.
>
> Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
>
> **And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.**
> –*Deuteronomy 6:1-9*
>
> Simply put, the goal of parenting is to *produce disciples*.
>
> Disciples of what? Disciples of *our lives*.

Bolding is mine. This is called the shema, by the way, a verse that is sacred to the Jewish people. You cannot understand Judaism without this verse.

When I think about marriage, one of the "design scenarios" that I think of is what sort of children will the marriage produce. In fact, this the main scenario that I use for spouse

evaluation. I consider the person’s ability to satisfy the requirements of raising children who will know the Lord. It’s very hard to do because I tend to focus on things like politics and apologetics. But a lot of the problem is just finding someone who cares about other people and is willing to invest in relationships instead of wanting to have fun, fun, fun all the time with friends at parties, dances and gatherings. Someone who cares about what other people believe, and who is willing to invest in them and help them along.

Health care reform blamed for huge hikes in premiums

October 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From NBC Connecticut. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The state has given Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield the go ahead to raise premiums by as much as 47 percent for some members, and says health care reform is the reason why.
>
> Attorney General Richard Blumenthal sent a letter to Insurance Commissioner Thomas Sullivan on Oct. 6, asking what he called "excessive" increases were approved without full consideration of all the facts. His letter mentioned rate increases for both Anthem and Aetna.
>
> The new rates took effect Oct. 1, and include increases from 19 percent all the way to 47 percent depending on the individual, the Hartford Courant reported.
>
> Sullivan responded to Blumenthal saying the new rates included "very rich benefits" mandated by federal law.
>
> "There is not one person in the state of Connecticut who will see an increase in their current premiums based on what the department approved for Anthem and Aetna," Sullivan said in a release. "The rates that were filed and approved reflect the current cost to deliver care and the impact of more comprehensive benefit designs required under the federal healthcare reform law. If the attorney general wants to complain to someone, he should complain to Congress."

Indeed. We should all be complaining to Congress in November.

China church leaders blocked from attending Lausanne Congress

October 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Christian Today. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> China's government is preventing Christian leaders in the country from attending a major international gathering of mission-minded leaders by stopping them as they reach the airport and confiscating their passports.
>
> While it is unclear how many Chinese Christian leaders have been stopped so far, more than 230 were invited to go to the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation in Cape Town, South Africa.
>
> On Sunday, five members of China's "underground" church in Beijing were blocked from leaving the country from Beijing International Airport and at least one was detained.
>
> Liu Guan, one of the five, told Hong Kong-based newspaper Ming Pao News that border inspectors refused to let them go through after seeing information about the Lausanne Congress on their passport visas. Shortly after, five or six government security officers arrived along with other authorities who seized their luggage and confiscated their passports.
>
> Though Liu reported that the law enforcement officers were polite and that there were no conflicts between the two sides, he was not allowed to board the plane and was sent home about three hours later. Liu's passport and those of his colleagues will not be returned to them until October 25 – the last day of the Lausanne Congress.
>
> In another report, Texas-based ChinaAid Association said one house church Christian was blocked from flying out of Shanghai International Airport, though another was cleared and is en route to South Africa.
>
> According to the Christian persecution watchdog group, which has been monitoring the situation closely, around 1,000 law enforcement officers have been assigned to restrain would-be Lausanne delegates from China and prevent them from boarding the planes.
>
> According to ChinaAid sources, all of the 200 or so house church representatives who were invited to attend the Lausanne Congress – whether Uyghur Christians from Xinjiang or Han Christians from Beijing – have been contacted by authorities for questioning.

Religious liberty is not a guaranteed right in many parts of the world. The main Lausanne Congress web site is here.

Can government spend tax money more efficiently than you can?

October 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a scary article from The American Spectator. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Social Security Administration sent out $250 checks — $18 million in all — to 72,000 dead people.
>
> Alan Hevesi, former Controller for New York State, who was the sole trustee for the state's large public pension fund, pled guilty to a charge of receiving $1 million in gifts and contributions from a money manager for steering $250 million of investments his way.
>
> California, all but bankrupt, reported that last year it spent $467 million in taxpayer funds on scholarships to students at four-year colleges who failed to return for a second year.
>
> The U.S. Postal Service, losing millions of dollars a month, has been giving cushy, non-bid contracts to former USPS executives. The USPS Inspector General found 17 of these contracts were given to former postal executives within a year of their retirement. One person received a no-bid $260,000 "knowledge transfer" contract. The IG reported, "These contracts were put in place even though highly experienced postal executives filled the positions vacated by the former executives."
>
> […]Seventy-three people, led by a man who lived in the former Soviet Union, were rounded up for defrauding Medicare of $35 million-plus through phony clinics and stolen doctor and patient identities. This coast-to-coast crime ring gave their invented clinics P.O. box addresses and filed fake claims. Medicare fell for it.
>
> […]Thousands of Medicaid recipients in California were given debit cards with which to buy food. Instead, more than a few of them hied themselves to Las Vegas and ran up gambling losses on the debit cards. This brings to mind the periodic revelations in Washington that credit cards issued by federal government agencies have been used for – surprise — vacations, jewelry, expensive dinners, etc.

This is why conservatives value limited government. We taxpayers are paying these bureaucrats to waste our money. The private sector is a lot less corrupt and inefficient – the money needs to stay there.

Boeing announces higher health care premiums for 90,000 workers

October 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Chicago Tribune.

Excerpt:

> Aerospace giant Boeing is joining the list of companies that say the new health care law could have a potential downside for their workers.
>
> In a letter mailed to employees late last week, the company cited the overhaul as part of the reason it is asking some 90,000 nonunion workers to pay significantly more for their health plan next year. A copy of the letter was obtained Monday by The Associated Press.
>
> "The newly enacted health care reform legislation, while intended to expand access to care for millions of uninsured Americans, is also adding cost pressure as requirements of the new law are phased in over the next several years," wrote Rick Stephens, Boeing's senior vice president for human resources.
>
> […]Spokeswoman Karen Forte said the Boeing plan is more generous than what its closest competitors offer, and the company was concerned it would get hit with a new tax under the law.
>
> The tax on so-called "Cadillac" health plans doesn't take effect until 2018, but employers are already beginning to assess their exposure because it is hefty: at 40 percent of the value above $10,200 for individual coverage and $27,500 for a family plan.
>
> […]Boeing said annual deductibles and copayments will increase for all its plans next year.
>
> Deductibles, the share of medical costs that employees pay annually before their plan kicks in, will go up to $300 for individuals, an increase of $100. For families, the new deductible will be $900, an increase of $300.
>
> In addition, Boeing is instituting a copayment of 10 percent after the deductible has been met. The copayment will rise to 20 percent in 2012.

You can read more about companies affected by Obamacare here.

What should a Roman Catholic think about naturalism and evolution?

October 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Charles Pope on the Archdiocese of Washington web site. (H/T Joe Carter on First Things)

Excerpt:

> It is common to experience a rather simplistic notion among Catholics that the Theory of Evolution can be reconciled easily with the Biblical accounts and with our faith. Many will say something like this: "I have no problem with God setting things up so that we started as one-celled organisms and slowly evolved into being human beings. God could do this and perhaps the Genesis account is just simplifying evolution and telling us the same thing as what Evolution does."
>
> There are elements of the truth in this sort of a statement. Surely God could have set things up to evolve and directed the process so that human beings evolved and then, at some time he gave us souls. God could have done that.
>
> The problem with the statement above is less theological than scientific because there is a word in that sentence that is "obnoxious" to evolutionary theory: "God." The fact is that most Catholics who speak like this over-simplify evolutionary theory and hold a version of it that most Evolutionary Theorists do not hold. They accept the Theory of Evolution uncritically.

Yeah, because what evolutionists mean by "evolution" is that *GOD HAD NO DETECTABLE EFFECT ON THE PROCESS.* They mean that *THE PROCESS OF EVOLUTION OCCURRED ENTIRELY WITHOUT DIVINE INTERVENTION.* That's what evolution means – fully materialistic, fully random, no intelligence needed, emergence of all the diversity of life we see.

> Now what this means is that God is excluded as a cause by evolutionary theory. It would be fine if evolutionists (as natural scientists) were either silent on the question of God. Or, perhaps if they simply stated that things may be acted upon by an outside force or intelligence but that is beyond the scope of their discipline. But that is not what is being said by most proponents of evolutionary theory. They are saying that biodiversity results *MERELY* from natural selection and random (i.e. non intended or non-purposeful) genetic mutations. They are saying that observable effects of biodiversity are wholly caused by something natural, random and without any ultimate goal or plan.
>
> But a Catholic cannot accept all of this. Even if a Catholic wants to accept that things have evolved in some way (whether through macro or microevolution) a Catholic cannot say that this process is simply random, chance, blind, or with no purpose. We believe that God alone created all things, and that he sustains all things. Neither do we confess some sort of "deist" God who merely started things

> off and then lets them take their own course. Rather, God sustains and carries out every detail.

Joe Carter adds:

> In my experience, most people haven't considered the issue of how the theological and scientific claims can be compatible. For instance, to be a "theistic evolutionist" in the sense that modern scient will accept, requires one to adhere to polygensism (the theory that Adam was not one historical man but, rather, a euphemism for "mankind"). That position, however, is not compatible with the teachings of the Bible, the Church, or of Jesus.

The dividing line between theists and non-theists is as follows: *did God act in history in a way that his creative agency and intelligent agency is discernable to us using the objective methods of science?* Atheists (and theistic evolutionists) say that God's creative agency and intelligent (selection/sequencing) agency is neither necessary to explain what we observe in the universe, nor are the effects of agency detectable through science. Theists (and deists) say that God's creative agency and intelligent agency is necessary in order to explain what we observe in the universe, and these effects of agency are detectable through science.

That is the dividing line. I don't how I could be much clearer.

Democrats get TWICE the amount of foreign contributions as Republicans

October 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama has been complaining lately about Republicans receiving foreign money! Scary, I know.

The Hill explains who really gets the most money from foreign donors. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Democratic leaders in the House and Senate criticizing GOP groups for allegedly funneling foreign money into campaign ads have seen their party raise more than $1 million from political action committees affiliated with foreign companies.
>
> House and Senate Democrats have received approximately $1.02 million this cycle from such PACs, according to an analysis compiled for The Hill by the Center for Responsive Politics. House and Senate GOP leaders have taken almost $510,000 from PACs on the same list.
>
> […]"Barack Obama criticized the Supreme Court and his adversaries over the bogus charge of foreign money tainting elections – while leaders in his own party had taken more than a million dollars from the foreign cookie jar," said Jonathan Collegio, a spokesman for American Crossroads, the political group at the center of the controversy.
>
> "The hypocrisy here is just stunning," he said.

Now is it illegal to get donations from "foreign donors"? No – the money comes from American employees of foreign corporations. But Obama is a hypocrite for making it sound so scary and ominous when his party collects twice as much as the party he is vilifying.

What are galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones?

October 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Circumstellar Habitable Zone (CHZ)

What do you need in order to have a planet that supports complex life? First, you need liquid water at the surface of the planet. But there is only a narrow range of temperatures that can support liquid water. It turns out that the size of the star that your planet orbits around has a lot to do with whether you get liquid water or not. A heavy, metal-rich star allows you to have a habitable planet far enough from the star so the planet can support liquid water on the planet's surface while still being able to spin on its axis. The zone where a planet can have liquid water at the surface is called the circumstellar habitable zone (CHZ). A metal-rich star like our Sun is very massive, which moves the habitable zone out further away from the star. If our star were smaller, we would have to orbit much closer to the star in order to have liquid water at the surface. Unfortunately, if you go too close to the star, then your planet becomes tidally locked, like the moon is tidally locked to Earth. Tidally locked planets are inhospitable to life.

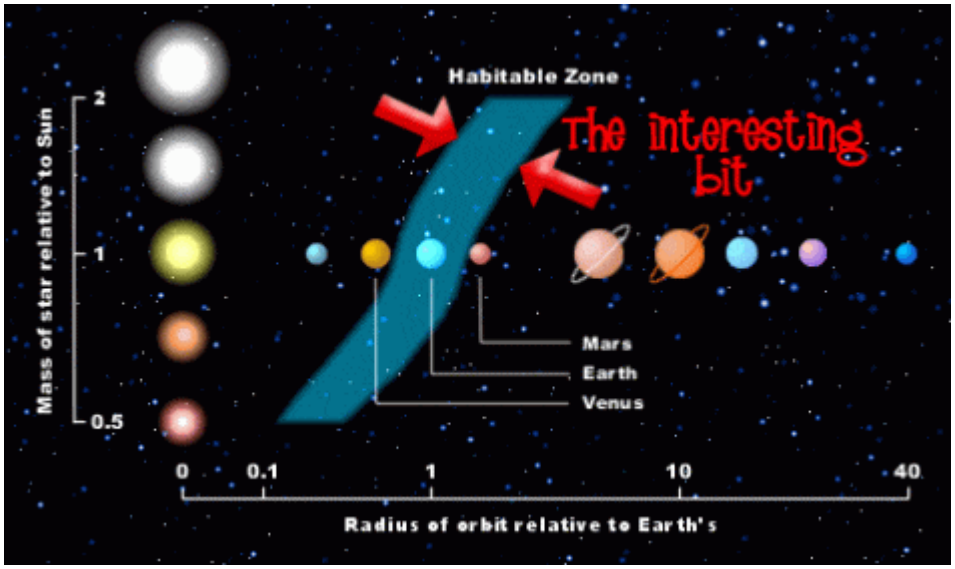

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

Here, watch a clip from The Privileged Planet: (Clip 4 of 12, full playlist here)

But there's more.

The Galactic Habitable Zone (GHZ)

So, where do you get the heavy elements you need for your heavy metal-rich star?

You have to get the heavy elements for your star from supernova explosions – explosions that occur when certain types of stars die. That's where heavy elements come from. But you can't be TOO CLOSE to the dying stars, because you will get hit by nasty radiation and explosions. So to get the heavy elements from the dying stars, your solar system needs to be in the galactic habitable zone (GHZ) – the zone where you can pickup the heavy elements you need but not get hit by radiation and explosions. The GHZ lies

between the spiral arms of a spiral galaxy. Not only do you have to be in between the arms of the spiral galaxy, but you also cannot be too close to the center of the galaxy. The center of the galaxy is too dense and you will get hit with massive radiation that will break down your life chemistry. But you also can't be too far from the center, because you won't get enough heavy elements because there are fewer dying stars the further out you go. You need to be in between the spiral arms, a medium distance from the center of the galaxy.

Like this:

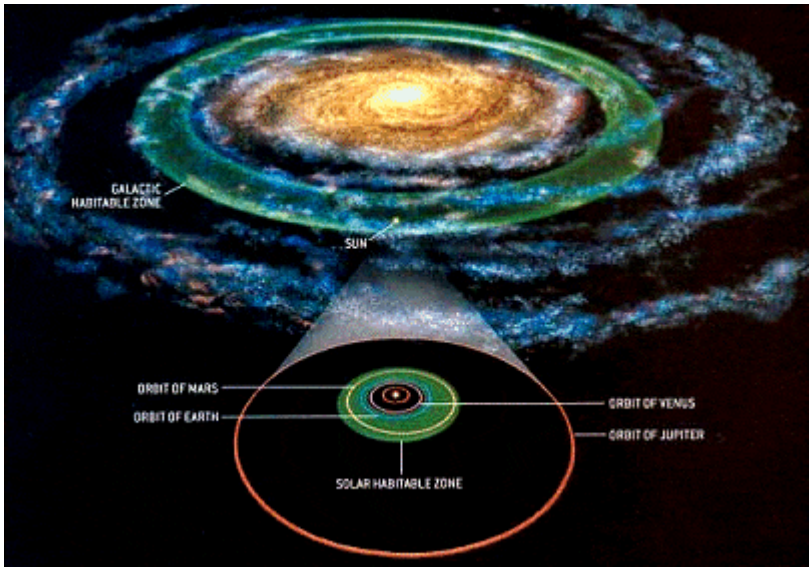

Galactic Habitable Zone and Solar Habitable Zone

Here, watch a clip from The Privileged Planet: (Clip 10 of 12, full playlist here)

The GHZ is based on a discovery made by astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez, which made the front cover of Scientific American in 2001. That's right, the cover of Scientific American. I actually stole the image above of the GHZ and CHZ (aka solar habitable zone) from his Scientific American article (linked above).

These are just a few of the things you need in order to get a planet that supports life.

Here are a few of the more well-known ones:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.

- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

By the way, you can watch a lecture with Guillermo Gonzalez explaining his ideas further. This lecture was delivered at UC Davis in 2007. That link has a link to the playlist of the lecture, a bio of the speaker, and a summary of all the topics he discussed in the lecture. An excellent place to learn the requirements for a suitable habitat for life.

In France, unionized thugs riot against maturity and responsibility

October 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story about the public sector union riots in France from Bloomberg News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> French refineries remained shut, trains were on half service, schools closed and gas stations ran dry as unions held their fourth strike in two months against President Nicolas Sarkozy's plan to raise the retirement age.
>
> Sarkozy has refused to retreat from a proposal to increase the retirement age for a full pension to 67 from 65. His plan would bring France closer to Germany and the U.S., which are moving toward setting 67 as the full-retirement age, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
>
> The French Senate is set to vote on the pension measure this week, giving final parliamentary approval to a plan to eliminate the retirement-system deficit by 2018.
>
> "This reform had been postponed for too long and the deadline couldn't be push further anymore," Sarkozy said at a press conference in Deauville, France. "I hope that everyone stays calm so that things don't go beyond certain limits. We cannot live without gasoline. I will see to it with the security forces that public order is guaranteed."
>
> Some protests turned violent, with youths today fighting police in the Paris suburb of Nanterre. In Lyon, some demonstrators broke shop windows and pillaged stores, L'Express magazine said on its website. Television reports showed snaking lines of drivers waiting to fill up on gas as about a quarter of the country's 12,000 service stations carried signs saying they'd run out of fuel.
>
> Government ministers said France has enough fuel to last several weeks and that they'll continue to use police to break up barricades at oil depots.
>
> […]France's 12 refineries have been on strike for a week, and no crude is arriving at the ports of Marseille, Le Havre and Nantes.
>
> […]Exxon Mobil Corp. declared "force majeure," in France, saying it will be unable to meet some of its oil supply obligations and that it has begun shutting down its Gravenchon refinery, the larger of its two oil-processors in the country.
>
> "A complete shutdown of the refinery is now under way," Catherine Brun, an Exxon spokeswoman in Paris, said by phone today. "We cannot deliver products out of tanks."
>
> Total SA, the country's biggest oil company, said a quarter of the 4,000 service stations it operates in France face shortages of one or more fuel products

> because of the strike.
>
> […]In France, the average retiree gets a net 65 percent of his average qualifying wage in government pension payouts, compared with 61.5 percent in Germany, 47 percent in the U.S. and 44 percent in Britain, according to the OECD.

I'm not sure why, but the word "extortion" pops into my mind. Or maybe I was thinking of "arrested development". What is it called when grown men and women refuse to grow up and take responsibility for their own lives and insist on receiving entitlements provided by their harder-working neighbors?

Could a public sector union pension crisis happen here in the USA? Well, consider this article from The Economist, a radically-left-wing pro-Obama magazine. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> CHUCK REED is the Democratic mayor of San Jose, California. You might expect him to be an ally of public-sector workers, a powerful lobby in the Golden State. But last month, at a hearing on pension reform held by the Little Hoover Commission, which monitors the state's government, Mr Reed lamented his crippling public-pensions bill. "City payments for retirement benefits have tripled over the last ten years even though our workforce has declined dramatically, and we have billions of dollars in unfunded liabilities that the taxpayers must pay," he said.
>
> Mr Reed estimated that the average cost to his city of employing a police officer or firefighter was $180,000 a year. Not only can such workers retire at 50, but some enjoy annual pension payments greater than their salaries. They are also entitled to cost-of-living increases of 3% a year, health and dental insurance for life and lump-sum payments for unused sick leave that could reach hundreds of thousands of dollars.
>
> Plenty of similar bills are looming in America's public sector: in municipalities, in the federal government, and especially at state level. Defined-benefit pensions, which link retirement income to salary, are expensive promises to keep. The private sector has been switching to defined-contribution plans, in which employees bear the investment risk. But the public sector has barely begun to adjust, and has built up a huge liability to its staff. Worse, it has not funded the promises properly.
>
> Joshua Rauh, of the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, and Robert Novy-Marx, of the University of Rochester, estimate that the states' pension shortfall may be as much as $3.4 trillion and that municipalities have a hole of $574 billion. Mr Rauh calculates that seven states will have exhausted their pension assets by 2020—even if they make a return of 8%, a common assumption that looks wildly optimistic. Half will run out of money by 2027. If pension promises are to be kept, this will place immense strain on taxes. Several have promised annual payments that will absorb more than 30% of their tax

> revenues after their pension funds are exhausted (see chart 1).
>
> Now the problem is making headlines, especially in California, where taxpayer groups have been highlighting the generous pensions of some former employees. More than 9,000 beneficiaries of CalPERS, the largest state retirement plan, receive more than $100,000 a year.
>
> The stage is set for conflict between public-sector workers and taxpayers. Because almost all states are required to balance their budgets, any extra pension contributions they make to mend a deficit will come at the expense of other citizens. Utah has calculated it will have to commit 10% of its general fund for 25 years to pay for the effects of the 2008 stockmarket crash. But attempts to reduce the cost of pensions are being challenged in court and will be opposed by trade unions, which still have plenty of members in the public sector.

It’s not good for people to go through life becoming more and more accustomed to bailouts and redistributed wealth from their neighbors. Everyone should have to earn their own money and provide for themselves during their own retirement years. It’s not good to be dependent on other people – it’s better to make your own way in the world, and to share with others who have less than you do.

Why school choice promotes good and restrains evil

October 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's see how tax credits that promote school choice help the poorest children to find a better way forward.

The Institute for Justice will be arguing the case before the Supreme Court.

Excerpt:

> On November 3, 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear the oral arguments in the case Garriot v. Winn. Arizona, like many states, offers tax credits to individuals and businesses for donations to fund scholarships for students to attend private schools. The goal of these programs is to give as many students as possible the resources they need to get a good education. The Dennard family has benefited from this program. Hear their story.

It's good to help poor children to avoid failing schools. In fact, the only people who are hurt by this are the teachers who are paid way too much and yet fail to perform because they are insulated from competitive pressures with no accountability to parents and students.

Should we be funneling money into public schools to pay teachers to fail to do their jobs for our kids?

Well, here an example of what unionized teachers do in public schools when parents aren't looking.

Excerpt:

> Three van loads of Hughes High students were taken last week – during school hours – to vote and given sample ballots only for Democratic candidates and then taken for ice cream, a Monday lawsuit alleges.
>
> The complaint was made by Thomas Brinkman Jr., a Republican candidate for Hamilton County auditor, and the Coalition Opposed to Additional Spending & Taxes against Cincinnati Public Schools.
>
> "They plan to bring four more high schools (to vote) this week," Christopher Finney, COAST attorney, said Monday after filing the suit.
>
> It seeks a temporary restraining order to prevent school officials from participating or helping students participate in partisan politics during school hours or with school property or employees involved.
>
> But the school district's lawyer denies any school connection.
>
> "No CPS personnel engaged in the promotion of candidates or any political party," CPS attorney Mark Stepaniak noted in a written release.

That's why we need to de-fund the Department of Education and force public schools to

compete with private schools, charter schools and homeschooling. Public schools are nothing but indoctrination camps for teaching impressionable young people to favor bigger government, which leads to higher salaries for their indoctrinators – the public school teachers and their greedy unions. The fact that these teachers can coerce children to agree with them using the power of the red marking pen makes me sick to my stomach.

We need to enact vouchers and make public schools compete, just like private business have to compete. The public school system is a worthless monopoly and it needs to be broken up right away.

Who is on the political left in America and what are their goals?

October 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams

From Investors Business Daily – economist Walter Williams explains the political left.

Excerpt:

> One of the greatest sources of confusion and deception is the difference between leftists, progressives, socialists, communists and fascists.
>
> I thought about this as I caught a glimpse of the Oct. 2 "One Nation" march on Washington.
>
> […]The gathering had the support of the AFL-CIO, Service Employees International Union, stalwarts of the Democratic Party such as Al Sharpton and organizations such as the NAACP, the National Council of La Raza, Green for All, the Sierra Club and the Children's Defense Fund.
>
> Let's look at some of the history of socialism and communism.
>
> Nazism is a form of socialism. In fact, Nazi stands for National Socialist German Workers' Party. Nazis murdered 20 million of their own people and in nations they captured.
>
> The unspeakable acts of Adolf Hitler's Socialist Workers' Party pale in comparison to the horrors committed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Between 1917 and 1987, Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin and their successors murdered, or were otherwise responsible for the deaths of, 62 million of their own people.
>
> Between 1949 and 1987, Mao Tse-tung and his successors were responsible for the deaths of 76 million Chinese. The most authoritative tally of history's most murderous regimes is in a book by University of Hawaii's Professor Rudolph J. Rummel, "Death by Government." A wealth of information is provided at his

> website.
>
> […]When Hitler, Stalin and Mao were campaigning for political power, you can bet they didn't campaign on the promise to murder millions of their own people, and probably the thought of doing so never crossed their minds. Those horrors were simply the end result of long evolution of ideas leading to consolidation of power in central government in the quest for "social justice."
>
> It was decent but misguided earlier generations of Germans, Russians and Chinese, like many of today's Americans, who would have cringed at the thought of genocide, who built the Trojan horse for a Hitler, a Stalin or Mao to take over.
>
> […]The primary goal of communism and socialism is government ownership or control over the means of production. In the U.S., only a few people call for outright government ownership of the means of production. They might have learned that government ownership would mess things up.
>
> Instead, they've increasingly called for quasi-ownership through various forms of government regulation, oversight, taxation and subsidies. After all, if someone has the power to tell you how you may use your property, it's tantamount to his owing it.

These are important things to understand about socialists/progressives/leftists/communists.

When you allow someone else to control the means by which you earn your living – by taxing you or by regulating your employer, for example – then you are giving up your freedom to earn your own money and to spend it as you see fit. Socialist dictators always get elected by people who have been duped into exchanging their liberty for the promise of "social justice" – equal life outcomes regardless of your free decisions. But the end is always the same – violence and poverty. To avoid mass murder, it makes sense to decentralize power over many individuals and businesses. And that's why conservatives favor the free market and limited government.

Republican Charles Lollar is challenging Steny Hoyer in Maryland

October 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Charles Lollar

Check out this story about Republican candidate Charles Lollar. (H/T The Other McCain)

Excerpt:

> You know the Democrats are in trouble when Steny Hoyer hits the airwaves in his campaign to retain his seat in Congress. Hoyer, whose seat was generously drawn for him by Maryland Senate President Mike Miller, usually uses his campaign largesse to benefit his Democratic Party colleagues with little thought of himself.
>
> That changed due to an aggressive campaign by first-time candidate Charles Lollar, who is making inroads into previous Hoyer strongholds in Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's counties.
>
> Lollar, who served in the Marine Corps, is taking the same no-nonsense approach to going after the previously unassailable Hoyer that has earned the U.S. Marine Corps worldwide respect and, yes, a little bit of fear.

More military Republicans are running for office these days.

Here's Allen West's new ad: (H/T The Other McCain)

Here's a rising star for you – young Josh Mandel from Ohio:

Something awesome about these patriots running for office.

Study finds that gay parents are more likely to raise gay kids

October 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new peer-reviewed study about gay parents raising gay kids in AOL News.

Excerpt:

> Walter Schumm knows what he's about to do is unpopular: publish a study arguing that gay parents are more likely to raise gay children than straight parents. But the Kansas State University family studies professor has a detailed analysis that past almost aggressively ideological researchers never had.
>
> […]His study on sexual orientation, out next month, says that gay and lesbian parents are far more likely to have children who become gay. "I'm trying to prove that it's not 100 percent genetic," Schumm tells AOL News.
>
> His study is a meta-analysis of existing work. First, Schumm extrapolated data from 10 books on gay parenting… [and] skewed his data so that only self-identified gay and lesbian children would be labeled as such.
>
> This is important because sometimes Schumm would come across a passage of children of gay parents who said they were "adamant about not declaring their sexual orientation at all." These people would be labeled straight, even though the passage's implication was that they were gay.
>
> Schumm concluded that children of lesbian parents identified themselves as gay 31 percent of the time; children of gay men had gay children 19 percent of the time, and children of a lesbian mother and gay father had at least one gay child 25 percent of the time.
>
> Furthermore, when the study restricted the results so that they included only children in their 20s — presumably after they'd been able to work out any adolescent confusion or experimentation — 58 percent of the children of lesbians called themselves gay, and 33 percent of the children of gay men called themselves gay. (About 5 to 10 percent of the children of straight parents call themselves gay, Schumm says.)
>
> Schumm next went macro, poring over an anthropological study of various cultures' acceptance of homosexuality. He found that when communities welcome gays and lesbians, "89 percent feature higher rates of homosexual behavior."
>
> Finally, Schumm looked at the existing academic studies… In all there are 26 such studies. Schumm ran the numbers from them and concluded that, surprisingly, 20 percent of the kids of gay parents were gay themselves. When children only 17 or older were included in the analysis, 28 percent were gay.

Here's the paper entitled "Children of homosexuals more apt to be homosexuals?". It appeared in the Journal of Biosocial Science.

Abstract:

> Ten narrative studies involving family histories of 262 children of gay fathers and lesbian mothers were evaluated statistically in response to Morrison's (2007) concerns about Cameron's (2006) research that had involved three narrative studies. Despite numerous attempts to bias the results in favour of the null hypothesis and allowing for up to 20 (of 63, 32%) coding errors, Cameron's (2006) hypothesis that gay and lesbian parents would be more likely to have gay, lesbian, bisexual or unsure (of sexual orientation) sons and daughters was confirmed. Percentages of children of gay and lesbian parents who adopted non-heterosexual identities ranged between 16% and 57%, with odds ratios of 1.7 to 12.1, depending on the mix of child and parent genders. Daughters of lesbian mothers were most likely (33% to 57%; odds ratios from 4.5 to 12.1) to report non-heterosexual identities. Data from ethnographic sources and from previous studies on gay and lesbian parenting were re-examined and found to support the hypothesis that social and parental influences may influence the expression of non-heterosexual identities and/or behaviour. Thus, evidence is presented from three different sources, contrary to most previous scientific opinion, even most previous scientific consensus, that suggests intergenerational transfer of sexual orientation can occur at statistically significant and substantial rates, especially for female parents or female children. In some analyses for sons, intergenerational transfer was not significant. Further research is needed with respect to pathways by which intergenerational transfer of sexual orientation may occur. The results confirm an evolving tendency among scholars to cite the possibility of some degree of intergenerational crossover of sexual orientation.

Comments to this post will be strictly filtered in accordance with Obama's law restricting speech on controversial topics.

Related posts

- Frank Turek lists ten alleged facts about same-sex marriage
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why do people oppose same-sex marriage?
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day

How should Christians reconcile their faith with politics?

October 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite book on Christianity and politics is "Politics According to the Bible", by Wayne Grudem. Dr. Grudem's B.A. is from Harvard University and his Ph.D is from Cambridge University, and he is probably the best theologian today. (Except for his horrible Calvinism, but I try to ignore that)

Here's a book review of Politics According to the Bible from Justin Taylor of Between Two Worlds.

Grudem's positions are usually conservative:

> I support political positions in this book that would be called more "conservative" than "liberal." That is because of my conclusions about the Bible's teaching on the role of government and a biblical worldview (see chaps. 3 and 4). It is important to understand that I see these positions as *flowing out of the Bible's teachings* rather than positions that I hold prior to, or independently of, those biblical teachings. And I do not hesitate to criticize Republican policies where I differ with them (for instance, in the endorsement of runaway government spending and the continual expansion of the federal government even under conservative Republican presidents). My primary purpose in the book is not to be liberal or conservative, or Democratic or Republican, but to explain a biblical worldview and a biblical perspective on issues of politics, law, and government. (p. 13)

And he recommends that Christians get involved in politics thoughtfully and persuasively:

> The "significant influence" view says that Christians *should* seek to influence civil government according to God's moral standards and God's purposes for government as revealed in the Bible (when rightly understood). But while Christians exercise this influence, they must simultaneously insist on protecting freedom of religion for all citizens. In addition, "significant influence" does not mean angry, belligerent, intolerant, judgmental, red-faced, and hate-filled influence, but rather winsome, kind, thoughtful, loving, persuasive influence that is suitable to each circumstance and that always protects the other person's right to disagree, but that is also uncompromising about the truthfulness and moral goodness of the teachings of God's Word. (p. 55)

You can find lots of wonderful lectures by Wayne Grudem on politics here. It's practical Christianity. Christianity… for MEN!

Sometimes I get very annoyed with church… but I never get tired of listening to these lectures every week.

Related posts

- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment
- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible
- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

Meet some of Obama's more radical female appointees

October 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michelle Malkin's latest column explains some of the left-wing radical extremist female czars that Obama has appointed.

Environmental czar Carol Browner:

> Browner is the neon green bureaucrat who sits on the board of the George Soros-funded, anti-business Center for American Progress and was listed by the Socialist International umbrella group as a member of the "Commission for a Sustainable World Society" until her czar appointment was announced in 2009. A ruthless, power-grabbing regulator since her days in the Clinton administration, Browner has spearheaded the Environmental Protection Agency's war on carbon, with EPA Secretary Lisa Jackson serving as her front-woman. Their anti-carbon agenda's job-killing effects are so alarming that several House Democrats have signed on to legislation curtailing the draconian greenhouse gas emissions rules.

> You want to talk about "mean"? Browner has plenty of "experience" bullying American business executives. She infamously told auto industry execs last year "to put nothing in writing, ever" regarding secret negotiations she orchestrated on a deal to increase federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards. She is salivating at the prospect of ramming through the massive, increasingly unpopular cap-and-tax plan in the lame-duck session. And more recently, she gained hands-on experience telling falsehoods to the American public about the BP oil spill. The independent presidential commission on the disaster criticized her earlier this month for repeatedly misrepresenting the findings of a federal analysis, which she claimed showed that "more than three-quarters of the oil is gone."

The rest of the article has more on:

- Jane Lubchenco, Obama's head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and a former high-ranking official at the left-wing Environmental Defense Fund
- Pro-abortion zealot and Obamacare enforcer Kathleen Sebelius, head of the Department of Health and Human Services
- Valerie Jarrett (the recruiter of communist and former green czar Van Jones)
- Anita Dunn (the admirer of Mao Tse-Tung)

Not to mention radically left-wing judges.

And he's made plenty of radical extremist appointments of males as well – Van Jones, Kevin Jennings, John Holdren, etc.

Jennifer Roback Morse debates feminism with abortion radical

October 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

She's the William Lane Craig of domestic policy!

Here's the main debate page.

Details:

Topic: Are We Getting It Right? The State of Women and Gender Studies

Jennifer Roback Morse
Senior Research Fellow, Acton Institute

Amy Richards
Author

University of Virginia, Newcomb Ballroom
3/14/2007

The video and audio are available on the debate page.

The MP3 file is here.

I have to admit, I skipped the silly feminist's speeches – which is something I almost NEVER do, except for Dan Barker debates. But I listened to Dr. J's speeches and they were awesome! I am telling all my male readers – listen: DOWNLOAD AND LISTEN TO THIS DEBATE. Jennifer Roback Morse is just awesome for men to listen to. Honestly, I think she's even more fun to listen to than Michele Bachmann.

I did listen to both speakers during the Q&A.

About her opponent Amy Richards

Hey, look at this radically-leftist pro-abortion New York Times article about Dr. J's opponent.

Excerpt:

> My boyfriend, Peter, and I have been together three years.
>
> […]I found out I was having triplets when I went to my obstetrician.
>
> […]My immediate response was, I cannot have triplets. I was not married; I lived in a five-story walk-up in the East Village; I worked freelance; and I would have to go on bed rest in March. I lecture at colleges, and my biggest months are March and April. I would have to give up my main income for the rest of the year. There was a part of me that was sure I could work around that. But it was a matter of, Do I want to?
>
> I looked at Peter and asked the doctor: "Is it possible to get rid of one of them? Or two of them?" The obstetrician wasn't an expert in selective reduction, but she knew that with a shot of potassium chloride you could eliminate one or more.

> And I had this adverse reaction: ”This is why they say it’s the woman’s choice, because you think I could just carry triplets. That’s easy for you to say, but I’d have to give up my life.” Not only would I have to be on bed rest at 20 weeks, I wouldn’t be able to fly after 15. I was already at eight weeks. When I found out about the triplets, I felt like: It’s not the back of a pickup at 16, but now I’m going to have to move to Staten Island. I’ll never leave my house because I’ll have to care for these children. I’ll have to start shopping only at Costco and buying big jars of mayonnaise. Even in my moments of thinking about having three, I don’t think that deep down I was ever considering it.

Wow – hard-core feminist! But no match for Dr. J.

New Jersey turnpike wasted millions on perks

October 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox New York.

Excerpt:

> Auditors say the New Jersey Turnpike Authority wasted $43 million on unneeded perks and bonuses. In one case, an employee with a base salary of $73,469 earned $321,985 when all payouts and bonuses were included.
>
> The audit says that toll dollars From the New Jersey Turnpike and the Garden State Parkway were spent on items ranging from an employee bowling league to employee bonuses for working on birthdays and holidays.
>
> It took place as tolls were being increased.
>
> The biggest expense uncovered in the audit was $30 million in unjustified bonuses to employees and management in 2008 and 2009 without consideration of performance.
>
> One example was paying employees overtime for removing snow and working holidays and then giving additional "snow removal bonuses" and "holiday bonuses."
>
> The Comptroller's Office audit released Tuesday says taxpayers also paid $430,000 for free E-ZPass transponders for employees to get to work and nearly $90,000 in scholarships for workers' kids.
>
> The audit shows turnpike authority employees got bonuses and overtime for working their birthdays and holidays.
>
> Comptroller Matt Boxer says tolls are set for another increase in 2012.
>
> […]Another audit finding was that employees were allowed to cash out a portion of their unused sick and vacation days at the end of the year to circumvent the current $15,000 limit for sick leave payouts upon retirement. That cost $3.8 million a year.

New Jersey is a hard blue state. Deep, deep blue.

If a private company did something crazy wasting money like this, they would be out of business because their prices would be higher when compared to their competitors. That's why government is inefficient and wasteful – *it has no competitors*. We need to keep everything possible in the private sector and have transparency, accountability and whistleblower protections to contain government corruption and fraud.

Left-wing NPR should lose all government funding for firing Juan Williams

October 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This 10-minute segment about NPR's firing of Juan Williams is a MUST-SEE.

The CEO of NPR (Vivian Schiller) is a radical leftist. She even worked for the New York Times – the most radically left-wing newspaper in the entire nation.

Look, I love to watch Juan Williams. Sure he's a lefty, and he says some crazy things sometimes, but he's a great guy and a good journalist. Conservatives ought to go to the mat for Juan Williams because he has always been willing to come on Fox News and mix it up with people on the other side of the aisle – that makes him a stand-up guy in my book. NPR should be ashamed. And they should not be funded by the government if they are only going to present left-wing views. If they want to be Air America The Sequel, then let them do it with their own money, until they go bankrupt.

Sarah Palin calls for NPR to lose all government funding

Here's what Sarah Palin said about Juan Williams' firing. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> At a time when our country is dangerously in debt and looking for areas of federal spending to cut, I think we've found a good candidate for defunding. National Public Radio is a public institution that directly or indirectly exists because the taxpayers fund it. And what do we, the taxpayers, get for this? We get to witness Juan Williams being fired from NPR for merely speaking frankly about the very real threat this country faces from radical Islam.
>
> We have to have an honest discussion about the jihadist threat. Are we not allowed to say that Muslim terrorists have killed thousands of Americans and continue to plot the deaths of thousands more? Are we not allowed to say that there are Muslim states that aid and abet these fanatics? Are we not allowed to even debate the role that radical Islam plays in inciting this violence?
>
> I don't expect Juan Williams to support me (he's said some tough things about me in the past) – but I will always support his right and the right of all Americans to speak honestly about the threats this country faces. And for Juan, speaking honestly about these issues isn't just his right, it's his job. Up until yesterday, he was doing that job at NPR. Firing him is their loss.
>
> If NPR is unable to tolerate an honest debate about an issue as important as Islamic terrorism, then it's time for "National Public Radio" to become "National Private Radio." It's time for Congress to defund this organization.
>
> NPR says its mission is "to create a more informed public," but by stifling debate on these issues, NPR is doing exactly the opposite. President Obama should make clear his commitment to free and honest discussion of the jihadist threat in

> our public debates – and Congress should make clear that unless NPR provides that public service, not one more dime.
>
> Mr. President, what say you?

My favorite senator, Jim Demint of South Carolina, will introduce a bill to cut government funding of NPR.

If you want to see how far on the left NPR really is, read this story by Byron York. They will tolerate any insult directed at the center-right, but they can't bear to even hear a mainstream conservative point of view.

http://gatewaypundit.firstthings.com/2010/10/bill-oreilly-npr-will-rue-the-day-congress-is-going-to-defund-npr-video/

Debate on the origin of life featuring Stephen C. Meyer and Doug Axe

October 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow, this should be the most exciting debate of the year:

The conversation about God and Darwin is heating up. After several months of back-and-forth, the theistic evolutionists at BioLogos (notably attacking Stephen Meyer's *Signature in the Cell*, in some cases without reading it) will meet and finally face intelligent design proponents, who are coming fresh off their successful salvo of essays and arguments in *God and Evolution*, which premiered with a conference at Biola University last week.

Next week the Vibrant Dance of Faith and Science becomes the God and evolution showdown in Austin, as the question of whether faith in God can co-exist with Darwinian evolution will be discussed and debated with people of faith on all different points of the spectrum. CSC Director Stephen Meyer will be presenting, as will CSC fellows Bill Dembski, Doug Axe, Richard Sternberg, Paul Nelson, Jack Collins, Walter Bradley, Bruce Gordon, and Ray Bohlin.

The Vibrant Dance of Faith and Science is unique for bringing together key leaders on both sides of the debate. Attendees have three days of speakers and sessions but should prepare for a rumble on Thursday, October 28, when Stephen Meyer and Doug Axe will go up against Darrel Falk and Randy Isaac in a debate on the origin of life, moderated by Walter Bradley. (If you haven't been following it, there's no small measure of disagreement between these thinkers).

For more on the conference, which runs from October 26-28 at Grace Covenant Church, and to register, visit vibrantdance.org.

I found this on Evolution News. It's good to see one of my favorite Christians (Walter Bradley) still in the mix on science and religion.

How do you persuade people to get married for the good of the children?

October 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an interesting interview with David Popenoe from CBC News. (H/T Andrea)

Excerpt:

AB: I'm wondering though if marriage is indispensable. I'll quote you back to yourself if you don't mind:

'Although there are many caring and responsible non-resident fathers, the alarmingly simple fact is that men are much less likely to stay close to their children when they are not married to their children's mother.'

Now in Quebec for instance, the last 2001 census, some 30 per cent of couples are living common law. Are we talking about a father's presence in the hosuehold or are we talking about a father's presence in the household while he's formally married to the children's mother?

DP: You know the problem with the cohabitation alternative, is that the break-up rate is so high. Even in Sweden, where cohabitation is as established a solution as it is in Quebec, the break-up rate of families with children who are just cohabiting is twice what it is for married couples. Sure they can raise children, but the likelihood of that child not living with two parents goes way up.

AB: So what do we do about this? Do we compell people to marriage? Do we offer disincentives to those couples? Do we return to the era when a child born out of wedlock is illegitimate? How do we persuade people who believe that they're in the social vanguard, socially progressive, living without benefit of matrimony, that they ought to get married?

DP: It's a hard question, and probably none of the things that you suggest does anybody want to do. But the first step is to realize that the decline of marriage is harmful for children. And then we have to look at culture and what's causing the decline. After all, most cohabiting couples eventually get married.

I think it's a question of putting children first. I don't see any other way of bringing marriage back. But I do think marriage is very important for children even though it may be an inconvenience for a lot of adults. Incidentally, studies in the United States and other countries show that people who are married are much happier than people who are living apart or living single. And of course those are generalizations…

Does anyone have any ideas about how solve this problem?

I think that the problem of fatherlessness can be lessened with the right policies – tax incentives, the repeal of no-fault divorce, family court reform, domestic violence reform, the enactment of shared parenting laws, etc. And maybe churches could be more effective at applying Christianity to the areas of marriage and parenting so that at least

Christians will understand what they are supposed to be doing with their spouses and children. For example, churches could work harder at convincing parents that they should focus more on raising the next generation of scholars, scientists and ADF lawyers.

But I think that people need to understand that feminism is the real problem here. If men are not going to be given a special role in the home, and if wives are going to compete with husband for the provider role by earning about the same or more as the man, and if judges are going to be overturning groundings on behalf of child-plaintiffs, then men are going to disengage from marriage and parenting. Until we as a society understand that men and women are fundamentally different, and that males need SPECIAL encouragement and respect for deciding to get married and to become fathers, then fatherlessness is going to remain a huge problem.

Consider this essay by Stephen Goldberg about men, marriage and family. (H/T Mysterious C)

Excerpt:

> FEMINIST "theories" deny the physiological roots of maleness and femaleness. In doing this they persuade the contemporary woman not merely that she can have it all (an eventuality impossible for those with male physiologies to believe about themselves), but that marriage can ignore crucial differences between males and females, differences that (if acknowledged at all) are incorrectly alleged to be "merely cultural" and, therefore, amenable to elimination.
>
> Most wives of fifty years ago understood that men were just men, and that men cannot be expected or socialized to be anything else. This made the marriage agreement a realistic one that was not inherently enraging to the woman (in the way it is when there is a pretense that men are simply less lumpy women who could just as easily accept an "egalitarian" role).
>
> The woman of the contemporary ideology–unlike all the women of all other societies that have ever existed-no longer recognizes this. When wives have expectations of an "equality" that demands not merely equal reward for different behavior, but equal reward for the same behavior, marriage as an institution is in trouble, and would be even were there not numerous other forces tending toward this end. (There is, to be sure, a range of possibilities in practical terms; the treatment of women in the United States is different from that in Saudi Arabia. But the core statistical male-female differences of cognition, temperament, and behavior are the same everywhere: no society–and only a feminist sub-culture in ours—claims to believe that women could be as aggressive as men or men as nurturing as women; no society fails to associate dominance and crime with males or familial stability and child care with females.)
>
> Similarly, the conflicting demands of feminine attractiveness and the maternal disposition, on the one hand, and success in the public arena, on the other, have generated a feminist psycho-social view of the world as protective armor. For example, it is received wisdom among the more feminist-oriented career women

> that men are threatened by female success, and there is no doubt a great deal of truth to this. Unexpected competition from former allies always causes anxiety, even if the new competitors do not add to the competition one faces.
>
> But the deep cause of the feminist emphasis on this male anxiety is the realization that even those men who are not threatened by female success are not especially drawn to it. While the perimeters of conceptions of femininity vary from time to time and culture to culture, the core behavior that defines the feminine and attracts males everywhere and at all times does not much vary. And dominant behavior is not a vital component of this femininity. Women through the ages knew that males are drawn to the feminine and that characteristics not disproportionately associated with the female elicit, at best, a male lack of interest.
>
> But women through the ages were not told that they had to exhibit these male characteristics. Contemporary women are told that their status will, to a great extent, be determined by their ability to mimic qualities associated with the male, and women know that these are, at best, qualities that do nothing to attract males. Males have never faced an analogous conflict because women everywhere have–for reasons rooted in female physiology–been drawn to men who exhibit dominance. Despite contemporary values claiming the desirability of males with a female portion of sensitivity and nurturance, the actual behavior of even those women who give lip-service encouragement to men who claim to agree casts serious doubt on the attractiveness to women of such men. The change in the attitude of each sex toward the other is at the heart of the matter. **As women have come to have less use for men, and have refused to grant their husbands the special position both sexes once took for granted, men have come to have less use for women.** Both look for satisfaction on an occupational playing field on which, statistically speaking, men as a sex cannot lose and women as a sex cannot win.

Steven Goldberg was the Chair of Sociology at City College, City University of New York from 1970 to 2005.

Christian student faces complaint for advertising for Christian roommate

October 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Grand Rapids Press has this story about a Christian student on trial for advertising for a Christian roommate. (H/T Mary, ECM)

Excerpt:

> GRAND RAPIDS — The 31-year-old nursing student was looking to keep her expenses down when she decided to invite someone to share her home.
>
> But when she posted an advertisement for a Christian roommate on her local church's bulletin board, the Grand Rapids woman landed in the middle of a civil rights debate that has her facing a complaint of alleged illegal housing discrimination.
>
> The advertisement contained the sentence, "I am looking for a Christian roommate," said Joel Oster, senior litigation counsel with the Alliance Defense Fund, which represents the woman.
>
> Someone saw the ad over the summer and anonymously filed a civil rights complaint with the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan. The complaint was then filed with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, and the woman was notified at the end of September.
>
> "I think it's a clear violation on its face," said Nancy L. Haynes, executive director of the local Fair Housing Center. "It's an advertisement that clearly violates the Fair Housing Act."
>
> Although the woman might choose a roommate based on religion, say, after interviewing the person over coffee, she cannot publish an ad with that intent, Haynes said.
>
> "She can choose to rent to a Christian, that's her prerogative," she said. "It's a separate violation to make a discriminatory statement, to publish a discriminatory statement."

There is a lot more to the story in the original post, and the Alliance Defense Fund is involved in the case.

This is a useful reminder about how far those on the left are willing to go to limit your fundamental human rights (freedom of association) so that they don't have to read anything that makes them feel "discriminated" against. You can be sure that if a person posted an advertisement for a gay roommate that this would never have caught anyone's eye. Christians aren't as intolerant as people on the left. When things like this happen, we need to fight back hard to keep our basic human rights. And it's important to never vote for people on the left who favor anti-Christian bigotry like what is happening to this

woman.

Non-religious people are always interested in preventing the free expression and practice of Christianity in public. They don’t want to be reminded about the moral values of others – it makes them feel bad about their own selfishness and immorality. That’s what’s driving this censorship – they don’t want to be confronted with the idea that there are rules that they should live by, and that some people exist who take that seriously. They wish everyone was in rebellion against moral standards like they are – because if everyone were doing it, there would be no one left to judge them.

Barbara Kay explains the coming demographic crisis

October 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Barbara Kay explaining the relationship between feminism and the coming demographic crisis. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> The causes for the coming demographic crisis are not in dispute: improved longevity, urbanization and rising female education. The United States' total fertility rate is relatively high at 2.06, but when you break it down, the American women with the highest fertility rates are those who have no post-secondary education. The rule is unvarying: The more educated the woman, the fewer her offspring.
>
> If any. Voluntarily childless couples (oops, make that "child-free" couples), once uncomplaining outliers from the matrimonial mainstream, now confidently assert the superior moral standing of environmentally-friendly "hedonic" marriage, in which shared interests and pleasures rather than children form the relationship glue. Some exhibit overt disgust at "breeders" and "moomies" (nursing mothers).
>
> These righteous depopulators are indifferent to the big picture. An article entitled "The Old World" in Sunday's New York Times Magazine paints a grim demographic portrait of the developed and developing world's future. By 2018 65-year-olds will outnumber those under five, "a historic first," and by 2050 the median age–now 28–will be over 40.
>
> Autocratic governments can make people have fewer children, but they can't make people have more. Singapore tried. While modernizing in the 1960s after gaining independence from the British, Singapore's newly minted Family Planning and Population Board launched a billboard campaign, messaging "Stop at Two" and "Small Families Brighter Future." Abortion and sterilization were encouraged at the government's expense. Maternity leave was denied after two children.
>
> It worked. Singapore reached its fertility rate target of 2.1 in 1976, a 53% plunge over a decade. But it didn't stop declining, as women's education rates went up. A reverse strategy was implemented. Abortion wasn't banned, but pre-op counselling is now required for women with three or fewer children. The billboard and media messaging was changed to "Have Three or More Children if you Can." But no dice. Singapore's fertility rate in 1960 was 5.45. Today it is 1.1.

I would like my wife to have advanced degrees to be able to write and speak so she can protect the family by advocating for good policies that will enable us to have autonomy from the government and taxes and politically correct fascism. I think getting an education is an excellent thing for a woman. And she can complete her education by the time she is 25. It's having a job outside the home when there are young children that is problematic for me. A writing career is an excellent option since research and writing can

be done from the home.

The real concern I have about this is children having a lower standard of living than we do. Because of these massive government pension programs (Social Security in the USA, Old Age Security in Canada), children will taxed at very high rates. Either these entitlement programs have to go, or children will be poor. These redistribution schemes cause people to depend too much on the government and not to plan ahead for their own needs (retirement, health care, etc.). It's immature to expect other people's children to pay for your health care and retirement. *You* have to pay – *you* have to earn and save *your* money to pay for what *you* need.

I was reading recently about how George W. Bush, a fine President and a good man, thought that his greatest success was keeping us safe (true) and his worst failure was the failure to privatize Social Security (also true). It's the Democrats who are telling us that Social Security doesn't need reform, just like the Democrats told us that Fannie and Freddie did not need to be regulated and reformed. Until we get serious about keeping them out of power, it's not really safe to marry and have children.

UPDATE: Alisha found this story about a woman who focused on her career and his now marrying HERSELF.

Let’s compare jobs and deficits between Obama and Bush

October 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gateway Pundit posted these graphs of unemployment rate and budget deficit from the Obama and Bush presidencies.

(Remember that the Democrats took control of Congress in January 2007 – they own the 2008 budget and unemployment rate)

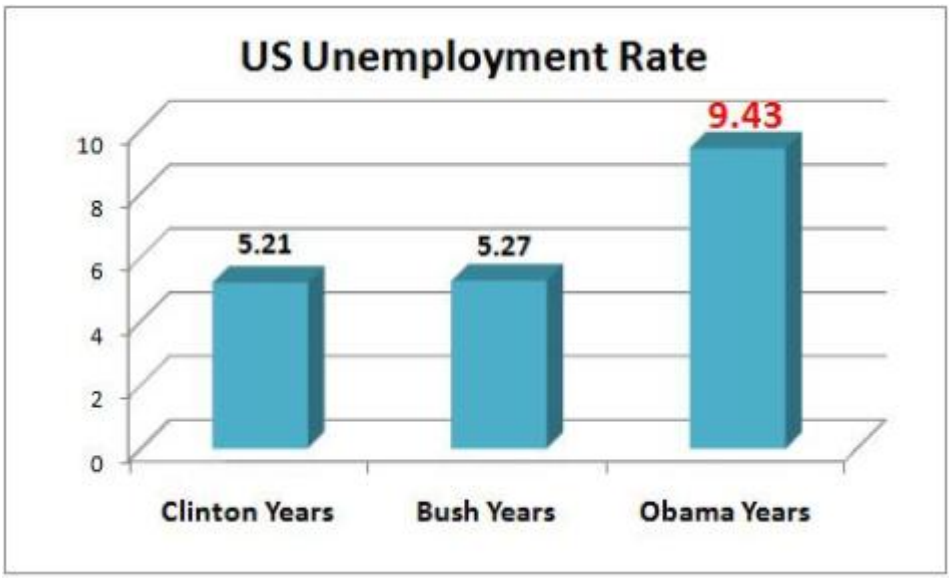

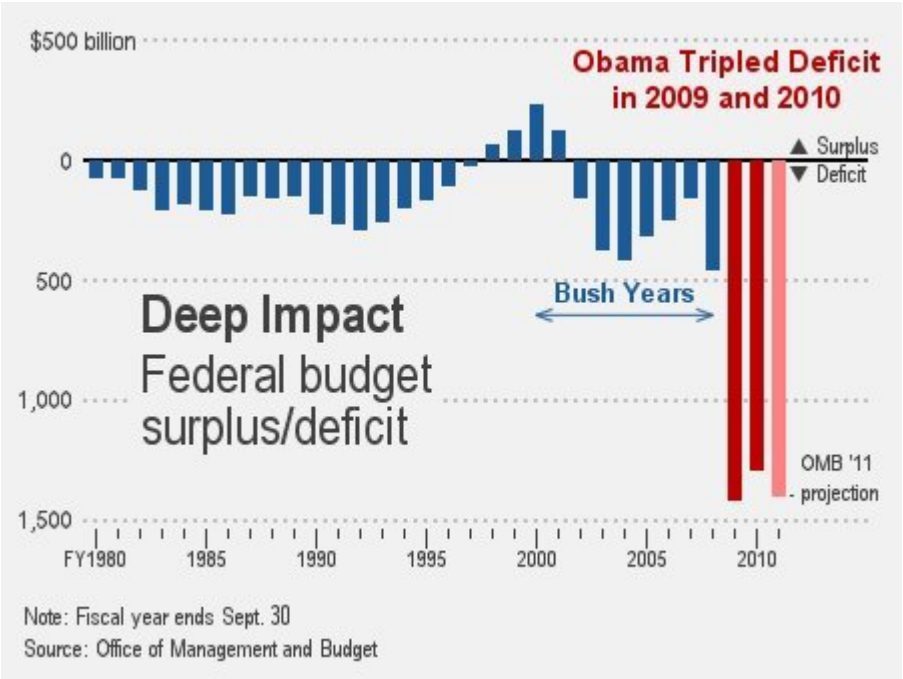

Gateway Pundit writes:

> **48 of 50 states** have lost jobs since they rammed through their so-callled Trillion dollar stimulus bill passed. The Obama-Pelosi economic plan resulted in a cumulative 7.5 million jobs deficit. In fact, Barack Obama is the worst jobs president since the Great Depression.

These are called facts. They are not the kinds of things that Barack Obama will mention in his speeches because he prefers to focus on emotions and rhetoric. He is not going to talk about unemployment and budget numbers. He is going to talk about hope and change. Don’t get fooled again.

New study finds that Obamacare subsidies cost 578% more than CBO estimates

October 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Verum Serum writes about a new Lewin Group study on the cost of Obamacare health care subsidies. (H/T Health Care BS via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A new study by the Lewin Group estimates that 28.6 million Americans will be eligible for a federal subsidy to purchase health insurance beginning in 2014 at a projected cost to tax payers in excess of $110 billion. This estimate is dramatically higher (578%) than the cost of these subsidies forecast by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) prior to the bill's enactment into law. If the new estimate is correct, it would mean that instead of lowering the deficit by $143 billion over ten years—a claim widely touted by proponents of the law— the legislation would begin adding to the deficit as early as 2015, only one year after major provisions of the law go into effect.
>
> A central component of the Patient Protection and Affordability Act is the establishment of health insurance exchanges starting in 2014, enabling individuals and families with incomes up to 400% of the federal poverty level who do not have insurance to purchase federally subsidized coverage. The CBO's final analysis of the bill enacted into law projected that only 7 million Americans would begin receiving these subsidies in 2014 at a total budgetary cost of $19 billion. This figure is $91 billion lower than the amount estimated by the Lewin Group.
>
> The Lewin Group study was commissioned by Families USA, a healthcare reform advocacy group based out of Washington D.C. which is closely allied with the White House and leading Democrats in Congress. Then Senator Obama was a keynote speaker at their annual Health Action conference in 2005 and 2007, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi opened the 2008 event. Other leading Democrats who have participated at Families USA events in recent years include Hillary Clinton, John Kerry, and Ted Kennedy.
>
> […]The CBO's projection that the healthcare reform bill would reduce the deficit by an estimated $143 billion over 10 years was a critical factor in the enactment of the bill. Democrats lost their super-majority in the Senate in January 2010 when Scott Brown was elected in Massachusetts, and ultimately passed the bill in March only through the use of procedural tactics, and without a single Republican vote in the House or Senate.
>
> The claim that the bill will reduce the deficit continues to be a leading selling point for proponents of reform. Just last month Families USA repeated this claim in a press release criticizing opponents of the legislation. But if the latest Lewin

> Group estimate is correct the initial 10-year cost of the bill will be significantly higher than what was forecast by the CBO, and would begin adding to the federal deficit as early as 2015.

So, this is a study commissioned by a left-wing group that did not find what they set out to find. I'm sure you will be hearing more about this study this week, but this finding will probably not be featured.

Democrats deliver ballots to inmates, but miss deadline to mail them to troops

October 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hans Bader writes about how Democrats delivered ballots to prison inmates but delayed the mailing of ballots to troops. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Democratic officials in Illinois missed the deadline to mail ballots to our troops overseas, but they hand-delivered ballots to inmates, without even waiting for inmates to apply. Perhaps this discrimination can be explained by the fact that inmates vote mostly for Democrats, while soldiers vote predominantly for Republicans.
>
> There are federal laws requiring states to send ballots in a timely fashion to troops overseas, but the Obama Administration is not enforcing them, as part of its ongoing politicization of the Justice Department (such as rubberstamping unconstitutional legislative proposals, and downplaying voter intimidation by liberal activists, while investigating Tea Party pollwatchers who uncovered rampant voter registration fraud in Houston).

Democrats are the part of criminals, and Republicans are the party of heroes.

Alberta judge defends student's free speech against U of Calgary

October 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A surprising defeat for fascism in Alberta, Canada. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> An Alberta judge ruled last week that universities are not entities deserving of independence and protection from the state, but rather that they are part of the state. In her decision, involving a case where twin brothers challenged being punished by the University of Calgary for negative Facebook posts about an instructor, Justice Jo'Anne Strekaf ruled that the university violated the Charter right to free expression. The landmark decision may have legal precedence, but it will unnecessarily handicap universities when acting as universities.
>
> As only Parliament and provincial legislatures are subject to the Charter, Strekaf has confirmed that at least some policies held and enforced by universities are on par with government legislation when certain Charter rights are concerned.
>
> In 1990, a Supreme Court ruling concluded that, despite government regulation and funding, universities "control their own affairs and enjoy independence from government regarding all important internal matters." That ruling, long cited by universities accused of violating the Charter, did leave open the possibility that some university activities could be subject to Charter review.
>
> Strekaf's contribution is, briefly, that when dealing with the hiring and firing of staff, universities are not government. With respect to students, however, universities educate them according to a government mandate and, therefore, are government.
>
> While the university argued that its disciplinary policies are part of a private contract between the U of C and students, Strekaf concluded that those policies are too closely related to the school's educational mandate to not be considered government action.
>
> Strekaf could have only ruled that the punishment (six months' probation) was excessive, or inconsistent with university policy, or that the students' comments were not defamatory, and left it at that. But no, the judge went all the way, and whittled Ivory Tower autonomy down to a pathetic nub.
>
> […]If Strekaf's ruling holds, it will prove popular among any number of campus protest groups, and anti-abortion clubs in particular. Such groups have been denied campus space for their activities at schools across the country, and have even been arrested and charged with trespassing. They may now have a remedy.

I hope this decision will help the Canadian pro-life students who have to deal with censorship and coercion all the time. You'll recall that the Canadian pro-life students face

censorship, expulsion and even imprisonment from left-wing university administrators.

Neonatal survival after withdrawal of artificial hydration and nutrition can last up to 26 days, according to a case series presented here at the 18th International Congress on Palliative Care. Although physical distress is not apparent in the infants, the psychological distress of parents and clinicians builds with the length of survival, said Hal Siden, MD, from Canuck Place Children's Hospice in Vancouver, British Columbia.

"These babies live much, much longer than anybody expects. I think that neonatologists and nurses and palliative care clinicians need to be alerted to this," he said. "The time between withdrawal of feeding and end of life is something that is not predictable, and you need to be cautioned very strongly about that if you are going to do this work." He presented a series of 5 cases that clinicians at his hospice had overseen over a 5-year period.

MUST-HEAR: Michael Behe debates Keith Fox on intelligent design

October 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design.

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> His new book "The Edge of Evolution" takes his conclusions further, arguing that the Darwinian processes of random mutation and natural selection are incapable of producing the variation and complexity we see in most of life.
>
> So can we conclude that life was intelligently designed by a creator?
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

Mike Behe is masterful in this debate, handling evidence and rhetoric with ease. By my count he made NO MISTAKES either in presentation or substance. He was in complete control the whole time, and knew exactly what to say to every question. I get the impression that Fox learned everything he knows about ID by reading Darwinists. He was so bad that I decided to paraphrase everything he said in my summary to make fun of him even more.

The MP3 file is here.

And Mike Behe is actually going to be speaking in London, England in November.

Summary

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism
- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program

- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent
- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true
- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival

explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah
- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet X!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren't going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

Debt has increased 5 trillion since Pelosi became Speaker of the House

October 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

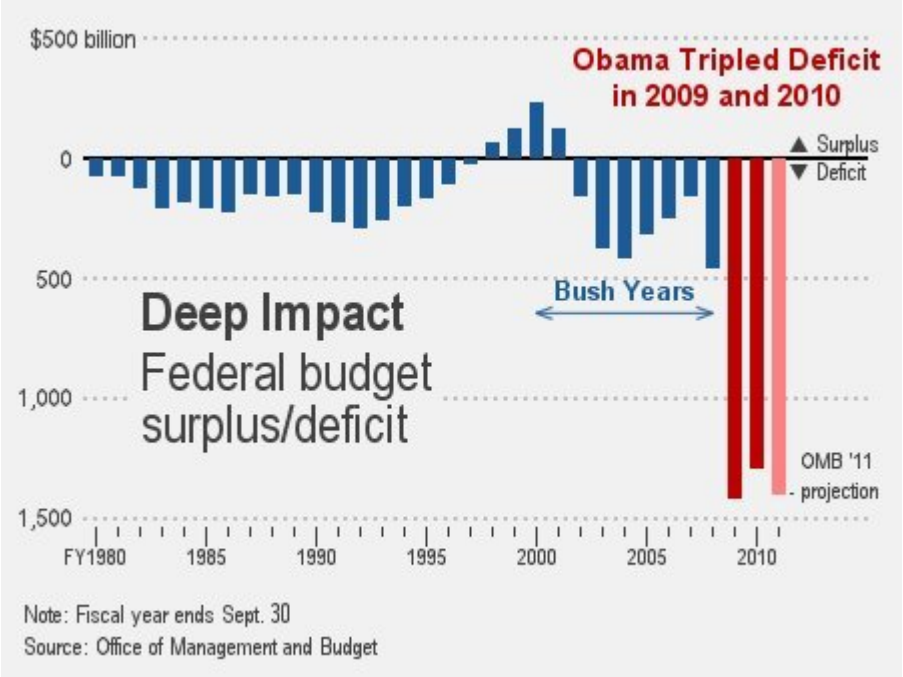

Nancy Pelosi becomes House Speaker in Jan 2007

Debt has increased 5 trillion since Nancy Pelosi became Speaker of the House in January 2007.

Excerpt:

> When Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) gave her inaugural address as speaker of the House in 2007, she vowed there would be "no new deficit spending." Since that day, the national debt has increased by $5 trillion, according to the U.S. Treasury Department.
>
> "After years of historic deficits, this 110th Congress will commit itself to a higher standard: Pay as you go, no new deficit spending," Pelosi said in her speech from the speaker's podium. "Our new America will provide unlimited opportunity for future generations, not burden them with mountains of debt."
>
> Pelosi has served as speaker in the 110th and 111th Congresses.
>
> At the close of business on Jan. 4, 2007, Pelosi's first day as speaker, the national debt was $8,670,596,242,973.04 (8.67 trillion), according to the Bureau of the Public Debt, a division of the U.S. Treasury Department. At the close of business on Oct. 22, it stood at $13,667,983,325,978.31 (13.67 trillion), an increase of 4,997,387,083,005.27 (or approximately $5 trillion).
>
> Pelosi, the 60th speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, has added more to the national debt than the first 57 House speakers combined.
>
> The $4.997-trillion increase in the national debt since she took the gavel is more

> debt than the federal government amassed from the speakership of Rep. Frederick Muhlenberg of Pennsylvania, who became the first speaker of the House on April 1, 1789, to the start of the speakership of Rep. Newt Gingrich of Georgia, the 58th speaker, who took up the gavel on Jan. 4, 1995.
>
> The national debt first topped $5 trillion on Feb. 23, 1996, more than a year into Gingrich's speakership.

FIVE TRILLION since January 2007.

UPDATE: More from Hans Bader at the Competitive Enterprise Institute on the unemployment rate.

Excerpt:

> As noted earlier, the stimulus package contained wasteful "green jobs" funding, 79 percent of which went to foreign firms, effectively sending American jobs overseas. A recent biofuel program actually wiped out jobs rather than creating them as intended, while costing taxpayers a lot of money. New EPA rules are expected to wipe out at least 800,000 jobs, and the EPA is considering new ozone rules that could wipe out 7.3 million jobs. The stimulus package contained provisions that wiped out thousands of jobs in America's export sector. New laws backed by Obama, and Obama Administration regulations governing employers, have discouraged employers from hiring new employees.

Businesses understand that more spending means inflation or taxes or both – so they stop hiring and stop expanding.

Mark Steyn explains the root cause of America's massive debt

October 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mark Steyn says that the spending and debt is just the symptom of a deeper character issue. (H/T The Way The Ball Bounces)

Excerpt:

> And, without serious course correction, America is doomed. It starts with the money. For dominant powers, it always does – from the Roman Empire to the British Empire. "Declinism" is in the air these days, but for us full-time apocalyptics we're already well past that stage. In the space of one generation, a nation of savers became the world's largest debtors, and a nation of makers and doers became a cheap service economy.
>
> […]At the lower end, Americans are educated at a higher cost per capita than any nation except Luxembourg in order to do minimal-skill checkout-line jobs about to be rendered obsolete by technology. At the upper end, America's elite goes to school till early middle age in order to be credentialed for pseudo-employment as $350 grand-a-year diversity consultants (Michelle Obama) or in one of the many other phony-baloney makework schemes deriving from government micro-regulation of virtually every aspect of endeavor.
>
> […]As I said, the decline of great powers invariably starts with the money. **When government spends on the scale Washington's got used to, that's not a spending issue, it's a moral one. There's nothing virtuous about "caring" "compassionate" "progressives" being caring and compassionate and progressive with money yet to be earned by generations yet to be born. That's what "fiscal conservatives" often miss: This isn't a green-eyeshade issue. Increasing dependency, disincentivizing self-reliance, absolving the citizenry from responsibility for their actions: The multitrillion-dollar debt catastrophe is not the problem but merely the symptom. It's not just about balancing the books, but about something more basic and profound.**

I think that the problem is that people, even conservatives, have bought into the idea that life is about having fun – having a good time. It's like there is no way we ought to be, and that there is no respect for doing what it takes to be cautious, frugal and self-reliant. No one is trying to build a life apart from government, anymore. We are all just pursuing pleasurable experiences – and we want someone else to take care of us. We are not studying difficult subjects in school, not taking on difficult jobs, and we aren't willing to delay gratification. Somehow, we have decided that it is government's job to equalize life outcomes regardless of our decisions.

This speech by George Will highlights the dangers of dependency on government.

Was Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh a Christian?

October 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed someone in the media saying that Timothy McVeigh was a Christian, so I thought I would set the record straight.

Actually, according to this CNN interview with a McVeigh biographer, McVeigh was an agnostic.

Excerpt:

> Question from chat room: Does McVeigh have any spiritual-religious beliefs?
>
> Lou Michel: McVeigh is agnostic. He doesn't believe in God, but he won't rule out the possibility. I asked him, "What if there is a heaven and hell?"
>
> He said that once he crosses over the line from life to death, if there is something on the other side, he will — and this is using his military jargon — "adapt, improvise, and overcome." Death to him is all part of the adventure.

There is no such thing as a Christian terrorists, because Jesus Christ did not model terrorism for his followers, nor did he order his followers to act aggressively towards others.

MUST-HEAR: Glenn Peoples debates Arif Ahmed on God and morality

October 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Another good Unbelievable debate between theist Glenn Peoples and atheist Arif Ahmed.

Details:

> Torturing children for fun – is that absolutely wrong?
>
> The Moral Argument for God states that there are such things as objective moral facts, and that objective moral facts must have an immaterial source – namely God. Therefore God Exists… Simple right?
>
> However, atheist Cambridge Philosopher Arif Ahmed disagrees with the first two premises. He debates with New Zealand's Christian philosopher Glenn People's on whether the argument proves the existence of God.
>
> So, are moral beliefs nothing more than our "preferences"? What do we do with the intuition that certain things are absolutely wrong? Are atheists who affirm moral facts but deny God, being inconsistent?

The MP3 file is here.

I would not really characterize Glenn as an orthodox "Christian" philosopher, although he claims to be – because he doesn't hold to some beliefs that are essential. E-mail me if you want more info and links to his statements. But he makes good arguments for theism.

Summary

Are there moral facts?

Glenn Peoples:

- Here is my argument:

> 1. If there are moral facts, then they have a basis that is either supernatural or natural
> 2. If there are moral facts, then there basis is not natural
> 3. Therefore, if there are moral facts, then there basis is supernatural
> 4. A supernatural person is the most plausible way to think of the the basis of moral facts
> 5. If there are moral facts, then the best way to think about their basis is that they are grounded by a supernatural person

Arif Ahmed:

- There are no moral facts
- There is no sensory evidence for moral facts

- I would only accept sensory evidence for the existence of moral facts
- Each person has preferences for how to treat other people
- I campaign for things I personally prefer
- So morality for me is doing whatever I want

Glenn Peoples:

- Well, that is not moral conduct, that's "satisfaction conduct"
- You are doing what satisfies you, but it's not normative
- There is no ought there
- It's not prescriptive of what you should do, it's just descriptive of what you do

Arif Ahmed:

- I would interfere with other people's preferences if I didn't prefer them

Glenn Peoples:

- What do you mean you "ought to" impose your preferences on other people

Arif Ahmed:

- I do this thing I prefer and this thing I prefer and this thing I prefer
- I do certain things because I like the way I feel when I do them
- Nothing defines moral standards because there are no moral standards

Glenn Peoples:

- On Arif's view, it is impossible that anyone's preference could be "wrong"
- Each person's preferences are supreme and cannot be judged on Arif's view
- On his view, someone who tortures people for fun is as justified as someone who doesn't because both act on the basis of preferences

Arif Ahmed:

- We can't prove the existence of moral facts because only things that can be perceived with the senses are real

Glenn Peoples:

- But even sensory inputs cannot be proven to be reliable using the senses

Is Glenn's argument valid?

Arif Ahmed

- Well, what if I arbitrarily assert that harm is morally wrong without sensory evidence for that moral fact, thus breaking my own rule about what counts as true

- that makes me look like less of sociopath than before, right?
- so how about that?
- even if there were moral facts, God doesn't have to be the cause of them

Glenn Peoples:

- If there are moral obligations, they must be owed to a person, not to a state of affairs

Arif Ahmed:

- Human beings don't have any proper function, no way we ought to be
- Each person just decides what they want

Glenn Peoples:

- What about purpose, is there any reason why we are here?
- On atheism, you would have to say no

Arif Ahmed:

- An atheist could have a purpose for your life in an accidental universe without a designer
- I don't believe there is a purpose to life though
- But you can choose social justice, or yoga, or vegetarianism, or video games and have meaning in life
- And an arbitrary, narcissistic, illusory purpose is just as valid as an objectively true purpose (and as healthy!)
- It's very liberating to be able to make up your own arbitrary purpose and arbitrary preferences
- You can even pretend they are significant and meaningful and that you are a good person (but they aren't!)

Glenn Peoples:

- Just to be fair, the idea of objective meaning and objective purpose does require creativity and work – it's not a cop out

Would Ted Strickland or John Kasich be a better governor of Ohio?

October 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a clip of Ted Strickland giving a speech to his Democrat supporters.

Here's the transcript of Ted Strickland's speech from the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> "The Republican party has been overtaken by the zealots, by the extremists, by the radicals … and they don't seem to like Ohio very much… And **quite frankly they act like they don't like America very much**. They want to change our Constitution. They want to change Medicare. They want to change labor rights. They want to change this country in fundamental ways."

Does Ted Strickland encourage businesses to remain in Ohio and hire workers in Ohio?

Let's see:

Wow. 400,000 jobs lost in Ohio while Strickland was governor? He sounds as competent at encouraging job creation as his fellow Democrat Barack Obama.

Ted Strickland raised taxes on citizens of Ohio by 840 million dollars. He thinks he knows how to spend *your* money better than you do.

Social Issues

I wonder how Ted Strickland is on social issues?

Life News says:

> In June of last year, Strickland upset pro-life Ohio residents by using his line-item veto to axe the section of the $1.3 billion funding bill banning state funds for cloning human beings.
>
> Mike Gonidakis, the director of Ohio Right to Life, told LifeNews.com at the time, "By vetoing a ban on using taxpayer funds for human cloning, Ted Strickland has demonstrated that he supports treating human life as a commodity."
>
> "Most Ohioans don't share Governor Strickland's cavalier disregard for the value of human life and they should not be forced to pay for its creation, exploitation and destruction in cloning research," Gonidakis said.
>
> In March 2007, Strickland feuded with pro-life advocates over his budget proposal that eliminated the $500,000 the state normally spends annually on encouraging kids to practice abstinence.
>
> The governor said he would not apply for any more federal funds for abstinence education for future budgets.
>
> In February 2007, Strickland would not fight to save an Ohio law that protects women from the dangerous RU 486 abortion drug which has killed seven women

> in the United States and injured more than a thousand more. With little fanfare, Strickland quietly dropped a legal effort to salvage a law that puts safety limits on the drug.
>
> The Ohio state legislature previously approved a bill to bring the use of the abortion pill in Ohio in line with Food and Drug Administration guidelines.
>
> During his tenure in Congress, Strickland had a strong pro-abortion voting record while Kasich compiled a strongly pro-life record.

Ohio Right to Life says:

> Ohio Right to Life today announced its endorsement of a slate of pro-life candidates seeking elected office statewide. The pro-life organization picked Rob Portman as its endorsed candidate for the U.S. Senate and named John Kasich as its endorsed candidate for governor.
>
> […]Marshal Pitchford, the chairman of the Ohio Right to Life Society Board of Trustees said the pro-life movement in Ohio "is fortunate to have experienced and highly qualified pro-life candidates seeking the state's executive offices."
>
> "John Kasich had an outstanding pro-life voting record during his career in Congress," he said. "His running mate, Mary Taylor, is an articulate advocate of the right to life movement. As Governor and Lt. Governor, they will reflect the common sense and common decency of the people of Ohio."

And he's also lousy on traditional marriage and the rights of children to be raised by a mother and a father. He was opposed to the Constitutional Amendment banning same-sex marriage, and opposed to banning gay adoption in D.C. He's a left-wing radical on social issues. Just like Barack Obama.

Right now, the Ohio governor race is a toss-up. I recommend that all my Ohio readers get out and vote for Kasich on election day.

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Have you seen the funny new David Zucker ad against Barbara Boxer?

October 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is really funny.

First, here's the real Barbara Boxer.

She's commonly known as the least intelligent senator in the Senate, but Patty Murray might be the dumbest now.

Now watch this ad from a former Democrat.

Ha! That's pretty funny.

Obama’s buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company

October 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CBS News: Chavez orders expropriation (nationalization) of American company Owens-Illinois. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez on Monday ordered the expropriation of U.S.-based glass maker Owens-Illinois Inc.’s unit in the South American country.
>
> Chavez announced plans to expropriate the company in a televised speech, saying it operates in western Trujillo state.
>
> The leftist leader criticized the company’s practices in the country, saying it had been “taking away the money of Venezuelans” and exploiting local people. Chavez did not detail his complaints about the company.
>
> There was no immediate reaction from the company, based in Perrysburg, Ohio.
>
> Owens-Illinois also has operations throughout Latin America in Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and the Caribbean, focusing on the manufacture of glass containers.
>
> It was unclear how the government would handle compensation for the company’s assets in Venezuela.
>
> Chavez has nationalized or expropriated a wide range of companies, including cement makers, retail stores and steel mills, while seeking to lead Venezuela toward a socialist system.
>
> He said in his speech that more expropriations are planned.
>
> “There’s another list around here,” Chavez said, but added that he would save additional announcements for later.

Here’s the Republican response to Hugo Chavez’s latest anti-American aggression.

Excerpt:

> Republican U.S. Rep. Connie Mack targeted Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez on Tuesday — and ripped into the Obama administration for not standing up to him.
>
> Mack, the ranking Republican on the House Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, noted that Chavez was continuing a world tour to push his country’s oil exportation.
>
> […]“While Chavez reaches out to nations across the world to explore and refine Venezuelan oil, what is the Obama administration doing?” demanded Mack, who is rumored to be running for the U.S. Senate in 2012. “The administration is failing to protect U.S. national security interests by ignoring the fact that we

> currently rely upon Venezuela for approximately 10 percent of U.S. oil imports. Instead of strengthening oil reserves or working with important U.S. allies such as Canada – which is well-poised to increase the flow of crude oil to our refineries – the Obama administration has not made it a priority.
>
> "What's more, as the administration sits idly by, Chavez continues his quest to nationalize key private-sector industries," continued Mack. "During his trip to Belarus, Chavez announced the nationalization of two gold mines in Venezuela, and just yesterday Chavez announced the expropriation of the local affiliate of U.S.-based glassmaker Owens Illinois. Chavez acknowledged that his government has "a list with more names" of companies in Venezuela that will be expropriated.
>
> "The Obama administration must get serious about dealing with the inherent threat that Chavez poses to our nation and the region," concluded Mack. "We must take a hard look at our current energy portfolio and invest in energy projects with countries that respect international legal standards. And finally, for the security of our economy and the free market, Congress must support the pending free-trade agreements by passing them without delay."

Where is Obama? Shouldn't he be saying something about this?

Hey Obama! I can nationalize more private corporations than you can!
Oh. I guess they are having some sort of communist competition or something. Maybe trying to see whose country can hit 20% unemployment first?

Related posts

- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela

- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Richard Dawkins’ rhetoric about religion and child abuse

October 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Vic Reppert wrote an interesting post a while back on Richard Dawkins’ view that parents teaching their religion to children is child abuse.

First, this is what Dawkins said:

> “God Delusion” author Richard Dawkins complains that “Our society, including the nonreligious sector, has accepted the preposterous idea that it is normal and right to indoctrinate tiny children in the religion of their parents, and to slap religious labels on them — ‘Catholic child,’ ‘Protestant child,’ ‘Jewish child,’ ‘Muslim child,’ etc.”
>
> Dawkins says those “labels” are “always a form of child abuse” and concludes:
>
> “Maybe some children need to be protected from indoctrination by their own parents.”

Then Reppert writes:

> The thinking that leads to religious persecution goes like this: those guys over there who are teaching false religious claims are exposing others to a greater likelihood of eternal damnation. So we have to stop these people no matter what it takes. Maybe people need to be protected from false teaching. Believe me, religious persecutors have everyone’s best interests at heart.
>
> So do anti-religious persecutors. Removing eternal damnation from the picture doesn’t eliminate the temptation to persecute. They will say that these religious people may not be exposing people to hell, but they are spreading scientific illiteracy and possibly ushering in a new dark age, and they just have to be stopped.
>
> If I were told that I could not teach Christianity to my children, you can bet I would consider myself to be a victim of persecution. (Unfortunately for Dawkins, we already “indoctrinated” our kids, and they are dedicated Christian adults now.)
>
> Yes, yes, I know, Dawkins says maybe. And the next atheist that comes along will say definitely. And it will be more tempting for these people to say definitely the closer they are to acquiring political power.

I don’t agree with Vic Reppert on many things, but he’s right about this. And I think Dawkins’ views are particularly alarming given the moral relativism, anti-reason and anti-science ideas so dominant on the secular left. I posted recently about the atheist philosopher Arif Ahmed’s denial of moral facts, which is the view that is consistent with atheism and an accidental, materialistic universe. It was interesting to see how Ahmed’s

denial of moral realism did not stop him from being politically active on the basis of his *personal preferences.* And he was perfectly happy forcing his personal preferences on other people despite admitting that morality is *illusory* when considered objectively.

Atheists don't believe in moral realism, but they do believe in pursuing pleasure and avoiding moral sanctions from those who disagree with them. And the more militant ones liek Dawkins and Ahmed will use political power to pursue those ends. If you are religious, and you teach your children that some actions are objectively immoral, then your children may grow up and judge atheists or vote in policies that limit their hedonism. Then the more militant atheists would feel bad, or be prevented from doing things that make them happy – like killing inconvenient babies who appear after recreational sex. And the more militant atheists may want to put a stop to you making them feel bad. There is nothing in their worldview that prevents them from using violence to stop you from making them feel bad. On their view, the universe is an accident, and you have no "natural rights" like the right to life, objectively speaking.

So you can see how the denial of objective moral values and duties leads to things like abortion today. Their victims today are weak, and small. Many people are therefore inclined to agree with them that the right to happiness of the strong trumps the right-to-life of the weak, (a right not grounded by the atheism worldview, which denies objective human rights). Tomorrow, if they had more political power, perhaps the more militant atheists would graduate to more draconian acts, like other atheists (Stalin, Mao, etc.) have in the past.

Atheist Aldous Huxley explains what atheists believe about morality and why they believe it:

> For myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation.The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality.We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom.

Atheism is just the denial of objective moral duties, achieved by denying the existence of the objective moral duty prescriber, also known as God.

Atheists oppose science and evidence

- Physicist Frank Tipler weighs in on Stephen Hawking's theory
- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Stephen Meyer debating Michael Shermer on the origin of life
- Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

Theists support science and evidence

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

MUST-SEE: What is it like to argue with a left-wing liberal?

October 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video about arguing with a left-wing liberal was sent to me by ECM.

Here is the MP3 file.

I think it is really accurate. They really are like this. I actually had a female aquaintance who used to argue against the military and against war with me like this, and she would get very agitated and irrational – unable to understand logical relationships like greater than or less than, or less probable and more probable. Everything is about the moral equivalence – there was no possible condition under which war could ever be justified.

Obama has appointed a record number of gay officials

October 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports on Obama's decision to appoint a record number of gay officials.

Excerpt:

> Less than halfway through his first term, President Barack Obama has appointed more openly gay officials than any other president in history.
>
> Gay activists say the estimate of more than 150 appointments so far — from agency heads and commission members to policy officials and senior staffers — surpasses the previous high of about 140 reached during two full terms under President Bill Clinton.
>
> […]Gay activists, among Obama's strongest supporters, had hoped he would be the first to appoint an openly gay Cabinet secretary. While that hasn't happened — yet — Obama did appoint the highest-ranking gay official ever when he named John Berry as director of the Office of Personnel Management, which oversees the nation's 1.9 million federal workers.
>
> Other prominent names include Nancy Sutley, chairwoman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and Fred Hochberg, chairman of the Export-Import Bank. Obama also named Amanda Simpson, the first openly transgender appointee, as a senior technical adviser in the Commerce Department.
>
> […]One Obama nominee who met some opposition was Chai Feldblum, a Georgetown University law professor nominated to serve on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
>
> Concerned Women for America accused Feldblum of playing "a major role in pushing the homosexual and transsexual agenda on Americans." Other conservative groups blasted her role in drafting the Employment Nondiscrimination Act, a bill that would ban employers from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Obama is a strong supporter of that legislation.
>
> Obama made Feldblum a recess appointment in March after an anonymous hold in the Senate held up her confirmation for months.
>
> Another target for conservatives was Kevin Jennings, founder of the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network, who was named to oversee the Education Department's Office of Safe & Drug Free Schools. More than 50 House Republicans asked Obama to remove Jennings from the post after reports surfaced about advice he gave more than 20 years earlier after learning a gay student had sex with an older man.
>
> Jennings conceded that he should have consulted medical or legal authorities

> instead of telling the 15-year-old boy that he hoped he had used a condom. The Obama administration defended Jennings and declined to remove him.

Comments to this post will be strictly filtered in accordance with Obama’s policies on acceptable speech.

How mistrust of men prevents fathers from parenting daughters

October 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stuart Schneiderman explains how the war against men has made it harder for fathers to parent their daughters.

Excerpt:

> In today's America a man knows that he can be sued for workplace sexual harassment if he looks at a woman in the wrong way, if he makes a sexually suggestive remark, or if he touches her inappropriately.
>
> He also knows that children, especially female children, are strictly off limits. Speak to his daughter in the wrong way and a man can find himself charged with child molestation. Even when the charges are false, it is very, very difficult to restore a reputation tarnished by the suspicion of child abuse.
>
> It isn't easy being a man in America today. The culture has made men into a threat, into the enemy of women and girls.
>
> Not everywhere, not for everyone, but enough of the time for men to be wary in their dealings with female children.
>
> The attacks on men, the stigmatization of men, the distrust about their motives have created a cultural miasma. If you were a father living in such a culture, would you want to talk about sex with your preteen daughter?
>
> The toxic environment produced by the war against men has made men more likely to shut down lines of communication with their daughters.
>
> Then, these same men are criticized for being too reticent, for not opening up, and for not expressing themselves.
>
> The culture strongly encourages girls to discuss intimate matters only with other women. Who but a woman would understand a woman's experience?
>
> Of course, this deprives girls of a good relationship with the most important man in their lives. And it also tells them that the only people they should listen to are people who are just like them.

His post was linked by Instapundit and Helen Reynolds. It's a great post. Some women are so busy bad-mouthing men that they don't realize that men shut down and withdraw from family life unless they get encouragement and respect. Men rise to the expectations of women.

Does Mark Driscoll know anything about economics, politics and foreign policy?

October 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Welcome visitors from Peter Lumpkins. Thanks for the link, Peter.

I find this article on religion and politics by shallow, trendy metrosexual pop star pastor Mark Driscoll to be extremely disturbing.

Excerpt:

> People are longing for Jesus, and tragically left voting for mere presidential candidates. For those whose candidate wins today there will be some months of groundless euphoric faith in that candidate and the atoning salvation that their kingdom will bring. But, in time, their supporters will see that no matter who wins the presidency, they are mere mortals prone to sin, folly, and self-interest just like all the other sons of Adam and daughters of Eve. To help extend naïve false hope as long as possible, a great enemy will be named and demonized as the one who is hindering all of the progress to atone for our sins and usher in our kingdom. If the Democrats win it will be the rich, and if the Republicans win it will be the terrorists. This diversionary trick is as old as Eve who blamed her sin on Satan rather than repenting. The lie is that it's always someone else's fault and we're always the victim of sinners and never the sinner. Speaking of repentance, sadly, no matter who wins there will be no call to personal repentance of our own personal sins which contributes to cultural suffering and decline such as our pride, gluttony, covetousness, greed, indebtedness, self-righteousness, perversion, and laziness.
>
> And, in four years we'll do it all again and pretend that this time things will be different. Four years after that, we'll do it yet again. And, we'll continue driving around this cul de sac until Jesus returns, sets up his throne, and puts an end to folly once and for all.

From this regrettable post, I understand that Mark Driscoll thinks that Christians should not try to assess which party best promotes policies that will promote liberty and goodness in the world. And that they should not take seriously their duty to vote, and to convince others to inform themselves and vote. Instead, I understand that he thinks that it doesn't really matter who wins. Democrats, Republicans – who cares?

What does it mean when someone says that it doesn't matter who wins elections?

- It means that the pro-life and pro-abortion positions are equivalent
- It means that traditional marriage and same-sex marriage are equivalent
- It means that intact families and single-mother families are equivalent
- It means that Iran and Israel are equally threatening to world peace

- It means that North Korea and the United States are equally free
- It means that Zimbabwe and Canada are equally prosperous
- It means that sex education and abstinence education are equivalent
- It means that public schools and homeschooling are equivalent
- It means that it doesn't matter whether Darwinism is taught as dogma or taught critically in schools
- It means that it doesn't matter whether there is another terrorist attack and millions of Americans are killed
- It means that it doesn't matter whether people have jobs or enough money left over after taxes
- It means that it doesn't matter whether tax dollars go to fund abortion, ESCR, IVF or sex changes
- It means that it doesn't matter whether religious liberty is limited by repressive fascist policies
- It means that it doesn't matter whether Iran nukes Israel back to the stone age
- It means that it doesn't matter whether poor children have the choice to go to a better school
- It means that it doesn't matter whether people die while waiting in line for health care
- and so on…

Back in the days of slavery, it wouldn't have mattered to such a person whether the slavers or the abolitionists won the election.

Avoid Mark Driscoll at all costs on these political and economic issues – stick with Wayne Grudem on politics/economics. Grudem actually knows about how reality functions. He studies the Bible and then he studies how the world actually works. Unlike Driscoll. Driscoll needs to spend less time on his hair and clothes, and more time reading actual books on economics, social policy and military affairs.

Here is my previous article about how Mark Driscoll minimizes women's responsibility for their own poor choices.

Obama’s reversal of the Bush tax cuts would cut your take-home pay

October 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily explains what would happen if Obama allows the Bush tax cuts to expire. (H/T Ponder With Us)

Excerpt:

> Professor Michael Graetz of Columbia University recently estimated in the Wall Street Journal that letting the tax cuts expire will cost the U.S. economy $10 billion a month in added withholding from paychecks.
>
> Goldman Sachs economist Alec Phillips estimates letting the Bush cuts expire could slash “nearly 10 percentage points” from disposable income growth in the first quarter of next year, and nearly two percentage points from GDP in the first half.
>
> With GDP now at a tad above $14 trillion, the impact could be $280 billion or more in the first six months alone.
>
> In short, the higher taxes could very well push us back into recession — at a time when the economy is struggling under 9.6% unemployment with little if any private-sector job growth.
>
> What’s most worrisome is what it will do to the working taxpayer. His or her take-home pay is about to fall, leaving noticeably less to spend and save.
>
> A married couple without children and an annual income of $80,000 would have an added $221 taken from their paycheck every two weeks, the Bloomberg report says, quoting the H&R Block Tax Institute. That jumps to $558 for couples bringing in $240,000.
>
> Data from the Tax Policy Center show even those with modest family incomes would take a hit. For example, a couple with income of $60,000 and four children can expect to pay $130 more every two weeks to Uncle Sam. It doesn’t get much better for those who make just $40,000. They’ll find about $108 more withheld every other week.

Obama likes to spread the wealth around. You don’t mind, do you? He knows so much better than you do how to spread your money around.

Bill Whittle explains how wealth is created

October 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Part 3 of an ongoing series about what conservatives believe. (H/T Ponder With Us)

This one is on wealth creation and free trade.

Parts 1 and 2 are here.

How does government regulation impact small start-up businesses?

October 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s an exploration of the impact of government regulation on small businesses. (H/T Foxfier)

Fewer businesses means fewer new jobs.

It also means that consumers have fewer options to get better quality products and services for less money. Boo!

Mary Eberstadt's book "Home Alone America"

October 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought I would write quickly about Mary Eberstadt's book "Home Alone America", which I read a few years back.

Here's an article from National Review by Stanley Kurtz.

Excerpt:

Up until now, public discussion of issues like day care has been dominated by feminist journalists and academics who take their own career decisions for granted and call on society to make their lives easier: How can I be equal to a man if society won't give me better day care? Eberstadt strides into this situation and asks a totally different series of questions: Are children any *happier* in day care than they are with their mothers? If not, should that effect a woman's career decisions? Are unhappy children who bite and get aggressive or ill in day care growing tougher, stronger, and more ruggedly individualist, or is it we adults who are being coarsened to needs of our children?

[…]Increasingly, we're medicating children for mental illnesses that barely existed in the past. Take "separation anxiety disorder" (SAD), defined as "developmentally inappropriate and excessive anxiety concerning separation from home or from those to whom the individual is attached." This syndrome is now said to affect about 10 percent of the nation's children. One of its symptoms is "refusal to attend classes or difficulty remaining in school for an entire day" — in other words, what used to be called "truancy."

Are 10 percent of the nation's children really in need of treatment for SAD, or are most of these children actually behaving more normally than mothers who have little trouble parting from their children for most of the day? Is it surprising that children get SAD in the absence of their parents? As Eberstadt suggests, maybe we need to define a whole new range of disorders: "There is no mental disorder…called, say, preoccupied parent disorder, to pathologize a mother or father too distracted to read *Winnie the Pooh* for the fourth time or to stay up on Saturday night waiting for a teenager to come home from the movies. Nor will one find divorced second-family father disorder, even though the latter might explain what we could call the 'developmentally inappropriate' behaviors of certain fathers, such as failure to pay child support or to show up for certain important events. There is also nothing…like separation *non*-anxiety disorder to pathologize parents who can separate for long stretches from their children without a pang."

And here's an article from National Review by Rich Lowry.

Excerpt:

Eberstadt writes: "Of reported cases of chlamydia in 2000, 74 percent occurred in persons age 15 to 24, and that number is judged to be 'a substantial underestimate of the true incidence of chlamydia among young people,' in the words of The Alan Guttmacher Institute. An estimated 11 percent of people age 15 to 24 are infected with genital herpes, and 33 percent of females in the same age group are thought to be

infected with human papillomavirus (HPV). This age group is also thought to account for 60 percent of gonorrhea cases. … Of the 18.9 million new STD cases in the United States in 2000, about 9.1 million, or half, were found in people between the ages of 15 and 24."

[…]Where are many of these kids having sex? In empty homes. A study in the journal *Pediatrics* of public-school kids found that 91 percent were having sex in a home setting — usually after school, when parents aren't around. Absent parents are practically an invitation to early sexual initiation. According to *Pediatrics*, "Youths who were unsupervised for 30 or more hours per week were more likely to be sexually active compared with those who were unsupervised for 5 hours a week or less."

[…]This is just the beginning of Eberstadt's distressing catalog:

[image] There has been a dramatic increase in ear infections, technically known as otitis media, in children. Eberstadt quotes a specialist: "Virtually every study ever done on the increase in otitis media has shown that day care is the most important difference."

[image] According to Eberstadt, "Practically every index of juvenile mental and emotional problems is rising." Many of these maladies are linked to absent parents. A Department of Health and Human Services report found that "children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems."

And so on.

A sample chapter is here.

If you've never thought about the effects of day care and parent-child separation, you should take a look. I thought that there were places in the book where the argumentation was a bit loose, and evidence was suspect or absent, but it is a good thing to get a different point of view on these issues. My concern is that parents will be all too ready to blame the suffering of the children on "mental problems" caused by "genetics" or "brain chemistry", rather than give up their two-parents-working lifestyle, and the economic perks that it brings. Frankly, children are a pain, and some parents will prefer to have to deal with grown-ups at work instead of screaming babies at home. Somehow, they feel ashamed for having to take care of children – as if raising children is somehow useless work because the government doesn't get any tax revenue from it. And the government might encourage parents to keep working even if the children are showing symptoms of anxiety, depression, etc.

Imagine how this works out in a single-payer system, e.g. – Canada. The government wants women to work, so they can get more tax money for taking over more of private businesses and redistributing wealth in more areas to make everyone "equal". They raise taxes, and now more women must work instead of staying home. Children go into government-run day care centers funded by the government via tax money from working mothers. The day cares educate the children instead of the parents. What happens when the children develop mental problems or behavioral problems? Can the state-run medical system blame the government for forcing women to work? Of course not – the child is somehow to blame, and will have to be medicated. The parents believe this because they

do not want to believe that their drive for more material possessions has caused their child any harm. It must be the brain chemicals that are to blame – not the intrusion of government and not the selfishness of the parents.

Public school teachers in Buffalo spent 9 million on cosmetic surgery in 2009

October 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox New York reports that public school teachers spent 9 million dollars on cosmetic surgery in 2009. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The state-appointed authority overseeing Buffalo public school finances says taxpayer-covered cosmetic surgery rung up by the city's teachers totaled nearly $9 million in 2009.
>
> The Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority reports that last year's costs for such elective procedures as chemical peels and other skin treatments are up $8 million over the 2004 tab for cosmetic surgery provided under the teachers' union contract.
>
> School district officials say teachers or their dependents accounted for 90 percent of the approximately 500 people who received cosmetic surgery last year. About 10,000 district employees are eligible for the benefit.

If we make the public schools compete with private schools, charter schools, and homeschooling parents, then the ones that waste money like this would go out of business. So long as they have a direct feed of money from the government, they really don't have to care what children and parents want. The only way to *make them care* is by making them compete for parents' money.

Pro-abortion students explain why science and evidence are irrelevant

October 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When you watch pro-life debaters like Jose Ruba and Scott Klusendorf, you see them making logical arguments, citing research from hostile sources, and showing images of actual unborn children as evidence.

Well, what do you get from the pro-abortion people? (H/T Verum Serum)

They think that science cannot determine at what point a baby's heart starts beating. Yes, they think that! Or rather, they *feel* that.

Because they will not conform their wills to logic and evidence. They just want to do whatever they want to be happy and then do whatever they want to make the natural consequences of their own choices *go away* so they can keep being happy and doing whatever they want. That's what abortion is.

In Canada, Blazing Cat Fur is being sued for linking to Mark Steyn

October 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow. Things are worse than I thought up north.

Read the whole thing. (H/T The Other McCain)

This is another of those Human Rights Commission trials I am always telling you guys about. There is no free speech in Canada. Everything you say, no matter how innocent, can land you in a courtroom. The only thing that is necessary is for someone to feel offended by what you said. No damage is needed, just that *someone feels offended*. Then you go to court, and the government pays for all the court costs of the plaintiff. You have to pay your own costs, of course, and the trials go on for years – much like the waiting list for a hip replacement surgery in Ontario.

Is Barack Obama a Christian? Are Democrats the party of atheism?

October 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Watch this video of a Democrat member of Congress and see what Democrats think of God.

Is that typical for Democrats? I think so.

What about Barack Obama? Does Barack Obama believe in God? Is Barack Obama a Christian?

I don't think that he does believe in God – at least he seems to not want to acknowledge it in public.

I actually think he is an *atheist*. And Ann Coulter agrees with me. She thinks that all liberals are atheists.

Here is a helpful video showing Barack Obama's view on whether faith in Christ is necessary for salvation.

He doesn't believe that Jesus is the *only* path to salvation, which I think is *required* to be an authentic Christian.

Here is a series of 7 videos examining whether Barack Obama is a Christian. (The link has transcripts to each clip)

I really don't care whether he is a Christian or not with respect to being the President, but I do care that people know his view of Christian doctrine.

Have the Democrats finally stopped spending money on bailouts?

October 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The AP reports that bailout spending is ongoing, despite Treasury Department claims that bailouts are over. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Treasury Department says its bank bailouts are over, but the spending continues.
>
> In a Sept. 22 speech, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said the bailouts "are completely behind us."
>
> That's not quite correct. In the final six months in which it could spend money from the Troubled Asset Relief Program, Treasury set aside $243 million for new contracts for law firms, accountants and money managers to help run what's left of the bailouts – on top of the $529 million already spent on work by staff, private companies and other agencies. Many of the contracts last until 2019, and there's nothing to stop the government from hiring even more help if it's needed to chase down the remaining bailout money.
>
> Treasury's authority to spend more from the $700 billion fund expired on Oct. 3. The law requires officials to recoup as much as possible of the $185 billion still in the hands of shaky private companies. After all collections are made, the government expects to be out about $51 billion, mostly from housing programs.
>
> Rising voter anger ahead of next week's elections has made Obama administration officials reluctant to speak candidly about the ongoing cost of managing TARP. Politicians who voted for the TARP law now face tough re-election fights. By downplaying their efforts, officials sidestep criticism of bailouts that helped Wall Street without easing lending or keeping many people in their homes.
>
> A government watchdog said this week that public statements by Treasury officials around the Oct. 3 deadline appeared designed to create a mistaken sense that TARP is over.
>
> "The idea that TARP is dead is just not accurate," said Neil Barofsky, the special inspector general overseeing the program, in an interview. "People can write its obituary, people can declare that it's been put out of its misery, but there's still close to $180 billion of TARP money outstanding, and $82 billion obligated to be spent."

ECM also sent me this article from the Heritage Foundation which explains how to cut $343 billion from the federal budget without breaking a sweat.

Tammy Bruce on how the left treats conservative gays

October 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tammy Bruce

In the ultra-left-wing UK Guardian, Tammy Bruce explains why disagreement with homosexuality is not "hate". (H/T Ari from Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> The real story of bigotry and intolerance is the fact that it lives and thrives on the left. As a gay woman who spent most of her adult life pushing the cart for liberal causes with liberal friends in a liberal city, I found that sexism, racism and homophobia are staples in the liberal world. The huge irony is liberals spend every ounce of energy promoting the notion that they are the banner carriers of individualism and personal freedom, yet the hammer comes down on anyone who dares not to conform to, or who dissents even in part from, the liberal agenda.
>
> Think about what would happen if you did act up? If you dared to say you like Sarah Palin, or admire Margaret Thatcher, or think global warming is a hoax, or think Bill Clinton is a sexual predator, or that George W Bush isn't to blame for everything, or that Barack Obama has absolutely no clue what he's doing, you know there would be a price to pay. Odds are that your "liberal" friends would very liberally hate you. At the very least, being shunned would be your new experience, condemning you to suffer that horrific liberal malady called social death.
>
> So, when it comes to my comfort level as a conservative who happens to be gay, here's what I know: while many conservatives are people of faith and their religion promotes a very different point of view than mine on homosexuality (and

> a few other things!), I have found conservatives to be more tolerant, more curious and more understanding of those who are different to them than I ever did when ensconced in US liberal leadership.

You can read a biography of Tammy Bruce here. I have heard her guest hosting for Laura Ingraham on her popular national radio show many times.

I noticed that Neil Simpson's latest round-up linked to this article in HillBuzz, a political blog run by two gay guys who agree with Tammy Bruce.

Excerpt:

> Here in Boystown, the only hostility we've ever received has been from the Left.
>
> The worst religious people will ever say to us, for being gay, is that they will "pray for us" because they wish we were straight…not out of some meanness, but because they believe being straight would mean a happier life and they don't want to see people unhappy. So, this is a little ignorant on their parts to presume that the only definition of happiness is for us to like girls…but it's not coming from an evil place.

I don't think that people who disagree with homosexuality and same-sex marriage want anyone to feel bad. You can't really persuade someone if you treat them badly – everyone knows that. And when you disagree with someone, you want to persuade them, so that means you have to treat them nicely. In fact, with people I disagree with, we usually compete to see who can be the nicest.

By the way, Neil has a book review of Tammy Bruce's book "The Death of Right and Wrong". I have the audio book of that!

Virginia man arrested for plotting attacks in Washington, D.C.

October 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports on the latest terror plot, this time targeting mass transit customers. (H/T Answering Muslims)

Excerpt:

> A Virginia man has been arrested for allegedly trying to help Al Qaeda plan multiple bombings around the nation's capital, according to U.S. officials.
>
> Farooque Ahmed, 34, of Ashburn, Va., was arrested today by the FBI and charged with providing material support to terrorists and collecting information for a terrorist attack.
>
> […]According to an indictment filed in U.S. Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, between April 2010 and Oct. 25, Ahmed repeatedly met with individuals he thought were affiliated with Al Qaeda to discuss "jihad."On May 15, in a hotel room in Sterling, Va., Ahmed told one individual that he might be ready to travel overseas to conduct jihad, but only after he completed the Hajj pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia in November, according to the indictment.
>
> In addition, he agreed to watch and photograph Arlington Cemetery Metrorail station and a hotel in Washington, D.C., in order to obtain information about their security and busiest periods.
>
> In fact, on July 7, he participated in surveillance and recording images of Arlington Cemetery Metrorail station. The next month, he allegedy participated in surveillance of the Courthouse, Pentagon City and Crystal City Metrorail stations outside Washington.
>
> During a meeting at a hotel in Herndon, Va., on Sept. 28, he suggested that rolling suitcases be used instead of backpacks, and he said that he wanted to kill as many military personnel as possible, according to the indictment.

What does fearless leader Obama think about Islamic terrorism?

Well, according to the UK Telegraph, Obama wants NASA to help muslims feel better about their scientific accomplishments!

Excerpt:

> Charles Bolden, a retired United States Marines Corps major-general and former astronaut, said in an interview with *al-Jazeera* that Nasa was not only a space exploration agency but also an "Earth improvement agency".

> Mr Bolden said: "When I became the Nasa administrator, he [Mr Obama] charged me with three things.

> “One, he wanted me to help reinspire children to want to get into science and math; he wanted me to expand our international relationships; and third, and perhaps foremost, he wanted me to find a way to reach out to the Muslim world and engage much more with dominantly Muslim nations to help them feel good about their historic contribution to science, math, and engineering.”
>
> He added: “It is a matter of trying to reach out and get the best of all worlds, if you will, and there is much to be gained by drawing in the contributions that are possible from the Muslim [nations].”

Ah yes. Taxpayer dollars to build Muslim self-esteem.

Meanwhile, the FBI and DOJ are targeting pro-lifers in their training. Democrats are *so good* at national security.

Left-wing Democrat groups pack Stephen Colbert / Jon Stewart rally

October 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Politco has the list of some of the left-wing Democrat special interest groups who attended the pro-Obama rally staged by left-wing radicals Stephen Colbert and Jon Stewart.

Excerpt:

> Abortion-rights supporters, marijuana fans, environmental activists, government watchdogs and the Democratic National Committee all will be cruising the Mall and spreading their messages in the hopes of winning hearts, minds and votes three days before Election Day.
>
> — At least 100 MoveOn.org Political Action volunteers will serve 25,000 cups of hot chocolate that advertise a get-out-the-vote effort people can join by texting the organization.
>
> — Public Citizen's government watchdogs are giving out 5,000 signs featuring slogan-contest winners like "It's a Democracy, Not an Auction," chosen from 6,000 entries.
>
> — Abortion rights supporters from NARAL will be trolling the Mall, metro stations and the bus parking lot at RFK Stadium, some in Lady Liberty costumes, rewarding people who sign up to volunteer with a sticker saying, "Vote Pro-Choice. Politicians Make Crappy Doctors" — also a product of a slogan contest.
>
> — After the rally, the pro-pot activists at Students for Sensible Drug Policy are set to do eight hours of phone banking urging California voters to support Proposition 19, which would legalize marijuana in the state.
>
> None of the groups quite know what kind of crowd to expect — MoveOn's Ilyse Hogue called it a "huge mystery." — but they figure it will probably be young, liberal and frustrated. Just the kind of folks whose untapped energy can be channeled into get-out-the-vote efforts.

Two clowns organizing a rally for the Clown-In-Chief. Yay! 10% unemployment! 3 trillion in budget deficits! Everyone laugh! It's so *funny!*

The radically leftist New York Times reports that the Democratic National Committee will be heavily involved in the Colbert/Stewart rally.

Excerpt:

> …the Democratic National Committee is doing everything it can to capitalize on the event.
>
> Volunteers and staff members from the headquarters are greeting people as they get off of the buses or arrive in Washington on trains, armed with sign-up sheets

> for canvassing efforts in districts across the country.
>
> And for those rally attendees who have not gotten enough of politics by the end of the rally, they can head over to the the committee's headquarters a few blocks away, where there will be a phone bank. Committee officials said they expected to get at least 100 people there.
>
> The rally had been a subject of concern for some Democrats, who said it would siphon the most active Democrats from around the country away from the get-out-the-vote efforts in their home states and districts.
>
> But a spokeswoman for the Democratic committee's Organizing for America said Saturday that the party is supportive of the Comedy Central hosts' event.
>
> "We think having people energized and enthusiastic in the final days before Election Day is great," said the spokeswoman, Lynda Tran. "OFA is urging people to head from the rally to a phone bank or to pick up a canvass and go door to door to urge their friends, neighbors, and communities to head to the polls on Tuesday."

Indeed. And the rally is supported by Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn, Barack Obama's old anti-American terrorist buddies, too.

Excerpt:

> When comics Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert announced their rallies on the national mall scheduled for this Saturday, they may not have expected—or wanted—an endorsement from Weather Underground terrorist Bill Ayers. But Ayers told the Ford Motor Company-sponsored Green Festival in Washington, D.C. last Saturday that the event will be a needed respite from the "Alice in Wonderland" world of military domination of the planet and wars waged by the U.S. "empire."
>
> The October 30 Stewart/Colbert rallies, dubbed "Restore Sanity" and "Keep Fear Alive," are "worth attending," Ayers said.
>
> […]Ayers and Dohrn had staged a fundraiser for Obama when he began his political career by running for the Illinois State Senate. Ayers and Obama served on a board and appeared at functions together. During the campaign, however, Obama tried to play down his relationship with the terror couple.

All of Obama's buddies from Bill Ayers and Bernadine Dohrn to Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert are very excited about the rally. I'm sure Reverend Jeremiah Wright would approve, as well.

Celebrate Hallowe’en with some scary old time radio shows

October 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Its MCSpinster!
Here are some of the scariest old time radio shows EVER! These are MP3 files. Be careful, they are SCARY!

- The House in Cypress Canyon (Suspense)
- The Thing on the Fourble Board (Quiet, Please)
- Three Skeleton Key (Escape)
- Donovan’s Brain – part1, part 2 (Suspense)
- Sorry, Wrong Number (Suspense)
- The Country of the Blind (Escape)
- Ghost Hunt (Suspense)

The House in Cypress Canyon is the scariest, in my opinion. If you can’t download MP3s, then you can read the transcript here.

I am a big fan of old time radio from 1939-1959.

Greg Koukl lists 6 things you have to believe to be a Christian

October 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the article on the Stand to Reason web site.

Excerpt:

> The six essential doctrines would be: the Trinity, the deity and humanity of Christ, the bodily resurrection, man's fallenness and guilt, salvation by grace through faith by the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, and belief that Jesus is the Messiah. And you have a seventh doctrine that strikes me as a functional necessity, that is the ultimate authority of Scripture without which none of the other truths can be affirmed or asserted with confidence.
>
> By the way, it's really important that people know these doctrines because many Christians are quite kind-hearted and they end up not being very careful about drawing distinctions between truth and falsity because they don't want to disagree. I understand that. But if you were really kind-hearted then you would be honest and straight-forward with people about the demands of the gospel on their lives. The demand of the gospel is that you believe particular things to be true. It's not just a matter of mere belief, as if these are just some incidental details of theology that you might happen to be mistaken about. And if you just happen to be mistaken, why should you go to hell because of that?
>
> You don't go to hell because you just happen to mistake a doctrine. You go to hell because you have broken God's law. It is very critical to understand that. God only judges guilty people. People get judged by God not because they mess up on their theology but because they are guilty. People who are guilty get condemned. That's it. There is a way to get around that but you've to know a couple of particular things that are true before you can take advantage of the forgiveness God offers. That's where the essential doctrines come in.

He's writing from a Calvinist perspective, which I don't entirely agree with. But I don't see anything wrong in that minimal list. I get very annoyed with theologians who are not philosophically trained and good at apologetics. You can trust Greg, he has to argue about these things all the time, so he isn't stuck in a bubble like most pastors and ministers.

By the way, I've met him several times, and I've chastised him about his Calvinism all the way through the standard rebuttals and objections, so don't e-mail him and chastise him again, because I've already done it, and thoroughly.

Did Obama keep his promise to not raise taxes on the middle class?

October 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The non-partisan libertarian Cato Institute explains that Obama broke his promise not to raise taxes on the middle class.

Excerpt:

> How many times have you heard the president and the congressional Democrats say Americans who make less than $200,000 a year have not had, and will not have, any of their taxes increased? Unfortunately, it is not true, and it is likely to become a whole lot worse.
>
> The 111th Congress has already enacted $352 billion in net tax increases and may, in the upcoming lame-duck session, enact the largest tax increases in history, which will hit every man, woman and child — as well as every business in America. The good folks at Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) have put together the data on what the current Democrat-controlled Congress has done already. I have summarized their analysis in the accompanying table.

Here is table:

Net Change in Taxes 111th Congress (in billions of dollars)		
Legislation (bill number)	**Gross Tax Cuts Enacted**	**Gross Tax Increases Enacted**
H.R. 2 S-Chip	0	65.5
H.R. 1 “Stimulus”	217.6	0
H.R. 3590/4872 “Obamacare”	144.0	652.2
H.R. 5297 “Small Business”	12.0	8.0
Totals	373.0	725.7

He continues:

> The tax increase of $725.7 billion dwarfs the tax cuts of $373 billion, leaving a net tax increase of $352 billion. But it gets worse. Just $107.6 billion of the tax cuts are permanent — the rest are temporary — but all of the $725.7 billion increases are permanent.
>
> The S-Chip bill was funded by an additional $65.5 billion in tobacco tax increases. These increases are paid primarily by lower-income people. Obamacare is funded with a variety of individual and employer mandates, excise tax increases and fees, including a tax on “tanning salons,” adding up to $652 billion in tax increases, before deducting $107 billion in “exchange credits” and $37 billion in

> small-business tax credits. The vast majority of these tax increases fall on middle- and lower-income people. As with all of the revenue estimates prepared by Congress' Joint Tax Committee, most of the behavioral effects of these tax changes are ignored — e.g., how many tanning-salon customers will now opt for the sun rather than pay the tax?
>
> The president and most congressional Democrats have been claiming they will make sure no one making less than $200,000 per year will face a tax increase when all of the "Bush tax cuts" expire on midnight Dec. 31. Given they have not been truthful about the tax increases they already have enacted, why should anyone believe these new claims?

Democrats don't cut taxes, they raise them. Democrats don't reduce spending, they increase it. Democrats don't enable businesses to create more jobs, they attack businesses and we get fewer jobs. Those are the facts.

Richard Dawkins’ atheist charity sues former Dawkins disciple for fraud

November 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The center-left UK Independent explains how one person who cannot ground morality rationally defrauded an organization of people who cannot ground morality rationally. (H/T Lex Communis)

Excerpt:

> Josh Timonen was one of a small coterie of young protégés around Richard Dawkins, sharing his boss’s zealous atheism. But now he and the evolutionary theorist have fallen out spectacularly. Professor Dawkins’s charity has accused Mr Timonen of embezzling hundreds of thousands of pounds.
>
> The two atheists had become close in recent years, with Dawkins, the best-selling author and Emeritus Professor of Biology at Oxford University, even dedicating his latest book, The Greatest Show on Earth, to him. But Mr Timonen and the Dawkins foundation are now preparing for a legal wrangle.
>
> The Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science, has filed four lawsuits in a Californian court alleging that Mr Timonen, who ran its online operation in America, stole $375,000 (£239,000) over three years. It is claiming $950,000 in damages, while Mr Dawkins is suing him for $14,000 owed to him personally. Mr Timonen strongly denies the allegations.
>
> […]In documents filed at the court, the foundation says it spotted the alleged embezzlement this year when books were found detailing $500 meals, trips to Malibu Beach Inn and $314,000 in salaries paid to Mr Timonen and his girlfriend.
>
> Beside his work for Professor Dawkins, Mr Timonen has been employed by fellow atheist Christopher Hitchens and the British Humanist Foundation, according to his website.

I actually wrote an entire series of posts on how atheists cannot rationally ground objective moral standards, free will, moral accountability, moral obligations and moral significance. If it turns out that Timonen is guilty, it would be interesting to hear what he thinks about the question “Why should I be moral?” from his atheist perspective.

52 Christian hostages killed by Al Quaeda Baghdad church attack

November 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: The number of victims who were killed is up to 52, now.

The SA Times Live reports on an Al Quaeda attack on a Christian church in Baghdad.

Excerpt:

> Thirty-seven worshippers were killed and 56 wounded in a hostage drama at a Baghdad church, says an official.
>
> "The latest toll is that 37 of the hostages were killed and 56 wounded," an Iraqi interior ministry official said after Sunday's attack on the church, claimed by an Al-Qaeda group.
>
> He said that seven security forces personnel also were killed and 15 wounded, but did not specify if any were Americans.
>
> Five attackers were killed and eight arrested, he said, adding there had been more than 100 worshippers at the Sayidat al-Nejat church in central Baghdad when the hostage-takers stormed in.
>
> The SITE monitoring group said Monday that Al-Qaeda group The Islamic State of Iraq claimed its fighters were behind the attack

This story makes me think about some of my Christian co-workers who voted for Obama because they thought the Iraq war was too expensive. Christians need to care about other Christians in other countries, and we need to think about the most effective means for making their lives a little safer. Thank God that our forces were deployed so they could do something about this. To stop terrorists, you need good men armed with weapons. Talking doesn't work.

CBS News caught on tape conspiring to smear Republican candidate

November 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Big Government reports on CBS News journalists conspiring to smear Alaska Republican Joe Miller. (H/T Lex Communis)

The audio:

The transcript:

> FEMALE REPORTER: That's up to you because you're the expert, but that's what I would do…I'd wait until you see who showed up because that indicates we already know something…
>
> [Laughter]
>
> [INAUDIBLE]
>
> FEMALE REPORTER: Child molesters…
>
> MALE REPORTER: Oh yeah… can you repeat Joe Miller's…uh… list of people, campaign workers, which one's the molester?
>
> [INAUDIBLE]
>
> FEMALE VOICE: We know that out of all the people that will show up tonight, at least one of them will be a registered sex offender.
>
> [Laughter]
>
> MALE REPORTER: You have to find that one person…
>
> [INAUDIBLE]
>
> FEMALE REPORTER: And the one thing we can do is ….we won't know….we won't know but if there is any sort of chaos whatsoever we can put out a twitter/facebook alert: saying what the… 'Hey Joe Miller punched at rally.'
>
> FEMALE REPORTER: Kinda like Rand Paul…I like that.
>
> [Laughter]
>
> FEMALE REPORTER: That's a good one.

For many voters who don't look at specific policies and candidate voting records, there is a tendency to vote based on scandals and sound bites. I personally know people who voted against McCain because they didn't like Sarah Palin's voice. My attempts to get them to compare voting records on spending went unheeded.

So media bias is one way that people vote Democrat. Another way is by voter fraud.

First, here are a couple recent examples of voter fraud:

- 8,000+ early voter requests were fraudulent in Arizona
- 6,000+ voter registrations were frauduent in Colorado

So how does Obama respond to this voting fraud?

Excerpt:

> The Justice Department is sending a small pack of election observers to Arizona as Hispanic groups sound the alarm over an anti-illegal immigration group's mass e-mail seeking to recruit Election Day volunteers to help block illegal immigrants from voting.
>
> Hispanic voting rights groups say the e-mail is just an attempt to intimidate minority voters. But election fraud monitors say that there are hundreds of examples of duplicate registrations, wrong information and past unregistered voters getting ballots.
>
> Voter fraud allegations have emerged just days before the midterm in many crucial battleground states across the country, including Nevada, Pennsylvania and Florida.
>
> The Justice Department announced Friday it would deploy more than 400 federal observers to 30 jurisdictions in 18 states ahead of Tuesday's election. But Arizona officials say the department had already committed to sending observers to their state.
>
> Justice Department officials had notified Maricopa County that they would send a "handful" of election observers, even before the e-mail was sent, Matthew Benson, a spokesman for Arizona's secretary of state, told FoxNews.com.

Yes, the same DOJ that dropped charges against Black Panthers for voter intimidation at polls.

And this video of Keith Ellison, the Minnesota Democrat who opposes requiring photo identification for voters. (H/T My Pet Jawa via ECM)

Get out and vote on Tuesday because I suspect that the Democrats get a huge boost from media bias and voter fraud. My guess is that the Democrats gets somewhere around a 2-3% bump on election day from voter fraud, and the media gives them another 5-10% by focusing on irrelevancies instead of rigorous policy analysis. I have no idea how much of a boost they get from using the Department of Justice.

Greg Koukl comments on the decline of shame and personal responsibility

November 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the commentary on the Stand to Reason web site.

Read the whole thing, and take note of this part:

> But there's one necessary requirement for someone ever to feel ashamed for his behavior, and the resistance to shame is really a resistance to this necessary requirement. This requirement is: he must feel responsible for the behavior. If you were forced to do something or it was an accident, there is no reason to feel ashamed. It is when you choose to do something that is patently immoral, and you reflect on it, there is a sense of shame associated with that because you chose to do it. But this is currently one of the deep, deep flaws in the American moral character–the loss of a sense of personal responsibility.
>
> One of the reasons for the plethora of legal cases now is because everybody is saying it's somebody else's fault. I trimmed my hedges with a Sears lawnmower. I fell and it cut me. That's not my fault for doing something stupid. It is Sears fault for not telling me that I shouldn't have used their lawnmower to trim the hedges with. By the way, that's a real story and the person collected for that. There are abundant examples of those kinds of crazy things because more and more people are saying that they are not the ones who are really responsible. Everybody is a victim, and if you are not responsible then there is no reason to feel shame about what you are not responsible for. *Ergo,* no shame and no guilt. The two go hand in hand.
>
> I think it would be great if one phrase was restored to the language of our moral discourse. It would be great if we would have the moral fortitude to say with conviction, Shame on you. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. It feels kind of awkward even to say that. It sounds so rude. Of course, this cuts across the grain of the cult of self-love and self-esteem, which exists not only in our culture but even in the church.
>
> […]Nowadays we go way out of our way not to act as if there is anything even marginally questionable about any of those things. It's as if we're desperately trying to make people who do bad things feel good, or at least feel neutral when they should be feeling very bad about what they've done.
>
> It's as if people have the idea that if we can get rid of shame, we can get rid of the moral offense that is at its root. To say that you ought to be ashamed is like saying that you ought to feel something about your genuine guilt.
>
> The idea seems to be that if we can change our feeling about guilt–I'm speaking here of true moral guilt, not the emotion of guilt, which I would consider much

> like shame itself–then the guilt itself will disappear. It's like saying that if we can get rid of the symptoms that sickness causes, then we can get rid of sickness, too. If we can take away the pain that causes the sickness, the sickness is gone. It doesn't work that way.

If a sinner harms another person, they need to not gloss over the sin and just try to be friends with the victim again, without any real effort to treat the sin as a serious failure. The sinner needs to claim responsibility, to understand how the victim felt, to make it up to them with some actions, and to take steps to change their character so that the mistake won't happen again.

Without growth, the same selfish mistakes are made over and over again. And saying "I'm sorry – are we friends now? are we friends now?" doesn't fix the problem with the victim of the sin, and it doesn't prepare sinner for real relationships with real self-sacrifice and real moral obligations. It's OK to make a mistake, but you don't learn from it unless you listen to the other person and then come up with things to do to change who you are and how you treat them. Creating sympathy through deliberately selected experiences can change how you feel. For example, I'm very selfish and arrogant, so I should probably do more volunteer work and spend more time helping other people with ordinary stuff. Reading about issues to create empathy and understanding is also good.

Is Dennis Kucinich or Pete Corrigan a better candidate?

November 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This Cleveland Plain Dealer article explains the differences between Ohio candidates Dennis Kucinich and Peter Corrigan.

Excerpt:

Could the voters produce a Republican sweep thorough enough to whisk away Dennis Kucinich?

It's hard to imagine. It's harder yet to get one's hopes up. But a very credible Republican candidate is running against Cleveland's unrepresentative representative this year, and residents of the 10th Congressional District should be falling all over themselves to elect him.

His name is Peter J. Corrigan. He's a businessman with expertise in the financial side of companies and — of all things — physics. In other words, he's not stupid.

[…]A mere 17 years after Clevelanders banished him from office for sinking their city into default, Kucinich headed off to Congress. And there he has lingered — at least when not running for president — ever since.

[…]When he was first elected, the not entirely tongue-in-cheek assessment was that with 434 adults to supervise him in the House of Representatives, how much damage could Dennis do?

[…]Since arriving at the House 13 years ago, Kucinich has sponsored 104 bills — some of them containing some pretty wacky stuff.

Fortunately, only four have become law. Their effects:

> - The Ukrainian Museum and Archives has a copy of "Window on America," a TV program the U.S. Information Agency beamed at Ukraine in 1998.
> - Revolutionary War hero Casimir Pulaski is now an honorary citizen of the United States.
> - A Cleveland post office has a new name.
> - Another Cleveland post office has a new name.

His bills to yank U.S. troops out of active war zones *right this very minute*, and impeach this, that and the other member of the George W. Bush administration didn't make the cut. Embarrassed fellow Democrats hunched their shoulders, averted their eyes and voted down those crazy ideas.

[…]When he popped in to shake a few hands at a suburban Catholic church's clambake a couple of weeks ago, one wag in attendance said he was tempted to grab a microphone and introduce "Congressman Dennis Kucinich, who used to be pro-life."

[…]And then there’s that lonely battle Kucinich fought for single-payer health care, right up until President Barack Obama gave him a ride on Air Force One.

People who didn’t want to see the nation’s health care system wrecked by the federal government were praying that Kucinich would stick to his guns — relax, Congressman, it’s just a metaphor — and provide a crucial “no” vote on Obamacare.

People who bought years and years of his rhetoric about profiteering insurance companies just knew he’d show Obama and Speaker Nancy Pelosi how a person of real integrity behaves.

Instead, he caved. He voted for a bill he had vilified as an eternal guarantor of insurance company profits.

Read the whole thing and if you are in Ohio, vote for Pete Corrigan. Kucinich is the least sane person in Washington.

What is natural law and why do conservatives believe in it?

November 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bill Whittle has posted part 4 of his excellent series on what conservatives believe.

Today's episode is on natural law and the rule of law.

Here are the previous parts:

- Small government and free enterprise
- Federalism and de-centralization of power
- Wealth creation and free trade

This is wonderful for Christians to watch. When you watch them, think about how your life goals are much easier with these policies as opposed the policies in North Korea or Cuba. Your liberties, including your precious religious liberty, all hangs on these ideas. You cannot conduct a Christian life if you are taxed too much, or if the government indoctrinates your children in government-run schools, or if you cannot even afford books on apologetics and theology because you have no money left over after buying food. Think about your Christian life as an enterprise – what do you need from the government, the courts and the private sector in order to succeed?

Is Barack Obama a socialist? What is his connection to socialism?

November 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez very different?

Here is an interview with Stanley Kurtz of National Review regarding his new book exploring the real Barack Obama and his past interest in socialism. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

The answers to this interview are too awesome to quote here. So I will quote *some* of the questions, and you should click through and read the WHOLE THING.

Questions:

LOPEZ: Why was the 1983 Socialist Scholars Conference "so formative an influence on Obama's political career"?

LOPEZ: What actual evidence do you have that Obama attended the annual Socialist Scholars Conferences in New York between 1983 and 1985?

LOPEZ: What is socialism? What is socialism to Barack Obama? How has that changed since 1983? How has it stayed the same?

LOPEZ: How important is black liberation theology to understanding Barack Obama? And where does Jeremiah Wright fit in here?

LOPEZ: Was Bill Ayers his mentor or not?

LOPEZ: How important is ACORN to understanding Barack Obama and the Democratic party today? Is ACORN still a factor?

LOPEZ: Barack Obama wrote in *Dreams from My Father*: "Political discussions, the kind that at Occidental had once seemed so intense and purposeful, came to take on the flavor of the socialist conferences I sometimes attended at Cooper Union or the African cultural fairs that took place in Harlem and Brooklyn during the summers — a few of the

many diversions New York had to offer, like going to a foreign film or ice-skating at Rockefeller Center." You read a lot into "diversions." How? Why? Is he really that smart?

LOPEZ: So is Saul Alinsky really, truly important to understanding our president?

LOPEZ: What does the Midwest Academy have to do with the milestone health-care legislation the president signed this March?

LOPEZ: Do you have insights into what exactly Barack Obama makes of the abortion debate and where that fits into a full picture of him? Despite a radicalism there, he's been stealth about it, somewhat consistently, in his national career.

OK, here is an excerpt from the interview.

LOPEZ: What actual evidence do you have that Obama attended the annual Socialist Scholars Conferences in New York between 1983 and 1985?

KURTZ: Obama tells us himself in *Dreams from My Father* that he attended socialist conferences at the Cooper Union. Detailed evidence from socialist archives shows that there was only one socialist conference at the Cooper Union, and that was the Socialist Scholars Conference of 1983. Obama's name also appears on a list of pre-registrants for the 1984 Socialist Scholars Conference. There is less evidence that he attended the Socialist Scholars Conference of 1985, although I think it's likely that he did. Not only did Obama attend the previous two conferences, evidence indicates that in 1985 he was studying the writings of Harry Boyte, an important theorist of community organizing who spoke at the 1985 conference. Boyte, by the way, advised Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. I carefully dissect the evidence for Obama's conference attendance in the book.

LOPEZ: What is socialism? What is socialism to Barack Obama? How has that changed since 1983? How has it stayed the same?

KURTZ: These are the big questions. In the 1980s, the failure of Sixties and Seventies radicalism and the ascent of Ronald Reagan forced America's socialists to take another tack. They de-emphasized strategies of nationalization and focused instead on local organizing as the way to move the country toward socialism. Now, instead of nationalizing a company, the idea was to get community organizers onto boards of directors, or to force banks to run loans through groups like ACORN. This was socialism "from below," and it is the strategy that captivated Obama.

Obama's socialist community-organizing colleagues followed French Marxist theorist André Gorz. Gorz advocated a strategy he called "non-reformist reforms," proposing a series of seemingly minor tweaks to the system that were in fact designed to undermine capitalism and usher in socialism over time. This led Obama's socialist mentors to devise an early version of the "public option," although at the time they applied the idea to the energy sector, not health care. The socialism of Obama's mentors was incremental and intentionally disguised. In the book, I argue that Obama follows many of his socialist mentors' ideas to this day.

OK, here is ONE MORE answer at the end of the interview.

LOPEZ: If there's one thing you could drive home to Americans about the president, what would it be?

KURTZ: He hasn't been telling us the truth about his political convictions.

We need to start to understand Democrats by looking at their voting records, the policies they push, their positions, their past affiliations, and their life experiences. You don't know anything about Barack Obama until you read books like these that go beyond the mainstream media puff pieces and Comedy Central slapstick interviews. You need to delve into who the man really is and what he intends to do to this country. The prosperity, liberty and security of your children depends on your diligence today. Inform yourself and persuade others.

And don't forget to vote on Tuesday, and then buy the Stanley Kurtz book and the David Freddoso book. Then read them.

Harvard economist says stimulus was designed to reward Democrat constituencies

November 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

EVERYONE PLEASE GO VOTE TODAY! (NOVEMBER 2nd, 2010)

Hans Bader at the Competitive Enterprise Institute comments on a new published paper by Harvard economist Jeffrey Miron, which explains why the stimulus failed to stimulate the economy and to create more jobs.

The paper is here. (PDF)

Excerpt:

Harvard economist Jeffrey Miron explains why the $800 billion stimulus package failed in a recent article.

What's interesting about Dr. Miron's critique is that he shows how the stimulus was a failure even if you take for granted liberal assumptions about economic policy (such as Keynesian economic theory), since it was so badly designed and executed that it failed to achieve its goals, spending wastefully while failing to revive the economy. Indeed, the stimulus was so poorly tailored to the economy (and the goal of reducing unemployment) that Miron concludes that it was designed to reward politically connected "constituencies" and special-interest groups, like public-employee unions, rather than being focused on "economic stimulus."

Other Harvard economics professors like Robert Barro have also criticized the stimulus package. Barro called it "the worst bill that has been put forward since the 1930s." Former Obama economic advisor Martin Feldstein, a Harvard professor who is a big believer in stimulus packages in principle, said that the stimulus designed by Obama and congressional Democrats was "poorly done"

Much stimulus money has been wasted. It has gone to prisoners and dead people, wasteful welfare spending, abandoned bridges to nowhere, and unnecessary government buildings. The stimulus subsidized foreign green jobs and wiped out jobs in America's export sector.

The "'stimulus' is not the road to economic recovery. It's the problem, not the solution, writes Nobel Prize winning economist Vernon L. Smith." Other Nobel Laureates like Gary Becker have also criticized the stimulus package. 200 economists signed a statement publicly opposing the stimulus package in an ad published in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*.

So the stimulus bill was a failure because it was not designed to grow the economy or create jobs.

What was the real purpose of the stimulus bill?

George Mason University professor Veronique de Rugy looked at recovery.org and found that Democrat districts got more stimulus money than Republican districts.

Here's the first chart:

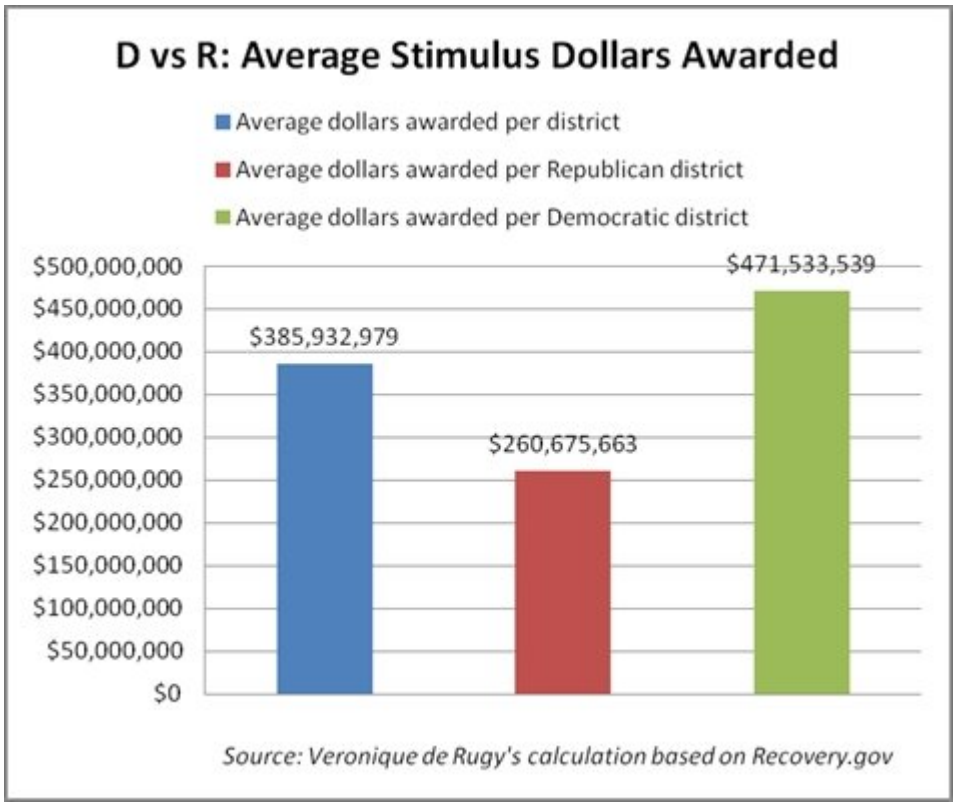

Stimulus spending by voting district affiliation

She writes:

> ...based on my new analysis of the Recovery.org data, Democratic districts are getting 1.8 times more money on average than Republican districts. Using Recovery.gov data, and cleaning it up seriously to be able to use it, we find that Republican districts are getting on average $260.6 million in stimulus awards while democratic districts are getting on average $471.5 million. The average is award per district is $385.9 million.
>
> Interestingly, my data also confirms that the stimulus funds are not allocated based on unemployment rates or even variations in unemployment rates. So basically, if the administration believes that government spending can create jobs, the allocation of the funds doesn't show it.

And here's the second chart showing which government departments got stimulus money.

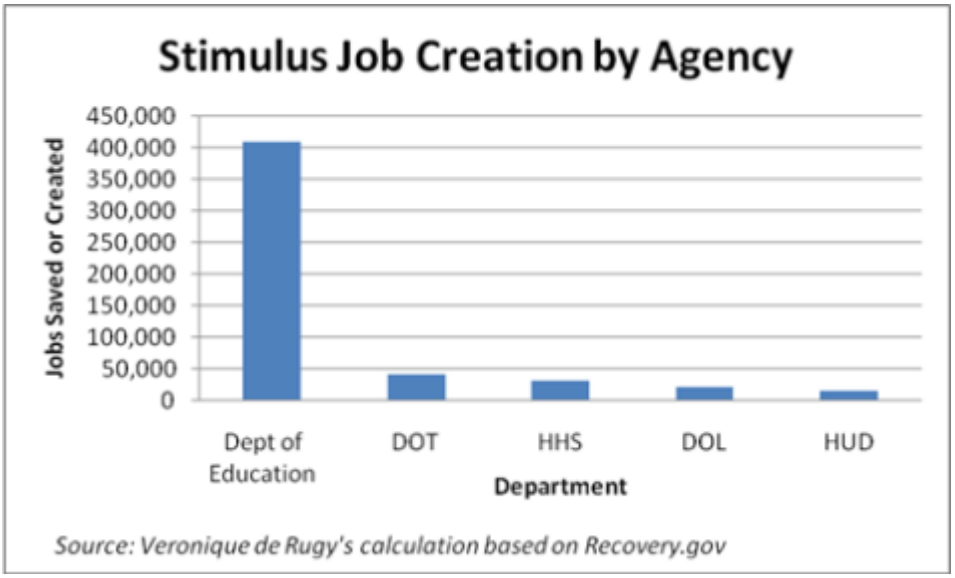

Stimulus spending by government agency

She writes:

> Based on the Recovery.gov data, more than two third of the 594,754.3 jobs "created or saved" with the stimulus funds were "created or saved" in the Department of Education (see chart). Basically, what the administration meant by shovel ready projects was funding for your next door teacher.
>
> […]A third of all union jobs are in Education
>
> 33 percent of the education industry is unionized
>
> The union boss, Andy Stern, was appointed to be on the president's debt commission.

The stimulus bill was never about stimulating the economy. It was about rewarding Democrat special interest groups. Remember, people who disagree with Obama are his "enemies". And that means he isn't there to govern for *all* the people *equally*. He's there to reward *his people. With Your Money.*

Frank Turek and Wayne Grudem think you should go vote today!

November 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

EVERYONE PLEASE GO VOTE TODAY! (NOVEMBER 2nd, 2010)

Here's Frank Turek's post on Jesus, Christians and politics on the Cross Examined blog. Excerpt:

> I often hear Christians claiming that we ought to just "preach the Gospel" and not get involved in politics. This is not only a false dilemma; it's stupid (how's that for direct?). If you think "preaching the Gospel" is important like I do, then you ought to think that politics is important too. Why? Because *politics and law affects your ability to preach the Gospel!* If you don't think so, go to some of the countries I've visited—Iran, Saudi Arabia, China. You can't legally "preach the Gospel" in those countries—or practice other aspects of your religion freely—because politically they've ruled it out.
>
> It's already happening here. There are several examples where religious freedoms are being usurped by homosexual orthodoxy. This summer a Christian student was removed from Eastern Michigan University's (a public school) counseling program because, due to her religious convictions, she would not affirm homosexuality to potential clients. A judge agreed (a similar case is pending in Georgia). In Massachusetts, Catholic charities closed their adoption agency rather than give children to homosexual couples as the state mandated. In Ohio, University of Toledo HR Director Crystal Dixon was fired for writing a letter to the editor in her local newspaper that disagreed with homosexual practice.
>
> More violations of religious liberty are on the way from the people currently in charge. Lesbian activist Chai Feldbaum, who is a recess appointment by President Obama to the EEOC, recently said regarding the inevitable conflict between homosexuality and religious liberty, "I'm having a hard time coming up with any case in which religious liberty should win." So much for tolerance. The people who say they're fighting for tolerance are the most intolerant, totalitarian people in politics.
>
> Getting involved in politics is necessary if for no other reason to protect your religious liberty, and the liberties of us all. So if you're a Christian, follow the example of Christ—call out hypocrites and fools, and vote them out on Tuesday!

Religious liberty is my top priority and my core value. You can't preach the gospel without

religious liberty – so don't just stand there and watch it slip away! Get out there and vote! The right to evangelize and discuss Christianity in public is already under attack in places like Canada and the UK! Don't think that it can't happen here – it can! Today is the day that you defend the gospel by defending your right to even talk about the gospel in public without having to worry that someone will censor or sue you for offending them. Get out there and vote for your liberty!

Wayne Grudem also encourages you to vote

Should Christian beliefs impact politics?

Do pastors have the right to speak from the pulpit about political, social or cultural issues?

What about the so-called "separation of church and state"?

You can find out more about Grudem's new book here – it's a 50+ page excerpt from the book! I've got my copy! And you can listen to podcasts from his Sunday School class here.

Frank Pastore thinks that politics flows from theological convictions

Frank Pastore has a Christian radio show on KKLA in Los Angeles.

Here is his post on Crosswalk.com about Christians and politics – specifically, he is responding to critics who say that he should not talk so much about politics on his Christian radio show, and that he should especially not argue about politics.

Excerpt:

> Perhaps many Christians believe these things because they don't understand politics is really an exercise of theology applied—one way we love our neighbors as ourselves. Our political and social policies should grow out of our theology, not vice versa. We are not to reverse engineer our theology based upon our political and social agendas. Our faith is foundational to everything else. For Christians, theology creates and shapes our approach to politics; for non-Christians, politics creates and shapes their approach to theology—or at least their worldview.
>
> A Christian becomes too political when their politics is no longer rooted in their theology, when their faith becomes merely peripheral and unnecessary to their political agenda, rather than the one thing that is fundamental and essential.
>
> How we vote to spend our tax dollars, what economic and social policies we hope to advance through votes for particular candidates, and what domestic and foreign policies we hope our government advances—these things are the applications of the values rooted in our Christian worldview.
>
> Just as how I choose to invest my time and treasure is the best expression of whether I'm living out my Christian values, so too what the government spends money on and what policy preferences it pursues is the best expression of our true American values.
>
> The best way for me to love my neighbor is through those things I choose to do

> personally. The second best way is through votes for candidates who support policies that I believe will promote the common good. Thus, I am political because I am loving, and I am loving because I am Christian. Therefore, I should argue—albeit in a God-glorifying manner—about politics.

Get out there and vote, people! And make all your friends and family vote, too!

Related posts

- Book review of Wayne Grudem's new book by Justin Taylor
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment
- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible
- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

I think Dennis Prager is going to have Wayne Grudem on at 2 PM

November 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager says that he is going to have a Christian speaker on at 2 PM Eastern to discuss politics. Someone who has written a book applying the Bible to every political and economic issue there is. I think he must be talking about Wayne Grudem's new book "Politics and the Bible".

You can listen to Prager online at KRLA or WHK or WWTC or radio or hundreds of other stations!

Here is a radio streaming guide that may also help.

This is scheduled for 11 AM Pacific / 2 PM Eastern. 30 minutes from now!

UPDATE: Wow! I love Dennis Prager! This was the best show ever!

What would happen if Paul Ryan headed the Budget committee?

November 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

r

Rep. Paul Ryan

Politico has a profile of Paul Ryan and discusses his policy ideas.

Excerpt:

> Ryan will easily win a seventh term in this swing district. But as this budget wonk is poised to take command of the Budget Committee chairmanship in a Republican House, he's going to have to navigate factions of no-compromise conservatives and angry post-election liberals if he expects to find a Goldilocks-type solution on the federal budget.
>
> Ryan stands to be the most important player in what may be the most consequential budget debate since the government shutdown of 1995. He is perhaps the only Republican in Congress who seems able to negotiate with both John Boehner and Barack Obama, but he still has to prove that his legendary budget expertise can be translated into real action if he's granted the power of the Budget Committee gavel.
>
> […]His critics concede that Ryan is the federal official who has offered the most detailed plan — titled the "Roadmap" — that is currently on the table. Democratic budget experts have begun to measure his approach and his skills, but they voice uncertainty over whether they can do business with him.
>
> "Because of Ryan's open and engaging personality and intelligence, people like to deal with him. But it's unclear whether he can reach agreement on big

> contentious budget issues with people on the other side of the aisle who have strong philosophical differences with him," said Bob Greenstein, executive director of the liberal-leaning Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. "Will he be willing, despite the radical nature of his proposals, to work out significant compromises in the next two years? We shall see."
>
> […]"Paul is more of a detail guy," said Mike Sommers, policy director for Minority Leader John Boehner. "The road map takes on big issues in a serious way. It is a logical progression of his work. He is dealing in depth with the leading issue of the day."
>
> Former Sen. Bob Kasten (R-Wis.), who hired Ryan immediately after his 1992 graduation from Miami (Ohio) University, remains a huge fan. "His road map is the real thing on where we need to go. Even Democrats who criticize him respect Paul Ryan for having the courage to show what needs to be done." Although many of its details may not survive, Kasten said, "the road map will become overarching in the emphasis on reducing spending in the next two years."
>
> Asked about Ryan's deal-making skills, he added, "Obama will have to make a decision. If he continues with his Keynesian policies, it will be a nightmare. … Paul doesn't want to blow up the government. He wants to see it work in a fiscally responsible way."
>
> As an undergraduate, Ryan majored in economics and he hoped to pursue further studies in economic modeling, notably on currency forecasting. But his job with Kasten led to staff positions with the late Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.) at Empower America and then with Sam Brownback of Kansas in both the House and the Senate. He returned to Wisconsin in 1998 to run for an open House seat and was elected at age 28 with an impressive 57 percent win.

If the Republicans take the House, he should be given the Budget Committee gavel.

Marco Rubio wins Florida Senate race – first tea party senator!

November 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

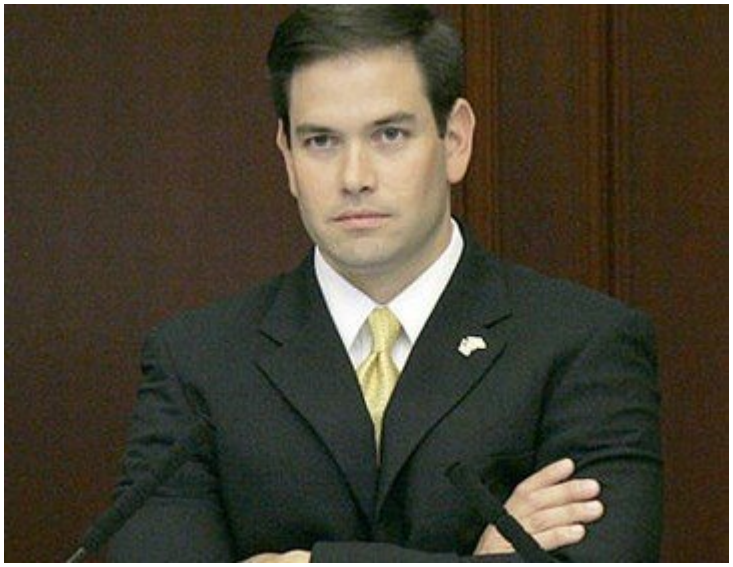

Florida Senator Marco Rubio

Here's the story on Marco Rubio's landslide victory in the Florida Senate race.

Excerpt:

MARCO RUBIO, REPUBLICAN

An attorney, the 39-year-old Miami native served as speaker of the Florida House and became a rising star in the GOP as a fiscal conservative.

Born to Cuban immigrants, Rubio began his career in public service as a city commissioner in West Miami and entered the Florida House at age 29. Within eight years he ascended from a representative seated by special election to majority whip, majority leader and eventually House speaker.

Fiscal conservatism is the cornerstone of Rubio's philosophy. He says controlling the national debt and paring government entitlement programs are the most important things lawmakers can accomplish. Rubio wants to reinstate tax cuts for the wealthy enacted under President George W. Bush in 2001 and 2003, slash corporate taxes and eliminate taxes on capital gains and dividend profits. He also supports eliminating the estate tax.

In the Republican primary for the Senate, Rubio initially trailed Gov. Charlie Crist by 30 points. The national GOP quickly embraced Crist, but Rubio overtook him with substantial tea party support. Twice he set records for the most lucrative three-month fundraising periods for a Senate race in Florida, collecting $4.5 million and $5 million, respectively. Crist, meanwhile, turned to a bid as an independent.

Rubio lives in West Miami with his wife, Jeanette, and four children.

Now, we finally get to remove the "to-be" from his blogroll entry which I put there the day

he announced he was running for Senate. Mr. Rubio is 39 years old. He's a star now, and he's going to go far!

Another tea party senator also won in Kentucky – Rand Paul.

Excerpt:

KENTUCKY:

RAND PAUL, REPUBLICAN

The 47-year-old eye doctor tapped into tea party fervor with a fiercely antiestablishment message. He has strong family ties to politics — his father is Republican Rep. Ron Paul of Texas, a former presidential candidate and libertarian icon.

Quiet and intense, Rand Paul railed against government bailouts and deficit spending in promoting low taxes and limited government. He's also personally frugal, according to friends who say he mows the lawn at his home in a gated community and shops the Internet for cheap golf shoes.

Paul was born in Pennsylvania, grew up in Texas and settled in Bowling Green, a college town near his wife's hometown, about 20 years ago. He runs his own ophthalmology practice.

Paul attended Baylor University but left early without a bachelor's degree for medical school at Duke University. He helped create a certification group for ophthalmologists after objecting to a powerful medical group's policy.

Paul and his wife, Kelley, have three sons. He has coached youth baseball, soccer and basketball, and his family attends a Presbyterian church, where his wife is a deacon.

He's only 47 years old!

We also have more new senators in Ohio (Rob Portman), Pennsylvania (Pat Toomey), New Hampshire (Kelly Ayotte), Indiana (Dan Coats), Wisconsin (Ron Johnson), North Dakota (John Hoeven).

Tea party candidate Nikki Haley is the new governor of South Carolina

November 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Nikki Haley and her husband Michael Haley

The Hindustan Times is awfully proud of our two Indian-American governors – Bobby Jindal and now Nikki Haley. (Both Republicans!)

Excerpt:

> Parents of both Nikki Randhawa Haley, who on Tuesday won the governor's election in South Carolina, and Bobby Jindal, the other Indian American governor of Lousiana, were born to immigrants from Punjab. Nikki Haley is the first woman and the second person of Indian origin after Bobby Jindal to become governor in the US. Jindal won the top job in Louisiana state in 2007.
>
> […]"I don't do anything halfway – I'm in this race to win," Nikki had told IANS in July taking time off her busy campaign for raising money.
>
> "I am confident that come November, the people of South Carolina will send me to the Governor's Mansion.
>
> "When they (voters) do, I will immediately get to work to give them progress that makes them proud."
>
> Asked whether her Sikh background will matter in the race, she had said,"What matters most in South Carolina – and I imagine elsewhere in the country – is not the personalities of the candidates but the message they carry.
>
> "Our message of bringing good government back to the people of this state, creating jobs by reforming our tax code so it's flatter and fairer, and reminding government of the value of a dollar resonates with all the people of this state.
>
> "I am very proud of my background and how I was raised. Just as in 2004 (when her opponents had raised the issue of background) I will hold my head up high and focus on what I can do for the people of this state."

It seems to me that the Indian culture of hard work and family is a natural fit with conservative ideals.

Why are so many British feminists converting to Islam?

November 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this article a while back about a trend of conversions to Islam by women in the UK.

Here's an example story:

> Women like Kristiane Backer, 43, a London-based former MTV presenter who had led the kind of liberal Western-style life that I yearned for as a teenager, yet who turned her back on it and embraced Islam instead. Her reason? The 'anything goes' permissive society that I coveted had proved to be a superficial void.
>
> The turning point for Kristiane came when she met and briefly dated the former Pakistani cricketer and Muslim Imran Khan in 1992 during the height of her career. He took her to Pakistan where she says she was immediately touched by spirituality and the warmth of the people.
>
> Kristiane says: 'Though our relationship didn't last, I began to study the Muslim faith and eventually converted. Because of the nature of my job, I'd been out interviewing rock stars, travelling all over the world and following every trend, yet I'd felt empty inside. Now, at last, I had contentment because Islam had given me a purpose in life.'
>
> 'In the West, we are stressed for superficial reasons, like what clothes to wear. In Islam, everyone looks to a higher goal. Everything is done to please God. It was a completely different value system.
>
> 'Despite my lifestyle, I felt empty inside and realised how liberating it was to be a Muslim. To follow only one god makes life purer. You are not chasing every fad.
>
> 'I grew up in Germany in a not very religious Protestant family. I drank and I partied, but I realised that we need to behave well now so we have a good after-life. We are responsible for our own actions.'
>
> For a significant amount of women, their first contact with Islam comes from - dating a Muslim boyfriend. Lynne Ali, 31, from Dagenham in Essex, freely admits to having been 'a typical white hard-partying teenager'.
>
> She says: 'I would go out and get drunk with friends, wear tight and revealing clothing and date boys.
>
> 'I also worked part-time as a DJ, so I was really into the club scene. I used to pray a bit as a Christian, but I used God as a sort of doctor, to fix things in my life. If anyone asked, I would've said that, generally, I was happy living life in the fast lane.'
>
> But when she met her boyfriend, Zahid, at university, something dramatic

> happened.
>
> She says: ‘His sister started talking to me about Islam, and it was as if everything in my life fitted into place. I think, underneath it all, I must have been searching for something, and I wasn’t feeling fulfilled by my hard-drinking party lifestyle.’

Why is this happening? Why are women in the West choosing Islam? Is it because Islam is tested and found to be true?

I have a hypothesis, but I am open to hearing other ideas. I think that what these women are looking for is not really truth, but community and a system of rules that they can follow in order to feel accepted by the community and to feel less guilty about the mistakes they made in the past. It’s not like they are undertaking some survey of religions and evaluating each one based on logical and evidential criteria. It’s not like they watched debates and listened to multiple sides in conflict. No. It’s that they partied a lot, then felt guilty, then picked a religion with rules about prayer and dress, (easy things they can show off and talk about), that would make their guilt go away. They turned over a new leaf and their new community-approved behavior is giving them acceptance and self-esteem. Truth has nothing to do with their search, and they don’t think that anyone else’s view is “false” either. They have no intention of arguing for their new convictions with other faith communities to see whose view is true. The point of their conversion is NOT to be RIGHT, it’s to FEEL GOOD about themselves after all the bad things they did. Religion is really on the same level as yoga, vegetarianism, recycling or pilades – it’s about *subjective experience and feelings* not about *objective truth*.

I identify this phenomenon primarily with women, but many men do it too. I would say something like 70% of women and 30% of men have this subjective approach to religion. This is why I complain about the “feminization” of Christianity. But Biblical Christianity is *not* feminized – it’s not postmodern, it’s not relativistic and it’s not universalist. We Christians should not want to appeal to the felt needs of people looking for community and self-esteem. We are a community based on truth, not a community based on feelings and needs and emotions. If religion is nothing but community and emotions, then there is nothing special about Jesus. He’s just one flavor – you can choose him if you like him, but if you don’t like him then you aren’t rationally obligated (by arguments and evidence) to choose him. I am appalled some people think of religion this way. It annoys me intensely. They are treating religion as the search for handbag or a new pair of shoes – shopping therapy to assuage guilty feelings.

When I see people choosing their religion like these women, it really causes me to wonder what is really going on in our churches. Is that all we are – a country club where people sing and feel a sense of belonging to a community and that some untested spirit in the sky is taking care of them? I know that the Bible doesn’t sanction a subjective approach to religion, but what if the church gets feminized and just dumps the Bible and focuses on creating tolerant welcoming communities and self-esteem building? Do we really believe that these moral rules are authoritative, and that they reflect God’s character and his design for us – our moral obligations? What if we minimize truth and sin and Hell and just

give people a country club where people can discuss the weather, vacations and their kids' extracurricular activities, and sing songs together, and assuage their guilt over their mispent youths. I am not saying that Christians have to be morally perfect – but maybe we would project seriousness about these matters if we were a little more *informed* and a little more *self-sacrificial*.

The question I have is – why don't Christians make a bigger deal about the importance of truth so they can distinguish Christianity from other religions, and why don't we do a better job of explaining our moral rules, (e.g. – chastity, pro-life, pro-marriage), with real logic and real evidence? Maybe if we made our Biblical criteria (truth) known, then people who choose Islam would realize that they were just jumping at religions based on their personal preferences, and neglecting to ask which one is true. Maybe then we would have something to offer other than nice buildings, "non-judgmental" (moral relativist) people, and good worship songs that make people have happy feelings. I know that people actually choose churches based on superficial things like whether they like the building or the songs. It makes me sick. It makes me sick to think that atheists are looking at us and thinking that we are all just irrational weaklings mouthing words that we have no reason to believe, and adopting rules in order to feel good about ourselves. Do people in the church have *any idea* how this looks to outsiders? They're not stupid. They can tell authentic Christians from fakes.

Michael Egnor asks atheist P.Z. Meyers about the New Atheism worldview

November 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, I should say that if you don't know who P.Z. Myers is, you should know that he is an incredibly arrogant and vulgar internet atheist. He is very popular on the Internet with atheists because of his foaming-at-the-mouth, howling-at-the-moon ranting against intelligent design, theism in general and Christianity in particular.

Anyway, Myers is interviewed by Michael Egnor, a neurosurgeon and professor of pediatrics, who appeared in the movie "Expelled". He asks P.Z. Myers questions about the New Atheism, then comments on Myers' answers. (H/T ECM)

Here are the questions:

1. Why is there anything?
2. What caused the Universe?
3. Why is there regularity (Law) in nature?
4. Of the Four Causes in nature proposed by Aristotle (material, formal, efficient, and final), which of them are real? Do final causes exist?
5. Why do we have subjective experience, and not merely objective existence?
6. Why is the human mind intentional, in the technical philosophical sense of aboutness, which is the referral to something besides itself?
7. Does Moral Law exist in itself, or is it an artifact of nature (natural selection, etc.)
8. Why is there evil?

Myers' answers are short and betray an incredible ignorance of the philosophical issues.

Here's TWO of the eight answers and Egnor's responses:

1) Why is there anything?

Myers: Nothing is unstable.

Egnor: "Nothing" is not unstable. Nothing is not stable. Nothing is not metastable, nor hypostable, nor quasi-stable. Nothing is nothing. Nothing has no properties. "Nothing is unstable" is gibberish. Hence its central place in New Atheist atheology. If by "nothing" Myers is referring to the emergence of matter by quantum fluctuations (today's trendy New Atheist evasion of theism), I observe that a quantum field isn't "nothing." A quantum field is very much something, in need of explanation. A quantum field gives rise to particles, not to itself. You have to explain the existence of the quantum field. Nice try. The question "why is there anything" is fundamental. The classical theist answer is that God's essence is His existence, and He is the ground of existence. Note that God (as understood classically) does *not* need explanation or cause. The uncaused nature of God is *demonstrated*, not stipulated, by classical theism (see Aristotle's Prime Mover argument and Aquinas' First, Second, and Third Ways). Furthermore, the Prime Mover

argument (Aquinas' First Way) demonstrates that God's existence is necessary even if the universe was eternal and had no beginning; His existence is necessary for existence of the universe at every moment. New Atheists don't understand the question, don't understand the terminology, and don't understand their own rudimentary logical contradictions. New Atheist ignorance doesn't mean that classical theism is true; it merely means that New Atheism has nothing to say. But I sort of suspected that.
2) What caused the Universe?

Myers: Nothing caused it.

Egnor: "Nothing" doesn't cause anything. Nothing is absence of existence. Nothing has no agency. "Nothing caused…" is an oxymoron.

Let's look at coherent answers to the question. The basic cosmological argument is this: 1) Whatever begins to exist is caused by another 2) the Universe began to exist 3) The Universe was caused by another. Modus ponens. Something that begins to exist cannot cause itself, because that would mean that it was prior to itself, which is nonsense.

The universe *began* to exist 13.75 ± 0.17 billion years ago. So another caused it. The universe is nature, so its cause is *super-nature-al* (sometimes the hyphens and the last 'e' are omitted). The supernatural cause of the universe is an insight provided by science and reason. Denial of a supernatural cause of the universe is denial of science (Big Bang Cosmology) and reason (elementary logic).

Let's consider the alternatives:

1) Perhaps the universe was caused by a quantum fluctuation, a black hole, fecundity of a multiverse, ad nauseum (vide supra). But then the causation problem just shifts to the quantum field or the black hole or the multiverse. What caused the quantum field, or the maternal black hole, or the whole damn multiverse itself? You can't change the subject.

2) Perhaps the word "cause" doesn't apply to the universe at all. Perhaps the universe is a Kantian noumenon, not a phenomenon, and it's not subject to the rules that govern the things we perceive (this was Kant's gambit against the Cosmological Argument).

But if this is true, then the principle of sufficient reason is invalid. The principle of sufficient reason, for you New Atheists, is the principle that anything that happens does so for a reason. It's the proposition that everything that begins to exist has a cause. If you deny the principle of sufficient reason to elide the inference to theism, then there is nothing wrong with asserting that lesser things in the universe (e.g. rabbits, hominids) popped into existence for no reason as well. If the whole shebang doesn't need reason, no thing needs a reason. You can invoke "it's uncaused" anytime. If you can shuck the principle of sufficient reason for the existence of the universe, you sure as hell can shuck the principle of sufficient reason for origin of species. POP. The universe exists. POP. Primordial prokaryotes exist. No need for OOL research. POP. Trilobites exist. No need for "natural selection" when you've got "uncaused existence." POP. Whales exist. POP. Man exists. New Atheist creationism, with no need for God. No need for any explanations. Stuff just POPs into existence. POP POP POP. No need for evolutionary biologists.

If the universe doesn't need a cause, no part of it needs a cause. Denial of the principle of sufficient reason is denial of logic, science, and history, all of it. Any surprise that New Atheists invoke it? They'd rather invoke nonsense than admit the obvious: there is a Cause.

I like to blog on the scientific research and the scientific evidence, but I still think that it is important to understand philosophical concepts like intentionality, final causes and the ontological foundations of morality. That's table stakes for a comprehensive worldview. Science only provides you with experimental confirmation for premises in logically valid arguments. You can't prove anything without an argument. And that requires at least some knowledge of logic and analytical philosophy.

You might also like to read the survey I gave some of the atheists I know and their horrible answers that show what atheists really think about truth and morality.

Atheists oppose science and evidence

- Physicist Frank Tipler weighs in on Stephen Hawking's theory
- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Stephen Meyer debating Michael Shermer on the origin of life
- Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

Theists support science and evidence

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

Saskatchewan planning to abolish its Human Rights Tribunal

November 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

Wow. I am speechless over this good news.

The Saskatchewan Leader-Post reports on the conservative Saskatchewan Party's plan to introduce a bill to abolish the Human Rights Tribunal and replace it with non-kangaroo courts. (H/T Small Dead Animals via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The provincial government plans to introduce human rights legislation that will dissolve the Saskatchewan Human Rights Tribunal in favour of having a court hear the complaints.
>
> Justice Minister Don Morgan said the change, among other reforms to the Human Rights Code, is being undertaken at the suggestion of Judge David Arnot, chief commissioner of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. The commission is the body that receives human rights complaints and occasionally refers a matter to a tribunal for a hearing.
>
> "There seemed to be a lot of support for going forward with it so we felt it was an appropriate piece of legislation to bring at this time," said Morgan, whose Sask. Party government signalled its intent in the throne speech to move forward with changes, which were first discussed in the spring.
>
> "It will allow for a more streamlined process, more mediation and more expedited handling of files. But the most significant thing is it will no longer be the human rights tribunal. The complaints, when they're referred on, will go directly to the Court of Queen's Bench," Morgan said.

The only problem with Saskatchewan now is that it's really cold there, and Kate

McMillan’s beloved Roughriders aren’t doing too well right now.

UPDATE: Here is a quick introduction to the Human Rights Commissions and Human Rights Tribunals.

That’s Ezra Levant, a Jewish conservative who is the King of free speech in Canada.

Related posts

- **In Canada, Blazing Cat Fur is being sued for linking to Mark Steyn**
- Canadian Human Rights Commissions continue war on Christians
- Video of Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn testifying against Canadian HRCs
- Mark Steyn on a Chicago radio show, commercial-free
- Mark Steyn and Ezra Levant on a Chicago radio show
- The Conservative Party takes up free speech in British Columbia
- The Conservative Party takes up free speech in Ontario
- Video of Ezra Levant discussing free speech on the Michael Coren show
- Video interview with Ezra Levant by the libertarian Fraser Institute

Iowa voters dismiss three judges who redefined traditional marriage

November 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

USA Today reports on the fate of three Iowa judges who redefined traditional marriage by legislating from the bench. (H/T Dr. J at Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> Three Iowa Supreme Court justices lost their seats Tuesday in a historic upset fueled by their 2009 decision that allowed same-sex couples to marry. Vote totals from 96% of Iowa's 1,774 precincts showed Chief Justice Marsha Ternus and Justices David Baker and Michael Streit with less than the simple majority needed to stay on the bench. Their *removal marked the first time an Iowa Supreme Court justice has not been retained since 1962,* when the merit selection and retention system for judges was adopted.

Dr. J writes:

> Other courts, state and federal, have failed to discover a right to same sex marriage. It is disingenous for these justices' to try to brazen it out by claiming that they based "their decisions on the law and the Constitution and nothing else." They are assuming the very thing that needs to be proven, and which Iowa voters believe cannot be proven, namely that there is an open and shut case for same sex marriage to be found in the Iowa Constitution.

If the right to redefine marriage was Constitutional, the people could surely be convinced to have their legislators enact it in the normal way. Judicial activism would not be needed. Good riddance.

Craig Hazen explains why Christianity is not like other religions

November 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A 28-minute lecture delivered at Biola University, the best Christian university on the planet.

(Link fixed, thanks Mary)

Topics:

- Christianity is different from other religions for several reasons
- Christianity is testable using objective evidence
- you can offer objective evidence for and against it
- compare that to Zen Buddhism, for example, which is about subjective experiences
- Buddhism is subjective, you can't test it objectively
- Christianity can be tested using the historical method
- if Jesus did not rise from the dead, Christianity is false
- Christianity is set up for inquiry
- You can know whether the resurrection happened using historical methods
- "faith" in Christianity is not belief without arguments and evidence
- the Bible presents it's claims about God as testable and public

This was very fun to watch.

Free speech hero Mark Steyn on the Michael Coren show

November 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mark Steyn interview in four parts, posted by SDAMatt. (H/T The Mysterious D)

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Part 4:

You can find out more about Mark Steyn here.

Related posts

- Saskatchewan planning to dismantle Human Rights Tribunal
- In Canada, Blazing Cat Fur is being sued for linking to Mark Steyn
- Canadian Human Rights Commissions continue war on Christians
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Why we work: to buy Mike Licona's new resurrection book

November 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

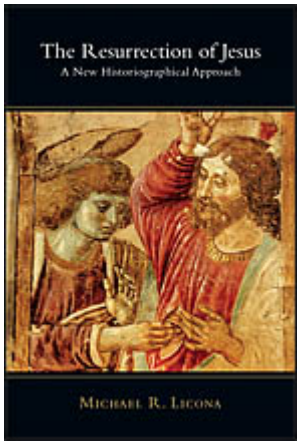

Mike's new book on the resurrection
And what a big book it is! 718 pages!

Here are the details from Brian Auten:

Michael Licona, Research Professor of New Testament at Southern Evangelical Seminary, has just released a monumental new book: *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach[image]*.

From the publisher:

> Could there be any new and promising approach to the question of the historicity of Jesus' resurrection? Yes, answers Michael Licona. And he convincingly points us to a significant deficiency in approaching this question: our historiographical orientation and practice. He then carefully and effectively applies his principles and methods to the question of Jesus' resurrection.

This book is sure to become required reading for anyone exploring this field, as Michael Licona has made an extremely significant contribution to scholarship in this area.

Pick it up today.

The book is $27 dollars on Amazon, but you probably won't need another book on the resurrection. I try not to buy books by people who haven't debated anyone on the other side, but that won't be a problem with Licona. He's debated everybody on the other side – like Bart Ehrman, Richard Carrier and Shabir Ally. He's battle-tested.

I took a look at the endorsements, and I recognize tons of historians.

Here's one:

"Licona has tackled his subject energetically, with near-obsessive thoroughness. He concludes that if one approaches the sources without an a priori commitment to the impossibility of resurrection, the 'Resurrection Hypothesis' is the interpretation that most adequately accounts for the evidence. Thus, the book boldly challenges the naturalistic

presuppositions of post-Enlightenment historical criticism. At the very least, Licona has shown that the usual naturalistic explanations of the resurrection tradition are, on the whole, weak, speculative and often tendentious. “I am not aware of any scholar who has previously offered such a thorough and fair-minded account of the historiographical prolegomena to the resurrection question. Furthermore, Licona’s discussion of the ‘bedrock’ historical evidence is appropriately nuanced and carefully modulated, not claiming more than can be supported by the consensus findings of qualified scholars. This lends credibility to his conclusions. Licona has presented a fair and vigorous case for his position. No doubt many readers will be unconvinced by his arguments, but no one can accuse him of naivet? or of ignoring counterarguments. “This study spans fields that are too rarely brought into conversation: New Testament studies and historiographical theory. Licona is to be commended for this undertaking and for producing a study that has both wide range and significant depth.”

—Richard B. Hays, George Washington Ivey Professor of New Testament and dean, Duke Divinity School

If you’re looking for a book on the resurrection, this might be a good one. Seems like it will cover everything.

UPDATE: Wow, big Mike Licona post up at Reason to Stand. Lots of Mike Licona videos.

Can a person be a Christian and yet still do bad things?

November 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I sometimes write posts about atheists and say that they will have difficulty grounding the minimal requirements of morality if the universe is an accident and they are just lumps of matter. To show how this works out, I like to cite famous atheists who also managed to get political power, and then point out how they treated other people. I then say that doing bad things is not really *wrong* on atheism, since morality is really based on doing whatever you feel like that makes you feel good and that your peers will approve of. And if you want to do something they won't approve of, you can still do it, as long as no one ever finds out.

Atheist readers sometimes object that Christians can behave just as badly as atheists.

But consider this post from Retha's English-language blog. (She's from South Africa)

Excerpt:

However you choose to define Christian, the definition most certainly is not "*anyone who calls himself a Christian, is a Christian."* We don't use that definition for anything else. We don't believe that everyone who calls themselves "honest" are. We don't believe that everyone who calls themselves "not overweight" are not. You cannot be a king, or a genius, or a dog, or a tall person, by calling yourself that. (If it worked that way, it would have been a very strong temptation to call myself drop-dead gorgeous.)

Simple word etymology is more useful: Christian has the root word *Christ* and the suffix –*ian*. A Christian is a Christ-following/ Christ-imitating person. Who is meant when we speak of Christ? He is the Jesus described in the New Testament, as described there.To be a *Christ-ian*, you need to follow/ imitate Jesus as he is painted in the Bible. That is where He is painted as the Christ.

There's a lot of wisdom in those two paragraphs.

I think it's possible for someone to call himself a Christian and yet to do bad things. Christians aren't perfect. Even when they know what they ought to do, they struggle to do it. The dividing line here is that a real Christian is never going to call sin anything other than sin. They aren't going to try to defend it. (Although I always try to explain what leads me to sin if anyone asks – which is not the same as rationalizing, it's just explaining). Someone who claims to be a Christian and yet does things that Bible forbids without any shame or regret is not a Christian. If that person responds to being judged by denying that what they are doing is wrong, or by attacking the Bible's authority on moral issues, then that person is *not* a Christian.

If the person is saying "don't judge me", or "the Bible doesn't say that", or "the Bible was written by *men*", or "the Bible was written a long time ago", or "I believe in a God of love", or "you're intolerant", or "I was born as a pickpocket", or "I have the bank-robbing

gene", or "that's your truth", or "that's just your interpretation", or "if God loved me, he would give me a Mercedez Benz", then you are probably not dealing with a Christian, whatever they claim to be. Lots of people claim to be Christians but don't follow Christ. An we shouldn't believe that someone who tries to argue that abortion is consistent with the Bible is an authentic Christian, for example. The Bible forbids pre-marital sex and murder.

I sometimes struggle with going to church, because I can't stand being around happy, singing people (unless they know apologetics, in which case I can). But you would never hear me say that going to church was *wrong*, or that I was morally justified in avoiding church. Instead, I would say I was wrong not to go to church regularly, but that I hadn't found a church that made me feel comfortable yet.

Republicans won a record-breaking 680 seats in state legislatures

November 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow… the ultra-leftist National Journal reports on the 680 seats lost by Democrats in the state legislatures. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Republicans picked up 680 seats in state legislatures, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures — an all time high. To put that number in perspective: In the 1994 GOP wave, Republicans picked up 472 seats. The previous record was in the post-Watergate election of 1974, when Democrats picked up 628 seats.
>
> The GOP gained majorities in at least 14 state house chambers. They now have unified control — meaning both chambers — of 26 state legislatures.
>
> That control is a particularly bad sign for Democrats as they go into the redistricting process. If the GOP is effective in gerrymandering districts in many of these states, it could eventually lead to the GOP actually expanding its majority in 2012.
>
> Republicans now hold the redistricting "trifecta" — both chambers of the state legislature and the governorship — in 15 states. They also control the Nebraska governorship and the unicameral legislature, taking the number up to 16. And in North Carolina — probably the state most gerrymandered to benefit Democrats — Republicans hold both chambers of the state legislature and the Democratic governor does not have veto power over redistricting proposal…

And Fox News reports that the Republicans won a huge number of governorships as well.

Excerpt:

> In Michigan, Republican businessman Rick Snyder, who vowed to turn around the state's devastated economy, defeated Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero, a Democrat.
>
> In Ohio, another closely watched race, and one of the fiercest, Republican John Kasich, a former chairman of the House Budget Committee, defeated Democratic Gov. Ted Strickland.
>
> In New Mexico, Republican Susana Martinez became the first Hispanic woman to become a state's chief executive.
>
> In Oklahoma, U.S. Rep. Mary Fallin, a Republican, became the state's first female governor. She defeated Democratic Lt. Gov. Jari Askins to replace term-limited Democratic Gov. Brad Henry.
>
> In Tennessee, Republican Knoxville Mayor Bill Haslam defeated Democratic

> businessman Mike McWherter to win the state's open governorship.
>
> In Kansas, conservative Republican Sen. Sam Brownback defeated Democratic state Sen. Tom Holland to win the governorship. Democrat Kathleen Sebelius was elected in 2002 and again in 2006 before joining Obama's Cabinet as secretary of health and human services. Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson replaced Sebelius but did not run for a full term.
>
> In Wyoming, former U.S. attorney Matt Mead, the Republican nominee, defeated former state Democratic chairwoman Leslie Petersen. And Republican Utah Gov. Gary Herbert won another two years in office.
>
> A Tea Party-backed South Carolina Republican, state Rep. Nikki Haley, was elected to replace term-limited Republican Gov. Mark Sanford. Haley won over state Sen. Vincent Sheheen.
>
> In a high-profile race for which both parties spent millions, Texas Republican Gov. Rick Perry, who has already served 10 years, defeated Democrat Bill White, a former mayor of Houston.
>
> South Dakota's Republican lieutenant governor, Dennis Daugaard, defeated Democratic challenger Scott Heidepriem to succeed term-limited Gov. Mike Rounds, keeping the seat in GOP hands. Alabama also remained in the Republican column as state Rep. Robert Bentley defeated Democratic nominee Ron Sparks. Republican Gov. Bob Riley is term-limited.
>
> In Nebraska, Republican Gov. Dave Heineman was easily re-elected over the Democratic candidate, lawyer Mike Meister.

It was a landslide. The worst defeat the Democrats have ever endured. I am a big admirer of Mary Fallin, by the way. She is ultra-conservative. She is the third of the trifecta of female Republican governors. These are very conservative women – excellent choices for the Republican party, and possible future Presidents!

Oh, by the way… what do these Republican governors do? They cut spending.

Excerpt:

> When Governor Christie set his sights on reducing the size of government and the debt in the Garden State, he is keeping that promise.
>
> The governor announced that beginning January, he'll cut 1,200 state jobs saving New Jersey taxpayers $8.8 million. The job cuts will include layoffs and attrition.
>
> So why January you may ask?
>
> Previous liberal tax and spend governor, Jon Corzine created a deal with his buddies in the state's unions to prevent Christie from cutting these jobs before leaving office. The deal prevented these lay offs until January 2011.
>
> Christie said the layoffs are needed to balance the state's $29.4 billion budget. This is the type of fiscal conservatism that has made Governor Christie a rock star in the Republican party.

That’s what they were elected to do, and they’ll do it.

What can we learn from Europe about big government?

November 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Ace of Spades. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> We see our future playing out in England and France right now. Only our upheavals are going to be much larger and more violent than theirs. Our population is larger, more diverse, and more polarized; our politics more fraught; our debts and obligations massively larger. Our passions are harder to rouse, but once aflame, take a long time to burn out.
>
> As in France, we have let an enormous segment of our population — perhaps as much as half — fall into a state where they depend on government largesse for a substantial part of their income. This is not money they earned themselves, not wages or savings, but rather money squeezed from the more productive half of the country. Half of our citizens pay no income taxes at all. An increasing number will draw public-sector pensions, Social Security, and medical insurance (Medicare/Medicaid) in amounts that far exceed what they contributed to those plans. Half of the US population, in short, lives not by the fruits of their own toil but by the (coerced) charity of others, as filtered and distilled through the hand of the government. This can not — it *can not*, by the laws of economics and simple physics — continue. The mathematics of the problem trump even philosophical issues of fairness, of governance, of ethics or law. The mathematics simply *will not allow it*.
>
> Consider the French. They are rioting over a proposal to raise the national age of retirement from 60 to 62. Germany's is 65 (going to 67) — how happy will German workers be to subsidize the early retirements of their French neighbors? The French labor unions are on a rampage, denouncing the move as a violation of a "promise" the country made to the workers. (If this reminds you of California, New Jersey, New York, and Michigan — well, the situations are closely analogous.) The word "promise" is illuminating: people have stopped thinking of social welfare as a "benefit" or a "perquisite", and have begun instead to think of it as a "right" or a "promise". A legally-binding promise which cannot be broken, though the heavens fall. Well, the heavens *are* falling, and the sovereigns will discover a universal truth: a government "promise" is not a suicide pact. Reality will assert itself, one way or another.
>
> Governments the world over are discovering that the river of money is not endless. That seemingly-inexhaustable mountain of wealth has been turned into an ocean of debt that will take decades to pay off. The spendthrift habits of the Western nations will put burdens on our children, and other generations not yet

> born, that should outrage us as a people. We are investing in the old rather than the young, and are punishing risk-taking and entrepreneurship rather than rewarding it. Our tax regimes seem to be deliberately crafted to kill innovation and long-term thinking. (What does “legacy” mean if the wealth I have accumulated in my life cannot be passed on to my children or heirs, but is instead eaten by the all-consuming government?) Young people — young *families* — are the foundation upon which Western Civilization is built. Neglect them, overburden them, cheat them, and you are committing societal suicide.

This is what the House Republicans have to stop Obama from doing. This is what is at stake.

New version of Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse's Love and Economics talk

November 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

If you've heard it before, it might be worth listening again – this version is clear and new, and there is Q&A. This is my favorite lecture on marriage because she makes marriage seem like the Lord of the Rings or some similar epic. There's good and evil, and it's very dangerous and adventurous and important.

The MP3 file is here.

Her goal in this lecture is to explain what families do to help to raise children who can participate in society and the free market. Her audience is fiscal conservatives and libertarians who think that marriage and family are not as important from fiscal issues. She is making a connection between marriage and civil society, and civil society to limited government, and limited government to liberty. Family should be very important to fiscal conservatives and libertarians.

My favorite part is about 26 minutes in, when she is discussing government-run day care, government-provided meals for children and being very aggressive about how she doesn't want government taking over the roles of mothers and fathers. The push to make government take over the parental roles flows from the idea that women need to be more like men, and that means they need to be separated from their children so they can work like men do. Also, government programs attempt to communicate to women that men are unecessary as protectors and providers and moral leaders, since the government can protect, provide and educate.

What she does not mention is that socialists *also* love the idea of taking money from the hard-working, frugal parents and redistributing it to single mothers so that all the children will be equally screwed with loveless day care and lousy public-school educations, which are really more indoctrinations than preparation for a profession. They like the idea that everyone will be equal and the only way to do that is to yank children away from their parents.

Consider the words of this radical feminist:

"We really don't know how to raise children. If we want to talk about equality of

opportunity for children, then the fact that children are raised in families means there's no equality. [...]In order to raise children with equality, we must take them away from families and communally raise them."

(Mary Jo Bane: Former Assistant Secretary of Administration for Children and Families in the Department of Health and Human Services of the Clinton administration)

This is what they think about the traditional family. The left thinks that the man's job is to work, and the woman's job is to work, and the government's job is to steal their money so that everyone's children are raised "communally". This is what the left believes about marriage and family. That's why they enact policies to break up marriages and push women out of the home to make them work like men. Leftists also don't want parents teaching their children conservative views and values.

This lecture is highly-recommended. Christians really need to think about marriage and family the way she does. There are two things a woman needs to do to convince a good man to marry. 1) Treat marriage and family as a war against tyranny and socialism. 2) Understand and assist men with their needs and plans.

Upcoming debate between William Dembski and Christopher Hitchens

November 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Upcoming debate between William Dembski and Christopher Hitchens. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Details:

William Dembski will be debating Christopher Hitchens at the Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, TX, Nov. 18th, on the question of God's goodness.

> "Does a Good God Exist?"
>
> Debate between Dr. William Dembski and Christopher Hitchens
>
> Two intellectual heavy weights will square off toe-to-toe on the existence and goodness of God.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where Dr. Dembski is a research professor, has an article on the debate.

> Dembski and Hitchens will debate the existence of a good God during a conference for the Biblical Worldview Institute at Prestonwood Christian Academy in Plano, Texas. The debate will be hosted in the worship center at Prestonwood Baptist Church from 8:40 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. It will also be webcast on http://www.pcawebcast.com.
>
> Dembski, a champion of the Intelligent Design movement, is also a senior fellow with the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture and an author of numerous books, including *The Design of Life: Discovering Signs of Intelligence in Biological Systems* and *The End of Christianity: Finding a Good God in an Evil World*. He was also featured in the 2008 documentary on Intelligent Design, *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*.
>
> Hitchens has authored, along with other controversial books, *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, and he edited *The Portable Atheist: Essential Readings for the Non-Believer*. Alongside Sam Harris, Daniel C. Dennett and Richard Dawkins, Hitchens has been called one of "The Four Horsemen" of the atheism. A former atheist, Hitchens' brother, Peter, renounced his disbelief and recently wrote the 2010 publication, *The Rage against God: How Atheism Led me to Faith*.
>
> Prestonwood Christian Academy is a ministry of Prestonwood Baptist Church, the location of one of Southwestern Seminary's seven extension centers. The College at Southwestern is also a sponsor for the debate. For more information on the conference or to register, visit www.prestonwoodchristian.org.

I am a big fan of William Dembski. He will crush Hitchens, just like Craig did at Biola in

2009.

Dallas/Fort-Worth apologetics conference TODAY

Here's a quick reminder about the upcoming conference in Dallas, TX.

When:

- November 5th and 6th, 2010
- Friday: 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM
- Saturday: 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Where:

- Denton Bible Church

Speakers and topics:

- Tag-team of all speakers on apologetics
- Dr. Paul Nelson, "The Power and Promise of Intelligent Design in Biology"
- Dr. Craig Hazen, "Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?"
- Sean McDowell, "Equipping Young People with a Biblical Worldview"
- Dr. J.P. Moreland, "The War of Worldviews"
- Dr. Mike Licona, "Can We Really Trust the Gospels"
- Dr. William Lane Craig, "The Case for the Existence of God"

The main page is here.

The thing I like about this conference is that all of the speakers have participated in lectures and debates. Paul Nelson has debated on intelligent design, JP Moreland has debated on the existence of God, Craig debates regularly on the existence of God, Licona has debated Ehrman and others on the resurrection, and Sean McDowell kicked butt in his debate on morality and atheism. Craig Hazen hasn't debated to my knowledge, but he does tons of lecturing, and people tend to really like his lectures. I once gave an entire set of lectures to my friends Andrew and Jen and they liked Craig Hazen the best.

So the point is that these guys are all really really good speakers! This conference should be a very lively affair.

John Hawkins of Right Wing News interviews Tom Sowell

November 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell

Right Wing News has a great interview with my favorite economist, Tom Sowell.

Excerpt:

Paul Krugman is one of the best known and highest regarded economists on the Left. He says the problem we have right now is the government simply is not spending enough money and the fears we have about the debt causing all these major problems are extremely overblown. What do you say to that argument that is very prevalent on the Left?

Well, it's a heads I win, tails you lose argument because if we spend twice as much for the next ten years and things don't get any better – you can still say, "We didn't spend enough." We should have spent four times as much. And if we spend four times as much, you can say we should spend 10 times as much. It's an impossible argument to refute.

It just so happens I've been reading a statement by Henry Morganfeld, the Secretary of Treasury under FDR, and he made the statement in 1939 — he said, "We have tried spending money. We are spending more than we have ever spent before and it does not work." Now this is FDR's closest confidant, the man who has been in charge of the spending — and after six years of it at this point, they have nothing to show for it and in point of fact, unemployment had gotten back up above 20 percent about a month before he made the statement.

Look at this – the man is branching out from fiscal conservatism into social conservatism. He's not a Christian, so this is pretty awesome.

Excerpt:

Now, you talked a lot about cultural issues in the book. That's something you've gotten more into in your columns lately. In the book you wrote about gay marriage and the comparison between gay marriage and interracial marriage. Why do you think that's a bad comparison and what do you say to

the argument that gay Americans have a right, perhaps even a constitutional right to get married?

Well, my Constitution must be out of date because I haven't seen it there. It's one of many things, such as the separation of church and state, that I've never seen there.

Marriage is not a right. Marriage is an imposition of a government's interest in certain unions. Probably because those unions produce children, but for other reasons, too. Otherwise people could marry or not marry utterly independently of the government.

But what we're talking about is not gay marriage. We're talking about redefining marriage through the convenience of leaders who speak for the gays. And I don't see any more reason for doing that than for allowing bigamists to redefine marriage to suit their convenience.

And you can read Tom Sowell's latest column on FDR and the Great Depression here. He talks about how the policies of President Roosevely *failed* to lower unemployment and how they mirror the policies of Obama and the Democrats today.

William Lane Craig asks: are there objective truths about God?

November 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a lecture entitled “Are there Objective Truths About God?”, philosopher William Lane Craig responds to the nasty reactions you get from postmoderns when you claim that your religion is true, and that other religions are false. See, we think that there are objective truths about God – that there are some propositions that describe the way God is, and that people who don’t believe in them are factually mistaken. But some people want to say that every statement about God is subjective – true for each person – so that conflicting claims are fine and no one is wrong, because everyone is just describing their own preferences. Unfortunately, Christianity claims to be true for everyone – (e.g. – God is three persons and one being), so that Christians are committed to defending the idea that there are objective truths about God.

Here’s the link to a page containing the lecture audio. (H/T Be Thinking)

The MP3 file is here.

So what questions does Bill answer in the lecture?

What is a self-refuting statement?

The main concept in the lecture is self-refutation. A self-refuting sentence is a sentence that, if true, makes itself false or meaningless. For example, suppose someone said to you: “there are no sentences longer than 5 words” then that would be self-refuting since it falsifies itself. Bill argues that objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God are all self-refuting.

What is truth?

Craig holds that “truth” is a property of a proposition such that a proposition is true if it corresponds to the external world. For example, if I claim that there is a crocodile in your closet and we find a crocodile in your closet, then my statement was true. If there is no crocodile in your closet then my statement was false. The real objective world out there is what makes propositional claims true or false – these are not claims about an individual’s preferences, they are claims about the world. Bill is concerned with truth claims about God that are objective – whether there are propositions about God that are true regardless of what anyone thinks.

Are there objective truths about God?

Bill discusses 3 objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God. Each objection seeks to make religion subjective, (true for each person, like food preferences or clothing fashion).

Objection #1:The Challenge of Verificationism

The first challenge is that religious claims cannot be verified using the 5 senses, and therefore religious statements are objectively meaningless.

Consider the statement “Only propositions that can be verified with the 5 senses are meaningful”. That statement cannot be verified with the 5 senses. If the statement is true, it makes itself meaningless. It’s self-refuting.

Objection #2: The Challenge of Mystical Anti-Realism

The second challenge is that religious claims, and claims about God, are neither true nor false.

Consider the statement “Propositions about God cannot be true or false”. Craig asks – why should be accept that? Any reason given would have to assert something about God that is true or false, and those reasons would contradict the original statement. For example, “God is too great to be grasped by human categories of thought” is a proposition about God that the speaker thinks is true, which contradicts the original assertion.

Objection #3: The Challenge of Radical Pluralism

The third challenge is that each person invents an entire reality of their own, and that there is no mind-independent objective world shared by individuals.

Consider the statement “There is no objective reality shared by all individuals”. That statement is a statement that applies to all individuals, regardless of what they think. It’s self-refuting.

Conclusion

Craig ends the lecture by arguing that it is OK for Christians to think that other people’s views are false. It does not follow that just because someone thinks other people’s views are wrong that they am going to mistreat other people. In fact, in Christianity it is objectively true that it is good for Christians to love their enemies. It is objectively true that all human beings have value, because human beings are made by God. So even if Christians disagree with others, they still treat them well, because they think that there are moral truths that they have to conform to.

My thoughts

Sometimes, non-Christians think that it is dangerous to hold beliefs too strongly. But I think what really matters is the content of the belief – some beliefs are evil and some are good – you want to believe the good beliefs as strongly as you can, as long as the evidence warrants it. In Christianity, I am absolutely obligated to treat people with whom I disagree with respect and gentleness (1 Pet 3:15-16). The more convinced I am about *that* belief, the *better* my opponents will be treated. A *stronger* belief in Christianity means *more* tolerance for those who disagree.

Why do non-Christians get so offended when Christians claim to be right about there being only one way to be rightly related to God? Well, for many it’s because their worldview is a personal preference, and they feel uncomfortable having to defend it rationally and evidentially – which is what Christians do that makes us so different from everyone else. For most people, religion is just their cultural preference – like cooking style, or favorite sport, or clothing style. That’s why they respond to your truth claims

with name-calling like “you’re intolerant” and “you’re judgemental” and “you’re arrogant”. These are just shorthand ways of saying, “I’m offended that you’ve thought things through more than I have, and that your careful arguments and evidence make the blind faith that I was raised in look bad – so I’ll just call you a name rather than do any thinking about what you’re saying”.

This happens a lot with insecure people who are raised to think that their religion is a racial, national or cultural identity. They haven’t thought anything through, or considered any alternatives, and they think that if you tell them they are wrong *on matters of fact* that somehow this amounts to some sort of racism or prejudice. You make factual claims, and they hear discrimination. But that’s not how Christians think of religion – we only care if it’s true or not – just like we care whether the claims of history or science are true or not. For many non-Christians, religion is not about truth at all but about personal preferences – and they cannot understand why Christians say that they have to go to Hell for having the wrong personal preferences. You have to *tell them* that religion is about truth. Then they understand why you are disagreeing with them and you can have a conversation about what is true.

For further study

A debate between a Christian and a postmodern, featuring Christian scholar Peter Williams and a very strange liberal person. This audio really makes it clear why people are opposed to objective truth claims about religion. Williams’ opponent is the epitome of postmodern relativist irrational universalism.

Everybody go vote in this Scientific American survey on global warming

November 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The survey is here on the Scientific American web site. (H/T ECM)

Questions:

- Should climate scientists discuss scientific uncertainty in mainstream forums?
- Judith Curry is:
- What is causing climate change?
- The IPCC, or Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is:
- What should we do about climate change?
- What should we do about climate change?
- What is "climate sensitivity"?
- Which policy options do you support?
- How much would you be willing to pay to forestall the risk of catastrophic climate change?

My answers were:

- Yes, it would help engage the citizenry.
- a peacemaker.
- natural processes
- a corrupt organization, prone to groupthink, with a political agenda.
- Nothing, we are powerless to stop it.
- an unknown variable that climate scientists still do not understand
- keeping science out of the political process
- nothing

Take the survey! It's important to send them a message.

Related posts

You can find my previous posts on climate change by clicking here.

The relationship between government spending and immigration

November 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

Mark Steyn is one controversial Canadian. Here is a summary of his concerns about government spending, immigration, multiculturalism and Western civilization, from Canada's national newspaper – the National Post.

Excerpt:

> Rates of public spending growth here in Canada, meanwhile, are only sustainable if we permit mass immigration, given that Canadian birthrate declines are more drastic than even America's (where they hold, for now at least at roughly replacement levels). These days, that immigration comes from Muslim countries, something that has caused severe social unrest in European countries that have relied on a similar model.
>
> "In the space of about 20 years, the Muslim community went from really nothing to overtake the well-established Jewish community in Toronto. And the idea that that's simply just one more interesting exotic item in the Canadian salad bar—we would be extremely lucky if that were the case."
>
> Amsterdam, among the most liberal cities in the world, he points out, is suffering an epidemic of gay bashing from unassimilated Muslims. In Sweden, perhaps Europe's most tolerant country, half the Jewish population of Malmo has fled after a sharp rise in Islamic anti-Semitic attacks.
>
> "I was in Malmo a couple of weeks ago," he says. "It's future is as a Muslim city."
>
> That he considers Muslim fundamentalists an unwelcome element in liberal society is the kind of thing that gets Mr. Steyn so readily branded as a bigot, particularly in Canada where a worship of his most hated term "multiculturalism"

> has, he says, utterly shrivelled the limits on public discussion. That may, however, only prove his point.
>
> "It's a sick fetish," he says. "The idea that multiculturalism simply on its own terms is a virtue in itself is completely preposterous."
>
> What the fact that 75% of Canada's population growth relies on immigration says "in effect, is that tomorrow's a crapshoot; tomorrow is whoever happens to turn up."
>
> When Immigration Minister Jason Kenney suggests, as he did this week that Canadians can choose between higher immigration levels, or having more children, he leaves out one option: for Canadians to stop spending at a rate that demands population growth. In any case, Mr. Steyn says, the fact that most immigrants bring behind them older or unproductive family members is just a way to "kick the can 10 years down the line and ensure there's an even bigger population making demands upon the state for which you'll have to bring in even more people." Eventually, the pyramid scheme runs out. We are, he says, engaged in nothing less than "civilizational suicide."

An interesting story just came to a conclusion in Canada. A Canadian-born Muslim was captured on the battlefield in Afghanistan while fighting Canadian soldiers. In Canada, Muslim men can marry four women who will all collect wefare. The article raises questions about whether the women entered the country legally. The same thing happens in the UK, according to the article. (In fact, there is an epidemic of rapes by Muslim gangs in various countries who justify their raping by same that the non-Muslim women are not dressed to proper Islamic standards.) Some work needs to be done to acclimate immigrants to Western standards of conduct.

A policy of preferring skilled immigrants might help prevent the problem of radical immigrants, but that's not the policy favored by the left – they want unskilled immigrants because unskilled immigrants tend to vote for bigger government, more wealth redistribution, higher taxes and more control of business. These policies are put in place by the left in order to buy votes from those who like to collect government handouts. In fact, the left opposes immigration of skilled workers, since they are more likely to vote for lower taxes and limited government. I think we could be very open about legal immigration – but then we have to make immigrants responsible for *paying their own way* and *following the laws of the land.*

Marco Rubio delivers the Republican weekly radio address

November 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I waited to post this until I found the transcript.

Transcript:

> "Hi, I'm Marco Rubio.
>
> "With Election Day now behind us, it's an honor to talk to you about the opportunity before us – an opportunity to put America back on track.
>
> "For too long, Washington has taken our country in the wrong direction: bigger government, reckless spending, and run away debt. And though I'm a proud Republican, here's the truth, both parties have been to blame.
>
> "This election the American people said enough is enough. That message was loud and clear. **We Republicans would be mistaken if we misread these results as simply an embrace of the Republican party. This Election is a second chance.** A second chance for Republicans to be what we said we were going to be.
>
> **"America is the single greatest nation on earth, a place without equal in the history of all mankind.** A place built on free enterprise, where the employee can become the employer. Where small businesses are started every day in a spare bedroom and where someone like me, the son of a bartender and a maid, can become a United States Senator.
>
> "I know about the unique exceptionalism of our country. Not because I read about it in a book, I've seen it through my own eyes. You see, **I was raised in a community of exiles, by people who lost their country, people who once had dreams like we do today, but had to come to a foreign shore to find them.**
>
> "For some their dreams were answered here in America, but many others found a new dream. To leave their children with the kinds of opportunities they themselves never had. And that is what we must do as a nation. To fulfill our sacred obligation to leave the next generation of Americans a better America than the one we inherited. And that is what this election was about.
>
> "In the past two years, Republicans listened to the American people and what they said is that it was time for a course correction.
>
> **"The past two years provided a frightening glimpse at what could become of our great nation if we continue down the current path**: wasteful spending, a growing debt and a government reaching ever further into our lives, even into our health care decisions.
>
> "It is nothing short of a path to ruin, a path that threatens to diminish us as a

> nation and a people. One that makes America not exceptional, not unique, but more like the rest of the world.
>
> **“As Republicans, here is what our commitment should be to you.** Our focus must not be simply winning elections. **It must be to ensure the next generation inherits a strong, free and prosperous America.**
>
> “We will govern as public servants who understand that re-election is simply a byproduct of good public service and good ideas. And most importantly, we will stand up and offer an alternative to the policies coming out of Washington for the past two years.
>
> “The challenges are too great, too generational in scope for us to be merely opponents of bad policies. Instead, we will put forward bold ideas and have the courage to fight for them. This means preventing a massive tax increase scheduled to hit every American taxpayer at the end of the year. It means repealing and replacing the disastrous health care bill. It means simplifying our tax code, and tackling a debt that is pushing us to the brink of our own Greece-like day of reckoning.
>
> “For many of us coming to Washington for the first time and others returning to serve, it’s a long way from home. A long way from the people whose eyes we looked into at town halls, at diners or roundtables, and promised that this time it would be different. That if you elected Republicans to office again, we would not squander the chance you gave us, and we must not. Because nothing less than the identity of our country and what kind of future we will leave our children is at stake.
>
> “That is our commitment and from you we ask this: hold us accountable to the ideas and principles we campaigned on.
>
> **“This is our second chance to get this right.** To make the right decisions and the tough calls and to leave our children what they deserve – the freest and most exceptional society in all of human history.
>
> “Thank you for listening, God bless you and your family, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.”

I got this from Gateway Pundit.

Philip E. Johnson lectures on science, evolution and religion

November 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this fun lecture by the grandfather of the big-tent intelligent design movement, Berkeley law professor Philip E. Johnson.

I'll bet you guys have all heard of him, but you've never heard him speak, right? Well, I was a young man, I used to listen to Phil's lectures and his debates with Eugenie Scott quite a bit. This is one of my favorite lectures. Very easy to understand, and boilerplate for anything else in the origins debate. This is a great lecture – funny, engaging and useful. You will definitely listen to this lecture several times if you listen to it once.

The MP3 is here. (91 minutes, 41 megabytes)

The Inherit the Wind stereotype

- Many people get their understanding of origins by watching movies like "Inherit the Wind" (or reading science fiction)
- The actual events of the Scopes trial are nothing like what the movie portrays
- The law forbidding the teaching of evolution was symbolic, not meant to be enforced
- The actual Scopes trial was a publicity stunt to attract attention to Dayton, TN to bring business to the town
- The ACLU advertised for a teacher who would be willing to be sued
- They found a substitute physical education teacher who would be willing to "break" the law
- The movie is nothing like the actual events the movie is a morality play
- The religious people are evil and stupid and ignorant and bigoted
- The scientists and lawyers are all intelligent, romantic, and honest seekers of the truth
- The religious people think that the Bible trumps science and science is not as reliable as the Bible
- The movie argues that the reason why there is ANY dissent to evolution is because of Biblical fundamentalism
- The movie presents the idea that there are no scientific problems with evolution
- The movie says that ONLY Biblical fundamentalists who believe in 6 day, 24-hour creation doubt evolution
- The movie says that Biblical fundamentalism are close-minded, and not open to scientific truth
- The movie says that people who read the Bible as making factual claims are misinterpreting the Bible
- The movie says that smart people read the Bible for comfort and feelings and arbitrary values, not for truth

Guided evolution and methodological naturalism

- What scientists mean by evolution is that fully naturalistic, unguided, materialistic mechanisms caused the diversity of life
- Scientists do not allow that God had any real objective effect on how life was created
- Scientists think that nature did all the creating, and any mention of God is unnecessary opinion – God didn't DO ANYTHING
- Scientists operate with one overriding rule – you can only explain the physical world with physical and material causes
- Scientists DO NOT allow that God could have done anything detectable by the sciences
- Scientists WILL NOT consider the idea that natural, material processes might be INSUFFICIENT for explaining everything in nature
- You cannot even ask the question about whether natural laws, matter and chance can explain something in nature
- Intelligent causes can NEVER be the explanation for anything in nature, and you can't even test experimentally to check that
- Scientists ASSUME that everything can be explained with natural laws, matter and chance – no questioning of natural causes is allowed
- Where no natural explanation of a natural phenomenon is available, scientists SPECULATE about undiscovered natural explanations
- The assumption of naturalistic sufficiency is called "methodological naturalism"
- To question the assumptions that natural is all there is, and that nature has to do its own creating, makes you an "enemy of science"
- But Johnson says that *naturalists* are the enemies of science, because they are like the Biblical fundamentalists
- Naturalists have a presumption that prevents them from being willing to follow the evidence where it is leading
- Experiments are not even needed, because the presumption of naturalism overrides any experimental finding that falsifies the sufficiency of natural causes to explain some natural phenomenon

What can natural selection and mutation actually do?

- what evolution has actually been observed to do is explain changing populations of moths and finches
- finches with smaller or larger beaks are observed to have differential survival rates when there are droughts or floods
- no new body plan or new organ type has been observed to emerge from these environmental pressures
- the only kind of evolution that has been observed is evolution *within types* – no new genetic instructions are created

- in textbooks, only confirming examples are presented – but what is required is a broad pattern of gradual development of species
- if you look at the fossil record, what you see in most cases is variation within types based on changing environments
- the real question is: can natural law and chance *be observed* to be doing any creating of body plans and organ types?

What kind of effect requires an intelligent cause?

- the thing to be explained in the history of life is the functional information sequences
- you need to have a sequence of symbols or characters that is sufficiently long
- your long sequence of characters has to be sequenced in the right order to have biological function
- the only thing that can create long sequences of functional information is an intelligent cause
- intelligent design people accept micro-evolution – changes within types – because that's been observed
- the real thing to be explained is the first living cell's functional information, and the creation of new function information

Critical response

The next 15 minutes of the lecture contain a critical response from a philosophy professor who thinks that there have been no developments in design arguments since Aquinas and Paley. He basically confirms the stereotypes that Johnson outlined in the first part of the lecture. I recommend listening to this, because it shows how weak the counter arguments are, and how these pseudo-intellectuals mislead unprepared students to question their Christian faith – especially dangerous since they have the power of the grading pen. Notice especially how he never mentions any arguments that Christians actually use, nor does he mention any actual science. Everything is "words, words, words" as Hamlet might say – no talking about experiments.

Here's what he says:

1) Don't take the Bible literally, even if the genre is propositional.

- all opposition to evolution is based on an ignorant, fundamentalist, literal reading of the Bible
- Christians need to reinterpret the Bible so that it is basically relaying personal preferences, and not factual information, regardless of the genre intended
- the Bible really doesn't communicate anything about the way the world really is
- the Bible is just meant to suggest certain opinions and experiences which you may find fetching, or not, depending on your feelings and community
- if Christians would just interpret the Bible as myths and opinions on par with other personal preferences, then evolution is no threat to religious belief

2) As long as you treat the design argument as divorced from evidence, it's not very effective

- the latest and best version of the design argument is Paley's argument which involves no experimental data, so I'll critique that
- this 200-year old argument which doesn't rely on science has serious problems, and unnamed Christians agree with me!
- Christians should NOT try to prove God's existence using evidence from the natural world (as Romans 1 says), and in fact it's "Pelagianism" to even try
- Christians should divorce their faith from logic and evidence even though the Bible says that Jesus performed miracles to supply evidence for his claims
- Christians should not tie their faith to the best science available today, because science is always changing – what happens if we discover that the universe is eternal tomorrow?
- What if! What if! Just because you guys have the facts on your side today, tomorrow science might prove that the universe is eternal! What would you do then?
- It's a good idea for me to critique the arguments of 1000-year old people who did not know anything about the cosmic fine-tuning argument – that's fair!
- I find it very useful to tell people that the argument from design is false without mentioning any scientific evidence of design from things like DNA and fine-tuning
- We need to assume that the natural world is explainable using only natural causes
- We should assume that natural causes create all life, and then rule out all experimental evidence for intelligent causes that we have today
- As long as you accept that God is a personal opinion that has nothing to do with reality, then you can do science
- The non-Christian process theologian Teilhard de Chardin is actually a Christian, and he accepts evolution, so quit complaining you ignorant fundies!
- Remember when theists said God caused thunder because he was bowling in the clouds and then we found out he didn't? Yeah well – maybe tomorrow we'll find out that functional sequences of amino acids and proteins have natural causes! What would you do then?

3) What the Bible really says is that you should vote Democrat and allow government to redistribute wealth to the poor

- Stop thinking about creation and start thinking about social justice! But not for stinky unborn babies

Q&A time

The lecture concludes with 13 minutes of questions.

Top academic warns of collapse of European economy

November 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the SA Times Live web site – top academic warns of economic collapse in Europe. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Dennis Lachman, a professor in economics at Georgetown University and a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, said at a conference on monetary policy and financial stability at the Reserve Bank on Thursday he has little doubt about this.
>
> "The only question is how long the governments in the northern part of Europe can keep kicking the can forward by financing a trillion dollars here and a trillion dollars there to keep the party going for a little bit longer.
>
> "We are talking about a currency arrangement that was flawed from the start."
>
> Lachman said the default of Greece or Ireland by the end of next year was another certainty.
>
> "The important thing is that we are not talking about problems only in Europe's periphery; we are talking about problems in the European banking system.
>
> "Their inter-linkages with the European banking system makes this of concern. It is not only for the European economy, but what we have learned from the Lehman (Brothers) debacle and the sub-prime debacle is that these kinds of crises have a habit of being global in scope."
>
> Lachman said at the end of 2009 the exposure of French banks to the so-called PIIGS countries (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain,) was around 37% of France's gross domestic product. For Germany the exposure is 21% of GDP.
>
> A write down of the debt of these countries would thus result in a shock for economies that haven't fully adjusted to the Lehman shock, he said.
>
> A euro crisis would coincide with the US economy either double-dipping or flirting with a double-dip, Lachman said.

I found two related videos on Verum Serum.

Austerity measures:

Rioting in Ireland:

The good news is that Americans have voted to avoid this dismal fate by electing Republicans. But we're not out of the woods yet. But it's definitely a good time to reduce your spending and start saving for a rainy day, and making a plan.

I'm struggling right now, because this is all happening too fast and my plan requires at

least 3 years to execute… GAH! I didn’t expect this would happen so fast. I hope the House Republicans can put the brakes on the spending.

Redistricting and the census will create more Republican House seats

November 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, consider this AP article which explains the redistricting advantage that Republicans have from the mid-term elections.

Excerpt:

> Republicans don't just control much of the electoral map. In some cases, they now have the power to redraw it.
>
> Overwhelming victories in statehouses and governors' races across the country this week have placed the GOP in command of redrawing both congressional and legislative districts to conform with Census results. It's a grueling and politically charged process that typically gives the party in power an inherent advantage for a decade, allowing them to preserve current strongholds or to put others in play.
>
> Along with gains in governorships this week, Republicans picked up about 680 legislative seats _ twice the number Democrats gained in their wave two years ago. For the GOP, it's a surge that comes at the most opportune time.
>
> "Regardless of what happens in Washington, the Democrats will not soon recover from what happened to them on a state level on Tuesday," said Chris Jankowski, executive director of the Republican State Leadership Committee's REDMAP project. "It was significant. It was devastating in some areas. It will take years to recover."
>
> **Tim Storey, a redistricting expert at the National Conference of State Legislatures, estimates that Republicans will have unilateral control over the redrawing of 195 congressional districts. Democrats have just 45.** The remainder are in states where either both parties have a chance to influence redistricting or where decisions will be made by independent commissions.
>
> That doesn't mean there will be another surge of Republicans two years from now. After all, parties still must adhere to a substantial series of legal limitations governing the composition of the districts, such as making sure districts have a similar number of voters and are compact and contiguous.

That's good news, but there's more good news. And this one is even better.

ECM sent this article from the leftist Washington Post, which another problem facing the Democrats in 2012: population shifting from blue states to red states.

Excerpt:

> There's really no gentle way to say this, so I'm just going to be blunt: In some ways, the political situation post-Nov. 2 is even worse for the Democrats than it

> may appear. And I am not just referring to the colossal losses they experienced in state legislatures — a 650+ seat swing in favor of the GOP that has left the Dems in control of the fewest state legislatures since 1928. The resulting pro-GOP gerrymandering may lastingly blunt the demographic advantage Democrats could otherwise expect to reap from population trends such as the growth of Hispanic America.
>
> No, what's really bad for President Obama and his party is the likely impact of the 2010 Census and ensuing House of Representatives reapportionment on the distribution of votes in the 2012 Electoral College. We can talk all day about whether a majority of voters would support Obama for re-election or not, but what really counts in presidential elections is the Electoral College. Each state's electoral vote equals its number of representatives in the House plus two, for its Senate delegation. And since the U.S. population continues to flow South and West, reapportionment will probably add House seats in red states and subtract them in blue states. Thus, the Census looks like a setback for Democratic chances to win the 270 electoral votes necessary to become president.
>
> **Texas, which has voted Republican in 9 of the last 10 elections will gain 4 electoral votes, according to projections from preliminary Census data by Polidata.com. The other gainers — one vote each — include Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, South Carolina and Utah. All of these states have voted for the GOP candidate in at least 7 of the last 10 elections.**
>
> To be sure, Florida and Nevada have been more up for grabs of late: Obama carried both in 2008. But the only reliably blue state that looks like gaining an electoral vote is Washington, which backed the Democrat in 6 of the last 10 elections. Only one reliably red state — Louisiana — is losing an electoral vote.
>
> Ohio, the perennial swing state — it backed the GOP in six of the last 10 elections — is losing two.
>
> Meanwhile, eight states that usually go blue in presidential elections — Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Minnesota — are projected to lose one electoral vote each.

Good news! See everyone says that I am always gloomy. There are feedback mechanisms so that people can realize what is happening and fix the problem. I am not sure how we are going to fix the people-not-marrying problem, but I'm sure there must be a way.

Should convicted murderer Steven Hayes get the death penalty?

November 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

WARNING: This story has graphic descriptions of evil and despicable acts.

Story from the Hartford Courant.

Excerpt:

> A Superior Court jury today sentenced Steven Hayes to death for the murders of Jennifer Hawke-Petit and her daughters, Hayley and Michaela, during a seven-hour home invasion, robbery and arson at their Cheshire home in July 2007.
>
> Outside the courthouse after the verdicts, Hawke-Petit's father, the Rev. Richard Hawke, said "There are some people who do not deserve to live in God's world."
>
> Asked what he had in his heart, Dr. William Petit Jr. struggled with his answer. "….Probably many of you have kids," he said, pausing to choke back tears. "Michaela was an 11-year-old little girl…tortured and killed in her own bedroom, surrounded by her stuffed animals…."
>
> Petit then talked about his daughter Hayley's bright future and her strength and the children that his wife, Jennifer, helped.
>
> "So, I was really thinking of the tremendous loss" during the verdict, Petit said, adding that he was pleased with it, but "mostly I was sad for the loss we have all suffered."
>
> Asked if he thought there'd be closure now, Petit said, "There's never closure. There's a hole…. with jagged edges…that may smooth out with time, but the hole in your heart and the hole in your soul" remains.
>
> "This isn't about revenge," Petit said. "Vengeance belongs to the Lord. This is about justice."
>
> […]The jury sentenced Hayes to death on six counts: killing Hawke-Petit and Michaela and Hayley in the course of a single action; killing a child under the age of 16; killing Hawke-Petit in the course of a kidnapping; killing Hayley in the course of a kidnapping; killing Michaela in the course of a kidnapping; and killing Hawke-Petit in the course of a sexual assault.
>
> […]Hayes, 47, of Winsted, was convicted Oct. 5 of breaking into the Petit home, beating Petit, tying up and torturing the family as Hayes and another man ransacked the home for cash and valuables and tortured the family for seven hours. Testimony during Hayes' trial showed that at one point in the break-in, Hayes forced Hawke-Petit to go to the bank to withdraw money. During that time, according to testimony, Komisarjevsky sexually assaulted Michaela Petit, 11.
>
> When Hawke-Petit and Hayes returned from the bank, Hayes raped and strangled

> Hawke-Petit. The house was doused with gasoline and set on fire as the intruders fled, testimony showed. Hayley, 17, and Michaela died of smoke inhalation.
>
> […]Prosecutors used the words of Hayes' younger brother Matthew to counter testimony that home-invasion crime was an aberration in Hayes otherwise troubled but basically nonviolent life.
>
> Matthew Hayes portrayed his brother as a conniving, sadistic, violent thief who saw Matthew take countless beatings from his brutal father for Steven Hayes' misdeeds. At one point, Steven Hayes held a gun to Matthew's head, according to the statement, which was given to state police after the home invasion.
>
> Examples of Hayes' sadistic behavior toward his brother included hooking Matthew to the garage door by his belt and raising the door up and down, and holding Matthew's hand to a red-hot burner. Matthew said his brother's life of crime was not a result of bad parenting or poor childhood. He said Hayes never learned to take responsibility for his actions.
>
> "Steven is what Steven is because he's a coward," Matthew Hayes wrote.

I know that some people are very pro-life and yet don't support the death penalty, and then there are leftists who favor killing innocent babies, while letting guilty murderers live. I am just curious about whether any of my readers is willing to come out and explain why Hayes should not get the death penalty. I think he should.

Related posts

- How to defend the Biblical view of capital punishment
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment
- Does the death penalty discourage crime?
- Is Obama against police officers and victims of crime?

Jeb Hensarling and Michele Bachmann: who has the best voting record?

November 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You may have heard that two qualified conservatives are running for the 4th highest position in the House of Representatives, Jeb Hensarling and Michele Bachmann. I was reading an article that assessed the relative strengths of each, and I thought it might be fun to see how you can leverage the work of other groups to assess candidates. (This is the way I do it)

Here's the background:

> Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) has the support of many Tea Party supporters for a Republican leadership post, but most leaders of the newly-elected House majority are backing conservative Rep. Jeb Hensarling of Texas.
>
> Bachmann and Hensarling appear headed for a showdown over the number four spot in the Republican leadership – that of chairman of the House Republican Conference.

And here's the assessment:

Both candidates have high ratings from conservative organizations.

Hensarling voted 100 percent of the time with the interests of the American Conservative Union in 2009, the same rating earned by Bachmann.

Hensarling has an 89 percent composite conservative rating in the assessment carried out by the *National Journal*, and a 12 composite liberal score.

National Journal reports he voted more conservative on economic issues than 96 percent of the House and more conservative on social issues than 93 percent of the House. He voted more conservative than 68 percent of the House on foreign policy.

Bachmann does marginally better with conservative votes, according to *National Journal*, with a 90 percent composite conservative rating and 10 percent liberal composite rating. She has voted more conservative than 92 percent of her colleagues on economic policy, more conservative than 89 percent of colleagues on social policy and more conservative than 75 percent of other House members on foreign policy.

Both get a 0 rating from Americans for Democratic Action for 2009.

The National Right to Life Committee gave both a 100 percent rating for 2010, while NARAL Pro-Choice America gave both a score of 0.

The Family Research Council, a social conservative group that advocates socially conservative policies, such as pro-life policies and opposition to same-sex marriage, gave both Bachmann and Hensarling a score of 100.

Taxpayer advocacy groups also give the two high marks as well. The National Taxpayers Union gave Bachmann an 89 percent rating for 2009. Hensarling upped her by a few

points with a 95 percent NTU rating for 2009.

Citizens Against Government Waste, a taxpayer watchdog group focusing on earmarks and other wasteful spending issues, gave Hensarling a 100 percent rating for 2009 (96 percent lifetime rating), slightly surpassing Bachmann's 99 percent rating (and a 91 percent lifetime rating) with the group that same year.

Evaluated in 2009 by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the nation's largest pro-business lobby. Bachmann scored 81 percent and Hensarling 83 percent.

Both received A-ratings from the Gun Owners of America in its 2010 candidates' rating guide.

Although the House in the 111th Congress "almost entirely avoided the issue of immigration," according to the pro-border enforcement group Federation for American Immigration Reform, it did rate lawmakers for their votes on two immigration-related measures. Bachmann and Hensarling both earned a positive rating.

And on national security issues for 2009-2010, Hensarling earned a 100 percent rating from the Center for Security Policy, a defense and national security think tank, while Bachmann received 87 percent.

Did you know that all those groups analyzed voting records and graded politicians? There are actually even more groups that give ratings based on voter records. I think that this is a much better way to assess candidates, because their voting record is a much more reliable indicator of what they intend to do than their campaign speeches.

So when you are deciding who to vote for, you can always use these ratings to see where people stand, as long as they have a voting record. For example, if you are concerned about government spending and waste, and the choices are Barack Obama and John McCain, you should know that Obama had a rating of 5 and McCain had a rating of 85 in 2008. That's how you could know what Obama would do as President.

Regarding the Hensarling vs. Bachmann contest, I think either one would be *great*. They are equally good. Naturally, I prefer Bachmann because of her personal background. Specifically, her decision to quit her job and homeschool her own 5 children, and to welcome 23 foster children into her home. In my opinion, that is *decisive.*

MUST-READ: Follow up post by Michael Egnor on the New Atheism

November 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remember my last post about the responses of atheist PZ Meyers to Michael Egnor's eight questions for the New Atheists?

Well, some other "New Atheists" have responded and he decided to write a new post about one of the funniest ones.

The New Atheist in question answers the questions, but first he attacks Egnor for not allowing comments to the blog post, for being Roman Catholic, for being close-minded(?), and so on.

He then writes this:

> The only "doctrine" inherent in "New Atheism" is a desire to observe a secular society and evidentialist arguments…Critical thinking is not conclusion and that's where Egnor gets everything wrong.

In other words, he doesn't have any answers to the questions!

Lest you think I am kidding, I will show his answers.

First, let's review the questions:

1. Why is there anything?
2. What caused the Universe?
3. Why is there regularity (Law) in nature?
4. Of the Four Causes in nature proposed by Aristotle (material, formal, efficient, and final), which of them are real? Do final causes exist?
5. Why do we have subjective experience, and not merely objective existence?
6. Why is the human mind intentional, in the technical philosophical sense of aboutness, which is the referral to something besides itself?
7. Does Moral Law exist in itself, or is it an artifact of nature (natural selection, etc.)
8. Why is there evil?

And now his answers:

> **I don't know.** Let's use the scientific method and critical thinking to continue to try to figure it out and let's leave religious presuppositions out of policy decisions so we don't create legal inequality between belivers [sic] and non-believers.

That's it. He only gave one answer. To all eight questions! He gave the same answer to all eight questions. "I don't know". My guess about his "policy" comments is that he is basically concerned that a majority of morality-enabled voters might put legal brakes on his selfish pursuit of happiness. E.g. – by passing laws defending the unborn or laws

defending traditional marriage or laws protecting religious liberty, etc.

Anyway, if you want something funny to read, then you should definitely read this post. The funniest stuff is Egnor's response to the New Atheist, and you have to click through to read that. I guarantee you will fall off your chair laughing. You readers think *I* am snarky and mean. You think *I* make fun of atheists for not being able to ground morality. Ha! Wait till you read Egnor. I'm *nice*.

We all need to get used to dealing with atheists this way. We need to bring their scientific, philosophical and moral deficiencies to the surface for all to see. And we must use questions to do it.

Atheists oppose science and evidence

- Physicist Frank Tipler weighs in on Stephen Hawking's theory
- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Stephen Meyer debating Michael Shermer on the origin of life
- Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

Theists support science and evidence

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

Christian couple barred from having foster children

November 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports on a Christian couple that has been banned from having foster children as a result of anti-Christian policies passed by the secular-left UK Labour Party. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The couple in the High Court test case, Eunice and Owen Johns, said Derby City Council's fostering panel rejected them as carers because they would never tell children a homosexual lifestyle was acceptable.
>
> Mrs Johns said: 'The council said: "Do you know, you would have to tell them that it's OK to be homosexual?"
>
> 'But I said I couldn't do that because my Christian beliefs won't let me. Morally, I couldn't do that. Spiritually I couldn't do that.'
>
> The Pentecostal Christian couple from Derby, who have fostered almost 20 children, are not homophobic, according to the Christian Legal Centre, which has taken up their case.
>
> But they are against sex before marriage and do not recognise as marriage civil partnerships between gay couples.
>
> Their beliefs are at odds with Derby City Council's equality policy, which was drawn up under the terms of the Sexual Orientation Act brought in by Labour.
>
> The Christian Legal Centre, which campaigns for religious freedoms, said in a statement: 'The case will decide whether the Johns will be able to foster without compromising their beliefs.
>
> 'The implications are huge. It is no exaggeration to say that the future of Christian foster carers and adoptive parents hangs in the balance.
>
> 'It may not be long before local authorities decide that Christians cannot look after some of the most vulnerable children in our society, simply because they disapprove of homosexuality.'

This reminds me of how gay activist groups banned Catholic adoption agencies for insisting that children be placed with a mother and a father. Clergy may face prosecution for refusing to perform same-sex marriages. Similarly, leftists insist that doctors and nurses be forced to perform abortions against their consciences. And of course, the left regularly tries to silence Christians from talking about their faith in public, because talk of "morals" and "truth" offends leftists – it makes them feel bad, and that means everyone has to *shut up* and pretend to be atheists like them. Where can you see thorough, consistent atheism on display? Well, North Korea and Zimbabwe, of course.

Here's another story I found at the Blog Prof. Michigan teacher bullies students into

accepting gay agenda on “anti-bullying” day.

Excerpt:

> Unionized teacher hacks sure have a funny way of educating their captive audience on national ” Anti-Bullying Day.” One teacher – Jay McDowell of Howell Schools who is also the local teachers union head – took it upon himself to make sure each and every one of his students endorsed homosexuality. When two students did not, he unilaterally suspended them from his class.

YOUR public schools in action. You pay for them. See, only certain students deserve bullying protection – certainly not the Christian students.

Where will this end? Well, I would expect that private schools and homeschooling will be be abolished and if any child expresses any preference for traditional marriage or protection for unborn children, then that child will be seized by the state and placed in a boarding school, or perhaps a more liberal household.

Can Michele Bachmann give the mid-term voters what they want?

November 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele Bachmann

Well, this left-wing Washington Post article explains what the mid-term voters voted for when they elected so many Republicans. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Americans' agenda is simple. In broad terms, they want the government to spur job growth, but not by subsidizing more government jobs with taxpayer dollars. They want Washington to balance the budget and reverse the growing influence of government on daily life. They want the government to encourage success, allow failure, punish those who break the law – and then get out of the way. And above all, they want politicians to follow through on their promises, even if that means tempering those promises in the first place.
>
> They also show clear support for the following five ideas:
>
> 1. Balance the budget as quickly as possible through meaningful spending reductions, a hard spending cap and a constitutional amendment so that it never gets unbalanced again.
> 2. Eliminate all earmarks until the budget is balanced, then require a two-thirds vote by Congress for future earmark legislation.
> 3. Keep taxes down by requiring supermajorities for increases, and eventually

> enact tax reform with a simple, low, fair rate that drastically reduces the length of the IRS code.
> 4. Create a blue-ribbon task force that engages in a complete, line-by-line forensic audit of federal agencies and programs to end waste and reduce red tape and bureaucracy.
> 5. And require Congress to provide specific constitutional authorization for every bill it passes so that the government stays within the boundaries imagined by the founders.
>
> One more thing: Voters want their representatives home in their districts and holding monthly town halls. The worst strategic mistake House Democrats made this year was canceling scores of public meetings, denying their constituents the chance to be heard. Hell hath no fury like a voter silenced, so the voters spoke in unison on Election Day.
>
> I've found that each of these policies has at least 60 percent public support, so if you agree with most of them, it means you're in the American mainstream. It also means that – wait for it – you agree with the tea party.
>
> These points come directly from the tea-party-backed "Contract From America," a document compiled from and voted on by the various tea party organizations and promoted by FreedomWorks, a conservative advocacy group. This governing agenda is supported not only by conservatives, but also by largely nonideological, anti-political voters in the middle.

Now let's see what Michele has to say about it:

You can see a much sharper version of the video at Gateway Pundit.

MUST-READ: Bill Craig on 1 Corinthians 15 and the empty tomb

November 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The best and earliest evidence for the basic facts of the resurrection are in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. But that early creed, which most historians date to withing 5 years of the crucifixion, does not contain *an explicit statement* about the empty tomb. The empty tomb is one of the minimal facts in many Christians "minimal facts" cases for the resurrection. Is there a way to argue that the empty tomb is implied by the early creed? Did Paul believe in the empty tomb? Does the concept of resurrection *imply* an empty tomb?

Here's an excerpt from the question that was posed to Bill:

> First off, you discuss the formula that Paul uses in 1 Cor. 15:3-5, and you claim that it is a very old Christian formula that Paul probably received on his visit to Jerusalem following his conversion. Therefore, you say that this formula can probably be dated back to within five years of Christ's death. You base your belief that this formula is an old Christian tradition on its "Semitic and non-Pauline characteristics" and on Paul's claim that this gospel formula is something that he received.
>
> However, in Paul's epistle to the Galatian (3.11-12, 15-18) he says, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ… But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter…"
>
> Paul seems to claim that he didn't receive the gospel which he preached and specifically outlined in 1 Cor. 15:3-5 from man, but from God in some special revelation. Therefore, how do you reconcile your belief that Paul received and consequently preached the old Christian formula of 1 Cor. 15:3-5 with what Paul says in Galatians 3? In addition, what are the Semitic and non-Pauline characteristics that are exhibited in 1 Cor. 15:3-5?
>
> Lastly, you conclude that Paul's claim that Christ rose "on the third day" is indicative of a physical resurrection and consequently an empty tomb. You say that colloquial usage of the phrase "on the third day" in the formula and within Christian writings is probably "a time indicator for the events of Easter, including the empty tomb, employing the language of the Old Testament concerning God's acts of deliverance and victory on the third day, perhaps with texts like Jonah 2.

> 11 and Hos 6. 2 especially in mind." However, it seems to me that the dating of the resurrection on the third day could also just as easily have been the result of Christ appearing to the disciples (not even necessarily on the third day) and their remembrance numerous claims that He would rise on the third day (e.g. Matt. 12.39-40; 16.21; 17.22-23; 20.17-19; 27.63, etc.). How do you know that the development of the phrase "on the third day" was not the result of many predictions to His disciples and others that He would rise on the third day? Sorry for the long question. I've just been studying your arguments for the resurrection, and these are some questions that I can't seem to resolve.

And you can click here to read Bill's response. This is a pretty tough question.

I'm inclined to think that Bill will have an answer because I know lots of atheists scholars have a very high opinion of this early creed.

Further study

The top 10 links to help you along with your learning on this issue and related issues.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Is there a Tea Party faction within the Christian Church? Who is it?

November 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did someone say "Tea Party?"

Consider this report by a *non-Christian* who attended the recent "On Guard" conference in Dallas, Texas. (H/T Melissa of Hard-Core Christianity)

Excerpt:

> Over the weekend, I attended the On Guard Conference 2010, a Christian apologetics conference. Before you read any further I must quickly explain my history with Christianity.
>
> Back in high school, I was holy rollin' like a 80-year-old on a Rascal. I knew for sure I was going into the ministry and was entirely prepared to spend the rest of my life in the service of God. Several things happened about which I would write a book (and might one day). The short version is, my church was populated with small-minded, bigots. The church split twice and once because of a situation I was involved in. A poor black woman living out of an old rusted mustang barely survived two lots down while the church sent money to missionaries in Honduras. By the time the church had sucked my soul from me and spit me out, I turned my back on it all.
>
> Fast forward to now. I have two children and I live in Texas. They will be exposed to Christianity in some form. We visited many churches (and synagogues since they are technically Jewish) and nothing appealed to me. The primary problem I have is that traditional worship is a broken record, especially when handled by Southern Baptists. There is only so much of the same catch-phrases, slogans, and cliches I can take before I hit toxic cynicism. The other problem I have is with modern worship. There is only so much canned slides, unfamiliar songs, and slick

> (but only re-purposed traditional) sermons I stomach. Where others claim tradition, I claim “rut”. I was on the other side long enough to see all of these things as meaningless.
>
> I kept myself at such a distance from religion for so long, that aplogetics is entirely new to me. Christian apologetics is a discipline (and I would argue a culture as well) within Christianity where Christians defend their faith through logic, reason, and even science. Yeah, I know, sounds crazy. But here’s the kicker:
>
> In my entire life, not once have I ever seen or heard a Christian say these words: “I’m not afraid for anyone to question me about my faith. I have nothing to hide [intellectually].”
>
> Keep in mind, growing up Southern Baptists means growing up knowing very little about your own faith and spending time around other people who are openly hostile to those who don’t believe the same way.
>
> For me, I don’t know what I believe anymore. I feel burned by a long history of disappointments by my own faith. In a nutshell, God to me is very similar to my own father. He came around, did his business and is long gone. I don’t and probably will never believe God is much more than a designer who set up some sophisticated systems that still work today but has moved on to other interests. I frankly think it’s absurd to believe God takes the time to help somebody have the strength to make it through a job interview while somewhere else around the world a child is sold into a life of sex slavery. But I digress.
>
> So my attendance at the conference is me intrigued by the kind of intellectual topics presented because that’s not the Christianity I know or see on TV.

He summarizes the conference and then ends with this:

> So the conference was great. So great in fact it occurred to me if actual mainstream Christianity was like that instead of the feelings-based judgment frontal assault I grew up with, I might have never left the church. However, the conference seemed to be geared toward two types: believers (meaning Christians who want to defend their faith) and atheists, who comprise the main apologetics boogie man. “Atheist” was used constantly to refer to the kind of people they needed to stay prepared for.
>
> As a guy who lost his faith long ago, I never doubted God’s existence. However, since I think he is a deadbeat dad, I have many questions and am looking for meaning without being convinced God is real. My struggle with faith has lasted me about 25 years. I would like to have seen a session on reconciling the Bible as a whole. For instance if Intelligent Design is really using science as I heard, how do they address the Adam and Eve question? I also would like someone like Dr. Moreland to discuss why he gets three angels and conversations with God directly when clearly God never bothered with me to begin with.

> The premise on which they build many of their arguments is their belief. I don't have that. So while I enjoyed the conference overall, I walked out of there with more questions. But isn't that kind of the point? For the first time in over two decades, I felt mentally stimulated by a religious event. In that, I'm intrigued.

And what do we learn from this?

Well, I will try to be civil, but what I really *want to do* is *rant* against the postmodernism, irrationality, mysticism, pietism, relativism, inclusivism, universalism, hedonism, etc. that has got us to a point where something like 70% of young Christians who grow up in the church abandon it as soon as they go off to college. The church is a club that is run by people who want nothing to do with the honest questions of people who are less interested in feelings, intuitions, amusement and community and more interested in *truth*. And we are failing these honest questioners, because we are too busy having fun and feeling happy.

I have a very good idea of why the church is losing all of it's young people. And we need a tea party revolution in the church to get people to come back.

So here's my stand:

- The church believes that belief in God's existence is divorced from logic and evidence, but I believe that God's existence is knowable, rational and supported by publicly-accessible evidence
- The church thinks that people become Christians because they like Christianity, but I believe that people become Christians when they think Christianity is true
- The church believes you can seek happiness without caring about the moral law, and their job is to make you feel accepted no matter what you do, but I believe that we need to set out clear moral boundaries and explain to people using non-Biblical evidence what damage is caused if those boundaries are broken
- The church believes that reading the Bible and attending church as therapeutic, but I think that the Bible and church are for clarifying my obligations in my relationship with God and for setting out the broad goals that I will use when I develop my life plan to meet those goals by solving problems using my talents in the way that *I* think is most effective – and my plan doesn't involve making *you* feel happy, by the way
- The church thinks that the Christian life consists of singing, praying and not disagreeing with anyone or thinking that we are right about anything, but I think we should get off our duffs and start studying to think about how our Christian convictions apply to the world around us in every area of life, from politics to economics to foreign policy to marriage and parenting and beyond
- The church believes that Christianity is true for them while other religions work for other people, but I believe that religions are assessed by whether they are true or not – and that other religions can be mistaken where they make false claims
- The church believes that evangelism is done without using apologetics or focusing on truth, but I think we should all be prepared by watching debates, holding open

forums, hosting speakers and conferences, and generally training ourselves to engage with the outside world in the realm of ideas
- The church thinks Christianity is a faith tradition, but I think Christianity is a knowledge tradition

Anyway, check out these other posts for more snarky defiance.

Mentoring

- the importance of being able to argue both sides of a question
- why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- how to talk to your co-workers about your faith

Apologetics advocacy

- does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?
- the six enemies of apologetic engagement
- why men flee the feminized church
- why won't Christians defend their faith in public?

Feminist Melanie McDonagh says that paternity should not be checked

November 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this unbelievable article from the UK Spectator that ECM sent me. It's written by a feminist. She is complaining about paternity tests. She thinks that women should be able to sleep with a lot of men and then arbitrarily name the richest one as the father to get the highest child support payments, and no fancy DNA test should be able to contradict her. Oh, and it goes without saying that women should not be *punished* for committing paternity fraud. That would be *mean.*

Excerpt:

> The subject has resurfaced lately, courtesy of a story in the Daily Mail, about a married television presenter who for years had been paying for the support of a child conceived, as he thought, as a result of his relationship with a writer. It seems that after meeting the child for the first time, he asked for a DNA test; it duly turned out that he was not, after all, the father. Poor child.

> […]Now I can see that some men might rather welcome an end to the old-fashioned scenario whereby they find themselves held to account for the paternity of children born to girls with whom they just happen to have had sex. The actor Jude Law recently found himself in just this position, and unhesitatingly and ungallantly demanded a DNA test.
>
> By contrast, the old situation, in which women presented men with a child, and the man either did the decent thing and offered support, or made a run for it, allowed women a certain leeway. The courtesan in Balzac who, on becoming pregnant, unhesitatingly sought, and got, maintenance from two of her men friends, can't have been the only one. Uncertainty allows mothers to select for their children the father who would be best for them.
>
> The point is that paternity was ambiguous and it was effectively up to the mother to name her child's father, or not. (That eminently sensible Jewish custom, whereby Jewishness is passed through the mother, was based on the fact that we only really knew who our mothers are.) Many men have, of course, ended up raising children who were not genetically their own, but really, does it matter?

Hmmmn. I wonder how anyone could even prove that the woman actually slept with her victim? Maybe a woman can just pick out a man arbitrarily on the street, based on his nice suit or fancy car, and name him as the (involuntary) sperm-donor. He wouldn't have any parental rights or authority, you understand.

Anyway, this shouldn't affect me. I'm chaste. But maybe I could still be forced to pay single mothers that I haven't even slept with just because I can afford to? Oh wait – that already happens. It's called progressive taxation. Oh well. It's not like I needed the money

I earn for my own future wife and children…

Save us, Barbara Kay!

Here's another article about child support from Barbara Kay about the child support bureaucracy in Ontario, Canada.

Excerpt:

> Ontario's Family Responsibility Office, which is responsible for ensuring that custodial parents don't get stiffed for child support payments by the non-custodial parent, has a lot of power.
>
> **Starting Dec. 1, someone (read "father") in arrears on their support payments can have their car impounded. That's about the stupidest punishment for non-payment one can imagine, since most people need their cars in order to work.**
>
> […]If you're going for irrational responses to non-payment, why not just throw the guy in jail –– but oh wait, they already do that. They throw guys in jail for non-support all the time, and when they do, the guys serve the whole 30, 60 or 90-day sentence (the term keeps lengthening), even though cocaine dealers routinely get out of jail after serving half their time.
>
> […]Let's look at the bigger picture, though. What is the guy paying child support for? Yeah yeah, to support his children. But that means they are, you know, sort of *his*children, right? Not necessarily. The custodial parent, almost always the ex-wife, although supposed to grant agreed-upon access rights to the children's father, can arbitrarily decide she doesn't want to allow access, and for any old reason — oh sorry, little Jimmy has a play date, oh sorry little Emma has too much homework, oh sorry, I just don't want to — can deny the father access. And does she pay for that? No. Oh, she might get a scolding from the judge, but there is no downside for her. No custodial mom has ever spent a night in jail or had her licence suspended for refusing her children's father legal access to them.

There's more in the article. Sigh. At least Barbara Kay likes men enough to speak out to defend us. Sometimes I think that women who care that men are treated fairly are the only ones who should be able to get married. If only men weren't so stupid that they judge women solely based on appearance. I guess we'll have to learn the hard way!

What is the conservative plan for taking care of the poor?

November 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's is the Heritage Foundation explaining what conservatives would do to solve the problem of poverty.

Excerpt:

Since 1964, the U.S. has spent $15.9 trillion on means-tested welfare programs. After adjusting for inflation, welfare spending is 13 times higher today than it was in 1965. Welfare spending has grown more rapidly than Social Security, Medicare, education, and defense. And what do we have to show for these efforts? According to the Census Bureau, a record high 3.7 million Americans fell into poverty in 2009. The out-of-wedlock birthrate is now 40% and the African American out-of-wedlock birthrate is 72%. When the War on Poverty began the out-of-wedlock birthrate was just 7%.

The collapse of marriage is the root cause of child poverty in the U.S. today. It is far past time to reboot our poverty programs to promote work and encourage marriage in order to control costs and promote greater self-reliance. Among Rector's recommendations:

- **Slowing the growth of the welfare state:** Congress needs to establish reasonable fiscal constraints within the welfare system. Once the current recession ends, aggregate welfare spending should be rolled back to pre-recession levels. After this rollback has been completed, the growth of welfare spending should be capped at the rate of inflation.
- **Promoting personal responsibility and work:** Able-bodied welfare recipients should be required to work or to prepare for work as a condition of receiving aid. Food stamps and housing assistance, two of the largest programs for the needy, should be aligned with the TANF program to require able-bodied adults to work or to prepare for work for a minimum of 30 hours per week.
- **Ending the welfare marriage penalty and encouraging marriage in low-income communities:** Current means-tested welfare programs penalize low-income recipients who get married; these anti-marriage penalties should be reduced or eliminated.

During the administration of President Bill Clinton, conservatives successfully reformed one welfare program in the 1990s: replacing the old Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with the new Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). But President Barack Obama's failed economic stimulus gutted those reforms. And his budget proposal would spend $10.3 trillion on means-tested welfare over the next decade. Before the current rise in poverty, that was enough to give $250,000 to each person currently living in poverty in the U.S., or $1 million for a poor family of four. Our nation can't afford another 10 years of failed War on Poverty thinking.

You can read more about this issue in this Townhall.com column by Walter Williams, which explains everything you need to do to avoid being poor, and to avoid making your kids poor.

Excerpt:

> Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And, finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior. If you graduate from high school today with a B or C average, in most places in our country there's a low-cost or financially assisted post-high-school education program available to increase your skills.
>
> Most jobs start with wages higher than the minimum wage, which is currently $5.15. A man and his wife, even earning the minimum wage, would earn $21,000 annually. According to the Bureau of Census, in 2003, the poverty threshold for one person was $9,393, for a two-person household it was $12,015, and for a family of four it was $18,810. Taking a minimum-wage job is no great shakes, but it produces an income higher than the Bureau of Census' poverty threshold. Plus, having a job in the first place increases one's prospects for a better job.
>
> The Children's Defense Fund and civil rights organizations frequently whine about the number of black children living in poverty. In 1999, the Bureau of the Census reported that 33.1 percent of black children lived in poverty compared with 13.5 percent of white children. It turns out that race per se has little to do with the difference. Instead, it's welfare and single parenthood. When black children are compared to white children living in identical circumstances, mainly in a two-parent household, both children will have the same probability of being poor.

Here's more Walter Williams: (2 minutes)

And some Thomas Sowell: (4.5 minutes)

Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell are my two favorite economists.

How can you figure out what God wants you to do?

November 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful post on decision making and the will of God posted on Neil's blog. Neil links to another post where someone is trying to figure out what God wants him to do.

Excerpt:

> **Really short version:** Aside from direct and clear personal revelation from God, you don't have access to his sovereign will when making decisions. Therefore you must look at other factors. **If it isn't moral, don't do it. If it is moral but not wise, don't do it. If it is moral and wise, then use your personal preferences.**
>
> Using this model you can end up with a wise and biblical decision, but you have avoided the traps of the "God told me to ____" routine. People who run around saying that God told them this and that convey a super-spirituality that can leave less mature believers wondering if they really have a relationship with God (i.e., "God doesn't tell me every little thing to do, so maybe I don't really know him.").

He has a helpful picture posted as well:

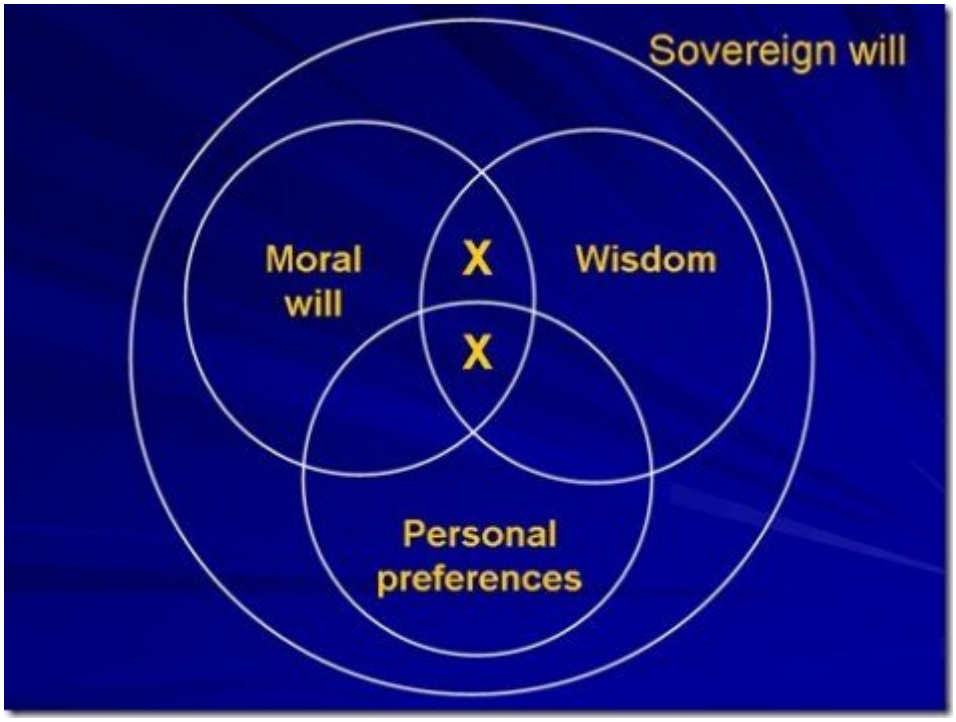

This is actually a very important topic for me, because I like making plans and making good decisions. I like being the quarterback or squad leader of my own life. I like to pick objectives and then make plans to achieve them. (Nothing too exotic, just simple stuff like saving money or reading more books)

Actually, I really oppose the idea that God has a magical fairy tale will for each person that will make them happy and fulfilled. For me, life isn't like that. I don't expect God to lead me along like a child at a scavenger hunt. I expect to survey the battlefield where I

am and then *do something* to make a difference. There are lots of things you can do that will please God. Should you focus on your career and sponsor apologetics conferences? Or should you use your spare time preparing Sunday school lessons? *There are lots of good things you could do to please God*. Your job is to pick the one that will be the most effective. It doesn't matter if it makes you happy, it only matters if it's effective and if you are good at it.

Who is Rifleman Dodd?

A while back, I was busily working my way through the U.S. Marine Corps Official Reading List, and I came across a book by C.S. Forester called *Rifleman Dodd*, or alternatively titled *Death to the French*. It's a work of historical fiction that takes place during the Napoleonic wars. The story is about a British marksman named Dodd, who is cut off from his own lines during a withdrawal maneuver. He is subsequently left to fend for himself behind enemy lines. An ordinary man might be full of despair and forget about his mission entirely. But Dodd is no ordinary man. Not only does he find a way to survive by finding food to eat, water to drink and places to sleep, but he also tries to remember his orders and to think about what he can do to advance the cause of his General, the Duke of Wellington.

Here's an excerpt from a gritty book review:

> It's about a green-coated British infantry rifleman in the Napoleonic Wars, an age when rifles were a novelty and most of the army was red-coated and carried muskets. Private Matthew Dodd gets separated from his regiment during a retreat and finds himself stranded behind enemy (French) lines in Portugal. With the occasional aid of some natives, but mostly on his own, he harasses the French with his rifle and tries to prevent them from building a bridge across the Tagus River. It's a remarkable tale of survival and solitary achievement, of a rank-and-file soldier who lives by his wits and slowly learns to make plans without orders, and shows leadership qualities and a knowledge of warfare.

I think we're in the same situation as Dodd.

There is no point in us looking for breadcrumb trails to happiness at this point. That's not the point of Christianity. The point of Christianity is friendship with God, imitation of Christ, honoring moral obligations, self-sacrificial love for your neighbor (and even your enemies!), and dedication to the truth – whether anyone else likes you or not. It's not supposed to make you happy, and it's not necessarily going to be a normal life like everyone else has. Things may not work out the way you'd like them to.

We seem to be making such a big deal about compassion and forgiveness in the Christian life these days – such a big emphasis on our feelings. Almost like we have forgotten that we have obligations to our friend – and his objectives. A relationship doesn't mean that one person completely disregards the character and goals of the other person and then is automatically granted forgiveness whenever they want it. That's not a friendship – that's using someone else for your own ends. Maybe it's time to remember what this is all

about.

If you think the Rifleman Dodd story sounds good to you, you should definitely buy the “Horatio Hornblower” DVDs and watch them. It’s like Band of Brothers only with twice the morality and wisdom. There’s a neat scene in there where Horatio has to suffer to protect someone who rebelled against him. We need to remember to be like that. Those are our orders.

How good are Democrats at standing up to radical Islam?

November 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story from the Jakarta Post. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Incidents of church attacks and religious violence are spreading throughout Java, outside of traditional "hot spots" such as Greater Jakarta and West Java, activists said on Sunday.
>
> The latest violent incident occurred in Sukoharjo, Central Java, on Oct. 13, when 12 people on motorcycles set fire to a Protestant church, said Theophilus Bella of the Jakarta Christian Communication Forum (FKKJ), which documents sectarian violence in Indonesia.
>
> A day before, an attempt to set fire to St. Joseph Catholic church in Klaten, Central Java, was foiled and caused only minor damage, he said in a report made available to The Jakarta Post. On Oct. 17, radical Muslims threatened to attack a Catholic church in Karanganyar, Central Java.
>
> Last month, an unidentified group attacked a Catholic church in Pasir regency, East Kalimantan, it said.
> Most of the incidents over the last several years took place in Greater Jakarta and West Java, including attacks and forcible church closures that occurred with little or no intervention from the government, the report said.
>
> According to the FKKJ, officials of Lubuk Linggau, Sumatra, said Huria Kristen Indonesia (HKI) congregation members lacked an official permit and could not conduct religious activities in their church, in apparent response to complaints from local residents.
>
> **The FKKJ said religious violence in Indonesia has escalated since the country gained independence in 1945.**

Will Obama denounce this religious violence in Indonesia?

Look at this article from the BBC. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> US President Barack Obama has held up Indonesia as an example of how a developing nation can embrace democracy and diversity.
>
> He was speaking in Jakarta on a visit to the world's largest Muslim nation.
>
> Mr Obama said innocent people across the world were still targeted by militants but emphasised that the US was not at war with Islam.
>
> Analysts say it is his biggest attempt to engage the Islamic world since a speech

> in Cairo last year.
>
> Mr Obama was speaking at the University of Indonesia, before an audience of 6,000 people.

That's Obama, but what about Democrats here in the United States?

Consider this article from Fox News. (H/T The Blog Prof)

Excerpt:

> A popular new law that bars Oklahoma courts from considering Islamic law, or Shariah, when deciding cases was put on hold Monday after a prominent Muslim in the state won a temporary restraining order in federal court.
>
> Two state legislators were quick to blast the judge's ruling and the Oklahoma attorney general, who they said did not stand up to support the new law.
>
> …Supporters of the Oklahoma ballot initiative, which passed with 70 percent of the vote, would not comment on the impact of the ruling. But state Sen. Anthony Sykes, who co-authored the measure, charged that the judge ruled as she did because the state's attorney general, Drew Edmondson, failed to respond to the suit.
>
> "The attorney general failed to file a response," Sykes said. "I am afraid that this might get written in stone that shouldn't be because the attorney general is leaving and a new one is coming in."

The current Attorney General is a Democrat.

Meanwhile, in Pakistan, a Christian woman is set to hang for blasphemy, which she almost certainly did not commit. (H/T The Blog Prof)

John Boehner vs Nancy Pelosi – who wastes taxpayer money?

November 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

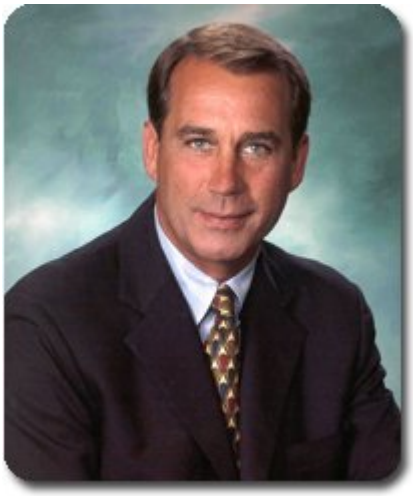

House Republican Leader John Boehner

Consider this story from The Hill about John Boehner's decision to fly *commercial airlines* between Washington, D.C. and Ohio.

Excerpt:

> Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio), the presumptive Speaker-elect of the House, will not use a private jet as Speaker for trips back and forth to his home district, he said Wednesday.
>
> "Over the last 20 years, I have flown back and forth to my district on commercial aircraft, and I'm going to continue to do that," Boehner told reporters at a press conference.
>
> The statement signals the first time since 2001 that a House Speaker has traveled commerically between Washington and their home district.
>
> Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the Speaker of the House, third in line to the presidency, was assigned a designated Air Force jet to shuttle them back and forth to their home districts on weekends.
>
> Former Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) used the jet, as does Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.). In 2007, Pelosi requested, and received, a larger jet than Hastert had used — this one capable of flying between Washington and California without stopping to refuel.
>
> A spokesman for Boehner said the Minority Leader had already spoken to security officials about his desire to travel commercially on the weekends, and that he would still use military transport for certain types of trips, like those to Afghanistan or Iraq.

That's why he's running for the Speaker of the House *uncontested.* This is a serious man

of principle.

On the other hand, Nancy Pelosi wasted millions ferrying herself and her family around the world on military aircraft, all at taxpayer expense.

Excerpt:

> We recently obtained new documents from the United States Air Force detailing Speaker Pelosi's use of United States Air Force aircraft between March 2009 and June 2010. And they pretty much tell the same, outrageous story as previous documents we've uncovered and released.
>
> Here are the highlights from the newest batch of documents, which we obtained pursuant to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request filed on January 25, 2009:
>
> - Pelosi used the Air Force aircraft for a total of 85 trips, covering 206,264 miles, from March 2, 2009 through June 7, 2010. Pelosi, her guests and Air Force personnel logged a total of 428.6 hours on these flights.
> - Members of Pelosi's family were guests on at least two flights. On June 20, 2009, Speaker Pelosi's daughter, son-in-law and two grandsons joined a flight from Andrews Air Force Base to San Francisco International Air Port. That flight included $143 in on-flight expenses for food and other items. On July 2, 2010, Pelosi took her grandson on a flight from Andrews Air Force Base to Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, California, which is northeast of San Francisco.
>
> According to previous documents uncovered by Judicial Watch, the Speaker's military travel cost the United States Air Force $2,100,744.59 over a two-year period — $101,429.14 of which was for in-flight expenses, including food and alcohol. Seriously, review these documents for yourself and you can see that Nancy Pelosi repeatedly turned indispensible Air Force aircraft into congressional party planes.
>
> For example, purchases for one Pelosi-led congressional delegation traveling from Washington, DC, through Tel Aviv, Israel to Baghdad, Iraq May 15-20, 2008, included: Johnny Walker Red scotch, Grey Goose vodka, E&J brandy, Bailey's Irish Crème, Maker's Mark whiskey, Courvoisier cognac, Bacardi Light rum, Jim Beam whiskey, Beefeater gin, Dewar's scotch, Bombay Sapphire gin, Jack Daniels whiskey, Corona beer and several bottles of wine.

The article also notes that Pelosi would reserve military aircraft all the time, and cancel her reservations at the last minute.

Obama doubles the number of federal workers paid over $150,000

November 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

USA Today reports that the number of federal works earning $150,000 or more has DOUBLED since Obama took office. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The number of federal workers earning $150,000 or more a year has soared tenfold in the past five years and doubled since President Obama took office, a USA TODAY analysis finds.
>
> The fast-growing pay of federal employees has captured the attention of fiscally conservative Republicans who won control of the U.S. House of Representatives in last week's elections. Already, some lawmakers are planning to use the lame-duck session that starts Monday to challenge the president's plan to give a 1.4% across-the-board pay raise to 2.1 million federal workers.

Meanwhile, the unemployment rate averaged 9.43% under Obama.

Frank Turek asks atheists: would you follow Jesus if Christianity were true?

November 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

His latest radio show is awesome as usual. We need to get used to talking to atheists, and this will help you because he's taking calls on that question – "if Christianity were true, would you become a Christian?".

The MP3 file is here. (54 minutes, not ad-free – skip ahead 3 minutes at breaks)

Topics from opening monologue and then callers:

- if Christianity were true, would atheists necessarily become Christians?
- does God force people to believe in him against their will?
- how important is evidence to persuading someone?
- what are some reasons to believe that God exists?
- what are some reasons to accept the resurrection of Jesus?
- what does the Bible mean by the word "faith"?
- what should you do with someone who needs reasons to believe?
- what should you do with someone who wouldn't believe even with reasons?
- what about Christians who think the Earth is only thousands of years old?
- was their death and suffering before the Fall?
- what about evolution? haven't we been able to observe evolution in action?
- what about the origin of life – the origin of biological information?
- what about the fossil record – especially the hominid fossil record?
- what about theistic evolution?

This is a great podcast, especially for beginners.

Frank Turek is a former naval aviator. He flew military aircraft. If you've seen the movie Top Gun, he's Maverick. And he's talking to you about apologetics, with all the benefit of his experience debating and conducting open forums on college campuses. Fun, fun, fun! (And not the bad kind of fun that Mary likes) Sometimes I wonder why I have to sit at a keyboard all day and slave over a hot computer*, when I would much rather be doing what Frank Turek is doing. Oh well. At least I get to listen and tell you about it, too.

By the way, the *right* answer to his question for an atheist is "yes, but where is the evidence?". That's what atheists *should* say in response to the question, and then they *should* listen to the evidence. Also, they *should* have reasons for believing that there is no God, or they are just exercising *blind faith*. And if they ask you, "would believe there were no God if atheism were true?" then you have to answer *yes*, because if atheism is true then you are rationally obligated to believe it. But then, they have to have *evidence* before you actually have to believe it! Being open to being proved wrong means a lot to people who don't agree with you. For example, I used to be a young-earther and I changed my mind.

By the way – that question he's asking? – "if Christianity were true, would you become a follower of Jesus?" – he stole that from my 13-question quiz for atheists. But I won't be bitter if you go to this page, print out my 13 questions, find an atheist of your very own, and ask them the questions yourself. *Don't let them know why you are asking or what the right answers are.* Just ask your atheist the questions and then report back to me here.

Frank's web site is called Cross Examined.

* I stole this from Brian Auten.

In the UK, socialists attack police and lay siege to Tory headquarters

November 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Thugs who hijacked the tuition fees protest narrowly avoided seriously injuring or even killing police when they threw a fire extinguisher off the seventh floor roof of the Tory HQ, it emerged today.
>
> The dramatic moment was captured on video footage, showing the extinguisher crashing to the ground just inches from a group of officers desperately battling to regain control in Millbank.
>
> A youth was seen on pictures clutching the missile on top of the building and the film showed it being launched over the edge and falling at speed.
>
> It glanced off the helmet of one territorial support group officer and grazes the knees of another. Had it properly hit any of the thousands of people below, it would almost certainly have left fatal injuries.
>
> […]Militants from far-Left groups whipped up a mix of middle-class students and younger college and school pupils into a frenzy, setting off the most violent student unrest Britain has seen in decades.
>
> The focus of the violence was Tory HQ in Central London, where hundreds of thousands of pounds of damage was caused.
>
> The glass frontage was smashed and protesters swarmed seven floors up to the roof, from where a fire extinguisher was hurled down at police below.
>
> Effigies of David Cameron and Nick Clegg were burned to cheers from the roaring mob. At least 14 casualties were taken to hospital, seven of them police officers, and 51 demonstrators were arrested.

Notice that the signs in the pictures have logos from socialist organizations on them. These are violent left-wing thugs and they nearly killed police officers. And why? To protest against anyone who would cut the flow of taxpayer money that subsidizes their work-free lifestyle.

Why do conservatives support legal private gun ownership?

November 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Part 5 of Bill Whittle's excellent series on what conservatives believe.

Here are the previous parts:

- Small government and free enterprise
- Federalism and de-centralization of power
- Wealth creation and free trade
- Natural law and natural rights

Happy Friday!

Why do conservatives oppose illegal immigration?

November 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Part 6 of Bill Whittle's excellent series on what conservatives believe.

Here are the previous parts:

- Small government and free enterprise
- Federalism and de-centralization of power
- Wealth creation and free trade
- Natural law and natural rights
- Legal gun ownership

Happy Friday!

Nancy Pelosi likely to stay on as Democrat House leader

November 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an AP piece from Fox News. (H/T The Blog Prof)

Excerpt:

> House Democrats averted a messy leadership struggle, clearing the way for Maryland Rep. Steny Hoyer to become second in command of their new minority without a challenge from South Carolina Rep. James Clyburn.
>
> Under an arrangement worked out in private, officials said late Friday that Clyburn would instead receive a new position, title unknown and duties undescribed, explicitly labeled the third-ranking post in leadership.
>
> The maneuvering was described by Democratic officials after Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., issued a vaguely worded statement saying she intends to nominate Clyburn to a new No. 3 post. The statement made no mention of Hoyer, and officials who filled in the details did so on condition of anonymity, saying they were not permitted to speak publicly about the matter.
>
> Pelosi is assured of remaining Democratic party leader when the new Congress convenes in January under a Republican majority. She has drawn no opposition for the post even though several members of the rank and file have said they would prefer she step aside after historic election losses. The GOP gained at least 60 seats in midterm elections, more than enough to return to power after a four-year absence.

Nancy Pelosi thinks that she is an asset to Democrat Party:

More Nancy Pelosi:

More Pelosi:

Wow! They're stupider than I thought.

What atheists think about religion and how should Christians respond?

November 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from radically left-wing anti-Christian New York Times that talks about what militant atheists are doing for Christmas in order to annoy Christians. (H/T Mary)

Let's see what atheists want to say.

Excerpt:

> Just in time for the holiday season, Americans are about to be hit with a spate of advertisements promoting the joy and wisdom of atheism.
>
> Four separate and competing national organizations representing various streams of atheists, humanists and freethinkers will soon be spreading their gospel through advertisements on billboards, buses and trains, and in newspapers and magazines.
>
> The latest, announced on Tuesday in Washington, is the first to include spots on television and cable. This campaign juxtaposes particularly primitive — even barbaric — passages from the Bible and the Koran with quotations from nonbelievers and humanists…
>
> […]Relying on the largess of a few wealthy atheists, these groups are now capable of bankrolling efforts to recruit and organize a population that mostly has been quiet and closeted.
>
> Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-president of the Freedom from Religion Foundation in Madison, Wis., one of the groups running advertisements, said, "We feel the only way to fight the stigma toward atheists and agnostics is for people to feel like they know them, and they're your neighbors and your friends. It's the same idea as the out-of-the-closet campaign for gay rights."
>
> […]"We must denounce politicians that contend U.S. law should be based on the Bible and the Ten Commandments," said Todd Stiefel, a retired pharmaceutical company executive who is underwriting most of the ad campaign that cites alarming Scripture passages. "It has not been based on these and should never be. Our founding fathers created a secular democracy."
>
> […] On the confrontational end of the spectrum, American Atheists, which was founded in 1963 by Madalyn Murray O'Hair, will just before Thanksgiving put a billboard on the busy approach to the Lincoln Tunnel from New Jersey heading into New York.
>
> It features a Nativity scene, and the words: "You Know it's a Myth. This Season Celebrate Reason."
>
> David Silverman, the president of American Atheists, said that the idea of the campaign is to reach people who might go to church but are just going through

> the motions. “We’re going after that market share,” he said.
>
> The United Coalition of Reason, a group in Washington, is sponsoring billboards and ads on bus shelters in about 15 cities that say, “Don’t Believe In God? Join the Club.”
>
> The ads by the Freedom From Religion Foundation take a more inviting approach, with big portraits of some famous and some workaday people, listing their hobbies and professions and giving a punchy, personal declaration of independence from religion. The group, which has been running advertisements on and off since 2007, has spent about $55,000 this year to put up 150 billboards in about a dozen cities.
>
> One, featuring Barbara Wright, a restaurateur in Madison, says: “It’s not what you believe, but how you behave.”

Wow! I’m impressed by these one-line catch phrases on billboards! So persuasive and rational! So focused on making propositional claims about the external world! So concerned with reason and evidence, not emotions and community! Such a careful investigation of the facts on both sides! The “Join the Club” argument! The “Celebrate Reason” argument! The “Be Nice If You Feel Like It” argument! Wowie wow wow! I’m impressed.

I note that the atheists are not funding formal debates, because that would require a discussion with two sides, and atheism is not something that performs well when the other side is well-represented. So, flashy sound-bite advertisements are used by atheists to present atheism to the public. It’s not rational, it’s marketing.

So how should Christians respond to this?

One group of Christians thinks that apologetics is the answer to this atheist plan. They think that Christians should learn the good scientific arguments for the existence of God from science (the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, habitability, Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, etc.) and the good philosophical arguments (moral argument, defense to the problem of evil, defense to the hiddenness of God, defense to religious pluralism, defense to postmodern skepticism, etc.), and the good historical arguments that don’t ASSUME the inerrancy of the Bible (1 Cor 15, minimal facts, responses to Old Testament violence, etc.).

I think that it is also important to have the money to be able to sponsor debates and conferences, as well. Nothing much would be made known the public unless deep-pocketed Christians were able to sponsor these debates and conferences. So Christians believe in choosing good degrees and getting good jobs and saving money to be able to invest in debates and conferences and such.

That’s one way to combat the sound-bite ads of the new atheists, and their rich backers.

But lately I have been having second thoughts. I talked to some of the Christians in my church, and they recommended alternative solutions to these challenges from the new atheists. They claim that these alternative solutions are superior to apologetics, so I

thought I would list some of them out and you can see whether you agree with them or me.

Here they are:

- the argument from doing yoga
- the argument from becoming a vegetarian
- the argument from getting body piercings and tattoos
- the argument from reading trendy theologians whom non-Christians have never even heard of
- the argument from reading fiction like “The Shack”, “The Da Vinci Code” and “Conversations with God”
- the argument from watching television shows like “American Idol”, “The Amazing Race” and “Lost”
- the argument from short-term mission trips to Bolivia to take pictures and then tell stories (not like Neil’s)
- the argument from having emotional experiences by singing about things we don’t know are true
- the argument from not talking about our beliefs at work because people won’t like us
- the argument from watching popular movies so many times that you memorize the dialog
- the argument from listening to popular music so many times that you memorize the lyrics
- the argument from watching sports teams play so many times that you memorize the rosters
- the argument from breast enlargement surgery
- the argument from turning worship into entertainment
- the argument from telling people that things that are wrong are not really wrong so they like us
- the argument from reading teenage vampire romance murder mysteries
- the argument from treating cats as if they were people

And so on.

Anyway, I am not sure whether apologetics or these other church arguments are better. Can anyone help me to decide?

I actually think that William Lane Craig used a new argument in his recent debate in Mexico against Richard Dawkins and Michael Shermer. I think he called it the argument from “watching the Home Decorating Network obsessively and creating detailed home renovation projects and decorating your home with expensive tacky crap and then showing it off to your neighbors”. I am not sure if that worked on Dawkins, we have to wait for the video to see what Dawkins’ response was.

Come on people. We can beat atheism like a bongo drum. We just have to be serious

about out-thinking them. They have *nothing*. The only way they win is if we put down our apologetics and amuse ourselves with narcissism and hedonism.

UPDATE: Excellent comments here from Laura (Pursuing Holiness) about the important of good works IN ADDITION TO apologetics. She is a real culture warrior and understands all the connections between Christianity and politics.

The best book on government is Mark Levin's "Liberty and Tyranny"

November 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an excellent review of *Liberty and Tyranny* in the American Spectator. (H/T Ensign Taiga)

Excerpt:

> It's the book that changed America.
>
> And it isn't often that a book — any book, even a popular, bestselling book like Mark Levin's *Liberty and Tyranny: A Conservative Manifesto* — can be said to have changed the course of American politics and history. The phenomenon is rare, extremely rare, usually taking both the country and even the author by surprise.
>
> Yet Levin's book has done just that, saluted by Minnesota Republican Congresswoman Michele Bachmann in an exclusive talk with *The American Spectator* as "providing [the] intellectual balance and foundation" of the Tea Party movement. A movement that stands triumphant this week in the wake of the conservative landslide that Levin himself believes can revitalize the conservative cause that Ronald Reagan once led to the White House.
>
> The results of the 2010 revolt against the Obama Era are staggering. The success of the Tea Party; the defeat of over 60 of Nancy Pelosi's House Democrats; the election of a half dozen U.S. senators, ten governors and almost 700 state legislators. What startles even more is that one campaign after another focused on the issues Levin featured in his book — the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, statism, the dangers of a powerful central government.
>
> Campaigns "motivated and inspired" specifically, says Bachmann, by Levin's *Liberty and Tyranny*.
>
> […]*Liberty and Tyranny*'s red, white, and blue flag-and-flame cover bearing Levin's bearded visage was waved aloft at Tea Party rallies. Bachmann marvels that "it's difficult to educate a nation" but says Tea Partiers made a point to "take copies of the book to town hall meetings" to grill House and Senate members on their knowledge of the Constitution they had taken an oath to obey. The book's cover itself appeared in poster form. One memorable photo captured former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin at a rally seated next to a soldier, the Levin book clearly visible in her lap. While the Palin photo was both real and un-staged, there was the inevitable humorous photo shopping. North Korea's Communist dictator Kim Jong Il — aka "The Great Leader" — was pictured brandishing a copy of the book written by the man his friends and fans call "The Great One." Another

> *Liberty and Tyranny* fan went to work mocking Obama's famous 2008 campaign poster, replacing Obama's image with an iconic rendering of Levin, the caption changed from "Hope and Change" to read simply: "The Great One."

Why do people trust Levin so much?

> LEVIN IS, FAMOUSLY, a considerable talk radio star, ranked number four in the nation with eight and a half million listeners. He is as well the longtime head of the conservative Landmark Legal Foundation. A former Reagan aide, Justice Department lawyer (serving as chief of staff to Reagan attorney general Edwin Meese III, among other positions in the government) and conservative activist who began his march on liberalism as a precocious 13-year old, Levin is no recent entry into discussions of law, politics, or conservative principles. His friend Rush Limbaugh calls him "F. Lee Levin" in humorous reference to the great trial lawyer, but the humor alludes to Levin's significant legal abilities that doubtless played a role in his ability to write a book that has stirred such consequence.
>
> Skipping 12th grade to move on to Temple University, Levin graduated — at 19 — Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude, with membership in the university's political science and history honor societies. By 22 he was already a lawyer, having graduated from Temple Law School — finding time along the way to get elected at 19 to his local suburban school board, making him the youngest elected school board member in the history of the state.
>
> Says Bachmann simply: "Mark Levin is an intellectual powerhouse."

How popular was the the book and what caused people to buy it?

> Clearly, as with Paine, Stowe and Goldwater before him, Levin had struck a very American nerve. While the book manifested all the usual best seller symptoms (it was #1 on the *New York Times* list for three months, #1 on Amazon for all books for several months as well as #2 for all of 2009 on the Amazon hardcover non-fiction list etc.), there was obviously something else going on.
>
> A very, very big something else.
>
> IT'S REASONABLE TO ASK after all of this — why all the fuss over a book that defends the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence? What *is* it that drives over 1.2 million books to sell like glasses of cold lemonade in the Sahara Desert? What kind of book gets over 2,000 reviews on Amazon, the book rated with five stars by all but a handful of readers? What kind of book sends Americans into the streets waving copies as if they'd uncovered the Holy Grail?
>
> Congresswoman Bachmann thinks she knows the answer. The book, she says simply, was a "gift to our nation."
>
> In a manner that Levin could not possibly have foreseen, his arguments defending individual freedoms and liberty from what Alexis de Tocqueville called "soft tyranny" — the supremacy of the state suddenly took on a vivid, personal

> meaning for Americans. As the new Obama administration and its allies on Capitol Hill began rapidly expanding the size and scope of the federal government almost exponentially, jamming a government takeover of health care through a Congress besieged by constituents shouting — sometimes literally — not to do this, millions of Americans were provoked from stunned amazement to outrage. On top of a staggering so-called stimulus plan that cost almost $1 trillion plus government takeovers and bailouts of everything from car companies to financial institutions, the realization dawned on many Americans that Levin was right: the long march of collectivism had suddenly turned into a sprint.

Here's a video showing how popular the book was:

Really highly recommended, along with the Politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism by Robert Murphy and Basic Economics by Thomas Sowell.

Obama administration hands out 111 waivers from Obamacare

November 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video is 2 minutes long. (H/T Wes Widner of Reason to Stand)

ECM sent me this article for those who cannot see the video.

Excerpt:

> 111 companies and organizations were granted waivers by Obama's Dept. of Health and Human Services so that they could get out of having to comply with Obamacare and unions were particularly well rewarded by the HHS with these waivers.
>
> Interestingly, there was no great announcement of these waivers issued to the press. The HHS buried the waiver announcement six layers deep on its webpage and posted them on Friday when they imagined no one would notice. It's a typical Friday evening document dump so common when an administration wants to avoid the prying eyes of the people. So much for the "most transparent administration in history," eh?
>
> One thing is sure about these waivers. Obama rewarded his union pals quite well.
>
> […]Interestingly enough, Obama has waived the onerous Obamacare rules for quite a few healthcare providers, too. One wonders how good Obamacare could be if the rules are waived for actual healthcare providers?

That article has the full list of the 111 special interest groups who got waivers from Obamacare. The rest of the corporations who did not get waivers will just have to lose jobs, I guess. I guess those are the ones that didn't support Obamacare.

Remember how unions were pushing for Obamacare? Well they got waivers from it, too.

Neil Simpson has a list of UNIONS that got exemptions:

> 1. Service Employees Benefit Fund
> 2. UFCW Allied Trade Health & Welfare Trust
> 3. IBEW No.915
> 4. Asbestos Workers Local 53 Welfare Fund
> 5. Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 123 Welfare Fund
> 6. UFCW Local 227
> 7. UFCW Maximus Local 455
> 8. Local 25 SEIU
> 9. UFCW Local 1262
> 10. Local 802 Musicians Health Fund
> 11. Greater Metropolitan Hotel

> 12. Local 17 Hospitality Benefit Fund
> 13. I.U.P.A.T.
> 14. Transport Workers
> 15. UFT Welfare Fund
> 16. UABT

That’s the list of KNOWN unions.

If Obamacare is so great, then why do all the Democrat special interest groups have to get exemptions from it? Could it be that Obamacare is a job-killing nightmare that not even Democrats want to be bound by?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96Uu_tI0hTw&feature=share

What does “quantitative easing” really mean?

November 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are some mild curse words in this, but it is the awesome. (H/T ECM and Lex Communis)

The video has gone the viral. It has the 600,000 views as of the 10 PM.

“Of course not, they are the Goldman Sachs. They make their money ripping off the American people”. LOL!

UPDATE: 24 hours later, and close to a million page views.

Supreme Court hears arguments on whether to allow Christian campus groups

November 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Conservative and liberal justices on the Supreme Court dueled verbally over whether a student religious group has a constitutional right to receive state college funds while excluding homosexuals and others who violate its beliefs.
>
> The case, argued Monday, stems from San Francisco, where the University of California's Hastings College of the Law says its policy requires that student groups seeking benefits such as school funding or preferred access to meeting rooms admit any interested student.
>
> Hastings refused to accept the Christian Legal Society as a registered student group because, starting in 2004, the organization has held members to a "statement of faith" prohibiting "fornication, adultery and homosexual conduct."
>
> The society sued, contending that the Hastings antidiscrimination policy violated its First Amendment right to associate with those it chooses and to select members and officers committed to promoting its beliefs. **Lower courts agreed with Hastings**, setting up a Supreme Court argument with both sides represented by lawyers who gained prominence during the administration of President George W. Bush.
>
> […]The student group was represented by Michael W. McConnell, a conservative scholar who has challenged prevailing views requiring a rigid separation between church and state. President Bush appointed him to a federal appeals court, but Mr. McConnell stepped down last year to head a center at Stanford Law School and litigate cases like this one.
>
> "If Hastings is correct, a student who does not even believe in the Bible is entitled to demand to lead a Christian Bible study," Mr. McConnell told the Supreme Court. While the school could bar discrimination based on "status"—such as race—it could not stop a student group from limiting membership to those who pledge fealty to its beliefs, he said.

And what about the wise Latina, who was appointed by Barack Obama, and hailed as a moderate?

> Liberal justices said Hastings's policy reflected a wish to avoid parsing the specific form of discrimination each student group might employ. Outside groups could still use campus facilities even if not officially registered, they said.
>
> "Your group is not being excluded or ostracized completely," Justice Sonia

> Sotomayor said. “You can meet in the cafeteria, you can meet in open spaces in the school.”

Elections have consequences.

Now I guess that there were apparently some people who thought that voting for Obama was consistent with authentic Christian faith. But look at how Obama’s judges like up on the issue compared to Bush’s judges. Real Christians are having their fundamental rights attacked by the secular left on campus, and the judges on the Supreme Court and going to decide what happens to those real Christians. University campuses are run by secular humanists who have no reason at all in their worldview to care about protecting anyone else’s rights – morality on naturalism is survival of the fittest and might makes right. They have no principles.

I vividly remember having a talk with two “Christians” who were heavily into NBA basketball and memorizing movie dialog in the parking lot of our office prior to the 2008 election. They assured me that all that was necessary to be a Christian was to attend church and to have a good time at church. They would not listen to a word I said about policies that were consistent with the Christian worldview – *not even on abortion or traditional marriage*. Obama had the right color of skin, and that’s all there was to it. And now we see the results of their voting. What will happen when they meet the authentic Christians they helped to persecute in Heaven?

In addition, let this be a lesson to Christians who are interested in making a difference in the world – we need more experts in the law like McConnell who have top tier credentials. Don’t waste your life – think about the most effective thing you think you might be able to do, and do that thing. It’s not meant to make you happy, it’s self-sacrificial service.

You can read more about McConnell here.

On women leaving marriages that don't make them happy enough

November 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Don't blame me! I didn't write it. Alisha wrote it. She's the meany, not me!

Excerpt:

> I have a certain friend, a great guy I've known since I was a gawky teen, and who continues to be my friend in my fully grown yet still gawky state. He has always been strong- fights hard, works hard, but loves the hardest.
>
> When he married a few years ago, I was a little worried. Now that he's divorced, I'm very hurt. And taken aback that he is not the only guy I know in this situation. In fact, I know about 4.
>
> Now, these men are far from perfect. No one except God is. Yet in all these collapsed marriages, the women openly and willingly admitted the men they promised to be with until death had never hit, pushed, sexually or emotionally accosted them. They quite simply, no longer wanted to be married.
>
> Of course, there is nothing really simple about dissolving one's marriage, except for my simple-minded incomprehension as I sat at a showing of "The Devil Wears Prada" with one of these ladies a few years back. We had gone to the mall to do a little window shopping, and for what seemed to be the entire trip, this young lady- I'll call her Amber- complained non-stop about what her husband wasn't doing. He wasn't buying her new clothes or shoes or taking her on vacations. She worked hard, many days 10 hours. And well, he worked, too, but it wasn't fair he didn't buy her more.
>
> "Can he afford to buy you all that stuff?" I asked. She looked at me as if I were stupid. "MY FATHER works two even three jobs to make sure Mama gets everything she wants and deserves! Sometimes, he is away for weeks, working at construction sites to ensure it!"
>
> […]Another girl I know got hitched- only to ditch her groom before a tan line started to develop on her ring finger. The very same things she loved about him while they were dating- his commitment to God, desire to go into the ministry, his "good guy" sweetness- were instantly repulsive in marriage. Their marriage annulled, she jumped into a long term dating relationship which turned into cohabitation and a child together. But fortunate for her, no wedding.

I actually blame the men for choosing these women. Men have to test women during the courtship to see if what they are interested in is making a commitment and then acting self-sacrificially to honor their obligations. I could tell you nightmare stories about Christian women I know who can do the most amazing acts of selfishness and then totally refuse to make amends or accept any responsibility. But then, I'm not married to those

women – because that all came out before I ever got serious about them. Many women are judging men today based on how amusing they are and whether their girlfriends will be envious and approving based on secular criteria supplied by TV shows and music videos. This all has to be detected during the courtship by the man. Courting is when the man has to detect if the woman is thinking anything other than "if I don't like this – if it doesn't make me feel happy all the time and impose no obligations on me – then I can get out of it". Is she ready for a commitment? That's the man's job to find out.

What courtship is really about for men is communicating your plan and the challenges you're facing and then standing back to see if she wants to help. I once met a Christian woman who would not so much as sit down with me to see what I did for a living. She wanted to have fun! And understanding my job so that she could help was not fun. (Presumably, spending my money that I earned from that job would have been more fun). So if a man marries a woman like that, then it is the man's fault. If men are too stupid to know how to detect lemons then they deserve to suffer. Learning how to court is more important than playing video games. Knowing what laws strengthen men in their roles as husbands and fathers is more important than watching X-treme sports. Men are responsible to understand marriage, understand what women do in a marriage, and understand policies that strengthen or weaken marriage. Many men who are divorced today voted for the party of no-fault divorce (with the custody battles and fake charges of child abuse) and domestic violence laws (which criminalize criticizing your wife's spending or weight) yesterday. And those men are fools. And they must be punished.

Men are terrible at knowing what they want from women. What matters to the stupid men about women today is not whether they are chaste and self-sacrificial and organized and goal-oriented, but only their physical appearance, how much they are willing to drink, and how far they are willing to go physically. Even Christian men have no idea what Christian women are supposed to DO in a marriage. Many men think that marriage will be 50% playing video games, and 50% sex or something. It's just totally unrealistic. Not to mention that women are not inanimate objects. They are more like employees. If you bring a woman into your home and do not know how to motivate them, then they will not fill the role that they are assigned. Surely a wife is as entitled to as much "management" as an employee. Having sex with someone is not effective management. One-on-one eye-to-eye communication about current concerns and future goals is effective management.

I think that men and women really need to sit down and think about marriage and parenting as an engineering problem. What are the use cases? What are the requirements? What is the design plan? What are the possible solutions? What are the tradeoffs? What is the schedule? How much of this can we build ourselves, and how much of it can we purchase or outsource? If the woman is not on board with the seriousness of marriage, because she resents obligations, saving money and structure, then *drop her like a hot potato.* If she does not want a man to fulfill his roles in the marriage – protecting, providing and leading on moral/spiritual issues – *then kick her to the curb*. Spontaneity is good for a Sunday afternoon or a Friday night. It is not the way to run a a marriage, especially when there are kids. Spontaneity is not the way to produce quality

software – with garbage in, you get garbage out. Can you imagine hiring an engineer based solely on their physical appearance and amusement value? Yet this is what men are doing. Christian men are doing this.

Democrats plan to block Republicans from banning earmarks

November 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News: Republicans support a ban on earmarks.

Excerpt:

> In a remarkable turnabout, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell shifted gears from fighting a two-year moratorium on earmarks to whole-heartedly embracing it. A long time member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and defender of pet project spending, McConnell said he simply could not ignore the will of the American people any longer and said it was time for him to "lead first by example."
>
> The leader repeated a criticism he has lodged in recent weeks against the ban, authored in the Senate by Tea Party favorite Sen. Jim DeMint, R-SC, that it was "small or even symbolic" action, but McConnell said Monday, "There is simply no doubt that the abuse of this practice has caused Americans to view it as the symbol of the waste and out of control spending that every Republican in Washington is determined to fight."
>
> "Right now we've got over 500 congressmen and senators who are in Washington who think it's their job to bring home the bacon. And that takes your eye off the ball. I mean, we're not working on important national issues when we're trying to pave a local parking lot," DeMint told Fox News Sunday's Chris Wallace.
>
> […]The action by McConnell avoids a major split within his party, while not conceding much, and puts the leader squarely on the side of the powerful, grassroots Tea Party movement.
>
> […]"With Republicans in Congress now united, it's now up to President," McConnell chided in a Senate floor speech. "We have said we are willing to give up discretion. Now we'll see how he handles spending decisions. And if the president ends up with total discretion over spending, we will see more clearly where his priorities lie."

From Fox News: Democrats oppose a ban on earmarks.

Excerpt:

> Jim Manley, spokesman for Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., released a statement saying, "It is up to each Senator whether or not they will support Congressionally directed funding to their state. From delivering $100 million in military projects for Nevada to funding education and public transportation projects in the state, Sen. Reid makes no apologies for delivering for the people

> of Nevada. He will always fight to ensure the state's needs are met."
>
> […]Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., a senior member of the spending panel indicated Monday he would not support the ban…

The House Republicans are, of course, strongly in favor of a ban on earmarks. They are a little more conservative than the Republicans in the Senate.

How strong are Democrats on ethical issues?

Meanwhile, Democrat Charlie Rangel was convicted on 11 counts of violating ethics rules. (The Other McCain via Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

Excerpt:

> Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), once one of the most powerful members of the House, was convicted Tuesday on 11 counts of violating ethics rules and now faces punishment.
>
> Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), the chairwoman of the adjudicatory subcommittee and the full House ethics committee, announced the decision late Tuesday morning following an abbreviated public trial and nearly six hours of deliberations.
>
> But Rangel, 80, is certainly not expected to lose his job…. in the lame-duck session, Democrats still hold the majority.
>
> […]The adjudicatory panel, which operated as a jury of his peers, found that Rangel had used House stationery and staff to solicit money for a school of public policy in his name at the City College of New York. It also concluded that he solicited donors for the center with interests before the Ways and Means Committee. Members of Congress are allowed to solicit money for nonprofit entities — even those bearing their names — as long as they do not use congressional letterhead or office resources to do so.
>
> The ethics panel split 4-4 on a charge that Rangel violated the gift ban because the plans for the center included an office and the archiving of his personal and professional papers.
>
> The panel also found Rangel guilty of using an apartment in Harlem zoned for residential use as his campaign office, failing to report more than $600,000 on his financial disclosure report and failing to pay taxes on rental income from a villa he owns in the Dominican Republic.
>
> Two counts charging him with improper use of the Congress's free franked-mail privilege were combined into one.

It's not hard to see which party is in favor of transparency and accountability, is it?

British woman has sex with strangers in order to get fatherless child

November 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here in the UK Sun. (H/T The Other McCain)

Excerpt:

> LARA CARTER has slept with 20 strangers in the past year – in a desperate and reckless bid to get pregnant.
>
> […]Lara, an assistant office manager, says: "This is absolutely the right time for me to have a baby and nothing is going to stand in my way.
>
> "**All my friends have babies** and I desperately want to be a mum.
>
> "I don't have a steady boyfriend and feel my time to have a baby is running out. **I only need a man to provide his sperm – I would have no interest in seeing him again**. That is why I'm a sperm hunter."
>
> Her obsession with getting pregnant started a year ago, when she attended the birth of a friend's baby.
>
> She says: "**The moment I saw my friend hold her newborn child**, I had a huge desire to feel that love too.
>
> […]She says: "First, I check if I'm ovulating… I meet some friends at a bar and instantly start looking for **potential sperm donors**.
>
> "When I find a potential sperm donor, I get their first name and **ask if they have any STDs**. If they haven't and we end up spending the night together, I'll sneak out in the morning.
>
> "When I don't want to spend the whole night with a man, I'll get the deed over and done with before I go home. I've had sex in some unusual places, including a car and even nightclub toilets.
>
> "Obviously, I encourage them to have unprotected sex, but some men want to use a condom.
>
> "If they do, **I always have one that I have pre-pricked in my handbag**. That way the sex isn't a waste of time."
>
> […]**Most people are very honest when asked if they have an STD. I trust my instincts**."
>
> Lara has already spent hundreds of pounds on baby clothes.
>
> She says: "Whenever I see a lovely baby outfit, I have to buy it for my future child.
>
> "I've also chosen the names my children will have. They will be Tilly and James or Matthew. I also take pregnancy vitamins, even though they are expensive.

> Lara admits her yearning for a baby is made worse by her circle of 20 close female friends – 17 of them have had children.
>
> She says: “I look at my friends with envy and know I would make such a good mum. They know about my quest to be a mother and support what I’m doing.
>
> “However, I haven’t told my family, and am worried about their reaction. **I’m happy to be a single mother and I wouldn’t want anything to do with the father**.
>
> “My parents are still together, so I didn’t grow up in a single-parent family, but **plenty of people do it these days**. I have plenty of savings to give a baby a loving, well-rounded home and lots of friends close by who can babysit. I have it all planned out.”
>
> She adds: “When I do get pregnant after a one-night stand, **I won’t contact the father… I want a baby, not a man**.

The UK has generous welfare benefits for single mothers.

Excerpt:

> Single mother Tracey Turner, 26… currently receives £136.50 a week in benefits, which includes £42.50 income support and £94 child tax credit.
>
> On top of this, her local council pays all of her £161-a-week rent and gives her a hefty discount on local rates.

A British pound is worth about $1.60 USD. 300 pounds a week x 52 weeks = 15500 pounds = about $25000 USD per year in benefits, not including the “hefty discount on local rates”. Local rates = local tax rates.

I think what is the most interesting is analyzing the parts of the first article that I have bolded. It tells a story about what is causing this woman to act this way, and what she thinks about herself, her relationships with others, and about the purpose of her life. Keep in mind that this is not unusual – the out-of-wedlock birth rate in the United States is 40%.

Left-wing fascists at Carleton University ban pro-life club

November 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Armed policeman arrests peaceful pro-life student

Here's the story from the National Post.

Excerpt:

> Carleton University's official student association has banned the Ottawa institution's anti-abortion club, offering it just one way to get back into good graces: support abortion rights.
>
> On Monday, the Carleton University Student Association (CUSA), decertified Carleton Lifeline for its anti-abortion views. It told the club that being against abortion violated CUSA's anti-discrimination policy…
>
> […]Ruth Lobo, the president of Carleton Lifeline, said CUSA assumes all students are "pro-choice," which is not necessarily the case. Its policy, she said, smacked of hypocrisy.
>
> "It's very ironic that they have a discrimination policy that allows them to discriminate against pro-life groups," she said. "CUSA claims to be representative of all students. As a pro-life student I am not represented by an organization I am forced to pay dues to in my tuition. Either they should create a policy in which students can opt out of fees or get rid of the discrimination policy," Ms. Lobo said.
>
> "Pro-choice should also mean that a woman has the right to not have an abortion, so I think CUSA is being anti-choice by not allowing people to hear the other side."
>
> CUSA did not return phone calls on Tuesday.

> […]Carleton Lifeline can no longer promote its views on campus or lobby in any way that would oppose [the pro-abortion] position. It can no longer book space for advocacy or events, nor is it eligible for funding.
>
> […]On Oct. 4, Ms. Lobo and four other students were arrested on campus by Ottawa police for attempting to display graphic anti-abortion posters. The police were called in by the school administration and the students were charged with trespassing.

Here are some questions to ask about Carleton University:

- Is Carleton University a fascist organization that criminalizes dissent from Liberal Party policies?
- Can Canadian taxpayers attend Carleton University without being a member of the Liberal Party?
- Is Carleton University committed to respect for diversity of opinion?
- Is Carleton University respectful of open debate and dialog?
- Is freedom of speech permitted at Carleton University?
- Is freedom of association permitted at Carleton University?
- Is Carleton University more or less free than fascist Iran or fascist North Korea?
- Is Carleton University more or less like the theocratic Taliban?
- Is there more of less freedom in Canada when compared to the United States?

And keep in mind that it receives funding from pro-life Canadian taxpayers. The money of pro-life taxpayers is good enough for Carleton University, but you don't have the same rights as pro-abortion taxpayers at Carleton University.

Be careful when traveling in Canada about expressing opinions in public. Canada is not like the United States where free speech is a right. If they don't like what you say, they may arrest you and put you in prison. Canada is more like North Korea or Iran with respect to free speech.

Take action!

If you do not approve of fascism on Canadian university campuses, please click here to send a message to the fascist university administrators at Carleton University. Notice how the Chancellor is connected to the left-wing Liberal party, which is responsible for the Human Rights Commissions which censor the free speech of Canadians like Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn. The Liberal party is basically similar to the Democrat party in the United States.

Related posts

- Video of armed police arresting pro-life students at Carleton University
- Carleton University orders peaceful pro-life students arrested
- University of Calgary convicts eight pro-life students
- University of Calgary denies legal counsel to accused accused students
- University of Calgary students face expulsion for pro-life display

- McGill University and University of Calgary censor pro-life students
- University of Ottawa cancels Ann Coulter appearance
- Ann Coulter files hate speech claim against Canadian university
- Canadian student union leader says pro-lifers are all potential murderers
- Lakehead University bans pro-life club
- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's University
- Pro-life club at McGill University banned
- University of Calgary uses police to threaten pro-life students (More from Ezra Levant)
- Canadian pro-life student quarantined by public school principal

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board wants to know children's sexual orientation

November 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Mercator Net. (H/T Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> A former Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau, once famously quipped: "The state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation."
>
> Unless, it would seem, the "nation" means schoolchildren ages 12-17, and the "state" is local school board bureaucrats and/or the provincial Ministry of Education. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (Ontario, Canada) plans to issue a survey which asks, among other things, for children to disclose their gender (four choices) and sexual orientation (nine choices). Proponents claim the survey is voluntary, but rather than requiring parental permission for the survey to be administered, the onus is on parents to opt out in writing (by Nov. 19), if they do not wish their child to participate.
>
> […]Although the survey is touted as being anonymous, each form is tagged with a code that can be traced back to the individual child, and, by extension, his or her family. Critics wonder what kind of inferences will be drawn, and who will have access to information that involves the cultural, religious, financial, and educational status of students' parents.

Now why do you suppose they want to know about the religion of the parents and about whether the child is gay? Hmmmn. And how will the parents' decision to opt out affect the children's test scores? Hmmmn.

Darrell Issa and the Republican plan to clean up corruption

November 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am happy that Boehner and McConnell are going to push the ban on earmarks, but who is going to fix the corruption, fraud, and lack of transparency elsewhere in government?

Consider this article from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> You may never have heard of Rep. Darrell Issa, but you will soon. Republicans have tasked him with cleaning up four years of Democratic misrule and misconduct. It's a big job, but somebody simply must do it.
>
> For proof, look no further than Tuesday's dirty debacle with Rep. Charles Rangel, who walked out of a congressional hearing before being found guilty by the House ethics committee on 11 of 13 charges of misconduct.
>
> […]As the head of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, California Republican Issa has promised aggressive investigations of misconduct, wherever it occurs. We think it's long overdue.
>
> […]The list of troubling government activities that should be investigated is a long one. Issa's already looking into Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. And he's been openly critical of the Obama stimulus' lack of controls and poor accounting practices.
>
> He — or other GOP committees — may also look into AIG and the other bank bailouts, and answer who got money and why.
>
> Then there's the Countrywide VIP program, in which some Congress members got favorable mortgages. And don't forget the $700 billion TARP program, the government's takeovers of GM and Chrysler, the links between the left-wing community organizing group ACORN and the Democrats, and even U.S. Minerals Management Service misconduct prior to the BP oil blowout.

I would really like to see an investigation of where the bailout money and stimulus money went.

Judge blames husband for his wife's decision to murder their children

November 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This case was not a small, obscure case. This was actually a huge to-do in Canada. I waited for Barbara Kay to write about it in the National Post, because she is my favorite Canadian writer. She just defends men, and I really really like that.

Excerpt:

> He just couldn't leave well enough alone. Judge Alfred Stong, I mean, who presided over the Elaine Campione murder trial. Two days ago the jury brought in a decision of first-degree murder and a 25-year sentence against Elaine Campione, who freely confessed to drowning her two little girls in a bathtub, and who freely stated in a videotape that her motivation was hatred for, and revenge against her husband Leo.
>
> The trial was over, But Judge Stong added comments after the verdict announcement suggesting that if had the power to overturn the jury's verdict, he would. He said, "It is more than disconcerting to think that if Campione had not been so abused, so used and discarded as a person, her two daughters could still be alive…" Judge Stong was determined that even if it is Campione that gets locked up, Canadians would know that the real villain, morally speaking, is Leo Campione, the father of the dead girls (even though his alleged abusiveness was entirely based on his wife's allegations and never proved), and it is actually the "discarded" Elaine Campione who is the victim.
>
> Judge Stong felt such personal animus against the grieving father that he wanted to deny Mr. Campione and his parents their opportunity to read a victim-impact statement, standard practice even with mandatory- sentencing cases. He only relented under strong pressure from the prosecutor, who reminded the judge that the murdered girls had been "an extremely important part of [Mr. Campione's] life."
>
> **The judge's attitude is shameful. But what can you expect from someone who has been trained – literally, judges take structured learning programs steeped in feminist myths and misandric conspiracy theories – that women are never abusive or violent unless they have been driven to it by an abusive male. Judge Stong just could not get it into his head – he alluded to the "unimaginable facts of this case" – that a woman could kill her children without a motivation involving a controlling male that somehow drove her to the act.**
>
> **Why did it not occur to the judge to blame the CAS? The CAS was well aware of Elaine Campione's quixotic and alarming history. They knew that Campione had exhibited many signs of psychosis, that she had**

> **been hospitalized in psychiatric wards, believed people were out to kill her and kidnap her children, and exhibiting such bizarre and/or negligent behaviours toward her girls that mother-substitutes, including her own mother, had to be constantly parachuted into her household if it was to function at all.**
>
> **Yet the CAS decided the mother was the "safe parent." Mr. Campione fought like a tiger and indebted himself trying to wrest control of the children from a woman he knew to be unstable and a potential risk to them, but nobody listened to him. Why? Because everyone licenced to deal with family issues on behalf of the state – social service agencies, police, lawyers and judges – are trained in the same mythology about women as Judge Stong was. They are all singing from the same hymn book: trust the woman, suspect the man, even when the evidence screams not to.**
>
> Let a man raise his hand once to a woman (or not, but simply be accused of doing so), and he will be whisked out of his children's lives for a year at least. You can be sure that if the father of these children had exhibited one-hundredth of the myriad clues to Elaine Campione's potential risk to her children's safety, the CAS would have eaten him for breakfast.
>
> The "system" didn't fail Elaine Campione. The system failed those two little girls by enabling a woman's psychosis at the expense of her children. There is nothing "unimaginable" in this case at all. It has all happened before.

Indeed. It happens all the time. Women murder their husbands and then plead that they were abused, with no evidence of abuse and no charges pressed at any point in the past. They spend a few months in therapy and then they are back on the street, perhaps with full custody of their children, (who swore in court there was no abuse committed by the father).

I feel so strange when I read Barbara Kay. Everyone else is always trying to shift the blame off of women and onto men, but not Barbara Kay. She must have had a lot of brothers and and a good father and made good decisions about boyfriends. Too bad there is only one Barbara Kay.

How Sal Giunta earned a Medal of Honor and lived to tell about it

November 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A Congressional Medal of Honor

Here’s the Friday night video. Enjoy!

That is one classy soldier.

Is marriage just an arrangement for people who love each other?

November 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this article from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, which is liberal like the CBC and BBC, but Australian.

However, read this excerpt:

> As proponents for gay marriage turn up the political temperature on this issue, the catchcry has become 'equal love' – if two persons of the same sex love each other, who are we to tell them they cannot marry? Greens MP Adam Bandt has this week reintroduced the argument in the Federal Parliament, stating, "It is the power of love that has brought us to this moment in the debate over marriage equality." This is a persuasive argument for it evokes in us our own needs to receive and to give love, but is 'equal love' a valid proposition for legalising same sex marriage?
>
> Let's think about it. If 'equal love' is the only prerequisite for marriage, then why not legalise marriage between uncles and nieces, or between mums and sons, if they are so inclined? I doubt if many people would accept such sexual unions, and yet if love (and take note that love in much of this debate is left undefined) is the only requisite for marriage how can we exclude a union between any two consenting persons, regardless of their status? Let's not stop there, what if three people love each other, should they not be permitted to marry? And if marriage is so malleable why not introduce, as one newspaper article recently suggested, fixed terms for marriage rather than being for life?
>
> The point is simple, 'equal love' is an inadequate ethic for deconstructing marriage. There are some human relationships which are appropriately deemed unsuitable for marriage. Particulars such as 'kinds' and teleology must play a role in defining marriage: what is a man and what is a woman, and what is the purpose or goal of marriage?

This guy is a pastor, yet he makes a good rational argument that is accessible to anyone. Is marriage really about adult feelings and the needs of adults to be happy? Or is it about something else?

Jennifer Roback Morse explains the purpose of marriage

If you want to learn more about how to define and defend traditional marriage, then take a look at these videos by Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, which I found at Lex Communis.

Details:

> Dr J addresses the Sacramento Department of Evangelization and Catholic Schools on the question of altering the definition of marriage to include same-sex

> unions. She also examines the break-down of traditional marriage and the consequences of no-fault divorce.

Clip 1 of 4:

Clip 2 of 4:

Clip 3 of 4:

Clip 4 of 4:

Or you can download the MP3 here. If anyone is wondering who I consider to be an ideal woman, Michele Bachmann and Jennifer Roback Morse are two of my favorite women. I really like women who I can sit and listen to and learn from, especially when they are passionate about what they believe and have lots of evidence to use in debates.

Are boys performing poorly in schools?

November 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Charlotte Observer.

Excerpt:

> In American schools, boys are underachieving and girls are excelling. This gender gap in academic achievement is evident as early as kindergarten. The longer students are in school, the wider the gap becomes.
>
> Boys are more likely than girls to earn poor grades, be held back a grade, have a learning disability, form a negative attitude toward school, drop out or get suspended or expelled.
>
> The education gender gap is affecting colleges, the workforce, the marriage rate and the fatherlessness rate in America.
>
> Women outnumber men in college by 4 to 3. Four decades ago, men outnumbered women in college by 4 to 3. The tipping point occurred in the late 1970s. Not only are men less likely than women to go to college, they're also less likely to graduate once there. Among 25-to-29-year-olds, 33 percent of women have earned at least a bachelor's degree compared with just 23 percent of men. This is the first generation of women to be more educated than their male counterparts.
>
> This shift means that women will increasingly get the highly paid jobs while men will experience a drop in earnings. This is already happening. Men in their 30's are the first generation to earn significantly less than their fathers' generation did at the same age. As jobs that require little education increasingly shrink, more and more men will become unemployed.
>
> As the gap continues to grow, fewer college-educated women are able to find college-educated men to marry. Many of these women are choosing not to marry at all rather than marry non-college-educated men who are likely to earn significantly less than they do.
>
> This is not to say that college-educated women and non-college-educated men never get married. But these marriages tend not to last. Marriages are more likely to end in divorce when wives earn more than their husbands.
>
> This is increasingly becoming a problem. Thirty years ago, wives earned more than their husbands in 16 percent of marriages. Now it's 25 percent and continuing to rise. By 2050, nearly half of the married women will earn more than their husbands.
>
> The rise in the number of single American women has given birth to another trend: the rise in single motherhood. The non-marital birth rate rose sharply from 18 percent in 1980 to 39 percent in 2006. According to the National Center for

> Health Statistics, this trend is not being fueled by teenage mothers but by women in their 30s and 40s.
>
> The National Center for Fathering found that 72 percent of Americans think that fatherlessness is the most significant social problem facing our nation. America is the world's leader in fatherless families.

I tried to think of a "balance" for this, but I can't think of any way that the schools discriminate against girls.

What’s more complex? Your brain or the Internet?

November 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check it out… a new peer-reviewed paper discussed at CNET News. (H/T Darwin’s God via ECM)

Excerpt:

> The human brain is truly awesome.
>
> A typical, healthy one houses some 200 billion nerve cells, which are connected to one another via hundreds of trillions of synapses. Each synapse functions like a microprocessor, and tens of thousands of them can connect a single neuron to other nerve cells. In the cerebral cortex alone, there are roughly 125 trillion synapses, which is about how many stars fill 1,500 Milky Way galaxies.
>
> These synapses are, of course, so tiny (less than a thousandth of a millimeter in diameter) that humans haven’t been able to see with great clarity what exactly they do and how, beyond knowing that their numbers vary over time. That is until now.
>
> Researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine have spent the past few years engineering a new imaging model, which they call array tomography, in conjunction with novel computational software, to stitch together image slices into a three-dimensional image that can be rotated, penetrated and navigated. Their work appears in the journal Neuron this week.
>
> To test their model, the team took tissue samples from a mouse whose brain had been bioengineered to make larger neurons in the cerebral cortex express a fluorescent protein (found in jellyfish), making them glow yellow-green. Because of this glow, the researchers were able to see synapses against the background of neurons.
>
> They found that the brain’s complexity is beyond anything they’d imagined, almost to the point of being beyond belief, says Stephen Smith, a professor of molecular and cellular physiology and senior author of the paper describing the study:
>
>> One synapse, by itself, is more like a microprocessor–with both memory-storage and information-processing elements–than a mere on/off switch. In fact, one synapse may contain on the order of 1,000 molecular-scale switches. A single human brain has more switches than all the computers and routers and Internet connections on Earth.
>
> Smith adds that this gives us a glimpse into brain tissue at a level of detail never before attained: “The entire anatomical context of the synapses is preserved. You know right where each one is, and what kind it is.”

I wonder why we consider evolution to be a “done deal” when we don’t have testable Darwinian accounts for how things like this can evolve. They are making the claim that it evolved. I am asking for some evidence.

Pakistan woman sentenced to death for defending her faith against Muslims

November 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A story from CNS News about a very brave Christian woman from Pakistan.

Excerpt:

> A Pakistani Christian woman is facing death following a conviction under the nation's Blasphemy Law, after she defended her faith against a group of Muslims who insulted her for her Christian beliefs.
>
> Asia Bibi, a 45-year-old farmworker and mother of three, was working in the fields of her small town of Itan Wali in the Punjab region of Pakistan in 2009 when her hand touched the water that the workers were to drink. The Muslim women working with her then refused to drink the water, saying that it had been contaminated by the touch of a Christian. Some reports indicate that the group had been pressuring Asia to abandon Christianity for some time.
>
> In the argument that followed, Asia reportedly defended her faith, although there are two versions of the exact nature of her statements. The Muslim women claim that she insulted Mohammed, claiming that he had died "with worms in his mouth." However, Asia's defenders say that she never made any insults, but rather defended her faith in Christ, affirming that he had died for the sins of mankind and risen from the dead, while Mohammed had not.
>
> After the women complained to a local imam, Quari Salim, the cleric filed charges against Asia for "blasphemy," and she was sent to prison to face trial. Fifteen months later, on November 7, she was sentenced to hang for her "crime," and to pay a fine equivalent to two-and-a half years' salary for an unskilled worker.
>
> A group of townspeople in Itan Wali told CNN that they all support the death sentence against Asia, and Quari told the news agency that her death sentence was "one of the happiest moments of his life," according to the interviewer.
>
> "Tears of joy poured from my eyes," said the imam during the videotaped interview.
>
> […]It has been reported that, in recent years, over 30 people who were accused of violating Pakistan's Blasphemy Law were either murdered in prison or killed following their acquittal and release.

Meanwhile, here's the Democrat Hillary Clinton defending the religious freedom OF MUSLIMS.

Excerpt:

> US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton criticized Wednesday the state of religious freedom in Europe, as Washington highlighted policies and attitudes toward

> Muslim veils and Islam as a whole.
>
> "Several European countries have placed harsh restrictions on religious expression," Clinton said, without elaborating as she unveiled the State Department's report on international religious freedom for the last year.
>
> Her assistant secretary for human rights, Michael Posner, cited France's ban on wearing the niqab and other face coverings in public places and a Swiss motion passed last year that bans building new minarets.
>
> […]France's law banning veils — passed last month — was considered an especially controversial move in a country with Europe's biggest Muslim population, estimated at nearly six million. The Netherlands is expected to follow suit.

If you expect the Democrats to do something about Christians being persecuted by Muslims, you're going to be waiting an awfully long time.

Also, why isn't the secular-leftist mainstream media reporting this story as much as they report stories like the Matthew Sheppard story and the Abu Ghraib story? Do Christian women not count as victims to the mainstream media, if the perpetrators are Muslim?

Related posts

- Is Obama serious about standing up to Pakistan?
- Woman killed for opposing her daughter's arranged marriage
- Is Obama serious about protecting religious liberty abroad?
- Pakistani man rapes 2-year old daughter of Christian man
- Christian man sacrifices his life to save 400 women from suicide bomber
- Obama backs restrictions on free speech at United Nations
- What is it like to be a Christian in a Muslim state?

How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?

November 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CNS News. (H/T The Blog Prof)

Excerpt:

> Planned Parenthood received $349.6 million in tax dollars in the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2008, and it paid its president, Cecile Richards, $385,163, plus another $11,876 in benefits and deferred compensation.
>
> According to a "fact sheet" published by the organization, Planned Parenthood Affiliate Health Centers performed 324,008 abortions in 2008.
>
> Planned Parenthood's fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2008 is the latest year for which the organization has publicly released an annual report and published the annual sum of grants and contracts it received from the government.
>
> In January 2009, Rep. Mike Pence (R-Ind.) introduced legislation to defund Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers that receive taxpayer funding. His bill, H.R. 614, would amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit "providing any federal family planning assistance to an entity unless the entity certifies that, during the period of such assistance, the entity will not perform, and will not provide any funds to any other entity that performs an abortion."

Why is it that all these liberal special interest groups like National Public Radio (NPR) and Planned Parenthood seem to be collecting so much taxpayer money? Well at least the Republicans are trying to do something about it.

Meanwhile, the International Planned Parenthood Federation is trying to lower the age of consent to 14 in Peru. I guess they are looking to drum up some more business by getting more people to have sex when they can't possible deal with the natural outcome of sex.

Related posts

- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- House Republicans win vote to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?

- Rep. Mike Pence drafts amendment to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

Does enforcing immigration law really reduce violent crime rates?

November 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Newsbusters. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> On Thursday's Fox and Friends, FNC hosts Gretchen Carlson and Steve Doocy gave attention to a University of Virginia study which found that, since Prince William County in Virginia became more strict in dealing with illegal immigrants in 2007, the jurisdiction has enjoyed a substantial drop in crime – including a 32 percent drop in violent crime – while neighboring Fairfax County has seen crime levels remain steady.
>
> Introducing an interview with Prince William County board of supervisors chairman Corey Stewart, co-host Doocy began: "Back in 2007, Prince William County in Virginia became the first large jurisdiction in the country to adopt a strict immigration enforcement policy. That move was widely criticized."
>
> Co-host Carlson added: "But a new study by the University of Virginia shows crime has dropped since the policy went into effect. … After a three-year study, here's some of the stuff that's happening: 41 percent drop in the hit-and-run accidents; 46.7 percent decrease in aggravated assaults."
>
> After noting that the University of Virginia and other "neutral organizations" were behind the study, guest Stewart informed viewers that violent crime had dropped substantially in his county compared to neighboring Fairfax County. Stewart:
>
> Well, you know, more than anything, it saved us lives. And we had a 32 percent drop in our overall violent crime rate in Prince William County. Prince William County, by the way, very large county. Second largest county in Virginia. And in Fairfax County, neighboring Fairfax County, they had a stable crime rate, and Prince William County's dropped by 32 percent over the same period of time.

Enforcing the law reduces crime! Wow!

Five Muslim boys make death threats against 13-year old boy

November 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A 13-year-old boy who penned an online Remembrance Day tribute to Britain's fallen soldiers was subjected to a vicious hate campaign by fellow pupils.
>
> A gang of 12-year-old pupils made up of five Muslim boys and one non-Muslim girl made death threats to Darius Gill involving knives and knuckle-dusters because of his support for British troops.
>
> One member of the gang also posted a picture of himself holding a rifle and threatened to hijack a plane.
>
> […]The students attend the 1,250-pupil Sidney Stringer Academy in Coventry. Muslim pupils make up 65 per cent of the school, which caters for children aged 11-18.
>
> […]Fortunately, Darius's mother Clare Allington read the comments on her son's Facebook page on Monday morning – the day of the promised attack – and immediately pulled her son out of school.
>
> Yesterday, Mrs Allington, 42, a mature student from Coventry, said: 'I logged on and it broke my heart. I was reading all sorts about knuckle-dusters, knives and death.
>
> 'They were planning to attack him at school that day so I rang the school straight away.'
>
> She added that she usually keeps an eye on her son's posts on Facebook every day but had not done so last weekend. She only read them on Monday.
>
> She added: 'If I hadn't read the threats and pulled my son out of school he could be dead.
>
> 'They might just be schoolchildren but they are fanatical and dangerous. The threats have to be taken seriously.'
>
> **Even yesterday, one of the yobs bragged about being quizzed by police and continued his online threats to attack Darius.**

It will be interesting to see how much the Muslim students are punished for this.

British Muslim cleric jailed for molesting his 15-year-old student

November 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Answering Muslims)

Excerpt:

> A Muslim cleric has been jailed for a year after sexually assaulting a young girl while he was meant to be teaching her the Qur'an.
>
> Hafiz Rahman, 67, was paid by families to teach their children after stepping down as a respected Imam.
>
> He went to the 15-year-old victim's home and molested her when they were left alone.
>
> A judge described the attack as the 'worst breach of trust imaginable' and said he believed it would have continued if the girl's father had not unexpectedly returned home.
>
> A jury of eight men and six women at Portsmouth Crown Court took less than two hours to find Rahman guilty of sexual activity with a child.
>
> Rahman, a former Imam at Jami Mosque in Portsmouth, Hampshire, is a Hafiz – someone who has memorised the entire Qur'an.
>
> Judge Roger Hetherington said: 'The parents of the child came to retain your services because they understood that you were a respected and indeed revered member of the community, who had, until recently, been an Imam to the mosque.
>
> 'On the jury's verdict and on abundant evidence, for whatever reason, you took advantage of that situation for your own sexual gratification.
>
> 'It must have been a very frightening experience for that girl.
>
> 'Given your position in the Muslim community and the respect with which you were accorded as a result by the family that you were visiting, this was as bad a case of breach of trust as it is possible to imagine.

That sentence seems to me to be far too lenient for the crime.

Here are some videos about the Islam and "child brides" from Answering Muslims.

The status of women in Islam is *very different* than in Christianity.

British Columbia Supreme Court considers striking down ban on polygamy

November 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada
from the Province.

Excerpt:

> As expected, the federal government Tuesday joined the B.C. government in support of Canada's controversial polygamy law.
>
> […]If Canada were to allow polygamy, it would be contrary to international obligations that recognize the harms of multiple marriages, said Strachan.
>
> Several interest groups also told the judge that they support the polygamy law, which was enacted in 1890 but has seldom been prosecuted in Canada.
>
> Jonathan Baker, a lawyer for Real Women of Canada, said that when freedom of religion is raised by fundamentalist Mormons as a rationale for polgyamy, the court should examine whether the practice being engaged is in fact based upon religious belief:
>
> "Was the marriage entered into in the honest belief that it was required to achieve eternal celestial bliss, or was it simply a matter of social pressure from the narrow, isolated community?"
>
> Baker added that it was "no exaggeration to say that polygamy is an anti-democratic abomination" and that a finding that the law is unconstitutional would be inconsistent with the values and opinions of most Canadians.
>
> […]The court is expected to hear more opening statements Wednesday, including statements from groups that oppose the law and would like it struck down.
>
> The issue of whether the law is constitutional was referred to the Supreme Court

> after polygamy charges laid in 2009 against two members of the small Interior community of Bountiful were quashed by the court.
>
> The trial is expected to run until the end of January.

Canada has one of the most liberal policies in the world on same-sex marriage, and they are also notorious for their no-fault divorce laws and punitive family courts.

Video of the Geivett/Craig vs. Dawkins/Shermer debate from Mexico

November 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the full debate in English if you missed it.

Doug Geivett wrote a blog post about the recent 3-on-3 debate in Mexico on "Does the universe have a purpose?".

> Usually, a debate question features one side taking the affirmative and the other side taking the negative. Here, the question for debate was **"Does the universe have a purpose?"**It was obvious from the correspondence I received from the debate organizers that I was to team with two individuals who agreed in taking the affirmative, and that the other three would take the negative—that is, they would deny that the universe has a purpose.

Speakers:

> The three of us on the affirmative side—**William Lane Craig, David Wolpe, and Doug Geivett**—all believe that whether the universe has a purpose depends on whether or not God exists. So we could argue that the universe does have a purpose if God exists, even if time did not allow for detailed arguments that God in fact exists. It would be up to the others—**Matt Ridley, Michael Shermer, and Richard Dawkins**—to argue that the universe does not have a purpose. Presumably, they would have to include arguments that God does not exist, since that would be crucial to their claim that the universe does not have a purpose. Or, they might argue that even if God exists, the universe does not have a purpose.

Format:

> Each of the six of us was allotted exactly six minutes for initial arguments. We were timed and stopped at six minutes. Strict enforcement of time limits is characteristic of debates, but not always understood by observers. I've noticed that some who've commented on the debate at various blogs have remarked that the moderator should not have interrupted debaters when they were about to make an important point. (The debate was part of a larger conference program.)

And here is a quote to make you click through and read all of Doug's post:

> **Richard Dawkins** is hero to many atheists today. So his participation and relation to the other two atheists deserves special notice. You'll find that Dawkins made numerous assertions and almost no arguments. **If you disagree, you should be able to reconstruct his arguments by identifying individual**

> **premises and specific conclusions.** So far, those who have praised Dawkins's performance in the debate, all of whom have been atheists themselves, have not attempted this reconstruction. I urge them to try. I will gladly address carefully reconstructed arguments in the comments section of this post. Dawkins called religious belief "pathetic" and accused Bill Craig of making an emotional argument. As I stated in my brief closing statement, it was Dawkins, more than anyone else, who made an "emotional argument." First, he gave no arguments against the existence of God. Second, he offered no rebuttals of the arguments we presented, and third, he dismissed religious belief as pathetic without argument. If I'm wrong about any of this, I would be happy to see evidence of my error and respond to whatever arguments he did present.

I actually am not really paying much attention to this debate since I watched a little and it looked like a music video with a crazy moderator. The speakers made opening speeches of ONLY SIX MINUTES! I can't watch a debate with speeches that short. You can't say anything good in six minutes! But I have to post the video in case you guys are interested in it. I think what is worth your time is Doug Geivett's summary of the debate. Doug is one of my three favorite philosophers, the others being Paul Copan and William Lane Craig.

Review, audio and video from the Christopher Hitchens vs William Dembski debate

November 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video is here.

The audio is here. (133 megabytes!)

Details:

- Opening statements – 15 minutes
- First rebuttal – 10 minutes
- Second rebuttal – 5 minutes
- Q&A – 30 minutes

Summary of Hitchens' opening speech, snarkified and with spin removed

Contentions:

1. God has to make the universe the way I would, but he didn't.
2. I don't like some things that people who claim to be religious do.

Arguments from science:

The fact that our current universe is running out of usable energy (entropy) means that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that the universe should go on forever.

The fact that the universe is a very big place means that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that the universe should be very small.

The fact that the universe is a very old place means that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that the universe should be very young.

The fact that the universe contains exploding stars means that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that the universe should not contain exploding stars.

The fact that the universe is expanding means that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that the universe should not be expanding.

The fact that the Earth is a small rock means that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that the Earth should not be a small rock.

Arguments from history:

Although I don't believe that there is any objective standard of right and wrong, I personally feel that Islamic terrorism is yucky yuck yuck. It's just my opinion though, since there is no objective standard of morality on atheism, but only arbitrary personal preferences and arbitrary customs that vary by time and place. Since these Muslim terrorists claim to be acting on behalf of God, and I don't like what they do, therefore God

doesn't exist.

Although I don't believe that there is any objective standard of right and wrong, I personally feel that Israeli military expansion is yucky yuck yuck. It's just my opinion though, since there is no objective standard of morality on atheism, but only arbitrary personal preferences and arbitrary customs that vary by time and place. Since these Israeli military expansionists claim to be acting on behalf of God, and I don't like what they do, therefore God doesn't exist.

Arguments from the human condition:

Although I said a minute ago that we should be cautious about the good experimental science that supports theism by showing that the universe came into being from nothing, fine-tuned for complex life, based on multiple lines of experimental evidence, I actually think that Darwinian evolution is true beyond a shadow of a doubt, based on ZERO lines of experimental evidence for macro-evolution (the evolution of new body plans and organ types). But since Darwinism is definitely true – as true as man-made global warming! – then God couldn't exist. Why? Because God would not use a gradual process to create life, because I wouldn't use a gradual process to create life. Also, we are similar to chimpanzees which proves that molecules to man evolution is true. Certainly there is no peer-reviewed evidence that human and chimpanzee DNA are actually very different. (Note that the link goes to Nature, the #1 peer-reviewed science journal).

When you were in your mother's womb, you grew some hair and then it fell off, proving there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that babies should not grow hair in their mother's womb, only to have it fall off.

Humans have appendices that have no purpose that is apparent to me, based on my vast experience with biology gleaned from writing snarky columns. Since I don't see a purpose to your appendix – certainly there is no peer-reviewed evidence that the appendix has any useful biological purpose – therefore God does not exist.

When you were a child, you grew some teeth and then they fell off, proving there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that children should not grow teeth, only to have them fall off.

There are a lot of species that go extinct in the history of life and this proves that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would not have wanted lots of species to go extinct.

The smart theistic evolutionist Francis Collins believes in Darwinian evolution and he's smart. I can't give you any reasons why he believes in Darwinian evolution right now, but you should definitely believe in evolution because of his authority and his skill at avoiding debates on evolution with his critics in the intelligent design movement.

You need to be more humble like me, you ignorant fools. If you simply read more cosmology, physics, chemistry and biology, like we clever journalists have, then you would be a smart atheist like me! And humble, too, you ignorant, illiterate fundamentalists!

Summary of Dembski's opening speech

Contentions:

1. Evolution is false, Hitchens' proofs from his book don't work.
2. Hitchens makes historical claims that are falsified by the evidence.
3. The progress of science falsifies atheism
4. Theism explains the big question of life better than atheism

Darwinian evolution vs. the evidence:

Junk DNA is not junk because the latest peer-reviewed scientific evidence shows that the so-called Junk-DNA actually has important functions in the cell. (Note that the link goes to Nature, the #1 peer-reviewed science journal).

The fossil record does not show a gradual pattern of emerging body plans because the latest evidence on the Cambrian explosion shows that new body plans emerged fully-formed without gradual developmental pathways.

The inverted retina is not a bad design, the counter-intuitive design actually is superior when the latest published research is considered.

Hitchens' argument about the evolution of the eye rely on mathematical simulations, not on experimental evidence.

Hitchens is committed to Darwinism whether there is any evidence or not, because he pre-supposes materialism, so some form of evolution MUST be true, regardless of how lousy the observable evidence is for it.

Historical arguments:

Hitchens dismisses Israel's time in Egypt and at Mount Sinai, but the evidence is written up in books like those of James K. Hoffmeier, published by Oxford University Press.

- *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition. (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Hitchens dismisses the historical records about Jesus, but these are again made clear in publications of top academic presses. (E.g. – N.T. Wright, Richard Bauckham, etc.)

The progress of science falsifies atheism:

Atheism requires that chemical evolution be true. Darwin thought that cells were simple because he needed them to be simple for this theory, and he didn't know anything about what cells were really like. But the progress of science has shown that the complexity of cells is enormous.

You can actually use rigorous methods developed by Bill in his book "The Design Inference", published by Cambridge University Press, and apply them to effects in nature, like archaeological artifacts, radio signals from space, and… cells and molecular machines.

When you apply the mathematical methods for inferring design to biology in books like “Signature in the Cell” or “The Design of Life”, components of living systems are found to be designed for a purpose.

The big questions are answered better by theism than atheism:

Other arguments: the cosmological argument, the fine-tuning argument, the moral argument, the argument from rationality/reason, the argument from mathematical foundations of reality, the argument from the the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus, etc.

Homeless man who found $3300 tracks down owner to return it

November 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Another story for our series on heroic men. (H/T Wes Widner, who IS a heroic man!)

Here's a print version of the story.

Excerpt:

> When a homeless Arizona man found a backpack containing thousands of dollars in cash, he could have seen it as a windfall. Instead, he saw that it was returned to its owner, an honorable act that's now paying off.
>
> Dave Tally, a recovering drug addict, came across the lost backpack earlier this month in a light rail station in Tempe. He opened it up, trying to find some sort of identification or baggage tag.
>
> Inside, there were no clues about its rightful owner, but Tally did find an envelope stuffed with $3,300 in cash, as well as a laptop computer.
>
> "Finding the envelope with the case was just mind-blowing," Tally said. "There were lots of crazy thoughts that went through my head."
>
> The cash could have meant a lot for Tally, who's lived on the streets for several years after losing his home. He now sleeps n the basement of local churches, saving what little he can to fix his broken bike, his only source of transportation.
>
> "I went into survival mode for a moment, actually more than a moment," Tally said, "thinking about all the things I could do for myself."
>
> But in the end, the money wasn't worth more than his honor.
>
> "It wasn't easy, but I know it was the right thing to do," Tally said. "I beat myself up pretty hard for even thinking I would spend one dime of that person's money."

What an awesome story – it shows that some people refuse to do wrong no matter what their situation is. I think it's amazing because so many people justify taking their neighbors money (through taxation) by pointing out inequalities between rich and poor. Here's a man who is very poor, and yet he did not consider his own modest situation to be a justification for stealing money from his neighbor. This is the problem with modern Democrats – they feel entitled to a perpetual adolescence by spending their lives working in the government or the schools or collecting welfare – and they are willing to steal from other productive people to finance it.

New study shows that children of divorce twice as likely to have a stroke

November 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Science Daily reports on a recent peer-reviewed Canadian study that links an increased risk of stroke to divorce. (H/T Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> "We were very surprised that the association between parental divorce and stroke remained so strong even after we had adjusted for smoking, obesity, exercise and alcohol consumption," said [study leader Esme] Fuller-Thomson.
>
> […]Of the 13,134 total study respondents, 10.4 percent had experienced parental divorce during their childhood, and 1.9 percent reported that they had been diagnosed with a stroke at some point in their lives. When adjusting for age, race and gender, the odds of stroke were approximately 2.2 times higher for those who had experienced parental divorce.
>
> When other risk factors — including socioeconomic status, health behaviors, mental health, and other adverse childhood experiences — were controlled in a logistic regression analysis, the odds ratio of stroke for those who had experienced parental divorce remained significantly elevated.

I also noticed that Stephen Baskerville has a new article on no-fault divorce up in the (ugh! blech!) American Conservative.

Excerpt:

> First: Marriage exists primarily to cement the father to the family. This fact is politically incorrect but undeniable. The breakdown of marriage produces widespread fatherlessness, not motherlessness. As Margaret Mead pointed out long ago—yes, leftist Margaret Mead was correct about this—motherhood is a biological certainty whereas fatherhood is socially constructed. The father is the weakest link in the family bond, and without the institution of marriage he is easily discarded.
>
> […]The notion that marriage exists for love or "to express and safeguard an emotional union of adults," as one proponent puts it, is cant. Many loving and emotional human relationships do not involve marriage. Even the conservative argument that marriage exists to rear children is too imprecise: marriage creates fatherhood. No marriage, no fathers.
>
> […]Here is the second unpleasant truth: homosexuals did not destroy marriage, heterosexuals did. The demand for same-sex marriage is a symptom, not a cause, of the deterioration of marriage. By far the most direct threat to the family is heterosexual divorce. "Commentators miss the point when they oppose

> homosexual marriage on the grounds that it would undermine traditional understandings of marriage," writes family scholar Bryce Christensen. "It is only because traditional understandings of marriage have already been severely undermined that homosexuals are now laying claim to it."
>
> [..]Thus the third inconvenient fact: divorce is a political problem. It is not a private matter, and it does not come from impersonal forces of moral and cultural decay. It is driven by complex and lucrative government machinery operating in our names and funded by our taxes. It is imposed upon unwilling people, whose children, homes, and property may be confiscated. It generates the social ills that rationalize almost all domestic government spending. And it is promoted ideologically by the same sexual radicals who now champion same-sex marriage. Homosexuals may be correct that heterosexuals destroyed marriage, but the heterosexuals were their fellow sexual ideologues.
>
> Conservatives have completely misunderstood the significance of the divorce revolution. While they lament mass divorce, they refuse to confront its politics. Maggie Gallagher attributes this silence to "political cowardice": "Opposing gay marriage or gays in the military is for Republicans an easy, juicy, risk-free issue," she wrote in 1996. "The message [is] that at all costs we should keep divorce off the political agenda."
>
> No American politician of national stature has seriously challenged unilateral divorce. "Democrats did not want to anger their large constituency among women who saw easy divorce as a hard-won freedom and prerogative," writes Barbara Dafoe Whitehead. "Republicans did not want to alienate their upscale constituents or their libertarian wing, both of whom tended to favor easy divorce, nor did they want to call attention to the divorces among their own leadership."

If we social conservatives care about children, then we need to be opposed to no-fault divorce. We need to be more careful about who we choose to marry, and not choose mates because of "chemistry" or "hotness" or because our friends approve of them based on arbitrary cultural standards gleaned from Lady Gaga and Dancing With The Stars. There are defined roles for the participants to a marriage, and there is a design for marriage, and there are specific tasks that need to get done. Marriage is a job, and it requires skills to execute difficult tasks that are morally obligatory. It's not about immature selfish adults pursuing happiness at the expense of their children. It's not about feelings. It's not about sentimentality. It's not about fun.

Divorce causes damage to the health and well-being of children, resulting in behaviors that will give us less liberty (greater intervention of government) and higher taxes (for social welfare programs) later on. There are consequences to selfishness and irresponsibility in relationships. Other people do not exist to entertain you. Relationships are not a form of recreational activity. At least they should not be for Christians. For Christians, the goal of relationships is to get the other person to have a closer relationship with God and to be equipped to serve God better. If children are the result, then the same

obligation applies to them. That is the purpose of relationships in Christianity.

Court says nurse who was forced to perform late-term abortion can't sue

November 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from LifeSiteNews. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Today the Second Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a Catholic nurse who was forced by a New York hospital to participate in an abortion does not have the right to sue her employer.
>
> Administrators at Mt. Sinai Hospital had threatened Catherine DeCarlo with disciplinary measures in May 2009 if she did not honor a last-minute summons to assist in a scheduled late-term abortion. The hospital insisted on her participation in the procedure on the grounds that it was an "emergency."
>
> Lawyers for DeCarlo, however, have pointed out that the procedure was not classified by the hospital as an emergency, and the patient was apparently not in crisis at the time of the surgery.
>
> DeCarlo claims that her participation in the abortion led to serious emotional trauma. She also claims that hospital administrators later attempted to coerce her into signing an agreement to participate in abortions in the future.
>
> The hospital had reportedly known of the Catholic nurse's religious objections to abortion since 2004.
>
> Alliance Defence Fund (ADF) attorneys had filed two suits in the case – one federal, filed in July 2009, and another state, filed earlier this year. The federal suit claimed that Mt. Sinai ignored federal laws prohibiting coercion while receiving hundred of millions of dollars in federal funding.
>
> In January the case was dismissed by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York, at which point it was appealed to the Second Circuit.
>
> However, in today's ruling the court found that there is no right to private action or private remedy under the statue cited by DeCarlo in her suit – the so-called "Church Amendment." (Read the decision here.)
>
> That amendment protects health care workers working for federally-funded entities from being discriminated against because they refused to perform abortions on religious or conscience grounds.

In other news, pro-abortion nutter attacks pro-life display with metal pipe and gets arrested when he turns to attack pro-lifers, too. Hey – anti-life is pro-violence. *That's their view*.

Sorry if blogging is a little light lately. I am having fun reading Mary's frequent debates on Facebook. It's really fun!

Should it be illegal to coerce a woman to have an abortion?

November 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rod Bruinooge

Story from Life Site News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> The vote on the Canadian bill seeking to criminalize abortion coercion, which was initially pushed back to February, is now set for December 15th.
>
> The bill, called "Roxanne's Law," is named after Roxanne Fernando, a Manitoba woman whose boyfriend attempted to coerce her to have an abortion after she became pregnant in 2007. After refusing to have the unborn child killed, Roxanne was beaten and left to die in a snow bank.
>
> It was introduced in April as a private members bill by Conservative MP Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South), who serves as chair of the parliamentary pro-life caucus. It is opposed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who says he "will oppose any attempt to create a new abortion law."
>
> The bill, also known as C-510, received its first hour of debate on November 1st. "No pregnant woman should ever have to choose between protecting herself and protecting her baby," Bruinooge told the House of Commons.
>
> It will receive a second hour of debate on December 13th.
>
> The bill has gained wide support among religious and pro-life organizations,

> including the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the Canadian Bishops' Catholic Organization for Life and Family, and Priests for Life, among numerous others.

Conservative prime minister (Stephen Harper) has committed to not changing abortion law at all while he has a *minority government*, probably because he feels he doesn't have a mandate to do that since he never campaigned to do that. However, this law is so sensible and moderate, I have to think that he should allow a free vote on the issue, and let the social conservatives see that they have a home in the federal Conservative Party. This measure is *so moderate* that it would be difficult to see how anyone could be against it.

The latest poll has the Conservatives at 33.3% support, and the socialist Liberals at 27.1% support, and the communist NDP at 16.6%. To get a majority, the Conservatives have to be north of 40%. Canada is still a *very liberal country.*

UPDATE: Mary writes:

> I agree that they should allow a free vote on the issue. It's something that even the pro-choice side should support – provided they're really pro-choice…
>
> This is actually really important. There need to be repercussions to coercing a woman into abortion. It could save a lot of lives. Most abortions are not wanted and many are coerced. Read this to see just how bad it is: http://www.theunchoice.com/pdf/FactSheets/ForcedAbortions.pdf

And:

> In the US context, listen to this recording of the testimony of a woman was coerced into an abortion by Planned Parenthood and hear how they try to shut her up when she wants to tell them why PP is not worthy of taxpayer funding:

How many ACORN employees have been convicted of voter fraud this year?

November 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Article from the Daily Caller. (H/T Verum Serum)

Excerpt:

> Yet another former ACORN employee was convicted of voter fraud last week. This brings the total number of convictions for former workers from the embattled group to at least 15 so far this year.
>
> Kevin L. Clancy of Milwaukee pleaded guilty last week to participating "in a scheme to submit fraudulent voter registration applications," according to Wisconsin Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen. Clancy admitted to filing multiple voter registration applications for the same individuals and registering himself and other voter registration canvassers to vote multiple times while working on an ACORN voter drive.
>
> Clancy received a 10-month prison term for his crime. Clancy's sentence will begin when he completes another sentence he is currently serving for armed robbery.
>
> "The integrity of elections is dependent upon citizens and officials insisting they be conducted lawfully," Van Hollen said. "Wisconsin's citizens should not have to wonder whether their vote has been negated or diminished by illegally cast ballots."
>
> So far 2010 has been a banner year for ACORN voter fraud prosecutions.

The article lists other convictions of ACORN employees for voter fraud from this year.

Hmmmn. Didn't Barack Obama have some connections to ACORN?

In Alberta, tens of thousands of patients are waiting for surgery

November 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Global TV (in Regina). (H/T Jojo)

Excerpt:

> As the Alberta Health Services Board gathers to determine the fate of its CEO, tens of thousands of Albertans are still waiting for surgery while complete operating rooms sit empty.
>
> "I was bed ridden for about three months," says Michel Gosselin, who needs surgery on his back. "I've been in pain for a year and two months."
>
> Dr. Robert Hollingshead, an orthopaedic surgeon, says patients like Michel often wait upwards of a year once they're finally booked for surgery. It's a problem doctors and surgeons in all fields face because of a serious shortage of operating rooms in Alberta.
>
> Despite pleas to the Province, little progress has been made even though a number of new operating rooms have been built, including six operating rooms that were originally used by the Health Resource Centre to perform 1,000 public hip, knee and ankle surgeries a year.
>
> However, the Health Resource Centre is now defunct after AHS ended its relationship with the private surgical facility to in October, forcing it into creditor protection.
>
> […]…AHS opened the McCaig Tower at the Foothills Hospital, touting that it would offer 23 new operating rooms, 11 of which were already complete.
>
> But one month later, less than 2 have been opened.
>
> "It's a travesty to open 11 state-of-the-art operating rooms in an almost $560-million facility and then open only 2 of them, and in fact, only run 1.4 – they've only staffed it for 1.4," says Dr. Hollingshead.
>
> Fifteen functional operating rooms sit empty in Calgary alone while the health system is so busy that new surgeons will likely have no place to operate.
>
> Dr. Hollingshead predicts if the situation doesn't improve Alberta could lose as many as 30 graduating surgeons over the next 5 years.

Singple-payer health care in Canada is not as good as the left wants you to believe.

Eight ways that feminists are ruining America's women

November 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A list of feminist faults by the famous blogger Cassy Chesser (Fiano).

Here are the eight ways:

1. Encouraging Promiscuity
2. Sanctioning Victimhood
3. Dabbling In Misandry
4. Destroying Chivalry
5. Attacking Motherhood
6. Requiring A Feminist Litmus Test (for high-achieving women)
7. Promoting Lies and Manipulation
8. Glorifying Abortion

Number 4 is my favorite:

> One of the easiest ways a man can show respect towards a woman is through chivalrous actions. Opening a door, pulling out a chair, giving up a seat for a lady… actions like these all show deference and respect for a woman. Being willing to protect a woman and put yourself at risk for her shows her value and worth. But for some reason, chivalry has come under attack. Men don't practice chivalry anymore, to the disappointment of women everywhere.
>
> Why not? Well, according to a poll taken of college men, it's because of radical feminism. Chivalry has been dubbed sexist. There's an attitude from women that they don't need a man. Women act as if chivalrous actions are somehow disrespectful. So why should men continue to be chivalrous? Many, many women are completely unappreciative when men treat them like a lady. And, according to the femisogynists, things like holding doors open for women are totally sexist. Fascist feminists see chivalry as dated, sexist, and demeaning. It doesn't matter that most women yearn for it deep down. They miss romance, they miss dating, and they miss being treated with respect and honor. How many times do women cry on the phone to their friends that they can't find a man who treats them well? Killing chivalry has a lot to do with that. Women have been manipulated and conditioned to see chivalry as something antiquated and disrespectful, so they spurn it when they see it. They still crave it though. They're wanting something better.
>
> Chivalry gives a woman power, the very thing that femisogynists claim to be after. If a man is going out of his way to be chivalrous towards a women, it's because he respects her, it's because he sees value in her, and it's because he wants to show that he is worthy of her. Chivalry is actually empowering to

> women, it elevates them, but it’s missing in our relationships today because fascist feminists destroyed it. It says a lot more about the worldview of the radical feminists than it does about the merits of chivalry.

WARNING! This post takes a *very* angry tone towards feminism. (Third-wave feminism)

Do TSA gropings mean that Obama is serious about national security?

November 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

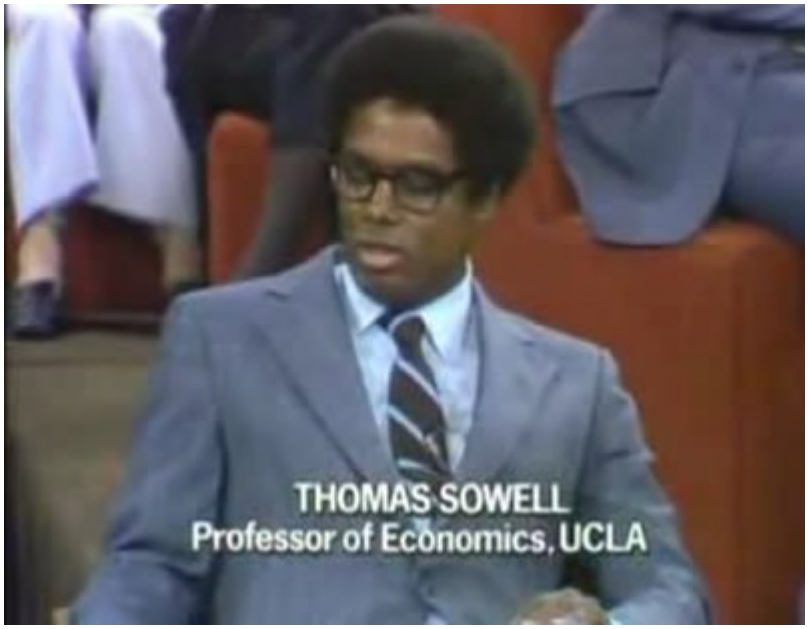

Young Thomas Sowell

Let's see what Tom Sowell says about it.

Excerpt:

> **As for the excuse of "security," this is one of the least security-minded administrations we have had. When hundreds of illegal immigrants from terrorist-sponsoring countries were captured crossing the border from Mexico– and then released on their own recognizance within the United States, that tells you all you need to know about this administration's concern for security.**
>
> **When captured terrorists who are not covered by either the Geneva Convention or the Constitution of the United States are nevertheless put on trial in American civilian courts by the Obama Justice Department, that too tells you all you need to know about how concerned they are about national security.**
>
> The rules of criminal justice in American courts were not designed for trying terrorists. For one thing, revealing the evidence against them can reveal how our intelligence services got wind of them in the first place, and thereby endanger the lives of people who helped us nab them.
>
> Not a lot of people in other countries, or perhaps even in this country, are going to help us stop terrorists if their role is revealed and their families are exposed to revenge by the terrorists' bloodthirsty comrades.
>
> What do the Israeli airport security people do that American airport security do

> not do? They profile. They question some individuals for more than half an hour, open up all their luggage and spread the contents on the counter– and they let others go through with scarcely a word. And it works.
>
> Meanwhile, this administration is so hung up on political correctness that they have turned "profiling" into a bugaboo. They would rather have electronic scanners look under the clothes of nuns than to detain a Jihadist imam for some questioning.
>
> Will America be undermined from within by an administration obsessed with political correctness and intoxicated with the adolescent thrill of exercising its new-found powers? Stay tuned.

So if Obama isn't sincere about national security, then why is he approving these expensive scanners instead of adopting the Israeli techniques that are known to work?

Excerpt:

> President Obama rallied to the defense of the Transportation Security Administration's X-rated airport x-ray scanners Saturday with the insistence that the intrusive machines were needed in response to last year's attack by failed underwear bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab. "Since the explosive device that was on Mr. Abdulmutallab was not detected by ordinary metal detectors, it has meant that TSA has tried to adapt to make sure that passengers on planes are safe," Mr. Obama said. Unfortunately, the administration's policies appear to be motivated more by business as usual in Washington than true security concerns.
>
> **For his extravagant trip to India earlier this month, Mr. Obama invited a number of corporate leaders, including Deepak Chopra, the chief executive of OSI Systems Inc. Through its Rapiscan Systems subsidiary, Mr. Chopra's firm sells whole-body imaging systems to the TSA. It is also an administration ally. Mr. Chopra and his executive vice presidents, Alan I. Edrick and Ajay Mehra, each cut separate checks for the maximum legal amount to Mr. Obama's presidential campaign on Oct. 24, 2008. Given the $2.4 billion in public money the administration plans to dole out over the life of the pornographic scanner program, those donations may have been a wise investment.**

Democrats cannot, and never will be, serious about national security. Democrats are more like Code Pink and Cindy Sheehan.

Recent terrorist acts by Muslims and animal rights activists

November 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A couple of stories about two recent terrorist acts by two anti-conservative special interest groups.

First, the radically leftist CNN reports on a terrorist act by animal rights nuts.

Excerpt:

> The FBI and University of California at Los Angeles police are investigating a new round of threats from anti-animal research activists who say they sent AIDS-tainted razor blades and a threatening message to a research professor, a university spokesman said Tuesday.
>
> The university said law enforcement officials confirmed that UCLA neuroscientist David Jentsch received a package at his home containing razor blades and a threatening note. No other details about the package or its contents were given by the university.
>
> The Animal Liberation Front posted an unsigned communique on its website from a group calling itself "The Justice Department at UCLA," claiming its members sent the razor blades to Jentsch because he uses primates for government-funded testing of drug addiction.
>
> […]Since 2006, other anonymous activists claimed responsibility for at least 11 acts of sabotage, vandalism, criminal damage and firebombing against UCLA faculty or property, either on and off campus, university officials said.
>
> In March 2009, activists seeking to stop the use of animals in research claimed to set fire to Jentsch's vehicle parked overnight outside his home.

Most animal rights activists are also pro-abortion, so it's not surprising that they think nothing about killing *people*, just not *animals.*

Second, the radically leftist New York Times reports on a terrorist act by an Islamofascist nut. (H/T The American Spectator via ECM)

Excerpt:

> A Somali-born teenager who thought he was detonating a car bomb at a packed Christmas tree-lighting ceremony in downtown Portland, Ore., was arrested by the authorities on Friday night. Federal agents said that they had spent nearly six months tracking him and setting up a sting operation.
>
> The bomb, which was in a van parked off Pioneer Courthouse Square, was a fake — planted by F.B.I. agents as part of the elaborate sting — but "the threat was very real," Arthur Balizan, the F.B.I.'s special agent in charge in Oregon, said in a statement released by the Department of Justice. An estimated 10,000 people

> were at the ceremony on Friday night, the Portland police said.
>
> […]In some cases, including the one in Oregon, the suspects living in the United States had developed contacts with figures in Yemen and northwest Pakistan, both homes to militant groups. In May, a Pakistani-born American was arrested in the plotting of a car bomb attack in Times Square, and later pleaded guilty.
>
> […]In a similar case in September 2009, a 19-year-old Jordanian was arrested after placing a fake bomb at a 60-story Dallas skyscraper. The same month, a 29-year-old Muslim convert was charged with placing a bomb at the federal building in Springfield, Ill. And in October, a 34-year-old naturalized American citizen born in Pakistan was arrested and charged with plotting to bomb the Washington subway after meeting with undercover agents and discussing his plans and surveillance activities.
>
> […]The authorities arrested Mr. Mohamud around 5:40 p.m. on Friday, 20 minutes before the tree-lighting ceremony was planned to start. As he was taken into custody, he kicked and screamed at the agents and yelled, “Allahu akbar,” an Arabic phrase for “God is Great,” the authorities said.

Notice the headline for this article: “Oregon Teen Arrested in Plot to Bomb Holiday Event”. Only later in the article does it mention that this was a Muslim committing terrorism against Christians at a Christmas event.

One good thing about this story is that the terrorist was denounced by another Muslim who was concerned about his “increasing radicalism”. So they’re not all radical nuts.

MUST-READ: What is causing the epidemic of gang rapes in Europe?

November 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM notified me about two posts over at Robert Stacy McCain's blog.

Here's is the first article, linked in McCain's first post.

Excerpt from the article:

> At home, Abid Saddique and Mohammed Liaqat, both of whom were married with young children, were considered clean, upstanding family men as well as devout Muslims.

> But once they left their front door and their wives behind, they turned into vodka-swilling, cocaine-binging paedophiles who spent every available moment randomly targeting young girls on the street, befriending them, and then horrifically abusing them.
>
> The 28-year-olds were at the head of a 13-strong gang who would film the assaults on their mobile telephones.
>
> For over 18 months, dressed "sharply" in designer western clothes, wearing jewellery and sporting short haircuts, the pair cruised the streets of Derby in a silver BMW 5 series with blacked-out windows, approaching girls at random and with a bottle of vodka and plastic cups hidden under the front seats.
>
> An undercover investigation by Derbyshire Police, dubbed Operation Retriever, was split into three trials which have run since February at Leicester Crown Court and can only now be reported.
>
> The victims, aged between 12-18, ranged from girls in care to a 14-year-old A-grade student from a strong, middle-class home. They were predominantly girls with a troubled background.
>
> […]In one incident, Saddique, who was convicted of 14 of the 29 charges he faced, was accused of engaging in sexual activity with a 12-year-old in Derby's picturesque Darley Park, while his accomplice Liaqat, who was convicted of 10 crimes of the 18 charges he faced, had sex with a 14-year-old in the BMW.
>
> Another time, a 14-year-old girl was filmed having sex with three of the gang in a hotel room as cheers ring out.
>
> The group faced 75 charges between them relating to twenty six girls, but police believe there are many more victims who have not come forward.
>
> Yesterday, Saddique and Liaqat – who since legal proceedings have begun had grown long beards and now wear Islamic dress – were convicted of charges of sexual assault and sexual activity with a child, bringing the trials to a close.

> This year they had already been convicted of a series of other offences including rape, sexual assault, sexual activity with a child, false imprisonment and making child pornography.
>
> […]"They were very confident in their approaches. They clearly thought of themselves as attractive young men, they had a car, they had some money and they would be quite aggressive when they would start their charm offensive.

McCain adds this from the UK Telegraph:

> A SCHOOLGIRL, who was in the care of the city council when she fell victim to a gang of Derby perverts, had been groomed and sexually abused by another man only months earlier, the Telegraph can reveal.
>
> The youngster was placed in a children's home by Derby City Council for her own protection after police arrested Ansar Hussain, who targeted her when she was just 13.
>
> But despite being under the supervision of social workers, she fell into the clutches of evil Abid Mohammed Saddique and Mohammed Romaan Liaqat – the ringleaders of a gang who raped and abused 27 girls.

And this from This is Derbyshire:

> "[T]hey knew the difference between a girl that goes home to her family at the end of the night and a girl that doesn't. I didn't have anyone to protect me or look after me and thought they were going to look after and care for me."

Most of the victims came from broken homes.

And here's the second post by McCain.

Excerpt:

> In a "serious case report," the Derbyshire board examined issues involved in the cases of two girls (identified as YP1 and YP2) who had been under care of local authorities and were victimized by the Liaqat-Saddique gang. The board also incorporated findings of a multi-agency review in the cases of 25 other victims of the gang.
>
> "Issues of culture, ethnicity and identity were a feature both in relation to the victims and the alleged perpetrators," the Derbyshire board reported. The two girls "were confused about their identity and sense of belonging. They both had a poor self image and had difficulty making friends and fitting in."
>
> These issues were "a critical factor in making [the girls] easy targets for abusers," according to the board report. "Questions have been raised for this review as to whether the ethnic background and culture of the perpetrators had any bearing on their decision to take part in this activity, and also whether the ethnic origin of the victims was significant in making them targets for abuse."

And he links this Times of India article.

Excerpt:

> Five British-born Pakistanis have been jailed for abusing white girls as young as 12.
>
> The 'sexual predators' preyed on their victims over several months and threatened them with violence if they refused their advances.
>
> One of the men branded his victim a "white b***h" when she resisted, while a second smirked, "I've used you and abused you."
>
> The men attacked the four girls in play areas, parks and in the back of their cars, Sheffield Crown Court heard. . . .
>
> The five, Umar Razaq, 24, Razwan Razaq, 30, Zafran Ramzan, 21, Adil Hussain, 20, and Mohsin Khan, 21, were found guilty of a string of sexually related offences against the girls, one aged 12, two aged 13 and one aged 16.

Stacy adds:

> Reid also cited another case in the Manchester area, where a 14-year-old runaway was a "sex slave" for an Asian gang. Nine men ages 25 to 33 – Asad Hassan, Mohammed Basharat, Mohammed Khan, Ahmed Noorzai, Mohammed Anwar Safi, Aftab Khan, Abid Khaliq, Mohammed Atif and Najibullah Safi — were convicted in that case.
>
> According to Reid, "there is a controversial, but relevant, cultural issue. Asian men of Pakistani heritage often believe white girls have low morals compared with Muslim girls." She quoted testimony in the Derbyshire case, when Saddique told the court: "These are girls I did not respect and these are girls who are just - partying and taking drugs and we had consensual sex."
>
> […]Last year, three men from the Keighley area – Mohammed Zackriya, 21, Mohammed Taj, 37, Mohammed Shabir, 36 — were convicted of sexually exploiting a 14-year-old.

Now I'm going to try to explain some factors that may be causing these events.

Why is this happening?

My hypothesis is two-fold.

1. Feminism (which explains why the women were fatherless and vulnerable)
2. Cultural relativism (which explains why the evil men were not challenged on their evil views)

Both of these have no stronger expression than in the United Kingdom, or perhaps in other European nations, which is why the problem is happening there more than here.

Feminism

As I've documented many times before by citing feminist scholars, the goal of third-wave

(gender) feminism is the destruction of marriage because of the “unequal” male/female roles inherent in marriage. Third-wave feminists pushed early sex education, recreational pre-marital sex and taxpayer-funded abortion as a way to de-couple sex from marriage. As I documented elsewhere by citing research, pre-marital sex reduces the stability of marriages, and the effect is increased depending on the number of pre-marital sex partners. Feminists deal with the marital instability they introduced by legislating no-fault divorce, punitive divorce courts, domestic violence laws that don’t recognize violence by women against men, bigger social programs, more welfare, taxpayer-funded abortions, taxpayer-funded day care, taxpayer-funded IVF, and taxpayer-funded public schools as a way of substituting government for fathers and marriage. The result is a 40% out-of-wedlock birth rate (72% in inner-cities) and boys and girls raised without fathers.

Feminism claims that men have no distinctive role as protector/provider/moral and spiritual leader. As a result, women influenced by feminism shun chivalry, and bypass men who excel in the traditional roles and who would make good husbands and fathers, and prefer to have the drama of “hook-ups” with “bad boys”, which their girl friends heartily approve of – based on pop culture standards. Male chastity, skill in defending Christianity with logic and evidence, knowledge of social/fiscal/foreign policy, a good resume, and a good portfolio mean nothing – because it’s the government’s job to provide/protect and teach morality/religion to children.

Good men, seeing that goodness is getting them nowhere sexually, will drop goodness like a hot potato and begin to act like bad boys. Naturally, these bad boys are not able to shoulder the burdens of the roles of husband and father, because they were never evaluated or selected to fill those roles. Men *have no roles* on feminism – so feminists have no way to tell one man from another except based on the most shallow soap-opera/Hollywood-celebrity level of “hotness”, “confidence” (appearance of confidence, not substance), and “chemistry”. Having to choose a man based on qualifications, and having to follow rules for courting, seems to many women to be too “strict” – by which they mean that reason and evidence should not be allowed to override their emotions and the expectations of their peer group.

Instead of preparing themselves *morally* for their role in the marriage, and *testing men* for the role they will play in the marriage, women instead amuse themselves with self-centered fashionable and entertaining causes/hobbies like yoga, vegetarianism, fiction and biographies, Dancing with the Stars, People magazine, animal rights alarmism, and climate change alarmism. Thus, their choice of man is going to be made based on selfishness and whimsy, not on the merits. But marrying a lazy, ignorant, cowardly man makes the marital stability situation *even worse*. Marriages *don’t survive* if neither the man or the woman is tested and selected for making self-sacrificial commitments to other people.

The real victims of marital instability are the innocent children of the selfish feminists. As a result, boys grow up without fathers, which increases their tendency to be poor students, poor workers and sexually aggressive, and girls grow up without fathers, which

drastically lowers the age at which they have sex.

Cultural relativism

Cultural relativism is the idea that is very popular on the secular left that all cultures are basically equal. This is what is taught in public schools where the achievements of Western Civilization are minimized, especially with respect to the United States, while the practices of other cultures are lionized. This is done because of the liberal belief that wars are caused by disagreements. The way to remove disagreements (according to the left) is by bashing down what is really good (Western Civilization) and lifting up what is evil, so that every view becomes equally valid. Specific evils from other cultures, like burning widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands, are rationalized as either not being evil at all, or by being the fault of the good nations. The goal of the left is to make sure that no one is able to judge anything as right or wrong, so that no one will feel bad about being judged.

Cultural relativism also causes left-wing parties to open Western countries up to massive immigration by unskilled immigrants, or by the unskilled family members of skilled immigrants. The goal of the left here is to tilt the voting away from Western ideas like the rule of law, capitalism, property rights, personal responsibility, religious liberty, monogamy, etc. No attempt to teach the superiority of Western values and beliefs is made in the public schools, so that you can have unskilled immigrants collecting welfare as they protest the very society in which they are protected and supported by taxpayer dollars.

As a result, immigrant communities that are not assimilated through education in civics, economics, and American history can actually import the very cultural beliefs and practices that hold their countries back from liberty, prosperity and security. In fact, in the UK, they actually have a parallel system of sharia law. In Canada, polygamous marriages, with multiple spouses collecting welfare, is normal. Cultural relativism is a major plank of left-wing parties like the Democrats.

It’s very important to understand that the ways that men and women interact in these other countries is *not the standard used in the West*. Although the left has attacked the values of chastity, modesty and courting that were the staples of Western Civilization, many believing Jews and Christians still believe in modesty and chastity today. The Bible forbids fornication (pre-marital sex) and that standard is one of the major reasons why we have these elaborate courting rituals and this focus on love and marriage, although you would never know it by watching Hollywood movies that glorify emotion-based relationships that lead to pre-marital sex. It turns out that the left and the Islamic radicals are actually united in their denial of the ways of courting that are found in Western literature and art – both oppose chastity, both oppose chivalry, and both oppose the sanctity of marriage.

Conclusion

It’s interesting to note that the majority of young unmarried women support parties on the political left like the Democrats, who push feminism and cultural relativism. They are

doing this to themselves, and often criticizing any man who dares to point out what the impact of their vote really is. Voting is not about *feeling* good, it's about *doing* good.

Commenters – please keep it short and contest specific claims that I made, and link to evidence to support your challenge. I will just dig up evidence as needed to support my claims when you contest them, because I don't want to copy everything from previous posts.

Michael Medved explains why Republicans should not drop social issues

November 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From AOL News.

Excerpt:

> Third, the dividing line between economic and social issues remains far less crisp and definitive than generally assumed. Take for example the Democratic determination to provide widespread coverage for abortion as a key component of ObamaCare. Social conservatives fought this provision as a matter of pro-life principle, while economic conservatives opposed it as an expensive new entitlement — providing government funding for an elective procedure that remains, at best, deeply controversial.
>
> Or consider current efforts by leading conservatives to trim federal funding to National Public Radio and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. "Culture Warriors" dislike these programs because they support a politically correct, shamelessly leftist perspective, while fiscal conservatives despise them because they offer a prime example of bureaucratic bloat — a federal intrusion into an area (television and radio broadcasting) where the private sector does a mostly adequate job and even manages to turn a profit.
>
> Most of today's major economic issues in fact feature some significant social component, and nearly all socio-cultural disputes involve an economic dimension, influencing the spending crisis and the overall growth of government. When it comes to current battles over the meaning of gay rights, for instance, there's no question that remaking society to treat gay and straight relationships as indistinguishable will impose a significant burden on taxpayers. If gay partners receive the same Social Security and Medicare benefits as married couples, a system already stretched to the breaking point will bear additional expenses running into the billions. This reform may or may not follow the dictates of fundamental fairness, but it is hardly without cost; you can't provide equal benefits for a whole new class of beneficiaries without creating obvious problems in the system's balance sheets.
>
> […]**The only real alternative to government as a source of assistance, authority and a functioning civil society remains the "little platoons" described by Edmund Burke — families and communities shaped by attitudes that count as both economically and culturally conservative.**

Michael Medved is kind of a Republican-In-Name-Only, like another famous radio show host Hugh Hewitt, but he's right about this at least. I like Dennis Prager and Mark Levin better when I am listening to the radio.

UN IPCC official admits that climate policy is about wealth redistribution

November 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Newsbusters. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> If you needed any more evidence that the entire theory of manmade global warming was a scheme to redistribute wealth you got it Sunday when a leading member of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change told a German news outlet, "[W]e redistribute de facto the world's wealth by climate policy."
>
> Such was originally published by Germany's NZZ Online Sunday, and reprinted in English by the Global Warming Policy Foundation moments ago:
>
> (NZZ AM SONNTAG): The new thing about your proposal for a Global Deal is the stress on the importance of development policy for climate policy. Until now, many think of aid when they hear development policies.
>
> (OTTMAR EDENHOFER, UN IPCC OFFICIAL): That will change immediately if global emission rights are distributed. If this happens, on a per capita basis, then Africa will be the big winner, and huge amounts of money will flow there. This will have enormous implications for development policy. And it will raise the question if these countries can deal responsibly with so much money at all.
>
> (NZZ): That does not sound anymore like the climate policy that we know.
>
> (EDENHOFER): Basically it's a big mistake to discuss climate policy separately from the major themes of globalization. The climate summit in Cancun at the end of the month is not a climate conference, but one of the largest economic conferences since the Second World War. Why? Because we have 11,000 gigatons of carbon in the coal reserves in the soil under our feet – and we must emit only 400 gigatons in the atmosphere if we want to keep the 2-degree target. 11 000 to 400 – there is no getting around the fact that most of the fossil reserves must remain in the soil.
>
> (NZZ): De facto, this means an expropriation of the countries with natural resources. This leads to a very different development from that which has been triggered by development policy.
>
> (EDENHOFER): First of all, developed countries have basically expropriated the atmosphere of the world community. But one must say clearly that we redistribute de facto the world's wealth by climate policy. Obviously, the owners of coal and oil will not be enthusiastic about this. One has to free oneself from the illusion that international climate policy is environmental policy. This has almost nothing to do with environmental policy anymore, with problems such as

> deforestation or the ozone hole.
>
> For the record, Edenhofer was co-chair of the IPCC's Working Group III, and was a lead author of the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report released in 2007 which controversially concluded, "Most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations."

It's not about global warming, it's about socialism.

MUST-READ: What can atheists do to counter religious parents?

November 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a neat post up an Uncommon Descent. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> What I found most fascinating about Longman's analysis is that he is able to explain why he thinks religion will eventually triumph over secularism **in purely Darwinian terms.** Having a baby is, for most couples in the modern world, a *choice*, which reflects their personal values. "And so," writes Longman, "by Darwinian process, those who adhere to traditions that preserve and celebrate the ancient injunction to 'go forth and multiply' wind up putting more of their genes and ideas into the future than those who don't."
>
> I imagine that well-read atheists are already aware of these social trends, and I'm sure they are quite worried about them. On the one hand, atheists naturally want the *percentage* of people espousing their secular world-view to *increase*; on the other hand, most of them believe that the world already has *too many people* for the Earth to support – which is a natural consequence of an atheistic world-view, as I pointed out in a recent post. Now put yourselves in the atheists' shoes: how do you think they would attempt to fight these trends? The only way they can achieve the dual objectives of keeping the world's population down *and* boosting the percentage of atheists worldwide is to **target the fertility of highly religious people.** I can think of **a few fairly obvious ways** in which they might attempt to do that, and because these measures are, in my opinion, *politically feasible*, I don't share Longman's certainty that religion will inevitably triumph over secularism. Some of these measures are either currently being implemented or are already well in place in many countries; other measures are a decade or two down the track. Well, here's my list. Recognize any of these in your country of residence?

What follows is a LONG list of items that the secular humanists can use to make sure that religious parents are not able to pass on their beliefs to their own children.

Here are a few from the list:

- Outlaw home schooling.
- Extend the number of hours that children are required to spend at school
- Introduce compulsory "values" classes into public schools
- Introduce compulsory classes on "religious tolerance" into public schools
- Enact laws guaranteeing free access to birth control (including abortion) at school as a fundamental human right for all students over the age of 12
- Encourage the passage of laws which make the possession of a college degree

essential for getting almost any kind of job.
- Deny government funding to religious schools that teach any kind of “bigotry.”
- Enact legislative measures disallowing childless couples from adopting a child if they intend to bring that child up in a faith which encourages any kind of “bigotry” or “intolerance”
- At a later stage, enact laws extending the same “protection” to all children, regardless of whether they are adopted or not.
- At a still later stage, enact laws allowing social workers to take children away by force from their parents (natural or adopted), if there is sufficient evidence that they are being raised in a household that encourages any form of “bigotry.”
- Citing concerns about children’s welfare following a string of highly publicized cases of child neglect reported in the press, introduce laws requiring all expecting mothers to submit to a home inspection by a suitably qualified social worker, with a follow-up interview

He explains each the bullet points I listed, and there are more bullet points in the original list that I didn’t list. Some of those have already been spotted in Sweden, Germany, Ontario, Quebec, and California.

Wow. The guys on the other side really are enraged by the thought that Christian parents might pass their moral and spiritual views on to their children. They would rather that Christian guys like me just confine our contributions to the next generation to supplying sperm and tax money so that they can push their moral and spiritual views on our children instead. And so what if their views result in our children having abortions, getting STDs, paying child support, or dying of AIDS? They know they are right, and we Christian men are just a naive wage-slaves who need to shut up and work to fund their indoctrination of our children.

I am not sure that these issues are on the radar of the church at all, because churches are very much focused on providing a non-confrontational, non-judgmental “show” to entertain their members and provide emotional comfort. Not only is the church mostly devoid of apologetics, but it is *especially* devoid of politics and economics. Everything controversial that might offend anyone like exclusive claims, arguments, evidence, politics, economics, abortion, marriage, etc. has been removed from most churches. Saying that pre-marital sex and drunkenness are wrong, and that global warming is a false religion might make some people feel bad. And if people feel bad, then the money might stop flowing into the plates. (I am not even mentioning the churches that are basically extensions of the secular left, and who do not even believe in orthodox Christianity)

The remarkable thing about this is that there are lots of Bible-believing Christians who persist in voting for left-wing parties governed by the secular left, in order to punish “the rich” or to get “universal health care” or to fight “global warming”. I find it amazing that churches are so incredibly naive that they do not care what the secularists are planning for their marriages, families and children – they don’t even realize that the worldview of

the secular left is – gasp – ANTI-CHRISTIAN. We just don't discuss these issues seriously in church. We want church to be about feelings and entertainment. We are so incredibly non-confrontational and non-strategic in our thinking. We just want to have a good time now and not think about the fact that the marriage and family boat is sinking on an iceberg called secular humanism. Theology and apologetics would be a good start, but if it is not worked into a worldview and a life plan and a vision of society and government, what good is it?

Just to be clear, I am not advocating surrender. I am saying that when I am in church, I am surrounded by people who have no idea what is really at stake. I keep getting urged by these people to sing songs, chit-chat about feelings, marry, and to have children. It's not going to work. There is a huge gulf between the church and I – they want to have fun and feelings and dance and sing and to keep going as if the secular left is just going to step aside and leave us alone. But I want to effectively defend the ability of authentic Christians to live out authentic Christian lives. So long as the church keeps thinking that "better worship" is the solution to the mass exodus of young Christians from church and social problems like the massive increases in out-of-wedlock births then I really have nothing in common with them.

Union that pushed for Obamacare drops medical coverage of children

November 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Don Surber via ECM)

Excerpt:

> One of the largest union-administered health-insurance funds in New York is dropping coverage for the children of more than 30,000 low-wage home attendants, union officials said. The union blamed financial problems it said were caused by the state's health department and new national health-insurance requirements.
>
> The fund is administered by 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union. Union officials said the state compelled the fund to start buying coverage from a third party, which increased premiums by 60%. State health officials denied forcing the union fund to make the switch, saying the fund had been struggling financially even before the switch to third-party coverage.

> The fund informed its members late last month that their dependents will no longer be covered as of Jan. 1, 2011. Currently about 6,000 children are covered by the benefit fund, some until age 23.

No one ever said that union members were wizards at economics. At least this time they have to face their own ignorance.

U.S. Army unveils revolutionary XM25 rifle in Afghanistan

November 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

HK XM25 25mm GL Airburst Rifle

Here's the story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Since the dawn of modern warfare, the best way to stay alive in the face of incoming fire has been to take cover behind a wall. But thanks to a game-changing "revolutionary" rifle, the U.S. Army has made that tactic dead on arrival. Now the enemy can run, but he can't hide.
>
> After years of development, the U.S. Army has unleashed a new weapon in Afghanistan — the XM25 Counter Defilade Target Engagement System, a high-tech rifle that can be programmed so that its 25-mm. ammunition detonates either in front of or behind a target, meaning it can be fired just above a wall before it explodes and kills the enemy.
>
> It also has a range of roughly 2,300 feet — nearly the length of eight football fields — making it possible to fire at targets well past the range of the rifles and carbines that most soldiers carry today.
>
> Lt. Col. Christopher Lehner, project manager for the semi-automatic, shoulder-fired weapon system for the U.S. Army's Program Executive Office Soldier, said that the XM25's capability alone is such a "game-changer" that it'll lead to new ways of fighting on the battlefield, beginning this month in Afghanistan.
>
> "With this weapon system, we take away cover from [enemy targets] forever," Lehner told FoxNews.com on Wednesday. "Tactics are going to have to be rewritten. The only thing we can see [enemies] being able to do is run away."

> […]Lehner said the first XM25s were distributed to combat units in Afghanistan this month. The 12-pound, 29-inch system, which was designed by Minnesota's Alliant Techsystems, costs up to $35,000 per unit and, while highly sophisticated, is so easy to use that soldiers become proficient within minutes.
>
> "That's how intuitively easy it is, even though it's high-tech," Lehner said. "All a soldier needs to know how to do is laze the target. It decimates anything within its lethal radius."

Sample usage:

> A potential battlefield scenario, according to Army officials, might go something like this:
>
> — A patrol encounters an enemy combatant in a walled Afghan village who fires an AK-47 intermittently from behind cover, exposing himself only for a brief second to fire.
>
> — The patrol's leader calls for the XM25 gunman, who uses the weapon's laser range finder to calculate the distance to the target.
>
> — He then uses an incremental button located near the trigger to add 1 meter to the round's distance, since the enemy is hiding behind a wall.
>
> — The round is fired, and it explodes with a blast comparable to a hand grenade past the wall and above the enemy.

Video:

It is laser-guided. You know how you can't hit the broad side of a barn with an underslung M203 grenade launcher past a hundred yards? Yeah, well this thing is laser-guided. Laser-guided grenade launcher. *Semi-automatic laser-guided grenade launcher!*

You don't even have to do standard 4F military tactics (Find, Fix, Flank, Finish). (Not to be confused with Patricia Churchland's 4Fs of evolutionary theory – feeding, fighting, fleeing and reproducing)*. You can just explode a grenade right over their heads!*

Made by Heckler & Koch, naturally. By the way, I fired an HK USP9 recently on my annual trip to the firing range. It rocked! Unfortunately they did NOT allow me to try the HK CAWS or the caseless HK G11. Phooey!

You can see more H&K stuff here.

Now if we could only scrap the JSF and revive the F-22, I would be much happier and safer.

Next story: U.S. Navy unveils new electromagnetic rail gun weapon system.

What did the early church fathers think about abortion?

November 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about early church traditions
This is from Birds of the Air. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Summary:

> Recently I came across a reading of the Didache. "The *what*?" you may ask. The Didache is a book written somewhere in the first or second century. For a long time it was up for consideration as Scripture. It was believed to be the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Eventually it was agreed that the book was an excellent book, but not inspired Scripture. So I was pleased to be able to download this admirable book containing good teachings from the early Church fathers.
>
> The book seemed to be largely a lot of quotes from Scripture. You'll learn the basic rules of Christianity — "First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself." You'll learn that "grave sins" are forbidden, like adultery, murder, fornication, and so on. (They specifically include pederasty in the list.) There are instructions regarding teachers, prophets, Christian assembly, and so on. Lots of the normal, good stuff. But, since this was written sometime prior to 200 AD, I was somewhat surprised at this instruction: "You shall not murder a child by abortion" (Didache, Ch 2).

Honestly, there is no real factual disagreement on abortion. People justify killing the weak the same way as they always do – because the weak are in their way and they are

stronger and can get away with it. The politically correct jibber-jabber about “choice” is just to make them (the man and the woman) feel good afterward. Really, abortion is just selfishness taken to the nth degree – you create another human being by recreational sex (fun) and then you kill them in order to avoid have to take responsibility for that new life. It’s like going out and getting drunk then getting behind the wheel of a car and killing someone with the car. It may not be what they intended to do, but it was their decisions that led up to it. They’re responsible. But they don’t want to face the natural consequences of their own actions, and they are willing to do the most heinous crime imaginable in order to do so. Sex makes babies. If you can’t welcome a baby into the world, *don’t have sex*. I don’t. And the chance of getting a woman pregnant is of the reasons why. (One of the others is that I don’t want to hurt a woman by leaving her after sex – which is why I believe in *married* sex. I don’t want to hurt anyone, most of all babies.

Given the pro-life practices of the early church, I find it hard to understand how people can think that fornicating (pre-marital sex) and abortion are OK. We were not like that then, and we shouldn’t be like that now. Sex was not a recreational activity then, and it is not a recreational activity now.

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf’s 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

William Lane Craig asks John Dominic Crossan: do you believe in God?

November 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The answer is NO, Crossan does not believe in God.

And here is the proof from William Lane Craig. (H/T Glenn Peoples)

This exchange with Crossan occurred in their debate entitled "Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?".

The MP3 file of that debate is here.

Now look over this post about theological liberals, from philosopher Glenn Peoples.

Excerpt:

> Secondly there's a palpable dishonesty at work here too. If you're going to present ideas, it's helpful to name them. But if you name them, you need to be conscious of the fact that some names are already taken, and already have meaning. Some of these names are covered by copyright (such as Coca Cola), so you wouldn't be able to use those, but others aren't. When you identify as a Christian theologian and say "I believe that God exists and that Jesus rose from the dead," you're using terminology and also theological phrases and concepts that have recognisable meaning. In a Christian context there's an existing understanding of what those concepts are and what those terms mean. God is the being who created the Universe, and Jesus rose from the dead by coming back to life and exiting his tomb. That's what Christians have always meant when they say those things. But how honest is it to say "I'm a Christian, God exists, and Jesus rose from the dead" when what you actually mean is "I have a healthy respect for the teachings of a man who was no saviour, I believe that there is such a thing as goodness, and Jesus' teachings still have some relevance for today"? Surely the respectable thing to say is "Look, Christianity is false, there's no God, but we can still gleam a thing or two from what Jesus said."

And more:

> I have no doubt that for people who – for whatever reason – have an emotional or wistful connection to chapels, ecclesiastical robes and moving liturgy but who cannot stomach the perceived balderdash about inconvenient things like God, liberal (or "progressive") Christianity is perceived as more intellectually respectable and credible. But those on the outside are a little more discerning and quite frankly aren't this easily duped. However wrong they might be, they are not uniformly stupid. The genuinely honest and self respecting thing would be to stop receiving the church salary or pension, stop using its land, buildings and resources, admit that you reject Christianity outright and be done with it. Do something a little less duplicitous with your life. Start your own religion if you

> must, but face the fact that a more respectable version of religion is not what you have created.

That's an excellent assessment of theological liberalism.I would have liked it even more if Glenn had talked about Crossan's other pre-supposition – of religious pluralism – which requires that nothing in Christianity be exclusive such that people in other religions would be mistaken in their view of God and face whatever consequences that entails.

By the way, if you like that kind of frankness, I really recommend getting hold of the Greer-Heard forums with John Dominic Crossan (2005), Bart Ehrman (2008) and Paul F. Knitter (2009) – three apostates who are strongly questioned by the other respondents to the debate. Especially by the philosophers, Paul Copan and Doug Geivett. That is one excellent thing about philosophers. While historians and theologians see to me to often what to cloud things over, philosophers (analytical philosophers anyway), seem to want to clear things up.

I do not yet have the 2010 MP3s yet, but will buy them this weekend. Greer-Heard does a great job on these MP3 recordings – $15 for an entire forum with respondents. You learn a ton, but it is definitely intermediate level material.

Disclaimer: I don't agree with Glenn on some things – I believe in non-material souls and I believe in Hell, and he seems to be more for material body only and annihilationism. But he keeps writing these amazing posts, so I keep linking.

Alliance Defense Fund’s strong opposition to divorce

November 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is timely, at a time where I am considering whether I would do more good supporting Christian/conservative groups on campus as an assistant professor or as a free speech lawyer defending campus groups from student governments.

No one is better at these kinds of issues than the ADF.

Here’s the article.

Excerpt:

> The longer I live, and the more time I spend in the Christian conservative movement, the more keenly I’m aware of the extent to which divorce is devastating the Body of Christ. It’s destroying children’s lives, destroying their parents, and destroying our cultural witness. I’m 41 years old, and by this point I’ve seen friends’ marriages end because of adultery, because they felt “trapped,” because the other spouse was cruel, because they allegedly “fell in love” with someone else, because of addictions, or because they simply “wanted to be happy.” Every single time — every time — one or both of the spouses made a series of deliberate decisions to place their own desires over those of their husband or wife, over the best interests of their children, and over the explicit admonitions of the God they allegedly serve.
>
> I am increasingly of the opinion that the Christian community simply will not prevail in the cultural battle to preserve marriage — especially when the argument for marriage absolutely depends on the fact that marriage does not exist merely to fulfill adult desires and sustain adult happiness — if we treat our own marriage vows so shabbily. How can we tell any population of Americans — whether inclined to homosexual behavior or even polygamy — that marriage is the earthly model of Christ’s relationship to his church if we treat it as an instrument of our own happiness?
>
> […]Frequently I hear talk of “divorce recovery” or someone saying they’re “going through” a divorce. This passive language detaches individuals from the acts of will that cause the dissolution of their family. You “recover” from the flu. You *decide* to divorce. Divorcing couples are capable of almost-epic feats of rationalization. Divorce without adultery? They rationalize it by saying that their spouse’s failings are the moral equivalent of adultery. Fall in love with someone else? They rationalize it through facile arguments that God loves them and wants them to be happy. Children devastated? They rationalize their actions as ultimately for the best because (despite all social science to the contrary) divorce is better for kids than living in conflict. Couples float away on oceans of psychobabble — incapable of confronting the hard truth: They are making a deliberate choice to defy God.

A bit more from a follow-up post.

Excerpt:

> Marriage is particularly fragile not just because of very real cultural changes in the Body of Christ, but because of a key (and catastrophic) legal change — the institution of no-fault divorce.
>
> […]And so we're faced with an enabling church and an enabling legal system — two escape hatches that are all too tempting in times of distress. The enabling church (including, sadly, many pastors and Christian peers) argue that various real or imagined spousal sins are the "equivalent" of adultery or the "equivalent" of abandonment. The enabling church tells you that "God's best" or "God's plan" is not the cross but a happy life, a joyful life. And the enabling legal system is all too ready to take your check, put you in the system and process your (sometimes) very fast, and (occasionally) very cheap divorce.

It then lists the well-known damage done to children, and continues:

> How, you ask, can parents be so much happier when their children are so much worse off? Wouldn't the emotional and sexual collapse of their own children cripple the parents' emotional well being? Not if they long ago shifted their life priorities — away from the Biblical model of self-denial and to the world's model of personal fulfillment.

Divorce is child abuse. Period. I'd like to see the church come out and preach sermons with the facts and statistics on what divorce does, and then provide people with practical advice and STRICT RULES about how to conduct courtships, marriages and parenting to the glory of God.

Marriage as an engineering problem

God is the customer of the marriage product, and he expects adults to love each other *self-sacrificially*, to honor moral obligations, and to raise the children to know him and serve him effectively.

There is no room in marriage for amusement and self-centeredness.

- No emotions
- No intuitions
- No "chemistry"
- No "fun"

We should be designing marriage as a solution to specific problems with the aim of serving God in our relationships.

If we can't agree to do that, then we should all serve the Lord as singles. Marriage isn't about YOU.

Should we embrace “green jobs” to stop global warming?

November 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First watch this video: (H/T The American Spectator)

And why does the phrase “global warming” keep changing?

Consider this post from the American Spectator. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

We know the memo circulating around the environoiac Leftosphere was to not call “global warming” “global warming” any more, but to instead use the greater encompassing “climate change.” Obama administration science adviser John Holdren updated the blueprint a couple of months ago:

> At the Environmental Protection Agency’s 40th celebration of the Clean Air Act, Holdren said, “I think one of the failures of the scientific community was in embracing the term ‘global warming’. Global warming is in fact a dangerous misnomer.” And in a speech last week in Norway, echoing remarks he made at a 2007 speech at Harvard University, Holdren said the term “global climate disruption” should be used instead of “global warming.”

Now USA Today reports that “climate” doesn’t work either:

> “Everybody is rethinking their priorities,” says Ken Cook, president of the Environmental Working Group. He says it was a “mistake” for environmentalists to focus single-mindedly on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Rather, he says, they need to pitch their concerns as “kitchen table” issues that directly affect people. For example, he cites the presence of the estrogen-like chemical bisphenol A, or BPA, in food packaging. “That’s personal to them. Climate is not,” he says.
>
> “Climate … seems to have become a dirty word,” says Melinda Pierce, lead lobbyist for the Sierra Club. She says environmentalists need to seek smaller, specific victories. “If we talk electric cars,” she says, “people find that appealing.”

There is nothing that is able to be observed – we are just told by the state-paid experts that the state must increase so they can be paid more and have more power over the private sector. There is no *reason* given other than their will to have more money and power.

Why should we lose all of our jobs for the Secularist Delusion?

Does government spend money as well as Christian taxpayers?

December 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting story from CNS News showing how the money of Christian taxpayers is spend by the Smithsonian Institution, which receives 65% of its annual $761 million budget from taxpayers. (H/T ECM, Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

Excerpt:

> The federally funded National Portrait Gallery, one of the museums of the Smithsonian Institution, is currently showing an exhibition that features images of an ant-covered Jesus, male genitals, naked brothers kissing, men in chains, Ellen DeGeneres grabbing her breasts, and a painting the Smithsonian itself describes in the show's catalog as "homoerotic."
>
> The exhibit, "Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture," opened on Oct. 30 and will run throughout the Christmas Season, closing on Feb. 13.
>
> […]"These themes, historic and artistic, come together in 'Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture,' the first major exhibition to examine the influence of gay and lesbian artists in creating modern American portraiture," says the plaque. "'Hide/Seek' chronicles how, as outsiders, gay and lesbian artists occupied a position that turned to their advantage, making essential contributions to both the art of portraiture and to the creation of modern American culture."
>
> The Smithsonian Institution has an annual budget of $761 million, 65 percent of which comes from the federal government, according to Linda St. Thomas, the Smithsonian's chief spokesperson. The National Portrait Gallery itself received $5.8 million in federal funding in fiscal year 2010, according to St. Thomas. It also received $5.8 million in federal funding in fiscal 2009, according to the museum's annual report. The gallery's overall funding in that year was $8 million.
>
> […]Co-curator David Ward told CNSNews.com the "Hide/Seek" exhibit is in keeping with the National Portrait Gallery's mission.
>
> […]"Hide/Seek evolved from the Portrait Gallery's ongoing commitment to represent the diversity of our people in recognizing the contribution that gay and lesbian Americans made to American art and culture during the last century," Ward said.

The museum claims that the taxpayer money is only used to pay for the building, etc., not the exhibits themselves, but:

> Chris Edwards, director of tax policy studies at the Cato Institute and a former senior economist on the congressional Joint Economic Committee, told

> CNSNews.com, “If the Smithsonian didn’t have the taxpayer-funded building, they would have no space to present the exhibit, right? In my own view, if someone takes taxpayer money, then I think the taxpayers have every right to question the institutions where the money’s going.”
>
> “Think about the Washington Post,” he said. “They don’t have to publish every op-ed that they get, right? They own the platform. In this case [the Smithsonian Institution], the taxpayers own the platform and so the taxpayers should decide what is presented on that platform.”

Click through to the articles for all the details of what the secular left considers to be “art”. Warning: it’s pretty sick stuff.

This is why I always recommend to socially conservative Christians – if you want to help the poor, help the poor with your own money. Do not let the government have your money thinking that they will use it to help the poor. They will *never* use it to honor Christ the way you could use it to honor Christ. In many cases, they could make it harder or even impossible for you to live out your authentic Christian life in the public square. (Think of the movie “Expelled” for instance)

Senate Democrats block pro-small business amendment

December 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Hill. (H/T ECM, Marathon Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The Senate on Monday night defeated two amendments designed to ease the tax-filing requirements for small businesses.
>
> Senators voted 61-35 — six votes short of the necessary 67 — to reject an amendment by Sen. Mike Johanns (R-Neb.) that would strip a provision from the new healthcare law that requires businesses to report supply purchases of $600 or more with a single vendor. Likewise, the chamber voted 44-53 to defeat Sen. Max Baucus' (D-Mont.) amendment, which would accomplish the same provision but is unpaid-for. That amendment also required 67 votes.
>
> At issue is a section of the new healthcare law that requires businesses, charities and state and local governments to file 1099 reports for all transactions above $600 per year. The votes also represented a noteworthy showdown between Johanns and Baucus, who presented a similar idea but did not fund it through offset spending cuts.
>
> Johanns said his approach was wiser since it was funded through unspent federal monies, directing the federal Office of Management and Budget to cut $39 billion in funds that would have been generated by the 1099 mandate.

The reporting requirement was introduced by the Obama administration.

If you force businesses to waste their time on paperwork, they have less to make money, and that means less money for hiring people.

Senate Democrats reject Republican's bill to ban earmarks

December 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Hill. (H/T ECM, Marathon Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The Senate on Tuesday morning defeated a proposal from Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) to ban congressional earmarks.
>
> In a 39-56 vote, members defeated a temporary ban on the appropriations procedure. The moratorium was offered as an amendment to a food-safety bill that is scheduled for a final vote Tuesday morning.
>
> Senate Republicans have already passed a voluntary ban on earmarks in their caucus, but several GOP senators have objected to it. Democrats have so far declined to ban earmarks from their members.
>
> The legislation would have established an earmark moratorium for fiscal years 2012 and 2013, and also would have covered the fiscal year that began on Oct. 1. Congress has yet to pass an appropriations bill for the current fiscal year, and in the lame-duck session lawmakers are likely to approve either an omnibus spending bill or a continuing resolution to keep the government operating.
>
> In speeches on Monday, Coburn said the ban was the only way to rein in out-of-control spending. He did not speak on Tuesday morning, but Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), who supports the ban, alluded to the issue in remarks about the current debate over tax cuts.
>
> "Republicans have heard the voters loud and clear," McConnell said. "They want us to focus on preventing a tax hike on every taxpayer, on reining in Washington spending and on making it easier for employers to start hiring again."
>
> But Democrats repeated the argument they laid out in floor speeches on Monday, asserting that the earmark process has already been made transparent.
>
> "We have put in place the most dramatic reform of this appropriations process since I've served in Congress," said Majority Whip and Appropriations Committee member Dick Durbin (D-Ill.). "There is full disclosure in my office of every single request for an appropriation. We then ask those who have made the requests to have a full disclaimer of their involvement in the appropriation, so it's there for the public record. This kind of transparency is virtually unprecedented."

It's going to be business as usual until we take the Senate in 2012.

MUST-READ: Sweden jails parents for spanking and seizes their children

December 1, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News. (H/T Mary)

Full article:

> A Swedish district court has sentenced a couple to nine months each in prison and fined them the equivalent of US $10,650 after they admitted to spanking three of their four children as a normal part of their parenting methods. Corporal punishment of children by parents was made illegal in Sweden in 1979, an early step in what a U.S. parental rights lawyer called the nearly total take-over of parenting by the state in Sweden.
>
> Court documents, quoted by Sveriges Television, said that the parents, who have not been named in the press, "explained that they had used, what they themselves described as spanking, physical punishment as part of their methods for raising the children."
>
> There is no indication of abuse by the parents in the released documents, with the court noting that the parents "had a loving and caring relationship with their children."
>
> Nevertheless, the parents have been sent to prison and fined 25,000 kronor for each of the "affected children." The children have been remanded to state-sponsored foster care since early this summer, and Mike Donnelly, Director of International Relations for the US-based Home School Legal Defence Association (HSLDA), told LifeSiteNews.com that it is "extremely unlikely" that the children will ever be returned to their family home.
>
> Donnelly said that the case is typical of the stories of many families with traditional values in Sweden: "In the area of family rights in Sweden things really aren't going well there."
>
> While the HSLDA does not hold an official position on the use of corporal punishment, Donnelly said it is clearly up to parents to determine whether corporal punishment is an appropriate form of discipline.
>
> "Parenting has been outsourced, or simply directly taken over by the state in Sweden," Donnelly said. "And these parents have been jailed for doing what in America would be perfectly normal."
>
> Ninety percent of Swedish children are in publicly funded day care from extremely early ages, as young as a year or 18 months, he said. It is the position of the state that parents are overruled by the state in areas of child rearing, he said.
>
> Donnelly said, however, that the best interests of the child are not the state's

> highest priority: “So lets take these kids who have had a loving and caring relationship with their parents and send them to foster care, and throw their parents into jail for nine months.”
>
> Donnelly cited the now notorious case of Domenic Johansson, the boy who was snatched by state officials because his parents were homeschooling him, an act that is also illegal in Sweden.
>
> “The bottom line is, don’t go to Sweden. Don’t move there, if you want to have a normal family.”

Well, what do we learn from this story?

Sweden is the most secular country on the planet. They think that the world is an accident and that there is no way that people ought to be – since there is no Designer to hold us accountable to any objective standard of morality. Also, there is no such thing as human rights, such as the right to parent your children as you see fit. The state determines what counts as a right. And you don’t have any rights to your children – they belong to the state. If there is no God, then there is no objective morality, and thus parents have any authority to tell children how they ought to be, or to make moral judgments against them.

Given the amount of regulation of the family by the state in Sweden, it makes no sense at all to start a family there. But other countries seem to want to follow along where Sweden is leading. Anyone who votes Democrat in the United States (or Liberal/NDP in Canada, or Labor/Liberal Democrat in the UK, or Labor/Green in Australia, etc.) is *moving us towards where Sweden is now.* Canada’s Liberal party actually has tried to pass a national day care system, and Hillary Clinton favors taxpayer-funded pre-Kindergarden. There is just something in the worldview of the secular left that wants to control the lives of others – a fascistic impulse that has no respect for the privacy of the family.

I should probably mention the word feminism, here. Sweden is also the most feminist country in the world, with laws requiring that boards of directors be 40% female. They do not want women to marry, they do not want women raising children. That is the state’s job, in Sweden. And most of the women in Sweden voted for it. They would rather have the state raise their children than raise the children themselves. They would rather have the state take 60% of their husband’s income and spend it on socialized day care than spend that money on their own family. Then they have the nerve to complain that men don’t want to make commitments. It’s ridiculous. The very laws that feminists vote for are the laws that destroy marriage, family and parenting. No one in his right mind should marry a feminist*.

(*Third-wave feminist)

Family law expert claims sex-offenders should be able to adopt

December 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Another scary story from Life Site News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> A "blanket ban" on convicted sex-offenders adopting children is discriminatory, says a report from Helen Reece of the London School of Economics. Reece, a family law expert, has said that each case should be examined separately "on its merits."
>
> "Sex offenders shouldn't all be tarred with the same brush," Reece said. "People need to be carefully screened for adoption and fostering, but each case should be taken on its merits.
>
> "There shouldn't be blanket rules. What somebody has done before is not necessarily what he or she will do again. When someone has served a sentence, as far as you can, you should treat them the same as anyone else."
>
> The report was published in the latest edition of Child and Family Law Quarterly.
>
> [...]Currently, there are very few remaining "blanket" restrictions on adoption and fostering in Britain. Single people, unmarried cohabiting couples and homosexual singles can all adopt.

Where does all this compassionate tolerance lead to?

> In the case of Ian Wathey and Craig Faunch, two homosexual men who were charged with sexually molesting the boys in their care, the council who gave them the children admitted that a "politically correct" prejudice in favor of homosexuals in adoption was in play.
>
> In an inquiry, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council employees said that despite growing reservations by staff and complaints from the mother of two of the boys, the two men were treated by the authorities as "trophy carers" because of their status as homosexuals. The two men were regarded as beyond scrutiny and "the fear of being discriminatory" lead the council to "fail to discriminate between the appropriate and the abusive."
>
> The Daily Telegraph quoted one social worker who told the inquiry, "you didn't want to be seen discriminating against a same-sex couple."

Well, there are *some* people who can't be foster parents or adopt. I wrote before about the Christian couple that was banned from being foster parents, and the adoption panel woman who was removed for saying that homosexual adoption is not always in the best interests of the child, and how the Catholic adoption agency group was shut down for

believing that children do best with a mother and a father.

The family law expert from above is a professor of law at the London School of Economics.

Her current research interests:

> Current research is concerned with the regulation of intimacy. The main research project at present, *Violence to Feminism*, is a theoretical probing of the contemporary feminist approach to violence against women. The two main research questions are first, why contemporary feminist theory has celebrated ever-widening conceptions of violence and secondly, why the contemporary feminist approach to violence against women has permeated legal development. Another current research project focuses on changing conceptions of parental responsibility.

Her last book is called “Divorcing Reponsibly”:

> This book provides an analysis of the increasing impact on the law in general and divorce law in particular of post-liberalism,which replaces choice with self-discovery. The author shows that post-liberal premises formed the foundation for every aspect of the recent divorce reform proposals. Accordingly, she attributes their failure to the contradictions inherent within post-liberalism. Nevertheless, she concludes that post-liberalism maintains a subtle yet pervasive influence on the law. Specifically, this means that we are held accountable not for what we do but for how we approach our decisions. Thus, for the first time ever, it has become possible to divorce responsibly.

Feminist scholars often write about violence against women, even though men are equally likely to be victims of domestic violence.

*Feminist scholars also conduct research that recommends legalizing polygamy, and then governments later consider whether to legalize it.

(*Third-wave feminism)

Are atheists just as moral as Judeo-Christian believers?

December 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a fine polemic from Michael Egnor, writing against radical atheistic Darwinist P.Z. Myers. (H/T ECM)

Myers' views:

> "I'm about as pro-choice as you can get…"

> "…I'm even willing to say that I'm pro-abortion…"

> "[I] would like to encourage more people to abort…"

And Egnor's response: (in part)

> Valerie Hudson and Andrea Den Boer, authors of the landmark book "Bare Branches: The Security Implications of Asia's Surplus Male Population" ask:
>
> > What forces drive the deficit of females in Asian nations such as India and China? Why are their birth sex ratios so abnormal? Why are early childhood mortality rates for girls higher than those for boys? Why are most children in orphanages girls? How do we account for the disappearance of so many women — estimated conservatively at over 90 million missing women in seven Asian countries alone?
>
> They conclude:
>
> > [T]he modern gender imbalance in Asia, as with historical gender imbalances in Asia and else-where, is largely a man-made phenomenon. Girls are being culled from the population, whether through prenatal sex identification and female sex-selective abortion, or through relative neglect compared to male offspring in early childhood (including abandonment)…
>
> Pro-abortion population control policies are the foundation of this femicide, and Myers' explicit embrace of abortion and implicit embrace of population control junk-science puts him in the company of thugs. Ironically, Myers' fellow pro-abortion goons have violated women's basic human rights — the right not to be sterilized, not to be forced to have an abortion, even the right to live until birth and the right not to be killed after birth because you're a girl — on a scale unprecedented in human history. It's no coincidence that the first women's rights activists in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th century were passionately pro-life and anti-abortion. Abortion and population control are primary instruments of femicide and of the worldwide degradation of women.

If a person is *pro-abortion* then they are necessarily *pro-sex-selection-abortion.*

Abortion is basically recreational sex followed by murder, in order to avoid having to deal with the demands of an innocent person who is at the mercy of the very people who freely chose to bring her into being. And yet atheists like P.Z. Myers want *more* abortions.

There is no place for human rights – of *any* kind – in an accidental universe. We are all just lumps of matter – machines made out of meat. That's their view. We don't even have consciousness or free will on their view. They think that we're just animals acting out our biologically determined behaviors based on survival instincts. It's a very low view of humans.

Here are some more famous atheists explaining what atheism is:

> The idea of political or legal obligation is clear enough… Similarly, the idea of an obligation higher than this, referred to as moral obligation, is clear enough, provided reference to some lawgiver higher…than those of the state is understood. In other words, our moral obligations can…be understood as those that are imposed by God…. But what if this higher-than-human lawgiver is no longer taken into account? Does the concept of moral obligation…still make sense? …The concept of moral obligation [is] unintelligible apart from the idea of God. The words remain but their meaning is gone. (Richard Taylor, Ethics, Faith, and Reason (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985), p. 83-84)
>
> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Source: Richard Dawkins)
>
> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory. (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

Don't make the mistake in thinking that an atheist is just like you because he lives in the same time and place as you and seems to act according to the fashions of the day. Atheists have no objective standard of morality. They think that "ought" statements are just arbitrary customs and preferences – like cooking style and clothing style and music style. It's all arbitrary on their view. They think that people behave well *not to conform to*

a Designer's plan that values self-sacrificial love but *in order to have happy feelings and to be accepted and praised by others.* They think the universe is an accident, and the purpose of life is to compete with other people in order to be the happiest. There is no final judgment for anything they do, on atheism.

When a Christian loves someone self-sacrificially, they neither think of themselves, nor even the other person, but instead think of their relationship with God. We act out of the desire to please someone who loves us more than anyone in the world. The good action is basically done out of a desire to respect that prior vertical relationship. We are grateful, and we show our gratitude by imitating Jesus' example of self-sacrificial love. The demands of a child, or a friend, or a family member are more important to me, as a Christian, than my own selfish happiness. I am more concerned about how my actions will cause someone to either turn to God or away from him. I would not act in a way that turns a person away from God. Even if it made me happy, even if I could get away with it. I just don't care that much about being happy in this life. It's not a big deal to me.

Court validates student's right to freedom of religion

December 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From One News Now. (H/T Caffeinated Thoughts via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Montana's highest court has ruled in favor of a former Montana high school valedictorian who was banned from speaking at her graduation because her speech contained religious references.
>
> Among Renee Griffith's planned comments were such statements as: "I didn't let fear keep me from sharing Christ and His joy with those around me" — and "I learned not to be known for my grades…but for being committed to my faith and morals and being someone who lived with a purpose from God with a passionate love for Him." She was ordered by school officials to replace "Christ" with the words "my faith"; and to amend the other statement to say she "lived with a purpose, a purpose derived from my faith and based on a love of mankind."
>
> Griffith, a co-valedictorian of her 2008 senior class, refused to do so and, consequently, was prevented from speaking at the ceremony.
>
> […]The Rutherford Institute helped to argue the case on behalf of Griffith. "Renee wanted to mention Christ and God in her graduation speech, and the school said she couldn't do it — then she insisted that she be able to do it," explains Rutherford's president, John Whitehead.
>
> "She was actually forbidden from even participating in the graduation ceremony at all," Whitehead continues. "So I think this [ruling] sends a shot across the bow of all these other cases that have happened across the country — and it's a reaffirmation that we still have some freedom in the United States."
>
> A lower court had ruled previously that Griffith's civil rights were not violated, and the school district had argued mentioning Christ or God in a speech is a violation of the alleged "separation of church and state."
>
> "But the [Montana Supreme Court] actually addresses that and says that's not true — this is just basically free speech and students should have a right, as other students have a right, to mention what's important to them and their lives when they're up before the students speaking about graduation," says the spokesman for The Rutherford Institute.
>
> Whitehead says the ruling affirms to Christian students that mentioning the name "Jesus" in a speech is not taboo.

W. William Leaphart dissented from the majority of the judges – he ruled against Renee Griffith. He was opposed to Christians exercising their religious liberty in the public square.

This is a good lesson about how the public school system tries to force their secular

worldview onto Christians. Can you believe that? The National Butte School District #1 actually told her what to say so that she could sound like them. They wanted her to pretend to believe what they believe. And they thought that suppressing her views would cause her no harm at all. That it was OK for her to be suppressed. That is was a good thing to silence her. That her rights could be breached so that their feelings would not be hurt. So that they wouldn't have to realize that Christianity isn't stupid, that it might even be true, and that smart people believe it.

The best thing Christians can do is to encourage their children to do well in school and to study apologetics. The atheists *really* hate the idea that smart people can be Christians. They really hate being confronted by smart Christians. Dumb ones they can accept, but the smart ones make them very angry. That's what we want.

By the way, this censorship by the public schools actually happens a lot. I blogged about the last time this happened here.

Right Wing News asks: who is the top conservative of 2010?

December 2, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s the poll. You can check up to THREE choices!

Right Wing News is run by John Hawkins.

Michele Bachmann calls for Attorney General Holder to resign

December 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann

Her post is up at Red State, a web site dedicated to grassroots conservatism.

Full text:

> The Wikileaks debacle is the latest proof that Eric Holder has no understanding of the dangerous times we live in. His ineptness, as head of the Department of Justice, is putting our nation in a vulnerable position.
>
> Earlier this week, the Wikileaks website jeopardized our nation's security and diplomacy by releasing hundreds of thousands of U.S. State Department documents. The same site put our troops at risk when it released thousands of classified U.S. military documents in July. As far back as March, the Pentagon declared Wikileaks to be a threat to national security. Meanwhile, the Attorney General, our nation's chief law enforcement officer, has been busy cracking down on dozens of websites that sold things like counterfeit purses. Eric Holder simply has the wrong priorities.
>
> During his tenure as Attorney General, Holder short-circuited the interrogation of the underwear bomber by ordering that the terror suspect be given Miranda rights within the first hour of questioning. Holder's use of civilian trials for terror suspects proved to be a failure last month when a civilian jury acquitted a man on 284 of 285 counts. This was after a judge refused to allow the testimony of a key prosecution witness, even though our military had captured the suspect after a gunfight in Pakistan and linked him to deadly bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa.
>
> Eric Holder has also had a slew of lesser problems, like his outspoken criticism of Arizona's immigration law before he had even read the law, his dropping of charges in the New Black Panthers voter intimidation case, and his failure to

> investigate fraud allegations and the misuse of taxpayer dollars in the recent Pigford claims settlement.
>
> The time has come for Eric Holder to step down as Attorney General of the United States. As a member of Congress and a mother of five children, I am concerned about the very real threats facing our country. We need a chief law enforcement officer who understands those dangers and knows how to respond.

A nice re-cap of the Obama administration’s lack of seriousness on national security and crime.

The best thing you missed at the EPS apologetics conference

December 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Angus Menuge

The best thing at the 2010 EPS apologetics conference was the parallel session given by Angus Menuge.

Here's Angus Menuge:

> Dr. Angus Menuge joined Concordia University Wisconsin in 1991. He earned his BA from the University of Warwick, England, and his MA and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he studied philosophy, computer science and psychology. Menuge's dissertation was on the philosophy of action explanation, and his current research interests include philosophy of mind, philosophy of science and Christian apologetics.
>
> In 2003, Menuge earned a Diploma in Christian Apologetics from the International Academy of Apologetics, Evangelism and Human Rights, which meets each July in Strasbourg, France. His thesis, a critique of scientific materialism, went on to become the book *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).
>
> Menuge has also edited volumes on C. S. Lewis, Christ and culture and the vocation of scientist, and has written several Bible studies. He is currently working with Joel Heck (Concordia Texas) on a collection of essays defining Lutheran education for the 21st century, entitled *Learning at the Foot of the Cross* (Concordia University Press, forthcoming).
>
> A frequent speaker, Menuge has given presentations on Christianity and culture, science and vocation, philosophy of mind, C. S. Lewis, Intelligent Design and the case against scientific materialism. He is a member of the Evangelical Philosophical Society.

UW – Madison is an incredibly good, but radically leftist school.

He presented a paper at the real Evangelical Philosophical Society conference for students and professors of philosophy, and you can download the paper here in Word format. (here's a PDF version I made)

Here is the introduction to the paper that Angus Menuge read at the EPS conference:

> The argument from reason is really a family of arguments to show that reasoning is incompatible with naturalism. Here, naturalism is understood as the idea that foundationally, there are only physical objects, properties and relations, and anything else reduces to, supervenes on, or emerges from that. For our purposes, one of the most important claims of naturalism is that all causation is passive, automatic, event causation (an earthquake automatically causes a tidal wave; the tidal wave responds passively): there are no agent causes, where something does not happen automatically but only because the agent exerts his active power by choosing to do it. The most famous version of the argument from reason is *epistemological*: if naturalism were true, we could not be justified in believing it. Today, I want to focus on the *ontological* argument from reason, which asserts that there cannot be reasoning in a naturalistic world, because reasoning requires libertarian free will, and this in turn requires a unified, enduring self with active power.
>
> The two most promising ways out of this argument are: (1) Compatibilism—even in a deterministic, naturalistic world, humans are capable of free acts of reason if their minds are responsive to rational causes; (2) Libertarian Naturalism—a self with libertarian free will emerges from the brain. I argue that neither of these moves works, and so, unless someone has a better idea, the ontological argument from reason stands.

The paper is 11 pages long, and it is awesome for those of you looking for some good discussion of one of the issues in the area of philosophy of mind. The thing you need to know about Angus Menuge is that he is quite strong and forceful in his writing and presentation, and to me, that is an excellent thing for a scholar to be. He reminds me of Doug Geivett, Paul Copan and William Lane Craig. Very direct, and very confrontational. You can even read an account of his debate with that radical atheist nutcase P.Z. Myers in 2008 here.

By the way, the epistemological argument from reason (P(R) on N & E is low) is the argument made by the famous Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga. I blogged about that argument before here. You need to know BOTH of these arguments. Plantinga also spoke at the EPS apologetics conference, explaining exactly this argument. I was sitting right there listening! (He made his annoying "going out for Pope" joke – blech!)

Powerpoint slideshow

But there is more than just the paper! At the EPS apologetics conference, which is meant for lay people as well as scholars, he presented this Powerpoint slideshow, (here's a PDF

version I made) . The slides are easier to understand than the paper, but the paper is not too bad.

Useful software

By the way, if you have not downloaded Open Office, a free open-source office suit made by Oracle, and built on the Java language (the programming language I use when I am not taking the blame for projects I lead) then you really ought to download it. It is a good free alternative to Microsoft stuff, not that I have anything against Microsoft. But I am a big fan of open source software.

Angus let me have both the Word document and the power point file, and he gave me permission to post it on the blog as well. I got all the wonderful stuff right after the conference, and I completely forgot to post it. But anyway, here it is now.

MUST-READ: CNS News interviews Michele Bachmann

December 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

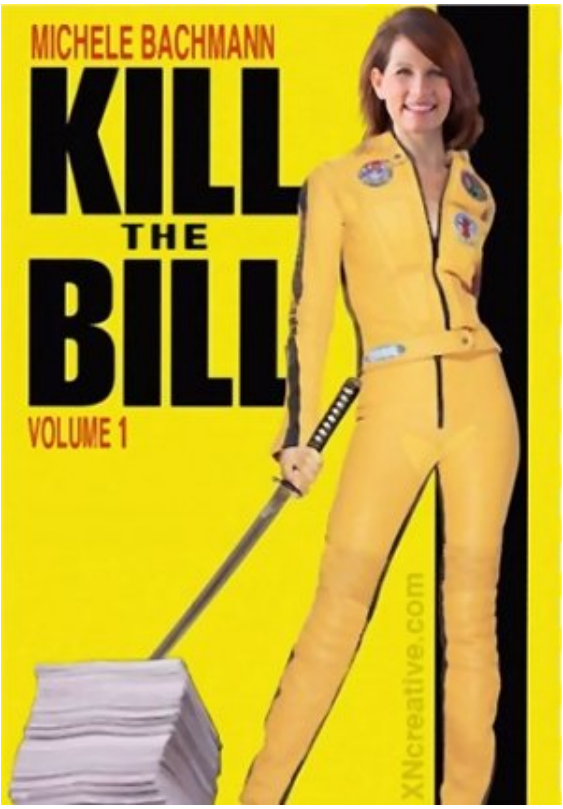

This is an actual photo of Michele in Congress

Here's an interview about her latest doings from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.), founder and chair of the House Tea Party Caucus, told CNSNews.com this week that when the Republicans take control of the House of Representatives in January they should kill Obamacare by zeroing-out funding for it, and by the same means remove from office the non-Senate-confirmed "czars" President Barack Obama has named to his administration.
>
> "That's the beauty of conservatives winning in this election, because the House has the power of the purse and we can zero that out in our budget," she said.
>
> "Zero out any funding for the current czars, for instance, that the president has," Bachmann told CNSNews.com in an appearance on "Online With Terry Jeffrey. "Zero out the implementation of Obamacare. Zero out funding for the 16,500 IRS agents who will be the enforcers of Obamacare. All of that needs to be zeroed out."
>
> When asked whether she was advocating that the Republican majority in the

> House kill Obamacare by simply using the power of the purse to never approve funding for it, Bachmann said: "Yes."
>
> […]**"**That's what we're supposed to do here in Congress, is make our case based upon a principled argument," the Minnesota conservative told CNSNews.com. "And we need to make that argument, because to go down the road of funding Obamacare will lead us to socialized medicine."

Here's an interesting part of the transcript:

Jeffrey: Congressman, let me turn to some social and cultural issues.

Earlier this year, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi gave a talk where she said that her favorite word was the "Word made flesh," namely Jesus Christ, and that she believed that she had a duty to pursue policies that were in keeping with the values of Jesus Christ. A reporter from CNSNews.com went to one of her press conferences and asked her when did she believe that the Word was made flesh? Was it at the Annunciation, at the conception of Jesus Christ? Or was it at the Nativity, at the birth of Jesus Christ? And when did Jesus get the right life? Was it at conception? Was it at birth? When did Jesus get the right to life? So I want to ask you that same question that we put to Nancy Pelosi. When was the Word made Flesh? At the conception? And when did Jesus get a right to life?

Bachmann: I think the answer would be John 1:1**.** The Word was God and the Word was with God from the foundation of the Earth. So, prior to our even being here on the Earth, the Father and the Son were together because all things were created by Jesus Christ and with the Father and held together. And I believe in a triune God: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. That's when Jesus was created. It's hard for us to understand, beyond our limits of time, what eternity really means. I don't know that the mind of man can truly conceive and understand eternity, but we know from the Word of God–I believe the Word of God–that Christ was preeminent. That He was preeminent and before all things and created all things. So, therefore, He always was one with the Father.

Jeffrey: And He became flesh, became a human being–

Bachmann: And dwelt with man.

Jeffrey: And dwelt among us.

Bachmann: And dwelt among us.

Jeffrey: And did Jesus have a right to life from the moment of conception?

Bachmann: Yes.

Jeffrey: Do all human beings have a right to life?

Bachmann: Yes, they do.

Jeffrey: Should there be legal protection for every human being from the moment of conception?

Bachmann: Yes, there should be.

You can see the full video of the interview and read the full transcript at the CNS News link.

I remember listening to a MacLaurin lecture one day given by Ravi Zacharias in Minnesota. And as I started it up, you will never believe who was introducing him. It was Michele Bachmann. And she was explaining to the audience how she had asked her husband, for her anniversary present, to go and hear Ravi Zacharias speak. She did not ask for stuff. She asked for apologetics. *If only* this woman could be President, I would be the happiest person in the world.

Related posts

- Michele Bachmann requests the resignation of Attorney General Eric Holder
- Michele Bachmann attacks government bailout of unions
- Michele Bachmann makes the case for limited government
- Why is the left so angry with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin?
- Michele Bachmann on Fox News with Laura Ingraham
- Democrats kill Michele Bachmann's attempt to freeze federal salaries
- Michele Bachmann on the US taxpayer-funded bailout of Greece
- Michele Bachmann explains the Obama's Wall Street bailout bill
- Michele Bachmann promises to work to repeal Obamacare
- Video of Michele Bachmann defending unborn children
- Michele Bachmann's passionate and inspiring speech at CPAC 2010
- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama's latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare's rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

Friday night funny: a conversation with a radical feminist

December 3, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Everybody likes Friday Night Funny, but no one ever sends me anything funny to post.

Well, I found this video on Jojo's Facebook page: (some swearing)

This video summarizes almost everything I have ever said about feminism on this blog in two years.

I actually got into a debate with a feminist on Facebook over this video.

Here it is:

- **Feminist:** If that video is done with its many straw men we could really use them to keep the crows away from the corn.
- **Wintery Knight:** Hey, can you pick the absolute worst straw man out of your blanket statement and tell us about him? It really isn't much help to make blanket statements like that since we have no reason to believe something that makes no specific claims.
- **Feminist:** You're right, blanket statements and broad generalizations are seldom helpful. A good example of this would be… Oh yes, the video.
- **Wintery Knight:** Yes, we know you don't LIKE it in the same way that I don't LIKE liver and onions. But what specific factual claim do you think is mistaken, and what evidence do you have that this factual claim is mistaken?
- **Feminist:** Not interested in going blow by blow. They're consistantly silly claims and I'm sure you've debated this enough that we could go in circles for a long period of time.That said, liver and onions done well is delicious and I hope you'll give it another shot.

That was it. If you guys want more funny stuff posted, you have to send me more funny stuff.

By the way, last month was our best month for traffic ever! Please share the blog with all your friends! You may have noticed that I have gotten rid of all the Google ads by paying for the no-ad upgrade on WordPress. I really hated those stupid ads! By the way, if you ever start a blog, WordPress is the best place to start one.

Also, if you are on Facebook, then please follow my blog!

Also, if you are ever trying to find the blog and can't remember the URL, just type in **https://winteryknight.com/** instead of the normal wordpress URL. That shorter one works just as well.

One other quick note. If you ever want to search the blog by a tag, just enter the main URL, then add "/tag" then add "/<tag_name>" where tag name is the name of the tag you are searching for.

Like this:

- https://winteryknight.com/tag/apologetics
- https://winteryknight.com/tag/jennifer-roback-morse

Happy Friday!

Assessing the evidence in favor of common ancestry

December 4, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from Evolution News that takes a statement from an evolutionist who supports common descent, and then then refutes it point by point.

Here's the case for common descent:

> UCA is now supported by a wealth of evidence from many independent sources, including: (1) the agreement between phylogeny and biogeography; (2) the correspondence between phylogeny and the palaeontological record; (3) the existence of numerous predicted transitional fossils; (4) the hierarchical classification of morphological characteristics; (5) the marked similarities of biological structures with different functions (that is, homologies); and (6) the congruence of morphological and molecular phylogenies.
>
> (Douglas L. Theobald, "A formal test of the theory of universal common ancestry," *Nature*, Vol. 465:219-222 (May 13, 2010).)

And here's a response to each of those points:

- (1) Phylogeny and biogeography don't always agree.
- (2) Phylogeny and paleontology don't always agree.
- (3) Transitional fossils are often missing (or the "predicted" transitional fossils fall apart on closer inspection).
- (4) Hierarchical classifications often fail.
- (5) "Homologous" structures often have different developmental pathways or different structures often have "homologous" developmental pathways.
- (6) Morphological and molecular phylogenies are often incongruent.

Before I read this post, I only knew about 3, 4, 5 and 6.

I thought that I would post this because I haven't said much about common descent before. I'm against it.

How historically accurate are movies made by Hollywood?

December 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, here's an example from the radically leftist Washington Post of all places. The new movie "Fair Game" about the two Democrats Joe Wilson and Valerie Plame. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The protagonists portrayed in the movie, former diplomat Joseph C. Wilson IV and former spy Valerie Plame, claim that it tells the true story of their battle with the Bush administration over Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and Ms. Plame's exposure as a CIA agent. "It's accurate," Ms. Plame told The Post. Said Mr. Wilson: "For people who have short memories or don't read, this is the only way they will remember that period."
>
> […]In fact, "Fair Game," based on books by Mr. Wilson and his wife, is full of distortions – not to mention outright inventions. To start with the most sensational: The movie portrays Ms. Plame as having cultivated a group of Iraqi scientists and arranged for them to leave the country, and it suggests that once her cover was blown, the operation was aborted and the scientists were abandoned. This is simply false. In reality, as The Post's Walter Pincus and Richard Leiby reported, Ms. Plame did not work directly on the program, and it was not shut down because of her identification.
>
> The movie portrays Mr. Wilson as a whistle-blower who debunked a Bush administration claim that Iraq had tried to purchase uranium from the African country of Niger. In fact, an investigation by the Senate intelligence committee found that Mr. Wilson's reporting did not affect the intelligence community's view on the matter, and an official British investigation found that President George W. Bush's statement in a State of the Union address that Britain believed that Iraq had sought uranium in Niger was well-founded.
>
> "Fair Game" also resells the couple's story that Ms. Plame's exposure was the result of a White House conspiracy. A lengthy and wasteful investigation by a special prosecutor found no such conspiracy – but it did confirm that the prime source of a newspaper column identifying Ms. Plame was a State Department official, not a White House political operative.

As everyone knows, Valerie Plame was not outed by the White House. Even the leftist CBS News reported that she was outed by Dick Armey (Richard Armitage) – and it was an accident. This is not in dispute. And in any case, she was a CIA desk employee at the time of the story, not a CIA field agent.

The root problem of so many of our difficulties these days, from the national debt, to the breakdown of the family, etc., is this seemingly limitless capacity we have to insist on

having fun all the time. People seem to not care that if they lie to themselves about a person, then it will not matter if they act on the lies – so long as the lies are entertaining.

Tom Daschle explains what socialized medicine really means

December 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM found this video on Health Care BS.

The thing you need to understand about socialized medicine is this:

- If you don't work then you don't pay into the system
- If you do work then you do pay into the system
- If you are young and still voting, then you get treatment
- If you are old and not still voting, then you get no treatment

So basically, if you collect welfare for your whole life, and choose to sleep with strangers, and then get an STD, then the abortion is FREEEE!

But, if you are old but have worked all your life, and get need surgery for a brain tumor, through no fault of your own, then you get DEAAADDDD!

That's socialized medicine in a nutshell. And NO, you cannot pay for any treatment over the counter – in a single payer system the GOVERNMENT decides whether you will be treated and when. You pay into the system your whole life based on your income level, and the government treats other people who make free choices to indulge in risky lifestyle decisions. When you finally retire and get sick due to no fault of your own, you can get in line behind the people who want sex changes and IVF. Everyone has an equal life outcome regardless of their willingness to work or make responsible decisions about what is moral/immoral and safe/unsafe.

And what are the incentives in a socialized medicine system? There is no incentive to work. But there is an incentive to be irresponsible and risky with your health. People who spend the day working instead of skiing will pay for people who break their legs skiing instead of working. That's socialized medicine. That's "equality". There is no personal responsibility or accountability in a socialist system.

Obama administration used spying, threats and bribes to build support for global warming treaty

December 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically leftist UK Guardian of all places! (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Hidden behind the save-the-world rhetoric of the global climate change negotiations lies the mucky realpolitik: money and threats buy political support; spying and cyberwarfare are used to seek out leverage.
>
> The US diplomatic cables reveal how the US seeks dirt on nations opposed to its approach to tackling global warming; how financial and other aid is used by countries to gain political backing; how distrust, broken promises and creative accounting dog negotiations; and how the US mounted a secret global diplomatic offensive to overwhelm opposition to the controversial "Copenhagen accord", the unofficial document that emerged from the ruins of the Copenhagen climate change summit in 2009.
>
> Negotiating a climate treaty is a high-stakes game, not just because of the danger warming poses to civilisation but also because re-engineering the global economy to a low-carbon model will see the flow of billions of dollars redirected.
>
> Seeking negotiating chips, the US state department sent a secret cable on 31 July 2009 seeking human intelligence from UN diplomats across a range of issues, including climate change. The request originated with the CIA. As well as countries' negotiating positions for Copenhagen, diplomats were asked to provide evidence of UN environmental "treaty circumvention" and deals between nations.
>
> But intelligence gathering was not just one way. On 19 June 2009, the state department sent a cable detailing a "spear phishing" attack on the office of the US climate change envoy, Todd Stern, while talks with China on emissions took place in Beijing. Five people received emails, personalised to look as though they came from the National Journal. An attached file contained malicious code that would give complete control of the recipient's computer to a hacker. While the attack was unsuccessful, the department's cyber threat analysis division noted: "It is probable intrusion attempts such as this will persist."
>
> The Beijing talks failed to lead to a global deal at Copenhagen.
>
> […]Perhaps the most audacious appeal for funds revealed in the cables is from Saudi Arabia, the world's second biggest oil producer and one of the 25 richest countries in the world. A secret cable sent on 12 February records a meeting between US embassy officials and lead climate change negotiator Mohammad al-Sabban. "The kingdom will need time to diversify its economy away from

> petroleum, [Sabban] said, noting a US commitment to help Saudi Arabia with its economic diversification efforts would 'take the pressure off climate change negotiations'."
>
> The Saudis did not like the accord, but were worried they had missed a trick. The assistant petroleum minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman told US officials that he had told his minister Ali al-Naimi that Saudi Arabia had "missed a real opportunity to submit 'something clever', like India or China, that was not legally binding but indicated some goodwill towards the process without compromising key economic interests".

Wow, so this is what Obama has been working on as the unemployment rate has soared higher to 9.8%.

Number of Obamacare waivers granted doubles to 222

December 5, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Verum Serum.

Excerpt:

> Last month it was revealed that 111 companies had received one year waivers from costly provisions of Obamacare.
>
> […]Yesterday HHS updated their site to show that the number of "waived" organizations has now doubled to 222. The total number of people excused from this particular requirement of the new law has gone from 1.1 million to 1.5 million in one month. The largest single addition is American Heritage Life Insurance Company with nearly 70,000 employees. There are also quite a few union locals on the updated list:
>
> - Bricklayers Local 1 – 1,985 employees
> - International Brotherhood of Trade Unions Local 713 – 861 employees
> - Local 1102 has three listings – 6,271 employees
> - Local 338 – 18,209 employees
> - SoCal Pipe Trades – 12,700
> - Teamsters Local 522 – 270
> - UFCW Local 1445 – 148
> - Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 630 – 1,166
> - UFCW Local 1000 – 3,855
> - SEIU Greater New York – 4,544
> - Laundry and Dry Cleaning Workers Local 52 – 1,547
> - Social Service Employees Union Local 371 – 34,000

I think that the aim is to cause small businesses to go out of businesses so that the government has an easier time controlling the economy, which is what socialists want. It is much harder to control a massive number of cats than a handful of mules.

Republicans block Democrats' attempt to raise taxes on job creators

December 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Senate Republicans on Saturday voted against President Obama's plan to extend the Bush tax cuts to only the middle class in a pair of votes Democrats are seizing to paint the GOP as guardians of the rich.
>
> The Senate voted 53-36 to extend all expiring tax cuts on individuals with incomes of less than $200,000 a year and married couples making less than $250,000 — seven shy of the required 60 to advance.
>
> Now keep in mind that "the rich" are the very people who own the small businesses that create most of the jobs. That is why constant slamming of the rich with taxes and health care mandates has raised the unemployment rate to 9.8% and kept it above 9% for 19 months – a record never before seen in the history of the country. When Obama says "the wealthiest 2%", you need to hear "9.8% unemployment". The wealthy are the ones who create the jobs. Bash the wealthy, and you get fewer jobs.

Obama says:

> President Obama said he was "very disappointed" in the Senate's verdict.
>
> "Those provisions should have passed," he said."It makes no sense to to hold tax cuts for the middle class hostage to permanent tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans especially when those high-income tax cuts would cost an additional $700 billion that we don't have and would add to our deficit."
>
> "But with so much at stake, today's votes cannot be the end of the discussion," he said. "It's absolutely essential to hardworking middle class families and to the economy to make sure their taxes don't go up on Jan. 1."

But the truth is:

> Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell immediately slammed the political maneuvering by Democrats after the votes.
>
> "According to the strange the logic of Democratic leaders in Congress, the best way to show middle class Americans that they care about creating jobs is to slam some of America's top job creators with a massive tax hike," he said on the Senate floor.
>
> "Today's vote was an affront to the millions of Americans who are struggling to find work and a clear signal that Democrats in Congress still haven't got the

> message from the November elections," he said.

Obama is anti-middle class because he is anti-small-business, and small businesses hire the middle class.

Democrats don't understand how jobs are created

In fact, the unemployment rate has been steadily rising since the Democrats took control of the spending process by winning the House and Senate in January 2007. The left side of this graph begins when Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid took control of the House and Senate in January 2007.

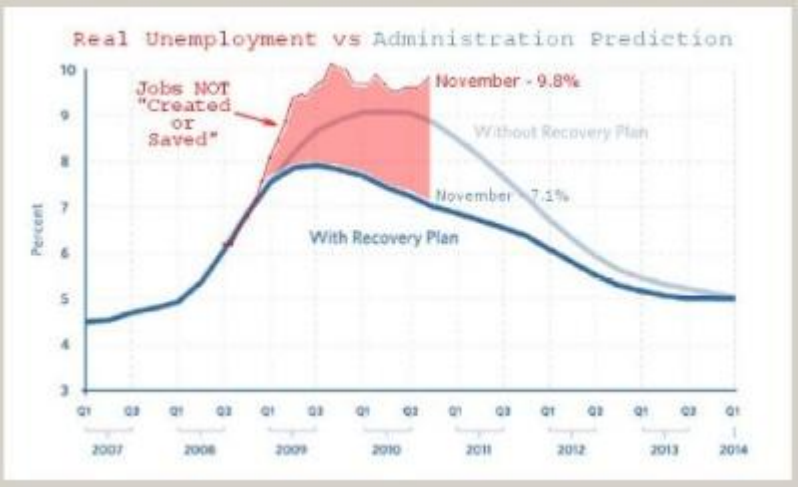

Democrats took control of the economy in 2007

The chart doesn't lie. When the Democrats control the budget, spending and unemployment rise a lot. When the Republicans controlled the House and Senate, the unemployment rate was 4.5%. These numbers do not lie. When they told you that more spending (the "recovery plan") to their favored special interest groups will create private sector jobs, they lied. The numbers show that they lied.

People like Michele Bachmann actually OWN SMALL BUSINESSES and they HIRE AMERICAN WORKERS. People like Michele Bachmann should be in charge of the economy. Not people like Obama. Obama had a rich grandmother who paid for all his schooling at expensive private schools. He had his life handed to him on a silver platter. Michele Bachmann grew up poor.

The dark side of the birth control pill

December 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from New York Magazine. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> The Pill changed the world. These days, women's twenties are as free and fabulous as they can be, a time of boundless freedom and experimentation, of easily trying on and discarding identities, careers, partners. The Pill, which is the most popular form of contraception in the U.S., is still the symbol of that freedom. As a young woman, you feel chic throwing that light plastic pack of dainty pills into your handbag, its retro pastel-colored wheel design or neat snap-to-close box sandwiched between lipstick and cell phone, keys and compact. It's easy to believe the assurances of the guests at the Pierre gala that the Pill holds the answers to empowerment and career success, to say nothing of sexual liberation—the ability to have sex in the same way that guys always have, without guilt, fear, or strings attached. The Pill is part of what makes one a modern woman, conferring adulthood and cool with the swipe of a doctor's pen.
>
> […]The fact is that the Pill, while giving women control of their bodies for the first time in history, allowed them to forget about the biological realities of being female until it was, in some cases, too late. It changed the narrative of women's lives, so that it was much easier to put off having children until all the fun had been had (or financial pressures lessened). Until the past couple of decades, even most die-hard feminists were still married at 25 and pregnant by 28, so they never had to deal with fertility problems, since a tiny percentage of women experience problems conceiving before the age of 28. Now many New York women have shifted their attempts at conception back about ten years. And the experience of trying to get pregnant at that age amounts to a new stage in women's lives, a kind of second adolescence. For many, this passage into childbearing—a Gail Sheehy–esque one, with its own secrets and rituals—is as fraught a time as the one before was carefree.
>
> Suddenly, one anxiety—Am I pregnant?—is replaced by another: Can I get pregnant? The days of gobbling down the Pill and running out to CVS at 3 a.m. for a pregnancy test recede in the distance, replaced by a new set of obsessions. The Pill didn't create the field of infertility medicine, but it turned it into an enormous industry. Inadvertently, indirectly, infertility has become the Pill's primary side effect.

I remember that this topic came up in Miriam Grossman's first book, where she was explaining how women spend the best years of their lives pursue degrees and money, and they have no idea how their fertility declines with age! It's really sad. Speaking as a man, I actually looked into how age would affect my ability to have children when I was in

my late 20s. It's sad that older women in the feminists movement think nothing of foisting all of these lies on younger women – and sadder still that younger women mostly don't understand how they are affected by these lies.

Articles like this really scratch where I itch as a person. Ever since I was a child, I always wanted to know how to live the next phase of my life – what would happen next, and how could I be ready. This is what's behind some of the decisions I've made that have protected me from danger. I actually spend a lot of time fretting about fretting about inflation and old age and so on, making plans and carrying them out. Part of it is learning about what I should value as a man – what will fulfill me. So often we don't pay attention to the traits conveyed by our distinct sex and think that we can undo our nature with drugs, and speculative blind-faith believing and so on – wishful thinking and hoping. But that's just foolishness. The world is the way it is and we are the way we are. God has made us all with certain desires and needs, and some of them are fairly fixed based on our sex.

How do environmental regulations affect the unemployment rate?

December 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s a short video that explains the problem. (H/T Reason to Stand)

Something to think about.

Is the practice of tithing binding on Christians?

December 6, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wes at Reason to Stand doesn't think that it is. He cites the Old Testament verses that are used to support tithing and explains why he doesn't think they are applicable to Christians.

Then he says this:

> Christ fulfills the requirements of the law in the NT. So for the same reason we no longer sacrifice animals on alters or consider buildings as sacred or see the Levitical priesthood as being in effect, we no longer tithe to support a theocratic system of government.
>
> […]the tithe has not been reinstituted in the NT. And yes, the tithe would have to be reinstituted since in the OT the tithe was given to a specific place (the temple) to specific people (the priests) under a theocratic system or partially independent Jewish state as the case is in the NT until about 90AD when they were eliminated as a sovereign or even semi-sovereign state.
>
> In the NT we are told that we are to give to the poor, the needy, etc. It may be the case that man-made organizations such as 501c3 non-profit businesses may do a good job of filling the needs of the poor and needy. However it is wrong to conflate the ekklesia or assembly of believers with either the temple of the OT (to which tithes were to be paid) or a building/man-made organization which is meant by most pastors who advocate tithing.
>
> Finally, in the NT we are told that our giving should not be under compulsion and in accordance with what we've decided in our hearts to give per 2 Corinthians 9:7. A tithe, by contrast stands directly opposed to this sentiment as it is both compulsory (Malachi 3:8-12) and it is a specified amount (Numbers 18:26).
>
> In the NT we are called to practice grace-based giving to those in need. While some may choose to give to organizations that can and often do meet the needs of those in need quite well, others don't. Neither, however, are sinning in how they choose to spend their money. However it is wrong to assert that the tithe is still in effect today. Especially when what we are supposedly tithing to is 1. not the temple and 2. often horribly mismanaged and/or spent almost exclusively on infrastructure (like props for the big show on Sunday morning).

I can tell you right now that I only do targeted giving for specific events that the church holds. The rest of my giving is to specific scholars and to build up other Christians who are doing good work with non-Christians.

How feminist groups skewed the Obama stimulus towards women's jobs

December 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christina Hoff Sommers

This Weekly Standard article is by Christina Hoff Sommers, an equity feminist who doesn't much care for third-wave (gender) feminists. (H/T Ari)

Excerpt:

> A "man-cession." That's what some economists are starting to call it. Of the 5.7 million jobs Americans lost between December 2007 and May 2009, nearly 80 percent had been held by men. Mark Perry, an economist at the University of Michigan, characterizes the recession as a "downturn" for women but a "catastrophe" for men.
>
> Men are bearing the brunt of the current economic crisis because they predominate in manufacturing and construction, the hardest-hit sectors, which have lost more than 3 million jobs since December 2007. Women, by contrast, are a majority in recession-resistant fields such as education and health care, which gained 588,000 jobs during the same period. Rescuing hundreds of thousands of unemployed crane operators, welders, production line managers, and machine setters was never going to be easy. But the concerted opposition of several powerful women's groups has made it all but impossible. Consider what just happened with the $787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.
>
> Last November, President-elect Obama addressed the devastation in the construction and manufacturing industries by proposing an ambitious New Deal-like program to rebuild the nation's infrastructure. He called for a two-year

> “shovel ready” stimulus program to modernize roads, bridges, schools, electrical grids, public transportation, and dams and made reinvigorating the hardest-hit sectors of the economy the goal of the legislation that would become the recovery act.
>
> Women’s groups were appalled. Grids? Dams? Opinion pieces immediately appeared in major newspapers with titles like “Where are the New Jobs for Women?” and “The Macho Stimulus Plan.” A group of “notable feminist economists” circulated a petition that quickly garnered more than 600 signatures, calling on the president-elect to add projects in health, child care, education, and social services and to “institute apprenticeships” to train women for “at least one third” of the infrastructure jobs. At the same time, more than 1,000 feminist historians signed an open letter urging Obama not to favor a “heavily male-dominated field” like construction: “We need to rebuild not only concrete and steel bridges but also human bridges.” As soon as these groups became aware of each other, they formed an anti-stimulus plan action group called WEAVE — Women’s Equality Adds Value to the Economy.
>
> The National Organization for Women (NOW), the Feminist Majority, the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, and the National Women’s Law Center soon joined the battle against the supposedly sexist bailout of men’s jobs. At the suggestion of a staffer to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, NOW president Kim Gandy canvassed for a female equivalent of the “testosterone-laden ‘shovel-ready’ ” terminology. (“Apron-ready” was broached but rejected.) Christina Romer, the highly regarded economist President Obama chose to chair his Council of Economic Advisers, would later say of her entrance on the political stage, “The very first email I got . . . was from a women’s group saying ‘We don’t want this stimulus package to just create jobs for burly men.’ ”
>
> […]Our incoming president did what many sensible men do when confronted by a chorus of female complaint: He changed his plan. He added health, education, and other human infrastructure components to the proposal. And he tasked Christina Romer and Jared Bernstein, Joseph Biden’s chief economist, with preparing an extraordinary report that calculated not only the number of jobs the plan would likely create, but the gender composition of the various employment sectors and the division of largess between women and men.
>
> Romer and Bernstein delivered “The Job Impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan” on January 10. They estimated that “the total number of created jobs likely to go to women is roughly 42 percent.” Lest anyone miss the point, they added that since women had held only 20 percent of the jobs lost in the recession, the stimulus package now “skews job creation somewhat towards women.”

Read the whole thing.

And ask yourself – how do men feel when women don’t want them to have their

traditional roles? How do *MEN* feel about it, not how do women feel. And what will men do when they cannot find jobs? Will they marry? Will they have children? There seems to be an outcry about global warming and recycling these days amongst women. Where is the outcry about men being discriminated against by schools dominated by female teachers? Where is the outcry among women when the number of incoming female college students is 60%? Or when the vast majority of jobs lost in the recession are lost by men?

Or do women prefer to not know the causes of the decline of men, and just to blame men without understanding the way the world really is, and the forces in play? I don't think that men are very happy to be blamed for a situation orchestrated by feminists. And when men aren't happy, men don't engage. They don't do what women expect. They retreat. They withdraw. Women cannot just act selfishly all their lives and expect men and children to just continue to please them as if they were robots – men and children are people, too.

Objective moral values and the Euthyphro dilemma

December 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post on this objection to objective morality from Reformed Seth.

Excerpt:

> What is another response from unbelievers? It's called the Euthyphro Dilemma (named after a character in of Plato's dialogues). The dilemma is: Is something good because God wills it? Or does God will something because it is good? This is a popular objection to the moral argument for God's existence. If you say something is good because God wills it, then that good becomes arbitrary. God could have willed that cheating is good or that hatred is good, etc. That doesn't work does it? If you say that God wills something because it is good, then that good becomes independent of God, which makes moral values and duties exist independently of God, which contradicts premise 1.
>
> How does Craig answer the Euthyphro dilemma? He says that "we don't need to refute either of the two horns of the dilemma because the dilemma is a false one: There's a third alternative, namely, God wills something because He is good…I mean God's own nature is the standard of goodness, and His commandments to us are expressions of His nature. In short, our moral duties are determined by the commands of a just and loving God."
>
> So according to Craig, moral values and duties don't exist independently of God because God's own character/nature defines what is good and those morals flow out of God's nature. When the atheist asks, "If God were to command spouse abuse, would we be obligated to abuse our spouses?" he's asking a question akin to "If there were married bachelors, who would the bachelor be married to?" There is no answer because the question is absurd.
>
> Craig assures us that the Euthyphro dilemma presents us with a false choice, and we shouldn't be tricked by it. "The morally good/bad is determined by God's nature, and the morally right/wrong is determined by His will. God wills something because He is good, and something is right because God wills it."

That response splits the horns of the dilemma.

Glenn Peoples has a paper and a podcast

I noticed that Glenn Peoples is good at responding to the Euthyphro dilemma. Glenn wrote an article (PDF here) that appeared in a Cambridge peer-reviewed journal. And he even did a podcast in case you don't want to read stuffy articles.

Here's the blurb about the paper:

> Plato's *Euthyphro* is widely thought to contain a knock down argument against theologically grounded ethics – widely thought, that is, outside of the field of philosophy of religion. The so-called *Euthyphro* dilemma is said to show that

> moral rightness cannot possibly consist in what God wills, but much of its success lies in the way the author was able to paint Euthyphro as the loser. Had Euthyphro been better informed and quicker on his feet, he would have won hands down – as he does in this revised version of the *Euthyphro* dialogue. A bit of philosophical fun – with a point. (Published in*Think: Philosophy for Everyone* 9:25 (2010).

Disclaimer: I believe in a soul, and Hell, and that the trinity is very important for being a Christian. Glenn thinks that humans don't have non-material souls, that people who reject Christ are annihilated after death and are not punished eternally, and that belief in the Trinity is not required in order to be saved.

William Lane Craig debates are fun

If you want to see the Euthyphro dilemma debated in front of a university audience then you can listen to the Craig-Antony debate here. (MP3)

That debate is being turned into a book as well.

UPDATE: Seth linked to a William Lane Craig podcast on Euthyphro.

Meet a small business owner – the enemy of Democrats

December 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s an interesting video. (H/T Ari)

See that guy? He’s your potential boss. Stop messing with this business and maybe he’ll hire you.

What is the cost of extending unemployment benefits?

December 7, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this piece in the Denver Post. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> **Businesses are being hit with large premium increases to prop up Colorado's broke unemployment-insurance fund.**
>
> **In notices that went out over the past two weeks, some firms are facing rates that have more than quadrupled from last year.**
>
> "I had to pick myself up off the floor after I opened the letter," said Linda Greene, owner of Westminster-based Merry Maids North. Her first-quarter premium for 2011 will be $2,200, compared with $497 a year earlier.
>
> "Money doesn't just fall out of the sky, so I'm going to have to totally rework my budget and hope for the best," said Greene, who employs 28 workers.
>
> The Colorado Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund covers the cost of payments to jobless workers. **Record numbers of unemployment claims caused the fund to go broke this year, forcing Colorado to borrow, so far, $368.5 million from the U.S. government.**
>
> **At least 40 other states also are borrowing from the federal government to cover their fund deficits.**
>
> Colorado's unemployment-benefit payments rose from $305 million in 2005 to $1.06 billion in 2009.
>
> …In prior years, firms that never had laid off workers had relatively low premiums.
>
> But for 2011, those businesses are facing big increases along with companies that have histories of layoffs.
>
> Colorado labor department executive director Don Mares said many companies with higher claims histories already are near the state's maximum rate of 5.4 percent of the first $10,000 a worker earns.
>
> As a result, businesses with low claims histories are being required to pay higher rates to make up the deficit.
>
> "This is a huge inequity," said Chuck Mock, owner of a Longmont-based software-consulting firm. "If you keep paying into the system and don't take anything out, that should be a good thing. But not in this case."

Wow. Could it be that it is these constant extensions of unemployment benefits that are scaring small businesses into not hiring anyone? Could it be that this is just another one

of Obama’s stealth tax hikes?

You can’t argue with the fact that Obama is the worst jobs President ever. Maybe it’s Obama’s *policies* that are causing the record unemployment. Maybe effects have causes. Maybe having an ACORN lawyer as President is not the best thing to do in a recession.

MUST-READ: Sweden jails father of child who was seized for being home-schooled

December 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Teacher Union Demanding Bigger Government

From an Alliance Defense Fund press release.

Excerpt:

> After seizing a child from his parents and holding him in custody with virtually no visitation for 1 1/2 years because he was home-schooled, the Swedish government has now jailed the boy's father for taking his son home from a supervised visitation when he wasn't supposed to last week. Social services officials also told the 9-year-old boy's mother that if she doesn't stop crying at the limited visitations, which last for one hour every five to six weeks, they will further reduce the frequency of visits with her son.
>
> After Swedish courts upheld the government's right to seize Domenic Johansson, son of Christer and Annie Johansson, attorneys with the Alliance Defense Fund and the Home School Legal Defense Association filed an application with the European Court of Human Rights asking it to hear the case, *Johansson v. Sweden*. Swedish authorities will not permit the family to be represented within the country by an ADF-allied attorney and have instead required them to accept a government-appointed public defender.
>
> "The government shouldn't abduct and imprison children simply because it doesn't like homeschooling. That's exactly what happened here," said ADF Legal Counsel Roger Kiska, who is based in Europe. "Despite the ill-advised decision on the part of Mr. Johansson, the only menace here is a government drunk with its own power. This sad circumstance is what happens when an over-powerful government pushes a parent to the point of desperation, so social services should not pretend to be surprised."
>
> "The parents complied with everything expected of them, and yet the government has continued to keep their son under lock and key," Kiska added. "Americans beware: This is coming to your doorstep if you are not vigilant

> about your government."
>
> Swedish authorities forcibly removed Domenic from his parents in June 2009 from a plane they had boarded to move to Annie's home country of India. The officials did not have a warrant nor did they charge the Johanssons with any crime. The officials seized the child because they believe home schooling is an inappropriate way to raise a child and insist the government should raise Domenic instead, even though home-schooling was legal in Sweden at the time he was taken into custody.

The Democrat party, and all secular leftist parties, are opposed to the idea of parents raising their own children because it offends their sense of "equality". The left desires equality of outcomes for all citizens regardless of how they act. And that means that all children should receive state care and instruction during daylight hourse, virtually from the time they are born until the time when they become employed (hopefully by the government). The left is especially terrified of homeschooling, because in that arrangement, the parents, (and especially the father), are able to teach the child to have the beliefs that the parents prefer. The left is allied with teacher unions who have educated themselves to the point where they believe that parents are not their *partners* in educating children, but instead are *enemies.*

Homeschooling versus fascism

A common thread in fascist regimes is the effort to separate children from parents at a young age, so that adult teachers can impose the state's values on the children when they are least able to resist them. That is why, accoring to the Guardian, the National Socialist party abolished homeschooling in fascist Germany in 1938. (A review of Goldberg's book by Canadian author Denyse O'Leary is here). My favorite quote from Goldberg's book is about the role of government-run schools in a fascist state:

> Hence a phalanx of progressive reformers saw the home as the front line in the war to transform men into compliant social organs. Often the answer was to get the children out of the home as soon as possible. An archipelago of agencies, commissions, and bureaus sprang up overnight to take the place of the anti-organic, contra-evolutionary influences of the family. The home could no longer be seen as an island, separate and sovereign from the rest of society. John Dewey helped create kindergartens in American for precisely this purpose — to help shape the apples before they fell from the tree — while at the other end of the educational process stood reformers like Wilson, who summarized the progressive attitude perfectly when, as president of Princeton, he told an audience, "Our problem is not merely to help the students to adjust themselves to world life … [but] to make them as unlike their fathers as possible."

The United States is also heading in this direction. In Democrat-run California, Human Events reported that homeschooling was effectively banned by an activist court. Christian apologist Dinesh D'Souza recently explained why the left is so intent on keeping control

of the schools here. He notes that secular people do not form families and do not have children, because it is too much of a constraint on their autonomy. Instead, D'Souza writes, secularists simply seize control of the children of religious parents, and pass their values on to the children in the mandatory government-run schools.

Christians and the secular left

Some people, even some Christians, vote for Democrats because they don't want to have to pay for the things they want by working themselves, but would prefer to pay for the the things they want by having their harder-working neighbors pay for the things they want. Parents who vote for leftists are really just delivering their children into the hands of an ever growing secular humanist educational bureaucracy that will have no respect – *no respect* – for the traditional family. And this is even worse for Christians, because the traditional family is the nursery for Christian beliefs. When a child has to please his peers and his public school indoctrinators more than his parents, Christianity is finished.

This is something that the church is largely ignorant of, and indifferent to, because they are more focused on providing feelings of happiness to their customers. The church does this by neglecting the truthfulness of Christianity as a knowledge tradition and emphasizing Christianity as an amusing musical show. Apologetics is replaced by entertainment.

Related posts

- Sweden seizes child and arrest parents for spanking
- Sex education for kindergarteners in Montana
- Dennis Prager explains the conflict between parents and the state
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Public school teachers in Buffalo spent 9 million on cosmetic surgery in 2009
- Why school choice promotes good and restrains evil
- Socialist Sweden tightens laws against homeschooling
- Battle escalates over homeschooled child seized by Swedish government
- Public schools hand out condoms to 5-year olds without parental consent
- LA students to be taught that AZ immigration law is un-American
- Public school bus driver blasts little girl for discussing Christianity
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power

- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

Do leading evolutionists think that evolution is compatible with God?

December 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a post from Jerry Coyne's blog: http://whyevolutionistrue.wordpress.com/2010/07/17/selective-creationists/. (H/T Retha from Christian Rethinker)

Coyne is a radical atheist and evolutionist. And he is also a very prominent biologist.

He writes:

> Only a tad more than one in four teachers really accepts evolution as scientists conceive of it: a naturalistic process undirected by divine beings. Nearly one in two teachers thinks that humans evolved but that God guided the process.
>
> Can we count those 48% of "guided-by-Godders" 0n our side? I agree with P. Z.: the answer is NO. Yes, they do accept that our species changed genetically over time, but they see God as having pulled the strings. That's not the way evolution works. The graph labels these 48% as believers in intelligent design, and that's exactly what they are, for they see God as nudging human evolution toward some preconceived goal. We're *designed*. These people are creationists: *selective* creationists.
>
> To count them as allies means we make company with those who accept evolution in a superficial sense but reject it in the deepest sense. After all, the big revolution in thought wrought by Darwin was the recognition that the appearance of design—thought for centuries to be proof of God—could stem from purely natural processes. When we cede human evolution to God, then, we abandon that revolution. That's why I see selective creationists like Kenneth Miller, Karl Giberson and Francis Collins as parting company with modern biological thought.

Just to let you know, Ken Miller and Francis Collins do not think that science can perform experiments and detect that an intelligent cause is the best explanation for some effect in nature. They are committed to explaining every effect in nature as the result of natural processes, before they ever sit down in front of a microscope to look and see. That is their faith commitment – naturalism. I.e. – God didn't do anything in nature that we can know about using objective measuring.

Theistic evolution versus atheism

Who was the foremost evangelical proponent of theistic evolution? Well, one of them was Howard Van Till of Calvin College. Why do I say "was"? Take a look at this event he did for a FREETHOUGHT group a while back.

Excerpt:

> FROM CALVINISM TO FREETHOUGHT: The Road Less Traveled
> by Howard J. Van Till
>
> Professor of Physics and Astronomy, Emeritus
> Calvin College
> Presented 5/24/2006 for the Freethought Association of West Michigan
> Lightly edited 5/26/2006
>
> Precis: Born into a Calvinist family, shaped by a Calvinist catechism training, educated in the Calvinist private school system, and nurtured by a community that prized its Calvinist systematic theology, I was a Calvinist through and through. For 31 years my
> teaching career was deeply rooted in the Calvinism I had inherited from my community.
>
> During most of that time it was a fruitful and satisfying experience. Nonetheless, stimulated in part by the manner in which some members of that community responded to my efforts to practice what I had learned from my best teachers, I eventually felt the need to extend my intellectual exploration into philosophical territories far outside the one provided by Calvinism. Did I complete the lengthy journey from Calvinism to Freethought? The listener will be the judge.

Freethought is atheism, by the way.

I think that either God can interfere or he can't. Theistic evolutionists and atheists think that he can't intervene – at least not in a way that is independent of "faith" – by which they mean blind belief ungrounded by evidence. What theistic evolutionists are really saying is that God interferes where we can't test in a lab (the resurrection), and he doesn't interfere in the area that they can test in a lab (science). This allows them to appease their wives and churches with pronunciations of orthodox *beliefs* (of course I believe in miracles, honey), and also to appease their scientific colleagues (God didn't do anything that we can know objectively). Well. Isn't that convenient for them AND THEIR CAREERS as scientists?

Megyn Kelly and Michele Bachmann on the Bush tax cut deal

December 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this on Michele's Facebook page.

There is a strange gap in the video for a couple of seconds near the beginning. But who cares? It's Michele Bachmann! You better watch it!!!

A sober assessment of the pros and cons. Should the Republicans have cut this deal?

Do “tax cuts for the rich” have a track record of creating jobs?

December 8, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Can complaining about “the rich” create more jobs than passing across-the-board tax cuts?

Let’s see what the record shows.

Excerpt:

> Why do we seem so helpless in solving our current mess? A big reason is the shocking lack of basic economic literacy among many of our political leaders. Case in point: Ohio Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown.
>
> Brown ripped into GOP Rep. Eric Cantor, saying he “either failed English class or failed logic class or failed history class because these tax cuts for the rich that Bush did twice … resulted in very little economic growth. We saw only 1 million jobs created in the Bush years, 22 million created in the Clinton years, when we reached a balanced budget with a fairer tax system.”
>
> This is false. From 2002, the last year before the cuts, to 2007, the last year before the financial meltdown, the real economy expanded by $1.77 trillion, or 15.2%. “Very little” growth? Jobs increased by 7.77 million, business investment surged 38%, and personal net worth soared 56%. Brown is wrong on every point.
>
> Yes, gross domestic product did fall sharply in 2008 as the financial meltdown hit. But no reputable economist maintains the financial panic was a result of the Bush tax cuts.

No, the declines in the economy are to be blamed on Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid, who were running the House and Senate starting in January 2007. It was their ballgame from that point on.

More:

> Laughably, Brown talks about how “we” reached a balanced budget during the Clinton years. What do you mean “we,” senator? Since budgets are written and passed by Congress, and only approved by the president, Brown must know that it was Republicans who balanced the budget — not Democrats.
>
> That’s right, a GOP-led Congress controlled the spending that led to the surpluses of the late 1990s. It also proposed welfare reform and pushed through cap-gains tax cuts that helped the economy boom. To his credit, President Clinton signed these initiatives into law — but only after much political arm-twisting.
>
> […]He went on to say: “There is no real history illustrating that these tax cuts for the rich result in jobs. It’s extending unemployment benefits that creates economic activity that creates jobs, not giving a millionaire an extra … $30,000

> in tax cuts they likely won't spend."
>
> "No real history"? Taxes were cut on high-income earners in the 1920s (Coolidge), 1960s (Kennedy), 1980s (Reagan) and again in the 2000s (Bush). These cuts benefited the rich and everyone else. In all these cases, jobs boomed after tax cuts. In fact, history shows that the best way to boost jobs is to cut taxes on the rich.

Democrats don't know how to create jobs. They think that taxing and regulating businesses causes businesses to create jobs. It's like if government walked up to a runner at the start line, stole his sneakers (taxes) and put a backpack full of dirt (regulations) on his back, and then told him to run *faster*. Having less money after taxes = *fewer jobs*. Spending more time complying with regulation = less time for running your business = *fewer jobs.* The Democrat policies make no sense, except to people with limited real life experience working in the private sector or running a business of their own.

How well do pro-tithing people perform in debates?

December 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was having a debate with pro-tithing people and I asked them whether they thought that pastors today were providing good value for the money they demanded from parishioners. In particular, I told them that at a bare minimum, a Christian pastor ought to KNOW whether God exists and KNOW whether Jesus rose from the dead. If the pastor doesn't know these things, then how is his flock supposed to KNOW these things and so by knowing them and knowing them to be *true*, take the final step of trusting in them?

I wrote this:

> It seems to me that Christianity requires the existence of a Creator and Designer of the universe as a matter of knowledge. (that they may know FOR CERTAIN that there is a God in Israel). Please tell me some of the initiatives that pastors you know have taken in order to supply the laity with KNOWLEDGE of the existence of a supernatural creator as a matter of objective knowledge, not subjective belief.
>
> The resurrection must also be KNOWN to be a real, objective historical even in order to sustain a robust Christian worldview. Please list some initiatives that pastors have spearheaded to encourage the laity to know the bodily resurrection of Jesus as a historical fact, and to defend against critics ranging from scholarly to popular. In your reply, be sure to reference their leveraging of scholars like Gary Habermas, William Lane Craig, Ben Witherington, Mike Licona, N.T. Wright and Richard Bauckham, which I am sure that most pastors are familiar with. I am especially interested in hearing about pastors who have shown our scholars in formal debates on this resurrection topic in the church, from the pulpit, as was done in Acts 2 by Peter in the early church.
>
> Also, there is a think out there called the New Atheism. Please list some initiatives that pastors you know have taken to equip their flocks to understand and respond to that as well.

And then we got responses from the pro-tithing people.

Well, there was a refusal to answer, ridicule, laughter, personal attacks, accusations of heresy, etc. No one would answer whether pastors were doing their jobs. (A different debater was in charge of asking them whether tithing was Biblical or not, and they just attacked his character over and over and over). Mostly, people completely dodged the question about whether pastors had to *do anything useful* in order to deserve the money they were demanding.

Then a pastor responded to me:

> As for @Wintery, not sure why you think I'm required to humble myself to your demands. I don't know you and don't feel the need to defend myself or the Lord against you.

> I leave you with this from Titus 3:9-11
> But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

He has to know me, otherwise he doesn't have to answer my questions. Otherwise, I'm not worth his time.

This pastor reminds me of a unionized public school teacher. He wants his money whether he performs his duty or not, and if you question whether he is performing his duty, he distorts your words and dismisses you. A person could attend his church for 40 years and not know anything at all about whether the Bible was reliable, whether God exists, whether the universe shows signs of being designed, whether there is a good response to why God allows evil, whether Hell is unjust, whether all religions are true, whether God has a reason for remaining hidden, whether miracles are possible, etc. He doesn't have to know anything about those kinds of questions, apparently. He just has to collect money and threaten people who don't pay him with God's wrath. Nice work if you can get it.

Yes there is a place for theology and preaching from the Bible. But shouldn't we be presented with some reasons to believe that there *is* a God, before we find out what he is like? Shouldn't we have some reasons to *think* that the Bible is reliable, before using it as an authority? What does it say about the Bible that we treat it as untestable? What does that say that we cannot ask questions in church without having the worship leader try to cast demons out of us?

Maybe I was being harsh but I just want to know why pastors have very definite convictions about people giving them money, but no definite convictions on whether God exists or not, or whether Jesus rose from the dead or not. I am not the nicest most tactful person in the world, but pastors have usually been opposed to what I think is important, so I want to know why I should pay them instead of using the money to bring in a Christian scholar to defend the reliability of the Bible or the resurrection at a university instead. What's the value proposition for me as someone who is looking to serve God?

There are non-Christians in my office are always telling me about Joel Osteen and preachers they see on TV. When I say that the Bible doesn't sanction that, they tell me that I ought to go into the ministry. I say "why?" and they respond "because you actually think that Christianity is true and you try to tell use why instead of just asking us for money all the time."

Some pastors have *no clue* how they look to non-Christians.

My last comment was really mean:

> So you haven't done anything to equip your flock to defend the existence of God as an objective fact, or to defend the resurrection of Jesus as an objective event

> in history.
>
> But you want your flock to pay you a mandatory 10% of their… gross income.
>
> What exactly do you think that Christians ought to do in the face of a non-Christian culture that rejects the existence of God and the resurrection of Jesus? What did Paul do in Acts 17 and Peter in Acts 2? What did Jesus do with "the sign of Jonah"? How about some evidence?
>
> Do you care whether people in your church KNOW that God exists the way they KNOW that water boils at 100 Celsius? Do you care whether people in your church KNOW that Jesus rose from the dead the way they KNOW that who won the battle of Waterloo?
>
> And what about the people outside the church? Does God care whether you prepare your flock to deal with them?
>
> You seem to not want to answer these questions… yet you want to have people pay you. What exactly is it that you do? Do you know whether these things you talk about on Sunday are true? Are you able to show them to be true so that your flock can trust in them?

There is only one thing that causes me to lose my temper and it's leaders in the church who prefer to be lazy, ignorant and cowardly rather than being effective.

And yes, there are good churches where they do amazing things – Lee Strobel Bible studies, showing Bill Craig debates, inviting Christian scholars to lecture and debate at the university and teach classes to the flock. Yes – it happens. It doesn't happen *enough*.

Paul Copan interviewed on the hard passages of the Old Testament

December 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How would you respond to all of the troubling stories in the Old Testament, (conquest, slavery, etc.), and the characterizations of God as jealous and angry and vengeful? Paul Copan has written a new book on those topics and more.

From the Evangelical Philosophical Society blog. (H/T Mary)

What surprising thing did he learn while researching the book?

> Surprising—and yet not surprising—is the fact that the more deeply I dug into understanding the ancient Near East, the more the biblical text made sense and the more favorable it looked in comparison to other relevant texts in the ancient Near East. For example, the strong bravado and exaggeration typical of ancient Near East war texts ("leaving alive nothing that breathed") was used even when lots of the enemy were left standing and breathing! What's more, Israel's warfare—directed at non-combatants in citadels or fortresses ("cities")—is tame in comparison to other ancient Near Eastern accounts of, say, the Assyrians. As far as servitude ("slavery") goes, this was voluntary and contractual rather than forced (unless Israel was dealing with, say, hostile foreign POWs who might be pressed into service to cut wood and carry water). Yet Israel's laws prohibited (a) kidnapping, (b) returning runaway (foreign) slaves to their masters, and (c) injuring servants. If these three Mosaic regulations were observed during by Western colonial powers, slavery would not have emerged and the nineteenth-century history of the United States would have looked much different.

What kinds of questions will people who read the book be able to answer?

> While I can't cover all the territory I would like in this book, I try to address the range of topics that are most pressing and most frequently raised by the critics. Part I deals with the phenomenon of the New Atheists and their arguments—and their case against the "Old Testament God." In fact, as you can see in the table of contents below, I use their quotations as my chapter headings! In Part II, I deal with issues related to the nature of God: Is God narcissistic? Why should God get jealous? How could God command Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?
>
> Part III looks at life in the ancient Near East and how Israel's laws look in comparison to those of other ancient Near Eastern cultures. I maintain, first, that while many of Israel's laws are not ideal (human hard-heartedness is part of the problem, as Matthew 19:8 indicates), they are generally a significant humanizing improvement over other ancient Near Eastern cultures. God meets his people where they are—with their embedded, fallen moral and social patterns—but he challenges them to greater moral and spiritual heights. Then I go on to address

> topics like Israel's kosher and purity laws, its civil laws and punishments, the treatment of women in Israel, slavery (or better "servitude") in Israel (and I extend the discussion to include the New Testament), then finally the question of Canaanite "genocide" (which it most certainly is not!) and of whether "religion" produces violence.
>
> **In Part IV, I argue that the biblical God serves as the basis for objective moral values and that atheists borrow the metaphysical grounding for human dignity and rights from a theistic worldview in which God makes human beings in his image.** Finally, I refer to the role of Jesus Christ as the fulfiller of the Old Testament, who illuminates the Old Testament and puts it into proper perspective. Moreover, his followers, when living consistently with his teachings, have actually made a remarkable moral impact on the world which scholars in both the East and the West, both Christian and non-Christian, acknowledge.

If some of you are following my debates on Facebook, then you know that I am using this argument against one of the atheists I am currently debating on the topic of spanking. Never, ever let an atheist get away with making moral statements. Moral statements are meaningless in an atheistic universe.

Paul Copan's new book might be worth picking up because I don't have anything on that topic. Not many people ask me questions like that, but maybe that's God's grace since I would not be able to answer them well anyway. Usually when I read something, he sometimes gives me that question from someone the very same week. It's very interesting when this happens. But that's what I mean when I say relationship with God. I mean we work together.

By the way, if you are looking for some good apologetics books for Christmas, take a look at this list at Apologetics 315.

Please pray for my friend who has suffered an injury

December 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hey all. WK here. I was wondering if you guys could take a moment for a friend of mine who is a deist. He was doing some constructive physical labor in a good cause, and he hurt his leg by accident.

Here are some points you may want to touch on in your praying.

- that the injury is not to serious and doesn't get any worse
- that he has wisdom in knowing how best to handle the injury's treatment
- that his livelihood is not adversely impacted by the injury
- that the treatment works and that his leg heals quickly
- that he is patient and endures his suffering while maintaining his good character
- that he receives care and compassion from the people around him
- that God would use this difficult experience to draw my friend towards him

I wanted to post the Psalm that I have always turned to, as far back as my childhood.

Psalm 27

[1] The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?

[2] When the wicked advance against me
to devour me,
it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.

[3] Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.

[4] One thing I ask from the LORD,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.

[5] For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock.

[6] Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

[7] Hear my voice when I call, LORD;
be merciful to me and answer me.

[8] My heart says of you, “Seek his face!”
Your face, LORD, I will seek.

[9] Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.
Do not reject me or forsake me,
God my Savior.

[10] Though my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will receive me.

[11] Teach me your way, LORD;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.

[12] Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
spouting malicious accusations.

[13] I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.

[14] Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.

Keep this one in mind when you are feeling down, but please pray for my friend today.

Canada suffering from extreme cold weather

December 9, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

From the Montreal Gazette.

Excerpt:

> Weary London, in southwestern Ontario, caught the worst of a blast of stormy weather that has been battering large parts of Canada this week.
>
> From the West Coast, where 100 to 180 millimetres of rain was forecast for parts of British Columbia, to the north and Quebec where blizzard conditions were expected, to the Maritimes where residents are cleaning up after high winds and heavy rain caused major flooding Monday, Canada is waking up to a reminder that winter is here — even if the calendar says two weeks remain before its official arrival.
>
> “It’s been a busy 48 hours,” Fontana said Tuesday.
>
> The blast of lake effect snow centred on London “started Sunday night and then (Monday) was bad, today is bad and (Wednesday) doesn’t look any better,” he said.
>
> It’s “as much as, practically, we had all of last winter. Every time we get some stuff cleared . . . we just get slammed again.”
>
> […]Elsewhere, up to 70 to 110 millimetres of rain was expected for Metro Vancouver, the Howe Sound and the Sunshine Coast through Wednesday, according to Environment Canada.
>
> Rainfall amounts of 100 to 180 millimetres were forecast for parts of Vancouver Island through Wednesday.
>
> More than a 1,000 workers were out on Montreal streets Tuesday clearing snow following a storm that dumped 20 centimetres and was expected to add another five during the day with high winds blowing snow and making the cleanup more

> complicated.
>
> Traffic was moving at a crawl on some highways and roadways in the Montreal region Tuesday morning.
>
> High winds and blowing snow were keeping visibility low on the province’s highways, according to Transport Quebec spokesman Denis Arsenault.
>
> In southern Quebec, wind mixed with snow was forecast to produce generalized blowing snow or blizzard conditions Tuesday, and a blizzard warning was in effect for Nunavut, where Eureka was the country’s coldest spot Tuesday morning, reaching a temperature of -42.4 C.

It’s global warming! We all need to stop driving our cars right now and purchase carbon offsets from Al Gore.

Sometimes good intentions meet unintended consequences

December 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A funny video from those crazy libertarians. (H/T Ari)

We should avoid making decisions on the basis of wanting to feel good about ourselves, because it can harm the very people we say we want to help. The right thing to do is to consider the consequences for ALL parties involved in a policy.

Angus Menuge on methodological materialism and the search for truth

December 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Angus Menuge

Methodological materialism is the view that requires scientists to explain everything they observe in nature using material causes and never intelligent causes.

And now, from the Evangelical Philosophical Society blog, an article entitled "Is methodological materialism good for science?". The article is written by Dr. Angus Menuge, whom I wrote about before.

Intro:

> Should science by governed by methodological materialism? That is, should scientists assume that only undirected causes can figure in their theories and explanations? If the answer to these questions is yes, then there can be no such thing as teleological science or intelligent design. But is methodological materialism a defensible approach to science, or might it prevent scientists from discovering important truths about the natural world? In my contribution to The Waning of Materialism (OUP, 2010), edited by Robert Koons and George Bealer, I consider twelve of the most common arguments in favor of methodological materialism and show that none of them is convincing.
>
> Of these arguments, perhaps the most prevalent is the "God of the gaps" charge, according to which invoking something other than a material cause is an argument from ignorance which, like a bad script writer, cites a *deus ex machina* to save our account from difficulty. Not only materialists, but also many Christian thinkers, like Francis Collins, worry that appeal to intelligent design commits the God of the gaps fallacy.
>
> As I argue, however, not only is an inference to an intelligent cause not the same as an inference to the supernatural, it is a mistake to assume that all gap

> arguments are bad, or that only theists make them. If a gap argument is based solely on ignorance of what might explain some phenomenon, then indeed it is a bad argument. But there are many good gap arguments which are made both by scientific materialists and proponents of intelligent design.

So how do you make an argument like that?

> As Stephen Meyer has argued in his *Signature in the Cell*, intelligent design argues in just the same way, claiming not merely that the material categories of chance and necessity (singly or in combination) are unable to explain the complex specified information in DNA, but also that in our experience, intelligent agents are the only known causes of such information. The argument is based on what we know about causal powers, not on what we do not know about them.
>
> Since the inference is based on known causal powers, we learn that the cause is intelligent, but only further assumptions or data can tell us whether that intelligence is immanent in nature or supernatural. It is a serious mistake to confuse intelligent design with theistic science, and the argument that since some proponents of design believe that the designer is God, that is what they are claiming can be inferred from the data, is a sophomoric intensional fallacy.

Basically, you identify what material processes have been OBSERVED to be capable of, and then you show that the effect you are trying to explain is beyond the reach of those powers. For example, think of a Scrabble board left alone in a locked room with an open window from morning till evening. It's summer, so the air conditioner is working hard all day. If you come home and enter the room and find a sentence on the Scrabble game board that says "IF YOU LEAVE YOUR WINDOWS OPEN THEN YOU PAY HIGHER ELECTRICITY BILLS" then does it make more sense to attribute that effect to the wind, or to an intelligent intruder?

If you are a materialist, then you can only appeal to matter, chance and time (and not much time, too). By ruling out intelligence, you are really confining yourself to an obviously wrong answer. But suppose you came home and found that that the tiles were scattered all over the board and on the floor and the only sequences spelled out "AN" and "ZYKDSFGOJD". I think a better inference there is that the wind blew the bag open made a couple of nonsense sequences. Of course the idea that wind could blow open a bag of Scrabble letters at all is very unlikely, but if you rule out intelligence, that's all you have left, no matter how strained the inference. You have to believe nonsense.

But what about the design theorist who can rule nonsense out as impossible? Well he hits on the correct explanation of the effect – intelligence.

As the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes says:

> "When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

But if an intelligent design theorist comes along and rules out material causes as an

explanation of the effect by showing that the effect is beyond the reach of matter, time and chance, then the explanation of intelligence must be, however improbably, true. The important thing is to rule out materialism *by evaluating what material causes can do*. We don't want to rule it out by pre-supposition, because that's what the naturalists do when they rule out intelligence as an explanation. Ruling things out by pre-supposition is how you get wrong answers to questions. Everything has to be on the table that we have experienced. And every human knows what it is to sequence Scrabble letters into meaningful words and phrases

By the way, the publisher of the book, OUP, is Oxford University Press. Angus Menuge doesn't mess around.

How do governments control costs in a single-payer health care systems?

December 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Take a look at what a new study shows about UK's National Health Service. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Financial pressures may mean junior doctors are not given training posts within the NHS and the overall number of places at medical school could drop, a report has said.

> This is despite extra burdens on the health service, including European rules limiting doctors' hours, more hospital admissions and people living longer than ever before, according to the study from the UK Royal Colleges of Physicians (RCP).
>
> Those specialties dedicated to looking after very ill people are facing particular strain, it said.
>
> Dr Andrew Goddard, RCP director of medical workforce, said the combination of factors was 'adding further stress to a system which may reach breaking point within the next few years'.
>
> In 2009, the number of consultant posts created across the UK increased by 10.2 per cent.
>
> However, financial pressures on the NHS mean that rise may not continue and there are 'growing fears' of a lack of training posts for young doctors.
>
> Dr Goddard said: "We have already seen a drop in the number of new posts being advertised in 2010, and although we have enough doctors in training to develop a consultant-delivered NHS, these doctors need to have jobs to go into if this service is to be realised."
>
> The latest study comes after the RCP in England warned last week of patients being left in the hands of junior doctors because of inadequate consultant cover on weekends.

And here's how it works out in Canada, which is a pure single-payer system – the kind that Democrats want to enact here in the USA.

Excerpt:

> It's no surprise to Thelma Lee that emergency room wait times are not meeting provincial targets.
>
> Lee said her 41-year-old daughter, Marlene Stephens, died Saturday after waiting nearly 90 minutes at the William Osler Health Centre's Etobicoke campus emergency room with breathing problems.

> Lee feels her daughter was not seen fast enough by medical staff.
>
> "They didn't touch her," said the grieving Lee. "She was crying out, 'I can't breathe, I can't breathe'. . . Nobody attended to my daughter."
>
> On Monday, Auditor General Jim McCarter released his annual report which found that despite putting an extra $200 million into shortening emergency room wait times over the last two years, "significant province-wide progress has not yet been made."
>
> "Complaints about overcrowding and delays in hospital emergency rooms have persisted for years," McCarter told a news conference on Monday.
>
> Emergency room waits for people with serious conditions sometimes reached 12 hours or more, the report said. That is far greater than the province's 8-hour wait time target, the report found.
>
> And for emergency patients who need a hospital bed, they waited on average for about 10 hours but some waited 26 hours or more, according to the 2010 Annual Report.
>
> "Our audit found that wait times for patients with less serious ailments have been reduced somewhat," McCarter said. "However, there has been only minimal progress in reducing wait times for patients with more serious conditions."

If this woman had offered to *BUY* her own health care in Canada, she would have been *ARRESTED*. That's "equality" in a socialist system. Everyone has an equal right to scream in agony while waiting in line for a doctor. And the most productive people have the additional joy of shoveling half of their salaries into the coffers of bureaucrats to waste on expensive family vacations at taxpayer expense.

In fact, the provincial government of Ontario is very busy right now trying to push a gay rights curriculum onto grade 1 students (and up) in public and private schools – that's what they do with the money that Canadians are forced to pay them – they BUY VOTES FROM LIBERAL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS SO THEY CAN GET RE-ELECTED. They don't have money for *health care*. They have their hands full with *social engineering*.

When you give the government your money, it's theirs to spend on whatever they want – *while you die on an emergency room floor*. When you keep your money in your own pocket, you get to use it to buy whatever you want – *including life-saving medical care*.

And do you know where the Liberal Ontario bureaucrats go when they need health care? The United States of America! Dying is for the plebians – the elites go to the capitalist health care system down south. Equality for thee, not for me.

Do not vote for secular leftists – if you value your life – DO NOT DO IT.

Jeffrey Simon on Calvinism, free will and moral responsibility

December 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spent some time last night chatting with some of my readers on Facebook, and Jeffrey Simon was one. He wrote this essay on Calvinism versus Molinism which I thought was good enough to post. I am in agreement with Jeffrey on this issue, BUT I did include some debates featuring Calvinist James White at the bottom of the post. I just wanted to present an excerpt from his essay that makes a point that I thought would get lots of responses from Calvinists. Jeffrey is *quite* aggressive.

The essay is here, but you have to be his friend in order to see it.

Excerpt:

When harmonizing man's perspective and God's perspective, the Calvinist embraces what is known as theological fatalism. They redefine free will and embrace compatibilism. Essentially compatibilism says that determinism and free will are compatible, hence the name compatibilism. In the same way that the wind blowing causes the trees to move, our desires and environment produce an effect which would be our action. When we make a decision, we could not have chosen otherwise. The Calvinist likes to say that we choose according to our greatest desire. This would explain how God is in control of everything and more specifically our salvation. How does God ensure the salvation of certain individuals? He changes their desires so they will freely choose Him. This brings up an objection though. If God desires that all are saved (1 Tim 2.4) and does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked (Eze. 33.11) and God "can save all whom He chooses to save", then why are not all saved? The Calvinist responds by making a distinction in God's will. While it is God's revealed will and desire [thelo] that all men are saved, it is not His decreed will [boulomai] that all will be saved. Essentially, God desires that all are saved and has a general love for the reprobate, but He has predestined them to Hell because His will [boulomai] trumps His desires [thelo]. Within Calvinism, there is a smaller section that claims regeneration logically precedes faith. Because we are "dead" in our sin, we must be made alive or regenerated before believing. How can a dead man believe and make himself alive? In the same way that Lazarus was commanded to be raised from physical death, we are commanded to be made alive (through regeneration) from our spiritual death.

In my estimation, the main problem with Calvinism is that it embraces a causally deterministic system. How can we freely make decisions yet God determined them for us? It is not a mystery, but rather a contradiction. In fact, at this point Calvinists are in agreement with naturalists because nearly all naturalists embrace compatibilism or determinism due to the fact that naturalism implies physicalism or materialism. Now, imagine reading through the Bible with the idea that free will does not exist. It is rather dizzying to imagine such a thing! Dr. William Lane Craig sums it up nicely when he says,

”Universal, divine, causal determinism cannot offer a coherent interpretation of Scripture. The classical Reformed divines recognized this. They acknowledge that the reconciliation of Scriptural texts affirming human freedom and contingency with Scriptural texts affirming divine sovereignty is inscrutable. D. A. Carson identifies nine streams of texts affirming human freedom: (1) People face a multitude of divine exhortations and commands, (2) people are said to obey, believe, and choose God, (3) people sin and rebel against God, (4) people’s sins are judged by God, (5) people are tested by God, (6) people receive divine rewards, (7) the elect are responsible to respond to God’s initiative, (8) prayers are not mere showpieces scripted by God, and (9) God literally pleads with sinners to repent and be saved (Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension, pp. 18-22). These passages rule out a deterministic understanding of divine providence, which would preclude human freedom” (The Only Wise God).

If God has determined our every thought and action, yet those nine things hold true, then it turns the Bible into a charade. How can anything be expected of us if we can’t make decisions? In response to this, the Calvinist may say “so what”. It may violate our fallen sense of justice, but God can do as “He pleases and no one can hold back His hand or say to Him: ‘What have You done?’” (Dan 4.35). God can determine us to do immoral things and hold us responsible because He is God. In fact, in the Book of Acts when Peter and John are talking about Christ’s crucifixion, they say that God “anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever His hand and His purpose predestined to occur.” Even though God predestined them to crucify Christ, they were held responsible. While this is *possible* it surely does not seem *plausible*. Turning to the book of Judges, for example, we would find ourselves asking why God determined Israel’s rebellion so many times. One only has to retort, so God is the author of evil, then? If I were to pick up a stick and use it to move a rock, what moved the rock? Technically the stick moved the rock; however, no one would say that. I moved the rock by picking up the stick and using it. It is no different with God. Surely those men crucified Christ, but it was really God behind the scenes. This intrudes upon the holiness of God because He cannot stand sin (Psalm 5.4) and cannot even tempt man (Jas 1.13) yet alone causally determine evil. Continuing, let’s take this causally deterministic system and God’s will as described by Calvinists to its logical conclusion. First of all, as I just mentioned, the biggest problem is that God becomes the author of evil. Second of all, there can be no “well-meant offer” of the Gospel to all persons if God has determined their destruction in hell. In regards to God’s will, a better way, I think, to understand it would be that while God desires all men to be saved, His will is to save those who believe. This does well with texts that say that God desires that all men are saved (1 Timothy 2:4) and does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11) (and it also does not make God look hypocritical). There are numerous texts where God exhorts people to believe, yet they reject Him. For example, in Isaiah 5 God is disappointed with Israel because of their continuous sin and He asks what more could He have done for them. God had provided all the means for godly living, yet Israel rejected

Him. Why would God waste His time with people whom He predestined to Hell and had no chance of salvation? Also, if it's God's "secret" will to save some and damn some, then how can anyone know about it?

Is there anyone on the Calvinist side reading this who can explain how people can be responsible for sinning if they have no way to avoid it? I am not sure if a person can be responsible in that case because the only way that they can not sin is if God does something, and he chooses not to do it. It's like giving a person a final exam but locking them out of the classroom all semester long.

Actually, I can see how that might actually be offensive to atheists, as in this debate between William Lane Craig and Edwin Curley of U of Michigan Ann Arbor.

Probably the best way to settle this is with debates. But I think that the only Calvinist who has debated on this issue is James White. So I put his debates below. I don't think that famous Calvinists like Mark Dricoll and even Wayne Grudem defend Calvinism in formal public debates. Can anyone point out any debates that I may have missed? I want formal debates with good scholars on either side so I can make sure that my mind was made up based on evidence.

Related posts

- First debate on Calvinism/Molinism between James White and Michael Brown
- James White debates Michael Brown on Calvinism vs Foreknowledge (1 of 2)
- Michael Brown debates James White on Foreknowledge vs Calvinism (2 of 2)

Friday night funny: cute parrot videos

December 10, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Indian ring-necked parrot wants to preen his friend. (30 seconds)

Getting a head scratch: (2 minutes)

More head scratching: (1 minute)

Here’s the parrot bathing: (30 seconds)

He’s spreading wings: (1 minute)

You can see he has all his flying feathers there… that little monster could totally take off and fly around.

Happy Friday!

How universities discriminate against evangelical Christians

December 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ). (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> We are preparing for trial in a very important religion discrimination case in Kentucky that's likely to attract a lot of attention.
>
> We represent Professor Martin Gaskell, an internationally-respected astronomer who was turned down for the post of Observatory Director at the University of Kentucky in 2007 after concerns were voiced that some of his writings contained in a personal website discussing the relationship between science and religion showed him to be "potentially evangelical."
>
> Professor Gaskell has filed suit against the University claiming that, by considering his religion in the hiring process, Kentucky violated Title VII, the Civil Rights Act of 1964…

The University of Kentucky tried to avoid a trial, but Judge Karl Forester ruled that there was enough evidence to go to trial, such as:

- The record contains "substantial evidence that Gaskell was a leading candidate for the position until the issue of his religion" became part of the search committee's deliberations.
- The head of the search committee wrote in an email to the Chair of the Physics & Astronomy Department that "no objective observer could possibly believe that we excluded Martin [Gaskell] on any basis other than religious . . ."
- The Department Chair admitted "that the debate generated by Gaskell's website and his religious beliefs was an 'element' in the decision not to hire Gaskell."
- One member of the search committee admitted that Gaskell's "views of religious things" were "a factor" in his decision not to support Gaskell's candidacy.
- Another member of the committee, having discovered Gaskell's website, warned fellow committee members that Gaskell was "potentially evangelical."
- The search committee head, anticipating a decision against Gaskell by his fellow committee members, wrote that "Other reasons will be given for the choice . . . but the real reason we will not offer him the job is because of his religious beliefs in matters that are unrelated to astronomy or to any of the other duties specified for this position."

This is why I blog under an alias. And I recommend it to any evangelical Christian who aspires to have an influence in academia.

Young women now being paid more than young men

December 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Young women have reversed the gender gap and raced ahead of men in the pay stakes.
>
> Landmark official figures showed yesterday that a woman in her 20s working full-time will typically earn 2.1 per cent more than a man in her age group.
>
> The average annual salary of a person in their 20s is around £20,000, according to the Office for National Statistics.
>
> The turning of the tables comes after a decade in which younger women – increasingly better educated and better motivated than men – have been remorselessly narrowing the historic pay differentials between the sexes.
>
> The achievement appears to be a death blow to the long-standing argument of equality campaigners that women are paid worse than men because they suffer from discrimination and disadvantage on the part of employers.
>
> The new reckoning of the pay gap published by the ONS showed that until the age of 30, women can now expect better pay than men.
>
> The majority of women ease up in their careers and devote more time to their children, a choice that in most cases hits their earnings potential.
>
> […]A spokesman for the Government Equalities Office said: 'The narrowing of the gender pay gap is very welcome but it still remains too large, which is why the Government is committed to promoting equal pay and taking measures to end discrimination in the workplace.'

And finally, some sanity:

> The insistence that the Government must act to close a pay gap that, for many women, no longer exists brought a scathing response from some critics.
>
> Economist Ruth Lea, of the Arbuthnot Banking Group, said: 'There is no pay gap for women who do not have children, and for women under the age of 40 the gap is now trivial.
>
> 'We always knew that single women were paid just as well as men. The idea that women are discriminated against was always a fantasy. I think the equality lobby will be running out of things to say.'

But there isn't any discrimination against boys in school – oh no, not at all. I'm sure boys do just as well as girls when they are taught female-oriented books by female teachers, all the way through school.

As men lose their traditional role of provider, and the authority and respect it brings, fewer men will want to marry, and women will have to settle for taxapery-funded IVF, taxpayer-funded day care and taxpayer-funded single mother welfare. The only upside to this is that it will be mostly women who will be paying those taxes.

Youth pastor Tory Ninja writes about the importance of parents

December 11, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This was a comment to one of the posts on tithing and the church. I had argued that pastors should only be paid when they produce.

Tory Ninja wrote this:

> I'm a youth and children pastor. I include "apologetic" minded material in everything I do. Even when the topic isn't apologetic I bring out some apologetics (for example, if I am teaching Christ dying for our sins, I spend some time talking about objections to that idea). We are currently going through the Hitchens/Wilson debate documentary.
>
> Sometimes we have good dialogs. We even go out into the community sometimes and do social justice. But the sad thing is is the Christian faith isn't taking hold. As soon as they graduate, they're gone. No one reads their Bible. People don't remember what was talked about 5 hours after class, even if they participated! People are texting all the time, playing games on their phones/ipods, and just aren't very engaged. Parents buy them the most messed up video games, let them watch the most messed up movies uncritically, and pay for their life sucking WoW [World of Warcraft] accounts. Last week a 9 year old boy, the son of an elder, told me his favourite type of movies were horror movies and he loved Saw.
>
> To be honest, I feel kind of like a failure. I feel a little guilty taking money from the church. I'm giving it my all and trusting the Lord, and that's what keeps me going, but the youth and children of today just have so many distractions. Also, not to mention the fact that parents do almost nothing to disciple their kids. I can't do everything!
>
> Anyway, I agree with you. A pastor shouldn't demand his wages. But the church shouldn't put him into indentured servanthood. I think a church should pay a pastor enough for him to do his ministry properly without having to worry about putting food on the table and clothes on his children. I'm happy that the church treats me well.
>
> This comment was all over the place. I guess I just wanted to say that the future doesn't look bright.

I think his point that parents have to work together with the pastors is a good one.

UPDATE: More from Tory Ninja. And I changed the title to make more sense! My fault.

So I thought I would add some more context to this comment.

For starters, I am in Canada. I'm not sure how different the church culture is from Canada

to the United State so everything I say may not be representative of what you experience in the States. I am again a little over the place. Also, I apologize if the tone seems negative. There are of course positives in today's youth and children ministry but that is not the topic of this comment.

Their are two major things that I have noticed a change in over the ten years I have been doing youth ministry. The first is that everyone is connected. When I started doing youth ministry texting wasn't quite in yet. But now it is like there is a symbiotic relationship between teens and their texting. I have contemplated doing a no texting and gaming policy but I hesitate as it is such big part of their life and also because sometimes the texts are important and I rather them take a text then a phone call. Also, many people have their Bibles on their phones now. I know during sermons I will often check the greek on my iPhone, look up commentaries, and various other things based on what the pastor is preaching. So I know they're legitimate ways for people to be using their phones.

Usually though, when I see someone doing something on their phone, that is when I will ask them a question about what is being taught at the moment. This strategy has kept texting down to a certain degree since I started doing it but it is still there.

Also, as soon as I am done teaching, or their is a break in teaching, bang! Out comes the video games. PSP, DS, iTouch/iPhone. Of course, these are all jail broken or hacked so they all have 100s of illegal games on them.

No one is ever where they are. They always need to be connected elsewhere. The sad part is is that when they aren't at church they are never at church if you know what I mean.

The second thing is that parents are even less engaged with their children now then they were ten years ago. The reason for this is technology. Parents haven't kept up. Kids get away with so much stuff because they know their parents don't have an inkling of how to keep tabs on them. Even if you put draconian measures on them they still find a way to outsmart the parents. For example, Facebook. I am still surprised at what youth and my youth leaders will put on their Facebook pages. It seems like they forget that I can see them. Even the people who seem most devout and engaged at church will have Facebook profiles of nearly naked women, constant swearing, positions on issues that are noticeably non-Christian, etc. They will create a separate Facebook page for their families and parents and have one for their friends. Parents often aren't engaged in their children's life enough to find these "secret" pages.

Youth are also up late at night playing video games, talking online, or texting. Some parents are able to stop these things by removing the computer and cell phones from the room, but not all. One reason youth are barely engaged in church is because they are up till 2-3 on a Saturday night playing Starcraft 2 or Call of Duty.

Now I realize that most of these problems existed before technology. I stayed up late playing games and talking on the phone when I was in high school. Especially Saturday night. But it was more challenging and less "church" people did it. We also had a more reasonable schedule during the week and thus weren't as dead tired on Sunday. But

social media type technology has totally changed the game.

Christianity has always been on the cutting edge of technology and social movement. The codex, equal rights, social justice, the printing press, music, etc. But we have totally lost that edge in this new age. It's been on the decline for the last century but we have totally lost it now. The way we promote issues aren't engaging. I'm not talking about numbers. It's easy to get numbers to a certain degree. Bring live camels with tigers jumping through flaming hoops to your Christmas pageant and you're likely to get numbers. I'm talking about creating disciples of Jesus Christ that are engaged and want to grow Christ's kingdom. We just don't know how to do that yet.

We even do apologetics wrong. I've shown kids William Lane Craig debates and they almost always think he loses. They usually think he had better arguments, but they always find what the non-Christian says to be more convincing. Non-Christians know how to engage the audience with the issues that are close to them. While the Kalam cosmological argument may be great, we need to figure out how to present it in a way that engages the heart.

Youth will even acknowledge that what I say or the Bible says is right but they just don't care. They don't want to follow it. Not that they don't want to be Christians or not that they won't tell others they are Christians, but rather on issues they disagree with they will just not follow it. Oh yes pastor, I know getting totally wasted is wrong but I just don't think you understand my context. Oh yes pastor, I know piracy is wrong, but I just don't care.

Anyway, I apologize if this seems overtly negative. Also, not every single youth is like this. There are good apples. There are parents who are discipling their kids. I'm also not saying that I am free from blame here. As a pastor I have a responsibility to disciple those entrusted to me and I have definitely made mistakes in this process. I'm not saying this to shift blame off of me. I'm saying these have been my observations over ten years.

The earliest Christians knew how to engage their culture. No one was really lukewarm about the Christians. Strong emotions, either pro or con, were caused by these Christians. They knew how fight the good fight. I think we are losing that fire. I think apologetics is key, but I think we need a new way of framing the material. What the way is however, I'm not so sure. Maybe someone here can paint some insight or point me to people/books who do!

If anyone else has experiences like this, send them to me. But you have to have a good alias like "Tory Ninja" or "Wintery Knight" or I can't print it. Kidding.

What happened when Islamic terrorists attacked a church

December 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is David Warren explaining what happened when Islamic terrorists attacked a Catholic Church in Baghdad, Iraq on October 31st, 2010. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> On Sunday, Oct. 31, during Mass, Islamist terrorists attacked the main Syriac Catholic Church in Baghdad — the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.
>
> […]A jeep parked outside the church then exploded, and a brigade of jihadis, in Iraqi army uniforms, burst through the main entrance commando-style. First one priest — a Father Wasim, among those trying to hold the door — shouted, "Leave them alone, take me!" He was immediately shot. A Father Thair then shouted from the altar, likewise, "Leave them alone, take me!" and was likewise annihilated.
>
> While this was happening, a Father Raphael succeeded in herding about 70 of the faithful into the sacristy, and blocking its door. In due course the jihadis found it had a small high window, and tossed grenades through that; others amused themselves by firing bullets through the door.
>
> In the cathedral proper, the jihadis used the central crucifix for target practice, while shouting in mockery, "Come on, tell Him to save you!" At their leisure, they executed the men of the congregation, while terrorizing the women and children in various other ways. They shot the arms off a couple of girls who tried to use cellphones; they shot babies who were crying. And in classical Arabic, with Egyptian and Syrian accents, they declared: "We are going to heaven, and you are going to hell. Allah is great!"
>
> At their leisure, for over the five hours they twice stopped for formal Islamic prayers.

Read the whole thing. There's more like that.

And then read this account of an attack in Sweden by Islamic terrorists. (H/T ECM)

And then remember which political party is interested in restraining terrorism, and which one isn't.

U.S. Navy sets world record with new electromagnetic rail gun

December 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rail Gun

The U.S. Navy has invented a new electromagnetic rail-gun weapon that is so advanced that it has set a world record. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A theoretical dream for decades, the railgun is unlike any other weapon used in warfare. And it's quite real too, as the U.S. Navy has proven in a record-setting test today in Dahlgren, VA.
>
> Rather than relying on a explosion to fire a projectile, the technology uses an electomagnetic current to accelerate a non-explosive bullet at several times the speed of sound. The conductive projectile zips along a set of electrically charged parallel rails and out of the barrel at speeds up to Mach 7.
>
> […]An electromagnetic railgun offers a velocity previously unattainable in a conventional weapon, speeds that are incredibly powerful on their own. In fact, since the projectile doesn't have any explosives itself, it relies upon that kinetic energy to do damage. And at 11 a.m. today, the Navy produced a 33-megajoule firing — more than three times the previous record set by the Navy in 2008.
>
> "It bursts radially, but it's hard to quantify," said Roger Ellis, electromagnetic railgun program manager with the Office of Naval Research. To convey a sense of just how much damage, Ellis told FoxNews.com that the big guns on the deck of a warship are measured by their muzzle energy in megajoules. A single megajoule is roughly equivalent to a 1-ton car traveling at 100 mph. Multiple that by 33 and you get a picture of what would happen when such a weapon hits a target.
>
> Ellis says the Navy has invested about $211 million in the program since 2005,

> since the railgun provides many significant advantages over convention weapons. For one thing, a railgun offers 2 to 3 times the velocity of a conventional big gun, so that it can hit its target within 6 minutes. By contrast, a guided cruise missile travels at subsonic speeds, meaning that the intended target could be gone by the time it reaches its destination.
>
> Furthermore, current U.S. Navy guns can only reach targets about 13 miles away. The railgun being tested today could reach an enemy 100 miles away. And with current GPS guidance systems it could do so with pinpoint accuracy. The Navy hopes to eventually extend the range beyond 200 miles.
>
> "We're also eliminating explosives from the ship, which brings significant safety benefits and logistical benefits," Ellis said. In other words, there is less danger of an unintended explosion onboard, particularly should such a vessel come under attack.
>
> […]There's also a cost and logistical benefit associated with railguns. For example, a single Tomahawk cruise missile costs roughly $600,000. A non-explosive guided railgun projectile could cost much less. And a ship could carry many more, reducing the logistical problems of delivering more weapons to a ship in battle. For these reasons, Admiral Carr sees the railgun as even changing the strategic and tactical assumptions of warfare in the future.

You may remember those big battleships that use to sail around 60 years ago during World War Two. Those are long gone now because even a 16-inch gun can only hit a target 20 miles away. But guided cruise missiles, like the Tomahawk cruise missile, came along and suddenly ranges of 200 miles became possible. That's why you never see big guns on ships any more, and battleships are no longer built. The problem with SSMs though is that you can shoot them down with other missiles, like AEGIS-class vessels using RIM-161 missiles to intercept them. Can you intercept these rail gun slugs? I don't know. If not, then that is a game changer.

I still think that this new weapon is not better than a nice carrier battle group with a couple squadrons of F-18 Hornets armed with Harpoon or Maverick ASMs. But it might be CHEAPER than a carrier battle group. And that is interesting. Maybe the Navy could mass produce these things so that they could be used in places where an expensive carrier battle group is not needed – against countries that do not have carriers or bombers of their own.

Previous story: U.S. Army unveils new guided grenade-launcher infantry weapon.

Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks

December 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Another example of speech critical of homosexuality being threatened with legal sanctions, reported by Life Site News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> The new archbishop of Brussels, Andre-Joseph Leonard, is being targeted by homosexualist groups, and has been condemned by the country's prime minister, after he said that AIDS is a consequence of risky sexual behavior, including homosexual sexual activity.
>
> Homosexualist groups have accused Archbishop Leonard of "homophobia," after he pointed out in a book released in October that "AIDS at the beginning multiplied through sexual behaviour with all sorts of partners or else through anal rather than vaginal sexual rapports."
>
> "When you mistreat the environment it ends up mistreating us in turn," he continued. "And when you mistreat human love, perhaps it winds up taking vengeance."
>
> "All I'm saying is that sometimes there are consequences linked to our actions. I believe this is a totally decent, honourable and respectable stance."
>
> A lawyer acting on behalf of a homosexualist lobby group has filed a formal complaint against Leonard for "homophobic statements" and "violating an anti-discrimination law."
>
> […]Recently a man ran up to the archbishop during a service at the Brussels cathedral and shoved a cherry pie in his face, apparently in connection with the controversy.

Here's a CDC study that discusses whether certain types of sex are more risky than other types.

Here's a refresher on some of the violence directed against supporters of the Prop 8 pro-traditional-marriage amendment.

And in Canada, an evangelical TV show has just been pulled off the air, also for disagreeing with homosexuality.

Note that comments to this post will be strictly filtered in accordance with Obama's law restricting speech critical of homosexuality.

Ezra Levant testifies to Parliamentary committee on ethical oil drilling

December 12, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ezra Levant

Ezra Levant's testimony to the Parliamentary Natural Resources committee is a nice summary of his thesis in his new book "Ethical Oil". (H/T Andrew)

An excerpt from Ezra Levant's testimony:

> One day we might discover a fuel source with no environmental side-effects, that is affordable and practical. But until that day comes, we need oil.
>
> Not just us, but the United States, to whom we sell 1.4 million barrels of oilsands oil every day. And last year, more cars were sold in China than in the U.S. And they all want to be two-car families too, and same for India and the rest of the developing world.
>
> So the choice isn't oilsands oil versus some fantasy fuel of the future. It's oilsands oil versus oil from the other places where oil comes from – mainly OPEC countries. I don't know what God was thinking when he was handing out oil, but he gave it to the world's bastards – places like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Nigeria. Out of the top ten countries ranked by oil reserves, Canada is the only western, liberal democracy on the list.
>
> That doesn't matter if all you care about is driving your car. It all burns the same. But what about the ethics of the oil?
>
> In my book, Ethical Oil, I suggest four liberal values by which we should judge the morality of a barrel of oil: respect for the environment; peace; fair wages for workers; and human rights.
>
> I compare oilsands oil to OPEC oil using these four measures.
>
> I come to the conclusion that oilsands oil is the "fair trade coffee" of the world's oil industry.

And a bit later, he explains why Canada needs to drill more, and sell more oil to other countries.

> The leader of the opposition has said it's important to increase trade with China and India. I agree. Right now, those countries are forced to buy terrorist oil,

> dictatorship oil, Darfur oil. Because we only let Americans buy our oil.
>
> I love our American neighbours. But it's dangerous to have just one customer for our product. We're at the mercy of protectionism and taxes. And sometimes we're taken for granted. That's why the pipeline to the West Coast is so strategically important – it makes us an independent country, with options.
>
> I find it very irritating that so many of the anti-oilsands and anti-pipeline activists in Canada take their funding from U.S. lobby groups like the Tides Foundation. Of course it's in America's interest that no other customers are allowed to buy Canadian ethical oil.
>
> But it's in Canada's interests that we are able to sell to whomever we choose. And if you care about industrial ethics, it's in the world's interest, too.
>
> A lot of people are watching how Canada handles the oilsands miracle. Not just Canadians. The American Ambassador is watching, too. He hopes the Gateway pipeline is strangled, so he can have our oil all for himself.
>
> The Saudi Ambassador is watching too. He hopes the pipeline is killed also, so he doesn't lose any market share in Asia.

The United States should buy things from other countries – but not if they cause more pollution than we would, and not if there are sponsors of terrorism. When we buy things from other countries, we should do it because they can do it better and cheaper than we can. We should not be restricting our own domestic energy production, which is what the Democrats want to do, so that we can enrich countries that pollute and sponsor terrorism against us and our democratic allies.

Do unemployment benefits encourage people to avoid working?

December 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the radically-leftist New York Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Before this recession, most economists probably thought that some amount of unemployment benefits were just and compassionate, and offered a sense of security even to people who were lucky enough to retain their jobs, despite the fact that the program would raise unemployment rates and reduce both employment and economic output.
>
> In other words, unemployment benefits shrink the economy to some degree, but shrinking the economy a bit may be a price worth paying.
>
> Unemployment benefits were thought to reduce employment and output because, by definition, working people were ineligible for the benefits. In particular, an unemployed person who finds and starts a new job, or returns to working at his previous job, is supposed to give up his unemployment benefits. Economists had found that a large fraction of unemployed people delay going back to work solely because the unemployment insurance program was paying them for not working.
>
> Fewer people working means a lower employment rate, and less output because unemployed people are not yet contributing to production.
>
> The recession has seen a number of economists ignore prior findings on unemployment insurance, at least as long as this recession continues. For example, in evaluating the stimulus law economists at the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office assumed that the law would raise gross domestic product, and took no account of the fact that the unemployment insurance and other provisions of the stimulus law give people incentives to work less.

Here's a new study explaining how the "generosity" of the radical left actually encourages people to avoid working, and to remain dependent on the government for their income.

> A study published by two labor economists, Stepan Jurajda and Frederick J. Tannery, looked at employment histories for unemployment insurance recipients in Pittsburgh in the early 1980s. Unemployment rates got quite high in Pittsburgh in those days, reaching 16 percent at one point, and staying over 10 percent for two and a half years.
>
> The chart below summarizes their findings for Pittsburgh.
>
> The chart displays the fraction of persons (in Pittsburgh) receiving unemployment

> benefits who began working again, as a function of the number of weeks until their unemployment benefits were scheduled to be exhausted. For example, a "hazard" value of "0.04″ for week "-14″ means that, among unemployed persons with 14 weeks remaining until their benefit exhaustion date, 4 percent of them either began working a new job or returned to their previous job.

The chart:

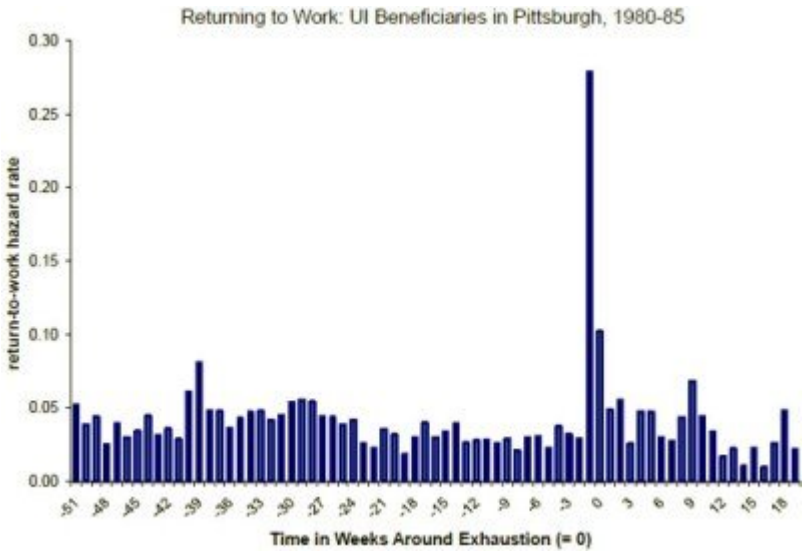

Unemployment offers a disincentive to find work

That chart basically shows the breaking down of the American working spirit by the radical left – making large segments of the American population dependent on government. This isn't good for the producers, and it isn't good for unemployed people to be out of work by choice. (Although to be sure, many many unemployed people are not unemployed by choice).

Why do so many people oppose debating about religion?

December 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article by Barbara Johnson in the Dallas Morning News. Her title is “Don’t bother debating faith”.

Full article:

> Recently Prestonwood Baptist Church invited Christopher Hitchens, a renowned atheist, to debate his views with William Dembski of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. While I applaud Prestonwood for having the courage to expose their young students to views which are so unlike those taught in their very conservative school, I question the idea of debating religious views at all. Debate or argument, while exposing us to the beliefs and convictions of others, can breed animosity, partisanship and an “us against them” mentality, as each side fights to defend a predetermined stance.
>
> Because religious or spiritual views and experiences are deeply personal, I don’t believe they belong in the debate arena at all.
>
> The spectacle of religious thinkers arguing and cutting down one another’s beliefs, practices and spiritual experiences makes little sense and is a detriment to what religion should stand for. Each individual must be allowed to walk his or her spiritual journey without outside pressure and condemnation. When one is pressured to “believe” a certain set of doctrines, or operate within a pre-set paradigm, true expression is suppressed.
>
> Psychologist Carl Jung notes that “many of our institutions throw obstacles in the way of the individual’s self-discovery” and that through the institution of the church “people are effectively defended and shielded against immediate religious experience,” an experience I feel cannot be imposed upon anyone through argument or even reasoning.
>
> The vast majority of the world’s population understandably practices the religious traditions of their own childhood. Having grown up Christian in the largest Muslim country in the world, surrounded by its good people, I have the privilege of a broad world view. Consequently, I feel that the all-too-prevalent idea that one entire group is misguided and needs to be enlightened with the ideas and dogmas of another group possessing a monopoly on truth is off the mark.
>
> I don’t have the answer to the mystery and purpose of life, and I am convinced that no one else on earth does either. I like to heed Václav Havel’s advice: “Keep the company of those who seek the truth – run from those who have found it.” All people of the world must be free to practice their culture and religion as they please or to define their own individual spirituality through the wisdom they

> accumulate with life experience. Too much time, energy and focus is spent by many "religious" folks trying to figure out who is right and who is wrong; who is saved and who is doomed; who should be included and who should be excluded from their institutions.
>
> If they are honestly seeking a personal relationship with the divine, they are wrestling with the wrong angel. True spirituality will never be achieved this way. More time should be spent searching for and recognizing the glimpses of God that are available each and every day in such things as expressions of love, acts of kindness and beautiful moments in nature.
>
> As Henri Nouwen so perfectly puts it, "My highest vocation is to be a witness to the glimpses of God I have been allowed to catch." I so admire the Zen Buddhists who don't expend energy defending dogmas or condemning those with varying practices or beliefs. They concentrate on inclusiveness, peaceful meditation, private introspection, acceptance, and respect for people and environment. They see glimpses of the divine in the simple miracles around them every day. How can anyone argue with that?

Here's a short bio of the woman who wrote the article:

> Barbara B. Johnson is a life coach living and working in Dallas. She is also a Community Voices volunteer columnist.

I think that people with expertise in philosophy, a science, history or even engineering are more likely to disagree with her. But I think that her view is shared by many leaders in the church, and by many parents of children who attend church (H/T Tory Ninja).

Refuting her view is simple, it takes only one line. If she is saying that debating with people to persuade them of your view is wrong, then she should not be debating with we narrow-minded believers in truth to persuade us that she is right and we are wrong, that her view is… true, and that our view is… false. But maybe being good at recognizing self-refuting statements is not a prerequisite for being a "life coach". Certainly a developed ability to reason logically is not a prerequisite for being published in the Dallas Morning News. One the one hand, she is telling us to accept her view, and on the other hand, she claims not to know anything.

And the worst thing is that it is people like this who protest apologetic debates, lectures and book studies who have marginalized the church from the public square. It is because the church is populated by people like Barbara, and because the pastors cater to the Barbaras in the church, that I struggle enormously with church attendance. I see her attitude everywhere in the church. In fact there is an entire movement called the emergent church, which is dedicated to reinventing Christianity based on Barbara's view of religion.

Instead of reading books like "The Case for Christ", "The Case for a Creator" and "The Case for Faith", we have a generation of church people reading "The Shack", "Conversations With God", "Blue Like Jazz", "Left Behind", "The Da Vinci Code",

“Twilight” and other nonsense.

By the way, if you want to here someone like Barbara in a debate with a Christian Philosopher, check out this debate.

MUST-SEE: Condoleezza Rice Takes on Katie Couric Over Iraq Claims

December 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am not a fan of Condi, but I absolutely cannot stand Katie Couric.

So, my helmet's off to you, Ms. Rice.

Canadian parents jailed and fined for spanking child

December 13, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Canada

Story from Life Site News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> The parents of a 14-year-old girl were sentenced each to 10 days in jail plus a $500 fine on December 9 for using a belt to spank their daughter. They had been found guilty of assault in June of this year, but sentencing was put off until a later date.
>
> The jail time was remitted due to the five days the couple spent locked up after being arrested, according to Quebec Media Inc.
>
> Lawrence Zachow, 60, and his wife Aida Calagui-Zachow, 54, were originally charged with assault with a weapon for the Jan. 15, 2008 spanking. However, Judge Michael Stevens-Guille found them guilty of the lesser offense of assault, saying he understood the parents were disciplining the girl according to their religious beliefs, and not just reacting in anger.
>
> “Whatever one’s belief in higher authority, if you live in Canada you are subject to the laws of Canada as interpreted by the courts, in this case the Supreme Court of Canada,” Stevens-Guille said in the ruling. “Spare the rod and spoil the child is not the byword of the discipline of children in this country in 2010,” he added.
>
> According to QMI, the court was told that the spanking was the result of a confrontation between the parents and the daughter, in ninth grade at the time, over the girl’s admission that she was having sex with her boyfriend. She refused her parents’ request to break off the relationship.
>
> Following the spanking, which the girl told the court did not hurt, she reported her parents to a school official who called the police.

> […]In 2004, the Supreme Court of Canada banned spanking of children under 2 and over 12 and criminalized it at any age with an implement such as the common wooden spoon.

I do not agree with spanking a 14-year old. My point in posting this is to show how social engineers in Canada's most liberal province do not really believe that parents are the authority over their own children. And I think they are especially annoyed by the idea that fathers should be able to push their morality on children because of their authority as provider and moral leader. What incentives does this create for fathers who want their daughters to not act immorally? Does being overridden by the state make men more likely to marry? Does it make men more likely to want to have children? What man takes on a marriage and children when he can be overruled and regulated by the feminist state at any time? Why bother to have children at all, if the state decides what vision of morality the children will be raised with?

Don't forget the previous story of the daughter who took her father to court for grounding her – and won! She was sending naked pictures of herself on her father's computer. Is that what fathers can look forward to? And with government approval, no less? Why should a man sign up for that? What is the point? Why bother? Why not just stay single, stop working so hard, and enjoy the freely available sex that is available as the number of fatherless women increases as feminism dominates society more and completely destroys the institution of marriage?

Women think men want to marry as much as they do and for the same reasons, but it's false. Men marry for respect, and to be recognized as essential, and as the moral and spiritual leader of the home. ALL THESE THINGS are taken away by the feminist state's regulation of the family. Men today get no respect, no special role as provider, and no authority as leader. They have been replaced and marginalized from their traditional roles, by design. There is really no reason for men to MARRY any more, and no reason for them to take on the burden of parenting. There is nothing in it for men. Women don't value men, and women vote for social policies that discriminate against men and marginalize them for their traditional roles – substituting government social programs and welfare for husbands and fathers. Imagine – courts overruling the judgment of parents about a 14-year old having sex! Unbelievable! What man wants this? NONE.
This is a question that women today never ask: What is the value proposition for men to marry and raise children?

And there even more to it than that. Presumably, these parents worked for 30 years each paying 40% of their income to the government. That would involve scholarships for these judges and lawyers to got the school. And funding for the courts and the prisons. And funding for public schools to teach their daughter sex education. And funding for public school teachers to call the police on them. Police that are funded by their taxpayer dollars. They literally paid the state to incarcerate them for the crime of disciplining (in an excessive way, granted) their own daughter, who had been indoctrinated by the state's sex education programs to think that pre-marital sex was normal.

There is something deeply, deeply disturbing about paying for your own execution. And it brings to mind that old sick pre-occupation of the secular left to avoid being judged morally at all costs – the same sickness that causes them to reject the objective moral law. In fact, they would probably find everything that I am saying to be quite odd. Morality? What is morality? These people don't understand what morality even is. The purpose of life, on their view, is to be happy in whatever way feels right to you. And anyone who tries to form your character to any end should be arrested and put in jail.

Previous story on Sweden fining and jailing parents for spanking their child.

UK stores stocking almost no Christmas cards that mention Jesus

December 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Supermarkets were accused of ‘airbrushing Christ out of Christmas’ yesterday after it emerged that less than one per cent of cards they stock have religious themes.
>
> Many stores display hundreds of different Christmas cards yet offer just a handful featuring traditional Christian scenes.
>
> Some had no cards at all with religious references in their extensive ranges.
>
> The Daily Mail visited major outlets of the big four supermarkets – Asda, Sainsbury’s, Tesco and Morrisons – in seven towns and cities.
>
> Out of 5,363 cards sold individually or in multipacks, just 45 featured Christian scenes such as the Nativity – 0.8 per cent.
>
> The worst offender was Morrisons, which had six out of a range of 973 cards, or 0.6 per cent.
>
> Second worst was Tesco, despite chief executive Sir Terry Leahy, a practising Catholic, writing to a customer in October to tell her: ‘We have increased the number of Christmas cards that will be available with a religious theme this year.’
>
> […]The Mail was contacted by a Tesco customer earlier this week who said her local store in Ely, Cambridgeshire, had just a ‘handful’ of cards with religious themes last year – and still had only three out of 67 last month, despite a personal assurance from Sir Terry.
>
> After she had repeatedly contacted customer services, she received a letter from the company chief.
>
> ‘Sir Terry promised more cards this year,’ she said.
>
> ‘But the selection of cards with anything relating to the true meaning of Christmas was tiny, so he has not kept his word.’
>
> Tesco said it had doubled the range of religiously themed cards this year but refused to give numbers, saying they ‘vary from store to store’.
>
> An Asda spokesman said: ‘We sell five different Christmas cards that have religious sentiment and traditional designs.’
>
> Morrisons said: ‘We stock types of cards that appeal to our customers.’
>
> A Sainsbury’s spokesman said: ‘The ranges that appear in our stores reflect what our customers want to buy.’

In case anyone is trying to remember, this is the meaning of Christmas:

This makes me sad. I feel sad for Christians who are being marginalized. We are the only ones who can be mistreated and marginalized with impunity. Christianity is the religion of loving your enemies and turning the other cheek, after all. I think I know why people are doing this – because they are more interested in being liked by non-Christians than being liked by Jesus for telling the truth about him. They think that Christianity is about being nice to others first, instead of being nice to Jesus first. Well, I for one do not care what people think about my faith. I can do just fine without any earthly friends. I hope it doesn't come to that, thought!

I am OK with not being happy and popular. I don't mind if honor the real message of Christmas doesn't make me happy and popular.

Pro-ID scientist Ann Gauger interviewed on Mike Behe's latest paper

December 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is all written up at Evolution News.

First, remember that Behe's peer-reviewed paper (PDF) was about whether evolutionary mechanisms were capable of creating any new information, that supports new functionality, that confers an evolutionary advantage.

Excerpt:

> Losing information is one thing — like accidentally erasing a computer file (say, an embarrassing diplomatic cable) where, it turns out in retrospect, you're better off now that's it not there anymore. Gaining information, building it up slowly from nothing, is quite another and more impressive feat. Yet it's not the *loss* of function, and the required underlying information, but its *gain* that Darwinian evolution is primarily challenged to account for.
>
> That's the paradox highlighted in Michael Behe's new review essay in *Quarterly Review of Biology* ("Experimental Evolution, Loss-of-Function Mutations, and "The First Rule of Adaptive Evolution"). It's one of those peer-reviewed, Darwin-doubting biology journal essays that, as we're confidently assured by the likes of the aforesaid Jerry Coyne, don't actually exist. Casey Luskin has been doing an excellent job in this space of detailing Michael Behe's conclusions. Reviewing the expansive literature dealing with investigations of viral and bacterial evolution, Dr. Behe shows that adaptive instances of the "diminishment or elimination" of Functional Coding ElemenTs (FCTs) in the genome overwhelmingly outnumber "gain-of-FCT events." Seemingly, under Darwinian assumptions, even as functionality is being painstakingly built up that's of use to an organism in promoting survival, the same creature should, much faster, be impoverished of function to the point of being driven out of existence.

And then the Evolution News post has an interview with Ann Gauger, (whose peer-reviewed publications have been featured before on this blog).

Here's one of the questions:

> … In your own research with Dr. Seelke, you found that cells chose to "reduce or eliminate function." But with vastly bigger populations and vastly more time, wouldn't we be justified in expecting gene fixes too, even if far fewer in number?

And her reply in part:

> For most organisms in the wild, the environment is constantly changing. Organisms rarely encounter prolonged and uniform selection in one direction. In turn, changing selection prevents most genetic variants from getting fixed in the

> population. In addition, most mutations that accumulate in populations are neutral or weakly deleterious, and most beneficial mutations are only weakly beneficial. This means that it takes a very long time, if ever, for a weakly beneficial mutation to spread throughout the population, or for harmful mutations to be eliminated. If more than one mutation is required to get a new function, the problem quickly becomes beyond reach. Evolutionary biologists have begun to realize the problem of getting complex adaptations, and are trying to find answers.
>
> The problem is the level of complexity that is required, from the earliest stages of life. For example, just to modify one protein to perform a new function or interact with a new partner can require multiple mutations. Yet many specialized proteins, adapted to work together with specialized RNAs, are required to build a ribosome. And until you have ribosomes, you cannot translate genes into proteins. We haven't a clue how this ability evolved.

It sounds this problem of getting beneficial mutations and keeping them around is an intractable problem, at least on a naturalist worldview. It will be interesting to see how the naturalists respond to the peer-reviewed work by Behe and Gauger. The only way to know if Behe and Gauger are right is to let the naturalists talk back. It would be nice to see a formal debate on this evidence, wouldn't it? I'm sure that the ID people would favor a debate, but the evolutionists probably wouldn't, since they prefer to silence and expel anyone who disagrees with them.

In addition to the new papers by Michael Behe and Ann Gauger I mentioned above, I wrote about Doug Axe's recent research paper here. He is the Director of the Biologic Institute, where Ann works.

Debates featuring Mike Behe

- Mike Behe vs Keith Fox
- Mike Behe vs Stephen Barr

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

Are unions to blame for the bankruptcy of A and P groceries?

December 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Yahoo News.

Excerpt:

> The fall into bankruptcy court by the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co. is the culmination of years of decline but creates an opportunity for its competitors and could mean further consolidation in the supermarket industry.
>
> The nation's oldest grocer filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection Sunday after years of struggling with enormous debt, falling sales and rising competition from low-priced peers.
>
> […]A&P, like most grocers, is struggling with the weak economy, reduced spending by consumers and intense competition. The company said aggressive competition from nontraditional food retailers like warehouse clubs, discount chains such as Wal-Mart Stores Inc., and dollar stores have compounded the problem.
>
> […]**It is also struggling with pension costs**, lease costs for store locations it has closed, and a contract with C&S Wholesale Grocers Inc., which provides the majority of its inventory, which it has been unable to negotiate down to lower costs.
>
> […]**A&P also has one of the most heavily unionized work forces in the business, with 95 percent of its workers covered under collective bargaining agreements. It said in its filing it would seek to work with the unions to lower those costs.**

I wonder why Wal-mart is doing so well compared to A&P. Oh I know – *Wal-mart isn't 95% unionized.* In fact, Wal-mart opposes unions, because employers should not be forced to pay dues to Democrat union bosses in order to keep what they earn by the sweat of their own brow.

Japan to cut corporate tax rate to spur job growth

December 14, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Yahoo News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Japan's government announced it would cut the country's hefty corporate tax rate by 5 percentage points, in a bid to stimulate the economy and help Japanese businesses stay competitive.
>
> The step announced late Monday is aimed at promoting investment, employment and salary increases at home so that Japan can exit deflation, Prime Minister Naoto Kan said.
>
> "I decided to take a bold step," he told reporters.
>
> Kan acknowledged more Japanese companies were moving abroad where corporate taxes are lower, causing job losses in Japan, Kyodo News agency reported. "That is not a plus for the Japanese economy," he said, according to Kyodo.

The Japanese corporate tax rate was the highest in the world, at 40%. According to the Wall Street Journal, the US corporate tax rate is just under 40%, so now we will be the highest corporate tax rate in the world. Our neighbor to the north should reap the rewards as they have been lowering their corporate tax rate for years, and it's going even lower in the future.

Most doctors will restrict or close their practice if Obamacare is not repealed

December 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the NY Post.

Excerpt:

> A recent survey finds that countless MDs will respond to ObamaCare by limiting which patients they'll see.
>
> The Physicians Foundation asked 2,400 doctors and American Medical Association members what they thought of the new law; a full 67 percent were against it.
>
> More important, it asked how they'd cope with the new rules (which don't fully kick in until 2014). Sixty percent said they feel compelled to "close or significantly restrict their practices to certain categories of patients." And 59 percent said the "reform" would oblige them to spend less time with the patients they do have.
>
> Of course, many doctors already limit how many patients they'll take on who depend on government insurance (whose fees rarely cover an MD's costs). But it'll get worse under ObamaCare: In the survey, some 87 percent said they would significantly restrict Medicare patients and 93 percent said they'd significantly restrict Medicaid patients.
>
> […]All in all, the survey found that 74 percent of doctors will alter how they practice.
>
> To stay in business under ObamaCare, doctors will have to adjust. Some will see fewer patients themselves and hire nurse practitioners to help carry the load; others will work part-time and supplement their income elsewhere. Many will join groups or become salaried employees of hospitals or clinics.

Was Obama telling the truth when he said that you could keep your doctor? No.

Related posts

- Massachusetts firms canceling health coverage due to rising costs
- More companies announce massive losses as a result of Obamacare
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care

Mary takes on a pro-abortion “Christian” woman

December 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Our commenter Mary likes to debate online. She found a pro-abortion woman to fight with. The pro-abortion woman explains in the post how she supports abortion in her work on “maternal health” in the developing world.

The pro-abortion woman’s first argument is that because we don’t have funerals for miscarried babies, that proves that the unborn aren’t human:

> We don’t issue death certificates for miscarriages, nor traditionally perform funerals for them. My mom miscarried at six months before she got pregnant with my first brother. She didn’t consider herself a mother until she had my brother two years later. That is anecdotal of course.

Her second argument is that making abortion illegal is not practical:

> This is a genuine question: how do you see ending abortions being carried out? I understand on an abstract level what I think you and others who are pro-life want–no more abortions (unless perhaps in the case of the mother’s life being in danger?). But practically, what would that look like? Making abortion illegal? Incarcerating doctors who perform and women who have abortions? Increasing access to family planning? Better sex ed? Better health care? Increased social services for poor women? All of the above? I can’t get behind something that says “Don’t have sex or live with the consequences.” It’s incredibly impractical.

And finally, she argues that people who are some pro-life people are “religious,

misogynistic crazy people", so the unborn have no right to live:

> I guess that's what frustrates me about the stunt from last week–it was meant to terrorize and disrupt, but I don't see what it did constructively to further their agenda. Honestly, all it did was solidify for most people there that anti-choice activists are religious, misogynistic crazy people. Not very helpful.

That's it. Those are her 3 arguments. I should add that this woman thinks that she is a Christian. But she finds chastity and personal responsibility for one's own decision to treat sex as recreational "impractical". *Incredibly* impractical.

Mary to the rescue

And now, here comes Mary:

Thanks for posting this, James-Michael. And thank you for asking the questions, "Rachel". I love it when I'm given the opportunity to be persuasive on a topic which is close to my heart. [image]

Rachel:
Regarding miscarriages, I actually think that there *should* be funerals for children that die before birth. I am close to someone who lost children in a miscarriage and the pain she feels is as real as that of a mother who loses a newborn. I think that our society does women a disservice when it ignores the reality of loss in the instance of miscarriage. Our society's omission in the case of miscarriage is no grounds on which to disregard the humanity of the pre-born.

You bring up the issue of practicalities, which is a good one. A very similar argument was brought up by those in favour of retaining legal slavery in the British Empire. But thankfully, we no longer have legal slavery in the western world. Just because something will require work does not mean that we should avoid it – especially when it is something as important as this. I support abortion being made illegal, except in the instance of saving the life of the mother. I would support incarceration for doctors or nurses who subsequently performed such illegal abortions, and for those who sold abortificants. I think there needs to be better education regarding foetal development, I believe that women should be offered an ultrasound of their baby, and I would love to see the resources currently being allocated to abortion being reallocated to crisis pregnancy centres.

I think it's also vital to recognize that the pro-life position is based on the following sound logic:
1) Taking an innocent human life is wrong (we call it murder).
2) The pre-born child is scientifically definable as a human life and is as innocent as they come.
3) Abortion takes the life of a pre-born child.
4) Abortion takes an innocent human life.
4) Abortion is therefore wrong.

As a fellow woman, I would also like to challenge you to seek better things for women.

Your commitment to maternal health is commendable. However, did you know that abortion increases the incidence of miscarriage in subsequent pregnancies? Did you know that it has been implicated in a dramatically increased incidence of breast cancer? And this is in addition to the psychological damage done to women who have abortions. Abortion is bad for women. Check out Feminists for Life. This organisation believes that women deserve better. I love that.

Think also of the unborn women. Women's health begins in the womb. Pre-born women have a right to life too. Surely their right to life is of greater importance than any other right of the mother's, except her right to life. Did you know that abortion is used by societies that do not value women to eliminate women? Sex selective abortion and female infanticide are common in China and India. Women's rights are not furthered by offering women the right to kill their own children.

Thank you for reading.

And then the strange pro-abortion "Christian" replied with craziness:

> Mary, I will join you in lifting up miscarriage as loss. I'm not sure, though, after reading your comments that you want to have dialogue with me because your only questions to me about breast cancer, miscarriage, and gender-selection are rhetorical in tone.
>
> I would still be interested in hearing how you would address eliminating abortions. Women with unintended pregnancies will seek abortions, illegal or legal. So, how do we go about eliminating (or more practically, reducing) unintended pregnancies in the first place?

Go here to read the whole thing. Mary tells me that she's going to go right back there and reply to Rachel again, but she was too tired to do it on Tuesday night. If you feel like debating, like Mary seems to like to do, then you can march right over there and help her out.

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

Alvin Plantinga explains where science and religion conflict

December 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig says that Alvin Plantinga is one of the greatest Christian philosophers today. (75 minutes)

Found here.

About Dr. Plantinga:

Alvin Cornelius Plantinga was born on 15 November 1932 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Plantinga won a scholarship to Harvard University, but left in 1951 to study at Calvin College (Grand Rapids), where William Harry Jellema was teaching philosophy. Following his time at Calvin, Plantinga studied at the University of Michigan from 1954-1955, and received his doctorate from Yale University (1955-1958). He began teaching at Wayne State University, then spent almost 20 years at Calvin College before moving to the University of Notre Dame.

He is currently John A. O'Brien Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame.

This lecture was delivered at Biola University, the Mecca of Christian apologetics.

Democrats switching to the Republican party in droves

December 15, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from National Review. (H/T ECM)

One from Georgia:

> The Democratic defections continue in the Georgia Legislature.State Rep. Bubber Epps on Monday became the latest Democratic state lawmaker to switch his allegiance to the Republican Party… Epps is the eighth Democratic state lawmaker to switch sides since the Nov. 2 general election. Republicans now hold 113 seats in the 180-member House. Democrats control 64 seats, there is one independent and two seats are open.

And one from Louisiana:

> State Rep. Noble Ellington of Winnsboro, a prominent Democrat for more than 20 years in the state House and Senate, says he is likely to switch to the GOP.“I’m 95 percent sure,” he said Wednesday.Two state senators — John Alario of Westwego and John Smith of Leesville — recently switched from the Democratic Party. Alario, a former two-time House speaker and a fixture in Democratic state politics for nearly four decades, said he made the change official last week.Ellington said he will probably make his final decision early next month.“I think at this point it would probably be hypocritical for me to remain in the Democratic Party because I find myself farther and farther away from what has become the liberal philosophy of the national party,” he said. “My way of thinking, which falls along a more conservative line, has been shrinking within the party.“At least nationally, the Republican Party seems to fit my philosophy more than the current Democratic Party.”

He documents cases from five different states.

Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist

December 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You're not going to hear this reported in the news, because it doesn't fit the narrative.

Here's the scoop from Verum Serum. Where else?

Video of a progressive atheist engaging in some secular humanism.

John of Verum Serum writes: (with links)

> Did he have "caps" and not real bullets as someone in the video claims? According to the AP, Duke killed himself with his own gun. So it appears the bullets were real and the people on the board were very lucky (or very blessed) to avoid being killed.
>
> We know the media loves stories about right-wing violence, but it's going to be hard to spin Clay Duke into a Tea Party terrorist. His Facebook page contains a kind of suicide note which references the movie V for Vendetta (a film in which the "hero" blows up Parliament). His religion is listed as "humanist" which means he was an atheist. He also quotes part of Shelley's poem Masque of Anarchy, not a Tea Party favorite. (click for full size)
>
> Also interesting is the list of favorite websites he provides, including Media Matters and The Progressive Mind along with about a dozen others.

Read the rest of the post to see how the media makes much of *some stories where conservatives can be smeared,* but how it covers up stories like this one. And it also covers up stories where the victims are conservatives. You've probably never heard of Kenneth Gladney.

This reminds me of the last radical leftist environmentalist who shot up the Discovery Channel building. He was inspired by Democrat environmentalist Al Gore. The gunman loved evolution. And he didn't like "greed" or "religion" either.

The gunman doesn't like the rich

The gunman's Facebook page screen shot says this: "I was born in a country where the Wealthy manipulate, use, abuse and economically enslave 95% of the population… Our Masters, the Wealthy, do as they like to us."

The wealthy? That sounds a lot like "the rich", doesn't it?

And who do we know who rants against "the rich"?

Barack Obama doesn't like the rich

Here he is talking about taxing the rich.

Here is Barack Obama calling in Democrats to "**argue with them and get in their face.**".

Not to mention asking Latinos to come out and “**punish our enemies**“.
Could Obama have incited this gunman to violence with his hate speech?

Steven Cowan on the connection between evil, suffering and no-see-ums

December 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This tiny little thing is a No-See-Um

Have you heard about the terrible noseeums? Then read on, for Steven Cowan will tell you about them.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude. Consider the recent Tsunami in the Indian Ocean that took the lives of almost 200,000 people. Consider as well the infamous Nazi Holocaust in which millions of Jews and others were mercilessly slaughtered. Moreover, we can watch the evening news on almost any day and hear of people in our neighborhoods being robbed, beaten, and murdered. How and why could God allow such things?

Excerpt:

> However, perhaps God's existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God's existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By "pointless evil," Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe's argument may be simply stated as follows:

> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the "noseeum inference." Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a "noseeum" is something that you cannot see—it is a "no-see-um." And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I "no-see-um" a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who, in this paper, lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous. Humans just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally

sufficient reason is a noseeum. Just because we don't see it doesn't mean it isn't there, and the burden of proof is on the person who says there is NO morally sufficient reason. They're making the claim, they have to shoulder the burden of proof.

By the way, I HAVE the PDF of the William Alston paper. But I can't post it publicly because it's copyrighted.

Read the whole post by Steve Cowan – the noseeum response to the inductive problem of evil is state of the art, and you can even hear it being used by William Lane Craig in his debate with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong on the problems of evil and suffering. (MP3)

I also found this opening speech from a debate that Steven Cowan did on the problem of evil just a month ago.

The *best* place to learn about no-see-ums is in this amazing, perfect lecture by Biola University professor Doug Geivett – hosted on Brian Auten's blog. Doug Geivett is a nice guy, and he even links to me from his blog.

Here's my previous best post on the problem of evil, if you want more. It explains everything you need to know about this topic, in brief, and understandably.

Is a college degree worth the money you pay for it?

December 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do college degrees really get you a better job?

It depends on what you study. If you study really hard stuff that is in demand, then it will help. But if you study easy stuff and don't come out in the top 1% of those easy programs, then going to college is a huge waste of money. It's also a huge "opportunity cost", because you could have been working instead of going to college – which would get you not only a salary but a lot of experience, too. Instead of having $50,000 in debt, you could have $50,000 in savings, over four years.

Take a look at this article from the Chronicle of Higher Education. (H/T Hans Bader at the Competitive Enterprise Institute)

Excerpt:

> "60 percent of the increase in the number of college graduates from 1992 to 2008 worked in jobs that the (Bureau of Labor Statistics) considers relatively low skilled — occupations where many participants have only high school diplomas and often even less." This means that the great push to increase the number of college grads has apparently come to very little — only a minority of the additional grads are in occupations regarded as requiring a bachelor's degree. Of the nearly 50 million U.S. colleges graduates, 17.4 million are holding jobs for which college training is regarded as unnecessary. The number of waiters and waitresses with college degrees more than doubled from in the years 1992-2008, from 119,000 to 338,000, and cashiers with college degrees rose from 132,000 to 365,000.

We should not be taking money from working individuals and businesses to provide grants for immature students to study basket weaving. Providing money for *so many* people to study things that are not practical and that they are not even that good at is a waste of money. We are not getting a good return for this money if graduates just go on to do jobs that they would have done anyway. The real questions that should be asked by students is "is this worth the money? Will this help me to find a job?" And the real question that taxpayers should be asking is "do we need to stop wasting money on grants for useless degrees and leave the money in the private sector to create more good jobs instead?".

It's not good to be sending young people to universities that are run by leftists in any case, because it insulates them from real life and puts them at the mercy of perpetual adolescents (professors). For many students, college is wasted on partying and "studying" impractical and counter-factual areas like feminist studies, peace studies, black studies, Marxist studies, queer studies, etc. We do not need to be sending so much money into the pockets of unqualified leftists like Bill Ayers and Bernadine Dohrn, who bash capitalism while living off of the wealth produced by it.

Hans writes:

> In "The Great College Degree Scam," expert Richard Vedder points out that "[s]ome in higher education KNOW about all of this and are keeping quiet about it because of their own self-interest. We are deceiving our young population to mindlessly pursue college degrees" they don't need.

Hans also talked about the problem of rising college debt here.

Why do feminists ignore the plight of women under Islam?

December 16, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an opinion piece from the Jerusalem Post. (H/T ECM)

Full article:

> In 1995, then first lady Hillary Clinton spoke at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. There Clinton seemed to embrace the role of championing the rights of women and human rights worldwide when she proclaimed, "It is no longer acceptable to discuss women's rights as separate from human rights…If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, let it be that human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights, once and for all."
>
> Yet as secretary of state, Hillary Clinton – like her fellow self-described feminists – has chosen to single Israel out for opprobrium while keeping nearly mum on the institutionalized, structural oppression of women and girls throughout the Muslim world. In so acting, Clinton is of course, loyally representing the views of the Obama administration she serves. She is also representing the views of the ideological Left in which Clinton, US President Barack Obama, the human rights and feminist movements are all deeply rooted.
>
> Since the height of the feminist movement in the late 1960s, non-leftist women in the West and Israel have been hard-pressed to answer the question of whether or not we are feminists. Non-leftist women are opposed to the oppression of women. Certainly, we are no less opposed to the oppression of women than leftist women are.
>
> But at its most basic level, the feminist label has never been solely or even predominantly about preventing and ending oppression or discrimination of women. It has been about advancing the Left's social and political agenda against Western societies. It has been about castigating societies where women enjoy legal rights and protections as "structurally" discriminatory against women in order to weaken the legal, moral and social foundations of those societies. That is, rather than being about advancing the cause of women, to a large extent, the feminist movement has used the language of women's rights to advance a social and political agenda that has nothing to do with women.
>
> So to a large degree, the feminist movement itself is a deception.

I am strongly opposed to third-wave feminism, but I certainly care more about women than Hillary Clinton does. I actually speak out against the oppression of women in Muslim countries. Clinton is a coward and a sell-out.

Abortion, moral relativism, and the banality of evil

December 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News. This is strongly-worded and profound.

Excerpt:

> The 20th century political philosopher Hannah Arendt coined the term "banality of evil" when she observed the trial of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann. Eichmann was the very epitome of modern, banal, "nice" evil – an unthinking bureaucrat who, even to the end, could not seem to grasp the enormity of the evil in which he had taken part as a cog in the machine, a mere functionary.
>
> Observers of the Nuremburg trials often commented that many of Eichmann's fellow Nazis were to all outward appearances perfectly ordinary, bland, modern, well-educated, even cultured men: bureaucrats whose mass murders were committed from a distance with the stroke of a pen, and with the most prosaic and dispassionate of justifications.
>
> We look back on this kind of man with the comfortable assurance that we are observing an undisputed monstrous evil, and are able to see it clearly. That man, those men, clearly ought to have known, and their facades of civilization are not enough to cover their shame. It is not enough, we can say, confident that the world will agree, to like Beethoven and Bach, to read Schiller and enjoy sports and be attentive husbands and fathers. We must know the difference between good and evil, or we are lost, we become those men, those civilized monsters.
>
> I have seen myself, many times, the existence of this new, passionless "nice evil." I have met it nearly every time I discuss abortion with a member of the "personally opposed but…" culture. **These are the "perfectly nice" people who believe that it is perfectly justifiable to murder an innocent infant or helpless old person, and for no other reason than the momentary inconvenience he creates for another.** Is there not something even more monstrous about this banal and complacent evil? Is this not the smiling, reasonable face of our worst dystopian nightmares?
>
> Pro-life apologists like to compare our current abortion culture with that of slavery, one of the greatest evils ever perpetrated under (nominally) Christian princes.
>
> In the centuries during which it was practiced, and whole economies were based on it, millions of people lived and prospered on its arrears. Until William Wilberforce forced the British public to look the realities of slavery in the face, it seems probable that the majority of them would, as the saying goes, not wish to own a slave themselves, but would not want to impose their personal beliefs on others. Buy and sell human beings, kidnap and torture and murder them, if your morality says you can. It is none of my business to tell you what to do.

> Were these millions “moral monsters”? We are so sure of these evils now, but the question haunts us: why did they not know? And how are we different from them? Should these ordinary people not have instinctively known these evils?
>
> Should they not all have done what Wilberforce finally did? Should there not have been a mass movement of decent, ordinary people against the atrocity of slavery? Why did Wilberforce’s crusade meet with such determined opposition, and take so long to accomplish?

Pro-abortionists de-humanize their victims and then kill them, *just so that they can have recreational sex without consequences*. This is the “great good” that pro-abortion radicals are fighting for – drunken hook-up sex and self-centered shacking up. They put amusement and entertainment above innocent human lives. Because they are strong, and unborn babies are weak. Their ethic is survival of the fittest. Pro-abortion is pro-selfishness. And they want you to celebrate and subsidize their selfishness, *or else*.

Brian Auten’s top 5 books for Christmas giving

December 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Apologetics 315.

> 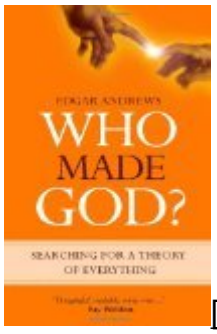
>
> [image]*Who Made God?[image]* Completely readable – completely excellent. Actually, one of my favorite reads this year. I thought, I could give this to *anyone* and they would understand it, enjoy it, and be challenged by it. Full of wit, humor, and sharp thinking. This definitely makes it to the top of my list. (review here)
>
>
>
> [image]*Is God Just a Human Invention?[image]* Another book with a question for a title – but [image]questions are good, and this book tackles about 18 of them that are being asked the most these days. Written by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow, with contributions from a ton of excellent specialists, this book is a phenomenal resource and doesn’t have to be read in any particular order. (an interview with the authors here)
>
> 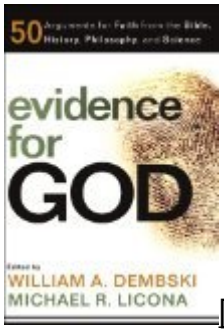
>
> [image]*Evidence for God: 50 Arguments for Faith from the Bible, History, Philosophy, and Science*[image] is another book loaded with great content – 50 essays! – with contributions from a ton of top-notch apologists. A close competitor with the previously mentioned book that happens to be a great resource.

> 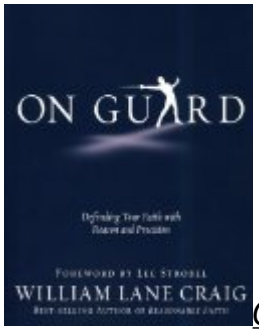
>
> *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision*[image] by William Lane Craig[image] is excellent for personal study or group studies. Weighty material that is clear, precise, and put together really well. I'd give this to Christian young people in high school and college who want to strengthen their apologetics foundations. (review here)
>
> 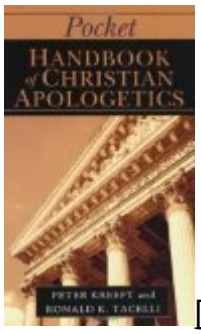
>
> [image]And finally, here's the stocking stuffer of the bunch: Kreeft and Tacelli's *Pocket Handbook of Christian Apologetics*[image]. The reason? Again, lots of material packed into a small book, organized and presented well.

My first choice is "Is God Just a Human Invention", but I have not read "Who Made God?", although I have it.

I'm not a big fan of Peter Kreeft's book. I have never read anything by Kreeft that has the same evidential tone like the stuff that William Lane Craig writes. I am not a big fan of these G. K. Chesterton / C.S. Lewis / Phillip Yancey type people for apologetics. It's just paper shields and foam swords – totally useless in battle. If you want real apologetics, you want experimental scientists, analytical philosophers and multi-lingual historians. You want guys like Mike Licona and William Lane Craig who have a lot of debating experience.

NOTE: Brian is giving away books to anyone who adds him on Facebook or Twitter, or subscribes to his newsletter.

How the federal government and stimulus spending discourage work

December 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A post by Hans Bader at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> Thanks to food stamps, Medicaid, and housing subsidies, and other welfare benefits, many "poor" people have far more disposable income than self-supporting households earning $40,000 to $60,000 a year. Veronique de Rugy points to a finding that "a one-parent family of three making $14,500 a year (minimum wage) has more disposable income than a family making $60,000 a year" — even excluding benefits from Supplemental Security Income. "America is now a country which punishes those middle-class people who not only try to work hard, but avoid scamming the system."
>
> […]The analysis de Rugy cites actually understates the disincentives to work, because it ignored the fact that many households that are "poor" in terms of taxable income are not poor at all once you factor in tax-free income from non-governmental sources. For example, child support is tax-free to the recipient family, no matter how huge the payments they receive (for example, a billionaire may pay several million dollars a year in child support to each of his ex-girlfriends with kids, leaving them in tax-free luxury, and under New York's child support guidelines, everyone is supposed to pay at least 17 percent of their gross income in child support for just one child, regardless of how high that income is. In Massachusetts, middle-income households pay 25 percent of gross income for just one kid — which is around a third of their after-tax income — under that state's child support guidelines).

He also talks about how the federal government encourages child support agencies to yank more children away from their parents – they get more funding that way!

Friday night funny: the woman language translator

December 17, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is pretty funny.

Happy Friday!

Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted

December 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the grass-roots conservative web site Red State. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Today, abortion giant Planned Parenthood released its 2008-2009 Annual Report.
>
> Behind the colorful graphics and happy faces is a stark number: Planned Parenthood received $363 million in government grants and contracts from 2008 to 2009 alone, all at the expense of the U.S. Taxpayer and the lives of unborn babies.
>
> **How many lives are we talking? 324,008 unborn human lives destroyed in one year. How many adoption referrals? 9,433.**

Abortion is the law of the land, but we are certainly not obligated to give them federal money to run their business. Certainly we are not obligated to give them a $363 million annual BAILOUT.

Excerpt:

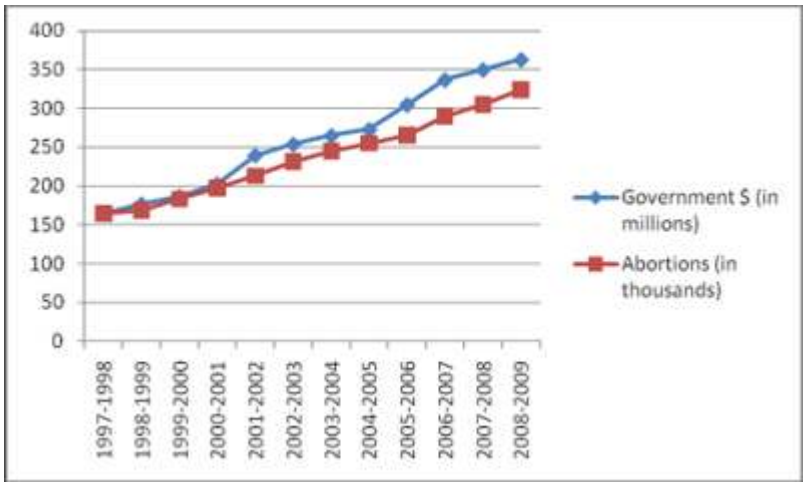

Hmmmn, it looks like the number of abortions is varying by the amount of state subsidies. I wonder how this number will change once abortions are covered by Obamacare and Obamacare is extended to even more uninsured people, and more insured people are *forced* to buy health care who don't want coverage for abortion (like pro-life men).

Social conservatives need to understand that fiscal conservatism *matters*. Evil costs money. Cut off the money, and you cut off the evil.

And any "social conservative" who supports single payer health care is rally a social liberal – anti-life and anti-marriage.

UK patients denied treatment as “public option” system makes cutbacks

December 18, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Hundreds of thousands of NHS patients are being denied routine procedures as dozens of trusts cut back on surgery, scans and other treatments in order to save money, a Daily Telegraph investigation has found.
>
> Trusts around the country are refusing to pay for operations ranging from hip replacements, to cataract removal and wisdom tooth extraction.
>
> The health service is also tightening restrictions that prevent patients undergoing procedures for lifestyle reasons.
>
> Smokers and obese patients are being denied operations until they change their habits and trusts are delaying surgery and non-emergency treatments, the Telegraph has found in the most comprehensive snapshot of NHS cuts yet.
>
> The cuts – which include the cancelling of MRI scans and x-rays – are taking place in defiance of the Coalition.

> Ministers are determined that front line services should be protected and the savings needed can be found from management costs and efficiencies.
>
> But there is growing evidence that NHS managers are sacrificing patient care instead.
>
> Doctors and nurses said the ‘grim’ results undermine the ‘myth’ that front line services are being protected and warned they were just the ‘tip of the iceberg’.
>
> The situation is predicted to get worse as the NHS struggles to save £20bn over the next four years.
>
> Although ministers have pledged to protect the health service budget and provide a real terms increase, it will not be sufficient to keep pace with growing demand and increasing costs.
>
> In addition from April next year the amount of money hospitals receive for each type of treatment will be cut by 1.5 per cent raising fears that managers will refuse to provide treatments that they make a loss on.
>
> As part of the investigation, The Telegraph had responses from almost one in three primary care trusts.
>
> Cuts were uncovered in 20 out of the 145 primary care trusts in England. Fifteen PCTs have said they are not cutting services and 11 were still undecided.
>
> […]Dr Mark Porter, Chairman of the British Medical Association’s Consultants

> Committee, said: “Each of these examples undermines the myth that the NHS has been protected from the financial crisis. These are all services that patients value.
>
> “They are by and large not being axed for clinical reasons, but as an inevitable consequence of the massive cost savings that have been imposed on the NHS.
>
> “Despite the continuing claims of real terms increases for the NHS, the reality on the ground is very different. The scale of the financial challenge facing the service is such that this is likely to be the tip of the iceberg.

Making health care “free” for patients and preventing people and businesses from making a profit on providing health care leads to higher demand and lower supply. The net result is a shortage. It’s the law of economics.

Eighteen peer-reviewed scientific publications that support intelligent design

December 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The list of eighteen papers dated 2000 or later that support ID theory is here. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Here are some from the last two years:

- Michael J. Behe, 'Experimental Evolution, Loss-Of-Function Mutations and "The First Rule Of Adaptive Evolution"', The Quarterly Review Of Biology, Volume 85, No. 4, December 2010
- A.C. McIntosh, 'Information and Entropy — Top-Down or Bottom-Up Development in Living Systems?,' International Journal of Design & Nature and Ecodynamics, Vol. 4(4):351-385 (2009)
- William A. Dembski and Robert J. Marks II, 'Bernoulli's Principle of Insufficient Reason and Conservation of Information in Computer Search', Proceedings of the 2009 IEEE International Conference on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics, San Antonio, Texas (October 2009): 2647–2652
- William A. Dembski and Robert J. Marks II, 'Conservation of Information in Search: Measuring the Cost of Success,' IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man and Cybernetics A, Systems & Humans, Vol. 39 (5):1051-1061 (September, 2009)
- William A. Dembski and Robert J. Marks II, 'The Search for a Search: Measuring the Information Cost of Higher Level Search,' Journal of Advanced Computational Intelligence and Intelligent Informatics, Vol.14, No.5, 2010, pp. 475-486
- Winston Ewert, George Montañez, William A. Dembski, Robert J. Marks II, 'Efficient Per Query Information Extraction from a Hamming Oracle,' Proceedings of the 42nd Meeting of the Southeastern Symposium on System Theory, IEEE, University of Texas at Tyler, March 7-9, 2010, pp.290-297
- Winston Ewert, William A. Dembski and Robert J. Marks II, 'Evolutionary Synthesis of Nand Logic: Dissecting a Digital Organism,' Proceedings of the 2009 IEEE International Conference on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics. San Antonio, TX, USA – October 2009, pp. 3047-3053
- Montañez G, Ewert W, Dembski WA, Marks II RJ (2010), 'A vivisection of the ev computer organism: Identifying sources of active information', BIO-Complexity 2010(3):1-6. doi:10.5048/BIO-C.2010.3

The blog post on ID.Plus has links to all the papers.

I did not see them mentioning Ann Gauger's recent paper I blogged about a while back, as well as Doug Axe's recent paper that I blogged about a while back.

What if Facebook had been around when Jesus was born?

December 19, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this cute video from Facebook.

And she also sent me this Ronald Reagan video.

Should have a bigger post up later! I got a Wii and a new LCD TV for my Dad for Christmas, so we are spending all our time going to the gym and playing Wii Sports Resort. He is beating me at about half the games. But we are talking about interesting things and I should write about some of those things pretty soon.

UPDATE: Here's a new Facebook-nativity video. This one made me laugh out loud.

How hard is it to dismiss a public school teacher in New Jersey?

December 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> As executive director of security for the Paterson, N.J., school system, one of James Smith's jobs is to try to remove teachers accused of wrongdoing from the district. That, combined with his 25 years in the Paterson Police Department, has taught him an important lesson: Trying to get rid of teachers is "10 times more difficult than any criminal case I've ever worked on," he said.
>
> One recent case the retired police captain points to is that of a special-education teacher who for years had been accused by students, parents and other teachers of hitting students. The case dragged on for four years and cost Paterson more than $400,000 to finally get the teacher dismissed. That included more than $280,000 the teacher collected in salary (even though he was no longer working) while the case was argued.
>
> Few in New Jersey attempt what Mr. Smith does. In 2008, the last year for which the state Department of Education provides statistics, only 35 tenure cases were filed in the state. Nineteen resulted in the loss of tenure. There are more than 120,000 teachers in the state, and more than 600 school districts. Paterson is one of the state's largest districts, with 52 schools and 24,000 students.
>
> Mr. Smith, 55 years old, estimates that he has filed one to two tenure charges a year—usually in cases where teachers won't resign when confronted with his allegations.
>
> […]Setting up a winnable tenure case means gathering irrefutable evidence, much as in a criminal investigation. Mr. Smith leaves no stone unturned—even traveling out of state to interview retired employees who may have witnessed a teacher's actions.
>
> "People don't realize what goes into it," he said.
>
> Sometimes, he sets up surveillance stakeouts. In one recent case, a teacher was being paid by the district to give lessons at home for two hours a day to a special-needs child who was bedridden. In fact, Mr. Smith said his videographer caught her dropping by for only a few minutes, then heading home or to a store. Another time, cameras caught a teacher who was out with back pain working vigorously in his yard.

This is one reason why parents should have a choice of schools, and receive a voucher so that they can register their child at any school that they think will teach their child the best. The public school system should have to compete for students with a robust

“private option” education system. Once public schools have to care about the needs of their customers (students and their parents) then public schools will work fine. Right now, they don’t have to care about their customers – they keep their jobs and gets raises regardless of performance. That has to stop.

Coldest December ever recorded in UK and Australia

December 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: We got linked by Gateway Pundit! Gateway Pundit is the best blog for finding news stories. Really recommend bookmarking them if you haven't already.

From Watts Up With That.

Excerpt:

> Breaking news! December can *still* be cold and snowy over parts of the Northern Hemisphere. Don't look to the American media for much information about European weather; it's about as foreign as driving on the wrong side of the road. But, in Britain, Italy, and the rest of Europe, the past several weeks have seen "*the Arctic refrigerator door*" swing wide-open.
>
> Here are some example headlines:
>
> Arctic freeze to last another month as AA warns of 'worst driving conditions imaginable' for Christmas getaways: Mail Online: "With temperatures expected to fall to -15c (5f), the Met Office said this is 'almost certain' to become the coldest December since records began in 1910."
>
> Europe travel mayhem as arctic freeze strikes again: AFP: "In Italy, rare snowfall disrupted the tourist destinations of Pisa and Florence, forced both airports to close and severely disrupted traffic and the region's rail network."

Meanwhile, here is MORE evidence of global warming on the other side of the planet.

Excerpt:

> Parts of the state recorded their coldest December mornings in several decades on Monday as summer snow fell in the Snowy Mountains, wild winds rattled the coast, and more than 500 people were still cut off by the worst flooding in years.
>
> The State Emergency Service (SES) received 74 calls for help from people in the Illawarra, Sydney and the Blue Mountains as gusts of up to 100kmh brought tree branches crashing down and damaged roofs.
>
> Temperatures plummeted to 4C at Parkes Airport in central NSW, 10 degrees below average and the coldest December morning in 54 years, The Weather Channel says.
>
> Coonamble in northern NSW recorded 7C – the coldest December morning in 12 years while Trangie, northwest of Dubbo, had 6C – the coldest December morning in 42 years.
>
> To make matters worse, the Bureau of Meteorology is predicting an unseasonably gloomy Christmas, with rain forecast for just about every part of the state between December 24 and Boxing Day.

And more global warming in Europe.

Excerpt:

> In Germany, Frankfurt airport operator Fraport said 560 flights had been canceled by Sunday afternoon and a large snow front coming in could mean more cancellations.
>
> At Germany's second largest airport in Munich, about 75 flights were canceled on Sunday out of 1,100 in all, mostly due to problems at other airports such as Amsterdam, Paris and Brussels, a spokesman said. Planes destined for London were being diverted to Munich and other German airports.
>
> Many trains were also delayed or canceled and the speed limit for intercity train travel was restricted across Germany.
>
> Snow blanketed northern France and authorities mobilized light armored personnel carriers in some areas to help motorists stranded on roadsides by the white stuff.
>
> Around 700,000 people had been expected to travel through Paris' two main airports over the weekend. But at the biggest, Roissy Charles de Gaulle, 40 percent of flights were canceled and over 5,000 people were stranded. At Orly, the city's second airport, 20 percent of flights were canceled.
>
> In Paris, the Eiffel Tower was closed because of the snow and a pop concert by Lady Gaga due to be held on Sunday was canceled because restrictions on heavy trucks in the Paris region prevented the show's equipment from arriving on time.

I am not so sure that this whole scheme to impose state control on the free market and individual consumption is working. Maybe they should claim that driving cars and running businesses and having babies is causing runaway global cooling, instead.

MUST-READ: Correcting the economic myths that liberals/leftists believe

December 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a nice New York Post. (H/T Mary)

Full text:

> **According to Barack Obama, "The arguments of liberals are more often grounded in reason and fact." But according to Margaret Thatcher, "The facts of life are conservative." Who's right?**
>
> Myth: The deficit was caused by Bush's tax cuts.
>
> Fact: For over four decades, 1960 through 2000, federal revenues averaged 18.2% of Gross Domestic Product and the trend was virtually flat. The final Bush tax rates became effective in 2003. In 2006 and 2007, well after the new tax rates were in effect, federal revenues were 18.2% and 18.5% of GDP, above historical levels. The federal government collected over half a trillion dollars more in 2007 than it did in 2000.
>
> Myth: Republicans spent like drunken sailors.
>
> Fact: Federal spending from 1960 through 2000 averaged 20.3% of GDP, with a slightly upward trend. The average over all Bush years, 2001 through 2008, was 19.6% of GDP – below the historical average. The 2001-2008 average deficit was also below the 1960-2000 average.
>
> Myth: Republicans exploded the federal debt.
>
> Fact: Per the US Constitution, "all bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives." Democrats controlled the House from 1955 through 1994, leaving the federal debt held by the public at 49.2% of GDP. Republicans then controlled the House from 1995 through 2006 and left it at 36.5% of GDP — below the level left by Democrat Congresses.
>
> At the end of Bush's presidency the debt was 40.2% of GDP. Now, two years post-Bush and four years of a Democrat Congress, the debt is 64% of GDP, the highest it's been since Harry Truman was paying off World War II.
>
> Myth: The deficit is due to the Iraq War.
>
> Fact: The Congressional Budget Office calculated that the Iraq War cost $709 billion from 2003 through 2010. Total federal deficits over those eight years added up to $4.944 trillion, with the bulk of that ($2.968 trillion) added in just the last two years, after Bush was out of office.
>
> By contrast, federal spending on education over 2003-2010 was $792 billion, and Obama's stimulus will cost $814 billion. How often do you hear that our deficit problem was caused by education spending?

Myth: The Reagan and Bush tax cuts only benefited the rich.

Fact: According to the CBO, “The lowest three income quintiles have seen declines in their average tax rates since the early 1980s .¤.¤. The average tax rate on the top quintile has fluctuated more, with periods of increases and decreases, and was somewhat lower in 2007 than in 1979.”

In fact, the top quintile (top 20% of taxpayers) paid about 25% of its income in federal taxes in 2007, about the same as it did in 1982. By contrast, the middle and bottom quintiles paid less than 15% and 5%, respectively, both lower than at any time since 1979. The bottom two quintiles had negative average income taxes – they received more in tax credits than they paid in income taxes. Per the CBO, “In 2007, about 35 percent of households did not owe any federal income taxes.”

Myth: The deficit is due to military spending.

Fact: If federal military spending had been eliminated in its entirety in 2009, the deficit would still have been $776 billion, a historical high. Defense spending is less than one fifth of the federal budget and less than 5% of GDP. When the economy was doing quite well in the 1960s, defense spending was twice as high in those terms. In fact, President Bush presided over smaller defense budgets (as a fraction of GDP) than all presidents from 1941 through 1993.

Myth: “The last eight years,” “the last ten years,” “the last decade,” “the lost decade.”

Fact: From 2000 through 2007 real GDP grew 2.4% annually and real disposable personal income grew 2.8% annually. The economy added 5.5 million net new jobs in those years. The unemployment rate stood at 4.4% in May 2007, just before the newly elected, Democrat-controlled Congress raised the minimum wage.

From August 2003 through December 2007, over eight million net new jobs were created.

Fiscal year 2007 was the last one under a federal budget written by a Republican-controlled Congress, and marked the peak in real GDP, jobs, and the stock market. The bad economy of the “last ten years” was all in the last three years – under federal budgets written by a Democrat-controlled Congress.

Myth: Bush deregulated banks, causing the financial crisis. Fact: President Bush did not deregulate banks, or much of anything else. He increased staffing and spending on economic regulation more than President Clinton did. The number of pages in the Federal Register averaged more in Bush’s first term than at any prior time in US history. He signed the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, the most sweeping regulation of business since the New Deal.

The New York Times, no cheerleader for President Bush, said in 2003, “The Bush administration is rightly pushing for the Treasury Department to regulate the two

> giants [Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae], along with the network of federal home loan banks." It was Barney Frank and other Democrats who helped kill such regulation. Frank said, "These two entities, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, are not facing any kind of financial crisis."
>
> Not a Myth: The above facts are matters of historical record. The sources of many myths are computer models rather than results from the real world. Remember the economic model that said the unemployment rate would not go above 8% if Obama's stimulus was passed? The stimulus was passed, yet the unemployment rate went above 10% and has been above 9% for the last 19 months.
>
> The models that say extending today's tax rates would add to the deficit assume that tax rates have no effect on taxpayer behavior. That is an assumption virtually all economists, and most non-economists, know is false. Yet Congress requires the CBO to base its predictions on that bogus assumption.
>
> The reality is that government spending is the problem. It is absurdly above historical levels right now and is unsustainable. It is driven by payments for individuals (64% of 2010 federal outlays) and entitlements, especially health care spending. ObamaCare did not bend the health-care cost curve down, either; it bent it up.
>
> We have to go with Margaret Thatcher on this one.

What a great find by Mary!

Let's re-post a Margaret Thatcher video and bask in her glorious competence and intelligence.

[youtub=http://www.youtube.com/v/okHGCz6xxiw]

She had a background in the hard sciences, like Angela Merkel, another conservative.

I think if Christian women want to impress men, they should talk like the Iron Lady. Liberalism / leftism is really just selfishness, envy and blaming others for your own choices. What man wants to marry someone like that?

Another cute Facebook nativity video from Don Surber

December 20, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this one here on Don Surber's blog.

The first one is here in case you missed it.

What does the common practice of withholding sex reveal about women?

December 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager features a lot of discussions about male-female relationships on his show, particularly during the male-female hour. I think this is one of the parts of his show that I really like best, because he knows what he is talking about.

He did a two part series a while back on 1) male sexuality and 2) what women should do about it within a marriage.

Part 1 is here.

Excerpt:

> It is an axiom of contemporary marital life that if a wife is not in the mood, she need not have sex with her husband. Here are some arguments why a woman who loves her husband might want to rethink this axiom.
>
> First, women need to recognize how a man understands a wife's refusal to have sex with him: A husband knows that his wife loves him first and foremost by her willingness to give her body to him. This is rarely the case for women. Few women know their husband loves them because he gives her his body (the idea sounds almost funny). This is, therefore, usually a revelation to a woman. Many women think men's natures are similar to theirs, and this is so different from a woman's nature, that few women know this about men unless told about it.
>
> This is a major reason many husbands clam up. A man whose wife frequently denies him sex will first be hurt, then sad, then angry, then quiet. And most men will never tell their wives why they have become quiet and distant. They are afraid to tell their wives. They are often made to feel ashamed of their male sexual nature, and they are humiliated (indeed emasculated) by feeling that they are reduced to having to beg for sex.
>
> When first told this about men, women generally react in one or more of five ways…

He then explains the 5 ways that women respond to this.

Here's one:

> 1. You have to be kidding. That certainly isn't my way of knowing if he loves me. There have to be deeper ways than sex for me to show my husband that I love him.

And this is the common mistake that some feminist women make because they think that men are just hairy women with no feelings and desires of their own that are distincly theirs. In the past, *all* women understood how men are different than women, but today almost no younger feminist women do. In fact, many younger women today struggle with

the idea that there is anything different about men that they need to learn. The only thing that they need to know is what makes women happy, and that it is everyone else's job to make women happy, so that women can then behave nicely (whatever that means). Younger feminist women today often think that they only need to be in touch with their own feelings – and that men and children simply have to get used to the idea that they have no right to make any demands on a woman – she has no moral obligations in a marriage.

Here's another from the list:

> 4. You have it backwards. If he truly loved me, he wouldn't expect sex when I'm not in the mood.

I think this whole problem of feminist women not understanding men, and of demeaning male feelings and values, is very serious. In my opinion, there is a whole lot of work that needs to be done by feminism-influenced women in order to fix this problem. The best place to learn about this is in Dr. Laura's book "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands". It's like an application form for a serious relationship. Sex is one thing, but a serious man should insist that a woman take him seriously – and take marriage and children seriously. Pre-marital sex, having fun, getting drunk, and going out, etc. are not the right foundation for a relationship that is defined by the need for mutual self-sacrifice. There is no such thing as a "feminist" marriage – marriage is not about selfishness and playing the victim.

I actually had a conversation with a Christian woman once who said that women should not be obligated to do things that they didn't feel like doing. I asked her if men were obligated to go to work when they didn't feel like going. She said yes, and acted as though I were crazy for asking. I just laughed, because she didn't even see the inconsistency. Many young feminist women today just don't understand men, and they don't want to understand them. They just want what they want and in the quickest way possible. Understand the needs of men and children, or how feminist-inspired laws discourage men from committing to marriage and parenting, are of no interest at all.

Part 2 is here.

Excerpt:

> Here are eight reasons for a woman not to allow not being in the mood for sex to determine whether she denies her husband sex.

He then explains the eight reasons.

Here's one of them:

> 7. Many contemporary women have an almost exclusively romantic notion of sex: It should always be mutually desired and equally satisfying or one should not engage in it. Therefore, if a couple engages in sexual relations when he wants it and she does not, the act is "dehumanizing" and "mechanical." Now, ideally, every time a husband and wife have sex, they would equally desire it and equally

> enjoy it. But, given the different sexual natures of men and women, this cannot always be the case. If it is romance a woman seeks — and she has every reason to seek it — it would help her to realize how much more romantic her husband and her marriage are likely to be if he is not regularly denied sex, even of the non-romantic variety.

This makes the point that many young feminist women today do not really understand that they are, in a sense, capable of changing their husband's conduct by the way they act themselves. I think that younger feminist women seem to think that their role in the relationship is to sort of do nothing and wait for the man to serve them. But relationships take work, and they take work from both participants.

At the end of the article, Prager makes a general point about women that I think needs to be emphasized over and over and over:

> That solution is for a wife who loves her husband — if she doesn't love him, mood is not the problem — to be guided by her mind, not her mood, in deciding whether to deny her husband sex.

I think that is an excellent question to ask a woman. What does it mean to love a man? I was forwarded one amazing response from a Calvinist woman recently in which she explained several things that she wanted to do to meet a particular man's needs and make his life easier, and what she was prepared to do *now* in order to show him that she really could do handle the role. I think that she said these things out of sympathy and understanding of that man, and that was very encouraging.

But I think that kind of seriousness about taking of someone else as they really are, self-sacrificially, is rare. And it makes me wonder what people think that marriage is when they get into the church and make vows that, ostensibly, will require self-sacrifice. What do women think that marriage is? What is the goal of it? What makes a marriage successful? Why do women think that men marry? What do men get out of marriage? What are the woman's responsibilities to the man in a marriage? I think these are questions that men should ask women. And the should not be satisfied with glib answers. Men should demand that books be read, that essays be written, that skills be developed, and that the woman's life experiences show that she has understood what will be expected from her and why.

I think that it's a good idea for men to try to get married, but they should be careful to make sure that the woman they choose is sensitive to their needs, just as men ought to be sensitive to the needs of women.

The New York Times explains why the leftist elite supports narcissism and divorce

December 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful romantic story endorsed by the New York Times, which represents the worldview of elite leftists. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> WHAT happens when love comes at the wrong time?
>
> Carol Anne Riddell and John Partilla met in 2006 in a pre-kindergarten classroom. They both had children attending the same Upper West Side school. They also both had spouses.
>
> […]Mrs. Riddell was a reporter and anchor on WNBC television in New York and a mother of two.[…]Mr. Partilla, then a 42-year-old triathlete and a president of media sales at Time Warner, recognized a kindred dynamo. "She's such a force," he said. "She rocks back and forth on her feet as if she can't contain her energy as she's talking to you."
>
> The connection was immediate, but platonic. In fact, as they became friends so did their spouses. There were dinners, Christmas parties and even family vacations together.
>
> So Ms. Riddell was surprised to find herself eagerly looking for Mr. Partilla at school events — and missing him when he wasn't there. "I didn't admit to anyone how I felt," she said. "To even think about it was disruptive and disloyal."
>
> What she didn't know was that he was experiencing similar emotions. "First I tried to deny it," Mr. Partilla said. "Then I tried to ignore it."
>
> But it was hard to ignore their easy rapport. They got each other's jokes and finished each other's sentences. They shared a similar rhythm in the way they talked and moved. The very things one hopes to find in another person, but not when you're married to someone else.
>
> Ms. Riddell said she remembered crying in the shower, asking: "Why am I being punished? Why did someone throw him in my path when I can't have him?"

> […]As Mr. Partilla saw it, their options were either to act on their feelings and break up their marriages or to deny their feelings and live dishonestly.

> […]"I did a terrible thing as honorably as I could," said Mr. Partilla, who moved out of his home, reluctantly leaving his three children.

> […]The pain he had predicted pervaded both of their lives as they faced distraught children and devastated spouses, while the grapevine buzzed and neighbors ostracized them.

> […]All they had were their feelings, which Ms. Riddell described as "unconditional and all-encompassing."
>
> "I came to realize it wasn't a punishment, it was a gift," she said. "But I had to earn it. Were we brave enough to hold hands and jump?"
>
> […]"I didn't believe in the word soul mate before, but now I do," said Mr. Partilla.
>
> […]"My kids are going to look at me and know that I am flawed and not perfect, but also deeply in love," she said. "We're going to have a big, noisy, rich life, with more love and more people in it."

Just FYI, I am using the word "adultery" for this because I consider carrying on an emotional affair while you are married to be adultery.

I think that this view is very popular among liberal elite circles, such as New York city. These elite liberals get very impatient with morality once they have risen to a certain level. They tend to want to elevate the pursuit of happiness (the "right" to be happy) over moral obligations to other family members who depend on them. There is no transcendent purpose for marriage, on their view – it is just another thing that is supposed to make them happy, like cars, vacations and careers. It doesn't really matter what happens to the children. The leftist elites blunder their way into marriages thinking that marriage is just another accessory added to their exciting glamorous lives, like triathlons and careers in news media. (Or yoga, recycling, animal rights crusading, and vegetarianism in other cases). Then they find a way to weasel out of their marriages so that they can be happier and more fulfilled with more glamorous and exciting partners. But what is the deeper issue underlying this view of marriage? After all, people didn't use to treat marriage as being about personal fulfillment… what happened?

The root cause

Obviously the people in our story are either functional atheists or outright atheists, since they are unrepentant adulterers. So why do atheists struggle so much with staying married? Let's see.

You know how I am always talking about how atheism doesn't rationally ground self-sacrificial moral obligations? Well this instance of adultery is exactly the kind of example that I am talking about. The problems with atheism and morality arises when an atheist is confronted with a desire to be happy that goes against what his society in that time and place considers to be moral. On atheism, right and wrong are *relative* to an arbitrary time and place in which the atheist was born – they are just like traffic laws and clothing fashions. It's *arbitrary*. And no atheist in the world is going to sacrifice a moment of happiness because of *arbitrary* customs and conventions that change over time and place – as long as they can escape the consequences. The whole point of atheism is to dismiss moral obligations, to look down on those who are moral as stupid, and to pursue selfish happiness in this life. But what happens when atheists face a "moral obligation" (as defined by culture) that goes against their self-interest, i.e. – their *feelings*? Well, the moral obligations go out the window – as long as they can avoid the social costs and punishments of their society (which is why the left is always so busy breaking down the

Judeo-Christian morality of parents in the secular leftist public schools – they don't want your kids to judge them for things like adultery and divorce). This is why the left support same-sex marriage – they want to redefine marriage so that it is based on the feelings and needs of selfish adults, not on moral obligations to children. The left doesn't care about born children any more than they care about unborn children – *they care about themselves*. And they spin these self-serving "i'm the brave victim of your silly cultural prejudices" stories to minimize their culpability for the damage they cause. They are inventing a new standard of morality – one that glorifies selfishness and the triumph of the strong over the weak (children, born and unborn).

On the Christian worldview, God is real, and he has a design plan for us. Part of that design plan is that we were made to honor our relationship with him. Honoring that relationship with him means treating others a certain way, especially our spouses and children. We have to train our whole lives in order to be able to shoulder the burdens of family relationships – to our spouse and to our children. If a man neglects his education or his employment history or his investment portfolio, then he cannot be a provider. His feelings on those obligations don't matter. If he wants to marry, he has a God-given obligation to provide. If a woman reads "The Shack" instead of "On Guard", votes Democrat because she thinks that the Comedy Channel is more reliable than Fox News, and sleeps around a lot in college after freely choosing to make herself drunk, then she has failed to prepare for her role as a mother and wife. Denying yourself happiness as you prepare for moral obligations in a marriage is *not rational* in a godless universe. If God does not exist, then there is no way you ought to be, and no way marriage ought to be, and no way children ought to be treated. Children are the biggest victims of all – if the leftists aren't killing them outright through abortion, then they are voting for no-fault divorce, single mother welfare, same-sex marriage, etc. in order to encourage selfish adults to deny children relationships with their two biological parents.

The problem with the left is that they want the prestige of marriage, but they won't give up their selfish moral relativism. But how can marriage, which is built on the idea of vows and self-sacrificial moral obligations, be entered into by non-theistic self-centered leftists who are guided only by their self-interest and their emotions? It can't. What they should have done is invented a new relationship, like cohabitation, and entered into that. But what they did, and what same-sex marriage activists are trying to do, is entering into marriage and then changing marriage into cohabitation by law. This is what conservatives mean when we say that no-fault divorce and same-sex marriage change marriage. If one party can dissolve a marriage unilaterally, then marriage has no meaning. If marriage can be had by people in non-exclusive relationships, then marriage has no meaning. They should have invented somethings else – something consistent with a worldview that denies self-sacrifice and moral obligations to children.

Anyway, read the whole disgusting, self-serving New York Times story, and leave me some comments.

Is the secular left repectful of academic freedom?

December 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A story from the Vancouver Sun. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Since 2006, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has been targeting small, private, accredited, and invariably Christian, universities. Its method is to emit vague accusations that codes of conduct of such institutions somehow violate CAUT's definition of academic freedom. It then appoints its own "commissioners" to "investigate" whether the schools are guilty as charged.
>
> Last year, it used these tactics against Trinity Western University in the Fraser Valley. More recently, it has turned it sights on a Mennonite school in Manitoba, a Baptist academy in the Maritimes and similar Christian schools across Canada.
>
> What's risible about CAUT's singling out of these Christian schools is that, by its own admission, it has absolutely no legislative or administrative authority to conduct such investigations.
>
> CAUT has been around since 1951, primarily as a labour advisory body for academic staff. It also plays the role of equal opportunity foghorn on campus free-speech issues. Demonstrating classic mission creep, though, it has appointed itself Canada's guardian of academic freedom and launched its campaign to root out attempts by universities to "ensure an ideologically or religiously homogeneous staff."
>
> The meaning of academic freedom is what CAUT says it means. A CAUT document has a footnote to give authority to what it calls the "conventional understanding of academic freedom" — and then cites itself as the authority.
>
> CAUT's campaign impugns the legal rights of faith-based institutions to require employees to conduct themselves in ways consistent with their affiliation to the organization's religious mission. Settled human rights law and religious freedom rulings from the Supreme Court of Canada entitle such organizations — non-academic and academic alike — to do just that.
>
> As Don Hutchinson, senior counsel for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, said recently about the case of Heintz versus Christian Horizons: "Christian institutions … have particular rights that permit them to engage in selective hiring, requiring their employees to agree with their mission, beliefs, and behaviours — provided the institution adequately explains … why they are essential to the performance of the individual's work . . . ." Such rights are not, Hutchinson stressed, special exemptions or loopholes or simply sneaky ways to impose "Christian morality" within the academy. They are legal rights, straight up.

> Sending unauthorized “commissioners” to snoop into entirely legal conduct is not just impudent. It offends the very fundamentals of freedom.

This is the kind of danger that needs to be on the map in Christian circles. Is it?

Wes Widner wonders if there are worse things for children than spanking

December 21, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a magnificent, must-read, post. (H/T Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> I got into a discussion a while back about the legitimacy of corporal punishment. Liberal parents are fond of labeling any form of punishment child abuse[1].
>
> Corporal punishment aside, lets look at the notion of child abuse a bit more.

That’s all you get. The post is amazing. Go read it. You will not be disappointed.

And I think that it is here where there is a way for Christians to distinguish themselves by caring so much about children that they are willing to restrain their pursuit of pleasure to make sure that children get a safe, stable and moral environment to grow up in.

Senator Tom Coburn lists some bad examples of government waste

December 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story.

Excerpt:

> Coburn, R-Muskogee, whose office regularly churns out reports mocking federal projects and programs, said Monday that "cutting wasteful and low-priority spending from the budget is not only sensible, but essential."
>
> "In today's economy, we can't afford to spend nearly $2 million to showcase neon signs no longer in use at Las Vegas casinos; nor can Congress and federal agencies afford to spend nearly $1 billion a year on unnecessary printing costs."
>
> The 100 projects cited on Monday tread some familiar ground for Coburn reports — road signs paid for with stimulus funds, research projects that sound like folly — and are mostly domestic. There is no mention of Iraq or Afghanistan, despite government reports documenting millions lost to fraud and waste.
>
> Topping Coburn's list is the conclusion of a FOX News story that the Department of Veterans Affairs spends $175 million each year to maintain buildings it can't use, in some cases because they're in such disrepair.
>
> Other items on the list:
>
> • $217,000 for a University of California and Stanford University study on when and why political candidates are ambiguous.
>
> • $90,000 to fund promotion of the Vidalia onion, including $60,000 for a campaign timed to coincide with the release of a Shrek movie.
>
> • $2.5 million on the Census Bureau's television ad that aired during the Super Bowl to promote the head-count but left many viewers scratching their heads in confusion.
>
> • $465,000 for an international AIDS conference in Austria.
>
> • $35 million paid in fraudulent Medicare and Medicaid claims to an alleged Armenian crime ring.
>
> • $48 million for a streetcar system in Atlanta that runs the same route as the city's subway system.
>
> • $900,000 to settle sexual harassment claims against a former housing director in Philadelphia.
>
> • And $28 million to print "rarely used" paper copies of the Congressional Record.

Here's a recent post from the Washington Examiner that compares Democrats and

Republicans on pork barrel spending. (H/T Gateway Pundit via Muddling)

Excerpt:

> Press coverage of the budget frenzy on Capitol Hill has suggested that pork-barrel earmark spending is still a bipartisan problem, that after months of self-righteous rhetoric about fiscal discipline, Republicans and Democrats remain equal-opportunity earmarkers.
>
> It's not true. A new analysis by a group of federal-spending watchdogs shows a striking imbalance between the parties when it comes to earmark requests. Democrats remain raging spenders, while Republicans have made enormous strides in cleaning up their act.
>
> In the Senate, the GOP made only one-third as many earmark requests as Democrats for 2011, and in the House, Republicans have nearly given up earmarking altogether — while Democrats roll on.
>
> The watchdog groups — Taxpayers for Common Sense, WashingtonWatch.com, and Taxpayers Against Earmarks — counted total earmark requests in the 2011 budget. Those requests were made by lawmakers earlier this year, but Democratic leaders, afraid that their party's spending priorities might cost them at the polls, decided not to pass a budget before the Nov. 2 elections. This week, they distilled those earmark requests — threw some out, combined others — into the omnibus bill that was under consideration in the Senate until Majority Leader Harry Reid pulled it Thursday night. While that bill was loaded with spending, looking back at the original earmark requests tells us a lot about the spending inclinations of both parties.
>
> In the 2011 House budget, the groups found that House Democrats requested 18,189 earmarks, which would cost the taxpayers a total of $51.7 billion, while House Republicans requested just 241 earmarks, for a total of $1 billion.

This is why stimulus spending, which is advocated by Democrats, costs jobs. Democrats waste money. They take money out of the job-creating sector of the economy, and they waste on government spending. If private companies wasted money like government, they would go out of business. Unfortunately, government can waste money like this all the time, and they just borrow more money. When you hear a Democrat say that they want to "invest" money they stole from businesses and workers in order to "stimulate" the economy, what they are talking about is wasting money and/or buying votes from their favored special interest groups.

Commenter Rose accepts male leadership in marriage

December 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I decided to write again on the question of whether women should be willing to have sex with their husbands when they are not in the mood for sex. Commenter Rose wrote a passionate statement recognizing that men need to be the leaders in the home. I kept reading the comment expecting to find some point where we disagreed, but I could not find one. I was especially pleased to see that she was very careful about qualifying her view so that she was not coming across as a doormat. Men need to be leaders, and it's the woman's job to make sure that they can be leaders without opening up the door for men to abuse the power that they are entrusted with.

Anyway, here is the comment by Rose. (I broke it up into paragraphs)

Thank you for posting this blog.

What I have to say is more than likely, not going to be very popular with the other women who have posted, and I want to give a brief bit of background information. I have been married twice. In both marriages, I was the leader. I was the leader spiritually, financially, emotionally, intellectually (and that isn't saying a lot), and physically. Both of my ex-husbands wanted me to be the one to always initiate the sex and they had this desire for ME to be in charge. I am a very independent woman and in every area, I took the lead, except (as much as either of them would have enjoyed for me to) in the bedroom.

Now that I am not in either marriage and I have had the opportunity to look back, I can safely tell you that being in a leadership position is NOT where I was created to be. I honestly feel that God created woman FOR man. In Genesis 2:20-22 we see these words: " But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib[l] he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man." It is very clear in that scripture that WOMAN was created to be MAN's helper.

Before I go any further, I want to state for the record that I know that above all, our purpose is to glorify God and to build God's Kingdom, and I do take that very seriously. I do not worship the man in my life, but I feel that my purpose, after the Kingdom work, is to please the man God has blessed in my life.

I am in a new relationship that is above and beyond the answers to all of my prayers. I have taken a vow of abstinence and that vow is not only honored, but expected of me. This man is a wonderful Christian man and has the need to be the leader in the home. For me, having a man who leads is not just a want or desire, but a NEED. We have discussed the very topic of your blog and I strongly feel that there is NO reason that after he is my husband, he should be told no to sex. My greatest pleasure, as a woman, is making him happy, pleasing him, and I feel more alive, more cherished, more protected than I have

ever felt in my life. Paul gives us very clear on how we are to treat each other, as a married couple, sexually and why. (1 Corinthians 7:3-5: The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.) This scripture relates in clear understanding that the ONLY reason either husband or wife should "deprive" each other is when it is mutual (meaning both agree) and for devoting yourselves to prayer. This doesn't say that we deprive our husbands because we aren't in the mood. Perhaps if a woman isn't in the mood, then she should explain this to her husband and they could take time to pray that together for understanding and for an agreement.

Sex is an emotional thing for both men and women, but our emotions are different. As maturing Christian adults, we should be able to recognize that about each other and communicate with our spouses what we feel and think. I am so glad that, in our relationship, we are taking the time, before hand, to relay those feelings, those insights about each other. We have found ways, even before we are married to practice and discuss him being the leader. Some of the things we have incorporated (even in our different homes) are:

> - I discuss decisions with him before I make them. He listens to what I have to say, we discuss it, and he gives me his opinion. I have not found a time, yet, that I didn't see things his way after we discussed them and prayed about them;
> - I know what his tastes are as far as clothing and even though he has not "insisted", I find myself wearing the things I know he would like or approve of, and it makes me feel wonderful to know I am doing something to please him;
> - We discuss financial matters and have begun to set up our future budget to have the same goal of paying off debts in our sights.
> - We are both teachers of God's Word, but he still teaches me so much and helps me keep my focus on the woman God has created me to be. Likewise, he expects me to respectfully let him know if he is making decisions or acting in a manner that is not glorifying God.

As I see Eph. 5:22-33, A man may not always "feel like" submitting to God's will, but it isn't an option, it isn't a request, it is a command. Husbands may not always feel like loving their wives, but again, it is a command. Wives may not always "feel like" submitting to their husbands or the Lord, but it doesn't say "submit when you feel like it." This again, is not given as an option, it isn't a request, it is a command, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord."

For me, and I know that most women will not agree, I think the idea of being available to my husband whenever he wants me is a very sexy, very exciting, very natural thing. I also believe that if I am available to him anytime he feels the desire for me, then when I have a desire for him, that need will also be fulfilled. According to WintryKnights reply, in today's society, I am a minority. I go against the grain, and that is where I know I belong. I AM pro-life, pro-family, pro-guns (and I hunt and fish, too), pro-male, accept sex roles, focus on raising children, am chaste, court on substance, (and I must respectfully disagree on the fun statement because we have had a blast getting to really know each other), am very serious about the challenges to marriage posed by socialism and secularism, study apologetics (we actually do this together and discuss it, I am for small government, small business, small education, small taxes, males teaching males and females teaching female, and so on.

In the past, I think I have wanted that Prince Charming or Knight (no offense, Wintry) to come riding in to save the day. The more I have grown and thought about it, I am under the impression that arranged marriages are not such a bad thing. I feel like my Father, the King of all Kings, has arranged a marriage for His princess. He has let me know that I don't need a prince or a knight, but I need someone with KINGLY characteristics, someone who can lead, someone who can rule, someone who can follow HIS lead and be an example to me and our family.

In submitting, to my "future King", he has made it very clear that he does not want a doormat. He wants a woman who has an opinion and doesn't mind sharing it, and he has to know that I can make the right decisions for our family on a whim when he may not be there to help in those decisions. He has to know that he can trust me to be a portrait of what a Christian woman looks like, to his children. His sons need to know what God's word says about submission and so does his daughter. What better way to teach them than through our example.

I have found so much freedom in submission. I am truly happy in a relationship for the first time in my life and I look very forward to our future together as his wife to bring him all of the desires of his heart, his mind, and his body!!

In Christ,
Rose

Now when I read that comment, I immediately cautioned her to test this new guy severely and to be certain that he could be trusted with this much authority, and that he was capable of doing his job as the husband and father.

I wrote:

> Now obviously you are going to have to vet this man like crazy before giving the lead role in the relationship – so please make sure you do that. But I have a feeling that you know this and are willing to take the responsibility for making a good decision. The time to check the man to see if he can handle being the quarterback is before the marriage. Test him every way you can – insist on seeing evidence that he can do the job of protecting, providing and

> moral/spiritual leading. Don’t marry someone who hasn’t demonstrated that he can fulfill his obligations.

And I hasten to add that I think that submitting to a man should never be done when the man is committing one of the four As: adultery, assault, abandonment or addiction. But honestly, I think she provided enough background there to see that her basic bias is in favor of submitting to male leadership because she understands men. Men like to get involved with women and start homes when they feel like they have a special role as leader of the home.

Having said that, there is nothing in the idea of male leadership that says that a women can’t make the man spend a year of his life completely abstinent in a courtship with her where the focus of the interactions is on the man proving that he can do without sex for two years while he is courting the woman. Courtship is the time to make sure that the man has self-control and will not be a brutish beast. That’s why we have that “no sex before marriage” rule.

Women: Make the man prove himself before you decide whether to give him the leadership of the home. Look at his resume. Look at his portfolio. Interview his former girlfriends. Interview the fathers of his former girlfriends. Be thorough. You are responsible for making a good choice. It’s your JOB to read everything, understand everything, and choose wisely. Making a wise choice is how you serve God. Choose what’s right. Don’t choose what you like. Don’t choose what makes you happy.

If things go wrong in a relationship, who is to blame?

December 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was having a discussion with a Christian woman last night (who can comment, if she likes) about who is to blame in relationships when things go wrong.

My basic contention is that whenever something goes wrong in a relationship, then the person whose expectations are dashed is to blame.

The reason why I think this is because you have to take people as you find them and then vet them as if they were job applicants applying for the job of marriage. The job of marriage has very specific requirements, and these requirements are objective. Someone is going to have to raise the kids, someone is going to have to cook the meals, someone is going to have to earn the bulk of the money, someone is going to have to deal with the beasties that invade the home. The goal of the relationship is not to test the person to see if they are "fun" or whether your friends are envious. The goal of the relationship is to test the person for the role they will play in the marriage.

So consider the case where a man has sex with and then dumps a woman, who expected him to marry her and have children. Who is to blame? On my view, it's the woman who is to blame. The man was bad before she got there, and you cannot expect a bad man to act good, just because you imagine that he will. Imagination is not the equivalent of passing an interview with the woman's father, and getting the father's approval. Imagination is not a 12-year resume with no gaps. Imagination is not a $500,000 investment portfolio. Imagination is not a paid-off home. Imagination is not a handful of reference letters from his former girlfriends. If the woman relied on her imagination, then the woman is to blame for the man's bad conduct.

Sometimes, what I've noticed is that women tend to focus on the bad thing that the men do that is counter to their expectations, because they project a standard of morality onto the man that the man expressly repudiates. In fact, I have actually met atheistic women who think that atheistic men should act based on some standard of morality. But the problem is that neither the atheist woman nor the atheist man accepts any objective standard of morality. If there is no designer to the universe, then the universe is an accident, and there is no way that we OUGHT to be. If there is no way we OUGHT to be, then there is no point in expecting anyone to be any way – it's just your opinion against their opinion. So you have a woman expecting a man to act according to some standard that she doesn't think is real by her own worldview!And meanwhile, the good men are passed by because we are "too strict", "too religious", "too moral", "too chaste", "too sober", "too predictable" and "there is no chemistry". (Chemistry = emotional craziness)

What this means is that women end up feeling free to drink as much as they want, have sex with whoever they want on the basis of appearance and popularity, and then expect that sex will cause the man to immediately propose with a diamond ring, a massive expensive wedding in Hawaii, a huge palatial home, and so on. The moral laws that might block a woman from doing bad things are "too strict" for her to follow, but they expect

men to follow moral rules that they don't follow themselves! Women actually believe that drunken hook-up sex will cause really immoral men to drop their hedonistic, atheistic lifestyles and act completely differently than they were before. What causes women to think this? It isn't reason and evidence, that's for sure. I think they think that men who are good looking and popular have some store of hidden virtue that is unlocked by having sex with the woman who is their "soul mate". Somehow, a magical spell will come over a self-centered, muscle-bound lout and he will be filled with thoughts of marriage and babies. Women actually think that! And what happens is that after choosing the wrong man and getting pregnant, etc. with him, they blame the man for the subsequent abortions, affairs, domestic violence, etc. In short, the problem is this: women go to the pet store, pass by all the dogs and cats and bird, and bring home a trendy and attractive alligator, who then promptly bites each of their limbs off. And then the women complain that the alligator is very unfair and immoral. Who is really to blame here? The alligator, who is just doing what comes naturally for alligators, or the woman who passed the good pets by and brought home a monster?

It sounds like I am blaming women, but I'm not – but she wasn't convinced. So I invented a new example to show how men could be to blame, unlikely though that may be, since men are perfect in every way. This time, I imagined what would happen if a stripper-gram woman showed up at my door. I actually told the woman I was chatting with that I had to go because a stripper-gram HAD shown up. I told the woman how attractive the stripper was, and how I was in love with her, and wanted to marry her. How she undoubtedly was very wealthy, and well educated, and how she would help me to raise little Michele Bachmanns and William Lane Craigs. I waxed eloquently on her B.A. in integrated science with a minor in philosophy of religion, M.A. in economics and her J.D. in defamation law. All of which I had no evidence for, except for the feelings of love aroused by the site of her naked cleavage. Besides, I explained, it would be easier for me to change her to match my boobie-induced delusions of her after we were married. At this point, my debating partner began to see the point. She could see that this imaginary stripper was going to dash my expectations, and probably cheat on me, and spend all my savings on shoes and breast implants. And who would be to blame? ME! Because I am the one who was refusing to court her properly, and instead inventing an entire future life together that the imaginary stripper and I had never discussed, nor was she capable of meeting those requirements.

I actually know a Christian-raised atheist woman who co-habitated with a left-wing, global-warming atheist and then got pregnant and had an abortion, and she blamed the man for this. As if an atheist should be expected to believe in objective moral values and marriage! As if the man had been able to get her to co-habitate and get pregnant without her consent! She accepted no responsibility for her choice of this man whatsoever. And when I told her about the dangers of pre-marital sex and the importance of courting rules, she dismissed them as being too strict, claiming that a good job, chastity, virginity, apologetics, a firmly-grounded Christian faith, a rational basis for morality, sobriety, and so on, were all totally unnecessary for a sensible successful marriage. Still! After all that!

Her sole criteria for a man? CHEMISTRY! And the approval of her female peers, who were all penniless, up to their eyeballs in student loans and credit card debt, and had degrees in squishy-headed non-engineering/non-science fields, like English, Women's Studies, Journalism and Peace Studies. Phooey!

So this kind of thing really happens, and many of the people who should bear the responsibility are oblivious to the fact that they have any duty at all to actually *evaluate* romantic partners rationally and objectively to see if they are able to meet the demands of marriage and parenting. People act as if drunkenness, partying, promiscuity and selfishness are pre-requisites to a good marriage. And that fathers have no role to play in setting out boundaries for their daughters and making them accountable for their decisions.

For all the men out there, if this sort of crazy irrational avoidance of responsibility strikes a chord with you, I urge you to go out and watch the 2008 movie "Taken" with Liam Neeson. For a more gritty dramatic movie, I recommend the movie "Thirteen"from 2003. Fathers matter. Husbands matter.

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My basic contention is that whenever something goes wrong in a relationship, then the person whose expectations are dashed is to blame.

The reason why I think this is because you have to take people as you find them and then vet them as if they were job applicants applying for the job of marriage. The job of marriage has very specific requirements, and these requirements are objective. Someone is going to have to raise the kids, someone is going to have to cook the meals, someone is going to have to earn the bulk of the money, someone is going to have to deal with the beasties that invade the home. The goal of the relationship is not to test the person to see if they are "fun" or whether your friends are envious. The goal of the relationship is to test the person for the role they will play in the marriage.

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At this point, the woman in question started to disagree with me. She thought that all people (especially those evil men) should be expected to act like Christian theists, and that if they didn't then they were to blame. In other words, people should feel feel free to drink as much as they want, have sex with whoever they want on the basis of appearance and popularity, and then expect that sex will cause the man to immediately propose with

a diamond ring, a massive expensive wedding in Hawaii, a huge palatial home, and so on. Women actually belief that drunken hook-up sex will cause really immoral men to drop their hedonistic, atheistic lifestyles and cause men to act completely differently than they were before. What causes women to think this? It isn't reason and evidence, that's for sure. I think they think that men who are good looking and popular have some store of hidden virtue that is unlocked by having sex with the woman who is their "soul mate". Somehow, a magical spell will come over a self-centered, muscle-bound lout and he will be filled with thoughts of marriage and babies. Women actually think that!

Well, she thought I was just blaming women again, which I love to do. So I invented a new example to show how men could be to blame, unlikely though that may be, since men are perfect in every way. This time, I imagined what would happen if a stripper-gram woman showed up at my door. I actually told the woman I was chatting with that I had to go because a stripper-gram HAD shown up. I told the woman who lovely the stripper was, and how I was in love with her, and wanted to marry her. How she undoubtedly was very wealthy, and would help me to raise little Michele Bachmanns and William Lane Craigs. I waxed eloquently on her B.A. in integrated science with a minor in philosophy of religion, M.A. in economics and her J.D. in defamation law. All of which I had no evidence for, except for the feelings of love aroused by the site of her naked cleavage. Besides, I explained, it would be easier for me to change her to match my boobie-induced delusions after we were married. At this point, my debating partner began to see the point. She could see that this imaginary stripper was going to dash my expectations, and probably cheat on me, and spend all my savings on shoes and breast implants. And who would be to blame? ME! Because I am the one who was refusing to court her properly, and instead inventing an entire future life together that the imaginary stripper and I had never discussed, nor was she capable of meeting those requirements.

So now I would like to hear from my commenters what they think about this way of assigning blame so that it is not based on the degree of bad thing that is done. Instead I assign blame to the person who chooses the wrong person for a relationship, for the wrong reasons, and then hopes to change that person later.

I actually know a Christian-raised woman who co-habitated with a left-wing, global-warming atheist and then got pregnant and had an abortion, and she blamed the man for this. As if an atheist should be expected to believe in objective moral values and marriage! As if the man had been able to get her to co-habitate and get pregnant without her consent! She accepted no responsibility for her choice of this man whatsoever. And when I told her about the dangers of pre-marital sex and the importance of courting rules, she dismissed them as being too strict, claiming that a good job, chastity, virginity, apologetics, a firmly-grounded Christian faith, a rational basis for morality, sobriety, and so on, were all totally unnecessary for a sensible successful marriage. Still! After all that! Her sole criteria for a man? CHEMISTRY! And the approval of her female peers, who were all penniless, up to their eyeballs in student loans and credit card debt, and had degrees in squishy-headed non-engineering/non-science fields, like English, Women's Studies, Journalism and Grievance Mongering Socialist Theory. (That is a real degree at Wellesley

College, I am pretty sure) Phooey!

So this kind of thing really happens, and many of the people who I think should bear the responsibility are oblivious to the fact that they have any duty at all to actually *evaluate* romantic partners rationally and objectively to see if they are able to meet the demands of marriage and parenting. People act as if drunkenness, partying, promiscuity and selfishness are pre-requisites to a good marriage. And that fathers have no role to play in setting out boundaries for their daughters and making them accountable for their decisions.

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How progressive academics make a living in the racism industry

December 22, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Better read this quick before it gets taken down. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> It is well known that progressives have been able for decades now to exercise their control through domination of hiring committees and the imposition of politically correct speech codes designed to exterminate dissent. Dr. Li is not some isolated figure fighting for racial justice; he belongs to a department dedicated to teaching students to "think critically about the world around them" and "committed to link the aims of the discipline with the mission of the University of Saskatchewan". Saskatchewan, like many universities in Canada, officially calls itself a "progressive university" committed to "employment equity" for women and visible minorities.
>
> Of the 15 full-time faculty members teaching in Dr. Li's department, eight are females, and three of the males, together with Dr. Li, are visible minorities of Asian origin. What is more, most of these members have research interests that touch on race, ethnicity, multiculturalism and social inequality. Among the many socialistic colleges, programs, and departments housed in Saskatchewan are: "Discrimination and Harassment Prevention," "Family Medicine," "Indian Teacher Education Program," "Native Studies," "Women's and Gender Studies".
>
> A similar set of facts can be adduced for all the academics cited in this article. Jeffrey Reitz, who claims that white people tend to trivialize the experiences of minorities as unimportant, is director of ethnic and immigration studies at the University of Toronto, housed in a department in which the research and teaching areas are singularly left-oriented in character: "health and mental health," "networks and community," "gender and family," "crime and socio-legal studies," "immigration and ethnic relations," "stratification, work, and labour markets." Constance Backhouse, who wants universities to "take the lead" in dismantling the "mythology" that Canada is a "race-less" society, belongs to the faculty of law at the University of Ottawa, wherein the "Message from the Dean" states categorically and imperially that research and teaching are expected to be pursued "in a progressive atmosphere where issues of social justice are at the forefront of student and faculty concerns".
>
> This influence of progressives over our universities may explain why few of the specialists cite any solid evidence to substantiate their claims. Working within an audience of true believers, they have grown accustomed to soft-ball questions and easy endorsements. Pretty much all the "evidence" cited is anecdotal, based on "feelings", and in no way the foundation for making a "systemic racism"

> allegation.
>
> […]The universities of Canada have worked like a gold mine for progressives. Many of the professors cited in the article have multiple research grants, contracts with government departments, awards for research and teaching, are fellows of the Royal Academy and, in at least one case, is a member of the Order of Canada. I could go on for pages citing their academic honours. University Affairs might have done its readers a greater service publishing an article entitled "The Racism Industry in Academia."
>
> One would think that after decades of widespread employment equity and the creation of entire departments and programs dedicated to the grievances and resentments of minorities and women, these academics would have some achievements to call for. Then again, why give up on what has been a most remunerative profession? Can these specialists do anything else? They don't care much for Western high culture. Their research and teaching interests stand in direct opposition to the Greek discovery of rational argumentation, the Roman legacy in jurisprudence, the invention of polyphonic music in medieval France, the invention of linear perspective painting in Renaissance Italy, the invention of the novel in modern Europe, the calibration of uncertainty in Europe (1565-1657), the rise of Galilean and Newtonian science, and indeed the invention of Liberalism and Democracy.

What really matters for progressives is not equality of opportunity as a right but equality as a fact and equality as a result.

This is why I recommend that all subsidies from non-science/non-engineering areas of the university be CUT OFF – it's too politicized right now, and they are just not interested in critical thinking and truth.

Department of Homeland Security to counter global warming threat

December 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation think tank, my favorite think tank – but I also like the Family Research Council. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano just can't speak in public without destroying any remaining confidence Americans have left in her agency. CNS News reports that at a conference devoted to "environmental justice", Secretary Napolitano announced that the Department of Homeland Security would be creating the "Climate Change and Adaptation Task Force" to mitigate the affects of global warming on security and response operations. No…really.
>
> According to CNS, Napolitano said the task force would examine: 1) "How will FEMA work with state and local partners to plan for increased flooding or wildfire or hurricane activity that is more serious than we've seen before?" 2) "What assistance can the Coast Guard bring to bear to assist remote villages in, for example, Alaska which already have been negatively affected by changes up in the Arctic?" 3) "How can we focus on how climate change is going to affect our rural citizenry including those who live along our borders both northern and southern?", and 4) how will the Coast Guard or border services react to rising water levels.
>
> […]But let's pretend that global warming does indeed pose an imminent national security threat, do the goals of this "task force" even make sense? No.
>
> First, it's built on the faulty premise that we are facing increased hurricane activity, flooding and wildfires due to global warming. Casual or not, the numbers simply don't add up. In fact, we've had two consecutive hurricane seasons that were historically quiet. But again, pretending the premise is correct, wouldn't the department be prepared for a greater-than-average number of response activities simply based on resource potential rather than adding some political cause to it all?
>
> This alone proves that the intent of the "task force" is to make a silly political statement; otherwise Secretary Napolitano currently has her department vastly unprepared for no valid reason.
>
> Secondly, the Coast Guard can already offer the specific assistance to Americans with which it is mandated. If our neighbors in the Arctic region are experiencing any of the issues that liberals attach to global warming — i.e. land loss, water-levels rising, extreme temperatures — what exactly would be the Coast Guard's new mission? They perform rescue operations, but surely

> Napolitano doesn’t expect water levels to rise so fast that Alaskans can’t slowly back away?
>
> […]President Obama has also reallocated considerable resources at NASA, from its original mission of human exploration to global warming research. And other agencies like the Departments of Energy, Commerce and the EPA are also diverting considerable taxpayer dollars to fight global warming and increase economic burdens on our country while ignoring other urgent and pressing priorities. But the misplaced focus of DHS is particularly worrisome given its critical mandate.

Leftists have serious problems with the identification of evil as… evil. Instead, they’ll try to paint free-market conservatives and social conservatives as threats to national security, or point to scary weather as a threat to national security. They don’t dare deal with real threats from evil groups and individuals – that would make the evil people *feel bad*. And leftists don’t want evil people to feel bad. Leftists are committed to the notion of “moral equivalence” – that all groups that are deemed “evil” are actually equivalent morally to the groups that are “good”.

The conflict between the state and the family

December 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A book review by Raymond J. Keating. I just ordered the book.

Excerpt:

> Sympathy and compassion help make humans caring, moral beings. Adam Smith, the father of modern economics, understood that, as illustrated by his emphasis on sympathy in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.
>
> Often, however, sympathy and compassion are transformed from tools of moral judgment and action into weapons of blind ideology, irrational emotionalism, and cynical politics. They particularly serve as the bat with which opponents of the welfare state get pummeled. After all, the argument goes, if you oppose an extensive network of government income, housing, healthcare, employment, and child-care assistance programs, you must be severely lacking in sympathy and compassion. To truly care, you must support big government.
>
> That assumption, unfortunately, has long clouded the debate over welfare policies, especially when it comes to government programs affecting family life. The big-government crowd has pushed blindly for government to play an ever-larger role as financial provider for households, thereby contributing critically to the undermining of traditional families. Meanwhile, it should be noted that some who argue against such programs have tried to make their case without fully acknowledging the important economic and societal roles played by the family.
>
> […]Part of the problem is the failure to apply economic analysis to the family's role in the economy and to the impact of government policies on the family. That has been remedied to a degree in *The War Between the State and the Family: How Government Divides and Impoverishes* by Patricia Morgan. Published initially by the London-based Institute of Economic Affairs, it mainly deals with the programs and realities of Great Britain, but the discussion and analysis obviously apply elsewhere, including the United States.
>
> Morgan pulls together overwhelming evidence and data showing the benefits to adults, children, and society in general of marriage and intact families, and the problems of non-marriage, single parenthood, and divorce. And she illustrates how the welfare state subsidizes and encourages family breakdown.
>
> For example, Morgan shows that marriage boosts personal responsibility and employment among males, while single males are far more likely to be jobless and receiving government assistance. She also makes clear that government benefits have a strong impact on marriage and childbearing decisions and responsibilities among both men and women.
>
> She notes the varying ways in which government policies affect such critical decisions: "By rewarding some behaviours and penalising others, tax and welfare

> systems affect the preference and behaviour of individuals not just through hard cash calculations but by (unavoidably) embodying and promoting certain values and assumptions. . . . The generous subsidisation of the lone-parent household cannot but reinforce the belief that it is quite acceptable for men to expect the state to provide for their offspring."
>
> Morgan sums up the implications of all this on the size and intrusiveness of government: "Growing family and household fragmentation" drives government spending and taxes ever higher; increases the "number of clients of the state"; "displaces existing institutional and private arrangements"; places the government in the role of parent and provider to children; allows for increased government intrusions into family life; and generates "an increasing mass of legislation and regulation of provisions for custody, access and financial support." For good measure, child development is inevitably hampered due to the loss of "private investment in children," which can never be matched in substance or quality by government programs.

She's like a British Jennifer Roback Morse, and I mean to read her book.

What I find puzzling is that I keep running into young people who aspire to be married and to have children, but who are going about their plan in ways that seem to be counterproductive – at least to me. I see a lot of young people voting Democrat, for example. I find this confusing, because voting Democrat means that there will be fewer jobs, higher taxes, more debt and more crime. That's just a start. So why are people voting for Democrats when Democrat policies undermine the feasibility of marriage? Probably because they saw Republicans being mocked on Comedy Central and cannot tell the difference between comedy and news.

Democrat energy policies lead to higher unemployment and higher utility bills

December 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an editorial from the sensible Washington Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The federal government is ushering in 2011 with new powers that will jack up energy costs for consumers. In the name of fighting unproven climate-change theories, bureaucrats are pushing through tough new business restrictions on emissions from energy plants that light and heat homes across the country. As a result, Americans in the near future may be forced to pay a hidden tax in their electric bills or, worse, find themselves in the dark and cold.
>
> The Environmental Protection Agency's new rules, which take effect Jan. 2, will impose limits on carbon dioxide. The EPA's primary targets are coal-plant operators, who will be forced to choose between retrofitting their facilities with expensive emissions-control equipment and cooling towers or shutting them down. Democratic Sen. John D. Rockefeller IV – whose West Virginia coal-country constituents have the most to lose from the tough emissions restrictions – announced Friday that he had failed in his 11th-hour attempt to force a Senate vote to suspend the regulations before they take effect. His measure would have delayed for two years the new emissions requirements for power plants, refineries and manufacturing factories under the Clean Air Act.
>
> A study released Dec. 8 by the Brattle Group, an economic consultancy, found that the new EPA rules could force the retirement of older power plants that produce 50,000 to 67,000 megawatts of electricity, or roughly 20 percent of the nation's coal-fired power plants. As many as 70 million homes could be subject to blackouts, according to American Solutions, an advocacy group for conventional energy. Equipping remaining plants to comply with the mandates would cost $100 billion to $180 billion, the Brattle report warned. Those expenses would be passed along to consumers in the form of higher electric bills.

But it's no problem, because we can just buy more oil from nations that sponsor terrorism and ship our jobs overseas. The Democrat party is the pro-terrorism and pro-outsourcing party. They want you to pay more for oil and gas, and they want to enrich nations that are hostile to American interests abroad. The moratorium on drilling, the subsidizing of "green jobs" programs, the blocking of new refinery construction, the blocking of new nuclear power plants, and so on, all add to higher gas prices and higher energy prices. This means less money in to bank accounts of working families for the things that working families need.

Navy vice admiral assesses the nuclear arms treaty signed by Obama

December 23, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the U.S. Naval Institute web site.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama was outmaneuvered by the Russians and should have abandoned the New START negotiations instead of seeking a political victory, says former nuclear plans monitor Vice Admiral Jerry Miller, USN (Ret).
>
> "The Obama administration is continuing a dated policy in which we cannot even unilaterally reduce our own inventory of weapons and delivery systems without being on parity with the Russians," Miller told the U.S. Naval Institute in Annapolis, Md. "We could give up plenty of deployed delivery systems and not adversely affect our national security one bit, but New START prohibits such action – so we are now stuck with some outmoded and useless elements in our nuke force."
>
> After meeting resistance from several Republicans, the U.S. Senate ratified the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia by a vote of 71-26 on Wednesday.
>
> "The Soviets/Russians were done in by Reagan and our missile defense program because they cannot afford to build such a system," said Miller. "They instead try to counter our program with rhetoric at the bargaining table. And they won by outmaneuvering Obama. START plays right into their hands."
>
> Former President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) is often credited with bankrupting the U.S.S.R. because the Soviets were unable to keep pace with the technology being developed by the United States.
>
> "We have always been superior in quality of our nuclear force, so we did not have to negotiate with a party we do not trust," said Miller. "If Obama wanted to save some money and improve national defense, he should have gotten out of the nuke negations and acted unilaterally. START is simply a political victory for Obama."
>
> Miller, who helped prepare the National Strategic Target List and Single Integrated Operational Plan for waging nuclear war and later participated in arms control meetings with the Soviet government, expressed concern that START could leave the United States vulnerable to other emerging threats.
>
> "The treaty prohibits the conversion of an existing ballistic missile system into a missile defense system," said Miller. "We might want to do that with a Trident or an ICBM sometime in the future, particularly if the Chinese alleged threat materializes."

Obama put short-term political gain over long-term national security. He gave away the store. He was outmaneuvered because Democrats are not serious or competent on national security issues.

Slain border agent’s family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano’s indifference

December 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, leaving the funeral of a murdered Border Patrol agent Wednesday, scolded a reporter for asking her to address the victim’s family’s concerns that not enough is being done to secure the southern border.
>
> The family of agent Brian Terry had complained that Napolitano had offered them “empty words” when she called to express her condolences. Terry’s father, Kent Terry, in an interview with ABC affiliate KGUN, said he told Napolitano to “wake your man up in the White House,” to which she replied that he’s done more in two years than any president.
>
> Napolitano attended the Detroit funeral Wednesday where she vowed “swift justice” for Terry’s killers. But asked about the family’s concerns outside the service, Napolitano said “now is not the time to talk about all that has been done.”
>
> She said more agents and technology are on the border than ever before, but told the KGUN reporter it’s time to remember the fallen agent and not start picking fights.
>
> “Listen, I don’t know who you spoke with in the family,” Napolitano said.
>
> After being told the concerns came from his father, mother and stepmother, she continued: “Listen, we are here today, the commissioner is here today, the chief of the Border Patrol is here today and we are here and his comrades are here with the family, who said other things to me by the way, so I really don’t think it appropriate for the media to try to pick this as a fight,” she said. “This is a moment to remember a fallen agent.”

The Obama administration is not serious about border security.

MUST-READ: Why Christianity is the most persecuted religion in the world

December 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A very fine article from the normally ultra-liberal Toronto Star. (H/T Jojo)

Excerpt:

> Virtually every human rights group and Western government agency that monitors the plight of Christians worldwide arrives at more or less the same conclusion: Between 200 million and 230 million of them face daily threats of murder, beating, imprisonment and torture, and a further 350 to 400 million encounter discrimination in areas such as jobs and housing. A conservative estimate of the number of Christians killed for their faith each year is somewhere around 150,000.
>
> Christians are "the largest single group in the world which is being denied human rights on the basis of their faith," the World Evangelical Alliance has noted.
>
> In a report to a conference on Christian persecution hosted by the European Parliament last month, the U.S. Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life put it this way: while Muslims and Jews worldwide and Baha'is in Iran certainly suffer too, Christians were "harassed" by government factors in 102 countries and by social factors, such as mob rule, in 101 countries.
>
> "Altogether, Christians faced some form of harassment in two-thirds of all countries," or 133 nations, the report said. Muslims also face "substantial" harassment, the Pew report found, but in fewer countries.
>
> Christians face harassment in more countries "than any other religious group," a Pew Forum spokesperson told the *Star*.
>
> Put in sharper focus, "at least" 75 per cent of all religious persecution in the world is directed against Christians, the conference was told.
>
> The euphemistic term "harassment" encompasses vigilante and terrorist attacks against Christians in more than a dozen Muslim countries. In Sudan, an estimated 1.5 million Christians have been murdered by the Islamic Janjaweed militia, including some who were crucified. In Nigeria, 12 states have introduced *sharia* law. Thousands of Christians were killed in the ensuing violence.
>
> In Saudi Arabia, the only faith permitted by law is Islam. Christians are regularly imprisoned and tortured on trumped-up charges of drinking alcohol, blaspheming or owning religious artifacts.
>
> In Egypt, Coptic Christians are still reeling from a church attack last January in which eight worshippers were killed. "The situation is deteriorating and is very tense," Sam Fanous, a leader of Toronto's Coptic community, told the *Star* from Cairo. He said that after Friday Muslim prayers, streets fill with anti-Coptic

> protests.
>
> In historically tolerant Indonesia, Islamic militias have bombed churches in majority Christian regions and killed or forcibly converted thousands.
>
> China, meantime, continues to shutter “underground” churches and ship pastors to prison.

Read the whole thing. This is one-stop shopping on the persecution issue, and the sources are unimpeachable. Send it to your friends.

New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence

December 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Life Site News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Couples who reserve sex for marriage enjoy greater stability and communication in their relationships, say researchers at Brigham Young University.
>
> A new study from the Mormon college found that those couples who waited until marriage rated their relationship stability 22 percent higher than those who started having sex in the early part of their relationship. The relationship satisfaction was 20 percent higher for those who waited, the sexual quality of the relationship was 5 percent better, and communication was 12 percent better.
>
> The study, published in the American Psychological Association's Journal of Family Psychology, involved 2,035 married individuals who participated in a popular online marital assessment called "RELATE." From the assessment's database, researchers selected a sample designed to match the demographics of the married American population. The extensive questionnaire included the question "When did you become sexual in this relationship?"
>
> Couples that became sexually involved later in their relationship – but prior to marriage – reported benefits that were about half as strong as those who waited for marriage.
>
> […]Sociologist Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas at Austin, who was not involved in the study, responded to its findings, saying that "couples who hit the honeymoon too early – that is, prioritize sex promptly at the outset of a relationship – often find their relationships underdeveloped when it comes to the qualities that make relationships stable and spouses reliable and trustworthy." Regnerus is the author of *Premarital Sex in America*, a book forthcoming from Oxford University Press.
>
> Because religious belief often plays a role for couples who choose to wait, Busby and his co-authors controlled for the influence of religious involvement in their analysis.
>
> "Regardless of religiosity, waiting helps the relationship form better communication processes, and these help improve long-term stability and relationship satisfaction," Busby said.

Young men and women growing up really need to be informed by their parents what they are going to want to be doing long term, and what they should be doing today to accomplish those goals. Young people benefit greatly from the guidance of older and wiser people, but in defining goals and defining the steps to reach those goals. To be a

convincing parent, you have to be convinced yourself. And to be convinced yourself, you need to be seen as having knowledge, not just opinions, but knowledge. Having the right peer-reviewed papers at hand will help you to be a better parent.

My previous post on research showing how sex before marriage greatly reduces the stability of marriage.

Friday night fun: dancing birdy, Tim drumming, and Silent Night

December 24, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

More fun things than funny things this week.

Dancing birdy. (H/T Kelli)

One of our regular readers Tim plays the drums *professionally*.

And here's Silent Night. (H/T Wes)

Merry Christmas and Happy Friday!

UPDATE: Look – I won an apologetics book in the Apologetics 315 drawing! Find more good apologetics books here.

What is the meaning of Christmas? Why Celebrate Christmas?

December 25, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that I would try to write a post to explain Christmas as I understand it to everyone who is foggy on what it is all about. I hope I am not making any theological errors here, after all, I am just a software engineer.

Basically, we know from a variety of scientific arguments that the universe was created and fine-tuned for life by an intelligent agent that existed causally prior to the beginning of the universe, because this agent brought the universe into being. Our purpose as humans is to enter into a two-way loving relationship with this Creator/Designer of the universe. This is the only way that we can ultimately be happy and fulfilled.

The mess we were in

Now, when you look at human experience, none of us is interested in finding out about the character of this Creator/Designer, because we are afraid that if we find out too much about him then we will have our freedom to do as we please constrained by the demands of a relationship with an all-powerful, all-good being. Just knowing that such a person exists and has a character distinct from our own is enough to cause us to flee from him so that we can stay autonomous from the obligations of the moral law that he expects us to follow.

Christians believe that this universal desire to avoid an all-powerful, all-good God who will judge us is a result of bad behaviors inherited by us from the very first rebellion against God by our ancestors. Ever since that rebellion, the capability for relating to God has been lost, because we no longer have the ability to stop our rebellion against God. Christians call the first rebellion of our ancestors “The Fall of Man”.

What does this rebellion look like for us today? Well, we want to do whatever we want, in order to be happy, and to ignore God's demands. We want to have happy feelings, including security, community and being morally good, all without a relationship with God. We want to acquire and rearrange matter for our selfish ends without acknowledging and honoring the Creator/Designer of that matter. And, of course, we would like other people to affirm, voluntarily or involuntarily, that our rebellion against God is really the height of moral goodness.

Additionally, some people imagine that God, if he exists at all, must desire our happiness. And of course when their needs are not met by this invented God, then they become even more bitter at God, and eventually decide that God could not really exist since their selfish needs are not being met by him. It never seems to occur to us humans that some pain and suffering may be permitted by God in order to turn our attention away from pleasure and security in this life, and back towards a relationship with him.

This is the mess we find ourselves in. This propensity for turning away from God and trying to pursue selfish happiness and security apart from a relationship with God is what the Bible calls "sin". Every single one of us deserves severe punishment for refusing to pursue a genuine two-way love relationship with the God who is there. That is the mess we are in before Jesus appears to address this problem.

The birth of Jesus

I cannot say much about *how* Jesus solves the problem of rebellion against God, because that is really the story of Easter, and today we are dealing with the story of Christmas. But I can say that the solution to the problem requires that God step into history to communicate with his creatures and to perform actions in order to be reconciled with them. That is the message of Christmas: God is stepping into history to do something to end our rebellion. Easter is the story of *what he does*.

This is talked about in the Bible in John 1, for example.

John 1:1-5:

[1]In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[2]He was with God in the beginning.

[3]Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

[4]In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

[5]The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

You can substitute the word "Word" there for *Logos*, which really means *logic* or *reason* or *wisdom.* This is a person with a divine nature, identified with the eternal being of God, who exists causally prior to the creation of the universe, who is going to take on an additional human nature, including a human body. (Christians believe that there is one divine "what" being and three divine "who" persons). Software engineers, you can think of Jesus having two natures as multiple inheritance in C++.

And it continues in John 1:10-14:

[10]He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

[11]He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

[12]Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

[13]children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

[14]The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Here the word grace doesn't mean like a graceful ballet dancer. It means an instance of mercy received from a superior. A person (a "who") identified with the divine being (a "what") has decided to make us a top-down offer of mercy.

The same message of God stepping into history is found in the Christmas carols that people sing at Christmas.

Christmas carols

Here's the best one, "O, Holy Night", and it says:

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining.
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

When we were in rebellion, we had lost our most valuable capacity – the capacity of being in a direct relationship with God. And if Jesus can accomplish his mission, then we are going to regain that capacity for a direct relationship with God.

Now look at "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", which one of my favorites:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

Basically, as I often say, there are only two kinds of people in the world. There are people who are willing to respond to the offer of a relationship with God, with all the little sacrifices and compromises that a relationship entails, and then there are people who are not willing to respond. For the people who are willing to respond, the appearance of Jesus is the best thing that could possibly happen, because now we are finally going to have a chance to deal directly with God, face-to-face, to find out what he is like, and change ourselves to be more like him, with his help.

And that is why people celebrate Christmas. It's the anniversary of the birth of Jesus. It is the story of God stepping into history to be reconciled with his rebellious creatures. It's the story of the divine *Logos* divesting himself of his glory and subjecting himself to the life of a creature in order to rescue us from our sinful, self-destructive rebellion. This love

for undeserving creatures is above and beyond the call of duty. We didn’t love him, but instead he loved us first, and he loved us enough to come down here and suffer with us so that we could be reconciled with God.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

EPA to stop global warming by killing jobs and raising energy prices

December 26, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the Environmental Protection Agency is set to impose a de-facto carbon tax by raising the cost of energy on American consumers.

Excerpt:

> The Environmental Protection Agency announced Thursday that it would regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants and oil refineries next year, targeting the nation's two biggest sources of carbon dioxide.
>
> The move, which comes as part of a legal settlement with several states, local governments and environmental groups which have sued EPA under the Bush administration for failing to act, highlights the Obama administration's intent to press ahead with curbs on carbon despite congressional resistance.
>
> Collectively, electric utilities and oil refineries account for almost 40 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions: Under the agreement, EPA will propose new performance standards for power plants in July 2011 and for refineries in December 2011 and will issue final standards in May 2012 and November 2012, respectively.
>
> […]Charles T. Drevna, president of the National Petrochemical & Refiners Association, said his industry will urge lawmakers to block EPA's move.
>
> "EPA's proposals would carry tremendous costs but no benefits for the American people – all pain and no gain," Drevna said in a statement. "Regulations can't create technology that doesn't exist or change the laws of physics and economics, so the only way to comply with EPA's proposals would be to inflict massive increases in energy costs and massive increases in unemployment on families across our nation. This is exactly the opposite of what President Obama rightly called for when he said economic recovery and job creation should be our nation's top priorities."
>
> Some key lawmakers such as Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), who is in line to chair the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee next year, seemed open to such suggestions.
>
> "Rep. Issa is disappointed by EPA's refusal to appropriately and thoroughly consider regulations that will undoubtedly kill more jobs in an already struggling economy," said Issa spokesman Kurt Bardella in an e-mailed statement. "The fact is there are serious questions about EPA's decision to move forward with these job-killing regulations that will usurp power from states — violating the principals of federalism that are the backbone of the clean air act. EPA's actions will also impose a de facto building moratorium that comes at the expense of thousands

> of jobs."

If you raise the cost of producing energy made by coal plants, it raises energy costs on consumers and businesses. If you raise costs on consumers, then you make ordinary people *poorer*. If you raise costs on businesses then you get *fewer jobs*. This is why we have had an unemployment rate of near 10% under the Democrats for nearly two years since Obama took office. And why the unemployment rate has been increasing since the Democrats took over the House and Senate in January of 2007. Because they know less about economics than my keyboard. They probably think that raising gas and utility prices will create jobs and increase disposable income of consumers.

I guess they think that a carbon tax is needed *right now* to stop the global warming monster. What global warming monster?

This one. From the horribly unreliable leftist CNN of all places.

Excerpt:

> Snow fell in parts of the southeast Saturday, the leading edge of a powerful storm system that has prompted blizzard warnings in New York City and Boston and threatened to cause major travel headaches at the tail end of the holiday week.
>
> The National Weather Service has issued a blizzard warning for the New York City metropolitan area, from northeast New Jersey through Newark and New York, and including the entirety of both the Long Island and Connecticut coasts of the Long Island Sound. That warning is in effect between 6 a.m. Sunday and 6 p.m. Monday.
>
> Forecasters predict between 11 to 16 inches of blowing snow in much of that region, bringing visibility to near zero at times. Sustained winds as strong as 30 miles per hour could hit Sunday night, with gusts up to 55 mph in parts of central and eastern Long Island.
>
> And, starting at noon Sunday and extending through 6 p.m. Monday, a similar warning is out for all of Rhode Island and most of eastern Massachusetts. Parts of that region could see as much as 20 inches of snow, with strong winds contributing to near blinding travel conditions and likely significant power outages.
>
> The weather service also put out a blizzard watch from Sunday evening through Monday afternoon for coastal New Hampshire and Maine, up to the Canadian border.

I think Obama better hurry up the socialism before global warming fries us all!

Are Christians too involved in politics?

December 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a thought-provoking post I missed at the Life Training Institute blog, about the new Wayne Grudem book on politics and the Bible.

Intro:

> I'm thoroughly enjoying Wayne Grudem's Politics According to the Bible. Finally, here's a Christian theologian who connects the dots: Christian belief is not just about John 3: 16, but transformed living which includeds the transformation of government. True, political success can't save souls eternally (only the gospel does that), but it can promote a more just society for the weak and oppressed. To that end, Christians should exert significant influence on government.
>
> Grudem begins by challenging five wrong views regarding Christians and government: 1) Government should compel religion. 2) Government should exclude religion. 3) All government is evil and demonic. 4) Do evangelism, not politics. 5) Do politics, not evangelism.
>
> […]Most helpful to the pro-life cause is Grudem's refutation of #4—namely, the faulty view that Christians should do evangelism not politics. Sadly, well-intentioned leaders like John MacArthur and Cal Thomas have discouraged pro-life Christians from engaging the culture through politics.

I am not a big fan of John MacArthur and Cal Thomas for the reasons stated, and I don't think that either is really much of an evangelist in any case, since I never see them referenced as authorities on apologetics, which is really the means by which evangelism occurs in the real world.

In his book, Grudem refutes MacArthur and Thomas:

> I agree that *one* significant way that God restrains evil in the world is through changing people's hearts when they trust in Christ as their Savior (see 2 Cor. 5:17). But we should not turn this *one* way into the *only* way that God restrains evil in this age. God also uses civil government to restrain evil, and there is much evil that can only be restrained by the power of civil government, for there will always be many who do not trust in Christ as their Savior and many who do not fully obey him.

Klusendorf also referenced this post by evangelical Joe Carter.

Excerpt:

> Consider that for more than two decades the number one issue on the agenda of the evangelical wing of the religious right has been abortion.
>
> The bitter irony is that this is perceived as the "number one" political issue for evangelicals when it really isn't one of our top priorities. If evangelicals–and

> Christians in general–truly cared about this issue, abortion on demand would not be the law of the land.
>
> Imagine if every Christian in America vowed not to cast a vote for any candidate of any party for any office if they supported or condoned the killing of the unborn. Imagine if every pastor in America had the courage to stand in the pulpit and deliver the Gospel-centric message that God abhors this slaughtering of the innocent and that for the church to tolerate this sin is a fecal-colored stain on the garment of Christ's bride.
>
> But it will never happen because the evangelical church isn't committed as the church to rectifying this grave injustice. We never have been.

I was having a talk with someone recently who was telling me that sometimes the religious left pushes policies that are inconsistent with the Bible, like wealth redistribution or encouraging Christians to condone sexual immorality instead of setting up boundaries on sexuality by making clear statements of what the Bible says and explaining why what the Bible says is true using real objective evidence. Yes, I support policies that are consistent with what the Bible says – but I don't look to politics to push non-Biblical policies.

Grudem's book is must reading for Christians looking for a comprehensive Biblical view of politics, including social AND economic issues.

Is global warming the secular leftist equivalent of flat-earthism?

December 27, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Either you say that this is global warming, or you get no research money and no Ph.D. Here's the latest on the 20 inches of global warming being dumped on the global warming alarmists on the secular leftist East coast.

Excerpt:

> The U.S. East Coast faces a second day of travel disruption after snowstorms blanketed cities from New York to Boston, closing airports and halting trains with waist-high drifts and blinding winds.
>
> New York City's Central Park had 20 inches (51 centimeters) of snow by 8 a.m., the most for the month since 1948, as the storm's center shifted north and east, the National Weather Service said. Snowfall in the city eased by daybreak while the agency issued blizzard warnings for Boston and into Maine.
>
> More than 5,000 flights were canceled in the region since yesterday as airports closed. John F. Kennedy International will reopen at 6 p.m., while resumption times for LaGuardia Airport in New York and New Jersey's Newark Liberty are undetermined, according to the Federal Aviation Administration's website.
>
> "It is horrendous in the New York City area," Tom Kines, a meteorologist at State College, Pennsylvania-based AccuWeather Inc., said by telephone. "This is about as bad as it gets. There may have been storms that equaled this, but it doesn't get much worse than this. To get this much snow with the amount of wind that is accompanying it, that is devastating."

And it's happening in Moscow, too.

This isn't a one-off thing, the same thing happened last year.

What is annoying to me is that people are making entire academic careers based on studying Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny using expensive scientific equipment paid for by taxpayers (who don't share their beliefs in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny).

I understand that global warming advocates are concerned about implementing communism and and coerced abortions, but why don't they just come out and advocate for communism and coerced abortions, and stop inventing fairy tales to deceive the public at taxpayer expense. You can have your delusions and your deluded research

programs where you hide the decline, but please pay for it with your own money, and keep your hands off of my children's worldviews.

The problem with the left in academia is that there is no room for critical thinking. If you oppose the idea that people in academia and government should be able to extract wealth from the productive proivate sector to fund their research into self-serving delusions, then you get bad grades, no research money, and no Ph.D. That's called "critical thinking" by the way. By which they mean coerced uncritical credulity.

William Lane Craig answers questions from an arrogant atheist

December 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this question and answer from William Lane Craig's Question of the Week.

Here are the questions:

Hi there, I'm writting in regards to your "Q&A 170: So many athiests, so little time" answer. First of all, your two simple questions have very simple answers, and an athiest who can't answer them isn't a true athiest.

1)
Q. What do you mean by (you don't believe in God)
A. I mean that I have a lack of belief the the existance of a deity, your christian God or any other.

2)
Q. What reasons do you have to think that (there is no God)
A. The Earth shows no proof of creation, every single thing on this Earth has a natural explanation, simply becasue modern science has not yet solved every problem, does not mean it never will. I'd go in to detail, but no need to bore you with the science of it all. So, I've given my proof and will give far more if you ask it of me, and any wel linformed athiest will be able to answer those questions in a flash and have the burden of proof back in your hands.
In regards to scholarly work, may I point out Charles Darwin's "The Origins of Species", the works of Gregor Mendel, father of Genetics, William "Strata" Smith, father of Geology, Alfred Wegener "The Origin of Continents and Oceans", Issac Newton, Galileo, On and on I go, where I stop, nobody knows!
Now, if I may turn to the real point of this e-mail besides to point out that you havent really told anyone how to argue christianity other than asking easy questions and throwing names at them. Your God is Omnicient so you say, operating on this assumption, here is how morality plays out in the bible…
1) God creates heaven and Earth and then he creates Humans.
2) God KNOWS that humans will sin
3) God puts the tree of knowledge in the garden of Eden KNOWING it will drive Adam to sin.
4) God Determines that Adams sin is transmutable down to every single person that will ever exist. (Moral objection 1: The sins of the father are logically not related to the son in any way shape or form)
5) God decides that to punish people for this one sin they had nothing to do with or anything else he deams bad, they shall be sentenced to an eternity of burning hellfire. Infinite punishment for a finite crime? That sounds like Moral objection #2 to me!
6) When God sees that his creations have really gone bad, he drowns the world, killing

millions of innocent people.
7) only 1600 years after the mass murder of his creations(following biblical chronology) they've already fallen back in to sin. So God, in his infinite wisdom, determines the best course of action, is to sacrafice his Son, who is part of himself, TO HIMSELF, to make up for the sins of the creations he made knowing they would sin!

How in the world do you rectify this!?

Cheers,

Luke

I think that Bill is doing a great thing to come down to the level of village atheist once in a while and reply, and if you read his answer, he's actually pretty mean. And it's a good thing, in this case, because the worldview of village atheists is a lot like the worldview of Islamic terrorists. They are so insulated from outside criticism that you really have to thrash them around a little bit in order to get them to see that they have been involved with a cult their whole lives. That's not going to be the case with some of the better atheists like Austin Dacey and Paul Draper, but it is going to be the case with many rank and file atheists, and we need to know how to answer them, too.

What is the real agenda of the global warming alarmists?

December 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Nothing makes fools of more people than trying to predict the weather. Whether in Los Angeles or London, recent predictions have gone crazily awry. Global warming? How about mini ice age?
>
> The sight of confused and angry travelers stuck in airports across Europe because of an arctic freeze that has settled across the continent isn't funny. Sadly, they've been told for more than a decade now that such a thing was an impossibility — that global warming was inevitable, and couldn't be reversed.
>
> This is a big problem for those who see human-caused global warming as an irreversible result of the Industrial Revolution's reliance on carbon-based fuels. Based on global warming theory — and according to official weather forecasts made earlier in the year — this winter should be warm and dry. It's anything but. Ice and snow cover vast parts of both Europe and North America, in one of the coldest Decembers in history.
>
> A cautionary tale? You bet. Prognosticators who wrote the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, global warming report in 2007 predicted an inevitable, century-long rise in global temperatures of two degrees or more. Only higher temperatures were foreseen. Moderate or even lower temperatures, as we're experiencing now, weren't even listed as a possibility.
>
> Since at least 1998, however, no significant warming trend has been noticeable. Unfortunately, none of the 24 models used by the IPCC views that as possible. They are at odds with reality.
>
> Karl Popper, the late, great philosopher of science, noted that for something to be called scientific, it must be, as he put it, "falsifiable." That is, for something to be scientifically true, you must be able to test it to see if it's false. That's what scientific experimentation and observation do. That's the essence of the scientific method.
>
> Unfortunately, the prophets of climate doom violate this idea. No matter what happens, it always confirms their basic premise that the world is getting hotter. The weather turns cold and wet? It's global warming, they say. Weather turns hot? Global warming. No change? Global warming. More hurricanes? Global warming. No hurricanes? You guessed it.
>
> Nothing can disprove their thesis. Not even the extraordinarily frigid weather now

> creating havoc across most of the Northern Hemisphere. The Los Angeles Times, in a piece on the region's strangely wet and cold weather, paraphrases Jet Propulsion Laboratory climatologist Bill Patzert as saying, "In general, as the globe warms, weather conditions tend to be more extreme and volatile."
>
> Got that? No matter what the weather, it's all due to warming. This isn't science; it's a kind of faith. Scientists go along and even stifle dissent because, frankly, hundreds of millions of dollars in research grants are at stake. But for the believers, global warming is the god that failed.
>
> Why do we continue to listen to warmists when they're so wrong? Maybe it's because their real agenda has nothing to do with climate change at all.

Click through to find out the real agenda of the global warming alarmists. What it means for you is higher unemployment and higher energy costs and higher taxes, for global warming "research", i.e. – hiding the decline.

The VAT as a replacement or add-on to the income tax

December 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Revenue-neutral tax reform involving a VAT *substituting* for income tax raises a number of concerns, but its one advantage might be that it would reduce or even eliminate the net bias against saving. Such a reform would quickly begin to raise the level of private savings and the private saving rate.
>
> The same cannot be said of *adding* a VAT to the current tax system. Adding a VAT would not have the same beneficial effects as substituting a VAT because, obviously enough, the anti-savings biases of the current system would remain intact.
>
> Even more telling, a massive VAT-based tax hike would slash the after-tax purchasing power of individuals and families. As they adjusted to the new tax, an early casualty would be private saving.
>
> […]VAT proponents who seek massive new sources of revenue—whether in the short run to pay for President Obama's spending surge or to address the nation's unsustainable long-term fiscal imbalance—sometimes misapply arguments that have some validity in the context of a revenue-neutral tax reform. A good example is the argument that a VAT would increase private saving.
>
> However, as an add-on tax, the VAT would not improve saving incentives as some suggest but would instead hammer private savings for an extended period as individuals and families slash their saving rates to sustain current consumption in light of the VAT's higher prices.

I am pro-VAT, but only if it is revenue-neutral and is coupled with a cap on federal spending, indexed to inflation. A freeze would be better still!

What's your view of taxation? Do you like a flat tax or the FAIR tax? Which taxes would you cut and which ones would you raise? What effect would it have on working families and their employers?

Socialist Hugo Chavez begins to use his new dictatorial powers

December 28, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez very different?
In Venezuela, Obama's buddy Chavez is enjoying his new decree powers.

Excerpt:

> Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez made his first use of new decree powers on Sunday to create a $2.3 billion fund for reconstruction after widespread flooding that left more than 130,000 people homeless.
>
> The South American OPEC member nation's socialist leader has infuriated opposition parties and been criticized as a dictator for assuming fast-track powers for the next 18 months that will enable him to rule by decree and bypass parliament.
>
> Chavez has justified the measure as necessary to enable the government to respond to recent torrential rains that swept away houses, smashed bridges and roads, and also killed around 40 people in the nation of 29 million.
>
> But critics say the president has cynically exploited the disaster as an excuse to outwit opposition parties who were due to take a larger share of seats — 40 percent — in the incoming National Assembly which convenes on January 5.

The problem with socialists is that they think that the people who actually make money will just keep on making money even though the government keeps confiscating a larger and larger share of it. Think about it. People on the left in academia, in government, or in the voluntary poor (single mothers, drug addicts) are basically subsisting by confiscating the wealth produced by others in business who have to start and run businesses or work in those businesses. They actually have contempt for people who take risks and take

responsibility, because they think that those people are “stupid”.

What you have is one group of people with a tenuous grasp on reality who are acting as parasites on an increasingly over-taxed and over-regulated host. Eventually, the host gives up working – why work if you are constantly being abused by taxes and regulations? And that is why the policies of Obama and Chavez lead to catastrophes like North Korea and Zimbabwe. They don’t understand that their ability to spend money depends on the very people they hate the most, and understand the least.

I actually had one woman in academia recently telling me how she deserved to receive more money from businesses and workers to support her Ph.D studies in a non-engineering and non-scientific field. She also thought that the Comedy Channel was more reliable than Fox News. I produced two studies from UCLA and Harvard showing that Fox News was dead center in terms of news bias. I produced a survey showing that mainstream journalists donate almost exclusively to Democrats. She produced no evidence, but urged me to show more “critical thinking”. “Critical thinking” is the word that people on the left use to mean uncritical acceptance of whatever counter-factual assertions their inexperienced professors tell them about the world. They have to believe in these high-minded delusions – otherwise they cannot get research money, scholarships, or degrees. That is called “critical thinking”. And they want you to pay more to support them in their “critical thinking” so that they can have money to research how up is down, left is right, and hot is cold.

More details from that new study on the benefits of delaying sex

December 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remember that study I wrote about on Christmas Eve?

It was also reported on by Fox News, but with more details. (H/T Mysterious C)

Excerpt:

> In the new study, Busby and his colleagues looked specifically at timing of sexual relations. They recruited 2,035 heterosexual individuals who had an average age of 36 and were in their first marriages. Participants reported when they first had sexual relations with their current spouse; they also answered communication questions, which evaluated how well they could express empathy and understanding toward their partners, how well they could send clear messages to their partners, and other questions.
>
> Other items on the questionnaire focused on relationship satisfaction and stability, with the latter gauged by three questions: how often they thought their relationship was in trouble; how often they thought of ending the relationship; and how often they had broken up and gotten back together.
>
> Individuals were categorized as either having:
> • Early sex (before dating or less than one month after they started dating).
> • Late sex (between one month and two years of dating).
> • And those who waited until after they married.
>
> Relationships fared better and better the longer a person waited to have sex, up until marriage, with those hitting the sack before a month showing the worst outcomes.
>
> Compared with those in the early sex group, those who waited until marriage:
> • Rated relationship stability as 22 percent higher
> • Rated relationship satisfaction as 20 percent higher
> • Rated sexual quality as 15 percent better
> • Rated communication as 12 percent better
>
> "Curiously, almost 40 percent of couples are essentially sexual within the first or second time they go out, but we suspect that if you asked these same couples at this early stage of their relationship – 'Do you trust this person to watch your pet for a weekend many could not answer this in the affirmative' – meaning they are more comfortable letting people into their bodies than they are with them watching their cat," Busby said.
>
> He added that those couples who wait to be sexual have time to figure out how trustworthy their partner is, how well they communicate, and whether they share the same values in life "before the powerful sexual bonding short-circuits their

> decision-making abilities.”

That’s why I always encourage men to remain chaste before marriage. You do not want to have your decision-making capabilities ruined by sex. Not in a climate where a woman can divorce you and take you to the cleaners. And you also want to avoid harming women by making them commit physically and then breaking up – that turns them into nasty vengeful feminists, and God knows we don’t need any more of those… Not only that, but if there are children involved, you definitely do not want to be wrecking their lives with an unstable union entered into when you were not in your right mind. And lastly, you want to avoid harming yourself by turning yourself into the kind of person that uses people (even if they want to be used) and then just abandons them. It will mess up your ability to have close friendships and to love other people self-sacrificially.

How does the communist government in China treat its citizens?

December 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary found this moving article in the Wall Street Journal that talks about what the state police can do to private citizens today in China.

Excerpt:

> On Dec. 23, the United Nations International Convention for the Protection of All Persons From Forced Disappearance came into force. China has declined to accede to this convention. My experience that same day is just one of many examples of how the authorities continue to falsely imprison Chinese citizens.
>
> That evening, I was in the Xizhimen area of Beijing chatting with my colleagues Piao Xiang, Xu Zhiyong and Zhang Yongpan. Ms. Piao had been disappeared after she and I went to Dandong on Oct. 7 to argue the court case of Leng Guoquan, a man framed by the police for drug trafficking; she had only been released on Dec. 20. Her abductors had been officers from the state security squad of the Public Security Bureau. I asked her to narrate the entire process of her disappearance in detail.
>
> Later, I suggested to Mr. Zhang, "Let's go and see Fan Yafeng's mom." The day before, we had contacted fellow human rights lawyer Fan Yafeng and found out that he was under strict house arrest. But he had said that his mother was going to be alone at home in the evening and so I thought we should go see her.
>
> Because I used to go there frequently I remembered clearly where she lived. As Mr. Zhang and I entered the block of flats and started walking up the staircase, I had a feeling that someone was following us. Observing that we went to the third floor, a young security guard asked us whom we were visiting. We said, "We're seeing a friend." Immediately, he called out for someone else to come up.
>
> We knocked on the door and were greeted by Mr. Fan's mother. But as we entered the flat, the security guard came with us, and a person in plainclothes stormed in just behind him. The man in plainclothes demanded to check our IDs in a very coarse manner. I asked him in a loud voice, "What sort of people are you? How can you enter a private residence without permission?"
>
> The plainclothes man said, "I am a police officer. We want to check your ID cards." "You're a police officer? I want to see your police ID." "If I am telling you I'm a police officer, then that's what I am. What are you doing here?" "Is that your business? How can you prove you're a police officer if you don't show your police ID card?"
>
> The situation was escalating. I ducked my head and used my phone to send out a message on Twitter, and Mr. Zhang made a phone call to a friend. It was then

> about half past eight. The plainclothes guy made a phone call asking for reinforcement. Later I learned that at that moment our own reinforcements were mobilizing.
>
> Two police officers showed up. One of them showed us his police ID. I asked Mr. Zhang to note down his police ID number and name, Shi Ligang, and pass it on to our Twitter friends. Then they wanted to check our IDs. I said, "According to Article 15 of the National Identity Card Law you have no right to check them in the present situation."
>
> He said, "We are conducting an investigation in accordance with the People's Police Law." I said, "You can only question people who are suspected of having broken a law. We've just come to a friend's home for a visit, so you have no right to question us."
>
> We quarreled for some time, and that state security squad officer in plainclothes kept making phone calls asking for more people to come over. The situation was getting worse, so I sent another Twitter message.
>
> I talked to Mr. Fan's mother and the older state security squad officer told her not to speak to me. I got angry. "You're not even disclosing your identity, do you think you can enter other people's flat as you please and order the flat-owner about—not to mention that that's illegal, it lacks every human feeling!"
>
> "You should think more clearly. Don't talk so much about the law with me. Do you know where we are? We are on Communist Party territory!"

The whole thing is a must-read, and it gets much, much worse. It will open your eyes to the dangers of the big government – and specifically *atheistic* big government. I find it ironic that Americans living in the freest country in the world would put on shirts that celebrate communism.

In case anyone wants to read a good book on where communism comes from and where it leads, I recommend "The Road to Serfdom" by F.A. Hayek, a Nobel-prize-winning economist. I have read the book four times, myself. The one-line-summary is this: if you let government control the free market such that it regulates businesses and workers, profits and earnings, you will lose every single freedom you have, including the precious freedom of religious liberty. If I had to point to one book that helped me to make the connection between economics and Christianity, this was the book. The book was recommended to me by Jay Richards himself, along with many books by Tom Sowell.

Analyzing four bad arguments in favor of abortion rights

December 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The post is here.(H/T Rational Theism)

Excerpt:

> As a bioethics student, I've encountered several challenging arguments in favor of abortion. In my research on the subject, there have been several authors who've forced me to think about the issue more deeply and to sharpen my arguments against it.
>
> But there are also some pretty bad arguments out there. In popular-level discussions about abortion, you'll often hear pro-choice advocates use arguments that completely miss the point and that show a lack of familiarity with the arguments on the pro-life side. In this post, I want to point out four such arguments and show how they're really nothing more than red herrings.
>
> - The first bad argument for abortion is the idea that you can be personally against it, but you shouldn't force your beliefs on others.
> - The second bad argument for abortion is that a woman can do whatever she wants with her body.
> - A third bad argument is that it's a women's issue, so men have no right to tell a woman that she can't have an abortion.
> - The last bad argument for abortion is that it should be legal because women will keep having abortions even if it's not, and we should at least ensure that they will have them in safe environments (instead of in back alleys with rusty equipment).

Click through to read the whole thing and get all the responses!

Ho-hum… more pro-intelligent design peer-reviewed papers

December 29, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I read Evolution News when I need to feel sleepy. It's always the same old thing… more peer-reviewed papers friendly to intelligent design being published in more prestigious science journals. (Yawn!) Time for me to go to bed. So sleepy…

Here's the first one:

> A peer-reviewed scientific paper published in 2010 by William Dembski and Robert Marks of the Evolutionary Informatics Lab supports no free lunch theorems. Published in *Journal of Advanced Computational Intelligence and Intelligent Informatics* and titled "The Search for a Search: Measuring the Information Cost of Higher Level Search," the paper's abstract states that unless one has information about a target, search engines often fail: "Needle-in-the-haystack problems look for small targets in large spaces. In such cases, blind search stands no hope of success." Their principle of Conservation of Information holds that "any search technique will work, on average, as well as blind search." However, in such a case "[s]uccess requires an assisted search. But whence the assistance required for a search to be successful?"
>
> Dembski and Marks thus argue that "successful searches do not emerge spontaneously but need themselves to be discovered via a search." However, without information about the target, the search for a search itself is still no better than a blind search:
>
> We prove two results: (1) The Horizontal No Free Lunch Theorem, which shows that average relative performance of searches never exceeds unassisted or blind searches, and (2) The Vertical No Free Lunch Theorem, which shows that the difficulty of searching for a successful search increases exponentially with respect to the minimum allowable active information being sought.The implication of course, is that without the ultimate input from an intelligent agent–active information–such searches will fail.

Booooring.

Here's an excerpt from another one:

> The remarkable properties of water are numerous. Its very high specific heat maintains relatively stable temperatures both in oceans and organisms. As a liquid, its thermal conductivity is four times any other common liquid, which makes it possible for cells to efficiently distribute heat. On the other hand, ice has a low thermal conductivity, making it a good thermal shield in high latitudes. A latent heat of fusion only surpassed by that of ammonia tends to keep water in liquid form and creates a natural thermostat at 0°C. Likewise, the highest latent

> heat of vaporization of any substance – more than five times the energy required to heat the same amount of water from 0°C-100°C – allows water vapor to store large amounts of heat in the atmosphere. This very high latent heat of vaporization is also vital biologically because at body temperature or above, the only way for a person to dissipate heat is to sweat it off.Water's remarkable capabilities are definitely not only thermal. A high vapor tension allows air to hold more moisture, which enables precipitation. Water's great surface tension is necessary for good capillary effect for tall plants, and it allows soil to hold more water. Water's low viscosity makes it possible for blood to flow through small capillaries. A very well documented anomaly is that water expands into the solid state, which keeps ice on the surface of the oceans instead of accumulating on the ocean floor. Possibly the most important trait of water is its unrivaled solvency abilities, which allow it to transport great amounts of minerals to immobile organisms and also hold all of the contents of blood. It is also only mildly reactive, which keeps it from harmfully reacting as it dissolves substances. Recent research has revealed how water acts as an efficient lubricator in many biological systems from snails to human digestion. By itself, water is not very effective in this role, but it works well with certain additives, such as some glycoproteins. The sum of these traits makes water an ideal medium for life. Literally, every property of water is suited for supporting life. It is no wonder why liquid water is the first requirement in the search for extraterrestrial intelligence.
>
> All these traits are contained in a simple molecule of only three atoms. One of the most difficult tasks for an engineer is to design for multiple criteria at once. … Satisfying all these criteria in one simple design is an engineering marvel. Also, the design process goes very deep since many characteristics would necessarily be changed if one were to alter fundamental physical properties such as the strong nuclear force or the size of the electron.

(D. Halsmer, J. Asper, N. Roman, T. Todd, "The Coherence of an Engineered World," *International Journal of Design & Nature and Ecodynamics*, Vol. 4(1):47-65 (2009) (internal citations removed).)

And it's only Wednesday.

UPDATE: It's Thursday morning, so that means another peer-reviewed scientific publication supporting ID.

UPDATE: It's Thursday afternoon, so that means another peer-reviewed scientific publication supporting ID.

How can we win the war on poverty?

December 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Director Blue has a very long and informative post with tons of useful graphs. (H/T ECM)

Here's what doesn't work:

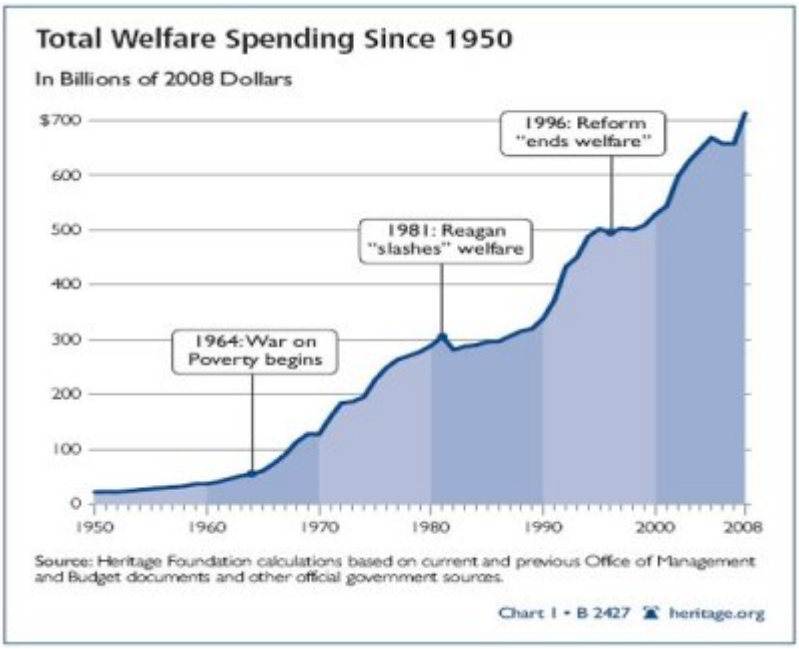

Director Blue explains:

> After adjusting for inflation, America's welfare expenditures are 1300% higher than in 1965. And the results have been absolutely catastrophic. But the documented failures haven't stopped President Obama and the Democrats from charting a course for massive new spending programs, at a time when the country can least afford it.

What could be the problem? Well, think of welfare as a cash payment given to women who have have babies with men who they chose knowing that those men were not interested in becoming fathers or husbands. Women are having sex with men and having babies with men who have not married them and have no intention of marrying them. And the government is *paying them* to do this. The government is paying them to oppose chastity. The government is paying them to avoid courting. The government is paying them to avoid chivalry. The government is paying them to avoid marriage.

So what happens next?

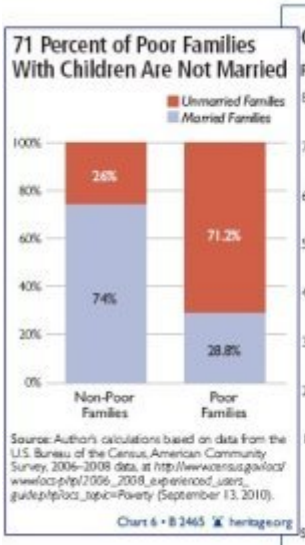

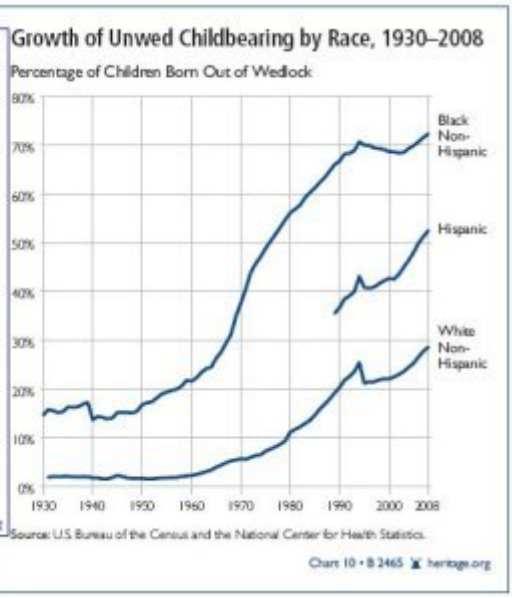

Director Blue explains:

> The out-of-wedlock birthrate is now 40 percent and the African-American out-of-wedlock birthrate is a shocking **72 percent**. But when the "War on Poverty" began, the out-of-wedlock birthrate was *just 7 percent*.
>
> Of 23 peer-reviewed U.S. studies since 2000, 20 found that family structure directly affects crime and/or delinquency. Research "**strongly** suggests both that young adults and teens raised in single-parent homes are far more likely to commit crimes, and that communities with high rates of family fragmentation (especially unwed childbearing) suffer higher crime rates as a result."

Why are the Democrats paying people not to marry?

Director Blue has no hypothesis, but I think the answer is feminism. Feminists do not like the idea that men have a role in marriage as the provider and protector and moral/spiritual leader. The best way to knock men out of their perch as husbands and fathers is to have the state take over the man's role in the family so that women do not need men. And this is exactly what has happened.

So it's actually very ironic that the people who *whine* the most about the poor actually *cause* poverty. And the people who are strongest in defense of traditional morality, like chastity, chivalry, courting and marriage, are the ones who the most concerned about the poor. Marriage is *good for the poor.* Democrats aren't concerned about the poor – they are concerned buying votes by redistributing wealth, so that they can stay in power and line their own pockets. They are willing to put politics – their opposition to marriage because of feminism – ahead of real people's well-being and prosperity.

Read the whole post at Director Blue's blog. It turns out that the Democrats want to continue subsidizing the feminist dream of destroying marriage and family with even more government spending on welfare. Eventually the money that the producers in this society for the Democrats to confiscate will run out – and where will we be then?

Christianity and the doctrines of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism

December 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you familiar with the differences between *exclusivism, inclusivism* and *pluralism?* This article from Leadership University explains all three of them.

Here's exclusivism:

> The following is a succinct explanation of the central characters and ideas behind each position. The exclusivist position has been the dominant position of the church as a whole through much of its history until the Enlightenment. Major representatives include Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Hendrick Kraemer, D.A. Carson, William Lane Craig, and R. Douglas Geivett.
>
> Key to this position is the understanding of God's general and special revelations. God is manifested through creation (general revelation), but Man has responded by freely going against this revelation and, thus, stands guilty before a holy God. However, God has demonstrated a reconciliatory mercy through His word and deed, fulfilled completely in Jesus Christ. The historical person of Jesus, then, is the unique, final, decisive, and normative self-revelation of God to Man (special revelation). Exclusivists believe that Jesus Christ is the sole criterion by which all religions, including Christianity, should be understood and evaluated. Calvin Shenk explains:
>
> > Christ did not come just to make a contribution to the religious storehouse of knowledge. The revelation which he brought is the ultimate standard. Since in Christ alone is salvation and truth, many religious paths do not adequately reflect the way of God and do not lead to truth and life. Jesus is not, therefore, just the greatest lord among other lords. There is no other lord besides him.
>
> Specific texts often employed by exclusivists include Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 3:11; and 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

And inclusivism:

> Inclusivism is a blanket term to characterize a sort of "middle way" between exclusivism and pluralism. Most prominent within mainline Protestantism and post-Vatican II Catholicism, its notable proponents (in one formor another) include Karl Rahner, Raimundo Panikkar and Stanley Samartha, and Hans Kung. Evangelical theologians such as Clark Pinnock, Norman Anderson, and John Sanders have also identified themselves with this position. Herein, the agnosticism associated with the latter option above is replaced with outright optimism. Christian salvation is not confined to the historical or geographic

> extent special revelation has spread, rather it must be available to all cultures, irrespective of age or geography.Salvation is still posited wholly in Christ and his salvific work. Specific knowledge of this work, however, is not necessary for the effect (i.e., salvation) to apply to those within a different religious culture who have responded to the general revelation available. Once again, Shenk explains:
>
> > Inclusivists want to avoid monopolizing the gospel of redemption. They acknowledge the possibility of salvation outside of Christian faith or outside the walls of the visible church, but the agent of such salvation is Christ, and the revelation in Jesus is definitive and normative for assessing that salvation. Jesus Christ is believed to be the center, and other ways are evaluated by how they relate to him. Other religions are not just a preparation for Christ, but Christ is actually present in them.
>
> The fundamental differences between exclusivism and inclusivism… are the nature and the content of "saving faith." The former emphasizes explicit faith while the latter points to an implicit faith.

And pluralism:

> Finally, there is the pluralist position. This is undoubtedly the most difficult of the three to define in any general sense. The spectrum of pluralistic thought is as wide as it is long. The focusof this particular study will examine the contributions of its key figures: Paul Knitter, John Hick, and Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Just as in the previous positions, the interpretative range within just these three individuals varies. It is fitting, however, to focus primarily on them since they are the most vocal and influential figures espousing pluralism today.
>
> Hick and Knitter argue the case for pluralism on the following grounds: (1) ethically, it is the only way to promote justice in an intolerant world; (2) in terms of the "ineffability of religious experience," so no religion can claim an absolutist stance; and (3) through the understanding that historical and cultural contexts must be the filter for any absolute religious claim. Hick has argued that all world religions attempt to relate to the unknowable Ultimate Reality (or, the Real), but because of their various cultural and historical contexts these attempts are all naturally different. Hence the various conceptions of the Real and the salvation(s) sought. The common soteriological goal, toward which all religions strive, though, is rooted in the desire to transcend self-centeredness and, in turn, encounter a new (unexplainable) experience with the Real. But, he emphatically emphasizes the fact that there is "no public evidence that any one religion is soteriologically unique or superior to others and thus has closer access to Ultimate Reality."
>
> Therefore, with pluralism, Christ is no more definitive or normative than any religious figure or concept. Or, as Andrew Kirk explains, "Rather than confessing that Jesus Christ is the one Lord over all, this view asserts that the one Lord who

> has manifested himself in other names is also known as Jesus." By "crossing the Rubicon," as Hick and Knitter illustrate, Christians are encouraged to abandon any claim of Christian uniqueness and the possibility of absolute revelation, accepting the fact that the Christian faith is one among many options.

Now maybe you didn't know this, but Roman Catholics seem to have taken a turn away from exclusivism and towards inclusivism in the last century.

So, I thought I would post a rebuttal to the Roman Catholic embrace of inclusivism from one of my favorite Christian apologists, Greg Koukl.

Excerpt:

> There are some issues of Christianity that are intra-Nicene, intramural discussions between believers, in which I think a charitable person can easily see how another Christian can hold a different view because there are things that are difficult to understand in Scripture. For instance, though I'm Reformed in my soteriology, my understanding of salvation–I'm a Calvinist–I am sympathetic to an Arminian perspective because I can see how they, in lines of reasoning from the New Testament and verses themselves from the New Testament, can come to their view. So, though I would disagree, and I think they're mistaken, I understand how they can see it.But there are other positions that I cannot understand because there is no New Testament evidence in favor of it, and, to the contrary, almost to a word, as the New Testament touches the issue, it says quite the opposite.
>
> Earlier this week, I was honored, flattered, and, frankly, humbled to have a very unique opportunity on Monday to address an audience of about 150 Jewish people that were in the midst of Jewish High Holy Day services–morning services, evening services–at kind of a pause time in the afternoon, in which my host and I and another guest had a discussion about Jews and Christians. The three of us were on the panel: my host, Dennis Prager, a man I have a tremendous admiration and affection for, and Greg Coiro, a Roman Catholic priest and a professional friend. I've known both of these men over 20 years and have been in many discussions, both in private and public on the air with Dennis and Greg Coiro.
>
> It was in this opportunity that, in a sense, the ancient quarrel of sorts, theologically, was revisited, that I've had in the past many years ago when we were talking about this in interfaith dialogues. This difference of opinion is a historically new development in Roman Catholicism that stunned me when I first encountered it in the early days of being on Religion on the Line in the late eighties, a radio panel Dennis Prager hosted for many years. The priests on the panel uniformly held the conviction, informed by Vatican II, that Jews don't have to believe in Jesus in order to receive the benefits of Jesus' salvation. This is a view called "inclusivism." It's not the same as pluralism, but in my view, it seems to have the same impact: "Yes, Jesus is necessary for salvation, but you don't

> have to believe in Jesus to benefit from Jesus."
>
> Now, at this afternoon panel recently, the very first question that came up was whether trust in Jesus is necessary for salvation. "Greg, do you believe that? Do Protestants believe that?" I answered, "Yes, I believe that. And no, not all Protestants believe that. But let me try to explain it to you in a way that doesn't sound so stark. Let me try to give it some perspective." I explained that it wasn't as if God was up there looking down at a bunch of religious clubs and prefers some over others. He used to prefer the Jewish club and now He prefers the Christian club. It may sound that way to many when this doctrine of Christianity is put forward: Jesus is the only way of salvation; you must believe in Jesus in order to benefit from what Jesus did.

Talk about Daniel in the lions' den. Anyway, click through and read the whole article to get an idea of how to make your stand for exclusivism in difficult places. By the way I am not a Calvinist (I accept some Calvinist doctrines, but not irresistible grace), but I think Greg is right to defend exclusivism. I realize that I have a lot of Roman Catholic readers, and I hope that you won't be too upset that we disagree on this. In fact, I'm hoping that you'll change your minds and agree with me!

For a general article defending the Christian doctrine of exclusivism, check out this article by William Lane Craig. One of my favorites, from way way back to when I was an undergraduate.

If you want to hear Paul Knitter in a debate, check out the Greer-Heard forums. The 2009 forum can be had as MP3s for $15, and you will not be disappointed with the response by Doug Geivett. The 2005 set with Crossan is also worth buying. If you really really like them, then get the 2008 one with Bart Ehrman and Dan Wallace. Chuck Quarles' response will knock your socks off. I actually met him at the EPS apologetics conference this year. Doug Geivett's response is worth the price of the whole set. Unfortunately, that Crossan set is not on MP3 – you have to get CDs. Crossan and Ehrman are back for the 2010 and 2011 forums, but I have not heard those yet.

What if Christians were treated like Muslims and vice versa?

December 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM found this neat article in Human Events, a conservative news magazine.

Excerpt:

> If Christians were treated like Muslims, conspicuous Christianity would be celebrated by our elites as a sign of our diversity and open-mindedness, not disparaged as an embarrassment, a nuisance and a breach of the law.
>
> If Christianity were treated like Islam, our students would be taught a white-washed version of Christian history, with the troubling bits miscast or omitted from textbooks and lesson plans.
>
> If Christianity were treated like Islam, if an evangelical Christian committed an evil act in the name of his faith, he would be portrayed in the media as a deviation from, not a personification of, the Gospel message. Meanwhile, our political and media elites would hasten to assure the public that evangelical Christianity is a religion of peace and that the vast majority of evangelical Christians do not support terrorism.
>
> […]If Christianity were treated like Islam, Christmas and Easter would be publicly celebrated for what they are — the signature events of Christianity, marking the birth and the death and Resurrection of Christ — not stripped of all their theological meaning and transformed into secular holidays devoted to crass consumerism.
>
> If Christians were treated like Muslims, NASA would be tasked with reaching out to Christians and recognizing their faith's profound achievements and contributions to science, math and engineering, instead of being told to make Muslims feel good about their rather meager scientific accomplishments.
>
> […]If Christians were treated like Muslims in America, amusement parks would celebrate "Christian Family Day," (Six Flags recently celebrated "Muslim Family Day"), and Christians would be asked to embrace, not set aside, their religious convictions at the door when they entered the public square. Meanwhile, Muslim imams, not Christian pastors, would fear hate crimes lawsuits for preaching orthodox views of sexuality and sin.

This is a pretty clever article, and I wish I had written it.

Non-Christian sometimes ask me whether I believe in Hell and whether I think that they are going there. And the answer is YES, I do believe in Hell, and YES, they are going there. And one of the reasons why they are going there to roast for an eternity (oh yes, I have the traditional view of Hell) is because of the way that people treat Christians in the here and now. I am talking about in the university, in the the news media, and in

Hollywood. Christians always seem to be the only group that you can make feel bad for what they believe. I think that this factor will play a significant part in the degree of punishment that non-Christians get in the afterlife. (And that doesn't mean that I'm going to treat them people badly because my goal is to persuade people and that means being nice to them).

Here's a tip for non-Christians who read my blog. You can fight with Christians all you like about whether Christianity is true, and no harm done. But whatever you do, do not be found on that day guilty of making us feel bad about our faith. Do not make it harder for us to be who we are. Do not be one of the people who pressures us to keep silent about what we believe. I understand that non-Christians do not like the things we do, like chastity and sobriety and being pro-life and pro-marriage. Those are good things that prevent harm and evil, and they should not be opposed.

A great article that explains what is at stake with "net neutrality"

December 30, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the American Spectator. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Yet, without compelling reason, law or even politics on their side, on December 21, on a 3-2 party line vote, the FCC voted to impose its "net neutrality" rules on the Internet. What net neutrality means is that the government now has the power to decide how ISPs and broadband operators manage the access they provide to the Internet. It is as if the government decided to regulate how FedEx delivers its overnight mail, and what routes and what vehicles they use.
>
> The FCC starts out by proclaiming that its net neutrality rules are just meant to ensure equal access by all to the Web. But as George Orwell showed us, that is how socialism started out too, until we later discovered that some were more equal than others. Once the founding principle is laid for government regulation and control, then that power can be used to regulate and control access to the Internet "in the public interest." In English translation, that means in the special interest of the Ruling Class. There are precedents in China and Iran for how that has worked out in practice.
>
> Dissenting FCC Commissioner Robert McDowell explained further in the *Wall Street Journal* on December 20 why the FCC's net neutrality regulation makes no sense:
>
> Nothing is broken and needs fixing, however. The Internet has been open and freedom-enhancing since it was spun off from a government research project in the early 1990s. Its nature as a diffuse and dynamic global network of networks defies top-down authority. Ample laws to protect consumers already exist. Furthermore, the Obama Justice Department and the European Commission both decided this year that net neutrality regulation was unnecessary and might deter investment in next-generation Internet technology and infrastructure.
>
> But what I have learned in life is that when something doesn't make sense, that means there is something else behind it that people are trying to hide.
>
> And that is exactly what we have here. For what is behind the FCC's net neutrality crusade is reflected by an organization calling itself Free Press. That is an Orwellian title in this case, because what Free Press is for is the opposite of a free press. Free Press is one of those pseudo-Marxist front groups that Barack Obama has always traveled with so easily throughout his life. It is a grown-up, slick, sophisticated version of those campus radicals who shout down college speakers with whom they don't agree.

> That is what Free Press is after with its “net neutrality” regulation. It is laying the groundwork for government control of the Internet. Once that it is established, it will be able to shout down websites with which it doesn’t agree, if not shut them out altogether.
>
> The entering wedge for net neutrality so far is not public freedom to access and navigate the Internet, which no one can credibly claim is not currently as free as could be. The entering wedge for now is use of Internet access and broadband services by competing commercial concerns like Netflix and YouTube, which consume huge proportions of bandwidth that can consequently interfere with use by consumers and others.
>
> The problem has not become unmanageable yet, but threatens to be. The concern is that broadband operators will limit use of their service by other commercial operations that are effectively bandwidth hogs, to preserve the viability of their service for the general public, which is exactly what they should do. The supposed purpose of net neutrality regulation so far is to prevent broadband operators from doing this.
>
> The solution is for broadband operators to charge heavier commercial users of their service heavier fees to cover the costs. Those heavier fees can then be used to build even bigger and better broadband and Cyberspace access, sufficient to fully accommodate even the heaviest commercial broadband users.
>
> But that [solution] doesn’t involve the expanded government power that Obama’s FCC and net neut advocates like Free Press are after. So it is not on the table as the answer. Government takeover is the only answer they will consider, just as in health care. But if the government is going to take control over the big investment bucks broadband providers put in the ground or into orbit, America is not going to get the Internet investment and access it needs. That is why America’s Internet access is already lagging behind other countries.
>
> […]This FCC episode raises a broader question about the Obama Administration in the next two years. Because what we see here is what we are already seeing elsewhere in the Administration as well, from HHS Secretary Sebelius’s takeover of health insurance, to the EPA’s takeover of the economy based on global warming fantasies. That broader question is: Are we going to be governed by democracy and the rule of law in America, or not?

Worth reading. I am trying to write about the problems in Obamacare and with the EPA raising energy costs on American consumers and businesses. But taking over the Internet could be an even bigger disaster if the government can prevent the truth about what they are doing from being reported.

New collection of essays published to defend mind-body dualism

December 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

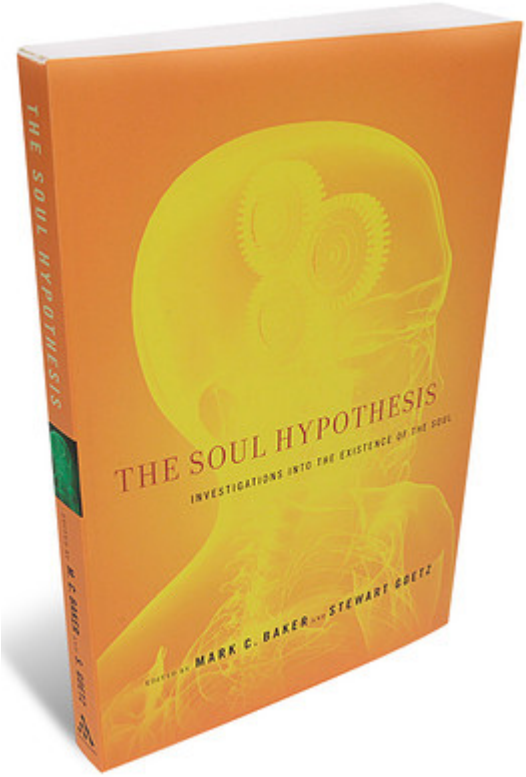

Here's the new book on J.P. Moreland's web site.

Full text:

In the *Soul Hypothesis: Investigations into the Existence of the Soul* (Continuum), co-editors Mark C. Baker and Stewart Goetz have assembled an impressive interdisciplinary team of scholars to address questions about the existence and nature of the soul.

"The Soul of the Matter" – Charles Taliaferro
"Minds, Brains and Brains in Vats" – Daniel N. Robinson
"Brains and Souls; Grammar and Speaking" – Mark Baker
"Making Things Happen: Souls in Action" – Stewart Goetz
"Energy of the Soul" – Robin Collins
"The Measure of All Things: Quantum Mechanics and the Soul" – Dean Zimmerman
"From Seeing to Seer" – Hans Halvorson
"Souls Beastly and Human" – William Hasker
"A Scientific Case for the Soul" – Robin Collins

You can preview the book here.

The book is unique is combining philosophical and scientific arguments for dualism, and the result is a rigorous, exciting, persuasive presentation of the issues and a stimulating challenge to so much of the reductionism that reigns in the sciences. As was noted in a recent review of the book in the *WSJ*,

> Sooner or later, the contributors to "The Soul Hypothesis" warn, scientists will pinpoint the exact three neurons whose firing accompanies the thought of our deciding to make a phone call or, if you prefer, deciding to get up and get a beer from the refrigerator. As ever more such micro-couplings are observed, we will—so scientists tell us with unseemly glee— gradually come to see that our cherished conscious life is nothing but a long series of electrical impulses, not an autonomous realm of free will and free thought. Co-editor Mark C. Baker cites the psychologist Steven Pinker, who finds it plausible to say that neural "activity in the brain" simply "*is* the mind."
>
> The book's contributors set out this scientific challenge fully and engagingly, but they also expose its fallacies. They note, for instance, that even if two things differ in their essential nature, as do mental thoughts and physical actions—or legislatures and laws—there is no reason why the one can't cause the other. As David Hume argued, what establishes our idea of cause and effect is the regular "conjunction" of two events. That a physical act regularly follows a mental decision suggests, as co-editor Stewart Goetz writes, that the one is "causing" the other and that voluntary human action exists.

The Soul Hypothesis is an excellent text that is sure to provoke a vigorous dialog about its content. I highly recommend it.

I really would like to be able to use this argument more – I just need a good book. I'm a big admirer of Charles Taliaferro. I even met him once at a conference!

Should Christians support government-run day care?

December 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, a Gallup poll came out about human origins.

Here was an interesting finding in the survey:

A significantly higher percentage of Republicans indicated a creationist view of human origins, which Gallup experts say reflects in part the strong relationship between religion and politics in contemporary America. Republicans are also significantly more likely to attend church weekly than are others. Democrats and Independents showed similar views on human origins:

> - Republicans: 36 percent think humans evolved through a God-guided process; 8 percent say God had no part in the process; and 52 percent held the creationist view.
> - **Democrats: 40 percent agree with evolution through a God-guided process; 20 percent say God had no part in the process; and 34 percent held the creationist view.**
> - Independents: 39 percent agree with evolution through a God-guided process; 21 percent say God had no part in the process; and 34 percent held the creationist view.

Gallup officials wrote that it's not surprising some 80 percent of Americans hold a view of human origins that involves God, since most Americans believe in God and about 85 percent identify with a religion.

What I find interesting is this – how the heck can someone be a young earth creationist, (which is a view that people can only hold because they are getting it out of the Bible), and yet vote for Democrats? Democrats stand for the enlargement of the secular leftist state, for the destruction of marriage and family, and for the complete elimination of religious liberty and traditional morality from the public square. No mature, authentic Christian votes Democrat.

What happens when Christians for left-wing parties?

Now, with that said, let's look at the most liberal province in Canada, Quebec. Quebec is a French-speaking province that was traditionally *dominated* by Roman Catholicism.

Consider this editorial in the National Post, Canada's best newspaper.

Excerpt:

> It's never too early to close the minds of the young. That's the thinking of the provincial government in Quebec, which announced earlier this month a ban on religion in subsidized daycare centres.
>
> Subsidized daycare is a central part of social policy in Quebec — parents pay

> $7/day, and provincial government pays the rest, which is about $40/day. The government of Quebec is now increasing its vigilance on what dangerous ideas the toddlers might be exposed to.
>
> Just before Christmas, Family Minister Yolande James announced regulations that would seek to ban religion instruction from daycare centres that take government money. Given that four-year-olds are unlikely to be studying theology, the Quebec government is out to stamp out religious expressions — prayers, songs, bible stories, manger scenes and even explanations for religious dietary practices.
>
> […]Our editorial board argued on Tuesday that Quebec's massive subsidies for approved daycare spaces has effectively crowded out non-subsidized daycare. The economic argument is clear — subsidize one form of child care over all others, and soon there will effectively be just one form of child care. Daycare has been de facto nationalized in Quebec, and the national religion of intolerant secularism will now be imposed.The cultural question is more troubling. So serious is Quebec's government about imposing its view on all children that, concurrent with the new regulations, it will triple the number of inspectors to enforce them. Quebec will soon have 58 inquisitors dropping in on daycares to ensure compliance. One can only imagine the scene when the inquisition arrives, sifting through the sandbox in search of clandestine religious items. And who will write the code for the bureaucrats, ensuring that miscreant daycare workers don't mention that la fête nationale was once upon a time Saint-Jean-Baptiste?
>
> There is an economic cost to big government. There is also a cultural cost, if everywhere government goes alternative values and viewpoints must retreat. If government goes everywhere, including the care of babies, then not even babies are entitled to hear views that dissent from government dogma. Quebec has long since abandoned the neutral state in favour of the aggressively secular state. Where the Quebec state goes, religion must retreat, and there is no limit on where the Quebec state will go.
>
> The heart of every culture is its attitude to the big questions of human life and existence. That's why a sensible people leaves culture in the hands of the churches, the artists, the musicians and the writers. Only a deeply insecure society entrusts culture to bureaucratic inquisitors. And only bureaucratic inquisitors see threats emerging in the cradle.
>
> Totalitarian states have always sought to control the kindergartens and the schools and the youth groups, all the better to ensure that the influence of parents on their own children is attenuated. There is the hard totalitarianism that comes by force of arms. Soft totalitarianism comes by way of subsidies, where first the family is embraced by the state, and only then is it suffocated.
>
> The educational world in Quebec does not leave much room to breathe. On religious and cultural matters, the consensus position, as defined by the

> curriculum apparatchiks, must be taught without exception in all public schools, private schools and even at home. Until now, the preschoolers had escaped the stifling grasp of government. No longer.
>
> As our editorial pointed out, the actual educational results of Quebec daycare are poor. Quebec's nationalized daycares don't teach little Quebeckers very much. Now they will ensure that the youngsters know even less.

And remember, the effort to ram sex education into the minds of younger children over the objections of their parents is quite common in Canada, and other European countries, too.

Every time a Christian votes to tax their rich neighbor or their rich employer, they are taking money away from the private, individual realm, and transferring it to the realm of government. Politicians use that money to buy votes from the masses by subsidizing their selfishness, irresponsibility and recklessness. Instead of having money spent by responsible workers and businesses for responsible workers and businesses, it gets wasted on people who are often lazy and who make poor decisions. To understand what this redistribution of wealth means, you need look no further than the skyrocketing out-of-wedlock birth rate and the resulting social problems, which imposes costs on *all* taxpayers.

There is a right way to look at politics and economics from the Christian perspective. And mature Christian should have thought these things through.

Now might be a good time to recommend Wayne Grudem's new book, "Politics According to the Bible". Grudem is a Bible-believing Christian with a Ph.D from Cambridge University. He is the author of the most widely used and respected systematic theology book. I also recommend Jay Richards' book "Money, Greed and God". Richards' Ph.D is from Princeton University. Those looking for a smaller, simpler book can try "The Virtues of Capitalism". A good economics book for beginners is "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism". And a good longer book for beginners is "Basic Economics", 4th edition, by Thomas Sowell.

Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?

December 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I want to highlight three posts that I found on The Thinking Housewife.

Here's the first one, that explains what a non-feminist is.

Excerpt:

> It appears to be increasingly common for women to superficially disavow feminism. That means, when asked if they are feminist, they say, "No, I'm not a feminist." But saying so doesn't necessarily make it so. I can say I don't notice cold weather, but if I wear a coat, obviously I do.
>
> What does it take for a woman *not* to be a feminist? She must explicitly and publicly reject feminist principles. A woman who is not a feminist would openly criticize *and judge* women who unilaterally divorce their husbands. She would not remain silent. She would criticize the glorification of career and the glorification of absentee mothering (even a woman who has a career can in this sense be anti-feminist). She would denounce hiring preferences for women and support preferences for men. She would never criticize her husband publicly, even to her closest friends, because to do so is to show disrespect for him and contempt for his authority. She would, within her own social context, encourage and approve of femininity.
>
> I'm not saying that a woman would do nothing else but harp against feminism, but that all this would be part of her life. Saying she is not a feminist means nothing. If a woman tolerates feminism everywhere, she is wearing the feminist coat.

Here's the second one by a Thinking Housewife reader, that explains what can happen when a man foolishly chooses a feminist to take on the roles of wife and mother.

Excerpt:

> My husband and I are always sad when I go to my brother's home. My sister-in-law is the typical "modern woman" and her marriage to my brother is a microcosm of the feminist absurdity you write about. She never cooks, and as a result her son is a very poor eater and is overweight, even though he is only three. It makes me sad to know that he never gets to make cookies with his mom and he hasn't learned how to sit through a meal. They just give him juice all day to keep him quiet. The whole family was recently at a hotel together for an event, and when we were in a gift store, she found a gag-gift apron that said, "When I said 'I do,' I didn't mean the cooking." She showed it to my brother laughing, and I turned to my mom and said that apron is only funny if it isn't true.
>
> My sister-in-law works full-time, and the children have been in daycare since they were three months old. My nephew is a sweet boy, but his only interest lies in

> television and movies and what's more disturbing is that when he is hurt or sad, he seeks comfort from males because his dad is the only one who really takes care of him. While his sister was being born, he stayed at my mom's. My brother and I went to help. My nephew got upset and asked me to pick him up, but after I picked him up he reached for my brother saying, "I want a man." My brother and I were really disturbed by this. His mother is a woman who did not change her name when she got married, did not combine bank accounts, and claims that because she carried her son for nine months, it is now the responsibility of my brother to do the rest. My mom saw her knowingly leave her son in a soiled diaper for over an hour, waiting for my brother to come home. My mom didn't do it because she got into this stalemate where she thought it might appear rude if she did it herself.
>
> My brother is a nice guy, but he seems sad all the time. It seems like these "modern" marriages that claim to be about partnerships are really just about exploiting men. The woman gets to work if she wants, she gets to have as many or as few children as she wants and then she gets to have someone else raise those kids. She doesn't have to cook or clean, but gets the benefit of having a working husband. They seriously seem to be more like roommates than spouses.
>
> […]One time my sister-in-law kept telling me about all these movies she likes, and I kept telling her I don't really watch much TV these days. Finally, I said, "Look, I'm home with the kids all day and when my husband gets home and the kids are finally in bed, we really just want to have some quiet time to talk."
>
> Her response was that my brother often wants to talk when he gets home, but she just ignores him and watches "American Idol."

Here's the third one, which explains why men do stupid things like marry feminists. Excerpt:

> Emily D.'s story is indeed very sad. In my experience, however, hardcore feminists are pretty outspoken about it, or they express opinions and attitudes that give away their position quite clearly to those around them. Didn't her husband observe any of these characteristics when they were dating? I find it hard to believe that her attitude was a total surprise to him. Either she had certain extraordinary qualities (great physical beauty, perhaps) or, more likely, offered certain "benefits" that he valued so much at the time that he was willing to overlook her extreme feminism.
>
> When I was at university (mid-to-late 1990's), I remember that the girls with the most active social lives were the liberal feminist types. My more conservative friends and I rarely ever got asked out on dates even though we were average-to-pretty in terms of looks. There were times when I was tempted to turn liberal feminist too. They had all the fun and the male attention.
>
> This is a truism, but maybe it needs to be said: Men who are serious about

> marrying women who will make good wives and mothers need to look for and date women with those qualities and practice the self-restraint that such women require of them. My experience at university has given me little sympathy for men who take advantage of the sexual license feminists offer and who then later complain about how they ended up with a feminist wife.

I am chaste. I am telling you men – be chaste until you marry. Do not compromise your judgment with sex. A woman's physical beauty is *no guarantee* of her ability to be a good wife and a good mother.Willingness to hook-up with you is *no guarantee* of her ability to be a good wife and mother.

Maybe we should review some courting rules to help men to avoid becoming miserable.

Do not believe anything they say to you, because women adapt to men and say what men want to hear. Demand that she read hard books on complicated things like astronomy and economics and education policy. Demand that she write about what she reads. Demand life experiences that show that she has sympathy with things like capitalism and apologetics. Demand a track record of past activism in defense of marriage, the unborn, parental rights, Christianity and small government. Make moral judgments of her constantly and tell her the judgments so you can see how she responds to being judged. Hold her accountable for every mistake she makes – demand that she have a plan to change so that the mistake isn't made again. Push all kinds of moral obligations onto her. Put her in charge of taking care of your pet, your garden, your car, and anything else that can be used to test her to see if she can handle responsibilities. Talk constantly about your desires and feelings. Complain about feminism and female nature all the time. Burden her up with the stories of your hard work day and how hard it is to be a man. Express your concerns about women who withhold sex, put on weight, and spend too much, after they get married. Demand that she engage all of her non-Christian friends and relatives so that they make progress towards better worldviews. Monitor her performance in debates to see how well she can reason and research evidence for her views. Harp on something you like to take care of, like your car, your pet, or your garden – and watch to see whether she shows an interest in it or considers it a rival to be taken away so that she is the only thing to get your attention.

The only way to test a woman for marriage and parenting is to… *test* a woman for marriage and parenting. And physical attraction is not a good way to test a woman for the roles of wife and mother.

As always, I think the default position for men in this society, given where things stand legally and financially, is *not to marry at all*. The only women you should even think of marrying are women who are actively opposing socialism, feminism, Darwinism, atheism, and any other -isms that are hostile to authentic Christian living. You will probably be miserable and wretched, but at least you can be miserable and wretched together – and you won't have to worry about her stabbing you in the back and undermining your enterprises.

I wrote before about my views on who is to blame when a relationship goes wrong.

Canadian conservatives to cut corporate tax rate and rein in consumer debt

December 31, 2010 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from the Montreal Gazette.

Excerpt:

> Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is rightly sticking to a plan to cut corporate taxes in January, despite threats from opposition parties to bring down the minority Conservative government.
>
> Flaherty's resolve is getting support in the Montreal business and economic community, where lower corporate taxes are seen as a key to reigniting private investment.
>
> […]The mobility of capital has been accelerating since the 1990s and corporate taxes can be a big factor in the decision-making process for foreign and local investors.
>
> The tax cut scheduled for Jan. 1 would lower the federal corporate rate to 16.5 per cent from 18. A further reduction to 15 per cent is set for 2012, which would put Canada at the top of the class among G7 economies.
>
> […]The opposition parties would rather see the money go to deficit reduction or to social programs that would help Canadians get through the difficult economy.
>
> Flaherty, on the other hand, wants Canada to have the lowest corporate tax rate of any major industrialized nation. His goal is to see the combined federal and provincial rate fall to 25 per cent from the current 28 per cent.
>
> "This is important. This is a competitive advantage for our country," Flaherty said in a speech last month. In 2007, when the Conservatives first announced the plan, the federal business tax rate was a little over 22 per cent.
>
> He sees a low rate as way to "brand Canada" in the global marketplace. It's "an incredible advantage at a time when other countries are in the position where they will have very little choice but to increase their taxes of all kinds."

Our corporate tax rate is the highest in the world at 35%. And the Democrats like it to be the highest – because they like to tax "the rich". That's why our companies are shipping jobs overseas, where tax rates are lower. And why the Canadian unemployment rate is far lower than ours.

But wait! There's more!

According to the Vancouver Sun, he has even more conservative plans.

Excerpt:

> Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is looking at a variety of ways to encourage

> Canadian households to trim their record-high debt levels, including a tightening of the rules on the lines of credit that people can take out against their homes.
>
> […]Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney recently warned the debt binge has made consumers more vulnerable to unexpected shocks, and advised them to be more prudent.Echoing the message of thrift, Flaherty said the government continues to closely monitor the housing market, and is prepared to intervene again if necessary.
>
> "We continue to watch carefully. If we need to tighten that market up more, we will," the finance minister said. "A lot of this demand is because of very low interest rates, so it's not surprising that some people are taking advantage of that. We want to encourage thrift. We want to encourage people in the residential mortgage world to not buy more house than they can afford."
>
> Since the height of the U.S. subprime mortgage crisis in 2008, the Finance Department has twice raised the standards by which homebuyers qualify for government-backed mortgages. For example, the government has raised the minimum down payment required to qualify for such mortgages, and limited the amount of cash that homeowners can free up by refinancing their mortgages.
>
> Flaherty said any tweaks would likely be along the same lines of what the government has already done. But he said he's concerned by the popularity of so-called home-equity lines of credit, which allow people to borrow money from their mortgage lender using their home as collateral. All of Canada's biggest banks offer such loans, often with flexible repayment terms.
>
> "There's one other area that concerns me, and that is the home-equity loan market, which has grown significantly," said Flaherty, who added that the government hasn't decided if it will take further action on mortgage rules.
>
> The market for home-equity loans, which critics have likened to using one's home as an ATM, exploded in the run-up to the U.S. housing-market collapse. Eventually, lenders curtailed their offerings of such loans, but not before the market's value mushroomed to $1.1 trillion U.S..

The Conservative Party of Canada is all about creating incentives for citizens to save their money.

Look at these amazing tax-free savings accounts that the Conservatives invented.

Excerpt:

> TFSAs, TPSPs and RLSPs all resemble the Roth IRAs in the United States, although Roth IRAs are more focused on retirement and have more constraints and penalties imposed on early withdrawals.
>
> Canada's new TFSA is flexible enough for consumption and retirement. Having paid income tax to earn a certain sum in the first place, any net proceeds placed in the TFSA will be totally tax free from that point on.

> So interest income will compound tax-free, while capital gains or dividends generated by stocks are also tax-free. When withdrawn from the plan, the full nest egg is available tax-free. Plus, the withdrawal frees up a comparable amount of new contribution room. As the budget puts it, there is “full flexibility to withdraw and recontribute.”
>
> The TFSA is designed to help Canadians save for serial short-term consumption goals like automobiles, vacations or home renovations. But it can also be used to save up for a down payment on a home or for education.
>
> […]Unlike RRSPs, which must be collapsed after age 71, there is no age limit for contributing to a TFSA. Unused contribution room is carried forward indefinitely.
>
> […]High-income investors can use the TFSA to shelter highly taxed interest income or foreign dividends, which are otherwise taxed at the top marginal tax rate.

Conservatives want people to have jobs, earn money, and save money. Liberals want people to not have jobs, borrow money, and then depend on government bailouts and handouts.

One last quick thing about James Flaherty. He is a social conservative and a *vocal* opponent of abortion.

Do public schools undermine the parent-child relationship?

January 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Robert Stacy McCain linked to this article on Big Government.

Excerpt:

> "I could never home-school. I would probably kill my kid by Wednesday, if I had to spend the entire day with him, every day!"
>
> Typical fare for the teenager-parent relationship? Unfortunately, yes. But ironically, the individuals making these pronouncements are often the *ideal* candidates for home schooling. Possibly the *worst*thing frustrated parents can do is send their aloof, argumentative children away (to school.) In any other setting, dropping them off somewhere, for someone else to deal with, would be deemed *giving up* on the relationship. (This is the way children likely perceive the slight as well – they aren't stupid, you know.)
>
> If the parents cannot stand to spend time with their own child, how will he ever feel loved? But parents are so blinded by school's beacon; they shield their eyes and shove the child into the wolves' den. (It is no wonder he returns home behaving like a wild animal.)
>
> **What children learn in school**
>
> Parents wonder where their relationship with their teen went wrong. Answer: Their influence was all but eclipsed the moment the child crossed the school threshold. It's that simple.
>
> Each day a young child goes to school, he learns (way too early,) that his parents don't know everything. School reinforces this point by teaching the little ones to instruct their parents. "Tell Mommy not to pack plastic sandwich bags in your lunch – that kills the dolphins!" Mommy kills dolphins!
>
> He makes friends with other kids whose parents also slaughter innocent animals. He joins his peers, learns to challenge authority, then comes home and asserts himself. The parent thinks, "Well, that's probably a good thing, because he is learning to be self-confident and capable."
>
> But a good parent has a sneaking suspicion that it isn't quite right.

And there was an interesting comment at McCain's blog:

> [Homeschooling is] a choice. We do not have lavish vacations, drive expensive cars, etc. All the toys the world screams that you must have … we chose not to have. Nor do we chase careers. We believe that preventing atheistic and Marxist indoctrination in our children and ensuring they are educated is more important than the things of this world.

> Results?
>
> My 12 year old reads on a college level.
> My 14 year old loves algebra.
> My 8 year old can hold converstions with adults, on or above their level.
>
> My kids:
>
> – Have never spent a day in public indoctrination
> – Love their teachers
> – Enjoy reading books
> – Aren't concerned with pop culture
> – Learn firearm safety and do not sit all day in gun free zones
>
> I am not seeking to send my children to some Ivy League school, but each of my children excels. The current problem I face is that my home is turning into a library. If any of my children attended a public school, they would be immediately suspended for independent thought.
>
> This may sound harsh to some (I really don't care), but moreover, God instructs us that we are responsible for our children's education. My wife and I choose to follow God's word.

I'm not so sure that the government will look kindly on parents teaching their kids firearms – that's just the kind of thing the nanny state frowns on, and just the kind of thing they like to stamp out – because what can parents know about parenting compared to bureaucrats?

I don't think that the private schools would do this as much, since they actually have to *please the parents* in order to *get paid*. See the difference between public and private schools?

Is there a difference between Christian martyrs and Muslim martyrs?

January 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting post on the Truth in Religion & Politics blog that asks and answers the question.

Excerpt:

> What is so unique about the earliest disciples of Jesus being martyred for their claim Jesus was raised from the dead? Many believers of various religious systems–Muslims for example–die and commit suicide regularly for what they believe to be true. Christian apologists arguing for the historicity of the Resurrection use the fact that Jesus' disciples and subsequent followers allowed themselves to be killed, without recanting their conviction that Jesus was raised from the dead. Is this line of reasoning valid? Does the fact that others die willingly for their religious faith undercut the veracity of the argument for the Resurrection?
>
> The most important aspect of this detail is the historical proximity of the disciples to the event. The disciples were contemporaries of Jesus and the Resurrection event. They were witnesses to Jesus' life; witnesses to His death; and claimed to be witnesses of His being alive after having been buried.
>
> If we claim the Resurrection was a story invented by the disciples, we have to also have to claim they died for an event they knew they invented themselves.
>
> […]Keep in mind I am not arguing for modern or even 2nd century Christian martyrs as evidence, but rather the first disciples who claimed to be actual witnesses to the events themselves. Muslims who die in suicide attacks are not first hand witnesses to Allah, or miracles of Allah. Mohammad did not perform miracles, he claimed only to be a prophet. Given this aspect of Islam, Mohammad's cohorts were getting their theological insight second-hand from someone who claimed to speak for God. They are not in parallel circumstances as the first martyred disciples who claimed to see with their own eyes the events for which they were killed. Muslims willingly die for what someone told them was true, and in fact they do believe the message of Mohammad is true, but they lack first hand experience of his claims; they could not necessarily have known his claims were false. Jesus' disciples claimed to be eye witnesses to the Resurrection, they would be in the position to know their own story was false.

Lots of people die for their beliefs, but only the first century Christian martyrs were in a position to know whether they saw Jesus after his death or not.

Why do young Christians become atheists in college?

January 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post on Sean McDowell's blog about how Paul Vitz, professor of psychology at New York University, lost his faith in college.

Excerpt:

> In fact, he believes the major barriers to belief in God are not rational but psychological. Psychological factors are not determinative, but strongly shape our perception and approach to God.
>
> To see how this relates to kids leaving the faith, let's briefly consider Vitz' own story. He grew up in a "wishy-washy" Christian home in the Midwest. He became an atheist in grad school and remained so until his *re*-conversion back to Christianity in his late thirties. While he would have denied it at the time, he now realizes that his reasons for becoming an atheist from 18-38 were "intellectually superficial and largely without a deep thought basis". Vitz is convinced that this phenomenon is widespread today.
>
> Rather than reasoning to his atheistic beliefs, he was simply socialized into them. He cites three reasons for his initial conversion. First, he had a degree of social unease coming from the Midwest. It seemed terribly dull, provincial, middle class, and narrow. He wanted to be part of the glamorous secular world at Michigan when he arrived on campus as an undergrad. Just think about all the young people arriving in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago or other big cities or campuses who are embarrassed by their fundamental upbringing. This kind of socialization, says Vitz, has pushed many people away from God.
>
> Second, he wanted to be accepted by the powerful and influential people in his field of psychology. His professors at Stanford had two things in common—their intense ambition and rejection of religion. Vitz concludes, "In this environment, just as I had learned how to dress like a college student by putting on the right clothes, I also learned to think like a proper psychologist by putting on the right, that is, atheistic or skeptical, ideas and attitudes".
>
> The third factor is personal convenience. Vitz explains, "The fact is, it is quite inconvenient to be a serious believer in today's neo-pagan world. I would have to give up many pleasures, some money and a good deal of time. I didn't have enough pleasures, I didn't have enough time, and I didn't have enough money to do any of that as far as I was concerned". Doubts about God often follow when young people grasp how inconvenient Christianity can really be. I've had countless discussions with young people about God, the Bible, evolution, and other apologetic issues only to discover that what is *really* driving their doubts is immoral behavior (usually sex). This is not always true, but I'm surprised how many times it is.

This is what parents need to prepare for before sending their children off to college. Do you have a plan?

Is the government really interested in undermining marriage?

January 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this calculator hosted by the Department of Health and Human Services. (H/T ECM)

Here are some of the things the calculator considers:

- how many hours each person works
- how much child support is being paid by the father
- what is the cost of day care
- eligibility for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- eligibility for Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Program
- eligibility for food stamps
- eligibility for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children
- eligibility for public and subsidized housing
- eligibility for Subsidized Child Care

It helps people who are considering marriage see all the benefits they would lose by marrying.

Sometimes, it is not worth it to work in a real job (dealing drugs doesn't count because you don't declare that), and sometimes it is not worth it to get married. And the government likes it when people don't get married, because fatherless children are more used to being dependent on the state, and they are more malleable in the public schools.

The calculator is linked by the United Way, a radically leftist organization that provides funding for all kinds of anti-Christian, anti-marriage, anti-family, anti-child social programs – including funding abortions. They also cut funding to the Boy Scouts of America.

What happened when Chile privatized its retirement program?

January 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of South America

Here's an editorial about how Chile privatized their government-run retirement program.

Excerpt:

> Nearly 30 years ago, on the very day Ronald Reagan was sworn in as U.S. president, Chile became the first nation to privatize its social security system. Three decades hence, it has surpassed all expectations.
>
> […]Thirty years on, Pinera's plan, adapted from the ideas of Milton Friedman, is, along with free trade, one of the two pillars of Chile's success story, surpassing all predictions.
>
> Pinera's proposal began with scrapping the payroll tax on the country's social security system and inviting all workers to take the money they were contributing and move it into a private pension.
>
> Workers would be free to choose the fund, how much to put in, and at what age they would retire, with a minimal safety net built into the design. Past contributions would be refunded to workers by government bond. And anyone who didn't like the idea was free to remain with the system as it was. It was a huge success: 95% of Chile's workers chose the private system.
>
> Pinera told the public to expect a compounded 4% rate of return under the

> private plan. But as of 2010, the average annual rate of return was 9.23%, far higher than promised.
>
> By contrast, the U.S. social security system, which today accounts for a quarter of the U.S. government budget, is slated to give retiring workers in the next decade a 1% to 2% rate of return. And those entering the system today will see a negative return.
>
> Chile's implicit pension debt fell to just 6% of GNP — compared with 100% in the U.S., 300% in France and 450% in Italy, leaving Chile with no net debt.
>
> Better still, the accumulated savings in the pension funds fueled Chile's spectacular economic ascent, taking real incomes from about $4,000 per capita in the early 1980s to $15,000 today, and GDP to the 6% range most years for nearly 20 years. With that record, is it any surprise that Chile this year earned itself a membership card into the club of rich nations, the OECD?
>
> The U.S. could have similar result if it had started on Chile's path 30 years ago, with no debt and a phenomenal rate of growth.
>
> But U.S. politicians, just like Chile's fascist generals, have insisted the public is too stupid to fend for itself without big government. Given U.S. politicians' fraudulent mismanagement and abuse of Social Security in recent years, such claims are outrageous.

And it even works in Canada – they privatized their air traffic control program.

Excerpt:

> In 1996, Canada privatized its air traffic control system, in part due to the long waits endured by passengers. Today, it should take the same approach to improve its miserable health care waiting times.
>
> Canada's air traffic control might not have been a major embarrassment — though its health-care system might be — but it was performing poorly enough that policymakers felt they had to do something about it. So they sold it for $1.5 billion.
>
> In turning over its air traffic control system to Nav Canada, the country relieved itself of a multitude of air travel issues.
>
> Lengthy delays have been minimized, flight times have been cut, circling while awaiting a landing slot has been decreased and routes are more efficient. The overall flying experience has improved as has the business environment for airlines.
>
> According to a Christmas Eve story in the Financial Post, privatization of the air traffic control system has "cut the fuel bill of airlines flying into Canada and above it by an estimated $1.4 billion collectively." Nav Canada "estimates it will be able to save airlines a further $2.9 billion on fuel by 2016."
>
> At the same time, the private company, which does not operate through a

> command-and-control arrangement like a state-run system would, has kept airlines' landing fees stable "and in some cases, like in 2006," even reduced them.
>
> Taxpayers have benefited. The system is no longer being propped up by $100 million to $200 million a year in public funds.
>
> Though Nav Canada is a nonprofit company, it still makes money. Its profits go to pay down debt and are plowed back into the company for new innovations — an incentive that the clumsy government-owned air traffic control system didn't have.

Why don't we try things that we know will work – like privatizing wasteful government agencies and social programs? If it works for Chile and Canada, then it should work for us. If massive government spending did not work for Japan, then it shouldn't work for us, either. Why govern by rhetoric and demonizing the opposition, when we can easily do what has worked for others? They are not really so different from us, are they?

Car bomb kills 21 Christians in Egypt

January 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary tipped me to this story.

Excerpt:

> A bomb killed at least 17 people outside a church in the Egyptian city of Alexandria early on New Year's Day and the Interior Ministry said a foreign-backed suicide bomber may have been responsible.
>
> Dozens of people were wounded by the blast, which scattered body parts, destroyed cars and smashed windows. The attack prompted Christians to protest on the streets, and some Christians and Muslims hurled stones at each other.
>
> Egypt has stepped up security around churches, banning cars from parking outside them, since an al-Qaeda-linked group in Iraq issued a threat against the Church in Egypt in November.
>
> […]A statement on an Islamist website posted about two weeks before the blast called for attacks on Egypt's churches, listing among them the one hit. No group was named in the statement.

Gateway Pundit had a later report of the bombing from AFP. (H/T Robert Stacy McCain)

Excerpt:

> A suspected suicide bomber blew himself up outside the Coptic church on Saturday, killing 21 people and wounding 79 others in an attack President Hosni Mubarak said was the work of "foreign hands."

The strange thing that Gateway Pundit found was that the White House (Barack Obama) was emphasizing that a terrorist attack on a Coptic Christian church injured and killed Muslims, as well as Christians. This is the kind of moral equivalence you find so often on the left. If a bunch of Christians are blown up by a bunch of Muslims, then no one is to blame, because everyone is a victim, including the Muslims who committed the crime. People on the left just can't bring themselves to say that violence against innocent people is wrong, and that the people who do it are wrong. They just can't name evil or blame evil. They don't want evil people to feel bad about being evil.

UPDATE: Gates of Vienna links to this AINA article which claims that the Egyptian church guards *left the church an hour before the bomb went off.*

Excerpt:

> There was no immediate claim of responsibility but officials hastily blamed either Al-Qaida or the Israeli Mousad of being behind the blast, but none of them mentioned the Egyptian state security which is viewed by Copts as the real culprit.

> To clear his security forces of negligence, the Minister of Interior said that the blast was an “individual” case, caused by a single suicide terrorist detonating his vest, and has nothing to do with an exploding car. The governor of Alexandria claimed the attack as being aimed at Muslims and Christians alike.
>
> After the blast, traumatized Copts were angered by chants of “Allah Akbar” from Muslims and began hurling stones at the mosque. Immediately security forces which were absent during the car blast and the ensuing events, appeared and starting shooting tear gas at the Copts, and they in turn hurled stones at them, said an eyewitness. Fifteen Copts were rounded up from their homes by the authorities.
>
> […]Eyewitnesses confirmed that security forces guarding the church withdrew nearly one hour before the blast, leaving only four policemen and an officer to guard such a big church and nearly 2000 people attending the midnight mass. “Normally they would have waited until the mass was over,” said el-Gezeiry. He also commented on the Muslim’s schadenfreude at the massacre at the church, who were heard chanting “Allah Akbar.”

Read the whole thing.

What happened in Europe when they embraced Democrat policies?

January 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story from the radically-leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> Francesca Esposito, 29 and exquisitely educated, helped win millions of euros in false disability and other lawsuits for her employer, a major Italian state agency. But one day last fall she quit, fed up with how surreal and ultimately sad it is to be young in Italy today.
>
> It galled her that even with her competence and fluency in five languages, it was nearly impossible to land a paying job. Working as an unpaid trainee lawyer was bad enough, she thought, but doing it at Italy's social security administration seemed too much. She not only worked for free on behalf of the nation's elderly, who have generally crowded out the young for jobs, but her efforts there did not even apply to her own pension.
>
> […]The outrage of the young has erupted, sometimes violently, on the streets of Greece and Italy in recent weeks, as students and more radical anarchists protest not only specific austerity measures in flattened economies but a rising reality in Southern Europe: People like Ms. Esposito feel increasingly shut out of their own futures. Experts warn of volatility in state finances and the broader society as the most highly educated generation in the history of the Mediterranean hits one of its worst job markets.
>
> […]The daughter of a fireman and a high school teacher, Ms. Esposito was the first in her family to graduate from college and the first to study foreign languages. She has an Italian law degree and a master's from Germany and was an intern at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. It has not helped.[…]Even before the economic crisis hit, Southern Europe was not an easy place to forge a career. Low growth and a corrosive lack of meritocracy have long posed challenges to finding a job in Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal. Today, with the added sting of austerity, more people are left fighting over fewer opportunities. It is a zero-sum game that inevitably pits younger workers struggling to enter the labor market against older ones already occupying precious slots.
>
> As a result, a deep malaise has set in among young people. Some take to the streets in protest; others emigrate to Northern Europe or beyond in an epic brain drain of college graduates. But many more suffer in silence, living in their childhood bedrooms well into adulthood because they cannot afford to move out.
>
> "They call us the lost generation," said Coral Herrera Gómez, 33, who has a Ph.D.

> in humanities but still lives with her parents in Madrid because she cannot find steady work. “I’m not young,” she added over coffee recently, “but I’m not an adult with a job, either.”
>
> […]Indeed, experts warn of a looming demographic disaster in Southern Europe, which has among the lowest birth rates in the Western world. With pensioners living longer and young people entering the work force later — and paying less in taxes because their salaries are so low — it is only a matter of time before state coffers run dry.
>
> “What we have is a Ponzi scheme,” said Laurence J. Kotlikoff, an economist at Boston University and an expert in fiscal policy.
>
> He said that pay-as-you-go social security and health care were a looming fiscal disaster in Southern Europe and beyond. “If these fertility rates continue through time, you won’t have Italians, Spanish, Greeks, Portuguese or Russians,” he said. “I imagine the Chinese will just move into Southern Europe.”

> The problem goes far beyond youth unemployment, which is at 40 percent in Spain and 28 percent in Italy.

> […]“This is the best-educated generation in Spanish history, and they are entering a job market in which they are underutilized,” said Ignacio Fernández Toxo, the leader of the Comisiones Obreras, one of Spain’s two largest labor unions. “It is a tragedy for the country.”

> Yet many young people in Southern Europe see labor union leaders like Mr. Fernández, and the left-wing parties with which they have been historically close, as part of the problem. They are seen as exacerbating a two-tier labor market by protecting a caste of tenured older workers rather than helping younger workers enter the market.

> For Dr. Kotlikoff, the solution is simple: “We have to change the labor laws. Not gradually, but quickly.”
>
> Yet in Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, any change in national contracts involves complex negotiations among governments, labor unions and businesses — a delicate dance in which each faction fights furiously for its interests.

The left think that education creates jobs. But education by leftists creates ignorance and resentment. Capitalism, corporations, property rights, the rule of law, and tax cuts create jobs. The unions that control left-wing parties like the Democrats are the ones to blame for blocking labor law reform that would create economic growth.

It’s sad, but not too sad, because you have to remember that the young generation is mentally challenged, and they overwhelmingly turn out to vote for more and more socialism – higher taxes, global warming alarmism, and bigger social programs. They just don’t know what the effects will be of their voting until they reach their 30s.

Young people are economically ignorant, but at the same time incredibly arrogant in their

ignorance. They want to be cool and trendy, and to vote the way they were taught to vote by the media and Hollywood celebrities. They want to vote for the Peter Pan economics that their teachers and professors taught them – using the red marking pen as a whip to scourge them into submission.

Consider this editorial in Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Heading into the new year, there's plenty of optimism about the stock market rising, corporate profits recovering and companies hiring. There's just one problem on that last jobs item: Many will be overseas.
>
> On those rare occasions when it's not demonizing businesses as bastions of corporate greed, the White House and all its supporting players spend their time pondering why U.S. businesses, with mountains of cash, won't use at least some of it to hire workers. A mere 900,000 jobs were created in 2010, while U.S. companies sat on $1.1 trillion in cash.
>
> Last week, President Obama went so far as to meet with 20 CEOs for several hours over this, "asking the attendees to dialogue with him on a shared agenda focused on moving our economy forward," according to a White House statement.
>
> We don't have any inside lines as to what was said, but news is trickling out the Obama administration is starting to think about doing something big to end the jobs drought in the U.S.
>
> The something big would be to lower the U.S. corporate tax, which at 35%, stands as the second-highest in the developed world. President Obama only told NPR that he discussed "simplifying the system, hopefully lowering rates, broadening the base."
>
> If so, and if there are no accompanying sleights of hand to extract cash from businesses some other way, as some reports have it, it's good news. Nothing inhibits the creation of U.S. jobs quite like high corporate taxes and their accompanying regulatory regime.
>
> The fact is, companies sitting on cash aren't doing nothing. They're hiring overseas, creating 1.4 million jobs in 2010 alone, according to the Competitive Enterprise Institute.
>
> That's not because they prefer foreigners to Americans, but because the bad business climate here pushes them to do so.
>
> The rest of the world is a vastly different place from Obama's U.S., which is characterized by high taxes and protectionist set-asides for politically connected unions that shut out free trade.
>
> In places like Indonesia, Singapore, Taiwan, India and Thailand, nobody demonizes business or blasts trade. Instead great efforts are made by the state and the private sector to draw in foreign investment by becoming more

> competitive than their rivals.
>
> U.S. multinationals go to these places not because labor is cheap but because these policies also create boomtowns with lots of customers. Incredibly enough, sometimes overseas profits and jobs provide a lifeline for troubled U.S. companies back home. Take GM — today, its Brazil and Korea operations help keep it afloat.
>
> Growth in the 8% to 9% range is typical in Asia.

The young are so busy swallowing slogans and persisting in a taxpayer-funded extended childhood in the schools that they cannot come up for air for a second to understand how the economy really works. All they do is get their worldview from Comedy Central and Michael Moore movies. And when reality asserts itself, they throw rocks through windows to protest as their entitlements are taken away. A generation of barbarians, raised by unionized taxpayer-funded socialist educators who know nothing about life outside of their sheltered ivory tower.

eading into the new year, there’s plenty of optimism about the stock market rising, corporate profits recovering and companies hiring. There’s just one problem on that last jobs item: Many will be overseas.On those rare occasions when it’s not demonizing businesses as bastions of corporate greed, the White House and all its supporting players spend their time pondering why U.S. businesses, with mountains of cash, won’t use at least some of it to hire workers. A mere 900,000 jobs were created in 2010, while U.S. companies sat on $1.1 trillion in cash.

A summary of Dr. Laura's Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands

January 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am re-reading the book and getting more and more excited about it. I am particularly happy that Christian women I respect like Sue Bohlin of Probe Ministries likes the book.

Sue's assessment is here.

Excerpt:

> Talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written a book that is improving thousands of marriages: *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands.*{1} We need this book because millions of wives either don't know how to love their husbands wisely and well, or they're too self-centered to see it as important. Dr. Laura credits this dismal condition to forty years of feminist philosophy, "with its condemnation of just about everything male as evil, stupid, and oppressive, and the denigration of female and male roles in families."{2} While the women's movement certainly had a hand to play in the disintegration of relationships and the family, I believe the core cause is our sinful self-centeredness, just as the Bible says.{3}
>
> Which is why we need help, and God instructs older women to train younger women to love their husband and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.{4} *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* is a great resource for learning these important values and skills.

She talks about men's needs for direct communication, respect, appreciation, support, and sex.

And ends with this:

> I can't recommend *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* highly enough. In fact, I gave a copy to my new daughter-in-law! Let me close with one more piece of wisdom from Dr. Laura: "[M]en are simple creatures who come from a woman, are nurtured and brought up by a woman, and yearn for the continued love, admiration and approval of a woman. . . Women need to better appreciate the magnitude of their power and influence over men, and not misuse or abuse it."{25} Amen!

And here's another summary of the book that I found.

Full text:

> Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written another book that deserves a place on the best seller list with six of her other books, such as Ten Stupid Things Women Do to Mess Up Their Lives and Ten Stupid Things Men Do to Mess Up Their Lives. The

Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands, from this unmarried man's perspective, is an excellent manual for women on how to get want they want from men and marriage and, generally, how to be happy. Dr. Laura makes a number of important, practical points, based on her experience in private practice, from advising her radio callers, and from literally hundreds of letters and emails she received from men and women while she was writing the book. Here are the points that struck this writer, together with commentary:

1. **Men Need Women, and This Need Gives Women Huge Influence**. Dr. Laura states the point as follows: "[M]en are simple creatures who come from a woman, are nurtured and brought up by a woman, and yearn for the continued love, admiration, and approval from a woman." Women have great power and influence over men, and wives in particular have tremendous power over their husbands. How they use this power essentially controls the relationship, because women are the masters of most relationships and marriages. That's why Dr. Laura says that she probably won't write The Proper Care and Feeding of Wives: wives already have most of the power and their marriages depend, for the most part, on them.

2. **Women Err in Favoring Children Over Husband**. A friend once told this writer that once a woman has children, her husband is relegated to the moral equivalence of a piece of furniture. How sad if this is true in many marriages. Here's how Dr. Laura puts it: "Once wives became mothers, they had no time to be wives. The men would even compliment their wives on being great mothers, but expressed considerable pain over not being shown love, affection, or sexual interest. The typical reply from a wife challenged with this was 'I only have time to take care of one person, and our child is that person. I'm just too tired for you.' This puts fathers in the ugly and uncomfortable position of feeling competitive with and resentful of their children, whom they love so much."

3. **Men and Women Are Different**. That men and women are deeply different ought not to be notable, but for the fact that it is so often challenged today. Dr. Laura says that society tries to make both men and women "unisex." But men are happiest being men, and women are happiest being women, with few exceptions. The differences start to manifest themselves very early. In one study Dr. Laura mentions, a barrier was placed between 1 year-old babies and their mothers. What did the little boys do? They attempted to get around the barrier or knock it down. The little girls? They cried until their mothers' picked them up. Men tend to respond to things physically, women verbally. In fact, the two sexes are just right for each other.

4. **Not Every Thought and Feeling Needs to be Said**. Women tend to be so verbal, so expressive, that they can tire out men easily unless they exercise some restraint. Dr. Laura reports that wives generally overwhelm their husbands

with communication. “Husbands imagine (so foolishly) that their wives are telling them something they actually need to know because they’re supposed to do something about it. Otherwise, men can’t imagine why the ‘communication’ is happening at all. It confuses them, frustrates them, and their response is to turn off. That’s when they unfairly become labeled insensitive.” Husbands and fiances are not girlfriends or psychologists, and women who want attention should adjust their communication style accordingly when speaking with them.

5. **Men Are Not Mind-Readers**. Most men are not very intuitive compared to most women. Many women “get caught up in the absurdly romanticized notion that ‘if he loved me, he’d just know what I’m thinking, what I’d like, what he should say.'” If a woman wants her man to do something, she should just ask him plainly, without nagging, and show appreciation when he does it. To act otherwise, as many women do, shows arrogance and lack of respect for the husband’s difference, and it leads to unhappiness in the marriage and in the family.

6. **Man Is an Embodied Soul**. No, Dr. Laura didn’t put it that way; “embodied soul” is a Catholic concept. But that concept is what underlies her discussion of how important it is to a man that his wife try to keep up her appearance. What does it mean that we are embodied souls? It means that our bodies are integral parts of who we are. We are not just souls. Our bodies are not like clothing that we can take on or off. There was no time during which we had only souls and not bodies, and in eternity as well we will have bodies. It is through our bodies, in fact, that we communicate to our loved ones and to the rest of the world. One thinks of the beautiful line from the old Anglican marriage rite: bride and groom pledge to each other “with my body I thee worship.” It is ironic, but in many cases men–sex-crazed pigs in the minds of many women–actually have a truer understanding of the beauty of the body and the meaning of the marital embrace than their wives do. “Objectification” may come as much or more from the woman’s side as from the husband’s if the woman sees her own body as being separate from rather than an integral part of herself. Dr. Laura writes: “In reading all the letters from men, I was struck by their depth of senstivity about the issue of women’s appearance. It wasn’t an impersonal, animal reaction (as it is with women the men don’t personally know), it was a deeply personal one. The wife’s comfort with and appreciation of her own body and femininity, and her willingness to share that with her husband, actually fed his sense of well-being, his feeling of being loved as a husband and valued as a ‘man.'”

7. **Infidelity by Omission**. Brides and grooms make a number of vows, not only of sexual fidelity. Marital vows include and imply words like love, honor, protect, and care for. “[W]hen one breaches those vows by neglect, is that also not a form of infidelity? Perhaps we should start looking at the act of intentionally depriving a spouse of legitimate needs as infidelity, too, because it stems from

> being unfaithful to the intent of the vows."

> 8. **In the Bedroom**. To her credit, Dr. Laura gives due place to the importance for marriage of the marital act: "The bedroom is the foundation of marriage and family." St. Josemaria Escriva, founder of Opus Dei, that supposedly conservative institution within the Church, put it this way: "The marriage bed is an altar." Enough said?

> 9. **Women Should Appreciate Men's Masculinity**. Dr. Laura relates a trip she made recently to a swimming pool. A mom and a dad were wading with their infant child. Mom held the child against her chest, cooed to him, and swooped him up and down. She passed the baby to dad. He turned the baby's face outward and swooshed him forward and up into the air. "Mom equals protection and nurturance. Dad equals autonomy and adventure. It is the perfect balance that helps produce a functional, secure human being." Too many women, though, act like Alice Kramdens, constantly belitting their husbands, shooting down their aspirations, treating them like children. Dr. Laura writes: "When a wife treats her man like he's one of her children, when she puts him down or thwarts his need for autonomy, adventure, risk, competition, challenge, and conquest, she ends up with a sullen, unooperative, unloving, hostile lump."

> 10. **Thou Shalt Not Covet**. Dr. Laura contributes a novel (to this writer) and insightful contemporary application of the commandment, "thou shal not covet." Specifically, she understands it as a rebuke to people who want it all, especially feminists. "Perhaps the feminist notions about women having power if they do it all has obstructed too many women's ability to realize that in real life we all make choices, and that the true joy and meaning of life is not in how many things we have or do, but in the sacrifice and commitment we make to others within the context of the choices we've made. The Tenth Commandment, about coveting, reminds us that none of us can have everything there is nor everything we want. Without enjoying and appreciating our gifts and blessings, we create a hell on earth for ourselves and for those who love us."

Please make an effort to buy this book and read it.

Republicans prepare to investigate Democrat corruption

January 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is Darrell Issa on Fox News Sunday.

Story from the left-wing Politico web site.

Excerpt:

> The WikiLeaks debacle, corruption in Afghanistan and Obama administration regulation are all on the agenda as Rep. Darrell Issa prepares to take the helm of the top House committee tasked with watch-dogging Washington.
>
> […]"We need to start by asking a very fundamental question: Why hasn't the economy created the private-sector jobs the president promised?" the memo said.
>
> That hearing would call business leaders to testify about how government regulations are doing "harm to job-creation efforts." The hearing falls in line with what Issa talked about Sunday, when he told "Fox News Sunday" that administration regulation is hurting American competitiveness.
>
> According to the agenda, Issa also plans to hold hearings on the role played by mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in the foreclosure crisis. For that, he intends to call the Federal Housing Administration chief to testify, along with non-government experts. Along those lines, Issa is planning a hearing examining the "failure" of another government panel to find out more about the financial crisis — he wants to dig into the work of the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, which he claims has done a "biased" and "highly partisan" job of looking for the root causes of the financial crisis.
>
> Issa also plans to detour into foreign policy. According to the memo, he'll hold a hearing on how to combat corruption in Afghanistan. He also plans a hearing on WikiLeaks, examining ways the federal government can plug the disclosure of more sensitive information in the future. He plans to call National Security Adviser Tom Donilon to testify.
>
> Issa said on "Fox News Sunday" that Attorney General Eric Holder needs to either do more to crack down on the WikiLeaks document dumps or leave the administration.

And so it begins.

Is Barack Obama responsible for rising gas prices?

January 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article that takes a look at the effects of his energy policies. (H/T Ari)

Excerpt:

> With gasoline currently above $3 per gallon nationwide and economists expecting that price to rise even further in 2011, America should be getting serious about producing more of its own resources. But instead of focusing on how to bring more relief to American motorists, President Obama has imposed massive new regulations, restrictions, and even threatened higher taxes on American energy, all of which negatively impact domestic production.
>
> What follows is a list of the five most egregious actions on the part of the Obama administration that have contributed to higher gasoline prices and greater dependence on foreign dictators for our energy…

Here's the one I thought was the most interesting:

> **Cancelling existing permits**: Immediately after taking office in 2009, President Obama's handpicked Secretary of the Department of Interior, Ken Salazar, canceled 77 leases for oil and gas drilling in Utah. The fact that this was one of the administration's first regulatory decisions meant that American energy companies were immediately concerned about their ability to produce oil and gas in the future, injecting a level of uncertainty into the market that moves the country away from job creation and economic recovery. One year later, the administration canceled 61 more leases, this time in Montana, as part of President Obama's war on global warming.

And here's the conclusion:

> Why has President Obama led the charge to restrict American energy? The answer is elusive, and it's anyone's guess what his administration will do (if anything) to fight for lower gasoline prices. But if past statements from him and his administration are any indication, the U.S. could be stuck (absent major legislative and regulatory changes) with prohibitively high gasoline prices: Then-Senator Obama said on the campaign trail in 2008 that he doesn't object to high oil prices as long as they come about gradually, and Secretary of Energy Steven Chu once famously said he hoped the U.S. would "boost the price of gasoline to the levels in Europe," where prices are currently about $7 per gallon.

Yes, it's true. People on the left are willing to enact policies that cost consumers more money, reduce the number of jobs for Americans, outsource energy production to other countries, and even pay our enemies to produce energy in ways that are *more* damaging to the environment than our ways of producing energy. This is the Democrat way. They

don’t care about you having cheaper energy prices, they don’t care about creating jobs for Americans, and they don’t care about reducing pollution. If you want to see where this is going, just look at the policies of the socialist Dalton McGuinty in Ontario, Canada.

Why do they do this? Well, people on the secular left are often stuck believing in doomsday predictions about overpopulation and resource exhaustion that were discredited years ago. Having rejected God’s sovereignty over the universe as part of their embrace of moral relativism and rejection of ultimate accountability, they look to big government to reduce the uncertainties and fears of a mindless, random universe.

If no one is in charge, then anything could happen, they think – and they are frightened. Thus, they look to government to coerce people to behave predictably, and also to reduce the total number of people (abortion, DDT bans, purges of dissenters, etc.). And of course fussing about imaginary bogeymen like global warming gives them an inflated sense of self-righteousness and justifies their nanny-state micro-managing of ignorant taxpaying businesses and workers.

These are not good people. These are not competent people.

Human Rights Tribunal finds Catholic school board guilty of discrimination

January 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> The Ontario Human Rights Tribunal has ordered a Catholic school board to compensate three members of a prominent UFO cult after finding the board guilty of religious discrimination.
>
> Daniel, Michel, and Sylvie Chabot, members of the Raelian cult, were hired in November 2006 by the Conseil Scolaire Catholique Franco-Nord to offer 'emotional pedagogy' training sessions for teachers. They delivered such sessions through what they call the Academy of Pleasurology and Emotional Intelligence (APEI).
>
> The Catholic board chose to end the contract in January 2007 after discovering their membership in the cult, which claims that humans were planted on Earth by benevolent extraterrestrials.
>
> On December 15th, Tribunal vice president Michelle Flaherty ruled that the board had discriminated against the three siblings on the basis of their beliefs. The parties had agreed to mediation, but asked the Tribunal to determine if the human rights code was violated. The decision does not reveal how much the board must pay in penalty.

Here's a quick bio of the Tribunal vice president:

> Michelle Flaherty has extensive experience in administrative, labour, human rights and employment law and has represented both employers and employees. From 1999 until 2000, Ms. Flaherty articled as a Law Clerk to Madame Justice Claire L'Heureux-Dubé of the Supreme Court of Canada. She also taught for a number of years at the University of Ottawa in the areas of equality, human rights and labour law. Her community involvement includes volunteering for several organizations in the Ottawa area. Ms. Flaherty is a graduate of the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa.

i thought that the Catholic employer should have been more careful. But then it struck me – even asking if the person is an orthodox Catholic could be considered discrimination and land you in a Human Rights Tribunal. After all, campus clubs have been banned in Canada for requiring that executive members sign a statement of faith. So I guess the practice of religion is now illegal in Canada.

I found an interesting article assessing Canada's three famous feminist Supreme Court justices, who are notorious for judicial activism to favor a left-wing agenda. Think of them

as 3 clones of Ruth Bader-Ginsburg.

When you let Democrats control health care, they close hospitals

January 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Weekly Standard. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Under the headline, "Construction Stops at Physician Hospitals," *Politico reports today that* "Physician Hospitals of America says that construction had to stop at 45 hospitals nationwide or they would not be able to bill Medicare for treatments." Stopping construction at doctor-owned hospitals might not seem like the best way to boost the economy *or* to promote greater access and choice in health care, but that exactly what Obamacare is doing.
>
> Kenneth Artz of the Heartland Institute explains, "Section 6001 of the health care law effectively bans new physician-owned hospitals (POHs) from starting up, and it keeps existing ones from expanding." *Politico* adds, "Friday [New Year's Eve] marked the last day physician-owned hospitals could get Medicare certification covering their new or expanded hospitals, one of the latest provisions of the reform law to go into effect."
>
> This little-noticed but particularly egregious aspect of Obamacare is, by all accounts, a concession to the powerful American Hospital Association (AHA), a supporter of Obamacare, which prefers to have its member hospitals operate without competition from hospitals owned by doctors. Dr. Michael Russell, president of Physician Hospitals of America, which has filed suit to try to stop this selective building-ban from going into effect, says, "There are so many regulations [in Obamacare] and they are so onerous and intrusive that we believe that the section [Section 6001] was deliberately designed so no physician owned hospital could successfully comply."
>
> Artz writes, "According to Russell, the AHA, along with Sen. [Max] Baucus (D-MT) and Congressman Pete Stark (D-CA), are responsible for the language in Section 6001." But the responsibility for all aspects of the overhaul primarily lies with outgoing-House speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate majority leader Harry Reid, and, particularly, Obamacare's principal champion, President Barack Obama.

This is just like letting the Democrats control energy policy. They block coal production, oil drilling, oil refining and construction of nuclear power plants. What happens where there is less power being produced and demand is increasing because of India and China? Well, supply decreasing, and demand increasing = SHORTAGE = HIGHER ENERGY PRICES. And that's exactly what they've done with health care.

Meanwhile, new conservative House majority leader John Boehner has introduced a bill to REPEAL OBAMACARE. (H/T ECM)

Whistleblower fired by Barack Obama loses his appeal

January 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here. (H/T Robert Stacy McCain)

Excerpt:

> A three-judge panel rejected appeals Tuesday by Gerald Walpin, a former federal watchdog fired by President Obama in 2009, likely ending his attempts to get back his old job.
>
> Former Corporation for National and Community Service Inspector General Gerald Walpin. (AP)Walpin was appointed inspector general for the agency overseeing AmeriCorps during George W. Bush's administration and filed suit in July 2009 shortly after his dismissal.
>
> But in a unanimous seven-page ruling issued Tuesday, judges with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia unanimously affirmed a previous district court decision, stating that Walpin "does not have a 'clear and indisputable right' " to reinstatement.
>
> In an interview, Walpin said he was disappointed by the decision, "not for myself but for the institution of inspectors general," because the court decision "has effectively removed any meaning" to a 2008 inspector general reform law.

McCain adds:

> And the White House lawyer who fired Walpin? He's now ambassador to Czechoslovakia.

Here's a story by Byron York to refresh you on the details of the case.

Excerpt:

> The White House's decision to fire AmeriCorps inspector general Gerald Walpin came amid politically-charged tensions inside the Corporation for National and Community Service, the organization that runs AmeriCorps. Top executives at the Corporation, Walpin explained in an hour-long interview Saturday, were unhappy with his investigation into the misuse of AmeriCorps funds by Kevin Johnson, the former NBA star who is now mayor of Sacramento, California and a prominent supporter of President Obama. Walpin's investigation also sparked conflict with the acting U.S. attorney in Sacramento amid fears that the probe — which could have resulted in Johnson being barred from ever winning another federal grant — might stand in the way of the city receiving its part of billions of dollars in federal stimulus money. After weeks of standoff, Walpin, whose position as inspector general is supposed to be protected from influence by

> political appointees and the White House, was fired.
>
> Walpin learned his fate Wednesday night. He was driving to an event in upstate New York when he received a call from Norman Eisen, the Special Counsel to the President for Ethics and Government Reform. “He said, ‘Mr. Walpin, the president wants me to tell you that he really appreciates your service, but it’s time to move on,'” Walpin recalls. “Eisen said, ‘You can either resign, or I’ll tell you that we’ll have to terminate you.'”
>
> […]In the course of his investigation, Walpin found Johnson and St. HOPE had failed to use the federal money they received for the purposes specified in the grant and had also used federally-funded AmeriCorps staff for, among other things, “driving [Johnson] to personal appointments, washing his car, and running personal errands.” Walpin came to the conclusion that Johnson and St. HOPE should be subject to suspension and debarment.

Kevin Johnson, is, of course, a Democrat. Just like Charlie Rangel and Maxine Waters are Democrats. And Chris Dodd is a Democrat. And so on.

Socialist European countries seizing individual retirement accounts

January 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this terrifying story.

Excerpt:

> People's retirement savings are a convenient source of revenue for governments that don't want to reduce spending or make privatizations. As most pension schemes in Europe are organised by the state, European ministers of finance have a facilitated access to the savings accumulated there, and it is only logical that they try to get a hold of this money for their own ends. In recent weeks I have noted five such attempts: Three situations concern private personal savings; two others refer to national funds.
>
> The most striking example is Hungary, where last month the government made the citizens an offer they could not refuse. They could either remit their individual retirement savings to the state, or lose the right to the basic state pension (but still have an obligation to pay contributions for it). In this extortionate way, the government wants to gain control over $14bn of individual retirement savings.
>
> The Bulgarian government has come up with a similar idea. $300m of private early retirement savings was supposed to be transferred to the state pension scheme. The government gave way after trade unions protested and finally only about 20% of the original plans were implemented.

The article describes 3 other countries that are grabbing more individual retirement contributions.

This is exactly where the Democrats would take us.

Can a person disagree without being hateful or inciting violence?

January 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ari is an Orthodox Jewish blogger who writes at Jennifer Roback Morse's Ruth Blog. Ari and Dr. J often write in defense of traditional marriage. As a result of that, they often get a number of pro-same-sex-marriage commenters who claim that mere disagreement with same-sex marriage is basically a hate crime. Well, Ari doesn't think that pro-SSM people should freak out at him for believing in traditional marriage, and he doesn't think that he is committing a hate crime. In fact, he would really like it if the pro-SSM people took his disagreement with same-sex marriage as… *disagreement with same-sex marriage* – instead of calling him names and attacking his character.

Now, let me ask you a question. If you were Ari, and you wanted to explain why disagreement is NOT hateful, and why disagreement with people is NOT dangerous and DOES NOT lead to violence, what would you do?

Well, Ari knows very well that conservative evangelicals like me disagree with him on whether Jesus is the only way, and that we think that having correct beliefs about who Jesus was and what his death accomplished are *required* in order for a person to be found worthy to be raised to eternal life with God in the general resurrection at the end of the age. So what he decided to do, in a fairly respectful way, is to explain how he feels about the evangelical Christians who 1) disagree with him on theology, 2) think that he should change his mind, and 3) try to persuade him that he should accept their view.

Here is an excerpt, but you WILL read the whole thing. (I have removed the name of the person he links to as an example of Protestant views)

Ari writes:

> How does it make me feel? Honestly, my most notable reaction is amusement. Am I offended? Maybe a little. But if I am at all offended, not very much. I could see how a soul more sensitive than I am would be deeply offended. (I would tell such a soul to get over it).
>
> As for me, I understand my own point of view. I'm secure in that point of view, and if [the Protestant] cares to disagree, there is neither anything I can do about it nor anything I would want to do about it. Were I cornered into a debate with [the Protestant], I know how to advance my point of view and the logical underpinnings of that view… I can say similarly if, instead of [the Protestant], I would be forced into a debate with notable atheist pseudo-rationalists Ricky Dawkins, Danny Dennet or Sammy Harris.

How does he respond to disagreements with Protestants or atheists? *He debates them*. He doesn't call them names. He doesn't claim they are inciting violence. He doesn't pass laws to silence them. He doesn't force them to pay fines. He doesn't put them in jail. He

doesn't seize their children. He doesn't enact laws to force his views on other people in the schools. He doesn't pass laws to force private companies to do sensitivity training of all employees. He doesn't award grants and scholarships on the basis of agreement with him. Etc. *He debates people who disagree with him*. And if they don't agree with him, he *leaves them alone.*

Ari continues:

> As you can see, although [the Protestant] has said, in absolutely no uncertain terms, that I am going to hell, I do not see any role for the government to shut him up. Indeed I would be horrified if the government believed my precious self-esteem to be so important that it would take it upon itself to shut [the Protestant] up for me.
>
> How would Dr. J feel if similarly confronted by [the Protestant]'s cartoon wrath? I don't have a clue, but I would be extremely surprised if her reaction was vastly different than my own. Does [the Protestant] have similar feelings about Dr. J's Catholic faith? Why, yes. Yes, he does.
>
> I trust that Dr. J. can defend her point of view to her own satisfaction, and to the satisfaction of those who share her faith. That I would likely disagree with her defense of her faith (which I don't share) is irrelevant. The world's a big place. I understand that it contains many people with many other points of view. I don't expect others always to agree with me. Indeed I would be foolish to believe that. I would be a tyrant if I insisted that force be used to make others agree.
>
> Now, do I think [the Protestant] is a hateful man? I have no idea. I have never met him. But, from reading a bit of his work, it seems to me that [the Protestant] has the best of intentions. He truly thinks I'm going to go to hell. He wants to save me from that fate. I would have to say that this fate, as he describes it, sounds more than a bit unpleasant. I commend him for his good intentions. However, I do think he's wrong.
>
> Should I condemn [the Protestant] for bothering me with his point of view? No.
>
> Rodney Stark discusses the admirable aspects of the missionizing impulse as follows:
>
> Imagine a society's discovering a vaccine against a deadly disease that has been ravaging its people and continues to ravage people in neighboring societies, where the cause of the disease is incorrectly attributed to improper diet. What would be the judgment on the society if it withheld its vaccine on the grounds that it would be ethnocentric to try to instruct members of another culture that their medical ideas are incorrect, and to induce them to adopt the effective treatment? If one accepts that one has the good fortune to be in possession of the true religion and thereby has access to the most valuable possible rewards, is one not similarly obligated to spread this blessing to those less fortunate? I see no flaw in the parallel– other than the objection that the religious claims my not be true, which objection misses the phenomenology of obligation. (*One True G-d*,

> Page 35).
>
> So, stop all the whining about “hate.” Maybe the people who disagree with you don’t really hate you. Maybe they just disagree.

I could not agree more. I wish I could shout this from the roof-tops! I wish we could all disagree respectfully – clarity, not agreement.

You need to read Ari’s post. It *will* be on the test. So get your butt over there and read it *right now*. And leave a comment telling Ari that he is brilliant!

By the way, Ari is my friend on Facebook, and so is Dr. J. I don’t entirely agree with either of them on theology. I think they are both mistaken at least in part. But I also think that they are both excellent morally, and highly effective on issues like marriage and abortion – issues where we are allies. In fact, I would not even put myself on the same scale as either of them if I were considering morality and effectiveness. They are heroes, and I am nobody. (Although you can follow my blog – that would make me somebody). It’s enough for me that they know that I have a different view than theirs, and that I have reasons for believing my view is better than their view. I do not insist that they celebrate all of my views, and I am thankful that they do not use the law to force me to celebrate all of their views. *That’s tolerance*.

Furthermore, let me say one thing about Hell. Protestants do not believe that the degree of punishment is the same for everyone who chooses to separate themselves from God by rejecting Jesus Christ. The duration is the same (eternity), but the degree of punishment is based on your actual sins. There is no moral equivalence been morally good non-Christians and people like Stalin, and they are not going to be treated equally in the afterlife.

AT LAST: Michele Bachmann open to presidential run in 2012

January 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann

Joy! Fox News has the story. (H/T Dad and Mary)

Excerpt:

> U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann of Minnesota is the keynote speaker at a GOP event in the early presidential caucus state of Iowa later this month, and a spokesman said Wednesday that the Tea Party favorite has "not ruled out" a bid for president.
>
> "Nothing's off the table for her," said Andy Parrish, Bachmann's chief of staff. "She's looking forward to traveling to Iowa for the fundraiser, and you know, she's looking forward over the next year to traveling and sharing the story of why we can't re-elect Barack Obama as president."
>
> […]Bachmann, who has drawn a national following with frequent guest appearances on cable and network news shows, broke fundraising records with an $11 million haul en route to winning her third term in Minnesota's 6th District. She also founded the congressional Tea Party caucus.
>
> Bachmann, 54, is a native of Waterloo, Iowa, but as a child moved with her family to Minnesota. On Jan. 21, she will deliver the keynote speech at the Iowans for Tax Relief PAC Taxpayers Watchdog Reception in Des Moines — an event co-

> hosted by U.S. Rep. Steve King and other prominent Iowa Republicans.
>
> Parrish wouldn't say whether Bachmann would talk presidential politics with state GOP leaders. He said she made several trips to Iowa in 2010, and while he wouldn't reveal specific travel plans in the coming months, he said she could end up in other early caucus or primary states.
>
> Bachmann has also been mentioned in recent weeks as a possible U.S. Senate candidate against Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar in 2012.

Here's why we like her so much – she's a fusion of social and fiscal conservatism. Excerpt:

> Last month, Bachmann said the session of Congress that starts today — with its new pro-life Republican majority — should de-fund the Planned Parenthood abortion business.
>
> Bachmann says she will press for the new Republican-controlled House of Representatives to pass a bill sponsored by fellow conservative luminary Mike Pence, an Indiana congressman, to de-fund Planned Parenthood when it convenes in January.
>
> "Well, I think one thing that we can do, quite simply, is to withhold funding from Planned Parenthood," Bachmann said when asked by CNS News about what Congress can do to protect unborn children.
>
> "It wouldn't mean that Planned Parenthood would go out of existence, because they do have their own independent funding, but what it would mean is that the taxpayer would no longer be funding that," she said.
>
> Bachmann also talked with CNS News about the latter point — ObamaCare and abortion funding — as a reason Republicans should pursue de-funding ObamaCare as well.
>
> "For the first time in American history under Obamacare–socialized medicine–under President Obama, we have federal funding of abortion," she said. "President Obama denies that, but we know that it's already happened in the state of Pennsylvania. And so, therefore, it's imperative that we in the House completely defund Obamacare so that we no longer force Americans to violate their moral conscience and pay for other people's abortions."
>
> Bachmann, a Minnesota congresswoman, is referring to the $160 million the federal government gave the state under ObamaCare to set up a high-risk insurance pool, but the terms of the pool allowed for the money to pay for elective abortions. That was also the case in New Mexico and Maryland until the National Right to Life Committee blew the whistle and both the Obama administration and officials in the three states backed down.
>
> Bachmann also told CNS News that Congress should de-fund the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), an agency that has worked hand-in-hand with the

> China population control officials who have used forced abortions and other human rights abuses to enforce its one-child policy. It has also promoted abortions in nations with pro-life laws.
>
> "I think it is incumbent upon us as the members of Congress to let people know–not for the purpose of scaring them–but to let people know the stark fiscal realities that we're facing right now as a nation," she said. "And can't we at minimum start with defunding things like Planned Parenthood and paying for other's people abortions that are highly controversial and are violating our principles of the Declaration of Independence, our inalienable right to life. That we can at least agree on, that we should defund that."

She is also conservative on foreign policy.

YAY! She's my absolute favorite! Because she's the best!

BACHMANN/DEMINT IN 2012!

Related posts

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- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
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- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

500 Muslim scholars endorse murder of Pakistani governor who opposed blasphemy laws

January 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Middle East and Asia

From McClatchy. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The increasing radicalization of Pakistani society was laid bare Wednesday when the nation's mainstream religious organizations applauded the murder of provincial governor **Salman Taseer** earlier this week, while **his killer was showered with rose petals as he appeared in court.**
>
> **Taseer, 66, the governor of Punjab, the country's most heavily populated province, was assassinated Tuesday by one of his police bodyguards** after Taseer had campaigned to ease Pakistan's blasphemy law. Religious groups threatened to kill others who questioned the blasphemy statute, which is designed to protect Islam and the Prophet Muhammad from "insult."
>
> Pakistan is a key partner for the U.S. in the global fight against terrorism but waves of fundamentalism have produced an increasingly intolerant and anti-American country, making the alliance with Washington hugely unpopular.

Life Site News explains more.

Excerpt:

> In November a Christian woman, Asia Bibi, was sentenced to be executed under the law for having defended her faith from insults by Muslims in the same state.
>
> […]While the Pakistani government denounced the murder, a group of 500 Muslim scholars issued an explicit statement endorsing the killing of Taseer. During initial court hearings Qadri was kissed and showered with flower petals by

> numerous supporters.
>
> “We pay rich tributes and salute the bravery, valor and faith of Mumtaz Qadri,” declared the Jamaat-e-Ahl-e-Sunnat group in a statement issued to the press. They added that “there should be no expression of grief or sympathy on the death of the governor, as those who support blasphemy of the Prophet are themselves indulging in blasphemy.”
>
> Extremist Islamic groups have held a national strike to protest the proposed repeal of the law, even though Pakistan’s ruling party has renounced plans to do so. The groups have also demanded the execution of Bibi, who was arrested in 2009 after defending her faith against Muslim women who she said were taunting her for her Christianity. She denies having insulted Mohammed.

Meanwhile, Iran is rounding up Christian leaders.

Excerpt:

> Iranian state television said Wednesday that leaders of the country’s Christian minority have been arrested and accused of spreading a hard-line version of their faith.
>
> The report did not give the number of people arrested. The group was promoting hard-line Christian views at cultural gatherings with the support of Britain, the TV reported, quoting Tehran Governor Morteza Tamadon. It did not elaborate.
>
> Tamadon was quoted as calling the group “a corrupt and deviant current.”
>
> A website of Iran’s political opposition reported that 60 Christians have been arrested since Christmas, including a priest taken into custody on Friday.
>
> The Sahamnews.org website said the priest, Leonard Keshishian, was summoned by security authorities in the central city of Isfahan and arrested.
>
> It gave no further details or a reason for the arrests.

Where is Obama? Does he have anything to say about this? Shouldn’t the supposed leader of the free world have something to say about this?

Maybe he is too busy playing golf… in only TWO YEARS he has played twice as many rounds of golf as George W. Bush played in EIGHT YEARS.

New study finds that contraceptive use increases abortion rates

January 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the article from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Abortion advocates often promote contraception by claiming that as contraception use increases, the number of "unwanted" pregnancies and therefore abortions will decrease. But a new study out of Spain has found the exact opposite, suggesting that contraception actually increases abortion rates.
>
> The authors, who published their findings in the January 2011 issue of the journal *Contraception*, conducted surveys of about 2,000 Spanish women aged 15 to 49 every two years from 1997 to 2007. They found that over this period the number of women using contraceptives increased from 49.1% to 79.9%.
>
> Yet they noted that in the same time frame the country's abortion rate more than doubled from 5.52 per 1,000 women to 11.49.

Mary also sent me this story from Life Site News about the morning after pill.

Excerpt:

> A poll has shown that as many as one fifth of all young women in the UK have used the morning after pill (MAP) in the past year after "unprotected sex."
>
> A Co-Operative Pharmacy survey of 3000 people found that 20 percent of women aged 18 to 35 took the "emergency contraceptive" pill last year. The same group said they had typically used the drug, which only acts as a genuine contraceptive in some cases, when they had had sex after using drugs and/or alcohol.
>
> The poll further found that up to 250,000 women had used the drug two or more times during the year. One in fifty 18-21 year-olds said they used the MAP as their normal form of contraception. One sixth of the women surveyed said they had contracted a sexually transmitted disease.
>
> While a National Health Service spokesman warned that the MAP fails to protect women from sexually transmitted diseases, the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) has long warned that the medical community is simply not telling women what MAP really is, or what it does.
>
> The morning after pill, a large dose of the same hormones used in contraceptive pills, can either prevent ovulation or prevent the implantation of an existing embryo in the uterine lining.
>
> "Very few women will know precisely when they ovulate," SPUC said, "so, if they take the morning-after pill, they will not know whether it has prevented

> conception or caused an abortion."

Once upon a time, men were men, women were women, and they got along with each other using strict rules of courting under the watchful eyes of their parents. Then feminism came along, pushed primarily by female writers, scholars, lawyers and legislators. These feminists all agreed that marriage was bad, courting was bad, chivalry was bad, and chastity was bad – because they involved "unequal gender roles". Men and women are identical in every way, they claimed, and women ought to be able to have recreational sex like men and not get pregnant, and focus on their careers like men and not feel the need for marriage and children. And here we are, thanks to feminism. (I mean third-wave feminism).

Related posts

- New study finds that pre-marital sex reduces quality of relationships
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- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama's new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children's sexual choices
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being

China unveils new J-20 stealth fighter, rival to the canceled F-22 Raptor

January 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We need to restart the F-22 plant now
Story from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> While America has stopped production of its stealth fighter, China prepares to challenge U.S. air supremacy in the Western Pacific with its own.
>
> China is on another Long March, one it hopes will lead to military supremacy over the U.S. at least in the Western Pacific. It is deploying a carrier-killing mobile missile, the Dong Feng 21D, and is expected to launch its first aircraft carrier this year, the refurbished ex-Soviet carrier Varyag. China is also conducting preflight tests on a fifth-generation stealth fighter expected to challenge the best the U.S. has to offer.
>
> Photographs reportedly showing China's J-20 undergoing high-speed taxi tests at the Chengdu Aircraft Design Institute in western China have appeared, first on unofficial Chinese and foreign defense-related websites. Such tests are the last stage before actual flight tests.
>
> […]China's stealth fighter appears to have "the potential to be a competitor with the F-22 (Raptor) and to be decisively superior to the F-35," according to Richard Fisher, a Chinese military expert with the International Strategy and Assessment Center in Washington. The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the designated replacement for the Raptor, has had its troubles. The general in charge of the program was fired amid concerns of spiraling costs and program delays.
>
> It was felt we couldn't afford both an F-22 dedicated to air superiority and the F-35, even though the latter is vastly inferior in air-to-air combat and ground defense penetration. The Raptor is perhaps the only plane that could evade sophisticated surface-to-air missile defense systems such as Russia's S-300 and

> S-400.
>
> “Only the F-22 can survive in airspace defended by increasingly capable surface-to-air missiles,” declares Air Force Association President Mike Dunn. The F-22 can fly 300 to 400 mph faster and two miles higher than the F-35. The F-35 is cheaper, but you get what you pay for. And it’s still under development. The F-22 is operational now, when we need it.
>
> […]During recent military exercises with South Korea, the F-22 was conspicuous by its absence. Deploying a squadron of F-22s to Osan Air Base in South Korea would send a powerful “keep off the grass” message to Beijing and Pyongyang. So why haven’t we done it? Why haven’t we sent the world’s most advanced combat aircraft into any potential combat zone?
>
> Perhaps because letting the F-22 Raptor prove its worth would be a visible reminder of the stupidity of building only 187 of them in a world where the Russians and Chinese are building their own stealth fighters, and thugocracies like Iran and North Korea go nuclear. It would be a reminder that the once-feared arsenal of democracy needs some serious retooling.

Let me be clear. The F-35 is overpriced junk. We should immediately resume, and even max out, production of the F-22 Raptor. That’s what Obama would be doing if he cared a whit about national security, and didn’t have his head stuck in the sand. We need more F-22s, and we need them yesterday and we need them deployed to South Korea and Japan yesterday.

It doesn’t help that we are firing Admirals for making insensitive training videos, either. We are the laughingstock of the world because of Obama’s weakness, incompetence and cowardice. Our enemies are laughing at us, and growing bolder.

Can you be a Christian and still have doubts?

January 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Of course! Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason explains whether Christian can doubt and how to do it right.

It’s fine! The only way to get rid of them is to work things through honestly.

Are the new Tea Party Republicans any better than the old liberal ones?

January 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gateway Pundit found this statement by House Majority Leader John Boehner. He's telling Obama that he can't have the credit card until he starts paying his bills.

Excerpt:

> Washington (Jan 6) House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) issued the following statement on the debt limit:
>
> "I've been notified that the Obama Administration intends to formally request an increase in the debt limit. The American people will not stand for such an increase unless it is accompanied by meaningful action by the President and Congress to cut spending and end the job-killing spending binge in Washington. While America cannot default on its debt, we also cannot continue to borrow recklessly, dig ourselves deeper into this hole, and mortgage the future of our children and grandchildren. Spending cuts – and reforming a broken budget process – are top priorities for the American people and for the new majority in the House this year, and it is essential that the President and Democrats in Congress work with us in that effort."

So he's serious about cutting the spending. I saw him taking questions from reporters and he certainly seemed determined to keep his promises. That's all he was telling the reporters – about how he was going to keep his promises that got the Republicans elected.

Oh, and Gateway Pundit found this story, about how the Republicans are going to fire all of Obama's 39 czars.

Excerpt:

> A group of House Republicans introduced a bill on Wednesday to rein in the various "czars" in the Obama administration.
>
> Rep. Steve Scalise (R-La.) and 28 other House Republicans introduced legislation to do away with the informal, paid advisers President Obama has employed over the past two years.
>
> The legislation, which was introduced in the last Congress but was not allowed to advance under Democratic control, would do away with the **39 czars** Obama has employed during his administration.
>
> The bill defines a czar as "a head of any task force, council, policy office within the Executive Office of the President, or similar office established by or at the direction of the President" who is appointed to a position that would otherwise require Senate confirmation.

According to Life Site News, John Boehner is quite the social conservative.

Excerpt:

> Today marked the swearing in of what some, including pro-life Representative Chris Smith, have labeled the “most pro-life” congress in living memory, and possibly even in history.
>
> Ninety-four new House members were sworn in, as well as 13 new senators. Republicans now hold a 242-193 majority in the House, while Democrats hold a 53-47 majority in the Senate.
>
> Besides the overall shift from Democrat to Republican majority in the House, one of the more dramatic changes is the replacement of Nancy Pelosi, a radical abortion supporter, with the staunch pro-life advocate Rep. John Boehner as Speaker of the House.
>
> Boehner has a long pro-life history, enjoying a 0% pro-choice voting record from the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) and a 100% pro-life voting record from the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC).
>
> Americans United for Life President and CEO Charmaine Yoest today welcomed the new Congress, saying in a statement: “I predict that we will see changes in President Obama’s pro-abortion health care plan and in other pro-life measures as a result of pro-life leadership taking their places in Washington, D.C. today.”
>
> In his opening speech to the House Boehner promised that that the Republican majority would honor their “Pledge to America,” a document outlining the GOP’s agenda that included a section pledging to eliminate federal funding of abortion. The preamble of the “Pledge” states, “We pledge to honor families, traditional marriage, life, and the private and faith-based organizations that form the core of our American values.”

Ladies and gentlemen, the new Republican party.

William Lane Craig discusses Romans 9 and "corporate election"

January 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the post on Reasonable Faith. He's responding to a questioner who is an atheist,and who thinks that Calvinism makes belief in Christianity impossible.

Part of the question:

> In Romans 9, Paul describes Jacob and Esau as being judged as loved and hated (or "loved less") before they did any good or evil. Paul then goes on to liken all of us as clay molded by a potter, and states that it is not the will of he who runs but of He who shows mercy which saves us. Paul relates God telling Pharaoh: "for this purpose I have raised you up …" and then discusses an idea that the vessels God made for "common use" are there only for the purpose of showing His patience to his more special pots.
>
> Many Reformed think this passage shows double-predestination and unconditional election, and I am forced to agree with them – as is Christ Himself in John 6:65! The Reformed God is something I view as tyrannical and unworthy of worship, and indeed it is tough for someone outside the faith to respond to the Calvinist interpretation of Romans 9 with anything but hatred: as the prominent Reformed scholar James White describes this very chapter, "I understand that the only way one can believe this is by an act of grace."
>
> In my view, this defeats your position of molinism, since one cannot freely choose God on his own in any potential setting without God's prior help. Furthermore, the context of the related story in John 6 has disciples abandoning Christ, prompting what He says in 6:65 and proving that Christ is not offered as a free gift to all! What is left for the freedom of man to choose Christ given these passages?

Part of the answer:

> Second, let's talk about Paul's doctrine of election in Romans 9. I want to share with you a perspective on Paul's teaching that I think you'll find very illuminating and encouraging. Typically, as a result of Reformed theology, we have a tendency to read Paul as narrowing down the scope of God's election to the very select few, and those not so chosen can't complain if God in His sovereignty overlooks them. I think this is a fundamental misreading of the chapter which makes very little sense in the context of Paul's letter.
>
> Earlier in his letter Paul addresses the question of what advantage there is to Jewish identity if one fails to live up to the demands of the law (2. 17-3.21). He says that although being Jewish has great advantages in being the recipients of God's revelatory oracles, nevertheless being Jewish gives you no automatic claim

to God's salvation. Instead, Paul asserts the radical and shocking claim that "He is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is of the heart, spiritual and not literal" (2. 28-29).

Paul held that "no human being will be justified in God's sight by works of the law" (3.20); rather "we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law" (3. 29). That includes Gentiles as well as Jews. "Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one" (3. 29-30).

Do you realize what that meant to Paul's Jewish contemporaries? Gentile "dogs" who have faith in Christ may actually be more Jewish than ethnic Jews and go into the Kingdom while God's chosen people are shut out! Unthinkable! Scandalous!

Paul goes on to support his view by appeal to the example of none less than Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation. Abraham, Paul explains, was pronounced righteous by God *before* he received circumcision. "The purpose," says Paul, "was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised [*i.e*., the Gentiles] and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them and likewise the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised [note the qualification!] but also follow the example of faith which our father Abraham had before he was circumcised" (4.11-12).

This is explosive teaching. Paul begins chapter 9 by expressing his profound sorrow that ethnic Jews have missed God's salvation by rejecting their Messiah [= *Christ*]. But he says it's not as though God's word had failed. Rather, as we have already seen, "not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his descendants" (9. 6-7). Being ethnically Jewish is not enough; rather one must be a child of the promise—and that, as we've seen, may include Gentiles and exclude Jews.

The problematic, then, with which Paul is wrestling is how God's chosen people the Jews could fail to obtain the promise of salvation while Gentiles, who were regarded by Jews as unclean and execrable, could find salvation instead. Paul's answer is that God is sovereign: He can save whomever He wants, and no one can gainsay God. He has the freedom to have mercy upon whomever He wills, even upon execrable Gentiles, and no one can complain of injustice on God's part.

So—and this is the crucial point—*who is it that God has chosen to save?* The answer is: *those who have faith in Christ Jesus*. As Paul writes in Galatians (which is a sort of abbreviated Romans), "So you see that it is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham" (Gal. 3. 7). Jew or Gentile, it doesn't matter: God has sovereignly chosen to save all those who trust in Christ Jesus for salvation.

That's why Paul can go on in Romans 10 to say, "There is no distinction between

> Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. For ‘everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved'” (10. 12-13). Reformed theology can make no sense at all of this wonderful, universal call to salvation. Whosoever will may come.
>
> Paul’s burden, then, in Romans 9 is not to narrow the scope of God’s election but to broaden it. He wants to take in all who have faith in Christ Jesus regardless of their ethnicity. Election, then, is first and foremost a corporate notion: God has chosen for Himself a people, a corporate entity, and it is up to us by our response of faith whether or not we choose to be members of that corporate group destined to salvation.
>
> Of course, given God’s total providence over the affairs of men, this is not the whole story. But Molinism makes good sense of the rest. John 6. 65 means that apart from God’s grace no one can come to God on his own. But there’s no suggestion there that those who refused to believe in Christ did not do so of their own free will. God knows in exactly what circumstances people will freely respond to His grace and places people in circumstances in which each one receives sufficient grace for salvation if only that person will avail himself of it. But God knows who will respond and who won’t. So again the fault does not lie with God that some persons freely resist God’s grace and every effort to save them; rather they like Israel fail to attain salvation because they refuse to have faith.

My view of election and Romans 9 is corporate election. Like middle knowledge, once you understand the concept of corporate election and re-read Romans 9, it turns out that the whole thing reads naturally. If you reject corporate election and middle knowledge because you like Calvinism, then there are lots of problems with the rest of the Bible, as William Lane Craig described here.

If you’d like to see Bill take on an atheist professor from the prestigious University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, who argues that Calvinist theology disproves the existence of a benevolent God, then read this debate.

Can there be moral accountability if there is no life after death?

January 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig answers a question.

You need moral accountability for morality to be rational, otherwise the only reason for being moral would be to have happy feelings and to avoid unhappy feelings – which is not prescriptive morality at all, but just self-interest. But that is only one of the things that you need for a person to have a rational basis for acting morally.

Here's the full list:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's

hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

If you don't have a rational basis for acting morally, then you will only do it when you want to feel happy, and avoid feeling unhappy. You'll do it if you feel like it, if people are watching, etc. But you won't do the right thing if it gets in the way of your selfishness.

For a really good debate on whether morality is real on Christianity and/or atheism, listen to this debate with Glenn Peoples against Cambridge philosopher Arif Ahmed.

If you would like to hear another good debate on whether Christianity and/or atheism can ground some of these requirements, then click here. This one features Sean McDowell.

And here's a debate that I did with one of our best atheist commenters, Moo.

More about atheistic concepts of morality

- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Science czar advocated forced abortions, mass sterilizations and totalitarianism
- Science czar says trees should be able to sue and born babies are not human beings
- Psychology Today features atheists who think that they are moral
- Does prominent atheist Michael Ruse think that morality is real or illusory?
- Is there such a thing as genuine libertarian free will if naturalism is true?
- How do leading atheists understand morality on atheism?
- Is prescriptive morality rationally grounded on atheism?
- Can atheists be moral? (A series explaining the grounding of morality)

Some debates on God and morality

- From the Unbelievable radio show: Glenn Peoples vs Arif Ahmed on the moral argument
- Sean McDowell debates James Corbett on whether morality is grounded by atheism
- From Christianity Today, a written debate: Douglas Wilson vs. Christopher Hitchens
- From the University of Western Ontario, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs. Kai Nielsen
- From Schenectady College, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs Richard Taylor
- From Franklin & Marshall College, William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz (audio, video1, video2, video3, video4, video5, video6, video7)
- From the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, William Lane Craig vs. Louise Antony (part1, part2)
- A debate from the Unbelievable radio show between a Christian pastor and a lay atheist
- Transcript of debate between Greg Koukl and Skeptic Magazine editor Michael Shermer

Does the CBO think that repealing Obamacare will help or hurt the deficit?

January 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gateway Pundit reports that the Democrats have been telling everyone that repealing Obamacare will make the budget deficit *worse*.

The left-wing Washington Post says:

> Rescinding the federal law to overhaul the health-care system, the first objective of House Republicans who ascended to power this week, would ratchet up the federal deficit by about $230 billion over the next decade and leave 32 million more Americans uninsured, according to congressional budget analysts.
>
> The rough estimate by the Congressional Budget Office also predicts that most Americans would pay more for private health insurance if the law were repealed.

The headline of this left-wing Washington Post news article is "CBO says health care repeal would deepen deficit".

The left-wing New York Times says:

> The nonpartisan budget scorekeepers in Congress said on Thursday that the Republican plan to repeal President Obama's health care law would add $230 billion to federal budget deficits over the next decade, intensifying the first legislative fight of the new session and highlighting the challenge Republicans face in pursuing their agenda.
>
> The budget office estimated that the health care law, including education provisions, would reduce deficits over 10 years by $143 billion. Tax increases and cuts in projected Medicare spending would more than offset the cost of extending health insurance to millions of Americans. The budget office projected that the law would result in even bigger savings beyond 2019.

The headlines of this left-wing New York Times news article is "Republicans Are Given a Price Tag for Health Law Repeal, but Reject It".

Wow, that sounds bad.

But is it true? Is it possible that the government can cover MILLIONS OF PEOPLE and have health care costs GO DOWN?

Well, look at the latest CBO numbers, straight from the CBO mailing list.

Excerpt:

> CBO and the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) have not yet developed a detailed estimate of the budgetary impact of H.R. 2, the Repealing the Job-Killing Health Care Law Act, which would repeal the major health care legislation enacted in March 2010. Yesterday, we released a preliminary analysis

> of that legislation indicating that, over the 2012-2021 period, the effect of enacting H.R. 2 on the federal budget as a result of changes in direct spending and revenues is likely to be an increase in deficits in the vicinity of $230 billion, plus or minus the effects of forthcoming technical and economic changes to CBO's and JCT's projections for that period.
>
> We have been asked to provide the revenue and direct spending components of that total. Extrapolating the estimated budgetary effects of the original health care legislation and accounting for the effects of subsequent legislation, CBO anticipates that enacting H.R. 2 would probably yield, for the 2012-2021 period, a reduction in revenues in the neighborhood of $770 billion and a reduction in outlays in the vicinity of $540 billion, plus or minus the effects of forthcoming technical and economic changes to CBO's and JCT's projections.

Ah. So repealing Obama care would CUT SPENDING by 540 BILLION DOLLARS. And the only way to say that Obamacare can produce a surplus is by RAISING TAXES BY 770 BILLION DOLLARS.

Related posts

- Did George W. Bush's tax cuts help or hurt the economy?
- What lowers unemployment? Bush's tax cuts or Obama's spending?
- Do "tax cuts for the rich" have a track record of creating jobs?
- Republicans block Democrats' attempt to raise taxes on job creators
- Harvard economists explain how Obama's spending created 10.2% unemployment

Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning

January 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The alleged shooter of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and Federal Judge John Roll has now been identified as Jared Lee Loughner.

What can we learn about the shooter from his YouTube channel?

Communism:

His favorite books include the Communist Manifesto and the founding document of national *socialism* in Germany. Yes, Hitler was a socialist.

> Animal Farm, Brave New World, The Wizard Of OZ, Aesop Fables, The Odyssey, Alice Adventures Into Wonderland, Fahrenheit 451, Peter Pan, To Kill A Mockingbird, We The Living, Phantom Toll Booth, One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, Pulp,Through The Looking Glass, The **Communist Manifesto**, Siddhartha, The Old Man And The Sea, Gulliver's Travels, **Mein Kampf**, The Republic, and Meno.

Flag burning:

I won't link to a flag-burning video, but that video and the book list are right on his Youtube page. He favorited a video of someone burning an American flag. As a supporter of flag-burning, he would have opposed the Tea Party and their pride in their Constitution and their country. Only the left is anti-American. Right-wingers never burn flags.

Atheism:

One of his other videos comments that he resented being given a Bible by a military recruiter since he professes no religion or faith. In short, the man is likely an atheist who resents people who hand him Bibles when he has no need for one.

The video says this:

> Every United States Military recruit at MEPS in Phoenis is receiving one mini bible before the tests.
>
> Jared Loughner is a United States Military recruit at MEPS in Phoenix.
>
> Therefore, Jared Loughner is receiving one mini bible before the tests.
>
> I didn't write a belief on my Army application, and the recruiter wrote on the application; None.
>
> […]No! I won't trust in God!

If he likes communism, then he is necessarily an atheist, since communism is an atheist worldview that asserts that religion is the "opiate of the masses". Is it really so surprising that someone who thinks that the universe is an accident and that there is no judgment for sin after death would shoot up his innocent neighbors? I don't find it difficult to

believe. Just take a look at the suicidal Columbine murderers – they were anti-Christian atheists and Darwinists.

Left-wing progressive?

Update from MSNBC:

> A 22-year-old woman in Arizona, Caitie Parker, claimed on her Twitter feed that she went to high school and college with the gunman, and was in a band with him. She described his politics in the past as "left wing, quite liberal, & oddly obsessed with the 2012 prophecy." She also described him as having a lot of friends "until he got alcohol poisoning in '06" and dropped out of school. "Mainly loner very philosophical."
>
> Parker described the gunman meeting Rep. Gabrielle Giffords previously: "He was a political radical & met Giffords once before in '07, asked her a question & he told me she was 'stupid & unintelligent.'"

That MSNBC link has transcripts of his videos, in which he professes having no belief in God, and no trust in God.

More details are emerging on Michelle Malkin's blog, too. Including this post from the Daily Kos showing the rage on the left against Giffords for voting against Nancy Pelosi as House Leader of the Democrats. (The post has now been pulled with an apology, but the Malkin link goes to a screen shot of the original post before it was pulled – and you can still find it in the Google's cache).

Related posts

- Communist atheist Mao Zedong killed 45 million people
- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

Four radicals left-wingers nominated to federal judgeships

January 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Hans Bader at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Here's one of the nominations:

> Radical law professor Goodwin Liu was also renominated. As lawyer Ted Frank noted in the *Washington Examiner*, Liu once claimed that racial quotas are not merely permitted, but constitutionally "required." If confirmed, Liu would sit on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, a sharply-divided federal appeals court with jurisdiction over a whopping one-fifth of the American people. Liu wrongly argued in the past that the Constitution requires some forms of welfare, although he denied supporting such a constitutional right to welfare in his more recent testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, when he experienced a politically-convenient confirmation conversion after his nomination became controversial. Although Liu briefly worked for a law firm, Liu has no experience actually trying cases, despite the fact that judges are supposed to have "substantial courtroom and trial experience" (a fact that did not keep the staunchly liberal ABA, which shares Liu's ideology, from supporting his nomination despite his lack of this basic qualification). Liu has claimed that "'free enterprise, private ownership of property, and limited government" are right-wing concepts and ideological "code words." Liu is also a big user of politically-correct psychobabble, writing that a judge is supposed to be a "culturally situated interpreter of social meaning" rather than an impartial umpire who interprets the law in accord with its plain meaning or its framers' intent.

What does the Heritage Foundation say about Goodwin Liu?

Excerpt:

> Liu has a strong penchant for redistribution, and it is clear that he believes judges should play a role in it. In an article titled, "Rethinking Constitutional Welfare Rights," he lays out his vision for the creation of a constitutional right to welfare. He desires a "reinvigorated public dialogue" about "our commitments to mutual aid and distributive justice across a broad range of social goods." Once this dialogue takes place among policymakers, Liu wants the courts to recognize "a fundamental right to education or housing or medical care…as an interpretation and consolidation of the values we have gradually internalized as a society."In another article, he stated that "negative rights against government oppression" and "positive rights to government assistance" have "equal constitutional status" because "both are essential to liberty."

Why would Obama want judges like these? Probably so that he can pass un-Constitutional legislation like Obamacare, that forces healthy people to buy medical insurance for things like abortions. He wants people who are pro-life to be forced to buy medical insurance for things that are completely voluntary, because he wants to appease his buddies at Planned Parenthood – they make money off of every abortion. The only thing in his way is that pesky Constitution.

Democrat-controlled Congress added 5.34 trillion to national debt

January 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

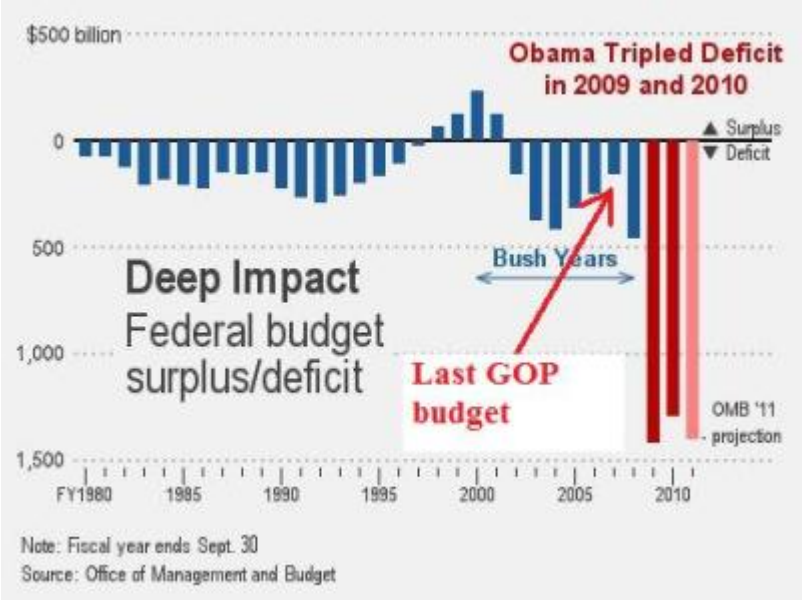

The last Republican budget was in 2006

Here's the story from CNS News, which the OFFICIAL NUMBERS from the Treasury Department.

Excerpt:

> In the 1,461 days that Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D.-Calif.) served as speaker of the House, the national debt increased by a total of $5.343 trillion ($5,343,452,800,321.37) or $3.66 billion per day ($3.657,394,113.84), according to official debt numbers published by the U.S. Treasury.
>
> Pelosi was the 52nd speaker of the House. During her tenure, she amassed more debt than the first 49 speakers combined.
>
> […]When Pelosi was sworn in on Jan. 4, 2007, the national debt stood at $8,670,596,242,973.04. At the close of business on Jan. 4, 2011, her last full day in the speakership, it stood at 14,014,049,043,294.41–an increase of $5,343,452,800,321.37.
>
> […]When Pelosi became speaker in January 2007 she was emphatic that there would be no new deficit spending.
>
> "After years of historic deficits, this 110th Congress will commit itself to a higher standard: Pay as you go, no new deficit spending," she said in her inaugural address from the speaker's podium. "Our new America will provide unlimited opportunity for future generations, not burden them with mountains of debt."

And a quick refresher about who controlled the House and the Senate at different times:

Year	Congress	President	Senate (100)	House (435)

2009	111th	D	D – 55***	D – 256
2007	110th	R	D – 51**	D – 233
2005	109th	R	R – 55	R – 232
2003	108th	R	R – 51	R – 229
2001	107th	R	D*	R – 221
1999	106th	D	R – 55	R – 223
1997	105th	D	R – 55	R – 228
1995	104th	D	R – 52	R – 230
1993	103rd	D	D – 57	D – 258

All government spending originates in the House of Representatives, so spending was a Democrat problem since the Democrats took over the House (and Senate) in January 2007. They own this recession.

And the reason that things went well in the Clinton Presidency is because the Republicans were in control of all the spending.

Do gun-free zones prevent multiple victim shootings?

January 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at what the media tells you about gun-free zones and multiple victim public shootings.

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A Google news search using the phrase "Omaha Mall Shooting" finds an incredible 2,794 news stories worldwide for the last day. From India and Taiwan to Britain and Austria, there are probably few people in the world who haven't heard about this tragedy.
>
> But despite the massive news coverage, none of the media coverage, at least by 10 a.m. Thursday, mentioned this central fact: Yet another attack occurred in a gun-free zone.
>
> Surely, with all the reporters who appear at these crime scenes and seemingly interview virtually everyone there, why didn't one simply mention the signs that ban guns from the premises?
>
> Nebraska allows people to carry permitted concealed handguns, but it allows property owners, such as the Westroads Mall, to post signs banning permit holders from legally carrying guns on their property.
>
> The same was true for the attack at the Trolley Square Mall in Utah in February (a copy of the sign at the mall can be seen here). But again the media coverage ignored this fact. Possibly the ban there was even more noteworthy because the off-duty police officer who stopped the attack fortunately violated the ban by taking his gun in with him when he went shopping.
>
> […]There are plenty of cases every year where permit holders stop what would have been multiple victim shootings every year, but they rarely receive any news coverage. Take a case this year in Memphis, where WBIR-TV reported a gunman started "firing a pistol beside a busy city street" and was stopped by two permit holders before anyone was harmed.
>
> […]Few know that Dylan Klebold, one of the two Columbine killers, closely was following Colorado legislation that would have allowed citizens to carry a concealed handgun. Klebold strongly opposed the legislation and openly talked about it.
>
> No wonder, as the bill being debated would have allowed permitted guns to be carried on school property. It is quite a coincidence that he attacked the Columbine High School the very day the legislature was scheduled to vote on the bill.

> Virginia Tech saw 32 murdered earlier this year; the Columbine High School shooting left 13 murdered in 1999; Luby's Cafeteria in Killeen, Texas, had 23 who were fatally shot by a deranged man in 1991; and a McDonald's in Southern California had 21 people shot dead by an unemployed security guard in 1984.
>
> All these attacks — indeed, all attacks involving more than a small number of people being killed — happened in gun-free zones.
>
> In recent years, similar attacks have occurred across the world, including in Australia, France, Germany and Britain. Do all these countries lack enough gun-control laws? Hardly. The reverse is more accurate.
>
> The law-abiding, not criminals, are obeying the rules. Disarming the victims simply means that the killers have less to fear. As Wednesday's attack demonstrated yet again, police are important, but they almost always arrive at the crime scene after the crime has occurred.
>
> The longer it takes for someone to arrive on the scene with a gun, the more people who will be harmed by such an attack.
>
> Most people understand that guns deter criminals. If a killer were stalking your family, would you feel safer putting a sign out front announcing, "This Home Is a Gun-Free Zone"? But that is what the Westroads Mall did.

And more from CNN.

Excerpt:

> Nearly a decade ago, a Springfield, Oregon, high schooler, a hunter familiar with firearms, was able to bring an unfolding rampage to an abrupt end when he identified a gunman attempting to reload his .22-caliber rifle, made the tactical decision to make a move and tackled the shooter.
>
> A few years back, an assistant principal at Pearl High School in Mississippi, which was a gun-free zone, retrieved his legally owned Colt .45 from his car and stopped a Columbine wannabe from continuing his massacre at another school after he had killed two and wounded more at Pearl.
>
> At an eighth-grade school dance in Pennsylvania, a boy fatally shot a teacher and wounded two students before the owner of the dance hall brought the killing to a halt with his own gun.
>
> More recently, just a few miles up the road from Virginia Tech, two law school students ran to fetch their legally owned firearm to stop a madman from slaughtering anybody and everybody he pleased. These brave, average, armed citizens neutralized him pronto.
>
> My hero, Dr. Suzanne Gratia Hupp, was not allowed by Texas law to carry her handgun into Luby's Cafeteria that fateful day in 1991, when due to bureaucrat-forced unarmed helplessness she could do nothing to stop satanic George Hennard from killing 23 people and wounding more than 20 others before he shot

> himself. Hupp was unarmed for no other reason than denial-ridden “feel good” politics.

And more gun-free zone shootings at the Holocaust Memorial and the University of Alabama. Killers are not stupid. They go to places where they know the risks of anyone stopping them are LOW.

Related posts

- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Do guns reduce crime? Watch this debate and hear both sides
- Liberal MSNBC says that more legal firearm ownership reduces crime rates
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Formal debate on gun control featuring John Lott and Gary Kleck
- Tom Sowell on gun control and judicial activism
- Grandmother jailed for five years for owning family heirloom handgun
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple-victim public shootings in Europe?
- 61-year-old British man convicted for cutting up fruit with a Swiss Army knife
- Understanding how concealed carry laws save lives
- Evaluating Sotomayor’s views on abortion and gun ownership
- Why do people favor legal private ownership and concealed carry of handguns?

Democrat sheriff admits he has no evidence for politicizing Arizona shooting

January 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was in the weight room when this came on – Megyn Kelly takes Democrat sheriff Clarence Dupnik to task for trying to link the Arizona shooter to the Tea Party/conservatives/Republicans.

And more:

Notice how no one is mentioning the fact that the shooter is an anti-theist who favorited a *flag-burning video* on his youtube account. Does that sound like a Tea Party conservative?

Actually, what I get from these two videos is that political correctness is going to be a major problem. First of all, when law enforcement is politicizing crime, how can they be expected to conduct their investigation fairly? Secondly, it looks like the shooter had several run-ins with the law over drug charges, etc., but that he was able to get a firearm anyway. Why didn't he have a criminal record? To me, this looks like another failure in law enforcement where the accused was let off easy. And Democrats are notorious for going easy on criminals.

Why do people have the impression that conservatives are more violent than liberals?

If there isn't any evidence to connect the shooter to the Republican party, will that stop the left-wing media from linking them anyway?

Check this post from Verum Serum.

Excerpt:

> But, in a move reminiscent of what we saw during Rather-gate, the left has decided to argue that the details of the shooting don't matter, the gist of their case holds true…
>
> - They couldn't prove the Bush memos were real, but wanted to stick with the story anyway. This was the genesis of "fake but accurate."
> - They couldn't deny that Joe Stack (who flew his plane into an IRS bldg.) quoted the Communist manifesto favorably and disliked George Bush, but labeled him the "Tea Party terrorist" anyway.
> - They couldn't deny that Richard Poplawski's only connection to Glenn Beck was that he was disappointed in Beck's *debunking* of a conspiracy theory he believed in. They continue to suggest Poplawski was a fan.
> - They couldn't deny that Pentagon shooter J. Patrick Bedell was a registered Democrat and a 9/11 Truther who disliked Bush, but they wanted him to be a Tea Partier as well.

> - They couldn't deny that Clay Duke was a leftist inspired by a left-wing movie produced during the Bush years, so they mostly said nothing at all.
>
> I'm leaving out a bunch more. The census worker's death who was blamed on the right, but which turned out to be suicide. The "right-wing" shooter at the Holocaust museum who turned out to hate Christianity and Fox News. And now the latest on the Giffords shooting is that Loughner may have been anti-Semitic and targeting her because she is Jewish. Generally speaking which party is more supportive of the Jews and Israel and which one is regularly accused of being beholden to Jewish interests? The group Loughner is believed to have been part of also supports SB1070, but Giffords was known to be tough on border control, so how would shooting her advance that agenda? Once again, we're not supposed to look that closely or ask if any of it makes sense. We're just supposed to feel outrage at the right targets.

Giffords also voted against Nancy Pelosi to be the House Leader. There was rage on the left over that. Why is that not being discussed?

Related posts

- Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning
- Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist
- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

Is the media accurate in reporting on left-wing and right-wing violence?

January 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an post from Newsbusters dated March 2010 that talks about whether the left or right is more violent.

Excerpt:

> Before letting the media continue to perpetuate a stereotype that may not actually exist at all, let me give you the facts that U.S. journalists refuse to cite. Let me show you where real violence comes from, and I don't even need to mention the millions of babies killed every year by progressives or even the tens of millions of people murdered by their communist heroes.
>
> - It was not the fear of conservative violence that caused Ann Coulter's speech to be cancelled this week.
> - It was a liberal who bit the finger off a man who disagreed with him on healthcare.
> - It was Obama-loving Amy Bishop who took a gun to work and murdered co-workers.
> - Joseph Stack flew his plane into the IRS building after writing an anti-conservative manifesto.
> - It was liberals who destroyed AM radio towers outside of Seattle.
> - It's liberals who burn down Hummer dealerships.
> - It was progressive SEIU union thugs who beat a black conservative man who spoke his mind.
> - It's doubtful that a conservative fired shots into a GOP campaign headquarters.
> - In fact, Democrats have no monopoly on having their offices vandalized.
> - Don't forget it was Obama's friend Bill Ayers who used terrorism as a tool for political change. SDS is still radical, with arrests in 2007 and the storming of the CATO Institute in July 2008.
> - It was a liberal who was sentenced to two years for bringing bombs and riot shields to the Republican National Convention in 2008.
> - It was a liberal who threatened to kill a government informant who infiltrated her Austin-based group that planned to bomb the RNC.
> - It was liberals who assaulted police in Berkeley.
> - It was liberals who intimidated and threw rocks through the windows of researchers.
> - The two Black Panthers who stood outside polls intimidating people with nightsticks were probably not right-wingers.
> - Every time the G20 gets together, it's not conservatives who destroy

> property and cause chaos.

But of course, you would never have this view if all you watched was the mainstream news media. Isn't it funny how the pattern of leftist violence has been obscured by the way that the media presents the stories? Is it intentional?

Is the media biased to the left?

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs.

> 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

And of course in the related links you will find surveys of journalists, records of political contributions made by journalists, and glaring examples of left-wing media bias. The Democrat party as a whole is more to the right than mainstream journalism as a whole.

Related posts

- MUST-SEE: Condoleezza Rice Takes on Katie Couric Over Iraq Claims
- CBS News caught on tape conspiring to smear Republican candidate
- Democrats got 88% of 2008 contributions from mainstream media
- How the left-wing media conspired to label conservatives as racists
- Journalists conspired to spike the Jeremiah Wright story
- Washington Post blogger is an advisor for the Obama administration
- Mark Steyn asks whether Fox News is more biased than CBC or BBC
- How reliable are government-paid broadcasters like Tavis Smiley?
- What can we learn about media bias from donations made by journalists?
- MSNBC's Contessa Brewer regrets that Times Square suspect is Muslim
- Is the mainstream media fair in reporting on abortion violence?
- How the left-wing media lowers the level of civil discourse
- MSNBC deliberately edits out black protester then complains about racism
- Shocking video example of left-wing media bias on MSNBC
- Which cable news network has the worst media bias?
- Hugh Hewitt demolishes MSNBC's Larry O'Donnell

New study finds that eating dinner as a family makes children happier

January 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-wing UK Guardian. (H/T Mercator via RuthBlog)

Excerpt:

> Researchers at the National Foundation for Educational Research asked the English pupils, aged between 10 and 15, whether they agreed, disagreed or were unsure about the statement: "I feel happy about life at the moment."
>
> […]The research, Reasons to be Cheerful: Being a 12-year-old Boy who Eats Dinner with his Family, which was commissioned by the Department for Education, also found that boys were 1.4 times more likely to say they felt happy than girls.
>
> […]Children who often eat a meal with family or friends at home and regularly eat fruit and vegetables are also more likely to say they are happy. The study found young people who often sit down for a meal with their family are 1.6 times more likely to state that they are happy as those who sometimes or never sit down to a meal with their family. The most likely reason for children to say they are unhappy is being worried about their parents or family, the researchers found. A high proportion of those who worried about their looks also said they were unhappy.
>
> The happiest group were 12-year-old boys who eat with their families.
>
> […]Benton said: "Our analysis confirms that If we are interested in the happiness and wellbeing of young people we need to look beyond how much money they have.
>
> "In particular, growing up in a supportive and safe environment, both within the home and elsewhere appear to be far more important. Parents making the effort to spend time with their children are a major positive influence on their chances of being happy."

This sort of contradicts the left's way of addressing children's issues – which is to weaken the parental bond through taxation and government-run social programs. Maybe we should lower taxes and let parents have more of their own earned income to pump into their own families directly on things like family dinners and family activities?

Obama administration replaces mother/father with parent 1/2 on passport application

January 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News. (H/T Dad and Mary)

Excerpt:

> The words "mother" and "father" will be removed from U.S. passport applications and replaced with gender neutral terminology, the State Department says.
>
> "The words in the old form were 'mother' and 'father,'" said Brenda Sprague, deputy assistant Secretary of State for Passport Services. "They are now 'parent one' and 'parent two.'"
>
> A statement on the State Department website noted: "These improvements are being made to provide a gender neutral description of a child's parents and in recognition of different types of families." The statement didn't note if it was for child applications only.
>
> […]Gay rights groups are applauding the decision.
>
> "Changing the term mother and father to the more global term of parent allows many different types of families to be able to go and apply for a passport for their child without feeling like the government doesn't recognize their family," said Jennifer Chrisler, executive director of Family Equality Council.
>
> Her organization lobbied the government for several years to remove the words from passport applications.
>
> "Our government needs to recognize that the family structure is changing," Chrisler said. "The best thing that we can do is support people who are raising kids in loving, stable families."
>
> […]Chrisler recounted the day she and her female partner tried to get her twin sons passports.
>
> "Even though my partner was their legal mother, had adopted them after I gave birth to them, she still had to put her name in the father field, and that is both discriminatory and makes us feel like second-class citizens," she said.

Democrats don't believe in family or marriage. That's why they push same-sex marriage and oppose the Defense of Marriage Act. They don't believe that children should grow up with mothers and fathers. They believe that children are chattel to be shifted around based on the whims of selfish, sex-obsessed adults. They don't care what the children want or what is best for them – they just need to buy the votes of people who want to be free from moral obligations to children. They think that parents should be ignored and pushed aside (except to work and pay taxes) so that the expert teachers can push sensible secular leftist views onto the children – especially sex education. And they would

like this extended to earlier and earlier ages. That is assuming that children are allowed to be born at all – the abortion rate in Democrat strongholds like New York is near 40%. About 40% of all pregnancies in New York end in deliberate abortions.

Why is the family disintegrating in America? Because Democrats are actively undermining them.

Are people on the political left more civil than those on the right?

January 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gateway Pundit finds that the ultra-leftist Daily Kos web site put a bulls-eye on Gabriell Giffords for being too conservative.

The Daily Kos post says:

> Who to primary? Well, I'd argue that we can narrow **the target list** by looking at those Democrats who sold out the Constitution last week. **I've bolded members of the Blue Dogs for added emphasis**.
>
> […]Not all of these people will get or even deserve primaries, but this vote certainly puts **a bulls eye** on their district. If we can field enough serious challengers, and if we repeat the Donna Edwards and Joe Lieberman stories a few more times, well then, our elected officials might have no choice but to be more responsive. Because if we show them that their AT&T lobbyist buddies can't save their jobs, they'll pay more attention to those who can.
>
> p.s. Four Blue Dogs voted to protect the Constitution — Baron Hill (IN-09), Mike Michaud (ME-02), Loretta Sanchez (CA-47), and Mike Thompson (CA-01). They apparently realized that being supposed "moderates" didn't necessitate selling out to Constitution for George Bush's imperial presidency.

Guess whose name appears in bold in the list of people with bulls-eyes on their districts? Gabrielle Giffords.

A screenshot of the original post is here. I expect it will be pulled soon, like the other Daily Kos post about Gabrielle Giffords being "dead" to the author after voting against Nancy Pelosi.

What about target maps?

Liberty Pundits found that the Democrats also use maps with targets on them.

This is spite of the fact that Paul Krugman says that the left never uses maps with targets on them. (H/T Nice Deb)

In the past, have people on the left been civil?

Consider this post from Michelle Malkin that is a HUGE collection of tons of hateful, threatening and/or violent things that the left has done in the last 10 years. (H/T Mary)

Here's the table of contents of the post:

- I. PALIN HATE
- II. BUSH HATE
- III. MISC. TEA PARTY/GOP/ANTI-TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE HATE
- IV. ANTI-CONSERVATIVE FEMALE HATE

- V. LEFT-WING MOB HATE — campus, anti-war radicals, ACORN, eco-extremists, & unions
- VI. OPEN-BORDERS HATE
- VII. ANTI-MILITARY HATE
- VIII. HATE: CRIMES — the ever-growing Unhinged Mugshot Collection

I caution you about looking at Michelle's post, although I would call it a must-read if you can handle it. It is all death threats, vulgarity and vitriol from top to bottom. I am talking about guns pointed at the heads of Sarah Palin and George W. Bush, violence, fake blood, signs with death threats. Really sick stuff.

What about Obama? Isn't he civil?

And more from the Blog Prof.

Excerpt:

"If they bring a knife to the fight, ***we bring a gun***," Obama in July 2008

"We're gonna ***punish our enemies*** and we're gonna reward our friends who stand with us on issues that are important to us." Obama to Latinos, October 2010

"I think it's tempting not to negotiate with ***hostage takers***, unless the hostage gets harmed. In this case the hostage is the American people and I was not willing to see them get harmed," Obama on keeping taxes from increasing, December 6, 2010

"A Republican majority in Congress would mean "***hand-to-hand combat***" on Capitol Hill for the next two years, threatening policies Democrats have enacted to stabilize the economy," Obama, October 6, 2010

"Here's the problem: It's almost like they've got — ***they've got a bomb strapped to them and they've got their hand on the trigger***. You don't want them to blow up. But you've got to kind of talk them, ease that finger off the trigger." Obama on banks, March 2009

"I want you to ***argue with them and get in their face!***" Barack Obama, September 2008

"***I don't want to quell anger. I think people are right to be angry! I'm angry!***" Obama on ACORN Mobs, March 2010

"We talk to these folks… ***so I know whose ass to kick***." Obama on the private sector, June 2010

Do you ever remember Bush using rhetoric like that? Me neither. Because he wasn't that kind of guy.

Related posts

- Democrat sheriff admits he has no evidence for politicizing Arizona shooting
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- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
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William Lane Craig discusses his panel debate with atheist Richard Dawkins

January 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Justin Brierley's latest Unbelievable show features William Lane Craig discussing the 3-on-3 debate with Richard Dawkins that occured in Mexico.

Details:

William Lane Craig is a philosopher, author and key defender of the Christian faith in debates around the world.

Although atheist Richard Dawkins had publicly said he will not debate Craig, he found himself on the same platform as him in November 2010. Dawkins was on an atheist team, Craig on a theist team as they debated "Does the Universe have a purpose?" at a Mexico TED-style event.

With extracts from the debate, William (Bill) Lane Craig chats to Justin about the circumstances of their encounter and why he believes Dawkins and the atheist team changed their tactics mid way, were ununified and failed to address the arguments that were presented.

To watch the full debate http://www.premiercommunity.org.uk/group/unbelievable/forum/topics/richard-dawkins-just-broke-his

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- who organized the conference?
- why was Craig invited to the event?
- how did Dawkins get involved?
- what happened when Craig and Dawkins met in the lobby?
- what did Craig think of format of the debate?
- clips of Richard Dawkins and William Lane Craig
- how the no-purpose side changed strategies in the debate
- what did Dawkins lecture on the day before the debate?
- how should Christians respond to the popularity of Dawkins?
- how did Dawkins respond to Bill Craig's arguments?
- what does Dawkins think about the "Why" questions of life?
- how did Dawkins respond to the kalam and fine-tuning arguments?
- is there anything wrong with Dawkins' epistemology?
- what arguments were presented by each side?
- which side's case is rooted in emotion and wishing?

Here's a clip showing some of the more memorable parts:

It turns out that Michael Shermer spoke up to the conference organizers to get Craig invited to the event. I have always had a good opinion of Shermer personally, and this just cements it. Shermer is an uncommonly fair atheist. He has no problem hearing from the other side. You can read a transcript of his debate with Greg Koukl, moderated by national radio show hose Hugh Hewitt.

I would like to see Richard Dawkins debate William Lane Craig one-on-one. I think it is interesting that Dawkins avoids debating Craig even though Hitchens has debated Craig and Sam Harris WILL BE debating Craig shortly. Why do so many atheists believe in Dawkins when he will not debate.

What can Christian parents learn from Amy Chua?

January 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM found this article in the Wall Street Journal.

But first – a little bit about Amy Chua, the author of the article:

> Amy Chua is the John M. Duff Professor of Law at Yale Law School. Her first book *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability* was a *New York Times* bestseller, was selected by both the *Economist* and the *Guardian* as one of the Best Books of 2003 and translated into eight languages. Her second book, *Day of Empire: How Hyperpowers Rise to Global Dominance – and Why They Fall* was a critically acclaimed Foreign Affairs bestseller. Amy Chua has appeared frequently on radio and television on programs such CNN Headline News, C-Span, The Lehrer News Hour, Bloomberg Television, and Air America. Her writings have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Financial Times, Harvard Business Review*, and the *Wilson Quarterly*. She lives with her husband, two daughters, and two Samoyeds in New Haven, Connecticut.

And now, an excerpt from the piece itself:

> A lot of people wonder how Chinese parents raise such stereotypically successful kids. They wonder what these parents do to produce so many math whizzes and music prodigies, what it's like inside the family, and whether they could do it too. Well, I can tell them, because I've done it.
>
> […]Despite our squeamishness about cultural stereotypes, there are tons of studies out there showing marked and quantifiable differences between Chinese and Westerners when it comes to parenting. In one study of 50 Western American mothers and 48 Chinese immigrant mothers, almost 70% of the Western mothers said either that "stressing academic success is not good for children" or that "parents need to foster the idea that learning is fun." By contrast, roughly 0% of the Chinese mothers felt the same way. Instead, the vast majority of the Chinese mothers said that they believe their children can be "the best" students, that "academic achievement reflects successful parenting," and that if children did not excel at school then there was "a problem" and parents "were not doing their job." Other studies indicate that compared to Western parents, Chinese parents spend approximately 10 times as long every day drilling academic activities with their children. By contrast, Western kids are more likely to participate in sports teams.
>
> What Chinese parents understand is that nothing is fun until you're good at it. To get good at anything you have to work, and children on their own never want to work, which is why it is crucial to override their preferences. This often requires

> fortitude on the part of the parents because the child will resist; things are always hardest at the beginning, which is where Western parents tend to give up. But if done properly, the Chinese strategy produces a virtuous circle. Tenacious practice, practice, practice is crucial for excellence; rote repetition is underrated in America. Once a child starts to excel at something—whether it's math, piano, pitching or ballet—he or she gets praise, admiration and satisfaction. This builds confidence and makes the once not-fun activity fun. This in turn makes it easier for the parent to get the child to work even more.

And here are her three main points:

> Chinese parents demand perfect grades because they believe that their child can get them. If their child doesn't get them, the Chinese parent assumes it's because the child didn't work hard enough. That's why the solution to substandard performance is always to excoriate, punish and shame the child. The Chinese parent believes that their child will be strong enough to take the shaming and to improve from it. (And when Chinese kids do excel, there is plenty of ego-inflating parental praise lavished in the privacy of the home.)
>
> […]Chinese parents believe that their kids owe them everything. The reason for this is a little unclear, but it's probably a combination of Confucian filial piety and the fact that the parents have sacrificed and done so much for their children. (And it's true that Chinese mothers get in the trenches, putting in long grueling hours personally tutoring, training, interrogating and spying on their kids.) Anyway, the understanding is that Chinese children must spend their lives repaying their parents by obeying them and making them proud.
>
> […]Chinese parents believe that they know what is best for their children and therefore override all of their children's own desires and preferences. That's why Chinese daughters can't have boyfriends in high school and why Chinese kids can't go to sleepaway camp. It's also why no Chinese kid would ever dare say to their mother, "I got a part in the school play! I'm Villager Number Six. I'll have to stay after school for rehearsal every day from 3:00 to 7:00, and I'll also need a ride on weekends." God help any Chinese kid who tried that one.
>
> […]Here's a story in favor of coercion, Chinese-style.

Now you go read the whole article to find out the three differences and read the coercion story. Read the coercion story now!

And what do we learn from it? Well, what I learned is that if we Christians want to have any hope of having an influence in the public square, then we will have to marry well, and we will have to train our children like Amy does. We should not be thinking of marriage as a way to have feelings and to gain happiness and fulfillment. Marriage should be about service to God. And one of the ways we serve is by producing children who will have an influence. I think that parents in the West tend to have the idea that the world is a safe place, and that we should try to please our children and make them like us – so that

everyone will be happy. But there is one person who will not be happy if we focus on ourselves instead of serving God. Do you know who that might be?

One thing I would say in criticism of Amy is that she seems to only care about grades – which are assigned by teachers who are not necessarily going to have the same goals as a Christian parent. Teachers have their own agenda, and will happily give a child an F for espousing a belief in abstinence, or for talking about the Big Bang or protein sequence specificity, or for mentioning Climategate and dissent from man-made catastrophic global warming. If the class is math or computer science, then the children should be required to be the best. If the class is on hating America, then maybe the child should be going to a different school or being homeschooled. (Assuming that the Democrats have not banned all private schooling and homeschooling, which their masters in the teacher unions would dearly love to do).

My advice for men is this: Have a plan for marriage and parenting. Make decisions your whole life to implement that plan. Choose a wife based on the criteria of the job of marriage. And raise your children to have an influence for Christ.

If you cannot wife who actually puts serving God over her own feelings and desires, remain chaste and do not marry. There is no point in getting married unless marriage and parenting can serve God. The point of marriage is not to have a big wedding. The point of marriage is not to make women happy and fulfilled. The point of marriage is not for the woman to neglect her children while focusing on her career. The point of marriage is not to produce family vacation photographs to show your neighbors. The point of marriage is not to blindly hand children off to the schools to be raised by left-wing radicals with degrees in nonsense fields like Education.

UPDATE: An interview with Amy Chua in the Globe and Mail.

What happens when same-sex marriage conflicts with religious liberty?

January 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-wing Globe and Mail.

Excerpt:

> Saskatchewan's top court has said marriage commissioners cannot use religion to say no to nuptials for same-sex couples.
>
> The Court of Appeal had been asked by the government to rule on a proposed provincial law that would have allowed commissioners to cite religious grounds in refusing to marry gays or lesbians.
>
> The appeal panel's unanimous decision released on Monday said the law would be unconstitutional and amount to discrimination.

And more from the judge:

> **"Accordingly, putting gays and lesbians in a situation where a marriage commissioner can refuse to provide his or her services solely because of their sexual orientation would clearly be a retrograde step – a step that would perpetuate disadvantage and involve stereotypes about the worthiness of same-sex unions," the justice wrote.**
>
> **Judge Richards rejected suggestions that the number of gay marriages would be small and those affected could simply seek out someone else to perform the ceremony. That would overlook the impact a refusal would have on gay or lesbian couples, he noted.**
>
> **"As can be easily understood, such effects can be expected to be very significant and genuinely offensive. It is not difficult for most people to imagine the personal hurt involved in a situation where an individual is told by a governmental officer, 'I won't help you because you are black (or Asian or First Nations) but someone else will,' or 'I won't help you because you are Jewish (or Muslim or Buddhist) but someone else will,' " Judge Richards wrote.**

As you might expect, the Human Rights Commission was involved:

> The proposed law was crafted after a conflict arose when commissioner Orville Nichols, a devout Baptist, refused to marry a gay couple in 2005.
>
> The two men laid a discrimination complaint with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. The case went before the human rights tribunal, which ruled in 2008 that Mr. Nichols discriminated against the couple. It found that as a public servant he was obligated to marry them once they approached him.

> Mr. Nichols, who has been a marriage commissioner for almost 30 years, was fined $2,500.
>
> He asked the Court of Queen's Bench to reverse the decision, but it upheld the tribunal's ruling. A further appeal is still before the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal.

Comments to this post will be strictly filtered in accordance with Barack Obama's laws restricting free speech on these issues.

Related posts

- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why do people oppose same-sex marriage?
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?

Let’s learn economics using videos from Thomas Sowell

January 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me these videos from the Uncommon Knowledge web site. Tom Sowell is *the official economist of the Tea Party movement*.

Part 1 of 5: (Housing Boom and Bust)

Part 2 of 5: (Quantitative Easing and Tax Cuts)

Part 3 of 5: (Health Care)

Part 4 of 5: (Trade, Trade Deficit, Protectionism, Tariffs)

Part 5 of 5: (The Federal Reserve, Bailouts, Keynes)

The fourth edition of his new book is out! Only $25 or less. (One of my readers bought it for me for Christmas, so please don’t buy me one!)

You can translate youtube videos into MP3 using the “vidtomp3” web site. Or I could make them FOR YOU!

UPDATE: Within 5 minutes somebody asked me to make the MP3s for them. So here you go if you don’t like YouTube.

- http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1701569/BasicEconomics1of5.mp3
- http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1701569/BasicEconomics2of5.mp3
- http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1701569/BasicEconomics3of5.mp3
- http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1701569/BasicEconomics4of5.mp3
- http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1701569/BasicEconomics5of5.mp3

These are low-quality so they could be smaller.

UPDATE: Commenter Jim says:

Downloads of Sowell’s interview are also available in both audio MP3 and video M4V formats.

Ex-Congressman who wanted Republican governor shot now pleads for civility

January 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story from the Washington Examiner. (H/T Commenter from Robert Stacy McCain)

Here's ex-Representative Paul Kanjorski (Democrat – Pennsylvania) writing in the New York Times on Tuesday.

Excerpt:

> We all lose an element of freedom when security considerations distance public officials from the people. Therefore, it is incumbent on all Americans to create an atmosphere of civility and respect in which political discourse can flow freely, without fear of violent confrontation.

And here he is in the Scranton Times on October 23, 2010, writing about new Republican Governor Rick Scott from Florida.

Excerpt:

> "That Scott down there that's running for governor of Florida," Mr. Kanjorski said. "**Instead of running for governor of Florida, they ought to have him and shoot him. Put him against the wall and shoot him.** He stole billions of dollars from the United States government and he's running for governor of Florida. He's a millionaire and a billionaire. He's no hero. He's a damn crook. It's just we don't prosecute big crooks."

There's a word for what he just did… it starts with an H.

Human Events lists the top 10 examples of liberal hate

January 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the list. (H/T Robert Stacy McCain)

Here's McCain's pick for the worst one:

> **(7) Exterminate Republicans**: This is what passes for a theater review in the Village Voice: Michale Feingold, while reviewing the play "King Cowboy Rufus Rules the Universe," wrote: "Republicans don't believe in the imagination, partly because so few of them have one, but mostly because it gets in the way of their chosen work, which is to destroy the human race and the planet. Human beings, who have imaginations, can see a recipe for disaster in the making; Republicans, whose goal in life is to profit from disaster and who don't give a hoot about human beings, either can't or won't. Which is why I personally think they should be exterminated before they cause any more harm."

And here's my pick:

> **(1) Palin Derangement Syndrome**: The Left's obsessive hatred of Sarah Palin is well-chronicled and is often accompanied by violent rhetoric. Let these three examples suffice: (1) Keith Halloran, a New Hampshire Democratic candidate, said on a Facebook thread that he wished Palin had been aboard the Alaska plane that crashed, killing five including Sen. Ted Stevens; (2) Another New Hampshire Democrat, Timothy Horrigan resigned from the state legislature after writing this gem on Facebook: "Well a dead Palin wd be even more dangerous than a live one . . . she is all about her myth & if she was dead she cldn't commit any more gaffes"; and (3) foul-mouthed comedian Sandra Bernhard warned Palin she would be "gang-raped by my big black brothers" if she tried coming to New York.

Now go read the whole list! Some of them I already blogged about.

I actually do know liberal people at work who even know about my blog and who haven't threatened me. But I have received threats. Not complaining, just pointing out that people do threaten me because of things that I say that they do not like. It makes it much harder to be friends with them.

“Clean energy” plant closes after receiving 58 million in subsidies

January 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News. (H/T ECM)

Full text:

> A clean energy company is closing its factory in Massachusetts, just two years after it opened the solar plant with about $58-million in taxpayer subsidies, the Boston Globe reported. Evergreen Solar calls itself a victim of weak demand and competition from cheaper suppliers in China.
>
> The newspaper describes Evergreen Solar’s closing a major hit to Democratic Governor Deval Patrick’s efforts to make Massachusetts a hub of the emerging clean-energy industry.
>
> “The administration persuaded Evergreen to build at Devens with a package of grants, land, loans, and other aid originally valued at $76 million. The company ended up taking about $58 million, one of the largest aid packages Massachusetts has provided to a private company,” the newspaper reported.
>
> Gov. Patrick, a VIP at Evergreen’s 2008 ribbon cutting, was heavily criticized by his rivals in 2010 for providing so much public aid to a company during tight fiscal times.
>
> The Evergreen closing will eliminate 800 jobs in the commonwealth, the Globe reported.

This reminds me of the Liberal government in Ontario, Canada – they wasted tons of money on green energy as well, and since the province owns the electricity company (Ontario Hydro), all the people have to pay double what they were paying before the green energy initiatives.

Obama raises gas prices by choking oil supply

Meanwhile, at the federal level, Obama is raising gas prices to appease his environmentalist faction. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> For the past nine months, Pres. Barack Obama has unilaterally taken steps that will lead to higher gas prices for struggling consumers, and fewer jobs and economic growth for our nation. Now Obama’s handpicked oil-spill commission (made up of environmentalists and political allies) has recommended more steps that will take us farther down that path of needless economic chaos — and, unsurprisingly, President Obama has responded to this report by looking into additional unilateral actions he can take outside the oversight of Congress.
>
> The commission report took its cues from President Obama, calling for more

> regulation, more government control, and less drilling.
>
> […]But the Obama commission apparently failed to consider the impact of reforms on taxpayers and on our energy industry. While the commission correctly included a focus on risk-based assessment for all individual offshore activities and operations, they spent entirely too much time appeasing environmental activists with proposals for ways to slow the industry down, like expanding the time it takes for a lease application to be reviewed and recommending a vast amount of new industry-wide regulations.
>
> This is exactly what President Obama aims to do: slow down or stop entirely the drilling of fossil fuels in the U.S., raise the price of existing and new supply wherever it comes from, and use unilateral executive-branch action to make gas so expensive that alternative energy sources will become viable dollar-to-dollar.

Do you see now why people shouldn't vote for the best looking or youngest candidate? It actually matters who the President is – because the President's decisions affect the prices of the things you use every day.

That is why making voting decisions based on emotions and happy-clappy talk about helping the poor and helping the environment is such a bad idea. It's anti-marriage and anti-family. If the government is taking people's money and wasting it, then people can't afford marriage and children. The people who whine the most about men not wanting to marry fail to see that it is exactly these feel-good policies that made marriage and parenting UNAFFORDABLE. Either vote based on emotions, or vote for family. There is no third way.

Either the government spends the worker's money, or the worker spends his own money. What is it going to be? Either policy is meant to make us congratulate ourselves on our moral superiority, or it is meant to enable us to afford to do what we ought to do – marry and raise children. What is it going to be?

Should Christians pray for the economy?

January 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from John Piper's Desiring God blog was sent to me by Mary.

Excerpt:

> A healthy economy serves people in multiple ways. Here are two.
>
> First, it is better for people to be able to work for their living than to have to depend upon others to provide for their needs. For example, Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to work with their hands so that they "will not be dependent upon anyone" (1 Thessalonians 4:12; see also 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12).
>
> In addition to this, as Wayne Grudem has pointed out in his book *Business to the Glory of God* , economic productivity is the only long-term solution to global poverty. We have seen this manifestly demonstrated over the last several hundred years as economic freedom has, through God's grace, lifted millions out of poverty, and it remains true for the future.
>
> Second, a healthy economy more effectively allows for the wide-scale implementation of proactive initiatives for the good of others. This is where I want to spend my time—focusing on things that do good for people on a large scale, both physically and spiritually. The multi-faceted creative initiatives that are enabled by a healthy economy include both the initiatives of for-profit businesses as well as the social and spiritual good that non-profit organizations are able to do.
>
> It is absolutely true that God does good through times of hardship and not just health. This is not just true, but glorious. Yet this does not give us reason as Christians to be nonchalant about whether hardship comes. We are to guide our actions and desires by God's will of command, which is to seek our nation's (and the world's) welfare, just as God commanded Jeremiah: "But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare (Jeremiah 29:7).

Economics is something that all Christians should care about. Read the Bible first, then think about how the Bible can be applied to economics. What is your plan to serve God, and how does the state of the economy help or hurt your plan? What can you do to make the economy stronger? How can you convince others to share that goal?

Related posts

- Book review of Wayne Grudem's new book by Justin Taylor
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment
- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible

- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

Iran rounds up Christians in crackdown

January 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News. (H/T Dad, Andrew, and a whole bunch of other people)

Excerpt:

> Iran has arrested about 70 Christians since Christmas in a crackdown that demonstrates the limits of religious tolerance by Islamic leaders who often boast they provide room for other faiths.
>
> The latest raids have targeted grass-roots Christian groups Iran describes as "hard-liners" who pose a threat to the Islamic state. Authorities increasingly view them with suspicions that range from trying to convert Muslims to being possible footholds for foreign influence.
>
> Christian activists claim their Iranian brethren are being persecuted simply for worshipping outside officially sanctioned mainstream churches.
>
> […]Iran's constitution gives protected status to Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians, but many religious minorities sense growing pressures from the Islamic state as hard-edged forces such as the powerful Revolutionary Guard exert more influence. There are few social barriers separating Muslims and Iran's religious minorities such as separate neighborhoods or universities. But they are effectively blocked from high government and military posts.
>
> […]Groups monitoring Christian affairs in the Islamic world say Iranian authorities see the unregulated Christian gatherings as both a potential breeding ground for political opposition and suspect they may try to convert Muslim in violation of Iran's strict apostasy laws — which are common throughout the Muslim world and have at times fed extremist violence against Christians and others.
>
> Tehran Governor Morteza Tamadon described the Christians as "hard-line" missionaries who have "inserted themselves into Islam like a parasite," according to the official Islamic Republic News Agency. He also suggested that the Christians could have links to Britain — an accusation within Iran that refers to political opposition groups Tehran claims are backed by the West.
>
> The crackdown by Iran resonates forcefully across the Middle East at a time when other Christian communities feel under siege following deadly attacks against churches in Egypt and Iraq — bloodshed that was noted Monday by Pope Benedict XVI in an appeal for protection of religious minorities.

Please pray for the Christian community in Iran. They don't have the same freedoms that you have!

What was the context of Michele Bachmann's "armed and dangerous" comment?

January 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann

Recently, New York Times columnist Paul Krugman wrote a column blaming conservatives for creating a "climate of hate".

Excerpt:

> The point is that there's room in a democracy for people who ridicule and denounce those who disagree with them; there isn't any place for eliminationist rhetoric, for suggestions that those on the other side of a debate must be removed from that debate by whatever means necessary.
>
> And it's the saturation of our political discourse — and especially our airwaves — with eliminationist rhetoric that lies behind the rising tide of violence.
>
> Where's that toxic rhetoric coming from? Let's not make a false pretense of balance: it's coming, overwhelmingly, from the right. It's hard to imagine a Democratic member of Congress urging constituents to be "armed and dangerous" without being ostracized; but Representative Michele Bachmann, who did just that, is a rising star in the G.O.P.

So what he is saying is that Michele Bachmann wants conservatives to arm themselves and eliminate their opponents violently. This was in the New York Times.

So, let's take a look at what Michele Bachmann *actually* said.

Transcript:

> Really now in Washington, I'm a foreign correspondent behind enemy lines. And I try to let everyone back here in Minnesota know exactly the nefarious activities that are taking place in Washington.
>
> But you can get all the latest information on this event. This is a must-go-to event with [the Competitive Enterprise Institute's] Chris Horner. People will learn.

> It will be fascinating.
>
> We met with Chris Horner last week, 20 members of Congress. It takes a lot to wow members of Congress after a while. This wows them.
>
> And I am going to have materials for people when they leave. I want people in Minnesota armed and dangerous on this issue of the energy tax: because we need to fight back.
>
> Thomas Jefferson told us, "Having a revolution every now and then is a good thing." And we the people are going to have to fight back hard if we're not going to lose our country.
>
> And I think this has the potential of changing the dynamic of changing freedom forever in the United States. And that's why I want everyone to come out and hear [Chris Horner]. So go to Bachmann.house.gov and you can get all [of] the information.

See, in context, it's quite clear that by armed, she means armed with material from Chris Horner on energy taxes (e.g. – the cap and trade bill) and by dangerous she means winning arguments using "all the information".

If you do a search for "armed and dangerous" and "michele bachmann", you will find that everybody and their mother on the left is taking the quote out of context in order to smear Michele Bachmann. And I hope that will be a lesson to you about dealing with the claims of people on the left. They hear these things on talk radio or MSNBC and they take them uncritically.

John Hinderaker at Powerline explains the problem with taking Michele Bachmann's "armed and dangerous" quote out of context. (H/T Hyscience)

Excerpt:

> Here is a rule of thumb: any time a liberal quotes a fragment of a sentence, or, as in this case, a three-word phrase, a red flag should go up. When liberals quote sentence fragments, they are usually misleading when they aren't out-and-out fabricated.
>
> My guess is that Krugman has no idea when Michele referred to being "armed and dangerous," or why, or what the rest of the sentence was. Krugman's biggest problem isn't that he is stupid. His biggest problem is that he is lazy. He is incapable of doing even the most rudimentary research, which is why his columns rarely contain many facts, and when they do, his "facts" are often wrong.
>
> As it happens, I–unlike Krugman–know all about Michele's "armed and dangerous" quote, because she said it in an interview with Brian Ward and me, on our radio show. It was on March 21, 2009. The subject was the Obama administration's cap and trade proposal. Michele organized a couple of informational meetings in her district with an expert on global warming and cap and trade, and she came on our show to promote those meetings. She wanted

> her constituents to be armed with information on cap and trade so that they would understand how unnecessary, and how damaging to our economy, the Obama administration's proposal was. That would make them dangerous to the administration's left-wing plans.
>
> The interview illustrates quite well the difference between Michele Bachmann and Paul Krugman. Krugman is a vicious hater. He rarely argues any issue on the merits, but prefers to smear those who disagree with him. Bachmann is infinitely better informed than Krugman. All she wants to do is debate her opponents on the facts. Unlike Krugman, she doesn't hate anyone; her irrepressible good humor is considered a marvel by everyone who knows her.

You can listen to the whole interview at that post on Powerline. I do occasionally listen to the Northern Alliance Radio show.

Is Paul Krugman civil with his opponents?

Of course not!

He writes:

> A message to progressives: By all means, hang Senator Joe Lieberman in effigy.

This is the first sentence in one of his New York Times columns. I put the link for context, so you can check it out yourself. If I were a leftist journalist, I would have left out the "in effigy" and then spread all over the Internet and on MSNBC. MSNBC edits the news to suit their narrative all the time – it's not really a news channel at all, it's just propaganda for the far-left fringe.

Is Paul Krugman seen as reliable?

Not by a bunch of non-conservatives:

- Megan McArdle (CENTER-LEFT)
- Richard A. Epstein (LIBERTARIAN)
- The Von Mises Institute (LIBERTARIAN)
- The Cato Institute (LIBERTARIAN)

Always read the New York Times with a skeptical eye.

You need to watch Fox News and listen to Hugh Hewitt

I really recommend that if any of you who are watching MSNBC and listening to NPR stop that and try an experiment. Switch to watching Special Report on Fox News at 6 PM Eastern every day for an hour. Bret Baier is fair, and you will see him do an amazing thing. The entire second half of the show is a panel discussion with people on the left present, and they get equal time. And if you can watch Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace on Sundays, you get another panel discussion with TWO leftists, usually Juan Williams and Mara Liasson – who work for NPR!!!! (Yes, I know NPR fired Juan) Neither Juan nor Mara are insane – in fact they are quite sensible leftists. Sometimes Bret will have other leftists on, but even they are not too crazy. Do you know why? Because they

can’t be crazy when there are conservatives on the panel who get to hold them to account. And the conservatives can’t be crazy, either. That’s how you get the truth – each side corrects the other, and they all get along well – laughing and joking. That’s what Fox News is famous for – fair and balanced. Balanced means you get BOTH sides. Fair means both sides get equal time to talk. It’s a debate *every night*.

I do not recommend watching the O’Reilly Factor or even Sean Hannity, and especially not Shepherd Smith, who is a radical left wing extremist.

Inauguration of first Latina governor ignored by left-wing media

January 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Governor Susana Martinez

Story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Martinez's story is an impressive one. The 51-year-old former district attorney, from middle class roots in El Paso, graduated near the top of her high school class before attending the University of Texas at El Paso and the University of Oklahoma College of Law. In 1996, Martinez was elected district attorney of the state's 3rd Judicial District, which covers heavily-Democratic Doña Ana County. Touting herself as a no-nonsense prosecutor during the 2010 gubernatorial election, Martinez defeated the state's Democratic lieutenant governor, Diane Denish.
>
> But the Republican's rise to statewide office garnered little attention in the national spotlight overall.
>
> The Associated Press made note of Martinez's historic inauguration in a news wire Jan. 1, acknowledging her as the first female governor of the state, while omitting her Hispanic heritage. That story was picked up by several media outlets including the Washington Post and Chicago Tribune websites. FoxNews.com also ran the AP story that day, but Fox News Latino had covered Martinez's candidacy and victory in a series of election articles beginning in October.
>
> The AP later updated its Jan.1 inauguration day wire mentioning her as the first Latina governor. A search of the New York Times website yielded no stories on Martinez's historic inauguration, and CNN mentioned her status as the nation's "first Hispanic female governor" in a broadcast on Jan. 2.

And of course we have the only two Indian-American governors, Bobby Jindal and Nikki Haley.

Five flaws in the thinking of the new atheists

January 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By UK philosopher Peter S. Williams. (H/T Apologetics 315)

It's 9 minutes long.

Topics:

1. Atheists misunderstand the nature of faith.
2. Atheistic view of epistemology is self-refuting.
3. Atheistic view of morality is self-contradictory.
4. Atheistic view of free will is self-contradictory.
5. Atheists don't understand theistic arguments.

This is a short presentation of the material presented in this paper.

If you want to hear more from Peter, this debate with an academic postmodern relativist is just awesome.

forumPost:1 AND inner sanctum mysteries

Zeitgeist conspiracy movie had profound impact on Jared Loughner

January 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Robert Stacy McCain is ALL OVER this story. Let's get caught up.

Here's Zach Osler, a friend of the Tucson murderer.

That's an Associated Press video.

Transcript excerpt:

> "There was a lot of talk about lucid dreaming and understanding reality. . . . And there were a lot of books and movies . . . things that I never would have heard about or watched — things like *Loose Change* about the 9/11 conspiracy . . . He watched things like that. . . . **He had basically nothing going for him, and I think he just couldn't deal with reality anymore**. . . . I know that he was experimenting with the drug, or herb or whatever it is, salvia divinorum. And from what I hear, he used it quite frequently. . . . It's like a hallucinogenic type of effect."

McCain also links to more interesting stuff:

> Loughner, now 22, would come over several times a week from 2007 to 2008, the Oslers said.
>
> The boys listened to the heavy-metal band Slipknot and progressive rockers the Mars Volta, studied the form of meditative movement called tai chi and watched and discussed movies.
>
> Loughner's favorites included little-known **conspiracy theory documentaries such as "Zeitgeist" and "Loose Change"** as well as bigger studio productions with cult followings and themes of brainwashing, science fiction and altered states of consciousness, including "Donnie Darko" and "A Scanner Darkly." . . .
>
> Roxanne Osler [said]: "Jared struck me as a young man who craved attention and acceptance."

In another post McCain summarizes a conspiracy theory movie called "Zeitgeist" in another post.

PART I: Attacking Christianity as a 'Myth'

This segment has been called "*The Da Vinci Code* on steroids." Toward the end, the narrator says, "Christianity, along with all other theistic belief systems, is the fraud of the age. It serves to detach the species from the natural world and likewise, from each other. It supports blind submission to authority. It reduces human responsibility to the effect that God controls everything."

PART II: 9/11 Was a Conspiracy

Not much to say here. You've seen one 9/11 "Truther" documentary, you've seen 'em all. But the guys at *Loose Change* can't sue for copyright infringement because, hey, it's a "documentary," and you can't copyright *crazy*.

PART III: TOTAL FREAKING KOOKINESS!

This is the Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test of *Zeitgeist* where, if you've gone along with the Jesus-Was-a-Myth stuff and the 9/11-Was-a-U.S.-Plot stuff, you're going to find yourself throbbing helplessly in spasms of conspiratorial ecstasy, covered in kook-splooge. The U.S. government and "international bankers" scheme behind the scenes to control every damned thing in the world — and plant computer chips in your brain, to boot!

Guess who liked Zeitgeist? Jared Loughner. He liked Zeitgeist *a whole lot.*

Does Zeitgeist sound like right-wing Tea Party material? It's an atheistic, anti-American, anti-capitalist movie. And that's what Jared believed. That's why he favorited flag-burning videos. He is the *complete opposite* of a Tea Party conservative.

I wonder why the left-wing mainstream news media isn't reporting on what Jared's friends are saying about his views?

In fact, I wonder what the left-wing media thinks of Zeitgeist? I wonder what the left-wing media thinks of Loose Change? I wonder what the left-wing media thinks of capitalism? I wonder what the left-wing media thinks on the war against Islamic extremism? I wonder what the left-wing media thinks of American exceptionalism? I wonder what the left-wing media thinks of Christian theism?

Can they *afford* to tell the truth about this story?

Off-duty policeman murders five Christians in Egypt

January 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yahoo News has the story.

Excerpt:

> An off-duty policeman boarded a train and opened fire on Tuesday, killing a 71-year-old Christian man and wounding his wife and four others, the Interior Ministry said. The attack, less than two weeks after the suicide bombing of a church killed 21, sparked new demonstrations by enraged Christians who pelted police with stones in southern Egypt.
>
> The church attack on worshippers leaving a New Year's Mass in the Mediterranean port of Alexandria touched off three days of riots and demonstrations by furious Christians who criticized the government for failing to protect them and vented over what they see as persistent discrimination.
>
> All of the casualties in the latest attack were Christians — four of them women — raising concerns it will ignite a new wave of protests by a community still traumatized by the suicide bombing.
>
> […]The ministry statement identified the policeman as Amer Ashour Abdel-Zaher, a 23-year-old Muslim, and said he boarded the Cairo-bound train at the town of Samalout in Minya province and opened fire on the passengers with a handgun.

This is actually happening a lot recently. The article continues:

> In January 2010, gunmen opened fire on worshippers leaving a Coptic Christmas Eve church service in southern Egypt, killing six Christians and a Muslim guard.
>
> Many Christians charge that the authorities are not doing enough to protect them and in fact allege some members of the security services turn a blind eye to anti-Christian incidents.

Do you know who isn't afraid to side with Egyptian Christians against terrorists? Stephen Harper, the prime minister of Canada.

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper participated in a round table discussion on security with Coptic Christian leaders.
>
> A deadly suicide bombing in Egypt on New Year's Day claimed the lives of some 21 worshippers.
>
> And nearly 100 people were wounded in the attack as they left a midnight mass at an Alexandria church.
>
> Harper condemned the attacks, saying the international community must stay vigilant against such violence against Coptic Christians.

> Harper met with several priests at the Church Of the Virgin Mary and St. Athanasius in Mississauga Thursday.
>
> He says he wants Coptic Christians in Canada to know the country stands behind their right to safely practice their faith.

Harper is a member of the Conservative Party of Canada. The conservatives in Canada are actually pretty outspoken about the plight of Coptic Christians.

Why are women so concerned with poor people in other countries?

January 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Look at this post by a male reader of The Thinking Housewife blog.

Excerpt:

> Since I wrote you last, I have decided to sign up for a few online dating sites, mostly out of curiosity. I could not imagine finding a serious mate on, say, *OKCupid,* but anything is possible. In poring over many hundreds of profiles in the past few days, a few things stand out to me.
>
> - I have not seen any woman make her desire for children, or even marriage, the central focus of her profile. Even though I filter profiles based on the "wants kids?" question (which is, surprisingly, often answered "yes"), nothing in the written profile suggests it is important to them. (This is occasionally not the case for Asian women)
> - The emphasis is instead on career, activities, hobbies, favourite movies/books/music, travel, and political inclinations (always to the left, sometimes the feminist left)
> - The surpreme goal of women my age appears to be to start an NGO in a Third World country.
> - Every woman my age has read *Eat, Pray, Love*.
> - Most are doing (or have done) advanced degrees, often in education or healthcare.
> - It is rare that a woman expresses interest in cooking, though most express interest in restaurants and food.
> - I have never seen a woman mention that she desires a good home, a place to call her own, or that she is otherwise domestically inclined.
>
> I suspect these line up with your readers' experiences too. That said, it may be that women view these traits as being desired by men, and they may be at odds with more deeply held needs.

In fact, The Thinking Housewife says these characteristics are also common in Christian circles:

> Right now, in this country, there are many children growing up in single-mother homes. Growing up without a father and with a mother who is usually not at home and who may bring strange men into your life is a desolating experience that has been proven to damage many people. I have a friend who is a teacher in a white working-class neighborhood. Many of the children there are growing up in homes of never-married or divorced mothers. These children are hungry for

> attention and love. Their situation portends further social chaos. Do you think the young Evangelical women you mention would brag about helping these white children? Would volunteer work with them have the same cachet?
>
> I suggest to you that it would not.
>
> I understand that people in Third World countries are materially *poorer* than these white children I mention. But in the Christian view, the immaterial is foremost and the *spiritual conditions* of these white children are nothing less than dire and probably worse than that of most children in the Third World. They are being raised by nihilistic popular culture.
>
> […]Christianity will not flourish in the Third World if it is dying in the West. We need these idealistic women to do their work at home, and that work includes becoming wives and mothers themselves.
>
> The idealism of these women is not wrong, but the direction it has taken *is*. Volunteering in the Third World has become a status symbol for Christians.

And since we've been talking about Dickens in the comments, here is something else from The Thinking Housewife in another post.

Excerpt:

> I call attention to another Dickens novel, perhaps his masterpiece, *Bleak House*, where Caddy's mother, Mrs. Jellyby, permits her own numerous children to starve in her own ramshackle house while she relentlessly pursues what Dickens brilliantly calls "telescopic philanthropy." Mrs. Jellyby also ignores her husband, who, being entirely untutored in housekeeping, in futility tries and largely fails to keep order in the house. Mrs. Jellyby is obsessed by and devotes her own and any other money that she can cadge to some supposed tribal orphans in an African village, who might or might not exist. Says one character of this formidable woman: "Mrs. Jellyby… is a lady of very remarkable strength of character who devotes herself entirely to the public. She has devoted herself to an extensive variety of public subjects, at various times, and is at present (until something else attracts her) devoted to the subject of Africa; with a view to the general cultivation of the coffee berry – and the natives – and the happy settlement, on the banks of the African rivers, of our superabundant home population." (Chapter IV)
>
> Says Mrs. Jellyby herself to Esther Summerhouse, the novel's female protagonist: "You find me… very busy; but that you will excuse. The African project at present employs my whole time. It involves me in correspondence with public bodies, and with private individuals anxious for the welfare of their species all over the country. I am happy to say it is advancing. We hope by this time next year to have from a hundred and fifty to two hundred healthy families cultivating coffee and educating the natives of Borrioboola-Gha, on the left bank of the Niger." (Chapter IV)

Ah, Dickens. He wasn't all bad after all!

I wrote about my view of short-term mission trips here. Some people disagree with me on that.

Related posts

- Why do women flock to movies like "Eat, Pray, Love"
- The apologetic value of self-sacrificial romantic love
- Women should read "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands"
- Arlemagne's post on the dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- What is the meaning of white roses?
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- The Wintery Knight's greatest fears about the future
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Conservatives mostly positive on new RNC chair Reince Priebus

January 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life Site News is happy.

Excerpt:

> Reince Priebus, the pro-life head of the Wisconsin Republican party, has won the chairmanship of the Republican National Committee after former chairman Michael Steele gave up the contest for re-election.
>
> Priebus, who has strongly emphasized his pro-life and pro-family views, won over half the votes after the seventh ballot was cast Friday afternoon.
>
> In interviews prior to the election, Priebus told the Susan B Anthony (SBA) List that, "I support our Republican platform which I think is rock solid on the issue of abortion."
>
> "I think that social issues are the fabric of our society and for us to not be involved with those issues causes us to turn our back on what I think is the foundation of America," said Priebus. "I believe if I was elected Chair of the RNC that would be something I would have an even bigger obligation to uphold the position I have on abortion."
>
> Priebus has also established a strong pro-family profile. In debates earlier this month, Priebus said that, "I don't believe that judges can rewrite the Constitution and redraft what marriage is." "I think there is a sanctity of marriage. Everyone should be loved but at the end of the day, I believe that marriage through the sanctity of marriage should be between one man and one woman," he added.
>
> Priebus, like every candidate for the chairmanship, is a proponent of traditional marriage – notable given recent headway made by the homosexualist group GOProud to establish a foothold for the gay agenda within Republican circles.
>
> […]The Washington Post's Chris Cillizza noted that Priebus already has a reputation for unifying tea party and GOP sentiments, seen as one of the most important tasks facing the party: in Wisconsin, Priebus had successfully rallied the GOP behind tea party favorites such as Gov. Scott Walker and Sen. Ron Johnson.

Erick Erickson's reaction at Red State is more moderate.

Excerpt:

> He's not the guy a lot of tea party activists wanted nationwide, but I've been inundated with calls from ardent defenders of his this past week from Wisconsin who say he was a significant player in the profound turn around up there.
>
> That so many have called this week to support him — people who are

> authentically and unquestionably grassroots — is encouraging.
>
> Congratulations to Reince Priebus, the new Chairman of the Republican National Committee.
>
> He has his work cut out for him on fundraising and rebuilding the 72 hour task force. It is time to let the healing begin and the fight for 2012 go forward.
>
> I wish Reince Priebus well, look forward to learning how to say his name, and am excited to work with him.

Red State is the number grassroots conservative site.

But Erickson did NOT consider Priebus to be the most conservative candidate in the race. Ann Wagner and Saul Anuzis were considered to be more conservative by Erickson and by Jim Hoft at Gateway Pundit. We did not get either of the two BEST candidates. But we did not get the worst candidate (Maria Cino) either.

Are public sector unions to blame for state and local deficits?

January 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this post from the Manhattan Institute.

Full text:

> The economists over at the e21 blog take on the argument being made by some pro-labor groups that public sector compensation (pay and the cost of benefits) is not a significant part of current state and municipal budget woes. In an editorial, e21 notes that state and local spending as a percentage of U.S. GDP has doubled in the last 50 years even as investment by local governments in traditional areas like building roads and bridges has been flat. Where has the money gone? Primarily to Medicaid and to public sector compensation.The editorial notes, for instance, that pension costs alone have increased in California from $2.4 billion per year to $4.8 billion from 2003 to 2009, while New York City's pension obligations have tripled over the same period.

> The Manhattan Institute's Nicole Gelinas has illustrated how those costs have worked on New York City. Amidst the controversy over the poor snow-cleaning job done by the city's sanitation department after the Dec. 26 snowstorm, Nicole pointed out that although the department has been shrinking, its personnel costs have been rising rapidly. The average cost of employing a single sanit worker in NYC is now $144,000 annually, up from $79,000 a decade ago. The big driver of costs is sharply rising pension contributions, up from $10 million a decade ago to $200 million today.
>
> The editorial at e21 concludes by comparing public sector pensions with private pensions, using California's formula for public workers as an example. For a state employee in California earning almost $83,000 at retirement after 25 years of service, e21 estimates that a similar private sector employee with a defined contribution plan would have to put away 23 percent of his pre-tax income every year to amass enough of a pot of money to purchase an annuity that would give him the same kind of retirement benefits.
>
> "Put simply, it is difficult to conceive a way to address the current – and projected – state fiscal crisis without dramatic reductions in state and local employee benefits,' the editorial concludes.

Somebody has to pay for all this mess.

Bill Whittle scores the Obama presidency at half-time

January 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is pretty good.

Here are the promises that Obama made when he was running for president:

1. Roll back the Bush tax cuts
2. Repeal the PATRIOT Act
3. Pass cap-and-trade legislation
4. Pass an amnesty bill for illegal immigrants
5. Close the Guantanamo Bay prison
6. Provide civilian trials for terrorists
7. Sign the pro-abortion “Freedom of Choice Act”
8. End warrantless wire-tapping
9. Limit the influence of lobbyists in Washington
10. Cut income tax rates for seniors

So how did he do so far? He had the House, the Senate and the Presidency.

What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?

January 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Take a look at this article from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> Britain's most feckless father is having another five children – and is apparently 'engaged' for the third time in three months.
>
> Unemployed father-of-10 Keith Macdonald – who pays just £5 a week to support his offspring – will cost taxpayers more than £2 million by the time all his youngsters reach 18.
>
> He has got two new girlfriends pregnant, is having another baby with an ex and a fourth woman who was already known to be having his child has discovered that she is actually having twins.
>
> But it remains unclear whether the latest pregnancies will make Macdonald, from Washington, Tyne and Wear, a father-of-15. The 25-year-old has admitted he has only eight youngsters, while one of his former lovers has claimed he already has 11 children – so when the next five are born he would have 16 in total.
>
> […]By the time each of his 15 children are 18, they will have cost the state £50,000 in child tax credits, £20,000 in child benefit while each mother could receive £30,000 in income support and £50,000 in housing benefit.

He's also spent time in prison and is *currently unemployed.* So where exactly is this guy getting the money to convince all these women of his ability to provide for them?

> The father, who has met most of his conquests at bus stops, claims £68.95 per week in disability benefits because he has a bad back and £44 per week in income support.
>
> He has previously said it was 'not his fault' he had fathered so many children.
>
> […]He fathered his first child when he was just 14.

What can these women possibly be thinking, having sex before marriage with such a beastly man?

> He is now engaged to marry 32-year-old unemployed Amy Ward, from Chester-le-Street, Tyne and Wear, and she is expecting his child.
>
> Unemployed Emma Kelly, 18, and 21-year-old ex-girlfriend Clare Bryant – have also both recently been made pregnant by the feckless father, it emerged today.
>
> And another one of his expectant partners – 24-year-old Danielle Little – has just found out that she is expecting his twins.

> It remained unclear when Macdonald, who has been in and out of prison, will tie the knot with his expectant fiancee Miss Ward.

> […]But Macdonald was also engaged to unemployed Danielle Little, from Sunderland, in September.

> He had promised to marry 19-year-old beautician Sarah Armstrong from Chester-le-Street in the same month when he discovered she was pregnant.
>
> Miss Little warned Miss Ward about the feckless father on Facebook – but she reacted with fury in a post on the site.
>
> She wrote: 'Some people just don't get on with their own lives and just like to cause s*** for other people.'

I think everyone can see that this man is not the sort of man that would pass any father's pre-dating interrogation. This man is *scum.* There was a time when a man like this would not have been able to afford bus fare if he didn't have a job. But now the government is *paying him* so that he can carry on with women as if he actually had a job. They are enabling him to act like a child well past the time where he should have grown up.

The author of the post on RuthBlog asks this:

> **Questions for Your Consideration**
>
> 1. What is the womens' role here? Are they victims? Why is the article centered around the man?
> 2. Imagine what these kids' reactions might be when they grow up and learn their dad is the father of many other children, most by different mothers. Do you think the parents considered the kids' reactions before having sex? Generally speaking, are a child's future (and unknown) reactions something parents ought to consider?
> 3. In your opinion, is this the sort of future most women dream about when they're young? What is the government's role, if any, in supporting the dreams of its youth?

Those are good questions, but I have one of my own.

Husbands or government

When women think about marriage, do they think about where the money is going to come from to buy all of the things they dream about? I know that they dream about babies, weddings, clothes, shoes, jewelry, a home, home decorations, a garden, furniture, drapes, vacations, and so on. But my question is – are they dreaming about who is going to pay for all of that? And if they know about these costs, then why are young, unmarried women voting to increase government spending on welfare? The only way to pay for all these benefits is by raising taxes and confiscating their future husband's earnings and investments. It may feel good to "soak the rich", but does it result in more marriage-minded men? (Obama has greatly increased welfare benefits, thus undermining marriage

and the need to choose a man who can earn money). How does heaping taxes and regulations on businesses make a man more likely to be employed? How does raising capital gains and dividends taxes make a man *more* able to earn a return on his investments?

A man cannot pay for all of these social programs, (which just incentivize more and more costly behaviors), at the same time as he is supporting a family of his own. If the government is handing out money to single mothers, then women *do not need men to prove that they are good earners* before having sex with them. So men stop trying to do well in school and get good jobs, and instead focus on being popular, exciting and entertaining.

The man in the Daily Mail article is an ex-con and unemployed. He is the worst sort of man for a woman to choose – and yet women are falling all over him. Because the government is making it unnecessary for them to *care* about whether he can earn a living and act responsibly. The government is saying "we pay the bills, so you can choose men on the basis of sex, drama and to impress your girlfriends with the drama". Women have decided that *there is no way that men ought to be* – they certainly should not be respected as the protector and provider and moral/spiritual leader.

Ends and means

I have been struggling lately to understand why women spend so much time thinking about what they want, and complaining about their friends who are getting married, and yet spend so little time acquiring funding, skills and knowledge to achieve what they want. One woman I know who wants to get married recently gave a one-word review of "Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands", which I made her read. Her review was "Barf!". She has *no idea* what demands marriage will place on her, and resents the needs of men (and probably resents the needs of children too). However, she is very interested in Mark Driscoll and loves to load up obligations on men. Obligations on men = GOOD! Obligations on women = BARF! That's how she thinks. It's the feminist double-standard that Dr. Laura writes about in PCF Husbands. And, of course, if anything thing goes wrong with the intentions of women, they can just blame the man and claim that the failure was unpredictable and not their fault.

I once had a conversation with an unemployed Christian woman who was explaining to me how she had a right to collect welfare from the government in order to have a child out-of-wedlock *by choice*. She had NO IDEA what fatherlessness would do to a child, and NO IDEA how increased welfare spending caused higher taxes and reduced the number of men who could afford to marry. She was left-wing on most fiscal policies. (But she was also not a feminist and she was chaste, so not totally awful)

Contrast that woman with another Christian woman I know who did a B.S. and M.S. in engineering, worked 10 years, saved all her money, and helped her husband pay off their house, before becoming a stay-at-home mother. She wanted a husband and a home, so she went out and did two degrees in engineering so that she could *help her husband pay for the things she wanted* – before becoming a stay at home wife and mom. The engineer

is vehemently opposed to big government, higher taxes and welfare because her husband's salary is what is allowing her to be a good wife and mother, away from the stress of work.

Socialism and feminism

Why are women pursuing men like the unemployed ex-con? I actually wrote a post on why women prefer bad men, and why they would prefer not to have to deal with traditional men acting in traditional male roles. It's less work for them if they just get a check in the mail – they don't have to be respectful of a husband if a check just comes in the mail. Some women really resent the authority that a man has in the home as the primary earner, and they also resent having to respect men and deal with their other needs for sex, verbal encouragement, etc. They want government to replace men, because men, especially good men, are authoritarian and demanding and judgmental. And the result is skyrocketing rates of single motherhood. The out-of-wedlock birth rate is 40% in the United States, costing us 112 BILLION dollars a year.

Here is another post discussing research on the attitudes of college women to hooking up done by the University of Virginia. Women really are choosing this. No one is making them do it. They are doing it because they *want to*. The bounds of traditional sexual morality, traditional sex roles and traditional courtship are not *fun*. Read the research and see for yourself what they say.

Socialism and Polygamy

This post on Haemet talks about the social costs of polygamy, which is another arrangement that can't easily be sustained without government support.

Related posts

- New study finds that pre-marital sex reduces quality of relationships
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama's new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives

- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children’s sexual choices
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being

New peer-reviewed article argues for irreducible complexity in birds

January 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

In a peer-reviewed paper titled "Evidence of Design in Bird Feathers and Avian Respiration," in *International Journal of Design & Nature and Ecodynamics*, Leeds University professor Andy McIntosh argues that two systems vital to bird flight–feathers and the avian respiratory system–exhibit "irreducible complexity." The paper describes these systems using the exact sort of definitions that Michael Behe uses to describe irreducible complexity:

> [F]unctional systems, in order to operate as working machines, must have all the required parts in place in order to be effective. If one part is missing, then the whole system is useless. The inference of design is the most natural step when presented with evidence such as in this paper, that is evidence concerning avian feathers and respiration.

He further notes that many evolutionary authors "look for evidence that true feathers developed first in small non-flying dinosaurs before the advent of flight, possibly as a means of increasing insulation for the warm-blooded species that were emerging." However, he finds that when it comes to fossil evidence for the evolution of feathers, "[n]one of the fossil evidence shows any evidence of such transitions."

Regarding the avian respiratory system, McIntosh contends that a functional transition from a purported reptilian respiratory system to the avian design would lead to non-functional intermediate stages. He quotes John Ruben stating, "The earliest stages in the derivation of the avian abdominal air sac system from a diaphragm-ventilating ancestor would have necessitated selection for a diaphragmatic hernia in taxa transitional between theropods and birds. Such a debilitating condition would have immedi¬ately compromised the entire pulmonary ventilatory apparatus and seems unlikely to have been of any selective advantage." With such unique constraints in mind, McIntosh argues that the "even if one does take the fossil evidence as the record of development, the evidence is in fact much more consistent with an *ab initio* design position – that the breathing mechanism of birds is in fact the product of intelligent design."

Let's take a step back and ask what counts as evidence for (macro) evolution for people who actually care about evidence.

Here's what counts as evidence:

1. A smooth sequence of fossils showing the gradual emergence of different body body features *across a wide spectrum of body plans.* Not just horses and whales, not just

micro-evolution. Major changes in body structure, which properly dated fossils*, from a wide range of body plans.*

2. A lab experiment that derives a new organ type or body plan from an unmodified organism, like the Lenski experiments tried to do on a smaller scale.
3. A computer simulation that shows a string of mutations that occur on one organism that would give it a new feature or organ within a reasonable amount of time (less than 4 billion years). The mutations must be probable, and the organism must have improved functionality at each stage of its development. And a calculation would have to be done to show that each beneficial mutation would spread to the rest of the population and survive in the next generation, which is a separate question.

Do we have that evidence in the case of bird evolution (feathers and lungs)? Of course not.

Do we have that evidence in the case of evolution as a whole? Of course not.

People who embrace evolution embrace it on the basis of non-rational, non-evidential factors.

Why did the mainstream media ignore Jared Loughner's Zeitgeist obsession?

January 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, a bit more about Loughner from the Arizona Republic. (H/T Robert Stacy McCain)

Excerpt:

> At the end of Loughner's junior year, in May 2006, the school nurse had him taken to the emergency room. "Extremely intoxicated," the sheriff's report would later say. It was 9 in the morning.
>
> Loughner told a deputy that he stole a bottle of vodka from his parents because his father had yelled at him.
>
> Loughner was changing. Drugs and alcohol blurred some days, but what friends remember most are the things he thought. Theories, ideas, strange questions.
>
> In Loughner's latter two years of high school, friend George Osler saw him drinking and smoking marijuana more and more.
>
> He would go off on these tangents and then he would stop talking altogether," Osler said. "He struck me as odd. It was an uncomfortable feeling."
>
> Loughner began fixating on a documentary: "Zeitgeist: The Movie."
>
> The movie is a bramble of conspiracy theories involving Sept. 11, the international monetary system, and Christianity.
>
> "There are people guiding your life and you don't even know it," the trailer for the movie intones.
>
> "He wanted to watch it all the time," Osler said. "It was cool at first. But then it got weird. It was all he wanted to do."
>
> Loughner developed a seeming obsession with currency, grammar and literacy rates. They were becoming the objects of his rants and screeds. Those around him didn't understand.

By the way, Mary wanted me to mention this refutation of Zeitgeist by New Zealand philosopher Glenn Peoples.

Robert McCain is happy about this new mainstream media coverage of the story he broke, but not happy with the rest of the mainstream media that is still silent.

He writes:

> As of noon Sunday, there were 39 search results on Google News for "Loughner+Zeitgeist." Most of those were passing mentions. Meanwhile, a Google News search for "Loughner+Palin" returned 10,395 results. There were 595 results for "Loughner+Limbaugh."
>
> By comparison, so far as I have been able to determine, by Sunday noon there

> had been exactly five substantial articles devoted specifically to the Loughner-*Zeitgeist* connection:
>
> - "**Loughner Admired Conspiracy-Minded *Zeitgeist* Film**," Jan. 12, Sarah Posner, *Religion Dispatches*
> - **"The New Age Assassin,"** Jan. 12, Jesse Walker, *Reason*
> - "**I'd Love to Turn You On**," Jan. 12, Richard Fernandez, *Pajamas Media*
> - "**The Missing Mass Murder Motive in Tucson**," Jan. 13, Robert Stacy McCain, *The American Spectator*
> - "***Zeitgeist*, the Conspiracy Film That Possibly Inspired Loughner**," Jan. 13, David Weigel, *Slate*
>
> Thursday, the *Washington Post* published a 2,700-word profile of Jared Lee Loughner, and today the *New York Times* published a 5,000-word profile of the Tucson killer.
>
> ***Neither story so much as mentioned Zeigeist.***

Can you count on the Washington Post and New York Times to tell you the truth about the world? Or rather, will they tell you what they want you to think about the world so that you will vote "the right way" – for left-wing politicians?

Certainly there could be that element of wanting to make people vote for Democrats and wanting to demonize Sarah Palin and the Tea Party. But I think another reason why they didn't report on it is because they don't disagree with the ideas presented in the movie. They may be sympathetic that Christianity is a myth, that 9/11 is some sort of conspiracy to make poor, innocent Islamic theocrats look bad, and that global communism really would be much better than free market capitalism. Jared's beliefs are the mainstream media's beliefs. So why would they associate murder with their own beliefs?

And moreover, the mainstream media doesn't DO detailed historical investigations of Christianity, so they would be more likely to fall for "Christianity is a myth" viewpoints. Even on the right-wing, you have ignorant journalists reducing Christianity to faith, who have never heard of William Lane Craig, the kalam argument, the fine-tuning argument, or specified complexity. All of these complicated arguments for theism are just beyond them – they only want to believe things that will make the right kinds of people like them, and provide them with maximum autonomy in their own lives. Their support for things like abortion and same-sex marriage isn't something that they have carefully weighed by listening to academic debates… they take their position because they want to behave selfishly and do not want to be told about boundaries or consequences. And they embrace left-wing economic policies because it gives them the feeling of being enlightened, compassionate and generous… with *other people's money.* They love the idea that people can act selfishly and stupidly and yet be rescued with someone else's money.

So don't expect the mainstream media to tell the truth about stories like this. They are Democrats, and they will never undermine the central pillars of the Democrat party,

which are largely in agreement with the Zeitgeist movie. Those pillars are, of course, that Christianity is a myth, that Christian positions on social issues are therefore false, that American military action is necessarily imperialistic and evil, and that socialism would be much better at creating prosperity for the masses than free market capitalism. Most event reporting is going to be massaged so that it fits that narrative, to some degree or other. Not sports stories, but certainly sensational stories like this one.

Is the media biased to the left?

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> […]The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.

From the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.

Don't count on them to tell you the truth… that's not their job.

Related posts

- MUST-SEE: Condoleezza Rice Takes on Katie Couric Over Iraq Claims
- CBS News caught on tape conspiring to smear Republican candidate

- Democrats got 88% of 2008 contributions from mainstream media
- How the left-wing media conspired to label conservatives as racists
- Journalists conspired to spike the Jeremiah Wright story
- Washington Post blogger is an advisor for the Obama administration
- Mark Steyn asks whether Fox News is more biased than CBC or BBC
- How reliable are government-paid broadcasters like Tavis Smiley?
- What can we learn about media bias from donations made by journalists?
- MSNBC's Contessa Brewer regrets that Times Square suspect is Muslim
- Is the mainstream media fair in reporting on abortion violence?
- How the left-wing media lowers the level of civil discourse
- MSNBC deliberately edits out black protester then complains about racism
- Shocking video example of left-wing media bias on MSNBC
- Which cable news network has the worst media bias?
- Hugh Hewitt demolishes MSNBC's Larry O'Donnell

Do you ever wish that your co-workers took your faith seriously?

January 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a problem that I used to have in the very beginning of my career, when I was still doing my undergraduate degree and working summer jobs and internships with software development companies. I was just in my early 20s, and was having to deal with being a Christian in the university and in the workplace. It's very difficult to do it when you are young – everyone thinks that they know more than you do just because they are older – whether they have studied the issues or not. Not only that, but you have deal with the pre-conceptions that people have about Christianity from watching anti-Christian movies and televangelists, etc.

What a mess. So what is the way forward?

The way forward is for you to take Christianity OUT of the realm of private faith, Sunday singing, emotions and feelings, personal testimony, miraculous healings, apparations (if you're Catholic), end times, Bible prophecies, and other stuff that scares non-Christians. And then you put Christianity INTO the realm of science, history, analytical philosophy, social science, economics, politics, law, and other public, testable, areas of knowledge.

After you've studied Chrsitianity and how it relates to public, testable areas of knowledge, it is easy to communicate your knowledge of things like the galactic habitability constraints, amino acid sequence specificity probabilities, minimal facts criteria for the historicity of the empty tomb, the grounding objection to middle knowledge, and the Laffer curve to other people. You are an expert at dumping the burden of proof on your opponent, every attempt by your opponent to make self-refuting statements is met with a whistle blow and a yellow card, and you wield Occam's Razor like a samurai warrior.

Great! It all works *great* on people who will give you an hour at lunch to *listen to your case*. But what about the people who have heard through the grapevine that you are a Christian, identify you with Joel Osteen, and are snickering at you behind your back every time you walk by?

Decorating your cube at work

The solution is to decorate your cube at work.

Here is what you will need:

1. a peer-reviewed paper on from a scientific journal (like this one, free version here)
2. a peer-reviewed paper on from a social science journal (like this one)
3. a news article on some foreign policy issue (like this one)
4. a publication from a think tank on economic or social policy (like this one)
5. a textbook on economics (like this one)
6. a schedule of events from an apologetics event (like this one)
7. a DVD of a William Lane Craig debate at a big university (like this one)

8. a debate book from a big academic press (like this one)

Just print these out and read them, and then put them on your desk. That should get you some attention and end the snickering.

Women gives birth after NHS nurses send her home from hospital

January 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T Secondhand Smoke via ECM)

Excerpt:

> It was a bitterly cold night in January when Geraldine Weller gave birth in the car park of a London hospital. Three hours earlier, the maternity unit had sent her away. Midwives who said they were short-staffed had confidently told her that it would be "ages yet" before she went into labour. They maintained that view even as her husband made frantic phone calls, reporting from their Surrey home that the baby's head could now be seen.

> In desperation, the couple ignored advice to stay put and drove back to the hospital. With her husband shouting into the security cameras of the maternity unit for help, Mrs Weller stepped from the passenger seat. As she did so, she gave birth to their first child, catching the newborn in one leg of her pyjamas.
>
> She says: "We just huddled together. My husband came back and wrapped Henry in a bath towel, and finally one of the nurses came out and said: 'What's this?' "

> […]Last month, a survey of 25,000 women who had children in England last winter found that more than one in five was left alone during childbirth at a point when it worried them.

The rest of the article features eyewitness comments from midwives working within the system. Naturally, no real names were used because the NHS sanctions anyone who speaks out against their government-run health care system. The same kind of government-run health care that the Democrats want in this country.

Related posts

- UK patients denied treatment as "public option" system makes cutbacks
- How do governments control costs in a single-payer health care systems?
- NHS patients giving birth in waiting rooms
- What does universal health care really mean?
- How well is government-run health care working out in the UK?
- British national health care system prepares to cut 20 billion dollars
- NHS kills a man's wife by delaying cancer treatment for 7 months
- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
- Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water
- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care

- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care
- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- NHS refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

Can Christianity survive the decline of males?

January 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from Touchstone Magazine. (H/T Mysterious C)

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes *up* from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> […]A mother's role will always remain primary in terms of intimacy, care, and nurture. (The toughest man may well sport a tattoo dedicated to the love of his

> mother, without the slightest embarrassment or sentimentality). No father can replace that relationship. But it is equally true that when a child begins to move into that period of differentiation from home and engagement with the world "out there," he (and she) looks increasingly to the father for his role model. Where the father is indifferent, inadequate, or just plain absent, that task of differentiation and engagement is much harder. When children see that church is a "women and children" thing, they will respond accordingly—by not going to church, or going much less.

I think that women need to really not leave it to chance when it comes to choosing a man to be the father of their children. If women want to serve God by raising godly children, then they'd better use the most effective courting techniques available to put each candidate through his paces. Just looking at wedding pictures, wishing, and hoping, is not really going to work. There may be more work involved in it – because to test a man's faith and abilities, you have to know what you are looking for in the first place.

My previous post on the feminized church.

Insurance companies who helped write Obamacare law like the Obamacare law

January 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from that horrible left-wing Politico site. (H/T RightKlik via Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

Excerpt:

> As Republicans push forward on repealing health reform, planning the law's demise, a different conversation is happening among thousands of health care investors gathered in San Francisco for this week's J.P Morgan Health Care Conference: how to capitalize on health reform's new business opportunities.
>
> The Congressional Budget Office estimates 32 million Americans will gain health insurance by 2019 if the law stands. For health insurers, that represents a potential boon for both their individual market business as well as in the Medicaid market, where states regularly contract with private insurers to manage care.

And they especially don't want to lose the individual mandate… which forces healthy people to pay for coverages they would never use because of their own lifestyle decisions.

> Health insurers spent barely anytime discussing Republicans' repeal efforts. Aetna's Zubretsky touched on the subject briefly only to say that Republicans understand that a rifle shot approach to tearing out specific health reform provisions, particularly the individual mandate, would not bode well for their business.
>
> "The unintended consequence of repealing and replacing part of the legislation is the biggest risk here," he said. "If guaranteed issue stays but the enforceable mandate disappears, you need another mechanism to make the costs in the risk pool work."
>
> Zubretsky said Aetna has been in touch with the GOP on the issue and "believe the Republican leaders we've been talking to understand the consequences of decoupling the mandate from the guaranteed issue."

Ugh! I hope the Republicans behave themselves and repeal as much of this bill as they possibly can!

This isn't free market capitalism – it's crony capitalism. Conservatives hate crony capitalism! Liberals love it. Conservatives love small business! Liberals hate it.

Science Daily reports on genetic convergence in bats and whales

January 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We have to start this post with the definition of convergence in biology.

> In evolutionary biology, convergent evolution is the process whereby organisms not closely related (not monophyletic), independently evolve similar traits as a result of having to adapt to similar environments or ecological niches.
>
> It is the opposite of divergent evolution, where related species evolve different traits.
>
> On a molecular level, this can happen due to random mutation unrelated to adaptive changes; see long branch attraction. In cultural evolution, convergent evolution is the development of similar cultural adaptations to similar environmental conditions by different peoples with different ancestral cultures. An example of convergent evolution is the similar nature of the flight/wings of insects, birds, pterosaurs, and bats.
>
> All four serve the same function and are similar in structure, but each evolved independently.

Jonathan Wells explains the problem that convergence poses for naturalistic evolution:

> Human designers reuse designs that work well. Life forms also reuse certain structures (the camera eye, for example, appears in humans and octopuses). How well does this evidence support Darwinian evolution? Does it support intelligent design more strongly?
>
> Evolutionary biologists attribute similar biological structures to either common descent or convergence. Structures are said to result from convergence if they evolved independently from distinct lines of organisms. Darwinian explanations of convergence strain credulity because they must account for how trial-and-error tinkering (natural selection acting on random variations) could produce strikingly similar structures in widely different organisms and environments. It's one thing for evolution to explain similarity by common descent—the same structure is then just carried along in different lineages. It's another to explain it as the result of blind tinkering that happened to hit on the same structure multiple times. Design proponents attribute such similar structures to common design (just as an engineer may use the same parts in different machines). If human designers frequently reuse successful designs, the designer of nature can surely do the same.

I'm a software engineer, and we re-use components all the time for different programs that have no "common ancestor". E.g. – I can dump develop my String function library

and use it in my web application and my Eclipse IDE plug-in, and those two Java programs have nothing in common. So you find the same bits in two different programs because I am the developer of both programs. But the two programs don't extend from a common program that was used for some other purpose – they have no "common ancestor" program.

Now with that in mind, take a look at this post from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

Earlier this year I wrote about how convergent genetic evolution is highly unlikely under neo-Darwinism, but makes perfect sense if you allow common design. An article in *ScienceDaily* titled "In Bats and Whales, Convergence in Echolocation Ability Runs Deep," points to evidence that, in my opinion, might be best explained by common design.

According to the standard mammalian phylogeny, the common ancestor of bats and whales was not capable of echolocation. Thus, the ability to echolocate must have evolved independently, and bat and whale echolocation is often cited by evolutionists as a textbook example of convergent evolution. However, the *ScienceDaily* article reports that these similarities are not just phenotypic but extend down into the level of the gene sequences:

> two new studies in the January 26th issue of Current Biology, a Cell Press publication, show that bats' and whales' remarkable ability and the high-frequency hearing it depends on are shared at a much deeper level than anyone would have anticipated — all the way down to the molecular level

Just as I noted that convergent genetic evolution was said to be "surprising" under neo-Darwinian thinking, this article reports, "The discovery represents an unprecedented example of adaptive sequence convergence between two highly divergent groups and suggests that such convergence at the sequence level might be more common than scientists had suspected."

The typical Darwinist tack is to call similar structures "superficially similar". I.e. – the appearance (phenotypes) are similar, but at the genotype (code) level, there is nothing in common. They have to say that because there is no common ancestor who shares the structure, so the *biological information* CANNOT be similar. A naturalistic theory can't accommodate similarities at the genetic level unless there is a shared common ancestor who has those instructions. But guess what? When you actually take a closer look at the evidence… the biological information IS similar between bats and whales – AND THEY DON'T SHARE A COMMON ANCESTOR. So it exactly like the software design scenario, where the designer has put the same bits into two programs that were developed independently and don't extend from a common program.

The Science Daily article explains more:

> "The natural world is full of examples of species that have evolved similar characteristics independently, such as the tusks of elephants and walruses," said Stephen Rossiter of the University of London, an author on one of the studies.

> “However, it is generally assumed that most of these so-called convergent traits have arisen by different genes or different mutations. Our study shows that a complex trait — echolocation — has in fact evolved by identical genetic changes in bats and dolphins.”
>
> […]”We were surprised by the strength of support for convergence between these two groups of mammals and, related to this, by the sheer number of convergent changes in the coding DNA that we found,” Rossiter said.

Read the whole thing at Evolution News. This is quality work by Casey Luskin.

New York Times walks back their biased coverage of the Tucson killings

January 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically left-wing, unreliable New York Times.

Excerpt:

> The Times's day-one coverage in some of its Sunday print editions included a strong focus on the political climate in Arizona and the nation. For some readers — and I share this view to an extent — placing the violence in the broader political context was problematic.
>
> […]**The Times had a lot of company, as news organizations, commentators and political figures shouldered into an unruly scrum battling over whether the political environment was to blame. Meanwhile, opportunities were missed to pick up on evidence — quite apparent as early as that first day — that Jared Lee Loughner, who is charged with the shootings, had a mental disorder and might not have been motivated by politics at all.**"If I were a reporter on this story, my very first call would have been to a mental health professional willing to consider the nature of Mr. Loughner's illness," Max Etchemendy of East Palo Alto, Calif., wrote. "The 'political' angle has been beaten to death, and 'medical' angle has been ignored completely."
>
> So why does a story get framed this way? Journalism educators characterize this kind of framing as a storytelling habit — one of relating new facts to an existing storyline — and also as a reflex of news organizations that are built to handle some topics well, and others less well.

Er, actually to the extent that he was motivated by politics at all, he was motivated by left-wing politics.

Gateway Pundit explains:

> The Tucson killer was an anti-Christian, anti-Constitution, left-wing, pro-Marx, antiflag, "quite liberal" lunatic who hated Bush. He had been targeting Rep. Gabrielle Giffords since 2007.

2007? That's before the Tea Partying even *started*. And before Sarah Palin was even discovered by most people except bloggers who live and breathe politics.

The New York Times just cannot report the facts on what animated the killer, because the New York Times journalists are largely animated by the same conspiracy theories and left-wing nonsense, (as seen in peer-reviewed studies of media bias and records of political contributions made by journalists). They believe in catastrophic man-made global warming now, just like they believed in catastrophic man-made global cooling 40 years

ago. These are not rational people. They have an agenda, and it affects their ability to apprehend reality.

The thing that annoys me is that the rest of us in the blogosphere were all over this guy from day one, reporting on his Youtube channel and so on. Even I was paying attention to the story because ECM kept bombarding me with the details for 2 hours. He was the one that picked up on the anti-Christian ranting and the flag-burning video. The morons at the New York Times apparently took a week to find that video, but ECM found it in a minute. Maybe they are not capable of understaning things like Twitter, Youtube and RSS feeds. It was *obvious* that Loughner was a lefty. The only reason they didn't report it is because they are not objective journalists at all, but Democrat operatives. They are as much in the tank for Obama as Robert Gibbs.

Russian immigrants alarmed by the Soviet-style policies of the Democrats

January 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez very different?

Here's the story from SILive.com. (H/T Red State via Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

Excerpt:

> Businessman Arkadiy Fridman said that the newly formed Citizens Magazine Business Club, a confederation of more than 50 Russian-owned businesses here and in Brooklyn, has aligned itself with the Molinari Republican Club (MRC) in an effort to increase the Russian community's political and economic clout.
>
> "We decided we had to support this club," said Fridman, a former Soviet Army officer who came to the United States in 1992. "They are very close to our political and business vision."
>
> […]Fridman said that the Democrats "are going in an absolutely different direction," focusing on "income redistribution" and rich-versus-poor "class war.""It's too socialistic," said Fridman, head of the non-profit Staten Island Community Center and president of Citizens Magazine, a public affairs publication. "It's very painful for us to see."
>
> […]The Big Brother approach reminds Fridman too much of what he left behind in the former Soviet Union.
>
> "It's the same rule like it was there," said Fridman, who estimates there are around 55,000 Russian immigrants here.
>
> Michael Petrov of the Digital Edge data management firm in Bloomfield, said that he objects to the "micro-managing of the economy" he's seen from city as well as federal officials.

> “Government is affecting small business more and more,” said Petrov, who came to the United States in 1994. “It’s the same as what’s happening in Russia.”

We really need to be looking at how these Democrat policies work out in other countries. The Democrats think that with enough money they can succeed at socialism where other countries have failed. But the United States isn’t any different from Russia or any other country once Democrats elect legislators and appoint judges who will disregard the Constitution. We’re all just peasants without the Constitution – we have no rights at all. And without the rule of law, private property, federalism, and so on, the free market is not going to be able to keep producing the tax revenues that the Democrats are so anxious to spend.

Somalian woman lied to get asylum and $417,000 of welfare benefits

January 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Abdulle, who also used the fake name Amina Muse and is from Somalia, was living in Gothenburg when the authorities insisted immigrants learn Swedish if they wanted to continue to claim handouts.

> She told a friend she couldn't be bothered and moved to England where she knew it would be far easier to collect benefits.
>
> She made up a story to gain asylum and gave herself and five of her six children false names and dates of birth, fraudulently claiming benefits on both the real and invented identities.
>
> And she somehow managed to continue claiming benefits in Sweden for three years after leaving.
>
> **Abdulle was born in Mogadishu in 1969 but moved to Sweden in 1994.**
>
> **Her friend Hodan Abdullahi Egal, who lives in Gothenburg, said yesterday: 'Ayan liked life here. She never worked, just took things easy and spent her time meeting up with old friends from Mogadishu.**
>
> 'But she couldn't be bothered to learn another language. Instead she decided to move to England.
>
> 'She said it was the land of easy money. She was convinced she would have no problems there because the system there made it far easier to collect money without proper checks.'
>
> Abdulle arrived in London in 2004 with her first five children, now aged eight to 17, and her husband Raghe Adan, and claimed asylum under the name Amina Ali Muse.
>
> In her application, she said militiamen had targeted her home in Somalia on December 1, 1998, shooting her brothers dead.
>
> She claimed she had been gang raped while three months pregnant, leading to a miscarriage, and that her niece had been raped, tortured and beaten.
>
> In fact, on that date Abdulle had been in Sweden giving birth to a daughter.
>
> **Between June 2004 and May 2010, Abdulle, who was living in Neasden, North-West London, claimed £261,358.14 in handouts.**
>
> **The cash came from almost every welfare benefit possible, including income support, disability living allowance, carers' allowance,**

> **jobseekers' allowance, housing benefit, council tax benefit, tax credits and child benefit.**
>
> […]**Abdulle… cannot be deported after finishing her sentence because she was granted British citizenship in 2009.**

I wonder how welfare laws like this get passed? Oh I know – people vote for left-wingers who are "compassionate" so they can redistribute the money they collect from high-earning productive taxpayers and business owners. That way, the do-gooders in government feel superior, the people who vote for higher tax rates feel superior, and the people who receive working people's money feel superior. Everybody wins! Everybody!

Giving money to the government is good! We should do more of that so that we can all feel like we are nice people! When I tell people that I vote for "compassion", they like me! And that's what voting is for! Feelings! Social acceptance! It's not like my company needed the money – they would just wasted it on giving people jobs to make stuff. And it's not like I needed the money – I would just waste it getting married. Much better for deserving poor people who are down on their luck through no fault of their own to get it.

In compassionate Canada, you can marry several people over the phone and collect welfare for each of them. Now that's compassion that we can all feel good about!

University of Kentucky pays $125,000 to settle anti-Christian discrimination suit

January 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically leftist Washington Post. (H/T Evolution News)

Excerpt:

> An astronomy professor who sued the University of Kentucky after claiming he lost out on a top job because of his Christian beliefs reached a settlement Tuesday with the school.
>
> The university agreed to pay $125,000 to Martin Gaskell in exchange for dropping a federal religious discrimination suit he filed in Lexington in 2009. A trial was set for next month.
>
> Gaskell claimed he was passed over to be director of UK's MacAdam Student Observatory because of his religion and statements that were perceived to be critical of evolution.
>
> Court records showed Gaskell was a front-runner for the job, but some professors called him "something close to a creationist" and "potentially evangelical" in interoffice e-mails to other university scientists.
>
> "We never thought from the start that everybody at UK was some sort of anti-religious bigot," said Frank Manion, Gaskell's attorney. "However, what I do think this case disclosed is a kind of endemic, almost knee-jerk reaction in academia towards people, especially scientists, of a strong religious faith."
>
> A statement from University of Kentucky counsel Barbara Jones Tuesday said the school's "hiring processes were and are fundamentally sound and were followed in this case." The university does not admit any wrongdoing.
>
> […]After applying for the job in 2007, Gaskell said he learned from a friend at UK that professors had discussed his purported religious views. E-mails turned over as evidence in the case showed that university scientists wondered if Gaskell's faith would interfere with the job, which included public outreach and education.
>
> One astrophysics professor at UK told department chair Michael Cavagnero in an e-mail that hiring Gaskell would be a "huge public relations mistake."
>
> […]Manion said documents and e-mail communications turned over by UK in the case showed strong evidence of religious bias, including a professor who surmised that Gaskell was "potentially evangelical."
>
> "The fact that somebody could say that without realizing the implications, speaks volumes," Manion said. "Because all you have to do is substitute any other label – potentially Jewish, potentially Muslim. Nobody would say that."

I think we should definitely de-fund these universities, put the money into the hands of

taxpayers, and let the taxpayers decide where to send their children to college – or WHETHER to send their children to college.

How the government forces Christians to affirm homosexuality

January 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the first story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> It is illegal in Britain for guesthouse keepers to refuse to allow two homosexual men to share a bed in their homes, according to a ruling by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in a test case sponsored by the country's leading homosexualist lobby group.
>
> Peter and Hazelmary Bull, devout Christians who own a guesthouse in a popular holiday resort in Cornwall, were ordered by the EHRC to pay a fine of £1,800 each to Martyn Hall and Steven Preddy, two men who had booked a room in September 2008.
>
> The Bulls explained to the Commission that they have a long-standing policy of refusing double rooms to any unmarried couple, no matter what their "orientation," at the Chymorvah Private Hotel in Marazion near Penzance.
>
> Mrs. Bull commented after the hearing, saying she and her husband were "disappointed" with the result.
>
> "Our double-bed policy was based on our sincere beliefs about marriage, not hostility to anybody. It was applied equally and consistently to unmarried heterosexual couples and homosexual couples, as the judge accepted," she told media.
>
> "We are trying to live and work in accordance with our Christian faith. As a result we have been sued and ordered to pay £3,600. But many Christians have given us gifts, so thanks to them we will be able to pay the damages."
>
> She added, "I do feel that Christianity is being marginalized in Britain. The same laws used against us have been used to shut down faith-based adoption agencies. Much is said about 'equality and diversity' but it seems some people are more equal than others."
>
> According to Judge Rutherford's ruling the crucial factor in the decision was the fact that Hall and Preddy were in a legal civil partnership. Under recently passed equalities laws, civil partners must be treated the same as couples in natural marriages.
>
> Judge Rutherford acknowledged that the Bulls had good reason to want to preclude what they regarded as immoral sexual activity in their home, but commented, "Whatever may have been the position in past centuries it is no longer the case that our laws must, or should automatically reflect the Judaeo-Christian position."

I think that some well-meaning Christians do get tricked into voting for the Labour party, because it sounds so good to "help the poor" and "bring our troops home". But it can lead to results like this "Human Rights" inquisition.

But wait! There's more from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> In yet another instance of the growing conflict between believing Christian professionals and the homosexualist movement in Britain, a Christian psychotherapist who helps individuals overcome homosexual inclinations may be "struck off," or barred from practicing her profession.
>
> Lesley Pilkington was the object of a sting operation by undercover journalist Patrick Strudwick, who approached her to ask her for help with his sexuality. He had told Pilkington that he wanted to leave the homosexual lifestyle and she informed him that she only worked within a Christian counseling framework.
>
> Strudwick, who went to two counseling sessions with Pilkington and published the transcript of the meetings in The Independent newspaper, was awarded journalist of the year by the homosexualist organization Stonewall for the sting. After the sessions, he lodged a complaint to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy alleging that Pilkington had failed to respect the "fixed nature" of his homosexuality.
>
> Pilkington, who is scheduled to appear before a professional conduct panel January 20 and faces losing her accreditation with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, said, "He told me he was looking for a treatment for being gay.
>
> "He said he was depressed and unhappy and would I give him some therapy. I told him I only work using a Christian biblical framework and he said that was exactly what he wanted."
>
> Commenting on the case, Conservative MEP Roger Helmer said, "Why is it OK for a surgeon to perform a sex-change operation, but not OK for a psychiatrist to try to 'turn' a consenting homosexual?"
>
> "If, for whatever reasons – moral, religious, personal – a homosexual man wants to have help to cure this, he should be allowed to seek treatment. I'm not being critical about homosexuality at all, but if we have people who want to change, why should they be prevented from that happening?" Helmer continued.
>
> The Christian Legal Centre, which is handling Pilkington's defense, said, "Those offering counselling for men and women wanting to change their homosexual behaviour have been increasingly targeted by the homosexual lobby, many of whom do not accept that people can change their behaviour."
>
> Andrea Minichiello Williams, CEO of the Christian Legal Centre said, "Lesley is a wonderful Christian counsellor who has practised for many years with an unblemished record."

> "It is shocking that she was targeted, lied to and misrepresented by this homosexual activist and even worse that her professional body consider her actions worthy of investigation.
>
> "It seems that what the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy object to is Lesley Pilkington holding the professional and personal view that homosexuality is not a fixed orientation."

The person responsible for the Humanist Inquisition is none other than famous Harriet Harman.

Excerpt:

> Social mobility is actually the antithesis of equality, because if people are able to progress higher up the social and income ladder it follows that others will be left behind.
>
> Social mobility inevitably rests upon a meritocracy in which people are rewarded for what they have achieved. This is the only fair system. Imposing 'equality' – which is really a kind of 'identicality', a belief that everyone must end up in exactly the same place – is monumentally unfair.
>
> It amounts to institutionalised discrimination based on the highly subjective and ideological prejudices of those in power to decide just who deserves to be privileged and who to be discriminated against.
>
> Accordingly, any moves to apply it are inevitably deeply coercive and in the end unattainable – as was proved so appallingly under Soviet communism. For the British government to introduce this Orwellian agenda is not just sinister – it is positively unhinged.
>
> The person said to be behind this is that middle-class paragon, the Equalities Minister Harriet Harman, who is said to have convinced her Cabinet colleagues of the need to enshrine the class war in law.
>
> In a speech this weekend, she will hail this move as a step towards 'a new social order'.
>
> 'We want to do more than just provide escape routes out of poverty for a talented few. We want to tackle the class divide,' she will say.
>
> This is but the latest bit of cack-handed injustice from Harman, an ultra-feminist gender warrior who has spent much of her political career trying to institutionalise injustice against men and privilege women on the basis of 'sexual equality'.

The moral of the story is… don't vote for left-wing parties if you want to have the freedom to *not celebrate* views that you disagree with on moral grounds.

Raising influential children matters

I distinctly remember the disagreement I got from some commenters when I posted the Amy Chua story about effective parenting. Well consider this story about the U.S.

Supreme Court and this story about the co-founder of Facebook. These stories demonstrate why I suggest that Christian parents ought to push their children a little harder in school, so that they get into positions of influence, e.g. – Supreme Court judges and founders of major Internet companies. We need to be able to put our children into positions of influence so that we can counter things like this. It does no good to sit back and complain when we are not doing all we could be doing!

Paul Ryan explains why Republicans are doing what they promised to do

January 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan - GOP Ideas Man

Here's the video from The Blog Prof.

Paul Ryan is going to do it because he said he would do it.

If you would like to understand what consumer-driven health care is, read this post from the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

If policymakers are serious about real patient-centered, consumer-driven health care reform, they should ensure that their legislative proposals embody six key principles:

> - **Individuals are the key decision makers in the health care system**. This would be a major departure from conventional third-party payment arrangements that dominate today's health care financing in both the public and the private sectors. In a normal market based on personal choice and free-market competition, consumers drive the system.
> - **Individuals buy and own their own health insurance coverage.** In a normal market, when individuals exchange money for a good or service, they acquire a property right in that good or service, but in today's system, individuals and families rarely have property rights in their health insurance coverage. The policy is owned and controlled by a third party, either their employers or government officials. In a reformed system, individuals would own their health insurance, just as they own virtually every other type of

> insurance in virtually every other sector of the economy.
> - **Individuals choose their own health insurance coverage.** Individuals, not employers or government officials, would choose the health care coverage and level of coverage that they think best. In a normal market, the primacy of consumer choice is the rule, not the exception.
> - **Individuals have a wide range of coverage choices.** Suppliers of medical goods and services, including health plans, could freely enter and exit the health care market.
> - **Prices are transparent.** As in a normal market, individuals as consumers would actually know the prices of the health insurance plan or the medical goods and services that they are buying. This would help them to compare the value that they receive for their money.
> - **Individuals have the periodic opportunity to change health coverage.** In a consumer-driven health insurance market, individuals would have the ability to pick a new health plan on predictable terms. They would not be locked into past decisions and deprived of the opportunity to make future choices.

And if you're looking for a nice short podcast on consumer-driven health care, go right here.

If you want a book on this, you can get Regina Hertzlinger's book (interview here), although I read it, and I found it filled with too many case studies and stories and not enough policy analysis.

UPDATE:

More Paul Ryan: (H/T Hyscience)

And some Michele Bachmann: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

And the House votes to repeal Obamacare, with 3 Democrats joining the Republicans, and no Republicans joining the Democrats.

Related posts

- Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly
- How Obamacare reduces the supply of medical care
- Obamacare cancels development on 60 new hospitals
- How Nancy Pelosi plans to bankrupt private medical insurers
- Videos explaining what government-run health care is like in Canada
- Is government more efficient than the private sector?
- Obama's health care plan treats taxpayers like children
- Understand the right way to reform health care… with short podcasts!
- Marsha Blackburn explains how Tennessee's public option plan failed
- Bobby Jindal explains a dozen freedom-preserving ways to cut health care costs
- John Stossel vs Michael Moore in 20/20 health care documentary
- Study shows 83 million people will lose private insurance under Obamacare

State regulators ignored abortionist who killed born-alive infants with scissors

January 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story was sent to me by four different people (Wes, ECM, Mary and Roo). Each person sent me a different versions of the story.

Here's the one that Roo sent from ABC News.

Excerpt:

> A doctor who gave abortions to minorities, immigrants and poor women in a "house of horrors" clinic was charged with eight counts of murder in the deaths of a patient and seven babies who were born alive and then killed with scissors, prosecutors said Wednesday.
>
> Dr. Kermit Gosnell, 69, made millions of dollars over 30 years, performing as many illegal, late-term abortions as he could, prosecutors said. State regulators ignored complaints about him and failed to inspect his clinic since 1993, but no charges were warranted against them given time limits and existing law, District Attorney Seth Williams said. Nine of Gosnell's employees also were charged.
>
> Gosnell "induced labor, forced the live birth of viable babies in the sixth, seventh, eighth month of pregnancy and then killed those babies by cutting into the back of the neck with scissors and severing their spinal cord," Williams said.
>
> […]Bags and bottles holding aborted fetuses "were scattered throughout the building," Williams said. "There were jars, lining shelves, with severed feet that he kept for no medical purpose."
>
> […]Gosnell has been named in at least 46 malpractice suits, including one over the death of a 22-year-old mother who died of sepsis and a perforated uterus in 2000. Many others also involve perforated uteruses. Gosnell sometimes sewed up the injury without telling women their uteruses had been perforated, prosecutors said.
>
> Gosnell charged $325 for first-trimester abortions and $1,600 to $3,000 for abortions up to 30 weeks.

ECM sent me this one from CBS News.

Excerpt:

> The grand jury investigation revealed that, for over two decades, government health and licensing officials had received repeated reports about Gosnell's dangerous practices. However, no action was ever taken, even after the agencies learned that Mrs. Mongar had died during routine abortions under Gosnell's care (see related story).
>
> Dr. Gosnell, who has practiced in the West Philadelphia neighborhood for

> decades, is also the target of a federal grand jury investigation into illegally prescribing prescription drugs. Investigators say during a search of his home, they found $240,000 in cash.
>
> […]Gosnell is suspected of killing hundreds of living babies over the course of his 30-year practice. However, he is not charged because the records do not exist.
>
> DA Williams said Gosnell made approximately $1.8 million in one year alone performing the procedures.

Many people actually agree with Gosnell that babies who are born during abortions have no right to live.

Did you know that even some politicians agree with Gosnell?

Obama also likes to give speeches to Planned Parenthood, the largest provider of abortions in the United States.

Why does Planned Parenthood perform abortions?

Excerpt:

> [Planned Parenthood] took home $85 million in "excess of revenue over expenses" (a nifty way of saying profits) and had an operating budget of over $1 billion for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, according to its latest annual report. Included in that budget was $350 million in "government grants and contracts" (an equally nifty way of saying your tax dollars). An increase in the number of abortions performed helped fuel the profits.

Abortion is a very profitable business, and the pro-abortion politicians subsidize the abortion industry with taxpayer dollars, including dollars from pro-life taxpayers, in exchange for political contributions to their campaigns. Yes, the contributions go almost entirely to Democrats.

Relaated posts

- Analyzing four bad arguments in favor of abortion rights
- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

New study explores whether atheism is rooted in reason or emotion

January 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From First Things, based on research reported by CNN. (H/T Apologetics 315)

> A new set of studies in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* finds that atheists and agnostics report anger toward God either in the past or anger focused on a hypothetical image of what they imagine God must be like. Julie Exline, a psychologist at Case Western Reserve University and the lead author of this recent study, has examined other data on this subject with identical results. Exline explains that her interest was first piqued when an early study of anger toward God revealed a counterintuitive finding: Those who reported no belief in God reported more grudges toward him than believers.
>
> At first glance, this finding seemed to reflect an error. How could people be angry with God if they did not believe in God? Reanalyses of a second dataset revealed similar patterns: Those who endorsed their religious beliefs as "atheist/agnostic" or "none/unsure" reported more anger toward God than those who reported a religious affiliation.
>
> Exline notes that the findings raised questions of whether anger might actually affect belief in God's existence, an idea consistent with social science's previous clinical findings on "emotional atheism."
>
> Studies in traumatic events suggest a possible link between suffering, anger toward God, and doubts about God's existence. According to Cook and Wimberly (1983), 33% of parents who suffered the death of a child reported doubts about God in the first year of bereavement. In another study, 90% of mothers who had given birth to a profoundly retarded child voiced doubts about the existence of God (Childs, 1985). Our survey research with undergraduates has focused directly on the association between anger at God and self-reported drops in belief (Exline et al., 2004). In the wake of a negative life event, anger toward God predicted decreased belief in God's existence.
>
> The most striking finding was that when Exline looked only at subjects who reported a drop in religious belief, their faith was least likely to recover if anger toward God was the cause of their loss of belief. In other words, anger toward God may not only lead people to atheism but give them a reason to cling to their disbelief.

I'm having trouble understanding how someone can read the gospel, realize how God did not prevent Jesus from enduring suffering, and then expect God to be Santa Claus. I'm drawing a blank. And this is not to mention the responses to the intellectual problem of evil.

Basically, here are four of the major reasons why people leave Christianity, in my experience.

1. They want to do something immoral that is forbidden in Christianity. This type of person wants to do something immoral that is forbidden by Christianity, like pre-marital sex. They dump Christianity in order to feel better about seeking happiness in this life, apart from God and his moral duties.
2. They think that God's job is to make them happy by giving them everything they want no matter what they do. When God disappoints them by not giving them what they expect in order to be happy, they leave the faith and just pursue happiness without caring about God.
3. They want to be loved by people, not by God. This type of person thinks that Christianity is compatible with being liked and popular. When they try to articulate the gospel in public, they find that people don't like them as much, and they feel bad about offending people with exclusive truth claims that they cannot back up using logic and evidence. So, they water down Christianity to get along with atheists, liberal Christians and other religions. Finally, they jettison Christianity completely and just say whatever makes people like them.
4. They don't want to learn to defend their faith. This type of person is asked questions by skeptics that they cannot answer. Usually this happens when people go to university after growing up in the shelter of the Church. The questions and peer pressure make them feel stupid. Rather than investigate Christianity to see if it's true and to prepare to defend it in public, they dump it so they can be thought of as part of the "smart" crowd.

My advice: prepare for tragedies – save money and take no chances. Live smart.

More on what causes atheism here.

National Science Foundation proposes re-education program for weathercasters

January 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Take a look at this job posting at George Mason University, funded by the NSF (i.e. – the government, with your tax dollars). (H/T Watts Up With That via Todd)

Excerpt:

> The George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication invites applications for a full-time Postdoctoral Research Fellow to support an NSF-funded planning grant titled **Making the Global Local: Unusual Weather Events as Climate Change Education Opportunities.** The goal of this project is to establish a national network of climate and weather science organizations, and university research and teaching programs, to engage, train, and empower local broadcast meteorologists to educate and inform the American public about climate change. The project will integrate informal learning, mass communication, and experiential learning theories to develop and test new pedagogical approaches to informal science education through frequent mass media exposure, linked to realworld experience (i.e., the local weather). It will also adapt and test conflict resolution theory and practice to engage meteorologists who reject the scientific consensus and climate scientists in constructive dialogue.

The government is using your money to convince you that you need to give them more money and keep less of your own money to buy the stuff you want – like private schooling for your children or to have a stay-at-home mother raise the children. Government knows best! Pay up, sucka!

Government messing with the news media… it's Orwellian. But quite normal in the absence of evidence. What else can they appeal to when they don't have evidence? It's either propaganda or the gulag, right?

I must also note that this is the same university that sanctioned Caroline Crocker for dissenting from Darwinism. Global warming and Darwinism are two sides of the same coin.

Related posts

- NSF spends 2 million to create Darwin indoctrination lesson plans

Why do Democrats hate Sarah Palin?

January 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sarah Palin

This analysis from the Wall Street Journal nails it. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> For many liberal women, Palin threatens their sexual *identity,* which is bound up with their politics in a way that it is not for any other group (possibly excepting gays, though that is unrelated to today's topic).
>
> An important strand of contemporary liberalism is feminism. As a label, "feminist" is passé; outside the academic fever swamps, you will find few women below Social Security age who embrace it.
>
> That is because what used to be called feminism–the proposition that women deserve equality before the law and protection from discrimination–is almost universally accepted today. Politically speaking, a woman is the equal of a man. No woman in public life better symbolizes this than Sarah Palin–especially not Hillary Clinton, the left's favorite icon. No one can deny Mrs. Clinton's accomplishments, but neither can one escape crediting them in substantial part to her role as the wife of a powerful man.
>
> But there is more to feminism than political and legal equality. Men and women are intrinsically unequal in ways that are ultimately beyond the power of government to remediate. That is because nature is unfair. Sexual reproduction is far more demanding, both physically and temporally, for women than for men.

> Men simply do not face the sort of children-or-career conundrums that vex women in an era of workplace equality.
>
> Except for the small minority of women with no interest in having children, this is an inescapable problem, one that cannot be obviated by political means. Aspects of it can, however, be ameliorated by technology–most notably contraception, which at least gives women considerable control over the timing of reproduction.
>
> As a political matter, contraception is essentially uncontroversial today, which is to say that any suggestion that adult women be legally prevented from using birth control is outside the realm of serious debate. The same cannot be said of abortion, and that is at the root of Palinoia.
>
> To the extent that "feminism" remains controversial, it is because of the position it takes on abortion: not just that a woman should have the "right to choose," but that this is a matter over which reasonable people cannot disagree–that to favor any limitations on the right to abortion, or even to acknowledge that abortion is morally problematic, is to deny the basic dignity of women.
>
> To a woman who has internalized this point of view, Sarah Palin's opposition to abortion rights is a personal affront, and a deep one. It doesn't help that Palin lives by her beliefs. To the contrary, it intensifies the offense.
>
> It used to be a trope for liberal interviewers to try to unmask hypocrisy by asking antiabortion politicians–male ones, of course–what they would do if their single teen daughters got pregnant. It's a rude question, but Palin, whose 17-year-old daughter's pregnancy coincided with Mom's introduction to the nation, answered it in real life.

Let me explain what I think the problem is in plain English. Feminists want to blame their failures on the men. They have invested everything in the belief that the world is inhospitable to women. The only way for women to succeed according to feminism, is to whine and complain and be a victim, and to make yourself into a man and deny your femininity and kill your own offspring. Sarah Palin didn't do any of that. Yet she was very nearly Vice President. She doesn't hate men, and she doesn't kill babies. Her success is the counter-example that shows that all of feminism is just self-serving lies that feminists invent in order to blame men for their own failure to succeed, marry and have children. THAT is why they hate Sarah Palin. They hated Bush because he was a Christian, and they hate Palin because she is pro-male, pro-marriage, and pro-life.

And as you all know, I do not want Palin to be President in 2012. I want Michele Bachmann to President in 2012, who, as a homeschooling mother, is the stronger purer form of what Sarah Palin represents. She's 100% feminity wedded to 100% conservatism. She is a walking refutation of feminist griveance-mongering. You don't have to be a feminist in order to succeed as a woman. You don't have to hate men. You don't have to hate marriage. And you don't have to kill children. You can love men, love marriage, and love children, and you can still go straight to the top.

UPDATE: Robert McCain has more.

> Taranto is very close to something here, and I wonder if he doesn't push the argument to its logical conclusion because he is afraid that he would be denounced by hysterical women — yes, even Republican women, even some "conservative" women — if he spoke the blunt truth.
>
> One of the necessary consequences of the Modern Professional Feminist Career Woman Lifestyle is that it tends to limit women's procreative capacity. It isn't merely that feminism's embrace of the Culture of Death elevates abortion to sacramental status. Rather, it is that feminist notions of Progress require that women foresake (or at least postpone) the love-marriage-motherhood model of happiness in pursuit of careerist equality. Even if a woman does not actually go all-out in following the anti-phallocratic ideology — "Feminism is the theory; lesbianism is the practice," to quote Ti-Grace Atkinson — her pursuit of the career woman lifestyle inevitably restricts her reproductive opportunities.
>
> By the time she finishes college and grad school and establishes herself firmly *en route* to an upper-middle-class socioeconomic future, the the Modern Professional Feminist Career Woman is 30 or older. Even if she could meet Mister Right, she's not going to abandon her career — for she has been taught to consider life meaningless without a professional career — in favor of domesticity. Ergo, even if she marries and decides she can afford a baby, she'll have to hire someone to raise it for her while she returns to the job from which she derives her sense of purpose and identity.

He's one of the few bloggers who gets deep into these moral issues. All my Christian readers should bookmark his blog.

House Republicans set to unveil $2.5 TRILLION in spending cuts

January 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

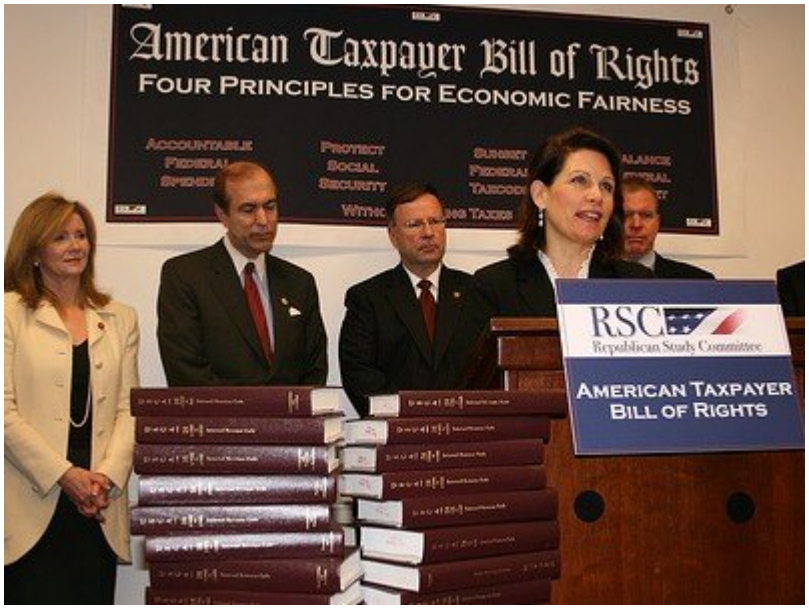

Republican Study Committee
(Michele Bachmann and Marsha Blackburn are members of the RSC)

From the Daily Caller. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> A number of the House GOP's leading conservative members on Thursday will announce legislation that would cut $2.5 trillion over 10 years, which will be by far the most ambitious and far-reaching proposal by the new majority to cut federal government spending.
>
> Jordan's bill, which will have a companion bill introduced in the Senate by Sen. Jim DeMint, South Carolina Republican, would impose deep and broad cuts across the federal government. It includes both budget-wide cuts on non-defense discretionary spending back to 2006 levels and proposes the elimination or drastic reduction of more than 50 government programs.
>
> Jordan's "Spending Reduction Act" would eliminate such things as the U.S. Agency for International Development and its $1.39 billion annual budget, the $445 million annual subsidy for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the $1.5 billion annual subsidy for Amtrak, $2.5 billion in high speed rail grants, the $150 million subsidy for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and it would cut in half to $7.5 billion the federal travel budget.
>
> But the program eliminations and reductions would account for only $330 billion of the $2.5 trillion in cuts. The bulk of the cuts would come from returning non-defense discretionary spending – which is currently $670 billion out of a $3.8 trillion budget for the 2011 fiscal year – to the 2006 level of $496.7 billion,

> through 2021.
>
> Going back to 2006 levels would reduce spending by $2.3 trillion over ten years. It is a significantly more drastic cut than the one proposed by House Republican leadership in the Pledge to America last fall, which proposed moving non-defense, non-mandatory spending for the current fiscal year back to 2008 levels, which was $522.3 billion. Jordan's proposal includes the recommendation from the Pledge for the current fiscal year, which ends in September.
>
> The proposal would cut the federal work force by 15 percent and freeze automatic pay raises for government employees for five years.

You'll remember that 2006 was the last year when the Republicans were in control of the House and Senate. Remember what life was like at the beginning of 2007? Unemployment was around 4% and the budget deficit was around 200 billion dollars. Then Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid came along and the spending started. Cutting spending can be a positive thing when you take money away from unions. And think of the jobs when companies realize that there will be an end to all this spending and they won't be on the hook for it. And children will have a standard of living that isn't worse than the ones that their parents had.

But now the Republican Study Committee wants to put a stop to all of that. The Republican Study Commitee is the conservative wing of the House Republican caucus and that's where all the good policies come from.

House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion

January 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Speaker John Boehner
From John Boehner's official government web site. (H/T Cubachi via Liberty Pundits)

Full text of John Boehner's speech:

> *"Our new majority has pledged to listen and focus on the will of the people. We've begun to carry out this commitment by cutting our own budget and repealing the job-destroying health care law.*
>
> *"Today we're here to talk about keeping another commitment to the people – and that is ensuring their tax dollars are never used to fund abortions.*
>
> *"A ban on taxpayer funding of abortion is the will of the people and ought to be the law of the land. But current law – particularly as enforced by this Administration – does not reflect the will of the people.*
>
> *"Last year, we listened to the people through our America Speaking Out project, and they spoke out on this issue – loudly and clearly. So we included it in our Pledge to America, and today we begin to make good on that commitment.*
>
> *"Congressman Chris Smith has introduced bipartisan legislation that codifies the Hyde Amendment and other similar policies by permanently applying a ban on taxpayer funding of abortion across all federal programs.*
>
> *"This common-sense legislation reflects the will of the people and deserves the support of the House. It is one of our highest legislative priorities. As such, I have directed that it receive the designation of H.R. 3. I appreciate Congressman Smith's steadfast leadership on this critical issue."*

And it's not just abortion providers like Planned Parenthood that get federal funding, either. It's the United Nations, too. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> By funneling tens of millions of dollars to organizations such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which support China's brutal One Child Policy, the United States and other Western countries are "accomplices" to "murder on a massive scale," said the Director of China Aid in an interview this week.
>
> […]In general, each family is permitted to have only one child. When a couple wants to have their first child, Fu explained, they are "required to get a pregnancy permission card – a yellow card before your wife can legally get pregnant." If a woman is pregnant without the permission card, she is arrested and forced to have an abortion.The "massive practice" of forced sterilization and abortion has a huge impact on China. Last year, said Fu, there was "a report of about 20 million babies, which were aborted … abortion being performed as late as nine months."
>
> […]Fu attests to the fact that a significant portion of the funding for abortions in China comes from international organizations, including The United Nations Population Fund.
>
> "The U.S.," said Fu, "provides funding and 40 million dollars goes to China to assist in carrying out this One Child Policy. So, unfortunately, the Western countries are accomplices to this policy."
>
> "It's really time for us to get past our apathy about it as an American people, and really start to take that seriously. These abuses with the One Child Policy and the factories are really going on in real life … These are actually really happening! My message is always to the American people: get over the apathy and do something. We have to hold our own government and the Chinese government accountable for these things," said Mason.

A lot of people talk about restricting abortion. They talk and talk and talk about it. And then when election day came around in 2008, some of them voted for the most pro-abortion President ever. Well, some real pro-lifers decided to fix that in 2010. And now Republican John Boehner has a mandate from the people to change the laws of this country to discourage the wholesale slaughter of innocent life. Less taxpayer funding for abortion means fewer abortions. It's a start. If the Republicans win the Presidency in 2012, maybe Boehner can finish it.

Republicans are pro-life

Mary also sent me this post from Scott Klusendorf on pro-life pastors and abortion and this post from Randy Alcorn on pastors and abortion.

UPDATE: Wes from Reason to Stand posted this video as well.

Here's an MP3 file of the speech.

Everyone on the left thinks that just because THEY don't care about the unborn then no one cares. But that's not true for conservatives. We really have thought this issue through, and we really do care.

UPDATE: From Canbuhay.

Martha Roby:

Ann Marie Buerkle:

Ann Marie Buerkle was a spokeswoman and then leader of local pro-life groups in New York and is now one of at least 15 pro-life congresswomen.

New study finds that alcoholism increases marital instability

January 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Look at this new study from CNN.

Excerpt:

> Alcohol dependency not only affects people who drink excessively, but also spouses, friends and family. Now a new study in the journal Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research finds that alcoholism has a strong connection to when people get married and whether those marriages are successful.
>
> "For young adults who are drinking, if their drinking continues to levels of problem use, it could impact their likelihood of marriage as well as likelihood of having a really lasting marriage," said study author Mary Waldron, assistant professor in human development at Indiana University. "What we found is yes, it's true that alcohol dependence is a strong predictor of separation and we've known that for quite a while, it was really the predictor of delayed marriage that was surprising to us."The study looked at 5,000 Australian twins, ages 28-92, all of whom reported a history of alcohol dependence sometime over their lifetime.
>
> The researchers found the association between alcoholism and getting married for the first time at a 23% lower likelihood for women. For men it was 36% lower only after age 29. For both sexes, the researchers concluded that the chance of separation was twice as likely and earlier. They also found that genetics played a role.
>
> "What we found by using both fraternal and identical twins is that genetic influences appear to contribute to the association … but the processes underlying the genetic effect, we really don't know yet and that will be a focus of future research," Waldron said.

The reason I am worried about this is that there seems to be so much drinking that goes on on university campuses. It's like the young people are really getting addicted to it, and there seems to be a lot of peer pressure on everyone to drink and drink and drink. I think alcohol is very interesting (I was recently visiting friends and got to try whiskey for the first time – it was horrible!) and it makes people feel at ease when you are having a good serious conversation. But I am not so sure about drinking it all the time. It's expensive, and it alters your moods. How can you be good at making sense when you drink too much? So I think in moderation it's OK, but not too much.

I think that reading articles like this are important to me. It's good to know WHY the Bible says things are right and wrong. If being drunk is "wrong" then why is it wrong? Why does God not want us to do this? With a little study and some good research, we can find the answers. And then when we talk to non-Christians about right and wrong, we can explain

the reasons for the moral positions we hold using scientific evidence. It’s a lot easier to talk about morality in public when you have solid evidence that doesn’t assume the Bible.

Friday night funny: Global warming, texting, jury duty

January 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Text to speech

Global Warming: (H/T Robb)

Here's the MP3 file.

Liberal Elites:

Here's the MP3 file.

I really need to make one of those one day…

Jury Duty

Cat summoned for jury duty. (H/T Mary)

Texting while walking

Here's another one:

Thank you so much to all of our regular readers and commenters!

Happy Friday!

Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann will respond to State of the Union address

January 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan - GOP Ideas Man

Here's the story from the Dallas Star-Telegram.

Excerpt:

> House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, a rising Republican star who has stirred controversy with his approach to budget-cutting, will give the GOP response Tuesday to President Barack Obama's State of the Union address.
>
> The choice is aimed at showcasing the commitment of Republicans, who took control of the House of Representatives this month, to deficit reduction.
>
> Ryan, 39, a seventh-term Wisconsin Republican, is known for his Roadmap for America's Future, a plan for reducing federal budget deficits that includes letting younger workers set aside Social Security tax payments for "personal retirement accounts."
>
> In addition, Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., a favorite of the Tea Party movement, will deliver a separate reaction to Obama's speech on behalf of the Tea Party Express, one of the movement's largest groups.
>
> The broadcast, after Obama's and Ryan's speeches, will be on live streaming video at www.TeaPartyExpress.org or at www.TeaPartyHD.com.
>
> Bachmann, who recently said she is considering seeking the Republican presidential nomination, was in Des Moines, Iowa, on Friday to be keynote speaker at a reception held by Iowans for Tax Relief, an influential anti-tax group.

> Bachmann also planned separate meetings with Iowa politicians, including Republican Gov. Terry Branstad and state House Speaker Kraig Paulsen, suggesting that she may be laying the groundwork for a caucus campaign.
>
> The Iowa caucuses, set for February 2012, launch the presidential nominating process.
>
> "It shows she wants to be a serious player in the national debate," Branstad spokesman Tim Albrecht said.

Here's the official announcement emphasizing private sector job creation. (H/T Hyscience)

Excerpt:

> In making the announcement, the GOP leaders noted that Chairman Ryan is a leading voice for fiscal discipline and common-sense solutions to cut spending and create jobs. Known for his thoughtful and detailed critiques of big-government policies, Ryan has helped put to rest the Democrats' argument that more government spending and higher taxes is the answer to most of our nation's ills. His commitment to free enterprise and limited government make him the right choice to outline a vision for how a smaller, less costly government will help create the right conditions for the creation of good, private sector jobs.
>
> "*Paul Ryan is uniquely qualified to address the state of our economy and the fiscal challenges that face our country*," said Speaker Boehner. "*We're broke, and decisive action is needed to help our economy get back to creating jobs and end the spending binge in Washington that threatens our children's future. I'm pleased that Paul will be outlining a common-sense vision for moving our country forward*."
>
> Leader McConnell said, "*Paul Ryan has spent the better part of the last two years explaining exactly why the Democrat agenda has been so bad for jobs and the economy, and why we need to ditch the government-driven approach in favor of creative, common-sense solutions that put the American people back in charge. Chairman Ryan's unique understanding of the fiscal problems we face, his command of policy, and his adherence to the principles of our nation's founding make him an excellent spokesman for the path that Americans want Washington to take*."
>
> Chairman Ryan said, "*Delivering an address to the nation is a unique opportunity, and I am grateful to my party's leaders for entrusting me with this responsibility. I am hopeful that the President will work with the new House Majority to cut spending, reform government, and restore the foundations for growth and job creation. More than rhetoric, we need results. I look forward to outlining a vision for a future that fulfills the uniquely American legacy of leaving the next generation with a stronger, more prosperous nation.*"

I don't know what to say… the Republican party is coming through for me in such an

amazing way. Everyone who I like is being prominently featured! And they really are trying to do something *different* for a change. I'm overwhelmed! The only other person I really wanted to hear from is Marco Rubio!

Related posts

- Paul Ryan explains why Republicans are doing what they promised to do
- What would happen if Paul Ryan headed the Budget committee?
- Paul Ryan discusses economics at the liberal Brookings Institute
- Paul Ryan explains taxes and spending to Chris Matthews
- Paul Ryan takes on Democrat Brad Sherman on the worsening economy
- Tragedy strikes! Paul Ryan is not going to run for President in 2012!
- Paul Ryan debates Robert Reich on Larry Kudlow show
- Paul Ryan debates on the relationship between tax rates and job creation
- Paul Ryan asks if America is becoming a European welfare state
- Sue Myrick interviews Paul Ryan about his Roadmap for America
- Fiscal and social conservatives unite in new free e-book "Indivisible"
- Paul Ryan talks about health care with Chris Matthews and Chris Wallace
- Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander
- Paul Ryan discusses Obamacare and the federal budget
- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan's plan for economic recovery
- Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama's 1.56 trillion budget deficit
- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama's record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan and Ann Coulter make the case against Obamacare
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism
- When all else failed, Republicans will try conservative ideas
- What was the context of Michele Bachmann's "armed and dangerous" comment?
- AT LAST: Michele Bachmann open to presidential run in 2012
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- Why is the left so angry with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin?
- Michele Bachmann on Fox News with Laura Ingraham
- Democrats kill Michele Bachmann's attempt to freeze federal salaries
- Michele Bachmann on the US taxpayer-funded bailout of Greece
- Michele Bachmann explains the Obama's Wall Street bailout bill
- Michele Bachmann promises to work to repeal Obamacare
- Video of Michele Bachmann defending unborn children
- Michele Bachmann's passionate and inspiring speech at CPAC 2010
- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs

- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama’s latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare’s rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

Does the church prepare people for the difficulty of evangelism?

January 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Battle-scarred means battle-ready

This post over at Reason to Stand is the kind of post that I wish I had written.

Excerpt:

> There is an old saying that "war is hell". That saying applies as much to ideological warfare as it does to physical warfare. Sure, the pain and consequences are often (though not necessarily) radically different, but the brutality is no less real.
>
> I am constantly amazed by other Christians who oooh and ahhh when I relay stories of past exploits where I've engaged people from various ideological backgrounds. They are usually enamored by such tailes and some even form a desire to join in such exploits themselves among the people they encounter on a daily basis.
>
> But for far too many, it ends there. I never see them later and hear their grand tales of past exploits. They never take the steps to become a warrior.
>
> Why is that?

And then he quotes a quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer which has a special meaning for me. I know that quote very well.

This post really struck at the core of my frustration with the church. Basically, the biggest problem with church is that it is all about having fun and having your emotions tickled. There is no part of church that suggests the idea that being an authentic Christian might require any work at all. And certainly nothing to make you think that being a Christian might involve any conflict – like opposing atheism in debates, or opposing abortion, or

even secularized public schools that teach evolution and sex education with taxpayer money.

I was recently listening to an episode of Unbelievable where an atheistic female politician was debating Os Guinness, who I consider to be a functional atheist. But forget about the debate. The main thing that was interesting was that the woman was quite a high ranking politician and she attended church because she enjoyed the beautiful building, the community of nice people dressed up, and especially the nice music and singing. But, her actual beliefs were atheistic.

I actually know a few women who are pro-abortion, pro-same-sex-marriage, pro-big-government, who also enjoy attending church for the singing, and such. And my point is that church, as Wes noted in his post, does nothing to tell people that there is anything more to Christianity than singing, pageantry and community. What matters is the show. In Catholic and Orthodox churches, the show is the liturgy. In Protestant churches, the show is the dancing and the singing and the talking about life having meaning and someone looking out for us who will give us goodies no matter what we do.

Do you know who gets left out of the church in this picture? People who actually think that Christianity is true, and who know how to talk about it, and how to live it out. It's disgusting. Read Wes' post and think about it. We need to be celebrating our *warriors*, not the pastors and especially not the worship leaders. The people who actually *talk about Christianity outside the church*. *That* should be the marker of authentic Christianity – not singing, and not talking about things from a pulpit in a sing-song voice.

Responding to an atheistic commenter on the moral argument

January 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Joey's original comment:

I am unconvinced by the argument that we can only have morality when there is a god, especially the christian god.

1. Moral principles have existed long before the christian or jewish god has 'declared' it in the bible. Look at the writings of Confucius for example.

2. As an atheist my sense of morality is based on empathy, compassion, psychology, science and logic. It is a human (and dare I say evolved) trait to want to empathise – and when I see suffering I want it stopped because it makes me feel bad. I look at science and psychology and see how we are all extremely similar to each other in our make up, and should therefore logically be treated the same by each other. And I look towards how I would want to be treated in such a situation as well – because I do not want to be defrauded, I would want to protect other people being defrauded because after all, why should I get preferential treatment if we are all equally human? There are so many basis for morality!

3. I personally find it a little odd that christians feel they are more moral because they can say that god tells them to be moral. Which would you rather prefer – someone to say to you "I love you because I do and you are amazing", or "I love you because god tells me to"? Who would you rather be friends with, someone who says "I am not going to kill you because I find it repulsive to the core of my being", or "I am not going to kill you because I believe god tells me not to, even though you deserve to die because of your sin"

4. That leads me to my fourth point. Morality which is solely based on god has a loophole – which is this: everything god says is wrong is wrong, unless god commands otherwise. I say this specifically because whilst as an atheist I can unashamedly say that I believe the invasion and conquest of another country and the slaughtering of all that nation's men, women and children is morally repulsive. Christians do not have that luxury, because their moral god commanded them to do exactly that in the bible and said it was ok. Or what about this morality: David and Bathsheba sins by committing adultery and murder. Rather than punishing them for it, god punishes the little baby of theirs by killing him. Or how the bible justifies slavery. Or how the bible commands women to obey their husband but not vice versa. Justice? I would not want to place my trust on that kind of morality.

Micah's response:

@Joey

"1. Moral principles have existed long before the christian or jewish god has 'declared' it in the bible. Look at the writings of Confucius for example."

(For the sake of this post, I'm going to be framing responses by way of the Moral

Argument)

The moral argument entails that it is God Himself that grounds morality, not the writings of the Bible. Taking into account even the writings of Confucius, those statements still need to be grounded by God Himself. He is the bar of morality by which we can measure such statements to be moral or virtuous or good. The argument does not even entail that we need to believe in God or that only the Bible has virtues in its text in all religious literature. The argument does not single out Christianity.

“It is a human (and dare I say evolved) trait to want to empathise”

To say that morality is a trait that you evolve means that morality is just something used to propagate the species. It’s not actually “good” in the end, just that specific interests or requirements are met in such a way as to preserve the species called “homo sapiens” and continue to pass on genes.

Beyond that, what if we rewound the clock and let evolution play out again? We may have had a different set of moral rules where, say, rape is virtuous.

Or try thinking of it this way: if aliens (who are personal and rational like ourselves) who evolved in some other star system came to Earth and started killing and raping people, would you try to appeal to your human morality? Why? These aliens have just evolved to have these morals, so you can’t say rape is wrong or planet take-over is wrong because you’d just be selfishly appealing to human morality (which again, would be for the sake of survival anyway). And to argue that we humans have the better morality than the aliens simply begs the question.

“and when I see suffering I want it stopped because it makes me feel bad.”

There are a lot of things that make us feel bad, but that isn’t an indicator of what is right and what is wrong. The soldier who nobly smothers a grenade with his body to save his comrades has that sense of dread and self-preservation about him, but to act against his feelings and his flight-or-fight responses, we can say, is a good moral sacrifice.

Or to put it another way, it makes me feel bad when my girlfriend cheated on me, therefore it seems to me clear that beating her would be the right course of action. Hey, she cheated, not me. She broke the relationship, not me. She made me feel bad!

“I look at science and psychology and see how we are all extremely similar to each other in our make up, and should therefore logically be treated the same by each other.”

I really don’t understand how it follows logically that since we’re similar, we should treat each other the same way. If you look at the business executives that sit comfortably in their lap of luxury with no worry of recourse, they don’t have to follow the golden rule. They use and abuse others and make shady deals and cut corners, all within reasonable bounds to preserve their company and their name, and live off their profits and not have to worry about the poor soul across the street that struggles to make ends meet for his family. To say that he ought to help others and not be selfish would again seriously beg the question as to what grounds morality.

In a cold, bleak universe where there is no God, and evolution reigns supreme, we’re no

different than a pack of flies. We're just a more complex collection of molecules with our brains wired for survival, self-preservation, and gene-propagation. I don't see any reason on the atheist view to live for others or to even live a virtuous life.

And on top of that, you have the problem of the fact that morality is abstract. There is no "morality-thing" that we attend to, it's an abstract rule or concept. Why then should we follow one set of abstract rules (i.e. – don't steal, be charitable) and not another set (i.e. – just make sure you don't get caught; don't help the weak; live for yourself)? If you say that we need to follow whatever our genes say, then what of conflicting matters such as "I shouldn't kill him" vs "I can easily get away with it and pin the blame on this other guy"? Which genes should we follow? The apparently selfish ones or the apparently virtuous ones?

"And I look towards how I would want to be treated in such a situation as well – because I do not want to be defrauded"

So morality basically comes down to mutual deceit. You don't kill me, and I don't kill you. That really doesn't explain a host of moral actions, moral situations, moral vices, immoral people, etc. Especially the heroic virtue of sacrifice.

And would your statement work in reverse as well? If I gave you $20 out of my own wallet because I knew you were jobless and needed a meal to eat for lunch, would I then have moral permission to demand that you need to pay me back? I mean, I gave something up, and to be FAIR, that other person should pay me back too. Besides, I could've used that $20 for a "better" purpose relating to MY self-preservation and MY survival (or my family's survival).

"I personally find it a little odd that christians feel they are more moral because they can say that god tells them to be moral."

No, we are not more moral, you completely misrepresent Christian teachings. None of us are moral. None. No one. We are not good enough to meet God's standards. We can only come to God as holy and righteous because people who place their faith in Christ are covered by Jesus' righteousness. His holiness is imputed to our account; a free gift.

"Which would you rather prefer – someone to say to you "I love you because I do and you are amazing", or "I love you because god tells me to"?"

If someone were to say the latter, then they wouldn't be following God's commands at all. Jesus said to love our neighbors as yourself, not "love your neighbors because I said so" This is such a gross misrepresentation and a false dichotomy of Christian virtue that a simple remedy of actually reading the New Testament would be a show stopper.

We Christians are called to seek those who are not in Christ because we have the urge to share the good news and help save those and have compassion because God had compassion for us, willing to not let any perish. God's forgiveness is open to EVERY SINGLE PERSON ON THE PLANET, and to refuse forgiveness pretty much means to refuse being saved. The phrase often goes, "God doesn't send people to Hell, people send themselves quite fine on their own"

Of course, if you want to insist on the position that God has given us some sort of, “love me or die” ultimatum, then you’re going to need to explain the biblical data where God selflessly gives His Son as the perfect sacrifice to cover all sins for all people, and that all we need to do on our part is to place our trust in Christ; no rituals required. You also would need to explain away the verses that say that God does not delight in the death of the wicked, or that He calls “judgment” His “strange work”. Or the verses where He pleads to Israel to turn back from their wicked ways and cries out, “Why will you die O Israel?”

If you only focus on the verses about God’s judgment and wrath (which are expressions of His perfect Justice) and block out the verses about His sacrifices, His patience, His love, and His urgings to turn back, His compassion, etc. then you are not being truthful to the whole data set, and so your position holds no water.

“everything god says is wrong is wrong, unless god commands otherwise.”

Again, you misrepresent the Christian position. God’s commandments are an expression of His morality and goodness, but His NATURE is the bar of justice and morality and goodness. Let us be clear on this, it is His nature, not His commands, that things are deemed right and wrong. This is not a “God said so, therefore, it’s right”. It’s a, “God is so, therefore, it is right”.

…And I’m not even going to get into the Old Testament because I could write 30+ pages on why you have a bad grasp on the culture of Israel and the Ancient Near East. I suppose I could copy and paste my thesis on “Does the Old Testament Sanction Slavery?”, but it’s roughly 10-11 pages, and this post is already long enough. Suffice to say here, at least in regards to slavery, no, slavery in the Bible and the Ancient Near East is NOTHING similar to the slavery that occurred in America because it didn’t involve forced labor, it didn’t involve outside field work for the most part, slaves/bond-servants had incredibly good health insurance, bond-servants were paid, God tells Israel to treat their servants with compassion and reminds them of their time as slaves in Egypt, slaves can rescind their contracts at any time, slaves can own property including land, slaves can choose to stay with their master if they wanted to when the contract expired, slaves could learn a trade and after their contract ended, their master was mandated to send them off with a monetary-gift, etc. Yeah, not looking like Colonial America at all.

My response:

1. Either moral principles are 1) one person’s opinions, 2) conventions of a group of people existing in a certain time and place, or 3) objective prescriptions of how humans ought to act for all times and places. Non-theistic systems of ethics are necessarily 1 or 2 – they are just individual or collection opinions that refer to nothing objectively. The universe is an accident on atheism, and there is no way we ought to be. So there is no morality on atheism. Just words that people either accept or reject.

2. What you just said there is that what you think people ought to do is based on your subjective feelings and opinions. You like apple pie and I like blueberry pie. You think I ought to like apple pie. But there is no objective truth on the matter – you just have

preferences, on atheism. You have opinions. But that is not morality, it is just personal tastes and preferences that you invented arbitrarily for yourself. That's not morality, that's personal preferences. And when an atheist understands the laws or values of a culture, he understands that they are arbitrary conventions that vary by time and place and not really rooted in any objective standard of how we ought to be.

3. Atheism has no objective moral standard because the universe, and humans, are ACCIDENTS, on atheism. There is no designer that prescribes behavior for humans on atheism. On theism, there is a designer who creates the universe and prescribes standards of behavior that are OUTSIDE opinions and preferences. You are talking about what you like and don't like, and I am talking about what is objectively right and wrong. What you like and don't like is based on your feelings, but on theism, right and wrong are based on the character of the person who creates the universe and is in a position to decide how free creatures ought to choose.

4. As an atheist, every opinion you have on what other people can do is AS WARRANTED as some other opinion of the opposite. The warrant for a belief on your view is in your feelings and maybe in the arbitrary customs of the people group where you find yourself in this time and place – which is no better or worse morality than any other time or place, but only different. You think that slavery is right or wrong based on opinions. You think that genocide is right or wrong based on opinions. You think that rape is right or wrong based on opinions. You think that murder is right or wrong based on opinions. And your opinion on moral questions is AS WARRANTED, on atheism, as the opposite opinion – because there is no objective standard, only your personal opinions and the fashions of your culture in this time and place. There is nothing more to morality on YOUR view than feelings and opinions and conventions. If you think that murder is wrong as an atheist, then what you mean is that your opinion is that murder is wrong, and that someone else who thinks that murder is right is AS WARRANTED IN FORMING THAT VIEW AS YOU ARE IN FORMING YOURS. Both opinions are rooted in the same ontological ground – FEELINGS.

Let me show you what atheists actually think about morality:

> The idea of political or legal obligation is clear enough… Similarly, the idea of an obligation higher than this, referred to as moral obligation, is clear enough, provided reference to some lawgiver higher…than those of the state is understood. In other words, our moral obligations can…be understood as those that are imposed by God…. But what if this higher-than-human lawgiver is no longer taken into account? Does the concept of moral obligation…still make sense? …The concept of moral obligation [is] unintelligible apart from the idea of God. The words remain but their meaning is gone. (Richard Taylor, Ethics, Faith, and Reason (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985), p. 83-84)
>
> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no

> evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Source: Richard Dawkins)
>
> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory. (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

Atheism is the complete ANTI-MORALITY point of view.

If you don't have a rational basis for acting morally, then you will only do it when you want to feel happy, and avoid feeling unhappy. You'll do it if you feel like it, if people are watching, etc. But you won't do the right thing if it gets in the way of your selfishness.

For a really good debate on whether morality is real on Christianity and/or atheism, listen to this debate with Glenn Peoples against Cambridge philosopher Arif Ahmed.

If you would like to hear another good debate on whether Christianity and/or atheism can ground some of these requirements, then click here. This one features Sean McDowell.

And here's a debate that I did with one of our best atheist commenters, Moo.

More about atheistic concepts of morality

- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Science czar advocated forced abortions, mass sterilizations and totalitarianism
- Science czar says trees should be able to sue and born babies are not human beings
- Psychology Today features atheists who think that they are moral
- Does prominent atheist Michael Ruse think that morality is real or illusory?
- Is there such a thing as genuine libertarian free will if naturalism is true?
- How do leading atheists understand morality on atheism?
- Is prescriptive morality rationally grounded on atheism?
- Can atheists be moral? (A series explaining the grounding of morality)

Some debates on God and morality

- From the Unbelievable radio show: Glenn Peoples vs Arif Ahmed on the moral argument
- Sean McDowell debates James Corbett on whether morality is grounded by atheism
- From Christianity Today, a written debate: Douglas Wilson vs. Christopher Hitchens
- From the University of Western Ontario, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs. Kai Nielsen
- From Schenectady College, a transcript of a public debate: William Lane Craig vs

Richard Taylor
- From Franklin & Marshall College, William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz (audio, video1, video2, video3, video4, video5, video6, video7)
- From the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, William Lane Craig vs. Louise Antony (part1, part2)
- A debate from the Unbelievable radio show between a Christian pastor and a lay atheist
- Transcript of debate between Greg Koukl and Skeptic Magazine editor Michael Shermer

Saturday night music: King’s Bounty – The Legend

January 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These are all authored by Lind Erebros, from the PC Game *King’s Bounty: The Legend*.

The Legend

The Knight

Duel of the Winds

Home Lands

In the Heart of Battle

To The Horizon

Glory Ride (my favorite)

Under the Shadow of the Oak

Happy Saturday!

Is there a smooth pathway from micro-evolution to macro-evolution?

January 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Luke Nix. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

> Macroevolutionary changes **are** a lot of microevolutionary changes, but they are in a specific series that follow a specific pathway. The missing premise in this argument is that the pathway from ancestor to claimed offspring (many generations down the road) is clear of obstacles.
>
> In his book, "The Edge of Evolution" Michael Behe shows that scientists have observed such an obstacle in the lab. The obstacle was **not** time, it is in the genetic pathway that must be traversed if macroevolutionary changes are to take place in reality. Since an obstacle has been observed, we now have a false premise in the argument. Since there is a false premise, the argument fails. There **is** a difference between micro- and macro-evolutionary changes. A lot of microevolutionary changes **are necessary** for macroevolution, but they **are not sufficient**. The other sufficient condition (a clear genetic pathway) still has yet to be met. Since both sufficient conditions for macroevolution have not been met, it **has not** been demonstrated. And since changes over time **has** been demonstrated, there is a need to distinguish between the two. To prevent confusion about what we know to be true and what we don't, this distinction **must** be made.
>
> There is only one way that this can be overcome by the naturalist: find a pathway that would be clear by default in nature. Notice that I have added one more piece to the missing premise above: "…clear by default in nature". I have to add that last qualification because as scientists are looking for a way to overcome this obstacle, they are introducing their own intelligence- fine-tuning the process, then "allowing nature to take its course". Their conclusion of naturalistic macroevolution will depend on a premise that is founded on intelligence. That would undermine the **whole** argument for naturalistic (macro)evolution.

This is one of the ways to show that evolution is true – by showing a pathway to macro-evolutionary change in the lab. If people expect me to believe in the grandiose claims of fully naturalistic evolution through a stepwise process, then why can't I see the pathway myself? Why do I have to take it on faith?

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life

- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

Abortion is supported by Darwinists, feminists and environmentalists

January 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Supporters of abortionists like Kermit Grosnell

While the Kermit Gosnell story is still being ignored by the mainstream media, I though I would investigate the groups who promote abortion.

The support for abortion comes entirely from the secular left, especially from the Darwinists, the feminists and the global warming alarmists. Let's take a look at each of them.

Atheists in the academy

Here's a good representative of Darwinism, biology professor P.Z. Meyers. (H/T Robert Stacy McCain)

Excerpt:

> "I've scooped brains out of buckets, I've counted dendrites in slices cut from the brains of dead babies. You want to make me back down by trying to inspire revulsion with dead baby pictures? I look at them unflinchingly and see meat. And meat does not frighten me."

Yes, that's what Kermit Grosnell thinks, too.

And here's more of Myers' views on abortion:

> P.Z. Myers on a faux online abortion poll:
>
> > "I'm about as pro-choice as you can get…"
>
> Unsurprisingly, Myers is "pro-choice". But Myers' advocacy of "choice" goes further:
>
> > "…I'm even willing to say that I'm pro-abortion…"
>
> "Pro-abortion"? Even committed pro-abortion zealots don't generally endorse abortion explicitly, except to assert the right to 'choice,' as if one were choosing

> a salad dressing rather than deciding to take a human life.
>
> Myers:

> "[I] would like to encourage more people to abort…"

Meyers is considered to be one of the more rabid atheistic evangelists operating today. But there are tons of virulent atheists operating on the taxpayer's dime in the university.

What about Peter Singer at Princeton University?

> The denial of basic human rights by the pro-abortion population control thugs is expanding. My colleague Wesley Smith at Secondhand Smoke quotes Peter Singer, a utilitarian atheist-Darwinist ethicist at Princeton, who has denied that young children meet the standards for personhood and has stated that many intelligent animals ought to have more rights than young children.
>
> Singer:
>
> > "When the death of a disabled infant will lead to the birth of another infant with better prospects of a happy life, the total amount of happiness will be greater if the disabled infant is killed. The loss of the happy life for the first infant is outweighed by the gain of a happier life for the second. Therefore, if the killing of the hemophiliac infant has no adverse effect on others it would . . . be right to kill him."
>
> More Singer:

> "Maybe the law has to have clear bright lines and has to take birth as the right time, although maybe it should make some exceptions in the cases of severe disability where parents think that it is better for the child and better for the family that the child does not live…The position that allows abortion also allows infanticide under some circumstances…**If we accept abortion, we do need to rethink some of those more fundamental attitudes about human life**."[emphasis mine]

This is where the ideas of Kermit Gosnell are taught to students – in the left-wing universities. Singer and Meyers are committed atheists, committed Darwinists and radically pro-abortion. Atheism has killed over 100 million people in the last 100 years. Atheism is the repudiation of objective morality. When you repudiate objective morality, you get mass murder. Sometimes through abortion, sometimes through DDT bans, sometimes through revolutions and wars, and sometimes in the Gulag. These are things that are natural on atheism – survival of the fittest. Kill the weak. That's their view. And when people like Grosnell go off to college, that's what they learn.

Feminists in government

First, it's important to understand that third-wave feminism, (hereafter "feminism") is one of the movements that brought about abortion.

Excerpt:

> A growing movement in America, spearheaded by Sarah Palin, is pro-life feminism, This attempts to decouple feminism from abortion rights, arguing that you can believe in a woman's right to be empowered without believing in her right to abort. Its proponents report a groundswell of support among young women looking to reinvent their mothers' ideology.
>
> But you cannot separate women's rights from their right to fertility control. The single biggest factor in women's liberation was our newly found ability to impose our will on our biology.
>
> […]As ever, when an issue we thought was black and white becomes more nuanced, the answer lies in choosing the lesser evil. The nearly 200,000 aborted babies in the UK each year are the lesser evil, no matter how you define life, or death, for that matter. If you are willing to die for a cause, you must be prepared to kill for it, too.

Actually, first-wave feminism, which I agree with, WAS pro-life. But today, what people mean by feminism is third-wave feminism, and third-wave feminism requires abortion on demand through all nine months of pregnancy.

Which political party supports that third-wave feminist view?

Obama himself talked about abortion and feminism in his recent speech on the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> "Today marks the 38th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that protects women's health and reproductive freedom, and affirms a fundamental principle: that government should not intrude on private family matters. I am committed to protecting this constitutional right. I also remain committed to policies, initiatives, and programs that help prevent unintended pregnancies, support pregnant women and mothers, encourage healthy relationships, and promote adoption," the president said in a statement. "And on this anniversary, I hope that we will recommit ourselves more broadly to ensuring that our daughters have the same rights, the same freedoms, and the same opportunities as our sons to fulfill their dreams."

And remember this speech?

> "Look, I got two daughters — 9 years old and 6 years old," he said. "I am going to teach them first about values and morals, but if they make a mistake, *I don't want them punished with a baby*. . . ."

That's feminism – the official view of the Democrat party.

Philadelphia, where Kermit Grosnell practiced, is DOMINATED by Democrats at all levels of government. It's very similar to Chicago in that respect. And the state had a Democrat

governor for the longest time as well.

Michelle Malkin explains:

> Ask yourself why you are not hearing about which root causes and whose rhetoric are to blame for this four-decades-long massacre — just the tip of a blood-soaked iceberg defended by the predators of Planned Parenthood. You know the answer: If it doesn't help the Left criminalize conservatism, it's not worth discussing.
>
> From the conclusion of the grand jury report: "It is not our job to say who should be fired or demoted. We believe, however, that anyone responsible for permitting Gosnell to operate as he did should face strong disciplinary action up to and including termination. This includes not only the people who failed to do the inspecting, the prosecuting, and the protecting, but also **those at the top** who obviously tolerated, or even encouraged, the inaction. The Department of State literally licensed Gosnell's criminally dangerous behavior. DOH gave its stamp of approval to his facility. These agencies do not deserve the public's trust. The fate of Karnamaya Mongar and countless babies with severed spinal cords is proof that people at those departments were not doing their jobs. Those charged with protecting the public must do better."

And she has also written about how Obama's science czar is a proponent of eugenics and coerced abortion. This man was appointed by Barack Obama. This is the Democrat view – they LOVE abortion. And some of them even love *infanticide*.

Obama himself voted twice against the Born Alive Infant Protection Act.

Obama also likes to give speeches to Planned Parenthood, the largest provider of abortions in the United States.

Why does Planned Parenthood perform abortions?

Excerpt:

> [Planned Parenthood] took home $85 million in "excess of revenue over expenses" (a nifty way of saying profits) and had an operating budget of over $1 billion for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, according to its latest annual report. Included in that budget was $350 million in "government grants and contracts" (an equally nifty way of saying your tax dollars). An increase in the number of abortions performed helped fuel the profits.

Abortion is a very profitable business, and the pro-abortion politicians subsidize the abortion industry with taxpayer dollars, including dollars from pro-life taxpayers, in exchange for political contributions to their campaigns. Yes, the contributions go almost entirely to Democrats.

Global warming alarmists

Here's an article that explains what global warmists think about people having babies.

Excerpt:

> Couples who have more than two children are being “irresponsible” by creating an unbearable burden on the environment, the British government’s green adviser warned.
>
> Jonathon Porritt, who chairs the government’s Sustainable Development Commission, says curbing population growth through contraception and abortion must be at the heart of policies to fight global warming.
>
> He says political leaders and green campaigners should stop dodging the issue of environmental harm caused by an expanding population.
>
> A report by the commission, to be published next month, will say that governments must reduce population growth through better family planning.
>
> “I am unapologetic about asking people to connect up their own responsibility for their total environmental footprint and how they decide to procreate and how many children they think are appropriate,” Porritt said.

Here’s an article from Michelle Malkin discussing Obama’s science czar John Holdren, a champion of global warming alarmism.

Excerpt:

> Refresher on Holdren’s eco-zealous views:
>
> *• Women could be forced to abort their pregnancies, whether they wanted to or not;*
>
> *• The population at large could be sterilized by infertility drugs intentionally put into the nation’s drinking water or in food;*
>
> *• Single mothers and teen mothers should have their babies seized from them against their will and given away to other couples to raise;*
>
> *• People who “contribute to social deterioration” (i.e. undesirables) “can be required by law to exercise reproductive responsibility” — in other words, be compelled to have abortions or be sterilized.*
>
> *• A transnational “Planetary Regime” should assume control of the global economy and also dictate the most intimate details of Americans’ lives — using an armed international police force.*

Democrats what to use government to promote abortion in order to stop global warming.

What about Republicans?

Meanwhile, the Republicans introduced a bill to stop all federal funding of abortions.

What is the unborn?

January 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video may help you to see what is really going on in there.

Chris S. sent me the video.

Woman meets stranger who rescued her during ice storm

January 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wes sent me this story of a heroic rescue.

Full text:

> A woman saved by a stranger gets her wish, to say thank you to her weather hero in person.
>
> Greta Nelson's car slid off the road and into a pond during last week's ice storm. Less than 24 hours later, CBS Atlanta helped reunite the Nelson with the man who saved her. Nelson waited eagerly to meet the man who she says saved her life.
>
> Thursday night she met Robinson's entire family."That's my saving angel. Thank you so much, thank you. Now I remember, I remember the face," said Nelson when she saw Joe Robinson.
>
> Until the moment they saw each other again, Nelson only knew him as Joe, the man who stopped during last week's ice storm when her car slid off the road and into a pond. That night, Robinson had just slid on the same icy patch when he looked in his rear view mirror."I saw her just whip off the road and over this bank and sort of just disappeared," said Robinson."All of a sudden I heard the splash and I thought, 'I'm in water? Oh God, I'm in water,'" said Nelson."I was kind of just going through the scenario of what I have to do. Do I have to get all the way in the water?" said Robinson."All of a sudden I heard him knocking on the back of the car," said Nelson.
>
> Nelson was on her way home from work and Robinson was on his way to work when they say the meeting "the heavens set up" happened. "He sent the right person. God sent the right person. Just the fact that he is the kind of person he is, is why my life was saved," said Nelson. Robinson has two new nicknames, hero and angel."I don't think I'm either one," said Robinson.Robinson said he's

> thankful he was able to help Nelson.“That’s the way I feel about it. I’m glad I could help her and I’m glad she’s safe,” said Robinson.

I think it goes without saying that we want to have more men like this, and to hold out men like this as examples for younger men to follow. How do we do that?

And we really need to make a big deal of men like this instead of celebrating sports figures and Hollywood celebrities and people who read teleprompters. This is a REAL man. REAL men have specific roles that they are meant to fill. REAL men are meant to be providers (work hard, keep what you earn, provide for your family and charities), protectors (be armed, kill terrorists, deter criminals, defeat lies with reason and evidence), and moral/spiritual leaders (have authority to teach about morality and religion in the home, do not be subverted by the school system, demonstrate devotion and love for women and children). We need to be encouraging and choosing real men who can do these things.

We all have to think about the messages that we are sending young men about what we want them to be. We have to be careful not to discourage good men from their aggressiveness and protectiveness. And we have to be careful not to tempt them down towards selfishness and sexuality instead of upward towards chastity and chivalry. If we want good men, we may have to think about what is best for men instead of thinking about ideologies and -isms. If we want men to be providers, we have to educate them to be providers and encourage them to work hard and to take responsibility by letting them keep what they earn. And we need to encourage women to choose GOOD men – and teach them why they should choose good men – and what they are choosing good men to do. Women need to understand what society and family requires from men, and how to prefer men who demonstrate skill at those responsibilities.

Women aren’t going to get good men by taxing them, disarming them, and then offering them sex without any expectation of having them first demonstrate that they can be committed protectors and providers.

Book review of Stephen Hawking's "The Grand Design" by Edgar Andrews

January 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

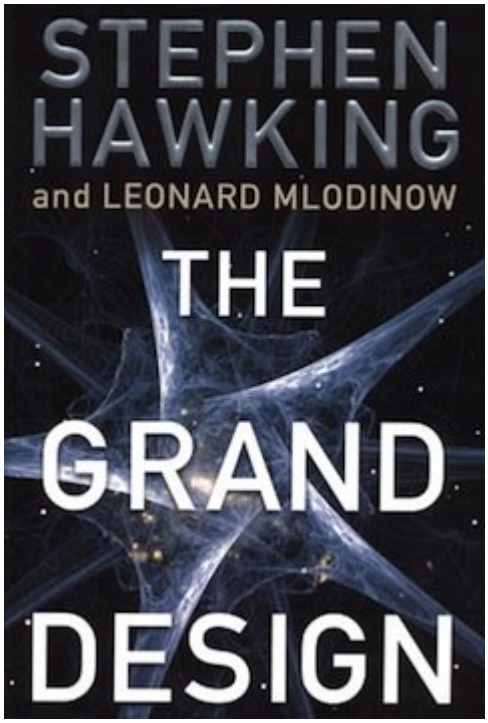

First, who is Edgar Andrews?

> Professor Edgar H. Andrews (BSc, PhD, DSc, FInstP, FIMMM, CEng, CPhys.) is Emeritus Professor of Materials at the University of London and an international expert on the science of large molecules. In 1967 he set up the Department of Materials at Queen Mary College, University of London, and served both as its Head and later as Dean of Engineering. He has published well over 100 scientific research papers and books, together with two Bible Commentaries and various works on science and religion and on theology. His book **From Nothing to Nature** has been translated into ten languages.
>
> Edgar Andrews was an international consultant to the Dow Chemical Company (USA) for over thirty years and to the 3M Company (USA) for twenty years. He was a non-executive director of Denbyware PLC throughout the 1970s and for five years a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of Neste Oy, the national oil company of Finland.

And now an excerpt from the book review: (H/T Apologetics 315)

> Hawking and Mlodinow declare: 'According to M-theory, ours is not the only universe. Instead, M-theory predicts that a great many universes were created out of nothing. Their creation does not require the intervention of some supernatural being or god. Rather, these multiple universes arise naturally from physical law. They are a prediction of science' (p.9).

> So what is this magical M-theory? The authors are rather coy about it. 'M-theory', they say, 'Is not a theory in the usual sense. It is a whole family of different theories, each of which is a good description of observations only in some range of physical situations' (p.8). Theoretical physicist Lee Smolin is more explicit: '… we still do not know what M-theory is, or whether there is any theory deserving of the name' (*The trouble with physics*, Allen Lane, 2007, p.146).
>
> The fact is that M-theory is an untestable mathematical construction which many scientists believe has no bearing on physical reality. But that doesn't deter our authors because they don't believe in 'objective reality' anyway. What we think is 'real', they say, is simply a model assembled in our brains from raw data input by our senses. But, confusingly, the authors then claim that the best models are those that reflect the way things really do happen in the real world — appealing to the very objective reality they say does not exist! Confused? Me too.
>
> But it gets worse. They claim that M-theory (whatever it might be) predicts not one universe but a multiverse — a vast collection of universes which cannot be observed or known to us in any way. On their own criterion, this makes M-theory a very bad model indeed. So it's hardly a useful replacement for God.

Here's a better book to read if you want to understand how belief in God relates to *experimental* science.

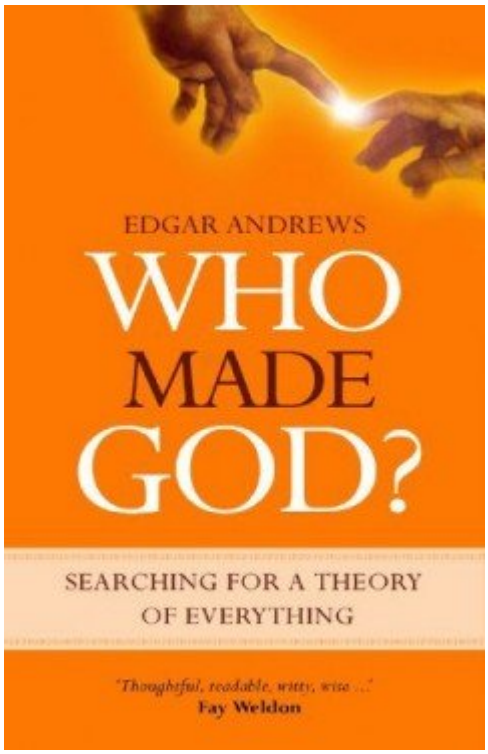

My Dad just finished reading his book "Who Made God?" and called me up to tell me how much he liked the book. My Dad is not a scientist, yet he read the whole thing and learned a lot about science. This is the book for people who haven't read a thing about science and religion. It's easy to understand because he explains the same thing over and other giving more and more detail. Even a child can understand the first explanation, and then he keeps layering on details until he gets up to the state-of-the-art.

Remember Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 picked this book as his favorite of 2010. You can't go wrong!

My Dad is now reading my copy of "Is God Just a Human Invention?" by Jonathan Morrow and Sean McDowell. I'm working on "Is God a Moral Monster?" by Paul Copan. I like books where difficult questions are asked and then careful answers are given. Then when people ask me the same questions, I can answer them using what I've learned – and often phrase the question even more clearly and forcefully than they did when they asked me.

Rachel Maddow doesn't understand modern military weapon systems

January 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rachel Maddow doesn't think that you can shoot down incoming missiles with missiles. I am NOT KIDDING.

Watch this if you like: (warning – has really vulgar language, because they are liberals)

Or read the transcript: (H/T Newsbusters)

> STEVE MOORE, WALL STREET JOURNAL: The other tragedy, David, of what's happened in the last 20 years is the reason Reykjavik fell apart was because Reagan didn't want to give up SDI or Star Wars. And here we are, you know, what 20 years later and we still don't have a missile defense system in this country.
>
> DAVID STOCKMAN: We shouldn't.
>
> RACHEL MADDOW, MSNBC: They've never worked.
>
> MOORE: I don't want to get blown up.
>
> MADDOW: You know what? Here's the country, here's the kind of thing you put over like a cake to protect the cake from flies. Missiles don't work that way. That's the whole idea of SDI. We'll protect ourselves by shooting missiles at other missiles. It's never worked in a test. We spent billions on it.
>
> MOORE: It's worked.
>
> MADDOW: And anybody who understands this knows it can never work.
>
> MOORE: If you don't think it works, then why did the Russians not want us to do it?
>
> MADDOW: The Russians were very happy to sign this thing.
>
> MOORE: No they weren't. They didn't want us to do SDI because they knew they didn't want us to blow up their missiles.
>
> MADDOW: You know what? If you think you can shoot the bullet with the other bullet, you can have an awesome life in Annie Oakley's side show, but you should not be in charge of billions of dollars of the defense budget. It's such a hysterical fantasy. I love it.

Newsbusters writes:

> It appears Maddow must have been out of the country during Desert Storm when Patriot missiles were used to take out Iraqi Scud missiles aimed at Israel and Saudi Arabia. Although their success rate was a great source of debate at the time (see the July 1996 Center for Defense Information study), no one disputes that some Scuds were indeed shot out of the air.
>
> More importantly, at least twelve countries are currently using Patriot technology

> as part of their missile defense programs.

Even Japan has missile defense technology:

And India can do it, too.

You can shoot down incoming ballistic missiles from mobile launchers, fixed launchers and naval launchers. In fact, even fighters can intercept incoming ballistic missiles.

In military simulations, I've scrambled my F-14 Tomcat CAP to intercept vampires fired at my carrier battle group. (My CAP usually consists of 1 E-2C Hawkeye and 4 F-14D Tomcats because I really like the range on the AIM-54C Phoenix AAM).

Ships will regularly shoot down incoming SSMs. In fact, that is the whole point of the AEGIS missile defense system that is deployed on CG Ticonderoga and DDG Arleigh Burke vessels.

IN FACT, in simulations I have actually shot down vampires using this Phalanx close-in weapon system made by Raytheon. That thing is just a big *machine gun* used for point defense if all other missile defense systems fail.

Should we really have Democrats like Rachel Maddow in charge of national defense?

UPDATE: Here are a couple more examples I found:

- Maddow wrong on Ronald Reagan
- Maddow wrong on Herbert Hoover

Related posts

- U.S. Army unveils revolutionary XM25 rifle in Afghanistan
- U.S. Navy sets world record with new electromagnetic rail gun

Frank Turek on the criterion of embarrassment

January 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video. (H/T Chris S.)

The criterion of embarrassment is just one of the historical criteria used to select the parts of a piece of ancient literature that is likely to be historical. Other things in the source may have happened, but we can't know them as history. If significant parts of a text are historical, it is possible to accept it as historical until there are specific reasons to say that some part of it is NOT historical.

Here is William Lane Craig's list of criteria for a saying or event to be historical:

1. Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
2. Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
3. Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
4. Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
5. Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
6. Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.

The criteria is the same for liberals and conservatives although some weight one criteria more than others. E.g. – moderate liberal E.P. Sanders likes embarrassment and multiple attestation, liberals John Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg like multiple attestation and early attestation, moderate Dale Allison likes embarrassment and dissimilarity, conservative N.T. Wright likes dissimilarity. Craig likes all of them and uses them all.

If you want to see these criteria used in a debate, watch this debate between William Lane Craig and James Crossley.

This is the best debate on the historical Jesus that I have ever seen.

If someone is asking you whether they should accept the Bible in all by making a faith commitment, then you tell them about the historical criteria, and you show them a debate. Show them a list of sayings or events that are considered to be indisputable. (That list is by the naturalist E. P. Sanders). And show them a fact that even William Lane Craig hesitates to defend. That way, you are not asking them to swallow a camel of inerrancy before they can read the Bible. Give them the criteria and show them how to use it. Talk about the dating of the sources. Be a scholar. Let them read the text as an interested skeptic.

Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception

January 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about pro-life Republicans

This story is from The Hill. (H/T Special Report with Bret Baier)

Full text:

> House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) vowed Monday to leverage the "biggest and the most pro-life freshman class in memory" to institute a "permanent government-wide prohibition on taxpayer funding of abortion."
>
> Cantor told the tens of thousands of anti-abortion protesters in town for the annual March for Life event that the legislation faces "an uphill battle in the Senate and in the White House," but that "the people's House will stand unapologetically for life."
>
> "Now the tide has turned," Cantor said. "Thanks to your support last November, there's a new majority in town."
>
> **About a dozen lawmakers addressed the crowd for the annual protest that marks the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* decision on abortion. Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.), the co-chairman of the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, was the first to speak. He vowed to press forward with his bill that establishes a permanent, government-wide prohibition on federal subsidies for abortion and for healthcare**

> **plans that cover abortion.**
>
> "We need your help in persuading the abortion president, who put abortion in ObamaCare — not withstanding a flawed executive order — to get this legislation passed," Smith said.

That's the House Majority Leader saying that. This is happening NOW.

And not just the House, but the Senate too! (Normally the Senate is more liberal than the House)

> **Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) said he'd introduce legislation Tuesday that establishes in law that human life begins at conception. Wicker argues that the Supreme Court did not tie the hands of Congress in its *Roe vs. Wade* decision, because its decision left unresolved the question of when life begins and explicitly acknowledged that if "personhood is established, the appellant's case, of course, collapses, for the fetus' right to life is then guaranteed specifically by the [14th] Amendment."**
>
> **The bill currently has five co-sponsors — Republican Sens. Richard Burr (N.C.), Mike Enzi (Wyo.), Jerry Moran (Kan.), Rand Paul (Ky.) and Roy Blunt (Mo.) — with more expected to join after the bill is formally introduced. Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) introduced companion legislation in the House last week.**
>
> "We're here today to say we're not going to abandon the fight [against abortion]," Wicker said. "Sometimes it's defensive in nature, and heavens knows we've had a lot to defend against in the last two or three years. … Tomorrow we take an offensive, and I like that a lot better."

The neat thing about Eric Cantor is that he is JEWISH. It is so good to have Jewish pro-lifers in positions of leadership!

More pro-life Republicans

John Boehner: (Speaker of the House!)

James Langford:

Martha Roby:

Ann Marie Buerkle:

I keep telling you guys – vote Republican. Now you know *why* I keep telling you to vote Republican.

There are SERIOUS social conservatives in the Republican party. They are NOT just FISCAL conservatives, awesome as that may be. And NOT just FOREIGN POLICY hawks, although that is undoubtedly awesome. There are deep social conservatives in the Republican party who might even be to the right on Scott Klusendorf on abortion, and to the right of Jennifer Roback Morse on marriage. I am not kidding.

These new Republicans are not casual about social conservatism, and not even the libertarian Tea Party ones like Rand Paul. And there are SO MANY of them that JUST GOT

elected in the November elections. That’s why that they can do things like this. They more of them we elect, the more we will see bills like this.

Related posts

- House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion
- House Republicans set to unveil $2.5 TRILLION in spending cuts
- Are the new Tea Party Republicans any better than the old liberal ones?
- Democrats plan to block Republicans from banning earmarks

All about Congressman Paul Ryan and Congresswoman Michele Bachmann

January 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan

About Paul Ryan:

Conservative Credentials:

Republican Congressman **Paul Davis Ryan** has represented Wisconsin's first House district since 1999, and in his sixth term he began to emerge as the new face of the Republican Party. Despite the heavily Democratic demographic of his home district, Ryan ran as a conservative in 1998 and won, beating the Democratic favorite by 15 percentage points. Before running for Congress, Ryan worked for several conservatives, including Sen. Sam Brownback and former housing secretary Jack Kemp. In 2009, Ryan offered conservative alternatives to both the 2010 Democratic Budget and Obama's health care reform plan.

Early Life:

Paul Ryan was born Jan. 29, 1970 in Janesville, Rock County, Wisc., the youngest of Paul Sr. and Betty Ryan's four children. He was raised Catholic. Sharing the same first name as his father, Ryan's childhood nickname was "P.D." Ryan attended Joseph A. Craig High School, and between his sophomore and junior year, his father died (Ryan was just 16). His father's death provided Ryan with Social Security benefits until his 18th birthday, which he used to pay for his education at Miami University of Ohio. Ryan, a member of the Delta Tau Delta fraternity, graduated in 1992 with a degree in economics and political science.

Congressional Races:

When Republican House Rep. Mike Neumann announced he was running for Senate, Ryan decided to run for Wisconsin's first House District, which Neumann was vacating. Although the district is predominantly Democratic, Ryan, a conservative Republican, was also a home-grown fifth-generation resident of Janesville. Ryan first faced 35-year-old beer distributor Brian Morello in the Republican primary and after beating him went on to a 15-point victory over Democrat Lydia Spottswood in the general election. For the next four races, Ryan would defeat Democrat Jeffrey C. Thomas. In 2008, he defeated Democrat Marge Krupp.

Work as Congressman:

One of the first things Ryan did as a Congressman was to convert an old truck into an office so he could hold office hours in the far reaches of his district. As a ranking Member of the Committee on the Budget, Ryan introduced HR 6110, "A Roadmap for America's Future" a comprehensive proposal that tackles the interrelated crises in health care, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, the tax code and the national deficit. In 2009, he joined other House leaders in introducing an alternative to President Barack Obama's budget proposal for 2010.

Family:

Spending a large amount of his time serving his constituents in Washington, Ryan met tax attorney Janna Little, who lived in Arlington, Va. An Oklahoma native, Little graduated from Wellesley College and George Washington University Law School. In 2000, Ryan asked Little to marry him at Big St. Germain Lake in northern Wisconsin, one of his favorite fishing spots. The couple was married in Oklahoma City in December 2000. They have one daughter, Elizabeth and two sons, Charles and Samuel, in Janesville.

Ryan on Five Major Issues:

1. **Abortion:** Has a 100 percent voting record with the National Right to Life Committee. Voted against allowing embryonic stem cell research. Voted against the transportation of minors across state lines for abortions. Voted against partial birth abortions except to save a mother's life.
2. **Immigration:** Voted in favor of building a fence along the Mexican border. Voted in favor of extending Immigrant Residency rules. Voted in favor of comprehensive immigration reform without amnesty.
3. **Civil Rights:** Voted in favor of prohibiting job discrimination based on sexual orientation. Voted to protect the pledge of allegiance. Has expressed support for an amendment to ban flag desecration.
4. **Families:** Voted to ban gay adoptions in Washington. Voted to constitutionally define marriage as between one man and one woman. Voted to reduce the Marriage Tax by $399 billion over 10 years. Voted to establish a nationwide AMBER alert system for missing children.
5. **Gun Control:** Has an "A" rating by the National Rifle Association. In 1999, he voted to decrease gun waiting periods from three days to one. Voted to prevent gun makers, gun manufacturers and gun sellers from being sued for gun misuse.

Related posts

- Paul Ryan's Path to Prosperity plan balances the budget without raising taxes
- Paul Ryan questions Chief Actuaries of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security
- Paul Ryan fact checks Obama's budget: is there really $4 trillion in deficit reduction?
- Paul Ryan takes Obama's State of the Union speech apart
- Paul Ryan teams up with Democrat Ron Wyden to push Medicare reform plan
- Budget guru Paul Ryan discusses the economy at the Heritage Foundation
- Paul Ryan explains how raising taxes hurts job creation
- Paul Ryan explains why the millionaire tax causes unemployment to rise
- Paul Ryan: cut current spending, cap future spending and balance the budget
- Paul Ryan talks about the looming American debt crisis
- Where does Paul Ryan stand on foreign policy and social issues?
- Paul Ryan responds to his critics on Medicare reform
- What's wrong with the American economy and how Paul Ryan would fix it
- Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann will respond to State of the Union address
- Republican Paul Ryan proposes over 6 trillion in spending cuts
- Paul Ryan discusses economics at the liberal Brookings Institute
- Paul Ryan explains taxes and spending to Chris Matthews
- Paul Ryan takes on Democrat Brad Sherman on the worsening economy
- Paul Ryan debates Democrat Robert Reich on Larry Kudlow show
- Paul Ryan debates on the relationship between tax rates and job creation
- Paul Ryan talks about health care with Chris Matthews and Chris Wallace
- Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander
- Paul Ryan discusses Obamacare and the federal budget
- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan's plan for economic recovery
- Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama's 1.56 trillion budget deficit
- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama's record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism

Rep. Michele Bachmann
About Michele Bachmann:

Elected in 2006, Congresswoman Michele Bachmann is the first Republican woman to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Minnesota. In only her first term, Congresswoman Bachmann developed a reputation as a "principled reformer" who stays true to her conservative beliefs while pushing for real reform of the broken ways of Washington. And, her strong advocacy for her constituents earned her a second term in Congress in November 2008.

She is a leading advocate for bipartisan earmark reform and tax relief and is a staunch opponent of wasteful government spending. She is among the leaders in the U.S. House pushing for increased energy exploration in the U.S. to provide much needed relief at the pump for hard-working Americans and put our nation on the path to energy independence.

Prior to serving in the U.S. Congress, Bachmann served in the Minnesota State Senate. She was elected to the Minnesota State Senate in 2000 where she championed the Taxpayers Bill of Rights. And, prior to that, Bachmann spent five years as a federal tax litigation attorney, working on hundreds of civil and criminal cases. That experience solidified Bachmann's strong support for efforts to simplify the Tax Code and reduce tax burdens on family and small business budgets.

Congresswoman Bachmann currently sits on the Financial Services Committee. This committee is tasked with the oversight of numerous financial sectors including housing, real estate and banking. This also gives the Congresswoman keen insight into the housing crisis and credit crunch, leading her to be a staunch opponent of the taxpayer-funded bailout of Wall Street. The 6th Congressional District of Minnesota contains parts of six counties, stretching from Stillwater past St. Cloud, including suburbs of the Twin Cities, which encompasses one of the nation's largest financial services sectors, making Congresswoman Bachmann's position on the Financial Services Committee particularly important.

Congresswoman Bachmann is a graduate of Anoka High School and Winona State University. Bachmann and her husband, Marcus, live in Stillwater where they own a small business mental health care practice that employs 42 people. The Bachmanns have five children, Lucas, Harrison, Elisa, Caroline, and Sophia. In addition, the Bachmanns have opened their home to 23 foster children, which has inspired Congresswoman Bachmann to become one of Congress' leading advocates for foster and adopted children, earning her bipartisan praise for her efforts.

Here is a collection of news stories about Representative Michele Bachmann:

- What was the context of Michele Bachmann's "armed and dangerous" comment?
- AT LAST: Michele Bachmann open to presidential run in 2012
- Megyn Kelly and Michele Bachmann on the Bush tax cut deal
- CNS News interviews Michele Bachmann

- Michele Bachmann requests the resignation of Attorney General Eric Holder
- Michele Bachmann attacks government bailout of unions
- Michele Bachmann makes the case for limited government
- Why is the left so angry with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin?
- Michele Bachmann on Fox News with Laura Ingraham
- Democrats kill Michele Bachmann's attempt to freeze federal salaries
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- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare's rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

Harvard astrophysicist backs the Rare Earth hypothesis

January 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

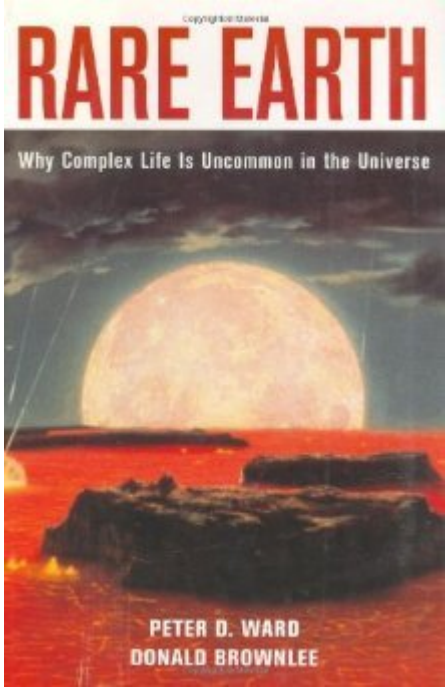

What is the Rare Earth hypothesis?

It's the thesis of a recent book written by two scientists at the University of Washington.

Here's the blurb:

> What determines whether complex life will arise on a planet? How frequent is life in the Universe?
>
> In this exciting new book, distinguished paleontologist Peter D. Ward and noted astronomer Donald Brownlee team up to give us a fascinating synthesis of what's now known about the rise of life on Earth and how it sheds light on possibilities for organic life forms elsewhere in the Universe.
>
> Life, Ward and Brownlee assert, is paradoxically both very common and almost nowhere. The conditions that foster the beginnings of life in our galaxy are plentiful. But contrary to the usual assumption that if alien life exists, it's bound to be intelligent, the authors contend that the kind of complex life we find on Earth is unlikely to exist anywhere else; indeed it is probably unique to our planet.
>
> With broad expertise and wonderful descriptive imagery, the authors give us a compelling argument, a splendid introduction to the emerging field of astrobiology, and a lively discussion of the remarkable findings that are being generated by new research. We learn not only about the extraordinary creatures living in conditions once though inimical to life and the latest evidence of early life on Earth, but also about the discoveries of extrasolar planets, the parts

> Jupiter and the Moon have played in our survival, and even the crucial role of continental drift in our existence.
>
> Insightful, well-written, and at the cutting edge of modern scientific investigation, *Rare Earth* should interest anyone who wants to know about life elsewhere and gain a fresh perspective on life at home which, if the authors are right, is even more precious than we may ever have imagined.

And here's a review by *Library Journal*:

> "Renowned paleontologist Ward (Univ. of Washington), who has authored numerous books and articles, and Brownlee, a noted astronomer who has also researched extraterrestrial materials, combine their interests, research, and collaborative thoughts to present a startling new hypothesis: bacterial life forms may be in many galaxies, but complex life forms, like those that have evolved on Earth, are rare in the universe. Ward and Brownlee attribute Earth's evolutionary achievements to the following critical factors: our optimal distance from the sun, the positive effects of the moon's gravity on our climate, plate tectonics and continental drift, the right types of metals and elements, ample liquid water, maintainance of the correct amount of internal heat to keep surface temperatures within a habitable range, and a gaseous planet the size of Jupiter to shield Earth from catastrophic meteoric bombardment. Arguing that complex life is a rare event in the universe, this compelling book magnifies the significance — and tragedy — of species extinction. Highly recommended for all public and academic libraries."

Note that Peter Ward is a *militant* atheist (he has debated against Stephen C. Meyer), and Donald Brownlee is an agnostic. These are not Christians, nor are they even *theists*. However, I have the book, I have read the book, and I recommend the book. I usually have this book on my shelf at work for show-and-tell.

Now for the latest news about the hypothesis of the book. (H/T Brian Auten of Apologetics 315)

There are always going to be optimistic predictions by scientists who need to attract research funding, but those are hopes and speculations. The data we have today says Earth is rare. The number of conditions required for complex life *of any kind* is too high for us to be optimistic about alien life in this galaxy, at least. And as the number of requirements for life roll in, the odds of finding alien life that can contact us get slimmer and slimmer.

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Peter S. Williams)

Excerpt:

> Dr Howard Smith, a senior astrophysicist at Harvard University, believes there is very little hope of discovering aliens and, even if we did, it would be almost impossible to make contact.

> So far astronomers have discovered a total of 500 planets in distant solar systems – known as extrasolar systems – although they believe billions of others exist.
>
> But Dr Smith points out that many of these planets are either too close to their sun or too far away, meaning their surface temperatures are so extreme they could not support life.
>
> Others have unusual orbits which cause vast temperature variations making it impossible for water to exist as a liquid – an essential element for life.
>
> Dr Smith said: 'We have found that most other planets and solar systems are wildly different from our own.
>
> 'They are very hostile to life as we know it.'
>
> 'The new information we are getting suggests we could effectively be alone in the universe.
>
> 'There are very few solar systems or planets like ours. It means it is highly unlikely there are any planets with intelligent life close enough for us to make contact.' But his controversial suggestions contradict other leading scientists – who have claimed aliens almost certainly exist.

These arguments are actually quite useful, and I include them in my standard list of scientific arguments for theism. (See below) You have to know this stuff cold. Most people believe in aliens because they watched movies made by artists. As a result, they think that humans are nothing special and that God is not interested in us in particular. Which is very convenient for them, because it means they can do whatever they want and not care what God thinks about what they are doing. If you want to defend against the idea that humans are nothing special, and that we were not placed here for a purpose, and that we are not accountable and obligated to seek and know the Creator/Designer, then you'll need more than feelings. You'll need science. You'll need the best science available.

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

Could Michele Bachmann’s Iowa speech foreshadow her SOTU response?

January 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I started watching this speech fully expecting that I would not be posting it. But by the end of the speech, I was really excited to post it!

Here’s the speech she delivered in Iowa last Friday. (H/T Shane from Caffeinated Thoughts)

And here’s the Q&A period after the speech:

Given the quality of the speech, I think you’re likely to see something like it in her response to Obama’s State of the Union speech, which will be broadcast after Paul Ryan’s official response.

UPDATE: Michele Bachmann’s response.

Obama's SOTU speech: more spending on Democrat special interests

January 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Hans Bader at the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> In his State of the Union address, President Obama will call for even more spending on his cronies – what he euphemistically refers to as "targeted investments" in things like "green jobs." Such spending benefits companies that donate millions to liberal politicians, like GE, which recently spent $65.7 million on lobbying to extract special favors from the government.
>
> […]"The new spending" Obama will call for will likely "include initiatives aimed at building the renewable-energy sector—which received billions of dollars in stimulus funding."
>
> This is a bad sign for the American worker, because such green jobs programs have wiped out thousands of American jobs in the past. The $800 billion stimulus package used "green-jobs" subsidies to send American jobs overseas. 79 percent of those subsidies went to foreign firms, such as an Australian firm that imported Japanese wind turbines, effectively outsourcing American jobs.
>
> […]The *Wall Street Journal* reports that the President will also call for "new government spending" on education. This is also a dubious idea, given that America already spends much more per capita on education than most other wealthy industrialized countries, with worse results.
>
> […]Dumping more money on the educational system is unlikely to spur economic growth, since so many college students learn little in college, are not interested in learning, and only go to college in order to get paper credentials rather than an education.
>
> […]Unlike other countries, which focus on educating engineers and other economically-productive occupations, America focuses on superficial, ideologically-fashionable liberal-arts majors.

If I had to summarize Obama's speech, I would say "the government will give you a unicorn in every stable".

Let's put the teleprompter away and review the facts.

Government spending: (i.e. – what Obama calls "investing")

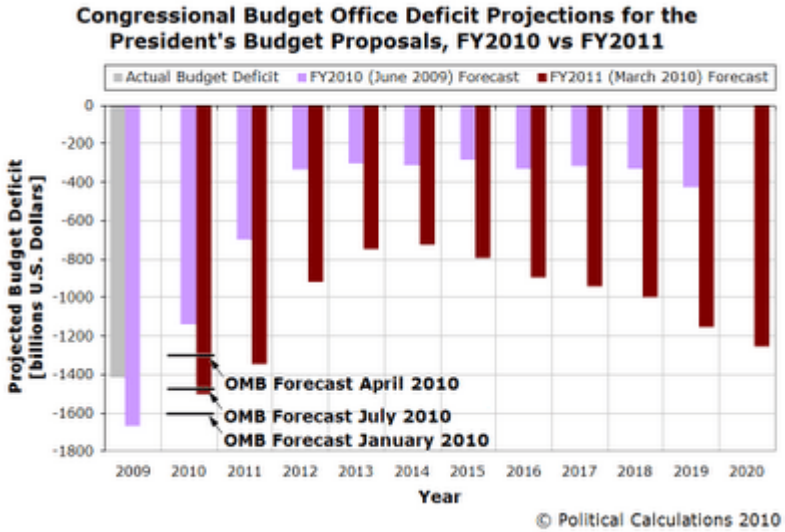

CBO Projected Federal Budget Deficits

Unemployment rate:

Unemployment Rate

The Democrats controlled ALL SPENDING starting in January of 2007, when they gained control of the House of Representatives and the Senate. When spending increases, businesses understand that there are only two ways to pay it off. Higher taxes, or inflation. So they stop hiring here and ship their jobs overseas. That's Obamanomics.

Republican Congressman Paul Ryan's response.

Video and transcripts of response speeches by Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann

January 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan

Paul Ryan

Paul Ryan's response to Barack Obama's State of the Union speech.

Transcript of Paul Ryan's response speech.

Here is a collection of news stories about Representative Paul Ryan:

- Paul Ryan explains why Republicans are doing what they promised to do
- What would happen if Paul Ryan headed the Budget committee?
- Paul Ryan discusses economics at the liberal Brookings Institute
- Paul Ryan explains taxes and spending to Chris Matthews
- Paul Ryan takes on Democrat Brad Sherman on the worsening economy
- Tragedy strikes! Paul Ryan is not going to run for President in 2012!
- Paul Ryan debates Robert Reich on Larry Kudlow show
- Paul Ryan debates on the relationship between tax rates and job creation
- Paul Ryan asks if America is becoming a European welfare state
- Sue Myrick interviews Paul Ryan about his Roadmap for America
- Fiscal and social conservatives unite in new free e-book "Indivisible"
- Paul Ryan talks about health care with Chris Matthews and Chris Wallace
- Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander
- Paul Ryan discusses Obamacare and the federal budget
- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan's plan for economic recovery
- Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama's 1.56 trillion budget deficit

- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama's record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan and Ann Coulter make the case against Obamacare
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism
- When all else failed, Republicans will try conservative ideas

Rep. Michele Bachmann

Michele Bachmann

Michele Bachmann'sresponse to Barack Obama's State of the Union speech.

Transcript of Michele Bachmann's response speech.

Here is a collection of news stories about Representative Michele Bachmann:

- What was the context of Michele Bachmann's "armed and dangerous" comment?
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- Why is the left so angry with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin?
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- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

Brian Auten interviews Jay Richards about Christian apologetics

January 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jay Richards

Christian scholar Jay Richards was interviewed by Brian Auten of Apologetics 315.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- What is intelligent design (ID)?
- Is ID specifically Christian?
- How does ID helpful to Christian apologetics?
- What does ID prove?
- Is it OK to use an argument that doesn't prove Christianity specifically?
- What is the difference between deism and theism?
- Do ID arguments get you to deism or theism?
- What is materialism, and how can you challenge it?
- How do opponents of ID define ID?
- What factors do you need to make a habitable planet?
- Are habitable planets common or rare in the universe?
- What is "The Privileged Planet" hypothesis?
- Is there an overlap between habitability and suitability for making scientific discoveries?
- What is the "Copernican Principle"?
- Has the progress of science made Earth seem common and ordinary?
- What is the most Earth-like planet that we've ever discovered?
- How should ID proponents respond to the objection that creatures aren't perfect?

- Does having a big moon make a planet more or less habitable?
- Does a planet's distance to the Sun make that planet more or less habitable?
- How do these two habitability factors affect the observability of solar eclipses?
- What does co-relation between habitability and "discoverability" tell us about God?
- How important is training in philosophy to Christian apologetics?
- What one thing should a Christian apologist work on to be more effective?

I'm hoping that Brian will do a follow-up interview with Jay on Jay's new book on theistic evolution.

Here's the description from Amazon.com:

> What does it mean to say that God "used evolution" to create the world? Is Darwin's theory of evolution compatible with belief in God? And even if Darwin's theory could be reconciled with religious belief, do we need to do so? Is the theory well established scientifically? Is it true?
>
> In the century and a half since Charles Darwin first proposed his theory of evolution, Christians, Jews, and other religious believers have grappled with how to make sense of it. Most have understood that Darwin's theory has profound theological implications, but their responses have varied dramatically.
>
> Some religious believers have rejected it outright; others, often called "theistic evolutionists," have sought to reconcile Darwin's theory with their religious beliefs, but often at the cost of clarity, orthodoxy, or both. Too few have carefully teased out the various scientific, philosophical, and theological claims at stake, and separated the chaff from the wheat. As a result, the whole subject of God and evolution has been an enigma wrapped in a shroud of fuzz and surrounded by blanket of fog.
>
> The purpose of this anthology of essays is to clear away the fog, the fuzz, and the enigma. Contributing authors to the volume include Jay Richards, co-author of *The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos Is Designed for Discovery*; Stephen Meyer, author of *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*; William Dembski, author of *The Design Revolution;* Jonathan Witt, co-author of A *Meaningful World: How the Arts and Sciences Reveal the Genius of Nature*; Denyse O'Leary, author of *By Design, or by Chance?*; and David Klinghoffer, author of *Shattered Tablets*.

Those authors are some of my favorite people to read in the whole world. I think this group will be mostly fed up with theistic evolutionists, like I am, although they may not go as far as I do when I label theistic evolutionists "functional atheists" or "theistic atheists".

Jay Richards is probably my favorite all-round Christian scholar, because he also writes a lot on policy and economics, and was interviewed on those topics by Frank Turek. He has a complete, well-rounded worldview.

Posts featuring Jay Richards

- Jay Richards explains when you should doubt “scientific consensus”
- Fiscal and social conservatives unite in new free e-book “Indivisible”
- First Things reviews Jay Richards’ Money, Greed and God
- Video of the Stanford debate between Jay Richards and Christopher Hitchens
- Cato Institute talks with Jay Richards about Christianity and capitalism

Interviews by Jay Richards

- Ann Gauger’s new peer-reviewed paper on Darwinian evolution
- Doug Axe publishes a new peer-reviewed paper on protein folding

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
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How lawsuit abuse hurts businesses and raises unemployment

January 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consdier this paper from the Heritage Foundation, featuring a variety of views on lawsuit abuse.

Excerpt:

> **LAWRENCE J. McQUILLAN, Ph.D.:** I am an economist. I focus on this issue as an economic issue, an economic problem. I have been working on this issue for about four years as a full-time project, and the first study that we did in 2006 was *Jackpot Justice*, which Hans mentioned earlier.
>
> In this study, what we set out to do is measure the total cost of the U.S. tort liability system and put that cost in perspective. Hans mentioned a figure of $252 billion a year. That is the direct cost of the tort liability system, but what we wanted to do in this study is also measure the indirect cost. When we crunched the numbers, we arrived at a total of $865 billion annually as the cost.
>
> It is a lawsuit industry. That's really the way to look at it. It truly is an industry in terms of the size, scope, and amount of resources devoted to it. To put it in perspective, it's roughly the size of the U.S. restaurant industry: About 6.5 percent of GDP would be the equivalent. It is about 30 times what the National Institutes of Health spends each year on finding cures for deadly diseases. It's a huge amount of resources that are diverted toward, basically, a transfer system.
>
> **The Costs of Lawsuit Abuse**
>
> Every year, lawsuit abuse costs each American about $2,000. That is the cost that is factored into all the goods and services that we buy, from ladders to lawnmowers. Built into every price is a component to pay for liability insurance and lawsuit defense.
>
> We estimated the wasteful part of that $865 billion to be about $589 billion a year. In other words, you could remove that part from this total cost and not change manufacturers' incentives to produce safe products. You could still fully compensate truly injured individuals.

Here is one of the ways that lawsuit abuse changes the free market:

> **Indirect Costs: Defensive Medicine**[…]The first one that gets talked about a lot these days is defensive medicine. Ninety-three percent of all physicians report practicing defensive medicine. These are basically unnecessary tests, procedures, referrals that they know are not really medically necessary to protect the patient, but they do them anyway to protect themselves from litigation. About 25 percent of all procedures, according to a survey last year by the

> Massachusetts Medical Society, are deemed by the physicians themselves to be unnecessary defensive medicine procedures.
>
> We crunched the numbers in terms of how much this defensive medicine costs the economy. We arrived, in 2007, at $124 billion a year, which is about 8 percent of total health care expenditures. Today, that number would be roughly about $191 billion a year.
>
> You also have to remember that these defensive medicine expenditures get passed along to all of us. We all end up paying for this in terms of our insurance. So insurance premiums go up, which then crowds out a lot of people from being able to afford insurance that they normally would be able to afford. We wanted to estimate what that costs. After crunching the numbers, we estimate that about 3.4 million Americans would have insurance today but do not because of the higher premiums due to just defensive medicine: today about $191 billion.
>
> I think yesterday there was a report that came out that showed something like 14,000 people a year die because they do not have health insurance. It would not surprise me if a lot of these 14,000 people that die every year are part of those 3.4 million people.

And one more:

> **Indirect Costs: Research and Development**
>
> Another indirect cost of the excessive tort liability system is R&D impact. Of course, businesses have to spend a lot more money on legal defense that would otherwise go to product research and development, new product innovation, and new products being introduced. We estimated that total at about $367 billion a year of lost sales of new products that would otherwise come to market but do not because of the diversion of resources basically away from R&D and new product development toward legal defense: again, another huge indirect cost where it is hard to measure what would have been but is not.
>
> Basically, the vaccine industry has fled the country. It is hard to find a manufacturer anymore in the U.S. that does vaccine development and manufacturing, primarily because of liability concerns. It was reported that the FDA granted the H1N1 virus vaccine to four companies to be manufactured, and without much of a surprise, three of the four companies are actually located outside the U.S.: Swiss, Australian, and French companies were all awarded the vaccine licenses.
>
> There is one company in the U.S in Maryland, but I think it got the license to manufacture only because they have a technological advantage. They are going to produce an inhalable version of the vaccine rather than the standard injectable version. I think that is probably why they got a license. Otherwise, I think all of the manufacturers would have come from Europe or Australia.
>
> That is a great example of how it really does impact U.S. business and how the

> liability system is forcing more and more business overseas. As a result, it hurts us in terms of the economy and job growth.
>
> As another example, Volkswagen was going to introduce a three-wheel vehicle, very green technology, that gets about 49 miles per gallon. They were going to sell it in the U.S. for about $17,000 a vehicle. Probably most people in this room would not want to drive this vehicle, but I can tell you that where I come from in California, it would have sold well. It would have had a big market. It actually got qualified, too, to use the HOV lanes in California.
>
> At the last minute, Volkswagen decided to pull it from the U.S. and not market it here because of liability concerns, but it is available in Europe. So once again, another example where European markets are perceived to be more favorable in terms of liability than the U.S.
>
> I do not think it is any accident, too, that they tend not to have punitive damages in Europe and, also, that they have the loser pay system. This is another example of the indirect costs, fewer products available in the U.S. A lot of people probably would have loved to buy this car, but it is not available.
>
> In terms of how expensive the U.S. system is compared to other countries of comparable standards of living, the estimate is that we have about 59 percent higher tort costs. These are direct costs. These are awards, attorneys' fees, and administrative expenses. This does not include the indirect costs that I just talked about, but it gives you a good indication of our system compared to other systems in the world. It is just much more expensive for compensating injured individuals.

That is just *one* of the perspectives provided in this excellent article.

If we expect to have jobs in the future, then we should be thinking about who we expect to hire us. Tacking on frivolous costs onto business owners who develop products and services that we need means that there will be fewer businesses to hire us when we are looking for jobs and less choice and competition when we make purchases.

Keep in mind that trial lawyers are one of the pillars of the Democrat party, and they fight against any regulation of lawsuit abuse.

I noticed that Hans Bader published an article here talking about how the Supreme Court has been attacking businesses. This is one of the reasons why we are bleeding jobs to other countries. Judicial activism is *hostile* to business and the free market.

Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage

January 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Timmy posted this guide to defending marriage on his Facebook page.

Excerpt:

I. THE MOST EFFECTIVE SINGLE SENTENCE:

Extensive and repeated polling agrees that the single most effective message is:

"Gays and Lesbians have a right to live as they choose,
they don't have the right to redefine marriage for all of us."

This allows people to express support for tolerance while opposing gay marriage. Some modify it to "People have a right to live as they choose, they don't have the right to redefine marriage for all of us."

Language to avoid at all costs: "Ban same-sex marriage." Our base loves this wording. So do supporters of SSM. They know it causes us to lose about ten percentage points in polls. Don't use it. Say we're against "redefining marriage" or in favor or "marriage as the union of husband and wife" NEVER "banning same-sex marriage."

II. MAIN MESSAGE THE 3X5 CARD.

> • Marriage is between a husband and wife. The people of [this state] do not want marriage to be anything but that. We do not want government or judges changing that definition for us today or our children tomorrow.
>
> • We need a marriage amendment to settle the gay marriage issue once and for all, so we don't have it in our face every day for the next ten years.
>
> • Marriage is about bringing together men and women so children can have mothers and fathers.
>
> • Do we want to teach the next generation that one-half of humanity—either mothers or fathers—are dispensable, unimportant? Children are confused enough right now with sexual messages. Let's not confuse them further.

> • Gays and Lesbians have a right to live as they choose; they don't have a right to redefine marriage for the rest of us.

Mary also sent me this excellent peer-reviewed paper on traditional marriage and same-sex marriage, authored by two guys from Princeton University and one guy from the University of Notredame. One of those guys is the famous Robert P. George!

Related posts

- New version of Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse's Love and Economics talk
- Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on marriage and family

- Jennifer Roback Morse debates on marriage at Columbia University

Obamacare waivers skyrocket to 729 including TONS of unions

January 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Michelle Malkin.

Excerpt:

> **The list is at 729 — plus 4 states (Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, and Tennesse).**
>
> Among the many new union refugees are 4 new SEIU locals :
>
> **-SEIU Health and Welfare fund, 2000 with 161 enrollees**
>
> **-Service Employees 32BJ North Health Benefit Fund* representing 7,020 enrollees**
>
> **-SEIU Local 300, Civil Service Forum Employees Welfare Fund representing 2,000 enrollees**
>
> **-SEIU Health & Welfare Fund representing 1,620**
>
> This is in addition to the three other previous SEIU waiver winners: Local 25 SEIU in Chicago with 31,000 enrollees; Local 1199 SEIU Greater New York Benefit Fund with 4,544 enrollees; and SEIU Local 1 Cleveland Welfare Fund with 520 enrollees.

Michelle pulled out a HUGE list of union-linked organizations that got waivers from Obamacare.

Michelle found the story in this post, which explains why the waivers are being granted.

Excerpt:

> Last year, the HHS website was very efficient posting a list of ObamaCare waivers that had been granted. Ususally by the 3rd of the month the list was updated to included waivers that had been approved in the previous month. But something happened in January. Two weeks into the month no new waivers had been posted.
>
> I was curious what caused the delay so I made some calls. Last Tuesday I spoke by phone with a media relations employees of HHS. She was not allowed to speak on the record, but after checking with folks at OCIIO who handle the ObamaCare waivers, she was able to inform me in a “not for attribution” way that the latest batch of waivers had in fact been processed. There was no specific hold-up that she could identify, they were simply running behind in getting the information on the website.
>
> Well today, the day after the President’s State of the Union, the new waivers are up.

> […]T**his ever-expanding list of waivers is the direct result of ObamaCare raising the annual benefit caps on certain health plans. Obviously, a plan with higher annual limits is potentially more costly than one without them. The money to cover the difference in premiums has to come from somewhere. Without the waivers, it will come from the employer who are forced by law to upgrade to the more expensive plan. In other words, the 729 organizations who have received waivers are not seeking refuge from an unintended consequence, but from the costs associated with one of ObamaCare's features. The real question is what these businesses will do once the waiver program comes to an end.**

Obamacare raises the cost of health care! But only for YOU – not for Obama and his cronies.

India Supreme Court exonerates eleven Hindus who murdered three Christians

January 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of India

First, let's hear about an anti-Christian crime that occurred in Orissa, the most anti-Christian area in India.

Excerpt:

> The Central Bureau of investigation (CBI) wanted the death penalty for Singh, who was linked to extreme right-wing Hindu group Bajrang Dal. The GCIC has opposed the request for a death sentence. The wife of the slain pastor, Gladys Staines, had already forgiven Dara and his accomplices involved in the brutal murder of her husband and children. (20/01/2009 Widow of Graham Staines: "Do not give up hope, pray for India").
>
> Twelve years ago, Graham Staines was burnt alive with his children aged eight and ten years in the small village of Manoharpur, in the tribal area of Orissa. Graham Staines had worked for thirty years with leprosy patients in Orissa, and was sleeping with his children in a car, on his journey home on a cold December night. A group of attackers poured petrol on the car, and burned them alive.
>
> The Staines tried to escape, but the assailants, fifty in all, prevented them. A witness said the attackers shouted slogans in praise of Dara Singh, the Hindu movement and the god Hanuman.
>
> In 2003 a court in Khurda judged all 13 accused guilty. Life in prison for everyone

> else, a death sentence for Dara Singh. In 2005, the Orissa High Court commuted the death penalty to life imprisonment, judged Hembran guilty and exonerated the others.

Shalini sent me this story about how the Supreme Court upheld the High Court's decision. Excerpt:

> Dara Singh killed Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two minor sons by setting fire to the vehicle in which they were sleeping, but the Supreme Court on Friday ruled that it was not a "rarest of rare" category crime to warrant death penalty for him.
>
> In a judgment drawing curtains on court proceedings in the sensational incident of January 1999, a bench of Justices P Sathasivam and B S Chauhan upheld the Orissa High Court judgment imposing life sentence on Singh alias Rabindra Kumar Pal and Mahendra Hembram. The trial court had awarded death penalty to Singh.
>
> The bench said the Orissa HC was justified in awarding life term to Singh and Hembran as the crime was committed in the passion to teach Staines a lesson for his alleged attempts to convert tribals.
>
> "Though Graham Staines and his two minor sons were burnt to death while they were sleeping inside a station wagon at Manoharpur, the intention was to teach a lesson to Staines about his religious activities, namely, converting poor tribals to Christianity," it said.
>
> "All these aspects have been correctly appreciated by the high court and modified the sentence of death into life imprisonment with which we concur," the bench said.
>
> Justice Sathasivam, writing the judgment for the bench, also dismissed the CBI`s appeal challenging the HC`s decision to acquit 11 other accused. "We have highlighted the weakness and infirmities of the prosecution case insofar as acquitted accused, who are poor tribals," he said. The CBI had taken over the probe from Orissa Police on May 3, 1999.
>
> "In the absence of definite assertion from the prosecution side about their specific role and involvement, it is not safe to convict them. We entirely agree with the reasoning and conclusion of the high court," it said.
>
> **While condemning killings in the name of religion, the bench also expressed its disapproval of conversion. "It is undisputed that there is no justification for interfering in someone`s belief by way of `use of force`, provocation, conversion, incitement or upon a flawed premise that one religion is better than the other," said the bench.**

This story is interesting because it shows how the pluralist view that "all religions are valid" can actually lead to violence. The pluralist view is itself a point of view that takes

itself to be true. Pluralists think that religions like Christianity, which claim to be true, are actually FALSE. In short, pluralism DOES disagree with Christianity. If disagreement with other religions is bad, then pluralists are just as guilty of being bad as Christians.

Is what they say about Christians being "exclusive" true? Does being "exclusive" make Christians dangerous? Well, the reason why the practice of Christianity DOES NOT result in violence is because part of the "truth" that Christians believe is that they should love their enemies and pray for the people who persecute them. That's why the victim's wife *forgave* the murderers for their crimes.

I actually have Hindus and Muslims in my family. They treat religion as a cultural or national identity – not really something to investigate to see if it is true or false. Hindus are not usually Hindus because they did some big investigation and found Hinduism to be true. (Hinduism requires an eternally oscillating cosmology, which contradicts physics and the Big Bang theory). It's more like that they do it for personal reasons or community reasons – it's like part of their national/cultural identity.

Why do some Hindus oppose evangelism?

A while back I posted this debate featuring a Hindu who disagreed with Christian evangelism and wanted to make it illegal. He complained about Christians using "force" (being kind and giving gifts) to convince people to become Christians. In the next breath he was pushing the government to use force his anti-Christian views onto Christians. He did not want them to evangelize, so he wanted to pass that view into law and force his neighbors to accept HIS views by force. He thought his view of Christianity and evangelism was TRUE, and he thought the traditional, Biblical Christian view was false. He actually insisted that his interpretation of the Bible was correct and all the Christian theologians were misinterpreting the Bible. He expected Christians to act like Hindus! And he thought that Christianity WAS Hinduism – or that it should be redefined to be understood to be Hinduism. Then he complained about Christians who thought that their views were TRUE and that his were FALSE.

The difference between Christians and Hindus is that committed Christians think they are right and use ideas and words to persuade, while militant Hindus think they are right and are willing to use force to make people agree with them. I think the difference is that a Christian can appeal to facts like the Big Bang theory, and the Hindu cannot really do that, as this Hindu commenter to another post showed.

I really recommend that you listen to that debate, and there is a play-by-play summary that I wrote in case the bandwidth is too high. And read my exchange with the Hindu commenter, too.

Here is the major persecution story in Orissa that I blogged about before. And here's another small story from Orissa that I found.

Does Obama tell the truth about people who are denied medical coverage?

January 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gateway Pundit gives you the facts that Obama leaves out of his speeches.

Excerpt:

> Robin Beaton's insurance company retroactively canceled her policy because she had failed to inform them of her history of acne **and a rapid heartbeat**.
>
> In 2009, Barack Obama included the story of a Waxahachie woman's breast cancer nightmare in his speech to Congress. Obama said the evil insurance company canceled her policy for failing to report a pre-existing condition: acne. As it turned out, Robin Beaton's insurance company retroactively canceled her policy because she had failed to inform them of her history of acne and a rapid heartbeat. Obama forgot to mention this in his talk.

And another one:

> Obama found another victim to report on in his State of the Union Address.
>
> I'm not willing to tell James Howard, a brain cancer patient from Texas, that his treatment might not be covered.
>
> But, as it turns out, Barack Obama forgot to mention a few things about Mr. Howard.
>
> When James Howard was diagnosed with brain cancer in March he did not know how he would pay for radiation treatments costing $87,000 and $2,300 a week for chemotherapy.
>
> At the time of his diagnosis, Howard was insured by UnitedHealth Group Inc, a policy for which he paid because his employer, Hennessey Performance near Houston, Texas, did not provide healthcare insurance for its employees.
>
> After his diagnosis, UnitedHealth revoked Howard's policy on the grounds that his was a pre-existing condition.
>
> **UnitedHealth said on Friday that Howard had failed to disclose an earlier initial diagnosis suggesting potential cancer from brain scans before he applied for coverage**.
>
> Of course, Obama forgot to mention this, too.

Oh, but I am sure the mainstream media will tell everyone the facts.

Republican Governor Rick Perry demands sonograms before abortions

January 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about moving to Texas

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Texas governor Rick Perry is throwing his weight behind legislation to require doctors to show women a sonogram of their unborn child before having an abortion, declaring the issue a legislative "emergency."
>
> As an emergency item on the legislative agenda, the state congress will have the option of voting on the measure within the first 30 days of the current legislative session.
>
> In addition to the sonogram, the bill would also require doctors to give mothers a detailed description of their child and his state of development, including the presence of limbs and internal organs. Mothers will also listen to their children's heartbeat, and must be given information about abortion alternatives no less than 24 hours before the abortion occurs.
>
> Perry's decision to fast track the legislation was announced at a speech before the Texas Rally for Life, held on Saturday in Austin, the state capital.
>
> "Nearly 40 years have passed since the tragedy of Roe vs. Wade was decided by the United States Supreme Court, and since then, fifty million, fifty million

> children have lost their chances," Perry told the crowd.
>
> "That is a catastrophic number. That's twice the population of this entire state. It's pretty hard to imagine people of good conscience sitting idly by through this, and in Texas we haven't. We have actively worked against that Roe vs. Wade decision. We have taken great strides in protecting the unborn."
>
> After listing previous legislative measures, such as parental notification and parental consent laws, Perry added, "today I am pleased to announce that I am designating the sonogram bill an emergency item for the 87th legislative session."
>
> "A woman seeking an abortion must be given a sonogram, ensuring that she understands the full impact of her decision, a decision that can scar her physically and otherwise for the rest of her life. When you consider the magnitude of that decision, ensuring that someone understands what is truly at stake, seems to be a small step, in my opinion."

The Republican party is the party of social conservatism. We believe in marriage and family.

Everyone who is a social conservative who votes for left-wing parties because of fiscal or foreign policy concerns really should ask themselves whether they have taken the time to understand the conservative view of fiscal and social issues. The conservative view is correct across the board – it's one seamless garment. If you learn more about the facts on economics and foreign policy, you will be a conservative.

Related posts

- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion
- House Republicans set to unveil $2.5 TRILLION in spending cuts
- Are the new Tea Party Republicans any better than the old liberal ones?
- Democrats plan to block Republicans from banning earmarks
- Texas Governor shoots coyote with concealed handgun to save dog

William Lane Craig explains God’s omniscience

January 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What does God know? What does it mean to be omniscient?

Summary:

> Robert Lawrence Kuhn (host of PBS’ “Closer to Truth”) asks William Lane Craig on God’s omniscience. Questions explored: What does it mean for God to be omniscience? What is meant by proposition? What is meant by non-propositional knowledge? Does God have propositional or non-propositional knowledge? What is the difference between natural knowledge, free knowledge, and middle knowledge? Who is Luis de Molina?

The interviewer is very intelligent and does a great interview!

Tons more videos here. I may post some more when I watch more.

Social Security running deficits now, will be bankrupt by 2037

January 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

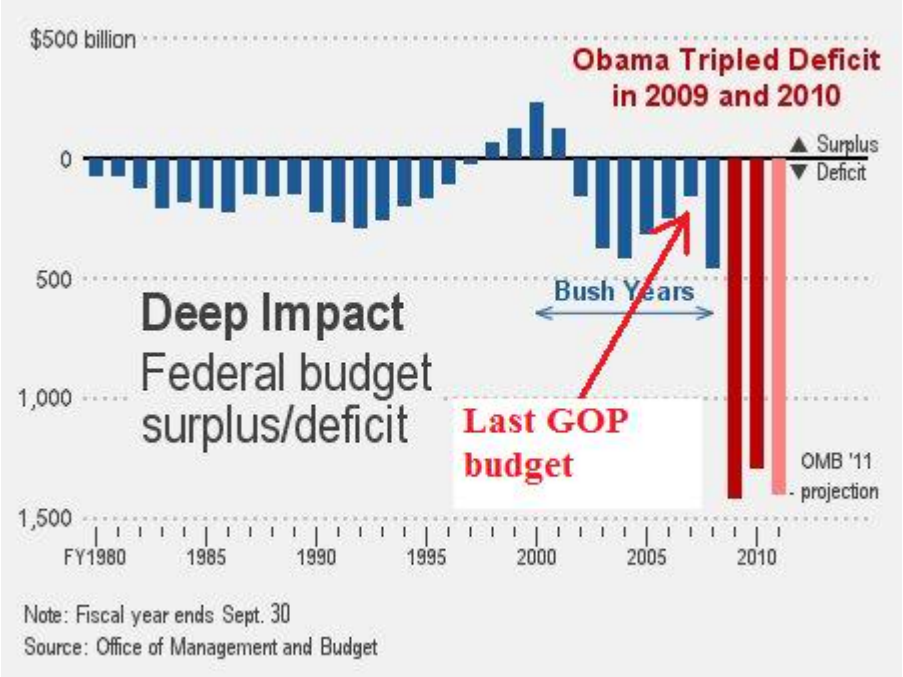

Last Republican budget was in 2006

This is from CBS News. (H/T Robert Stacy McCain)

Excerpt:

> Social Security's finances are getting worse as the economy struggles to recover and millions of baby boomers stand at the brink of retirement.
>
> New congressional projections show Social Security running deficits every year until its trust funds are eventually drained in about 2037.
>
> This year alone, Social Security is projected to collect $45 billion less in payroll taxes than it pays out in retirement, disability and survivor benefits, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said Wednesday. That figure swells to $130 billion when a new one-year cut in payroll taxes is included, though Congress has promised to repay any lost revenue from the tax cut.
>
> The massive retirement program has been feeling the effects of a struggling economy for several years. The program first went into deficit last year, but the CBO said at the time that Social Security would post surpluses for a few more years before permanently slipping into deficits in 2016.
>
> The outlook, however, has grown bleaker as the nation struggles to recover from the worst economic crisis since Social Security was enacted during the Great Depression. In the short term, Social Security is suffering from a weak economy that has payroll taxes lagging and applications for benefits rising. In the long term, Social Security will be strained by the growing number of baby boomers

> retiring and applying for benefits.
>
> The deficits add a sense of urgency to efforts to improve Social Security's finances. For much of the past 30 years, Social Security has run big surpluses, which the government has borrowed to spend on other programs. Now that Social Security is running deficits, the federal government will have to find money elsewhere to help pay for retirement, disability and survivor benefits.

You may remember that George W. Bush tried to reform Social Security during his Presidency, but left-wing media and the Democrats cowed him into submission. Shut up, they explained. Just like they shut him up on his plan to regulate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac back in 2003.

Here's why nothing is going to be done to fix the problem. (H/T Hyscience)

It's not going to be fixed until we vote out every last Democrat and replace them with grown-ups from the grown-up party.

The best short article on the state of marriage

January 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

One of the things that bothers me most about many women is that they think that planning for marriage means getting a degree in liberal arts, reading romance novels, looking at their friend's wedding photos and holding other people's babies. I am not convinced that many women understand anything about why a man would want to marry, what he'll need in the marriage, and how children should be raised so that they will be effective, public Christians.

But then I read articles like this one in the National Post and I realize that some people do get it. (H/T Andrea)

Excerpt:

> But, paradoxically, for those who do go through with a real marriage, the introduction of no-fault divorce in 1968 means it is easy to end the commitment. No-fault divorce made it simple for one spouse to give up on their vows when the going gets tough (or a better-looking/higher-earning/ less-nagging partner appears on the scene).
>
> The result has been a fivefold spike in the divorce rate. The courts are now filled with family-law cases, helping ex-spouses and lawyers sort through the minutiae of domestic life. Courts pick through the unsavoury business of marital breakdown, deciding who gets what, including the children themselves.
>
> Speaking of children, when it comes to their safety, there isn't much the government won't regulate. From secondhand smoke in cars, to the plastics in toys, to the design of playground equipment, no sandbox is left unturned in a quest to protect our kids.
>
> Yet at the same time, high tax rates make it nearly impossible for one parent to stay home and care for their families. But children don't raise themselves. This

> has led some to call for national state-run daycare programs — adding a new, more literal meaning to the words “nanny state.”
>
> Since successive federal governments have failed to implement national daycare, the push for institutional care for toddlers has gone provincial. In Ontario, draft plans given to Premier Dalton McGuinty in June 2009 included a recommendation for the Ministry of Education to establish an “Early Years Division” to create programs for kids age “zero through eight.” The vision? A seamless day of state-provided care, including care before and after work. Under the proposal, some three-yearolds would log longer hours in school than many grown-ups do at work, healthy lunch and snacks included. All at taxpayer expense, of course.
>
> […]Often, when it comes to raising kids, daycare and schooling, we hear talk from qualified experts and smart people with degrees — as if parents aren’t quite up to snuff. Today’s smaller families mean we seldom learn from parents or grandparents who successfully raised large broods, so it’s easy to assume the experts have a better handle on our kids.
>
> But it’s gone too far. The public school curriculum is now devised largely without parental input, yet attempts to usurp some of the most important family responsibilities, including teaching ethics, values and sex education. On that front, studies suggest that parents are still the number-one influence in teen sexual decision making. Good news perhaps, since but for rare cases, teachers aren’t exactly jumping over couches in staff rooms to grab the sex ed curriculum.

I have probably never read so much useful information about what men are thinking about when they think about marriage in such a small space. We are thinking about fiscal conservatism, parental autonomy, stay-at-home mothers, and vouchers for private schools. The irony is that most young unmarried women are opposed to ALL of those things, and they VOTE AGAINST all of those things. And so, naturally, men want nothing to do with marrying them. Men may be interested in sex, but they certainly won’t be interested in marriage.

No one ever asks men what they want – everyone just assumes that men will keep acting chivalrously and keep marrying when all the incentives to marry are taken away! Ridiculous! If marriage doesn’t involve keeping what you earn, respect from the wife, family autonomy and social prestige, then men will not marry. Men like to do hard things ALONE – we don’t want to pay the government to “help” us, especially when the “help” means using our earnings to subsidize single motherhood with welfare and state-run education.

Women: if you want a man to think about marriage, this article shows the way you need to talk about marriage with men. Reading Dr. Laura’s “The Proper Care of Marriage”, Dr. Stephen Baskerville’s “Taken Into Custody”, George Gilder’s “Men and Marriage”, Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse’s “Love and Economics”, and James Dobson’s “Bringing Up Boys” would also be a good start. Probably the best two things to learn to impress a man are economics and Christian apologetics, with an emphasis on science and history.

William Lane Craig explains God’s relationship to time

January 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is kind of an advanced topic that can make your head explode… so be careful.

Here’s the first video in the series on God and Time:

Summary:

> Robert Lawrence Kuhn (host of PBS’ “Closer to Truth”) interviews William Lane Craig on time in relation to God. Questions explored: How do you deal with God and time? What is the tensed (aka A-Theory or dynamic theory) and tenseless (aka B-Theory or static) theory of time? How do they deal with past, present and future? Who is John Ellis McTaggart? How do scientists use the 4-dimension of time? How does special relativity deal with the A-theory and B-theory of time?

And the second:

Summary:

> Robert Lawrence Kuhn (host of PBS’ “Closer to Truth”) asks William Lane Craig about God’s personal relationship with time. Questions explored: If God is timeless how can He be active in the temporal world? Who is Soren Kierkegaard? Does it makes sense to talk about a timeless person? Does time affect God? Or does God affect time? Does God have a future? How does Evil and time effect one another? How does God work in time if He were in time? How does God work in time if He were timeless? How would God be in a tensed theory of time? How would God be in a tenseless theory of time?

And the third:

Summary:

> Robert Lawrence Kuhn (host of PBS’ “Closer to Truth”) interviews William Lane Craig about whether God is temporal or timeless. Questions explored: Why did it take God so long to create us? What did Leibniz argue against Newton? How did this entail that time had a beginning? How did a timeless God create a temporal universe? Does God change His characteristics in creating time? In what sense is God eternal with relation to time? Can God go back in time and undo what was done? If God works in time is he “locked” in time forever? When God works in time is He “limited”?

Many Christians disagree with Dr. Craig on his ideas about God and Time… but I think they are all wrong!

The least difficult book on this difficult topic is this one.

What issue could propel the Republicans to victory in 2012?

January 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The issue is school choice. Are the Republicans aware of this issue?

You bet they are.

Excerpt:

> The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, as it is known, was launched in 2004 as the first federally funded program providing K-12 education grants. Though supporters say it gives poor students an alternative to the city's underperforming public school system, teachers unions and other opponents say it draws sorely needed money away from the public system.
>
> Lawmakers opposed to the program succeeded in eliminating it after Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill. — who could not be reached for comment Tuesday — attached an amendment to a 2009 spending bill. President Obama stepped in and agreed to allow students currently enrolled to graduate. But the program is no longer accepting new applicants.
>
> Lindsey Burke, a Heritage Foundation analyst also on Boehner's guest list, said she hopes the proposed legislation finds an audience on the Hill.
>
> "We know that demand is very high for the program," she said. She said there were four applicants for every available scholarship when the program was accepting students and that graduation rates were far better than in the public system.
>
> Under the program, low-income parents in the District of Columbia were eligible for grants worth up to $7,500 annually to send their kids to private school. According to statistics provided by the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, the average household participating in the program earned just over $25,000 a year. There are still more than 1,000 students enrolled in the Opportunity Scholarship Program.
>
> Washington, D.C., has one of the most troubled public school systems in the country; its students consistently lag behind national averages on standardized testing. According to the scholarship program data, 93 percent of enrolled students would have otherwise attended an underperforming school in the District.

How much does it cost to provide a POOR education to one of these children?

Excerpt:

> The most common per-pupil figure used for D.C. Public Schools is an estimated $13,000. That figure is used by all of Washington's major daily newspapers – The

> Washington Times, The Washington Post and the Washington Examiner. Local radio and TV stations quote that number as well. But the actual dollar amount is $24,600 – which is "roughly $10,000 more than the average for area private schools," as Andrew Coulson of the Cato Institute pointed out in his April 4 blog, "The Real Cost of Public Schools."
>
> Mr. Coulson did not use "new math" to come up with $24,600. He used simple arithmetic. Total funding for D.C. Public Schools this fiscal year (including federal dollars) was $1.216 billion. He divided that by the official enrollment figure of 49,422 and the sum became $24,606.
>
> Also, Mr. Coulson averaged the published tuition costs for private schools in the region and came up with four figures: average tuition paid ($11,627); median tuition paid ($10,043); estimated average per-pupil spending ($14,534); and estimated median per-pupil spending ($12,534). Using simple math, we learned that average per-pupil spending at D.C. area private schools is $10,000 less than at D.C. Public Schools.

And more from the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> In a presentation at the Heritage Foundation, Dr. Patrick Wolf, a University of Arkansas researcher who has studied school choice programs, including OPS, for the Department of Education, said that the data shows that public charter schools and voucher programs educate a higher percentage of disadvantaged and minority children on average than traditional public schools.
>
> About 90 percent of OPS recipients are African American and 9 percent are Hispanic, Wolf says, with 17 percent diagnosed with disabilities. Their families' average income of $17,356 is well below the federal poverty line. **But they still managed to do slightly better than their peers in the District's public schools.**

You can get better performance for much less money, even with more disadvantaged children – it just takes vouchers.

The money for the vouchers would naturally come from closing down the schools that cannot satisfy parents, who will use the voucher to go elsewhere to buy their children's education. Instead of a monopoly where customers are forced to pay for a product they don't want just because of where they live (because they are POOR and cannot afford to live elsewhere), parents will have a *choice* of where to send their children, and schools will have to compete to please parents by providing a good product to buy – a quality education. It will turn the public school system from a monopoly into a free market, where the customer (parents) will be king, and the children will benefit. Only underperforming teachers and their allies in the Democrat party stand to lose.

If Republicans take steps to enact robust school choice using voucher programs NOW, then propose a national voucher program in the 2012 election, then they will win the

2012. This is the winning issue. We need to put the children *first* and put the underperforming adults *last.*

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

Unemployment rate in socialist Spain now above 20%

January 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Europe

Here's the story from Yahoo News.

Excerpt:

> Spain announced Friday its jobless rate surged to a 13-year record above 20 percent at the end of 2010, the highest level in the industrialized world, as the economy struggled for air.
>
> It was more bad news for an economy fighting to regain the trust of financial markets and avoid being trapped in a debt quagmire that has engulfed Greece and Ireland and now menaces Portugal.
>
> Another 121,900 people joined Spain's unemployment queues in the final quarter of the year, pushing the total to 4.697 million people, said the national statistics institute INE.
>
> The resulting unemployment rate was 20.33 percent for the end of the year — easily exceeding Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero's target of 19.4 percent.
>
> Spain appears to be stuck in a rut of staggeringly high levels of unemployment.
>
> After posting a jobless rate of 18.83 percent in 2009 and now 20.33 percent in 2010, the government is forecasting 19.3 percent for 2011 and 17.5 percent in

> 2012.
>
> The Spanish economy, the European Union's fifth biggest, slumped into recession during the second half of 2008 as the global financial meltdown compounded the collapse of a labour-intensive construction boom
>
> It emerged with tepid growth of just 0.1 percent in the first quarter of 2010 and 0.2 percent in the second but then stalled with zero growth in the third.
>
> Zapatero has said the fourth quarter will show positive growth which would pick up steam in 2011 but he warned that job creation would be "far from what we need and desire. It will be slow and progressive."

Remember that Spain elected Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero in April 2004, who is a member of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, which is very similar in policy to Barack Obama and the Democrats. Let's see what has happened in Spain. (H/T Spain Economy Watch)

Unemployment:

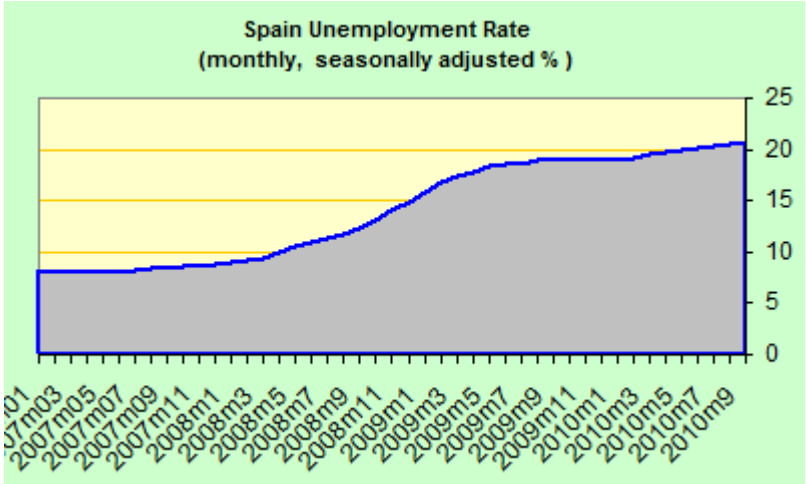

Spain Unemployment Rate

Private sector employment:

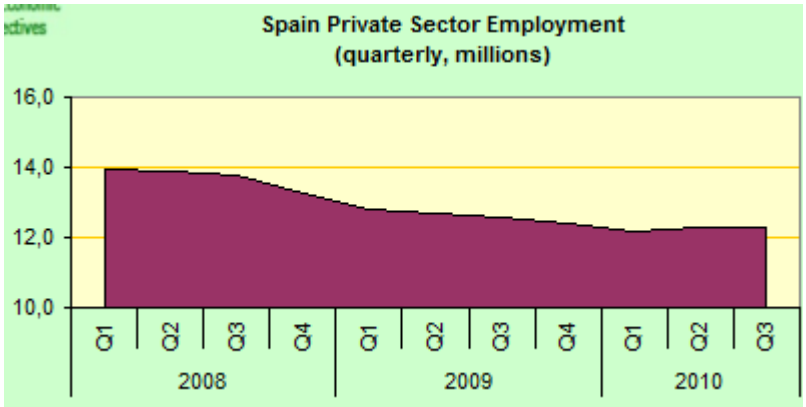

Spain Employment - Private Sector

Public sector employment:

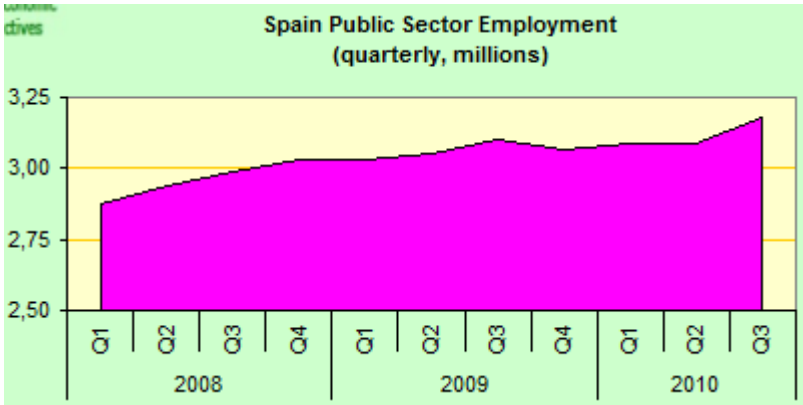

Spain Employment - Public Sector

So what do we learn from this?

Well, the public sector doesn't really sell any products or services, so they don't really have any customers to please, nor do they have any revenue. They exist by confiscating the wealth of other people (in the private sector) who do have products and services to sell, and do have customers to please. The governments job is to HELP the people in the private sector and not to raise their taxes, or control them, or get in their way except to make sure that they compete fairly and honestly with other people in the private sector. When government oversteps their bounds by raising taxes too high and spending too much, they stop acting like a REFEREE and start acting more like a PARASITE.

You'll note that Obama is also spending trillions of dollars on government boondoggles – and where is our unemployment rate now?

Arkansas Senate votes to block taxpayer funding of abortion

January 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

State Sen. Cecile Bledsoe

Republican state senator Cecile Bledsoe is making headlines in Arkansas.

Excerpt:

> The Arkansas Senate voted Thursday to prohibit insurers in new markets set up under the federal health care law from offering coverage for abortions except in cases where the mother's life is at stake — a move that opponents say will make it virtually impossible for women to get abortion coverage.
>
> The Senate voted 27-8 to approve strict limits on when abortion would be covered in the new insurance markets that will be set up starting in 2014 under the federal health care overhaul. The legislation would prohibit abortion coverage by insurers in those markets even in cases of rape and incest.
>
> Coverage for abortions could be obtained through separate supplemental policies.
>
> The bill's sponsor, Sen. Cecile Bledsoe, R-Rogers, said it was aimed at preventing publicly funded abortions in Arkansas in the new system. Under the reform law, some people participating in the new networks will receive tax credits to subsidize their health insurance coverage.
>
> "This is about tax dollars and Arkansans have said overwhelmingly we don't want to spend tax dollars on abortions," Bledsoe told the Senate.
>
> […]Bledsoe's bill now heads to the House. Gov. Mike Beebe, a Democrat, said Thursday night he'd prefer to see an exemption for rape and incest in the bill, but would not say whether he'd oppose the legislation in its current form.

Notice how the Democrats try to water down a good law by raising an exception that happens in a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a percent of cases. Also note that

babies that are conceived as a result of rape or incest are still human beings, and deserve a right to life. She/He should be allowed to live and then placed for adoption after birth. Why should the innocent baby be punished for a crime that she/he did not commit? To deter rape and incest, we can pass even tougher criminal laws against them, and offer the woman assistance while she carries the child.

Related posts

- Republican Governor Rick Perry demands sonograms before abortions
- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion
- House Republicans set to unveil $2.5 TRILLION in spending cuts
- Are the new Tea Party Republicans any better than the old liberal ones?
- Democrats plan to block Republicans from banning earmarks

What is the real issue in the push for legalized abortion?

January 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think the main cause of the desire for legalized abortion, is that women and men do not want to take responsibility for their actions.

The sexual act always has a chance of making a baby. If people who are having sex are not ready to take care of a baby, without the government's help, then they should not have sex. We should not take chances with other people's lives just so we can do risky things that make us feel good. The needs of grown-ups to feel good does not trump the right to life of another (unborn) human being. We have to sometimes give up things that make us feel good in order to avoid harming others.

I think the reason why people push abortion is because they want to believe that pre-marital recreational sex is normal. The people who push these policies are often those who had sex themselves before they were married, perhaps because it was fun (men) or perhaps because they wanted attention from the opposite sex (women). They wanted the recreational sex to feel good, but didn't want to be saddled with the consequences of their desire for happiness.

I think the solution is to replace recreational pre-marital sex with chastity, courting and marriage. Men need to learn to control their desires, and make good decisions to prepare for being a husband and father, and get married, before they have sex. Women need to learn to do without male attention, to prepare themselves for having a husband and children, and to have sex only after they are married. Pre-marital sex isn't an appropriate way for a woman to get attention from a man. There are other ways. And we should be training men to respond to those other ways. We should also be encouraging fathers to stay married and model love for their children by loving their wives.

We should not have any laws or policies that discourage men from preparing for their role of protector/provider/moral-and-spiritual-leader in a marriage. Sex education should not be subsidized or promoted by government because it makes children learn about sex outside of the context of marriage. And we should likewise not have any laws or policies that discourage women from preparing for marriage, by making husbands seem unnecessary to having and raising children. For example, we should end welfare payments for single mothers to make it clear that men are needed to provide for children, and that men should be selected by women for that role.

Children need a stable relationship with their married biological mother and father. So government has to promote marriage. Government may have to give up promoting third-wave feminism so that we can strengthen marriage, since third-wave feminism is opposed to marriage. We may need to to roll-back to first-wave (equal opportunity) feminism and give up the misguided quest to equate men with women in every area of life.

And we shouldn't be pushing sex education as a way of removing the moral prohibitions on pre-marital sex. Those prohibitions were there for a reason and people who have pre-marital sex SHOULD feel bad. The solution is NOT to tell everyone that there is nothing wrong with it just because the people who do it want to feel better about themselves by making everyone agree with them. I think the left uses the public schools to beat down moral standards so that they will feel better about their own immorality. But immorality is harmful – and it's better for young people to abide by traditional moral rules and avoid harming themselves and others than for grown-ups to avoid feeling bad for breaking those rules. Sorry grown-ups, but maybe it feels bad because it is bad – and stop trying to tell everyone that what you did was fine. It wasn't fine. It was wrong.

Related posts

- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice

January 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, education reform in Florida.

Excerpt:

> Michelle Rhee, who gained national attention as the chancellor of schools in Washington, D.C., called Monday for giving students government-funded vouchers to attend private schools, rating principals based on student achievement and getting rid of teacher tenure.
>
> The release of the blueprint was the first formal action of Ms. Rhee's new advocacy group, StudentsFirst, which she launched in December, after leaving her job heading D.C. schools in October. Ms. Rhee said she was in discussions with the governors of Florida, New Mexico, New Jersey, Tennessee, Nevada and Indiana to adopt part, if not all, of the agenda.
>
> […]The nation's two largest teachers' unions criticized Ms. Rhee's agenda.[…]The detailed plan Ms. Rhee released Monday focuses on overhauling teacher pay and evaluation plans, giving parents more say in their child's education and spending tax dollars more wisely.
>
> In addition to doing away with tenure, it calls for ending the practice of paying teachers based on years of service and on the master's degrees they collect. Ms. Rhee said pay should be based on whether teachers boost student achievement.
>
> She also is calling for districts to get parental consent before placing children in the classrooms of low-performing teachers. Ms. Rhee said firing ineffective teachers can be time-consuming and expensive.
>
> "Too many districts hide the fact that they have ineffective teachers and we are saying, 'If you can't change the laws, then you have to give parents the information,' " she said.
>
> The blueprint also prods states and districts to adopt "parent trigger" laws that let parents force a major overhaul of a school if more than half of them sign a petition. They could vote to turn the school into a charter school or force the district to get rid of most of the teaching staff.A similar policy was used in Compton, Calif., last year.
>
> Ms. Rhee's document also calls for an end to what she calls ineffective policies that waste taxpayer money, such as class size reduction policies in the higher grade levels. Her plan, she said, wouldn't increase spending but would ensure taxpayer money was spent more wisely.
>
> StudentsFirst's initial foray into policy could be in Florida, where Republican Gov. Rick Scott, who was elected to office in November, appointed Ms. Rhee to his

> transition team. In a news release, Mr. Scott praised Ms. Rhee's agenda and said he supported her call to eliminate tenure and expand the number of charter schools, public schools run by independent groups.

And education reform from Indiana. (H/T Heritage Foundation)

Excerpt:

> Gov. Mitch Daniels urged the state legislature to finally act on significant reforms to public education and local government in his annual State of the State speech Tuesday, repeating a call for the expansion of charter schools, merit pay for teachers and the elimination of township government.
>
> […]Now empowered by a Republican majority in both legislative chambers, Daniels said "it's going to be a session to remember." He was escorted to the podium by several lawmakers of both parties, including Sen. Earline Rogers, D-Gary.
>
> He said Indiana should let students finish their high school studies a year early and be given scholarships for college studies. Teachers should be rewarded based on student performance, he said, adding that one in three Hoosier children can pass the national math or reading exam.
>
> Meanwhile, he said 99 percent of Indiana teachers are rated "effective."
>
> "If that were true 99 percent, not one-third, of our students would be passing those national tests," Daniels said.
>
> Families who can't find the right public or charter public school, he said, should be able to apply state dollars toward "the non-government school of their choice."

And finally, education reform in Pennsylvania. (H/T Heritage Foundation)

Excerpt:

> Political momentum is building for taxpayer-funded school tuition vouchers, as hundreds of people clogged the Capitol rotunda Tuesday to support the idea of "school choice."
>
> […]During the recent campaign, Lt. Gov. Jim Cawley told the boisterous crowd, Gov. Tom Corbett "repeatedly said that things would change in education. Today we start that process of putting children first. State government should be open to and promote charter schools, home schools, private schools and cyber schools" as well as traditional public schools, he said."I'm more excited and encouraged about the possibility of educational change than I've ever been," said Sen. Jeffrey Piccola, R-Dauphin, who has been advocating state-funded tuition vouchers for 15 years.
>
> […]His bill, Senate Bill 1, would create a three-phase program for making state-funded vouchers available to low-income students who now have no choice but

> to go to public schools that consistently score poorly on state proficiency tests.
>
> […]The Senate Education Committee will hold a hearing on the bill in mid-February, and it could get a Senate vote in March. Since Republicans control both the Senate and House, and since Gov. Tom Corbett supports the school choice idea, the bill is likely to be enacted. But opponents could file a court challenge.

Last week was "School Choice Week", and there were a lot of events promoting school choice. Republicans noticed these events and participated in them. And now Republicans are making a push to sign bills that help poor students to get better educations. Democrats are opposed to school choice because they are supported by teacher unions who want guaranteed jobs for teachers regardless of performance.

I like that the Republicans are making pushes to cut spending, ban taxpayer funding of abortions, and introduce school choice. These are all issues that I strongly agree with, because they are all pro-child. Children shouldn't have to pay for the debts their parents run up, children shouldn't be killed in the womb, and children shouldn't get a crappy education just so that badly performing schools can stay open. These policies make sense to me. Next, they should introduce a federal law for charter marriages, and introduce a federal voucher program for pre-marital counseling.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

Why border security is a national security issue

January 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> U.S. border guards got a surprise when they searched a Mexican BMW and found a hardline Muslim cleric – banned from France and Canada – curled up in the boot.
>
> Said Jaziri, who called for the death of a Danish cartoonist that drew pictures of the prophet Mohammed, was being smuggled into California when he was arrested, along with his driver Kenneth Robert Lawler.
>
> The 43-year-old was deported from Canada to his homeland Tunisia in 2007 after it emerged he had lied on his refugee application about having served jail time in France.
>
> Jaziri had allegedly paid a Tijuana-based smuggling cartel $5,000 to take him across the border near Tecate, saying he wanted to be taken to a 'safe place anywhere in the U.S.'
>
> According to the court documents, a Mexican guide led Jaziri and a Mexican immigrant over the border fence near Tecate.
>
> They then trekked across the rugged terrain under cover of darkness to a spot popular for drivers who pick up immigrants for smuggling runs into San Diego.
>
> […]His case drew support from the Muslim community as well as Amnesty International after he claimed he would be tortured if sent back to Tunisia.

In other news, my Dad sent me this link about a sham university that was set up to grant student visas to people who wanted admittance to the United States illegally.

Is Chris Matthews or Michele Bachmann right about John Quincy Adams?

January 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann

Let me link to a post that I found on Letitia's blog.

Here's the dispute:

> On Tuesday, leftist lackey Chris Matthews went on a jaundiced tirade against Congresswoman Michele Bachmann's speech for the Iowans for Tax Relief. Specifically, he derided Rep. Bachmann's citation of John Quincy Adams as one of this country's forebearers who worked tirelessly for abolition.

First, of all, let's look at this post on Big Government which explains what John Adams did.

Excerpt:

> As a Founder and the second President, it's true that John Adams put the Republic above what was then an impossible issue to resolve. It is inaccurate to suggest he was a proponent of slavery with no role in its ultimately being eliminated in the U.S. No, he did not sacrifice the forming of a Republic for it, which is precisely what a strong position against it would have meant. But he did make his sentiments known (for more), taking pride in never having employed a slave. He is said to have found it "repugnant" and he argued against the Southern position that blacks not be included in population figures during the Continental Congress.

Now back to Letitia and John Quincy Adams, son of John Adams.

Here are the facts, linked from Letitia's post:

> John Quincy Adams: according to biographies of Adams' life, he repeatedly attempted to introduce bills by abolitionist groups into Congress calling for the abolition of slavery. Such was the opposition to his ongoing attempts, Southern Democrats passed a number of gag rules in order to prevent Adams from introducing any more abolitionist bills.
>
> > "Throughout he was conspicuous as an opponent of the extension of slavery, though he was never technically an abolitionist, and in particular he was the champion in the House of Representatives of the right of petition at a time when, through the influence of the Southern members, this right was, in practice, denied by that body. His prolonged fight for the repeal of the so-called "Gag Laws" is one of the most dramatic contests in the history of the U.S. Congress. The agitation for the abolition of slavery, which really began in earnest with the establishment of the Liberator by William Lloyd Garrison in 1831, soon led to the sending of innumerable petitions to congress for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, over which the Federal government had jurisdiction, and for other action by congress with respect to that institution. These petitions were generally sent to Adams for presentation. They aroused the anger of the pro-slavery members of congress, who, in 1836, brought about the passage of the first "Gag Rule", the Pinckney Resolution, presented by Henry L. Pinckney, of South Carolina. It provided that all petitions relating to slavery should be laid on the table without being referred to committee or printed; and, in substance, this resolution was re-adopted at the beginning of each of the immediately succeeding sessions of congress, the Patton Resolution being adopted in 1837, the Atherton Resolution, or "Atherton Gag", in 1838, and the Twenty-first Rule in 1840 and subsequently until repealed. Adams contended that these "Gag Rules" were a direct violation of the First Amendment to the Federal Constitution, and refused to be silenced on the question, fighting for repeal with indomitable courage, in spite of the bitter denunciation of his opponents. Each year the number of anti-slavery petitions received and presented by him increased; perhaps the climax was in 1837, when Adams presented a petition from twenty-two slaves, and, when threatened by his opponents with censure, defended himself with remarkable keenness and ability. At each session, also, the majority against him decreased until in 1844 his motion to repeal the Twenty-first Rule was carried by a vote of 108 to 80 and his battle was won." (Source: NDDB biographies, http://www.nndb.com/people/370/000026292/)
>
> Incidentally (or not incidentally, if you believe in Divine Providence as I do), in the

> last year of Adams' life, he mentored a young Congressman to work toward abolition. This Congressman later went on to become the 16th President of the United States. Oh, what was his name? Abraham Lincoln.

She then links to this Youtube video showing the details of the connection between John Quincy Adams and Abraham Lincoln.

Letitia is a friend of mine, so I recommend that everyone read the rest of her post. Her blog is called "Talitha, Koum". There's a Biblical meaning to that phrase.

My thoughts

I'm going to compare Chris Matthews to Michele Bachmann to see which one has more education, more experience and higher moral standards.

Education:

Let's review Matthews' academic history. He has a bachelor degree in something, no site will say what, from the College of the Holy Cross. When people don't say what the degree is in, you can bet your bottom dollar that it is something totally useless like drama or music or education or women's studies. And he did one year of graduate work in economics before DROPPING OUT. He then spent some time working as a police offer on Capitol Hill.

In contrast, Michele Bachmann has a B.A. and a J.D. and an LL.M in tax law from the College of William and Mary, a prestigious law school. That means she has completed her bachelor degree, doctorate in laws, and a post-doctoral degree in tax law. She worked as a federal tax lawyer before starting a successful career in politics.

Campaigns:

Matthews is a Democrat, who has worked for Democrats and he has even run for office as a Democrat.

> When Matthews first arrived in Washington, D.C., he worked as a police officer with the United States Capitol Police. Subsequently, he served on the staffs of four Democratic members of Congress, including Senators Frank Moss and Edmund Muskie. In 1974, he mounted an unsuccessful campaign for Pennsylvania's 4th congressional district seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, in which he received about 24% of the vote in the primary. Matthews was a presidential speechwriter during the Carter administration, and later worked for six years as a top aide to long-time Speaker of the House of Representatives Tip O'Neill, playing a direct role in many key political battles with the Reagan administration.

Michele Bachmann meanwhile has run for office at the state and federal level and won numerous times, in a blue state, no less. In all, she has spent six years as a state senator, and 4 years as a congresswoman, and was just elected again. She has not ruled out a run for the Presidency in 2012.

Religion:

Note that Matthews was raised Catholic but he is not a Catholic, since he is a strong proponent of abortion.

> Matthews is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross but his own Catholic faith has diverged from the pro-life teachings of the Catholic Church.
>
> His political career saw him as a top staffer for pro-abortion former House Speaker Tip O'Neil and he is an unabashed supporter of Obama.
>
> In March, Matthews referred to pro-life advocates who oppose pro-abortion Health Secretary nominee Kathleen Sebelius as terrorists.

> During his program "Hardball," Matthews worried that Sebelius would become the target of "the terrorism of the, of the anti-abortion people."

And more:

> […]the conservatives will find the evils of sodomy, the evils of, uh, uh, infidelity, the evils of sex of any form. It seems like the conservatives don't like sex and they're very focused on that and the liberals are focused on social injustice.

So he rejects Biblical morality on sex. And why should we be surprised? He is a Democrat -the party of John Edwards, Bill Clinton, Gary Condit, Eliot Spitzer, etc. For Democrats, affairs are OK – they never resign because they think that there should be no rules around sex. My opinion is that he is an atheist like most Democrats, although he is not going to come out and say that.

Note what being pro-abortion really means. Being pro-abortion means that one group (adults) can choose to kill another group (the unborn) simply because it makes them happier to do so. To make this sound more palatable, they marginalize an entire group of human beings to being non-human trash. As Frank Turek recently noted, this is *EXACTLY* what slave-owners did. Slave-owners marginalized an entire class of human beings to trash because it made them happier. If Matthews had been alive during the time of slavery, he would have been a slave-owner. He would have called abolitionists "terrorists", just like he calls pro-lifers "terrorists".

In contrast, Michele Bachmann is an outspoken evangelical Christian. Her views are consistent with the Bible across the board.

Misogyny:

Chris Matthews is constantly insulting the intelligence of women:

> On a recent installment of MSNBC's "Hardball," Chris Matthews could not contain his mocking laughter as he announced the breaking news that Michele Bachmann had been appointed to the House Intelligence Committee. Matthews does not make any case to support the idea that Bachmann lacks the competence to be on the intelligence committee; to him it is simply a forgone conclusion based on her gender and political leanings. Matthews has made trivializing remarks about Christine O'Donnell as well. During O'Donnell's

> campaign, Matthews dismissed her as a "cute" girl that is "just having fun." Somehow, conservative women are inherently bimbos.
>
> However, the most glaring examples of the bimbo narrative are focused upon Sarah Palin. Matthews, along with many in the mainstream media, have repeatedly accused her of lacking intelligence. From the outset of her emergence upon the national stage Matthews has questioned her intelligence: calling her an empty "vessel" that lacks "independent thinking" which will be filled up with conservative rhetoric. When Palin's first book deal was announced, Matthews was quick to dismiss: "If she can read, if she can write, she'll make money."
>
> Last Friday, preemptively criticizing an upcoming appearance on *Hannity*, Matthews compared Palin's appearance to an infomercial that would be "selling makeup foundations." Palin was to discuss the recent blood libel comment she made in response to accusations that she incited the Arizona shootings.

And not just conservative women:

> On "Hardball" Thursday, Chris Matthews responded to critics who claim he recently made sexist comments about Hillary Rodham Clinton, which they say is part of a history of similar conduct.
>
> Controversy erupted after Matthews made remarks on Joe Scarborough's "Morning Joe" on MSNBC that "the reason she's a U.S. senator, the reason she's a candidate for president, the reason she may be a front-runner is her husband messed around. That's how she got to be senator from New York. We keep forgetting it. She didn't win there on her merit."

Naturally, Michele Bachmann won't do this – she is an intelligent woman. She knows how hard it is to actually finish graduate school and win election campaigns… unlike Chris Matthews. She actually finishes what she starts… unlike Chris Matthews.

UPDATE: Letitia posted this on Facebook:

Wow, that was pretty fast.

Related posts

- Rachel Maddow doesn't understand modern military weapon systems
- What was the context of Michele Bachmann's "armed and dangerous" comment?
- Is the media accurate in reporting on left-wing and right-wing violence?
- Condoleezza Rice Takes on Katie Couric Over Iraq Claims
- CBS News caught on tape conspiring to smear Republican candidate
- Democrats got 88% of 2008 contributions from mainstream media
- How the left-wing media conspired to label conservatives as racists
- Journalists conspired to spike the Jeremiah Wright story
- Washington Post blogger is an advisor for the Obama administration
- Mark Steyn asks whether Fox News is more biased than CBC or BBC
- How reliable are government-paid broadcasters like Tavis Smiley?

- What can we learn about media bias from donations made by journalists?
- MSNBC’s Contessa Brewer regrets that Times Square suspect is Muslim
- Is the mainstream media fair in reporting on abortion violence?
- How the left-wing media lowers the level of civil discourse
- MSNBC deliberately edits out black protester then complains about racism
- Shocking video example of left-wing media bias on MSNBC
- Which cable news network has the worst media bias?
- Hugh Hewitt demolishes MSNBC’s Larry O’Donnell

Over 99 percent of people in southern Sudan vote for succession

January 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

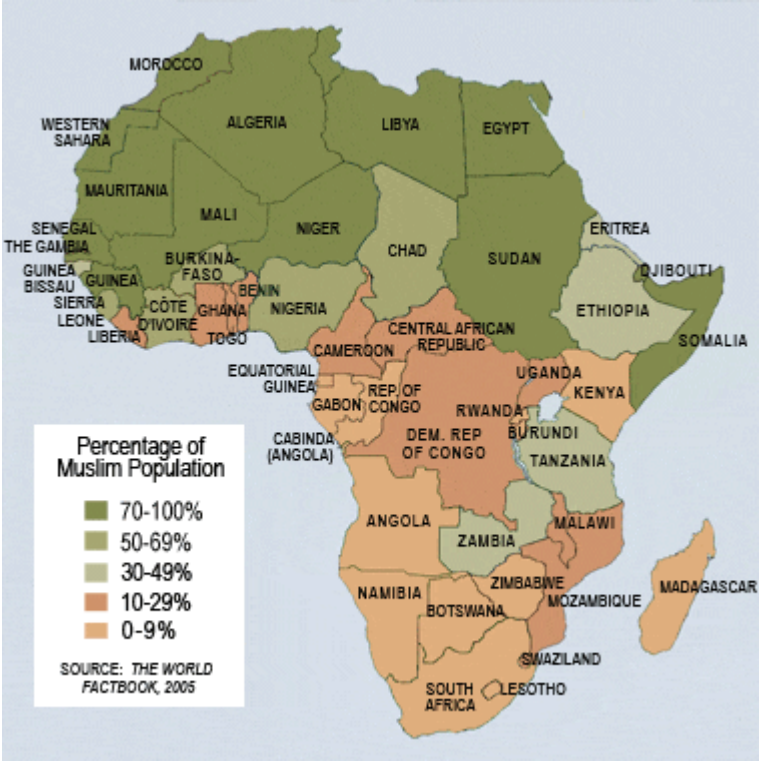

Map of Africa

Great news in Sudan. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> More than 99 percent of Southern Sudanese voted to secede from the north, a referendum official said Sunday in the first official preliminary result announcement.
>
> "The vote for separation was 99.57 percent," said Chan Reek Madut, the deputy head of the commission that organized the referendum, to a crowd in the South's capital of Juba, according to Reuters.
>
> Voter turnout in the South was 99 percent, Madut said. And over 60 percent of Southern Sudanese living in the north turned out to vote, with 58 percent voting to secede, he stated.
>
> Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil, chairman of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission, said 99 percent of the Southern Sudanese diaspora in eight nations also voted to secede.
>
> After decades of civil war and ongoing tension between the northern and southern governments, it looks like the south will finally become its own country. The weeklong referendum, which began on Jan. 9, is called for by the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which ended more than two decades of civil

> war.
>
> […]Southern Sudan President Salva Kiir, who is expected to lead the independent South, has called for Southern Sudanese to forgive the North for the years of violence during the civil war. Some 1.9 million people died during the war between the North and South and more than 500 churches were destroyed in the South.
>
> "For our deceased brothers and sisters, particularly those who have fallen during the time of struggle, may God bless them with eternal peace," said Kiir at Catholic Cathedral in Juba on Jan. 16.
>
> "And," he continued, "may we, like Jesus Christ on the cross, forgive those who have forcefully caused their deaths."

Southern Sudan is the more Christian part of Sudan, so this is good news for Sudanese Christians.

Here's a close up of southern Sudan:

Map of Southern Sudan

Muddling linked to an interesting post providing more historical context for the referendum.

I'm still very worried about what is going on in Egypt and Pakistan. I am still trying to catch up on Egypt but the two posts linked by Gateway Pundit are the two best that I've seen.

Is the TSA more interested in airport security or supporting unions?

January 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this story by Hans Bader in the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> The TSA shut the door Friday on a private airport screening program that was making the inefficient agency look bad by outperforming it in safety, innovation, and passenger satisfaction. The TSA's action was praised by a liberal union in Washington that expects to unionize the TSA, the American Federation of Government Employees. Its head, John Gage, applauded the Obama Administration for requiring a "federalized" government "work force."
>
> Previously, the Screening Partnership Program allowed airports to replace government screeners with private contractors. 16 airports did so. "But on Friday, the TSA denied an application by Springfield-Branson Airport in Missouri to privatize its checkpoint workforce, and in a statement," TSA head John "Pistole indicated other applications likewise will be denied." The TSA's head said he did not see any "clear or substantial advantage" to the TSA in allowing additional airports to use private screeners, although he said that the few other airports that already use private screeners will be allowed to continue to do so.

> […]Earlier, the TSA retaliated against a veteran pilot who exposed the TSA's security failures, taking away whistleblower Chris Liu's credentials and firearm.
>
> The Obama Administration is now seeking to unionize the TSA, even though the TSA was originally forbidden to unionize due to security concerns. Unlike the TSA's current head, all past TSA Administrators have recognized that collective bargaining and union work rules are inconsistent with the flexibility needed to protect public safety and adapt quickly to changes in terrorist tactics. (Undercover agents have managed to slip bombs past TSA screeners, and the TSA is even less effective at detecting them than the private security firms it replaced after 9/11). The AFGE union predicted on January 21 that voting to unionize the TSA will begin by mid-March.

The problem with unionizing the TSA is that it leads to the same problems we have in public schools, where there is no concern about pleasing customers because it is impossible to fire teachers no matter how badly they perform. Is it the job of government to provide adult day care to a bunch of poorly-performing layabouts? If the TSA cannot do the job of keeping us safe, then why should be locked into hiring them? We need to have more flexibility to get the best people for the job, and that means that we cannot hire union workers who will not respond to our needs.

Obamacare struck down as unconstitutional by Florida judge

January 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hans Bader again, writing at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> A judge in Florida just declared the health care law known as "Obamacare" unconstitutional, ruling it void in its entirety. Judge Vinson rightly declared the health care law's individual mandate unconstitutional, since the inactivity of not buying health insurance is not an "economic activity" that Congress has the power to regulate under the Interstate Commerce Clause. (Under the Supreme Court's decision in *United States v. Morrison* (2000), which I helped litigate, only "economic activity" can be regulated under the Commerce Clause, with the possible exception of those non-economic activities that harm instrumentalities of interstate commerce or cross state lines.)
>
> Judge Vinson also **rightly declared the law as a whole unconstitutional**. The health care law lacks a severability clause. So if a major provision like the individual mandate is unconstitutional — as it indeed was — then the whole law must be struck down.
>
> […]As I noted earlier in *The Washington Examiner*, "To justify preserving the rest of the law, the judge" in the earlier Virginia case "cited a 2010 Supreme Court ruling [*Free Enterprise Fund v. PCAOB]* that invalidated part of a law — but kept the rest of it in force. But that case involved a law passed almost unanimously by Congress, which would have passed it even without the challenged provision. Obamacare is totally different. It was barely passed by a divided Congress, but only as a package. Supporters admitted that the unconstitutional part of it — the insurance mandate — was the law's heart. Obamacare's legion of special-interest giveaways that are 'extraneous to health care' does not alter that." In short, Obamacare's individual mandate is not "volitionally severable," as case law requires.
>
> The individual mandate provision also was not "functionally" severable from the rest of the law, since the very Congress that passed Obamacare deemed the individual absolutely "essential" to the Act's overarching goals (as Judge Vinson in Florida correctly noted).
>
> […]Cato legal scholar Ilya Shapiro, who filed briefs against the law in Virginia, comments on today's decision here, calling it a "victory for federalism and individual liberty

I also got two more opinions about what this means:

- It’s the end of Obamacare (Volokh Conspiracy)
- It’s not the end of Obamacare (NAM)

Not sure who to believe. An injunction would have been better.

Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality

February 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News. (H/T Mary's friend Eleanor)

Excerpt:

> Just a week after Christian guesthouse owners in Cornwall were ordered to pay compensation to two homosexual men turned away over a married-couples-only rule, two more homosexuals are suing the owners of an upscale bed and breakfast on the Thames.
>
> Emboldened by the recent win for the homosexualist lobby, Michael Black, 63, and John Morgan, 58, are claiming sexual discrimination by owner Susanne Wilkinson after they were turned away from the Swiss B&B in Cookham, Berkshire, last March.
>
> […]The Daily Mail reports that the two men booked their room online but when they arrived Mrs. Wilkinson told them "it is against my convictions for two men to share a bed', adding 'this is my private home." Wilkinson returned their deposit and asked them, politely, to leave.
>
> "She said she was sorry and she was polite in a cold way and she was not abusive, so we asked our money back and she gave it to us," Black told the Mail.
>
> Black implied that the solution is for people with traditional British Christian moral values to stay out of any business or employment that would bring them into contact with the public.
>
> "If anyone thinks that providing a public service may conflict with their religious beliefs they should question whether that is a suitable business for them."
>
> The first institutions to disappear under the recently passed Sexual Orientation Regulations of the Equality Act, installed under Tony Blair's Labour government, were the nation's Catholic adoption agencies. All of them were forced either to close or sever their ties with the Catholic Church upon being instructed that they must consider homosexual partners as prospective adoptees.
>
> In debates in the House, some British parliamentarians had also warned that the Equalities laws would create legal conflicts between homosexuals and conscientious Christian hoteliers like Peter and Hazelmary Bull, the owners of the Cornwall guesthouse who were ordered by a judge last week to pay £3,600 to Martyn Hall and Steven Preddy, homosexuals in a registered civil partnership.
>
> The Bulls appear to have been set up as a test case by the homosexualist activist group Stonewall. The two men, according to court testimony, attempted to book a room in the Penzance guesthouse by registering as "Mr. and Mrs. Preddy" a month after the Bulls received a threatening letter from Stonewall.

> The Bulls, who are appealing last week's ruling, say they are being driven out of business by a "hate campaign," and have received abusive phone calls and bogus negative reviews of their hotel have been posted to a travel website. Several homosexual men have called and demanded rooms, threatening legal action if they are refused. Mrs. Bull told the Daily Telegraph, "One told me I was an abomination and would go straight to hell. These people know nothing about my lifestyle, and I've been astounded by their cruelty."

Is there a right not to be offended? If so, then does it trump the right to religious liberty?

Please read this article on same-sex marriage by Dennis Prager to find out how the gay agenda will change society.

In fact, you can see it right now in the UK education system.

Related posts

- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Court says nurse who was forced to perform late-term abortion can't sue
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Christian student faces complaint for advertising for Christian roommate
- Gay federal judge rules traditional marriage unconstitutional in California
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Pastor relieved of duties for mentioning Jesus in NC legislature
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- Do Democrats like Chai Feldblum believe in religious liberty?
- Do Democrats like Martha Coakley believe in religious liberty?
- How Harriet Harman's Equality Bill will impact religious liberty
- Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

Obama’s weak foreign policy may lead to WAR in the Middle East

February 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Middle East

First article from the left-wing Huffington Post. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> In its first year, **the Obama administration cut funding for democracy and governance programming in Egypt by more than half, from $50 million in 2008 to $20 million in 2009** (Congress later appropriated another $5 million). The level of funding for civil society programs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was cut disproportionately, from $32 million to only $7 million. Though funding levels for 2010 are not yet available, they are expected to show an increase to $14 million, says Stephen McInerny, the director of advocacy at the Project on Middle East Democracy. He notes that the Bush administration slashed economic aid to Egypt in the 2009 budget but kept the funding for democracy and governance programs constant, while Obama cut funding to those programs in an effort to make the cuts more proportional and under pressure from the American embassy in Cairo.

Second article, from the LA Times. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration said for the first time that it supports a role for groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, a banned Islamist organization, in a reformed

> Egyptian government.
>
> […]The statement was an acknowledgment that any popularly accepted new government will probably include groups that are not considered friendly to U.S. interests, and was a signal that the White House is prepared for that probability after 30 years of reliable relations with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Third article, from National Review. (H/T Hyscience)

Excerpt:

> Hamas's overt intervention in Egypt is an alarming development, although a predictable one. It is worth pointing out that Hamas is not merely colluding with the Muslim Brotherhood. Hamas *is* the Muslim Brotherhood. That, of course, will not be what you hear from our foreign-policy experts, such as Obama adviser Bruce Riedel, who are busily sculpting their narrative about how the Brotherhood — the font on modern jihadist terror — has renounced violence and is really nothing for us to be very concerned about. But the stubborn fact is that Hamas is the most prominent of the Brotherhood's Palestinian branches, whose operations long predated Hamas and brought Hamas (a/k/a, the Islamic Resistance Movement) into being.

So that's what's happening in Egypt… Hamas is moving in to take control, just like Hezbollah controls Lebanon (now). But why now? Why didn't this happen when George W. Bush was President?

Well, Barack Obama is no George W. Bush.

Let's review:

- Obama insulted our British allies
- Obama insulted our Afghan allies
- Obama backed Iran's suppression of pro-democracy protestors
- Obama did nothing when Russian tanks rolled through Georgia
- Obama did nothing when Hezbollah took over Lebanon
- Obama backed the socialist Zeyala in Honduras
- Obama met with Chavez, Ortega and Morales and kept silent while they insulted the United States
- Obama did nothing while Turkey became increasingly Islamicized
- Obama cut funding to democracy and governance programs in Egypt

And what is the end game of all of this weakness and moral equivalence?

Excerpt:

> The circle is now complete. This week Barack Obama truly became what many people believe he was all along, the long lost second term of Jimmy Carter's presidency.
>
> […]First he criticized the weakened leader of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak. Next Obama

> threatened to emasculate Mubarak's standing with the Egyptian military by reducing US financial aid if Mubarak didn't allow the protests and revolution in the streets to continue.
>
> Obama followed up by tacitly signaling that he supports the violent Islamic protests which are backed by the Shariah-compliant extremists of the Moslem Brotherhood, which is the only real opposition party in Egypt to the thirty-year dictator Mubarak. After that, like Carter, Obama showed constant indecision and weakness, which is having the result of undermining our allies and empowering the forces of insanity and evil on the ground in Egypt and other destabilized countries in the region like Tunisia, Lebanon and Jordan.
>
> Just like Carter, Obama got us to this point by undermining our only ally in the area, Israel, and empowering all of her regional enemies for the first two years of his presidency. That undermining has led us directly to these out of control events.
>
> At this moment, of the four nations that border Israel, two of them, Syria and Lebanon, are client states of Iran waging constant war and the other two which both have brokered peace are facing internal turmoil, Jordan is facing Islamic protests in her streets and the relatively stable tourist destination Egypt, is exploding in revolution.
>
> The way Obama is handling the Egyptian crisis there can only be one outcome. The Moslem brotherhood will seize total control of the nation and turn the Arab world's most populace country into a totalitarian Islamic theocracy just like Iran. Egypt's fall will be a strategic disaster for the US because Egypt borders Israel and controls the vital Suez Canal which connects the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. The Suez is one of the most vital water-ways in the entire world because it is the shipping lane that allows Middle East oil to get to the consumer countries in Europe.
>
> If Egypt falls to this kind of governance total war will quickly come to the Middle East with catastrophic strategic and economic consequences for the whole world.

Strength doesn't cause wars – weakness causes wars. When you are strong, aggressors know that aggression will cause them plenty. Obama, and his constant apologizing and appeasing and siding with terrorists and dictators, is what REALLY causes wars.

New study finds that feminism does not empower women in relationships

February 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller. (H/T Kelli)

Excerpt:

> "Girl power" might have brought women and girls victories in academics and sports but, as a recent book out of the University of Texas reports, an unintended consequence of women's success has given men a leg up in the game of love.
>
> Based on research published in their new book,"Premarital Sex in America: How Young Americans Meet, Mate and Think About Marrying," Mark Regnerus and Jeremy Uecker, sociologists from the University of Texas at Austin, have found that with women becoming more educated and professionally successful than ever, it has become extremely difficult for them to find a committed man.
>
> Financially secure and with less incentive to marry, more and more young women are playing the field longer and lowering the value of women in general — leaving their sisters, (usually older and hearing the tick-tock of their biological clocks) out in the cold.
>
> If he can get to the "business" with just one or two dinners with Martha, why would he commit to 20 dates and "maybe" Mary?
>
> Regnerus told The Daily Caller that in the sexual economy women act almost like a cartel. At one time the price of sex was extremely high, but with the demise of the shotgun wedding, the invention of "the pill" and a population of willing women, the "price" of sex has plummeted.
>
> "People's individual choices matter in part because they contribute to collective norms, collective possibilities," Regnerus said. "So this is why I say there is no such thing as truly discrete sex because it becomes a data point in what you expect from women or from men in subsequent relationships."
>
> According to Regnerus, it is largely women who decide the going rate for sex.
>
> "So if you think of a collective of men and a collective of women, the men come to learn what is expected of them in order to access sex, because they want it a little bit more than women …Women have to decide, more than men, how much it is worth so to speak … but she is not deciding alone," he said.
>
> In this model, phenomena such as the "one-night stand" act to lower the price for all and as women get older the value becomes more consequential.
>
> "When you are say 27, 32, I assume most women wouldn't want to give it up just for dinner," Regnerus said. "They are at a different life phase where they want to cut the crap and say, 'If this is going nowhere, then goodbye.' But the problem is

> they are being under-bid and men are reaching further down the age range."

The article goes on to cite Jennifer Roback Morse and Carrie Lukas, who are two of my favorite women in the whole world when it comes to this issue. I have read Dr. Morse's "Love and Economics" and "Smart Sex" and Mrs. Lukas' book "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Women, Sex and Feminism", and I highly, highly recommend them all to men and women. Carolyn Graglia's "Domestic Tranquility" and George Gilder's "Men and Marriage" also pretty good, with lots of insights on how feminism changes the dynamics of marriage.

Related posts

- Can Christianity survive the decline of males?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New study finds that pre-marital sex reduces quality of relationships
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama's new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children's sexual choices
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being

Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?

February 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a research paper written in 2003 from the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> Marriage is good for men, women, children–and society. Because of this simple fact, President George W. Bush has proposed a new pilot program to promote healthy marriage. Despite demonstrated evidence in every major social policy area of the need to rebuild a strong and healthy culture of marriage, President Bush's new marriage initiative is still opposed by the extreme wing of feminism that sees no good in marriage or in unity between men and women, and between mothers and fathers.
>
> Moderate, mainstream feminists have long rejected this animus against marriage; the vast majority of such feminists either are married or intend to marry. Mainstream feminists are focused on a worthy concern: removing obstacles to the advancement of women in all walks of life.
>
> Radical feminists, however, while embracing this mainstream goal–even hiding behind it–go much further: They seek to undermine the nuclear family of married father, mother, and children, which they label the "patriarchal family." As feminist leader Betty Friedan has warned, this anti-marriage agenda places radical feminists profoundly at odds with the family aspirations of mainstream feminists and most other American women.

The next part of the paper quotes from leading third-wave feminists who oppose marriage.

Here are some of the recent ones:

> In her 1996 book In the Name of the Family: Rethinking Family Values in the Postmodern Age, Judith Stacey, Professor of Gender Studies and Sociology at the University of Southern California, consigned traditional marriage to the dustbin of history.36 Stacey contended that "Inequity and coercion…always lay at the vortex of that supposedly voluntary `compassionate marriage' of the traditional nuclear family."37 She welcomed the fact that traditional married-couple families (which she terms "The Family") are being replaced by single-mother families (which she terms the postmodern "family of woman"):
>
> > Perhaps the postmodern "family of woman" will take the lead in burying The Family at long last. The [married nuclear] Family is a concept derived from faulty theoretical premises and an imperialistic logic, which even at its height never served the best interests of women, their

> children, or even many men…. The [nuclear married] family is dead. Long live our families!38

Stacey urged policymakers to abandon their concern with restoring marital commitment between mothers and fathers and instead "move forward toward the postmodern family regime," characterized by single parenthood and transitory relationships.39

In 1996, Claudia Card, professor of Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, continued the attack:

> The legal rights of access that married partners have to each other's persons, property, and lives makes it all but impossible for a spouse to defend herself (or himself), or to be protected against torture, rape, battery, stalking, mayhem, or murder by the other spouse…. Legal marriage thus enlists state support for conditions conducive to murder and mayhem.40

Other radical feminists suggested that a culture of self-sufficiency and high turnover in intimate relationships is the key to independence and protection from hostile home life. Activist Fran Peavey, in a 1997 Harvard article ironically titled "A Celebration of Love and Commitment," suggested that "Instead of getting married for life, men and women (in whatever combination suits their sexual orientation) should sign up for a seven-year hitch. If they want to reenlist for another seven, they may, but after that, the marriage is over."41 Also in 1997, radical feminist author Ashton Applewhite, in her book Cutting Loose–Why Women Who End Their Marriages Do So Well proclaimed: "Women who end their marriages are far better off afterward."42

Another feminist widely read during the 1990s was Barbara Ehrenreich, a former columnist with Time magazine who now writes for The Nation.43 Throughout her work, Ehrenreich extols single parenthood and disparages marriage. Divorce, she argues, produces "no lasting psychological damage" for children. What America needs is not fewer divorces but more "good divorces."44 Rather than seeking to strengthen marriage, policymakers "should concentrate on improving the quality of divorce."45 In general, Ehrenreich concludes that single parenthood presents no problems that cannot be solved by much larger government subsidies to single parents.46

Ehrenreich writes enthusiastically about efforts to move beyond the narrow limits of the nuclear married family toward more rational forms of human relationship:

> There is a long and honorable tradition of "anti-family" thought. The French philosopher Charles Fourier taught that the family was a barrier to human progress; early feminists saw a degrading parallel between marriage and prostitution. More recently, the renowned British anthropologist Edmund Leach stated, "far from being the basis of the

> > good society, the family with its narrow privacy and tawdry secrets, is the source of all discontents."47
>
> While Ehrenreich recognizes that men and women are inevitably drawn to one another, she believes male-female relationships should be ad hoc, provisional, and transitory. She particularly disparages the idea of long-term marital commitment between fathers and mothers. In the future, children will be raised increasingly by communal groups of adults.48 These children apparently will fare far better than those raised within the tight constraints of the nuclear married family "with its deep impacted tensions."49

The paper goes on to explain how these messages have entered into college textbooks. College textbooks used in classes where young women are expected to agree with the textbooks in order to get their good grades. This is what your children will learn. It's not what you think feminism is that matters – it's what they think feminism is. And what they think is what the textbooks tell them to think – or else they get drummed out of the university. This is where the 42% out-of-wedlock birth rate *came from*. And why our children are growing up without fathers, and growing further and further away from God. Marriage is bad (apparently) because husbands and their traditional roles are bad. So what men for? Sperm-donors and wallets. Men understand this and so we don't marry.

Do you ever wonder why we have things like no-fault divorce, abortion, co-habitation, hooking-up, in vitro fertilization, socialism, welfare, and so on? It's because of feminism. Feminism is *anti-marriage.* Should women now complain about men not being willing to marry and commit? Of course not. So long as women support feminism, by voting for feminists like Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, then marriage will decline. If women *don't like men* and *don't care about what men want* and *think men are evil* then they should not expect men to accept their traditional roles as protectors and providers and moral/spiritual leaders. Don't complain that there are no men around who will marry you. Of course there aren't – because ideas have consequences. Feminism has consequences.

Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring

February 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this shocking story from National Review.

Excerpt:

> …[T]he actor playing the pimp literally walks into a New Jersey Planned Parenthood clinic announcing he is involved in sex work and that some of the girls are underage.The clinic office manager clearly gets the picture. Not that she's being set up. But that he needs her help to keep operating. And she's willing to help. He says he has a sexually transmitted disease and is worried one of the girls working for him may have given it to him. But he also has other service inquiries to inquire about.
>
> And all of this seems like another day at the office for the Planned Parenthood clinic worker. Where she's coaching this sex trafficker on how to get underage girls he indicates he is employing as sex slaves from Asia.
>
> The clinic worker even assumes the girls are illegal. Watch the video. Do watch the video. She has no doubt what she's dealing with in the scenario.

Here's the video:

And more from the post:

> Talking about underage girls at one point, she even offers her philosophy that an underage girl is "still entitled to care without mom knowing what the hell is going on."
>
> And apparently even if mom is far out of the picture and she's slaving away for a pimp, birth control should be provided, abortions should be provided.
>
> [I]n this particular Pert Amboy clinic, a sex trafficker was coached into how to make everything "look as legit as possible." Coaching. "For the most part, we want as little information as possible," she explained. The Planned Parenthood worker's only obstacle to providing him the full "streamlined" services he wants to keep his business running is some auditing details she's worried they could get caught on for abortions of these girls, in the country illegally, under 14 and 13, needing abortions. Saying – laughing — "You've never got this from me. Just to make all our lives easier," she hands the pimp the name of another, non-Planned Parenthood clinic, which can get away with more. "They're protocols are not as strict as ours, they get audited differently."
>
> When asked how long a girl might have to wait to get back to the work of the sex trade after an abortion, two weeks minimum is the answer. He protests, "We've still got to make money." The clinic worker understands his predicament and so

> advises that the girls can still work “Waist up, or just be that extra action walking by” to advertise the girls who are still at full-body work.

Remember, Planned Parenthood, like ACORN, teacher unions, labor unions, trial lawyers, welfare collectors and abortion providers are all pillars of the Democrat party. If you like subsidizing the kinds of activities that these groups engage in, (e.g. – voter fraud, etc.), then by all means – vote Democrat. It’s very important that we understand what it means when someone says “I vote Democrat”. It means “I think that taxpayers should subsidize Planned Parenthood to assist pimps with their underage sex-trafficking businesses”. It’s practically in the Democrat party platform. And besides, Planned Parenthood needs to perform as many abortions as possible – that’s how they make the money they use to contribute to Democrats. It’s all about the money.

If you vote for Republicans, then you get all the immediate cessation of all subsidies for Planned Parenthood, and a ban on taxpayer-funding of abortions. Period. I am talking about the federal level here – the entire country.

There is a difference between the two parties.

Can intelligent design be front-loaded at the creation of the universe?

February 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

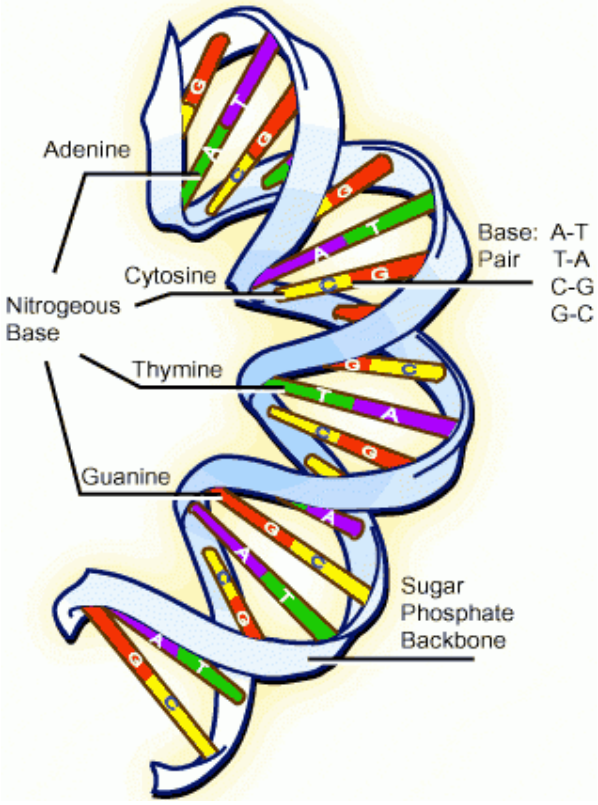

Structure of DNA

This video introduction to intelligent design packs a lot of information into a very small video. (H/T Brian Auten from Apologetics 315)

When it comes to the science of DNA, theistic evolutionists and atheists agree: matter, law and chance are sufficient to evolve DNA. No intelligence is needed to sequence the base pairs or the amino acids. That agreement that intelligent causes are not needed to explain DNA is why I call theistic evolution "functional atheism".

Theistic evolutionists express subjective opinions about God that no one can investigate using science. These untestable opinions about God are similar to the opinions of little children about Santa Claus. And yet they insist that they be taken seriously alongside the people who actually think Christianity is *objective knowledge*, not *subjective opinion*.

To defuse a theistic evolutionist, simply ask them for fully materialistic and naturalistic explanation for the first living organism – the origin of life. And then watch how they avoid answering the question. For even Richard Dawkins has no idea how life could begin, if only purely naturalistic, materialistic causes are allowed in the explanation.

Theistic evolutionists hate talking about evidence. They want to talk their private feelings and beliefs and experiences in order to reassure you that they are just like you. Don't let them talk about religion – stick to what science can show. Demand evidence that the material processes can do the creating that the theistic evolutionists think that material

processes can do.

Here’s an easy article that you can read that explains a bit more about what the video discussed. Here is one is a bit more difficult. These are mentoring articles for Christians.

If you want to read some serious research, then read this post and listen to this interview which are both about the work of Doug Axe.

Iowa House passes constitutional amendment to define marriage

February 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Shane at Caffeinated Thoughts.

Excerpt:

> The Iowa House passes HJR 6 by a vote of 62-37, this resolution introduces an amendment to the Iowa Constitution defining marriage to be between one man and one woman.
>
> The entire Republican caucus voted in favor of the resolution minus State Representative Betty DeBoef (R-What Cheer) who was ill today. Three Democrats joined with Republicans to vote yes – State Representatives Dan Muhlbauer (D-Manilla), Brian Quirk (D–New Hampton), and Kurt Swaim (D-Bloomfield).
>
> Before Iowans can vote on the language in this amendment it first needs to pass the Iowa Senate. Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal (D-Council Bluffs) has already promised to block a vote, and an attempted vote to bypass Senate rules to allow the Senate version to come to the floor to be debated and voted on failed. The amendment would have to be passed again in the next General Assembly before it could be placed on the ballot.

It looks like the Democrats will block it in the Senate, because they oppose traditional marriage, and do not believe that children should be raised by a mother and a father. That's why they support single motherhood, no-fault divorce and same-sex marriage.

Caffeinated Thoughts also had this post about the opponents of the definition of marriage bill.

Excerpt:

- Family Planning Council of Iowa – their purpose is "to provide quality reproductive health care and family planning services to all people in Iowa who desire such services." Huh? Protecting the traditional definition of marriage somehow diminishes their mission? And yet, they have one lobbyist registered against.
- Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO – they also have a lobbyist registered against HJR 6. I wonder how the definition of marriage is a labor issue and how many of their members don't expect their dues to pay for activity like this.
- National Association of Social Workers – They have two lobbyists working against. How this advances the social work field or impedes their members from doing their work I'll never know, but it is further proof how this profession has been hijacked by the left.
- AFSCME Iowa Council 61 – How again is this a labor issue? Oh I know benefits…

Nope, sorry if I were a union member I'd be ticked, and they have six three lobbyists registered against this bill.

- Planned Parenthood of the Heartland – Interesting, I'm surprised they are advocating any type of monogamous relationship since they want to treat youth like they are a bunch of minks. They have two lobbyists registered against.
- Interfaith Alliance of Iowa – they should change their name to InterLiberalFaith Alliance of Iowa.

It's important to understand which groups are left-wingers. Unions, abortion providers, religious pluralists, etc.

In a prior story, Arkansas Republicans passed a ban on taxpayer-funding of abortion.

Does dispensing the morning-after pill to teens reduce teen pregnancies?

February 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> A government scheme to give teenagers the morning-after pill free of charge at pharmacies in a bid to cut down on unwanted pregnancies has led to a rise in sexually transmitted diseases, research shows. A study has found that the policy simply encouraged young people to have unprotected sex and had failed to cut down the number of under-age pregnancies.
>
> Professors Sourafel Girma and David Paton of Nottingham University compared areas of England where the scheme was introduced with those where it was not or where it was implemented later. They found that pregnancy rates for girls aged under 16 remained the same while the rates of sexually transmitted diseases increased by 12 per cent in those areas where the pill was available free from chemists. Prof Paton said: “We find that offering the morning-after pill free of charge didn’t have the intended effect of cutting teenage pregnancies but did have the unfortunate side of effect of increasing sexually transmitted infections.

Remember, those pills were bought with taxpayer dollars, and the morning-after-pill can cause abortions in some cases, by preventing a fertilized egg from implanting. But what do you expect, it’s the socialist UK.

Researchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity

February 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From USA Today. (H/T Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> Although the link between HPV and these types of cancers is indisputable, the association with oral sex is strong but a little more speculative, experts say.
>
> A 2007 study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that younger people with head and neck cancers who tested positive for oral HPV infection were more likely to have had multiple vaginal and oral sex partners in their lifetime.
>
> In the study, having six or more oral sex partners over a lifetime was associated with a 3.4 times higher risk for oropharyngeal cancer — cancers of the base of the tongue, back of the throat or tonsils. Having 26 or more vaginal-sex partners tripled the risk.
>
> And the association increased as the number of partners — in either category — increased.
>
> The researchers also reported that cancers of the tonsil and base of the tongue have been increasing every year since 1973, and wrote that "widespread oral sex practices among adolescents may be a contributing factor in this increase."
>
> The researchers concluded that in their study, oral sex was "strongly associated" with oropharyngeal cancer, but noted that they could not "rule out transmission through direct mouth-to-mouth contact" such as French kissing.
>
> In 90% of cases of HPV infection in the body, the immune system clears HPV naturally within two years, according to federal health agencies, but in some cases, certain types of HPV can lead to cervical cancer or less common malignancies, such as oropharyngeal cancer. A 2010 Swedish study, in fact, suggested that the rise in oropharyngeal squamous cell cancer in a number of countries "is caused by a slow epidemic of HPV infection-induced (cancers)."
>
> HPV tends to be site specific, explained Dr. Amesh A. Adalja, an adjunct instructor in the division of infectious diseases at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. In other words, it tends to stay wherever it first enters the body, be it the vagina (which in some cases could lead to cervical cancer), or the mouth and throat.

Now here is the scary part:

> The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that, in 2002, some 90% of males and 88% of females aged 25 to 44 reported ever having oral sex with a partner of the opposite sex.

> Comparable figures from 1992 showed that about three-quarters of men aged 20 to 39 and closer to 70% of women aged 18 to 59 having ever given or received oral sex.

And don’t forget that breast cancer has been linked to having abortions by several independent studies.

Why doesn't God gives us more evidence that he exists?

February 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome, Please Convince Me listeners! This post was mentioned in Please Convince Me Podcast #190.

Have you ever heard someone say that if God existed, he would give us more evidence? This is called the "hiddenness of God" argument. It's also known as the argument from "rational non-belief".

Basically the argument is something like this:

1. God is all powerful
2. God is all loving
3. God wants all people to know about him
4. Some people don't know about him
5. Therefore, there is no God.

You may hear have heard this argument before, when talking to atheists, as in William Lane Craig's debate with Theodore Drange, (audio, video).

Basically, the atheist is saying that he's looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that's logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden when our eternal destination depends on our knowledge of his existence.

What reason could God have for remaining hidden?

Dr. Michael Murray, a brilliant professor of philosophy at Franklin & Marshall College, has found a reason for God to remain hidden.

His paper on divine hiddenness is here:
"Coercion and the Hiddenness of God", American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us. Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him. God places a higher value on people having the free will to respond to him, and if he shows too much of himself he takes away their free choice to respond to him, because once he is too overt about his existence, people will just feel obligated to belief in him in order to avoid being punished.

But believing in God just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants for us. If it is too obvious to us that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and behave morally out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out

of interest *in him*, just like we might try to get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God's veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don't seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to reach out to us and draw us to him. But I do think that we are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist's argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. In order to derive a contradiction, God MUST NOT have any possible reason to remain hidden. If he has a reason for remaining hidden that is consistent with his goodness, then the argument will not go through.

When Murray offers a possible reason for God to remain hidden in order to allow people to freely respond to him, then the argument is defeated. God wants people to respond to him freely so that there is a genuine love relationship – not coercion by overt threat of damnation. To rescue the argument, the atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free choice of his creatures to reject him.

People choose to separate themselves from God for many reasons. Maybe they are professors in academia and didn't want to be thought of as weird by their colleagues. Maybe they didn't want to be burdened with traditional morality when tempted by some sin, especially sexual sin. Maybe their fundamentalist parents ordered them around too much without providing any reasons. Maybe the brittle fundamentalist beliefs of their childhood were exploded by evidence for micro-evolution or New Testament manuscript variants. Maybe they wanted something really bad, that God did not give them. How could a good God allow them to suffer like that?

The point is that there a lot of people who don't want to know God, and God chooses not to violate their freedom by forcing himself on them. God wants a relationship – he wants you to respond to him. (See Matthew 7:7-8) For those people who don't want to know him, he allows them to speculate about unobservable entities like the multiverse. He allows them to think that all religions are the same and that there is nothing special about Christianity. He allows them to believe that God has no plan for those who never hear about Jesus. He allows them to be so disappointed because of some instance of suffering that they reject him. God doesn't force people to love him. If they don't want to look into these things because they want to avoid having to care what he thinks, then he lets them think anything they want that "works for them". What they think is false, but so long as they don't investigate anything, then they can keep doing what they want and thinking it's fine.

Michael Murray's work

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses

such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007). The book chapter from the Cambridge book is here. The book chapter from the Routledge book is here.

Michael Murray's papers are really fun to read, because he uses hilarious examples. (But I disagree with his view that God's work of introducing biological information in living creatures has to be front-loaded).

Here's more terrific stuff from Dr. Murray:

- "Who's Afraid of Religion?", Inaugural Lecture delivered March 30, 2006. Franklin and Marshall College.
- "Seek and You Will Find", in God and the Philosophers. Thomas Morris, editor. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1994.

What happens to people who never hear about Jesus and the gospel?

February 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the most difficult questions for Christians to answer, especially when posed by adherents of other religions, is the question of what happens to those who have never heard of Jesus? In this post, I will explain how progress in the field of philosophy of religion has given us a possible (and Biblical) solution to this thorny question.

First, Christianity teaches that humans are in a natural state of rebellion against God. We don't want to know about him, and we don't want him to have any say in what we are doing. We just want to appropriate all the gifts he's given us, do whatever we want with them, and then have eternal bliss after we die. We want to do whatever we want and then be forgiven, later.

Along comes Jesus, who, through his sinless life and his death on the cross, heals that rift of rebellion between an all-good God and rebellious man. Now we have a real understanding of the fact that God is real, that he has power over death, and that he has very specific ideas on what we should be doing. If we accept Jesus' atoning sacrifice and follow his teachings, we can avoid the penalty of our rebellion.

The only problem is that in order to appropriate that free gift of reconciliation, people need to actually *know* about Jesus. And there are some people in the world who have not even *heard* of him. Is it fair that these other people will be sent to eternal separation from God, just because they happened to be born in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Enter William Lane Craig to save the day. His solution is that God orders the world in such a way that anyone who would freely choose to acknowledge Jesus and appropriate his teachings in their decision-making *will* be given eternal life. God knows in advance who would respond, and chooses their time and place of birth, and he supplies them with the amount of evidence they need.

And this agrees with what the Bible teaches. The apostle Paul says this in his apologetic on Mars Hill in Acts 17:22-31:

> 22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.
> 23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ' N D ' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.
> 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;
> 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;
> 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, **having determined their appointed times and the boundaries**

> **of their habitation,**
> **27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;**
> 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'
> 29 "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.
> 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,
> 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

In this research paper, Craig explains in detail how God foreknows how people will choose in every set of circumstances, and how God uses that knowledge to get everyone where they need to be *without violating their free will.* God wants the best for everybody, and has ordered to whole universe in order to give each of us our best opportunity for eternal life.

Here is a summary of the what is in his paper:

> The conviction of the New Testament writers was that there is no salvation apart from Jesus. This orthodox doctrine is widely rejected today because God's condemnation of persons in other world religions seems incompatible with various attributes of God.
>
> Analysis reveals the real problem to involve certain counterfactuals of freedom, *e.g.*, why did not God create a world in which all people would freely believe in Christ and be saved? Such questions presuppose that God possesses middle knowledge. But it can be shown that no inconsistency exists between God's having middle knowledge and certain persons' being damned; on the contrary, it can be positively shown that these two notions are compatible.

Go read this paper and equip yourself to answer this common question!

And now I want to close by making a general point. There are two kinds of people in the world. The first kind encounters problems, like the hiddenness of God, or the problem of evil, the problem of Cookie monster objections (thanks, Truthbomb!), or religious pluralism, and they respond by *leveraging* that problem in order to justify rejecting God and going their own way.

Even uninformed Christians read books like "The Da Vinci Code", and avoid the arguments and evidence that would defeat the objections raised by that book. Why? They want to be lazy, or to fit in, or to pursue pleasure apart from God. This is because if we don't know that God is real *for certain* then we won't feel *rationally compelled to be good.* And that's why many Christians go out of their way *not to find out the truth* about these thorny problems.

And doubts also relieve us of the burden of evangelizing. Uninformed Christians know that their doubts give them freedom to keep silent about God, so they can get along with non-Christians. They think that keeping the truth about God to themselves, and not being ready and available to answer questions, is *loving.* But it's really just *selfishness.* It doesn't help non-Christians to keep the truth from them.

So why do some Christians hide the truth from others? It's because they really *do not believe that God will exclude people based on their beliefs about Him*, even though Jesus says so in many places*.* Deep down, *we believe that God's purpose for humans is to be happy.* When Christians don't try to find answers to difficult questions like religious pluralism, they end up softening the Bible's exclusive claims *based on their emotions*.

This is not what ambassadors are supposed to do – we are not free to make up our own doctrines and then lie to people in order to be happy and popular.

The second group is willing to spend time and effort to assess whether science, history, philosophy, etc. support Christianity. This kind of person is willing to go where the evidence leads. They don't jump on doubts and use them to justify disobedience. They are willing to be public (i.e. – "divisive") about their faith and put God first, above worldly goals, like popularity.

The whole point of life is for God to draw people to himself in a *two-way* relationship. He reveals himself a little, and we respond and pursue him. How about you? Do you want to know for certain whether God is real? Are you willing to give up everything to follow him? Or would you rather that God just keep out of your busy life and your subjective purposes in the world?

UPDATE: A related post over at Tough Questions Answered on whether Jesus is required to be rightly related to God and to get eternal life.

Why does God allow people to experience evil and suffering?

February 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just wanted to draw your attention to this 4 page essay by Joe Manzari, which is the best darn summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen. The problem of evil is an objection to the existence of God based on the presence of evil or suffering in the world. The arguments basically infer that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then there should not *be* any evil or suffering.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An exampel of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omnipotent being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God

> can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order to for the character of humans through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to show* that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil we observer more compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.

Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life. And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.

2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   Given that we humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. We should not be surprised that people would also reject his moral demands on them, which results in some of the evil we see.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.
(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That’s right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again. More on this argument for God’s existence *from evil* here.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I’ve been through… but then, that’s why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

For more on the problem of evil, listen to this lecture by Douglas Geivett, professor of philosophy at Biola University. Then you *must listen* to this debate here between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong. Another debate transcript is here, with William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen. Here’s a book debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, published by Oxford University Press, 2004.

Ten resources to help you defend the resurrection of Jesus as history

February 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's briefly talk about whether the Bible supports talking about the resurrection with non-Christians.

There are lots and lots of Christians in the world, but almost none of them are comfortable talking about the resurrection with non-Christians, in a way that doesn't use crazy Christianese language and doesn't assume that the Bible is inerrant. But I think that this situation is wrong for three reasons.

First, Jesus says that his resurrection is a sign so that peope will believe in his other theological claims.

Matthew 12:38-40:

[38]Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

[39]He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

[40]For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Second, Paul says that if the resurrection didn't happen then we are all wasting our time with Christianity.

1 Corinthians 15:13-19:

[13]If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

[14]And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

[15]More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

[16]For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

[17]And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

[18]Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

[19]If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

And third, Peter uses the resurrection as evidence in his evangelistic efforts.

Acts 2:22-24, 29-33, 36:

[22]"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[23]This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you,

with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

[24]But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

[29]"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

[30]But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

[31]Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

[32]God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

[33]Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

[36]"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

So, how can you do what Jesus, Paul and Peter do with your non-Christian friends?

You can do it, too – and you must

It's true that non-Christians don't like to hear that they will go to Hell unless they have a relationship with Jesus. And do you know why they think that? Because they think that sin and Hell are just your personal opinions. Not-very-nice opinions. Opinions that they can ignore because it's just your personal preference that you were raised in. They think that religion is like Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy – myths designed to make people feel good about themselves.

Just think for a minute what they must think of your blind-faith pronouncement that they are going to Hell unless they "believe in Jesus" (whatever that means to a non-Christian). How would you like to hear someone tell *you* that *you* are going to Hell for not liking vanilla ice cream? You'd think they were crazy! And that's what non-Christians think of you, unless… Unless what? Unless you present publicly testable arguments and evidence to show them *why* they should consider the claims of Jesus.

No one complains that it is "mean and divisive" if their doctor diagonoses them with cancer. Because a challenging diagnosis is not the doctor's personal opinion – it's true objectively. You need to make your presentation of the gospel *exactly like* a doctor's diagnosis. Am I making sense here?If you are telling them the truth and you can show them publicly testable reasons and evidence, what sense does it make for them to be offended? They might as well be offended by their credit card statement or their speeding ticket.

I have Jewish friends, Hindu friends, Muslim friends, atheist friends, etc. Telling people the truth with publicly testable arguments and evidence that they can assess for themselves works. What doesn't work is denying the reality of sin and Hell and then trying to be nice to non-Christians who are going to Hell so that they will like you. *That's not Biblical.* That's just reinventing Christianity based on your own emotional need to be happy and to

be liked by others and to feel good about yourself.

Some things to help you talk about the resurrection

The main thing to remember about talking about the resurrection in public with non-Christians is that *you can't assume that the Bible is true.* Serious Christians get around this by using standard historical criteria to filter out the passages of the Bible that are most likely to be historical. A passage could be as small as 1 verse or it could be several verses. Some of the criteria would be things like: 1) how early after the events was the passage written? 2) in how many places does it appear? 3) Are the places where it appears independent from one another (e.g. – Mark and Paul), 4) does it embarass the author in some way? Using these criteria, historians can extract a bare minimum set of facts about Jesus.

Once you establish these minimal facts, you argue that the best explanation of the facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead. Your opponent either has to disprove one of your minimal facts, or he has to propose an alternative explanation of those minimal facts that explains the data better.

Usually, the only point of disagreement is whether the tomb was empty. Most atheists will give you the crucifixion, the burial, the post-mortem appearances, and the early belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus in the early church.

The top 10 links to get you started

So with that out of the way, here are the top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Two debates where you can see this play out:

- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Is atheism more rational than Christianity? Greg Koukl and Michael Shermer debate

February 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Found at Hugh Hewitt's blog, (but it isn't formatted properly there! It's all jumbled up – so I applied a regular expression transform to add line breaks to my version below)

Thanks to Apologetics 315.

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HH: Special edition of the Hugh Hewitt Show. As we come to the end of what I call the decade of the atheists, I am taking a day here at the end of the year to look back at what that has been about, and what progress or lack thereof has been made in that conversation, what it meant, and what it ought to mean, and whether or not those of you who are just finished celebrating Christmas were in fact simply involving yourself in a pagan kind of ritual that grew up over the years, or whether you're worshipping the one, true God. All that and more, because this has been the decade of the atheists, Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, many others, but today, I want to ask did they make a difference at all, or is in fact faith in God generally stronger than ever. To join me in this all day special conversation in studio, two guests. Greg Koukl is the founder and the president of Stand To Reason, http://www.str.org. He is a leading Christian apologist. He's an author most recently of Tactics: A Gameplan For Discussing Your Christian Convictions from Zondervan Press. Before that, Relativism, he's got a lot of other books and pamphlets as well at Amazon.com. But you can find out most about Greg at http://www.str.org. Michael Shermer is the editor of Skeptic Magazine. He is the founder of the Skeptic Society, author of a number of books, including The Mind Of The Market: How Biology And Psychology Shape Our Economic Minds, and Why Darwin Matters: The Case Against Intelligent Design. Both Michael and Greg have been guests on the Hugh Hewitt Show before. They're both very generous with their time to spend an entire day doing this, and so welcome to you both. Gentlemen, I believe in biography before everything. Greg Koukl, K comes before S. Give people a little bit of a rundown on who you are and how you ended up doing this.

GK: Well, just a broad background here. I approach the issue that we're talking about today not as a philosopher or a theologian, though I have advanced degrees in both, but really as a human being that's trying to make sense out of my world. What worldview, what picture of reality does the best job of answering the questions? That wasn't always my perspective. I was raised in a religious home, nominally religious. And then in the 60s, during the counterculture, like a whole bunch of other young people, I went crazy. You know, you abandon the views of the establishment, you embrace all these new things that are invading the world in the 60s, and I did that. I was at Michigan State University in their Honors College there as a prelaw student, as it turned out. I had thought I had tried Christianity because of my background. I thought I was too smart to be a Christian. And so I just didn't give real serious consideration to that until I went to the West Coast, and

went, I was a student at UCLA. And at that time, I began to give fresh consideration to the claims that Jesus of Nazareth was making on my life. And in 1973, I made a commitment to follow Him. And that began to change everything. In 1976, I spent three months in Europe, five weeks of that behind the Iron Curtain working with Christians who are suffering there as a result of their own convictions as Christians, back when they had an Iron Curtain. A number of years later, in 1982, I went to Thailand to work with Cambodian refugees. My job was to feed 18,500 people in Sakeo refugee camp, which the result of the Cambodian holocaust of 1975-1976, and then in 1993, I decided to kind of focus my efforts and start an organization with some other people, particularly Melinda Penner, who many who are listening know as The Enforcer. And that organization is called Stand To Reason. And Hugh, I had two basic goals with starting Stand To Reason. One is to train Christians to think more carefully about their convictions. There just was a lot of nonsense being spewed by Christians who I think had the right ideas, but were not communicating them well, and were not thinking well about those ideas. And secondly, I wanted to develop some tools to show that Christianity is actually worth thinking about. Some of these were tools of engagement. There was too much of a bellicose atmosphere between those who believed in Jesus and the Christian worldview and those who don't. And I wanted to see that engagement look more like diplomacy than D-Day. And so there's kind of a general attitude thing that I wanted to see happen, building ambassadors for Christ. Secondly, I wanted to help them with the new tools of evidence, and the information that has been coming out in the last ten or fifteen years that have been very, very powerful, I think, to commend the Christian worldview to the rest of the world – things about big bang cosmology, for example, the design inferences that we find in the universe, the evidence for the existence of the soul, the evidence from the primary source documents about Jesus of Nazareth and his resurrection. All of these things, there's been a lot of work done in the last fifteen or twenty years. And so our goal is to try to bring these things down to a level where people can understand them, throw the ball so that they can catch it, for believers in Christ to do so, but without having a bunch of religious language attached to it, one, and two, using an external approach. In other words, using the philosophy and the science to demonstrate that their views are worth thinking about, instead of simply throwing Bible verses at them, and in the process, I've written a number of books, one of them on abortion called Precious Unborn Human Persons. It's basically a small monograph. The next one, Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted In Mid-Air that I co-authored with Frank Beckwith, who you know. And the one most recently is the one you just mentioned, Tactics: A Game Plan For Discussing Your Christian Convictions.

HH: With that introduction, Mike Shermer, how about you?

MS: Well, I was born and raised in the Southern California area, and my home was, neither of my homes, as my parents were divorced, neither of them were religious, but neither were they anti-religious. They were just not religious. But in the nascent Jesus movement of the early 70s, I became a born again when I was in high school, 1971. And I remember it was a, my best friend, he was a Presbyterian, so on a Saturday night, I

accepted Christ into my heart. And then Sunday, I went to the local Presbyterian church with his family, and went up to the alter and all that with the other people that were called forward. And then on Monday, I remember returning back to high school to tell my buddy, Frank, that I had finally become religious and accepted Jesus like he had been telling me about, and hoping I would. And instead of being excited, he was disappointed, because he was a Jehovah's Witness, and that I had gone to the wrong church, the Presbyterians. Anyway, so that always stuck in the back of my mind like wow, aren't we all on the same bus together in the same journey? Well, not always. Anyway, so…but I took it pretty seriously. I went to Bible study classes. There was a little place in La Crescenta called the Barn, where Christians met and had Bible study classes, things like that. And then I went to Pepperdine University in Malibu there to, really to matriculate initially into theology, but then I switched to psychology, really for logistical reasons. I just wanted to be a college professor, because it's, you know, it's a great gig that you hardly have to work and you get good pay. Don't ever listen to those professors complain about their pay. It's the best gig going. And I wanted in on that. And theology was my field, but to get a PhD, you have to do Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic and Latin. And I could barely get through Spanish, so I realized okay, I have to do something I'm actually good at, which was science, which was experimental psychology. And so I switched fields. But while I was at Pepperdine, I took courses in the New Testament, the Old Testament, the life of Jesus. I took an entire semester course in the writings of C.S. Lewis. We read everything that Lewis wrote, and I really loved C.S. Lewis. I still like C.S. Lewis. I think he's a great writer. But then eventually, when I went to graduate school, when I was in a different environment, not surrounded by Christians, and getting different perspectives. And for a number of reasons, I ultimately lost my faith, and let go of God, and became essentially a secularist, or a non-believer, whatever. I never really call myself an atheist. I mean, I don't like to identify myself or define myself by what I don't believe, because atheism doesn't really stand for anything. There's no principles behind it. There's no platform or set of planks that we live our lives by. We just simply don't believe in God. So then I got into, well, actually I had a ten year span where I was a bike racer living here in Orange County, and did Race Across America five times, and I was the assistant director, and the executive director of the race. And so I spent quite a bit of time in a completely different profession, but teaching part time psychology. Then after ten years of bike racing, I realized my body wasn't going to hold out forever, and I might have to use my brain again. So I went back and got a PhD in the history of science at Claremont, and then became a fulltime professor at Occidental College in L.A. But on the side, we just started the Skeptics thing as just sort of a hobby in my garage. It was nothing, really, just for fun, and a lecture series at Cal Tech. And it just got bigger and bigger, and by 1997-98, when my first book, Why People Believe Weird Things did really well, I had a literary agent that got me a big advance for my next book, and a lecture agent, and so on, and I realized you know, I think I could actually make a living as a writer and an editor and a public intellectual, and actually teach more people than I can teach in a classroom, that is just reach more people. And so I've been doing that every since. I quit teaching at Oxy in 98, and returned to teaching just two years ago at Claremont Graduate University, just one

class a year, Evolution, Economics & the Brain. It's a PhD level course. So it's just for fun. So my main job, my day job, is editing and writing.

HH: We've got a minute and a half to the break, so I'll let you go first, Greg. What's your first question for Michael? I'll lead most of this conversation, but in between, I'll let you pose each other questions. Do you have a question or anything that you're curious about his background?

GK: Well, about his background?

HH: Just anything.

GK: Well, I think, and this is just going to seed further conversation, Michael, but I think the biggest, one of the biggest problems, it's not the only big problem, but one of the biggest problems that atheists have to deal with is the problem of morality. Listen, if you have a guy who drags a woman into an alley, and then molests her, and then…that's our music. Okay, I'll finish my illustration in just a few moments. But I want to raise the nature of morality, is the question, or how best to explain the existence of real morality.

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HH: When we went to break, I began just the first opportunity to ask each other a question. So Greg, you were bringing up the…rephrase it for the audience who just tuned in for Michael.

GK: Right. Actually, the big question here, Hugh, is whether it's possible to be good without God. Now I'm not talking about whether it's possible to be good without a belief in God. I certainly think that's possible, but be good without God. And the answer to that question hinges entirely on precisely what you mean by good. And so I was going to give an illustration. So a man drags a young girl into the alley, he sexually abuses her, strangles here, and tosses her into the dustbin. Is that act wrong? Now I think everybody listening is going to admit it is wrong. But here is the real question. What do we mean when we say that that act of rape and abuse and murder is wrong? Are we describing the action itself, the object? Are we saying that the object, the rape, the murder, has a quality of being wrong, and therefore, wherever that rape goes, the wrongness follows it, just like your height, 6' 2", or whatever it is, is an objective quality of you. Wherever you go, your height follows you in the same way. Does the wrongness follow the rape? Well, if it's a quality of the rape, if it's an objective quality of the rape, then it does. And it doesn't matter what people think about it, or what cultures decides, or what your evolutionary conditioning is. The rape is still wrong. The other alternative is that you're not talking about the rape. You're talking about yourself. You're talking about your genetic conditioning. You're talking about your culture's decision about that kind of thing. And if that's the case, then the truth of the wrongness of the rape is simply in the individual or the subject. And this is why philosophers distinguish between ethical objectivism and ethical subjectivism. Now there's lots of different subjectivisms in ethics. But simply put, if you're an ethical subjectivist, you're a relativist. And actual ethics don't exist. Ethics are an illusion. If you conclude that ethics are an illusion, there's lots of different ways to explain it. Michael's written a really great book, I think, called The Science Of Good And

Evil. I've read most of it, and it's well written, and it's very compelling. But it's a description about how the illusion of ethics has taken place. If you want to go that route, you're welcome to go that route. But what you can't do is you can't then talk about morality as if it's objective when your explanations are subjective. So this is a problem that I think all atheists, including Michael, have to solve. Are ethics objective or relative? And if they're relative, then how can we make moral judgments that are meaningful on other people?

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Wow, let's just get right into it. Well, I don't think it's quite so black and white. That is to say I think there are provisional moral truths that exist whether there's a God or not. In other words, it's wrong, morally, absolutely morally wrong to rape and murder. And that would be true whether there was a God or not. In other words, if…is God saying that it's wrong because it's really wrong, and He's instructing us in his Holy Scripture that it's wrong? Or is it only wrong because He said so? And if it turned out there wasn't a God, would that make it okay? And my answer is no, it really is wrong, whether God says it's wrong or not. That is to say I think it really exists, a real, moral standard like that. Why? Well, because first, you could ask the person who is being affected, we should always ask the moral recipient of the act, how do you feel about being raped or murdered or stolen from or lied to. And the moral actor will tell you, it doesn't matter whether, if I could use a current example, I haven't any idea if Tiger Woods and his wife are religious or not. But you can just ask his wife whether it was morally right or wrong, and she'll tell you. It doesn't matter whether there's a God or not. It's wrong. And so that's the first principle. Just ask. Ask the moral recipient of whether it's right or wrong. But I think Greg's after something deeper, that is to say is there something even deeper still behind the moral actor's feelings about how they're treated. And the answer is yes, I think so. We're a social species. We don't live in isolation. We live as members of a group. And as such, there's no possible way our group could survive, be cohesive, be a unit of any kind of solidarity against other groups, or against a harsh environment. If there were too much violations of social norms, that is if there were constant lying and cheating and raping and murdering, there's no way a social group could hang together. And as such, as we all know, we're very tribal. We're tribal against other groups, but within our groups, we're very pro-social, altruistic, cooperative. We have a good and evil in our nature. So to this extent, I find myself interesting often in agreement with my conservative friends on most of the things they consider morally, moral truths. That is, we share the same moral values, even though I come at it from a different perspective.

HH: Greg?

GK: Yeah, I'm actually not after something deeper here, Michael. At least to start out the discussion, I'm trying to be as simple and clear and precise as possible, because it's very easy to weave together a bunch of things that sound persuasive, but turn out to be different things. Like for example, Darwinian evolution, which is a materialistic process, and here I mean the blind watchmaker thesis, the neo-Darwinian synthesis, natural selection working on mutations, and a kind of a cultural evolution that Michael has just

referred to as we work together as a group to survive as a group. Those are two entirely different things. One is materialistic, Darwinian, the other one is intelligent design, quite frankly, where the group gets together and makes some determinations to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What I'm trying to do is to be able to answer the question that came up initially, is God necessary for morality, which Michael denies. It's to say well, what is it that morality, that we're trying to describe? It is either objective, and therefore an immaterial obligation that applies to certain behaviors, or it is subjective. The things that Michael described were variously subjective, evolutionary elements, subjective cultural elements, but then he affirmed that we all have good and evil in our nature, or an awareness of that. I agree with that entirely. We all are aware of those things. That's why even if we don't believe in God, we can still know morality and follow it. The question is what accounts for real, genuine objective morality?

HH: One minute to the break, Michael Shermer.

MS: I'm not arguing for cultural evolution. I'm actually arguing as part of our, what you described as materialistic, natural selection, Darwinian evolution, that it's not enough to just pretend or fake being a good group member. You actually have to believe it, feel it, and live it. So what I'm arguing is that natural selected certain moral sentiments, as Adam Smith called them, moral feelings, an actual empathy, Adam Smith talked about, we actually empathize with somebody else, we can put ourselves into their shoes and feel their pain, I'm arguing that's very real. It's every bit as real a part of our evolutionary heritage as our eyes and our hands.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, you were saying that evolutionary biology has produced a real morality.

MS: Yeah, I think really, Adam Smith had it right in his very first book, The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, long before Darwin, that we actually have in our biological nature, our human nature, the capacity to feel other people's pain. He called it empathy, we think of it often either as empathy or sympathy. That is, we really do connect to other people. A lot of good research on this now, brain scans, you can show somebody a little video of somebody they know, or have feelings for, getting pricked with a pin, and the same areas of their brain light up, the pain receptors, as in the person getting the pin prick. In other words, we have an evolved tendency to really be deeply, emotionally connected to our fellow group members. And that's why I say groups like World Vision, where you want to adopt a child, it doesn't help to show a picture of 10,000 starving African kids. What does affect us is one child, a picture of one child with a little biography. That's how you get people to adopt a child to donate. The reason for that is because essentially they're tricking the brain, our brains into making that stranger an honorary family member, an honorary within group member, which is why I argue that free trade is one of the best ways of defusing normal tribal tensions between people. It makes them honorary friends, honorary members. Well, what's going on there is we're tricking the brain into sort of this evolutionary rule of thumb – be nice to people that are like you and that are related to

you, and that you know, and that are fellow group members, and don't do what our natural tendency is, is to be tribal and xenophobic against those other guys. And free trade is one of the best things you can do for that. So I'm arguing that's actually tapping something deep within us.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, basically, I agree with Mike completely here. We do have this tendency, and it seems to be universal among humankind. The question is, what is that tendency, actually? And what is the best way to explain it? And I see like a handful of significant problems with using evolution to explain morality. The first one is that evolution is a materialistic process. And here, I'm going back to an original point, and I don't want people to lose it. There is no way that you can take molecules, and reorganize them in any fashion, over any length of time, and have pop out of the mixture an objective moral principle that's immaterial, and that applies to human beings. All you're going to get is a reorganization of the molecules. And what they can produce, and this is what Mike has done in his book, and he mentioned just s few moments ago, they can produce sentiments. They can produce feelings. They can produce behavior. But this leads us to the second problem of using evolution to explain morality, is that morality is more than sentiments, feelings and behavior. Morality entails things like motive and intention. I mean, you could have a guy walk into a garage, walk out with a hose, and is that wrong? Well, it depends. Is it his hose or somebody else's hose? Did he intend to take the other person's hose? Is he borrowing the hose? So we can see here are elements that are part of the moral thing that needs to be explained, that are immaterial, and therefore the Darwinian explanation can't even in principle go there. It can't do that job. But here's the worst problem. Regardless of what our sentiments happen to be regarding moral actions, we can feel good or feel bad or whatever, the problem is that morality is prescriptive, not merely descriptive. That is it tells us not just what we did, but what we ought to have done in the past, and what we ought to do in the future. That is not something that any Darwinian mechanism can describe, because nothing about my biology can inveigh upon me to act a certain way for moral reasons in the future. It doesn't tell me why I should be good tomorrow. This is a huge difference between these two views, the descriptive and the prescriptive. Prescriptive is part of morality, and can't even, in principle, be explained by an evolutionary materialistic system.

HH: Michael Shermer, I'll give you a start on that. We have about 45 seconds to the break, so you may want to…we'll come back after the break and pick up. But what's your start to that?

MS: Well, the start would be that again, let's not think of evolution just as nature red and tooth and claw, and it's nasty, brutish and short, but that in fact, we have this whole other social evolution. And I'm not talking about cultural evolution where we consciously make decisions, but subconsciously, because it's in part of our nature to actually, seriously, deeply feel for other people and their actions, and the consequences of our actions, so that we actually have a sense of right and wrong that we're born with, but

then culture taps into and tweaks, one way or the other.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, Greg had made the argument that the Darwinian model simply cannot explain immaterial concepts like morality, that there's just no way you can rearrange the molecules to get there. You're saying well, yes you can.

MS: Yeah, I think so, because if we think of morality as another suite of emotions that are involved with other people's behaviors, the consequences of our actions, how we feel about them, how people feel about us when we do these things, that's as every bit as important a biological part of our nature as anything else we talk about. So let's take a real simple emotion. When you're hungry, nobody does any calculations about the caloric input/output ratios of eating an apple versus an ice cream, although now it's posted on the walls for us to see. But we just feel hungry, and we feel hungry for certain kinds of foods. The feeling of hunger is a proxy for something else. Evolution's done the calculating for us. You need food, so we're going to, your hypothalamus is going to secrete these certain chemicals that causes your stomach to rumble and so on. When you're attracted to somebody else, a member of the opposite sex, nobody does the calculation by, let's say, a man finds a woman attractive who has a .67 hip to waist ratio, and an hourglass figure, although that is pretty much universal. Nobody walks about with calipers taking measurements of who they're going to want to date or ask out. You just look around, and you just go wow, I really find this woman attractive. It's a feeling you have, okay? So those are kind of simple emotions, but sliding up the scale, the moral emotions are really no different. When I lie to somebody, I've violated a social norm, and they respond in a very angry, hostile way. So those emotions that we both share, guilt, shame, anger, disgust, involved a social relationship that whether it was a norm violation, those are the kinds of emotions that are just like hunger and sexual attraction that are built into us by nature, by evolution. Or, if you wish, this is how God created the moral sentiments, just like He created everything else in the universe, through a process of nature. I think that's equally reasonable to argue. So I don't see that it has to be an atheistic viewpoint versus a theistic viewpoint to get to our moral sentiments. Why couldn't God have used evolution to create the moral sentiments as I've described them?

GK: Yeah, well, you don't actually believe that, I know, Mike, so this is kind of like adding God to the soup, you know, if it makes people feel better. But the basic argument is that evolution all by itself can do the trick. And I think if your listeners are listening carefully, what they're going to hear is Mike has just described, and if I'm being unfair to your assessment here, let me know, Mike, that moral feelings are simply that. They are sophisticated emotions that do some work for us for survival, and even on a group level. Now there's a name for this. It's called emotivism. A.J. Ayer, the famous atheist, offered this description of morality. It's a relativistic scheme of morality. Morality doesn't actually exist, Ayer argued. There is no objective right or wrong. Rape isn't wrong itself. What happens is, we have feelings about it, and we express it in moral language, but rape isn't really wrong. So your listeners are going to have to ask themselves the questions. When

they just survey their own moral senses, and we all have access to this, do we want to believe that scientists have figured out that really what we're doing is feeling sophisticated, complicated emotions, and that the emotions are in us, and we are not seeing anything about the action? Or does it seem like rape is wrong? Look, when I say rape is wrong, I'm talking about the rape. When I say liver is awful, I'm talking about me. I'm talking about my own tastes and preferences. It's interesting, as Michael has given his explanation, though, that he's doing, and I don't know if you are aware of this, Michael, but you're doing the very thing that I kind of warned against. You give a description of the foundations of morality that turn out to be relativistic, but then there's a smuggling of a more objectivistic morality in the back door, like when Michael says you don't have to do what your nature tells you to do, in other words, what you've been programmed by evolution to do. You can kind of rise above that. Well, now we're talking about a morality that isn't dictated by evolution, but a morality that we can employ through our acts of will, to rise above this kind of brutish evolutionary morality. And that sounds suspiciously like the very thing that I'm talking about here.

MS: But I don't mean, there's nothing to rise above by itself. Yes, we have to say rise above our tribal instincts to be xenophobic when we meet somebody who's a stranger, who's different from us. We all struggle against that, particularly in a black and white America, where there's always been this underlying tension. Indeed, so culture helps us do that – education, travel, diversity of exposure to different people. That makes you a little more tolerant. Okay, but I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about is tapping into the good part of our nature, the fact that in addition to that xenophobic tribalism we have, we also have this other side that almost never gets discussed in evolutionary…even in evolutionary circles, you'll still hear evolutionary biologists talking about, in a way that Huxley did, and Herbert Spencer did in Darwin's own time, that we have to somehow struggle mightily against our genes to overcome that nasty tendency we have to want to rape, kill, pillage and destroy. Well no, actually, we have this whole other side that's just as genetically programmed into our nature. And the point of culture – education, politics, economics and so on, is to tap into the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said.

GK: Okay, here's the question I have for you, Michael, then. You've identified that really, we have good and we have bad. That's part of, under your terms, that's part of our genetic nature, and we can choose to tap into what you call the good side. Why ever should we do such a thing if there is not a higher standard that directs our action to the better side, your words, than the bad side, your words, if really, ultimately, they are both the result of a genetic evolution, and from outside terms, neither is better than the other. Why should we do that, Michael?

MS: Yeah, well I don't see how entering God into the equation changes that problem at all.

GK: Well, that's the next step. What I'm trying to show is that the should comes from the outside, and if we can demonstrate that, then we can ask…

MS: But there's no outside.

GK: That's my point. On your view, morals are relative, and there is no difference.

MS: No, but I don't think even in your view, there's an outside.

GK: Well, we can get to that in the next step.

MS: …because adding God doesn't add anything.

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HH: Greg, reset the debate. What just happened there?

GK: Well, what I'm arguing is basically, you have two choices. You have objective morality, or subjective morality. Subjective morality means that when we say something's wrong, we're not talking about the action itself, we're talking about ourselves. Now there are sophisticated ways of characterizing how we're talking about ourselves, whether it's culture, whether it's evolution. But ultimately, you end up with no morality. I think that's false. I think people know there is objective morality. And if evolution, no materialistic system can explain it, given the discovery of objective morality, then we have to take the next step and ask what is the best explanation for objective morality. Michael, I think, wants to deny objective morality, but I think he's been smuggling the notion in subtly, as many times happens in these kinds of discussions. And he's, I'm not sure if he's denied that or not.

MS: Well, I think there's only two kinds of people – those who think there's only two types of morality, objective and subjective, and those that don't, which is the rest of us.

GK: Okay.

MS: Seriously, I mean, I reject your dichotomy of there's either objective reality or it's all subjective relativism and anything goes, and what Hitler did is perfectly fine. No, I don't believe that. I don't think anybody, hardly anybody actually really believes that, except for maybe a few academic philosophers who've never been in the real world. Really, I think we all recognize that there are deep, provisional truths, moral truths, that we recognize as real. And so what you want to get at is what's the outside source? And as you know, since you read my book, this is an old problem that everybody's familiar with in your business anyway, and that is Plato's Euthyphro's dilemma, in which Socrates asks his student, Euthyphro, the point which I should first wish to understand is whether the pious, or holy, is beloved by the gods because it is holy, or holy because it is beloved of the gods. In other words, which comes first, that the moral principle really exists out there in sort of an ideational world, and the gods say hey, look…

GK: They're beholden to that.

MS: …that's a real, moral principle…

GK: Right.

MS: …and we're going to instruct you through the holy book that's what you should do.

GK: And that makes the gods contingent…

MS: Or do they not really exist other than in the mind of God, who says listen, I've

decided that killing is wrong, and I'm telling you in this particular book, and ignore those other holy books, because they're wrong. And so now we get to the problem of which is, which do you believe, for example?

GK: Okay, this is a famous dilemma you actually mentioned at one of the earlier segments, and it has been answered very carefully. I'll give a possible answer for it.

HH: One minute to the break.

GK: Okay, one minute. One answer is to say that God says something is right because it's, the rightness of it is grounded in His nature. It's not an arbitrary act of His will, voluntarism, it isn't that he has some external standard that makes him now contingent, but that God is good in Himself, and that His commands flow forth from His nature. That's a possible solution for it. What you can't do is you can't jump from evolution and say well, if you go your way, I see a difficulty there, so I can ignore the evidence that's facing me right now for moral objectivism. That, I think, is a false move. So I can answer the objection, but also I think it's a false move.

HH: But you'll do it after the break.

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HH: But I want to go back and pick up the thread that we were at right before the end of the break. And Michael Shermer, I'm going to have you reset the debate for people wandered in off the street in the middle of this. Where are we in the conversation right now between you and Greg Koukl?

MS: Okay, just in case anybody's just checking on online, it's http://www.skeptic.com instead of…

HH: I'm sorry.

MS: No big deal. Anyway, so, well, is there an outside source to these moral principles that God then recognizes and says yeah, this is part of the universe, it really is wrong to kill other people, and I as the Deity am telling you this is what I know as part of nature? Or, do no such moral principles actually exist anywhere outside of the Deity Himself, and then He tells us through His Holy books? Okay, so which is the right answer to that question? And two, assuming that…well, you did say something about it's in God's nature. Well, if we're made in God's image, wouldn't that also put the moral principles in our nature as well?

GK: It does…

MS: So then we're tapping into those principles that really exist in us. And how is that any different from what I've been arguing already?

GK: No, the difference there, just on that particular issue, is I agreed earlier when you said it's part of our nature. The source is what's different. What's part of our nature is the knowledge of external things. In my case, these things are external. They are external like math principles are external to my mind. I don't invent them in my mind. In your case, the way you account for them being universal, in the sense that they're part of all humankind, is that evolution has created this. These are two entirely different things. In

my case, I'm talking about an object of reality, and in your case, you're talking about a subjective reality. And I know you want to jump in. Just one more point here. I am not complicating things at all, or oversimplifying things. The issue is quite simple if you start at the bottom. Either moral obligations are objects, or they're part of the object, or they're part of the subject. They are objectively true, or they're not. There are no other options. Now if you agree that morality is not objective, then it's a crap shoot, really. It's not whatever you want, if what you mean your society isn't going to allow you to do whatever you want. It's not whatever you want if you meant that well, evolution is going to determine certain things for you, that aids the species. But it is whatever you want. What is is right, if there is no outside objective moral standard that's governing you. Now how you want to ground that, that has it's own…that's another issue. And grounding it in God makes a lot of sense, and it even, I'm not even subject to the kind of problems that you Euthyphro dilemma that was just offered there. There is an answer to that, that avoids that problem. But it seems to me if there are objective moral laws, then that suggests an objective moral law giver. And if it's not, then it's just deterministic biology, or it's whatever the group says. And then we could be all over the map.

MS: Well, then you have the problem, it seems to me, of determining which moral values in the Holy book that you embrace, the Bible, which not everybody embraces as the source, other people have different holy books and sources, so…but anyway, granting yours, which of the moral principles are you going to adhere to, and which not? So for example, I presume you would reject slavery, as everybody would today. And yet Christians of centuries past embraced slavery, and used Biblical references as political support for slavery, as you well know. And William Wilberforce, who over, you know, sort of single-handedly, against all his fellow Christians who were standing up against him, said no, this is a bad idea. And so I think you have the problem of, like, which moral principles are you going obey, and which not?

GK: Oh, no, you're absolutely right, Michael. We have the problem as human beings, actually, regardless of our understanding about where morality comes from, of trying to figure out which is the appropriate applicable principle in this given situation. Your system suggests that we're basically kind of following an evolutionary impulse, and that's what we're obeying, and so we're not really obeying goodness itself, where I'm suggesting that the problem of moral decision making is difficult, because there are a lot of competing moral goods. But there is an answer to the problem if we think through it carefully. And you don't have to have a Bible, and I think you understand this, Michael. People…my view isn't that people have to have a Bible to know right and wrong. The Bible itself, in Romans Chapter 2, teaches that that is on everybody's heart in some fashion that allows him to have access to it, which is what you said earlier. It's in all of our natures. We agree on that particular point. So you don't need to have the Bible. But if you do, then you have a problem with interpretation. That's true of everything. We don't make the issue simpler in a sense by saying oh, well, morals are objective, because now we have to ask which objective moral principles apply in this circumstance.

MS: Well, so…right…

GK: So I readily agree that there's a challenge there in moral decision making.

MS: So how do you know what's right and wrong? How do you personally know? Is it from the Bible? Do you listen to the still, small voice within? Do you pray?

GK: I reflect on my moral nature, on my moral intuitions. Just like I know how math principles are right and wrong, I reflect on those things as well.

MS: Well, me, too. So how is it any different, because I do the same thing.

GK: And I have a…well, the difference is, well, I just described. You are reflecting on a nature that you're compelled by certain evolutionary things to do something, and it could just as well have been that evolution pushed you in an entirely different direction, so that rape or child molesting, or something like that, is wrong. I mean, we're not even talking now so far, Hugh, about the details of how evolution accomplishes this, which is another issue. We're just talking about it conceptually right now.

MS: Actually, I don't do that. I don't even think about evolution or Darwinism or anything like that when I'm thinking about right and wrong.

GK: Right, I know.

MS: Like when I interact with other people…

GK: …in the explanation, you do.

MS: Yeah, in my explanation. Yeah, but when I think about well, what should I do in this situation, how should I treat this other person, is this really right or wrong, I just try to put myself in their shoes, and think well, how would I feel?

GK: Fair enough.

MS: And I think you do, too. I think that's what we all do.

GK: We are both drawing on the same faculties.

MS: Right.

GK: That isn't the question whether we have the faculties. The question is where do the faculties come from, and what ground them? What makes these things good or bad? You just told me a few moments ago, Michael, that you can go either direction. You could obey your baser nature, which is evolutionary determined, or the higher nature. Well, what is higher and lower in evolution?

MS: Well, this is a good question. Say…take the slavery issue, for example. How do you know that's wrong?

GK: Actually, you raised the question of xenophobia earlier. We could do our tribal instinct thing, which we're by nature dictated to follow, but we can rise above that. So I don't know why…what's above that, unless you're importing some external standard of morality?

MS: Right, so where does it come from?

GK: How do you adjudicate between the two on an evolutionary basis?

MS: I think…yeah, I think that there is a long term trend over the last, maybe, couple of

thousand years, to expanding the circle of moral sentiments of who we're going to count as fellow group members that we do not rape, pillage, destroy and kill. And the question is why has that happened, let's say, since the Enlightenment, where we no longer want to treat blacks like we used to, and we want to give women the right to vote, and so on, and now gay marriage is up on the table for discussion and so on. We keep sort of expanding the circle of sentiments. Why would that be? I actually think that it's possible there is sort of a built-in to maybe the universe or something, a tendency toward, well, Robert Wright calls this playing more nonzero games, more win-win games, that is all of us benefit if we have more positive moral exchanges between us. This is why I promote free trade. I think it's one of these mechanisms of generating not just more wealth, but more goodwill between people. And I think that may be very well built into the system, whether there's a God or not. I think it might actually be there.

GK: Well, this is a very important juncture in our conversation, because what Michael has appealed to is something very much like a universal mind, that is this perspective over the whole enterprise, looking down saying as all the things fit together, this would be better for everyone, and that somehow directs the process.

MS: I'm not quite committed to that, by the way. I just think it's an interesting idea…

GK: But if…okay, now fair enough…

MS: And I'm not sure if it's a bottom up process, or a top down process, so…

GK: Well, this is the question then. If it is a bottom up process, if it's in the genes, how is it that the genes, then, in any of their working, can anticipate, in a sense, the greater good for all mankind? That strikes me as completely con…

MS: Not just the genes, no, something a higher order than that, that in the species itself, I mean, we're not talking just about natural selection of individuals, where the organism is the target of selection. But here, I'm talking about group selection. I think group selection has a reasonable case to be built around social organizations, that they themselves are the target of selection. So religion, for example, is a great unifying social force. It brings people together, it unifies them for both good and evil actions, and it's, I think, also part of our nature.

GK: Okay, very good, group selection. There's natural selection, which is on the genes, and then there is group selection. Natural selection is materialistic, and it's unguided. Group selection entails intelligent design, because the group is involved there, encouraging or discouraging the behaviors. And when you form your group, it's kind of a social contract thing, that's fine as an explanation, but just keep in mind that both of them are relativistic. And if one group thinks that their group will do better by destroying other groups, it is certainly "morally" within their rights to do so.

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HH: Gentlemen, for people who have just walked in on the middle of this, we've been not going around in circles, we've been actually moving towards a very sharply defined disagreement. But I want you both to state what that disagreement is in one minute or less, not to each other, but for the audience who just walked in. If you had to summarize

for them in a minute, or in 90 seconds each, what they missed, Greg Koukl, how would you say that?

GK: You have to make a decision, listener, as to whether morality is objective in some sense, or merely subjective. Is it a quality of the action, so when we say rape is wrong, we're talking about rape? Or are we just talking about our feelings or our emotions, or maybe our biological conditioning? As far as I'm concerned, you can go either direction with it at this particular point, but if you decide to go with a subjectivist view, a relativistic view, which is what the evolutionary explanation offers, then you have to be consistent with that to be fair. You can't start then smuggling what sounds like objective morality in the back door, because now you've got another morality that is not accounted for by your evolutionary scheme. And you've got to find another accounting for that, and I think this turns out to be one of the best arguments in favor of theism of some sort, the moral argument. But this is the essence of it, what we're discussing right now.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Well, I reject what I consider to be a false alternative between objective and subjective morality. I reject subjective morality, I reject relativistic morality. I believe there are objective moral standards. I prefer, I slightly prefer the word transcendent moral values. I don't believe in God, but I could be wrong. If there's a God, it seems to me that the moral standards, moral principles should exist anyway, whether there's a God or not, and that what God is doing, if He's doing anything, is He's telling us what those are. And here, I see a serious problem you have of interpreting what those are, because there's more than one holy book. People have many claims about moral values based on God, of which we vehemently disagree with. So when I asked you earlier about how do you know what's right and wrong, you said I reflect upon it, and I used the expression the still, small voice within. And so okay, so we all do that. I think it all begins with the Golden Rule. Everything else is commentary after that, as the great rabbi said, that is how do you feel, how would you feel if I did this, how would I feel if you did this to me? Well, maybe I should put myself in your shoes, and that's where morality begins, and I think that's absolute, whether there's a God or not.

HH: Okay, gentlemen, I had a lot to cover that is not related to this, but I don't want to move on too expeditiously. Do you think we have covered this issue?

GK: Yeah, I think we've done a pretty good job, and I think the differences are fairly clear in the, what, hour or so we've been talking about this issue. And I mean, I can take another shot here, then I'd get the last word on it, but I think we've summed up our views fairly accurately.

HH: All right, then let me ask you one question before we move to my second set. Michael, you've referred a few times to the presence of many holy books as though that somehow diminishes the idea that one may or may not have more authority than the other. Is that necessarily true, just that there are many holy books, there may be a hierarchy of authority among them, correct?

MS: Just take the current events of Islam. Clearly, they have a very different view of

morality of how women should be treated than we do, and yet they're basing it on similar holy texts, and some different holy texts. And so how are people of goodwill, who genuinely believe to get along in the world? Clearly, appeals to God is not going to solve our problem, is it?

HH: Okay, I didn't state it very well, then. What I was asking is just does the fact there are many holy books in any way diminish the authority of any one in particular? Just because there are many of them, you've said it a few times, and it's usually as an aside that…it's kind of …

MS: Oh, okay. There could be one, yeah, there could be one that's really right, and the rest are wrong.

HH: You know, there's kind of an implied, and I don't want to put words in your mouth, but when I'm a believer, as I am, in Scripture, and I hear you say that, I hear a sneer, oh, many holy books, but not an argument that one of them can't be right. Do you see what I'm getting at?

MS: Oh, yes, one of them could be right, and the rest wrong, but how do you know which one?

GK: Well, that's a different question.

MS: Because people of genuine belief in faith like you, who are Islamic, believe just as strongly as you do that women should be treated certain ways, and you would disagree. So how are we to settle this?

GK: I'm so glad he put it that way, because that point has absolutely nothing to do with the discussion. You don't cancel out…

MS: But isn't it an interesting point, though?

GK: Wait, let me finish. No, it is an interesting point, maybe, for sociologists, but as to the issue at question, let me finish the thought, Mike, and then you can respond to it. You don't decide whether a book or revelation is true or false, or anything else for that matter, by looking at how strongly different people hold the views. You have to look at the reasons for the views. I mean, let's just talk about science for example. There are very strongly held views by scientists on a lot of different things, even opposing views about how the Darwinian project worked out. It wouldn't be fair of me to Michael to say well, your particular view, I don't know if you're a punctuated equilibrium guy, or you're a classical Darwinist, or whatever, but it would be unfair for me to say to Michael look, you couldn't be right, nor could they be right, because you both have equally strong beliefs that you are true. That is a non-issue in the discussion. Something else has to be focused on to try to break the tie.

MS: Okay, that's a good example, because in that example, at least in principle, it could be settled through more data collection, whether evolution moves along in fits and starts, as described by punctuated equilibrium, or it moves gradually by gradualism. We can at least in principle settle that dispute.

GK: Why can't the other one be settled in principle?

MS: How would you settle the dispute between a Muslim and a Christian on how women should be treated? How would you settle that? I mean, they go look, it says right here in the Scripture, and you say but it says in my Scripture, so how are we going to settle that?

GK: Well…the question here, yeah, well in principle, it can be settled in actually two different ways. One, based on the authority of the book, and so you can look at the books, and say do I have any good, independent reasons, not just leaps of faith, but any good reasons to believe that this is actually a communication of God over and against this one being a communication of God? And there are lots of different strategies to go about that. Or one could just look at the claims themselves, and say look, based on what seems to be a common sense of right and wrong and morality that we all seem to have, and using our best faculties to reflect on it, I have reasons to mistrust this one, and trust this one more. Those are two, at least in principle ways, that you can go about adjudicating between those claims.

MS: I have a better way to settle it. Ask the women. How do you feel being treated like this? Which would you prefer? I think you'll get a pretty straightforward answer there, unless the guy's behind the door with a shotgun, and she has to give a certain answer.

GK: Okay, this presumes that we ought to care what other people think about how they're treated, which presumes an objective morality, and now we're back into that thing again. So that plays into my hands, not his.

MS: And I agree, there's an objective morality.

HH: But I…when I come back from break, we've got to go to break, when I come back, and I'll ask you, Michael, when we start, is there a way to adjudicate between the reasonability of those books, because it seems to me that the audience driving around right now has on their mind, and I always try and put myself in the point of the audience, wait a minute, how do you decide between many books claiming to be the revealed wisdom of God, and if your answer is you can't, don't bother, fine. If your answer is you can, pick this one, fine. But let's get to that. Is there an objective way to pick between the books?

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HH: But I want to get back to the subject I was raising. As between the books that claim to be the revealed wisdom of God, is there an objective way to judge them on their merits? Greg Koukl, let me start with you.

GK: Well yes, let's say, for example, if the documents in question claim that God communicated in an historical way, penetrated history and certain, particular things happened, now you've got an historical test for that kind of thing. You can look at the details that are expressed. Maybe there's some prophecy that is proclaimed at one time, and you have reason to believe was fulfilled at another time. You ask me in principle how it could be done, this is a way in principle that it could be done. You could see whether the view of the world that the books portray seem to comport with one's deepest intuitions about the way the world really is. I actually think religion is a very messy and untidy business. And with my philosophical training, I like to have all the loose ends tied

up. But the fact is, life is not tidy. And no matter what view you take, there are going to be problems and unanswered questions. So I take the perspective, as I mentioned at the beginning of the show, Hugh, as a man looking at my universe trying to make the most sense out of it. What picture of the world, what worldview does the best job of answering most of the questions? And I think this worldview-type analysis would be helpful here. If you have a book that gives a worldview that has a certain feature that seem to resonate with your deepest intuitions about the world, that seems to me a plus for the book. If you have another book that seems to indicate something entirely different, like the Vedas, for example, that suggest that the universe is just an illusion, that it's all Maya. Well this, to me, does not resonate with my deepest intuitions. So here's another way that in principle, at least, one could test one worldview against another with their religious books.

HH: Mike Shermer?

MS: That does seem problematic to me, even within your own Holy book, of how much we, how many of the Old Testament rules and laws we no longer obey – death penalty for disobedient children and adulterous people and so on. We would no longer practice that ever in our country. Why is that? I mean, that was once considered to be Holy Scripture, now it's rejected by most believers. So obviously, there are decisions being made in people's minds about what's right and wrong that is external to the source itself, that comes from, what, culture, parents, upbringing and so on.

HH: Okay, I'm going to recede from it, although my question was how would you choose between the books. I want to come back to that, Michael, but Greg has a response to that.

GK: Yeah, of course. Look, the Old Testament law was written for Jews. This is not like we're just making something up out here. It is a proper hermeneutic It was written to Jews under a very specific situation, and it was meant to be applied to them under the theocracy. There are some people who hold this, but certainly not the majority, that these same laws in the same way ought to be applied today. That's why we call it the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Even within the Christian worldview, there is a place for that, and now there's a place for something new. So there's no contradiction there at all.

HH: Yeah, you know, Michael, that does seem to me, Hitchens has made that argument to me a number of times, and it's just a silly argument.

MS: Which argument?

HH: The argument that the Old Testament rules that have been abandoned somehow indict the New Testament laws and morality. It's just a silly argument.

MS: Well wait. You still obey some of the Old Testament rules. So how do you…

HH: Yes.

MS: Which ones do you pick and choose from?

HH: I'll give you Al Mohler's book. Again, I'm not a participant. I don't want to answer. I want to ask you, though. To me, it was nonresponsive when I said as between the books, how do you judge which books?

MS: Okay, which books? I would just say…

HH: Of all the holy books that claim to have universal wisdom and knowledge about God, and I could name ten of them, is there a way to choose…

MS: I don't think so. I'm answering your question. I don't think there is any outside way to do that. Even in principle, because the ultimate, the original source of those books came through some human source, some revelatory experience that somebody had, that had to at some point put pen to paper and write down what the God said.

HH: Let me rephrase it, then. On the basis of human reason, there is no way to evaluate all those books as to which ones are at least more closely approximating the way that people ought to live or not?

MS: Oh, that's a different question. Maybe I misheard, because I think we could do that, but what's that standard of the way we ought to live? What are we using for that standard? I would argue there is such a standard, and it's not from religion.

HH: And so you would evaluate those books based upon your independently arrived at understanding of what is morality?

MS: I think we do do that.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, I think we do do that to a degree, too, and here Mike and I have no debate about the existence of a moral sense in human beings. The difference is whether that moral sense is merely an expression of our subjective emotions, which it seems to me what he argues for, though he wants to ennoble that and call that kind of objective morality, or is it our ability to grasp moral realities that are outside of us that would not change, even if our own opinions about it happen to change. That's the difference between objective and subjective. And Mike, you appealed for a kind of third category, but either…I don't see where there is a third category. It's either in the object or in the subject, and that's pretty much the law of excluded middle there.

HH: Remember that thought. We'll come right back to Michael Shermer.

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HH: Michael Shermer, what were you going to say?

MS: Well, so let's take another current example of whether homosexuality is a sin, leaving aside marriage as a political question, but just is homosexuality a sin or not. Now I presume you would argue it is, and it's right there in the Old Testament, a man shall not sleep with another man, it's an abomination. But why stick with that one, which seems to me equally culturally dependent as some of the other Old Testament on small populations struggling in a harsh environment, in which you want lots of marriage, lots of children and so on. I could kind of see that rules back then, but why bother now? I mean, why not abandon that one along with slavery and some of the other ones?

HH: Greg Koukl? Well, okay, this one goes to a matter of authority, because I think there are complicated, and for some, persuasive arguments that homosexuality is wrong, per se, because of natural law arguments or whatever, but those don't resonate with most

people. I think what Michael's getting at here is how is it that the New Testament, or now why are you still holding over that from the Old Testament when things have changed? And the reason is, it's not just an incidental part of the Old Testament law. It seems to be indicated there that the behavior itself transcends, morally speaking, any local law. Some of the laws in the Old Testament were for local things, but some seemed to transcend, like it's wrong to kill, or rather, wrong the murder is the Hebrew word. And so in the New Testament, even though we're not in the Old Covenant situation, we have these same kinds of things, these more transcendent things that apply to all human beings, prohibited. And one of those that's spoken to is the homosexuality issue. And the reason that Paul gives in Romans Chapter 1 is that God made human beings for one purpose, the man for the woman, and the man, in the case of male homosexuality, abandoned the woman that God made for them and burned in their passion against someone else. So there's a violation of the natural order. Now this isn't something that I'm probably going to come up with all on my own just thinking about, and this is where I think Divine revelation is helpful to have us dial down on some of the moral things. And you're certainly free not to accept that, but this is what makes homosexuality durable as a sin, in a sense, from the Old Testament times to the New Testament, because of the reasons that God gives that it's wrong.

MS: But using that sort of a moral intuition, and the still, small voice or the reflective aspects of morality, given that we live in a modern world in which we have plenty of people, we don't need more, and somebody, the evidence seems to show people are just born this way, it's like asking a gay person when they chose to become homosexual would be like me asking you when you chose to become heterosexual. And you'd say well, I didn't choose. This is my nature. And that's what gay people say. This is my nature. I've always felt like this. So why would you care? Who cares if somebody finds love with a member of the same sex, and love and marriage leads to fidelity and more moral behavior that we all agree is good for society? Why block that?

GK: Okay, just as a matter of fact, it is not the case that science has shown that this is genetic. There is no gay gene. This has not been demonstrated.

MS: No, not a gay gene…

GK: Or anything like that.

HH: Okay, we're going way off the off-ramp, gentlemen.

GK: Okay, the answer is, why would any Christian object to that?

MS: Yeah.

GK: Because out of fidelity to their God, because they believe that God has said this is wrong, and so they're going to oppose it in principle, even though it is not within their purview, then, to bring persecution upon that person, because there's another value that they hold, and that is that all human beings are made in the image of God.

MS: Okay, here's my prediction.

HH: I don't want a prediction. I want to get back to my question, Michael Shermer.

MS: Yup.

HH: Based upon what I would say your evolutionarily-constructed moral law, what you consider to be the societal moral law, have you evaluated the various holy books, and given them a hierarchy, which is best, which is not so good, which is terrible?

MS: No, I guess I have not.

HH: And why not, if that matters so much?

MS: I don't, I'm not that interested. I love studying religion, though I have not read the Koran, for example.

HH: Greg Koukl, is it necessary for someone who's going to say there's an evolutionary moral law, and talk about God, to have that kind of assessment?

GK: I actually don't, I'm sympathetic to Mike. I mean, there's a lot of books to read, you can't read them all. And if he thinks he has come upon a cogent and powerful explanation for the world as he sees it, then he doesn't have a motivation to go outside of that. My argument has been that it's not adequate, and that's why some other kind of solution is going to be necessary.

HH: Okay, here's my objection. If there's a moral law, and there's a societal good, and one of these books is really bad for it, and one of these books generally support it, then you ought to, even as an agnostic, make a choice between that which is really horrific, a Hitlerian approach to, you know, a Nazi, Mein Kampf, don't read that one, that's horrible, versus the New Testament is pretty nice. I think…

MS: Yeah, I guess I would attest that the New Testament's better than the Old Testament. I guess I would agree. I think Jesus was a big step forward. I think the feminization of some of the morality in the book of Ruth toward the end of the Old Testament is a big improvement over the early books, so yeah, I guess I do evaluate.

HH: And where do you put the Koran in that? You haven't read it at all, it just doesn't matter?

MS: Oh, I've read it, of course since 9/11, I've read lots of parts of it that everybody quotes, which are all the, you know, the horrific parts. And that seems to me far beneath the Bible in terms of what we would consider moral values. But anyway…

HH: Do any of the books have a better grounding in natural science?

MS: No, I don't think so.

HH: Do any of the books have a better grounding in history?

MS: It depends on which books. I mean, parts of the Old Testament have some good grounding in history, and others don't.

HH: This is a transition. Greg Koukl, how is the historical evidence for the accounts of these various books?

GK: Well, it depends on which one you're talking about. Some of these books aren't history books. They're poetic books that are meant in poetic language, the Bhagavad Gita, for example, to tell something about reality. I think the unique thing about the

Judeo-Christian revelation is that principally, the theological story is told through history, so the history is really important. The big event of the Old Testament is the exodus, you know, and this was the salvation event where God intervened. The big event in the New Testament is similar to that, parallel to that, is the resurrection of Christ. Now obviously, we have a lot more access to information about the life of Jesus of Nazareth than we do about the exodus. In fact, there's a kind of a big hole there in terms of archaeology for that period of time. But there's not a big hole when it comes to the life of Christ. And the documentary evidence is quite extensive. And not just the primary source documentation for the life of Jesus, which we call Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which by the way, should not be simply dismissed because they were written by Christians. Historians don't dismiss them for that reason. But we have to look at these as historical documents. And when we do, we find a tremendous amount of powerful testimony from those documents about the person of Jesus, what He taught, and what He did, which also points to a literal time-history resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Now if that actually happened, that puts this worldview in a whole different category.

HH: Well, that's my transition, is to the person of Christ, because most of our audience is Christian. And a lot of this argument has been, as I've had with many of the new atheists, silly to believe in Jesus.

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HH: Mike Shermer, as I said at the end of last hour, last segment, is it silly to believe in the historical person of Jesus Christ? And is it silly to believe in the claims and the accounts of him as recorded in the New Testament.

MS: I don't like the word silly, because it trivializes a serious issue. I think it's an empirical claim on one level, whether Christ rose from the dead or not, but on the other hand, I think it's an article of faith. You can show all 13 million Jews in the world that evidence for the risen Christ, and eyewitnesses, and the rock was rolled away or whatever, and they almost universally, except for the small population of Jews For Jesus, reject the evidence. So I don't think it's ultimately provable. I do think it's an article of faith, like many other articles of faith of religion. I don't like the word silly at all. I think that trivializes it unnecessarily.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, a frustrating situation for atheists is that the vast majority of people in this country, the rank and file, don't believe in Darwinian evolution. But I wouldn't be free then to say well, this is just, evolution's obviously an article of faith, because look at all the people who look at the evidence that you provide so persuasively and don't believe it. This is an observation that leads to no conclusion about this issue at all.

HH: And so, and it's frustrating as well, because it seems to me central for agnostics, atheists, to answer the question about the empirical evidence, and whether it is of high quality…I had this conversation with Richard Dawkins. Dawkins likes to argue you know, I'm a Latin teacher, and I'm just arguing that Rome existed, and a lot of people are arguing Rome didn't exist. And it's the same with evolution. And I challenged him, I asked

him the historical evidence for the personhood of Jesus is overwhelming, isn't it?

MS: Yes.

HH: And so, is the proof…

MS: Well, I don't know about overwhelming. I think Jesus existed.

HH: Well, is it overwhelming? Or just a guess?

MS: I think there's good enough evidence for us to conclude that somebody named Jesus of Nazareth existed.

HH: And on the basis of what we know generally about historical text, isn't there pretty good, and perhaps even overwhelming evidence that the Gospels are reliable, historically tested accounts about what this person did?

MS: Well now, it's getting a little fuzzier, because of the inconsistency of the accounts. And you could say well, okay, eyewitnesses saw things slightly differently. Yeah, but there's some important differences between the four Gospels. And what about the other Gospels that are not in the canonical books, the gospel of Thomas, for example? And there's legitimate, theological research on these other books, and why can't those be concluded?

HH: One minute, Greg.

GK: Well, there is legitimate, theological research, and not only on Thomas, but a whole bunch of other pseudepigrapha that come afterwards. There are all kinds of literary documents that make claims to write about Jesus that we know, because of their dating, couldn't possibly have the eyewitness accounts of the information that the Matthew, Mark, Luke and John canonical Gospels have. So just because there are other things that claim to be gospels, it doesn't mean that they're contenders as source of historical information. And the scholars in the field make this distinction. Now Thomas is one of those few documents where they seem to take seriously, but our documents of Thomas are like 3rd Century, and looks to have been written in the 2nd Century. So why is it that the 1st Century documents of the Gospels don't get preeminence there as historical documents? They should.

HH: When we come back, the third hour is given over to do the anti-God people have to put up with the same rigorous defense of their beliefs as they ask the theists to put up with theirs. Stay tuned.

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HH: And I want to spend this hour talking really about the debate over the debate. And it's occurring at an unusual time, because just a couple of weeks ago surfaced one of the greatest scandals in the history of modern science, Climategate, in which incredibly unscientific behavior on the part of scientists has been revealed. The atheists have often in the past few years tried to position the debate as between reason and faith. But now we find the tactics that people of faith are often accused of, absolutely evident on the part of the behavior of scientists – data manipulation, witch hunts against scientists with whom they disagreed with, a refusal to confront contrary evidence. And I took that, and I

applied it to this debate over intelligent design, Michael Shermer, and I'm wondering whether or not the opponents of intelligent design have been using the same tactics that the Climategate scientists, who are now deeply scandalized, embarrassed and discredited, have been using for the last, obviously, we just learned about it. But have the proponents of the anti-God view been just as intellectually dishonest as the Climategate scientists?

MS: Well, on the Climategate thing, I think the smoking guns are not what I thought they would be. I have some sympathy for the global warming skeptics. I was once one, and could be persuaded again. I think that's just a data question there. But what I think it revealed was how political scientists are. They're very liberal and very tribal, and like everybody else, they circle the wagons when they think they're being attacked from outside. And I think that's what we saw. So to that extent, do atheists, have atheists done that? Yes, they have. They've circled the wagons, they feel like they're under siege. At time, I think particularly since 9/11 with the fear of Islamic terrorism, and then since the Bush administration pushing an Evangelical agenda into politics, way more than Bush Sr., ever did as a Methodist, and certainly more than Reagan ever did, I think that's what caused non-believers to feel like they needed to push back somewhat. And then you just get specific cultural phenomenon like Dawkins' book takes off, or Hitchens' book takes off, something like that. I mean, the book sales on those books are more than cumulative all the other books they've ever written, plus all of a bunch of other books, so I think you get a combination of those events there.

HH: Greg Koukl, first your response, then I have a follow up.

GK: Well yeah, I think that there is kind of a shell game and a muscling going on, and we see it in the field. And I think what people don't realize, and I didn't realize this until maybe six or seven years ago when this was explained to me, and when explained, I really saw this, that there are actually two definitions of science that are in play here, Hugh. One of them is a methodological definition, the scientific method. You know, follow certain methods, and you come up with the right results. Now if you don't follow that method, then that's called bad science, and you can't trust the results you come up with. But there's more going on here. It isn't just a methodology. There is also a philosophical definition. This philosophical definition is metaphysical materialism, or called naturalism. A metaphysical view is a total view of reality, and on this view, nothing exists but the molecules in motion. That's materialism. That's also part of the definition. So currently, in the state of science, in order to be doing science, good science, you have to be doing the right methodology, but you also have to come to the right kinds of conclusions. You have to come to conclusions that comport with naturalism and materialism. And if you don't, you're accused of doing religion instead of science. I just want people to see that there's a difference here, and lots of times in this discussion, this metaphysical issue trumps the methodology. Notice that a lot of times, the arguments aren't against ID proper, that is the evidence that they've offered. It's a dismissal by saying you're not doing science, you're doing religion. This isn't real scientists at work like we are, these are phonies. And so it's a way of discrediting based on the kind of conclusions that they come up. Now this

happens all the time, and you can see a bullying that's going on in the field, and a lot of people have identified this, Guillermo Gonzalez for example, a famous example from Iowa State University, denied tenure though very qualified. Francis Beckwith, for goodness sake, a philosopher, not a scientist, but the same kind of thing happened to him at Baylor before it got reversed, and a lot of other people. There's a political game going on here, and it seems to me that if the evidence for Darwinian evolution is so powerful, then why do you have to do these political moves that are driven not by the methodology, but largely by the metaphysics doing the magic? Why? And I think because the metaphysics are doing a large part of the work, and the method doesn't give the evidence that's necessary to convince the most people.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Of course, other fields of science don't deal with these issues, like why are Christian groups not up in arms about the Krebs cycle being taught in biochemistry classes and biology classes. Why not? I mean, if you're going to object to methodological naturalism, why pick on just one, particular little subfield?

GK: Because it doesn't have any ramifications for these other things.

MS: Yeah, of course. That's right.

GK: But it does…

MS: Because certain fields of science do bump up against political and religious implications.

GK: But it's not just that, Michael. It has to do with the evidence in question. Nobody has, even from my side of things, has any difficulty with the Krebs cycle, because methodological naturalism is the thing that governs day to day science.

HH: Why don't you explain the Krebs cycle for our audience.

MS: Oh, it's just a…

GK: I can, but he…

HH: I know, but don't use terms like that for the audience.

MS: It's just a biochemical process in cells of using energy.

GK: Yeah. And so at this point, to finish my thought, though…

MS: Yeah.

GK: What this points out is that these kinds of issues are not the kind of thing that affect day to day science. But when it comes to the issue of origins, then it's something entirely different. You have a different category that you're talking about, and this is where the muscling has been done, and that's why the complaints have been raised, muscling that is illegitimate considering what's at stake.

MS: Well, muscling on both sides. I mean, it's political on both sides, so the left and the right both push back against each other, all the way back to the Catholic Church and Galileo.

GK: Well, okay, I'm glad…

MS: I mean, that tension has always been there. Let's not…

GK: Great. And it was wrong with Galileo, and it should be wrong now. That's my point. If it was wrong then, and with the monkey trial and everything, now everything is in reverse, and I think this is what Hugh was getting at. If the power plays were wrong in the past, then they should be wrong now, and why don't we just let everybody lay their cards on the table and play fair, and then let the best idea win?

MS: I agree. So just put it out there. Like the Climategate? Yeah, let's get that original data. I agree. Sure. Now let me just back up for a second on an example not related to religion, but on another field that I deal with, extra sensory perception. Can we actually read the minds of other people? Okay, setting aside the TV psychics and all that silly stuff, there are some scientists who actually believe that mind exists separate from brain, and that we can connect to each other, and there's a famous physicist named Roger Penrose, who has this theory about that quantum mechanics explains how when neurons fire, the collapse of the wave function inside the atoms, inside the nerves, fire in a sequence that my cells can read your cells. They're actually communicating, somehow, across a distance, all right? I don't happen to think that's true, but let's say it turned out to be true, and that now we have a naturalistic explanation for extra sensory perception. Well, that would no longer be the paranormal, would it? Now it would be quantum neuroscience, or neurophysics, or something like that. So at some point, you need some kind of a natural explanation for the phenomenon in question that we can test. So for example, when somebody, when cosmologists talk about well, the galaxies are structured in this odd way where there must be more matter out there, we'll call it dark energy or dark matter, they don't actually mean that as an explanation. It isn't an explanation. It's just a word filler until we can figure out what's going on. So at some point, it's not that no one's allowing you to introduce the supernatural, it's just that no different than calling it ESP, that doesn't explain it. We need some kind of a mechanism that causes it.

GK: Okay, to be fair, Michael, I was at the debate one week ago that you did with Professor Prothero and Steve Meyer, and the others from the ID thing. And you started out your presentation by saying this is all about religion, it's not about science. That's the first thing you said. And then you referred to the other guys as, you and your partner, as 'those guys,' and we are doing real science, and they're not. In fact, Steve Meyer raised a complaint at the personal attack there, because both of them have advanced degrees in their fields. Now I mean, this is an example of the kind of thing that I'm talking about. It's like, you didn't say to these guys well, you're real scientists, we're real scientists, but really, the facts matter, so let's look at the facts. There are all of these kind of subtle and sometimes not so subtle invectives, or shout across there. Now I've been in debates before. I know how that works. I'm just simply saying that your kind of tone of innocence here, it strikes me as disingenuous, because this is a game that you guys play all the time when in public circumstances. And sometimes, it's not just invectives, it's actually muscling, we won't publish your paper, we won't let people know about it, we're going to criticize you in front of all these people and try to discredit you.

HH: A response coming back from Michael Shermer when we return.

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HH: Michael Shermer, I was not at this debate. I have no idea what Greg just referenced. So I want to give you a chance to go back to what he was just talking about. Did you attack Steven Meyer's scientific credentials?

MS: Actually, I didn't. My partner did. Well, you know…

HH: Did you correct your partner at that point?

MS: Well…

GK: Steven Meyer corrected him, actually, is what happened.

MS: Yeah, I mean, this is a part of the format of debate, right? I mean, it's a contest. It's competitive. You're supposed to, you know, you're supposed to come out…like a lawyer, you're supposed to defend your position. You're not supposed to…if it's a panel discussion, that's different than a debate. This was a debate. I actually do think that it's perfectly fine for Steven Meyer to publish books like his new book on DNA, and put forth testable hypotheses. Okay, at least now we're getting somewhere, where if you give us something we can take back to the lab and test, then we're doing science. If it's just I infer that there's a designer behind this, okay, that's nice, but what am I supposed to do with that? So the analogy I made is that let's say it turns out life did not originate on Earth, that it was seeded here either through meteorites or comets, or maybe even extra-terrestrials brought it here and seeded it, and they are from the Planet Vega, a planet around the Star Vega. Let's say something like that.

HH: A dysfunctional GM car, okay.

MS: Yeah, exactly, yeah. Right. Good, we needed some humor there. And…but and let's say we found a little pod out in Blythe or something in the desert with the blueprints of how they made DNA. Well, that would be interesting, but we'd still want to know well, where did the Vegans come from? I mean, who made those guys? Did they evolve on this planet? Or were they seeded there from someplace else? Or did God do it? Or…in other words, at some point, we need some natural explanation for where life came from. And if you take this back far enough, you will end up at an infinite regress. Well, God, outside of space and time, came into our space and time, stirred the particles, and created life. Okay, but where did, if not God, the intelligent designer, where did He come from? Did he evolve? Or is he a standalone, the last causal link? And there, we bump up against the great unknown. I don't see how that's resolvable.

GK: I've got so much to say about this, I'm not sure where to begin. Let me just start with the power play. At that debate, Richard Sternberg was the other I.D. guy there, and Richard Sternberg used to be with the Smithsonian. But he had the audacity of publishing a paper by Steven Meyer in a journal, a peer review journal that was associated with the Smithsonian, and he got bounced. This is the kind of thing that I'm talking about.

MS: You know, I just called them. He's still there. At least, he's still on their list.

GK: Okay, well, the firestorm…

MS: I don't think he got bounced.

GK: …surrounding that, you don't…okay, forget the bounce thing. The firestorm surrounding it you don't deny?

MS: Yes, of course. We're all emotional, yeah. Right.

GK: Well, it goes beyond that. And so the point to bringing up the debate, I understand that there is these things you do in debates, but this in the debate was the microcosm of the bigger issue, and that's why I pointed that out. Now with regards to, you know, life beginning on other planets, and then who designed the Designer and that kind of thing, it's a very odd question. And virtually all the guys on Mike's side of this debate ask the same question – who created God, or some variation of that. And what's curious is that Mike and none of these other guys believe that God was created, because they don't believe in God. I don't believe that God was created, because I think that God is eternal. So nobody in the discussion believes that God was created or designed. So why does the question come up that who designed the Designer, or who created God? Frankly, it's a distraction. It's a distraction from the evidence in front of us, for intelligent design. If I'm walking down the beach as we could here in Newport, Hugh, and I see a footprint in the sand, a shoeprint in the sand, I don't need to know who the manufacturer of the shoe is before I can properly conclude from the evidence that a shoe made the print. The same thing is true here. We're focusing on one issue, and that is whether the evidence suggests an intelligent designer. If we come to the conclusion that that's the case, much like forensic pathology, there's a dead man with five holes in his chest from bullets, gee, it doesn't look like natural causes, now let's go search for the person who did it. That's the next step. But we can't say, I think, vacuous challenges like who created God when none, all of these guys know that nothing about our view requires God's creation. They say this to, I think, distract from the main issue, the evidence for design itself, which is compelling, Hugh.

MS: Oh, I don't say it as a distraction. I think it's a really interesting question. Where did the universe come from in the first place. And if there were multiple universes, you still have the same problem – where did those come from.

GK: I agree. I agree.

MS: And I do think, Greg, at some point, we do bump up against limitations of our knowledge, of our language…

GK: Right.

MS: …of what our brains are capable of solving. And there is a leap of faith for all of us. You either decide to believe, or you decide not to believe. And I don't think it's ultimately provable one way or the other. Now on the other question positing a designer from the evidence of design, I think there is an inference there in which we have vast experience of people shooting each other, and we know what that is. And so you come across somebody with five bullet holes, okay, there's a natural inference there based on experience. And we've seen people make tennis shoes, so we know that they're made when we see the print. Okay, there's a natural inference there. But we've never seen any

designer design DNA. We just have the product, the artifact, from which we infer what? And there, it isn't the same as an artifact that's made by us.

HH: All right. Now gentlemen, I want to switch for the last three segments of the show leading into a larger question about belief in God generally. Is it good or bad for people? And regardless of whether it's true, or the true true, to use Francis Schaeffer, but is it good or bad? Because that leads me to the second question, are the new atheists involved in an evil project or a good project? Because these are both obvious question. So Greg, you want to take a first pass?

GK: Yeah, I'll take a shot at it, and again, I want to go back to my earliest comment when we started talking about morality. It depends on what you mean by good. And I'm just weighing in now to say that when you're using the word good, I'm taking this as good in the objective sense.

HH: Yes.

GK: Do objective goods, oughts that we should do and whatever, come to pass better when there is belief in God? There's a famous story of a Hassidic Jew that was standing in front of a German machine gun having just dug his own grave. And he said just before he was gunned down, he said God is watching. Now one thing that the German officer didn't believe at that point was that God was watching. Nor did Mao, nor did Lenin, nor did Stalin, nor did many other people who did great atrocities, did they believe that God was watching. As David Berlinski has pointed out, that's actually the definition of secularism. God is not watching. Now I don't think it takes, you know, a lot of deep thinking to realize, and Michael might call this a shallow motivation regardless, to realize that if people really believe that God is watching, their behavior is going to be better on balance than if they really believe that God is not watching.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Well, I do think that religion and belief in God is good when it does good, and evil when it does evil. And we can make a laundry list of goods and evils that religion does. You have Hitchens' book here, and he's got a laundry list in there of all the evils.

GK: And we agree on that, by the way, Michael.

MS: And you could take David Brooks' book, Who Really Cares, and he documents how Republicans and conservatives and religious people give more money and more time, and donate more blood and so on then securalists, atheists, nonbelievers, and Democrats. So I would say that's great. I mean, I sponsor a child through World Vision, because I think they do the job. They put the boots on the ground, and they make things happen. And religion is really good for that. And so I think it's too simple to say is religion good or evil. I mean, come on, it's a big, complex, social, historical force that does lots of good things, and lots of bad things.

HH: When we come back, I'll follow up, because I don't think it's too simple. I think it's actually the question about whether or not the anti-God people are engaged in evil if they're destroying belief in God.

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HH: So Michael, I come back to this. You said yeah, religion's done a lot of good and a lot of bad, but generally speaking, and the utilitarian view, is belief in God good for the planet? And if it is good for the planet, have the anti-God people been involved in an evil project?

MS: I don't think they have been involved in an evil project. I think what it…it makes it okay to not believe in God. Remember, atheism isn't a thing. There's no, like, central set of tenets that we adhere to or believe in, or anything like that as you would a Republican or conservative, or something like that, or a Christian or a Jew or whatever. We don't have anything like that, because there is nothing. It's just simply we just don't believe. Now because we're social creatures, we like to feel like we belong to a family, an extended family, a group of friends, a bowling league, social capital, this is called. Everybody likes to feel like they belong. Because religion is so dominant in America, particularly the Christian religion, those of us who are either not Christian or not believers, we feel a little alienated, a little lonely, and a little left out. And we'd like to have our own group. So in part, what the new atheist movement is tapping into is that social feeling of wanting to belong to a group. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think it's good that there are people out there, groups out there that make that okay.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, your question was not whether religion does good, but whether belief in God does good, if I recall it correctly.

HH: Yup.

GK: And so I want to return specifically to that. The atheists do have a code. It's not very complicated. It's just that as Michael just put it, there is nothing. So what is the moral consequence on a people if they believe there is nothing? That's really the question. The 20th Century, which we just left, was the bloodiest century in the history of the world. And just a casual adding up of the numbers shows over 100 million that were dead at the hands of just three people – Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Tse Tung. Now these people had a particular ideology at which atheism was its foundation. Because they didn't believe in God, and there is a natural kinship here between worldviews and the actions that follow them, because they didn't believe in God, it was the state that was the greater power. And if the state is the greatest power, and they were the state, then they had no one to answer to. And consequently, they were able to do these things that everyone views as an atrocity. Now this, I think, is logical. This follows from that worldview. I'm not saying that atheists are all evil like that. They're not. Mike is a fine guy. What I'm saying is that given the atheistic worldview, you are allowed to do those kinds of things, because there is no transcendent rule that's keeping you from doing otherwise.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Nobody kills or dies in the name of atheism, because there's nothing to kill or die for. People kill and die for causes, for ideologies, for beliefs. And communism is a faux

religion. It is exactly like a religion, a set of tenets that people adhere to, and then we're going to go out and change people's minds, or impose our views on them and so on. That's what social groups do, whether they're political, ideological, economic, religious, whatever. And that's what communism is. And it's nothing more than that. Nobody killed in the name of that. In any case, Hitler's not a good example, because as we've seen now…

GK: I didn't use him.

MS: …with the indictment of the Catholic Church, they were very much involved in the whole Nazi process there…

HH: That's…time out, Michael. That's simply not true, but let's not go there. I would want to have an expert in the Vatican's many, many interventions to save lives, and then we'd have a long conversation…

MS: Oh, of course they did. Yes, yes.

HH: Let's just not throw it out there. Let's just not throw it out there.

GK: The real issue here is not whether people did it in the name of atheism or not. But it has to do with the kinship of behaviors to worldviews. Whether people are thinking of this as a rationale, gee, I'm an atheist, so I can go kill people, is not the issue. The issue is how is it that people actually live out the deep beliefs that they have about the world? And it seems obvious that when people have believed that there's nothing else but us and our rules, what we make, for whatever reasons we do, and we answer to no one, and there isn't going to be any final justice or final judgment or final reckoning, well, it seems very clear to see how this is going to have a deleterious effect on behaviors.

MS: Yeah, but if Torquemada had gas chambers, wow, what would the numbers have been in the Inquisition? I mean, in the name of God, Torquemada…

GK: So you're saying there is no relationship between the worldviews?

MS: Well, you brought up the numbers.

GK: Right.

MS: It isn't numbers that's important. It's what your capable of doing. And religious beliefs and political ideologies are no different as belief systems driving behavior that's moral or immoral. People kill in the name of religion just as much as they do in the name of a political ideology.

GK: This is false, just quantifiably, first of all.

MS: No, I disagree.

GK: But secondly, there is the idea…

MS: Not by the numbers.

GK: The idea is what's important. People just have to reflect in the idea. Which one is a better encourager to good behavior, that God exists. That was your question.

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HH: It seems that we're onto something very important here, and Michael, I sense

defensiveness on your part, so I'm going to let you go first. If, in fact, the new atheists launch a series of responses that lead people to not believe in God, and those people in not believing in God act a certain way, that's causation. That's responsibility. Ought the new atheists ought to own their responsibility? If they kill God, ought they not to own the results of killing God?

MS: First of all, I don't think that's going to happen. It didn't happen at the turn of the 20th Century.

HH: Didn't ask that question, though.

MS: Yeah, yeah, I know. Sure, okay, I'll stand up and be responsible. Why not?

HH: Greg Koukl, have they been? It's a flippant response. That's okay. But…

GK: Yeah, well…

MS: No, it's a true response. Yes…

GK: What I was…okay, great. So what do we take away from that?

HH: Right.

GK: Listen, I'm arguing if there is no God, then everything is permitted. There is no objective morality.

MS: I don't agree with that. Come on.

GK: I understand that. I understand you don't, but you have ground objective morality…

MS: Yes, you can. We're back to where we began.

GK: Your morality is subjective.

MS: No, it's not.

GK: It's something that's in the subject. It's in the genes…

MS: That's objective.

GK: And it creates…yes, okay. Well, it is objective, but it's not objective in the way that I'm talking about it. It's objectively in the subject, and ethicists have made this distinction for a long time between objective and subjective. I'm not going to go there again. Let me just finish the equation here. If there is no God, then everything is permitted. If the new atheists are right, then there is no God. Therefore, if the new atheists are right, then everything is permitted. Now I think that follows. And I think this, then, creates a problem. Again, I don't think that all of the atheists are bad people in everything that they do. They're just as bad as the rest of us religious people. Let's face it. The question has to do with the impact of worldviews, and that is really what's in play here.

HH: I do agree, Michael, that's where I'm coming back down to. I take responsibility for it if in fact the people who allowed and facilitated the rise of the atheist monsters of the 20th Century were around today, they would deny responsibility for them, even though they facilitated it with the collapse of the orders that previously held back the monsters. It seems to me now that Dawkins, et cetera, your rhetoric is much milder than Dawkins, but that they were about unleashing the beast again, because the beast is eager. The most eager thing in the world for the Devil, the Christians have always said, is not to be

believed in. And you guys are doing a good job.

MS: If they, if Dawkins and Hitchens and so on were promoting some kind of a political agenda hooked to the atheism, whereby you're supposed to go out and do this or do that, then yes, I'd think you have a point, and I'd be concerned about it. That is, is it leading to greater liberty, or greater tyranny? That's the question, liberty and tyranny, is at stake in terms of the boots on the ground, actual change.

HH: Greg Koukl, if you take down a dam when it's not raining, and nothing happens for give years, ten years, fifteen years, twenty years, and then the hundred year flood comes, which happens every hundred years, and you destroy everything in front of it…

GK: Then you're in trouble. Right.

HH: You're responsible.

GK: Well, you made the point. And actually, Sam Harris is very explicit about this in his book. He said that there are some beliefs that are so dangerous, and he's talking about theism here, that it's justified to even kill people for that belief. Now two things are in play here. Sam Harris acknowledges the relationship between worldviews. You believe certain things that have certain consequences, which I think is true and that's what I'm arguing, and then he exemplifies it himself with the danger of atheism. He thinks that they, atheists, not all believe this, and certainly Michael doesn't, he is not going to get involved in this, but he seems to suggest that some people should be killed for their beliefs. And whether Dawkins has a political agenda or not is irrelevant. If he is laying the foundation that justifies a certain political agenda, then the dominoes are going to fall. It's a logical slippery slope, and it's one to be concerned about.

MS: You see, I place at the feet of the monstrous evil of the 20th Century Marxism, Leninism. If Marx and Lenin just simply said we're atheists, and they wrote atheist books, nothing would have happened. It's that they hooked it to something else, which is the confiscation of private property, the confiscation of individual liberties, the ownership of productivity. That's what destroyed those societies and led to the monstrous problems.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Well yeah, I agree with that as far as it goes, except to say that there was something else that was in place that allowed them to do such a thing, and that there was a, again, a kinship between the belief system and the results of that belief system, the particular things. Now could religious people have done that? Yes, but it's a lot harder to hang the behavior of Christians who say they're Christians that's evil, on Jesus Himself, because Jesus didn't teach that kind of thing. Instead, you have Christians that are acting contrary to Jesus' own behavior and teaching. In this case, you have behaviors that are fully consistent with an atheistic worldview.

MS: But you left out the first World War, which was Christian nations fighting Christian nations – Germany and France and England were all Christian nations. They all believed God was on their side. And they imposed just as much destruction as happened in World War II. They just didn't have any…

HH: I actually don't believe any of them believed God were on their side when they went into that war. I know the history of World War I fairly well. They did not march to war on the basis…

MS: Well, but you would call them Christian nations.

HH: But they did not, then went to war on the basis of economics…

MS: Well, okay…

GK: But even if they did, it's not the point.

HH: It had nothing to do with God.

MS: Okay, I would agree.

GK: The point is what is it that, does the worldview that they have justify what they did? And now we're back to Jesus again, which they can't put it on Jesus, but the atheists can put it on atheism.

HH: Very quickly, this segment and last, of the various world religions, which has contributed the most to human progress in the alleviation of suffering? It's an objective question. It's not a question about which is correct or which is true. Just if you look through of all the world religions, which has contributed the most to human progress and the alleviation of suffering? Michael Shermer, do you have an answer to that?

MS: I'd say probably Christianity.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, this is well documented. Under The Influence, for example, is one of the books that has been written to show this is the case.

MS: Oh, that's a Judeo-Christian…

HH: Does that necessarily tell us anything about the truth claims of the religion, Greg Koukl?

GK: Well, when you look at the particular truth claims, I think it does. These things were done in a way that were consistent with the Christian worldview, and seem to resonate with the other people who didn't share their worldview as something that's good. This is why going back to worldview perspective is so valuable. I think these are outliving of a worldview that deeply resonates with our deepest intuitions about the way the world actually is.

MS: I'm in favor of any ideology that gives more people more freedom and liberty and individual power, whether that's religious or nonreligious.

HH: We'll be back. I'm going to give a minute to each of my guests to wrap this up. Don't go anywhere, America.

– – – –

HH: I want to thank Michael Shermer of Skeptic Society, http://www.skeptic.com, and Greg Koukl of Stand To Reason, http://www.str.org for their time and their patience. Greg Koukl, a minute, fifteen for you.

GK: Yeah, I started out talking about worldviews. And as a man trying to make sense of my world and finding a worldview that seems to fit reality as I experience it. I think atheism is way too austere for me, Hugh. It commits me to too many counterintuitive things – everything comes from nothing, like comes from nonlife, consciousness comes from matter, morality comes from a reorganization of molecules. None of this seems to make sense to me. There is another alternative that seems to make a lot more sense, that a big bang needs a big banger, that a moral law comes from a moral lawgiver, that design comes from a designer. These notions are captured well, I think, in the Biblical account of life. And the person of Jesus, especially, exemplifying these notions, and then giving us a way to live that makes sense. And this is why I'm a Christian and not an atheist. I think it makes the best sense of the world as we know it.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: I'm an atheist, because I don't believe in God, and there's nothing to follow from that. I think we have an absolute moral standard, we have objective moral truths, we all know what they are, we listen to our small inner voice within that comes from our evolutionary heritage as a social primate species, in which we care deeply about our fellow group members. We have empathy and sympathy, and that's where the moral emotions come from. In terms of religion, I think religion is good when it does good, it's bad when it does bad. In general, I'm in favor of anything that leads to greater freedom, greater liberty, greater autonomy for more people in more places. And that has been the trend for the last five hundred years, that I attribute to the general secular idea, from the Enlightenment, that people have value in and of themselves, and I think religion has fostered, after the fact, sort of just slightly behind the wave, reinforcing those good, human values, and attenuating the bad ones. And that's why they've discarded so many of the Old Testament values that we no longer adhere to. So I think that's the long term trend, and I think we should continue to count people, more and more people as part of our fellow in-groups, and I think free trade and travel and the internet is the best way to encourage that.

HH: Thank you, Michael Shermer of Skeptic Magazine, http://www.skeptic.org, Greg Koukl of Stand To Reason, http://www.str.org. Once again, all their books I've been talking about are linked at Hughhewitt.com. I want to thank Adam and Generalissimo for all their work in producing today.

End of interview.

Can atheists be moral? Sean McDowell and James Corbett debate

February 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten posted the audio a few milliseconds after the debate concluded!

Here is the MP3 file.

Sean's case is similar to the one I make, but he only has 3 minimal requirements for morality.

First, he explains the difference between objective and subjective truth claims, and points out that statements of a moral nature are meaningless unless morality is objective. Then he states 3 things that are needed in order to ground objective morality.

1. an objective moral standard
2. free will
3. objective moral value of humans

The question of the foundations of morality is without a doubt the easiest issue for beginning apologists to discuss with their neighbor. If you're new, then you need to *at least* listen to his opening speech. He's an excellent speaker, and his rebuttals are very, very smooth. The citations of atheist philosophers like Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, e.g. – to show that "religious" wars had *nothing* to do with religion, really hurt his opponent. He seems to cite prominent atheists like Thomas Nagel, Richard Taylor, Michael Shermer, etc., constantly in order to get support for his assertions. That took preparation. I can't believe that McDowell is this calm in a debate situation.

When I listen to Frank Turek, he seems to struggle in his rebuttals. McDowell sounds like he foreknew exactly what his opponent would say and pre-wrote responses. He even had powerpoint slides made *in advance* for his rebuttals! I am not making this up – Corbett even remarked on it.

For those of you who want to understand how these things work, listen to the debate. There is a period of cross-examination if you like that sort of thing. I do!

EXTRA:

- You may also be interested in Dinesh D'Souza's thumping of some atheist here.

How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?

February 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Some statistics on the importance of biological fathers from Fathers.com.

Excerpt:

> Some fathering advocates would say that almost every social ill faced by America's children is related to fatherlessness. Six are noted here. As supported by the data below, children from fatherless homes are more likely to be poor, become involved in drug and alcohol abuse, drop out of school, and suffer from health and emotional problems. Boys are more likely to become involved in crime, and girls are more likely to become pregnant as teens.

For a summary, I'll just list one fact from each of the six categories they listed.

> **1. Poverty**
>
> Fact:
>
> – Children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor. In 2002, 7.8% of children in married-couple families were living in poverty, compared to 38.4% of children in female-householder families.
>
> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002, P20-547, Table C8. Washington, D.C.: GPO 2003.
>
> **2. Drug and Alcohol Abuse**
>
> Fact:
>
> – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states, "Fatherless children are at a dramatically greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse."
>
> Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. Survey on Child Health. Washington, DC, 1993.
>
> **3. Physical and Emotional Health**
>
> Fact:
>
> – Unmarried mothers are less likely to obtain prenatal care and more likely to have a low birthweight baby. Researchers find that these negative effects persist even when they take into account factors, such as parental education, that often distinguish single-parent from two-parent families.
>
> Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service.

> Center for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. Report to Congress on Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing. Hyattsville, MD (Sept. 1995): 12.
>
> – Children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems.Source: Stanton, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics."National Health Interview Survey." Hyattsville, MD, 1988.
>
> **4. Educational Achievement**
>
> Fact:
>
> – After taking into account race, socioeconomic status, sex, age, and ability, high school students from single-parent households were 1.7 times more likely to drop out than were their corresponding counterparts living with both biological parents.Source: McNeal, Ralph B. Jr."Extracurricular Activities and High School Dropouts." *Sociology of Education* 68(1995): 62-81.
>
> **5. Crime**
>
> Fact:
>
> – Children in single parent families are more likely to be in trouble with the law than their peers who grow up with two parents.
>
> Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. National Health Interview Survey. Hyattsville, MD, 1988.
>
> **6. Sexual Activity and Teen Pregnancy**
>
> Fact:
>
> – A white teenage girl from an advantaged background is five times more likely to become a teen mother if she grows up in a single-mother household than if she grows up in a household with both biological parents.Source: Whitehead, Barbara Dafoe. "Facing the Challenges of Fragmented Families." *The Philanthropy Roundtable* 9.1 (1995): 21.

Fathers matter, so women need to choose men who will be good fathers. And that means having an idea of what fathers do, and knowing how to evaluate a man to see if he can do what fathers do. There's more to fathers than handsomeness and fun!

Research from the Heritage Foundation

- Marriage: Still the Safest Place For Women and Children
- Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty

Canada created twice the number of jobs as the United States in January

February 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

U.S. Labor Force Participation

By now, everyone has heard that Marxist Obama has failed to create jobs again, so that the underemployment rate is at 19.2%. (Underemployment is even higher than employment because it takes into account people working part-time who want to work full-time but can't). That means that 20% of the population either cannot find work, or cannot find full-time work. The labor force participation under Obama's socialist regime is now at a 26-year low.

Excerpt:

> At 64.2%, the labor force participation rate (as a percentage of the total civilian noninstitutional population) is now at a fresh 26 year low, the lowest since March 1984, and is the only reason why the unemployment rate dropped to 9% (labor force declined from 153,690 to 153,186). Those not in the Labor Force has increased from 83.9 million to 86.2 million, or 2.2 million in one year! As for the numerator in the fraction, the number of unemployed, **it has plunged from 15 million to 13.9 million in two months!** The only reason for this is due to the increasing disenchantment of those who completely fall off the BLS rolls and no longer even try to look for a job. Lastly, we won't even show what the labor force is as a percentage of total population. It is a vertical plunge.

But these kinds of failures are not unavoidable. For example, look at Canada's latest unemployment numbers.

Excerpt:

> Canada's job creation in January was more than four times the median forecast, pushing the Canadian dollar to its strongest level since May 2008 and adding to evidence the country's economic recovery may be accelerating.
>
> Employment rose by 69,200 and the labor force increased by 106,400, Statistics

> Canada said today in Ottawa. The jobless rate rose to 7.8 percent from December's 7.6 percent, as more people sought work. Economists forecast 7.6 percent unemployment and job growth of 15,000, according to the median estimates of 25 and 26 economists surveyed by Bloomberg News.
>
> "This adds confidence to the notion we are headed for a better year for growth and growth in the job market," said Mark Chandler, head of Canadian currency and rates strategy at Royal Bank of Canada's RBC Capital Markets unit in Toronto. "There isn't a lot of slack in the labor market in Canada, certainly on a relative basis to other countries."
>
> Canadian policy makers have been dealing with the impact of a strong currency and a slowdown in growth of household and government spending that crimped the economic recovery in the second half of last year. Bank of Canada Governor Mark Carney stopped raising interest rates after September and Finance Minister Jim Flaherty scaled back plans to exit stimulus.
>
> "It's one of these reports that's strong through and through – it's hard to find any weakness," said David Tulk, chief Canada macro strategist at Toronto-Dominion Bank's TD Securities unit.
>
> "The Bank of Canada would likely just see this as a step towards a stronger recovery, but not a point where they would need to respond," he said. He predicts a July rate increase.
>
> […]The report restores Canada's status as having regained all the jobs lost in the recession, after a Jan. 28 revision based on updated census data reduced Statistics Canada's estimate of total employment.
>
> The Canadian dollar gained 0.4 percent to 98.75 cents per U.S. dollar at 4:30 p.m. in New York from 99.11 cents yesterday, after earlier touching 98.32 cents, the strongest level since May 2008. The benchmark 10-year Canadian government bond yield increased four basis points to 3.46 percent, the highest since May.
>
> […]"Too many Canadians are still looking for work, the economic recovery is fragile," Flaherty said today in response to a question in the House of Commons. "We need to continue with our job-creating, low-tax plan."
>
> Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said reductions in corporate taxes are the best way to boost employment.
>
> […]Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the world's largest retailer, said Jan. 26 it will open 40 "supercenters" in Canada by the end of January 2012, creating 9,200 construction and store jobs.

Basically, the Canadians listened to Obama's speeches, and then decided to do the EXACT OPPOSITE of what he said. They are drilling for more oil, lowering corporate taxes below 20%, (ours is 36%), cutting spending and raising interest rates to encourage people to spend less and invest more, which supports job creation. This is what Hayek

would recommend. In order to create jobs, you need to cut corporate taxes to provide businesses with a profit motive. And you need to make sure that there is capital to borrow for risk-taking, which happens when interest rates are higher because people save more money by giving it to banks to lend to businesses. When a business sees that it can keep profits that it makes then that's what they'll do. That's when they start expanding their businesses and taking risks – when there is money to be made. If you keep banning drilling, imposing health care costs and demonizing businesses in speeches, like Obama does, then they WON'T hire anyone.

I hope that all the young people who voted for the first MTV President are happy with their 18% youth unemployment rate. Ideas have consequences.

But the differences between Canada are even more pronounced. Recall that Canada is ONE TENTH the size of the United States, with one-tenth the population, one-tenth the GDP, and one-twentieth the national debt. A 700,000 increase in the number of jobs is really like a **700,000** increase when projected proportionally to the United States. Canada didn't spend massive amounts of money on "stimulus" spending, because the prime minister is NOT a Keynesian. He's a Hayekian, like me. He's not following the socialist, academic playbook – he's following the capitalist, real-world playbook. He doesn't believe that lowering interest rates and wasting money of government public works projects is a way out of a recession. And he's right.

New study links father absence to increased bullying

February 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Science Daily. (H/T Wes from Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> "Our behavior is driven by our perception of our world, so if children feel they are not getting enough time and attention from parents then those feelings have to go somewhere and it appears in interaction with their peers," said Christie-Mizell, an associate professor of sociology and licensed psychologist specializing in family therapy and the treatment of children with mood and behavior disorders.
>
> His study, published in the journal *Youth & Society*, looked at two questions — "What is the relationship between the number of hours parents work and adolescent bullying behavior?" and "What is the relationship between bullying behavior and youth's perceptions of the amount of time their parents spend with them?"
>
> What Christie-Mizell found is that it was children's perception of how much time they spent with their fathers that had the most impact on bullying behavior.
>
> Christie-Mizell began the research thinking that mothers' work hours — since mothers overwhelmingly are the ones to care for and monitor children — would be more likely to have an impact on whether children exhibited bullying behavior such as being cruel to others, being disobedient at school, hanging around kids who get in trouble, having a very strong temper and not being sorry for misbehaving. However, it was when fathers worked full time or overtime and children perceived that they did not spend enough time with their fathers that bullying behavior increased.
>
> Mothers' work hours showed modest to no effect on bullying behavior. Christie-Mizell believes this is because children perceive mothers as being more accessible because they still handle most of the responsibilities at home as caregivers and family managers.
>
> "The findings about fathers and mothers are important because it turns what most of us think is conventional wisdom — that mothers have the most influence on children — on its ear. What this research shows is that while it's equally important for kids to spend time with both parents, fathers need to make an extra effort," he said.

It's amazing that the very people who complain the most about "bullying" are causing the bullying by undermining the traditional family. If everyone is so concerned about "safe" schools, then maybe they should promote fatherhood and marriage instead of redefining marriage so that fathers are redefined right out of the marriage.

My previous post on the effects of fatherlessness on children is here. Fathers matter.

Marriage matters. Biological fathers are the least likely to abuse their children. Individual stepfathers and live-in boyfriends tend to not be as good for children as biological fathers.

Research from the Heritage Foundation on the importance of fathers

- Marriage: Still the Safest Place For Women and Children
- Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty

Who has done more for religious liberty? Bush or Obama?

February 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One place where religious liberty is under attack is in China. What do Chinese Christians think about Bush and Obama? (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Leading Chinese Christian dissidents blasted the Obama administration Thursday, saying it had done virtually nothing to advance the cause of religious freedom.
>
> "For the past two years, in public it's been almost dead silence," said Bob Fu, founder and president of the China Aid Association, an international Chirstian human rights group.
>
> He said private pleas to State Department officials to publicly mention names of jailed and "disappeared" Christian leaders had fallen on deaf ears.
>
> "Although I see some similarities between this administration and the last one — of course, both put an emphasis on business and trade — at least President [George W.] Bush singled out religious freedom as a foreign policy priority. He was very vocal, he made lots of policy speeches, he was not ashamed to talk about it."
>
> Mr. Fu, whose organization has headquarters in Midland, Texas, was in Washington on Thursday to join a six-member delegation of Christian leaders from China at the National Prayer Breakfast. Chinese authorities barred three of the six from leaving the country.
>
> Religious freedom in China has been a growing international issue in recent years as the nation's Christian population has mushroomed. Though the Chinese government has given space to tightly controlled state-sanctioned churches, the vast majority of the country's Christian population — more than 100 million, by some estimates — prefer to join independent "house churches," which remain heavily persecuted.
>
> Zheng Leguo, a prominent evangelist from Zhejiang province, said that house-church Christians "prayed for the re-election of President Bush because he cared about the religious-freedom issue and they thought having him in office would keep them further from prison."
>
> "The Chinese-government-sanctioned church was praying for Mr. John Kerry," he quipped, referring to the 2004 Democratic presidential nominee.

The article also notes that former ambassador to China Jon Huntsman, an Obama-appointee, hasn't done anything for the Chinese Christians. He is also pro-amnesty, a

believer in man-made global warming, and a supporter of same-sex civil unions. Apparently, he is running for the 2012 Republican nomination! What a laugh.

Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action

February 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about exposing Planned Parenthood
From Live Action's web page. (H/T Lex Communis)

The videos:

- **Richmond, Virginia Planned Parenthood Full Video**
- **Falls Church, Virginia Planned Parenthood Full Video**
- **Roanoke, Virginia Planned Parenthood Full Video**
- **Charlottesville, Virginia Planned Parenthood Full Video**

Excerpt:

> The footage shows a man who identifies himself as a pimp working with underage girls. He seeks assistance for getting abortions, STD testing and birth control for girls he "manages" as sex workers, who are from out of the country and as young as 14 to 15 years old. The investigation continues to unearth alarming evidence that Planned Parenthood, which receives more than $350 million from the American taxpayer every year, is willing to facilitate the sexual exploitation of minors and young women.
>
> "Today, we are sending Attorney General Cuccinelli and Virginia law enforcement officials new, disturbing footage from three Virginia clinics. The footage explicitly shows Planned Parenthood staff willing to engage in activity that sexually

> exploits minors and young women. The evidence continues to mount, and shows a clear pattern where Planned Parenthood is willing aid and abet the sex-trafficking industry. These are abhorrent practices and it is time Planned Parenthood be held accountable," Rose said.
>
> Findings in these Virginia videos:
>
> • Falls Church – Abortions for underage girls from other countries only require a photo ID.
>
> Planned Parenthood staffer: "We don't necessarily look at the legal status, like I said. Abortion appointments do require photo ID. It's nothing as far as records. It's just photo ID that's ever going to be required."
>
> • Roanoke – Birth control and STD testing for underage prostitutes is no problem
>
> Planned Parenthood staffer: "From the age of 12 up, for birth control, you can just come in and do that. You don't have to have a parent, OK?"
>
> Planned Parenthood staffer discussing STD testing: "And the thing is, see this is the thing a lot of people don't know that. . .Right, through the Health Department. And so, they'll uh, they'll track it. And they're discreet. They're confidential. They, you know, don't tell people what's going on, because – frankly – it's nobody's business."
>
> • Charlottesville – Birth control and testing for STDs and pregnancy for underage girls with no questions asked.
>
> Planned Parenthood staffer: "Anybody here can help you. Everything here is confidential. We can't give any information out."

Notice the concern about taxpayer-funding. I love it when social conservatives understand that they are paying for the evils they condemn. That should be the first step – to de-fund the immoral practices. Eil is harder to do when you have to pay for it yourself. It makes people make better decisions when they know that they have to face the consequences of their own actions. The worst thing in the world is for the government to pay for abortions – that takes away all the moral and financial sting. Which is exactly why the Republicans want to ban all taxpayer-funding of abortion and why Obama passed Obamacare to fund abortions.

One other nice thing is that Cuccinelli, the attorney general, is the same who has been investigating the University of Virginia for global warming fraud.

Gay activist killed by gay prostitute for refusal to pay for sex

February 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> After the brutal murder of Ugandan gay rights activist David Kato last week, media, homosexual activists, and human rights groups claimed it was the result of anti-homosexual sentiments in Uganda.
>
> However, on Wednesday police arrested a man by the name of Nsubuga Enock who they say was a sex partner of Kato's and who has confessed to the murder.
>
> According to Inspector General Kale Kayihura, the suspect said "he negotiated with the deceased to be paid money as he was to be used as a sexual partner."
>
> He said the man then had sex, but Kato did not pay. "The following day, Nsubuga confesses that he picked a hammer from the bathroom and hit him on the head," said Kayihura.
>
> "There is nothing concrete to suggest that Nsubuga was motivated by hate, although we are not dismissing it."
>
> Police also said Enock was a well known thief.
>
> Kato was murdered on January 24. Media and activists around the world immediately decried his death as a direct attack on his homosexual stance and Kato is being described as an activist hero and "model."
>
> New York based Human Rights Watch issued a statement last Thursday calling for thorough investigation of the case. "David Kato's death is a tragic loss to the human rights community," said Maria Burnett, senior Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch. "David had faced the increased threats to Ugandan LGBT people bravely and will be sorely missed."
>
> Newspapers across North America last week slammed Uganda as a "deeply" anti-homosexual country and cited Kato's high-profile involvement in activist groups as reason for the murder. Kato reportedly had "many death threats" over the last months after he, along with other homosexual activists, was "outed" in a newspaper that published his picture.

Interesting because of the media bias, very similar to the Gabby Giffords case where Sarah Palin was blamed with zero evidence, when the murderer had favorited flag-burning videos on YouTube and he also liked to read books on socialism like the Communist Manifesto and Mein Kampf. In short, he was an atheist and a leftist.

I think we are at the point now where the media can write stories demonizing groups they oppose entirely without evidence, and only much later does the real story emerge, if at

all. So much for the objectivity of the news media.

Because of Obama’s laws restricting free speech, do not even THINK of commenting on this post.

Related posts

- Gay rights activist accused of sexually assaulting 17-year-old boy
- Gay rights activist convicted of manslaughter
- Gay rights activist who ran pedophile ring gets life sentence
- Gay health expert charged with selling adopted 5-year old boy for sex

Public school censors student for singing Christian song

February 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a disturbing story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A California elementary school is changing course after being sued for barring a fifth grader from performing to a Christian song in the school's February 4 talent show.
>
> The students parents filed a lawsuit Friday saying Superior Street Elementary School violated their son's first amendment rights by telling him he couldn't dance to his favorite song "We Shine" because of its references to Jesus, **MyFoxLA reported.**
>
> The lawsuit claims that after the boy's January 14 audition the school's principal, Jerilyn Shubert, told his mother the song was "offensive" and a violation of the "separation of church and state" and asked why he couldn't "pick a song that does not say Jesus so many times?"

> […]The Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian legal alliance that brought the case on behalf of the student, says while its pleased with the district's decision the lawsuit will continue to ensure that the school drafts a policy to prevent this from happening again."Christian students shouldn't be censored at public elementary schools because district officials think that religious speech may be offensive, which isn't justified by the Constitution" said ADF Senior Counsel David Cortman. "The LAUSD did the right thing by recognizing the student's constitutional rights and lifting its censorship of religious speech at the talent show."

The school is, of course, a government-run (i.e. – public) school. The school web site is here. I found something interesting on the web site.

Excerpt:

> Superior Street Elementary School, as *a multicultural and diverse learning community*, prepares each student for academic, social, and personal success by providing a safe, supportive, challenging, and meaningful environment.

The problem with public schools is that they get paid money up front through taxation so that they have no responsibility to provide results to their customers in order to earn that money. Instead of having to compete with other schools in order to get paid, they get paid regardless of how they perform. So by the time that Christian parents discover what they are getting for their taxpayer dollars, it's too late to take them back, and the only solution is to sue, which costs time and money.

But there is another point I want to make about the ADF and the lawyers. Where do they come from? And who pays them?

I ask this because recently I have been having discussions with a single Christian woman who thinks that anything that children want to do with their lives is as good as any other thing. I sent her the profiles of some high-powered influencers on either side of the culture war, e.g. – high-tech business owners who use their fortunes to promote same-sex marriage and conservative Supreme Court justices. I would put the ADF into the class of high-powered influencers. But the response from her was that poets can be just as influential as wealthy entrepreneurs or Supreme Court Justices.

Let's just take a look at the biography of an ADF lawyer and see what they are like:

> Alan Sears serves as president, CEO, and general counsel of the Alliance Defense Fund, a legal alliance of Christian attorneys and like-minded organizations defending the right of people to freely live out their faith. He leads the strategy, training, funding, and litigation efforts of ADF that have resulted in various roles in 37 victories at the U.S. Supreme Court and wins in more than three out of four cases litigated to conclusion. Under his leadership, ADF has funded more than 2,000 grants and legal projects for allied lawyers and organizations, and ADF attorneys have successfully defended marriage as the union between one man and one woman in over 40 cases nationwide.
>
> Since the launch of ADF in 1994, Sears has provided strategic leadership in the training of more than 1,400 lawyers through the ADF one-of-a-kind National Litigation Academy, which is designed to equip attorneys to more effectively defend religious freedom, the sanctity of life, and marriage and the family. These attorneys have reported more than $117 million in pro-bono/dedicated time. Sears' visionary efforts have also resulted in the graduation of more than 900 outstanding law students— representing more than 140 law schools—from the unique ADF Blackstone Legal Fellowship program. This in-depth summer internship program helps equip these students to assume leadership positions to shape the future of American law. Today, ADF has more than 1,800 allied attorneys.
>
> Sears earned his Juris Doctor from Louis D. Brandeis School of Law. While serving in numerous positions within the government, he worked for the Department of Justice under Attorneys General William French Smith and Edwin Meese III, including service as an Assistant U.S. Attorney and Chief of the Criminal Section. Sears was also appointed as the director of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography and served as associate solicitor with the Department of the Interior under Secretary Donald Hodel. A graduate of the University of Kentucky, Sears has continued his education with professional instruction at Stanford University, Harvard Law School, Harvard Business School, and Pepperdine University.
>
> Practicing law for three decades, Sears is a member in good standing with the

> American, Arizona, California, District of Columbia (inactive), and Kentucky bar associations. He has helped fashion the language for numerous state and federal laws and has testified before committees of the U.S. House and Senate, state legislatures, and many local governments and commissions. Legislators in 20 states have adopted his legislative recommendations. Sears has assisted legislators and law enforcement officials from many countries and has spoken before committees of the British Parliament.

I would link to the profile of a poet for contrast, but the poet accomplished nothing in his life and had no effect on society as a whole.

The interesting thing is that both of these children cost about the same to raise. Is one a better deal than the other? If I knew I was going to get poets on the other end of the decision to marry, could I do better using the money for the child for something else that would benefit God more – like sponsoring Christian apologetics events? What is the point of marrying and having children anyway? What is the business case? What is the value proposition to a man who has scarce resources that have alternative uses? And what leverage do I have after a marriage to make sure my plan will be followed? (E.g. – consider this case)

I should also note that the ADF is a charity and is funded by the donations of wealthy Christians. They are not funded by the donations of poets, because poets have no marketable skills and therefore nothing to share with others. Actually, it is poets who invent concepts like postmodernism, moral relativism, emotivism, diversity and multiculturalism, which is what causes these problems in the first place.

New study finds that fathers should play with children and mothers should care for them

February 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Found here in the Courier and Mail.

Excerpt:

> A study suggests that couples have a stronger relationship when the father spends more time playing with their child.
>
> But when he participates in care-giving such as giving baths, parents undermine each other.
>
> The study in the *Journal of Developmental Psychology* involved 112 couples with four-year-olds.
>
> They were asked how often they played with their children and were involved in care-giving.
>
> The US researchers looked for signs of supportive co-parenting, and for evidence of couples criticising or trying to "outdo" each other.
>
> A year later the couples took part in a similar activity and results showed when fathers played more with their child at the beginning of the study, the couple showed more supportive co-parenting in the second session.
>
> But when fathers took part more in care-giving, the couples showed lower levels of supportive co-parenting a year later.

It's a small study, so I would like to see another one that is bigger.

Afghan Red Cross worker set to be hanged after converting to Christianity

February 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East

Mary sent me this news article from the UK Daily Mail.

Full text:

> An Afghan physiotherapist will be executed within three days for converting to Christianity.
>
> Said Musa, 45, has been held for eight months in a Kabul prison were he claims he has been tortured and sexually abused by inmates and guards.
>
> Mr Musa, who lost his left leg in a landmine explosion in the 1990s, has worked for the Red Cross for 15 years and helps to treat fellow amputees.
>
> He was arrested in May last year as he attempted to seek asylum at the German embassy following a crackdown on Christians within Afghanistan.
>
> He claims he was visited by a judge who told him he would be hanged within days unless he converted back to Islam.
>
> But he remains defiant and said he would be willing to die for his faith.
>
> He told the Sunday Times: ‘My body is theirs to do what they want with.
>
> ‘Only God can decide if my spirit goes to hell.’
>
> Defence lawyers have refused to represent him, while others have dropped the case after receiving death threats.
>
> Mr Musa was arrested after a TV station showed western men baptising Afghans during secret ceremonies.

And it’s not just Afghanistan and Iraq – now it’s Egypt. Jennifer Caballero linked to this

Cubachi post that explains how Egyptian Christians are in fear of persecution.

Here is an article from the left-wing Huffington Post that talks about Obama's response to all of this persecution of Christians.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has not shown us it cares about the persecution of Christians. This is obvious. At a time of rising persecution of Christians throughout Muslim lands, the president has nominated Dr. Suzan Johnson Cook — a "motivational speaker" with questionable qualifications — to hold the critical position of U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom.
>
> Respected diplomat Thomas Farr, who headed the State Department's International Religious Freedom desk, has written in *The Washington Post*: "The Obama administration seems to have decided that other policy initiatives — outreach to Muslim governments, obtaining China's cooperation, advancing gay rights — would be compromised by vigorous advocacy for religious freedom."
>
> The situation for Christians around the world is increasingly dire. In Afghanistan, a government we support and largely fund is hounding Christians, pursuing them, and threatening them with death.
>
> Christians in Iraq are suffering more now than at any time since the dawn of the Christian era. Fully half of Iraq's Christians have fled the country since the 2003 U.S. invasion. They can no longer survive where their ancestors lived for thousands of years.
>
> Christians in Egypt were murdered at Christmas by Muslim militants. Christians in Lebanon are newly threatened by the rise of Hezbollah — backed by Iran.
>
> In Iran itself, 100 Christians were arrested in 24 cities on Boxing Day, the day after Christmas. The Iranian regime — to which this president extended an "open hand" and to whose people he sent Persian New Year's greetings — is committed to a totalitarian variant of Islam. No wonder they want nuclear weapons.

It's become very popular on the left to say that Islam is a religion of peace, and to include Islam as a mainstream religion alongside Judaism and Christianity. Somehow, I don't think that the multicultural relativists have looked very deeply at Islam.

And I don't think that Islam could have much going for it rationally or evidentially if it has to resort to violence in order to avoid people converting away from it. If membership in Islam isn't voluntary, then how many Muslims really believe in it because they think it is true? Clearly, they don't really care about presenting as rationally testable. It's basically presented as "convert or die".

Fewer people are paying taxes because fewer people are married

February 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an interesting essay from The Family in America.

Here's the problem:

> Just two days before Tax Day this year, the Heritage Foundation was quick on the draw with a *Backgrounder* by Curtis S. Dubay citing IRS data showing that the bottom 50 percent of tax filers pay less than 3 percent of all income taxes. According to Dubay, "the rapid increase in the number of nonpaying tax filers caused by tax credits is leading the country to a dangerous tipping point." Like other conservatives and libertarians, he fears that once the bottom half of tax filers pay no taxes whatsoever, they "could vote themselves an increasing share of government benefits at no cost to themselves."

And here's what's causing the problem:

> More important, this relatively new concern about the growth in the number of Americans paying no income taxes overlooks the social roots of the problem, particularly the decline of the most economically productive segment of the population: the married-two parent family.[5] Consequently, few economic conservatives seem willing to connect the dots between the changing demographics of the American taxpayer, which Hodge at least acknowledges,[6] and the growth of Americans paying no taxes. They seem more eager to blame the latter on the addition and expansion of refundable credits, especially the child tax credit, not changing demographics. Yet Roberton Williams of the Tax Policy Center, a joint project of the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution, estimates that married couples are far less likely to be non-taxpayers in 2009 than single filers or head-of-household filers. In this last category, his model shows 72 percent paying no income taxes, the highest percentage of all tax filing categories. Only 38 percent of married-joint filers, and 26 percent of married-separate filers, pay no taxes.[7]
>
> Indeed, the Tax Foundation's own analysis of IRS data documents the decline in the proportion of married filers from 65 percent of returns in 1960 to 41 percent in the years 2000–02, and the dramatic growth of head-of-household filers, representing largely unwed mothers, from 2 percent to 15 percent during the same period. Moreover, looking at data from 2002 returns, the foundation finds that married couples, while they file less than half of all tax returns, pay nearly three-quarters of all income taxes paid by the American people.[8] Even though the analysis does not include changes that might arise from the doubling of the child tax credit to $1,000 in 2003, the numbers nonetheless suggest that the growth in

> the number of Americans who pay no income taxes is driven more by the retreat from marriage than by the proliferation of credits in the tax code, as problematic as that might be. The numbers further suggest that if conservatives are serious about tax reform, they can no longer ignore the elephant in the room—the retreat from marriage and family life—that undermines the very economic growth they seek. Nor can they presume that a flatter tax system with lower rates and a wider base, favored by the libertarian wing of the GOP, will lead to smaller government, as analysis by economist Gary Becker shows that countries with flatter tax systems tend to have larger governments.[9] They must therefore be open to tax reform proposals that recognize the natural family as the social and economic ideal as well as reinforce the recovery of marriage and the child-rich family—not economic growth for its own sake—as centerpieces of American life.

This is yet another reason for fiscal conservatives to take notice that you cannot have economic growth if the traditional family is replaced with single-mother families. Single motherhood is not a situation where men are responsible and work hard as providers. It infantilizes men and rewards them for acting like nomads and barbarians. And the children who are raised without fathers are not going to be as mentally healthy or productive as the ones raised with fathers. The traditional family, with children raised by biological parents who are attached to them, is an important part of future economic growth. It’s all linked together – social conservatism and fiscal conservatism.

New study links morning-after pill to increase in sexually-transmitted diseases

February 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Physorg. (H/T Family Research Council)

Excerpt:

> Offering the morning after pill free over the counter has not reduced the number of teenage pregnancies and may be associated with a rise in sexually-transmitted diseases (STIs), according to a report by experts at The University of Nottingham.
>
> Professors David Paton and Sourafel Girma used local health authority data to study the impact that the introduction of Government-backed schemes to offer emergency birth control at pharmacies and without prescription have had on conception rates and the diagnosis of STIs among under-18s.
>
> Their findings show that, on average, areas operating a pharmacy emergency birth control (EBC) scheme saw an overall increase of five percent in the rate of STIs among teenagers — 12 per cent in the under-16s age group. The study also found that EBC schemes may actually be associated with a small increase in the number of teens falling pregnant.
>
> […]Historically, a number of studies have been conducted looking at the impact of easier access to contraception and legalising abortion and a review of 23 of these reports in 2007 revealed that none found any significant decreases in unwanted pregnancies or abortion rates.
>
> […]The researchers warned that as the figures only show the number of diagnoses at GUM clinics, rather than the total number of infections of illnesses which can in some cases be asymptomatic.
>
> Professor Paton commented, “Our study illustrates how government interventions can sometimes lead to unfortunate unintended consequences. The fact that STI diagnoses increased in areas with EBC schemes will raise questions over whether these schemes represent the best use of public money”.

Make having sex easier, and you get more people having sex more often. More sex means more STDs. Pretty simple.

Which political party raises unemployment more? Democrats or African communists?

February 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's look at the fiscal policies of ANC party in South Africa. (H/T Eleanor via Mary)

Excerpt:

> If the government has its way, private companies will no longer be able to hire employees without first considering people listed on a government database of unemployed South Africans.
>
> Failure to do so could result in heavy fines for companies.
>
> This is according to the Employment Services Bill gazetted in December last year.
>
> According to the proposed bill, the government intends to establish a public employment service, whose task will be to create a database of all unemployed people in the country. The employment service will then link job seekers to companies that have vacancies.
>
> The bill, one of four tabled last year, also stipulates that employers will have to register all their vacancies with the service in 14 days.
>
> The government will then provide the companies with the names of possible candidates to fill those posts.
>
> According to the proposed bill, if companies fail to appoint candidates from the database who meet the requirements, they will need to provide written reasons for their actions.
>
> The bill also proposes conditional employment of foreigners. If a company employs a foreigner, it will have to prove to the employment service that it was unable to find a suitable local candidate, including those provided by the government.
>
> The government has also vowed to deal with recruitment agencies that charge job seekers fees. It has proposed that all agencies be registered or face punitive measures.
>
> The bill proposes that the agencies must charge employers the fees instead.
>
> In addition, the bill provides for temporary workers to be paid at the same rate as permanent workers.

This may be the most anti-jobs policy I have EVER heard of. If Satan himself wanted to design a policy to destroy jobs and stop businesses from hiring, then he could not do more to raise the unemployment rate than this evil, evil job-killing policy.

Let's take a closer look:

- first, government has no money of its own – it must steal money from productive

businesses. Businesses who create products and services that consumers actually want. That means that the money that is used for this database and the government employees will take money away from businesses. When businesses have less money, they hire fewer workers. *Therefore, this policy will raise the unemployment rate*.

- second, government will fine companies who do not waste time and money complying with this new regulation. Complying with the regulation not only requires time to query the database, but also to interview candidates who match the job requirements, and then to provide written reasons why they did not hire those candidates. The time spent complying with these regulations will cost the company money, reducing the amount of money that is available to hire workers. *Therefore, this policy will raise the unemployment rate*.
- Third, the fee for hiring foreign workers will cause companies to settle for a local employee, who may not be as skilled as the foreign worker. The extra paperwork to hire a better-qualified foreign worker will cost the company money, reducing the amount of money that is available to hire workers. *Therefore, this policy will raise the unemployment rate*.
- Fourth, in the case where the employer has to pay an extra fee to hire a worker who has been found by a headhunter, it just raises the cost of hiring this person and may cause the company NOT to hire this worker. Whereas before, a company would have to pay X to hire a worker P, now they will have to pay X + some fee in order to hire worker P. This extra fee will cost the company money, reducing the amount of money that is available to hire workers. *Therefore, this policy will raise the unemployment rate*.

Since the stated "good intention" of this bill is to reduce unemployment, I can only conclude that the ANC is a party of diabolical liars, or that they are not competent enough to run a lemonade stand. When you raise the cost of employees, either through fees or through fines or through paperwork, then you get fewer employees hired. What will happen is that more South African businesses will ship their jobs overseas. This is where outsourcing *comes from* – from stupid anti-business policies.

But wait! What about Obama? Isn't he economically illiterate, too?

Consider this story from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama's budget proposal is expected to give states a way to collect more payroll taxes from businesses, in an effort to replenish the unemployment-insurance program. The plan could cause controversy at a time when the administration is seeking to mend fences with corporate America.
>
> The proposal would aim to restock strained state unemployment-insurance trust funds by raising the amount of wages on which companies must pay unemployment taxes to $15,000, more than double the $7,000 in place since

> 1983.
>
> The plan, which would take effect in 2014, could increase payroll taxes by as much as $100 billion over a decade, according to a person involved in its construction.
>
> By proposing to enlarge the pool of wages subject to unemployment taxes, the White House appears to be offering states a more politically palatable way to raise revenues than to boost tax rates. States could keep the tax rates they have, or even lower them somewhat, and still raise considerably more revenue than they are raising now.
>
> …To avoid hitting businesses with a tax increase during the economic recovery, the proposal would delay the new rules until 2014. The plan is expected to be included in Mr. Obama's budget proposal for fiscal 2012, to be released Monday.
>
> Any proposal would need congressional approval.

Michelle Malkin explains:

> Just remember: There is no such thing as a "free" government benefit. Who pays? Dentists, tavern owners, maid services, mom-and-pop shops — small businesses that are the backbone of the American economy. And the businesses that have the lowest claims histories are getting punished the most to make up the jobless benefits fund deficit.
>
> So much for Do No Harm.

This policy will basically *raise the cost of hiring an employee.* It is nothing but a new tax on businesses who hire employees. Businesses will have to pay the government *more money* for every employee they hire. Their only way out is to not hire anyone (here), but to move their businesses abroad, away from Obama and his anti-business regulations and taxes.

Remember what happened to the unemployment rate since the Democrats took over Congress in 2007:

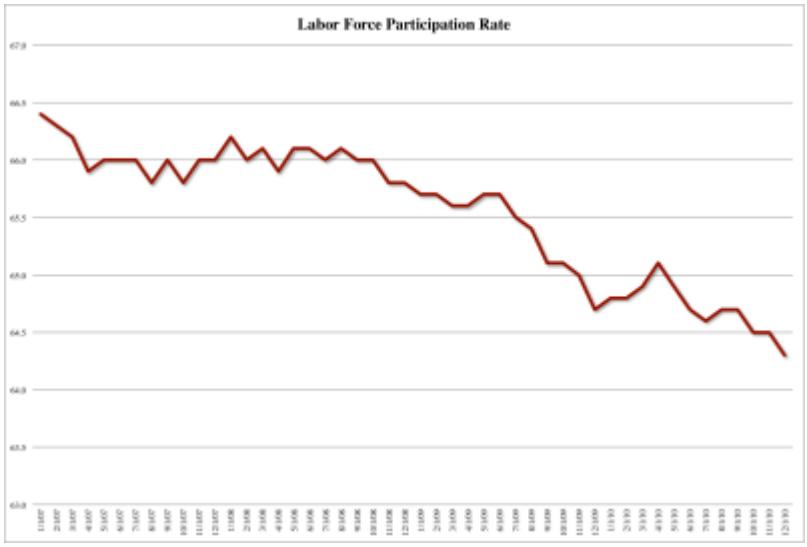

Labor Force Participation Rate

Click the graph for a larger image. When you tax something, you get less of it.

Civil rights commission finds that Obama administration has racist double standard

February 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remember the New Black Panthers voter intimidation story?

Here's a re-cap from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> President Obama's Justice Department continues to stonewall inquiries about why it dropped a voter intimidation case against the New Black Panther Party.
>
> The episode—which Bartle Bull, a former civil rights lawyer and publisher of the left-wing Village Voice, calls "the most blatant form of voter intimidation I've ever seen"—began on Election Day 2008. Mr. Bull and others witnessed two Black Panthers in paramilitary garb at a polling place near downtown Philadelphia. (Some of this behavior is on YouTube.)
>
> One of them, they say, brandished a nightstick at the entrance and pointed it at voters and both made racial threats. Mr. Bull says he heard one yell "You are about to be ruled by the black man, cracker!"
>
> In the first week of January, the Justice Department filed a civil lawsuit against the New Black Panther Party and three of its members, saying they violated the 1965 Voting Rights Act by scaring voters with the weapon, uniforms and racial slurs. In March, Mr. Bull submitted an affidavit at Justice's request to support its lawsuit.
>
> When none of the defendants filed any response to the complaint or appeared in federal district court in Philadelphia to answer the suit, it appeared almost certain Justice would have prevailed by default. Instead, the department in May suddenly allowed the party and two of the three defendants to walk away.

Well, an investigation just completed, and now we have the facts on why the charges were dropped by the Obama administration.

Jennifer Rubin explains why in the left-wing Washington Post. (H/T The Heritage Foundation)

Excerpt:

> The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights came out in December with a draft of its interim report on the New Black Panthers Party scandal. Earlier today a final report was posted on the commission's website, and with it, a flurry of rebuttals and separate statements from a number of the commissioners. The import of these statements should not be minimized.
>
> The statements indicate several points: 1) the New Black Panther Party case

> brought by career Justice Department employees was meritorious on the law and the facts; 2) there is voluminous evidence of the Obama administration's political interference in the prosecution of the New Black Panther Party case; 3) there is ample evidence that the Obama administration directed Justice Department employees not to bring cases against minority defendants who violated voting rights laws or to enforce a provision requiring that states and localities clean up their voting rolls to prevent fraud; 4) the Justice Department stonewalled efforts to investigate the case; and 5) vice chairman Abigail Thernstrom has, for reasons not entirely clear, ignored the evidence and tried to undermine the commission's work.

The rest of the article has specific comments from the investigators of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

Do people choose their religion based on their country of birth?

February 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This podcast is from Jim W. Wallace of Please Convince Me. (H/T John Barron)

Topic:

> Do people choose their religion based on the country of their birth, or based on peer pressure from their local community, or based on pressure from their family?

The MP3 file is here. (31 Mb, 67 minutes)

Summary:

- people in the early church did not become Christians because of peer pressure
- Christianity thrived in an environment of hardship and persecution
- even today, Christianity is thriving in China, in a hostile environment
- Christianity is actually growing the fastest in non-Christian countries
- in America, the two fastest growing religions are Islam and “No religion”
- the entertainment industry, mainstream media and university are anti-Christian
- many people become Christians on their own, which no family/community pressure

If you listen to his read e-mails, he mentions my post on the hiddenness of God and plugs my blog! Wow!

Do universities discriminate against conservatives?

February 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically-leftist New York Times. (H/T The Blog Prof)

Excerpt:

> Discrimination is always high on the agenda at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology's conference, where psychologists discuss their research on racial prejudice, homophobia, sexism, stereotype threat and unconscious bias against minorities. But the most talked-about speech at this year's meeting, which ended Jan. 30, involved a new "outgroup."
>
> It was identified by Jonathan Haidt, a social psychologist at the University of Virginia who studies the intuitive foundations of morality and ideology. He polled his audience at the San Antonio Convention Center, starting by asking how many considered themselves politically liberal. A sea of hands appeared, and Dr. Haidt estimated that liberals made up 80 percent of the 1,000 psychologists in the ballroom. When he asked for centrists and libertarians, he spotted fewer than three dozen hands. And then, when he asked for conservatives, he counted a grand total of three.
>
> "This is a statistically impossible lack of diversity," Dr. Haidt concluded, noting polls showing that 40 percent of Americans are conservative and 20 percent are liberal. In his speech and in an interview, Dr. Haidt argued that social psychologists are a "tribal-moral community" united by "sacred values" that hinder research and damage their credibility — and blind them to the hostile climate they've created for non-liberals.
>
> "Anywhere in the world that social psychologists see women or minorities underrepresented by a factor of two or three, our minds jump to discrimination as the explanation," said Dr. Haidt, who called himself a longtime liberal turned centrist. "But when we find out that conservatives are underrepresented among us by a factor of more than 100, suddenly everyone finds it quite easy to generate alternate explanations."
>
> […]The politics of the professoriate has been studied by the economists Christopher Cardiff and Daniel Klein and the sociologists Neil Gross and Solon Simmons. They've independently found that Democrats typically outnumber Republicans at elite universities by at least six to one among the general faculty, and by higher ratios in the humanities and social sciences. In a 2007 study of both elite and non-elite universities, Dr. Gross and Dr. Simmons reported that nearly 80 percent of psychology professors are Democrats, outnumbering Republicans by nearly 12 to 1.

And yet all we ever hear from the academic left is how open-minded they all are – how they love to celebrate diversity. *What diversity?* They're more bigoted and segregated

than the Ku Klux Klan. At least the Klan isn’t taxpayer-funded by the very people who are being discriminated against!

Ohio Republican proposes ban on abortions after baby has a heartbeat

February 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about moving to Ohio

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> An unborn child's heartbeat can be detected as soon as 18 days after conception, and supporters of a bill slated to be unveiled in the Ohio Legislature Wednesday say that women should be prohibited from ending pregnancies beyond that milestone.
>
> State Rep. Lynn Wachtmann is planning to unveil the "Heartbeat Bill" and a legislative aide for the Republican tells Fox News that 42 of the 99 representatives in the Ohio state House have signed on to the bill, which would make an exception to the heartbeat rule only in emergency medical situations.
>
> According to 2009 data from the Ohio Department of Health, 56.6 percent of abortions in that state occur in the first nine weeks of pregnancy. And since the fetal heartbeat appears on monitors by six weeks into gestation in most cases, supporters of the bill believe that it could prevent thousands of abortions.
>
> "When the Heartbeat Bill passes, it will be the most protective law in the nation," Janet Folger Porter, president of conservative advocacy group Faith2Action, said in a release. Porter helped craft the bill, and was also instrumental in passing the nation's first ban in partial-birth abortion when she was legislative director of

> Ohio Right to Life.
>
> […]And though Porter and former Ohio Right to Life president Linda Theis vocally support the Heartbeat Bill, the pro-life organization's current executive director says the legislation is destined for failure.
>
> "Unfortunately, the Heartbeat Bill will not survive a court challenge, and therefore not save one life," Ohio Right to Life executive director Michael Gonidakis told Fox News, arguing that state courts and the Supreme Court would slap down the heartbeat cut-off in the same way they would reject a full abortion ban. "Because the Supreme Court, unfortunately, has ruled on countless occasions that any restrictions on abortion pre-viability are unconstitutional," he says.

And in Georgia, another Republican is proposing a bill to ban all abortions once the unborn baby can feel pain. Can you imagine causing pain to a helpless little baby? That would be horrible – but that is exactly what abortion does. So, I hope both of these pro-life bills pass.

I also must note that poets will play *no part* in these initiatives to restrict abortion. These pro-life legislative efforts will be fought by lawyers and judges who have advanced legal training – training that takes effort and money to achieve. And their case will be grounded in science, not in poetry. The pro-abortion side is grounded in poetry, feelings and sad stories about poor, poor women who are not responsible for their own choices. The pro-life side is grounded in reason and evidence. And the more reason and evidence the pro-life side can muster, the stronger their case will be in the only place where it really matters – the legislatures and the courts.

Barack Obama offers to cut 775 million from 3,800,000 million budget

February 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

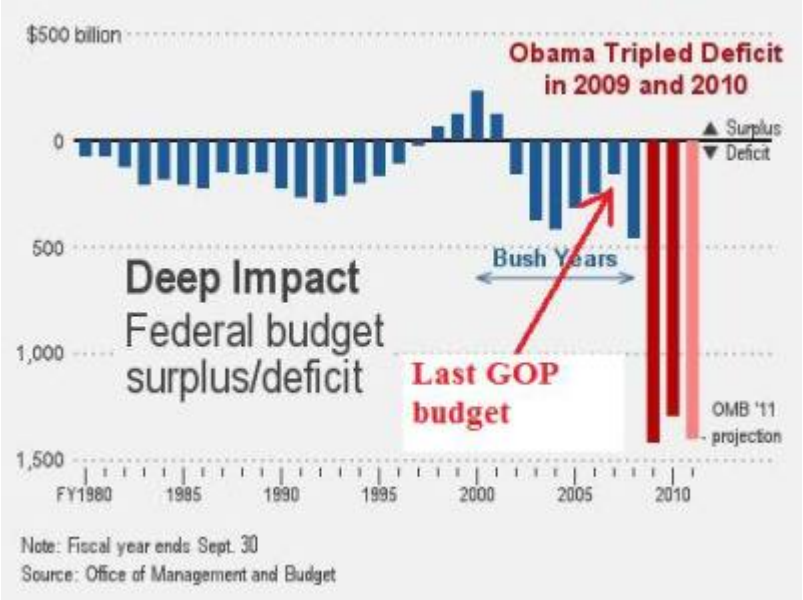

Last Republican budget was in 2007
From The Hill.

Excerpt:

> President Obama's budget director Jack Lew in a Sunday opinion piece outlined some off the "tough choices" Obama is willing to make to cut spending in his 2012 budget request due out on Feb. 14.
>
> The piece details cuts that affect initiatives dear to the president: programs to help the poor and to clean up the Great Lakes near the president's home state of Illinois.
>
> The cuts are relatively small, however, in the larger scheme of things. In total, the $775 million in detailed cuts fall far short of demands by congressional Republicans and will do little toward tackling the deficit, which is estimated to be $1.5 trillion this year by the Congressional Budget Office. The cuts are in addition to a five-year spending freeze which the administration says will save $400 billion over the next decade.
>
> […][Lew] said "this cut is not easy for" Obama.

The 2012 deficit is projected to be 1,500,000 million. TWELVE TIMES what the last *Republican* budget was back in 2007, when unemployment was at 4.3%. Government spending means taking money away from productive workers and from the businesses that hire those productive workers.

To see a graphical representation of the cuts as a portion of the entire budget, click here. The cuts cannot be seen with the naked eye, so the there are several images in that post,

each one more zoomed in than the last.

CBO says that Obamacare will reduce employment by 800,000 workers

February 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The CBO director was being questioned by Republican Congressman John Campbell when he let something interesting come out about Obamacare.

Here's the video:

And the transcript: (H/T The Weekly Standard)

> **Chairman [Paul] Ryan**: "[I]t's been argued…that the new health care law will create jobs and increase labor force participation. But if I recall from your analysis, it was quite the opposite. Is that not the case?"
>
> **Director [Douglas] Elmendorf** : "Yes."…
>
> […]
>
> **Rep. [John] Campbell**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, we'll — and Dr. Elmendorf — and we'll continue this conversation right now. First on health care, before I get to — before I get to broader issues, you just mentioned that you believe — or that in your estimate, that the health care law would reduce the labor used in the economy by about 1/2 of 1 percent, given that, I believe you say, there's 160 million full-time people working in '20-'21. That means that, in your estimation, the health care law would reduce employment by 800,000 in '20-'21. Is that correct?
>
> **Director Elmendorf**: Yes. The way I would put it is that we do estimate, as you said, that…employment will be about 160 million by the end of the decade. Half a percent of that is 800,000.

I noticed that the Blog Prof found of video of Nancy Pelosi promising that Obamacare would CREATE 400,000 jobs. Ooops.

I am sure that some of the 800,000 people who will be losing their jobs because of Obama's socialist health care plan voted for Obama in 2008. What were those people thinking?

What is the value proposition for a Christian man considering marriage?

February 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Basically, I think that my job as husband and father is:

1. to make sure that I focus on being a good protector, provider and moral spiritual leader by making good decisions and setting aside time to learn how to defend my views on religion and morality
2. to make sure that I am aware of areas where God has an interest, like the abortion debate, the marriage debate, the debate over the origin of the universe, the debate over biological origins, the debate over free markets vs secular socialism, the debate over religious liberty and family vs fascism, etc.
3. to make sure that I am aware of the skills, arguments and evidence that are related to these trouble areas
4. to make sure that I assess the skills and capabilities of my future children
5. to choose a wife who is aware of these problem areas and the relevant skills
6. assess the skills and capabilities of the children
7. communicate to them the areas where Christianity is under fire
8. demonstrate to the children how much these areas matter to their parents
9. together with my future wife, to steer the future children into degrees and careers that will move the ball forward in these areas.
10. act intentionally to ensure that they achieve influence in the problem areas as effectively as possible

I don't think that it is Dad's job to just roll over and pay for a wife and several children unless the wife agrees with me to try and achieve something together that we could not achieve as singles. I.e. – I think that if we have a child, then we should NOT be as happy if the child is a poet as we would be if the child is Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or William Lane Craig. I think that some things that a child can be are more influential than others, and that children should be jointly steered in the direction of being influential and effective as a way of making the marriage count for the Lord. And I think the Bible supports the idea of stewardship and making the most of gifts and blessings.

So I don't feel that I am obligated to marry unless I can foresee that my wife is serious about making the marriage, family and children count for God. If I don't foresee a return on the investment, which is quite risky for the man given the feminism and socialism in the laws and tax codes, then wouldn't I be better off just working and giving the money away to Christian speakers for apologetics speaking and debating? Children typically cost $250,000 and stay-at-home moms are expensive too. Is it worth it to have a wife who doesn't agree with me on the purpose of the marriage and the parenting? Am I supposed to hand her hundreds of thousands of dollars and get nothing at all back to show for it?

I think the fundamental question is this: What is the purpose of marriage for men, and how should a prospective wife present herself to a man who wants the marriage and the children to count for the Lord? How can she show that she is aware of what he is planning and show that she has taken steps to help him to achieve results for God, instead of just making herself happy? How can she show that there a difference between a child being a good student and a bad student? How can she show that there a difference between writing poetry and being an ADF lawyer?

Are some directions more likely to have an influence on the culture than others? Is the role of parents to produce a return for the blessings that God has given them, or are they just supposed to let children do whatever makes them happy, so that the parents will be happy and be their children's friends? I think what it boils down to is this: should Christian parents steer their children to be William Lane Craig or Michele Bachmann on purpose, or should they just let them be poets if that's what makes the children happy?

Obama administration covers up political correctness that led to massacre

February 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Hans Bader, at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> Discrimination and politically-correct blinders can be deadly. It was obvious in the aftermath of the Fort Hood shootings that the killer was inspired by Islamic extremism. Obvious, that is, to anyone but officials in the Obama administration, who continue to cling tightly to a culture of political correctness and preferential treatment that helped make the shootings possible.
>
> Nidal Hasan shot dead 12 soldiers and a civilian at Fort Hood, while shouting "Allahu Akbar." But the Obama administration's inquiry into the shootings falsely suggested Islamic extremism was not a factor in the shootings. Its report on the Fort Hood massacre did not even "mention the words 'Islam' or 'Muslim' once," referring to the killer simply as the "alleged perpetrator." Instead, it claimed the tragedy resulted from "bureaucratic shortcomings" in the "sharing of information."
>
> […]The shooter's Islamic extremism was obvious. Prior to the shooting, he had said that Muslims should rise up against the military, "repeatedly expressed sympathy for suicide bombers," was pleased by the terrorist murder of an army recruiter, and engaged in hate-speech against non-Muslims, publicly calling for the beheading or burning of non-Muslims, and talking "about how if you're a nonbeliever the Koran says you should have your head cut off, you should have oil poured down your throat, you should be set on fire." "In addition, Hasan openly had suggested revenge as a defense for the 9/11 attacks, defended Osama bin Laden, and said his allegiance to his religion was greater than his allegiance to the constitution."
>
> But the military did nothing to remove him from a position where he could harm others. Although his views were common knowledge, "a fear of appearing discriminatory . . . kept officers from filing a formal written complaint," the Associated Press noted. Moreover, "a key official on a review committee reportedly asked how it might look to terminate a key resident who happened to be a Muslim," as NPR noted. Instead, the military effectively exempted Hasan from rules of conduct that apply to everyone else, in order to promote its conception of "diversity."
>
> As military attorney Thomas Kenniff notes, there was a climate of "obsessive political correctness" in the military. As Major Shawn Keller pointed out, in a column entitled "An Officer's Outrage Over Fort Hood." "There was no shortage of warning signs that Hasan identified more with Islamic Jihadists than he did

> with the US Army. . .But just like September 11, those agencies and individuals charged with keeping America and Americans safe failed to connect the dots that would have saved lives. Jihadist rhetoric espoused by Hasan was categorically dismissed out of submissiveness to the concepts of tolerance and diversity. . . . the leaders in Hasan's chain-of-command failed to act . . . out of fear of being labeled anti-Muslim and receiving a negative evaluation report."
>
> Indeed, even after the shootings, government officials worried more about the fate of "diversity" than about the lives of their troops: "Our diversity, not only in our Army, but in our country, is a strength," Army Chief of Staff George Casey told NBC's Meet the Press. "And as horrific as this tragedy was, if our diversity becomes a casualty, I think that's worse," Casey said.

Can you trust the Democrats on national security? I don't see why.

Related posts

- Hasan's classmates knew he was a radical, but would not speak out
- Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?
- Fort Hood terrorist tried to prosecute his patients for war crimes
- Navy SEALs face assault charges from Iraqi terrorist they captured
- How the British government funds radical Islam

North Dakota Republican Dan Ruby wants to slash tax rates and ban abortion

February 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Dan Ruby

Wow, this guy is perfect!

He managed to get this pro-life bill passed in North Dakota.

Excerpt:

> A strong majority of lawmakers in the North Dakota House of Representatives on Friday afternoon passed a law that would make it illegal to murder any human being from the moment of their conception.
>
> The Defense of Human Life Act, HB 1450, recognizes every human being at any stage of development as a person under state law with a right to protection.
>
> "The overwhelming community and legislative support for HB 1450 proves that North Dakota could be the first state to recognize the value and dignity of every living human being," stated Representative Dan Ruby. "The Defense of Human Life Act is just common sense. Of course every human being is a person, and every innocent person should receive legal protection. I am motivated to see women and children protected by HB 1450, and I look forward to its passage in the Senate in the near future."
>
> While the bill prohibits chemical abortifiacients such as RU-486, it does not apply to emergency contraception, or other "contraception administered before a clinically diagnosable pregnancy." The bill also exempts legitimate medical procedures that may lead to the death of children in the womb when a woman's life is in danger. The bill also exempts pregnant women seeking abortions from criminal prosecution.
>
> The bill, supported by ND Right to Life, ND Life League, ND Family Alliance, ND CWFA, and the ND Catholic Conference, passed 68-25 in Friday's vote.
>
> "HB 1450 simply states that all human beings will be equal under North Dakota state law. Our law would treat all children as human beings," said Republican

> Rep. Gary Paur in an email to supporters.
>
> Daniel Woodard, a legal consultant for North Dakota Right to Life and the North Dakota Life League, told LifeSiteNews.com that the bill would put the one remaining abortion clinic in the state out of business. “This bill should shut down that clinic,” said Woodard.

That’s good, but here is something that is also just as good: not taking money away from families, and not taking money away from the corporations that enable families to have money.

Excerpt:

> Under the Republican governor’s proposal, the lowest individual income tax rate would decline from 1.84 percent to 1.63 percent, while the top rate would fall from 4.86 percent to 4.65 percent. The cuts would save North Dakotans about $50 million in income tax payments over two years.
>
> Republican and Democratic lawmakers have offered alternatives. Rep. Jerome Kelsh, D-Fullerton, the House minority leader, has introduced a bill to exempt a person’s first $40,000 of income, and a couple’s first $50,000, from the state income tax entirely.
>
> Kelsh said he wanted to focus the tax break on lower-income North Dakotans.
>
> “I don’t think (state) income tax, to the top level of income earners in North Dakota, is really a problem,” Kelsh said in an interview. “Maybe their federal is different, but North Dakota income tax is not very burdensome to anyone.”
>
> Reps. Dan Ruby, R-Minot, and Jim Kasper, R-Fargo, have proposals that offer larger income tax cuts than the governor’s proposal.
>
> Ruby’s legislation would slash corporate and individual income taxes by 60 percent. The state Tax Department estimates it would reduce income tax collections by $634.7 million over two years. It would also cut taxes on so-called “pass-through” income that individuals receive from partnerships and limited liability companies.
>
> Ruby’s bill would cut the top corporate tax rate from 6.4 percent to 2.56 percent, and reduce all five of North Dakota’s individual income tax rates below 2 percent. The top income tax rate would fall from 4.86 percent to 1.94 percent.

Oh, and I should note that he is NOT a poet. He is a small business owner and a father of 10!

New report finds that America is falling behind on international trade

February 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a good editorial on why Obama's policies haven't led to more exports.

Excerpt:

> President Obama claims he'll double U.S. exports in five years. But a new report from Congress shows U.S. firms losing major ground to competitors because he won't act on free trade pacts with Colombia and Panama.
>
> In a report titled "Losing Jobs and Alienating Friends: The Consequences of Falling Behind on Free Trade With Colombia and Panama," the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Richard Lugar presents a bleak picture of Latin American markets and allies slipping away as the administration fails to enact the Colombia and Panama free-trade agreements.
>
> While President Obama tries to get on the good side of business by saying he'd go forward with the U.S.-Korea free-trade deal, he's making only vague statements of support for the other two treaties.
>
> "What the president says matters a lot less than what he does," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said Monday in calling for the passage of the long-languishing other two pacts.
>
> Staffer Carl Meacham visited Colombia and Panama in late January and has returned with a long list of horror stories for the Foreign Relations Committee report to be released Tuesday. He tells of lost contracts, evaporating market share and unhappy allies writing off America as a partner in favor of new relationships with more trade-friendly partners like China.
>
> The trend also affects other Latin states. Obama is getting ready to visit Brazil and Chile next month and will tout those new relationships. But he's unlikely to note that both have quietly made China, instead of the U.S., their top trading partner.
>
> In 10 years, China will also become the top trade partner of Colombia and Panama, nations that would rather have America in that spot. Without the trade pacts, however, it won't happen.
>
> Meacham found that the contractual losses to American companies in the absence of the pacts are already mounting. They include $5.25 billion for Panama Canal expansion, $1.5 billion for Panama City Metro construction and millions in highway contracts in both Panama and Colombia.
>
> These contracts are going to foreigners from countries where duty-free trade has given their companies a competitive advantage as U.S. companies pay tariffs.
>
> Meacham also found market-share losses in the same grim league, as Colombia

> signs off on free-trade deals with Canada (expected in two or three months), Europe (expected this summer) and South Korea (in third-stage negotiations in Los Angeles now).

Free trade is not only good for jobs, but also for foreign policy. It gives you leverage with a country because you’re more tightly coupled to them. Unfortunately, Obama is a socialist and he opposes free trade. So not only will be lose jobs, but also influence and goodwill abroad.

What do Egyptians really want?

February 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

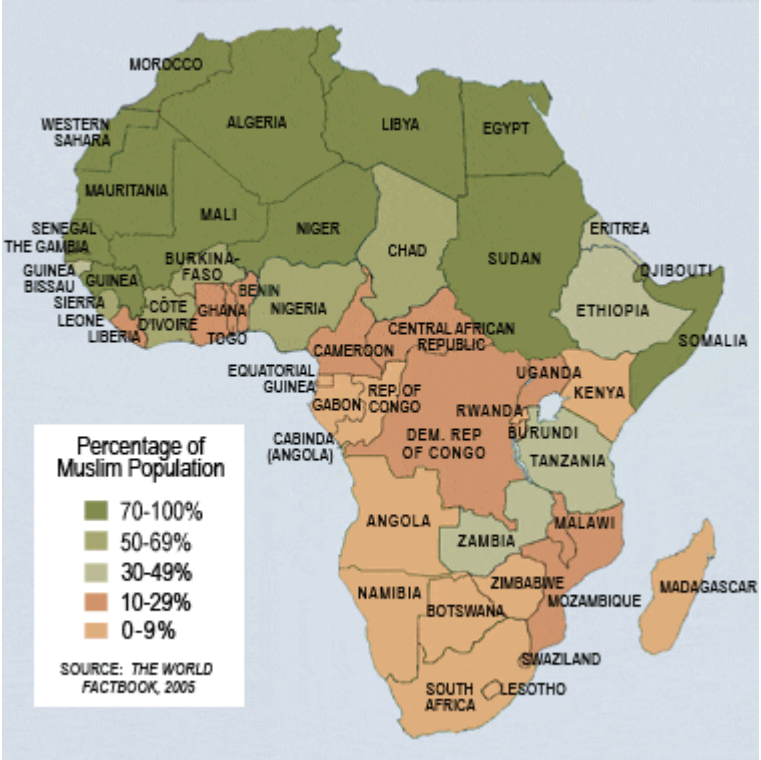

Map of Africa

This IBD editorial discusses the latest Pew Research poll.

Excerpt:

> According to a major survey conducted last year by the Pew Research Center, adults in Egypt don't crave Western-style democracy, as pundits have blithely trumpeted throughout coverage of the unrest.
>
> Far from it, the vast majority of them want a larger role for Islam in government. This includes making barbaric punishments, such as stoning adulterers and executing apostates, the law of their country. With the ouster of their secular, pro-American leader, they may get their wish.
>
> Among highlights from the Pew poll:
>
> • 49% of Egyptians say Islam plays only a "small role" in public affairs under President Hosni Mubarak, while 95% prefer the religion play a "large role in politics."
>
> • 84% favor the death penalty for people who leave the Muslim faith.
>
> • 82% support stoning adulterers.
>
> • 77% think thieves should have their hands cut off.
>
> • 54% support a law segregating women from men in the workplace.
>
> • 54% believe suicide bombings that kill civilians can be justified.

> • Nearly half support the terrorist group Hamas.
> • 30% have a favorable opinion of Hezbollah.
> • 20% maintain positive views of al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden.
> • 82% of Egyptians dislike the U.S. — the highest unfavorable rating among the 18 Muslim nations Pew surveyed.
>
> This empirical evidence refutes the sympathetic narrative broadcast as a continuous loop in the media over the past fortnight.

Another case of media spinning for Obama, trying to make this not look like a foreign policy disaster in order to protect a weak President.

Who is right about snow and global warming? Al Gore or the IPCC?

February 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> Al Gore took to his blog earlier this month to respond to Bill O'Reilly's question: "Why has southern New York turned into the tundra?"
>
> Gore happily typed away, blaming global warming for the snow and quoting Chicago Tribune columnist Clarence Page as his scientific authority.
>
> "As it turns out, the scientific community has been addressing this particular question for some time now and they say that increased heavy snowfalls are completely consistent with what they have been predicting as a consequence of man-made global warming," Gore wrote.
>
> Unfortunately for Gore and others who have claimed that the snow this winter is a global warming byproduct, their own authorities have said climate change will result in less snow.
>
> Both the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have predicted warmer, less snowy winters.
>
> A sampling:
>
> - "Snow season length and snow depth are very likely to decrease in most of North America … except in the northernmost part of Canada where maximum snow depth is likely to increase (Christensen et al., 2007)." (EPA)
> - "Decreases in snowcover and increases in winter rain on bare soil will likely lengthen the erosion season and enhance erosion intensity." (EPA)
> - "Rising temperatures have generally resulted in rain rather than snow in locations and seasons where climatological average temperatures for 1961 to 1990 were close to freezing (0 °C)." (EPA)
> - "As temperatures rise, the likelihood of precipitation falling as rain rather than snow increases, especially in autumn and spring at the beginning and end of the snow season, and in areas where temperatures are near freezing. Such changes are observed in many places, especially over land in middle and high latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere, leading to increased rains but reduced snowpacks." (IPCC)
>
> Some, such as University of East Anglia senior climate researcher, Dr. David Viner, have said that in a few years snow will be scarce, and "children just aren't going to know what snow is."

How can global warming be scientific if more snow and less snow both mean that global warming is happening?

More contradictory global warming predictions at Marginalized Action Dinosaur.

How far have Canadian public schools gone to push leftist ideology?

February 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

From the National Post.

Excerpt:

> In the quest to instill healthy eating habits, schools in Ontario have banned bottled water, but not decaffeinated soft drinks. Fries are out, but pizza is in, as long as it has whole-wheat crust, low-fat cheese and no pepperoni. In Alberta, Dunstable School south of Slave Lake instituted a "Character Education and Virtues Program" that involved rewarding students who did good deeds by putting their names on a wall, giving them a free pizza lunch and a chance to win money for a bike. But the program was also used to monitor the number of good deeds each student performed and then investigate those who didn't do enough.
>
> A New Brunswick school was met with outrage when it tried to impart moral values to its Grade 4 students by asking them to decide in 10 minutes or less who they would save if the Earth was about to explode: an Acadian francophone, a Chinese person, a black African, an English person or an Aboriginal person. The problem came when a parent, whose daughter was adopted from Ethiopia and was the only visible minority in the class, felt the project promoted stereotypes, prompting the province's education minister to condemn the assignment.
>
> Such morality-based assignments are part of a growing emphasis on cross-curriculum teaching, which encourages teachers to find lessons that draw links between a variety of academic subjects, said Doretta Wilson, executive director of the Society for Quality Education.

> The organization conducted a study to look for errors and "unsubstantiated dogmatic statements" in Canadian science curriculum. It found a Manitoba science manual that urged teachers to promote the message that historic Aboriginal cultures "exemplified the qualities of good stewardship in their interactions with the environment," and a New Brunswick Grade 5 science class policy that promoted the belief that sauna whirlpools and other alternatives to conventional medicine "prevent or cure illnesses." In Quebec, it found a physics curriculum that advocated that science could be used to help advance Quebec nationalism because "a society can express its cultural identity only in conjunction with some form of scientific and technological autonomy."
>
> Increasingly, value-based teachings have come in the guise of environmental activism, which school have been promoting with varying degrees of commitment and sometimes conflicting messages.
>
> As part of the Toronto District School Board's climate change action plan, an elementary school had every student write a letter to the Prime Minister to crack down on idling vehicles and held a contest to find the student who could design the best "eco-ticket" to be slapped on the windshield of an offending car.
>
> Meanwhile in natural gas and oil sands communities in northern Alberta, B.C. and Saskatchewan, the petroleum industry has banded together to create its own environmental awareness program for elementary schools. As part of the program, students don a chef's hat and have a "fossil fuel bake" and then put on a "petroleum play." The program donates $5,000 to the school to help create an outdoor education project.

Global warming alarmism is nothing but socialism – i.e. – government-controlled redistribution of wealth. So what we have here is the taxpayer-funded indoctrination of children so that the children will believe in government control of the free market (production and consumption).

I find it very annoying that Christians often want to provide these public schools with more and more money. I often have discussions with Christians who are in favor of public schools and single-payer health care who nevertheless want to get married and have families. Do they not realize where the money for all of these government programs comes from? The money comes from families and from the companies who employ parents. So the very people who support social programs, poverty programs, environmental programs, education programs, etc. are the ones who are working to undermine civil society by transferring wealth from families and the businesses who hire parents to government.

What I find the most perturbing is how Christians bash businesses and capitalism and then complain that men won't marry. What sort of man wants to pay half his income to secular-leftists so that his children can be indoctrinated by public schools? (And you can't opt out of paying for them) When Christians talk about "taxing the rich" so that government can "help the poor" and "protect the environment", then they should NOT

expect that there will be any money left over for marriages and child-raising. If you think it's a good idea for parents to pay government to teach the children their worldview and values, then why are parents and families needed? People should just work and have babies, and then the government should take their money and decide what children will believe, right?

UPDATE: I noticed that California gay activists have introduced a bill to push their agenda in the schools as well.

Video of Allen West's keynote speech at CPAC

February 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video for Allen West, who gave the concluding speech.

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Here's an article about Allen West's 2011 CPAC speech.

Excerpt:

> **First pillar: Effective and efficient conservative government.**
>
> - He quoted Thomas Jefferson: "Most bad government results from too much government"), which is why next week Congress will cut 100 billion dollars of spending off of the federal budget.
> - Making people more dependent on the government has to end, so hard decisions must be made. "We cannot continue on with the policies of behavior modification through excessive taxation and over burdensome regulation…and that's why we're going to be cutting from the EPA." (wild cheering)
> - If health care is so great, then someone explain to me why over 200 Democrat political groups are going to the President and asking for waivers." Here was a great quote: "I say this to the President: The good things in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: closing the doughnut hole, making sure that we take care of people with the preexisting conditions, keeping our young kids on our insurance, I can probably fit that in five to ten pages. It's the other two thousand four hundred ninety pages with eleven new taxes, a hundred fifty nine new government agencies and beauracracies, and sixteen thousand new IRS agents, that the United States of America does not want!" (standing ovation)
> - He mentioned the financial meltdown in 2008 and blamed it (rightfully so) on government interference with the private sector.
> - He talked about reforming the individual tax code, cutting the corporate business tax rate from 35% down to 20%, eliminating capital gains taxes and dividends taxes, capping federal spending at 18-20%, developing a balanced budget amendment, and eliminating "redundant, failed, and duplicitious federal government programs and agencies."
>
> **Second pillar: Peace through vigilance, through resolve, through strength.**

- He mentioned the famous Edmund Burke quote, one of my personal favorites: “All that is required for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”
- He quoted Sun Tzu: “To know your enemy, and to know yourself, and to know the terrain or the environment, in countless battles, you will always be victorious.”
- And then he made the most important statement of the night: “Peace begins with courageous leaders who are willing to identify and define our enemy, and their objectives, *because political correctness has no place in our national security strategy*.” (the crowd *screamed* and another standing ovation ensued)
- He said he was appalled that the Fort Hood shooting was treated like workplace violence.
- He said “A new America, a secure America, means that we can ill afford to have a twenty-first century Sir Neville Chamberlain moment.”
- He said “And yes, yes I do have a problem with granting American Constitutional rights to terrorists while we attempt to and have imprisoned *our own warriors for killing terrorists*.” (another standing ovation – there were so many during this speech)
- Here’s another money quote: “The dawn of a new America means this: Secure our borders and enforce our laws. Recognize the emerging threats on the Korean peninsula. Recognize the threats that are coming out of South and Central America. And confront the radical Islamic non-state, non-uniformed belligerents who transit freely across borders, killing and promoting a seventh century ideology that is anathema to the values of America and to Western civilization.”
- He said that we must never forget that Israel is our greatest ally in the Middle East, and vowed that “I shall never let Israel down.”

Third and most important pillar: Never abandon our values.

- “We must honor our language and realize that it is the most important, most basic and common bond which makes us an American.”
- He said we shouldn’t allow multiculturalism to “grow on steroids” and make American culture subservient.
- He said he doesn’t support late term abortion or abortion as birth control because he doesn’t believe that having a baby is punishment (reference to an Obamateurism).
- He said “We must hold sacred the privilege of the institution of marriage as a bond between a man and a woman.”
- He said we had to reclaim our “Judeo-Christian faith heritage.” He quoted John Adams: “We have no government armed with power, capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and religion. Our

> Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."
> - He said "This is not about a separation of church and state. It is about making sure that we do not separate faith from the individual. You must never forget that the American motto is In God We Trust." (standing ovation)
> - His next statement almost got a standing ovation from me: "We welcome the beliefs of others in America, but our coexistence must be based on a simple premise: when tolerance becomes a one-way street, it leads to cultural suicide. And American cultural values shall never be subjugated to any other as long as I have air in my lungs."
>
> His closing thoughts started with a quote from George Washington: "We are either a united people or we are not. If the former, let us in all matters of general concern act as a nation which has national objects to promote and a national character to support. If we are not, let us no longer act a farce by pretending to it." He quoted Abraham Lincoln: "America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves." He discussed how he grew up in the Atlanta area and went into the military, and then ran for political office as a public service to all Americans. He said "This is what Abraham Lincoln said. 'Be sure you put your feet in the right place. Then stand firm.' So as you depart here today from this great hall, from this great gathering of conservatives, this is the commission that I send you out with: *Stand firm, for this is the dawn of a new America*. God bless you all, God bless America, steadfast and loyal. Thank you."

And here's Herman Cain's speech:

Cain is probably running in 2012 and West will go in 2016 or 2020.

Several states considering bills to promote academic freedom

February 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Across the country legislation is moving forward that will protect teachers and students who want the freedom to discuss both the strengths and weaknesses of modern evolutionary theory.
>
> […]To help combat the dogmatism that presently pervades evolution-education, Discovery Institute supports legislation that protects academic freedom for teachers who would dare to challenge Darwin in the classroom. There are presently academic freedom bills in Oklahoma, Tennessee, New Mexico, Kentucky, and Missouri.
>
> As is expected, misinformation is already being spread about the bills. Yesterday I was informed that Oklahoma evolutionists are continuing to spread the myth that Louisiana's Academic Freedom Law was declared unconstitutional. The truth is that the law hasn't even been challenged in court. As I discuss here, ACLU Executive Director Marjorie Esman reportedly acknowledged that "if the Act is utilized as written, it should be fine; though she is not sure it will be handled that way."
>
> ClimateProgress is putting out the false claim that the legislation "forces teachers to question evolution." That's false. An academic freedom bill does not require teachers to teach anything differently. Topics like evolution will still be taught as a matter of required state law. All students will still need to learn and will be tested upon all aspects of state science standards. The bill still mandates that teachers follow the curriculum and teach the pro-evolution evidence. But it also gives teachers academic freedom to teach about credible scientific viewpoints that challenge the neo-Darwinian "consensus"–if they choose to do so.
>
> And of course, we're also hearing the standard false claim that the bills allow the teaching of creationism or religion. Despite the talking points of critics, academic freedom bills would not authorize or protect the teaching of creationism or any other religious viewpoint. According to a number of federal court rulings, creationism is a religious viewpoint that is illegal to advocate in public schools. **Consistent with these rulings, most academic freedom bills contain language that expressly excludes the teaching of religion and only protects the teaching of scientific information.**

I'm sure that if I looked at those bills that they are being sponsored by Republicans. Academic freedom – the freedom to question authority about evidence – is very important

to conservatives.

Mark Steyn on big government and the violence of abortion

February 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From his web site. He reflects on the Philadelphia abortionist, Dr. Gosnell.

Excerpt:

> Oh. Well, "Dr" Gosnell's just one rogue abortionist. How about the "right to choose" over at Planned Parenthood? There are a whole range of choices – not so much for the illegally smuggled underage foreign sex slave, but at least for her pimp. If you're a middle-aged guy running a child-sex business, you have the "right to choose" what's best for that 13-year old Venezuelan hottie you brought over a couple weeks back. As the Falls Church clinic assures him:
>
> We don't necessarily look at the legal status, like I said.
>
> That's good to know. With Planned Parenthood aiding and abetting child prostitution, my friend Rich Lowry argued that the back alley is back:
>
> With Planned Parenthood aiding and abetting child prostitution, my friend Rich Lowry argued that the back alley is back:
>
> Legal abortion was supposed to end "back-alley abortions," both their dangers and their entanglements with shady characters. But the practice and the mores of the back alley are with us still, tolerated by people for whom the ready provision of abortion trumps all else.
>
> Rich is right. Ever since Roe v Wade, proponents of a woman's "right to choose" have warned us against going back to the bad old days of rusty coat hangers and unsterilized instruments from money-grubbing butchers on the wrong side of town. Now, happily, the back alley is on the main drag, and with a state permit framed on the wall. In Philadelphia:
>
> Furniture and blankets were stained with blood. Instruments were not properly sterilized. Disposable medical supplies were not disposed of; they were reused, over and over again. Medical equipment – such as the defibrillator, the EKG, the pulse oximeter, the blood pressure cuff – was generally broken; even when it worked, it wasn't used. The emergency exit was padlocked shut. And scattered throughout, in cabinets, in the basement, in a freezer, in jars and bags and plastic jugs, were fetal remains. It was a baby charnel house.
>
> In New Jersey:
>
> The Department of Health and Senior Services investigated the abortion facility and found dirty forceps, rusty crochet hooks used to remove IUDs, and a quarter-inch of dirt and debris under an examining table.
>
> For years, the supposed regulators averted their gaze – as a matter of policy.

Yes, big government makes abortion worse, which is which pro-life social conservatives should be fiscal conservatives. Stop government from subsidizing abortion and a lot fewer people will be having them. Parents would be a LOT more serious about telling their children to be careful about sex.

This is why I support the use graphic visual aids when talking about abortion. When you see human blood being spilled, it’s pretty clear what abortion really is: violent murder.

Should Christians support wealth redistribution as a way to alleviate poverty?

February 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article by Jay Richards for the American Enterprise Institute.

First, his introduction:

> If you're like me, when you think of wealth and poverty, you picture its material manifestations. To have wealth, we imagine, is to have money, stocks, real estate, or valuable commodities, which, in turn, gives us the means to achieve various material ends, such as food, clothing, cars, housing, and healthcare. Poverty, in contrast, is the lack of such goods, which, in turn, leads to a lack of food, shelter, basic medical care, and other such items. These mental associations can make it hard to discover the preconditions of wealth creation, many of which are immaterial, even spiritual, rather than material.
>
> For most of human history, discovering the sources of wealth creation would have been devilishly hard, since most economies, such as there were, tended to be static. If a Mesopotamian farmer or Greek shepherd in the second century BC ever asked, "Where does wealth come from?" he would have assumed that wealth came from rain, common labor, good luck, or some combination of these. He probably also would have assumed that to get really wealthy, you need to plunder other people.
>
> But we now have concrete examples of cultures that have created vast new wealth, moving the majority of their citizens from poverty to relative prosperity. And when we look at these cultures retroactively, we discover answers that, for most of us, are counterintuitive. I've argued elsewhere that we're able to discern ten crucial features allowing such cultures to alleviate poverty and create wealth. The more of these a culture has or does, the more likely it is to be prosperous.
>
> The Top Ten Ways to Alleviate Poverty
>
> 1. Establish and maintain the rule of law.
> 2. Focus the jurisdiction of government primarily on maintaining the rule of law, and limit its jurisdiction over the economy and the institutions of civil society.
> 3. Implement a formal property system with consistent and accessible means for securing a clear title to property one owns.
> 4. Encourage economic freedom.
> 5. Encourage stable families and other important private institutions which mediate between the individual and the state.
> 6. Encourage belief in the truth that the universe is purposeful and makes sense.

> 7. Encourage the right cultural mores.
> 8. Instill a proper understanding of the nature of wealth creation and poverty.
> 9. Focus on cultivating your comparative advantage rather than protecting what used to be your comparative advantage.
> 10. Work hard.
>
> There is a striking correlation between societies that exhibit these traits, or some subset of them, and the large-scale wealth creation. But notice that only one of them describes a material good. All the others are intangible, immaterial, spiritual. You can't find economic freedom or cultural mores on a map or put them in a safe. You can't bottle diligence or weigh the ingredients for stable families and voluntary institutions on a scale. These goods involve beliefs, social conventions, institutions, commitments, virtues, and creativity. Having listed them in brief, now I want to hold each of the ten immaterial ingredients up to the light and consider how each helps a society move from poverty to prosperity.

If someone has a spiritual or moral sickness that is preventing them from working, then the solution is not to hand them someone else's money. That's not going to make them happy. They need to earn their own pay and be responsible for their own independence.

Family Research Council lecture

Here's a lecture that Jay Richards did for the Family Research Council, on the topic of Christianity and Economics. It's a very good lecture that discusses some basic economic principles and some common economics myths. You can also listen to the MP3 file, but it's 60 megabytes.

UPDATE: Letitia also put up a post on Christianity and socialism today.

Flordia A&M university shuts down Christian campus group

February 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Examiner.

Full text:

> In January, Florida A&M University officials had placed the student group "Commissioned 2 Love" on "inactive status". Their reasoning was; because the club's adviser [who was assigned by the university] was not present at all of the group's gatherings. The Florida A&M Student Handbook states that student organization advisers, who are assigned by the university and not chosen by the clubs themselves, must "attend and remain present for the duration of all organizational meetings, official functions, and sponsored activities."
>
> Based on this, the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) sent officials of Florida A&M University a letter yesterday urging them to reinstate a Christian student group they de-recognized in January and banned from engaging in activities on campus. This rule, says ADF's Jeremy Tedesco , would allow the university to "appoint an atheist to oversee a Christian group, a meat-eater to advise a vegetarian group, or a Republican to provide direction to College Democrats". He said that the policy is not only unconstitutional, but absurd.
>
> According to the ADF letter, this requirement is unconstitutional because it gives university employees complete and unbridled discretion over whether a student group's meeting or speech will occur.
>
> The ADF letter also points out that the university's policies violate the Constitution because they "compel student organizations to associate with government employees who they may not want to associate with, and who in fact may be adverse to the group's mission and expression.
>
> Even worse, the students are not given the authority to select their own advisers, but rather the Associate Vice President for Student Life appoints advisers for student organizations…. FAMU's policies are particularly egregious violations of the right to association, since they require the government employee with whom student organizations must associate to…'[p]rovide counseling, leadership and direction regarding…the mission of the club or organization.'"

According to a related Competitive Enterprise Institute post, Obama has made it a priority to increase the amounts of money extracted from Christian taxpayers that are paid to secular universities that treat Christians like dirt.

Excerpt: (with links removed)

> Education expert Neal McCluskey earlier lamented the failure of House

> Republicans to propose meaningful cuts in education spending, “despite the fact that the ivory tower is soaking in putrid, taxpayer-funded waste. Quite simply, the federal government pours hundreds of billions of dollars into our ivy-ensconced institutions every year, but what that has largely produced is atrociously low graduation rates; at-best dubious amounts of learning for those who do graduate; ever-fancier facilities; and rampant tuition inflation that renders a higher education no more affordable to students but keeps colleges fat and happy.” Shortly thereafter, in an effort to trim the deficit, House Republicans came out with some additional cuts, proposing the elimination of some wasteful education programs.
>
> If the GOP is reluctant to make cuts, Obama is much, much worse: he earlier sought to double education spending, and Obama’s recent State of the Union called for more increases in education spending (and other wasteful boondoggles at taxpayer expense), even though many students learn little in college. As we noted earlier, half “the nation’s undergraduates show almost no gains in learning in their first two years of college,” according to a study cited in *USA Today*. “36% showed little change” even after four years. Although education spending has exploded, students “spent 50% less time studying compared with students a few decades ago.” “32% never took a course in a typical semester where they read more than 40 pages per week.” States spend hundreds of millions of dollars operating colleges that are worthless diploma mills, yet manage to graduate almost no one — like Chicago State, “which has just a 12.8 percent six-year graduation rate.”

Wake up! Not only do Christians need to do a lot more studying of these issues, so that we can ground our social views with public evidence and research, but we also need to do a lot better job of developing an understanding of fiscal conservatism that reflects our individual goals and priorities. The left is not on your side – stop giving them other people’s money.

Harvard University professor blasts Obama's foreign policy failures

February 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Awesome video from the ultra left-wing MSNBC. (H/T Newsbusters)

Here is an article about Obama's foreign policy failures in Egypt by the Harvard professor.

Excerpt:

> Last week, while other commentators ran around Cairo's Tahrir Square, hyperventilating about what they saw as an Arab 1989, I flew to Tel Aviv for the annual Herzliya security conference. The consensus among the assembled experts on the Middle East? A colossal failure of American foreign policy.
>
> This failure was not the result of bad luck. It was the predictable consequence of the Obama administration's lack of any kind of coherent grand strategy, a deficit about which more than a few veterans of U.S. foreign-policymaking have long worried. The president himself is not wholly to blame. Although cosmopolitan by both birth and upbringing, Obama was an unusually parochial politician prior to his election, judging by his scant public pronouncements on foreign-policy issues.
>
> Yet no president can be expected to be omniscient. That is what advisers are for. The real responsibility for the current strategic vacuum lies not with Obama himself, but with the National Security Council, and in particular with the man who ran it until last October: retired Gen. James L. Jones. I suspected at the time of his appointment that General Jones was a poor choice. A big, bluff Marine, he once astonished me by recommending that Turkish troops might lend the United States support in Iraq. He seemed mildly surprised when I suggested the Iraqis might resent such a reminder of centuries of Ottoman Turkish rule.
>
> The best national-security advisers have combined deep knowledge of international relations with an ability to play the Machiavellian Beltway game, which means competing for the president's ear against the other would-be players in the policymaking process: not only the defense secretary but also the secretary of state and the head of the Central Intelligence Agency. No one has ever done this better than Henry Kissinger. But the crucial thing about Kissinger as national-security adviser was not the speed with which he learned the dark arts of interdepartmental turf warfare. It was the skill with which he, in partnership with Richard Nixon, forged a grand strategy for the United States at a time of alarming geopolitical instability.
>
> The essence of that strategy was, first, to prioritize (for example, détente with the Soviets before human-rights issues within the USSR) and then to exert pressure by deliberately linking key issues. In their hardest task—salvaging peace with honor in Indochina by preserving the independence of South

> Vietnam—Nixon and Kissinger ultimately could not succeed. But in the Middle East they were able to eject the Soviets from a position of influence and turn Egypt from a threat into a malleable ally. And their overtures to China exploited the divisions within the communist bloc, helping to set Beijing on an epoch-making new course of economic openness.
>
> The contrast between the foreign policy of the Nixon-Ford years and that of President Jimmy Carter is a stark reminder of how easily foreign policy can founder when there is a failure of strategic thinking. The Iranian revolution of 1979, which took the Carter administration wholly by surprise, was a catastrophe far greater than the loss of South Vietnam.
>
> Remind you of anything? "This is what happens when you get caught by surprise," an anonymous American official told The New York Times last week. "We've had endless strategy sessions for the past two years on Mideast peace, on containing Iran. And how many of them factored in the possibility that Egypt moves from stability to turmoil? None."
>
> I can think of no more damning indictment of the administration's strategic thinking than this: It never once considered a scenario in which Mubarak faced a popular revolt. Yet the very essence of rigorous strategic thinking is to devise such a scenario and to think through the best responses to them, preferably two or three moves ahead of actual or potential adversaries. It is only by doing these things—ranking priorities and gaming scenarios—that a coherent foreign policy can be made. The Israelis have been hard at work doing this. All the president and his NSC team seem to have done is to draft touchy-feely speeches like the one he delivered in Cairo early in his presidency.
>
> These were his words back in June 2009:
>
> "America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles—principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings."
>
> Those lines will come back to haunt Obama if, as cannot be ruled out, the ultimate beneficiary of his bungling in Egypt is the Muslim Brotherhood, which remains by far the best organized opposition force in the country—and wholly committed to the restoration of the caliphate and the strict application of Sharia. Would such an outcome advance "tolerance and the dignity of all human beings" in Egypt? Somehow, I don't think so.

It's a disaster. The Obama presidency is a disaster in every area – fiscally, socially and even in foreign policy.

His strategy of giving happy-clappy speeches, bowing to enemy dictators, pussyfooting around terrorists and cutting the defense budget has emboldened our enemies. *Barack Obama enables evil to thrive.* Now Lebanon is run by Hezbollah and Egypt is poised to fall to Hamas. It's a disaster. A colossal failure.

The fact that so many well-meaning Americans voted for this man disgusts me. So many left-wing Americans are spoiled, lazy, envious and ignorant. They vote based on what they see on the Comedy Channel, and so that they would fit in with their wordsmith professors. What a disaster. People are dying because the people who voted for Obama were too lazy to look at his voting record. They had no time to look at his record. No time to read ratings by groups like Citizens Against Goverment Waste or the National Taxpayers Union. Obama-voters wanted to be entertained. Their hatred of Sarah Palin for trivialities has increased the evil in the world. That makes Obama voters evil.

155,000 illegal immigrants receiving welfare benefits in the socialist UK

February 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Verum Serum)

Excerpt:

> Tens of thousands of workers with no right to be in Britain have been claiming benefits thanks to an extraordinary loophole in the law.
>
> Ministers have discovered that Labour allowed 155,000 illegal immigrants to qualify for sickness benefits and maternity pay. Government sources put the cost to the public purse at 'tens of millions of pounds'.
>
> They say the shambles is a damning indictment of how Labour lost control of both the benefits and immigration systems with taxpayers left to foot the bill. Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith will outlaw the practice in welfare reform legislation expected to be unveiled this week.
>
> Ministers believe most of those abusing the system came to work in Britain for a limited period and overstayed their visa. Others managed to get a job without a work permit.
>
> At present, someone could be illegally in the UK and able to claim Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), paid to those too sick to work, as well as statutory payments such as maternity or paternity pay and sick pay.
>
> Astonishingly, the Work and Pensions Department has not in the past asked to see work permits when assessing claims for ESA.
>
> Employers, meanwhile, have not been asked to show proof that workers are in Britain legally when processing claims for maternity or paternity pay or sick pay.
>
> […]Hundreds of thousands of National Insurance numbers were handed out under Labour to illegal workers as, alarmingly, there was no requirement on JobCentre staff to check whether a person was in the country legally.
>
> […]However, the European Commission has warned ministers that the rules may infringe the human rights of EU citizens and are 'not compatible' with EU law. It has started legal proceedings against Britain to have restrictions on welfare claims by incomers scrapped.
>
> […]The scale of the welfare challenge facing Britain is laid bare today in figures which show at least 330,000 children – around one in 30 – are growing up with a parent claiming Jobseeker's Allowance.

The Labour Party is the UK-based equivalent of the Democrat party here, and Democrats also advocate for similar welfare programs for illegal aliens. Here, illegal immigrants get free health care (from emergency rooms, that cannot turn anyone away), free schooling

in public schools, and free birthright citizenship. And they get to work without paying any income taxes. It's a mess. This is being paid for by everyone else who plays by the rules. And all this doesn't even include the crime problems.

Now consider this article from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Verum Serum)

Excerpt:

> Ministers today faced calls for an inquiry into claims that their open-door immigration policy was designed to make Britain more multicultural and allow Labour to portray the Tories as racists.
>
> A former Labour adviser alleged that the Government opened up Britain's borders in part to try to humiliate Right-wing opponents of immigration…
>
> The Daily Mail reported on Saturday the controversial claims by Andrew Neather, who worked for Tony Blair and Jack Straw.
>
> He said Labour's relaxation of immigration controls in 2000 was a deliberate attempt to engineer a 'truly multicultural' country and plug gaps in the jobs market.
>
> He said the 'major shift' in immigration policy was inspired by a 2001 policy paper from the Performance and Innovation Unit, a Downing Street think-tank based in the Cabinet Office…
>
> Ministers were reluctant to discuss the move publicly for fear that it would alienate Labour's core working-class vote, Mr Neather said. But they hoped it would allow them to paint the Conservatives as xenophobic and out of touch.
>
> 'I remember coming away from some discussions with the clear sense that the policy was intended – even if this wasn't its main purpose – to rub the Right's nose in diversity and render their arguments out of date,' Mr Neather added.

That's right. This mess was intentionally created.

Obama administration seeks repeal of conscience protections for health care workers

February 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Religion aside, since 2008, health care workers have had the protection of law to say that they would not help with procedures such as abortion, sex changes, or other similar controversial medical procedures.
>
> And now, the U.S. Health & Human Serviced Department (HHS) headed by Kathleen Sebelius is apparently attempting to remove the "conscience protections" for health care workers! This would eliminate any protection of a health care worker that attempts to opt out of helping with abortion procedures or other controversial medical procedures where the worker feels that his/her conscience tells them, no!
> Elimination of the "conscience protections" would put many health care workers at risk of being punished, or actually fired from their jobs. There have been many cases prior to the 2008 implementations of these protections where the Pharmacist, nurse, or even doctors have been reprimanded, or even fired because they claimed "conscience protections". Without these protections, there is no limit as to what may be required of health care workers.
>
> In a letter signed by 46 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, it asks her to explain why her department is seeking to repeal conscience protections for health care workers in light of known attacks on such workers. The two situations cited in the letter involve clients represented by attorneys with the Alliance Defense Fund.

Another reason for the government to stay out of the private sector. The more money you give them is the more they can regulate your behavior.

UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches

February 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Lex Communis)

Excerpt:

> Gays and lesbians will be able to 'marry' in church under new laws to be unveiled this week.
>
> The historic decision by Liberal Democrat Equalities Minister Lynne Featherstone will end the legal definition of marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman.
>
> A gay couple will be able to refer to one of the partners as a 'husband', and a lesbian couple will be able to refer to one of the partners as a 'wife'.
>
> A key part of the reform will bring an end to the ban that prevents civil partnerships being conducted in places of worship.
>
> In a major concession to Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg's Lib Dems, the Government will announce that for the first time, such ceremonies will be allowed to have a religious element, including hymns and Bible readings. They could be carried out by priests or other religious officials.
>
> […]Ms Featherstone will also say gays should be able to hold traditional weddings in register offices and other civil settings such as country houses and even football grounds.
>
> […]The change could also lead to legal action by gay couples denied the right to marry in church.
>
> Gay marriages are already legal in Canada, South Africa, Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands and some American states.

The Liberal Democrats are to the left of the Labour Party in the UK. They are like the New Democrats in Canada.

Even though the Liberal Democrats are hostile to Christianity, there were probably many Christians who voted for them as a way of promoting "equality" and "social justice" through redistribution of wealth. But the more government grows, the more they meddle in civil society. No billionaire business owner has the power to coerce and control a private citizen as much as the lowest level politician has. Businesses can only sell you things if you freely choose to buy them – hardly oppressive. But the most feeble government bureaucrat can coerce you and sanction you for failing to comply with his will – you don't have a choice of whether to comply or not.

"A government big enough to give you everything you want, is strong enough to take everything you have."

(Thomas Jefferson)

Note that this sort of thing happens in Canada, too.

Related posts

- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why do people oppose same-sex marriage?
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?

William Lane Craig on Sam Harris' attempt to ground morality with science

February 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig is going to be debating atheist Sam Harris in April, so I thought that I would link to a couple of resources in which Craig assesses Harris' views. Harris thinks that you can use science to discover an objective morality. Does his view make sense?

Here's an audio clip from Youtube:

And in this MP3 file, Craig assesses Harris' attempt to grounded morality on naturalism.

Topics:

- Harris opposes ground moral values and moral duties on a theistic worldview
- Harris thinks that the factual statements made by science can ground moral values and moral duties
- Harris thinks that these findings of science lead to an objective morality
- Harris' view is that what is "good" is what contributes to "human well-being"
- Human happiness and flourishing is "good" and human unhappiness and decline is "evil"
- Craig agrees that science can show what factors contribute to human flourishing
- On atheism, there is no reason to select the fourishing of human beings as "good"
- Craig asks: why say that human well-being and flourishing is a *moral* good?
- there are non-moral uses of the word "good" and moral uses of the word "good"
- the moral sense of "good" refers to the "good life" and what we ought to do to be good
- Harris equivocates between different uses of the word *good*
- in chess, there are good moves and bad moves with respect to winning the game – but that's not *moral good*
- similarly, someone who cleans your yard can do a good job or a bad job – but that's not *moral good*
- what is the explanation, on atheism, for human flourishing having the moral dimension of being "good"?
- how does Harris deal with the fact-value divide? (the fallacy of deriving an ought from an is)
- how does Harris leap from facts about brains to the moral property of "goodness"?
- what scientific experiments does Harris propose to show that human flourishing is the "good"?
- is Harris' view just utilitarianism? (the view that the good is whatever makes the most number of people happy)
- can Harris ground human rights like the right to life on his view?
- Can human rights be overridden if it makes lots of people happy, on Harris' view?
- does Harris' view lead to eugenics? how could Harris oppose the elimination of the

weak or undesirables?

I think the question that Sam Harris has to answer is this: on atheism, why should a person limit their own pursuit of happiness when they can be more happy by being selfish and spurning the “flourishing of humans”? Why should any individual atheist care about the flourishing of humans when self-sacrificial actions to improve the flourishing of others diminishes his own happiness?

You can hear even more about Harris’ views from New Zealand philosopher Glenn Peoples.

Report finds women outpacing men in educational attainment

February 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Young women are outpacing men in educational attainment and there's little sign males will make up ground any time soon.
>
> Nearly one in four women had earned a bachelor's degree by the time they reached age 23, compared to just one in seven men, the **Labor Department** said Wednesday. And while a growing share of professions are expected to require a college education in the future, men don't appear poised to make up the education gap.
>
> The Labor Department's report was based on a long-term survey of Americans born between 1980 and 1984. The results are from the latest round of questioning, which took place in 2008 and 2009 when respondents ranged from 23 to 29-years-old.
>
> Because the same percentage of males and females — 16% — were enrolled in college at age 23 "it is unlikely the gap in educational attainment will close in the next few years," according to the report.
>
> Women were also less likely to have dropped out of high school or opted not to enroll in college.
>
> Those with the most education were also the most likely to hold jobs at the age of 23. Some 89% of bachelor's-degree holders were employed compared to 75% of high school graduates.
>
> But for many education levels men tended to be more likely to hold a job. Those young men who had dropped out of high school, only attained a high school degree or had some college experience (but no bachelor's degree) were more likely to be employed at 23 than their female counterparts.

There is currently *a lot* of legislation that discriminates in favor of women in the schools (Title IX, etc.). Not only that, but the vast majority of teachers are female, which puts the education of boys in peril.

What happens when government gets involved in energy production?

February 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this story from Canada, found in the National Post.

Excerpt:

> A $200-million wind farm in northern New Brunswick is frozen solid, cutting off a potential supply of renewable energy for NB Power.
>
> The 25-kilometre stretch of wind turbines, located 70 kilometres northwest of Bathurst, N.B. has been completely shutdown for several weeks due to heavy ice covering the blades.
>
> […]Wintery conditions also temporarily shutdown the site last winter, just months after its completion. Some or all of the turbines were offline for several days, with "particularly severe icing" blamed.
>
> The accumulated ice alters the aerodynamics of the blades, rendering them ineffective as airfoils. The added weight further immobilizes the structures.
>
> […]Melissa Morton, a spokeswoman for the utility, says the contract isn't based on power delivered during a specific period, but rather on an annual basis.
>
> "Our hopes is that it will balance out over the 12-month period and, historically, that has been the case."
>
> Despite running into problems in consecutive winters, Ms. Morton says NB Power doesn't have concerns about the reliability of the supply from the Caribou Mountain site.

This story has the word *Wintery* in it, and spelled correctly, too. That is a good thing. However, government-run utilities wasting taxpayer money on environmentalist nonsense is a bad thing. Maybe the taxpayer-funded wind farm is doing such a good job of stopping global warming that we are now seeing global cooling?

And remember that the Ontario government provides subsidies to private companies for inefficient solar power. More waste.

Now consider this post from Red State, found in Neil Simpson's latest round-up.

Excerpt:

> As taxpayer tragedies go, Broomfield, Colorado-based Range Fuels has all the plot elements—splashy headlines, subsidies and opportunistic venture capitalists. Range got its start in 2006 when George W. Bush used a State of the Union address to extol wood chips as a source for cellulosic ethanol that would break America's "addiction to oil." Mr. Bush pledged that with government funding cellulosic ethanol would be "practical and competitive within six years."

> Vinod Khosla stepped in with his hand out. The political venture capitalist founded Range Fuels and in March 2007 it received a $76 million grant from the Department of Energy—one of six cellulosic projects the Bush Administration selected for $385 million in grants. Range said it would build the nation's first commercial cellulosic plant, near Soperton, Georgia, using wood chips to produce 20 million gallons a year in 2008, with a goal of 100 million gallons. Estimated cost: $150 million.
>
> … the EPA said Range would finally produce some fuel in 2010—but only four million gallons, not 100 million, and of methanol, not cellulosic ethanol. **So taxpayers have committed $162 million (along with at least that much in private financing) to produce four million gallons of a biofuel that others have been making in quantity for decades.**

Yes, George W. Bush made some mistakes… but there is someone even worse.

From USA Today, we learn the consequences of Obama's moratorium on oil drilling. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Seahawk Drilling Inc. said it has filed for bankruptcy protection and plans to sell its fleet of offshore drilling rigs to a competitor for $105 million.
>
> Seahawk, which announced the deal with Hercules Offshore Inc. Friday, has been hurt by a slowdown in Gulf of Mexico drilling after the BP oil spill last April. The government halted drilling in deep waters and imposed tough new rules that have curtained all energy exploration in U.S. waters.

Bottom line – keep government out of the free market.

Why are Egyptians wealthier in America than they are in Egypt?

February 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams

This is from Walter Williams, my second most favorite economist after Thomas Sowell.

Excerpt:

> Why is it that Egyptians do well in the U.S. but not Egypt? We could make that same observation and pose that same question about Nigerians, Cambodians, Jamaicans and others of the underdeveloped world who migrate to the U.S. Until recently, we could make the same observation about Indians in India, and the Chinese citizens of the People's Republic of China, but not Chinese citizens of Hong Kong and Taiwan.
>
> […]Much of Egypt's economic problems are directly related to government interference and control that have resulted in weak institutions vital to prosperity. Hernando De Soto, president of Peru's Institute for Liberty and Democracy (www.ild.org.pe), laid out much of Egypt's problem in his Wall Street Journal article (Feb. 3, 2011), "Egypt's Economic Apartheid." More than 90 percent of Egyptians hold their property without legal title.
>
> De Soto says, "Without clear legal title to their assets and real estate, in short, these entrepreneurs own what I have called 'dead capital' — property that cannot be leveraged as collateral for loans, to obtain investment capital, or as security for long-term contractual deals. And so the majority of these Egyptian enterprises remain small and relatively poor."
>
> Egypt's legal private sector employs 6.8 million people and the public sector 5.9 million. More than 9 million people work in the extralegal sector, making Egypt's underground economy the nation's biggest employer.
>
> Why are so many Egyptians in the underground economy? De Soto, who's done

> extensive study of hampered entrepreneurship, gives a typical example: “To open a small bakery, our investigators found, would take more than 500 days. To get legal title to a vacant piece of land would take more than 10 years of dealing with red tape. To do business in Egypt, an aspiring poor entrepreneur would have to deal with 56 government agencies and repetitive government inspections.”
>
> Poverty in Egypt, or anywhere else, is not very difficult to explain. There are three basic causes: People are poor because they cannot produce anything highly valued by others. They can produce things highly valued by others but are hampered or prevented from doing so. Or, they volunteer to be poor.
>
> Some people use the excuse of colonialism to explain Third World poverty, but that’s nonsense. Some the world’s richest countries are former colonies: United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong. Some of the world’s poorest countries were never colonies, at least for not long, such as Ethiopia, Liberia, Tibet and Nepal. Pointing to the U.S., some say that it’s bountiful natural resources that explain wealth. Again nonsense. The two natural resources richest continents, Africa and South America, are home to the world’s most miserably poor. Hong Kong, Great Britain and Japan, poor in natural resources, are among the world’s richest nations.

What is necessary for wealth is a capitalist economy, that emphasizes the rule of law, private property, judicial restraint, limited government, etc. Egypt has none of those, and that’s why Egypt is poor. India and Chile used to be like Egypt, but then they revamped their societies to be more like America. Now India and Chile are more prosperous. Economics is not rocket science.

Capitalism creates wealth, and raises the standard of living of the poor and the wealthy. It doesn’t matter what rung of the social ladder someone is on – as long as they can keep what they earn, instead of having it redistributed by socialists, then they will work hard to create something of value to share with others. Poverty is caused by economic ignorance.

More Walter Williams stuff here, and more Thomas Sowell stuff here. These are the clearest-thinking economists operating today.

University of California Davis: only Christians commit religious discrimination

February 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From an Alliance Defense Fund press release.

Excerpt:

> An Alliance Defense Fund allied attorney sent a letter to the University of California at Davis Wednesday on behalf of more than 25 students who object to a policy that defines religious discrimination as Christians oppressing non-Christians.
>
> "Christians deserve the same protections against religious discrimination as any other students on a public university campus," said ADF Senior Counsel David French. "It's ridiculously absurd to single out Christians as oppressors and non-Christians as the only oppressed people on campus when the facts show that public universities are more hostile to Christians than anyone else."
>
> The UC-Davis policy defines "Religious/Spiritual Discrimination" as "The loss of power and privilege to those who do not practice the dominant culture's religion. In the United States, this is institutionalized oppressions toward those who are not Christian."
>
> The letter from ADF-allied attorney Tim Swickard, one of nearly 1,900 attorneys in the ADF alliance, explains, "It is patently clear that UC Davis's definition of religious discrimination is blatantly unconstitutional under both the Federal and California State Constitutions. The policy singles out some faiths for official school protection while denying the same protection to others solely on the basis of their particular religious views….. Moreover, the UC Davis policy is simply nonsensical given the environment on most University campuses where Christian students, if anything, are among the most likely to be subjected to discrimination because of their faith."
>
> The letter cites a recent study of more than 1,200 faculty at public universities that showed that professors admitted to having a significant bias against Christian students, particularly evangelicals. Fifty-three percent admitted to having negative feelings about evangelical students solely because of their religious beliefs. Mormon and Catholic students did not fare much better in the study. A 2004 Harvard Institute of Politics poll indicated that only 35 percent of college students call themselves "born again," and only 22 percent identify as evangelical Christians. A 2000 study of teens by the Barna Research Group found that only 26 percent claim to be "committed to the Christian faith."

But that's not all. Apparently, laws can be applied differently to certain groups.

Consider this interesting column from the Toronto Sun.

Excerpt:

> When Ontario's McGuinty government and the leadership of the OPP sided with First Nations protesters against local residents in Caledonia in 2006, it outraged many people.
>
> In her seminal book about the issue, *Helpless*, Christie Blatchford avoided the native rights issue and concentrated on the abandonment of rule of law which, curiously (or maybe not so curiously), offended many rank and file OPP officers who were ordered not to provoke Indians, but to hammer down locals who protested against the protesters.
>
> Two of the victims of the temporary policy — Gary McHale and Mark Vandermaas, once arrested for raising the Canadian flag!

And here's an example from Denmark:

> When historian Lars Hedegaard was charged with making disparaging remarks about Muslims and Sharia law, Jesper Langballe, a Danish MP was similarly charged for supporting Hedegaard's right to free speech.
>
> Both were charged under Article 266b of a Danish law which, extraordinarily for a democratic country, does not allow "truth" as a defence.
>
> Article 266b says "whoever publicly … issues a … communication by which a group of persons is threatened, insulted or denigrated … is liable to a fine or incarceration for up to two years."
>
> In other words, the truth of whatever might be said is irrelevant.
>
> MP Langballe pleaded guilty, because he realized the Danish law doesn't recognize "truth" as a defence.

And here's an example from Austria:

> Meanwhile in Austria, Elisabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff faces three years in prison if convicted on Tuesday, of denigrating religious teachings — specifically Muslim teachings with quotes from the Koran — and inciting hatred against a religious group.
>
> Among other things, Ms. Wolff felt Sharia law was not compatible with a free and secular society, and referred to Paris, Brussels, Rotterdam where there are "no-go zones where Sharia is effectively the law … (where) immigrant youths (mostly Muslim) torch cars, throw stones at police, etc."
>
> She denies she sought to incite hatred and violence, but "we need to be informed, make people aware, to inform our politicians and write letters to the newspapers."

It's so strange because these laws are never applied equally – only some groups are protected, while other groups can only be offenders.

Obama budget is a ten-year, $1.5 trillion tax hike over present law

February 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the analysis of Obama's budget. (H/T The Blog Prof)

Excerpt:

> President Obama released his budget this morning. Rather than focusing on Washington's over-spending problem, the budget calls for higher taxes on families and small businesses to pay for even more government spending. **Under the Obama budget, tax revenues will grow from 14.4% of GDP in 2011 to 20% of GDP in 2021. By comparison, the historical average is only 18% of GDP.**
>
> Tax hike lowlights include:
>
> - Raising the top marginal income tax rate (at which a majority of small business profits face taxation) from 35% to 39.6%. This is a $709 billion/10 year tax hike
> - Raising the capital gains and dividends rate from 15% to 20%
> - Raising the death tax rate from 35% to 45% and lowering the death tax exemption amount from $5 million ($10 million for couples) to $3.5 million. This is a $98 billion/ten year tax hike
> - Capping the value of itemized deductions at the 28% bracket rate. This will effectively cut tax deductions for mortgage interest, charitable contributions, property taxes, state and local income or sales taxes, out-of-pocket medical expenses, and unreimbursed employee business expenses. A new means-tested phaseout of itemized deductions limits them even more. This is a $321 billion/ten year tax hike
> - New bank taxes totaling $33 billion over ten years
> - New international corporate tax hikes totaling $129 billion over ten years
> - New life insurance company taxes totaling $14 billion over ten years
> - Massive new taxes on energy, including LIFO repeal, Superfund, domestic energy manufacturing, and many others totaling $120 billion over ten years
> - Increasing unemployment payroll taxes by $15 billion over ten years
> - Taxing management capital gains in an investment partnership ("carried interest") as ordinary income. This is a tax hike of $15 billion over ten years
> - A giveaway to the trial lawyers—not letting companies deduct the cost of punitive damages from a lawsuit settlement. This is a tax hike of $300 million over ten years
> - Increasing tax penalties, information reporting, and IRS information sharing. This is a ten-year tax hike of $20 billion.

> **Add it all together, and this budget is a ten-year, $1.5 trillion tax hike over present law.** That's $1.5 trillion taken out of the economy and spent on government instead of being used to create jobs.
>
> The "tax relief" in the budget is mostly just an extension of present law, and also some refundable credit outlay spending in the tax code. **There is virtually no new tax relief relative to present law in the President's budget.**

So then how can the Obama administration claim that they are being fiscally responsible? Let's see how. (H/T Hyscience)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration's statement that the government will not be adding to the debt by the middle of the decade clashes hard against the facts, Republicans say, leaving officials straining to justify the budget claim they've pushed repeatedly over the past few days.
>
> As it turns out, the administration is not counting interest payments. That means the budget team plans to have enough money to pay for ordinary spending programs by the middle of the decade. But it won't have the money to pay off those pesky — rather, gargantuan — interest payments. So it will have to borrow some more, in turn increasing the debt and increasing the size of future interest payments year after year.
>
> So how then, visibly agitated Republicans asked, can the administration claim that its 2012 spending plan sets the country on a course to "pay for what we spend" in just a few years?

Hyscience also linked to this McClatchy news article.

Excerpt:

> He overlooks the fact that the government still would have to borrow to pay interest on the debt, much of it run up on his watch. Despite achieving "primary balance" in fiscal 2017, the government would have to borrow $627 billion to pay $627 billion in interest. Interest payments would rise annually through 2021.
>
> Debt would rise as well, according to Obama's proposed budget. Despite the budget reaching "primary balance," the total gross government debt would rise from $21.9 trillion in fiscal 2017 to $22.9 trillion in 2018, $24 trillion in 2019, $25.2 trillion in 2020 and $26.3 trillion in 2021.
>
> In all, the debt would jump by nearly $4.5 trillion in the four years after the government supposedly would stop adding to the debt because it had achieved "primary balance" – and that's according to his own budget.

And a non-partisan fact-checking organization has found that Obama is lying about the budget. You can bet that the mainstream media will be backing him up, though.

Was Jesus really worshipped as God?

February 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this interesting article at Please Convince Me that tries to find all of the places inside the Bible, and in later historical sources, where people put Jesus in the place of God and worship him.

Obviously, his followers worshiped him:

> ***John Said That Jesus Is the Creator God Who Came to Us in Human Form***
> *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men…The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-4, 14)*
>
> ***Paul Said That Jesus Possesses the Full Deity of God***
> *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. (Colossians 2:9-10)*
>
> ***The Writer of Hebrews Said That Jesus Possesses the EXACT Nature of God the Father***
> *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. (Hebrews 1:1-3)*
>
> ***Paul Said That In Jesus, God Makes Himself Visible to Us***
> *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:15)*
>
> ***Paul Said That Jesus is Simply God the Father, Appearing in a Body***
> *Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:16)*
>
> ***Paul Said That God the Father Willingly Submitted His Power As the Man We Know As Jesus***
> *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and*

> *became obedient to death- even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:5-8)*
>
> ***The Writer of Hebrews Said That Jesus is Called God by God the Father***
> *But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." (Hebrews 1:8-9)*

But there were other people who worshiped him, too:

> ***The wise men worshiped Him from the moment He was born***
> *On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. (Matthew 2:10-12)*
>
> ***The leper worshiped Him at his healing***
> *And behold, a leper came to Him, and bowed down to Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." (Matthew 8:2)*
>
> ***The synagogue ruler worshiped Him***
> *While He was saying these things to them, behold, there came a synagogue official, and bowed down before Him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live." (Matthew 9:18-19)*
>
> ***The disciples worshiped him in the boat***
> *And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." (Matthew 14:32-33)*
>
> ***The Canaanite woman worshiped Him***
> *But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" (Matthew 15:25-26)*
>
> ***The mother of James and John worshipped Him***
> *Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, bowing down, and making a request of Him. (Matthew 20:20-21)*
>
> ***The blind man worshiped Him at his healing***
> *Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. (John 9:35-38)*
>
> ***The women worshiped Him at the empty tomb***
> *So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. (Matthew 28:8-10)*
>
> ***The disciples worshiped Him at the Ascension***
> *Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told*

> *them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him (Matthew 28:16-17)*

Here is a post I wrote about the earliest records where Jesus is spoken of as having some connection and/or equality with God. I put the earliest ones only so that you could use them in a debate and not worry about whether people think those verses are reliable. The ones I chose are the most reliable.

Democrat lawmakers flee state to avoid voting on spending cuts

February 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video from Gateway Pundit.

Story from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Democratic lawmakers fled the state in an effort to torpedo a closely watched vote on what would be the nation's first major overhaul of union laws in years, as government workers flooded the statehouse for a third day seeking to block passage of the bill.
>
> Surrounded by thousands of tightly packed protesters, including teachers who had been encouraged by union leaders to show up in force, state senators gathered around 11 a.m. to vote on Republican Gov. Scott Walker's proposal to limit collective-bargaining rights for most state employees.
>
> The governor's proposal, part of a bill aimed at overcoming a $137 million deficit in the current budget and a projected $3.6 billion hole in the next two years, would allow collective bargaining on wages, but not pensions and health care. Workers would be required to pay more for both.
>
> But a roll call revealed that the 14 Senate Democrats were absent, leaving the chamber short of the 20 votes needed to conduct business.
>
> […]Late Thursday, Gov. Walker, who could hear chanting every time he opened his office door, blasted the Democrats' move as a "stunt" and urged them to return to vote on what he called as a "bold political move but a modest, modest proposal" that would preserve benefits for public employees that remained "better than what most people are getting across the state."
>
> The extraordinary scene was being followed in statehouses across the country, as a test case of both union clout and the political will of newly elected legislators. Wisconsin was at the front edge of voter discontent in 2010, with voters agitated about public spending electing Gov. Walker to succeed Democrat Jim Doyle and handing both houses of the legislature to the GOP.
>
> […]If the governor's efforts succeed, other states are expected to try to follow, as governors grapple with deepening deficits. Many new governors in both parties have blamed the states' fiscal crisis in part on what they say are overly generous benefits and pension obligations granted over many years to organized government workers.
>
> Proposals similar to Gov. Walker's have been made in New Jersey and Ohio. In Columbus, Ohio, thousands gathered Thursday to protest a Republican proposal that would eliminate collective-bargaining rights for many of that state's 400,000

> public-sector workers.
>
> […]Gov. Walker first introduced his "budget repair" bill just a week ago, setting off the firestorm that has swept the Capitol. Besides limiting collective-bargaining right for most workers—excepting police, firefighters and others involved in public safety—it would require government workers, who currently contribute little or nothing to their pensions, to contribute 5.8% of their pay to pensions, and pay at least 12.6% of health-care premiums, up from an average of 6%.
>
> In exchange, Gov. Walker has pledged no layoffs or furloughs for the state's 170,000 public employees. He has said 5,500 state jobs and 5,000 local jobs would be saved under his plan, which would save $30 million in the current budget and $300 million in the two-year budget that begins July 1.

The lawmakers are required *by law* to report to their posts to vote on all legislation, which is why the police were dispatched to locate them.

Here's what the fuss is about:

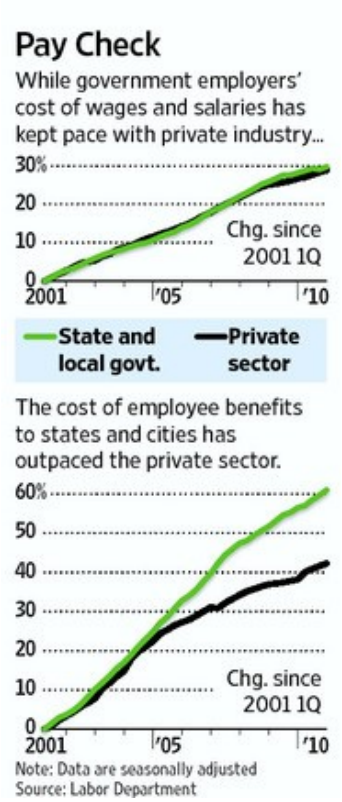

Public Sector Benefits

And Gov. Walker is not the only one trying to stop the massive transfers of wealth from the productive private sector to non-productive public sector.

Excerpt:

> Lawmakers around the country are looking at new ways to prevent budget disasters by changing the rules for overburdened state employee pension funds. But they are meeting stiff resistance from public employee unions.
>
> Two Arizona state lawmakers this week, including the speaker of the House, introduced their plan to salvage the state's budget by significantly changing the

> public retirement system.
>
> Following the lead of Gov. Chris Christie, R-N.J., a pair of New Jersey assemblymen on Monday put forth their legislative solution to make solvent a fund that's $54 billion in the red.
>
> Also on Monday, in his first budget address as governor, Florida's Rick Scott announced his effort to "stabilize and secure" government employee pensions.
>
> The moves are part of a larger battle over pension reform between conservative budget hawks and government worker unions.

The national debt is currently over 14 trillion, and scheduled to be at 26 trillion by 2021.

Michelle Malkin has a breakdown of teacher salaries and benefits here.

Do all the decisions a Christian makes have to be divinely directed?

February 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two views on the topic of decision making and the will of God. The view you learn in the church is called "the traditional view". I call this view the feminized/postmodern view. The more practical view is called "the wisdom view". I call this view the battlefield/military view. I am a proponent of the wisdom view.

Let's learn about the two different views:

> [The traditional view is] that God has a plan for our lives and that we receive guidance through methods such as "open and closed doors", "feeling led" and "the still, small, voice". Once the view has been well explained, through the foil of a fictional seminar, the book continues to critique this view, explaining how it is based on a poor use and understanding of scriptures, and how some of the reasons given in support of the view do not apply.
>
> [The wisdom view] holds that God does not have an "individual will" for our lives, but rather that all of God's will can be summed up within two categories, God's sovereign will and God's moral will. Basically God's sovereign will is all the things that god decrees will happen. It is hidden (mostly) from us, and does not play an active part in our decision, although some of it is revealed in the bible. God's moral will is the part that we must concern ourselves with in making decisions. It is fully revealed in the bible and our decisions must be made within it. We may use wisdom in applying god's moral will to our lives, or we may be in an area not covered by god's moral will. We must finally submit in advance to God's sovereign will, being prepared for him to sovereignty intervene and redirect us through whatever means he wills (see James).

Here's a bit more from someone else:

> Regarding the view that God has a personal will for us individually that we have to discern and find, J.I. Packer says, "The first thing to say is that the idea of guidance is actually a novelty among orthodox evangelicals. It does not go back farther than the last century. Second, it has led people to so much foolish action on the one hand, and so much foolish inaction on the other, as well as puzzlement and heartbreak when the 'hotline' to God seems to go silent, that it has to be discredited. Third, it must be said that Scripture gives us no more warrant constantly to expect personal 'hotline,' 'voice-from-the-control-tower' guidance than to expect new authoritative revelations to come our way for the guidance of the whole church." (Hot Tub Religion, page 118).
>
> As to the point of the question, how do I make decisions, I attempt to make decisions in light of three factors: God's moral will, wisdom, and my personal

> desires. If something is opposed to God's moral will, then I should obviously flee from it. If it's not opposed, then I consider the wisdom of the choices. For example, would it be wise for me to marry a woman who loves Jesus, though we have nothing else in common? Probably not. If the options pass the criteria of wisdom, then I'm free to choose how I wish. If I'm offered two jobs, and both are honoring to God, and both would be wise to take, then I'm free to choose the job I would like more. I don't need to put out a fleece or await some other confirmation from God. If it's moral and wise, then the only question as to whether or not it will honor Him is my attitude.
>
> Some examples of this model used in the Bible (in theological circles referred to as the Wisdom Model) are in Paul's planning of a mission to Rome in Romans 1:9-15, 15:22-24, the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29), and Paul's instructions for legal disputes (1 Cor 6:3-6).

The best book on this topic is Garry Friesen's "Decision Making and the Will of God". In it, you'll find a full assessment about what the Bible teaches on this topic.

When I am trying to decide what will be effective, I look at Christian scholars, at their papers, books, and public debates. That's effectiveness because it is addressed to a non-Christian audience in public with the force of reason and evidence. It is persuasion and it is addressed to rational minds. I want to change the minds of people who have a large influence on society on the whole. I don't think that offering Christianity as life-enhancement or self-help is really "having an influence". I think that offering Christianity as truth, with support, is "having an influence".

So let me be clear about what I believe:

- I don't think that God normally talks to people directly
- I don't believe that life is an Easter egg hunt, filled with clues accessible only to emotion and intuition
- I don't believe that God expects people to discover a specific will for their lives using non-rational means
- I think that people make up their own life plan that is consistent with the Bible
- The goal of the life plan is to be effective, and there are no other considerations
- I think that there are many good things a person can do, but that some are more effective than others
- I think that with respect to the goal of serving God effectively, *my happiness is expendable*
- I don't think that the purpose of doing something for the Lord is to feel good about ourselves
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they like them
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they are good at them
- I think people should do hard things that they don't like – as long as it's more

effective
- I don't think that any course of action is as effective as any other – some plans accomplish more
- I don't think that life is totally unpredictable and irrational and subjective
- I think that we can know what is or is not effective by studying and learning about the world
- I think life is like a battlefield that must be surveyed, understood and acted upon deliberately

I think that every person is the commanding officer of his or her own life, and each person must study everything they can, make a plan that is consistent with the Bible's moral prescriptions, execute the plan and achieve whatever they can achieve for the Lord. And the goal is not comfort or happy feelings, but real achievements. Life is more like a war than a vacation resort or a buffet or a shopping center. God's will for us is not have happy feelings, but that we freely choose to sacrifice ourselves out of obedience and service to him. In my case, that means studying hard things, making money, saving money, and giving money away to good scholars, sponsoring good events and being persuasive to non-Christians. I cried when I had to learn calculus, because it was so hard. But who cares?

I think that it is very important to realize that God is not impressed by our not being smart and not being effective. If we have the ability to be smart, then we should be smart, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability to make money, then we should make money, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability have a great influence, then we should have a great influence, whether it makes us happy or not. There will be plenty of time for happiness after we're dead. With respect to God's purposes in the world, my happiness is expendable. The thought about what "I want" doesn't enter into my mind.

Whenever someone questions my plans by saying that I am asserting my will over God's will, the first question I want to ask that person is this: "how do you know what God's will is?" and "what is your basis for thinking that my plan will not be effective?". I want to know if I have misunderstood something about the way the world is, or miscalculated in some way. I want someone to look at my calculations and show where they are going to produce a less optimal result for the Lord. That's the only concern I have – effectiveness.

This article by Greg Koukl may be helpful.

And I also found this summary of the Friesen book useful:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4
- Part 5
- Part 6

- Part 7
- Part 8
- Part 9

In nine parts.

Read Theodore Dalrymple's "Life at the Bottom" online for free

February 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I want to recommend that you read a book that is available online for free.

The author is a psychologist in a British hospital that deals with a lot of criminals and victims of crime. So he gets to see the worldview of the "underclass" up close, and to understand how the policies of the compassionate secular left are really working at the street level. The theme of the book is that the left advances policies in order to feel good about themselves, even though the policies actually hurt the poor and vulnerable far more than they help them. And the solution of the elites is more of the same.

The whole book is available ONLINE for free! From City Journal!

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Lots more essays are here, all from City Journal.

My favorite passage

The only bad thing about reading it online is that you miss one of the best quotes from the introduction. But I'll type it out for you.

> The disastrous pattern of human relationships that exists in the underclass is also becoming common higher up the social scale. With increasing frequency I am consulted by nurses, who for the most part come from and were themselves traditionally members of (at least after Florence Nightingale) the respectable lower middle class, who have illegitimate children by men who first abuse and then abandon them. This abuse and later abandonment is usually all too predictable from the man's previous history and character; but the nurses who have been treated in this way say they refrained from making a judgment about him because it is wrong to make judgments. But if they do not make a judgment about the man with whom they are going to live and by whom they are going to have a child, about what are they ever going to make a judgment?
>
> "It just didn't work out," they say, the "it" in question being the relationship that they conceive of having an existence independent of the two people who form it, and that exerts an influence on their on their lives rather like an astral projection. Life is fate.

This is something I run into myself. I think that young people today prefer moral relativists as mates, because they are afraid of being judged and rejected by people who are too serious about religion and morality. The problem is that if you choose someone who doesn't take religion and morality seriously, then you can't rely on them to behave morally and exercise spiritual leadership when raising children. And being sexually involved with someone who doesn't take morality seriously causes a lot of damage.

An excerpt

Here's one of my favorite passages from "Tough Love", in which he describes how easily he can detect whether a particular man has violent tendencies on sight, whereas female victims of domestic violence – and even the hospital nurses – *will not* recognize the same signs.

> All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.
>
> This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious

> young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.
>
> Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.
>
> This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.
>
> Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.
>
> At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how* they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

Go read the rest!

Book reviews

- The Age of Bad Ideas
- Review of Life at the Bottom

Greg Koukl takes on pro-abortion caller to his radio show

February 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This was sent to me by my friend Robb. The caller asks Greg whether he has ever taken in any foster children, since he is pro-life. She apparently thinks that Greg cannot be pro-life unless Greg is willing to adopt every crisis pregnancy child who is allowed to be born.

This is the greatest amount of ass-kicking that has ever been accomplished in 10 minutes. I have never heard Greg Koukl lose his temper, but he is clearly a little annoyed with the caller.

Texas Senate approves pre-abortion ultrasound law

February 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Melissa posted this Reuters article on Facebook. Read the part in bold.

Excerpt:

> The Texas Senate on Thursday approved a measure that would require women seeking an abortion to first get an ultrasound.
>
> Women could choose not to view the sonogram image or listen to the heartbeat, but they would be required to listen to an explanation of the images, except in cases of rape or incest or if there are fetal abnormalities.
>
> Republican Gov. Rick Perry, who had put the legislation on a fast track by declaring it an emergency priority, commended the bill's advancement.
>
> "Considering the magnitude of the decision to have an abortion, it is crucial that Texans understand what is truly at stake," Perry said in a statement.
>
> **The measure now goes to the Texas House, where it has broad support. The legislation passed out of the Senate in 2007 and 2009 but died in the House. This year, the House has a larger Republican majority**.
>
> "This is God's time to pass this bill," said the measure's author, Sen. Dan Patrick, a Houston Republican.
>
> Opponents say that the measure interferes with the doctor-patient relationship and would be traumatic for women in an already difficult situation.
>
> "It's the most serious decision they'll ever make in their lives and now you're trying to put government in the middle of that decision," said Democratic Sen. John Whitmire of Houston.
>
> […]Texas is one of several states with strong Republican legislative majorities proposing additional restrictions on abortion.
>
> Eighteen states regulate abortion providers' provision of ultrasound, according to the Guttmacher Institute. The requirements in those states vary widely; some of them require women to get an ultrasound before an abortion, while others require only that she be offered the chance to see the image if an ultrasound is performed.

Republicans introduced the law, and voted for the law. Democrats opposed the law. Republicans are pro-life. Democrats are pro-abortion.

Neil Simpson has more good news here.

House Republicans win vote to defund Planned Parenthood

February 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about voting Republican

This is from Life Site News. (H/T Eleanor)

Excerpt:

> In a historic vote Friday afternoon, the US House voted to strike all federal funding for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Every year the abortion giant receives hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer funding.
>
> The congressional body voted 240-185 in favor of the amendment, introduced by Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN), to the 2011 Federal Spending Bill.
>
> Immediately after the vote Rep. Pence released a statement saying: “This afternoon’s vote is a victory for taxpayers and a victory for life. By banning federal funding to Planned Parenthood, Congress has taken a stand for millions of Americans who believe their tax dollars should not be used to subsidize the largest abortion provider in America.
>
> “I commend my colleagues in both parties for taking a stand for taxpayers and a stand for life.”
>
> The amendment will now go before the Senate.
>
> The vote came after a heated debate in the House. It also comes in the wake of an explosive series of videos released over the last two weeks by the pro-life

> organization Live Action, which showed Planned Parenthood staff repeatedly willing to aid and abet the trafficking of underage "sex workers" by offering advice to an undercover investigator posing as a "pimp" on how to obtain secret abortions, contraception, and STD tests.

Here's some information on the finances of Planned Parenthood.

Excerpt:

> I'm sure the House Clerk has had his hands full all week, with the nearly 600 amendments filed and the many that were voted on during the fiscal 2011 spending debate. As a result, his website has been rather slow to update. At this point, though, we have all the votes on the spending bill, and there are two I'd like to point out right away. I'll look at the final vote in a subsequent post, but here is the first one, yesterday's Pence Amendment, by which the House voted rather convincingly to stop $363 million in subsidies for the nation's largest abortion provider, Planned Parenthood, and its many affiliates nationwide.
>
> Even if you're not a social conservative, funding for Planned Parenthood as a fiscal and a campaign finance issue. **Currently, taxpayers are effectively subsidizing the Democratic Party. Planned Parenthood is a charity with plenty of donors. There's no reason why taxpayers should have to support their favorite charity so that they can give more of their money to Democrats.**
>
> Take, for example, Planned Parenthood of Greater Indiana. Its IRS 990 form for 2009 reports that this affiliate had $10.6 million in revenue from patient services (including $1.2 million from Medicaid — an entitlement not covered by this spending bill). It raised $2 million and then took in $3 million in government grants. On the other side of the ledger, the group reports providing $14.6 million in services. With additional efforts to raise money and a bit of budgeting, they could probably operate at the same pace without the special handouts. (Their medical director made about $300,000 in 2009 — if he believes very strongly in the cause, perhaps he can settle for a bit less.)

If abortion were really supported by the majority of the American people, then surely the people who support abortion would be able to dig deep into their own wallets and just give Planned Parenthood all the money it needs to keep killing helpless babies. But I don't think they are going to do that. And since they are not going to do that, Planned Parenthood will probably have to raise their prices for abortions. And as long as Obamacare doesn't fund those abortions, then a lot more people are going to have to pay more for abortions. And since a lot more people don't want to spend that money on abortions, a lot more people are going to stop treating sex as a recreational activity and behave more responsibly. Responsible behavior is what happens when people have to face the consequences of their own decisions.

I'm a fiscal conservative and a social conservative, and I don't want my tax money going

to kill innocent babies. I worked for that money and it's mine – I earned it. I have to work weekends without pay just to keep my job. If all of these left-wing liberals are so comfortable with their jobs and salaries that they have extra money to spend on baby-killing, then let them give *their* money to Planned Parenthood. My money is for providing for my (future) babies, and paying for their graduate degrees. If I have to pay for other people's plans to kill babies, then I can't pay for my plan to raise them.

"You cannot legislate the poor into freedom by legislating the industrious out of it. You don't multiply wealth by dividing it. Government cannot give anything to anybody that it doesn't first take from somebody else. Whenever somebody receives something without working for it, somebody else has to work for it without receiving. The worst thing that can happen to a nation is for half of the people to get the idea they don't have to work because somebody else will work for them, and the other half to get the idea that it does no good to work because they don't get to enjoy the fruits of their labor."

– Adrian Rogers, former President of the Southern Baptist Convention

And a quote from Michael Medved:

The only real alternative to government as a source of assistance, authority and a functioning civil society remains the "little platoons" described by Edmund Burke — families and communities shaped by attitudes that count as both economically and culturally conservative.

Abortion will be severely restricted abortion providers realize that there is no money to be made by killing innocent people. That's why we need to stop paying them our money.

Note that Susan G. Komen For the Cure and United Way also fund abortions. Be careful where you give your money.

Neil Simpson has a round-up on this topic here.

Related posts on Republican bills

- Texas Senate approves pre-abortion ultrasound law
- North Dakota Republican Dan Ruby wants to slash tax rates and ban abortion
- Ohio Republican proposes ban on abortions after baby has a heartbeat
- Iowa House passes constitutional amendment to define marriage
- Arkansas Senate votes to block taxpayer funding of abortion
- Republican Governor Rick Perry demands sonograms before abortions
- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- Michael Medved explains why Republicans should not drop social issues

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation

- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Rep. Mike Pence drafts amendment to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

Should government unions get inflated salaries and pensions during a recession?

February 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the raw facts from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> The battle in Madison has become the epicenter of a national fight between newly empowered small-government conservatives and Democrats backed by government worker unions.
>
> The grassroots political operation of President Obama, who on Wednesday denounced the austerity legislation as an "attack on unions," has swung in behind the government workers. Organizing for America, the activist organizing wing of the Democratic National Committee is helping keep the pressure on Republican lawmakers who plan to pass the legislation today.
>
> Members of the Service Employees International Union, the most influential union in national Democratic circles, have also joined the fray in support of the government workers. The SEIU is helping man an around-the-clock occupation of the central halls of the state capital.
>
> Tea Party groups, meanwhile, have planned a counter demonstration for Saturday at the capitol in support of the measure, raising the prospect of a clash between the activist groups.
>
> Thousands of union activists have tried to shut down the process at the statehouse, which swung to the GOP in the 2010 elections. The efforts to block access to the state Senate and disrupt debates have been described as "mostly peaceful," though union groups have expanded their protests to the homes of individual lawmakers.
>
> Nine protesters have been arrested so far for disorderly conduct.
>
> The holdup in the vote is due to the fact that the Democratic members of the Senate are on the lam, denying Republicans a quorum and the chance to vote. The Democrats are holed up at a resort just across the Illinois border, putting them beyond the reach of Wisconsin law enforcement agencies that could otherwise compel at least one Democrat to appear in the Senate so a vote could take place.
>
> So far, the hideout seems to be backfiring. Moderate Republicans who had been on the fence over the legislation are denouncing the shutdown as undemocratic.
>
> The lower chamber of the legislature may take up the bill today if Senate Democrats remain in hiding.
>
> The measure would increase the contributions of public employees to their own retirement and medical benefits. The plan, put forward by new Gov. Scott Walker,

> R-Wisc., would have public workers make equal contributions to their retirement funds (teachers currently contribute $1 for every $56.94 from the state) and increase workers' share of health insurance premiums to 12.6 percent. Teachers in most districts currently pay less than 5 percent of their insurance costs. The national average for workers is 27 percent.

This is important because Ed Schultz and Rachel Maddow are lying about the facts. But what do you expect from MSNBC?

Here's McCain's latest from the American Spectator. (H/T Hyscience)

Excerpt:

> Quin Hillyer's observations about the Obama-led "thugocracy" illustrate the yawning chasm between the intimidation tactics of the Left and all the prattling about "civility" liberals dished out last month.
>
> The still-greater chasm is the economic gap between the striking government employees and the taxpayers who pay their salaries. Stephen Hayes of the *Weekly Standard* points out that the average teacher in Wisconsin receives $77,857 in total compensation, when the value of their generous benefit package is added to their salaries. Given that the median household income in Wisconsin is just above $50,000 (and the typical household has more than one wage-earner), this means that the striking teachers are earning substantially more than the people whose taxes pay their salaries. Furthermore, the basic bone of contention between them and Gov. Walker is his plan to make them contribute a larger share toward their pension and health benefits.
>
> Michelle Malkin has more eye-opening facts about the economic realities of the Wisconsin strike. It is obvious that if voters and taxpayers pay attention to the facts, Walker wins and the strikers lose, as I said this morning:
>
> The unemployed, the under-employed and regular folks trying to pay their bills aren't likely to have a lot of love for people who (a) have jobs, (b) work at taxapayer expense, (c) get paid more money than the average taxpayer, and (d) go on strike because they don't want to pay a dime toward their own generous benefits.

The thuggish behavior of the left-wing unions, supported by Barack Obama, has even radical leftists from Time and the Washington Post crying foul.

Larry Kudlow of CNBC has more.

Excerpt:

> Wisconsin parents should go on strike against the teachers' union. A friend e-mailed me to say that the graduation rate in Milwaukee public schools is 46 percent. The graduation rate for African-Americans in Milwaukee public schools is 34 percent. Shouldn't somebody be protesting *that*?
>
> Governor Walker is facing a $3.6 billion budget deficit, and he wants state

> workers to pay one-half of their pension costs and 12.6 percent of their health benefits. Currently, most state employees pay nothing for their pensions and virtually nothing for their health insurance. That's an outrage.
>
> Nationwide, state and local government unions have a 45 percent total-compensation advantage over their private-sector counterpart. With high-pay compensation and virtually no benefits co-pay, the politically arrogant unions are bankrupting America — which by some estimates is suffering from $3 trillion in unfunded liabilities.
>
> Exempting police, fire, and state troopers, Governor Walker would end collective bargaining over pensions and benefits for the rest. Collective bargaining for wages would still be permitted, but there would be no wage hikes above the CPI. Unions could still represent workers, but they could not force employees to pay dues. In exchange for this, Walker promises no furloughs for layoffs.
>
> Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels is also pushing a bill to limit the collective-bargaining rights of teachers for wages and wage-related benefits. Similar proposals are being discussed in Idaho and Tennessee. In Ohio, Gov. John Kasich wants to restrict union rights across-the-board for all state and local government workers. More generally, both Democratic and Republican governors across the country are taking on the extravagant pay of government unions.
>
> Why? Because taxpayers won't stand for it anymore.

Neil Simpson comments:

> Let me get this straight: Union-loving Dems shirk their duties and leave the state? And what, exactly, is bad about that? (That's horrible behavior on their part of course, but if they leave and don't come back that would be swell.)
>
> Unemployment is stuck at 10% — which means non-union unemployment is much higher — and they think this will improve their reputations?
>
> Poorly performing teachers close at least 15 school districts to go fight for their entitlements? Yeah, that'll garner a lot of sympathy.

I have been super busy at work and working weekends, so I haven't been covering this story as much as I should be. But like Neil, I am extremely excited about this. I picked two winning issues for the GOP in 2012: School choice reform and de-funding abortion. Those are two issues that fiscal conservatives and social conservatives agree on. I'd like to now add two more issues to the list: a federal right-to-work law (can work without having to join a union) for ALL employees – public and private, and reforming public sector pensions to be in line with private sector pensions.

We have to go after Democrat special interest groups hard and stop them for collecting all of this private sector taxpayer money. Social conservatives should support this because unions are notoriously pro-abortion and anti-marriage. We need to stop giving them taxpayer money to fund their left-wing political activism.

What are the economic effects of the green environmentalist agenda?

February 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Some day, environmental radicals will be held accountable for crimes against the ecosystem — the human ecosystem.
>
> Back in 2007, they convinced federal Judge Oliver Wanger to rule that the Endangered Species Act gave the federal government the right to cut water to thousands of farmers in California's Central Valley to protect a 3-inch baitfish called the delta smelt.
>
> That ruling turned many of the Valley's prized vineyards and almond groves into wastelands. Jobs were lost, family farms were shut, fields went fallow and food prices rose.
>
> But there's been just one problem with this overreaching of the law: Cutting off water didn't save the smelt.
>
> A draft of a new study from the Delta Stewardship Council shows the water cutoffs had no effect on the smelt. The smelt remains endangered even as farmers have been punished with a policy that cut off as much as 90% of their water.
>
> "Environmentalists claimed the sky was falling in Delta, and the only way to save smelt was to flush more fresh water to the ocean," said Andrew House, spokesman for Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif. "So they embarked upon a narrow path of diverting water from (San Joaquin Valley) farmers by using science to confirm their predetermined assessment of what was going on."
>
> But it didn't work. Similar evidence is now coming out from the Pacific Northwest stating that shutting down the logging industry never did save the spotted owl.
>
> In both cases, the science was highly speculative and new predatory species seem to be more likely causes. But that never stopped cocky environmentalists from saying they had all the answers — and all the power.
>
> "Our farmers went through two years of supply cuts to have . .. better information and science, " said Steve Wade, executive director of the California Farm Water Coalition, commenting on the report.
>
> Wade noted that the water shut-off has been particularly hard on family farms, many of which have gone under as a result of the policies. He said their farms have been bought out by big agribusinesses, ironic given environmentalists' hatred of that.

> Unemployment reached 40% in some areas as a result of the cutoff, and even cities like Fresno (with an unemployment rate above 16%) ended up losing 25% of their water, too.
>
> Food lines appeared in the world's most fertile agricultural valley, with farmworkers accepting bags of carrots grown in China, a sorry emblem of man-made famine.
>
> House notes that not only did the water shut-off wreak havoc on Central Valley farms, its smelt-saving basis — which Judge Wanger later called "sloppy science" — managed to endanger the smelt even more by not addressing the real reason for the creature's demise.
>
> "They wasted so much time focusing on a phantom problem, they haven't examined what the real problems are. Now you have the Delta Stewardship Council saying" the species may not be saved, House said.
>
> This was never about science anyway. "It was … about re-engineering the development of California, particularly the San Joaquin Valley," said House. "They don't think the west side should be farmed at all, they want it removed from production, gone to a natural state, re-engineered as a socialist Utopia."

Real people's lives were ruined by this green alarmism. And it's happening everywhere. People losing their jobs, paying more for electricity, food riots and even people dying from malaria in the third world because of DDT bans.

Chris Wallace interviews Governor Scott Walker on union pension reform

February 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Found at Verum Serum.

Chris Sinkinson debates John Hick on religious pluralism

February 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Looks like Justin Brierley found a pastor to debate who isn't goofy. This pastor has a Ph.D in philosophy and he can really whip some ass.

The players:

> John Hick is a noted philosopher and theologian who is a proponent of a pluralist view of religion – that there is one light (God) but many lampshades (religious expressions).
>
> Chris Sinkinson is a pastor and Bible tutor who has critiqued Hick's work. He says that pluralism empties Christianity of any content and in its own way disrespects other religions more than his own exclusivist stance.

The MP3 file is here.

Justin does a freat job as moderator. He said what I was thinking a number of times.

One quick thing. If you like this debate, then you need to order the Greer-Heard forum MP3s from the Harold Netland vs. Paul F. Knitter debate. Paul Knitter's case for pluralism is essentially the same as Hick's although he emphasizes the "evangelicals are mean" argument more than the "I want people of other religions to like me" argument. Crossan has the same view: "Christianity can't be true because the universe is eternal and not finely-tuned, DNA doesn't have an intelligent cause, the Cambrian explosion never happened, God wouldn't allow evil and suffering, and I don't want my Buddhist and Hindu students to think that I'm mean. Waah! Waah!". Apostates are so cowardly.

if you can't buy the Knitter lectures, then at least read this.

Anyway, here is my snarky summary, in which I invent what I think the people really meant when they say things.

—-

Hick:
– had an experience looking at the buildings of other religions
– other religions have buildings, so all religions are equal
– I spent some time in the East, and met nice Eastern people
– since Eastern people are nice that means all religions are equal

Justin:
– isn't Jesus' claim to be the exclusive path to salvation offensive?

Sinkinson:
– all religions that are exclusive have to deal with religious pluralism
– even John Hick writes polemically in favor of his own view
– even John Hick thinks that religions that are exclusive are false

Justin:
– what about the blind man and the elephant?
– the story seems to say that other people have a partial grasp?
– but the story-teller himself has the privileged view
– so isn't the religious pluralist just as arrogant as exclusivists?

Hick:
– well, it's not arrogant to claim to have the right answer
– Jesus never made the claim to be God incarnate
– Jesus never made the claim to be the exclusive path to God
– historians don't think that John's gospel is reliable because it is late
– the proclamation of exclusivity was added by evangelists much later

Sinkinson:
– the historians who doubt the high Christology are radical skeptics
– the mainstream of historical scholarship accepts a high Christology
– the EARLIEST history about Jesus has the highest Christology

Hick:
– the moderate scholars do think Jesus was divine but that he didn't think he was divine
– the phrase "Son of God" was used to describe any remarkable person
– only later did the early church turn the generic term into "God the Son"

Sinkinson:
– there is reflection on Jesus' identity and developments, but not invention
– Jesus and his followers were in trouble precisely for linking him to deity
– why else would Jesus get into trouble and get crucified?

Hick:
– the Romans crucified him because people were saying he was the Messiah
– but the Messiah was not identified as being divine, but political
– and that's why the Romans crucified him

Justin:
– do you (Sinkinson) think that people in other religions can be saved?

Sinkinson:
– the traditional view is exclusivism
– the other world religions are logically contradictory with Christianity
– you have to respect their differences – they are not the same as Christianity
– exclusivists allow that people can be saved by responding to natural theology
– and there are also other cases like old testament saints and babies

Hick:
– but people's religions is based on where they are born
– so it's not fair for God to expect people to be saved in one religion only

Sinkinson:
– the plurality of religions grouped by location doesn't make christianity false
– that would be the genetic fallacy – rejecting an idea because of its origin

– the real question to consider is whether it is true
– and even the objection assumes that God is a God of love, who should be fair
– but how do you know that God is loving? that is an exclusive view
– how can the “blob” ultimate of religious pluralism be “loving” and “fair”

Hick:
– the ultimate reality is loving or not loving depending on each person’s religion

Sinkinson:
– but some religions and theistic and some are atheistic
– how can those God exist and not exist?

Hick:
– God is beyond everyone’s understanding, except mine
– God is beyond all definitions, except mine
– God is beyond all human understanding, except mine
– i’m not contradicting myself, it’s a mystery! a mystery!
– as long as you don’t look to closely, they’re all the same!
– allow me to tell you about God, which no one can do but me

Justin:
– doesn’t your religious pluralism mean that Christianity is false?

Hick:
– well, Christianity can’t be true, because it disagrees with other religions
– Christianity can’t falsify other religions, that would be mean to them
– other religions are just as “profound” as Christianity – and that’s what matters – not whether a religion is truth
– some religions are older than Christianity, that means they can’t be disagreed with
– we can’t let Christianity be true, because then some people will feel bad
– if people feel bad, then they don’t like me and then I feel bad
– that’s why I’m an apostate – because I want to be thought of as “tolerant”
– I don’t really care about logic or evidence or truth – just being liked
– if there’s one thing I know about the unknowable ultimate reality, it’s that it wants me to be liked by lots of people

Sinkinson:
– your view seems to be agnosticism – that nothing can be known about the “ultimate real”
– if we can’t express in words what God is like, then why are you saying what God is like?

Hick:
– the indescribable ultimate is described (falsely, but interesting) by various tradition

Sinkinson:
– does the “ultimate real” exist?

Hick:
– no

Justin:
– are all the exclusive religions wrong, and only you are right?

Hick:
– all propositions about God in all the religions are false
– the experience of being deluded and having feelings about your delusions is “valid” in all religions
– all religions are equally good ways to believe false things and to have feelings about that
– only my propositions about God are true
– everyone who disagrees with me is wrong

Sinkinson:
– so all the propositions of all the religions are wrong
– but all the experiences and feelings are “right”

Hick:
– yes
– all propositions about God are humanly constructed, and so false
– except mine – mine are true! not like you plebians

Sinkinson:
– so everything distinctive about Christianity are literally false?

Hick:
– yes, Christian doctrines are all false
– because if they were true, other religions would be false, and they would feel bad
– and we can’t have that, because everyone has to like me
– only things that don’t offend people in other religions can be true

Sinkinson:
– so do we have to then treat all religions as non-propositional?

Hick:
– well just don’t ask people about the content of their beliefs
– just treat their religion as non-cognitive rituals, feelings and experiences
– don’t inquire too deeply into it, because all religions are all nonsense
– i’m very respectful and tolerant of different religions!

Sinkinson:
– but Muslims, for example, think their religion is making truth claims

Hick:
– but there can be tolerance as long as you treat religions as non-propositional nonsense

Sinkinson:
– um, I have a higher respect for religions than you do
– I actually consider that other religions could be true

Hick:
– well they are all useful because they are all false

– I don’t emphasize beliefs, I emphasize living, experiences and feelings
– as long as everyone accepts my view and rejects their religion, we’ll all be tolerant

Justin:
– erm, isn’t that an exclusive claim?
– you’re trying to say that your view of what religion is is right
– and everyone else is wrong

Hick:
– I’m not arrogant, I just think that all the religions of the worlds are false
– only my statements about religion are true – everyone else is wrong
– I’m tolerant, and Christians are arrogant

Justin:
– but you think Sinkinson’s view is wrong
– why should we accept your view and deny his view?

Hick:
– His view of salvation is false, and mine is true

Sinkinson:
– you use words with set meanings, but you mean completely different things
– when I say salvation, I mean deliverance from sins through Jesus

Hick:
– I get to decide what salvation means for everyone, you intolerant bigot

Sinkinson:
– but that word has a specific meaning that has held true in all of Christian history
– but what you mean by salvation is people having subjective non-rational delusions

Hick:
– I don’t like using the word salvation

Sinkinson:
– but you just used it!
– and you think that it is present in different world religions, but it isn’t

Hick:
– God is unknowable and indescribable
– God isn’t a wrathful God though
– and the Christian description of God is false
– Evangelical Christians are mean
– I had experiences with people of other faiths
– and these experiences taught me that religions that think that the universe is eternal are true
– as long as you reduce religion to behaviors and not truth, then religions are all good at producing behaviors
– if you just treat all religions as clothing fashion and food customs, they are all valid
– the main point of religion is for people to agree on cultural conventions and stick to

them
– never mind the propositional statements of religions… who cares about truth? not me!
– but Christianity is definitely false

Sinkinson:
– the Judeo-Christian God is different – he reveals himself to humans
– he is distinct from the other religions
– he is personal, and is loving but also angry at sin

Hick:
– But God isn't a person, and he isn't a non-person
– i can't say what he is – I'll offend someone if I say anything at all!
– except Christians – I can offend them because they are arrogant bigots
– I'm also very spiritual – I meditate on my breathing

Sinkinson:
– you can't assess a religion by the experiences that people have
– people who have weird experiences do all kinds of evil things
– so the real question has to be about truth – is the New Testament reliable

Obama administration rolls back conscience protections for health care workers

February 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The Obama Administration has rescinded a federal regulation from 2008 that protected the conscience rights of health care providers opposed to providing abortifacient contraception, such as the Plan-B "morning-after" pill.
>
> The Health and Human Services Department under Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, issued the new "final rule," which leaves health-care workers of federally funded entities a narrower conscience exemption that only protects them from having to participate in abortions or sterilizations.
>
> The new regulation replaces the earlier one enacted in the waning days of the George W. Bush administration, which broadened the interpretation of existing federal conscience statutes related to abortion to include health professionals opposed to emergency contraception, such as Ella or Plan-B, drugs which pro-life advocates say also act as abortifacients.
>
> Sebelius alleged in the promulgation of the new final rule that the Bush-era conscience regulations "instead led to greater confusion", citing comments received by HHS. She said her department was changing the rule because it was "unclear and potentially over-broad in scope."
>
> The HHS Secretary said in her statement that her department did share the concern of those in favor of rescinding the rule that it had the "potential to negatively impact patient access to contraception and certain other medical services" esp. for certain sub-populations, such as "low income patients, minorities, the uninsured, patients in rural areas, Medicaid beneficiaries, or other medically under-served populations."
>
> The ruling is a victory for Planned Parenthood and other "family planning" groups that have insisted that drugs like Plan-B (taken within 72 hours of sexual intercourse) and Ella (taken within five-days of intercourse) should be defined as "contraception." Pro-life groups countered that pro-life health providers should be protected from discrimination under federal statutes, because these drugs could prevent a conceived human embryo from implanting in the mother's womb, thereby aborting it.
>
> […]"Today's erosion of conscience protections for medical professionals is a blow both to medicine and the right to practice one's deeply-held convictions," said Dr. J. Scott Ries, on behalf of the 16,000-member Christian Medical Association (CMA).

> Ries said the new HHS final rule disregarded the findings of the previous HHS 2008 final rule which stated that allowing health professionals to practice according to their convictions would negatively impact patient services or create "new barriers."
>
> "Losing conscientious healthcare professionals and faith-based institutions to discrimination and job loss especially imperils the poor and patients in medically underserved areas," said Ries. "We are already facing critical shortages of primary care physicians, and the Obama administration's decision now threatens to make the situation far worse for patients across the country who depend on faith-based health care."

As the days go on, I find myself missing George W. Bush more and more. Say what you like about him, he was a Christian. And now we have a non-Christian (atheist) president and an atheistic administration. Things like conscience protections are naturally under attack. Naturally, people on the secular left think that the state has a right to impose their views and overrule the religious and moral views of individual citizens. That's what fascism is – and fascism is exclusively a phenomenon of the political left. The right values individual liberty and free market capitalism.

Thomas Sowell on the root causes of the mortgage lending crisis

February 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a 33-minute video of Thomas Sowell explaining what caused the current recession.

He blames everybody, but Barney Frank and Chris Dodd most of all.

For those who cannot watch a big long video, here's an article from Reason magazine.

Here's a summary from the article:

> Now, in *The Housing Boom and Bust* (Basic Books), Sowell contemplates the greatest expansion of government power in a generation, which was itself occasioned by the greatest economic crisis in as long. A quick but thorough guide to the causes of the crises, Sowell's book shows how government policies led to a huge increase in highly risky housing loans. As he notes, the immense local variability in housing prices and failed loans reveals that the government mistook a set of local problems for a national one, and then imposed a single troublesome national solution. Sowell argues that while foolish decisions to indulge in complicated investment vehicles affected the specifics of how the financial contagion spread, at its root the housing problem is one of bad mortgages. And those came from bad decisions by government and by borrowers themselves.

And an excerpt:

> **reason:** You parcel out some share of responsibility for the specific way the housing bust broke down to borrowers, lenders, financial markets, and the government. What was the borrowers' share?
>
> **Sowell:** There are those who borrowed to buy a place to live and speculators who borrowed to speculate, and did enormously well for a number of years. Then there were people who simply don't understand complex mortgages, particularly people who never owned a home before and whose educations were limited. But the people I would blame the most in the sense that without their interference other problems would have been within manageable means are the politicians—people in Congress and the president and regulators—who pushed the lenders and the banks and Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac into lending and buying mortgages based on people who didn't meet standards that evolved in the marketplace and which had worked. Those politicians, in addition to that initial mistake, ignored all sorts of warnings from all sorts of sources. As I list in the book, the *Economist* in London, *Fortune, Barron's*, people at the American Enterprise Institute, all over the map, saw that this policy of encouraging homeownership at all costs was leading to trouble.
>
> But the politicians clearly had as their political goal homeownership as "a good thing" and persisted—and for that matter persist to this moment in pushing it.

> The Federal Housing Administration last I checked was promoting supporting mortgages that have less than 4 percent down payment. We all make mistakes, but politicians have persisted in their mistakes, and in the pointing of fingers in other directions.
>
> "Affordable housing" covers a number of things. There was this sense in Washington that the cost of buying a house had become a nationwide major problem which would require a federal answer as opposed to a local answer. All the data say that was not true. People weren't paying a higher percent of their income nationwide for housing than they had a decade earlier. In fact, it was a somewhat lower percentage in some areas. Now in some areas, including California—coastal California—people were paying half their family income to put a roof over their head. That in turn was a result of local political people putting all sorts of restrictions on building.
>
> Implicit in the idea of "affordable housing" is the notion that third parties know what people can afford better than those people know themselves. If you spell it out it sounds so absurd you wonder how anyone could have believed it. But for politicians the question is not, is it absurd? The question is whether or not the public will buy it.
>
> **reason:** How much weight do you place on the notion that Federal Reserve expansionary money and credit policies primed the bubble, and bust, in housing?
>
> **Sowell:** I find it hard to accept. I'm sure if the interest rates had been at 8 percent the boom would not have gone as far and the bust would not have been as big. I'm not saying monetary policy had no effect. But I am struck by the fact that Federal Reserve policy is nationwide, and in places like Dallas the increase in housing prices was in single digits and the decrease has been in single digits. So while Fed policy undoubtedly aggravated circumstances, it can't be the fundamental cause because the defaults were so heavily concentrated. 60 percent of all defaults nationwide were in five states, and I suspect if you broke down the data even more you'd find specific regions in those five states very heavily implicated in defaults.

For more on the specific laws that caused the prices of homes to skyrocket in those 5 states, read this article.

Excerpt:

> Let us go back to square one to consider the empirical consequences of policies in the housing market. Politicians in Washington set out to solve a national problem *that did not exist* — a nationwide shortage of "affordable housing" — and have now left us with a problem whose existence is as undeniable as it is painful. When the political crusade for affordable housing took off and built up steam during the 1990s, the share of their incomes that Americans were spending on housing in 1998 was 17 percent, compared to 30 percent in the

> early 1980s. Even during the housing boom of 2005, the median home took just 22 percent of the median American income.
>
> What created the illusion of a nationwide problem was that, in particular localities around the country, housing prices had skyrocketed to the point where people had to pay half their income to buy a modest-sized home and often resorted to very risky ways of financing the purchase. In Tucson, for example, "roughly 60% of first-time home buyers make no down payment and instead now use 100% financing to get into the market," according to the *Wall Street Journal*. Almost invariably, these locally extreme housing prices have been a result of local political crusades in the name of locally attractive slogans about the environment, open space, "smart growth," or whatever other phrases had political resonance at the particular time and place.
>
> Where housing markets have been more or less left alone — in places like Houston or Dallas, for example — housing did not take even half as big a share of family incomes as did comparable housing in places like the San Francisco Bay Area, where heavily hyped political crusades had led to severe restrictions on building. It was in precisely these extremely high housing-cost enclaves that the kind of people for whom the national housing crusade expressed much concern — minorities, low-income people and families with children — were forced *out* disproportionately.
>
> Few things blind human beings to the actual consequences of what they are doing like a heady feeling of self-righteousness during a crusade to smite the wicked and rescue the downtrodden. Statistical studies about disparities between blacks and whites in mortgage loan approval rates might be said to have "jump-started" the housing crusades that began in the 1990s. Politicians and the media led this crusade, with many community activists following in their wake, much like scavengers, able to extract large sums of money from banks and other institutions by raising claims of discrimination, whose power to delay government approval of bank mergers and other business decisions made pay-offs to these activists the only prudent course for those accused.

I'm pretty sure that the San Francisco Bay area is run by leftists. And not moderate leftists – radical leftists. And I'm pretty sure that Dallas and Houston are not run by radical leftists. This crisis was local to areas that were *dominated* by Democrats who were passing all kinds of regulations and restrictions on the real estate market in order to drive up the price of their own properties and keep the "undesirable" minorities out.

I really recommend that everyone buy Thomas Sowell books and read them. I just finished "The Housing Boom and Bust" and am now working on "Economic Facts and Fallacies" and next up is "Intellectuals and Society".

Related posts

- Democrat Barney Frank admits his role in causing the recession

- If you had to blame the recession on one person, who would it be?
- Who benefits from the Democrats financial regulation bill?
- Wall Street bankers gave Obama millions in campaign contributions
- Who are the ten most corrupt politicians of 2009?
- Thomas Sowell explains how politicians cause recessions while getting elected
- Democrats planning government regulation of more large companies
- Democrats use TARP money to shore up personal fortunes
- Democrats caused the recession and Republicans tried to stop it

New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less

February 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Citizen Link. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> It's a number that is trumpeted from the rooftops — and the pulpit: Half of marriages among Christians and non-Christians alike end in divorce.
>
> But the reality is that Christians who attend church regularly get divorced at a much lower rate.
>
> Professor Bradley Wright, a sociologist at the University of Connecticut, found that among people who identify as Christians but rarely attend church, 60 percent have been divorced. Of those who attend church regularly, 38 percent have been divorced.
>
> W. Bradford Wilcox, a leading sociologist at the University of Virginia and director of the National Marriage Project, found a nearly identical spread between "active conservative Protestants" who regularly attend church and people with no religious affiliation.
>
> Professor Scott Stanley from the University of Denver, who is working on the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative, said couples with a vibrant religious faith have more and higher levels of the qualities that marriages need to avoid divorce.
>
> "Whether young or old, male or female, low-income or not, those who said that they were more religious reported higher average levels of commitment to their partners, higher levels of marital satisfaction, less thinking and talking about divorce and lower levels of negative interaction," he said. "These patterns held true when controlling for such important variables as income, education and age at first marriage."

I think this is another good example of means-end reasoning in marriage. I often criticize women for choosing the wrong men to marry because they don't define typical marriage scenarios and then select men who have prepared for those scenarios. Going to church is an antidote for the moral relativism that ails us, and it transports us outside of our hedonism to a place where we can think about bigger and better things. Women need to choose men who have a habit of attending church. Basically, young people need to study research to find out what works (chastity, pre-marital counseling, church attendance, etc.) and then demand that prospective mates demonstrate those skills – if they expect the marriage to last.

I say this as someone who struggles enormously with the feminized church, but you can't argue with the data. I personally think that church attendance is less important than a good knowledge of philosophical theology and apologetics, and the habit of debating

about those things. (Especially science apologetics) I've been to my friend Andrew's church, and if I lived near him, I would attend regularly. They have excellent apologetics events, world-reknown apologetics speakers and classes on apologetics. They have shown William Lane Craig debates, taught Greg Koukl and Lee Strobel books, and they even did "The Truth Project", which features Stephen C. Meyer. They actually believe what they claim to believe, and they have actually studied why they ought to believe it. I would attend a church like that regularly.

Related posts

- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Frank Turek explains the kalam argument and some objections to it

February 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

His latest show focus on three of the better known scientific arguments for the existence of God. The argument from the origin of the universe, the argument from the cosmic fine-tuning, and the argument from biological information. He is especially focused on the first argument. He answers about a half-dozen objections raised by university students during his most recent speaking engagements on secular college campuses.

If you need a refresher on the kalam argument, read this first.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

Atheist dogma
– they pre-suppose natural causation and no evidence can overturn the assumption
– they rule out intelligent causes before they look at the evidence
– they rule out supernatural causes before they look at the evidence
– the assumption of naturalism is just a philosophical assumption
– the assumption is not subject to debate – they just believe it on faith
– the view that all truth must be detected with scientific methods is self-refuting

How atheists oppose the origin of the universe:
– that's a god of the gaps argument
– you have to find an answer to problems that fits with my assumption of naturalism
– who made God?
– quantum mechanics shows that things can pop into being uncaused – maybe the universe did too
– given enough time, the universe will pop into being out of nothing

Responses:
– the cause of nature's coming into existence cannot be inside of nature
– if nature has a beginning, then the cause of the beginning cannot be natural
– nature is the effect, the cause cannot be natural – it must be supernatural
– the only objection to the origin of the universe is the pre-supposition of naturalism
– but naturalism is not science – it's a faith commitment to an unproven assumption
– only an agent with free will can cause an effect when/where there is no physical cause
– the inference to a supernatural cause is not based on ignorance, but on what we know
– the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe is the foundation of the argument
– the scientific evidence has gotten strong as more discoveries emerged
– regarding quantum mechanics, the particles do not come into being from nothing
– the virtual particles come into being from a vaccuum, which is not nothing
– to say that events occur without causes is to deny the scientific method itself

Muslims assault man for teaching comparative religions class

February 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Four men launched a horrific attack on a teacher in which they slashed his face and left him with a fractured skull because they did not approve of him teaching religion to Muslim girls.
>
> Akmol Hussein, 26, Sheikh Rashid, 27, Azad Hussain, 25, and Simon Alam, 19, attacked Gary Smith with a Stanley knife, an iron rod and a block of cement.
>
> Mr Smith, who is head of religious education at Central Foundation Girls' School in Bow, east London, also suffered a fractured skull.
>
> The four now face a jail sentence.
>
> Detectives made secret recordings of the gang's plot to attack Mr Smith prior to the brutal assault.
>
> The covert audio probe captured the gang condemning Mr Smith for 'teaching other religions to our sisters', the court heard.
>
> The RE teacher was targeted as he made his way on foot along Burdett Road in nearby Mile End on July 12 last year, Snaresbrook Crown Court was told.
>
> Prosecutor Sarah Whitehouse told the court: 'The evidence from what was said on the probe points overwhelmingly to a religious motive for this attack.'
>
> It is believed the gang had made two earlier attempts to get at the teacher.
>
> They were due to stand trial for the attack at Snaresbrook Crown Court but pleaded guilty to causing grievous bodily harm with intent.
>
> A fifth defendant, Badruzzuha Uddin, 23, admitted assisting the thugs by hiding blood-stained clothing.

Remember, it is the secular left that promotes multi-culturalism – the idea that all cultures are equally good. It is the official policy of the UK government, and their immigrants are encouraged not to adopt Western culture. The secular leftists don't think there is anything better about the Western nations, when compared to Iran or Saudi Arabia. That's why we shouldn't elect them.

Left-wing media silent on Afghan Christian's impending execution

February 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East
This is from National Review. (H/T Kelly)

Excerpt:

> A terrible drama is unfolding in Afghanistan: There are reports that Said Musa, whose situation I described at Christmas, will soon be executed for the 'crime' of choosing to become a Christian. (For background, see here.)
>
> Musa was one of about 25 Christians arrested on May 31, 2010, after a May 27 Noorin TV program showed video of a worship service held by indigenous Afghan Christians; he was arrested as he attempted to seek asylum at the German embassy. He converted to Christianity eight years ago, is the father of six young children, had a leg amputated after he stepped on a landmine while serving in the Afghan Army, and now has a prosthetic leg. His oldest child is eight and one is disabled (she cannot speak). He worked for the Red Cross/Red Crescent as an adviser to other amputees.
>
> He was forced to appear before a judge without any legal counsel and without knowledge of the charges against him. "Nobody [wanted to be my] defender before the court. When I said 'I am a Christian man,' he [a potential lawyer] immediately spat on me and abused me and mocked me. . . . I am alone between 400 [people with] terrible values in the jail, like a sheep." He has been beaten, mocked, and subjected to sleep deprivation and sexual abuse while in prison. No Afghan lawyer will defend him and authorities denied him access to a foreign lawyer.
>
> Any and every human being who is imprisoned, abused, or tortured for the free

> and peaceful expression of their faith deserves our support, but Musa is also a remarkable person and Christian. In a letter smuggled to the West, he says, “The authority and prisoners in jail did many bad behaviour with me about my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, they did sexual things with me, beat me by wood, by hands, by legs, put some things on my head.”
>
> He added a thing much more important to him, that they “mocked me ‘he’s Jesus Christ,’ spat on me, nobody let me for sleep night and day. . . . Please, please, for the sake of Lord Jesus Christ help me.” (View the full letter here)
>
> He has not, in fact, even appealed to be released, only to be transferred to another prison. He has also stated that he is willing to give his life for his faith. “Please, please you should transfer me from this jail to a jail that supervises the believers. . . . I also agree . . . to sacrifice my life in public [where] I will tell [about my] faith in Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, [so] other believers will take courage and be strong in their faith.”
>
> Newspapers in the U.K. and elsewhere in Europe have reported the story, but with, the exception of the *Wall Street Journal* and, of course, NRO, American outlets have not found it worthy of attention. The *Journal* reports that “Afghan officials have been unapologetic: ‘The sentence for a convert is death and there is no exception,’ said Jamal Khan, chief of staff at the Ministry of Justice. ‘They must be sentenced to death to serve as a lesson for others.’”

It’s instructive to consider the types of victims that the left wing-media covers. There were thousands of stories about Matthew Sheppard and Rodney King. But almost no stories at all about Said Musa. I wonder why that is?

Michele Bachmann and Paul Ryan on the Wisconsin teacher union pensions

February 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, Megyn Kelly explains the Wisconsin union crisis.

Michele Bachmann interviewed by Megyn Kelly:

Paul Ryan interviewed by Greta Van Susteren.

Paul Ryan also talks about Obama's latest budget.

Ladies and gentlemen, the grown-up party.

UPDATE: Here's a story for those who are Youtube-impaired.

Excerpt:

> Two-thirds of the eighth graders in Wisconsin public schools cannot read proficiently according to the U.S. Department of Education, despite the fact that Wisconsin spends more per pupil in its public schools than any other state in the Midwest.
>
> In the National Assessment of Educational Progress tests administered by the U.S. Department of Education in 2009—the latest year available—only 32 percent of Wisconsin public-school eighth graders earned a "proficient" rating while another 2 percent earned an "advanced" rating. The other 66 percent of Wisconsin public-school eighth graders earned ratings below "proficient," including 44 percent who earned a rating of "basic" and 22 percent who earned a rating of "below basic."
>
> The test also showed that the reading abilities of Wisconsin public-school eighth graders had not improved at all between 1998 and 2009 despite a significant inflation-adjusted increase in the amount of money Wisconsin public schools spent per pupil each year.

This is an issue we can win on.

Can parents lead their children to be effective and influential Christians?

February 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm not going to surprise any of my regular readers by stating that I believe that fathers should lead their children to pursue advanced degrees and to reach high positions of influence. I think it is the man's job to survey the world, to decide where the battles are being fought, to encourage his children to be the best in every academic discipline, to push them to take on difficult practical tasks, to assess their strengths and weaknesses as they progress (not their likes and dislikes), and to push them towards success in areas where the battles are being fought and where they have talent.

So, for example, if I had a child, here are some areas I would steer him/her toward:

- cosmology, to study the Big Bang and fine-tuning arguments
- software engineering, to make tons of money and not have to conform to teacher's expectations
- philosophy, because that's what William Lane Craig, Jay Richards and Stephen C. Meyer did
- New Testament, because that's what Gary Habermas, N.T. Wright, and Ben Witherington did
- economics, as long as they went to Hillsdale/Grove City, then George Mason, because they could go on to politics
- law, as long as they went to Hillsdale/Grove City, then George Mason, because they could go on to politics
- biochemistry, because intelligent design is all bound up with the origin of life chemistry – but this is risky
- paleontology, because the Cambrian explosion is an excellent apologetic argument – but this is very risky
- dentist, because you can make a ton of money, and it's not regulated
- veterinarian, because you can make a ton of money, and it's not regulated
- mathematics professor, because you can influence children, but not be turfed out for your religion/politics
- medical physics, you can make a ton of money and no risk of being discriminated against
- bioinformatics, combine software engineering and biochemistry – but this is somewhat risky
- social scientist working on social issues like marriage and parenting and social policy, but this is pretty risky

I want to lead my future children towards academic excellence and effective professions where they can exert an influence. I would do this by using things like rules, standards, accountability, and moral boundaries. I would teach my children to learn to sacrifice their

happiness to love God more effectively. I would encourage them to take risks, work hard, be enterprising, and to earn and save money.

I've been practicing all of this over the years on my male and female friends. I encourage them to go back to school, get advanced degrees, bring in good speakers to church and universities, show debates, read good apologetics and economics books, earn and save money, etc. The consensus view , among men and women who I've challenged, is that all this hard work is not much fun, but that they loved the feeling of being confident in their faith, and that they loved having a worldview that was comprehensive – integrating science, politics, history, economics, philosophy, foreign policy, etc. And they felt that it made them feel closer to God because they liked having the experience of defending him.

Although the leading seems to work really well on friends, but as soon as you try it on girl friends, they get really mad. And they don't think that it's a good parenting style either. Some women say that children are random, that every child is as effective as any other, and that parents have to make children happy just as they are, or the children will rebel against high expectations and hard work, and become atheists. And worst of all, some women think that *children need to be protected from the expectations, boundaries and standards of their own fathers.* This is a father's worst nightmare, and, along with fiscal liberalism and social liberalism, it *disqualifies a woman from being marriageable.* Women need to not only be comfortable with men leading the family through goal-directed parenting, but they need to encourage the men to *be men*.

So some women think that male parenting is bad for children, and doesn't work to produce effect Christian kids.

But is it true?

Well consider two children of famous Christian apologists.

First, Lee Strobel's son:

> Kyle Strobel is a speaker, writer, and a practitioner of spiritual formation and community transformation. His main focus is on discipleship, spiritual formation, and creating a community of disciples who do the same. He has done masters work in Philosophy of Religion as well as New Testament. After doing further masters work in Spiritual Formation, Kyle has started his Ph.D in theology at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland in order to help integrate the often divorced spheres of theology and spirituality.
>
> Kyle has focused his ministry on developing and equipping people to live a Jesus way of life, which is also the subtitle to his book Metamorpha: Jesus as a way of life(Baker, April 2007). Kyle and his wife Kelli live in Aberdeen, Scotland.

Second, Josh McDowell's son:

> Head of the Bible Department at *Capistrano Valley Christian Schools*, where he teaches the courses on Philosophy, Theology, and Apologetics. He graduated summa cum laude from Talbot Theological Seminary with a double Master's

> degree in Theology and Philosophy. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in Apologetics and Worldview Studies from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Sean received the "Educator of the Year" for San Juan Capistrano, California in 2008. His apologetics training was awarded Exemplary Status by the *Association of Christian Schools International*. Sean is listed among the top 100 apologists.

I've talked to Greg Koukl, and he is amazingly intense and thoughtful about how he is raising his kids. I asked him this personally. He has a plan. He's put a lot of thought into it. I'm sure his wife supports him leading the children. Apologists are good at persuading other people, and that is *exactly* what you do with your friends… *and with your children*. If you are tough on your friends, and that works, then you can be sure that being tough on the kids will work too.

If I have children in the future, I will have to pull money away from the ministries and scholars and conferences that I like to sponsor. My friends will not be receiving gifts and books and lectures and debates. I will have a lot less time for writing and relationships with atheists and co-worker debates. I'll have to work for many years more at a boring job to pay for stuff that's just normal every day stuff. If I have to do all that, then I would like to see that my wife is prepared to raise children, is supportive and understanding of what men do in a family, and focused on serving God effectively. And I would like to see her value the fact that a man has *demonstrated his ability to lead* by building up his friends over the *long-term* into effective and influential Christians – by giving them time and money and setting high expectations and monitoring their progress. Women should not be afraid of men who have a track record of leading other people to be effective and influential. In fact, they should *value* it. What they should *not* value is moral relativism, postmodernism, epistemic relativism, a lack of long term mentoring relationships, ignorance, laziness, cowardice and submission to peer pressure. Men are not hairy women. And fathers are not mothers. And fathers should lead the family. And wives should support them, and take their leadership seriously and help them.

Poll finds 68% of Canadians positive on Canadian economy

February 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

From the leftist Globe and Mail.

Excerpt:

> A new international survey shows Canadians are in a very positive mood about the state of the economy, suggesting the opposition parties face an uphill battle pushing for change on the eve of a possible federal election.
>
> Describing Canada as a "superstar," an Ipsos online survey of citizens in 24 countries finds 68 per cent of Canadians are feeling good about the economy. Those January numbers are up six points from a month earlier.
>
> […]The contrast between Canada's positive mood and some other G8 countries is particularly striking. Only 20 per cent of Americans said their economy was good and even more pessimism was reported for Britain, France, Italy and Japan.
>
> Canada's results place it sixth of the 24 countries surveyed, behind Sweden (82 per cent); Saudi Arabia (80 per cent); Australia (78 per cent); India (76 per cent) and China (74 per cent).
>
> Ipsos senior vice-president John Wright, who is based in Toronto and is responsible for the international survey, says the numbers are good news for the Conservatives because other surveys show Canadians give Prime Minister Stephen Harper high marks for managing the economy.
>
> "It plays to [the Conservatives'] strong hand and more importantly it contrasts with an opposition party which doesn't seem to be on that track," he said in an interview. "The opposition – whether it be the NDP or the Liberals – are talking

> about things that are below the national concerns."
>
> Mr. Wright said the Conservatives "own" the issue of the economy, placing them on very solid ground heading in to a possible federal election.
>
> "It's usually governments are thrown out, they're not voted in," he said. The flurry of Conservative ads criticizing Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff have also proven to be "very, very effective," he said.

The latest federal election poll has the capitalist Stephen Harper and his Conservative party on the boundary of a Parliamentary majority. They currently have 143 seats, with 155 needed for a majority.

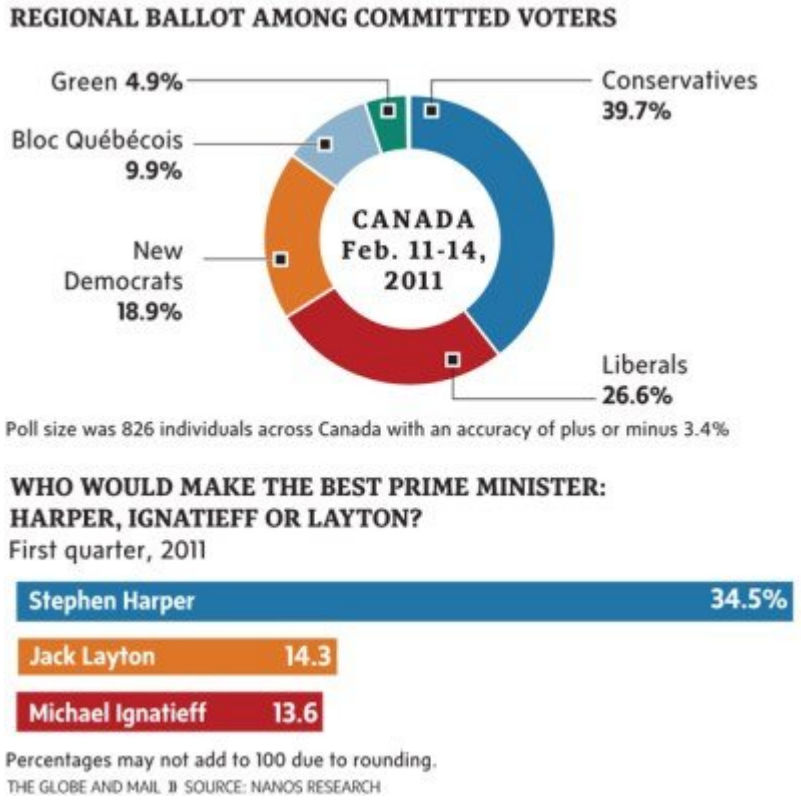

Canada Election Poll 2011

Harper has a BA and MA in Economics, and is cutting the corporate tax rate to HALF of the US corporate tax rate. It's about JOBS. If you love corporations and businesses with low taxes and less regulations, you get the jobs. He also supports free trade, so that Canadians can sell their goods to foreign markets, and buy good from abroad for a cheaper price, either for consumption of manufacturing. More jobs. It's all about the jobs for the capitalists. They just want more and more jobs. That's why they keep making conditions better for employers.

Related posts

- Canada created twice the number of jobs as the United States in January
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper vows to end long-gun registry
- Stephen Harper makes a stand against North Korean aggression
- Fiscally conservative Canada campaigns against global bank tax
- Federal conservatives in Canada aim to cut spending and waste from budget

- Canada’s finance minister proposes changes to mortgage lending laws
- Supreme Court sides with Conservative Party against price-fixing monopoly
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper seeks increased trade with India
- Canadian Evangelicals and Catholics more opposed to secularism and socialism
- Members of Canadian socialist parties oppose child sex-trafficking crime bill
- Harper instructs foreign minister to denounce Libyan dictator
- Canadians to walk out of Ahmadinejad’s speech at UN
- Canada signs free trade deal with Panama
- Harper pays surprise visit to troops in Afghanistan
- Investors Business Daily says Harper better leader than Obama
- Round-up of US news media interviews with Stephen Harper

How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy

February 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the centrist City Journal. (H/T Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> Within my lifetime, single parenthood has been transformed from shame to saintliness. In our society, perversely, we celebrate the unwed mother as a heroic figure, like a fireman or a police officer. During the last presidential election, much was made of Obama's mother, who was a single parent. Movie stars and pop singers flaunt their daddy-less babies like fishing trophies.
>
> None of this is lost on my students. In today's urban high school, there is no shame or social ostracism when girls become pregnant. Other girls in school want to pat their stomachs. Their friends throw baby showers at which meager little gifts are given. After delivery, the girls return to school with baby pictures on their cell phones or slipped into their binders, which they eagerly share with me. Often they sit together in my classes, sharing insights into parenting, discussing the taste of Pedialite or the exhaustion that goes with the job. On my way home at night, I often see my students in the projects that surround our school, pushing their strollers or hanging out on their stoops instead of doing their homework.
>
> Connecticut is among the most generous of the states to out-of-wedlock mothers. Teenage girls like Nicole qualify for a vast array of welfare benefits from the state and federal governments: medical coverage when they become pregnant (called "Healthy Start"); later, medical insurance for the family ("Husky"); child care ("Care 4 Kids"); Section 8 housing subsidies; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; cash assistance. If you need to get to an appointment, state-sponsored dial-a-ride is available. If that appointment is college-related, no sweat: education grants for single mothers are available, too. Nicole didn't have to worry about finishing the school year; the state sent a $35-an-hour tutor directly to her home halfway into her final trimester and for six weeks after the baby arrived.
>
> In theory, this provision of services is humane and defensible, an essential safety net for the most vulnerable—children who have children. What it amounts to in practice is a monolithic public endorsement of single motherhood—one that has turned our urban high schools into puppy mills. The safety net has become a hammock.

The article contains a case study, so you really get the feel for what's behind the statistics.

Remember that fatherlessness is not good for children – so we should not be encouraging

fatherlessness.

Related posts

- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New study finds that pre-marital sex reduces quality of relationships
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Research to help you understand the “hook-up” culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama’s new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism’s war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children’s sexual choices
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being

Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional

February 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The Justice Department has announced that it will no longer defend the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) because the president and Attorney General Eric Holder now believe the law is unconstitutional.
>
> "After careful consideration, including review of a recommendation from me, the President of the United States has made the determination that Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act ("DOMA"), 1 U.S.C. § 7, as applied to same-sex couples who are legally married under state law, violates the equal protection component of the Fifth Amendment," Holder wrote in a letter to House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) Wednesday.
>
> Section 3 of DOMA is the portion of the law that defines marriage as between one man and one woman. Obama and Holder now support the claims of the law's opponents that the traditional definition of marriage violates the Constitution.
>
> Holder explained that he and Obama felt that the government could not defend the traditional definition of marriage as a rational distinction in federal court, saying that any morality-based defense of DOMA would amount to "animus" and "stereotype-based thinking" that the Constitution prohibits.
>
> "The [legislative] record contains numerous expressions reflecting moral disapproval of gays and lesbians and their intimate and family relationships – precisely the kind of stereotype-based thinking and animus the Equal Protection Clause is designed to guard against," Holder wrote.
>
> In other words, because Congress enacted DOMA for moral reasons, the Obama administration will not defend it, because it thinks those moral reasons amount to "animus" towards homosexuals.
>
> Holder said that Obama had decided that the traditional definition of marriage could not be defended from charges that it is not discriminatory, given what Holder said was a "history" of anti-homosexual discrimination.
>
> "After careful consideration, including a review of my recommendation, the President has concluded that given a number of factors, including a documented history of discrimination, classifications based on sexual orientation should be subject to a heightened standard of scrutiny," Holder said.
>
> "The President has also concluded that Section 3 of DOMA, as applied to legally married same-sex couples, fails to meet that standard and is therefore unconstitutional," he added.

> Congress, as the author of DOMA, can still defend the law in federal court.

It's so strange to me that so many of the people who voted for Obama aspire to marriage and claim to love children. But they support the Democrat party that undermines marriage in so many ways. From subsidies for single mothers, to no-fault divorce, to opposition to shared-parenting laws, to supporting recreational pre-marital sex, to supporting same-sex marriage… Obama and the Democrats are opposed to traditional marriage. They do not believe in a lifelong commitment of one man and one woman, and a stable environment in which to raise children. They believe in feminism. They believe in big government. They believe in easy no-fault divorce. They believe in single motherhood and sole custody of children for the mother. They believe in sex education. They believe in subsidized abortion. They believe in normalizing the homosexual lifestyle (with the higher rates of promiscuity and domestic violence it entails). They believe in making people feel better about living in selfish, risky and costly ways.

Why do these people who vote Democrat expect children to grow up with a mother and a father? Why do they expect men to commit to marriage? After you have undermined every reason for men to choose to marry and become fathers, you don't then turn around and expect people to marry, do you?

If you are a democrat, then don't expect that you will be married. If you are a Democrat, then don't expect to grow up with a father and a mother. If you are a Democrat, then don't expect your parents to stay married. If life is about recreation and selfishness and having someone else pay for your risky, irresponsible behavior – this is the Democrat platform – then don't expect to marry. Marriage isn't free, and it doesn't happen without the right conditions. If you are a Democrat, you destroyed marriage. Everything the Democrats stand for is anti-marriage. Democrats are anti-marriage. If you vote Democrat, then you are anti-marriage. You are causing the decline of marriage. And you are hurting children who need a mother and father.

Related posts

- Frank Turek lists ten alleged facts about same-sex marriage
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why do people oppose same-sex marriage?
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day

Christian apologists sue City of Dearborn and Carleton University

February 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the evil city of Dearborn, Michigan is being sued.

Excerpt:

> If you've been following this blog for the past two years, you've seen Muslim security guards assault our sister Mary Jo Sharp at the Dearborn Arab Festival. You've seen Dearborn's own Corporal Kapanowski assault our sister Negeen. You've seen falsified police reports, written by corrupt police officers trying to justify their unlawful arrests. You've seen police officers (who take an oath that they will support and defend the Constitution) take us into custody for attempting to hand out copies of the Gospel to Muslims outside the festival. You've seen lies from the Mayor, lies from police, and even lies from Christians trying to curry favor with the local Muslims.
>
> For a complete summary of our experience in Dearborn, click here.
>
> Enough is enough. Today, the Thomas More Law Center filed a massive 96-page Complaint against the City of Dearborn. Mayor John B. O'Reilly, Police Chief Ronald Haddad, seventeen Dearborn police officers, and two members of the Arab Chamber of Commerce are officially being sued. If the City of Dearborn refuses to honor the U.S. Constitution, we hope this lawsuit will help persuade them that, so long as Michigan is part of the United States, they have no choice in the matter.
>
> Of course, the City of Dearborn is no stranger to civil rights lawsuits. A Christian wrestling coach sued the City after he was targeted for his faith by a Muslim principal. (The City settled out of court.) Two more Christian teachers at a majority Muslim high school are now suing after being targeted and persecuted for their faith.

And what about Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada?

Excerpt:

> Members of an anti-abortion group at Carleton are suing the university for discrimination.
>
> The $225,000 lawsuit filed in Ontario Superior Court Feb. 18 by Carleton students Ruth Lobo and John McLeod claims the university breached its own human rights policies and procedures by refusing to let a campus club called Carleton Lifeline set up a controversial display featuring large images of aborted fetuses and genocide atrocities in the Tory Quad, a high-traffic square at the centre of campus (university officials offered the group space at a different spot).

> Claiming the university was trying to censor its message by suggesting the group set up its displays in an alternative location, Carleton Lifeline attempted to set up its display in Tory Quad last October and were arrested by Ottawa police and campus security.
>
> "Carleton University's decision to have Carleton Lifeline arrested, charged with trespassing and fined was excessive, unjustified and constituted an attempt to bully, intimidate and censor them," the statement of claim says.
>
> The lawsuit names the university, its president Roseann O'Reilly Runte and three other senior officials.
>
> […]Lobo, a human-rights major, and McLeod, who's studying business, claim Carleton breached its fiduciary duty to provide them with a free and open campus environment to discuss and debate controversial ideas and, through its actions, stripped them of their freedom of expression and freedom from discrimination.
>
> As a result, the students say their grades and reputations have suffered.
>
> "Their university experience has been tarnished, their reputation, individually and as a group, has suffered and they have lost their trust in Carleton University's professors and administrators," the lawsuit claims.
>
> The pair also claim being arrested and detained last fall infringed on their rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
>
> They are seeking $100,000 in general damages for wrongful arrest and pain and suffering, $100,000 for punitive damages and $25,000 for the Charter violations.

I have an idea. Let's make more children into Christian lawyers. And then let's make them work for the Alliance Defense Fund, the Thomas More Law Center, the Homeschool Legal Defense Association, American Center for Law and Justice, The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, Institute for Justice, etc. Yes, I know – the children won't like it. They will prefer to play Nintendo and go to the movies with their annoying friends, (the same as what I wanted when I was a spoiled little brat!). But who cares what they think?

Indiana Republicans to introduce right-to-work bill

February 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> Throngs of union members and supporters gathered in Indianapolis Monday for a protest against a proposed bill in the Indiana House that would restrict collective bargaining rights and make it a misdemeanor to require any employee to join or pay dues to a union.
>
> Republican state Rep. Jerry Torr, the bill's author, described his proposal as a tool to attract business to Indiana. He told **Fox59 in Indianapolis** that prospective employers are avoiding the state because they're worried about its work rules.
>
> "What I'm trying to do is bring jobs to Indiana," **Torr said**. "We have lost manufacturing jobs in Indiana because we are not a right-to-work state."
>
> […]Currently 22 states have right-to-work laws, according to the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation. Research by the National Conference of State Legislatures shows that several states in New England and in the northern Midwest are now considering right-to-work proposals.
>
> Minnesota state Rep. Keith Downey wants right-to-work language enshrined in his state's constitution — that's part of a proposal he's putting forward that would also slash the state work force and freeze pay.
>
> Michigan's Legislature is also weighing the idea of letting local jurisdictions create right-to-work zones. New Mexico, Connecticut and Alaska, among other states, have right-to-work bills currently in committee.
>
> In Wisconsin, Walker is casting every component of his plan as critical.
>
> He told "Fox News Sunday" that he's not willing to hammer out a compromise that leaves collective bargaining rights in place — even if the state Senate Democrats who skipped town in order to prevent a vote agree on raising benefits contributions.
>
> Walker said he wants to give local governments "the tools they need to balance the budget now and in the future" by changing the collective bargaining laws. His office released a fact sheet Monday giving examples of benefits won through collective bargaining, including health insurance that covers Viagara.
>
> Plus, Walker said workers must have the "flexibility" to stay out of a union — and in turn avoid dues payments — if they choose.
>
> "For us, if you want to have democracy, if you want to have the American way, which is allowing people to have a choice, that's exactly what we're allowing there," Walker said. "People see the value, they see the work, they can continue to vote to certify that union and they can continue to voluntarily have those

> union dues, and write the check out and give it to the union to make their case, but they shouldn't be forced to be a part of this if that's not what they want to do."

Teachers, for example, are really expensive… I am not sure we can afford to pay them as much as we do during a recession. (H/T Tina)

We really need to stop overpaying people with guaranteed jobs all these inflated salaries and benefits during a recession. There just aren't enough of us out here working on goods and services to support the unions.

Why Christians should focus on cultural issues as well as evangelism

February 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scott Klusendorf linked me this article on Facebook, in which he gives five reasons why Christians should not JUST focus on the gospel, but should instead be good at promoting goodness and opposing evil.

Excerpt:

> First, it does not follow that because cultural reformers cannot make a culture blameless before God, we shouldn't try to make it better for the weak and oppressed. I do not know of a single pro-life leader, for example, who argues that cultural reform can save souls eternally; only the gospel does that. The fact that cultural reform cannot get a man to heaven, however, does not mean that it cannot (in many cases through political means) save him from injustice here on earth. In short, pro-life advocates like me do not work for change in culture to save the world from spiritual death, but to save the most vulnerable members of the human family, the unborn, from physical death.
>
> Second, the goal of cobelligerent cultural reform is not necessarily to change the hearts of individuals (whether saved or lost), but to restrain their evil acts. Martin Luther King, Jr., put it well: "It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important."[3] The purpose of government, according to Scripture, is not to ensure salvation, but to promote justice (Rom. 13:1-4). The primary purpose of the church, of course, is to preach the gospel of Christ, but if Christians, collectively, do not also challenge government to fulfill its duty to protect the weak and defenseless, who will?
>
> Third, the notion that "there can be no real cultural impact apart from the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ" sounds good, but it is simply incorrect. Consider the moral evil of slavery in America, which did not end because of mass conversions to Christ. It ended when believers and nonbelievers joined forces to stand against it—and paid for it with the lives of 360,000 Union soldiers. Was the abolition of slavery not a "real" cultural improvement? True, it did not make those who participated right with God, but it did take the physical whips off the backs of oppressed people. That is moral and cultural improvement by any reasonable standard.
>
> Fourth, it is not spiritually unacceptable for Christians to mobilize with non-Christians for causes other than preaching the gospel. Prior to the Civil War, Protestant clergy worked with non-Christians and organized the Underground Railroad to free black slaves. Anyone who thinks that God's people are wasting their time pursuing social justice may want to take a look at how important it is

> to God: Jeremiah 5:26-28; 9:24; Isaiah 1:16-17, 21-23; 58:6-7; 61:8; Psalm 94:1-23; Proverbs 24:1-12; Matthew 25:41-46.
>
> Fifth, why should anyone suppose that pro-life advocacy detracts from the discipline responsibilities of the local church as outlined in Matthew 28? Simply put, the answer to a lack of evangelical fervor for the Gospel is not to withdraw our political advocacy for the weak and vulnerable; it's to encourage Christians to do a better job presenting the gospel. We don't have to stop rescuing the innocent to do that.

This is why I try to have a balance of apologetics with other issues. And not just social policy, but fiscal policy and foreign policy. We need to have complete, comprehensive, coherent Christian worldviews. One obvious benefit of this is that we can connect Christianity with any topic when we are talking to others in the workplace, or anywhere that normal conversations occur. And if we study everything very well, people will link our intelligence to our faith. They'll say "if you've put this much thought into economics, then you must have a well-thought-out faith, too". Being well-rounded makes you more convincing, more influential on moral and cultural issues, and more effective at turning conversations to the gospel.

Virginia Republicans pass strict regulations on abortion clinics

February 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News. (This is a piece from the leftist AP, though)

Excerpt:

> Virginia took a big step Thursday toward eliminating most of the state's 21 abortion clinics, approving a bill that would likely make rules so strict the medical centers would be forced to close, Democrats and abortion rights supporters said.
>
> Gov. Bob McDonnell, a Republican and Catholic, supports the measure and when he signs it into law, Virginia will become the first state to require clinics that provide first-trimester abortions to meet the same standards as hospitals. The requirement could include anything from expensive structural changes like widening hallways to increased training and mandatory equipment the clinics currently don't have.
>
> While abortion providers must be licensed in Virginia, the clinics resemble dentists' offices and are considered physicians offices, similar to those that provide plastic and corrective eye surgeries, colonoscopies and a host of other medical procedures.
>
> Democrats and abortion rights supporters said the change would put an estimated 17 of the state's 21 clinics out of business. Most of the clinics also provide birth control, cancer screenings and other women's health services.
>
> […]Anti-abortion bills typically die in a Democrat-controlled Senate committee, but Republicans in the House tacked it onto a bill that already had passed the Senate. Doing so allowed the bill to sidestep the committee and forced a vote on the Senate floor, where Democrats hold a 22-18 majority.
>
> Two anti-abortion Democrats voted with Republicans, and Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling, a Republican, cast the tie-breaking vote after hours of debate.
>
> After it becomes law in July, the state Board of Health will take public comments before issuing the guidelines. The board is appointed by the governor.

This is the way to do it. Like getting Al Capone on tax evasion.

Can computers become conscious by increasing processing power?

February 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There is a very famous thought experiment from UC Berkeley philosopher John Searle that all Christian apologists should know about. And now everyone who reads the Wall Street Journal knows about it, because of this article. (H/T Sarah)

Searle is writing about the IBM computer that was programmed to play Jeopardy. His Chinese room example shows why no one should be concerned about computers acting like humans. There is no thinking computer. There never will be a thinking computer. And you cannot build up to a thinking computer my adding more hardware and software.

Excerpt:

> Imagine that a person—me, for example—knows no Chinese and is locked in a room with boxes full of Chinese symbols and an instruction book written in English for manipulating the symbols. Unknown to me, the boxes are called "the database" and the instruction book is called "the program." I am called "the computer."
>
> People outside the room pass in bunches of Chinese symbols that, unknown to me, are questions. I look up in the instruction book what I am supposed to do and I give back answers in Chinese symbols.
>
> Suppose I get so good at shuffling the symbols and passing out the answers that my answers are indistinguishable from a native Chinese speaker's. I give every indication of understanding the language despite the fact that I actually don't understand a word of Chinese.
>
> And if I do not, neither does any digital computer, because no computer, qua computer, has anything I do not have. It has stocks of symbols, rules for manipulating symbols, a system that allows it to rapidly transition from zeros to ones, and the ability to process inputs and outputs. That is it. There is nothing else.

By the way, Searle is a naturalist – not a theist, not a Christian. But he does oppose postmodernism. So he isn't all bad. But let's hear from a Christian scholar who can make more sense of this for us.

Here's an article by Christian philosopher Jay Richards.

Excerpt:

> Popular discussions of AI often suggest that if you keep increasing weak AI, at some point, you'll get strong AI. That is, if you get enough computation, you'll eventually get consciousness.
>
> The reasoning goes something like this: There will be a moment at which a

computer will be indistinguishable from a human intelligent agent in a blind test. At that point, we will have intelligent, conscious machines.

This does not follow. A computer may pass the Turing test, but that doesn't mean that it will actually be a self-conscious, free agent.

The point seems obvious, but we can easily be beguiled by the way we speak of computers: We talk about computers learning, making mistakes, becoming more intelligent, and so forth. We need to remember that we are speaking metaphorically.

We can also be led astray by unexamined metaphysical assumptions. If we're just computers made of meat, and we happened to become conscious at some point, what's to stop computers from doing the same? That makes sense if you accept the premise—as many AI researchers do. If you don't accept the premise, though, you don't have to accept the conclusion.

In fact, there's no good reason to assume that consciousness and agency emerge by accident at some threshold of speed and computational power in computers. We know by introspection that we are conscious, free beings—though we really don't know how this works. So we naturally attribute consciousness to other humans. We also know generally what's going on inside a computer, since we build them, and it has nothing to do with consciousness. It's quite likely that consciousness is qualitatively different from the type of computation that we have developed in computers (as the "Chinese Room" argument, by philosopher John Searle, seems to show). Remember that, and you'll suffer less anxiety as computers become more powerful.

Even if computer technology provides accelerating returns for the foreseeable future, it doesn't follow that we'll be replacing ourselves anytime soon. AI enthusiasts often make highly simplistic assumptions about human nature and biology. Rather than marveling at the ways in which computation illuminates our understanding of the microscopic biological world, many treat biological systems as nothing but clunky, soon-to-be-obsolete conglomerations of hardware and software. Fanciful speculations about uploading ourselves onto the Internet and transcending our biology rest on these simplistic assumptions. This is a common philosophical blind spot in the AI community, but it's not a danger of AI research itself, which primarily involves programming and computers.

AI researchers often mix topics from different disciplines—biology, physics, computer science, robotics—and this causes critics to do the same. For instance, many critics worry that AI research leads inevitably to tampering with human nature. But different types of research raise different concerns. There are serious ethical questions when we're dealing with human cloning and research that destroys human embryos. But AI research in itself does not raise these concerns. It normally involves computers, machines, and programming. While all technology raises ethical issues, we should be less worried about AI

> research—which has many benign applications—than research that treats human life as a means rather than an end.

Jay Richards is my all-round favorite Christian scholar. He has the Ph.D in philosophy from Princeton.

When I am playing a game on the computer, I know exactly why what I am doing is fun – I am conscious of it. But the computer has no idea what I am doing. It is just matter in motion, acting on it's programming and the inputs I supply to it. And that's all computers will ever do. Trust me, this is my field. I have the BS and MS in computer science, and I have studied this area. AI has applications for machine learning and search problems, but consciousness is not on the radar. You can't get there from here.

Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?

February 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I read this annoying article by Kay Hymowitz in the Wall Street Journal, which is completely ignorant of the causes of men's decline in education and work, as well as their refusal to marry as often as they used to.

Captain Capitalism responded to the article here, explaining why men aren't giving women what they want.

Excerpt from his massive bullet-point list:

- Did you hear of this "divorce fad" going around? Apparently men get to pay out the majority of the time be it alimony or child support.
- Did you hear about this "divorce fad" going around? Apparently 65% of the time it's women who initiate divorce.
- Kids cost around $500,000 each to raise. given employment prospects we can't afford that. Much rather buy a boat or frankly work all that much less.
- Hey, you hear about this federal budget deficit and debt? Apparently we elected this guy "Barack Obama" and a bunch of democrats into office who are now mortgaging the future. This means our expenses in the future will be higher. Well, of course us "foolish, immature, pooping, farting boys" were too "immature" to vote for him like you wise women, but then again we're too busy flinging poo at each other to ponder the future macro-economic ramifications of a collapsing dollar.
- Hey, you hear about this social security medicare thing? Apparently enough "smart wise women" disproportionately kept voting for democrats to essentially have those immature 20 something men pay for the livelihood for these aging people. This added expense on our futures make's it that much harder economically to commit to a wife and children.
- Hey, you hear about this "welfare state" "medicaid" thing? Apparently enough "smart wise women" disproportionately over the years voted in enough democrats to essentially replace the role of fathers with government programs making fathers not only unnecessary, but an increasingly risky and unrewarding proposition, not to mention, making it easier for women to just up and leave their husbands, because well, "they needed to find themselves" and the government will take care of the kids while they go pursue their EPL fantasy.
- Hey, did you hear about this "welfare state" thing? Apparently because we've now outsourced bringing up children to the government and have to create government jobs for all the "sociology majors" and "education majors"and "communications majors" our tax bill will go through the roof. Oh! Wait!!! No it doesn't! I forgot! I'm a guy! I can live on very little, work a crappy job, work part time, live in a crappy apartment with my buds and STILL have enough disposable income to play video

games and buy booze.

Remember that 77% of young, unmarried women voted for Obama (70% of unmarried women, but 77% of young unmarried women). And research shows that women consistently vote for bigger and bigger government, more wealth redistribution for the "poor", and more intrusion into the family by the state. Men don't like paying more in taxes and getting less liberty. It makes it harder for us to justify marriage rationally. We want to get married, but the numbers don't come out in the black. We can either afford marriage and family or government social programs, but we cannot afford both.

I think the problem of men not wanting to marry is caused by women actually believing feminism – that men and women are identical. Once you believe that, there is no special role that men are supposed to play, and no way to distinguish a man who fills that role from one who doesn't. According to feminism, which most young women believe, men aren't meant to be providers, protectors or moral/spiritual leaders. Chastity is out. A boring, good-paying job is out. Morality is out. Sobriety is out. Apologetics and theology are out.

What's in? Being good-looking, inoffensive, and entertaining. Women are not selecting responsible men because they think that the men can be changed to be responsible, through sex, or maybe through nagging, and eventually through the threat of losing all his money and custody of his children. Men aren't stupid. They've noticed that responsibility and morality are out, and they're acting like clowns because that's what women prefer when getting drunk and hooking up, the Duke University student and her report on all the men she slept with – they were graded by physical attractiveness, sexual technique, popularity and *athletic ability*.

Men do what women expect them to do in order to get sex. Just read the peer-reviewed studies on hooking up. If women don't select men who can do specific things as husbands and fathers, then men won't prepare themselves to do specific things. If they are already getting sex for playing the fool, then why should they do more than play the fool? If women obsessed over Paul Ryan and William Lane Craig, then that's what men would aspire to. They don't, and so men don't. Mature men intimidate women with their strong opinions, moral judgments, and exclusive theological claims. Much better to have an immature man who is shallow and politically correct.

There is a way for women to get what they want from men, but they actually have to engage in conversations with men and find out what men want from women. And what men want from a marriage. What they want from children. What they want from government. What they want from schools. What they want from the workplace. What they want from the church. You can't take away everything men need to marry and then expect them to marry. Nagging, belittling, withholding sex and controlling are not incentives for men to marry. Every time you break a man down, that is one less husband and father candidate. And eventually, the money flow dries up for the sperm-banks and social programs that substitute for men. What will women do then?

For myself, I am NOT on the same track as secular men (video games, alcohol, girlfriends

an TV). I'm earning and saving to support Christian scholars and apologetics events in churches and universities. That's my role right now until women destroy feminism with their own hands. Marriage is only good for me if it is good for God. And I need to be convinced that it will be good for God by whoever is applying for the job. I would like to see the reasons why I should marry in a woman's moral decisions, her studying of difficult apologetic topics, and her political and economic conservatism. I would like to see that she understands men and marriage and understands how marriage and parenting can serve God, if done in an unselfish, moral and disciplined way. No pursuing happiness. No reducing moral obligations to "legalism".

Making one woman feel happy with a diamond ring and an expensive wedding is not a good choice for me when I could spend a lot less money sponsoring a stack of debates over my lifetime on Christian topics, in front of hundreds of thousands of university students, or even in churches. There are ways that marriage could be a good deal for God, but I want to see the value proposition for marriage before I sign up. So far, most women seem to resent the idea that marriage should be have to be proven good for God. They resent the question itself. But everything we do is for God, and I have a right to ask what is in it for him? I think a lot of Christian men are asking the same question.

Related posts

- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Why the media can't tell the truth about why Lara Logan was attacked

February 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is currently the top post on National Review.

Excerpt:

> As Jihad Watch director Robert Spencer has detailed, al-Azhar University endorses a sharia manual called Umdat al-Salik. It is quite clear on the subject of women who become captives of Muslim forces: "When a child or a woman is taken captive, they become slaves by the fact of capture, and the woman's previous marriage is immediately annulled." This is so the woman can then be made a concubine of her captor.
>
> This arrangement is encouraged by the Koran. Sura 4:23–24, for example, forbids Muslim men from consorting with the wives of other Muslims but declares sexual open season on any women these men have enslaved. ("Forbidden to you are . . . married women, except those whom you own as slaves.") Moreover, Mohammed — whose life Muslims are exhorted by scripture to emulate — rewarded his fighters by distributing as slaves the women of the Jewish Qurazyzah tribe after Muslim forces had beheaded their husbands, fathers, and sons. The prophet himself also took one of the captured women, Rayhanna, as his concubine. And, as Spencer further notes, Mohammed directed his jihadists that they should not practice coitus interruptus with their slaves — they were encouraged to ravish them, but only in a manner that might produce Muslim offspring.
>
> As I documented in an earlier column, Sheikh Qaradawi contends that women bring sexual abuse on themselves if they fail to conform to Islamist conventions of modest dress. Shahid Mehdi, a top Islamic cleric in Denmark, has explained that women who fail to don a headscarf are asking to be raped, an admonition echoed by Sheikh Faiz Mohammed, a prominent Lebanese cleric, during a lecture he delivered in Australia.
>
> In light of these exhortations, should it be any surprise that the sexual abuse of women is Islam's silent scandal? In Europe's expanding Muslim enclaves, it is a terror tactic to extort women — Muslim and non-Muslim — into adopting the hijab and other Islamic sartorial standards. Rape has become so prevalent, and so identifiably a Muslim scourge, that embarrassed and hyper–politically correct Swedish authorities have discouraged police in cities such as heavily Muslim Malmo from collecting data that point to Islam as the common denominator in rape reports.

This week, muslims were also implicated in terrorist attacks in the United States and in supporting polygamy in Canada.

Intelligent Design conference in Oklahoma, March 25-26

February 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

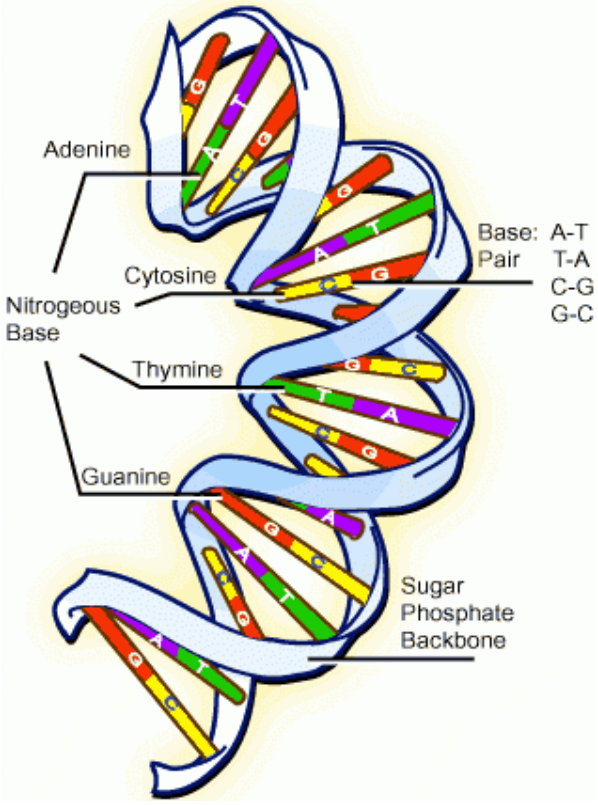

Structure of DNA

Information here at Evolution News. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

During the past decade, an increasing number of so-called “new atheists” have argued that human beings and the rest of nature are the products of chance and necessity rather than intelligent design. These “new atheists” typically base their ideas on Darwinian evolution, arguing that Darwin proved that nature is the product of a blind and unguided evolutionary process.

The message of the new atheists has spread far and wide. Just two years ago, thousands of students flocked to a lecture by leading new atheist Richard Dawkins at the University of Oklahoma. Dawkins famously contends that “Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.” He received cheers and applause from the audience at OU.

The Darwinian view of nature has had a powerful impact on nearly every area of our culture. In public policy, it has encouraged the devaluation of human life. Among Christians, it has led some leading theologians and scientists to argue that God Himself doesn’t know how the history of life will turn out. And in science, Darwinian theory has encouraged the censorship of new scientific data as well as discrimination against scientists and students who think nature supplies evidence of intelligent design.

The good news is that the new atheists are wrong. Far from establishing a blind and

purposeless universe, the findings of science increasingly provide powerful evidence that we live in a purpose-driven universe of incredible beauty and design.

On March 25-26 Oklahomans will have the chance to explore this evidence for themselves as four national experts come to Oklahoma to address the growing intersection between science and faith. **Dr. Michael Behe**, renowned biochemist and author of the books *Darwin's Black Box* and *The Edge of Evolution*, will speak about the incredible design in the nanotechnology of the cell. **Dr. Jay Richards**, co-author of *The Privileged Planet*, will talk about how earth itself was intelligently designed for life and for scientific discovery. **Dr. John West**, author of *Darwin Day in America* and co-editor of *The C.S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia*, will document the widespread impact of Darwin's theory on society and faith. And lawyer **Casey Luskin**, co-author of *Traipsing into Evolution: Intelligent Design and the Kitzmiller v. Dover Decision* will outline positive steps you can take to stand for truth for you and your family.

Visit the event page here for more details.

If you don't usually read Apologetics 315, you really need to check out the Friday round-up of all the week's news.

Other conferences

- Coquitlam, British Columbia
- Cape Town, South Africa

Dealing with objections to Christian apologetics

February 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this post on the Possible Worlds blog. (H/T Apologetics 315)

He deals with the following five objections:

1. **You can never argue anyone into the kingdom.**
2. **Doesn't the Bible say to stay away from philosophy?**
3. **We should do apologetics from the Word of God only.**
4. **Apologetics removes the faith component.**
5. **Only the select few can get involved in apologetics, therefore I have no reason to do it.**

The fifth one, "not everyone has to do apologetics", is the one I hear the most often from people:

> That is simply not true! As Christians we have an obligation to engage in apologetics! 1 Peter 3:15 says, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."
>
> Peter's message, in context, is that even in the face of persecution, we may suffer for our good lifestyle in Christ. If this is the case, give every man an answer for why you are doing that. I'm willing to bet Peter's apologetic went along the lines of his sermon in Acts 2. In this sermon, Peter appealed to fulfilled Old Testament prophecy as well as eyewitness testimony of the Resurrection. Sounds like apologetics to me!
>
> But what about those whose intellectual talents are somewhat lacking? Did Peter really expect them to be able to give a reason? Yes. Inasmuch as one is able, he must present an apologetic for Christ. Suppose one cannot follow complex philosophical arguments. What can he do? He may argue from personal experience or a changed life. He may point someone who is interested in the direction of apologetic resources. In essence, any Christian should learn as much as he is able to learn. Almost every Christian I know is capable of presenting the common-sense cosmological argument ("whatever begins to exist had a cause, the universe began to exist, therefore the universe had a cause").
>
> Not only is apologetics defensible and important in bringing certain types of people to Christ, it is also commanded of every believer. The Bible never commands the level of skill of an apologist, just that the believer holds and expresses a reason for his hope. The more I study the stronger in faith I become. There are always questions I will be unable to answer, but God has answered so many more in such wonderful ways I just have to trust him!

I hear that objection most from people who think that the Christian life consists of being happy and having the feeling that God does really appreciate you caring about him and trying to serve him effectively. I don't think that is the right way to have a relationship with another person. You have to get to know them and incorporate their character and goals into your decision making. You accommodate them. You serve them.

I found some more reasons why people don't do apologetics:

1. Christians don't seem to care that Christianity is routinely ridiculed
2. Christians think that faith means belief in the absence of evidence and argument
3. Christians are not aware of the tremendous intellectual resources available
4. Christians are more concerned about being "nice" and "tolerant"
5. Christians don't want to take the time to study issues thoroughly

The post has my comments on those reasons.

The fact of the matter is that God's existence and character are under attack, and what works is reason and evidence. Not feelings, not stories, and not being nice. Anyone can be nice. Christianity needs to be presented as TRUE, (by nice people).

My thoughts on this question are here. This is one of my favorite posts.

I've noticed that Christian women are often complaining about how to make men take an interest in them. I think the two best things to do to fix that is to get really good at fiscal conservatism and really good at apologetics. Men want women who are marriage-friendly (fiscally conservative) and who put their own happiness second to defend others (apologetics). That's what fiscal conservatism and apologetics tells a man about your character. If a woman advocates for redistributing wealth to the poor through government, then she is opposed to traditional male rols (provider/protector) and has no idea how marriage is supposed to work in practice. If a woman makes excuses about why she does not have to know how to defend God's existence and character, then she doesn't have the ability to care about the needs and goals of others in relationships. Just because a woman *says* she wants marriage and to be a mother, it doesn't mean she *actually wants* that. She may just want people (big and small) to make her happy but without having to care about what they want.

Are evolution and empathy a rational foundation for prescriptive morality?

February 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is from Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason. He is answering the question of whether observations of social behaviors in animals is an adequate ground for a robust prescriptive moral standard. (The "Wright" mentioned in the quote is Robert Wright)

Excerpt:

> When morality is reduced to patterns of behavior chosen by natural selection for its survival value, then morality is not explained; it's denied. Wright admits as much. Regarding the conscience he says:
>
> The conscience doesn't make us feel bad the way hunger feels bad, or good the way sex feels good. It makes us feel as if we have done something that's wrong or something that's right. Guilty or not guilty. It is amazing that a process as amoral and crassly pragmatic as natural selection could design a mental organ that makes us feel as if we're in touch with higher truth. Truly a shameless ploy.[11] [emphasis mine]
>
> Evolutionists like Wright are ultimately forced to admit that what we think is a "higher truth" of morality turns out to be a "shameless ploy" of nature, a description of animal behavior conditioned by the environment for survival. We've given that conduct a label, they argue. We call it morality. But there is no real right and wrong.
>
> Does Bongo, the chimp, actually exhibit genuine moral behavior? Does he understand the difference between right and wrong? Does he make principled choices to do what's right? Is he worthy of blame and punishment for doing wrong? Of course not, Wright says. Bongo merely does in a primitive way what humans do in a more sophisticated way. We respond according to our genetic conditioning, a program "designed" by millions of years of evolution.
>
> The evolutionary approach is not an explanation of morality; it's a denial of morality. It explains why we think moral truths exist when, in fact, they don't.

Do observations of patterns of behavior in different societies and different times create any moral obligation in individuals to conform to those arbitrary patterns of behavior?

Koukl continues:

> This observation uncovers the most serious objection to the idea that evolution is adequate to explain morality. There is one question that can never be answered by any evolutionary assessment of ethics. The question is this: Why ought I be moral tomorrow?
>
> One of the distinctives of morality is its "oughtness," its moral incumbency.

> Assessments of mere behavior, however, are descriptive only. Since morality is essentially prescriptive–telling what should be the case, as opposed to what is the case–and since all evolutionary assessments of moral behavior are descriptive, then evolution cannot account for the most important thing that needs to be explained: morality's "oughtness."
>
> The question that really needs to be answered is: "Why shouldn't the chimp (or a human, for that matter) be selfish?" The evolutionary answer might be that when we're selfish, we hurt the group. That answer, though, presumes another moral value: We ought to be concerned about the welfare of the group. Why should that concern us? Answer: If the group doesn't survive, then the species doesn't survive. But why should I care about the survival of the species?
>
> Here's the problem. All of these responses meant to explain morality ultimately depend on some prior moral notion to hold them together. It's going to be hard to explain, on an evolutionary view of things why I should not be selfish, or steal, or rape, or even kill tomorrow without smuggling morality into the answer.
>
> The evolutionary explanation disembowels morality, reducing it to mere descriptions of conduct. The best the Darwinist explanation can do–if it succeeds at all–is explain past behavior. It cannot inform future behavior. The essence of morality, though, is not description, but prescription.
>
> Evolution may be an explanation for the existence of conduct we choose to call moral, but it gives no explanation why I should obey any moral rules in the future. If one countered that we have a moral obligation to evolve, then the game would be up, because if we have moral obligations prior to evolution, then evolution itself can't be their source.

What atheists mean by morality is this: accidental patterns of social behavior designed to promote group cohesion. The behaviors are accidental and they are basically the same as group food preferences, clothing preferences and traffic law preferences. They are MADE UP. Any member of the group who is sufficiently powerful can do as he pleases, because there is no real moral obligation – just customs and conventions. And the only reason not to do what you like is because you might get caught. That's "monkey morality". And that's what atheists mean by morality.

And this is where this evolutionary morality leads atheists like Steven Pinker.

Excerpt:

> One of the hippest intellectuals around recently argued in polite company that it's difficult to defend laws against killing a baby. But he hardly drew a yawn.
>
> Steven Pinker, an MIT psychology professor and best-selling author, presented his argument in a 2 November 1997 *New York Times Magazine* article entitled *Why They Kill Their Newborns*. The article attempted to shed light on the "prom mom" phenomenon of recent headlines. Pinker maintains that giving birth and then discarding the newborn in the trash is (of all things) best explained as an

> indirect result of species-preserving evolutionary adaptations. On this basis, Pinker eventually concludes, "The baby killers turn out to be not moral monsters but nice, normal (and sometimes religious) young women."

That's atheist morality.

Or you can read about atheist Peter Singer instead.

Excerpt:

> In 1993, ethicist **Peter Singer** shocked many Americans by suggesting that no newborn should be considered a person until 30 days after birth and that the attending physician should kill some disabled babies on the spot. Five years later, his appointment as Decamp Professor of Bio-Ethics at Princeton University ignited a firestorm of controversy, though his ideas about abortion and infanticide were hardly new. In 1979 he wrote, "Human babies are not born self-aware, or capable of grasping that they exist over time. They are not persons"; therefore, "the life of a newborn is of less value than the life of a pig, a dog, or a chimpanzee."

That's atheist morality.

When a person says "I'm an atheist", what they mean is "Every person can decide for themselves if murdering babies is right for them, and if a society decides that murdering babies is their evolved behavior, then it's right for them – morality is what people decide it is". In a time and place where slavery is acceptable, atheists would own slaves. In a time and place where killing your offspring is acceptable, atheists will kill their offspring. In a time and place where killing Jews is acceptable, atheists will kill Jews. They have no external standard of morality, other than the behaviors they observe in the people around them. And they only ape those behaviors to avoid losing social prestige. In their hearts they know that these behaviors are just arbitrary conventions, like driving on the right side of the road. This is what they believe.

Evolutionary ethics is an oxymoron. What atheist mean when they talk about morality is *that there is no morality*. What they want to talk about is why humans have *feelings of obligation* to do this or that. If you ask them whether there is anything humans ought to do, independent of feelings and instincts and social conventions, the answer is NO. And feelings are so easily dismissed when they go against self-interest, for atheists. They explain morality *away*, so that they can jettison moral feelings when they go against their self-interest. "I only *feel* bad when I kill my child because of genetic programming and social conditioning, but there isn't anything *really wrong* with killing my child". That's atheist morality.

When an atheist condemns something, he is expressing a *personal preference* against that thing. And on his atheistic view, the denial of his preference is *as warranted as the affirmation of his preference.* He may not like rape, so he says "rape is wrong". But on his *own view*, the person who says "rape is right" *is as warranted in his personal opinion as the atheist is.* They think that all talk about what people ought to do is basically opinions of individuals and groups. Slavery isn't objectively wrong, it's either "the way we do

things in this time and place” or it’s “not the way we do things in this time and place”. It’s all about feelings, on atheism. If it feels good, do it. Just don’t get caught, because then you’ll feel bad. That’s the level of morality that atheists rise to because there is really nothing right or wrong objectively, on their view.

The great moral accomplishment of atheist morality in the last 150 years has been to murder 100 million people. And this is not counting the 40+ million deaths caused by abortion in the US alone, or the 20 million deaths caused by environmentalist alarmism. It also doesn’t count the millions of broken homes caused by the sexual revolution, or the social costs of fatherlessness.

What should we do about public sector unions?

February 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s a good video that Ari posted on Facebook.

More union stuff:

- Heritage Foundation: In California, unions are the government
- Heritage Foundation: How did unions become so dominant in Wisconsin?

Blogging might be a bit light today, I have been working all weekend on JQuery and JSON stuff for work…

http://blog.heritage.org/2011/02/25/guest-blogger-in-california-unions-are-the-government/

Scientists discover that tides affect a planet's habitability

February 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

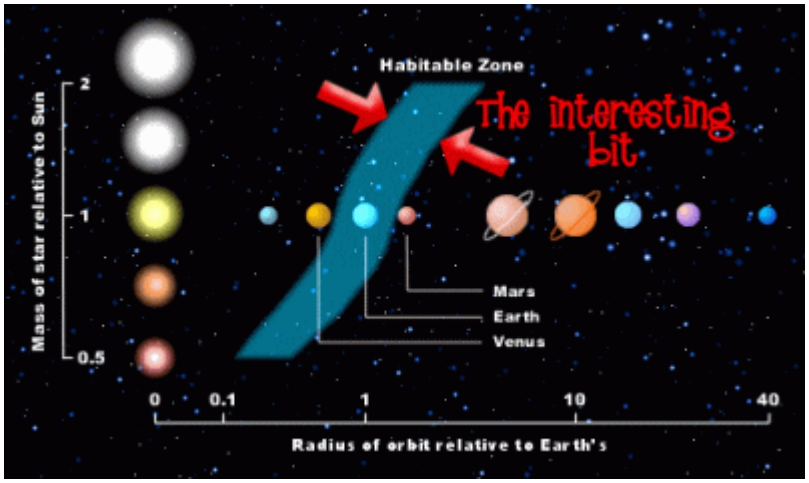

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

Science Daily reports on a new factor that affects planetary habitability: tides. Specifically, tides can affect the surface temperature of a planet, which has to be within a certain range in order to support liquid water – a requirement for life of any conceivable kind.

Excerpt:

> Tides can render the so-called "habitable zone" around low-mass stars uninhabitable. This is the main result of a recently published study by a team of astronomers led by René Heller of the Astrophysical Institute Potsdam.
>
> […]Until now, the two main drivers thought to determine a planet's temperature were the distance to the central star and the composition of the planet's atmosphere. By studying the tides caused by low-mass stars on their potential earth-like companions, Heller and his colleagues have concluded that tidal effects modify the traditional concept of the habitable zone.
>
> Heller deduced this from three different effects. Firstly, tides can cause the axis of a planet`s rotation to become perpendicular to its orbit in just a few million years. In comparison, Earth's axis of rotation is inclined by 23.5 degrees — an effect which causes our seasons. Owing to this effect, there would be no seasonal variation on such Earth-like planets in the habitable zone of low-mass stars. These planets would have huge temperature differences between their poles, which would be in perpetual deep freeze, and their hot equators which in the long run would evaporate any atmosphere. This temperature difference would cause extreme winds and storms.
>
> The second effect of these tides would be to heat up the exoplanet, similar to the tidal heating of Io, a moon of Jupiter that shows global vulcanism.

> Finally, tides can cause the rotational period of the planet (the planet's "day") to synchronize with the orbital period (the planet's "year"). This situation is identical to the Earth-moon setup: the moon only shows Earth one face, the other side being known as "the dark side of the moon." As a result one half of the exoplanet receives extreme radiation from the star while the other half freezes in eternal darkness.
>
> The habitable zone around low-mass stars is therefore not very comfortable — it may even be uninhabitable.

Here is my previous post on the factors needed for a habitable planet. Now we just have one more. I actually find this article sort of odd, because my understanding of stars was that only high-mass stars could support life at all. This is because if the mass of the planet was too low, the habitable zone wouldbe very close to the star. Being too close to the star causes tidal locking, which means that the planet doesn't spin on its axis at all, and the same side faces the star. This is a life killer.

This astrophysicist who teaches at the University of Wisconsin explains it better than me.

Excerpt:

> Higher-mass stars tend to be larger and luminous than their lower-mass counterparts. Therefore, their habitable zones are situated further out. In addition, however, their HZs are much broader. As an illustration,
>
> - a 0.2 solar-mass star's HZ extends from 0.1 to 0.2 AU
> - a 1.0 solar-mass star's HZ extends from 1 to 2 AU
> - a 40 solar-mass star's HZ extends from 350 to 600 AU
>
> On these grounds, it would seem that high-mass starts are the best candidates for finding planets within a habitable zone. However, these stars emit most of their radiation in the far ultraviolet (FUV), which can be highly damaging to life, and also contributes to photodissociation and the loss of water. Furthermore, the lifetimes of these stars is so short (around 10 million years) that there is not enough time for life to begin.
>
> **Very low mass stars have the longest lifetimes of all, but their HZs are very close in and very narrow. Therefore, the chances of a planet being formed within the HZ are small. Additionally, even if a planet did form within the HZ, it would become tidally locked, so that the same hemisphere always faced the star. Even though liquid water might exist on such a planet, the climactic conditions would probably be too severe to permit life.**
>
> In between the high- and low-mass stars lie those like our own Sun, which make up about 15% percent of the stars in the galaxy. These have reasonably-broad HZs, do not suffer from FUV irradiation, and have lifetimes of the order of 10 billion years. Therefore, they are the best candidates for harbouring planets

> where life might be able to begin.

This guy is just someone I found through a web search. He has a support-the-unions-sticker on his web page, so he's a liberal crackpot. But he makes my point, anyway, so that's good enough for me.

Maybe the new discovery is talking about this, but I already knew about it because I watched The Privileged Planet DVD. Actually that whole video is online, and the clip that talks about the habitable zone and water is linked in this blog post I wrote before.

Atheism hates science

- Physicist Frank Tipler weighs in on Stephen Hawking's theory
- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Stephen Meyer debating Michael Shermer on the origin of life
- Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Richard Dawkins cites German professor as authority on historical Jesus
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

Theism loves science

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

How teacher unions protect teachers from being fired

February 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the New York Post.

Excerpt:

> At age 75, Roland Pierre is the granddaddy of the rubber room — 13 years in the purgatory of teachers yanked from the classroom for alleged wrongdoing.
>
> But the Department of Education can't fire Pierre, and he's stuck around long past the minimum retirement age.
>
> Pierre was permanently removed from the classroom in 1997 after he was accused of sexually molesting a sixth-grade girl at PS 138 in Brooklyn.
>
> But since then, Pierre has continued to receive full pay and fringe benefits, including health, pension and vacation, officials said. He pulls down $97,101 a year.
>
> He's one of six tenured teachers that Chancellor Joel Klein has refused to return to the classroom, even though any criminal charges were dropped and DOE hearing officers let them off the hook.
>
> Pierre has been "permanently reassigned" the longest of all.
>
> On June 26, 1997, Pierre, then 62, was arrested on felony sex-abuse charges after he allegedly called one of his students into an empty classroom where he taught English as a second language, closed the door and molested her.
>
> […]Officials would not explain what happened since, but sources said the criminal charges were apparently dismissed, and a DOE disciplinary case was "dropped on a technicality."
>
> Even if dropped, the arrest and disciplinary case would almost certainly prevent Pierre from ever getting another teaching job, said lawyer Joy Hochstadt, who has represented other teachers.
>
> "Every application asks, 'Have you ever been brought up on charges?' " she said.
>
> The DOE has no required retirement age. Hired in 1986, Pierre could have retired at age 62. At his age, he can collect Social Security as well as his full salary, so his income may be close to $125,000 a year, sources said.

Here's a worse story.

Excerpt:

> The Alabama Department of Education has stopped the pay of a Washington County teacher who was still getting her salary while locked up in federal prison serving a 10-year sentence for child enticement.

> Charlene Schmitz was suspended from Leroy High School in August 2007 for inappropriate behavior with a 14-year-old student and was terminated after her February 2008 conviction.
>
> She was the first teacher in Alabama to continue getting paid under the state's reworked tenure law after being convicted and put behind bars.
>
> Washington County Schools CFO Larry Moss told The Associated Press on Wednesday that Schmitz received her last paycheck on Nov. 30 after a license revocation hearing. He said she had been paid more than $158,000 in salary and retirement benefits since she was first suspended.

If teachers had any concern for students at all, they would support vouchers and a national right to work law. Let the parents have the money, and let them choose their school. We can't be paying for teachers like this.

This is why teacher unions exist. They want to extract money from taxpayers without having to care whether children learn anything or not. They oppose any alternative to forced attendance in public schools – be it vouchers, homeschooling, private schools. They are in this job for one reason: MONEY. At least this is the way it is in the United States and Canada.

Why are we giving left-wing NPR $531 million a year?

February 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Newsbusters reports on the radically leftist NPR.

Excerpt:

> Almost the entire media skipped this chilling honor-killing verdict from Arizona on Tuesday, from Reuters: "An Arizona jury on Tuesday found an Iraqi immigrant guilty of second-degree murder for running down his daughter with a Jeep because she had become too Westernized." Faleh Almaleki killed his daughter Noor in October 2009 because she spurned his arranged marriage and was living with her boyfriend. Apparently, to report this is to be "Islamophobic."
>
> NPR skipped Almaleki, but they noted the verdict in another horrific killing on Monday night's All Things Considered: Aasiya Hassan was beheaded by her husband Mozzamil in 2009 as the two headed a Buffalo television project designed to create better understanding about Muslims. NPR reporter Dina Temple-Raston's objective was to deny this crime was about Islam. Instead, she said, it was simply about domestic violence.
>
> NPR anchor Robert Siegel tried to explain that "at the time, the media seized on the murder as an honor killing. That's a killing allowed in some Muslim societies when shame has been brought on a family. But NPR's Dina Temple-Raston reports from Buffalo, the Hassan case is really about domestic violence and it forced an entire community to reckon with stereotypes."

Yes, most domestic violence involves behadings. It's not an exclusively Islamic thing, you know.

Republicans have proposed a bill to cancel the $531 million of welfare that NPR receives each year for this "journalism". But NPR isn't the only leftist state-run media source.

Here's another instance of media bias from radically leftist PBS, in which Eleanor Clift says that Scott Walker doesn't represent the will of the people, even though he was elected after campaigning to reform union pay and benefits to fix their budget woes.

MUST-HEAR: Jennifer Roback Morse on contraceptives, divorce, cohabitation, SSM and ART

February 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

I often tease women for being too focused on happiness and feelings, but Dr. J isn't like that at all. She is all about economics, incentives, and moral boundaries. She thinks about the big issues. She once chastised me in an e-mail for being too emotional. I think she has had it with the feelings-based arguments from the socially-liberal left.

This lecture does not repeat much from her previous lectures.

Anyway – DO NOT MISS THIS LECTURE!

The MP3 file is here. (93 minutes, 43.5 Mb)

Keep in mind that this speech was given to Wisconsin Catholic seminarians, so there is a lot of rah-rah Catholic stuff. I'm an evangelical Protestant, so I just smile when she talks about that. At least there was no Mary in it. Yay!

SUMMARY

Contraception:
– contraception does not reduce the abortion rate
– contraception is bad because it makes sex a recreational activity
– contraception fails, which leads to the need for abortion
– 80% of abortions are done on unmarried women
– teenagers do not think that contraceptives will FAIL for them
– they don't understand that the probabilities is PER ACTION – more actions increases probability
– the more you rely on something that has a small chance of failure, the more chance you will get a failure
– more sex, means more chances for a person to get a failure
– older women are naturally less fertile, so they skew contraceptive effectiveness figures higher
– contraceptives are most likely to fail for the young, the poor and the unmarried
– contraception means that women cannot ask men to promise to marry them before sex
– the pressure for a man to marry if the woman gets pregnant is gone

– the presumption is that the woman will have an abortion
– women who want to get married are at a disadvantage to get male attention now
– because men will prefer women who are willing to have an abortion if they get pregnant
– when people argue for these social changes, they don't accurately assess consequences
– they think that they can have the happiness-making freedom without damaging anything else
– they think that no incentives will be created so that others start to act differently
– example: no-fault divorce – there were terrible consequences that were minimized by the social engineers

Divorce:
– people who wanted this believed myths in order to get the happiness-making freedom for the adults
– they said that divorce would be less harmful for children than if the parents stayed together
– they argued for no-fault divorce because they wanted happiness and didn't care about children
– in a low conflict marriage, it is better for children if the parents stay together
– in a high-conflict marriage, it is better for children to divorce
– but for high-conflict divorce, you could have gotten a divorce for cause
– what people pushing no-fault divorce really wanted was to divorce to pursue happiness elsewhere
– there is also a financial incentive to divorce for no reason – alimony, child support, property
– but divorce really disrupts the lives of the children
– the VAST MAJORITY of divorces are in low-conflict situations
– the social norm was that low-level conflict meant that you stayed married for the sake of the kids
– a pregnancy after a re-marriage is devastating to children of the first marriage
– not being able to have a normal relationship with both biological parents is devastating to children
– what often drives people into co-habitation is the fear of screwing up their own marriages
– pro-divorce people want women to re-marry afterwards to provide kids with a "father-figure"
– the presence of a stepfather increases bad behavior in the kids, as well as risk of abuse
– but actually, stepfathers spend little time with kids, and draws mother away from the kids
– biological fathers spend the most time with the children
– disciplining the children is more complex with a non-bio dad
– normally, dads wants the kids to behave, and moms want the children to be happy
– often, the woman will forbid the father from disciplining the children
– the father will just drop out of parenting completely when his authority is not respected

Co-habitation:
– social engineers understate the risks of co-habitation and overstate the risks of marriage
– but research shows that co-habitation makes no positive contribution to marriage
– feminists love to say that marriage is very risky, but without comparing it to alternatives (feminists don't like marriage because of the "unequal gender roles")
– when compared with the alternatives, like co-habitation, marriage is better on every measure
– feminists say that married women do not report abuse in marriage, that's why marriage LOOKS better
– but murders HAVE TO BE reported, and co-habitation results in NINE TIMES more murders than marriage
– children are killed FIFTY TIMES more with co-habitation with an unrelated adult than with 2 bio-parents
– the live-in boyfriend is the culprit in 85% of these cases

Same-sex marriage:
– alternatives to marriage change rules and incentives, it is NOT the same thing as marriage
– necessarily, one of the parents will not have a close relationship with one bio-parents
– social engineers say that mothers and fathers are interchangeable – but they are different
– SSM undermines the presumption of paternity, and substitutes state-ordered parenting
– the public purpose of marriage is to attach mothers to fathers, and parents to children
– SSM elevates private purposes for marriage over and above the public purpose of marriage
– SSM will lead to fathers being marginalized from the family
– the state will have to force people to equate SSM and natural marriage

Artificial reproductive technology:
– it is the next substitute for marriage
– highly educated career women do not have to prepare for a husband to get a baby
– her behavior through her life changes because she doesn't have to care about marriage

Is Skeptic magazine keeping up with the progress of science?

March 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Not if the progress of science undermines the speculations about a naturalistic origin of life. In their latest issue, Skeptic magazine espouses the old, discredited Miller-Urey experiments from half a century ago. The old science is Darwin-friendly. But is that old science still current?

Consider this post from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

Stanley Miller had not in fact "simulated atmospheric conditions on the early Earth." And this has been known for quite a long time. Origin of life theorist David Deamer states:

> This optimistic picture began to change in the late 1970s, when it became increasingly clear that the early atmosphere was probably volcanic in origin and composition, composed largely of carbon dioxide and nitrogen rather than the mixture of reducing gases assumed by the Miller-Urey model. Carbon dioxide does not support the rich array of synthetic pathways leading to possible monomers . . . .
>
> (D.W. Deamer, "The First Living Systems: a Bioenergetic Perspective," *Microbiology and Molecular Biology Reviews*, Vol. 61: 239 (1997).

As I discuss here, there's very good reason to understand why an atmosphere on Earth of volcanic origin would not contain methane or ammonia. A 2010 paper in *Cold Spring Harbor Perspectives in Biology* states that the chemical properties of the Earth's mantle have not changed over time, and thus if volcanoes don't produce appreciable amounts methane and ammonia today (which they don't), then they also wouldn't back then:

> Geochemical evidence in Earth's oldest igneous rocks indicates that the redox state of the Earth's mantle has not changed over the past 3.8 Gyr (Delano 2001; Canil 2002).(Kevin Zahnle, Laura Schaefer, and Bruce Fegley, "Earth's Earliest Atmospheres," *Cold Spring Harbor Perspectives in Biology* (2010).)

The papers cited in the quote above confirm this point. For example, Canil's 2002 paper in *Earth and Planetary Science Letters* found that vanadium redox states in peridotite-bearing mantle xenoliths and Archean cratons imply that Earth's mantle was just as oxidized in the Archean as it is today. The paper concludes:

> Abiotic synthesis of molecules and hydrocarbons that can lead to life in early Archean mantle-derived volcanic gases requires they contain significant H_2 and CO, but such reduced components are not supported by results of this and many other studies, which imply a scenario of Archean mantle redox not unlike that of today. Life may have found its origins in other environments or by other

> mechanisms.
>
> (Dante Canil, “Vanadian in peridotites, mantle redox and tectonic environments: Archean to present,” *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, Vol. 195:75-90 (2002) (internal citation removed).)

The situation is summed by authorities Kasting and Catling as follows: “For the 4 billion years for which a geological record exists, no evidence for a pronounced change in mantle redox state exists.” (James F. Kasting and David Catling, “Evolution of a Habitable Planet,” *Annual Review of Astronomy and Astrophysics*, Vol. 41:429-463 (2003).)

Skeptic magazine *cannot* be skeptical on the origin of life. They *have to* affirm a naturalistic origin of life, because they assume that there was no intelligent cause of the origin of life, *before looking at the evidence.* They affirm that the universe is eternal, *before looking at the evidence.* They affirm that there is a multiverse to explain the fine-tuning, *before looking at the evidence.* They affirm that habitable planets are common, *before looking at the evidence.* They assume that a gradual string of pre-Cambrian fossils exists, *before looking at the evidence.* They believe in man-made catastrophic global warming alarmism, *before looking at the evidence.* Evidence is very, very bad for skeptics. Which is why they oppose the progress of science and have to go back fifty years to the speculations. They don’t like the progress of science. They believe what they *want* to believe. And that’s why they don’t want to debate anything, but instead refuse to hire people who disagree with them – or fire them if they are already hired.

It’s Skeptic magazine versus the scientists. Religion versus science. The pre-supposition of naturalism versus reality.

Wisconsin Democrat makes death threat against Republican Assemblywoman

March 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Newsbusters: Wisconsin Dem Assemblyman Tells GOP Assemblywoman 'You Are F–king Dead'.

Excerpt:

> Despite the following report from the Northwestern at 12:53 PM Monday, no major media outlet other than Fox News has covered this disgusting story:
>
> Rep. Gordon Hintz, D-Oshkosh, called Rep. Michelle Litjens, R-Winneconne, Monday morning to apologize for his comments that Litjens described as containing an obscenity and the words "you're dead." Last week, he accepted responsibility for being issued an ordinance violation for visiting a massage parlor in Appleton that was the subject of a prostitution sting.
>
> In this post-Gabrielle Giffords world, with calls for a new civility, a man that was just busted in the middle of a prostitution sting says "You are f–king dead" to a woman on the floor of the Wisconsin assembly, and America's media couldn't care less.
>
> Despite this being reported no later than 10:43 AM, a Google news search identified that apart from Wisconsin outlets, only Fox and conservative websites thought this was at all newsworthy.
>
> As of 12:30 AM Tuesday, according to LexisNexis, no major news outlets reported this event. Closed-caption records for ABC's "World News," CBS's "Evening News," and NBC's "Night News" also found no coverage of this issue.

More union thuggery that you'll probably never hear about in the mainstream media:

- PROTESTERS ATTACK FOX NEWS ANCHOR IN MADISON
- MoveOn Pro-Union Thugs Scream F*** You at Tea Partiers & Shove Woman
- Union Member Assaults Tea Partier in Sacramento
- Profanity and Intimidation in the Kansas State House
- Thug Life: Union Member Shoves Protester in Atlanta
- Chicago Union Rally: Protesters Joke About Knocking "Teabaggers" Unconscious

Government spending hundreds of millions to repair mosques in Muslim countries

March 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scary stuff.

Found at Answering Muslims.

UK judge rules that Christians have no right to religious liberty

March 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T ADF Alert)

Excerpt:

> Lord Justice Munby and Mr Justice Beatson made the remarks when ruling on the case of a Christian couple who were told that they could not be foster carers because of their view that homosexuality is wrong.

> The judges underlined that, in the case of fostering arrangements at least, the right of homosexuals to equality "should take precedence" over the right of Christians to manifest their beliefs and moral values.
>
> In a ruling with potentially wide-ranging implications, the judges said Britain was a "largely secular", multi-cultural country in which the laws of the realm "do not include Christianity".

> […]The ruling in the case of Owen and Eunice Johns, from Derby, is the latest in a series of judgments in which Christians have been defeated in the courts for breaching equality laws by manifesting their beliefs on homosexuality.
>
> […]In their ruling yesterday, the judges complained that it was not yet "well understood" that British society was largely secular and that the law has no place for Christianity.
>
> "Although historically this country is part of the Christian West, and although it has an established church which is Christian, there have been enormous changes in the social and religious life of our country over the last century," they said.
>
> It was a "paradox" that society has become simultaneously both increasingly secular and increasingly diverse in religious affiliation, they said.
>
> "We sit as secular judges serving a multicultural community of many faiths. We are sworn (we quote the judicial oath) to 'do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of this realm, without fear or favour, affection or ill will'."
>
> The judges acknowledged that there was a "tension" in the case of Mr and Mrs Johns between the rights of individuals to maintain their religious beliefs and the rights of homosexual people to live free from discrimination.
>
> However, when fostering regulations were taken into account, "the equality provisions concerning sexual orientation should take precedence" over religious rights, they said.

The world becomes a more evil place when Christians are forced to retreat into the shadows by the fascist state. I wonder if the two defendants voted for the Labor

government that brought in these anti-Christian changes? I hope that they did not vote for the Labor Party, because it is a fearful thing to be your own executioner.

Related posts

- Muslims assault man for teaching comparative religions class
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- How the government forces Christians to affirm homosexuality
- Pro-life protesters arrested and detained in UK
- Christian preacher arrested for saying that homosexuality is a sin
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- Outgoing UK Labour government aims to make sex education compulsory
- How Harriet Harman's Equality Bill will impact religious liberty
- How the British government funds radical Islam
- UK bill imposes restrictions on homechooling families
- Christian doctor fired in the UK for acting in the best interests of children

Jim Wallace reports on his mission trip to UC Berkeley

March 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jim Wallace at Please Convince Me has a new podcast up. This is worth listening to if you want to understand atheists.

The MP3 file is here. (75 minutes, 34 Mb)

Normally, I would write a summary of this, but suffice to say that he goes over the thoughts of a few prominent atheists, and what is valuable is that you can see what they think of Christians, and what they really believe. I always enjoy finding out what atheists believe and then taking a look at how well they can ground their "values" based on their view of an accidental, materialist universe.

UPDATE: I just got this in the mail from Jim's mailing list.

Hello

What a great February! We just got back from a wonderful trip to Berkeley with 30 high school students who spent time studying atheism and philosophical naturalism and talking to students on the campus about the existence of God. It was part of our annual Berkeley Missions Trip and it resulted in 30 young warriors who are now equipped to defend their faith and change their world. We want to help you do the same thing, so here is this month's "Three Minute Truth Training" responding to yet another objection to the truth of the Christian Worldview:

OBJECTION: Christians believe Christianity is true simply because they were raised in a Christian culture. If they were raised in a Muslim culture, they would believe that Islam is true with the same passion and certainty.

RESPONSE: The answer to this objection lies in Christian history. While it is true that cultural and geographic influences often favor a particular point of view or behavior, our personal experience demonstrates that individuals often make private, independent choices in spite of the accepted beliefs of their culture. As an example, many of us are vegetarians in spite of the fact the culture is predominantly carnivorous. The history of Christianity also confirms that the vast majority of Christian converts concluded that Christianity was true in spite of their geographic location or cultural background. You can demonstrate this by helping the skeptic recognize the facts of history:

The History of the Ancient World
Christianity emerged in a culture that was largely Jewish or Pagan (a polytheistic mix of religious beliefs within the Roman Empire) and completely hostile to the claims of Christianity. History records the hardship that was faced by 1st Century Christians who concluded that Christianity was true and devoted their lives to Jesus. These believers did not become Christians because Christianity was the default religion of the time.

The History of China

China also has a history of religious suppression related to Christianity. The native culture of China has historically embraced some version of Shenism or Taoism. While Christian missionaries labored in China for centuries, their efforts were often suppressed by governmental regimes (like the Communist Party of China). In spite of this suppression and the cultural inclination toward Shenism or Taoism, Christianity has continued to grow as a underground movement, with some reporting as many as 130 million Christians now living in China. These believers did not become Christians because Christianity was the default religion of their region or culture.

The History of Persecution

History has demonstrated the fact that Christianity continues to grow in spite of intense persecution. Christians have historically come to faith in regions where Christianity is NOT the default religion. For this reason, Christians are still the most persecuted religious group in the world, particularly in places like North Korea, Muslim countries, India, China, Vietnam, and the Philippines. These suffering believers did not become Christians because Christianity was the default religion of their region or culture.

The History of Many of Us Here In America

While America is clearly a Christian nation, our principles of freedom have allowed our citizens to embrace a number of competing religious worldviews without restriction. In fact, a recent Pew Forum poll revealed that Muslims and those who do not affiliate themselves with any religious belief system are the two fastest growing groups in America. Many Christians have come to faith in homes that were hostile or benign to theistic beliefs. In spite of their familial "micro-culture", they converted to Christianity. These believers did not become Christians because Christianity was the default religion of their family.

Millions of Christians have historically demonstrated that they embrace the truth of the Christian worldview because they believe it is true, not because it happens to be the default position of their family, culture, region or era in history.

What does the Bible mean when it uses the word “faith”?

March 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Tektonics.

Here’s a popular view of faith that says that people believe weird things by acts of will:

> Consider these three views:
>
> 1. A “faith healer” named Benny Pophagin offers to heal Joe of his lumbago. Benny lays hands on Joe and prays, but the lumbago remains. Benny waves Joe away, saying, “This is your problem. You don’t have enough *faith*.”
> 2. A Christian faces several objections to his beliefs that he cannot answer. He says, “I don’t care what people say, I still have *faith*.”
> 3. The famous skeptic Mark Twain said, “*Faith* is believing what you know ain’t so.”
>
> Can anyone guess what is wrong with this picture?
>
> The answer is that all of these examples offer an incorrect definition or understanding of what Biblical *faith* is all about. Twain’s own definition does correctly (with some negative emphasis) embody the way “faith” is understood by far too many *today* — but it does not match the Biblical definition of that word, and as the first two examples suggest, “faith” is a badly misunderstood concept in the church at large.

Atheists and many Christians seem to agree on that view of faith… but is that view *Biblical*?

Here’s an excerpt from the article showing the Biblical view of faith:

> The Greek word behind “faith” in the NT is *pistis*. As a noun, *pistis* is a word that was used as a technical rhetorical term for *forensic proof*.
>
> Examples of this usage are found in the works of Aristotle and Quintiallian, and in the NT in Acts 17:31:
>
> *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given* ***assurance*** *unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*
>
> If you are used to thinking of “faith” in terms of our first two examples, this will assuredly come as a surprise. The raising of Christ is spoken of here as a *proof* that God will judge the world. However, if we think about the missionary preaching of the book of Acts, this makes perfect sense and teaches us a certain lesson.
>
> Here is more food for thought: Is there anyplace in the NT where we can find

someone giving their “personal testimony”?

The answer is yes — but it is in Phil. 3, where Paul gives his personal testimony about his former life, *when writing to fellow Christians*. He does *not* use it in a missionary setting to unbelievers.

Indeed, one will find nowhere in the NT an example of missionaries, or anyone, giving their personal testimony.

This is for good reason. The ancients conceived of personality as static; the way you were born is the way you stayed. Personal change was not a focus, because it was thought impossible. This is why the church remained suspicious of Paul even after his conversion, and until Barnabas (who probably knew Paul previously) testified on his behalf.

But note well: The following is *not* the sort of thing one will find in the NT:

Acts 2:48-52 And Peter arose and said, Men and brethren, I testify to you that whereas I formerly smoked mustard leaves, drank wine, cursed daily, and smelled moreover of fish, when the Lord Jesus Christ entered my heart I became clean. Now I no longer smoke, I no longer drink, my language is no longer filthy, and I bathe daily. Praise the Lord!

On the contrary.Here is what we *do* find in the missionary preaching of the NT:

Acts 2:22-36 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by ***miracles and wonders and signs****, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath* ***raised up****, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For* ***David speaketh concerning him****, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved…Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;* ***He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ****, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This* ***Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*** *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear…* ***Therefore*** *let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Peter’s primary appeal here was threefold:

1. He appealed to the *evidence of the wonders and signs* performed by Jesus;
2. he appealed to the *empty tomb*,

> 3. and he appealed to *fulfillment of OT prophecy*.
>
> In short, his appeals were *evidentiary*. One of course might wish to dispute the validity of the evidence, but in context this is beside the point. The point is that Peter grounded belief in Christianity on *evidence* — or, as the definition of *pistis* in Acts 17:31 would put it, *proofs*.

If Paul and Peter would around today, Paul would have a Ph.D in Astrophysics (Romans 1) and Peter would have a Ph.D in Ancient History (Acts 2). And they would be using good theistic arguments to defend belief in God, and historical evidence to defend the resurrection. Because Christianity is *all about* the evidence. Always has been, always will be. We do not offer Christianity to people on the basis of feelings or life enhancement. It is true, and that's all.

Here is my article on whether the Bible opposes logic and evidence. And one about why some (weird) Christians don't defend their faith.

UPDATE: Michael sends me this video from Greg Koukl:

And notes that Greg Koukl has a new book coming out soon, called "Faith is Not Wishing". Greg Koukl formed my views on what faith is, along with R.C. Sproul and J.P. Moreland. For now, you can read this article about faith by Greg Koukl, and it's FREE.

Stephen Harper’s Conservatives up to 43% in latest federal election poll

March 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

For my Canadian readers, especially Tory Ninja. (H/T Ben)

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s Conservatives have opened up a wide lead against their political rivals in public favour and would be close to winning a majority if an election occurred now, a new poll has found.
>
> The national survey, conducted exclusively for Postmedia News and Global National, found that the Tories are now supported by 43% of decided voters — up by four points from early February.
>
> That finding by pollster Ipsos Reid is significant, as the level of support is near the threshold that experts believe the Tories need to win their long-coveted majority.
>
> The Conservatives haven’t been this popular since they enjoyed a brief spike in the polls in December 2008 when Canadians were opposed to the opposition parties’ efforts to create a coalition government.
>
> The new survey shows the Tories have a 16-point lead over the Liberals, led by Michael Ignatieff. The Grits, who have been trying to stoke voter anger over the government’s performance, have the support of 27% of voters, up by two points.
>
> Jack Layton’s NDP appears to be in political decline as it makes demands to the government over what should be in the budget. The New Democrats would receive 13% of the vote, down by five points.
>
> Similarly, the Green party, led by Elizabeth May, is in trouble. It would receive

> five per cent of the vote, down by five points.
>
> Gilles Duceppe's Bloc Quebecois has 10%of the vote nationally and still has a commanding lead in Quebec.
>
> "What you're seeing in the numbers is a continuation of a trend that started over the past two months," said Ipsos Reid president Darrell Bricker on Tuesday.
>
> "And one could say that with these types of numbers, the Tories are well poised to potentially form a majority."
>
> Bricker said that two major factors are at work: Canadians are generally optimistic about the economy and are giving credit to the Harper government, and the negative Conservative TV ads which take aim at Ignatieff's political ambitions and patriotism are working.
>
> […]Bricker said another trend is occurring which works in the Tories' favour: They are increasingly attracting support beyond their traditional base.
>
> The new poll finds the Tories receiving more support from middle-income Canadians, women, university-educated voters and foreign-born Canadians.
>
> "They're flattening out those demographic differences and becoming more mainstream," said Bricker.
>
> […]The federal political parties are preparing for the possibility of an election that could be precipitated by a budget in late March.
>
> […]In every region but Quebec, the Tories are leading in public opinion.

This poll puts them in majority territory, because last time they only won by 37.65% to 26.26% but they won 143 seats. 155 seats are needed for a majority, so 43% would definitely do the job. Anything over 40% is good.

Stephen Harper has a BA and MA in Economics, and is cutting the corporate tax rate to HALF of the US corporate tax rate. In Canada, voters are concerned about JOBS, not about Harper's skin color, happy-talk or handsomeness. Canadians understand that if you woo corporations and businesses with low taxes and fewe regulations, you get the jobs. Harper also supports free trade, so that Canadians can sell their goods to foreign markets, and buy good from abroad for a cheaper price, either for consumption of manufacturing. This results in even MORE jobs.

Related posts

- Poll finds 68% of Canadians positive on Canadian economy
- Canada created twice the number of jobs as the United States in January
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper vows to end long-gun registry
- Stephen Harper makes a stand against North Korean aggression
- Fiscally conservative Canada campaigns against global bank tax
- Federal conservatives in Canada aim to cut spending and waste from budget
- Canada's finance minister proposes changes to mortgage lending laws
- Supreme Court sides with Conservative Party against price-fixing monopoly

- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper seeks increased trade with India
- Canadian Evangelicals and Catholics more opposed to secularism and socialism
- Members of Canadian socialist parties oppose child sex-trafficking crime bill
- Harper instructs foreign minister to denounce Libyan dictator
- Canadians to walk out of Ahmadinejad’s speech at UN
- Canada signs free trade deal with Panama
- Harper pays surprise visit to troops in Afghanistan
- Investors Business Daily says Harper better leader than Obama
- Round-up of US news media interviews with Stephen Harper

Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading

March 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to write about a common mistake that I see men making today when they are selecting women for marriage.

Some women prefer men who don't have strong views on moral, spiritual, economic and political issues, and who don't try to lead them in moral and spiritual areas. This is because if men know a lot about things then they tend to have definite opinions which might constitute grounds for rejecting the woman if she does something wrong, and women fear rejection. For the spiritual leadership, again, if the man has studied this a lot, then the woman fears that he will make her do a bunch of reading and debating which may not be much fun for her. So, some women avoid men like that. The question I want to ask in this post is – should men marry a woman who doesn't like that they know a lot about moral issues and spiritual issues? I don't think that men should, and I'm going to explain why.

Good men will want to set moral boundaries and lead spiritually when they have children.

Children usually look to Dad for guidance about the real world, because he is viewed as more "practical". And fathers tend to want to protect children by setting moral boundaries and debating moral issues. Additionally, fathers want to protect children from believing lies that may cause them to make bad decisions. So, fathers are going to talk about things like chastity and oxytocin, as well as things like the big bang and the cosmic background radiation. They do this to tell children right and wrong with evidence and to tell children the truth about the world with evidence. What they do is NOT just state opinions or preferences – these are not take-it-or-leave it. And this can be offensive to some women who reject that morality is one way or the other, or that the universe is one way or the other. Some women elevate happiness above morality and truth, and men need to be aware that those women will not let them state moral principles or tell the truth about spiritual things. They value "compassion" (the denial of moral absolutes and personal responsibility) and "pluralism" (the denial that anyone's beliefs about the world can be false). If a good man has children, he needs to be sure that the woman is not undermining all of his boundary-setting and truth-arguing at home. He has to test for this during the courtship.

Sometimes men are stupid, and choose women without regard to what God wants from the marriage.

Let's pretend that men are choosing medicine instead of a wife. Some men are choosing their medicine based on the pretty packaging, and yummy taste, and then complaining when it doesn't fix the illness. They want to choose a medicine without knowing anything about their illness and anything about the candidate medicines. They want to be "free" to choose a medicine based on the feelings they have about the medicine – not whether *it*

will do the job required. They say: “But it looked good and tasted good! Medicines that look good and taste good should work!” They think that they can judge everything about a woman in her physical appearance and her manner. (Women do this too, when they talk about wanting things like “a deep voice” and “confidence” – without looking for signs that the man can meet marriage/parenting requirements). The purpose of the woman and the marriage, for some men, seems to be to *meet their needs*. So *their criteria* are the only criteria that matter. God is nowhere in the picture. He supposedly doesn’t want a marriage and children that honor him – oh no. He supposedly wants the man to be *happy*. The customer of the marriage is *the man*, not God.

And men really need to be on the alert to detect women who will block them from doing what good men do with marriage and children, otherwise they will not be allowed to make moral judgments and to lead the family. Men – make sure when you are choosing a wife that you choose someone who loves moral judgments and the way that you like to build other people up to be effective and influential. If the candidate resents your setting of moral boundaries, or resents your knowledge of issues, or resents your efforts to “bully” them into correct views using reasons and evidence, then you need to pass on that woman. You are a man. Men are interested in morality, truth, fixing problems and making things better. You must make sure your wife is supporting you in that role. Make sure she is choosing you for the right reasons, using the right criteria. You are a quarterback. Do not play for a team where you will be reduced to cheerleader and mascot. You were not designed to do that.

And women – it makes no sense to complain that men are not raising the children properly if you deliberately chose a man who didn’t believe in moral judgments or truth. If the man makes you behave morally in the courtship, he will make your children behave morally. If the man makes you believe true things in the courtship, he will make your children believe true things. You will just have to learn to like being judged on moral grounds and being led about spiritual things.

Related posts

- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren’t men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- What does the common practice of withholding sex reveal about women?
- Why are so many British feminists converting to Islam?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- Why do women flock to movies like Switch and Eat, Pray, Love?
- Women should read “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands”
- Arlemagne’s post on the dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- 12-year-old girl (and her mother) sues father for grounding her… and wins!
- The Wintery Knight’s greatest fears about the future
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?

- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman’s offer of casual sex
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper’s questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man’s decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Pakistan Muslims murder Christian politician for opposing blasphemy laws

March 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Middle East Map

Story from leftist CNN. (H/T Mysterious M)

Excerpt:

> A Pakistani government minister who had said he was getting death threats because of his opposition to a controversial blasphemy law was shot to death Wednesday.
>
> Shahbaz Bhatti was the only Christian member of the Cabinet in Pakistan, where 95 percent of people are Muslim. He served as the government's minister of minority affairs.
>
> He was shot and killed in Islamabad on Wednesday morning, Pakistani police said. The Taliban claimed responsibility.
>
> "(The) assassination of Bhatti is a message to all of those who are against Pakistan's blasphemy laws," said Ihsanullah Ihsan, a Taliban spokesman.
>
> Bhatti had been critical of the law, saying at one point, "I am ready to sacrifice my life for the principled stand I have taken because the people of Pakistan are being victimized under the pretense of blasphemy law."
>
> Other officials have also been targeted for opposing the blasphemy law, which makes it a crime punishable by death to insult Islam, the Quran or the Prophet Mohammed.
>
> In January, the governor of Punjab province, Salman Taseer, was assassinated by his security guard because he spoke out against the law.
>
> After Taseer's death, Bhatti pledged to continue pushing for amendments in the

> law.
>
> “I will campaign for this … these fanatics cannot stop me from moving any further steps against the misuse of (the) blasphemy law,” he said at the time.
>
> Bhatti said he was facing threats on his life, but was not afraid.
>
> “I was told by the religious extremists that if you will make any amendments in this law, you will be killed,” he said.

Here is my previous post about the Governor of Punjab province, who was also murdered by Muslims for defending free speech.

What does it say about a religion when they are unwilling to debate you, but instead resort to murdering you? To me, when you have to resort to violence instead of arguments and evidence, it’s a clear signal that you have no evidence, and cannot win an argument. There is no debater like William Lane Craig in the Islamic world. And Muslims wouldn’t listen to arguments and evidence on both sides, anyway. But Christians flock to William Lane Craig debates, and clap politely after opponents of Christianity express their views.We don’t find them convincing, but we don’t kill them. We are confident in what we believe, because we know why we believe.

Christianity is a religion of truth, and Islam is a religion of murder.

You can find more stories like this one at Blazing Cat Fur.

Ohio Republicans pass bill to cut bloated union salaries and benefits

March 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Ohio state senators narrowly approved a bill that would prohibit public-employee unions representing 400,000 state employees from bargaining over health benefits, pensions and working conditions.
>
> While national attention has focused for weeks on a similar battle in Wisconsin, the vote, by 17-16 in Ohio's Republican-controlled Senate, virtually ensured that the Buckeye State will become the first to strip collective bargaining rights from public employees as a means of grappling with gaping budget deficits.
>
> The bill now goes to the House, where the Republicans have a 59-40 majority. If approved, as expected, it will move for signature to Republican Ohio Gov. John Kasich, who supports the bill.
>
> […]Republican lawmakers say worker pay and benefit cuts are needed to offset projected budget shortfalls. "If we're going to grow in Ohio, we cannot raise taxes," Republican state Sen. Keith Faber said Wednesday.
>
> […]Union officials began a coordinated effort to try to block bills in Wisconsin and Ohio that would curtail collective bargaining rights for public workers, and right-to-work legislation introduced in 13 states, including New Hampshire and Missouri. Those bills would allow workers in the private-sector to opt out of paying dues or belonging to a union. Such legislation threatens the unions' funding and their political clout heading into the 2012 elections.
>
> In Wisconsin, Republican state senators passed a resolution fining the 14 Democrats who left the state Feb. 17 to prevent a vote on Republican Gov. Scott Walker's bill restricting public employees' collective-bargaining rights. The vote on the resolution didn't require a quorum, unlike the budget bill that would curb bargaining.
>
> The Wisconsin Democrats, who are in Illinois, will be fined $100 a day for their absence when the Senate is in session. Several of the Democrats went to Kenosha, Wis., Monday to meet with Republican Wisconsin Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, said Fitzgerald spokesman Andrew Welhouse. But the fines seemed to set back efforts to break the impasse.

Remember that Indiana Republicans are proposing a right-to-work bill, which would allow workers to OPT OUT of paying union dues, which are just used to campaign for Democrats and leftists causes anyway. This bill would break the backs of the unions.

Buckeyes and Badgers and Hoosiers, oh my!

Stephen Harper's Conservative Party cuts federal spending by 6.2%

March 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper

More news from up north. (H/T Ben)

Excerpt:

> Federal government expenditures are set to fall next fiscal year by $16.5-billion, or 6.2%, with big cuts to regional development and environment programs, according to documents tabled Tuesday.
>
> That would leave total expenditures for the 2011-12 year at $250-billion, with the bulk taken up by transfer payments to individuals and governments, and operating costs. Just over $30-billion of that expense is attributed to refinancing Canada's debt.
>
> The figures, contained in spending estimates provided by the Treasury Board, sees budget increases for departments entrusted with security and law enforcement – such as a 21% boost to jails — but cuts of roughly 20% to Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Government is supposed to be concerned with security and law enforcement, not with environmentalist wastefulness.

Here's Paul Ryan. He would like to cut our budget by 6.2% – and maybe even more.

If Canada is cutting their government waste, then why can't we?

There are a lot of programs that we could be cutting.

Excerpt:

> The federal government could save billions in taxpayer dollars annually by consolidating duplicative government programs, according to a new report.
>
> The newly-released report from the Government Accountability Office "makes us all look like jackasses," Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) told reporters Monday night.
>
> The conservative senator said the report — which identifies redundancies in more than 546 individual programs — reveals why the United States is $14 trillion in debt.
>
> "Anybody who says we don't look like fools up here hasn't read the report," he said.
>
> […]The GAO reviewed 34 areas (among them agriculture, defense and social services) where agencies, offices or initiatives have similar or overlapping objectives. The report also looked at 47 additional cost-saving opportunities related to more general government efficiency. For instance, the report said, "Improved corrosion prevention and control practices could help [the Defense Department] avoid billions in unnecessary costs over time."
>
> Addressing duplicative efforts on even a single issue could save billions, the report found. For instance, the GAO says the government could save up to $5.7 billion annually by addressing potentially duplicative policies designed to boost domestic ethanol production. Additionally, the Defense Department could save $460 million annually by making broader changes to the governance of its military health care system.
>
> The report finds that there are 15 agencies involved in food safety, 80 programs involved in economic development and more than 100 involved in surface transportation. There are 10 agencies and 82 programs involved in teacher quality, and more than 20 agencies and about 56 programs involved in financial literacy efforts. There are about 2,300 investments across the Defense Department to modernize its business operations.
>
> House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) said today that in order to foster long term economic growth, "we're going to deal with the pressing issues of regulatory waste in our agencies, as well as long term issues facing our country with entitlement programs."

This is why we have to stop giving private sector money to government. They don't earn any money by making things or helping people – they don't sell anything useful. They just steal money from the productive workers and businesses and then they waste it and run up trillion dollar deficits. This kind of corruption, fraud and waste would not survive in small businesses, and probably not even in big businesses. Business have to be efficient or they go bankrupt. They have to perform or their competitors will have them for lunch. The consumer is king in the private sector.

Related posts

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- Canada signs free trade deal with Panama
- Harper pays surprise visit to troops in Afghanistan

Paul Copan challenges Richard Dawkins on determinism and rationality

March 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Parchment & Pen. There is an MP3 file linked in the post. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

> Last week, Richard Dawkins spoke here in Ft. Lauderdale at Nova Southeastern University on "The Fact of Evolution." The following week, I spoke on "The Fact of God"—also delivered at Nova Southeastern.
>
> […]I asked Dawkins how he could claim that the naturalist id rationally superior to the theist since, according to his book *River Out of Eden*, all of us are dancing to the music of our DNA. Our beliefs are the product of non-rational, deterministic physical forces beyond our control—whether we're theists or naturalists. In fact, if the naturalist is right, it's only by accident—*not* because he's more intellectually virtuous than the theist. That is, the naturalist has *accidental* true belief (which is not knowledge) rather than *warranted* true belief (which is knowledge).
>
> Dawkins gave the odd reply that it's kind of like Republicans and Democrats—with each group thinking they're right and the other group wrong. But on what grounds could either side think they are more rational than the other? Dawkins then added that he supposed that whatever view "works" the correct one to hold. But here's the problem: what "works" is logically distinct from "true" or "matching up with reality"—since we may hold to a lot of *false* beliefs that help us survive and reproduce, even if they are false. Indeed, naturalistic evolution is interested in survival and reproduction—the "four F's" (fighting, feeding, fleeing, and reproducing). Truth, the naturalist philosopher Patricia Churchland argues, is secondary to these pursuits According to another such naturalist, the late Richard Rorty, truth is "utterly unDarwinian."
>
> […]…how can Dawkins condemn "religious" people who fly planes into buildings since they are just *dancing to their DNA—just like the naturalist is*? They're just doing what nature has programed them to do. We can further ask: Why isn't Dawkins denouncing atrocities done *in the name of atheism*—like those of Stalin, Pol Pot, or Mao Tse-tung? Dawkins gives the impression that it's only people of "religion" who carry out horrendous evils. Of course, if Dawkins is right, these mass murderers could not justly be condemned since they too were wired by nature to act as they did.

Paul then excerpts a segment from an interview with Dawkins:

> Dawkins:….What I do know is that what it feels like to me, and I think to all of us,

> we don't feel determined. We feel like blaming people for what they do or giving people the credit for what they do. We feel like admiring people for what they do. None of us ever actually as a matter of fact says, "Oh well he couldn't help doing it, he was determined by his molecules." Maybe we should… I sometimes… Um… You probably remember many of you would have seen Fawlty Towers. The episode where Basil where his car won't start and he gives it fair warning, counts up to three, and then gets out of the car and picks up a tree branch and thrashes it within an edge of his life. Maybe that's what we all ought to… Maybe the way we laugh at Basil Fawlty, we ought to laugh in the same way at people who blame humans. I mean when we punish people for doing the most horrible murders, maybe the attitude we should take is "Oh they were just determined by their molecules." It's stupid to punish them. What we should do is say "This unit has a faulty motherboard which needs to be replaced." I can't bring myself to do that. I actually do respond in an emotional way and I blame people, I give people credit, or I might be more charitable and say this individual who has committed murders or child abuse of whatever it is was really abused in his own childhood.
> ….
>
> Manzari: But do you personally see that as an inconsistency in your views?
>
> Dawkins: I sort of do. Yes. But it is an inconsistency that we sort of have to live with otherwise life would be intolerable. But it has nothing to do with my views on religion it is an entirely separate issue.

There's a fuller explanation in the post – I just pulled out some parts to give you the idea.

This is something Christians need to get used to. Atheism should not smuggle in Christian beliefs. Atheism has to stand and fall on materialism, determinism, life ending at the grave, and moral subjectivism. There is no free will on atheism. There are no moral values or moral obligations on atheism. There is no rationality on atheism. There is no meaning in life on atheism. There is no purpose to life on atheism. There is no accountability for sin on atheism. There is no self-sacrificial love on atheism. There is no reward for virtue and self-sacrifice on atheism. It is a worldview

Wisconsin Republicans order police to take AWOL Democrats into custody

March 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Republicans in the Wisconsin Senate passed a resolution Thursday calling for police to take 14 Democrats into custody for contempt after they fled to Illinois to avoid voting on a bill that would strip public-sector unions of nearly all their collective bargaining rights.
>
> On the same day, Republicans in the Indiana House agreed to impose fines of $250 per day on Democrats who are also in Illinois, boycotting the legislature over labor and education bills they oppose.
>
> In Wisconsin, Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald signed the orders after Republicans voted 19-0 calling for the action unless Democrats returned to the chamber by 4 p.m. Thursday.
>
> None of the Democrats did, prompting Fitzgerald to sign 14 orders of detainment in dramatic fashion in the center of the Senate chamber. State patrol officers watched silently from the gallery.
>
> The move comes two weeks after the Democrats left, effectively delaying the vote on Gov. Scott Walker's proposal that he says will help him address a $3.6 billion budget shortfall. Walker said Thursday that he will start issuing layoff notices to state workers on Friday if his bill isn't passed by then.
>
> […]The resolution gives the sergeant at arms the authority to take any and all steps, with or without force and assistance from police, to bring the senators back.

The Republicans should make the fines $250 *per hour*, not $250 per day. And they should apply the fine to all the union thugs, not just the Democrat fleebaggers. Then the Republicans could balance the budget. Everybody wins!

How much influence do labor unions have in the Democrat party?

March 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this amazing Milwaukee Journel-Sentinel article on Marathon Pundit's blog. It explains where the political contributions of the biggest unions go. Let's take a look at a few of the unions.

Excerpt:

> • National Education Association. Membership: 3.2 million; assets: $216 million. The NEA, representing most of the nation's teachers, has 31 headquarters officers and employees who earn more than $200,000 in pay and benefits. The president, Dennis Van Roekel, received $397,721 in salary and benefits. **Of the $3.7 million NEA spent on political activities in the last election cycle, 98% went to Democratic candidates.** The NEA has 98,000 members in Wisconsin.
>
> • Service Employees International Union. Membership: 1.8 million; assets: $187 million. The SEIU, whose membership has increased in recent years, has been organizing hospital, home care and nursing home workers, along with local and state government employees, janitors and security officers. The union has nine headquarters officers and employees who earn more than $200,000. The former president, Andy Stern, was paid $306,388 in salary and benefits from the union in 2009. Stern resigned in 2010 and was replaced by Mary Kay Henry, formerly the executive vice president. Over the past two years, **SEIU gave almost $2 million to Democratic candidates and $8,500 to Republicans.** It has 18,000 members in Wisconsin.
>
> • United Food & Commercial Workers. Membership: 1.3 million; assets: $157 million. The UFCW, whose members work in meatpacking, food processing and retail grocery stores, has 17 headquarters officers and employees who earn more than $200,000. The president, Joseph T. Hansen, received $360,737 in compensation in 2009. **Of the $1.9 million the union donated to political candidates over the past two years, 99% of it went to Democrats.**
>
> • International Brotherhood of Teamsters: Membership: 1.3 million; assets: $175 million. The Teamsters, whose origins date to the horse- and mule-team drivers of the late 1800s, represent truck drivers and a wide array of blue-collar and government workers. Eight headquarters officers and employees received more than $200,000 in 2009. The president, James P. Hoffa, was compensated $364,869. **Over the past two years, the Teamsters have donated $2.3 million to Democratic candidates and $46,500 to Republicans.**
>
> • American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees. Membership: 1.5 million; assets: $78 million. AFSCME, one of the fastest growing unions in the

> United States, was founded in Wisconsin almost 80 years ago. At union headquarters in Washington, 10 officers and employees receive more than $200,000 a year. McEntee was paid $479,328 in salary and benefits in 2009. **Over the past two years, AFSCME has donated $2.3 million to Democratic candidates and $78,500 to Republicans.**

Emphasis is from Marathon Pundit. The Democrat party is basically owned lock, stock and barrel by the unions.

How the resurrection of Jesus changed the behavior of the early church

March 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The mean Calvinists at Triablogue recently posted something interesting.

Excerpt:

> Galen, a non-Christian writing around the middle of the second century, commented:
>
> "For their [the Christians'] contempt of death and of its sequel is patent to us every day, and likewise their restraint in cohabitation. For they include not only men but also women who refrain from cohabiting all through their lives; and they also number individuals who, in self-discipline and self-control in matters of food and drink, and in their keen pursuit of justice, have attained a pitch not inferior to that of genuine philosophers." (cited in Robert Wilken, The Christians As The Romans Saw Them [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984], p. 80)
>
> Mathetes, an ante-Nicene Christian, wrote:
>
> "For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all others; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all.

Here's another article from Christian Cadre on Christian opposition to infanticide (post-birth abortion).

Excerpt:

> "Infanticide was infamously universal" in ancient Greece and Rome. Frederic Farrar, The Early Days of Christianity, page 71. As Will Durant stated, infanticide

> was so common in ancient Rome that “birth itself was an adventure.” Caesar and Christ, page 56. Indeed, so common was infanticide in ancient Greece that Polybius (205-118 BCE) blamed the decline of ancient Greece on it. (Histories, 6). It was “decimating pagan society,” Durant, op. cit., 698, and was the leading cause of the tremendous gender gap of men to women in the ancient world. Rodney Stark, The Rise of Christianity, pages 97-98. Female infants were particularly vulnerable to infanticide. It was very uncommon for even wealthy, upper-class families to have more than one daughter in ancient Greece and Rome. An inscription found in Delphi illustrates this quite well. Of more than 600 second-century families, only one percent had raised two daughters. Susan Scrimshaw, “Infanticide in Human Populations: Societal and Individual Concerns,” in Infanticide: Comparative and Evolutionary Perspectives, eds. Glenn Hausfater and Sarah Hardy, page 439. In sum, there is no dispute among historians and informed laypersons: Infanticide was incredibly widespread in the ancient pagan world.
>
> But what is most chilling is that it was openly practiced. Pagan society approved of the practice and encouraged it. “Not only was the exposure of infants a very common practice, it was justified by law and advocated by philosophers.” Rodney Stark, The Rise of Christianity, page 118. See also Durant, op. cit., page 56. In Greece and ancient Rome a child was virtually its father’s chattel-e.g., in Roman law, the Patria Protestas granted the father the right to dispose of his offspring as he saw fit. In Sparta, the decision was made by a public official. The Twelve Tables of Roman Law held: “Deformed infants shall be killed” De Legibus, 3.8. Of course, deformed was broadly construed and often meant no more than the baby appeared “weakly.” The Twelve Tables also explicitly permitted a father to expose any female infant. Stark, op. cit., page 118.
>
> Leading pagan leaders and philosophers also encouraged the practice. Cicero defended infanticide by referring to the Twelve Tables. Plato and Aristotle recommended infanticide as legitimate state policy. Cornelius Tacitus went so far as to condemn the Jews for their opposition to infanticide. He stated that the Jewish view that “it was a deadly sin to kill an unwanted child” was just another of the many “sinister and revolting practices” of the Jews. Histories 5.5. Even Seneca, otherwise known for his relatively high moral standards, stated, “we drown children at birth who are weakly and abnormal.” De Ira 1.15.

And today, atheists and pagans agree on infanticide. They think it’s a good idea, because they want to have sex but without having babies come along to impose obligations and costs on them. Basically, it comes down to *greed* and *selfishness*. And that’s what causes atheists and pagans to support infanticide and abortion.

But what about Christians? Very different:

> From its earliest creeds, Christians “absolutely prohibited” infanticide as “murder.” Stark, op. cit., page 124. To Christians, the infant had value. Whereas

> pagans placed no value on infant life, Christians treated them as human beings. They viewed infanticide as the murder of a human being, not a convenient tool to rid society of excess females and perceived weaklings. The baby, whether male, female, perfect, or imperfect, was created in the image of God and therefore had value.
>
> Early Christian documents reveal that there was a clash of cultures as Christianity converted previously pagan Romans and Greeks. Whereas Judaism prohibited infanticide by Jews, Christianity was converting pagans and instructing them that infanticide was immoral and murder. The Didache (90 -110 CE), an instruction manual for Christian converts, commanded "You shall not commit infanticide." Another early Christian document, the Epistle of Barnabas (130 CE), also explicitly condemned infanticide and prohibited its practices as necessary parts of the "way of light." Moreover, by the end of the second century, "Christians were not only proclaiming their rejection of abortion and infanticide, but had begun direct attacks on pagans, and especially pagan religions for sustaining such crimes." Stark, op. cit., page 125. Robin L. Fox also notes this activity: "Christians opposed much in the accepted practice of the pagan world. They vigorously attacked infanticide and the exposure of children." Fox, op. cit., page 350.
>
> Callistus, the Bishop of Rome — a onetime slave — in 222 CE strongly voiced his condemnation of infanticide to the pagan public. Justin Martyr's First Apology (250 CE) stated, "We have been taught that it is wicked to expose even newly-born children." Also in the second century, Athengoras, a Christian leader, wrote in his Plea to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, that "[we do not expose] an infant, because those who expose them are chargeable with child murder." Another Christian writer, Minucius Felix, wrote to Emperor Claudius, "And I see that you at one time expose your begotten children to wild beasts and to the birds; at another that you crush when strangled with a miserable kind of death. . . . And these things assuredly come down from your gods. For Saturn did not expose his children but devoured them."

Note:The First Apology of Justin Martyr was written around A.D. 150, not (as in the quotation) around 250.

One can easily see how this early Christian opposition to hedonism with the issue of infanticide led to opposition to slavery and to opposition to abortion today. They are all related – it's always the strong classifying some group of weaker people as subhuman and then mistreating them out of greed (the desire for more money). But Christians think that children are not inconveniences, they are little people. And they are all made by God to know God. You don't kill people who were made to know God, you help them to know God. You might have to kill evil people (just war), guilty people (capital punishment) and in self-defense (violent crime) – but you don't kill innocent little babies. They haven't done anything wrong, and so they don't deserve to be killed. They have a right to impose

obligations on us when they come along into our lives – especially when our actions are what caused them to come along! And I also think that the early church was right to discourage fornication (pre-marital sex) to discourage people from getting into situations where infanticide would be a temptation.

One of the ways that I make it easier for myself to do crazy moral stuff like chastity and charity is by reading about the earliest Christians. My opposition to abortion was heavily informed by looking at what the early church did, and their interest in eternity is what gives me my patience for building up people in my own life, and to now expect anything in return. Everyone needs to know God and be related to him. I mustn't fuss too much about being a virgin, not being married, etc. People have questions and my job is to prepare to answer them, and to help others prepare to answer them. Happiness is irrelevant. If you have the eternal perspective, then you don't really worry about trying to pack in happiness in this life. You are more interested in what God wants, and that eternal relationship with him. You want to work on that relationship by doing things for him and with him – things that are important to him. It doesn't really matter if no one else approves of you.

How the science teachers lobby misrepresents intelligent design

March 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Science Teachers Association (NSTA), which stands alongside the rest of the Darwin lobby in holding that neo-Darwinian evolution should be taught in a one-sided, pro-evolution-only fashion.
>
> […]But the Darwin lobby is smart. While it is trying to ban and censor the views of its opponents, the Darwin lobby has a particular narrative which tries to paint its opponents as the censors and the extremists. The narrative goes something like this (my paraphrase): 'Dark forces of intelligent design and creationism are seeking to ban evolution from public schools and then force their religious beliefs into the science classroom. We must stand against censorship and religious agendas, so we must fight their agenda at any cost. Stand with us, the guardians of freedom of thought and the First Amendment.'
>
> […]The article goes on to cover recent debates in Texas over teaching evolution. The reality, of course, is that NO leading Darwin-critics in Texas sought try to censor evolution. Evolution is still a required part of the curriculum in Texas, and the new TEKS that continue to teach evolution were eagerly adopted by the Texas State Board of Education members who were skeptics of neo-Darwinian evolution.
>
> McKee's strategy is thus one of the oldest in the books: deflect away from the fact that *she herself* advocates an extreme position by painting her opponents as extremists.
>
> The reality is that leading groups that doubt neo-Darwinian evolution (like Discovery Institute) strongly oppose any attempts to ban evolution or remove it from the curriculum in schools. We also oppose teaching creationism in the science classroom because it's a religious viewpoint. As for ID, we feel it's science and constitutional to teach, but we want the debate over ID to be a scientific one and not a political one, so we oppose attempts to push ID into public schools. Instead, we think that public schools should simply teach the scientific evidence **both for and against** neo-Darwinian evolution.
>
> So where does that leave us? Leading Darwin-critics aren't seeking to introduce creationism or ID into public schools, and they would vehemently oppose attempts to ban evolution. Rather, they seek to increase coverage of evolution by teaching both the evidence for and against neo-Darwinism.
>
> The Darwin lobby wants only the pro-Darwin-only viewpoint taught. They want to

> censor any science that challenges neo-Darwinian evolution.

The whole article is good to read, and especially this picture that summarizes their view and my view.

It's important to understand that conservative pro-ID people like me are not trying to get rid of evolution. We want it taught as the best available theory that naturalists can invent after their faith commitment that the universe is eternal and matter is all that there is. And then we want the scientific evidence *against* evolution taught. That's it. Period. *Teach the controversy*. Don't distort the evidence to fit the pre-supposition of naturalism. Teach the evidence that the universe had a beginning, and that life exhibits characteristics of information. If nature is hostile to naturalism, then so much the worse for naturalists. Leave religion (naturalism) out of the classroom, and go where the evidence leads.

UK media discussing whether Christians are fit to be foster parents

March 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video:

Basically, the state thinks that Christians cannot be parents because their individual morality clashes with the moral relativism and sexual hedonism of the state. Many (most) people of the people who agree with fascism will be on the political left. That's why fascism is only and exclusively a phenomenon of the political left.

But not all people on the secular left are fascists.

Here's some useful commentary about one of the speakers: (H/T Mary)

> The historian, television and radio presenter, David Starkey is gay and an atheist. He is also an honorary member of the National Secular Society. You might therefore expect him to be clearly in favour of the ruling in the High Court this week that banned a Christian couple from fostering children because of their religious beliefs.

Starkey is not a fascist. I thought it was interesting that he mentioned his mother but not his father in the clip. Homosexuality is highly co-related with a breakdown in the relationship of the same-sex parent. When you have an absent/abusive/weak father and a domineering mother, that puts you at risk, if you are male. And the situation is reversed for women, where different environmental factors come into play, making the little girl feel devalued and vulnerable as a little girl. Parents – take heed. And be careful how you present Christianity to your children. If you present it as rules with no evidence or warrant, you will get a rebellion. If you present in the context of being informed about science, etc., within the context of a respectful, open-minded relationship, you may win the child over.

Back to the video – I thought it was interesting when the red-haired woman said that Christians could have their pro-life, pro-marriage, anti-slavery, anti-infanticide morality *at home*, but at work they had to object the state's version of morality. She would fit in well in Nazi Germany or Communist North Korea. David Starkey would not have fit into to those fascist regimes at all.

Fascism is the imposition of state morality and purposes over individual morality and purposes. Conservatism limits the state's ability to impose morality and purpose onto the citizens, and also limits involuntary wealth redistribution from one group of individuals to another. In conservatism everyone makes their own choices and pays their own way. In liberalism, the government endorses certain lifestyles over others, and transfers wealth involuntarily from unfavored groups to subsidize the favored groups – as with taxpayer funding of abortion, in vitro fertilization or sex changes. Christians are usually not favored by the state because our strong moral views conflict with the sexual hedonism that is so

prevalent today. We have nothing to gain from an overbearing state, and much to lose.

Here's a debate I posted a while back in which British fascists agree with the red-haired woman that Christians have no human rights to things like free speech, and that some group of people (atheists) have the right to silence other groups (Christians) because they are "offended".

Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien

March 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Watch the story. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

The Obama administration equipped Border Patrol with bean bags, and the illegals shot back at them with real bullets.

Fox News confirms the story:

First, the Obama administration denied that Border Patrol was firing with bean bags: (H/T The Blog Prof)

> "There was no order given to CBP law enforcement personnel – now or in the past – that dictates the use of less-than-lethal devices before using deadly force," stated CBP's Southwest Border Field Branch Office of Public Affairs.

But now, they admit their lies:

> Border Patrol agents shot beanbags at a group of suspected bandits before the men returned fire during a confrontation in a remote canyon, killing agent Brian Terry with a single gunshot, records show.
>
> And an illegal immigrant wounded in the gunbattle who is now the only person in custody linked to the slaying contends he never fired a shot, according to FBI search warrant requests filed in the U.S. District Court in Tucson.
>
> The documents provide the most detailed version yet of what happened in the deadly gunbattle Dec. 14 in Peck Canyon, northwest of Nogales.
>
> The documents say the group of illegal border entrants refused commands to drop their weapons after agents confronted them at about 11:15 p.m. Two agents fired beanbags at the migrants, who responded with gunfire. Two agents returned fire, one with a long gun and one with a pistol, but Terry was mortally wounded in the gunfight.
>
> Border Patrol officials declined to answer questions about protocol for use of force, citing the ongoing investigation.
>
> But Terry's brother, Kent Terry, said the other agents who were there that night told him that they were instructed to use the non-lethal beanbags first. It's a policy that doesn't make sense to Kent Terry.
>
> "You go up against a bandit crew that is carrying AKs, and you walk out there with guns loaded with beanbags – I don't get it," Terry said in a phone interview from Michigan. "It's like going to the Iraqi war with one knife. It boggles my mind. … These guys (Border Patrol agents) are professionals; they should be able to use their judgment call on their own."

> On the night of the deadly encounter, agents were trying to apprehend at least five suspected illegal immigrants. One agent, using thermal binoculars, spotted two men carrying rifles. When the group came close, at least one agent identified himself as police and ordered the men to drop their weapons.
>
> Here's how the rest of the events are described in the FBI document:
>
> "When the suspected aliens did not drop their weapons, two Border Patrol agents deployed 'less than lethal' beanbags at the suspected aliens. At this time, at least one of the suspected aliens fired at the Border Patrol agents. Two Border Patrol agents returned fire, one with his long gun and one with his pistol.
>
> "Border Patrol agent Brian Terry was shot with one bullet and died shortly after. One of the suspected illegal aliens, later identified as Manuel Osorio-Arellanes, was also shot."

Remember Democrat Janet Napolitano, who thinks that tea party activists, returning veterans and pro-lifers are all potential terrorists? Well, she won't take responsibility for equipping Border Patrol agents with bean bags, so that they get shot with real guns.

Excerpt:

> Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, leaving the funeral of a murdered Border Patrol agent Wednesday, scolded a reporter for asking her to address the victim's family's concerns that not enough is being done to secure the southern border.
>
> The family of agent Brian Terry had complained that Napolitano had offered them "empty words" when she called to express her condolences. Terry's father, Kent Terry, in an interview with ABC affiliate KGUN, said he told Napolitano to "***wake your man up in the White House***," to which she replied that he's done more in two years than any president.
>
> Napolitano attended the Detroit funeral Wednesday where she vowed "swift justice" for Terry's killers. But asked about the family's concerns outside the service, Napolitano said "now is not the time to talk about all that has been done."

Why do the Democrats always have to be the party of criminals and terrorists?

Related posts

- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference
- Department of Homeland Security to counter global warming threat
- Obama administration investigates Wisconsin pro-lifers
- Homeland Security head says that "the system worked"
- Democrats will push amnesty to give 12-20 million illegal aliens citizenship
- Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?
- Michele Bachmann calls for Napolitano to resign
- It's official: Obama's socialism will lead to fascism

Germany puts parents in jail if they pull their kids out of sex education

March 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Alliance Defense Fund.

Excerpt:

> Alliance Defense Fund attorneys representing two German parents filed an emergency order Thursday with the European Court of Human Rights, calling for the mother's immediate prison release. ADF attorneys filed an appeal on the parents' behalf last year asking the ECHR to uphold national and international law against the German government's unlawful incarceration and fines in violation of parental rights.
>
> Heinrich and Irene Wiens chose to keep their four children from attending a mandatory play and four school days of "sexual education" that taught students an extremely permissive view of sexuality. For this they were fined and then sentenced to more than six weeks in prison for refusing to pay. The father already served his prison term. Both parents contend that the programs oppose their Christian beliefs and that forcing their children's participation is unlawful. ADF has four similar cases before the ECHR, as Irene Wiens is the 10th Christian parent imprisoned.
>
> "Parents, not the government, are the ones ultimately responsible for making educational choices for their children, and jailing them for standing on this universal right is simply unconscionable," said ADF Legal Counsel Roger Kiska. "Irene Wiens was well within her rights under the European Convention of Human Rights to opt to teach her children a view of sexuality that is in accord with her own religious beliefs, instead of sending them to four days of classes and an interactive play that she found to be objectionable. These types of cases are crucial battles in the effort to keep bad decisions concerning parental rights overseas from being adopted by American courts."
>
> In June 2006, the Wiens' objected to their children's attendance at both a mandatory stage play and four school days of so-called "sexual education" classes. Both parents believed the programs contradicted their sincerely held religious beliefs, as they and their four children are active in the Christian Baptist Church. The Wiens' kept their children at home during the programs and instead instructed them in their own Christian values on sexuality. The parents were subsequently sentenced by a lower court in June 2008 and both were fined a total of 2,340 Euros (approximately $3,250 U.S.), which they refused to pay on legal and moral grounds. As a result, Heinrich Wiens served 43 days in prison from August 26 to October 6, and Irene Wiens is still serving her 43-day sentence in jail.

> School officials allege that the purpose of the compulsory play “Mein Köper Gehört Mir” (My Body Is Mine) was to introduce preventative measures for sexual abuse amongst children. Yet ADF attorneys argue that the play and “sexual education” lessons also promoted a very permissive view of sex and sexuality that strongly contradicts the Wiens’ Christian beliefs. Also, the Wiens’ contend that no scientific proof exists that the programs deter sexual abuse, but that they rather teach children to become sexually active by instructing them to observe their inner feelings of sexuality, ultimately teaching that if something feels good sexually, then it is an acceptable practice.

I really resent paying for teachers to indoctrinate children with their views of sexuality. Shouldn’t I get to keep my money and choose my school? What is the argument for me paying the government directly and taking whatever they give me? I don’t want these people or their sex education. Let me decide what’s best for my future children. I should be allowed to spend the money I earn on whatever I want. I don’t see why I should have to pay for something that doesn’t meet the needs of my future children.

Teacher union promotes sexualizing children at United Nations conference

March 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Robert Stacy McCain is covering a very strange story about how the United Nations is promoting sex to children. (H/T Hot Air)

Over the long-term, I think it is probably better for a child to learn about marriage than sex, because they shouldn't be alone and childless for the last half of their lives. Instead of learning how to have sex outside of marriage, so that they can use people and be used by people for temporary fun, it might be a better idea to research what challenges are encountered in a long-term stable marriage, what character and skills a spouse should have, and what policies and laws promote marriage.

The only thing that I think sexualization of children will do is raise social costs, increase government, and break the bonds between children and parents. That will just open up children to being influenced more by government and less by their parents. Furthermore, I guess some people who are perverts and predators would also benefit from sexualizing children. They would be less likely to be exposed to moral judgments and shame if young people are indoctrinated to think that perversion is normal, and more likely to find lots of children to have sex with. So I guess that this is the agenda that teacher unions, the United Nations, and the Democrats who fund both of them are pushing.

Anyway, here is the first story from Robert Stacy McCain.

Excerpt:

> "Experts" have determined that what's wrong with our education system is that kids aren't taught enough about sex:
>
> **"Oral sex, masturbation, and orgasms need to be taught in education," Diane Schneider** told the audience at a [United Nations conference] panel on combating homophobia and transphobia. Schneider, representing the National Education Association (NEA), the largest teachers union in the US, advocated for more "inclusive" sex education in US schools. . . . She claimed that the idea of sex education remains an oxymoron if it is abstinence-based, or if students are still able to opt-out.
>
> Comprehensive sex education is "the only way to **combat heterosexism and gender conformity**," Schneider proclaimed, "and we must make these issues a part of every middle and high-school student's agenda." . . .
>
> A panel sponsored in part by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) advocated for "comprehensive sex education" not only as a tool to **combat "gender oppression,"** but also as the key to achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals.

Diane Schneider has done work for the National Education Association, and she is also

employed by the gay rights group GLSEN, which promotes sex to children. The NEA is the largest teacher union in the country, and they basically own the Democrat party. The sexualization of children is part of the Democrat agenda. They don't like marriage – they don't like parents. They want children to be having sex. They want children to reject the morality of their parents, especially fathers. And they don't like "heterosexism". Traditional marriage is "heterosexist". Only feminists use words like "gender oppression". This is a feminist initiative.

Keep in mind that the teaching profession is *dominated* by women. Around 80% of classroom teachers are women. The unions are likewise dominated by women at all levels. So why are women pushing this agenda into classrooms? Why is there no revolt to teaching sex outside of marriage to children? Is it because women do not want children who engage in risky, immoral and dangerous activities to feel badly about it? Is it because children resent fathers setting moral boundaries on children? Is it because they think that if everyone sins, then no one will be able to make any judgments, and then no one will feel bad? Is it because they think that the problems that result from risky behavior should just be solved by taking someone else's money, instead of making better choices?

Isn't it weird that single, unmarried women who vote Democrat think that they will one day get married and stay married for their whole lives? I find that weird. I am not sure how encouraging men to have sex with women they have NO INTENTION of staying with for life will make men into husbands. I think that feminists think that some charming, loyal, faithful man is going to come along and protect and provide for them and love them into their old age and raise children with them. But then I look at stories like this and I wonder – are women who vote Democrat capable of linking the things they are voting for to their own plans for their lives? Or do they just expect to degrade themselves with others until they turn 30, knock out a couple of fatherless children at taxpayer expense (IVF) and then go on welfare for the rest of their lives with no man ever giving them a second look. That seems to be what will happen. Men don't marry women who cannot be faithful, who cannot be unselfish, and who cannot stop voting more and more of their money out of their wallets.

McCain writes:

> Of all the problems affecting the world, America's leading organization of teachers is urging the United Nations "to combat heterosexism and gender conformity" by teaching "oral sex, masturbation, and orgasms"? Because that's exactly what's needed by impoverished villagers in Bolivia, Botswana, Belize and Burkina Faso.
>
> Meanwhile, you will be pleased to learn, in her official statement to the U.N. conference, Melanne Verveer, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues (and "one of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton 's closest associates"), devoted separate sections to "Women and Green Jobs" and "Gender and Climate Change."

> So that's the "women's agenda" the United States is now promoting worldwide: Orgasms for kids, green jobs and fighting climate change.

You can find out more about Diane in McCain's first post.

But there's more in the second post, which talks about Girl Scouts and the United Nations.

Excerpt:

> Pundette was writing about the latest United Nations outrage — teaching kids masturbation and oral sex to combat "heterosexism" — and in the process linked to this U.N.-related story you might have missed:
>
> The World Association of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides hosted a no-adults-welcome panel at the United Nations [in March 2010] where **Planned Parenthood was allowed to distribute a brochure entitled "Healthy, Happy and Hot."** . . . The brochure claims, "Many people think sex is just about vaginal or anal intercourse… But, there are lots of different ways to have sex and lots of different types of sex. **There is no right or wrong way to have sex. Just have fun, explore and be yourself!**" . . .
> **The Girl Scouts**, **along with the YWCA** have been **co-moderating a young women's caucus** that included an "Intergenerational Conversation" side event on **"universal access" and "reproductive health."** One recent Girl Scout project "aims at securing the right of women, men and adolescents aged between ten and twenty-five, to better reproductive and sexual health."

If this is what women want, then they need to realize that this is mutually exclusive to marriage. You can spend the first 30 years of your like as a left-wing anti-family activist and then blame men for not marrying you and taking care of you in your old age. Women are doing this to themselves, and man-blaming is not going to fix the situation. Feminism and the sexual revolution isn't something that men pushed on women. It's something that women push on themselves. Just because they don't like it doesn't mean that they didn't choose it.

Republican senators introduce bill to defund NPR and PBS

March 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> Two Republican senators on Friday introduced a bill to stop taxpayer subsidies to public radio and television.
>
> Since 2001, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting has received nearly $4 billion in taxpayer money for National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).
>
> Sens. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) and Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) said with the nation on the brink of bankruptcy, some decisions to cut spending are difficult — but not this one:
>
> "Americans struggling to make ends meet shouldn't be forced to fund public broadcasting when there are already thousands of choices for educational and entertainment programming on the television, radio and Web," DeMint said. "President Obama's own bipartisan debt commission proposed ending these unnecessary subsidies to public broadcasting. NPR boasts that it only gets 2 percent of its funding from taxpayers and PBS gets about 15 percent, so these programs should be able to find a way to stand on their own."
>
> Coburn called subsidies for public broadcasting "indefensible." "The federal government has no business picking winners and losers in today's highly competitive media environment. NPR and CPB will do just fine without largesse from Washington," Coburn added.
>
> **CPB was incorporated as a private, nonprofit corporation under the authority of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, and its first taxpayer subsidy in 1969 was $5 million. In the current fiscal year, CPB is slated to receive $430 million from taxpayers, and President Obama recently asked for an increase to $451 million, the senators said.**
>
> **PBS President Paula Kerger received $632,233 in compensation in 2009, according to the tax forms that nonprofits must file, while NPR President Emeritus Kevin Klose received more than $1.2 million in compensation.**
>
> **DeMint and Coburn also noted that in 2010, NPR accepted a $1.8 million grant from the Open Society Foundation, backed by liberal financier George Soros, to hire 100 reporters. Additionally, NPR has an endowment of over $200 million, they said in a news release.**

These are tough times and we have to cut spending… on liberal propaganda.

Obama continues to block oil drilling as gas prices rise

March 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From left-wing Politico.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration late Friday appealed a judge's orders directing the Interior Department to act on several Gulf of Mexico deepwater drilling permits.
>
> The appeal is the latest salvo in the ongoing fight over the speed with which Interior is – or isn't – letting oil drillers get back to work after last year's BP oil spill.
>
> Gulf state lawmakers and the oil industry have accused the department of enacting a "de facto" moratorium against new drilling, while Interior says it needs to ensure safety and environmental protections are in place.
>
> Friday's appeal challenges rulings by Judge Martin Feldman of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, who on Feb. 17 gave Interior 30 days to make a verdict on five pending deepwater drilling permits applications. He later added two additional permits to that order.

The Washington Times re-caps Obama's record on energy policy.

Excerpt:

> President Obama has intentionally hamstrung domestic energy production under the delusional theory that the U.S. economy can thrive on so-called green power. As Mideast turmoil threatens the oil supply, the price of domestic crude has jumped above $100 a barrel and gas at the pump now exceeds $3.46 a gallon. This shows just how dangerous the Obama administration's economic and energy policies can be to our wallets.
>
> There can be no doubt that the president took deliberate action to block access to the nation's energy resources. A federal judge recently found the Interior Department in contempt for ignoring his order overturning the oil-drilling moratorium the administration imposed following the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. On Feb. 22, Judge Martin Feldman upped the pressure by insisting that the department act on five pending permits within 30 days. Permits that would, under normal circumstances, be processed in two weeks have been ignored for four to nine months. "Not acting at all is not a lawful option," Judge Feldman wrote. The department had no choice but to issue the first permit since the spill on Feb. 28.
>
> Interior pinned the blame for delays on technical problems. Yet, as the department dithered, oil companies atrophied and employees lost work.

> According to a study released in January by the business alliance Greater New Orleans, Inc., the moratorium cost Louisiana about 25,000 jobs. Houston-based Seahawk Drilling, the most recent victim of the drilling ban, announced Feb. 18 that it had filed for bankruptcy and agreed to a buyout from a competitor. The jobs of the company's 494 employees are in jeopardy, according to USA Today.
>
> Meanwhile, Mr. Obama's fiscal 2012 budget proposal calls for imposing a $4 per acre fine on oil and gas companies for land on which they currently hold leases but are not drilling. This gimmick helps the O Force imply that the industry is holding off on drilling in the hope that shortages will drive up prices.

Gas prices are up near $5 in parts of the United States.

When you reduce the supply of a commodity without a decrease in demand, prices go up. This is economics 101. But Obama doesn't know economics 101, and that's why we have a 14 trillion dollar national debt, and a 1.65 trillion dollar budget deficit.

Make no mistake – this is a tax on business and individual consumption. We are losing jobs because of Obama's refusal to allow companies to increase the supply and reduce the prices that Americans pay for energy.

Obama vows to veto any bill that defunds Planned Parenthood

March 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from Life News. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama would veto the House-approved long-term spending bill for the federal government that contains the Pence Amendment, a measure that would de-fund the Planned Parenthood abortion business.
>
> Because of that provision and other pro-life riders that stop abortion funding globally and in the District of Columbia, the Washington Times indicates "Obama has issued a veto threat on that bill, saying House Republicans' cuts are unacceptable."
>
> "Senate Democrats said the non-spending provisions of the bill — such as restrictions on Planned Parenthood and on Obama administration rules and regulations — will also have to be struck," the Times continues.
>
> […]Tony Perkins, the head of the Family Research Council, shed light on the situation, talking about the key pro-life provision in the House-approved budget bill that would stop taxpayer funding of abortions in the District of Columbia.
>
> "Until this administration came to town, it was illegal to take money out of our pockets and use it to directly finance the killing of D.C.'s unborn children. That all flew out the window in the 2009 omnibus, when the Democratic leadership insisted on giving District abortion doctors a direct pipeline to government dollars," he explained."Thanks to the last Congress, the capital of the free world is also the capital of free abortions. This is incredibly significant now, as House and Senate leaders wrestle over the new budget."
>
> "As part of the continuing resolution that House members passed last week, the District would go back to the way things were before President Obama, when there was a freeze on D.C. taxpayer-funded abortion. That's all up in the air, now that both parties can't seem to come to an agreement on budget cuts," he said. "The Left's version of a "clean bill" is still awash in abortion funding."

The Blog Prof reviews some of Obama's pro-abortion actions.

Excerpt:

- signed an Executive Order opening up taxpayer funding for destroying embryos for research, even though the effort is moot (more here)
- directed the Department of HHS to overturn regulations that protect medical professionals from being forced to perform or refer for abortion (more here)
- second act in office was to authorize US dollars to fund abortions oversees (more

here)
- voted against the Born Alive Infant Protection Act (more here and here), thereby outright condoning infanticide (this was before he was elected President, but something that no one should forget). Apparently, not just once but 4 times!
- signed an Executive Order authorizing taxpayer funding for the destruction of human embryos for research and overturned a prior administration EO pressing for forms of stem cell research that wouldn't require embryo destruction. Even though destroying embryos is likely already moot at this point
- announced $50 million for the UNFPA, the UN population agency that has been criticized for promoting abortion and working closely with Chinese population control officials who use forced abortions and involuntary sterilizations.
- defunded all abstinence-only education, instead going with contraceptive-only education that is proven not to decrease pregnancy or abortion
- Signed a new budget calling for taxpayer-funded abortions in Washington D.C.

Robert McCain notes that this is the same Planned Parenthood that wants to teach Girl Scouts about sex.

Democrats are not really pro-choice – they are *pro-abortion*. When you pay for people to have abortions, you are pro-abortion.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Rep. Mike Pence drafts amendment to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

Related posts on Republican bills

- House Republicans win vote to defund Planned Parenthood
- Texas Senate approves pre-abortion ultrasound law
- North Dakota Republican Dan Ruby wants to slash tax rates and ban abortion
- Ohio Republican proposes ban on abortions after baby has a heartbeat
- Iowa House passes constitutional amendment to define marriage
- Arkansas Senate votes to block taxpayer funding of abortion
- Republican Governor Rick Perry demands sonograms before abortions
- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception

- Michael Medved explains why Republicans should not drop social issues

How Stephen Hawking's materialism drives him into irrationality

March 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> In a documentary from the Discovery Channel on the search for extraterrestrial life, Stephen Hawking provides an extraordinarily candid example of the fallacious materialist logic for why extraterrestrial life "must" be possible.

> Around 1:15 of the clip below, Hawking states:
>
> > The life we have on earth must have spontaneously generated itself. It must therefore be possible for life to be generated spontaneously elsewhere in the universe.
>
> The gaping hole in Hawking's logic should be immediately apparent to anyone willing to think critically and skeptically: If we haven't yet explained how life could have spontaneously generated on earth, how do we know that it can be generated spontaneously elsewhere in the universe?
>
> What makes Hawking's position even worse is that in this clip he admits that "we don't understand how life formed."
>
> So according to Hawking, "we don't understand how life formed," but he knows that "the life we have on earth must have spontaneously generated itself." Hawking might be, as the documentary puts it, "one of the greatest minds of our generation," but as anti-ID biochemist Russell Doolittle once said to me in grad school (when attacking Michael Behe), smart guys are great rationalizers.

Here's the clip:

I would not want to be a materialist. I would have to believe in magic and defend a lot of nonsensical things. Then I would lose a lot of arguments. I wouldn't like it. I guess I haven't believed in the Flying Spaghetti Monster of materialism since I learned about the Big Bang. Abandoning materialism is just part of growing up. You put the science fiction down, and start reading science.

Anyway, there is a conference on science and materialism.

Excerpt:

> Conference sessions will examine the conflicting worldviews of theism and materialism; the widespread impact of materialism on science, ethics, society, Biblical studies and theology; the latest scientific evidence against materialism and for intelligent design in biology and cosmology; and the positive implications

> of modern science for theism.
>
> Speakers will include Westminster faculty Vern Poythress, author of *Redeeming Science*; K. Scott Oliphint, author of *Reasons for Faith*; Jeffrey Jue, author of *Heaven Upon Earth*; Brandon Crowe, Lecturer in the New Testament; and Westminster President Peter Lillback, author of *George Washington's Sacred Fire*. Speakers will also include Discovery Institute Fellows such as astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez, co-author of *The Privileged Planet*; molecular and cell biologist Jonathan Wells, co-author of *The Design of Life* and author of *The Myth of Junk DNA* (forthcoming, 2011); philosopher of biology Paul Nelson; philosopher and theologian Jay Richards, editor of *God and Evolution: Protestants, Catholics, and Jews Explore Darwin's Challenge to Faith*; and social scientist John West, author of *Darwin Day in America: How Our Politics and Culture Have Been Dehumanized in the Name of Science*.

If any of my readers are interested in seeing how science is at war with the religion of materialism, please get the book "Who Made God?" by Edgar Andrews, which is suitable for readers of virtually any experience level. I also loved "The Case for a Creator" by Lee Strobel, which is also good for beginners.

The kalam cosmological argument defended in a peer-reviewed science journal

March 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the peer-reviewed article. It appears in a scientific journal focused on astrophysics.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole article is posted online here.

Here's an excerpt in which Craig explains the Big Bang cosmology:

> The monumental significance of the Friedman-Lemaitre model lay in its historization of the universe. As one commentator has remarked, up to this time the idea of the expansion of the universe "was absolutely beyond comprehension. Throughout all of human history the universe was regarded as fixed and immutable and the idea that it might actually be changing was inconceivable."{8} But if the Friedman-Lemaitre model were correct, the universe could no longer be adequately treated as a static entity existing, in effect, timelessly. Rather the universe has a history, and time will not be matter of indifference for our investigation of the cosmos. In 1929 Edwin Hubble's measurements of the red-shift in the optical spectra of light from distant galaxies,{9} which was taken to indicate a universal recessional motion of the light sources in the line of sight, provided a dramatic verification of the Friedman-Lemaitre model. Incredibly, what Hubble had discovered was the isotropic expansion of the universe predicted by Friedman and Lemaitre. It marked a veritable turning point in the history of science. "Of all the great predictions that science has ever made over the centuries," exclaims John Wheeler, "was there

ever one greater than this, to predict, and predict correctly, and predict against all expectation a phenomenon so fantastic as the expansion of the universe?”{10}

As a GTR-based theory, the Friedman-Lemaitre model does not describe the expansion of the material content of the universe into a pre-existing, empty, Newtonian space, but rather the expansion of space itself. This has the astonishing implication that as one reverses the expansion and extrapolates back in time, space-time curvature becomes progressively greater until one finally arrives at a singular state at which space-time curvature becomes infinite. This state therefore constitutes an edge or boundary to space-time itself. P. C. W. Davies comments,

> An initial cosmological singularity . . . forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity. . . . On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.{11}

The popular expression “Big Bang,” originally a derisive term coined by Fred Hoyle to characterize the beginning of the universe predicted by the Friedman-Lemaitre model, is thus potentially misleading, since the expansion cannot be visualized from the outside (there being no “outside,” just as there is no “before” with respect to the Big Bang).{12}

The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, “At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*“{13}

[…]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Now such a conclusion is profoundly disturbing for anyone who ponders it. For the question cannot be suppressed: *Why does the universe exist rather than nothing?* In light of the universe’s origin *ex nihilo*, one can no longer dismiss this question with a shrug and a slogan, “The universe is just there and that’s all.” For the universe is not “just there;” rather it *came into being*. The beginning of the universe discloses that the universe is not, as Hume thought, a necessarily existing being but is contingent in its existence. Philosophers analyzing the concept of necessary existence agree that the essential properties of any necessarily existing entity include its being eternal, uncaused, incorruptible, and

> indestructible{14}–for otherwise it would be capable of non-existence, which is self-contradictory. Thus, if the universe began to exist, its lacks at least one of the essential properties of necessary existence-eternality. Therefore, the reason for its existence cannot be immanent, but must in some mysterious way be ultra-mundane, or transcendent. Otherwise, one must say that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of absolutely nothing, which seems absurd. Sir Arthur Eddington, contemplating the beginning of the universe, opined that the expansion of the universe was so preposterous and incredible that "I feel almost an indignation that anyone should believe in it–except myself."{15} He finally felt forced to conclude, "The beginning seems to present insuperable difficulties unless we agree to look on it as frankly supernatural."{16}
>
> I find that most scientists do not reflect philosophically upon the metaphysical implications of their theories. But, in the words of one astrophysical team, "The problem of the origin [of the universe] involves a certain metaphysical aspect which may be either appealing or revolting."{17}

Every theist should able to understand and defend this argument. It is a scientific refutation of materialism, and it is supported by six lines of scientific evidence – all of which emerged as science has progressed.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies
3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

Several naturalistic/materialistic cosmologies are refuted in Craig's peer-reviewed paper, including the steady-state model, oscillating model, the vacuum fluctuation model, the chaotic inflationary model, and the quantum gravity model. These naturalistic (no God) alternatives all have theoretical or observational difficulties. Atheism is at odds with modern cosmology – and the progress of science itself.

This is the kind of evidence I expect all my readers to be using when discussing whether God exists. Scientific evidence. Please do not talk about your testimony, or the Bible, or what your pastor said on Sunday. We need to show that we understand science, because science is a reliable and respected way of getting knowledge about the universe. Science (experimental, testable, repeatable science) should set limits on what we can believe. Leave the wishing and hoping and praying and dreaming to the atheists.

You should definitely print this article out and read it, then send it to your atheistic friends. I have tried this out on atheists, and the response I get is that scientific discoveries will soon emerge that falsifies all of these six scientific discoveries, and the

kalam cosmological argument, and will prove that the universe is eternal. When I ask them for reasons to believe that these discoveries will be forthcoming, they appeal to science fiction novels, television shows and movies. *I will take a peer-reviewed research paper over Star Trek any day of the week.*

Atheism hates science

- Physicist Frank Tipler weighs in on Stephen Hawking's theory
- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Stephen Meyer debating Michael Shermer on the origin of life
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

Theism loves science

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

How to falsify a religion using scientific or historical evidence

March 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought I would just explain how you can use the findings of science and history to narrow down the list of religions.

Falsifying a religion using science

Consider this argument:

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

Notice how I falsified the oscillating model with theoretical and experimental reasons.

The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with atheism, Buddhism, Mormonism, etc. because they also require an eternally existing universe.

Falsifying a religion using history

Consider this argument:

1. To be a Muslim, you must believe that the Koran is without error.
2. The Koran claims that Jesus did not die on a cross. (Qur'an, 4: 157-158)
3. The crucifixion of Jesus is undisputed among non-Muslim historians, including atheist historians.
4. Therefore, it is not rational for me to become a Muslim.

I'm going to support the premise that Jesus was crucified by citing historians from all backgrounds.

Consider some quotes from the (mostly) non-Christian scholars below:

> "Jesus' death as a consequence of crucifixion is indisputable." Gert Lüdemann
>
> "That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be." J.D. Crossan

> “The passion of Jesus is part of history.” Geza Vermes
>
> Jesus’ death by crucifixion is “historically certain”. Pinchas Lapide
>
> “The single most solid fact about Jesus’ life is his death: he was executed by the Roman prefect Pilate, on or around Passover, in the manner Rome reserved particularly for political insurrectionists, namely, crucifixion.” Paula Fredriksen
>
> “The support for the mode of his death, its agents, and perhaps its co-agents, is overwhelming: Jesus faced a trial before his death, was condemned, and was executed by crucifixion.” L.T. Johnson
>
> “One of the most certain facts of history is that Jesus was crucified on orders of the Roman prefect of Judea, Ponitus Pilate.” Bart Ehrman

That’s 7 famous historians: 3 atheists, 3 Jews and 1 moderate Catholic. The atheists, Ludemann, Crossan and Ehrman, have all debated against the resurrection of Jesus with William Lane Craig. Johnson is the moderate Catholic, the rest are Jewish historians. The Koran was written in the 7th century. That is why no professional historian accepts the Koran as more authoritative than the many earlier Christian and non-Christian sources for the crucifixion story. Many of the sources for the crucifixion are dated to the 1st century. It’s not faith. It’s history.

I have seen debates with Muslim scholars, and I have never once heard them cite a non-Muslim historian to the effect that Jesus was not crucified. To my knowledge, there is no historian who denies the crucifixion of Jesus in his published work.

Can Christianity be falsified by science or history?

Yes. If you prove that the universe is eternal than would falsify the Bible’s claim that God created the universe out of nothing. That would be a scientific disproof. If you could find the body of Jesus still inside a tomb, that would falsify the Bible’s claim about a resurrection. That would be a historical disproof. The nice thing about Christianity is that we make lots of testable claims. This is not make believe, this is knowledge. You can test this. And you should.

Walter Bradley explains three scientific arguments for God's existence

March 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor.

Here's a bio from his faculty page at Baylor University:

> Walter Bradley (B.S., Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin) is Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He comes to Baylor from Texas A&M University where he helped develop a nationally recognized program in polymeric composite materials. At Texas A&M, he served as director of the Polymer Technology Center for 10 years and as Department Head of Mechanical Engineering, a department of 67 professors that was ranked as high as 12th nationally during his tenure. Bradley has authored over 150 refereed research publications including book chapters, articles in archival journals such as the Journal of Material Science, Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites, Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials, Journal of Composites Technology and Research, Composite Science and Technology, Journal of Metals, Polymer Engineering and Science, and Journal of Materials Science, and refereed conference proceedings.
>
> Dr. Bradley has secured over $5.0 million in research funding from NSF grants (15 yrs.), AFOSR (10 years), NASA grants (10 years), and DOE (3 years). He has also received research grants or contracts from many Fortune 500 companies, including Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, 3M, Shell, Exxon, Boeing, and Phillips.
>
> He co-authored The Mystery of Life Origin: Reassessing Current Theories and has written 10 book chapters dealing with various faith science issues, a topic on which he speaks widely.
>
> He has received 5 research awards at Texas A&M University and 1 national research award. He has also received two teaching awards. He is an Elected Fellow of the American Society for Materials and the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the largest organization of Christians in Science and Technology in the world. He is President elect of the ASA and will serve his term in 2008.

You can read more about his recent research on how to use coconuts to make car parts in

this article from Science Daily.

Below, I analyze a lecture I chose from the hundreds of public lectures he has given all over the world on the integration of Christian faith with other public, testable areas of knowledge. In this lecture, entitled "Is There Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer?", Dr. Bradley explains how the progress of science has made the idea of a Creator and Designer of the universe more acceptable than ever before. (It's a little different from the one I posted earlier in the week, and now I have summarized it so people can discuss it without having to watch the lecture).

Evidence #1: The design of the universe

1. The correspondence of natural phenomena to mathematical law

- All observations of physical phenomena in the universe, such as throwing a ball up in the air, are described by a few simple, elegant mathematical equations.

2. The fine-tuning of physical constants and rations between constants in order to provide a life-permitting universe

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants and ratios: (there are more examples in the lecture)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would be able to build up the

nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.
- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – "carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can't be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

3. Fine-tuning to allow a habitable planet

- A number of factors must be fine-tuned in order to have a planet that supports life
- Initial estimates predicted abundant life in the universe, but revised estimates now predict that life is almost certainly unique in the galaxy, and probably unique in the universe.
- Even though there are lots of stars in the universe, the odds are against *any* of them supporting complex life.
- Here are just a few of the minimal requirements for habitability: must be a single star solar system, in order to support stable planetary orbits, the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to have liquid water at the surface, the planet must sufficient mass in order to retain an atmosphere, etc.

The best current atheist response to this is to speculate that there may be an infinite number of unobservable and untestable universes. (I.e. – the Flying Spaghetti Monster did it)

Evidence #2: <u>The origin of the universe</u>

1. The progress of science has shown that the entire physical universe came into being out of nothing (= "the big bang"). It also shows that the cause of this creation event is non-physical and non-temporal. The cause is *supernatural*.

- Atheism prefers an eternal universe, to get around the problem of a Creator having to create the universe.
- Discovery #1: Observations of galaxies moving away from one another confirms that the universe expanded from a single point.
- Discovery #2: Measurements of the cosmic background radiation confirms that the

universe exploding into being.
- Discovery #3: Predictions of elemental abundances prove that the universe is not eternal.
- Discovery #4:The atheism-friendly steady-state model and oscillating model were both falsified by the evidence.
- And there were other discoveries as well, mentioned in the lecture.

The best atheistic response to this is to speculate that there is an unobservable and untestable hyper-universe outside our own. (I.e. – the Flying Spaghetti Monster did it)

Evidence #3: The origin of life

1. The progress of science has shown that the simplest living organism contains huge amounts of biological information, similar to the Java code I write all day at work. This is a problem for atheists, because the sequence of instructions in a living system has to come together all at once, it cannot have evolved by mutation and selection – because there was no replication in place prior to the formation of that first living system!

- Living systems must support certain minimum life functions: processing energy, storing information, and replicating.
- There needs to be a certain amount of complexity in the living system that can perform these minimum functions.
- But on atheism, the living system needs to be simple enough to form by accident in a pre-biotic soup, and in a reasonable amount of time.
- The minimal functionality in a living system is a achieved by DNA, RNA and enzymes. DNA and RNA are composed of sequences of proteins, which are in turn composed of sequences of amino acids.

Consider the problems of building a chain of 100 amino acids

- The amino acids must be left-handed only, but left and right kinds are equally abundant in nature. How do you sort out the right-handed ones?
- The amino acids must be bound together using peptide bonds. How do you prevent other types of bonds?
- Each link of the amino acid chain needs to be carefully chosen such that the completed chain with fold up into a protein. How do you choose the correct amino acid for each link from the pool of 20 different kinds found in living systems?
- In every case, a human or other intelligence could solve these problems by doing what intelligent agents do best: *making choices.*
- But who is there to make the choices on atheism?

The best current atheistic response to this is to speculate that unobservable and untestable aliens seeded the earth with life. (I.e. – the Flying Spaghetti Monster did it)

The problem of the origin of life is not a problem of chemistry, it is a problem of engineering. Every part of car functionality can be understood and described using the

laws of physics and chemistry. But an intelligence is still needed in order to assemble the components into a system that has the minimal requirements for a functioning vehicle.

Conclusion

In all three areas, scientists expected that the data would be consistent with atheism. First, scientists expected that life could exist even if the physical constants and ratios were altered. The progress of science said *NO*. Second, scientists expected that the universe would be eternal. The progress of science said *NO.* Third, scientists expected that the origin of life would be simple. The progress of science said *NO.* Why do some people resist the progress of science and cling to the religious dogma of materialism?

Related posts

- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show
- Cowardly Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Answering Richard Dawkins' question: "Who made God?"
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

MUST-SEE: NPR executive exposes radical left-wing bias in hidden camera sting

March 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video showing the sting of NPR that everyone is talking about:

That's the short version. The longer version is here.

That NPR Senior Vice President for Fundraising Ron Schiller in the video. And he represents everything that NPR believes behind closed doors. The mask is off.

Where did that video come from?

NewsMax has the full story.

Excerpt:

> In the video, Schiller is seen at a luncheon meeting in Georgetown with prospective NPR donors who claim to represent a pro-shariah group called the Muslim Education Action Center. The prospective donors, who say they have $5 million to disburse, are actually grass-roots activists O'Keefe trained.
>
> The videotape shows Schiller telling his prospects that the the grass-roots conservative tea party organizations have "hijacked" the Republican party. He states that the new GOP elements are "not just Islamaphobic, but really xenophobic, I mean basically they are, they believe in sort of white, middle-America gun-toting — I mean, it's scary. They're seriously racist, racist people."
>
> Schiller's potential patrons state outright on their faux Web site that they support the spread of extremist shariah law. They also are heard telling Schiller that their organization has connections to the Muslim Brotherhood, an extremist group that has been linked to terrorism.
>
> In the video, Schiller also defended NPR's decision to terminate its association with commentator and columnist Juan Williams over comments Williams made on Fox News last year. Williams discussed his uneasiness about flying with people wearing traditional Muslim garb. Schiller said Williams had "lost all credibility."
>
> […]"What NPR did I'm very proud of," Schiller says.[…]Another NPR fundraiser, Institutional Giving Director Betsy Liley, also attended the Feb. 22 meal where Schiller made those remarks. She appears to compare America's treatment of Muslims in the years since 9/11 with the internment of Japanese Americans in camps during WWII.
>
> […]Asked to elaborate on the additional revelations he plans, O'Keefe confirmed the additional disclosures involve NPR, but would not say whether they stem from the same meeting involving Schiller and Liley.

Strangely enough, NPR denies that it has any left-wing bias.

Is NPR liberal? Are they biased to the left?

From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> Just yesterday NPR's president and CEO stood before the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., and declared that the taxpayer-funded news organization exhibited no bias against conservatives. Vivian Schiller even dared conservatives to show her the proof.
>
> Less than 24 hours later, filmmaker James O'Keefe delivered the goods.
>
> […]The timing was fortuitous — and it exposed Schiller as an apologist for the liberal mainstream media, of which NPR is a key player. If this is the type of talk Schiller permitted at the highest levels of NPR, is there really any question about the organization's hostility to conservatives?
>
> Schiller's plea yesterday for specific examples of bias was itself laughable. The Media Research Center has a treasure trove of incidents dating back years.
>
> "There's no question it is a perception issue," Schiller insisted when asked about bias in the newsroom. "It is absolutely a perception issue."
>
> But while she was willing to chalk up NPR's liberal bias as merely a "perception" problem, she made sure another form of diversity was being addressed in more substantive manner.

This is the organization that FIRED Juan Williams. Juan Williams is a leftist, but not crazy enough for NPR, apparently.

Why did they do it?

From CNN.

Excerpt:

> The conservative activist responsible for producing an undercover video showing a National Public Radio senior executive slamming the Tea Party as "racist" and "scary" is speaking out about why he went after the organization.
>
> And late Tuesday, NPR announced it has placed the executive, Senior Vice President for Fundraising Ron Schiller, on administrative leave.
>
> Filmmaker James O'Keefe said the idea for the sting stemmed from an incident in October when NPR fired analyst Juan Williams after he said he got scared when people wore Muslim garb on airplanes.
>
> "My colleague Shaughn Adeleye who posed as one of the members of the Muslim Brotherhood was pretty offended with what happened with Juan Williams and he suggested looking into NPR after that incident back in the fall," O'Keefe said to CNN Correspondent Brian Todd on Tuesday.
>
> "My other colleague Simon Templar came up with the idea to have a Muslim angle since Juan Williams was fired due to his comments. So we decided to see if there was a greater truth or hidden truth amongst these reporters and journalists

> and executives."

I am a big fan of the Saint novels, so it's good to see someone resurrecting the Simon Templar alias. This sting is definitely something that Simon Templar would do to expose "the ways of the ungodly".

Please read this interview transcript from the Hugh Hewitt show.

Excerpt:

> HH: And where is the full video? Is it at Project Veritas, James O'Keefe?
>
> JO'K: www.theprojectveritas.com.
>
> …
>
> HH: All right, now James O'Keefe, tell us a little bit about www.theprojectveritas.com. Who funds it?
>
> JO'K: Who funds it? We don't have any money right now. We are a non-profit organization, funded by grassroots people. I'm not exaggerating. We get very small donations, we're running on fumes. And we have volunteer filmmakers, volunteer videographers who go out there. So I would appreciate people make a donation. It's a 501c3. We haven't gotten our tax exemption back from the IRS yet, but hopefully we do. And it's just an effort to muckrake, to shake things up, to expose things for what they are, and to investigate the powerful institutions that the mainstream media refuses to investigate.
>
> HH: Did you time the release of this to coincide with the debate over whether or not to defund NPR?
>
> JO'K: NO, that wasn't intentional. We got this tape, you know, February 22nd, in that week, which you know, and I produced it. So frankly, it was just very coincidental, and it happens to be more of a story. You know, as a journalist, I'm glad it's taking place now, because it's getting a lot more exposure given the debate. But frankly, that was kind of coincidental. It was not done months and months and months ago and I waited. It was done two weeks ago, three weeks ago, and it took me some time to produce it.
>
> HH: Is it fair in your opinion to call this a sting?
>
> JO'K: I don't care what you call it. Honestly, and everyone's asking me what do I refer to myself as. It really does not matter. You can call it a sting, you can call it investigative reporting, you can call it filmmaking, you can call it activism. But what it is, is exposing that a triangle has three sides, frankly, that everyone knows that this is true. But the guy is a caricature, a stereotype, of what people have been talking about for years about these media elites. So I don't really care what people call me or call my teammates, journalists or sting artists or activists or hoaxsters. Whatever they say, I think that it's a form of journalism that's been used for decades by ABC News, PrimeTime Live, 60 Minutes, To Catch A Predator. We're just adding a new media twist to it.

> HH: Where were you, the reason I asked for the term is so I can ask this question. Where were you when the sting was going down?
>
> JO'K: I wasn't even in D.C. I trained these two guys. I gave them all my expertise. I gave them equipment that I have. And I helped them do what they wanted to do. That's my mission at The Project Veritas, train people, equip them, and send them out into the field to do creative reporting.
>
> HH: Did you conceive of the idea, James?
>
> JO'K: No, the idea was basically a hybrid between Shaughn Adeleye, who came to me and was a little bit offended by what happened with Juan Williams, and my other friend, Simon Templar, who similarly thought about doing something with NPR. And we just put our heads together, and I offered by expertise, which is the sort of undercover stuff, and they sort of did the rest.

Evolution News has more on how NPR covers science news.

Excerpt:

One particularly interesting segment of the tapes is an exchange in which the NPR officials explain how their network covers controversial subjects in science. Betsy Liley is heard describing another funding source who wanted NPR not to report the views of global warming skeptics:

> This funder said to us, 'you know you would like us to support your environmental coverage, but we really don't want to give you money if you're going to talk to the people who think climate change is not happening,' (as reported by the *Washington Times*).

She continues to say,

> It is a complicated thing, though. T**here's a political question and there is a scientific question** and we were talking to him about supporting the science desk. And so we've gone back to the science editor and asked how have you planned to cover this thing? Our coverage, if you look at our coverage, you would say that science coverage has accepted that climate change is happening and we're covering it. But in politics, our Washington desk, might actually cover it should it resurface as a political issue…this debate….
>
> **I think the challenge in our society now is that we are questioning facts**. It's not opinions we are debating. I mean, what are the facts? **Is the world flat? Is that the next question we're going to debate?**

Mr. Schiller chimes in later saying,

> The main point here is that it is not our responsibility to present the opinion of a non-scientist through our science desk. All educated scientists accept that climate change as fact. On the political side, however, where it is not accepted as fact, and the fact that debate is happening is news and it's really important news.

> And **our point of view requires that we cover that debate, if for no other reason than to have Americans understand there are still people who believe that it is not fact**.

We should be stinging the secular left elites all the time. Stinging NPR, ACORN and Planned Parenthood is great for everyone – we stop funding them and then their missions (communism, voter fraud and abortion, respectively) are set back. They need our money to do the evil things they want to do. We need to cut off or limit all funding sources of NPR, PBS, unions, trial lawyers, environmentalists, ACORN and Planned Parenthood. And we need to bring in vouchers to stop all involuntary funding of public schools. Why are we work hard in private industry to pay the salaries of lazy left-wing socialists? Let them find real jobs and pay their own way in the free market. Let them offer something of value that customers want instead of acting like parasites on a host.

Government handouts make up 35% of all wages

March 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNBC.

Excerpt:

> Government payouts—including Social Security, Medicare and unemployment insurance—make up more than a third of total wages and salaries of the U.S. population, a record figure that will only increase if action isn't taken before the majority of Baby Boomers enter retirement.
>
> Even as the economy has recovered, social welfare benefits make up 35 percent of wages and salaries this year, up from 21 percent in 2000 and 10 percent in 1960, according to TrimTabs Investment Research using Bureau of Economic Analysis data.
>
> "The U.S. economy has become alarmingly dependent on government stimulus," said Madeline Schnapp, director of Macroeconomic Research at TrimTabs, in a note to clients. "Consumption supported by wages and salaries is a much stronger foundation for economic growth than consumption based on social welfare benefits."
>
> The economist gives the country two stark choices. In order to get welfare back to its pre-recession ratio of 26 percent of pay, "either wages and salaries would have to increase $2.3 trillion, or 35 percent, to $8.8 trillion, or social welfare benefits would have to decline $500 billion, or 23 percent, to $1.7 trillion," she said.
>
> […]Social welfare benefits have increased by $514 billion over the last two years, according to TrimTabs figures, in part because of measures implemented to fight the financial crisis. Government spending normally takes on a larger part of the spending pie during economic calamities but how can the country change this make-up with the root of the crisis (housing) still on shaky ground, benchmark interest rates already cut to zero, and a demographic shift that calls for an increase in subsidies?
>
> At the very least, we can take solace in the fact that we're not quite at the state welfare levels of Europe. In the U.K., social welfare benefits make up 44 percent of wages and salaries, according to TrimTabs' Schnapp.

You can see a nice graph of welfare spending and another graph of single motherhood in this post at Director Blue. He makes the same point I made about increased welfare spending destroys marriage by reducing the need for men in their traditional roles.

New OUP book links premarital sex and promiscuity to poor mental health

March 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Found in the freaking New York Times of all places. (H/T Robert Stacy McCain)

Excerpt:

> [E]arlier generations of Americans waited longer to have sex, took fewer sexual partners across their lifetimes, and were more likely to see sleeping together as a way station on the road to wedlock.And they may have been happier for it. That's the conclusion suggested by two sociologists, Mark Regnerus and Jeremy Uecker, in their recent book, "Premarital Sex in America." Their research, which looks at sexual behavior among contemporary young adults, finds a significant correlation between sexual restraint and emotional well-being, between monogamy and happiness — and between promiscuity and depression.
>
> This correlation is much stronger for women than for men. Female emotional well-being seems to be tightly bound to sexual stability — which may help explain why overall female happiness has actually drifted downward since the sexual revolution.
>
> Among the young people Regnerus and Uecker studied, the happiest women were those with a current sexual partner and only one or two partners in their lifetime. Virgins were almost as happy, though not quite, and then a young woman's likelihood of depression rose steadily as her number of partners climbed and the present stability of her sex life diminished.
>
> When social conservatives talk about restoring the link between sex, monogamy and marriage, they often have these kinds of realities in mind. The point isn't that we should aspire to some Arcadia of perfect chastity. Rather, it's that a high sexual ideal can shape how quickly and casually people pair off, even when they aren't living up to its exacting demands. The ultimate goal is a sexual culture that makes it easier for young people to achieve romantic happiness — by encouraging them to wait a little longer, choose more carefully and judge their sex lives against a strong moral standard.

Stacy McCain adds:

> *What if Regnerus and Uecker are right?*
>
> What would be the consequences of having *scientific proof* that pre-marital chastity and marital fidelity — "One Life, One Wife" – confer socio-economic advantages not only on individuals who uphold such values, but also produce advantages for the larger society?
>
> The implications for public policy, I'll leave to the wonks. Rather, I suggest the

> likelihood that this scientific insight could lead people to consider the possibility that *the Bible is actually true*.

I have to confess that I am always hopeful of getting tweeted by Brian Auten on his Apologetics 315 twitter feed. And when I write posts like this, I just know that Brian takes one look at the headlines and says "tsk! tsk! another anti-feminist political post from WK! Nothing to do with Christian apologetics!". Then he passes my post over for a philosophical term of the day (like "aseity"). But I wish he would read through my whole post and see what the purpose of these posts are – to show that real research can confirm or disconfirm what the Bible says, and that we need to be thinking, as apologists, about the many ways that we can defend the Christian worldview using evidence. Sometimes, people don't become atheists because of scientific or philosophical arguments. Sometimes people become atheists because they way to have sexual pleasure without worrying about moral rules (men) or they want to get attention without worrying about moral rules (women). I'm sorry, but that's really the kind of thing that causes people to become atheists. And broken families and missing fathers have a lot to do with that. So I think Christian apologists need to address that with evidence.

But there's more to this story.

I get a lot of flak from Christian women (let's face it – the men all agree with me) because of my intent to raise effective, influential children and my further intent to shepherd those children into good fields where they can make tons of money with impunity and/or have a big influence on society. (The make-money track is to support scholars who are going more for influence than money, like William Lane Craig). All I get when I say things like that is a lot of feminist kickback about how wives are happier when their children are happy, and children are happy whenever they do whatever makes them feel good. There is no room for the wisdom and leadership of fathers in a feminist Christian woman's home. Their goal is *feelings of happiness.* But that's not my goal. I want to raise effective Christian scholars, like Regnerus.

Consider the author of this OUP book that is being cited in the New York Times.

His faculty page at the prestigious University of Texas (Austin):

> Mark Regnerus is an associate professor of sociology at the University of Texas at Austin (PhD, 2000, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) and a faculty associate at the university's Population Research Center. Author of over 30 published articles and book chapters, his research is in the areas of sexual behavior, religion, and family. His book *Premarital Sex in America: How Young Americans Meet, Mate, and Think about Marrying* (Oxford University Press, 2011) is available beginning in December 2010. His previous book *Forbidden Fruit: Sex and Religion in the Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford University Press, 2007) tells the story of the sexual values and practices of American teenagers, paying particular attention to how participating in organized religion shapes sexual decision-making. Mark's research and opinion pieces have been featured in numerous media outlets in the US and elsewhere. *Forbidden Fruit* has been

> reviewed in *Slate*, the *Dallas Morning News, Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and *The New Yorker*. His op-ed on marital timing norms appeared in the *Washington Post* on April 26, 2009.

Two books with OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS.

And do you know what else? He writes stuff for a Christian web site.

Excerpt:

> Virginity pledges. Chastity balls. Courtship. Side hugs. Guarding your heart. Evangelical discourse on sex is more conservative than I've ever seen it. Parents and pastors and youth group leaders told us not to do it before we got married. Why? Because the Bible says so. Yet that simple message didn't go very far in shaping our sexual decision-making.
>
> So they kicked it up a notch and staked a battle over virginity, with pledges of abstinence and accountability structures to maintain the power of the imperative to not do what many of us felt like doing. Some of us failed, but we could become "born again virgins." Virginity mattered. But sex can be had in other ways, and many of us got creative.
>
> Then they told us that oral sex was still sex. It could spread disease, and it would make you feel bad. "Sex will be so much better if you wait until your wedding night," they urged. If we could hold out, they said, it would be worth it. The sheer glory of consummation would knock our socks off.
>
> Such is the prevailing discourse of abstinence culture in contemporary American evangelicalism. It might sound like I devalue abstinence. I don't. The problem is that not all abstainers end up happy or go on to the great sex lives they were promised. Nor do all indulgers become miserable or marital train wrecks. More simply, however, I have found that few evangelicals accomplish what their pastors and parents wanted them to.
>
> Indeed, over 90 percent of American adults experience sexual intercourse before marrying. The percentage of evangelicals who do so is not much lower. In a nationally representative study of young adults, just under 80 percent of unmarried, church- going, conservative Protestants who are currently dating someone are having sex of some sort. I'm certainly not suggesting that they cannot abstain. I'm suggesting that in the domain of sex, most of them don't and won't.
>
> What to do? Intensify the abstinence message even more? No. It won't work. The message must change, because our preoccupation with sex has unwittingly turned our attention away from the damage that Americans—including evangelicals—are doing to the institution of marriage by discouraging it and delaying it.

The article goes on to explain his ideas, supported by research, on how to solve this

problem. (I disagree with everything he says about why there are more Christian women than men, but still… smart guy – his solution to the marriage problem seems to be similar to Danielle Crittenden in her book “What Our Mothers Didn’t Tell Us”)

Do you see what I mean about people having an influence? What sense does it make to talk about what you like and what you are good at? No one cares. God doesn’t care about what you like nor does he care about what makes you happy. He cares about what increases knowledge of him, and what increases goodness in all of our behavior – Christians and non-Christians. You are expected to lay aside your need for happiness, and ease, and to do hard things. Hard things that will actually count.

Two debates on Christianity and history featuring Richard Bauckham

March 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A leading New Testament scholar from Cambridge, Dr. Richard Bauckham, was recently on the radio program 'Unbelievable?' which is on the Premier Christian Radio network.

Debate 1: The reliability of the gospels

Bauckham was arguing that the Gospels are based on eyewitness accounts and therefore should be regarded as fundamentally trustworthy.

Joining him was New Testament historian Dr. James Crossley, discussing the implications of Bauckham's work and whether the Gospel of John was written by the disciple John himself, as Bauckham claims.

It is well worth the listen.

Part 1 – (1 hr 20 mins)
Part 2 – (1 hr 20 mins)

This is a great debate between two great New Testament scholars.

Debate 2: The divinity of Jesus

The second debate concerns whether the belief in Jesus' divinity was early and authentic, or whether it developed slowly over time. Richard is very thorough and works only with minimal facts that skeptical scholars will agree with. James Crossley is an excellent atheist and argues his side as well as any atheist I have ever heard in a debate on historical questions.

Here is the MP3 file. (Just over an hour)

Below there are speaker bios.

Richard Bauckham

You can find out more about Bauckham in this Christianity Today profile.

Summary:

The author of CT's 2007 Book Award winner in biblical studies, Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, Richard Bauckham proposes a new (or, rather, an ancient) paradigm through which to view the Gospels: as the eyewitness testimony of trustworthy insiders. Wheaton professor Gary Burge asked the St. Andrews scholar how his approach diverges from mainstream New Testament scholarship—and what it means for our understanding of Jesus*.

I'm really excited by the respect he is getting in the academy. This is a completely NEW perspective on the gospels that is getting a lot of attention.

James Crossley

Crossley specializes in Mark, the earliest and most reliable gospel. Mark's source for the Passion narrative of Jesus is dated to the 40s, about 10-20 years after the death of Jesus.

Mark’s gospel is based on the eyewitness testimony of his companion Peter. So it is fun to hear them debate Mark in the first show. And they get into 1 Corinthians 15 as well, which is dated to 1-3 years after Jesus died.

Crossley debated against William Lane Craig before here and he debated against Michael Bird as well (part 1, part 2).

Objective truth in the abortion debate – a pro-life training video

March 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a training video from CCBR, a Canadian pro-life group I really like.

That guy in the video is the one who is always getting into trouble at university debates and lectures.

Here is his biography:

> Jojo has taught pro-life apologetics for both Christian and secular audiences. He has represented the pro-life side in abortion debates held at universities, trained pro-lifers at conferences and given pro-life talks at different religious venues. Jojo has also spoken to the Parliamentary Pro-life Caucus, a group made up of pro-life Members of Parliament, in 2006.
>
> In 2006, Jojo debated Tracy Davidson, the executive director of Planned Parenthood Ottawa, and Jeannette Doucet of Canadians for Choice in Ottawa. Abortion advocates were so frustrated with the debate that they tried to ban the pro-life club which organized it.
>
> In 2009, abortion advocates at St. Mary's University in Halifax shouted Jojo down for 45 minutes in an attempt to stop his presentation. Because of the publicity the protests received, more people attended Jojo's subsequent talks in the area.
>
> Jojo also shares the Christian case for the pro-life view at a variety of different church denominations across the country. He has spoken as the main Sunday morning speaker as well as at various church venues during the week.
>
> One Christian friend, after hearing Jojo's pro-life presentation, said, "I can't believe they do this [abortion] in Canada" and now supports his work.
>
> After graduating, Jojo worked for the National Campus Life Network, the only national pro-life student organization, where he organized two national pro-life conferences.
>
> Jojo earned a Bachelor of Journalism and a Masters in Political Science from Carleton University in Ottawa. He is a co-founder of, and works full-time with, the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform.

Ugh! He went to that awful fascist Carleton University! No wonder they turned him into a pro-life debater!

You may also like this longer talk on pro-life apologetics by Scott Klusendorf delivered at an Alliance Defense Fund conference.

Republicans introduce national right-to-work legislation

March 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

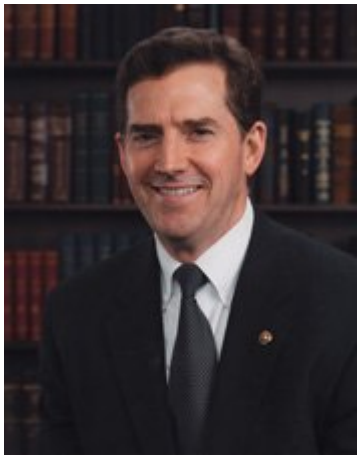

Sen. James Demint

From the Hill.

Excerpt:

> Eight Republican Senators introduced a bill Tuesday giving workers a choice as to whether to join labor unions, which they argue will boost the nation's economy and provide an increase in wages.
>
> Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.), introduced the National Right to Work Act to "reduce workplace discrimination by protecting the free choice of individuals to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities," according to a statement.
>
> Seven other Republicans signed onto the effort: Sens. Tom Coburn (Okla.), Orrin Hatch (Utah), Mike Lee (Utah), Rand Paul (Ky.), James Risch (Idaho), Pat Toomey (Pa.) and David Vitter (La.).
>
> "Facing a steady decline in membership, unions have turned to strong-arm political tactics to make forced unionization the default position of every American worker, even if they don't want it," Hatch said. "This is simply unacceptable. At the very least, it should be the policy of the U.S. government to ensure that no employee will be forced to join a union in order to get or keep their job.
>
> "Republicans cited a recent poll they said shows that 80 percent of union members support having their policy and that "Right to Work" states outperform "forced-union" states in factors that affect worker well being.
>
> From 2000 to 2008, about 4.7 million Americans moved from forced-union to right to work states and a recent study found that there is "a very strong and highly statistically significant relationship between right-to-work laws and economic growth," and that from 1977 to 2007, right-to-work states experienced

> a 23 percent faster growth in per capita income than states with forced unionization.
>
> "To see the negative impacts of forced unionization, look no further than the struggling businesses in states whose laws allow it," Vitter said. "It can't be a coincidence that right-to-work states have on balance grown in population over the last 10 years, arguably at the expense of heavy union-favoring states."
>
> DeMint blamed the problems faced by U.S. automakers on the unions.
>
> "Forced-unionism helped lead to GM and Chrysler's near bankruptcy and their requests for government bailouts as they struggled to compete in a global marketplace," he said. "When American businesses suffer because of these anti-worker laws, jobs and investment are driven overseas."

If you want to attract businesses, then you need to have pro-business laws. That's where jobs come from – businesses.

Here's an article about states who are trying to pass these laws to attract more employers.

Excerpt:

> Currently 14 states beyond Indiana and Wisconsin are considering legislation that would limit union benefits and/or collective bargaining power. They are: Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington (state) and West Virginia. In any number of these states, supporters have planned or held rallies against the measures. But public support might be less than deep. According to a Rasmussen Poll conducted late last week and released Monday, 48 percent of likely U.S. voters sided with Wisconsin Governor Walker whereas only 38 percent sided with his union opponents; the other 14 percent were undecided. And 50 percent of the respondents favored reducing their home state's government payroll by one percent a year for 10 years either by reducing the work force or reducing their pay. Only 28 percent opposed such action.

This is how we are going to turn the recession around. Cut off the spending on left-wing special interests – NPR, PBS, ACORN, Planned Parenthood, Unions. They all will have to pay their own way, just like the grown-ups do.

Jim Wallace and the case-making Christian

March 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

To make a good case, you need to be prepared

I found an interesting post by Jim Wallace of Please Convince Me. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Wallace responds to the alarming statistics of Christians abandoning their faith as soon as they get to university, often because of intellectual doubts. He also notes that many young Christians who don't fall away don't really have a Biblical worldview at all.

Here's the problem:

> Many students are walking away from Christianity because they no longer believe it is true. In a survey conducted by sociologists Christian Smith and Melinda Denton and recorded in their book, "Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers" (Oxford University Press, 2005), 32% of former believers said they left because of intellectual skepticism…
>
> The young Christians who were surveyed said that they believed in the existence of a God who created and ordered the world and watches over human life here on earth. They also believe that this God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, (as they claimed the Bible teaches, and as most other world religions also teach). They said that the central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself. They did not believe that God needed to be involved in one's life except when He is required to solve a problem, and they said that good people go to heaven when they die. Not much of this version of "Christianity" resonates with the classic, orthodox truth of the Christian Worldview, does it?

And here's his solution, passionately argued:

> When asked what it means to be a Christian, few of us would respond that being a Christian means becoming a 'defender of the faith'. Most of us shy away from challengers and those who hold opposing beliefs; many of us are uncomfortable

> with the potential confrontation. But being a Christian demands that we become proficient "case makers". Think about it for a minute. We would all agree that our salvation does not depend on our ability to defend what we believe. After all, we are saved when we trust Jesus for our salvation and recognize that we are fallen, sinful creatures in need of a Savior. When we recognize that Jesus is God incarnate and paid the penalty that we deserve, we begin to embrace the promise of God to rescue us from ourselves! This trust in Christ as Lord and Savior is what saves us.
>
> But we need to recognize that our Christian life is more than one of trust. It is also a life of knowledge and expression. God has called us to think about what we believe and defend it to those who might challenge us or simply ask questions (more on that HERE). Christian "case makers" who have accepted this challenge are often called "apologists". The word "apologist" comes from the Greek word "apologia" which simply means "speaking a defense". The term does have some liability, however, for a couple of reasons. First, the related term, "apology" leaves many with the impression that Christians think they have something to apologize for when they engage in "apologetics". Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. Secondly, our present culture has a tendency to view apologists as professional speakers of one kind or another. Even Christians tend to think of apologetics as something to be done by professionals, rather than an important responsibility to be embraced by each and every Christian. It's time to recognize the fact that all Christians are called to be a Christian "case makers"; the situation couldn't be more urgent.
>
> […]There's a reason why God calls us to worship Him with our minds, understand the value of evidence, examine our beliefs until we are convinced, and then become Christian "case makers" (more on that HERE)! While it is our faith and trust in Christ that saves us, it is our ability to make the case for Christ that protects us and transforms our world. We need to become "case makers" just as Paul was a "tent maker". "Case making" needs to be a part of our Christian identity, and all of us need to be apologists for the Christian Worldview. We cannot continue to delegate this responsibility to well known apologists and Christian authors. We don't need one 'million dollar apologist'; we need a million 'one dollar apologists'. All of us can be equipped to defend our faith; it doesn't require a master's degree in apologetics; it doesn't require a library full of books, or a radio show, or a podcast. It simply requires the personal commitment to learn the truth and defend it to others.

This article is pretty long, but it has a lot of information based on his experience as a cold case police detective.

Here's a snippet that should get you to read the whole thing:

> Call Witnesses Selectively
>
> Once the Opening Statements have been made, it's time to begin presenting the

> evidence to the jury. Much of this evidence will simply be the testimony of important expert witnesses. The attorneys have to select these witnesses carefully and judiciously. Each case is different and will require specific types of experts. Some cases require DNA experts, others require experts in material evidence; some cases require coroners or doctors, others require weapons specialists. The attorneys have the burden of deciding which types of experts will be needed to best make the case.
>
> As a Christian…
>
> I've got to do something very similar if I want to be a "Case Making" Christian. While I may be very familiar with the scientific or philosophical work that has been done on a particular topic, I have to be careful not to overload the conversation with the opinions of too many "expert witnesses". I have to be specific and targeted in the way that I bring experts into the conversation. I also need to be well versed in the work that these experts have done so that I can accurately quote them.
>
> A "Case Making" Tip:
>
> Become a specialist. It's important to have a broad understanding of a number of apologetic issues, but I know there are some places where I am weak, and some places where I am stronger. I try to focus on those areas that are off special interest to me and it's in these areas that I am most familiar with the experts in the field. See yourself as the foreman on a jury. You and I don't have to BE expert witnesses; we simply need to be able to reiterate what the expert witnesses have said once we get back in the jury room with the other jurors.

This is point #3 in his list of 7 points. He's basically saying that you have to be able to represent the work of the experts intelligently, instead of just reading what they've written out loud, which could take forever. You need to read the experts, and then support your case with relevant quotes from the experts, showing how they support arguments that you understand – because you made them. And this preparation and specialization is not based on what is easy for you, or based on what you like, but is instead based on what is effective for your audience. If your audience finds science appealing, then to science you will go. Hint: most men like science, math and computers. Whatever you choose, logic, science, history – it has to be focused on demonstrating the truth of Christianity – NOT Christianity as life-enhancement.

[image]Call Witnesses Selectively

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A "Case Making" Tip:

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Greg Koukl offers eight tips for effective witnessing

March 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A tactical approach makes Christianity more fun

From Stand to Reason – some excellent tactical advice from a master apologist.

Here's the setup:

> I overheard a conversation on the airplane coming back from my vacation in Wisconsin. A Christian gentleman was vigorously sharing his faith with a gentleman in the seat directly behind me. There are some things we can learn, both good and bad, from what I overheard and take his effort—which was a good one—and channel it in a little bit more constructive direction.
>
> So I am going to give you eight points of application.

And here are my favorites from his list:

> **3. Try to stay away from religious language, terminology, and religious affect.** This person was very religious in his whole approach. I think this is hard for us as Christians because we are brought up in a Christian environment and it's natural for us to talk this way, but it sounds weird to people outside of that environment. I think there are a lot of people who may be, in principle, interested in a bona fide, genuine relationship with God through Jesus Christ but who are not interested in the Christian religion as they perceive it. This is where I think a lot of the emergent guys have a legitimate bone to pick with Evangelicalism. Let's try not to sound like Bible-thumping fundamentalists if we can avoid it, even if that's what we are, because there's no need to sound that way if it puts people off. Find another way to communicate the message. Just talk in a straightforward manner. Be conscious of using religious language the other person may not understand or may think is strange. Avoid all of that so they can hear the message you're trying to communicate.

> **4. Focus on the truth, not personal benefits of Christianity.** I appreciated the gentleman's approach in that he kept talking about truth. One person he was talking to said he liked reincarnation. The Christian man said that even if he liked reincarnation that that didn't make it true if it's not true. Liking something is not going to change reality. That's a great point. He was focusing on the truth claims of Jesus. He wasn't giving a bunch of promises. He wasn't saying, "Jesus is my ice cream. He's a great flavor. Try him to see if you like him, too." Or, "Try Jesus because he'll make your life so wonderful." Focus on truth and not personal benefits.
>
> **5. Give evidence.** This gentleman was giving all kinds of evidence for his seatmates to consider. Good for him! You should too. You know why? Because people in the Bible did, too. Jesus, Paul, Peter, all the Apostles. If you look at the details of how they communicated their faith they gave evidence for the truth of what they were saying about Jesus. In fact, if you want to get the content of the Gospel, one of the most famous passages for the articulation of the Gospel is the beginning of 1 Corinthian 15. Paul gives all kinds of evidence. It's all right there as he is explaining the Gospel. We see that all through the New Testament. So give evidences. It's appropriate. People do respond to that even in a postmodern age.

I remember that I was once working in Chicago, and after a particular good apologetics discussion with a team of engineers, I apologized to them all for being so exclusive and a fundamentalist. These guys all had MS and PhD degrees in computer science from top schools like Stanford, Purdue, U of I, NIU and Northwestern. They said "you're not a fundamentalist". And I said, "but I am ultra-conservative in my theology!". And they said "That's ok – as long as you have considered different points of view and you have objective evidence, then somehow it doesn't sound fundamentalist".

I think that's something that we need to work on. When Christianity is about truth, it's open to investigation using public evidence. At work, I have explained the structure of DNA molecules in the office and had people rolling their chairs out of their cubicles to come and see me draw amino acid chains on a white board, and calculate the probabilities with a calculator. (You have to have the calculator – otherwise the whole thing doesn't work!). You can be a fundamentalist, without sounding like a fundamentalist. You just have to focus on truth. If the truth out there is fundamentalist, then you can be a fundamentalist.

Look here:

Make religion about truth – not personal preferences. They respect that way of talking – as long as you bring the science and the history. My advice is to study all the physics, astronomy, chemistry, math and biology you can. Study all the new testament and ancient history you can.

More Greg Koukl

- You can watch Greg Koukl lecture at UCLA on “Moral Relativism”. (58 minutes – worth every second)
- And you can watch Greg give a lecture on tactics here. (90 minutes – another must see)
- And there’s a whole playlist of videos here. Anybody with a blog will love this playlist.

NPR planned to hide $5 million donation from radical Muslim group from government

March 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(44 minutes)

Story from the left-wing Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> An NPR fundraising executive said her organization would be willing to shield a would-be donor from a government audit by keeping the donor's name anonymous, according to a series of surreptitiously recorded phone calls released on Thursday by a conservative activist.
>
> Betsy Liley, NPR's senior director of institutional giving, made the comments to a man posing as a trustee of a fictitious Muslim charity, which the man had said had connections to the Muslim Brotherhood, an Egypt-based group that has suspected ties to terrorists.
>
> Liley's conversations with the man were captured as part of a sting operation orchestrated by James O'Keefe, who has targeted the ACORN community group and Planned Parenthood with secret recordings.
>
> O'Keefe secretly videotaped Liley's boss, Ron Schiller, making demeaning comments about conservatives during a luncheon meeting set up to discuss what the NPR managers believed was a potential $5 million contribution. Liley was also at that meeting and briefly comments in the video.
>
> Ron Schiller resigned from NPR on Tuesday for his role in the video scandal. The video's release also led to the resignation on Wednesday of his boss, NPR chief executive Vivian Schiller.
>
> In a lengthy follow-up phone call with Liley after the lunch, an O'Keefe associate posing as "Ibrahim Kasaam " of the Muslim Education Action Center (a fictitious entity) expressed concerns that NPR, which receives government funding, would be subject to government audits or would have to disclose the source of its donations.
>
> Liley responded, "If you were concerned about that, you might want to be an anonymous donor and we would certainly, if that was your interest, we would want to shield you from that."
>
> At another point, Kasaam asked Liley, "It sounded like you're saying that NPR would be able to shield us from a government audit, is that correct?"
>
> "I think that is the case, especially if you were anonymous, and I can inquire about that," Liley said. She later informed Kasaam via e-mail that NPR's management had cleared an anonymous donation from his group.

> NPR had previously said, in the wake of the luncheon video, that it had "repeatedly refused" to accept donations from the organization.
>
> NPR put Liley on administrative leave as a result of the video.

And they get millions of dollars of taxpayer money. It's got to stop.

Should ID researchers be “marked down” for defending intelligent design?

March 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s an interesting post from Evolution News about a teacher in New Zealand who grades her students down if they try to discuss intelligent design in class.

Excerpt:

> Biology lecturer Alison Campbell at the University of Waikato in Hillcrest, New Zealand, exemplifies a mindset that is tragically common in academia. She openly boasts that if a student were to use standard ID arguments such as the irreducible complexity of the bacterial flagellum, that student would be “marked down”:
>
> If, for example, a student were to use examples such as the bacterial flagellum to advance an ID view then they should expect to be marked down; that particular creationist trophe has been well & truly discredited.

And in fact in reading over that post by Alison Campbell and the comments, it’s not clear that she has read anything by an ID theorist. She quotes from a an anti-ID philosopher and a anti-ID judge to argue against intelligent design. She doesn’t interact with any intelligent design books, by quoting pro-ID arguments and citing page numbers. She doesn’t mention a single research paper written by an ID theorist. It’s just something that an English teacher could have written. She has to keep everything very vague in that post. “There is lots of evidence against ID, so let me quote a philosopher”. “There is lots of evidence against ID, so let me quote a judge”. Neither of those authorities has any training in biology. Does Alison Campbell? Let’s see.

Here are some of her recent publications:

> Campbell, A. 2009 You let them talk in lectures? Student discussion as formative assessment . In: Meyer, Luanna H., Davidson, Susan, Anderson, Helen, Fletcher, Richard, Johnston, Patricia M., Rees, Malcolm(eds) Tertiary assessment & higher education studnet outcomes: policy, practice & research. Wellington : Ako Aotearoa pp91-96.
>
> Campbell, A., Künnemeyer, R. and Prinsep, M. R. 2008. Staff perceptions of higher education science and engineering learning communities. Research in Science & Technological Education, Vol 26, No 3, pp279-294.
>
> Campbell A. 2008. The creep of creationism – is it relevant to teaching earth sciences? Geological Society of New Zealand (Inc) 146, pp 23-26.
>
> Campbell, A. 2007. Is intelligent design a scientific alternative to the theory of evolution? New Zealand Science Teacher 116 pp11-12.
>
> Campbell, Alison. (2005). Intelligent Design? Radio New Zealand ‘Our Changing

> World' interview 6th October.
>
> Otrel-Cass, Kathrin, Earl, Kerry, Campbell, Alison, Cooke, Penelope. (2005). Evolution for Teaching Website evaluation report. NZ Science Teacher, Number 109, pp 27-29.
>
> Buntting, Cathy, Coll, Richard Kevin and Campbell, Alison. 2005. Student views of concept mapping use in introductory tertiary biology classes. International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education. ISSN: 1573-1774 (Online).
>
> Zepke Nick, Leach Linda, Prebble Tom, Campbell Alison, Coltman David, Dewart Bonnie, Gibson Maree, Henderson Judy, Leadbeater Jenny, Purnell Sue, Rowan Linda, Solomon Nika and Wilson Stewart. 2005. Improving tertiary student outcomes in the first year of study. Teaching & Learning Research Initiative.
>
> Campbell, Alison. (2004). Book review: The flight of the huia. New Zealand Journal of Zoology, Vol.31, pp 379-380.
>
> Campbell A, Cooke P, Earl K and Otrell-Cass K. (2004). A New Zealand "Evolution for Teaching" Online Resource. Teaching EARTH SCIENCES Vol 29, Number 3/4, pp 31-32.
>
> Campbell, A.M., P. Cooke, K. Cass & K. Earl (2004) "Evolution for Teaching".

I don't see a single publication in experimental science in there. She doesn't do research. She has no research publications. But if a genuine experimental biologist came into her classroom, that person would be marked down for disagreeing with her religion – the religion of materialism. The assumption of naturalism. Both of which are *easily* demonstrated as false simply by looking at the experimental evidence supporting the Big Bang theory, e.g. – redshift, cosmic microwave background radiation, light element abudnances, etc. But some people don't let the science inform their worldview. They just write about teaching and then mark down actual experimental biologists who question their faith commitments to materialism and naturalism.

Here are some papers from Biologic Institute researchers:

D'Andrea-Winslow L, Novitski AK (2008) Active bleb formation is abated in *Lytechinus variegatus* red spherule coelomocytes after disruption of acto-myosin contractility. Integrative Zoology 3: 106-113. doi:10.1111/j.1749-4877.2008.00086.x

Axe DD, Dixon BW, Lu P (2008) *Stylus*: A system for evolutionary experimentation based on a protein/proteome model with non-arbitrary functional constraints. PLoS ONE 3: e2246. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0002246

Sternberg RV (2008) DNA codes and information: Formal structures and relational causes. Acta Biotheoretica doi:10.1007/s10441-008-9049-6. PMID: 18465197

Gonzalez G (2008) Parent stars of extrasolar planets – IX. Lithium abundances. Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, Online Early Articles doi:10.1111/j.1365-2966.2008.13067.x

Duren RW, Marks II RJ, Reynolds PD, Trumbo ML (2007) Real-time neural network

inversion on the SRC-6e reconfigurable computer. IEEE Transactions on Neural Networks 18: 889-901. PMID: 17526353

Gonzalez G, Laws C (2007) Parent stars of extrasolar planets VIII. Chemical abundances for 18 elements in 31 stars. Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society 378: 1141-1152. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2966.2007.11867.x

Gravagne IA, Marks II RJ (2007) Emergent behaviors of protector, refugee and aggressor swarms. IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man and Cybernetics, Part B: Cybernetics 37: 471- 476. PMID: 17416173

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Notice any differences between Alison's papers and these papers? That's right! These papers are science. Alison's papers are not science. They are secular-left education policy. But all of these real scientists from Biologic would be "marked down" in her classroom – because philosophers and judges say that they must be marked down. Why assess the complicated science when you can just impose your religion by force on dissenters? It worked for the Catholic Church against Galileo. Maybe Alison doesn't understand experimental science? Maybe ID papers are just too complicated for her to understand?

Since Alison mentions the bacterial flagellum by name, I thought that it might be useful for us to see a popular-level article on the bacterial flagellum written by an anonymous graduate student of biology. He has to be anonymous because of religious people like Alison who will mark him down for doing actual science that contradicts her faith. (I know who he is)

Excerpt:

> As I mentioned in my previous essay, the synthesis of the bacterial flagellum is orchestrated by genes which are organised into a tightly ordered cascade in which expression of one gene at a given level requires the prior transcription of

another gene at a higher level.

In *Salmonella*, the flagellar system has three classes of promoters — Class I, Class II, and Class III. This sequential transcription is coupled to the process of flagellar assembly. Class I contains only two genes in one operon, namely FlhD and FlhC. Class II consists of 35 genes across eight operons. These genes include those involved in the biosynthesis of the hook-basal-body and other components of the flagellum and export apparatus, as well as the regulatory genes FliA and FlgM. Those genes which are involved in the synthesis of the filament are controlled by virtue of the Class III promoters.

The Class I promoter is required to drive the expression of the enteric master regulator, FldH4C2. The Class II promoters are subsequently turned on by this master regulator in association with the sigma factor, σ70. The Class II promoters are responsible for the gene expression of the hook-basal-body subunits and its regulators, including σ28 (encoded by a gene called FliA) and its anti-sigma factor, FlgM. The sigma factor σ28 is, in turn, required in order to activate the class III promoters. Before the construction of the Hook-Basal-Body has been completed, one obviously does not want the flagellin monomers to be prematurely expressed. Thus, in order to inhibit the σ28, its anti-sigma factor FlgM keeps it away from the RNA polymerase holoenzyme complex. When, finally, the Hook Basal Body has been completed, the anti-sigma factor FlgM is secreted, remarkably, through the flagellar substructures which are produced by the expression of the Class II hook-basal-body genes. The Class III promoters are then finally turned on by the sigma factor σ28, and the flagellum is completed. These Class III promoters are responsible for the expression of flagellin monomers, the chemotaxis system and the motorforce generators. In all, more than 50 genes are necessary for flagellar self-assembly to take place.

The flagellar apparatus can basically be divided into two key components: the secretion system and the axial structure. As discussed in my previous piece, the key components of the axial structure are FlgG for the rod, FlgE for the hook, and FliC for the filament. Each of those has its own respective cap protein, by virtue of which it assembles. The cap protein for FlgG is FlgJ; for FlgE, it is FlgD; and for FliC, it is FliD.

The cap protein FliD remains at the tip of the filament in the finished product. Some other components of the axial structure — FlgB, FlgC and FlgF — connect the rod and MS ring complex. The hook and filament are connected by FlgK and FlgL.

The structural foundation of the flagellar apparatus is the MS ring complex. When the C ring and C rod attach to the cytoplasmic surface of the M ring, the complex begins to secrete flagellar proteins.

One particularly remarkable feature of the flagellar assembly is the construction of the rod structure (which is built through the peptidoglycan layer with the

> assistance of cap protein FlgJ). The outer membrane represents a road block such that it cannot continue to grow. Incredibly, the outer ring complex actually cuts a hole in the membrane to allow the hook to continue to grow beneath the FlgD scaffold until it reaches a specified critical length, upon which the substrates which are being secreted switch from the rod-hook mode to flagellin mode. FlgD is then replaced by hook associated proteins (or HAPs) and the filament continues to grow. This, of course, only works correctly in the presence of the cap protein FliD; otherwise the flagellin monomers are lost.

Alison thinks that that is creationism. Notice how often the Bible was cited? That's right. It wasn't. This guy is not even a young-earther, and he leans towards common descent, too. (UPDATE: He just post a pack of research against common descent last week and now he is leaning away from it)

Don't read that Alison – it's nasty science, and it would offend your beliefs! Just stick to writing the stuff you're good at. And for Darwin's sake, don't try to debate the science with anyone who disagrees with you. Don't read any books that disagree with you. And don't read any research papers and cite them in your writings. Just mark the ID scientists down – that's the safest way to silence them. Ram your religion down their throats. Who cares about evidence? Not you. Otherwise you would be reading theirs, and writing some of your own.

UPDATE: Lenny has a good post about biases at Come Reason.

Scientific American assesses naturalistic explanations for the origin of life

March 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Scientific American. (H/T Letitia via Mary)

Excerpt:

> As recently as the middle of the 20th century, many scientists thought that the first organisms were made of self-replicating proteins. After Francis Crick and James Watson showed that DNA is the basis for genetic transmission in the 1950s, many researchers began to favor nucleic acids over proteins as the ur-molecules. But there was a major hitch in this scenario. DNA can make neither proteins nor copies of itself without the help of catalytic proteins called enzymes. This fact turned the origin of life into a classic chicken-or-egg puzzle: Which came first, proteins or DNA?
>
> RNA, DNA's helpmate, remains the most popular answer to this conundrum, just as it was when I wrote "In the Beginning…" Certain forms of RNA can act as their own enzymes, snipping themselves in two and splicing themselves back together again. If RNA could act as an enzyme, then it might be able to replicate itself without help from proteins. RNA could serve as gene and catalyst, egg and chicken.
>
> But the "RNA-world" hypothesis remains problematic. RNA and its components are difficult to synthesize under the best of circumstances, in a laboratory, let alone under plausible prebiotic conditions. Once RNA is synthesized, it can make new copies of itself only with a great deal of chemical coaxing from the scientist. Overbye notes that "even if RNA did appear naturally, the odds that it would happen in the right sequence to drive Darwinian evolution seem small."
>
> The RNA world is so dissatisfying that some frustrated scientists are resorting to much more far out—literally—speculation. The most startling revelation in Overbye's article is that scientists have resuscitated a proposal once floated by Crick. Dissatisfied with conventional theories of life's beginning, Crick conjectured that aliens came to Earth in a spaceship and planted the seeds of life here billions of years ago. This notion is called directed panspermia. In less dramatic versions of panspermia, microbes arrived on our planet via asteroids, comets or meteorites, or drifted down like confetti.

John Horgan is not a Christian, nor even a theist. This is the state of the art if you are a naturalist.

Basically, you have at most a couple hundred million years from the time the Earth cools to the appearance of first life. You are unlikely to get one measly protein without an intelligence arranging the amino acids. This is assuming we spot you a favorable

environment for creating amino acids without intervention. And then there would still be the problem of sequencing the proteins.

Atheists oppose science and evidence

- Physicist Frank Tipler weighs in on Stephen Hawking's theory
- Peter Atkins claiming that the entire physical universe is nothing
- Stephen Meyer debating Michael Shermer on the origin of life
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life

Theists support science and evidence

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

Friday Night Funny: Quebecers think that Obamacare would be good

March 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

Quebec is the most liberal province in Canada, and the most French. And the most socialist!

That's Steven Crowder, who grew up in Montreal, Quebec.

I laughed my head off at this video and tears came out.

Mary sent me this post that Erica found on CNN. Crime fail!

Here's some Juan Williams getting excited about his former employer, NPR:

Happy Friday!

Is it arrogant and judgmental to defend your answers to ultimate questions?

March 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post on Tough Questions Answered that got 66 comments!

Excerpt:

> Four times in the past year I have heard the following kind of statement from atheists: "Religious people are dangerous because they think they have answers to ultimate questions." Twice these comments were uttered by personal friends of mine, and twice I heard them expressed by atheists in debates that I listened to via mp3. The first few times I heard the comment I didn't think much of it. The fourth time, however, has bothered me enough that I need to respond.
>
> What are the ultimate questions that religious people think they know the answers to? Generally, these are questions like the following:
>
> 1. Where did the universe come from?
> 2. How do we know what is right and what is wrong?
> 3. Does God exist?
> 4. What happens to us after we die?
> 5. What is the purpose of our lives?
>
> Atheists seem to be alarmed by the fact that religious people think they have answers to these questions. The argument is that people who think they have answers to these questions are often dogmatic, uninterested in reason, irrational, arrogant, and exclusionary. The flip side of this argument is that people who claim to have no answers to these questions are open-minded, reasonable, rational, intellectually humble, and [inclusive].

They go on to answer the objection in the quote. But I'm not showing that here, you have to click through!

You may also be interested in this one question that you should ask all your atheist friends about their "moral" views. Ask them the question, then have a discussion with them about what morality really is, and what worldview grounds what morality really is.

Three lectures in three days from Jennifer Roback Morse

March 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

First, before the three lectures, there is a quick segment on Issues, Etc.

The MP3 file is here. (12 minutes, 5.4 Mb)

This one is about Rahna Reiko Rizzuto, a university professor who has decided to abandon her children out of selfishness, and become a deadbeat mom. Here summary of her view is "I didn't want to do *give up my life for someone else*.".

Franciscan University of Steubenville

The MP3 file is here. (26 minutes, 11.8 Mb)

This one is about artificial reproductive technologies, and was delivered to a class of nursing students in their medical ethics class. Timely – because the Democrats just rescinded conscience protections for medical workers.

Nashville Republican Women

The MP3 file is here. (56 minutes, 25.9 Mb)

In this shorter talk she discusses the Ruth Institute, the views of the next generation on marriage, and the consequences of abandoning or redefining the institution of marriage. She delivered a longer version of this talk the next day at Aquinas College.

Duqesne University

The MP3 file is here. (53 minutes, 24.4 Mb)

This talk is based on her book "Smart Sex". The topic of that book is on how irresponsible sex can actually drive people away from each other, and how we are rejecting the obligations we have to other people out of selfishness and preventing ourselves from enjoying life-long married love.

About Jennifer Roback Morse

Here's her bio:

> Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D. is the founder and President of the Ruth Institute, president of the Ruth Institute a project of the National Organization for Marriage

> to promote life-long married love to college students by creating an intellectual and social climate favorable to marriage.
>
> She is also the Senior Research Fellow in Economics at the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty.
>
> She is the author of Smart Sex: Finding Life-long Love in a Hook-up World, (2005) and Love and Economics: Why the Laissez-Faire Family Doesn't Work (2001), recently reissued in paperback, as Love and Economics: It Takes a Family to Raise a Village.
>
> Dr. Morse served as a Research Fellow for Stanford University's Hoover Institution from 1997-2005. She received her Ph.D. in economics from the University of Rochester in 1980 and spent a postdoctoral year at the University of Chicago during 1979-80. She taught economics at Yale University and George Mason University for 15 years. She was John M. Olin visiting scholar at the Cornell Law School in fall 1993. She is a regular contributor to the National Review Online, National Catholic Register, Town Hall, MercatorNet and To the Source.

These lectures are particularly timely for me, as I am working my way through Dr. Laura Schlessinger's "Stupid Things Parents Do To Mess Up Their Kids", and getting some ideas for public policies and laws that would really be pro-child and pro-marriage. That book is my light reading book, and I recommend it. Dr. Laura Schlessinger is hit or miss, but this one is definitely a direct hit. My heavy reading books are "Signature in the Cell" by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and "Economic Facts and Fallacies" by Dr. Thomas Sowell.

UK approves explicit sex education materials for five-year old children

March 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Creative Minority Report via Foxfier)

Excerpt:

> Explicit cartoons, films and books have been cleared for use to teach sex education to schoolchildren as young as five.
>
> A disturbing dossier exposes a wide range of graphic resources recommended for primary school lessons.
>
> The shocking material – promoted by local councils and even the BBC – teaches youngsters about adult language and sexual intercourse.
>
> Among the books singled out in the report is How Did I Begin? by Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom which has a cartoon image of a couple in bed in an intimate embrace.
>
> It is accompanied by an explanation – using frank and adult terminology – of the act of intercourse.
>
> Another, called The Primary School Sex And Relationships Education Pack by HIT UK, includes material to allow children aged five to 11 to learn about different sexual positions and prostitution.
>
> The BBC has been highlighted for an educational video featuring full frontal nudity, while its learning resources department, BBC Active, shows computer-generated images of male genitalia.
>
> All the material has been recommended by councils for use at ages 'seven-plus'.
>
> […]Before the election, the Liberal Democrats said they 'unreservedly' supported mandatory sex education in primary schools.

I wonder if they will be doing away with the right of parents to opt their students out of the sex education curriculum, like they do in Ontario, Canada. And in Germany, if your child doesn't attend the sex education classes, then you are fined – and if you can't pay the fine then you go to jail. Sweden also jails parents for homeschooling.

Related posts

- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- British woman has sex with strangers in order to get fatherless child
- The UK has generous welfare benefits for single mothers
- Switzerland company to manufacture condoms for 12-14 year olds
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- Most children of British mothers born out of wedlock – UK Telegraph

- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- Public schools hand out condoms to 5-year olds without parental consent
- Teacher union promotes sexualizing children at United Nations conference
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the “hook-up” culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children’s sexual choices

Is Obama causing gas prices to rise by restricting oil drilling?

March 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are some graphs from the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Graph 1:

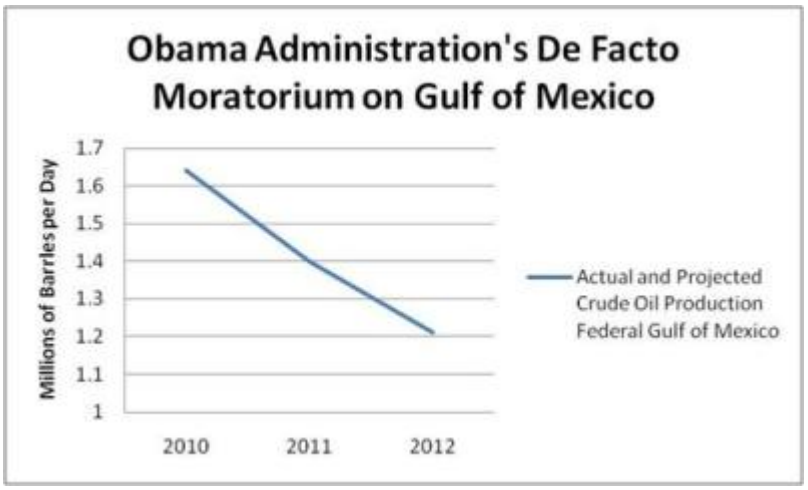

Domestic oil production down since Obama took office

Graph 2:

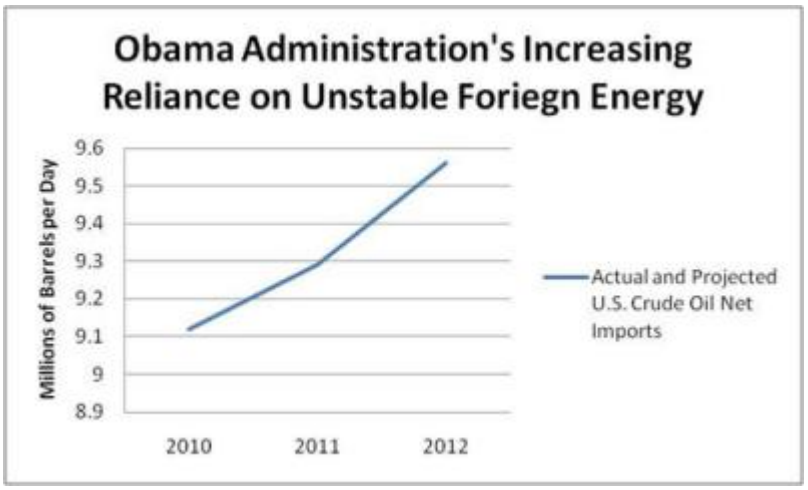

More reliance on foreign oil since Obama took office

Quote:

> *"The numbers don't lie—it's clear that this Administration is taking U.S. energy policy in exactly in the wrong direction. Gas prices are closing in on $4 per gallon and thousands of people are out of work in the Gulf because of the de facto moratorium on drilling permits,"* said Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings. *"Unemployment is only going to get worse as this Administration's policies continue to increase the cost of gasoline, which trickles down to every sector of our economy. We need to use our resources to produce American made energy, create good jobs, and insulate ourselves from uncontrollable energy prices spikes."*

That's a government web site.

Fox News explains that this doesn't just cause higher gas prices, but also increases unemployment.

Excerpt:

> The Chamber of Commerce released a report Thursday that found 351 energy projects around the country were in regulatory limbo last year because of regulations, environmental protests, or lawsuits.
>
> None of them include drilling for oil or gas and remarkably, almost half of the delayed projects involved renewable energy.
>
> "There are hundreds of laws with thousands of provisions, all of which can stop a project," said William Kovacs of the Chamber's Environment, Technology & Regulatory Affairs Division.
>
> Steve Pociask of TeleNomic Research, one of the authors of the study, found those delays are costing the economy dearly. The report says the stalled projects cost the economy $1.1 trillion in economic activity last year and would have provided 1.9 million jobs in each year of construction.
>
> The report said that once constructed, the projects would have supplied some 791,000 jobs per year over 20 years and added $3.4 trillion to the GDP, and that's without taking into account lower energy prices that could result from the completed projects.
>
> […]A partial list from the report shows the stalled or delayed proposals included 22 nuclear projects, 1 nuclear disposal site, 21 transmission projects, 38 gas and platform projects and 111 coal projects.

Here's a story from the Louisiana Times-Picayune. It shows that Obama is lying to the public about these facts.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama said Friday that oil production out of the Gulf of Mexico is at a record high and that a rush to new drilling is not a long-term solution for a nation that consumes more than a quarter of the world's oil.
>
> But Louisiana lawmakers lambasted the president's remarks on rising energy prices, made at his second news conference of the year, suggesting that he failed to confront the fact that his administration's slow-go on permitting threatens future supplies, and that renewed drilling is an essential response to the rise in gas prices.
>
> "The gap continues to widen between what President Obama claims to be true about domestic energy production and what Louisianans know is true," said Sen. David Vitter, R-La.
>
> "This administration still doesn't seem to understand that the best way to combat rising gasoline prices is to encourage new domestic development and

> production of oil," said Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La. With gas prices rising amid increased international demand and chaos in oil-rich Libya, Obama sought to debunk the notion that his administration was impeding domestic energy production.
>
> […]"Someone should tell the President that April Fool's Day is still weeks away," said Rep. Jeff Landry, R-New Iberia. Like other members of the delegation, Landry complained that the president's assertions about Gulf oil production failed to credit the aggressive permitting policies of past administrations that enabled oil to flow at record levels, or to acknowledge that his administration's slow-down on permitting in the aftermath of the BP oil spill is leading to a drop in production that will become painfully obvious in the months and years to come.
>
> […]Landry said he agreed the president should "focus on responsible and affordable alternative energy sources like nuclear, natural gas and clean coal." But he said tax subsidies for wind, solar and experiments like the electric car made no sense.
>
> "We've got enough natural gas and coal for the next 200 years. Why do we require the American people to continue to pour tax dollars down the toilet?" asked Landry.

And what it shows is that we are bidding on foreign oil, which China, India and everyone else is also bidding on. Do you know what happens when lots of people want to buy the same thing? The price of that thing goes up. And that's exactly what we are seeing. The only way to make gas prices go down is by increasing our own supply.

Palestinians celebrate with candies after 3-month old is stabbed to death

March 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Palestinians celebrate murdering 3-month old girl

From the New York Post.

Excerpt:

> Israeli officials are sweeping through West Bank settlements in a manhunt for the killers of a Jewish couple and three of their children found stabbed in their home early yesterday.
>
> The five family members were knifed in their beds as they slept in their house in the West Bank town of Itamar.
>
> The victims were Udi Fogel, 36, his wife, Ruth, 35, and three of their six children: Yoav, 11, Elad, 4, and 3-month-old Hadas, local papers reported yesterday.
>
> The grisly slayings occurred sometime during the Jewish Sabbath late Friday night, military officials said. It's unknown if the murders, deemed a "terror attack" by the Israeli military, was carried out by a lone assailant or several killers.
>
> […]In Gaza, a Hamas official applauded the attack, and local residents celebrated the killing of the settlers.

Despicable.

More from YNet News. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Gaza residents from the southern city of Rafah hit the streets Saturday to celebrate the terror attack in the West Bank settlement of Itamar where five

> family members were murdered in their sleep, including three children.
>
> Residents handed out candy and sweets, one resident saying the joy “is a natural response to the harm settlers inflict on the Palestinian residents in the West Bank.”

If you want to see the actual photos, you can see them here. WARNING! THIS IS INCREDIBLY GRAPHIC MATERIAL.

The only way to deal with evil on this level is by escalating. Peace through strength. Speak to them in a language they understand, and they will stop.

What got me started on apologetics? William Lane Craig debate transcripts

March 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yes, William Lane Craig debate transcripts. In fact, I still read them from time to time to keep up my skills.

Here's one of my favorites, the Craig-Nielsen debate on grounding morality without God

Summary:

> THE CRAIG-NIELSEN DEBATE: GOD, MORALITY, AND EVIL
> William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen
> with annotations by William Lane Craig
> February 1991, University of Western Ontario

Best part:

Finally, he raises the issue of immortality and says, "Death doesn't undermine moral values. In fact, things that we value become all the more precious." Well, in one sense he's right. It's the *absence of God* that undermines the objectivity of moral values, not *death*. But let's suppose that there are objective moral values. What would be undermined by the lack of immortality? I think two things.

First, I think there would be no reason to adopt the moral point of view. Since you're going to die, everyone ends up the same. It doesn't make any difference whether you live as a Hitler or a Mother Teresa. There is no relationship between your moral living and your ultimate fate. And so in that sense, death undermines the reason for adopting the moral point of view rather that just being an egoist and living for self.

Second, there's no basis for self-sacrifice on this point of view. Why should an atheist, who knows everything is going to end in death, do things that are morally right that go against self-interest? For example, a few years ago there was a terrible mid-winter air disaster in Washington, DC, as a plane crashed into a bridge spanning the Potomac River, spilling its passengers into the icy waters. And as the helicopters came to rescue these people, attention focused on one man who again and again passed by the rope ladder rather than be pulled to safety himself. Seven times he did this, and when they came again, he was gone. The whole nation turned its eyes to this man in respect and admiration for the noble act of self-sacrifice that he did. And yet on the atheistic view, that man wasn't noble. He did the *stupidest* thing possible. He should have gone for the rope ladder first, pushed others away, if necessary, in order to survive! But to give up all the brief existence he will ever have for others he didn't even know? Why? It seems to me, then, that it's not simply the absence of God that undermines objective moral values, but ethical living is also undermined by the atheistic point of view because you then have no reason to adopt the moral point of view and you have no basis for acts of self-sacrifice.

By contrast, on the Christian view, where you have both God and immortality, you have

the necessary presuppositions for the affirmation of objective moral values and for consistent living of the ethical life.

And another of my favorites, the Craig-Taylor debate on the ontological grounding of morality.

Summary:

> Is The Basis Of Morality Natural Or Supernatural?
> Richard Taylor and William Lane Craig
> October 1993, Union College, Schenectady, New York

Sample Craig:

(2) I argued that moral accountability also exists under the supernaturalist view, and Professor Taylor didn't deny the point.

(II) What about my critique, then, of naturalism? I said that naturalism doesn't provide a sound foundation for morality, and here I made two points:

(1) On the naturalist view, objective right and wrong do not exist. Again, Professor Taylor doesn't deny this point; he just says, "Well, to say that they're conventional doesn't mean they're contemptible." Well, granted; but it *does* mean they're arbitrary, they're non–objective. There's no more difference between moral right and wrong than driving on the right–hand side of the road versus the left–hand side of the road. It's simply a societal convention. And the modern evolutionist thinks these conventions are just based in socio–biological evolution. According to Michael Ruse, a professor of the philosophy of science,

> The position of the modern evolutionist…is that humans have an awareness of morality…because such an awareness is of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation, no less than are hands and feet and teeth…. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, [ethics] is illusory. I appreciate that when somebody says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves…. Nevertheless…such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction and…any deeper meaning is illusory….{26}

This is essentially the same view as Professor Taylor's. Moral values are simply rooted in socio–biological evolution, that have passed down as certain taboos and certain commands, but they have no objective validity in terms of their moral rightness or wrongness. Professor Taylor says, "But I have a high regard for people who are truly moral and decent." I don't deny that. Of course he does! But the point is that in his ethics, in his philosophy, he has no *basis* for that affirmation. What I bring is not a new set of values—I think we pretty much hold those in common—but I'm offering a secure *foundation* for those values that we all want to hold dear.

You see, on Professor Taylor's view, there really isn't any objective morality. I think every one of us here tonight would agree that it's wrong to kill babies and that the holocaust

was morally wrong. But in his book Professor Taylor says, “The infanticide practiced by the Greeks of antiquity did not violate their customs. If we say it was nevertheless wrong, we are only saying that it is forbidden by *our* ethical and legal rules. And the abominations practiced by the Nazis…are forbidden by our rules, and not, obviously, by theirs.”{27} I submit that that is simply a patently false view of moral values and that naturalism, therefore, can’t provide any objective basis for right and wrong.

And another of my favorites, the Craig-Tooley debate on the problem of evil.

Summary:

> A Classic Debate on the Existence of God
> Dr. William Lane Craig & Dr. Michael Tooley
> November 1994, University of Colorado at Boulder

Sample Craig:

(2) Christian doctrines increase the probability of the coexistence of God and the evils in the world. Let me just mention a couple of these.

(i) On the Christian view, the purpose of life is not happiness as such in this life. Rather it is the knowledge of God—which will ultimately produce true and everlasting happiness. What that means is that many evils occur in this life which might be utterly pointless with respect to producing human happiness. But they might not be pointless with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Dr. Tooley assumes when he talks about changes that would make this world a better place, that the purpose of life is basically to be happy in this life. And I certainly admit that you could make changes that might appear to make this life a better place, make it happier. But that’s not God’s purpose. So if you understand that the purpose of life is not happiness as such, I think that you can see that the existence of evil doesn’t necessarily cast any improbability upon God’s existence.

(ii) It’s also the Christian view that God’s purpose spills over into eternal life. In the afterlife God will bestow a glory and happiness upon us that is incomparable to what we’ve suffered here on earth. And the longer we spend in eternity with Him, the more the sufferings in this life shrink by comparison to an infinitesimal instant. Dr. Tooley admits in his article that it is possible that immortality could justify such evils. But, he says, it’s “very unlikely” that there is life after death. Well, I have two comments. First, I’d like him to prove that it’s unlikely that there is life after death.{26} Second, I suggest that the resurrection of Jesus gives us grounds for hoping in life after death, and I’ve attempted to justify that historically. So given these Christian doctrines, I think you can see that the existence of God and evil is not so improbable after all.

[…]

(4) Finally, I think that there is actually an argument for God from evil. It would go like this:

(i) If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist. If there is no God, moral values are either socio-biological by-products or just expressions of personal preference.

(ii) Evil exists. That's the premise of the atheist. There is real evil in the world.

(iii) Therefore, objective values do exist. Some things are really wrong.

(iv) Therefore, God exists.

Thus the presence of evil in the world actually demonstrates God's existence because in the absence of God, there wouldn't be any distinction objectively between good and evil, between right and wrong. So although evil in one sense calls into question God's existence, in a much deeper sense, I think, it actually requires God's existence.

So in the light of these four responses, I think that the argument from evil, as difficult and emotionally pressing as it might be, in the end doesn't constitute a good argument against the existence of God. So I think the four arguments given against the existence of God by Dr. Tooley are inconclusive. You've still got my six arguments for God's existence, and therefore I still think that on balance the evidence favors theism as the more rational worldview.

You can find more debates here.

Veronique de Rugy debunks myths about public sector pension liabilities

March 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Reason magazine. (H/T Hyscience)

Bullet point summary:

> **Myth 1:** *Unfunded state pensions do not represent an immediate threat and are therefore not in crisis.*
> **Fact 1:** *In the best case scenario, some state pension funds will run out as soon as 2017. And the longer the states wait to fully fund their pensions, the more drastic the financial consequences will be.*
>
> **Myth 2:** *State debt accurately reflects state liabilities. And state default is not a concern because the federal government will bail the states out before they reach that point.*
> **Fact 2:** *Many government pension liabilities are kept off the books, so most states and cities underestimate their actual debt.*
>
> **Myth 3:** *State and local workers are not overpaid. And even if they are, changing their compensation won't make a difference.*
> **Fact 3:** *While this is a complex issue, the total compensation package for state workers does tend to exceed that of their private-sector counterparts.*
>
> **Myth 4:** *The financial crisis, which caused a depreciation of pension assets, is the real culprit behind pension underfunding.*
> **Fact 4:** *While the recession dealt a severe blow to state pensions, the problem of pension underfunding dates back to the early 2000s. Many states had already failed to cover the cost of promised benefits even before they felt the full weight of the Great Recession.*

And conclusion:

> Here's the bottom line: We can argue endlessly over when the pension plans will run out of cash, or what the true value of the unfunded liabilities is. We can even debate what the true meaning of being broke. But there is one issue where there is no room for debate. Once the pension plans run out of money, the payments will have to come out of general funds, meaning out of the pockets of taxpayers. If the states want to avoid this, they must push through reforms as soon as possible. A good first step would be to switch to accounting methods that show the true market value of their liabilities. Once those methods are in place, lawmakers should consider moving away from defined benefit pensions.

What states like Wisconsin and Ohio are doing is completely necessary. This is a real crisis, and we need to act now to make sure that taxpayers are not squeezed when the

money runs out.

Government report: US has world's largest supply of oil, natural gas and coal

March 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the press release. (H/T Canada Free Press)

Abstract:

> Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, and Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, today released an updated government report from the Congressional Research Service (CRS) showing ***America's combined recoverable oil, natural gas, and coal endowment is the largest on Earth.*** America's recoverable resources are far larger than those of Saudi Arabia (3rd), China (4th), and Canada (6th) combined. And that's not including America's immense oil shale and methane hydrates deposits.

Details:

Oil

CRS offers a more accurate reflection of America's substantial oil resources. While America is often depicted as possessing just 2 or 3 percent of the world's oil – a figure which narrowly relies on America's proven reserves of just 28 billion barrels – CRS has compiled US government estimates which show that ***America, the world's third-largest oil producer, is endowed with 163 billion barrels of recoverable oil.*** That's enough oil to maintain America's current rates of production and replace imports from the Persian Gulf for more than 50 years.

Natural Gas

Further, CRS notes the 2009 assessment from the Potential Gas Committee, which estimates America's future supply of natural gas is 2,047 trillion cubic feet (TCF) – an increase of more than 25 percent just since the Committee's 2006 estimate. ***At today's rate of use, this is enough natural gas to meet American demand for 90 years.***

Coal

The report also shows that ***America is number one in coal resources, accounting for more than 28 percent of the world's coal.*** Russia, China, and India are in a distant 2nd, 3rd, and 5th, respectively. In fact, CRS cites America's recoverable coal reserves to be 262 billion short tons. For perspective, the US consumes just 1.2 billion short tons of coal per year. And though portions of this resource may not be accessible or economically recoverable today, these estimates could ultimately prove to be conservative. As CRS states: "…*U.S. coal resource estimates do not include some potentially massive deposits of coal that exist in northwestern Alaska. These currently inaccessible coal deposits have been estimated to be more than 3,200 billion short tons*

of coal."

Oil Shale

While several pilot projects are underway to prove oil shale's future commercial viability, the Green River Formation located within Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah contains the equivalent of 6 trillion barrels of oil. The Department of Energy estimates that, of this 6 trillion, approximately 1.38 trillion barrels are potentially recoverable. That's equivalent to more than five times the conventional oil reserves of Saudi Arabia.

Methane Hydrates

Although not yet commercially feasible, methane hydrates, according to the Department of Energy, possess energy content that is *"immense … possibly exceeding the combined energy content of all other known fossil fuels."* While estimates vary significantly, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) recently testified that: *"the mean in-place gas hydrate resource for the entire United States is estimated to be 320,000 TCF of gas."* For perspective, if just 3% of this resource can be commercialized in the years ahead, at current rates of consumption, that level of supply would be enough to provide America's natural gas for more than 400 years.

The press release has lots of informative graphs.

The PDF of the full report is here.

Obama keeps blocking energy production at home, and sending taxpayer money (and jobs) to countries in the Middle East, some of who don't like us very much. What would possess a president to undermine the national security and economy of his own country that way? Why does he want to raise the cost of living for his fellow citizens and send jobs overseas to the Middle East?

Do taxpayers benefit from affirmative action in police and army hiring?

March 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From leftist Yahoo News. (H/T Bruce McQuain)

Excerpt:

> The U.S. military is too white and too male at the top and needs to change recruiting and promotion policies and lift its ban on women in combat, an independent report for Congress said Monday.
>
> Seventy-seven percent of senior officers in the active-duty military are white, while only 8 percent are black, 5 percent are Hispanic and 16 percent are women, the report by an independent panel said, quoting data from September 2008.
>
> […]The report ordered by Congress in 2009 calls for greater diversity in the military's leadership so it will better reflect the racial, ethnic and gender mix in the armed forces and in American society.

This makes me think of the Major Nidal Hasan scandal.

And more from Dayton News Source. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The Dayton Police Department is lowering its testing standards for recruits.
>
> It's a move required by the U.S. Department of Justice after it says not enough African-American candidates passed the exam.
>
> Dayton is in desperate need of officers to replace dozens of retirees. The hiring process was postponed for months because the D.O.J. rejected the original scores provided by the Dayton Civil Service Board, which administers the test.
>
> Under the previous requirements, candidates had to get a 66% on part one of the exam and a 72% on part two.
>
> The D.O.J. approved new scoring policy only requires potential police officers to get a 58% and a 63%. That's the equivalent of an 'F' and a 'D'.
>
> "It becomes a safety issue for the people of our community," said Dayton Fraternal Order of Police President, Randy Beane. "It becomes a safety issue to have an incompetent officer next to you in a life and death situation."

Does political correctness provide good value for taxpayers? Shouldn't taxpayers get the best candidate available? What about the people who will die in life and death situations, because the best candidate wasn't chosen? Who suffers the most from the effects of political correctness?

New CDC report finds that virginity is on the rise in America

March 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Maggie Gallagher at Real Clear Politics. (H/T Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> Shocking news: Virginity is on the rise in America.
>
> The source is sober, academic, practically irrefutable: the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Its latest analysis of the sex lives of Americans age 15 to 44 includes a startling finding: Virginity is increasing among teens and young adults in the U.S.
>
> Compared with data from the 2002 (National Survey of Family Growth), a higher percentage of males and females 15-24 in 2006-2008 have had no sexual contact with another person. In 2002, 22 percent of young men and women 15-24 had never had any sexual contact with another person, and in 2006-2008, those figures were 27 percent for males and 29 percent for females.
>
> The survey was was drawn from in-person interviews with a national sample of 13,495 males and females. The data were collected using audio computer-assisted self-interviewing, or ACASI, in which the respondent enters his or her own answers into the computer — known to be the most accurate way of collecting sensitive data.
>
> The response rate for the 2006-2008 NSFG was 75 percent — very high for this kind of data.
>
> The increase in virginity is not just "technical virginity," mind you. These are young adults who say they have had no sexual contact of any kind: no intercourse, no oral sex, no anal sex. (Presumably, a lot of them have, however, kissed and hugged!)
>
> I'm an old hand at stats. But even I was surprised by this finding buried in the report (Table 3): 32 percent of currently married women under the age of 45 say they have had only one sex partner in their life.
>
> Slightly more than 50 million Americans are married. If the figures for those under 45 mirror the national figures (a conservative assumption), that means the number of women who have never had sex with anyone but their husbands is at least 8 million.

I'm one of the virgins who doesn't kiss, although I might hug, if the person could pass all of my grueling tests and requirements.

Related posts

- New OUP book links premarital sex and promiscuity to poor mental health
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren’t men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- What does the common practice of withholding sex reveal about women?
- Why are so many British feminists converting to Islam?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- Why do women flock to movies like Switch and Eat, Pray, Love?
- Women should read “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands”
- Arlemagne’s post on the dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- 12-year-old girl (and her mother) sues father for grounding her… and wins!
- The Wintery Knight’s greatest fears about the future
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman’s offer of casual sex
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper’s questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man’s decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life

March 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The origin of life

There are two problems related to the origin of the first living cell, on atheism:

1. The problem of getting the building blocks needed to create life – i.e. the amino acids
2. The problem of creating the functional sequences of amino acids and proteins that can support the minimal operations of a simple living cell

Normally, I concede the first problem and grant the atheist all the building blocks he needs. This is because step 2 is impossible. There is no way, on atheism, to form the sequences of amino acids that will fold up into proteins, and then to form the sequences of proteins that can be used to form everything else in the cell, including the DNA itself. But that's tomorrow's topic.

Today, let's take a look at the problems with step 1.

The problem of getting the building blocks of life

Now you may have heard that some scientists managed to spark some gasses to generate most of the 20 amino acids found in living systems. These experiments are called the "Miller-Urey" experiments.

The IDEA center has a nice summary of origin-of-life research that explains a few of the main problems with step 1.

Miler and Urey used the wrong gasses:

> Miller's experiment requires a reducing methane and ammonia atmosphere,[11, 12] however geochemical evidence says the atmosphere was hydrogen, water, and carbon dioxide (non-reducing).[15, 16] The only amino acid produced in a such an atmosphere is glycine (and only when the hydrogen content is unreasonably high), and could not form the necessary building blocks of life.[11]

Miller and Urey didn't account for UV of molecular instability:

> Not only would UV radiation destroy any molecules that were made, but their own short lifespans would also greatly limit their numbers. For example, at 100ºC (boiling point of water), the half lives of the nucleic acids Adenine and Guanine are 1 year, uracil is 12 years, and cytozine is 19 days[20] (nucleic acids and other important proteins such as chlorophyll and hemoglobin have never been synthesized in origin-of-life type experiments[19]).

Miller and Urey didn't account for molecular oxygen:

> We all have know ozone in the upper atmosphere protects life from harmful UV radiation. However, ozone is composed of oxygen which is the very gas that Stanley Miller-type experiments avoided, for it prevents the synthesis of organic molecules like the ones obtained from the experiments! Pre-biotic synthesis is in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. The chemistry does not work if there is oxygen because the atmosphere would be non-reducing, but if there is no UV-light-blocking oxygen (i.e. ozone – O_3) in the atmosphere, the amino acids would be quickly destroyed by extremely high amounts of UV light (which would have been 100 times stronger than today on the early earth).[20, 21, 22] This radiation could destroy methane within a few tens of years,[23] and atmospheric ammonia within 30,000 years.[15]

And there were three other problems too:

> At best the processes would likely create a dilute "thin soup,"[24] destroyed by meteorite impacts every 10 million years.[20, 25] This severely limits the time available to create pre-biotic chemicals and allow for the OOL.

> Chemically speaking, life uses only "left-handed" ("L") amino acids and "right-handed" ("R)" genetic molecules. This is called "chirality," and any account of the origin of life must somehow explain the origin of chirality. Nearly all chemical reactions produce "racemic" mixtures–mixtures with products that are 50% L and 50% R.

Two more problems are not mentioned in the article. A non-peptide bond anywhere in the chain will ruin the chain. You need around 200 amino acids to make a protein. If any of the bonds is not a peptide bond, the chain will not work in a living system. Additionally, the article does not mention the need for the experimenter to *intervene* in order to prevent interfering cross-reactions that would prevent the amino acids from forming.

The progress of science

As science has progressed, the discoveries have proved out the need for a Creator and Designer in every area – the big bang, cosmic, galactic and stellar fine-tuning, the Cambrian explosion, etc…. and even the origin of life.

> "More than 30 years of experimentation on the origin of life in the fields of chemical and molecular evolution have led to a better perception of the immensity of the problem of the origin of life on Earth rather than to its solution. At present all discussions on principal theories and experiments in the field either end in stalemate or in a confession of ignorance. New lines of thinking and experimentation must be tried."
>
> (Dose, Klaus, "The Origin of Life: More Questions Than Answers," Interdisciplinary Science Reviews, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1988, p.348.)

Meanwhile, atheists are left to have blind faith that the progress scientists have made during decades of research will be miraculously overturned by new evidence that their

beloved unobservable Flying Spaghetti Monster, (peas be upon him), did it. Hey! Don't blaspheme against the non-supernatural powers of his noodly appendage! (Two Ph.Ds in biology will not save you from the wrath of the Darwoid cultists!)

To see how bad this gets for atheists, watch this video where Dawkins says that unobservable aliens evolved somewhere else and then seeded the Earth with life. He has *no evidence* that these aliens did evolve (no fossil record), and even worse, he does not know *whether they even exist*. Nevertheless, that is the state of atheism today – an unobservable Flying Spaghetti Monster evolved somewhere else and seeded the Earth with life.

What else could have happened?

Further study

One of my favorite resources on the origin of life is this interview from the University of California with former atheist and origin of life researcher Dean Kenyon. Kenyon, a professor of Biology at San Francisco State University, wrote the textbook on "chemical evolution", which is the view that chemicals can arrange themselves in order to create the first living cell, without intervention.

This interview from the University of California with another origin of life researcher, Charles Thaxton, is also one of my favorites.

You'll need Quicktime to see the videos, or buy the videos from ARN. (Kenyon, Thaxton) I have both of them – they rock!

The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information

March 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last time we saw how the progress of science in the last 30 years has proved that the environment of the early Earth would not have allowed the emergence of the basic building blocks of life. This time, let's allow the atheist to assume the building blocks were created by the noodly appendage of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, (peas be upon him), and see whether it's possible for the blocks to chain themselves together to make a living cell withinin a reasonable amount of time (400 million years, say).

For this post, I will be referencing an article by Stephen C. Meyer, which he published in the Catholic journal "First Things". I chose this article deliberately because it was written at the level of an ordinary layman, so we could all understand everything well enough to feel confident explaining it to our neighbors. All unattributed quotes are from this article.

The combatants

The contest over origins features two opposing points of view:

- A Creator and Designer is responsible for the origin of life
- Matter, chance and long periods of time are sufficient to explain the origin of life

What's at stake?

Atheistic Cornell University professor Will Provine explains what logically follows from naturalistic evolution:

> There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either. What an unintelligible idea.

So, the stakes are high.

Why doubt the apparent design in nature?

There are two main reasons why atheists doubt the appearance of design in nature:

- David Hume's argument against miracles (refuted at the highest levels by non-Christian scholars)
- Charles Darwin's theory of evolution (refuted by the Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, the natural limits of biological change, the incompatibility of naturalistic evolution and rationality, etc.)

Minimal life functionality requires information

In order for a living organism to support life, it must be able to perform minimal functions:

- store information
- transmit information

- edit information
- use that information to regulate metabolic processes

There must be sufficient information inside the cells of that organism to support those functions. How does this information exist in the cell, and where did it come from?

Atheism is a pre-scientific worldview

Meyer describes the primitive superstitions of tribes of atheists living in primitive, pre-scientific cultures:

> …in the 1870s and 1880s scientists assumed that devising an explanation for the origin of life would be fairly easy….they assumed that life was essentially a rather simple substance called protoplasm that could be easily constructed by combining and recombining simple chemicals such as carbon dioxide, oxygen, and nitrogen. …just as salt could be produced spontaneously by adding sodium to chloride, so… could a living cell be produced by adding together several chemical constituents and then allowing spontaneous chemical reactions to produce the simple protoplasmic substance that they assumed to be the essence of life.

Atheists believe in all kinds of primitive pre-scientific myths, like the eternal universe, etc., which the progress of science has falsified. Can the progress of science falsify the atheistic superstitions about the origin of life?

The Oparin-Haldane hypothesis

Atheists began to panic in the early 20th century as discoveries began to pile up confirming the that the entire physical universe, and time itself, was created by a supernatural force that existed transcendentally, independent of matter, energy, space and time. (See here for a listing of 6 of these discoveries from the progress of science). Atheists decided that they'd better get involved in this "science" thing that the Christians had started.

Meyer reports on one of their first groundless speculations:

> During the 1920s and 1930s a more sophisticated version of this so–called "chemical evolutionary theory" was proposed by a Russian biochemist named Alexander I. Oparin…. Oparin, like his nineteenth–century predecessors, suggested that life could have first evolved as the result of a series of chemical reactions.

It was hoped that that the Flying Spaghetti Monster would appear to his true believers and ground this blind speculation, allowing atheists to continue in their flight from rationality and moral obligations.

The Miller-Urey experiment

Pre-biotic synthesis (see below) produces amino acids, which are the first step in explaining the origin of the simplest life, on atheism:

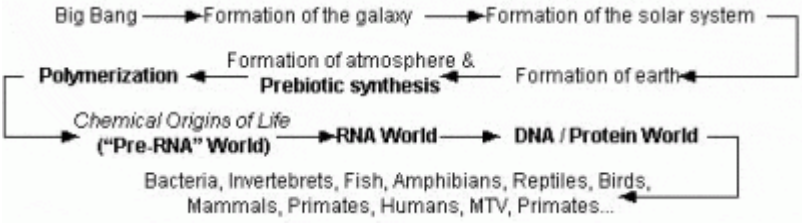

How did life begin?

As we saw last time, the Miller-Urey experiments that were designed to produce the building blocks of life (amino acids) were horribly flawed and did not reflect the conditions that would have existed on the early Earth.

I'll summarize the problems with the experiment:

- the gasses were used in the experiment were not those present on the early Earth
- molecular oxygen was excluded from the experiment
- Harmful UV radiation was filtered out by the experimenter intervention
- interfering cross-reactions were prevented by experimenter intervention

Other problems:

- extinction events, such as meteorite impacts, were excluded not considered
- the chirality problem (left-handed amino acids, right-handed sugars) was not considered
- the problem of getting all peptide bonds was not considered

This experiment, though flawed, still exists in biology textbooks today, along side faked photographs of peppered moths and doctored drawings of embryos. All must praise the Flying Spaghetti Monster, and at taxpayer expense!

The problem of biological information

To create life, you need to sequence amino acids into proteins, and sequence the nucleotides on DNA strands.

Meyer explains:

> To form a protein, amino acids must link together to form a chain. Yet amino acids form functioning proteins only when they adopt very specific sequential arrangements, rather like properly sequenced letters in an English sentence. Thus, amino acids alone do not make proteins, any more than letters alone make words, sentences, or poetry. In both cases, the sequencing of the constituent parts determines the function (or lack of function) of the whole.

> …As it turns out, specific regions of the DNA molecule called coding regions have the same property of "sequence specificity" or "specified complexity" that characterizes written codes, linguistic texts, and protein molecules. Just as the letters in the alphabet of a written language may convey a particular message depending on their arrangement, so too do the sequences of nucleotide bases (the A's, T's, G's, and C's) inscribed along the spine of a DNA molecule convey a

> precise set of instructions for building proteins within the cell. The nucleotide bases in DNA function in precisely the same way as symbols in a machine code. In each case, the arrangement of the characters determines the function of the sequence as a whole…. In the case of DNA, the complex but precise sequencing of the four nucleotide bases (A, T, G, and C) stores and transmits the information necessary to build proteins.
>
> …As Bernd–Olaf Kuppers recently stated, "The problem of the origin of life is clearly basically equivalent to the problem of the origin of biological information."

How do atheists account for this biological information?

Atheistic superstitions about the biological information

Le's take a look at the atheist's faith-based explanations of the origin of life: chance, law and self-organization.

For the first one, let's calculate the odds of building a protein composed of a functional chain of 100 amino acids, by chance. (Think of a meaningful English sentence built with 100 scrabble letters, held together with glue)

1. Chance:

- BONDING: You need 99 peptide bonds between the 100 amino acids. The odds of getting a peptide bond is 50%. The probability of building a chain of one hundred amino acids in which all linkages involve peptide bonds is roughly (1/2)^99 or 1 chance in 10^30.
- CHIRALITY: You need 100 left-handed amino acids. The odds of getting a left-handed amino acid is 50%. The probability of attaining at random only L–amino acids in a hypothetical peptide chain one hundred amino acids long is (1/2)^100or again roughly 1 chance in 10^30.
- SEQUENCE: You need to choose the correct amino acid for each of the 100 links. The odds of getting the right one are 1 in 20. Even if you allow for some variation, the odds of getting a functional sequence is (1/20)^100 or 1 in 10^65.

The final probability of getting a functional protein composed of 100 amino acids is 1 in 10^125. Even if you fill the universe with pre-biotic soup, and react amino acids at Planck time (very fast!) for 14 billion years, you are probably not going to get even 1 such protein. And you need at least 100 of them for minimal life functions, plus DNA and RNA.

Research performed by Doug Axe at Cambridge University, and published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Molecular Biology, has shown that the number of functional amino acid sequences is tiny:

> Doug Axe's research likewise studies genes that it turns out show great evidence of design. Axe studied the sensitivities of protein function to mutations. In these "mutational sensitivity" tests, Dr. Axe mutated certain amino acids in various proteins, or studied the differences between similar proteins, to see how mutations or changes affected their ability to function properly. He found that

> protein function was highly sensitive to mutation, and that proteins are not very tolerant to changes in their amino acid sequences. In other words, when you mutate, tweak, or change these proteins slightly, they stopped working. In one of his papers, he thus concludes that "functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences," and that functional protein folds "may be as low as 1 in 10^77."

The problem of forming DNA by sequencing nucleotides faces similar difficulties. And remember, mutation and selection cannot explain the origin of the *first* sequence, because mutation and selection require replication, which does not exist until that first living cell is *already in place*.

2. Law:

The idea here is that components, such as nucleotides, might have special bonding affinities that might cause them to bond together spontaneously into functional sequences. Like if certain SCRABBLE tiles had an affinity for certain other tiles that caused them to bond together whenever they met.

Meyer writes:

> Consider what would happen if the individual nucleotide "letters" in a DNA molecule *did* interact by chemical necessity with each other. Every time adenine (A) occurred in a growing genetic sequence, it would likely drag thymine (T) along with it. Every time cytosine (C) appeared, guanine (G) would follow. As a result, the DNA message text would be peppered with repeating sequences of A's followed by T's and C's followed by G's.

3. Self-organization:

The idea here is that some spontaneous order might arise due to some physical force, just like rocks sort themselves by size in a rock agitator because of gravity.

Meyer writes:

> …just as magnetic letters can be combined and recombined in any way to form various sequences on a metal surface, so too can each of the four bases A, T, G, and C attach to any site on the DNA backbone with equal facility, making all sequences equally probable (or improbable). The same type of chemical bond occurs between the bases and the backbone regardless of which base attaches. All four bases are acceptable; none is preferred. In other words, differential bonding affinities do not account for the sequencing of the bases. Because these same facts hold for RNA molecules, researchers who speculate that life began in an "RNA world" have also failed to solve the sequencing problem…

Understanding what creates information

The bottom line is that in order for software code, or even English letters, to be functional, it needs to defy ordering mechanisms. Biological sequences are functional for the same reason that software code or English text is functional – because some intelligent agent *chose* an irregular sequence of characters in order to achieve a specific

purpose. Look at the letters in this post – they are not ORDERED by physical laws. They are SELECTED by an intelligent agent.

Meyer writes:

> To see the distinction between order and information, compare the sequence "ABABABABAB ABAB" to the sequence "Time and tide wait for no man." The first sequence is repetitive and ordered, but not complex or informative.

What causes specified, complex sequences?

> …the information contained in an English sentence or computer software does not derive from the chemistry of the ink or the physics of magnetism, but from a source extrinsic to physics and chemistry altogether. Indeed, in both cases, the message transcends the properties of the medium… Our experience with information–intensive systems (especially codes and languages) indicates that such systems always come from an intelligent source…

And this is what everybody means by "intelligent design". This design inference came from the progress of science. The more we discovered about the cell, the more nature pointed towards a creative, designing intelligence. The only option left to atheists now is *blind faith that the Flying Spaghetti Monster will swoop in and undo the progress of science over the last 100 years.* Good luck with that, atheists!

Further study

One of my favorite resources on the origin of life is this interview from the University of California with former atheist and origin of life researcher Dean Kenyon. Kenyon, a professor of Biology at San Francisco State University, wrote the textbook on "chemical evolution", which is the view that chemicals can arrange themselves in order to create the first living cell, without intervention.

This interview from the University of California with another origin of life researcher, Charles Thaxton, is also one of my favorites.

You'll need Quicktime to see the videos, or buy the videos from ARN. (Kenyon, Thaxton) I have both of them – they rock!

The Cambrian explosion: biology's Big Bang

March 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article by Jonathan Wells.

First, let's re-cap the challenge to evolution from the phenomenon of the Cambrian explosion.

> The newly released film "Darwin's Dilemma" argues that the geologically abrupt appearance of the major groups of animals (the "phyla") in the Cambrian Explosion posed a serious problem for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution (as he himself knew), and that subsequent fossil discoveries—far from solving the problem—have made it worse.

Basically, all the major body plans we have today appear in the fossil record in a 2-3 million period about 543 million years ago. There are no precursors in the fossil record showing the gradual evolution of these major body plans.

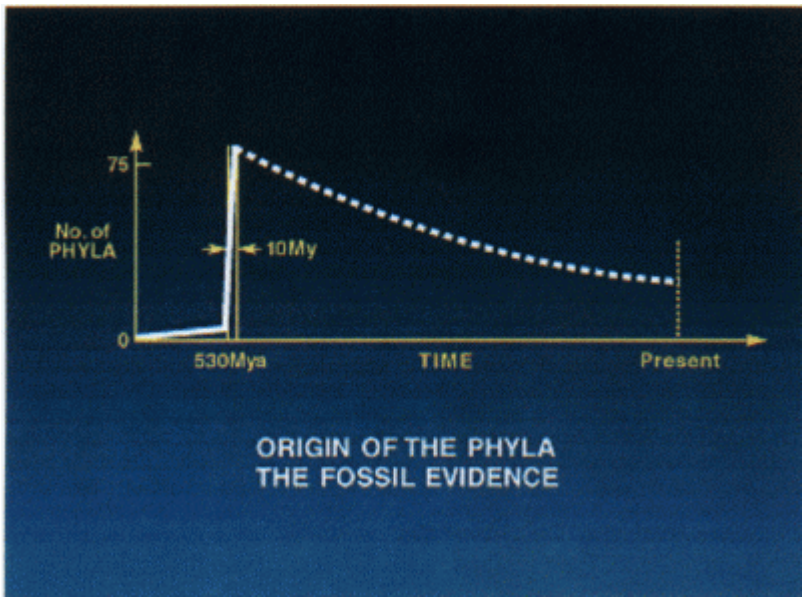

The Cambrian Explosion: 0 to 60 in a few million years

Darwin expected to discover lots and lots of fossils leading up to the Cambrian explosion period that would show how all these phyla came into existence slowly over time. Unfortunately for the naturalistic evolutionists, the discoveries we've been making haven't shown any hint of precursor fossils leading up the Cambrian explosion.

> Since 1859, however, many Precambrian fossils have been found, including microfossils of single-celled bacteria in rocks more than three billion years old. In addition, multicellular Precambrian fossils have been found in the Ediacara Hills of Australia, though there is continuing debate over whether any—or how many—of the Ediacaran fossils were animals, or what relationship—if any—they had to the Cambrian phyla. In 1998, Cambridge University paleobiologist Simon Conway Morris (who is featured in the film "Darwin's Dilemma") wrote, "Apart from the few Ediacaran survivors… there seems to be a sharp demarcation

> between the strange world of Ediacaran life and the relatively familiar Cambrian fossils" (*Crucible of Creation*, 30).

But wait! Maybe we can't find the precusor fossils *required* by Darwinism because they are too small or too soft to have survived for so long?

> Since 1859, however, many Precambrian fossils have been found, including microfossils of single-celled bacteria in rocks more than three billion years old. In addition, multicellular Precambrian fossils have been found in the Ediacara Hills of Australia… In 1998, Cambridge University paleobiologist Simon Conway Morris… wrote, "Apart from the few Ediacaran survivors… there seems to be a sharp demarcation between the strange world of Ediacaran life and the relatively familiar Cambrian fossils" (*Crucible of Creation*, 30).
>
> So there is now no shortage of Precambrian fossils. Not only do we have fossils of bacteria, but we also have many fossils of soft-bodied Multicellular organisms. "In the Ediacaran organisms there is no evidence for any skeletal hard parts," wrote Conway Morris in 1998. "Ediacaran fossils look as if they were effectively soft-bodied" (*Crucible of Creation*, 28). The same is true of many of the organisms fossilized in the Cambrian explosion.

But wait! Scientists have discovered lots of exceptionally preserved microbes just before the Cambrian explosion. Don't microbes count as precursors to the Cambrian explosion phyla?

> Richard Callow and Martin Brasier reported in the January 2009 issue of the *Journal of the Geological Society, London* "a variety of exceptionally preserved microbes" from late Precambrian rocks in England that address "the paradox known as '"Darwin's dilemma'."
>
> […]Callow and Brasier didn't solve Darwin's dilemma. Instead, they put one more nail in the coffin of Darwin's attempt to salvage his theory from it. The truth is that "exceptionally preserved microbes" from the late Precambrian actually *deepen* Darwin's dilemma, because they suggest that if there had been ancestors to the Cambrian phyla they would have been preserved.

I am willing to believe in evolution. But in order to get me to believe it, I *insist* on seeing a fossil record that shows the gradual emergence of phyla, one or two at a time, over hundreds of millions of years. That is what Darwinism predicts. We now have a solid record of what came before the Cambrian explosion. So where are the precursors? Where is the record of gradual emergence? Where is my evidence?

What does the peer-reviewed research say?

Story from the Discovery Institute.

A new peer-reviewed paper has been published that concludes that there is no material explanation for the massive amounts of information introduced during the Cambrian explosion, when all of the phyla came into being in the blink of an eye, geologically

speaking, with *no fossilized precursors.*

Excerpt:

> Thus, elucidating the materialistic basis of the Cambrian explosion has become more elusive, not less, the more we know about the event itself, and cannot be explained away by coupling extinction of intermediates with long stretches of geologic time, despite the contrary claims of some modern neo-Darwinists.

Once again, the progress of science brings light.

The DI post goes on to cite another passage from the paper:

Beginning some 555 million years ago the Earth's biota changed in profound and fundamental ways, going from an essentially static system billions of years in existence to the one we find today, a dynamic and awesomely complex system whose origin seems to defy explanation. Part of the intrigue with the Cambrian explosion is that numerous animal phyla with very distinct body plans arrive on the scene in a geological blink of the eye, with little or no warning of what is to come in rocks that predate this interval of time. The abruptness of the transition between the ''Precambrian'' and the Cambrian was apparent right at the outset of our science with the publication of Murchison's *The Silurian System*, a treatise that paradoxically set forth the research agenda for numerous paleontologists — in addition to serving as perennial fodder for creationists. The reasoning is simple — as explained on an intelligent-design t-shirt.

> Fact: Forty phyla of complex animals suddenly appear in the fossil record, no forerunners, no transitional forms leading to them; ''a major mystery,'' a ''challenge.'' The Theory of Evolution – exploded again (idofcourse.com).

Although we would dispute the numbers, and aside from the last line, there is not much here that we would disagree with. Indeed, many of Darwin's contemporaries shared these sentiments, and we assume — if Victorian fashion dictated — that they would have worn this same t-shirt with pride.

Here is the reference for the paper:

> (Kevin J. Peterson, Michael R. Dietrich and Mark A. McPeek, "MicroRNAs and metazoan macroevolution: insights into canalization, complexity, and the Cambrian explosion," *BioEssays*, Vol. 31 (7):736 – 747 (2009).)

I linked before to a bunch of easy-to-understand videos that explain the Cambrian explosion. Here's another peer-reviewed research paper on the Cambrian explosion written by Stephen C. Meyer, on the Cambrian explosion. This is the paper that got evolutionary biologist Richard Sternberg fired by secular leftists. He has two earned Ph.Ds in biology. I would expect that the people who fired him had never seen the inside of a biology lab. That's the way it goes – science (intelligent design) vs. religion (materialism).

Videos on intelligent design

- Youtube: Unlocking the Mystery of Life's Origin

- Youtube: The Privileged Planet
- Youtube: How DNA is replicated
- DVD on the Cambrian explosion (now available from Amazon.com)

What is the real solution to child obesity and bullying?

March 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Call it the Nanny State run amok. By hosting an all-day White House conference on adolescent bullying last week, President Obama elevated a schoolyard issue to the level of public enemy No. 1, perhaps on a par with the first lady's labors on behalf of childhood obesity.Typical of all federal "preventions" that mobilize the Departments of Education or Health and Human Services on behalf of some perceived crisis, none of the players of the conference had the guts to yank at the underlying root of the bullying culture: family breakdown.
>
> […]In a national study of nearly 2,500 Norwegian boys and girls ages 12 to 15 published in the November issue of European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, researchers found a substantial statistical correlation between both victims and aggressors of bullying and parental divorce.
>
> Given that both victims and aggressors of bullying, relative to their noninvolved peers, were also found to experience more psychological problems, the parental-divorce link should not be surprising.
>
> The distress of parental breakup, the Norwegian researchers claim, leaves adolescents emotionally vulnerable and therefore easy targets for bullies among their peers.
>
> At the same time, parental divorce incubates bullying by leaving adolescents, according to study, with "less monitoring, often fewer adults to confide in, and sometimes increased aggression because of feelings of loss."
>
> […]Yet this common-sense understanding of bullying wasn't entertained at the White House. If this were the first time Team Obama ignored the data, it might not be troubling.
>
> Instead, a disturbing pattern is emerging: The first lady's high-profile campaign against childhood obesity suffers the same blind spot. Paralleling the Norway study on bullying, recent research on obesity finds that children of divorced or single parents suffer another disadvantage to their well-being: higher risks of being overweight.
>
> For example, scholars at the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work in Miami, writing in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health last July, found that children in single-parent households, relative to their peers from two-parent households, were more likely to be "overweight" and nearly three-quarters as likely to be "obese," or seriously overweight (odds ratio:

> 1.72). Kids from broken homes were also more likely to have higher cholesterol levels and lower HDL levels, indicators of type 2 diabetes.
>
> By not keeping up with the research, the White House ends up, as it did last week with the bullying conference, calling for greater public “interventions” by education and health authorities to address the problem.

Democrats are ignorant. They attack traditional marriage because marriage supports “unequal gender roles”, which is incompatible with feminism. They think that stay-at-home moms can be replaced by strangers and that children will not be adversely affected. And then when massive social problems result from the destruction of marriage, they resort to legislating higher taxes and more social programs – draining money out of the families that are left to subsidize *more* broken homes. Single mother families are the leading cause of child poverty. It’s a death spiral, and it’s going to continue until people stop acting irresponsibly and expecting their neighbors to bail them out.

Video of a recent pro-choice demonstration

March 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What do pro-choice protesters really think about abortion? (H/T Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

This is why I am pro-life. I am not willing to act irresponsibly and selfishly, then kill another human being to escape the consequences of my own selfish choices. I prefer not to engage in recreational premarital sex, because I don't want to be a party to a murder.

Isn't it funny how people now think that chastity is weird, but murder is not weird? It used to be that society recognized chastity as a virtue, because we knew that abortions were immoral and expensive, and that premarital promiscuity made people less suitable for marriage. But now chastity has become immoral, and being marriage-minded is frowned upon.

I am beginning to see that children are basically not being planned for at all by adults. In socialist countries, feminists spend their 20s and early 30s partying, then at 40 they get taxpayer-funded IVF, conceive a baby, throw her into taxpayer-funded day care, collect taxpayer-funded single mother benefits, and then put the child into taxpayer-funded government-schools. Who pays for all of this? The high-earning, marriage-minded, morally judgmental, spiritually discerning men. Those "no fun" men are passed over by the feminists, because the government performs all the traditional male duties now – with their money. There is no need to choose men who can handle a wife and children. That's the government's job, now.

Wes also blogged on this story at Reason to Stand, and he noted this:

> It needs to be pointed out that their attitude towards sex as a sterile, recreational activity unconnected with any biological consequences combined with their view of children as parasites are not unique. These are the predominant views of our society, pushed in all facets from politics to education to entertainment.
>
> The future looks very bleak for any children produced and raised in the homes the people above will provide (when they choose to provide it, of course). One protester even had a sign "would you trust me with a child?"
>
> What the above video shows is how it is socially acceptable, indeed *fashionable*, to spurn our biological design in pursuit of unbridled hedonism.

For me the worst protester was the one who calmly explained that she would not allow a baby to derail her education and career. She is willing to have recreational sex, and she is resolved to murder an innocent child who would cost her money. When I look at young single feminists today, that's what I see. And 77% of young unmarried women vote for abortion. Sex is fun, but babies aren't fun. They talk about "corporate greed", but they are the greediest ones of all. Corporations don't murder you to get your money, they just sell you stuff you want to buy. It's the feminists who murder you for money.

It’s a mess. And those kids who are born from these self-centered, promiscuous, unstable adults are starting out with a 14 trillion dollar deficit on their heads, that is growing by 1.65 trillion this year. No one cares about children any more. They don’t care what children need, and they don’t make sacrifices to provide for them.

Should government do more to help people achieve prosperity?

March 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Arthur Brooks at the American Enterprise Institute. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> In January, the right-leaning organization Resurgent Republic asked Americans which of the following statements comes closer to their view: (a) "Government should do more to solve problems and help meet the needs of people"; or (b) "Government is trying to do more things than it can do well, things that should be left to the private sector and individuals." Forty-nine percent of respondents chose (a); 46% chose (b). (The other 5% said they didn't know.)
>
> […]The "doing good" philosophy cannot accommodate difficult but necessary budget decisions. It will always devolve into a drunken spending binge largely directed toward rewarding political friends like public-sector unions (witness the current mayhem in Wisconsin), engaging in social engineering (see the new health-care mandates), socializing losses (emergency loans and grants to failing businesses), and doling out pork (look almost anywhere in the stimulus).
>
> […]So citizens say they want government to help them, politicians oblige, but citizens loathe the result. How do we cut this Gordian Knot? The solution is a real philosophy that outlines what the government should do–and, just as importantly, not do. Our elected officials must then show courage and leadership by governing according to this philosophy.
>
> What is that governing philosophy? Here is an answer from the great economist and Nobel laureate Friedrich Hayek: As regards the economy, the government should provide a minimum basic standard of living for citizens, and address market failures in cases where government action can do so cost effectively. That's all.
>
> We should acknowledge that markets are not perfect. Market failures can occur when we have monopolies (which eliminate competition), externalities (like pollution), public goods (the military, for example), and information problems (such as when people cheat others in the marketplace). Nearly all economists agree these kinds of failures can justify some degree of state intervention.
>
> Obviously, there is plenty of room for debate in this philosophy. What is a minimum basic standard of living? And are certain services–for example, the Smithsonian Institution–public goods? How much waste can we find in the defense budget? These are the arguments we should be having.
>
> But there are many others we shouldn't be having, because the answers are clear. Should we bail out car companies? (No: GM would fail precisely because

> markets are working, not because they are failing.) Should we leave the retirement age at 65 even though people are living much longer than ever before and taking more than they ever paid into the Social Security system? (No: This is middle-class welfare, not a minimum basic standard of living.) Should we continue to prohibit people from buying health insurance from companies across state lines? (No: This induces market failure.) Do we need high-speed trains to take us to St. Louis? (No: This is not a public good.) And so on.

It’s not the government’s job to equalize life outcomes regardless of our own choices. Their job is to referee the game, not to pick winners and losers.

How is Obama responding to a recession and global instability?

March 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> When Democrats held Congress, the Obama agenda was audacious. Today, faced with global unrest and an economic reckoning, the president is filling out basketball brackets and scolding school bullies.
>
> ‘There is only one president,” Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad, D-N.D., told Politico this week, when asked if President Obama should be exercising leadership toward reforming America’s out-of-control entitlement spending programs, such as Medicare and Social Security.
>
> The soothsayer famously told Julius Caesar to “beware the ides of March.” One of the priority items for Obama on Tuesday, March 15, was taping his picks for the NCAA basketball tournament.
>
> Last week, the president and the first lady were holding a “White House Conference on Bullying Prevention,” at which he recalled being taunted because of “big ears and the name that I have.” He lamented recent youthful suicides, such as those of Ty Field and Carl Walker-Hoover.
>
> We can’t just accept that “kids will be kids,” Obama insisted, citing data showing that many American students have been “pushed, shoved, tripped, even spit on.”
>
> Then, of course, there is the partying. Late last month, the president and first lady treated themselves to an East Room concert by Smokey Robinson, Sheryl Crow, comedian Jamie Foxx and others. At previous soirees, the Obama White House has hosted Stevie Wonder, Paul Simon, Tony Bennett, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and even a cavalcade of stars from Broadway shows.
>
> And let’s not forget former Beatle Paul McCartney being flown in from England to sing “Michelle” to the first lady and attack President George W. Bush from the East Room stage.

He has no idea what the average American family is facing right now.

Is it ok to judge people? Is Hell a real place?

March 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: I thought I'd better explain what's in this post at the top. First, I show where Hell is mentioned in the gospels. Second, I talk about whether can Christians should judge non-Christians. Finally, I talk about why judging can actually be the loving thing to do.

Where is Hell in the New Testament?

Here's a few Bible verses where Jesus talks about Hell.

1. **Matthew 5:22**
   But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca, ' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of **hell**.
2. **Matthew 5:29**
   If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into **hell**.
3. **Matthew 5:30**
   And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into **hell**.
4. **Matthew 10:28**
   Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in **hell**.
5. **Matthew 18:9**
   And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of **hell**.
6. **Matthew 23:33**
   "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to **hell**?
7. **Mark 9:43**
   If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into **hell**, where the fire never goes out.
8. **Mark 9:45**
   And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into **hell**.
9. **Mark 9:47**
   And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into **hell**,
10. **Luke 12:5**
    But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into **hell**. Yes, I tell you, fear him.
11. **Luke 16:23**
    In **hell**, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with

Lazarus by his side

I don't mind if people disagree with those verses on historical grounds – maybe because they are not early enough or not multiply attested enough, although I think they are historically reliable. What bothers me is when a person throws verses out because they just don't like them. I don't think that having an intuition or a feeling is grounds for throwing out Bible verses.

Who to judge and how to judge

Did you know that it is forbidden to judge non-Christians using Christian moral standards?

1 Cor 5:9-13:

[9]I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—

[10]not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.

[11]But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

[12]What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?

[13]God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

I think this text explains what judging is. If you "judge" someone, it seems to mean disagreeing with them or it could even mean avoiding them. For example, I often speak against single motherhood and day care in front of people who are single mothers and who use day care – I just disagree with them.

I think that Christians can vote for political candidates who are pro-life and pro-marriage and pro-liberty. But the verse above says that but you can't force individual non-Christians to act like Christians against their own free will. You *can* judge other Christians, but be careful how you do that if you actually want them to listen to you. Have a relationship with them first, and then talk about moral issues in the abstract. People get defensive unless you make the discussion about the evidence, not about their personal lives.

And of course you can disagree with people of other religions about which religion is true when tested against history and the external world, but again, it's best to appeal to logic and evidence. E.g. – the big bang, which falsifies a whole stack of world religions and cults, and is testable scientifically.

Why judging is wonderful and you should do it, too

I wonder if you all remember a while back when I linked to all the chapters of Theodore Dalrymple's famous book "Life at the Bottom", which is about the worldview of the British lower class. It's also about how rich, well-meaning secular leftists hurt the poor by enacting public policies that reward bad behavior and punish good behavior. Dalrymple is a psychiatrist in a hospital, so he sees it all firsthand.

This is from the introduction to the book:

> The disastrous pattern of human relationships that exists in the underclass is also becoming common higher up the social scale. With increasing frequency I am consulted by nurses, who for the most part come from and were themselves traditionally members of (at least after Florence Nightingale) the respectable lower middle class, who have illegitimate children by men who first abuse and then abandon them. This abuse and later abandonment is usually all too predictable from the man's previous history and character; but the nurses who have been treated in this way say they refrained from making a judgment about him because it is wrong to make judgments. But if they do not make a judgment about the man with whom they are going to live and by whom they are going to have a child, about what are they ever going to make a judgment?
>
> "It just didn't work out," they say, the "it" in question being the relationship that they conceive of having an existence independent of the two people who form it, and that exerts an influence on their on their lives rather like an astral projection. Life is fate.

I think that young people today prefer moral relativists as mates, because they are afraid of being judged and rejected by people who are too serious about religion and morality, especially the old kind of morality that was focused on chastity, sobriety, worship, charity, etc. The problem is that if a young person chooses someone who doesn't take religion and morality seriously, then that person can't rely on their partner to behave morally and to exercise moral leadership in the home.

Here's another one of my favorite passages from the "Tough Love" chapter, in which he describes how he easily he can detect whether a particular male patient has violent tendencies or not, on sight. But female victims of domestic violence – and even the hospital nurses – cannot *or will not* recognize the signs that a man is violent.

> All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.
>
> This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once

> when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.
>
> Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.
>
> This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.
>
> Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.
>
> At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how* they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

Just remember not to judge people for the purpose of hurting them. Judge others for the purpose of helping them to set up boundaries that will protect them from actions that might hurt them or those around them, and impose costs on the whole society to repair the damage. The best thing to do is to discuss moral issues in the abstract.

Related posts

- James Spiegel explains what really causes atheism
- Interview with Jim Spiegel on "The Making of an Atheist" book
- Book review of "If there's a God, why are there atheists?"
- Should you reject the Biblical notion of Hell based on emotions?

- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

Are Tea party conservatives more racist than liberal socialist Democrats?

March 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> Typical opinion polls reported in the news average a response rate of under 20%, and some observers speculate that the real response rates for some prominent surveys may be as low as 1% of the people they contact. The General Social Survey, on the other hand, usually averages about a 70% response rate, the highest in the industry for a large-scale survey of the general U.S. public.
>
> The most recent survey for which results were available when I began this project a few weeks ago was the 2008 survey. (For an updated analysis that includes more recent data, see the Author's Update on the last page of this editorial.) It asked the question:
>
> Some people think that the government in Washington is trying to do too many things that should be left to individuals and private businesses. Others disagree and think that the government should do even more to solve our country's problems. Still others have opinions somewhere in between.
>
> Where would you place yourself on this scale . . . ?
>
> 1— I strongly agree the government should do more
> 2—
> 3— I agree with both
> 4—
> 5— I strongly agree the government is doing too much
>
> Thus, those who agree that "the government is doing too much" would choose 4 or 5.

And what is the result of this survey?

> Social scientists usually measure traditional racism against African Americans by looking at the survey responses of white Americans only. Among whites in the latest General Social Survey (2008), only 4.5% of small-government advocates express the view that "most Blacks/African-Americans have less in-born ability to learn," compared to 12.3% of those who favor bigger government or take a middle position expressing this racist view (Figure 2). We social scientists sometimes like to express things in relative odds, especially for small percentages. Here the odds of small government whites not expressing racist views (21-to-1 odds) is three times higher than the odds of big-government whites not being racist (7-to-1 odds).

> But advocates of smaller government can be found among Democrats and Independents as well as Republicans. What happens if we compare Republicans who think Washington is doing too much with those who think that government should do more or take a middle position? The relationships I've just described only get stronger.
>
> Figure 3 shows that, among whites, Republican advocates of smaller government are even less racist (1.3% believing that blacks have less in-born ability) than the rest of the general public (11.3% expressing racist views). Thus, in 2008 Republicans who believe that the government in Washington does too much have 10 times higher odds of not expressing racist views on the in-born ability question than the rest of the population (79-to-1 odds v. 7.9-to-1 odds).
>
> What about conservative Republicans more generally, not just the ones who want a smaller government? Surely they must be more racist. Actually not. In 2008, only 5.4% of white conservative Republicans expressed racist views on the in-born ability question, compared to 10.3% of the rest of the white population.
>
> As Figure 4 shows, this same pattern holds for white Democrats compared to white Republicans: in 2008 12.3% of white Democrats in the U.S. believed that African Americans were born with less ability, compared to only 6.6% of white Republicans.
>
> […]Data from self-reports in the General Social Survey appear to support the notion that those who oppose income redistribution are somewhat more altruistic in their behavior than redistributionists (e.g., donating money, looking after pets or plants while friends are away), a conclusion also reached by the economist Arthur Brooks.

Click through for the charts and more analysis.

Should government promote marriage to lower-income communities?

March 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

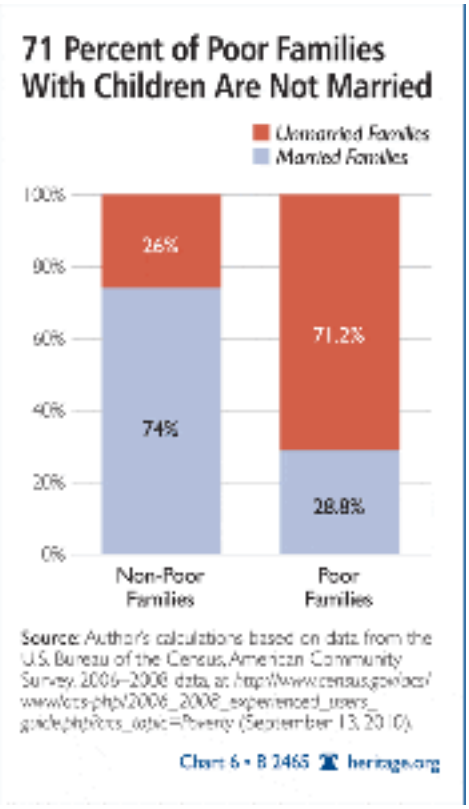

Marriage and Poverty

I found this article by Robert Rector on the The Heritage Foundation web site. It is part of their Poverty and Marriage project.

Excerpt:

> The Census data presented so far demonstrate that married couples have dramatically lower poverty rates than single parents. These substantial differences in poverty remain even when married couples are compared to single parents of the same race and level of education. The pattern is almost exactly the same in all 50 states.
>
> However, in the Census comparisons, the married couples and single parents are obviously different (albeit similar) persons. It is therefore possible that much of the difference in poverty between married families and single-parent families might be due to hidden differences between married and single parents as individuals rather than to marriage *per se*. For example, it is possible that unmarried fathers might have substantially lower earnings than married fathers with the same racial and educational backgrounds. If this were the case, then marriage, for these men, would have a reduced anti-poverty effect.
>
> Fortunately, we have other direct data on poverty and unmarried parents that corroborate the Census analysis. These data are provided by the Fragile Families

and Child Well-being Survey conducted jointly by Princeton and Columbia universities.[16] The Fragile Families survey is a representative national sample of parents at the time of a child's birth, with a heavy emphasis on lower-income unmarried couples. The survey is unusual in collecting information not only on single mothers, but on non-married fathers as well, including (critically) the actual employment and earnings of the father in the year prior to birth.

Because the Fragile Families Survey reports both the mothers' and fathers' earnings, it is simple to calculate the poverty rate if the non-married mothers remain single and if each unmarried mother married her child's father (thereby pooling both parents' income into a joint family income). The Fragile Families data show that if unmarried mothers remain single, over half (56 percent) of them will be poor. (This high level of poverty will persist for years: Half of all unwed mothers will be poor five years after the child is born.[17]) By contrast, if the single mothers married the actual biological fathers of their children, only 18 percent would remain poor.[18] Thus, marriage would reduce the expected poverty rate of the children by two-thirds.

It is important to note that these results are based on the actual earnings of the biological fathers of the children and not on assumed or hypothetical earnings. Moreover, the non-married fathers in the sample are relatively young. Over time, their earnings will increase and the poverty rate for the married couples will decline farther.

[…]Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.

When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.

The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:

- More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
- Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]

> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

You should definitely click through the article and view all the colorful charts and diagrams. This article should be printed out and used to explain the connection between fiscal conservatism and social conservatism.

I also want to point out that two notable groups on the left act to destroy marriage. First of all, there are the feminists, who oppose the unequal gender roles in marriage. They lobby for feminist policies that destroy marriage, like no-fault divorce. Second, there are the socialists, who favor redistribution of wealth from productive to non-productive people. They lobby for increased welfare for single mothers, causing more single-mother households. Either way, marriage is under attack by the left. I have not even mentioned things like sex education and state-run day care.

What should the government do?

I think that government does have a role in providing financial incentives in the form of tax breaks to married couples who have children and stay married. The government should give bigger and bigger tax breaks as marriages last longer and longer, and have more children. And the biggest tax breaks of all should be given to families where one parent stays at home while the children are not yet in school, during the crucial early years. Sounds crazy, doesn't it? But if research agrees that marriage is good for children, good for married couples, and good for society, then why aren't we doing more to inform people about the benefits of marriage, and providing them with financial incentives to marry for the long-term?

NYT investigation finds widespread corruption in state-run care system

March 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A pretty disturbing story the leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> Nearly 40 years after New York emptied its scandal-ridden warehouses for the developmentally disabled, the far-flung network of small group homes that replaced them operates with scant oversight and few consequences for employees who abuse the vulnerable population.
>
> A New York Times investigation over the past year has found widespread problems in the more than 2,000 state-run homes. In hundreds of cases reviewed by The Times, employees who sexually abused, beat or taunted residents were rarely fired, even after repeated offenses, and in many cases, were simply transferred to other group homes run by the state.
>
> And, despite a state law requiring that incidents in which a crime may have been committed be reported to law enforcement, such referrals are rare: State records show that of some 13,000 allegations of abuse in 2009 within state-operated and licensed homes, fewer than 5 percent were referred to law enforcement. The hundreds of files examined by The Times contained shocking examples of abuse of residents with conditions like Down syndrome, autism and cerebral palsy.
>
> […]The Times reviewed 399 disciplinary cases involving 233 state workers who were accused of one of seven serious offenses, including physical abuse and neglect, since 2008. In each of the cases examined, the agency had substantiated the charges, and the worker had been previously disciplined at least once.
>
> In 25 percent of the cases involving physical, sexual or psychological abuse, the state employees were transferred to other homes.
>
> The state initiated termination proceedings in 129 of the cases reviewed but succeeded in just 30 of them, in large part because the workers' union, the Civil Service Employees Association, aggressively resisted firings in almost every case. A few employees resigned, even though the state sought only suspensions.
>
> In the remainder of the cases, employees accused of abuse — whether beating the disabled, using racial slurs or neglecting their care — either were suspended, were fined or had their vacation time reduced.
>
> […]In some cases, not even criminal convictions are disqualifying. Henry Marrero, an employee at a group home in Utica, was convicted of beating a 99-year-old man while moonlighting at a nursing home — slapping the man three times in the face and once on the stomach. He pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor and was

> barred from participating in federally financed health care programs. But he kept his state job working with the developmentally disabled.
>
> […]The Civil Service Employees Association, one of the most powerful unions in Albany, makes no apologies for its vigorous defense of the group-home workers it represents.
>
> But the union’s approach — contesting just about every charge leveled at a worker — has contributed to a system in which firings of even the most abusive employees are rare. Most disciplinary measures represent a compromise between management and the union, often reached at the urging of an arbitrator chosen by both sides.

This article really has to be read in full to be understood. Solid investigative work by the New York Times.

Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations

March 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> The theme of CSW this year was "access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology." However, rather than reading, math, computer skills, and vocational training, a number of panels and events focused instead on "comprehensive" sex education. For example, the Population Council hosted a side event during CSW with International Planned Parenthood Federation and the International Women's Health Council to introduce advocates from other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and delegates from around the world to their new *It's All One Curriculum: Guidelines and Activities for a Unified Approach to Sexuality, Gender, HIV, and Human Rights Education*. The curriculum's ultimate goal: "to enable young people to enjoy—and advocate for their rights to—dignity, equality, and healthy, responsible, and satisfying sexual lives."
>
> The creators of this curriculum claim that its perspective is appropriate for all young people globally, irrespective of their culture. Parents and policymakers alike might be surprised, if not horrified, upon examining some of its content. For example, the first unit is entitled "Sexual Rights are Human Rights," which ignores anything controversial about that assertion and enumerates a variety of so-called sexual rights alongside the more generally accepted political and social rights. The section on relationships discusses "long-term domestic relationships or partnerships," listing marriage as one such type of relationship often entered into out of social, religious, or economic pressures. It calls for the legalization of same-sex marriage. Not only does the curriculum advocate for same-sex marriage and the normalization of homosexuality, it also calls for the acceptance and legalization of prostitution (euphemistically referred to as "sex work") and unencumbered access to legal abortion, which it asserts as a human right. It asserts that parenthood and marriage need not be related and that gender is a social construct that varies across time and culture. It encourages students to explore their sexual desires and says "sexuality may be expressed by oneself or with others." Absent in the several hundred pages of curriculum and activities is any positive mention of abstinence, other than including it as a possible means of contraception or an effective way to avoid contracting a sexually transmitted infection.

Ever wonder where this stuff comes from? It comes from the political left. And it's paid for

by U.S. taxpayer dollars.

CBO finds that Obama understated budget deficits by 2.3 TRILLION

March 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Hill. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> The Congressional Budget Office on Friday released its analysis of President Obama's 2012 budget proposal and found it does less to rein in deficits and the debt than the administration had estimated.
>
> CBO estimates Obama's plan would produce 10 years of deficits totaling $9.5 trillion. By 2021, it would increase the debt held by the public to 87 percent of gross domestic product.
>
> The administration, using different methods, estimated budget deficits would total $7.2 trillion over the next 10 years under the 2012 budget. It forecast that total debt in 2021 would be 77 percent of GDP.
>
> The White House also said total deficits over the next decade would be $1.1 trillion more without the recommendations included in Obama's budget.
>
> Marc Goldwein, policy director for the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, said that CBO has found the effects to be almost nil.
>
> He explained that the difference between the CBO's $9.5 trillion estimate and OMB's $7.2 trillion estimate comes from two sources: rosy economic growth assumptions by OMB and offsets for the Medicare doc fix as well as transportation spending OMB did not specify in the budget and which CBO will not factor in.
>
> The most important aspect of CBO's analysis is that, while OMB claimed the president's budget "stabilized" the debt at 77 percent of GDP over the 10-year window, CBO estimates the debt will grow throughout the period and end up at 87 percent, he said.

Here's Michelle Bachmann explaining that since the Democrats took control of the budget in 2007, over 5 trillion dollars has been added to the debt.

The chart Michele is talking about:

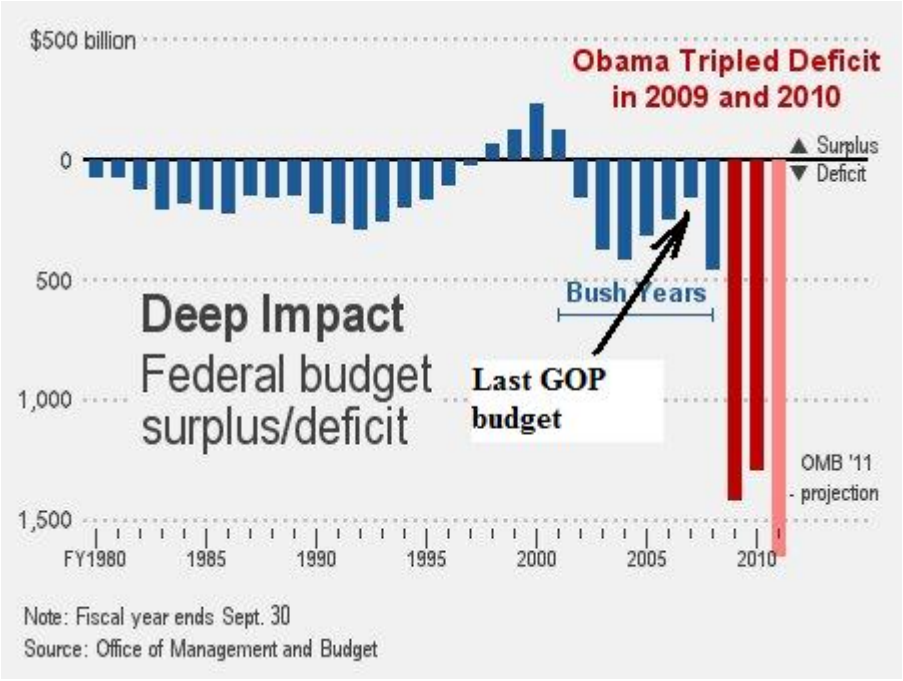

Barack Obama Budget Deficit

The last Republican budget was in 2006. The recession started in 2007, along with the spending.

Meanwhile, the Obama will attend his fourth party event of the month. It's party time! Just like in college!

Book review of “A Meaningful World”

March 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Melissa at Hard-Core Christianity.

Excerpt:

> In A Meaningful World: How the Arts and Sciences Reveal the Genius of Nature, Benjamin Wiker and Jonathan Witt argue that, contrary to the nihilism spawned by reductionist materialism, meaning virtually pervades the cosmos. They demonstrate how meaning is evident, not only in the biological realm, but also in chemistry, mathematics, and astrophysics. Wiker and Witt go beyond offering an argument for intelligent design; they set out to prove that the universe is a work of genius intelligence; it is “meaning-full” rather than meaningless. They postulate that, akin to the elaborate, multi-layered works of the literary mastermind William Shakespeare, the universe and the life it contains cannot simply be reduced to their smallest parts; they must be taken as ingeniously contrived, integrated wholes whose parts are often interdependent and viable only within their appropriate context. They liken reductionism to an acid that damages everything it touches, be it man’s brilliant creative expressions or the scientific endeavor to discover the truth about the nature of life and the universe.

This is a good book for people who want to know the difference that objective detection of design makes to a person’s worldview. If there is a design in the universe, there is a designer. And that design comes out in science, literature, art and almost everything else.

France dispatches carrier battle group to Libya

March 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

French Rafale Fighter
From the Times of India.

Excerpt:

> France on Sunday sent its Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier to Libya to bolster the West's air campaign against Muammar Gaddafi's forces.
>
> The French Navy's flagship set off from the southern naval port of Toulon at 1210 GMT, with 20 warplanes, most them Rafale and older Super Etendard combat jets, as well as helicopters and two E-2 Hawkeye surveillance aircraft.
>
> Tugs pulled it from the wharf as dozens of onlookers watched it depart.
>
> "The aircraft carrier is 24 hours by sea from the Libyan coast but will take 36 to 48 hours to get there, to take the time to load on the fighter jets that will participate in the operations and to hold some landing exercises," a military source said.
>
> The aircraft carrier was to be escorted by three frigates — the anti-submarine Duplex, the anti-air Forbin and the multi-mission stealth Aconit — and the oil tanker La Meuse, military officials said.
>
> The French naval group was to be protected by a nuclear attack submarine, they added.
>
> French warplanes also continued sorties over Libya early Sunday as part the West's biggest intervention in the Arab world since the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq.
>
> Saturday, French jets spearheaded the West's assault with four air strikes in Libya, destroying several armoured vehicles of forces loyal to the embattled Libyan strongman.

Sarkozy is, of course, the leader of the French conservatives. And of the free world? France started combat operations in Libya on March 10th!

Learn more about the French Rafale fighters here (they are fairly new), and the Charles de Gaulle here. It is a CVN, not a CV. Extremely capable, and fairly new.

Mary Jo Sharp responds to Rob Bell's book "Love Wins"

March 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I met Mary Jo Sharp and Roger Sharp at the EPS Conference in Atlanta. They are awesome. Mary Jo is really passionate and animated, and Roger is really friendly and engaging.

Here's Mary Jo's article on the trendy universalist pastor Rob Bell.

She quotes Bell:

> Pastor Bell states that Mithraism was an influential religion of the first century and Mithra's "followers believed he was born of a virgin, he was a mediator between God and humans, and Mithra had ascended to heaven." He also makes similar comments on the god, Attis, and discusses a little about emperor worship. After discussing the emperor worship, he states, "In the first century, to claim that your God had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, well it just wasn't that unique. The claims of the first Christians weren't really anything new. Everybody's god had risen from the dead. What makes yours so special?"

What? That's news to me… I thought the doctrine of a single bodily resurrection prior to the end of the world was unique to Christianity.

Mary Jo assesses Bell's assertion:

> Finally, I think the obvious problem that should be noted is Bell's statement, "Everybody's god had risen from the dead. What makes yours so special?" In the Roman worship of Mithras, there is no recorded death story. Hence, there is also no resurrection story. So, from the evidence we have on Mithras, we can know that not everybody's god died nor did everybody's god rise from the dead. How can a comparison be conscionably made between Jesus' resurrection story and a non-existent resurrection story? This comparison is illogical and should not be made. I would respond to Pastor Bell's rhetorical question by answering that Jesus *actually* died and rose from the dead. Therefore, the early Christians had a very unique story if they were approaching Mithraic worshipers in the first century with the good news!

So Bell lied. It sounds like he is using "The Da Vinci Code" movie as a historical source in order to equate Christianity with Greek and Roman religions, in order to make the case that all religions are the same. That way, people can believe anything and still not go to Hell.

There's more in Mary Jo's post, but there is one outright mistake (or lie) by Bell. Why are people buying this book? It sucks.

Glenn Peoples adds:

> None of the Mithras mythology depicts him being killed for humanity. In fact, he is not depicted as being killed at all. On the contrary, it is Mithras himself who does the killing! As is seen in the most widely use image of Mithras, he was said to have slain a great bull. Actually the very earliest reference to this event is from the close of the first century (AD 98-99), so it is post Christian, but setting that aside, Mithras' death is not depicted at all. For the earliest reference to the slaying of the bull, see R. L. Gordon, "The date and significance of CIMRM 593 (British Museum, Townley Collection)," *Journal of Mithraic Studies* 2:2. Read it online here. As there is no depiction of Mithras' death in any ancient mythology, there is likewise no depiction of any resurrection.
>
> Swedish scholar Tryggve N. D. Mettinger (I can only wonder how his first name is pronounced!) is professor of Hebrew Bible at Lund University in Sweden and a member of the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, Stockholm. Although he claims that there were in pre-Christian antiquity a few cases of myths of dying and rising gods, he makes two important admissions in his monograph, *The Riddle of Resurrection*. Firstly, he affirms that he is going against a "near consensus," and a consensus held not by Christian scholars, but by historians in general. Secondly, while he suggests that there *existed* myths of gods rising from death, he never suggests that the accounts are similar to that of the death and resurrection of Jesus. In fact he concludes the opposite:
>
> There is, as far as I am aware, no prima facie evidence that the death and resurrection of Jesus is a mythological construct, drawing on the myths and rites of the dying and rising gods of the surrounding world.
>
> Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The Riddle of Resurrection* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wicksell, 2001), 221.

I find it interesting that so many people will buy a book based solely on Bell's stylish appearance, complete with trendy glasses and hair, and his appealing universalist message. No one is buying it because they think it's true – Bell isn't in a position to know what's true. Why listen to a stupid person? It's like going to have your fortune told, or reading horoscopes. It sounds good, but it's not real.

Queen’s University feminist says that polygamy should be permitted

March 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What does feminism really mean? Is feminism compatible with traditional marriage?

Well, take a look at this post from the Vancouver Sun.

Excerpt:

> A Queen’s University law professor says that polygamy should be legal in Canada.
>
> Queen’s issued a news release on the day that a polygamy reference opened in British Columbia, where the government is seeking a legal opinion on whether Canada’s 128-year-old ban on multiple marriage violates the freedom of religion guarantees in the Charter of Rights.
>
> Bev Baines, head of the Department of Gender Studies and a constitutional law expert, argues that Canada is a multicultural country and it is therefore unconstitutional to criminalize people for their marital relationships.
>
> “The law achieves nothing,” Baines said in the release. “We’ve had the law on the books since 1892 and we had no prosecutions in the last 60 years aside from a failed attempt last January. We don’t stop polygamy by having a law.”

Who is this person? Let’s read her faculty web page:

> Bev Baines
>
> Head of the Department, Undergraduate Chair
>
> Professor Baines is one of the founders of feminist legal studies in Canada.
>
> She recently published The Gender of Constitutional Jurisprudence (Cambridge University Press, 2004, with Ruth Rubio-Marin) in which the contributors examine constitutional cases pertaining to women in twelve countries to explain how constitutions shape and are shaped by women’s lives.
>
> More generally, her research interests include Charter rights, human rights and judicial review. She was involved in the movement to entrench women’s equality rights in the Canadian Charter of Rights; and she continues to be a strong advocate for equity issues in Canadian universities and society.
>
> After co-coordinating the Women’s Studies Program in the Faculty of Arts and Science between 1991 and 1993, she served as Associate Dean of the Faculty of Law from 1994 until 1997. She has also taught Law and Public Policy in the School of Policy Studies, and is now Head of the Department of Gender Studies.

This person is teaching the next generation of students her views, and is being paid to do it, (and to travel around the world), at taxpayer expense. Her research, which changes

the laws of the land, is taxpayer-funded. I'm sure she means well, but I am not sure that polygamy is as good as traditional marriage is for children. And I don't think that it's fair to women either – women need an exclusive, life-long romantic commitment.

In Canada, polygamous Muslims can already collect multiple welfare checks for their multiple wives.

Excerpt:

> Hundreds of [Greater Toronto Area] Muslim men in polygamous marriages — some with a harem of wives — are receiving welfare and social benefits for each of their spouses, thanks to the city and province, Muslim leaders say.
>
> Mumtaz Ali, president of the Canadian Society of Muslims, said wives in polygamous marriages are recognized as spouses under the Ontario Family Law Act, providing they were legally married under Muslim laws abroad.
>
> "Polygamy is a regular part of life for many Muslims," Ali said yesterday. "Ontario recognizes religious marriages for Muslims and others."
>
> He estimates "several hundred" GTA husbands in polygamous marriages are receiving benefits. Under Islamic law, a Muslim man is permitted to have up to four spouses.
>
> However, city and provincial officials said legally a welfare applicant can claim only one spouse. Other adults living in the same household can apply for welfare independently.
>
> The average recipient with a child can receive about $1,500 monthly, city officials said.

Why do feminists want that?

I think the reason why feminists support polgamy is because they are hostile to traditional marriage.

Excerpt:

> In 1974, the outcry grew still harsher. Ti-Grace Atkinson, a member of The Feminists and author of Amazon Odyssey, called married women "hostages."29 Atkinson concluded:
>
> > The price of clinging to the enemy [a man] is your life. To enter into a relationship with a man who has divested himself as completely and publicly from the male role as much as possible would still be a risk. But to relate to a man who has done any less is suicide…. I, personally, have taken the position that I will not appear with any man publicly, where it could possibly be interpreted that we were friends.30
>
> Feminism's shrill animosity toward the married family continued beyond the 1970s. In 1981, radical feminist author Vivian Gornick, a tenured professor at the University of Arizona, proclaimed that "Being a housewife is an illegitimate

> profession…. The choice to serve and be protected and plan towards being a family-maker is a choice that shouldn't be. The heart of radical feminism is to change that."31
>
> Some influential feminists asserted that marriage was akin to prostitution. In 1983, radical feminist author Andrea Dworkin declared, "Like prostitution, marriage is an institution that is extremely oppressive and dangerous for women."32 In 1991, Catherine MacKinnon, a professor of law at both the University of Michigan Law School and the University of Chicago Law School, added, "Feminism stresses the indistinguishability of prostitution, marriage, and sexual harassment."33

Read the quotes in that article… feminists don't like marriage!

So what would happen if people who believe in feminism wrote the laws of the land? Would they encourage people to get married and have children? Or would they pass laws and policies that encouraged people not to marry (no-fault divorce) and not to have children (high tax rates) and to make them incapable of staying married (sex education, pre-marital sex)? Is the decline of marriage, which is caused by feminism, good for children? Does it make them happy, prosperous and safe?

Is there a backlash against feminism by normal women who want husbands, marriage and children? Are they thinking hard about how to encourage men to marry and stay married? Are they heads of Gender Studies departments, writing and researching pro-marriage and pro-child laws? Do normal women vote overwhelmingly for smaller government, lower taxes, pro-male and pro-marriage policies? Are they informed about these issues? Should they be informed? Whose job is it to inform them? I guess I would like to see traditional women informing themselves and voting for limited government, and fewer research grants for feminists and other non-scientific ideologues.

(By feminism, I mean third-wave feminism)

What Christians can learn from Jews, part 1

March 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 linked this on his Twitter feed.

I could not agree more. My orthodox Jewish doctor is really worried about me not marrying and he gives me lots of advice for how to live in a secular culture too. This is one of the things he told me about.

Book review of “Four Views on Hell”

March 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Spotted this on the Apologetics 315 Twitter feed.

Excerpt:

> The purpose of this article is to critique *Four Views On Hell,* a book written by four theologians representing their respective views namely: literal, metaphorical, purgatorial, and conditional. This presentation will first give a summary of the book, and then offer several key points of analysis. The first point of analysis will be each author’s theological perspective and background because it serves as their interpretive lens. This naturally leads to examining the scriptural evidence for each view and how the author interprets it. While scripture is the ultimate arbiter, arguments offered from logic and emotion will be examined as well. Finally, criticism will be offered on the basis of exegesis and rational coherence. This critique will attempt to show that the book leads one to accept eternal punishment as the most coherent biblical position, while the biblical descriptions of hell are more likely metaphors for a larger reality.
>
> The four views literal, metaphorical, purgatorial, and conditional are represented by John F. Walvoord, William Crockett, Zachary J. Hayes, and Clark H. Pinnock respectively. Each author contributed a chapter followed by responses from the other three. This makes for a very lively and useful book as each view is well argued and subjected to thoughtful criticism. Walvoord makes a strong case for a literal everlasting hell with actual fire. His exegetical work concerning the eternal nature of hell based on the term *aionios* is convincing. He remarks, “If exegesis is the final factor, eternal punishment is the only proper conclusion.”[1] While Crockett stresses that hell is an existential reality, he argues against claiming exacting knowledge concerning its nature. He stresses, “the Scriptures do teach about a real hell, a place of frightful judgment.”[2] Still yet, he argues that the literal view makes the Bible say too much and compares it to the Egyptian topographers of the underworld. He presents a compelling argument for the metaphoric view, emphasizing the use of conflicting language, “how can hell be literal fire when it is also described as darkness?”[3] This point is reiterated *ad nauseum* against the literal view in several responses throughout the book. The organization of the book is interesting in that the further one reads the more speculative the argumentation and the less scriptural the basis. The slope is slippery indeed.
>
> Hayes argues for an interim state which he believes is rooted in the redemptive work of Christ. His position on hell proper is obfuscated by his argument for purgatory. He bases a lot of his argumentation on history and tradition, which is not surprising as it is its only real grounding. He also petitions a humanistic sense of fairness, an emotional appeal which he shares with the next alternative.

> Pinnock's case is based more on a negative argument against the classical view than evidence for his own. Accordingly, he exaggerates the traditional view at the outset. He contends one is asked to believe that God "endlessly tortures sinners by the million, sinners who perish because the Father decided not to elect them to salvation, though he could have done so, and whose torments are supposed to gladden the hearts of believers in heaven."[4] He argues forcefully that eternal torment is sadistic, vindictive and unjust. It is not befitting of God's character. He proposes annihilationism or "conditional immortality" as a preferable alternative.

You can kind of see where Pinnock is similar to Rob Bell – he is being forced by his Calvinism into universalism in order to be fair. Molinists like me have no such pressures – if you're going to Hell it's your fault. If you're going to heaven, you would NOT be going there if God didn't do ALL the work. You just have to not resist him. You have a choice to resist or not. That's it.

I love reading these Three/Four/Five view books. The whole series is good.

Obama administration invents federal anti-bullying law

March 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Minding the Campus. (H/T Hans Bader)

Excerpt:

> There's no federal law against bullying or homophobia. So the Department of Education recently decided to invent one. On October 26, it sent a "Dear Colleague" letter to the nation's school districts arguing that many forms of homophobia and bullying violate federal laws against sexual harassment and discrimination. But those laws only ban discrimination based on sex or race – not sexual orientation, or bullying in general. The letter from the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights twisted those laws, interpreting them so broadly as to cover not only bullying, but also a vast range of constitutionally protected speech, as well as conduct that the Supreme Court has held does not constitute harassment. In so doing, it menaced academic freedom and student privacy rights, and thumbed its nose at the federal courts.
>
> […]The Education Department's letter, from Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Russlynn Ali, flouts the Supreme Court's harassment definition, claiming that "Harassment does not have to . . . involve repeated incidents" to be actionable, but rather need only be "severe, pervasive, or persistent" enough to detract from a student's educational benefits or activities. The letter goes out of its way to emphasize that harassment includes speech, such as "graphic and written statements" and on the "Internet."
>
> The letter falsely implies that anti-gay harassment is generally discrimination based on sex. It cites as an example of illegal "gender-based harassment" a case in which "a gay high school student was called names (including anti-gay slurs and sexual comments) both to his face and on social networking sites." This is exactly what most federal appeals courts have said does not constitute gender-based harassment. It is not clear whether this case is merely a hypothetical example, or – more disturbingly — a finding by the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in an actual case. The letter says that "each of these hypothetical examples contains elements taken from actual cases."
>
> If it actually found a school district guilty of harassment over this, then the Education Department has flagrantly disregarded court rulings, not just about what harassment is, but about how officials are supposed to respond to harassment. In this example of anti-gay harassment, the Education Department says the school district is liable for harassment even though "the school responded to complaints from the student by reprimanding the perpetrators,"

> which stopped "harassment by those individuals," because such discipline "did not, however, stop others from undertaking similar harassment of the student."
>
> That totally contradicts the Supreme Court's *Davis* decision, which said school districts are not liable for harassment just because it continues, and are only liable if they are "deliberately indifferent" to harassment once they learn of it; they need not actually succeed in "purging schools of actionable peer harassment" or ensuring that all "students conform their conduct to" rules against harassment.
>
> Even in the workplace, where institutions are liable for mere "negligence" regarding harassment, they are not liable for harassment that continues after steps "reasonably calculated" to prevent harassment – such as when employees stubbornly engage in harassment for which other employees have already been properly disciplined, as a federal appeals court ruled in *Adler v. Wal-Mart* (1998). Indeed, an institution may sometimes avoid liability even where there was no discipline at all, if it was unclear whether the accused employee was guilty, given due-process concerns.
>
> Essentially, the Education Department has turned harassment law upside down, making schools more liable for harassment than employers, when the Supreme Court intended that they be less subject to liability. (The Education Department letter also suggests racial "sensitivity" training – never mind that this often backfires on institutions. In *Fitzgerald v. Mountain States Tel & Tel. Co.* (1995), where adverse employee reactions to diversity training spawned a discrimination lawsuit, the appeals court noted that "diversity training sessions generate conflict and emotion" and that "diversity training is perhaps a tyranny of virtue.")
>
> The letter also implies that it does not matter whether speech is "aimed at a specific target" in considering whether the speech is "harassment." This stretches harassment law well beyond its existing reach even in the workplace, effectively prohibiting a vast range of speech that a listener overhears and objects to. Employees have tended to lose lawsuits alleging harassment over speech not aimed at them (the California Supreme Court's 2006 *Lyle* decision being a classic example), although there are occasional exceptions to this rule. The courts reason that "the impact of such 'second-hand' harassment is obviously not as great as harassment directed toward" the complainant herself.
>
> Banning such speech also raises serious First Amendment issues. Recently a federal appeals court cited the First Amendment in dismissing a racial harassment lawsuit by a university's Hispanic employees against a white professor over his racially-charged anti-immigration messages. In its decision in *Rodriguez v. Maricopa County Community College* (2010), the court noted that the messages were not "directed at particular individuals" but rather aimed at "the college community" as a whole.

So the state has basically decided to use the government-run school system, which is

funded through compulsory taxation, to potentially criminalize speech critical of certain Democrat special interest groups.

All sensible people are opposed to “bullying” and “harassment” – when someone hits someone else in a school or workplace, that should be stopped. Because schools are a place of learning, just as businesses are a place of working. But this administration is going beyond the punishment of actual crimes to punish thoughts that disagree with their their thoughts. This is just fascism – the imposition of moral values and beliefs by the state onto individuals through the use of threats, coercion and force. And you can bet that conservative groups – like the pro-life groups who are regularly banned from speaking – will not be the beneficiaries of these laws.

To learn more about Kevin Jennings, the man Obama has appointed to spearhead this efforts, read this post at Gateway Pundit. And this post at Gateway Pundit.

Sodexo files lawsuit against SEIU union for racketeering

March 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great news from Big Government.

Excerpt:

> One of the largest food services and facilities management companies in the world, Sodexo is the provider of choice for most schools, universities, companies, hotels, prisons and other facilities that outsource their cafeteria and food catering operations, and for those that outsource industrial cleaning services. SEIU has been incessantly battering Sodexo since 2007, in its desire to unionize some of its nearly 400,000 employees, many of them hotel and food service workers. Exacerbating the tensions was a longstanding turf war between SEIU and UNITE HERE over hotel and casino workers, which often spilled over into SEIU's antics prior to the settlement the warring unions reached this past summer.
>
> Sodexo USA has filed the lawsuit in an attempt to halt the over-the-top harassment from SEIU, alleging that many of the acts are very serious and outside of the normal realm of union tactics, including acts of **" SEIU blackmail, vandalism, trespass, harassment, and lobbying law violations designed to steer business away from Sodexo USA and harm the company."** [emphasis added]
>
> Aside from some of its usual corporate smear campaign tactics, certain organizers in the SEIU subscribed to some especially nasty, and frankly repulsive, tactics:
>
> The complaint alleges that the SEIU, in face to face meetings, threatened Sodexo USA's executives that it would harm Sodexo USA's business unless they gave in to the union, and then carried out its threats through egregious behavior, including:

> > - throwing plastic roaches onto food being served by Sodexo USA at a high profile event;
> > - scaring hospital patients by insinuating that Sodexo USA food contained bugs, rat droppings, mold and flies;
> > - lying to interfere with Sodexo USA business and sneaking into elementary schools to avoid security;
> > - violating lobbying laws to steer business away from Sodexo USA, even at the risk of costing Sodexo USA employees their jobs; and
> > - harassing Sodexo USA employees by threatening to accuse them of

> wrongdoing.

This country will be better off if we can stop thugs from extorting money from the productive sector of the economy. And that goes for ACORN and Planned Parenthood, too.

What Christians can learn from Jews, part 2

March 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the second video in the series from yesterday.

This is the Jewish shema – which is Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.[a]

5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Notice the emphasis on passing your beliefs to your children. Is that something we should be leaving to chance? Or should we have definite ideas about how to do that given a realistic assessment of the challenges they will face?

What I would like to see is for people to read the Bible, but not for comfort, or to feel pious, or to have community. I would like people to read the Bible and then think about it. I would like people to study other areas of life – like science and economics – and then devise strategies for letting the Bible inform the way they make decisions and achieve their goals. I want people to think about the most effective ways to wisely achieve the goals of their Christian lives using the best information available.

Youth pastor Tory Ninja pleads with Christian parents to get involved

March 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tory Ninja

This is from one of our regular commenters Tory Ninja.

I'm a youth pastor in a church in Canada and have worked with youth for the last 10 years. And I think my current position is almost pointless and a waste of funds. Actually, I think the position is pointless in most churches. This post is an explanation as to why.

The short answer is this: Parents.

The long answer is this:

When I came into my current church setting 6 months ago I quickly realized something had gone horribly wrong in the youth and children ministries (the same could be said for the church I was in before). No one knew anything about the Bible or Christianity. Now don't get me wrong, every class has one or two super geeks. In the church I was in previously the geek had been the son of a missionary, in my current church it is a kid who knows more stuff than most college students on most everything and a young convert girl who used to attend an underground church in China. But other than these people, who had external reasons to know things, no one knew anything.

Actually, Christianity didn't really seem to impact any of their lives beyond coming to church on Sunday and giving lip service to some sort of Christian/secular garbage morality. Their knowledge of the Bible is non-existent. For example, most people did not know the story of Noah's Ark. Now, I don't mean they were confused over whether it was a local flood, or a global flood, or a literary creation. Oh no, if only! Rather, they just didn't know the story… at all. Most of these kids (14-17) had grown up in the church. So what went wrong?

The first place you would think is the problem is with the church. We must be some sort of hippy liberal, let's talk about our feelings, never bring out the Bible because it's old and outdated, type of church. Nope. We are actually quite a strongly conservative, very

biblically based, and incredibly mission orientated denomination. To become a pastor in this denomination, (I'm not talking about ordination here, that's even harder), you literally have to know the Bible and theology better than anyone in the pew would know. You get grilled. Most people fail when they apply, and many people who apply are graduates from the denomination's seminaries. (They do let you try again, and most people eventually pass after lots of study). I remember one of the questions I was asked was "Hmmm, you say in your application that you like history. Could you please explain to us the history behind the canon development of the Bible?" and many questions I answered were followed up with "are you really sure? Do you actually believe that? But what about these verses here, how would you respond to those? What is the context of the verse you just cited to us?" Etc. We have national Bible championships. We are actually growing as a denomination, and have never stopped growing since our founding. My church fits quite nicely within the denomination. We care about knowing our stuff.

So if my church is in a denomination like the one described above, how did my youth never hear the story of Noah's Ark? Well, to tell the truth, they have probably heard it countless times. But they don't care. For example, one day I asked my class what the Gospel was. I wasn't looking for a fully orbed answer, just the basic "Jesus died for my sins" answer. No one answered. I then asked a youth who had taking the essentials to Christianity class TWICE. He said he didn't know. I then said, didn't you take the essentials to Christianity class? He replied, word for word, "Yeah, but I didn't pay attention the second time"… Face palm. I wanted to say "well, what about the first time"?

So what's going wrong? This brings me to my answer: Parents. They are not doing their jobs. Let me give an example. I also run the children's ministry and thus get to talk to children quite often. Most of the children in my ministry who are over 6 and under 9 have seen "Saw", and some have seen "Hostel". If you don't know what those movies are, they are basically torture porn. You see people tortured. Lots of it. These kids got access to these movies from their parents. The parents didn't even watch the movies with them, they put them on and then walked out of the room. This isn't just my church. This is in churches EVERYWHERE in North America. This is just one of many examples that tells me that parents aren't doing their job of discipling their kids in the Christian faith.

Sending children to a youth ministry is pointless if the parents aren't actively discipling their kids during the week. Christianity just won't stick. For example, why do the kids of most immigrants lose the mother tongue of their parents? Well, because they spend at least 5 days a week, 8 hours a day, at school taught in English. All their friends speak English. All the media they watch and listen to is in English. The only time they even hear their mother tongue is at home. And unless the parents make a concerted effort to teach the language and to emphasize its importance, the child will lose the language. They may understand it. But they will barely be able to speak it, it won't impact their lives, and they will most definitely not pass it on to their kids.

The same thing goes for Christianity. If the parents aren't actively, every day, teaching and discipling their kids in Christianity it's content and its importance then there is almost no point in sending them to a youth ministry. If the parents aren't every day praying with

their kids, teaching them how to share their faith, giving them good reasons to be Christians, etc. they are not being good Christian parents. I take this very seriously. For example, my one year old daughter (almost two) already knows how to pray. We can't eat meals without praying otherwise she will start screaming at us to pray. She will say amen after worship songs at church. We read the Bible to her EVERY night. As she gets older, we are going to take an active everyday role in teaching her the precious truths of the Gospel. She will memorize Scripture. She will learn about other religions and worldviews and how to interact with them. Will this guarantee she will be a Christian when she grows up? No, not at all. If we don't do it right, she might even rebel because of our training! But if she ceases to be a Christian it won't be for a lack of knowledge, or a lack of critical engagement, or a lack of seeing her parents treat Christianity as something important.

If parents aren't actively involved in their child's faith, sending them to a youth ministry will be pointless, even destructive. Now some of you may be saying "But pastor, don't you have children and youth with non-Christian parents? If youth ministry is destructive for youth with Christian parents who don't live like Christians, wouldn't that be the same for youth with non-Christian parents? Yet it is clearly better for youth with non-Christian parents to come to church so they can at least hear the gospel some times even if they don't hear it at home. So wouldn't it be the same for youth with Christian parents who are failing at discipling?" Good question. And the answer is no.

Here's why. It has been my experience that the youth with non-Christian parents are often much stronger Christians than those youth who have Christian parents who are failing as Christian parents (which is most of them). See, a youth with non-Christian parents has a good reason for why their parents don't disciple them in Christianity: they're non-Christians! Thus, the bad example of the parents only reinforces in the youth that they need to use their own initiative to learn about the Christian faith. But if a youth has Christian parents, and the Christian faith isn't the most important thing in the parents lives, the youth is going to learn that Christianity is really not that important. If the parents never read their Bible, the youth is going to think that is acceptable. If the parents emphasize school more than Christ, the youth is going to think school is more important, no matter what the parents say about Jesus. If the parents emphasize sports more than Christ, the youth is going to think sports are more important, no matter what the parents say about Jesus. The hypocrisy of the parents will destroy their child's faith.

Which leads me to the whole point of this post, Why are youth pastors in many churches pointless and a waste of funds? Because youth pastors aren't in charge of the single most important thing in a youth's walk with Christ: the parents. The senior/main pastor is. The youth pastor actually has zero control over the constituency that he is suppose to shepherd. Thus, it is becoming my conviction that having a separate pastor for the youth in most churches is a waste of resources. Until a church has a senior pastor who is actively promoting and discipling adults to be good parents, and actually seeing results from that discipleship, there is no point in hiring a youth pastor. A youth pastor will not solve the "youth problem". If anything, given that most youth pastors know very little

about the Christian faith, and also usually have much lower requirements to be in that position, they will probably do more harm then good. Why waste thousands of dollars on a youth pastor when an educated lay leader would almost certainly be better? Use that extra money for buying good educational resources, or use it for missions/outreach, etc. Don't waste it on a youth pastor. He will not solve the problem. That needs to start with the senior pastor and the parents. A youth pastor can be incredibly effective, but only if the senior pastor and the parents are doing their jobs.

I am currently half way through my one year probation at the church I am at. The church has taken quite the financial burden in hiring me. They know the youth and children ministries need help, because very few of their youth and children remain in the faith after high school, many drop out before graduating high school. But I can't even begin to help with the problem until the parents start doing their job. And that's not my job. Sure, I have met with parents one on one. But it is hard to flat out tell parents they have failed at parenting one on one to their face when you have only talked to them once or twice before. That will just close them off to you. And when I tried to give a parent seminar, almost no parents showed up. Thus, given my new convictions, at the end of my one year probation, I may very well step down as youth pastor. Until the entire ethos of my church changes, and people start taking the raising of their kids seriously, I am a total waste of funds. It is better to just have an educated lay leader do my job, or one of the other pastors to take my load.

As a final point, I'm not saying youth or children ministry is pointless. It is incredibly important. Let me say it again: youth ministry is incredibly important. But there is no reason to spend thousands of dollars hiring a youth pastor in a church that doesn't already have parents doing their job. Until that happens, save your funds, and use dedicated lay leaders.

And that is why youth pastors are usually pointless and a waste of funds.

His previous post is here. Some days, I wish I had gotten married and had children. I'm sure I could do a better job leading the children than these bad church parents have done. And I'm sure I could do a better job of leading the parents than these lame, feminized pastors.

Jay Richards explains how welfare forces people into dependency

March 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christian philosopher Jay Richards writing for the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> More than 77 government welfare programs—which are spread across several federal departments and provide cash, food, housing, medical care, and targeted social services to poor and low-income persons—are "means-tested." That is, beneficiaries qualify if they are below a specified income level.
>
> Regardless of their intention, means-tested programs by their very nature pose disincentives for households to increase their incomes and risk termination of their benefits. Thus, the welfare system effectively set up roadblocks to the two main avenues for economic progress: marriage and employment. A single mother would be ensured of her benefits package as long as she did not take a job or marry an employed husband. Given this scenario, it's not surprising that dismal societal trends have followed.
>
> **Unwed childbearing** is the major cause of child poverty in America. Since 1965, the rate of unwed births has soared from 7 percent to 39 percent (and among blacks, to 69 percent). Children born and raised outside marriage are nearly *seven times* more likely to live in poverty than children born to and raised by a married couple. Moreover, unwed childbearing is concentrated among low-income, less educated women in their early 20s—those who have the least ability to support a family by themselves.
>
> **Low levels of parental work** is the second major cause of child poverty in the United States. In a typical year, only about one-fourth of all poor households with children have combined work hours of adults equaling 40 hours a week. The typical poor family with children is supported by only 800 hours of work during a year, an average of 16 hours of work per week. If work in each family were raised to 2,000 hours per year—the equivalent of one adult working 40 hours per week through the year—nearly 75 percent of poor children would be lifted out of poverty.[6]

Marriage and one parent working = no child poverty. Why is government undermining that? Because broken homes produce children that require government intervention = more government = higher taxes = greater "equality" of wealth through government-run redistribution.

The article explains several government policies that would reduce dependency on government.

Richards explains:

> The Welfare Reform Act of 1996 reduced some of these damaging incentives in one major program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Under AFDC, states were given more federal funds if their welfare caseloads increased, and funds were cut whenever the state caseload fell. In other words, states were basically *encouraged* to swell their welfare rolls.
>
> Welfare reform replaced AFDC with a new program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), which provided incentives to move recipients toward self-sufficiency. Funding to each state remained constant regardless of the size of caseloads, and states were allowed to retain savings from caseload reductions.
>
> In addition, states were required to have at least half of their welfare recipients engaged in work or activity that would prepare them for employment. Rather than anticipating depending on the government indefinitely, recipients were limited to five years on the welfare rolls. (Under the old AFDC program, recipients spent an average of 13 years on the rolls.) These reforms in funding structure and incentives made a substantial difference.
>
> Despite dire predictions by opponents of reform that work requirements and benefit limitations would lead to a surge in poverty, just the opposite occurred. States had the flexibility to design programs that best fit the needs of their constituents. State welfare agencies were transformed overnight into job placement centers, while social workers helped recipients access child care, housing, transportation, or other support that was necessary to move them into jobs and toward self-sufficiency.
>
> Within 10 years, welfare caseloads shrank by more than half: 2.7 million fewer families were dependent on welfare checks. As the welfare caseloads fell, the employment of single mothers surged upward, and 1.6 million fewer children were living in poverty.[7] In 2001, despite the recession, the poverty rate for black children was at the lowest point in America's history.[8]

Unfortunately, Obama rolled back welfare reforms in order to incentivize people to go back onto government dependence.

Keep in mind that Arthur Brooks of the AEI has shown that the amount of wealth a person has (over the poverty level) is not what makes them happy. What makes a person happy (above the poverty level) is that a person is making their own way and earning their own bread by their own work. That's what makes people happy.

Should adherence to intelligent design be grounds for not hiring a professor?

March 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Michael Egnor at Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Commenting on proposed state laws to protect scientists from discrimination, University of Chicago biology professor Jerry Coyne sums up the Darwinist approach to academic freedom:
>
> > "… I abhor discrimination against hiring simply because of someone's religion, but **adherence to ID (which, after all, claims to be a nonreligious theory) should be absolute grounds for not hiring a science professor**." (emphasis mine)
>
> Actually, Coyne has no problem with discrimination against a scientist because of religious belief. Coyne took strong exception to NIH director Francis Collins' public discussion of his Christian beliefs:
>
> > Collins gets away with this kind of stuff [i.e. publicly stating that science is compatible with belief in God] only because, in America, Christianity is a socially sanctioned superstition. He's the chief government scientist, but he won't stop conflating science and faith. He had his chance, and he blew it. He should step down.
>
> […]Coyne has failed to provide a shred of evidence that adherence to ID is associated in *any* way with bad science. How many of the scientists who have signed the Discovery Institute's "A Scientific Dissent from Darwinism" — all of whom, according to Coyne, should be unemployable in science — practice bad science in any measurable way? Where is Coyne's objective evidence that these scientists who support ID are substandard scientists, let alone so substandard that not a single one of them should be employed in science?
>
> Yet Coyne insists that scientists — not just evolutionary biologists but *any* scientists — be banned from employment merely for affirming the evidence for design in nature.
>
> Coyne provides no evidence that adherence to ID is associated with substandard science. He makes no argument at all for discriminating against scientists who recognize design in nature. He merely asserts that such scientists (mostly scientists who don't share his atheist metaphysics) must not be allowed to work as scientists.
>
> For Coyne, and for his atheist comrades who exert disproportionate influence in the scientific profession, actual evidence of scientific skill or accomplishment are

> of less importance in hiring a scientist than whether the scientist passes the materialist/atheist litmus test. An atheist who is an utterly undistinguished biologist can gain international renown as a defender of science, whereas a superbly accomplished astrophysicist is denied employment because he has expressed doubts about the adequacy of Darwinism to explain all aspects of living things and has expressed a willngness to take ID seriously.
>
> Jerry Coyne's inquisition is a small part of a fervent crusade on the part of (mostly atheist) scientists to eliminate scientists who acknowledge design in nature from the scientific profession. But most of this science is paid for by taxpayers, who ultimately decide whether or not such discrimination is acceptable in science.
>
> Coyne's explicit metaphysical litmus test is clear evidence that we need legislation to protect academic freedom for scientists.

This is another case where the close-minded inquisitors can be promoted higher in the academy based on their ideological purity, while the really brilliant scientists are burned at the stake as heretics.

How do secular leftist professors feel about Christian students?

March 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Alliance Defense Fund.

Excerpt:

> The late American philosopher Richard Rorty (d. 2007) in describing his assessment of the role of university professor wrote: "When we American college teachers encounter religious fundamentalists, we do not consider the possibility of reformulating our own practices of justification so as to give more weight to the authority of the Christian scriptures. Instead, we do our best to convince these students of the benefits of secularization." The re-education imperative is one that he, "like most Americans who teach humanities or social science in colleges and universities, invoke when we try to arrange things so that students who enter as bigoted, homophobic, religious fundamentalists will leave college with views more like our own." Rorty explains to the "fundamentalist" parents of his students: "we are going to go right on trying to discredit you in the eyes of your children, trying to strip your fundamentalist religious community of dignity, trying to make your views seem silly rather than discussable." He helpfully explains that "I think those students are lucky to find themselves under the benevolent *Herrschaft* [domination] of people like me, and to have escaped the grip of their frightening, vicious, dangerous parents."
>
> The sociologist Alvin Gouldner in his book *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* set forth a number of the historical developments that were decisive in the formation of the revolutionary intellectual class. Among the factors is the process of secularization which de-sacralizes authority and enables challenges to theological traditions. Another factor was the extension of non-church public schooling. The colleges and universities in particular generate "dissent, deviance, and the cultivation of an authority-subverting culture of critical discourse." And the school teachers at all levels conceive and fulfill their tasks as representatives of (the abstract) *society as a whole* (whatever that is), thus distanced from and with no allegiance or obligation to the values of the parents of their students. A related factor is the structure of the new educational system: "increasingly insulated from the family system," thereby situated to serve as "an important source of values among students divergent from those of their families." In both form and content (which are not so neatly divisible, by the way) the state educational enterprise has been leveraged to missionary ends, further undermining parental authority and replacing its formative function.
>
> Law Professor Samuel Levinson has with welcome candor revealed that it is not due to his sympathy for certain religious students that he prefers that public

> grade schools grant limited exemptions to those students with conscientious objections to portions of the curriculum. Rather, such measures are calculated to mollify those religious students, thereby keeping them in the secularizing environment of the government school where they are likely to have their views transformed. With just enough solicitude for such students' interests, they may be convinced to stay put, and thus be "lured away from the views—some of them only foolish, others, alas, quite pernicious—of their parents."
>
> To push these [Christian] students from the public schools . . . will assure that they will in fact be educated within institutions that are, from my perspective at least, far more limited, and indeed, "totalitarian" than anything likely to be found within a decent public school. My desire to "lure" religious parents back to the public schools thus has at least a trace of the spider's web about it.
>
> And there's more than a trace of irony in his assigning "totalitarian" levels as he plots means to manipulate the worldviews of children by coaxing them to remain in institutions designed for that very purpose. Spider's web, indeed.

I was just having a conversation with a couple of left-wing Christians on Facebook who were telling me how Christianity was compatible with left-wing politics. They have no idea what they are talking about – they just don't know what they are up against. They are the ones who vote for more funding for public schools, thinking they are innocuous.

One of the reasons that kept me from marrying is that I didn't meet anyone in university who took this threat as seriously as I do. If you believe that children should be influential for the Christ, then reading that excerpt should scare you. But if babies are just for baby pictures, then it's not really a big deal. But it's a big deal to me.

Apple is OK with Grindr gay hook-up app, but not OK with Gay Cure app

March 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Christianity Today.

Excerpt:

> Apple removed Exodus International's app after critics released a position calling the organization "hateful and bigoted." Exodus promotes "freedom from homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ."
>
> […]Apple spokesman Tom Neumayr told CNET that Apple pulled the app because "it violates our developer guidelines by being offensive to large groups of people."
>
> […]About 147,000 people have signed a petition addressed to Apple CEO Steve Jobs that stated: "Apple doesn't allow racist or anti-Semitic apps in its app store, yet it gives the green light to an app targeting vulnerable LGBT youth with the message that their sexual orientation is a 'sin that will make your heart sick' and a 'counterfeit'. This is a double standard that has the potential for devastating consequences."
>
> […]Other organizations and companies have been targeted because of issues related to sexuality. Equality Matters has targeted Chick-Fil-A for being connected to other ministries. "In fact, the company has strong, deep ties to anti-gay organizations like Focus on the Family and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and its charitable division has provided more than $1.1 million to organizations that deliver anti-LGBT messages and promote egregious practices like reparative therapy that seek to 'free' people of being gay."
>
> Lady Gaga ended a deal with Target for exclusively selling a version of her new album, saying the corporation supported anti-gay rights groups.
>
> Apple made a similar decision last year when it removed an app from the Manhattan Declaration. After a petition with about 7,000 signatures, Change.org, Apple removed it from the app store.

Applications that suggest that people might be able to leave the gay lifestyle should be banned, according to some gay activists. They don't like traditional views of sex, and they are prepared to force their views onto others who merely disagree with them. They call that "tolerance".

But some apps are OK for Apple and gay activists – like Grindr.

Excerpt:

> Alex Cohen is on a date – sort of. He's having Thai food in the Castro with his new friend Sean, whom he met through his iPhone, all the while texting nine other

> guys whom he might hook up with later.
>
> Not that Sean is offended. Between bites of fried calamari, he's texting a handful of other men who might become his Mr. Right for the night.
>
> They are "grinding," the latest verb in the gay lexicon, which refers to the new gay dating app for the iPhone called Grindr. A revolutionary way to meet gay men, Grindr has eliminated the need for "gay-dar"; it uses GPS technology to download hundreds of pictures of available men within walking distance.
>
> Alex and Sean can click on a man's picture to start a text conversation, send pictures and, if they so desire, make arrangements for a rendezvous. There's a number on each man's photo, indicating how many feet away they are at that instant.

Apple thinks that Grindr is just fine. Apple thinks that anonymous sex is just fine. But Apple doesn't think that free speech is just fine.

If you like free speech, then don't buy Apple products. I like free speech, so I don't buy Apple products.

More here at the Reformed Pastor's blog.

To learn more about reparative therapy from actual doctors who do it, check out NARTH.

Canadians brace themselves for a federal election

March 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper

This just in! The Conservatives are going to take a shot at winning a majority.

Excerpt:

> Canadians may face their fourth federal election in seven years as early as May, after opposition parties said they wouldn't back Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper's fiscal plan.
>
> Leaders of all three opposition parties said that C$7.6 billion ($7.7 billion) in new measures announced yesterday by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty weren't enough to warrant their support. Harper will face a Liberal motion of non-confidence on March 25.
>
> Opposition lawmakers are seeking to benefit from what they say have been ethics violations by Harper's administration, including accusations by Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff that former Harper aide Bruce Carson was peddling influence with companies seeking state contracts, as well as charges that ministers have misled Parliament. Harper has said he doesn't want an election that could undermine the country's recovery.
>
> "The opposition parties are going to talk about contempt of Parliament and ethics" to weaken the government's position, said Robert Drummond, a political scientist at York University in Toronto. The Conservatives "are going to want to talk about their economic record."

I don't know why the opposition parties would focus on ethics – according to the latest poll, the Conservatives have them beat solidly on ethics.

Excerpt:

> In the poll, Canadians were given two choices for what they think is the most important issue in the election.
>
> Sixty-three per cent said that “electing a party and leader that will provide honest, open and trustworthy government” is more important.
>
> By comparison, 37% believe that “electing a party and leader that will make sure that our economic recovery continues” is more important.
>
> Those findings, on their surface, should be good news for the Liberals. But in an ironic twist, the very issue the Liberals are trumpeting could backfire on them in a campaign.
>
> Here’s why:
>
> • 28% of Canadians believe the Conservatives, if re-elected, would do the best job of “providing honest, open and trustworthy government.”
>
> • 22% believe the NDP would do the best job of this.
>
> • Just 15% say the Liberals would be best at providing honest, open and trustworthy government.

And more:

> When it comes to the party that can do the best job at “making sure our economic recovery continues,” 37% chose the Tories, while significantly fewer believe the Liberals (20%), NDP (14%) or Bloc (6%) are best positioned to do this.
>
> Nearly one-quarter (23%) don’t believe any of these parties would do the best job at this.
>
> Thinking about which party would “keep taxes under control,” 36% believe the Conservatives are best able to do this, while fewer believe the Liberals (17%), NDP (16%) or Bloc (6%) are best positioned to do this. Twenty-five per cent think that some other party would do a better job with this.
>
> One in three (33%) believe the Conservatives would do the best job at “spending taxpayers money wisely,” while others believe the NDP (18%), Liberals (16%) or Bloc (6%) would do the best job of this. Another 27% don’t believe any of these parties would do the best job at spending taxpayers money wisely.

The Conservatives currently have 143 seats, with 155 needed for a majority. The latest poll puts them just shy of a majority.

UPDATE: An even later poll puts Harper at 43% support.

Related posts

- Stephen Harper’s Conservatives up to 43% in latest federal election poll
- Poll finds 68% of Canadians positive on Canadian economy
- Canada created twice the number of jobs as the United States in January

- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper vows to end long-gun registry
- Stephen Harper makes a stand against North Korean aggression
- Fiscally conservative Canada campaigns against global bank tax
- Federal conservatives in Canada aim to cut spending and waste from budget
- Canada’s finance minister proposes changes to mortgage lending laws
- Supreme Court sides with Conservative Party against price-fixing monopoly
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper seeks increased trade with India
- Canadian Evangelicals and Catholics more opposed to secularism and socialism
- Members of Canadian socialist parties oppose child sex-trafficking crime bill
- Harper instructs foreign minister to denounce Libyan dictator
- Canadians to walk out of Ahmadinejad’s speech at UN
- Canada signs free trade deal with Panama
- Harper pays surprise visit to troops in Afghanistan
- Investors Business Daily says Harper better leader than Obama
- Round-up of US news media interviews with Stephen Harper

Stephen C. Meyer in FOUR John Ankerberg online videos

March 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News. (H/T Stephen C. Meyer)

Excerpt:

> In four television episodes of the John Ankerberg Show broadcast across the US and over 200 nations worldwide, Dr. John Ankerberg interviewed Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, author of the groundbreaking book *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*. The series will begin broadcasting on April 3 at 5:30pm EDT on the Daystar Network and on April 10 at 9:30pm EDT on the INSP Network.
>
> In the interviews Dr. Meyer explains how even Charles Darwin, in his book *The Origin of Species*, admitted he did not know how the first cell came into being, or how life came to be.
>
> Scientists in Darwin's day thought the cell was a simple glob of plasm, but today we have discovered that the cell is an almost unimaginably complex system of molecular machines and rich in digital code.
>
> Where did this high-tech in low life come from? Ankerberg and Meyer explore the mystery surrounding this question, which Meyer calls the DNA enigma. Click on the links below to watch full episodes of the show online!
>
> - Week 1: Every person's body consists of over a trillion cells. Almost every one of these cells includes a DNA molecule. What is DNA? Why is it so special? What does it do? Where did the digital code embedded in DNA originate? Why does the specified information in DNA point to a designing intelligence?
> - Week 2: As scientific technology has progressed, scientists have realized the cell is more and more complex. According to Microsoft's Bill Gates, the DNA within each cell is far more complex than any computer software ever created. Where did the coded information within DNA come from? What naturalistic theories have been proposed? What is the possibility of the precise genetic information in DNA evolving by chance?
> - Week 3: In addition to chance, scientists have offered other answers to the origin of the precise genetic information found in DNA. Why is it that natural selection, self-organizing natural laws, or some combination of these with chance cannot explain where the information originated? We'll also see why DNA exhibits signs of a designing intelligence.
> - Week 4: What is the scientific theory of Intelligent Design (ID)? Is ID true science or just religion masquerading as science? We'll also answer the

> objections to ID such as, “Is ID just an argument from ignorance?” (“We don’t know what the naturalistic causes are right now for the origin of life.”) We’ll also see why ID is based on scientific reasoning but may have larger religious implications.

And Meyer is not making this up. This is the state of science today.

From Scientific American.

Excerpt:

> As recently as the middle of the 20th century, many scientists thought that the first organisms were made of self-replicating proteins. After Francis Crick and James Watson showed that DNA is the basis for genetic transmission in the 1950s, many researchers began to favor nucleic acids over proteins as the ur-molecules. But there was a major hitch in this scenario. DNA can make neither proteins nor copies of itself without the help of catalytic proteins called enzymes. This fact turned the origin of life into a classic chicken-or-egg puzzle: Which came first, proteins or DNA?
>
> RNA, DNA’s helpmate, remains the most popular answer to this conundrum, just as it was when I wrote “In the Beginning…” Certain forms of RNA can act as their own enzymes, snipping themselves in two and splicing themselves back together again. If RNA could act as an enzyme, then it might be able to replicate itself without help from proteins. RNA could serve as gene and catalyst, egg and chicken.
>
> But the “RNA-world” hypothesis remains problematic. RNA and its components are difficult to synthesize under the best of circumstances, in a laboratory, let alone under plausible prebiotic conditions. Once RNA is synthesized, it can make new copies of itself only with a great deal of chemical coaxing from the scientist. Overbye notes that “even if RNA did appear naturally, the odds that it would happen in the right sequence to drive Darwinian evolution seem small.”
>
> The RNA world is so dissatisfying that some frustrated scientists are resorting to much more far out—literally—speculation. The most startling revelation in Overbye’s article is that scientists have resuscitated a proposal once floated by Crick. Dissatisfied with conventional theories of life’s beginning, Crick conjectured that aliens came to Earth in a spaceship and planted the seeds of life here billions of years ago. This notion is called directed panspermia. In less dramatic versions of panspermia, microbes arrived on our planet via asteroids, comets or meteorites, or drifted down like confetti.

John Horgan is not a Christian, nor even a theist. The origin of life is not explainable on the basis on unintelligent causes. But it is perfectly explainable as the result of intelligent causes. Just like the sequence of letters arranged in this blog post to have meaning are best explained as the result of an intelligence.

Jennifer Roback Morse on Obama’s rejection of traditional marriage

March 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

A new podcast from Issues, Etc. featuring the magnificent Jennifer Roback Morse.

The MP3 file is here.

The first topic is Obama’s refusal to defend the federal Defense of Marriage Act. A lot of people made a mistake when they voted for Obama in 2008. Although he *claimed* to be a Christian and *said* that he believed in traditional marriage. Newsflash! Obama is a radical anti-Christian leftist who is deep in the pocket of the anti-marriage left. Of course he is opposed to traditional marriage! The lesson for 2012 is that Christians need to *never* believe what politicians say when they are trying to get elected – look at their record and see what they’ve done.

The second myth she punctures is that a secular left government is OK with Christian parents teaching children about Biblical morality. It’s not *just* that they would want to indoctrinate children to reject Biblical morality. It’s not *just* that they want to monitor what children say to make sure they don’t express any Biblical moral views in public. Its that they actually think that Christian parents should not be allowed to teach children in their care about Biblical moral views. You don’t own your children – the state owns them. The state decides what your children will believe.

BONUS:

Here’s a new podcast on The New York Times and “modern love”.

Arizona Republicans ban race-selection and sex-selection abortions

March 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Steve Montenegro
From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> A bill that would ban abortions based on the race or gender of the baby was passed by the Arizona House of Representatives yesterday, and now goes to Gov. Jan Brewer for approval.
>
> Titled the "Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act of 2011," the bill would make it a Class 3 felony to perform or in any way coerce someone into receiving an abortion based on the race or gender of the unborn child.
>
> Doctors who violate the law could face prison terms and the loss of their medical license. Any medical professional who fails to report a violation would be subject to a $10,000 fine.
>
> Additionally, the law allows the father of an unborn child, if he is married to the mother, to bring a civil action on the child's behalf. In the case of an abortion performed on the baby of a minor, the baby's maternal grandparents would be similarly able to take legal action on the baby's behalf.
>
> In its original form, the penalty for doctors who violated the law was a $10,000 civil fine. After the Senate modified it to make violation a felony, it returned to the House for approval, and is now headed for the governor's desk.

Those racist, sexist conservatives! Oh, wait…

A little more about Steve Montenegro:

> **Steve Montenegro** is one of two State Representatives from Legislative District 12. He is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of Arizona State University with a B.S. in Political Science. He also holds an Associate of Arts in Theology from Logos Christian University. Presently, Steve works in the Glendale office of U.S. Congressman Trent Franks, where he represents the office in immigration matters and where he handles constituent casework for residents in the district.
>
> Steve also serves as an Assistant Pastor/Youth Pastor at the Surprise Apostolic Assembly. As part of his work within his church, he has filled a number of roles including Music Director and Music Teacher.
>
> Steve has made working with young people a real priority in his life. He spent five years as President of Arizona Messengers of Peace, providing counseling and guidance to youth in need.
>
> He also worked as a Teacher at the Arizona Charter Academy and Superior School, where he focused on excelling students and at-risk high school students. He understands the importance of allowing parents to be involved in their children's education: The importance of helping parents decide what kind of education they want for their children.
>
> Steve understands and treasures the gift of freedom, and he shares this message in his daily life.

And of course, he won in 2010, and just look at what he is doing. When I think of what I want my future children to accomplish, I mean things like what Steve Montenegro accomplishes. I want to raise my children to make a difference like Steve did.

If you guys are wondering what I look like, I look a bit like him, but darker skin. My parents are also immigrants. And I *hate* race-selection and sex-selection abortions. That is one of the reasons why I am a Republican.

We need to pass bills like this in every state. Well, every state where Republicans are in the majority. Democrats favor race-selection and sex-selection abortions. Democrats think that if a woman doesn't like the race of her unborn child, then she can abort the child. Democrats think that if a woman doesn't like the sex of her unborn child, then she can abort the child. Democrats are racist. Democrats are sexist. If there were a gay gene, Democrats would support a woman's right to choose to abort a gay child just because that child was gay. Democrats are homophobic.

What about Florida?

But there's more good stuff happening in Florida, with Republicans in the legislature introducing a record number of pro-life bills.

Excerpt:

> Facing a record number of pro-life bills in the Florida legislature, Governor Rick Scott of Florida has hinted that he will approach the legislation favorably, although he has yet to review them all.

> “I’ll review all those bills, but as you know, I’ve been pro-life all my life and I’m going to be a pro-life governor,” said Scott according to local CBS affiliate WCTV.com.
>
> Florida lawmakers have filed at least 18 pro-life bills this year, according to the Miami Herald, part of a nationwide push against abortion on the state level.
>
> One bill prohibiting private insurance plans in state-based health exchanges passed a Senate committee on March 14, alongside another proposing a constitutional amendment prohibiting state tax dollars from being used for any abortions, including in cases of rape or incest.
>
> Last Monday, a measure that would put in place further parental notification requirements was also approved by a House panel.
>
> In June 2010, then-Governor Charlie Crist disappointed pro-life leaders in Florida by vetoing an ultrasound bill widely considered the most significant pro-life measure in Florida’s history. Crist, who initially billed himself as “pro-life,” removed the pro-life section from his campaign website last year and changed party affiliation from Republican to Independent to pit himself against pro-life Republican gubernatorial candidate Marco Rubio.
>
> Among the measures waiting in the wings this year is another measure requiring abortion-bound women to have ultrasounds, which was approved by a House committee Tuesday.

Don’t ever say that elections don’t matter. They do matter, and Christians need to be informed about social issues and policies. We need to vote in a way that restrains evil.

Michele Bachmann courts homeschoolers in Iowa speech

March 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann
From Caffeinated Thoughts.

Excerpt:

> Congresswoman Bachmann was next. She took time to introduce herself as a native Iowan and that she is a 7th generation Iowan. She noted that she is also 100% Norwegian, so that makes her "Iowegian." She and her husband Marcus also homeschooled. They have five natural born children, and were the foster parents for 23 kids, she said that makes her "the old lady in the shoe."
>
> She congratulated Iowans on ousting three of the Iowa Supreme Court justices calling them "black-robed masters." She was appalled at their audacity to redefine marriage, and said that as State Senator she offered a constitutional amendment to define marriage as one man, one woman in Minnesota. That was sparked by what she saw happening in Massachusetts when their supreme court dictated to the Legislature what law they must pass to make gay marriage legal in that state.
>
> She said that she was the first Republican woman to be elected to go to Washington out of Minnesota. She qualified that, "I'm not just a Republican, I'm a way conservative." She joked that Washington still doesn't know what to do with her.
>
> She said that she has been prolife since she was 19 having been impacted by the

> teaching of Francis Schaeffer in college. She also said that exercises her 2nd Amendment rights, and has a carry permit. She noted that she grew up in a house where they made their own shotgun shells in the basement, and took her first gun safety course when she was 12.
>
> She said, “I may be 5-foot-2 and wearing a yellow suit, but I am one tough lady when it comes to protecting our freedoms.” To great applause she said, “we will make Barack Obama a one-term president. We will repeal Obamacare. She said that we have a brief window of opportunity in 2012. She said we need to run up to 60 seats in the Senate. She proclaimed, “I am in for 2012 to make sure that torch of liberty is not extinguished on our watch.”
>
> She explained after the speech that she meant she’s “in it for 2012” to help beat Obama, it wasn’t an announcement of a presidential run. She said that she’ll decide in June whether or not to run. State Senator Kent Sorenson (R-Indianola) is an early supporter, and he said, “I hope she does run. I think she will.” Another homeschooling parent that I spoke with said, “she’s the real deal,” but was quick to mention that she like aspects of what each candidate who spoke.
>
> Personally, after listening to Congresswoman Bachmann’s speech I felt that was the first true campaign speech I heard today. Cain’s was good, but Bachmann’s covered a wider range and you definitely had the feel that she was selling herself to the group. She does have the potential to do very well among homeschoolers specifically, and evangelicals in particular.
>
> I have the chance to ask her about her 2012 intentions today in a one-to-one exclusive interview, so be sure to check back.

I hope she runs in 2012.

By the way, I think I mentioned before that Michele is into Christian apologetics. It’s not just Francis Schaefffer, she likes Ravi Zacharias, too. She’s a home-schooling apologetics mom!

Related posts

- Michele Bachmann and Paul Ryan on the Wisconsin teacher union pensions
- Video and transcripts of response speeches by Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann
- What was the context of Michele Bachmann’s “armed and dangerous” comment?
- AT LAST: Michele Bachmann open to presidential run in 2012
- Megyn Kelly and Michele Bachmann on the Bush tax cut deal
- CNS News interviews Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann requests the resignation of Attorney General Eric Holder
- Michele Bachmann attacks government bailout of unions
- Michele Bachmann makes the case for limited government
- Why is the left so angry with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin?
- Michele Bachmann on Fox News with Laura Ingraham
- Democrats kill Michele Bachmann’s attempt to freeze federal salaries

- Michele Bachmann on the US taxpayer-funded bailout of Greece
- Michele Bachmann explains the Obama’s Wall Street bailout bill
- Michele Bachmann promises to work to repeal Obamacare
- Video of Michele Bachmann defending unborn children
- Michele Bachmann’s passionate and inspiring speech at CPAC 2010
- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama’s latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare’s rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

Walter Williams interviewed by libertarian Reason magazine

March 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams

Here's the video. (H/T The Blog Prof)

He's my second favorite economist, right behind Thomas Sowell.

In his latest column, he explains the famous "Broken Window Fallacy".

Excerpt:

> Economic lunacy abounds, and often the most learned, including Nobel Laureates, are its primary victims. The most recent example of economic lunacy is found in a Huffington Post article titled "The Silver Lining of Japan's Quake" written by Nathan Gardels, editor of New Perspectives Quarterly, who has also written articles for The Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, New York Times and Washington Post.
>
> Mr. Gardels says, "No one — least of all someone like myself who has experienced the existential terror of California's regular tremors and knows the big one is coming here next — would minimize the grief, suffering and disruption caused by Japan's massive earthquake and tsunami. But if one can look past the devastation, there is a silver lining. The need to rebuild a large swath of Japan will create huge opportunities for domestic economic growth, particularly in energy-efficient technologies, while also stimulating global demand and hastening the integration of East Asia. … By taking Japan's mature economy down a notch, Mother Nature has accomplished what fiscal policy and the central bank could not."
>
> […]Why might Japan's and Florida's devastation be seen as "pluses"? French economist Frederic Bastiat (1801-1850) explained it in his pamphlet "What is Seen and What is Not Seen," saying, "There is only one difference between a bad

> economist and a good one: the bad economist confines himself to the visible effect; the good economist takes into account both the effect that can be seen and those effects that must be foreseen."
>
> Bastiat elaborated further in his "Broken Window Fallacy" parable where a vandal smashes a shopkeeper's window.
>
> A crowd forms, sympathizing with the shopkeeper. Soon, someone in the crowd suggests that instead of a tragedy, there might be a silver lining. Instead of the boy being a vandal, he was a public benefactor, creating economic benefits for everyone in town. Fixing the broken window creates employment for the glazier, who will then buy bread and benefit the baker, who will then buy shoes and benefit the cobbler and so forth.
>
> Bastiat says that's what's seen. What is not seen is what the shopkeeper would have done with the money had his window not been smashed. He might have purchased a suit from the tailor. Therefore, an act that created a job for the glazier destroyed a job for the tailor. On top of that, had the property destruction not occurred, the shopkeeper would have had a suit and a window. Now he has just a window and as a result, he is poorer.

I learned a lot about economics from his columns.

Friday night movies: rescuing baby birds

March 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's one with a hummingbird.

Here's another one:

They're so cute! I love birds! Making friends with wild birds is *the best thing in the world!*

The Color of Paradise

This is a movie from Iran. Here's a review from Christian Answers.

Excerpt:

> The story focuses on the life of an 8-year old blind boy, Mohammad (Mohsen Ramezani), who spends the school year in an institute for the blind in Tehran and the summers with his grandmother and sisters in the hills of Iran. His widowed father, Hashem (Hossein Mahjub), is late in picking up Mohammad for summer vacation and even wishes to leave him behind at the school. His aversion to his son is painful to watch. The reason for his attitude becomes apparent when they arrive at the grandmother's house in the country and Hashem visits the home of the Islamic woman he wishes to marry. He hides the existence of his son from her family, hoping to find favor with them. He has already told his mother he wants to put Mohammad in apprenticeship with a local carpenter, who is also blind. Hashem's antipathy toward his blind child is his fatal flaw and error, and precipitates the tragic sequence of events that follow.

It's not overtly Islamic, it's just really good.

Watch the first few clips and then I will comment. (If you only have time for one clip, watch clip 3)

Clip 1:

Clip 2:

Clip 3:

Clip 4:

You can watch the whole movie on Youtube.

Sometimes people are born with characteristics that they can't help that cause other people not to care about them. But we should really be seeing other people like God sees them. He doesn't care about accidental external things. He cares what people are like on the inside.

Saturday morning funny: Co-workers disuss Libya vs. Iraq

March 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is the war in Libya more justified than the war in Iraq? (H/T Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

I wonder when someone is going to make one of these for Christian apologetics.

Neil's latest round-up contains other interesting stories as well – an open letter to universalist pastor Rob Bell, an open letter to left-wing apostate Brian McLaren, an article about how General Electric is getting a tax break from Obama, and another universalist pastor who was fired by his United Methodist congregation.

Florida Republicans ban automatic deduction of union dues

March 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Orlando Sentinel.

Excerpt:

> After a largely party-line vote, the Florida House delivered a major blow to public employee unions, approving a bill that would ban automatic dues deduction and require members to sign off on the use of their dues for political purposes.
>
> Democrats and Republicans fought over the legislation for just under two hours. Democrats and labor unions have accused conservatives of "union-busting" and for trying to weaken Democrats' political power because unions are a major backer of Democratic candidates.
>
> Rep. **Chris Dorworth**, R-Lake Mary, said this was simply the state's movement to get out of the dues deduction business and let the unions take care of their own business.
>
> "It's a bill that empowers membership of labor unions," Dorworth said.
>
> The bill passed 73-40, with two Republicans siding with Democrats. Rep. Ed Hooper, R-Clearwater and Rep. Ana Rivas Logan, R-Miami broke ranks with Republicans and sided with Democrats for the vote.

This is the way to beat the Democrats. Cut off all of their funding. A federal right-to-work bill and a federal voucher program should be the top priorities of the Republicans in 2012.

Unproductive UK rioters demand to be given other people's money

March 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video from Verum Serum.

Story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Police **fought mobs of masked thugs** who pelted officers with ammonia and fireworks loaded with coins.

> The anti-capitalists started fires and smashed their way into banks, **hotels** and **shops**, bringing chaos to Britain's busiest shopping street.
>
> The violence began as Ed Miliband, the Labour leader, addressed a TUC rally of at least 250,000 peaceful protesters in Hyde Park who had marched from Westminster to demonstrate against government spending cuts.
>
> As he spoke, an apparently co-ordinated attack began on shops and police in Oxford Street as a mob tried to storm into shops including Topshop, BHS and John Lewis.
>
> MPs and retailers said the scenes damaged Britain's reputation around the world.
>
> The move was the first of a string of actions by anarchists in which:
>
> • There was violence last night in Trafalgar Square, with protesters setting banners ablaze and throwing missiles including broken bottles at police officers. As police contained protesters around Nelson's Column, there were running battles in Strand. Close to Charing Cross railway station, a fire was started near shops;
>
> • Fortnum and Mason, the department store, was occupied by 200 "anti-cuts" protesters who smashed windows and knocked over displays;
>
> • A huge fire was started in the centre of Jermyn Street, the Ritz hotel was attacked with dustbins and a "Trojan horse" set on fire in Oxford Circus;
>
> • Banks were broken into, their windows smashed and daubed with graffiti reading "smash the bank";
>
> • Windows were smashed in New Bond Street and running scuffles took place on Piccadilly, where a Porsche car showroom was attacked.
>
> Anarchist groups had spent weeks preparing the action on Facebook and Twitter and even posted a map directing people to the time and location of where to attack shops.
>
> […]After five hours of running battles, there were 202 arrests. At least 30 people, including five police officers, were injured. Police said the anti-capitalists threw

> lightbulbs filled with ammonia at them.

More videos from Verum Serum.

Libyan opposition forces linked to Al-Quaeda

March 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Abdel-Hakim al-Hasidi, the Libyan rebel leader, has said jihadists who fought against allied troops in Iraq are on the front lines of the battle against Muammar Gaddafi's regime.
>
> In an interview with the Italian newspaper Il Sole 24 Ore, Mr al-Hasidi admitted that he had recruited "around 25″ men from the Derna area in eastern Libya to fight against coalition troops in Iraq. Some of them, he said, are "today are on the front lines in Adjabiya".
>
> Mr al-Hasidi insisted his fighters "are patriots and good Muslims, not terrorists," but added that the "members of al-Qaeda are also good Muslims and are fighting against the invader".
>
> His revelations came even as Idriss Deby Itno, Chad's president, said al-Qaeda had managed to pillage military arsenals in the Libyan rebel zone and acquired arms, "including surface-to-air missiles, which were then smuggled into their sanctuaries".
>
> Mr al-Hasidi admitted he had earlier fought against "the foreign invasion" in Afghanistan, before being "captured in 2002 in Peshwar, in Pakistan". He was later handed over to the US, and then held in Libya before being released in 2008.

Columnist Charles Krauthammer is not happy with the way Obama is handling Libya.

Excerpt:

> And as for the United States, who knows what American policy is. Administration officials insist we are not trying to bring down Qaddafi, even as the president insists that he must go. Although on Tuesday Obama did add "unless he changes his approach." Approach, mind you.
>
> In any case, for Obama, military objectives take a back seat to diplomatic appearances. The president is obsessed with pretending that we are not running the operation — a dismaying expression of Obama's view that his country is so tainted by its various sins that it lacks the moral legitimacy to . . . what? Save Third World people from massacre?
>
> Obama seems equally obsessed with handing off the lead role. Hand off to whom? NATO? Quarreling amid Turkish resistance (see above), NATO still can't agree on taking over command of the airstrike campaign, which is what has kept the Libyan rebels alive.

> This confusion is purely the result of Obama's decision to get America into the war and then immediately relinquish American command. Never modest about himself, Obama is supremely modest about his country. America should be merely "one of the partners among many," he said Monday. No *primus inter pares* for him. Even the Clinton administration spoke of America as the indispensable nation. And it remains so. Yet at a time when the world is hungry for America to lead — no one has anything near our capabilities, experience, and resources — America is led by a man determined that it should not.
>
> A man who dithers over parchment. Who starts a war from which he wants out right away. Good God. If you go to take Vienna, take Vienna. If you're not prepared to do so, better then to stay home and do nothing.

I am as much a warmonger as anyone could be, but I do think it is important to do your homework first. The first question to ask before going to war is "what is the objective?" I am still not sure what to make of this Libyan action – why is it good for the United States to risk our blood and treasure in Libya? The Telegraph story makes me think that it is a bad idea for us to get involved in Libya, unless we intended to occupy it and build it up, like we did with Iraq. But conquering Iraq and building it back up made sense strategically. What is the point of getting involved in Libya?

Conservatives lead Liberals by 19 points in latest 2011 election poll

March 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

Canada's opposition parties decided not to support Stephen Harper's Conservative Party, so Canada will hold a federal election in early May 2011. But should the opposition parties have called an election? Not according to the latest poll.

From the liberal Ottawa Citizen.

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservatives begin an election campaign this weekend far ahead of their political rivals in public favour and would be poised to win a "comfortable" majority if Canadians cast their votes now, a new poll has found.
>
> The national survey, conducted exclusively for Postmedia News and Global National, reveals that voter support is declining for the opposition Liberals who have put forward a non-confidence motion that will lead to the defeat of the Conservative government in the House of Commons Friday afternoon.
>
> The March 22-23 poll by Ipsos Reid found that public support remains solid for the Tories despite recent opposition attempts to draw attention to such controversies as the government's treatment of Parliament and revelations that an ex-senior aide to Harper lobbied a department to get funds for his fiance, a former escort.
>
> The Conservatives are now supported by 43 per cent of decided voters — up by three points from two weeks ago.
>
> Just as important, the Tories now have a widening 19-point lead over the Liberals

> led by Michael Ignatieff.
>
> […]"The Tories are starting this election campaign in a better place than they have started the last three campaigns," Ipsos Reid president Darrell Bricker said in an interview Thursday. "With 43 per cent, they're probably quite comfortably in majority territory."At dissolution of Parliament, the Tories will have 143 seats. They need to win just 12 more — to reach the 155-seat mark — to get a majority government.Bricker said the problem for the Liberals is that their efforts to discredit the Tories on ethics are going nowhere.
> […]According to the poll, the Tories have opened up a commanding lead in vote-rich Ontario. In that key battleground, the Conservatives stand at 46 per cent, compared to 30 per cent for the Liberals, 16 per cent for the NDP and eight per cent for the Greens.
>
> In Quebec, the Tories appear poised to easily hang on to their seats. While the Bloc would receive 41 per cent of the vote, the Conservatives (25 per cent) have moved into second position, followed by the Liberals (18 per cent), the NDP (13 per cent) and the Greens (three per cent).
>
> In another key battleground — British Columbia — the Conservatives (50 per cent) hold a solid lead over the Liberals (22 per cent), with the NDP (20 per cent) not far behind. The Greens (seven per cent) trail.

> […]In Alberta, the Tories stand at 54 per cent support, while the Liberals have 23 per cent, the NDP have 17 per cent and the Green party has five per cent.In Saskatchewan/Manitoba, the Tories are ahead at 66 per cent, while the Liberals have 18 per cent and NDP has 13 per cent.
>
> In the Atlantic region, the Tories are at 41 per cent, followed by the Liberals at 28 per cent, the NDP at 20 per cent, and the Greens at 11 per cent.

Just to refresh you, the Liberals are the socialist party, and the NDP are the communist party, and the Bloc is the French communist party. The conservatives are strong on defense and fiscal issues, and they do have *some* good social conservatives like Maurice Vellacott and Rob Anders. The Conservatives do understand the need for strong families, low unemployment rates and low taxes as a support for social conservatism, but there is not much they can do about that while they are still a minority party. That could all change with this election, and you might see some common sense reforms to strengthen marriage (reform divorce laws and custody laws), and have some restrictions on abortion, like the kind that the state Republican parties pass.

For example, you might finally see moderate reforms like parental consent or born alive infant protection or a bill to make coerced abortion a prosecutable offense or more ultrasounds in hospitals or tax deductions for adoptions. This would be in addition to all the wonderful military and economic laws they could pass if they were a majority: a helicopter carrier, new guided-missile frigates, new safe nuclear reactors, lower minimum wage rates to raise the employment rate, free trade deals (e.g. – with Singapore, India,

South Korea, Ukraine, Georgia and the Baltic nations), employer payroll tax cuts to encourage hiring of more employees, vouchers for school choice so parents could choose schools, lower corporate tax rates to encourage businesses to move to Canada, a national right-to-work law so workers wouldn't have to join a union, dismantle the long gun registry to encourage self-defense of homes and property, abolish all Human Rights Commissions and Human Rights Tribunals, privatize CBC, Canada Post and other Crown corporations to make them more balanced politically and more responsive to consumers, double the child tax credit for married couples to encourage married couples to have children, and put in income splitting for married couples to allow mothers to stay home for a couple of years with new kids, etc. At least they could ask the Canadian people what they want and try to put in common sense reforms that support working families.

The election is set for May 2011. I cannot believe that the Conservatives are more popular in Saskatchewan than in Alberta. Alberta used to be the conservative headquarters of Canada, with Calgary at the center. Now I am not so sure what to think.

Government troops shooting protesters in Syria

March 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Now that violence has broken out in Jordan and Syria, countries where we have much more vital strategic interests, will Obama open up a fourth and a fifth military front as well?

Excerpt:

> Even as the Obama administration defends the NATO-led air war in Libya, the latest violent clashes in Syria and Jordan are raising new alarm among senior officials who view those countries, in the heartland of the Arab world, as far more vital to American interests.
>
> Deepening chaos in Syria, in particular, could dash any remaining hopes for a Middle East peace agreement, several analysts said. It could also alter the American rivalry with Iran for influence in the region and pose challenges to the United States' greatest ally in the region, Israel.
>
> In interviews, administration officials said the uprising appeared to be widespread, involving different religious groups in southern and coastal regions of Syria, including Sunni Muslims usually loyal to President Bashar al-Assad. The new American ambassador in Damascus, Robert Ford, has been quietly reaching out to Mr. Assad to urge him to stop firing on his people.
>
> As American officials confront the upheaval in Syria, a country with which the United States has icy relations, they say they are pulled between fears that its problems could destabilize neighbors like Lebanon and Israel, and the hope that it could weaken one of Iran's key allies.
>
> The **Syrian unrest continued on Saturday**, with government troops reported to have killed more protesters.With 61 people confirmed killed by security forces, the country's status as an island of stability amid the Middle East storm seemed irretrievably lost.
>
> **For two years, the United States has tried to coax Damascus into negotiating a peace deal with Israel and to moving away from Iran — a fruitless effort that has left President Obama open to criticism on Capitol Hill that he is bolstering one of the most repressive regimes in the Arab world.**
>
> […]Indeed, the crackdown calls into question the entire American engagement with Syria. Last June, the State Department organized a delegation from Microsoft, Dell and Cisco Systems to visit Mr. Assad with the message that he could attract more investment if he stopped censoring Facebook and Twitter. While the administration renewed economic sanctions against Syria, it approved export licenses for some civilian aircraft parts.

> The Bush administration, by contrast, largely shunned Damascus, recalling its ambassador in February 2005 after the assassination of a former Lebanese prime minister, Rafik Hariri. Many Lebanese accuse Syria of involvement in the assassination, a charge it denies.
>
> When Mr. Obama named Mr. Ford as his envoy last year, Republicans in the Senate held up the appointment for months, arguing that the United States should not reward Syria with closer ties. The administration said it would have more influence by restoring an ambassador.

Diplomacy only works when it is backed by the CREDIBLE threat of FORCE. For two years, Obama didn't show that he was willing to use force, and it emboldened the Iran-backed Syrian government to behave violently. Look at how Obama fumbled the Iranian election, where civilians were being shot down in the streets. That's what causes violence – appeasement of evil. If evil people thought that they were going to have to pay a price for being evil, then they wouldn't be evil. Obama made friends with bad people – he emboldened them to do bad things.

What is the strategic advantage of war in Libya?

From ABC News.

Excerpt:

> Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said that Libya did not pose a threat to the United States before the U.S. began its military campaign against the North African country.
>
> On "This Week," ABC News' Senior White House Correspondent Jake Tapper asked Gates, "Do you think Libya posed an actual or imminent threat to the United States?"
>
> "No, no," Gates said in a joint appearance with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. "It was not — it was not a vital national interest to the United States, but it was an interest and it was an interest for all of the reasons Secretary Clinton talked about. The engagement of the Arabs, the engagement of the Europeans, the general humanitarian question that was at stake," he said.

Why didn't the Obama administration go to Congress before engaging in military action in oil-rich Libya?

> During his campaign for the Presidency, in December, 2007, Barack Obama told The Boston Globe that "The President does not have power under the Constitution to unilaterally authorize a military attack in a situation that does not involve stopping an actual or imminent threat to the nation."
>
> Earlier in 2007, then-Senator Hillary Clinton said in a speech on the Senate floor that, "If the administration believes that any — any — use of force against Iran is necessary, the President must come to Congress to seek that authority."

Bush debated the war in Iraq for 6 months and got permission from Congress before going in. Why couldn’t Obama do it? Why does Obama have to rush to war?

How to ensure that your children will have an enduring faith

March 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from The Poached Egg.

Excerpt:

> My seven year old son, Jeremiah, a first grader, was doing some homework the other day and was thinking out loud. "Two plus two equals four", I overheard him say. This piqued my interest a bit and I decided to throw him a curveball.
>
> "Son, two plus two equals five", I said, to which he responded, "No it doesn't."
>
> I decided to take things a little further and said, "But Son, I *truly* and *sincerely* believe that two plus two equals five. Doesn't that mean I'm right?"
>
> Without missing a beat, his reply was only a simple, "Nope".
>
> Although I was beginning to become concerned that I might be teaching him that 'Dad may not always be right', I decided to sacrifice that myth on the altar of truth and roll with it. I then asked him, "Son, what if me and a whole lot of other people really believe that two plus two equals five, and that it might offend us and hurt our feelings that other people like you might think that we're wrong; can't you just let be true for us and let 'two plus two equal four' for you?"
>
> Another "Nope".
>
> "Why not?" I asked.
>
> "Because two plus two equals *four!"* He replied with stern conviction. I was now determined to take it even further.
>
> "Son, what if you were the only person in the world who believed that two plus two equals four? Would you still be right?"
>
> He looked up at me from his seat at the table with his trademark big grin and gave me a very confident, "Yes!"
>
> "How come?" I asked?
>
> "Because two plus two equals ***four!***", he replied again, but this time in a manner which implied that his patience with my line of questioning was wearing thin.
>
> Again, I asked, "How come?"
>
> To which he replied, "*Because it just **does**!*"

He goes on to explain that he is getting his child used to the idea that if something is true, then the people who don't believe it are wrong, and it doesn't matter how they feel about it. Since the author knows about apologetics, he will be able to give arguments for thinking that Christianity is true as the child grows up. That's one way to build up your kids – get them used to the idea that truth doesn't always make everyone like you. And

that truth is more important than feelings or community.

I have a friend Andrew who does a fine job of preparing his children for their future roles as effective, influential Christians. One way he does this is by building up their ability to say no to obvious lies. He sits at the table with his kids and points at a glass of milk and then claims that it is a glass of orange juice. The child denies that it is and a fight ensues, with Andrew trying hard to get the child to just go along with his lies, and the child resisting. It’s very important for children to have the sense that if something is true, then they don’t have to change their view to make anyone feel better. This principle is helpful when dealing with aggressive people or offended people.

Jay Smith debates Mohammed Bahmanpour on the crucifixion of Jesus

March 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Justin Brierley's Unbelievable radio show.

Details:

> The Koran claims that Jesus did not die on the cross.
>
> Mohammed Bahmanpour of the Islamic College in London defends the Koranic view that although "it was made to appear to them" that he died, in fact he was substituted by another.
>
> Jay Smith is a Christian evangelist to Muslims in London and brings to bear Biblical and other historical witnesses to the crucifixion. They debate the issue and whether the Koran or the New Testament is to be trusted as a revelation of God.
>
> Includes listener interactions with the guests.

The MP3 file is here.

Here are the opening speeches:

Mohammed:
– in Surah 4 (Quran), it says that Jesus didn't die on a cross
– it only appeared to onlookers as though Jesus died on the cross
– muslims believe that the crucifixion really happened
– but Jesus wasn't the one who died, it was actually Judas
– most Muslims think that Judas betrayed Jesus
– some Shiites believe that Judas died voluntarily in Jesus' place
– the gospel of Judas seems to make Judas out to be a hero

Jay:
– the 4 gospels agree that Jesus died on a cross
– John is an eyewitness and it's in his gospel
– Paul's writings also echo the gospels (Romans and epistles)
– the gospel of Judas is a fourth century document
– it reflects gnostic theology, which denies that Jesus had a body
– even Surah 19 says that Jesus actually did die and rise after
– so Surah 4 and Surah 19 are internally contradictory

They take calls from callers and debate issues with each other. It's interesting to hear the role that history and historical methods plays in each religion.

Speaking of Unbelievable, Justin has an Unbelievable conference coming up on May 14th in the UK. Details are here.

New study finds that parental notification laws reduce abortions by 15%

March 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about possible research topics
From Life News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Michael New, Ph.D., an assistant professor at the University of Alabama, recently published a study on abortion in State Politics and Policy Quarterly demonstrating the effectiveness of pro-life laws.
>
> The study, "Analyzing the Effect of Anti-Abortion U.S. State Legislation in the Post-Casey Era," evaluated abortion data from nearly every state over a span of 21 years, from 1985 to 2005 – a longer period than nearly any other peer-reviewed study. It contributes to a substantial body of social science research which finds that parental involvement laws and public funding restrictions are effective.
>
> New found in his study that data from both the Centers for Disease Control and the Guttmacher Institute provide solid evidence that Medicaid abortion funding restrictions, parental involvement laws and informed consent laws effectively lower abortion rates. His findings included that parental involvement laws reduce in-state abortion rates for minors by approximately 15 percent. This is among the first peer reviewed studies which shows that informed consent laws have an effect.

> […]The study is now part of a substantial body of academic literature showing that such laws are effective in cutting abortions — and back up the anecdotal evidence seen in states like Mississippi, Michigan, South Carolina, Missouri and others where abortions have been cut by half from their previous highs thanks to the passage of several pro-life measures limiting abortions.
>
> […]Dr. New issued a previous study in 2008 showing parental involvement laws reduce abortions anywhere from 19-31 percent for teenagers.
>
> He also issued a prior study looking at 1985-1999 finding pro-life laws cut teen abortion rates by as much as 50 percent. Parental involvement laws were part of the reason for this decline but not the only reason.
>
> State Politics and Policy Quarterly serves as the official journal of the state politics and policy section of the American Political Science Association and is one of the top state politics journal in the country.

Wow! When I talk about raising children to have an influence by leading them towards areas where they can make a difference, this is what I am talking about. I think we need to do a lot of good research on family, marriage and pro-life issues to be able to influence policy makers and voters with the truth. Like it or not, it is very important that Christian parents push their children on to get Masters degrees and Ph.Ds in areas that matter. A lot of people are complaining about the weather, but Christians need to get serious about doing something about it – with quality academic work.

Senate Republicans fight to block Democrats from imposing energy tax

March 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Marathon Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The Environmental Protection Agency debate lands in the Senate this week, amid the makings of a left-right coalition to mitigate the agency's abuses. Few other votes this year could do more to help the private economy—but only if enough Democrats are willing to buck the White House.
>
> This moment arrived unexpectedly, with Majority Leader Harry Reid opening a small business bill to amendments. Republican leader Mitch McConnell promptly introduced a rider to strip the EPA of the carbon regulation authority that the Obama Administration has given itself. Two weeks ago, Mr. Reid pulled the bill from the floor once it became clear Mr. McConnell might have the 13 Democrats he needs to clear 60.
>
> […]A vote to overrule the EPA is also needed to remove the regulatory uncertainty hanging over the economy. This harm is already apparent in energy, where the EPA is trying to drive coal-fired power out of existence. The core electricity generation that the country needs to meet future demand is not being built, and it won't be until the EPA is bridled. This same dynamic is also chilling the natural gas boom in the Northeast, and it is making U.S. energy-intensive industries less competitive world-wide.
>
> As the EPA screws tighten, the costs will be passed along to consumers, with the same damage as a tax increase but none of the revenues. Eventually, the EPA plan will appreciably lower the U.S. standard of living. Hardest hit will be the middle-American regions that rely on coal or heavy industry, though the EPA bulldozer will run over small businesses too. The Clean Air Act, once the carbon doomsday machine has been activated, won't merely apply to "major" sources of emissions like power plants or factories. Its reach will include schools, farms, hospitals, restaurants, basically any large building.

It's not enough that the Democrats caused the recession through their affirmative action mortgage lending to unqualified borrowers, now they have to go and pass an energy tax, too. Not to mention their efforts to block domestic energy development, which only makes prices go higher. When will they learn?

Obama to cut funding to pro-Western radio broadcasts to China

March 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation. The President's budget is going to undermine our foreign policy.

Excerpt:

> The end of an era is at hand. Today marks the last day of BBC World Service Broadcasts to China and Russia after 70 years on the air. Voice of America (VOA) may not be far behind.
>
> VOA several years ago closed down its Russian broadcasts, and, according to the President's 2012 budget request, broadcasts to China are soon to follow. Already shortwave service in Cantonese has been closed down, and in October, Mandarin is to follow. Next year, television as well as AM and FM radio are on the cutting block.
>
> The Chinese people have been able to rely on truthful information from VOA and the BBC throughout their many national traumas, including Tiananmen Square. No more. While some VOA shortwave programming is to be transferred to Radio Free Asia (which is also owned by the U.S. government), the Internet will henceforth be the primary medium of communication with the people of China, a country whose government is world-class when it comes to Internet censorship.
>
> On VOA's Chinese service, which devoted an evening show to the broadcasting cuts last week, callers from China expressed their disappointment and dismay with the radio silence from the West that is about to befall them. Contrary to arguments that radio and satellite TV are completely jammed by the Chinese government, callers from a number of provinces, from Beijing to rural China to Inner Mongolia, spoke of their reliance on VOA as an honest and credible source of source of news. They spoke of not knowing where to turn if the broadcasts go off the air. One expressed deep mystification and sadness: "Why are you abandoning us?"

My co-workers often ask me, because I am pro-peace-through-strength and pro-just-war, what my plan is for dealing with strategic hot-spots like Lebanon, Syria, North Korea and Iran. Well the first order of business is to oppose Islamic radicalism with *peaceful means*. My model is Ronald Reagan. If you can win a war without firing a shot, then you need to do that. Broadcasting pro-Western messages into trouble spots and arming pro-democracy groups costs us basically nothing. There isn't anything wrong with the United States using its wealth and power to promote democracy, capitalism and peace abroad. We have the power to do it, and we ought to insofar as we are able to. It's better to use radio broadcasts now than Tomahawk cruise missiles later, as much as I love Tomahawk

cruise missiles.

Michele Bachmann looking presidential against the liberal media

March 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Muddling Towards Maturity.

I liked her better when she was more excitable and passionate, but I guess she has to be like this if she's going to be President. Oh well.

By the way, if you'd like to see Michele Bachmann talk about her faith, faith and politics, homeschooling, school choice, and free speech, then head over to Caffeinated Thoughts and watch the video interview. She's just herself all the time like that.

All my previous Michele Bachmann posts are here.

New study finds that children of separation/divorce die 5 years earlier

March 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> While many studies have shown the positive effects of stable natural marriage on the physical and mental health of husbands and wives, an eight-decade-long research effort initiated in 1921 by Stanford University psychologist Lewis Terman has found significant negative effects on the children of failed marriages.
>
> The study found that such children died almost five years earlier, on average, than children from intact families.
>
> In 1990, psychologists Howard Friedman and Leslie Martin began a follow-up of the work begun by Lewis Terman, whose main interest lay in a study of 10-year-olds in San Francisco, with the goal of forming a test to identify the potential of high intellectual achievement. One of the results of Terman's work was the Stanford-Binet IQ test.
>
> Friedman and Martin found that Terman's original interviews with the children were so detailed and comprehensive that an analysis of follow-up interviews, and a study of the causes of death in the death certificates of participants, could shed some light on the significant factors that affect longevity.
>
> The results of Mr. Friedman and Ms. Martin's research are published in a book titled "The Longevity Project" and provide some sobering insights.
>
> "Parental divorce during childhood emerged as the single strongest predictor of early death in adulthood," the authors said.
>
> "The grown children of divorced parents died almost five years earlier, on average, than children from intact families. The causes of death ranged from accidents and violence to cancer, heart attack and stroke. Parental break-ups remain among the most traumatic and harmful events for children."
>
> The authors noted that the early death of a parent did not have the same effect on children's life spans or mortality risk as that of parental divorce and family break-up.

I think that depriving a child of a relationship with two opposite-sex parents over the long-term is child abuse. Children need to grow up with someone of each sex who is dedicated to them in a permanent, involved way. When will adults learn to think of what children need, instead of thinking of what adults want? Having a child is a very particular thing. There are certain beliefs you need to have, certain skills, certain assets and certain moral values. It's not like buying a hamburger. It's a little person that you are committed to.

That little person will impose obligations on you. It is not there to entertain you, it is there to be loved and supported by you in effective ways. It’s not for you to use children like slaves to meet your own needs. Don’t have them if you won’t raise them.

Andrew sent me these articles from the UK about single motherhood by choice and fertility clinics for same-sex couples.

A closer look at Stephen Harper's Family Tax Cut plan

March 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper
From Life Site News. (H/T Jeanie)

Excerpt:

> On the campaign trail Monday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced a family income-splitting plan that pro-family groups are saying would correct a tax system that unjustly discriminates against single-income families or those where one spouse earns significantly more than the other.
>
> Harper said the current tax system treats married couples like "roommates," because spouses are taxed individually. He is proposing a Family Tax Cut that would allow families with children under 18 to share up to $50,000 of their household income for federal tax purposes.
>
> But the catch is that the change won't take effect until the budget is balanced, which the Conservatives aren't promising until at least 2015-2016.
>
> Speaking in Saanich, B.C., the Prime Minister said the proposal will make the income tax system fairer for families and will provide tax relief to about 1.8 million families who will save, on average, $1,300 per year.
>
> The plan is projected to cost $2.5 billion per year.
>
> "There's a tax unfairness that exists right now. This will move towards a more fair analysis," said Dave Quist, executive director of the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada, which has been pushing the income-splitting idea for five years.
>
> Under the current tax system, two families with the same household income can

> end up paying different amounts of tax. For example, a family with parents earning $60,000 and $20,000 would pay $1,292 more in tax than where each spouse earns $40,000. And a family with one parent earning $70,000 and the other staying at home will pay $1,992 more than a family where each spouse earns $35,000.
>
> Quist pointed out that when families seek a loan or mortgage, the lender's decision will be based on household income, not individual, so the tax system should operate the same way. "It's only fair that when we're looking at income tax levels, that we look at household incomes and household tax levels as well. That's the real benefit," he said.
>
> Some are complaining that the move encourages women to stay at home, but Quist says his organization's research consistently shows that most families want one parent to stay home with the kids. In fact, child care always comes up as their last option.
>
> "Why don't we afford the tax breaks to families so they can choose how to best use the money to suit their unique family needs?" he said.

Read the rest here. This policy is *directly targeting* single-earner families for tax benefits, while families with two working parents get *nothing.* That is a clear message being sent to couples. *Being a stay-at-home mother and wife is a valuable contribution to society.*

Let me be clear. My candidate for president in 2012 is Congresswoman Michele Bachmann. But there was a time when Congresswoman Michele Bachmann *stopped her career* in order to *homeschool her five children*. She didn't think that the public schools were doing a good enough job. She also took in 23 foster children into her home at various times. And all I am saying is this: *Michele Bachmann did not make a mistake by putting her family first*. And what we need is a government that recognizes the high calling of wife and mother. Yes, I hope that Michele Bachmann will be President in 2012. But I don't want her to feel guilty about staying home to raise and educate her own children. We need to put in place financial incentives for all women to raise and educate their own children *if they choose to.* And then they can go on from there to run for President (or Prime Minister) – just like Michele Bachmann.

Back to Harper's policy. There are policies that have nothing to do with abortion and same-sex marriage that are socially conservative. The more money that families keep away from government, the better off the children will be. This plan by Harper, a social conservative who *does what he can do*, will strengthen marriages and encourage mothers to stay home with their young children during the crucial early years. It makes marriage an even better deal financially, and will encourage couples to get married and stay married. There are policies that incentivize social liberalism, like government-run day care, taxpayer-funded abortion or single mother welfare. And then there are policies like Stephen Harper's policies which incentivize stronger families and healthier, happier children. This is what you get when you elect a *socially conservative* economist. Pro-family policy. Pro-marriage policy. Pro-child policy.

Do you know what he should tackle next? A federal right-to-work law (or a federal law making the payment of union dues voluntary), and a federal choice in education law, (i.e. – vouchers). But maybe he'll need a majority to do that.

The latest federal election poll is here. Harper leads the Liberals 41-24.

Related posts

- Conservatives lead Liberals by 19 points in latest 2011 election poll
- Stephen Harper's Conservatives up to 43% in latest federal election poll
- Poll finds 68% of Canadians positive on Canadian economy
- Canada created twice the number of jobs as the United States in January
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper vows to end long-gun registry
- Stephen Harper makes a stand against North Korean aggression
- Fiscally conservative Canada campaigns against global bank tax
- Federal conservatives in Canada aim to cut spending and waste from budget
- Canada's finance minister proposes changes to mortgage lending laws
- Supreme Court sides with Conservative Party against price-fixing monopoly
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper seeks increased trade with India
- Canadian Evangelicals and Catholics more opposed to secularism and socialism
- Members of Canadian socialist parties oppose child sex-trafficking crime bill
- Harper instructs foreign minister to denounce Libyan dictator
- Canadians to walk out of Ahmadinejad's speech at UN
- Canada signs free trade deal with Panama
- Harper pays surprise visit to troops in Afghanistan
- Investors Business Daily says Harper better leader than Obama
- Round-up of US news media interviews with Stephen Harper

Preview of the William Lane Craig vs Lawrence Krauss debate

March 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: I have now posted a preview of the William Lane Craig vs. Sam Harris debate!

UPDATE: The video and audio from the Krauss-Craig debate are linked in this post.

I've put together some relevant resources to prepare you for tonight's BIG debate (and to get tweeted by Brian Auten of Apologetics 315, I hope!)

The Big Bang and the Fine-Tuning

First, since Lawrence Krauss is a physicist, I expect that there will be some disagreement about the the kalam cosmological argument and the cosmic fine-tuning argument. To prepare yourself for the cosmological argument, you should print out this peer-reviewed article written by Craig. To prepare yourself for the fine-tuning argument, you should read this paper by Robin Collins.

And then you can watch this 10-part lecture delivered by William Lane Craig at the University of Colorado, Boulder. It is entitled "Beyond the Big Bang".

Beyond the Big Bang

Here's part 1:

The full playlist is here.

If you watch the full lecture, you'll notice that Craig takes a question from famous atheist Victor Stenger. Stenger is a physicist whom Craig had debated before the lecture on the existence of God at the University of Hawaii. You can watch their entire debate on Youtube, and I've linked it below.

William Lane Craig vs. Victor Stenger

Here's part 1:

The full playlist is here.

Keep in mind that Craig recently debated arch-naturalist Francisco Ayala (link goes to Youtube playlist), so he will be fully prepared to debate philosophy of science, should that come up. I don't recommend watching the entire debate, because Ayala is difficult to understand.

The moral argument

The owner of the Persistent Questions Exchange blog informed me that Krauss has actually spoken out on morality and science in the past, so we may see some sparks flying on the moral argument. It may therefore be worthwhile for you to review Craig's recent comments on Sam Harris' theory on scientific foundations for morality. I think that Krauss may say something similar. (Also note that Harris will be debating Craig on April 7,

2011 at the University of Notre Dame).

You should either read Craig's paper on the moral argument OR watch a lecture he recently delivered at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Here's part 1:

The full playlist is here.

If you want to see the moral argument played out in a couple of debates, you could watch the William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz debate on Youtube. Yes, that's the same Paul Kurtz who wrote the "Humanist Manifesto". Or you could watch the more recent William Lane Craig vs. Louise Anthony debate on Youtube, if you've already seen the Kurtz debate.

So, I think that's where the clash is going to be tonight – on those three arguments.

Extra credit

Brian Auten maintains the William Lane Craig Audio Debate Feed here, in case you get through all of these and would like to see how well Bill Craig performs against other famous challengers, like Marcus Borg, Lewis Wolpert, Arif Ahmed, Bart Ehman, John Shelby Spong, Gerd Ludemann, John Dominic Crossan, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, etc.

Obama covers 44 million more Americans under Disabilities Act

March 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note to regular readers – don't forget that the William Lane Craig vs. Lawrence Krauss debate is tonight at 7 PM Eastern time. And you can watch it online here. It is also being live-blogged here.

From Fox News. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Millions of Americans may be disabled and not even know it, according to some legal experts.
>
> That's because sweeping new regulations from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission offer new guidelines on the issue of how to define "disability" under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
>
> The ADA, originally passed in 1990 and updated by Congress in 2008, originally defined disability as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity."
>
> When a worker satisfies the definition, employers must provide reasonable accommodations. For years, employers and employees have clashed over who truly qualifies for the sometimes-costly modifications to workplace duties and schedules. Attorney Condon McGlothlen says the new regulations could have a profound impact on that debate.
>
> "Before, perhaps 40 million people were covered by the ADA. That number will increase significantly," McGlothlen told Fox News. "Some people might even say that a majority of Americans are covered as disabled under the law."

His solution to unpopularity due to excessive spending is more excessive spending. When will he learn?

Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration

March 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Christian Newswire.

Excerpt:

> Volunteers from the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property (TFP) visited Brown University during their state-wide tour for traditional marriage in Rhode Island. While peacefully demonstrating on the Ivy League campus, their pro-family banner was vandalized and a volunteer was spat upon in the face.
>
> "What we faced at Brown University, an Ivy League university, had the flavor of a religious persecution," said TFP Student Action Director John Ritchie. "Dozens of pro-homosexual students screamed, spat, taunted, and even attempted to destroy our traditional marriage banner."
>
> "Suddenly, a loud thud-rip noise was heard. I looked up and saw a pro-homosexual student literally crashing through our traditional marriage banner, attempting to destroy it," explained Ritchie. "Running at top speed, he flung himself into it and ripped one side loose. Some students watching from a distance approvingly cheered the act of violence," he said.
>
> "Brown University students recently held a protest against traditional marriage at the same location where we held ours and their signs included the word 'equality,'" Ritchie said. "However, they clearly wanted to impede our right to equally assemble."
>
> "One of our youngest volunteers, age 17, was spat upon in the face," explained Ritchie. During our peaceful demonstration for God's marriage, he walked over and asked: 'What do I do with this on my face?' First, we told him to wipe the spittle off his face and then reported the incident to the police."
>
> "Seeing the violent attitude of the pro-homosexual students, the police wanted to escort us to our vans after the campaign was over to protect us," stated Ritchie. "And thank God they did, because when we pulled away from the curb, many pro-homosexual students closed in to hit the sides of our vehicles with their fists or palms. A hard object, maybe a rock, was even thrown against one of the vans."

I would link to the video, but Youtube has censored it. Youtube is not what you would call a pro-free speech web site.

Jennifer Roback Morse in Rhode Island

I found this video posted at the Alliance Defense Fund. (H/T Ruth Blog)

I admire anyone who is willing to stand up for the rights of children to have a mother and a father to grow up with.

Jonathan Wells is interviewed about his new book on Junk DNA

March 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note to regular readers – don't forget that the William Lane Craig vs. Lawrence Krauss debate is tonight at 7 PM Eastern time. And you can watch it online here. It is also being live-blogged here.

From Uncommon Descent. The interviewer is science journalist Denyse O'Leary.

Excerpt:

What caused the change of view about junk DNA? Can you suggest a couple of key findings?

In a word, evidence. The first to emerge was the fact that almost all of an organism's DNA is transcribed into RNA. (So although most of it may be non-protein-coding, it codes for RNA.) From a Darwinian perspective, this is surprising: Why would an organism struggling to survive devote so many of its internal resources to producing supposedly useless RNA? Indeed, since 2003 it has become clear that non-protein-coding RNAs perform many essential functions in living cells.

Pseudogenes constitute one type of so-called "junk DNA." These are segments of DNA that resemble segments that elsewhere (or in other organisms) code for protein. Yet RNAs transcribed from some pseudogenes have been found to function in regulating how much protein is produced by the DNA segments they resemble. Repetitive DNA, in which a non-protein-coding sequence is repeated many times, is another type of so-called "junk DNA." Yet repetitive DNA is now known to regulate many essential functions, including embryo implantation in mammals.

There is also growing evidence that non-protein-coding DNA can perform functions that are independent of its sequence. One example is the region of a chromosome (called a "centromere") that attaches it to other structures in the cell. Another example is the retina in the eyes of nocturnal mammals, in which non-protein-coding DNA acts like a liquid crystal to focus scarce rays of light.

Some claim that ID theorists predicted the finding and others claim they didn't. What's your take?

The literature doesn't lie. Design theorist William A. Dembski wrote in 2004, "For years now evolutionary biologists have told us that the bulk of genomes is junk and that this is due to the sloppiness of the evolutionary process. That is now changing. For instance, researchers at the University of California at San Diego are finding that long stretches of seemingly barren DNA sequences may form a new class of noncoding RNA genes scattered, perhaps densely, throughout animal genomes. Design theorists should be at the forefront in unpacking the information contained within biological systems." (The Design Revolution, p. 317.) At the time, biologists such as Dawkins, Coyne, Avise and

Collins were still claiming that most of our DNA is junk.

Last week there was a paper in the peer-reviewed journal Science that discussed the problem of genetic similarities in different organisms that *do not share a common inheritance.* Evolution News talked about that here.

Audio and video from the debate between William Lane Craig and Lawrence Krauss

March 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Audio of the William Lane Craig vs. Lawrence Krauss debate at North Carolina State University has now been posted at Apologetics 315.

And I also posted some background information on Craig's arguments.

William Lane Craig's case

William Lane Craig made 5 arguments for the existence of God:

- the contingency argument
- theargument from the origin of the universe (kalam)
- the argument from cosmic fine-tuning
- the moral argument
- the argument from the miracle of the resurrection

These arguments went unrefuted during the debate.

Lawrence Krauss's case

Lawrence Krauss made the following arguments in his first speech

- Dr. Craig is a professional debater
- Dr. Craig is not a scientist
- Dr. Craig is a philosopher
- Disproving God's is a waste of my valuable time
- Dr. Craig has the burden of proof to show evidence
- My job is not to present any evidence
- I think that "extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence" is a nice slogan, but I have no evidence for it
- I don't like that God doesn't appear on Youtube, therefore he doesn't exist
- I don't like that God didn't appear to humans until recently, therefore he doesn't exist
- I don't like that the stars didn't come together to spell "I am here", therefore God doesn't exist
- Dr. Craig has to supply extraordinary evidence, because my favorite slogan says he has to
- Dr. Craig talks about logic, but the universe is not logical
- Dr. Craig doesn't have any arguments, just things he doesn't like
- Dr. Craig doesn't like infinity, and that's why he believes in the Big Bang cosmology
- Dr. Craig doesn't like chance, and that's why he believes in cosmic fine-tuning
- Dr. Craig doesn't like rape, and that's why he believes in the ontological foundations of morality

- If people believe in logic, then they can't do science
- The things that science discovers contradict the laws of logic
- For example, Dr. Craig doesn't like infinity, so he believes in the experimental measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation
- For example, Dr. Craig doesn't like chance, so he believes in the fine-tuning of the gravitational constant for the formation of stable stars
- Quantum mechanics shows that the universe is stranger than you think, therefore all of Craig's arguments are false
- My t-shirt says 2 + 2 = 5, therefore all of Craig's arguments are false
- Atheism may look ridiculous, but it's true, and if you don't like it, too bad – because the universe is very strange
- Accidents happen all the time, so that explains the cosmic fine-tuning
- We all have to convince ourselves of 10 impossible things before breakfast, and atheism is impossible, so you need to convince yourself of it
- I don't know about the Big Bang, so Dr. Craig cannot use the Big Bang to to prove the universe began to exist
- I don't know about the cosmic fine-tuning, so Dr. Craig cannot use the fine-tuning of cosmological constants to prove the fine-tuning
- I don't know anything about science, so Dr. Craig cannot use science in his arguments
- Dr. Craig says that the universe is contingent because it began to exist 13.7 billion years ago based on the state-of-the-art scientific evidence for the Big Bang creation out of nothing from 1) red-shift of light from distant galaxies, 2) cosmic microwave background radiation, 3) helium-hydrogen abundances, 4) experimental confirmation of general relativity, 5) the second law of thermodynamics, 6) radioactive element abundances, etc., but how does he know that? I don't know that
- It's fine not to know the answer to scientific questions like whether the universe began to exist, it's more exciting
- Thinking that the universe began to exist based on 6 pieces of scientific evidence is the "God-of-the-Gaps" fallacy, it's intellectual laziness
- But all kidding aside, the universe actually did begin to exist 13.72 billion years ago, exactly like Craig says in his argument
- I could argue that God created the universe 4.5 seconds ago with all of us sitting believing that we heard Dr. Craig, and how could you prove me wrong? It's not falsifiable
- Universes can spontaneously appear out of nothing, and in fact they have to appear out of nothing
- *Nothing is unstable*, and space and time can come into existence out of nothing, so that's not a problem
- Our universe could have appeared out of a multiverse, an unobservable, untestable multiverse that I have no way of observing or testing, but which was in fact created by none other than the Flying Spaghetti Monster!
- The universe is not fine-tuned for life, and no scientist says so, especially Martin

Rees, the atheist Astronomer Royal, and every other scientist
- What if God decided that rape was OK, would it be OK? God can change his moral nature arbitrarily, can't he?
- Would you have any preference as to whether I was born an atheist baby or a Muslim baby?

Here are the arguments in Krauss' second speech:

- We don't understand the beginning of the universe
- We don't understand whether the universe had a cause
- Steven Weinberg says that science makes it possible to be an atheist, so therefore the universe didn't begin and didn't have a cause
- It's just intellectual laziness to say that the universe came into being 13.7 billion years ago, and that things that come into being of nothing have a cause
- Dr. Craig is an expert on nothing, ha ha ha!
- There are multiple versions of nothing, there's nothing, and then there is something, which is also nothing if I want it to be
- There was no space, there was no time, and then the space create the empty space
- I'm going to give Dr. Craig a break
- At least in the nothing there were laws like *F=ma*, and those laws created the empty space, because *descriptions of matter that does not even exist yet* can create space out of nothing
- Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin are good friends of mine and I talk to them all the time, unlike Dr. Craig
- Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin don't mention God in their scientific papers, therefore the universe didn't begin and didn't have a cause
- Maybe there is a multiverse that cannot be observed or tested? And my unscientific speculations are a refutation of Craig's scientific evidence for the fine-tuning
- Dr. Craig just doesn't like my speculations about the unobservable, untestable multiverse, and that's why he believes in the Big Bang cosmology
- And if you let me speculate about an unobservable, untestable multiverse, then maybe the inanimate invisible universes reproduce and compete for food and mutate like animals and then there is natural selection so that the finely-tuned universes survive and now we're in one!
- My cool animation of blue goo mutating proves that the multiverse is real! Empty space is not empty!
- Darwinism, which is a theory about the origin of species, explains the cosmic fine-tuning that occurred at the moment of creation
- The unobservable, untestable multiverse universes all have different laws, I believe
- We don't know what the right answer is, but we are willing to look at any possibility, as long as the possibilities we look at are not supernatural possibilities, because I am not giving up my right to recreational sex outside of marriage!
- The discovery of the origin of the universe could be an accident, I don't know if the

universe began to exist or not, maybe all the six scientific evidences are wrong because if I don't like the evidence we have, so I'll just wait for new evidence to overturn the evidence we have which I don't like
- Maybe there are other forms of life that are unobservable and untestable that are compatible with a universe that has no stable stars, no planets, no elements heavier than hydrogen, no hydrogen, no carbon, etc.

Here are the arguments in Krauss' third speech:

- Dr. Craig is stupid
- Why should we even care about Dr. Craig's arguments and evidence, we can just count the number of scientists who are atheists and decide whether God exists that way – I decided everything based on what my teachers told me to believe – I needed good grades to make money so I could move out of my bossy parents' house and have fun!
- I actually know general relativity, not like Dr. Craig who co-wrote a book on general relativity published by Oxford University Press
- What quantum mechanics shows is that virtual particles come into being in a quantum vacuum, and then go out of existence almost immediately – and that is exactly like how a 13.7 billion year old universe came into being in a quantum vacuum, and we're going to disappear *very soon*
- Space and the laws of physics can be created, possibly, if you accept my speculations about an unobservable, untestable multiverse
- I don't like the God of the Old Testament, especially his prohibition on drunkenness and fornication, therefore he doesn't exist
- Groups of people can decide what they think is good and evil, like the Nazis and slave-owners did, and then that becomes good for them in that time and place, and that's what I mean by morality
- Here's something I studied that wasn't fine-tuned, therefore there is no fine-tuning of the universe
- Not knowing things is really exciting! Dr. Craig is not really exciting because he knows things – phooey!

Here are the arguments in Krauss' fourth speech:

- If you will just grant me an observable, untestable multiverse, then there must be some universe where intelligent life exists
- Infinite numbers of things exist everywhere in nature, you can see lots of infinite collections of things, like jelly beans and bumblebees and invisible pink unicorns
- I don't like the fine-tuning, but if my speculations about the multiverse are proven true, then I won't have to learn to live with the fine-tuning
- Inflation, the rapid expansion of the universe which occurs at some time after the the origin of the universe (t = 0), explains the absolute origin of time, space, matter and energy out of nothing that occurred at t = 0

- Physical processes that develop subsequent to the creation of the universe at t > 0 can explain the fine-tuning of quantities that are set at t = 0
- Morality is just a bunch of arbitrary conventions decided by groups of people in different times and places by an accidental process of biological and social evolution, but *that* practice over there by *those* people is *objectively* wrong!
- 1 Cor 15:3-7, which most scholars, even atheists like James Crossley, admit is dated to within 3 years of the death of Jesus, is actually dated to 50 years after the death of Jesus
- The historical case for the resurrection made by people like N.T. Wright in their multi-volume academic works is on par with the story of Mohammed ascending to Heaven on a horse

If you liked this, please check out my snarky summary of Christopher Hitchens' speeches in the Craig-Hitchens debate.

Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?

March 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Live Action. (H/T Neil Simpson via Mary)

Excerpt:

> A series of new undercover phone calls reveals that contrary to the claims of Planned Parenthood CEO Cecile Richards and other supporters of the nation's largest abortion chain, the organization does not provide mammograms for women.
>
> In the tapes, a Live Action actor calls 30 Planned Parenthood clinics in 27 different states, inquiring about mammograms at Planned Parenthood. Every Planned Parenthood, without exception, tells her she will have to go elsewhere for a mammogram, and many clinics admit that no Planned Parenthood clinics provide this breast cancer screening procedure. "We don't provide those services whatsoever," admits a staffer at Planned Parenthood of Arizona. Planned Parenthood's Comprehensive Health Center clinic in Overland Park, KS explains to the caller, "We actually don't have a, um, mammogram machine, at our clinics."
>
> Opponents of defunding Planned Parenthood have argued in Congress and elsewhere that the organization provides many vital health care services other than abortion, such as mammograms. Most prominently, Planned Parenthood CEO Cecile Richards recently appeared on The Joy Behar Show to oppose the Pence Amendment to end Planned Parenthood's taxpayer subsidies, claiming, "If this bill ever becomes law, millions of women in this country are gonna lose their healthcare access–not to abortion services–to basic family planning, you know, mammograms."

In the last reported year, Planned Parenthood received $363 million in government money.

Review of the William Lane Craig vs Lawrence Krauss debate

March 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Possible Worlds.

Excerpt:

> I have never before seen Krauss debate, but the physicist opened up explaining he did not particularly like them. I was shocked to discover that Krauss' entire opening statement revolved around criticizing Craig's well-known arguments as "God-of-the-gaps." He also mentioned that quantum mechanics demonstrates that physics does not conform to the laws of logic (thus, in my view, demonstrating a fundamental equivocal misunderstanding of the term "logic." It does not mean, as Krauss here seems to suggest, "common sense" or "what we would expect." This is the most charitable view as the only other sense he could mean is that it is reasonable to assume reason does not apply to physics, while also giving us a reason, which is self-contradictory.). He also suggested God cannot be the grounds of objective morality since God can't will evil things to be good.
>
> […]In Craig's second rebuttal he again focused the debate topic. Craig does this to show both what he has argued and to show that the rebuttal was not at all relevant to the topic at hand. I wished he had discussed more cosmology and *why* inflationary models require an absolute beginning, but he at least mentioned these rebuttals. He completely tore apart the Humean argument against miracles by pointing out that he did not have the probability calculus back in that time. Craig seemed perfectly comfortable by this point and not at all rushed; however he had fewer points to argue against as Krauss was defaulting to "desire" as a motivator over scientific evidence.
>
> By the time of Krauss' second rebuttal, he was struggling for words. He seemed to have run out of things relevant to say. He did eventually get going, but made such contradictory statements as "there is no purpose in the universe." As Ryan Hedrich said to me during the debate, "There's no meaning, no purpose, and yet there he is, arguing away for God only knows what reason (literally)."

And he even reviews the Q&A. This is a really good review.

In this post you can find links to the audio, video, and my snarky summary on Krauss' speeches.

Wisconsin governor’s union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues

March 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Human Events.

Excerpt:

> How much will the union bosses’ income stream fall, when dues money no longer flows from employee paychecks directly into their coffers? Writing in the *New York Post* earlier this month, Rich Lowry laid out the worst-case scenario for Big Labor, based on some previous examples:
>
> “When Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels ended collective bargaining and the automatic collection of dues in 2005, the number of members paying dues plummeted by **roughly 90 percent**. In 2007, New York City’s Transit Authority briefly stopped automatically collecting dues for the Transport Workers Union, and dues fell off by more than a third.”
>
> The financial damage to unions will actually be even worse than the amount of dues withheld by defiant, or delinquent, public employees. The state of Wisconsin has actually been performing an extremely valuable service by collecting these dues automatically and handing the bundled loot over to the union hierarchy. Private companies pay a great deal of money to maintain Accounts Receivable departments and collections agents. Imagine the WEAC was a private concern with 98,000 customers. The amount they would spend on collecting fees from those customers would be a significant line item on their budget.
>
> This will all leave the unions with much less money to slip into Democrat pockets – but again, the damage is even worse than the total amount of campaign dollars lost. Many union members are not Democrats, and some of them will likely begin demanding more control over how union money is spent, now that the dues don’t magically disappear out of their paychecks. This will greatly reduce the unions’ ability to make promises to Democrat politicians, in exchange for political services.

Money is a very important thing. You can encourage people to do all kinds of things when you give them the right financial incentives. And policies create those financial incentives. That’s why we need to win elections.

Interview with Doug Giles, father of two extraordinary daughters

April 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller. (H/T Pearcey Report)

Summary:

> Like most parents, Clash Radio host and Townhall.com columnist Doug Giles is proud of his children. His daughter Hannah helped take down ACORN in 2009, when she partnered up with James O'Keefe to produce revealing undercover videos. Giles' other daughter, Regis, started the campaign "Girls Just Wanna Have Guns," which, among other things, aims to instruct young women on how to protect and defend themselves against predators.
>
> He has every reason to brag about his no-nonsense girls, both of whom partially inspired his new book, "Raising Righteous and Rowdy Girls," which provides 14 chapters on how to rear females in today's world. The Townhall.com contributor advises parents to teach their girls classiness and the value of intellect, but it's not all work and no play for the Giles clan. Giles thinks it's important for young women to know how to hunt, fight, rebel, date decent guys and even party.

Sample questions:

TheDC: So what makes a "righteous and rowdy girl?"

DG: Well, a common misconception among evangelicals, which I'm one of them, is that if your daughter is righteous, she has to be this petty-coat wearing damsel in distress who says, "Oh my, I need a knight in shining armor to come and rescue me." The problem is that there are no knights in shining armor. A lot of the guys have bought into the misandrous fly and they've become more feminine or effeminate and more of a dandy instead of the historic Clint Eastwood type who can kick butt and take names.

So I wanted to want to show that girls can be righteous, they can be classy, they can excel in academics and at the same time they can have a rowdy good time rebelling against this cultural swill that is shoved up their tailpipe and down their throat 24/7 by this Godless culture. The rowdy aspect is, like in my book, I teach them again how to fight, how to shoot guns, how to protect themselves, because especially in the state of Florida, I believe nearly 80 percent of the abductions that occur with young people happen to females, so I don't like that. I want to make sure my kids don't have that scenario play out on them and they become victims of some weirdo.

If you're going to put your kids in public school or university, there's such anti-American sentiment there that I didn't want my kids to be some sponge and that professor be the Super-Soaker who tries to erode what my wife and I have taught them, so the rowdy aspect comes into play where we tell our kids they have a right to rebel, question, and rage against the machine to be the James Dean, Harley Davidson-wearing rebel against

secularism, socialism, slutification and the wussification of our culture. Yes they can be righteous to where they can live clean lives, but that doesn't mean they live in some kind of sterile environment separated from culture. They can infiltrate the culture with comedy, class, wisdom, intellect, but also with a rebellious attitude that says we're not going to allow our nation go down the crapper because it's what everybody else is doing.

TheDC: So did your daughters go to public school and have to deal with this sort of propaganda and anti-American agenda from their teachers?

DG: Yeah, absolutely. They went to public school all the way until high school and then we yanked them. It's so bad down here that the best schools look like Leavenworth. I mean literally, strewn with barbed wire, there are cops parked up on the sidewalk right by the doors, it's 186 percent overcrowded, so we said screw this. The girls started homeschooling with Florida Virgil School and they just excelled academically. But they were part of the mucked-up mix for several years and during that time period, they would hear all this stuff that we hear on Fox News, just America completely denigrated. If you didn't dance to their call, you were made to be the weird person. I just refused to have my daughters feel like that when traditional values, Judeo-Christian world view, and conservative principles and capitalism caused America to be the great American experiment, so I made certain that as much as I could from their little tiny hearts and little tiny minds that they were educated to our great foundations, to our Christian worldview, and when they heard the other stuff coming from the teachers ridiculing those things, that they had the right and the moxie to question that and confront it when it was served to them on a regular basis.

I guess I'm going to buy this book! I don't think that any Christian women will allow me to parent children like this though – they think that strong fathers who set goals for their children are "bullies".

Christian student sues school district that suppressed his evangelism

April 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Christian Post. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> A former student at a high school in Southern California recently filed a lawsuit against the school district after he had been suspended for sharing his faith.
>
> About a year ago, Kenneth Dominguez, 16, was disciplined by Gateway East High School in San Diego County and was prevented from bringing his Bible to campus.
>
> The lawsuit was filed after the Grossmont Union High School District refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing, according to Brad Dacus, president and founder of Pacific Justice Institute, which is representing Dominguez.
>
> […]But his grace sharing period came to a halt when an administrator reprimanded him. The school official told Dominguez that he was not allowed to share his faith because of the "separation of church and state."
>
> According to Dacus, Dominguez had not created any disruption when he was testifying about his faith to fellow students. He didn't shout or preach out loud and he limited his talk to lunch breaks and the hallways, and not the classroom.
>
> Additionally, there has been no record of any student or anyone else complaining, Dacus noted.
>
> After being warned by the administrator, Dominguez continued to discuss his faith and bring his Bible to school. He was then told that he could not bring his Bible to campus either. A two-day suspension soon followed.
>
> […]**The incident doesn't come as a surprise to PJI attorneys. Among the 4,000 requests for legal assistance received last year alone, Dacus said many of them dealt with public school religious freedom issues.**
>
> **"Particularly in a state like California where the teachers union has such great control over what goes on in public schools, we see a lot of hostility and bigotry against Christian students, sometimes under the cloak of 'tolerance,'" he lamented.**

Teacher unions – when they're not stealing your money, they're suppressing your religious liberty.

A former student at a high school in Southern California recently filed a lawsuit against the school district after he had been suspended for sharing his faith.

Montreal muslims show support for shooting civilians in Syria

April 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

From the Montreal Gazette. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> Montreal had its own version Wednesday night of what some in Syria are calling "loyalty marches" – demonstrations in support of Syrian strongman Bashar Assad. Dozens of flag-waving Syrian nationals and Syrian Canadians, including many students, shouted pro-Assad slogans at the corner of Guy St. and de Maisonneuve Blvd. denouncing what they decried as "biased media reports" about unprecedented anti-regime protests that were virtually unheard of during the past 11 years. While protesters in Syria are demanding the end of 50 years of emergency rule, the Montreal demonstrators voiced support for Assad.

Blazing Cat Fur has links to photos of the rally. Scary.
I blogged before about the violent actions of the Iran-backed Syrian government.

We've become a nation of takers, not makers

April 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From moderate conservative Stephen Moore, writing in the Wall Street Journal. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> If you want to understand better why so many states—from New York to Wisconsin to California—are teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, consider this depressing statistic: Today in America there are nearly twice as many people working for the government (22.5 million) than in all of manufacturing (11.5 million). This is an almost exact reversal of the situation in 1960, when there were 15 million workers in manufacturing and 8.7 million collecting a paycheck from the government.
>
> It gets worse. More Americans work for the government than work in construction, farming, fishing, forestry, manufacturing, mining and utilities combined. We have moved decisively from a nation of makers to a nation of takers. Nearly half of the $2.2 trillion cost of state and local governments is the $1 trillion-a-year tab for pay and benefits of state and local employees. Is it any wonder that so many states and cities cannot pay their bills?
>
> Every state in America today except for two—Indiana and Wisconsin—has more government workers on the payroll than people manufacturing industrial goods. Consider California, which has the highest budget deficit in the history of the states. The not-so Golden State now has an incredible 2.4 million government employees—twice as many as people at work in manufacturing. New Jersey has just under two-and-a-half as many government employees as manufacturers. Florida's ratio is more than 3 to 1. So is New York's.
>
> Even Michigan, at one time the auto capital of the world, and Pennsylvania, once the steel capital, have more government bureaucrats than people making things. The leaders in government hiring are Wyoming and New Mexico, which have hired more than six government workers for every manufacturing worker.
>
> Now it is certainly true that many states have not typically been home to traditional manufacturing operations. Iowa and Nebraska are farm states, for example. But in those states, there are at least five times more government workers than farmers. West Virginia is the mining capital of the world, yet it has at least three times more government workers than miners. New York is the financial capital of the world—at least for now. That sector employs roughly 670,000 New Yorkers. That's less than half of the state's 1.48 million government employees.

The problem with having a high number of government workers is that government workers don't actually produce anything to sell. They pay the salaries of their workers by taking a percentage of the money that productive business make when they sell

customers useful things like cell phones and laptops and automobiles.

This article is the second most popular on the Wall Street Journal. Recommended.

Republican lawmaker introduces bill to protect questioners of Darwinism

April 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

Excerpt:

> An Arlington lawmaker has filed a bill aimed at protecting Texas college professors and students from discrimination because they question evolution.
>
> The measure from Republican state Rep. Bill Zedler would block higher education institutions from discriminating against or penalizing teachers or students based on their research into intelligent design or other theories that disagree with evolution.
>
> Zedler said he filed the bill because of cases in which colleges had been hostile to those who believe that certain features of life-forms are so complex that they must have originated from a higher power.
>
> "We can have the academic freedom to have all kinds of ideas and philosophies but, lo and behold, even mention intelligent design and there are people that want to run you out of town on a rail," Zedler said.
>
> Zedler said fear of workplace discrimination is preventing evolution critics in colleges from speaking their minds.
>
> "I do believe there are people that want to say something but … they're afraid to because there are people around the country that have been discriminated against," Zedler said.

Secular leftists place a great premium on getting "consensus" for whatever ideas provide maximum autonomy from moral obligations, whether the ideas are true or not. They don't care whether the consensus is true, just that everyone agrees on it and that it produces good feelings. They just don't handle differing points of view well… it confuses them and makes them anxious and frustrated. They are uncomfortable with concepts like being judged, or being punished. The don't want anyone to disagree with their religion of materialism, which allows them to pursue pleasure apart from any objective moral obligations. Since the religion of materialism, which is so popular on the left, does away with morality, we have to be very careful to enshrine into the law protections for those who would dissent from this denial of objective morality. Otherwise you end up with cases like the Guillermo Gonzalez case or the Richard Sternberg case. There are no limits to what a materialist will do in order to keep up the illusion that no one is there to hold them accountable. They'll believe anything. They'll do anything. There isn't anything in their materialism to stop them from committing atrocities. That's why we need laws to contain their abuse of power.

A quotation from Martin Luther King, Jr. illustrates the point:

> “It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can keep him from *lynching me*, and I think that’s pretty important.”

Until the time where those on the secular left learn to accept dissent, and allow debate, without resorting to insults and personal attacks, laws that protect dissenters will be necessary.

Harper would ban political contributions from unions and corporations

April 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper
From PostMedia News.

Excerpt:

> Stephen Harper says scrapping taxpayer subsidies for political parties could help break Canada's cycle of holding federal elections every few years, but his political foes say it's another attempt to financially cripple the other parties.
>
> On Friday, Day 7 of the campaign, Harper said he will ban the subsidies if the Conservatives win a majority government on May 2. Any party that receives more than two per cent of the vote in a general election receives a subsidy of roughly $2 per year for each vote the party received.
>
> Harper said the system funnels taxpayers' money to political parties they don't necessarily support, and allows parties to operate in perpetual campaign mode.
>
> "We think money should come from voters. Not from corporations, not from unions and not from government. (It) should come from the voters," he told reporters.
>
> […]In January, Harper revealed for the first time, in an interview with Postmedia News, that a ban on the subsidies would be a "clear plank" in his party's platform for an election.
>
> Shortly after winning the 2008 election, the Tories proposed to end the subsidies,

> but that sparked anger from the opposition parties and they rallied to form a coalition that nearly defeated Harper's government. On Friday, Harper made it clear he hasn't changed his mind. However, in an apparent bid to take some of the sting out of the move and to reduce criticism, he revealed there would be a three-year transition.
>
> "I've wanted to change this, but we're very clear: Unless we have a majority government, we'll never attempt to change it, because we know that in a minority government you could never move this forward. So if we get a chance to change it, we will," Harper told reporters.

Basically, there should only be ONE WAY for parties to get money in my view. Individual contributions from workers and small businesses. Anyone who can use government to grant it a monopoly (unions, big corporations) should NOT be allowed to contribute money to politicians. Get the big money from left-wing unions and left-wing big corporations out of politics.

Here's the latest poll, showing the Conservatives steady at 41.3% support. (H/T Jeanie)

Michele Bachmann beats RINO Mitt Romney in fundraising

April 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann
From the left-wing Politico.

Excerpt:

> Michele Bachmann became the queen of 2011 fundraising this quarter, bringing in a combined $2.2 million for the quarter – bigger than the $1.9 million that frontrunner Mitt Romney reported bringing in, officials confirmed for POLITICO.
>
> Bachmann raised $1.7 million for her congressional committee, and another $500,000 for her leadership PAC, Bachmann adviser Andy Parrish said.
>
> The numbers are sure to roil the early presidential-watching, as the Minnesota congresswoman gears up for a likely run for the White House in 2012.
>
> Much of her donations are reportedly small checks.
>
> Bachmann, a tea party favorite, has been getting increasing attention as Sarah Palin appears increasingly unlikely to run.

Michele Bachmann is my pick to be President in 2012. Looks like she is off to a good start.

Just so you know, Mitt Romney is not a strong conservative. He enacted socialized medicine, with an individual mandate, in Massachusetts when he was the governor. It is suffering from enormous deficits. And in my opinion, he is pro-abortion, although he claims not to be when he is running for President.

Related posts

- Michele Bachmann looking presidential against the liberal media
- Michele Bachmann courts homeschoolers in Iowa speech
- Michele Bachmann and Paul Ryan on the Wisconsin teacher union pensions
- Video and transcripts of response speeches by Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann
- What was the context of Michele Bachmann's "armed and dangerous" comment?

- AT LAST: Michele Bachmann open to presidential run in 2012
- Megyn Kelly and Michele Bachmann on the Bush tax cut deal
- CNS News interviews Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann requests the resignation of Attorney General Eric Holder
- Michele Bachmann attacks government bailout of unions
- Michele Bachmann makes the case for limited government
- Why is the left so angry with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin?
- Michele Bachmann on Fox News with Laura Ingraham
- Democrats kill Michele Bachmann's attempt to freeze federal salaries
- Michele Bachmann on the US taxpayer-funded bailout of Greece
- Michele Bachmann explains the Obama's Wall Street bailout bill
- Michele Bachmann promises to work to repeal Obamacare
- Video of Michele Bachmann defending unborn children
- Michele Bachmann's passionate and inspiring speech at CPAC 2010
- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama's latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare's rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

Women on the secular left are repulsed by the needs of men and children

April 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an interesting post by a brilliant new blogger Sparx 401.

Excerpt:

> Here's an interesting article from Georgetown University's News Magazine:
>
> The Kids Aren't All Right
>
> Essentially, the writer, Julie Patterson, exclaims that she finds children repulsing, even the thought of "family time" and child-rearing inculcates in her a sense of disgust and revolt. She writes, and a I quote:
>
> > I'll come right out and say it: Children repulse me. They frighten me. They make me anxious. Babies all look the same, and they are all ugly. Toddlers are praised for doing ordinary things like speaking and waving. Children have a comment and a question about everything.
>
> and,
>
> > …I could muse on how the source of my discomfort lies in how the promise of youth that shines in their carefree eyes makes me lament my own loss of innocence, but it's probably more accurate to say that these kids just suck. They're loud, they're obnoxious, they have too much energy, and they're still learning how to conjugate irregular verbs. I have no time for that in my life…I assume that they, like many predators, can sense fear, and will therefore leave me in peace. But there are no guarantees in life—not even the success of birth control. Here's to hoping no little accident ever "blesses" my life.
>
> Even for people who prefer not to have children, this seems to be going too far. This may be a shot in the dark, and correct me if I'm wrong (I have tried to look and see her personal beliefs on religious and spiritual matters, but to no avail), but I don't think she's a Christian…perhaps a nominal one in label only, but certainly not following any orthodox teaching from any mainline denominations.
>
> I have found via Lex Communis, who provided this other related link that, "Incidentally, Julie's Facebook page lists her only two Interests and Activities as "Being a Bitch" and "Being a Hypocrite.""

And then you get these complaints from some women that men are unreliable and immature for not marrying them. Well, d'uh! You don't marry an insane man-hating, child-hating woman, any more than you marry a great white shark. You don't hire a dentist to fix your car, you don't hire a doctor to do your taxes. And you don't marry a

left-wing feminist, because left-wing politics and feminism (narcissism) are not compatible with the self-sacrificial behaviors required for marriage and parenting. Men may have sex with left-wingers and feminists, but they don't marry them, and they don't have children with them. We aren't that stupid. We know that if you are willing to kill a baby *you created* while *having recreational sex*, just because babies cost money and you can't be bothered , then you are not suitable for marriage. If you can't be bothered to treat men like grown-ups and court them properly, and care about their needs and get to know them, then you are not qualified to be a wife and mother. Manipulating men through early sex is not the right way to make a man make a life-long, exclusive commitment to love you and provide for you. They are actual behaviors required to be qualified for marriage and parenting, and men need to be free from sex so they can assess a woman objectively. It's the man's job to choose a woman who can help the man in his roles as protector/provider and moral/spiritual leader, raise effective, influential Christian children, and have an influence for God herself in society (such as becoming President).

More about this in my afternoon post for tomorrow.

Round-up of good news for conservatives from the past week

April 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, from Heritage Foundation think tank, school choice reform passes in Washington, D.C. and Indiana. Now poor parents will have a choice to send their children to better schools without having to move to a richer neighborhood.

Excerpt:

> The month of March closed with a victorious week for schoolchildren and families across the nation. School choice bills passed in both Washington, D.C., and in Indiana to expand educational options for students.
>
> In Washington, the SOAR Act sailed through the House on a 225–195 vote, reauthorizing and expanding the successful D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (DCOSP), which has been under attack by the Obama Administration for the last two years. In Indiana, legislation that has been cited as the "broadest" voucher expansion bill in the country similarly won hands-down in the Indiana House.
>
> In Washington, House Education Committee chairman John Kline (R–MN) said last Wednesday:
>
> > Today's vote is a victory for disadvantaged students throughout our nation's capital. Over the last seven years, the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program has placed a quality education within reach of students previously trapped in underperforming schools. This program has engaged parents, motivated children, and helped the dream of a diploma become a reality for thousands of D.C. students.
>
> In a similar vein, Indiana House Speaker Brian Bosma noted:
>
> > This is about promoting opportunity, focused tightly on those that have no choice today. … I'm here to give parents—especially parents without the means—opportunities for their children."
>
> The SOAR Act not only restores the DCOSP—which provides scholarships to low-income students in D.C.—it also expands the DCOSP to allow more students to receive scholarships.
>
> Indiana's legislation would provide families with a portion of their children's public school funding to use on their choice of private schools. The amount of money families receive would be based on income levels.

Christian parents are not well served by government-run public schools, because public schools undermine Christian beliefs and result in poorly-educated educated children to

boot. Let us have our tax money back so we can choose a school that serves our needs. We don't let the government pick our laptop and cell phone, why should we let the government take our money and then choose a failing school for our children? I want to choose the school my children will go to – because I am the one who will be held accountable to God later for the children I've produced. And I want the poor parents and the rich parents to get the same voucher so that everyone can choose. I want the poor to have the exact same options that the rich have. And I want the failing schools to be closed down due to lack of funds, just the way that a business that fails its customers is closed down due to competitive pressures.

Next, Denver Republicans reject same-sex civil union bill.

Excerpt:

> A bill to allow civil unions for same-sex couples in Colorado was stopped on Thursday night by a vote in the House Judiciary Committee.
>
> The committee voted 6-5 to stop the bill from moving on to the full House.
>
> The vote came after eight hours of testimony in a packed chamber at the State Capitol.
>
> The measure easily passed the Senate last week with three Republicans joining all the Democrats voting for it.
>
> Democrats said Senate Bill 172 could have cleared the House if all members there were allowed to vote.

This is a good idea because marriage benefits are given out to promote marriage, which is the most stable environment to raise children. Same-sex civil unions are proven to be less stable than opposite-sex marriages, and that is bad for children. If we care about children, then we need to give tax incentives for traditional marriage – the best environment in which to raise children. It's not personal – it's business.

Next, Texas Republicans shift money from contraceptive programs to crisis-pregnancy centers.

Excerpt:

> About $7 million over the next two years would be moved from state-funded family planning services into crisis pregnancy center funding under an amendment passed by the Texas House during the budget debate.
>
> The House voted 100-44 to pass the amendment, despite a short battle between author Rep. Randy Weber, R-Pearland, and several Democrats, who argued that family planning services help not only in the prevention of unwanted pregnancies, but also allow low-income women to get healthy check ups and cancer screenings. They said the amendment would cost the state money in the end.
>
> "This takes money from the pot of funds used to reduce the rate of unplanned pregnancy to give money to counsel women who are pregnant already. Isn't that

> counter-productive? asked Rep. Mike Villarreal, D-San Antonio.
>
> Author of the amendment Rep. Randy Weber, R-Pearland, said that the "most innocent" need to be protected, which he said more funding for abortion-prevention centers would accomplish. He also said studies point to statistics that the poorest families using contraceptives were not successful.

I am not a big fan of single motherhood, but I am a big fan of adoption. And murdering an innocent child is certainly worse than either of those. Studies show that more contraception does not prevent abortions, it increases them.

Next, more education reform by Florida Republicans.

Excerpt:

> Florida is widely recognized as the state leader in education reform. Students in the Sunshine State have made the strongest academic achievement gains in the nation since 2003, and they are one of the only states that have been able to narrow the achievement gap between white and minority students. Yesterday, the *Washington Post* highlighted the Florida model, and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush's role in its creation:
>
> "The president who turned No Child Left Behind from slogan into statute is gone from Washington, and the influence of his signature education law is fading. But another brand of Bush school reform is on the rise.
>
> "The salesman is not the 43rd president, George W. Bush, but the 43rd governor of Florida, his brother Jeb.
>
> "At the core of the Jeb Bush agenda are ideas drawn from his Florida playbook: Give every public school a grade from A to F. Offer students vouchers to help pay for private school. Don't let them move into fourth grade unless they know how to read."
>
> State leaders seem to know a good reform strategy when they see it, and many across the country are beginning to embrace the Florida reform model.
>
> Governor Susana Martinez of New Mexico and Governor Gary Herbert of Utah just signed the Florida-style A-F grading system into law in their respective states. The scale grades schools and school districts on a straightforward, transparent scale designed to inform parents and taxpayers about achievement results. The move will arm parents with more information about school performance – a necessary step to improving education. State leaders in Indiana, Arizona and Louisiana also recently implemented the A-F grading scale.
>
> While transparency about school performance is essential to results-based education reform, providing parents with opportunities to act on that information is crucial. Many states are now working to enact that most important piece of the Florida reform model – school choice.
>
> […]Florida students have demonstrated the strongest gains on the NAEP in the

> nation since 2003, when all 50 states began taking NAEP exams. Moreover, between 1998 and 2008, the average score for black students increased by 12 points in reading from 192 to 204. In Florida, it increased by 25 points—twice the gains of the national average. If African American students nationwide had made the same amount of progress as African American students in Florida, the fourth-grade reading gap between black and white would be approximately half the size it is today.

Republicans are *all about* helping the poorest African-American children to get high-quality educations. And we don't just talk about it, and we don't just express good intentions, and we don't just pass ineffective laws to much media fanfare. *We deliver the goods – we walk the walk – we have the evidence of good results*. It's not about vague rhetoric and happy feelings. It's about delivering the goods we promised to deliver. Better educations for poor minority students. Higher standards. Better outcomes.

If we care about children, then we do not kill them, we do not make them grow up without mothers and fathers, we do not force them into failing schools. Conservatism is pro-family, pro-parent, and pro-child. This is what we believe, and we act on those beliefs when we are voted in. No more happy talk about hope and change. If you want results for poor minorities, you vote Republican. And we don't provide "compassionate" welfare programs to incentivize broken homes either, because that is the number one cause of child poverty. Conservatives hate making people slaves to the government.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries

- How teacher’s unions make war on charter schools

NHS hospital director dies on surgery waiting list

April 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Newsbusters.

Excerpt:

> James Taranto at the Wall Street Journal editorial page caught this story about Britain's National Health Service.
>
> "A former NHS director died after waiting for nine months for an operation–at her own hospital," London's Daily Mail reports:

> Margaret Hutchon, a former mayor, had been waiting since last June for a follow-up stomach operation at Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford, Essex.

> But her appointments to go under the knife were cancelled four times and she barely regained consciousness after finally having surgery.

> Her devastated husband, Jim, is now demanding answers from Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust–the organisation where his wife had served as a non-executive member of the board of directors.

> He said: "I don't really know why she died. I did not get a reason from the hospital. We all want to know for closure. She got weaker and weaker as she waited and operations were put off."

Dance with the devil, and you get burned.

Here is a recent post I wrote from the libertarian Cato Institute explaining why health care in the USA is superior to health care in socialist countries like the UK and Canada.

Related posts

- Women gives birth after NHS nurses send her home from hospital
- UK patients denied treatment as "public option" system makes cutbacks
- How do governments control costs in a single-payer health care systems?
- NHS patients giving birth in waiting rooms
- What does universal health care really mean?
- How well is government-run health care working out in the UK?
- British national health care system prepares to cut 20 billion dollars
- NHS kills a man's wife by delaying cancer treatment for 7 months
- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
- Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water
- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care
- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS

- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care
- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- NHS refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

Pro-life teacher fired for using graphic evidence of abortion

April 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Philippe Isnard, 40, a history teacher who was suspended last November for having provided pro-life materials and shown images of aborted babies during a debate about abortion in his 10th grade class in Manosque, France, was fired from the National Education system on Thursday.
>
> Isnard lost his position without salary, benefits or any right to financial compensation via the social welfare system.
>
> He told LifeSiteNews.com he was "stunned" by the severity of the decision, even though he was beyond hoping for complete exoneration.
>
> Revocation constitutes the harshest possible disciplinary measure for a teacher in the French public education system. Graded 4 on a scale of 1 to 4 of possible disciplinary measures, a full revocation can only be pronounced by the Education minister himself. It puts a full stop to the father-of-two's teaching career in all state-funded schools.
>
> […]Shortly after Isnard was temporarily suspended in November, a "psychological counseling unit" was set up at Les Iscles high school to support students who had participated in the abortion debate. Reportedly no students have made use of its services.
>
> The local Planned Parenthood was also invited into Les Iscles high school to follow up the debate, meeting with the students in groups of five.
>
> For his part, Isnard has argued that he encouraged debate in the class. Students were encouraged to bring their own material, either for or against abortion, while Isnard himself provided Simone Veil's Assembly speech promoting the first French law legalizing abortion, now known as the "Loi Veil," pro-life video clips, a pro-life tract and "No Need to Argue."
>
> He says he warned his students about the shocking nature of some of the materials to be presented and told them they were free to leave the class if they wished.
>
> Last month Isnard's case went before a mixed commission of teachers' union members and representatives of the Academic hierarchy of Aix-Marseille. According to information leaked, after the six-hour hearing all 38 members of the disciplinary commission voted for a disciplinary measure to be pronounced.

Secular leftists want to teach sex education to 5-year-olds, but arguing against abortion is

off limits in government-run schools.

Is common descent supported by evidence from biogeography?

April 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Just FYI, I am delaying my mean anti-feminist post until 6 PM at least to check it over.

Mysterious Jonathan writing at Uncommon Descent.

Here's his thesis:

> Recently on this blog, I have been exploring and examining some of the genomic arguments for common descent. As I have been documenting in recent weeks, while the case for common ancestry — on the face of it — looks mightily strong, closer inspection reveals that the arguments don't, in fact, stand up under more rigorous scrutiny. In the vast majority of instances, the corroborative data is very carefully cherry picked from the pertinent data set, and the non-congruent evidence is discarded or ignored.

And here's a snippet:

> One popular argument for common descent is the case from the discipline of biogeography — that is, the study of the geographical and historical distribution of species in relation to one another. The argument is based largely around the observation that species are related in accordance with their geographical proximity with respect to one another.

And here is the problem – this is dynamite:

> So, when the biogeographical data does not accord with the predictions and expectations made by common descent, one always has 'oceanic dispersal' as an *ad hoc* fudge factor — including the rather remarkable claim that Monkeys made it across the Atlantic from Africa to South America! As Casey Luskin notes here, molecular studies claim that the South American monkeys diverged from the African monkeys around 35 million years ago. But Africa became an isolated island continent around 80 million years ago!

Apparently, monkeys rode on the back of the Flying Spaghetti Monster from Africa to South America.

I actually thought that the evidence for common descent was fairly good, because Behe accepts it and he is not a Darwinist. I didn't like it, but facts are facts. But I'm glad that Jonathan is shedding some light on this issue. I would like to be able to argue against it, if the evidence is there.

Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?

April 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I don't think that Christian men should marry women who are politically liberal who claim to be Christians, because I don't think that political liberalism is compatible with Christianity. But I'll write some things that liberal Christian women tell me and you can see if you think it's compatible with a Christian worldview, and a Christian view of marriage and parenting.

Some of this is based on a recent comment I received from a liberal Christian woman who accused me of being a racist (I'm darker than Barack Obama) and opposed to women succeeding (I have a longstanding record of supporting Michele Bachmann for President in 2012), etc. She also basically called me homophobic, because I oppose the gay agenda of sexualizing preschoolers with gay propaganda *and* because I think that children do best with a mother AND a father.

Her comment shows that the best liberals can do when debating policy is name-calling. Imperialist! Racist! Corporatist! Homophobe! Sexist! Bigot! Greedy! That's what this woman did, and I encounter these Christian feminists a lot in churches.They learn their secular leftist worldview in the schools, and then they "read" the Bible by having feelings about what the secular leftists tell them to believe. If you ask them what the Bible says, they'll say "it says that all religions are equal, that people should feel good, and that people shouldn't judge other people". This is what the secular leftists told them that the Bible said, and they believe it. And then they vote. And then they expect that Christian men will marry them for voting for policies that utterly destroy the minimal social requirements for Christian marriage and Christian parenting, (e.g. – she votes for things like no-fault divorce, etc.).

So I thought I would list out some of the things I've heard from women in churches over the years and you can tell me if you think that marriage to them would be a good idea (by marriage I mean real practical marriage meant to provide God with an ROI higher than he would get if the two people stayed single). Should a Christian man marry a woman whose entire worldview consists of slogans without any evidential support? Should Christian men accept the bare statement "I'm Christian" as though it proves that a woman has a worldview that is compatible with the Bible? Should the Christian man ask her to connect a Christian marriage plan to specific policies and laws, such as one might read about in Jay Richards' "Money Greed and God", Nancey Pearcey's "Saving Leonardo", Jennifer Roback Morse's "Love and Economics", or most importantly Wayne Grudem's "Politics and the Bible"? Do "Christian" women have any idea what moral values, skills, policies and experiences are conducive to a successful marriage and the production of effective, influential Christian children?

According to liberal Christian women:

- conservatives are close-minded
- conservatives are oppressive
- morality is not objective, it's relative to each person, or to different cultures
- God does not expect people to avoid sinning
- it's wrong to judge others
- all religions are equally true
- there is no such thing as the Devil or Hell
- sinning is OK because God will still let unrepentant sinners into Heaven
- there is nothing wrong with abortion
- there is nothing wrong with the gay agenda
- opposition to Islamic terrorism is racism
- world war II was an imperialist, unjust war
- the best way to prevent a war is to disarm your own forces, withdraw to your own borders, and appease evil dictators by granting them concessions and abandoning your democratic allies to their aggression
- Christianity is about agreeing with people who do everything the Bible forbids, and making non-Christians feel good about their rebellion against God, so that they will like you
- conservatives are racists (FYI, I have dark brown skin and am the son of first generation immigrants)
- the best way to avoid being a racist is to obsess over the color of people's skin and demand that people with different skin color be treated differently
- the desire of Christian husbands to keep the money they earn is greedy
- Christian husbands have a duty to have the money they earn confiscated by the government so it can be redistributed as the secular government sees fit to redistribute it
- Christian men are stupid and evil and cannot be trusted, which is why women should be able to count on big government social welfare programs
- fathers are not needed to raise children, and can be replaced with sperm donors and welfare checks
- it is bad for poor people to have to depend on their neighbors if they make poor decisions, because asking their neighbors for money and being accountable to their neighbors will make them feel bad – it is better if the government takes money from Christian husbands (in part) and then just gives the poor people the money directly, no matter what poor decisions they made – so that they don't feel bad about making the poor decisions and they don't have to change their poor decision-making
- the government should use the public schools teach children as young as 5 to have sex, use fallible contraceptives, and have abortions, and this teaching should be done using the taxpayer money collected in part from Christian husbands
- if an individual or a group has a lot of money, then the secular government should be able to take that money away to redistribute it – regardless of how hard they worked for that money
- taxing and regulating businesses will have no effect on a Christian husband's ability

to hold onto his job, or find a new one if he is laid off or fired
- the best way to create more jobs is by taxing and regulating businesses and raising tariffs and the costs of energy
- the best way to have an intelligent discussion with someone you disagree with is to attack their character and call them names that your teachers taught you to call them – reading good books by the people you disagree with and watching academic debates is a complete waste of time
- watching Michael Moore movies is adequate preparation for debating policy with conservatives
- watching the Comedy Network and listening to NPR are excellent ways to stay aware of the state of the world
- the secular leftist government can be relied on to use money from Christian taxpayers to protect religious liberty and practices like homeschooling
- economic policy can be determined through feelings and intuitions – as long as politicians say happy words and expressing good intentions, then the people they claim to care about are sure to come out ahead
- capitalism doesn't create wealth, socialism does – just look at how much richer North Korea is than the United States
- churches have too much money and they don't spend it on the poor, so they should be taxed and regulated by secular government
- private and parochial schools are only available to "the rich" so they should be abolished and all children should be forced to attend public schools, which are run by the secular government
- homeschooling should be outlawed because parents can teach their children moral values that are offensive and close-minded and make liberal special interest groups feel offended
- a baby isn't a person until a woman decides it's a person, and abortion should be taxpayer-funded
- children don't need a mother and a father, and we should have policies that make people feel good about raising fatherless children – like welfare programs
- corporations "control people" by making useful products, and providing useful services, that people are free to buy, or not, depending on whether they think that those products and services are worth the money being asked for
- government doesn't control people when it forces preople to buy health insurance that covers abortions, sex changes, drug rehab, IVF, or any number of things that Christians will never need and may even object to on moral grounds
- it is ok for Christians to vote for a secular government that reduces the costs of pre-marital sex by allowing taxpayer-funded abortions and taxpayer-funded welfare payments, because the God of the Bible wants people to have premarital sex more easily and at a lower cost
- conservatives support the death penalty for people who disagree with them on religion and morality (not on a criminal matter, this woman called herself a Christian and literally thought that conservatives wanted the death penalty for people of

other religions and sexual orientations – no criminal charges or anything)
- the death penalty is mean and has never been shown to have a deterrent effect on violent crime rates in peer-reviewed research
- Christian women can best impress Christian men by showing no understanding of the needs of young children, and by having no plan to produce effective/influential Christian children in a challenging secular environment
- the best way for a Christian women to understand the needs of men and children is by focusing on her own education and career and avoiding any peer-reviewed research that addresses the needs of men and children
- marriage consists of the woman working full-time and treating her husband as a roommate and treating her children as pets who are dropped off at the day care – preferably government-run day care – and eventually moving the children on to government-run schools
- conservative men, especially the Tea Party supporters, are sexist and don't want women to be successful – especially the ones who want Michele Bachmann to be President
- if a man asks a woman to read anything on economics, science, philosophy, etc., then he is oppressing her because she should be free to construct her entire worldview based on her feelings, intuitions and peer expectations
- whenever a woman is asked how she has prepared to deal with a husband and children, she should turn the question around and ask what men and children will do to serve her and make her happy
- government subsidies for unmarried women who raise fatherless children doesn't cause more women to have babies out of wedlock, and out of wedlock babies do not increase poverty or criminal behavior
- corporations who sell products and services to people who are willing to buy them of their own free will causes poverty and criminal behavior
- the best way to prevent a mortgage lending crisis is for government to lower interest rates for extended periods of time and then impose restrictions on housing construction, driving home prices higher, and then to force banks to make loans to unqualified applicants who don't have to report their citizenship, report their income, or even make a downpayment
- the best way to respond to the policy question about whether high tax rates are bad for Christian families is to ask the questioner how much money they personally give to charity
- God is more impressed by people who give their money to voluntarily homeless alcoholics than by people who give money to sponsor an on-campus academic debate where university students will hear arguments for and against God's existence, God's character, and what God has done in history through the person of Jesus
- the best way to learn about marriage and parenting is by listening to feminist teachers, not by reading Jennifer Roback Morse and Laura Schlessinger
- the best way to learn about economics is by listening to socialist teachers, not by

reading Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams
- the best way to learn about what the Bible says about politics is by listening to secular teachers, not by reading Wayne Grudem and Jay Richards
- the best way to learn about foreign policy is by listening to draft-dodging bleeding-heart hippy teachers, not by reading Frank Gaffney and John Bolton
- developing a Christian worldview is best achieved by believing whatever ignorant, inexperienced teachers in government-run secular schools tell you to believe so that you can get an A – this is called "critical thinking" and conservatives don't do that
- it's more important to be liked by your liberal teachers and inexperienced, foolish peers than to conform your behavior and worldview to what the Bible actually says
- if a Christian woman engages in global warming alarmism, recycling, veganism and yoga then Christian men will think that she is moral and suitable for marriage and parenting
- Church is a place where you sing songs and meet people, have happy feelings, and get comfort for the uncertainties of life and death
- men are just as likely to marry and have children with a 50% tax rate, a 15% unemployment rate and a 20 trillion dollar debt as they are with a 15% tax rate, a 5% unemployment rate and a 5 trillion dollar debt – what really matters is whether they are in love or not
- men are just as likely to marry and have children with a no-fault divorce law and 90% sole-custody awards for the woman as they are with at-fault divorce laws and mandatory shared-parenting
- if you pay poor people $35,000 a year in cash and benefits for not working, then they will try as hard as they can to get out of poverty
- affirmative action is a great idea and it is no problem at all that 60% of all undergraduates are women, because men are just as willing to be husbands and fathers when they don't have college degrees *or jobs*
- God doesn't want us to do anything effective to advance his causes and his concerns or to defend his moral values and moral duties – God just wants us to have happy feelings and to be liked by others, no matter what they believe and what choices they make
- the purpose of having children is to let them do what they want so they are happy, and not to make them effective and influential for God
- it's wrong to call your children "garbage" even if they later look back on you with love for spending so much time parenting them effectively and are accepted to Harvard and Yale and are set to have an enormous influence for Christ – that's bullying and God doesn't like parents bullying people into Harvard and Yale (he prefers poets and ballet dancers)
- the best way for mothers to deal with children is by handing them to strangers and then assuaging the guilt from child neglect with excessive permissiveness coupled with excessive spending on material rewards and suppression of the father's desire to discipline and lead the children toward greater effectiveness and influence for Christ

- defending the faith is something that only a few people do if they have that "spiritual gift", but other people have the spiritual gift of reading Dan Brown, Stephanie Meyer and J.K. Rowling novels – both choices are equally pleasing to God, though
- if a Christian man cares about keeping the money he earns for his current or future family, then he is selfish and only cares about himself
- patriotism, national honor, advanced weapon systems and a large military are all ways to encourage aggressors to attack other nations
- peace talks, appeasement, betraying your allies, weakness, moral equivalence, coddling terrorists captured on the battlefield, and a weak military causes aggressors to not attack you or other nations
- legal firearm ownership causes violent crime rates to increase
- multiple victim public shootings *never* occur in areas where weapons are banned (for the law-abiding), like shopping malls and schools
- slavery was invented by Americans and has never been practiced anywhere else or in any other time
- slavery is only practiced by whites against blacks
- slavery was abolished first by non-whites, and then only at the very end by whites
- the American military is largely a force for evil in the world
- man-made catastrophic global warming is real and needs to be countered by imposing a communist government to control industry, because the Earth has never been warmer than it is now, certainly not during the Medieval Warming Period
- America is imperialist because Americans spend their blood and treasure liberating other countries from tyranny like South Korea, France, Kuwait, East Germany, etc. and then instead of occupying those countries they leave, and then airdrop supplies (The Marshall Plan) or foreign aid or massive private donations

And then they wonder why men do not think that women are suitable for marriage or children. I think it's an act of treason against God for authentic Christian men to marry Democrats, or even to give them the time of day.

The point of this post is that today I am seeing a lot of women complaining about men not wanting to marry them, and going on to have children out of wedblock as an alternative (and then they collect welfare and throw the children in day care and public schools – i.e. – child abuse). The thought never occurs to them that men HAVE thought women and marriage and children through, and they have decide that many women are simply not qualified morally or spiritually for the tasks of marriage and parenting. Men decide this based on their knowledge of the needs of men and children, and women's lack of preparation to meet those needs, and women's unwillingness to sacrifice their own interests to meet the needs of others. What many women, Christian and atheist, seem to believe is that men should fall in love with them with a complete disregard for their worldview and preparation for marriage and parenting. And what they mean by marriage and parenting is not self-sacrifice and service to men and children, with the larger goal of serving God. They actually mean a combination of postmodernism, moral relativism and

narcissistic hedonism. They think that this is what marriage provides – a perpetual state of bliss where they do whatever makes them feel good moment by moment and men and children just celebrate that. Rah rah day-care! Rah rah sex-withholding! Rah-rah wealth redistribution! That's apparently what men and children should expect from a woman in a marriage situation. And of course, God, if he exists, exists only to guarantee happy feelings and cannot judge or interfere or impose moral obligations on the woman.They think marriage is fairy-tale narcissism. Even the wedding is a day of expensive attention-getting narcissism.

A woman's relationship with God, and the amount of thought and effort she puts into it, is a valuable window into how she views her relationships with men and children. If she reads a lot and takes on a lot of obligations to understand God and to serve him in effective ways (apologetics, politics, economics, foreign policy) then men should think that she will treat relationships with men and children the same way. But that takes time to assess. Men need to keep their hands off of women when dating/courting in order to assess her *real views*. You can't assess a woman for marriage and parenting based on her physical appearance, weight and sexual skills. You would be surprised how little Biblical worldview capability there is for young attractive women, how little practical thinking about money and education, etc. has been done, how little planning has been done beyond the desire for wedding pictures and baby pictures, and how little is understood about how men and children impose obligations on women. God is better than men and children are. She won't treat men and children well if she doesn't treat God well. If she projects her feelings onto the Bible, and resents its plain meaning, and rejects the obligations it places on her, then she isn't going to treat husbands and children any better. If she responds to God's character by rejecting his differences, his judgments, and his expectations, then she isn't going to respond well to the those same concerns in men or children.

A nice physical appearance and the willingness to hook-up on the first date are not qualifications for marriage and parenting. And they are not qualifications for serving God either. And women who soft-pedal immorality like abortion and gay rights in order to be liked by leftists are not Christians. Christianity means something. It doesn't mean having happy feelings and being liked and projecting your goals and beliefs onto God. Men – don't complain if you are shallow enough to think that you can test a woman by having fun with her. Going on trips and having fun experiences is not courting. Make her read hard books, make her do hard things, make her write essays on men, marriage, parenting, apologetics, science, politics and economics. Demand that she give you 10 scientific arguments from the peer-reviewed literature for God's existence. Demand that she explain how laws and policies challenge the goals of a Christian marriage. Judge her on moral grounds at every opportunity. Load her up with moral obligations and tasks. Because that's what she'll be expected to do in a marriage.

I think that the liberal "Christian" commenter probably places herself more of the good end of the moral scale than the bad end, but I just want to be clear – I consider don't consider her a Christian or even a good person. It's not that she is deliberately evil, she is

just incredibly ignorant on every subject, having imbibed her views from secular leftist teachers like a trained seal who is rewarded with fish by her trainer. She hasn't read anything outside of schoolwork, she just parroted her way to good grades. The harm comes when she tries to pass herself off as a Christian to gullible Christian men who will be swayed by her looks and youth and physical contact instead of her knowledge, wisdom and experiences at practical things – like running a business, or evangelizing atheists in her workplace. Men need to have their goals for love, marriage and parenting clear, and to understand what questions to ask women to detect their real suitability for marriage and parenting. This woman simply has no capability to do the job. She hasn't looked into these issues at all, she just accepted what the people around her believed. When you scratch the surface, she isn't a Christian at all – she just uses frilly God talk to put window dressing on her own narcissism, vacuity and conformity.

By the way, the quickest way for her to join the reality-based community would be to buy and read Thomas Sowell's "Intellectuals and Society", which I just finished last night. Thomas Sowell is the official economist of the Tea Party movement, and, of course, he is black. As is the other great Tea Party economist Walter Williams. I would also recommend Wayne Grudem's "Politics and the Bible". He writes theology, which is something that these liberal Christian woman have never looked into. And of course they will never have looked into apologetics either, so they won't have read William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland's "Philosophical Foundations for Christian Worldview". After all, they have feelings and intuitions and social expectations to guide them. Who needs truth?

Related posts

- New OUP book links premarital sex and promiscuity to poor mental health
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- What does the common practice of withholding sex reveal about women?
- Why are so many British feminists converting to Islam?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- Why do women flock to movies like Switch and Eat, Pray, Love?
- Women should read "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands"
- Arlemagne's post on the dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- 12-year-old girl (and her mother) sues father for grounding her… and wins!
- The Wintery Knight's greatest fears about the future
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married

- Does a man’s decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Does God scare people into loving him with the threat of Hell?

April 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from The Sparx401 again.

Excerpt:

> It's probably one of the more prominent questions seekers and skeptics alike will ask: What kind of choice is that?! Love me or burn in Hell? This particular question is what we'll be delving into today. In fact, I'll be writing a slew of posts on questions pertaining to Hell and Salvation and such.
>
> First, a "sketch":
>
> Tim bows on one knee and says to Karen, "I love you more than anyone could imagine! You're so incredibly beautiful! And actually, Karen, I was wondering if you'd be my wife and marry me."
>
> Taken aback by this, but obviously touched by his feelings, Karen thoughtfully responds, "That's so sweet of you Tim! Still, I'm going to have to think about it…"
>
> "Oh sure, go right on ahead. I don't want to force you, else that wouldn't be a genuine choice," replies Tim.
>
> "However," he exclaims, "If you don't choose to marry me, I'll send you down into my basement where my crazy cousin Micah will torture you forever".
>
> "What? That's totally unfair! What kind of choice is that? Why would you send me down there for?" stammers Karen with shock.
>
> "I'm not sending you down there Karen, you are sending yourself there if you choose not to marry me. It's still your free choice, after all".
>
> Such a story is how a good number of skeptics view God's "provision" of choice vis-à-vis Hell and Salvation. Yet, how accurate is this portrayal given the relevant biblical data and Christian doctrine? My contention? Very inaccurate.

Click here to find out how to respond to this objection.

J.P. Moreland on confirming the Bible with scientific evidence

April 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From J.P. Moreland's web site. (H/T Thinking Matters NZ)

Excerpt:

> The Bible is the greatest source of wisdom for life in all of humanity. If followed, its teaching regularly and without rival leads to human flourishing. It is important to keep this in mind, because, since the beginning of the twentieth century in the United States, current after current of alleged thought has told us to jettison scriptural teaching in favor of some recent, more updated findings. This has especially been true in the sexual revolution, which tells us that traditional biblical morality is stifling and repressive. However, if the Bible is true, one would predict that. In fact, following its teachings would lead to flourishing, and disobeying its teachings would have a deleterious effect on people.
>
> I just finished reading Joe McIlhaney, MD, and Freda Bush's, MD, book, *Hooked: New Science on How Casual Sex is Affecting our Children* (Northfield Publishing, 2008). So far as I know, neither author is a believer, and if he or she is, neither's religious views form a part of his/her arguments. The thesis of the book is that, given current brain research, is it now beyond reasonable doubt that sexual promiscuity (basically, any intense sexual activity, including, but not limited to, intercourse) has a negative impact on one's brain chemistry, one's health, one's ability to enjoy sex, and one's ability to connect emotionally and relationally with someone. They argue that only in the context of traditional marriage can sexual relations be life-giving.

I have the book, and bought explicitly for the reason of being able to confirm and defend my views, which I get from the Bible, with scientific evidence, which I get from scientists. I find that people who don't believe the Bible are more impressed with the Bible when I start by arguing with the scientific evidence. That's how you start a conversation that ends with the Bible.

Harper’s Conservatives lead Liberals 42.3 to 28.4 in latest election poll

April 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Vancouver Province.

Excerpt:

> Stephen Harper’s Conservatives have soared into majority government territory in B.C. with more than double the support of the Liberals, a new poll says.
>
> As the federal election campaign enters week two, The Nanos poll, conducted for The Globe and Mail and CTV, indicates 49.7 per cent support for the Conservatives here and 23.4 per cent for the Liberals, with the NDP garnering 20.6 per cent support.
>
> The daily tracking poll has Stephen Harper’s Conservatives winning over 40-per cent support across Canada — seen as the key level of support for forming a majority government — with a commanding 14-point lead over Michael Ignatieff’s Liberals.
>
> Harper’s party is only trailing in Quebec to the Bloc, with Canada-wide support of 42.3 per cent, compared to 28.4 per cent for the Liberals, 16.4 per cent for Jack Layton’s NDP and 3.8 per cent for the Greens.

And from the London Free Press – policies!

Excerpt:

> “We stand with farmers and hunters and we will scrap the long-gun registry,” said Harper, adding that a Tory majority would prevent the opposition from blocking those efforts again.
>
> He also tried to counter the image of rural residents as out of step with the rest of the country.
>
> “I have not found in rural Canada a general opposition to gun control,” said Harper. “There’s not a general opposition to the idea that a gun owner should get a licence. We’ve had a handgun registry for years.”
>
> He sees wide acceptance of those measures as well as restrictions on powerful weapons.
>
> “What people don’t accept is going out and registering millions and millions and millions of long guns when we already have all this other information.”

My previous post on Harper’s plan to ban political contributions from unions and big corporations, as well as federal subsidies for political parties.

My previous post on Harper’s initiative to win over social conservatives as much as he can given the circumstances.

Republican Paul Ryan proposes over 6 trillion in spending cuts

April 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan

Finally. From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> [Tuesday] morning the new House Republican majority will introduce a budget that moves the debate from billions in spending cuts to trillions.
>
> […]The president's recent budget proposal would accelerate America's descent into a debt crisis. It doubles debt held by the public by the end of his first term and triples it by 2021. It imposes $1.5 trillion in new taxes, with spending that never falls below 23% of the economy. His budget permanently enlarges the size of government. It offers no reforms to save government health and retirement programs, and no leadership.
>
> Our budget, which we call The Path to Prosperity, is very different. For starters, it cuts $6.2 trillion in spending from the president's budget over the next 10 years, reduces the debt as a percentage of the economy, and puts the nation on a path to actually pay off our national debt. Our proposal brings federal spending to below 20% of gross domestic product (GDP), consistent with the postwar average, and reduces deficits by $4.4 trillion.
>
> A study just released by the Heritage Center for Data Analysis projects that The Path to Prosperity will help create nearly one million new private-sector jobs next year, bring the unemployment rate down to 4% by 2015, and result in 2.5 million additional private-sector jobs in the last year of the decade. It spurs economic

> growth, with $1.5 trillion in additional real GDP over the decade. According to Heritage's analysis, it would result in $1.1 trillion in higher wages and an average of $1,000 in additional family income each year.

Read the whole article for the details of the budget, which include:

- Reducing spending
- Welfare reform
- Retirement program reform
- Health care program reform
- Budget enforcement
- Tax reform

Here's the official video:

Here's the official page for Ryan's Path to Prosperity budget proposal.

Here's a little more motivation from the grown-ups at Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> By the Social Security and Medicare Trustees' own estimates, we are running headlong into a fiscal tsunami. All told, the government's entitlement accountants say, we have roughly $107 trillion in unfunded liabilities — $340,836 and change for every American alive today.
>
> Even if you're generous and reduce that by the amount of assets the government has, the future red ink at the end of the 2010 fiscal year was still about $57 trillion — $7 trillion for federal pensions, $17 trillion for Social Security, $22 trillion for Medicare, and about $11 trillion or so in debt. That's $481,000 for every U.S. household.

I am sad because children being born today will have a lower standard of living tomorrow. We are spending away their future and it has got to stop! Why fuss about "saving the planet" when we are saddling the young with hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt?

Related posts

- Michele Bachmann and Paul Ryan on the Wisconsin teacher union pensions
- Video and transcripts of response speeches by Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann
- Paul Ryan explains why Republicans are doing what they promised to do
- What would happen if Paul Ryan headed the Budget committee?
- Paul Ryan discusses economics at the liberal Brookings Institute
- Paul Ryan explains taxes and spending to Chris Matthews
- Paul Ryan takes on Democrat Brad Sherman on the worsening economy
- Tragedy strikes! Paul Ryan is not going to run for President in 2012!
- Paul Ryan debates Robert Reich on Larry Kudlow show
- Paul Ryan debates on the relationship between tax rates and job creation
- Paul Ryan asks if America is becoming a European welfare state

- Sue Myrick interviews Paul Ryan about his Roadmap for America
- Fiscal and social conservatives unite in new free e-book “Indivisible”
- Paul Ryan talks about health care with Chris Matthews and Chris Wallace
- Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander
- Paul Ryan discusses Obamacare and the federal budget
- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan’s plan for economic recovery
- Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama’s 1.56 trillion budget deficit
- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama’s record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan and Ann Coulter make the case against Obamacare
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism
- When all else failed, Republicans will try conservative ideas

Supreme Court narrowly sides with private schools against government

April 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> The Supreme Court's big school choice decision yesterday is notable mainly for its insight into the progressive mind. To wit, no fewer than four Justices seem to believe that all wealth belongs to the government, and then government allows citizens to keep some of it by declining to tax it.
>
> At issue in A*rizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn* was a state tax credit for donations to organizations that offer scholarships for private schools, including (but not exclusively) religious schools. A group of taxpayers sued, claiming that religion was being subsidized on their dime, in violation of the First Amendment's establishment clause.
>
> The district court tossed out this novel church-state theory, only to have it revived by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Yesterday's 5-4 decision was another well-deserved rebuke to the nation's leading judicial activists who dominate that appellate court.
>
> […]And what do you know, four Justices assume precisely that. Both of President Obama's nominees joined the four dissenters, and newcomer Elena Kagan delivered a fiery 24-page apologia for that position, claiming that "the distinction" between appropriations and tax credits "is one in search of a difference." There's a good debate to be had about tax credits (see below), but one question for Justice Kagan: Is the government also establishing religion by not imposing a 100% tax rate on churches, mosques and synagogues?With one more vote, the current Court's liberal minority would surely ban school choice involving any religious schools. The *Arizona* decision shows again that the Court is only a single vote away from many decisions not all that far removed from those of the Ninth Circuit.

You can also listen to a 5-minute podcast on the decision from the Hugh Hewitt show right here.

Note that Obama's two new appointees sided *against* Christian schools and private schools. Yet some brain-damaged Christians actually vote for Democrats, and claim to be Christians. (And they claim to want to get married and to raise children who will presumably be Christians, too!). School choice is as central an issue to informed Christians as is opposition to no-fault divorce, same-sex marriage and abortion.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel’s documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama’s new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher’s unions make war on charter schools

Book review of Bart Ehrman's latest book "Forged" by Mike Licona

April 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike sent me the review, and I printed it out, but Stand to Reason posted on it first, with quotations. (Melinda wrote the post)

Excerpt:

> Here are some highlights from Mike Licona's review of Ehrman's new book *Forged*. Ehrman's book contends that some of the New Testament books are forgeries. These include Acts, the two Epsitles bearing Peter's name, and six of Paul's Epistles.
>
> The gist of Licona's assessment is that Ehrman repeatedly brings up partial information and dismisses arguments that disagree far too quickly.
>
> Ehrman appear[s] to take a different approach, assuming all of the 27 are guilty of false attribution until nearly unimpeachable evidence to the contrary can be presented. Evidence of this approach can be seen when the evidence for traditional authorship is dismissed too quickly or when arguments against the tradition authorship are strikingly weak....Unfortunately, because many of Ehrman's readers will go no further than reading *Forged*, they will fall prey to some very poor arguments....
>
> An example of partial information that ends up misleading:
>
> In chapter five, Ehrman turns to some of the motive behind ancient forgeries. In the cases presented in this chapter, the Christians were responding to their conflicts with Jews and pagans. After discussing some of the literature he writes, "the authors intended to deceive their readers, and their readers were all too easily deceived" (159). Although Ehrman is correct, it is likewise noteworthy that none of the literature he cites became canonical. Ehrman fails to mention that....
>
> ...In a book where he is identifying deceit, it's ironic that Ehrman himself engages in misleading his readers. In a technical sense, he's correct: the reason we have the present literature in the New Testament is because a theologically orthodox group won the theology war. However, the impression Ehrman leaves his readers is that the only things distinguishing the literature that made it into the New Testament from the literature that did not is the results of a vote....
>
> But sometimes the winners deserve to win [for historical reasons]....

Read the rest. Mike Licona is my favorite resurrection scholar.

You can also watch the most recent debate between Bart Ehrman and Mike Licona here.

Republican Tom Price grills left-wing AARP CEO on Obamacare

April 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video highlights what the left-wing AARP is really about.

Don't join this organization. If you are a senior, join AMAC instead. They're more conservative than AARP.

UPDATE:

For those of you without Youtube!

Liberal:
CNN summary
NPR summary

Conservative:
Republican Congressman Reichert
An excellent blog post

Correcting four myths about the Crusades

April 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an interesting article from First Principles Journal. (H/T First Things)

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the

> formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

This is always good to know for when you are answering Muslims.

Preview of Thursday's debate between William Lane Craig and Sam Harris

April 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Audio, a summary of the debate, and my snarky summary of the debate are all linked here.

First, some information about the debate.

- Who: William Lane Craig vs. Sam Harris
- Where: The University of Notre Dame
- When: Thursday, April 7 – 7pm to 9pm

Live streaming

And apparently the debate will be streamed live by the University of Notre Dame. (H/T Mary)

> "I'm sorry it's taken me so long to get back to you with an answer about online availability. I got it myself this afternoon. There will be a live stream on http://www.ndtv.net/. On the day of the debate, Thursday April 7 at 7:00, the home page of http://www.ndtv.net/ will be replaced with the live stream. I hope you enjoy it."

Now let's see where the debaters stand.

Sam Harris

Here's a part of a book review of "The Moral Landscape".

Excerpt:

> Harris defines morality in terms of human well-being, with its intent being to advance our welfare. He also claims that human well-being is a function of the brain's state.[5] However, he doesn't present evidence to support the idea that any particular states of the brain can be produced in any particular way. (Yet, evidence exists that suggests certain moral behaviors generally considered evil produce a functional state of the brain indicative of well-being in those morally reprehensible individuals.)

If I am understanding him correctly, Harris thinks that what is good is happy brain states for the biggest number of people. He can measure happy brain states using scientific methods. But then comes the atheist leap of faith. He thinks that from this *IS* we should jump to an *OUGHT*. Harris this that we OUGHT to do whatever maximizes happy brain states for the biggest number of people. I think that Craig should challenge him on why we should accept this ought when it goes against OUR OWN self-interest, and when we can escape the social consequences.

Harris' view sounds like old-style utilitarianism. And old-style utilitarianism has many flaws.

Excerpt:

> Harris is blazing a bold path with this assertion, but his case starts to fall apart almost as soon as he leaves the gate. First of all, Harris's "moral science" is less using science to determine values than it is using science as an evaluative mechanism for what Harris has already deemed to be moral. For instance, without any science in sight, Harris baldy asserts that "the only thing we can reasonably value" is "maximizing the well-being of conscious creatures." Far from using science to determine human values, Harris simply assumes as a first principle that his version of utilitarianism is correct. By making this assumption, Harris skips entirely past where his argument should be. Even those whose knowledge of philosophy is limited to high-school debate can list the many potential flaws with a utilitarian worldview, but Harris brushes them aside with a single sentence where he bothers with them at all. Why, precisely, should individuals value the good of the collective whole or of future generations over their own immediate personal wellbeing? It is never precisely made clear, although Harris boldy implies that everybody prefers a fair world to one that favors them. Would it be right for our species to be sacrificed towards the unfathomably immense happiness of some race of superbeings? Harris says the answer is "clearly" yes, and leaves it at that. Should average wellbeing be held in highest esteem, or aggregate wellbeing? This is mentioned and then goes unaddressed.

And you can read more about the flaws of utilitarianism in this excellent article by J.P. Moreland.

Excerpt:

> **Several objections** show the inadequacy of utilitarianism as a normative moral theory. **First**, utilitarianism can be used to justify actions that are clearly immoral. Consider the case of a severely deformed fetus. The child is certain to live a brief, albeit painless life. He or she will make no contribution to society. Society, however, will bear great expense. Doctors and other caregivers will invest time, emotion, and effort in adding mere hours to the baby's life. The parents will know and love the child only long enough to be heartbroken at the inevitable loss. An abortion negates all those "utility" losses. There is no positive utility lost. Many of the same costs are involved in the care of the terminally ill elderly. They too may suffer no pain, but they may offer no benefit to society. In balancing positives and negatives, and excluding from the equation the objective sacredness of all human life, we arrive at morally repugnant decisions. Here deontological and virtue ethics steer us clear of what is easier to what is right.
>
> **Second**, in a similar way, utilitarianism denies the existence of supererogatory

> acts. These are acts of moral heroism that are not morally obligatory but are still praiseworthy. Examples would be giving 75 percent of your income to the poor or throwing yourself on a bomb to save a stranger. Consider the bomb example. You have two choices — throwing yourself on the bomb or not doing so. Each choice would have consequences and, according to utilitarianism, you are morally obligated to do one or the other depending on which option maximized utility. Thus, there is no room for acts that go beyond the call of morality.
>
> **Third**, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of human rights and human dignity. If enslaving a minority of people, say by a lottery, would produce the greatest good for the greatest number, or if conceiving children only to harvest their parts would do the same, then these could he justified in a utilitarian scheme. But enslavement and abortion violate individual rights and treat people as a means to an end, not as creatures with intrinsic dignity as human beings. If acts of abortion, active euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and so forth maximize utility, then they are morally obligatory for the utilitarian. But any moral system that makes abortion and suicide morally obligatory is surely flawed.
>
> **Finally**, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of motives and character. We should praise good motives and seek good character because such motives and character are intrinsically valuable. But utilitarianism implies that the only reason we should praise good motives instead of bad ones, or seek good character instead of bad character, is because such acts would maximize utility. But this has the cart before the horse. We should praise good motives and blame bad ones because they are good or bad, not because such acts of praising and blaming produce good consequences.

I expect that Craig will use some of Moreland's arguments on Thursday night.

Now a bit more of that book review.

According to Sam Harris, people are not free to make moral choices. This is because on atheism, human beings are just computers made out of meat, and everything they do is determined by their genetic programming and sensory inputs.

> Like many who hold an atheistic worldview, Harris does not accept the notion of free will. Rather, he accepts determinism, as is demonstrated by the following quotes:
>
> - "You seem to be an agent acting of your own free will. As we shall see, however, this point of view cannot be reconciled with what we know about the human brain."
> - "All of our behavior can be traced to biological events about which we have no conscious knowledge: this has always suggested that free will is an illusion."
> - "I, as the subject of my experience, cannot know what I will next think or do until a thought or intention arises; and thoughts and intentions are caused

> by physical events and mental stirrings of which I am not aware."[1]

How can machines be morally responsible?

Elsewhere, it should be noted that Harris claims to believe in objective moral values, but he thinks they are not discovered but created.

Excerpt:

> Yesterday, Harris posted an article in answer to some of his critics, titled Moral confusion in the name of "science". It turns out Harris has not come up with a theory about any particular objective moral truth. In answer to the question, "Who decides what is a successful life?" Harris proclaims, "The answer is: 'we do.'" In other words, Harris says we determine objective morality, but this is a contradiction, because objective morality, if it exists, is discovered–not created.

To me, Harris' view isn't objective morality – it's cultural relativism. Because "we" are deciding that human happiness is morally valuable as opposed to something else, doing good things that are good on some objective standard but that make us feel unhappy – like not killing our unborn children. What makes us happy is arbitrary and it varies by time and place – so really what "we" decide is good depends on who the we is, and when the we is deciding. But there isn't anything really right or wrong out there. In some places and times slavery made the majority of people happy, and on Harris' view, that was just fine for that group because they had the right brain states. Maybe I am misunderstanding his argument.

I should also point out that Harris is a political liberal, so he would presumably put abortion in the "good" category because it leads to happy feelings for the grown-ups.

Now let's look at Craig's views.

William Lane Craig

You should either read Craig's paper on the moral argument OR watch a lecture he recently delivered at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Here's part 1:

The full playlist is here.

If you want to read a couple of debates that feature the moral argument, you can read the William Lane Craig vs Kai Nielsen debate and the William Lane Craig vs. Richard Taylor debate.

If you want to see the moral argument played out in a couple of debates, you could watch the William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz debate on Youtube. Yes, that's the same Paul Kurtz who wrote the "Humanist Manifesto". Or you could watch the more recent William Lane Craig vs. Louise Anthony debate on Youtube, if you've already seen the Kurtz debate.

Here are some recent comments by Craig on Sam Harris' theory on scientific foundations for morality.

And here are a couple of video lectures on Sam Harris by philosopher Glenn Peoples.

And a post on Harris' argument by Christopher Copan Scott at the Student Apologetics Alliance.

Extra credit

Brian Auten maintains the William Lane Craig Audio Debate Feed here, in case you get through all of these and would like to see how well Bill Craig performs against other famous challengers, like Marcus Borg, Lewis Wolpert, Arif Ahmed, Bart Ehman, John Shelby Spong, Gerd Ludemann, John Dominic Crossan, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, etc.

You guys may also be interested in my snarky, humorous summary of Lawrence Krauss' speeches in his debate with Craig, and in the preview post which featured resources for understanding Craig's kalam argument, the fine-tuning argument and the moral argument.

Adult stem cells used to grow a new heart

April 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News. (H/T Letitia)

Excerpt:

> Researchers at the University of Minnesota used adult stem cells to create a living human heart that they hope will revolutionize transplants.
>
> The breakthrough, said lead researcher Dr. Doris Taylor, could ultimately mean that "donated" hearts are no longer used in transplant operations, circumventing the ethical problems involved in organ donation and obviating the need for drugs to combat immune system rejection.
>
> Dr. Taylor, director of the university's Center for Cardiovascular Repair, is one of the world's leaders in heart organ repair and regeneration and has said it is her goal to create a living heart that can be transplanted into a patient, entirely out of stem cells.
>
> She presented her team's findings at the American College of Cardiology's annual conference in New Orleans.
>
> "The hearts are growing, and we hope they will show signs of beating within the next weeks," she told the Daily Mail. "There are many hurdles to overcome to generate a fully functioning heart, but my prediction is that it may one day be possible to grow entire organs for transplant."
>
> The breakthrough is a follow-up on work Dr. Taylor completed in 2008 in which her team used stem cells to rebuild the hearts of rats. They removed all the muscle cells in a rat heart, leaving just a "scaffold" of other tissues such as blood vessels and valves. This scaffold was then repopulated with stem cells, which took their cues from the scaffold tissue to regenerate healthy, functioning heart muscle.

Another scientific breakthrough for ethical adult stem cells.

Related posts

- CBS News discovers that adult stem cells produce more treatments
- Adult stem cells used to restore sight to patients blinded by chemical burns
- British boy becomes first in the world to have stem cell transplant
- ABC News reports on how adult stem cells produce innovative cures today
- Round up of articles on adult stem-cell research from FRC
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama's plan to fund ESCR

- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

I can’t believe my best friend is a Republican

April 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is from the ultra-left-wing Salon.com. (H/T Mary)

Basically, it’s written by a crazy left-wing liberal Democrat woman, and she explains what she thinks about her conservative Republican friend, and why. I think that conservatives (and Christians) can learn a lot from this article. Aside from the obvious point about how conservatives should make friends with liberals, here are four points I want to emphasize. Point one: liberals respect study, intelligence and academic credentials. Point two: Liberals remember when conservatives treat them nicely. Point three: liberals think that you don’t believe what you say you believe unless they see you professing what you believe openly and confidently in front of liberals. Point four: talking to liberals intelligently and explaining why you believe what you believe with the authority of *public square knowledge* creates tolerance and respect for conservative ideas.

Point one:

> In the beginning, it didn’t matter. We were more concerned with our own mutual war on body fat. And we soon found on the periphery of weight loss the other things we had in common: a love of books and science, a hatred of hysterics.
>
> […]She believes what she’s telling me, and she’s studied the issues. That might be what is so difficult: She has the same education as I have, and yet she has made different decisions, decisions that are so counter to what I believe. Decisions I find abhorrent.
>
> […]Janet’s willingness to associate with so many liberal friends — though I know she seeks refuge in chat rooms and magazines that share her beliefs — makes her a better and more interesting person. She has her beliefs challenged constantly. She is more well-read and educated in her politics than most of the liberals I know. Too many liberals I know are lazy, they have a belief system that consists of making fun of Glenn Beck and watching “The Daily Show.”

Point two:

> Then I remember the things that don’t get discussed in our debates — how she held my hand through a recent surgical procedure, rubbing it and distracting me the way a mother would, how she calms my fears about parenting, how she has been a family to me in a town where I have none. How that right-wing, gun-loving, flag-wearing, union-busting Republican still thinks, after all this time, and with so much information to the contrary, that I can lose and keep off weight.

Point three:

> Her daughters’ names are Liberty, Honor and Victory, the latter named at the time we invaded Iraq. (Her son’s name, inexplicably, is Bernard.) She owns a bust

> of Ronald Reagan and cried when he died, proving that she, perhaps alone with Nancy, had remembered that he was still alive. There is a bumper sticker on her very, very large SUV that says “REPEAL,” and I believe it refers to the healthcare bill.

Point four:

> …I think having a Republican friend is making me a better liberal. We need friends who differ from us. It’s easy to watch Republican extremism and think, “Wow, they’re crazy.” But when someone is sitting face to face with us, when someone we admire and respect is telling us they believe differently, it is at this fine point that we find nuance, and we begin to understand exactly how we got to this point in history. We lose something critical when we surround ourselves with people who agree with us all the time. We lose out on the wisdom of seeing the other side.

I recommend you read the whole thing. It’s really encouraging to hear the liberal valuing the differences of her conservative friend, and recognizing how having sincere, intelligent people on the other side makes her more articulate and informed about the liberal views that she believes.

And when I tell you all to emphasize raising children who will be intelligent, effective and influential, this is why. Leftists respect intelligence and conviction. The reason why they try to suppress us is because they think we are stupid, that we don’t really have reasons for what we believe – but just inherited it from our parents. It’s up to us to study these issues and debate with skill when the opportunity arises.

Was Mahatma Gandhi really a good person?

April 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Thinking Matters New Zealand)

Excerpt:

- Although credited with leading India to independence from Britain, Gandhi actually undermined this effort. Between 1900 and 1922, he suspended his civil disobedience at least three times, even though more than 15,000 supporters were in jail for the cause. (When Britain finally did withdraw from India, it was largely motivated by their anti-imperialist Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, and the fact that Britain was nearly bankrupt from the war.)
- Gandhi was dangerously politically incompetent. He advised the Jews to adopt nonviolence toward the Nazis, and wrote a letter to Hitler starting with the words "My friend". He also advised the Jews of Palestine to "rely on the goodwill of the Arabs". Fortunately for their existence, the Jews ignored him.
- As well as calling Hitler his friend, Gandhi and Mussolini got on well when they met in December 1931. Gandhi praised Mussolini's "service to the poor, his opposition to super-urbanization, his efforts to bring about a coordination between Capital and -Labour, his passionate love for his people."
- Gandhi was outstandingly racist, describing "the raw Kaffir" as someone "whose occupation is hunting and whose sole ambition is to collect a number of cattle to buy a wife, and then pass his life in indolence and nakedness," and saying of white Afrikaaners, "We believe as much in the purity of races as we think they do."
- He was also a hypocrite on many levels. He prevented his son marrying a Muslim despite publicly promoting Muslim-Hindu unity. He denounced lawyers, railways and parliamentary politics, yet he was a professional lawyer who constantly used railways to get to meetings to argue that India deserved its own parliament. And although he is known for his hunger strikes, his official position was that these were "the worst form of coercion, which militates against the fundamental principles of non-violence" (in which he believed).
- His views on nakedness and sexual chastity were also belied by his depraved behavior: when he was in his 70s he encouraged his 17-year-old great-niece, Manu, to be naked during her "nightly cuddles" with him. After sacking several long-standing and loyal members of his 100-strong personal entourage who might disapprove of this part of his 'spiritual quest', he began sleeping naked with Manu and other young women also.
- Despite being thought of as a peaceful man, he was vicious and callous. "There will be no tears but only joy if tomorrow I get the news that all three of you were killed," he once told some of his workers. To a Hindu he once said, "I do not mind if each and every one of the 500 families in your area is done to death." And he forced Manu, his niece (remember the "nightly cuddles"), to walk through a jungle known

for harboring rapists—just so she could retrieve a pumice stone he liked to use on his feet. When she returned in tears, he “cackled” with laughter and said: “If some ruffian had carried you off and you had met your death courageously, my heart would have danced with joy.”
- In 1908 he left his wife for a German man named Hermann Kallenbach. “Your portrait (the only one) stands on my mantelpiece in my bedroom,” he wrote to Kallenbach. “The mantelpiece is opposite to the bed.” Gandhi nicknamed himself “Upper House” and Kallenbach “Lower House.” The two pledged “more love, and yet more love—such love as they hope the world has not yet seen.”

People ask about what will happen to the good people who never hear of Jesus, but who among us is really good? We all need a Savior to be reconciled with God. None of us is morally perfect.

More about Gandhi from ABC News. Don’t believe everything you see in the movies.

Audio, video and summary of the William Lane Craig vs. Sam Harris debate

April 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten has posted the audio of the William Lane Craig vs Sam Harris debate here. And the video of the William Lane Craig vs Sam Harris debate is posted on Youtube. My preview provides background information and lectures to help you to understand the arguments. Here is a more serious, less snarky review of the debate, which doesn't mention the Monkey God or the Lord of the Rings. But read mine first!

(By the way, you may also be interested in my snarky, humorous summary of Lawrence Krauss' speeches in his debate with Craig, in the preview post which featured resources for understanding Craig's kalam argument, the fine-tuning argument and the moral argument, and in my snarky summary of Christopher Hitchens' case against God)

SUMMARY OF THE DEBATE

This summary is not AS SNARKY as the Lawrence Krauss summary or the Christopher Hitchens summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

Introduction:

- Harris and Craig agree on objective morality
- What is the foundation of morality?
- What makes certain actions right or wrong?

Two claims

1. if God exists, then we have a sound foundation for objective moral values and duties
2. if God does not exist, then we do not have a sound foundation for objective moral values and duties

1) Theism grounds morality

Objective moral values

Theism provides sound foundation for objective moral values
– objective moral values are grounded in God
– God is the locus and paradigm of moral value
– God is, by nature, the standard for what is right and wrong

Objective moral duties

Theism provides a sound foundation for objective moral duties
– God's nature is expressed as commands for us
– God's commands for us are not arbitrary
– they must be consistent with his own nature

– and they reflect his moral character
– the essence of morality in theism is to love God and also to love your neighbor

2) Atheism does not ground morality

Objective moral values

What is the basis for objective moral values on atheism?
– on atheism, human beings are accidental products of evolution
– on atheism, there is no reason to believe that human well-being is any more important than the well-being of any other animal
– Harris denies that the objective moral value is from Platonic forms
– Harris wants to ground moral values in nature
– but nature is morally neutral
– the "morality" of humans is just a set of evolved customs that help them to survive and reproduce
– this morality is just a set of conventions, it doesn't refer to anything that has an objective existence
– quotes Michael Ruse: "morality is just an aid to survival, and any deeper meaning is illusory"
– if we were to rewind evolution and start it again, another set of conventions might have evolved
– to say that morality is about human well-being is to commit "speciesism"
– quotes Richard Dawkins: "there is no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pointless indifference"

What does Harris say:
– Harris redefines the word "good" to mean the well-being of humans
– Harris "solves" the problem of moral value by just asserting that HUMAN well-being is the good
– Harris isn't talking about what is good and evil
– Harris only talks about what is conducive to human "flourishing"

Objective moral duties

What is the basis of objective moral duties on atheism?
– first, natural science tells us only what is, not what ought to be
– quotes Jerry Fodor: "science cannot tell us that we have a moral obligation to take actions to increase human flourishing"
– on the naturalistic worldview, humans are animals – and there are no OBJECTIVE moral duties
– where do moral obligations come from on atheism?
– they are just conventions that are ingrained into us by social evolution
– as human societies evolve, certain actions are unfashionable
– people who act "immorally" against their society's conventions are just being unfashionable
– bad actions like rape and murder happen all the time in the animal kingdom

– second, Harris believes that there is no free will – all human actions are causally determined
– if there is no free will, then there is no moral responsibility
– no one is responsible for the things they do, on atheism
– on atheism, humans have no control over the actions they take, and cannot make moral choices, or be morally responsible

Conclusion:
– Harris and I mostly agree on practical ethics, but only theists have a foundation for objective moral values and duties

Dr. Harris' opening speech:

God is not needed to ground moral values and moral duties

- Good means maximizing human well-being for the largest number of people
- Religion is not necessary for a "universal" morality
- Religion is a bad foundation for "universal" morality

Facts and values:

- Moral values are the products of human evolution
- E.g. – Sexual jealousy is the result of biological evolution
- And then these ideas of right and wrong are enshrined in cultural institutions like marriage
- Religious people insert God in to explain values, when evolution is the real explanation

Moral disagreements:

- I personal don't agree with the ethics of the God of Abraham
- I have no basis for an objective moral standard, but the God of Abraham fails to meet my personal preferences
- Dr. Craig lies when he quotes me, half his quotes are of other people I quoted, not me
- But I'm not going to say which quote he lied about

Goodness is what makes you feel happy:

- Questions of right and wrong depend upon brains
- Brains are natural entities
- Science can measure well-being in brain states
- States of affairs in which the majority of brains have high well-being

I'm a good person because I don't like the Taliban:

- The Taliban is bad because the majority of their brains don't have high well-being

- I think throwing battery acid in women's faces is bad
- The Taliban thinks that throwing battery acid in women's faces is good
- What determines right and wrong is brain states of well-being

Insults against religion = Dr. Craig:

- religion / Dr. Craig doesn't value evidence
- religion / Dr. Craig doesn't value logic
- religion / Dr. Craig doesn't value intellectual honesty

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

1) Theism is a good foundation for moral values and duties

Harris says:
– Craig thinks that if God doesn't exist, then good and evil would have no meaning

Craig says:
– But Craig says that he is not saying that God is required for moral semantics
– He is addressing the question of the ontological grounding

Harris says:
– The God of the Bible is mean

Craig says:
– divine command theory doesn't require that the Bible be the set of commands
– in any case, the old testament passages can be defended in Paul Copan's book

Harris says:
– Religion isn't needed for universal morality

Craig says:
– the issue isn't universality, because the Nazis could have won, and put in a universal morality
– the issue is if they had won, would there be any standard to condemn them

Harris says:
– Good and evil are related to the number of brain states of well-being

Craig says:
– Harris uses good and evil in non-moral ways
– Harris isn't talking about moral good and moral evil
– Harris is talking about pleasure and misery
– Harris is equating moral good and moral evil with feelings of pleasure and feelings of misery
– Harris claims that the property of being good is identical with human flourishing
– it is possible that the continuum of human well-being is not identical with the moral landscape
– in order for them to be identical, there cannot be this possibility or it fails the law of identity
– you could have psychopaths with happy brain states that represent a peak in the moral

landscape

Harris says:
– If we have a moral duty to do anything, we have a duty to avoid feeling miserable”

Craig:
– moral obligations arise when there is an authority who can issue binding commands
– on atheism, there is no authority who can issue binding commands
– without free will, morality makes no sense since there is no free will
– no free will means no moral duties, and no moral responsibilities

Dr. Harris’ first rebuttal:

I don’t like Hell and I don’t like suffering and I don’t like Christians:

- There is no evidence that Hell exists
- Think of the parents of the children of people who die in tsunamis
- If God allows people to suffer, then he doesn’t exist, because God’s job is to make us not suffer
- God can’t exist, because some people are born in the wrong culture, and never hear about Jesus
- Some people pray to the Monkey God, why don’t they go to heaven?
- What about the people in the Lord of the Rings, are they going to Hell?
- What about people who repent just before being executed, are they going to heaven?
- God is cruel and unjust because he lets innocent people suffer
- God is worse than a psychopath
- People who believe in God are evil
- People who believe in God are narcissists
- God commanded stuff that I don’t like, so he’s evil
- Suppose God were evil – then people would have to do evil things
- Religious people think that saying Latin phrases turn pancakes into the body of Elvis Presley
- The evidence for God is actually not very good, if you avoid read any Christian scholars
- Christianity is a cult of human sacrifice
- The people who wrote the Bible were really stupid
- Christians are psychopaths

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

Sam Harris cannot make any judgments about moral values and moral duties on atheism
On atheism, there is no foundation for making objective moral judgments

Harris didn’t respond to anything Craig said

Harris says that Christians only believe in God to avoid Hell

Red herrings:

Craig says that people who become Christians do it because God is the good
Christians don't pursue a relationship with God for fire insurance

The problem of evil
– not relevant to the debate topic

The problem of the unevangelized
– not relevant to the debate topic

Evil actually proves that God exists
– if evil exists, then there is an objective moral standard
– if there is an objective moral standard, then God exists

Harris has no foundation for saying that Christian beliefs are morally bad
Harris has no basis for making moral judgments

Harris' remark that theists are psychopathic
– Harris' remark is as stupid as it is insulting

Harris says that the Old Testament promoted
– first, there was no slavery in the Old Testament it was indentured servitude
– second, that's not relevant to the debate topic

Harris mentions the Taliban
– but the response to the Taliban is not to say that God doesn't exist
– the response to the Taliban is to say that they have the wrong God
– the real God never commanded them to do those things

Dr. Harris' second rebuttal:

I'm a scientist, Craig is stupid, I've meditated with wise yogis and lamas, I don't like the Taliban:

- When I make a scientific case for morality, I didn't really mean that it was scientific
- You just have to assume that misery is morally evil, and happiness is morally good, even if that can't be proved scientifically
- I'm a scientist
- Science is great
- Dr. Craig is stupid
- Dr. Craig is not a scientist
- Science is better than religion
- You can ground an objective standard of morality and objective moral duties and moral responsibility on arbitrary brain states of accidentally evolved biologically determined monkeys
- Dr. Craig's question for me about my unproven assumptions is a stupid question
- I prayed to the Monkey God in a cave and he told me about objective morality
- I have spent a lot of time studying meditation with wise yogis and lamas
- I consider some people to be spiritual Jesus
- I can imagine that Jesus was very spiritual and charismatic
- We don't have to use logic and reason to debate about morality, we can meditate on

the Monkey God
- i don’t like the Taliban

Dr. Craig’s third rebuttal:

Harris didn’t reply to anything I said

Harris admitted that psychopaths can occupy the peaks of the moral landscape
So on Harris’ view, you can commit unspeakable acts of cruelty and still have a brain state with well-being

Dr. Harris’ third rebuttal:

Dr. Craig is a Muslim, Dr. Craig is the Taliban, Dr. Craig is a Muslim Taliban Muslim Jihadi:

- How many of you in the audience are Muslims
- Muslims think that non-Muslims are going to Hell
- Christianity and Islam are identical
- Dr. Craig is a Muslim!
- Dr. Craig is the Taliban!
- Dr. Craig wants to jihad me!

Thomas Sowell explains how liberal pacifism causes wars

April 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell

I just finished reading Thomas Sowell's "Intellectuals and Society" and I really recommend it. I mean – this is the book of the year from 2010. If you have no interest at all in economics and politics, you should definitely buy this book and read it. If you have never read anything about conservative economics and policy, then this is the place to start. It covers a little bit of economics, a little bit of jurisprudence, a little bit of education, a little bit of foreign policy… you name it – it's in there. And in plain English. Thomas Sowell is my favorite economist, and the economist favored most by all conservatives. I own about a DOZEN of his books. He's that good.

I wanted to talk to you about what was in chapter 7 "Intellectuals and War" and chapter 8 "Intellectuals and War: Repeating History". So I searched and searched and found a summary of Sowell's arguments in those chapters.

Here's an article from Townhall.

Excerpt:

> On the international scene, trying to assuage aggressors' feelings and look at the world from their point of view has had an even more catastrophic track record. A typical sample of this kind of thinking can be found in a speech to the British Parliament by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in 1938: "It has always seemed to me that in dealing with foreign countries we do not give ourselves a chance of success unless we try to understand their mentality, which is not always the same as our own, and it really is astonishing to contemplate how the identically same facts are regarded from two different angles."
>
> Like our former ambassador from the Carter era, Chamberlain sought to "remove the causes of strife or war." He wanted "a general settlement of the grievances of the world without war." In other words, the British prime minister approached Hitler with the attitude of someone negotiating a labor contract, where each side

> gives a little and everything gets worked out in the end. What Chamberlain did not understand was that all his concessions simply led to new demands from Hitler — and contempt for him by Hitler.
>
> What Winston Churchill understood at the time, and Chamberlain did not, was that Hitler was driven by what Churchill called “currents of hatred so intense as to sear the souls of those who swim upon them.” That was also what drove the men who drove the planes into the World Trade Center.
>
> Pacifists of the 20th century had a lot of blood on their hands for weakening the Western democracies in the face of rising belligerence and military might in aggressor nations like Nazi Germany and imperial Japan. In Britain during the 1930s, Labor Party members of Parliament voted repeatedly against military spending, while Hitler built up the most powerful military machine in Europe. Students at leading British universities signed pledges to refuse to fight in the event of war.
>
> All of this encouraged the Nazis and the Japanese toward war against countries that they knew had greater military potential than their own. Military potential only counts when there is the will to develop it and use it, and the fortitude to continue with a bloody war when it comes. This is what they did not believe the West had. And it was Western pacifists who led them to that belief.
>
> Then as now, pacifism was a “statement” about one’s ideals that paid little attention to actual consequences. At a Labor Party rally where Britain was being urged to disarm “as an example to others,” economist Roy Harrod asked one of the pacifists: “You think our example will cause Hitler and Mussolini to disarm?”
>
> The reply was: “Oh, Roy, have you lost all your idealism?” In other words, the issue was about making a “statement” — that is, posturing on the edge of a volcano, with World War II threatening to erupt at any time. When disarmament advocate George Bernard Shaw was asked what Britons should do if the Nazis crossed the channel into Britain, the playwright replied, “Welcome them as tourists.”

That was explained even more in the book with more examples from history.

Most people think that Thomas Sowell is a libertarian, but he isn’t a full libertarian. He just reports the evidence. If the evidence is pro-war, then he’s pro-war. Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher called this view “peace through strength”. There is only one reason why evil people do not attack – because they think that good people have the firepower tomake them pay dearly for their aggression, and – and this is very important – the will to use it. In the book, Sowell explains how the the left responded to the horror of world war one by undermining the will of the people to fight. They minimized patriotism and heroism, and emphasized charges of “imperialism”, moral equivalence, and lots of sob stories about victims.

Here’s an article that explains it more.

Excerpt:

> In France, after the First World War, the teachers' unions launched a systematic purge of textbooks, in order to promote internationalism and pacifism.
>
> Books that depicted the courage and self-sacrifice of soldiers who had defended France against the German invaders were called "bellicose" books to be banished from the schools.
>
> Textbook publishers caved in to the power of the teachers' unions, rather than lose a large market for their books. History books were sharply revised to conform to internationalism and pacifism.
>
> The once epic story of the French soldiers' heroic defense against the German invaders at Verdun, despite the massive casualties suffered by the French, was now transformed into a story of horrible suffering by all soldiers at Verdun— French and German alike.
>
> In short, soldiers once depicted as national heroes were now depicted as victims— and just like victims in other nations' armies.
>
> […]France, where pacifism and internationalism were strongest, became a classic example of how much it can matter.
>
> During the First World War, France fought on against the German invaders for four long years, despite having more of its soldiers killed than all the American soldiers killed in all the wars in the history of the United States, put together.
>
> But during the Second World War, France collapsed after just six weeks of fighting and surrendered to Nazi Germany.
>
> At the bitter moment of defeat the head of the French teachers' union was told, "You are partially responsible for the defeat."
>
> Charles de Gaulle, Francois Mauriac, and other Frenchmen blamed a lack of national will or general moral decay, for the sudden and humiliating collapse of France in 1940.
>
> At the outset of the invasion, both German and French generals assessed French military forces as more likely to gain victory, and virtually no one expected France to collapse like a house of cards — except Adolf Hitler, who had studied French society instead of French military forces.
>
> Did patriotism matter? It mattered more than superior French tanks and planes.

Everybody wants peace. Everyone – on both sides of the issue. The problem is that one side – the leftists – call their opponents names like "imperialist" and talk "disarmament" and "dialog" as if they have have the answer to peace. *That doesn't work and it has never worked*. Pacifism only "works" in the classroom, where naive children are forced to parrot the opinions of their secular leftist teachers who have no expertise in war or history. What has actually worked in history is peace through strength. Strength deters wars, strength deters violence. Strength – and the will to use that strength to restrain

evil.

Read this to learn more about the doctrine of peace through strength, and read this to compare terrorist attacks under Bush and under Obama.

A good book to read on this topic is Frank Gaffney's "War Footing".

Two reasons why Christians should not support public schools

April 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From two stories. Here's the first from the Alliance Defense Fund.

Excerpt:

> Alliance Defense Fund attorneys filed a lawsuit Thursday on behalf of a student-led pro-life club against Independent School District #885 for denying the club, at St. Michael-Albertville High School, official status because it allegedly "does not support the student body as a whole." Despite that claim, school officials have recognized more than a dozen other non-curricular clubs, including the Environmental and Animé clubs, providing them with benefits and access currently denied to the pro-life student group, known as the All Life Is Valuable (ALIV) Club.
>
> […]The principal of St. Michael-Albertville High School denied equal treatment to the ALIV Club and the local chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes even though District Policy 801 requires the district to grant equal access to student clubs wishing to meet for "religious, political, or philosophical reasons during non-instructional time."
>
> The ALIV Club addresses a variety of issues that students face, including those related to faith and religion, life, abortion, abstinence, personal responsibility, leadership, community service, peer pressure, promoting respect and dignity for all others, and examining governmental and political issues. Neither the ALIV Club nor FCA, however, receive any of the benefits enjoyed by more than a dozen other recognized non-curricular student clubs. Officially recognized clubs, such as the Diversity Club, Environmental Club, Animé Club, and Book Club are able to meet during a special club period, make announcements, and engage in fundraising activities, among other benefits.

When Democrats complain about needing more money for public schools, they want to take your money and use it against your children. They want to pound conservative Christian views out of your children, using your money, and replace those views with their secular leftist views.

Here's the second story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The controversial Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association is building a $3 million war chest on the backs of all its member to defeat the province's Progressive Conservative Party in the upcoming fall election.
>
> The 45,000-strong union, whose leadership has become infamous for advancing

> causes opposed to Catholic teaching, voted at its annual general meeting in Toronto last month to force every member to pay an extra $60 towards its political campaign. The fee takes effect July 1st.
>
> Teachers have refused to comment publicly on the powerful union's activities out of fear of retaliation. But one teacher told LifeSiteNews, under condition of anonymity, that he's disappointed they're taking $60 "for a campaign that I don't really agree with in the first place."
>
> "I've got to vote in conscience always. If I voted Liberal, it wouldn't be in conscience," he said. "It comes down to what's the greater good here."
>
> The campaign aims to "protect the gains" made in education since Dalton McGuinty's Liberals took office eight years ago, OECTA union president James Ryan wrote in a March 23rd letter to union members. He said delegates left the AGM "acutely aware of how the election of a Conservative government under Tim Hudak would threaten the common good, particularly education."
>
> The union has long used portions of the mandatory dues, which already can amount to nearly $1,000 per year, to fund a range of activities violating Catholic teaching. In December, LifeSiteNews revealed that OECTA provided funding to Egale, a leading homosexual lobby group, to promote gay-straight alliances in Catholic schools – in opposition to the Ontario bishops.
>
> […]Vouchers and charter schools, in particular, are initiatives aimed at promoting parental choice in education as an alternative to current teachers' union dominated public education monopolies. There is also a growing trend in North America to question the automatic pay scales based on seniority and degrees that public system teachers receive, rather than on regularly assessed personal skills or merit.According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Studies, a conservative think-tank, OECTA's partisan fee shows the need for reform of Ontario's labour laws. "Regardless of what political party stands to gain, forcing workers to support partisan political activity of any kind is a fundamental violation of their individual rights and profoundly undemocratic," said president Joseph Ben-Ami.
>
> "Giving unions the power to force workers to join, or to pay dues even if they aren't forced to join, is a recipe for abuse and corruption," he added. "The law needs to recognize and respond to this."

You can't even be a teacher in Canada without joining a union. The unions use union dues to elect Liberal (socialist) and NDP (communist) candidates. Christians should always vote for right-to-work laws to deny power and money to the public schools. Public schools don't represent your values. They represent *their* values. With *your* money.

Friday night fun: Mike Licona videos about the resurrection of Jesus

April 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, *I* think it's fun, and this is how I am spending my Friday night!

The 5 videos are here on the NAMB 4Truth.net web site. (H/T Mike Licona)

You can download the videos from that page, and there is even a PDF.

There are 5 videos.

- The first video is an introduction that highlights the importance of the resurrection in Christian belief.
- The second video talks about how historians piece together what happened in the past using evidence.
- The third video talks about "historical bedrock" – the parts of a historical document are accepted by most scholars.
- The fourth video talks about how to answer objections from Internet web sites.
- The fifth video talks about how to answer objections from scholars.

(I think they switched the order of the fourth and fifth debates, but I am going off of the PDF summary)

Mike has debated Richard Carrier and Bart Ehrman, so what you are getting here is a Christian historian's perspective on how to debate the resurrection. If you want to see something you can really use in a hostile encounter, then you need to prepare yourself with Mike Licona's material.

Here is the video of the debate between Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman.

Mike Licona also reviewed Bart Ehrman's latest book "Forged".

What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?

April 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a helpful post from Neil Simpson at Eternity Matters.

Excerpt:

> Facts about Planned Parenthood, the organization at the center of the potential government shutdown:
>
> 1. They crush and dismember innocent human beings for a living. That is their primary revenue source. Abortion is not health care.
>
> 2. They have been caught countless times, both on audio and on video, hiding statutory rape,. That alone should result in them being not only being de-funded but put out of business. Businesses who commit serial felonies don't get to point to other (alleged) good things they do to avoid responsibility.
>
> 3. They have been caught many times hiding sex trafficking, which includes victims of human trafficking.
>
> 4. Their CEO falsely claimed that Planned Parenthood provides mammograms and that a loss of Federal funding would end these. How many CEOs don't know what services their organization provides? Was this incompetence or a deliberate lie about a highly emotional, most-favored-disease issue to sustain public funding for her organization? Why hasn't she or the mainstream media highlighted and corrected this error?

And there's more in his list that you should know.

So that's what they do. Now why do Democrats want to give them taxpayer money?

From the Center for Responsive Politics.

Excerpt:

> In 2010, Planned Parenthood and a California affiliate together spent more than $700,000 on federal lobbying efforts, a Center for Responsive Politics analysis of federal lobbying records finds. By comparison, all other organizations that primarily advocate for abortion rights collectively spent $247,280 on federal lobbying efforts during the same period, according to the Center's research.
>
> Planned Parenthood's political influence efforts hardly stop at lobbying.
>
> The organization's political action committee, for example, donated more than $148,000 to federal candidates — almost all Democrats — during the 2010 election cycle. The PAC spent more than $443,000 overall.
>
> Planned Parenthood also recorded $905,796 in independent expenditures during the 2010 cycle — money spent in support of, or in opposition to, federal political

> candidates, largely through advertisements. The top beneficiaries of this money were Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.).

It's about the money. Democrats give Planned Parenthood your money, and then Planned Parenthood kills babies with the money, and they make a profit by killing, and then they take some of the profits from their killing, and they give it back to Democrats who approved their subsidies. And taxpayers, including pro-life taxpayers, pay for this.

Related posts

- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- House Republicans win vote to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Rep. Mike Pence drafts amendment to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

I recommend the movie Battle: Los Angeles to my readers

April 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM recommended this movie to me and I saw it and it was AWESOME.

Here's a review.

Excerpt:

> "Battle: Los Angeles" takes a big "what would happen if" premise – in this case, a massive alien invasion – and then fulfills that premise by taking it seriously. Not self-seriously. The movie is lots of fun, but it stays true to the terms it establishes, telling the story through the eyes of one Marine platoon assigned to rescue civilians in Santa Monica.
>
> […]Essential to the movie's success is Aaron Eckhart, who plays a Marine staff sergeant as though he were in a World War II movie: no camping it up, no comedy, no winking at the audience, no smiling. He's just a tough guy, with lots of emotional scars, who is very good at his job. Eckhart's commitment to the movie's reality, which is as fierce as the sergeant's commitment to his men, takes what otherwise might merely have been outlandish and makes it believable, and frightening.
>
> […]Advisory: The aliens are ugly, and there are a lot of dead bodies. But these have to be the politest, cleanest-talking Marines ever. They don't even curse at the aliens. They want to take back Los Angeles while avoiding an R rating.

The movie features a very positive portrayal of military professionals, especially of the U.S. Marines – the Wintery Knight's *favorite* military branch.

I am not saying that Battle: Los Angeles is a courting movie, I am saying that this is a FUN movie, and recommended for children ages 16 and up. The PG-13 rating is a little low, because there is some swearing and one F-word. But there is also a V-22 Osprey! Several of them, in fact!

When it comes to movies, I am a stickler for realism, especially with spy movies and war movies. The new James Bond movies are not spy movies, they are stupid movies. Danger Man and Secret Agent shows with Patrick McGoohan are real spy shows. Real war movies are movies like Gettysburg and We Were Soldiers. Battle: Los Angeles is science fiction, but the movie has a realistic scope, and there is no ridiculous video-game style running and gunning. The weapons and vehicles were realistic, although the tactics could use some work. (I saw little suppressive fire and flanking, for example).

The story is very plain and believable. Simple objective for the mission, easier to follow, and showcasing U.S. Marine initiative and ingenuity. If there is one thing that the Corps drums into their recruits, it's to accomplish the mission by any means necessary, and to take the initiative to act without orders if necessary. That's why the Corps makes new

Marines read books like “A Message to Garcia” and “Riflemann Dodd” – to drum into their heads that what superiors want from them is RESULTS, not questions. Find a way to achieve the objective. Think for yourself.

Just FYI, here’s my list of movies that I *do* use during courting:

- Rules of Engagement (Samuel L. Jackson)
- Bella
- Henry V (Kenneth Brannagh)
- The Lives of Others
- United 93
- Taken (Liam Neeson)
- Cinderella Man
- The Blind Side
- Cyrano de Bergerac (Gerard Depardieu)
- Amazing Grace (Ioan Gruffudd)
- Gettysburg
- We Were Soldiers
- Stand and Deliver
- Blackhawk Down
- The Pursuit of Happyness
- High Noon

If you don’t want to see a good heroic conservative action movie, watch one of these.

Biologist expresses doubts about the sufficiency of Darwinian mechanisms

April 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From pro-naturalism Discover Magazine. (H/T Uncommon Descent)

Excerpt:

> All scientists agree that evolution has occurred… The question is, i**s natural selection enough** to explain evolution? … This is the problem I have with neo-Darwinists: They teach that what is generating novelty is the accumulation of random mutations in DNA, in a direction set by natural selection… Natural selection **eliminates and maybe maintains, but it doesn't create**. …
>
> I was taught over and over again that the accumulation of random mutations led to evolutionary change — led to new species. I believed it **until I looked for evidence**. …
> There is **no gradualism in the fossil record**… 'Punctuated equilibrium' was invented to describe the discontinuity. …
> **The critics, including the creationist critics, are right about their criticism**. It's just that they've got nothing to offer but intelligent design or 'God did it.' They have no alternatives that are scientific. …
> The evolutionary biologists believe the evolutionary pattern is a tree. It's not. **The evolutionary pattern is a web**… [emphasis added].

(I took this extract verbatim from Jonathan's post in Uncommon Descent, with his emphasis)

Margulis is a naturalist who believes in a naturalistic chain of causation from particles to people. But she is honest about the sufficiency of Darwinian mechanisms to explain ALL of the history of life. Maybe Darwinism isn't the whole story. It's part of the story for sure (micro-evolution), and there may even be common descent to some degree. But is it the whole story? Why aren't we allowed to ask that question?

If all naturalists did was teach the evidence for and against evolution, instead of presenting as fact and brooking no scientific dissent, then I would not be so hostile to the public schools. So long as the public schools promote indoctrination instead of investigation, I will urge everyone I know to avoid them and to defund them as much as possible. The classroom is not the place for secular leftists to indoctrinate children in the religion of naturalism. They should teach what science and show, and allow discussion of alternative explanations, including the explanation of intelligent causation.

Profile of Canadian pro-life debater Jojo Ruba

April 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the article. (I linked to the printable version)

Excerpt:

> Before Jose "Jojo" Ruba spoke at St. Patrick's Church last night as part of the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform's Northern Ontario Truth Tour, he conceded he has a tough task ahead of him; making parallels between the civil rights movement and the abortion debate today would be tough for anyone.
>
> That's what Ruba, a graduate of Carleton University's Journalism and Masters of Political Science programs, has set out to do on the Sudbury stop of his tour of Northern Ontario with his talk Injustice Interrupted: From the Civil Rights Movement to The Modern Abortion Debate.
>
> Ruba, who's approaching his 10th year as a public speaker, debater and educator on pro-life issues, said his talk examines the legacy of the civil rights movement and the lessons that can be taken from the social reform movement as it relates to the pro-life movement.
>
> No stranger to controversy, Ruba said he knows it's tough to draw comparisons, but added that he wants to give people some ideas as to why he thinks comparisons between the civil rights movement and the modern abortion debate are justified.
>
> Ruba said his presentation focuses on an important question central to the argument : what are the unborn?
>
> "If unborn are human beings like us, just as the civil rights activists fought for equality rights of human beings who were different, but still human beings, we say the same thing about the pre-born child."
>
> Ruba said that's what he does as a "pro-lifer," and a challenge he presents to other pro-lifers.
>
> "If we truly believe there are 300 deaths every day of Canadians through legal abortion, how should we act? With gentleness and respect, of course, following the laws, but without compromise."
>
> Like those who fought for equal rights in the civil rights movement, Ruba is aware of those who would try to silence him.
>
> Ruba recalled a time when he was giving a lecture at St. Mary's University in Halifax when prochoice audience members shouted him down for 45 minutes.
>
> "At McGill University in Montreal, they shouted me down for two hours," Ruba said. "They started singing all 99 verses of 99 bottles of beer on the wall and also sang happy birthday for abortion."
>
> Ruba said that even in such a hostile environment, he was happy to stay

> afterward and answer questions.
>
> “In fact, one of the protesters who started off chanting as part of the protest group, after hearing a bit of what I’d had to say, said he’d wished he’d heard more of the presentation. Even when it happened in Halifax, more people showed up at the next university on the tour because of the controversy.”
>
> Ruba said it’s a person’s right to disagree with him, but argued the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform is “a good thing, a democratic right.”

Here’s another video featuring Jojo Ruba that I featured previously.

Stephen Harper's Conservatives unveil "Here for Canada" platform

April 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Stephen Harper's Conservative Party web site. (H/T Jeanie)

Excerpt:

> Today, Prime Minister Stephen Harper unveiled his "Here for Canada" Conservative policy platform. The platform provides Canadians with a prudent low-tax plan to protect and create jobs by completing our recovery from the global economic recession. "Here for Canada" commits to eliminating the deficit by the 2014-2015 fiscal year without cutting transfer payments to individuals or to the provinces. And it contains concrete measures to secure Canada's borders and keep our streets and neighbourhoods safe.
>
> […]The "Here for Canada" plan focuses on five key priorities:
>
> - **Creating jobs** through training, trade and low taxes.
> - **Supporting families** through our Family Tax Cut and more support for seniors and caregivers.
> - **Eliminating the deficit** by 2014-2015 by controlling spending and cutting waste.
> - **Making our streets safe** through new laws to protect children and the elderly.
> - **Standing on guard for Canada** by investing in the development of Canada's North, cracking down on human smuggling and strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces.
>
> Canada is emerging from the global recession as one of the world's top-performing advanced economies. Throughout the global crisis of the past two years, the world has looked to Canada as a model and an inspiration. Through the Economic Action Plan, Stephen Harper's Government is making the necessary investments to protect Canadians and create jobs now, while laying a strong foundation for long-term economic growth. Our low-tax plan is helping businesses create jobs. And we're reducing taxes on hard-working Canadian families, because we understand that household budgets are tight.

The Conservatives need to get over 40% support to get a majority, so they can enact their 5-point platform. The latest Canadian federal election poll has the Conservatives leading the socialist Liberals 41 to 31, while the communist NDP party trails at 15%.

This large map shows the voting breakdown by region from the 2008 election.

New study finds that fathers and marriage reduce drug use in children

April 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> Teen substance abuse is once again on the rise, according to a national study of adolescent drug and alcohol use released this week. The annual release of the Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS) showed an alarming increase in adolescent substance abuse since 2008.
>
> According to the study (PDF), teen illicit drug use and prescription drug abuse have significantly increased in the past three years. Marijuana use among adolescents increased 22 percent from 2008 to 2010, with nearly 40 percent of teens using the drug within the past year. Ecstasy use is also on the rise, increasing from 6 percent in 2008 to 10 percent in 2010. Likewise, 25 percent of teens admit they've taken medication not prescribed by their doctor, and one in five has used a behind-the-counter pain reliever without the direction of a doctor. This new data is especially worrisome, as it suggests that teen drug use is climbing again after a relative decline over the past decade.
>
> Unfortunately, adolescent substance abuse is not reserved to the halls of high schools or prom after-parties. The nationally projectable study found an increase in alcohol use among young teens and even pre-adolescents. Almost two in three teens who admit to drinking alcohol said they had consumed their first full drink at age 15. Shockingly, 25 percent of the same group said they had first imbibed at 12 years old or younger.
>
> […]Whether teens have regular contact with their parents, especially with their fathers, can have significant impact on illicit drug and alcohol use. For instance, a child growing up in a divorced family is four times more likely to try illicit drugs by the time he or she is 14 than the same child raised in an intact, married family. Children who live with both parents and have close relationships with their fathers are less likely to smoke, drink alcohol, or use marijuana regardless of many other socioeconomic factors.
>
> Religious practice also seems to have a positive effect on teens' engagement in risky behavior. Adolescents who express personal religious beliefs and whose families regularly practice their faith are at lower risk for substance abuse. Fewer than one in 10 teens from an intact, religious family report ever using hard drugs, while more than one in five adolescents from non-intact, non-religious homes have abused illicit substances.

(I removed the links from the excerpt, but every assertion they make is linked to

research)

I found this very interesting, especially since I was recently responding to a post that William Lane Craig posted on Facebook. Bill wanted to know why so many people seem to be incapable of considering both sides of a debate and judging who won the debate based on the arguments and evidence presented. This is relevant because in his two most recent debates, the atheists either presented no arguments or they did not attempt to refute his arguments or rebuttals. Bill's question made me think of all the other factors that cause people to be unable to consider the case for Christianity on the merits, in a debate situation.

I replied to Bill that there were social forces that were breaking down children's ability to consider both sides of questions so they could make their own decisions, instead of doing what their teachers and peers tell them to do, and this was especially bad as families break down and fathers are ejected from the home by women who chose to have sex with or marry men who are not qualified to be fathers, because they are not capable of being moral/spiritual leaders.

I wrote:

> To answer Bill's original question in the post, I think you have to point out what the public school system is doing to students. The public schools are not encouraging students to learn both sides of current issues so that they can debate them. They have a definite point of view that they are pushing, from the authority of the red pen.
>
> For example, do you think that most public school teachers give equal time to proponents of vouchers or other school choice alternatives? Heck no. They have to be in favor of bigger government and higher taxes – that's how they get paid. And you can see the same thing in debates about sexual ethics, moral relativism, moral equivalence, evolution, global warming, anti-capitalism, and so on.
>
> They have an agenda. And when you have an agenda, you don't present issues as having two sides that have to be judged on the merits. Instead, the public schools typically present one side with emotional stories or slogans, and the other side is derided with insults or made out to be a bogey-man. That's the reason why the atheistic students cannot assess who won the debate. They have been trained in the schools to think one side is correct without ever have to assess the other side.
>
> My favorite economist (Thomas Sowell) puts it well in this column: http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/226865/de-programming-students/thomas-sowell
>
> I think it's high time for Christian apologists to realize that it takes more than the kalam argument to defeat an atheist. You have to think of the dimension of family, and the schools, and even the laws and policies that incentivize certain behaviors that, one adopted into a lifestyle, make Christianity unpalatable

> because of its ethical demands.
>
> Consider the impact on having a FATHER in the home on religious belief: http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=14-01-026-f
>
> And further consider that fatherlessness is correlated with atheism: http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2008/vanhove_vitzreview_jan08.asp
>
> Now – the question to ask is – what policies promote having a father in the home. Well, no-fault divorce and welfare programs certainly do not promote having a father in the home, for example. So the reason why so many people cannot judge a debate may not be as simple as saying "Bill Craig is a bad debater". Bill Craig is an excellent debater. But if there are other circumstances at work due to bad policies that make children incapable of even considering the other side, then what can Bill Craig do? Well, Bill Craig could write about policy, I suppose, although we have other scholars for that. But we should all be thinking about it.

I've written before about how liberal women choose big government policies that will provide them with financial security regardless of who they choose to have sex with or marry. Liberal women like big government because it relieves of the responsibility to be prudent when choosing men. Tomorrow I am actually going to be explaining, with research, how liberal women actually resent the idea that they would have to conform to choice of sex partner/husband to any traditional male roles or to any courting rules. So long as liberal women continue to vote for big government and choose men based on superficialities like physical appearance, clothes, air of confidence and tone of voice, we are screwed as a society.

Men conform themselves to women's expectations. If the ability to be a protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader are not the criteria that women use to choose men, then men will change into what women want. Women are the deciders. Men adapt to women's expectations. That is why it is so important for women to put down the women's magazines and pick up the research showing the importance of fathers, and specifically, the importance of fathers who have rationally-grounded, well-evidenced KNOWLEDGE about moral and spiritual matters. So long as women view men who have knowledge as "too strict" and "no fun", children will be damaged.

Speaking of Facebook, if you want to be my friend on Facebook, my Facebook page is here and you can follow the blog here.

What’s the best way to combat the trend toward “village atheism”

April 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A village atheist is an atheist who is very convinced about his atheism but whose reasons for atheism are completely naive and superstitious, and who is completely unaware of the scholarly evidence for theism. Letitia wrote a post recently on her blog in which she expressed her concerns about the idea that the public may be trending towards village atheism, just because atheism is being presented as the most intelligent view in popular culture, and because Christians are not getting their scholarly arguments and evidences heard.

Excerpt:

> While reflecting on his debate with Sam Harris and the audience questions that came after, Dr. William Lane Craig wrote the following about the makeup of the audience that night:
>
> > I wonder is something culturally significant is going on here. Several years ago, I asked the Warden at Tyndale House in Cambridge why it is that British society is so secular when Britain has such a rich legacy of great Christian scholars. He replied, “Oh, Christianity is not underrepresented among the intelligentsia. It’s the working classes which are so secular.” He explained that these folks are never exposed to Christian scholarship because of their lack of education. As a result there is a sort of pervasive, uninformed, village atheism among them. I wonder if something like this could be happening in the States. I was surprised to see the number of blue collar folks from the community buying Harris’ book and thanking him for all he has done. They didn’t seem to have any inkling that his views had just been systematically exposed as logically incoherent. The intelligentsia have almost universally panned Harris’ recent book (read the reviews!). Yet it is lapped up in popular culture. Wouldn’t it be amazing if unbelief became the possession mainly of the uneducated?
>
> This comment causes my heart to sink. Personally, I like to think that I am fairly observant of the religious cultural shifts here in the U.S. and their bearing on what Christians should do to respond to them. However, I have to admit that Dr. Craig’s note above catches me a little off guard, even alarming to a degree as I realize what his observation, if truly symptomatic of an eve of a significant change, means for Christian apologists in this day and age. An inculcation of “New Atheism” among the blue collar/working class here would be a dramatic reversal of the religious landscape of America. I cannot help but feel that such a

> situation might be more "dismaying" than "amazing."
>
> […]I have no doubt that the inculcation is taking place. It is being impressed upon the public through books by New Atheists like Sam Harris that are aimed on the popular level, both to adults and youth (e.g. Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*). In the public classroom, atheism is the default worldview in the disciplines of both the hard and social sciences. Atheism is marketed as the new *neutral* position in almost all of public literature, television, and many commercial media outlets. Atheists pronounce that atheism is the only viable alternative for fair-minded people once they have shed the evil "superstition" of theism and Christianity that has existed here since the Pilgrims brought their Bibles off the Mayflower. Pair the New Atheists' media blitz of book tours and public appearances and the fruits of declining Christian influence over American culture, I suppose we should expect an eventual 'atheism-of-the-masses' to emerge.

She then finishes the post with three ideas on how to counter this trend: 1) Christian scholars should try to appear on television shows, 2) Christian scholars should try to submit opinion columns to newspapers, and 3) Christians who are prepared to discuss theology and apologetics should participate in public discussions. I'll just point out that it is excellent for Christian women to be concerned about these things, and to come up with solutions to the problems they raise. We need more women like Letitia to be concerned about these things, and to come up with effective plans to do something about it. (You'll recall that she has a conference coming up in Arizona where she will be speaking – so she has chips on the table).

She also posted her post on Facebook, and got a few interesting replies. I'll just paste a few of them in anonymously.

Here's one from P:

> The culprit here is government-controlled education. Secular progressives control teacher certification, teacher and administrator education, curriculum construction, textbook writing and selection, and just about all curriculum selection. …Virtually everybody but the very wealthy are required to spend 12 years under this regime. The consequence is uniform inculcation of the young in America, from kindergarten to high school graduation, with the same ideas that we just heard come out of Sam Harris' mouth.

That echoes my comments earlier about how Christians should support school choice and oppose a public school monopoly.

But there's more from S:

> [D]on't you think we (the church) ought to be more supportive of our congregants who wish to pursue doctorate level work within their particular field of discipline? It seems that if we had a individuals …with full-on Christian worldviews who have risen to the highest levels of authority in places like the educational system, that they could make just as much impact as what is

> happening now.

And then I chimed in and recommended that the church bring more scholars to speak in the on issues of policy and apologetics, so that the congregants would have something to talk about with their neighbors, and so that the children would get ideas about what they could study in order to have an effective influence.

I would like to see churches turn to questions like 1) is Christianity true? 2) how do we know it's true from science, philosophy and history? 3) which economic policies are the best for Christians to support? 4) how do you use evidence and arguments to convince other people to be pro-life and pro-traditional marriage? 5) why do Christians have so many rules about sex and relationships? 6) how do you respond to the arguments made by non-Christians? 7) what is the best way to prevent wars – disarmament or deterrence? 8) what should Christians think about secular fads like global warming and feminism? And so on.

When the church starts to become interesting again, by actually having lectures, debates and disagreements about what's true, then people in the culture will take it seriously. Right now, I think we are too focused on not have debates, not pursuing truth, not making exclusive theological claims, not making moral judgments, and just putting on a show that will make people have happy feelings and a sense of community. Eventually, when people in church notice that there are no men in the church, and consequently no children in the church, then we may decide to try something else.

What’s wrong with the American economy and how Paul Ryan would fix it

April 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a pretty long, but very educational, article from National Review.

Here’s the intro:

> There’s been an avalanche of commentary on Paul Ryan’s “Path to Prosperity,” and rightly so. Ryan’s proposal, which would reform entitlement spending, balance the budget, and begin paying off the debt, is the most important legislative proposal of my lifetime. It may not pass in its current form. But there is a much better chance than you’d think that it will pass in modified form, perhaps under another president. Either way, it will change the way we talk about the deficit and the debt for a very long time.
>
> The plan is quite comprehensive, encompassing discretionary spending, defense spending, financial regulation, Fannie and Freddie, tax reform, welfare programs, and Medicare and Medicaid. (As David Brooks puts it, PTP “dodges Social Security,” which is acceptable, given Social Security’s lesser impact on our long-term fiscal problems.)
>
> As for getting debt under control, here’s what the Congressional Budget Office had to say about the “Path to Prosperity”:
>
> The resulting budget deficits under the proposal would be around 2 percent of GDP in the 2020s [down from 9 percent in 2010] and would decline during the 2030s. The budget would be in surplus by 2040 and show growing surpluses in the following decade. Federal debt would equal about 48 percent of GDP by 2040 and 10 percent by 2050.
>
> And Yuval Levin has put together some nice charts, based on the CBO numbers, that show how dramatically PTP changes our country’s fiscal trajectory, relative to both current law and the Obama budget.
>
> […]So let’s sift through the most controversial aspects of the plan: those related to health-care entitlements. It’s going to be a rather wonky exercise, though I’ve done my best to make it readable by breaking it up into bite-sized chunks.

Here’s a summary of his nine points:

1. It reduces *the growth of* Medicare and Medicaid spending so that it is similar to countries like France, Germany and Switzerland
2. It reduces the costs of health care by letting individuals control how their own money is being spent – reducing demand naturally
3. It lets individuals decide what medical insurance coverages they want – just like they do with auto insurance

4. It mandates that seniors have to pay appropriate premiums for any extra medical insurance coverage they choose
5. It encourages states to save money and to prevent fraud by giving them financial rewards for doing so
6. It requires the rich to pay more for Medicare than the poor -by means-testing service provision
7. It introduces a voucher system where the government gives each person money (e.g. – $15,000) to choose a plan they like
8. The Democrat alternative to the "Path to Prosperity" plan is tax increases and rationing health care
9. The CBO agrees that if we do nothing about entitlement spending, we will bankrupt the country

I really encourage my Christian readers to take a shot at reading this article. It is very important for us to be seen as being informed about policies down to the details, so that we can discuss things other than Christianity intelligently. No one is going to trust you to discuss spiritual things unless they can see that you have some familiarity with material things. The reason why Bill Craig can back atheists into an auditorium is because he understands things about cosmology, physics, history and philosophy. People trust him, because he knows what he is talking about. You have a plan for a Christian life too, and you need to be able to do a good job of making decisions. You need to understand your country's economy in order to make good decisions. And not just voting decisions, but spending decisions, educational decisions, career decisions and investing decisions. And then when you talk about your faith to others in public, you can link it to all kinds of different *public* areas of knowledge. So that Christianity will come up naturally, no matter what the topic is.

Related posts

- Republican Paul Ryan proposes over 6 trillion in spending cuts
- Michele Bachmann and Paul Ryan on the Wisconsin teacher union pensions
- Video and transcripts of response speeches by Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann
- Paul Ryan explains why Republicans are doing what they promised to do
- What would happen if Paul Ryan headed the Budget committee?
- Paul Ryan discusses economics at the liberal Brookings Institute
- Paul Ryan explains taxes and spending to Chris Matthews
- Paul Ryan takes on Democrat Brad Sherman on the worsening economy
- Tragedy strikes! Paul Ryan is not going to run for President in 2012!
- Paul Ryan debates Robert Reich on Larry Kudlow show
- Paul Ryan debates on the relationship between tax rates and job creation
- Paul Ryan asks if America is becoming a European welfare state
- Sue Myrick interviews Paul Ryan about his Roadmap for America
- Fiscal and social conservatives unite in new free e-book "Indivisible"
- Paul Ryan talks about health care with Chris Matthews and Chris Wallace

- Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander
- Paul Ryan discusses Obamacare and the federal budget
- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan’s plan for economic recovery
- Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama’s 1.56 trillion budget deficit
- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama’s record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan and Ann Coulter make the case against Obamacare
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism
- When all else failed, Republicans will try conservative ideas

Audio, video and full summary of the William Lane Craig vs Sam Harris debate

April 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The details of the debate:

- Who: William Lane Craig vs. Sam Harris
- Where: The University of Notre Dame
- When: Thursday, April 7 – 7pm to 9pm
- Topic: Is Good from God?

Here are the links to my preview, the audio and the video.

- My debate preview
- Link to the audio
- Link to the video

This comprehensive summary is from Thinking Matters New Zealand. It is entertaining to read, but accurate and comprehensive.

Here's an overview:

> Summary of Craig's arguments:
>
> 1. Under theism, God accounts for moral values because he is a perfect being and goodness is part of his nature
> 2. Under theism, God's commands account for moral duties
> 3. Under atheism, morality is just an evolved convention, in which case it is not actually morality
> 4. If morality is evolved convention, it doesn't refer to anything objective
> 5. We can imagine moral conventions evolving differently; therefore they aren't objective
> 6. Harris is trying to redefine goodness as wellbeing, just by his own fiat
> 7. Harris's describing how to be moral doesn't explain what grounds morality
> 8. Harris faces an insuperable problem in the naturalistic fallacy: you cannot derive what ought to be from mere facts about the universe
> 9. Harris's naturalistic view doesn't allow for free will, which completely undermines his moral theories anyway
>
> Craig's two basic contentions:
>
> 1. If God exists we have a sound foundation for objective moral values and duties;
> 2. If God does not exist we do not have a sound foundation for these.

> Summary of Harris' arguments:
>
> 1. Objective morality is important
> 2. You don't need religion to have objective morality
> 3. Science can actually tell us what we ought to value because we never really separate facts and values
> 4. Moral values depend on nature because they depend on nature-dependent minds, and so can be understood with science
> 5. Morality is intrinsically about wellbeing because we can imagine a possible world in which everyone suffers horribly, and we see that we have an obligation to relieve that suffering
> 6. Morality can't be dictated by divine commands because God is evil
> 7. We can say scientifically that the Taliban is bad
>
> Harris' main argument:
>
> 1. Moral values and obligations depend upon minds
> 2. Minds depend upon the laws of nature
> 3. Therefore, moral values depend upon nature and can be understood through science

And, for an excerpt, here's their summary of Craig's first rebuttal:

> Craig started by drawing the audience's attention to how Harris was confusing moral ontology with moral semantics: confusing the *basis* or the *foundation* for moral values with the *meaning* of moral terms. Craig's argument, and the topic of the debate, was about what *grounds* moral values and duties—*not* what words like "right" and "wrong" and "good" and "evil" mean. Christians readily concede that we can know what good and evil are even if we don't believe they are grounded ontologically in God.
>
> He then rightly dismissed Harris's criticism of YHWH's character as irrelevant. For one thing, there are plenty of divine command theorists who are not Jews or Christians. For another, there's good reason to think that YHWH (the God of the Bible) is *not* a moral monster—in that regard he recommended Paul Copan's new book, *Is God a Moral Monster?*. "We have not heard *any* objection to a theistic grounding for ethics," Craig said. "If God does exist, it's clear, I think—obvious even—that we have a sound foundation for objective moral values and duties."
>
> He then started to drag Harris over broken glass by showing that the issue of human flourishing, or conscious wellbeing, is not the question of the debate. We agree that, all things being equal, the flourishing of conscious creatures is good. The question is: if atheism were true, what would *make* the flourishing of conscious creatures good? Craig observed that Harris is using words like "good" and "better" in *non*-moral ways: for example, that there is a good way to get

> yourself killed doesn't imply that it's a moral thing to do. Harris's contrast of the "good" life and the "bad" life is not an *ethical* contrast: it is a contrast between a pleasurable life and a miserable life. Since Harris had given no reason to identify pleasure and misery with good and evil, there was no reason for thinking that the flourishing of conscious creatures is objectively good.
>
> Here Craig brought down the hammer and completely crushed Harris for the rest of the debate, by not only showing that Harris wasn't engaging with the topic (he was equivocating between moral epistemology and ontology) but that his entire ethical system was necessarily false, by his own admission. Harris was saying that the property of "being good" is *identical* with the property of creaturely flourishing…but on the penultimate page of his book, he tellingly admitted that if rapists, liars, and thieves could be just as happy as good people, then his moral landscape would no longer be a *moral* landscape: it would just be a continuum of wellbeing, whose peaks were occupied by good and bad people alike. But as Craig pointed out, this implies that there's a possible world where the peaks of wellbeing are occupied by evil people (say psychopaths). If moral goodness is *identical* to human wellbeing it is logically contradictory for there to be a possible world in which the peaks of wellbeing are occupied by evil people. Thus, moral goodness *cannot* be identical with human wellbeing or flourishing.
>
> Harris was down for the count, and never even tried to address this argument in his followups.
>
> Craig followed up this crushing argument with a further one, noting that moral obligations only arise when there is an appropriate authority to issue binding commands—and under atheism, no objective authority exists, and so objective moral values cannot exist.

If you missed the debate and can't listen to the audio or see the video, this summary is well worth reading. It is accurate, and yet snarky, but without any exaggerations. I really think that what is behind atheism's philosophical flirtations with the language of morality is an effort to put a respectable smokescreen around a worldview adopted by those who simply cannot be bothered with any moral obligation that might act as a speed bump on their pursuit of happy feelings and pleasures here and now. They want to be happy, and being good gets in their way. They aren't trying to explain morality – they are trying to explain morality away… as the arbitrary conventions of a random process of biological evolution and cultural convention. Then they will be able to dismiss their conscience as an illusion created by the arbitrary culture they were raised in.

UPDATE: An even LONGER summary from New Zealand philosopher Glenn Peoples here.

New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance

April 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Vox Day)

Excerpt:

> It takes a woman just three minutes to make up her mind about whether she likes a man or not, a study has revealed.
>
> The average female spends the time sizing up looks, physique and dress-sense as well as taking in scent, accent and eloquence of a potential suitor.
>
> Women also quickly judge how he interacts with her friends and whether he is successful or ambitious.
>
> It also emerged most women believe 180 seconds is long enough to gauge whether or not he is Mr Right, or Mr Wrong.
>
> The study also found women rarely change their mind about a man after their initial reaction – and believe they are 'always right' in their assumptions and judgments.
>
> The report which was commissioned among 3,000 adults to mark the release of Instinct, a new book by Ben Kay.
>
> Kay said: 'I think a lot of people believe in trusting their instincts when dating. It makes it seem more magical, like it's coming from somewhere deeper.

I am not sure if this method of choosing mates should be used by Christian women. If the goal of a relationship is to please God and serve him, then our feelings should not be the guide. God is the customer of the relationship, not the woman, and not the man. The goal of a relationship is not primarily to have happy feelings – because that can lead to being selfish and destructive. It makes no sense to say that you are driving drunk in order to please God, or playing Russian roulette in order to please God – pleasing God needs to be done intelligently, with preparation, and respecting strict moral boundaries, if it is going to stand the chance of being effective at achieving his goals. It's so easy to think that God is just interested in our happiness, but he isn't. He is interested in us knowing him, serving him, suffering with him and understanding him.

Also, think of the harm that can be caused if women use emotions to choose men for the role of making them happy, instead of the role of making God happy. Men are designed by God to be protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders. According to this study, women are completely disinterested in whether a man can perform these traditional male roles. Because it is clear that nothing at all can be known about a man's ability to perform these roles by looking at his appearance and style. Even if a man has a confident way of saying what a great provider he is, it doesn't mean anything – he could be lying. The only

way to know for sure is to see his investment portfolio. You can't see the size of his portfolio by looking at his shoes.

Here are some ideas about what women should be doing to assess men for these roles:

- protector: does he understand which ideologies and policies oppose marriage, faith and family? is he good at defending his views against secular leftists?
- provider: what does his balance sheet look like? what does his resume look like? what does his university transcript look like? does he give to charity?
- moral leader: what has he written or spoken about related to moral issues like abortion, marriage, parental rights, etc.?
- spiritual leader: what has he written or spoken about related to theology and apologetics? does he have long-term mentoring relationships with other committed Christians?

None of these ways of judging a man can be accomplished in 180 seconds, and probably not even in 180 hours. It takes time.

Related posts on sex and feminism

- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New study finds that pre-marital sex reduces quality of relationships
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama's new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children's sexual choices
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being

Related posts on courting

- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading

- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- New OUP book links premarital sex and promiscuity to poor mental health
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- Why do women flock to movies like Switch and Eat, Pray, Love?
- Arlemagne's post on the dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- 12-year-old girl (and her mother) sues father for grounding her… and wins!
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Public school bans home-made packed lunches

April 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from the Chicago Tribune. (H/T ECM, The Way the Ball Bounces)

Excerpt:

> Fernando Dominguez cut the figure of a young revolutionary leader during a recent lunch period at his elementary school.
>
> "Who thinks the lunch is not good enough?" the seventh-grader shouted to his lunch mates in Spanish and English.
>
> Dozens of hands flew in the air and fellow students shouted along: "We should bring our own lunch! We should bring our own lunch! We should bring our own lunch!"
>
> Fernando waved his hand over the crowd and asked a visiting reporter: "Do you see the situation?"
>
> At his public school, Little Village Academy on Chicago's West Side, students are not allowed to pack lunches from home. Unless they have a medical excuse, they must eat the food served in the cafeteria.
>
> […]Any school that bans homemade lunches also puts more money in the pockets of the district's food provider, Chartwells-Thompson. The federal government pays the district for each free or reduced-price lunch taken, and the caterer receives a set fee from the district per lunch.
>
> […]At Little Village, most students must take the meals served in the cafeteria or go hungry or both. During a recent visit to the school, dozens of students took the lunch but threw most of it in the garbage uneaten. Though CPS has improved the nutritional quality of its meals this year, it also has seen a drop-off in meal participation among students, many of whom say the food tastes bad.
>
> "Some of the kids don't like the food they give at our school for lunch or breakfast," said Little Village parent Erica Martinez. "So it would be a good idea if they could bring their lunch so they could at least eat something."

One thing you have to understand about the secular left. They don't like the idea that people are different. They want everyone to be "equal". They want everyone to drive the same kind of car, live in the same kind of house, and especially to be forced to attend the same public schools. They don't want anyone to be better or worse at anything, no matter how hard they try. Forcing all the children to have the same food for breakfast and lunch is their way of making all the children equal. If you've seen the movie "The Incredibles", the secular left are like the annoying cry-babies who sue the super heroes for being super until the super heroes go underground. Progressives think that should be no freedom to be different, because that might make someone else feel bad.

Having the school provide generic meals also a way of marginalizing fathers, I think. One

of the things that fathers really like, I am told, is feeding their children. Dads get a big kick out of buying things for their family to eat. By taking over the father's role as provider, the school is making fathers unnecessary. When fathers don't have a special role in the home, they tune out of the family. When fathers are forced to share their responsibilities with the state, it diminishes their prestige and authority in the home. When government takes over the role of men, the men who were good at those roles are no longer sought after. And all the money they make by working hard is just gobbled up by the government and redistributed – which makes them less able to to marry and raise their own families.

Liberty and Equality

To read a really excellent explanation of what I've tried to explain clumsily above, read my previous post on liberty (equality of OPPORTUNITY) and equality (equality of OUTCOMES). I reference a couple of articles by Jewish thinker Dennis Prager. He really explains it well. You can have liberty, or you can have equality, but you can't have both. So long as there is freedom, people will do different things. What the secular left wants is to destroy liberty, so that everyone will be the same.

By the way, The Way the Ball Bounces is a *great blog*. You should bookmark it.

Democrats made funding of abortion providers non-negotiable in deal

April 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> On Friday, the federal government almost shut down over abortion, more than 38 years after *Roe v. Wade* was supposed to have settled the question. Politico reports on the Thursday-night negotiations over funding the government for the remainder of fiscal 2011:
>
> The low point may have come Thursday night.
>
> House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) had spent more than an hour meeting with President Barack Obama in the Oval Office, inching toward a deal to avert a shutdown, but he kept insisting that it include a prohibition against federal funding for Planned Parenthood.
>
> That was a nonstarter for Obama. As the meeting was breaking up, Vice President Joe Biden told the speaker, in no uncertain terms, that his demand was unacceptable. If that became the deal breaker, Biden said, he would "take it to the American people," who would presumably punish the GOP for shutting down the government over an ideological issue.
>
> "They were faced with a choice–they would either have to give in or shut down the government," said a senior administration official, describing how the negotiations went from there.
>
> A Bloomberg account has Obama telling Boehner during the same meeting: "Nope, zero. John, this is it." And that was it. The Republicans did well in the negotiation overall: "Boehner agreed to a package of $38.5 billion in cuts, a significant victory for a man who said his goal was to extract as much as possible from the federal budget," Bloomberg reports. But they yielded on the question of subsidizing Planned Parenthood, America's biggest abortion provider. (How big? Timothy Carney of the Washington Examiner reports that "it performed 332,278 abortions in 2009, while serving 7,021 prenatal clients and referring 977 parents to adoption services.")
>
> […]There's also a financial angle. Planned Parenthood receives millions in taxpayer subsidies and spends hundreds of thousands on lobbying and campaigning. In February, OpenSecrets.org reported that Planned Parenthood's political action committee "donated more than $148,000 to federal candidates–almost all Democrats–during the 2010 election cycle" and "spent more than $443,000 overall." Planned Parenthood made an additional $905,796

> in “independent expenditures” during the 2010 cycle–exercising its right to free speech pursuant to last year’s *Citizens United* decision.
>
> The biggest beneficiaries of Planned Parenthood money, according to OpenSecrets.org, were Sens. Patty Murray of Washington and Barbara Boxer of California. According to the Hill, both were also among “a defiant group of Senate women,” all Democrats, who “said Friday they’ll oppose any spending bill that would affect reproductive health funding”…

The Republicans tried, but the Democrats would not budge on funding abortion with taxpayer dollars.

Should pastors preach against false ideas and false ideologies in church?

April 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Thinking Christian.

Excerpt:

> Justin Buzzard tells this story:
>
> About ten years ago I heard Ben Patterson, campus pastor of Westmont College, say something that I will never forget. Ben told the story of a retired pastor who began noticing that his former congregation was sliding away from orthodoxy. The pastor saw this as his fault, noting the one thing he thought he did most poorly as a pastor. The pastor stated, in two sentences, his great failure as a pastor:
>
> > **I always told people what to believe. My great mistake is that I never told my people what NOT to believe.**
>
> It's possible to be so "biblical" that we're unbiblical.
>
> I'm referring to pastors, churches, and individual Christians who say, "we're sticking to the Bible, and we don't ever need to study anything but the Bible." The great men and women of the Bible didn't say that. They didn't just preach in support of God's truth. They *knew* the lies that were current in their cultures, they named those lies—with very contemporary examples—and they *exposed* what was false about them. When Isaiah ripped apart idol worship so sarcastically in Isaiah 44:9-20, he knew what he was talking about. So those who only study the Bible are failing to follow its example!

I think the reason for this is because the church is so focused on providing a happy music show every week, so that people can feel happy and affirmed, that they would never want to be negative and exclusive. That might make the people in the audience feel offended or excluded. That's why pastors never set up Christianity as being true in distinction to other views that are false. And pastors surely would not appeal to external evidence from science and history – that might make people who don't know any science and history feel bad, and spoil their happy feelings. It seems to me that pastors need to get back into the habit of connecting the Christian to real life. False ideas are harmful, and the pastor's job is to stand up to wolves that might harm his flock – not to ignore the wolves. A very good place to start would be in the area of capitalism and taxation, or maybe in the area of sexual ethics and marriage.

Stephen Harper wins English-language election debate

April 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephen Harper shakes hands with petulant children

From left-wing Global TV, a university professor scores the first English-language debate in the Canadian Federal election.

Excerpt:

> **How well did the four leaders present their points?**
>
> Dr. Royce Koop: Harper is very effective at getting his message across. He is very clear, disciplined, and it's tough to knock him off his game. Ignatieff is not communicating as well as I thought he would. He's clearly new to this debate format.
>
> **Who were the clear aggressors and/or defenders throughout the debate?**
>
> Dr. Royce Koop: As can be expected, the three opposition leaders are the aggressors and Harper is the defender. However, Duceppe has distinguished himself as an aggressor. His opening comment was a strong, sharp attack of Harper. However, Harper is effectively defending himself in this debate. His strength is being disciplined, and he's keeping his cool very well.
>
> **Who preformed best?**
>
> Dr. Royce Koop: Harper behaved like the PM-in-waiting. These debate formats actually favour the incumbent PM. Everyone is attacking them, and so they are able to rise above it all and act prime-ministerial. This is how Chretien survived the debates in 1997 and 2000, by riding above all the attacks, and Harper is doing so very effectively tonight.
>
> **What was your impression of the Harper-Ignatieff face-off? Who won that tete-a-tete?**
>
> Dr. Royce Koop: I think that Harper won that exchange, but it was a close call.

> Ignatieff has to be able to knock Harper off his game, and he hasn't been able to do so effectively. He came close at the conclusion of the first exchange between them, but Harper came out on top.

A left-wing report from the Markdale Standard.

Excerpt:

> Harper projected calm competence and self-assurance from the outset. He carried that through, almost without interruption, to his closing statement two hours later.
>
> There was one moment when Ignatieff had an opening. That was in the prolonged section on democracy. Ignatieff was pressing hard. He scored some good hits on Stephen Harper, branding him a control freak who disrespects democratic institutions and, by extension, Canadians. It was a compelling segment and for a few moments it seemed like Ignatieff might turn the tide.
>
> It didn't happen. The debate moved on to other topics and ended, advantage Harper, on health care. Here Harper was very strong, looking pragmatic and sensible as the others sought in vain to breach his defence.
>
> Harper's debating skills, designed for TV, outmatched all three of the other contestants. Most tellingly, he looked constantly at the camera when answering questions, not at his opponents. He was the only one to do so consistently, though NDP leader Jack Layton also used this technique towards the end.
>
> But Harper was rock-solid with it, constantly gazing into the camera, speaking directly Canadians in reassuring tones. With his body language he projected calm confidence. He kept his gestures small and controlled and within the circumference of his body – an effective technique on television.
>
> […]Tomorrow, look for Harper's numbers in English Canada to rise sharply, into the low 40s. This will come as bitter brew to Liberal supporters across Canada, but it's the simple reality: A Conservative majority is back on the table.

How did Harper win the debate? By using *evidence*.

Excerpt:

> Canada's good economic standing relative to its G8 counterparts, and the country's relatively quick emergence from recession, can, in part, be credited to encouraging investment in the corporate sector, Mr. Harper said.
>
> While in power, the Stephen Harper Conservatives have cut the corporate tax rate from 22.5% to 16.5%, with a further reduction to 15% scheduled for 2012.
>
> To then foist a sudden reversal in policy on corporate Canada would send the wrong message to investors, Mr. Harper said on Tuesday. He quoted Jack Mintz, a public policy expert at the University of Calgary, as saying that the additional taxes proposed by the Liberals would cost the Canadian economy 200,000 jobs

> and $40-billion in business investment over the long run.
>
> "Every credible economic analyst, every major business group in this country, says that if you raise taxes, you will hurt growth, hurt jobs and hurt revenue," Mr. Harper said.

He must be the only politician I know who actually EXPLAINS why corporate tax-hikes are a bad idea. The government needs to cut taxes to attract corporations to move to their country, and to encourage their people to start or grow businesses. That's where jobs COME FROM. And when people are working, because they have lots of jobs to choose from, they are happier and they pay more in taxes than if they were unemployed. And when people are employed, the government spends less on unemployment and other welfare programs. Notice that our corporate tax rate down here is 36%. More than double the Canadian corporate tax rate. Compared to the Canadians, we spend way too much, and we create far fewer jobs.

If the left-wing newspapers are calling it a victory for Harper, then it was a landslide victory for Harper. I am talking William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens landslide victory. I can hardly wait to see the poll numbers from up north tomorrow. The latest pre-debate poll has Harper leading the socialist Liberal party by 12 points. (H/T Jeanie)

UPDATE: Post-debate poll shows that Harper won the debate.

Related posts

- Stephen Harper's Conservatives unveil "Here for Canada" platform
- Harper would ban political contributions from unions and corporations
- A closer look at Stephen Harper's Family Tax Cut plan
- Poll finds 68% of Canadians positive on Canadian economy
- Canada created twice the number of jobs as the United States in January
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper vows to end long-gun registry
- Stephen Harper makes a stand against North Korean aggression
- Fiscally conservative Canada campaigns against global bank tax
- Federal conservatives in Canada aim to cut spending and waste from budget
- Canada's finance minister proposes changes to mortgage lending laws
- Supreme Court sides with Conservative Party against price-fixing monopoly
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper seeks increased trade with India
- Canadian Evangelicals and Catholics more opposed to secularism and socialism
- Members of Canadian socialist parties oppose child sex-trafficking crime bill
- Harper instructs foreign minister to denounce Libyan dictator
- Canadians to walk out of Ahmadinejad's speech at UN
- Canada signs free trade deal with Panama
- Harper pays surprise visit to troops in Afghanistan
- Investors Business Daily says Harper better leader than Obama
- Round-up of US news media interviews with Stephen Harper

Carrie Lukas does the math on the male-female pay gap

April 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Carrie Lukas

A popular article by Carrie Lukas, writing in the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> The unemployment rate is consistently higher among men than among women. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 9.3% of men over the age of 16 are currently out of work. The figure for women is 8.3%. Unemployment fell for both sexes over the past year, but labor force participation (the percentage of working age people employed) also dropped. The participation rate fell more among men (to 70.4% today from 71.4% in March 2010) than women (to 58.3% from 58.8%). That means much of the improvement in unemployment numbers comes from discouraged workers—particularly male ones—giving up their job searches entirely.
>
> Men have been hit harder by this recession because they tend to work in fields like construction, manufacturing and trucking, which are disproportionately affected by bad economic conditions. Women cluster in more insulated occupations, such as teaching, health care and service industries.
>
> […]The Department of Labor's Time Use survey shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. One would expect that someone who works 9% more would also earn more. This one fact alone accounts for more than a third of the wage gap.
>
> Choice of occupation also plays an important role in earnings. While feminists suggest that women are coerced into lower-paying job sectors, most women know that something else is often at work. Women gravitate toward jobs with fewer risks, more comfortable conditions, regular hours, more personal fulfillment

> and greater flexibility. Simply put, many women—not all, but enough to have a big impact on the statistics—are willing to trade higher pay for other desirable job characteristics.
>
> Men, by contrast, often take on jobs that involve physical labor, outdoor work, overnight shifts and dangerous conditions (which is also why men suffer the overwhelming majority of injuries and deaths at the workplace). They put up with these unpleasant factors so that they can earn more.
>
> Recent studies have shown that the wage gap shrinks—or even reverses—when relevant factors are taken into account and comparisons are made between men and women in similar circumstances. In a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30, the research firm Reach Advisors found that women earned an average of 8% more than their male counterparts. Given that women are outpacing men in educational attainment, and that our economy is increasingly geared toward knowledge-based jobs, it makes sense that women's earnings are going up compared to men's.

My favorite book on feminism, economics and marriage is Carrie Lukas' "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Women, Sex and Feminism". If you don't have the book, then please go out and buy one for you, and one for a young, unmarried woman in your life. Books like this one are for women who are serious about making their marriages last. And men can read them, too – so that we'll know what to look for in women. There is nothing more attractive to a marriage-minded man than a fiscally conservative woman.

Here's an interview of Carrie Lukas conducted by famous men's rights activist Bernard Chapin. The next time you see men reading the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue, take a closer look. On the inside of that magazine we are often concealing a copy of Carrie Lukas' book. When Carrie Lukas talks about economics and policy, men think about marriage.

Conservative Party unveils plan to promote religious liberty abroad

April 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper
From the Montreal Gazette.

Excerpt:

> A Conservative government would create a new, special "Office of Religious Freedom," the party announced in its electoral platform on Friday.
>
> The office would be housed at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and its role would be:
>
> - To monitor religious freedom around the world;
> - To promote religious freedom as a key objective of Canadian foreign policy;
> - And to advance policies and programs that support religious freedom.
>
> Under the heading, "Defending Religious Freedom," the Conservatives said they recognize that "respect for religious pluralism is inextricably linked to democratic development." And that the federal government could and should do more to respond to the plight of those "who suffer merely because of their faith."
>
> […]The Conservative platform also includes a pledge to create a national Holocaust memorial in the Ottawa area and to support the establishment of a memorial to the victims of communism.

This is not a surprise, as the Canadian conservatives are famous for taking bold stands to defend the rights of persecuted Christians in places like Egypt.

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper participated in a round table discussion on security with Coptic Christian leaders.
>
> A deadly suicide bombing in Egypt on New Year's Day claimed the lives of some 21 worshippers.
>
> And nearly 100 people were wounded in the attack as they left a midnight mass at an Alexandria church.
>
> Harper condemned the attacks, saying the international community must stay vigilant against such violence against Coptic Christians.
>
> Harper met with several priests at the Church Of the Virgin Mary and St. Athanasius in Mississauga Thursday.
>
> He says he wants Coptic Christians in Canada to know the country stands behind their right to safely practice their faith.

So, not only is Harper introducing policies that will strengthen families and marriages so that there will be fewer abortions and healthier children, but he is also dedicated to defending the religious liberty of minorities abroad.

Should pro-life social conservatives vote for Stephen Harper?

April 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about tax cuts for married couples

Don't listen to me, listen to Dave Warren.

Excerpt:

> Our tax code has everything to do with our societal propensity to demographic extinction.
>
> It helps destroy families in two major ways (and many minor ones for which we won't have space). It forces the mother of small children to work for a second (heavily taxed) family income. Then, offers her the alternative of becoming a "welfare mom" -effectively a ward of the state, but with the bill sent these days to anything that looks like an ex-husband.
>
> Fatherless households, with or without angry mothers, are in turn the source of so many of the children we do have: the ones who have survived the abortion mills. Those, of a certain age, acquainted with the modern schoolyard, will have noticed the general tendency toward juvenile delinquency. Though, overall crime rates balance out, thanks to the diminishing number of juveniles, as a proportion of our aging population.
>
> The tax code isn't, of course, the only cause contributing to this demographic, social, and moral disaster. The "culture of death" is also communicated through mass media and entertainment industries, and catered to by every sort of

> commercial advertising.
>
> Yet the tax code is the principal originating cause. Over many decades, it has facilitated the Nanny State, by treating citizens as income-earning atoms. The capitalists feed upon conditions in the resulting market, wherein everyone is an atomized consumer, living narcissistically for the day.
>
> It is against this very real background that the Harper government has proposed the one thing that looks like a serious policy proposal in the current general election campaign. It is to change the tax code to reduce the penalty on one-income families. I'll leave the technical description of this "income splitting" to the tax experts and policy wonks.
>
> Naturally, the feminists, and all other "progressive" people, are outraged by a scheme that would reduce this penalty. A woman's place is in the workforce, according to the received progressive view; which holds that men and women must be treated as interchangeable; which makes children, by extension, discardable lifestyle options. (See rude reference to abortion mills, above.) That is why the last Pope called it the "culture of death."
>
> By contrast, the "culture of life," to which humans are called by nature -often in the face of social engineering -envisions a world in which mothers and children play an important, and often the commanding part.

Just look at this chart from the Heritage Foundation:

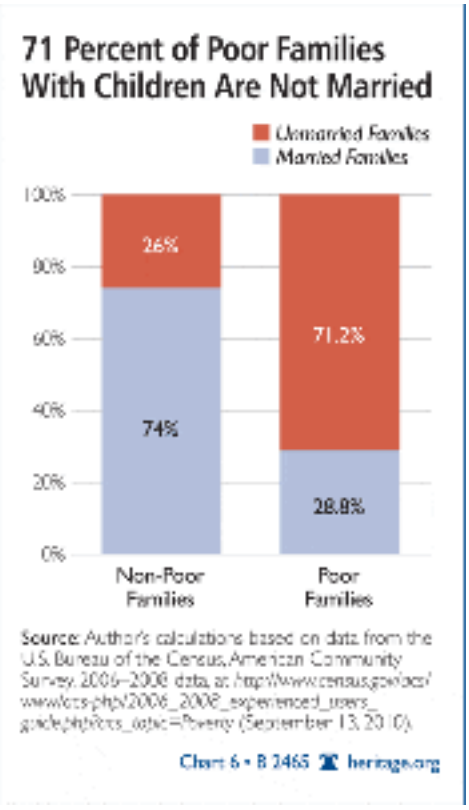

Marriage and Poverty

Job creation reduces abortion. Intact families reduce abortion. A father in the home reduces abortion. Tax credits for children reduces abortion.

There is more than one way to be pro-life, especially in Canada where the majority of the

people are not pro-life. Abortion is the consequence of the gender-feminist revolution that destroyed marriage and the family and replaced parents with public schools that push sex education, even onto very young children. The way to turn the tide back to the pro-life position is to first build consensus for pro-life laws by creating the conditions where every unborn child can be welcomed into the world by a loving *married couple*. There are financial incentives in Stephen Harper's Family Tax Cut plan that will encourage people to get married and stay married. Harper is a social conservative and social conservatives should vote for Harper. He does the best he can by putting pro-life financial incentives in place.

You can read more about Stephen Harper's 5-point Here for Canada policy plan and the Conservative plan to promote religious liberty abroad.

Economist Paul Ryan disgusted with Obama's childish emotional bloviating

April 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican economist Paul Ryan responds to the community-organizer/teleprompter-reader.

Here's the transcript. (H/T Lonely Conservative)

Excerpt:

> I'm very disappointed in the president. I was excited when we got invited to attend his speech today. I thought the president's invitation to Mr. Camp, Mr. Hensarling and myself was an olive branch. Instead, what we got was a speech that was excessively partisan, dramatically inaccurate, and hopelessly inadequate to addressing our countries pressing fiscal challenges.
>
> What we heard today was not fiscal leadership from our commander-in-chief. What we heard today was a political broadside from our campaigner-in chief.
>
> I guess it's no coincidence that last week when the president launched his billion dollar re-election campaign was the week we launched our effort to try and get this debt and deficit under control and get our economy growing.
>
> Last year, in the absence of a serious budget, the president created a fiscal commission. Then with his budget he disavowed his fiscal commission. He ignored all of its recommendations. Now he wants to delegate leadership yet again to a new commission. How are we to expect different results? And the measurements of results of this new commission are lower than the measurements of success of the last commission that ended a few months ago.
>
> We need leadership. We don't need a doubling down on the failed politics of the past.
>
> […]Exploiting people's emotions of fear, envy, and anxiety is not hope; it's not change. It's partisanship. We don't need partisanship. We don't need demagoguery. We need solutions. And we don't need to keep punting to other people to make tough decisions. If we don't make those decisions today, our children will have to make much, much tougher decisions tomorrow.

Paul Ryan and Jeb Hensarling are the two best-known Republican budget wonks.

You can read more about Paul Ryan in this Business Week interview.

Excerpt:

> **President Obama called your plan "a vision that says if our roads crumble and our bridges collapse, we can't afford to fix them … but we can somehow afford more than $1 trillion in new tax breaks for the wealthy." How do you respond?**

> I don’t even know what to say about that. First of all, we’re not even talking about cutting taxes. We’re talking about keeping tax revenues where they are [by making the Bush tax cuts permanent] and cleaning up all the junk in the tax code for a flatter, fair, simpler tax system. So we’re not talking about cutting taxes. We want to keep the tax revenues where they are and fix the tax code. And with respect to all the spending—you know, that partisan-spending rhetoric—if you don’t fix entitlements, Charlie, if you don’t get spending under control, there’s not going to be any money left for those other things, for roads, for bridges, for education, for the environment. So I’m amazed that he would use that kind of hyperbolic, hyperventilating rhetoric to describe our plan.

I find it interesting that last week we heard William Lane Craig chastise the child Sam Harris for making “stupid and insulting” remarks about Christians, we are now getting Paul Ryan making similar assessments of our naive, childish President. Have Christians and conservatives finally reached their limit of tolerating stupidity and incompetence?

More about Paul Ryan and his budget proposal in my previous post.

MUST-HEAR: Michele Bachmann gives the best speech ever

April 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann

My favorite Congresswoman stole the spotlight in Iowa when she lectured for the Family Leader Presidential Lecture Series. She's back to the passionate arm-waving that I always liked so much.

The MP3 file is here. (17 Mb)

Shane Vander Hart from Caffeinated Thoughts has a great summary of the speech.

Excerpt:

> Bachmann started her speech sharing her testimony saying she understood the Gospel for the first time at age 16 after growing up in a Lutheran Church and then she gave her life to Christ. She said that it "changed her life forever." She said she had a hunger for the Word after then, and explained that the Holy Spirit "lifted the veil" from her eyes so she was then able to understand it. She participated in YoungLife and another Bible study when in high school. That first year in Christ was, Bachmann said, "was the defining year of my life."
>
> In college she participated the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at her school, and cited Francis Schaffer's film, *How Now Shall We Live*, made an impact on how she lives out her faith. During law school at Oral Roberts University Law School she did advocacy for better homeschooling laws. She and her husband, Marcus, homeschooled their five children in their early years. She got involved in public

> schools as they did foster care for 23 kids since they were not allowed by Minnesota law to put those kids in private school or to home school them.
>
> She noted a change in public schools where "knowledge, facts, and information" were taking a back seat to indoctrination. She noted the 2000 Goals to Work standard implemented in the public schools that was a federal program implemented in all 50 states. She advocated for its repeal in Minnesota – the first state to do so. She said later this is where she got her start in politics.
>
> She highlighted her prolife advocacy in the Minnesota Legislature – a requirement to fund prolife groups if they were going to fund Planned Parenthood and a woman's right to know act.
>
> […]On marriage, she commended Iowans for booting the three Iowa Supreme Court justices up for retention last fall. She said that Minnesota could possibly vote in favor of a Marriage Amendment now that Republicans She noted that Congress can limit the subject matter jurisdiction for Article Three courts federally denying them an opportunity to rule on marriage. "This is the first time in recorded history that we have seen marriage in society defined as anything other than between one man and one woman."
>
> […]On life she said that she and her husband has done more than just talk about life, but have tried to live it out through being sidewalk counselors and taking unwed mothers into their home. Quoting Francis Schaeffer she, "life is the watershed issue of our time." Bachman proclaimed her commitment to life, "I will not give up until we give life the position it deserves in the United States and is protected from conception until natural death."
>
> She explained how taxes has impacted the family where in the 1950s would pay approximately 5% of their income to taxes. She said now some families can pay up to 50% which explains why we have fewer one income families. She noted the spending which has fueled anti-family tax policy. She said the first thing on the House's pro-family agenda was to rein in spending. Regarding education reform, she noted how the Supreme Court has recently ruled that tax credits for private religious schools is constitutional. She also said that she'd abolish the Federal Department of Education. She also called for the abolishment of the United States Tax Code.

[Note: commenter Francine notes that Michele says that this is the first time that marriage has been redefined to not be between men and women – the summary is in error about what she said]

She ends the speech with her concern for the fact that over 40% of children are beig born without a mother and father in the home, and she blames bad fiscal policies for this injustice. She makes the connection between left-wing fiscal policies and social breakdown. It's so important that social conservatives understand that big government, high taxes, excessive regulation and massive spending are major causes of virtually all of our social problems. The breakdown of the family is what makes soul-destroying

secularism possible.

There was also a press conference after the speech.

The MP3 file is here. (3 Mb)

Shane also covered the press conference.

Excerpt:

> During the press conference that was held after Congresswoman Michelle Bachmann's speech in Pella, IA for The FAMiLY Leader's Presidential Lecture Series, she was asked to elaborate on the bill in Minnesota she helped to get passed that allowed funding for prolife organizations basically putting them on the same footing as Planned Parenthood. During her answer she mentioned that she said that she introduced a similar bill in Congress.
>
> She was also asked about what programs would she be open to abolishing other than the Federal Department of Education. She listed the Department of Energy and the Department of Commerce as ones that have been discussed in Congress. She said "anywhere we can abolish we might as well cut back and abolish." Saying in particular that our private sector has the capability to handle our energy needs. She was asked about her disappointment with the House budget deal and where she would like the House leadership to put up a fight. Bachmann said, "defunding Obamacare, this will change our country forever." She noted later that some may not be willing to take on budget battles in the future, she said that we have to… she said, "we have to change course."

I have been pushing Michele Bachmann on this blog since the beginning two years ago, because she represents what I consider to be an ideal Christian woman. She is everything that I have ever hoped a Christian woman could be in my wildest, wildest dreams. I could not give any politician a more ringing endorsement. I hope with all my heart that she will some day be President of the United States.

Related posts

- Michele Bachmann beats RINO Mitt Romney in fundraising
- Michele Bachmann looking presidential against the liberal media
- Michele Bachmann courts homeschoolers in Iowa speech
- Michele Bachmann and Paul Ryan on the Wisconsin teacher union pensions
- Video and transcripts of response speeches by Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann
- What was the context of Michele Bachmann's "armed and dangerous" comment?
- AT LAST: Michele Bachmann open to presidential run in 2012
- Megyn Kelly and Michele Bachmann on the Bush tax cut deal
- CNS News interviews Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann requests the resignation of Attorney General Eric Holder
- Michele Bachmann attacks government bailout of unions
- Michele Bachmann makes the case for limited government

- Why is the left so angry with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin?
- Michele Bachmann on Fox News with Laura Ingraham
- Democrats kill Michele Bachmann's attempt to freeze federal salaries
- Michele Bachmann on the US taxpayer-funded bailout of Greece
- Michele Bachmann explains the Obama's Wall Street bailout bill
- Michele Bachmann promises to work to repeal Obamacare
- Video of Michele Bachmann defending unborn children
- Michele Bachmann's passionate and inspiring speech at CPAC 2010
- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama's latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare's rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

She explained how taxes has impacted the family where in the 1950s would pay approximately 5% of their income to taxes. She said now some families can pay up to 50% which explains why we have fewer one income families. She noted the spending which has fueled anti-family tax policy. She said the first thing on the House's pro-family agenda was to rein in spending. Regarding education reform, she noted how the Supreme Court has recently ruled that tax credits for private religious schools is constitutional. She also said that she'd abolish the Federal Department of Education. She also called for the abolishment of the United States Tax Code.

Can people be good if God doesn't exist?

April 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, a post by Luke Nix defining the term objective morality.

Excerpt:

> Let us examine a more recent debate: William Lane Craig vs. Sam Harris. One of the words that was not clearly defined and accepted by both participants was "objective". Sam Harris clarified that he was only arguing for a "universal" morality (one that only exists as long as conscious minds exist- he's referring to humans), while Craig was arguing for morality that exists regardless of whether or not conscious minds exist- he's also referring to humans. The fact that they were each using different definitions of "objective" caused much confusion for those who did not pick up on the distinction or its significance for the debate (even though Craig pointed out both in his first rebuttal).

Objective morality is binding on us whether we like it or not. An objective moral standard lays out what is right or wrong for us independently of how we feel about that standard. What could ground such a moral standard?

From the Apologetics Guy blog, a simple post explaining the main issue in the debate over morality.

Excerpt:

> "Can't people be good without God?" I mean, couldn't an atheist do some really good things without God? I guess if we mean "doing the right thing while not believing in God," then sure. An atheist *could* do the right thing. For example, they could honestly report their income to the government, be faithful their spouse and so forth. And why not? But maybe the better question is, "Why?" Why even care about being moral?
>
> Think about it like this: If God's not real, there's no moral law giver and no such things as objective moral commands. If that's true, then why not say, "I'll do the *right* thing when it makes me feel good or gives me an advantage, and I'll do the *wrong* thing when *it* makes me feel good or gives me an advantage." Or why not say, "I hereby declare from this day forward that it's always right to steal."
>
> If there's no God and no objective moral standard, there's no moral difference between abusing someone or taking care of them. Basically, good and evil are reduced to preference. All you could say is, "I don't like terrorism," or "I'm not into slavery." "Human trafficking isn't my thing." But who can really live like this?

If there is no designer of the universe, then there is no design for the universe. If there is no design for the universe, then there is no way that anything *ought to be.* If there is no way anything ought to be, then there is no way humans ought to be. Any statement

about what we “ought” to do in an accidental universe is just someone opinion – you can accept it if you like it, but it’s not real.

Here’s another post by Micah from the Student Apologetics Alliance about the most common objective to the moral argument from objective morality to a moral lawgiver.

Excerpt:

> First and foremost though, I want to start off with some background information…namely the Euthyphro Dilemma. This famous dilemma is named after Plato’s dialogue *Euthyphro*. The dilemma here is thus, “Is something good because God commands it? Or, does God command it because that thing is good?” Either way, one runs into problems. If something is good because God commands it, then God could command anything–like rape or murder–and that would be good, and Christians certainly don’t want to advocate that. On the other hand, does God command something because it’s good? If so, then aren’t we appealing to an independent standard of goodness? Is it that God is looking at some moral standard and says, “Oh, I see, that’s a good thing. I’ll command people to do this then…”? We would then have something that sets itself above God, and in fact, this standard would seem to exist even in God’s absence.
>
> Now, the response I and a lot of other Christian thinkers have offer is that there is a third option: namely that something is good because God **is** good. God is the standard for morality to which all others measure up to. God being good and being moral is essential to His nature. What this implies is that God’s commands are not arbitrary at all, but rather expressions of His nature. What this also implies is that God does not obey moral laws, but rather He is goodness itself. God being good is as natural and essential as humanness is natural to Plato. What this also implies is that without God, we would not have objective moral values and duties incumbent upon us as humans. Sure, we could subjectively make up our own rules, but they wouldn’t be objective or binding. We would not be able to truthfully say, in the absence of God, that rape is objectively wrong regardless if some believe it’s right.
>
> What I’m NOT saying here is that a person needs to **believe in** God in order for him or her to recognize moral values and vices. One does not need to believe in God in order to know that rape is wrong, but that’s not the argument here. The argument being offered is that without God Himself, objective morality would not exist–morality would not be grounded. The difference lies between two domains: epistemology (how we come to know things; we can come to know certain moral truths without reference to God) and ontology (the nature of being and existing; that such moral truths would need to be grounded in God’s nature in order for them to be binding on everyone).

It’s very important that we all understand what the moral argument is about. It’s about the means of existing of moral value and moral duties. Are they real? Do they really exist somewhere? Or are they just our personal preferences – like clothing fashions and

culinary conventions?

91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists

April 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Melissa Clouthier at Red State. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> Planned Parenthood claims to support women's health. Their institutional actions, though, indicate they support criminal activity that would harm a child. How? By facilitating abortions for children raped by adult men. Fully 91% of the abortion clinics contacted would help an underaged girl receive an abortion even when the clinic counselor knew the father was an adult male.
>
> […]Far from being champions for women, abortion mills exploit them–even the young and raped. They cover up the crimes of grown men to what end? To keep abortion an absolute "right"? *To protect their business?*
>
> In the last year, we've seen abortion mills shut down due to deplorable conditions. We've seen women maimed and even killed. We've seen jars of baby body parts on shelves.
>
> And from the Planned Parenthoods of America, we've seen obfuscation and straight up lying. No, they don't perform mammograms. No, they don't focus on preventative health for women.
>
> What Planned Parenthood *does do* is make a lot of money aborting babies. And, it seems, they are willing to abort the babies of babies who were raped by adult men trying to get rid of the criminal evidence.

Neil also linked to the audio and transcripts of the calls to Planned Parenthood.

Here are links to previous stings of Planned Parenthood by Live Action.

The videos:

- **Richmond, Virginia Planned Parenthood Full Video**
- **Falls Church, Virginia Planned Parenthood Full Video**
- **Roanoke, Virginia Planned Parenthood Full Video**
- **Charlottesville, Virginia Planned Parenthood Full Video**

Why are we giving these people so much taxpayer money?

Related posts

- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- House Republicans win vote to defund Planned Parenthood

- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Rep. Mike Pence drafts amendment to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

Is the argument for intelligent design based on ignorance?

April 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Uncommon Descent. (IC = irreducible complexity, FSCI = functional specific complex information)

Excerpt:

> First, ID is not, as its opponents suggest, a purely negative argument that material forces are insufficient to account for IC and FSCI. At its root ID is an abductive conclusion (i.e., inference to best explanation) concerning the data. This conclusion may be stated in summary as follows:
>
> 1. Living things display IC and FSCI.
> 2. Material forces have never been shown to produce IC and FSCI.
> 3. Intelligent agents routinely produce IC and FSCI.
> 4. Therefore, based on the evidence that we have in front of us, the best explanation for the presence of IC and FSCI in living things is that they are the result of acts of an intelligent agent.
>
> The second reason the "argument from ignorance" objection fails is that the naysayers' assertion that ID depends on an "absence of evidence" is simply false. In fact, ID rests on evidence of absence. In his *Introduction to Logic* Irving Marmer Copi writes of evidence of absence as follows:
>
> In some circumstances it can be safely assumed that if a certain event had occurred, evidence of it could be discovered by qualified investigators. In such circumstances it is perfectly reasonable to take the absence of proof of its occurrence as positive proof of its non-occurrence.
>
> How does this apply to the Neo-Darwinian claim that undirected material forces can produce IC and FSCI? Charles Darwin published *Origin of Species* in 1859. In the 152 years since that time literally tens of thousands of highly qualified investigators have worked feverishly attempting to demonstrate that undirected material forces can produce IC and FSCI. They have failed utterly.
>
> Has there been a reasonable investigation by qualified investigators? By any fair measure there has been. Has that 152 year-long investigation shown how undirected material forces can account for IC or FSCI? It has not.
>
> Therefore, simple logic dictates that "it is perfectly reasonable to take the absence of proof" that undirected material forces can account for IC and FSCI as "positive proof of its non-occurrence."

The argument from intelligent design is based on what we know. The hope that biological information has a naturalistic cause is based on what we don't know. As science

progresses, the evidence for intelligent causes in biology becomes more clear.

Related posts

- Is the set of 20 amino acids used in living systems finely tuned?
- Biologist expresses doubts about the sufficiency of Darwinian mechanisms
- Stephen C. Meyer in FOUR John Ankerberg online videos
- Should adherence to intelligent design be grounds for not hiring a professor?
- ID theorist responds to critics of the design of the bacterial flagellum
- Should ID researchers be “marked down” for defending intelligent design?
- Walter Bradley explains three scientific arguments for God’s existence
- How the science teachers lobby misrepresents intelligent design
- Can intelligent design be front-loaded at the creation of the universe?
- Harvard astrophysicist backs the Rare Earth hypothesis
- Ho-hum… more pro-intelligent design peer-reviewed papers
- Eighteen peer-reviewed scientific publications that support intelligent design
- Pro-ID scientist Ann Gauger interviewed on Mike Behe’s latest paper
- Angus Menuge on methodological materialism and the search for truth
- Assessing the evidence in favor of common ancestry
- Philip E. Johnson lectures on science, evolution and religion
- Robin Collins explains why fine-tuning is necessary for life
- How can you tell whether something is designed or not?
- How do proponents of Darwinian evolution respond to debate?

California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools

April 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Yahoo News. (H/T Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> Gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people would be added to the lengthy list of social and ethnic groups that public schools must include in social studies lessons under a landmark bill passed Thursday by the California Senate.
>
> If the bill is adopted by the state Assembly and signed by Gov. Jerry Brown, California would become the first state to require the teaching of gay history.
>
> Supporters say the move is needed to counter anti-gay stereotypes and beliefs that make children in those groups vulnerable to bullying and suicide.
>
> Opponents counter that such instruction would further burden an already crowded curriculum and expose students to a subject that some parents find objectionable.
>
> The legislation, sponsored by Democratic Sen. Mark Leno of San Francisco, passed on a 23-14 party line vote. It also would add disabled people to the curriculum.
>
> The bill gives school districts flexibility in deciding what to include in the lessons and at what grades students would receive them.
>
> But starting in the 2013-14 school year, it would prohibit districts and the California Board of Education from using textbooks or other instructional materials that reflect adversely on gay, bisexual and transgender Americans.

There are policies that we could pass that would promote school choice and homeschooling, like voucher programs. The public sector unions oppose school choice laws, because they do not want parents to have a choice of what their children will learn. Vote smart – don't vote for Democrats.

Youth unemployment rate would rise if minimum wage is increased

April 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNBC.

Excerpt:

> A quarter of teenagers were jobless in March, representing a surprising increase from February, even as the unemployment rate for the rest of the population decreased.
>
> This figure may only get worse if budget-strapped states raise the minimum wage, and it could also be a sign of greater structural damage underlying our economy, analysts said.
>
> The unemployment rate for 16- to 19-year olds jumped back up to 24.5 percent in March, up from 23.9 percent the prior month, according to the latest jobs data from the Labor Department.
>
> […]"Even when comprehending that teen employment is volatile in nature, the data that exists serves up some shock and awe," said Brian Sozzi, a retail research analyst with Wall Street Strategies, in a note Wednesday. "If these (wage) increases do go through, the prospect for teen employment will remain grim as employers search for workers with advanced skills to fill positions."
>
> Twelve states, including Illinois and Pennsylvania, are considering a hike in the minimum wage. While this has been the subject of a long-running debate, many economists and analysts say raising this pay bar may cause more teen layoffs, even as it helps teens who manage to stay employed make more.
>
> "Minimum wage increases over the past few years has definitely made it worse," said Peter Boockvar, chief equities strategist at Miller Tabak. "In fact, there should be zero minimum wage for teenagers, or at most, something much less than the current rate."
>
> Teens typically are the first to be fired and the last to be hired back in a normal economic cycle, so this rate can be considered a kind of leading indicator of employment.

The majority of young people foolishly favor Democrats – the same Democrats whose policies create a 25% unemployment rate for youth. Irony!

You can find out more about how raising the minimum wage increases unemployment from this comprehensive, 50-year, government study.

Excerpt:

> Summary of Research on the Minimum Wage

* The minimum wage reduces employment.

Currie and Fallick (1993), Gallasch (1975), Gardner (1981), Peterson (1957), Peterson and Stewart (1969).

* The minimum wage reduces employment more among teenagers than adults.

Adie (1973); Brown, Gilroy and Kohen (1981a, 1981b); Fleisher (1981); Hammermesh (1982); Meyer and Wise (1981, 1983a); Minimum Wage Study Commission (1981); Neumark and Wascher (1992); Ragan (1977); Vandenbrink (1987); Welch (1974, 1978); Welch and Cunningham (1978).

* The minimum wage reduces employment most among black teenage males.

Al-Salam, Quester, and Welch (1981), Iden (1980), Mincer (1976), Moore (1971), Ragan (1977), Williams (1977a, 1977b).

* The minimum wage helped South African whites at the expense of blacks.

Bauer (1959).

* The minimum wage hurts blacks generally.

Behrman, Sickles and Taubman (1983); Linneman (1982).

* The minimum wage hurts the unskilled.

Krumm (1981).

* The minimum wage hurts low wage workers.

Brozen (1962), Cox and Oaxaca (1986), Gordon (1981).

* The minimum wage hurts low wage workers particularly during cyclical downturns.

Kosters and Welch (1972), Welch (1974).

* The minimum wage reduces average earnings of young workers.Meyer and Wise (1983b).

* The minimum wage reduces employment in low-wage industries, such as retailing.Cotterman (1981), Douty (1960), Fleisher (1981), Hammermesh (1981), Peterson (1981).

* The minimum wage causes employers to cut back on training.Hashimoto (1981, 1982), Leighton and Mincer (1981), Ragan (1981).

* The minimum wage encourages employers to install labor-saving devices.Trapani and Moroney (1981).

* The minimum wage increases the number of people on welfare.Brandon (1995), Leffler (1978).

* The minimum wage hurts the poor generally.

Stigler (1946).

* The minimum wage does little to reduce poverty.

Bonilla (1992), Brown (1988), Johnson and Browning (1983), Kohen and Gilroy

> (1981), Parsons (1980), Smith and Vavrichek (1987).
>
> * The minimum wage helps unions.Linneman (1982), Cox and Oaxaca (1982).
>
> * The minimum wage increases teenage crime rates.Hashimoto (1987), Phillips (1981).
>
> * The minimum wage encourages employers to hire illegal aliens.
>
> Beranek (1982).
>
> * Few workers are permanently stuck at the minimum wage.
>
> Brozen (1969), Smith and Vavrichek (1992).
>
> * The minimum wage has reduced employment in foreign countries.Canada: Forrest (1982); Chile: Corbo (1981); Costa Rica: Gregory (1981); France: Rosa (1981).

This is why it is important for voters to understand economics. When you raise the price of labor, fewer employers will purchase labor. Supply and demand.

What happens if a city decides to privatize all its functions?

April 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Everything good, and nothing bad.

Privatization makes costs go down, and quality go up.

Can Democrats be pro-life? Are there any pro-life Democrats?

April 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News. (H/T Alliance Defense Fund)

Excerpt:

> When members of the Senate voted yesterday on whether taxpayer money should continue flowing to the Planned Parenthood abortion business to the tune of tens of millions of dollars annually, pro-life advocates had no friends in the Democratic Party.
>
> When members of the Senate voted yesterday on whether taxpayer money should continue flowing to the Planned Parenthood abortion business to the tune of tens of millions of dollars annually, pro-life advocates had no friends in the Democratic Party.
>
> Guy Benson, a writer at TownHall, a conservative web site, noted the unanimous pro-Planned Parenthood posture of the supposedly pro-life Democrats and says they are now officially extinct.
>
> "Can we finally dispense with the myth of the pro-life Democrat?" he said. "In the Senate last night, three "pro-life" Democrats voted in lockstep with America's Official Abortion Party to maintain federal funding to Planned Parenthood in a stand alone vote."
>
> "There was nothing to camouflage or obfuscate the issue," Benson continued. "In case you've forgotten, Planned Parenthood is the nation's number one provider of abortions. Ninety-seven percent of women who enter its doors are no longer pregnant when they exit, and almost 40 percent of the group's revenues stem from abortions. It was founded in racism (remnants of which remain alive and well today), it is systemically corrupt, and its moral degradation reaches far beyond its abortion-related services."
>
> "Planned Parenthood receives nine figures in government funding each year, and presented with the chance to shut off the spigot, "pro-lifers" Sen. Joe Manchin, Sen. Ben Nelson, and Sen. Bob Casey all declined to do so," Benson said. "If one cannot bring him- or herself to strip government funding from the nation's largest abortion mill, one should abandon the pretense of calling oneself "pro-life." It's an insult to the movement, and an affront to the intelligence of pro-life voters."
>
> He concluded: "The Democratic Party is a pro-abortion party. Last night's vote confirms that sad truth."

I think the last "pro-life Democrat" was Bart Stupak, and we all know how that ended.

Ezra Levant on the new Sun News television network

April 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ezra Levant

Learn about the new Sun News television network and Ezra Levant's new show "The Source". Sun News launching in Canada on April 18, and it should provide some much needed diversity to the close-minded, economically ignorant climate of big government spending that dominates the news media up north.

Excerpt:

> Do you want to get the Sun News Network on your TV? Then you'd better ask for it. Because we go live in less than two weeks. April 18th is the launch. And you don't want to miss a minute of it, I can promise you that.
>
> Here's a ready-built form for contacting your cable company and demanding the channel. Click it, and take the thirty seconds to send a note.
> And maybe pick up the phone and add the power of your voice to your efforts.
>
> If we were the CBC or CTV, you wouldn't have to ask for the channel. It would be forced on you. In fact, under Canadian broadcasting law, every cable provider must carry CBC and CTV, and every single cable subscriber (that would be you) is forced to pay for it, whether you watch it or not.
>
> These two companies have had a combined 30-plus years of this mandatory indoctrination — and taxation. As if the CBC's billion dollars a year wasn't enough, they ding you for 54 cents a month on your cable bill, whether you ever watch them.
>
> It's the David Suzuki tax. The Peter Mansbridge tax. It's the Alberta-bashing tax. The gun registry tax. It's a tax to pay for your own indoctrination.
>
> We're the Sun — a privately owned company. We don't have the power of taxation. Which is fine. We'll win our viewers the old fashioned way — by broadcasting interesting things that people want to watch.
>
> That's what's so remarkable about the CBC-CTV duopoly. Despite all the subsidies and mandatory broadcasts, Canadians so often choose to get their news elsewhere — including a news station headquartered in the Deep South of the United States, called CNN. They're headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, the cradle of the Confederacy.
>
> It's a pretty damning indictment of Canadian TV news that a TV station in the

> heart of Dixie manages to draw more eyeballs than local offerings. Imagine if the biggest-selling newspaper in Canada were USA Today. How lame would Canadian newspapers have to be to allow that to happen?
>
> One day, the CBC and CTV will have to compete on an equal footing with Sun News Network. One day the CBC won't get the Sun's entire annual TV budget — $20 million — in a single week. Seriously, do the math: with a billion dollars a year, the CBC burns through the Sun's yearly expenses every seven days.
>
> That's a state broadcaster for you. And that's why they have big government built right into their DNA: without big government and high taxes, they'd have to get real jobs.
>
> […]That's my real beef with Canadian TV news today. Not that it's liberal, which it generally is. But that it has such a dreary consensus. On everything from gun control to Omar Khadr to global warming, CTV and CBC are like Tweedledee and Tweedledum. There is the official, "acceptable" view that gets on the air, and everything and everyone else can go pound sand.

In this video, Ezra Levant explains his new show, and the vision of Sun News.

My understanding of Canadian news media from my Canadian friends is that all the mainstream media news channels ever talk about is how much taxpayer money to spend on various whiny special interest groups. They just talk and talk about stimulus spending, "equalization payments", welfare, subsidies for green energy companies and so on. The political debates are big whining sessions where the progressive political parties complain that the other progressive parties aren't spending enough money on the poor fill-in-the-blank group. The majority of the people vote for left-wing parties like the Liberals and the New Democrats and the Bloc Quebecois, because the majority of the people get an economically ignorant view preached to them by the news media. They have been taught by the media to choose policies based on 1) their feelings, 2) greed for their neighbor's money and 3) international opinion, especially the UN. They can't think for themselves, and they are accustomed to depending on government to give them handouts.

Sun News will compete against the ultra-liberal networks like CTV and government-owned CBC. Unlike CBC and CTV, the Sun News network will feature center and center-right perspectives on the news, and will cover issues that the mainstream news networks cannot touch. (Yes, in Canada every province has anti-free-speech censorship panels that go after pastors and Christian business owners who offend left-wing groups with their inconvenient free speech). There really isn't any free speech in Canada, the whole country is run like a liberal university campus with speech codes, where the governing leftists collect taxpayer money that is then used to silence dissenting voices, like those of Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn. They really need some different points of view so that they can be more open-minded and tolerant. They just get offended too easily because they only know one way of thinking about the issues and they find disagreement offensive.

Can evolutionary biologists be objective about evolution?

April 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News, and article by Casey Luskin.

Excerpt:

> What I am suggesting is that the public packaging of Darwinian theory has become intensely political, and that would-be critics face certain pressures.
>
> But don't take my word for it. Listen to what evolutionists themselves are saying.
>
> Consider the words of philosopher Jerry Fodor and cognitive scientist Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini in their book *What Darwin Got Wrong*:
>
> > We've been told by more than one of our colleagues that, even if Darwin was substantially wrong to claim that natural selection is the mechanism of evolution, nonetheless we shouldn't say so. Not, anyhow, in public. To do that is, however inadvertently, to align oneself with the Forces of Darkness, whose goal is to bring Science into disrepute.
> >
> > (Jerry Fodor and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, *What Darwin God Wrong*, p. xx (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010)
>
> Likewise, theoretical biologist Günter Thieβen wrote in *Theory in Biosciences*:
>
> > It is dangerous to raise attention to the fact that there is no satisfying explanation for macroevolution. One easily becomes a target of orthodox evolutionary biology and a false friend of proponents of non-scientific concepts.
> >
> > (Günter Theißen, "The Proper Place of Hopeful Monsters in Evolutionary Biology," *Theory in Biosciences*, Vol. 124: 349-369 (2006).)
>
> Again, philosopher and biologist John Dupré writes in *American Scientist*:
>
> > The enduring debates with creationists have also undoubtedly tended to discourage admission that major conceptual issues about evolution remain unresolved.
> >
> > (John Dupré, "The Conditions for Existence," *American Scientist*)
>
> Such words are not harbingers of some kind of a mass conspiracy to hide problems with evolution from the public. No such conspiracy exists. But they do show evidence of the hyper-political nature of this debate, where scientists feel political pressure to avoid lending credence to those they call "creationists."

It's important to point that what materialists mean by "science" is presuming materialism

and then carrying on a charade of investigating the world and discovering that materialism did it. They can't be open to agent causation, because their religion doesn't allow it.

Give me that old-time religion

Imagine a materialist CIO who thought that code was written by large numbers of monkeys pounding at keyboards instead of by engineers. He would be firing all the software engineers and replacing them with monkeys in order to generate better code. And he would call this method of generating new code "science". It's the scientific way of generating new information, he would say, and using software engineers to generate new code isn't "science". It's what he learned at UC Berkeley and UW Madison! His professors of biology swear that it is true!

It seems to me that there are incentives in place that make it impossible for Darwinists to discuss their materialistic religion honestly. They feel pressured to distort the evidence in the public square, and there are political pressures on them to distort the evidence in order to avoid being censured by their employers and colleagues. When questions about the evidence for Darwinism come up, they have to rally around their religion and chant the creeds that comfort them. There can be no questioning of their faith in the presupposition of materialism.

IDF arrest two Palestians for murder of the Vogel family

April 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Israel
From the Jerusalem Post.

Excerpt:

> Two Palestinian youths from Awarta, have confessed to killing five members of the Fogel family in nearby Itamar on Friday night, March 11.
>
> The suspects, who were arrested in the past few days – along with several accomplices – are Hakim Maazan Niad Awad, 18, a high-school student, and Amjad Mahmud Fauzi Awad, 19, also a student.
>
> They are from the same clan, but not directly related.
>
> The two men have admitted to planning a terrorist attack against Jews, and confessed to the stabbings. They reenacted the attacks for investigators, security personnel said on Sunday.
>
> The intruders broke into the Fogel home in the Itamar settlement and stabbed to death five members of the family in their sleep: Udi Fogel, 36, Ruth Fogel, 35, and their children Yoav, 11, Elad, four, and Hadas, three months.
>
> The terrorists did not know that the Fogels' two other children were sleeping in a side room, so their lives were spared.
>
> "I have never heard such heartless testimony," a Shin Bet (Israel Security

> Agency) source told Channel 2 on Sunday night.
>
> The suspects reenacted the murder and the planning leading up to it with accuracy and without emotion, the source said, adding that they expressed no remorse.
>
> When asked if they regretted killing small children and a baby, Amjad responded that they had killed “five Israelis and Jews,” and didn’t regard their age as a factor.
>
> Although the young men carried out the attack on their own initiative, they are affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and received significant help from family members and friends after the attack, the IDF said.

In other news, a 16-year-old boy has died as a result of injuries sustained during a Hamas attack on a school bus using anti-tank missiles. *Anti-tank missiles.*

Christian electrician faces termination for displaying cross

April 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

But wearing a burkha is just fine. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> An electrician faces the sack for displaying a small palm cross on the dashboard of his company van.
>
> Former soldier Colin Atkinson has been summoned to a disciplinary hearing by the giant housing association where he has been employed for 15 years because he refuses to remove the symbol.
>
> […]Throughout his time at work, he has had an 8in-long cross made from woven palm leaves attached to the dashboard shelf below his windscreen without receiving a single complaint.
>
> But his bosses at publicly funded Wakefield and District Housing (WDH) in West Yorkshire – the fifth-biggest housing organisation in England – have demanded he remove the cross on the grounds it may offend people or suggest the organisation is Christian. Mr Atkinson's union representative said he faces a full disciplinary hearing next month for gross misconduct, which could result in dismissal.
>
> The association strongly promotes 'inclusive' policies and allows employees to wear religious symbols at work.
>
> It has provided stalls at gay pride events, held 'diversity days' for travellers, and hosted a gender reassignment event entitled A World That Includes Transpeople.
>
> […]Despite the company's treatment of Mr Atkinson, the boss of the depot where he works in Castleford has been allowed to adorn his office with a poster of the Argentinian revolutionary Che Guevara.Denis Doody, who is WDH's environmental manager, also has a whiteboard on which are written several quotations by the Marxist guerrilla leader, who was a key figure in the Cuban revolution in the Fifties.Colleagues said staff and even members of the public who were visiting the depot would be able to see the poster and whiteboard through his office window.
> […]But the company's equality and diversity manager, Jayne O'Connell, who was recruited from HBoS bank in 2009, replied: 'WDH has a stance of neutrality. We now have different faiths, new emerging cultures. We have to be respectful of all views and beliefs.'[…]At another meeting, Ms O'Connell said Mr Atkinson could express his faith but 'it is quite clear it cannot be associated with WDH and displaying the cross gives the impression that WDH is a Christian organisation'.She said staff could demonstrate their personal beliefs 'discreetly',

> even adding that the company could provide extra material in its official corporate colours ‘for employees who wish to wear a different style of uniform’.Pressed by Mr Cunliffe on whether a Muslim woman who wore a burka at work would be considered discreet, she said: ‘If they could do their job effectively, then yes.’
> Asked whether she would think a burka in WDH corporate colours was discreet, Ms O’Connell replied: ‘Yes, it would be.’

Read the whole story, there are many more alarming details.

Related posts

- UK judge rules that Christians have no right to religious liberty
- Muslims assault man for teaching comparative religions class
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- How the government forces Christians to affirm homosexuality
- Pro-life protesters arrested and detained in UK
- Christian preacher arrested for saying that homosexuality is a sin
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- Outgoing UK Labour government aims to make sex education compulsory
- How Harriet Harman’s Equality Bill will impact religious liberty
- How the British government funds radical Islam
- UK bill imposes restrictions on homechooling families
- Christian doctor fired in the UK for acting in the best interests of children

New study finds that cohabitation damages children

April 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> The astonishing speed at which traditional family life has collapsed is laid bare today.
>
> Shocking figures reveal that births outside marriage are at their highest level in two centuries and nearly half of children can expect their parents to separate by the time they turn 16.
>
> Nine out of ten couples now live together before – or instead of – tying the knot. Before the Second World War, it was fewer than one in 30.
>
> From a situation 30 years ago where it was often considered shameful to have a child outside of wedlock, it has now become the norm.
>
> Some 46 per cent of children are born to unmarried mothers, according to research by the Centre for Social Justice.
>
> The think-tank said a child growing up in a one-parent family is 75 per cent more likely to fail at school, 70 per cent more likely to become a drug addict, 50 per cent more likely to have an alcohol problem and 35 per cent more likely to be unemployed as an adult.
>
> Some 48 per cent of children are likely to see their family break up before they are 16. Ten years ago, it was 40 per cent.
>
> Gavin Poole, executive director of the CSJ, which was set up by Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith, said: 'Current high levels of cohabitation are a key factor in the rise in family breakdown in our country and this paper shows that we have not been here before.
>
> 'Marriage and commitment tend to stabilise and strengthen families and cannot be ignored. The peculiarly high levels of family breakdown found in Britain are at the heart of the social breakdown which is devastating our most deprived communities.
>
> 'We cannot ignore the wealth of evidence showing that the family environment in which a child grows up is key in determining their future life outcomes.'
>
> The report says the decline in the traditional family is a crucial factor in the social decay that is blighting Britain.
>
> It finds that – at around 5 per cent – levels of births outside marriage were the same in the 1950s as in the 1750s.
>
> They remained at low levels through the 19th century and stayed flat until the 1960s. But since then they have soared. By the late 1970s, 10 per cent of babies

> were born to single or unmarried parents, by 1991 it was 30 per cent and today it is 46 per cent.
>
> The authors of the research point to evidence suggesting that in the 1950s and 1960s, only 1 to 3 per cent of couples cohabited before marriage.
>
> Today, nearly 90 per cent of couples live together before, or instead of, getting married.
>
> Family breakdown, the experts claim, is being fuelled by the growth in the less stable relationship of cohabitation. 'A child growing up in a fractured, chaotic or fatherless family is far less likely to develop the pro-social skills essential for success later in life,' Mr Poole said.

The thing to understand about the secular left in Britain is that they are not really against poverty – not if it means telling people to be more responsible and informed about abstinence, courting and marriage. They are willing to "fix" poverty by taking money from one group and giving it to another group. But they are not willing to prevent poverty by holding people accountable to moral standards. That would be so judgmental, divisive and offensive to poor people. And if there is one thing the secular left stands for, it's not making people feel bad for their own decisions. The secular left would rather have adults doing whatever makes them feel good than to have children grow up healthy and happy in stable environments.

Marriage is the best way to prevent child poverty, so let's have some policies that promote marriage and discourage cohabitation.

Related posts

- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New study finds that pre-marital sex reduces quality of relationships
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama's new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- How feminism is opposed to chivalry, marriage and fathers
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?

- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children’s sexual choices
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being

Which health care system is better? Canada or the United States?

April 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Hoover Institute at Stanford University.

The article compares (pre-Obamacare) American health care to health care in other places like Canada, the UK and Europe.

The full article. I almost never cite the full article, but this is a must read. Men, pay close attention to the differences in prostate cancer treatment rates in a for-profit system versus a single-payer system, where bureaucrats decide who gets treatment.

> MEDICINE AND HEALTH:
>
> Here's a Second Opinion
>
> By Scott W. Atlas
>
> *Ten reasons why America's health care system is in better condition than you might suppose. By **Scott W. Atlas.***
>
> Medical care in the United States is derided as miserable compared to health care systems in the rest of the developed world. Economists, government officials, insurers, and academics beat the drum for a far larger government role in health care. Much of the public assumes that their arguments are sound because the calls for change are so ubiquitous and the topic so complex. Before we turn to government as the solution, however, we should consider some unheralded facts about America's health care system.**1. Americans have better survival rates than Europeans for common cancers.**Breast cancer mortality is 52 percent higher in Germany than in the United States and 88 percent higher in the United Kingdom. Prostate cancer mortality is 604 percent higher in the United Kingdom and 457 percent higher in Norway. The mortality rate for colorectal cancer among British men and women is about 40 percent higher.**2. Americans have lower cancer mortality rates than Canadians.**Breast cancer mortality in Canada is 9 percent higher than in the United States, prostate cancer is 184 percent higher, and colon cancer among men is about 10 percent higher.**3. Americans have better access to treatment for chronic diseases than patients in other developed countries.** Some 56 percent of Americans who could benefit from statin drugs, which reduce cholesterol and protect against heart disease, are taking them. By comparison, of those patients who could benefit from these drugs, only 36 percent of the Dutch, 29 percent of the Swiss, 26 percent of Germans, 23 percent of Britons, and 17 percent of Italians receive them.
>
> **4. Americans have better access to preventive cancer screening than Canadians.** Take the proportion of the appropriate-age population groups who

have received recommended tests for breast, cervical, prostate, and colon cancer:

- Nine out of ten middle-aged American women (89 percent) have had a mammogram, compared to fewer than three-fourths of Canadians (72 percent).
- Nearly all American women (96 percent) have had a Pap smear, compared to fewer than 90 percent of Canadians.
- More than half of American men (54 percent) have had a prostatespecific antigen (PSA) test, compared to fewer than one in six Canadians (16 percent).
- Nearly one-third of Americans (30 percent) have had a colonoscopy, compared with fewer than one in twenty Canadians (5 percent).

5. Lower-income Americans are in better health than comparable Canadians. Twice as many American seniors with below-median incomes self-report "excellent" health (11.7 percent) compared to Canadian seniors (5.8 percent). Conversely, white, young Canadian adults with below-median incomes are 20 percent more likely than lower-income Americans to describe their health as "fair or poor."

6. Americans spend less time waiting for care than patients in Canada and the United Kingdom. Canadian and British patients wait about twice as long—sometimes more than a year—to see a specialist, have elective surgery such as hip replacements, or get radiation treatment for cancer. All told, 827,429 people are waiting for some type of procedure in Canada. In Britain, nearly 1.8 million people are waiting for a hospital admission or outpatient treatment.

7. People in countries with more government control of health care are highly dissatisfied and believe reform is needed. More than 70 percent of German, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, and British adults say their health system needs either "fundamental change" or "complete rebuilding."

8. Americans are more satisfied with the care they receive than Canadians. When asked about their own health care instead of the "health care system," more than half of Americans (51.3 percent) are very satisfied with their health care services, compared with only 41.5 percent of Canadians; a lower proportion of Americans are dissatisfied (6.8 percent) than Canadians (8.5 percent).

9. Americans have better access to important new technologies such as medical imaging than do patients in Canada or Britain. An overwhelming majority of leading American physicians identify computerized tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) as the most important medical innovations for improving patient care during the previous decade—even as economists and policy makers unfamiliar with actual medical practice decry

these techniques as wasteful. The United States has thirty-four CT scanners per million Americans, compared to twelve in Canada and eight in Britain. The United States has almost twenty-seven MRI machines per million people compared to about six per million in Canada and Britain.

10. Americans are responsible for the vast majority of all health care innovations. The top five U.S. hospitals conduct more clinical trials than all the hospitals in any other developed country. Since the mid- 1970s, the Nobel Prize in medicine or physiology has gone to U.S. residents more often than recipients from all other countries combined. In only five of the past thirty-four years did a scientist living in the United States not win or share in the prize. Most important recent medical innovations were developed in the United States.

Despite serious challenges, such as escalating costs and care for the uninsured, the U.S. health care system compares favorably to those in other developed countries.

This essay appeared on the website of the National Center for Policy Analysis on March 24, 2009. An earlier version was published in the *Washington Times.*Available from the Hoover Press is *Power to the Patient: Selected Health Care Issues and Policy Solutions,* edited by Scott W. Atlas. To order, call 800.935.2882 or visit www.hooverpress.org.

Scott W. Atlas is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a professor of radiology and chief of neuroradiology at Stanford University Medical School.

Please forward this article to all of your friends! It’s important!

Dennis Prager on dependence, responsibility and character

April 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this video on Evan Sayet's Facebook page.

You may also be interested in this article by Dennis Prager that explains the conflict between equality of life outcomes (redistribution of wealth) and equality of opportunity (liberty and responsibility).

Woman who falsely accused lacrosse players of rape faces murder charge

April 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> The woman who falsely accused three Duke lacrosse players of raping her was charged Monday with murder in the death of her boyfriend.
>
> Crystal Mangum was indicted on a charge of first-degree murder and two counts of larceny. She has been in jail since April 3, when police charged her with assault in the stabbing 46-year-old Reginald Daye. He died after nearly two weeks at a hospital.
>
> An attorney for Mangum and officials in the district attorney's office did not immediately return calls seeking comment.
>
> Mangum falsely accused the lacrosse players of raping her at a 2006 party at which she was hired to perform as a stripper. The case heightened long-standing tensions in Durham about race, class and the privileged status of college athletes.
>
> Prosecutors declined to press charges for the false accusations, but Mangum's bizarre legal troubles have continued.
>
> Last year, she was convicted on misdemeanor charges after setting a fire that nearly torched her home with her three children inside. In a videotaped police interrogation, she told officers she set got into a confrontation with her boyfriend at the time — not Daye — and burned his clothes, smashed his car windshield and threatened to stab him.
>
> Friends said Mangum has never recovered from the stigma brought by the lacrosse case and has been involved in a string of questionable relationships in an attempt to provide stability for her children.

I know many of you think that I am going to blame the woman for this, but you're wrong. The man is to blame. This woman was evil before the man met her – because she made false accusations against the Duke lacrosse team. The man *knew this*. Even if he didn't know it, it's his responsibility to interrogate her to unearth all of her craziness before his judgment is overwhelmed by the power of physical contact with her. So I blame the man – he is the one who had the dashed expectations. He believed that she was capable of a relationship, but she clearly was not! Easy sex is *no guarantee* that the woman is going to treat a man well. You don't try to pet the alligator at the zoo – you can't have a relationship with an alligator. It's an alligator!

If every man on the planet ignored this woman, then who would she have left to be evil

with? Surely at that point she would realize that there was something wrong with the way she treats men. I really recommend that men do a better job of reading some of the cases where women make false accusations of rape, harassment and child abuse (against ex-husbands in order to get custody) and get very familiar with what kind of women do this sort of thing *and why*. Learn the warning signs by reading their stories. Why do these women make false accusations? What do they have in common? What should men ask them to see whether they are dangerous? Men have to be careful because not judging wisely can lead to divorce, or even being murdered.

What economic policies do left-wing and right-wing economists agree on?

April 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is from Harvard economist Greg Mankiw. (H/T Michael)

Excerpt:

> Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:
>
> 1. A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)
> 2. Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)
> 3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
> 4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
> 5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
> 6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
> 7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
> 8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
> 9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
> 10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
> 11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
> 12. A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)
> 13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a “negative income tax.” (79%)
> 14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

I wonder which political party believes in most or all of these positions?

Hmmmmn.

Republicans hire top lawyer to defend traditional marriage against Democrats

April 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from liberal CNN. (H/T Reuben)

Excerpt:

> House Republicans have hired a prominent conservative attorney to defend the federal Defense of Marriage Act in a pending lawsuit, legal sources say, and will make an effort to divert money from the Justice Department to fund its high-profile fight.
>
> House Speaker John Boehner disclosed the legal and political strategy in a letter Monday to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. The Obama administration, which normally would defend federal laws in judicial disputes, announced last month it believed the Defense of Marriage Act, often referred to as DOMA, to be unconstitutional. The law defines marriage for federal purposes as unions only between a man and woman.
>
> Boehner said that with the Justice Department not participating, he had "no choice" but to act unilaterally.
>
> "The burden of defending DOMA, and the resulting costs associated with any litigation that would have otherwise been born (sic) by DOJ (The Department of Justice), has fallen to the House," Boehner said. "Obviously, DOJ's decision results in DOJ no longer needing the funds it would have otherwise expended defending the constitutionality of DOMA. It is my intent that those funds be diverted to the House for reimbursement of any costs incurred by and associated with the House, and not DOJ, defending DOMA."
>
> Such a move would require Senate approval, an unlikely prospect since Democrats control that chamber.
>
> Boehner will probably end up finding money for the legal fight from other discretionary and non-discretionary spending sources, according to legal experts. There was no indication just how much the legal fight could eventually cost.
>
> […]Legal sources say the House Republican leadership hired [Paul D.] Clement, a Washington appellate attorney, to defend the law. He filed a brief Monday in a pending case from New York, where a lesbian received an estate tax bill of more than $360,000 after her longtime partner and legal wife had died.Clement is a former solicitor general under President George W. Bush, serving from 2005 to 2008. It was his job to defend federal laws and executive actions in court, similar to what he will be doing now as a private lawyer on retainer. He was mentioned at one time as a possible Supreme Court nominee.
>
> Separately, he also is representing more than two dozens states in their lawsuit

> against the administration over the sweeping health care reform law passed by Congress last year. That case is pending in a federal appeals court in Atlanta.

Once again we see the importance of conservative parents raising influential children. Everybody talks about traditional marriage, but only Paul D. Clement is going to be in a position to really do something about it. And why? Because he has effectively pursued skills and jobs that put him in a position to have an influence.

If you are looking for a good charity, try the Alliance Defense Fund

April 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Alliance Defense Fund secured a matching grant of 1.25 MILLION dollars. These guys do more for religious liberty in the world than *anybody*. A great organization. It's all about getting a return for your investment, and these guys provide a huge return on investment.

Watch the video:

What they've done:

> Christian attorneys trained at the ADF Legal Academy are on the frontlines fighting for religious freedom in communities like yours every day. These faithful allied attorneys are protecting the Body of Christ from legal attacks – and by God's grace, are winning case after crucial case.

Some ADF victories:

- ***Charles LiMandri*** achieved an important victory for four San Diego firefighters who were forced to endure sexual harassment during a lewd city-sponsored parade celebrating homosexual behavior.
- ***Natalie Decker*** successfully defended a Christian couple in Colorado who were criminally charged for disciplining their child in accordance with church teaching.
- ***Steven O'Ban*** helped the Christian non-profit organization, World Vision, win an important victory after the ministry was sued by two former employees who were dismissed after admitting that they didn't believe in the Holy Trinity.

What they're doing:

> ADF Legal Academy-trained attorneys are in communities across America defending the constitutionally protected rights of Christians who have been censored and punished for expressing their faith. Please be in prayer for these and so many other important allied attorney cases being fought to protect *Our First Liberty* – religious freedom – and to keep the door open for the spread of the Gospel.

Some current ADF cases:

- ***Randall Wenger*** is representing a 5th-grade public school student in Pennsylvania who was prohibited from distributing fliers that invited classmates to a Christmas party at her church because the school district has a policy that bars speech "promoting Christianity."
- ***Karen Mueller*** is defending a nurse-practitioner in Wisconsin who was fired for

sharing her faith with the patients for whom she cared.
- ***Daniel Cox*** is assisting with the defense of three young women who were arrested, shackled, strip-searched, and detained overnight by Maryland state police after peacefully expressing their pro-life views.

Religious liberty is what I would call my "core value". The freedom to be who I really am, and to say what I really think in public, whether people like it or not. The ADF defends my religious liberty, and no one does it better.

I never give money to charities that don't promote my worldview. My goal is not to alleviate people's suffering, primarily. My goal is to persuade others about the truth of the gospel. And that takes legal work, policy work and research on arguments and evidence. I want to defend God's existence and character, and to promote the social conditions (e.g. – protection of unborn children, traditional marriage, low taxes, free trade, school choice, security from terrorism, etc.) that maximize the opportunities of non-Christians to investigate the gospel for themselves.

Yes, arguments and evidence are very important, but arguments and evidence are not weighed in a vacuum. Every person on the planet was created to know God, and my job is to make sure they get their best opportunity to do that. Part of that opportunity is letting Christians have the freedom to be who they are in public, in front of non-Christians. It's also important for me to be able to find a job, to keep what I earn, and to spend my earnings on the causes that I think are important – not to let someone else take my money and spend it buying votes from special interest groups with wasteful government spending.

My favorite charities are Reasonable Faith, Stand to Reason, Please Convince Me, CrossExamined, Faith Beyond Belief, Heritage Foundation, Family Research Council, Access Research Network, Discovery Institute Center for Science & Culture, and Alliance Defense Fund. These are charities that move the ball forward effectively.

Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff admits plan to form coalition with Quebec separatists

April 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

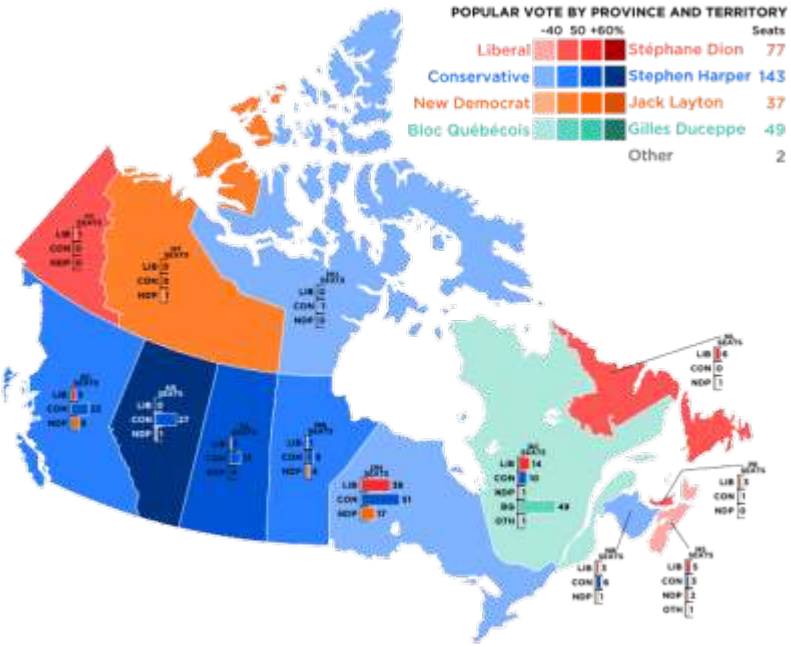

2008 Election Canada Provincial Map

Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff is willing to lead a coalition that would include Bloc Quebecois separatists. The separatists are a significant minority of the people in Quebec (about a third) and they threaten to secede from Canada unless the other provinces give them them money collected from citizens in other provinces.

Excerpt:

> Michael Ignatieff is saying clearly for the first time that he could defeat a minority Conservative government and make a case to the Governor-General that his party could govern with the support of others – and without another trip to the polls.
>
> Until now, Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff has only said the party that wins the most seats on May 2 can "try" to win the confidence of the House of Commons. While the comment carried an obvious implication, he spelled it out for the first time Tuesday.
>
> "If [Conservative Leader Stephen] Harper wins the most seats and forms a government but does not secure the confidence of the House, and I'm assuming Parliament comes back, then it goes to the Governor-General. That's what happens. That's how the rules work.
>
> "And then, if the Governor-General wants to call on other parties – or myself, for example – to try and form a government, then we try and form a government. That's exactly how the rules work and what I'm trying to say to Canadians is I

> understand the rules, I respect the rules, I'll follow them to the letter and I'm not going to form a coalition," he said.
>
> Mr. Harper began the campaign by stating that another Conservative minority is no longer an option; that only a majority mandate will keep him as prime minister. His original line of attack was that the other parties would form a coalition. Mr. Ignatieff continues to rule out a formal coalition – which would involve inviting members of another party to sit in cabinet – but he is clearly open to convincing the Governor-General that he can provide stable government with the support of other parties in the House.

Harper should get a bump now that we know that Ignatieff is willing to conspire to break up Canada with Quebec separatists, and willing to cut deals with the communist NDP. So on the one hand you have extorting separatists and on the other hand you have massive spending and higher unemployment which result from corporate tax hikes. There is only *one option* left for Canadians who are serious about federalism, fiscal responsibility and a unified Canada. The Conservative Party of Canada, led by Stephen Harper.

Here's the current electoral map from 2008, showing electoral districts:

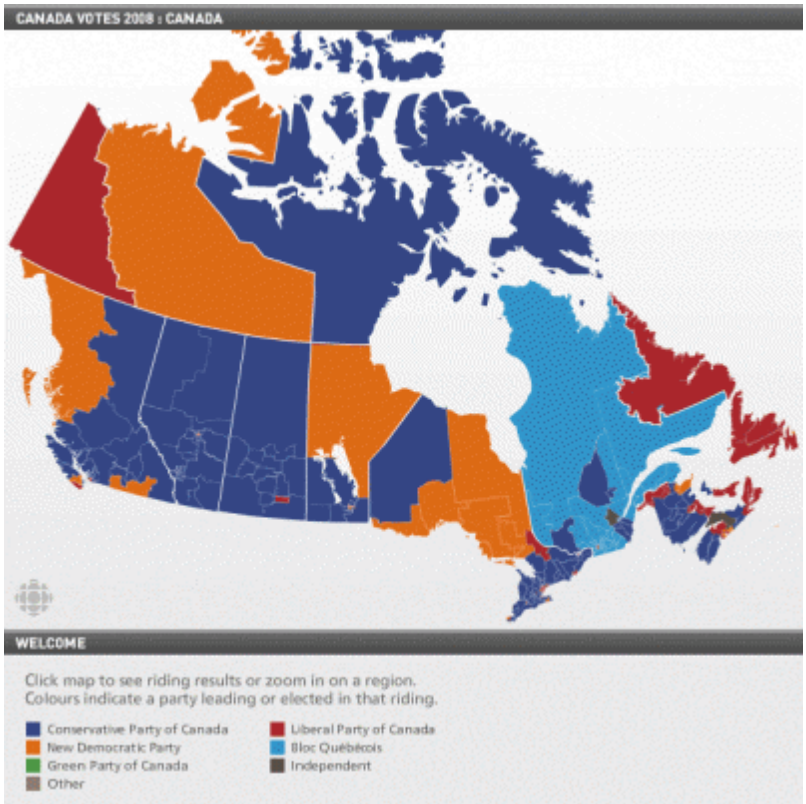

2008 Canada Election Electoral Map

Stephen Harper is ahead by 11 points in the latest 2011 election poll.

Related posts

- Should pro-life social conservatives vote for Stephen Harper?
- Conservative Party unveils plan to promote religious liberty abroad
- Stephen Harper wins English-language election debate
- Stephen Harper's Conservatives unveil "Here for Canada" platform

- Harper would ban political contributions from unions and corporations
- A closer look at Stephen Harper’s Family Tax Cut plan
- Poll finds 68% of Canadians positive on Canadian economy
- Canada created twice the number of jobs as the United States in January
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper vows to end long-gun registry
- Stephen Harper makes a stand against North Korean aggression
- Fiscally conservative Canada campaigns against global bank tax
- Federal conservatives in Canada aim to cut spending and waste from budget
- Canada’s finance minister proposes changes to mortgage lending laws
- Supreme Court sides with Conservative Party against price-fixing monopoly
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper seeks increased trade with India
- Canadian Evangelicals and Catholics more opposed to secularism and socialism
- Members of Canadian socialist parties oppose child sex-trafficking crime bill
- Harper instructs foreign minister to denounce Libyan dictator
- Canadians to walk out of Ahmadinejad’s speech at UN
- Canada signs free trade deal with Panama
- Harper pays surprise visit to troops in Afghanistan
- Investors Business Daily says Harper better leader than Obama
- Round-up of US news media interviews with Stephen Harper

Republicans move to defund Planned Parenthood at the state level

April 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about federalism
From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Days after Republican Congressmen in Washington abandoned the effort to strip Planned Parenthood of its federal funds, the battle continues in state legislatures across the country.
>
> In **North Carolina,** Republicans added a provision to the state budget last week that would prohibit the state from providing grants or entering into contracts with Planned Parenthood, a measure which would deprive the organization of the $473,000 it currently receives through state family planning programs.
>
> Representative Nelson Dollar, chairman of the House appropriation subcommittee for Health and Human Services, told the Raleigh News and Observer newspaper that the provision is unrelated to the issue of abortion.
>
> "There are a whole host of programs being reduced. Planned Parenthood is not unique," he said, adding that the proposed budget still allocated $3.6 million towards other teen pregnancy prevention programs.
>
> A similar measure prohibiting state grants and contracts with Planned Parenthood was added to a pro-life bill in **Indiana** yesterday. According to an

> Associated Press report, Planned Parenthood is currently receiving $3 million in Indiana state funds.
>
> The larger bill of which the funding provision is now a part, HB 1210, would also prohibit abortions after 20 weeks gestation. The current legal cut-off in Indiana is 24 weeks. The bill has yet to be voted on by the state Senate.
>
> Also on Monday, **Minnesota** Republicans introduced SF 1224, a bill that does not mention Planned Parenthood by name, but which prohibits state grant funds from being given to any organization that provides abortions or refers patients for abortion.
>
> If passed, the bill would remove state funds from all of the 24 clinics that Planned Parenthood operates in Minnesota.
>
> This past week's legislation mirrors other recent efforts in **Wisconsin** and **New Hampshire** to keep Planned Parenthood from receiving fund from state coffers. Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker unveiled a budget proposal in early March which eliminates the Title V Maternal and Child Health Program. Title V is the source of roughly $1 million in funding for Planned Parenthood's 27 Wisconsin clinics, according to the Huffington Post.
>
> The proposed budget is currently stalled by tense debate over its radical overhaul of state finances, including cuts in education, and health-care and pension plans for public employees.
>
> Legislative efforts in New Hampshire have also come to a standstill, after a bill specifically targeting Planned Parenthood was introduced in early February. HB 228 would, like the North Carolina and Indiana legislation, prohibit the state from entering into a contract with Planned Parenthood; it is currently retained in committee in the House.
>
> Planned Parenthood stands to lose approximately $800,000 if the New Hampshire legislation is passed.

Read the rest, there's more.

Abortion is about profits. It's a business. If we vote to cut off the taxpayer subsidies, the abortions will stop. Get government out of the health care business, and the abortions will stop.

Related posts

- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- House Republicans win vote to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring

- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Rep. Mike Pence drafts amendment to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

Paul Copan on whether the Bible endorses slavery

April 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Before I link to Paul Copan's article, (H/T The Poached Egg), I want to say that I actually don't see why atheists are so bothered by slavery, since there no such thing as morality if atheism is true. If atheism is true, then slavery isn't wrong. It's just *unfashionable* in some societies who have evolved one way, versus other societies that have evolved to think slavery is OK. Whatever has evolved is right, on atheism – there is no transcendent objective standard by which atheists can condemn any practice as wrong. They also can't prescribe moral behavior, for at least two reasons. First, there is no reason to be moral on atheism if you get more pleasure from being immoral and you can escape the consequences. Second, there is no free will on atheism, because matter is all there is and the interactions of particles in motion is determined by the laws of physics that govern matter.

Having said that, let's assume slavery is wrong, which it is on Christian theism, and see what Paul Copan has to say about the practice of slavery and the Old Testament.

Excerpt:

We should compare Hebrew debt-servanthood (many translations render this "slavery") more fairly to apprentice-like positions to pay off debts — much like the indentured servitude during America's founding when people worked for approximately 7 years to pay off the debt for their passage to the New World. Then they became free.

In most cases, servanthood was more like a live-in *employee*, temporarily embedded within the employer's household. Even today, teams trade sports players to another team that has an owner, and these players belong to a franchise. This language hardly suggests slavery, but rather a formal contractual agreement to be fulfilled — like in the Old Testament.3

Through failed crops or other disasters, debt tended to come to *families*, not just individuals. One could *voluntarily* enter into a contractual agreement ("sell" himself) to work in the household of another: "one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells himself" (Leviticus 25:47). A wife or children could be "sold" to help sustain the family through economically unbearable times — unless kinfolk "redeemed" them (payed their debt). They would be debt-servants for 6 years.4 A family might need to mortgage their land until the year of Jubilee every 50 years.5

Note: In the Old Testament, *outsiders did not impose servanthood* — as in the antebellum South.6 Masters could hire servants "from year to year" and were not to "rule over … [them] ruthlessly" (Leviticus 25:46,53). Rather than being excluded from Israelite society, servants were thoroughly embedded within Israelite homes.

The Old Testament prohibited unavoidable lifelong servanthood — unless someone loved his master and wanted to attach himself to him (Exodus 21:5). Masters were to grant their servants release every seventh year with all debts forgiven (Leviticus 25:35–43). A

slave's legal status was unique in the ancient Near East (ANE) — a dramatic improvement over ANE law codes: "Hebrew has no vocabulary of slavery, only of servanthood."7

An Israelite servant's guaranteed eventual release within 7 years was a *control or regulation to prevent the abuse and institutionalizing of such positions.* The release-year reminded the Israelites that poverty-induced servanthood was not an ideal social arrangement. On the other hand, *servanthood existed in Israel precisely because poverty existed: no poverty, no servants in Israel. And if servants lived in Israel, this was voluntary (typically poverty-induced) — not forced.*

Read the whole thing. And if you think that's interesting, you can listen to this debate on slavery and the Bible.

Heroic Christian woman sacrifices her life to save her unborn child

April 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jessica Council

From Life Site News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> In August of last year Jessica Council – a beautiful, 30-year-old mother of one – noticed that she had a sore throat. At around the same time, she also began to suspect that she was pregnant.
>
> When after two weeks the sore throat had not gone away, Jessica decided to have it checked out. Her doctor told her that it was probably a thyroid goiter, and ultimately nothing to be too concerned about. Just to be sure, however, he had a test done, which he said confirmed his initial suspicions. Everything would be ok, he said.
>
> But everything was not ok. The doctor had misread the test.
>
> Around November 15th, Jessica began having trouble breathing. On November 21st she landed in the emergency room. Then, on November 22nd, her throat closed up so tightly that she could not breathe, at which point doctors managed to insert a tube down her throat, and put her on a ventilator.
>
> The following day, November 23rd, Jessica was informed that she had cancer. By then, she also knew for certain that she was with child.
>
> Thus began a journey that would put the faith and pro-life convictions of Jessica and her husband, Clint, to the ultimate test.
>
> […]Clint describes his wife's reaction to the news of the cancer in her throat as "a

> mixture of fear and surprise." As for himself, he says he felt "just every emotion you can think of … except for joy. I was a basket case."
>
> But, of course, Jessica wasn't the only one threatened by the cancer: she was pregnant, and any treatments she underwent would almost certainly harm, and possibly even kill her unborn child.
>
> On November 25th, the hospital's OB/GYN offered the couple an abortion. Clint says Jessica never hesitated. "That was never an option," he said. "That is black and white."

Read the whole thing for the rest of the story. I think this about as heroic as a person can be.

UPDATE: Wes also sent me this story of a 9-year old boy who saved his 2-year old sister's life… using CPR!

Mike Licona debates Bart Ehrman on the Unbelievable radio show

April 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Unbelievable radio show.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is well known as a US New Testament Scholar who lost his Christian faith and now questions many core precepts of Christianity, including the Resurrection of Jesus. When Mike Licona had doubts he devoted himself to investigating the evidence and became convinced that Jesus resurrection is the only rational explanation for the facts.
>
> They debate key historical facts about the resurrection – are the letters of Paul that report the resurrection and the Gospel accounts trustworthy or theologised and changed with time? What about apparent contradictions between the Gospels? Does the consensus of scholars count as evidence, or is there a Christian bias? Can a miracle count as an explanation for historical data?

The MP3 file is here.

Snarky summary of the radio debate: (items with * are my made-up paraphrases/clarifications)

Ehrman:
– Bart's new book is about forgeries in the ancient world
– some books were falsely attributed to prominent Christian figures
– there are mistakes in the Bible
– there are mistakes in the resurrection narratives
– the defeat of inerrancy led to his conversion to liberal Christianity
– the problem of evil and suffering caused him to become a non-Christian

Licona:
– there are minimal facts that are agreed to by a broad spectrum of scholars
– the minimal facts are accepted because they pass standard historical criteria
– Fact 1: Jesus died by crucifixion
– Fact 2: Individuals and groups had visions of Jesus after his death
– Fact 3: Paul, a skeptic and an enemy, had an appearance of Jesus that converted him
– these facts are agreed to atheist scholars, liberal scholars, etc.
– virtually 100% of scholars agree with these three facts
– there is no naturalistic explanation of these three facts
– therefore, the best explanation of these three facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Ehrman:
– all historians would accept these three facts, except for maybe the group appearances

– the death of Jesus is irrelevant to the resurrection
– the second and third point can be collapsed together
– so really there is only one fact

Moderator:
– the crucifixion is relevant because Muslims don't admit that fact
– the crucifixion important because it establishes a resurrection, not a resuscitation

Ehrman:
– well, if the point is that he died, then yes, this does require a resurrection

Licona:
– the crucifixion refutes Muslims who deny that Jesus died
– the crucifixion refutes the apparent death theory (swoon theory)
– the death is required for a bodily resurrection
– it's important to know what facts most scholars, regardless of worldview, agree on
– it's important to emphasize that Licona is working from historical bedrock facts
– the resurrection is the best explanation for the historical bedrock facts

Ehrman:
– you are trying to list 3 things, but really it is just one thing – the appearances
– and not ALL scholars agree that the group visions occurred

Licona:
– name one prominent scholar who denies the group appearances

Ehrman:
– the radically leftist atheist nutcase John Dominic Crossan denies the group appearances
* Crossan is so far on the left that I look like a nutcase for even citing him
* Crossan believes in the Secret Gospel of Mark, which is a hoax – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan believes that the synoptics are LATER than gnostic forged gospels – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan presupposes atheism, so he cannot admit to miracle stories as a pre-supposition – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan pre-supposes religious pluralism, so he cannot allow any exclusive claims Christians make – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan is a good historian, it's just that he is so far to the left that no one – NO ONE – agrees with his all of crazy theories
* I think it is a good idea to cite historians who pre-suppose atheism and political correctness before they sit down to do history

Licona:
– let me explain why most scholars accept the individual and group post-mortem appearances
– the best source for the appearances is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 15:3-8
– Paul himself had an appearance of Jesus after Jesus' death
– Paul received this material from a source very soon after the appearances – within 1-3 years

– we know that Paul met with Jesus disciples multiple times prior to writing
– Paul probably received it from Peter and James, who were themselves eyewitnesses

Moderator:
– this early dating presumably rules out legend

Licona:
– well legends CAN start quickly
– it does show that Paul was an eyewitness
– it does show that Paul was in contact with reliable eyewitnesses

Ehrman:
– 1 Corinthians is written around 55 AD, twenty-five years after Jesus died
– it is not implausible that Paul got the creed from the disciples, who were eyewitnesses
– but you don't need a long time for legends to emerge, so that is a possibility

Licona:
– only about 3% of people could read and write back them
– instead, people had enormous capacity for memorization
– the Pharisees were particularly good at memorization
– Jews were very serious about passing along traditions accurately
– Paul, a prominent Pharisee, would have been capable of passing on early creeds accurately
– Paul, in 1 Cor 7, shows that he is willing to separate his opinions from authentic tradition
– Paul had an opportunity in 1 Cor 7 to put words into Jesus' mouth, but he wouldn't do it

Ehrman:
– cultural anthropologists show that things do get changed in some oral cultures
– in these oral cultures, it is assumed that the story teller will change the story
– only in written cultures are they careful to avoid changing the story
– in the New Testament, you can compare the same story in two different gospels, there are differences

Licona:
– Ehrman is right that the gospel writers pick and choose things from the oral tradition that they want to include in their gospels
– different oral tradition transmission schemes have more or less embellishment
– african tribes embellish more, rabbinic teaching embellishes less
* Jesus' followers would have viewed him as a rabbi, and been careful about adding to his teachings
– Paul, an eyewitness, probably received the creed in 1 Cor 15 from other eyewitnesses
– Paul speaks about going twice to Jerusalem in Galatians
– he is meeting with Peter and James to check his facts

Ehrman:
– when you look at Mark and John, there are lots of differences in the narrative

Licona:
– I agree that the gospels have differences, but the oral tradition is likely fixed

Ehrman:
– but Mark and John have different sayings
– why doesn't Mark have the same explicit high Christology that John has?

Licona:
– first, John is trying to weave the oral tradition into a compelling story
– and second, when you look in Mark, the high Christology is there in the Son of Man sayings
– the apocalyptic Son of Man is in Mark, and everywhere in the New Testament

Ehrman:
– the "apocalyptic Son of Man" isn't in John

Licona:
– what about in John 9 with the man who was born blind

Ehrman:
– where is the apocalyptic part?

Licona:
– the healed man worships Jesus because he is the Son of Man
– that links to the apocalypic passages in the Old Testament

Moderator:
– what about the differences between the gospels?

Ehrman:
* well, now is the time for me to set up an inerrantist straw man and then knock it down!
* who was at the empty tomb: one angel or two angels? we don't know, so the whole Bible is false!
* I used to be an inerrantist, so one minor difference is enough for me to dump the whole Bible
* I'll kill you, you stupid straw man! I hate you, Moody Bible Institute! You lied to me!

Licona:
– many of these problems can be solved by realizing that the gospel writers compress time
– the stories don't have to list ALL the characters in every scene
– you don't have to force the Bible to meet some sort of wooden chronology
– the main thing is that the events happened, not that the descriptions match word for word across sources

Ehrman:
– you can't infer a miracle from history, David Hume says so
* extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, David Hume says so
* no I don't know what begging the question is, I'm not a philosopher
* no I don't remember when Bill Craig kicked my ass on this Hume objection in our debate
– the New Testament gospels contradict each other at every point, they are not reliable at all!
* they cannot even agree what Jesus' name is! There are 1 trillion variants of Jesus'

name!
* “one angel vs two angels” proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point
* my expansive list of FOUR theologically insignificant variants proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point

Licona:
– um, the gospels agree on the central narrative and disagree on the peripherals
– and they agree on the minimal facts I presented, even if they disagree about the number of angels

Ehrman:
* they have to agree on everything and be inerrant! The Moody Straw Man Bible Institute says so!
* I really really really need to have the number of angels be the same, or Jesus didn’t die on the cross

Licona:
– but you don’t deny any of the three minimal facts I presented (crucifixion, appearances, Paul)

Ehrman:
– well, I don’t know if the group appearances occurred – maybe they did
– i think Jesus died on the cross, and I think that people said they saw him alive afterward

Licona:
– if you deny the minimal facts, then you are outside the majority of scholars

Ehrman:
– the majority of scholars who agree to the minimal facts you presented are Christians
* Gerd Ludemann is an atheist Christian
* James Crossley is an atheist Christian
* Hector Avalos is an atheist Christian
* the majority of the atheist scholars are all Christians!
– VIRTUALLY EVERYBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IS A CHRISTIAN!!! (Yes, he said that)

Licona:
– you really think so?

Ehrman
– you name one non-Christian in the SBL

Licona:
– (incredulous) um, John Dominic Crossan is an atheist

Ehrman:
– but he CLAIMS TO BE A CHRISTIAN so that means HE IS A CHRISTIAN
* all you have to do to be a Christian is claim to be one
* you can even deny the existence of God and the divinity of Christ and still be one, you bigot!

Licona:
– would Jesus or the apostles recognize a Christian as being someone who doubts God's existence

Ehrman:
– my view is that Jesus and the apostles would not recognize evangelical Christians as Christians
* a non-theist can be a Christian just by claiming to be one, but evangelical Christians are not Christians even if they claim to be Christians
– Christians can't record accurate history about the resurrection because they are biased

Licona:
– on your view, if a person is a Christian then he can't write about the evidence for the resurrection
– so then similarly, you would not allow Jews to write about the historicity of the Holocaust
– because you think that if people have an interest in what they are recording then they can't be objective
– but you have to consider the evidence we have, taking the biases of the sources into account

Ehrman:
– but the only people who believe in the resurrection are Christians!

Licona:
– well, people can consider the evidence for the resurrection as non-Christians
– and then if they accept it they can become Christians

Moderator:
– what about your bias? you don't believe in God – doesn't that pre-supposition affect how you do history?

Ehrman:
– well, I presuppose naturalism, so I can't admit to anything in history that implicates supernatural causes
* no I have never heard of the arguments for the Big Bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, limits on mutations creating information, habitability and so on – I never heard about that stuff from my atheist university professors and even if I had I would have been expelled for talking about it because that would make people feel bad about their sinning

Licona:
– so it's not bias you are concerned about, it's that you don't want history to contradict your untested religion of naturalism?
– why not just do the history without pre-suppositions to gather the minimal facts and then see what the best explanation is?

Ehrman:
* well God is out of bounds as an explanation because I could not have got my PhD if I

mentioned God
* I really needed my smart atheist professors to like me and give me good grades so God is RIGHT OUT
* ideas like a real God and moral laws and Hell makes my atheist professors uncomfortable and that means low grades for me
* I'm not really interested in butting heads with professors – it's easier to just agree with them and move on to selling books to the gullible
* My books are much more sensational than Dan Brown books, so please buy lots of them!

Licona:
– what if the historical evidence is good enough to show that Jesus rose from the dead?

Ehrman:
– well I would not call someone rising from the dead a miracle – I would call it weird
* I also think that the Big Bang is "weird" but that doesn't prove that God created the universe out of nothing
* if it's a miracle then I'm going to have to not sin, and maybe even go to Hell, and we can't have that

Licona:
– well, you accept the three minimal facts
– what if we try all the naturalistic explanations for those three facts and there are problems with all of them?
– what if the resurrection is the best explanation for the three minimal facts?

Ehrman:
– but I want to arbitrarily rule God put because I want to pre-suppose naturalism
– there is not historical reason I have to rule put supernatural explanations a priori

Licona:
– I think you are struggling with the theological implications of a historical conclusion

Ehrman:
– well when you do theology, you have to avoid grounding your theology on science or history
– theology has to be completely made up or it's not good theology

Licona:
– I think you are letting your dislike of the implications of the resurrection determine your historical conclusions
– you have to use historical methods to gather the minimal facts that every scholar accepts, regardless of worldview
– then you weigh ALL the hypotheses, natural and supernatural, that could account for these minimal facts
– then you choose the hypothesis that best explains the minimal facts

More stuff

Debates

- Craig Evans and Bart Ehrman
- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

A lecture on Bart Ehrman by William Lane Craig.

Unmasking Bart Ehrman: A Review of “Misquoting Jesus”

More about Bart Ehrman here. More about Mike Licona here.

William Lane Craig explains why moral choices are impossible on atheism

April 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From his debate with Sam Harris.

Here are a couple more videos you may like:

The moral argument is one of my favorite arguments.

Angus Menuge explains the ontological argument from reason

April 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Angus Menuge

Here's some information about Dr. Menuge:

> Dr. Angus Menuge joined Concordia University Wisconsin in 1991. He earned his BA from the University of Warwick, England, and his MA and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he studied philosophy, computer science and psychology. Menuge's dissertation was on the philosophy of action explanation, and his current research interests include philosophy of mind, philosophy of science and Christian apologetics.
>
> In 2003, Menuge earned a Diploma in Christian Apologetics from the International Academy of Apologetics, Evangelism and Human Rights, which meets each July in Strasbourg, France. His thesis, a critique of scientific materialism, went on to become the book *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).
>
> Menuge has also edited volumes on C. S. Lewis, Christ and culture and the vocation of scientist, and has written several Bible studies. He is currently working with Joel Heck (Concordia Texas) on a collection of essays defining Lutheran education for the 21st century, entitled *Learning at the Foot of the Cross* (Concordia University Press, forthcoming).
>
> A frequent speaker, Menuge has given presentations on Christianity and culture, science and vocation, philosophy of mind, C. S. Lewis, Intelligent Design and the case against scientific materialism. He is a member of the Evangelical Philosophical Society.

Dr. Menuge presented a paper at the real Evangelical Philosophical Society conference for students and professors of philosophy, and you can download the paper here in Word

format. (here's a PDF version I made)

Here is the introduction to the paper that Dr. Menuge read at the EPS conference:

> The argument from reason is really a family of arguments to show that reasoning is incompatible with naturalism. Here, naturalism is understood as the idea that foundationally, there are only physical objects, properties and relations, and anything else reduces to, supervenes on, or emerges from that. For our purposes, one of the most important claims of naturalism is that all causation is passive, automatic, event causation (an earthquake automatically causes a tidal wave; the tidal wave responds passively): there are no agent causes, where something does not happen automatically but only because the agent exerts his active power by choosing to do it. The most famous version of the argument from reason is *epistemological*: if naturalism were true, we could not be justified in believing it. Today, I want to focus on the *ontological* argument from reason, which asserts that there cannot be reasoning in a naturalistic world, because reasoning requires libertarian free will, and this in turn requires a unified, enduring self with active power.
>
> The two most promising ways out of this argument are: (1) Compatibilism—even in a deterministic, naturalistic world, humans are capable of free acts of reason if their minds are responsive to rational causes; (2) Libertarian Naturalism—a self with libertarian free will emerges from the brain. I argue that neither of these moves works, and so, unless someone has a better idea, the ontological argument from reason stands.

The paper is 11 pages long, and it is awesome for those of you looking for some good discussion of one of the issues in the area of philosophy of mind. The thing you need to know about Dr. Menuge is that he is quite strong and forceful in his writing and presentation, and to me, that is an excellent thing for a scholar to be. He reminds me of Doug Geivett, Paul Copan and William Lane Craig. Very direct, and very confrontational. You can even read an account of his debate with that radical atheist nutcase P.Z. Myers in 2008 here.

By the way, the epistemological argument from reason (P(R) on N & E is low) is the argument made by the famous Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga. I blogged about that argument before here. You need to know BOTH of these arguments. Plantinga also spoke at the EPS apologetics conference, explaining exactly this argument.

Powerpoint slideshow

But there is more than just the paper! At the EPS apologetics conference, which is meant for lay people as well as scholars, he presented this Powerpoint slideshow, (here's a PDF version I made) . The slides are easier to understand than the paper, but the paper is not too bad.

And here is another article by Dr. Menuge on intelligent design.

Latest poll has Stephen Harper's Conservatives leading by 19 points

April 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

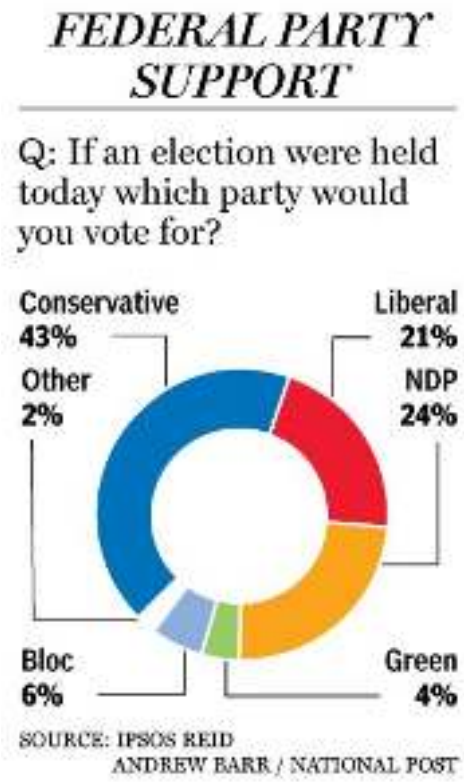

Canada Federal Election Poll April 2011
The latest poll from National Post. Tories up by NINETEEN POINTS.

Excerpt:

> The nationwide survey by Ipsos Reid, conducted exclusively for Postmedia News and Global TV, reveals a historic shift in public opinion has occurred as the political parties have fought for votes in this campaign.
>
> If an election were held now, Stephen Harper's Conservatives would receive 43% of the vote among decided voters, up two points from two weeks ago.
>
> […]Ipsos Reid president Darrell Bricker said Thursday the results of the April 18-20 poll confirm a significant shift is occurring.
>
> He said the sudden rise in national support for the New Democrats is largely thanks to growth in Quebec and in British Columbia.
>
> It's difficult to predict how much this boost in the popular vote would translate into extra seats for Layton's party, he said.
>
> While the NDP has political experience in B.C., it has little history of organizational strength in Quebec.
>
> "It does come down to the ground game," said Bricker.
>
> "You have to be able to get those votes into the ballot box."

> "The real story about the NDP surge isn't about them winning a lot more seats, but how they affect the Liberal votes and the Bloc votes."
>
> Bricker said it's possible that in Quebec, as the Liberals and Bloc lose votes to the NDP, the Tories could stand to benefit in tight races.

Please go vote YES in the following polls, which are being pushed by the left-wing government-run Canadian Broadcast Corporation. The CBC favors taxpayer-funded abortion of unborn children through all nine months of pregnancy for any reason or no reason. The CBC also favors criminals being allowed to commit crimes in the homes of law-abiding citizens without fear of being deterred by an armed homeowner. The CBC is pro-abortion and pro-criminal.

Question: Should the Canadian Conservative Party cut funding for Planned Parenthood to provide free abortions, which encourages people to have more abortions by lowering the cost of an abortion?

Vote here.

Question: Should the Canadian Conservative Party abolish the wasteful $1 billion long-gun registry, when all the available research from economists shows that firearm ownership by law-abiding citizens reduces violent crime?

Vote here.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

Related posts on gun control

- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple victim shootings?
- Do guns reduce crime? Watch this debate and hear both sides
- Liberal MSNBC says that more legal firearm ownership reduces crime rates
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Tom Sowell on gun control and judicial activism
- Grandmother jailed for five years for owning family heirloom handgun
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple-victim public shootings in Europe?
- 61-year-old British man convicted for cutting up fruit with a Swiss Army knife

- Understanding how concealed carry laws save lives
- Why do people favor legal private ownership and concealed carry of handguns?

Liberal students don’t support redistributing GPA points

April 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Funny video sent to me by John.

So how do people get rich in the United States of America?

Steven Crowder explains:

You don’t earn a high income unless you can produce something that people want.

New Michele Bachmann interviews on the economy

April 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let Americans spend their own money

Time to prioritize spending

Obama's plan is to raise your taxes

Can we pay for Obama's deficits by taxing ONLY the "rich"?

No, and George Mason University economist Walter Williams explains why.

Excerpt:

> This year, Congress will spend $3.7 trillion dollars. That turns out to be about $10 billion per day. Can we prey upon the rich to cough up the money? According to IRS statistics, roughly 2 percent of U.S. households have an income of $250,000 and above. By the way, $250,000 per year hardly qualifies one as being rich. It's not even yacht and Lear jet money. All told, households earning $250,000 and above account for 25 percent, or $1.97 trillion, of the nearly $8 trillion of total household income. If Congress imposed a 100 percent tax, taking all earnings above $250,000 per year, it would yield the princely sum of $1.4 trillion. That would keep the government running for 141 days, but there's a problem because there are 224 more days left in the year.
>
> How about corporate profits to fill the gap? Fortune 500 companies earn nearly $400 billion in profits. Since leftists think profits are little less than theft and greed, Congress might confiscate these ill-gotten gains so that they can be returned to their rightful owners. Taking corporate profits would keep the government running for another 40 days, but that along with confiscating all income above $250,000 would only get us to the end of June. Congress must search elsewhere.
>
> According to Forbes 400, America has 400 billionaires with a combined net worth of $1.3 trillion. Congress could confiscate their stocks and bonds, and force them to sell their businesses, yachts, airplanes, mansions and jewelry. The problem is that after fleecing the rich of their income and net worth, and the Fortune 500 corporations of their profits, it would only get us to mid-August. The fact of the matter is there are not enough rich people to come anywhere close to satisfying Congress' voracious spending appetite. They're going to have to go after the non-rich.

Obama is going to have to tax you and me to pay for his trillions of dollars in spending.

William Lane Craig vs. John Shelby Spong on the resurrection of Jesus

April 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig is the greatest Christian debater in the history of the church, and Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong is a very liberal non-Christian.

Part 1 of 2: (61 minutes)

Part 2 of 2: (42 minutes)

The moderator is none other than the famous journalist David Aikman! The opening speeches are only 15 minutes, and the rebuttals are 10 minutes. This debate is accessible because Craig's opponent is not really attacking him on a scholarly basis, but more as the pretty typical liberal atheist that you meet at work.

Craig spends all of his opening speech explaining historical methods, sources, dating and how he infers the resurrection as the best explanation of the minimal facts. The resurrection of Jesus is quite awesome to debate when people are given time to explain the historical methods and how the scholars use these methods to evaluate which facts are likely to be historical and which are not.

Ten resources to help you defend the resurrection of Jesus as history

April 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's briefly talk about whether the Bible supports talking about the resurrection with non-Christians.

There are lots and lots of Christians in the world, but almost none of them are comfortable talking about the resurrection with non-Christians, in a way that doesn't use crazy Christianese language and doesn't assume that the Bible is inerrant. But I think that this situation is wrong for three reasons.

First, Jesus says that his resurrection is a sign so that peope will believe in his other theological claims.

Matthew 12:38-40:

[38]Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

[39]He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

[40]For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Second, Paul says that if the resurrection didn't happen then we are all wasting our time with Christianity.

1 Corinthians 15:13-19:

[13]If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

[14]And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

[15]More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

[16]For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

[17]And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

[18]Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

[19]If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

And third, Peter uses the resurrection as evidence in his evangelistic efforts.

Acts 2:22-24, 29-33, 36:

[22]"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[23]This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you,

with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

[24]But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

[29]"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

[30]But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

[31]Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

[32]God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

[33]Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

[36]"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

So, how can you do what Jesus, Paul and Peter do with your non-Christian friends?

You can do it, too – and you must

It's true that non-Christians don't like to hear that they will go to Hell unless they have a relationship with Jesus. And do you know why they think that? Because they think that sin and Hell are just your personal opinions. Not-very-nice opinions. Opinions that they can ignore because it's just your personal preference that you were raised in. They think that religion is like Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy – myths designed to make people feel good about themselves.

Just think for a minute what they must think of your blind-faith pronouncement that they are going to Hell unless they "believe in Jesus" (whatever that means to a non-Christian). How would you like to hear someone tell *you* that *you* are going to Hell for not liking vanilla ice cream? You'd think they were crazy! And that's what non-Christians think of you, unless… Unless what? Unless you present publicly testable arguments and evidence to show them *why* they should consider the claims of Jesus.

No one complains that it is "mean and divisive" if their doctor diagonoses them with cancer. Because a challenging diagnosis is not the doctor's personal opinion – it's true objectively. You need to make your presentation of the gospel *exactly like* a doctor's diagnosis. Am I making sense here?If you are telling them the truth and you can show them publicly testable reasons and evidence, what sense does it make for them to be offended? They might as well be offended by their credit card statement or their speeding ticket.

I have Jewish friends, Hindu friends, Muslim friends, atheist friends, etc. Telling people the truth with publicly testable arguments and evidence that they can assess for themselves works. What doesn't work is denying the reality of sin and Hell and then trying to be nice to non-Christians who are going to Hell so that they will like you. *That's not Biblical.* That's just reinventing Christianity based on your own emotional need to be happy and to

be liked by others and to feel good about yourself.

Some things to help you talk about the resurrection

The main thing to remember about talking about the resurrection in public with non-Christians is that *you can't assume that the Bible is true.* Serious Christians get around this by using standard historical criteria to filter out the passages of the Bible that are most likely to be historical. A passage could be as small as 1 verse or it could be several verses. Some of the criteria would be things like: 1) how early after the events was the passage written? 2) in how many places does it appear? 3) Are the places where it appears independent from one another (e.g. – Mark and Paul), 4) does it embarass the author in some way? Using these criteria, historians can extract a bare minimum set of facts about Jesus.

Once you establish these minimal facts, you argue that the best explanation of the facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead. Your opponent either has to disprove one of your minimal facts, or he has to propose an alternative explanation of those minimal facts that explains the data better.

Usually, the only point of disagreement is whether the tomb was empty. Most atheists will give you the crucifixion, the burial, the post-mortem appearances, and the early belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus in the early church.

The top 10 links to get you started

So with that out of the way, here are the top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Two debates where you can see this play out:

- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Peter Williams on whether the gospels are based on eyewitness testimony

April 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Peter J. Williams

This is a lecture I found from Dr. Peter J. Williams. He's giving the lecture in Texas! Isn't that a hoot?

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?

- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?
- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker. And this material was NEW TO ME. I like the way that this lecture is filled with little UK expressions like "mind the gap" and "Yah?". He doesn't say "if you like" as much as Justin Brierley, though. Just once I would like to have a discussion with Justin and have him say that, then I would say "no I don't like that". I think that would be funny, and I would love to see the expression on his face when I said that.

You can read an interview with Peter Williams here on Between Two Worlds.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate on Apologetics 315.

And Apologetics 315 also posted Peter Williams' assessment of Bart Ehrman's "Misquoting Jesus".

Peter Williams debates Bart Ehrman on his book "Misquoting Jesus"

April 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The audio for this Unbelievable radio show debate is available from Apologetics 315.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is the US author of the bestselling book "Misquoting Jesus" (In the UK "Whose word is it?"). He calls into question the authority of the New Testament as scribal changes over time have changed the documents.
>
> So can we trust the scripture? Bible scholar Peter Williams believes in the reliability of the New Testament and that Bart's prognosis is far too pessimistic.

I think Justin Brierley breaks his record for saying "if you like" in this particular debate. So, if you like it when he says "if you like", this debate is for you!

Summary of the Williams-Ehrman debate:

Note: this summary is snarky. When I get annoyed with whiners, I make things up.

Ehrman:

- I had a mystical experience in childhood and became an evangelical Christian
- I went to Moody Bible Institute, and they told me that the Bible was inerrant
- For a while, I was committed to the view that there are no mistakes in the Bible
- At Princeton, I was taught and graded by professors who did not accept inerrancy
- I began to see that the Bible did have errors after all!
- We don't have the originals written by the authors, we only have thousands of copies
- if the words of the Bible are not completely inerrant, then none of it is historical
- if all of the words in the copies of the Bible are not identical, then none of it is historical

Williams:

- I would say the New and Old testaments are the Word of God
- We don't need to have the original Greek writings in order to believe in the authority of the Bible
- I believe in inerrancy, but doesn't mean there are no problems
- the doctrine of inerrancy has always referred to the original copies, not the translations

Moderator:

- what are the main points of Misquoting Jesus?

Ehrman:

- we don't have the originals of any of the books of the New Testament
- we have copies that are much later, sometimes even centuries later
- the copies we have all differ from one another – they were changed by scribes
- we have 5000 manuscripts in the original Greek language
- there are hundreds of thousands of differences
- most of the differences don't matter
- some differences are significant for meaning or doctrine
- errors are propagated because the next scribe inherits the mistake of their source copy
- a large gap between the time of writing and the first extant copy means more errors have crept in

Williams:

- the reason we have so many variants is because the number of manuscripts is large

Angry Jesus or compassionate Jesus in Mark

Ehrman:

- most manuscripts say that Jesus was compassionate when healing a leper, but one says he was angry
- it makes a huge huge huge really really big difference if Jesus is compassionate or angry
- the whole Bible needs to be thrown out because of this one word between different in one manuscript

Williams:

- this variant is important for understanding the passage, but it has no great meaning
- the change is probably just an accident – the two words are very similar visually in Greek
- it's just an accident – it emerged in one manuscript, and it impacted a few more
- the tiny number of manuscripts that have the error are geographically isolated
- I'm pretty sure that WK prefers the angry Jesus anyway – so who cares?

Ehrman:

- no! someone changed it deliberately! it's a conspiracy! you should buy my book! it's a *big deal*!!!!!1!!1!one!!eleventy-one!

The woman caught in adultery in John

Ehrman:

- it is isn't in any of the earliest manuscripts
- this is an apocryphical story that some scribe deliberately inserted into the text
- most people don't even know about this! it's a cover-up! you need to buy my scandalous book!

Williams:

- that's right, it's a late addition by some overzealous scribe
- and it's clearly marked as such in every modern Bible translation
- the only people who don't know about this are people who don't read footnotes in their Bible
- and in any case, this isn't a loss of the original words of the New Testament – it's an addition

Grace of God or apart from God in Hebrews

Ehrman:

- well this is just a one word difference, but it makes a huge huge really really big difference!
- the words are very similar, so it's could be an accident I guess
- but it wasn't! this was a deliberate change! it's a conspiracy! it's a cover-up! scandal!
- buy my book! It's almost as good as Dan Brown!

Moderator:

- hmmmn…. I kind of like "apart from God", and I'm sure WK does too – why is this such a big scandal again?

Ehrman:

- you don't care? how can you not care? it has to be inerrant! or the whole thing is false!
- Moody Bible Institute says!

Williams:

- yeah Bart is always saying that every change is deliberate but it's just an accident
- the words are very similar, just a few letters are different, this is clearly an accident
- I have no problem with apart from God, or by the Grace of God
- please move on and stop screaming and running around and knocking things over

Moderator:

- but what if pastors try to use this passage in a sermon?

Williams:

- well, one word doesn't make a big different, the meaning that appears is fine for preaching
- it's only a problem for people who treat the Bible as a magic book with magical incantations
- they get mad because if one word is out of place then the whole thing doesn't work for their spell
- then they try to cast happiness spells but the spells don't work and they experience suffering
- the suffering surprises them since they think that fundamentalism should guarantee them happiness
- then they become apostates and get on TV where they look wide-eyed and talk crazy

Ehrman:

- hey! are you talking about me? a lot of people buy my books! i am a big success!
- it is very important that people don't feel bad about their sinning you know!

Is Misquoting Jesus an attack?

Williams:

- it's rhetorically imbalanced and misleading
- it tries to highlight change and instability and ignore the majority of the text that is stable
- he makes a big deal out of 5 or so verses that are different from the mainstream text
- he says that scribes deliberately changed the scriptures, but he doesn't prove that
- it's just as likely that the differences are just scribal errors made by accident

Ehrman:

- well, maybe the variants aren't a big deal, but what about one angel vs. two angels?
- that's a significant issue! significant enough for me to become an apostate – a *rich* apostate
- if one word is different because of an accident, then the whole Bible cannot be trusted
- it has to be completely inerrant, so a one word difference means the whole thing is unreliable
- we don't even know if Jesus was even named Jesus, because of one angel vs two angels
- buy my book! you don't have to read it, just put it on your shelf, then you'll feel better about not having a relationships with God – because who's to say what God

really wants from you? Not the Bible!

Other debates:

- William Lane Craig vs Bart Ehrman (transcript)
- Michael Licona vs Bart Ehrman
- Michael Licona vs Bart Ehrman radio debate

Other critiques:

- William Lane Craig on Bart Ehrman
- Michael Licona on Bart Ehrman

William Lane Craig and James Crossley debate the resurrection of Jesus

April 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and so there isn't very much to mock him for.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing

- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don’t have any earlier sources, so we just don’t know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn’t check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

What every Christian should know about defending the resurrection

April 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You need to know that the early creed in 1 Cor 15:3-8 is the earliest and best evidence for the resurrection.

Here's a post where I explain more about this, and here's another post from William Lane Craig on the same topic.

You're going to see this passage used in every single debate on the resurrection of Jesus. It's front and center in the most recent summary I posted on the Craig-Crossley debate. Naturally, Crossley immediately accepted the date and the contents of the creed and the fact that it is eyewitness testimony. It's that good.

Obama to raise gas prices and inflation by raising taxes on oil companies

April 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama is now saying that he wants to cut subsidies to oil companies (H/T Lonely Conservative), which will just increase their costs for extracting and processing oil. They will pass those costs directly on to the consumer. Obama will then blame the oil companies, even though he is the cause of the higher costs in the first place.

Excerpt:

> The White House has sent officials to the G20 summit in Seol, South Korea and part of the message those officials are carrying from the PResident is a promise to join "joint efforts to phase out fossil fuel subsidies."
>
> But, what subsidies to fossil fuels get? Mostly tax breaks, which are hardly subsidies at all. Letting people or companies keep more of their own money isn't "subsidy." It's tax relief. America's policies amount to tax breaks aimed at driving capital investment in the energy markets, and frankly these sort of tax breaks are available to a lot of industries.
>
> […]What's going on here is a bit of sleight-of-hand. Obama and other world leaders are talking about "ending subsidies" for fossil fuels. What they really mean is raising taxes on fossil fuels so that the so-called "green energy" projects they're all so drippy about are more competitive in world energy markets.
>
> What this means for you and me is higher energy prices and, by extension, a higher cost of living across our entire economy as those higher energy prices translate into higher prices for goods and services (everyone has to pay their power/fuel bills).
>
> And it won't just be the taxes adding to our expenses. If higher taxes drive more fossil fuel producers out of the market (and that's clearly the goal here), they will be replaced by much more expensive and much less reliable "green energy" producers. That, again, means a bigger hit to the wallets of Americans.
>
> Meanwhile, this report concludes that cumulative US subsidies of biofuels could reach $1 trillion over the next two decades. And that's *just* biofuels, not other initiatives like wind power or solar power.
>
> In summary, these people want to hamstring cheap, reliable fossil fuels in order to promote heavily-subsidized, expensive, unreliable green power.

Next time, don't vote for a Marxist community organizer to be President. Pick someone who actually has run a business and met payroll.

UPDATE: A commenter adds:

> What the President is talking about when he mentions oil "subsidies" is not a

> “subsidy,” it’s fair accounting. The primary “subsidy” is the oil depletion allowance, which is simply proper accounting for depleting in-ground assets.
>
> The oil depletion allowance is nothing more than how the oil company computes how much an oil well decreases in total value when they pump oil out of it. There’s a finite amount of oil in a well, but the total amount is really an estimate. When it drills the well, the oil company declares what the oil in the ground is worth. When it pumps the oil out of the ground, the company takes a “depletion allowance” to account for the reduced value of the oil in the ground, and subtracts that value from their profits, thus reducing the amount of profit they have to declare for tax purposes. This is no different from, say, a paper company subtracting the cost of the logs they used in making paper from the profit they earned selling the paper. It’s calculated something like depreciation because the actual amount of the oil in a well is impossible to measure.
>
> What’s happening is that the President, in an attempt to create demons that his dupes can hate, is deliberately misleading people into thinking that oil companies get special treatment. Just using the word “subsidy” regarding the depletion allowance is a lie, plain and simple. Worse, even: it’s defamation, and a declaration that the government really owns everything.

Does the limiting of government spending make children starve?

April 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a pretty illuminating article from Forbes magazine.

Here's the question:

> The budget debates have been illuminating. Apparently, those heartless tea partiers would gladly allow children to starve so millionaires can pay less in the way of taxes. The latter has been a recurring slander leveled against welfare reform in the '90s and more recently in response to Paul Ryan's budget proposal.
>
> No one starved then. What if Washington stopped doling out relief now?

Wow. Are conservatives really so heartless? Is government spending really necessary to keep people from starving?

Let's see:

> People who oppose government redistribution contribute four times as much charity as those who favor such schemes. This includes 3.5 times as much to secular charities. Those who prefer free markets also give more blood, are more likely to provide directions, to return change given mistakenly or offer assistance to the homeless.
>
> To truly be charity, alms must be given freely, require nothing in remuneration and offer the donor no material benefit. If possible, benevolence should be anonymous. The left hand ought to not even know what the right hand does.
>
> Instead, the Left hand blares a trumpet about compassion while spending others' money as it shamelessly smears the Right. Who is really heartless: those seeking fiscal responsibility or those spending our children into peonage?

That's true – all of this government spending certainly isn't good for our children. Why do we call it compassion when we impoverish the next generation so that we can spend ourselves into a higher standard of living with their future earnings?

But maybe the poor today really do need the money. Maybe charity isn't enough and we need to government to take our money to help the poor?

Let's see:

> The real vacuum is federal spending. Washington filters our taxes through a bureaucratic black-hole before spewing out waste and vote-buying patronage. Public charity is an oxymoron. There is nothing moral in confiscating property from one to bestow on another.
>
> As discussed previously, society does not revolve around Washington. The building blocks for an ordered, coherent community are families, friends and

> neighbors and then church (or equivalent). Only if each fails does government have any justification to execute its own counterfeit charity.
>
> […]Historically, when private parties provided most benevolence, it was generally administered more prudently than politicians redistributing other's largesse. Thomas Jefferson bragged that you could travel the entire eastern seaboard and never encounter an American begging. Private charity was readily available and distributed responsibly so as to not create additional social burdens.
>
> Relief was never meant for people who could help themselves, but don't. Instead of easy handouts, people who neglect their duties could be taught responsibility and the dignity of work. Sensible charity offers a minimal safety net to prevent starvation or exposure, not provide idle comfort.
>
> Poverty once suggested that someone lacked food, clothing or shelter. As the Heritage Foundation observed,
>
> According to the government's own surveys, the typical "poor" American has cable or satellite TV, two color TV's, a DVD player or VCR. He has air conditioning, a car, a microwave, a refrigerator, a stove, and a clothes washer and dryer. He is able to obtain medical care when needed. His home is in good repair and is not overcrowded. By his own report, his family is not hungry, and he had sufficient funds in the past year to meet his family's essential needs.
>
> Not exactly dire circumstances. The average menial laborer today enjoys more material abundance than a prince or tribal chieftain of recent past.

Please click through and read the rest of this article. There is a lot more I'm not quoting.

I think conservatives need to start thinking about this question. We are always being accused of being stingy, because we want to keep our own money, and maybe give it away in charity, while holding the recipients accountable to pull their own weight. Is that so wrong? I give a lot more money in charity than Joe Biden, and I make a lot less. Maybe leftists think that everyone is as greedy as they are. Maybe they think that people shouldn't be held accountable for making the kinds of simple decisions that cause poverty.

Federal Reserve studies find that speculators are not causing gas prices to rise

April 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez very different?

Just like Hugo Chavez, Obama is now blaming high gas prices on "speculators". Is he right about the cause of the high gas prices?

The Heritage Foundation investigates, using studies from the Federal Reserve.

Excerpt:

> Yet the allegations of speculators manipulating the market occur every time gas prices rise. They have been investigated numerous times by the Federal Trade Commission and others and found to be without merit, but few critics are ever convinced. Several Federal Reserve studies found no correlation between speculation and the price of any commodity. Yet President Obama remains unconvinced and seems to believe this time the speculators are getting away with something.
>
> In fact, speculators can also help lower costs in the near term, and one way for that to happen is to increase supply, signaling lower future prices. As my colleague David Kreutzer points out, "A better solution is to increase access to new energy sources. If new sources of oil are allowed to be used, futures markets and speculators will lower the future cost of oil, which will translate into lower fuel prices at the pump."
>
> The reality is oil prices have been rising steadily for a year as the global economy is on the mend and countries are using and demanding more oil. A weak dollar is also playing a role. While "Drill Here, Drill Now" is not a panacea and won't bring gas prices down dramatically, increasing access to oil reserves in the U.S.—both onshore and offshore—would help offset rising demand, increase jobs, and

> stimulate the economy. Unlike the President's solutions of increasing biofuel production and bringing more electric vehicles into the market, drilling can be done without the taxpayer's help. Subsidizing uneconomic sources of fuel and transportation is a bad deal for the consumer and the taxpayer and will do nothing to offset high gas prices.
>
> Blaming speculators and creating unnecessary task forces is a good way for the Administration to signal it is "doing something" about high gas prices. But the truth is that the federal government is merely diverting attention away from its bad policies.

Obama's anti-speculator speech is just a way of deflecting the blame to someone else, to make it look like he is doing something. But actually, he is causing the problem, because he is ignorant of the most basic rules of economics.

Director Blue notes that this is exactly the kind of anti-capitalism rant that the communist Hugo Chavez has given in the past – right before the onset of hyperinflation in Venezuela.

Does the Bible mention unicorns?

April 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Shermer, who appears in the video, asks Christians to explain why there are unicorns in the Bible. (H/T Letitia) The Bible certainly mentions the word unicorn. But does it refer to the mythical horse-like creature, like Shermer seems to think?

Once you back to the original Latin words, it turns out that the unicorn that is mentioned is really a *rhinoceros*.

You can read a debate between Greg Koukl and Michael Shermer here. This debate was moderated by radio show host Hugh Hewitt, and presumably transcribed by his much-maligned producer Duane Patterson. Hewitt also moderated the famous debate at Biola University, featuring William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens.

Environmental Protection Agency blocks oil drilling in Alaska

April 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

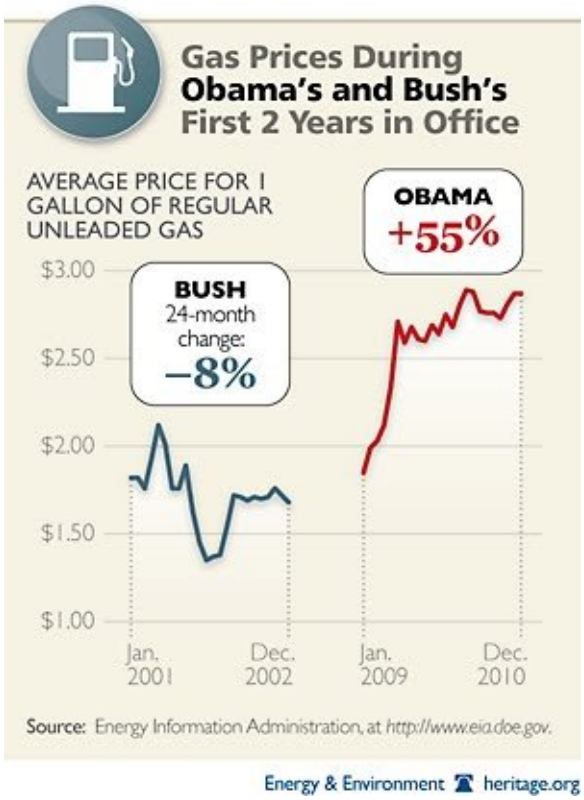

Gas Prices under Obama and Bush

John Hawkins of Right Wing News and Doug Ross of Director Blue have started a new conservative news site called Trending Right.

Trending Right shows the most linked conservative stories on Twitter for EACH HOUR.

If you guys want to suggest me as a source for their feed (I don't see any real conservative/Christian blogs there now) then that would be great. Just send Doug an e-mail. The link to e-mail is at the bottom of their page.

I went there just now, and found this popular story from the Heritage Foundation right away. Apparently, the Environmental Protection Agency is blocking oil drilling in Alaska. This must be part of the reason why gas prices have more than doubled since Obama took office.

Excerpt:

> There are an estimated 27 billion barrels of oil waiting to be tapped in the Arctic Ocean, off the coast of Alaska. But after spending five years and nearly $4 billion, Shell Oil Company has been forced to abandon its efforts to drill for oil in the region.
>
> With gas at $4 per gallon and higher, one might think that more oil would be a good thing. So what's the road block? The Environmental Protection Agency. Fox

> News reports that the EPA is withholding necessary air permits because of a one square mile village of 245 people, 70 miles from the off-shore drilling site. From Fox News' Dan Springer:
>
> The EPA's appeals board ruled that Shell had not taken into consideration emissions from an ice-breaking vessel when calculating overall greenhouse gas emissions from the project. Environmental groups were thrilled by the ruling.
>
> "What the modeling showed was in communities like Kaktovik, Shell's drilling would increase air pollution levels close to air quality standards," said Eric Grafe, Earthjustice's lead attorney on the case.
>
> Who at the EPA made the decision? Springer writes:
>
> The Environmental Appeals Board has four members: Edward Reich, Charles Sheehan, Kathie Stein and Anna Wolgast. All are registered Democrats and Kathie Stein was an activist attorney for the Environmental Defense Fund. Members are appointed by the EPA administrator.
>
> […]Aside for the EPA's decision on Shell, the Obama administration has imposed a months-long moratorium on deepwater offshore drilling that curtailed domestic production and sent some seven drilling rigs elsewhere.

That story was liked by 2208 people on Facebook! Something tells me that my blogging has just gotten a lot easier.

Frank Turek: can God bring good effects out of evil events?

April 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Townhall.com.

Excerpt:

> The atheist persisted, "But if God exists, why do some babies die such horrible deaths?"
>
> Well, if the atheist is granting that God exists, then he has a valid question. While he can't explain evil and suffering from his atheistic worldview, I need to explain it from mine.
>
> My explanation went this way. Although I know why evil in general occurs (see the video), I don't know why every *specific* evil occurs. But *I know why I don't know why*—because I'm finite and can't see into the future. Since God is infinite and can see all the way into eternity, he may allow evil events that ultimately work together for good. In other words, he can still bring good from evil even if we can't see how.
>
> To illustrate, I referred back to the classic Christmas movie "It's a Wonderful Life." That's where George Bailey, played by Jimmy Stewart, falls on hard times, becomes despondent and tries to commit suicide. He's saved by an angel and is permitted to see how life in his town would have turned out if he had never existed. George sees that everything would have turned out far worse without him, and thus realizes that even though evil infects life, good can prevail in the end. George could only see this with God's timeless perspective. Only God can see how trillions of free choices and events can interact ultimately for good even if some of them seem hopelessly negative at the time. (In fact, that's one reason why God told Job to trust him.)
>
> At that point, a man sitting ten feet from the atheist raised his hand.
>
> "Go ahead, sir."
>
> He first looked over at the atheist, then back at me and said, "I know of a young woman who was raped and became pregnant. The rape nearly destroyed her." His voice began to crack . . . "But she decided that she would not punish the baby for the sin of the father. She later gave birth to a baby boy." (By this point he was weeping openly.) "And that boy grew up to be a pastor whom God has used to help bring many people to Christ. He ministers to people to this day. That boy grew up to be *me*."
>
> He then looked back at the atheist and said, "My mother turned evil into good, and God can too."
>
> The atheist left immediately after the event ended, but I did get to meet that

> brave pastor who spoke up. His name is Gary Bingham, and he's the pastor of Hillside Wesleyan Church in Marion, Indiana. Gary told me that his mom had self-confidence issues for many years but is doing much better since becoming a Christian a few years ago. I thanked him and asked him to let his mom know that she touched many for good that night. I hope through this column she has touched many more today.

Sometimes a good witness can help to illustrate a good argument. If you would like to hear a good debate on the problems of evil and suffering, then click here: William Lane Craig vs Walter Sinnott-Armstrong.For a book length treatment of the problems of evil and suffering, see the book "God?: A Debate between a Christian and an Atheist", published by Oxford University Press, 2003. This is part of their famous Point/Counterpoint series, where you get both sides of controversial issues from top scholars. Oxford University Press is the top academic press in the world, so this is a good book to have.

If you would like to learn more about the problems of evil and suffering, see the related posts below. The first link in the list tells you everything you need to know to get started.

Related posts

- Why does God allow people to experience evil and suffering?
- Why doesn't God gives us more evidence that he exists?
- New study explores whether atheism is rooted in reason or emotion
- Steven Cowan on the connection between evil, suffering and no-see-ums
- Why do bad things happen to good people?
- Brian Auten interviews Clay Jones on the problems of evil and suffering
- Paul Copan explains the problems of evil and suffering in 17 minutes
- William Lane Craig explains why God permits evil and suffering
- Can a meaningful standard of good and evil exist without a Designer?
- Can atheists make sense of good and evil?
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

Upcoming summer apologetics conference in Phoenix, Arizona

April 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an apologetics conference that is happening in Phoenix, Arizona in June!

And here are the speakers:

- Mary Jo Sharp (Confident Christianity)
- Brett Kunkle (Stand to Reason)
- Neil Mammen
- Letitia Wong
- Shawn White

And here are the topics:

- What is truth?
- Are all religions the same?
- Does God exist?
- Is the Bible true?
- Is faith blind?

And they are having a raffle for an Ipad 2 for conference sponsors! If you are looking for a good conference to sponsor, this one looks ideal!

Obama spent $1.6 billion on Chinese wind and $2 billion on Brazilian oil

April 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

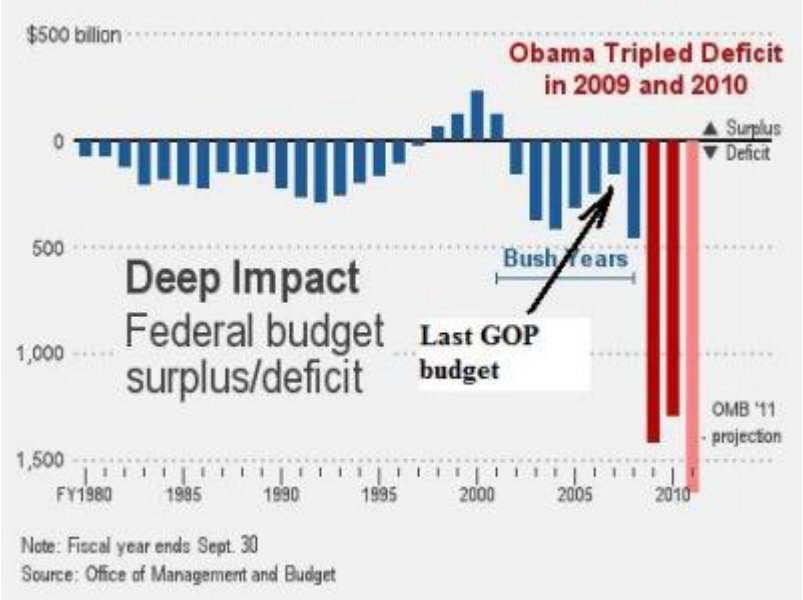

Obama Budget Deficit 2011

ABC News reports on the subsidies for Chinese wind turbines. (H/T GP)

Excerpt:

> Despite all the talk of green jobs, the overwhelming majority of stimulus money spent on wind power has gone to foreign companies, according to a new report by the Investigative Reporting Workshop at the American University's School of Communication in Washington, D.C.
>
> Nearly $2 billion in money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has been spent on wind power, funding the creation of enough new wind farms to power 2.4 million homes over the past year. But the study found that nearly 80 percent of that money has gone to foreign manufacturers of wind turbines.
>
> "Most of the jobs are going overseas," said Russ Choma at the Investigative Reporting Workshop. He analyzed which foreign firms had accepted the most stimulus money. "According to our estimates, about 6,000 jobs have been created overseas, and maybe a couple hundred have been created in the U.S."
>
> Even with the infusion of so much stimulus money, a recent report by American Wind Energy Association showed a drop in U.S. wind manufacturing jobs last year.

NewsMax reports on the subsidies for Brazilian oil driling. (H/T GP)

Excerpt:

> Gulf Oil CEO Joe Petrowski says President Barack Obama's weekend comments in Brazil that the United States looks forward to purchasing oil drilled for offshore by

> that nation “is rather puzzling,” and “hypocritical” as his administration has imposed a virtual moratorium Gulf Oil,Joe Petrowski, Barack Obama, Brazil, Drillingon domestic drilling. The signal to purchase more foreign oil comes after the U.S. Export-Import Bank invested more than $2 billion with Brazil’s state-owned oil company, Petrobras, to finance exploration.
>
> “Any drilling, or any new production, especially production outside the Mideast – that is inherently unstable and probably is going to become more unstable as we move forward – is a positive,” Petrowski said Tuesday on Fox News.
>
> “But why Brazil, when we could have the jobs and foreign exchange in this country, is rather puzzling – and I’d say somewhat humorous,” Petrowski told Fox News’ Neal Cavuto. “What is it about Brazil that they have that we don’t have?
>
> “What concerns me – in addition to we are going to lose the jobs, and in addition to not having the foreign exchange – is one of the untold problems, I think, in the world oil markets, besides that we are getting too much of our oil from the Mideast, is 75 percent of our oil is being produced by government-run entities,” he continued.
>
> “And I just have a theory that private companies are going to be more efficient in finding it, and getting it out at a more reasonable price, than state-owned companies,” Petrowski said.
>
> Cavuto asked whether buying oil from Brazil is bad for the U.S. economy.
>
> “It would be a lot better if we had the drilling here,” Petrowski said. “And it seems a double standard and it seems somewhat hypocritical [that] a country that desperately needs jobs, and we need them here, that we are encouraging other countries to create the jobs that we need.”

Obama has so much taxpayer money to hand out to China and Brazil, but now he wants to prevent AMERICAN oil companies from getting tax deductions for asset depreciation (depletion allowance).

What happens when we use American taxpayer dollars to stimulate energy production in other countries?

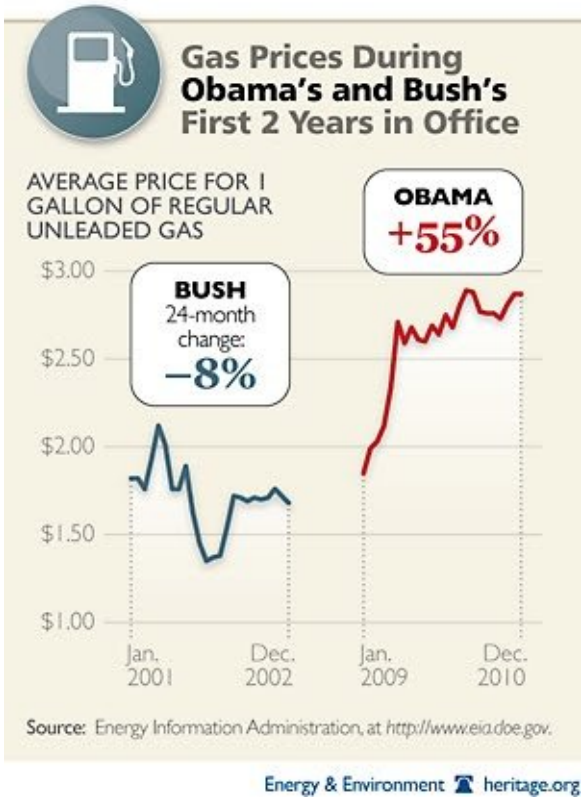

Gas Prices under Obama and Bush

We pay more for energy, that's what. Because we shipped our energy sector jobs overseas.

From the Washington Examiner. (H/T JWF)

Excerpt:

> At least $53 million in federal funds have gone to ACORN activists since 1994, and the controversial group could get up to $8.5 billion more tax dollars despite being under investigation for voter registration fraud in a dozen states.
>
> The economic stimulus bill enacted in February contains $3 billion that the non-profit activist group known more formally as the Association for Community Organizations for Reform Now could receive, and 2010 federal budget contains another $5.5 billion that could also find its way into the group's coffers.
>
> An Examiner review of federal spending data found that ACORN has received at least $53 million in federal money since 1994.

Meanwhile, Obama gave $3 billion taxpayer dollars to ACORN, which has been indicted on voter fraud charges, and 0.35 billion taxpayer dollars to Planned Parenthood, which has been caught on film covering-up statutory rape. Why is it that organizations that support Democrats like ACORN and Planned Parenthood are below the radar, while Obama keeps complaining about oil companies? Does taxing oil companies make the price at the pump go down? Or rather, doesn't taxing oil companies cause the price at the pump to go up? And if taxing companies is such a good idea, why did Obama's favorite crony corporation GE make $14.2 billion in profits in 2010, but pay NOTHING in taxes?

UPDATE: This post linked by the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

What do public school teachers think they are teaching your children?

April 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Minority Report. (H/T Stacy McCain)

Excerpt:

> Sarah Knopp, a Los Angeles teachers union leader (in the Tax the Rich shirt) and Megan Behrent a New York City teacher affiliated with the International Socialist Organization, explain how to push Marxism in the public school classroom.

McCain writes:

> This panel discussion, entitled "Capitalism and Education: A Marxist Discourse on What We're Fighting Against and What We're Fighting For," was sponsored by the magazine *International Socialist Review*.
>
> Notice that participants in this panel included two public university professors who train teachers: Jean Anyon of City University of New York and Jeff Bale of Michigan State University.
>
> Parents who continue sending their children to ~~public schools~~ *government indoctrination centers* always react to revelations like this by saying, "Oh, that kind of stuff isn't happening in our school. We live in a *good* district!"
>
> To such parents, I ask: Do you think people like Sarah Knopp and Megan Behrent only teach in *bad* school districts? How many more socialist teachers like Knopp and Behrent are there in America? And do you think they advertise their beliefs to the parents in their districts?

We keep hearing the Democrats sob about how we need to spend more and more money "for the children". Is this what they need more and more money for? Maybe we should introduce choice and competition into the school system, and make union membership optional. That would be good for parents and children, anyway. And aren't they supposed to be the customers of the education system?

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Supreme Court narrowly sides with private schools against government
- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter

- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama’s new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher’s unions make war on charter schools

How would allowing gays to marry affect your life?

April 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from Legal Insurrection, a prominent law blog.

Excerpt:

> King & Spalding has withdrawn from representing the House of Representatives with regard to the Defense of Marriage Act. King & Spalding was hired after the Obama administration abruptly — and disingenuously — changed its legal position recently.
>
> The attempts to intimidate, both politically and sometimes physically, supporters of traditional marriage are nothing new.
>
> The strategy is to define the traditional marriage view as bigotry on par with racism. Once you accept that premise, then everything else follows and is justified. Even expressing a legal view that there is no federal constitutional right to same sex marriage — a view expressed under oath by Elena Kagan — now constitutes hate speech.
>
> There were numerous boycotts of businesses owned by people who supported Prop. 8 in California, including a boycott organized by an association of law professors.
>
> Taking it one step further, there was a widespread campaign to demonize and boycott Mormon-owned businesses in the wake of Prop. 8 in California…
>
> […]Now the intimidation has moved beyond political supporters of Prop. 8 and Mormons, and into an attempt to deprive pro-traditional marriage groups of their counsel of choice. As Jennifer Rubin points out (via John Hinderaker), the attempt to intimidate lawyers into not representing pro-traditional marriage clients is part of a deliberate strategy, not a haphazard reaction.
>
> […]Would such lawyers and staff now be afraid to express their views on the subject, fearing a backlash against their individual careers much as King & Spaulding feared a backlash? If representing the pro-traditional marriage view is unacceptable for the firm, would there be a hostile work environment for such people?

Dennis Prager wrote more about how same-sex marriage affects society back in 2008.

Excerpt:

> Outside of the privacy of their homes, young girls will be discouraged from imagining one day marrying their prince charming — to do so would be declared "heterosexist," morally equivalent to racist. Rather, they will be told to imagine a prince or a princess. Schoolbooks will not be allowed to describe marriage in male-female ways alone. Little girls will be asked by other girls and by teachers if

> they want one day to marry a man or a woman.
>
> The sexual confusion that same-sex marriage will create among young people is not fully measurable. Suffice it to say that, contrary to the sexual know-nothings who believe that sexual orientation is fixed from birth and permanent, the fact is that sexual orientation is more of a continuum that ranges from exclusive heterosexuality to exclusive homosexuality. Much of humanity — especially females — can enjoy homosexual sex. It is up to society to channel polymorphous human sexuality into an exclusively heterosexual direction — until now, accomplished through marriage. But that of course is "heterosexism," a bigoted preference for man-woman erotic love, and therefore to be extirpated from society.
>
> Any advocacy of man-woman marriage alone will be regarded morally as hate speech, and shortly thereafter it will be deemed so in law.
>
> Companies that advertise engagement rings will have to show a man putting a ring on a man's finger — if they show only women fingers, they will be boycotted just as a company having racist ads would be now.
>
> Films that only show man-woman married couples will be regarded as antisocial and as morally irresponsible as films that show people smoking have become.
>
> Traditional Jews and Christians — i.e. those who believe in a divine scripture — will be marginalized. Already Catholic groups in Massachusetts have abandoned adoption work since they will only allow a child to be adopted by a married couple as the Bible defines it — a man and a woman.
>
> Anyone who advocates marriage between a man and a woman will be morally regarded the same as racist. And soon it will be a hate crime.
>
> Indeed — and this is the ultimate goal of many of the same-sex marriage activists — the terms "male" and "female," "man" and "woman" will gradually lose their significance. They already are. On the intellectual and cultural left, "male" and "female" are deemed social constructs that have little meaning. That is why same-sex marriage advocates argue that children have no need for both a mother and a father — the sexes are interchangeable. Whatever a father can do a second mother can do. Whatever a mother can do, a second father can do. Genitalia are the only real differences between the sexes, and even they can be switched at will.
>
> And what will happen after divorce — which presumably will occur at the same rates as heterosexual divorce? A boy raised by two lesbian mothers who divorce and remarry will then have four mothers and no father.
>
> We have entered something beyond Huxley's "Brave New World."… Our children and their children will pay the price.

Check out this vandalism at a Catholic church by supporters of same-sex marriage. The vandalism says "where is the love?" I don't think that the vandals showed much love for

those who disagree with same-sex marriage, though. And sometimes the consequences for disagreement can be *much worse than vandalism*. It can mean legal consequences, sensitivity indoctrination, vandalism, or even violence. What's sad is that the well-meaning young leftists, who think what they are doing is compassionate, are actually encouraging this coercion.

How would allowing gays to marry affect your life?

Related posts

- Republicans hire top lawyer to defend traditional marriage against Democrats
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Queen's University feminist professor says that polygamy should be permitted
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- Frank Turek lists ten alleged facts about same-sex marriage
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why do people oppose same-sex marriage?
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Gay federal judge rules traditional marriage unconstitutional in California
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- Do Democrats like Chai Feldblum believe in religious liberty?
- Do Democrats like Martha Coakley believe in religious liberty?
- How Harriet Harman's Equality Bill will impact religious liberty
- Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- What happens when same-sex marriage conflicts with religious liberty?
- Can a person disagree without being hateful or inciting violence?

Should social conservatives vote for Barack Obama?

April 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from Life News. Let's see how Obama feels about taking the lives of innocent unborn human persons.

Excerpt:

> The following is a compilation of bill signings, speeches, appointments and other actions that President Barack Obama has engaged in that have promoted abortion before and during his presidency.
>
> While Obama has promised to reduce abortions and some of his supporters believe that will happen, this long list proves his only agenda is promoting more abortions.
>
> During the presidential election, Obama selected pro-abortion Sen. Joe Biden as his vice-presidential running mate.

Here are a few of the items listed. (There are over ONE HUNDRED pro-abortion actions listed)

> November 5, 2008 – Obama selects pro-abortion Rep. Rahm Emanuel as his White House Chief of Staff. Emanuel has a 0% pro-life voting record according to National Right to Life.
>
> November 24, 2008 – Obama appoints Ellen Moran, the former director of the pro-abortion group Emily's List as his White House communications director. Emily's List only supports candidates who favored taxpayer funded abortions and opposed a partial-birth abortion ban.
>
> November 24, 2008 – Obama puts former Emily's List board member Melody Barnes in place as his director of the Domestic Policy Council.
>
> January 23, 2009 – Forces taxpayers to fund pro-abortion groups that either promote or perform abortions in other nations. Decision to overturn Mexico City Policy sends part of $457 million to pro-abortion organizations.
>
> February 27, 2009 – Starts the process of overturning pro-life conscience protections President Bush put in place to make sure medical staff and centers are not forced to do abortions.
>
> February 28, 2009 – Barack Obama nominates pro-abortion Kathleen Sebelius to become Secretary of Health and Human Services.
>
> April 14 – Obama administration releases document that claims pro-life people may engage in violence or extremism.
>
> May 5 – Details emerge about a terrorism dictionary the administration of President Barack Obama put together in March. The Domestic Extremism Lexicon calls pro-life advocates violent and claims they employ racist overtones in

> engaging in criminal actions.
>
> May 8 – President Obama's budget eliminates all federal funding for abstinence-only education.
>
> May 26 – Appoints appeals court judge Sonia Sonotmayoras a Supreme Court nominee. Sotomayor agrees that the courts should make policy, such as the Roe v. Wade case. Sotomayor is later opposed by pro-life groups and supported by pro-abortion groups and those who know her say she will support abortion on the high court.
>
> July 14 – Obama science czar nominee John Holdren is revealed to have written before that he favors forced abortions.
>
> August 4 – Information becomes public that Ezekiel Emanuel, an Obama advisor at the Office of Management and Budget and a member of Federal Council on Comparative Effectiveness Research, supports rationing health care for disabled Americans that could lead to euthanasia.
>
> December 17 – Signed a bill that overturned the 13-year-long ban on funding abortions with tax dollars in the nation's capital.
>
> January 26, 2010 – Renominates radical pro-abortion activist Dawn Johnsen to a top Justice Department position.
>
> February 8, 2010 – The Obama administration admitted it improperly conducted a threat assessmenton pro-life groups in Wisconsin who were preparing to rally against a new abortion center at a University of Wisconsin health clinic.
>
> March 22, 2010 – Signs the pro-abortion health care bill into law that contains massive abortion funding, no conscience protections and rationing.
>
> May 10, 2010 – Names pro-abortion activist Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court; she is strongly opposed by pro-life groups.
>
> September 30, 2010 – Obama administration exposed as to how it partnered with leading pro-abortion organizations to host an FBI training seminar in August with the main focus of declaring as "violent" the free speech activities of pro-life Americans.
>
> December 14, 2010 – Obama administration admits it is working to rescind conscience protections for medical professionals who don't want to participate in abortions.
>
> February 18, 2011 – President Obama weakens conscience protections for pro-life medical workers.
>
> March 2, 2011 – Obama administration refuses to investigatevideos showing Planned Parenthood helping alleged sex traffickers get abortions for victimized underage girls.

Read the whole thing – the linked article contains links to all the news stories I mentioned, and the ones I left out. Barack Obama claims to be a Christian, and many

many social conservatives believe him. But I think the list shows that Obama's decisions and policies on abortion are at odds with the Bible, and the practices of the early Christian church. I also don't think that Obama's progressive fiscal policy or weak foreign policy are consistent with Christianity, but that's another post for another day.

Here is my previous post on Obama's pro-abortion record.

NDP leader Jack Layton lived in subsidized housing with $120,000 income

April 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

NDP leaders Bob Rae and Jack Layton

Here's an article from the Toronto (Red) Star on the NDP Party, Jack Layton and ethics.

Excerpt:

> Layton, who is married to fellow NDP MP Olivia Chow, elicits strong feelings both for and against. His critics say he is a tax-and-spend socialist while supporters are almost moony-like in their adoration of the man.
>
> "I quite like the guy as a person," said Harper cabinet minister John Baird, "but his solution to everything is increase taxes and increase spending."
>
> From time to time he has been criticized for saying one thing and doing another, including being caught red-handed in 1985 living in subsidized housing in Toronto when his and Olivia Chow, then a Toronto trustee, were raking in a combined $120,000 year.
>
> "Jack once told me many years after that incident that it is the one thing he has never able to purge or expunge from the public's mind, this apparent contradiction," said former seatmate Brian Ashton.

The Toronto Star is the most radical, left-wing newspaper in Canada. They are far to the left of the New York Times or the Los Angeles Times.

How did former NDP leader Bob Rae govern in Ontario?

If you want to know what New Democrats do to an economy, you can read about how NDP leader Bob Rae wrecked the Ontario economy in the 1990s.

Excerpt:

> The Liberal government had forecast a small surplus earlier in the year, but a worsening North American economy led to a $700 million deficit before Rae took office. In October, the NDP projected a $2.5 billion deficit for the fiscal year

> ending on March 31, 1991.[40] Some economists projected soaring deficits for the upcoming years, even if the Rae government implemented austerity measures.[41] Rae himself was critical of the Bank of Canada's high interest rate policy, arguing that it would lead to increased unemployment throughout the country.[42] He also criticized the 1991 federal budget, arguing the Finance Minister Michael Wilson was shifting the federal debt to the provinces.[43]
>
> The Rae government's first budget, introduced in 1991, increased social spending to mitigate the economic slowdown and projected a record deficit of $9.1 billion. Finance Minister Floyd Laughren argued that Ontario made a decision to target the effects of the recession rather than the deficit, and said that the budget would create or protect 70,000 jobs. It targeted more money to social assistance, social housing and child benefits, and raised taxes for high-income earners while lowering rates for 700,000 low-income Ontarians.[44]
>
> A few years later, journalist Thomas Walkom described the budget as following a Keynesian orthodoxy, spending money in the public sector to stimulate employment and productivity. Unfortunately, it did not achieve its stated purpose. The recession was still severe. Walkom described the budget as "the worst of both worlds", angering the business community but not doing enough to provide for public relief.
>
> […]Rae's government attempted to introduce a variety of socially progressive measures during its time in office, though its success in this field was mixed. In 1994, the government introduced legislation, Bill 167, which would have provided for same-sex partnership benefits in the province. At the time, this legislation was seen as a revolutionary step forward for same-sex recognition.
>
> […]The Rae government established an employment equity commission in 1991,[49] and two years later introduced affirmative action to improve the numbers of women, non-whites, aboriginals and disabled persons working in the public sector.
>
> […]In November 1990, the Rae government announced that it would restrict most rent increases to 4.6% for the present year and 5.4% for 1991. The provisions for 1990 were made retroactive. Tenants' groups supported these changes, while landlord representatives were generally opposed.

Be careful who you vote for, Canada. We voted for Obama, and now we have a 14.5 trillion dollar debt and a 1.65 trillion deficit – TEN TIMES the last Republican budget deficit of 160 billion under George W. Bush in 2007. TEN TIMES WORSE THAN BUSH.

UPDATE: This post linked by Blazing Cat Fur.

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- NDP leader Jack Layton wants consumers to pay higher prices for lower quality goods

Conservative Stephen Harper will free small businesses to create jobs

April 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Everyone please be patient for today and tomorrow, because I will be blogging mostly on the Canadian election which is set for Monday, May 2nd! Things will be back to normal on Friday night!

Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper announces his job creation plan.

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced that a re-elected Conservative Government will implement a range of measures, including reducing unnecessary regulation, to support small businesses in creating jobs and spurring economic growth.
>
> "Canada's entrepreneurs are the backbone of our economy, creating jobs and driving long-term economic growth in communities large and small across our country," said Mr. Harper. "It is important that government create the conditions for Canadian entrepreneurs to flourish and grow."
>
> A re-elected Stephen Harper Government will spur a culture shift within government by legislating a 'one-for-one' rule, so that government must eliminate an existing regulation every time it proposes a new one. The success of the small- and medium-sized business sector contributes greatly to the economic and social success of Canada; however, 26 per cent of small business owners say they may not have gone into business had they known the true burden of regulation.

> Stephen Harper's Government has taken decisive action to address the needs and concerns of entrepreneurs in the last five years, including reducing taxes and red tape; improving access to business financing; making substantial investments in training, research, and development; and opening up new markets. Building upon Prime Minister Stephen Harper's declaration of 2011 as the Year of the Entrepreneur, a re-elected Conservative Government will further support Canadian businesses by:
>
> - Moving forward with the Red Tape Reduction Commission, which will apply a small business lens to regulations to ensure that they do not have unintended impacts on small businesses.
> - Introducing a $1,000 Employment Insurance tax credit for any new employees hired by a small business.
> - Extending BizPal, an online service for businesses that provides streamlined, customized one-stop shopping for information on required permits and licences.
> - Providing $20 million over two years for the Canada Youth Business Foundation, enabling young Canadians to launch more than 1,000 new businesses and generate an estimated 6,700 new jobs.

Canada's unemployment rate is better than the United States unemployment rate.

Meanwhile, Jack Layton wants to cripple the Canadian economy with a cap-and-trade carbon tax for companies that produce energy. (H/T Blue Like You)

Excerpt:

> If NDP Leader Jack Layton wins a minority government May 2, supported by the Liberals and Bloc Quebecois, he plans to make Canadians pay a new charge estimated at $21.5 billion over the next four years for the right to emit man-made carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
>
> Under Layton's proposed cap-and-trade plan, this money will be paid by ordinary Canadians in higher retail costs for goods and services, along with job layoffs and lower salaries and benefits for workers.
>
> Layton's plan is to impose cap-and-trade on us soon after the NDP takes power.
>
> We know this because in outlining his proposal during the election, the NDP estimated it will collect $3.6 billion from cap-and-trade in this fiscal year alone, which started April 1 and ends March 31, 2012…

That will drive up the prices that Canadians *and Americans* pay for Canadian energy.

Related posts

- Should pro-life social conservatives vote for Stephen Harper?

- Conservative Party unveils plan to promote religious liberty abroad
- Stephen Harper wins English-language election debate
- Stephen Harper’s Conservatives unveil “Here for Canada” platform
- Harper would ban political contributions from unions and corporations
- A closer look at Stephen Harper’s Family Tax Cut plan
- Poll finds 68% of Canadians positive on Canadian economy
- Canada created twice the number of jobs as the United States in January
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper vows to end long-gun registry
- Stephen Harper makes a stand against North Korean aggression
- Fiscally conservative Canada campaigns against global bank tax
- Federal conservatives in Canada aim to cut spending and waste from budget
- Canada’s finance minister proposes changes to mortgage lending laws
- Supreme Court sides with Conservative Party against price-fixing monopoly
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper seeks increased trade with India
- Canadian Evangelicals and Catholics more opposed to secularism and socialism
- Members of Canadian socialist parties oppose child sex-trafficking crime bill
- Harper instructs foreign minister to denounce Libyan dictator
- Canadians to walk out of Ahmadinejad’s speech at UN
- Canada signs free trade deal with Panama
- Harper pays surprise visit to troops in Afghanistan
- Investors Business Daily says Harper better leader than Obama
- Round-up of US news media interviews with Stephen Harper

NDP leader Jack Layton promises to promote greater access to abortion

April 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

NDP leaders Bob Rae and Jack Layton

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> As Canada's New Democratic Party (NDP) surges in the polls in the lead up to Monday's federal election – raising the once-unimaginable specter of a coalition government headed by NDP leader Jack Layton – the party has emphasized their plan to push Canada beyond the status quo of state-funded abortion-on-demand, promising to actually promote greater access to abortion across the country.
>
> NDP leader Jack Layton emphasized the party's commitment to abortion – and questioned the Conservative party's commitment – in Gatineau, Quebec on Monday as part of a pitch to win over women voters. "The cabinet of the prime minister is still questioning the right of women to choose," said Layton, according to the Toronto Star.
>
> In a statement to Campaign Life Coalition, the political arm of Canada's pro-life movement, the NDP said they are committed as a party to "universal access to abortion services and guaranteed reproductive freedoms for all Canadian women, regardless of income or where they live."
>
> The party emphasized that this is a position demanded of all NDP candidates. "All New Democrat candidates agree to adhere to these principles when they agree to accept the nomination from their riding association," said the statement.
>
> Notably, last year every NDP Member of Parliament, except four who did not vote, opposed Bill C-510 (Roxanne's Law), which would have protected women who choose to keep their unborn babies from being coerced into abortion.
>
> […]The polling firm suggests the party could win as many as 100 seats, allowing

> them to team up with the Liberals to form a coalition government that would make Layton Canada's Prime Minister. They report that the NDP's popularity has particularly surged in Quebec, where they say there has been "a wholesale transfer of Bloc Quebecois supporters."
>
> Though Layton did not give details at the Gatineau rally on the party's plan to promote abortion, an NDP policy official told the Toronto Star that the party would negotiate with the provinces and territories to make abortion easily accessible to every woman who wants one. The official suggested this could involve adding to the number of hospitals and family doctors committing abortions.
>
> Two provinces that would likely be affected are New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, frequent targets of abortion advocates. New Brunswick has successfully avoided funding private abortion facilities so far, and P.E.I. residents must currently obtain abortions in other provinces. Both would undoubtedly come under pressure from an NDP-led government.

Social conservatives should not be voting for Jack Layton. He is a pro-abortion radical.

How did former NDP leader Bob Rae govern in Ontario?

If you want to know what New Democrats do to an economy, you can read about how NDP leader Bob Rae wrecked the Ontario economy in the 1990s.

Excerpt:

> The Liberal government had forecast a small surplus earlier in the year, but a worsening North American economy led to a $700 million deficit before Rae took office. In October, the NDP projected a $2.5 billion deficit for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 1991.[40] Some economists projected soaring deficits for the upcoming years, even if the Rae government implemented austerity measures.[41] Rae himself was critical of the Bank of Canada's high interest rate policy, arguing that it would lead to increased unemployment throughout the country.[42] He also criticized the 1991 federal budget, arguing the Finance Minister Michael Wilson was shifting the federal debt to the provinces.[43]
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> The Rae government's first budget, introduced in 1991, increased social spending to mitigate the economic slowdown and projected a record deficit of $9.1 billion. Finance Minister Floyd Laughren argued that Ontario made a decision to target the effects of the recession rather than the deficit, and said that the budget would create or protect 70,000 jobs. It targeted more money to social assistance, social housing and child benefits, and raised taxes for high-income earners while lowering rates for 700,000 low-income Ontarians.[44]
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NDP leader Jack Layton would kill jobs and raise energy prices with cap-and-trade

April 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

NDP leaders Bob Rae and Jack Layton

The Ottawa Sun reports on what Jack Layton's cap-and-trade carbon tax would do to the economy and jobs. (H/T Blue Like You)

Excerpt:

> If NDP Leader Jack Layton wins a minority government May 2, supported by the Liberals and Bloc Quebecois, he plans to make Canadians pay a new charge estimated at $21.5 billion over the next four years for the right to emit man-made carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
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Remember what happened to consumer energy prices in Ontario when Dalton McGuinty embraced unproven wind and solar power?

The Globe and Mail explains:

> If you haven't opened your September hydro bill yet, you're in for a shock. Rates have risen 18 per cent this year to date, and that's just the start. By this time next year – election time – Ontario power consumers will be forking over about twice as much (in nominal terms) as they did when Dalton McGuinty took office in 2003.
>
> […]Power expert Tom Adams may know more about this subject than any other

> living being. And he's steamed. Ontario's rates, he says, have already surpassed the U.S. average and are headed for European levels – "just because of public policy."
>
> The policy is to go all out on renewables – wind and solar– whether or not it makes sense. The province is paying sky-high rates for power it doesn't need so we can have wind turbines marching on and on to the horizon, just like Denmark does. "Power demand has been dropping since 2005," says Mr. Adams. In fact, we have so much excess supply that, from time to time, it threatens to crash the system. Because of this, we're even paying the neighbours to take the power off our hands.
>
> "Ontario will need new power supplies in the future," Mr. Adams says. "But why not buy it when we need it?" Instead of waiting, the power authority is signing long-term contracts at the rate of about $1-billion a week, while paying enormous premiums to attract wind and solar producers. In other words, it's making 20-year commitments to pay stunningly high prices for power we don't need.
>
> On top of that, the province is building new transmission lines to nowhere while neglecting to ensure that Toronto's hospitals and banks can keep the lights on. In July, Toronto experienced what Mr. Adams calls "Ontario's first green blackout." That blackout occurred because the city's downtown core is badly underpowered. It has the weakest power system of any financial centre in the developed world.
>
> Why haven't we done anything about it? Because the green lobby has been campaigning for conservation, instead. And so, when the government started picking sites for transmission upgrades, it decided to build a power line up the shore of Lake Nipigon to connect remote wind turbines to Thunder Bay.
>
> Ever since the days of Adam Beck, the father of public power in Ontario, the province's energy policy has been linked to economic policy. The motto was reliable power at cost. Now energy policy has been entirely decoupled from economic policy and attached to the runaway train of environmental policy. Everyone in the power system knows it. But they're so terrified to raise their hands, most of the public is still in the dark.

The National Post wrote about how the Ontario government wastes taxpayer money to subsidize big corporations who experiment with unproven, expensive energy programs, like solar power.

Excerpt:

> The Swedish retail giant IKEA announced yesterday it will invest $4.6-million to install 3,790 solar panels on three Toronto area stores, giving IKEA the electric-power-producing capacity of 960,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) per year. According to IKEA, that's enough electricity to power 100 homes. Amazing development. Even more amazing is the economics of this project. Under the Ontario government's feed-in-tariff solar power scheme, IKEA will receive 71.3¢ for each kilowatt of

> power produced, which works out to about $6,800 a year for each of the 100 hypothetical homes. Since the average Toronto home currently pays about $1,200 for the same quantity of electricity, that implies that IKEA is being overpaid by $5,400 per home equivalent.
>
> Welcome to the wonderful world of green economics and the magical business of carbon emission reduction. Each year, IKEA will receive $684,408 under Premier Dalton McGuinty's green energy monster — for power that today retails for about $115,000. At that rate, IKEA will recoup $4.6-million in less than seven years — not bad for an investment that can be amortized over 20.
>
> No wonder solar power is such a hot industry. No wonder, too, that the province of Ontario is in a headlong rush into a likely economic crisis brought on by skyrocketing electricity prices. To make up the money paid to IKEA to promote itself as a carbon-free zone, Ontario consumers and industries are on their way to experiencing the highest electricity rates in North America, if not most of the world.
> The government's regulator, the Ontario Energy Board, has prepared secret forecasts of how much Ontario consumers are going to have to pay for electricity over the next five years. The government won't allow the report to be released. The next best estimate comes from Aegent Energy Advisors Inc., in a study it did for the Canadian Manufactures and Exporters group. Residential rates are expected to jump by 60% between 2010 and 2015. Industrial customers will be looking at a 55% increase.
>
> Going back to 2003, based on numbers dug up by consultant Tom Adams, the price of residential electricity in Ontario hovered around 8.5¢ a kWh in 2003 — the first year of the McGuinty Liberal regime. By 2015, Aegent Energy estimates the price will be up to 21¢, an increase of 135%. Doubling the price of electricity in a decade is no way to spur growth and investment. In this age of global economic competition IKEA may end up with fewer sales of its Billy bookshelves in Toronto because its customers will be bogged down with soaring power bills and a sliding economy.

How about wind power? Is that any better? The National post explains the costs and drawbacks of wind power.

Excerpt:

> A $200-million wind farm in northern New Brunswick is frozen solid, cutting off a potential supply of renewable energy for NB Power.
>
> The 25-kilometre stretch of wind turbines, located 70 kilometres northwest of Bathurst, N.B. has been completely shutdown for several weeks due to heavy ice covering the blades.
>
> […]Wintery conditions also temporarily shutdown the site last winter, just months after its completion. Some or all of the turbines were offline for several days, with

> "particularly severe icing" blamed.
>
> The accumulated ice alters the aerodynamics of the blades, rendering them ineffective as airfoils. The added weight further immobilizes the structures.
>
> […]Melissa Morton, a spokeswoman for the utility, says the contract isn't based on power delivered during a specific period, but rather on an annual basis.
>
> "Our hopes is that it will balance out over the 12-month period and, historically, that has been the case."
>
> Despite running into problems in consecutive winters, Ms. Morton says NB Power doesn't have concerns about the reliability of the supply from the Caribou Mountain site.

And messing with energy production doesn't just hurt consumers, it hurts businesses who have to pay more for electricity. They deal with those additional costs by laying off workers and raising the prices of their goods and services. These alternative energy sources simply to not work as well (YET) as current methods of generating power, and it costs a lot of taxpayer money to experiment with them. This is real money folks – YOUR MONEY.

The Wall Street Journal has more on the economic effects of cap-and-trade laws. Even with a Democrat-run House, a Democrat-run Senate, and a Democrat president, the anti-business left was not able to get the cap-and-trade carbon tax passed in the United States. Everybody, including Democrats, knew that a tax on energy production will cost the energy sector jobs, and raise prices on consumer energy.

Spain tried to implement a green jobs program, and it cost them 2.2 jobs in other sectors of the economy for every green job created by their green energy policy.

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Excerpt:

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UPDATE: This post linked by Crux of the Matter.

Related posts

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NDP leader Jack Layton gets medical care at private clinic instead of public hospital

April 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

NDP leaders Bob Rae and Jack Layton

From CTV News:

> NDP Leader Jack Layton, who's campaigning as the defender of public health care, had surgery at a private clinic in the 1990s, The Canadian Press has learned.
>
> Layton had hernia surgery at the Shouldice Hospital, a private facility in the Toronto suburb of Thornhill, while he was serving as a Toronto city councillor. The NDP leader said he wasn't aware the clinic was private when he went for his surgery in the mid-1990s.

CBC News has more on Layton's reasons for jumping the queue:

> Earlier in the campaign, Layton said he would not go to a private clinic nor would he send a loved one to a private clinic, even if he could get faster treatment.

He would have had a longer wait at a public hospital, and he didn't want to wait in line behind ordinary people.

How did former NDP leader Bob Rae govern in Ontario?

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Conservative Stephen Harper will cut taxes for families

April 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper announces his tax cut plan for families.

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced today that a re-elected Conservative Government will continue to implement low-tax measures to improve the quality of life of Canadian families.
>
> "The Conservative Party believes in low taxes for Canadian families, because we know household budgets are tight," said Mr. Harper. "A re-elected Conservative Government will continue to keep taxes down for families so they can keep more of their hard-earned money to spend on what matters to them."
>
> Budget 2011, the Next Phase of Canada's Economic Action Plan, included concrete measures to keep taxes down for Canadian families. These include a new Family Caregiver Tax Credit to help around 500,000 families with the cost of caring for an infirm child or an aging parent, and the elimination of the $10,000 cap on the Medical Expense Tax Credit for any expenses incurred in caring for a financially-dependent relative. Our 2011 Budget — opposed by the Ignatieff Liberals and their Coalition partners, the NDP and Bloc Québécois — would also create a new $500 Children's Arts Tax Credit to help parents cover the cost of putting their children in artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.
>
> "It is important for a Conservative Government to make Canadian families one of our key priorities," said Mr. Harper. "That is why we will introduce measures to

> help caregivers, people who make sacrifices for their families, with concrete, affordable measures."
>
> Prime Minister Harper also reiterated his commitment to double to $1,000 the amount of the Children's Fitness Tax Credit and to introduce the Family Tax Cut, income-sharing for families with children under the age of 18 years old, once the Government eliminates the deficit in 2014.
>
> Stephen Harper's Conservative Government cut taxes for Canadian families by more than $3,000 on average.
>
> Prime Minister Harper observed that the Coalition of the Ignatieff Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois has the wrong priorities with their plan to raise taxes on Canadian families and ignore the choices that families make. "The choice is clear," Mr. Harper said. "Canadians can choose between our low-tax plan for families and their high-tax agenda that will set you and your family back."

Stephen Harper would also pass a bill to get tough on crime and criminals, in order to protect law-abiding Canadian families.

Related posts

- Should pro-life social conservatives vote for Stephen Harper?
- Conservative Party unveils plan to promote religious liberty abroad
- Stephen Harper wins English-language election debate
- Stephen Harper's Conservatives unveil "Here for Canada" platform
- Harper would ban political contributions from unions and corporations
- A closer look at Stephen Harper's Family Tax Cut plan
- Poll finds 68% of Canadians positive on Canadian economy
- Canada created twice the number of jobs as the United States in January
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper vows to end long-gun registry
- Stephen Harper makes a stand against North Korean aggression
- Fiscally conservative Canada campaigns against global bank tax
- Federal conservatives in Canada aim to cut spending and waste from budget
- Canada's finance minister proposes changes to mortgage lending laws
- Supreme Court sides with Conservative Party against price-fixing monopoly
- Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper seeks increased trade with India
- Canadian Evangelicals and Catholics more opposed to secularism and socialism
- Members of Canadian socialist parties oppose child sex-trafficking crime bill
- Harper instructs foreign minister to denounce Libyan dictator
- Canadians to walk out of Ahmadinejad's speech at UN
- Canada signs free trade deal with Panama
- Harper pays surprise visit to troops in Afghanistan
- Investors Business Daily says Harper better leader than Obama
- Round-up of US news media interviews with Stephen Harper

NDP leader Jack Layton wants consumers to pay higher prices for lower quality goods

April 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

NDP leaders Bob Rae and Jack Layton

Jack Layton is opposed to free trade with other nations, and Jack Layton supports the imposition of tariffs on imported goods. Stephen Harper favors free trade and opposes tariffs, and has pushed through numerous free trade deals during his terms in office. So now we have to ask the questions: is free trade good for Canada? Is free trade good for Canadian consumers? Is free trade good for Canadian companies? Is free trade good for the poor in other countries?

Let's start by noting that free trade is supported by virtually ALL economists, regardless of their political persuasion. Moderate economist Gregory Mankiw of Harvard University lists the policies that are accepted by virtually all economists.

Here's Greg's list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:

1. A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)
2. **Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)**
3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)

10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
12. A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)
13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

Now let's drill down to the research on free trade in particular.

Here's an article from the libertarian Cato Institute, a respected think tank.

Excerpt:

> There are three important reasons voluntary exchange is good not only for the contracting parties but the world as a whole:
>
> (1) Trade improves global efficiency in resource allocation. A glass of water may be of little value to someone living near the river but is priceless to a person crossing the Sahara. Trade delivers goods and services to those who value them most.
>
> (2) Trade allows partners to gain from specializing in the producing those goods and services they do best. Economists call that the law of comparative advantage. When producers create goods they are comparatively skilled at, such as Germans producing beer and the French producing wine, those goods increase in abundance and quality.
>
> (3) Trade allows consumers to benefit from more efficient production methods. For example, without large markets for goods and services, large production runs would not be economical. Large production runs, in turn, are instrumental to reducing product costs. Lower production costs lead to cheaper goods and services, which raises real living standards.
>
> Evidence supports the idea nations more open to trade tend to be richer than those that are less open. Columbia University economist Arvind Panagariya wrote in a paper "Miracles and Debacles: Do Free-Trade Skeptics Have a Case?": "On the poverty front, there is overwhelming evidence that trade openness is a more trustworthy friend of the poor than protectionism. Few countries have grown rapidly without a simultaneous rapid expansion of trade. In turn, rapid growth has almost always led to reduction in poverty."
>
> According to the Cato Institute's 2004 report on Economic Freedom of the World, which measures economic freedom in 123 countries, the per capita gross domestic product in the quintile of countries with the most restricted trading was only $1,883 in 2002. That year's per capita GDP in the quintile of countries with the freest trading regimes was $23,938.

Harper holds the B.A. and the M.A. in economics from the University of Calgary. He knows this stuff cold.

Here's an article from The Heritage Foundation, another think tank. This article outlines five reasons why free trade is the best economic policy.

Here is an excerpt from one reason from the list of five:

> REASON #1: Higher Standard of Living
>
> The most compelling reason to support free trade is that society as a whole benefits from it. Free trade improves people's living standards because it allows them to consume higher quality goods at less expensive prices. In the 19th century, British economist David Ricardo showed that any nation that focuses on producing goods in which it has a comparative advantage will be able to get cheaper and better goods from other countries in return. As a result of the exchange, both trading parties gain from producing more efficiently and consuming higher quality goods and services at lower prices.
>
> Trade between nations is the same as trade between people. Consider what the quality of life would be if each person had to produce absolutely everything that he or she consumed, such as food, clothing, cars, or home repairs. Compare that picture with life as it is now as individuals dedicate themselves to working on just one thing–for example, insurance sales–to earn a salary with which they can freely purchase food, a car, a home, clothing, and anything else they wish at higher quality and lower prices than if they had done it themselves.
>
> It simply makes sense for each person to work at what he or she does best and to buy the rest. As a nation, the United States exports in order to purchase imports that other nations produce more skillfully and cheaply. Therefore, the fewer barriers erected against trade with other nations, the more access people will have to the best, least expensive goods and services in the world "supermarket."
>
> Producers benefit as well. In the absence of trade barriers, producers face greater competition from foreign producers, and this increased competition gives them an incentive to improve the quality of their production while keeping prices low in order to compete. At the same time, free trade allows domestic producers to shop around the world for the least expensive inputs they can use for their production, which in turn allows them to keep their cost of production down without sacrificing quality.
>
> In the end, the results benefit both producers–who remain competitive and profitable–and consumers–who pay less for a good or a service than they would if trade barriers existed.

There is no loser to free trade exchanges, otherwise the participants to the trade would not make the trade at all. Both parties gain – that's why they choose to make the trade.

NDP candidates are not economists

NDP candidates are not known for their demonstrated knowledge and experience in

economics, unlike Stephen Harper.

Excerpt:

> Usually an election call means all bets are off for politicos wanting to take a Vegas vacation.
>
> But, if you're a New Democrat, you can be in Sin City with just days to go in the federal election campaign.
>
> That's where the party's long shot candidate for the Quebec riding of Berthier-Maskinonge, Ruth Ellen Brosseau, finds herself.

Ruth works in the campus pub at Carleton University. She is not an economist.

But there's more:

> Some NDP candidates in Quebec could prove to be wild cards if they end up winning on May 2.
>
> Several are still university students.
>
> Charmaine Borg in Terrebonne-Blainville and Sherbrooke candidate Pierre-Luc Dusseault are both studying political science.
>
> Actress and former camp counsellor Marie-Claude Morin in Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot is working on a degree in social work.
>
> Others have off-beat political backgrounds.
>
> Alexandre Boulerice, the NDP candidate in Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie, is a member of the left-wing separatist party Quebec Solidaire.
>
> In the Pontiac riding, the New Democrats have nominated Mathieu Ravignat. He was a Communist Party candidate in the Montreal area in 1997.

You can watch a video report on some of the NDP candidates here at Blazing Cat Fur.

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Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on marriage at Stanford University

April 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States.

Details:

> Dr J gave this talk at Stanford University's Anscombe Society on the reasons for marriage, and the ways in which it shapes society and the next generation. After Dr J's talk at Stanford University, she took questions and answers from the students in attendance. They had quite the lively discussion... **Please be advised–some of these questions may be overly explicit for very young listeners.**

The files:

- The MP3 file for the lecture is here. (19 Mb, 42 minutes)
- The MP3 file for the Q&A is here. (19 Mb, 42 minutes)

Here's her biography:

> Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D. is the founder and President of the Ruth Institute, president of the Ruth Institute a project of the National Organization for Marriage to promote life-long married love to college students by creating an intellectual and social climate favorable to marriage.
>
> She is also the Senior Research Fellow in Economics at the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty.
>
> She is the author of Smart Sex: Finding Life-long Love in a Hook-up World, (2005) and Love and Economics: Why the Laissez-Faire Family Doesn't Work (2001), recently reissued in paperback, as Love and Economics: It Takes a Family to Raise a Village.
>
> Dr. Morse served as a Research Fellow for Stanford University's Hoover Institution from 1997-2005. She received her Ph.D. in economics from the

> University of Rochester in 1980 and spent a postdoctoral year at the University of Chicago during 1979-80. She taught economics at Yale University and George Mason University for 15 years. She was John M. Olin visiting scholar at the Cornell Law School in fall 1993. She is a regular contributor to the National Review Online, National Catholic Register, Town Hall, MercatorNet and To the Source.
>
> Dr. Morse's scholarly articles have appeared in the Journal of Political Economy, Economic Inquiry, the Journal of Economic History, Publius: the Journal of Federalism, the University of Chicago Law Review, and the Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy, Social Philosophy and Policy, The Independent Review, and The Notre Dame Journal of Law Ethics and Public Policy.
>
> […]Her public policy articles have appeared in Forbes, Policy Review,The American Enterprise, Fortune, Reason, the Wall Street Journal, Vital Speeches, and Religion and Liberty.
>
> She currently lives in San Diego, CA. She and her husband are the parents of a birth child, an adopted child. From March 2003 to August 2006, Dr. Morse and her husband were foster parents for San Diego County. During that time, they cared for a total of eight foster children.

Her talent is to apply the economic way of thinking to social issues like marriage, family and parenting.

MIT student offers a secular case against same-sex marriage

April 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology student newspaper. It's written by a Ph.D student in financial economics.

Excerpt:

> When a state recognizes a marriage, it bestows upon the couple certain benefits which are costly to both the state and other individuals. Collecting a deceased spouse's social security, claiming an extra tax exemption for a spouse, and having the right to be covered under a spouse's health insurance policy are just a few examples of the costly benefits associated with marriage. In a sense, a married couple receives a subsidy. Why? Because a marriage between two unrelated heterosexuals is likely to result in a family with children, and propagation of society is a compelling state interest. For this reason, states have, in varying degrees, restricted from marriage couples unlikely to produce children.
>
> […]Homosexual relationships do nothing to serve the state interest of propagating society, so there is no reason for the state to grant them the costly benefits of marriage, unless they serve some other state interest. The burden of proof, therefore, is on the advocates of gay marriage to show what state interest these marriages serve. Thus far, this burden has not been met.
>
> […]Perhaps it may serve a state interest to recognize gay marriages to make it easier for gay couples to adopt. However, there is ample evidence (see, for example, David Popenoe's *Life Without Father*) that children need both a male and female parent for proper development. Unfortunately, small sample sizes and other methodological problems make it impossible to draw conclusions from studies that directly examine the effects of gay parenting. However, the empirically verified common wisdom about the importance of a mother and father in a child's development should give advocates of gay adoption pause. The differences between men and women extend beyond anatomy, so it is essential for a child to be nurtured by parents of both sexes if a child is to learn to function in a society made up of both sexes.
>
> […]When married persons care more about themselves than their responsibilities to their children and society, they become more willing to abandon these responsibilities, leading to broken homes, a plummeting birthrate, and countless other social pathologies that have become rampant over the last 40 years. Homosexual marriage is not the cause for any of these pathologies, but it will exacerbate them, as the granting of marital benefits to a category of sexual relationships that are necessarily sterile can only widen the separation between marriage and procreation.

> […]The biggest danger homosexual civil marriage presents is the enshrining into law the notion that sexual love, regardless of its fecundity, is the sole criterion for marriage. If the state must recognize a marriage of two men simply because they love one another, upon what basis can it deny marital recognition to a group of two men and three women, for example, or a sterile brother and sister who claim to love each other?

You can learn the basics of defending traditional marriage from this column. But same-sex marriage is actually *less* of a threat to marriage than another policy called "no-fault divorce". Let's look at that policy.

No-Fault Divorce

Economist Stephen Baskerville wrote an article about how certain policies cause the decline of marriage and the family. The biggest one is the policy of no-fault divorce, which is really unilateral divorce. No-fault divorce refers to the ability of one spouse to end the marriage for any reason, or no reason. It's probably the biggest reason why men refuse to marry today, because they are almost always the victim, and it costs them plenty.

Dr. Baskerville writes:

> …80 percent of divorces are unilateral. Under "no-fault," divorce becomes a power grab by one spouse, assisted by judicial officials who profit from the ensuing litigation: judges, lawyers, psychotherapists, and social workers. Involuntary divorce involves government agents forcibly removing innocent people from their homes, seizing their property, and separating them from their children. It requires long-term supervision over private life by state functionaries, including police and jails.
>
> …Invariably the first action in a divorce is to separate the children from one parent, usually the father. Even if he is innocent of any legal wrongdoing and does not agree to the divorce, the state seizes his children with no burden of proof to justify why. The burden of proof–and financial burden–falls on him to demonstrate why they should be returned.
>
> A legally unimpeachable parent can thus be arrested for seeing his own children without government authorization. He can be arrested through additional judicial directives that apply to no one but him. He can be arrested for domestic violence or child abuse, even without evidence that he has committed any. He can be arrested for not paying child support, regardless of the amount demanded. He can even be arrested for not paying an attorney or psychotherapist. There is no formal charge, no jury, no trial, and no record.

If these statements surprise you, I recommend you read the whole article to find out how this is done.

My secular case against marriage is here.

Media spins police report of naked Jack Layton in "massage parlor"

April 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Toronto Sun reports that NDP Leader Jack Layton was discovered naked in a Chinatown "massage parlor" with a young woman from mainland China. The police found him while they were conducting a raid.

Excerpt:

> Jack Layton was found laying naked on a bed by Toronto Police at a suspected Chinatown bawdy house in 1996, a retired Toronto police officer told the Toronto Sun.
>
> The stunning revelation about the current leader of the New Democratic Party comes days before the federal election at a time when his popularity is soaring.
>
> When the policeman and his partner walked into a second-floor room at the Toronto massage parlour, they saw an attractive 5-foot-10 Asian woman who was in her mid-20s and the married, then-Metro councillor, lying on his back in bed.

The Toronto Sun also reports that the "massage parlor" had been targeted in anti-prostitution raids by police. (WARNING: Sexual content!)

Excerpt:

> The suspected bawdy house at 787 Dundas St. W. where Jack Layton was found was one of 26 raided by Toronto Police in Project Cobra in the mid-1990s.
>
> Asian crime gangs were feeding off the bawdy houses that stretched across Toronto from Chinatown East to Parkdale.
>
> Police assigned to Project Cobra hit 26 bawdy houses and laid more than 300 charges.
>
> "Police were cracking down on underage girls from Thailand," a former asian crime unit cop says.
>
> "It was unregulated and unpoliced … it was a lucrative business, the girls were pulling in $600 to $700 for a couple hours work," he says.
>
> The setup at 787 Dundas St. W. impressed the ex-cop.
>
> The guy who ran the place controlled traffic with a red and green light system from the second floor where he could see down a stairway to the street.
>
> "The setup was amazing … when the police showed up, the manager flicked on the red light switch — which told the girls to pretend it was a legitimate business — rubs only — keep it clean and the green light meant they could perform sexual services," he says.
>
> [Graphic details omitted]

> **Police were most concerned about underage girls brought in from Thailand and Vietnam.**
>
> The other women in the bawdy houses ranged in age from the 20s to 50.

Blazing Cat Fur has link to Sun News Network breaking news video.

Here it is:

So why is no one else in the media covering this spectacular story?

Mainstream media reporting Layton's denials, but no facts

So what is the mainstream media reporting today?

This is from CBC:

> A letter from Layton's lawyer also denied any wrongdoing from their client.
>
> "The facts are that Mr. Layton had obtained a massage from a massage therapist, but had no knowledge whatsoever that the therapist's location may have been used for illicit purposes," Brian Iler wrote in a statement.
>
> "He does recall being advised by the police at the time that he did nothing wrong, but that the location was questionable, and to be stayed away from. Mr. Layton gave the officer his name and address, and nothing further happened."

The CBC would not print the details of the story – they just cited Layton's denial, Layton's wife's denial, and Layton's lawyer's denial. That's it. That's their news story – listening to *one side of the story*. They refused to report any of the facts from the Toronto Sun articles that I cited above, or even to show a picture of the massage parlor. If this story had been about Stephen Harper, they would have been all over it.

Today I am looking at the news headlines and every single story from the mainstream press (excluding the Sun newspapers and blogs) is spinning for Jack Layton. For example, the Globe and Mail story doesn't even mention that he was found by police NAKED on a BED – or that this "massage parlor" had been previously raided by police for suspected sex-trafficking and prostitution, or that the woman was a Chinese national.

More about the real Jack Layton in this Canada Free Press story and on Secrets of Vancouver.

Blazing Cat Fur has a humorous take on this story. (WARNING: Graphic!)

Related posts

- NDP leader Jack Layton lived in subsidized housing with $120,000 income
- NDP leader Jack Layton promises to promote greater access to abortion
- NDP leader Jack Layton would kill jobs and raise energy prices with cap-and-trade
- NDP leader Jack Layton gets medical care at private clinic instead of public hospital
- NDP leader Jack Layton wants consumers to pay higher prices for lower quality goods

Stephen C. Meyer explains why rational systems of morality require God

April 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer

About the speaker:

Stephen C. Meyer is director of the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture (CSC) and a founder both of the intelligent design movement and of the CSC, intelligent design's primary intellectual and scientific headquarters. Dr. Meyer is a Cambridge University-trained philosopher of science, the author of peer-reviewed publications in technical, scientific, philosophical and other books and journals. His signal contribution to ID theory is given most fully in *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, published by HarperOne in June 2009.

[…]Graduating from Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington, in 1981 with a degree in physics and earth science, he later became a geophysicist with Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) in Dallas, Texas. From 1981 to 1985, he worked for ARCO in digital signal processing and seismic survey interpretation. As a Rotary International Scholar, he received his training in the history and philosophy of science at Cambridge University, earning a PhD in 1991. His thesis offered a methodological interpretation of origin-of-life research.

[…]Prior to the publication of *Signature in the Cell*, the piece of writing for which Meyer was best known was an August 2004 review essay in the Smithsonian Institution-affiliated peer-reviewed biology journal *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*. The article laid out the evidential case for intelligent design, that certain features of living organisms–such as the miniature machines and complex circuits within cells–are better explained by an unspecified designing intelligence than by an undirected natural process like random mutation and natural selection.

[…]Meyer's many other publications include a contribution to, and the editing of, the peer-reviewed volume *Darwinism, Design and Public Education* (Michigan State University Press, 2004) and the innovative textbook *Explore Evolution* (Hill House Publishers, 2007).

Meyer has been widely featured in media appearance on CNN, MSNBC, NBC, ABC, CBS,

Fox News, PBS, and the BBC. In 2008, he appeared with Ben Stein in *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*. He's also featured prominently in two other science documentaries, *Icons of Evolution* and *Unlocking The Mystery of Life*.

Part 1 of 4: (15 minutes)

Part 2 of 4: (15 minutes)

Part 3 of 4: (15 minutes)

Part 4 of 4: (15 minutes)

It starts out simple, and then gets more complex.

What is the best explanation for the Cambrian fossil record?

April 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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i found an interesting video that explores a mystery in the Cambrian fossil record.

Richard Dawkins explains the mystery in his famous book “The Blind Watchmaker”.

Excerpt:

> “Eldredge and Gould certainly would agree that some very important gaps really are due to imperfections in the fossil record. Very big gaps, too. For example the Cambrian strata of rocks, vintage about 600 million years, are the oldest ones in which we find most of the major invertebrate groups. And we find many of them already in an advanced state of evolution, the very first time they appear. It is as though they were just planted there, without any evolutionary history.” (Dawkins, Richard [zoologist and Professor for the Public Understanding of Science, Oxford University], “The Blind Watchmaker,” [1986], Penguin: London, 1991, reprint, p.229)

He’s referring to prominent paleontologists Niles Eldredge and Stephen Jay Gould.

Now let’s watch the video.

Part 1 of 2: (41 minutes)

Part 2 of 2: (33 minutes)

This documentary has a mix of scholars who accept the standard naturalistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion, and some who are skeptical of the standard explanation. The first three scholars in the list below are considered to be world-renown experts in the Cambrian era fossils.

List of scholars:

Simon Conway Morris is Professor of Palaeobiology at the University of Cambridge and one of the world’s leading evolutionary paleontologists. He is noted in particular for his contributions to the understanding of the Cambrian Explosion and the fossils found in the Burgess Shale. Elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society (United Kingdom) in 1990, he also has been awarded the Walcott Medal of the National Academy of Sciences (United States). Dr. Conway Morris is author of the noted books *The Crucible of Creation: The Burgess Shale and the Rise of Animals* (1998) and *Life’s Solution: Inevitable Humans in a Lonely Universe* (2003). His views about the extent as well as the limits of Neo-Darwinism can be found in his article “Darwin was right. Up to a point.”

James Valentine is Emeritus Professor in the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of California, Berkeley, where he is also affiliated with the Museum of Paleontology and the Center for Integrative Genomics. He is one of the world’s leading experts on the Cambrian Explosion, and is the author of numerous technical articles on

the subject, as well as author of the books *On the Origin of Phyla* and *Evolutionary Paleoecology of the Marine Biosphere*, co-author of *Evolution and Evolving*, and editor of *Phanerozoic Diversity Patterns: Profiles in Macroevolution*.

Paul Chien is a Professor in the Department of Biology at the University of San Francisco. A marine biologist, Dr. Chien received his Ph.D. in Biology from the University of California at Irvine, and he was a postdoctoral fellow at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). Dr. Chien's work has been published in over fifty technical journals, and he has spoken internationally, and on numerous occasions, from Brazil to mainland China—where he has also been involved in cooperative research programs. Dr. Chien has done research in the renowned fossil beds of Chengjiang, China.

Jonathan Wells is currently a Senior Research Biologist at the Discovery Institute. He holds two Ph.D.s, one in Molecular and Cell Biology from the University of California at Berkeley, and one in Religious Studies from Yale University. He has worked as a postdoctoral research biologist at the University of California at Berkeley and the supervisor of a medical laboratory in Fairfield, California, and he has taught biology at California State University in Hayward. Dr. Wells has published articles in numerous journals, and he is author of *Icons of Evolution: Why much of what we teach about evolution is wrong* and *The Politically-Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design*, and co-author of *The Design of Life*.

Richard Sternberg is a Research Scientist at the Biologic Institute and a Research Collaborator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. He is an evolutionary biologist with interests in the relation between genes and morphological homologies, and the nature of genomic "information." He holds a Ph.D. in Biology (Molecular Evolution) from Florida International University and a Ph.D. in Systems Science (Theoretical Biology) from Binghamton University. From 2001-2007, he served as a staff scientist at the National Center for Biotechnology Information, and from 2001-2007 he was a Research Associate at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. Dr. Sternberg's website can be visited here.

Douglas Axe is Director of Biologic Institute. His research uses both experiments and computer simulations to examine the functional and structural constraints on the evolution of proteins and protein systems. After earning his Ph.D. at the California Institute of Technology, Dr. Axe held postdoctoral and research scientist positions at the University of Cambridge, the Cambridge Medical Research Council Centre, and the Babraham Institute in Cambridge. His work has been reviewed in *Nature* and featured in a number of books, magazines and newspaper articles, including *Life's Solution* by Simon Conway Morris, *The Edge of Evolution* by Michael Behe, and *Signature in the Cell* by Stephen Meyer.

Paul Nelson is a philosopher of biology, specializing in evolutionary developmental biology (evo-devo). He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1998, and he is presently an Adjunct Professor in the M.A. Program in Science & Religion at Biola University. He has published articles in such journals as *Biology & Philosophy* and *Zygon*

and has contributed essays to numerous anthologies.

Stephen Meyer is Director of the Center for Science and Culture at Discovery Institute. Formerly a geophysicist with Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO), Dr. Meyer earned his Ph.D. in the history and philosophy of science at Cambridge University as a Rotary International Scholar. From 1990-2002, he was on the faculty of Whitworth College. Dr. Meyer is author of peer-reviewed publications in technical, scientific, philosophical and other books and journals. His latest book is *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*. His other books include *Darwinism, Design and Public Education* and *Explore Evolution*. Dr. Meyer's website can be visited here.

If you like the video, you can buy the DVD here.

Related videos

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life
- The Privileged Planet

Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels signs bill to defund Planned Parenthood

May 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels said Friday he will sign restrictive abortion legislation, making Indiana the first state to cut off all government funding for Planned Parenthood and boosting Daniels' credentials among social conservatives as he considers whether to run for president.
>
> Daniels said he supported the abortion restrictions from the outset and that the provision added to defund abortion providers did not change his mind. He said women's health, family planning and other services will remain available.
>
> "The principle involved commands the support of an overwhelming majority of Hoosiers," Daniels said in a statement announcing his intention to sign the bill when it arrives on his desk in about a week.
>
> […]State Rep. Linda Lawson, a Democrat from Hammond who opposes the bill, said the legislation wouldn't win Daniels any friends among independents and women.

I thought he was only a fiscal conservative. Oh well, I guess this is fiscally conservative.

Related posts

- Republicans move to defund Planned Parenthood at the state level
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- House Republicans win vote to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Rep. Mike Pence drafts amendment to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation

- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
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- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

Tim McGrew explains how undesigned coincidences affect textual reliability

May 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tim McGrew

UPDATE: This post has been linked by Denyse O'Leary at the famous ID blog Uncommon Descent! Denyse's blog is the Post-Darwinist.

I found this lecture from philosopher Tim McGrew at MandM. Tim teaches at Western Michigan University.

The MP3 file is here.

Tim's wife Lydia explains the concept of undesigned coincidences on her blog:

> Undesigned coincidences in the Gospels … is an argument that was well-known in the nineteenth century but has, for no really clear reason, simply been forgotten as time has gone on. It is a cumulative case argument that the Gospels reflect, to an important extent, independent knowledge of actual events. Please note that this argument is quite independent of one's preferred answer to the synoptic question. That is to say, even if, e.g., Mark was the first Gospel and others had access to Mark and show signs of literary dependence on Mark, the argument from undesigned coincidences provides evidence for independent knowledge of real events among the Gospel writers. There are many more of such coincidences beyond those given in the talk.

Basically, this argument finds cases where the same story is in two sources, but where some important detail is left out of one account so that something about the story seems out of place. But the other source has the missing detail that unlocks the mystery. This makes the sources appear to be independent, especially as more of these coincidences pile up. If this happens a lot, it argues for independent sources, which means that the story is multiply attested, which it is it less likely to have been made up.

My favorite example was the Philip example from John 6.

Lydia explains that example here:

> As I was listening to Tim's examples, I was struck by all the reasons there might be for a real eyewitness not to fill out the *explanation for* a detail. Think for example how tedious it is to listen to someone who goes back to explain every little detail he mentions in a story.
>
> […]Similarly, as John is telling the story about the feeding of the five thousand, it would be quite natural for him to say that Jesus asked Philip where they could buy bread if he were really an eyewitness–that is, because he remembered that Jesus *did* ask Philip. (Tim talks about why it was Philip in the interview.) But John himself might have had to stop and think for a moment if someone had asked him, "Why did Jesus ask Philip rather than any of the other disciples?" Presumably when John told the story, he wasn't particularly thinking about some special reason for Jesus to select Philip for the question. But if someone were forging the story as fiction, he would have a reason for choosing to use a given disciple as a character at that point in his fictional narrative, and therefore he would be unlikely to choose that character without making the reason clearer to his readers.
>
> All sorts of such things can happen when one is telling a true story, especially a story one has witnessed. One gets caught up in what one actually remembers and drops in incidental references to small facts, which facts are to some extent selected randomly by the memory as one brings the scene back to memory. This is typical of real memoirs but not of elaborate forgeries.

Lydia is also a philosopher, and her Ph.D is from Vanderbilt University. She's put together a nice list of resources on historical apologetics. She is a homeschooling mom – I LOVE THAT!!!

How the Obama administration deliberately ships jobs overseas

May 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> This month, one year since the Deepwater Horizon explosion in the Gulf of Mexico, the Noble Clyde Boudreaux—an ultra-deepwater semi-submersible drilling rig—will start operations off the coast of Brazil. Until a few weeks ago it was stationed in the Gulf.
>
> The two events are not unrelated. Moving the Noble out of U.S. waters is one of the adverse consequences of the Obama administration's overreaction to last year's Gulf spill.
>
> Despite the president's repeated claims that he's been "encouraging" domestic oil production, administration policies have been driving drilling rigs out of the Gulf (six deepwater rigs in addition to the Noble have left the Gulf, with two more possibly on the way out). The overall result has been lower domestic oil production, slower economic growth, job losses and higher energy prices.
>
> In the immediate aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon explosion and spill, President Obama announced a six-month moratorium on new deepwater drilling. According to the administration's estimates, this cost nearly 19,000 jobs in the Gulf states alone—even though federal researchers then cut the figure by an ad hoc factor of 40%-60% to make the results more palatable.
>
> In the months after lifting the ban, the administration slowed drilling permits to a crawl, effectively creating what some have called a "permatorium." Dismayed by the delays, in February U.S. District Court Judge Martin Feldman tried to force the administration to act on seven pending permits, calling the inaction on permits "increasingly inexcusable." Permitting has picked up recently, thanks in part to increasing political pressure, but remains far below pre-spill levels.
>
> In December, the White House reversed course on its own five-year plan to open portions of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, the Mid-Atlantic and the South Atlantic to offshore exploration. This effectively locks up an estimated 7.6 billion barrels of oil and 36.6 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Do you know what happens when the supply of a commodity goes down? Prices go up! And when gas prices go up, the price of every consumer good that is shipped using trucks and planes and boats *also goes up*.

Related posts

- Environmental Protection Agency blocks oil drilling in Alaska

- Government report: US has world’s largest supply of oil, natural gas and coal
- Is Obama causing gas prices to rise by restricting oil drilling?
- Obama continues to block oil drilling as gas prices rise
- “Clean energy” plant closes after receiving 58 million in subsidies
- LSU Professor: Repeal of oil industry tax credits will cost 150,000 jobs
- Offshore drilling moratorium would cost 175,000 jobs per year
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- Obama administration modifies report by experts
- How changing prices signal buyers and sellers in a free market economy
- Obama blocks drilling at home, makes loan to Soros-backed firm to drill in Brazil
- Obama raises taxes on oil and gas to stop global warming

Should Christians marry non-Christians? Should Christians date non-Christians?

May 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think that the best way to answer the question, “should I marry a non-Christian?”, is to ask whether it makes any difference if your spouse is on board with your plans for your ministry and with your marriage. So let’s take a look at a case where someone chose a Christian wife, and we’ll see how much that affected his ministry and his marriage.

I want to draw your attention to a talk on “Vision in Life” given by William Lane Craig. Bill is the ablest defender of the Christian faith operating today, having defeated all of the best known atheists in formal academic debates, in front of *thousands* of university students. This list includes people like Christopher Hitchens and Victor Stenger. The Hitchens debate took place in an auditorium filled with 5000 students, and many thousands more were watching at churches all over the world. No one has done more to defend Christianity on university campuses. So how did Bill do it? Well, he owes a lot of his success to his amazing wife Jan, as we shall see below.

The MP3 file is here. (32 minutes)

This was Bill’s chapel address to Biola University students, and he is introduced by his son, John, a Biola grad.

The impact that a Christian woman makes on her husband

Here is a quotation that occurs about 11 minutes into the talk, as Bill describes the completion of his Bachelor’s degree at Wheaton:

> And it was at Wheaton that my vision began to focus on presenting the gospel in the context of giving an intellectual defense of the faith, to appeal not only to the heart but also to the head, as well. And so I determined that I would go on to seminary for further training.
>
> But, my senior year, in chapel, we heard a speaker who challenged us, before going on to further education, to take a couple of years out, and to wring out the sponge, so to speak, that had been soaking up all that knowledge, and to work with university students while we were still about the same age.
>
> And so I joined the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for 2 years, and was assigned to Northern Illinois University. And that was where I met my wife Jan. She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota where she had come to faith in Christ. And she had a similar vision for her life of evangelism and discipleship.
>
> And as we worked at NIU together, she with gals and I with the guys, leading students to Christ and discipling them to walk with the Lord, we fell in love. And we decided that we would be more effective if we joined forces and became a team.

It is at this point in the talk where Bill begins to explain just how Jan molded him into the lean, mean debating machine that travels the world striking terror into the hearts of atheists today.

Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

In an article on his web site, he talks about how Jan encouraged him to do his first PhD:

> As graduation from Trinity neared, Jan and I were sitting one evening at the supper table in our little campus apartment, talking about what to do after graduation. Neither of us had any clear leading or inclination of what we should do next.
>
> So Jan said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really like to do next?"
>
> I replied, "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to England and do a doctorate under John Hick."
>
> "Who's he?" she asked.
>
> "Oh, he's this famous British philosopher who's written extensively on arguments for the existence of God," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a cosmological argument for God's existence."
>
> But it hardly seemed a realistic idea.
>
> The next evening at supper Jan handed me a slip of paper with John Hick's address on it. "I went to the library today and found out that he's at the University of Birmingham in England," she said. "Why don't you write him a letter and ask him if you can do a doctoral thesis under him on the cosmological argument?"
>
> What a woman! So I did, and to our amazement and delight Professor Hick wrote

> back saying he'd be very pleased to supervise my doctoral work on that subject. So it was an open door!

And in the same article, he explains how Jan encouraged him to get his second Ph.D:

> As Jan and I neared the completion of my doctoral studies in Birmingham, our future path was again unclear to us. I had sent out a number of applications for teaching positions in philosophy at American universities but had received no bites. We didn't know what to do.
>
> I remember it like yesterday. We were sitting at the supper table in our little house outside Birmingham, and Jan suddenly said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really *like* to do next?"
>
> I laughed because I remembered how the Lord had used her question to guide us in the past. I had no trouble answering the question. "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to Germany and study under Wolfhart Pannenberg."
>
> "Who's he?"
>
> "Oh, he's this famous German theologian who's defended the resurrection of Christ historically," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus."
>
> Our conversation drifted to other subjects, but Jan later told me that my remark had just lit a fire under her. The next day while I was at the university, she slipped away to the library and began to research grants-in-aid for study at German universities. Most of the leads proved to be defunct or otherwise inapplicable to our situation. But there were two grants she found that were possibilities. You can imagine how surprised I was when she sprung them on me!

Both of these Ph.D experiences are also described in the talk. And the talk concludes as follows:

> I am so thankful to be married to a woman who is tremendously resourceful, tremendously talented and energetic, who could have pursued an independent career in any number of areas, but instead, she has chose to wed her aspirations to mine, and to make it her goal to make me the most effective person I can be, for Christ. And she has been like my right arm in ministry over these many years. And it is a tremendous privilege to be a team with a person like that.
>
> And you young men, I would encourage you, if you marry, to find a gal who shares your vision, not some independent vision, but who is interested in aligning herself with you, and pursuing together a common vision and goal that will draw you [together], so that you will avoid the growing separateness that so often creeps into marriages.

And now you know the rest of Bill's story. *The person you marry will have an enormous influence on the impact you will have for Christ and his Kingdom.* It is up to you to decide

whether that influence is going to be positive or negative, by deciding if you will marry, and if you do marry, by deciding whom you will marry.

Conclusion

The level of influence of a significant other in a non-platonic relationship greatly impacts your ability to achieve the vocational task that the Lord has set for you. My recommendation is to avoid engaging in *any* romantic relationship in which self-sacrificial service to the Lord is not the main focus. And remember, physical contact greatly reduces your ability to make objective evaluations.

Today, Christians treat the Christian life as a hobby that we engage in *for our benefit.* And this includes romantic relationships. One way of screening prospective mates is by assessing how well prepared they are to defend the Lord's reputation, when it is called into question. An authentic Christian should care enough to have prepared to defend God's existence and character in public. Don't just take the confession of faith and church attendance as a sign of being a Christian. Ask them how they know that the things they believe are really true.

So ask your marriage candidates questions. Ask them to defend why God exists. Ask them to defend how they know Jesus rose from the dead. Ask them why other religions are not effective for salvation. Ask them why God allows evil and suffering. Ask them how they know right from wrong. Ask them what economic and social policies they favor. And ask them how they would explain the Christian convictions persuasively to a non-Christian. Do they have reasons? Do they have evidence? Don't take these things for granted.

UPDATE: New William Lane Craig lecture specifically on the topic of Christian marriage:

- Healthy Relationships (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008) (audio here)

Related posts

- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- What does the common practice of withholding sex reveal about women?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Why do women flock to movies like Switch and Eat, Pray, Love?
- Women should read "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands"
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- The Wintery Knight's greatest fears about the future
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting

- Why men should refuse a woman’s offer of casual sex
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven’t got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- Does a man’s decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste

Jim Wallace explains and defends the doctrine of Hell

May 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J Warner Wallace

I stole this image from Wallace's Facebook page. Without asking. He is a cold case detective. So, I could get arrested. If I suddenly stop blogging, then would one of you please bail me out of jail?

Anyhoo, five podcasts on Hell from Please Convince Me.

I just listened to the first one and I really, really think you need to listen to this. He doesn't talk like a pastor. Wallace is a tough guy. And when he talks about Hell and judgment, it is just awesome. I spent Sunday listen to those two people-pleasing cowards Rob Bell and Brian Maclaren on the Unbelievable show and my ears metaphorically bled – that's how annoying those apostates are to listen to. I wish I had listened to Wallace instead. It's straight talk. No evasions. No whining. No answering questions with questions. No vague insinuations that truth should be decided by feelings and the need to be liked by others.

Number 1:

> *In the wake of Rob Bell's new book, "Love Wins," many people are beginning to question the nature and existence of Hell and how exactly God decides who must go there. For many,* the idea that our temporal, finite sin on earth should deserve an eternal punishment of infinite torment in hell is ridiculously inequitable. Why would God torture infinitely those who have only sinned finitely? *Jim addresses this objection and answers listener email.*
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 2:

> *A loving God would never create a place like Hell, would He? Any God that would*

> *send people to a place of punishment and torment is unloving by definition, right? In this podcast, Jim responds to these foundational objections to the existence of Hell. In addition, Jim comments on the Harris / Craig debate and answers listener email related to hearing God's voice.*
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 3:

> *In this podcast, Jim answers the objection that God would send people like Gandhi to Hell (simply because they are not Christians) alongside people like Hitler (who have committed unspeakable atrocities). How can a reasonable and just God be the source of such inequitable punishment? Also Jim answers listener email related to the power of prayer, the importance of evidential apologetics and the grounding for objective morality.*
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 4:

> Isn't it unfair for God to penalize people who are otherwise good, just because they haven't heard about Jesus? A good God would not send good people to Hell. Jim responds to this objection and answers listener email related to the Craig/Harris debate, pre-existing mythologies that are similar to Jesus, and the difficult, exclusive nature of "election".
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 5:

> If God is all-loving, why doesn't he "reform" people rather than simply "punish" them in Hell? Skeptics sometimes argue that a God who simply punishes his children in Hell is a sadistic and vengeful God, unworthy of our worship. Jim responds to this objection and answers listener email related to the nature of "election", the evidence for "annihilationism", and a political quote related to same sex marriage.
>
> The MP3 file is here.

There could be more coming in this series, but these are so good I though I would link to them right away. I'll keep an eye out for new ones.

Related posts

- Does God scare people into loving him with the threat of Hell?
- Is it ok to judge people? Is Hell a real place?
- Why doesn't God gives us more evidence that he exists?
- Book review of "If there's a God, why are there atheists?"
- Should you reject the Biblical notion of Hell based on emotions?
- Why do people go to Hell?

- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

How George W. Bush's secret CIA prisons and waterboarding killed Osama Bin Laden

May 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: CIA Director Leon Panetta confirms that waterboarding was used to get the tip on Osama Bin Laden's location

Obama should NOT be getting a speck of credit for the execution of Osama Bin Laden. It was GEORGE W. BUSH who created the enhanced interrogation techniques and clandestine prisons that led to the location of Osama Bin Laden. Barack Obama voted to stop the enhanced interrogation techniques, and to close the secret CIA prisons.

The ultra-liberal Minneapolis Star Tribune reports that the secret CIA prisons led to the killing of Osama Bin Laden.

Excerpt:

> Officials say CIA interrogators in secret overseas prisons developed the first strands of information that ultimately led to the killing of Osama bin Laden.
>
> Current and former U.S. officials say that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, provided the nom de guerre of one of bin Laden's most trusted aides. The CIA got similar information from Mohammed's successor, Abu Faraj al-Libi. Both were subjected to harsh interrogation tactics inside CIA prisons in Poland and Romania.
>
> The news is sure to reignite debate over whether the now-closed interrogation and detention program was successful. Former president George W. Bush authorized the CIA to use the harshest interrogation tactics in U.S. history. President Barack Obama closed the prison system.

The UK Daily mail reports on how interrogation of Guantanamo Bay detainees led to the killing of Osama Bin Laden.

Excerpt:

> Detainees at Guantanamo Bay provided the crucial breakthrough in hunting down Osama Bin Laden, American officials said last night.
>
> Senior officials in the Obama administration said intelligence gained from interrogations at the U.S. base was directly responsible for helping security forces track down and kill Bin Laden.
>
> The claim will fuel the international row about the Guantanamo camp – one of the most controversial legacies of the 9/11 attacks on the U.S. – and whether torture can ever be justified.
>
> […]Hundreds of suspects rounded up in Afghanistan and Pakistan were subjected to techniques such as water-boarding, sleep deprivation, white noise and stress

> positions at the U.S. Naval base in Cuba.
>
> Human rights groups claim the techniques amounted to torture, and that many of the detainees had no link to terrorism.
>
> But U.S. officials said interrogations had produced crucial information about a trusted courier who provided support to Bin Laden after he fled Afghanistan.
>
> A senior source said detainees had provided the courier's nickname and indicated he could be living with Bin Laden – although it took years to track down his true identity and location.
>
> The official said: 'Detainees flagged for us individuals who may have been providing direct support to Bin Laden and his deputy after their escape from Afghanistan. One courier in particular had our constant attention.'

Remember how the Democrats wanted to ban interrogations and close CIA prisons in 2009? (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> Officials say CIA interrogators in secret overseas prisons developed the first strands of information that ultimately led to the killing of Osama bin Laden.
>
> Current and former U.S. officials say that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, provided the nom de guerre of one of bin Laden's most trusted aides. The CIA got similar information Mohammed's successor, Abu Faraj al-Libi. Both were subjected to harsh interrogation tactics inside CIA prisons in Poland and Romania.

And Obama campaigned on closing down Guantanamo Bay. He had nothing to do with the killing of Bin Laden. If anything, he was completely against the techniques and policies that worked to find and kill Bin Laden.

Related posts

- Terrorist attacks under George W. Bush and Barack Obama
- Thomas Sowell explains how liberal pacifism causes wars
- Charles Krauthammer and Ralph Peters on Obama's foreign policy
- Democrats favor terrorist rights over national security in latest intelligence bill
- Marc Thiessen defends water-boarding against Christiane Amanpour
- Al-Quaeda linked to failed terrorist attack on Northwest Airlines airliner
- What are the consequencs of treating terrorism as a law enforcement issue?
- Which is more cruel and immoral? Waterboarding or abortion?
- Are Democrats fixing national security or fixing the blame on others?
- Homeland security chair says Swedish grandmothers just as likely to be terrorists
- Homeland Security head says that "the system worked"
- What is Obama working on instead of making Americans safer?
- Is waterboarding really torture? Does it enhance our national security?
- Obama cuts missile defense as Iran test-fires missile that can hit Israel

- What is the conservative doctrine of “peace through strength”?

Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper wins a majority

May 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephen Harper Wins Majority

You can see the latest Canadian election results here on the Sun News Network.

The Conservatives won 167 seats in the House of Commons. They needed 155 for a majority of the 308 seats.

From the Vancouver Sun.

Excerpt:

> Conservative leader Stephen Harper has emerged from the election campaign as a much more powerful prime minister and will lead a majority government with four years to change the country.
>
> At a rally of his supporters here, Conservatives cheered and celebrated Monday as the results rolled in from throughout the country, confirming that Canadians, in large numbers, had given Harper the trust he had sought in the five-week campaign.
>
> As the evening wore on, Harper's party was coming within striking distance of reaching the benchmark threshold — 155 seats — they needed for a majority. When the Tories crossed that threshold, a great cheer erupted in the hall here in Calgary where supporters had gathered to celebrate and listen to Harper's speech.
>
> The Conservatives success came as the NDP made historic gains at the expense of the Liberals and Bloc Quebecois, which saw their popular vote drop as they lost seats.
>
> In recent days on the hustings, Harper had portrayed the election as having

> historic consequences for the country. In addition, his own personal future was at stake.
>
> It was clear that with a majority victory, Harper will be regarded by historians as a political success story who united the political right in Canada.
>
> He will have a four-year mandate to implement significant change in areas ranging from tax policy, to the criminal justice system, to foreign affairs.

Here's the reaction to the Harper victory from businesses and investors.

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper has won for a third time the leadership of Canada, in a stunning vote which changed the country's political landscape.
>
> As the ballot counting wore on over six times zones and more than 5,000 miles from Atlantic to Pacific, Harper won his great aim, a majority government after two minorities in 2006 and 2008. The television networks declared his majority victory well before 11 p.m. ET. The Conservatives may have won 160 to 165 seats when 155 are needed for a majority in the 308-seat House of Commons.
>
> While a Conservative victory again was always considered quite possible, the countrys political landscape was altered in three stunning ways:
>
> The New Democratic Party, a rump group of social democrats in the 41st Parliament with 36 seats in the 308-seat House of Commons, surged into becoming the chief opposition party in the 42nd Parliament with about 105 to 108 seats.
>
> The former chief opposition party, the historically great Liberal Party of Canada, the government of the country for more than 100 years of Canada's 144 years since Confederation of separate British colonies into one nation, sunk to a very poor third with perhaps 30 seats. Michael Ignatieff, who became Liberal leader exactly two years earlier to the date, was looking to lose his Toronto-area seat.
>
> The Bloc Quebecois, the separatist party from the French-speaking province of Quebec, was wiped out by the surging NDP, from 47 of Quebec's 75 seats to perhaps two seats.
>
> While the social democrats in the new Democratic party hold a powerful position in the House of Commons, the Conservatives with their majority will enforce a program which by and large is what foreign and domestic business and investors prefer.
>
> The Conservatives will bring back a budget which was lost in the last Parliament when the election intervened 36 days ago, and will continue with a further tax cut for corporations, but a reduction in spending it said would bring back balance during 2014, erasing the federal budget deficit the Conservatives created after 11 years of Liberal government-created surpluses.
>
> Prime Minister Harper campaigned for a majority saying his Conservatives were

> the prudent economic managers while the others were “tax and spend” parties. He will keep the same course. Economists have said that they see no significant changes in deficit reduction or in monetary policy under the Conservatives.

Well done, Canada! Congratulations!

Homeschooled student about to enter law school at age 16

May 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reggie sent me this story from WSU Today.

Excerpt:

> A 16-year-old student from Union, Wash., will soon become the youngest person on record to graduate from Washington State University.
>
> Kayla Heard could talk at age one and read at 18 months. She started first grade at three, graduated from high school at ten and began community college at 11.
>
> Kayla was home-schooled and is earning her social sciences degree though WSU Online.
>
> "My parents felt it wouldn't be good to send me to a campus at such a young age," she said. "I appreciate their decision, mainly because online studying has given me quite a bit of flexibility in my schedule." Kayla and her family will attend the May 7 commencement in Pullman.
>
> Kayla's mother said she knew her daughter was different early on.
>
> "When she was a baby, she respected paper," Marlyn Heard said. "She didn't tear it or put it in her mouth. She would look at a picture or writing like she wanted to know what it said."
>
> When Kayla was seven months old, her mom laid out flash cards with numbers and letters.
>
> "In two months she knew them," Marlyn said. "She would pick the right ones – before she could speak." Kayla could print letters at three and write in cursive at four.
>
> At the age of two, Marlyn said, Kayla realized that all the presidents of the United States have been male. She looked at her mom and said, "I'll be the first female president. And I'll defend the rights of children."
>
> Kayla graduates with a 3.71 grade point average. She's already passed a law school admissions test, and will spend the summer filling out law school applications.
>
> "I'm interested in pursuing a degree online in international law," Kayla said. "I have a passion for traveling and learning about foreign cultures." She wants to work abroad, possibly in Hong Kong, and she plans to "visit a plethora of foreign countries" before settling down.
>
> Kayla spends her spare time singing in church, playing piano and guitar, and reading and writing. She also stays in her room a lot, Marlyn said. "We call her cave girl."

> Are there other brilliant members of the Heard family?
>
> "I have relatives who are scholars, but not like Kayla," Marlyn said. "And my son is more like a normal kid. He's 12. When he was a baby, he put the flash cards in his mouth."

This is what I expect from homeschooling families.

Homeschooling is not something that the secular left is OK with. The secular left doesn't want parents to have a big influence on their children. The secular left is not OK with the generally traditional moral beliefs of the parents. They don't want some families to be different from other families. They want everyone to be the same, even if that means that the public schools make everyone equally crappy. If homeschooled children today expect to homeschool their own children tomorrow, then they better set goals to get into the university and have an influence on public policy. Because there are forces at work who want to take homeschooling away, no matter how well it works.

Somehow, we have gotten the idea that our children are not our responsibility, and that God will not hold us accountable for the children we raise. I think that's wrong. Why are we all so anxious to lower the bar for ourselves and lower expectations? Why don't we look at children as serious projects worthy of our attention and RAISE the bar for what we expect from them – and help them *all the time* so that they can achieve it? You can't make a succesful child like this without giving them care, attention and guidance – letting them see downfield where the challenges are so they can make the right moves NOW.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- What do public school teachers think they are teaching your children?
- Supreme Court narrowly sides with private schools against government
- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?

- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher’s unions make war on charter schools

What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!

May 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Chivalry and chastity are two important factors in my life. Both of these ideas are rooted in Christianity, and they give men tools for expressing themselves to women using words or gifts, instead of using touch. Both are complex disciplines to learn. Reading literature is the best way to learn, or by watching your parents get along, if you have a good father and mother (I did not!). But another way to learn is by studying the great works of art. You can learn a lot about the differences between men and women by looking at great art – and you can get some ideas on how to treat them, too.

Below are just a few of my favorite paintings. (I like the Pre-Raphaelite era especially) Each of these paintings expresses something that men want from women in a chaste and chivalrous relationship. These behaviors are great as part of a formal courtship.

Click the small images for MUCH larger images!

RECOGNITION:

Godspeed - Edmund Blair Leighton - 1900

Men should be judged by godly women based on whether they are doing what God wants them to do. Those men who are willing to put God first in their planning should be recognized as special. Standard procedure is to give committed Christian men a token with the lady's colors that he can carry into battle.

APPROVAL:

The Accolade - Edmund Blair Leighton - 1901

Men need to be encouraged to fulfill their obligations to God by receiving the approval of godly women. Men who accomplish great things for God should receive rewards from women. Notice that the painting is portraying a public accolade.

ATTENTION:

Alain Chartier - Edmund Blair Leighton - 1903

Along with her relationship with God, godly women should make time for relating to godly men, especially to her husband if she is married. This is even more important than parenting! I am a big believer in eye contact and long written essays.

UNDERSTANDING/RESPECT:

Call to Arms - Edmund Blair Leighton - 1888

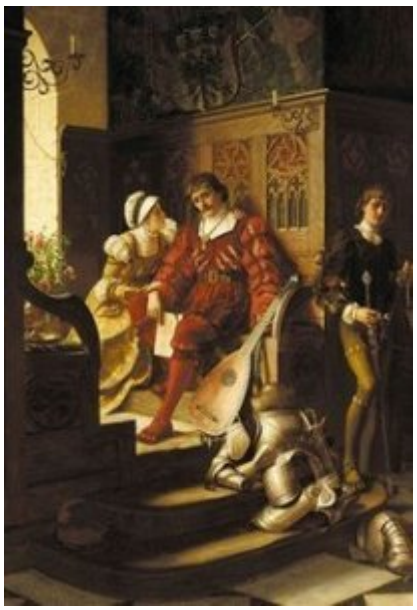
Duty - Edmund Blair Leighton - 1883

Women need to understand that a man's duty to her comes second to a man's duty to God. Part of loving a man is letting him do the activities that he needs to do in order to flourish *as a man.* Treating a man as a little boy by trying to control him is a sure way to make him disengage from the relationship.

DEFERENCE/GRATITUDE:

[image]

St. George Fighting the Dragon - Raphael Sanzio - 1505

A woman should be able to drive a stick shift, fire a Springfield Arms XD accurately, do the family tax return, throw a football 20 yards, and barbecue steaks. However, when men are around, she should allow men to do things for her, even if she can do them better herself. Men should always be asked to do dangerous tasks (shoveling snow, killing spiders, etc.), and they should never be criticized by women about their performance in front of other people, only in private – and even then with gentleness.

Related posts

- Should Christians date or marry non-Christians?

- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- What does the common practice of withholding sex reveal about women?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Why do women flock to movies like Switch and Eat, Pray, Love?
- Women should read "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands"
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- The Wintery Knight's greatest fears about the future
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste

New study finds that US rich pay a larger share of taxes than in any other country

May 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele Bachmann posted this Wall Street Journal article about a new OECD study that shows how the rich pay most of the total tax burden.

Excerpt:

> As President Barack Obama pushes to raise income taxes on high earners, opponents are seizing on data that indicates these U.S. households already pay a large and growing share of taxes, even compared with high-tax European countries. And a new congressional study concludes that the percentage of U.S. households owing no federal income tax climbed to 51% for 2009.
>
> Republicans are expected to highlight these figures at a congressional hearing Tuesday. They oppose Mr. Obama's proposal to increase taxes for high earners, defined as families making more than $250,000 per year, as a way to help close large federal budget deficits.
>
> […]Upper-income taxpayers have paid a growing share of the federal tax burden over the last 25 years.
>
> A 2008 study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, for example, found that the highest-earning 10% of the U.S. population paid the largest share among 24 countries examined, even after adjusting for their relatively higher incomes. "Taxation is most progressively distributed in the United States," the OECD study concluded.
>
> Meanwhile, the percentage of U.S. households paying no federal income tax has been climbing, and reached 51% for 2009, according to a new analysis by the Joint Committee on Taxation. That was the first time since at least 1992 that more than half of households owed no federal income tax, according to JCT estimates.; earlier data were unavailable on Monday.

Here's a useful graphic that shows who really pays the most taxes.

When 51% of the population doesn't pay federal taxes, you have a situation where the majority of the people have no incentive to cut spending. This is a bad situation.

William Dembski reviews a new book by two theistic evolutionists

May 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Patheos, an opening statement by William Dembski. This is the first part of a four-part debate with two scientists of the Biologos group, which advocates for theistic evolution. (And not to be confused with the Biologic Institute, which is supportive of intelligent design).

Excerpt:

> Throughout their book, Giberson and Collins overconfidently proclaim that Darwinian evolution is a slam-dunk. Thus one reads, "There has been no scientific discovery since Darwin–not one–which has suggested that evolution is not the best explanation for the origin of species" (21-22). No theory is that good. Every theory admits anomalies. Every theory faces disconfirming evidence. Repeatedly readers are informed that mountains of overwhelming evidence support Darwin's theory and that the authors are "unfamiliar with any premier scientists who reject evolution." And just so there's no doubt, in that same paragraph, they reiterate, "There are certainly a few scientists who reject evolution . . . But these are never premier scientists."

> Oh, you reject Darwinian evolution; you can't be a premier scientist. What counterexample would convince Giberson and Collins to retract such a claim? How about Henry Schaefer's signature on a "Dissent from Darwin" list? Schaefer heads the computational quantum chemistry lab at the University of Georgia, has published over a thousand peer-reviewed journal articles, and is one of the most widely cited chemists in the world. Then again, Giberson and Collins look askance at this list (according to them, it has too many emeriti professors and not enough biologists). But why engage in such posturing about scientific pecking order in the first place? The issue is not who's doubting Darwinism, but what are the arguments for and against it and whether they have merit. Giberson and Collins' constant drumming of mainstream and consensus science is beside the point–science progresses by diverging from the mainstream and by breaking with consensus.

> Because Giberson and Collins assert that natural selection is such a powerful mechanism for driving evolution–and one that admits no reasoned dissent–it's worth recounting here briefly why the intelligent design community is so skeptical of it. It's not, as theistic evolutionists often suggest, that we have a desperate need to shore up faith and morality and are using ID as our instrument of choice to accomplish that end. Rather, it's that natural selection is, in essence, a trial and error tinkering mechanism for which all evidence suggests that its

> power is quite limited. Trial and error works fine when you have something that's functional and are trying to enhance it or adapt it to a new situation.

> But for natural selection, as a trial and error mechanism, to traverse vast swatches of biological function space, we need to see an extended series of small gradual structural changes (under neo-Darwinism, these are genetic mutations leaving effects at the phenotypic level) that continually improve, or at least maintain, function, with evolving functions and evolving structures covarying and reinforcing each other. But we know of no detailed testable (macro-)evolutionary pathways like this in any field, whether in the evolution of living forms or in the evolution of language or in the evolution of technologies. In fact, when we can trace such evolutionary pathways, we find that significant change happens in creative leaps, not via trial and error tinkering.

Everyone who has read Dembski's opening remarks in this four-part series is raving about the quality of what he's written. I was hoping to wait for the response before publishing his opening salvo, so we could balance it, but no reply has appeared yet. For me, there is only one issue in the debate about the origin of life: if natural causes can create life from non-life with the time and resources available on the early Earth, then show me the mechanism. That's all I want to see – the evidence that natural causes can do the creating that the naturalists say that it can do. I don't want to hear about feelings, possibilities, what God could or couldn't do, philosophy, what church you attend, your favorite hymn, the way you were raised, your religious experiences, etc. I just want to see you prove that nature can do all the creating that you say it can do.

CIA Director Leon Panetta confirms that waterboarding led to Osama Bin Laden

May 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CIA Director Leon Panetta confirms that waterboarding / enhanced interrogation techniques led to Osama Bin Laden, in this MSNBC interview by Brian Williams.

Excerpt:

> **Brian Williams:** I'd like to ask you about the sourcing on the intel that ultimately led to this successful attack. Can you confirm that it was as a result of waterboarding that we learned what we needed to learn to go after Bin Laden?
>
> **Leon Panetta:** You know, Brian, in the intelligence business you work from a lot of sources of information, and that was true here. We had a multiple series of sources that provided information with regards to this situation. Clearly, some of it came from detainees and the interrogation of detainees, but we also had information from other sources as well. So it's a little difficult to say it was due just to one source of information that we got.
>
> **Williams:** Turned around the other way, are you denying that waterboarding was in part among the tactics used to extract the intelligence that led to this successful mission?
>
> **Panetta:** No, I think some of the detainees clearly were — you know, they used these enhanced interrogation techniques against some of these detainees. But I'm also saying that the debate about whether we would have gotten the same information through other approaches I think is always going to be an open question.
>
> **Williams:** So, final point, one final time: enhanced interrogation techniques, which has always been kind of a handy euphemism in these post-9/11 years, that includes waterboarding.
>
> **Panetta:** That's correct.

This is the waterboarding that Obama opposed. Obama opposed enhanced interrogations. Obama opposed military tribunals. Obama opposed CIA prisons. Obama opposed Guantanamo Bay. Obama opposed counter-terrorism. I would not be surprised if the decision to kill Bin Laden was made in order to keep Obama from reading him his rights, giving him a civilian trial, bowing to him, etc.

Notice that the left-wing New York Times is in denial about the facts.

And don't forget how waterboarding prevented a similar 9/11-style attack on Los Angeles.

Excerpt:

> The Central Intelligence Agency told CNSNews.com today that it stands by the assertion made in a May 30, 2005 Justice Department memo that the use of

> "enhanced techniques" of interrogation on al Qaeda leader Khalid Sheik Mohammed (KSM) — including the use of waterboarding — caused KSM to reveal information that allowed the U.S. government to thwart a planned attack on Los Angeles.
>
> Before he was waterboarded, when KSM was asked about planned attacks on the United States, he ominously told his CIA interrogators, "Soon, you will know."
>
> According to the previously classified May 30, 2005 Justice Department memo that was released by President Barack Obama last week, the thwarted attack — which KSM called the "Second Wave"– planned " 'to use East Asian operatives to crash a hijacked airliner into' a building in Los Angeles."
>
> KSM was the mastermind of the first "hijacked-airliner" attacks on the United States, which struck the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Northern Virginia on Sept. 11, 2001.
>
> After KSM was captured by the United States, he was not initially cooperative with CIA interrogators. Nor was another top al Qaeda leader named Zubaydah. KSM, Zubaydah, and a third terrorist named Nashiri were the only three persons ever subjected to waterboarding by the CIA.

I actually asked one person who thought waterboarding was "torture" who KSM was. She didn't know! But this is like asking "who is buried in Grant's tomb?" when it comes to intelligence matters. You can't decide what to believe based on your feelings or the need to please others or to strike a pose with your peers to earn their approval. You have to have access to the facts, or you get taken in by conspiracy theories and sloganeering. You have to understand WHY Americans will use an Apache helicopter to attack a force of infantry armed with RPGs when a convoy of Hummers comes into their line of fire. It does no good to try to participate in debates on national security and foreign policy without knowing the facts. Feelings of envy and hatred for the United States are not arguments.

Let me be very very clear. To oppose the waterboarding of a terrorist like KSM is to favor the deaths of thousands of innocent Americans, thousands of innocent civilians in wars, and millions or even billions of dollars of financial losses. That is the "moral superiority" of the left. They would rather protect a guilty terrorist from a little discomfort than save huge numbers of innocent lives and protect the assets of huge numbers of innocent people. And they expect you to hold them in high regard for protecting evil, and punishing good. Apparently, this is considered as being the height of morality on the secular left, as Evan Sayet has pointed out. Despite what leftists believe, it is morally good for American soldiers kill a terrorist who has harmed innocent people or who is plotting an attack that will kill innocent people.

Thank you, President George W. Bush, for having a clear moral vision, and for making the hard, unpopular decisions that kept us safe.

Thank you, Central Intelligence Agency, for doing hard, unpopular things in order to protect us from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

Thank you, United States Armed Forces, for taking on the thankless task of protecting the people of the United States.

GOD BLESS AMERICA!

Related posts

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New report compares cost of coal power to renewable wind and solar power

May 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Australia

From the Victorian Auditor-General's Report, April 2011. (H/T Joanne Nova)

Here's the chart:

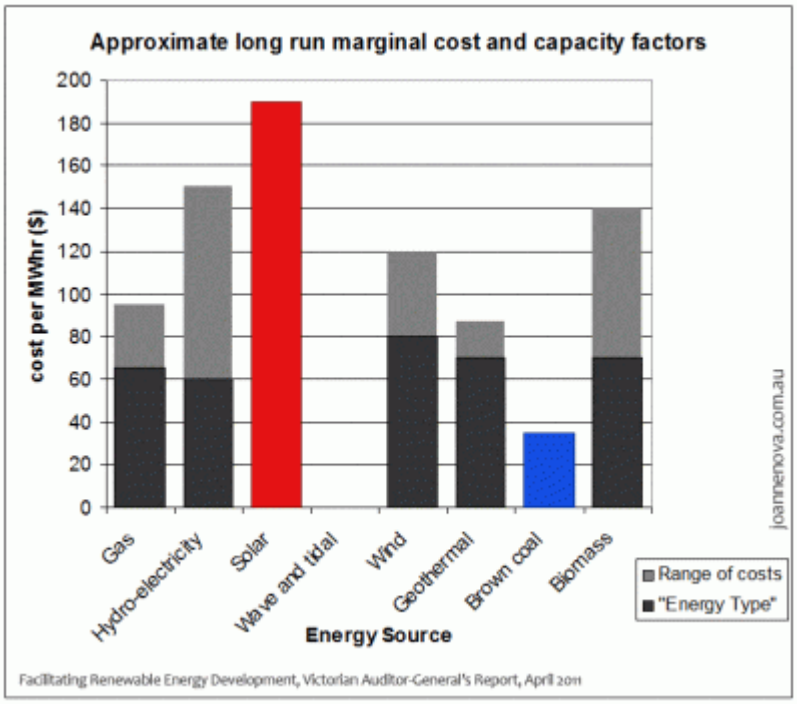

Cost of renewable wind and solar energy

Click here for a bigger version.

Compared to coal, wind power is *incredibly* expensive, and solar power is *even worse*.

What happened when the Canadians embraced wind and solar power?

What happened to consumer energy prices in Ontario when the Liberal government

embraced unproven wind and solar power?

The Globe and Mail explains:

> If you haven't opened your September hydro bill yet, you're in for a shock. Rates have risen 18 per cent this year to date, and that's just the start. By this time next year – election time – Ontario power consumers will be forking over about twice as much (in nominal terms) as they did when Dalton McGuinty took office in 2003.
>
> […]Power expert Tom Adams may know more about this subject than any other living being. And he's steamed. Ontario's rates, he says, have already surpassed the U.S. average and are headed for European levels – "just because of public policy."
>
> The policy is to go all out on renewables – wind and solar– whether or not it makes sense. The province is paying sky-high rates for power it doesn't need so we can have wind turbines marching on and on to the horizon, just like Denmark does. "Power demand has been dropping since 2005," says Mr. Adams. In fact, we have so much excess supply that, from time to time, it threatens to crash the system. Because of this, we're even paying the neighbours to take the power off our hands.
>
> "Ontario will need new power supplies in the future," Mr. Adams says. "But why not buy it when we need it?" Instead of waiting, the power authority is signing long-term contracts at the rate of about $1-billion a week, while paying enormous premiums to attract wind and solar producers. In other words, it's making 20-year commitments to pay stunningly high prices for power we don't need.
>
> On top of that, the province is building new transmission lines to nowhere while neglecting to ensure that Toronto's hospitals and banks can keep the lights on. In July, Toronto experienced what Mr. Adams calls "Ontario's first green blackout." That blackout occurred because the city's downtown core is badly underpowered. It has the weakest power system of any financial centre in the developed world.
>
> Why haven't we done anything about it? Because the green lobby has been campaigning for conservation, instead. And so, when the government started picking sites for transmission upgrades, it decided to build a power line up the shore of Lake Nipigon to connect remote wind turbines to Thunder Bay.
>
> Ever since the days of Adam Beck, the father of public power in Ontario, the province's energy policy has been linked to economic policy. The motto was reliable power at cost. Now energy policy has been entirely decoupled from economic policy and attached to the runaway train of environmental policy. Everyone in the power system knows it. But they're so terrified to raise their hands, most of the public is still in the dark.

The National Post wrote about how the Ontario government wastes taxpayer money to subsidize big corporations who experiment with unproven, expensive energy programs,

like solar power.

Excerpt:

> The Swedish retail giant IKEA announced yesterday it will invest $4.6-million to install 3,790 solar panels on three Toronto area stores, giving IKEA the electric-power-producing capacity of 960,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) per year. According to IKEA, that's enough electricity to power 100 homes. Amazing development. Even more amazing is the economics of this project. Under the Ontario government's feed-in-tariff solar power scheme, IKEA will receive 71.3¢ for each kilowatt of power produced, which works out to about $6,800 a year for each of the 100 hypothetical homes. Since the average Toronto home currently pays about $1,200 for the same quantity of electricity, that implies that IKEA is being overpaid by $5,400 per home equivalent.
>
> Welcome to the wonderful world of green economics and the magical business of carbon emission reduction. Each year, IKEA will receive $684,408 under Premier Dalton McGuinty's green energy monster — for power that today retails for about $115,000. At that rate, IKEA will recoup $4.6-million in less than seven years — not bad for an investment that can be amortized over 20.
>
> No wonder solar power is such a hot industry. No wonder, too, that the province of Ontario is in a headlong rush into a likely economic crisis brought on by skyrocketing electricity prices. To make up the money paid to IKEA to promote itself as a carbon-free zone, Ontario consumers and industries are on their way to experiencing the highest electricity rates in North America, if not most of the world.
> The government's regulator, the Ontario Energy Board, has prepared secret forecasts of how much Ontario consumers are going to have to pay for electricity over the next five years. The government won't allow the report to be released. The next best estimate comes from Aegent Energy Advisors Inc., in a study it did for the Canadian Manufactures and Exporters group. Residential rates are expected to jump by 60% between 2010 and 2015. Industrial customers will be looking at a 55% increase.
>
> Going back to 2003, based on numbers dug up by consultant Tom Adams, the price of residential electricity in Ontario hovered around 8.5¢ a kWh in 2003 — the first year of the McGuinty Liberal regime. By 2015, Aegent Energy estimates the price will be up to 21¢, an increase of 135%. Doubling the price of electricity in a decade is no way to spur growth and investment. In this age of global economic competition IKEA may end up with fewer sales of its Billy bookshelves in Toronto because its customers will be bogged down with soaring power bills and a sliding economy.

How about wind power in a coastal province like New Brunswick? Is that any better? The National post explains the costs and drawbacks of wind power.

Excerpt:

> A $200-million wind farm in northern New Brunswick is frozen solid, cutting off a potential supply of renewable energy for NB Power.
>
> The 25-kilometre stretch of wind turbines, located 70 kilometres northwest of Bathurst, N.B. has been completely shutdown for several weeks due to heavy ice covering the blades.
>
> […]Wintery conditions also temporarily shutdown the site last winter, just months after its completion. Some or all of the turbines were offline for several days, with "particularly severe icing" blamed.
>
> The accumulated ice alters the aerodynamics of the blades, rendering them ineffective as airfoils. The added weight further immobilizes the structures.
>
> […]Melissa Morton, a spokeswoman for the utility, says the contract isn't based on power delivered during a specific period, but rather on an annual basis.
>
> "Our hopes is that it will balance out over the 12-month period and, historically, that has been the case."
>
> Despite running into problems in consecutive winters, Ms. Morton says NB Power doesn't have concerns about the reliability of the supply from the Caribou Mountain site.

It's a waste of taxpayer money.

Bell Canada, which owns CTV News, drops competitor Sun News Network

May 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ezra Levant upset that Bell Canada is censoring Sun News Network. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

How biased is the mainstream media in Canada? (H/T Blazing cat Fur)

This is why Canadians are so left wing. They have to listen to radically left-wing news coverage from CTV and CBC, and when an alternative comes along, the big networks immediately censor them. Canadians cannot be objective on any issue if they only ever hear *one side*.

Does God pose an authority problem for you?

May 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm going to steal this entire post from Tough Questions Answered to get a conversation started:

> Many of the people I know who reject God or who have crafted a God that makes no demands on them have a fundamental problem with authority. They don't want anybody telling them what to do.
>
> For a person who wants complete autonomy, who chafes at the thought of anyone having authority over them, a creator God who makes demands is way inconvenient.
>
> Many people who believe in God, but also have this authority hang-up, create their own version of God. This God gives them what they want when they want it. He approves of everything they do, as long as they are just trying to be happy. He encourages them to follow their desires, wherever they lead. C. S. Lewis compared this God to a senile, old grandfather who never says "no" to his grandchildren. You want chocolate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? No problem!
>
> Is this the Christian God? Philosopher Paul Moser answers the question:
>
> It would be a strange, defective God who didn't pose a serious cosmic authority problem for humans. Part of the status of being God, after all, is that God has a unique authority, or lordship, over humans. Since we humans aren't God, the true God would have authority over us and would seek to correct our profoundly selfish ways.
>
> If you are "worshiping" a God who makes no demands on you, you're worshiping no God at all. You're just trying to find a deity to make you feel good about your selfish choices. What's the point?

I'm posting this because I'm looking for comments. Do you know anyone like this? I'll help by getting you started with some sample atheists.

Famous atheists agree: God is not the boss of them

Consider the words of Thomas Nagel, a famous atheist philosopher:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-

> informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)"

He is a widely respected atheist. He once named Stephen C. Meyer's Signature in the Cell as one of the Times Literary Supplement's best books of the year.

And what about atheist Richard Lewontin: (and by "science" he means "naturalistic science")

> "Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science *in spite of* the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite of* its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite of* the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our own a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, not matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door." (Richard Lewontin in *New York Review of Books*, January 9, 1997, p. 28)

Interesting. He's willing to tell people lies to keep the Divine Foot outside the door.

And one last one from Aldous Huxley:

> "I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way that they find most advantegous to themselves… For myself, the philosophy of meaningless was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political." — Aldous Huxley in Ends and Means, 1937

So this is pretty widespread among famous atheists. How about among ordinary atheists?

Survey says

Additionally, atheists are not as charitable as religious people:

Arthur Brooks' survey showed that atheists certainly give less in charity and do less community service as religious people on the right and left.

Quote:

> Drawing on some ten data sets, Brooks finds that religiosity is among the best predictors of charitable giving. Religious Americans are not only much more likely to give money and volunteer their time to religious and secular institutions, they are also more likely to provide aid to family members, return incorrect change, help a homeless person, and donate blood. In fact, despite expecting to find just the opposite, Brooks concluded: "I have never found a measurable way in which secularists are more charitable than religious people."
>
> Consider some examples. Religious citizens who make $49,000 gave away about 3.5 times as much money as secular citizens with the same income. They also volunteered twice as often, are 57 percent more likely to help homeless persons, and two-thirds more likely to give blood at their workplace. Meanwhile, those who insist that "beliefs don't matter as long as you're a good person" are not as good as those who do think beliefs matter. The former group gave and volunteered at much lower rates.
>
> Yet even these findings tend to obscure the impact of religion on charity. This is because some of the survey respondents that Brooks classified as secular are indirectly affected by religion if they were raised in a religious household.

Atheists also divorce more than committed Christians:

Quote:

> It's a number that is trumpeted from the rooftops — and the pulpit: Half of marriages among Christians and non-Christians alike end in divorce.
>
> But the reality is that Christians who attend church regularly get divorced at a much lower rate.
>
> Professor Bradley Wright, a sociologist at the University of Connecticut, found that among people who identify as Christians but rarely attend church, 60 percent have been divorced. Of those who attend church regularly, 38 percent have been divorced.
>
> W. Bradford Wilcox, a leading sociologist at the University of Virginia and director of the National Marriage Project, found a nearly identical spread between "active conservative Protestants" who regularly attend church and people with no religious affiliation.
>
> Professor Scott Stanley from the University of Denver, who is working on the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative, said couples with a vibrant religious faith have more and higher levels of the qualities that marriages need to avoid divorce.
>
> "Whether young or old, male or female, low-income or not, those who said that they were more religious reported higher average levels of commitment to their

> partners, higher levels of marital satisfaction, less thinking and talking about divorce and lower levels of negative interaction," he said. "These patterns held true when controlling for such important variables as income, education and age at first marriage."

My survey of atheists

I like to find out what atheists are really thinking. So a while back, I did this massive survey of the atheists in my life, and this fear of authority (and morality) seemed to be *the* central belief animating atheism.

Here's Question 11:

> What is your purpose in life, and why did you choose that purpose? Is it just yours, or for everyone else too?

And these were the responses:

- Mine is to feel good about myself and to feel respected by others.
- Mine is to enjoy it. I'd hope that I go about it in a way that doesn't interfere with others enjoyment and that when it does we can compromise.
- Mine is to relieve inordinate suffering, while leaving room for constructive suffering that lead to creativity and progress. Based on empathy.
- Mine is to help the species survive by having lots of children, because that lasts after you die
- Each person decides for themselves. My purpose is to have happy feelings
- My purpose is to have happy feelings by doing what most of the other people are doing and avoiding social disapproval
- I have no "objective" purpose. I do what I can to be happy, all things considered.
- To live as contented as possible. To find answers to big questions. To prepare my children for adulthood. I chose these things because that's what I like. I don't care what another's purpose is as long as they don't harm anyone.
- My purpose is to seek happiness while doing no harm (or as little harm as is it may be possible to do) for as long as I'm alive. Of course it's just my own purpose – I can't presume to choose another's purpose. That being said, I do presume everyone has more or less the same goal of happiness and fulfillment, but the precise methods of going about it are always going to vary from person to person.
- I want to be happy. I generally like other people, and I want them to be happy too.

Here's Question 12:

> Suppose Jesus appeared to us right now and addressed you directly with the following words: "I'm really here and you need to *follow me* in order to flourish and achieve the goal for which I created you". He then glares suspiciously at me, snatches a few fries from *my* plate, eats them, and then disappears. Later on, the Ghostbusters show up and confirm that Jesus was no ghost, but really God stepping into history. And everyone in the restaurant saw and heard exactly what

> you and I saw and heard. How would you proceed? How would you find out what to do? (i.e. – the atheist now knows Christianity is true, and I want to see what they think they should do in order to act like a Christian)

And these were the responses:

- I have no idea
- I would not follow. My own goals are all that I have, and all that I would continue to have in that unlikely situation. I would not yield my autonomy to anyone no matter what their authority to command me
- I would not follow, because God doesn't want humans to act any particular way, and he doesn't care what we do
- I would not follow. Head is spinning. Would go to physician to find out if hallucinating.
- If I found there was no trickery? I'd have to change my mind wouldn't I! Not really likely though is it?
- I would keep doing what I am doing now, acting morally. That's what all religions want anyway. (In response to my triumphant scribbling, he realized he had fallen into a trap and changed his answer to the right answer) Oh, wait. I would try to try to find out what Jesus wanted and then try to do that.
- I hope I would be courageous enough to dedicate my life to rebellion against God.
- I would not have to change anything unless forced to and all that would change is my actions not my values. I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran.
- He would have to convince me that what he wants for me is what I want for me.

Here's Question 13:

> What would be the most difficult thing about becoming a Christian for you? Would it be the moral demands? The demands on your time? The unpopularity, humiliation and persecution that you would face? How would you feel about publicly declaring your allegiance for Christ and facing the consequences? (i.e. – they have become a Christian, what is the most difficult adjustment from your current life?)

And these were the responses:

- I don't know
- It would not be that big of a change for me. I already act morally, I'm already public about my beliefs, and I don't care what people think about what I believe. I don't mind disagreeing with people and being unpopular for it. I think the 10 commandments are good. I could find out what to do and start doing those things.
- I would not be able to believe in miracles, so there would be cognitive dissonance
- Sacrificing my personal moral standards to take up a standard from a book that is

very old and outdated
- The most difficult would be the fact that I believe something without good evidence.
- I work many hours a week for institutions and organizations that are charitable. I'm certainly not going to swap those for hours for "prayer time" and waste them.
- I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran. Obviously, it is possible that if I became a Christian, then I would have different values then I have now.
- The most difficult thing would be trying to believe the ridiculous claims of Christianity. As for what a Christian finds difficult, how would I know?
- I could never obey God from gratitude and love, only from servility inspired by fear and cowardice. I do not see myself as servile, fearful or cowardly, and to behave in such a manner would injure my self-esteem and self-image.

So you might be surprised to know that even if Christianity were true, atheists have no intention of changing the way they live. That's the real issue – and that should be scary for any atheist to realize. If they just cracked open a Bible and read Romans 1, that should be enough to scare the crap out of them – because it's pretty obvious what is going on with humans – all of us have an authority problem. And a lot of the learning and striving that atheists do is just an effort to get people to think that they are so great and successful after they've dumped their relationship with God.

I hope that more atheists look in the mirror and are honest with themselves about what's really going on. Is it really such a terrible thing to have a relationship with the person who cares the most about you and wants the best for you? Is fun really that important that people have to push away a real, significant, eternal relationship just because it requires self-denial? If I didn't embrace chastity, as God wishes, where would I get to time to do the really heroic things I do – and how could I concern myself with a woman's real moral and spiritual needs if I got into the habit of using them selfishly? You can't experience imitating God when you shut him out. And that's what we are all here to do – to know him, to be his friend, to act in a way that allows us to feel what he feels, and to have sympathy with him.

House Republicans unanimously support No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act

May 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about defunding abortion

The Dailer Caller reports on the roll call for the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> The House of Representatives on Wednesday passed a bill that would prohibit all federal funding for abortions. The bill was approved by a vote of 251-175.
>
> The "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act" amends the existing Hyde amendment. The Hyde amendment currently prohibits most federal funding for abortions.
>
> In a press release, bill sponsor Republican Rep. Christopher Smith of New Jersey wrote, "one thing is clear: federal funding of abortion will lead to more abortions."
>
> Smith wrote, "In 2009, there were only 220 government-financed abortions. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the federal government would pay for as many as 675,000 abortions each year without the Hyde Amendment and other provisions that prevent federal funding of abortion."
>
> […]Smith's statement said that the bill "simply protects taxpayers from having to fund or subsidize something they morally oppose."

> All House Republicans who voted supported the legislation; they were joined by 16 House Democrats.
>
> The White House strongly opposes the bill. In a policy statement, the administration wrote that the bill "intrudes on women's reproductive freedom and access to health care; increases the tax burden on many Americans; unnecessarily restricts the private insurance choices that consumers have today; and restricts the District of Columbia's use of local funds, which undermines home rule."

Life News reports that the public supports banning funding for abortions:

> A majority of Americans object to the use of taxpayer money for funding abortion, according to numerous polls — including a survey CNN conducted in early April showing Americans oppose public funding of abortion by a margin of 61% to 35%.

And also notes that cutting off funding makes a big difference in the number of abortions:

> Congressman Chris Smith, a New Jersey Republican who is the lead sponsor of the bill, informed the House that a study by the Guttmacher Institute, the pro-abortion former research apparatus of Planned Parenthood, released a study noting that one-quarter of women who otherwise would have had abortions chose to give birth when taxpayer dollars were not available to pay for abortions of their children.

The Heritage Foundation explains what the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act does.

Excerpt:

> H.R. 3 seeks to prohibit federal funding of abortion by permanently codifying an array of protections against government subsidies for abortions.
>
> […]H.R. 3 would permanently prohibit the use of taxpayer dollars to subsidize elective abortions. In addition to addressing the various loopholes for federal abortion funding, the bill prevents funding for:
>
> - Elective abortion through appropriations for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;
> - International aid for contraceptive programs where abortion is used as a method of family planning;
> - Insurance coverage for federal employees that includes elective abortions; and
> - Subsidized abortion with monies congressionally appropriated for the District of Columbia, as well as locally generated tax dollars.
>
> […]H.R. 3… also addresses the conscience rights of pro-life medical professionals and institutions. Both the weak conscience protections in the PPACA and the

> Obama Administration's recent decision to partially rescind federal conscience regulations have placed the rights of doctors, pharmacists, and hospitals in a precarious situation. Codifying the annual Hyde–Weldon clause, H.R. 3 provides protection from discrimination in federally funded programs to medical professionals and institutions that decline participation in abortion.

The Weekly Standard notes that the tally could have been even higher. Five Republicans did not vote, and they are all pro-life.

Doug Groothuis states the central problem with Rob Bell's book

May 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Doug Groothuis was asked to serve on a panel discussion of Rob Bell's new book "Love Wins".

He wrote an outline, and posted on his blog. (H/T Doug)

Here's the core problem he found with Bell's book:

> 4. Bell seems to advance three propositions in *Love Wins*
>
> a. Everyone is saved: God wants all to be saved; God gets what God wants.
>
> b. Everyone is not saved. We can refuse God's love.
>
> c. We don't know if everyone is saved or not.
>
> 5. These statements are inconsistent with each other; they cannot all be true

I am not sure why anyone is reading this book – it's logically inconsistent. And whenever you ask Bell questions, his stock reply is to ask you questions back without answering. He makes an assertion, you point out how he contradicts the teachings of Jesus, and then he says "I don't know, do you?" or "do you long for everyone to be saved?" or "do you know if universalism is true?". These are verbatim quotes from his debate on the Unbelievable show. It is so bad that I listened to the first 30 minutes and just quit. I would rather listen to Christoper Hitchens – at least he is clear about what he believes. Rob Bell makes John Dominic Crossan sound like Hugh Ross.

Jobless claims rise to eight-month high, consumer confidence falls

May 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video stolen from NW War College.

Can the government create jobs by spending money and running deficits? (H/T Kelly)

Excerpt:

> The number of Americans filing for jobless aid rose to an eight-month high last week and productivity growth slowed in the first quarter, clouding the outlook for an economy that is struggling to gain speed.
>
> While the surprise jump in initial claims for unemployment benefits was blamed on factors ranging from spring break layoffs to the introduction of an emergency benefits program, economists said it corroborated reports this week indicating a loss of momentum in job creation.
>
> New claims for state jobless benefits rose 43,000 to 474,000, the highest since mid-August, the Labor Department said on Thursday. Economists had expected claims to fall.
>
> […]Other reports this week showed weaker employment growth in the manufacturing and services sectors in April and a step back in private hiring, suggesting Friday's closely watched data could prove weaker than economists have been expecting.
>
> An industry survey released on Thursday found hiring by U.S. small businesses almost ground to a halt in April.

This isn't surprising. Government spending takes money OUT of the private sector and puts money IN to the non-productive public sector.

The Heritage Foundation explains how government spending has *never* worked to create jobs. Not even when Republicans do it.

Excerpt:

> Indeed, President Obama's stimulus bill failed by its own standards. In a January 2009 report, White House economists predicted that the stimulus bill would create (not merely save) 3.3 million net jobs by 2010. Since then, 3.5 million more net jobs have been lost, pushing the unemployment rate above 10 percent.[1] The fact that government failed to spend its way to prosperity is not an isolated incident:
>
> - During the 1930s, New Deal lawmakers doubled federal spending–yet unemployment remained above 20 percent until World War II.
> - Japan responded to a 1990 recession by passing 10 stimulus spending bills

> over 8 years (building the largest national debt in the industrialized world)–yet its economy remained stagnant.
> - In 2001, President Bush responded to a recession by "injecting" tax rebates into the economy. The economy did not respond until two years later, when tax rate reductions were implemented.
> - In 2008, President Bush tried to head off the current recession with another round of tax rebates. The recession continued to worsen.
> - Now, the most recent $787 billion stimulus bill was intended to keep the unemployment rate from exceeding 8 percent. In November, it topped 10 percent.[2]

So obviously government spending reduces employment – it could never happen any other way. And everyone who has ever held a job in private industry knows this. Government spending only works in the university classrooms, where the right answer is always the answer that makes academic wordsmiths feel good about themselves. Good intentions are the right answer in the classroom – good results are the right answer in the free market.

Drilling moratorium = higher gas prices = low consumer confidence

What happens to consumer confidence when Obama cuts off oil drilling and gas prices go up?

Excerpt:

> Consumer confidence dropped last week to the lowest level in more than a month as rising fuel costs squeezed American household budgets.
>
> The Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index decreased to minus 46.2 in the week ended May 1, the lowest level since the end of March, from minus 45.1 the prior period. Another report showed claims for unemployment benefits unexpectedly surged last week, raising the risk the improvement in the jobs market has stalled.
>
> Stocks dropped and Treasury securities rose on concern that rising expenses, including the highest gasoline prices in almost three years, may prompt companies and households to cut back on spending. The reports bolster the arguments of Federal Reserve policy makers like Chairman Ben S. Bernanke who've said job growth is too slow to remove record monetary stimulus.

Obama has been printing money in order to goose people into spending more instead of saving. The problem with devaluing the currency, which is what he is doing, occurs when you reach the stage where consumers *stop spending* because prices *must increase* when you print money. We are now at that stage, and our economy is about to go down the drain. Interest rates will have to rise, which is going to slow economic growth even more. This is all known.

When you don't understand economics, you take the whack-a-mole approach to fixing the economy. That's what Obama has done. He keeps trying to control things from the top

instead of trusting businesses and consumers with their own money. Everything Obama does makes the economy worst. He doesn’t know what he is doing, and he won’t listen to people who do know. His baseless confidence (arrogance) should have been a red flag to the American people. There is nothing worse than hiring someone who thinks that they know everything, but who hasn’t the qualifications to run a lemonade stand.

The post-abortion trauma of famous musician Steven Tyler

May 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article in National Review. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Long before he won accolades as an *American Idol* judge, Steven Tyler was a bona-fide rock star, with all that that implied. In 1975, when he was in his late 20s and the lead singer for the band Aerosmith, Tyler persuaded the parents of his 14-year-old girlfriend, Julia Holcomb, to make him her legal guardian so that they could live together in Boston.
>
> When Miss Holcomb and Tyler conceived a child, his longtime friend Ray Tabano convinced Tyler that abortion was the only solution. In the Aerosmith "autobiography," *Walk This Way* (in which recollections by all the band members, and their friends and lovers, were assembled by the author Stephen Davis), Tabano says: "So they had the abortion, and it really messed Steven up because it was a boy. He . . . saw the whole thing and it [messed] him up big time."
>
> Tyler also reflects on his abortion experience in the autobiography. "It was a big crisis. It's a major thing when you're growing something with a woman, but they convinced us that it would never work out and would ruin our lives. . . . You go to the doctor and they put the needle in her belly and they squeeze the stuff in and you watch. And it comes out dead. I was pretty devastated. In my mind, I'm going, Jesus, what have I done?"
>
> […]After the abortion, Tyler began a torrid affair with *Playboy* model Bebe Buell while still seeing Julia, the mother of his aborted son. If you were wondering what happened to Julia (who is referred to as Diana Hall in the book) after this purportedly psychologically safe procedure, Bebe tells us: "There were many suicidal calls from poor Diana as they were breaking up. It was actually a pretty sad time."
>
> And how was Steven coping?
>
> He went on a European concert tour, accompanied by Bebe, who tells us: "He was crazy . . . totally drunk, really out of it. . . . Steven destroyed his dressing room at Hammersmith . . . when we got back from Europe. . . . One night I found him on the floor of his bathroom having a drug seizure. He was writhing in pain."
>
> This was followed by Steven's "Tuinal days" — a period he spent stoned on massive doses of the barbiturate. He says: "I would eat four or five a day . . . and be good for a couple of months . . . which is why that period is blackout stuff."
>
> This is the dysfunctional recipe for dealing with post-traumatic stress: Take heavy doses of drugs to numb the memories and feelings — and throw in a portion of

> toxic rage at bandmates and hotel rooms. Anger, especially in men, is often an undiagnosed sign of depression and repressed grief that needs a healthy expression and healing. Many post-abortive fathers tell us that anger management was a major problem for them after their abortions.
>
> […]For many post-abortive men and women, the anxiety associated with an abortion can surface at unexpected times, triggered by events such as a subsequent pregnancy, the death of a pet or a loved one, or some other person, place, or thing that in some way connects with the traumatic memory. Years later, when Tyler married, and he and his wife were expecting their first child, he was still haunted by the abortion: "It affected me later. . . . I was afraid. I thought we'd give birth to a six-headed cow because of what I'd done with other women. The real-life guilt was very traumatic for me. Still hurts."

There are so many interesting things about this post:

- how some men at a certain age have difficulty in making commitments and being responsible
- how men at a certain age never think that anything bad will happen to them
- how parents need to be more careful about standing up to their children and saying NO
- how statistics do matter – the more you use something risky, the greater chance it will fail
- how the rock-and-roll lifestyle that people seem to venerate can be destructive
- how abortion really does harm men

In my next post, I will be writing about a different kind of behavior by a real hero. I find it very strange that so many people celebrate rock-and-roll musicians who merely entertain us. That doesn't necessarily qualify them for being good husbands and fathers, though. I think women need to realize that some young men can be very dangerous and destructive because of their foolhardiness and irresponsibility. But sometimes a lack of fear can be a good thing in responsible young men, as we shall see in the next post.

Navy SEAL Michael Murphy awarded Medal of Honor

May 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Navy SEAL Michael Murphy wins Medal of Honor

The Washington Examiner reports on the story of a brave Navy SEAL named Michael Murphy. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Engaged in a frenzied firefight and outnumbered by the Taliban, Navy Lt. Michael Murphy made a desperate decision as he and three fellow SEALs fought for their lives on a rocky mountainside in Afghanistan's Kunar Province in 2005.
>
> In a last-ditch effort to save his team, Murphy pulled out his satellite phone, walked into a clearing to get reception and called for reinforcements as a fusillade of bullets ricocheted around him. One of the bullets hit him, but he finished the call and even signed off, "Thank you."
>
> Then he continued the battle.
>
> Dan Murphy, the sailor's father, said it didn't surprise him that his slain son nicknamed "The Protector" put himself in harm's way. Nor was he surprised that in the heat of combat his son was courteous.
>
> "That was Michael. He was cool under fire. He had the ability to process information, even under the most difficult of circumstances. That's what made him such a good SEAL officer," Murphy said.
>
> A warship bearing the name of the Medal of Honor recipient will be christened Saturday — on what would have been Murphy's 35th birthday — at Bath Iron

> Works, where the destroyer is being built.
>
> Murphy, who was 29 when he died, graduated from Pennsylvania State University and was accepted to multiple law schools, but decided he could do more for his country as one of the Navy's elite SEALS — special forces trained to fight on sea, air and land — the same forces that killed Osama bin Laden this week in Pakistan.
>
> […]Murphy, of Patchogue, N.Y., earned his nickname after getting suspended in elementary school for fighting with bullies who tried to stuff a special-needs child into a locker and for intervening when some youths were picking on a homeless man, said Dan Murphy, a lawyer, former prosecutor and Army veteran who served in Vietnam.
>
> Maureen Murphy said he thought he was too young to take a desk job as a lawyer. Instead, he went to officer candidate school, the first step on his journey to become a SEAL officer. He was in training during the Sept. 11 attacks, which shaped his views.
>
> His view was that there are "bullies in the world and people who're oppressed in the world. And he said, 'Sometimes they have to be taken care of,'" she said.
>
> On June 28, 2005, the day he was killed, Murphy was leading a SEAL team in northeastern Afghanistan looking for the commander of a group of insurgents known as the Mountain Tigers.

What happened to Murphy?

> The Operation Red Wings reconnaissance team rappelled down from a helicopter at night and climbed through rain to a spot 10,000 feet high overlooking a village to keep a lookout. But the mission was compromised the following morning when three local goat herders happened upon their hiding spot.
>
> High in the Hindu Kush mountains, Murphy and Petty Officers Marcus Luttrell of Huntsville, Texas; Matthew Axelson of Cupertino, Calif.; and Danny Dietz of Littleton, Colo.; held a tense discussion of the rules of engagement and the fate of the three goat herders, who were being held at gunpoint.
>
> If they were Taliban sympathizers, then letting the herders go would allow them to alert the Taliban forces lurking in the area; killing them might ensure the team's safety, but there were issues of possible military charges and a media backlash, according to Luttrell, the lone survivor.
>
> Murphy, who favored letting the goat herders go, guided a discussion of military, political, safety and moral implications. A majority agreed with him.
>
> An hour after the herders were released, more than 100 Taliban armed with AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades opened fire, attacking from higher elevation, and maneuvering to outflank the SEALs, said Gary Williams, author of "Seal of Honor," a biography of Murphy.

> […]As the only survivor, Luttrell has pangs of regret for voting to go along with Murphy, his best friend; he now believes the team could've survived if the goat herders were killed.

He wasn't willing to kill unarmed civilians. That's the difference between the United States and the Muslim terrorists. It's a moral difference. Michael Murphy was a good man. He used guns and violence to protect others, and he was not willing to kill unarmed civilians.

Here are the requirements for the Army version of the Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is awarded by the President in the name of Congress to a person who, while a member of the Army, distinguishes himself or herself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. The deed performed must have been one of personal bravery or self-sacrifice so conspicuous as to clearly distinguish the individual above his comrades and must have involved risk of life. Incontestable proof of the performance of the service will be exacted and each recommendation for the award of this decoration will be considered on the standard of extraordinary merit.

I once read an entire book on Medal of Honor award winners in World War II. It's hard to read those stories, because these people who won the award did amazing acts of bravery, courage and self-sacrifice, but then most of them DIED. The stories almost always end in sadness and grief. Here's the one that really stuck with me as an example.

On a happier note, what kind of ship do you think would suit Michael Murphy? A merchantman? Hell, no!

USS Michael Murphy DDG 112 Arleigh Burke

Michael Murphy is getting a brand new Arleigh Burke guided missile destroyer! Arleigh Burke vessels have the AEGIS missile defense system and their role is to protect carrier strike groups from incoming SSMs and ASMs.

Excerpt:

> The Arleigh Burke Class destroyers are equipped with the Aegis combat system which integrates the ship's sensors and weapons systems to engage anti-ship missile threats.
>
> The Aegis system has a federated architecture with four subsystems – AN/SPY-1 multifunction radar, command and decision system (CDS), Aegis display system (ADS) and the weapon control system (WCS). The CDS receives data from ship and external sensors via satellite communications and provides command, control and threat assessment. The WCS receives engagement instruction from the CDS, selects weapons and interfaces with the weapon fire control systems.
>
> […]Lockheed Martin is developing the Aegis ballistic missile defence (BMD) capability for the Aegis combat system to engage ballistic missiles with the SM-3 missile. 15 Arleigh Burke destroyers have been fitted with the Aegis BMD system, which provides the capability for long-range surveillance, tracking and engagement of short and medium-range ballistic missiles. The system received US Navy certification for full deployment in September 2006. Work was completed on the 15 destroyers at the end of 2008 and the vessels, with three Ticonderoga cruisers, form the Aegis BMD fleet. On 30 July 2009 the Aegis BMD system was successfully tested by the US Navy on the USS Hopper (DDG 70).Aegis BMD is the main sea-based component of the US ballistic missile defence system.
>
> The weapons control systems include a SWG-1A for Harpoon, SWG-3 for Tomahawk, mk99 mod 3 missile fire control system, GWS34 mod 0 gun fire control system and mk116 mod 7 fire control system for anti-submarine systems.

Only two warships that I know of have the AEGIS system. The DDG Arleigh Burke and the CG Ticonderoga. They are extremely rare and special – just like Michael Murphy.

Michael Murphy was a real hero. It makes me sad that he is gone. But his spirit will live on in the new warship that bears his name.

Related posts

- Heroic Christian woman sacrifices her life to save her unborn child
- Woman meets stranger who rescued her during ice storm
- How Sal Giunta earned a Medal of Honor and lived to tell about it
- Man chases down kidnapper's vehicle to rescue young girl
- What can Christians learn from Rob Miller's Medal of Honor story?
- Husband sacrifices his life to save his pregnant wife
- Stephen Meyer is named Daniel of the Year for 2009 by World Magazine

Capitalist Chile posts 15.2% yearly increase in GDP

May 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

South America Map

Investors Business Daily explains the economic policies that allowed Chile to post 15.2% yearly growth.

Excerpt:

> As the U.S. languishes, Chile posted a head-turning 15.2% yearly gain in GDP in March, and forecasts for the year are rising. Why can't we do that here?
>
> A year ago, Chile lay in rubble, victim of the world's fifth most powerful earthquake. So Chile's 15.2% growth is a big bounce from a bad setback.
>
> But it shouldn't be dismissed as an anomaly. It's a showy number, but not the only one.
>
> The same day Chile released its data, Goldman Sachs raised its 2011 growth forecast for the country to 6.4% from 6%. In its annual regional business index, Latin Business Chronicle ranked Chile as having the best business climate in Latin America in 2011.
>
> Such numbers are so alien to the U.S. in the economically debilitated Obama era, it makes sense to look at what Chile has done.
>
> First, Chile's policies for long-term growth were put into effect in the 1980s by the group of Milton Friedman-inspired economists known as the Chicago Boys.
>
> Under them, Chile's pension privatization cost nothing and left the country with

> no net debt. The private funds now hold assets worth 90% of GNP ($185 billion) — capital used to develop the country. Already, Chile's education and infrastructure are the best in Latin America as a result.
>
> Second, there's free trade, of which Chile is a global champion, signing at least 58 treaties to gain access to 2 billion customers.
>
> That's a big reason Chile is close to full employment and is scrambling to attract growth-hungry U.S. entrepreneurs — and getting them.
>
> […]Bamrud says Chile has been turning heads with investors the past year and a half because of its emphasis on improving its corporate environment, its tax regime and its economic freedom, all of which rate highly.
>
> "Chile has always been held out as a model for Latin America, but the reality is … it's now a model for the U.S.," he said.
>
> Corporate taxes are the second lowest in Latin America at 18%, behind Paraguay's 10%. The Latin average is 28%.
>
> Meanwhile, Goldman Sachs' chief economist for Latin America, Alberto Ramos, says Chile has wisely fostered growth by reducing the size of government and not printing too much money.
>
> In 2011, it cut government spending to 5% of GDP, or $700 million, more than its projected 5.5%. So GDP has room to grow 6.4%, rather than 6% as first estimated.

Chile is doing the exact opposite of the socialist Barack Obama. Chile is cutting government spending, removing tariffs, enacting free trade deals, and cutting corporate taxes. Businesses and investors are moving there, and there are not enough people to work at all the jobs that are being created. Meanwhile, in Venezuela, communist dictator Hugo Chavez just reported 0.6% gain in the last quarter of 2010.

But wait! There's more good news from Chile!

Investors Business Daily writes again about Chile's privatized retirement program. (H/T Tina)

Excerpt:

> May Day — socialists' paean to class warfare — evokes memories of Soviet tanks in Red Square and leftist radicals rioting. But Chile celebrates the actual empowerment of workers.
>
> May 1 marks the 30 years since Chile became the first nation to privatize its social security system. By turning workers into investors, the move solved an entitlement crisis much like the one America faces today.
>
> "I like symbols, so I chose May Day as the birth date of Chile's 'ownership society' that allowed every worker to become a small capitalist," wrote Jose Pinera, former secretary of labor and social security and the architect of this pension revolution. He is now a senior fellow at the Cato Institute in Washington,

> D.C.
>
> What he designed has succeeded beyond all expectations. Yet Congress remains reluctant to adopt anything like it, despite efforts by Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush to partially privatize an American system.
>
> Instead of paying a 12.4% Social Security tax as we do here, Chilean workers must pay in 10% of their wages (they can send up to 20%) to one of several conservatively managed and regulated pension funds. From the accumulated savings, they get a life annuity or make programmed withdrawals (inheriting any funds left over).
>
> Over the last three decades these accounts have averaged annual returns of 9.23% above inflation. By contrast, U.S. Social Security pays a 1% to 2% (theoretical) return, and even less for new workers.
>
> […]In 2005, New York Times reporter John Tierney worked out his own Social Security contributions on the Chilean model and found that his privatized pension would have been $53,000 a year plus a one-time payout of $223,000. The same contributions paid into Social Security would have paid him $18,000.

The biggest threat to American solvency is the growth in entitlement spending on Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. The Democrats are stubbornly opposed to reforming these benefits, because they like the idea of transferring wealth from children, who cannot vote, to people who depend on government hand-outs, who can vote. And the best part of their scheme is that young people can be easily indoctrinated by the public schools to believe that have their future mortgaged away to buy votes *is a good idea*. It’s really very sad and unfair to young people.

Condi Rice takes on MSNBC's Lawrence O'Donnell on national security

May 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you can't see the video, you can read the transcript at Newsbusters.

Here's a little more about Condi:

> Condoleezza Rice is the Thomas and Barbara Stephenson Senior Fellow on Public Policy at the Hoover Institution, professor of political economy in the Stanford Graduate School of Business, and professor of political science at Stanford University.
>
> From January 2005 to 2009, she served as the sixty-sixth secretary of state of the United States. Before serving as America's chief diplomat, she served as assistant to the president for national security affairs (national security adviser) from January 2001 to 2005.
>
> Rice joined the Stanford University faculty as a professor of political science in 1981 and served as Stanford University's provost from 1993 to 1999. She was a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution from 1991 to 1993 and returned to the Hoover Institution after serving as provost until 2001. As a professor, Rice won two of the highest teaching honors: the 1984 Walter J. Gores Award for Excellence in Teaching and the 1993 School of Humanities and Sciences Dean's Award for Distinguished Teaching.
>
> She has authored and coauthored several books, including *Extraordinary, Ordinary People: A Memoir of Family* (2010), *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (1995), with Philip Zelikow, *The Gorbachev Era* (1986), with Alexander Dallin, and *Uncertain Allegiance: The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army* (1984).
>
> Rice served as a member of the boards of directors for the Chevron Corporation, the Charles Schwab Corporation, the Transamerica Corporation, and the International Advisory Council of J.P. Morgan. She was a founding board member of the Center for a New Generation, an educational support fund for schools in East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park, California, and was vice president of the Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula. In addition, she has served on several local and national boards of foundations and charitable organizations.
>
> She currently serves on the board of C3, an energy software company, and Makena Capital, a private equity firm. In addition, she is a member of the boards of the Commonwealth Club, the Aspen Institute, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
>
> Rice earned her bachelor's degree in political science, cum laude and Phi Beta

> Kappa, from the University of Denver in 1974; her master's degree from the University of Notre Dame in 1975; and her PhD from the Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Denver in 1981.

Lawrence O'Donnell does not have a PhD in International Studies, nor was he ever Secretary of State or National Security Adviser. He should just shut up.

Quebec judge orders three-year-old into daycare for “socialization”

May 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

From Life Site News. (H/T Mary, Eleanor)

Excerpt:

> A Quebec judge has ordered a three-year-old and a five-year-old to attend state-funded day care following claims that the children lacked proper “socialization.”
>
> The parents of the Notre-Dame-des-Bois family were also ordered to place their two elder homeschooled children in public schools, and accused of failing to act quickly to correct learning disabilities, despite their doctor’s testimony to the contrary.
>
> “This is a shocking decision,” said Paul Faris of the Canadian branch of the Home School Legal Defense Association, who have backed the family’s case. He told LifeSiteNews this is the latest in the Quebec government’s ongoing effort to “clamp down on choice in education.”
>
> He said the most concerning part is the judge’s decision to “order the younger children who were not of compulsory school age into day care for socialization.”
>
> The family, who have homeschooled for four years, were reported to the province’s Youth Protection Services in November 2009 after a run-in with the local school board. The elder children were ordered into school in April 2010 after court proceedings began in February 2010. There was a four-day trial in November, and Judge Nicole Bernier issued her ruling in March.
>
> Faris said the court refused to hear the parents’ expert witness and dismissed the testimony of the family doctor, who has been fully supportive of their medical

> decisions. In her ruling, Judge Bernier claimed the family doctor's testimony lacked objectivity and was "full of bias" owing to his relationship with the parents.
>
> Faris said the judge gave "excess weight" to the government's experts, who he says "found that one child's hearing impairment 'indicated' that the parents could not be trusted and therefore all the children should be enrolled in public school programs." Judge Bernier determined that the security and development of the children was compromised by parental negligence.
>
> In her ruling, Judge Bernier called the mother's teaching approach "outdated," saying it emphasized repetition exercises and acquisition of knowledge rather than the Ministry's preferred approach of teaching learning skills. She also criticizes the elder children's social development, noting that they had difficulty at first with the other children when they entered the classroom.
>
> "The parents, though aware … of the need to stimulate each child by interactions with peers of the same age, outside of the family, either at school, kindergarten, or day care or occasional education trips, maintain their interest in the teaching model of the home school," she wrote, going on to lament that they are "refusing to integrate the youngest in kindergarten or day care, and opposing educational outings for the children."
>
> "Their reasons are always the same and regard a social mistrust that does not meet the needs of their children," she added. She also took issue with the fact that the parents apparently had not obtained a homeschooling exemption under the Education Act, which requires that the parents offer a program equivalent to that offered in the schools.

I do not recommend that anyone get married or have children in Quebec. The government and courts seem to think that they are the parents of your children, and the regulators of your marriage. So why bother letting them run your life? Go somewhere else instead. Just imagine – being these parents and paying taxes to these fascists for years, so that they can now take your children away from you. This is where the secular leftist obsession with equality of outcome and uniformity of thought leads. They really are fascists, and they really do hate marriage and family.

This story is particular ironic, considering the news story about the 16-year old homeschooled child entering LAW SCHOOL, having completed her Bachelors degree prior to turning 16. Perhaps this child could move to Canada, get on the Supreme Court of Canada, and overrule this left-wing judicial activist? That should be the mission of all homeschooled children, in my opinion. They should be planning on it.

And in other news, the gay rights lobby is forcing their agenda into the Ontario's Catholic school system. The governments in Quebec and Ontario are both Liberal, and are supported even by some Catholics. These Catholics think that it is the government's job to redistribute wealth in order to equalize life outcomes and achieve "social justice". Imagine how shocked they must be now, to find government intruding into their private

lives.

Republican governors in Florida and Texas to sign ultrasound bills

May 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about ultrasound legislation

Republicans in the Texas House and Senate have voted in favor of a bill requiring an ultrasound before every abortion. Republican Governor Rick Perry will sign the ultrasound bill.

Excerpt:

> A bill that allows women a chance to see an ultrasound of their unborn baby before an abortion is now headed to Governor Rick Perry, who plans to sign the pro-life measure into law.
>
> After the Texas Senate signed off on the legislation, the state House, on a 94-41 vote, voted to concur on the Senate changes to HB 15, the sonogram bill. Now the state will become the latest to give women the kind of information about the development of their unborn child the normally don't receive at abortion clinics — information that may prompt many to choose abortion alternatives.
>
> The Senate passed the bill on second reading on a 21-10 vote and all hostile, pro-abortion amendments by Sens. Wendy Davis, Jose Rodriguez, and Leticia Van de Putte were defeated.
>
> […]For women who reside in counties with more than 60,000 people (more than 92% of women seeking abortions), the sonogram must be performed at least 24 hours before the abortion, and the consultation must be given in person. For

> women who reside in smaller counties or more than 100 miles from an abortion provider (less than 8% of women seeking abortions), the sonogram may be performed at least two hours before the abortion and the 24-hour private consultation may be done by phone.
>
> […]When used in pregnancy centers, ultrasounds convince more than 80 percent of women considering an abortion to keep their baby or consider adoption.

Republicans in the Florida legislature sent an ultrasound bill to Republican governor Rick Scott, but they also send a parental consent bill.

Excerpt:

> Florida senators on Thursday voted to send two pro-life bills to the state governor, including a bill that would mandate that women be given an opportunity to view an ultrasound and hear a description of their unborn child before having the child killed through an abortion.
>
> The ultrasound bill (HB 1127) passed easily, 24-15. Its passage was a significant victory for pro-life advocates in the state, given that a similar bill was vetoed last year by then-Gov. Charlie Crist.
>
> However, with pro-life Governor Rick Scott now in office, there is little chance of the bill meeting a similar fate this time around.
>
> The state senate also passed on Thursday a bill (HB 1247) that would tighten up the state's parental consent law, making it more difficult for minors to get a judicial bypass to avoid having to tell their parents. That bill passed 26-12.
>
> "You can't give a child an aspirin in school without permission. You can't do any kind of medication, but we can secretly take the child off and have an abortion?" said Sen. Steve Oelrich, R-Gainesville, according to the Associated Press. "We should support it with all our hearts and souls if parental responsibility means anything to us."
>
> Since the election of Gov. Scott, as well as strong pro-life Republican majorities in both the House and the Senate in last November's election, the state of Florida has drawn attention for the sheer volume of pro-life legislation that is making its way through the legislature.
>
> Late last month Florida legislators had passed a number of other pro-life bills, including a constitutional amendment that would ban public funding for abortion and prevent the state courts from interpreting a right to privacy to include abortion.

Abortion is all about making money – it's a business. The more regulations you can introduce to reduce the profit margin, the fewer abortionists will want to get into the business. That will raise the prices of abortions and send a signal to abortion consumers about the costly outcomes of careless sex. As a society, we care about whether people are responsible with sex – they should be ready to deal with any children that are

produced because children are people too. Why should society have people engaging in recreational activities that can kill another person and then *lower the costs* of their taking that risk? It makes no sense. Unborn babies are people too, and we don't make it easier for people to be reckless about sex and put the lives of other people at risk. We don't make it easier for people to engage in recreational activities that can get other people killed.

Parental consent laws are also proven to reduce the number of abortions. Ideally, you want young people to understand the facts about contraception failure rates and to know that their parents *will* be involved in the abortion decision. It's better for young people to understand the normal outcomes of sex (babies) before they decide to do it, so that children will only come along when adults have decided that they are prepared to accommodate them. The natural outcome of sex is a baby, and people should understand that society is serious about protecting babies and giving them what they need.

Republicans pushing hard for school choice at the state level

May 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

School choice is a major issue for Republicans in five different states.

Excerpt:

> 2011 is shaping-up to be a monumental year for school choice. The year kicked-off with big changes in Wisconsin, where in February, Governor Scott Walker broke the union stranglehold on public education and lifted the cap on the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, the nation's oldest voucher program.
>
> In March, Utah passed a statewide online learning program. The Beehive State passed the The Statewide Online Education Program, which allows children in grades 9-12 to take highschool coursework online from public or private providers anywhere in the state. Also in March, in an historic win for low-income children in the nation's capital, the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program was restored and expanded, thanks to the leadership of Speaker John Boehner.
>
> In April, Arizona created education savings accounts (ESAs) for special-needs children, who can now receive 90 percent of state per-pupil expenditures in their ESAs, which they can use on a variety of education options, including private school tuition.
>
> And in May, Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels enacted the largest school voucher program in the country, which will help an estimated 600,000 children attend a private school of their choice.
>
> Now, children in Oklahoma could soon benefit from a proposed tuition tax credit program. A bill which is headed to Gov. Mary Fallin's desk would provide scholarships to children in low- and middle-income families to attend a private school of their choice. Oklahoma is building on the voucher program for special needs children passed early last year, and is on its way to having one of the most robust education markets in the country.

Meanwhile, in Illinois, Democrat women are trying to push more sex education into the schools, while Republican men try to slow them down.

Excerpt:

> Bananas and condom races became topics of debate in the Illinois Senate this afternoon, when lawmakers rejected a measure that would have given the State Board of Education new control over sex education.
>
> Under the legislation, schools choosing to offer sex education would be required to teach "medically accurate and developmentally appropriate" curriculum — local districts would choose from a range of material offered by the state board,

> then parents could review the material and decide whether or not their child should participate.
>
> Republican lawmakers grilled the bill's sponsor, state Sen. **Heather Steans**, D-Chicago, on what would qualified as "age-appropriate" material for the junior high and high school students in question.
>
> State Sen. **Kyle McCarter**, R-Lebanon, asked Steans if materials suggesting "having races by putting condoms on bananas" were suited for sixth-graders.
>
> State Sen. **Chris Lauzen**, R-Aurora, said he believed adopting the new standards could push parents with "traditional values" to pull their children from public schools.
>
> […]"This is not just educating them on math and science — this is educating them on an issue that could literally save their lives," said state Sen. **Linda Holmes**, D-Plainfield.

The funny thing is that all the evidence shows that increasing sex education actually increases the number of out-of-wedlock births and sexually-transmitted diseases. If we really were serious about stopping out-of-wedlock pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, we would be pushing abstinence education – which is the only thing that is proven to work.

Related posts

- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- British woman has sex with strangers in order to get fatherless child
- The UK has generous welfare benefits for single mothers
- Switzerland company to manufacture condoms for 12-14 year olds
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- Most children of British mothers born out of wedlock – UK Telegraph
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- Public schools hand out condoms to 5-year olds without parental consent
- Teacher union promotes sexualizing children at United Nations conference
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children's sexual choices

J. Gresham Machen on the relationship between knowledge and faith

May 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christian scholarship is the new Crusade

Most of my readers are familiar with William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland – they are two of the most famous Christian apologists out operating today. They both cite a person named "J. Gresham Machen", and today I want to tell you more about this person.

William Lane Craig quotes him in this chapel address to Wheaton College students. (I am adding some context to Craig's citation: Craig started the quote at "False ideas…" and ended it at "…harmless delusion")

> We are all agreed that at least one great function of the Church is the conversion of individual men. The missionary movement is the great religious movement of our day. Now it is perfectly true that men must be brought to Christ one by one. There are no labor-saving devices in evangelism. It is all hard-work.
>
> And yet it would be a great mistake to suppose that all men are equally well prepared to receive the gospel. It is true that the decisive thing is the regenerative power of God. That can overcome all lack of preparation, and the absence of that makes even the best preparation useless. But as a matter of fact God usually exerts that power in connection with certain prior conditions of the human mind, and it should be ours to create, so far as we can, with the help of God, those favorable conditions for the reception of the gospel. False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion.

I was actually in the audience when he gave this speech – I was there for the philosophy conference.

So Craig is citing J. Gresham Machen. What about Moreland?

Here's an essay that Moreland wrote for Christian Leadership Ministries, the faculty arm of Campus Crusade for Christ.

He cites he exact same passage by J. Gresham Machen, as well, only he starts his citation at "God usually exerts…".

So that's Craig and Moreland. Citing the same passage, by the same writer. Interesting.

So who is this J. Gresham Machen anyway?

Here's the bio:

> J. Gresham Machen was professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary before becoming one of the founders of Westminster Theological Seminary and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). This address on *The Scientific Preparation of the Minister*, was delivered September 20, 1912, at the opening of the one hundred and first session of Princeton Theological Seminary, and in substance (previously) at a meeting of the Presbyterian Ministers' Association of Philadelphia, May 20, 1912. It was first published in The Princeton Theological Review, Vol. 11, 1913.

And Craig and Moreland are citing this essay, which you can read online for free. If you want to know what makes the Wintery Knight the Wintery Knight, this is the place to find your answers.

The essay was published in the Princeton Theological Review in 1913. The essay explains what the church *should have* done, but didn't. And the only way out of the mess we are in now is to go back to the fork in the road and make the right turn this time.

You really need to read the essays I linked to by Craig, Moreland and Machen. It will open your eyes and show you how there can be so many Christians attending church on Sundays, and yet they have so little impact on the culture as a whole.

Autobiographical note

When I was a young man, I was exposed to the writings of William Lane Craig, J.P. Moreland, Walter L. Bradley, Greg Koukl, Hugh Ross, and Philip E. Johnson – and they changed my life. It really does make a big difference to young people when they are engaged at an intellectual level, with logic and evidence. I had no other connections to the church at that time. No one in my family, and none of my friends, were religiously inclined. I had no felt needs for religion. But approaching Christianity as knowledge worked for me. Before my conversion, I never attended the feminized church. And I was never told that Christianity was opposed to logic and evidence. Imagine my surprise to see what was being taught in the church compared to the public, testable claims to knowledge in the Bible, and the public, testable claims to knowledge that Christians scholars made in their books.

This passage from R.C. Sproul and John Gerstner in their otherwise useless book on Christian apologetics was formative for me, as well:

> Secularism, on the other hand, is a *post*-Christian phenomenon carrying in its baggage, a *conscious* rejection of the Christian world view. It supplants the Christian consensus with its own structured view of reality. Less barbaric on the surface than paganism, secularism adopts a benevolent paternalism toward the not yet enlightened Christian who continues the practice of an anachronistic faith. Wearing a benign mask, the secularist loudly proclaims his commitment to religious tolerance on behalf of those weak-minded souls who still cannot bear to face a hostile, or worse, an indifferent universe, without the narcotic effect of ecllesiastical opium. The church is safe from vicious persecution at the hands of the secularist, as educated people have finished with stake-burning circuses and torture racks. No martyr's blood is shed in the secularist West – so long as the church knows her place and remains quietly at peace on her modern reservation. Let the babes pray and sing and read their Bibles, continuing steadfast in their intellectual retardation; the church's extinction will come not by sword of pillory, but by the quiet death of irrelevance. It will pass away with a whimper not a bang. But let the church step off the reservation, let her penetrate once more the culture of the day and the Janus-face of secularism will change from benign smile to savage snarl.

This is the problem we are facing today. We have changed Christianity into "faith" instead of KNOWLEDGE.

Thomas Sowell opposes government intervention in the economy

May 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

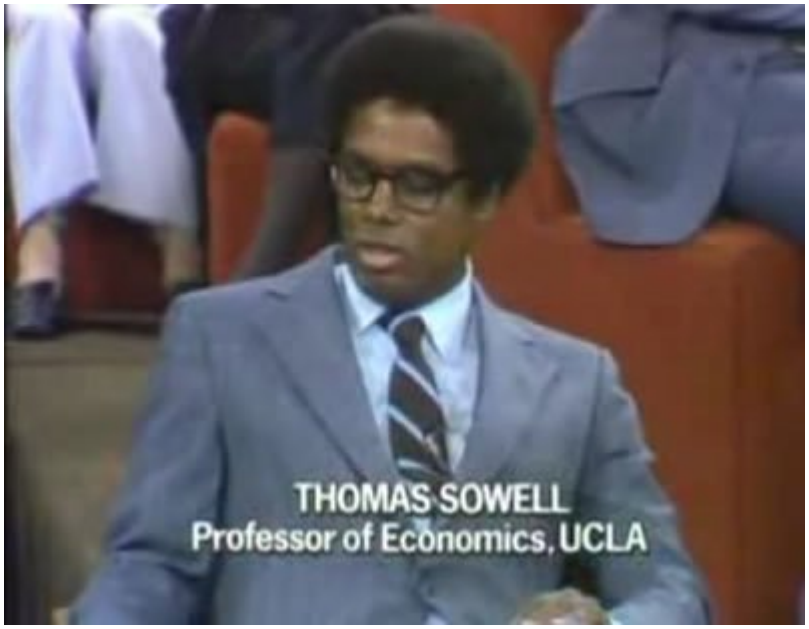

Young Thomas Sowell
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The policies of this administration make it risky to lend money, with Washington politicians coming up with one reason after another why borrowers shouldn't have to pay it back when it is due, or perhaps not pay it all back at all. That's called "loan modification" or various other fancy names for welshing on debts. Is it surprising that lenders have become reluctant to lend?
>
> Private businesses have amassed record amounts of cash, which they could use to hire more people — if this administration were not generating vast amounts of uncertainty about what the costs are going to be for ObamaCare, among other unpredictable employer costs, from a government heedless or hostile toward business.
>
> As a result, it is often cheaper or less risky for employers to work the existing employees overtime, or to hire temporary workers who are not eligible for employee benefits. But lack of money is not the problem.
>
> Those who are true believers in the old-time Keynesian economic religion will always say that the only reason creating more money hasn't worked is because there has not yet been enough money created. To them, if QE2 hasn't worked, then we need QE3. And if that doesn't work, then we will need QE4, etc.
>
> Like most of the mistakes being made in Washington today, this dogmatic faith in government spending is something that has been tried before — and failed

> before.
>
> […]It is not politically possible for either the Federal Reserve or the Obama administration to leave the economy alone and let it recover on its own.
>
> Both are under pressure to “do something.” If one thing doesn’t work, then they have to try something else. And if that doesn’t work, they have to come up with yet another gimmick.
>
> All this constant experimentation by the government makes it more risky for investors to invest or employers to employ, when neither of them knows when the government’s rules of the game are going to change again. Whatever the merits or demerits of particular government policies, the uncertainty that such ever-changing policies generate can paralyze an economy today, just as it did back in the days of FDR.

Words of wisdom.

Obama vows to continue prosecuting counter-terrorism experts

May 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this Wall Street Journal article by former Attorney General Michael Mukasey.

Excerpt:

> Consider how the intelligence that led to bin Laden came to hand. It began with a disclosure from Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM), who broke like a dam under the pressure of harsh interrogation techniques that included waterboarding. He loosed a torrent of information — including eventually the nickname of a trusted courier of bin Laden. That regimen of harsh interrogation was used on KSM after another detainee, Abu Zubaydeh, was subjected to the same techniques. When he broke, he said that he and other members of al-Qaeda were obligated to resist only until they could no longer do so, at which point it became permissible for them to yield. "Do this for all the brothers," he advised his interrogators. . . .
>
> The harsh techniques themselves were used selectively against only a small number of hard-core prisoners who successfully resisted other forms of interrogation, and then only with the explicit authorization of the director of the CIA. Of the thousands of unlawful combatants captured by the U.S., fewer than 100 were detained and questioned in the CIA program. Of those, fewer than one-third were subjected to any of these techniques.
>
> […]President Obama ran for election on the promise to do away with these techniques even before he became aware, if he ever did, of what they were. Days after taking office, he directed that the CIA interrogation program be done away with entirely and that interrogation be limited to the techniques set forth in the Army Field Manual, a document designed for use by even the least experienced troops. It's available on the Internet and used by terrorists as a training manual for resisting interrogation.

Jennifer Rubin, writing in the left-wing Washington Post comments on the Mukasey column.

Excerpt:

> In addition to eliminating the very techniques that allowed us to track down and kill bin Laden, Obama has permitted the Justice Department to reopen investigation of previously cleared CIA operatives. Mukasey explains: " I say 'reopening' advisedly because those investigations had all been formally closed by the end of 2007, with detailed memoranda prepared by career Justice Department prosecutors explaining why no charges were warranted. Attorney General Eric Holder conceded that he had ordered the investigations reopened in September 2009 without reading those memoranda. **The investigations have**

> **now dragged on for years with prosecutors chasing allegations down rabbit holes, with the CIA along with the rest of the intelligence community left demoralized.**"

That's right – Barack Obama has intimidated *the entire intelligence community* with his prosecution of CIA operatives who were *judged innocent.* Does his decision to prosecute CIA counter-terrorism experts make us safer from terrorist attacks?

And just look at how he treated the 9/11 widow Debra Burlingame. He literally turned his back on her just because she asked him why he is continuing to prosecute the CIA interrogators for doing their jobs. That's the real Barack Obama. He can't take a question, he can't handle criticism. He has no civility for people who disagree with him.

Related posts

- CIA Director Leon Panetta confirms that waterboarding led to Osama Bin Laden
- How George W. Bush's secret CIA prisons and waterboarding killed Osama Bin Laden
- Terrorist attacks under George W. Bush and Barack Obama
- Thomas Sowell explains how liberal pacifism causes wars
- Charles Krauthammer and Ralph Peters on Obama's foreign policy
- Is the Obama administration deliberately weakening our military?
- Democrats favor terrorist rights over national security in latest intelligence bill
- Marc Thiessen defends water-boarding against Christiane Amanpour
- Al-Quaeda linked to failed terrorist attack on Northwest Airlines airliner
- What are the consequencs of treating terrorism as a law enforcement issue?
- Which is more cruel and immoral? Waterboarding or abortion?
- Are Democrats fixing national security or fixing the blame on others?
- Homeland security chair says Swedish grandmothers just as likely to be terrorists
- Homeland Security director says that "the system worked"
- What is Obama working on instead of making Americans safer?
- Is waterboarding really torture? Does it enhance our national security?
- Obama cuts missile defense as Iran test-fires missile that can hit Israel
- What is the conservative doctrine of "peace through strength"?

Do you need to have a special feeling before you can share your faith?

May 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a fun commentary from Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason.

First, the setup:

> A couple of days ago, someone asked me about how much initiative I took sharing my faith in public. Do I wait for the Holy Spirit to "lead" me–waiting until I feel like God wants me to talk to a particular person–or do I just jump in on my own without a special directive from the Lord?
>
> I'll tell you the truth. If I waited for the Holy Spirit to "lead" me in that sense, I'd never do anything. I rarely "feel impressed" to do anything God commands, including witnessing.
>
> That's one of the problems with this approach. It's a mistake to think that being led by the Spirit is a subjective thing, as if you can feel the tugging of the Holy Spirit grabbing you by the ear or the heart and pulling you along. That isn't what the leading of the Spirit means in the Scriptures.

And a snarky excerpt:

> Here's how it works out for me. When I get on an airplane, I do not usually want to talk to anybody about the Lord. I want to work on my computer, I want to read, I want to watch the movie, I want to sleep. I don't want to be bothered with conversation about spiritual things. Maybe that doesn't sound very admirable, but that's the way I feel.
>
> Even though I feel that way, though, I know something different. I know, first of all, that I'm a Christian. I hold the information that can transform people's lives and can secure their eternity. I have something valuable that every person needs. Proverbs says I ought not withhold something good from somebody when it's within my power to do it (Prov. 3:27).
>
> So when I get on a plane, I don't feel like sharing my faith, but my attitude is to be obedient to whatever opportunity the Lord gives to me. My goal is to be available. I say, "Lord, I don't want to talk to anyone today; I want to have an easy, conflict-free flight. That's my desire. I don't 'feel led.' But Lord, if you give me an opportunity to make a difference for the Kingdom in some way–to plant a seed, to give a word of encouragement, whatever–I'm available."
>
> Then, I just keep my eyes open. Generally, in the context of a conversation, I try to drop a word or two or a statement, that might open the door to spiritual things. I toss ought some bait and see if I get a nibble. I don't try to force the situation, but sometimes–to continue the fishing metaphor–I do throw some chum

> in the water to see if I can trigger a little appetite.
>
> Sometimes I get that opportunity when people ask me what I do for a living. Since I'm a writer, an educator, a student, a seminar speaker, a talk show host, and a CEO, I can say a lot of different things. I try to choose that particular description of my work that I think would offer the best opportunity to introduce spiritual things with the particular person I'm talking to.
>
> So my goal is to be available to the opportunities God sovereignly gives me to be obedient. I look for a chance to plant a seed somewhere. I don't do it because I feel moved by the Spirit, led by the Spirit, prompted, nudged, pushed or anything like that. I do it because I want to be faithful, to be obedient. My goal as a Christian is not to follow whatever I think my feelings are telling me, but to do those things I ought to be doing, and I don't need a personalized message for that.

He then goes on to give an example of how he puts this into practice.

One of the things I like about Greg is that he comes across as a tough, non-sense Christian. I think a lot of men would be a lot more interested in Christianity if they realized that they could get into disagreements and take bold stands and be the pilots of their own lives – instead of waiting for the right feelings.

Soldiers don't wait to feel like fighting when they are on the battlefield. They just do their jobs. There is plenty of time to talk about feelings with other Christians after you you finish the battle. Then you can be as emotional as you want – once the fighting is done.

Gay donors fuel Barack Obama's 2012 re-election campaign

May 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-wing Politico.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama's reelection campaign is banking on gay donors to make up the cash it's losing from other groups of wealthy supporters who have been alienated and disappointed by elements of Obama's first term.
>
> Pleased by an all-out White House push to repeal "don't ask, don't tell," gay donors have surprised campaign officials with the extent of their support. And the campaign's new fundraising apparatus appears designed to capitalize on their enthusiasm: Obama's finance committee included one gay man in 2008; there are 15 this year, a source said.
>
> The Obama campaign finance director, Rufus Gifford, was a top California gay fundraiser; the DNC treasurer, Andrew Tobias, is gay; and the White House social secretary — traditionally a key, if unofficial, fundraising job — is also a gay man, Gifford's former partner Jeremy Bernard.
>
> The spur for the gay community becoming an anchor for Obama's reelection fundraising is a series of policy shifts in 2010. After a year of rocky relations and suspicion from Obama's gay supporters that he wasn't really committed to their issues, the last year saw a surge in activity. Along with the high-profile repeal of the military ban, Obama's Justice Department recently refused to defend the Defense of Marriage Act. And the administration has taken smaller steps, like gay partner hospital visits and hate crimes legislation, concrete and important gestures that simply weren't made during the Bush administration.
>
> […]Professional gay men, with a personal stake in politics and less likely to have children or college funds that would consume their disposable income, have long been key to Democratic fundraising. A rarely told story of Howard Dean's 2004 rise, for instance, was his early, blockbuster fundraising from gay donors who appreciated his support for civil unions, then a cutting-edge policy.

This is what he gets for refusing to defend the Defense of Marriage Act in court. Democrats don't believe in marriage. They don't believe that children should be raised by their mothers AND fathers.

Will the Conservative Party omnibus crime bill contain restrictions on free speech?

May 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

Several Canadians wrote to me about this story from the Ottawa Sun.

Excerpt:

> The Conservatives plan on introducing an omnibus crime bill when the House resumes that wraps all of their previous legislation into one.
>
> The bill is promoted as allowing police to track and prosecute the perverts passing around child pornography and allows them to update their monitoring techniques to deal with the ever-changing computerized world we live in.
>
> Sounds fine. What could be wrong with that?
>
> In fact, there's nothing wrong with that part, but there is plenty to worry about in what they propose to do regarding hate crimes.
>
> The bill plans to make it a crime to link to any website that promotes hatred.
>
> Here's what the Library of Parliament says about the bill on its website: "Clause 5 of the bill provides that the offences of public incitement of hatred and wilful promotion of hatred may be committed by any means of communication and include making hate material available, by creating a hyperlink that directs web surfers to a website where hate material is posted, for example."
>
> For simply posting a link to a website that has material someone else deems hateful, you could go to jail for two years and be branded a criminal.
>
> The Internet police. Only in Canada.

The problem with these laws, as the article notes, is that they never apply to certain

special interest groups favored by the secular left elite. Instead, they are commonly used to punish those who disagree with the opinions of the secular elite. I am ashamed that the Conservative Party, which I wrote favorably about prior to the election, could consider passing restrictions on speech. I expect this sort of thing from secularists and collectivists, but not from free market capitalists. Where is their love of F.A. Hayek now?

To my Canadian readers: you should immediately write to your Conservative Party MP and tell them that you do not want restrictions on free speech.

Theistic evolutionists and the two-platoon strategy

May 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What should we make of theistic evolutionists telling us that you can *believe* in God, while still *knowing* that matter, law and chance explain the full development of all of life?

Consider this quotation from Phillip E. Johnson.

Quote:

> The National Academy's way of dealing with the religious implications of evolution is akin to the two-platoon system in American football. When the leading figures of evolutionary science feel free to say what they really believe, writers such as Edward O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Carl Sagan, Steven Pinker, Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Lewontin and others state the "God is dead" thesis aggressively, invoking the authority of science to silence any theistic protest. That is the offensive platoon, and the National Academy never raises any objection to its promoting this worldview.
>
> At other times, however, the scientific elite has to protect the teaching of the "fact of evolution" from objections by religious conservatives who know what the offensive platoon is saying and who argue that the science educators are insinuating a worldview that goes far beyond the data. When the objectors are too numerous or influential to be ignored, the defensive platoon takes the field. That is when we read those spin-doctored reassurances saying that many scientists are religious (in some sense), that science does not claim to have proved that God does not exist (but merely that he does not affect the natural world), and that science and religion are separate realms which should never be mixed (unless it is the materialists who are doing the mixing). Once the defensive platoon has done its job it leaves the field, and the offensive platoon goes right back to telling the public that science has shown that "God" is permanently out of business. (The Wedge of Truth, IVP 2000, pp. 88-89).

So what naturalistic scientists believe is that God didn't do anything to create the diversity of life – that nature does all of its own creating. In fact, it doesn't matter if the best naturalistic explanation is improbable or implausible – scientists *must* bitterly cling to materialistic explanations of natural phenomena.

The problem for these scientists is that they are taxpayer-funded, and religious people don't like paying to have scientists shoehorn reality into a pre-supposed naturalistic framework. Sometimes, religious people get annoyed about being told that sparking gases can create functional proteins. And sometimes, religious people get annoyed about being told that the universe oscillates eternally despite observations that falsify that speculative theory. And sometimes, religious people get annoyed about being told that there are as yet undiscovered fossilized precusors to the Cambrian era fossils.

Naturalists think that opposition to these lame naturalistic theories only ever be

religiously-motivated. They cannot accept that people might question their naturalistic just-so stories on scientific grounds. So what do the naturalists do when faced with scientifically-motivated dissent that *they think* is religiously motivated? Well, they trot out "religious" scientists. These "religious" scientists claim to have a deep personal faith in God, and a belief in miracles. But these religious scientists believe that what actually happened is that law, matter and chance did all the creating of life. This is the "second platoon". They are sent out to mislead the public by talking about their personal faith, and what God could and couldn't do, and how evolutionists can believe in God without any evidence of intelligent causes in the history of life. The one question they most want to avoid is whether science, done in the ordinary naturalistic way, can discover evidence of intelligent agency in the history of the development of life.

Now, take a look at this article by Jay Richards. He cites some theistic evolutionists.

Excerpt:

> Biologist Ken Miller:
>
> For his part, [Ken] Miller, a biologist, has no qualms about telling us what *God* would do: "And in Catholicism, he said, God **wouldn't** micromanage that way. 'Surely he **can** set things up without having to violate his own laws.'"
>
> I am unaware of any tenet of Catholic theology that requires God not to micromanage. It is, however, a tenet of deism.

Got that? What really happened is that God didn't do anything. How does he know that? From the science? No. Because he assumes naturalism. Oh, it's true that he *says* that God is lurking somewhere behind the material processes that created life. But God's agency is *undetectable* by the methods of science. And he is hoping that you will accept his subjective pious God-talk as proof that a fundamentally atheistic reality is somehow reconcilable with a robust conception of theism.

More from Richards:

> Then we get Stephen Barr offering his private definition of "chance."

> It **is possible** to **believe** simultaneously in a world that is shaped by chance and one following a divine plan. "God is in charge and there's a lot of accident," said Barr, also a Catholic. "It's all part of a plan. . . . God **may have** known where every molecule was going to move."

What does Barr really believe? He believes that what science shows is that nature created life without any interference by an intelligent agent. Barr then offers believers his subjective pious God-talk to reassure them that evolution is compatible with religion. He has a *personal belief* – NOT BASED ON SCIENCE – that the material processes that created all of life are "all part of a plan". He cannot demonstrate that from science – it's his *faith commitment*. And more speculations: "God may have known…". He can't demonstrate that God did know anything *from science*. He is just offering a personal opinion about what God "could have" done. The purpose of these subjective opinions is to

appease those who ask questions about what natural mechanisms can really create. Can natural causes really account for the development of functional proteins? Never mind that – look at my shiny spiritual-sounding testimony!

That's theistic evolution. What really happened is that no intelligent causes are needed to explain life. What they say is "God could" and "God might" and "I believe" and "I attend this church" and "I received a Christian award" and "I believe in miracles too". None of these religious opinions and speculations are scientifically knowable – they are just opinions, speculations and biographical trivia. Atheists and theistic evolutions agree on what science shows about the diversity of life – *intelligent causes didn't do anything*.

The quickest way to disarm a theistic evolutionist is to refuse to talk about religion or God, and to ask them to show you the naturalistic explanation of the Big Bang. And the naturalistic explanation of the fine-tuning. And the naturalistic explanation of the origin of life. And the naturalistic explanation of the Cambrian explosion. And so on. Focus on the science – don't let them turn the conversation to their personal beliefs, or to the Bible, or to religion, or to philosophy. Ask them what they can show in the lab. If naturalistic mechanisms can do all the creating they say it can do, let's see the demonstration in the lab.

New regulations causing fishermen to suffer massive financial losses

May 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From WMUR in New Hampshire. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Fishermen on New Hampshire's Seacoast are warning that new fishing regulations could destroy their industry and have already caused them severe emotional stress.
>
> […]"If they don't do something to modify the fishing regulations, we won't have a fishing industry on the Seacoast, is what it boils down to," said Hampton Town Manager Fred Welch.
>
> […]The new regulations are known as "catch-share." The team said they are not there to look at possible changes to the rules but rather to see what effects they are having.
>
> […]"One of the fishermen from Rye had said that there had been three suicide attempts and a half dozen divorces during this first year of catch-shares," said Bob Campbell of the Yankee Fisherman's Cooperative. "Commercial fishermen are usually pretty tight-lipped, and for something this serious to come out, I mean, you know that the whole situation is grave."
>
> Campbell said the cooperative has lost about $750,000 in business since the new regulations went into effect.
>
> "We're off 1.1 million pounds of fish from last year, and over a million and a half pounds from the year before," he said.

This is what regulations made in Washington do to a business running in New Hampshire.

New study finds that gay men are twice as likely to report having cancer

May 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Sydney Morning Herald.

Excerpt:

> A large study in California released Monday found that cancer may be nearly twice as prevalent among gay men as among straight men.
>
> The study relied on self-reported data from the California Health Interview survey, the largest state survey of its kind in the United States, and included more than 120,000 people over three years: 2001, 2003 and 2005.
>
> A total of 3,690 men reported a cancer diagnosis as adults. Gay men were 1.9 times as likely as straight men to have been diagnosed with cancer, said the study published in the peer-reviewed journal Cancer.
>
> There was no such difference witnessed among lesbian and straight women, but gay and bisexual females were twice as likely to say they were in fair or poor health after a cancer diagnosis compared to their heterosexual counterparts.
>
> […]The survey did not address how cancer survival rates may differ among those of varying sexual orientation, and may not reflect a true difference in the actual cancer rate because it relied on data from survivors only.
>
> But researchers believe that higher anal cancer rates, caused by the sexually transmitted human papillomaviruses, as well as complications from human immunodeficiency virus, may be at least partly to blame.
>
> "The greater cancer prevalence among gay men may be caused by a higher rate of anal cancer, as suggested by earlier studies that point to an excess risk of anal cancer," said the study.
>
> Researchers "did not have data available on the rate of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, which is higher among gay men, and may have contributed to the significant association of cancer prevalence and sexual orientation."
>
> HIV and AIDS have been linked to a series of cancers including Kaposi sarcoma and non-Hodgkin lymphoma as well as anal, lung, testicular cancer and Hodgkin lymphoma.

Comments to this post will be strictly filtered in accordance with the Obama administration's chilling of free speech.

Responding to the objection: who are you to say?

May 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is from Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason.

Excerpt:

> Today I was thinking about a concept that came up in conversation, a challenge raised to Christians who offer their point of view. The challenge is: "Who are you to say?"
>
> This question it comes up in one of two contexts. The first one is secular. You'll hear it quite frequently when another person disagrees with your point of view, especially a moral one. They immediately challenge you with, "Who are you to say?"
>
> Taken at face value this is an attack on *you* . It's a response that focuses on the person, not the argument. Instead of dealing with a person's point, you attack the individual in some way. This is called an *ad hominem* , a type of informal fallacy. An *ad hominem* might be when you say, "You jerk. You're just stupid," or, "What do you know?" or something of that order. It's a form of name calling.
>
> There are lots of sophisticated ways people use *ad hominem* that slip by us in addition to the obvious ones just mentioned. "Who are you to say?" is one of them. It's a challenge addressed to the person and not the argument.
>
> The challenge comes up in a second context, when Christians with positions of visibility challenge those inside the church who disagree with them. They sometimes refer to their attackers as "heresy hunters" to disparage them. (Some, I guess, might have called me that, though I don't know specifically if I've been labeled in that way.) This is the same kind of comment as, "Who are you to say? Who made you in charge? What right do you have to challenge my doctrine?"
>
> This question is completely irrelevant. Here's why.

Click here for the rest.

I had an answer to this question before I read his article, and now I have a much better understanding of this objection. That's what you get from Greg Koukl – clear thinking Christianity.

Video of the first Republican presidential debate in South Carolina

May 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Herman Cain

The first GOP presidential debate for 2012 was held in South Carolina the evening of May 5, 2011. Participants were Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX), Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty, businessman Herman Cain, former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum, and former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson.

And here's who the focus group picked as the winner – almost unanimously: (H/T The Other McCain)

Herman Cain!

You can watch the full debate below. The debate was moderated by some of my favorite Fox News people: Juan Williams, Bret Bair, Chris Wallace and Shannon Bream. This is the most even-handed questioning I have *ever seen* in a public debate, especially Chris Wallace.

Part 1 of 4:

Part 2 of 4:

Part 3 of 4:

Part 4 of 4:

Here's the latest poll by PPP, a Democrat polling firm, from 5/5 to 5/8:

Romney	Huckabee	Trump	Palin	Gingrich	Paul	Bachmann	Pawlenty
18	19	8	12	13	8	7	5

Herman Cain, Mitch Daniels and Rick Santorum had no score.

My candidate is Michele Bachmann. I don't like any of the others in that poll. I absolutely cannot stand Romney, Huckabee, Trump, Gingrich, and Paul. I don't think Palin should run. Pawlenty is highly qualified, but not conservative enough for me.

A 30-minute Herman Cain speech is here.

The top article on National Review is about Herman Cain

May 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story on National Review. Everyone is going ga-ga for Herman Cain!

The first few lines:

> 'How many of you think Herman Cain won the debate?"
>
> Twenty hands shot up.
>
> "Well, we can stop right there," said Frank Luntz, a fast-talking political consultant, as he paced before a Fox News focus group on May 5. "This is unprecedented."
>
> Luntz pointed to the top row, looking for answers. One by one, South Carolina Republicans in trucker caps and business suits raved about Cain. After watching the 65-year-old spar with fellow GOP presidential contenders, many were itching to join his ranks.
>
> "He's a breath of fresh air," explained one gentleman. "He is the godfather of business sense, and he can attack Obama well," declared a middle-aged lady. Others nodded vigorously.
>
> Luntz was stunned. "[Cain] was not a real candidate before tonight," he exclaimed. "What happened?"
>
> […]Cain, a former corporate executive and talk-radio host, did more than that; he won over a slew of Republicans pining for a 2012 candidate. Though he was standing among better-known Republicans such as Tim Pawlenty and Ron Paul, Cain's rich baritone, business smarts, and sharp one-liners connected.
>
> It's easy to see why: He was frank and refreshing. But more notably, on a stage full of state and congressional leaders, Cain used his outsider status to his advantage. "Most of the people who are in elective office in Washington, D.C., they have held public office before," he noted during one exchange. Then, with expert comedic timing, he quipped: "How's *that* workin' for you?"
>
> […]Since the debate, Cain has seen his fortunes rise. The latest Zogby poll shows him trailing only New Jersey governor Chris Christie in popularity among GOP-primary voters. In Washington State over the weekend, Cain won a Republican straw poll.
>
> Online, the buzz is palpable. He was a trending topic on Twitter during the debate; on Facebook, he has 84,000 friends, a number that's growing every day. Conservatives may not know much about him, but they like what they are hearing. As Rush Limbaugh remarked on his radio show after the debate, "Herman Cain made me think I was listening to me in every answer."

And my favorite part:

> Cain's thirst for self-improvement was evident at the start. He grew up in Atlanta, the son of working-class parents — his father a chauffeur, his mother a domestic worker. They had always dreamed of owning their own home, not living in a "half-home," an attached unit. They achieved that goal. They wanted their two sons to graduate from college. Both did.
>
> Cain saw his parents' hard work as a simple, inspirational example: Work hard, trust in God, have no fear, and you can achieve the American dream. To him, it is more than a political idea; it is central to who he is as a citizen, and as a potential presidential candidate. Once he earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Morehouse College in 1967, Cain was determined to map his own path to success.
>
> The early motivator, and Cain says it unabashedly, was wealth. Working as a systems analyst for the United States Navy in Dahlgren, Va., Cain made $7,729 a year. At age 23, he made a personal goal to one day earn $20,000. As he settled into his position, he noticed that advancement — and an increased salary — would require a graduate degree. So he searched for the top computer-science program he could find, predicting that future jobs would require such skills.
>
> Cain selected Purdue University in Indiana. He was not exactly eager to return to the classroom, but he knew that he needed to learn more and improve his résumé. After surviving a string of difficult courses and exams and earning his master's degree in 1971, he returned to the Navy full-time and was granted a GS-13 position. His new salary: $20,001.

The rest of the article explains how he rose through the ranks at Pillsbury, Burger King, and Godfather Pizza. My goodness, this man is just an ordinary man who came from *nowhere* to achieve *everything*. He is everything that Republicans represent. His life reflects the American Dream. Please, let this man save us from the RINOs: Romney, Huckabee and Gingrich.

Notice the part where the article mentions that Cain is a Baptist preacher. He is not afraid to talk about his faith in public.

Here's a 1-minute introduction to Herman Cain:

Also, here's a 30-minute CPAC speech by Herman Cain. Here is video of the South Carolina debate, and the focus group response. My friend Robb posted the video of Cain beating up Bill Clinton, which is referenced in the article.

Greg Koukl responds to cultists knocking on his door

May 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a commentary from Greg Koukl. He talks about dealing with Mormons, and what their approach to evangelism says about them.

Here's the problem:

> When LDS missionaries knocked on my brother Dave's door while he was working, he took off his tool belt and sat down to talk with them. When he began to press them on their case, though, they took offense. "We just came here to share our point of view and now you are trying to have an argument with us," they said. "We're not here to argue with people. We just want to talk about our view and our experience." Dave pointed out that *they* knocked on *his* door for the purpose of changing his point of view. They weren't just "sharing."
>
> Sometimes they'll take another tack. When you try to offer evidence counter to their view they'll say, "You're persecuting us." I have heard that as well. I'm not sure if LDS missionaries are actually taught to take that approach when challenged. Maybe they just see it modeled by their mentors, or maybe they have a persecution complex, but this is ready on their lips the minute you offer an objection to their point of view.
>
> How do you get around that? If those young men I saw pedaled up to my house and knocked on my door, I'd want to politely set some ground rules.

And here is the ground rule for dealing with Mormons:

> Here's the way I'd introduce the first question: "Great. I'd be glad to talk to you. I just want to be clear on a couple of things before we get going. *Do you think your religion is actually true, I mean really true?"*
>
> Now this is a "yes" or "no" question. Either they'll say "yes" which is the right answer, because they do think their religion is true and that's why they're proselytizing or they'll say "no," in which case I would ask, "If you don't think Mormonism is true, then why are you knocking at my door?" So they are probably not going to say that. They might say, "Well, it's true for us." Then I'm going to ask what that means. If it is just "true" for them that is, just their opinion that works for them then why should I listen? I have my own "truths" that work for me. What we are getting at is the fact that they actually believe their view about religion is right and ours is wrong. It's not just true for *them*. That's why we should change our religion and become Mormon.
>
> Of course, that's a politically incorrect way of putting it, and they may be uneasy having their position stated so baldly. (I had one LDS young man say, "I would never say anyone else is wrong in their religious view," a statement he ultimately retracted after my probing questions forced him to think a little more carefully

> about that remark in light of his missionary efforts.) To ease the discomfort you might say, "I'm not in the least offended by that view. My religion is a missionary religion, too. We think we're right and others are wrong in so far as they differ from our beliefs. I just want us both to be clear on our positions. We both think we're right and the other is mistaken. That's all."
>
> We continue. "Okay, so you believe your view is correct. That's why you're here. If my view is different from yours, then mine is incorrect and I should change my view if I'm a reasonable person and become a Mormon. So what this discussion is about is who's view is true, yours or mine. Is that fair? Great — come on in."

I can remember like yesterday my encounters with Mormons in high school. I told them about the evidences for the Big Bang, and then asked them to square their view of eternally existing matter with the Big Bang. And they replied "we don't really try to make our religion fit with what science shows". Later on when I started working, I got into a debate with another Mormon. I noticed she was reading the Book of Mormon. So I asked her why she had chosen Mormonism out of all the other faiths. And she said "because it makes me feel good". It just doesn't seem like Mormonism is a religion that you arrive at after some careful investigation, because none of the ones I've know or read seem to be able to defend it to me when I ask them.

Here's another commentary from Greg Koukl. In this one, he gets a visit from Jehovah's Witnesses. They come to his door, ring the door bell and ask him if he wants some of their apocalyptic literature.

So Greg says this:

> "I'm a Christian pastor," I said, directing my comments to the younger convert, the one less influenced by the Watchtower organization and more open to another viewpoint. "In fact, I'm studying theology right now." I held up the tome I'd been reading, Turretin's 18th century Institutes of Eclentic Theology.
>
> "It's clear we have some differences, including the vital issue of the identity of Jesus. I believe what John teaches in John 1:3, that Jesus is the uncreated Creator. This makes Him God."

And they run away!

> "You're entitled to your opinion and we're entitled to ours," was all she said. No question, no challenge, no theological rejoinder. This was a dismissal, not a response. She turned on her heels and started for the next house–young cadet in tow–in search of more vulnerable game.

Greg reflects:

> Third, they don't take the issue of truth very seriously. Religious evangelism is a persuasive enterprise; the evangelist is trying to change people's minds. He thinks his view is true and other views are false. He also thinks the difference matters. Follow the truth, you win; follow a lie, you lose–big time. A commitment

> to truth (as opposed to a commitment to an organization) means an openness to refining one's own views, increasing the accuracy in understanding, constantly searching for more precision in thinking.
>
> A challenger could always turn out to be a blessing in disguise, an ally instead of an enemy. An evangelist who's convinced of his view would want to hear the very best arguments against it. One of two things is going to happen.
>
> He may discover that some objections to his view are good ones. The rebuttal helps him make adjustments and corrections in his thinking, refining his knowledge of the truth. Or it may turn out he's on solid ground after all. Developing answers to the toughest arguments against him strengthens both his witness and his own confidence in his religion.
>
> But my visitors didn't wait to hear my thoughts to inform their own beliefs, so they might know the truth more accurately. They didn't pause to hear the reasons I reject the Watchtower's authority, so they might try to refute me and gain confidence in their own view.

I remember my own days of dealing with Jehovah's Witnesses who were trying to convert a member of my family. They came back to our door and I stepped outside the house and shut the door behind me. Then I asked them about the failed predictions for the end of the world that their organization had made, especially 1914, 1975 and so forth. They had never heard of the predictions that their organization had made, so I showed them the printouts I had made. Then I asked them why I should trust their organization to tell me the truth, if they were trying to make these prophetic statements and failing so miserably. They left and never came back.

New study on education quality of universal day care programs

May 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

This article from the Toronto Sun talks about the government-run day care system in Quebec. (H/T Luis)

Excerpt:

> Quebec's $7-a-day daycare system is failing to improve children's educational outcomes, an economics professor from Montreal says.
>
> In a new paper, Pierre Lefebvre of the Universite du Quebec a Montreal explains that when the system was created, Quebecers were told "it would promote children's development so they would perform better in school later."
>
> "This never happened," he says.
>
> The researcher studied children under the age of five from Quebec and children of the same age from the rest of Canada and compared their progress at various points between 1994 and 2006. He found Quebec's family policy did nothing to improve cognitive skills in children.
>
> According to Lefebvre, it's because the Quebec government program is doing a lousy job.
>
> "There is a serious quality problem. I would go as far as to say that daycare quality is very low, both in terms of educators' formation and in terms of the quality of interactions between educators and children."

The program receives taxpayer money from all working people. So working husbands with stay-at-home wives have to pay for a day care system that they will never use.

Here's a second article from the National Post about Sweden's government-run universal

day care system. (H/T Luis)

Excerpt:

> True, parental leave in Sweden is a generous 16 months. There are no babies in daycare. But when parental leave ends, practically the reverse is true: A full 92% of all children aged 18 months to five years are in daycare. Parents pay only a symbolic amount for this; tax subsidies for daycare are $20,000 per child, annually. Swedish taxes are among the highest in the world, and the tax system was designed to make both parents seek employment in the work force.
>
> […]Then there are the questions about the social toll Sweden's childcare system is taking. Sweden has offered a comprehensive daycare system since 1975; since the early '90s, negative outcomes for children and adolescents are on the rise in areas of health and behaviour. While direct causation has been difficult to prove, many Swedish health-care professionals point to the lack of parent involvement beyond the first 16 months as a primary contributing factor. Psychosomatic disorders and mild psychological problems are escalating among Swedish youth at a faster rate than in any of 11 comparable European countries. Such disorders have tripled among girls over the last 25 years. Education outcomes in Swedish schools have fallen from the top position 30 years ago, to merely average amongst OECD nations today. Behaviour problems in Swedish classrooms are among the worst in Europe.
>
> This isn't surprising. After a generation of inexperience, Swedish parenting abilities are deteriorating. A study sponsored by the European Union showed many middle-class parents lack the ability to set limits and sense their children's needs.
>
> Recently, Swedish public service radio investigated the state of Swedish daycares. Parents, psychologists and daycare staff expressed deep concern. In spite of high funding levels, group size and the child-to-adult ratio continue to increase. An experienced pre-school teacher recalls that in 1980 the group size for small children was 10 kids with four adults. For older children, that ratio was five kids per adult. But after the Swedish financial crisis 20 years ago, this changed. Today younger children face ratios of up to 17 kids to three adults and older children face ratios of up to 10 to one. Staff on sick leave are not replaced. "We can't give quality care today," one teacher reported. Only one person interviewed contended that Swedish daycare is still top quality — the Swedish Deputy Minister of Education, Nyamko Sabuni.

Again, this program is taxpayer funded. Working husbands with stay-at-home wives will be paying for something that they don't even use.

I think parents need to consider what happens in other countries to see how good these universal day care programs really are.

Frank Turek on faith and why young people are leaving the church

May 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Friday night awesome. (H/T Chris)

This guy is a former naval aviator, and it shows in the way he talks about his faith.

Jennifer Roback Morse explains how divorce laws changed marriage

May 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

When couples think that divorce is possible, it changes what marriage means. She also talks about how Christianity makes a big difference to our understanding of marriage.

The MP3 file is here.

Right Wing News posted an interview with Warren Farrell recently, and this question and answer struck me.

Excerpt:

Now thanks to people like Mark Steyn, conservatives have gotten a lot more interested in demographics over the last few years. In the Western world, you're seeing a lot less marriage and a lot less people having children. Now you've written a couple of books about divorce and you've had a lot of experience talking about marriage. Why do you think marriage is simply less appealing to men today than it used to be a few decades ago?

I think, first of all, it's both more appealing and less appealing. For example, when I wrote **Why Men Are the Way They Are** in 1986, almost invariably women would say that the first chapter that they opened up to was the chapter on why are men afraid of commitment. There was a deep interest in the '70s and early '80s – and for hundreds of years before that — on the part of women on how to get a man, how to get married and so on. Men were oftentimes the resisting party to that. Today, from what I can tell anecdotally and what I see in surveys, men and women are about equally interested in getting married. Having said that, there is a statistical shift that actually is in the opposite direction. Men have a greater interest, compared to women, in getting married in relation to what it used to be.

Nevertheless, there are many men whose fear of getting married is based on many things — one of which is that they see that their dad was married when he was younger, but now he lives in an apartment while their mom lives in a home. The mom got to raise the children, which they interpreted when they were younger as "Dad was just not interested," but then as they got to be age 18 to 25, their dad eventually let them know

that he was extremely interested and showed them court documents about how he fought in court to be involved with them, but how the mom resisted that involvement. So the man starts saying, “Wow, if I get married to the wrong woman, I could end up like my dad. My dad thought he was in love with my mom at the time and my mom was in love with my dad. Then my dad ended up not getting the home, not getting the children, having us feel that he hated us or was at least neglectful of us, his being depressed and disappointed and paying child support for children he couldn’t see in a home he couldn’t live in….” That gets pretty depressing for some boys that feel they could fall into the same pattern. The reason it isn’t even more depressing for many men is that when a man falls in love, he believes his woman will be different and oftentimes she is. But, sometimes she isn’t.

I think a lot of young men who have suffered through this experience are worried about it happening to them. A good start would be to realize that God wants us to have good marriage, and to ask ourselves – what are we going to do to prepare ourselves for marriage? What are we going to read? How will be train our character to be able to put others first? How will we strengthen our faith so that it can have an impact on our actions? If we just leave it up to whims and feelings, things aren’t going to work out. There has to be some sort of plan to make the marriage successful.

UK Telegraph on Richard Dawkins' cowardly refusal to debate William Lane Craig

May 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

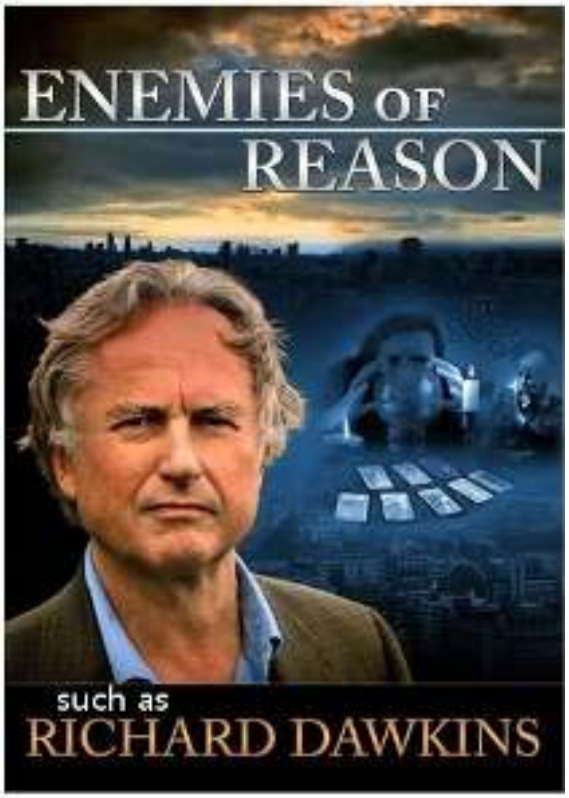

Will Richard Dawkins debate William Lane Craig?
(Image stolen from Glenn Peoples)

Cowardly Richard Dawkins refuses to debate William Lane Craig on this latest UK tour.
(H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Richard Dawkins has made his name as the scourge of organised religion who branded the Roman Catholic Church "evil" and once called the Pope "a leering old villain in a frock".
>
> But he now stands accused of "cowardice" after refusing four invitations to debate the existence of God with a renowned Christian philosopher.
>
> A war of words has broken out between the best selling author of The God Delusion, and his critics, who see his refusal to take on the American academic, William Lane Craig, as a "glaring" failure and a sign that he may be losing his nerve.
>
> Prof Dawkins maintains that Prof Craig is not a figure worthy of his attention and has reportedly said that such a contest would "look good" on his opponent's CV but not on his own.
>
> An emeritus fellow of New College, Oxford, Prof Dawkins last year supported a

> plan to charge Pope Benedict XVI with crimes against humanity for his alleged involvement in the cover-up of sex abuse by Catholic priests.

> Prof Craig is a research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, in California, and the author of 30 books and hundreds of scholarly articles on Christianity.
>
> He has debated with leading thinkers including Daniel Dennett, A.C.Grayling, Christopher Hitchens, Lewis Wolpert and Sam Harris.
>
> Prof Craig is due to visit Britain in October this year. Four invitations to take part in public debates were sent to Prof Dawkins from The British Humanist Association, The Cambridge Debating Union, the Oxford Christian Union and Premier Radio.
>
> Prof Dawkins declined them all.
>
> […]Some of Prof Dawkins's contemporaries are not impressed. Dr Daniel Came, a philosophy lecturer and fellow atheist, from Worcester College, Oxford, wrote to him urging him to reconsider his refusal to debate the existence of God with Prof Craig.
>
> In a letter to Prof Dawkins, Dr Came said: "The absence of a debate with the foremost apologist for Christian theism is a glaring omission on your CV and is of course apt to be interpreted as cowardice on your part.
>
> "I notice that, by contrast, you are happy to discuss theological matters with television and radio presenters and other intellectual heavyweights like Pastor Ted Haggard of the National Association of Evangelicals and Pastor Keenan Roberts of the Colorado Hell House."
>
> Prof Craig, however, remains willing to debate with Prof Dawkins. "I am keeping the opportunity open for him to change his mind and debate with me in the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford" in October, he said.

Read it all. And please forward this to EVERYONE you know.

Dawkins mentions that he "already debated Craig" in that lame, worthless Mexico event where all the speakers got 2 minutes for their speeches, and one minute rebuttals. That was not a formal academic debate, that was a spectacle. I want a formal debate so Craig can put this blowhard in his place like he did with Hitchens, Harris, and Dennett. I want this nonsense about atheism being a rational, moral worldview to end NOW. And by now, I mean yesterday.

Why won't Dawkins debate Craig?

Let's re-cap Dawkins' reasons in point form: (with my comments in parentheses)

- Dawkins claims that he is willing to debate high-ranking clergymen (but Craig is a scholar, not a clergyman)
- Dawkins claims that Craig is a creationist (but Craig supports his kalam cosmological

argument with the Big Bang)
- Dawkins claims that Craig's only claim to fame is that he is a professional debater (but see Craig's CV and publications below, which is *far* more prestigious than Dawkins)
- Dawkins claims that he's too busy (busy cowering in fear hugging his Darwin doll for comfort)

Let's review William Lane Craig's qualifications:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

Here are some of Craig's most recent publications:

From 2007:

- Ed. with Quentin Smith. *Einstein, Relativity, and Absolute Simultaneity*. Routledge Studies in Contemporary Philosophy. London: Routledge, 2007, 302 pp.
- "Theistic Critiques of Atheism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, pp. 69-85. Ed. M. Martin. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- "The Metaphysics of Special Relativity: Three Views." In *Einstein, Relativity, and Absolute Simultaneity*, pp. 11-49. Ed. Wm. L. Craig and Quentin Smith. Routledge Studies in Contemporary Philosophy. London: Routledge, 2007.
- "Creation and Divine Action." In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* pp. 318-28*.* Ed. Chad Meister and Paul Copan. London: Routledge, 2007.

From 2008:

- *God and Ethics: A Contemporary Debate*. With Paul Kurtz. Ed. Nathan King and Robert Garcia. With responses by Louise Antony, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, John Hare, Donald Hubin, Stephen Layman, Mark Murphy, and Richard Swinburne. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.
- "Time, Eternity, and Eschatology." In *The Oxford Handbook on Eschatology*, pp. 596-613. Ed. J. Walls. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

From 2009:

- Ed. with J. P. Moreland. *Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- "The *Kalam* Cosmological Argument." With James Sinclair. In *Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*. Ed. Wm. L. Craig and J. P. Moreland. Oxford: Blackwell.
- "In Defense of Theistic Arguments." In *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath and Daniel Dennett in Dialogue*. Ed. Robert Stewart. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Forthcoming:

- "The Cosmological Argument." In *Philosophy of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Issues*. Ed. Paul Copan and Chad Meister. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- "Cosmological Argument"; "Middle Knowledge." In *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Ed. G. Fergusson *et al*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- "Divine Eternity." In *Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*. Ed. Thomas Flint and Michael Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Richard Dawkins is eminently qualified to debate uninformed clergymen, but he has too much at stake (in terms of book royalties) to disappoint his loyal horde of foam-flecked fundies by debating a professional scholar who has debated hundreds of times, against the top non-Christian scholars, in hundreds of universities, including Harvard, Cambridge and Oxford.

The Craig-Hitchens debate

This debate was moderated by HUGH HEWITT, host of the nationally-syndicated Hugh Hewitt Show.

This is just an example of what these debates typically look like. No one gets hurt, so what is Dawkins afraid of?

Who is linking to this post?

- *This post was linked by Sense of Events. Thanks Don!*
- *This post was linked by Uncommon Descent. Thanks Denyse!*
- *This post was linked by Right Wing News. Thanks John!*
- *This post was linked by Verum Serum. Thanks John!*

Related posts

- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show
- Cowardly Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Answering Richard Dawkins' question: "Who made God?"
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

What was the real cause of the financial crisis?

May 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the American Spectator.

Excerpt:

> I believe that the *sine qua non*of the financial crisis was U.S. government housing policy, which led to the creation of 27 million subprime and other risky loans — half of all mortgages in the United States — which were ready to default as soon as the massive 1997-2007 housing bubble began to deflate. If the U.S. government had not chosen this policy path — fostering the growth of a bubble of unprecedented size and an equally unprecedented number of weak and high-risk residential mortgages — the great financial crisis of 2008 would never have occurred.
>
> In this article, I will outline the logical process that I followed in coming to the conclusion that it was the U.S. government's housing policies — and nothing else — that were responsible for the 2008 financial crisis.
>
> The inquiry has to begin with what everyone agrees was the trigger for the crisis — the so-called mortgage meltdown that occurred in 2007. That was the relatively sudden outbreak of delinquencies and defaults among mortgages, primarily in a few states — California, Arizona, Nevada, and Florida — but to a lesser degree everywhere in the country. No one disputes that the losses on these mortgages and the decline in housing values that resulted from the ensuing foreclosures weakened financial institutions in the U.S. and around the world and were the precipitating cause of the crisis.
>
> […]Researcher shows that the turning point came in 1992, with the enactment by Congress of what were called "affordable housing goals" for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. These two firms, which were shareholder-owned, had been chartered by Congress more than 20 years earlier to operate a secondary market in mortgages. The original idea was that they would buy mortgages from banks and other originators (Fannie and Freddie were not permitted to originate mortgages), standardize the mortgage document, resell those mortgages to institutional and other investors, and in that way create a national market for U.S. mortgages.From the beginning, Fannie and Freddie's congressional charters required them to buy only mortgages that would be acceptable to institutional investors — in other words, prime mortgages. At the time, a prime mortgage was a loan with a 10-20 percent down payment, made to a borrower with a good credit record who had sufficient income to meet his or her debt obligations after the loan was made. Fannie and Freddie operated under these standards until 1992.
>
> The 1992 affordable housing goals required that, of all mortgages Fannie and

> Freddie bought in any year, at least 30 percent had to be loans made to borrowers who were at or below the median income in the places where they lived. Over succeeding years, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) increased this requirement, first to 42 percent in 1995, to 50 percent in 2000, and finally to 55 percent in 2007. It is important to note, accordingly, that this occurred during both Democratic and Republican administrations.
>
> At the 50 percent level, Fannie and Freddie had to acquire at least one goal-eligible loan for every prime loan that they acquired, and since not all subprime loans were goals-eligible Fannie and Freddie were in effect required to buy many more subprime loans than prime loans to meet the goals. As a result of this process, by 2008, Fannie and Freddie held the credit risk of 12 million subprime or otherwise risky loans — almost 40 percent of their single-family book of business.
>
> But this was not by any means the full extent of the problem. HUD took Congress's enactment of the affordable housing goals as an expression of a congressional policy to reduce underwriting standards so that low-income borrowers would have greater access to mortgage credit. As outlined in my dissent, by tightening the affordable housing goals, HUD put Fannie and Freddie into competition with the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), a government agency with an explicit mission to provide credit to low-income borrowers, and with subprime lenders such as Countrywide, that had pledged to reduce underwriting standards in order to make more mortgage credit available to low-income borrowers. Moreover, all these organizations were joined by insured banks and S&Ls, which as noted above were required under the CRA to make mortgage credit available to borrowers who are at or below 80 percent of the median income in the areas where they live.
>
> Of course, it is possible to find borrowers who meet prime loan standards among low-income families, but it is far more difficult to find such loans among these borrowers than among middle-income groups. And when Fannie, Freddie, FHA, subprime lenders like Countrywide, and insured banks and S&Ls are all competing to find loans to borrowers in the low-income category, the inevitable result was a significant deterioration in underwriting standards.
>
> So, for example, while one in 200 mortgages involved a down payment of 3 percent or less in 1990, by 2007 it was one in less than three. Other credit standards had also declined. As a result of this government-induced competition, by 2008 19.2 million out of the total of 27 million subprime and other weak loans in the U.S. financial system could be traced directly or indirectly to U.S. government housing policies.

I've read Thomas Sowell's "The Housing Boom and Bust" and this article is a snapshot of that book. It mentions Department of Housing and Urban Development, Fannie Mae,

Freddie Mac, the Community Reinvestment Act, the Federal Housing Administration, and so on.

Related posts

- Thomas Sowell on the root causes of the mortgage lending crisis
- Democrat Barney Frank admits his role in causing the recession
- If you had to blame the recession on one person, who would it be?
- Who benefits from the Democrats financial regulation bill?
- Wall Street bankers gave Obama millions in campaign contributions
- Who are the ten most corrupt politicians of 2009?
- Thomas Sowell explains how politicians cause recessions while getting elected
- Democrats planning government regulation of more large companies
- Democrats use TARP money to shore up personal fortunes
- Democrats caused the recession and Republicans tried to stop it

Michael Brown and Eric Smaw debate: should same-sex marriage be legal?

May 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate wasn't just enlightening, it was entertaining. I am a software engineer and I work all day with software engineers. It makes me feel funny when I am the only one at work who follows the research on marriage and parenting and about no-fault divorce and cohabitation and same-sex marriage. I am so passionate about this, because I believe that children have legitimate needs and we need to care about those needs. I really don't care as much about the needs of adults and their stupid careers as much as I care about children growing up with attentive, available mothers and fathers.

This is a must-see debate! (And you can buy Michael Brown's new book here if you like it – I bought two copies)

About the debate:

> On April 21, 2011 at 7:30pm at UCF's Health and Public Affairs Building (Room 119), Rollins College professor, Dr. Eric Smaw and author and seminary professor Dr. Michael L. Brown will debate the question "Should same sex marriage be legalized in America?" The event will be held at 4000 Central Florida Blvd and is open to the public. After the formal portion of the debate, Brown and Smaw will field questions from the audience.

About the speakers:

> **Dr. Smaw** will be responding in the affirmative. He earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Law from the University of Kentucky in 2005. His areas of expertise are philosophy of law, international law, human rights, ethics, and modern philosophy. He has published articles on human rights, terrorism, and cosmopolitanism. His most recent publication is "Swaying in the Balance: Civil Liberties, National Security, and Justice in Times of Emergency".
>
> **Dr. Brown** will be responding in the negative. He earned his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and is a nationally known evangelical lecturer and radio host. He is the author of numerous scholarly articles and twenty books, including the recently published study "A Queer Thing Happened to America", which is quickly being recognized as the definitive work on the history and effects of gay activism on American culture.

Here are the first two parts:

Part 1 of 10:

Part 2 of 10:

The rest of the segments are here.

Summaries of the opening speeches

Summary of Dr. Brown's opening speech:

There is no compelling reasons by the state should change the definition of marriage

The reason the state conveys benefits for marriage is because marriage is beneficial for the state

Traditional marriage is recognized by the state for several reasons:
– it domesticates men
– it protects women
– it provides a stable, nurturing environment for children

Marriage has three public purposes:
– to bind men and women together for RESPONSIBLE procreation
– to get the benefit
– to provide children with two parents who are bonded to them biologically
– to create the next generation of people to keep the society going

Normally, opposite sex couples create children

Homosexual couples can NEVER create children together

Men and women are differences that are complementary

Monogamy is the norm for opposite sex couples.

For gay men, open relationships / cheating is the norm.
This is because women have a tempering effect on sexuality.

There is no evidence that recognizing same-sex civil unions and marriages have changed this trend.

Same-sex marriage guarantees that children will either not have a father or a mother
So which of the sexes is dispensable when raising children?

For example, consider Dawn Stefanowicz, who grew up with a gay father and no mother
She never got a chance to see a man model love and protect a women within a marriage
That makes an enormous difference in a woman's life – in the way she relates to men

Even with scientific advancements, every baby has a mother and a father

If we change the definition of marriage so that it is based on consent, then why limit it to just two people
If marriage is not the union of male and female, then why have only TWO people
In Canada, you have civil liberties lawyers arguing for for polygamy
In the United States, Professor David Epstein was in a consensual relationship with his daughter
Should incestuous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?
Should polyamorous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?

Sexual orientation is not the same as race
Men are women are different in significant ways, but different races are not
You need separate bathrooms for men and women, but not for people of different races

Summary of Dr. Smaw's opening speech: (He ended his speech after only 10 minutes)

You can redefine marriage so that it no longer based on the public purposes he mentioned (controlling procreation, fusing complementary male and female natures, providing children with mothers and fathers who are biologically linked to them, providing children with a comparatively stable development environment that offers comparatively less instability, promiscuity and domestic violence rates compared to cohabitation, etc.), but is instead based on consent and feelings, and that redefinition of marriage won't open marriage up to polygamy, polyamory, etc.

If you like feminism, then you should allow same-sex marriage

If you like abortion rights, then you should allow same-sex marriage

Homosexuals participate in society by working at various jobs, so they are participating in society

Homosexuals should be given the same tax breaks as married people because they work at various jobs for money

Working at a job for money achieves the same public purpose as procreating and staying together to raise children in a stable environment

You can listen to the rest for the rebuttals, and cross-examination. Oh yes – there was cross-examination! It starts two thirds of the way through Part 5, if you want to jump to it. And sparks were flying! There is also Q&A from the audience of students.

This is such a great debate – I love to hear two passionate guys disagreeing about something. I love to hear both sides of the issues. There is always something to learn by listening to the other side. It makes me more effective and more tolerant when I stand up to defend my side of the argument.

Related posts

- How would allowing gays to marry affect your life?
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?
- Why do people oppose same-sex marriage?
- Republicans hire top lawyer to defend traditional marriage against Democrats
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Queen's University feminist professor says that polygamy should be permitted
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- Frank Turek lists ten alleged facts about same-sex marriage
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Christian couple barred from having foster children

- Gay federal judge rules traditional marriage unconstitutional in California
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- Do Democrats like Chai Feldblum believe in religious liberty?
- Do Democrats like Martha Coakley believe in religious liberty?
- How Harriet Harman's Equality Bill will impact religious liberty
- Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- What happens when same-sex marriage conflicts with religious liberty?
- Can a person disagree without being hateful or inciting violence?

Allen West on Obama's plan to make contractors reveal political contributions

May 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lt. Colonel Allen West, U.S. Army

Check out this video of Rep. Allen West (R-FL) questioning the Obama administration's decision to force bidders on federal contracts to *disclose their political contributions* before the contracts are awarded.(H/T Right Scoop)

Wow… this is what a President looks like. He's confident because he knows what he is talking about.

More Allen West videos

Allen West on economic policy

That video has over 2.4 MILLION views on Youtube.

Allen West on foreign policy

That video has over 2.1 MILLION views on Youtube.

Even more videos

- Video of Allen West's speech at CPAC 2011 is here.
- Video of Allen West's victory speech from 2010 is here.

Is Newt Gingrich conservative or liberal?

May 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> White House hopeful Newt Gingrich called the House Republican plan for Medicare "right-wing social engineering," injecting a discordant GOP voice into the party's efforts to reshape both entitlements and the broader budget debate.
>
> In the same interview on Sunday, Mr. Gingrich backed a requirement that all Americans buy health insurance, complicating a Republican line of attack on President Barack Obama's health law.
>
> The former House speaker's decision to stick with his previous support for an individual mandate comes days after former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney defended the health revamp he championed as governor, which includes a mandate.
>
> The moves suggest the Republican primary contest, which will include both men, could feature a robust debate on health care, with GOP candidates challenging the Democratic law while defending their own variations.

Consider this article from the conservative National Review. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> Newt Gingrich's appearance on "Meet the Press" today could leave some wondering which party's nomination he is running for. The former speaker had some harsh words for Paul Ryan's (and by extension, nearly every House Republican's) plan to reform Medicare, calling it "radical."
>
> "I don't think right-wing social engineering is any more desirable than left-wing social engineering," he said when asked about Ryan's plan to transition to a "premium support" model for Medicare. "I don't think imposing radical change from the right or the left is a very good way for a free society to operate."
>
> As far as an alternative, Gingrich trotted out the same appeal employed by Obama/Reid/Pelosi — for a "national conversation" on how to "improve" Medicare, and promised to eliminate 'waste, fraud and abuse,' etc.

More from the leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> For Ms. Clinton, standing side by side with her husband's onetime nemesis gives her the chance to burnish her credentials among the moderates she has been courting during her time in the Senate.
>
> But in comments this week, she portrayed the rapprochement as one born of

> shared policy interests, not calculated politics.
>
> “I know it’s a bit of an odd-fellow, or odd-woman, mix,” she said. “But the speaker and I have been talking about health care and national security now for several years, and I find that he and I have a lot in common in the way we see the problem.”
>
> For his part, Mr. Gingrich, who helped lead the impeachment fight against President Bill Clinton, called Mrs. Clinton “very practical” and “very smart and very hard working,” adding, “I have been very struck working with her.”

Maybe he is actually running to win the Democrat nomination this time.

Does sex education reduce teen pregnancies and sexually-transmitted infections?

May 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The American Thinker evaluates Planned Parenthood's sex education strategy for reducing teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.

Excerpt:

> Planned Parenthood's anointed sex missionaries received their first federal funding in the Lyndon Johnson administration. The sort of "sex education" now pushed in Santa Fe and elsewhere started in 1968 when the National Education Association Journal called for "sex education as an integral part of school curriculum beginning in early grades."[3] Planned Parenthood, the NEA, and herds of shrill progressives were following a behavioral pattern characteristic of the 1960s left.
>
> An early example of the pattern emerged in the reactions to Rachel Carson's 1962 Silent Spring scare-book, which got DDT banned and still enables the malaria deaths of about 3,000 children a day. Paul Ehrlich's 1968 Population Bomb — turned dud — warned of mass starvations unless humanity curbs its reproductive enthusiasm. Then also in 1968, the NEA Journal demanded solutions to imagined problems.
>
> Imagined, because calls for sex education were based on "problems" that lived only in the minds of anointed ones seeking to spread agendas. "Contraception education" would allegedly reduce unwanted pregnancies and illegitimate births.[4] A "crash educational program"[5] would arrest out-of-control venereal disease, while general sex education would address "the emotionally disastrous results of irresponsible sexual behavior."[6] The claims shared a common thread: fictitious bases.
>
> Not only were there no disease and illegitimacy crises, but indicators were solidly improving at the time of the alarmists' claims. As Sowell documents in The Vision of the Anointed,[7] teenage pregnancies and venereal disease declined during the 1950s and 1960s. Yet over skeptics' protests that sex education would increase sexual behavior, Planned Parenthood and public schools forged ahead to curtail behaviors that were already fading. Sex-ed was off and running.
>
> And results followed.
>
> During the 1970s, pregnancies among fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds jumped 41 percent.[8] Between 1970 and 1984, abortions among unwed fifteen- to seventeen-year-olds more than doubled and birth rates jumped 29 percent.[9] By 1976, five years of data showed unmarried girls fifteen to nineteen having sex at increasing rates.[10] And not only did venereal disease not subside, but teen

> gonorrhea rates tripled between 1956 and 1975.[11]
>
> In the 1950s, 13 percent of teen girls had been sexually active. By the late 90s, the figure had tripled. Premarital intercourse, approved by less than a third of women in the 1950s, was acceptable to 91 percent by the late 80s. By 2005, over two-thirds of Blacks and half of Latino high-schoolers were having intercourse, while over half of all teens fifteen to nineteen were performing oral sex. By 2006, babies born to unmarried women accounted for 37 percent of all births, [12] 70 percent among Blacks. The Black illegitimacy rate reflected a 218 percent explosion over forty-five years.
>
> Such realities have drawn dismissive responses from sex-ed advocates. Incredibly, the horrific trends of the 1970s and 1980s were offered as reason for more sex education.[13] Yet amid cover-ups and excuses, the sex-ed crowd's true motives were exposed in 1978, in of all places, Congress. One committee report noted that despite sex education's stated objective of reducing teen pregnancies and sexually-transmitted disease, the real goal "of most sex educators appears to be encouragement of healthy attitudes about sex and sexuality."

This is the same thing that happened in the UK – it's not just here.

So there was no crisis for the pro sex-education to solve.

Sex education was always about indoctrinating children against the wisdom and morality of their parents. And they got their funding and their access to the public schools from the Democrat party. A vote for a Democrat politician is a vote for sex education. A vote for sex education is a vote for teen pregnancies, abortions, and sexually-transmitted diseases. And according to the research I posted about before, the premarital sex in and of itself is lousy preparation for a stable, fulfilling marriage. The left is ruining the lives of our children, and our children's children by deliberately lying to them about right and wrong. There is also this new Oxford University Press book that links premarital sex and promiscuity with reduced mental health.

Why do they do this? They do this because they think that the best way to stop people from having feelings of shame and guilt is to break down the moral boundaries that specify what is right and wrong. That's what's behind this – normalizing risky, irresponsible behavior. And the way that the left deals with the skyrocketing numbers of teen pregnancies and sexually-transmitted infections is to double down with more sex education – and more government spending on social programs, followed by tax hikes to pay for all the lifestyle-equalizing. And then, of course, fewer men can afford to marry because of those tax rates, and fewer women can afford to stay home and raise their young children.

After all, there's no social problem in the world that can't be fixed by a little more government intervention and public school indoctrination. If worse comes to worse and the health care costs costs increase, we can just make health care "free" by nationalizing it to completely separate behaviors from consequences. That should get rid of the

problem. And if all of these broken homes create children who commit criminal acts, we can always ban guns and legalize drugs. That should get rid of the problem.

That’s how the left thinks. Or rather – that’s how the left feels.

Former alarmist scientist admits global warming is a “fiction”

May 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

David Evans consulted full-time for the Australian Greenhouse Office (now the Department of Climate Change) from 1999 to 2005, and part-time 2008 to 2010, modelling Australia’s carbon in plants, debris, mulch, soils, and forestry and agricultural products. And then he stopped working for them. Now that he is no longer obligated to toe the party line, he explains what global warming really is about. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> The debate about global warming has reached ridiculous proportions and is full of micro-thin half-truths and misunderstandings. I am a scientist who was on the carbon gravy train, understands the evidence, was once an alarmist, but am now a skeptic. Watching this issue unfold has been amusing but, lately, worrying. This issue is tearing society apart, making fools out of our politicians.
>
> Let’s set a few things straight.
>
> The whole idea that carbon dioxide is the main cause of the recent global warming is based on a guess that was proved false by empirical evidence during the 1990s. But the gravy train was too big, with too many jobs, industries, trading profits, political careers, and the possibility of world government and total control riding on the outcome. So rather than admit they were wrong, the governments, and their tame climate scientists, now outrageously maintain the fiction that carbon dioxide is a dangerous pollutant.
>
> The evidence that was ignored by the global warming alarmists:
>
> Most scientists, on both sides, also agree on how much a given increase in the level of carbon dioxide raises the planet’s temperature, if just the extra carbon dioxide is considered. These calculations come from laboratory experiments; the basic physics have been well known for a century.
>
> The disagreement comes about what happens next.
>
> The planet reacts to that extra carbon dioxide, which changes everything. Most critically, the extra warmth causes more water to evaporate from the oceans. But does the water hang around and increase the height of moist air in the atmosphere, or does it simply create more clouds and rain? Back in 1980, when the carbon dioxide theory started, no one knew. The alarmists guessed that it would increase the height of moist air around the planet, which would warm the planet even further, because the moist air is also a greenhouse gas.
>
> This is the core idea of every official climate model: For each bit of warming due to carbon dioxide, they claim it ends up causing three bits of warming due to the extra moist air. The climate models amplify the carbon dioxide warming by a

> factor of three — so two-thirds of their projected warming is due to extra moist air (and other factors); only one-third is due to extra carbon dioxide.
>
> That's the core of the issue. All the disagreements and misunderstandings spring from this. The alarmist case is based on this guess about moisture in the atmosphere, and there is simply no evidence for the amplification that is at the core of their alarmism.
>
> Weather balloons had been measuring the atmosphere since the 1960s, many thousands of them every year. The climate models all predict that as the planet warms, a hot spot of moist air will develop over the tropics about 10 kilometres up, as the layer of moist air expands upwards into the cool dry air above. During the warming of the late 1970s, '80s and '90s, the weather balloons found no hot spot. None at all. Not even a small one. This evidence proves that the climate models are fundamentally flawed, that they greatly overestimate the temperature increases due to carbon dioxide.
>
> This evidence first became clear around the mid-1990s.
>
> At this point, official "climate science" stopped being a science. In science, empirical evidence always trumps theory, no matter how much you are in love with the theory. If theory and evidence disagree, real scientists scrap the theory. But official climate science ignored the crucial weather balloon evidence, and other subsequent evidence that backs it up, and instead clung to their carbon dioxide theory — that just happens to keep them in well-paying jobs with lavish research grants, and gives great political power to their government masters.

Read the whole thing.

The Blog Prof also linked this useful video in which a Physics professor from the University of California at Berkeley explains the Climategate scandal.

These revelations should mark the end of global warming alarmism, but they won't, because global warming is such a useful fiction for so many people. As the article noted, it's a source of endless research grants and prestigious travel budgets for researchers in academia who must apply for government money before they can prove what the governments wants them t0 prove – namely, that government needs to control individuals and corporations. It provides those who reject traditional morality with a way of feeling better about themselves by being "moral" about recycling, turning of their lights and not having any children. It gives people a feeling of pride, because they are better than those greedy oil companies that pay a 40% tax rate, much higher than the 0% paid by companies that are favored by the Democrat Party, like GE. It also provides a useful fiction for the socialists to mislead the public into voting for them to "solve" the "crisis" with bigger government, higher taxes and less individual liberty.

Related posts

- Scientist quits American Physical Society over "global warming scam"
- How reliable are the "independent" reviews of Climategate?

- NASA admits that their data is worse than CRU Climate-gate data
- 19 points that undermine the claims of global warming alarmists
- Global warmist Phil Jones admits there’s been no global warming since 1995
- UN IPCC global warming alarmism based on student essay and magazine article
- How the UN’s IPCC cites non-scientific claims from the World Wildlife Fund
- Chairman of UN’s IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal
- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline
- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Princeton University physicist testifies against global warming

Wayne Grudem defends what the Bible says about same-sex marriage

May 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The thing I love about Wayne Grudem is that every time I read his view on some issue, I find that he does two things well. First, he does a lot of research to know what the Bible says, and I always learn something new about the Bible from his analysis. Second, he confirms and applies what the Bible says using real world evidence, especially statistics. It seems to me that the role of the pastor/theologian, which almost *no* pastors and theologians do well, is to *link what the Bible says to the way the world really is.* Pastor/theologians should be concerned with explaining what the Bible and then taking the next step to *persuade* people to act on what the Bible says by engaging their intellects with arguments and evidence.

Here's how Wayne Grudem does exactly that in this San Francisco Examiner interview about same-sex marriage.

Question to Dr. Grudem:

> …is the subject and practice of Gay Marriage and Same Sex Blessings no longer a controversy and of public and Christian debate and discussion? Is it a done-deal in our society given the success of the "Gay Agenda" in the Military, American Foreign Service, California Courts, Massachusetts, other States in America and even in the present Presidential and Federal Administration's practice of no longer supporting the federal law known as the Defense of Marriage Act?

Part of his answer:

> The main thing I want to emphasize in this discussion is this: The primary question in this controversy is what kind of intimate, cohabiting, potentially child bearning relationship does society want to encourage and reward and protect? Up to this point, American society has decided to encourage and promote *marriage* as a relationship between one man and one woman, because it gives immeasurable benefits to a society that no other relationship can provide. This relationship is better for raising children, better for protection against domestic violence and abandonment, better for encouraging lifelong companionship and care, better for encouraging sexual faithfulness, and better in many other ways, that I explain in my book *Politics—According to the Bible*.
>
> But homosexual relationships do not give these benefits. Male homosexuals experience a 25 to 30 year decrease in life expectancy, and much higher incidence of many chronic diseases.
>
> Sexual faithfulness is far different among married heterosexuals: 90 percent of heterosexual women, and over 75 percent of heterosexual men have never engaged in extramarital sex. But among male homosexuals the rate of sexual

> faithfulness is around 2 percent, even when "faithfulness" is generously defined as ten or fewer lifetime partners. Such statistics are seldom reported in the mainstream media. The question is, is this the kind of relationship we as a society want to encourage, reward, and promote by giving it the status of "marriage" and all the societal encouragement and endorsement that that status carries?
>
> I don't think any society today should *criminalize* homosexual conduct (as some legislators in Uganda are now attempting to do), any more than I think society should criminalize adultery or fornication, because these are private acts between individuals that government should not intrude into. But I also don't think society should *encourage and promote* such relationships by calling them "marriage" and giving them all the benefits that go with marriage. And so the issue is not whether homosexual couples can get married, but rather, do we as a society wish to *redefine marriage* in its entirety so that it is no longer a relationship between one man and one woman? The homosexual agenda is attempting to redefine what marriage is, and I think that would be a terrible mistake for our society.

Wow. I'll bet you that nobody was expecting the conservative evangelical to bring the evidence on a moral issue. But that's just what Grudem did.

You may recognize many of the points Grudem makes from the research-laden posts that I have written before about same-sex relationships. He is basically saying 1) let's look at what the Bible says, and then 2) let's try to see the evidence that proves or disproves what the Bible says. Basically, if you believe the Bible is true, then you should be able to look out at the world and see that… the Bible's true! And in order to convince Christians *and non-Christians* to accept the correct position on controversial issues, then you need to approach the issues like Wayne Grudem approaches them. (See the related posts for a few more examples of Grudem in action)

When Wayne Grudem uses evidence, it makes it a lot easier for people who listen to him to *do what the Bible says*, because he gives them reasons and evidence that they can accept even if they don't accept the Bible. It's like if I told you how an automobile works by explaining the internal mechanisms that make the car go, with experiments and statistics to prove each point. After you listened to me explain, then you would understand that gas goes in the gas tank and not in the radiator. "I sincerely believe" is not a reason to believe that I know what I am talking about. I have to show you evidence. My investment advisor may have sincere beliefs about my teeth, but I'm not letting him poke drills into my mouth. We need to be careful that our own natural tendency to *be lazy* doesn't cause us to miss the method of persuasion that is taught in the Bible: reason and evidence.

But back to the same-sex marriage issue… If one of the public purposes of marriage is to give children a stable, lasting environment to grow up in, in which they can be nurtured by two parents who have *biological inventives* to nurture them, then it is clear that same-

sex marriage *cannot* do this as well as traditional marriage, in most cases. The environment of a same-sex relationships is just not the same – and the differences undermine the stability that children need. Obviously, there is more we could do legislatively to help children, such as giving tax breaks for stay-at-home parents, by offering school choice, by cutting income taxes, by making no-fault divorce illegal, and so on. And when we talk about the issue, we need to put the needs of children front and center. This is the reason why marriage exists in the first place. If we focus on the needs of adults who want their "rights", then we lose. We need to focus on the rights of children – the right of a child to have a mother and a father, in the home with them, nurturing and guiding them to maturity.

Wayne Grudem knows how to make his case

- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment

More posts about same-sex marriage

- How would allowing gays to marry affect your life?
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?
- Why do people oppose same-sex marriage?
- Frank Turek lists ten alleged facts about same-sex marriage
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- Can a person disagree without being hateful or inciting violence?

Do pro-lifers care about people who are already born?

May 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Ruth Blog – a post to answer the objection that pro-lifers don't care about babies after they are born.

Here's the challenge:

> One of the most frequently repeated truisms of the abortion debate is that pro-lifers really don't care about life. As much as they talk about protecting the unborn, we are told, pro-lifers do nothing to support mothers and infants who are already in the world. Liberal writers such as Matthew Yglesias are given to observing that pro-lifers believe that "life begins at conception and ends at birth." At *Commonweal*, David Gibson, a journalist who frequently covers the abortion debate, asks how much pro-lifers do for mothers: "I just want to know what realistic steps they are proposing or backing. I'm not sure I'd expect to hear anything from pro-life groups now since there's really been nothing for years."

And an excerpt from the response:

> In the United States there are some 2,300 affiliates of the three largest pregnancy resource center umbrella groups, Heartbeat International, CareNet, and the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates (NIFLA). Over 1.9 million American women take advantage of these services each year. Many stay at one of the 350 residential facilities for women and children operated by pro-life groups. In New York City alone, there are twenty-two centers serving 12,000 women a year. These centers provide services including pre-natal care, STI testing, STI treatment, ultrasound, childbirth classes, labor coaching, midwife services, lactation consultation, nutrition consulting, social work, abstinence education, parenting classes, material assistance, and post-abortion counseling.
>
> […]The Catholic Church–perhaps the single most influential pro-life institution in the United States–makes the largest financial, institutional and personnel commitments to charitable causes of any private source in the United States. These include AIDS ministry, health care, education, housing services, and care for the elderly, disabled, and immigrants. In 2004 alone, 562 Catholic hospitals treated over 85 million patients; Catholic elementary and high schools educated over 2 million students; Catholic colleges educated nearly 800,000 students; Catholic Charities served over eight-and-a-half million different individuals. In 2007, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development awarded nine million dollars in grants to reduce poverty. And in 2009, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network spent nearly five million dollars in services for impoverished immigrants.
>
> The Catholic Church is far from the only pro-life religious group that assists the

> needy. At the Manhattan Bible Church, a pro-life church in New York since 1973, Pastor Bill Devlin and his congregation run a soup kitchen that has served over a million people and a K-8 school that has educated 90,000 needy students. Pastor Devlin and other church families have adopted scores of babies, and taken in scores of pregnant women, including some who were both drug-addicted and HIV positive. The church runs a one-hundred-and-fifty bed residential drug rehabilitation center and a prison ministry at Rikers Island. All told, the church runs some forty ministries, and all without a government dime.
>
> [….]If pro-life Americans provide so many (often free) services to the poor and vulnerable–work easily discovered by any researcher or journalist with an Internet connection–why are they sometimes accused of caring only for life inside the womb? Quite possibly, it is the conviction of abortion advocates that "caring for the born" translates first and always into advocacy for government programs and funds. In other words, abortion advocates appear to conflate charitable works and civil society with government action. The pro-life movement does not. Rather, it takes up the work of assisting women and children and families, one fundraiser and hotline and billboard at a time.

People think that abortion providers do a lot for women's health, but Planned Parenthood doesn't provide mammograms.

You may be interested in this post by Neil Simpson, who volunteers at a crisis pregnancy center.

Excerpt:

> The "Pro-lifers don't care about kids after they are born" line is one of my favorite arguments to rebut. I teach people how to do it in pro-life training sessions in a two-step approach. The tone of the conversation is important. These arguments are powerful and quite effective if they are laid out in a calm, reasoned approach. You probably won't convert the rabid pro-choicers, but most of the middle-grounders will get the point.
>
> **First**, show that pointing out a moral wrong does not obligate you to take responsibility for the situation.
>
> If your neighbor is beating his wife, you call the police. The police don't say, "Hey, buddy, unless you are willing to marry her yourself then we aren't going to stop him from beating her." You can use child or animal abuse as examples as well. Most people get the point pretty quickly.
>
> Or ask the pro-choicer what they would do if the government decided to reduce the number of homeless people by killing them. Could he protest that without having to house and feed them all himself?
>
> […]**Second**, explain that while we aren't morally obligated to help after the babies are born to be able to speak out against abortion, Christians do many things with their time and money anyway – orphanages, Crisis Pregnancy Centers

> (CPCs), food pantries, etc.
>
> When I'm teaching CPC volunteers I remind them of all that they and the center do: Pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, food, clothes, diapers, life skill training, parenting training, post-abortion counseling and more – all for free! And, of course, we share the Gospel with the clients if they are interested (Saving lives now and for eternity!).
>
> The workers are mostly volunteers and the leaders make below-market wages because they believe in the cause. Most centers receive no government funding, so all the money comes from donations. There are far more Crisis Pregnancy Centers than there are abortion clinics.

On a completely different topic, I posted an article by Helen Alvare a while back. She is one of the authors of this article. There was a pretty good dispute with a single mother who disagreed her comments to that article.

Related posts

- Does sex education reduce teen pregnancies and sexually-transmitted infections?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
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If Obamacare is so great, then why do so many Democrats get waivers?

May 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily reports on who is getting exemptions from Obamacare.

Excerpt:

> It's bad enough that the administration has granted another 204 ObamaCare waivers. But even worse is that nearly one in five went to employers in the district of Rep. Nancy Pelosi, House architect of the bill.
>
> It was Pelosi who said Congress had to pass the Democrats' health care overhaul so the country could find out what's in it.
>
> Seems that quite a few businesses in her backyard found out what is in it and decided they didn't like it.
>
> According to the Daily Caller, 204 waivers for a provision of ObamaCare were approved last month — bringing the total waiver count to 1,372. Out of that April number, 38 of the waivers "are for fancy eateries, hip nightclubs and decadent hotels in" the Democrat's hard-left San Francisco district.
>
> The waivers, which the administration began granting only months after the bill was passed and signed, let employers avoid terms of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that require health care insurance plans to carry at least $750,000 in benefits before being exhausted.
>
> This requirement, found in the thousands of pages that make up the ObamaCare bill, is too costly for many businesses that can afford to provide health coverage only through less comprehensive plans.
>
> The owner of Tru Spa, one of the San Francisco businesses granted a waiver, told the Daily Caller both ObamaCare and new local laws have "devastated" businesses in the region.
>
> The employers that were granted waivers in Pelosi's district include Boboquivari's, a restaurant that, reports the Daily Caller, "advertises $59 porterhouse steaks, $39 filet mignons and $35 crab dinners."
>
> "Then, there's Cafe des Amis, which describes its eating experience as 'a timeless Parisian style brasserie,' which is 'located on one of San Francisco's premier shopping and strolling boulevards.'"
>
> Also among the 38 are the four-star hotel Campton Place and the self-proclaimed four-diamond Hotel Nikko.
>
> While Pelosi's constituents are being protected from her party's health care wreckage, another Democratic constituency is being taken care of, as well.
>
> A coalition of groups operating under the name wheresmywaiver.com says that

> "50.26% of waiver beneficiaries are unionized, despite union workers only making up 11.9% of the workforce."
>
> The Service Employees International Union, whose former President Andy Stern was one of the most frequent White House visitors before he was named to President Obama's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, has been well-represented on the waiver list.
>
> So have the teacher unions.
>
> Organized labor, of course, is a heavy donor to Democratic candidates and was among the groups that pressed hard for Congress and the president to ram ObamaCare through the legislature and into Americans' lives.
>
> If ObamaCare is so vital to our national well-being, why are these unions and employers in a heavily Democratic district seeking relief from the burdens it imposes?
>
> And why would Democratic Rep. Anthony Weiner, whose brilliant thought process led him to say "the bill and I are one," ask for a waiver for his hometown of New York City?

This is what happens when the government takes money *out* of the private sector and lets politicians spend it. Especially left-wing politicians who are not inclined to cut taxes and reduce regulations.

Related posts

- Republican Tom Price grills left-wing AARP CEO on Obamacare
- CBO says that Obamacare will reduce employment by 800,000 workers
- Does the CBO think that repealing Obamacare will help or hurt the deficit?
- When you let Democrats control health care, they close hospitals
- Most doctors will restrict or close their practice if Obamacare is not repealed
- Union that pushed for Obamacare drops medical coverage of children
- Did Obama keep his promise to not raise taxes on the middle class?
- New study finds that Obamacare subsidies cost 578% more than CBO estimates
- Boeing announces higher health care premiums for 90,000 workers
- Health care reform blamed for huge hikes in premiums
- Is there a Constitutional basis for ObamaCare?
- 3M to drop retirees from its health care plan
- Obamacare causes companies to drop health insurance coverage
- Health insurers are dropping coverage of children
- Was Obama lying to you about keeping your health care plan?
- Connecticut approves health insurance hikes caused by Obamacare
- If insurance companies complain about Obamacare, they get sanctioned
- Health care premiums will increase due to Obamacare
- Why American employers are not hiring any more workers
- Does Obamacare really fund abortions with taxpayer dollars?

- Obamacare’s impact on ER wait times and low-wage workers
- Obama flip-flops on health care mandates – now it IS a tax
- MUST-READ: How Obama reduces the supply of medical care
- CBO raises Obamacare cost projections to over 1 trillion dollars
- MUST-READ: New York Times critiques socialized medicine
- How Obamacare raises your taxes if you don’t buy health insurance
- More companies announce massive losses as a result of Obamacare

New study finds that immigration costs Canada up to $23 billion a year

May 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

Story in the National Post. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Newcomers to the country generally make less money and chip in less in taxes than the national average.And allowing 250,000 immigrants into the country annually is costing us all billions of dollars each and every year, according to a study by the Fraser Institute.
>
> The study, dubbed Immigration and the Canadian Welfare State, sharply criticizes Canada's current immigration system, using earnings and other figures from the 2005-06 fiscal year reported by 844,476 people in the 2006 Census.
>
> It claims the group as a whole earned on average about $10,000 more and paid about $2,500 more in income taxes annually than those within the sampling who had settled in Canada in the previous 18 years.
>
> The study also found immigrants typically pay a little over $6,000 less in property and sales taxes than the national average.
>
> That means the approximately 3.9 million immigrants who settled in Canada between 1987 and 2004 are shortchanging federal government coffers by between $16.3 billion and $23.6 billion annually, depending on how many of those newcomers have moved back home, emigrated elsewhere or died, the study said.
>
> […]The study also takes on the notion that immigrants are helping the country by taking menial jobs that most Canadians don't want."Immigrants do fill jobs that

> Canadians don’t want and thus benefit the economy but, in the absence of immigration, these jobs would pay higher wages and would be filled by Canadians or eliminated by the application of labour-saving technology,” the study states.
>
> “Under these conditions, poverty in Canada would be reduced substantially.”
>
> As for changes, the study suggests annual immigration numbers should be increased or decreased, depending largely on “market forces.”
>
> **The study also recommends Canada be more selective, allowing only newcomers who have employment lined up, offering them citizenship only if they hang onto their job for a set number of years and deporting those who lose their jobs.**

Canada has a welfare state with single-payer health care, public housing, welfare payment and free public schools. So, people who cannot pull their own weight can rely on all of these goodies provided by the working Canadians. Because of these generous benefits, Canada has a lot of people who would like to move there from poor countries. And they can’t possibly take them all in because it is costing the working Canadians billions of dollars. But there is a way for them to allow more immigration – they just have to stop all of their government handouts. If there were no handouts then everyone could come to Canada freely, because they would go home again unless they held on to their job and pulled their own weight. They could even bring their families once they had worked hard enough to support them – but those family members would not be eligible to get money from the government.

So what do we as Americans learn from this? Well, we need to make sure that the people who come here are selected on the basis of their skills, their education, their ability to pay their own way. We need to have a big fence to keep illegal immigrants out, and we need to have a huge gate to allow skilled legal immigrants in. And they can even bring their families with them – as long as they don’t get a dime of taxpayer money in cash or through social programs – they should have to pay for *everything they use*, including schools and health care. And they should not be eligible for a dime of government money until they get their green cards after years of demonstrated hard work and clean living.

Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?

May 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News. (H/T Steve)

Excerpt:

> A new pro-life website set up by two teen siblings exposes the links and connections between the Girl Scouts of America and the Planned Parenthood abortion business.
>
> Last year, the Girl Scout organization came under fire nationally when the World Association of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides hosted a no-adults-welcome panel at the United Nations where Planned Parenthood was allowed to distribute a brochure entitled "Healthy, Happy and Hot." The brochure, aimed at young people living with HIV, contains explicit and graphic details on sex, as well as the promotion of casual sex in many forms.
>
> In 2004, a report from a pro-life group that monitors Planned Parenthood indicated more than one-quarter of GSA troops work with the pro-abortion group. Of the 315 Girl Scout councils in the U.S. at that time, 17 councils reported having a relationship with Planned Parenthood and its affiliates, and 49 reported they do not. The other 249 refused to disclose any relationship.
>
> After learning of these disturbing links, teen siblings Sydney and Tess Volanski decided to leave their local Girl Scout group after eight years of involvement and they have decided to launch a new web site called "SPEAK NOW: Girl Scouts" exposing the distribution of the brochures at the UN meeting and other links between the young girls' organization and the abortion business.
>
> Sydney told the pro-life group Concerned Women for America, "Even though they denied this involvement … we wanted to make sure that we knew what we were supporting by being a Girl Scout, so we continued to research the connection."
>
> "We found shortly after this 'Healthy, Happy, Hot' issue, that The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts also called WAAG, which is the international organization that Girl Scouts is a part of, had a post on their website demanding safe, affordable, and accessible abortions for women as young as I am, 15," she said.
>
> […]In fact, Kathy Cloninger, CEO of the Girl Scouts of America, appeared on NBC's "Today" show many years ago and said, "We partner with many organizations. We have relationships with our church communities, with YWCAs, and with Planned Parenthood organizations across the country, to bring information-based sex education programs to girls."

I would NOT send my future daughters to Girl Scouts or YWCA. These are not good

organizations for children to be involved with.

Related posts

- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
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Has Christianity held back the progress of science? What about Galileo?

May 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, here's an article from the peer-reviewed journal Nature, probably the best peer-reviewed journal on science in the world. (H/T Letitia)

The article is written by James Hannam. He has a PhD in the History and Philosophy of Science from the University of Cambridge and is the author of The Genesis of Science: How the Christian Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution (published in the UK as God's Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of Modern Science).

Excerpt:

> Few topics are as open to misunderstanding as the relationship between faith and reason. The ongoing clash of creationism with evolution obscures the fact that Christianity has actually had a far more positive role to play in the history of science than commonly believed. Indeed, many of the alleged examples of religion holding back scientific progress turn out to be bogus. For instance, the Church has never taught that the Earth is flat and, in the Middle Ages, no one thought so anyway. Popes haven't tried to ban zero, human dissection or lightening rods, let alone excommunicate Halley's Comet. No one, I am pleased to say, was ever burnt at the stake for scientific ideas. Yet, all these stories are still regularly trotted out as examples of clerical intransigence in the face of scientific progress.
>
> Admittedly, Galileo was put on trial for claiming it is a fact that the Earth goes around the sun, rather than just a hypothesis as the Catholic Church demanded. Still, historians have found that even his trial was as much a case of papal egotism as scientific conservatism. It hardly deserves to overshadow all the support that the Church has given to scientific investigation over the centuries.
>
> That support took several forms. One was simply financial. Until the French Revolution, the Catholic Church was the leading sponsor of scientific research. Starting in the Middle Ages, it paid for priests, monks and friars to study at the universities. The church even insisted that science and mathematics should be a compulsory part of the syllabus. And after some debate, it accepted that Greek and Arabic natural philosophy were essential tools for defending the faith. By the seventeenth century, the Jesuit order had become the leading scientific organisation in Europe, publishing thousands of papers and spreading new discoveries around the world. The cathedrals themselves were designed to double up as astronomical observatories to allow ever more accurate determination of the calendar. And of course, modern genetics was founded by a future abbot growing peas in the monastic garden.
>
> But religious support for science took deeper forms as well. It was only during the

> nineteenth century that science began to have any practical applications. Technology had ploughed its own furrow up until the 1830s when the German chemical industry started to employ their first PhDs. Before then, the only reason to study science was curiosity or religious piety. Christians believed that God created the universe and ordained the laws of nature. To study the natural world was to admire the work of God. This could be a religious duty and inspire science when there were few other reasons to bother with it. It was faith that led Copernicus to reject the ugly Ptolemaic universe; that drove Johannes Kepler to discover the constitution of the solar system; and that convinced James Clerk Maxwell he could reduce electromagnetism to a set of equations so elegant they take the breathe away.
>
> Given that the Church has not been an enemy to science, it is less surprising to find that the era which was most dominated by Christian faith, the Middle Ages, was a time of innovation and progress. Inventions like the mechanical clock, glasses, printing and accountancy all burst onto the scene in the late medieval period. In the field of physics, scholars have now found medieval theories about accelerated motion, the rotation of the earth and inertia embedded in the works of Copernicus and Galileo. Even the so-called “dark ages” from 500AD to 1000AD were actually a time of advance after the trough that followed the fall of Rome. Agricultural productivity soared with the use of heavy ploughs, horse collars, crop rotation and watermills, leading to a rapid increase in population.

I hope this will set the record straight – monotheism created experimental science. If you want atheistic science, you’re looking at things like the steady-state model, directed panspermia and man-made global warming. You could call that speculative science, I guess.

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

Is Mitt Romney conservative or liberal?

May 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's start by looking at Romney's record on fiscal policy.

The libertarian Cato Institute think tank explains why Obamacare and Romneycare are identical in many ways.

Excerpt:

> As part of his liberal phase when governor of Massachusetts — political principles have been ever-flexible for Romney — he orchestrated passage of legislation with eerie similarities to ObamaCare. Massachusetts mandates purchase of insurance, decides what benefits must be offered, and maintains a complex system of subsidies and penalties. Declared Boston Globe columnist Adrian Walker, the two programs are "not identical, but they're certainly close kin." MIT economist Jonathan Gruber, who advised both Gov. Romney and President Obama on health care, asserted: "Basically, it's the same thing."[…]Alas, even the former governor's constitutional scruples are suspect. In 1994 he backed a federal mandate. His concern about the overweening federal government apparently was not so finely developed then.
>
> […]However, paying for more benefits for more people inevitably makes medicine more expensive. Costs for Commonwealth Care, the Massachusetts government's subsidized insurance program alone are up a fifth over initial projections. Last year State Treasurer Timothy P. Cahill wrote: "The universal insurance coverage we adopted in 2006 was projected to cost taxpayers $88 million a year. However, since this program was adopted in 2006, our health-care costs have in total exceeded $4 billion. The cost of Massachusetts' plan has blown a hole in the Commonwealth's budget."
>
> […]State finances have not collapsed only because RomneyCare spread the costs widely, forcing virtually everyone in and out of the state to share the pain. Cahill cited federal subsidies as keeping the state afloat financially. Indeed, a June study from the Beacon Hill Institute concluded that "The state has been able to shift the majority of the costs to the federal government." The Institute pointed to higher costs of $8.6 billion since the law was implemented. Just $414 million was paid by Massachusetts. Medicaid (federal payments) covered $2.4 billion. Medicare took care of $1.4 billion.
>
> But even more costs, $4.3 billion, have been imposed on the private sector — employers, insurers, and residents. This estimate is in line with an earlier study by the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, which figured that 60% of the new costs fell on individuals and businesses.
>
> As expenses have risen, so have premiums. Noted Kuttner, "because serious cost containment was not part of the original package, premium costs in the

> commonwealth have risen far faster than nationally — by 10.3%, the most recent year available." Economists John F. Cogan, Glenn Hubbard, and Daniel Kessler figured that RomneyCare inflated premiums by 6% from 2006 to 2008. This at a time where the state-subsidized Commonwealth Care was displacing private insurance for many people, thereby reducing demand, which should have reduced cost pressures.
>
> Unfortunately, noted the Beacon Hill Institute, "private companies have no choice but to pass the higher costs onto the insured. Some of these costs fall in the double-digit range." That naturally displeased public officials, since it undercut their claim to have solved Massachusetts' health care problems.

And the Boston Herald notes that Romneycare caused the loss of 18,000 jobs. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> The Bay State's controversial 2006 universal health-care plan — also known as "Romneycare" — has cost Massachusetts more than 18,000 jobs, according to an exclusive blockbuster study that could provide ammo to GOP rivals of former Gov. Mitt Romney as he touts his job-creating chops on the campaign trail.
>
> "Mandating health insurance coverage and expanding the demand for health services without increasing supply drove up costs. Economics 101 tells us that," said Paul Bachman, research director at Suffolk University's Beacon Hill Institute, the conservative think tank that conducted the study. The Herald obtained an exclusive copy of the findings.
>
> "The 'shared sacrifice' needed to provide universal health care includes a net loss of jobs, which is attributable to the higher costs that the measure imposed," said David Tuerck, the institute's executive director.
>
> …Despite Romney's vaunted business acumen as a successful venture capitalist, Bachman said the former governor "was a little naive about what would become of the law."
>
> The Beacon Hill Institute study found that, on average, Romneycare:
>
> - cost the Bay State 18,313 jobs;
> - drove up total health insurance costs in Massachusetts by $4.311 billion;
> - slowed the growth of disposable income per person by $376; and
> - reduced investment in Massachusetts by $25.06 million.

And from the Heartland Institute, an article showing how Romneycare could actually lead to single-payer health care in Masachusetts.

Excerpt:

> The 2006 reform jeopardized the solvency of private health plans in the Bay State. Unfortunately, insurers' solvency is not something patients, physicians,

> and voters have reason to observe closely, so the political class suffers from perverse incentives once it starts micromanaging health insurance. As a result, higher costs have been passed on through higher per capita spending and premium growth.
>
> According to the state's 2010 annual report, today "per capita spending on health care in Massachusetts is 15 percent higher than the rest of the nation, even when accounting for wages and spending on medical research and education in Massachusetts." Indeed, Professor John F. Cogan of Stanford University has concluded the 2006 reform led to premium growth 6 percent higher in Massachusetts than in the rest of the United States between 2006 and 2008.
>
> **Because it was politically intolerable to allow premiums to rise in line with the costs of Romneycare, the state's insurance commissioner denied 235 of 276 rate increase requests in April 2010. For a short time, no new policies were offered, and plans suffered significant losses. The next month, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, the state's largest carrier, announced a $55 million provision for anticipated losses in the second quarter alone.**
>
> **Of the 12 largest carriers, five were already operating at a loss. At this point, even if the state allows Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts to increase rates in line with medical costs, my analysis concludes the carrier will become insolvent in the vicinity of 2017. Other carriers will soon follow.**

Campaign speeches and debate zingers *today* don't cancel out a liberal leftist record on policy *yesterday*.

Mitt Romney on the issues in 2012

Mitt Romney's record on fiscal issues

And a comprehensive overview of Mitt Romney's record from the Examiner.

Excerpt:

> He often claims to have balanced the Massachusetts budget without raising

> taxes. The first part of that claim is true, but the second part is a matter of semantics.
>
> **As Cato pointed out in a 2006 report, while Romney didn't raise general tax revenues, he raised various fees by $500 million and then proposed $140 million in business tax hikes by closing "loopholes." His health care plan also increased spending, prompting tax increases after he left office to cover cost overruns.**
>
> This time around, by sticking by his health care law, Romney is attempting to avoid the "flip flopper" label that dogged his last campaign. But this shift in tactics isn't going to make the problem of his past positions suddenly disappear.
>
> As governor, Romney was no friend of gun owners. In 2004, when the Clinton-era federal assault weapons ban expired, he signed a permanent one at the state level.
>
> Despite his tough talk on immigration during his last campaign, in 2005 Romney told the Boston Globe that reform along the lines that McCain proposed was "reasonable."
>
> Romney also, at various times, supported campaign finance regulations far more sweeping than McCain-Feingold, even though he subsequently blasted that law as an attack on free speech.
>
> Romney's support for "No Child Left Behind," President Bush's expansion of the federal government's role in education, not only puts him at odds with conservatives, but it also undercuts the federalist defense of his health care law. If a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work for health care, why should it work for education?
>
> Furthermore, there's no reason to believe that social conservatives who were suspicious of Romney's conveniently timed conversion from pro-choice to pro-life before his last presidential run will see him as any more authentic this time around.

Consider this article from the Boston Globe.

Excerpt:

> "I don't speak for the scientific community, of course," Romney said, in response to the first question of the morning. "But I believe the world's getting warmer. I can't prove that, but I believe based on what I read that the world is getting warmer. And number two, I believe that humans contribute to that."
>
> He also said he wanted to wean the country from its dependence on foreign oil by seeking alternative sources of energy, and said that Americans should do more to conserve.
>
> "I'm told that we use almost twice as much energy per person as does a European, and more like three times as much energy as does a Japanese citizen,"

> Romney said. “We can do a lot better.”

This makes me think that Mitt Romney wants to surpass Obama’s $535 million loan to Solyndra.

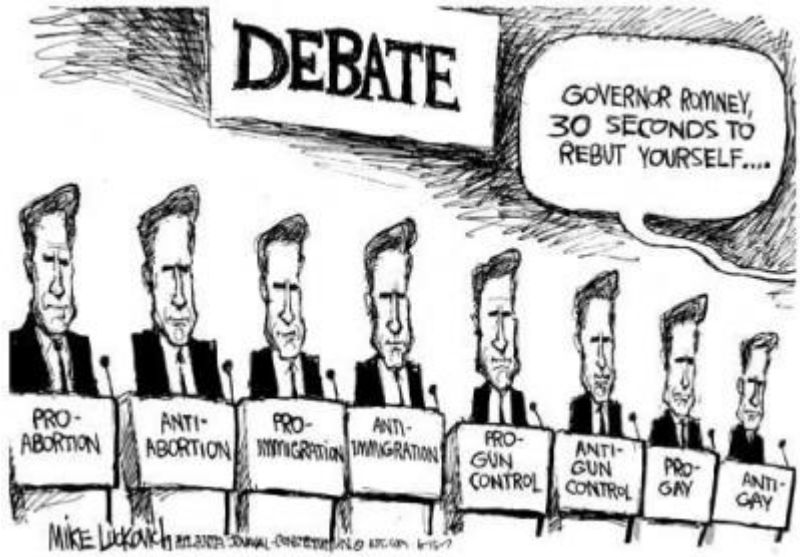

Mitt Romney position on abortion, gun control, gay marriage
(Image: H/T Robert)

Mitt Romney’s record on social issues

From the 1994 Massachusetts Senate debate between Mitt Romney and Edward Kennedy.

Here he is again in 2002 in his run for government of Massachusetts:

And again in May 2005, as governor of Massachusetts:

And on embryonic stem cell research in 2005:

And on gun control in 2002:

Mitt Romney is *not* a social conservative. He is a center-leftist who will *say anything* in order to get elected in 2012. Nothing he says can be trusted – he adapts himself to any environment when campaigning – he says what people want to hear, and it is not at all what his actual record shows.

Mitt Romney political views in 2012

What do conservatives think of Mitt Romney’s record?

Well-known conservative magazine Human Events listed Mitt Romney as #8 on their list of 10 RINOs. This list is from December 27, 2005.

Excerpt:

> 8. Gov. Mitt Romney (Mass.)
> Has said, “I believe that abortion should be safe and legal in this country.”
> Supports civil unions and stringent gun laws. After visiting Houston, he criticized the city’s aesthetics, saying, “This is what happens when you don’t have zoning.”

Those are the facts on Mitt Romney’s record.

Which types of unions have the highest rates of divorce?

May 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A quiz for you, from Ruth Blog.

Question:

> Same sex couples have had the legal right to form domestic partnerships in several European countries. Denmark was the first to introduce registered partnerships, in 1989. Norway was second, in 1993, then Sweden in 1995. Data from 2 of these landmark countries, Norway and Sweden, as well as California, have been studied enough to answer this question:
>
> What types of unions have the highest rates of divorce?
>
> - Opposite sex married couples: men and women are so different, it is a wonder they ever stay married.
> - Male unions: men are naturally less committed, and less monogamous, so their partnerships don't endure.
> - Female unions: women get so emotionally distraught over things. A union of two women, without any male counter-balancing their roller-coaster, is very unstable.
>
> Hint: the answer is the same in all three countries!

And here's the answer:

> Female unions seem to have the highest divorce rates, followed by male unions, followed by opposite sex unions.
>
> "For Sweden, the divorce risk for partnerships of men is 50% higher than the risk for heterosexual marriages, and that the divorce risk for female partnerships is nearly double that for men."
>
> "For Norway, divorce risks are 77% higher in lesbian partnerships than in those of gay men." (The Norwegian data did not include a comparison with opposite sex couples.)
>
> In California, the data is collected a little differently. The study looks at couples who describe themselves as partners, whether same sex or opposite sex. The study asks the question, how likely is it that these couples live in the same household five years later. Male couples were only 30% as likely, while female couples were less that 25% as likely, as heterosexual married couples, to be residing in the same household for five years.
>
> The only contradictory data I have found to this pattern is from the Netherlands. In the Dutch data, same sex couples have a 3.15 times greater dissolution rate

> than opposite sex cohabiting couples, and a 3.15 x 3.66 or 11.5 times greater dissolution rate than opposite married couples. But, female couples seem to be more stable than male couples.

Do you know what else is bad for relationships? Premarital sex and cohabitation. And that's not my opinion, those are the facts. (See the studies below) Either we are going to get serious about constraining our selfish behavior to protect children from instability, or worse, or children are going to suffer. When adults substitute their own selfish ideologies for God's design for marriage, children suffer.

Related posts

- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being

What is a “right-to-work” law, and why do Democrats oppose them?

May 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> It’s hard to imagine Uncle Sam telling Walt Disney where to make movies or McDonald’s how many hamburgers to make, but if you take a look at the case of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) versus Boeing, you’ll see that the federal government is trying to do just that: dictate where and how private industry may do business. And it’s doing so to bolster one of President Barack Obama’s favorite special interests—labor unions.
>
> To catch you up on the story, Boeing Corporation decided to build a new assembly plant in Charleston, South Carolina, in order to produce the 787 Dreamliner. The NLRB (which is responsible investigating unfair labor practices) got wind of the decision and last month filed a complaint against Boeing, alleging that the company decided to build the plant in South Carolina out of retaliation for union strikes at its Washington state facilities. Nevermind that Boeing actually added 2,000 jobs in Washington on this particular project.
>
> South Carolina is a right-to-work state, meaning that Boeing can hire non-union workers. For fans of big labor (like President Obama and his allies), right-to-work states are a threat to unions’ dominance. (It’s worth noting that the NLRB today is composed of four members, three of whom are Obama appointees.)
>
> The NLRB’s intentions, then, could be easily inferred. It is doing all it can to help unions at the expense of right-to-work states, corporations and at the end of the day, American workers. But in this case, we have even more than inference.

This is important. The way to destroy the Democrats as a political party is to go after their funding.And a lot of their funding is taken from union workers, many of whom are social conservatives who don’t agree with Democrat priorities like taxpayer-funding of abortions and legalizing same-sex marriage.

Here’s a good explanation of the difference that right-to-work laws make to individual union members.

Excerpt:

> As Oregon teachers and lawmakers continue brainstorming various education reforms, getting rid of mandatory union dues should be at the top of the list.
>
> That’s nothing against the Oregon Education Association. As far as I can tell, OEA has well-meaning, knowledgeable people working for it. And unlike in Washington, where the state-level teachers union was recently riddled with

> lawsuits over how it spends members' dues, Oregon teachers who have had unacceptable run-ins with their state-level union either don't exist or are hard to find.
>
> But no matter how decent a job a union does, a teacher should never be forced to give it money as a condition of his or her employment, especially when unions are known to engage in all sorts of politicking. Just imagine if your employer took a portion of your paycheck each month and spent it furthering causes and issues and candidates with which you disagreed.
>
> As Susan Stacy, a special education teacher in Seaside, said, "I don't agree with a lot of the policies or pursuits of the NEA or the OEA. And when they support organizations or causes I flat out disagree with, I don't think I should be forced to support them. Even when it comes to organizations I think are good, it should be my choice to support them."
>
> Stacy has been teaching in Oregon for 12 years. Before that, she taught for five years in Utah, a state without compulsory unionism. When she was hired here, she was surprised when she received her first paycheck to find a deduction for union dues. She asked her district what it was all about since she wasn't planning to be a member and then was informed that in Oregon she had to pay dues.
>
> "I was incensed," she said.
>
> […]Taxpayers should be against compulsory union dues, too. After all, taxpayers employ teachers, not unions. It's crazy that the state allows a union to take hundreds of dollars from 47,000-plus educators each year to help further its agenda. While the majority of the union's work involves collective bargaining, the union regularly opposes charter schools and partakes in legislative battles to eliminate them. It routinely backs Democrats, endorsing just eight Republicans from among 90 state races in 2008.

There is a move to pass a right-to-work law on right now in New Hampshire. This would allow workers to work without being forced to join a union, and to pay union dues.

Mike Licona on the hostility to evangelical Christians on campus

May 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Baptist Press. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Did their youth pastors drop the ball on preparing them adequately to withstand the attacks on their faith they would experience when they went off to college? Yes. But the buck stops with Dad. I failed and I admit I'm embarrassed because, of all people, the children of an apologist should know the evidence.
>
> Let's take a moment and look at the situation in which our children find themselves. This will help us to see why it's important to equip them with both evidences and answers to the difficult questions. University campuses are growing increasingly hostile toward evangelical students. A 2007 report by two Jewish researchers found a strong bias against evangelical students at secular universities.[1] More than 1,200 faculty members from 712 colleges and universities were interviewed pertaining to their feelings toward various religious followers. The results were alarming. Three percent of American faculty members admitted having negative or unfavorable feelings toward Jews while 33 percent admitted having them toward Muslims. But 53 percent admitted having negative or unfavorable feelings toward evangelical Christians. The researchers concluded, "Conservative Christians have for some time been concerned about their children's campus environment. These data certainly legitimize their concerns."
>
> But it didn't stop there. To their shock, these Jewish researches likewise discovered that a significant number of American faculty members want Muslims to play a greater role in the American political process while wanting evangelicals to stay out of it. But why? After all, generally speaking, most Muslims are pro-life, against homosexual marriage and women's rights, at least as they are enjoyed by American women. To me, this suggests we are in much more than a cultural war between political conservatives and liberals. It goes beyond secularism and the religious. On many of our college campuses, it is a war against evangelical Christianity.
>
> I personally have had numerous students from all over North America inform me that professors, on the first day of class, said their objective was to rid Christian students of their faith by the end of the semester. That's right. The professor openly stated in class that his or her objective was to rid Christian students of their faith within the next hundred days. Can you imagine what would happen if those same professors had instead asked how many of his or her students were Muslims … or Jews? They would have been labeled "Islamaphobe" or "anti-

> Semite" and would soon have joined a number of others in the job market. But faculty members often get a pass if they're a "Christophobe."

I've been fussing a lot lately about making good decisions about sex before marriage, and the importance of children growing up with two biological parents. But another thing to prepare for is what happens when your children get into the schools. If you just abandon them to be influenced by their peers, by the culture, and by liberal educators, then you can't expect your children to have an accurate worldview. Very rarely will you find that their peers, their pop culture influences, and their educators, have any sort of knowledge about what the Christian worldview really says, what the evidence is for it, and what the defenses are to arguments and evidence against it. You have to take the initiative to know this stuff. And if you aren't married yet, then you need to be picking someone who has looked into the arguments and evidence for the Christian worldview. Economics, social science, education, marriage, parenting are all important things to study, but people already know a lot about that just by being aware of politics and such. That stuff is on the bottom shelf – apologetics is on the top shelf. You have to reach up high to get it – not everyone has it. And you can't outsource it, either. You have to know it yourself.

What does the Bible say in the shema? (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

If you want an example of how far teachers will go to indoctrinate your children in university, check out this story from Neil Simpson. His daughter got a homework assignment that was designed to cause her to think that heterosexuality was ABNORMAL. Basically, it was a questionnaire with a lot of ridiculously offensive questions. She was supposed to give it to someone to fill out, so she gave it to her Dad. But her Dad is Neil Simpson – apologetics blogger and super-Dad. He's posted the questions with his answers, as well as the outcome of the story. It's worth reading if you want to see a good example of parenting.

Tennessee Republicans pass bill to allow future pro-life legislation

May 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Debra Maggart

From Life News. (H/T Steve)

Excerpt:

> The state legislature has approved a state ballot proposal that will allow Tennessee voters to run back a pro-abortion ruling by the state Supreme Court that prevents lawmakers from putting in place any pro-life laws to limit abortion.
>
> The amendment is necessary because the Tennessee Supreme Court ruled 4-1 in 2000 that the state constitution allows unlimited abortions. It is necessary, pro-life advocates say, to be able to pass laws to limit and reduce abortions. The ruling claimed the Tennessee Constitution contains a fundamental abortion right even broader than Roe v. Wade or the federal constitution and it resulted in the striking down of numerous pro-life Tennessee laws that were helping women and limiting abortions.
>
> The Tennessee state House voted today 76-18 vote for the state ballot proposal sponsored by Republican Rep. Debra Maggart of Hendersonville. The text of SJR 127 returns authority for abortion regulation to the people of Tennessee and their state legislators and reads as follows: “Nothing in this Constitution secures or protects a right to abortion or requires the funding of an abortion. The people retain the right through their elected state representatives and state senators to enact, amend, or repeal statutes regarding abortion, including, but not limited to, circumstances of pregnancy resulting from rape or incest or when necessary to save the life of the mother.”
>
> Proposed amendments in Tennessee must be passed by two consecutive general assemblies, the second time by a two-thirds supermajority. with today’s vote, SJR 127 will now be placed on the ballot for approval by Tennesseans during the next gubernatorial election in 2014.

The bill was passed the first time in 2009 by a margin of 77-21. Tennessee must have a REALLY liberal Supreme Court, because the legislators are good. Then again, they passed TennCare and that was just socialized medicine.

Tennessee Senate Republicans pass bill to ban teaching of homosexuality to kids

May 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sen. Stacey Campfield
From Fox News. (H/T Reformed Seth)

Excerpt:

> A measure that would prohibit the teaching of homosexuality in Tennessee public schools has passed the Senate.
>
> Under the proposal approved 19-11 on Friday, any instruction or materials at a public elementary or middle school will be "limited exclusively to age-appropriate natural human reproduction science." Republican Senate sponsor Stacey Campfield of Knoxville says "homosexuals don't naturally reproduce."
>
> Campfield says current state curriculum is not clear on what can be taught.
>
> The companion bill has been withdrawn from consideration in the House. But its sponsor has said he will bring it up again next year if the Senate version passes.
>
> According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Tennessee would become the first state to enact such legislation if the proposal passes.
>
> Opponents of the legislation say it would be unfair to students who have same sex parents.

This makes me think of this controversial article I saw on Life Site News, about a gay journalist who talks about how gay activists are deliberately targeting children for indoctrination, in order to normalize the gay lifestyle.

Related posts

- Wayne Grudem defends what the Bible says about same-sex marriage
- Michael Brown and Eric Smaw debate: should same-sex marriage be legal?
- How would allowing gays to marry affect your life?
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?

- Why do people oppose same-sex marriage?
- Republicans hire top lawyer to defend traditional marriage against Democrats
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Queen's University feminist professor says that polygamy should be permitted
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- Frank Turek lists ten alleged facts about same-sex marriage
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Gay federal judge rules traditional marriage unconstitutional in California
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- Do Democrats like Chai Feldblum believe in religious liberty?
- Do Democrats like Martha Coakley believe in religious liberty?
- How Harriet Harman's Equality Bill will impact religious liberty
- Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- What happens when same-sex marriage conflicts with religious liberty?
- Can a person disagree without being hateful or inciting violence?

Harold Camping's 1994 doomsday/end of the world prediction

May 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video, the prediction is at the 1:00 mark.

And we all know that the world didn't end in 1994. Camping was wrong the last time, so I don't think we have anything to be concerned about this time, either. But there is more to say about Camping than his false predictions.

What does Jesus say?

Jesus says that no one except the Father knows when the world will end.

Mark 13:32-33:

32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.

Matthew 24:36-44:

36 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark;

39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

41Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.

44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

That passage is in Mark and Matthew. Mark is early, and Matthew provides multiple attestation. But this passage also passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it ascribes ignorance to Jesus – something that the early church would not have made up if they were hoping to gain converts by falsely portraying Jesus as the Messiah. Therefore, it is *very likely* that this passage is authentic, and would be viewed as authentic even by those who are non-Christians. But Harold disagrees with Jesus – he thinks he knows the day and the hour. It seems to me that he thinks that Jesus is either lying or mistaken as quoted in this passage.

So, let's re-cap. We know that Harold Camping seems to be in disagreement with Jesus about whether we can know the time that the world will end. Jesus says no one can know, and Harold Camping says he knows. We also know that Harold Camping made prophecies about the end of the world occurring in 1994, and his prophecies turned out to be false. That makes him a false prophet.

What does the Bible say about false prophets?

Deuteronomy 18:21-22:

[21] You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?"

[22] If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.

If he was wrong the first time, then we shouldn't take him seriously this time.

Why is Harold Camping doing this?

This article from CNN Money explains how Harold Camping collects millions of dollars in donations.

Excerpt:

> By now, you've probably heard of the religious group that's predicting the end of the world starts this weekend.
>
> Harold Camping and his devoted followers claim a massive earthquake will mark the second coming of Jesus, or so-called Judgment Day on Saturday, May 21, ushering in a five month period of catastrophes before the world comes to a complete end in October.
>
> At the center of it all, Camping's organization, Family Radio, is perfectly happy to take your money — and in fact, received $80 million in contributions between 2005 and 2009. Camping founded Family Radio, a nonprofit Christian radio network based in Oakland, Calif. with about 65 stations across the country, in 1958.
>
> […]According to their most recent IRS filings, Family Radio is almost entirely funded by donations, and brought in $18 million in contributions in 2009 alone.
>
> According to those financial documents, accountants put the total worth of Family Radio (referred to as Family Stations on its official forms) at $72 million.
>
> With those kind of financials — and controversial beliefs — it's no wonder skeptics have accused the group of running a scam.
>
> Camping first inaccurately predicted the world would end in 1994. Even so, he has gathered even more followers — some who have given up their homes, entire life savings and their jobs because they believe the world is ending.

I wonder how this looks to non-Christians who are trying to see what Christianity is really

about? Is this what we are about?

Is Harold Camping open to being corrected?

Finally, I noticed that Camping has declined to go on the radio and discuss his ideas with Christian scholars like Dr. Michael Brown. Brown reproduces an e-mail exchange here, showing how the false prophet is not willing to debate the truth of his claims on the air. That should be a clear warning to Christians to stay away from this man. Not only is he bad for us if we believe him, but he is actually *undermining* the cause of Christ due to his ignorance and his lack of accountability to people like Dr. Brown who have studied these things more than he has.

UPDATE: Camping may also have problems with the Trinity, according to James White. (H/T Glenn)

The failed prediction that the mainstream media isn't covering

May 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Powerline Blog.

Excerpt:

> I have been puzzled by the extent of the media coverage of some crank's prediction that the world would come to an end today. People are always predicting the end of the world. So far they have always been wrong. Was there something about this particular prediction that was newsworthy? Did any significant number of people expect to wake up this morning and see graves opening and people ascending into Heaven? This morning, there were news stories to the effect that the world still exists. Really! Did reporters expect their readers to be surprised? Why, in short, was this silliness a major media event?
>
> I wish reporters would pay as much attention to a more important failed prediction: the Obama administration's assurance that its policies, including the "stimulus," would foster job creation and prevent unemployment from reaching 8 percent.

And here are some charts from John's post.

Community organizer Obama predicted that his $800 billion dollar stimulus program would keep unemployment below 8%:

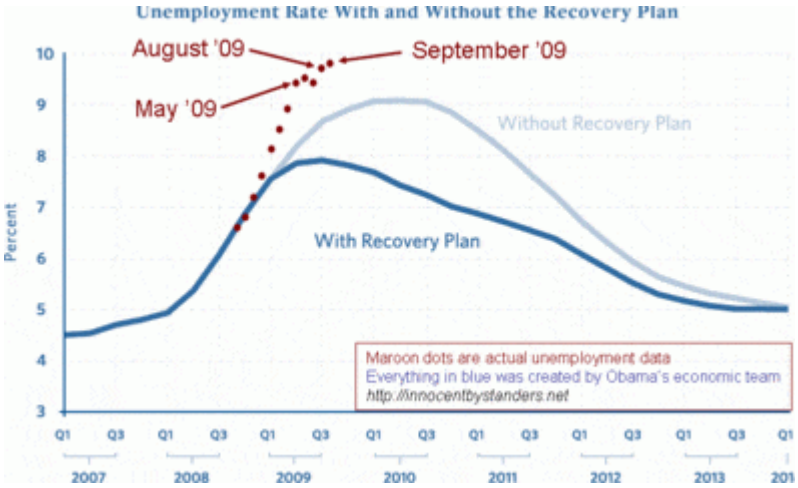

Stimulus Job Creation Prediction

Ooops! Never send a community organizer to do an economist's job.

How about all that spending? Surely ALL the spending must have created more jobs?

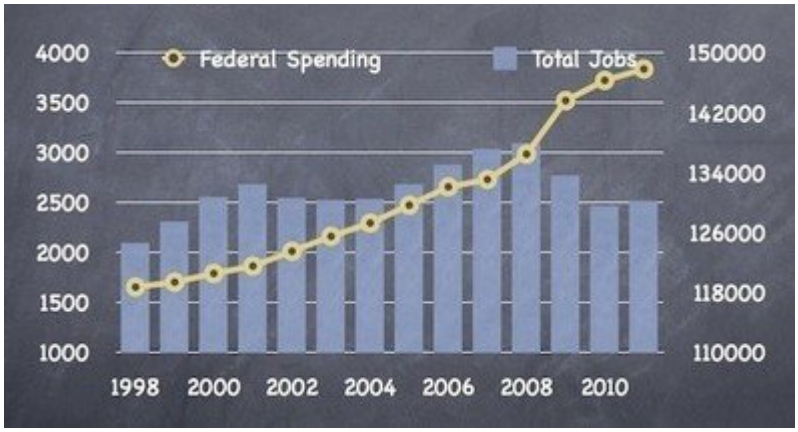

Government Spending Vs Jobs

Hans Bader of the Competitive Enterprise Institute links to a new study by two economics professors that shows that 550,000 jobs were *LOST* because of the stimulus bill.

This should be the end of the belief that government spending creates jobs, but it won't be, because the university is not committed to teaching what gets results, but what produces feelings of superiority. The secular elites feel that they should be allowed to redistribute the wealth created by businesses and workers. This feeling of entitlement to control and distribute is best put into practice with large-scale taxation, spending and redistribution of wealth. The professors think that their good feelings (subjective) will somehow, mysteriously, cause good effects in the real world (objective). The chart proves their mysticism wrong, but the university is insulated from feedback from the real world.

That is why we need to elect business owners like Michele Bachmann or Herman Cain.

J Warner Wallace answers: can a loving God send people to Hell?

May 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J Warner Wallace

I stole this image from James Warner Wallace's Facebook page. Without asking. He is a cold case detective. So, I could get arrested. If I suddenly stop blogging, then would one of you please bail me out of jail?

Now just a quick note about the title of this post. I do NOT believe that a loving God "sends people to Hell". I think people freely choose to separate themselves from God because they don't want to relate to him. People who go to Heaven are people who freely choose to respond to God's unilateral offer of forgiveness. People who go to Hell are those who freely chose to reject his offer of forgiveness.

Anyhoo, six podcasts on Hell from Please Convince Me.

Number 1:

> *In the wake of Rob Bell's new book, "Love Wins," many people are beginning to question the nature and existence of Hell and how exactly God decides who must go there. For many,* the idea that our temporal, finite sin on earth should deserve an eternal punishment of infinite torment in hell is ridiculously inequitable. Why would God torture infinitely those who have only sinned finitely? *Jim addresses this objection and answers listener email.*
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 2:

> *A loving God would never create a place like Hell, would He? Any God that would send people to a place of punishment and torment is unloving by definition, right? In this podcast, Jim responds to these foundational objections to the*

> *existence of Hell. In addition, Jim comments on the Harris / Craig debate and answers listener email related to hearing God's voice.*
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 3:

> *In this podcast, Jim answers the objection that God would send people like Gandhi to Hell (simply because they are not Christians) alongside people like Hitler (who have committed unspeakable atrocities). How can a reasonable and just God be the source of such inequitable punishment? Also Jim answers listener email related to the power of prayer, the importance of evidential apologetics and the grounding for objective morality.*
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 4:

> Isn't it unfair for God to penalize people who are otherwise good, just because they haven't heard about Jesus? A good God would not send good people to Hell. Jim responds to this objection and answers listener email related to the Craig/Harris debate, pre-existing mythologies that are similar to Jesus, and the difficult, exclusive nature of "election".
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 5:

> If God is all-loving, why doesn't he "reform" people rather than simply "punish" them in Hell? Skeptics sometimes argue that a God who simply punishes his children in Hell is a sadistic and vengeful God, unworthy of our worship. Jim responds to this objection and answers listener email related to the nature of "election", the evidence for "annihilationism", and a political quote related to same sex marriage.
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 6:

> A Loving God would love all of His creation, right? Wouldn't He make sure that everyone goes to Heaven (regardless of what they might believe in this life)? A loving God would never limit Heaven to a select few and allow billions of people to suffer in Hell, would He? Jim responds to these objections and answers listener email related to Christian "essentials", the appropriate response to fallen teachers and the nature of "debate" as it relates to Richard Dawkins and William Lane Craig.
>
> The MP3 file is here.

I'm listening to the last one right now, and he is really mad at Rob Bell for being evasive in his debate with Adrian Warnock. I could not agree more. I was writing up a snarky

summary of that debate but Bell literally made my ears bleed with his disingenuous questioning of anyone who asked him straight yes or no questions. Sometimes I feel like the bad guy for being harsh and snarky with certain people, but Wallace was just as upset with Bell as I was with Bell.

There could be more podcasts coming in this series, but these are so good I though I would link to them right away. I'll keep an eye out for new ones.

The one thing I do disagree with J Warner Wallace on is that he is a Calvinist, and I believe in the middle knowledge view of salvation. William Lane Craig has written about his concerns with Calvinism, and I talk about those concerns in this post and link to some debates in there as well.

Related to the problem of Hell, is the problem of religious pluralism – what about people who say that you can follow any religion and still be approved by God? Here is a debate on religions pluralism, featuring the king of pluralism John Hick.

Related posts

- Doug Groothuis states the central problem with Rob Bell's book
- Does God scare people into loving him with the threat of Hell?
- Is it ok to judge people? Is Hell a real place?
- Why doesn't God gives us more evidence that he exists?
- Book review of "If there's a God, why are there atheists?"
- Should you reject the Biblical notion of Hell based on emotions?
- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

Spanish conservatives defeat socialists in regional and local elections

May 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Europe
From the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. (H/T Bret Baier)

Excerpt:

> Spain's ruling Socialists suffered a crushing defeat to conservatives in local and regional elections Sunday, yielding power even in traditional strongholds against a backdrop of staggering unemployment and unprecedented sit-ins by Spaniards furious with what they see as politicians who don't care about their plight.Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero said the result was due punishment of his government for the state of the economy — the jobless rate is a eurozone high of 21.3 percent. But he said he had no plans to move up general elections, which must be held by March of next year, and pledged to press on with job-creating reforms despite the loud outcry of opposition to his party.
>
> The win for the conservative opposition Popular Party puts it in even a stronger position to win the general elections and return to power after eight years of Socialist rule.
>
> In what Spanish media said was the worst performance on record by the Socialist Party in local and regional elections, the numbers reflecting the loss were stunning: the conservative Popular Party won at the municipal level by about two million votes, compared to 150,000 in its win in 2007, and in 13 regional governments that were up for grabs, Zapatero's party lost in virtually all of them.

> One was Castilla-La Mancha in central Spain, where the Socialists have always held power. The Socialists also lost bastions like the town halls in Barcelona and Seville. The conservatives padded their majorities in Madrid and Valencia, in the latter even though the president is under investigation for corruption. Several other Socialist-controlled regional governments also fell. Spain's electoral map turned largely blue — the color of the Popular Party.

I can see why Zapatero would want to avoid calling federal elections. Spain's youth unemployment stands at 45% and he is very likely to be thrown out of power completely. I'm sure a lot of the young people voted for socialism, because socialism is so trendy in movies, music, in the universities, and on television . But the young people are finding out now that you cannot cover your nakedness with empty rhetoric, you cannot feed your stomach with feelings of self-congratulation, and you cannot coerce employers to hire you by demonizing capitalism.

New Jersey per-pupil cost is $17,800

May 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

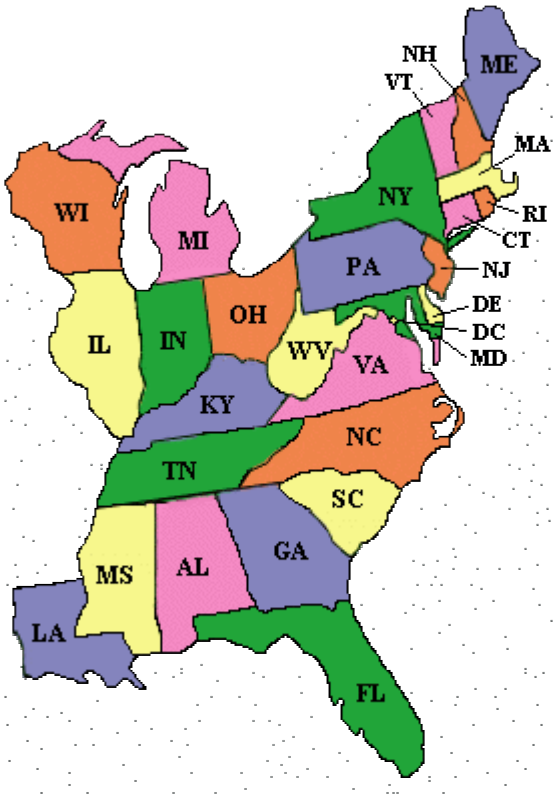

Eastern United States Map

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Michele Bachmann)

Excerpt:

> The Christie administration has recalculated the amount it says New Jersey public school districts spend per pupil, increasing the state average rate by several thousand dollars to more than $17,800.
>
> The figure, from the 2009-10 school year, has been adjusted to include costs such as transportation, federal funding, debt payments and legal judgments that can vary greatly from district to district. In the 2008-09 school year, using the previous calculation, the state average was $13,200 per student.
>
> The Christie administration says the new figure is more transparent and complete.
>
> […]Gov. Chris Christie has frequently said that Newark schools spend nearly $25,000 per student, despite what he calls failing results. The new spending guide shows Newark's spending at nearly $23,000 per student, up from about $17,600 under previous estimates.

Compare that with the average tuition with higher-performing private or parochial schools.

Excerpt:

AVERAGE PRIVATE SCHOOL TUITION: $8,549

> Elementary: $6,733
> Secondary: $10,549
> Combined: $10,045
> (Digest 2009, Chapter 2, Table 59)

AVERAGE CATHOLIC SCHOOL TUITION: $6,018

> Elementary: $4,944
> Secondary: $7,826
> Combined: $9,066
> (Digest 2009, Chapter 2, Table 59)

I think we need to put in a national voucher system, or, failing that, we should abolish the federal Department of Education completely and leave education to the states and municipalities.

This post was linked by:

- The Competitive Enterprise Institute

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

The Wintery Knight demands that Michele Bachmann run for President

May 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann

Michele Bachmann *still* hasn't announced that she is willing to run for President!

I have therefore decided to protest her tarrying by posting two interviews that she did this past week, so that you can all tell me if you think that she would make a good President, or not. Maybe she will stop by and read our comments and realize how badly she is needed, and how well she would do as President.

First, Bret Baier spends some time with Michele going over her pluses and minuses: (MP3 version here – 3 Mb)

If you have Fox News, Bret Baier's show is the best thing on that entire network.

Second, here is an interview with popular social conservative Mike Huckabee: (MP3 version here – 3 Mb)

And for those who do not want to watch videos *or* listen to MP3s, I found this brand new profile of Michele Bachmann.

Excerpt:

> Michele Bachmann was a self-styled "education researcher" making a run for a Minnesota school board seat in 1999 when the question came up at a candidate forum: If elected, would she serve all four years?
>
> Maybe not, she said.
>
> Bachmann, now a three-term congresswoman and tea party favorite who may run for president in 2012, opened up about a confrontation she'd had with a state senator over Minnesota's new school standards.
>
> "I told him that if he's not willing to be more responsive to the citizens, that I may have to run for his seat or find someone else who would do so," she said, according to a newspaper account of the meeting.

Bachmann lost the school board race, but then knocked off the senator, a fellow Republican, just months later using the standards as her primary issue.

It was an early indicator of a recurring theme: Bachmann often wins by losing.

[…]The race would test her resilience because she would start far back. But as a little-known House member only a few years ago, Bachmann became hero of the conservative tea party movement in part by fighting losing battles with the GOP establishment. Her path to Congress was paved by failed efforts to pass a ban on gay marriage in the Minnesota Legislature.

“She is very good at turning lemons into lemonade all the time,” said Sal Russo, a California political consultant who came to know Bachmann through the tea party.

[…]From her first involvement in politics, the 55-year-old Bachmann has shown a determination to keep pressing forward and find opportunities, even when the way seemed blocked.

In the late 1990s, Bachmann was a stay-at-home mother of five in Stillwater, a scenic St. Croix River town east of St. Paul. Then she was drawn into a revolt over education standards.

[…]”People had been predicting her demise since Day One: ‘Oh, she’s a radical, she’s too far right, she’s too outspoken, she’s too inflammatory,'” Pulkrabek said. “The fact of the matter is, with the exception of the first race, she wins.”

Parlaying her school board defeat into a victorious legislative campaign, she moved to the state Senate and seized on a new issue.

Around Thanksgiving 2003, justices in Massachusetts ruled the commonwealth couldn’t prevent same-sex marriage. Bachmann hit the phones, reaching out to fellow conservatives about making sure gay marriage would stay illegal in Minnesota.

[…]Jeff Davis heard her public appeal through his car radio. Not politically involved at the time, Davis came to the Capitol and pledged to help Bachmann.

[…]”She’s an energizer. She influences people around her,” Davis said. The drive instantly elevated Bachmann’s political profile, he said. “It was a launch point.”

[…]Bachmann’s victory in that race brought her to the national stage and prompted a new focus on fiscal issues. She harnessed the outrage of the tea party, a fledgling political force inflamed by debates over government bailouts and a far-reaching health law pursued by President Barack Obama.

Her outspoken opposition did not stop the health law, but it got her much more television exposure and helped make her a face of the new resistance. In one Fox News interview, Bachmann urged viewers to flood Washington and “go up and down through the halls, find members of Congress, look at the whites of their eyes and say, ‘Don’t take away my health care.'”

Amy Kremer remembers seeing Bachmann’s television plea while on a Tea Party

> Express bus heading between rallies in Washington state. The next week, Kremer joined Bachmann in the nation's capital for a big tea party protest.
>
> "You can tell the ones who have the passion, the fire in the belly and are truly speaking from the heart. She's one of those," Kremer said. "That comes through."

The article goes on to explain how Michele got to be a three-term Congresswoman in one of the most liberal states in the entire country.

About Michele Bachmann:

> Congresswoman Bachmann is a leading advocate for tax reform, a staunch opponent of wasteful government spending, and a strong proponent of adherence to the Constitution, as intended by the Founding Fathers. She believes government has grown exponentially, with ObamaCare being the most recent example of its uninhibited growth. Congresswoman Bachmann wants government to make the kind of serious spending decisions that many families and small businesses have been forced to make. She is a champion of free markets and she believes in the vitality of the family as the first unit of government. She is also a defender of the unborn and staunchly stands for religious liberties.
>
> Prior to serving in the U.S. Congress, Bachmann served in the Minnesota State Senate. She was elected to the Minnesota State Senate in 2000 where she championed the Taxpayers Bill of Rights. Before that, she spent five years as a federal tax litigation attorney, working on hundreds of civil and criminal cases. That experience solidified her strong support for efforts to simplify the Tax Code and reduce tax burdens on family and small business budgets. Congresswoman Bachmann also led the charge on education issues in Minnesota calling for the abolishment of Goals 2000 and the Profiles of Learning in its school. She recognized the need for quality schools and subsequently started a charter school for at-risk kids in Minnesota.
>
> Congresswoman Bachmann sits on the Financial Services Committee (FSC) and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. The FSC is tasked with oversight of numerous financial sectors including housing, real estate and banking. This gave the Congresswoman keen insight into the housing crisis and credit crunch, leading her to be a staunch opponent of the taxpayer-funded bailout of Wall Street and the Dodd-Frank legislation. Serving on the Intelligence Committee was a welcomed opportunity for Congresswoman Bachmann as she has consistently advocated peace through strength to ensure America's national security. As a mother of five children and 23 foster children, she has a deep appreciation for that portion of the Oath of Office in which members of Congress vow to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

> In July 2010 Congresswoman Bachmann hosted the first Tea Party Caucus meeting because she saw the need for Tea Partiers to have a listening ear in Congress. She is seen as a champion of Tea Party values including the call for lower taxes, renewed focus on the Constitution and the need to shrink the size of government.

You can learn even more in the links below, particularly this one that contains the best speech I have ever heard from her. That speech covers her Christian faith in some detail, and mentions her interest in Francis Schaeffer's apologetics, which also formed the views of famous worldview scholar Nancey Pearcey. Did you know that Michele once introduced famous Indian apologist Ravi Zacharias when he was giving a MacLaurin lecture? She is a big fan of Christian apologetics – she asked to go see Ravi Zacharias *for her birthday present*. A woman after my own heart. She doesn't want clothes and jewelry – she wants to be able to defend her faith! You can listen to the lecture right here (14 Mb), and hear her gushing about apologetics and Ravi Zacharias. The topic is "Christian Apologetics in the 21st century". The lecture was delivered in March 2002 in Minnesota, when Michele was a state senator.

You can contribute to her campaign right here. You can be her friend on Facebook here and also here.

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- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

What are the arguments for the historical fact of the empty tomb?

May 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection. The entire paper was also presented orally to the students and faculty at California State University, Fresno in 2005, and a full recording is available here. The paper covers all of Craig's preferred set of minimal facts, which he uses in debates.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

More on this from N.T. Wright, here.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think

> otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s. For example, the atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark some time in the 40s. (See the debate below)

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say "The President is hosting a dinner at the White House" and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the "high priest" as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus' death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as "Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women" and "Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female."
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

Further study

To hear a related lecture by Craig on the topic of "Who did Jesus think he was?", click here. The video is here. This lecture was delivered in February, 2009 at Columbia

University, probably the most secular leftist university in the United States.

Why won’t Christians defend their faith in public?

May 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I would like to describe a situation that arises frequently that concerns me. The situation I describe below brings out a flaw I see in the way that rank-and-file Christians respond to criticisms of Christianity in the public square.

Here is the situation

Eve is busy programming away at her desk, rushing to check in her unit tests so she can spend her lunch hour reading the latest Stephenie Meyer novel, or check on the schedule for her local sports team, “the Vicariouses” (she has tickets for Thursday). Suddenly Eve hears Alice talking to Bob on the other side of her cubicle. She stops typing to listen to the following unencrypted conversation.

Alice: I was watching a documentary on the Discovery Channel last night that said that the universe has always existed, so there is no God!

Bob: I was watching a documentary on PBS last night showing simulations of how the first life started on Earth! God didn’t do it!

Alice: I saw “Inherit the Spin” on the weekend! The only reason people oppose evolution is because of the Bible! Not because of science!

Bob: I’m going to see “The Va Dinci Code” this weekend! It says that the Gospels are unreliable and that Jesus didn’t even die on the cross!

Alice: I just bought the latest Dichard Rawkins book “Christians Should Be Fed to Lions and the Bible Should Be Burned”!

Bob: I will read that as soon as I finish Histopher Chritchens’ book “Why God is the Evilest, Stupidest Person in the World”!

Eve double-majored in business and computer science at the Indian Institute of Technology, and has an MBA from the London School of Economics. She has spent a ton of time, effort and money studying very difficult subjects for her job, and she even publishes research papers. She works full-time and runs her own business part-time, and teaches night classes for a well-known university. She earns about 200K per year. She lives in a huge house, drives an expensive car, and goes on vacation abroad to all the best vacation spots.

Eve thinks she is a Christian. She has attended church since childhood, her husband is a church elder and she sings in the church choir. She reads the Bible and prays every night, because it helps her to get sleepy before bed. She gives lots of money to the poor. She teaches Sunday school to very small children. She has even read all of the Narnia novels *five times*! She even has a calendar filled with nature scenes and itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny Bible verses posted on her office wall at work! Judging from all of these facts, you might expect Eve to get in on that conversation with Alice and Bob, and set them straight.

But she won’t. Why not?

Why won't Eve stand?

I am wondering if anyone can explain to me why it is that most church Christians are not able or not willing to make a public defense when God's reputation is called into question. It seems to me that there are two bad effects that follow from Eve's unwillingness to stand up and invite Alice and Bob to lunch so that she can address their questions and concerns.

1. God's reputation is being trashed by Alice and Bob on the basis of lies they've swallowed from pop culture. These lies about God's existence and character could be easily corrected with a minimal amount of study, which Eve is capable of – she is a genius and has amazing entrepreneurial skills. If someone said similar lies about her husband or children, she *would* speak up, but she won't speak up for God.
2. Alice and Bob are bound for Hell unless someone cares enough to correct their mistaken beliefs, which, along with their sinfulness, is what is keeping them from a relationship with God that would go on in Heaven. If Eve's husband or children were mistakenly about to drink poison thinking it was Aspirin, then Eve *would* speak up. But to save her co-workers from Hell, she won't speak up.

Eve is capable of studying to defend the faith, because of her great success in other areas where so much time and effort were required to master difficult material. So why has she not applied herself to answering public challenges to her Christian faith from her professors, teachers, actors, the media, politicians, scientists, historians, etc.? She's heard these questions about God's existence and character all through high school and into university and then now in her career. Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says to prepare a defense? Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says to acknowledge God before men? Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says that all authentic believers in Jesus will suffer a little for their faith?

It seems to me that if she did spend some time studying, and then made her defense to her co-workers, then two good things would follow:

1. Eve would be demonstrating her love for God and her friendship with God by protecting his reputation when it is called into question by unbelievers in public settings. That's what friends do – if Eve wanted to be God's friend, she would care that no one believed lies about him and told lies about him in public settings.
2. Eve would be demonstrating her love for her neighbor if she was able to correct some of these false beliefs, such as that the universe is eternal, or that a historical case cannot be made for the resurrection, or that evil is not compatible with theism. It's important for Alice and Bob to know that Christianity is not stupid.

So why is it that Eve is able to go to church for 20 years, sing in the choir, read the Bible, read the Narnia stories, pray on her knees, and yet still be unwilling to do the best thing for God and the best thing for her neighbor?

Questions for my readers

Can anyone help me to understand why Christians are willing to accept this? Why is this not being addressed by churches?

Do you have an experience where a Christian group stifled apologetics? Tell me about that, and why do you think they would do that, in view of the situation I outlined above? My experience is that atheists (as much as I tease them) are FAR more interested in apologetics than church Christians – they are the ones who borrow books and debates, and try to get their atheist wives to go to church after they becomes interested in going to church. Why is that?

I'm not saying we all have to be geniuses. I am just saying that we should put as much effort into learning apologetics as we put into learning school stuff and work stuff.

Note: I picked these names because there is a running gag in computer network security where these names are used to describe the actors. Eve is the eavesdropping hacker, get it?

UPDATE: Christopher Copan Scott commiserates on Facebook:

> On several occasions while bringing up the importance of apologetics for not only the individual believer, but the church as a whole, I am instantly responded with an improper definition of faith that somehow excludes reason, and thus apologetics should not be used.
>
> Or, some may respond that the use of apologetics shows that we (those who advocate for the use of apologetics) value man's word over God's (that's probably the funniest claim out of the bunch).
>
> Few do express a spark of interest, yet seldom act upon it. These people respond enthusiastically initially, but never attempt to involve themselves in reading, listening to debates, or actually downloading the podcasts I recommend, etc.
>
> Lastly, I do find myself enjoying dialogue, at times, with atheists more than Christians. This is especially true when it comes to philosophical matters, since most Christians I converse with simply don't care for philosophy.
>
> Now, why is this so?
>
> The reasons are manifold.
>
> For one, (as Moreland talks about) the church is filled with empty selves. Christians desire that which entertains them, and have difficulty being able to reflect deeply on abstract ideas. So they would readily delve into sensational books, then read something that challenges them and takes careful thought.
>
> Also, I think Christians often equate disagreement with hostility. It's almost as if once one disagrees about a certain proposition, then you are therefore cantankerous and want to break the unity. Thus, in order to preserve this (facade of) unity, Christians wont allow rational disagreement.
>
> For these reasons and many more, I'm genuinely anxious about how the different bible studies at my future college will be. In spite of my attempts to kindly and

> respectfully disagree on certain points during dialogue with Christians, my motives are often misinterpreted and Im labeled as the argumentative kid who thinks too much.
>
> Okay, Im done.

I’m not the only one who is suffering with these experience, it seems.

What House Republicans should push: a national voter ID law

May 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> On Thursday, the Wisconsin legislature sent a bill requiring photographic identification for voting to Gov. Scott Walker's desk. This follows the enactment of an even stricter law in Kansas a few weeks ago.
>
> Drafted by my office, Kansas's Secure and Fair Elections Act combined three elements: (1) a requirement that voters present photo IDs when they vote in person; (2) a requirement that absentee voters present a full driver's license number and have their signatures verified; and (3) a proof of citizenship requirement for all newly registered voters. Although a few states, including Georgia, Indiana and Arizona, have enacted one or two of these reforms, Kansas is the only state to enact all three.
>
> Other states are moving in the same direction. The Texas legislature sent a photo-ID bill to Gov. Rick Perry's desk last Monday. And next year Missouri voters will get a chance to vote on a photo-ID requirement.
>
> Immediately after the Kansas law was signed in April, critics cried foul. They argued that voter fraud isn't significant enough to warrant such steps, that large numbers of Americans don't possess photo IDs, and that such laws will depress turnout among the poor and among minorities. They are wrong on all three counts.
>
> […]My office already has found 67 aliens illegally registered to vote in Kansas, but when the total number is calculated, it will likely be in the hundreds. In Colorado, the Secretary of State's office recently identified 11,805 aliens illegally registered to vote in the state, of whom 4,947 cast a ballot in the 2010 elections.
>
> […]According to the 2010 census, there are 2,126,179 Kansans of voting age. According to the Kansas Department of Motor Vehicles, 2,156,446 Kansans already have a driver's license or a non-driver ID. In other words, there are more photo IDs in circulation than there are eligible voters. The notion that there are hundreds of thousands of voters in Kansas (or any other state) without photo IDs is a myth.
>
> Carrying a photo ID has become a part of American life. You can't cash a check, board a plane, or even buy full-strength Sudafed over the counter without one. That's why it's not unreasonable to require one in order to protect our most important privilege of citizenship. But just in case any person lacks a photo ID, Kansas's law provides a free state ID to anyone who needs one. Other states

> have included similar provisions in their photo-ID laws.
>
> Some opponents of election security laws also declare that they are part of a sinister plot to depress voter registration and turnout, especially among minority voters who are more likely to vote Democrat. Here too the facts do not support the claim. Georgia's photo ID requirement was in place for both the 2008 and 2010 elections, when turnout among minority voters was higher than average. Likewise, Arizona's proof-of-citizenship requirement for registration has not impeded minority voters from registering.

This should pushed by Republicans right alongside a national right-to-work law and a national voucher program. I would love to see an opt-out of Social Security as well. We need that voter ID law to be in place *before* the 2012 presidential election.

This post was linked by:

- Creative Minority Report

http://reader.creativeminorityreport.com/2011/05/national-voter-id-law.html

Robin Collins explains two kinds of fine-tuning

May 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

The fine-tuning argument

Here's a short article where Collins gives TWO examples of the fine-tuning. He is very modest in his argument, merely asserting that the fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than it is with atheism.

Excerpt:

> Science is commonly thought to have undercut belief in God. As Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg famously remarked, "the more we find out about the universe, the more meaningless it all seems." Yet, the discoveries of modern physics and cosmology in the last 50 years have shown that the structure of the universe is set in an extraordinarily precise way for the existence of life; if its structure were slightly different, even by an extraordinarily small degree, life would not be possible. In many people's minds, the most straightforward explanation of this remarkable fine-tuning is some sort of divine purpose behind our universe.

> This fine-tuning falls into three categories: the fine-tuning of the laws of nature, the fine-tuning of the constants of physics, and the fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe. "Fine-tuning of the laws of nature" refers to the fact that if the universe did not have precisely the right combination of laws, complex intelligent life would be impossible. If there were no universal attractive force (law of gravity), for example, matter would be dispersed throughout the universe

> and the energy sources (such as stars) needed for life would not exist. Without the strong nuclear force that binds protons and neutrons together in the nucleus, there would not be any atoms with an atomic number greater than hydrogen, and hence no complex molecules needed for life. And without the Pauli-exclusion principle, all electrons would fall to the lowest orbital of an atom, undercutting the kind of complex chemistry that life requires.

> Some fundamental physical numbers governing the structure of the universe—called the constants of physics—also must fall into an exceedingly narrow range for life to exist. For example, many have estimated that the cosmological constant—a fundamental number that governs the expansion rate of empty space—must be precisely set to one part in 10^{120} in order for life to occur; if it were too large, the universe would have expanded too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form, and if it were too small, the universe would have collapsed back on itself. As Stephen Hawking wrote in his book A Brief History of Time, "The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life." Finally, the initial distribution of mass energy at the time of the big bang must have an enormously special configuration for life to occur, which Cambridge University mathematical physicist Roger Penrose has calculated to be on the order of one part in $10^{10^{123}}$. This is an unimaginably small number.

I know what you're thinking: How do we know that non-Christian scientists acknowledge the fine-tuning of gravity in the way that Collins describes?

Well, the New Scientist actually talks about the fine-tuning of the force of gravity. And they're not Christians.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe's birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational**

> **strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Here's a very long paper by Collins on the fine-tuning argument, where he answers several objections to the argument, including the multiverse/many-universe hypothesis. I normally make fun of the multiverse, (= the Flying Spaghetti Monster), but it actually does deserve a reasonable, fair response. (Unless Jerry asks, then it's Flying Spaghetti Monster all the way).

Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood

May 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration is not happy with Indiana for being the first state to defund Planned Parenthood. According to reports, the administration is considering taking away the state's Medicaid money in retaliation.
>
> Pro-life Gov. Mitch Daniels recently signed into law a measure that bars state agencies from entering into contracts with abortion providers, aside from hospitals. The law also bans abortion past 20 weeks gestation, with an exception for the life or physical health of the mother.
>
> The law effectively cuts Planned Parenthood off from approximately $3 million in state family planning funds, unless the state organization divides into separate independent affiliates that have nothing to do financially with abortion-providing affiliates.
>
> The New York Times reports that federal officials are considering withholding some or all of the state's Medicaid money in order to pressure the state to allow the nation's largest abortion provider to tap into family planning funds.
>
> The Times reports that the administration has 90 days to take action.
>
> The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said in a statement approved by the White House: "Federal law prohibits federal Medicaid dollars from being spent on abortion services. Medicaid does not allow states to stop beneficiaries from getting care they need — like cancer screenings and preventive care — because their provider offers certain other services. We are reviewing this particular situation and situations in other states."
>
> Marcus J. Barlow, representing the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, pointed out to the Times, however, that the state was not cutting off funds for family planning services. "It's a change in providers," he explained, observing that clients of Planned Parenthood could go to other non-abortion providing clinics for those services.
>
> Bioethicist Wesley J. Smith posed the question on his blog: "Is PP so important to Obama that he and his HHS Secretary are willing to materially hurt poor people by cutting off Medicaid funding to try and leverage restored funding for PP?"
>
> "So long as those services are available, what business is it to the Feds which facilities provide them? Or, are we to believe that PP has a right to receive public money?" he said.

Well, the other service providers didn’t donate massive amounts of money to the Demcorat Party, like Planned Parenthood did. (See below) Some people who claim to be pro-life voted for Barack Obama, and I think those people really need to reconsider the facts. The Democrats are a pro-abortion party.

Related posts

- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

New poll finds one third of young New Yorkers plan to leave state

May 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

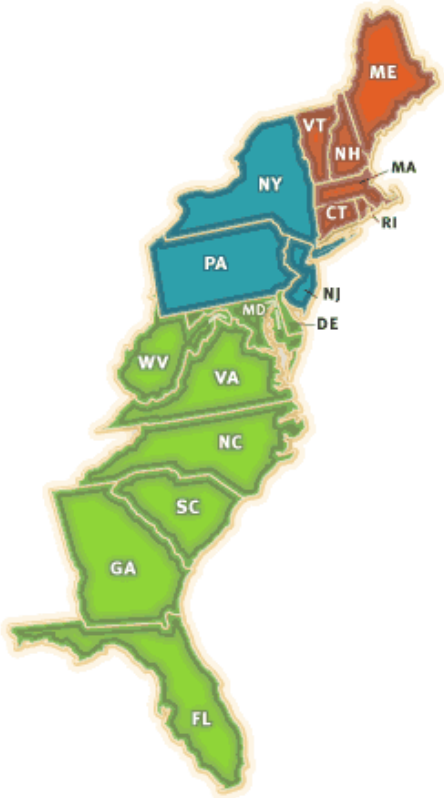

Eastern United States Map
From CBS News.

Excerpt:

> A New York poll provides grim evidence of a continuing exodus from the state, once the national leader in manufacturing and other high-paying jobs.
>
> The NY1-YNN-Marist College poll released Thursday night finds 1 in 3 New Yorkers under age 30 plans to move to another state at some time, while 1 in 4 adults overall plans an exodus from the Empire State within five years.
>
> "Right now, many young people do not see their future in New York state," said Marist pollster Lee Miringoff. "Unchecked, this threatens to drain the state of the next generation."
>
> According to the survey, most of those who plan to move will do so because of economic reasons including jobs, the cost of living, and taxes. Although the recession has been officially over for months, many New Yorkers still feel the worst is yet to come.
>
> Thirty-seven percent of New Yorkers polled feel the economy is getting worse, up from 31 percent in February's poll. The number who feels the economy is improving dropped to 16 percent, from 19 percent in February.

> […]The American Legislative Exchange Council reported that New York lost 1.9 million residents from 1998 to 2007, most of them young and educated.

Why is this happening?

Mary sent me this article from the Manhattan Institute, which gives some clues.

Excerpt:

> For one thing, according to a recent survey in *Chief Executive*, New York State has the second-worst business climate in the country. (Only California ranks lower.) People go where the jobs are, so when a state repels businesses, it repels residents, too. It's also telling that in the Marist poll, 62 percent of New Yorkers planning to leave cited economic factors—including cost of living (30 percent), taxes (19 percent), and the job environment (10 percent)—as the primary reason.
>
> In upstate New York, a big part of the problem is extraordinarily high property taxes. New York has the 15 highest-taxed counties in the country, including Nassau and Westchester, which rank first and second nationwide. Most of the property tax goes toward paying the state's Medicaid bill—which is unlikely to diminish, since the state's most powerful lobby, the political cartel created by the alliance of the hospital workers' union and hospital management, has gone unchallenged by new governor Andrew Cuomo.
>
> […]Parts of the country are seeing a revival of manufacturing—traditionally a source of upward mobility for immigrants—but not New York City, whose manufacturing continues to decline. The culprits here include the city's zoning policies, business taxes, and declining physical infrastructure.
>
> Then there's the cost of living in New York City. A 2009 report by the Center for an Urban Future found that "a New Yorker would have to make $123,322 a year to have the same standard of living as someone making $50,000 in Houston. In Manhattan, a $60,000 salary is equivalent to someone making $26,092 in Atlanta." Even Queens, the report found, was the fifth most expensive urban area in the country.

In completely unrelated news, the Democrats just won another seat in New York state due to the incompetence of the state Republican party.

Video interview of Charles Thaxton on the origin of life

May 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Charles Thaxton

When I was a younger man, just starting full-time work with a hot Internet start-up in the big city, my biggest interest was in the origin of life. I liked to listen to debates about it (e.g. – Walter Bradley versus Robert Shapiro, etc.) and lectures and interviews. Two of my favorite interviews are from the University of California series on Origins, featuring Charles Thaxton and Dean Kenyon.

I found the one with Charles Thaxton in miniature form on Youtube.

About Charles Thaxton:

> Charles Thaxton received his Ph.D. in physical chemistry from Iowa State University. He completed two post-doctoral programs, one in history of science at Harvard University and the second in the molecular biology laboratories of Brandeis University.
>
> He has specialized in the origin of life and in science's relationship with Christianity through history.
>
> He is co-author of *The Mystery of Life's Origin* and also *The Soul of Science*. He is Academic Editor of the high school biology book *Of Pandas and People*. He has contributed significant chapters to the books *God and Culture* and *The Creation Hypothesis*.
>
> He has published technical articles in *Journal of Inorganic Chemistry*, *Journal of Scientific Instruments*, and *Journal of Cell Biology*.
>
> He has lectured widely in American universities including Princeton University, Yale University, University of Michigan, University of Delaware, Rice University, Texas Universtiy, Johns Hopkins University, Vanderbilt University, and Harvard

> Law School.
>
> He has lectured outside the country at the Korean Advanced Institute of Science, the Russian Academy of Science, and in various universities in Mongolia, Romania, Poland, Hungary, and the former Czechoslovakia.
>
> He has held appointments at Slovak Technical University in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, the Biomathematical Institute in Craiova, Romania, and at Charles University in Prague, where he was a Templeton scholar in the department of natural sciences.
>
> He is a member of American Chemical Society, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Fellow of American Institute of Chemistry, American Scientific Affiliation, and Discovery Institute.
>
> He and his wife Carole homeschooled two sons, both of whom are college graduates. He is a survivor of two bouts of cancer, which left him with one leg and one lung. He and his wife reside near Atlanta, Georgia, where they teach homeschooled teens at Konos Academy. He also is writing two books, punctuated by speaking stints.

Here's the lecture I liked so much featuring Charles Thaxton:

And here are the questions:

1. How did you first get interested in the origin of life?
2. How did you come to write The Mystery of Life's Origin with Walter Bradley and Roger Olsen?
3. Was there an advantage to having the three of you collaborate on the project?
4. What is the primary argument of your book, The Mystery of Life's Origin?
5. Have scientists come close to developing a plausible naturalistic explanation to the origin of life or do you still consider the origin of life to be a mystery?
6. Do you see a particular irony in the timing of Stanley Miller's experiments and the discovery of DNA by Watson and Crick?
7. How does the emergence of modern genetics tie in with the Darwinian scenario of life going from simple to complex?
8. What are the major problems with origin of life simulation experiments?
9. Isn't it rather impressive that amino acids were produced in the Miller experiments?
10. How close is the development of amino acids to the threshold of life?
11. What are the steps involved in producing proteins from amino acids?
12. Why are amino acids isolated during this process?
13. How can the investigator affect the outcome of a simulation experiment?
14. How did you evaluate the different chemical evolution experiments?
15. Are the initial conditions in the simulation experiments plausible?
16. What did the earth's early atmosphere contain?
17. Will the simulation experiments work with this atmosphere?
18. There seems to be an underlying assumption that the origin of life resulted without any intelligent input whatsoever yet the simulation experiments appear to rely upon

intelligent guidance. Could you comment on this irony?
19. Are there any natural processes that would have filtered out destructive ultraviolet light?
20. What additional steps beyond creating amino acids would be required to develop life?
21. What is so difficult about making proteins or nucleic acids?
22. In addition to the energy problem in protein synthesis isn't there a sequencing problem?
23. Are DNA sequences analogous to a written language?
24. Has Hubert Yockey made similar claims?
25. In The Mystery of Life's Origin you refer to order, randomness, and specified complexity. Could you give us an overview of these concepts?
26. What do you think the presence of specified complexity in a living system indicates about its origin?
27. In inferring the necessity of intelligence to produce life haven't you ventured from the realm of science to religion?
28. Could you summarize the reasons why you believe intelligence was involved in the origin of life?
29. What are the major objections to your current point of view?
30. How was The Mystery of Life's Origin received by the scientific community?
31. What was Dean Kenyon's response to your critiques of his book, Biochemical Predestination?
32. What was Dean Kenyon's response to The Mystery of Life's Origin?
33. Were you a bit apprehensive about meeting Kenyon after writing a book which was quite critical of his views in Biochemical Predestination?
34. Are self-organizational theories plausible?
35. Would you comment on the work done by Prigogine and Eigen?
36. What is your assessment of RNA scenarios?
37. What other problems do you see with an RNA world?

This is an argument you never hear in William Lane Craig debates, but it's worth knowing well.

Related posts

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information

ID critics do not read ID books before reviewing them

May 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> As a friend of ours puts it, Jonathan Wells's *The Myth of Junk DNA* is in the process of being "Ayala'ed." To "Ayala" a book is to attack it in review without having bothered to read or even read much about it, simply on the basis of what you think it probably says given your uninformed preconceptions about the author. The term comes from the wonderful instance where distinguished biologist Francisco Ayala pompously "reviewed" Stephen Meyer's *Signature in the Cell* for the Biologos Foundation website while giving clear evidence of not having cracked the book open or even looked at the table of contents.
>
> Thus we have several posts from University of Toronto biochemist Larry Moran, criticizing *Myth* while being totally open about not having read it first. Moran wrote no fewer than four posts on the book in this fashion, claiming as an excuse that *Myth* would not be published in Canada until May 31. (In fact, the book was available for purchase from Amazon since early May.) And now, as Casey already noted, we have *Forbes* science writer John Farrell, citing Moran as his source — a "double Ayala," so to speak, where you attack a book without reading it citing as justification a review by someone else who also hasn't read it.
>
> Farrell thinks the myth of junk DNA is itself a myth — that "scientists never dismissed junk DNA in the literature." In other words, Wells has set up a straw man. Of course, not having looked at the book, Farrell can't have consulted Dr. Wells's fifty pages of notes documenting his argument. The notes may be downloaded for free here. (Also available in Canada.)

So this is what criticism of intelligent design amounts to… denouncing a book before reading it.

Biophysicist Cornelius Hunter explains why reading the book is not necessary for Darwinists – because Darwinism is impervious to evidential concerns.

Excerpt:

> This centuries old framework for naturalism is key to understanding evolution today. Science writers such as Farrell report that scientists have discovered, for instance, "just how not-so-intelligently designed the human genome actually is," but this is not a scientific conclusion. For unlike the target of his criticism (the ID theory) which refers to complexity rather than goodness of design, evolutionary thought and its underlying naturalism framework refer to the design's

> metaphysics. As Farrell explains:
>
> > Many mutations are neutral, or can be easily overcome by technology. And some of them cause a great deal of psychological suffering, such as the mutation that causes **trimethylaminuria**, which is physically harmless but causes the victims to smell like rotten fish no matter how clean they are. But many other mutations are deadly or, worse yet, can cause a person to have a lifetime of suffering. Perhaps the most disturbing mutation is the one that causes **Lesch-Nyhan syndrome**. This one mutation, of a single amino acid in a protein, causes the victim to have an uncontrollable compulsion for self-mutilation: they chew their own lips and fingers, and find sharp objects to stab their faces and eyes. **The victims are fully able to feel their pain and they know what they are doing, but cannot control it**.
> >
> > **Obviously to argue such mutations are the product of intentional design is to suggest the deity or intelligence responsible, is something of a monster**.
>
> Indeed. Leibniz was concerned about the evil in the world, but he had no idea how deeply it runs. It is truly abominable, and it makes for a moving and powerful argument that no good creator who has the power to create a universe would ever create this one.
>
> Whether by the Epicurean's swerving atoms, or science's natural laws, the world must have arisen on its own.
>
> How could anyone deny this obvious conclusion? This and other metaphysical arguments leave no room for debate. Evolution must be true. We may not know how it occurred, but it is a fact.
>
> The powerful theory of evolution hangs on this framework of thought that mandates naturalism. The science is weak but the metaphysics are strong. This is the key to understanding evolutionary thought. The weak arguments are scientific and the strong arguments, though filled with empirical observation and scientific jargon, are metaphysical. The stronger the argument, the more theological or philosophical.

(Emphasis is in the original)

And I recommend you read the whole post, especially if you've never read anything by Cornelius Hunter.

So the reason why Darwinists don't care about evidence is because evidence is irrelevant once you pre-suppose the religion of naturalism. And you presuppose the religion of naturalism because of the problem of evil and suffering. I.e. – "based on my childhood caricature of God as the cosmic Santa Claus, I now see that evolution must be true, because my cosmic Santa Claus God cannot have any purpose for allowing the evil and suffering I see in nature." Science has nothing to do with it. Nature is not nice, and so God

didn’t make nature. And that’s the end of the discussion.

These Darwinian critics of ID are really just close-minded religious fundamentalists whose principal response to experimental science is uninformed religious bluster. You don’t get an education when you take classes from the Darwinbots – you get indoctrinated. And if you dissent you get failed or fired. It’s that simple. They don’t debate you – they censor you. They don’t produce evidence for their views, they insult you. How dare you call their religion into question by appealing to facts? Darwinists don’t like facts. They don’t like evidence.

Related posts

- Jonathan Wells is interviewed about his new book on Junk DNA
- ID researchers “marked down” in science classes by unqualified professor
- Has the progress of science vindicated Mike Behe or Ken Miller?
- What kinds of predictions does intelligent design make?
- Audio of debate between Stephen Meyer and Peter Atkins on intelligent design
- Science Daily reports that there is no such thing as Junk RNA
- Science Daily reports the biological functions supported by Junk DNA
- Audio debate between William Dembski and Lewis Wolpert about intelligent design
- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Richard Dawkins agrees that there is no naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel’s TV show

Paul Ryan responds to his critics on Medicare reform

May 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from the liberal Washington Post that quotes Ryan explaining why he made the video.

Excerpt:

> We can no longer let politicians in Washington deny the danger to Medicare – the danger is all too real, and the health of our nation's seniors is far too important. We have to save Medicare to avoid disruptions in benefits for current seniors, and to strengthen the program for future generations. House Republicans have put forward a plan to do just that. Democratic leaders in Congress have failed to produce a plan – it has been 755 days since Senate Democrats even passed a budget. Meanwhile, the President's plan would empower a panel of 15 unelected bureaucrats to cut Medicare for current seniors, while failing to save the program for future retirees.
>
> This video lays out the clear choice our nation faces on Medicare: Will Medicare become a program in which a board of bureaucrats manages its bankruptcy by denying care to seniors? Or will leaders work together to save and strengthen Medicare by empowering seniors to choose health care plans that work best for them, with less support for the wealthy and more help for the poor and the sick? House Republicans have advanced solutions to save Medicare. Instead of working with us, the leaders of the Democratic Party have opted to play politics with the health security of America's seniors.

It's probably the best video I've ever seen to explain the benefits of consumer-driven health care, as opposed to government-run rationing of health care by a board of unelected elites. Either we choose Paul Ryan's plan or we pay our money and then wait in line for health care that someone else will approve, or not.

UPDATE: New video from Jennifer Rubin's latest column:

I agree with him.

Jay Richards asks: what should Christians believe about global warming?

May 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Boundless.

Excerpt:

> The big environmental issue nowadays is global warming. Anyone who watches or reads the news even occasionally has been told that humans are causing global warming through all the fossil fuels we're burning. They've also been told that this warming process eventually will prove catastrophic if we don't reverse course as soon as possible.
>
> As thinking Christians and good stewards, how should we respond?
>
> The short answer is, we should respond thoughtfully. Thoughtless stewards are rarely good stewards.
>
> Notice that my brief summary of the global warming controversy bundled together several distinct claims. To think clearly about this issue, we have to tease apart this bundle of claims and consider each one. For each claim, there is a corresponding question we need to answer. And it's only *after* answering these questions that we can be in a position to determine what, if anything, we ought to do about global warming.
>
> Here are the four central questions:
>
> 1. Is the earth warming?
> 2. If the earth is warming, is human activity (like carbon dioxide emissions) causing it?
> 3. If the earth is warming, and we're causing it, is that bad overall?
> 4. If the earth is warming, we're causing it, and that's bad, would any of the proposed "solutions" (e.g., the Kyoto Protocol, legislative restrictions on carbon dioxide emissions) make any difference?

If you like this article, you download a video of a lecture on this same topic, or listen to the audio from the lecture. The lecture was delivered at the University of California, Davis.

New study shows how taxpayer-funding increases number of abortions

May 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.
Excerpt:

> A major pro-life group is responding to the study released by a pro-abortion organization saying abortion rates have fallen for women as a whole but increased for women below the poverty line. The National Right to Life Committee blames taxpayer funding.
>
> As LifeNews reported, the new study in the journal Obstetrics & Gynecology indicates the abortion rate has decreased in the United States — good news because it means more pregnant women are opting against having an abortion. However, the report presents news that should spark a drive to help more women below the poverty level find pregnancy resources and support because it indicates poor women are having abortions at a higher rate than before.
>
> The new report was published by the Guttmacher Institute, a pro-abortion research group formerly affiliated with the Planned Parenthood abortion business. According to Guttmacher, poor women accounted for 42% of all abortions in 2008, and their abortion rate increased 18% between 2000 and 2008, from 44.4 to 52.2 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15–44. In comparison, the national abortion rate for 2008 was 19.6 per 1,000, reflecting an 8% decline from a rate of 21.3 in 2000.
>
> NRLC officials disputed Guttmacher's claims that restrictions on abortion "disproportionately affect" poor women.
>
> "Data showing an eight percent drop in abortion rates across the board from 2000 to 2008 are encouraging," said Randall K. O'Bannon, Ph.D., National Right to Life director of education and research.
>
> "Guttmacher suggests that higher abortion rates among poorer woman and abortion restrictions are somehow connected, yet it's a thesis that goes undefended," O'Bannon further noted. "How common sense regulations like right-to-know laws, which tell women about abortion's risks and alternatives which are better for both them and their unborn children, and similar protective measures, are supposed to hurt poor women is hard to fathom."
>
> The researcher says the overall downward trend seems to indicate that such laws, along with the assistance provided by pregnancy care centers, which provide lifesaving alternatives to abortion, are enabling more women to choose life for their unborn child. However, several states – California, New York and at least a dozen others – publicly fund abortion for poor women with taxpayer

> money, which O'Bannon blames for increasing the abortion rates for poor women receiving the free or reduced-cost abortions.
>
> "While the abortion industry saw declines among most demographic groups, it just happened to see growth among women for whom states were covering abortion costs," observed O'Bannon. "The fact is, when tax dollars pay for abortion, you get more abortion."
>
> […]O'Bannon noted: "The abortion industry likes to argue that high abortion rates are due to insufficient government funding for 'family planning,' but the record seems at odds with that assertion. As abortion industry giant Planned Parenthood has received hundreds of millions of tax dollars each year, abortions at their facilities have steadily increased at rates that very nearly match their increases in government funding."

I really like when pro-lifers have thought about abortion as an economic problem, and are willing to embrace (in part) economic solutions. I know a lot of pro-lifers who will accept nothing less than a full ban on all abortions right now today. They do not understand incremental measures. The same pro-lifers who do not understand incremental pro-life policies usually don't understand pro-life arguments either. They just haven't thought about the issue as a problem to solve, but only as a hard-line pose to impress their friends.

These uninformed pro-lifers do not want to think about the causes of abortion, nor about the incentives to abort, nor about incremental measures that will reduce the number of abortions, such as parental notification laws, mandatory sonograms or waiting periods. Pro-life legislators can only legislate based on what the public opinion will support (and maybe a little bit over that line). In the meantime, there is a battle for public opinion that needs to be waged by each individual pro-lifer with his neighbors, using arguments and evidence that are convincing to the non-pro-life person (i.e. – not "The Bible says" or "The Pope says", but "the statistics show" or "the science shows").

Related posts

- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
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Should you shut down religious debates to make people feel better?

May 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Wes at Reason to Stand.

Excerpt:

Easter Sunday I participated in a lively discussion with a group of atheists on the topic of the resurrection. It was all kicked off by a friend who posted "Happy Zombie Jesus Day!"

And while the exchange with the non-Christians on the thread went pretty well, I was dumbfounded when the following was posted:

> Dan can not prove the absence of God any more than believers can absolutely prove the existence of God. This is why it is called Faith (or lack of). So at the end of the day we should either celebrate either the second coming or the Easter Bunny bringing candy, whichever works for us individually, and move on. My position on the subject is my position, it neither grows stronger or weaker if I get someone else's input. Actually, someone passionately challenging my position may only serve to strengthen my resolve. So for many Dan may actually be working to further solidify their faith. For others his comments may strike a chord of familiarity. At the end of the day those that believed in the second coming still will and those that think a pink bunny actually brings candy… well, they still will too. So, whatever you celebrate today, enjoy the fact that Winter is over and Summer is around the corner!

On the surface this may seem like a simple plea of "why don't we all just get along?" But I suspected something else, so I posted this by way of reply:

> George, your position sounds rather anti-intellectual to me and decidedly post modern. Facts matter and our discovery of them is absolutely paramount. If I am holding on to false beliefs I would certainly like to know and the best way for me to go about doing that is to regularly expose myself and my positions to others who hold differing opinions. Sure, that exchange may strengthen my resolve, Dan knows I appreciate his help in making me a better Christian, but it may also cause me to abandon false beliefs. The worst thing we could do, however, is to think that our persuit of truth is of no importance or to think that encouraging others to examine their positions does not enrich all of us (how's that for self-interest Dan?).

To this George responded:

> Wes, enjoy the debate. I hope you find what you are looking for.

> I am open to debate things that can be proven, debating things that can't are

> largely mental masturbation. So I go with my beliefs on those, and you are welcome to respect those or not. Whatever your choice, I am fine with it. Not a factor here.

Read the rest of the post, and tell me what you think.

I thought I would post this since I am running a little late this morning, and then I'll update the post with my comments in the next few minutes.

NY state public schools spend the most money but get lousy results

May 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

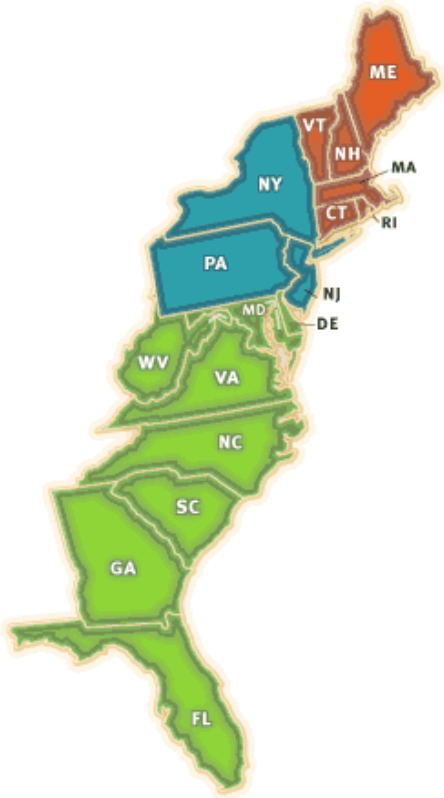

Eastern United States Map
From the New York Post. (H/T Jammie Wearing Fool)

Excerpt:

> New York state's school systems deserve an F — in financial accountability.
>
> State taxpayers spend substantially more money on education than any other state in the nation but get far less in return on their investment, according to a shocking new federal study released yesterday.
>
> New York schools on average spent $18,126 per student in the 2008-2009 school year — tops in the nation, the Census Bureau reports.
>
> That's nearly $2,000 more than the $16,271 spent in neighboring New Jersey and 80 percent higher than the national average of $10,499.
>
> But the Empire State's four-year high-school graduation rate of 73.5 percent ranked a lowly 39th in the nation, two points below the national average, according to a separate analysis by the National Center for Education Statistics.
>
> By comparison, Massachusetts — which spends $4,000 less per student — has an 83 percent graduation rate.
>
> New York has doubled its per-student spending over 10 years. For five consecutive years the state has spent the most per student in the nation.

> […]One main reason for New York's sky-high spending is it pays its teachers significantly more in salaries and benefits than any other state.
>
> New York spent $12,524 per student to cover instructional salaries and benefits, nearly double the national average of $6,369. Even New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts spent $3,000 less per student than New York did on teacher pay and benefits.

Teacher unions are one of the main Democrat special interest groups. Teacher unions oppose being held accountable by parents. They don't want to have their pay and benefits be conditional on producing quality educations for children. They just want to be able to collect exorbitant salaries and benefits while they indoctrinate your children with leftist politics and liberal values. They don't care what parents want, and they don't care about whether your children learn anything that will allow them to achieve independence and prosperity.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- New Jersey per-pupil cost is $17,800
- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

Is Oprah Winfrey a Christian?

May 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from CNN.

Excerpt:

> Lofton, a professor of U.S. religious history at Yale University and the author of "Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon," was intrigued that Winfrey had mentioned Jesus, since she had used his name sparingly on air.
>
> "Early on (in her career) she was more comfortable in saying that but over time began to use this more universal language of 'spirit,'" said Lofton, who wrote about Oprah's final show for CNN's Belief Blog.
>
> Lofton says Winfrey wants to be viewed as someone who "translates and understands herself as a Christian woman" but reflects a modern attitude about religion and religious institutions.
>
> And that has angered a few folks.
>
> In 2008, Winfrey endorsed the book "A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose," helping it sell more than 3.5 million copies after the talk-show host selected it for her book club. Winfrey and the book's author, Eckhart Tolle, took part in a webinar in which she angered some Christians by saying that Jesus didn't come to die on the cross.
>
> "It really was about him coming to show us how to do it, how to be, to show us the Christ-consciousness that he had and that that consciousness abides with all of us," she told the audience.
>
> One viewer even asked the question on the Oprah.com message boards: Is Oprah a Christian?
>
> Pistis07 wrote: "I was surprised because I had always thought she was a Christian but after flicking through her website and watching clips of more shows where she seems to be promoting a type of New Age religion and books from 'New Age spiritualists,' I really doubt that she is a Christian in the way Jesus explained and most Christians understand. Or perhaps she's just confused about the nature of God."
>
> It was an issue her critics seized on. They said she wasn't promoting the God of the Bible but instead was indoctrinating her audience into a New Age spiritualism.
>
> Authors Josh McDowell and Dave Sterrett say as much in their book, "'O' God: A Dialogue on Truth and Oprah's Spirituality." Sterrett told Crosswalk.com in October 2009 that Winfrey "reflects the common American practice of choosing whatever beliefs seem most attractive and leaving the rest."
>
> Her message in the final years of her show was that the truth of life was within

> the individual, several commentators have said.
>
> “Christians aren’t people who have gotten in touch with their inner selves, but those who actually have Christ living inside of them through the Holy Spirit,” McDowell told Crosswalk.
>
> What Winfrey tried to get across is her belief that there wasn’t just one right way to be connected to God, Lofton argues.
>
> “The only right way is the way that she herself articulates and embodies, which is multiplicity,” she said. “You can be many things. There are many paths to God, she says. It’s that multiplicity which very much marks contemporary religious life.”

Some people evidently think that she is not. And I agree with those people.

Consider this article by William Lane Craig about salvation and religious pluralism.

Excerpt:

> “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4.12). So proclaimed the early preachers of the gospel of Christ. Indeed, this conviction permeates the New Testament and helped to spur the Gentile mission. Paul invites his Gentile converts to recall their pre-Christian days: “Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2.12). The burden of the opening chapters of Romans is to show that this desolate situation is the general condition of mankind. Though God’s eternal power and deity are evident through creation (1.20) and the demands of His moral law implanted on the hearts of all persons (2.15) and although God offers eternal life to all who seek Him in well-doing (2.7), the tragic fact of the matter is that in general people suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ignoring the Creator (1.21) and flouting the moral law (1.32). Therefore, “all men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands, no one seeks for God…'” (3.9-1 1). Sin is the great leveler, rendering all needy of God’s forgiveness and salvation. Given the universality of sin, all persons stand morally guilty and condemned before God, utterly incapable of redeeming themselves through righteous acts (3.19-20). But God in His grace has provided a means of salvation from this state of condemnation: Jesus Christ, by his expiatory death, redeems us from sin and justifies us before God (3.21-26). It is through him and through him alone, then, that God’s forgiveness is available (5.12-21). To reject Jesus Christ is therefore to reject God’s grace and forgiveness, to refuse the one means of salvation which God has provided. It is to remain under His condemnation and wrath, to forfeit eternally salvation. For someday God will judge all men, “inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of

our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (II Thessalonians 1.8-9).

It was not just Paul who held to this exclusivistic, Christocentric view of salvation. No less than Paul, the apostle John saw no salvation outside of Christ. In his gospel, Jesus declares, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14.6). John explains that men love the darkness of sin rather than light, but that God has sent His Son into the world to save the world and to give eternal life to everyone who believes in the Son. "He who believes is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God" (John 3.18). People are already spiritually dead; but those who believe in Christ pass from death to life (John 5.24). In his epistles, John asserts that no one who denies the Son has the Father and identifies such a person as the antichrist (I John 2.22-23; 4.3; II John 9). In short, "He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life" (I John 5.12). In John's Apocalypse, it is the Lamb alone in heaven and on earth and under the earth who is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals, for it was he that by his blood ransomed men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation on the earth (Revelation 5.1-14). In the consummation, everyone whose name is not found written in the Lamb's book of life is cast into the everlasting fire reserved for the devil and his cohorts (Revelation 20.15).

One could make the same point from the catholic epistles and the pastorals. It is the conviction of the writers of the New Testament that "there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all" (I Timothy 2.5-6).

Indeed, it is plausible that such was the attitude of Jesus himself. New Testament scholarship has reached something of a consensus that the historical Jesus came on the scene with an unparalleled sense of divine authority, the authority to stand and speak in the place of God Himself and to call men to repentance and faith.{1} Moreover, the object of that faith was he himself, the absolute revelation of God: "All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matthew 11.27) .{2} On the day of judgment, people's destiny will be determined by how they responded to him: "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; but he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God" (Luke 12.8-9).{3} Frequent warnings concerning hell are found on Jesus' lips, and it may well be that he believed that most of mankind would be damned, while a minority of mankind would be saved: "Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For

> the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matthew 7:13-14) .{4}
>
> A hard teaching, no doubt; but the logic of the New Testament is simple and compelling: The universality of sin and the uniqueness Christ's expiatory sacrifice entail that there is no salvation apart from Christ.

The Bible is very clear that belief in Christ's atoning death on the cross is required for a right relationship with God. I find it interesting that so many Christians, especially Christian women, have so much respect for a person who is not even a believer. Can you really rely on a non-Christian to give you advice about morality and spirituality? Is she an authority on the Bible? An authority on logic? An authority on science? An authority on history? Has she debated her views with scholars who disagree with her – as might be done in a courtroom where evidence trumps feelings? Shouldn't you rely instead on the Bible, and the work of authentic Christian scholars who accept what the Bible teaches?

Alabama Senate Republicans pass several pro-life bills

May 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

State Senator George Reed (R-AL)
From Life News.

Excerpt:

> After the Alabama state Senate voted to not participate in the abortion funding that will take place under the Obamacare law, legislators then approved a slate of pro-life bills that would limit abortions.
>
> The measures are the first pro-life pieces of legislation to advance in the state Senate, thanks to the 2010 elections allowing pro-life lawmakers control of the body.
>
> The chamber approved SB 298, by Senator Allen, which makes it unlawful to administer any abortion-inducing drug to a woman without her receiving an exam by a physician and would provide a physician with guidelines to follow in administering any abortion-inducing drugs. The bill targets the webcam or telemed abortion process that is generating controversy in Iowa where Planned Parenthood is denying women an in-person consult with a doctor prior to getting the dangerous RU 486 abortion drug that has killed dozens of women worldwide and injured another 1,100 in the U.S. alone as of 2006 FDA figures.
>
> That legislation passed 26-6.
>
> The Senate passed SB 301, by Senator Williams, to defines the term “persons” as used in the Code of Alabama 1975, as including all humans from the moment of fertilization and implantation in the womb. The bill can’t ban abortions, but allows the state to declare that human life begins at that point. The Senate voted 23-7 for that measure.
>
> The chamber also passed SB 308, by Senator Scofield, that requires a physician to perform an ultrasound, provide verbal explanation of the ultrasound, and

> display the images to pregnant women before performing an abortion. The measure is similar to measures approved in other states that allow women to see the ultrasound of their baby, something abortion centers don't typically show despite doing them to determine the age of the unborn child before the abortion.
>
> The Senate voted 26-3 for the ultrasound legislation.
>
> Lt. Governor Kay Ivey applauded the votes, saying, "History is being made in the Alabama Legislature. I commend Senator Greg Reed for all of his hard work in making the passage of this bill a reality. The Alabama Legislature is working together to help protect and save the lives of our future generations."
>
> Sen. Greg Reed added: "This past November's election had consequences, and in this case, those positive consequences allowed us to pass the first pro-life bill in years."
>
> The lopsided votes on the five bills were a departure from the days when Democrats controlled the state Senate and pro-life bills died in committee.

Elections have consequences.

Men are the biggest losers in the recession

May 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the American Spectator.

Excerpt:

> Over the past decade, the total number of jobs for women went up by close to a million. Meanwhile, men lost more than 3 million jobs. From 1960 to 2008, the average unemployment rate for men 25 years and older was 4.2 percent. In the last two years, it has more than doubled, shooting up to 8.9 percent. By contrast, unemployment for women of the same age and for the same period of time went from 4.7 percent to 7.2 percent, an increase of 52 percent. The disparity is more striking if one considers that women's rate of participation in the workforce has risen sharply since 1960 while the percentage of men in the job market has been shrinking.
>
> One reason that men's employment rate lags behind is that there has been negative growth in the types of jobs men historically have occupied. In the last 10 years, 5.5 million manufacturing jobs were lost. That's one-third of our manufacturing base in an industry where men make up 70 percent of the workforce. In construction, where 87 percent of positions are filled by men, more than 1.4 million jobs went away during that time frame. Approximately 4.4 million jobs have been added in the education and health care sectors, but women dominate this growing field as they make up 77 percent of the work force.
>
> It's working-class men, not those who occupy elite positions in finance and government, who are suffering. The hemorrhaging of manufacturing and other well-paying jobs in America means that a rising number of young American men face dwindling prospects for earning a middle-class wage in the future. Young male unemployment is at 19 percent. More than 15 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans (most of whom are male) were unemployed in January 2011. African-American males also have been hit hard. Ten years ago, both African-American men and women had the same unemployment rate of 8.2 percent. Since then, the men's rate has more than doubled and now is almost four points higher than the unemployment rate for women. Similarly, Hispanic men now have a 1.7 percent higher unemployment rate than Hispanic women, whom they historically have outperformed.
>
> With growing numbers of out-of-work young men comes a volatile mix of negative social outcomes: they are less likely to marry, less likely to be a stable parental force for the children they father, and more likely to engage in violent behavior.
>
> One would think that Washington policymakers would see these developments as

> a cause for concern. Nonetheless, for more than a decade, they have looked the other way as good American jobs have been shipped overseas, outsourced or have simply gone away. Ironically, our business tax system incentivizes our companies to export jobs and prosperity overseas. Also, our government welfare system all but discourages an intact family of a father and mother by the way it distributes money.

Men are not going to be able to fulfill their roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader if they do not have the authority that comes from being the principle/sole breadwinner in the family. Right now, we have a situation where the schools are discriminating against men by having a tiny minority of male teachers, as well as co-ed classrooms. Men cannot learn as well when they are taught primarily by women and are distracted by female peers and do not have a separate male-focused curriculum. And that is why men now earn 40% of bachelor degrees on many campuses. Government's massive spending and job-killing policies leave the few men who can graduate in an unstable employment situation where marriage becomes too risky. De-valuing a man's savings with inflation doesn't help, either.

Republicans respond to pro-lifers desire to cut UN abortion funding

May 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> Earlier this month, LifeNews.com reported on a public vote House Republicans were taking, seeing input from American voters on which one of three ideas for saving taxpayer dollars was the most attractive and should become the next bill pushed in Congress. With thousands of pro-life advocates encouraged to vote, legislation cutting UNFPA funding won out and will now become the next piece of legislation Republicans will advance.
>
> The vote at the popular YouCut web site makes it so the public will be able to track the progressof the legislation as it moves through the legislative process.
>
> Rep. Renee Ellmers, of North Carolina, will be introducing legislation soon.
>
> "This is going to save American taxpayers $400 million dollars over a 10 year period and it's just another part of what we're doing here in Washington to cut wasteful spending that we see happening," she said in a new video introducing the bill. "And I am very excited to be part of this program and each week we will have more cuts coming forward."
>
> The legislation would result in cutting the funding President Barack Obama put in place for the UNFPA, an agency that promotes abortion and works hand-in-hand with family planning officials in China enforcing the one-child, forced-abortion policy.
>
> […]Steve Mosher, the head of the Population Research Institute and the leading campaigner exposing China and the one-child policy, says the UNFPA is the UN population control agency that is complicit in China's brutal one-child policy, which is carried out through a program of coercive abortion and involuntary sterilization. He hopes the YouCut program receives enough votes to move the pro-life bill forward.
>
> "With just a click of your mouse, you can cut funding to the United Nations Population Fund,' he said in an email to LifeNews. "Defunding UNFPA could be considered by the House soon, but only if this option gets the most votes on the YouCut website. That's where you come in. If you think the United States House of Representatives should cut funding to the UNFPA, then vote for that option on the YouCut web site, and urge everyone you know to do the same."
>
> Pro-life blogger Jill Stanek also encouraged people to vote in it.
>
> "How many times have you been forwarded an email to vote on a meaningless opinion poll?" she asked. "Well, for once, here's a poll that can really save the

> lives of preborn children. If you have friends who are solely fiscal conservatives, tell them that at $400 million, this choice will save taxpayers the most money of any of this week's 3 options.
>
> The YouCut web site talks about the history of UNFPA funding.
>
> "In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan withheld all U.S. contributions to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) after determining that UNFPA participated in the support and co-management of China's population control program," it explains. "Under the Bush administration, the U.S. withheld funds for the UNFPA from America's annual contributions to the United Nations due to UNFPA's complicity in China's one-child policy enforced through coercive abortion and involuntary sterilization, but the Obama administration and the 111th Congress resumed contributions to UNFPA."
>
> The budget House Republicans wanted sought to terminate UNFPA funding, which stood at $55 million in FY 2010. UNFPA funding was cut by $15 million, to $40 million in the final agreement over FY 2011 spending, but the remainder is sent to the pro-abortion agency.
>
> After Obama restored the funding, Rep. Chris Smith tried to offer an amendment to revert the language back to the original ban on such funding, but House Democrats blocked him from doing so. Then, pro-life Sen. Roger Wicker offered a similar amendment but the Senate defeated it.

Republicans are opposed to funding coerced and sex-selection abortions in China. If Republicans can cut off the money to the United Nations, then maybe the coerced and sex-selection abortions in China will decrease. Regardless of that, we taxpayers can certainly use the money better on our own projects than the government of China can. For example, if I get my money back from the United Nations, I could give it to a crisis pregnancy center. Let me decide – it's my money. I earned it.

What is the meaning of Memorial Day?

May 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Arlington National Cemetary

What is Memorial Day? It's the day that we remember all those brave men and women who have sacrificed to protect our liberties and our lives so that we could be safe from harm.

This video may help you to understand.

From Hot Air, a quote from Ronald Reagan.

> Memorial Day is an occasion of special importance to all Americans, because it is a day sacred to the memory of all those Americans who made the supreme sacrifice for the liberties we enjoy. We will never forget or fail to honor these heroes to whom we owe so much. We honor them best when we resolve to cherish and defend the liberties for which they gave their lives. Let us resolve to do all in our power to assure the survival and the success of liberty so that our children and their children for generations to come can live in an America in which freedom's light continues to shine.
>
> The Congress, in establishing Memorial Day, called for it to be a day of tribute to America's fallen, and also a day of national prayer for lasting peace. This Nation has always sought true peace. We seek it still. Our goal is peace in which the highest aspirations of our people, and people everywhere, are secure: peace with freedom, with justice, and with opportunity for human development. This is the permanent peace for which we pray, not only for ourselves but for all generations.
>
> The defense of peace, like the defense of liberty, requires more than lip service. It requires vigilance, military strength, and the willingness to take risks and to make sacrifices. The surest guarantor of both peace and liberty is our unflinching

> resolve to defend that which has been purchased for us by our fallen heroes.
>
> On Memorial Day, let us pray for peace — not only for ourselves, but for all those who seek freedom and justice.

And check some of my Medal of Honor posts:

- Navy SEAL Michael Murphy awarded Medal of Honor
- How Sal Giunta earned a Medal of Honor and lived to tell about it
- What can Christians learn from Rob Miller's Medal of Honor story?

If you want to help out our troops, you can send them things through Soldier's Angels.

God Bless Our Troops!

UPDATE: I am listening to this podcast from the Heritage Foundation about the origin and meaning of Memorial Day.

For more reading, why not check out some of the military bloggers?

- BlackFive
- Mudville Gazette
- Froggy Ruminations
- Michael Yon
- Bill Roggio
- Adventures of Chester

If you want to help out our troops, you can send them things through Soldier's Angels.

Republican Allen West debates economic policy on Fox News Sunday

May 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace.

Here's the transcript.

Excerpt:

WALLACE: Congressman West, as we saw in the special election up in New York state this week, where the Democrat beat the Republican and Medicare was a big issue, as we see in the national polls a lot of people, especially seniors, don't want to see Medicare changed this way.

WEST: Well, I think when you look at Paul Ryan's plan, first of all, there is no change for anyone who is a senior 55 years and above. But as I sit here right now, I'm 50 years of age. And we already know that the board of trustee has said, you got 13 years and something very bad is going to happen with Medicare. So, what is going to be there for myself when I get 63 to 65?

So, I think the thing that we see is at least there's a plan out there to try to have some type of reform.

And there was a great article by Mr. Stanley Druckenmiller in The Wall Street Journal back in the 15th of May that talked about the fact that the financial markets, a lot of these, you know, bond markets are looking to see: are we going to have some type of long- term viable solution and plan as we go forward?

WALLACE: But let me pick up on that, Congressman Edwards, because the knock against the Democrats is you don't have a plan, that congressional Democrats didn't pass a budget last year. Senate Democrats aren't offering a budget this year — President Obama talks having an independent panel of medical experts who are going to find $20 billion of cuts somewhere. At least they've got a plan.

EDWARDS: Well, I think it's not true that we don't have a plan. And, in fact, when we passed the Affordable Care Act last year, we put in some real markers for Medicare that in fact reduced Medicare costs. We invested in preventive care for seniors because we know that the real drivers of Medicare are these long-term costs for chronic care that happens at the — you know, at the end of life.

You know, Republicans are very interesting because in their budget what they would do is repeal preventive care. Prescription drug coverage — we also closed the donut hole there, which is costing seniors a boatload of money and is not very efficient on the system.

So, to say that Democrats don't have a plan I think is incorrect. I mean, in fact, the plan is to preserve and protect Medicare for future generations. And Republicans want to dismantle that.

WEST: Yes, but I think as you sit here and look at the two of us, one of us has voted to cut Medicare. When you look at the fact you voted for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which had $500 million of cuts of Medicare. And we also have this independent payment advisory board, these 15 bureaucrats, that are supposed to control the cost of Medicare. I mean, that's something that really does scare seniors.

What we are talking is something that does not affect any senior, anyone 55 years and above. We're talking about something that does put in some type of viable plan to sustain Medicare for the future, because as we know, it was put out three weeks ago, it won't be there.

EDWARDS: Well, the congressman thinks the seniors are only interested in what's good for them. And what we know about seniors, whether they're in south Florida or in Maryland, is that they actually care about what happens with that next generation. They care about whether we're going to cover preventive care and prescription drug.

WEST: But if you don't have a plan, there is nothing for the next generation.

EDWARDS: And that they are — and that they are not sent in the private market to negotiate with insurance companies. We know that that would be a failure. And that's exactly what the Republican plan calls for. I can't negotiate on —

WALLACE: Let me move on to another thing, because the biggest difference, it seems to me, looking at your two positions on how to deal with the deficit is over taxes.

Congresswoman Edwards, you have a big plan to increase revenues. And let's put it up on the screen. You would raise tax rates for the wealthy. You would raise the estate tax. You would tax capital gains and dividend as ordinary income and you would end tax subsidies for oil and gas companies.

So, raise taxes in the middle of a weak recovery?

EDWARDS: Well, let's be clear — raise tax on the wealthiest 2 percent who have run away with the store for the last 10 years and haven't put money back into the economy. I mean, that's a fact, because if that trickle-down theory had worked, our economy would be in good shape right now.

And so, we do — I do subscribe to a plan that says, you know what? Middle income earners, you've already shared a fair burden of your taxes. But the wealthiest 2 percent have not.

And there's no excuse whatsoever for continuing taxes for people who make over $500,000 a year.

WALLACE: Congressman West, you got something there?

WEST: Yes. I got a very interesting article which was written on the 26th of May by Steven Moore for The Wall Street Journal that talks about — we are talking about a 62 percent top tax rate and the absolutely abysmal effects that it will have on this economy.

And one of the great things he says here is, in the end, "The Tax Foundation recently noted that in 2009, U.S. collected a higher share of income and payroll taxes, 45 percent, from the richest 10 percent of tax files than any other nation, including some such

socialist welfare states."

So, I think that we are already getting a lot of the juice from those top brackets. But go back and look at history, Donna, when we looked at Coolidge and Harding. It took those marginal tax rates down to 29 percent. And the percentage of revenues for GDP grew. But after them came Hoover and Roosevelt who took it from 24 percent up to 83 percent, and the percentage of revenues decreased. Even John F. Kennedy, when he came in and saw a 91 percent marginal tax rate said that was too high. He took it down to 71 percent.

He seems to have all the facts and figures at his fingertips! Just like William Lane Craig, except he's a former Army Lt. Colonel.

Denyse O'Leary explains why theists are lacking courage

May 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Uncommon Descent. Denyse O'Leary answers the question I posed in my previous post: why do otherwise intelligent, ambitious, qualified Christians shy away from answering questions about their faith?

Excerpt:

> Christians confront a deep double standard, to which Darwinism has greatly contributed, by which the atheist position is considered the normal "secular"one and the Christian or other theist position a sort of disloyalty to the public good.
>
> […] Secular materialists use fashionable words like "skeptical" to describe themselves, when they are not skeptical at all. That confuses discourse and enables remarkably fatuous people to shape public opinion. While working on *The Spiritual Brain*, I confronted an astonishing fact: The secular materialist would accept any materialist premise, no matter how implausible, to support his view. In fact, I sometimes ask, is there any proposition fronted in the name of, say, Darwinism (as I did here, that you regard as absurd? I often get blank looks or protests that Darwinism is science and there are no such propositions, and an immediate change of subject. Well, when we hear that, at least we know who we are dealing with.
>
> The Christian/theist labours under no such disability. He can accept a materialist explanation when it fits the facts, but not otherwise. But by acting this way, he becomes – in the eyes of the secular atheist – untrustworthy. He can't be relied on to just shout the party line.
>
> The upshot is that, the Christian risks more, speaking out, and is far more responsible for the need to have intelligent ideas. It's much safer for Christians to bury themselves in fluffy Christian books and sweat off the flab in Christian weight loss programs, and little by little accommodate themselves to the reigning orthodoxy. After a couple of decades, they don't even know.

So basically, I understand her to say that the the "skeptics" are actually so committed to the presupposition of naturalism that they are aggressive and close-minded. Their materialism is functioning as a sort of fundamentalism, much like you would find with Islamic radicals. A Christian can look at some new phenomenon in nature and ask the question: is it explained by materialism or is an intelligence required? But the materialist has to presume the answer before looking at the evidence – so they are close-minded to evidence, because of their non-scientific philosophy of materialism.

There are two ways to have a discussion about nature. You can ask a question and then compare evidence for various hypotheses. That's the non-fundamentalist approach.

That's the approach used by Christians. The naturalist approach is to *not allow questions to be asked* and to *attack the character of the person asking the question.* That's the fundamentalist approach.

And that's where the fear and intimidation comes in. Who wants to debate with someone who is not open to having their religious pre-supposition validated against the evidence? You're just going to get fired, censored, arrested or worse. That's the way it is with fundamentalists like naturalist extremists and Islamic extremists. All kinds of nastiness to others is possible when you are a true believer. Denyse's point is that the intimidation drives theists to avoid these discussions, and that leads to their decision to just focus on other things like careers and weight loss and fluff.

Related posts

- ID critics do not read ID books before reviewing them
- Should ID researchers be "marked down" for defending intelligent design?

Canadian economy growing at 4% – twice as fast as US economy

May 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CTV News.

Excerpt:

> The Canadian economy grew at twice the rate of its American counterpart in early 2011, posting its fastest rate of growth in the past year.
>
> Statistics Canada released figures on Monday showing real gross domestic product grew at an annualized rate of 3.9 per cent during the first quarter in Canada.
>
> South of the border, real GDP grew only 1.8 per cent during the same time period.
>
> […]Also of concern are the balance sheet issues the U.S. faces as a whole, with Finance Minister Jim Flaherty recently telling CTV's Question Period that the debt and deficit problems there "are significant."
>
> […]Output was up for nearly all major industrial sectors, with StatsCan identifying the mining and oil and gas extraction industries as being the largest contributors to growth.

Canada doesn't seem to have a problem with debt or unemployment, partly because they have an all of the above energy production policy. The Democrats are blocking drilling in Alaska, blocking domestic energy production here, while giving away money to foreign countries to develop their energy production. (E.g. – giving money to Brazil, or giving money to China)

Obama has outsourced our energy jobs with his heavy-handed environmentalist regulations.

What can Christians do to prevent abortion?

May 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

WARNING: This post is extremely opposed to Democrats, feminists and the postmodern/relativist/universalist church. Please do not read if you are easily offended.

Consider this account of an abortion. (H/T Mary, The Other McCain)

Excerpt:

> My biological father abandoned my mother while we were toddlers. He was a charming rogue of a gambler who came and went in our lives, leaving a wake of debt and infidelity. My mother had been encouraged to get an abortion (illegally) by more than one family member when she found out she was expecting me, (the middle child). Thankfully she gave birth to me and later to my younger brother, and was a loving mother. When Daddy's gambling debts caused her small teaching salary to be garnished, she filed for a divorce. Even after the first divorce she had been a good mother, taking us to church, reading us the Bible in the morning before school, singing to us at night, and praying with us for our wandering father. She was gentle and supportive and I always knew I could go to her for help. When mother remarried my first stepfather, (who was an alcoholic) things became difficult.
>
> A devastating trauma struck our family in the summer of 1971 when I was 13 years old. My younger brother was killed in a car accident on our way home from a camping trip with our grandparents. He was 10 years old. My grandfather was also killed, my grandmother lost a leg, and my sister and I were injured. The car accident and family trauma triggered a chain of events that led to my mother and first stepfather to divorce.
>
> My stepfather was committed to a mental hospital briefly, and mother had an emotional breakdown. My sister and I went to live with my aunt and uncle for some months.
>
> When we returned home to my mother after the divorce, things were not the same. My mother seemed wounded and disillusioned with life. Without the stability of the family, or the church, we all struggled to recover from my brother's death. She was still working as a teacher but she was living with my second stepfather, though they were not married yet. He is a man I have grown to love and respect over time, yet in the 1970's, when he was living with my mother, he was a different person than he is today and we disliked each other.
>
> My sister and I were left on our own most of the time. Previously, I had been raised going to church, but after the accident we just never went back. My sister and I became angry and rebellious. My sister left home when she was about 16, and backpacked around the country with her boyfriend. There I was at age 15,

> my sister gone, and feeling like I was in the way. There was a sense of being an obstacle to my mothers' relationship with this new man.
>
> My friendships changed from the kids we knew at church to the kids who hung out at the local Teen Center. Some of them took drugs and drank.
>
> […]My mother signed over guardianship of me to Steven after I had moved to Boston. I remember my surprise when Steven told me she had signed the papers and trying to take this in mentally. A sense of vulnerability came over me, knowing that I was his ward, but we were not married. He had not expressed his intentions of a long-term relationship with me. He had mentioned that he wanted guardianship papers so I could travel across state lines when he was on tour. I had told him my mother would not sign me over to him. I asked him how he had got her to do it. He said, "I told her I needed them for you to enroll in school." I felt abandoned by my mother as well as my father and stepfather. Steven was really my only hope at that point.

So now what do we learn from this? Who is responsible for Julia's abortion according to these facts? And what should Christians do to prevent a situation like this from occurring again? Should we wait until the pregnancy happens, or is there a way to attack the root of the problem with pro-family policies and effective church involvement?

First of all, it's important to point out that fatherlessness causes women to engage in early sex.

Consider these facts:

> – Adolescent females between the ages of 15 and 19 years reared in homes without fathers are significantly more likely to engage in premarital sex than adolescent females reared in homes with both a mother and a father.
>
> Source: Billy, John O. G., Karin L. Brewster and William R. Grady. "Contextual Effects on the Sexual Behavior of Adolescent Women." Journal of Marriage and Family 56 (1994): 381-404.
>
> – Children in single parent families are more likely to get pregnant as teenagers than their peers who grow up with two parents.
>
> Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. National Health Interview Survey. Hyattsville, MD 1988.
>
> – A white teenage girl from an advantaged background is five times more likely to become a teen mother if she grows up in a single-mother household than if she grows up in a household with both biological parents.
>
> Source: Whitehead, Barbara Dafoe. "Facing the Challenges of Fragmented Families." The Philanthropy Roundtable 9.1 (1995): 21.
> (Source)

Fatherlessness has many causes, but the most obvious cause is that women freely choose to have sex with men who will not stick around to raise the children. That is why

we have an out-of-wedlock birth rate of over 40% – women are consenting to sex with men who will have not demonstrated that they are willing and capable of committing to marriage and parenting. The choice of who to have sex with is, in virtually every situation, the woman's decision. Women with low self-esteem are especially prone to avoid men who have strong moral character, and definite ideas about religion. They want to avoid being "controlled" or "rejected" when they act immorally. So they deliberately choose men who will not judge them or lead them spiritually. So the blame for fatherlessness lies solely on the woman – she chooses the man who she intends to have sex with.

Women cannot blame an irresponsible MAN for hurting them if they CHOOSE HIM and then he acts… IRRESPONSIBLY. He was irresponsible BEFORE the woman got there, and yet she still chose him of her own free will. Women are very well educated these days, and they have plenty of time to think about marriage. But what I have found is that they often resent the idea of using any criteria for men other than entertainment, feelings and peer-approval. How will they look in wedding pictures, they wonder?

We have already talked a lot about how women choose men using the 180-second rule, based on physical appearances and "confidence". Women are not doing a good job of evaluating men for the role of husband and father. They are choosing based on shoes and voice and shoulders. So of course this is not going to work. Everything else in life requires lots of time spent reading, planning and testing if you hope to have success. But when it comes to men, many young, unmarried women choose irrationally and stupidly, based on selfishness and vanity. And the problem gets worse as successive generations are raised without fathers. Fathers matter. Fathers need to respected for the role they play in parenting.

Politics

Exacerbating the situation is the fact that leftist social engineers push sex education and welfare subsidies for women who chose to deliberately avoid men who are protectors and providers. However, women again do not escape blame here, since 77% of young, unmarried women voted for Obama in 2008, according to exit polls. Obama is a Democrat, and Democrats are the party of sex education, single mother welfare, no-fault divorce, and same-sex marriage. Democrats are the anti-marriage party, and young, unmarried women turn out in droves to vote for Democrats. And these policies cause the out-of-wedlock birth rate to skyrocket.

Naturally, the more that these young, unmarried women vote for bigger and bigger government to bail them out of their own irresponsible choices with men, the higher taxes will go, and the less money marriage-minded men will have. Men with less money DO NOT GET MARRIED. And the decline of boys in the schools isn';t going to help them to find jobs, either. Instead of valuing good men, it seems as though young, unmarried women prefer to marry the government, since government mails out the checks but makes no moral demands. Parenting is left to taxpayer-funded day care and public schools – not fathers. We need to realize that fathers can only be effective when they

have authority in the home, and this is usually related to the fact that they are primary breadwinners.

Postmodernism, moral relativism and universalism in the church

Another factor is the church. Julia's mother was a very devout, spiritual and pious Christian. She attended church regularly, read the Bible and sung all the praise hymns. And how did this affect her decision making? Well – it didn't. And the reason for this is two-fold. First of all, the church has stopped providing boundaries for behaviors and making moral judgments. Churches have embraced postmodernism (there is no truth), moral relativism (moral judgments are evil because people feel bad when they are judged) and universalism (believe anything you want as long as it makes you feel good). Christianity is no longer presented as being TRUE, with evidence and arguments (apologetics). Instead it is presented as something that makes people feel better, and you choose the religion you like.

The purpose of going to church for Julia's mother was to have good feelings and a sense of community. She was not interested in discovering scientific and historical evidence that would make the moral rules of Christianity incumbent on her – she was not interested in moral obligations. Moral rules, like the rules around chastity and courtship, are "too strict". It's better to just take church as another way of feeling happy, and then do whatever you want. I once knew an adulterous woman who had sex with her boyfriends in the same house as her children, yet she loved to attend church and to sing Handel's Messiah at Christmas – for the spectacle and the emotional high. Imagine what view of marriage her children got from that?

Anti-intellectualism in the church

In addition to the failure of the church to defend against postmodernism, moral relativism and universalism, there is the problem of the fundamentalist churches that just preach from the Bible without ANY idea of why the Bible should be taken as an authority. So, not only is the church disinterested in talking about the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability problem, irreducible complexity and so forth, but they are also disinterested in explaining moral issues like abortion and traditional marriage. When churched parents have discussions with their children, they use church merely as a way to boss the children around so that they have less trouble with the kids. They scare them with the Devil and Hell (which are both real) without ever explaining prescriptive moral obligations using evidence.

For example, Julia's mother's church and parents SHOULD HAVE explained to her the importance of chastity and courting using evidence from social science that shows how chastity improves marital stability and marriage quality – things like communication and fidelity. The bad effects of cohabitation and hooking-up should have been explained WITH EVIDENCE, like you find in Dr. Laura books or Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse books. I can walk into churches to hear some of the most famous preachers, like John Piper and Alistair Begg, and never once hear a single piece of real-world evidence. All I get is "the Bible says" and that has no effect on people who do not have reasons to accept the Bible as

true, and an understanding of how that truth is applied in the real world. Apparently, in many churches it is considered high-treason to ask – “are these things really true? And how do we see that they are true here in the real world, with publicly testable and observable data”? (Mark Driscoll is an exception, much as I disagree with his male-bashing, feminist bias)

Conclusion

So, in short, young, unmarried Democrat-voting women cause problems for their daughters by raising them without fathers, and the church’s refusal to engage in apologetics and to connect faith to public evidence just makes the problem worse. That’s where abortion comes from, and many, many pro-lifers need to get engaged on these problems instead of waiting until the woman is already pregnant. Yes, we need sonograms Yes, we need to cut public funding for Planned Parenthood. Yes, we need parental notification laws. But we also need to address the problem with pro-family policies and with apologetics and statistics in the church.

Related posts

- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren’t men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste

Michael Brown explains five simple truths about the Middle East conflict

June 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Israel

Mary sent me this article from TownHall.

Here's the introduction:

> Is there any subject more controversial than the question of the legitimacy of the modern State of Israel? Is it the eternal home of the Jewish people, promised to them by God Himself? Or is it the illegitimate home of violent Jewish occupiers, an apartheid state guilty of ethnic cleansing? Or is it something in between? In the midst of the often emotional arguments on both sides, it is helpful to review five simple truths about the Mideast conflict.

And the list of 5 points:

1. There is no such thing as a historic "Palestinian people" living in the Middle East.
2. There were anti-Jewish intifadas in Palestine two decades before the founding of the State of Israel in 1948.
3. Jewish refugees fleeing from Muslim and Arab countries were absorbed by Israel after 1948; Arab refugees fleeing from Israel after 1948 were not absorbed by Muslim and Arab countries
4. Only one side in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is truly committed to peaceful co-existence.
5. The current uprisings throughout the Muslim and Arab world today remind us that

Israel cannot fairly be blamed for all the tension and conflicts in the region.

And what I think is the most significant point:

4. Only one side in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is truly committed to peaceful co-existence. It is often stated that if the Palestinians put down their weapons, there would be no more war but if the Israelis put down their weapons, there would be no more Israel. This is not to say that all Palestinians are warmongers and all Israelis are doves. But the vast majority of Israelis are not driven by a radical ideology that calls for the extermination of their Arab neighbors, nor are they teaching their children songs about the virtues of religious martyrdom.

Israel does not relish spending a major portion of its budget on defense, nor does it relish sending its sons and daughters into military service. It simply will not surrender Jerusalem, its historic and religious capital, and it will not commit regional suicide by retreating to indefensible borders. In return it simply asks the Palestinians to say, “We embrace your right to exist.”

I think point #4 tells you everything you need to know.

Parental authority and the need for independent children

June 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this interview of Randy Alcorn from Eternal Perspectives Ministries.

Here's the problem:

> **What is the greatest challenge parents of young people face?**
>
> I would say balance. Parents have to balance their responsibility to govern their children's lives with their teenagers' need to develop independence and freedom. Parents have to maintain that tension.

And here's a snapshot of the solution:

> **So, what does that mean in terms of parenting?** The ideal is prevention. Parents need to develop their relationship with their child and build the level of intimacy that gives them the right to come down hard in certain areas. Too often the relationship is typified by Mt. Olympus. Parents come down like lightning bolts to their kids, then return to the top of their mountain. The relationship is confrontational, when what they need is a consistent, loving relationship in which 90 percent of what is done is affirming. Criticism should be the exception instead of the rule. Jesus came down to us in the incarnation and we need to come down from our adult world and enter our children's lives. Only then can we help pull them up into maturity.
>
> **You raised two daughters. What patterns did you establish with them?**
>
> We talked a lot. When the girls were young, we sat down and read Bible stories and talked about principles, trying to plug those into their current situation—whether it be kindergarten or sixth grade or high school, the principle is the same. We tried to spend the time with them that allowed us to see their lives as they happened. That was a big thing to us.
>
> **You sound like you've thought this through.**
>
> If we don't think strategically about parenting, then we've made a statement: our children aren't important, or parenting comes so naturally that it happens without our attention. If we're going to influence our children, we need to strategize—regrouping and reevaluating along the way.

Anyone else in agreement with Randy? The idea that what really matters is QUANTITY of time spent talking about the lives of the children and injecting the Christian worldview into the lives of the children *every day* – instead of waiting until things blow up – sounds plausible. But that requires parents with lots of time for parenting.

So, if you're a man looking for a woman who can take this kind of challenge on, you'd better find someone with a lot of time for parenting and a track record of effective

nurturing. The ideal woman would be someone who dumps everything else whenever she sees an opportunity to influence a person's worldview, especially in spiritual areas, and take action. If she is able to build up her friends to be world-changers, and has achieved a lot herself, (an investment portfolio, a career prior to becoming a mother, graduate school degree, apologetics and theology capabilities, running a business, reading research papers, etc.), then that would be the best-case scenario – because then she'll be teaching them from experience of been a Christian herself and succeeded.

Thomas Sowell explains why third-world countries are so poor

June 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell

Mary sent me this article from TownHall.com.

Excerpt:

> The idea that the rich have gotten rich by making the poor poor has been an ideological theme that has played well in Third World countries, to explain why they lag so far behind the West.
>
> […]There is obviously something there with very deep emotional appeal. Moreover, because nothing is easier to find than sins among human beings, there will never be a lack of evil deeds to make that explanation seem plausible.
>
> Because the Western culture has been ascendant in the world in recent centuries, the image of rich white people and poor non-white people has made a deep impression, whether in theories of racial superiority– which were big among "progressives" in the early 20th century– or in theories of exploitation among "progressives" later on.
>
> In a wider view of history, however, it becomes clear that, for centuries before the European ascendancy, Europe lagged far behind China in many achievements. Since neither of them changed much genetically between those times and the later rise of Europe, it is hard to reconcile this role reversal with racial theories.
>
> More important, the Chinese were not to blame for Europe's problems– which would not be solved until the Europeans themselves finally got their own act together, instead of blaming others. If they had listened to people like Jeremiah Wright, Europe might still be in the Dark Ages.
>
> It is hard to reconcile "exploitation" theories with the facts. While there have been conquered peoples made poorer by their conquerors, especially by Spanish

> conquerors in the Western Hemisphere, in general most poor countries were poor for reasons that existed before the conquerors arrived. Some Third World countries are poorer today than they were when they were ruled by Western countries, generations ago.

It's sad, because when I talk to many people from other countries, like Mexico and Greece, they blame the United States for their own bad decisions, instead of *imitating* United States policies. Maybe if Mexico and Greece stopped blaming others and started trying to imitate the best countries, then they would be more like Chile. A few decades ago, Chile made a decision to re-make their economy to be *more American than America.* And the result is that they are seeing *record economic growth.* Prosperity has nothing to do with skin color – just with policies. Chile embraced good economic policies and now they are much richer than before. The main thing to do is to make sure that you have economists in charge, not community organizers. Canada has an economist in charge, and they just scored DOUBLE the GDP growth of the United States. Knowledge matters.

FRC releases new study on marriage and economic well-being

June 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary found this little blurb on the Christian Post.

Excerpt:

> Marriage plays a big role in the well-being of the U.S. economy, such that sound and stable marriages keep the economy healthy while divorce helps the economy regress, a new report suggests.
>
> The findings released by the Family Research Council's Marriage and Religion Research Institute show how intact married-couple families outperform other family types, including remarried families, divorced families, single-parent families, and cohabiting families, in all of the following economic segments: employment, income, net value, net worth, poverty, receipt of welfare and child economic well-being.
>
> Basically the stats show that the more intact the family remains, the less the difficulties and the inefficiencies the family encounters.
>
> Married-couple families generate the most income with "the median household income twice that of divorced households and four times that of separated households," reads the report.
>
> Divorced families on the other hand experience a sharp decrease in income after the separation. Divorced women are affected the most as they are 2.83 times more prone to live in poverty than women who remain married.
>
> MARRI Director Pat Fagan, Ph.D, said couples that remain stably married can provide a sound environment where children can be securely fostered while divorce triggers society's reliance on government welfare programs – programs that currently cost tax payers around $112 billion per year.

Then I went looking for the research paper and found this press release.

Excerpt:

> The economic well-being of the United States is strongly related to marriage, which is a choice about how we channel our sexuality. The implications of sexual choices are apparent when comparing family structures across basic economic measures such as employment, income, net worth, poverty, receipt of welfare, and child economic well-being. In all of these the stable, intact married family outperforms other sexual partnering structures; hence the economy rises with the former and encounters more difficulties and inefficiencies as it diverges from it.
>
> **Family Structures and Economic Outcomes:**

> - **Employment and Income.** *Married-couple families generate the most income, on average.* Young married men are more likely to be in the labor force, employed, and working a full-time job than their nonmarried counterparts. Cohabiting men have less stable employment histories than single and married men. Married families generally earn higher incomes than stepfamilies, cohabiting families, divorced families, separated families, and single-parent families. According to one study, married couples had a median household income twice that of divorced households and four times the household income of separated households.
> - **Net Worth.** *Intact, married families have the greatest net worth.* A family's net worth is the value of all its assets minus any liabilities it holds. Married households' net worth is attributable to more than simply having two adults in the household: a longer-term economic outlook, thrift, and greater head-of-household earning ability (the marriage premium) all contribute to greater household net worth.
> - **Poverty and Welfare.** *Poverty rates are significantly higher among cohabiting families and single-parent families than among married families.* Over one third of single mothers live in poverty. Nearly 60 percent of non-teenage single mothers rely on food stamps or cash welfare payments.
> - **Child Economic Mobility and Well-Being.** *Children in married, two-parent families enjoy more economic well-being than children in any other family structure.* Children in cohabiting families enjoy less economic well-being than children in married families, but more than children in single-parent families. The children of married parents also enjoy relatively strong upward mobility. By contrast, divorce is correlated with downward mobility. A non-intact family background increases by over 50 percent a boy's odds of ending up in the lowest socioeconomic level.

Having a high net worth is necessary if you want to have an impact. With money, you can buy people apologetics books, sponsor debates, get more degrees, and contribute to Michele Bachmann, and send your children to the best universities so they can have an influence. Therefore, we need to be extra careful who we marry, extra diligent about preparing for our roles in marriage, and extra persistent in staying married. We need the money for important things.

The FRC is my second favorite think tank, right behind the Heritage Foundation.

Obama administration paves way for false sexual harassment charges

June 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Famous conservative professor Mike Adams explains the problem at Townhall.

Excerpt:

> [T]he Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has announced new guidelines that will force due process to take a back seat to political correctness. These guidelines will apply to sexual harassment and felony sexual assault cases.
>
> […]According to the new OCR guidelines, any college that accepts federal funding or federal student loans (close to 100% of our nation's colleges) must now employ a "preponderance of the evidence" standard of proof in sexual harassment and sexual assault cases. This lowered standard replaces the traditionally accepted standard of proof beyond a reasonable doubt, which, according to most triers of fact, is close to 100% confidence of guilt. In contrast, "preponderance of evidence" means the campus judiciary only needs to be 50.01% confident that a person is guilty of a given offense – even if that offense is rape, which, regardless of degree, is always a serious felony.
>
> This mandate from the federal government will have profound real-life costs for real students. If we learned anything from the infamous Duke Lacrosse case it is this: Academia is quick to blame people for creating a "rape culture" on campus and slow to take responsibility for false accusations.
>
> Unfortunately, Duke was not an isolated case. At Stanford, student jurors in sexual misconduct cases are actually given "training materials" that say things like, "Everyone should be very, very cautious in accepting a man's claim that he has been wrongly accused of abuse or violence" and "An abuser almost never 'seems like the type.'"
>
> In other words, even highly respected universities like Stanford try to create unfair and partial juries prior to rape adjudications – in clear violation of the spirit of the 6th Amendment (Do you remember when liberals cared about the "spirit of the law"?). Adding a mere "preponderance" standard to such a toxic environment would be a recipe for disaster – disaster in the form of wrongful felony convictions.
>
> The OCR mandates are not merely confined to actions. They apply to students' speech, too. Columbia University already lists "love letters" as a form of sexual harassment. The University of California, Santa Cruz, classifies using "terms of endearment" as sexual harassment. (Who could have ever imagined that one could be endeared and harassed at the same time?). At Yale, "unspoken sexual innuendo such as voice inflection" is considered sexual harassment. The

> absurdities are seemingly endless in 21st Century “hire” education.

Studies have shown that the number of false rape accusations is near 50%.

Here’s a Fox News article from a prominent equity feminist, Wendy McElroy.

Excerpt:

> “Forty-one percent of all reports are false.”
>
> This claim comes from a study conducted by Eugene J. Kanin of Purdue University. Kanin examined 109 rape complaints registered in a Midwestern city from 1978 to 1987.
>
> Of these, 45 were ultimately classified by the police as “false.” Also based on police records, Kanin determined that 50 percent of the rapes reported at two major universities were “false.”
>
> Although Kanin offers solid research, I would need to see more studies with different populations before accepting the figure of 50 percent as prevalent; to me, the figure seems high.
>
> But even a skeptic like me must credit a DNA exclusion rate of 20 percent that remained constant over several years when conducted by FBI labs. This is especially true when 20 percent more were found to be questionable.
>
> False accusations are not rare. They are common.

If you would like to get an idea of how false rape accusations are handled by the police, here is an example. Here’s a very recent example.

Related posts

- Woman recants rape charge after man spends 2 years in jail
- Judge blames husband for his wife’s decision to murder their children
- Is lenience towards women increasing domestic violence against men?
- Why are sentences for domestic violence committed by women so lenient?
- How domestic violence against men is ignored by the feminist state
- Women are becoming more violent towards their partners
- Do men and women commit domestic violence in equal numbers?
- Woman recants false rape charge, freeing man after 3 years in prison
- Woman who made false rape accusation gets zero jail time
- UK woman makes EIGHT false rape accusations and gets no jail time
- New research shows that drug-facilitated “date rape” is a myth
- Lehigh University student could stand trial for false rape accusation
- Are women held to a different standard than men under the law?
- No charges planned for accuser in Hofstra rape hoax
- How feminism destroyed free speech on university campuses

New Gallup poll finds that Americans overestimate gay population

June 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Joe Carter at First Thoughts.

Excerpt:

> Let's take a survey: Are Americans (a) really bad at estimating, (b) really gullible, (c) both really gullible and really bad at estimating? After seeing the results of this Gallup survey, I think the answer is obvious:
>
> U.S. adults, on average, estimate that 25% of Americans are gay or lesbian. More specifically, over half of Americans (52%) estimate that at least one in five Americans are gay or lesbian, including 35% who estimate that more than one in four are. Thirty percent put the figure at less than 15%.
>
> As the Gallup articles points out, demographer Gary Gates recently released a review of population-based surveys on the topic which found 1.7% of Americans identify as lesbian or gay and another 1.8% (mostly women) identify as bisexual. Yet, as economist Karl Smith notes, "most Americans believe that there are significantly more gays and lesbians than blacks (12.6%) or Hispanics (16.3%) and 35% of Americans believe there are as many or more gays than Catholics (~25%)."
>
> Why do Americans think there are so many gays in the U.S.? Maybe they are basing their estimations on what they see on television.
>
> At the launch of the 2010-2011 television season, the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) examined the five broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, The CW, Fox, and NBC) and found that 41 characters on 84 programs were homosexual. An additional 53 homosexual characters appeared on 30 scripted cable programs. That's a total of 94 characters on the 114 shows that were counted.

Yipes. The actual number has to be 2-3% or something like that.

You can see more of the results here.

Seven videos from the Biola University conference on God and evolution

June 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been weaseling out of my apologetics posting this week, and this is my last chance to get something good up so I can make it onto Brian Auten's weekly apologetics bonus links at Apologetics 315, the best Christian apologetics site ever.

So I am posting SEVEN video clips from a recent Biola University conference on theistic evolution. (H/T Mysterious Jonathan)

Conference details:

> Can you believe in God and Darwinian evolution at the same time? Scientists and scholars have an answer that may surprise the audience as they explore this and related questions at the God & Evolution conference on Saturday, October 16, 2010 at Biola University in La Mirada, California.
>
> The conference will focus on the conflict between neo-Darwinism and traditional theological views of Protestants, Catholics and Jews.
>
> What is "theistic" evolution, and how consistent is it with traditional theism?
>
> What challenges does Darwin's theory pose for Protestants, Catholics, and Jews?
>
> Is it "anti-science" to question Darwinian Theory?

> These questions and more will be addressed at the one-day conference by Marvin Olasky, editor of World magazine, biologist Jonathan Wells, political scientist John West, philosopher Jay Richards, attorney and science writer Casey Luskin and authors David Klinghoffer and Denyse O'Leary.
>
> In the century and a half since Charles Darwin first proposed his theory of evolution, Christians, Jews, and other religious believers have grappled with how to make sense of it. Most have understood that Darwin's theory has profound theological implications, but responses have varied dramatically.
>
> Some believers have rejected it outright; others, including "theistic evolutionists" such as Francis Collins and Karl Giberson, have sought to reconcile Darwin's theory with their religious beliefs, often at the cost of clarity, orthodoxy, or both. As a result, the whole subject of God and evolution is a source of confusion for many believers.
>
> Join us for this one-day seminar, featuring contributors to the new book, *God and Evolution*, exploring these issues and offering a wide-ranging critique of those who seek to reconcile materialistic theories such as Darwinism with belief in God.

Here is the playlist for all SEVEN video clips.

Clip 1 of 7: **Jay W. Richards**: The Central Issues (34 minutes)

Clip 2 of 7: **John G. West**: Three Big Questions (22 minutes)

Clip 3 of 7: **Casey Luskin**: Why the New Atheists Won't Be Appeased (21 minutes)

Clip 4 of 7: **Denyse O'Leary**: Catholics & Evolution (29 minutes)

Clip 5 of 7: **David Klinghoffer**: Judaism & Evolution (17 minutes)

Clip 6 of 7: **Jonathan Wells**: Science and Theistic Evolution (26 minutes)

Clip 7 of 7: Panel Discussion with **Marvin Olasky** (99 minutes)

So it looks like there are 2 Catholics (Richards, O'Leary), 2 Jews (Luskin, Klinghoffer), 2 Protestants (West, Olasky) and 1 "Other" (Wells) in that list. It's a diverse group.

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

June 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to MP3 file)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> His new book "The Edge of Evolution" takes his conclusions further, arguing that the Darwinian processes of random mutation and natural selection are incapable of producing the variation and complexity we see in most of life.
>
> So can we conclude that life was intelligently designed by a creator?
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

I get the impression that Fox learned everything he knows about ID by reading Darwinists.

The MP3 file is here.

This post was linked by:

- Uncommon Descent

The summary below is rated VERY SNARKY.

Summary

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism
- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program

- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent
- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true
- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival

explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah
- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet X!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren't going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

Ben Shapiro interviews Hollywood producers about their liberal bias

June 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

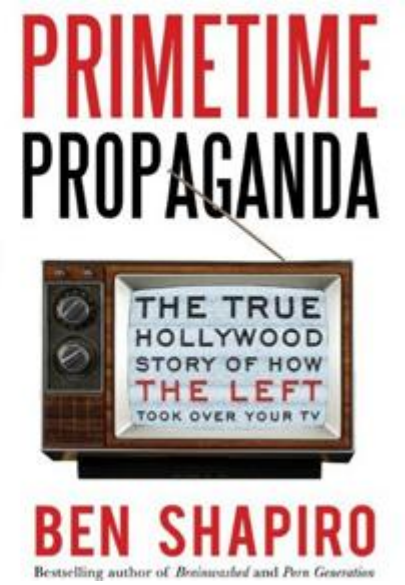

Ben Shapiro

I spotted this book review of the new book "Primetime Propaganda, The True Hollywood Story Of How The Left Took Over Your TV" by Ben Shapiro, posted on Newsbusters.

Excerpt:

> [The book's title] may sound like an overblown title, but if you read Ben Shapiro's new book, "Primetime Propaganda, The True Hollywood Story Of How The Left Took Over Your TV," you will see it isn't overblown in the least. Ben doesn't just speculate here. He goes to the source.
>
> He interviews the movers and the shakers of Hollywood who admit their own bias and their own agenda… this fascinating book takes us into the minds of the people who bring television into our home. They clearly state how they want to influence our kids with their political views.
>
> I sat down to read Ben's book thinking it wouldn't really tell me anything I didn't already know, but I was wrong. This book isn't just about looking at the actual shows that are influencing our kids, it takes us backstage in the industry and gives us a glimpse of the people who create these shows and why. First and foremost, there is a blacklisting in Hollywood regarding conservatives. They as much as admit it in Ben's interviews.
>
> […]Ben gives us all the details of the presidents of the networks, the producers, and the writers, and how they were determined to systematically bring liberal views to television family shows. But most disturbing to me is Ben's account of how they infused liberal messages into children's television. Ben met with the producer of *Captain Planet and The Planeteers*, a cartoon with a far left

> environmental message. He asked the producer whether he thought Captain Planet promoted a politicized point of view. The producer responded by asking what other point of view would their be?

And I noticed that Ari has been posting some of the interviews on RuthBlog.

Here's is the most popular one:

And another:

And this one has really bad language, so watch out for the F-word if you click the link.

Personal application

This book and these interviews confirm to me why I shouldn't have a television in my apartment. I only watch Special Report with Bret Baier if I am in the gym, or Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace if I am at my parents' house visiting. I would watch the Canadian Sun News Network if I were in Canada, because I hear that Theo Caldwell says very frank things like this and this. I am shocked that Canadians talk like that about moral issues.

I rarely watch movies at all, except maybe one a year.

Here's my list of movies that I do find useful:

- Rules of Engagement (Samuel L. Jackson)
- Bella
- Henry V (Kenneth Brannagh)
- The Lives of Others
- United 93
- Taken (Liam Neeson)
- Cinderella Man
- The Blind Side
- Cyrano de Bergerac (Gerard Depardieu)
- Amazing Grace (Ioan Gruffudd)
- Gettysburg
- We Were Soldiers
- Stand and Deliver
- Blackhawk Down
- The Pursuit of Happyness
- High Noon (Gary Cooper)
- The Long Walk

I also like older TV shows like Danger Man. Here is an episode on Youtube: clip1, clip2, clip3. And even some newer stuff like Band of Brothers is worth watching. (Check this out this well-known battle: clip1 and clip2 and you can read the history here. I would love it if there were more good television shows and movies, but there aren't, and I'm not going to let my need to be entertained cause me to watch things that are designed to manipulate me.

Where does Paul Ryan stand on foreign policy and social issues?

June 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan

We all know that Paul Ryan is conservative on fiscal issues. He's the man with a plan to stop overspending and solve the debt problem. But where does he stand on other issues?

Here's an article from the liberal Washington Post about Ryan's foreign policy views.

Excerpt:

> Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) gave a speech Thursday to the Alexander Hamilton Society in Washington. If one is looking for clues as to Ryan's interests beyond chairing the House Budget Committee, a speech, as he put it, to "a room full of national security experts about American foreign policy" would merit attention.
>
> …Ryan delivered an above-the-fray talk on the subject of American uniqueness (a less loaded term) and the myth that American decline in inevitable. He posited, "Our fiscal policy and our foreign policy are on a collision course; and if we fail to put our budget on a sustainable path, then we are choosing decline as a world power."
>
> Ryan contends that the debt crisis is not a bookkeeping problem or even simply a domestic problem; it is about maintaining our status as a superpower and about American values.
>
> […]He plainly is not with the cut-and-run set on Afghanistan. "Although the war has been long and the human costs high, failure would be a blow to American prestige and would reinvigorate al-Qaeda, which is reeling from the death of its leader. Now is the time to lock in the success that is within reach." Nor can he be

> accused of wanting to "go it alone." "The Obama administration has taken our allies for granted and accepted too willingly the decline of their capacity for international action. Our alliances were vital to our victory in the Cold War, and they need to be revitalized to see us through the 21st century."
>
> As for China, he bats down the idea that we should go along to get along… He's clear that China has "very different values and interests from our own."
>
> And finally on defense spending, he rejects the sort of penny-pinching isolationism of Jon Huntsman or Rep. Ron Paul (R-Tex.).

According to On The Issues,he's solid on military spending:

- Rated 22% by SANE, indicating a pro-military voting record
- YES on $266 billion Defense Appropriations bill
- YES on deploying SDI
- YES on emergency $78B for war in Iraq & Afghanistan
- YES on continuing military recruitment on college campuses
- YES on restricting no-bid defense contracts

He's solid on counter-terrorism:

- NO on Veto override: Congressional oversight of CIA interrogations
- NO on requiring FISA warrants for wiretaps in US, but not abroad
- YES on making the PATRIOT Act permanent
- YES on continuing intelligence gathering without civil oversight
- YES on allowing electronic surveillance without a warrant
- YES on removing need for FISA warrant for wiretapping abroad
- YES on retroactive immunity for telecoms' warrantless surveillance

And supports military intervention against Islamic terrorists:

- Strengthen sanctions on Syria & assist democratic transition
- Sanctions on Iran to end nuclear program
- YES on authorizing military force in Iraq
- YES on declaring Iraq part of War on Terror with no exit date
- NO on redeploying US troops out of Iraq starting in 90 days
- NO on investigating Bush impeachment for lying about Iraq

I agree with him on all of that. But how is he on social issues?

Excerpt:

> Ryan, the top Republican on the Budget Committee who has a strongly pro-life record, talked about the place social issues have in the election in an interview with CNBC last week.
>
> "We will agree to disagree on those issues," Ryan said last Monday on CNBC.

> “But let’s rally around the tallest pole in our tent
>
> Ryan also released a statement today that LifeNews.com received saying pro-life issues are not on a list of menu items that have to be given up during the election season.
>
> “Healthy debate should take place within the Republican Party on specific policies, but it is a false choice to ask which natural right we should discard
>
> “All planks – economic liberty and limited government; keeping our nation secure; championing America’s founding truths and the dignity of every human person – are rooted in same timeless principles, enshrined in our Founding and the cause of our exceptionalism,” Ryan added. “The American family must remain at the core of our free society, and I will remain ever-vigilant in its defense.”
>
> Conor Sweeney, a top Ryan spokesman, told LifeNews.com today that Ryan doesn’t agree with the “truce” on social issues Barbour and Daniels have advocated.
>
> “Paul Ryan rejects the false choice that our natural rights to ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness’ are a menu of options,” he said, adding that Ryan has been “calling upon his colleagues to defend the sanctity of life.”
>
> He also pointed to comments Ryan made in a Weekly Standard interview rejecting the “truce” language and putting him outside the Daniels-Barbour circle.
>
> “I don’t see it quite the same way [as Daniels],” Ryan said in June, “we don’t need to ask anybody to unilaterally disarm.”
>
> “I’m as pro-life as a person gets,” Ryan continued. “You’re not going to have a truce. Judges are going to come up. Issues come up, they’re unavoidable, and I’m never going to not vote pro-life.”

Here’s his voting record on pro-life issues:

- Rated 0% by NARAL, indicating a pro-life voting record
- Rated 100% by the NRLC, indicating a pro-life stance
- Prohibit transporting minors across state lines for abortion
- Bar funding for abortion under federal Obamacare plans
- Congress shall protect life beginning with fertilization
- Prohibit federal funding to groups like Planned Parenthood
- Grant the pre-born equal protection under 14th Amendment
- YES on barring transporting minors to get an abortion
- YES on banning partial-birth abortions
- YES on banning Family Planning funding in US aid abroad
- YES on federal crime to harm fetus while committing other crimes
- YES on funding for health providers who don’t provide abortion info

- YES on banning partial-birth abortion except to save mother's life
- YES on making it a crime to harm a fetus during another crime
- YES on restricting interstate transport of minors to get abortions
- NO on allowing human embryonic stem cell research
- NO on expanding research to more embryonic stem cell lines

And he is also a strong defender of traditional marriage:

- Rated 0% by the HRC, indicating an anti-gay-rights stance
- YES on banning gay adoptions in DC.
- YES on Constitutional Amendment banning same-sex marriage
- YES on Constitutionally defining marriage as one-man-one-woman
- YES on prohibiting job discrimination based on sexual orientation
- NO on enforcing against anti-gay hate crimes

Tough on crime:

- Rated 30% by CURE, indicating anti-rehabilitation crime votes
- YES on more prosecution and sentencing for juvenile crime
- NO on funding for alternative sentencing instead of more prisons.
- NO on expanding services for offendors' re-entry into society

Favors school choice:

- Rated 8% by the NEA, indicating anti-public education votes
- NO on environmental education grants for outdoor experiences
- NO on $40B for green public schools

And an increased role for families and churches:

- YES on responsible fatherhood via faith-based organizations
- YES on treating religious organizations equally for tax breaks
- NO on instituting National Service as a new social invention

So definitely not *just* a fiscal conservative. He's conservative across the board. And STRONGLY so.

Female readers of the Wintery Knight blog may now swoon.

Economists and investors are alarmed by Obama's reckless and wasteful spending

June 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reuters reports on a statement by 150 economists backing Republican demands for spending cuts.

Excerpt:

> More than 150 economists back House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner's call to match any increase in the debt limit with spending cuts of equal size, according to a letter released by the Republican leader's office on Wednesday.
>
> The letter will give Boehner an important talking point as he and his fellow House Republicans meet with President Barack Obama at 10 a.m. to discuss the debt limit and other fiscal issues.
>
> "An increase in the national debt limit that is not accompanied by significant spending cuts and budget reforms to address our government's spending addiction will harm private-sector job creation in America," the letter said.
>
> Signatories include Nobel laureate Robert Mundell of Columbia University and economists from schools like New York University and Georgetown University, as well as conservative think tanks like the American Enterprise Institute.
>
> The Treasury Department has warned that the country could face a default that could push it back into recession and roil markets across the globe if it does not raise the $14.3 trillion debt limit by Aug 2. Treasury has been tapping federal employee pensions and other funds to pay the nation's bills since it reached the current debt limit on May 16.
>
> Republicans say they will not back any increase that does not include steep spending cuts and other limits to ensure that debt stays at a manageable level.
>
> The Republican-controlled House on Tuesday defeated a bill that called for a debt-limit increase without conditions.

This Wall Street Journal article quotes a few economists responding to the recent disappointing job report.

Excerpt:

> –**What appeared to be a sustainable level** of job growth seems to have faded hard in May. Yes nonfarm payrolls increased for the month, but that increase is actually a net-negative considering population growth that adds 75,000 – 85,000 workers to the labor force in an average month. Job growth is (was?) the only thing going for consumer incomes and spending, and this most recent result will throw said spending, responsible for 70% of economic activity, into a

questionable state. –*Guy LeBas, Janney Montgomery Scott*

–**There is no way to put lipstick on that pig**: That was an extremely weak employment report. Nonfarm payrolls rose at the slowest pace since last September and private payrolls (+83,000) even posted their smallest increase since last June. One important factor behind the sudden deterioration between April and May was the swing in retail employment. The latter fell by 9,000 in May after still rising 64,000 in April. That pattern corroborates our view that the unusually late Easter lifted payrolls in April and were a corresponding drag in May… One sector that has to be highlighted here is "leisure & hospitality". After creating 132,000 jobs (44,000 per month) between January and April, the sector cut 6,000 jobs in May — a monthly swing of -50,000 jobs. The reasons for this could be manifold: Households had to cut back on spending for arts, entertainment etc. amid soaring gasoline prices, or they were reluctant to visit restaurants amid higher food prices. –*Harm Bandholz, Unicredit*

–**The slowdown in the pace of growth** has clearly rattled the confidence of small and medium size firms that have been responsible for much of the hiring over the past few months.. Beneath the headline the data was just as dreary. Goods producers essentially slammed the brakes on hiring, with manufacturers culling 5,000 workers from the payrolls. Seasonal adjustments at the BLS likely accounted for the increase in hiring in the food and beverage sector, thus negating whatever McDonalds effect on retail hiring that might have occurred. The only real positives in the report were hiring by health care firms and in business services which modestly decelerated below their respective three month averages of 40,000 and 56,000 respectively. –*Joseph Brusuelas, Bloomberg*

–**It is fairly clear that in the face of increasing uncertainty**, against the backdrop of a deep recession and shallow recovery, firms decided to stop hiring. The bigger question remains whether this is a temporary hold or the pause before renewed layoffs on a broad scale. Looking at the underlying metrics of the economy, the June employment report will likely be worse than May. Going past the next the several months the economy is in the nexus of a temporary squall today created by the supply chain disruption and higher food and energy prices. All else being equal these issues will resolve themselves and the economy should rebound later in the summer. All else is not equal, however, as China is slowing, QE2 is ending, and no one really knows what fiscal policy is beginning. In sum, these factors will build increasing headwinds to growth whose full effect on real activity is unlikely to be felt for several more months.–*Steven Blitz, ITG Investment Research*

–**The critical importance of continued labor market improvement** cannot be overstated, as the wage and salary income that a labor market recovery, even a sub-par one by historical standards, provides to consumers will be key in providing fuel for ongoing economic growth in 2011. Therefore, today's payroll

> figures, along with other evidence pointing to labor market woes in May (higher initial unemployment claims and a reduction in small business hiring plans being the two most important) are bad news indeed. To be fair, all was not terrible in this report, as the average workweek held steady from an upward revised 34.4 hour level in April and the manufacturing workweek increased to a robust 40.6 hours. *–Joshua Shapiro, MFR Inc.*

We’re in serious trouble, and the Democrats are oblivious.

Ed Feser describes Peter Singer's struggle with objective morality

June 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Ed Feser's blog, a report on one of the most famous atheist utilitarians.

Excerpt:

> The Guardian reportsthat Peter Singer is having second thoughts about some aspects of his moral philosophy. In particular, he now has doubts about whether preference utilitarianism provides satisfactory moral advice about climate change. (As the reporter puts it, "preference utilitarianism can provide good arguments not to worry about climate change, as well as arguments to do so.") Singer is also now open to the idea that moral value must be grounded in something objective; and though he is still not inclined to believe in God, he acknowledges that a theologically-oriented ethics has the advantage that it provides the only complete answer to the question why we should act morally.
>
> This is progress, though it seems to me that Singer's conception of moral objectivity is dubious. Apparently he would ground our knowledge of objective moral truths in "intuition." As I have said before, this is bad methodology, at least from an Aristotelian-Thomistic natural law point of view as I understand it. Moral intuitions track objective moral truth in only a very rough, general, and mutable way. Practically they are useful – that is why nature put them into us – and they might provide a useful heuristic when philosophically investigating this or that specific moral question. But intuition does not ground moral truth, it is not an infallible guide to moral truth, and it should never form the basis of a philosophical argument for a controversial moral position.

So Singer has finally become aware of the the difference between relative morality and objective morality, but he's still not clear about *moral epistemology* and *moral ontology*, which comes up so often in William Lane Craig's debates. Even if we *know* right and wrong through our moral intuitions, we still have to need a designer of the universe to say how it ought to be, if our intuitions are referring to a *real* design for the universe, and for us.

Well, still – at least Singer is making progress. But he'll never be able to arrive at a rational conception of morality on atheism.

Can atheists make sense of morality?

Consider this excerpt from a recent article by Paul Copan.

Excerpt:

> Jürgen Habermas is one of Europe's most prominent philosophers today. Another fact about Habermas: he's a dyed-in-the-wool atheist. Yet he highlights the

inescapable historical fact that the biblical faith has had a profound influence in shaping civilization. Consider carefully his assessment:

"Christianity has functioned for the normative self-understanding of modernity as more than just a precursor or a catalyst. Egalitarian universalism, from which sprang the ideas of freedom and a social solidarity, of an autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, the individual morality of conscience, human rights, and democracy, is the direct heir to the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love. This legacy, substantially unchanged, has been the object of continual critical appropriation and reinterpretation. To this day, there is no alternative to it. And in light of current challenges of a postnational constellation, we continue to draw on the substance of this heritage. Everything else is just idle postmodern talk."

[…]This isn't surprising. Intrinsic human dignity and worth make sense if we have been made in God's image rather than being mere molecules in motion. Biblical theism has the metaphysical capital to sustain the concept of human rights. Our law courts and legal system assume that humans don't simply dance to the music of their DNA. The criminal's excuse ("Your honor, my genes made me do it") flies in the face of what we all know of human nature and our presumption of moral responsibility. Human value and moral agency make better sense if we have come from a supremely valuable being beyond nature. We certainly have no rational justification to anticipate the emergence of intrinsic human dignity and worth if we are simply the products of mindless, deterministic, valueless material forces in a purposeless cosmos.

Another point that undercuts objective morality and human dignity given naturalism is that many naturalists themselves see the logical outcome of their own metaphysic. Naturalism, they argue, simply lacks the metaphysical equipment to account for objective moral values. Many naturalists admit that natural material processes without God cannot bring us to moral responsibility and human dignity and worth. These features of reality—which we routinely assume—don't square well with naturalism. Here's a sampling of key naturalists on this topic:

- **Friedrich Nietzsche**: "Moral judgments agree with religious ones in believing in realities which are no realities….*There are altogether no moral facts*." Indeed, morality "has truth only if God is the truth—it stands or falls with faith in God."[5]
- **Jean-Paul Sartre**: "It [is] very distressing that God does not exist, because all possibility of finding values in a heaven of ideas disappears along with Him."[6]
- **Bertrand Russell** believed that "the whole subject of ethics arises from the pressure of the community on the individual."[7]
- **E. O. Wilson** locates moral feeling in "the hypothalamus and the limbic

> system"; it is a "device of survival in social organisms."[8]
> • **Jonathan Glover** considers morality a "human creation" and calls on humans to "re-create ethics."[9]
>
> We could add lots more leading naturalists—J.L. Mackie, James Rachels, Peter Singer, and the like; these acknowledge that nature can't get us to objective moral values and human dignity.

Indeed, thoughtful atheists understand that there is no concept of "ought-to-do" in an accidental universe.

In order to have a robust notion of morality, you need five things:

- beings with objective moral value
- objective moral duties
- free will, in order to make moral choices and be responsible for them
- ultimate significance for your actions
- proportional rewards/punishments for your actions

Atheism grounds none of these. Christian theism grounds all of them. So, moral behavior is not rational on atheism. What atheists do is look around at the customs and conventions in the time and place where they exist and they mimic their neighbors. If they can escape the consequences of being caught, or avoid being caught, then they rebel against the conventions of their neighbors. The motive for conforming and not conforming to these arbitrary conventions is the same – pleasure. Nothing is really right or wrong in an accidental universe. There is no way we ought to be, we just try to feel good, and complying (or not) with the arbitrary expectations of society in the time and place where we are is just another way we try to feel good.

Atheists think that moral prohibitions are like changing fashions or culinary preferences. In some societies, slavery was wrong. In others, it's right. There is no REAL objective truth about whether slavery is right or wrong, on atheism. And that's why you can see a lot of people who reject God killing unborn children today – which is actually WORSE than slavery. Everyone who is pro-abortion today would have been pro-slavery when slavery was still being practiced. That's atheist morality. Do what makes you feel good, and use force to avoid being judged and punished by your peers. Survival of the fittest. There is no such thing as objective human rights on atheism, or the right to life.

More about utilitarianism

You can read more about the flaws of utilitarianism in this excellent article by J.P. Moreland.

Excerpt:

> **Several objections** show the inadequacy of utilitarianism as a normative moral theory.
>
> **First**, utilitarianism can be used to justify actions that are clearly immoral.

> Consider the case of a severely deformed fetus. The child is certain to live a brief, albeit painless life. He or she will make no contribution to society. Society, however, will bear great expense. Doctors and other caregivers will invest time, emotion, and effort in adding mere hours to the baby's life. The parents will know and love the child only long enough to be heartbroken at the inevitable loss. An abortion negates all those "utility" losses. There is no positive utility lost. Many of the same costs are involved in the care of the terminally ill elderly. They too may suffer no pain, but they may offer no benefit to society. In balancing positives and negatives, and excluding from the equation the objective sacredness of all human life, we arrive at morally repugnant decisions. Here deontological and virtue ethics steer us clear of what is easier to what is right.
>
> **Second**, in a similar way, utilitarianism denies the existence of supererogatory acts. These are acts of moral heroism that are not morally obligatory but are still praiseworthy. Examples would be giving 75 percent of your income to the poor or throwing yourself on a bomb to save a stranger. Consider the bomb example. You have two choices — throwing yourself on the bomb or not doing so. Each choice would have consequences and, according to utilitarianism, you are morally obligated to do one or the other depending on which option maximized utility. Thus, there is no room for acts that go beyond the call of morality.
>
> **Third**, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of human rights and human dignity. If enslaving a minority of people, say by a lottery, would produce the greatest good for the greatest number, or if conceiving children only to harvest their parts would do the same, then these could he justified in a utilitarian scheme. But enslavement and abortion violate individual rights and treat people as a means to an end, not as creatures with intrinsic dignity as human beings. If acts of abortion, active euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and so forth maximize utility, then they are morally obligatory for the utilitarian. But any moral system that makes abortion and suicide morally obligatory is surely flawed.
>
> **Finally**, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of motives and character. We should praise good motives and seek good character because such motives and character are intrinsically valuable. But utilitarianism implies that the only reason we should praise good motives instead of bad ones, or seek good character instead of bad character, is because such acts would maximize utility. But this has the cart before the horse. We should praise good motives and blame bad ones because they are good or bad, not because such acts of praising and blaming produce good consequences.

It would be nice to see Peter Singer in a debate with J.P. Moreland. Moreland could move him along in his thinking, I'm sure.

Texas requires losing parties of frivolous lawsuits to pay their own costs

June 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal, some good news on tort reform.

Excerpt:

> This week, Texas Gov. Rick Perry signed a law that will help free Lone Star State businesses from the threat of frivolous lawsuits by enacting "loser-pays" tort reform. Prior to the legislation, litigants faced a no-lose situation, while defendants stood to lose everything—even for the most outrageous, bizarre and wrongful accusations.
>
> Even when defendants won, the legal fees associated with protecting themselves could add up to tens of thousands of dollars. As a result, many pre-emptively settled out of court, as the settlement payment would be less than the legal fees. Under Texas's new legislation, however, litigants will be forced to pay for the defendant's attorney fees if the case is determined groundless. This will compel would-be litigants to consider the practicality of their complaint before taking legal action, and it will protect defendants from the dire financial impact of frivolous cases.
>
> The Texas legislation should serve as a national model, especially as we recover from the Great Recession. America has the most expensive civil-justice system in the world, costing $255 billion in 2008, or nearly 2% of gross domestic product, according to a 2009 study by the firm Towers Perrin (now Towers Watson). That's more than twice as much as any other industrialized nation as a percent of the GDP.
>
> Small businesses—the engines of our economy and the creators of 64% of American jobs—are usually the target of frivolous lawsuits. In fact, small businesses paid 81% of business tort liability costs in 2008. On average, a small business earning $1 million must spend $20,000 annually on lawsuits—money they could have otherwise spent on product development or new job creation.
>
> Softening the threat of frivolous lawsuits sparks economic activity. In 2003, for example, Texas put limits on non-economic damages in medical malpractice cases. Since then, the number of doctors applying to practice in the Lone Star State has jumped by 60%. The same can be expected of businesses that no longer have to fear the financial impacts of civil-lawsuit abuse.

One of the reasons why we are in an economic mess is because we have not reined in the excesses of the trial lawyers. And the Democrats will never be able to rein them in because they are the core of the Democrat party, along with labor unions, teacher unions, word-smithing academics, criminals, welfare recipients and Hollywood celebrities. The

sheltered, non-productive segments of society, who have never had to run a business or make payroll.

Let me add this tort reform law (loser pays) to the other list of policies we need at the national level:

- National right-to-work law
- National photo ID required for voting
- National voucher system for education
- National voucher for health care
- Nation cap on damages for lawsuits
- allow Opt-out of Social Security
- allow Opt-out of Medicare
- allow Opt-out of Medicaid
- allow Opt-out of unemployment insurance
- Flat income tax at 10% below 50,000 and 25% over 50,000, with no deductions except for charity and retirement contributions
- Zero capital gains tax, phased in over four years
- Tax-free savings accounts with no restrictions on withdrawals, limit $5,000 per year

I hope the Republicans will campaign on these ideas.

Herman Cain gaining momentum with the Tea Party conservatives

June 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a cute cartoon from Don Surber:

The Tea Party loves Herman Cain
And Herman Cain is even being recognized by the ultra-leftist New York Times, finally. (H/T The Other McCain)

Excerpt:

> A Gallup poll released last week showed Mr. Cain with the highest voter intensity score of any Republican presidential contender — far higher than Ms. Palin, a former governor of Alaska, or Mr. Romney, a former governor of Massachusetts. While Mr. Cain's name recognition was at 37 percent, it had risen 16 points since March.
>
> Many pundits and voters declared him the winner of the first Republican debate last month. And he won the straw polls at the Tea Party Patriots convention in February and the Conservative Values Conference in Iowa in March.
>
> If few people think Mr. Cain can win the nomination, he is satisfying voters' desire to fall in love with a candidate. Their passion for him says as much about what the Republican field is lacking as it does about any specifics he is offering.
>
> He captivates with his talk radio certainty, his pulpit cadences, and what he describes as his "common-sense business solutions" that make it sound as though solving the nation's debt crisis is as simple as streamlining the number of pizza toppings on offer, as he did to improve performance at Godfather's.
>
> His rags-to-riches personal story and his talk of an "empowerment agenda" appeals to voters who believe that the federal budget has been corrupted by a culture of entitlement that no longer values sweat equity. As a black conservative, he appeals to Tea Party supporters who are angry at being tagged

racists for their disagreements with the nation's first black president. And in a country increasingly sour on Washington, his lack of political experience has become a calling card.

"Tea Party people love him," said Jenny Beth Martin, the co-founder of Tea Party Patriots.

[…]Mr. Cain, 65, grew up poor in Georgia, his father working three jobs to finally buy a house for his family. Mr. Cain worked his way through Morehouse College and earned a master's degree at Purdue University before becoming a vice president at Pillsbury.

Advised by the president of the company that he had to take a different route if he wanted to be a president of a company himself, Mr. Cain quit and entered the Burger King training program, where potential executives are trained from the grill up, working as "Whopper floppers" and cleaning bathrooms. Soon he was in charge of his region, and within a couple of years Pillsbury asked him to help turn around the Godfather's chain, which he eventually joined in buying.

He became a folk hero among Republicans in 1994, when he challenged President Bill Clinton on his health care legislation during a televised town-hall-style meeting: "If I'm forced to do this, what will I tell all those people whose jobs I'm forced to eliminate?"

He ran for the Senate in Georgia in 2004, coming in second in the Republican primary ahead of a more seasoned politician, and parlayed his success into a career as a talk radio host.

[…]Liberals, he said, "are scared to death of me. They don't want me to go up against their beloved Obama. I have done stuff, fixed stuff, can explain stuff and run stuff. He's been a community organizer, he's got failed policies. He reads from the teleprompter, I don't. I've got common-sense solutions, he passes 2,700-page legislation. The contrast would be so obvious, and when you get past all of the quantitative stuff, they can't use race to cover for him."

Mr. Cain predicts he will finish in the top three or better in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina. More and more voters seem to agree.

At a lunch in Concord, Kevin Attar, a small-business owner, listened to Mr. Cain's pitch, then said: "I think this country is ready for someone with your platform. How do we get more people to know who you are?"

Mr. Cain urged him to spread the word.

He excused himself from the table, telling his guests he had someone to greet upstairs.

There, Ms. Bachmann, a congresswoman from Minnesota, was doing a radio interview. Mr. Cain put his arm around her and smiled for the assembled cameras. "She can run, that's great," he boomed. "The more the merrier. She's a great friend. I have a lot of respect for her."

> **Ms. Bachmann, finally allowed a word in, joked, "That's why he supports me."**
>
> **"Did you all get what you need for pictures?" Mr. Cain asked. "Here, let me give you one more."**
>
> **He put his arm around Ms. Bachmann again, leaned far forward and smiled bigger than anyone in the room.**

She's Mrs. Bachmann, you stupid New York Times person. Oh well.

And I actually found the pictures:

Cain/Bachmann 2012?

And another from earlier:

Bachmann/Cain 2012?

If I get Bachmann/Cain, or even Cain/Bachmann, I am going to be a very happy Knight. I'll be Summery Knight, then. Well… for a little while. Then back to being gloomy and

judgmental.

Gallup reports that Bachmann and Cain have the highest positive intensity scores with voters.

Excerpt:

> Herman Cain and Michele Bachmann continue to earn the highest Positive Intensity Scores, at 25% and 21%, respectively. Below these two, several other candidates have Positive Intensity Scores in the 14 to 16 range, including two of the best-known candidates, Sarah Palin and Mitt Romney, and two who are less well-known — Tim Pawlenty and Rick Santorum.

That's good news!

Fiscal assessments of the candidates

You can read Club For Growth's assessment of Herman Cain's fiscal conservatism. Club For Growth had mixed reviews of Newt Gingrich and Tim Pawlenty, but they are very positive about Herman Cain, based on his speeches. Cain does not have a record, so he is a bit more of a gamble. We don't know if he would do what he says! But if he does what he says then he gets an A grade. By the way, these reports are excellent to print out and leave them out on your desk. (Read them first). We need to be getting into discussions with people in the office NOW. Be passionate about these policies! Memorize them, understand them, and explain them.

Once again, Michele Bachmann is my first choice, then Herman Cain, then Tim Pawlenty. This is strictly on policy. You can learn more about Michele Bachmann in this post, in which I beg her to run for President.

Secular government uses your tax money to limit your religious liberty

June 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

Often, Christians, Jews and other religious people are swayed to vote for left-leaning parties in elections. The leftists promise all kinds of goodies that they will provide, freeing us from the responsibility to provide for ourselves. And they promise that it won't cost us a thing, because they will take the money from our rich neighbors, or from some other group of people who, they tell us, have no right to their own money. Well, what happens when religious people trust the secular government and vote them into power in order to get these goodies?

This is what happens in Quebec. (H/T Don Surber)

Excerpt:

> MONTREAL — The 3- and 4-year-olds at the Childcare Center of Hebrew Foundation were always excited on Fridays. They'd get to re-create the rituals their parents typically perform for Friday night dinner, an integral part of the Jewish Sabbath, or Shabbat.
>
> On a rotating basis, each child would be designated, if female, to light candles and say a blessing or, as a boy, bless the challah bread. The "wine" would be grape juice.
>
> But on Friday, there was no Shabbat simulation. And there probably never will be again, if the Quebec government can help it.
>
> "My 4-year-old daughter is devastated she can't do her Shabbat next year," said Sandy Jesion, who sends his child to the daycare in Dollard-des-Ormeaux, a Montreal suburb where he lives.

> Nor are there any more prayers before the mid-morning snack. No stories about Noah's Ark. No recounting of the parting of the seas.

Don Surber writes:

> But the center could prevent this if it refused government money.
>
> From the Toronto Star: "As of last Wednesday, subsidized daycare and early-childhood learning centres in Quebec have had to abide by a new directive prohibiting religious activities, which the government expects to foster the integration of all children."
>
> Don't get me wrong. Canadians should fight this. But the Childcare Center of Hebrew Foundation is not helpless. It could tell Quebec where it can shove that money.

Notice though, that a much better solution that not taking the subsidies is to NOT VOTE FOR THE TAXES in the first place. Vote to shrink government, and then you get to keep your own money and spend it as you see fit. Your employer gets to keep the money, so that he will be able to raise your salary, or to not LAY YOU OFF in a recession. It is *never* a good idea for religious people to give a secular government their money, or even their neighbor's money. The secular government can never spend the money as efficiently as private citizens can. It's your money – you keep it and spend it on helping others the way YOU think is best. And if you want to have a religious education, then that's your decision. Don't let the government use your money and then make that decision FOR YOU. Don't let someone else take your money, or your neighbor's money, or your employer's money, and then use it to PUSH THEIR VIEW ONTO YOUR CHILDREN. You keep your money and raise your own children. You call the shots with the money you earn.

Should the Republican candidates agree to debate on left-wing news channels?

June 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From moderate Republican Hugh Hewitt writing in the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> One week from today, the first debate featuring all but two of the key GOP contenders for the presidency will occur.
>
> Rep. Michele Bachmann of Minnesota, businessman Herman Cain, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Rep. Ron Paul of Texas, former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney and former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum will participate in the debate on the campus of St. Anselm College, from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. EDT on Monday, June 13.
>
> Incredibly, once again, GOP primary voters will only get to see their would-be nominees through a lens ground by traditional media. The event is being sponsored by CNN, local television station WMUR and the New Hampshire Union Leader.
>
> CNN Chief National Correspondent John King will moderate the debate, with reporters from the local outlets. No doubt these are fine journalists, but like King, they will almost certainly carry with them all the biases and predispositions of the mainstream media.
>
> If Dr. Charles Xavier could leave his X-Men films to read the minds of these and other journalists, how many do you suspect he would find who support a right-to-life amendment, oppose same-sex marriage, are eager to slash the corporate tax rate?
>
> We all know this built-in bias exists, but still the candidates (except Sarah) agree to play by rules dictated by media that is overwhelmingly opposed to their election.
>
> Expect the standard stunt questions on abortion in the event of rape or incest, weapons of mass destruction, evolution, global warming, or any of a dozen other dog whistles to the left designed to create the moment that replicates across the Web, that seeks to wound prospects by defining the GOP field as outside the mainstream.
>
> They will do so even as the panel glides over the issues of national security of the United States and the woeful economic conditions in the land that ought to dominate. Imagine FDR participating in debates in 1931 and being asked about anything but the Depression and the adequacy of Hoover's response to it.

I often disagree with Hugh Hewitt, especially on his backing of Mitt Romney and Harriet

Miers, but he’s right about this.

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

June 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

The article goes on to make some very informative comments on the relationship between apologetics and belief.

Christina Hoff Sommers takes on sexual harassment hysteria on campus

June 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christina Hoff Sommers

Christina Hoff Sommers writes about feminism gone wild in the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Excerpt:

> American courts take exacting precautions to avoid convicting an innocent person of a crime. It was therefore startling to read the April 4, 2011, directive on sexual violence sent by the U.S. Department of Education's assistant secretary for civil rights, Russlynn H. Ali, to college officials across the country. In an effort to make campuses safe and equitable for women, Ali, with the full support of her department, advocates procedures that are unjust to men.
>
> […]Marching under the banner of Title IX and freed of high standards of proof, campus disciplinary committees, once relatively weak and feckless, will be transformed into powerful instruments of gender justice. At least, that is the fantasy. But here is the reality: Campus disciplinary committees—often a casual mix of professors, students, and an assistant dean or two—are well suited to resolving cases involving purported plagiarism and cheating, and violations of college rules on drugs and alcohol. But no one considers them prepared to adjudicate murder, arson, or kidnapping cases, or criminal assault. They lack the training and the resources to investigate and adjudicate felonies. So why are they expected to determine guilt or innocence in cases of rape?
>
> As with murder and arson, serious charges of sexual assault should be left to the police and the courts. The Department of Education should not pressure

> universities to enact a system whereby a student can be found guilty of a major crime by a mere preponderance of evidence.
>
> […]Being a victim of rape is uniquely horrific, but being accused of rape is not far behind. If the person is guilty, then the suffering is deserved. But what if he is innocent? To be found guilty of rape by a campus tribunal can mean both expulsion and a career-destroying black mark on your permanent record. Such occurrences could become routine under the Ali dispensation.
>
> So why is Ali taking such draconian measures? Because she asserts that rape on campuses has reached epidemic levels, citing a study that states that 19 percent, or almost one in five women, will be a victim of assault or attempted assault during their college years.
>
> But is that figure accurate or even plausible? Research on sexual assault is notoriously hard to conduct, and the studies are wildly inconsistent. A 2003 Bureau of Justice Statistics special report, "Violent Victimization of College Students, 1995-2002," found that among the nation's nearly four million female college students, there were six rapes or sexual assaults per thousand per year during the years surveyed. That comes to one victim in 40 students during four years of college—too many, of course, but vastly fewer than Ali's one in five.
>
> The study cited by Ali used an online survey, conducted under a grant from the Justice Department, in which college women were asked about their sexual experiences, on campus and off, and the researchers—not the women themselves—decided whether they had been assaulted. The researchers employed an expansive definition of sexual assault that included "forced kissing" and even "attempted" forced kissing. The survey also asked subjects if they had sexual contact with someone when they were unable to give consent because they were drunk. A "yes" answer was automatically counted as a rape or assault. According to the authors, "an intoxicated person cannot legally consent to sexual contact."
>
> Surely, reasonable people can disagree on that: If sexual intimacy under the influence of alcohol is by definition assault, then a significant percentage of sexual intercourse throughout the world and down the ages qualifies as crime.
>
> The Justice Department stamped a disclaimer on every page of the survey report, advising that it is not a publication of the Justice Department and does not necessarily reflect its positions or policies. Ali, however, treats it as an official government finding and ignores the controversies and ambiguities surrounding her "one in five" figure.

I'm a huge fan of Christina Hoff Sommers. I really recommend her book "The War Against Boys". Must-reading for any parent. The article notes in the author bio that she is working on an updated version of that book, and you can bet this topic will be covered.

Hillary Clinton, Huma Abedin, Elin Nordegren, Elizabeth Edwards and Maria Shriver

June 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

All of these women were cheated on, to some extent, by their spouses:

- Hillary Clinton is the wife of Bill Clinton.
- Huma Abedin is the wife of the Anthony Weiner.
- Elin Nordegren is the wife of Tiger Woods.
- Elizabeth Edwards is the wife of John Edwards.
- Maria Shriver is the wife of Arnold Schwarzenegger.

So what do they all have in common?

Andrew Klavan explains a common mistake that each of these women made when choosing their spouse.

Excerpt:

> I wanted to take a serious look at this situation and get at the reasons men such as Weiner behave in this grotesque way.
>
> I blame women. No, really. Women — by which I mean each and every single member of the female gender — you know who you are — need look no further than themselves to explain why Weiner-types behave toward them in this fashion. We men are always hearing complaints from women about how badly we treat them, what pigs we are, how pushy and abrasive… on and on. But what these same women conveniently fail to mention is that this stuff really works on them!
>
> Charles C. Johnson writing about Weiner's johnson at *Big Government* reports that the media has long described Weiner as "a lean, mean dating machine," who has "a bevy of babes surrounding him," wherever he goes. In other words, this guy has been cleaning up in the romantic department. Arnold Schwarzenegger didn't seem to have any trouble getting dates either. Neither did alleged serial rapist Dominique Strauss-Kahn of the IMF. Chicks dig these creeps!
>
> So, then, ladies — what do you expect? All we guys want is for you to love us. If this is the sort of guy you follow after in droves, this is the sort of guy we're encouraged to be. And I have to admit: I don't get it. I look at Weiner and I see a rude, arrogant, entitled and clearly dishonest little piece of Democrat thoroughly convinced of his wholly non-existent superiority. Physically, he's a dead ringer for a turtle that's been pulled out of its shell. And as for his manners… did I mention he takes pictures of his absurdly eponymous package and sends them to women on Twitter!

> And *that's* the sort of stuff that wins you over, ladies? Well, if it is, expect to see a lot more of it. It's Darwin 101: men evolve to attract the opposite sex. By natural law, women get what they want from men… it hardly seems fair for them to complain about it when it turns up in their inbox.
>
> So women, here's some free advice. Stop dating creeps. It only encourages them.

Now, I don't think that Klavan's criticism applies to ALL WOMEN, only to women who have not though carefully about the requirements of marriage for men and women, and how to test men to see if they have what it takes to handle their responsibilities. It's THOSE women who end up with men who cheat.

So how should women test men for marriage?

Here are some questions that the five women who chose these disgusting creeps for husbands SHOULD have asked:

1. What is the public purpose of marriage?
2. What are the expected public outcomes of a good marriage?
3. Does chastity before marriage provide any indication about a person's ability to stay faithful in a marriage?
4. What should men and women bring to a relationship so that they are able to perform expected marital behaviors?
5. Is marriage more about self-indulgence or about self-sacrifice? Can you get used to self-sacrifice by being self-indulgent?
6. If a person is pro-abortion, what do they believe about taking responsibility to avoid harming others with their poor decisions?
7. If a person is pro-same-sex marriage, what do they believe about the needs of children compared to the needs of adults?
8. If a person believes in wealth redistribution, do they have a correct understanding of working, saving and investing?
9. Does a person's superior appearance, wealth, or power determine whether they will be faithful in a marriage?
10. Can you cause your spouse to be faithful by spending a lot of money on a wedding?
11. Can you cause your spouse to be faithful by inviting famous people to your wedding?
12. Is it a good idea to choose someone to marry who your parents and elders disapprove of?
13. Is it a good idea to choose whether to have sex with someone using "the 180-second rule"?
14. Is it a good idea to choose someone to marry in order to impress your friends (or to make them jealous)?
15. Is it a good idea to marry someone because most of your friends are getting married?
16. Is it a good idea to avoid studying the effects of divorce on children prior to

marrying?

17. Can you expect a spouse to adhere to objective moral obligations without a knowledge of God's existence, grounded on evidence?
18. Can you expect a spouse to adhere to objective moral obligations without a knowledge of God's character, grounded on evidence?
19. Does holding a Bible for a photo-op make someone into a William Lane Craig or a Wayne Grudem?
20. Does singing praise hymns in church make someone into a William Lane Craig or a Wayne Grudem?

Those last items are to show that you really cannot have a moral standard that is binding unless there is some way that the universe ought to be, because it was designed to be a certain way by a Designer. If a person is convinced that there is a Designer who made people, it rationally grounds the idea that there is a way that humans ought to act – independently of how we may feel individually, or even in different cultures in different places and times. The more a man knows whether God exists and knows what God is like as a person – based on evidence – the more seriously that man will try to incorporate God's personality into his decision making. A serious study of the evidence for God's existence and character helps people to take moral obligations to others more seriously – especially when they don't FEEL LIKE IT. That is why marriages where both spouses attend church regularly last. Women need to be asking men these worldview and morality questions, and insisting on seeing the behaviors that raise the probability of having a stable marriage to a faithful man.

Basically, instead of relying on feelings and peer approval to choose a man, women need to ask men questions to find out whether they are trustworthy and equal to the tasks that men perform as husbands and fathers. I don't think that women who were cheated on really asked questions about their chosen spouse's worldview, and how the man's worldview grounded moral obligations, such as the obligation NOT to cheat. It seems that today, a well-grounded worldview that grounds moral obligations is regarded by some women as being superfluous to marital stability. I guess they think that fidelity is basically random – that Elliot Spitzer is as likely to be a faithful spouse as James Dobson. They just don't ask men to explain what they believe and why, and why any particular man can be trusted to make moral decisions. And they shouldn't be satisfied with words – they should demand to see evidence that the man has studied these issues, written about them, debated with others about them, and acted on these convictions *personally*.

I think that women today are also giving up their responsibility to read about marriage and parenting, to read about risks and challenges that threaten stable marriages, like no-fault divorce laws and cohabitation, and to read about how important it is to stay married because of how divorce affects children. Women should not abdicate the responsibility to judge men, they should not say that "men are unpredictable", and they should not set themselves up as helpless victims. They need to keep men at arm's length, keep their wits about them and do the work of evaluating men for the roles that men play in

marriage and family.

Character and knowledge count. Just because a man can put on a show for you, it doesn't mean that he is capable of producing the results of a thoughtful Christian worldview.

What does Dr. Laura say about marriage?

> "Commitment to marriage and child rearing was once viewed as the pinnacle of adulthood identity, so that women looked carefully for the "right" man for the job, and parents were consulted for opinions and blessings."
> Source: Dr. Laura Schlessinger, *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands*, page 53.

You can read more about the Anthony Weiner scandal here. Bill Clinton officiated at Anthony Weiner's wedding. Huma Abedin was the personal assistant of radical feminist Hillary Clinton. Ironic, isn't it?

This post was linked by:

- Little Miss Attila
- Neil Simpson
- Linkiest
- Right Wing News
- DaTechGuy

Related posts

- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste

Does the NAACP care more about children's educations or union jobs?

June 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Here's something you don't see everyday. Thousands of American blacks held a rally in Harlem last week to protest . . . the NAACP.
>
> The New York state chapter of the civil rights organization and the United Federation of Teachers, the local teachers union, have filed a lawsuit to stop the city from closing 22 of Gotham's worst schools. The lawsuit also aims to block the city from giving charter schools space to operate in buildings occupied by traditional public schools.
>
> Protesters at the rally, which included parents and charter school operators like Geoffrey Canada of the Harlem Children's Zone, urged the NAACP to withdraw from the suit. But Hazel Dukes, president of the state NAACP chapter, is unpersuaded. Using the kind of language more readily associated with past opponents of black civil rights, Ms. Dukes said that critics of the lawsuit "can march and have rallies all day long. . . . We will not respond."
>
> What schoolhouses is Ms. Dukes standing in the doorway to protect? Well, at the Academy for Collaborative Education, one of the Harlem schools that the city wants to close, only 3% of students were performing at grade level in English last year, and only 9% in math. At Columbus High School in the Bronx, another school slated for closure, the four-year graduation rate in 2009 was 40%, versus a citywide average of 63%, and less than 10% of special education students graduated on time.
>
> The teachers union wants to keep these abysmal schools open to preserve jobs for their members. This is bad enough. But the union and NAACP also want to limit better educational options for low-income families who can't afford private schools and can't afford to move to an affluent neighborhood with decent public schools. The union knows that in a place like New York City, where space is at a premium, blocking charters from operating in public buildings will hamper charter growth.
>
> If the lawsuit succeeds, the awful schools will remain open to damage another generation of children. If you want to know why the NAACP has become irrelevant to the lives of African-Americans, this typical display of moral indifference to the plight of minority children is Exhibit A.

The NAACP is aligned with the Democrat party, and the Democrat party is beholden to teacher unions. They don't care about children. Not only are the Democrats spending the

next generation into debt, but they are also bankrupting medicare and social security, subsidizing the destruction of their families with single mother welfare, and now destroying their hopes of getting and education. It's unconscionable. They hate children.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

Melissa previews the new Illustra Media ID documentary

June 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Hard-Core Christianity.

Excerpt:

> Last summer, I had the privilege of attending lectures by one of the scientists featured in the upcoming Illustra Media documentary, *Metamorphosis.* Dr. Paul Nelson explained the science behind this unique argument for intelligent design theory, and I've been waiting with bated breath for the film's resease ever since!
>
> The intelligent design argument presented by the film (which I understand isn't discussed until the third part) is the enormous problem that insect metamorphosis poses for the theoretical neo-Darwinian descent pathways. In plain language, neo-Darwinism claims that random genetic mutations coupled with natural selection acting over greats spans of time are responsible for a caterpillar's physical ability to transform into a butterfly. There's an insurmountable obstacle for this alleged process, however.
>
> When it enters the pupa phase, in which it forms a hard chrysalis around itself, the caterpillar's body *totally liquefies*. Subsequently, an entirely new body plan is constructed from this chemical soup, and what emerges from the chrysalis is absolutely nothing like what went in. Now, according to neo-Darwinism, mutations that equip an organism for such a spectacular metamorphosis are cumulative. The mutations that dictate chrysalis formation would come first. Next would come mutations that cause body-liquefication. Next would come—uh-oh—do you see the problem here? If a caterpillar goes into a pupa stage without the necessary genetic information to build the new body structure and GET OUT OF the pupa stage (an "escape plan," if you will), it would simply die inside the chrysalis, never to emerge. Thus, there is NO ADVANTAGE for natural selection to act upon, and the process of metamorphosis could never evolve. What would be needed here is for the caterpillar to acquire ALL the mutations necessary for the pupa phase and ALL the mutations necessary for the architecture of a survivable adult body plan AT THE SAME TIME. Based on what evolutionary biology teaches about how mutations accumulate, this simply isn't going to happen. This is a case of all-or-nothing that argues strongly for intentional, intelligent design.

If you want to see the first three in the series, look here:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (DNA)
- The Privileged Planet (Fine-Tuning and Habitability)
- Darwin's Dilemma (Fossils)

About Melissa:

> Melissa is a graduate student at Biola University, studying for the Master of Arts in Science and Religion. She holds a Bachelor's degree in biology and worked in biotechnology and pharmaceutical research for five years after obtaining her undergraduate degree. She has spent more than a decade studying the science and philosophy pertaining to the origins debate and is also currently working toward her certification in general Christian apologetics from Biola. She directs The Woodlands chapter of Reasonable Faith and welcomes opportunities to speak and teach on scientific apologetics.

She also is a homeschooling mom, which is the best kind of mom.

Firms to drop employee health coverage as Obamacare takes effect

June 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBS Marketwatch.

Excerpt:

> Once provisions of the Affordable Care Act start to kick in during 2014, at least three of every 10 employers will probably stop offering health coverage, a survey released Monday shows.
>
> While only 7% of employees will be forced to switch to subsidized-exchange programs, at least 30% of companies say they will "definitely or probably" stop offering employer-sponsored coverage, according to the study published in McKinsey Quarterly.
>
> The survey of 1,300 employers says those who are keenly aware of the health-reform measure probably are more likely to consider an alternative to employer-sponsored plans, with 50% to 60% in this group expected to make a change. It also found that for some, it makes more sense to switch.
>
> "At least 30% of employers would gain economically from dropping coverage, even if they completely compensated employees for the change through other benefit offerings or higher salaries," the study says.

Now we're going to get what we voted for, unless the Republicans get in all the way in 2012.

Poll: Disengagement grows the longer workers stay in government jobs

June 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

From the Ottawa Citizen. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Recent post-secondary graduates recruited by the federal public service appear to become more disengaged and less ambitious the longer they're in their jobs.
>
> That's a key conclusion of a new study that provides an intriguing window into perceptions of government employment by new public service hires and potential recruits. The study, recently posted to a government website, was done for the Public Service Commission by EKOS Research Associates.
>
> It involved online surveys with two groups of people hired through the government's Post-Secondary Recruitment Program (PSR), as well as recent hires recruited through other methods and "potential recruits" — mostly university graduates under age 35.
>
> As part of the study, EKOS re-interviewed 219 PSR recruits who were surveyed in an earlier phase of the study in 2009. It found some "troubling shifts" in their attitudes.
>
> The importance these recruits attach to "key intrinsic job aspects" has declined over the past year, the study reports. The weight they give to the opportunity to be creative declined by nine percentage points from 2009 to 2010, it says, while the importance they attached to the prestige associated with their jobs fell by 10 points.
>
> There were also smaller declines in the importance ascribed to meaningful work

> and opportunities for career advancement, while “more extrinsic issues” — such as attractive compensation and a good work-life balance — assumed greater significance.
>
> “These findings suggest that PSR recruits become less ambitious/intrinsically motivated as they spend more time in the federal public service,” the study concludes.

Can people who are disengaged serve the public as well as private sector workers whose compensation and continued employment *depends* on their being engaged in their work? This is why we need to privatize as much as possible.

Peer-reviewed journal apologizes for censoring pro-ID article

June 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News. (Excerpt below, with links removed)

Excerpt:

> In one of their favorite soundbytes, members of the Darwin lobby like to assert that intelligent design scientists do not publish peer-reviewed research. That claim is manifestly false. But the fact that intelligent design scholars do publish peer-reviewed articles is no thanks to Darwinists, many of whom do their best to ensure that peer-reviewed articles by intelligent design scientists never see the light of day.
>
> Witness the brazen censorship earlier this year of an article by University of Texas, El Paso mathematics professor Granville Sewell, author of the book *In the Beginning and Other Essays on Intelligent Design*. Sewell's article critical of Neo-Darwinism ("A Second Look at the Second Law") was both peer-reviewed *and* accepted for publication by the journal *Applied Mathematics Letters*. That is, the article was accepted for publication until a Darwinist blogger who describes himself as an "opinionated computer science geek" wrote the journal editor to denounce the article, and the editor decided to pull Sewell's article in violation of his journal's own professional standards.
>
> The publisher of *Applied Mathematics Letters* (Elsevier, the international science publisher) has now agreed to issue a public statement apologizing to Dr. Sewell as well as to pay $10,000 in attorney's fees.
>
> "It's hard to imagine a more blatant assault on intellectual freedom and the free exchange of ideas," says attorney Pete Lepiscopo with the California firm of Lepiscopo and Morrow, which represented Sewell.
>
> Lepiscopo points out that in retracting Sewell's article, *Applied Mathematics Letters* "effectively accepted the unsubstantiated word and unsupported opinion of an inconsequential blogger, with little or unknown academic background beyond a self-professed public acknowledgment that he was a 'computer science grad' and whose only known writings are self-posted blogs about movies, comics, and fantasy computer games." This blogger's unsupported opinion "trumped the views of an author who is a well respected mathematician with a Ph.D. in Mathematics from Purdue University; a fully-tenured Professor of Mathematics at the University of Texas–El Paso; an author of three books on numerical analysis and 40 articles published in respected journals; and a highly sought-after and frequent lecturer world-wide on mathematics and science."
>
> After Dr. Sewell's article was pulled, Darwinian zealots crowed about their

> achievement and maliciously speculated that the article was withdrawn because it wasn't really peer-reviewed or because it was somehow substandard. The journal, meanwhile, left Dr. Sewell to twist in the wind, seemingly endorsing the Darwinists' smears. The journal editor Dr. Rodin wrote a groveling letter to the Darwinist blogger who complained to him in which he agreed that publishing Sewell's article would involve "impropriety." Rodin further apologized "for our erroneous judgement in even considering this paper for publication."
>
> Dr. Rodin and his journal now have to issue a public statement providing "their sincere and heartfelt apologies to Dr. Sewell… and welcom[ing] Dr. Sewell's submission of future articles for possible publication." More important than the apology, the journal has to set the record straight by reiterating that "Dr. Sewell's article was peer-reviewed and accepted for publication" and by making clear that his article was not withdrawn because of "any errors or technical problems found by the reviewers or editors."

Wow. I actually clicked on some of the links in the post at Evolution News and was carried off to the lands of naturalistic blogging. It's amazing how confident they are in their little echo chambers, but I cannot fathom why this should be since they are unwilling to debate their views in public. To me, you can only know something if you are willing to hear the criticisms against it. If you censor all your opponents and hang around in little online chat rooms gloating to your choir about how smart you are and how right you are, why think that you really know anything about what you are talking about?

The only way to be sure about any issue is to listen to both sides in a debate, and let your opponents have a hearing. I would not feel confident in asserting *anything* if I only heard the arguments on one side of the question. Not only do the Darwinbots seem to be confident in asserting their views without hearing their opponents, they are actually *arrogant* and *insulting* about it. But before you can be trumpet your victory in a disagreement, doesn't there have to be an actual debate first? Canceling the debate by censorship doesn't mean that you won the debate. It means you're *scared* of debate.

Here's what you do. Slap a defamation lawsuit on the blogger who complained for a million dollars and let them have their day in court to explain why they said what they said. Then we'll find out which side has the blind faith and which side has the knowledge.

Tim Pawlenty lays out bold, conservative tax plan to create jobs

June 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remember on Sunday when I recommended some policies?

Excerpt:

> Let me add this tort reform law (loser pays) to the other list of policies we need at the national level:
>
> - National right-to-work law
> - National photo ID required for voting
> - National voucher system for education
> - National voucher for health care
> - Nation cap on damages for lawsuits
> - allow Opt-out of Social Security
> - allow Opt-out of Medicare
> - allow Opt-out of Medicaid
> - allow Opt-out of unemployment insurance
> - **Flat income tax at 10% below 50,000 and 25% over 50,000, with no deductions except for charity and retirement contributions**
> - **Zero capital gains tax, phased in over four years**
> - Tax-free savings accounts with no restrictions on withdrawals, limit $5,000 per year

In the comments, I added that the limit would be $100,000 for married couples, in response to a challenge from a commenter. And I should have mentioned that I wanted corporate taxes cut to 25%.

Well, guess what Tim Pawlenty went and did?

Excerpt:

> Former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty will propose significant reductions in the corporate and individual tax rates Tuesday while calling for deep spending cuts that could see the federal government abandon its role delivering the mail or backstopping home loans.
>
> The proposals are part of an economic plan Mr. Pawlenty will unveil later today in remarks at the University of Chicago. The plan, according to excerpts provided by Mr. Pawlenty's campaign, is tailored to the business community and fiscal conservatives as he seeks the Republican presidential nomination, but its impact on the deficit is unclear, given the potential drop in tax revenue.
>
> **Mr. Pawlenty wants to reduce the corporate tax rate from 35% to 15%**

> **and create just two tax brackets for individuals and families: a 10% rate on the first $50,000 of income for individuals – or $100,000 for married couples – and a 25% rate for all other income. In addition, he will call for the elimination of taxes on capital gains, dividends, interest income and inheritance.**

Hey, some of that sounds familiar!

And there's more:

> In order to offset any lost tax revenue — and to tackle the deficit — Mr. Pawlenty calls for something called "The Google Test" to determine whether the government should be involved in a program.
>
> "If you can find a good or service on the Internet, then the federal government probably doesn't need to be doing it," Mr. Pawlenty says. "The post office, the government printing office, Amtrak, Fannie [Mae] and Freddie [Mac], were all built in a time in our country when the private sector did not adequately provide those products. That's no longer the case."
>
> He calls on Congress to freeze spending at current levels and impound 5% of spending until the budget is balanced. "If they won't do it … I will," he plans to say.
>
> The former governor will call for terminating all federal regulations, unless Congress votes to keep them individually.

I feel that I must make clear that the Wintery Knight is not Tim Pawlenty. However, he *may* be reading the Wintery Knight. One can't know for sure.

OK, so right now I am still favoring Bachmann overall, with Cain in second place, and Pawlenty in third place. Feeling better about Pawlenty now. Three strong conservative candidates! WOOHOO!!! I would be happy with ANY of these three candidates.

You can read excepts of Pawlenty's speech right here on his web site. Awesome stuff!

Recent college graduates realizing that Obama's rhetoric doesn't produce jobs

June 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller. (H/T Right Wing News)

Excerpt:

> A very large proportion of recent university graduates have soured on President Barack Obama, and many will vote GOP or stay at home in the 2012 election, according to two new surveys of younger voters.
>
> "These rock-solid Obama constituents are free-agents," said Kellyanne Conway, president of The Polling Company, based in Washington, D.C. She recently completed a large survey of college grads, and "they're shopping around, considering their options, [and] a fair number will stay at home and sit it out," she said.
>
> The scope of this disengagement from Obama is suggested by an informal survey of 500 post-grads by Joe Maddalone, founder of Maddalone Global Strategies. Of his sample, 93 percent are aged between 22 and 28, 67 percent are male and 83 percent voted for Obama in 2008. But only 27 percent are committed to voting for Obama again, and 80 percent said they would consider voting for a Republican, said New York-based Maddalone.
>
> That's a drop of almost 60 points in support for Obama among this influential class of younger post-grad voters, who Maddalone recruited at conferences held at New York University and Thomson-Reuters' New York headquarters.
>
> The bad news for Obama was underlined May 19 with a report by a job-firm Adecco that roughly 60 percent of recent college-grads have not been able to find a full-time job in their preferred area. One-in-five graduates have taken jobs far from their training, one-in-six are dependent on their parents, and one-in-four say they're in debt, according to the firm's data.

Let's see. These graduates voted for Obama during college, and now they've just finished going through many years of indoctrination from teachers who are typically isolated from real life, i.e. – isolated from private sector employment, military service, entrepreneurship, stay-at-home motherhood, and so forth. They parroted all of the secular left-wing views of their indoctrinators, got their diplomas in social work or English or peace studies, and now they are out on their own for the first time, looking for jobs from the people they have been taught to hate and despise. Imagine their surprise to find out that the world is nothing like they were led to believe, their non-quantitative degrees are useless, and that they are now $60,000 in debt, and they will never collect a dime from entitlement programs from Social Security.

Not to mention the $534,000 dollars that each household in the US owes because of

Nancy Pelosi's $5.34 TRILLION dollar addition to the national debt. (H/T Doug Ross)

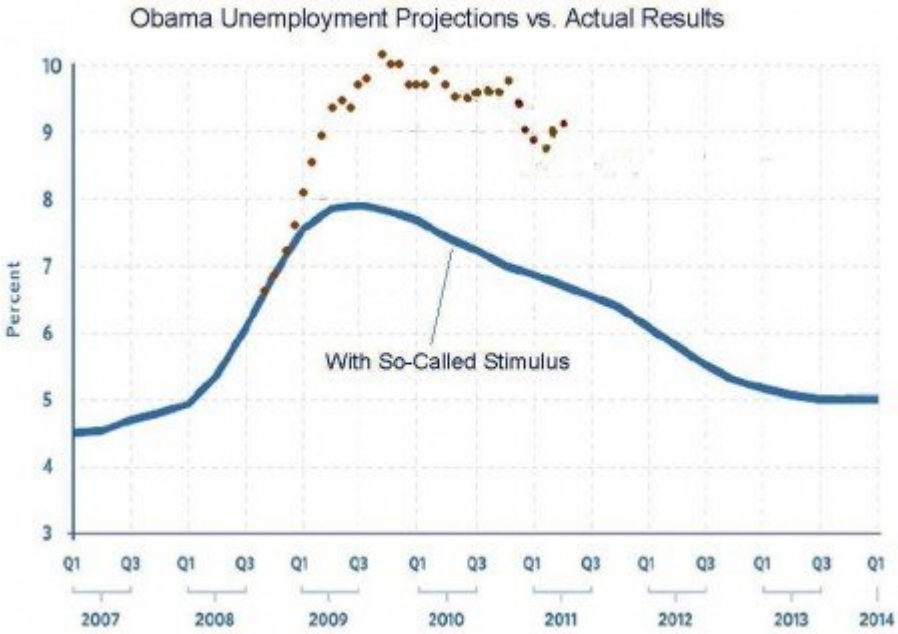

Obama Unemployment Stimulus Graph
Image from Conservative Compendium.

Here's another interesting article from the Washington Examiner, by political guru Michael Barone.

Excerpt:

> Barack Obama and the Democratic congressional supermajorities of 2009-10 raised federal spending from 21 to 25 percent of gross domestic product. Their stimulus package stopped layoffs of public employees for a while, even as private sector payrolls plummeted.
>
> And the Obama Democrats piled further burdens on would-be employers in the private sector. Obamacare and the Dodd-Frank financial regulation bill are scheduled to be followed by thousands of regulations that will impose impossible-to-estimate costs on the economy.
>
> […]It's hard to avoid the conclusion that the threat of tax increases and increased regulatory burdens have produced something in the nature of a hiring strike.
>
> And then there is the political posturing. On April 13 Obama delivered a ballyhooed speech at George Washington University. The man who conservatives as well as liberal pundits told us was a combination of Edmund Burke and Reinhold Niebuhr was widely expected to present a serious plan to address the budget deficits and entitlement spending.
>
> Instead the man who can call on talented career professionals at the Office of Management and Budget to produce detailed blueprints gave us something in the nature of a few numbers scrawled on a paper napkin.
>
> The man depicted as pragmatic and free of ideological cant indulged in cheap

> political rhetoric, accusing Republicans, including House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan who was in the audience, of pushing old ladies in wheelchairs down the hill and starving autistic children.
>
> The signal was clear. Obama had already ignored his own deficit reduction commission in preparing his annual budget, which was later rejected 97-0 in the Senate. Now he was signaling that the time for governing was over and that he was entering campaign mode 19 months before the November 2012 election. People took notice, especially those people who decide whether to hire or not. Goldman Sachs's Current Activity Indicator stood at 4.2 percent in March. In April — in the middle of which came Obama's GW speech — it was 1.6 percent. For May it is 1 percent.
>
> "That is a major drop in no time at all," wrote Business Insider's Joe Weisenthal.
>
> After April 13 Obama Democrats went into campaign mode. They staged a poll-driven Senate vote to increase taxes on oil companies.
>
> They began a Mediscare campaign against Ryan's budget resolution that all but four House Republicans had voted for. That seemed to pay off with a special election victory in New York's 26th Congressional District.
>
> The message to job creators was clear. Hire at your own risk. Higher taxes, more burdensome regulation and crony capitalism may be here for some time to come.

Corporations do not hire workers or expand their businesses when there is uncertainty and looming tax increases.

Max Andrews writes about the blessings of suffering

June 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Max's blog Sententia. (H/T Fred W.)

Except:

> I was diagnosed with Crohn's disease in May 2004 at the end of my Junior year of high school. Crohn's is an autoimmune disease and mine happens to be in my terminal ileum at the end of my small intestine. When I first went to the emergency room seven years ago I felt like someone had reached into my gut and started twisting my organs around while I was digesting glass. It was, and is, extremely painful and nauseating. It was about the sixth day in the hospital when the doctor diagnosed me. I wept once he left the room because I knew that this had ruined my life dreams of serving in the U.S. Army as an intelligence analyst. Well, seven years later I can look at this disease and honestly say that it has been one of the greatest gifts God has ever given me.
>
> I've had a flare up (reoccurrence) about once a year since I was first diagnosed. I refused long-term medication for a while since it started out as a mild case and medication wouldn't allow me to join the Army. I graduated high school and took a year off before going to college so I could work with the Army and doctors so I could enlist. My attempts fell short and I could not overturn or appeal my medical disqualification. It had been my dream since I was a young child. I have a very patriotic family and both of my grandfathers served. My mother's father was an NCO in the U.S. Air Force around the Korean War and worked with nuclear bombs. My father's father was an officer in the U.S. Navy and served on the U.S.S. Dauphin. I felt it was my duty to serve my country. I excelled in J.R.O.T.C. in high school as the Battalion Commander, the leader of over 250 other cadets and I was one of the most decorated (if not the most decorated) cadets in the school's history. I studied government until my second semester sophomore year of college. I knew then that I was called to something greater; I knew that God had a *specific* purpose for me and his purpose was greater than anything I could have planned for. I then became an undergraduate biblical studies student and I'm now a philosophy graduate student. However, these are peripheral details that resulted from my Crohn's. The blessing is so much greater than any classes I've ever taken.
>
> God used Crohn's to alter the course of my life. This one event was a catalyst for so many changes. Since getting Crohn's I have gotten saved. Since being saved I started asking myself the deeper questions of life and existence, which led me to study philosophy. My relationship with God continually grows and I think about God throughout the entire day. There isn't a day that goes by when I don't think about God or ask him questions about him and existence. God has used Crohn's as a means to demonstrate my purpose in life. Well, it's not so much that I know

> my meta-purpose, so to speak, but it's a way that God has shown me that *I do* have purpose and meaning. When I think about the way my life would have been without Crohn's I don't believe I would appreciate my existence and God's work as much as I do now; because of that I have no problem believing Crohn's is a gift from God.

Please read the whole post, there's more to it. It shows you how Christians think about suffering in a completely different way from non-Christians. We think that suffering can be valuable if a person endures it well and learns from it.

Pro-life news from Texas, North Carolina, Iowa, Ohio and Pennsylvania

June 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about Iowa's abortion ban

Steve Ertelt at Life News does a great job of tracking the progress being made by Republicans on life issues.

Texas

An amendment to a Senate bill would make it so hospital districts that do abortions in the state would not qualify for receiving state taxpayer funds.

Excerpt:

> "Senate Bill 7 passed with the pro-life provisions in place," Texas Alliance for Life director Joe Pojman explained. "Two good amendments were also added: one by Rep. Zedler (R-Arlington) relating to more detailed reporting of information relating to abortions and one by Rep. Christian (R-Nacogdoches) to prevent tax funding for abortions by hospital districts. This was the preliminary vote in the House, the final vote in the House will be tomorrow."
>
> Rep. Wayne Christian floated the hospital amendment, which also targets contracts with the Planned Parenthood abortion business or other abortion businesses and says hospital districts would lose state funding if they "contract or affiliate with other organizations, agencies or entities that provide or refer for abortion or abortion-related services."

> State House members approved the budget amendment 100-37 after Democrats attempted to use a procedural motion to block consideration of it. The Dallas Morning news indicates Democratic Reps. Guillen, T. King, Lozano, Martinez, Munoz and Pickett were the only ones to join Republicans supporting it.
>
> […]"Sen. Jane Nelson (R-Flower Mound) has filed Senate Bill 7 to make Planned Parenthood ineligible for all family planning funds. Please call your state senator and urge him to support this bill," Pojman added.

North Carolina

North Carolina Republicans approved a bill to provide women who are considering abortion with more information so they can make a better decision.

Excerpt:

> North Carolina legislators approved a bill today that pro-life groups support to help women obtain information about abortion's risks and alternatives they may not otherwise receive before an abortion.
>
> The measure, which also has a 24-hour waiting period component, is designed to help women find positive abortion alternatives. The Woman's Right to Know bill, H 854, is similar to legislation other states have passed and is proven to reduce abortions. When women are given information about abortion that Planned Parenthood and other abortion businesses don't routinely provide, they frequently consider alternatives.
>
> The state House voted 71-48 for the Right to Know bill that provides them with information about the development of their unborn child, the medical risks associated with having an abortion, and the availability of abortion alternatives.
>
> During the debate, according to an AP report, Republicans explained how the measure would help women considering an abortion and Democrats responded that the measure was an intrusion between the doctor-patient relationship, even though women getting abortions normally have never met the abortion practitioner and will never see him again following the abortion.

Iowa

Iowa House passes a ban on abortion at or after 18 weeks of pregnancy.

Excerpt:

> Today, House Republicans passed a revised Senate File 534 that removes the weak Senate language and replaces it with, according to the Des Moines register, a ban on virtually all abortions after 18 weeks of pregnancy — two weeks earlier than the Nebraska law that has not been challenged in court by abortion supporters.
>
> Rep. Dawn Pettengill, a Republican who headed up the changes, said she was glad that the bill would be one of the strongest pro-life laws in the nation.

> "I believe life begins at conceptions so, to me, I say great. I'm glad that is true," Pettengill said, according to the Register.
>
> The revised legislation would charge abortion practitioners with a crime for doing abortions after that point and they could face 10 years in prison and a $10,000 fine for abortions afterwards. That upset Rep. Janet Petersen, a Des Moines Democrat who was upset "doctors" would be charged even though abortion practitioners typically don't practice legitimate medicine.
>
> Jill June, president of Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, opposed the ban on late abortions and claimed lawmakers supporting it "seem to be on a reckless attack of Iowa women."

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Republicans in the Senate approved a bill that would opt the state out of abortion funding required by Obamacare.

Excerpt:

> The Obamacare legislation requires state health insurance exchanges created under the legislation to cover abortions, but the law allows states to opt out of requiring abortion coverage. The ban extends to the state exchanges the Obamacare legislation would set up because the funding for abortions would come at taxpayer expense through the exchanges, which would be funded with federal subsidies.
>
> Under the new health care law, states will be in charge of their own health care exchanges that are available for individuals and small businesses. The exchange doesn't go into effect until 2014 and states are filing lawsuits seeking to stop the pro-abortion health care bill in its other pro-abortion provisions entirety, but states are moving now to exercise their right to opt out of some of the abortion funding.
>
> The Pennsylvania Senate approved Senate Bill 3 on a 37-12 vote that lawmakers described as a common sense piece of legislation which would ensure that Pennsylvania is not forced into the abortion business as a result of so-called health care reform. The legislation now goes to the state House for consideration.
>
> Senate floor later, Sen. Larry Farnese, D-Philadelphia, criticized the bill saying it would make it harder for women to get abortions.
>
> "This is not a new or radical step for Pennsylvania, but rather an extension of the restrictions we already have in place for (Medicaid) and other taxpayer-subsidized programs," countered the bill's sponsor, Sen. Don White, R-Indiana.

Ohio

Ohio Republicans in the Senate approved two amendments to prevent taxpayer funds from being used for abortions.

Excerpt:

> This afternoon, state senators accepted two pro-life amendments that will ban non-therapeutic abortions in publicly funded facilities and further protect taxpayer dollars from paying for abortion. The Senate Finance Committee voted to include the Ohio Right to Life amendments to House Bill 153 which is expected to advance this week.
>
> Designed to withstand pro-abortion challenges, both Ohio Right to Life amendments mandate measures to prevent state funding for non-therapeutic abortions. The first bans abortions from being performed in public hospitals. The second prohibits abortion coverage in insurance plans of local public employees.
>
> "Countless times, the citizens of Ohio have stated that they do not want their tax dollars paying for abortion," says Ohio Right to Life Executive Director, Mike Gonidakis. "These measures will ensure that Ohioans' tax dollars will be protected."
>
> Gonidakis said, "Ohio Right to Life expresses its gratitude to the Ohio Senate for their courage to stand up for the unborn and to defend the conscience rights of Ohio taxpayers. We thank Senate President Tom Niehaus (R – New Richmond), Senator Kris Jordan (R – Powell) and all state senators who stand for protecting women and supporting life. Ohio Right to Life and the pro-life people of Ohio have confidence that their legislators will continue to be steadfast in their commitment to vote for life."

You can follow Steve on Twitter here.

Mike Licona responds to Bart Ehrman's new book on gospel authorship

June 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post on Bible Gateway, Michael Licona assesses Ehrman's argument that the letters traditionally ascribed to Paul are not traceable back to Paul. Licona argues that Paul would have had access to other people in the Christian community who would have helped him to craft and write his letters.

Here's Ehrman's challenge:

> Most, though not all, of the arguments against traditional authorship fall into two categories: style and content. However, if an author employed the use of a secretary to write what he dictated as well as provide varying degrees of editing, this would explain quite well why some of the letters in the New Testament whose authorship is questionable have vocabulary, grammar, some content, and an overall writing style that differs, even significantly, from the undisputed letters. Ehrman recognizes this and writes, "Virtually all of the problems with what I've been calling forgeries can be solved if secretaries were heavily involved in the composition of the early Christian writings" (134).Did Paul use a secretary at least occasionally? We may answer with an unequivocal yes. Of Paul's seven undisputed letters, it is certain that he used a secretary for no less than four.
>
> - I, Tertius, who write this letter greet you in the Lord. (Rom. 16:22)
> - This greeting is in my own hand—Paul. (1 Cor. 16:21; cf. Gal. 6:11; Philemon 1:19)
>
> Ehrman concurs, "There is no doubt that the apostle Paul used a secretary on occasion" (134). But he contends that there's no evidence that Paul used them for any other services such as editing to correct grammar and improve style, coauthor to contribute to content, or compose the letter with the named author giving his final approval (134-36; cf. 77).

And here's part of his response:

> Writing a letter in antiquity was a costly enterprise. Randolph Richards, who is perhaps today's leading authority on the use of secretaries in antiquity, discusses the costs involved. Papyri, labor, and courier fees added up quickly. Of course, Cicero, Seneca, and the ultra-wealthy could easily afford the costs. But Paul, the missionary, would not have been so fortunate. Richards estimates that the cost for penning Paul's letters ranged from $101 in today's dollars for *Philemon* to $2,275 for *Romans*. And these figures do not include the expenses involved with a courier.Now perhaps you're thinking, "But Paul tells us in his letters he had churches that supported him (Phil. 4:10-18; 2 Cor. 11:9). And we know he had co-

workers whom he mentions in his letters (Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; 8:23; Phil. 1:1; 2:25; Col. 1:1; 4:11; 1 Th. 1:1; 2 Th. 1:1; Philem. 1:1, 24. cf. Gal. 1:1). They would naturally have been the couriers and could even have served as his secretaries. So, he would have incurred little to no labor costs." That much is evident.

And what's to have prevented these co-workers from also providing editorial and compositional services according to their personal abilities? Could the Tertius mentioned in Romans 16:22 have been a professional secretary who had volunteered his services? We will never know. What is clear is the fact that not being a member of the ultra-wealthy does not preclude Paul's use of a secretary for editing and composition.

[…]The early Christian church faced many situations and theological debates. In their minds, these matters were often more important than life itself. For example, in 1 Corinthians Paul is answering a situation where some members of the church in Corinth were denying an afterlife. Paul replies that if we are not raised from the dead to enjoy eternal life, Christ was not raised from the dead either. And if Christ was not raised, our Christian faith is worthless and our loved ones who have already died are forever gone. In fact, Paul adds, if there is no future resurrection of the dead and this life is all there is, let's party hard now because we will all be dead in a relatively short period of time (1 Cor. 15:12-19, 32)!

The letters in the New Testament weren't written for the mere enjoyment of the exercise and at leisure as many of the letters of Cicero and Atticus had been. Given the importance the early Christian letters had for their authors and recipients, there was a much greater need for using a secretary in order to craft the letters carefully. We know Paul could write, since he signed many of his greetings at the end of his letters. So, why have a secretary to whom he could dictate a letter without also depending upon him for editing services?

Here's a third reason for holding that Paul would want his secretary to be more involved than simply taking dictation: He flat out states that others were involved in his letter writing. Paul was apparently not very good at public speaking. This conclusion comes from information provided in his undisputed letters. In 2 Corinthians 11:6, Paul admits that he is "untrained in public speaking" (See also 1 Cor. 2:1, 4). In 2 Corinthians 10:10-11, he writes, "it is said, 'His [i.e., Paul's] letters are weighty and powerful, but his physical presence is weak, and his public speaking is despicable.' Such a person should consider this: What we are in the words of our letters when absent, we will be in actions when present."

Notice carefully how the subject changes from Paul the poor public speaker in the singular to the "we" who write the letters. More than one person is involved in writing Paul's letters. So, the involvement of the secretary appears to go beyond taking simple dictation.

> In summary, Ehrman's argument fails since Paul may not have incurred any costs for his extensive use of a secretary, the important occasions for writing the letters would have motivated Paul's extensive use of a secretary, and Paul clearly states that others were involved in the actual writing of the letters.

Now I want to say a few words about a recent experience I had talking to a Jewish atheist about what the Bible says about Jesus.

Talking about the Bible with non-Christians

To be convincing and appealing when discussing the New Testament with non-Christians, you need to be very aware of the fact that non-Christians do not understand theological language and they do not assume that the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God and they do not think that you have done your homework to know who wrote it and whether it was translated correctly from the originals so many years back.

The right way to discuss the Bible is to talk about the New Testament as a book that contains ancient biographies from a variety of authors. You want to list a number of factors that would affect whether individual verses within individual books are reliable. You want to weigh the arguments for and against the conservative view.

Here are some things to consider:

- when was the passage written?
- who wrote the passage?
- is the passage found in multiple sources?
- does the passage embarrass the author?
- does the passage praise the author's enemies?
- does the passage hinder the evangelistic message of the early church?

I was recently discussing the Harold Camping prophecy with a friend of mine who is an atheist, and I was explaining the passage where Jesus says that no one knows the date of judgment day. I used multiple sources, early sources, and the criterion of embarrassment to show why my friend should not consider Camping to be a disproof of the reliability of the Bible and an embarrassment to Christians.

Here are the passages I used to discredit Camping's calculations:

Mark 13:32-33:

32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.

Matthew 24:36-44:

36 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving

in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark;

[39] and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

[40] Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

[41]Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

[42] "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

[43] But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.

[44] So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Mark is early, and Matthew provides multiple attestation. But this passage also passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it ascribes ignorance to Jesus – something that the early church would not have made up if they were hoping to gain converts by falsely portraying Jesus as the Messiah. Therefore, it is *very likely* that this passage is authentic, and would be viewed as authentic even by those who are non-Christians. Any passage that undermines the missionary project of the early church by calling Jesus' identity as the Messiah into question is *guaranteed* to be historical. And it goes to show the quality of history you find in the New Testament.

It is sometimes useful to contrast good historically reliable passages with passages that are not viewed as historically reliable. In a related post, William lane Craig is asked by John Ankerberg about a passage that most historians do not view as historically reliable. Even if you are an inerrantist like me, you are not obligated to use and defend every verse when you quote the Bible to make arguments about theology or morality or history. Just analyze the passages that you are using the historical criteria, in order to persuade your non-Christian audience that you are not taking the Bible on faith. If one of your passages fails the tests, then don't use it – find another passage that passes the tests.

Regarding inerrancy, C. Michael Patton of Parchment & Pen blog doesn't think that you have to believe in inerrancy to become a Christian. I would argue that mature Christians should believe in inerrancy of the original writings, but new Christians don't have to.

So, to sum up, don't talk about the Bible the way that Christian pastors do on Sunday mornings with your non-Christian friends. Talk about the Bible like scholars do with your non-Christian friends. Here is a good example of how Christian and non-Christian scholars talk about the Bible in formal academic debates.

What are slut-walks and how do they relate to feminism and marriage?

June 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Feminism and slut walks

Consider this Washington Post article by a prominent feminist named Jessica Valenti, entitled "SlutWalks and the future of feminism".

Excerpt:

> More than 40 years after feminists tossed their bras and high heels into a trash can at the 1968 Miss America pageant — kicking off the bra-burning myth that will never die — some young women are taking to the streets to protest sexual assault, wearing not much more than what their foremothers once dubbed "objects of female oppression" in marches called SlutWalks.
>
> It's a controversial name, which is in part why the organizers picked it. It's also why many of the SlutWalk protesters are wearing so little (though some are sweatpants-clad, too). Thousands of women — and men — are demonstrating to fight the idea that what women wear, what they drink or how they behave can make them a target for rape. SlutWalks started with a local march organized by five women in Toronto and have gone viral, with events planned in more than 75 cities in countries from the United States and Canada to Sweden and South Africa. In just a few months, SlutWalks have become the most successful feminist action of the past 20 years.
>
> In a feminist movement that is often fighting simply to hold ground, SlutWalks stand out as a reminder of feminism's more grass-roots past and point to what the future could look like.
>
> The marches are mostly organized by younger women who don't apologize for their in-your-face tactics, making the events much more effective in garnering

> media attention and participant interest than the actions of well-established (and better funded) feminist organizations. And while not every feminist may agree with the messaging of SlutWalks, the protests have translated online enthusiasm into in-person action in a way that hasn't been done before in feminism on this scale.
>
> […]Nineteen year-old Miranda Mammen, who participated in SlutWalk at Stanford University, says the idea of "sluttiness" resonates with younger women in part because they are more likely than their older counterparts to be called sluts. "It's also loud, angry, sexy in a way that going to a community activist meeting often isn't," she says.
>
> Emily May, the 30-year-old executive director of Hollaback, an organization that battles street harassment, plans to participate in SlutWalk in New York City in August. "Nonprofit mainstays like conferences, funding and strategic planning are essential to maintaining change — but they don't ignite change," she says. "It's easy to forget that change starts with anger, and that history has always been made by badasses."
>
> Unlike protests put on by mainstream national women's organizations, which are carefully planned and fundraised for — even the signs are bulk-printed ahead of time — SlutWalks have cropped up organically, in city after city, fueled by the raw emotional and political energy of young women. And that's the real reason SlutWalks have struck me as the future of feminism. Not because an entire generation of women will organize under the word "slut" or because these marches will completely eradicate the damaging tendency of law enforcement and the media to blame sexual assault victims (though I think they'll certainly put a dent in it). But the success of SlutWalks does herald a new day in feminist organizing. One when women's anger begins online but takes to the street, when a local step makes global waves and when one feminist action can spark debate, controversy and activism that will have lasting effects on the movement.

I am not sure that slut walks are the right way for women to prepare themselves for marriage and children. It seems natural to me that women should aspire to life-long love and commitment – being protected and provided for by a man who is enchanted by them and values them as a helper and companion. To me, slut-walks are not a step on the way to lifelong love and parenting, because behaving selfishly and immodestly doesn't attract marriage-minded men. Men don't want wives who are irresponsible and immodest – they want wives who can assess risks, respect others and to take responsibility for their own decisions.

Dressing provocatively doesn't excuse evil predatorial men if they take that as an offer to commit crimes. But dressing immodestly does say to a good marriage-minded man that he should avoid that woman as a candidate spouse. That's why people dress professionally and conservatively at work, too – to set the tone for respectful interactions about things that matter, and to not distract the other person or lower the level of

discussion. It's a courtesy to others that helps them to focus on work-related things instead of being distracted by non-work-related things.

Women should also welcome men who say to them "that behavior is unwise and self-destructive", because giving a woman constructive guidance in a gentle way is a form of caring – just like telling someone that not exercising may be bad for their health. Telling someone the truth about something dangerous that they should avoid is a way of caring for them. When I talk to fatherless women, they tell me that they did stupid things they regret because "no one cared what I did". So if a man says "don't do that, it's wrong", it is a way of showing that he does care. "Don't drink alcohol when you're driving, it's wrong".

If a woman wants to communicate to a man that she is worth marrying, then she should try to try to get him to focus on her personality and her intelligence – the things that last after getting old and wrinkly. Just like if she were going to a job interview and wanted to talk about her academic qualifications and her work experience. Women should say to a man "I am strong and dependable and caring" not "look at me! I'm fun and easy!". Marriage-minded men want an intelligent and encouraging helper, not fun. Marriage isn't about fun – it's a lot of work. If either person says "It's my body, I'll do what I want" then that is a red flag that shows they are not ready for the conflict resolution and compromising that marriage requires. It would not be good, for example, if a husband just decided to stop working one day and said "it's my body, I'll do what I want". Marriage isn't like that – the whole point of it is to do what's best for others.

I am a man who has *very* definite ideas about what I want from a woman. I have things that I need her to do if we were to get married. I need her to be able to raise children who know that God exists, and know what he is like. I need her to be able to steer them into fields that are important for the Christian life. I need her to be able to make them excel in those fields. I need her to be able to debate with them and make sure that they are able to withstand intellectual challenges and moral challenges that they will face. I need her to understand men, and male responsibilities, and to help me to flourish in my roles as protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. And I need her to have an influence on the people in our church and the people we invite into our home. Are young women ready to handle the moral obligations that are central to relationships with men and children? Are young women ready to encourage men and children to be *more* virtuous? Are young women ready to accept men as the moral and spiritual leader in the home?

When I read these prominent feminists, and how much of an influence they have on young women, I do not think that feminism as it is expressed today is helping to develop the kind of woman who is equal to challenges of marriage and parenting. I have made excellent decisions in my life around my education and finances. I am chaste and have a well-developed defensible Christian worldview – a worldview that my wife could count on. I am offering life-long married love, and I've got the references and the accomplishments to prove that I can do what is expected of me. What I am asking in return is for women to be mindful of the moral and spiritual needs of men and children, and to prepare their character for life-long married love and parenting. Marriage and parenting requires self-

sacrifice, restraint and discipline. Where is self-sacrifice, restraint and discipline in these slut-walks? Can a woman “do what she wants” in a marriage when there are men and children who are depending on her to meet their needs?

Disclaimer: Men who are convicted of rape should receive the death penalty, in my opinion. Nothing in this post should be taken as excusing men who rape.

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Coward A.C. Grayling and chicken Dawkins flee debate with William Lane Craig

June 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sing with me:

> Brave Sir Grayling ran away
> Bravely, ran away…away…
> When danger reared its ugly head
> He bravely turned his tail and fled
> Yes, brave Sir Grayling turned about
> And gallantly he chickened out
> Bravely taking to his feet
> He beat a very brave retreat
> Bravest of the brave, Sir Grayling
>
> He is packing it in and packing it up
> And sneaking away and buggering off
> And chickening out and pissing off home,
> Yes, bravely he is throwing in the sponge.

From BeThinking.org's web site.

Excerpt:

> For years, 'New Atheist' Professors Anthony Grayling and Richard Dawkins have made money and gained publicity out of God. But now, the courage of their convictions seems to be running dry: they have both refused to debate one of the world's leading defenders of the Christian Faith, Professor William Lane Craig.
>
> While Professor Dawkins has set himself up as the 'scourge' of the Church, Professor Grayling has offered his latest attack on Christianity by publishing *The Good Book – a secular bible* in the year the Church celebrates the 400th anniversary of the translation of the King James Bible.
>
> While Dawkins and Grayling have refused to debate the existence of God, Grayling has also refused to debate the foundations of the morality on which his 'Good Book' rests. These point-blank refusals to engage in public discussions with Professor Craig will undermine their credibility, not only among Christians but also amongst fellow academics.
>
> Professor Craig, Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, California, is arguably the world's foremost defender of historic Christianity. He has debated with many top academics and leading atheists across the world, including Peter Atkins, Daniel Dennett, Anthony Flew, Christopher Hitchens, Lewis Wolpert and, most recently, Sam Harris.

> Craig visited the UK in 2007 and received national media coverage for his debate at Westminster Central Hall with Professor Lewis Wolpert, chaired by Radio 4's *Today* presenter, John Humphrys. This debate has now been seen by thousands of people on YouTube. Professor Craig, who has two Ph.Ds, has written over thirty books and published some 200 academic papers. He is returning to the UK from 17-26 October in a tour sponsored by the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, Damaris Trust and Premier Christian Radio.
>
> Having been invited to debate Craig, Professor Grayling replied:
>
> "*I am not interested in debating Professor Craig, though if he would like to co-opt me for the publicity for his tour – I would be happy to debate him on the question of the existence of fairies and water-nymphs. But as for the very uninteresting matter of whether there is just one god or goddess and that it can be debated despite the claim that it is transcendently ineffable and unknowable – that is an empty prospect, hence my declining the invitation."*
>
> Justin Brierley, who presents Premier Radio's highly-rated discussion programme, *Unbelievable?*, comments:
>
> *"It looks insulting and worryingly narrow minded when an invitation to defend such views against a top-flight Christian academic such as Dr. Craig is dismissed in these terms. Grayling is seen as a key proponent of rationalism and atheism in the UK. It will therefore come as a surprise to many that he is so unwilling to defend the rational grounds for atheism against a major opponent."*

Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 tweeted this, earlier:

If you would like the see how well atheists do in debates with Craig, you can watch this:

William Lane Craig vs. Christopher Hitchens:

No wonder Grayling and Dawkins are soiling their knickers at the thought of facing him. It's easy to impress your students when you are grading their papers AFTER they've paid their tuition. But a formal debate in a neutral venue would not be safe.

Previous story on Dawkins' refusal to debate is here.

Craig's UK tour schedule is here.

Poll: Canadians becoming more conservative

June 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

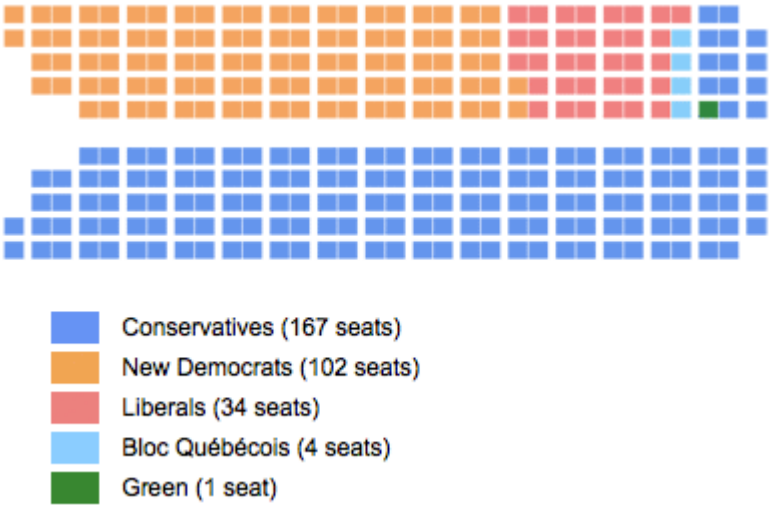

Canada May 2011 Federal Election Results

Consider this story from the Vancouver Sun. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Canadian ideals are shifting to the right, being taken over by a "unique strain of conservatism," a poll from Preston Manning's Calgarybased think-tank shows, the former Reform party leader said Wednesday.
>
> This was the second year the Manning Centre for Building Democracy conducted the poll, which asked Canadians about their attitudes toward values and policies generally ascribed to Conservatives. Last year's results indicated similar movements, with more people saying they don't want government peddling grand views and having its hands in all aspects of society.
>
> The only exception to this opinion is public safety and security policies, Manning said in an interview Tuesday.
>
> Of those surveyed, 65 per cent said government should focus on current issues, and 67 per cent said government should decrease in size to do more.
>
> Canada, it seems, has arrived at a point where its citizens have shifted their expectations for government, said Allan Gregg, the head of Harris Decima, which helped with the polling.
>
> "(Government) is no longer the grand designer," he said.
>
> But the national shift isn't necessarily being ascribed to Stephen Harper, who has been prime minister for slightly more than five years.
>
> "This can't be traced back the last two or three or four years," said Andre Turcotte, president of Feedback Research Centre, which also helped with polling and interpreting the results. Instead, he said, this is something that has been happening since the late 1980s -around the same time the Reform Party began

> its rise.
>
> Turcotte couldn't speculate to whether it was by design or surprise, but he said that in 2008, Harper tapped into what many wanted out of government -being smaller and more focused on specific issues.
>
> "As these conservative values become mainstream values, people will less and less identify them with Conservatives. People will just say these are Canadian values," Manning said.
>
> The poll was conducted from May 4 to 11, almost immediately after the election. A total of 1,000 interviews were conducted with randomly selected Canadians, resulting in a margin of error of 3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

I blogged recently about how Canada's economic numbers are vastly superior to the American numbers. I think the Canadians are learning what works by comparing what they've been doing (e.g. – corporate tax cuts down to *half* of our rate) compared to what we've been doing, (e.g. – massive bailouts and government spending). They know that they are better off than we are, and they know that conservative policies work – they've lived through it. That's why a country that used to be liberal is now trending conservative. Prime Minister Stephen Harper gave them a five-year economics course and they gave him rave reviews as a professor, and a BIG promotion.

New study finds that young people value marriage and hope to marry

June 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the National Post. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Young adults still tend to view marriage as an important life commitment to which they aspire, results of a new U.S. study suggest.
>
> The findings appear to contradict public and academic anxiety over the state of marriage, and surprised even the researchers.
>
> "What was so striking about what the young people said is that no one really described rejecting marriage," said lead author Maria Kefalas, a sociology professor at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia. "I had a category all written -marriage rejector -and we couldn't find any. There was no one who said, 'Marriage is meaningless and I don't want to get married.' "
>
> The researchers uncovered a divide between rural and urban young adults after examining interviews with 424 people aged 21 to 38 who lived in New York, San Diego and Minneapolis/St. Paul or rural Iowa.
>
> Young adults in small towns and rural areas -dubbed "marriage naturalists" -generally have a 1950s view toward marriage, they found, seeing it as the inevitable "next step" in a long-term relationship.
>
> "It was like a time capsule," Ms. Kefalas said. "Marriage was expected. It wasn't fretted about, there was very little hand-wringing about it. A lot of the pressure for marriage was external in terms of social expectation that that's what you do."
>
> In contrast, urban young adults -dubbed "marriage planners" by the researchers -had high standards for potential marriage partners and a strong sense that marriage was something they had to be "ready for."
>
> […]Ms. Kefalas said she believes declining marriage rates in Canada and the United States are due to a shifting economic landscape that makes it more difficult for young adults in the Millennial cohort born in the 1980s and 1990s to get the education, career, housing and general stability they feel they need before saying "I do" -not a lack of interest in the institution itself.
>
> "One of the great myths has been that young people, in particular millennials, are saying, 'We don't want to get mar-ried and marriage is irrelevant to us,' and that's not true," Ms. Kefalas said.

The paper is to be published in the Journal of Family Issues.

I think the problem I see, and this is something for Christians to research, and for churches to get serious about – is that we need to help young people to translate these

aspirations to marry into a solid plan for *how to get married well*. That means telling them how to prepare themselves to be married, how to find and evaluate another person for marriage, and how to court another person in a way that will result in a stable, loving marriage. Young people need to understand things that social scientists know – like the fact that chastity is good for marital stability, and that cohabitation is bad for marital stability. We need to study these factors and then inform the young people in winsome ways.

William Lane Craig meets the Reasons to Believe panel

June 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video: (106 minutes)

Host:

- Kenneth Samples, philosopher

Panel:

- Hugh Ross, astrophysicist
- Dave Rogstad, astronomer
- Jeff Zweerink, astrophysicist

Guest:

- William Lane Craig, philosopher

Topics in the first hour:

- is there a pro-theism/pro-Christian revolution going on in philosophy departments today?
- is the revolution in philosophy spreading outside of the Anglo-American sphere?
- has the progress of science hurt or helped the traditional theistic arguments?
- is the epistemological argument from reason from Alvin Plantinga convincing?
- what is the significance of the "heat death of the universe" for atheism?
- can atheism rationally ground objective moral value and objective moral duties?
- can atheists make any rationally-grounded moral judgments?
- should Christians abandon rational arguments and evidence to appeal to postmoderns?
- what is middle knowledge and Molinism and how are they different?
- how would a Wesleyan/Arminian respond to the verses that seem to favor Calvinism?
- how do arguments and evidence work with God's drawing people into a relationship with him?
- can God achieve full sovereignty over the universe merely by controlling circumstances?
- what are counterfactuals and how are they related to middle knowledge?
- what is Dr. Craig's disagreement with Einstein's special theory of relativity?
- how does this disagreement with Einstein affect a person's view of time?

And then there is an hour of questions from the callers, where topics like the Incarnation,

God’s purpose in creating the universe, sin and Hell, annihilationism, and the “best” argument for God’s existence, and so on are covered. This is getting rave reviews by other Christian apologists on Facebook.

At last! Conservative woman blames liberal women for choosing bad men

June 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The greatest article ever posted on the American Thinker. (H/T Wes Widner)

Excerpt:

> The saddest thing about the whole sordid, societally humiliating Weiner affair, is that it highlights once again the morally-schizoid nature of the modern liberal woman. I've known many of these women — a great many — and it never ceases to confound me how smart women can be such ridiculous fools when it comes to choosing men.
>
> On the one hand, liberal women believe wholeheartedly in the idiotic social construct they call, "sexual liberation." They pride themselves on losing their virginity, as though that "accomplishment" had ever been above the challenge-scale of an alley cat in heat.
>
> These liberal women I've known, having given away their female V-card over and over and over again, all the while scour their host of intimate "trial runs" searching for that mythical, Hollywood-construct, Mr. Right. This Mr. Right guy, for whom they are searching, is known to them up front as even more sexually-liberated than they, but this little factoid seems not to register in their liberated little heads as they frantically search for the equally mythical family home with the white picket fence, which somehow never gets hit by any of life's roving tornadoes. One can almost hear them say in unison, "And they all lived happily ever after."
>
> […]Evidently, the liberal woman is capable of the most severe form of psychological denial known to humankind. Certain that one of the men with whom she has copulated without strings will suddenly morph into a faithfully monogamous creature the minute she can convince one of them to say "I do" in front of a few witnesses, the liberal woman marches blindly down the aisle towards near-certain, adulterous doom. Yet, no amount of honest reason can dissuade liberal women from this self-destructive, moral myopia.
>
> What other term but "morally schizoid" could possibly describe this blatantly contradictory tendency among liberal women?
>
> Having spent their youth casually throwing their own sexual morality to the winds of fairytale "liberation," these liberal women still steadfastly cling to the faithfully monogamous ideal for that sometime-later moment when they actually do desire all the traditional things — the husband, the kids, the white picket fence — those pesky female-nature embedded longings, which coincidentally ensure the continuation of the human race.

> But these liberal women somehow — in perfect schizoid manner — convince themselves that once married, they will be the gratuitous beneficiaries of the monogamous respect they still desire, but have never once demanded or deserved. Intuitively, women know that strict monogamy provides the only real security for themselves and their own offspring. Yet, they continue themselves to spurn the demands of monogamy until the very last minute, believing that fidelity springs forth naturally in miraculous profusion among all "married" humans. Such pure poppycock can only be explained as a mental disorder.
>
> […]Any woman, who still believes that males are naturally monogamous and that a wedding ring is anything more than a little band of gold, needs to take a long, hard look at the sham of a marriage on display between Congressman Weiner and his wife of less than one full year. Afterwards, if said woman still does not see the lifelong value in chastity before marriage and a pair of shredder scissors in the kitchen drawer afterwards, she needs to take a very large bucket of ice cold water and dump it upon her own head.

READ THE WHOLE THING. READ IT!!! NOW!!!!!

I recently provided the male perspective on liberal women's poor decision-making about men and marriage.

Related posts

- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste

V-22 Osprey gets rave reviews from deployed US Marines

June 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a photo of the V-22 Osprey – it can change from a helicopter to a plane:

V-22 Osprey Joint Service Aircraft

Here's a quick run-down on what the V-22 Osprey can do.

Excerpt:

> The V-22 is a tiltrotor aircraft, taking off and landing like a helicopter, but, once airborne, its engine nacelles can be rotated to convert the aircraft to a turboprop airplane capable of high-speed, high-altitude flight.
>
> It can carry 24 combat troops, or up to 20,000 pounds of internal or external cargo, at twice the speed of a helicopter. It includes cross-coupled transmissions so either engine can power the rotors if one engine fails.
>
> The rotors can fold and the wing rotate so the aircraft can be stored aboard an aircraft carrier.
>
> […]The Osprey has two, large, three-bladed rotors that rotate in opposite directions and produce lift. Because the rotors turn in opposite directions, there is no need for a tail rotor to provide stability as in a helicopter. The wing tilts the rotors between airplane and helicopter modes and generates lift in the airplane mode. The Osprey can convert smoothly from helicopter mode to airplane mode in as few as 12 seconds.
>
> The major advantages of the Osprey over a helicopter are:
>
> - Longer range – The Osprey can fly from 270 to 580 miles (453 to 933 km).
> - Higher speed – The Osprey's top speed is 315 mph (507 kph), which is twice as fast as a helicopter's top speed.
> - Increased cargo capacity – The Osprey can carry 20,000 pounds (4,536 kg)

> of cargo or 24 troops.
>
> The advantage of the Osprey over an airplane is that it can take off, hover and land like a helicopter. This makes is more versatile than an airplane for such missions as moving troops to remote areas, especially those without landing strips, or conducting long-range rescue operations at sea.

The Hill has battlefield reports about the performance of the USMC V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft.

Excerpt:

> Military and industry officials rave about the V-22 tiltrotor's performance in Afghanistan but know they need to show the aircraft is worth its high price tag.
>
> The Marine Corps are flying V-22 Ospreys in theater and "it's more effective than we expected," Maj. Gen. Jon Davis, Second Marine Corps Air Wing commander, told reporters here recently. "We have only scratched the surface with this aircraft. … "We're doing things with the V-22 we did not plan to do."
>
> The V-22 takes off vertically but can fly like a plane, allowing it to travel faster than traditional helicopters. The military is using the craft to haul teams of Marines, special operators, combat rescue personnel and cargo.
>
> But there are questions in defense circles about whether — after years of technical delays and cost spikes —such glowing reviews will be enough to avoid future cuts as White House, Pentagon and congressional officials look for ways to trim the annual Defense budget.
>
> Despite rave reviews from war fighters, the program is among the most expensive at the Pentagon.
>
> Each Osprey has a flyaway cost of $65 million. The Pentagon already has spent over $30 billion on the V-22 program, according to the Congressional Research Service.

But some people would rather cut the V-22 than cut Obamacare:

> Liberal lawmakers often come after the Osprey initiative when looking for places to trim Pentagon spending.
>
> Last month, Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.) offered an amendment to a Pentagon policy bill that would have directed the department to spend no monies on the program in 2012.
>
> Woolsey dubbed the program a "boondoggle" for the "military-industrial complex." Terminating the program would save more than $12 billion over 10 years, and $2.5 billion in 2012 alone, she claimed.
>
> The House overwhelmingly defeated her amendment, but not before Woolsey said the aircraft has gotten "mediocre marks" from independent auditors and "underperformed across the board." There are reports the V-22 has struggled in

> “high-threat environments,” she said.
>
> She also said it has failed to “prove its worth” operationally and has had a number of major crashes. But Davis says it has proven its value, citing the fleet’s strong record in a rugged war theater.
>
> Program officials and advocates are ready to fight back as Washington continues talking about an era of federal spending cuts.
>
> Their embryonic message, as Davis put it: “Why would we terminate something that works?”
>
> Marine Corps and Bell-Boeing officials also say to avoid budget cuts or a reduced buy, they will have to show critics like Woolsey that the fleet is reliable.
>
> Right now, the Osprey’s closely monitored reliability rate in Afghanistan is around 73 percent, according to program officials.
>
> Davis wants to push that figure to 80 percent, saying that would make the V-22 among the military’s most reliable aircraft.

I love the V-22 Osprey. It is a force multiplier, in my opinion. And can you imagine that some people wanted to cancel it just because of some difficulties they had early on in testing?

Related posts

- China unveils new J-20 stealth fighter, rival to the canceled F-22 Raptor
- Is the Obama administration deliberately weakening our military?
- Where does Paul Ryan stand on foreign policy and social issues?
- Thomas Sowell explains how liberal pacifism causes wars
- U.S. Navy sets world record with new electromagnetic rail gun
- Rachel Maddow doesn’t understand modern military weapon systems
- U.S. Army unveils revolutionary XM25 rifle in Afghanistan
- AC-130 gunships now mounting 105mm howitzer
- What is the conservative doctrine of “peace through strength”?

Democrats want MORE wasteful stimulus spending and HIGHER taxes

June 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Hill reports that some Democrats want to waste even more money on "stimulus" wealth redistribution. (H/T Marathon Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Senior Senate Democrats are growing frustrated by what they see as President Obama's passivity on the economy, and are beginning to discuss a large infrastructure package funded by tax increases.
>
> Some Democrats, such as Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin, who serves as chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, think such a package could lower the unemployment rate by as much as two percentage points.
>
> […]"I am concerned about the Obama administration's approach on this," Harkin said. "It always has been about jobs. I think the administration kind of got snookered talking about the deficit and the debt after the last election.
>
> "The last election was about jobs and the economy, and now we're in a position where we really do need some economic pump-priming by the federal government," he said.
>
> Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, endorsed Harkin's argument for more infrastructure spending, and said it is gaining support in the broader caucus.
>
> "There's very broad support," Rockefeller said. "There's no other way to get at this problem."
>
> Rockefeller said a spending package was discussed at several meetings Wednesday and that there's a recognition Democrats need to be tougher in negotiations with Republicans.
>
> "We have to be much more aggressive about all this, because as soon as they say 'We're not going to do that,' as they've been saying for so long about so many things, you just kind of say 'oh.' We've got to stop saying 'oh,' " he said, referring to the hard line Republicans have taken for Medicare cuts and against tax increases.
>
> Even centrists like Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-N.D.) say a major infrastructure package funded by tax revenue-generating measures is what's needed to strengthen the economy.

Here's how well the stimulus spending has been working so far to create jobs:

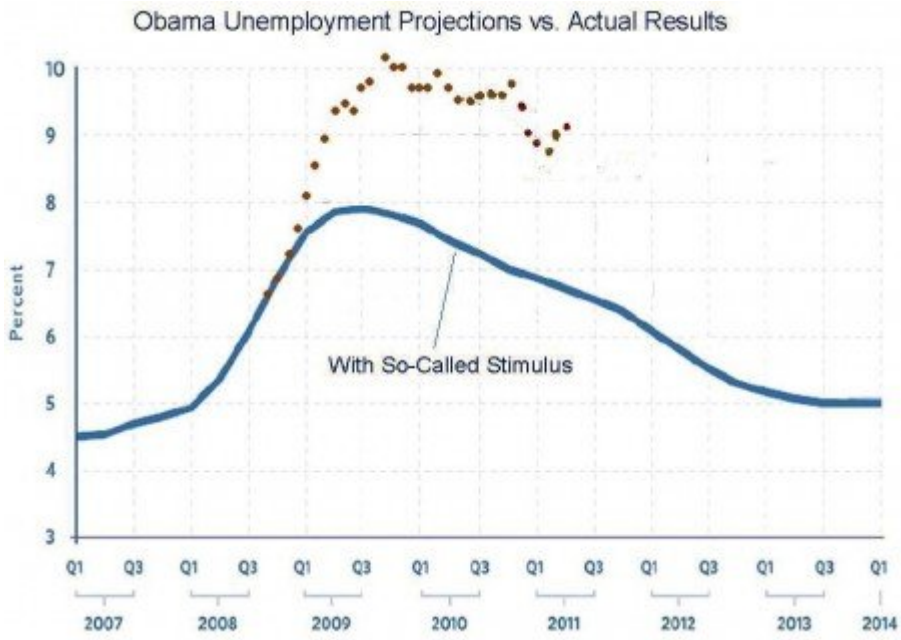

Obama Unemployment Stimulus Graph

And more:

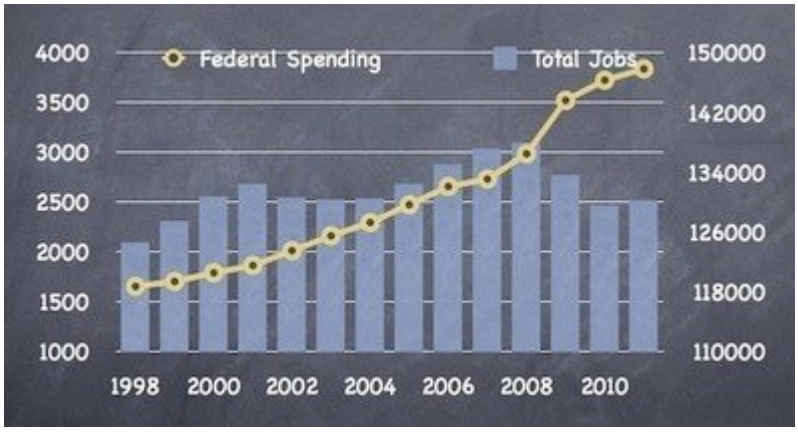

It’s not working! And they want more of this.

Is the taxpayer-funded scientific bureaucracy self-correcting?

June 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this post from Evolution News which talks about a paper in the prestigious pro-naturalism journal Science that is drawing a lot of criticisms. (H/T Melissa, Jonathan)

Excerpt:

> Last December we reported on a controversial paper published in *Science* which claimed to have discovered bacteria that feed on arsenic instead of phosphorous. According to NASA, this research promised to provide "an astrobiology finding that will impact the search for evidence of extraterrestrial life." At that time the media reported things like:
>
> - scientists discovered "a bacteria whose DNA is completely alien to what we know today" (*Wired*)
> - the "bacteria is made of arsenic" (*Wired*)
> - the bacteria is "capable of using arsenic to build its DNA, RNA, proteins, and cell membranes" (*Gizmodo*)
> - the paper had reported "arsenic-based life" which is "very alien in terms of how it's put together" and "NASA has, in a very real sense, discovered a form of alien life" (*io9*)
> - "you can potentially cross phosphorus off the list of elements required for life" (*Nature*)
>
> But soon after the original *Science* paper was published, credible scientists began critiquing the paper's claims. In the June 3, 2011 issue of *Science*, several of those scientists have published comments critiquing the original paper. Many of their criticisms focus on the claim that the original paper did not establish or rule out the possibility that the bacteria are not still living off of phosphorous.

So you have a paper being published that everyone is excited about because it helps the naturalists to close gaps in their worldview. But was it good science? The Evolution News piece goes on to list the criticisms of the paper.

And here is the result:

> Of course the authors of the original paper, including lead-author Felisa Wolf-Simon, co-authored a reply to the criticisms which should also be read. But critics remain unconvinced. *Nature* news recently quoted Barry Rosen of Florida International University stating, "I have not found anybody outside of [Wolfe-Simon's] laboratory who supports the work." Likewise, Rosie Redfield observes:
>
> "With so many mistakes pointed out, there should be at least some where the authors say, 'you're right, we should have done that but we didn't'," Redfield

> says. “This as an entirely a ‘we were right’ response, and that’s a bad sign in science.”
>
> Despite the high levels of skepticism of claims of arsenophilic bacteria, *Nature* reports that few scientists have taken the initiative to attempt to experimentally reproduce the claims made in the original paper:
>
> **However, most labs seem too busy to spend time replicating work that they feel is fundamentally flawed and is not likely to be published in high-impact journals. So principal investigators are reluctant to spend their resources, and their students’ time, replicating the work. “If you extended the results to show there is no detectable arsenic, where could you publish that?” asks Simon Silver of the University of Illinois at Chicago, who critiqued the work in FEMS Microbiology Letters in January and on 24 May at the annual meeting of the American Society for Microbiology in New Orleans. “How could the young person who was asked to do that work ever get a job?” Refuting another scientist’s work also takes time that scientists could be spending on their own research. For instance, Helmann says he is installing a highly sensitive mass spectrometer that can measure trace amounts of elements. But, he says, “I’ve got my own science to do.”**
>
> Such admissions do not bode well for those who blindly believe in the perfectly objective, self-correcting nature of science. In this case, it seems safe to experimentally critique these claims since so many respected scientists have already expressed vocal skepticism. Yet experiments are apparently not yet forthcoming. What about areas of science where scientists are *not* able to express their dissent freely? For example, who would take time to experimentally critique claims that are central to neo-Darwinian theory, especially if it’s dangerous to one’s career? One hopes that science will become more self-correcting when it comes to claims made in support of materialism.

In light of what we now know about global warming research, shouldn’t we be a little more welcoming of whistleblowers and critics? Shouldn’t we be a little more careful about hastily approving research that agrees with the religion of naturalism, instead of checking it over thoroughly to make sure that it really is good science?

UK police “covered up” Islamic violence because of political correctness

June 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Victims say that officers in the borough of Tower Hamlets have ignored or downplayed outbreaks of hate crime, and suppressed evidence implicating Muslims in them, because they fear being accused of racism.

> The claims come as four Tower Hamlets Muslims were jailed for at least 19 years for attacking a local white teacher who gave religious studies lessons to Muslim girls.
>
> *The Sunday Telegraph* has uncovered more than a dozen other cases in Tower Hamlets where both Muslims and non-Muslims have been threatened or beaten for behaviour deemed to breach fundamentalist “Islamic norms.”
>
> One victim, Mohammed Monzur Rahman, said he was left partially blind and with a dislocated shoulder after being attacked by a mob in Cannon Street Road, Shadwell, for smoking during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan last year.

> “Two guys stopped me in the street and asked me why I was smoking,” he said. “I just carried on, and before I knew another dozen guys came and jumped me. The next thing I knew, I was waking up in hospital.”
>
> “He reported it to the police and they just said they couldn’t track anyone down and there were no witnesses,” said Ansar Ahmed Ullah, a local anti-extremism campaigner who has advised Mr Rahman. “But there is CCTV in that street and it is lined with shops and people.”
>
> Teachers in several local schools have told *The Sunday Telegraph* that they feel “under pressure” from local Muslim extremists, who have mounted campaigns through both parents and pupils – and, in one case, through another teacher – to enforce the compulsory wearing of the veil for Muslim girls. “It was totally orchestrated,” said one teacher. “The atmosphere became extremely unpleasant for a while, with constant verbal aggression from both the children and some parents against the head over this issue.”
>
> One teacher at the Bigland Green primary school, Nicholas Kafouris, last year took the council to an employment tribunal, saying he was forced out of his job for complaining that Muslim pupils were engaging in racist and anti-Semitic bullying and saying they supported terrorism. Mr Kafouris lost his case, though the school did admit that insufficient action had been taken against the behaviour of some pupils. The number of assaults on teachers in Tower Hamlets

> resulting in exclusions has more than doubled from 190 in 2007/8 to 383 in 2008/9, the latest available year, though not all are necessarily race-related.

This is the kind of bullying that the secular left just doesn't care about.

A while back, I posted about the epidemic of Muslim gang-rape going on in certain European countries.

What is the meaning and significance of the holiday of Pentecost?

June 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Patheos, an article by New Testament scholar and pastor Mark D. Roberts.

Introduction:

> For Christians, Pentecost is a holiday on which we commemorate the coming of the Holy Spirit on the early followers of Jesus. Before the events of the first Pentecost, which came a few weeks after Jesus' death and resurrection, there were followers of Jesus, but no movement that could be meaningfully called "the church." Thus, from an historical point of view, Pentecost is the day on which the church was started. This is also true from a spiritual perspective, since the Spirit brings the church into existence and enlivens it. Thus Pentecost is the church's birthday.

I'm guessing most of you know the story of what happens. Peter preaches on who Jesus was, and the meaning of his bodily resurrection – and a whole lot of people believe him and become Christians.

Here are the topics that Roberts mentions in the article:

1. The Presence and Power of the Spirit
2. The Central Role of the Church in God's Work in the World
3. The Multilingual Nature and Mission of the Church
4. The Inclusive Ministry of the Church

I wanted to excerpt the part of the article where Dr. Roberts explains a part that I think is important.

Excerpt:

> **3. The Multilingual Nature and Mission of the Church**
>
> On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit empowered believers in Jesus to praise God in many languages that they had not learned in the ordinary manner (Acts 2:5-13). Symbolically, this miracle reinforces the multilingual, multicultural, multiracial mission of the church. We are to be a community in which all people are drawn together by God's love in Christ. As Paul writes in Galatians 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."
>
> *Personal Implications:* Although there are some glorious exceptions, it seems that the church has not, in general, lived out its multilingual mission. We are often divided according to language, race, and ethnicity. Pentecost challenges all of us to examine our own attitudes in the regard, to reject and repent of any prejudice

> that lurks within us, and to open our hearts to all people, even and especially those who do not share our language and culture. Yes, I know this is not easy. But it is central to our calling. And it is something that the Spirit of God will help us to do if we are available.

So this is a good thing to remember. Anyone who is willing to believe in Christ and re-prioritize their lives based on his identity and teachings can be a Christian.The Holy Spirit is available to anyone who is willing to respond to God's drawing them towards himself – anyone who asks God to forgive their sins and re-orient their lives to that it is Christ-directed.

You really can't look at a person and tell what they are going to be able to contribute to the mission of Christ. They might have a different skin color. They could come from far-away countries. And have different cultural backgrounds. They could be single and childless, or they could be married with children. They could be lonely or popular. They could be ugly or beautiful. They could be emotional and artistic, or scientific and technical. They could come from a happy family or have no family. They could be rich or they could be poor. They might not fit the mold of what we expect for what counts as a good Christian.

I'm not turning a blind eye to sin here, because sin that is celebrated and unrepented IS a reason to reject someone's claim to be a Christian. I am trying to point out that we should not be rejecting or discounting sincere, effective Christians for non-moral considerations. This is not a country club. It's all hands on deck.

Michele Bachmann: hot photos from her vacation on the beach

June 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann

Before we see the hot pictures of Michele Bachmann from her vacation on the beach, let's take a look at this Wall Street Journal article and find out what sorts of economics books Michele Bachmann reads on the hot beach possibly in her bathing suit.

> Ms. Bachmann is best known for her conservative activism on issues like abortion, but what I want to talk about today is economics. When I ask who she reads on the subject, she responds that she admires the late Milton Friedman as well as Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams. "I'm also an Art Laffer fiend—we're very close," she adds. "And [Ludwig] von Mises. I love von Mises," getting excited and rattling off some of his classics like "Human Action" and "Bureaucracy." "When I go on vacation and I lay on the beach, I bring von Mises."

Consider Thomas Sowell's "The Housing Boom and Bust". Here's a photo of that book which Michele Bachmann reads on the hot beach possibly in a swimsuit:

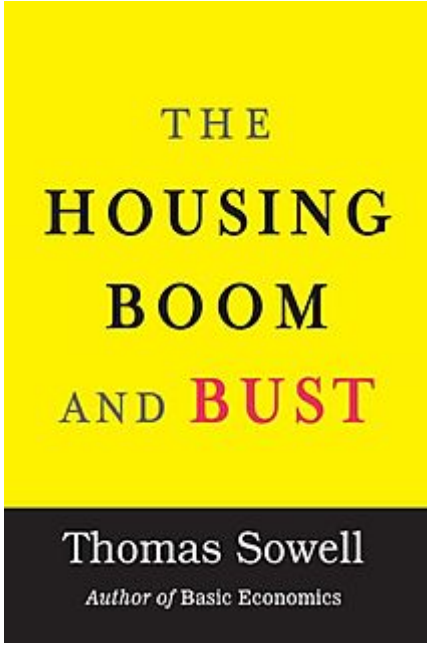

Picture of a book Michele Bachmann reads on the hot beach
The Wall Street Journal explains more:

> As we rush from her first-floor digs in the Cannon House Office Building to the House floor so she can vote, I ask for her explanation of the 2008 financial meltdown. "There were a lot of bad actors involved, but it started with the Community Reinvestment Act under Jimmy Carter and then the enhanced amendments that Bill Clinton made to force, in effect, banks to make loans to people who lacked creditworthiness. If you want to come down to a bottom line of 'How did we get in the mess?' I think it was a reduction in standards."
>
> She continues: "Nobody wanted to say, 'No.' The implicit and then the explicit guarantees of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were sopping up the losses. Being on the Financial Services Committee, I can assure you, all roads lead to Freddie and Fannie."

Consider Walter Williams' "Liberty vs the Tyranny of Socialism". Here's a picture of that book which Michelle Bachman reads on the hot beach possibly in a bathing suit:

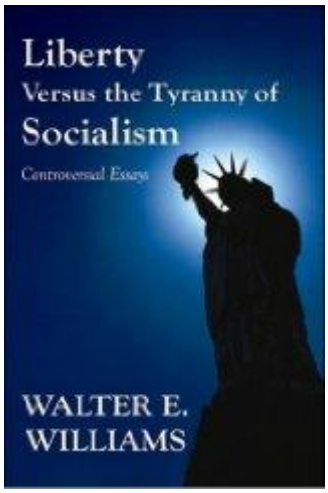

Photo of a book Michelle Bachman reads on the hot beach
The Wall Street Journal explains more:

> Ms. Bachmann voted against the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) "both times," she boasts, and she has no regrets since Congress "just gave the Treasury a $700 billion blank check." She complains that no one bothered to ask about the constitutionality of these extraordinary interventions into the financial markets. "During a recent hearing I asked Secretary [Timothy] Geithner three times where the constitution authorized the Treasury's actions, and his response was, 'Well, Congress passed the law.'"
>
> Insufficient focus on constitutional limits to federal power is a Bachmann pet peeve. "It's like when you come up to a stop sign and you're driving. Some people have it in their mind that the stop sign is optional. The Constitution is government's stop sign. It says, you—the three branches of government—can go so far and no farther. With TARP, the government blew through the Constitutional stop sign and decided 'Whatever it takes, that's what we're going to do.'"
>
> Does this mean she would have favored allowing the banks to fail? "I would have. People think when you have a, quote, 'bank failure,' that that is the end of the bank. And it isn't necessarily. A normal way that the American free market system has worked is that we have a process of unwinding. It's called bankruptcy. It doesn't mean, necessarily, that the industry is eclipsed or that it's gone. Often times, the phoenix rises out of the ashes."

Consider Milton Friedman's "Capitalism and Freedom". Here's a pic of that book which Michelle Bauchman reads on the hot beach possibly in a bikini:

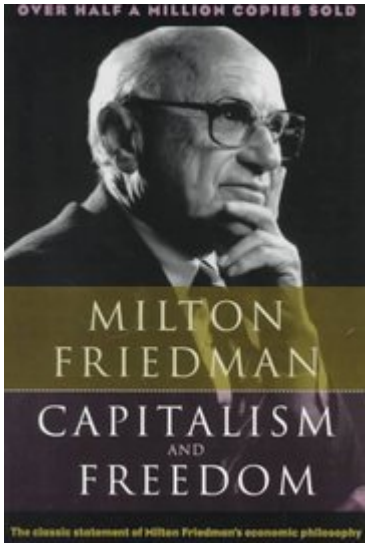

Pics of a book Michelle Bauchman reads on the hot beach
The Wall Street Journal explains more:

> "For one, I believe my policies prior to '08 would have been much different from [President Bush's]. I wouldn't have spent so much money," she says, pointing in particular at the Department of Education and the Medicare prescription drug bill. "I would have advocated for greater reductions in the corporate tax rate and reductions in the capital gains rate—even more so than what the president did." Mr. Bush cut the capital gains rate to 15% from 20% in 2003.

> She's also no fan of the Federal Reserve's decade-long policy of flooding the U.S. economy with cheap money. "I love a lowered interest rate like anyone else. But clearly the Fed has had competing goals and objectives. One is the soundness of money and then the other is jobs. The two different objectives are hard to reconcile. What has gotten us into deep trouble and has people so perturbed is the debasing of the currency."
>
> That's why, if she were president, she wouldn't renominate Ben Bernanke as Fed chairman: "I think that it's very important to demonstrate to the American people that the Federal Reserve will have a new sheriff" to keep the dollar strong and stable.

> […]Ms. Bachmann attributes many of her views, especially on economics, to her middle-class upbringing in 1960s Iowa and Minnesota. She talks with almost religious fervor about the virtues of living frugally, working hard and long hours, and avoiding debt. When she was growing up, she recalls admiringly, Iowa dairy farmers worked from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.
>
> Her political opponents on the left portray her as a "she-devil," in her words, a caricature at odds with her life accomplishments. She's a mother of five, and she and her husband helped raise 23 teenage foster children in their home, as many as four at a time. They succeeded in getting all 23 through high school and later founded a charter school.

Michele Bachman is actually willing to pass a lower corporate tax rate than even Tim Pawlenty's 15% rate:

> If she were to take her shot, she'd run on an economic package reminiscent of Jack Kemp, the late congressman who championed supply-side economics and was the GOP vice presidential nominee in 1996. "In my perfect world," she explains, "we'd take the 35% corporate tax rate down to nine so that we're the most competitive in the industrialized world. Zero out capital gains. Zero out the alternative minimum tax. Zero out the death tax."
>
> The 3.8 million-word U.S. tax code may be irreparable, she says, a view she's held since working as a tax attorney at the IRS 20 years ago. "I love the FAIR tax. If we were starting over from scratch, I would favor a national sales tax." But she's not a sponsor of the FAIR tax bill because she fears that enacting it won't end the income tax, and "we would end up with a dual tax, a national sales tax and an income tax."
>
> Her main goal is to get tax rates down with a broad-based income tax that everyone pays and that "gets rid of all the deductions." A system in which 47% of Americans don't pay any tax is ruinous for a democracy, she says, "because there is no tie to the government benefits that people demand. I think everyone should have to pay something."
>
> On the stump she emphasizes an "America-centered energy policy" based on

> "drilling and mining for our rich resources here." And she believes that repealing ObamaCare is a precondition to restoring a prosperous economy.
>
> […]Ms. Bachmann also voted for the Republican Study Committee budget that cuts deeper and faster than even Mr. Ryan would. "We do have an obligation with Social Security and Medicare, and we have to recognize that" for those who are already retired, she says. But after that, it's Katy bar the door: "Everything else is expendable to bring spending down," and she'd ax "whole departments" including the Department of Education.

Below are some links to learn more about Michele.

Campaign speeches, interviews and debates

Speeches:

- Michele Bachmann's Republican Leadership Conference speech
- Michele Bachmann's speech at the Right Online Conference

Reactions from her recent debate performance:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

Profiles of Michele Bachmann:

- ABC News
- WORLD Magazine

And here are some of her media interviews and speeches in the House of Representatives.

You can contribute to her campaign right here. You can be her friend on Facebook here and also here.

This post was linked by:

- Doug Ross at Director Blue
- Pajames Media – The Tatler
- Trending Right

And tweeted by Kathleen McKinley and Robert Stacy McCain.

Related posts

- New Michele Bachmann interviews on the economy
- MUST-HEAR: Michele Bachmann gives the best speech ever
- Michele Bachmann beats RINO Mitt Romney in fundraising
- Michele Bachmann looking presidential against the liberal media
- Michele Bachmann courts homeschoolers in Iowa speech

- Michele Bachmann and Paul Ryan on the Wisconsin teacher union pensions
- Video and transcripts of response speeches by Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann
- What was the context of Michele Bachmann's "armed and dangerous" comment?
- AT LAST: Michele Bachmann open to presidential run in 2012
- Megyn Kelly and Michele Bachmann on the Bush tax cut deal
- CNS News interviews Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann requests the resignation of Attorney General Eric Holder
- Michele Bachmann attacks government bailout of unions
- Michele Bachmann makes the case for limited government
- Why is the left so angry with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin?
- Michele Bachmann on Fox News with Laura Ingraham
- Democrats kill Michele Bachmann's attempt to freeze federal salaries
- Michele Bachmann on the US taxpayer-funded bailout of Greece
- Michele Bachmann explains the Obama's Wall Street bailout bill
- Michele Bachmann promises to work to repeal Obamacare
- Video of Michele Bachmann defending unborn children
- Michele Bachmann's passionate and inspiring speech at CPAC 2010
- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama's latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare's rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

51-year old woman wins up to £30k after failing riot police physical

June 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story from the UK Daily Mail shows how the political correctness of the left can go. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> For 30 years it has been used to test the fitness of officers who police riots and other outbreaks of serious public disorder.
>
> The so-called 'shield run' involves officers covering a distance of 500 metres in less than two minutes, 45 seconds while wearing full riot gear and carrying a shield.
>
> But when Inspector Diane Bamber, 51, failed to meet the time limit, she claimed she had been left humiliated.
>
> She brought a sex and age discrimination case against her force, Greater Manchester Police, and now stands to win up to £30,000 after an employment tribunal ruled in her favour.
>
> The landmark case has opened the door for thousands of other women officers to claim payouts and has triggered a review of specialist police training across the country.
>
> Insp Bamber, a serving officer for more than 30 years who still works for Greater Manchester Police, attended an Initial Public Order Commanders' Course in Lancashire in November 2008.
>
> She complained to the tribunal that prior to the course starting she had been led to believe that she would not have to take part in the shield run. But on the day of the test, Insp Bamber was informed that all officers who wanted to be considered for events where trouble was a possibility would have to pass it.
>
> She agreed to run but she did not finish in the allotted time. Her failure meant she could not complete the rest of the training course.
>
> […]In her ruling, Judge Hilary Slater said Insp Bamber's claims of indirect sex and age discrimination were 'well-founded'.
>
> Noting that the officer had 'suffered humiliation at being sent away from the course', Judge Slater added: 'The tribunal concludes that the claimant was put at the disadvantage suffered by women and persons of her age group in that she failed the test and was not able to complete the training.'
>
> The shield run was first introduced in the Eighties when Scotland Yard used it to test the fitness of officers policing the Notting Hill Carnival. Greater Manchester Police also conducted the runs for 30 years but has now dropped them.

> The Mail on Sunday understands that the Association of Chief Police Officers is now reviewing the lawfulness of the physical training formats for 13 specialist operational roles, including those for firearms officers, which could discriminate against women and older officers.
>
> Last night [Conservative] MP Robert Halfon said: 'At a time when forces face enormous challenges and need to do all they can to protect frontline service, it is bizarre they are being forced to use taxpayers' money to pay compensation in cases such as these.'

Now ask yourself a question. If the police force was completely private, and had to compete for security contracts with other firms, how long do you think someone who could not pass the physical fitness exams would last? That's right. But there is no choice and competition for government services. You just pay your taxes and the left-wing bureaucrats decide how much service you'll get. Their agenda is not driven by concerns about serving you – the customer. Their agenda is about winning the votes of special interest groups by appearing nice. If you call for the police, and your life depends on it, then you can have a nice die, because no one is coming to save you.

Michele Bachmann wins Republican primary debate in New Hampshire

June 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the mainstream media:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

From Twitter:

John Hawkins (Right Wing News)
Winner? Michele Bachmann. Last place? Herman Cain. His Muslim answer sounded awful. #cnndebate

Kathleen McKinley (Houston Chronicle, Right Wing News)
Now that Bachmann has proven herself a worthy candidate, the msm will go after her like they did Palin #waitandsee

Erick Erickson (Red State)
That sound you hear is millions of jaws hitting the ground by Bachmann's stellar answer on Libya. She just did very well with that.

Erick Erickson (Red State)
Newt proved he can handle the debate. Bachmann wins as the strongest non Romney. Romney wins overall as no one knocked him off his perch.

Jennifer Rubin (Washington Post)
@daveweigel and Bachmann exceeded expectations

Jennifer Rubin (Washington Post)
who thinks Palin could have been more impressive than Bachmann?

Kathryn Jean Lopez (National Review)
michelle bachmann wins tonight and i suspect mitt romney is quite comfortable with that. #cnndebate

David Freddoso (National Review)
Lesson 1: Bachmann is a more serious candidate than Gingrich.

Jim Geraghty (National Review)
Bachmann's performance tonight was so strong, it will take Ed Rollins at least half a week to derail her momentum…

Larry Sabato (Democrat)
Bachmann also pleased with her performance, with reason.

S.E. Cupp (Moderate conservative)
Romney looked good tonight, so did Pawlenty. But it must be said, Bachmann was actually the only rockstar on that stage.

S.E. Cupp (Moderate conservative)
David Gergen also says it was a very good night for Bachmann. So who did you think won the night?

Ezra Klein (Democrat from Washington Post)
Romney won. Bachmann surged. Cain disappointed. Pawlenty whiffed. Gingrich slept. Santorum fretted. Paul scolded. #CNNDebate

Keep in mind that Romney is the establishment candidate, the pick of the moderate Republicans and the Democrats. However, he did do well – it's his record on abortion, religious liberty, global warming and health care that troubles me. (See related links below)

Debate transcript:

- Part 1 of 4
- Part 2 of 4
- Part 3 of 4
- Part 4 of 4

Best sound bite:

> KING: Congresswoman Bachmann, should the president have supported and jointed more U.S. presence, but now a NATO operation? Was that the right thing to do? Is that in the vital national interest of the United States of America?
>
> BACHMANN: No, I don't believe so it is. That isn't just my opinion. That was the opinion of our defense secretary, Gates, when he came before the United States Congress. He could not identify a vital national American interest in Libya.
>
> Our policy in Libya is substantially flawed. It's interesting. President Obama's own people said that he was leading from behind. The United States doesn't lead from behind. As commander in chief, I would not lead from behind.
>
> We are the head. We are not the tail. The president was wrong. All we have to know is the president deferred leadership in Libya to France. That's all we need to know. The president was not leading when it came to Libya.
>
> First of all, we were not attacked. We were not threatened with attack. There was no vital national interest. I sit on the House Select Committee on Intelligence. We deal with the nation's vital classified secrets.
>
> We to this day don't yet know who the rebel forces are that we're helping. There are some reports that they may contain al Qaeda of North Africa. What possible vital American interests could we have to empower al Qaeda of North Africa and Libya? The president was absolutely wrong in his decision on Libya.

This is the answer that EVERYONE is pointing to as her finest moment.

Check out this Jennifer Rubin column that was just posted.

Excerpt:

> There was some news made Monday night, as Bachmann declared her candidacy and showed herself to be a serious candidate. She often invoked her congressional experience (voting against TARP and against raising the debt limit and introducing a bill to repeal Obamacare). She gave an impassioned speech on the right to life, but said she wouldn't go into states seeking to repeal their laws on gay marriage. As a federal matter, however, she would support a constitutional amendment if the Defense of Marriage Act doesn't survive judicial scrutiny.

Read the whole thing. Michele is the candidate we need support.

You can contribute to her campaign right here. You can be her friend on Facebook here and also here.

Related posts

- Is Mitt Romney conservative or liberal?
- Is Newt Gingrich conservative or liberal?
- Michele Bachmann interviewed by the Wall Street Journal
- Another interview with Michele Bachmann

Calvinism versus Foreknowledge: which view of God's sovereignty is true?

June 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I stayed up late tonight (Monday) listening to the Republican primary debate, so I thought that I would just dump out some links to some old debates on Calvinism and Foreknowledge. The speakers are introduced in the MP3 files.

There are two debates below, but the second one is in two parts.

The first debate

The first debate is all in one MP3 file.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- What is Calvinism and why is it important?
- Does God love all people the same way in Calvinism?
- Does God desire the salvation of all people in Calvinism?
- Is the offer of salvation to all people a genuine offer on Calvinism?
- Does Calvinism diminish or augment God's sovereignty?
- Can God accomplish his will by permitting evil creaturely actions?
- Did Jesus die only for the "chosen", or for the possibility of salvation for all?
- Does a person's responding to God's offer of salvation detract from Gods glory?
- Does our ability to resist God's grace mean that we are "stronger" than God?

There is a little static in the audio for a few seconds every time they come back from a break, but nothing major. There are no commercials. And the debate is SO worth it, because there are almost no good debates on this topic, although you may be interested in reading the debate between William Lane Craig and Ed Curley.

The second debate

The second debate spans two MP3 files and in this debate, the two participants specifically discuss verses of Scripture that are relevant to the the two views.

Part 1:

The MP3 file is here.

The participants discuss the following passages:

- John 6
- Romans 8
- Romans 9
- Ephesians 1

Part 2:

The MP3 file is here.

The participants discuss the following passages:

- Luke 13:34-35 (Deuteronomy 5:28-29)
- Ezekiel 18:21-32 (Jeremiah 3:19-20; Ezekiel 22:30-31)
- I John 2:1-2 (2 Pet 2:1)

I didn't like this second debate as much as the first one.

My view

You can watch a video that describes my view. The only difference between my view and that video is that I do think you can lose your salvation by deliberate, voluntary apostasy. I.e. – the unforgiveable sin of renouncing the Holy Spirit.

UK Telegraph pronounces Michele Bachmann the winner of the debate

June 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph, Michele Bachmann is the winner of last night's Republican primary debate.

Excerpt:

> Tonight, she relentlessly pushed her experience as a tax lawyer, a member of the House Intelligence Committee, a decision-maker not afraid to buck her own party on TARP and a leader of the charge against Obamacare – not to mention being a mother of five and foster mother of 23.
>
> There is often a herd mentality at debates. But I've never seen such unanimity as there was this time. In the spin room afterwards, almost everyone flocked initially to Team Bachmann to hear what they had to say. Their game plan has been simple: 1. Grab the headlines by announcing she was running for president. It was gimmicky but effective. All the wires led with this "news" – I use inverted commas because we all knew she was running and she still hasn't set a date for the actual announcement. 2. Push details of her broad experience and policy know-how.

Here's the debate transcript:

- Part 1 of 4
- Part 2 of 4
- Part 3 of 4
- Part 4 of 4

Best sound bite from Michele Bachmann:

> KING: Congresswoman Bachmann, should the president have supported and jointed more U.S. presence, but now a NATO operation? Was that the right thing to do? Is that in the vital national interest of the United States of America?
>
> BACHMANN: No, I don't believe so it is. That isn't just my opinion. That was the opinion of our defense secretary, Gates, when he came before the United States Congress. He could not identify a vital national American interest in Libya.
>
> Our policy in Libya is substantially flawed. It's interesting. President Obama's own people said that he was leading from behind. The United States doesn't lead from behind. As commander in chief, I would not lead from behind.
>
> We are the head. We are not the tail. The president was wrong. All we have to know is the president deferred leadership in Libya to France. That's all we need to know. The president was not leading when it came to Libya.

> First of all, we were not attacked. We were not threatened with attack. There was no vital national interest. I sit on the House Select Committee on Intelligence. We deal with the nation's vital classified secrets.
>
> We to this day don't yet know who the rebel forces are that we're helping. There are some reports that they may contain al Qaeda of North Africa. What possible vital American interests could we have to empower al Qaeda of North Africa and Libya? The president was absolutely wrong in his decision on Libya.

To learn more about Bachmann, check out these profile pieces:

- Wall Street Journal profile of Michele Bachmann
- ABC News profile of Michele Bachmann

You can also see videos of Michele Bachmann interviews from a previous post.

These are both worth reading to understand her background, policies and voting record.

Lee Strobel interviews Brian Auten (Apologetics 315) on the state of apologetics

June 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten of Apologetics 315

From Bible Gateway, an interview by Lee Strobel featuring Brian Auten, webmaster of Apologetics 315.

Intro:

As creator of the best website for resources to defend Christianity, Brian Auten offers a unique perspective on the current apologetics scene—the good, the bad, and the hopeful.

Apologetics 315 features a terrific compilation of material for Christians to equip themselves to better define and defend the faith. It's full of links to resources dealing with every imaginable area of apologetics. As a regular reader of the site, I became curious what its creator, Brian Auten, thinks about the current state of apologetics around the world—and he was willing to share his insights by answering a few questions.

Excerpt:

• What trends do you see in apologetics?

Consider books like *The DaVinci Code*, writings by agnostic professor Bart Ehrman, or the various publications of the so-called New Atheists. All these attacks on Christianity have generated a lot of buzz. However, each of these attacks has been met with a strong counter-response from scholars, theologians, and apologists. Christianity hasn't been defeated. Instead, it has weathered storm after storm. In the meantime, the resources available that answer these challenges have increased dramatically. Over and over again,

what has been intended to bring Christianity down has only served to strengthen it.

But the tendency is this: too many times Christians are only responding to the challenges. That seems to be the trend. Why are we not running to the battle? Instead of just reacting to the next challenge, I long for the day when more and more Christians would equip themselves with this vast armory of resources and use it to take the battle to the enemy's camp, so to speak. Apologetic-savvy educators, scientists, public officials, businessmen, actors, novelists, movie-makers—all people with a heart of evangelism who are able to defend and contend for the faith in the public square could have an immense impact for the Gospel.

And more:

• You're passionate about churches starting apologetics ministries. Are you seeing more of them doing this?

I want to see churches start their own apologetics ministries because it is our scriptural mandate to "always be prepared to give an answer." Yet there often is very little preparation going on! When challenges to faith come, people struggle to find substantive answers. This may cause some believers to resort to a sort of "believe it anyway" mentality; for others it causes them to abandon the faith altogether.

Research by the Barna Group has shown that a majority of young people walk away from the faith around the time they go to college or university. They simply have not been equipped to deal with the secular challenges that come against their faith when they go to college. But what if they had been properly equipped to understand and answer these sorts of challenges? They would not only be able to stand up under the attacks, but they would also be able to share Christ with more confidence, knowing that they have good reasons undergirding their faith.

So I think it's so crucial that our churches become training grounds where believers learn why they believe what they believe. Apologetics ministries and small group studies provide a venue for discipleship where people can work through the tough questions that they constantly face from the secular world. And what's more, our faith is enriched to even deeper levels when we experience the joy of loving God with our minds.

Thankfully, I think we are seeing a rise in the number of churches that both see this need and are beginning to equip their congregations through apologetic teaching, small groups, conferences, and resources.

Read the whole thing. Tweet it, share it. Think about it!

There's a great list of scholars and ministries in there as well. If you guys want to know what you should be reading to prepare your defense of theism and Christianity, leave a comment with your intended audience, and I will suggest some resources. I may even BUY YOU the resource, if you are a budding apologist who is conservative on economics and politics and foreign policy. Yes, I do that a lot on this blog – mailed out a dozen books this month already to people. Get to know me, I can help you to defend your faith.

Obama spent $80 billion dollars on green jobs so where are the jobs?

June 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

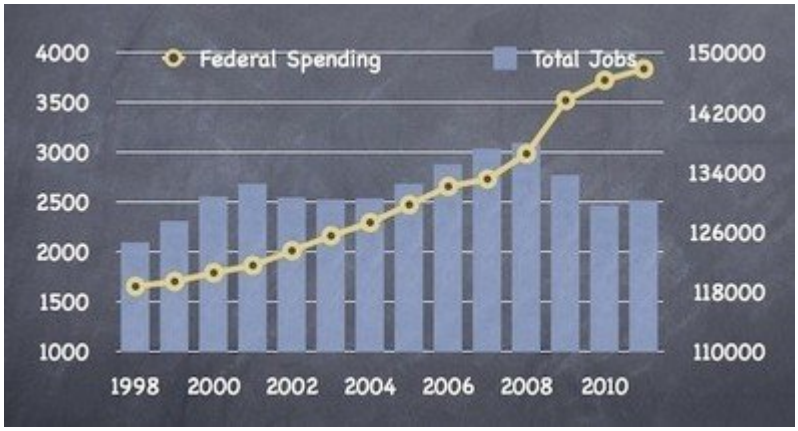

Government Spending Vs Jobs

From left-wing Politico, an evaluation of Barack Obama's green jobs stimulus spending.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama heads to an energy plant in North Carolina on Monday to talk once again about the job-creating power of a green economy.
>
> The catch? Nearly three years into Obama's presidency, the White House can't point to much solid evidence that significant numbers of Americans are scoring the green jobs the president has been touting.
>
> Monthly Labor Department employment reports say nothing about the new clean energy workforce, while an effort to document how many Americans actually make a living in the "green collar" field may not be done by November 2012.
>
> Obama's Council of Economic Advisers suggests 225,000 clean energy jobs were either created or preserved through the third quarter of 2010 thanks to more than $80 billion in the economic stimulus package. But those are estimates at best.
>
> White House officials say asking about the connection between the 9.1 percent unemployment rate and the administration's concerted green jobs campaign is the wrong question.

And we should not have tried this, because Spain tried spending money on green jobs and it raised unemployment.

Excerpt:

> Pajamas Media has received a leaked internal assessment produced by Spain's Zapatero administration. The assessment confirms the key charges previously made by non-governmental Spanish experts in a damning report exposing the catastrophic economic failure of Spain's "green economy" initiatives.

> […]Unsurprisingly for a governmental take on a flagship program, the report takes pains to minimize the extent of the economic harm. Yet despite the soft-pedaling, the document reveals exactly why electricity rates "necessarily skyrocketed" in Spain, as did the public debt needed to underwrite the disaster. This internal assessment preceded the Zapatero administration's recent acknowledgement that the "green economy" stunt must be abandoned, lest the experiment risk Spain becoming Greece.
>
> The government report does not expressly confirm the highest-profile finding of the non-governmental report: that Spain's "green economy" program cost the country 2.2 jobs for every job "created" by the state. However, the figures published in the government document indicate they arrived at a job-loss number *even worse* than the 2.2 figure from the independent study.

Green jobs programs *don't work.* They haven't worked *anywhere*.

Does Obama look around the world and evaluate what policies work and what policies don't work? Or does he just decide how to spend private sector money based on what makes him feel good, and what makes him look good? Is that what being President is about? Wasting tons of taxpayer money and bankrupting the country so that you can feel good about yourself because people *think* you are doing something good?

Do children do better when raised by married fathers?

June 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A study from the Heritage Foundation explains the roles that married fathers play in raising children.

Excerpt:

> As Father's Day 2011 approaches, it's a good time to reconsider the evidence as to why. Decades of academic research show that the father's role in the family has a powerful and long-term impact on the future of the next generation.
>
> In terms of economic well-being, children who grow up in homes where both parents are present are 82 percent less likely to live in poverty. Intact families tend to fare better in a wide range of economic measures; on average they have a higher net worth, higher income, more household assets, and greater savings.
>
> A father's role goes far beyond that of breadwinner, however, influencing his children's well-being, behavior, and futures, which can have a profound impact on the health of civil society. Married fathers especially can have life-long influences on their children.
>
> Youths growing up with both a mother and father in the home are less likely to engage in high-risk behavior. They are also less likely to become sexually active or to give birth in high school or outside of marriage. In addition, with both a mom and a dad in the home, adolescents are less likely to be involved with substance abuse such as drug and alcohol use and binge drinking.
>
> The two-parent family, likewise, provides a safeguard against delinquent and anti-social behavior. On average, youths living with both parents are less likely to engage in violent behavior, commit a property crime, or be incarcerated.
>
> In addition, teens with both moms and dads at home tend to fare better on a range of emotional and psychological outcomes: They tend to experience better emotional health and have higher levels of self-esteem and social competence, and they are less likely to experience psychological distress and anxiety.
>
> Given all of the above, it is not surprising that children raised by married fathers tend to have greater academic achievement and higher levels of educational attainment, and they tend to score higher in math and reading in even the earliest grades.
>
> And fathers' impact goes beyond the effects of family structure. Dads' involvement and relationship with their children is associated with greater psychological well-being, lower levels of behavioral problems, greater educational attainment, and a decrease in the likelihood of teen substance use.

I removed all the links to their sources, you have to click through to their site for the linked research.

What Christians can learn from atheists about making truth claims

June 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this post from Simple Apologetics through Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 Twitter feed, which discusses what Christians can learn from atheism with respect to bearing the burden of proof for Christian truth claims.

Excerpt:

> For instance, many atheists also call themselves "free thinkers", a title suggesting that they are not beholden to any one perspective, but always open to following wherever reason and evidence may lead. As the current description of "Freethought" on Wikipedia reads:
>
> Freethought holds that individuals should not accept ideas proposed as truth without recourse to knowledge and reason. Thus, freethinkers strive to build their opinions on the basis of facts, scientific inquiry, and logical principles, independent of any logical fallacies or intellectually limiting effects of authority, confirmation bias, cognitive bias, conventional wisdom, popular culture, prejudice, sectarianism, tradition, urban legend, and all other dogmas. Regarding religion, freethinkers hold that there is insufficient evidence to support the existence of supernatural phenomena.
>
> Of course Christians will disagree about the basic tenets of freethought in regards to religion, but the first section of this description is one that nearly everyone should be able to gladly affirm. (We might want to broaden what counts as a legitimate basis for our opinions to include testimony from others, memories, and other 'properly basic' beliefs, but I digress).
>
> In this regard, atheists (and others) who denounce a fideistic approach to religion are doing religious people a great service. Whenever the claims of faith are said to be outside of rational investigation, it creates a great challenge for everyone else. To take a small scale example, I once knew a student who would occasionally cancel Bible studies because "God told me that we should not meet today." The truth of the matter was more likely that she was behind in her homework! Her 'prophetic' explanation was frustrating and a conversation stopper, but it also came across as fairly disingenuous, and it eroded the trust in our relationship.
>
> A similar, but more significant, problem exists when Christians say "you just have to take it on faith" or "you just need to believe" or "pray about it and it'll become clear to you" when confronted with difficult challenges to their beliefs. These words initially sound good, and pious, and noble, but upon reflection (or hearing them one too many times), they start to sound like an intellectually lazy way of avoiding the problems. When atheists (or others) criticize Christians for this, they

> are calling us to a higher level of reason, thoughtfulness, and conversational engagement with other viewpoints.
>
> This process—of going from conviction, to being challenged, to doubt about our own ideas, to investigation, to fresh conviction—should be celebrated. It is okay to not have answers and it is okay to change our minds as we continue to learn and grow. Going through the emotionally wrenching experience of uncertainty is necessary if we are to process the complexity of contemporary challenges to religious belief (or, alternatively, the current arguments against atheism).

Many people know that I don't get along well with fideistic Christians and that I can barely keep myself from running out of the church because there is often very little thinking and arguing going on in there. Everywhere I look I see postmodernism, religious pluralism, socialism, and moral relativism. Feelings have replaced thinking, and everyone afraid to offend other people by expressing and defending an idea as *correct*. Part of that is because no one knows why they believe anything, anymore, and they are too busy having fun to study anything to see if they are right.

But, as I wrote before, the Bible's definition of faith is "trust based on evidence". In that post, I give three lines of argument that faith is NOT something you either prefer to believe or not, apart from evidence and arguments. The Old Testament and New Testament agree that people need to rest their trust in God based on arguments and evidence, "that they may know for certain". That phrase is quoted in both the Old and New Testaments. Know For Certain.

That's actually why Jesus performed miracles. He made assertions about the spiritual world, and then he gave evidence of his authority to make those pronouncements by healing the sick, etc. and even by rising from the dead. The question for us today is – since we can't perform miracles, are there any alternatives left to us that can take the place of miracles? And the answer is yes. We can use philosophical arguments, and hard evidence from science and history.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Responses to arguments against Christian theism

Rebuttals and refutations of arguments against Christian theism are listed here, e.g. – the problems of evil and suffering, the problem of the unevangelized, the problem of religious pluralism, the problem of divine sovereignty vs. human freedom. You can also find some positive *historical* arguments for Christianity in particular on that page. Formal academic debates featuring prominent atheists like Christopher Hitchens and James Crossley abound on Youtube. There is no excuse for not being prepared to explain and defend.

Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels

June 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Houston Chronicle, the latest news on the investigation of Obama administration's Mexican gun-trafficking program. (H/T Doug Ross)

Full story:

> House and Senate lawmakers are threatening to block presidential nominees and subpoena Justice Department officials this week to force the release of documents on a controversial gun trafficking program that allowed American shipments of weapons to Mexican cartels.
>
> Congressional investigators claim U.S. officials allowed American gun stores to sell weapons in bulk to Mexican buyers in order to track the shipments and identify the ringleaders, known as "Operation Fast and Furious" under "Project Gunrunner."
>
> Weapons from those sales were found at the scene of two separate attacks on U.S. agents, and Congress wants to know if they were used specifically in the deaths of Immigration and Customs Enforcement special agent Jaime Zapata or Customs and Border Patrol agent Brian Terry.
>
> Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, claims the Justice Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is conducting a cover-up in its refusal to hand over documents and witnesses to congressional investigators.
>
> Grassley, the ranking Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said he will block President Barack Obama's nominees from confirmation until he gets the documents he needs for his panel's investigation.
>
> In the House, Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., will hold the first of several hearings today into the failure of the Justice Department and the ATF to cooperate with the congressional probes. Issa is threatening to issue subpoenas to retrieve documents and to gain access to witnesses.
>
> The efforts by Grassley and Issa have won bipartisan support from Texas lawmakers frustrated with the lack of information about the death of Zapata coming from the administration.
>
> "The Justice Department engaged in an unauthorized activity which actually ended up putting guns in the hands of dangerous drug cartels in Mexico," said Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas. "Unfortunately, they seemed to be engaged now in a cover-up and refuse to be forthcoming with regards to Senator Grassley's reasonable request for documents and information."
>
> Zapata, a Brownsville native, was working in Laredo as an ICE agent before he was transferred to Mexico to serve as a U.S. government consultant to the

> Mexican military's battle against the cartels.
>
> He was killed Feb. 15, and agent Victor Avila was wounded, when Los Zetas cartel members shot the agents in their SUV during an attempted car jacking along the highway between Mexico City and San Luis Potosi.
>
> The Zapata family wants more information about the death of their son, said Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-Laredo, who supports Grassley's attempt to obtain documents.

Congressman Darrell Issa tweeted this Daily Caller story.

Excerpt:

> Four Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) agents in transcribed interviews with top GOP oversight official Darrell Issa's office are contradicting the Justice Department's account of "Operation Fast and Furious," saying hundreds of weapons -– including assault rifles and military grade sniper weapons -– were allowed to escape into the clutches of Mexican drug cartels in an apparently reckless investigative strategy.
>
> Their testimony raises the question of whether Ronald Weich, a deputy to Attorney General Eric Holder, lied to congressional investigators in a Feb. 4 letter denying the allegations. Weich is testifying before Issa's committee Wednesday.
>
> The four ATF agents describe how the weapons were tracked from sales at U.S. gun shops but not seized as is normal practice. The goal of the operation was to track the weapons as they progressed from the purchasers through criminal networks.

Yes, apparently Democrats are only opposed to legal gun ownership by law abiding citizens. If you are a murderous, torturing Mexican drug dealer, then the Democrats want you to have guns so you can murder people. And if the Democrats keep blocking border security measures, then the Mexican drug gangs can just come over and murder Americans on American soil. If you're a Democrat, this makes sense to you. You voted for it. You support it. It's "gun control".

It's similar to the way Democrats are only opposed to legal immigration. Illegal immigration is a great idea, according to Democrats. But if you have skilled workers who want to come here and work, start businesses, pay taxes and to NOT commit crimes, then the Democrats don't want them to get green cards. People who pay taxes tend to vote Republicans, and that makes them bad – according to Democrats. Democrats only want illegals to become citizens – because illegals vote for more and more dependence on government.

And if you're a Democrat, then executing convicted criminals is a bad idea, but murdering innocent babies is a good idea. Apparently, for Democrats, it's a bad idea to deter criminals from committing violent crimes with the threat of capital punishment. But Democrats want people to have as much irresponsible sex as possible… and if a baby is created then people can just get rid of it. Babies are so inconvenient – for Democrats.

Obama doesn't want people who freely choose to have irresponsible sex to be punished… with a baby.

And if you want to start a business or get a job, that's bad – according to Democrats. Bad people who work hard and don't commit crimes should pay lots of income taxes – especially if you work really hard and make lots of money. But if you just want to be on welfare and collect federal benefits and food stamps, then you can do that and not have to pay any taxes. Democrats love to encourage people to be dependent on the government, because it's easier to buy votes that way. The Democrats want to spend lots of money on people who choose not to finish high school and who choose not to get married before having children. They subsidize that – largely with the money they get from married workers.

And don't even think about requiring people to have a photo ID before voting. Democrats think that it is unfair for illegal immigrants and criminals to not have the right to vote – multiple times, if possible. Because they probably don't vote Republican, and that makes it OK.

Welcome to the Democrat party – check your moral sense at the door, please.

Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions

June 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remember when that awesome Republican governor Scott Walker limited the unions from extorting massive amounts of money from the state using their collective bargaining powers? Well, some judge halted the legislation. That judge has now been overruled by the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

Here's the story from the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. (H/T PJ Tatler)

Excerpt:

> Acting with unusual speed, the state Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the reinstatement of Gov. Scott Walker's controversial plan to end most collective bargaining for tens of thousands of public workers.
>
> The court found that a committee of lawmakers was not subject to the state's open meetings law, and so did not violate that law when it hastily approved the collective bargaining measure in March and made it possible for the Senate to take it up. In doing so, the Supreme Court overruled a Dane County judge who had halted the legislation, ending one challenge to the law even as new challenges are likely to emerge.
>
> The changes on collective bargaining will take effect once Secretary of State Doug La Follette arranges for official publication of the stalled bill, and the high court said there was now nothing to preclude him from doing that. La Follette did not return a call Tuesday to say when the law would be published.
>
> […]The court ruled that Dane County Circuit Judge Maryann Sumi's ruling, which had held up implementation of the collective bargaining law, was in the *void ab initio*, Latin for invalid from the outset."The court's decision …is not affected by the wisdom or lack thereof evidenced in the act," the majority wrote. "Choices about what laws represent wise public policy for the state of Wisconsin are not within the constitutional purview of the courts. The court's task in the action for original jurisdiction that we have granted is limited to determining whether the Legislature employed a constitutionally violative process in the enactment of the act. We conclude that the Legislature did not violate the Wisconsin Constitution by the process it used."
>
> The court concluded that Sumi exceeded her jurisdiction, "invaded" the Legislature's constitutional powers and erred in halting the publication and implementation of the collective bargaining law.

Ace of Spades explains what the phrase "ab initio" means.

Excerpt:

> Generally, when a higher court calls bulls**t on a lower one, it's called a *remand*, a declaration that the lower court got it wrong, and to *try again.*
>
> Commenters are telling me the court ruled here *ab initio*, which (context clues, it's been forever since I did anything law-oriented) means it's expunged from memory altogether as being improperly entertained from the start, which means there is no remand to the lower court to try again. The higher court has said "Not only did you get this wrong, you got it so wrong we don't trust you with another bite at the apple, so we're directing your decision from here. It's over. Done. Finished. Kaput."
>
> And more. This judge, Sumi, attempted not to rule a *law* unconstitutional but a *bill* — a not-quite-yet-a-law — unconstitutional, as she ordered the law to be unpublished, that is, to remain a bill without going to the final step to make it a law.

Ace actually brought out the flaming skull and the bear for this story… so it must be big.

Here's some other good news from Wisconsin – they just passed a bill to legalize concealed carry. That's good for law-abiding citizens and bad for criminals, who will now have a tougher time committing crimes.

Does God’s omniscience conflict with human free will?

June 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This question was sent to me by a friend from the Phillipines while I as on Facebook, on Tuesday night.

Here’s the setup for the question, from Come Reason ministries.

Excerpt:

> Hello,
>
> Christian doctrine holds that God is all knowing (1 John 3:20), and humans have free will (Deuteronomy 30:19 is my favorite example). however, at my favorite apologetics debate board, I have seen skeptics raise an objection to these points several times. the basic logic behind their arguments is this:
>
> 1. A being with free will, given two options A and B, can freely choose between A and B.
> 2. God is omniscient (all-knowing).
> 3. God knows I will choose A.
> 4. God cannot be wrong, since an omniscient being cannot have false knowledge.
> 5. From 3 and 4, I will choose A and cannot choose B.
> 6. From 1 and 5, omniscience and free will cannot co-exist.
>
> I have read many counter-arguments from apologetics sites, but they were either too technical (I couldn’t understand them), or not satisfying. so, I was wondering what would your input be on this issue?
>
> Thank you,
>
> Justin

Ever heard that one? Here’s Lenny Eposito’s answer:

> Hi Justin,
>
> Thanks for writing. This is a great question as it shows how even those who appeal to logic can have biases that blind them. Let’s examine this argument and see if it follows logically.
>
> Premises 1 and 2 in your outline above are the main premises to the argument and are not disputed. The Christian worldview argues that every human being is a free moral agent and is capable of making choices simply by exercising their will, not under compulsion or because of instinct. Also, it is a long held doctrine of Christianity that God is all-knowing. The Bible says that God knows “the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10).” For omniscience to be truly knowledgeable it must

> be correct knowledge, so premise number 4 is also granted.
>
> However, point number 5 is where the logic falters. Those who argue in this manner make the mistake of thinking that because God possesses knowledge about a specific matter, then he has influenced it. That does not follow at all. Just because God can foresee which choice you will make, it does not mean you couldn't still freely choose the other option.
>
> Let me give you an example. I have a five year old son. If I were to leave a chocolate chip cookie on the table about a hour before dinner time and my son was to walk by and see it, I know that he would pick up the cookie and eat it. I did not force him to make that decision. In fact, I don't even have to be in the room at all. I think I know my son well enough, though, to tell you that if I come back into the kitchen the cookie will be gone. His act was made completely free of my influence, but I knew what his actions would be.
>
> In examining the argument, the assumption is made in premise 3 that because God knows I will choose A somehow denies me the choice of B. That is the premise that Christianity rejects. Omniscience and free will are not incompatible and it is a non-sequitor to claim otherwise.
>
> Thank you Justin for this interesting question. I pray that you will continue to defend the gospel of our Lord and may He continue to bless you as you seek to grow in Him.

That's a great answer and should work in ordinary conversations.

More technical

J.W. Wartick maps out the arguments more fully with symbolic logic here on his Always Have A Reason blog. But I'll just excerpt the gist of it.

Excerpt:

> It is necessarily true that if God knows x will happen, then x will happen. But then if one takes these terms, God knowing x will happen only means that x will happen, not that x will happen *necessarily.* Certainly, God's foreknowledge of an event means that that event will happen, but it does *not* mean that the event could not have happened otherwise. If an event happens necessarily, that means the event could not have happened otherwise, but God's foreknowledge of an event doesn't somehow transfer necessity to the event, it only means that the event will happen. It could have been otherwise, in which case, God's knowledge would have been different.
>
> […]Perhaps I could take an example. Let's say that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow (and I do hope I will, I don't like missing classes!). God knows in advance that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow. His knowledge of this event means that it will happen, but it doesn't mean that I couldn't choose to stay in and sleep for a while, or play my new copy of Final Fantasy XIII, or do something more useless with my time. If I chose to, say, play Final Fantasy XIII (a strong

> temptation!), then God simply would have known that I would play FFXIII. His knowledge does not *determine* the outcome, His knowledge is simply *of the outcome*.

If we choose A, God would foreknow A. If we choose B, God would foreknow B. His foreknowledge of our choices is contingent on our making free choices.

I had to learn symbolic logic and Bayes' theorem in college for my computers science degrees, and it's pretty useful for understanding these philosophers. Philosophy is a lot like computer science, at least for analytical philosophy.

UPDATE: Here's another one from Sam Harper. I would click through just to read his funny author profile.

How Barack Obama gave top campaign donors government jobs

June 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Left-leaning Politico reports on corruption, cronyism, nepotism and patronage appointments in the Obama administration.

Excerpt:

> Telecom executive Donald H. Gips raised a big bundle of cash to help finance his friend Barack Obama's run for the presidency.
>
> Gips, a vice president of Colorado-based Level 3 Communications, delivered more than $500,000 in contributions for the Obama war chest, while two other company executives collected at least $150,000 more.
>
> After the election, Gips was put in charge of hiring in the Obama White House, helping to place loyalists and fundraisers in many key positions. Then, in mid-2009, Obama named him ambassador to South Africa. Meanwhile, Level 3 Communications, in which Gips retained stock, received millions of dollars of government stimulus contracts for broadband projects in six states — though Gips said he had been "completely unaware" that the company had received the contracts.
>
> More than two years after Obama took office vowing to banish "special interests" from his administration, nearly 200 of his biggest donors have landed plum government jobs and advisory posts, won federal contracts worth millions of dollars for their business interests or attended numerous elite White House meetings and social events, an investigation by iWatch News has found.
>
> These "bundlers" raised at least $50,000 — and sometimes more than $500,000 — in campaign donations for Obama's campaign. Many of those in the "Class of 2008" are now being asked to bundle contributions for Obama's reelection, an effort that could cost $1 billion.
>
> As a candidate, Obama spoke passionately about diminishing the clout of moneyed interests. Kicking off his presidential run on Feb. 10, 2007, he blasted "the cynics, the lobbyists, the special interests," who had "turned our government into a game only they can afford to play."
>
> "We're here today to take it back," he said.

Say one thing in public, and do the opposite in private. Don't believe the words of a candidate in their stump speeches. Look at their voting record, and their legislative initiatives, and their ratings from non-partisan organizations, such as the Club For Growth, Citizens Against Government Waste, and the National Taxpayer's Union. Don't vote based on pleasant sounding words and pleasant appearances, do the research.

Marco Rubio’s amazing maiden speech in the US Senate

June 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

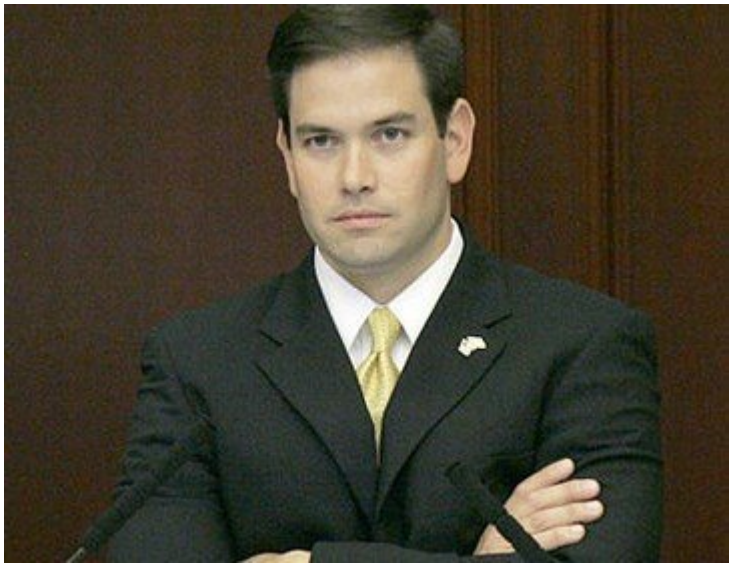

Florida Senator Marco Rubio

Human events reported on Florida Senator Marco Rubio’s first speech on the floor of the US Senate today, and it was AWESOME. (H/T Kathleen McKinley)

Full story:

> Freshman Florida Republican Senator Marco Rubio delivered his maiden speech on the floor of the Senate yesterday and it was a speech all GOP presidential contenders should watch.
>
> It was the best speech of the 2012 presidential cycle, except the person who delivered it has all but ruled himself off of the 2012 ticket on numerous occasions.
>
> The GOP presidential field has been criticized for not having passion or conviction, and Rubio’s speech lit up the normally staid Senate chamber to the extent that this is possible. It had a clear argument, an emotional arc, personal tie-ins, and was delivered with conviction. Too often, even in the GOP, politicians talk about American exceptionalism as if it is an academic exercise.
>
> Not Rubio.
>
> Rubio owned it, his words personified it, and his speech was delivered in a way that led one who was watching to to think Rubio was humbled and still awed at America’s exceptional past and promise.
>
> As Republicans learned in 2008, words and stories matter. It draws a public who does not get caught up in the drudgery of modern American politics in to care about the democratic process.
> Add in the fact that Rubio is young and a minority, which are the two groups

Republicans do most poorly with, and the speech and the messenger become even more dynamic, compelling, symbolic and important.

Rubio said he came “from a hard working and humble family” that “was neither wealthy nor connected,” but that he “grew up blessed in two important ways:” He had a strong and stable family and was born in America.

He realized that “America is not perfect” and “ti took a bloody civil war to free over 4 million African Americans who lived enslaved … and it would take another hundred years after that before they found true equality under the law.”

Rubio then movingly talked about how people who came to give their children a better life contributed to an “American miracle.”

He spoke of how a “16-year-old boy from Sweden, who spoke no English and had only five dollars in his pocket, was able to save and open a shoe store,” and “today, that store, Nordstrom is a multi-billion dollar global retail giant.”

He spoke of a “a young couple with no money and no business experience decided to start a toy business out of the garage of their home, and, “today, that company, Mattel, is one of the world’s largest toy manufacturers”

He spoke of the “French-born son of Iranian parents created a website called AuctionWeb in the living room of his home,” and, “today, that website now called eBay stands as a testament to the familiar phrase, ‘Only in America.'”

Rubio then talked movingly of the American dream and personified it by putting faces on the dream.

He said it was “story of the people who cleaned our office last night” who work hard so they can send their kids to college.”

He said it was “the story of the people who served your lunch today” who “work hard so that one day their children will have the chance to own a business.”

He said, in a reference to his father, the American Dream was also the “story of a bartender and a maid in Florida, whose son now serves here in this Senate, and who proudly gives his testimony as a firsthand witness of the greatness of this land.”

He then pivoted and said while “most great powers have used their strength to conquer other nations” America “is different” for America, “power also came with a sense that to those that much is given, much is expected.”

Rubio said that America’s greatness can be found anywhere in the world, “when someone uses a mobile phone, email, the Internet, or GPS” or “when a bone marrow, lung or heart transplant saves a life.”

Rubio then talked about how he “grew up in the 1980s, a time when it was morning in America” and that the 1980s, like the American century, faced challenges and triumphs but it was a “century where American political, economic and cultural exceptionalism made the world a more prosperous and peaceful place.”

> He spoke of how the country is headed toward the wrong direct and that "we do stand now at a turning point in our history, one where there are only two ways forward for us. We will either bring on another American century, or we are doomed to witness America's decline."
>
> Rubio said that since "every single one of us is the descendant of a go-getter," "of dreamers and believers," and "of men and women who took risk and made sacrifices because they wanted to leave their children better off than themselves" that "we are all the descendants of the men and women who built the nation that changed the world" whether "hey came here on the Mayflower, a slave ship, or on an airplane from Havana."
>
> Rubio then quoted John F. Kennedy about how America is the "watchmen on the walls of world freedom" and asked if America declined, "who will serve as living proof that liberty, security, and prosperity are all possible together," or "lead the fight to confront and defeat radical Islam that "abuses and oppresses women, has no tolerance for other faiths and seeks to impose its views on the whole world," or stand up for children who "are used as soldiers and trafficked as slaves?"
>
> Rubio asked, if America declines, "who will create the innovations of the 21st century?"
>
> He answered that nobody will because "there is still no nation or institution in the world willing or able to do what we have done."
>
> "Now, some say that we can no longer afford the price we must pay to keep America's light shining," Rubio said. "Others say that there are new shining cities that will soon replace us."
>
> "I say they are both wrong," Rubio emphatically said because the world "still needs America," "still needs our light," and "still needs another American century" and "with God's help, that will be our legacy to our children and to the world."

You can watch the video here. The full transcript is here. READ THE WHOLE THING if you can't watch the video.

You'll recall that this blog has been a strong supporter of Marco Rubio since the day he announced his candidacy. He, along with Michele Bachmann, Paul Ryan, Allen West and Jim Demint, are my favorite Republicans. I'm probably forgetting some, but those are the ones that come to mind. I think if I had to choose someone who best matched my views across the board, that would be Michele Bachmann. But Marco Rubio best matches my personal story, and my opinion of the United States of America.

Here's my post on the day he won the seat: Marco Rubio wins Florida Senate race – first tea party senator!

And here's my post on the day he announced he was running: Conservative Marco Rubio announces for Florida Senate seat.

He will be a great Senator. And some day, maybe he’ll be even more. IFYKWIMAITYD.

George Will says that Ted Cruz is the candidate to rally around

June 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Senate candidate Ted Cruz

Kay Bailey Hutchinson has retired from the Senate, and George Will thinks that Republican candidate Ted Cruz is the man to replace her.

Excerpt:

> For a conservative Texan seeking national office, it could hardly get better than this: In a recent 48-hour span, Ted Cruz, a candidate for next year's Republican Senate nomination for the seat being vacated by Republican Kay Bailey Hutchison, was endorsed by the Club for Growth PAC, FreedomWorks PAC, talk-radio host Mark Levin and Erick Erickson of RedState.com.
>
> For conservatives seeking reinforcements for Washington's too-limited number of limited-government constitutionalists, it can hardly get better than this: Before he earned a Harvard law degree magna cum laude (and helped found the Harvard Latino Law Review) and clerked for Chief Justice William Rehnquist, Cruz's senior thesis at Princeton — his thesis adviser was professor Robert George, one of contemporary conservatism's intellectual pinups — was on the Constitution's Ninth and 10th amendments. Then as now, Cruz argued that these amendments, properly construed, would buttress the principle that powers not enumerated are not possessed by the federal government.

Robbie George??? Robbie George??? Holy snouts! That guy is one of the top academic pro-lifers. *Every* Christian apologist knows about Robbie George. It's the law! Well, it isn't. But it should be!

I continue:

> At age 14, Cruz's father fought with rebels (including Fidel Castro) against Cuba's dictator, Fulgencio Batista. Captured and tortured, at 18 he escaped to America with $100 sewn in his underwear. He graduated from the University of Texas and met his wife — like him, a mathematician — with whom he founded a small business processing seismic data for the oil industry.
>
> By the time Ted Cruz was 13, he was winning speech contests sponsored by a Houston free-enterprise group that gave contestants assigned readings by Frederic Bastiat, Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises. In his early teens he traveled around Texas and out of state giving speeches. At Princeton, he finished first in the 1992 U.S. National Debate Championship and North American Debate Championship.
>
> As Texas's solicitor general from 2003 to 2008, Cruz submitted 70 briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court, and he has, so far, argued nine cases there. He favors school choice and personal investment accounts for a portion of individuals' Social Security taxes. He supports the latter idea with a bow to the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who said such accounts enable the doorman to build wealth the way the people in the penthouse do.
>
> Regarding immigration, Cruz, 40, demands secure borders and opposes amnesty for illegal immigrants but echoes Ronald Reagan's praise of legal immigrants as "Americans by choice," people who are "crazy enough" to risk everything in the fundamentally entrepreneurial act of immigrating.

He is a hard-core Republican. He has Republican experiences: legal immigrant, fought communism, studied something that required actual work, founded a small business, etc. This is the prototypical Republican!

You can find out more about him on his positions page. I was interested in his stance on social issues, in particular.

Excerpt:

> **Ted Cruz has fought to protect innocent human life. He played a leading role in several important cases, including defense of the partial-birth abortion ban, parental consent laws, and prohibiting state funds from going to abortion. These cases have all been part of the ongoing effort to ensure that every child in America receives the protection and respect he or she deserves.**
>
> - Authored an amicus brief for 13 states, successfully defending the federal Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act. The ban was upheld 5-4 before the U.S. Supreme Court;
> - Authored an amicus brief for 18 states, successfully defending the New Hampshire parental notification law. The law was upheld 9-0 before the U.S. Supreme Court [note: this brief was awarded the Best Brief Award from the National Association of Attorneys General for U.S. Supreme Court briefs

> written in 2005-06];
> - Successfully defended Texas's Rider 8, which prohibits state funds for groups that provide abortions, winning unanimously before the Fifth Circuit court of appeals.
>
> **Ted Cruz has worked hard in defense of traditional marriage, including his intervention in a case protecting Texas marriage laws. In addition, he has fought on the federal level to defend marriage between one man and one woman as the fundamental building block of society.**
>
> - When a Beaumont state court granted a divorce to two homosexual men who had gotten a civil union in Vermont, Cruz, under the leadership of Attorney General Greg Abbott, intervened in defense of the marriage laws of the State of Texas, which successfully led to the court judgment being vacated;
> - Worked with Attorney General Abbott to send a letter to Congress in support of the federal Defense of Marriage Act.

He has lots of nice actions related to lots of conservative policies on that page. What a resume! Energy production, voter fraud prevention, border security, legal firearm ownership – you name it, this guy has been fighting for conservative principles. Like Michele Bachmann, (and unlike RINO Mitt Romney), he has actually tried to do pro-life and pro-marriage things. We don't just have to take his word for it, he has the actions to prove his words. Just look at the list of issues on his page!

It's so funny, because on that page, he says this: "You say you believe in these principles. **Show me.** When have you fought for conservative principles and what have you accomplished?" This is exactly the question we should be asking of any political candidate. Show. Me. The. Record.

Prominent atheist philosopher gives mixed review of intelligent design

June 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this report on a peer-reviewed assessment of intelligent design by the prominent atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel.

Excerpt:

> Prof. Thomas Nagel, a self-declared atheist who earned his PhD. in philosophy at Harvard 45 years ago, who has been a professor at U.C. Berkeley, Princeton, and the last 28 years at New York University, and who has published ten books and more than 60 articles, has published an important essay, "Public Education and Intelligent Design," in the Wiley InterScience Journal *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 36, issue 2…
>
> […]Prof. Nagel's paper is a significant and substantial opening, at America's highest intellectual level, that encourages all intelligent, educated, informed individuals — particularly those whose interest in this issue derives from intellectual curiosity, not the emotional advocacy excitement for any side — that it is legitimate as a matter of data, science, and logic, divorced from all religious texts and doctrines, to consider that intelligent design may be a valid scientific approach to understanding how DNA and the complex chemical systems of life came to attain their present form. Prof. Nagel's article is well worth the price to put it in the library of any inquiring mind.

The actual paper is here.

Now for the summary of the paper, with supporting quotes:

> Professor Nagel has read ID-supportive works such as Dr. Behe's *Edge of Evolution* (p. 192). He reports that based on his examination of their work, ID "does not seem to depend on massive distortions of the evidence and hopeless incoherencies in its interpretation" (pp. 196-197). He reports that ID does not depend on any assumption that ID is "immune to empirical evidence" in the way that believers in biblical literalism believe the bible is immune to disproof by evidence (p. 197). Thus, he says "ID is very different from creation science" (p. 196).
>
> Prof. Nagel tells us that he "has for a long time been skeptical of the claims of traditional evolutionary theory to be the whole story about the history of life" (p. 202). He reports that it is "difficult to find in the accessible literature the grounds" for these claims.
>
> Moreover, he goes farther. He reports that the "presently available evidence" comes "nothing close" to establishing "the sufficiency of standard evolutionary

> mechanisms to account for the entire evolution of life" (p. 199).
>
> He notes that his judgment is supported by two prominent scientists (Marc Kirschner and John Gerhart, writing in the Oct. 2005 book *Plausibility of Life*), who also recognized that (prior to offering their own theory, at least) the "available evidence" did not "decisively settle[]" whether mutations in DNA "are entirely due to chance" (p. 191). And he cites one Stuart Kauffman, a "complexity theorist who defends a naturalistic theory of emergence," that random mutation "is not sufficient" to explain DNA (p. 192).
>
> Prof. Nagel acknowledges that "evolutionary biologists" regularly say that they are "confiden[t]" that "random mutations in DNA" are sufficient to account for "the complex chemical systems we observe" in living things (p. 199) — but he disagrees. "Rhetoric" is the word Professor Nagel uses to rejects these statements of credentialed evolutionary biologists. He judges that the evidence is NOT sufficient to rule out ID (p. 199).
>
> He does not, however, say that the evidence compels acceptance of ID; instead, some may consider as an alternative to ID that an "as-yet undiscovered, purely naturalistic theory" will supply the deficiency, rather than some form of intelligence (p. 203).
>
> In light of these considerations, Prof. Nagel says that "some part of the high school curriculum" "should" include "a frank discussion of the relation of evolutionary theory to religion" but that this need not occur in biology classes if the biology teachers would find this too much of a "burden" (p. 204). Significantly, Prof. Nagel — who is a professor of law as well as a professor of philosophy — concludes that, so long as the proposal is not introduced by religiously-motivated persons "as a fallback from something stronger," but by persons "more neutral" or "without noticeable religious beliefs," it would be constitutional to "mention" ID in public school science classes, because doing so genuinely furthers "the secular purpose of providing a better understanding of evolutionary theory and of the evidence for and against it" (p. 203). He makes clear that the "mention" must be a "noncommittal discussion of some of the issues" (p. 205).

So Nagel does NOT think that ID is a slam dunk, just that it is worth considering in science classrooms. Teach the controversy, that's always the right approach. Be open-minded. Look at the evidence before you decide.

New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce

June 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports on a new study that shows that women who lose their virginity as teenagers are more likely to divorce. (H/T Dina, Mysterious C)

Excerpt:

> Women who lost their virginity as young teenagers are more likely to divorce – especially if it was unwanted, according to new research.
>
> The University of Iowa study shows that 31 per cent of women who had sex for the first time as teens divorced within five years, and 47 per cent within 10 years.
>
> Among women who delayed sex until adulthood, 15 per cent divorced at five years, compared to 27 per cent at 10 years.
>
> The findings were published in the April issue of the Journal of Marriage and Family.
>
> Author Anthony Paik, associate professor of sociology in the university's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, examined the responses of 3,793 married and divorced women to the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth.
>
> The study showed, however, that if a young woman made the choice to lose her virginity as a teenager, there was no direct link to a marital split later in life.
>
> If the sexual act took place before the age of 16 women were shown more likely to divorce, even if it was wanted.
>
> Thirty-one percent of women who lost their virginity during adolescence had premarital sex with multiple partners, compared to 24 per cent of those who waited.
>
> Twenty-nine percent experienced premarital conceptions, versus 15 percent who waited.
>
> One in four women who had sex as a teen had a baby before they were married, compared to only one in ten who waited until adulthood.
>
> Only one per cent of women surveyed said they chose to have sex at age 13 or younger, compared to five per cent at age 14 or 15, and 10 per cent at age 16 or 17.
>
> Forty two per cent reported that their first sexual intercourse before age 18 that was not completely wanted.
>
> Fifty eight per cent of the group waited until age 18 or older to have sex. Of those, 22 per cent said it was unwanted, compared to 21 per cent who said it was wanted.

> Researchers concluded sex itself may not increase the probability of divorce, while factors such as a higher number of sexual partners, pregnancy, or out-of-wedlock birth increased the risk for some.

This dovetails nicely with the previous studies that Mysterious C sent me that showed that, for men and women, the more sexual partners you have before marriage, the more unstable your marriage will be. See the related posts for more. If you're still a virgin, like me, (and I'm in my mid-thirties now, and I'm saving my first kiss for my engagement), then there is nothing wrong with you. If you want a stable marriage, then you don't have sex before you're married. There are tons of virgins out there, and there is a huge difference in the quality of romantic relationships when both parties exercise self-control with physical touching.

Related posts

- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of chastity
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is third-wave feminism compatible with marriage?
- Why Christian men should be chaste

Are universities teaching students how to think critically?

June 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unionized teachers view the public school system as a way to indoctrinate children in anti-Americanism, socialism, moral relativism, pacifism, postmodernism, feminism, promiscuity and a host of other doctrines of the secular left. Professors collect the money taken from working parents through compulsory taxation, and then refuse to do what is best for the children's future careers. Instead of educating children to be logical, open-minded critical thinkers, public schools indoctrinate children with the views of the secular leftist teachers.

And you can see the results of this left-wing indoctrination process in the videos below. (H/T Tina)

Affirmative Action

Redistribution of Wealth

Keynesian deficit spending

Free speech and fair debate

The only good thing about this sad turn of events is that the high unemployment rate for youth will help them to learn the way the world really is quite rapidly, after their exit from the Never-Never-Land of public school. A new study shows that only 25% of teens will be able to find jobs this summer. Imagine their surprise when everything enacted by the Obama administration, which they overwhelmingly supported, is shown to have *failed to create economic growth.* Who knew? They will learn that capitalism and corporations are good, and that lower taxes and less regulation are essential to job creation.

Eventually, young people will eventually realize that they have been played for suckers by the secular leftist academics. They will start to think critically about the Jon Stewart show, the Stephen Colbert show, the Rachel Maddow show, and the Ed Schulz show. They will realize that hatred and mockery are not arguments. They will learn that businessmen and economists know more about business and economics than comedians and opinion journalists. They will have to start from the bottom and unlearn everything they learned in the public schools. Unfortunately for them, that should be about the time that the austerity measures kick in to pay for the multi-trillion dollar national debt that the Obama administration ran up, thanks to their votes.

But these growing pains are only going to get worse as liberal government programs break up traditional families more and more. But again, it will be self-inflicted misery since the young people are *big supporters* of marriage-killing feminist, socialist and gay-rights policies. Fewer and fewer of them will grow up in traditional homes, with mothers and fathers who stick around to raise them. Won't they be surprised to find out how much the traditional marriages they rejected as "sexist" and "intolerant" matter so much to

their success. But by then it will be too late, and their meager salaries, should they be lucky enough to find a job that hasn’t been outsourced to a capitalist nation, will be automatically taxed to pay for the subsidized pensions of their wordsmithing professors. Naturally, those very entitlement programs will be bankrupt by the time they are ready to retire – too bad they opposed the privatization of those programs when they had the chance to vote to save their own futures.

Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired

June 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Mike Adams explains how a gay manager at Cisco Systems got Dr. Frank Turek fired for opposing same-sex marriage. Adams explains what happened in a letter addressed to the President of Cisco.

Excerpt:

> I want to bring to your attention a recent decision made by your HR team that I think does not reflect your leadership of Cisco. **Dr. Frank Turek was fired as a vendor for his political and religious views, even though those views were never mentioned or expressed during his work at Cisco.**
>
> […]In 2008, Dr. Turek was hired by Cisco to design and conduct a leadership and teambuilding program for about fifty managers with your Remote Operations Services team. The program took about a year to conduct, during which he also conducted similar sessions for another business unit within Cisco. That training earned such high marks that in 2010 he was asked to design a similar program for about 200 managers within Global Technical Services. Ten separate eight-hour sessions were scheduled.
>
> The morning after completing the seventh session earlier this year, a manager in that session —who was one of the better students in that class—phoned in a complaint. It had nothing to do with content of the course or how it was conducted. In fact, the manager commented that the course was "excellent" as did most who participated. His complaint regarded Dr. Turek's political and religious views that were never mentioned during class, but that the manager learned by "googling" Dr. Turek after class.
>
> The manager identified himself as gay and was upset that Dr. Turek had written this book providing evidence that maintaining our current marriage laws would be best for the country. Although the manager didn't read the book, he said that the author's view was inconsistent with "Cisco values" and could not be tolerated. (Dr. Turek is aware of this because he was in the room when his call came in.) The manager then contacted an experienced HR professional at Cisco who had Dr. Turek fired that day without ever speaking to him. The HR professional also commended the manager for "outing" Dr. Turek.
>
> This firing had nothing to do with course content—the program earned very high marks from participants. It had nothing to do with budget constraints—the original contract was paid in full recently. A man was fired simply because of his personal political and religious beliefs—beliefs that are undoubtedly shared by thousands of your very large and diverse workforce.

Chastity vs sexual immorality

Let me tell you about the difference between chastity and sexual immorality. In my life, I have decided to be chaste, and what I have found is that there is a constant stream of negative judgments coming from the culture, the education system, and so forth disapproving of my decision to be chaste. But you will never see me trying to use the law to censor and coerce people who disagree with me. That is because I know that chastity is a virtue, and that chastity is necessary for a stable marriage – strictly on the peer-reviewed research.

No amount of disagreement from anti-chastity activists will make me feel bad about what I have decided to do, because I have the facts. I am not offended by incorrect views because it's a factual question, and I'm right. And I also don't want other people who disagree with me to celebrate my views, because they don't hold my views. And I don't mind that they disagree with me – my Christian worldview has a place for tolerance. Even God himself allows people to rebel against him – he doesn't swoop down on sinners and demand obedience. He lets people decide for themselves. I want the right to voice my disagreement with others – I would not force anyone to agree with me and celebrate my views against their own will.

I think we can all see how sexual immorality is different from chastity. When people do something wrong that they know is wrong, they have a different response to being judged. Instead of *ignoring the judgment* as I do, they try to censor, coerce and overpower those who disagree with them. This can include the use of courts or even the use of force. The feeling of being offended is so strong for some sexually immoral people that any concerns about tolerating diverse opinions, or permitting disagreement goes out the window. Even to *hear* the words of disagreement is sometimes too much for a person in rebellion.

Consider this passage from Matthew 14:1-2:

Matthew 14:1-12:

[1] At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the reports about Jesus,

[2]and he said to his attendants, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead! That is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

[3] Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,

[4] for John had been saying to him: "It is not lawful for you to have her."

[5] Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they considered John a prophet.

[6] On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for the guests and pleased Herod so much

[7] that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked.

[8] Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the

Baptist."

[9] The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted

[10] and had John beheaded in the prison.

[11] His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother.

[12] John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.

Notice that this coercion can happen with all kinds of sexual immorality – in this case, incest. The desire to not be judged about the means of pursuing pleasure is strong. No one wants to hear about the potential harm they are causing. They just want to do it, and you just need to shut up and affirm them in their self-indulgence. Celebrate Anthony Weiner. Celebrate Bill Clinton. Celebrate Tiger Woods. Celebrate Elliot Spitzer. Celebrate Arnold Schwarzenegger. Celebrate John Edwards. OR ELSE. Very few people are brave enough to talk about the victims of this adult self-indulgence. And those who do will be taken under fire for it.

Same-sex marriage and coercion

And that leads me to the question that gay activists often ask supporters of traditional marriage: "how would allowing same-sex marriage hurt your marriage?". And now we know the answer. Same-sex marriage would likely, *criminalize* free speech that promotes traditional marriage over same-sex marriage, as it has in other countries with same-sex marriage, such as Canada. If you are a working husband, and you are responsible for a family, you will be under a constant threat of termination should your pro-marriage views become known to your colleagues and supervisors. Also, if you teach you children to favor traditional marriage, you may be persecuted by the state.

I would like to be able to provide for my family if I choose to marry, and I would like my children to favor traditional marriage over cohabitation, or any other arrangement, because traditional marriage is best for children who need a stable environment with two loving biological parents (if possible). But if it becomes the law that my view is "offensive" and "discriminatory", then that would affect my marriage. Sometimes, I am very glad that I am not married, because getting married in a society that is offended by marriage takes a lot of courage. It seems to me that many Christians, especially the uninformed emotional ones who would rather read vampire fiction and Dan Brown than peer-reviewed research, prefer to redefine Christianity to mean "affirming destructive behavior so that you feel good and more people like you".

Let Dr. Turek's story be a lesson to all of you who prefer traditional marriage. Don't allow your opinions on marriage to be linked to your true identity, because some sexually immoral people will try to separate you from your livelihood if they can. It's no longer safe to express a preference for traditional marriage in this society. If you do it, you are taking chances. Just look at the vandalism and stalking of Prop 8 supporters. If you want children to grow up with a mother and a father in this society, then you are a marked target to those who put adult hedonism above the rights of children – including many Christians who enjoy singing and schmoozing in the church. Just this week I got an anguished e-mail

from someone who blogs under his real name who is now in the cross-hairs for expressing his preference for traditional marriage in public.

Note: Comments to this post will be strictly filtered in accordance with legislation passed by the Obama administration limiting the free discussion of sexual morality, which many liberal Christians voted for in 2008.

Related posts

- Wayne Grudem defends what the Bible says about same-sex marriage
- Michael Brown and Eric Smaw debate: should same-sex marriage be legal?
- How would allowing gays to marry affect your life?
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?
- Why do people oppose same-sex marriage?
- Republicans hire top lawyer to defend traditional marriage against Democrats
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Queen's University feminist professor says that polygamy should be permitted
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- Frank Turek lists ten alleged facts about same-sex marriage
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Gay federal judge rules traditional marriage unconstitutional in California
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- Do Democrats like Chai Feldblum believe in religious liberty?
- Do Democrats like Martha Coakley believe in religious liberty?
- How Harriet Harman's Equality Bill will impact religious liberty
- Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- What happens when same-sex marriage conflicts with religious liberty?
- Can a person disagree without being hateful or inciting violence?

How Obama's plan to raise the minimum wage will hurt young black men

June 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

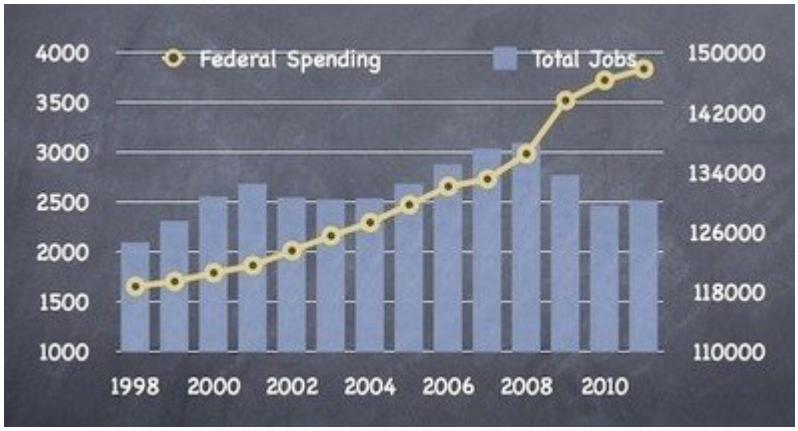

Government Spending Vs Jobs
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> How amusing to watch Democrats wring their hands over what they can do to get businesses to create jobs, when one of the biggest job killers is the minimum wage they keep hiking.
>
> Recall that it was Democrats who raised the federal wage floor a whopping $2.10 an hour in the middle of the recession. The record 41% increase has led to record unemployment among young people, especially black teens.
>
> Congress started ratcheting up the minimum wage from $5.15 an hour in mid-2007, arguing it would help abate poverty. But retailers looking to slash costs eliminated low-skilled, entry-level jobs rather than pay the mandated increases.
>
> Now 1.5 million fewer teens are working. Last year's unemployment rate for workers ages 16 to 19 shot up to 26% from 2007's 15%.
>
> As for black teens, their joblessness soared to a record 43% after the final raise to $7.25 took effect in mid-2009. It helped put more than half of young black men out of work — a first.
>
> The president proposes cranking the minimum wage even higher to $9.50. Then he wants to raise it every year thereafter as a "living wage" indexed to inflation.

Yes, this is the problem that happens when you elect someone who knows nothing whatsoever about economics. And when I say nothing, I mean he is in disagreement with virtually all economists *across the ideological spectrum*.

Moderate economist Gregory Mankiw of Harvard University lists the policies that are accepted by virtually all economists.

Here's Greg's list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:

1. A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)
2. Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)
3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

From CNBC, we get this article showing that any increase in the minimum wage will *raise* the unemployment rate for young people.

Excerpt:

> A quarter of teenagers were jobless in March, representing a surprising increase from February, even as the unemployment rate for the rest of the population decreased.
>
> This figure may only get worse if budget-strapped states raise the minimum wage, and it could also be a sign of greater structural damage underlying our economy, analysts said.
>
> The unemployment rate for 16- to 19-year olds jumped back up to 24.5 percent in March, up from 23.9 percent the prior month, according to the latest jobs data from the Labor Department.
>
> […]"Even when comprehending that teen employment is volatile in nature, the data that exists serves up some shock and awe," said Brian Sozzi, a retail research analyst with Wall Street Strategies, in a note Wednesday. "If these

> (wage) increases do go through, the prospect for teen employment will remain grim as employers search for workers with advanced skills to fill positions."
>
> Twelve states, including Illinois and Pennsylvania, are considering a hike in the minimum wage. While this has been the subject of a long-running debate, many economists and analysts say raising this pay bar may cause more teen layoffs, even as it helps teens who manage to stay employed make more.
>
> "Minimum wage increases over the past few years has definitely made it worse," said Peter Boockvar, chief equities strategist at Miller Tabak. "In fact, there should be zero minimum wage for teenagers, or at most, something much less than the current rate."
>
> Teens typically are the first to be fired and the last to be hired back in a normal economic cycle, so this rate can be considered a kind of leading indicator of employment.

A new study shows that only 25% of teens will be able to find jobs this summer. And Obama thinks that this number is apparently too high. He wants to lower it by raising the price that must be paid by employers who would like to hire younger workers.

You can find out more about how raising the minimum wage increases unemployment from this comprehensive, 50-year, government study.

Excerpt:

> Summary of Research on the Minimum Wage
>
> * The minimum wage reduces employment.
>
> Currie and Fallick (1993), Gallasch (1975), Gardner (1981), Peterson (1957), Peterson and Stewart (1969).
>
> * The minimum wage reduces employment more among teenagers than adults.
>
> Adie (1973); Brown, Gilroy and Kohen (1981a, 1981b); Fleisher (1981); Hammermesh (1982); Meyer and Wise (1981, 1983a); Minimum Wage Study Commission (1981); Neumark and Wascher (1992); Ragan (1977); Vandenbrink (1987); Welch (1974, 1978); Welch and Cunningham (1978).
>
> * The minimum wage reduces employment most among black teenage males.
>
> Al-Salam, Quester, and Welch (1981), Iden (1980), Mincer (1976), Moore (1971), Ragan (1977), Williams (1977a, 1977b).
>
> * The minimum wage helped South African whites at the expense of blacks.
>
> Bauer (1959).
>
> * The minimum wage hurts blacks generally.
>
> Behrman, Sickles and Taubman (1983); Linneman (1982).
>
> * The minimum wage hurts the unskilled.
>
> Krumm (1981).

> * The minimum wage hurts low wage workers.
>
> Brozen (1962), Cox and Oaxaca (1986), Gordon (1981).
>
> * The minimum wage hurts low wage workers particularly during cyclical downturns.
>
> Kosters and Welch (1972), Welch (1974).
>
> * The minimum wage reduces average earnings of young workers.Meyer and Wise (1983b).
>
> * The minimum wage reduces employment in low-wage industries, such as retailing.Cotterman (1981), Douty (1960), Fleisher (1981), Hammermesh (1981), Peterson (1981).
>
> * The minimum wage causes employers to cut back on training.Hashimoto (1981, 1982), Leighton and Mincer (1981), Ragan (1981).
>
> * The minimum wage encourages employers to install labor-saving devices.Trapani and Moroney (1981).
>
> * The minimum wage increases the number of people on welfare.Brandon (1995), Leffler (1978).
>
> * The minimum wage hurts the poor generally.
>
> Stigler (1946).
>
> * The minimum wage does little to reduce poverty.
>
> Bonilla (1992), Brown (1988), Johnson and Browning (1983), Kohen and Gilroy (1981), Parsons (1980), Smith and Vavrichek (1987).
>
> * The minimum wage helps unions.Linneman (1982), Cox and Oaxaca (1982).
>
> * The minimum wage increases teenage crime rates.Hashimoto (1987), Phillips (1981).
>
> * The minimum wage encourages employers to hire illegal aliens.
>
> Beranek (1982).
>
> * Few workers are permanently stuck at the minimum wage.
>
> Brozen (1969), Smith and Vavrichek (1992).
>
> * The minimum wage has reduced employment in foreign countries.Canada: Forrest (1982); Chile: Corbo (1981); Costa Rica: Gregory (1981); France: Rosa (1981).

This is why it is important for voters to understand economics. When you raise the price of labor, fewer employers will purchase labor. Supply and demand.

Syrian armed forces murder 16 innocent protestors

June 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of the Middle East

Syria is really beginning to get on my nerves. This new violence against their own citizens is coming after several assassinations of key political figures in nearby Lebanon, e.g. – Rafik Hariri, Pierre Gemayel, etc.

Excerpt:

> Syrian security forces killed at least 16 people Friday, including a teenage boy, as thousands of people poured into the streets across the country calling for the downfall of President Bashar Assad's autocratic regime, activists said.
>
> The unrest also appeared to be spilling over into neighboring Lebanon. A senior member of a Lebanese political party allied with Syria and an off-duty soldier were killed Friday after gunmen opened fire and lobbed a grenade near hundreds of people holding an anti-Assad protest in northern Lebanon, a security official said in Beirut.
>
> The protests in Syria came hours after Syrian troops backed by tanks and helicopter gunships seized control early Friday of another northwestern town in the latest military operation to quell the dissent.
>
> Since the protests erupted in mid-March, Assad has unleashed the military to crush street demonstrations. Human rights activists say more than 1,400 Syrians have been killed and 10,000 detained.
>
> "What is our guilt? We just demanded freedom and democracy nothing else," said Mohamed, who spoke to The Associated Press from a refugee camp in neighboring Turkey and asked to be identified only by his first name. He and other refugees offered fresh accounts of summary executions to suppress the pro-democracy movement.

> “I saw people who were beheaded with machine-gun fire from helicopters,” and a man tortured to death when security forces “poured acid on to his body,” he said.
>
> Mohamed fled with his family as the military besieged Jisr al-Shughour, a rebellious town the government recaptured last Sunday.
>
> He said a sugar factory in the city was turned into a jail where they “hold quick trials and execute anyone who they believe participated in protests.”
>
> He is among some 9,600 people are seeking shelter in Turkish refugee camps.

We are wasting $9.5 million PER DAY in a pointless war in Libya. We should stop that war immediately, and pull our troops out of South Korea, Japan and Western Europe, and attack Syria, while we have our forces already deployed in Iraq. A two-pronged assault from the West and the East would be ideal, and we would not even have to use ground forces. I don’t mind spending money on war, but we have no strategic goal in Libya. Syria makes a lot more sense as a target. We should take advantage of Syria’s aggression towards peaceful protesters to target and destroy their military power. It would be difficult, but it would certainly take the pressure off of Lebanon and Israel in the Middle East region.

Andrew Klavan compares the Ryan budget to the Obama budget

June 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Andrew Klavan on the culture. (H/T Club For Growth)

Douglas Groothuis also tweeted this Fox News article by Paul Ryan, in which Ryan talks about the current economic crisis and his plan to address the issues.

Excerpt:

> There are three main reasons why the president's policies have made this recovery weaker than usual:
>
> ***1. Regulatory uncertainty:*** After the stimulus passed, the president turned his attention immediately to costly overhauls of the nation's financial and health-care sectors. These overhauls needlessly transferred more control over America's economy to government bureaucrats in Washington, without fixing the problems they were intended to address. The transfer of so much power to the arbitrary dictates of federal regulators has made it hard for businesses to plan for the future with confidence, and things will remain this way until these laws are replaced with real reforms.
>
> ***2. Tax uncertainty:*** The president's ad hoc tax policies, with a mix of tax hikes on job creators and temporary rebates for others being the hallmarks of his approach, have left businesses in the lurch. Moreover, the president's new health care law imposes a crushing $800 billion tax hike, and he continues to threaten businesses and families with higher rates in the future, even as he dithers on his vague promise to address America's uncompetitive corporate tax rate, which is the highest in the developed world.
>
> ***3. Debt uncertainty:*** The president has not put forward a plan that saves Medicare from bankruptcy, even though nonpartisan experts tell us that this could happen in 9-13 short years unless we act. Each year that we fail to put our critical government health and retirement programs on a path to long-term solvency, we are making trillions of dollars of unfunded promises to future retirees. We are already borrowing 40 cents of every dollar we spend, and Washington's inability to solve its spending problems is leading rating agencies such as Standard & Poors to downgrade our credit outlook. Government under this administration is failing at its number-one economic job, which is to create a stable, predictable environment for job creators.

Also: One seniors group is already supporting the Ryan plan.

Michele Bachmann’s Republican Leadership Conference speech

June 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The clips below are from Friday, June 17th, 2011.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 3 of 3:

You can read about Michele Bachmann’s June 18th, 2011 speech at the Right Online Conference here. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Reactions from her recent debate performance:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

Profiles of Michele Bachmann:

- Wall Street Journal
- ABC News

You can contribute to her campaign right here. You can be her friend on Facebook here and also here.

Mitt Romney refuses to sign pro-life pledge – is he still pro-abortion?

June 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a pro-life statement that has been signed by Michele Bachmann, Tim Pawlenty, Newt Gingrich, Rick Santorum, and Ron Paul. The statement is from the Susan B. Anthony List, a respected and well-known pro-life group.

Here's the pledge:

> I PLEDGE that I will only support candidates for President who are committed to protecting Life. I demand that any candidate I support commit to these positions:
>
> FIRST, to nominate to the U.S. federal bench judges who are committed to restraint and applying the original meaning of the Constitution, not legislating from the bench;
>
> SECOND, to select only pro-life appointees for relevant Cabinet and Executive Branch positions, in particular the head of National Institutes of Health, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Health & Human Services;
>
> THIRD, to advance pro-life legislation to permanently end all taxpayer funding of abortion in all domestic and international spending programs, and defund Planned Parenthood and all other contractors and recipients of federal funds with affiliates that perform or fund abortions;
>
> FOURTH, advance and sign into law a Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act to protect unborn children who are capable of feeling pain from abortion.

Notice how moderate it is. These are all incremental measures that a pro-life candidate can easily accept.

But Mitt Romney wouldn't sign it at all. That means that he either doesn't want to nominate strict constructionists, or doesn't want to select pro-life appointees for certain relevant positions, or doesn't want to cut funding for abortion, or doesn't want to sign a bill to ban late-term abortions.

Take a look at this video of Mitt Romney from 1994 claiming that he is not pro-life.

And more pro-abortion Mitt Romney as recently as 2002:

And Mitt Romney again embracing abortion, as recently as 2005:

You can find out more about Mitt Romney's background, positions and voting record right here.

Compare Mitt Romney with Michele Bachmann

I can look at a candidate like Michele Bachmann, and see a pro-life record. Where is Mitt Romney's pro-life record?

Romney certainly has *nothing like* the record on social conservatism that Michele

Bachmann has. She actually has done things to show that she is pro-life and pro-traditional-marriage.

Excerpt:

> Bachmann also talked about other issues she fought for while in the Minnesota State Senate. She supported a number of pro-life pieces of legislations, like a woman's right to know law and a statistical reporting law. She was also the lead sponsor of the Minnesota marriage amendment.

That's what a social conservative looks like. Not like Mitt Romney in those videos. When you take a look at his state-run health care plan in Massachusetts, it turns out that he isn't a fiscal conservative either. Let's not make another mistake like with Obama and elect someone who has no resume just because of his appearance. Mitt Romney is to the left of many Democrats on the issues.

What is the meaning and purpose of Father's Day?

June 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Father's Day is the day that children and wives are supposed to honor fathers by giving them respect for being providers, protectors and moral/spiritual leaders. One of the best ways to motivate this duty is by studying research to find out the difference that fathers make.

Some statistics on the importance of biological fathers from Fathers.com.

Excerpt:

> Some fathering advocates would say that almost every social ill faced by America's children is related to fatherlessness. Six are noted here. As supported by the data below, children from fatherless homes are more likely to be poor, become involved in drug and alcohol abuse, drop out of school, and suffer from health and emotional problems. Boys are more likely to become involved in crime, and girls are more likely to become pregnant as teens.

For a summary, I'll just list one fact from each of the six categories they listed.

> **1. Poverty**
>
> Fact:
>
> – Children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor. In 2002, 7.8% of children in married-couple families were living in poverty, compared to 38.4% of children in female-householder families.
>
> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002, P20-547, Table C8. Washington, D.C.: GPO 2003.
>
> **2. Drug and Alcohol Abuse**
>
> Fact:
>
> – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states, "Fatherless children are at a dramatically greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse."
>
> Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. Survey on Child Health. Washington, DC, 1993.
>
> **3. Physical and Emotional Health**
>
> Fact:
>
> – Unmarried mothers are less likely to obtain prenatal care and more likely to have a low birthweight baby. Researchers find that these negative effects persist

> even when they take into account factors, such as parental education, that often distinguish single-parent from two-parent families.
>
> Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. Report to Congress on Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing. Hyattsville, MD (Sept. 1995): 12.
>
> – Children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems.Source: Stanton, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics."National Health Interview Survey." Hyattsville, MD, 1988.
>
> **4. Educational Achievement**
>
> Fact:
>
> – After taking into account race, socioeconomic status, sex, age, and ability, high school students from single-parent households were 1.7 times more likely to drop out than were their corresponding counterparts living with both biological parents.Source: McNeal, Ralph B. Jr."Extracurricular Activities and High School Dropouts." *Sociology of Education* 68(1995): 62-81.
>
> **5. Crime**
>
> Fact:
>
> – Children in single parent families are more likely to be in trouble with the law than their peers who grow up with two parents.
>
> Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. National Health Interview Survey. Hyattsville, MD, 1988.
>
> **6. Sexual Activity and Teen Pregnancy**
>
> Fact:
>
> – A white teenage girl from an advantaged background is five times more likely to become a teen mother if she grows up in a single-mother household than if she grows up in a household with both biological parents.Source: Whitehead, Barbara Dafoe. "Facing the Challenges of Fragmented Families." *The Philanthropy Roundtable* 9.1 (1995): 21.

Now take a look at this Wall Street Journal article that explains some of the ways that fathers have beneficial effects on children.

Excerpt:

> As an estimated 70.1 million fathers prepare to celebrate Father's Day in the U.S., recent research shows that their distinct style of parenting is particularly

> worth recognition: The way dads tend to interact has long-term benefits for kids, independent of those linked to good mothering.
>
> […]The benefits of involved fathering are known: improved cognitive skills, fewer behavioral problems among school-age children, less delinquency among teenage boys and fewer psychological problems in young women, based on an analysis of 16 long-term studies of father involvement, published in 2008 in the scholarly journal Acta Paediatrica.
>
> Some of dads' behavior may spring from their roles as family breadwinners. Although mothers play a significant role in the workforce, men are still the primary breadwinners in more than three-fourths of married-couple households.
>
> And 48% of working fathers spend less than six hours a day with their children, compared with 31% of working mothers, according to a recent poll of 459 working adults by Workplace Options, a provider of employee-assistance and work-life programs in Raleigh, N.C.
>
> As a result, fathers may be less familiar with their children's nonverbal cues. Such dads tend to challenge children more to express themselves in words, helping foster the better cognitive skills researchers have found in 2-year-olds with involved fathers.
>
> Parenting patterns may be rooted in neurological differences. Under stress, research shows, men's brains are wired to respond to challenges physically, leaping into action. Women are more likely to withdraw or shut down.
>
> Because fathers have had to learn to manage their own impulses to strike out or react physically to frustration, they may be better equipped than mothers to help children manage their own urges to behave badly, Dr. Pruett says.
>
> Indeed, fathers typically aren't as upset as mothers by kids' tantrums or bad behavior, based on a 2009 survey of 1,615 parents by Zero to Three, a nonprofit child-development research and policy organization. Only half as many fathers as mothers say their children's temper tantrums are one of their biggest challenges.

Fathers matter, so women need to choose men who will be good fathers. And that means having an idea of what fathers do, and knowing how to evaluate a man to see if he can do what fathers do. There's more to fathers than handsomeness and fun!

Related posts

- Marriage: Still the Safest Place For Women and Children
- Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty
- New study finds that fathers and marriage reduce drug use in children
- Do children do better when raised by married fathers?
- Can Christianity survive the decline of males?
- New study shows that children of divorce twice as likely to have a stroke
- Are boys performing poorly in schools?

- How do you persuade people to get married for the good of the children?
- New study shows how fathers reduce stress in children
- Feminist politican wants UK government to provide free IVF
- Are elderly women who have babies through IVF being selfish?
- Why two-parent families are better for children
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- What causes single motherhood, and how are children affected?
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day

Audio from J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" lecture

June 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Where does all my snarkiness about the anti-intellectual church come from? It comes largely from this lecture, and from the book of the same name. This lecture also gave me many of my personality quirks, like saying "Does that make sense to you?" all the time. He's a great speaker. This lecture could change your life. It changed mine.

The MP3 file.

Topics:

- How J.P. Moreland become a Christian
- How evangelism drove his efforts to answer skeptics
- How can evangelicals be so numerous, and yet have so little influence?
- When did the church stop being able to out-think her critics?
- How studying and thinking can be a way of worshiping God
- Romans 12:1-2 – what does this passage mean?
- Are your beliefs under the control of your will?
- Can you "try" to believe something by an act of will?
- If not, then how can you change your beliefs?
- Changing your mind is the only way to change your life
- Matthew 22:37 – what is this passage saying?
- How can you love God by using your intellect?
- How can you defend God's honor, when it is called into question?
- In a debate, should you quote sources that your opponent doesn't accept?
- Should you only study the Bible, or should you study rival worldviews?
- 1 Pet 3:15 – what does this passage mean?
- If you knew you were going to be in a debate, what should you do?
- How can you be bold in witnessing? Where does boldness come from?
- What should the church do to make bold evangelists?
- 2 Cor 10:5 – what is this passage talking about?
- The passage talks about destroying fortresses – what are the fortresses?
- List of some of the speculations that we are supposed to be destroying
- What does the phrase "spiritual warfare" really mean?

You can read a little summary of a part of the book here.

And here is a longer university version of the same lecture (MP3).

Paul Ryan talks about the looming American debt crisis

June 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Whenever I feel sad about how inflation is devaluing my roll0ver IRA, it makes me feel better to listen to Paul Ryan.

To see what Paul Ryan is concerned about, you can see the charts of the federal budget here.

Supreme Court throws out anti-business class action lawsuit

June 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You have to read this post by Ed Morrissey at Hot Air.

Except:

> The Supreme Court took a big bite out of the pockets of class-action trial lawyers today, at least in the field of employment discrimination. The court unanimously rejected a class-action lawsuit against Wal-Mart on behalf of 1.6 million female employees that attempted to argue that the retail giant purposefully and systematically discriminated on gender for compensation. But a narrow 5-4 rulingon a companion issue promises to make filing any more such class-action lawsuits nearly impossible:
>
> The justices divided 5-4 on another aspect of the ruling that could make it much harder to mount similar class-action discrimination lawsuits against large employers.
>
> Justice Antonin Scalia's opinion for the court's conservative majority said there needs to be common elements tying together "literally millions of employment decisions at once."
>
> But Scalia said that in the lawsuit against the nation's largest private employer, "That is entirely absent here."
>
> Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, writing for the court's four liberal justices, said there was more than enough uniting the claims. "Wal-Mart's delegation of discretion over pay and promotions is a policy uniform throughout all stores," Ginsburg said.
>
> The contrasting opinions gives a good indication of what is at stake.
> In *most*corporations (especially national retail chains), compensation decisions are almost always delegated to individual locations or regional management. For one thing, the labor market varies from region to region, and what amounts to competitive compensation in one region might be insufficient in another, depending on the cost of living, labor availability, and so on.
>
> Ginsburg's identification of this as a *prima facie* indication of discrimination would have exposed virtually all US retailers to such class-action lawsuits. Not only would that have sapped retailers of billions in capital, but it doesn't make any sense on its face anyway. If compensation decisions are decentralized throughout an organization, how can that possibly demonstrate a coordinated, centralized, and explicit effort to discriminate on the basis of *anything*?

Reining in judicial activism and trial layers is a good way to incentivize corporations to create jobs. If you want to lower unemployment, stop these frivolous class-action

lawsuits.

It’s also worth pointing out that lawsuits like this are bogus in a free market, because if people really area being underpaid, they can always go to a different employer to get a higher salary – IF THEY ARE WORTH IT. We really need a national loser-pays law to deter these nuisance lawsuits.

45% of the new jobs in the last two years were created in TEXAS

June 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Richard Fisher, the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, dropped by our offices this week and relayed a remarkable fact: Some 37% of all net new American jobs since the recovery began were created in Texas. Mr. Fisher's study is a lesson in what works in economic policy—and it is worth pondering in the current 1.8% growth moment.
>
> Using Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data, Dallas Fed economists looked at state-by-state employment changes since June 2009, when the recession ended. Texas added 265,300 net jobs, out of the 722,200 nationwide, and by far outpaced every other state. New York was second with 98,200, Pennsylvania added 93,000, and it falls off from there. Nine states created fewer than 10,000 jobs, while Maine, Hawaii, Delaware and Wyoming created fewer than 1,000. Eighteen states have lost jobs since the recovery began.
>
> The data are even more notable because they're calculated on a "sum of states" basis, which the BLS does not use because they can have sampling errors. Using straight nonfarm payroll employment, Texas accounts for 45% of net U.S. job creation. Modesty is not typically considered a Texas virtue, but the results speak for themselves.
>
> Texas is also among the few states that are home to more jobs than when the recession began in December 2007. The others are North Dakota, Alaska and the District of Columbia. If that last one sounds like an outlier at first, remember the government boom of the Obama era, which has helped loft D.C. payrolls 18,000 jobs above the pre-crisis status quo. Even so, Texas is up 30,800…

Roger Kimball linked to that piece here, and he adds more to the story:

> Yes, Texas: the state that is the poster child for right-wingery, the state with no state income tax whose population is growing at about 1000 per day (see a connection?) while bankrupt behemoths like California are bleeding jobs and people.
>
> There are a handful of other places in the U.S. where job creation is rife. One of them is Washington, D.C., where an exploding government bureaucracy has also led to the creation of many jobs.
>
> Many public-sector, i.e., tax-payer-funded jobs, that is. The jobs in Texas are overwhelmingly private-sector, i.e., wealth-creating jobs.

> I mention this by way of introduction to my main point, which is to highlight something Texas Governor Rick Perry said in a recent speech in New Orleans. Addressing a friendly crowd, the governor urged listeners to “stop apologizing” for their efforts to overturn the “entitlement mindset.” “Stand up” and be counted, he advised: “Our opponents on the left are never going to like us, so let’s stop trying to curry favor with them.”

You can watch Perry’s speech here:

Maybe Governor Rick Perry should get into the race and turn the conversation towards job creation. However, I would not vote for Rick Perry because of his stance on illegal immigration.

San Francisco: average retired city worker paid more than average worker

June 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the San Francisco Chronicle.

Excerpt:

> The average retiree from San Francisco city government earns an annual pension of $46,272, according to the San Francisco Employees' Retirement System. The average retiree who worked at least 30 years in city government earns an annual pension of $76,981.
>
> The average pension for a retiree from the Fire Department is $108,552. From the Police Department? $95,016. And everybody else? $41,136.
>
> The figures show most retirees aren't getting anywhere near the fat packages that outrage many city residents – like the $264,000 pension paid to former Police Chief **Heather Fong** last year.
>
> But city retirees are doing pretty well compared with working San Franciscans. Census data show the median family income in the city is $86,546. Per capita income is $44,373.

What a liberal dump.

Brian Auten interviews Dr. Norman Geisler

June 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The nice thing about linking to Brian Auten is that he has the nice little summary all made up!

The MP3 file is here. (44 minutes)

Summary: (from Brian)

> Today's interview is with apologist Norman Geisler, Distinguished Professor of Apologetics at Veritas Evangelical Seminary and author of over 70 books. He answers a variety of questions and topics: how he got into apologetics, his greatest influences on his own thinking, the change on the apologetics landscape in the past decades, his suggested required reading for all apologists, the kinds of arguments he has encountered and how they have affected him, advice for studying arguments, the growth of apologetics in the church, the top three topics to focus on, skills apologists should develop, pitfalls to avoid, areas that should be strengthened, the necessity of theology, what he feels the strongest argument is for God's existence, learning from those who disagree, one's prayer life and integrity, favorite illustrations, advice for studying in the field, and more.

A good interview with a prominent Christian apologist.

Is the Euro aggravating the European debt crisis?

June 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this story from the liberal German newspaper "Der Spiegel".

Here's the thesis of the article:

> In the past 14 months, politicians in the euro-zone nations have adopted one bailout package after the next, convening for hectic summit meetings, wrangling over lazy compromises and building up risks of gigantic dimensions.
>
> For just as long, they have been avoiding an important conclusion, namely that things cannot continue this way. The old euro no longer exists in its intended form, and the European Monetary Union isn't working. We need a Plan B.
>
> Instead, those in responsible positions are getting bogged down in crisis management, as they seek to placate the public and sugarcoat the problems. They say that there is only a government debt crisis in a few euro countries but no euro crisis, citing as evidence the fact that the value of the European common currency has remained relatively stable against other currencies like the dollar.
>
> But if it wasn't for the euro, Greece's debt crisis would be an isolated problem — one that was tough for the country, but easy for Europe to bear. It is only because Greece is part of the euro zone that Athens' debts are a problem for all of its partners — and pose a threat to the common currency.
>
> If the rest of Europe abandons Greece, the crisis could spin out of control, spreading from one weak euro-zone country to the next. Investors would have no guarantees that Europe would not withdraw its support from Portugal or Ireland, if push came to shove, and they would sell their government bonds. The prices of these bonds would fall and risk premiums would go up. Then these countries would only be able to drum up fresh capital by paying high interest rates, which would only augment their existing budget problems. It's possible that they would no longer be able to raise any money at all, in which case they would become insolvent.

Well, the article talks about how economically productive counties like Germany are on the hook for the bailouts to underperforming countries like Greece and Portugal. That will happen unless Greece reverts to the drachma and stops dragging down the Euro. But the strong European countries are not the only source of bailout funds – there's also the International Monetary Fund. And guess who funds them?

Consider this article by John Bolton in the New York Post.

Excerpt:

> Most Americans had barely heard of the International Monetary Fund before the arrest of its managing director, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, for sexually assaulting a hotel housekeeper. Yet the race to replace him offers a chance to rethink

> everything about what the real American interest is in the IMF — including whether its continued existence is beneficial.
>
> The top contenders for Strauss-Kahn's job are French Finance Minister Christine Lagarde and Bank of Mexico Governor Agustin Carstens. Europeans have headed the IMF since its founding, as Americans have led the World Bank — prerogatives that Third World countries increasingly resent as vestiges of colonialism. Carstens' candidacy is the most visible manifestation of this rising discontent.
>
> […]Europe is eager to keep the top IMF job not simply because of geographical chauvinism but because continued IMF assistance is critical to European Union efforts to bail out the fractured economic and fiscal system in Greece and several other EU countries. Lurking behind the bailout crisis is the EU's growing panic over the viability of its currency, the euro. Having a sympathetic ear at the IMF's pinnacle seems absolutely critical to protect Europe's parochial interests.
>
> What of America's interests? We should have long ago resisted throwing our scarce resources, through the IMF or otherwise, into the sinkhole of defending the euro. The currency was always conceived to be as much a political statement as an economic policy: Its European proponents believed the euro would enhance Europe's strength as an alternative and perhaps rival to America.
>
> If the United States and a few other developed countries like Japan decide to break with Europe over this vote, the IMF's voting system, based on world-wide economic strength, makes defeating Lagarde a real possibility.
>
> Today's IMF does little or nothing for US national interests, especially when we face enormous domestic economic challenges. Why should Washington not support Carstens, break the EU hold on the IMF and stop IMF support for the euro?

We can barely afford us, and yet we have to bailout these profligate European nations? Give me a break.

Jennifer Roback Morse: Father's Day is also Husband's Day

June 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jennifer Roback Morse is one of my favorite writers on family issues, because she is just so positive about men and the roles that men play in the family, and the challenges that men face while performing those roles.

She wrote this article in appreciation of her husband, and it's a must-read, especially for men looking for some appreciation and encouragement.

Excerpt:

> The feminist movement introduced an unbelievable amount of tension into the relationships between men and women. Feminism gave us women permission to nag and criticize our husbands, which most women can do just fine without any special permission. The legacy of the feminist movement has been to turn the home, which should be the place of cooperation, into a sphere of competition between men and women. And ironically, feminism, which was supposed to be about getting beyond stereotypes, supported the most negative of stereotypes about men.
>
> I have my own pet theory about the stereotype of men dragging their feet about getting married. The socio-biologists claim that men want to invest their seed in as many women as possible, and therefore do not want marriage. I think this is only a dim shadow of the whole truth. The whole truth must include this great fact about men: They are capable of heroic loyalty. When men finally do marry, they are capable of committing themselves to the care of their wives and children. Many men spend a lifetime working at jobs they don't like very much, for the love of their families. When men marry, they take it very seriously. It is women who initiate most divorces. It is divorced men who commit suicide at twice the rate as married men, while divorce has little impact on the suicide propensities of women.
>
> When women marry, we get things that we want and value. We get the opportunity to become mothers. We get a home, our nest for our little ones. What do men get? They get the right to throw themselves on a live grenade for the protection of their families. Or, as St. Paul suggested to the Ephesians, husbands get the right to be crucified.
>
> Most men, with an insignificant number of exceptions, are capable of this heroic loyalty. We women can call this out of our men. We don't achieve this by nagging. We certainly don't achieve it by competing with them over who makes the most money, or by keeping score with them on who does the most household chores. We need to build them up, as St. Paul says. Watch them sit up straighter

> and taller when we appreciate and admire them.
>
> We need to build up our marriages because our children suffer from broken relationships or non-relationships. We now know that father absence inflicts a wound on children that social science can measure, but only partially fathom. We are finding that even the children conceived by artificial means long for a relationship with their fathers.
>
> So if we are going to honor fathers, we women have to honor our husbands, as husbands. And sometimes, just sometimes, we will find that they will honor and build us up as well.

A woman cannot go wrong by studying what men do, why men matter, and what men want from women and children. Creating the conditions for a married man to thrive in his roles is an important goal for women, after their goal of pleasing God. To get the man to perform, a woman has to create the ideal conditions for him to perform. And that means providing the right environment and loving him as if she had never been hurt. Dr. Morse knows what men are supposed to do, and she knows what she has to do to create the conditions where her husband can perform. Wives need to create the right incentives for husbands to performing their roles, and to fill them up with love by encouraging, acknowledging, recognizing, affirming, accepting and desiring them. If men don't get the things that they need from their wives, then they won't be able to perform. They'll just go silent and withdraw.

Dr. Morse's podcasts are here, and the recent interview with Warren Farrell is worth listening to for those who would like to understand men a little better.

MUST-READ: Melanie Phillips blames single mothers for family breakdown

June 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Melanie Phillips

Melanie Phillips takes UK Conservative Party leader David Cameron to task in the UK Daily Mail. Sent to me by Dina! I love this article!

Excerpt:

> Singling out 'runaway dads' for censure, [David Cameron] said that such individuals should be treated like drunk drivers — people who are beyond the pale and upon whom should be heaped 'the full force of shame'.
>
> Now, excoriating 'runaway' or 'deadbeat' dads is a familiar refrain. We all know the scenario: feckless youths getting one girl pregnant after another and abandoning each one in turn, playing next to no part in the upbringing of the children they have serially fathered.
>
> This is, indeed, reckless and reprehensible behaviour. But it is only part of a much more complex and deeply rooted problem.
>
> Most pertinently, it totally ignores the fact that there is another feckless actor in this dysfunctional family drama — the mother, who may be having children by a series of different men.
>
> In line with politically correct thinking, Mr Cameron presents such girls or women as the hapless victims of predatory males. But that is just plain wrong. For at the most fundamental level, this whole process is driven by women and girls.
>
> In those far-off days before the sexual revolution, relations between the sexes were based on a kind of unspoken bargain.
>
> Women needed the father of their children to stick around while they grew up, in

> return for which a woman gave a solemn undertaking to be faithful to this one man.
>
> For his part, the father's interests were served by being offered not just a permanent sexual relationship but a guarantee from the trust placed in his wife that the children were, indeed, his.
>
> With the combination of the sexual revolution, the Pill and the welfare state, however, women's interests changed. Suddenly they were being told sex outside marriage was fine, unmarried motherhood was fine — and crucially, that the welfare state would provide them with the means to live without male support.
>
> Among upper-middle-class trendies, marriage became an irksome anachronism and 'living together' became fashionable.
>
> At the bottom of the social scale, however, these permissive signals from above combined disastrously with widespread unemployment among young men, whose lack of income made them an unattractive marriage prospect.
>
> As a result, girls decided that, while they wanted a baby, the available fathers were usually a waste of space and so they didn't want them to remain a part of their lives.
>
> These young men then treated the message that they weren't wanted as a licence for irresponsibility. And so the 'runaway dad' was born.
>
> To single out these boys for censure — while calling lone mothers 'heroic', as Mr Cameron did — is not only unfair and perverse, but will fail to get to grips with the problem.
>
> If it is to be remedied, women and girls have to come to a different conclusion about where their interests lie.
>
> That means the welfare state has to stop playing the role of surrogate husband through the benefits it gives single mothers.

READ THE WHOLE THING. As with Canada's Barbara Kay, I am not in full agreement with Melanie on every topic. But she is awesome on this topic!

Related posts

- Marriage: Still the Safest Place For Women and Children
- Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty
- New study finds that fathers and marriage reduce drug use in children
- Do children do better when raised by married fathers?
- Can Christianity survive the decline of males?
- New study shows that children of divorce twice as likely to have a stroke
- Are boys performing poorly in schools?
- How do you persuade people to get married for the good of the children?
- New study shows how fathers reduce stress in children
- Feminist politican wants UK government to provide free IVF

- Are elderly women who have babies through IVF being selfish?
- Why two-parent families are better for children
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- What causes single motherhood, and how are children affected?
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day

Obama’s retreat defies military commanders and emboldens terrorists

June 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation analyzes Obama’s decision to cut and run in Afghanistan.

Excerpt:

> President Obama’s plan for a hasty withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan risks squandering the hard-won gains made on the battlefield in southern Afghanistan over the last ten months.
>
> U.S. military commanders on the ground in Afghanistan had reportedly requested a slower pace of withdrawal to afford them the opportunity to consolidate recent gains against Taliban insurgents. President Obama has denied his military commanders flexibility to determine the pace and scope of withdrawal based on conditions on the ground, and instead appears to have based his decision largely around the U.S. domestic political calendar.
>
> The plans for rapidly withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan also risks upending the major achievement of eliminating Osama bin Laden across the border in Pakistan.
>
> Bin Laden’s death and an aggressive drone campaign in Pakistan’s tribal border areas have put al-Qaeda on its back foot. The Administration deserves credit for accomplishing this crucial objective.
>
> However, it is short-sighted to use bin Laden’s death as justification for hastening the U.S. troop draw down in Afghanistan. Announcing rapid withdrawal of U.S. forces will likely bolster the morale of the Taliban and encourage them to stick with the fight. Since al-Qaeda has not yet dissolved as an organization and its relationship with the Taliban remains strong, reducing military pressure on the Taliban in Afghanistan could benefit al-Qaeda and provide it a lifeline at a critical juncture in the fight against terrorism.
>
> The withdrawal plan will signal to both our Afghan allies and enemy forces that the U.S. is more committed to withdrawing its forces than the long-term goal of stabilizing the country. The U.S. made a grave error in turning its back on Afghanistan after the Soviets departed in 1989. President Obama’s speech will stoke fears that the U.S. is getting ready to repeat a similar mistake.
>
> Obama’s announcement on rapid troop withdrawals from Afghanistan will further discourage Pakistan from cracking down on the Taliban leadership that finds sanctuary on its soil. The speech will reinforce Islamabad’s calculation that the U.S. is losing resolve in the fight in Afghanistan and thus encourage Pakistani military leaders to continue to hedge on support to the Taliban to protect their own national security interests.

And more from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> President Obama delivered a remarkable speech last night, essentially unplugging the Afghanistan troop surge he proposed only 18 months ago and doing so before its goals have been achieved. We half expected to see a "mission accomplished" banner somewhere in the background.
>
> Not long ago, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates spoke about only a token drawdown this year, but he's now on his way out of the Pentagon. This time Mr. Obama overruled his military advisers and sided instead with Vice President Joe Biden and his political generals who have their eye on the mission of re-election. His real generals, the ones in the field, will now have to scramble to fulfill their counterinsurgency mission, if that is still possible.
>
> […]In justifying the withdrawal, Mr. Obama repeatedly stressed the damage we've done to al Qaeda. Yet most of those successes have been mounted from Afghanistan, including the killing of Osama bin Laden. Mr. Obama stressed that he'll continue to press Pakistan to cooperate in attacking terrorist havens, but his accelerated withdrawal schedule will make that persuasion harder. The Pakistan military will now almost surely not act against the Afghan Taliban. The Pakistanis will press instead for a "reconciliation" between the Afghan government and Taliban leaders, who will be the most relieved by last night's speech.

Republican reactions to Obama's decision to cut and run, taken from the left-leaning Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Likewise from House Republican Policy Committee Chairman Tom Price (R-Ga.) came a blast:
>
> "The brave men and women of our military continue to risk their lives to ensure that Afghanistan does not once again become a safe haven for terrorists who seek to kill Americans and our allies. . . . President Obama must lead. Leadership in this instance means making decisions based on conditions on the ground, listening to our military commanders and not changing strategy for political purposes. If the president is unwilling or unable to lead with resolve and commitment, if he continues to telegraph our strategy and tactical decisions to the enemy, then he should admit to the country that his administration will not support the fight that is necessary, and bring our brave men and women home now."
>
> […]Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) had this statement:
>
> > "I am concerned that the President has not followed the recommendations of General Petraeus on the timing of our withdrawal from Afghanistan. The General was successful in Iraq by maintaining

> American momentum while the Iraqi army grew to the size needed to maintain long-term security. To repeat his victory formula in Afghanistan, we would need to maintain military momentum against Al Qaeda and the Taliban until the Afghan army reaches critical mass of 400,000 troops—estimated to be achievable by 2014. We withdrew our support and ignored Afghanistan in the 1990s and paid a high price in 2001. We should learn from that mistake and back the Petraeus strategy.”

I’m anxious to hear the reactions from General Petraeus and the other battlefield commanders.

Is Obama right to say that technology destroys jobs?

June 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal, a rebuttal to the community organizer's latest episode of economic illiteracy.

Excerpt:

> Today, a couple of workers can manage an egg-laying operation of almost a million chickens laying 240,000,000 eggs a year. How can two people pick up those eggs or feed those chickens or keep them healthy with medication? They can't. The hen house does the work—it's really smart. The two workers keep an eye on a highly mechanized, computerized process that would have been unimaginable 50 years ago.
>
> But should we call this progress? In a sense it sounds like a deal with the devil. Replace workers with machines in the name of lower costs. Profits rise. Repeat. It's a wonder unemployment is only 9.1%. Shouldn't the economy put people ahead of profits?
>
> Well, it does. The savings from higher productivity don't just go to the owners of the textile factory or the mega hen house who now have lower costs of doing business. Lower costs don't always mean higher profits. Or not for long. Those lower costs lead to lower prices as businesses compete with each other to appeal to consumers.
>
> The result is a higher standard of living for consumers. The average worker has to work fewer and fewer hours to earn enough money to buy a dozen eggs or a pair of shoes or a flat-screen TV or a new car that's safer and gets better mileage than the cars of yesteryear. That higher standard of living comes from technology. It isn't just the rich who get cheaper TVs and cars, plus the convenience of using an ATM at midnight.
>
> Somehow, new jobs get created to replace the old ones. Despite losing millions of jobs to technology and to trade, even in a recession we have more total jobs than we did when the steel and auto and telephone and food industries had a lot more workers and a lot fewer machines.
>
> Why do new jobs get created? When it gets cheaper to make food and clothing, there are more resources and people available to create new products that didn't exist before. Fifty years ago, the computer industry was tiny. It was able to expand because we no longer had to have so many workers connecting telephone calls. So many job descriptions exist today that didn't even exist 15 or 20 years ago. That's only possible when technology makes workers more productive.

This is discussed more in Jay Richards' book "Money, Greed and God", which is an

excellent little introduction to economics meant for Christians. The chapter you want is on “The Materialist Myth”, which is the idea that wealth is only ever shuffled around, and never created.

Which political party should Christians vote for?

June 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this disturbing story from Citizen Link, which shows how secular leftist special interests want to restrict religious liberty.

Excerpt:

> A "who's who" of Leftist, humanist, abortion and gay organizations submitted a stern letter to President Obama on Tuesday, demanding that he rescind part of the 2002 Executive Order protecting religious hiring rights.
>
> More specifically, the coalition wants Obama to prohibit contractors who do business with the government from using religious-based hiring criteria.
>
> The letter, signed by 52 organizations, comes days before the 70thanniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order that barred discrimination by federal contractors. His directive was then codified into law in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibited employers from hiring and firing based on religious beliefs. In 1972, it was slightly amended to exempt churches and religious associations.
>
> The timing of the letter also coincides with the federal government's stepped-up efforts to codify into law special protections for gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender people.
>
> Bruce Hausknecht, judicial analyst for CitizenLink, noted the biased news coverage of the weighty issue. "The liberal news media has given Americans the impression that faith-based charitable groups are pushing to rescind these protections," Hausknecht said. "Not true. A closer look at the list of cosigners reveals the true motive: to silence people of faith and push them out of the public square."
>
> Cosigners include: American Civil Liberties Union, Americans for the Separation of Church and State, Catholics for Choice, Center for American Progress Action Fund, Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, National Education Association, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, National Organization for Women, People for the American Way, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and the Transgender Law Center.

When you elect a Democrat, you're electing someone who wants to use the power of the state to marginalize and censor Christianity. In fact, if you read classical works on economics like "The Road to Serfdom", you'll learn that socialism necessarily leads to the destruction of all other liberties, including religious liberty. That is because the bigger that a secular government becomes, the less they are willing to allow individuals to make their own decisions based on their own personal morality and religion. Obama is one of the worst offenders in this regard – we have never had a more pro-abortion and pro-

same-sex marriage President. We have never had a President who was more allied with pro-abortion lobbyists and pro-gay-rights lobbyists. And he is also in favor of paying welfare to women who freely choose to raise children without fathers. This man is anti-life, anti-family and anti-marriage. No Christian could vote for such a man.

Should Christians vote for Democrats who want to "tax the rich"?

Let's make it clear, because a lot of Christians don't understand this. In order for you to exercise your freedom as a Christian, you need to have money. With money, you can afford charity, private Christian schools, Bibles, apologetics books, marriages, children, homeschooling, and so forth. How do you get that money? You work for it. And how do you make it grow? You invest it.

Now let's see how the secular left and their agenda of redistribution at wealth hurts that plan.

1. They get you fired, like Frank Turek was fired by Cisco Systems, because you are a Christian
2. They tax your income and give it to anti-Christian groups, like Planned Parenthood
3. They tax your investments to fund public schools which undermine Christian truth claims (evolution) and Christian morality (sex education)
4. They confiscate money from your employer and redistribute it to government workers and unions, which makes it harder for you to stay employed
5. They restrict your choices for educating your children, by sending more money to public schools and legislating against private schools and homeschooling
6. They take over health care, forcing you to subsidize secular leftist causes like abortions, sex changes, in vitro fertilization, etc.
7. They take over health care, forcing Christian doctors and nurses to perform procedures that violate their consciences
8. They halt military spending and pro-democracy initiatives, and coddle captured terrorists, encouraging terrorist attacks, like 9/11
9. They spend enormous amounts of money, increasing government dependence and discouraging families from having children

And so forth. Basically, the more you vote for free market conservatism, the more small businesses there will be. The more small businesses there are, the better your chance of finding an employer who will not discriminate against your Christian faith. (Contrary to popular beliefs, conservatives DO NOT like big corporations – because they are almost ALWAYS liberal, seeking to use the government to block younger companies from challenging them with better quality and lower prices). The more employers there are to choose from, the more likely you can find a higher salary. The higher your salary, the more you have to spend on charity, as well as your family and your community. The more money you make in investments, the more you can buy apologetics books and sponsor apologetics web sites and conferences and debates. The more the government stays out of the free market, the more choice you have to buy goods and services that are in line

with your Christian values – e.g. – SCHOOL CHOICE. The more the government stays out of health care, the less you will pay for health care since you don’t need coverage for abortions, sex changes, in vitro fertilization, etc. The less government regulates business, the less opportunity there will be for these secular leftist special interest groups to lobby government to discriminate against Christians.

Republicans rebuff Obama's call to raise taxes on small business

June 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, an article explaining how the Obama administration wants to raise taxes on small businesses.

Excerpt:

> Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner told the House Small Business Committee on Wednesday that the Obama administration believes taxes on small business must increase so the administration does not have to "shrink the overall size of government programs."
>
> The administration's plan to raise the tax rate on small businesses is part of its plan to raise taxes on all Americans who make more than $250,000 per year—including businesses that file taxes the same way individuals and families do.
>
> Geithner's explanation of the administration's small-business tax plan came in an exchange with first-term Rep. Renee Ellmers (R.-N.C.). Ellmers, a nurse, decided to run for the U.S. House of Representatives in 2010 after she became active in the grass-roots opposition to President Barack Obama's proposed health-care reform plan in 2009.
>
> "Overwhelmingly, the businesses back home and across the country continue to tell us that regulation, lack of access to capital, taxation, fear of taxation, and just the overwhelming uncertainties that our businesses face is keeping them from hiring," Ellmers told Geithner. "They just simply cannot."
>
> […]When Ellmers finally told Geithner that "the point is we need jobs," he responded that the administration felt it had "no alternative" but to raise taxes on small businesses because otherwise "you have to shrink the overall size of government programs"—including federal education spending.

So what about the Republicans in the House? Are they going to cave in to the Democrat demands for more taxes on job creators?

CNS News reports that House Republicans categorically refuse to raise taxes during a recession.

Excerpt:

> Two days after House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) dodged the question of whether Republicans would insist that any increase in the debt limit in this fiscal year would be exceeded by spending cuts in this fiscal year, the congressman walked out of debt/budget talks with Vice President Joe Biden, stating he could not continue as long as the Democrats insisted that taxes be raised as part of a

> budget deal.
>
> House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), meanwhile, maintained that tax increases were off the table and that spending cuts should exceed any increase in the federal debt limit.
>
> "Each side came into these talks with certain orders, and as it stands the Democrats continue to insist that any deal must include tax increases," said Cantor in a statement released on Thursday. "[T]he tax issue must be resolved before discussions can continue. Given this impasse, I will not be participating in today's meeting."
>
> Both Cantor and House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) have consistently said that any budget deal for the remainder of fiscal year 2011 and a vote on raising the debt limit–from $14.29 trillion to potentially $16.79 trillion (a $2.5 trillion increase)–would not include raising taxes.
>
> After Cantor left the talks with Biden, along with Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), Boehner held a press conference and said, "Listen, we've got to stop spending money that we don't have and, since the beginning, the Majority Leader [Canotor] and myself, along with Sen. McConnell and Sen. Kyl have been clear: tax hikes are off the table."
>
> "First of all: raising taxes is going to destroy jobs," said Boehner. "If you raise taxes on the people that we need to grow our economy and to hire new workers, guess what? They're not going to do it if they have to pay higher taxes to the federal government."
>
> "Second, a tax hike cannot pass the U.S. House of Representatives," said the Speaker. "It's not just a bad idea, it doesn't have the votes and it can't happen. And third, the American people don't want us to raise taxes. They know that we've got a spending problem. That's why Republicans passed a budget [drafted by Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin] that pays down debt over time without raising taxes."

But what about the Republicans in the Senate? Aren't they usually more liberal than the Republicans in the House?

CNS News reports that Republicans in the Senate are absolutely opposed to increasing taxes in a recession.

Excerpt:

> Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) told CNSNews.com that he would "absolutely not" support any tax increases as part of a deal to increase the debt limit.
>
> Lee was asked if he agreed with Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner that revenue increases should be part of a negotiation on the debt limit because spending cuts alone are "irresponsible."
>
> "I'm fine with revenue increases as long as they don't involve tax increases.

> There are other ways of increasing revenue. They could expand their use of federal public land through extension of oil and gas leases and so forth. If they want that kind of revenue increase, I'm all for that," said Lee after endorsing the "Cut, Cap and Balance Pledge" during a press conference at the Capitol on Wednesday.
>
> Politicians who support the pledge vow to vote against raising the debt limit unless Congress adopts a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution and implements budget cuts and caps on federal spending.
>
> Lee was then asked if he would support any tax increases, specifically.
>
> "No. Absolutely not. We can't afford a double dip recession right now, and that's exactly where that would take us," said Lee.
>
> "You take the same people whose investment dollars are needed to create jobs and you penalize them and you tell them you're going to get to keep less of your, the rewards from your investment than you would otherwise take – that's going to chill rather than promote investment. And if you do that, we're going to have fewer jobs rather than more at a time when we can least afford to hemorrhage jobs."

House and Senate Republicans understand that we need jobs, and that raising taxes will hurt job creation. Obama's answer to everything is always more taxing and more spending and more borrowing. The Republicans have got to hold firm and take away his credit card. We need an intervention.

Jim Demint introduces bill to halt funding for European bailouts

June 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

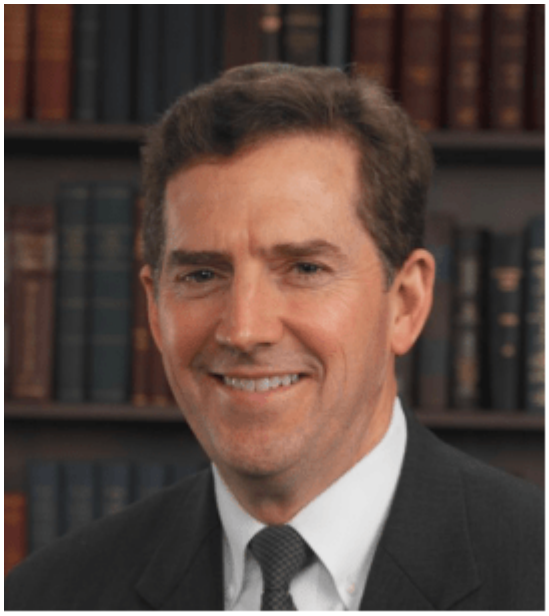

Senator Jim Demint

The Wall Street Journal reports on the Republican effort to halt taxpayer-funded bailouts for socialist European nations.

Excerpt:

> A group of Republican senators plan to renew their attempts at stopping the U.S. from funding International Monetary Fund loans to Greece and other countries after the Senate failed to vote on their proposal last week.
>
> A spokesman for Sen. Jim DeMint (R., S.C.), who is leading the effort, said the GOP senators plan to soon introduce stand-alone legislation that would direct the U.S. Treasury to vote against any IMF assistance to European Union nations for the foreseeable future. If enacted into law, it could halt U.S. participation in any future IMF attempts to stabilize the sovereign debt crisis in Europe.
>
> The proposal comes as finance ministers work towards a political agreement committing to provide financing to meet a growing gap in Greece's funding needs beyond the current EUR110 billion, which in turn would allow the IMF to release a delayed tranche of cash in early July.
>
> […]Attempts by GOP lawmakers to block IMF loans failed to gain traction in Congress last year. And President Barack Obama has asserted in a signing statement after a House vote on an IMF provision that he doesn't recognize Congress' ability to tell the administration how to vote at the IMF.

Greece embraced socialism, and now they have to face the music.

If you favor abortions, then you favor sex-selection abortions

June 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about banning sex-selection abortions

This article from the Wall Street Journal discusses the unintended consequencs of sex-selection abortions. (H/T Joy McCann)

Excerpt:

> Mara Hvistendahl is worried about girls. Not in any political, moral or cultural sense but as an existential matter. She is right to be. In China, India and numerous other countries (both developing and developed), there are many more men than women, the result of systematic campaigns against baby girls. In "Unnatural Selection," Ms. Hvistendahl reports on this gender imbalance: what it is, how it came to be and what it means for the future.
>
> In nature, 105 boys are born for every 100 girls. This ratio is biologically ironclad. Between 104 and 106 is the normal range, and that's as far as the natural window goes. Any other number is the result of unnatural events.
>
> Yet today in India there are 112 boys born for every 100 girls. In China, the number is 121—though plenty of Chinese towns are over the 150 mark. China's and India's populations are mammoth enough that their outlying sex ratios have skewed the global average to a biologically impossible 107. But the imbalance is not only in Asia. Azerbaijan stands at 115, Georgia at 118 and Armenia at 120.
>
> What is causing the skewed ratio: abortion. If the male number in the sex ratio is

> above 106, it means that couples are having abortions when they find out the mother is carrying a girl. By Ms. Hvistendahl's counting, there have been so many sex-selective abortions in the past three decades that 163 million girls, who by biological averages should have been born, are missing from the world. Moral horror aside, this is likely to be of very large consequence.
>
> In the mid-1970s, amniocentesis, which reveals the sex of a baby in utero, became available in developing countries. Originally meant to test for fetal abnormalities, by the 1980s it was known as the "sex test" in India and other places where parents put a premium on sons. When amnio was replaced by the cheaper and less invasive ultrasound, it meant that most couples who wanted a baby boy could know ahead of time if they were going to have one and, if they were not, do something about it. "Better 500 rupees now than 5,000 later," reads one ad put out by an Indian clinic, a reference to the price of a sex test versus the cost of a dowry.
>
> […]Ms. Hvistendahl argues that such imbalances are portents of Very Bad Things to come. "Historically, societies in which men substantially outnumber women are not nice places to live," she writes. "Often they are unstable. Sometimes they are violent."
>
> […]There is indeed compelling evidence of a link between sex ratios and violence. High sex ratios mean that a society is going to have "surplus men"—that is, men with no hope of marrying because there are not enough women. Such men accumulate in the lower classes, where risks of violence are already elevated. And unmarried men with limited incomes tend to make trouble. In Chinese provinces where the sex ratio has spiked, a crime wave has followed. Today in India, the best predictor of violence and crime for any given area is not income but sex ratio.

I think that it is a good idea, when talking to someone who is female and pro-abortion, to them about sex-selection abortions. It seems to me that it is impossible for someone who is pro-abortion to make a principled argument against aborting unborn children just because they are women. If abortion is morally permissible, then sex-selection abortions are morally permissible. After all, it's the born woman's body – it's her choice. Right? Well, maybe not right. Maybe we need to think about this some more.

Note that the Republicans have been trying to ban sex-selection abortions in some states – but the Democrats are opposing them. Democrats favor sex-selection abortions – and in very liberal countries, they are openly permitted.

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf

- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

Contrasting the moral motivations of Christians and humanists

June 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, consider this article from the LA Times, about a South Korean pastor who takes in abandoned, disabled children.

Excerpt:

> In a country that prizes physical perfection, Pastor Lee Jong-rak, his eyes opened after caring for his own disabled son, has been taking in unwanted infants, who if not for his drop box would be left in the street.
>
> The drop box is attached to the side of a home in a ragged working-class neighborhood. It is lined with a soft pink and blue blanket, and has a bell that rings when the little door is opened.
>
> Because this depository isn't for books, it's for babies — and not just any infants; these children are the unwanted ones, a burden many parents find too terrible to bear.
>
> One is deaf, blind and paralyzed; another has a tiny misshapen head. There's a baby with Down syndrome, another with cerebral palsy, still another who is quadriplegic, with permanent brain damage.
>
> But to Pastor Lee Jong-rak, they are all perfect. And they have found a home here at the ad hoc orphanage he runs with his wife and small staff. It is the only private center for disabled children in South Korea.
>
> "This is a facility for the protection of life," reads a hand-scrawled sign outside the drop box. "If you can't take care of your disabled babies, don't throw them away or leave them on the street. Bring them here."
>
> Since 1998, Lee, now 57, has taken in nearly three dozen children — raised them, loved them, sent them to school. He has changed their diapers, tended to their cries in the middle of the night. Today, he has 21 wards: the youngest a 2-month-old, the oldest 18.
>
> His motivation is painfully personal. Twenty-five years ago, Lee's wife, Chun-ja, gave birth to a baby so disfigured Lee kept the boy from her for a month until he could figure out a way to tell her the unthinkable, explaining only that the child had a serious illness and was rushed to another hospital.
>
> The baby was born with cerebral palsy. A mammoth cyst on his head choked off the blood flow, slowly rendering him brain-damaged. Doctors gave him months to live.
>
> Today he lies on a bed in Lee's home, his legs splayed at impossible angles, his feet turned back inward. Eyeing the room impassively, he occasionally lets out a snort or sigh, as his parents regularly vacuum his saliva through a tracheal hole

> in his throat. They call him Eun-man, which means full of God's grace.

Let's take a closer look at what counts as morality in a Christian worldview.

Christianity and self-sacrificial personal morality

Well, first of all, the moral activity is proceeding from a true worldview. The worldview of Christian theism is grounded on facts. A scientific case can be made for the existence of God, from the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, habitability and so forth. Second that case can be augmented by philosophical arguments like the ontological argument from reason, the epistemological argument from evil, the moral argument, and so forth. And finally, a historical argument can be made made for the resurrection of Jesus, which shows the self-sacrificial and loving character of God.

Most importantly, the Christian worldview holds that our happiness is not the purpose of life. The purpose of life is to be rightly related to God the Father, and that this knowing God can involve some self-sacrificial suffering. The purpose of life is not for us to feel happy, to be liked by others, or to be concerned about equalizing the distributions of material possessions through government. What is required of Christians is that they sacrifice their own interests on an individual basis and help their neighbors personally, etc. There is little mention of accomplishing good through government, the emphasis is all on personal morality. Any earning, saving and spending that we do is expected to be partly for the goal of helping others directly. We don't concern ourselves with the decisions that others are making with respect to earning, saving and spending. We don't care about how rich or poor someone is. We just care about our own ability to earn, save and spend – with the goal of making all of it serve God.

Additionally, we are commanded to give reasons for what we believe, based on good science, good philosophy and good history.

Morality on secular humanism

Now let's contrast that outward-focused example of good behavior, based on a true worldview, with the "morality" of secular humanism. This article written by Rick Heller, from The Humanist.

Excerpt:

> If solving the climate change problem were as simple as handing out light bulbs, we'd be all set. This April, three dozen humanists paired up like Mormon missionaries and rang doorbells in Cambridge, Massachusetts—but not to spread a message of faith. Instead, they gave away free energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs to residents who surrendered their old-fashioned incandescent bulbs in exchange. Coming at the conclusion of the American Humanist Association's 2011 conference, this community service project collected a couple hundred energy-hogging bulbs for reuse in children's crafts projects.
>
> Technological improvements such as better light bulbs are part of the solution to

> the climate problem. But events like the 2010 BP oil spill into the Gulf of Mexico and the disaster at Japan's Fukushima nuclear complex make it hard to place all one's faith in large-scale engineering projects. Furthermore, Boston College economist Juliet Schor warns that the growth in consumption has been outpacing efficiency improvements. "We get more efficient, but that makes people want to buy more energy, because it's effectively cheaper," she told me. **"So you have to control the demand."**
>
> But people typically don't want less; they want more. That may be why some even deny the reality of climate change. What if we could offer the prospect of *more* satisfaction, but in a different form that was less damaging to the planet? **People could have more of what they really want—to feel good**—while purchasing fewer things that depend on atmosphere-polluting industries.

First, what is the basis for action in secular humanism? Well, in secular humanism, the universe is an accident, and there is no objective meaning or purpose to the universe as a whole. There is no objective moral law that specifies what humans ought to do in secular humanism. Inalienable human rights are also not grounded because there is no Creator to ground them. However, people have happy feelings, so the humanists have decided that we should maximize happy feelings and call that "morality". (It's not clear to me how this would not be competitive, since what makes you happy may not make me happy). Humanists act to maximize their own happiness. (And really, by happiness, I mean self-indulgence, as opposed to the Christian sense of happiness which is more like *eudaimonia*). Humanists are not acting on the motives of the South Korean pastor to comply with an objective moral standard by serving God self-sacrificially or by imitating Christ's suffering and obedience.

The global warming myth as a noble lie

Rick appeals to global warming as a reason why we should constrain our consumption. I agree that people should reduce their consumption voluntarily, and I would incentivize that with tax-free savings accounts, etc. But I don't think that global warming should be used to persuade people to reduce their consumption, because man-made global warming is a false view. The myth of global warming, (which was the myth of global cooling 30 years ago and will become the myth of global cooling 30 years from now), serves two purposes in the secular humanist mythology.

The first purpose of global warming/cooling mythology is to allow people to substitute easy/fake virtues, like recycling for hard/real virtues, like chastity and fidelity. That way, they can be "moral" without having to really deny themselves, especially in sexual areas. Second, the global cooling/warming mythology allows them to draw the wider public into supporting a political program of wealth redistribution and government control. This means that a person can be moral not by giving away their own money to the poor, but by taxing their productive neighbor in order to redistribute that wealth to favored groups. Note that recycling and redistributing wealth are not the same as being self-controlled or

being faithful to your wife or taking care of disabled children. It's not about personal self-denial.

If you want to understand the dangers of pursuing happy feelings instead of self-sacrificial morality, just think of liberal politicians like Bill Clinton, John Edwards, and Elliott Spitzer. They will rail and rail about the evil rich in speeches and receive applause from people who envy the rich and covet their wealth. But then they go out and cheat on their wives in private. They major in redistributive rhetoric but minor in personal sexual morality. Their goal is feelings of happiness – not the obligation to do right when it goes against their self-interest. They feel happy when people applaud them for wanting to take money from one group and give it to another.

They get feelings of happiness from indulging in sinful behavior in private. But there is no self-denial and self-sacrifice in the personal realm, especially on sexual issues. The recycling is meant to provide cover for them to reject traditional moral obligations. The public speeches about wealth redistribution also "balance out" the private vices. That's why Bill Clinton can still claim to be a good person after cheating on his wife – being willing to redistribute the wealth of others made him a good person, he thinks – and he didn't have to do anything *personally self-sacrificial.*

Is mindfulness the answer?

And this is where we get back to Rick's article. Rick isn't advocating easy substitute moralities or wealth redistribution as a path to feelings of happiness. He is trying to get people to generate happy feelings *by themselves* by reflecting on the wonders of the things they already own or have access to, like roses and fingers and such. He is very clear that he doesn't want secular humanists to be grateful to God, though. He just wants them to spend more time acknowledging stimulating things that they've been ignoring. He hopes that this will cause them to become less interested in consumption and consumerism, because they appreciate what they already have. He wants them to voluntarily constrain their own material consumption, in order to fight global warming/cooling. So what should Christians make of this?

Well, this would be a good idea, I think, because it might remove a lot of the envy that left-wing politicians tap into in order to lead envious people down the road to serfdom. If non-Christians stop being taken in by flowery speeches about wealth redistribution, then we will all be a lot more free and prosperous. It seems to me that it is a lot less harmful for non-Christians to reduce their guilty feelings through "mindfulness" than by supporting passing price controls, minimum wage increases, carbon taxes, and so forth, as a way to get goodies without having to work for them. I don't think that it provides a *rational* basis for morality, but it might provide an *emotional* basis for resisting socialist rhetoric.

It would also be a good idea for us to encourage non-Christians to stop spending so much money. The massive national debt that we are accumulating will be bad for our future freedom and prosperity. It is also bad for future generations who will be saddled with crushing debt. Charitable enterprises like the South Korean pastor's drop box operation

run on private donations. The more we restrain spending and make people immune to the secular left's envy rhetoric, the less government will spend, and the more money we Christians will have in our pockets for charity. We need to keep what we earn in order to love God effectively. The government will never sponsor something like a William Lane Craig vs. Christopher Hitchens debate. We need to keep more of our own money so that *we can fund that debate.*

Self-sacrifice as a way of relating to God in Christ

As good as Rick's idea is, it still doesn't go as far as Christian morality goes.

Consider what morality is like in the normal Christian life. The normal Christian is always trying to give of his own self and possessions in order to help others – and not because it makes him feel good, but because it really IS objectively good – it is his way of imitating Christ and having a relationship with God based on the experience of acting on God's value system. It is because we have a Creator and a Designer that we have an obligation to act in a particular way – there is a way we ought to be, in other words.

We don't need other people to celebrate our speeches to make up for our rebellion and guilt. We don't need to have "Chastity Pride" marches or "Fidelity Pride" marches or "Taking Care of Disabled Children" marches. We are not trying to feel happy by doing what we do. We already know that what we are doing is good. We don't need to force people to celebrate our decisions or to make others be like us through public school indoctrination. We get a sense of joy and fulfillment from the relationship with God. It's not happiness as self-indulgence, it's human flourishing according to an objective design. We were designed to be in a relationship with God, and that relationship requires enduring suffering, not avoiding it.

How should Michele Bachmann answer the evolution vs intelligent design question?

June 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From ID proponents Jay Richards and David Klinghoffer. (H/T Stephen C. Meyer)

Excerpt:

> Rep. Michele Bachmann is the latest to get pulled to the side of the road, lights flashing in her rear-view mirror. Talking with reporters in New Orleans following last week's Republican Leadership Conference, she said "I support intelligent design," referring to the theory that nature gives scientific evidence of purpose and design.
>
> She continued: "What I support is putting all science on the table and then letting students decide. I don't think it's a good idea for government to come down on one side of a scientific issue or another, when there is reasonable doubt on both sides."
>
> Government neutrality would be welcome, as Bachmann rightly notes. But unfortunately the candidate's statement generated headlines ("Bachmann: Schools should teach intelligent design," as CNN.com summarized) that made her sound like she was ready to go a lot further than the intelligent design (ID) movement, which merely advocates that Darwinian theory's weaknesses be taught along with its strengths. Allowing teachers to discuss ID in class would be much more appropriate and advisable than requiring them to do so.
>
> […]Fortunately, there's an easy way to answer that takes account of the dilemma. Asked about evolution, here's what Michele Bachmann, Tim Pawlenty, or Chris Christie could have said:
>
> "Life has a very long history and things change over time. However, I don't think living creatures are nothing but the product of a purposeless Darwinian process. I support teaching all about evolution, including the scientific evidence offered against it."
>
> Dogmatic neo-Darwinians won't like that answer (they admit of no scientific arguments against their theory, unlike in any other area of scientific inquiry). But some other scientists will be fine with it, and, according to Zogby polling data, so will the 80 percent of Americans who favor allowing students and teachers to discuss evolutionary theory's strengths and weaknesses.
>
> Such a formulation, true to the scientific evidence and to the Constitution, would also be devilishly hard for rival candidates to disagree with. Campaign staff and advisors would do well to commit something like it to memory.

I actually thought Michele's answer was fine, but the suggested answer is better. If Michele Bachmann is picking a science adviser, either Stephen C. Meyer or Jay Richards

would be a good choice. Pick someone with experience.

Frank Turek asks: how would same-sex marriage affect society?

June 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

His latest post from Cross-Examined explores the consequences of legalizing same-sex marriage on children and society.

Excerpt:

> The law is a great teacher, and same sex marriage will teach future generations that marriage is not about children but about coupling. When marriage becomes nothing more than coupling, fewer people will get married to have children.
>
> So what? People will still have children, of course, but many more of them out-of wedlock. That's a disaster for everyone. Children will be hurt because illegitimate *parents* (there are no illegitimate children) often never form a family, and those that "shack up" break up at a rate two to three times that of married parents. Society will be hurt because illegitimacy starts a chain of negative effects that fall like dominoes—illegitimacy leads to poverty, crime, and higher welfare costs which lead to bigger government, higher taxes, and a slower economy.
>
> Are these just the hysterical cries of an alarmist? No. We can see the connection between same-sex marriage and illegitimacy in Scandinavian countries. Norway, for example, has had de-facto same-sex marriage since the early nineties. In Nordland,the most liberal county of Norway, where they fly "gay" rainbow flags over their churches, out-of-wedlock births have soared—more than 80percent of women giving birth for the first time, and nearly 70 percent of *all*children, are born out of wedlock! Across all of Norway, illegitimacy rose from 39 percent to 50 percent in the first decade of same-sex marriage.
>
> Anthropologist Stanley Kurtz writes,"When we look at Nordland and Nord-Troendelag — the Vermont and Massachusetts of Norway — we are peering as far as we can into the future of marriage in a world where gay marriage is almost totally accepted. What we see is a place where marriage itself has almost totally disappeared." He asserts that "Scandinavian gay marriage has driven home the message that marriage itself is outdated, and that virtually any family form, including out-of-wedlock parenthood, is acceptable." But it's not just Norway. Blankenhorn reports this same trend in other countries. International surveys show that same-sex marriage and the erosion of traditional marriage tend to go together. *Traditional marriage is weakest and illegitimacy strongest wherever same-sex marriage is legal.*
>
> You might say, "Correlation doesn't always indicate causation!" Yes, but often it does. Is there any doubt that liberalizing marriage laws impacts society for the worse? You need look no further than the last 40 years of no-fault divorce laws in

> the United States (family disintegration destroys lives and now costs taxpayers $112 billion per year!).
>
> No-fault divorce laws began in one state, California, and then spread to rest of the country. Those liberalized divorce laws helped change our attitudes and behaviors about the *permanence* of marriage. There's no question that liberalized marriage laws will help change our attitudes and behaviors about the *purpose* of marriage. The law is a great teacher, and if same-sex marriage advocates have their way, children will be expelled from the lesson on marriage.

These are things that Christians need to know to intelligently discuss same-sex marriage. Most of his facts are things that I've blogged about before, but it helps to have it all in one place. The only concern I have is that you cannot even talk about the issue using facts any more – because you get shut down.

Related posts

- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired
- Wayne Grudem defends what the Bible says about same-sex marriage
- Michael Brown and Eric Smaw debate: should same-sex marriage be legal?
- How would allowing gays to marry affect your life?
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?
- Why do people oppose same-sex marriage?
- Republicans hire top lawyer to defend traditional marriage against Democrats
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Queen's University feminist professor says that polygamy should be permitted
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- Frank Turek lists ten alleged facts about same-sex marriage
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Gay federal judge rules traditional marriage unconstitutional in California
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- Do Democrats like Chai Feldblum believe in religious liberty?
- Do Democrats like Martha Coakley believe in religious liberty?
- How Harriet Harman's Equality Bill will impact religious liberty
- Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)

- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- What happens when same-sex marriage conflicts with religious liberty?
- Can a person disagree without being hateful or inciting violence?

Titanium spine: Michele Bachmann one point behind Romney in Iowa poll

June 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Presidential Candidate Michele Bachmann

The Des Moines Register reports that Michele Bachmann trails Romney by one point in the latest poll from Iowa.

Excerpt:

> Two-time candidate Mitt Romney and tea party upstart Michele Bachmann are neck and neck leading the pack, and retired pizza chief Herman Cain is in third place in a new Des Moines Register Iowa Poll of likely participants in the state's Republican presidential caucuses.
>
> **The results** are bad news for the earnest Tim Pawlenty, a former Minnesota governor who is in single digits despite a full-throttle campaign.
>
> Romney, a former Massachusetts governor and business executive, claims 23 percent, and Bachmann, a Minnesota congresswoman and evangelical conservative, garners 22 percent. Neither has done heavy lifting in Iowa.
>
> The rest of the Republican field is at least 12 points behind them.
>
> Cain, a retired Georgia business executive, is the top choice for 10 percent of potential caucusgoers.
>
> Former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, whose entire Iowa campaign team resigned in frustration two weeks ago over its perception that his efforts are half-hearted, is tied in fourth place at 7 percent with the libertarian-leaning Ron Paul, a longtime Texas congressman.
>
> Pawlenty is at 6 percent; Rick Santorum, a former U.S. senator from Pennsylvania, 4 percent; and Jon Huntsman, a former Utah governor and ambassador to China, 2 percent.
>
> "The surprise here is how quickly Michele Bachmann is catching on," said Jennifer Duffy, a political analyst with the nonpartisan Cook Political Report of

> Washington, D.C. “To me, she’s the one to watch, not Romney.”

The poll has a 4.9 point margin of error, so it’s not the greatest poll.

Titanium spine

Bachmann was also interviewed by Chris Wallace on Fox News Sunday, where Wallace went out of his way to ask her the tough questions that she will be getting more of as a Republican female candidate. Bob Shieffer also interviewed her on CBS’ Face the Nation show on Sunday.

National Review reports:

> On the eve of her presidential announcement in Waterloo, Iowa, a confident Michele Bachmann made the case that she was a serious candidate, attacking President Obama’s record and parrying tough questions in interviews with CBS’s Bob Schieffer and Fox News’s Chris Wallace.
>
> “Since the debate, people have paid attention and they recognize that I am very serious about what I want to do,” Bachmann said on Fox.
>
> She didn’t shy away from outlining clear differences between herself and Mitt Romney, who is statistically tied with her for the lead among Iowa voters according to a *Des Moines Register* poll released yesterday.
>
> “What people know about me is I do what I say and I say what I mean. I am a fighter for the cause … People recognize that I’m very sincere in what I say,” Bachmann told Wallace. She later criticized Romney for his “disappointing” decision to not sign the pro-life pledge by the Susan B. Anthony List.
>
> “Mitt Romney has to say what he is, but I will say, if he is saying now that he is pro-life, this was a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate that by signing … the pledge,” Bachmann said.
>
> On CBS, Bachmann hit Romney on his health-care program, calling individual mandates at both the state and federal level “unconstitutional,” and arguing that reliance on free market forces, rather than efforts by state or federal government, was how health-care costs should be brought down.
>
> Asked by Wallace about New York’s legislature’s decision to legalize gay marriage, Bachmann said she acknowledged the state’s tenth amendment right to do so, but said she would continue to push for a federal marriage amendment that would outlaw same-sex marriage. She said her position was “entirely consistent,” noting that the issue of gay marriage was likely to be dealt with at a federal level in either the courts or the legislature.
>
> In response to Schieffer’s question about whether she believed homosexuality was a choice or not, Bachmann said she was running for president, not “to be anyone’s judge.”
>
> She also defended herself against charges that she was a gaffe-prone politician who had made erroneous statements in the past. Wallace directly asked, “Are

> you a flake?" a term that Bachmann called "insulting," noting her extensive career as a tax lawyer and politician. In response to Shieffer's remarks about her history of "misleading" statements, Bachmann said, "I haven't mislead people at all."
>
> "I think the question should be asked of President Obama," she added, noting that he pushed for nearly $1 trillion dollar stimulus by saying it would prevent unemployment rates from going above 8 percent. "That is what's serious. Did he mislead the American people? Not only did he mislead the American people, he caused our economy to go down to depths we haven't seen," Bachmann pointed out.
>
> Bachmann, who has criticized Obamacare for taking $500 billion away from Medicare, told Wallace that she did not see Paul Ryan's budget, a budget which Bachmann voted for and which would also cut Medicare, as impacting seniors the same way Obamacare would.
>
> "Let's be clear: the Ryan budget is really the 55 and under plan. People need to recognize no one under 55 will be touched," she said, calling Ryan's plan a "starting point" for a budget discussion.
>
> "My commitment is to make sure government keeps its promises to senior citizens both on Medicare and on Social Security," Bachmann said of the 55-year-old and older crowd, but noted that those younger would have to face "adjustments."
>
> She argued that if the nation was going to be serious about its fiscal situation, the debt ceiling could not be raised. Making clear that she was against defaulting, Bachmann said payments on the debt would have to be prioritized if a new, higher ceiling wasn't authorized and that Congress would have to cut spending elsewhere. Speaking about how the number of federal limos had been increased by 73 percent in the past two years, Bachmann said it showed how Obama wasn't "serious about cutting spending" now.
>
> If she were president, matters would be different.
>
> "I have a titanium spine to do what needs to be done to turn the economy around," Bachmann said on Fox.

She will get the same treatment from the misogynists on the left. Can she take it? I think she can.

Learn more about Michele Bachmann

Speeches:

- Michele Bachmann's Republican Leadership Conference speech
- Michele Bachmann's June 18th, 2011 speech at the Right Online Conference

Reactions from her recent debate performance:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

Profiles of Michele Bachmann:

- Wall Street Journal
- ABC News

Here is the latest comprehensive profile of Michele Bachmann from the Weekly Standard. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Michele Bachmann’s speech at the Right Online 2011 conference

June 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The videos for the entire speech are below. (H/T Right Scoop)

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 3 of 3:

Reaction here from Eric Erikson at Red State.

A closer look at Michele Bachmann's background, family and education

June 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Who is Michele Bachmann?

My friend Muddling over at the Muddling Towards Maturity blog notified me this morning that the Weekly Standard has posted the most detailed profile in on Michele Bachmann so far. I took at look at the article, and he's right. There is a lot of new stuff here. Check out this excerpt, and if you like it, read the whole thing. I will put links to some of her other interviews and speeches at the bottom of this post.

Excerpt:

> Michele Amble was born on April 6, 1956, in Waterloo, Iowa, the second of four children and the only girl. Her childhood was modest. Her parents owned a small home and rented out the top floor for income. Her father was studying to be an engineer. When Michele was four, the family moved into a three-bedroom rambler. "It was probably lower middle class," she said, "and then, as families do, we moved up to middle class." She was baptized and raised in the Lutheran church.
>
> The Ambles come from Norwegian immigrants who arrived in America in the middle of the nineteenth century. They trace their roots in Iowa back seven generations. They were Democrats. The one Republican Michele knew well as a child was her paternal grandmother, a devoted *Wall Street Journal* and *Time* magazine reader who, like her other grandparents, worked in a factory. David Amble, Michele's father, was the first in the family to go to college.
>
> When Michele was in elementary school, her father got a job designing ordnance at Honeywell. The work took the Ambles to Anoka, Minnesota, north of the Twin Cities. Then came a time of upheaval. Her parents divorced. Her father moved to

California. Michele and her brothers remained in Minnesota with their mother, Jean. The family fell into poverty overnight. “My mom made about $4,800 a year,” Michele said. Jean was a bank teller.

Michele was 13 years old. She and her mother had a conversation. “My mom said, ‘One thing that can never be taken away from you is your education,’ ” Bachmann told me in a 2009 interview. If she worked hard in school, her mother went on, she’d have a foundation for life. Michele became a devoted student at Anoka High, graduating early. She was popular and was elected to the homecoming court in the fall and winter semesters. She was never queen, though. “I won Miss Congeniality once,” she said.

[…]When she returned to the States, Michele enrolled at a community college near Anoka. Money was tight. She’d often work three jobs—school bus driver, restaurant hostess, all sorts of things. The following summer she went to Alaska, where she worked for an uncle who lived in the Aleutian Islands. Alaska’s oil boom was just beginning, and geologists scoured the rocks for signs of petroleum. Michele tarred roofs, cleaned fish, washed dishes, and cooked meals. In Alaska she fell into conversation with a geologist who wanted to know her plans. Michele told him she didn’t want to go back to community college, and she also didn’t have any money. The geologist recommended Winona State University in the southeastern part of Minnesota, near the Mississippi River.

[…]It was at Winona State that Michele began to date Marcus Bachmann… Michele and Marcus married after graduating from college in 1978. They spent the next year working in Minnesota, Michele at the Buffalo County judge’s office, Marcus in social work. Then began the long juggling act of continuing their education while holding jobs and raising kids. The family moved to Tulsa, then Virginia Beach, for graduate school. By the time they wound up in Stillwater, Minnesota, in the late 1980s, the Bachmanns had a law degree from Oral Roberts (Michele), a master’s in tax law from William and Mary (Michele), a master’s in education and counseling from Regent University (Marcus), and a growing family.

Marcus went on to open two successful Christian counseling clinics. Bachmann worked as a federal tax attorney until the birth of her fourth child. She always had plenty to do. “We taught all of our children to read and write at home before we sent them to school, and we sent our biological children to Christian school,” she said.

The Bachmanns also opened their home to teenage girls with eating disorders. The maximum number of kids, biological and nonbiological, they had at one time was nine. There came a moment when “we found ourselves with a seventh grader, a first grader, a four-year-old, a two-year-old, and a nursing newborn,” Bachmann said, “and four foster children.” There were so many kids in the house the family applied for a group home license.

Bachmann was involved in all aspects of her children’s education. In the early

> 1990s, she joined the board of a Christian-influenced charter school in Stillwater. She left that position in 1993, but remained interested in civic life. She and Marcus were active in the pro-life movement. Curriculum reform, though, was the issue that eventually drove her into politics.

The article goes on to talk about her legislative initiatives and political accomplishments.

I just have to include this part about how she got her start, as an inspiration to all of my readers:

> In April 2000, as the fight to overturn the Profile of Learning continued, Bachmann attended her local nominating convention for state senate. The incumbent, moderate Republican Gary Laidig, had 28 years' experience. But he was increasingly out of step with the conservative families pouring into the St. Paul suburbs. As the convention began, Bachmann conversed with her fellow activists. Laidig had to go, they said. Someone suggested Bachmann run against him.
>
> She didn't know what to do. She was wearing jeans and tennis shoes and a sweatshirt with a hole in it. She'd had no business leaving the house that morning, she said.
>
> But Bachmann went on stage and delivered a five minute speech on freedom. Then she sat down. "I'm sitting there, and I had to be neutral," former Minnesota state GOP chairman Ron Eibensteiner told me in 2009. "But I'm thinking to myself, boy, would I love to have her run." Laidig gave a speech, and the convention took a vote. Bachmann won a supermajority on the first ballot.
>
> Shocked, Laidig decided to challenge her in a primary. Bachmann won handily. It was no mystery why. "She tells it like it is," Minnesota GOP state chair Tony Sutton told me two years ago. "She doesn't pull any punches. That's why she has such a strong following."

And I think this snapshot of Michele shows why we like her:

> Whereas Palin makes emotional and cultural appeals to her supporters, Bachmann formulates an argument. She talks like a litigating attorney, and her speeches, op-eds, and interviews are littered with references to books and articles. Not all of her references are conservative. During our recent interview, Bachmann cited Lawrence Wright's history of al Qaeda, *The Looming Tower* ("I love that book!"), to illustrate a point about the rise of radical Islam.

Just FYI, *The Looming Tower* is THE comprehensive assessment of Al Qaeda. We need a President who reads books like that, even if it is written by a liberal. She reads outside of the people who agree with her, so long as what they write is well-sourced and credible. And remember, Michele Bachmann reads re-known economist Ludwig Von Mises on the beach, when she's on vacation! That's pretty heavy reading.

You can take a look at the related posts below to learn more about Michele Bachmann.

Campaign speeches, interviews and debates

Speeches:

- Michele Bachmann's Republican Leadership Conference speech
- Michele Bachmann's speech at the Right Online Conference

Reactions from her recent debate performance:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

Profiles of Michele Bachmann:

- Wall Street Journal
- ABC News
- WORLD Magazine

Michele Bachmann on television news

Let Americans spend their own money

Time to prioritize spending

Obama's plan is to raise your taxes

Michele Bachmann in the legislature

Against socialism:

For economic growth:

Against ACORN funding:

Michael Murray explains how to talk about religion in public

June 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I want to discuss a research paper by evangelical Christian philosopher Michael J. Murray. The title of the paper is "Who's Afraid of Religion?"

Murray begins with a distinction, as philosophers love to do:

> …we would be perfectly happy to have a discussion of claims like…"Mahayana Buddhism emerged in the first century BCE with the appearance of the Mahayana sutras." … It is OK to speak of religion… as a historical phenomenon or a socio-cultural influence. It is something altogether different to discuss religious commitments that one owns. That is the sort of religion that troubles us.

People who aren't religious feel discomfort about hearing about the religious beliefs of others, because those beliefs influence public policy, but (they think) those beliefs are based non-rational factors, such as place of birth, parental beliefs, peer groups, emotions, prejudices, superstitions, etc. They are uncomfortable living in a government that was voted in by people whose views are based on irrational religious beliefs.

Murray has some illustrations of this "theo-phobia" here:

> …think about the last time you heard a devoutly religious person argue, on explicitly religious grounds, that gay marriage should be banned, or that intelligent design should be taught in the public school biology curriculum, or that abortion is murder and thus should be outlawed.

He thinks that arguing for views on pureliy religious grounds makes people uncomfortable.

And I agree with that. I feel uncomfortable when people argue for positions from faith-based premises, especially if I don't believe in their religion. But do discussions of religious beliefs necessarily have to be about faith-based personal preferences? Or is there another way to discuss religion that doesn't make non-religious people squirm with discomfort?

In the remainder of the paper, Murray explores five reasons why theo-phobia exists in academic settings:

1. Religion supports oppression, violence, and tyranny and is thus best ignored, excluded or perhaps even actively opposed.
2. Religion is a personal or subjective matter and as a result can't be subjected to canonical standards of rational scrutiny. It thus has no place in the academy.
3. Religion can't have a role in scholarly inquiry since it at best plays a balkanizing role in the scholarly world.

4. If religion is allowed to have a role in the academy it will quickly intrude into domains where it does not belong.
5. Reason #5 is kept secret until the end of the paper.

Regarding point 1, Murray argues that religious excesses can be controlled by falsifying the religion using reason and evidence, because *religions make testable claims.* So, if academics are afraid of the excesses of a dangerous religion, they should *falsify it by arguing that its claims are false.* There is no reason to be afraid of expressions of religious belief when you are free to argue against the testable truth claims of that religion.

I repeat: different religions make different claims about the external world. Either the universe had a beginning (Christianity) or it didn't (Mormonism). Either Jesus died on the cross (Christianity) or he didn't (Islam). If academics are worried about the effects of some religion, they *can* argue against it! If a religious person is *not* willing to defend the testable truth claims, then they are discredited anyway by refusing to engage.

For the remaining 4 points, especially the last one, *I recommend you read the whole article*. Give it to your friends, religious and non-religious, who believe that faith is fundamentally different from other academic disciplines. Some truth claims of different religions *can be tested*. And Christians especially should help others to feel comfortable talking to them by sticking to *testable truth claims and publicly accessible evidence.*

I'll give you a hint about reason #5, from atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel of New York University. Nagel is quoted as follows:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

So we learn from Murray that religions stand or fall based on logical consistency and empirical validation against the external world, *just like any other academic discipline*. So long as you stick to discussing the public, testable claims of religions, there is no reason to be uncomfortable about discussing religions. Don't discuss the parts of a religion that can't be tested, only discuss the parts that can be tested.

(Note: Nagel isn't all bad, he defends intelligent design as science in a research paper summarized here).

If you would like to see how you can discuss religion in a public forum, check out this debate between a Christian philosopher, William Lane Craig, and an atheist Christopher Hitchens:

It can be done.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

A secular case against gay marriage

June 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Note: this post has a twin! Its companion post on a secular case against abortion rights is here.

Roxeanne de Luca challenged socially conservative bloggers to write a non-religious case against same-sex marriage, so here's mine.

I can't possible cover everything, but I will make three arguments.

1. Same-sex marriage is bad for children
2. Same-sex marriage is bad for civil society and business
3. Same-sex marriage is bad for public health

Let's look at these in order.

1. SSM is bad for children

Traditional marriage is beneficial for children for 4 reasons:

- traditional marriages last longer than same-sex unions
- traditional marriages are more peaceful than same-sex unions
- traditional marriages offer children male and female influences
- traditional marriages model life-long love between men and women

Space permits me to only discuss the first two, using this paper from the Family Research Council, which cites data from mainstream sources like the Department of Justice, peer-reviewed studies, etc.

That research paper compares same-sex couples and heterosexual married couples, in the following ways:

- relationship duration
- monogamy vs. promiscuity

- relationship commitment
- number of children being raised
- health risks
- rates of intimate partner violence

It turns out that same-sex unions are not as good for children as traditional marriage, on those measures.

Relationship duration

Claim: about 58% of traditional marriages last longer than 20 years.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2001)

Claim: about 5% of same-sex unions last longer than 20 years.

Source: 2003-2004 Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census

Monogamy vs Promiscuity

Claim: 85% of married women and 75.5% of married men report being faithful to their spouses. For homosexual males, the number is 4.5%

Sources: Laumann, The Social Organization of Sexuality, 216; McWhirter and Mattison, The Male Couple: How Relationships Develop (1984): 252-253; Wiederman, "Extramarital Sex," 170.

Rates of intimate partner violence

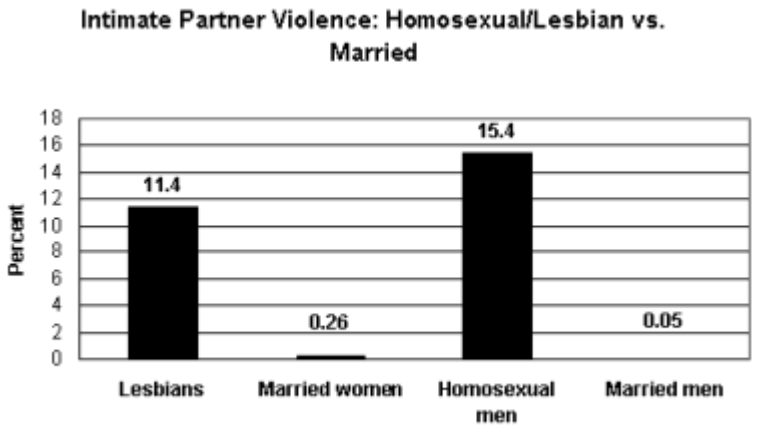

Married men and women experience significantly less intimate partner violence than do homosexual men and women.

Sources: "Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence," U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs: 30; "Intimate Partner Violence," Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report:11.

There is a lot more evidence cited in the research paper. Read the whole thing.

Consider this article by Dr. Trayce Hansen about which family configuration is best for children. The title is "Same-Sex Marriage: Not in the Best Interest of Children".

Excerpt:

> Only mother-father families afford children the opportunity to develop relationships with a parent of the same, as well as the opposite sex. Relationships with both sexes early in life make it easier and more comfortable for a child to relate to both sexes later in life. Overall, having a relationship with both a male and female parent increases the likelihood that a child will have successful social and romantic relationships during his or her life.[5]
>
> Moreover, existing research on children reared by homosexuals is not only scientifically flawed and extremely limited [6,7,8] but some of it actually indicates that those children are at increased risk for a variety of negative outcomes.[6] Other studies find that homosexually parented children are more likely to experiment sexually, experience sexual confusion, and engage in homosexual and bisexual behavior themselves.[5,6,9] And for those children who later engage in non-heterosexual behavior, extensive research reveals they are more likely to suffer from psychiatric disorders, abuse alcohol and drugs, [10] attempt suicide, [11] experience domestic violence and sexual assault, [12] and are at increased risk for chronic diseases, AIDS, and shortened life spans.[13,14,15]
>
> It shouldn't be surprising that studies find children reared by homosexuals are more likely to engage in homosexual behavior themselves [16,9,17] since extensive worldwide research reveals homosexuality is primarily environmentally induced. Specifically, social and/or family factors, as well as permissive environments which affirm homosexuality, play major environmental roles in the development of homosexual behavior.[18,19,20,21]

The rest of the article, with references, is here.

Research from the Heritage Foundation shows that traditional marriage is the safest place for women and children – women and children are much less likely to be the victims of domestic violence or violent crime when they are in a married home. Another Heritage Foundation research paper shows that child poverty is greatly reduced when children grow up in a married home.

So what do we learn from this? The evidence is clear: traditional marriage is better for children than same-sex marriage.

2. SSM is bad for civil society and business

SSM will *increase* the power of the state to regulate civil society and business. Let me quickly summarize the evidence for this to give you an idea how it would work, using Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse's testimony to the Rhode Island legislature.

Excerpt:

> Far from limiting the power of the state, your version of equality has become a tool for the hostile takeover of civil society by the state. Churches are already under attack for daring to dissent from the new state-imposed Orthodoxy that marriage is whatever the government says it is.7

> Parents are losing the right to direct the education of their own children.8 Foster parents in the UK must submit to the state's views about marriage.9 Reputable adoption agencies have been put out of business.
>
> And the pettiness of some of the complaints brought by same sex couples is simply staggering. Christian bed and breakfast owners have been sued for not allowing unmarried couples to stay in double rooms. They would have gladly rented them separate rooms, but that was not good enough for the thought police.10 Same sex couples have brought legal complaints against wedding photographers, as if there were a constitutional right to have your picture taken by the person of your choice.11

The details of the events she is describing can be found in the references for her speech.

Here are a few more examples of this infringement on civil society and business:

- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired
- Law firm that agreed to defend marriage pressured by gay groups
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Queen's University feminist professor says that polygamy should be permitted
- Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec
- Christians forced to perform same-sex marriages
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

Notice how same-sex marriage impacts businesses, clergy, non-profits, etc. and even leads to polygamy. Once you decide that marriage is not about putting guidelines around sex and producing and nurturing the next generation, but about letting consenting adults do whatever they want, then there are no rules.

Now consider this article about how the breakdown of marriage changes society and government, written by Dr. Frank Turek.

Excerpt:

> The law is a great teacher, and same sex marriage will teach future generations that marriage is not about children but about coupling. When marriage becomes

> nothing more than coupling, fewer people will get married to have children.
>
> So what? People will still have children, of course, but many more of them out-of wedlock. That's a disaster for everyone. Children will be hurt because illegitimate *parents* (there are no illegitimate children) often never form a family, and those that "shack up" break up at a rate two to three times that of married parents. Society will be hurt because illegitimacy starts a chain of negative effects that fall like dominoes—illegitimacy leads to poverty, crime, and higher welfare costs which lead to bigger government, higher taxes, and a slower economy.
>
> Are these just the hysterical cries of an alarmist? No. We can see the connection between same-sex marriage and illegitimacy in Scandinavian countries. Norway, for example, has had de-facto same-sex marriage since the early nineties. In Nordland,the most liberal county of Norway, where they fly "gay" rainbow flags over their churches, out-of-wedlock births have soared—more than 80percent of women giving birth for the first time, and nearly 70 percent of *all* children, are born out of wedlock! Across all of Norway, illegitimacy rose from 39 percent to 50 percent in the first decade of same-sex marriage.
>
> Anthropologist Stanley Kurtz writes,"When we look at Nordland and Nord-Troendelag — the Vermont and Massachusetts of Norway — we are peering as far as we can into the future of marriage in a world where gay marriage is almost totally accepted. What we see is a place where marriage itself has almost totally disappeared." He asserts that "Scandinavian gay marriage has driven home the message that marriage itself is outdated, and that virtually any family form, including out-of-wedlock parenthood, is acceptable." But it's not just Norway. Blankenhorn reports this same trend in other countries. International surveys show that same-sex marriage and the erosion of traditional marriage tend to go together. *Traditional marriage is weakest and illegitimacy strongest wherever same-sex marriage is legal.*
>
> You might say, "Correlation doesn't always indicate causation!" Yes, but often it does. Is there any doubt that liberalizing marriage laws impacts society for the worse? You need look no further than the last 40 years of no-fault divorce laws in the United States (family disintegration destroys lives and now costs taxpayers $112 billion per year!).
>
> No-fault divorce laws began in one state, California, and then spread to rest of the country. Those liberalized divorce laws helped change our attitudes and behaviors about the *permanence* of marriage. There's no question that liberalized marriage laws will help change our attitudes and behaviors about the *purpose* of marriage. The law is a great teacher, and if same-sex marriage advocates have their way, children will be expelled from the lesson on marriage.

So there are financial and social costs to the breakdown of marriage. The more government has to spend to deal with the problems SSM creates, the higher taxes will go,

and the less money is left in the hands of working families to accomplish their own plans.

To be fair, I think that sex education and no-fault divorce are worse threats to marriage than same-sex marriage. I would like to see more research to persuade people that chastity before marriage is important, like this research , so that we could see our way clear to push for policies that encourage young people to wait longer before having sex. And I would like to see other measures taken to strengthen marriage from no-fault divorce, such as a shared parenting laws. But SSM is the current topic, so I'll stick with that here.

3. SSM is bad for public health

Now we come to the sensitive part. We should not be encouraging SSM because it normalizes homosexuality and the homosexual lifestyle is associated with harmful behaviors.

Consider this recent Centers for Disease Control study. Life Site News discusses the findings in this article.

Excerpt:

> Students who report being gay or bisexual are more likely than heterosexual students to engage in unhealthy risk behaviors such as tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual risk behaviors, suicidal behaviors, and violence, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
>
> The study reported: "the prevalence among gay or lesbian students was higher than the prevalence among heterosexual students for a median of 63.8% of all the risk behaviors measured, and the prevalence among bisexual students was higher than the prevalence among heterosexual students for a median of 76.0% of all the risk behaviors measured."
>
> Specifically, gay or lesbian students had higher rates for seven of the 10 health risk categories (behaviors that contribute to violence, behaviors related to attempted suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, other drug use, sexual behaviors, and weight management).
>
> The study also found that only 1.3% of students self-identified as gay or lesbian at the eight sites where they were asked their "sexual identity." A median of 3.7% said they were bisexual.
>
> Researchers analyzed data from Youth Risk Behavior Surveys conducted during 2001–2009 in seven states and six large urban school districts. These sites collected data on high school students' sexual identity (heterosexual, gay or lesbian, bisexual, or unsure), sex of sexual contacts (sexual contact with the opposite sex only, with the same sex only, or with both sexes), or both.
>
> The study, "Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health Risk Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9–12 in Selected Sites—Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, United States, 2001–2009," was published as a Morbidity and

> Mortality Weekly Report Surveillance Summary.

Dr. Trayce Hansen summarizes some of the previously published research on the health care effects of the gay lifestyle.

Excerpt:

> Non-heterosexual behavior leads to increased risk of psychological and physical disorders
>
> Sadly, the research is also clear that individuals who adopt non-heterosexual lifestyles are more likely to suffer from a host of negative outcomes including psychiatric disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide attempts, domestic violence and sexual assault, and increased risk for chronic diseases, AIDS, and shortened lifespan. Schools should not affirm and thereby encourage young people to adopt lifestyles more likely to lead to such devastation. (To review these specific studies see references 5-10 below).

The footnotes she mentions are in the original article. That article also debunks the "gay gene" myth using identical twin studies, which show that only 10-11% of identical twins have the same sexual orientation.

Consider how society treats the practice of cigarette smoking. Certainly, we don't want to coerce people into not smoking – we want them to have the choice. But we should definitely not lie to people about the health effects of smoking. It does no good to tell people that dangerous things are not really dangerous. I would rather hurt someone's feelings gently by telling them the truth than see them suffer real harm after telling them lies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have seen three reasons why we should not legalize same-sex marriage:

1. Same-sex marriage is bad for children
2. Same-sex marriage is bad for civil society and business
3. Same-sex marriage is bad for public health

Notice that there are no arguments in this post that require a religious worldview or belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Further study

For a more academic case against SSM, see this peer-reviewed paper on traditional marriage and same-sex marriage, authored by two guys from Princeton University and one guy from the University of Notredame. One of those guys is the famous Robert P. George. For some simple, practical tips on defending traditional marriage, check out this tip sheet from the National Organization for Marriage. Here's another good peer-reviewed

paper in the Harvard University Journal of Law and Public Policy. And of course there are the two recent large-scale studies on gay parenting outcomes, and responses to the criticisms of those studies.

You can also watch the videos from a formal academic debate on same-sex marriage held at the University of Central Florida, featuring Dr. Michael Brown. Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse also debated same-sex marriage at Columbia University in a formal academic debate. You can see her give a lecture on same-sex marriage at Houston Baptist University here, as well.

AT LAST! Michele Bachmann is officially running for President in 2012

June 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Full text of the announcement is here.

Excerpt:

> This election is about big issues, not petty ones. When all is said and done, we cannot be about big government as usual. Then America will lose.
>
> In Washington I am bringing a voice to the halls of congress that has been missing for a long time. It is the voice of the people I love and learned from growing up in Waterloo. It is the voice of reasonable, fair-minded people who love this country, who are patriotic, and who see the United States as the indispensable nation of the world.
>
> My voice is part of a movement to take back our country, and now I want to take that voice to the White House. It is the voice of constitutional conservatives who want our government to do its job and not ours and who want our government to live within its means and not our children's and grandchildren's.
>
> I am here in Waterloo, Iowa to announce today: We can win in 2012 and we will. Our voice has been growing louder and stronger. And it is made up of Americans from all walks of life like a three-legged stool. It's the peace through strength Republicans, and I'm one of them, it's fiscal conservatives, and I'm one of them, and it's social conservatives, and I'm one of them. It's the Tea Party movement and I'm one of them.

Photos:

I stole those pictures from the UK Telegraph. Canada's Sun News Network had this segment on Michele Bachmann as well.

Campaign speeches, interviews and debates

Speeches:

- Michele Bachmann's Republican Leadership Conference speech
- Michele Bachmann's speech at the Right Online Conference

Reactions from her recent debate performance:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

Profiles of Michele Bachmann:

- The Weekly Standard
- Wall Street Journal
- ABC News
- WORLD Magazine

Michele Bachmann on television news

Let Americans spend their own money

Time to prioritize spending

Obama's plan is to raise your taxes

Michele Bachmann in the legislature

Against socialism:

For economic growth:

Against ACORN funding:

Green energy firm run by Obama fundraiser gets $535M loan guarantee

June 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

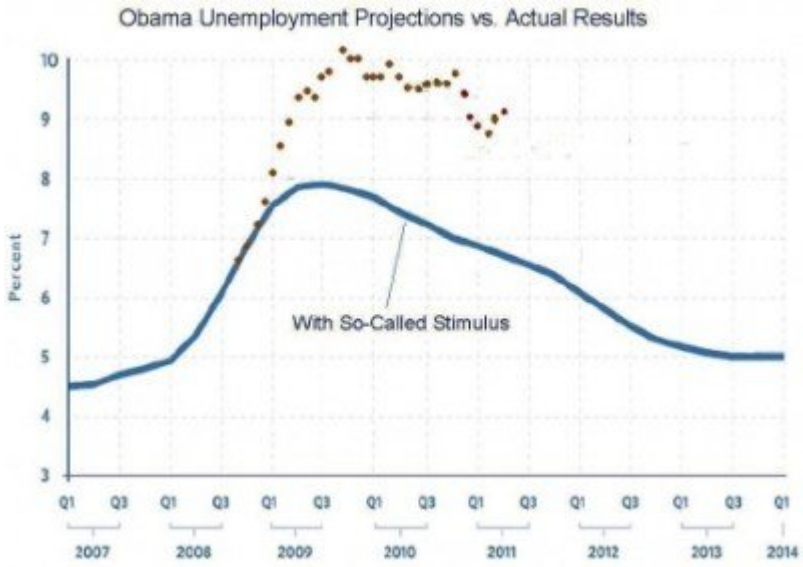

Obama Unemployment Stimulus Graph
From the Daily Caller. (H/T Doug Ross)

Excerpt:

> Solyndra, Inc. was supposed to have showcased the effectiveness of the Obama administration's stimulus and green jobs initiatives, but instead it has become the center of congressional attention for waste, fraud and abuse of such programs.
>
> According to a Feb. 17 letter signed by Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton, Michigan Republican, and Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Cliff Stearns, Florida Republican, to Energy Secretary Steven Chu, the Fremont, Calif.-based solar panel manufacturer should never have received a $535 million loan guarantee from the stimulus.*
>
> The company became the first recipient of an Energy Department loan guarantee under the stimulus in March 2009, which was intended to "finance construction of the first phase of the company's new manufacturing facility" for photovoltaic solar panels.
>
> The Energy Department estimated in a March 20, 2009 press release that the loan guarantee would create 3,000 construction jobs and a further 1,000 jobs after the plant opened.
>
> And President Barack Obama and Vice President Joseph Biden each personally showcased Solyndra as an example of how stimulus dollars were at work creating jobs, during appearances at the company over the course of the following year.
>
> Biden personally announced the closure of Solyndra's $535 million loan

> guarantee in a Sept. 9, 2009 speech, delivered via closed-circuit television, on the occasion of the groundbreaking of the plant.
>
> The vice president justified the federal government's investment in Solyndra in front of employees and other dignitaries, including Secretary Chu and former Calif. Gov. Arnold Schwartzenegger, saying the jobs the company intended to create would "serve as a foundation for a stronger American economy."
>
> "These jobs are the jobs that are going to define the 21st century that will allow America to compete and to lead like we did in the 20th century," Biden said.
>
> According to Biden's speech, the $535 million loan guarantee was a smaller part of the $30 billion of stimulus money the administration planned to spend as part of its Green Jobs Initiative.
>
> Obama made similar claims in a May 26, 2010 speech at the plant, but the 1,000 jobs he and Biden touted in their respective speeches failed to materialize.
>
> Instead, Solyndra announced on Nov. 3 it planned to postpone expanding the plant, which put the taxpayers on the hook to the tune of $390.5 million taxpayers**, or 73 percent of the total loan guarantee, according to the Wall Street Journal.
>
> It also announced that it no longer planned to hire the 1,000 workers that Obama and Biden had touted in their speeches and that it planned to close one of its older factories and planned to lay-off 135 temporary or contract workers and 40 full-time employees.
>
> A closer look at the company shows it has never turned a profit since it was founded in 2005, according to its Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings.
>
> And Solyndra's auditor declared that "the company has suffered recurring losses, negative cash flows since inception and has a net stockholders' deficit that, among other factors, [that] raise substantial doubt about its ability to continue as a growing concern" in a March 2010 amendment to its SEC registration statement.
>
> "While we understand the purpose of the Loan Guarantee Program is to help private companies engaging in clean energy products to obtain financing by providing loan guarantees, subsequent events raise questions about Solyndra was the right candidate to receive a loan guarantee in excess of half a billion dollars," Upton and Stearns wrote.
>
> A June 2010 Wall Street Journal report indicating that Solyndra's majority owner, Oklahoma billionaire George Kaiser, was a major fundraiser for the 2008 Obama-Biden campaign has stimulus opponents such as Citizens Against Government Waste crying foul.

What did we get for spending nearly a trillion dollars on stimulus? We got 9% unemployment. But Obama's political cronies got a big raise.

Economics in One Lesson

Perhaps it is time to review Henry Hazlitt's Economics in One Lesson, chapter 4, entitled "Public Works Mean Taxes".

Excerpt:

> Therefore, for every public job created by the bridge project a private job has been destroyed somewhere else. We can see the men employed on the bridge. We can watch them at work. The employment argument of the government spenders becomes vivid, and probably for most people convincing. But there are other things that we do not see, because, alas, they have never been permitted to come into existence. They are the jobs destroyed by the $10 million taken from the taxpayers. All that has happened, at best, is that there has been a *diversion* of jobs because of the project. More bridge builders; fewer automobile workers, television technicians, clothing workers, farmers.

And consider Chapter 5 as well, entitled "Taxes Discourage Production".

> In our modern world there is never the same percentage of income tax levied on everybody. The great burden of income taxes is imposed on a minor percentage of the nation's income; and these income taxes have to be supplemented by taxes of other kinds. These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to become employers at all. Improved machinery and better-equipped factories come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.
>
> There is a similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment

> that they profess to solve.

George W. Bush cut taxes in his first term and created 1 million NEW JOBS. Obama transfered BILLIONS from the private sector to the public sector, where government waste is rampant. Government spending is a *job killer*. Obama might be a nice man, but he is just wrong on economics and business. What we should have done is elected someone who doesn't repeat the mistakes made in other countries, like in Japan where massive government spending failed to stimulate the economy. And we shouldn't enact single-payer health care, because it's not working in Canada. The wait times to see doctors in Canada are increasing. We should only imitate the *successes* of other countries, like the free trade agreements in Chile or the flat tax in Lithuania or the private retirement accounts in Chile or the low tax rates of Hong Kong. We have to decide, as a nation, whether we want jobs and prosperity, or rhetoric and feelings.

Paul Chien interviewed on the Cambrian era fossils

June 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

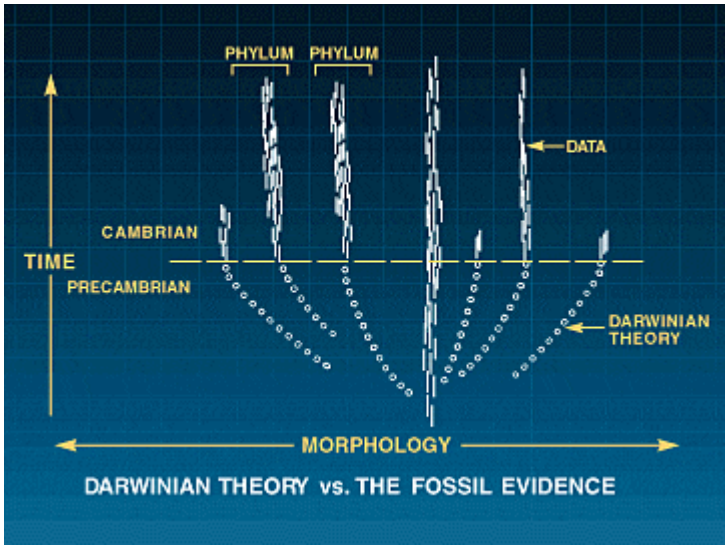

Cambrian era fossils: Theory versus Data
From Leadership University. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Excerpt:

> Dr. Paul Chien, chairman of the biology department at the University of San Francisco, recently accepted a unique invitation to travel to China to study fossils of the Cambrian era. What Chien found at the Chengjiang site, and what he has since learned about the Cambrian fauna, has changed the focus of his career. Today, Chien concentrates on further exploring and promoting the mysteries of the Cambrian explosion of life. Subsequently, Chien possesses the largest collection of Chinese Cambrian fossils in North America.
>
> Chien attended Mere Creation, a conference last November sponsored by Christian Leadership, which was featured in the previous *Real Issue*. The following is an interview with Paul Chien.
>
> ***RI:*** Dr. Chien, what is your interest in the evolution/creation debate?
>
> ***Chien:*** Even before I became a Christian, I had doubts about evolution. During my college years I was really interested in finding answers, but I got very little help. For a while I lost interest because I thought, one way or the other, it wasn't very important. But since I started teaching, many people ask me about that. In fact, I often speak at churches and youth groups and conferences, and I have been forced back to that question; it's pretty much my hobby now.
>
> ***RI:*** Until recently, you have focused on the effects of pollution on marine organisms. How then did you come to study the Cambrian "explosion of Life"?
>
> ***Chien:*** In studying marine organisms, and mainly the invertebrate groups, I have a clear vision of the distinct characteristics of each phyla. The theory of evolution never [seemed to] apply well in my field of marine invertebrates. When the news

broke concerning [the discovery of] an explosion of animal life, it really excited me because that [had been] my position for many years. Also, Phil Johnson's chapter on fossils [*Darwin on Trial,* Intervarsity Press, 1991] really ignited my interest in that area.

When an opportunity came up to talk with Chinese paleontologists and to visit them and the original site of fossil discovery, it became something I had to do. So last March I organized an international group to make a visit there.

RI: So is the Chengjiang site a primary site for the Cambrian explosion?

Chien: Yes, it's the site of the first marine animal found in the early Cambrian times we don't count micro-organisms as animals.

RI: Are there other places in the world where you find the same organisms?

Chien: In some ways there are similarities between the China site and the other famous site, the Burgess Shale fauna in Canada. But it turns out that the China site is much older, and the preservation of the specimens is much, much finer. Even nerves, internal organs and other details can be seen that are not present in fossils in any other place.

RI: And I suppose many of these are probably soft-tissue marine-type animals?

Chien: Yes, including jellyfish-like organisms. They can even see water ducts in the jellyfish. They are all marine. That part of western China was under a shallow sea at the time.

RI: As you became more interested in this and discovered more about it, did you find it really was an "explosion of life"?

Chien: Yes. A simple way of putting it is that currently we have about 38 phyla of different groups of animals, but the total number of phyla discovered during that period of time (including those in China, Canada, and elsewhere) adds up to over 50 phyla. That means [there are] more phyla in the very, very beginning, where we found the first fossils [of animal life], than exist now.

Stephen J. Gould, [a Harvard University evolutionary biologist], has referred to this as the reverse cone of diversity. The theory of evolution implies that things get more and more complex and get more and more diverse from one single origin. But the whole thing turns out to be reversed we have more diverse groups in the very beginning, and in fact more and more of them die off over time, and we have less and less now.

RI: What information is the public hearing or not hearing about the Cambrian explosion?

Chien: The general impression people get is that we began with micro-organisms, then came lowly animals that don't amount to much, and then came the birds, mammals and man. Scientists were looking at a very small branch of the whole animal kingdom, and they saw more complexity and advanced features in that group. But it turns out that this concept does not apply to the

> entire spectrum of animals or to the appearance or creation of different groups. Take all the different body plans of roundworms, flatworms, coral, jellyfish and whatever all those appeared at the very first instant.
>
> Most textbooks will show a live tree of evolution with the groups evolving through a long period of time. If you take that tree and chop off 99 percent of it, [what is left] is closer to reality; it's the true beginning of every group of animals, all represented at the very beginning.
>
> Since the Cambrian period, we have only die-off and no new groups coming about, ever. There's only one little exception cited the group known as bryozoans, which are found in the fossil record a little later. However, most people think we just haven't found it yet; that group was probably also present in the Cambrian explosion.
>
> Also, the animal explosion caught people's attention when the Chinese confirmed they found a genus now called Yunnanzoon that was present in the very beginning. This genus is considered a chordate, and the phylum Chordata includes fish, mammals and man. An evolutionist would say the ancestor of humans was present then. Looked at more objectively, you could say the most complex animal group, the chordates, were represented at the beginning, and they did not go through a slow gradual evolution to become a chordate.

Someone posted an interesting documentary on Youtube about the Cambrian explosion.

Leadership University is run by CLM, and features solid scholarship on a wide range of issues, including science.

Democrat writer exposes Al Gore's greed and hypocrisy

June 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Registered Democrat and Obama supporter Walter Russell Mead assesses Al Gore's suitability to lead the global warming movement. (H/T Newsbusters)

Excerpt:

> You can be a leading environmentalist and fail to pay all of your taxes. You can be a leading environmentalist and be unkind to your aged mother. You can be a leading environmentalist and squeeze the toothpaste tube from the middle, park in the handicapped spots at the mall or scribble angry marginal notes in library books.
>
> But you cannot be a leading environmentalist who hopes to lead the general public into a long and difficult struggle for sacrifice and fundamental change if your own conduct is so flagrantly inconsistent with the green gospel you profess. If the heart of your message is that the peril of climate change is so imminent and so overwhelming that the entire political and social system of the world must change, now, you cannot fly on private jets. You cannot own multiple mansions. You cannot even become enormously rich investing in companies that will profit if the policies you advocate are put into place.
>
> It is not enough to buy carbon offsets (aka "indulgences") with your vast wealth, not enough to power your luxurious mansions with exotic low impact energy sources the average person could not afford, not enough to argue that you only needed the jet so that you could promote your earth-saving film.
>
> You are asking billions of people, the overwhelming majority of whom lack many of the basic life amenities you take for granted, people who can't afford Whole Foods environmentalism, to slash their meager living standards. You may well be right, and those changes may be necessary — the more shame on you that with your superior insight and knowledge you refuse to live a modest life. There's a gospel hymn some people in Tennessee still sing that makes the point: "You can't be a beacon if your light don't shine."

This old story from the UK Telegraph has more on Al Gore's demagoguery and profiteering.

Exceptional speech on foreign policy by Tim Pawlenty

June 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tim Pawlenty delivered this must-read speech on foreign policy to the Council on Foreign Relations today.

Excerpt:

> President Obama has failed to formulate and carry out an effective and coherent strategy in response to these events. He has been timid, slow, and too often without a clear understanding of our interests or a clear commitment to our principles.
>
> And parts of the Republican Party now seem to be trying to out-bid the Democrats in appealing to isolationist sentiments. This is no time for uncertain leadership in either party. The stakes are simply too high, and the opportunity is simply too great.
>
> No one in this Administration predicted the events of the Arab spring – but the freedom deficit in the Arab world was no secret. For 60 years, Western nations excused and accommodated the lack of freedom in the Middle East. That could not last. The days of comfortable private deals with dictators were coming to an end in the age of Twitter, You Tube, and Facebook. And history teaches there is no such thing as stable oppression.
>
> President Obama has ignored that lesson of history. Instead of promoting democracy – whose fruit we see now ripening across the region – he adopted a murky policy he called "engagement."
>
> "Engagement" meant that in 2009, when the Iranian ayatollahs stole an election, and the people of that country rose up in protest, President Obama held his tongue. His silence validated the mullahs, despite the blood on their hands and the nuclear centrifuges in their tunnels.
>
> While protesters were killed and tortured, Secretary Clinton said the Administration was "waiting to see the outcome of the internal Iranian processes." She and the president waited long enough to see the Green Movement crushed.
>
> "Engagement" meant that in his first year in office, President Obama cut democracy funding for Egyptian civil society by 74 percent. As one American democracy organization noted, this was "perceived by Egyptian democracy activists as signaling a lack of support." They perceived correctly. It was a lack of support.
>
> "Engagement" meant that when crisis erupted in Cairo this year, as tens of thousands of protesters gathered in Tahrir Square, Secretary Clinton declared,

> "the Egyptian Government is stable." Two weeks later, Mubarak was gone. When Secretary Clinton visited Cairo after Mubarak's fall, democratic activist groups refused to meet with her. And who can blame them?
>
> The forces we now need to succeed in Egypt — the pro-democracy, secular political parties — these are the very people President Obama cut off, and Secretary Clinton dismissed.
>
> The Obama "engagement" policy in Syria led the Administration to call Bashar al Assad a "reformer." Even as Assad's regime was shooting hundreds of protesters dead in the street, President Obama announced his plan to give Assad "an alternative vision of himself." Does anyone outside a therapist's office have any idea what that means? This is what passes for moral clarity in the Obama Administration.
>
> By contrast, I called for Assad's departure on March 29; I call for it again today. We should recall our ambassador from Damascus; and I call for that again today. The leader of the United States should never leave those willing to sacrifice their lives in the cause of freedom wondering where America stands. As President, I will not.

I blogged quite a bit about the peaceful protestors in Iran. Remember Neda Soltan who was shot down in the streets? And yet Obama had almost nothing to say about the pro-democracy movements. And Obama was on the wrong side in the Honduras election, as well – he backed Manuel Zelaya. It's good that Tim Pawlenty has something to say about it.

And a bit more of his speech:

> The third category consists of states that are directly hostile to America. They include Iran and Syria. The Arab Spring has already vastly undermined the appeal of Al Qaeda and the killing of Osama Bin Laden has significantly weakened it.
>
> The success of peaceful protests in several Arab countries has shown the world that terror is not only evil, but will eventually be overcome by good. Peaceful protests may soon bring down the Assad regime in Syria. The 2009 protests in Iran inspired Arabs to seek their freedom. Similarly, the Arab protests of this year, and the fall of regime after broken regime, can inspire Iranians to seek their freedom once again.
>
> We have a clear interest in seeing an end to Assad's murderous regime. By sticking to Bashar al Assad so long, the Obama Administration has not only frustrated Syrians who are fighting for freedom—it has demonstrated strategic blindness. The governments of Iran and Syria are enemies of the United States. They are not reformers and never will be. They support each other. To weaken or replace one, is to weaken or replace the other.
>
> The fall of the Assad mafia in Damascus would weaken Hamas, which is

> headquartered there. It would weaken Hezbollah, which gets its arms from Iran, through Syria. And it would weaken the Iranian regime itself.
>
> To take advantage of this moment, we should press every diplomatic and economic channel to bring the Assad reign of terror to an end. We need more forceful sanctions to persuade Syria's Sunni business elite that Assad is too expensive to keep backing. We need to work with Turkey and the Arab nations and the Europeans, to further isolate the regime. And we need to encourage opponents of the regime by making our own position very clear, right now: Bashar al-Assad must go.
>
> When he does, the mullahs of Iran will find themselves isolated and vulnerable. Syria is Iran's only Arab ally. If we peel that away, I believe it will hasten the fall of the mullahs. And that is the ultimate goal we must pursue. It's the singular opportunity offered to the world by the brave men and women of the Arab Spring.
>
> The march of freedom in the Middle East cuts across the region's diversity of religious, ethnic, and political groups. But it is born of a particular unity. It is a united front against stolen elections and stolen liberty, secret police, corruption, and the state-sanctioned violence that is the essence of the Iranian regime's tyranny.
>
> So this is a moment to ratchet up pressure and speak with clarity. More sanctions. More and better broadcasting into Iran. More assistance to Iranians to access the Internet and satellite TV and the knowledge and freedom that comes with it. More efforts to expose the vicious repression inside that country and expose Teheran's regime for the pariah it is.
>
> And, very critically, we must have more clarity when it comes to Iran's nuclear program. In 2008, candidate Barack Obama told AIPAC that he would "always keep the threat of military action on the table to defend our security and our ally Israel." This year, he told AIPAC "we remain committed to preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons." So I have to ask: are all the options still on the table or not? If he's not clear with us, it's no wonder that even our closest allies are confused.
>
> The Administration should enforce all sanctions for which legal authority already exits. We should enact and then enforce new pending legislation which strengthens sanctions particularly against the Iranian Revolutionary Guards who control much of the Iranian economy.

Here's a clip from the discussion with CFR after the speech:

You know, I was listening to a fiscal conservative being interviewed on the radio the other day and the person was saying that he had more fear of Obama's foreign policy than of Obama's economic policy. This was after he had laid out a gloomy economic picture.

What do studies tell us about mainstream media bias?

June 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).

> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.

> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

And here's a bit from that same article about The New Yorker:

> The last bulwark against bias's slipping into The New Yorker is the copy department, whose chief editor, Ann Goldstein, gave $500 in October to MoveOn.org, which campaigns for Democrats and against President Bush. "That's just me as a private citizen," she said. As for whether donations are allowed, Goldstein said she hadn't considered it. "I've never thought of myself as working for a news organization."

Those are the facts.

So what?

Now consider this column from Brent Bozell, which explains the difference media bias makes to political intelligence.

Excerpt:

> The Republican presidential contest is picking up steam. Obama is consistently polling under 50 percent. This one's a toss-up, and in the thick of it is the Fox News Channel. It's not just their role in hosting and vetting the candidates. It's their role as the chief villain in the eyes of liberal Democrats struggling to push their version of the "truth" about Obama.
>
> Jon Stewart rhetorically asked Chris Wallace about Fox on "Fox News Sunday, because he thought he knew the answer: "Who are the most consistently misinformed media viewers? The most consistently misinformed? Fox, Fox viewers, consistently, every poll."
>
> In the real world – outside Stewart's smug bubble – this is garbage. A 2008 survey by the Pew Research Center asked media consumers three questions: which party was in control of Congress (Democrats), who was the secretary of state (Condi Rice) and who was the prime minister of Britain (Gordon Brown).
>
> Let's document how the viewers of "Hannity &Colmes" were better informed than Stewart's "Daily Show" gigglers on basic political facts. Hannity viewers beat Stewart's on the Democratic majority (84 percent to 65 percent correct answers), Condi Rice (a dramatic 73 percent to 48 percent gap) and Gordon Brown (49 percent to 36). Overall, as a percentage getting all three questions right, Hannity won 42-30.

Just keep that in mind when you are watching the mainstream media news shows. A very

good site to bookmark and read is Newsbusters, which documents mainstream media bias daily. I even have an RSS feed of their latest stories on the front page on this blog.

UPDATE: New York Times cites abortion advocates as neutral sources.

Does God behave badly? Brian Auten interviews David T. Lamb

June 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 interviews Old Testament scholar David T. Lamb on his new book "God Behaving Badly: Is the God of the Old Testament Angry, Sexist and Racist?", a book which is intended for the lay Christians who want to reconcile the New Testament and Old Testament portraits of God.

The MP3 file is here.

About David T. Lamb's academic credentials:

- Doctor of Philosophy, Theology (Old Testament)(2005), University of Oxford
- Master of Philosophy, Theology (Old Testament)(2002), University of Oxford
- Master of Divinity (2000), Fuller Theological Seminary
- Master of Science, Industrial Engineering (1985), Stanford University
- Bachelor of Arts, Economics (1984), Stanford University

Summary:

- Lamb's testimony and experience in campus ministry
- Lamb's decision to go to graduate school become a Christian scholar
- Lamb's new book and its' intended audience (it's for beginners!)
- Why Christians should read more in the Old Testament
- Why we need to look at the positive and negative texts in the Old Testament
- Are the portraits of God in the Old Testament and the New Testament compatible?
- Is the Old Testament picture of God loving or harsh?
- What are some of the examples that people point to when they say God is angry?
- Are there general any guidelines for answering hard passages of the Bible?
- Is the Old Testament God sexist?
- What does the Old Testament say about women?
- Is the Old Testament God racist?
- What are some examples where other nations are treated well by God?
- Don't the laws in the Old Testament make God look legalistic and strict?

This book is similar to Paul Copan's "Is God a Moral Monster?", but that book is less introductory than Lamb's book. It also engages more directly with the New Atheists than Lamb's book.

Brian also interviewed Paul Copan about his book, and you can listen to that interview on Brian's site.

Is absence of evidence for God evidence of his absence?

June 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Christopher Copan Scott. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Excerpt:

> There is a central question that must be answered in the philosophy of religion: Is absence of evidence, evidence of absence? The answer is that it all depends on what the *thing*in question is.
>
> Examine these two scenarios:
>
> Suppose in S1 (scenario one) Bob is invited on a challenge to find one golden ant, the only golden ant, and it happens to be somewhere in the 1.7 billion acres known as the Amazon Rainforest. If you were to find this one golden ant in 24 hours you would be rewarded with a large sum of money. Furthermore, suppose Bob the contestant is unsuccessful in this challenge and as a result complains to the organizers of the event saying that because he could not find the golden ant, it therefore does not exist. The problem with his complaint is that in S1, the absence of evidence for this one golden ant, gives little to no justification for you to conclude the non-existence of it.
>
> Let us go on to S2. Here Bob is confronted with a similar challenge, instead he is not trying to find an ant but an elephant, and the environment is not the Amazon Rainforest, but his small office room. In S2, one's assertion that the lack of evidence of the elephant in his office is evidence of absence of the elephant would be warranted.
>
> This demonstrates that the absence of evidence is evidence of absence for the existence of a particular entity, if and only if it meets the following two conditions:
>
> 1) If the postulated entity were to exist, we should expect to have some evidence of its existence.
>
> 2) We have thoroughly examined the area which we would expect to find the entity.
>
> Now what does this mean when it comes to the existence of God? This means that those who assert that the lack of evidence for the existence of God provides sufficient grounds to assert that this is evidence of absence must take the burden of proving (1) and (2).
>
> This debate has been taken up in what is called *the hiddenness of God.* So at the least, in order to assert that the absence of evidence is evidence of absence for God one is required to provide justification for this claim.

For a longer treatment of the question of the hiddenness of God, please see a paper by philosopher Michael Murray, which I discuss in this post. This is an important philosophical problem that rarely comes up in the formal academic debates that we all love to watch with William Lane Craig. On a related note, it's worth taking a look at the concept of burden of proof as it relates to the problems of evil and suffering. There are lots of links to lectures and essays in that post.

Ohio Senate passes John Kasich's pro-life, pro-jobs, pro-child budget

June 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> The Ohio state legislature today passed a state budget which includes multiple pro-life amendments ensuring the state is not involved in abortion funding with taxpayer money.
>
> The state budget, House Bill 153, now advances to pro-life Governor John Kasich. Among other things, the state budget contains Ohio Right to Life amendments that will protect taxpayer dollars from paying for abortion.
>
> The first amendment bans abortions from being performed in public hospitals. The second amendment prohibits abortion coverage in insurance plans of local public employees.
>
> "These two pro-life amendments will ensure that Ohio taxpayer dollars are not funding abortion," said Mike Gonidakis, executive director of Ohio Right to Life. "It is crystal clear that a vast majority of Ohioans oppose all forms of taxpayer funding of abortion."
>
> Additional pro-life amendments were also included. One measure requires the Ohio Department of Health to apply for federal abstinence education grants to reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies. The final pro-life amendment preserves the right of student groups to use and benefit from school funds and facilities, therefore protecting the rights of pro-life groups on college campuses.
>
> "Abstinence education taught by our pro-life educators reduces teen pregnancy. These efforts have resulted in a decrease in teen abortions in Ohio, having a dramatic impact," Gonidakis said.
>
> "I am pleased that the Ohio House budget bill once again places a priority on abstinence education," added Valerie Huber, Executive Director for the National Abstinence Education Association. "Passage of this measure assures that students in Ohio will again receive the benefits of this important risk avoidance message. We appreciate Ohio Right to Life's support for this measure that returns a state priority on abstinence education in Ohio."
>
> House Bill 153 will be signed into law on June 30th by pro-life Governor John Kasich, who Ohio Right to Life fully expects to support each of these life-saving measures.
>
> […]The passage of the budget comes after state House passage of three pro-life bills, including an abortion ban, ban on late-term abortions, and a bill to stop abortion funding in Ohio via the state exchange created under Obamacare.

> http://www.lifenews.com/2011/06/28/ohio-house-passes-ban-on-abortions-late-term-abortions/

And more from National Review on some of the fiscally conservative provisions in Ohio's budget.

Excerpt:

> For conservatives, it's a recession-era dream budget. "It balances the budget, preserves our tax cuts, and sets the stage for renewing the ability of Ohio to create jobs," Ohio governor John Kasich tells National Review Online.
>
> The $55.5 billion budget, which covers the next two fiscal years and fills an $8.6 billion shortfall, cuts $1.4 billion from Medicaid funding, sells five prisons to private operators**,** and slashes the money sent to local governments by 25 percent next year and an additional 25 percent in the following year. That last decision has proven to be controversial already, with critics charging that Kasich is passing the deficit problems to local governments, forcing them to raise taxes or severely restrict services. Kasich sees the cuts as an opportunity — and says it would be a "huge mistake" for local government to raise taxes, thus "providing disincentives for companies to locate in their communities."
>
> […]On education, over the next two years, Kasich is expanding school choice by quadrupling the numbers of vouchers available and rescinding a statewide cap on charter schools. He is capping higher-education tuition hikes at 3.5 percent, requiring that all university professors teach an extra class, and asking universities to look into ways of offering three-year bachelor's degrees.
>
> On the jobs front, he's adamant about the need to forgo tax hikes, even preserving an $800 million tax cut implemented in January. "States with lower levels of taxation have faster economic growth," Kasich observes. He's also setting aside $100 million — the profits from the state's liquor monopoly — to fund JobsOhio, a new initiative dedicated to attracting and retaining businesses in Ohio. With an unemployment rate of 9.2 percent and a loss of over 600,000 jobs in the last decade, Ohio could use the boost.
>
> Both the state house and senate are Republican-controlled, and Kasich is "very optimistic" that the budget will pass. "I've told [state lawmakers] that if they have some better policy ideas, that's fine — but we will not negotiate the numbers. We will have a balanced budget, and we will preserve the tax cut," he says.
>
> […]But if the budget succeeds in bringing about an economic resurgence, look for Kasich to reap the benefits. In a piece headlined "Kasich's beliefs at heart of plan," *Columbus Dispatch* writer Joe Hallett commented that the "plan is as much a social budget as a fiscal one, built on ideology as much as practicality," and said that "Ohio, at least in modern times, has never seen a state budget like [this]."

> Kasich is ready to be judged on the results. “Budgets are just a means to an end. They’re not an end in themselves,” he observes. “This budget can set the stage in our state for recovery.”

And the Toledo Blade reports that the Ohio budget should please parents, as well. Excerpt:

> Some 1,100 Ohioans swarmed the grounds of the Statehouse Tuesday to demonstrate support for Gov. John Kasich’s plan to quadruple the number of school vouchers, even as overall aid for public schools is cut.
>
> The governor’s $55.5 billion, two-year budget proposed last week also would lift the cap on the creation of charter schools, which operate with more regulatory freedom than their traditional public K-12 counterparts.
>
> “School choice is not about doing away with public schools,” Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor told the crowd. “It’s about making them better. … Ohio’s future depends on our children being the best and the brightest in the world.”
>
> Mr. Kasich’s spending plan would more than quad- ruple the number of vouchers to 60,000 by 2013 from roughly 14,000 now.
>
> Suzanne Donahue of Toledo sends her 13 and 11-year-old daughters to St. Catherine of Siena School. She’s never received an Ohio EdChoice scholarship, and she’s not sure that her children would qualify under the proposed expansion. But she attended Tuesday’s rally to support that option for other children.
>
> “We pay out of our pockets for it, and I vote for every tax situation that’s on the ballot for the kids because I hate to see the children suffer,” she said. “However, it would be nice to have some of those funds come to my own family. … I believe healthy competition will equal better schools and that better schools will survive.”
>
> […]The state runs two voucher programs — the statewide Ohio EdChoice Program, which caps the number of scholarships at 14,000, and a smaller, less generous program only for students in Cleveland city schools.
>
> The EdChoice program targets students who attend a school that has been in academic emergency or watch for two out of the last three years. The grants are $4,250 for K-8 students and $5,000 for high school students, or the amount of the participating school’s tuition, whichever is less.
>
> The budget also would lift the cap on how many bricks-and-mortar and on-line charter schools may be sponsored by one organization. The cap was imposed to slow the proliferation of such schools after a number of highly publicized failures. More than 300 charter schools in Ohio serve nearly 88,000 students.

Good news for fiscal and social conservatives. Well done, John Kasich!

Obama blasts private jet tax breaks created by his own stimulus

June 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation, my favorite think tank.

Excerpt:

> The chief economic culprit of President Obama's Wednesday press conference was undoubtedly "corporate jets." He mentioned them on at least six occasions, each time offering their owners as an example of a group that should be paying more in taxes.
>
> "I think it's only fair to ask an oil company or a corporate jet owner that has done so well," the president stated at one point, "to give up that tax break that no other business enjoys."
>
> But the corporate jet tax break to which Obama was referring – called "accelerated depreciation," and a popular Democratic foil of late – was created by his own stimulus package.
>
> Proponents of the tax break lauded it as a means to spur economic activity by encouraging purchases of large manufactured goods (planes). So the president's statement today – and his call to repeal that tax break generally – is either a tacit admission that the stimulus included projects that did not, in fact, stimulate the economy, or an attempt to "soak the rich" without regard for the policy's effects on the economy.
>
> For many Americans, those effects could be dramatic. Cessna and Gulfstream have facilities in a combined 15 cities nationwide (and another four abroad). A significant decline in consumption of private jets would undoubtedly have adverse effects on at least some of those local economies. Given the sizable bump in consumption that the initial tax break yielded, its repeal would likely have that economic domino effect.

Rightly or wrongly, any increase in the taxes paid by any US-based business is going to result in higher prices for consumers, or layoffs, or both. Even talking badly about businesses causes them to feel uncertain about the future. And when businesses are uncertain, they don't hire people and they don't expand. Obama's solution to the recession created by the Democrat housing policies was to take money from the private sector and blow it on the public sector. Private companies realize that the bill is going to come due soon, and they are sitting on their money in case Obama succeeds in his plan to raise taxes on businesses.

Operation Fast and Furious: The ATF gunrunning scandal

June 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation think tank, the latest on the Obama administration's facilitation of assault weapon sales to Mexican drug cartels. (I.e. – "gun control")

Excerpt:

> The U.S. government intentionally sells assault weapons to Mexican drug cartels. Those cartels use those weapons to kill, among others, a U.S. law enforcement officer. The White House deflects questions on the subject. The director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), who watched the gun sales on video in his office, stonewalls Congress. So does the Justice Department. The whistleblower that exposed it all is fired.
>
> Paperback novel or real-life Obama Administration scandal? Time's up.
>
> Just last week, Vince Cefalu, a special agent in the ATF for 24 years, was dismissed from his job after helping expose an operation code named "Operation Fast and Furious," which was designed to purposefully put assault weapons into the hands of Mexican drug cartels so they could then be tracked to collect intelligence.
>
> The operation itself is an exhausting series of unbelievable mistakes and lapses of judgment, but the Administration's response is even more disturbing, as is the subdued media reaction.
>
> According to the written testimony of Supervisory Special Agent Peter Forcelli: "ATF agents assigned to the Phoenix Field Division, with the concurrence of their local chain of command, 'walked' guns. ATF agents allowed weapons to be provided to individuals whom they knew would traffic them to members of Mexican drug trafficking organizations."
>
> The goal was to uncover larger criminal conspiracies across the border. Without informing Mexican authorities, the ATF facilitated over 2,500 assault weapons entering Mexico illegally. The only modern "tracking" method was a rigged-up GPS from Radio Shack that Forcelli took it upon himself to install, since the only other tracking method would be serial numbers on the guns. That device failed.
>
> ATF agent John Dodson, who feared that this operation would cost lives, was told to stand down and "fall in line" by supervisors. Dodson testified to Congress: "Although my instincts made me want to intervene and interdict these weapons, my supervisors directed me and my colleagues not to make any stop or arrest."
>
> ATF agent Olindo James Casa agreed. Casa testified:
>
> On several occasions I personally requested to interdict or seize firearms, but I was always ordered to stand down and not to seize the firearms.

> Later, guns sold in this operation were discovered at the scene of a shootout in Arizona in December 2010 in which Customs and Border Protection agent Brian Terry was killed. As Forcelli testified: "To allow a gun to walk is idiotic.… This was a catastrophic disaster."
>
> Since then, we have learned that this operation had support in Washington and that its tactics were not a secret. Forcelli testified that Assistant U.S. Attorney Emory Hurley helped orchestrate the operation and that U.S. Attorney Dennis Burk "agreed with the direction of the case." E-mails show that Deputy Assistant Director for ATF Field Operations William McMahon was "so excited about Fast and Furious that he received a special briefing on the program in Phoenix."
>
> Acting ATF director Kenneth Melson actually watched—yes, watched—live video surveillance of the operations from his office in Washington. He and his deputy were briefed weekly on the operation.
>
> […]As of today, the only person punished for Operation Fast and Furious has been someone who helped expose the details. Accountability for this massive operational failure is essential, and it will come only with more media attention.

It's a mighty peculiar kind of gun control, isn't it? But I could see how it would help the Obama administration to lobby the public to support increased gun control laws. All it cost was the lives of a few law enforcement agents. I'm sure that their families will understand.

Obama had the reputation for being soft on crime and criminals going as far back as his days as a state senator.

Excerpt:

> As a state senator, Obama has been no defender of the unalienable right to life. He twice voted against bills prohibiting tax funding of abortions. In April 2002, he voted against a bill to protect babies born alive after a failed abortion procedure. A similar federal law passed later that year. In 1997, Obama twice voted "present" on an Illinois partial-birth abortion ban. He absented himself from a third vote on the measure. In 2001, he voted "present" on a bill to notify parents when their minor children seek an abortion. He also voted against a cloning ban in 2000, although he voted for it in 2001. In 1999, Obama voted against requiring school boards to put Internet pornography filters on school computers meant for students' use. In 2001, he voted "present" on a bill to keep pornographic book and video stores and strip clubs from setting up within 1,000 feet of schools and churches. In 2003, he voted in the Health and Human Services Committee for a bill requiring "age appropriate" sex-education for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
>
> Despite his talk of promoting reading among inner-city youth, Obama has repeatedly opposed bills designed to promote discipline in public schools. In 2001, he twice voted "no" on a bill to let school districts require unruly students

> to complete suspensions before they can be shuffled into a new school district. He voted “present” on an almost unanimously passed bill requiring adult prosecution for students who fire guns on school grounds. Obama has been markedly soft on crime. In 2001, he voted against a bill that added extra penalties for crimes committed in furtherance of gang activities. He also voted against a bill making it a criminal offense for accused gang members, free on bond or on probation, to associate with known gang members. In 1999, he was the only state senator to vote against a bill prohibiting early prison release for criminal sexual abusers.

That article was written in 2004. If only we had looked at Obama’s record before we elected him.

Protein binding: by chance or intelligent design?

June 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Fazale Rana has this interesting post up on protein binding at Reasons to Believe.

Excerpt:

> Nobody likes getting the flu. In fact, the influenza virus represents a serious health challenge. For most people it causes a few days of misery, but tragically for others, it takes their lives.
>
> Biomedical researchers are looking for ways to develop therapies against the strains of the influenza virus that avoid destruction by the immune system or fail to respond to antiviral drugs. Recently scientists from the University of Washington and The Scripps Institute made progress toward this end. They designed novel proteins from scratch that bind to the stem region of hemagglutinin, a viral protein that plays a central role in the infection process.[1] The hope is that the new proteins will have therapeutic use and also help with diagnosis.
>
> This advance has obvious biomedical importance. It also contributes toward understanding the fundamental nature of protein-protein interactions (PPIs), and with this insight comes powerful new evidence that life stems from a Creator.
>
> Often, in order to carry out their function, proteins must interact and bind in a highly specific manner with other proteins. These PPIs are selective. If the wrong proteins bind to each other, the interaction is of no use to the cell.
>
> A large and varied population of proteins crowds the cell's interior. Even the simplest bacterium harbors several thousand different types of proteins, along with numerous copies of the other biomolecules inside it. The jam-packed environment complicates things. Proteins are more likely to encounter the "wrong" partners than the ones they are designed to interact with.
>
> Biochemists are currently working to understand the specificity of PPIs and how proteins avoid unintended interactions. As it turns out, protein surfaces are carefully structured to allow strong interactions between protein pairs while minimizing the strength of the unwanted interactions. Recent work by Harvard scientists indicates that the concentration of PPI-participating proteins in the cell is also designed carefully.
>
> In other words, protein structure and concentrations have to be precisely regulated to promote the PPIs critical for life.

The rest of the article talks about all the intricate and cutting-edge engineering and computation done by the scientists to create a situation where the proteins could bind, and then ends with this:

> When considering this study, it is remarkable to note how much effort it took to

> design a protein that binds to a specific location on the hemagglutinin molecule. As biochemists Bryan Der and Brian Kuhlman point out while commenting on this work, the design of these proteins required:
>
> …cutting-edge software developed by ~20 groups worldwide and 100,000 hours of highly parallel computing time. It also involved using a technique known as yeast display to screen candidate proteins and select those with high binding affinities, as well as x-ray crystallography to validate designs.[2]
>
> If it takes this much work and intellectual input to create a single protein from scratch, is it really reasonable to think that undirected evolutionary processes could accomplish this task routinely?

If you have to involve human intelligence to this degree, then I think that the best explanation is intelligent design.

Video shows how DNA information directs protein synthesis

July 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

SOMEONE didn’t like my post on the UK income-splitting , so I’m posting this video instead.

Please don’t link to the income-splitting post!

Live Action's Lila Rose debates pro-abortion activist

July 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this video of Lila Rose debating on the Live Action web site.

Are you wondering about that pro-abortion woman? Me too. So I found this interesting post on Captain's Quarters (Ed Morrissey) about the pro-abortion woman. She wrote on the Daily Kos that she has a crush on Iran's theocratic dictator Mahmoud Achmandinejad – even though she's a Jewish lesbian! Very weird.

Planned Parenthood attemps to censor Live Action videos

In this related Life News story, I learned that Planned Parenthood attempted to censor the Live Action undercover videos on Youtube.

Excerpt:

> A key part of Planned Parenthood's counterattack against Lila Rose's youth-led group, Live Action, and its staggered release early this year of damning videos depicting Planned Parenthood managers, "health professionals," and other employees willing to welcome, advise and aid & abet purported "sex traffickers" and "pimps" was to get YouTube to suppress the videos on the basis that they violated YouTube's published "privacy guidelines." This post recalls our long and ultimately successful effort to help Live Action defeat Planned Parenthood's counterattack.
>
> On their release last January, the Live Action videos "went viral," winning hundreds of thousands of viewers online, and both sparking and helping to sustain a nationwide firestorm of outrage against Planned Parenthood's willingness to use federal funds to support criminal exploitation of young people and sex slavery. The epidemic of outrage prompted Congressional efforts to de-fund Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider, by ending its federal subsidies. Those efforts nearly culminated in a shutdown of the federal government, as House Republicans pushed the issue as far as they could in last minute White House negotiations over the federal budget.

The rest of the post documents the back and forth exchanges between Planned Parenthood and the Thomas More Society lawyers, as Planned Parenthood tries to censor the undercover videos that exposed them as being willing "…to do business with, and thereby aid and abet, sex traffickers and pimps of underage girls, many of whom … recently arrived in this country, imported here for lewd and immoral purposes in what could only be described as a form of sex slavery – an obscenely cruel bondage." If you click through to read the whole thing, there is a happy ending, but only after some setbacks.

In other news, pro-lifers are asking New Jersey governor Chris Christie to veto Planned Parenthood funding again, after the Democrats in the Senate voted to restore subsidies

to Planned Parenthood.

Related posts

- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

How Michele Bachmann’s miscarriage shaped her pro-life views

July 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele and Marcus Bachmann
From Life News.

Excerpt:

> Campaigning in South Carolina, Republican presidential candidate Michele Bachmann said a “devastating” miscarriage helped shape her pro-life views on abortion. The compelling personal story ties in to her rationale for becoming a foster care mom.
>
> While on the campaign trail in Rock Hill, South Carolina, the Minnesota congresswoman revealed she had a miscarriage decades ago and that the event led her to solidify her pro-life views and prompted her and her husband to become a foster home to 23 children over the years.
>
> “After our second child was born, we became pregnant with a third baby,” Bachmann said, according to a Politico report. “And it was an unexpected baby, but of course we were delighted to have this child. And the child was coming along, and we ended up losing that child. And it was devastating for both of us, as you can imagine if any of you have lost a child.”
>
> She said the miscarriage also prompted Bachmann and her husband Marcus to re-evaluate their personal and professional life goals.
>
> “At that moment we didn’t think of ourselves as overly career minded or overly materialistic,” she said, according to Politico. “When we lost that child, it changed us. And it changed us forever.”
>
> “We made a commitment that no matter how many children were brought into

> our life, we would receive them because we are committed to life," she added.
>
> Reporters at the event say Bachmann shared it about halfway through her town hall at Winthrop University on Wednesday night. The miscarriage story is not one that Bachmann has shared much and Peter Hamby from CNN reports that "Even some of Bachmann's staffers were caught by surprise when she talked about the miscarriage and had not heard [the] story before."

You can see pictures and videos of the event at Right Wing News, courtesy of John Hawkins. I really appreciate that John has been broadly supportive of Michele, because he is a major figure in the conservative blogosphere.

You can also find out more about Michele Bachmann from interviews, campaign speeches and speeches in the legislature.

Are the Bush tax cuts to blame for Obama's 1.6 trillion dollar deficits?

July 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

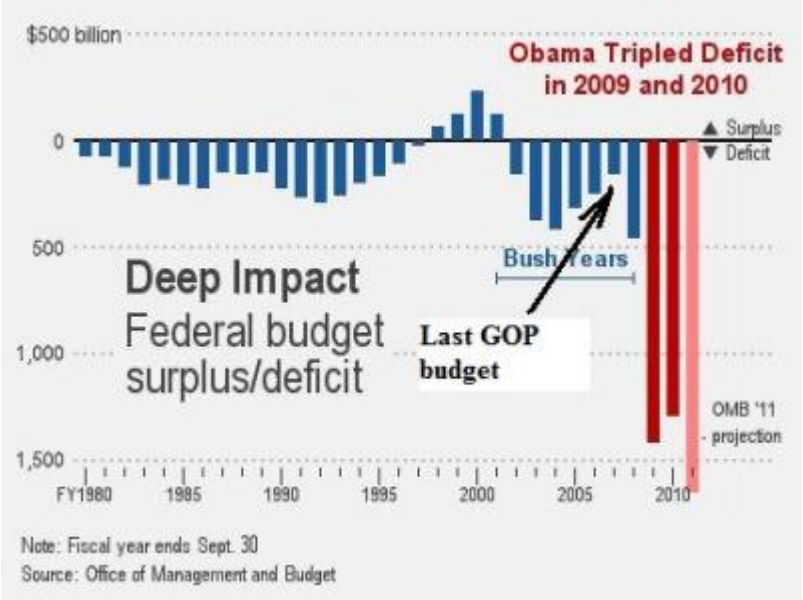

Obama Budget Deficit 2011

From the Wall Street Journal, the raw numbers on the Bush tax cuts and the deficit. (H/T Paul Ryan)

Excerpt:

> But what about the liberal claim, repeated constantly, that the Bush tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 caused today's deficits? CBO has shown this to be demonstrably false. On May 12, the budget arm of Congress examined the changes in its baseline projections from 2001 through 2011. In 2001, it had predicted a surplus in 2011 of $889 billion. Instead, it expects a deficit of $1.4 trillion.
>
> What explains that $2.29 trillion budget reversal? Well, the direct revenue loss from the combination of the 2001 and 2003 Bush tax cuts contributed roughly $216 billion, or only about 9.5% of the $2.29 trillion. And keep in mind that even this low figure is based on a static revenue model that assumes almost no gains from faster economic growth.
>
> After the Bush investment tax cuts of 2003, tax revenues were $786 billion higher in 2007 ($2.568 trillion) than they were in 2003 ($1.782 trillion), the biggest four-year increase in U.S. history. So as flawed as it is, the current tax code with a top personal income tax rate of 35% is clearly capable of generating big revenue gains.
>
> CBO's data show that by far the biggest change in its deficit forecast is the spending bonanza, with outlays in 2011 that are $1.135 trillion higher than the budget office estimated a decade ago. One-third of that is higher interest payments on the national debt, notwithstanding record low interest rates. But

> $523 billion is due to domestic spending increases, including defense, education, Medicaid and the Obama stimulus. Mr. Bush's Medicare drug plan accounts for $53 billion of this unanticipated spending in 2011.

The last GOP budget was in 2007, and the deficit was $160 billion, ONE TENTH of Obama's budget deficit. And that was WITH the tax cuts. The cause of the current trillion dollar deficits is Barack Obama's spending.

Remember what the unemployment rate was under Bush:

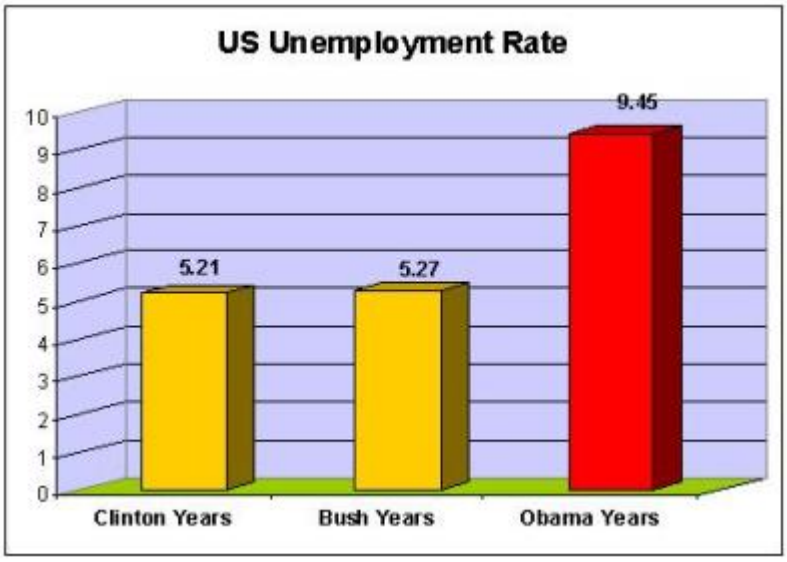

Comparison of unemployment rates - Bush vs Obama

I think that looking at the budget deficit numbers and the unemployment numbers is a good way to judge how capable a President is. It gets away from the media spin, the gaffes, the jokes on those liberal Comedy Channel shows. Just look at the numbers, because we all have to care about jobs and spending. Politics is about our freedom, prosperity and security. Not about making us laugh or feel superior to others.

A secular case against abortion rights

July 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about being only two months old

Note: this post has a twin! Its companion post on a secular case against gay marriage is here.

Now, you may think that the view that the unborn deserve protection during pregnancy is something that you either take on faith or not. But I want to explain how you can make a case for the right to life of the unborn, just by using reason and evidence.

To defend the pro-life position, I think you need to sustain 3 arguments:

1. The unborn is a living being with human DNA, and is therefore human.
2. There is no morally-relevant difference between an unborn baby, and one already born.
3. None of the justifications given for terminating an unborn baby are morally adequate.

Now, the pro-abortion debater may object to point 1, perhaps by claiming that the unborn baby is either not living, or not human, or not distinct from the mother.

Defending point 1: Well, it is pretty obvious that the unborn child is not inanimate matter. It is definitely living and growing through all 9 months of pregnancy. (Click here for a video that shows what a baby looks like through all 9 months of pregnancy). Since it has human DNA, that makes it a human. And its DNA is different from either its mother or father, so it clearly not just a tissue growth of the father or the mother. More on this point

at Christian Cadre, here. An unborn child cannot be the woman's own body, because then the woman would have four arms, four legs, two heads, four eyes and two different DNA signatures. When you have two different human DNA signatures, you have two different humans.

Secondly, the pro-abortion debater may try to identify a characteristic of the unborn that is not yet present or developed while it is still in the womb, and then argue that because the unborn does not have that characteristic, it does not deserve the protection of the law.

Defending point 2: You need to show that the unborn are not different from the already-born in any meaningful way. The main differences between them are: *size, level of development, environment* and *degree of dependence*. Once these characteristics are identified, you can explain that none of these differences provide moral justification for terminating a life. For example, babies inside and outside the womb have the same value, because location does not change a human's intrinsic value. More at Stand to Reason, here.

Additionally, the pro-abortion debater may try to identify a characteristic of the already-born that is not yet present or developed in the unborn, and then argue that because the unborn does not have that characteristic, that it does not deserve protection, (e.g. – sentience). Most of the these objections that you may encounter are refuted in this essay by Francis Beckwith. Usually these objections fall apart because they assume the thing they are trying to prove, namely, that the unborn deserves less protection than the already born.

Finally, the pro-abortion debater may conceded your points 1 and 2, and admit that the unborn is fully human. But they may then try to provide a moral justification for terminating the life of the unborn, regardless.

Defending point 3: I fully grant that it is sometimes justifiable to terminate an innocent human life, if there is a moral justification. One of the best known justifications is Judith Jarvis Thomson's "violinist" argument. This argument is summarized by Paul Manata, one of the experts over at Triablogue:

> Briefly, this argument goes like this: Say a world-famous violinist developed a fatal kidney ailment and the Society of Music Lovers found that only you had the right blood-type to help. So, they therefore have you kidnapped and then attach you to the violinist's circulatory system so that your kidneys can be used to extract the poison from his. To unplug yourself from the violinist would be to kill him; therefore, pro-lifers would say a person has to stay attached against her will to the violinist for 9 months. Thompson says that it would be morally virtuous to stay plugged-in. But she asks, "Do you have to?" She appeals to our intuitions and answers, "No."

Manata then goes on to defeat Thomson's proposal here, with a short, memorable illustration, which I highly recommend that you check out. More info on how to respond to

similar arguments is here.

The best book for beginners on the pro-life view is this book:

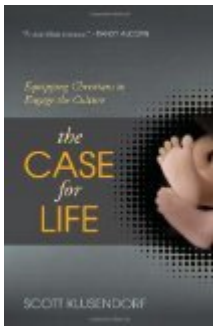

For those looking for advanced resources, Francis Beckwith, a professor at Baylor University, published the book Defending Life, with Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Video:10-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Objective truth in the abortion debate – a pro-life training video
- Alan Shlemon explains a classification system for pro-abortion arguments
- What is the best single book on the pro-life position?

And some posts motivating Christians and conservatives to take abortion seriously:

- Why Christians should focus on cultural issues as well as evangelism
- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion
- Are Christians too involved in politics?
- What did the early church fathers think about abortion?
- Scott Klusendorf confronts a "pro-life" nun who voted for Obama

Why do some people not believe in God?

July 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An analysis of the common causes of atheism. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Excerpt:

> Most atheists would have us think they arrived at their view through cool, rational inquiry. But are other factors involved? Consider the candid remarks of contemporary philosopher Thomas Nagel: "I want atheism to be true …. It isn't just that I don't believe in God, and, naturally, hope that I'm right about my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that." Could Nagel's attitude—albeit in a more subtle form—actually be common among atheists?
>
> […]The 20th-century ethics philosopher Mortimer Adler (who was baptized quietly at age 81) confessed to rejecting religious commitment for most of his life because it "would require a radical change in my way of life, a basic alteration in the direction of my day-to-day choices as well as in the ultimate objectives to be sought or hoped for …. The simple truth of the matter is that I did not wish to live up to being a genuinely religious person."
>
> Historian Paul Johnson's fascinating if disturbing book Intellectuals exposed this pattern in the lives of some of the most celebrated thinkers in the modern period, including Rousseau, Shelley, Marx, Ibsen, Hemingway, Russell, and Sartre. In their private (and often public) lives, these Western intellectual stars were moral wrecks.
>
> […]As children of the Enlightenment, we tend to heavily emphasize the impact of belief on behavior. But it also works the other way around. Our conduct affects the way we think. On the positive side, as Scripture's wisdom literature tells us, obedience and humility lead to insight and understanding. Negatively, as we indulge in immoral behavior, our judgment will be skewed.
>
> […]External factors may also hamper the natural awareness of God and contribute to a descent into atheism. In his book Faith of the Fatherless: The Psychology of Atheism, New York University psychologist Paul Vitz, a onetime atheist, examines the lives of the major atheists of the modern period, including Hobbes, Hume, Voltaire, Feuerbach, Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, Russell, and Freud. He found they had something in common: a broken relationship with their father. Whether by death, departure, abuse, or some other factor, the father relationships of all these well-known atheists were defective. Vitz also examined the lives of prominent theists during the same period (Pascal, Reid, Burke, Berkeley, Paley, Wilberforce, Kierkegaard, Schleiermacher, Newman, Chesterton, and Bonhoeffer, among others). In every case, he found a good relationship with the father or at least a strong father figure.

One more quick quote on the argument that immorality leads to an atheistic worldview:

> "I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way that they find most advantegous to themselves… For myself, the philosophy of meaningless was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political."
> — Aldous Huxley in *Ends and Means*, 1937

This rejection of morality is widely acknowledged by prominent atheists as being a selling point of atheism. People become atheists *because* they know that atheism will free them from having to do anything simply because it's "good".

Consider these prominent atheists:

> The idea of political or legal obligation is clear enough… Similarly, the idea of an obligation higher than this, referred to as moral obligation, is clear enough, provided reference to some lawgiver higher…than those of the state is understood. In other words, our moral obligations can…be understood as those that are imposed by God…. But what if this higher-than-human lawgiver is no longer taken into account? Does the concept of moral obligation…still make sense? …The concept of moral obligation [is] unintelligible apart from the idea of God. The words remain but their meaning is gone. (Richard Taylor, Ethics, Faith, and Reason (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985), p. 83-84)

> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory. (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins) http://www.simonyi.ox.ac.uk/dawkins/WorldOfDawkins-archive/Dawkins/Work/Arti

> cles/1995-05-10nomercy.shtml

And it works in reverse. When I was a young man, one of my reasons for becoming a Christian was precisely because I did not want to be like atheists. I could plainly see the harm they were causing others with their rejection of prescriptive morality, and when I put that together with the cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory, which I learned about in grade 1, the case was sealed. It helped that I had not done anything really wrong at that time, or it would have been harder for me to accept that I was guilty. The more bad stuff you are into, the harder it is to accept that you are wrong, and to turn away from it. Some clean-living atheists are going to have no problem being fair with the evidence. – switching to Christianity would be much easier for them to do.

As for his second point, consider this article that talks about how important fathers are in passing along religious convictions to children.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes *up* from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.

That is why I find it so odd that so many "Christians" insist on voting more and more wealth redistribution from rich to poor. The more that government programs are seen as a replacement from the protecting, providing and moral/spiritual leading that fathers do in the home, the more atheists we are going to be producing. Fathers are vital for passing on spiritual and moral convictions to children. Fathers are the ones who show that setting

moral boundaries is a way to love someone – that love is not incompatible with rules. It is very important that young people see that it is loving for a person in authority to set up rules and boundaries – and that there are reasons for those rules. It's very similar to the way that boys raised by single mothers are aggressively sexually – because they haven't seen men loving their wives up close, and getting respect and approval for that love. And girls raised fatherless are similar – they haven't seen men loving their wives up close, so they aren't in a position to judge men and hold them accountable. The family is needed to model all kinds of good behaviors at a pre-cognitive level.

You can order Jim Spiegel's book "The Making of an Atheist" here from Amazon:

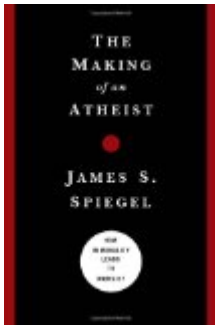

And you can also read a sample chapter for free here.

Should government recognize and legalize same-sex marriage?

July 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Earlier in the week, I posted a case against same-sex marriage that was restricted to non-religious arguments. Here's an article written by famous Christian apologist J Warner Wallace that does the same thing, but it is packed with even more evidence than mine!

In his article, he considers the following questions:

- What is the aim of the same-sex marriage movement?
- What percentage of people are gay in the United States?
- What is the role of government?
- Why should government promote traditional marriage?
- Are heterosexual and homosexual relationships the same with respect to domestic violence?
- Are heterosexual and homosexual relationships the same with respect to healthiness?
- Are heterosexual and homosexual relationships the same with respect to spousal fidelity?
- Are heterosexual and homosexual relationships the same with respect to stability?
- Does it matter to children whether their two biological parents raise them or not?

Here's an excerpt:

> It's clear that that traditional heterosexual two parent family units are far more enduring, monogamous, non-abusive and healthy. On these standards alone, it's reasonable for us to value and promote traditional two parent marriages as the 'ideal' form of family in our culture. But as it turns out, a number of studies confirm that two 'biological' parents are actually required if we want to best assure success and well-being in our children.
>
> Many studies come to this conclusion, including studies that are conducted by liberal advocacy groups who also recognize the fact that "children do best when raised by their two married biological parents…" (Mary Parke, "Are Married Parents Really Better for Children?", Center for Law and Social Policy Policy Brief, May 2003, p.1). This reality is confirmed by a number of additional studies demonstrating that "an extensive body of research tells us that children do best when they grow up with both biological parents…" (Kristin Anderson Moore, et al., "Marriage From a Child's Perspective: How Does Family Structure Affect Children, and What Can We Do about It?", Child Trends Research Brief, June 2002, p.1).
>
> We know, for example, that children raised in two biological parent families are far less likely to become sexually active at a young age compared to every other

form of family unit, including stepfamilies. (Dawn Upchurch, et al., “Neighborhood and Family Contexts of Adolescent Sexual Activity”, Journal of Marriage and the Family, 61, 1999, 920-930). Children who are not living with both biological parents are 50 to 150% more likely to abuse drugs that kids who are raised in other types of family units, including stepfamilies like those formed in same sex unions. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “The Relationship Between Family Structure and Adolescent Substance Use”, Rockville, MD, National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, 1996).

In a similar way, studies indicate that “children residing in households with adults unrelated to them were 8 times more likely to die of maltreatment than children in households with 2 biological parents. Risk of maltreatment death was elevated for children residing with step, foster, or adoptive parents.” (Michael Stiffman, et al., “Household Composition and Risk of Fatal Child Maltreatment,” Pediatrics, 109, 2002, pp.615-621). Over and over again, studies confirm the same reality: children do better when raised not only in two parent family units, but in two biological parent family units!

This conclusion is not limited to heterosexual studies. Even those who advocate and support same sex parenting recognize that there are inherent difficulties for children raised n these settings. The homosexual parenting literature continues to recognize this:

“The Lesbian and Gay Parenting Handbook: Creating and Raising Our Families” (April Martin):

“Some children do express an intense longing for the other biological parent, talking about it frequently and emotionally…. Adolescents take particular interest in both their heredity and in gender-specific role models.”

“The Lesbian Parenting Book: A Guide to Creating Families and Raising Children” (D. Merilee Clunis, G. Dorsey Green):

“It is very normal for children to long about and ask for a father…. It is natural to feel defensive when your child longs for a father. We encourage you to remain patient while she asks questions, sorts out information and comes to terms without knowing her father’s identity, or not having her biological father in her life. She needs to do it…. [Artificially Inseminated] children of lesbian parents may grieve never knowing their biological father.”

“Gay Men Choosing Parenthood” (Gerald P. Mallon):

“(The majority of children being raised in gay male households) sometimes verbalized a desire for a mother at one time or another.”

“For Lesbian Parents: Your Guide to Helping Your Family Grow Up Happy, Healthy, and Proud” (Suzanne M. Johnson, Elizabeth O’Connor):

“(Lesbian mothers should ask their daughters) if it’s hard sometimes not having a

> father. Let her know that you understand that sometimes it is hard."

Please consider giving this article a read. It is very comprehensive, and cites a huge number of sources. I think that this topic mattered a lot more to the author than it did to me. I grew up in a marriage home and my parents are still married. I only write about the issues of single motherhood, divorce and same-sex marriage because I have friends in these situations, and because I have read the research. But J Warner Wallace grew up in a single parent home. So he is writing about this topic based on his personal experience.

Further study

For a more academic case against SSM, see this peer-reviewed paper on traditional marriage and same-sex marriage, authored by two guys from Princeton University and one guy from the University of Notredame. One of those guys is the famous Robert P. George. For some simple, practical tips on defending traditional marriage, check out this tip sheet from the National Organization for Marriage.

You can also watch the videos from a formal academic debate on same-sex marriage held at the University of Central Florida, featuring Dr. Michael Brown. Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse also debated same-sex marriage at Columbia University in a formal academic debate. You can see her give a lecture on same-sex marriage at Houston Baptist University here, as well.

Democrat economists: “stimulus” cost $278,000 per job

July 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

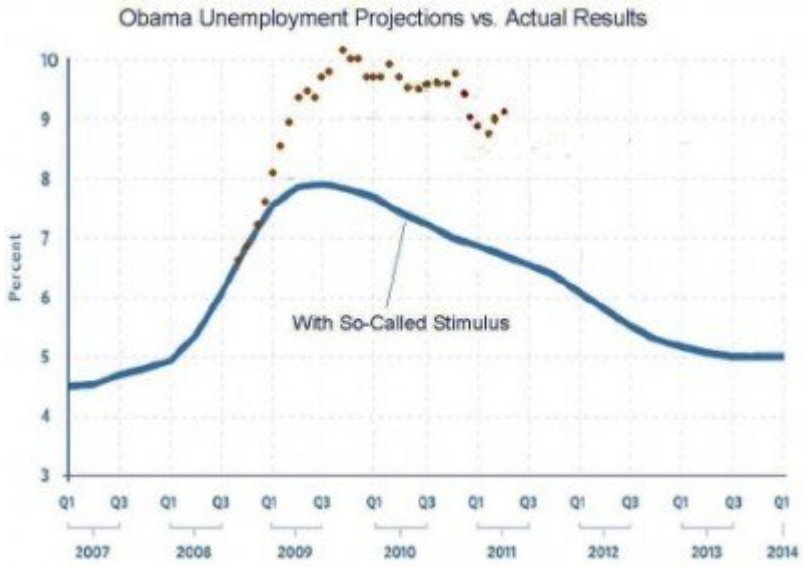

Obama Unemployment Stimulus Graph
From the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> When the Obama administration releases a report on the Friday before a long weekend, it’s clearly not trying to draw attention to the report’s contents. Sure enough, the “Seventh Quarterly Report” on the economic impact of the “stimulus,” released on Friday, July 1, provides further evidence that President Obama’s economic “stimulus” did very little, if anything, to stimulate the economy, and a whole lot to stimulate the debt.
>
> The report was written by the White House’s Council of Economic Advisors, a group of three economists who were all handpicked by Obama, and it chronicles the alleged success of the “stimulus” in adding or saving jobs. The council reports that, using “mainstream estimates of economic multipliers for the effects of fiscal stimulus” (which it describes as a “natural way to estimate the effects of” the legislation), the “stimulus” has added or saved just under 2.4 million jobs — whether private or public — at a cost (to date) of $666 billion. That’s a cost to taxpayers of $278,000 per job.
>
> In other words, the government could simply have cut a $100,000 check to everyone whose employment was allegedly made possible by the “stimulus,” and taxpayers would have come out $427 billion ahead.
>
> Furthermore, the council reports that, as of two quarters ago, the “stimulus” had added or saved just under 2.7 million jobs — or 288,000 more than it has now. In other words, over the past six months, the economy would have added or saved more jobs *without* the “stimulus” than it has with it. In comparison to how things

> would otherwise have been, the “stimulus” has been working in reverse over the past six months, causing the economy to shed jobs.
>
> Again, this is the verdict of Obama’s own Council of Economic Advisors, which is about as much of a home-field ruling as anyone could ever ask for. In truth, it’s quite possible that by borrowing an amount greater than the regular defense budget or the annual cost of Medicare, and then spending it mostly on Democratic constituencies rather than in a manner genuinely designed to stimulate the economy, Obama’s “stimulus” has actually undermined the economy’s recovery — while leaving us (thus far) $666 billion deeper in debt.

Imagine what a report would say that *wasn’t* written by Obama’s own economists.

Happy Independence Day 2011!

July 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

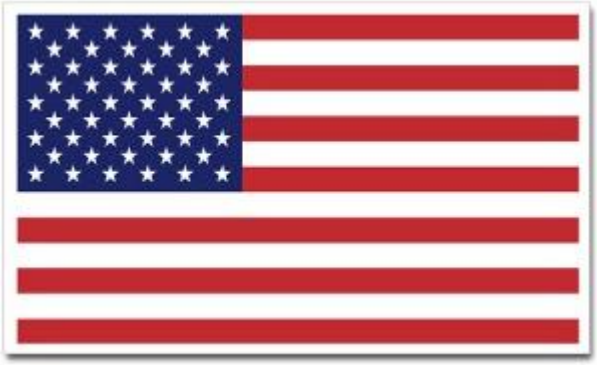

The Stars and Stripes

The Declaration of Independence

You can listen to conservative writer Scott Ott reading the Declaration of Independence here, and follow along with the complete text here.

The best book to read about the Revolutionary War is David McCullough's 1776, which I highly recommend. The audio book version is awesome.

George Washington and the American Revolution

Washington Crossing the Delaware

To really understand the founding of the United States, you should read about the story of Washington crossing the Delaware. At this point in the Revolutionary War, the British commanders had achieved a stunning series of victories against the Americans. They had even sent word home to the King that the war was over, and that the Americans would be forced to surrender. But Washington did not give up. He attacked the British forces and took them by surprise – and he won the Battle of Trenton! That was the turning point of the war. There almost *never was* a United States of America – that's how close the revolution came to failing.

Ronald Reagan vision of America

Ronald Reagan

Here is a portion of Ronald Reagan's farewell speech:

Excerpt:

> I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind it was a tall proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace, a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity, and if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That's how I saw it, and see it still.
>
> And how stand the city on this winter night? More prosperous, more secure, and happier than it was eight years ago. But more than that; after two hundred years, two centuries, she still stands strong and true on the granite ridge, and her glow has held steady no matter what storm. And she's still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home.

This is no ordinary nation.

Songs of America

Whenever I drive on long trips, I always practice singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "America the Beautiful".

Even if you are not an American, you can be an honorary American, just for today, if you sing the songs below. God knows that there are other people in the world that love freedom and look to the United States as the model.

If we fall now, then you other freedom-loving people abroad must be ready to pick up the torch!

United States Air Force

The Star Spangled Banner

Lyrics:

"Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country should leave us no more!
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave

O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!”

America the Beautiful

Lyrics:

“O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare of freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife.
Who more than self their country loved
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for halcyon skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the enameled plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee

Till souls wax fair as earth and air
And music-hearted sea!

O beautiful for pilgrims feet,
Whose stem impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till paths be wrought through
wilds of thought
By pilgrim foot and knee!

O beautiful for glory-tale
Of liberating strife
When once and twice,
for man's avail
Men lavished precious life!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till selfish gain no longer stain
The banner of the free!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till nobler men keep once again
Thy whiter jubilee!"

Here is my favorite version of America the Beautiful, sung by Ray Charles. This is the same version you hear on the Mark Levin show on Friday. Perfection.

Any more ideas?

Put your suggestions for more songs and speeches in the comments!

Remember to be grateful for the Founding Fathers, and other patriots, who risked everything for liberty in the Revolutionary war. Be grateful to those men and women still fighting abroad to keep those freedoms safe from evil. And most of all, be grateful to God that America is still the beacon of liberty.

Happy Independence Day!

John Stossel explains what’s great about America

July 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are all the parts of the documentary. (H/T Timmy from Rational Theism)

Here’s the quick summary of what the documentary is about.

Part 1 of 6.

Part 2 of 6.

Part 3 of 6.

Part 4 of 6.

Part 5 of 6.

Part 6 of 6.

You may also like this video by Dennis Prager explaining the American trinity.

Happy Independence Day!

More John Stossel stuff

- John Stossel documentary on public school costs and performance
- John Stossel documentary on entrepreneurs in America
- John Stossel’s documentary about public schools and school choice
- John Stossel explains how environmentalism kills millions of people
- New study shows that greens are less moral than ordinary people
- John Stossel explains how the profit-motive drives innovation in health care
- Is government more efficient than the private sector?
- John Stossel vs Michael Moore in 20/20 health care documentary

Dinesh D’Souza: What’s so great about America?

July 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dinesh D'Souza

Here is the essay, which provides an immigrant’s perspective on America (Dinesh is the son of East Indian immigrants).

Excerpt:

> Is America worthy of a reflective patriotism that doesn’t mindlessly assert, “My country, right or wrong,” but rather examines the criticisms of America and finds them wanting? As an immigrant who has chosen to become an American citizen, I believe that it is. Having studied the criticisms of America with care, my conclusion is that the critics have a narrow and distorted understanding of America. They exaggerate American faults, and they ignore what is good and even great about America.
>
> The immigrant is in a good position to evaluate American society because he is able to apply a comparative perspective. Having grown up in a different society-in my case, Mumbai, India-I am able to identify aspects of America that are invisible to people who have always lived here. As a “person of color,” I am competent to address such questions as what it is like to be a nonwhite person in America, what this country owes its minority citizens, and whether immigrants can expect to be granted full membership in this society. While I take seriously the issues raised by the critics of America, I have also developed an understanding of what makes America great, and I have seen the greatness of America reflected in my life. Unlike many of America’s homegrown dissidents, I am also acutely conscious of the daily blessings that I enjoy in America.
>
> Here, then, is my list of what makes America great.

He focuses on the following areas:

- America’s Good Life
- Equality
- The Pursuit of Happiness
- The Ethics of Work
- Religious Liberty
- Ideals and Interests
- America’s Virtue

Read the whole thing. It’s long it’s similar to his book of the same name, but up to date.

Brian Auten interviews David Wood on Christianity and Islam

July 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Dearborn Four in court
(That's David Wood on the left)

Click here for a 90-minute interview podcast covering a wide range of topics. (Please click through for the MP3 file)

About David:

> David Wood is a Teaching Fellow in Philosophy. A former atheist, David converted to Christianity after examining the evidence for God's existence and the historical evidence for Jesus' resurrection. He has degrees in biology and philosophy and is a member of the Society of Christian Philosophers and the Evangelical Philosophical Society. David lives in the Bronx, NY, with his wife Marie and his three sons—Lucian, Blaise, and Reid.

This is interesting:

> David Wood is a Teaching Fellow in Philosophy at Fordham University, where he teaches Philosophy of Human Nature and Philosophical Ethics. A former atheist, he became a Christian after investigating the historical evidence for Jesus' resurrection. Due to a college friendship with a Muslim named Nabeel, David began an intensive study of Islam, and now reaches Muslims through Acts 17 Apologetics Ministries, which he codirects with his friend Nabeel (who is now a Christian).

Boy, is it great when God reaches out to these scholarly guys.

David is one of the brave Christians who was arrested by Dearborn for answering questions about Christianity asked by Muslims.

Brian’s summary of the interview:

> Today’s interview is with David Wood, a former atheist who converted to Christianity after examining the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. As well as being a Teaching Fellow in Philosophy, David directs Acts 17 Apologetics Ministries, defending the Christian Faith against atheistic and Islamic objections. He talks about the Dearborn Arab Festival, the growth of Islam, the crucifixion of Jesus (Christian view compared to Islam), the usage of the word “Allah,” Muslim arguments for the Qu’ran, the question of Jihad, assessing arguments in favor of Islam, inaccuracies in the Qu’ran, recommended resources on Islam, and more.
>
> Find Acts 17 Apologetics here, as well as great resources at Answering-Islam. Blog here: AnsweringMuslims.com.

You can find more interviews with the best Christian apologists at Apologetics 315, and be sure and check out his “Must-visit” pages for some excellent links.

Do right-to-work or forced union states create more high-paying jobs?

July 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neil Simpson writes about a CNBC report entitled "America's Top States for Business 2011". At the top of the list: right-to-work states where workers are not forced to join unions that collect union dues to support Democrat policies like amnesty for illegal immigrants, taxpayer-funded abortion and legalizing same-sex marriage.

Here are the criteria used to rank states in the CNBC survey:

- Cost of Doing Business
- Workforce
- Quality of Life
- Economy
- Transportation & Infrastructure
- Technology & Innovation
- Education
- Business Friendliness
- Access to Capital
- Cost of Living

Red State writes:

> When it comes to America's Top States for Business 2011, when it comes to a quality workforce, 18 out of the top 20 states are Right-to-Work states. Moreover, **all 22 Right-to-Work states are in the top 25 states for having the best workforces**.
>
> CNBC defines its criteria as this:
>
> Many states point with great pride to the quality and availability of their workers, as well as government-sponsored programs to train them. We rated states based on the education level of their workforce, as well as the numbers of available workers. **We also considered union membership. While organized labor contends that a union workforce is a quality workforce, that argument, more often than not, doesn't resonate with business.** We also looked at the relative success of each state's worker training programs in placing their participants in jobs.
>
> Since nine out of 10 of the states cited for having the best education are ***not*** right to work states, it appears that those who receive their educations in forced-union states get smart, pack up and leave, leaving the not-so-smart union extremists to invent myths about their own superiority while they pay their forced union dues.

And here's a map of right to work states:

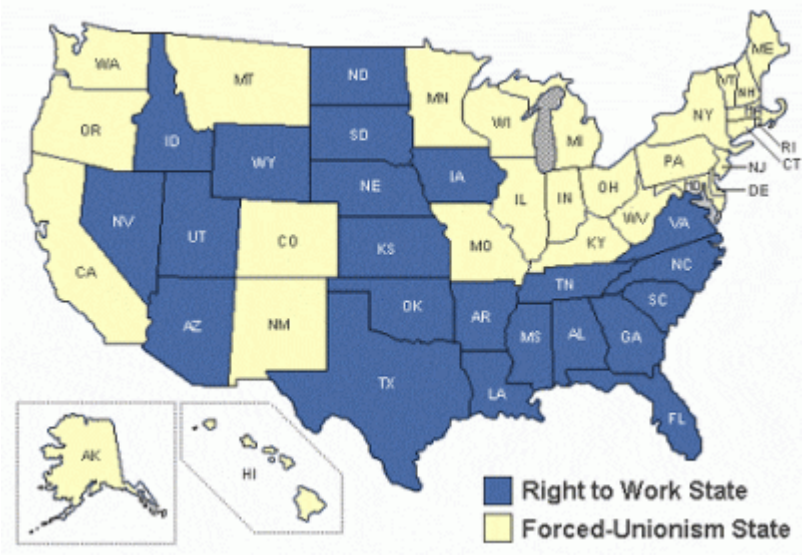

Right to Work State Map

Notice that they are mostly Republican states, because are the states that are run by economists and people with business experience – people who know how to create jobs, as opposed to giving speeches that demonize and threaten the people who create jobs.

Doug Ross posted these charts a while back that show that employees also do better in right to work states. There are more jobs being created, and the income growth is higher than the forced union states.

Employment growth:

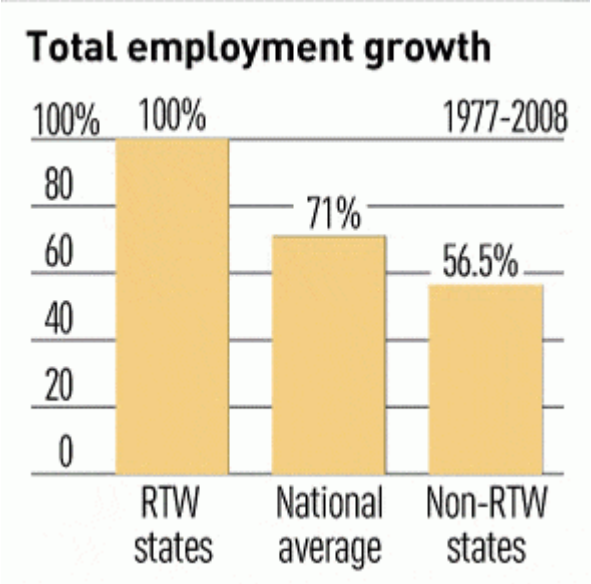

Right To Work States: Employment Growth

Income growth:

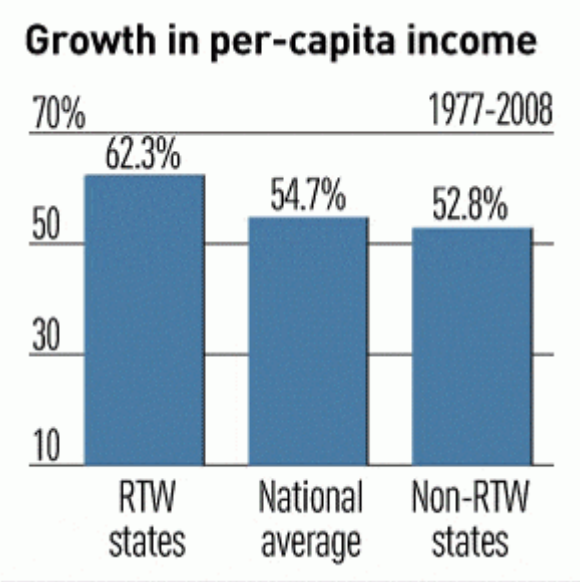

Right To Work States: Income Growth
The only losers are the unions. In right to work states, businesses and workers WIN.

How feminism led to increased child abuse and child neglect

July 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Casey Anthony, feminism and abortion

Here's a fine article on the long-term consequences of feminism, written by Carolyn Moynihan at MercatorNet. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Despite decades of feminism and gender role revision, we are still more shocked when mothers neglect, abuse and especially kill their children. But one does not have to look far into the lives of most of these women to find that the other side of the sexual revolution — what's politely known as the "evolution" of the family — has played a significant role.
>
> Casey Anthony is a single mother, living with her own parents, the father of her child nowhere to be seen, although there have been rumours of incest. Macsyna King was cohabiting with her twins' father, Chris Kahui.
>
> The stresses of single parenthood, with or without boyfriends, are well known. And the dangers of cohabitation for children are becoming clearer all the time. A recent US federal government study of child abuse and neglect shows the dramatically increased risks for children living in a home where there is an unrelated boyfriend — and even with their own parents if they are cohabiting. Sociologist Brad Wilcox comments:
>
> This new federal study indicates that these cases are simply the tip of the abuse iceberg in American life. According to the report, children living with their mother and her boyfriend are about 11 times more likely to be sexually, physically, or emotionally abused than children living with their married biological parents.

> Likewise, children living with their mother and her boyfriend are six times more likely to be physically, emotionally, or educationally neglected than children living with their married biological parents. In other words, one of the most dangerous places for a child in America to find himself in is a home that includes an unrelated male boyfriend—especially when that boyfriend is left to care for a child by himself.
>
> But children living with their own father and mother do not fare much better if their parents are only cohabiting. The federal study of child abuse found that children living with their cohabiting parents are more than four times more likely to be sexually, physically, or emotionally abused than their peers living in a home headed by their married parents. And they are three times more likely to be physically, emotionally, or educationally neglected than children living with their married biological parents. In other words, a child is not much safer when she is living in a home with her parents if her parents' relationship does not enjoy the legal, social, and moral status and guidance that marriage confers on relationships.

So how does it work?

Well, Mrs. Moynihan is right to talk about the sexual revolution as a cause of the problems that children face. The whole point of third-wave feminism is for women to have recreational sex "like men" and to pursue their careers "like men" – at the expense of marriage and parenting. The kinds of men that women will choose today for this recreational sex are *completely different* from the kinds of men that women used to choose when they wanted protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders. And that's why women end up having sex with men who are not qualified to be husbands and fathers. Today, men who want to get married and to have a mother for their children are to be avoided. All of their demands on women to be wives and mothers are just "too strict".

If a woman's goal is recreational sex and a career, then she won't choose a man who has demonstrated his ability to perform traditional husband/father roles. She will choose a man who is physically attractive, entertaining, non-judgmental and who won't expect her to be a wife and mother. That's why courting has been replaced with binge-drinking, hooking up and co-habitating. Religion, chastity and economics are out, and drinking, hook-ups and abortions are in. The problem is that when women choose to drift into relationships that start with selfish recreational sex, instead of with chastity and courting, then any children who happen along are more likely to be abused, neglected and impoverished.

The most important thing to many women who have been influenced by feminism is that they are happy all the time. And they think that they can extend their selfish pursuit of happiness into a lasting relationship – that men and children will somehow celebrate their selfishness. For some women, if the demands of children and men don't make them happy, then they can just abort the children and divorce the men for any reason. What

abortion really amounts to in practice is the refusal by women to be selective about who they have sex with, followed by the willingness to kill in order to avoid having their own happiness diminished by having to care for babies. And abortion is supported by many women today. (Men are slightly more pro-life than women)

This Reuters article discusses the Casey Anthony trial, and has an interesting quote:

> Roommates of Casey Anthony's former boyfriend described on Wednesday how the Florida mother partied at nightclubs and remained outgoing after her 2-year-old daughter's death on June 16, 2008.
>
> "She seemed normal. Happy. Like everything was fine," said Nathan Lezniewicz on the second day of testimony in Casey Anthony's first-degree murder trial in Orlando.
>
> The case has gained national attention and drawn TV personalities including Nancy Grace and Geraldo Rivera to the courtroom. Casey Anthony, 25, faces the death penalty if convicted.
>
> Prosecutors contend that she suffocated daughter Caylee Marie Anthony by wrapping duct tape around her head, nose and mouth. During opening statements Tuesday, the defense said the toddler drowned in the Anthony family's backyard pool and no one alerted police about the accident.
>
> Caylee wasn't reported missing until July 15, 2008, by her grandmother, Cindy Anthony, who called 911 and told the dispatcher she had not seen the little girl for a month.
>
> Lezniewicz roomed at the time with Casey's then-boyfriend Tony Lazzaro and two other young college men at an Orlando apartment.
>
> Lezniewicz said he was at a local nightclub when Casey entered a "hot body" contest. Jurors saw a photograph of her and Lezniewicz grinning at the club.
>
> "She was partying, having a good time," testified Roy "Clint" House, another roommate.

Today, many women don't want men who tell her what's right and what's true – especially about religion and morality. Those men are "too strict" and "too demanding" – they tell her about the moral obligations that women have to husbands and children, and she doesn't want to hear or have to do anything about it. As I argued before, it's important to understand that encouraging women to make better decisions about men and sexual activity as part of the effort to protect children, born and unborn.

Related posts

- Marriage: Still the Safest Place For Women and Children
- Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty
- New study finds that fathers and marriage reduce drug use in children
- Do children do better when raised by married fathers?
- Can Christianity survive the decline of males?

- New study shows that children of divorce twice as likely to have a stroke
- How do you persuade people to get married for the good of the children?
- New study shows how fathers reduce stress in children
- Feminist politican wants UK government to provide free IVF
- Are elderly women who have babies through IVF being selfish?
- Why two-parent families are better for children
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- What causes single motherhood, and how are children affected?
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day

Obama tries to block execution of convicted Mexican rapist and murderer

July 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama is trying to block Texas from executing a convicted rapist and murderer, who also happens to be an illegal immigrant.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama is attempting to block the execution in Texas on Thursday of a Mexican man because it would breach an international convention and do "irreparable harm" to US interests.
>
> The White House has asked the US supreme court to put the execution of Humberto Leal Garcia on hold while Congress passes a law that would prevent the convicted rapist and murderer from being put to death along with dozens of other foreign nationals who were denied proper access to diplomatic representation before trials for capital crimes.
>
> […]Leal, 38, was convicted in 1994 of the rape and murder of a 16-year-old girl in San Antonio. Few question that he was responsible for the killing but the Texas authorities failed to tell Leal, who was born in Mexico and has lived in the US since the age of two, that under the Vienna convention he was entitled to contact the Mexican consulate when he was arrested.
>
> Leal's lawyers argue that the lack of consular access played a role in the death penalty being applied because the Mexican national incriminated himself in statements made during "non-custodial interviews" with the police on the day of the murder. Had Leal had access to the Mexican consulate it would have been likely to have arranged a lawyer who would have advised the accused man to limit his statements to the police. As it was, the Mexican authorities were never informed of his arrest.

Obama had the reputation for being soft on crime and criminals going as far back as his days as a state senator.

Excerpt:

> As a state senator, Obama has been no defender of the unalienable right to life. He twice voted against bills prohibiting tax funding of abortions. In April 2002, he voted against a bill to protect babies born alive after a failed abortion procedure. A similar federal law passed later that year. In 1997, Obama twice voted "present" on an Illinois partial-birth abortion ban. He absented himself from a third vote on the measure. In 2001, he voted "present" on a bill to notify parents when their minor children seek an abortion. He also voted against a cloning ban in 2000, although he voted for it in 2001. In 1999, Obama voted against requiring school boards to put Internet pornography filters on school computers meant for

> students' use. In 2001, he voted "present" on a bill to keep pornographic book and video stores and strip clubs from setting up within 1,000 feet of schools and churches. In 2003, he voted in the Health and Human Services Committee for a bill requiring "age appropriate" sex-education for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
>
> Despite his talk of promoting reading among inner-city youth, Obama has repeatedly opposed bills designed to promote discipline in public schools. In 2001, he twice voted "no" on a bill to let school districts require unruly students to complete suspensions before they can be shuffled into a new school district. He voted "present" on an almost unanimously passed bill requiring adult prosecution for students who fire guns on school grounds. Obama has been markedly soft on crime. In 2001, he voted against a bill that added extra penalties for crimes committed in furtherance of gang activities. He also voted against a bill making it a criminal offense for accused gang members, free on bond or on probation, to associate with known gang members. In 1999, he was the only state senator to vote against a bill prohibiting early prison release for criminal sexual abusers.

That article was written in 2004. He hasn't changed a bit.

Atlanta public schools caught helping students to cheat on standardized tests

July 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Beverly Hall and Atlanta public schools

From the liberal Atlanta Journal-Constitution, news of a cover-up of "systemic" cheating in the Atlanta public schools. (H/T Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> State investigators have uncovered a decade of systemic cheating in the Atlanta Public Schools and conclude that Superintendent Beverly Hall knew or should have known about it, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution has learned.
>
> In a report that Gov. Nathan Deal planned to release today, the investigators name nearly 180 educators, including more than three dozen principals, as participants in cheating on state curriculum tests, officials said over the weekend. The investigators obtained scores of confessions.
>
> The findings suggest the national accolades that Hall and the school system have collected — and the much-vaunted academic progress for which she claimed credit — were based on falsehoods. Raising test scores apparently became a higher priority than conducting the district's business in an ethical manner.
>
> […]The report's release culminates more than two years of inquiries into Atlanta's huge gains on the state-mandated Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in 2009. An AJC analysis first detected statistically improbable increases in test scores at two Atlanta schools in 2008. The following year, the AJC published another analysis that found suspicious score changes on the 2009 CRCT at a dozen Atlanta schools. The newspaper's reporting ultimately led to the state investigation that is being released today.The investigators' report, officials said,

> depicts a culture that rewarded cheaters, punished whistle-blowers and covered up improprieties. Strongly contradicting denials of cheating and other irregularities by Hall and other top district executives, the report describes organized wrongdoing that robbed tens of thousands of children — many of whom came from disadvantaged backgrounds and struggled in school — of an honest appraisal of their abilities.
>
> At the same time, the document apparently provides a scathing assessment of the school system's handling of the scandal, accusing district leaders of hampering the special investigators' efforts to uncover the truth. The investigators reportedly accuse Hall and her top aides of refusing to take responsibility for the district's problems.
>
> The report also will detail potentially criminal acts by district officials, the AJC has learned.
>
> In an effort to maintain Hall's high profile in national education circles, the superintendent and her top aides reportedly tried to hide unflattering information as far back as 2006. District officials illegally altered documents related to the test and withheld material that should have been released under the state's Open Records Act, the report is expected to say.

There is a possibility of criminal charges, and I do hope that this woman and all responsible spend at least a few years in jail.

We need to get taxpayer money out of the public school system, and back into the hands of parents, through a federal voucher system. Let the parents decide which school is best for their children. Let them buy education the same way that they buy things from other retailers. Choice and competition. Lower price and higher quality. If they don't like the results that public schools provide, then let them take their money to a private school – or use the money to homeschool.

Notice that the largest teacher union, the National Education Association (NEA) has endorsed Obama. Democrats protect the failings of the education establishment, in exchange for votes and political activism. The faster we vote the Democrats out, the faster education in this country will improve.

Tennessee Republicans pass Unborn Victims of Violence Act

July 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From NRLC News.

Except:

> Early on the morning of January 5, 2004, two men were driving their pickup truck past a woman walking up a Nashville street when she collapsed.
>
> Antonio Dejesus Idelfonso and Eliseo Marcelino-Quintero immediately stopped to see if they had hit her and found Tracy Owen, a 32 year old pregnant woman, lying on the road crying for help. Idelfonso told police that he responded, "Here's your help," and shot her five times in the upper body. One of the bullets struck her preborn child. [See here.]
>
> Idelfonso and Marcelino-Quintero said that they killed Tracy because they thought they had struck her with their pickup truck and feared they would get in trouble.
>
> At the time Deputy District Attorney, Tom Thurman, told The Tennessean that the state's law applied only to any unborn child able to live outside the mother's womb.
>
> Thankfully, as of last Friday, crimes such as these in Tennessee will now fully recognize two victims, regardless of the age of the unborn child.
>
> With enactment of Tennessee's 2011 expanded Unborn Victims of Violence Act, prosecutors will be able to bring charges against individuals such as Idelfonso and Marcelino-Quintero and give recognition to the humanity and life of unborn children assaulted or killed in the commission of a crime.
>
> Together with our sponsors, pro-life state Senator Mae Beavers (R-Mt. Juliet) and pro-life state Representative Joshua Evans (R-Greenbrier), Tennessee Right to Life led the effort to expand this protection.
>
> As the state's oldest and largest pro-life organization, Tennessee Right to Life is leading the way to restore full protection for Tennessee's unborn children and unborn children.

Great News from Tennessee!

How the Obama administration opposes the creation of 100,000 jobs

July 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

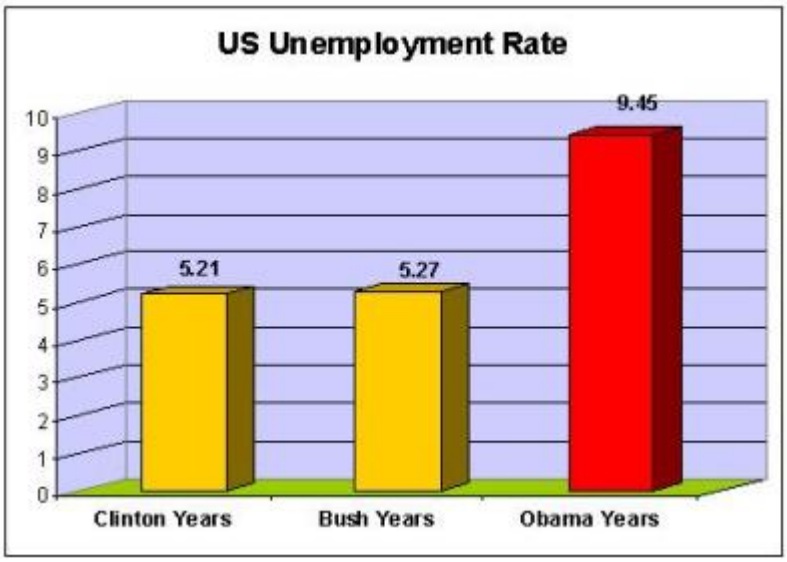

Comparison of unemployment rates - Bush vs Obama

The Wall Street Journal reports on how Obama's Environmental Protection Agency is trying to block a pipeline from Alberta that would create 100,000 jobs and lower oil prices at the pump.

Excerpt:

> With 9.1% unemployment and gasoline prices in the stratosphere, President Obama must sometimes wish that some big corporation would suddenly show up and offer a shovel-ready, multibillion-dollar project to create 100,000 jobs and reduce U.S. reliance on oil from dictatorships.
>
> Oh, wait. His Secretary of State has had that offer sitting on her desk since she was sworn in. The trouble is that the Administration can't approve it without upsetting its anti-fossil fuel constituency. And so the proposal sits.
>
> In September 2008 TransCanada applied to build a new pipeline—the Keystone XL—to bring diluted bitumen from the oil-rich tar sands of Alberta to thirsty American refineries on the Gulf Coast. It is hardly a radical proposal. Canadian crude has been flowing to the U.S. for decades. Another Canadian company—Enbridge—operates the Clipper pipeline across the Canadian border to Chicago. In July 2010 TransCanada began operating its Keystone pipeline from Alberta to Cushing, Oklahoma, which is a major storage and pricing depot.
>
> The Keystone XL would cut a slightly different path, through the American heartland to Port Arthur, Texas. Judging from its past experience and that of Enbridge, TransCanada expected that permitting would take roughly 23 months. Thirty-three months, two State Department studies and 208,000 public comments later, TransCanada is still waiting. On current trend, the company will

> be lucky to get its permit by January, or after 40 months. But even that is far from certain.
>
> If Mr. Obama were drawing up a plan from scratch to boost union employment and deflate Iranian-ally Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, it might look like the Keystone XL. TransCanada estimates that building the pipeline will mean more than $20 billion—$13 billion from TransCanada itself—in investment and 13,000 new American jobs in construction and related manufacturing. The company also expects more than 118,000 “spin-off” jobs during the two years of construction.
>
> TransCanada says it has signed building contracts with four major U.S. unions. It projects that construction will generate $600 million in new state and local tax revenue and that over its life the pipeline will generate another $5.2 billion in property taxes. The Energy Policy Research Foundation in Washington estimates that by linking to the XL, oil producers in North Dakota’s Bakken region will enjoy efficiency gains of between $36.5 million and $146 million annually. Lower transport costs will mean savings for Gulf Coast refiners of $473 million annually if the pipeline meets conservative expectations of shipping 400,000 barrels per day.
>
> Today those refineries are highly dependent on imports from Mexico and Venezuela, which have decreased output in recent years. TransCanada would help to provide Gulf Coast refiners with a more reliable source of supply from a U.S. ally.

Obama wants to create jobs – he just wants to create jobs in Mexico, Venezuela and the Middle East.

Thomas Sowell on health care: thinking beyond stage one

July 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

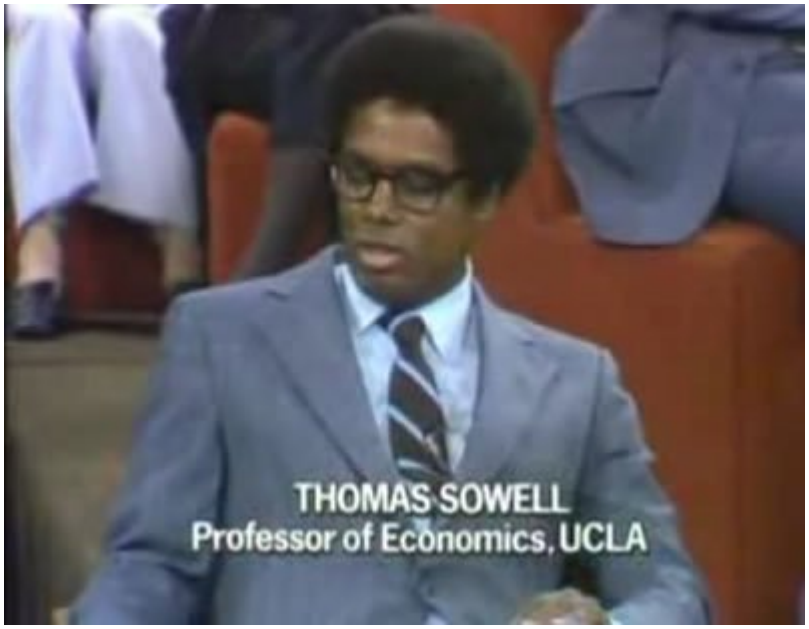

Young Thomas Sowell

Economist Thomas Sowell explains what socialized medicine means *for all parties* – and what evidence is ignored.

Excerpt:

> The same preference for talking points, and the same lack of interest in digging into the facts about realities, prevails today in discussions of whether to have a government-controlled medical system.
>
> Since there are various countries, such as Canada and Britain, that have the kind of government-controlled medical systems that some Americans advocate, you might think that there would be great interest in the quality of medical care in these countries.
>
> The data are readily available as to how many weeks or months people have to wait to see a primary-care physician in such countries, and how many additional weeks or months they have to wait after they are referred to a surgeon or other specialist. There are data on how often their governments allow patients to receive the latest pharmaceutical drugs, as compared with how often Americans use such advanced medications.
>
> But supporters of government medical care show virtually no interest in such realities. Their big talking point is that the life expectancy in the United States is not as long as in those other countries. End of discussion, as far as they are concerned.
>
> They have no interest in the reality that medical care has much less effect on

> death rates from homicide, obesity, and narcotics addiction than it has on death rates from cancer or other conditions that doctors can do something about. Americans survive various cancers better than people anywhere else. Americans also get to see doctors much sooner for medical treatment in general.

Conservatives are the reality-based community.

What produces more fraud? The free market or government-run programs?

July 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review, an article examining how government programs like Medicare and Medicaid are ripe for fraud and waste.

Excerpt:

> The three most salient characteristics of Medicare and Medicaid fraud are: It's brazen, it's ubiquitous, and it's other people's money, so nobody cares.
>
> Consider some of the fraud schemes discovered in recent years. In Brooklyn, a dentist billed taxpayers for nearly 1,000 procedures in a single day. A Houston doctor with a criminal record took her Medicare billings from zero to $11.6 million in one year; federal agents shut down her clinic but did not charge her with a crime. A high-school dropout, armed with only a laptop computer, submitted more than 140,000 bogus Medicare claims, collecting $105 million. A health plan settled a Medicaid-fraud case in Florida for $138 million. The giant hospital chain Columbia/HCA paid $1.7 billion in fines and pled guilty to more than a dozen felonies related to bribing doctors to help it tap Medicare funds and exaggerating the amount of care delivered to Medicare patients. In New York, Medicaid spending on the human-growth hormone Serostim leapt from $7 million to $50 million in 2001; but it turned out that drug traffickers were getting the drug prescribed as a treatment for AIDS wasting syndrome, then selling it to bodybuilders. And a study of ten states uncovered $27 million in Medicare payments to dead patients.
>
> These anecdotes barely scratch the surface. Judging by official estimates, Medicare and Medicaid lose at least $87 billion per year to fraudulent and otherwise improper payments, and about 10.5 percent of Medicare spending and 8.4 percent of Medicaid spending was improper in 2009. Fraud experts say the official numbers are too low. "Loss rates due to fraud and abuse could be 10 percent, or 20 percent, or even 30 percent in some segments," explained Malcolm Sparrow, a mathematician, Harvard professor, and former police inspector, in congressional testimony. "The overpayment-rate studies the government has relied on . . . have been sadly lacking in rigor, and have therefore produced comfortingly low and quite misleading estimates." In 2005, the *New York Times*reported that "James Mehmet, who retired in 2001 as chief state investigator of Medicaid fraud and abuse in New York City, said he and his colleagues believed that at least 10 percent of state Medicaid dollars were spent on fraudulent claims, while 20 or 30 percent more were siphoned off by what they termed abuse, meaning unnecessary spending that might not be criminal." And even these experts ignore other, perfectly legal ways of exploiting Medicare

> and Medicaid, such as when a senior hides and otherwise adjusts his finances so as to appear eligible for Medicaid, or when a state abuses the fact that the federal government matches state Medicaid outlays.
>
> Government watchdogs are well aware of the problem. Every year since 1990, the U.S. Government Accountability Office has released a list of federal programs it considers at a high risk for fraud. Medicare appeared on the very first list and has remained there for 22 straight years. Medicaid assumed its perch eight years ago.

They waste money because it’s not their money – it’s your money. Private companies minimize waste because it is in their interest to minimize waste – they have to be competitive and be responsive to customers, or they don’t get paid. The profit motive reduces waste and fraud.

Do naturalistic theories account for the minimal facts about Jesus' resurrection?

July 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a neat post from Ichtus77 on her blog of the same name. She lists 12 facts that are admitted by the majority of New Testament scholars across the broad spectrum of worldviews, including atheistic scholars.

Excerpt:

> I am studying "the twelve facts" and want to get down what I've got so far. After the facts are displayed, we're going to turn the whole thing into a logic puzzle.
>
> Here are the 12 Facts:
>
> 1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion.
> 2. He was buried, most likely in a private tomb.
> 3. Soon afterwards the disciples were discouraged, bereaved and despondent, having lost hope.
> 4. Jesus' tomb was found empty very soon after his interment.
> 5. The disciples had experiences that they believed were the actual appearances of the risen Christ.
> 6. Due to these experiences, the disciples lives were thoroughly transformed. They were even willing to die for their belief.
> 7. The proclamation of the Resurrection took place very early, from the beginning of church history.
> 8. The disciple's public testimony and preaching of the Resurrection took place in the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus had been crucified and buried shortly before.
> 9. The gospel message centered on the preaching of the death and resurrection of Jesus.
> 10. Sunday was the primary day of worshiping and gathering.
> 11. James, the brother of Jesus and a skeptic before this time, became a follower of Jesus when he believed he also saw the risen Jesus.
> 12. Just a few years later, Paul became a believer, due to an experience that he also believed was an appearance of the risen Jesus.

These are the facts that you see admitted in debates by atheistic historians, like in the debate between James Crossley and William Lane Craig.

The resurrection puzzle is like a Sherlock Holmes mystery. People deduce what happened from the evidence that is considered to be unimpeachable. The "minimal facts" that EVERYONE accept in debates. The reason why everyone accepts these facts is because they pass the historical criteria which are used everywhere by everyone to determine

what is parts of historical writings are authentic. The historical tests for historical records take into account things like how many sources a asserted fact is in, and how early the sources are, and so on.

So the approach is like this:

1) Use historical tests to get undeniable historical facts
2) Try to explain the undeniable historical facts with a hypothesis

Like Sherlock Holmes says: "…when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

It's the Sherlock Holmes method of doing history.

So, Ichtus77 lists the minimal facts, and in the rest of the post she surveys the following naturalistic hypotheses to see how well they can account for the minimal facts listed above.

Here are the naturalistic theories:

- The Unknown Tomb theory
- The Wrong Tomb theory
- The Twin theory
- The Hallucination theory
- The Existential Resurrection and the Spiritual Resurrection theories
- The Disciples Stole Body theory
- The Authorities Hid Body theory
- The Swoon theory
- The Passover Plot theory

The main way that scholars argue for the resurrection is to list the minimal facts, and defend them on historical grounds, then show that there is no naturalistic hypothesis that explains them all. The resurrection hypothesis explains all the data.

Craig Hazen asks: “can atheists be good without God?”

July 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Craig Hazen encourages Christians to challenge the New Atheists on their claims of being good without God (and claiming that God is a moral monster, too). How are they helping themselves to objective morality on atheism, so that these statements are more than just their personal opinions?

Hazen writes:

> The primary technique the new atheists have adopted for dealing with the issue of the origin or grounding of the moral law is obfuscation. The new atheists are very fond of saying, “We don’t need God to be good.” Indeed, they often say that atheists, agnostics and skeptics often lead more wholesome lives than lifelong professing Christians. Now, theists should not be fooled by this. Our response should be, “Of course you don’t need God to be good — we’ve never claimed that you do.” You see, it is not knowledge (epistemology) of the moral law that is a problem — after all, the Bible teaches that this law is written on every human heart. Rather, the daunting problem for the new atheist is the nature and source (ontology) of the moral law. Here are some questions you can ask Richard Dawkins the next time you sit next to him on a bus:
>
> • If everything ultimately must be explained by the laws of physics and chemistry, help me understand what a moral value is (does it have mass, occupy space, hold a charge, have wavelength)?
>
> • How did matter, energy, time and chance result in a set of objective moral values? Did the big bang really spew forth “love your enemy?” If so, you have to help me understand that.
>
> • What makes your moral standard more than a subjective opinion or personal preference? What makes it truly binding or obligatory? Why can’t I just ignore it? Won’t our end be the same (death and the grave) either way?
>
> The old atheists did not want to have to face questions like these, so they simply denied the reality of objective moral values. The new atheists have thrown the door open. Let’s not make it easy for them. Let’s ask the hard questions in a winsome and engaging way.

Where does the standard that allows atheists to “be good” come from on atheism? And where does the standard that allows them to judge God as evil come from on atheism?

Comedy: atheists making moral demands on atheists

I think that this article on The Other McCain is relevant to Hazen’s essay. The article explains the latest scandal in the atheist blogosphere: A 30-year old divorced atheist feminist tried to impose objective moral obligations on another atheist who hit on her in

an elevator.

Excerpt:

> There is nothing wrong with “don’t do that” as *advice*. The guy’s approach was clumsy and creepy. But it seems obvious, to me at least, that he was merely exhibiting a deficiency of social skills, rather than predatory menace.
>
> While we cannot rule out the possibility that the guy is a serial killer with the bodies of 11 victims buried in his backyard, I’m inclined to believe he was just awkward and clueless. It was 4 a.m. and, in the famous words of Mickey Gilley, “The women all get prettier at closing time.” What was this guy’s blood-alcohol content? Was he at the beer-goggles stage where he saw Watson as Ingrid Bergman and thought he was Humphrey Bogart?
>
> Well, as Watson says, “don’t do that.” But it’s a huge leap from “don’t do that” to a very broad and general accusation of *misogyny* and a complaint about being *sexualized*.
>
> What set off the big brouhaha amongst atheists and feminists, however, was when Dawkins showed up in the comments of a blog to belittle Watson’s complaint by comparing her unpleasant elevator experience to the sufferings of women in the Islamic world. Once the feminists started screaming for blood, Dawkins’s fellow atheists were only too happy to throw him under the bus. The reaction was as if Dawkins himself had hit on Watson.
>
> This is one of those episodes where the totalitarian impulse of feminism is glaringly apparent. Feminists ferociously suppress dissent and seek to impose a conformity of thought, so that anyone within the movement who expresses doubt about the dogma and the agenda is condemned as a heretic.

But I wanted to address the issue of atheism and morality in my comment to McCain’s post:

> It’s hilarious to me that a woman can be an atheist, think the universe is an accident, think that there is no objective moral law based on a design for how humans ought to be, and then prescribe criteria for male behavior as if it is not just her personal opinion, but is a shared, objective standard that men should adhere to.
>
> If the universe is an accident, then whatever is, is right. If matter is all there is, then there is no way that the matter “ought to be”. Matter just is.
>
> Here’s Dawkins himself:
> “In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won’t find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor

> cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music."
>
> Source: http://www.physics.ucla.edu/~chester/CES/may98/dawkins.html
>
> You can't derive a prescriptive morality if nature is just about survival of the fitness. Either we are moral agents endowed with consciousness and free will (which requires a non-material soul) OR WE ARE ANIMALS. And animals are not moral agents. The customs and conventions of different social groups in different times and places in history are not objective moral duties. They are just like culinary customs and dress styles. And you can't accuse anyone of being immoral on that kind of relativistic view. The worst she could say is "I don't like it" or "that person is acting unfashionably". She can't say that anything is WRONG.

And I also thought this comment to McCain's post was pretty funny:

> There's a possibility here that you're overlooking, which is that the young lady might just have wanted for people to know–in a shrill, scolding, disapproving, school-marmish kinda way–that somebody was attracted to her. Because otherwise, you know, we would probably assume that nobody is.

Indeed. It makes me laugh when atheists assert that marriage, which is built on self-sacrifice and moral obligations, is somehow compatible with the view that morality is "an illusion fobbed off on us by our genes", as atheist Michael Ruse says. Atheists reduce morality to personal opinions and cultural conventions that vary by time and place, and then they demand that other people act according to those preferences and conventions. "[They] laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in [their] midst. [They] castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful", as C.S. Lewis argues in his essay "Men Without Chests".

Recall the study that showed that Christians who attend church regularly have vastly lower divorce rates than average. Maybe that's because they are constantly reminded in church that morality is rooted in God's character, and not a figment of their imaginations that can be vetoed for selfish gain? That might be a helpful bit of knowledge to have in your worldview if you're considering marriage, you know. Love *requires* that the idea of self-sacrifice be rationally grounded in some sort of objective design for the universe and us. You can't get love from selfishness. You can't get marriage from survival of the fittest. Not rationally, anyway. And when the chips are down, and obligations clash with self-interest, reason has a *major* part to play in determining how we will act. Either you ground morality or you cave in to selfishness, and marriages don't last when you have no *reason* not to be selfish.

By the way, the best article refuting evolutionary explanations of morality is written by Mark D. Linville. It's in the book "Contending with Christianity's Critics".

Hmmn, I wonder where this link goes.

This post was linked by:

- The Other McCain

How should intelligent design affect education policy?

July 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The best people to read on that question are the people from the Discovery Institute. And you can find a nice summary of their approach on the Sententia blog.

Excerpt:

> I decided to gather together an easy-to-follow outline of the evolution of (how apropos) science education policy and intelligent design with a particular focus on the role of the Discovery Institute.
>
> **The New Debate over Teaching Evolution**
>
> - It's about science, NOT religion.
> - It's about teaching MORE about evolution, not less.
> - The problem isn't that we are teaching too much about evolution rather we are not teaching enough about evolution.
> - It's about freedom of speech and academic freedom.
> - Discovery Institute has "transformed the debate [over evolution] into an issue of academic freedom rather than a confrontation between biology and religion." *New York Times*, August 21, 2005
>
> **Discovery Institute's "Teach the Controversy" Approach**
>
> - Teach the scientific evidence for and against Darwin's theory, but *don't* try to mandate the study of alternatives to Darwin like intelligent design.
> - This tries to *not* politicize intelligent design.
> - This was DI's policy *before* Dover, and it remains the policy *after* Dover.

The rest of the article explains how this approach has been applied to the education system in different states, and how the Darwinian Empire is responding.

Lenny Esposito discusses how postmodernism influences the church

July 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s the video, which is number 5 in a 6-part series.

And here’s number 6 in the 6-part series.

The rest of the videos are here at the Come Reason YouTube channel.

First Michele Bachmann TV ad airs in Iowa

July 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This ad is now playing on televisions in Iowa.

Here's a response to the ad from the left-leaning Politico.

Excerpt:

> Michele Bachmann is going up in Iowa with the first television ad of her presidential campaign, a 30-second spot titled "Waterloo" that Bachmann's team says will start running statewide today.
>
> The bio spot, produced by Strategy Group Media, features a direct-to-camera Bachmann talking about growing up in Waterloo, Iowa, her five children, her foster kids and her professional life.
>
> "I know we can't keep spending money that we don't have," Bachmann says, pivoting to politics and touting her congressional record of fighting "the wasteful bailout [and] against the stimulus," and pledging: "I will not vote to increase the debt ceiling."
>
> The commercial is upbeat, with a strumming guitar overlay as Bachmann speaks. The spot is going up just as Bachmann is introducing herself to Iowa voters, who already put her in a statistical tie for first place in a recent Des Moines Register poll.
>
> She is making a serious push to win the Ames Straw Poll next month, and even some Democrats are taking note that she is running a professional campaign so far, with crisp visuals at her stump stops following an effective rollout.

Look like a good ad to me. Common sense conservatism.

Michele Bachmann is my top choice for President *by far*, with Tim Pawlenty in second place and Herman Cain in third place. I am waiting to hear whether Texas Governor Rick Perry will jump in. I have friends who want him to run.

What does God want Christians to accomplish in this life?

July 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Your choices today are part of an ongoing relationship with God

Melissa writes a post about it on her Hard-Core Christianity blog. I heartily endorse this post, and it represents my experience learning from C.S. Lewis' writings as well.

Intro:

> Over the past year I've thought a great deal about the brevity of life when it is considered in the context of eternity. I've pondered this so often, in fact, I've begun thinking of my current mental preoccupation as a sort of mid-life crisis. I've felt God impressing this idea–of our temporal life being a precious drop in the bucket of time–upon me more and more, and I haven't known quite what to do with the emotions and the thoughts that have surfaced. I wouldn't call them negative or depressing; I'd describe them as mysterious, pulsing, non-yet-solidified. I suppose I should have realized before now that God was indeed taking me somewhere in the heavy yet gentle way only He operates.

Excerpt:

> **HERE'S WHAT I AM COMING TO UNDERSTAND…**
>
> This is not just a life to be tolerated until we reach our eternal resting place. This is our *single, fleeting opportunity* to prepare ourselves for the day when we step out of these Shadowlands and into direct fellowship with God; everything we allow Him to build and nurture within us *here* will come to ultimate fruition and purposefulness in Heaven. A sobering thought, is it not?
>
> My favorite analogy is that of a soldier being honed by battle after battle with the Enemy. Lewis says,

> **Christianity is the story of how the rightful King has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage…He wants every bit of intelligence we have to be alert at its job, and in first-class fighting trim.**
>
> Through temporal life, the soldier is consciously and intentionally growing wiser and more competent; when he finally presents himself to his beloved King, he will be sublimely outfitted for a purposeful place in the eternal Kingdom. Lewis continues:
>
> **…it is quite true that there will probably be no occasion for just or courageous acts in the next world, but there will be every occasion for being the sort of people that we can become only as the result of doing such acts here.**
>
> We live at a very special point in man's history. We can stand on the shoulders of great Christian men and women who have much to teach us if we will but read and study their legacy. God has raised up great theologians, apologists, philosophers, writers, and artists to steer and inspire us, if we will only take notice. It boils down to how we choose to dedicate our time and energy.
>
> I implore you, as my brothers and sisters in Christ: Learn about our faith. Understand the history of Christianity, the essential doctrines, and the historical and scientific support for the reliability of our Scripture. Open your mind and heart to what the Spirit wants to teach you. Use these lessons to recruit and help train fellow soldiers. We are preparing for the Kingdom to come!

Read the whole thing!

And when you're done with that, read this excerpt from Mere Christianity, entitled "The Obstinate Toy Soldiers".

Excerpt:

> The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God… And the present state of things is this. The two kinds of life are now not only different (they would always have been that) but actually opposed.
>
> The natural life in each of us is something self-centred, something that wants to be petted and admired, to take advantage of other lives, to exploit the whole universe. And especially it wants to be left to itself: to keep well away from anything better or stronger or higher than it, anything that might make it feel small. It is afraid of the light and air of the spiritual world, just as people who have been brought up to be dirty are afraid of a bath. And in a sense it is quite right It knows that if the spiritual life gets hold of it, all its self-centredness and self-will are going to be killed and it is ready to fight tooth and nail to avoid that.
>
> Did you ever think, when you were a child, what fun it would be if your toys could come to life? Well suppose you could really have brought them to life. Imagine turning a tin soldier into a real little man. It would involve turning the tin into

> flesh. And suppose the tin soldier did not like it He is not interested in flesh; all he sees is that the tin is being spoilt He thinks you are killing him. He will do everything he can to prevent you. He will not be made into a man if he can help it.
>
> What you would have done about that tin soldier I do not know. But what God did about us was this. The Second Person in God, the Son, became human Himself: was born into the world as an actual man-a real man of a particular height, with hair of a particular colour, speaking a particular language, weighing so many stone. The Eternal Being, who knows everything and who created the whole universe, became not only a man but (before that) a baby, and before that a foetus inside a Woman's body. If you want to get the hang of it, think how you would like to become a slug or a crab.
>
> The result of this was that you now had one man who really was what all men were intended to be: one man in whom the created life, derived from his Mother, allowed itself to be completely and perfectly turned into the begotten life. The natural human creature in Him was taken up fully into the divine Son. Thus in one instance humanity had, so to speak, arrived: had passed into the life of Christ. And because the whole difficulty for us is that the natural life has to be, in a sense, "killed," He chose an earthly career which involved the killing of His human desires at every turn-poverty, misunderstanding from His own family, betrayal by one of His intimate friends, being jeered at and manhandled by the Police, and execution by torture. And then, after being thus killed-killed every day in a sense-the human creature in Him, because it was united to the divine Son, came to life again. The Man in Christ rose again: not only the God. That is the whole point For the first time we saw a real man. One tin soldier-real tin, just like the rest-had come fully and splendidly alive.

I think there are two ways to work at not being a tin soldier. 1) Reading apologetics books in order to be able to be a friend to God by telling people the truth about him, with evidence. Those shared experiences of you speaking up for your friend because you know what you are talking about get you out of your own desires and build a self-sacrificial friendship with him. And 2) Studying public square issues like abortion, divorce, marriage and so forth in order to articulate intelligent reasons why the Bible is correct in what it asserts about moral questions. The experience of talking to other people about economics, politics and foreign policy builds the relationship with God. And the more you know, the less freedom you have to make bad decisions – learning the truth about things is how you make doing evil *unthinkable.*

These are the good insights in C.S. Lewis books that help people who would like to become Christians to know how they are supposed to go about doing that. I have had non-Christian friends read them in order to understand at a practical level what Christianity is all about. These books are excellent to read when you are in high school and college. My favorites are "Mere Christianity", "The Problem of Pain", "God In the

Dock", "The Abolition of Man", "The Great Divorce", "The Four Loves", "Miracles", "Christian Reflections", etc . I have never read the Narnia books, though. I also recommend that non-Christians all read the gospel of John as a snapshot of what Christianity is all about. You can read it in a few hours.

I would really recommend this lecture (MP3) by Walter Bradley as well, which is the best thing I have ever encountered about the Christian life. If you are not training hard, learning new things, and having people ask you questions about your faith every day, then you are doing it wrong – you need to get a intellectual/professional mentor and get moving forward. The normal Christian life is full of dangers and adventures! If you don't look in the mirror every morning and see a heroic knight going out to try to slay dragons, then you are *doing Christianity wrong*.

By the way, if you are a Christian woman and you want to impress a Christian man, you need to talk about your Christian life to the man like Melissa does – with reference to books. Melissa is a particularly good example of how to behave because she is heavily into science apologetics. She is also fiscally conservative.

Doctors grow new trachea from patient's own adult stem cells

July 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Doctors have replaced the cancer-stricken windpipe of a patient with an organ made in a lab, a landmark achievement for regenerative medicine. The patient no longer has cancer and is expected to have a normal life expectancy, doctors said.
>
> […]The windpipe is a hollow tube, about 4.5 inches long, leading to the lungs. A key part of it is a scaffold—which functions like a skeleton for the organ—consisting of tissues such as cartilage and muscle. As a first step, a team led by Alexander Seifalian of University College London used plastic materials and nanotechnology to make an artificial version of the scaffold in the lab. It was closely modeled on the shape and size of the Eritrean man's windpipe.
>
> Meanwhile, researchers at Harvard Bioscience Inc. of Holliston, Mass., made a bioreactor, a shoe-box-size device similar to a spinning rotisserie machine. The artificial scaffold was placed on the bioreactor, and stem cells extracted from the patient's bone marrow were dripped onto the revolving scaffold for two days.
>
> With the patient on the surgery table, Dr. Macchiarini and colleagues then added chemicals to the stem cells, persuading them to differentiate into tissue—such as bony cells—that make up the windpipe.
>
> About 48 hours after the transplant, imaging and other studies showed appropriate cells in the process of populating the artificial windpipe, which had begun to function like a natural one. There was no rejection by the patient's immune system, because the cells used to seed the artificial windpipe came from the patient's own body.

Another success for ethical adult stem cell research.

Related posts

- Adult stem cells used to grow a new heart
- CBS News discovers that adult stem cells produce more treatments
- Adult stem cells used to restore sight to patients blinded by chemical burns
- British boy becomes first in the world to have stem cell transplant
- ABC News reports on how adult stem cells produce innovative cures today
- Round up of articles on adult stem-cell research from FRC
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough

- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama’s plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

John Boehner says no to Obama's plan to raise taxes by 2 trillion

July 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican House Speaker John Boehner
From the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Senate Democrats have drafted a sweeping debt-reduction plan that would slice $4 trillion from projected borrowing over the next decade without touching the expensive health and retirement programs targeted by President Obama.
>
> Instead, Senate Democrats are proposing to stabilize borrowing through sharp cuts at the Pentagon and other government agencies, as well as $2 trillion in new taxes…
>
> […]Republicans dismissed the Democratic blueprint, saying higher taxes would be devastating to an economy already weighed down by a 9.2 percent unemployment rate. In their spending plan, House Republicans proposed to save $4 trillion entirely through spending cuts; they would also eliminate Medicare as an open-ended entitlement after 2021.
>
> "If they're calling for $2 trillion in tax hikes in the middle of a jobs crisis, it's little wonder that it's been 800 days since Senate Democrats passed a budget," said McConnell spokesman Don Stewart.
>
> Since early this year, Senate Democrats have struggled to draft a spending plan. Moderates refused to endorse any blueprint that included big annual budget deficits or big tax hikes. Liberals, meanwhile, opposed sharp cuts to social programs. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), the senior Budget Committee Republican, has relentlessly hammered Democrats for their failure to adopt a budget.
>
> Although the new document is unlikely to be officially adopted, it was embraced by a majority of Senate Democrats when Conrad presented it at a closed-door

> luncheon earlier this week, aides said.
>
> Under the blueprint, the top income tax rate would rise to 39.6 percent for individuals earning more than $500,000 a year and families earning more than $1 million. That group, which constitutes the nation's richest 1 percent of households, would also pay a 20 percent rate on capital gains and dividends, rather than the 15 percent rate now in effect.

John Boehner says no way.

Excerpt:

> Speaker John A. Boehner told President Obama on Saturday night he will not agree to the president's most ambitious plan for deficit reduction, citing the administration's pursuit of tax increases as one of the main hurdles.

The Democrats want to tax investors and job creators. Is it any wonder that this administration has been unable to create jobs? They keep taxing and regulating the small businesses and investors who enable the creation of the majority of new private sector jobs, then are shocked to find that no new jobs are being created. When will they learn that "taxing the rich" just means "taxing the job creators"?

Why are companies not hiring?

Companies are not hiring because the Democrats spent too much, and now they want to raise taxes. Higher taxes makes companies not hire workers.

Look at this diagram:

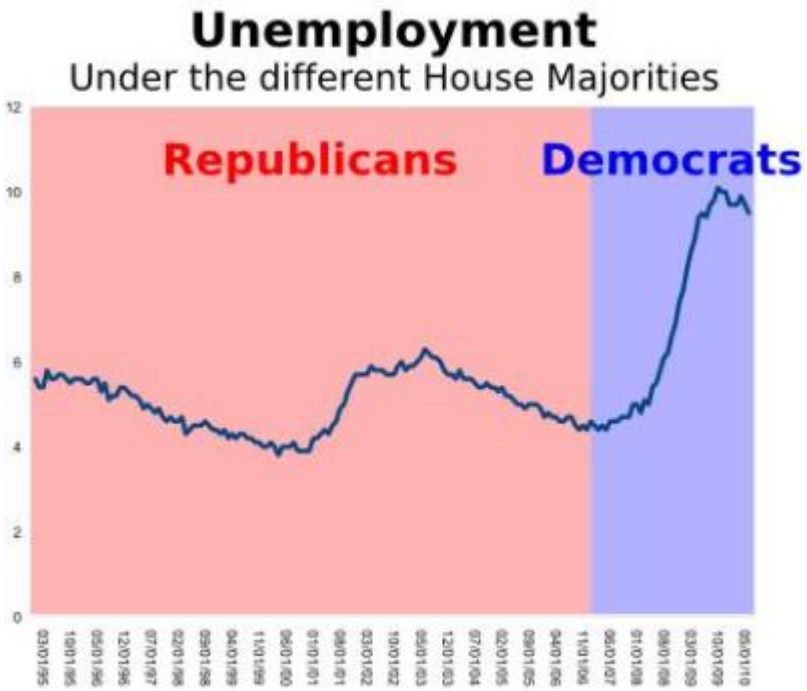

Republican control of House = low unemployment

Compare the unemployment rates when Republican Newt Gingrich was in charge of the House, to when Nancy Pelosi was in charge:

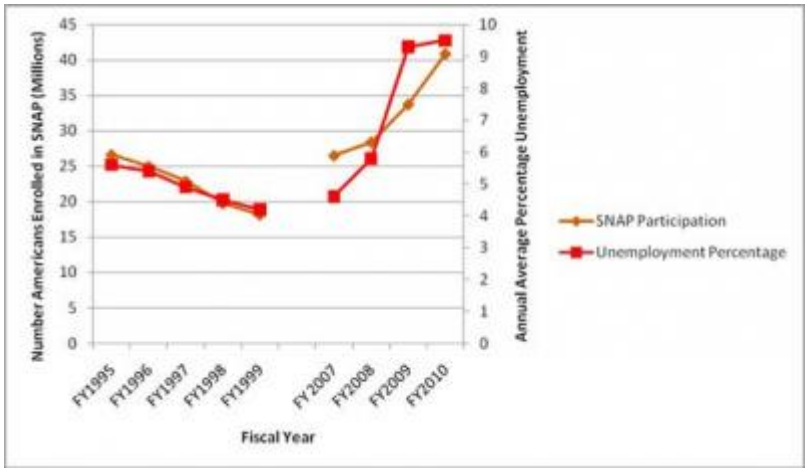

Unemployment: Gingrich ('95-'99) vs Pelosi ('07-'10)

Nancy Pelosi added 5.34 trillion to the national debt in 4 years! If you are running a business, then you STOP hiring when you see that the government is spending so much that new taxes are inevitable. You cannot argue with these facts – more spending means higher unemployment, BECAUSE more spending raises fears of higher taxes on job creators. And that’s exactly what Obama is now threatening, and why the unemployment rate is going UP not DOWN. Newt Gingrich added only ONE TRILLION to the national debt between 1994 and 1999. ONE TRILLION. That’s bad, but it’s not FIVE TRILLION as under Pelosi.

Prior to January 2007, George W. Bush’s unemployment rate was down below 5%. Job creators knew that he wasn’t going to come after them with tax hikes and burdensome regulations. You can’t create jobs by punishing job creators. The trade-off of low tax rates for the wealthy is a low unemployment rate. Those are the facts, and we have to live with reality as it is.

Darwinian apologists absent from conference on evolution research

July 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

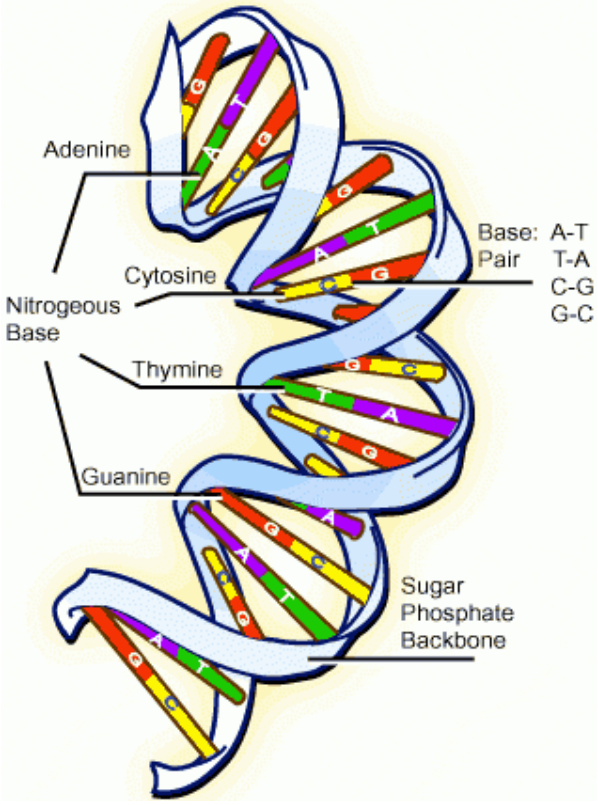

Where do you get your information?
Thomas Cudworth explains at Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> From June 17 to June 21, 2011, at the University of Oklahoma (Norman) campus, the conference "Evolution 2011" was in session. It was co-sponsored by three scientific societies – The Society for the Study of Evolution, The Society of Systematic Biologists, and the American Society of Naturalists. It was billed by its promoters as "the premier annual international conference of evolutionary biologists on the planet."
>
> That billing may be somewhat hyperbolic, yet two things are clear: the conference was huge, with an expected turnout of 1400-1500 people; and many of the big names of evolutionary biology were to be there. Jerry Coyne was to give an address; H. Allen Orr was to chair a session; and Gunter Wagner and Sergey Gavrilets, cutting-edge biologists from the famed 2008 Altenberg conference, were to be there as well. Hundreds of papers were scheduled, and the research contributors to the various papers and presentations, according to the index for the conference, numbered something like 2,000.
>
> […]Let's start with those Darwin defenders who are actively anti-religious or show contempt for religion in their writings and internet remarks. Conspicuously

> absent from the list of conference contributors were evolutionary champions Richard Dawkins, P. Z. Myers, Larry Moran, and Eugenie Scott.
>
> Among those who have not attacked religious belief, but have violently bashed ID and/or passionately upheld neo-Darwinian theory, Paul Gross (co-author of *Creationism's Trojan Horse*) and plant scientist Arthur Hunt (who has debated ID people live and on the internet) were not listed as contributors to any of the papers.
>
> Among those who were active in the Dover ID trial, as witnesses for the plaintiffs, the no-shows include Kevin Padian, Robert Pennock, and Brian Alters.
>
> Among the prominent Christian Darwinists, i.e., theistic evolutionists/evolutionary creationists, only Ken Miller was going to be there, and not to read a scientific paper, but to issue a cultural manifesto on why evolution matters in America today. The leading figures of Biologos – Darrel Falk, Dennis Venema, Kathryn Applegate, David Ussery, David Kerk, Denis Lamoureux – who have so often been presented, explicitly or implicitly, as experts on evolutionary biology – produced no papers for this conference. British scientists Oliver Barclay and Denis Alexander, who have posted several guest columns on Biologos, are not mentioned. The frequent UD commenter and Quaker TE Allan MacNeill, who has penned hundreds of thousands of words on UD and on his own blogs, apparently couldn't manage 5,000 or so words for an original research paper for the conference, nor could the belligerent Calvinist TE and almost as prolific anti-ID blogger Steve Matheson.

Here's why I think this is significant. The people who are the most aware of what intelligent design scholars are publishing in their books and research papers are these Darwinian apologists. They are the ones who know what has to be proven by the Darwinian side in order to counter the research being done by the intelligent design side, e.g. – the protein synthesis papers by Ann Gauger and Doug Axe. So at a major research conference on evolution, you would expect that they would have some research to present to counter the pro-ID research. But there isn't any.

What I suspect is that the Darwinian side is going to be focused on proving the things that the ID already agrees with as being naturalistic – micro-evolution, adaptation and so forth. That's what the conference will be about. But the conference will not be about responding to the really hard questions that are required for evolution to be a seamless explanation for all that we see. And that is telling. I see P.Z. Myers writing blog posts that are read by atheists and accepted as true. But what I don't see is PZ Myers presenting the research to back up his blog posts in a real academic conference. And I especially don't see PZ Myers agreeing to participate in public debates against pro-ID scholars.

Here are some papers from pro-intelligent design Biologic Institute researchers:

D'Andrea-Winslow L, Novitski AK (2008) Active bleb formation is abated in *Lytechinus variegatus* red spherule coelomocytes after disruption of acto-myosin contractility. Integrative Zoology 3: 106-113. doi:10.1111/j.1749-4877.2008.00086.x

Axe DD, Dixon BW, Lu P (2008) *Stylus*: A system for evolutionary experimentation based on a protein/proteome model with non-arbitrary functional constraints. PLoS ONE 3: e2246. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0002246

Sternberg RV (2008) DNA codes and information: Formal structures and relational causes. Acta Biotheoretica doi:10.1007/s10441-008-9049-6. PMID: 18465197

Gonzalez G (2008) Parent stars of extrasolar planets – IX. Lithium abundances. Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, Online Early Articles doi:10.1111/j.1365-2966.2008.13067.x

Duren RW, Marks II RJ, Reynolds PD, Trumbo ML (2007) Real-time neural network inversion on the SRC-6e reconfigurable computer. IEEE Transactions on Neural Networks 18: 889-901. PMID: 17526353

Gonzalez G, Laws C (2007) Parent stars of extrasolar planets VIII. Chemical abundances for 18 elements in 31 stars. Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society 378: 1141-1152. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2966.2007.11867.x

Gravagne IA, Marks II RJ (2007) Emergent behaviors of protector, refugee and aggressor swarms. IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man and Cybernetics, Part B: Cybernetics 37: 471- 476. PMID: 17416173

Weinschenk JJ, Combs WE, Marks II RJ (2007) On the avoidance of rule explosion in fuzzy inference engines. International Journal of Information Technology and Intelligent Computing 1, #4.

Gonzalez G (2006) Condensation temperatures trends among stars with planets. Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society: Letters 367: L37-L41. doi:10.1111/j.1745-3933.2005.00136.x

Gonzalez G (2006) The sun’s interior metallicity constrained by neutrinos. Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society: Letters 370 : L90–L93. doi:10.1111/j.1745-3933.2006.00197.x

Gonzalez G (2006) The chemical compositions of stars with planets: A review. Publications of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific 118: 1494-1505 (invited review paper). doi:10.1086/509792

Gonzalez G (2005) Habitable zones in the universe. Origins of Life and Evolution of Biospheres 35: 555-606. doi:10.1007/s11084-005-5010-8

Keller D, Brozik JA (2005) Framework model for DNA polymerases. Biochemistry 44: 6877-6888. PMID: 15865433

Shapiro JA, von Sternberg R (2005) Why repetitive DNA is essential to genome function. Biological Reviews 80: 227-250. Review. PMID: 15921050

von Sternberg R, Shapiro JA (2005) How repeated retroelements format genome function. Cytogenetic and Genome Research 110: 108-116. PMID: 16093662

Axe DD (2004) Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds. Journal of Molecular Biology 341: 1295-1315. PMID: 15321723

Lu H, Macosko J, Habel-Rodriguez D, Keller RW, Brozik JA, Keller D (2004) Closing of the fingers domain generates motor forces in the HIV reverse transcriptase. Journal of Biological Chemistry 279: 54529-54532. PMID: 15385563

Keller D, Swigon D, Bustamante C (2003) Relating single-molecule measurements to thermodynamics. Biophysical Journal 84: 733-738. PMID: 12547757

von Sternberg R, Cumberlidge N (2003) Autapomorphies of the endophragmal system in trichodactylid freshwater crabs (Crustacea: Decapoda: Eubrachyura). Journal of Morphology 256: 23-28. PMID: 12616572

Bustamante C, Keller D, Oster G (2001) The physics of molecular motors. Accounts of Chemical Research 34: 412-420. PMID: 11412078

D'Andrea-Winslow L, Strohmeier G, Rossi B, and Hofman P (2001) Identification of a Na/K/2Cl cotransporter (NKCC) in sea urchin coelomocytes: microfilament dependent surface expression mediated by hypotonic shock and cAMP. Journal of Experimental Biology 204: 147-156. PMID: 11104718

Gonzalez G, Brownlee D, Ward P (2001) The Galactic Habitable Zone: Galactic chemical evolution. Icarus 152: 185-200. doi:10.1006/icar.2001.6617

Axe DD (2000) Extreme functional sensitivity to conservative amino acid changes on enzyme exteriors. Journal of Molecular Biology 301: 585-595. PMID: 10966772

von Sternberg R (2000) Genomes and form. The case for teleomorphic recursivity. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 901: 224-236. PMID: 10818573

Wuite GJ, Smith SB, Young M, Keller D, Bustamante C (2000) Single-molecule studies of the effect of template tension on T7 DNA polymerase activity. Nature 404: 103-106. PMID: 10716452

Axe DD, Foster NW, Fersht AR (1998) A search for single substitutions that eliminate enzymatic function in a bacterial ribonuclease. Biochemistry 37: 7157-7166. PMID: 9585527

Axe DD, Foster NW, Fersht AR (1996) Active barnase variants with completely random hydrophobic cores. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA. 93: 5590-5594. PMID: 8643620

Gauger AK, Goldstein LS (1993) The Drosophila kinesin light chain. Primary structure and interaction with kinesin heavy chain. Journal of Biological Chemistry 268: 13657-13666. PMID: 8514798

So there is plenty there to refute – if there were refutations available.

SEIU union thugs go on trial for racist attack on black conservative

July 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tea Party conservative Kenneth Gladney

Gateway Pundit has the background on the attack.

Excerpt:

> After a health care town hall meeting in August 2009 St. Louis native **Kenneth Gladney** was beaten, kicked and called racist names by Rep. Russ Carnahan's SEIU supporters. Gladney was beaten so badly that he was hospitalized for the night.
>
> Gladney, a cancer survivor, was selected by the Carnahan supporters for the beatdown because he was handing out "Don't Tread On Me" flags and because he was black.
>
> The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* reported at the time:
>
> Kenneth Gladney, a 38-year-old conservative activist from St. Louis, said he was attacked by some of those arrested as he handed out yellow flags with "Don't tread on me" printed on them. He spoke to the Post-Dispatch from the emergency room of the St. John's Mercy Medical Center, where he said he was waiting to be treated for injuries to his knee, back, elbow, shoulder and face that he suffered in the attack. Gladney, who is black, said one of his attackers, also a black man, used a racial slur against him before the attack started.
>
> The national media and NAACP ignored the hate crime.
> Gladney didn't fit the mold.

And here's the latest update from liberal CBS News.

Excerpt:

> Twenty-months after he claims he was beaten by two union activists, while he tried to sell conservative buttons outside a Congressman Russ Carnahan town hall forum on health care reform, Kenneth Gladney now has a court date.
>
> The case against two Service Employees International Union members accused of attacking Gladney is scheduled for July 11th, according to St. Louis County Counselor Patricia Reddington.
>
> SEIU members Elston McCowan and Perry Molens are charged with misdemeanor assault . Both men pleaded not guilty and requested a jury trial.
>
> Earlier, Gladney had complained that the delay in scheduling a trial was "political" and he pointed the blame at Reddington and fellow Democrat, County Executive Charlie Dooley.
>
> Reddington countered that the delay was caused soley by the defendant's request for a jury trial. Her municipal court system has no jurors, so she had to work with he state courts to set up a court room and a jury, Reddington said.

I think this an important story because it shows the true colors of the SEIU.

What are some of the risk factors for divorce?

July 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: I had to make major changes to the previous version of this post because I was too harsh. After getting some much needed chastisement from two of my good friends, I realized that the article was more of a warning to people about what mistakes lead to divorce, and not an endorsement of those mistakes. So below is an UPDATED post which is much more sympathetic.I apologize to everyone who was offended.

I found this article in the Wall Street Journal, which is the most popular article at the time I am writing this post.

The author lists some of the mistakes she made that led her to get a divorce in her first marriage.

This is the first thing I saw that caught my eye:

> "Whatever happens, we're never going to get divorced." Over the course of 16 years, I said that often to my husband, especially after our children were born.

So she is trying to express an intention here, repeatedly, to her husband. I think the point here is that she did have good intentions but as we shall see that was not enough to prevent the divorce. That's a warning to others that good intention are not enough.

Here is the second thing:

> I believed that I had married my best friend as fervently as I believed that I'd never get divorced. No marital scenario, I told myself, could become so bleak or hopeless as to compel me to embed my children in the torture of a split family. And I wasn't the only one with strong personal reasons to make this commitment.

I noticed that a lot of people seem to think that being compatible is very important to marriage. But I don't think that it is the most important thing. For example, you would not expect two cocaine addicts or two gambling addicts, etc. to have a stable marriage. I think marriage is more like a job interview where there are specific things that each person has to be able to do in order to make it work. So again, she's giving a warning to others that compatibility is not a guarantee of marriage success.

And there's more:

> My husband and I were as obvious as points on a graph in a Generation X marriage study. We were together for nearly eight years before we got married, and even though statistics show that divorce rates are 48% higher for those who have lived together previously, we paid no heed.
>
> We also paid no heed to his Catholic parents, who comprised one of the rare reassuringly unified couples I'd ever met, when they warned us that we should wait until we were married to live together. As they put it, being pals and

> roommates is different from being husband and wife. How bizarrely old-fashioned and sexist! We didn't need anything so naïve or retro as "marriage." Please. We were best friends.
>
> Sociologists, anthropologists and other cultural observers tell us that members of Generation X are more emotionally invested in our spouses than previous generations were. We are best friends; our marriages are genuine partnerships. Many studies have found that Generation X family men help around the house a good deal more than their forefathers. We depend on each other and work together.

So here I am seeing that she rejected sex roles, parental advice, or the moral guidelines of Christianity. Again, she is discussing some of the factors that I at least think contribute to divorce. I think that she is right to highlight the fact that she was wrong to disregard the statistics on cohabitation.

So here are some of the mistakes:

- reject advice from parents
- avoid chastity
- cohabitate for EIGHT YEARS
- embrace feminism, reject sex roles
- thinking that good intentions would overcome every challenge

So, what does the research show works to have a stable marriage?

- chastity
- rejection of feminism
- regular church attendance
- parental involvement in the courting
- parents of both spouses married

In my next post, I will be posting questions to help men to avoid marrying women like this and getting divorced. Stay tuned.

More related posts

- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being

- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren’t men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste

Questions to ask to find out if a woman is a solid Christian

July 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was having a chat with a friend of mine a few days back and we were discussing how a man can tell if a woman is marriage material. Now this friend is not yet a Christian, but he is a conservative. So I suggested to him this list of questions (below) that I ask women when I want to test them.

Before we look at the list, let me just point out what kinds of questions are bad. You want to avoid asking leading questions that will allow the person to just give a yes or no answer. Don't ask "who did you vote for?" – that's much too easy to fake. You want them to argue for their positions on different issues at length, and in their own words, and with reference to their own experiences.

It's also a good idea for men to observe a candidate's behavior over time to see if it's consistent with her answers. Also, I think that even if the woman gets none of the questions right, but begins to ask you for books to read so that she can answer them, then that counts as a right answer. You just have to make sure she follows through, though. I sent one woman a book on Christianity and capitalism for her Christmas gift in 2009 and it took her 18 months for her to write the book review! In all honesty, these questions are pretty tough, so I think that the best you can hope for is that the person becomes curious. I had to learn the answers over many years. Having said that, you could probably cover most the topics with about $40 worth of introductory books.

When scoring the answers, you can award bonus points for extras, e.g. – naming any scholar as an authority (especially non-Christian scholars), referencing a book or a debate, referencing peer-reviewed papers, listing and refuting other points of view, recounting debates she herself has had with opponents, and pointing to her own past writings. Best of all is passion and aggression in answering the questions. Sometimes it is a good idea to pretend to disagree with her, or to pretend to be unconvinced, and then have her try to convince you. Another good thing to look for is susceptibility and vulnerability – she should have real feelings about these topics – it shows that she's invested in them.

Note: these questions can be used to test Christian men, as well.

QUESTIONS

1. Cosmology

What scientific evidence would you point to to show that God created the universe OR that God fine-tuned the universe, or parts of the universe, for intelligent life?

SAMPLE ANSWER: The big bang theory, the fine-tuning argument, galactic habitability, stellar habitability, or terrestrial habitability.

BONUS POINTS: referencing hard evidence like light element abundances, cosmic

microwave background radiation, or specific instances of fine-tuning.

WHY IT MATTERS: She can't be a Christian unless she *knows* God exists, and that can't just be based on feelings and community. An awareness of the scientific evidence shows a seriousness about spiritual things – that her belief is rooted in objective reality, not in subjective feelings, culture, community, etc. It's not "her truth", it's "the truth". If she doesn't know why she believes, then she can't be relied upon to make decisions as a Christian, especially in stressful situations. There is always going to be a conflict between doing what one feels like and doing what is consistent with reality. Having scientific facts helps a person to do what they ought to do.

2. Intelligent Design

Explain the concept of intelligent design and explain how it applies to the i) origin of life OR ii) to the fossil record.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the concept of specified complexity and Dembski's explanatory filter, then explain how it applies to (i) amino acid sequencing or the double helix, OR (ii) to the sudden origin of animal phyla in the Cambrian explosion.

BONUS POINTS: Ideally, for the origin of life question, she's going to mention things like UV radiation, chirality, cross-reactions and peptide bonds, then calculate the approximate probabilities for generating a protein by chance. For the Cambrian explosion, she should graph out the introduction of phyla over time, and explain the Ediacaran fauna and why they are not precursors to the Cambrian fauna. Bonus points for bashing theistic evolution, or talking about the early earth environment and the problems with forming amino acids.

WHY IT MATTERS: Darwinian evolution is bad science because it is really just philosophy (naturalism) masquerading as science. You can't marry anyone who pre-supposes a metaphysical view like naturalists do, and then allows that philosophical assumption to overrule the scientific evidence. You don't want to be paired up with someone who lets their prejudices overturn data.

3. The problems of evil and suffering

Assuming that Christianity is true, why do you think that God would allow suffering and evil in the world? Distinguish between human evil and natural evil in your answer. Also explain what role you think God's permission of evil and suffering has in maturing Christians.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Define the deductive and inductive problems of evil, explains several different responses to them, such as free will, character formation, natural law, the ripple effect, etc. Mention the burden of proof for claims that certain evils are gratuitous, i.e. – noseeums.

BONUS POINTS: explaining how evil relates to Christian theology and God's purposes for humans being knowledge of him and not just happiness, talking about Jesus' own suffering and the meaning and purpose of it. More bonus points for pointing out how atheists cannot even complain about evil without assuming objective morality, which

requires a moral lawgiver.

WHY IT MATTERS: Lots of nasty things can happen in a marriage. Children can get sick or die, jobs can be lost, and so on. It helps when you are dealing with a person who expects it and will not jettison their responsibilities and belief in Christ in order to pursue happiness unencumbered. The main thing is that the woman thinks that the purpose of life is to know God, and that suffering and evil play a role in gaining knowledge of God. You definitely do not want to marry someone who thinks that the purpose of life is happiness, and that God is some big bearded grandfather in the sky who just wants to hand out goodies to people and make sure they are having a good time regardless of what they choose to do.

4. The moral argument

What is the is-ought fallacy? What is the difference between moral objectivism and moral relativism? Give one reason why moral relativism is false. Give one reason why an atheist cannot rationally ground prescriptive morality. Explain why objective morality relates to God's existence.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the is-ought fallacy. Explain objective and subjective morality. Discuss the reformer's dilemma and how it refutes relativism. Explain that atheism requires materialism, and materialism denies free will – so moral choices are impossible. Outline the moral argument.

BONUS POINTS: Give more than one reason where only one was asked for, refute attempts to assert objective morality on atheism, explain how moral obligations are related to God's design for humans.

WHY IT MATTERS: You can't marry a person who thinks that the moral law is not a brake on their desire to be happy. There are going to be times in the marriage when self-sacrifice is required by the moral law – either for you, for God, or for the children. It will not be easy to be moral then, so you are looking for someone who thinks that morality is real, and not subject to their feelings and whims. It might be worth asking the person when she has had to do the right thing when it was against her self-interest, like those valedictorians who name Jesus in their speeches and then get censored.

5. The resurrection of Jesus

Assume you are talking to a non-Christian. Explain how you would make a case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus on historical grounds. This person does not accept the Bible as inspired and/or inerrant.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the criteria for establishing minimal facts / historical bedrock, list a set of minimal facts, explain why they pass the criteria, propose at least two naturalistic alternatives to the resurrection, and disprove them. MUST mention 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 in order to pass.

BONUS POINTS: listing atheist scholars who support each minimal fact, discussing N.T. Wright's work on the Jewish concept of resurrection, referencing Richard Bauckham's work on the gospels as eyewitness testimony, mentioning the pre-suppositions

(naturalism, relativism) of liberal scholars like Crossan and Borg.

WHY IT MATTERS: The resurrection is the cornerstone of Christian belief. A person cannot encounter skeptics and not be able to defend the resurrection on historical grounds to them. The resurrection matters to how people act: they act completely differently depending on whether they believe that this life is all there is, or that this life is just a precursor to eternal life with God. You want someone who takes the long-term perspective.

6. World religions

Name two major world religions and argue against them using either the laws of logic, scientific evidence or historical evidence. Explain the concept of middle knowledge, and why it is relevant to the problem of religious pluralism.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Refute Theravada Buddhism with the big bang, or refute Islam with the crucifixion of Jesus, etc. MUST mention specific beliefs of that religion that are testable, and not just argue that they reject Christianity and are therefore false. Explain how middle knowledge reconciles free will and divine sovereignty, and that it also helps to solve the problem of people who have never heard the gospel.

BONUS POINTS: Using evidence that is universally accepted by people outside of that religion. Using scientific evidence. Referencing Acts 17:27 or other Bible passages when explaining middle knowledge. Mentioning objections to middle knowledge, such as the grounding objection.

WHY IT MATTERS: Many younger Christians today believe that Christianity is moralistic therapeutic deism. They think that the purpose of religion is to have good feelings and to be nice to other people and to make other people feel good. It’s all about feelings. You need to make sure that she knows how to make people feel bad and is comfortable doing it, with evidence. Middle knowledge also grounds the person’s willingness to see people as being responsible for their acceptance or rejection of Christ. Instead of taking a hands-off fatalistic approach to salvation, someone who accepts middle knowledge is going to take persuasion seriously and expend effort to try to change the people around them.

7. Abortion

How would you establish that the unborn are fully human and deserve protection? Explain three pro-abortion arguments and then show why they are false. Name three incremental pro-life policies that you would introduce if you were a legislator.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Use the SLED test and the law of biogenesis. Talk about the DNA signature of the unborn being distinct from the mother. Explain and refute the back-alley abortions argument, the it’s the woman’s body argument, the Judith Jarvis Thompson violinist argument, etc. Legislation would be parental notification, banning funding for abortion providers, mandatory sonograms, etc.

BONUS POINTS: Refute more pro-abortion arguments, reference specific legislation that is in-flight or was recently signed into law. Experiences protesting abortion or debating abortion with pro-abortionists. Experience counseling a post-abortive or crisis pregnancy

woman. Mentioning biological details of foetus development.

WHY IT MATTERS: Basically, because people who think that sex is for recreation, and that it is ok to kill children to avoid any limits on the pursuit of happiness are not qualified for marriage. You can't enter into an intimate commitment with someone who is willing to commit murder in order to get out of the consequences of their own selfish pursuit of pleasure. That is not going to work in a marriage – you need someone who makes good decisions, avoids harming others, is chaste and self-controlled, and takes responsibility for her actions when they go awry.

8. Marriage

Explain the public purposes of marriage, and then outline three threats to marriage and explain what legislation you would propose to neutralize these threats. What choices should people make before marriage to make sure they will have a stable, loving marriage?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Some public purposes of marriage are i) to force moral constraints on sexual activity, ii) to produce the next generation of humans, iii) to provide children with a stable, loving environment in which to grow up. Three threats to marriage are i) cohabitation, ii) no-fault divorce – which leads to fatherlessness, and iii) same-sex marriage. There are others, too. For legislation, there are things like tax incentives, shared parenting laws, school choice to de-monopolize politicized public schools, etc. Pre-marriage behaviors are things like chastity, experience with children, having lots of savings, being physically fit, etc. Having a degree in experimental science, math or economics is excellent for a woman. Avoid artsy degrees, especially English.

BONUS POINTS: Name more threats to marriage, explain the effects of fatherlessness on children, explain how divorce courts work, explain how socialism impacts the family through taxation and wealth redistribution, explain what happens to women and children after a divorce.

WHY IT MATTERS: It's important for people who want to get married that they understand that marriage takes time and effort, and it requires both spouses to prepare for marriage, to be diligent at choosing a good spouse, and to understand what spouses and children need in order to stay engaged.

9. Children

Explain a person you admire and then tell me what you would do as a mother in order to produce that person from one of your children. What are some people and laws that you would change to make your job easier?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Jay Richards. Jay Richards is one of the most well-rounded Christian scholars operating today. He has knowledge of multiple areas, including economics and science. To make a Jay Richards, you need to be very careful about his education – which could mean homeschooling and saving money for later university tuition, as well as exposing him to apologetics and debates at an earlier age. He would need to have the dedicated attention of his mother for the first two years of his life, at least. Some laws

that would help would be lower taxes, school choice, and academic freedom laws.

BONUS POINTS: Explaining how different things like day care, public schools, divorce, etc. harm children. Explaining how mother and fathers contribute to the child's moral, cognitive, spiritual, etc. development at different times. Explain how the child is harmed if both parents are not present and engaged to play these roles.

WHY IT MATTERS: Marriage is an enormous sacrifice for a man. Not only is there the risk of divorce, but wives and children are very expensive. A man can serve God fine as a bachelor. He has to have compelling reasons why getting married would serve God more than staying single. Producing influential children seems to be one of the major reasons for a man to get married, and he needs to see evidence that his wife is on board with that.

10. Husbands

Explain the roles of a man in a marriage, and tell me some of the things you would do in order to help your man to achieve those roles. What groups would oppose your husband from fulfilling those roles, and what have you done in your life to prepare yourself to help your husband in his roles? What are some of the most important things that a man needs from a woman, and what specific things should a wife do to provide them?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Men are supposed to be protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders. In order to help men to be protectors, women have to give them time to study to discern truth from lie, and support their ability to be physically strong, and to own firearms. It is also a good idea for women to have a positive view of good men who use force to restrain evil, as with the American military. Women should support the use of force against radical Islam and terrorists, as well. In order to help men to be providers, women have to advocate for fiscal conservatism in the public square. That would mean advocating for lower taxes, less government spending and smaller government. It would also mean being frugal in the home and helping the man to move ahead at work. If the children are up and out of the house, it could mean going back to work or starting a business to help make ends meet – or monitoring investments. For a man to be a moral and spiritual leader, a woman has to be supporting of him making moral judgments in the home, disciplining the children, holding her accountable for moral errors, and for making exclusive truth claims when it comes to spiritual things. She should not censor him when he gets into debates about spiritual things, even if other people who disagree feel bad – so long as he is not being a jerk. Her goal is not to be popular or liked, but to support her husband in his roles. The most important thing a man needs is respect, and that means treating him as important and significant, being grateful for his contributions, soliciting his opinion on things, being mindful of his male nature, which is more visual and sexual.

BONUS POINTS: Having read "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands", "Men and Marriage", "Love and Economics" and "Taken Into Custody". More bonus points for having written about what she learned about men and marriage from books like that. The goal here is for her to have a real awareness and sympathy for what men are facing as husbands and fathers, and to have an idea of what women can do to support them in

their roles.

WHY IT MATTERS: As a man, you have certain needs – the biggest need is for respect. If you are thinking of marrying a woman who cannot define respect, and doesn't know how to give you respect, then you are going to be in for a world of hurt. The more she views marriage as a joint project with specific goals and external challenges, the more understanding and support you will get. No one wants to fly a plane with someone who doesn't know how to fly a plane, fix a plane or navigate a plane. The more she knows about men and marriage, the better it will go for you – and the children.

Parting thoughts

This list is not exhaustive, it's just to give you an idea of the kinds of things you should be looking for. A lot of it is the attitude. You are looking for a woman who does not shift blame onto you, who takes responsibility when she is wrong, who argues using logic and evidence, who loses arguments gracefully, and wins arguments gracefully, and who loves you and cares for you even if you are fighting.

If I were making a list for women, I would emphasize different things more centered around the specific roles that men play in the marriage – asking for his resume, work history, savings, investments, past relationships with women, parenting ability, self-defense ability, mentoring ability, and especially on moral issues and Christian truth claims.The most important thing that a woman needs is love, and the man should be ready to speak about love at length, and explain how he is going to provide her with love during the courtship and during the marriage. Women need to know that they are significant and desired by the man.

Related posts

- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?

- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste

Taxing the rich at 100% doesn't cover Obama's 1.6 trillion dollar deficit

July 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An amazing, must-read article from Arthur C. Brooks, president of the American Enterprise Institute. He writes about the national debt problem.

Excerpt:

> The practical answer to this problem involves common sense. What do most of America's families do when they find they are overspending? They don't send the kids out to get part-time jobs in order to increase family revenues–they cut back on their spending. Why? Because that's what works to solve the problem.
>
> The government can learn from families. In fact, the data show that when countries are trying to find their way out of a debt crisis, the more they rely on tax increases as opposed to spending cuts, the more likely they are to fail. My colleagues Kevin Hassett, Andrew Biggs, and Matt Jensen studied 21 developed countries that have attempted fiscal consolidation over the last 37 years. Some succeeded and returned to economic health; -others failed.
>
> On average, failed attempts to close budget gaps relied 53 percent on tax increases and 47 percent on spending cuts. Successful consolidations averaged 85 percent spending cuts and 15 percent tax increases. Some of the most successful financial comebacks–like Finland's in the late 1990s–involved more than 100 percent spending cuts, so that taxes could be lowered. The spending cuts by the successful countries centered on entitlements and government personnel.
>
> Now let's look at the moral argument against raising taxes. Why does the president want to increase America's tax burden? You may think it's just a way to increase revenues and reduce the deficit. But even the president knows he can't solve the fiscal crisis by helping himself to bigger and bigger chunks of the income of America's most successful people. Even if individuals earning more than $200,000 were taxed at a 100 percent marginal rate–and we confiscated their passports so they could not flee–the take would come to $1.27 trillion, or just 77 percent of this year's deficit.
>
> For the administration, it's not about the money–as we have heard again and again, it's about "fairness." The president believes that we will be a better nation if we redistribute more money from those who have more to those who have less. How much more do we need to redistribute until our system is fair?
>
> As you ponder this question, remember the facts: The wealthiest 5 percent of Americans already account for 59 percent of federal income taxes. Nearly half of our citizens pay no federal income taxes at all–yet two-thirds of us believe that

> everybody should at least pay something, even if just to remind ourselves that government isn't free. The Tax Foundation reports that the percentage of Americans who are net takers from the tax system is nearing 70 percent.

Arthur C. Brooks is an expert in making moral arguments for the free market. He is a Christian, and has debated against Jim Wallis on Christianity and economics. I think we have to take his advice (elsewhere in the article) where

NHS refuses to treat woman who is starving to death

July 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a sad news story from the UK, where they have a massive state-run health care system called the National Health Service. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A young woman who is starving to death after being diagnosed with a paralysed stomach has been told that NHS bosses refuse to fund an operation to save her.
>
> Rudi Hargreaves, 22, has shrunk from a healthy 10st to a skeletal 5st 10lb after being diagnosed with the crippling condition last year.
>
> Within weeks of being diagnosed with gastroparesis, Rudi found her size 12 clothes were hanging off her – as her stomach became unable to digest food at a normal rate.
>
> The condition can be treated with a £14,000 operation to fit a gastric pacemaker – although this is still considered to be an experimental treatment.
>
> But health chiefs have refused to fund the surgery, saying 'insufficient supporting information' has been provided by her GP.
>
> […]A spokesperson for NHS Hull said: 'To date, the application in question has not been agreed as, crucially, insufficient supporting information has been provided to allow due consideration to take place.
>
> 'Any requested procedures must also fall in line with the provider trust's priorities for service development and delivery.
>
> 'The patient's clinician has been invited to provide the necessary clarification, receipt of which should enable the patient's case to be progressed within the PCT.'

What's troubling is countries like Canada, where the government not only decides if you will be treated, but whether you can be treated. That's because if they deny you treatment, you cannot pay for treatment out of pocket. You have to leave the country and pay someone else out of pocket for the treatment, even though you have have paid into the system for many years. So your money is good enough for them to collect over your life, but when you need treatment, you may not be allowed to get it, and you may not even have the money (after taxes) to go abroad for treatment.

Scientists find first superbug strain of gonorrhea

July 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's another reason to avoid casual sex. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Scientists have found a "superbug" strain of gonorrhea in Japan that is resistant to all recommended antibiotics and say it could transform a once easily treatable infection into a global public health threat.
>
> The new strain of the sexually transmitted disease — called H041 — cannot be killed by any currently recommended treatments for gonorrhea, leaving doctors with no other option than to try medicines so far untested against the disease.
>
> […]Gonorrhea is a bacterial sexually transmitted infection and if left untreated can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy and infertility in women.
>
> It is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases in the world and is most prevalent in south and southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In the United States alone, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of cases is estimated at around 700,000 a year.
>
> British scientists said last year that there was a real risk of gonorrhea becoming a superbug — a bacteria that has mutated and become resistant to multiple classes of antibiotics — after increasing reports of gonorrhea drug resistance emerged in Hong Kong, China, Australia and other parts of Asia.
>
> […]The World Health Organization estimates there are at least 340 million new cases of curable sexually transmitted infections — including syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia and trichomoniasis — every year among people aged 15 to 49.

One would hope that young people would be aware of things like this, but often they never think that bad things will happen to them.

An illustrated guided to the global warming controversy

July 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this video on Neil Simpson's blog.

It's a quick illustrated overview of the global warming agenda.

Social liberal Mitt Romney refuses to sign pro-marriage pledge

July 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mitt Romney is a RINO - Republican In Name Only

Socially liberal, fiscally moderate Mitt Romney refuses to sign a pro-marriage pledge.

Excerpt:

> Last week, the Family Leader, a conservative pro-family group in Iowa, asked Republican presidential candidates to sign a pledge endorsing traditional marriage and other social issues. Michele Bachmann was the first to say she would sign it. Mitt Romney has decided not to. Tim Pawlenty hasn't announced his decision.
>
> That tells you something important about the battle for the Republican presidential nomination and the box in which Pawlenty now finds himself. Two months ago, he believed he was in a strong position to break out and become the principal alternative to front-runner Romney. Today he is trying to figure out how to prevent Bachmann from blocking his path.
>
> […]The calculus for Romney was the opposite, but not necessarily more difficult. Neither winning Iowa nor becoming the favored candidate of social and religious conservatives is part of his strategy for capturing the nomination or the presidency. He wants support from those values voters, but, as with others who have won the GOP nomination, he is not willing to pay any price to get it.

Here's the pledge.

Naturally, Michele Bachmann was the first to sign it – because she is *actually* a social conservative.

Is Mitt Romney a social conservative?

Here's a video of Mitt Romney expressing his social conservative credentials: (H/T Robb)

Just to refresh you, Mitt Romney also refused to sign the pro-life pledge authored by the Susan B. Anthony List. Michele Bachmann signed it, of course. Because Michele Bachmann is solid on social issues, and is a pro-life and pro-marriage *activist*. She doesn't just make speeches – she has acted. It's in her public record.

And of course Mitt Romney was praised by Al Gore for his global warming views. Seriously.

And Mitt Romney passed the Massachusetts equivalent of Obamacare, which is now way over budget. He's not even a solid fiscal conservative.

How long are the days of Genesis? Hugh Ross and Jason Lisle debate

July 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this radio debate about the age of the Earth on the Apologetics 315 Twitter feed.

Speakers:

Jason Lisle

Dr. Lisle graduated *summa cum laude* from Ohio Wesleyan University where he double-majored in physics and astronomy, and minored in mathematics. He did graduate work at the University of Colorado where he earned a Master's degree and a Ph.D. in Astrophysics. While there, Dr Lisle used the SOHO spacecraft to investigate motions on the surface of the sun as well as solar magnetism and subsurface weather. His thesis was entitled "Probing the Dynamics of Solar Supergranulation and its Interaction with Magnetism." Among other things, he discovered a previously unknown polar alignment of supergranules (solar convection cells), and discovered evidence of solar giant cells. He has also authored a number of papers in both secular and creation literature.

Hugh Ross

At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver's Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or "quasars," some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

So both have impeccable scientific credentials. But just wait until you hear what one of them does at about 28 minutes into the debate. Oh my goodness. You will not believe the bombshell that gets dropped during this debate.

The MP3 file is here. (This is the updated version that Brian Auten fixed to remove the commercials!)

I don't always agree with Frank Pastore, (only 95%), but he knows the topic of the debate back to front, and guides the discussion in an incredibly useful, accurate way. This is a fine debate to listen to! You will learn a lot. And you will have fun learning.

The Bible and the early church fathers

Jason Lisle

- we take Genesis literally
- the starting point of YEC is Scripture
- the plain meaning of Scripture is that the earth was made in 6 24-hour days
- science has to be interpreted in a way that fits a plain reading of Genesis 1

- the evidence for an old universe and old Earth must be rejected a priori

Hugh Ross

- we take Genesis literally
- the Hebrew word for day (yom) can mean 24 hours or a long period of time
- there are multiple creation accounts in the Bible
- interpreting yom as long periods of time harmonizes all the accounts
- the Bible says that the seventh day is not even ended
- we believe in a literal Adam and Eve living thousands of years ago

Jason Lisle

- there's only 1 account of creation in the Bible: Genesis
- the normal view in church history is 6 24-hour days
- there are some early church fathers who that the days are long
- the other places where creation is discussed are not real accounts

Hugh Ross

- the early church did not spend a lot of time talking about the age of the Earth
- there is not unanimous agreement about the age of the Earth
- there is no definitive statement on the age of the Earth until Isaac Newton
- Newton strongly favored an old earth, hundreds of years before Darwin
- there are other creation accounts, Job 38-39
- Pslam 104 is a creation account

Jason Lisle

- a Psalm is not written in the genre of historical narrative
- Psalm 104 is not a creation account – it talks about ships, etc
- it's talking about the modern era, not a creation account

The evidence from science

Hugh Ross

- both of us believe in an absolute beginning of time, space and matter
- both of us believe that space is expanding now
- stars form as matter coalesces during the expansion of the universe
- star formation requires a universe aged on the order of billions of years

Jason Lisle

- if you pre-suppose my interpretation of Genesis, then the universe is young

Hugh Ross

- the speed of the expansion of the universe proves an old universe
- the light emitted from the oldest stars also proves an old universe

Jason Lisle

- if you pre-suppose my interpretation of Genesis, then the universe is young

Was the universe made with the appearance of age

Jason Lisle

- any evidence for an old universe is wrong
- stars didn't form gradually, they were created by God instantly
- stars have the appearance of age, but they're actually young

Hugh Ross

- God doesn't lie in the Bible or in the book of nature
- Scientists can look back in time by looking further out into the universe
- Because light takes a long time to travel to the Earth, we can see the past
- we can see a time when there were no stars yet
- stars formed slowly over time, not instantaneously
- we have photos of the universe before stars and after stars
- we can see a history of the universe by looking closer and further away

Does nature provide us with knowledge about creation?

They discuss Psalm 19 now, so here's Psalm 19:1-5:

[1] The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

[2] Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

[3] There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

[4] Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

[5] which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

Jason Lisle

- nature isn't a book
- nature doesn't provide knowledge about God
- Psalm 19 doesn't say that nature communicates to us
- **verse 3 says "There is no speech nor language"**

Hugh Ross

- **If you read all of verse 3, it says the exact opposite of what you just said it says**

- Verse 1: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands”
- Verse 2: “Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.”
- Verse 3: “There is no speech or language **where their voice is not heard.**“
- Verse 4: “Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

Jason Lisle

- You can’t take the Bible literally all the time

How important is the age of the Earth?

Hugh Ross

- it’s a non-essential because it has nothing to do with salvation or inerrancy
- both sides of the debate affirm the same views of salvation and inerrancy
- professional scientists have multiple lines of evidence saying the universe is old
- the only reason it matters is that young earth creationism is a barrier to faith
- if you have to deny science to be a Christian, then it stops people from being saved
- young earth opposition to science has been used by secularists to marginalize Christianity

Jason Lisle

- there was no death in the Garden of Eden, animal or human, before the Fall
- the Bible says that death was a consequence of Adam’s sin
- so there was no death before the Fall, according to the Bible
- old earth people believe in death before the Fall

Consider Romans 5:12:

[12]Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Hugh Ross

- Romans 5:12 says that Adam’s sin caused death to come **to all men**
- old earth people believe that only animal death existed before the Fall, not human death
- plant and animal death existed before the Fall – Adam and Eve were eating!

Jason Lisle

- I interpret the Bible to say that plants aren’t living creatures

What about dinosaurs, the Flood, and Noah’s ark?

Jason Lisle

- dinosaurs were created on the 6th day
- dinosaurs lived alongside humans and were vegetarians before the Fall
- dinosaurs were on the Ark – they're not that big – just take baby dinosaurs
- it's a global flood

Hugh Ross

- dinosaurs were created on the 5th day
- they were extinct before before humans ever appeared
- nobody in history ever wrote about dinosaurs until 200 years ago
- it's a local flood

Related posts

- Different perspectives on the days of Genesis.
- What caused Da Vinci Code author Dan Brown to abandon his Christian faith?
- An argument for the existence of God from Big Bang cosmology

Wes Widner from Reason to Stand pointed out another debate on this topic.

FL senator Marco Rubio: “We need more taxpayers, not more taxes”

July 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

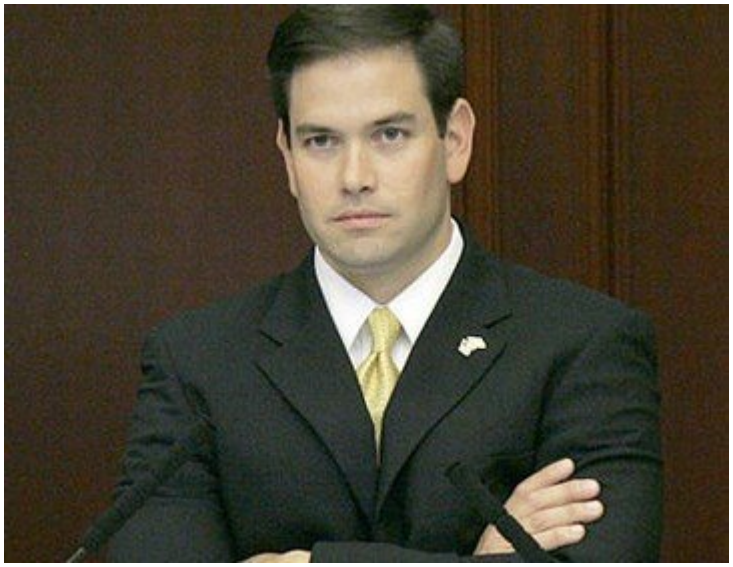

Florida Senator Marco Rubio

If there is anyone I like almost as much as Michele Bachmann, it’s Marco Rubio. And boy, can this guy do an interview.

On the Sean Hannity show: (7 minutes)

And on the Rush Limbaugh radio show: (11 minutes)

He’s William Lane Craig-esque. He just talks about the issues without one hem or haw. Not an *uh* or an *ah* to be heard. It’s uncanny. Hmmn. Look at that picture up there. He looks very intense. Do you think he might be some sort of conservative super-android designed by the U.S. Military in a secret base under a mountain in Colorado? I’m not sure.

I actually heard him interviewed on the Hugh Hewitt show on Tuesday night. Hugh played the interview back-to-back in two consecutive hours, and then his producer Duane Patterson posted the full transcript. This one was the best interview of all. Hugh does a great interview, and he was blown away by Marco Rubio.

Excerpt:

> HH: Now the President is betting, obviously, that he can turn a conservative message into a toxic one for 2012. Your old colleague from the Florida House, Adam Hasner, is running for Senate down there, a lot like Josh Mandel in Ohio, and Ted Cruz in Texas, they’re running as real conservatives with very much a Rubio-like message from 2010. Will that work in this environment of demagoguery from the White House?
>
> MR: Yeah, it will work, because the common sense of the American people is powerful, and I think that too many people here in Washington walk around thinking well, we can spin it this way, or we can use our allies in the media to

> confuse people and make them not believe their own eyes. But the truth is that we're way past that today. The ability of people to get information from multiple sources in real time, the ability of us to communicate directly to our constituents, to go on programs such as yours and talk about the reality of what we're facing, is something that wasn't around not that long ago, and it's incumbent upon us who feel passionate about this to go out there and make clear to the people what our choices are. And this is not a complicated issue. It's very, very simple. The United States spends more money than it takes in, and it's not generating enough revenue for its government to pay down the debt. So we have to figure out how do we stop spending more money than we take in? We need a balanced budget amendment. We need a spending cap. And we need real reductions in spending starting right now. And what do we do to get more revenue in the hands of government so it can pay down its debt and not grow its government? Well, you're not going to do that through tax increases. You're going to do that through new taxpayers, that is getting people back to work, getting people hired and working, so these people will pay taxes, and then we can use that revenue to pay down the debt. That's what we need. And you're not going to create new taxpayers, you're not going to create economic growth and jobs in America if you're running around threatening to raise taxes.
>
> HH: Do you think the President understands the underlying economics, Senator Rubio, and is just demagoguing it? Or is he fundamentally misinformed about how capitalism works?
>
> MR: I think there are three things going on here. Number one, I think he's a prisoner to extremist elements in his own base who not only, they don't care that the taxes don't solve any problems. They want their pound of flesh. They want to punish somebody, they want class warfare. That's what they believe in. And this is their chance to do it, and they're putting pressure on him to do that. So I think that's his first problem. His second problem is that I think he's surrounded by a bunch of people who philosophically do not believe fully in the free enterprise system, and in fact, they'd like to see government play a greater role. And they see this downturn in the economy, and crisis such as this, as an opportunity to exert more government involvement in our economy. And that's the second problem. **And his third problem is a level of incompetence. I think the President, quite frankly, is not up to the job. And if you look at every measure of quality of life in America today, unemployment is higher. The debt is higher. The only thing lower is the value of your home. If you look at every measurable economic thing in America today, they are all worse than they were the day he took over. Two and a half years into his presidency, things continue to get worse, not better, and it's because the President is incompetent in his job as president. He is not, he doesn't know what he's doing.**

I think he's going to be President one day. And I agree with him on Obama's competence.

The man is not qualified in any way, shape or form to run a lemonade stand, much less to be the President of the most powerful country on the planet. I would like to see a Marco Rubio/Allen West ticket in 2020, after the two Michele Bachmann terms are done.

Are the rich paying their fair share of taxes?

July 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

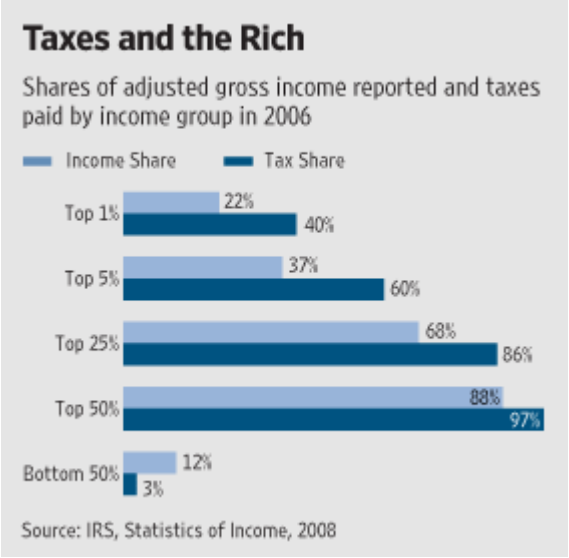

Do the rich pay their fair share of taxes?
The Hoover Institute at Stanford University tweeted this article.

Excerpt:

> The Democrats' position in the negotiations to raise the debt limit and deal with runaway government debt can be summarized in one mantric phrase: the rich must "pay their fair share" in taxes. White House communications director Dan Pfeiffer, for example, said a day before the Obama's Sunday summit with Congressmen that any deal requires a "balanced approach that asks the very wealthiest and special interests to pay their fair share." Earlier this year, Illinois Congressman Jan Schakowsky introduced legislation called the Fairness in Taxation Act, which she justified by saying "It's time for millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share." Clearly, the Democrats think this is a winning formula going into the critical 2012 elections, despite the historically verified fact that raising tax rates on top earners will not over time generate more tax revenues.
>
> Some political Socrates needs to challenge this formula by asking for a definition of "fair." Clearly, having the top 10% of taxpayers pay 70% of all income taxes––while nearly half of taxpayers pay nothing––isn't considered "fair" by those who want to increase taxes on high earners. So what would be fair? Having the top 10% pay 80%, or 90%, or 100%? The U.S. already has the most progressive tax system among 24 OECD countries, ahead of socialist heartthrobs like Sweden and Norway, so what more do Democrats want?

It might be a good idea to send this article to your friends, and bookmark it in case you get into a debate.

How did the Reagan tax cuts and Bush tax cuts affect unemployment?

July 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, which discusses how the Reagan tax cuts affected the unemployment rate.

Excerpt:

> In 1980, President Carter and his supporters in the Congress and news media asked, "how can we afford" presidential candidate Ronald Reagan's proposed tax cuts?
>
> Mr. Reagan's critics claimed the tax cuts would lead to more inflation and higher interest rates, while Mr. Reagan said tax cuts would lead to more economic growth and higher living standards. What happened? Inflation fell from 12.5 percent in 1980 to 3.9 percent in 1984, interest rates fell, and economic growth went from minus 0.2 percent in 1980 to plus 7.3 percent in 1984, and Mr. Reagan was re-elected in a landslide.
>
> […]Despite the fact that federal revenues have varied little (as a percentage of GDP) over the last 40 years, there has been an enormous variation in top tax rates. When Ronald Reagan took office, the top individual tax rate was 70 percent and by 1986 it was down to only 28 percent. All Americans received at least a 30 percent tax rate cut; yet federal tax revenues as a percent of GDP were almost unchanged during the Reagan presidency (from 18.9 percent in 1980 to 18.1 percent in 1988).
>
> What did change, however, was the rate of economic growth, which was more than 50 percent higher for the seven years after the Reagan tax cuts compared with the previous seven years. This increase in economic growth, plus some reductions in tax credits and deductions, almost entirely offset the effect of the rate reductions. Rapid economic growth, unlike government spending programs, proved to be the most effective way to reduce unemployment and poverty, and create opportunity for the disadvantaged.

The conservative Heritage Foundation describes the effects of the Bush tax cuts. (H/T The Lonely Conservative)

Excerpt:

> President Bush signed the first wave of tax cuts in 2001, cutting rates and providing tax relief for families by, for example, doubling of the child tax credit to $1,000.
>
> At Congress' insistence, the tax relief was initially phased in over many years, so the economy continued to lose jobs. In 2003, realizing its error, Congress made

> the earlier tax relief effective immediately. Congress also lowered tax rates on capital gains and dividends to encourage business investment, which had been lagging.
>
> It was the then that the economy turned around. Within months of enactment, job growth shot up, eventually creating 8.1 million jobs through 2007. Tax revenues also increased after the Bush tax cuts, due to economic growth.
>
> In 2003, capital gains tax rates were reduced. Rather than expand by 36% as the Congressional Budget Office projected before the tax cut, capital gains revenues more than doubled to $103 billion.
>
> The CBO incorrectly calculated that the post-March 2003 tax cuts would lower 2006 revenues by $75 billion. Revenues for 2006 came in $47 billion above the pre-tax cut baseline.
>
> Here's what else happened after the 2003 tax cuts lowered the rates on income, capital gains and dividend taxes:
>
> - GDP grew at an annual rate of just 1.7% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the six quarters following the tax cuts, the growth rate was 4.1%.
> - The S&P 500 dropped 18% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts but increased by 32% over the next six quarters.
> - The economy lost 267,000 jobs in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the next six quarters, it added 307,000 jobs, followed by 5 million jobs in the next seven quarters.
>
> The timing of the lower tax rates coincides almost exactly with the stark acceleration in the economy. Nor was this experience unique. The famous Clinton economic boom began when Congress passed legislation cutting spending and cutting the capital gains tax rate.

Those are the facts. That's not what you hear in the media, but they are the facts.

Is Christianity false or is it just mean and judgmental?

July 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you noticed lately that there is a decided lack of atheists who argue against Christianity on factual grounds? Instead of constructing arguments against Christian theism, what I am seeing more and more of is that people try to say that Christianity makes some group feel bad, and therefore Christianity is not worthy of pursuit and engagement.

Here's how it works. You have a person who has some sinful habit or other that they don't want to give up, and they notice that people are judging them and saying that what they are doing is wrong. And they feel bad. And they decide to attack Christianity to make the Christians stop judging them. So how do they do it? Do they argue that the concept of God is logically incoherent? No… Do they argue that some instances of evil and suffering are gratuitous? No… Do they argue that the universe is eternal so that it had no Creator? No…

What do they do?

What they do is pick on some statement by a conservative Christian that makes them feel bad, and then claim that they are victims of meanness. And apparently, making someone feel bad is some sort of disproof of Christian theism. Why is that? It's because have decided as a culture that the purpose of religion is to make people feel good about themselves and to be "nice" to other people. And by "nice", we mean not making other people feel bad about the sinfulness of their behavior. So people are making Christianity irrelevant just by *assuming* that the purpose of life is happiness, and that any religion that makes people unhappy can be dismissed.

Before, people thought about Christianity as something that you investigated, and that was either true or false. People understood that Christianity made claims about the external world that were either true or false. For example, Christianity claims that the universe had a beginning in the finite past. And the people who disagreed with Christianity would try to produce arguments and evidence that the universe was eternal, as with the steady-state theory or the oscillating model of the universe. And people were willing to change their behavior to match what was true, even when it made them feel less happy. But not any more.

I think somehow, as a society, we have internalized the following beliefs:

- God wants me to have happy feelings
- the purpose of religion is to give me happy feelings
- God's moral will for me is that I be "nice" to others
- being nice to others means accepting whatever they want to do as "good"
- accepting whatever anyone does makes them like me

- when people like me, I feel happy, which is what God wants
- there is no need for me to study God's existence
- God exists when I want to be comforted, and doesn't exist when I want to sin
- there is no need for me to study God's character
- God's character is pretty much like my character, whatever I want is fine with God
- there are no moral rules or obligations from God that apply to me
- religions are all the same, I choose the one that makes me feel happy

So you can see that someone who believes things like this can claim to be a Christian, but would actually attack real Christians who hold to the old view of exclusive factual claims and moral judgments. The real Christians are people who have studied these questions, who know that God exists, and what he is like, and accept the Bible's moral teachings as authoritative. So you could have a famous pastor who defends the Bible's prohibition on sex before marriage, and have someone *feel bad about being judged*, and then a bunch of these "the purpose of life is happiness" people will appear and chastise that pastor for making people feel bad. And many of them will claim to be Christians, and attend church, too.

Now notice that this mob of happy-feelings people are not going argue against the pastor using the Bible, because the Bible is pretty clearly against fornication. What they'll do instead is they'll pick out some piece of the Bible that seems unfair, like the slaughter of some group of child-sacrificing pagans, and they'll rail against that Bible passage in order to discredit the Bible's authority on moral questions. And then the good conservative pastor is made to feel bad because he has broken those unwritten laws – he made someone feel bad using this evil book. That's the new purpose of life.

No factual claims about God's existence were made. No historical arguments were made. No evidence was presented. The mere fact that the Bible is mean to talk about killing the poor Canaanites is used to prove that the Bible has no moral authority at all, on any issue. "It's mean" entails that *it's false*. And you can have people who read the Bible for devotions, who sing in church, and who lead worship, who think that the Bible is false because it's mean, and it's mean because it can be used to judge people and make them feel bad.

An example

Now consider single motherhood, as in this case.

Excerpt:

> She tells her children to do as she says and not as she does.
>
> But the words of mother of 14 Joanne Watson – who receives more than £2,000 a month in state handouts – have fallen on deaf ears.
>
> Her 15-year-old daughter Mariah is pregnant, the father has 'left the scene', and the youngster is about to start living off benefits.
>
> Mrs Watson, 40, is raising her giant brood alone after parting from her husband John, 46, three years ago, and breaking up with subsequent partner Craig le

> Sauvage, 35, last year.
>
> Despite this, she has still managed to squirrel away enough cash for a £1,600 breast enhancement and a sunbed. She claims she has always encouraged her daughters to use contraception – but, inevitably, it seems they would rather follow the family tradition.
>
> Mariah's pregnancy comes after Mrs Watson's oldest daughter Natasha, 22, got pregnant with her son Branford, now six, when she was 16. Her second eldest daughter Shanice, 19, also got pregnant at 16 with her 22-month-old son Marley.
>
> Mariah says she has no concerns about becoming a teenage mother, as it seems the most natural thing in the world. Initially, she and her child will be supported by the taxpayer.
>
> She is expected to move into a housing complex for single mothers and will receive supplementary benefit and child allowance for her baby.
>
> The youngster, who is due to have a boy, said: 'I'm not nervous. I've been around babies my whole life so I know what to expect and that I can handle it. The father isn't involved and I don't want him to be either. I'm really excited and think I will be a great mum.'

Now there are two responses to this from people who profess to be Christians. The first response, my response, is to make a general argument against having sex before marriage, using the latest statistics to show the harm that fatherlessness causes to children, and more evidence besides. My response is not to pick on any one person, but to set moral boundaries, to make moral judgments against the selfishness of parents, and to not celebrate and subsidize anything that will harm innocent children. I defend the right of children to grow up in a loving home with two biological parents. However, even a general argument using evidence does make some people feel bad, so I am judged as "mean".

But there is another response. This response comes from someone who professes to be a Christian, but they are actually a "God wants me to be happy and to be nice to people so they will like me and then we'll all be happy" person. They would never dream of judging anyone for anything they do. And they are very angry with me for getting my moral rules out of that horrible Bible, and for using facts and evidence to make people feel bad. They believe in *compassion*, which is the idea that says that the moral boundaries of the Bible are false, and that we have to celebrate and subsidize any and every variation on the traditional family, regardless of the harm caused, so that the selfish adults don't feel bad about their destructive choices.

And what do we make of a person who feels that saying "it's wrong" is mean, because it makes a guilty person feel bad? Well, here is the truth. A person who argues against the Bible based on the happy-feelings model is no friend of God, and no friend of the victims of selfish actions. They may think that they are being a good person by affirming the decision of the 15-year old to have a child with no father, but they are not good. Stealing money from their neighbors without providing anything in return isn't good either. They

may satisfied their invented happy-feelings God, but they have grieved the real God, and hurt the real child. And they did it by refusing to set clear moral boundaries.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Guttmacher Institute: states enact record number of abortion restrictions

July 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

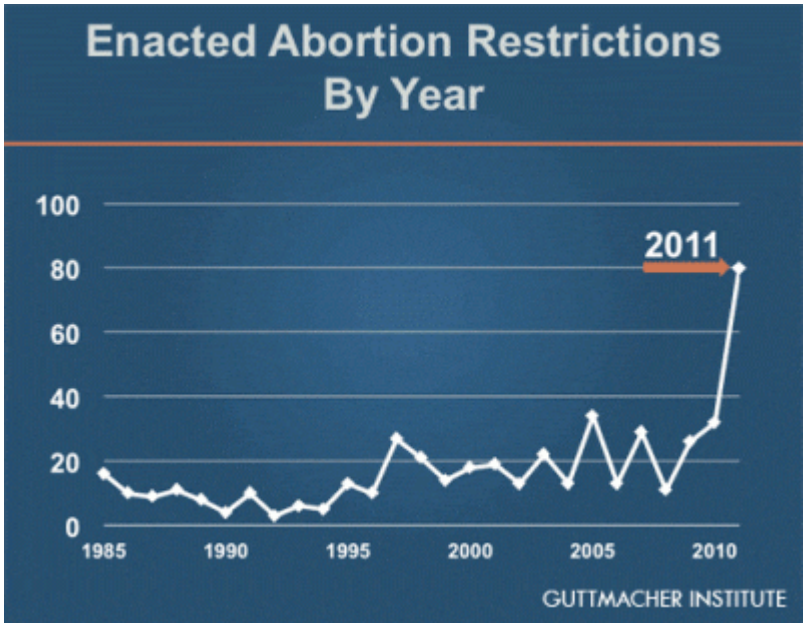

Enacted Abortion Restrictions By Year

Great news from the Guttmacher Institute, a pro-abortion think tank. (H/T John from Truth in Religion & Politics)

Excerpt:

> In the first six months of 2011, states enacted 162 new provisions related to reproductive health and rights. Fully 49% of these new laws seek to restrict access to abortion services, a sharp increase from 2010, when 26% of new laws restricted abortion. The 80 abortion restrictions enacted this year are more than double the previous record of 34 abortion restrictions enacted in 2005—and more than triple the 23 enacted in 2010. All of these new provisions were enacted in just 19 states.

The post breaks down the pro-life measures by category:

- Counseling and waiting periods
- Gestational bans
- “Heartbeat” bill
- Banning abortion coverage in new insurance exchanges
- Medication abortion
- Cuts to abortion subsidies

All of these bills were supported by Republicans, and opposed by Democrats.

Elections have consequences. We elected a massive number of Republicans in 2010, and now we are seeing the results of that effort. I could not be more proud of the Republicans

who voted in these measures to protect the unborn.

Related posts

- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

How President George W. Bush helped to create South Sudan

July 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

New Map of Africa including South Sudan
From Investors Business Daily. (H/T Muddling Towards Maturity)

Excerpt:

> As South Sudan joyfully celebrated its independence from Sudan, President Obama hailed it as the fruit of partnership, togetherness, hope and unity. South Sudanese, however, hailed President Bush.
>
> Proudly wearing the black cowboy hat given to him by President Bush, South Sudan's new president, Salva Kiir Mayardit, couldn't have made a stronger statement about who made his country's independence possible after 50 years of warfare.
>
> "It was George Bush and the Christian fundamentalists who heard the cry of South Sudan," affirmed a South Sudanese man quoted by the Los Angeles Times.
>
> […]In 2005, President Bush put South Sudan at the top of the U.S. foreign policy agenda. Knocking heads, he forced the murderous Islamofascist government of Sudan to negotiate with the South Sudan rebels, including their right to secede. That hard work led to today's result — and with it, the first chance South Sudan has ever had to break free of its oppression.

No President since Reagan cared more about the freedom of people in other countries than George W. Bush. And a lot of that is owing to his evangelical Christian convictions –

he cared about the freedom of other people.

Public schools spend $130,000 of stimulus money on diversity training books

July 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

School board President Sandra Jensen
From the Omaha World-Herald. (H/T Dennis Prager)

Excerpt:

> The Omaha Public Schools used more than $130,000 in federal stimulus dollars to buy each teacher, administrator and staff member a manual on how to become more culturally sensitive.
>
> The book by Virginia education consultants could raise some eyebrows with its viewpoints.
>
> The authors assert that American government and institutions create advantages that "channel wealth and power to white people," that color-blindness will not end racism and that educators should "take action for social justice."
>
> The book says that teachers should acknowledge historical systemic oppression in schools, including racism, sexism, homophobia and "ableism," defined by the authors as discrimination or prejudice against people with disabilities.
>
> The authors argue that public school teachers must raise their cultural awareness to better serve minority students and improve academic achievement.
>
> The Omaha school board approved buying 8,000 copies of the book — one for every employee, including members of the custodial staff — in April. The decision to buy the book was made 11-0, with board member Mary Ellen Drickey passing on the vote.
>
> Janice Garnett, OPS assistant superintendent of human resources, said she could not recall another time that the district had bought copies of the same book to give to every staff member.

> **Employees will be asked to read a couple of chapters each quarter and then meet in study groups to discuss the book using a study guide produced by the district, she said. For teachers, the study sessions will be a part of their professional development.**
>
> […]Only those educators who acknowledge the existence of white privilege in America, that "white" is a culture in America and that race "is a definer for social and economic status" can reach proficiency, the authors contend. Those who score poorly on the worksheet are asked in the book what they will do "to align yourself with the values expressed."
>
> […]The book says teachers must overcome irrational fear of homosexuality and reject the "color-blind" approach to teaching in which teachers treat all children the same. Instead, the group identity of students of color should be recognized and esteemed, the authors say.
>
> […]The authors — Franklin and Brenda CampbellJones and Randall B. Lindsey — all former teachers, write that their intent in the book is "to prepare educators to unshackle themselves from tradition and become facilitators for reconciliation of historical injustices."
>
> [Franklin] said the book has been well-received by other school districts using it, including San Diego and Atlanta, and districts in Maryland and Canada.
>
> The push for cultural proficiency, sometimes referred to as cultural competence, is a trend across the country, though what's meant by these terms varies. Definitions range from encouraging teachers to understand the cultural backgrounds of students to more aggressive efforts to rewrite curricula and adapt school systems to immigrant cultures.
>
> A primary concern of critics is that schools and universities could use cultural proficiency as an ideological litmus test and that the money put toward such programs could be better spent directly on academics.
>
> […]Asked last week if she believes white privilege exists in Omaha, [School board President Sandra Jensen] said: "That depends on the cultural lens that one looks through."

So what do we learn from this?

- We learn why the stimulus failed to create jobs
- We learn what public schools demand more and more money for
- We learn that public schools are not about teaching skills, but about indoctrination
- We learned that Democrats want to indoctrinate your children in leftist ideology
- We learned why over-funded American public schools produce such poor results
- We learned why overpaid public school teachers should have their benefits cut
- We learned why parents and children should favor school choice, e.g. – vouchers
- We learned why Christian parent need to support homeschooling
- We learned that the only racists left are the racists on the left, i.e. – Democrats

A vote for the Democrats is a vote for these overpaid leftist educational bureaucrats. “Stimulus” money is nothing more than government waste. It RAISES unemployment, by redistributing wealth from job creators to left-wing bureaucrats.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel’s documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- New Jersey per-pupil cost is $17,800
- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama’s new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher’s unions make war on charter schools

Democrats mandate that gay history be taught in California schools

July 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Christian Post. (Note that the Democrat governor has now signed the bill)

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, a bill that would make the state the first to require textbooks and history classes to include the study of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans as well as those with disabilities passed in the state assembly. The bill also bans material that reflects negatively on gays.
>
> The measure passed along a party line vote, 49-25, with one Republican voting in favor. It is now on its way to Democrat Gov. Jerry Brown. Brown has not indicated whether or not he will sign it. Former Republican Gov. Schwarzenegger vetoed a similar bill five years ago.
>
> On a whole, Republicans are against the bill. According to The Associated Press, Republicans refer to it as a "well-intentioned but ill-conceived bill." Concerns are raised that it would indoctrinate children to accept homosexuality.
>
> Openly gay Democrat Assembly Speaker, John Perez, is pushing for the governor to sign the bill. "This bill will require California schools to present a more accurate and nuanced view of American history in our social science curriculum by recognizing the accomplishments of groups that are not often recognized," he said, according to the New York Daily News.
>
> If signed, the bill could take effect as early as the 2013-2014 academic year. The measure leaves it up to the local school boards on how to implement the policy. However, it will require school districts to adopt textbooks and other materials to cover the new agenda. California is one of the largest buyers of textbooks, causing fear that this bill could affect school systems throughout the country.
>
> […]The bill is formally supported by the California Teachers Association, several school districts and a progressive religious organization, according to SF Chronicle. It is opposed by many churches and conservative organizations.

Democrat governor Jerry Brown signed the bill on Thursday.

And the Pacific Justic Institute adds:

> A controversial bill that would require public schools to emphasize the roles and contributions of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people has now passed both houses of the California legislature and is expected to be signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown within days. Legal experts predict, though, that SB 48 will affect schools across the nation.
>
> "The reality is that the major textbook manufacturers do not create different

> textbooks for each state," noted Brad Dacus, president of Pacific Justice Institute. "Instead, they seek to comply with mandates in the largest states, especially California and Texas. As a result, many smaller states are pressured into approving California-focused instructional materials, which must now cater to the gay history mandate."

There are lots of ways to respond to an event like this:

- we can vote for more Republicans
- we can vote to lower taxes, shrink government and privatize education
- we can vote for more school choice, so parents decide where children go to school
- we can vote for more federalism – more local control of education issues
- we can train and educate Christian lawyers to argue for parent's rights in court
- etc.

It's very important for Christians to understand what it means to vote Democrat. It means you go to work and earn money that will be used to indoctrinate your children to disrespect your Christian worldview. That's why Democrats favor a well-funded, top-down, centralized, state-run education system. And it's up to parents to vote smarter.

UPDATE: Reader Todd K. sends me this article from City Journal, the journal of the Manhattan Institute.

Excerpt:

> California's budget crisis has reduced the University of California to near-penury, claim its spokesmen. "Our campuses and the UC Office of the President already have cut to the bone," the university system's vice president for budget and capital resources warned earlier this month, in advance of this week's meeting of the university's regents. Well, not *exactly* to the bone. Even as UC campuses jettison entire degree programs and lose faculty to competing universities, one fiefdom has remained virtually sacrosanct: the diversity machine.
>
> Not only have diversity sinecures been protected from budget cuts, their numbers are actually growing. The University of California at San Diego, for example, is creating a new full-time "vice chancellor for equity, diversity, and inclusion." This position would augment UC San Diego's already massive diversity apparatus, which includes the Chancellor's Diversity Office, the associate vice chancellor for faculty equity, the assistant vice chancellor for diversity, the faculty equity advisors, the graduate diversity coordinators, the staff diversity liaison, the undergraduate student diversity liaison, the graduate student diversity liaison, the chief diversity officer, the director of development for diversity initiatives, the Office of Academic Diversity and Equal Opportunity, the Committee on Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Issues, the Committee on the Status of Women, the Campus Council on Climate, Culture and Inclusion, the Diversity Council, and the directors of the Cross-Cultural Center, the Lesbian Gay

> Bisexual Transgender Resource Center, and the Women’s Center.

I don’t agree with Heather McDonald on everything, but this article is awesome.

Does Jesus use hyperbole to make a point?

July 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was inspired by Neil Shenvi's comment to do a search on Jesus' use of hyperbole, and below is an article I found on it.

From Hank Hanegraaf's Christian Research Institute web site.

Excerpt:

> I want to pay particular attention to Jesus' statement in Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."
>
> One way to misinterpret this verse is to take it literally. Cults often operate on the premise that the statement is literally true — that it pits loyalty to the group against love for family. In doing so, they attempt to distance followers from family members who might make them fall away.
>
> Critics of Christianity in turn point to the verse in order to denigrate the Christian faith. An atheist, for example, quotes the verse as "a perfect illustration of how a cult operates. Sort of makes you wonder about all those conservative religionists that preach 'traditional family values!'"
>
> […]It is obvious that a literal interpretation of Jesus' statement leads to disastrous results; but what is the alternative to interpreting it literally? The only viable option is to regard the statement as being a *hyperbole* — a conscious exaggeration that expresses truth in a nonliteral manner.
>
> It apparently is not easy for people to label a statement as being a hyperbole. On the surface, it may seem to signal a lack of faith when we do not take the great promises of Scripture at face value. After all, "all things are possible with God" (Mark 10:27). Interpreting hyperbolic statements literally, however, lands us in much greater difficulties than interpreting them figuratively does.
>
> […]Elton Trueblood shows in his book *The Humor of Christ* that the most distinctive feature of Jesus' discourses is their use of exaggeration — the preposterous overstatement in the mode of "our conventional Texas story, which no one believes literally, but which everyone remembers." G. K. Chesterton notes that "Christ had even a literary style of his own.…The diction used by Christ is quite curiously gigantesque; it is full of camels leaping through needles and mountains hurled into the sea."
>
> This is, in fact, accurate; for example: "When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" (Matt. 6:3); "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God" (Matt. 19:24); The kingdom of God "is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree,

> and the birds of the air made nests in its branches” (Luke 13:19).

The rest of the article is worth reading – the author talks about how hyperbole works in the Bible and how to recognize it.

I thought this was important to highlight since I love to exaggerate for effect, and now we know that it’s ok that I do. Certain people don’t like it when I exaggerate for effect. But I won’t say who!

Peter Hitchens distinguishes the deserving and undeserving poor

July 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article by Christopher Hitchens' brother Peter in the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Scrubone)

Excerpt:

> Here beginneth the first lesson: In St Paul's first epistle to Timothy, Chapter 5, we read: 'If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.'
>
> And in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, St Paul rubs it in, in that way he has: 'This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.'
>
> This seems pretty clear to me, and a dozen generations before my own knew these words by heart and lived according to them. They gave to charity and supported the helpless and needy with all their might.
>
> But they scorned those who sought to live off others when they had no need to.
>
> […]I don't mind bishops intervening in our national life. That's what they are for. I like having them in the House of Lords to remind us of the foundations on which our country stands. But they are not there to act as reinforcements for the Liberal Democrats. They are there to remind us that we are at heart a Christian nation and people.
>
> They should stand up for lifelong marriage, denounce the lax treatment of wrongdoers and the neglect of their victims, condemn public drunkenness, defend unborn babies against those who wish to kill them, stand in the way of stupid and unjust wars, and of selfish cruelty of all kinds. But they really have to get out of their heads the idea that the Welfare State must be unconditionally defended.
>
> For it is the hard-working poor who pay for it, and who see their near neighbours living lives of shameless idleness on their money. And they also watch criminals profiting by their crimes, and getting away with it.
>
> If the parsons, pastors, priests and bishops of this country took the side of the poor against these parasites, instead of acting as their spokesmen, they might find their churches filling up again.
>
> But as long as they talk like the TUC, they will stay at the fringe of our national life.

He's actually replying to the lame apostate Archbishop Rowan Williams. If you want a real Archbishop, try His Grace Archbishop Cranmer.

Here's a related lecture that Jay Richards did for the Family Research Council, on the topic of Christianity and Economics. It's a very good lecture that discusses some basic

economic principles and some common economics myths. You can also listen to the MP3 file, but it's 60 megabytes.

Related posts

- Should Christians support wealth redistribution as a way to alleviate poverty?
- Should Christians pray for the economy?
- Fiscal and social conservatives unite in new free e-book "Indivisible"
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Cato Institute talks with Jay Richards about Christianity and capitalism
- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible
- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

Casey Luskin debates Thom Hartmann on Darwinism

July 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Casey Luskin, Attorney & Program Officer in Public Policy and Legal Affairs-Discovery Institute.

There are some good lessons from this video you should know. The most important thing is to never allow the Darwinist to mention God, the Bible, or religion in a discussion about evolution. Always debate the evidence for and against Darwinism.

Michele Bachmann: her latest embarassing gaffe caught on video

July 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yes, our good friends in the mainstream media are so professional – they really know how to be fair and balanced, and to focus on the policy issues. That's why we have such a great economy and such a low employment rate now – because they carefully vetted Obama's voting record and accomplishments and then we were able to choose the candidate who had the best record on economic policy and job creation.

Here's the latest poll from Iowa.

Excerpt:

> According to a Magellan Strategies poll of 1,024 likely 2012 Iowa Republican Caucus goers, released this week, Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) has a firm lead over fellow candidates Mitt Romney, Herman Cain and Tim Pawlenty. Bachmann's double digit lead also placed her well ahead of Ron Paul, Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum.
>
> Bachmann, who was born and raised in Waterloo, Iowa, grabbed 29 percent support in the poll. Romney, a former Massachusetts Governor and runner up in this poll, grabbed 16 percent support. Both Pawlenty and Cain grabbed 8 percent support in this poll, while Paul, Gingrich and Santorum finished with five percent support or less.
>
> A strong finish in the Iowa Presidential Caucus would be a big win for Bachmann or any of the other candidates, because Iowa is the first state in the nation to hold its caucus. New Hampshire is another important state for Bachmann and the other GOP candidates, because New Hampshire holds the first primary election every four years.
>
> While Romney is still the frontrunner in New Hampshire, Bachmann has polled well in New Hampshire in recent weeks. An American Research Group poll, released on Thursday, shows Romney with 29 percent of the Republican vote, while Bachmann snags 16 percent of the Republican vote. This poll also had Cain, Paul, Pawlenty, Sarah Palin, Jon Huntsman and Rudy Giuliani grabbing less than 10 percent of the Republican vote. Giuliani was the third place finisher in this poll with 9 percent of the Republican vote.

You can find out more about Michele Bachmann in the links below, stuff the mainstream media will never tell you.

Campaign speeches, interviews and debates

Speeches:

- Michele Bachmann's Republican Leadership Conference speech

- Michele Bachmann’s speech at the Right Online Conference

Reactions from her recent debate performance:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

Profiles of Michele Bachmann:

- The Weekly Standard
- Wall Street Journal
- ABC News
- WORLD Magazine

Michele Bachmann on television news

Let Americans spend their own money

Time to prioritize spending

Obama’s plan is to raise your taxes

Michele Bachmann in the legislature

Against socialism:

For economic growth:

Against ACORN funding:

Would the Republican “cut, cap and balance” plan solve the debt crisis?

July 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let’s take a look at the Republican “Cut, Cap and Balance” plan, as reported by CBS News.

Excerpt:

> The House next week will take a vote to raise the debt ceiling and pass a balanced budget amendment, House Republican leaders said today.
>
> The plan is unlikely to go anywhere, since a balanced budget amendment would likely fail in the Democrat-led Senate, but GOP leaders nevertheless called it a serious plan to raise the debt ceiling. They said President Obama and Democrats have failed to come up with an equally serious plan.
>
> “We asked the president to lead,” House Speaker John Boehner said in a press conference today. “We asked him to put forward a plan — not a speech, a real plan — and he hasn’t. We will.”
>
> The “cut, cap and balance” proposal would make raising the debt ceiling contingent on Congress sending a balanced budget amendment to the states. It would also cap government spending at 18 percent of Gross Domestic Product over the next 10 years.
>
> The plan would raise the debt ceiling by $2.4 trillion, since that is the increase requested by the president. However, the plan would actually make even more in spending cuts — as much as $111 billion in 2012 alone.
>
> […]Boehner said the House would vote on the “cut, cap and balance” plan and then decide how to proceed from there.”I don’t want to preclude any chance of coming to an agreement, but [Democrats have] been unwilling to put a real plan on the table,” Boehner said. “Without serious spending cuts or real reform to entitlement programs, this problem is not going to be solved.”

That’s what the Republicans would do if they were in control. The balanced budget amendment would cap spending at 18% of GDP, so that we would never have a debt crisis ever again. That’s the right solution, except that the Democrats cannot give up the idea of buying votes with the money they steal from job creators. They just can control their addiction to spending.

Now, let’s take a look at who caused the debt crisis, with this House Budget Committee article by fiscal hawk Paul Ryan. (H/T Washington Post)

Excerpt:

> While President Obama has recently professed a newfound — and vague — desire to cut government spending, it’s useful to recall what the President has

> actually done since taking office in 2009. The President signed into law a massive spending spree that plunged us deeper into debt, and failed to deliver on its promise to create jobs.

> - 24% Increase in Base Spending. Non-defense discretionary spending grew by 24% for the first two years of the Obama Administration, adding $734 billion in spending over the next 10 years.
> - Record Government Spending. The Federal government will spend $3.6 trillion this year, 24% of gross domestic product (GDP) and the highest burden on the economy since World War II. Spending has historically averaged a little over 20% of GDP.
> - President's Budget Makes Matter Worse. According to CBO, the President's budget never spends less than 23% of GDP and by the end of the decade rises to 24% of GDP. His budget's failure to address the drivers of our debt threatens the health and retirement security of America's seniors, and the economic security of all Americans. The President's budget seeks to spend $46 trillion in government spending over the next decade, and has subsequently fought against House Republican efforts to restrain his spending appetite down to $43.5 trillion.

During the four years when Nancy Pelosi was the Speaker of the House, and Harry Reid was in control of the Senate, the Democrats packed 5.34 trillion dollars onto the national debt.

Gary Habermas and a Duke University professor discuss the resurrection

July 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speakers:

Gary Habermas

Chair, Department of Philosophy, Liberty University
Distinguished Research Professor

Ph.D., History and Philosophy of Religion, Michigan State University (1976)
M.A., Philosophical Theology, University of Detroit (1973)
B.R.E., Christian Education, Bible, Social Sciences; William Tyndale College (1972)

Distinguished Research Professor; Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and Graduate School; Chair, Department of Philosophy and Theology, Liberty University; current appointment: teaching in PhD program, Liberty University, 1981-Present.

Joel Marcus

Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins, Duke University

B.A., New York University
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D, Columbia University-Union Theological Seminary, New York

Joel Marcus teaches New Testament with an emphasis on the Gospels and the context of early Christianity in first-century Judaism. His publications include two monographs on Mark and a two-volume commentary on the same Gospel in the *Anchor Bible* series (Doubleday, 2000, 2009). His current research focuses on the parting of the ways between ancient Judaism and the Christianity of the first three centuries A.D.

This is MP3 audio of the discussion is in 3 parts.

- Part 1 of 3 (35 minutes)
- Part 2 of 3 (35 minutes)
- Part 3 of 3 (36 minutes)

Each part is 8 Mb. The last segment is Q&A with students.

Dr. Marcus is fairly moderate, definitely not an evangelical, so it makes for an interesting, but friendly, disagreement. Dr. Habermas is streaky. Sometimes he is hot and sometimes he is cold. This time, he is fairly hot.

Did Obama's foreign policy make America more respected abroad?

July 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> In the Middle East, where U.S. military involvement and diplomacy are most closely watched, President Obama is held in lower regard in the Arab world than President Bush was in the last year of his presidency.
>
> Obama is not only less liked than the supposedly hated Bush, he can't even hold a candle to Iran's grubby, menacing Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Zogby reports that in Egypt, 31% of Egyptians agree with Iran's policies compared with 3% for Obama's, with similar figures in Jordan. Among Egyptians, just 5% hold a favorable attitude toward the U.S. compared with 9% in 2008.
>
> […]Clinton will do no better in bilateral talks with the Turks — a nation that has moved so far away from its long alliance with the U.S. it can only be called a former ally — on Syria, Iran and Israel/Palestine.
>
> In these countries, Obama's policy can be summed up in a litany of ineffectual maneuvers.
>
> On Syria, the first move was to succor, then to scold as the dictatorship indifferently sheds streams of blood in the streets of Damascus — showing the fundamental disconnect between what the brutal Syrian regime is and what the Obama administration thinks it is.
>
> After throwing Tunisia and Egypt, two pro-Western allies, overboard, the administration ineffectually grasps a problem in Syria as the bodies pile up.

> On Iran, Obama policy shows even more weakness. The president wasted two years coddling the monster regime that threatens a region of more than a billion people. He missed a chance to support a student uprising in 2009 and now watches as Iran's illegal nuclear program speeds ahead with little fear of consequences, more brazen and closer to realization.
>
> Whatever this learning-curve policy amounts to, it garners no international respect.
>
> Then there's the stance the White House has taken on Israel, abusively telling its ally to retreat to 1967 borders. It emboldened provocations from Palestinian terrorist groups and showed the rest of the Arab world that it pays more to be America's enemy than its friend. Now the Arab League is moving to recognize Palestine.

It turns out that what foreign powers respect is *strength*, not *weakness*.

On “Face the Nation”: Marco Rubio says the President has no plan

July 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio takes on Obama spokesman Bob Schieffer on CBS’ “Face the Nation”. (H/T Mariangela)

In this speech on the floor of the Senate, he lays the whole debt problem and the solutions.

I just wish that the voters would compare Obama’s class-warfare rhetoric and his performance on job create with Marco Rubio’s clear explanation of the incentives and motives of job creators. We don’t need redistribution of wealth, we need people to have jobs. When people have jobs, they feel comfortable to investing or spend money.

Bush's tax cuts led to a 44% increase in revenues from 2003 to 2007

July 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

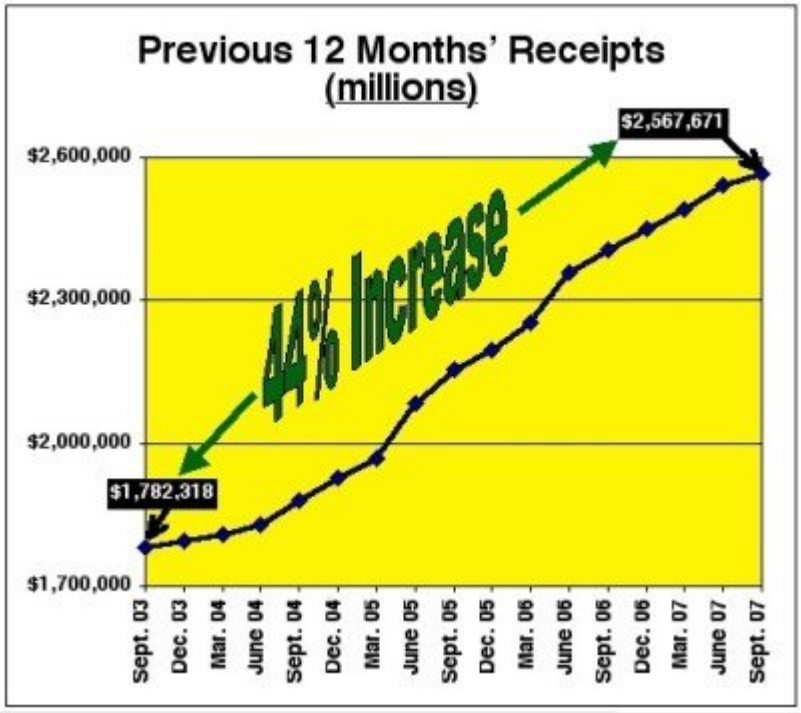

Federal Receipts 2003 through 2007

From Newsbusters. It turns out that Bush's tax cuts in 2001 and 2003 were not responsible for adding to the deficit. They actually increased the amount of tax money being collected, as the economy grew, and more jobs were created. People pay more in taxes when they have jobs.

Excerpt:

> The graph doesn't show collections tanking, does it? Instead, the graph shows that collections increased by 44%, or almost $800 billion, in four years. Adding up the individual increments in each of the four years compared to 2003 (2004 – $98B; 2005 – $371B; 2006 – $624B; 2007 – $785B; 2008, not shown, treating IRS stimulus payments as outlays instead of negative receipts – $835B), what really happened is that in the five full fiscal years after George W. Bush got the across-the-board and investment-related tax cuts he had been pushing for since taking office in 2001, the cumulative *increase* in tax collections was over $2.7 trillion.
>
> Doubtless, the static analysis crowd will claim that collections would have been even higher (I guess by a cumulative $1.6 trillion, given the AP's Democratic Party talking point above) if the Bush cuts hadn't been enacted. Two words, guys: Prove it. Two follow-up words: You can't.
>
> We can argue all day long about the how much of the increase in collections was due to the incentive effects of the tax cuts and how of the improvement might have occurred anyway, but no one can credibly act as if it's an established fact

> that the Bush cuts somehow caused collections to go $1.6 trillion in the opposite direction. There is absolutely no proof for this contention, and plenty of evidence that the Bush cuts jump-started an economy and federal collections, both of which had been flat or declining during the two years leading up to mid-2003. The more reasonable conclusion to reach is that the country would already be dead in the water if the Bush tax cuts hadn't passed in 2003. Instead, the wire service hopes that its "Bush tax cuts cost us" meme will be gullibly recited during the next several days at its subscribing newspaper, TV, and radio outlets. "Disgraceful" doesn't even begin to describe this pathetic promotion of self-evident falsehood.
>
> The fact is that the federal budget was one good year away from balancing after the $162 deficit reported in fiscal 2007. Unfortunately, that was the last budget passed by a Republican-controlled Congress, and it was the only year which showed a modest increase in overall spending. Beginning in 2007 with effects beginning in fiscal 2008, the House and Senate controlled by Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid began increasing spending at rates far beyond what profligate Republicans spent earlier in the decade, and, unfortunately, Bush 43 made no real effort to stop them…

Read the whole thing.

UPDATE: Reggie sent me this article showing that the Reagan tax cuts also increased revenues.

Excerpt:

> In 1980, the last year before the tax cuts, tax revenues were $956 billion (in constant 1996 dollars).
>
> Revenues exceeded that 1980 level in eight of the next 10 years. Annual revenues over the next decade averaged $102 billion above their 1980 level (in constant 1996 dollars).

The graph is here.

When you get people to start engaging in the economy, you can collect more taxes from them. They engage when they think that they will be able to keep more of what they make from their labor.

Is opposition to 1.6 trillion dollar deficits rooted in racism?

July 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this video of Democrat Sheila Jackson Lee.

Fox News explains. (H/T The Other McCain)

Excerpt:

> Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, suggested during a House floor speech Friday that raising the debt ceiling was being held up by members of Congress because President Obama is black.
>
> "Only this president–only this one–only this one has received the kind of attacks and disagreements and inability to work," she said. "Only this one. Read between the lines."
>
> "What is different about this president that should put him in a position that he should not receive the same kind of respectful treatment of when it is necessary to raise the debt limit in order to pay our bills?" she added.
>
> A member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Jackson Lee said the debt limit was raised many times under previous Democratic and Republican presidents. "In the minority community that is the question that is being raised. Why is this president being treated so disrespectfully?"
>
> […]Towards the end of her speech, Jackson Lee said she hoped that race was not getting in the way of solving the debt crisis.
>
> "I cannot imagine coming this far in my life, that of my children's life and that of others to come to a point where we would use the uniqueness and the difference of this president to treat him differently. If that is not getting in our way, then there's no reason why we can't come together and solve this problem," she said.

Stacy McCain points out that Sheila Jackson-Lee voted *against* the debt ceiling increase when George W. Bush was President:

> To the sin of racial demagoguery, Jackson-Lee adds also blatant hypocrisy because (as Don Surber reminds us) *she voted against raising the debt ceiling* when Bush was president. And y'know who else voted against raising the debt ceiling during the Bush administration?

If it's racism to vote against debt ceiling increases, then that makes Sheila Jackson-Lee a racist. Actually, making distinctions about race at all is racist. Which means that the people on the left who keep making these distinctions are racists. The left is obsessed with dividing people along racial lines.

What works to halt the spread of AIDS? Morality or condoms?

July 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

New Map of Africa
From MercatorNet.

Excerpt:

> Earlier this year, the journal *PLoS Medicine* published a stunning report about the prevalence of AIDS in Zimbabwe. Over the ten years to 2007 HIV prevalence was halved. This decline is almost unique in sub-Saharan Africa.
>
> Aha! you might say. Despite the disastrous state of its economy, Zimbabwe has been distributing condoms by the millions to bring down adult prevalence from 27 percent to 16 percent. But you would be quite wrong. It is not condoms which are saving the lives of thousands of Zimbabweans, say researchers, but changes in behaviour, “mainly reductions in extramarital, commercial, and casual sexual relations”.
>
> In other words, it looks like abstinence and fidelity are the secret to turning around the devastating AIDS epidemic which has killed 30 million people and infected 33 million and orphaned 16 million children.
>
> Not condoms.
>
> This report supports the thesis of the authors of the fascinating book *Affirming Love, Avoiding AIDS*, Matthew Hanley and Jokin de Irala.
>
> […]Hanley and de Irala show that “primary behaviour change” is the best

> weapon for fighting AIDS, not “harm reduction”. In fact, the rapid spread of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, despite a thorough understanding of how it spreads and billions spent on risk reduction, is “one of the greatest failures in the history of public health”. The South African strategy assumed, for instance, that the spread of AIDS has little to do with sexual responsibility. Authorities there promoted condoms with a “have fun but play safely” campaign. The results have been disastrous. About 18 percent of men and women between 18 and 49 live with HIV/AIDS.
>
> The AIDS bureaucracy is committed to technical fixes despite lip service to abstinence and fidelity. Condoms, voluntary counselling and testing and treatment of other sexually transmitted diseases are their strategies. All of these are effective to some degree, but they ignore mounting evidence that HIV transmission rates remain high despite widespread distribution of condoms. In Botswana, the authors point out, condom sales increased from 1 million in 1993 to 3 million in 2001, while HIV prevalence rose from 27 to 45 percent among pregnant urban women. Between 1990 and 2002 life expectancy fell by 30 years in Botswana, a decline “unprecedented in the history of the human race”.
>
> Why don’t condoms work? It’s not a question of permeability or breakage, but of how they are used. For one thing, only consistent condom use is effective in warding off AIDS. Yet it appears that most men use condoms very irregularly. And the evidence is mounting that condoms actually promote risky sexual behaviour because users feel that they are protected.
>
> The engine of the epidemic is multiple sex partners, a growing number of AIDS researchers believe. When people have stopped engaging in casual sex and participating in a web of sex relationships, as has happened in Uganda and Zimbabwe, AIDS rates have fallen dramatically.

Here’s the abstract from the paper:

> There is growing recognition that primary prevention, including behavior change, must be central in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The earlier successes in Thailand and Uganda may not be fully relevant to the severely affected countries of southern Africa.
>
> We conducted an extensive multi-disciplinary synthesis of the available data on the causes of the remarkable HIV decline that has occurred in Zimbabwe (29% estimated adult prevalence in 1997 to 16% in 2007), in the context of severe social, political, and economic disruption.
>
> The behavioral changes associated with HIV reduction—mainly reductions in extramarital, commercial, and casual sexual relations, and associated reductions in partner concurrency—appear to have been stimulated primarily by increased awareness of AIDS deaths and secondarily by the country’s economic deterioration. These changes were probably aided by prevention programs

> utilizing both mass media and church-based, workplace-based, and other interpersonal communication activities.
>
> Focusing on partner reduction, in addition to promoting condom use for casual sex and other evidence-based approaches, is crucial for developing more effective prevention programs, especially in regions with generalized HIV epidemics.

Government programs that basically try to take promiscuity as a given and then reshuffle wealth around to make the promiscuous avoid the consequences of their own choices. Why is that? Well, government bureaucrats would be out of a job if people behaved responsibly – they have every incentive NOT to solve social problems. The bigger the social problems, the more money they can collect in taxes. The more money they collect in taxes, the more they can play Robin Hood and get accolades from the public for their generosity. That is the real reason that people on the left, who love to feel as though they are solving problems for people by shuffling money around, oppose personal responsibility.

Italy’s debt crisis – what can we learn from it?

July 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Europe

Very bad news for Italy, but a learning opportunity for us.

Excerpt:

> Fears are spreading that Italy may soon have to follow Greece, Ireland, and Portugal and seek a financial bailout from the European Union and the International Monetary Fund. Doubts over the sustainability of Italy’s explosive cocktail of high debt and low growth have led to violent routs that saw Italian stocks plunge and bond yields soar in recent days.
>
> Italy is the seventh-largest economy in the world and the third-largest economy in the euro zone (the group of countries which use the euro as their common currency). It is also the third-most indebted country in the world after the United States and Japan. In its European context, Italy’s mountain of debt is more than that of all the other so-called PIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Greece, and Spain) group of financially troubled countries combined.
>
> Given the massive size of the Italian economy, many analysts believe that Italy (like Spain) is too big to be rescued and that a full-blown debt crisis in the country could lead to the collapse of Europe’s single currency.
>
> Confidence in Italy began to erode after Moody’s Investors Service and Standard & Poor’s announced in recent weeks that they are reviewing the country’s sovereign credit rating. The review for a possible downgrade of Italy’s rating

> comes amid stalled economic growth that will complicate any efforts to reduce the country's debt load, and political infighting in Rome over budget cuts required to prevent government borrowing costs from spiraling to unaffordable levels.
>
> There is no quick fix for the two most immediate problems ailing Italy: the country's towering national debt and extremely poor prospects for economic growth.
>
> At 120 percent of GDP, Italy's debt is the EU's second-largest by that measure after Greece, which has a debt-to-GDP ratio of 150 percent. Italy's €1.8 trillion ($2.5 trillion) debt, which is equal to the country's national income, poses an unsustainable economic burden that will push Italy into the abyss if the government's debt servicing costs keep rising.

What can we learn from Italy that we should avoid?

First, they are planning to balance the budget by 2014:

> The plan calls for freezing public sector pay, reducing funding to local government and health services, increasing the retirement age, and cracking down on tax evasion. Italians will also have to pay €25 for some non-emergency hospital visits and €10 above existing fees to see specialists. The aim is to cut the budget deficit from 3.9 percent this year to 2.2 percent in 2013 and to balance the budget by 2014.

We are running massive 1.6 trillion dollar deficits under Obama, and he refuses to balance the budget. Even if he took every penny earned by those households earning $200,000 or more per year, that would not generate enough money to cover his massive 1.6 trillion dollar spending sprees. The problem is not revenue, it's spending.

And what else can we learn from Italy?

Here's more from the PJM article:

> Everyone seems to agree that Italy's growth problems are structural and systemic. As noted recently by the *Economist* magazine: "Between 2000 and 2010 Italy's average growth, measured by GDP at constant prices, was just 0.25% a year. Of all the countries in the world, only Haiti and Zimbabwe did worse."
>
> Says the *Economist*: "Many things contribute to these gloomy figures. Italy has become a place that is ill at ease in the world, scared of globalization and immigration. It has chosen a set of policies that discriminate heavily in favor of the old and against the young. Combined with an aversion to meritocracy, this is driving large numbers of talented young Italians abroad. In addition, Italy has failed to renew its institutions and suffers from debilitating conflicts of interest in the judiciary, politics, the media, and business. These are problems that concern the nation as a whole, not one province or another."

Does that sound familiar? That’s right! The Democrats are scared of globalization. They oppose free trade deals that reduce the prices of consumer goods. The Democrats favor distributing wealth from young to old. They oppose reforming entitlements like Social Security and Medicare for young people. The Democrats are opposed to meritocracy. They are the party of unions, tenure and wealth redistribution. It’s this economics illiteracy that is slowing down economic growth here at home. We need to vote the people who make economic decisions by *feelings* out. And we need to put the people who make economic decisions based on *job creation* in.

William Lane Craig makes sense of the doctrine of substitutionary atonement

July 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably one of the most common questions that you hear from people who don't fully understand Christianity is this question: "why did Jesus have to die?". The answer that most Christians seem to hold to is that 1) humans are rebelling against God, 2) Humans deserve punishment for their rebellion, 3) Humans cannot escape the punishment for their rebellion on their own, 4) Jesus was punished in the place of the rebellious humans, 5) Those who accept this sacrifice are forgiven for their rebelling.

Some people think that humans are not really rebellious at all, but it's actually easy to see. You can see it just by looking at how people spend their time. Some of us have no time for God at all, and instead try to fill our lives with material possessions and experiences in order to have happy feelings. Some of us embrace just the parts of God that make us feel happy, like church and singing and feelings of comfort, while avoiding the hard parts of that vertical relationship; reading, thinking and disagreeing with people who don't believe the truth about God. And so on.

This condition of being in rebellion is universal, and all of us are guilty of breaking the law at some point. All of us deserve to be separated from God's goodness and love. Even if we wanted to stop rebelling, we would not be able to make up for the times where we do rebel by being good at other times, any more than we could get out of a speeding ticket by appealing to the times when we drove at the speed limit, (something that I never do, in any case).

This is not to say that all sinners are punished equally – the degree of punishment is proportional to the sins a person commits. However, the standard is perfection. And worse than that, the most important moral obligation is a *vertical* moral obligation. You can't satisfy the demands of the moral law just by making your neighbor happy, while treating God like a pariah. The first commandment is to love God, the second is to love your neighbor. Even loving your neighbor requires you to tell your neighbor the truth – not just to make them feel good. The *vertical* relationship is more important than the *horizontal* one, and we've all screwed up the vertical relationship. We all don't want God to be there, telling us what's best for us, interfering with our fun. We're obstinate tin soldiers, as C.S. Lewis says. We don't want to relate to a loving God if it means having to care what he thinks about anything.

So how do we get out of this mess that we are all in?

This article from Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason may help you to make sense of it – without any churchy jibber-jabber.

Excerpt:

> Christians often say, "if you believe in Jesus you go to Heaven; if you don't

> believe in Jesus you go to Hell". Is that true? Well, it is true, but it doesn't communicate a sense of the true circumstance. It's not coherent to most people because it just seems bizarre why what one person thought about some guy who died 2000 years ago has anything to do with their eternal destiny. Whether they believe in him or not seems irrelevant to anything that might happen after we die. So we have often not been careful to communicate the sense of things.
>
> We need to be clear so that someone rejects the real message and not some incoherent mess that some Christian has handed him that they can't make sense of. So, I don't say, "if you believe in Jesus you go to Heaven, and if you don't believe you go to Hell," because this is misleading. I'd rather try to explain it more accurately.
>
> Many of you are familiar with the conversation I had with a fellow at Barnes and Noble in which he asked me a question. I was giving a talk there as part of the book on relativism that Dr. Frank Beckwith and I co-authored, *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air*. Since I was talking about it in the bookstore, he came up afterwards and started asking questions about Jesus. Instead of unloading this slogan on him, I asked him this question. Do you think that people who commit moral crimes ought to be punished? He said, "Yes." I said, "Good, so do I." Second question, "Have you ever committed any moral crimes?" Pause. Then he said, "Yes, I guess I have." You know what I said to him? "So have I."
>
> This just took 30 seconds, right? Then I reflected back to him, "Look where we've come so far. We both believe that people who commit moral crimes ought to be punished. And we both believe we've committed moral crimes. You know what I call that? Bad news." And it is bad news.
>
> Most people are concerned with doing what is right. That was one of the first things he told me. "I'm Jewish. I believe in morality. I believe in God. Why do I have to believe in your Jesus?" Here is a man who has some level of commitment to the moral life. The problem is, he knows that that commitment does not guarantee that he is going to live a fully moral life and he's aware of his own moral crimes. And so am I. Now what? That is the issue? We are guilty. That is the bad news.
>
> This is why it is so important to get the bad news before the good news. The bad news gives meaning to the good news. I was able to talk about the fact that now we both admit we have a problem, but that there is a solution that God has ordained. Since He is the one who is offended, He is the one who can call the shots on how to fix the problem. The answer is through His Son Jesus, who provides mercy because he took the rap for our crimes. We got off. He went to jail. A modern metaphor to put it in perspective.

Now I've noticed that on some atheist blogs, they don't like the idea that someone else can take our punishment for us to exonerate us for crimes that we've committed. So I'll quote from this post by the great William Lane Craig, to respond to that objection.

Excerpt:

> The central problem of the Penal Theory is, as you point out, understanding how punishing a person other than the perpetrator of the wrong can meet the demands of justice. Indeed, we might even say that it would be wrong to punish some innocent person for the crimes I commit!
>
> It seems to me, however, that in other aspects of human life we do recognize this practice. I remember once sharing the Gospel with a businessman. When I explained that Christ had died to pay the penalty for our sins, he responded, "Oh, yes, that's imputation." I was stunned, as I never expected this theological concept to be familiar to this non-Christian businessman. When I asked him how he came to be familiar with this idea, he replied, "Oh, we use imputation all the time in the insurance business." He explained to me that certain sorts of insurance policy are written so that, for example, if someone else drives my car and gets in an accident, the responsibility is imputed to me rather than to the driver. Even though the driver behaved recklessly, I am the one held liable; it is just as if I had done it.
>
> Now this is parallel to substitutionary atonement. Normally I would be liable for the misdeeds I have done. But through my faith in Christ, I am, as it were, covered by his divine insurance policy, whereby he assumes the liability for my actions. My sin is imputed to him, and he pays its penalty. The demands of justice are fulfilled, just as they are in mundane affairs in which someone pays the penalty for something imputed to him. This is as literal a transaction as those that transpire regularly in the insurance industry.

It might be a good idea to also read this post on CARM, which explains the Bible verses that have led generations of Christians to believe in the doctrine of substitutionary atonement. This isn't something that the church tells you, it's something that comes straight out of the Bible, when you just read it alone, by yourself.

Excerpt:

> Jesus did what we could not. He took our place and bore our sins in his body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24) and made propitiation for our sins.
>
> - Rom. 3:25, "whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed."
> - 1 John 2:2, "and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."
> - 1 John 4:10, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
>
> The word propitiation "properly signifies the removal of wrath by the offering of a gift." Propitiation properly deals with the wrath of God. The wrath of God is due

> to the legal requirements of punishing the sinner. Remember, the sinner is someone who has broken the law of God; hence, the legality of punishment, and since Jesus is our propitiation and turns away the lawful wrath of God, we have further evidence that Christ's sacrifice was to avert God's righteous wrath against us, the sinners. Since the law of God must be met and cannot be ignored, it is proper that the law be fulfilled. Jesus is the one who fulfilled the law and never sinned (1 Pet. 2:22). But, he bore our sins in his body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24) and became sin on our behalf (2 Cor. 5:21) thereby suffering the penalty of sin, which is death.

I think that the way that a person becomes a Christian is by *recognizing* that they really are a rebel against God, and that their own made-up standard of what they ought to be doing is insignificant, arbitrary and self-serving. The way forward lies in acknowledging that we need to have a fresh start with God – we need forgiveness. If we are going to start to do what we ought to do, then we need a change from the inside out. And there is only one person who has ever solved that problem – Jesus. He paid the price, and offers us a fresh start. That's what Christians mean when they talk about "being saved". They mean that Jesus solved the problem of the rift between God and man that is caused by man's rebellion. Appropriating his sacrifice on the cross requires a genuine belief that Jesus is who he said he was, and did what he said he did. It's easy to recognize people who genuinely trust in Jesus, because genuine trust causes the person to re-orient and re-prioritize their lives in light of that sacrifice. That's what people mean when they talk about being "a follower of Jesus".

Related posts

- Greg Koukl lists 6 things you have to believe to be a Christian
- Mary explains how sinful humans can be rightly related to a holy God
- Is being a good person enough to get you into Heaven?
- Does the Bible teach that all sins are equally bad?

Democrat CEO: business community is “frightened” of Obama administration

July 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Seeking Alpha, a rant by Democrat CEO Steve Wynn of Wynn Resorts. (H/T Business Insider via ECM)

Excerpt:

> I believe in Las Vegas. I think its best days are ahead of it. But I’m afraid to do anything in the current political environment in the United States. You watch television and see what’s going on on this debt ceiling issue. And what I consider to be a total lack of leadership from the President and nothing’s going to get fixed until the President himself steps up and wrangles both parties in Congress. But everybody is so political, so focused on holding their job for the next year that the discussion in Washington is nauseating.
>
> And I’m saying it bluntly, that this administration is the greatest wet blanket to business, and progress and job creation in my lifetime. And I can prove it and I could spend the next 3 hours giving you examples of all of us in this market place that are frightened to death about all the new regulations, our healthcare costs escalate, regulations coming from left and right. A President that seems, that keeps using that word redistribution. Well, my customers and the companies that provide the vitality for the hospitality and restaurant industry, in the United States of America, they are frightened of this administration.And it makes you slow down and not invest your money. Everybody complains about how much money is on the side in America.
>
> You bet and until we change the tempo and the conversation from Washington, it’s not going to change. And those of us who have business opportunities and the capital to do it are going to sit in fear of the President. And a lot of people don’t want to say that. They’ll say, God, don’t be attacking Obama. Well, this is Obama’s deal and it’s Obama that’s responsible for this fear in America.
>
> The guy keeps making speeches about redistribution and maybe we ought to do something to businesses that don’t invest, their holding too much money. We haven’t heard that kind of talk except from pure socialists. Everybody’s afraid of the government and there’s no need soft peddling it, it’s the truth. It is the truth. And that’s true of Democratic businessman and Republican businessman, and I am a Democratic businessman and I support Harry Reid. I support Democrats and Republicans. And I’m telling you that the business community in this company is frightened to death of the weird political philosophy of the President of the United States. And until he’s gone, everybody’s going to be sitting on their thumbs.

A glimpse into what’s going on in the business community.

Dennis Prager: Ten ways that progressive policies harm moral character

July 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager's latest column is worth reading.

Summary:

> While liberals are certain about the moral superiority of liberal policies, the truth is that those policies actually diminish a society's moral character. Many individual liberals are fine people, but the policies they advocate tend to make a people worse.

The rest of the article outlines the top 10 ways that progressive policies harm moral character.

Here's one:

> 1. The bigger the government, the less the citizens do for one another. If the state will take care of me and my neighbors, why should I? This is why Western Europeans, people who have lived in welfare states far longer than Americans have, give less to charity and volunteer less time to others than do Americans of the same socioeconomic status.
>
> The greatest description of American civilization was written in the early 19th century by the Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville. One of the differences distinguishing Americans from Europeans that he most marveled at was how much Americans – through myriad associations – took care of one another. Until President Franklin Roosevelt began the seemingly inexorable movement of America toward the European welfare state – vastly expanded later by other Democratic presidents – Americans took responsibility for one another and for themselves far more than they do today. Churches, Rotary Clubs, free-loan societies and other voluntary associations were ubiquitous. As the state grew, however, all these associations declined. In Western Europe, they have virtually all disappeared.

And here's another one:

> 7. The welfare state corrupts family life. Even many Democrats have acknowledged the destructive consequences of the welfare state on the underclass. It has rendered vast numbers of males unnecessary to females, who have looked to the state to support them and their children (and the more children, the more state support) rather than to husbands. In effect, these women took the state as their husband.

The political agenda of the left is not good for moral character, or for the family – where

moral character is developed. We need to be self-reliant, to work hard, to give to charity and to serve our neighbors individually.

Obama supports legislation to repeal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)

July 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From ABC News.

Excerpt:

> Tomorrow the Senate will hold the first hearing on The Respect for Marriage Act, which repeals the Defense of Marriage Act, thus granting to all lawfully married couples—including same-sex couples—to receive federal marriage benefits and protections if they are joined by a valid marriage in a state where such marriages are legal.
>
> "The president has long called for a legislative repeal of the so-called Defense of Marriage Act, which continues to have a real impact on the lives of real people –our families, friends and neighbors," White House press secretary Jay Carney said at today's press briefing.
>
> "He is proud to support the Respect for Marriage Act, introduced by Senator Feinstein and Congressman Nadler, which would take DOMA off the books once and for all," said Carney. "This legislation would uphold the principle that the federal government should not deny gay and lesbian couples the same rights and legal protections as straight couples."
>
> The president has long opposed DOMA, signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1996, but it wasn't until earlier this year that he **instructed the Justice Department to stop defending it** as a law on the books, as is customary. In February, President Obama "made the determination," according to Attorney General Eric Holder, that DOMA "as applied to same-sex couples who are legally married under state law, violates the equal protection component of the Fifth Amendment."
>
> As for his personal position on same sex marriage, **the president continues to only say it is "evolving."**

At last, his true colors are on display on the marriage issue. Everyone who voted for Barack Obama in 2008 opposed traditional marriage, and opposed the right of children to have a normal relationship with both of his or her biological parents. When you add this insult to the pro-abortion injuries he's dealt previously, the end result is clear. This man is no Bible-believing Christian, and no Bible-believing Christian could EVER vote for him.

Related posts

- Gay donors fuel Barack Obama's 2012 re-election campaign
- Republicans hire top lawyer to defend traditional marriage against Democrats
- Jennifer Roback Morse on Obama's rejection of traditional marriage

- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- What do Democrats think of the Defense of Marriage Act?
- What does Barack Obama really think about the definition of marriage?
- Barack Obama proclaims June as LGBT rights month
- Obama vows to repeal Defense of Marriage Act in speech to gay activists

Ed Feser explains common misunderstandings of cosmological arguments

July 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A post explaining why popular objections to the cosmological argument are weak, from Ed Feser's blog. This is a MUST-READ.

Intro:

> Most people who comment on the cosmological argument demonstrably do not know what they are talking about. This includes all the prominent New Atheist writers. It very definitely includes most of the people who hang out in Jerry Coyne's comboxes. It also includes most scientists. And it even includes many theologians and philosophers, or at least those who have not devoted much study to the issue.
>
> […]In particular, I think that the vast majority of philosophers *who have studied the argument in any depth* – and again, that includes atheists as well as theists, though it does not include most philosophers *outside* the sub-discipline of philosophy of religion – would agree with the points I am about to make, or with most of them anyway. Of course, I do *not* mean that they would all agree with me that the argument is at the end of the day a *convincing* argument. I just mean that they would agree that most non-specialists who comment on it do not *understand* it, and that the *reasons* why people reject it are usually superficial and based on caricatures of the argument.

Here's the list of his corrections to common atheist misunderstandings of the cosmological argument:

1. *The argument does NOT rest on the premise that "Everything has a cause."*
2. *"What caused God?" is not a serious objection to the argument.*
3. *"Why assume that the universe had a beginning?" is not a serious objection to the argument.*
4. *"No one has given any reason to think that the First Cause is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good, etc." is not a serious objection to the argument.*
5. *"The argument doesn't prove that Christianity is true" is not a serious objection to the argument.*
6. *Science has shown such-and-such" is not a serious objection to (most versions of) the argument.*
7. *The argument is not a "God of the gaps" argument.*
8. *Hume and Kant did not have the last word on the argument. Neither has anyone else.*
9. *What "most philosophers" think about the argument is irrelevant.*

Excerpt: (number 1 in the list)

> Lots of people – probably most people who have an opinion on the matter – think that the cosmological argument goes like this: Everything has a cause; so the universe has a cause; so God exists. They then have no trouble at all poking holes in it. If everything has a cause, then what caused God? Why assume in the first place that everything has to have a cause? Why assume the cause is God? Etc.
>
> Here's the funny thing, though. People who attack this argument never tell you where they got it from. They never quote anyone defending it. There's a reason for that. The reason is that none of the best-known proponents of the cosmological argument in the history of philosophy and theology ever gave this stupid argument. Not Plato, not Aristotle, not al-Ghazali, not Maimonides, not Aquinas, not Duns Scotus, not Leibniz, not Samuel Clarke, not Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, not Mortimer Adler, not William Lane Craig, not Richard Swinburne. And not anyone else either, as far as I know. (Your Pastor Bob doesn't count. I mean no one among prominent philosophers.) And yet it is constantly presented, not only by popular writers but even by some professional philosophers, as if it were "the" "basic" version of the cosmological argument, and as if every other version were essentially just a variation on it.
>
> Don't take my word for it. The atheist Robin Le Poidevin, in his book Arguing for Atheism (which my critic Jason Rosenhouse thinks is pretty hot stuff) begins his critique of the cosmological argument by attacking a variation of the silly argument given above – though he admits that "no-one has defended a cosmological argument of precisely this form"! So what's the point of attacking it? Why not start instead with what some prominent defender of the cosmological argument has actually said?
>
> Suppose some creationist began his attack on Darwinism by assuring his readers that "the basic" claim of the Darwinian account of human origins is that at some point in the distant past a monkey gave birth to a human baby. Suppose he provided no source for this claim – which, of course, he couldn't have, because no Darwinian has ever said such a thing – and suppose also that he admitted that no one has ever said it. But suppose further that he claimed that "more sophisticated versions" of Darwinism were really just "modifications" of this claim. Intellectually speaking, this would be utterly contemptible and sleazy. It would give readers the false impression that anything Darwinians have to say about human origins, however superficially sophisticated, is really just a desperate exercise in patching up a manifestly absurd position. Precisely for that reason, though, such a procedure would, rhetorically speaking, be very effective indeed.
>
> Compare that to Le Poidevin's procedure. Though by his own admission no one has ever actually defended the feeble argument in question, Le Poidevin still calls

> it “the basic” version of the cosmological argument and characterizes the “more sophisticated versions” he considers later on as “modifications” of it. Daniel Dennett does something similar in his book Breaking the Spell. He assures us that the lame argument in question is “the simplest form” of the cosmological argument and falsely insinuates that other versions – that is to say, the ones that philosophers have actually defended, and which Dennett does not bother to discuss – are merely desperate attempts to repair the obvious problems with the “Everything has a cause” “version.” As with our imaginary creationist, this procedure is intellectually dishonest and sleazy, but it is rhetorically very effective. It gives the unwary reader the false impression that “the basic” claim made by Aristotle, Aquinas, Leibniz, et al. is manifestly absurd, that everything else they have to say is merely an attempt to patch up this absurd position, and (therefore) that such writers need not be bothered with further.
>
> And that, I submit, is the reason why the stupid “Everything has a cause” argument – a complete fabrication, an urban legend, something no philosopher has ever defended – perpetually haunts the debate over the cosmological argument. It gives atheists an easy target, and a way rhetorically to make even their most sophisticated opponents seem silly and not worth bothering with. It‘s a slimy debating trick, nothing more – a shameless exercise in what I have elsewhere called “meta-sophistry.” (I make no judgment about whether Le Poidevin’s or Dennett’s sleaziness was deliberate. But that they should know better is beyond question.)
>
> What defenders of the cosmological argument do say is that what comes into existence has a cause, or that what is contingent has a cause. These claims are as different from “Everything has a cause” as “Whatever has color is extended” is different from “Everything is extended.” Defenders of the cosmological argument also provide arguments for these claims about causation. You may disagree with the claims – though if you think they are falsified by modern physics, you are sorely mistaken – but you cannot justly accuse the defender of the cosmological argument either of saying something manifestly silly or of contradicting himself when he goes on to say that God is uncaused.
>
> This gives us what I regard as “the basic” test for determining whether an atheist is informed and intellectually honest. If he thinks that the cosmological argument rests on the claim that “everything has a cause,” then he is simply ignorant of the basic facts. If he persists in asserting that it rests on this claim after being informed otherwise, then he is intellectually dishonest. And if he is an academic philosopher like Le Poidevin or Dennett who is professionally obligated to know these things and to eschew cheap debating tricks, then… well, you do the math.

I don’t agree with Ed Feser on everything, but this post is dynamite. It is very forceful. He has 168 comments at the time of writing. It’s long, so you might want to print it out. But it is awesome.

I remember one day when I was having a closed-door conversation with one of my liberal atheist co-workers following the completion of a grueling project. I asked him why he was an atheist. He said he didn't really know other that he didn't want to be bothered. So I listed out about 10 arguments against Christian theism and he finally said that in college he had read an argument against God from evil. I asked him "human evil or natural evil". He said human evil. I said "deductive or inductive". He didn't understand, so I explained the difference between the logical and probabilistic problem of evil. It was deductive. I said, "is it from J.L. Mackie?" He shot out of his seat and put his hands on the desk "how did you know that!". I told him to sit down, and I refuted the argument using Plantinga's work. Then I told him about William Rowe's probabilistic version of the problem of evil. "That's a better version of the argument, but I can defeat that one too". We went to lunch and I did so. Christians have to know everything, and we have to be able to articulate our opponent's point more forcefully than they can. It shows intellectual honesty to be able to help the person see the most forceful version of their objections. We need to be able to do that.

Here's an excellent peer-reviewed paper by William Lane Craig on the science of the cosmological argument. It was published in a peer-reviewed astrophysics journal.

Debating the Kalam cosmological argument

Here's a basic lecture explaining the kalam cosmological argument that leverages the Big Bang cosmology to argue for God's existence.

Watch and see!

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Part 4:

You can also find a more technical version of the lecture here on video. This version is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Craig has previously debated Stenger and Tooley. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A of this lecture.

You might also be interested in this exchange in which William Lane Craig takes on prominent atheist Daniel Dennett. And you can watch an entire debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens here. The cosmological argument is Craig's first of five arguments.

The Gang of Six proposal: what's in it and what do conservatives think of it?

July 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A good analysis from Dan Mitchell of the libertarian Cato Institute. (With links removed – you have to click through for the links he included)

Excerpt:

> The Good
>
> - Unlike President Obama, the Gang of Six is not consumed by class-warfare resentment. The plan envisions that the top personal income tax rate will fall to no higher than 29 percent.
> - The corporate income tax rate will fall to no higher than 29 percent as well, something that is long overdue since the average corporate tax rate in Europe is now down to 23 percent.
> - The alternative minimum tax (which should be called the mandatory maximum tax) will be repealed.
> - The plan would repeal the CLASS Act, a provision of Obamacare for long-term-care insurance that will significantly expand the burden of federal spending once implemented.
> - The plan targets some inefficient and distorting tax preference such as the health care exclusion.
>
> The Bad
>
> - The much-heralded spending caps do not apply to entitlement programs. This is like going to the doctor because you have cancer and getting treated for a sprained wrist.
> - A net tax increase of more than $1 trillion (I expect that number to be much higher when further details are divulged).
> - The plan targets some provisions of the tax code – such as IRAs and 401(k)s) – that are not preferences, but instead exist to mitigate against the double taxation of saving and investment.
> - There is no Medicare reform, just tinkering and adjustments to the current system.
> - There in no Medicaid reform, just tinkering and adjustments to the current system.
>
> The Ugly
>
> - The entire package is based on dishonest Washington budget math. Spending increases under the plan, but the politicians claim to be cutting

> spending because the budget didn't grow even faster.
> - Speaking of spending, why is there no information, anywhere in the summary document, showing how big government will be five years from now? Ten years from now? The perhaps-all-too-convenient absence of this critical information should set off alarm bells.
> - There's a back-door scheme to change the consumer price index in such a way as to reduce expenditures (i.e., smaller cost-of-living-adjustments) and increase tax revenue (i.e., smaller adjustments in tax brackets and personal exemptions). The current CPI may be flawed, but it would be far better to give the Bureau of Labor Statistics further authority, if necessary, to make changes. A politically imposed change seems like nothing more than a ruse to impose a hidden tax hike.
> - A requirement that the internal revenue code maintain the existing bias against investors, entrepreneurs, small business owners, and other upper-income taxpayers. This "progressivity" mandate implies very bad things for the double taxation of dividends and capital gains.

I'm more of a Heritage Foundation guy, myself, but this post is really very good.

Now let's see Paul Ryan's evaluation of it, courtesy of Jennifer Rubin in the Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Meanwhile, the president has heaped praise on the Gang of Six plan, which envisions more than $1.2 trillion in tax hikes and more than $880 billion in defense cuts. (So much for Obama making "sure that we're cutting it in a way that recognizes we're still in the middle of a war, we're winding down another war, and we've got a whole bunch of veterans that we've got to care for as they come home.") As Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) points out, the president's new favorite plan includes just about every bad idea advanced so far in the debt debate:

> Heavy Reliance on Revenues. The plan claims to increase revenues by $1.2 trillion relative to a "plausible baseline." It also claims to provide $1.5 trillion in tax relief relative to the CBO March baseline. The CBO baseline assumes the expiration of tax relief, resulting in a $3.5 trillion revenue increase. As a result, the plan appears to include a $2 trillion revenue increase relative to a current policy baseline. If the $800 billion in tax increases from the new health care law are included, the plan appears to increase revenues by $2.8 trillion, without addressing unsustainable health care spending that is driving our debt problems.

> Elusive Spending Restraint. It is unclear how much the plan achieves in spending savings. Based on released documents, it appears to primarily rely on cuts in the defense budget through $886 billion in reductions from the President's budget for "security programs."

> Lack of Entitlement Reform. The plan does not address the $1.4 trillion in spending expansions in the new health care law. The health care law increases eligibility for the Medicaid program by one-third and creates a brand new health care entitlement. It does not appear to include reforms to the Medicare program. While it appears to pursue Social Security reform, it could end up creating barriers to enactment of these reforms.

> Well, at least we know what Obama stands for: huge tax hikes, ephemeral domestic spending cuts, savaging the defense budget, and zero entitlement reform. I imagine that will come up in ads for the Republican presidential nominee next year.

Sounds like it’s not a good deal for conservatives.

Does atheism rationally ground the capacity for making moral judgments?

July 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In Christian theology, a classical definition of evil is found in the work of Augustine of Hippo. He states that the evil is not a thing itself, and therefore is not brought into being by God. Instead, evil is the privation of right order. Or, to put it more simply, evil is the state of affairs when things are the way they ought not to be. So, if a mugger mugs you and steals your money, that was evil, because humans ought not to do that. And if a tsunami leaves thousands of people homeless, that's evil, because the world ought not to be like that. (Let's bracket why God might allow natural evil, such as the latter example, for another post).

The point is that when you talk about evil and suffering, it pre-supposes that the world is not the way it ought to be. But that means that the world ought to be some way. If the world "ought to be" any way other than it is, then that pre-supposes a designer, who had a purpose for the world, i.e. – a way the world ought to be.

So, atheists cannot use the apparently gratuitous evil in the world as a disproof that there is a God *until* they define what they mean by evil, and explain how this objective standard of good and evil came to exist.

So what is evil on atheism? An answer that is NOT open to atheists is the solution above, namely, that evil is a departure from the way things ought to be. Because the universe is an accident on atheism – it is purposeless – there is no way *the universe* ought to be. *We* are accidents on atheism. There is no way *we* ought to be.

So evil must mean one of two things on atheism:

1. Evil means something that the atheist finds personally distasteful. It is a subjective preference that each person decides for themselves. Just as some people don't like broccoli – some people don't like murder or tsunamis. It's up to each person. But that cannot be used as an argument against God, because who says that God's moral purposes ought to be connected to the personal moral preferences of atheists? It won't work.
2. Evil is what society says is counter to the social conventions of a particular time and place. If we decide that murder is against our society's conventions today, then for that time and place, murder is "evil". But then, not signaling when you turn right at a stop sign is also "evil". It's all just made-up conventions. And again, it is difficult to see why God should be bound by a society's conception of good and evil, they are just conventions of accidental people, on an accidental planet, in an accidental universe. (Again, we will bracket the problem of deciding what a society is for this discussion).

Neither of those options is going to allow an atheist to claim that God is evil. Because

their basis for saying so is either going to be their personal preferences or the arbitrary conventions of the culture they happen to live in in arbitrary time and place.

So, it seems to me that pressing the problem of evil is inconsistent on atheism. There is no moral standard that an atheist can use to hold God accountable, in an accidental universe. You have to *pre-suppose* an objective moral standard, and a designer of the universe who makes that standard and makes it applicable, before you can proceed to hold God accountable to that standard. But then, you have already assumed God in order to argue against him.

To learn more about the difficulties that atheists have in making sense of morality, I really recommend this lecture (MP3) on the problems of evil and suffering by Doug Geivett (hosted by Apologetics 315), and this short 4-page paper on the problem of evil as well.

Paul Ryan: cut current spending, cap future spending and balance the budget

July 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Grown-up Paul Ryan explains the Republican plan to cut current spending, cap future spending, and pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

So what does Barack Obama want?

“I don’t think he wants to cut spending, and I think he wants to raise taxes.”

How much wealth do the poor in America have?

July 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new paper from the Heritage Foundation. (H/T Brett Kunkle)

Excerpt:

> Each year for the past two decades, the U.S. Census Bureau has reported that over 30 million Americans were living in "poverty." In recent years, the Census has reported that one in seven Americans are poor. But what does it mean to be "poor" in America? How poor are America's poor?
>
> For most Americans, the word "poverty" suggests destitution: an inability to provide a family with nutritious food, clothing, and reasonable shelter. For example, the Poverty Pulse poll taken by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development asked the general public: "How would you describe being poor in the U.S.?" The overwhelming majority of responses focused on homelessness, hunger or not being able to eat properly, and not being able to meet basic needs.[1] That perception is bolstered by news stories about poverty that routinely feature homelessness and hunger.
>
> Yet if poverty means lacking nutritious food, adequate warm housing, and clothing for a family, relatively few of the more than 30 million people identified as being "in poverty" by the Census Bureau could be characterized as poor.[2] While material hardship definitely exists in the United States, it is restricted in scope and severity. The average poor person, as defined by the government, has a living standard far higher than the public imagines.
>
> As scholar James Q. Wilson has stated, "The poorest Americans today live a better life than all but the richest persons a hundred years ago."[3] In 2005, the typical household defined as poor by the government had a car and air conditioning. For entertainment, the household had two color televisions, cable or satellite TV, a DVD player, and a VCR. If there were children, especially boys, in the home, the family had a game system, such as an Xbox or a PlayStation.[4] In the kitchen, the household had a refrigerator, an oven and stove, and a microwave. Other household conveniences included a clothes washer, clothes dryer, ceiling fans, a cordless phone, and a coffee maker.
>
> The home of the typical poor family was not overcrowded and was in good repair. In fact, the typical poor American had more living space than the average European. The typical poor American family was also able to obtain medical care when needed. By its own report, the typical family was not hungry and had sufficient funds during the past year to meet all essential needs.
>
> Poor families certainly struggle to make ends meet, but in most cases, they are struggling to pay for air conditioning and the cable TV bill as well as to put food on the table. Their living standards are far different from the images of dire

> deprivation promoted by activists and the mainstream media.
>
> Regrettably, annual Census reports not only exaggerate current poverty, but also suggest that the number of poor persons[5] and their living conditions have remained virtually unchanged for four decades or more. In reality, the living conditions of poor Americans have shown significant improvement over time.

These are the people that the elites on the left are constantly making us feel guilty about. But keep in mind that it is very easy to avoid poverty in America. A person just has to make four decisions, as economist Walter Williams explains.

Excerpt:

> Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And, finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior.
>
> If you graduate from high school today with a B or C average, in most places in our country there's a low-cost or financially assisted post-high-school education program available to increase your skills.
>
> Most jobs start with wages higher than the minimum wage, which is currently $5.15. A man and his wife, even earning the minimum wage, would earn $21,000 annually. According to the Bureau of Census, in 2003, the poverty threshold for one person was $9,393, for a two-person household it was $12,015, and for a family of four it was $18,810. Taking a minimum-wage job is no great shakes, but it produces an income higher than the Bureau of Census' poverty threshold. Plus, having a job in the first place increases one's prospects for a better job.
>
> The Children's Defense Fund and civil rights organizations frequently whine about the number of black children living in poverty. In 1999, the Bureau of the Census reported that 33.1 percent of black children lived in poverty compared with 13.5 percent of white children. It turns out that race per se has little to do with the difference. Instead, it's welfare and single parenthood. When black children are compared to white children living in identical circumstances, mainly in a two-parent household, both children will have the same probability of being poor.
>
> How much does racial discrimination explain? So far as black poverty is concerned, I'd say little or nothing, which is not to say that every vestige of racial discrimination has been eliminated. But let's pose a few questions. Is it racial discrimination that stops black students from studying and completing high school? Is it racial discrimination that's responsible for the 68 percent illegitimacy rate among blacks?
>
> The 1999 Bureau of Census report might raise another racial discrimination question. Among black households that included a married couple, over 50 percent were middle class earning above $50,000, and 26 percent earned more than $75,000. How in the world did these black families manage not to be poor?

> Did America’s racists cut them some slack?

In America, poverty is self-inflicted. But that doesn’t mean that the Democrats don’t help the poor to stay poor.

Democrats wants to raise minimum wage, which promotes higher unemployment among younger workers – and more dependence on government programs. They want to subsidize single motherhood and enact no-fault divorce laws, to destroy marriage. And they want to push gay history and green propaganda in the public schools, to diminish the economic value of a high school education. They don’t want the poor to lift themselves out of poverty so that they are independent of government. Redistribution of wealth makes Democrats feel good about themselves – so they need the poor to stay poor. Democrats take money from the wealthy, causing them not to hire workers, and then give that money to the poor, so that they don’t need to work for anything.

How do job creators perceive Obama's anti-business policies?

July 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interview with Bernie Marcus, the co-founder of Home Depot, from Investors Business Daily.

Intro:

> Bernie Marcus co-founded Home Depot (HD) in 1978 and brought it public in 1981 as the U.S. was suffering from the worst recession and unemployment in 40 years. The company thrived, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs and redefining home improvement retailing.
>
> But Marcus says Home Depot "would never have succeeded" if it launched today due to onerous regulation. He recently helped launch the Job Creators Alliance, a Dallas-based nonprofit of CEOs and entrepreneurs dedicated to preserving the free enterprise system. IBD recently spoke to him about jobs and the economy.

Excerpt:

> **IBD:** What's the single biggest impediment to job growth today?
>
> **Marcus:** The U.S. government. Having built a small business into a big one, I can tell you that today the impediments that the government imposes are impossible to deal with. Home Depot would never have succeeded if we'd tried to start it today. Every day you see rules and regulations from a group of Washington bureaucrats who know nothing about running a business. And I mean every day. It's become stifling.
>
> If you're a small businessman, the only way to deal with it is to work harder, put in more hours, and let people go. When you consider that something like 70% of the American people work for small businesses, you are talking about a big economic impact.
>
> **IBD:** President Obama has promised to streamline and eliminate regulations. What's your take?
>
> **Marcus:** His speeches are wonderful. His output is absolutely, incredibly bad. As he speaks about cutting out regulations, they are now producing thousands of pages of new ones. With just ObamaCare by itself, you have a 2,000 page bill that's probably going end up being 150,000 pages of regulations.

> **IBD:** If you could sit down with Obama and talk to him about job creation, what would you say?
>
> **Marcus:** I'm not sure Obama would understand anything that I'd say, because he's never really worked a day outside the political or legal area. He doesn't know how to make a payroll, he doesn't understand the problems businesses

> face. I would try to explain that the plight of the busi nessman is very reactive to Washington. As Washington piles on regulations and mandates, the impact is tremendous. I don't think he's a bad guy. I just think he has no knowledge of this.

And Bernie is not the only one – we saw the recent rant from a Democrat CEO named Steve Wynn.

Excerpt:

> And I'm saying it bluntly, that this administration is the greatest wet blanket to business, and progress and job creation in my lifetime. And I can prove it and I could spend the next 3 hours giving you examples of all of us in this market place that are frightened to death about all the new regulations, our healthcare costs escalate, regulations coming from left and right. A President that seems, that keeps using that word redistribution. Well, my customers and the companies that provide the vitality for the hospitality and restaurant industry, in the United States of America, they are frightened of this administration.And it makes you slow down and not invest your money. Everybody complains about how much money is on the side in America.
>
> You bet and until we change the tempo and the conversation from Washington, it's not going to change. And those of us who have business opportunities and the capital to do it are going to sit in fear of the President. And a lot of people don't want to say that. They'll say, God, don't be attacking Obama. Well, this is Obama's deal and it's Obama that's responsible for this fear in America.
>
> The guy keeps making speeches about redistribution and maybe we ought to do something to businesses that don't invest, their holding too much money. We haven't heard that kind of talk except from pure socialists. Everybody's afraid of the government and there's no need soft peddling it, it's the truth. It is the truth.

But there are many more CEOs saying the same thing.

Excerpt:

> Wynn's remarks echo those on a lengthening list of CEOs including:
>
> - 3M's George Buckley, who blasted Obama last February as anti-business. "We know what his instincts are," Buckley said. "We've got a real choice between manufacturing in Canada or Mexico — which tends to be more pro-business — and America," he told the Financial Times.
> - Boeing's Jim McNerney, who in the Wall Street Journal last May called Obama's handpicked National Labor Relations Board's suit against his company a "fundamental assault on the capitalist principles that have sustained America's competitiveness since it became the world's largest economy nearly 140 years ago."
> - Intel's Paul Otellini, who told CNET last August that the U.S. legal environment has become so hostile to business that there is likely to be "an

> inevitable erosion and shift of wealth, much like we're seeing today in Europe — this is the bitter truth."
> - Home Depot co-founder Bernie Marcus, who observed to radio host Hugh Hewitt last month that Obama "never had to make payroll," that "nobody has ever created a job in this administration" and that the president is "surrounded by college professors."
> - GE's Jeffrey Immelt, one of Obama's biggest supporters, who hit out at the president last year. "Business did not like the U.S. president and the president did not like business," the FT reported him saying. "People are in a really bad mood. We have to become an industrial powerhouse again, but you don't do this when government and entrepreneurs are not in sync."
> - Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett, another Obama backer, who blasted Obama's bank tax in January 2010 as a "guilt tax," once called Obama's carbon tax idea "regressive" and this month denounced Obama's obsession with corporate jets.
>
> These aren't the only ones. CEOs of battered oil companies like Chevron and Exxon Mobil, media companies like Fox News and Forbes, and business groups like the Chamber of Commerce have also spoken out. When the creators of jobs and wealth are saying the same thing, isn't it time for the White House to listen up?

When will the American people realize that you can't support tax increases for the rich, and then be surprised when they just *stop hiring* – or worse they *outsource jobs to more business-friendly countries*. Obama's anti-business economic policies *cause outsourcing.* The only reason for job creators to take a risk by trying to expand their businesses is because they might be able to make a profit. Take away their profit, and there is no reason for them to hire anyone. The profit motive is what creates jobs. Obama is attacking the profit motive, and that's why no one is hiring. Anyone who understands economics understands that.

And it's not just Obama's anti-business rhetoric that is to blame for the high unemployment rate. It's higher regulation of job creators and job-killing leftist boondoggles like Obamacare.

How health care mandates drive up health care costs

July 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The ObamaCare legislation gives the administration the authority to compile a list of female preventive services that all new health insurance plans will have to cover without employing deductibles or charging co-payments. A medical advisory panel is recommending that birth control services should be one of these services.
>
> The committee from the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine that issued the guidelines also suggests that free breast-pump rentals, counseling for domestic violence, annual wellness exams and HIV tests be part of all health insurance plans.
>
> These mandates won't come without significant costs. The additional benefits won't be free, despite the left's loose usage of that word in association with health care. The mandates will force insurance premiums higher and someone will pay.
>
> The Congressional Budget Office said years ago that existing mandates at the state level — there are more than 2,000 of them, according to the Council for Affordable Health Insurance — raise premiums by 15%.
>
> That's just a starting point. CAHI, which has done heavy work on this issue, believes that state mandates push premiums up by 20%. In some states, the increase can be as high as 50%. The result is a cost curve that bends upward, not down.
>
> Mandates at the state level run from the expected to the bizarre. They require insurers to provide such unorthodox coverage as wigs (hair prostheses), Oriental medicine, port-wine stain elimination, smoking cessation, acupuncture, midwives, counseling, and marriage, occupational and massage therapists.
>
> As we've noted before on these pages, the state mandates are an insult to common sense. Why would a single man need an insurance package that covers in vitro fertilization, maternity leave, midwives, breast reduction or mammograms?
>
> Does it make sense for a childless, unmarried woman to be forced into a plan that includes care for a newborn and screening for prostate cancer? And is there any reason a teetotaler's policy should cover alcohol abuse?
>
> These regulations are not only asinine, they wreck the health insurance marketplace. The longer the list of mandates, the less competition there is. When insurers have to carry these gold-plated packages, they can't compete with

> lower-priced plans that have fewer benefits. This can price some customers entirely out of the private market.

Here's a post from Ruth Blog that makes the financial aspects clearer, using "free" contraception as an example.

Excerpt:

> First of all, preventive medicine implies the prevention of a pathological condition. Pregnancy is anything but pathological. Artificial contraception is an elective medical therapy for those desiring to block a totally normal and healthy physical condition. Not only is contraception elective, but the decision to have sex should be elective as well.
>
> Secondly… If an unmarried woman makes the conscious decision to be sexually active, it seems she should also bear the consequences of such a decision. Her partner should be willing to share any burdens of the relationship, including the financial cost of sexual relations. If a woman is not in a stable relationship, it seems unreasonable to demand someone else has to pay for her sexual dalliances.
>
> […]Sexual activity is elective. Preventing the normal consequence of sexual activity, pregnancy, is elective. The use of artificial contraception to prevent pregnancy is a personal lifestyle choice, not a medically recommended therapy. Therefore, artificial contraception should not be considered mandated preventive medical care. In these tight fiscal times, we cannot afford to be too inclusive with what constitutes preventive medicine.

Note that the artificial conception would be free for women who want to have children without fathers. And we know how that works out.

The Heritage Foundation points out that mandates actually reduce the freedom and prosperity of women who don't use these services.

Excerpt:

> Many Americans find the use of birth control morally objectionable, and some women may simply have no need for a health plan that covers these services, based on any number of personal choices and other factors. Those that fall into this category would have no choice but to pay for unnecessary coverage if the recommendations are made law.
>
> […]If HHS takes an overly prescriptive approach regarding these particular measures, women who would prefer not to pay the higher premiums to carry health benefits they don't need or to which they object won't have that option.
>
> In a truly market-based insurance exchange, women would be able to choose a health plan that met their needs and was consistent with their values, and those who wished to forgo certain benefits would have the freedom to do so. If any attempt at health reform is to succeed at reducing costs and tailoring coverage

> to the specific needs of each individual, it must ensure that consumers are able to choose the plan and benefits that work best for them, rather than submitting to the decisions of a bureaucratic board.

There is no opt out for moral women when these things are *mandated* as minimum coverages in *every policy*. There is no escape. My fear is that women would be forced to pay for these services and then feel obligated to use them since that is the only way to get any value for the money that is being forcibly extracted from them.

What health care mandates really achieve is 1) to buy votes from the providers of the mandated services, and 2) to transfer wealth from people who don't want or need these elective services (e.g. – single chaste Christian men) to people who need it *because of their own elective lifestyle choices*. And the more I have to pay to subsidize other people's breast implants, contraceptives, STI treatments, abortions and in vitro fertilizations, the less I can afford to do the things that I want to do, which isn't fair. My money is my money, and their money is their money. I should be allowed to keep what I earn and buy only the health care that I need. I have other uses for that money. Let the government do-gooders find some other way to boost their self-esteem instead of playing Robin Hood with health care.

The earliest record of the death and resurrection of Jesus

July 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You guys may have noticed that in my quiz for Christian women, there is no way to pass if you don't know about the earliest record of Jesus' death and resurrection. That earliest record is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

Here's a blog post by chab123 to tell you all about it.

Excerpt:

> Paul applies this [rabbinical transmission] terminology in 1 Corinthians 15: 3-7 which is one of the earliest records for the historical content of the Gospel – the death and resurrection of Jesus. The late Orthodox Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide was so impressed by the creed of 1 Cor. 15, that he concluded that this "formula of faith may be considered as a statement of eyewitnesses." (5)
>
> Paul's usage of the rabbinic terminology "passed on" and "received" is seen in the creed of 1 Cor. 15:3-8:
>
> "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born."
>
> There is an interesting parallel to Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 15:3-8 in the works of Josephus. Josephus says the following about the Pharisees.
>
> "I want to explain here that the Pharisees passed on to the people certain ordinances from a succession of fathers, which are not written down in the law of Moses. For this reason the party of the Sadducees dismisses these ordinances, averaging that one need only recognize the written ordinances, whereas those from the tradition of the fathers need not be observed." (6)
>
> As Richard Bauckham notes, "the important point for our purposes is that Josephus uses the language of "passing on" tradition for the transmission from one teacher to another and also for the transmission from the Pharisees to the people." (7) Paul, being a Pharisee, was no doubt following this pattern.
>
> Bauckham notes in his book Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony that the Greek word for "eyewitness" (autoptai), does not have forensic meaning, and in that sense the English word "eyewitnesses" with its suggestion of a metaphor from the law courts, is a little misleading. The autoptai are simply firsthand observers of those events. Bauckham has followed

the work of Samuel Byrskog in arguing that while the Gospels though in some ways are a very distinctive form of historiography, they share broadly in the attitude to eyewitness testimony that was common among historians in the Greco-Roman period. These historians valued above all reports of firsthand experience of the events they recounted.

Best of all was for the historian to have been himself a participant in the events (direct autopsy). Failing that (and no historian was present at all the events he need to recount, not least because some would be simultaneous), they sought informants who could speak from firsthand knowledge and whom they could interview (indirect autopsy).” In other words, Byrskog defines “autopsy,” as a visual means of gathering data about a certain object and can include means that are either direct (being an eyewitness) or indirect (access to eyewitnesses).

Byrskog also claims that such autopsy is arguably used by Paul (1 Cor.9:1; 15:5–8; Gal. 1:16), Luke (Acts 1:21–22; 10:39–41) and John (19:35; 21:24; 1 John 1:1–4).

While the word “received” (a rabbinical term) can also be used in the New Testament of receiving a message or body of instruction or doctrine (1 Cor.11:23; 15:1, 3; Gal. 1:9, 12 [2x], Col 2:6; 1 Thess 2:13; 4:1; 2 Thess 3:6), it also means means “to receive from another.” This entails that Paul received this information from someone else at an even earlier date. 1 Corinthians is dated 50-55 A.D. Since Jesus was crucified in 30-33 A.D. the letter is only 20-25 years after the death of Jesus. But the actual creed here in 1 Cor. 15 was received by Paul much earlier than 55 A.D.

As Gary Habermas notes, “Even critical scholars usually agree that it has an exceptionally early origin.” Ulrich Wilckens declares that this creed “indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity.” (8) Joachim Jeremias calls it “the earliest tradition of all.” (9) Even the non-Christian scholar Gerd Ludemann thinks that “the elements in the tradition are dated to the first two years after the crucifixtion….not later than three years after the death of Jesus.” (see Gerd Ludemann, The Resurrection of Jesus, pg 38).

The majority of scholars who comment think that Paul probably received this information about three years after his conversion, which probably occurred from one to four years after the crucifixion. At that time, four to eight years after Jesus died, Paul visited Jerusalem to speak with Peter and James, each of whom are included in the list of Jesus’ appearances (1 Cor. 15:5, 7; Gal. 1:18–19).This places it at roughly A.D. 32–38. Even the co-founder Jesus Seminar member John Dominic Crossan, writes:

“Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that “I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received.” The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18,

> he “went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days” (10).
>
> This comment by Crossan makes sense because within the creed Paul calls Peter by his Aramic name, Cephas. Hence, if this tradition originated in the Aramaic language, the two locations that people spoke Aramaic were Galilee and Judea. (11) The Greek term “historeo” is translated as “to visit” or “to interview.” (12) Hence, Paul’s purpose of the trip was probably designed to affirm the resurrection story with Peter who had been an actual eyewitness to the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:5).

In a lecture I listened by Gary Habermas, he said that all of the resurrection hangs on this one passage. I have seen this passage dated to 1-3 years after the cross BY ATHEISTIC HISTORIANS in debates, as in the debate with William Lane Craig and James Crossley. I have a summary, the video, and the audio all linked in this one post. You can see this early evidence debated in a public academic debate.

New study finds that gays can change their sexual orientation

July 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Researchers at Fordham University in New York have publisheda study in the March edition of the Journal of Men's Studies, showing that positive results can be gained by homosexual men seeking to change their "orientation" by developing healthy non-sexual relationships with other men.
>
> According to the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homoseuxality (NARTH), the study rovides "valuable empirical evidence" from the mainstream of psychological research supporting environmental factors as the cause of homosexuality.
>
> The study, by Dr. Elan Y. Karten and Dr. Jay C. Wade, examined the "social and psychological characteristics" of men who experience unwanted homosexual attractions and who seek "sexual orientation change efforts" (SOCE).
>
> Investigating these characteristics in cases of "self-reported change," Karten and Wade found that clients reported that they experienced "a decrease in homosexual feelings and behavior, an increase in heterosexual feelings and behavior, and a positive change in psychological functioning" with SOCE.
>
> The researchers discovered that the most significant factors correlating to successful orientation change were "reduced conflict in expressing nonsexual affection with other men, being married, and feeling disconnected with men prior to treatment."
>
> NARTH commented that the factors like "reduced conflict in expressing nonsexual affection with men," provide "valuable empirical evidence" that homosexual thoughts and feelings are greatly influenced by social and psychological factors," instead of being biologically pre-determined.
>
> NARTH also noted that the study demonstrated that there is a growing body of mainstream literature that is "beginning to give voice" to the value of SOCE.

You won't hear this reported in the mainstream media… or in the speeches of Democrat politicians.

Previously I wrote a post entitled "What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?" which is also useful.

New study: frequent Bible reading leads to charity and openness to science

July 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist Huffington Post.

Excerpt:

> Franzen speculates the reason so little research has been done on the effects of reading Scripture may be because "the ubiquity of references to the Bible promotes the idea that we all know what it says and, consequently, reading it is simply a habitual and ultimately meaningless activity."
>
> But that is not true, according to his study using data from Christian respondents to the 2007 wave of the Baylor Religion Survey.
>
> In many cases, Franzen found frequency of Bible reading was one of the most powerful predictors of attitudes on moral and political issues. Consider some of the findings:
>
> - The likelihood of Christians saying it is important to actively seek social and economic justice to be a good person increased 39 percent with each jump up the ladder of the frequency of reading Scripture, from reading the Bible less than once a year to no more than once a month to about weekly to several times a week or more.
> - Christian respondents overall were 27 percent more likely to say it is important to consume or use fewer goods to be a good person as they became more frequent Bible readers.
> - Reading the Bible more often also was linked to improved attitudes toward science. Respondents were 22 percent less likely to view religion and science as incompatible at each step toward more frequent Bible reading.
> - The issues seemed to matter more than conservative-liberal tags. In the case of another major public policy debate, same-sex unions, nearly half of respondents who read the Bible less than once a year said homosexuals should be allowed to marry, while only 6 percent of people who read the Bible several times a week or more approved of such marriages.
>
> Among other issues, more frequent Bible readers also were more likely to oppose legalized abortion, the death penalty, harsher punishment of criminals and expanding the federal government's authority to fight terrorism.
>
> […]But the results are consistent with some past research.
>
> In a 1998 article in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, sociologists Mark Regnerus, Christian Smith and David Sikkink found that data from the 1996 Religious Identity and Influence Survey suggested that, contrary to "conventional

> wisdom," conservative Protestants were among the most generous Christians in giving to the poor.

Surprise, surprise – reading the Bible makes people more moral.

I think we need to be open to letting our ideas about goodness, God and science be determined by what research shows, instead of what our feelings are. If science shows that atheists are generally more irrational and more amoral than believers, then we have to go where science leads. Not every atheist is irrational and immoral, but we have to believe what science tells us about atheism.

This study showing how authentic Christians get divorced less often than average is also interesting.

Robin Collins explains two kinds of fine-tuning

July 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

The fine-tuning argument

Here's a short article where Collins gives TWO examples of the fine-tuning. He is very modest in his argument, merely asserting that the fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than it is with atheism.

Excerpt:

> Science is commonly thought to have undercut belief in God. As Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg famously remarked, "the more we find out about the universe, the more meaningless it all seems." Yet, the discoveries of modern physics and cosmology in the last 50 years have shown that the structure of the universe is set in an extraordinarily precise way for the existence of life; if its structure were slightly different, even by an extraordinarily small degree, life would not be possible. In many people's minds, the most straightforward explanation of this remarkable fine-tuning is some sort of divine purpose behind our universe.

> This fine-tuning falls into three categories: the fine-tuning of the laws of nature, the fine-tuning of the constants of physics, and the fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe. "Fine-tuning of the laws of nature" refers to the fact that if the universe did not have precisely the right combination of laws, complex intelligent life would be impossible. If there were no universal attractive force (law of gravity), for example, matter would be dispersed throughout the universe

> and the energy sources (such as stars) needed for life would not exist. Without the strong nuclear force that binds protons and neutrons together in the nucleus, there would not be any atoms with an atomic number greater than hydrogen, and hence no complex molecules needed for life. And without the Pauli-exclusion principle, all electrons would fall to the lowest orbital of an atom, undercutting the kind of complex chemistry that life requires.

> Some fundamental physical numbers governing the structure of the universe—called the constants of physics—also must fall into an exceedingly narrow range for life to exist. For example, many have estimated that the cosmological constant—a fundamental number that governs the expansion rate of empty space—must be precisely set to one part in 10^{120} in order for life to occur; if it were too large, the universe would have expanded too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form, and if it were too small, the universe would have collapsed back on itself. As Stephen Hawking wrote in his book A Brief History of Time, "The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life." Finally, the initial distribution of mass energy at the time of the big bang must have an enormously special configuration for life to occur, which Cambridge University mathematical physicist Roger Penrose has calculated to be on the order of one part in $10^{10^{123}}$. This is an unimaginably small number.

I know what you're thinking: How do we know that non-Christian scientists acknowledge the fine-tuning of gravity in the way that Collins describes?

Well, the New Scientist actually talks about the fine-tuning of the force of gravity. And they're not Christians.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe's birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational**

> **strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Here's a very long paper by Collins on the fine-tuning argument, where he answers several objections to the argument, including the multiverse/many-universe hypothesis. I normally make fun of the multiverse, (= the Flying Spaghetti Monster), but it actually does deserve a reasonable, fair response. (Unless Jerry asks, then it's Flying Spaghetti Monster all the way).

Thomas Sowell explains the historical effects of tax cuts

July 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell

Here's part 1 of 3.

Excerpt:

> The actual results of the cuts in tax rates in the 1920s were very similar to the results of later tax-rate cuts during the Kennedy, Reagan and George. W. Bush administrations — namely, rising output, rising employment to produce that output, rising incomes as a result and rising tax revenues for the government because of the rising incomes, though the tax rates had been lowered.
>
> Another consequence was that people in higher-income brackets paid not only a larger total amount of taxes, but a higher percentage of all taxes, after what were called "tax cuts for the rich." It was not simply that their incomes rose, but that this was not taxable income, since the lower tax rates made it profitable to get higher returns outside of tax shelters.
>
> The facts are unmistakably plain, for those who bother to check the facts. In 1921, when the tax rate on people making over $100,000 a year was 73%, the federal government collected a little over $700 million in income taxes, of which 30% was paid by those making over $100,000.
>
> […]By 1929, after a series of tax-rate reductions had cut the tax rate to 24% on those making over $100,000, the federal government collected more than a billion dollars in income taxes, of which 65% was collected from those making over $100,000.
>
> There is nothing mysterious about this. Under the sharply rising tax rates during the Wilson administration, fewer and fewer people reported high taxable incomes, whether by putting their money into tax-exempt securities or by any of the other ways of rearranging their financial affairs to minimize their tax liability.

> Under Wilson's escalating income-tax rates to pay for the high costs of the First World War, the number of people reporting taxable incomes of more than $300,000 — a huge sum in the money of that era — declined from well over a thousand in 1916 to fewer than three hundred in 1921. The total amount of taxable income earned by people making over $300,000 declined by more than four-fifths in those years.
>
> Secretary Mellon estimated in 1923 that the money invested in tax-exempt securities had tripled in a decade, and was now almost three times the size of the federal government's annual budget and nearly half as large as the national debt. "The man of large income has tended more and more to invest his capital in such a way that the tax collector cannot touch it," he pointed out.
>
> Getting that money moved out of tax shelters was the whole point of Mellon's tax-cutting proposals. He also said: "It is incredible that a system of taxation which permits a man with an income of $1,000,000 a year to pay not one cent to the support of his government should remain unaltered."

Here's part 2 of 3.

Excerpt:

> Empirical evidence on what happened to the economy in the wake of those tax cuts in four different administrations over a span of more than 80 years has also been largely ignored by those opposed to what they call "tax cuts for the rich."
>
> Confusion between reducing tax rates on individuals and reducing tax revenues received by the government has run through much of these discussions over these years.
>
> Famed historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., for example, said that although Andrew Mellon, secretary of the treasury from 1921 to 1932, advocated balancing the budget and paying off the national debt, he "inconsistently" sought "reduction in tax rates."
>
> Nor was Schlesinger the only highly regarded historian to perpetuate economic confusion between tax rates and tax revenues. Today, widely used textbooks by various well-known historians have continued to misstate what was advocated in the 1920s and what the actual consequences were.
>
> According to the textbook "These United States" by Irwin Unger, Mellon, "a rich Pittsburgh industrialist," persuaded Congress to "reduce income tax rates at the upper-income levels while leaving those at the bottom untouched."
>
> Thus "Mellon won further victories for his drive to shift more of the tax burden from the high-income earners to the middle and wage-earning classes."
>
> But hard data show that, in fact, both the amount and the proportion of taxes paid by those whose net income was no higher than $25,000 went down between 1921 and 1929, while both the amount and the proportion of taxes paid by those whose net incomes were between $50,000 and $100,000 went up — and the

> amount and proportion of taxes paid by those whose net incomes were over $100,000 went up even more sharply.

And here's part 3 of 3.

Excerpt:

> President Kennedy, like Andrew Mellon decades earlier, pointed out that "efforts to avoid tax liabilities" make "certain types of less-productive activity more profitable than other more valuable undertakings" and "this inhibits our growth and efficiency." Therefore the "purpose of cutting taxes" is "to achieve a more prosperous, expanding economy."
>
> "Total output and economic growth" were italicized words in the text of Kennedy's address to Congress in January 1963, urging cuts in tax rates. Much the same theme was repeated yet again in President Reagan's February 1981 address to a joint session of Congress, pointing out that "this is not merely a shift of wealth between different sets of taxpayers."
>
> Instead, basing himself on a "solid body of economic experts," he expected that "real production in goods and services will grow."
>
> Even when empirical evidence substantiates the arguments made for cuts in tax rates, such facts are not treated as evidence relevant to testing a disputed hypothesis, but as isolated curiosities. Thus, when tax revenues rose in the wake of the tax-rate cuts made during the George W. Bush administration, the New York Times reported:
>
> "An unexpectedly steep rise in tax revenues from corporations and the wealthy is driving down the projected budget deficit this year."
>
> Expectations, of course, are in the eye of the beholder. However surprising these facts may have been to the New York Times, they are exactly what proponents of reducing high tax rates have been expecting, not only from these particular tax rate cuts, but from similar reductions in high tax rates at various times going back more than three-quarters of a century.

It's Thomas Sowell – the official economist of the Tea Party.

Why the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) should be rewritten

July 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Phyllis Schlafly explains. (H/T Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> Ignoring the mountain of evidence that women initiate physical violence nearly as often as men, VAWA has more than 60 passages in its lengthy text that exclude men from its benefits. For starters, the law's title should be changed to Partner Violence Reduction Act, and the words "and men" should be added to those 60 sections.
>
> The law should be rewritten to deal with the tremendous problem of false accusations so that its priority can be to help real victims. A Centers for Disease Control survey found that half of all partner violence was mutual, and 282 scholarly studies reported that women are as physically aggressive, or more aggressive, than men.
>
> Currently used definitions of domestic violence that are unacceptably trivial include calling your partner a naughty word, raising your voice, causing "annoyance" or "emotional distress," or just not doing what your partner wants. The law's revision should use an accurate definition of domestic violence that includes violence, such as: "any act or threatened act of violence, including any forceful detention of an individual, which results or threatens to result in physical injury."
>
> Women who make domestic violence accusations are not required to produce evidence and are never prosecuted for perjury if they lie. Accused men are not accorded fundamental protections of due process, not considered innocent until proven guilty, and in many cases, are not afforded the right to confront their accusers.
>
> Legal assistance is customarily provided to women but not to men. Men ought to be entitled to equal protection of the law because many charges are felonies and could result in prison and loss of money, job, and reputation.
>
> Feminist recipients of VAWA handouts lobby legislators, judges and prosecutors on the taxpayers' dime (which is contrary toSection 1913 of Title 18, U.S. Code), and the results are generally harmful to all concerned. This lobbying has resulted in laws calling for mandatory arrest (i.e., the police must arrest someone; guess who), of the predominant aggressor (*i.e.*, ignore the facts and assume the man is the aggressor), and no-drop prosecution (i.e., prosecute the man even if the woman has withdrawn her accusation or refuses to testify).

I think this is something that most people never even think about. But we could agree

that violence against women is terrible, but still not endorse the feminist-inspired VAWA law as the solution to the problem.

Is a college degree worth what you pay for it?

July 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Barone writing in Human Events.

Excerpt:

> We are still suffering from the bursting of the housing bubble created by low interest rates, lowered mortgage standards, and subsidies to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Those policies encouraged the granting of mortgages to people who should never have gotten them — and when they defaulted, the whole financial sector nearly collapsed.
>
> Now some people see signs that another bubble is bursting. They call it the higher-education bubble.
>
> For years, government has assumed it's a good thing to go to college. College graduates tend to earn more money than non-college graduates.
>
> Politicians of both parties have called for giving everybody a chance to go to college, just as they called for giving everybody a chance to buy a home.
>
> So government has been subsidizing higher education with low-interest college loans, Pell grants, and cheap tuitions at state colleges and universities.
>
> The predictable result is that higher education costs have risen much faster than inflation, much faster than personal incomes, much faster than the economy over the past 40 years.
>
> Moreover, you can't get out of paying off those college loans, even by going through bankruptcy. At least with a home mortgage, you can walk away and let the bank foreclose and not owe any more money.
>
> Peter Thiel, the co-founder of PayPal, is adept at spotting bubbles. He sold out for $500 million in March 2000, at the peak of the tech bubble, when his partners wanted to hold out for more. He refused to buy a house until the housing bubble burst.
>
> "A true bubble is when something is overvalued and intensely believed," he has said. "Education may still be the only thing people still believe in in the United States."
>
> But the combination of rising costs and dubious quality may be undermining that belief.
>
> For what have institutions of higher learning done with their vast increases in revenues? The answer in all too many cases is administrative bloat.
>
> Take the California State University system, the second tier in that state's public higher education. Between 1975 and 2008, the number of faculty rose by 3 percent, to 12,019 positions. During those same years, the number of administrators rose 221 percent, to 12,183. That's right: There are more

> administrators than teachers at Cal State now.
>
> These people get paid to “liaise” and “facilitate” and produce reports on diversity. How that benefits Cal State students or California taxpayers is unclear.
>
> It is often said that American colleges and universities are the best in the world. That’s undoubtedly true in the hard sciences.
>
> But in the humanities and to a lesser extent in the social sciences, there’s a lot of garbage. Is a degree in religious and women’s studies worth $100,000 in student loan debt? Probably not.
>
> As economist Richard Vedder points out, 45 percent of those who enter four-year colleges don’t get a degree within six years. Given the low achievement level of most high school graduates, it’s hard to avoid the conclusion that many of them shouldn’t have bothered in the first place.

I think college is a good idea if you you don’t spend too much on it, and if you can make back the investment by getting a job in a good field. In general, no subject that is easy is worth spending $100,000 on, though. Engineering, science, medicine, law, etc. are worth it.

Does Obama have a plan to solve the debt crisis?

July 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A popular column by Mark Steyn on National Review.

Excerpt:

> In government, being merely a quarter-century obsolete would be a major achievement. The ruling party in Washington is wedded to the principle that an 80-year-old social program is inviolable: That's like Blockbuster insisting in 2011 that there's no problem with its business model for rentals of silent movies with live orchestral accompaniment. To be sure, there are some problems parking the musicians' bus in residential streets, but nothing that can't be worked out.
>
> But "political reality" operates to different rules from humdrum real reality. Thus, the "debt ceiling" debate is regarded by most Democrats and a fair few Republicans as some sort of ghastly social faux pas by boorish conservatives: Why, everyone knows ye olde debt-limit vote is merely a bit of traditional ceremonial, like the Lord Chancellor walking backwards with the Cap of Maintenance and Black Rod shouting "Hats off, strangers!" at Britain's Opening of Parliament. You hit the debt ceiling, you jack it up a couple trillion, and life goes on — or so it did until these GOP yahoos came along and decided to treat the vote as if it actually meant something.
>
> Obama has done his best to pretend to take them seriously. He claimed to have a $4 trillion deficit-reduction plan. The court eunuchs of the press corps were impressed, and went off to file pieces hailing the president as "the grown-up in the room." There is, in fact, no plan. No plan at all. No plan whatsoever, either for a deficit reduction of $4 trillion or $4.73. As is the way in Washington, merely announcing that he had a plan absolved him of the need to have one. So the president's staff got out the extra-wide teleprompter and wrote a really large number on it, and simply by reading out the really large number the president was deemed to have produced a serious blueprint for trillions of dollars in savings. For his next trick, he'll walk out on to the stage of Carnegie Hall, announce that he's going to play Haydn's Cello Concerto No. 2, and, even though there's no cello in sight and Obama immediately climbs back in his golf cart to head for the links, music critics will hail it as one of the most moving performances they've ever heard.
>
> The only "plan" Barack Obama has put on paper is his February budget. Were there trillions and trillions of savings in that? Er, no. It increased spending and doubled the federal debt.
>
> How about Harry Reid, the Senate majority leader? Has he got a plan? No. The Democrat Senate has shown no interest in producing a budget for two-and-a-half years. Unlike the president, Senator Reid can't even be bothered pretending he's

> interested in spending reductions. But he is interested in spending, and, if that's your bag, boring things like budgets only get in the way.
>
> It seems reasonable to conclude from the planlessness and budgetlessness of the Obama/Reid Democrats that their only plan is to carry on spending without limit. Otherwise, someone somewhere would surely have written something down on a piece of paper by now. But no, apparently the Department of Writing Down Plans is the only federal expense the president is willing to cut. You begin to see why the Europeans are a little miffed. They're passing austerity budgets so austere they've spawned an instant anti-austerity movement rioting in the street — and yet they're still getting downgraded by the ratings agencies. In Washington, by contrast, the ruling party of the Brokest Nation in History has no spending plan other than to plan to spend even more — and nobody's downgrading them.

Charles Krauthammer proposes a short-term solution that will put the blame squarely on Obama in this article on National Review. I am expecting the Republicans to follow this plan – we should see it coming out this week,

What happens to people who have never heard of Jesus?

July 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the most difficult questions for Christians to answer, especially when posed by adherents of other religions, is the question of what happens to those who have never heard of Jesus. In this post, I will explain how progress in the field of philosophy of religion has given us a possible (and Biblical) solution to this thorny question.

First, Christianity teaches that humans are in a natural state of rebellion against God. We don't want to know about him, and we don't want him to have any say in what we are doing. We just want to appropriate all the gifts he's given us, do whatever we want with them, and then have eternal bliss after we die. We want to do whatever we want and then be forgiven, later.

Along comes Jesus, who, through his sinless life and his death on the cross, heals that rift of rebellion between an all-good God and rebellious man. Now we have a real understanding of the fact that God is real, that he has power over death, and that he has very specific ideas on what we should be doing. If we accept Jesus' atoning sacrifice and follow his teachings, we can avoid the penalty of our rebellion.

The only problem is that in order to appropriate that free gift of reconciliation, people need to actually *know* about Jesus. And there are some people in the world who have not even *heard* of him. Is it fair that these other people will be sent to eternal separation from God, just because they happened to be born in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Well it turns out that Christian scholars know about this problem and they have solutions. William Lane Craig's solution to this problem is that God orders the world in such a way that anyone who would freely choose to acknowledge Jesus and appropriate his teachings in their decision-making *will* be given eternal life. God knows in advance who would respond to him in certain circumstances, and chooses the time and place of their birth so that they will freely respond. The solution is called Molinism or "middle knowledge".

And this agrees with what the Bible teaches. The apostle Paul says this in his apologetic on Mars Hill in Acts 17:22-31:

> 22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.
> 23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ' N D ' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.
> 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;
> 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;
> 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of

> the earth, **having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,**
> **27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;**
> 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'
> 29 "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.
> 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,
> 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

In this research paper, Craig explains in detail how God foreknows how people will choose in every set of circumstances, and how God uses that knowledge to get everyone where they need to be *without violating their free will.* God wants the best for everyone, and has ordered to whole universe in order to give each of us our best opportunity for eternal life.

Here is a summary of the what is in his paper:

> The conviction of the New Testament writers was that there is no salvation apart from Jesus. This orthodox doctrine is widely rejected today because God's condemnation of persons in other world religions seems incompatible with various attributes of God.
>
> Analysis reveals the real problem to involve certain counterfactuals of freedom, *e.g.*, why did not God create a world in which all people would freely believe in Christ and be saved? Such questions presuppose that God possesses middle knowledge. But it can be shown that no inconsistency exists between God's having middle knowledge and certain persons' being damned; on the contrary, it can be positively shown that these two notions are compatible.

Go read this paper and equip yourself to answer this common question!

Wes from Reason to Stand also posted this video explaining counterfactuals:

Some people encounter philosophical problems like the hiddenness of God, or the problem of evil, or religious pluralism, and they respond by stopping their search for solutions. They seem to take it as an article of faith that no one has ever written anything to solve the problems. But Christians do have solutions – you just have to ask and investigate to find the solutions.

Do good people in non-Christian religions go to Heaven?

July 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason.(H/T Apologetics Junkie)

He answers the question "Am I going to Hell if I don't believe in Jesus?".

Excerpt:

> Sometimes we have to reframe a critic's question in order to give an accurate answer. The questions, Am I going to Hell if I don't believe in Jesus?, is an example. As it is asked, it makes it sounds as though Jesus were the problem, not the answer. As though failing a theology quiz sends us to Hell. Instead, we need to reframe the question to answer accurately and show that sin is the problem, and Jesus is the only way because He alone has solved that problem. Sinners don't go to Hell for failing petty theology quizzes.
>
> While giving a talk at a local Barnes & Noble, someone asked why it was necessary for him to believe in Jesus. He was Jewish, believed in God, and was living a moral life. Those were the important things, it seemed—how you lived, not what you believed.
>
> To him the Christian message depicted a narrow-minded God pitching people into Hell because of an arcane detail of Christian theology. How should I answer?
>
> Remember that the first responsibility of an ambassador is knowledge—an accurately informed message. What is our message?
>
> One way to say it is, "If you don't believe in Jesus, you'll go to Hell. If you do believe, you'll go to Heaven."
>
> That's certainly true, as far as it goes. The problem is it's not clear. Since it doesn't give an accurate sense of why Jesus is necessary, it makes God sound petty.
>
> So how do we fix this? Here's how I responded to my Jewish questioner. I asked him two simple questions.

Read the rest of the article.

Christians all need to understand how to explain why sincere beliefs and good works are not enough to satisfy God's moral demands on us. My friend thinks that if a person is a "good" person, then he should go to Heaven. But God is not the Tooth Fairy. God is *more concerned* that we understand the truth about his existence and character – that is the whole point of sending Jesus to die as an atonement for our rebellion. The problem isn't that we lie, cheat and steal. The problem is that we want to get our own happiness apart from God, without wanting to know him as he is, and without having to care about his goals and his character in the relationship.

Here's what God wants us to know about ourselves:

- we have to realize that what we really are is rebels against God
- rebels don't want God to be there
- rebels don't want God to have any goals or character different from their goals and character
- rebels don't want God to place any demands on them
- rebels don't want to have any awareness that God is real or that he is morally perfect
- rebels want to be liked as they are now – they don't want to change as part of a relationship
- rebels want to conceive of their own way to happiness, and to use other people and God for their own ends
- rebels don't want there to be a mind-independent objective reality, they want to invent their own reality that allows them to be praised and celebrated for doing whatever makes them happy at every point along their lives
- rebels would rather die that put their pursuit of happiness second
- rebels have no interest in rules, judgments, accountability or punishments

Here's what God wants for us to be saved from our rebelling:

- we have to know his real character so we have a genuine relationship with him
- the best way to know his character is by taking time to study what Jesus did in history
- what the incarnation tells us is that God is willing to humiliate himself by taking on a human nature
- what the crucifixion tells us is that God is willing to die in our place even though we're rebelling against him (Jesus is *Savior)*
- part of being saved is to trust God by allowing his character to transform our desires and actions (Jesus is *Lord*)
- as we grow in letting the character of Jesus inform our actions, we build a set of experiences that are like Jesus' experiences – i.e. – we obey God rather than men, and we suffer for our obedience – just like Jesus

Jesus came to give his life as a ransom for our rebellion against God, and the most important thing we have to do in this life is to come to terms with who he was and what he did. Your own good deeds don't justify you before God, because he isn't interested in what you can do unless you are first interested in knowing who he is. A Christian's good deeds are the result of identifying Jesus as Savior and Lord, and then following him by making decisions in your own life that respect his character. God doesn't need you to solve all the world's problems – he could do that himself. It's not what you do, it's who you know and trust that counts. The good deeds are just your way of trying to be like him and trying to feel the same thing he felt when he gave his life for you. You have a friend and you want to be like him in order to know what he feels so you have sympathy with

him.

The main point is that knowing Jesus as the revelation of God's character, and then following Jesus, is *more important* than doing "good things".

The first commandment, according to Jesus, is found in Matthew 22:34-38:

[34]Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.

[35]One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

[36]"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

[37]Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

[38]This is the first and greatest commandment.

The second commandment which comes after that one has to do with loving your neighbor. But the second one *is not the greatest commandment.* You can't love God unless you *know God*. That it, unless you make knowing about his existence and character a priority in your life to the point where you find out the truth about his existence and character. And not as your own opinion, or as the opinion of the people around you, or as the faith-tradition you were raised in. No. You have to value God enough to respond to his overtures to you. You have to know him in truth, not as a quick checkbox that you check off for an hour on Sundays to make your life "easier" because you are happier and the people around you like you. You have to know him before you can act to love him – who he is and what he's done.

The way that Protestants like me draw the line is as follows – justification (how your rebellion is canceled) is God's job. He draws you to him while you are still in rebellion, but you have a choice to resist him or not. If you resist his unilateral action to save you, then you are responsible for rejecting him. Sanctification (about doing good works) is not about canceling your rebellion, it's about the later step of re-prioritizing your life, so that you make decisions that reflect the character of Jesus, so that you become more like him. Even your desires change as the relationship progresses. It is something you work at – you study and experience, study and experience. The whole point of studying apologetics is to build yourself into a love machine that fears nothing and holds up under fire, because you know the truth and the truth makes you free to do what you ought to do regardless of the consequences (e.g. – failure to be recognized and requited by someone you loved well).

The most important relationship is not the horizontal relationship with your neighbor, it's the vertical relationship with God himself. And when you know God as he really revealed himself in history, then your desires – and consequently your actions – will change naturally. When you know God as a person, you freely make all kinds of sacrifices for him. You put yourself second because you want to *work on the relationship*. You start to believe that your own happiness isn't as as important as *working on the relationship.* It's like building a house. You don't notice the sacrifices.

Sometimes, I think that the whole point of Christianity and that vertical relationship is so

that we know God better. We sympathize more with him than we do with ourselves, because of how unfairly people treat him, how good and loving he is, and how right his goals are. It's not that he needs help, because he's *God* – he's *sovereign*. But the relationship gets to the point where it becomes reasonable for you to put yourself second with God, and to let his goals become your goals – you want the relationship with a loving God *more* than you want to be happy. You get tired of ignoring the person who loves you most – you start to wonder what it would be like to actually respond to him. For Christians, the demands of this other being eventually seem to be not so terrible after all – and we try to put aside our own desires and to give him gifts and respect instead of worrying so much about being happy *all the time*.

It's not irrational to be kind to the person who loves you the most – who sacrificed the most for you.

Related posts

Here is a series of posts I did on why people go to Hell.

- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

Do the Boehner and Reid plans address the concerns of credit agencies?

July 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

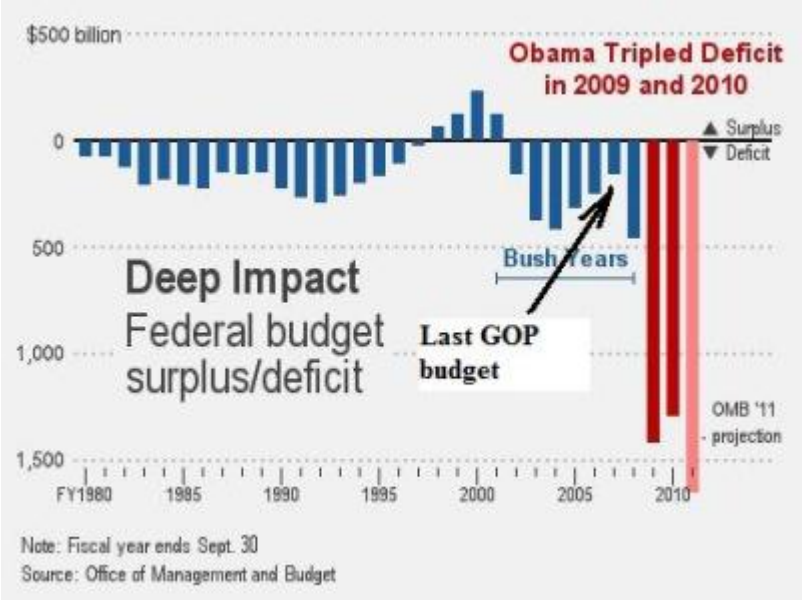

Obama Budget Deficit 2011

The Heritage Foundation assesses the new Boehner and Reid plans: can they stop us from getting our credit downgraded?

First, the credit agencies:

> The second and even more crucial issue is whether Congress will take necessary action beyond the next year to bring our debt under control over the medium and long-term. This is where the rating agencies really voice their strong concern. Again, Standard & Poor's:
>
> *Congress and the Administration might also settle for a smaller increase in the debt ceiling, or they might agree to a plan that, while avoiding a near-term default, might not, in our view, materially improve our base case expectation for the future path of the net general government debt-to-GDP ratio."*
>
> Moody's response is similar:
>
> *The outlook assigned at that time to the government bond rating would very likely be changed to negative at the conclusion of the review unless substantial and credible agreement is achieved on a budget that includes long-term deficit reduction. To retain a stable outlook, such an agreement should include a deficit trajectory that leads to stabilization and then decline in the ratios of federal government debt to GDP and debt to revenue beginning within the next few years.*
>
> What the rating agencies are saying is that Congress and the President must pass legislation that immediately begins to rein in deficits and bring our debt down to more acceptable levels, and either keeps it there or continues to drive it

> down further.

Right now, there are two plans on the table, because the Senate rejected Boehner's "Cut, Cap and Balance" plan. Do either of these plans address the concerns of the two credit agencies?

> The Boehner proposal would cut $1.2 trillion in discretionary spending. There is no assurance that these cuts will occur, but let's assume they do. Let's even be generous and assume that they are – in the words of S&P– "enacted and maintained throughout the decade." This would cut debt held by the public from its projected $24.9 trillion in 2021 to $23.7 trillion, and when measured against the economy from 104% to 99.4%. Certainly, this is an improvement, but it is hardly declining from today's levels, nor would these cuts fundamentally restructure entitlements – the real driver of our deficits in the future.
>
> Step two in the Boehner proposal would reduce deficits by an additional $1.8 trillion over ten years. Even assuming these cuts all happen, and even assuming they were all spending cuts – a broad assumption given the President's rhetoric surrounding tax hikes on the wealthy – this would bring publicly held debt down to 92% of GDP. Better, but not that much. Even throwing in interest savings from deficit reduction would bring this down to 88%. Again, not much improvement and far worse than today's debt ratio.
>
> The Reid proposal doesn't move the ball forward enough either. At best it falls somewhat short of Boehner's $3 trillion by $800 billion ($1.2 trillion in discretionary and some confusing savings to be had from winding down operations in Iraq and Afghanistan of $1.0 trillion.)
>
> Neither of this week's dueling debt ceiling proposals would pass the test from Moody's or Standard and Poor's for a credible, firm and actionable plan that would turn the tide of our deficits to put our debt on a manageable track. And if that holds true, then a downgrade by the rating agencies could occur smack in the very election year the President is trying to scoot through.
>
> […]The fact is, the only plan that could likely pass muster with Moody's and Standard and Poor's is House passed, Cut, Cap and Balance. Why? They tackle spending with firm caps that are enforceable, and before the end of the decade bring spending down to 19.9% of GDP and keep it there.

My guess right now is that Obama is going to sign the Boehner plan into law. He has no choice, Boehner pwnd him in the deal negotiations. Obama is going to have to yield, or all the blame for the default will go on HIS shoulders. As much as I like the new Boehner plan, it doesn't look like it's going to stop our debt rating from being downgraded. We needed to pass the Cut, Cap and Balance plan, but the Democrats rejected it. Think of that when interest rates shoot up. A debt downgrade is going to cause WIDE-RANGING repercussions in the lives of ordinary working families.

John Boehner stands up for spending cuts and job creation

July 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama went on television last night to argue for more wasteful spending and higher taxes on job creators. I guess he thinks that 1.65 trillion dollar deficits and a 9.2% unemployment rate is acceptable for working families, as long as he isn't personally affected by it.

The Wall Street Journal did not like Obama's speech at all.

Excerpt:

> The Obama Presidency has been unprecedented in many ways, and last night we saw another startling illustration: A President using a national TV address from the White House to call out his political opposition as unreasonable and radical and blame them as the sole reason for the "stalemate" over spending and the national debt.
>
> We've watched dozens of these speeches over the years, and this was more like a DNC fund-raiser than an Oval Office address. Though President Obama referred to the need to compromise, his idea of compromise was to call on the public to overwhelm Republicans with demands to raise taxes. He demeaned the GOP for protecting, in his poll-tested language, "millionaires and billionaires," for favoring "corporate jet owners and oil companies" over seniors on Medicare, and "hedge fund managers" over "their secretaries." While he invoked Ronald Reagan, the Gipper would never have used such rhetoric about his opposition on an issue of national moment.
>
> […]Apart from shifting blame for any debt default, the speech was also an attempt to inoculate Mr. Obama in case the U.S. loses its AAA credit rating. He cleverly, if dishonestly, elided the credit-rating issue with the debt-ceiling debate. But he knows that Standard & Poor's has said that it may cut the U.S. rating even if Congress moves on the debt ceiling. Mr. Obama wants to avoid any accountability for the spending blowout of the last three years that has raised the national debt held by the public—the kind we have to pay back—from 40% in 2008 to 72% next year, and rising. This will be the real cause of any downgrade.
>
> Speaker John Boehner made clear in his speech that the GOP doesn't want a default but wants more genuine cuts in spending. Mr. Obama is betting his rhetoric will cause the public to turn against the GOP, but we wonder if voters will be persuaded by a man whose concept of leadership is the politics of blame.

Thankfully, John Boehner isn't going to let Obama get away with wrecking the economy any more.

Here's Boehner's response:

The transcript is here.

Obama's Monday night speech was insulting, deceptive, vindictive and divisive. He doesn't know how to solve a problem by getting people who are opposed to him to buy into a compromise plan. Instead, he just goes in front of cameras and insults the people he has to work with. That is not the right way to get people to work together. Imagine if a manager in a private company called a press conference to excoriate some people on a different team in that company. Is that any way to get people working together to solve a problem? To point fingers at your co-workers and poison the well? It's juvenile. Where is his plan? How is he solving the problem?

The only people I see solving the problem are intelligent people like Paul Ryan, John Campbell, Tom Price, Tom McClintock, Mike Simpson, Ken Calvert and Tom Cole. People who work weekends developing solutions. People who understand how to write policies. People with degrees in economics, business and finance. People with private sector experience running businesses and creating jobs. Obama isn't one of those people. Obama just reads a teleprompter. He doesn't know how to create jobs – he never did it before becoming President. So why did we elect him?

Paul Nelson and Jonathan Wells present their research at a biology conference

July 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News. (Written by Paul Nelson)

Excerpt:

> Jonathan Wells and I presented our posters at the 2011 annual meeting of the Society for Developmental Biology this past weekend, and had a great time. For those who don't know what a poster session is, the idea is simple: you summarize your data, experiment, hypothesis, whatever, in the space of a 6′ x 4′ panel, and then at a scheduled time ("poster session"), stand by your board and field questions from whoever stops by to talk. Jonathan presented his material on Saturday afternoon; you can download an abbreviated version of his poster as a pdf here. (The pdf is shorter than the poster itself because Jonathan omitted any copyrighted visuals.) I presented yesterday afternoon, and my full poster can be downloaded as a pdf here.
>
> Neither of us faced any hostility, which (for Jonathan) was a refreshing change of atmosphere from the angry reception he received during his poster presentation at the 2005 annual meeting of the American Society for Cell Biology. In fact, we met with friendly, open-ended questions, curiosity, and meaningful exchanges. One biologist at Jonathan's session carefully read the main panels, then said to Jonathan, "Are you serious?" He and Jonathan then spent a long time going over the arguments and data in the poster — the opening question was an invitation for a detailed explanation.

This is good news. Maybe there is a gap between the Darwinian activists and the regular rank-and-file biologists, who are just interested in what's true. It helps that Wells and Nelson are experts in this area of biology, so they can defend their views with authority.

Should Christians divorce their faith from public square issues?

July 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have had major problems with IVCF and Campus Crusade as an undergraduate student (IVCF) then as a graduate student (Crusade). Basically, they are totally driven by numbers and refuse to say or do anything that isn't centered on privatized fideism. They refused to learn apologetics, take positions on economics or politics, or even to discuss the moral questions being discussed in the broader society – for fear of "offending" people. They do this because they think that being saved can be divorced from personal morality as well as engagement with society as a whole. Their focus is on "belief", not on study, growth or practice. Whatever you believe about abortion, gay rights, environmentalism and socialism is totally fine with them, because Christianity has nothing to say about those kinds of issues.

Scott Klusendorf at the Life Training Institute assesses Campus Crusade for Christ's decision to rename themselves "CRU".

Excerpt:

> Well, at Cal Poly SLO in May of 2008, the response of Christians to the abortion controversy did in fact turn-off at least one non-Christian, but not for reasons campus fellowship groups might expect. The ASB student leader responsible for organizing an abortion debate at that campus expressed her dismay that Campus Crusade would not attend the event or get behind promoting it with its members.
>
> She asked me directly why I thought that was so. She thought for sure the Christians would show up and she was puzzled that they didn't. Their refusal to get involved turned her off.
>
> I didn't know what to tell her. Perhaps CC had good reasons for not attending and I hold out hope it did, though it's hard for me to imagine what those reasons might be. I suspect she is not the only secular student puzzled by CC's non-involvement.
>
> Indeed, according to a 2005 TIME Magazine piece, the overall trend is not encouraging. Instead of equipping students to confront the thought structures that determine culture in the first place, many of these groups help students nurture a very private and personal faith, a faith separate from the intellectual climate of the university. The TIME article states:
>
> "But all the groups tend to go about their business quietly. "They kind of operate under the surface," McKaig says. Josh Sanburn, editor in chief of the Indiana Daily Student, notes that the number of students in the fellowships is roughly the same as the school's African-American student population, but unlike the Christians,

> “the black students on this campus are very good about making sure they’re heard.” Evangelical students, however, see their spiritual mission differently. Says sophomore CSF member Emily Hoefling: “We usually believe what affects people more than a newspaper article is to see people living Christian lives.”
>
> Question: Since when does “living Christian lives” mean checking out of the real action on campus?
>
> I fear that the message to Christian students and the campus at large couldn’t be clearer: Christianity is not relevant to the most pressing issues of our day. It’s fine as a personal life enhancement, but irrelevant to the real world of ideas, politics, morality, and law where the rest of the world lives.
>
> Again, is that a good witness for Christ? As Charles Malik pointed out half a century ago, “If you win the whole world [for Christ] and lose the mind of the world, you will soon discover that you have not won the world.”
>
> As I’ve said before, Christian leaders have it all wrong. My own experience suggests that far from turning people off, a persuasive pro-life case, graciously communicated, suggests to non-believers that maybe, just maybe, the Christian worldview has something relevant to say to the key issues of our day. But when we fail to even put in an appearance at key debates, the message to non-Christians is that we simply don’t care about the big stuff.
>
> Including the biggest issue of all, “Christ?”

This reminds me of an article I found on Life News about Michele Bachmann.

Excerpt:

> Congresswoman Michele Bachmann is one of the several pro-life advocates seeking the Republican nomination to face pro-abortion President Barack Obama and she cites Christian writer Francis Schaeffer as an influence on her pro-life views.
>
> In a campaign stop to speak to local residents at a church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Bachmann shared her testimony and talked about the Christian faith she and her husband share. That faith, which has matured thanks to the writings of Schaeffer, has led Bachman to a pro-life view that has seen her compile a 100% pro-life voting record in Congress and adopt dozens of foster children.
>
> “One thing that Dr. Schaeffer said is that [God is] not just the God of theology. He’s not just the God of the Bible,” Bachmann said, according to the Des Moines Register. “Since he is the Creator God, he’s the father of biology, sociology, of political science, of you name the subject. … And that altered our way of thinking, that God had something to say about our career.”
>
> “Francis Schaeffer also said that life is the watershed issue of our time, and how we come down on how we view human life will impact all other issues,” she said. “And so Marcus and I decided we didn’t want to be pro-life only, just as

> speaking… We wanted to live a life of being about pro-life."
>
> The Register indicates Bachmann told the audience that, upon the encouragement to put her pro-life views into action, she and her husband began counseling and praying with single mothers and helping them get to pregnancy and adoption centers to provide further practical support instead of abortion.

One of the reasons why I started this blog is because of my experiences with the campus clubs when I was a student. In many cases, you would not find a dime's worth of difference between the worldviews of secular leftists and these campus club organizations, at least in my experience. The ones I belonged to were thoroughly compromised by postmodernism, relativism, leftism and anti-intellectualism. They blocked me from introducing apologetics and debates every step of the way, for fear of "offending" people. I will never forget the empty-headed people who proclaimed themselves "Christian communists" or the ones who explained to me how blind faith was more genuine than rational faith, or the science student who told me that Christianity and science were completely separate, etc. Every week it was another testimony or a prayer walk. Never would they even let a scholar come in to talk about the evidence for the resurrection.

Texas governor Rick Perry has a strong pro-life record

July 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

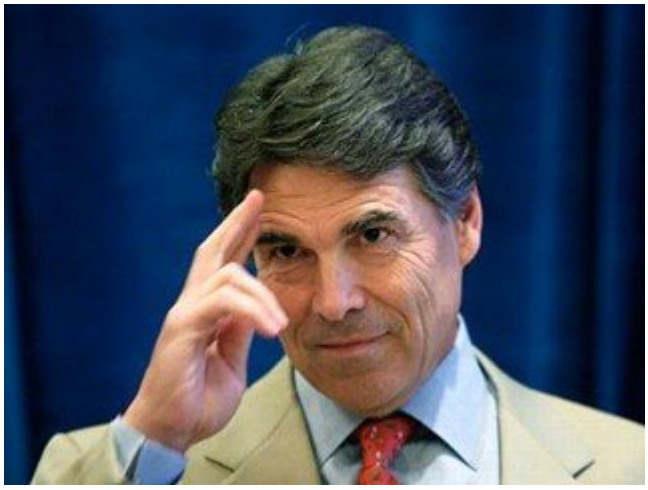

Texas Governor Rick Perry is pro-life

From Life News – an excellent re-cap of Perry's pro-life record.

Excerpt:

> "Every one of Governor Perry's judicial appointees adheres to a strict constructionist style of jurisprudence; neither do they find a right to privacy in the penumbra of the Constitution, nor do they legislate from the bench," Graham assures. "Governor Perry's appointments have created the largest, most conservative judicial body in America."
>
> Joe Pojman, the head of Texas Alliance for Life, has also worked closely with the governor and confirms to LifeNews that "Perry has always been pro-life throughout his time as an elected official."
>
> "For many years, Perry has supported the fund raising efforts of pro-life organizations, including Texas Alliance for Life, and he has appeared several times at the Texas Rally for Life held at the state Capitol to commemorate the tragic Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision," Pojman added."We believe Perry has the right stuff to be president. If elected, he will aggressively defend innocent human life as he has as governor of Texas."
>
> Pojman pointed to a laundry list of achievements Perry can point to as governor that have advanced the pro-life cause. Most recently, he signed into law a bill that would revoke taxpayer funding of the Planned Parenthood abortion business. But going back to the beginning, as the Lt. Governor in 1999, Perry oversaw the passage by the Texas Senate of the Parental Notification Act, the most substantial pro-life law passed in Texas up to that point. In 2005, Gov. Perry signed the parental consent measure to increase parents' rights and, in the years since the parental notification and consent laws have been in effect, abortions on

> minor girls have dropped by 32% per year.
>
> In 2003, Perry signed the Prenatal Protection Act, a law that protects unborn children from violent crimes of murder and assault by expanding the definition of human life in Texas criminal and civil law to include unborn children "at every stage of gestation from fertilization to birth." Texas' highest criminal court has upheld convictions of criminals for the murder of unborn children several times, and several are serving life sentences.
>
> In 2005, Perry signed a measure prohibiting abortions in the third trimester and, in 2003, Perry signed the Woman's Right to Know Act in 2003, which required that abortion businesses offer state-created informational brochures to women considering abortion. That law also prohibits late abortions from being performed excepted in hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers.
>
> This year, Perry appeared to step up his push for pro-life laws even more and, in response to requests from the two Texas pro-life groups, made passing an ultrasound law among his top priorities.
>
> "The bill he signed raises the standard of care for informed consent for abortion, for the first time, to the level of other surgical and medical procedures. It mandates a sonogram and gives women the right to see the image of the unborn child and hear the heartbeat. The bill also requires the physician who will perform the abortion to meet with the woman for an in-person consultation session 24 hours before the abortion to describe the procedure, its risks, and the alternatives," Pojman said. "Abby Johnson, the former director of a Texas Planned Parenthood abortion facility turned pro-life advocate, believes that provision will "devastate" the abortion industry."
>
> Perry, this year, also signed a bill to create a "Choose Life" license plate to promote infant adoption as an alternative to abortion in the Lone Star State. Perry long promoted compassionate alternatives to abortion. Since 2005, Perry has signed budgets that include millions for pregnancy resource centers and other pro-life agencies that assist pregnant women.
>
> Perry has also funded adult, not embryonic, stem cell research and treatments since 2005, and has spoken out against embryonic stem cell research.

This is what I like to see. Not rhetoric, but a record. A *strong* record with many different lines of engagement. We know what he would do, because we can see what he has done. That's how you pick a candidate. You pick the one with the best record. You don't listen to speeches read off of a teleprompter.

Contrast that pro-life record with Barack Obama's radically pro-abortion record.

Excerpt:

> November 5, 2008 – Obama selects pro-abortion Rep. Rahm Emanuel as his White House Chief of Staff. Emanuel has a 0% pro-life voting record according to National Right to Life.

November 24, 2008 – Obama appoints Ellen Moran, the former director of the pro-abortion group Emily's List as his White House communications director. Emily's List only supports candidates who favored taxpayer funded abortions and opposed a partial-birth abortion ban.

November 24, 2008 – Obama puts former Emily's List board member Melody Barnes in place as his director of the Domestic Policy Council.

January 23, 2009 – Forces taxpayers to fund pro-abortion groups that either promote or perform abortions in other nations. Decision to overturn Mexico City Policy sends part of $457 million to pro-abortion organizations.

February 27, 2009 – Starts the process of overturning pro-life conscience protections President Bush put in place to make sure medical staff and centers are not forced to do abortions.

February 28, 2009 – Barack Obama nominates pro-abortion Kathleen Sebelius to become Secretary of Health and Human Services.

April 14 – Obama administration releases document that claims pro-life people may engage in violence or extremism.

May 5 – Details emerge about a terrorism dictionary the administration of President Barack Obama put together in March. The Domestic Extremism Lexicon calls pro-life advocates violent and claims they employ racist overtones in engaging in criminal actions.

May 8 – President Obama's budget eliminates all federal funding for abstinence-only education.

May 26 – Appoints appeals court judge Sonia Sonotmayoras a Supreme Court nominee. Sotomayor agrees that the courts should make policy, such as the Roe v. Wade case. Sotomayor is later opposed by pro-life groups and supported by pro-abortion groups and those who know her say she will support abortion on the high court.

July 14 – Obama science czar nominee John Holdren is revealed to have written before that he favors forced abortions.

August 4 – Information becomes public that Ezekiel Emanuel, an Obama advisor at the Office of Management and Budget and a member of Federal Council on Comparative Effectiveness Research, supports rationing health care for disabled Americans that could lead to euthanasia.

December 17 – Signed a bill that overturned the 13-year-long ban on funding abortions with tax dollars in the nation's capital.

January 26, 2010 – Renominates radical pro-abortion activist Dawn Johnsen to a top Justice Department position.

February 8, 2010 – The Obama administration admitted it improperly conducted a threat assessmenton pro-life groups in Wisconsin who were preparing to rally against a new abortion center at a University of Wisconsin health clinic.

> March 22, 2010 – Signs the pro-abortion health care bill into law that contains massive abortion funding, no conscience protections and rationing.
>
> May 10, 2010 – Names pro-abortion activist Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court; she is strongly opposed by pro-life groups.
>
> September 30, 2010 – Obama administration exposed as to how it partnered with leading pro-abortion organizations to host an FBI training seminar in August with the main focus of declaring as “violent” the free speech activities of pro-life Americans.
>
> December 14, 2010 – Obama administration admits it is working to rescind conscience protections for medical professionals who don’t want to participate in abortions.
>
> February 18, 2011 – President Obama weakens conscience protections for pro-life medical workers.
>
> March 2, 2011 – Obama administration refuses to investigatevideos showing Planned Parenthood helping alleged sex traffickers get abortions for victimized underage girls.

I just picked some of his record from that post on Life News. Barack Obama is the most pro-abortion President we’ve ever had.

Does the mainstream media tell the truth about Cuba?

July 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> Last week, just outside Cuba's holiest Catholic shrine, government thugs attacked in plain daylight a group of opposition women — beating them, stoning them and stripping them naked to the waist. The women, mostly black and middle-aged, suffered this public humiliation because they were trying to find a dignified way to bring attention to the plight of their husbands, who are in prison for freely speaking their minds.
>
> The archbishop of Santiago de Cuba has condemned the attack. You can find an eyewitness account in Spanish in the above video.
>
> It should make for poignant watching today, the anniversary of the start of the Cuban Revolution.
>
> Unfortunately, there's nothing unusual in this grotesque attack on the Damas de Blanco (or Ladies in White, the harassed association of wives of political prisoners) on the street outside the shrine of Our Lady of La Caridad del Cobre. It's routine for Cubans to be publicly degraded, brutalized and imprisoned when they dare speak their minds. Their daily existence has been one of fear and wretched suffering for 50 years now.
>
> Yet the chances are that you probably haven't heard about this story. A quick Google search of the attacks on the Damas de Blanco turned up only about five hits, none from a major publication. Why?
>
> Not because it's a dog-bites-man story (literally, in this case), as some journalists might have you believe. No, it's simply because the media don't report the daily attacks on the Cuban dissidents.

The left in America seems to really approve of communism in Cuba. One wonders if they have any idea what really goes on there. Or maybe they do know, and they approve of it.

Should we cut foreign aid to governments who oppose us at the UN?

July 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News, a story about foreign policy.

Excerpt:

> A Republican amendment to appropriations legislation would bar funding for any government that opposes the U.S. position at the United Nations more often than not. Although unlikely to make it into law, the amendment draws fresh attention to the fact that a majority of countries, including most leading recipients of U.S. foreign aid, would fall into that category.
>
> Among multiple amendments inserted into the State Department and foreign operations authorization bill during a House Foreign Affairs Committee markup last week was one by Rep. Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.) prohibiting any foreign assistance to governments that vote against the U.S. position at the U.N. more than 50 percent of the time.
>
> Grades would be obtained from annual State Department reports on voting practices at the U.N., which have been required under U.S. law for decades, and would relate to votes in the General Assembly during its most recent session, or in the case of members of the Security Council, to their votes in both the council and assembly.
>
> In order to waive the prohibition, the president would, on a case-by-case basis, have to issue Congress with a determination that invoking the waiver was "important to the national interests of the United States."
>
> Duncan's amendment passed by a party-line vote of 22-18, and was among those incorporated into the final version of the bill that passed out of the full committee by a 23-20 vote late last Thursday night.
>
> "We're $14.3 trillion in debt," the tea party-backed Republican freshman said in a statement Monday. "Why should we pay countries to hate us when they've shown they're willing to do it for free?"
>
> "The United States has no business giving money away to countries and groups who seek to do us harm."

This bill makes sense, so the Democrats are opposed to it.

Texas governor Rick Perry signs tort reform into law

July 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the San Antonio Business Journal. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Gov. Rick Perry on Monday signed into law a bill meant to limit frivolous lawsuits.
>
> House Bill 274 — the so-called "loser pays" act — was deemed an emergency item by the governor at the start of the session.
>
> Business groups such as the Texas Association of Business, the National Federation of Independent Businesses and the Texas Association of Manufacturers lauded the tort reform omnibus bill for allowing courts to stop meritless lawsuits early in the process.
>
> The bill streamlines justice by allowing plaintiffs seeking less than $100,000 to request an expedited civil action. The new law, which goes into effect Sept. 1, also transfers risk to those filing an abusive lawsuit by requiring some losing plaintiffs to pay court costs and fees of the defendant.
>
> "HB 274 provides defendants and judges with a variety of tools that will cut down on frivolous claims in Texas," Gov. Perry said. "This important legislation will help make Texas that much more attractive to employers seeking to expand or relocate from countries all over the world by allowing them to spend less time in court and more time creating jobs."

This should help to move even more businesses to Texas, creating even more jobs.

Is Anders Breivik a Christian? Does he even believe in God?

July 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I also found this article posted on Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> To be sure, Breivik identifies himself as "100% Christian" in his manifesto (p. 1403), and he certainly talks incessantly about defending "Christian" civilization. But he also makes clear that his Christianity is a simply pose adopted for political reasons. Answering why he chose to align himself with a group supposedly espousing "Christian values," he states: "My choice was based purely [on] pragmatism." (p. 1380) He goes on to explain that "Christianity" has far more "mass appeal" than nationalism, white supremacy, or a revival of paganism, and so it is a more effective "banner" under which to build his movement. (p. 1381) In sum, Breivik views religion like Machiavelli viewed religion–as a political tool. It's worth noting that Machiavelli's *The Prince*is listed by Breivik as one of his favorite books. (p. 1407)
>
> As for his own religious beliefs and practices, Breivik frankly admits: "**I'm not going to pretend I'm a very religious person as that would be a lie.** I've always been very pragmatic and influenced by my secular surroundings and environment." (p. 1344, emphasis added) Indeed, Breivik acknowledges that he used to believe that "Religion is a crutch for weak people. What is the point in believing in a higher power if you have confidence in yourself!? Pathetic." He continues: "Perhaps this is true for many cases. Religion is a crutch for many weak people and many embrace religion for self serving reasons as a source for drawing mental strength (to feed their weak emotional state f[or] example during illness, death, poverty etc.). **Since I am not a hypocrite, I'll say directly that this is my agenda as well**." (p. 1344, emphasis added) In other words, at best he views his embrace of religion as a psychological crutch to give him strength for his horrific activities. Although he adds that he has not yet actually prayed to God for strength, he expects that he may do so when he goes on his murderous rampage: "If praying will act as an additional mental boost/soothing it is the pragmatical thing to do. I guess I will find out… If there is a God I will be allowed to enter heaven as all other martyrs for the Church in the past." (p. 1345) Note the "if" in his statement about whether God exists. Breivik himself doesn't even appear to believe in God. He frequently identifies himself as a "cultural Christian," a term which he defines at one point as the same thing as a "Christian atheist." (p. 1360)
>
> Unsurprisingly, Breivik's idea of "cultural Christianity" has little to do with Christianity as most people would understand that term. For example, Breivik

> makes clear that to join his movement for cultural Christianity "[i]t is not required that you have a personal relationship with God or Jesus." (p. 1361) Indeed, Breivik would like to expand "Christianity" to include those who worship the Norse pagan god Odin. Breivik calls for the Christian church to be "re-create[d]… as a nationalistic Church which will tolerate and allow (to a very large degree) native cultures/heritage/thought systems such as Odinism." (p. 1361) And despite using the adjective "cultural," Breivik's "cultural Christianity" doesn't leave much room for Christians to actually influence society apart from social rituals. Indeed, Breivik emphasizes that he wants a secular European state where "[t]he Church and church leaders **will not be allowed to influence non-cultural political matters in any way. This includes science, research and development and all non-cultural areas which will benefit Europe in the future. This will also include all areas relating to procreation/birth/fertility policies and related issues of scientific importance (reprogenetics)**." (p. 1137, emphasis added)
>
> As can be seen, Breivik harbors a special concern that Christians not be able to influence issues related to science and pubic policy "in any way." Why?
>
> Because he sees biological science–not traditional religion–as the ultimate savior of society. In his view, advances in biology will makes possible a vigorous new form of Social Darwinism that will save the Nordic race through positive eugenics.

I'm a fairly serious evangelical Christian, and I disagree with *everything* this madman believes. I wonder why the media was so anxious to paint him as some sort of authentic Christian, when he isn't one? Authentic Christians take seriously Jesus' command to "love your enemies", but I guess that's not something that people in the media would know about. There is a double standard in the secular left media. They certainly were not willing to label Major Nidal Malik Hasan as an authentic Muslim, even though he was shouting "Allahu Akbar!" as he shot down American troops.

I wonder what God thinks about people in the mainstream media who slam Christians by distorting facts? I'm guessing that he doesn't like them. I'm guessing that he doesn't like the way they gloss over the persecution of Christians, either. But that's a decision they seem willing to make. Just because a mouse is in the cookie jar, it doesn't make that mouse a cookie.

And one last point. I take it personally when this nut runs around smearing the word *knight* with his crazy rantings. Last week, I had the pleasure of ordering a lovely bouquet of white roses for a young lady I admire very much. I cleaned up my sports car and put the flowers carefully into the trunk, then drove over there at top speed to present the flowers to her with some other gifts. I wanted to encourage her for doing the many good things that she does. The word "knight" refers to someone who acts chivalrously, gently, mercifully and gallantly. Knights protect and nurture innocent people.

Related posts

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- Obama administration covers up political correctness that led to Nidal Hasan massacre

Rank-and-file Democrats are not as extreme on abortion as Obama

July 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> The new Gallup poll showing Americans strongly supporting some of the kinds of pro-life laws that have been successful in stopping abortions around the country and reducing them to historic lows in some states has another interesting conclusion.
>
> While President Barack Obama has stopped at nothing to advance abortion and taxpayer funding of abortion, the poll shows Democrats nationwide are not as strongly pro-abortion as the president. In fact, a majority of Democrats support some key pro-life laws and large minorities support others.
>
> The polling data reveals 84 percent of Democrats back informed consent measure to give women more information about abortion's risks and alternatives, 61 percent support parental consent before a teenage can get an abortion, and 60 percent support a 24-hour waiting period. That's not the overall percentage of Americans who support those pro-life laws, that's not the percentage of Republicans. That's more than 60 percent of Democrats backing each of those policies.
>
> The results go further and they show 59 percent of Democrats back a partial-birth abortion ban, and 49 percent support a bill to allow women a chance to see an ultrasound before an abortion. While not a majority, a good percentage of Democrats also support a ban on federal funding of abortion businesses like Planned Parenthood (25 percent), and an allowance for pharmacists and healthcare providers to opt out of participating in abortions or dispensing abortion drugs (33 percent).

I think the safest thing for a pro-lifer to do is to vote Republican, though. If the fiscal policies of the Republicans cause you to stumble, just get yourself a copy of Thomas Sowell's "Basic Economics" or even the introductory book "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism" by Robert P. Murphy. If the foreign policy views of Republicans are the problem, just pick up a copy of "War Footing" by Frank Gaffney or "Surrender is Not an Option" by John Bolton. For Christians, I especially recommend Wayne Grudem's "Politics According to the Bible" or Jay Richards' "Money, Greed and God".

Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?

July 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> As hearings reveal the attorney general to be either a charlatan or a boob, word comes of possible FBI complicity in letting guns "walk" into Mexico, ordered by an administration pushing gun control.
>
> If there was any doubt that Project Gunrunner and its offshoot, Operation Fast and Furious, had little to do with stopping gun-trafficking into Mexico and a lot to do with creating an atmosphere for more gun control, it ended with the revelation by Fox News that two convicted felons were allowed to buy and move more than 300 guns into Mexico, something the FBI should have caught but didn't.
>
> Under current federal law, people with felony convictions are not permitted to buy weapons, and those with felony arrests are typically flagged while the FBI conducts a thorough background check through its National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).
>
> According to court records reviewed by Fox News, two of the 20 defendants indicted in the Fast and Furious investigation — and, yes, there have been indictments — have felony convictions. Jacob Wayne Chambers and Sean Christopher Stewart obtained more than 360 weapons despite criminal records that should have prevented them from buying even one gun.
>
> When asked about the breakdown, Stephen Fischer, a spokesman for the NICS System, said the FBI had no comment. We are not surprised. Since day one, you could here crickets chirp every time the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives or the Department of Justice was asked about an operation that got two U.S. agents killed.
>
> **We suspect the FBI was ordered to look the other way just as ATF agents were told to every time they had a chance to interdict weapons going to Mexico, allegedly the whole purpose of the operation. That order could only have come from Attorney General Eric Holder.**

One wonders how far up the chain this operation went. The Democrats are desperate to impose gun control measures, and this operation would have given them their chance, if it had not been exposed as government-supported arms dealing.

Related posts

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- Obama’s attorney general has his head in the sand on national security
- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training
- Obama administration threatens South Carolina for saving prisoner’s lives

Judge throws out atheist attempt to censor day of prayer and fasting

July 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

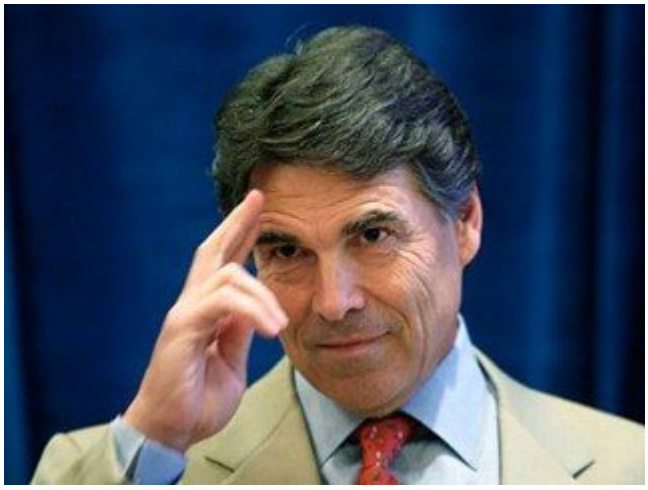

Texas Governor Rick Perry
From the Houston Chronicle.

Excerpt:

> A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit that sought to stop Gov. Rick Perry from sponsoring a national day of Christian prayer and fasting, ruling Thursday that the group of atheists and agnostics did not have legal standing to sue.
>
> U.S. District Judge Gray H. Miller said the Freedom From Religion Foundation argued against Perry's involvement based merely on feelings of exclusion, but did not show sufficient harm to merit the injunction they sought.
>
> "The governor has done nothing more than invite others who are willing to do so to pray," Miller said.

I've been reflecting on what I've learned about militant atheism during the time I have been running this blog, and I think the whole atheistic fundamentalism view boils down to 3 things. The first is the desire to be immoral, usually dressed up by defining morality as being based on feelings or cultural conventions. The second is the desire to censor and coerce other people who make them feel bad about being immoral. And the third is the desire to tell other people how intelligent and moral they are, but without actually being intelligent or moral. But I digress.

More:

> A day earlier, Perry defended the event, comparing it to President Barack Obama's participation in the National Day of Prayer.
>
> "My prayer is that the courts will find that the first amendment is still applicable to the governor no matter what they might be doing and that what we've done in the state of Texas or what we've done in the governor's office is appropriate," he

> said. “It’s no different than what George Washington or Abraham Linlcoln or President Truman or President Obama have done.”
>
> Perry, an evangelical Christian, said he didn’t yet know what his role in the rally would be.
>
> “I’m going to be there — I may be ushering for all I know — I haven’t gotten my marching orders,” he said. “It’s not about me and it’s not about the people on the stage either, this is truly about coming together as a state lifting up this nation in prayer, having a day of prayer and fasting. That’s all it is.”

Good for governor Perry, though. Sticking his neck out a bit. Good. But he has a ways to go to catch Michele.

NASA data shows that atmosphere will trap far less heat than UN predicted

July 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Forbes magazine. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> NASA satellite data from the years 2000 through 2011 show the Earth's atmosphere is allowing far more heat to be released into space than alarmist computer models have predicted, reports a new study in the peer-reviewed science journal *Remote Sensing*. The study indicates far less future global warming will occur than United Nations computer models have predicted, and supports prior studies indicating increases in atmospheric carbon dioxidetrap far less heat than alarmists have claimed.
>
> Study co-author Dr. Roy Spencer, a principal research scientist at the University of Alabama in Huntsville and U.S. Science Team Leader for the Advanced Microwave Scanning Radiometer flying on NASA's Aqua satellite, reports that real-world data from NASA's Terra satellite contradict multiple assumptions fed into alarmist computer models.
>
> "The satellite observations suggest there is much more energy lost to space during and after warming than the climate models show," Spencer said in a July 26 University of Alabama press release. "There is a huge discrepancy between the data and the forecasts that is especially big over the oceans."
>
> In addition to finding that far less heat is being trapped than alarmist computer models have predicted, the NASA satellite data show the atmosphere begins shedding heat into space long before United Nations computer models predicted.
>
> The new findings are extremely important and should dramatically alter the global warming debate.

There's a conflict between the theoretical predictions of the government-funded alarmists and the actual experimental results. So who are you going to believe? The people who are taking money from the government, to argue for more government control? Or the actual experimental results?

Related posts

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- Global warmist Phil Jones admits there's been no global warming since 1995

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- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Princeton University physicist testifies against global warming

Obama’s job creation advisor ships American business unit to China

July 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Jack Cafferty of CNN. (H/T Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> Here is more evidence of the suicide mission this country is on: General Electric announced it’s moving its 115-year-old X-ray business from Waukesha, Wisconsin to Beijing, China.
>
> The X-ray business is part of General Electric’s GE Healthcare unit, and this move is just part of a broader plan by GE to invest $2 billion in China.
>
> This will become the first GE business to be headquartered there. A handful of the unit’s top executives will be transferred to China but otherwise, the company says, none of the 150 staffers in the Milwaukee-area facility will lose jobs or be transferred. However, GE plans to hire more than 65 engineers and a support staff at a new facility in China.
>
> It’s the kind of news that makes you want to reach for something sharp and jab it in your eye. General Electric’s Chief Executive, Jeffrey Immelt, is one of President Obama’s advisers on… ready? U.S. job creation!
>
> […]Two months after Immelt was named to the council, The New York Times reported that General Electric paid no income taxes last year… thanks to some fancy accounting footwork, even though the company earned $14.2 billion in profits last year – more than $5 billion in the U.S. alone.

Obama named Immelt as the head of the President’s Council on Jobs and Competitiveness in January. And it’s no surprise that he is shipping jobs overseas – that’s what happens when you elect a tax and spend socialist as President. When Obama attacks businesses with his anti-capitalist rhetoric, they curtail hiring here and hire in China instead. Who would try to expand a business with an anti-business liberal with his finger on the button? You would have to be stupid to risk your capital in a country that runs 1.65 trillion dollar deficits.

It’s important to understand that big businesses like General Electric are *not* conservative. Big business wants government to insulate them from competition by using regulations to block new entrants. *Small* businesses are conservative.

Hillary Clinton opposes bill to cut taxpayer funding of abortions abroad

July 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is warning members of the U.S. House that she will personally urge pro-abortion President Barack Obama to veto a State Department funding bill over cuts to groups that perform and promote abortions.
>
> As LifeNews has reported, House Republicans have put forward an appropriations bill that would put the Mexico City Policy back in place. The policy, which President Barack Obama ditched during his first week in office, prevents the funding of groups that promote or perform abortions overseas.
>
> Planned Parenthood is one of the major recipients of millions of dollars through the State Department and the USAID program and the abortion business refused to stop doing abortions or lobbying other nations to change their pro-life laws during the Bush administration so it could receive funds for non-abortion family planning services. The abortion business is lobbying Congress to reject the bill and Clinton took its side today.
>
> Clinton, in the letter, according to CNN, called the bill "debilitating to my efforts to carry out a considered foreign policy and diplomacy" and said she "will recommend personally" that Obama veto the bill. She addressed the letter to pro-life Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Florida Republican who is the chair of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.
>
> […]Responding to Clinton's letter, Ros-Lehtinen's office told CNN the pro-life lawmaker is "disappointed that the Obama administration would stand in the way" of the measure that "blocks U.S. tax dollars from being wasted on foreign organizations, programs, and governments that work to undermine U.S. interests abroad."
>
> The language of the legislation also bans funding for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), an agency that has promoted abortions internationally and worked hand-in-hand with population control officials in China who have relied on forced abortions and sterilizations to enforce the one-child policy.
>
> The policy has been a central tenant of pro-life foreign policy during Republican administrations, but pro-abortion presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama both scrapped it during their first weeks in office. The policy, first named for a conference in Mexico City where pro-life President Ronald Reagan announced it, ensures taxpayer dollars don't flow through international family planning programs to organizations like the International Planned Parenthood Federation,

> which claims to have done hundreds of thousands of abortions worldwide.
>
> Despite Obama and Senate Democrats holding up the pro-life policy, Republicans have made inroads into cutting the international pro-abortion agenda.
>
> In April, pro-life Speaker John Boehner secured an budget agreement that, in part, cuts funding to the pro-abortion UNFPA (United Nations Family Planning Agency) that has worked hand-in-hand with Chinese population control officials who have enforced the one-child rule with forced abortions and other human rights abuses.

Still wondering how much Democrats believe in abortion? It’s a sacrament.

Drowning polar bears scientist being investigated for misconduct

July 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is ManBearPig to blame for global warming?
CBS News reports. (H/T Lonely Conservative via Reformed Seth)

Excerpt:

> A federal wildlife biologist whose observation in 2004 of presumably drowned polar bears in the Arctic helped to galvanize the global warming movement has been placed on administrative leave and is being investigated for scientific misconduct, possibly over the veracity of that article.
>
> Charles Monnett is an Anchorage-based scientist with the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement.
>
> He has not been informed by the inspector general's office of any charges or questions related to the scientific integrity of his work, according to Jeff Ruch, executive director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility.
>
> Monnett was told July 18 that he was being put on leave, pending results of an investigation into "integrity issues."
>
> On Thursday, Ruch's watchdog group plans to file a complaint on Monnett's behalf.

Lonely Conservative notes that this man's government-funded "research" was featured by Al Gore in his "documentary".

And here's more on this story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Something about this story is very odd. Surely, under the Obama administration

> any government official who was discovered to have been "emotionalising the issue" in order to raise public awareness of the terrible dangers of ManBearPig would be given a promotion, and a Congressional Medal of Honor at the very least? Can it really be possible that BOEMRE remains so principled and inviolate that it still insists its employees cleave to the truth?
>
> It's definitely one to watch, anyway. After all, the "drowning polar bear" story was instrumental in the US Interior Department's controversial decision in 2008 to have Ursus maritimus declared a "threatened species." (Despite evidence that polar bear populations have increased roughly five-fold in the last 50 years: not so much a threatened species, you might say; more like a plague or an infestation). It also prompted the silly scene in Al Gore's fantasy movie An Inconvenient Truth where an animated polar bear is shown drowning because of "global warming."
>
> At Watts Up With That you'll find an excellent World Climate Report essay reporting on the background to the "drowning polar bear" story.
>
> But the part of the study that garnered the press attention so much so that it has become ingrained in global warming lore was that Monnett et al. reported the sighting of four polar bear carcasses floating in the sea several kilometers from shore, presumably having drowned. All four dead bears were spotted from the plane a few days after a strong storm had struck the area, with high winds and two meter high waves. Since polar bears are strong swimmers, the authors concluded that it was not just the swimming that caused the bears to drown, but that the swimming in association with high winds and waves, which made the exertion rate much greater, sapping the bears of their energy and leading to their deaths. The authors also suggested that the frequency and intensity of late summer and early fall storms should increase (as would the wave heights) because of global warming and thus the risk to swimming bears will increase along with the number of bears swimming (since there will be less ice) and subsequently more bears will drown. But they didn't stop there—they suggested that the increased risk will not be borne by all bears equally, but that lone females and females with cubs will be most at risk—putting even more downward pressure of future polar bear populations. And thus a global warming poster child (or cub) is born.
>
> But does all of this follow from the data? Again, we haven't heard of any reports of polar bear drownings in Alaska in 2005, 2006, or 2007—all years with about the same, or even less late-summer sea ice off the north coast of Alaska than in 2004, the year of the documented drownings.

How is that science?

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- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Princeton University physicist testifies against global warming

New study: adult stem cells used in breast cancer treatment

July 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> Stanford doctors have shown that women with advanced breast cancer show greater survival when treated with aggressive chemotherapy and their own adult stem cells.
>
> Their study looked at long-term results for women with advanced, stage-4 breast cancer, who were treated 12-14 years ago with high-dose chemotherapy and their own, purified adult stem cells, compared to women who received chemotherapy and unpurified blood stem cells.
>
> While the numbers of patients in this long-term study are small, the results are striking. Five of the 22 women (23 percent) who received their purified adult stem cells are still alive, four of whom have no sign of disease. Only seven of the 74 women (9 percent) who received the untreated cells are still alive, with five of those seven having no sign of disease. Women who received their own purified adult stem cells had a median survival of 60 months, whereas those receiving unpurified stem cells had a median overall survival of 28 months.
>
> Senior author Dr. Judith Shizuru said:
>
> "Our study suggests that the high-dose therapy strategy can be modified to include the use of cancer-free purified blood stem cells to yield better overall outcomes in women with advanced breast cancer."
>
> The results were published online in the journal *Biology of Blood and Marrow Transplantation*.

If you haven't bookmarked Life News, it's an excellent site for pro-life news.

The U.S. government sends out 200 million checks per month

July 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio talks about how the massive spending spree started when the Democrats took control of the House and Senate in 2007, and about how the Democrats have been running government for 2.5 years without a budget, and about Obama's silly budget proposal which was rejected 97-0 in the Senate. He also hammers Obama for not putting forward a plan, the need to create more jobs in order to get more people to pay taxes without raising tax rates, anf the need to reform entitlement programs in order to save them. He also takes questions from John Kerry.

Why is there so much spending? Radical leftist Ezra Klein explains why in this Washington Post article.

Excerpt:

> I've been saying the federal government sends out 80 million checks a month, a number I got from the Bipartisan Policy Center. The president says the government sends out 70 million. Alec MacGillis says we're both wrong:
>
> The figures used by Obama and Geithner were, if anything, too low. They relied on Treasury Department figures from June that include Social Security (56 million checks that month), veterans benefits (4.5 million checks), and spending on non-defense contractors and vendors (1.8 million checks).
>
> But those numbers do not include reimbursements to Medicare providers and vendors (100 million claims in June), and electronic transfers to the 21 million households receiving food stamps.
>
> Nor do they include most spending by the Defense Department, which has a payroll of 6.4 million active and retired employees and, on average, pays nearly 1 million invoices and 660,000 travel expense claims per month.
>
> Obama's and Geithner's statements were hyperbolic only in one sense: The vast majority of the payments are now electronic, not checks per se. Of the roughly 80 million payments that the Treasury Department made in June, just 12 million were paper checks, half of them to Social Security recipients who prefer to get their allotment in the mail.Yikes.

John Hawkins of Right Wing News tweeted this today:

> Democrats are selling your children into slavery so they'll have more cash to give to bribe their supporters with.

Most of the time the government writes a check, it is redistributing money from those who work and earn to some other group of people who did not earn that money. In some

cases, these expenditures are legitimate – as with defense. But in other cases, it is just borrowing from children's futures in order to pay off other people who should be taking responsibility for their own lives.

William Lane Craig asks: can we be good without God?

July 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A video lecture in 3 parts, and a peer-reviewed paper to go with the clips.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 3 of 3:

And here is the article that discusses the same topic, in more detail, and with footnotes.

Excerpt:

> Can we be good without God? At first the answer to this question may seem so obvious that even to pose it arouses indignation. For while those of us who are Christian theists undoubtedly find in God a source of moral strength and resolve which enables us to live lives that are better than those we should live without Him, nevertheless it would seem arrogant and ignorant to claim that those who do not share a belief in God do not often live good moral lives–indeed, embarrassingly, lives that sometimes put our own to shame.
>
> But wait. It would, indeed, be arrogant and ignorant to claim that people cannot be good without belief in God. But that was not the question. The question was: can we be good without God? When we ask that question, we are posing in a provocative way the meta-ethical question of the objectivity of moral values. Are the values we hold dear and guide our lives by mere social conventions akin to driving on the left versus right side of the road or mere expressions of personal preference akin to having a taste for certain foods or not? Or are they valid independently of our apprehension of them, and if so, what is their foundation? Moreover, if morality is just a human convention, then why should we act morally, especially when it conflicts with self-interest? Or are we in some way held accountable for our moral decisions and actions?
>
> Today I want to argue that if God exists, then the objectivity of moral values, moral duties, and moral accountability is secured, but that in the absence of God, that is, if God does not exist, then morality is just a human convention, that is to say, morality is wholly subjective and non-binding. We might act in precisely the same ways that we do in fact act, but in the absence of God, such actions would no longer count as good (or evil), since if God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist. Thus, we cannot truly be good without God. On the other hand, if we do believe that moral values and duties are objective, that provides moral grounds for believing in God.

This is the easiest argument for God's existence to discuss with non-Christians. If you would like to hear a good debate on this topic, I recommend the debate between Arif

Ahmed and Glenn Peoples.

A closer look at the budget deal

August 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good article in the Wall Street Journal about the budget deal struck by the House, Senate and White House on the weekend.

Excerpt:

> The big picture is that the deal is a victory for the cause of smaller government, arguably the biggest since welfare reform in 1996. Most bipartisan budget deals trade tax increases that are immediate for spending cuts that turn out to be fictional. This one includes no immediate tax increases, despite President Obama's demand as recently as last Monday. The immediate spending cuts are real, if smaller than we'd prefer, and the longer-term cuts could be real if Republicans hold Congress and continue to enforce the deal's spending caps.
>
> The framework (we haven't seen all the details) calls for an initial step of some $900 billion in domestic discretionary cuts over 10 years from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) baseline puffed up by recent spending. If the cuts hold, this would go some way to erasing the fiscal damage from the Obama-Nancy Pelosi stimulus.
>
> […]The second phase of the deal is less clear cut, though it also could turn out to shrink Leviathan. Party leaders in both houses of Congress will each appoint three Members to a special committee that will recommend another round of deficit reduction of between $1.2 trillion and $1.5 trillion, also over 10 years. Their mandate is broad, and we're told very little is off the table, but at least seven of the 12 Members would have to agree on a package to force an up-or-down vote in Congress.
>
> If the committee can't agree on enough deficit reduction, then automatic spending cuts would ensue to make up the difference to reach the $1.2 trillion minimum deficit-reduction target. One key point is that the committee's failure to agree would not automatically "trigger" (in Beltway parlance) revenue increases, as the White House was insisting on as recently as this weekend. That would have guaranteed that Democrats would never agree to enough cuts, and Republicans were right to resist.
>
> Instead the automatic cuts would be divided equally between defense and nondefense. So, for example, if the committee agrees to deficit reduction of only $600 billion, then another $300 billion would be cut automatically from defense and domestic accounts (excluding Medicare beneficiaries) to reach at least $1.2 trillion.
>
> One reason to think tax increases are unlikely, however, is that the 12-Member committee will operate from CBO's baseline that assumes that the Bush tax rates expire in 2013. CBO assumes that taxes will rise by $3.5 trillion over the next

> decade, including huge increases for middle-class earners. Since any elimination of those tax increases would increase the deficit under CBO's math, the strong incentive for the Members will be to avoid the tax issue. This increases the political incentive for deficit reduction to come from spending cuts.
>
> Mr. Obama's biggest gain in the deal is that he gets his highest priority of not having to repeat this debt-limit fight again before the 2012 election. The deal stipulates that the debt ceiling will rise automatically by $900 billion this year, and at least $1.2 trillion next year, unless two-thirds of Congress disapproves it. Congress will not do so.

I don't like the deal because I wanted Obama to have to face this problem with this again in May of 2012, but it may be the best deal we could get with control of only the House.

Infidel Guy and skeptic Bart Ehrman discuss the historical Jesus

August 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I find atheism a bit of a quirky worldview because a significant group of the more militant atheists seem to be willing to believe in weird things that are obviously false. Even things that are denied by the majority of scholars.

For example, they believe in the eternal universe, invisible alien civilizations, and the unobservable multiverse. I just think it's weird… one minute you are having a normal conversation with them about politics or parenting, then POW… the crazy comes out. It's like talking to a Muslim software engineer. One minute he's seated quietly discussing JUnit and Interfaces, and the next minute he's standing on the table with a fork in his hand ranting about Jihad and Intifidas. Crazy.

Believe my delusions or I'll insult you!

Anyhoo, here is an interesting case in point, in which "The Infidel Guy", who thinks that Jesus never existed, confronts skeptical historian Bart Ehrman. Bart Ehrman lets the true believing jihadi know that the world really is round and that leprechauns most certainly do not exist.

Surprise! We're not winning the arguments with you because we are "skilled debaters". We're winning because you're crazy and irrational. Phrasing your claims as insults doesn't make your claims true.

Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance

August 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the raw story from U.S. News and World Report.

Excerpt:

> Beginning Aug. 1, 2012, women in the United States will have their birth control covered by insurance companies, free of co-pays, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced Monday.
>
> "Most private health care plans, including the private health care plan available to members of Congress, already include most of these services, including contraception. Family planning is something that keeps women healthy, and it was an important piece of today's announcement," Stephanie Cutter, a White House advisor, told *ABC News* Monday.
>
> The move to make contraception free to women is one of eight new measures aimed at providing "preventive health services" to women, the HHS said. They follow on recommendations from a report issued July 19 by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), which advises the federal government.
>
> The new initiatives are based on those recommendations and seek to expand women's access to preventive services under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.
>
> **"The Affordable Care Act helps stop health problems before they start," HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said in an agency statement released Monday. "These historic guidelines are based on science and existing literature, and will help ensure women get the preventive health benefits they need."**
>
> The IOM report was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to identify "gaps in preventive services for women as well as measures that will further ensure women's health and well-being," the agency said.

The problem with this is that taxpayer-funded contraception has been tried in the UK and it has been found to *raise* unwanted pregnancy rates. So why would anyone do this? Well, because more premarital sex means fewer stable marriages. And marital breakdown results in fatherlessness, which gives the state a crisis to solve. And whenever the state has a crisis to solve, they can push for higher taxes and more social engineering. For example, they can equalize life outcomes between single mothers and married couples by subsidizing the one former with the wealth generated by the latter. Besides, children accept what public schools teach them much better when there is no pesky father around to compete with the government-run schools.

But there's a more sinister reason. More unwanted pregnancies means more abortions,

which are mainly provided by Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood will get more fees and the Democrat Party will get more donations.

I think that Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse is going to be discussing this tonight on Catholic Radio of San Diego from 6 to 7 PM Pacific Standard Time.

Are evangelical Christian women the new feminists?

August 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Michele Bachmann

Here's an interesting article from the Washington Post. (H/T Lenny from Come Reason)

Excerpt:

> Religion historian Marie Griffith has been watching this shift, and recently wrote an essay titled "The New Evangelical Feminism of Bachmann and Palin." She caught all kinds of heat from feminists on the left who say that neither Bachmann nor Palin, whom some have dubbed "the spiritual heads" of the tea party, can remotely be regarded as their conceptual colleagues.
>
> While Griffith agrees that these women do not resemble traditional feminists in their political views, she believes that they have captured the hearts and minds of conservative Christian women in a historically significant way. Two generations ago, a conservative Christian woman would have been encouraged to have babies and keep house; work would have been seen as an economic necessity, not a higher calling.
>
> **"Now," says Griffith, director of the new John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics at Washington University in St. Louis, "I really see evangelicals taking hold of that view that women can speak about righteous godly things, just as men can. They can make an impact on the world. Not only that, they should make an impact on the world."**
>
> **Nance points out that the abortion wars used to be fought by men. Today, the most prominent antiabortion warriors are Christian women, most of whom have young children.**
>
> **It's their focus on motherhood, I think, that makes these new Christian feminists so appealing to millions — their unflinching insistence that their families come first, that even the most ambitious among them occasionally have spit-up on their blouses.**
>
> Palin has her entourage; Bachmann, her brood, which includes that staggering

> number — 23! — of foster kids. Nance describes taking a call from a member of Congress while in her car with a baby screaming in the back seat. “Sir,” she said, “you’ll have to listen to the baby crying — or you can wait.”

Remember though that Michele Bachmann took time out from her career to homeschool her 5 children, so family comes first. Michele has denied that she is a feminist, and I agree with her. To be a feminist in the traditional sense, you have to favor state-run day care, state-funded abortions, selfishness, premarital sex, contraception, no-fault divorce and gender neutrality. Feminists also oppose marriage, limited government, personal responsibility, fathers, and husbands. I don’t think that Michele Bachmann is a feminist in any way whatsoever. She is a woman, her way of life is being threatened, and it’s all hands on deck.

Child faces $535 fine and jail time for rescuing baby bird

August 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Baby Woodpecker

I am a bird lover, and this story just makes me *sick.*

Excerpt:

> Eleven-year-old aspiring veterinarian, Skylar Capo, sprang into action the second she learned that a baby woodpecker in her Dad's backyard was about to be eaten by the family cat.
>
> "I've just always loved animals," said Skylar Capo. "I couldn't stand to watch it be eaten."
>
> Skylar couldn't find the woodpecker's mother, so she brought it to her own mother, Alison Capo, who agreed to take it home.
>
> "She was just going to take care of it for a day or two, make sure it was safe and uninjured, and then she was going to let it go," said Capo.
>
> But on the drive home, the Capo family stopped at a Lowes in Fredericksburg and they brought the bird inside because of the heat. That's when they were confronted by a fellow shopper who said she worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
>
> "She was really nervous. She was shaking. Then she pulled out a badge," said Capo.
>
> The problem was that the woodpecker is a protected species under the Federal Migratory Bird Act. Therefore, it is illegal to take or transport a baby woodpecker. The Capo family says they had no idea.
>
> "I was a little bit upset because I didn't want my mom to get in trouble," said Skylar.

> So as soon as the Capo family returned home, they say they opened the cage, the bird flew away, and they reported it to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
>
> “They said that’s great, that’s exactly what we want to see,” said Capo. “We thought that we had done everything that we could possibly do.”
>
> But roughly two weeks later, that same woman from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed up at Capo’s front door. This time, Capo says the woman was accompanied by a state trooper. Capo refused to accept a citation, but was later mailed a notice to appear in U.S. District Court for unlawfully taking a migratory bird. She’s also been slapped with a $535 fine.

Why are we paying the government to take away our liberty? Liberty is the power to do what you ought to do. The government subsidizes abortion providers, and then they turn around and fine and maybe even jail 11-year old children who rescue baby birds.

My previous post on bird rescues is here.

Do children make marriages more stable or more happy?

August 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new study sheds light on how the presence of children affects marital stability and happiness. (H/T Reformed Seth)

Excerpt:

> […][C]hildfree couples divorce more often than couples who have at least one child, according to researchers, despite numerous studies that indicate marital happiness plummets in the first year or two after the birth of a child and sometimes never quite recoups.
>
> Among the research author Po Bronson gathered for his various books, he notes the work done by sociologist Paul H. Jacobson as proof:
>
> > "For couples without children, the divorce rate in 1948 was 15.3 per 1,000. Where one child was present, the estimate rate was 11.6 per 1,000. The figure thus continues to decrease, and in families with four or more children, it was 4.6. Altogether, the rate for couples with children was 8.8 per 1,000. In other words, the rate for childless couples was almost double the rate for families with children."
>
> OK, but Jacobson's study was published in 1950; is it still true today?
>
> Yes, according to journalist Anneli Rufus, whose number crunching discovered that of the divorced couples in the United States, 66 percent are childless compared with 40 percent who have kids. Why? Evidently, the "absence of children leads to loneliness and weariness."
>
> […]So if they're so happy, why do more kidfree couples end up splitting?
>
> "People assume children are the glue that holds a marriage together, which really isn't true. Kids are huge stressors," says Scott, head of the Childless by Choice Project whose documentary on childfree couples was just released. "Despite that, there is a strong motive to stay together. The childfree don't have that motive so there's no reason to stay together if it's not working." That's why for Wilde, who says her relationship became too much work and "I don't think love should be work," it wasn't too hard to kiss her prince goodbye.

The article is from an extremely liberal web site, which explains why they are quoting all of these anti-child web sites. There is some sort of doomsday overpopulation myth that people on the left often believe in, against all the evidence. It's really just selfishness, though.

I think that one of the reasons why childless couples divorce more is because people tend to stay together for the children and try to work it out.

Clay Jones: why does God allow suffering?

August 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From apologist Clay Jones. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

> Since I teach on why God allows evil, I often talk about Job. I have learned that many Christians have missed a major lesson of that book, if not *the* major lesson. Although many rightly conclude from Job that we should be humble when it comes to why God allows this or that suffering, there is something else amazing found in the book's beginning.
>
> In the first chapter we learn that Job is the wealthiest man in the world, renowned, and that he worships God.
>
> But then we are told of a great contest in Heaven.
>
> One day the angels presented themselves before the Lord and Satan came along with them and the Lord asked Satan:
>
> "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." (Job 1:8-11)
>
> Here Satan contends that Job only serves God because God has given Job everything Job wants and that If God didn't give Job what he wanted then Job would rebel.
>
> Well, the Lord tells Satan that Satan can destroy all the things Job enjoys. Soon disaster kills his family, marauders steal his possessions, Satan afflicts him with boils, and Job's wife tells him to "curse God and die."
>
> And here's the question I ask my students: "what was the only thing that Job had to do to humiliate Satan in front of God and all God's servants?"

Read the whole thing to get the answer.

Does loving your neighbor require that you agree with them?

August 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From apologist Jonathan Morrow.

Excerpt:

> We live in an interesting, ever-changing, and challenging day. As Christians, learning to navigate such a reality can be very confusing and intimidating. In one of Jesus' central teachings, he commands us to love our neighbor (cf. Mark 12:31). And while we can and should often do this by meeting physical needs, there is another vital, but often overlooked, application of this passage. We need to stand up for the possibility of truth. We need to protect the endangered species of honest disagreement concerning the nature of reality. Today a not so subtle battle is raging from newspapers columns to college classrooms concerning the nature of tolerance. There are 2 competing definitions:
>
> - False Tolerance: We can make no judgments at all about the truth of others' beliefs.
> - True Tolerance: We allow others the freedom to hold beliefs which we judge to be false.
>
> If we cannot tell our neighbors or ourselves the truth about reality, then we cannot really love them. Because love involves seeking another's highest good, and goodness is anchored in reality (after all, the truth sets us free). We must fight the false tolerance that seeks to intellectually bully our culture into agreeing that every viewpoint (especially when it comes to religion and morality) is equally valid. We must speak up in love for the possibility of truth. Loving our neighbor requires this.

Loving someone doesn't mean telling them lies to make them feel good so that they will like you and you will feel good. That's not love, that's selfishness.

Tea party voters are pleased with John Boehner's deal

August 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tea party Republicans give Boehner positive reviews

	Opinion of John Boehner as a result of budget negotiations			
Among...	More favorable	Less favorable	Opinion hasn't changed	*More-Less favorable*
All adults	11	34	45	*-23*
Democrats	3	51	39	*-48*
Republicans	32	15	49	*+17*
Support tea party	54	16	28	*+38*
Independents	7	34	49	*-27*

Boehner's deal pleases the Tea Party
From the liberal Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> A majority of Republicans who agree with the tea party movement give House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) positive reviews for his role in debt negotiations in a new Washington Post-Pew Research Center poll. The speaker's high marks represent a crucial link between the highly energized political movement and the Republican establishment as attention pivots back to the 2012 election cycle.
>
> […]After Republicans cut a deal on Sunday reducing the deficit with spending cuts alone – a key GOP and tea party priority – there is little doubt that the tea party movement has emerged as a powerful and sustained force in national politics.
>
> […]Tea party Republicans are significantly more tuned in than others to the 2012 presidential contest, according to another survey. Overall, more than eight in 10 are closely following the campaign, said the latest Washington Post-ABC News poll. Some 42 percent of Republicans who *strongly* support the tea party said they're following it "very closely," roughly twice the number of Democrats (17 percent), independents (19 percent) and Republicans overall (21 percent) who say so.
>
> Tea party Republicans make up nearly one-quarter of registered voters in swing states. While tea party Republicans make up 17 percent of registered voters in states that favored Obama by 10 points or more according to June and July Post-ABC polls, they make up 23 percent of voters in states decided by single digit margins. That's identical to the 23 percent of voters in heavily McCain states who identify as tea party Republicans.

Elections matter. Make sure you start engaging your friends *now.*

Are there errors in the Qu’ran?

August 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a post that takes a look at the textual reliability, scientific reliability, prophetic accuracy and historical accuracy.

Excerpt:

> While the list of historical inaccuracies and anachronisms is vast, one has been selected for discussion here. Surah 20 relays the incident of the golden calf. In Surah 20:85-88, 95 we read:
>
> “He [Allah] said, ‘We have tempted thy people since thou didist leave them. The Samaratin has led them into error.’ Then Moses returned…and we cast them [(gold) ornaments], as the Samaritan also threw them, into the fire.’ (Then he brought out for them a Calf, a mere body that lowed; and they said, ‘This is your god, and the god of Moses, whom he has forgotten.’)…Moses said, ‘And thou, Samaritan, what was thy business?’”
>
> Now, let us consider this for just a moment. How can a Samaritan have led the Israelites astray at the time of Moses (approx 1400 BC) when the city of Samaria was founded by King Omri in about 870 B.C? The Samaritans did not exist until after the exile of the Northern kingdom of Israel and the resettlement of the area under king Sargon II in 722 B.C. with non-Israelites who then adopt a syncretism [mixture] between the religion of the Jews and their own polytheistic background. The Samaritans did not exist until 530 years after Moses. By this mistake alone, the Qur’an can be rendered unreliable and certainly not an inerrant work of God.

This is important, because Muslims think that the Qu’ran is without error.

Eric Cantor says that Obama is in over his head

August 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist Politico web site, an assessment of Obama's negotiating ability.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama is "in over his head" when it comes to tackling the country's economic troubles, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor said Wednesday.
>
> The president has not run a business or created jobs and has proven himself ill-suited to put the economy back on track, the Virginia Republican said in a midday interview on The Wall Street Journal's website with opinion columnist Peggy Noonan and editor James Freeman.
>
> President Barack Obama is "in over his head" when it comes to tackling the country's economic troubles, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor said Wednesday.
>
> The president has not run a business or created jobs and has proven himself ill-suited to put the economy back on track, the Virginia Republican said in a midday interview on The Wall Street Journal's website with opinion columnist Peggy Noonan and editor James Freeman.

When picking someone to run an economy, don't pick the person who has scored high marks for agreeing with professors in university classrooms. Agreeing with professors does not give a person experience of how the world really works. Instead, choose someone who has practical experience at running a business and creating jobs. Academic parroting is no substitute for running a successful private sector business. Herman Cain would be a better choice for President than Barack Obama, if the main criterion was job creation.

New study: HIV infection rate higher for those having male/male sex

August 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Reuters.

Excerpt:

> According to the estimates, published in the journal PLoS ONE, there were 48,600 new HIV infections in the United States in 2006, 56,000 in 2007, 47,800 in 2008 and 48,100 in 2009. Over the four-year period, that amounts to an average of 50,000 cases per year.
>
> […]Men who have sex with men – which includes openly gay and bisexual men and those who do not identify themselves as gay or bisexual – remain most heavily affected.While this group represents 2 percent of the overall U.S. population, they accounted for 61 percent of all new HIV infections in 2009.
>
> And young men who have sex with men – those aged 13 to 29 – are the hardest hit, accounting for more than one quarter of all new HIV infections nationally.
>
> New HIV infections affected young men who have sex with men of all races, but the CDC saw very sharp increases among young black men who have sex with men.
>
> "We saw increases of up to 48 percent – nearly a 50 percent increase between 2006 and 2009," Fenton said.

Is it a good idea to celebrate behaviors that are likely to cause harm? Is it a good idea to conceal the risks of certain behaviors from the general public? Aren't people who set boundaries between harmless and harmful behavior more loving than people who deny that any behaviors are more or less harmful?

Comments to this post will be filtered because of the Obama administration law restricting speech on these topics.

Survey: 69% believe scientists falsified global warming data

August 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the respected polling firm Rasmussen Reports. (H/T Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> The latest Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey of American Adults shows that 69% say it's at least somewhat likely that some scientists have falsified research data in order to support their own theories and beliefs, including 40% who say this is Very Likely. Twenty-two percent (22%) don't think it's likely some scientists have falsified global warming data, including just six percent (6%) say it's Not At All Likely. Another 10% are undecided. (To see survey question wording, click here .)
>
> The number of adults who say it's likely scientists have falsified data is up 10 points from December 2009 .
>
> Fifty-seven percent (57%) believe there is significant disagreement within the scientific community on global warming, up five points from late 2009. One in four (25%) believes scientists agree on global warming. Another 18% aren't sure.
>
> Republicans and adults not affiliated with either major political party feel stronger than Democrats that some scientists have falsified data to support their global warming theories, but 51% of Democrats also agree.
>
> Men are more likely than women to believe some scientists have put out false information on the issue.
>
> Democrats are more likely to support immediate action on global warming compared to those from other party affiliations.

I'm not surprised by this. Scientists had every reason to falsify their research. The more of a "crisis" they can generate, the more government money they get. And government is always happy to fund "research" that shows that *more government* is needed to solve the "crisis". And public schools get more money too, to educate the impressionable children on the evils of unrestrained capitalism, and the need for higher taxes and more government restrictions on individual spending.

Ezra Levant interviews Mark Steyn on Sun TV

August 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Blazing Cat Fur uploaded this new video featuring free speech warriors Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn. It also has funny Canadian commercials!

They talk about Mark Steyn's new book "After America".

Vancouver, BC handing out free crack pipes and drug needles

August 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

From the Vancouver Sun. (H/T The Michael Medved Show)

Excerpt:

> Vancouver health officials will distribute new crack pipes to drug users this fall as part of a pilot project aimed at reducing the transmission of diseases such as **hepatitis C**.
>
> The program, part of Vancouver's harm-reduction strategy, is expected to start in October and run for six months to a year, said Dr. Reka Gustafson, a medical health officer with the Vancouver Coastal Health authority.
>
> […]While heroin users can get clean needles from needle-exchange programs or the city's safe-injection site, new pipes aren't as easily accessible.
>
> Across Canada, only a handful of cities, including Calgary and Winnipeg, hand out crack pipes.
>
> A kit with a clean, unused pipe, mouthpiece, filter and condoms will be handed out to the participants, Gustafson said. It's not known at this time how many drug users will take part in the pilot, which will have an estimated cost of between $50,000 and $60,000.
>
> […]Transmission rates for disease, particularly for hepatitis C, continue to rise in Vancouver. About 60 per cent to 80 per cent of drug users in Vancouver have the disease or are at risk of getting it, said B.C. medical health officer Dr. Perry Kendall.
>
> "There's good reason that hepatitis C and HIV can be transmitted on the mouth

> piece of pipes. It’s not as clear as with needle-sharing but it’s pretty persuasive,” Kendall said. “This pilot will tell us if we should be doing more.”

I can’t believe that this is happening in conservative cities like CALGARY, ALBERTA. It’s craziness. When you lower the cost barrier and risks of drug use, you get MORE drug use, not less. Lowering the cost of any choice or behavior will, all other factors being equal, create more of that choice or behavior.

N.T. Wright explains seven “mutations” caused by the resurrection

August 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought I would just go over a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best).Wright has taught at Cambridge, Oxford, Duke, McGill, etc.. He’s published 40 books.

Here is the lecture (that link has PDF transcript, audio and movies) that Wright gave on the resurrection.

N.T. Wright’s historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright’s case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable* apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here’s the outline of Wright’s case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. ‘Resurrection’ is not a fancy word for ‘life after death’; it denotes life after ‘life after death’.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an invented exaltation was already available to do the job.
3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.
5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have

invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

Teacher union memo reveals agenda to undermine parents

August 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> American Federation of Teachers officials have disavowed an internal report after it was posted on the union's website following its annual conference, embedded on each of its 19 pages with the union's logo and signed by a union official.
>
> The report, titled "How Connecticut Defused the Parent Trigger," was replaced on AFT's website with a note saying "we have received complaints about these materials and have removed them because they do not represent AFT's position."
>
> Education activist RiShawn Biddle copied the report before it was removed from the AFT website. The report describes in detail AFT's strategy for subverting school reform legislation in Connecticut, a strategy that relied greatly on deceiving legislators and interested parents.
>
> The Parent Trigger proposal originated in California and was adopted by education reformers in Connecticut last year. The proposal empowers a majority of parents with children attending a persistently failing school to force education officials to either close it, convert it to a charter school or replace its staff.
>
> The union was blindsided when thousands of minority parents thronged in the Connecticut capitol to support the measure. Many of them expressed concern that their state's public schools posted the biggest gap in the country on standardized test scores between minority and Caucasian students.
>
> But where California teachers unions lobbied to block the bill in their state legislature and state education department, AFT's Connecticut affiliate began an offensive that ultimately neutered the bill.
>
> And, according to the now-disavowed report, they succeeded because the proposal's "name is a misnomer," since school governance councils "are advisory and do not have true governing authority."
>
> The bill approved by Connecticut legislators allows the councils of elected community members only to advise school officials rather than empowering them to force needed reforms.
>
> […]The report also makes clear AFT officials must be hoping Biddle's discovery does not become more widely known because it destroys the union's carefully erected image as reform-minded partners who love to "collaborate" with parents and communities.Though the union's biggest concern is not serving children or parents, it cannot have the public aware of this, or that its strategy includes the

> “absence of charter school and parent groups from the table” during political shenanigans that simultaneously target lawmakers with lobbying pressure while appearing to “[discuss] shared concerns” with parent and reform groups.
>
> The union says it learned from past “mistakes” to avoid “inflammatory rhetoric” and the appearance of “saying ‘no.'” So, instead, it preaches “collaboration” and “allowing teachers to have a voice,” while working behind the scenes to make sure no one but the union does.

Read the whole thing, and consider homeschooling.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel’s documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Public schools spend $130,000 of stimulus money on diversity training books
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- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
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- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher’s unions make war on charter schools

Why do atheists believe in unobservable entities and weird things?

August 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this summary of an article in Nature written by George Ellis, a famous cosmologist based in Cape Town, South Africa.

Excerpt:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "*Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields*".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.
>
> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book *The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos* (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal *Nature*. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "*Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities*."
>
> **According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.**
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.
>
> Multiverse thinking is basically an atheistic attempt to solve some huge problems with the big bang and explain why the universe could have been formed without a design or a Designer.

Now how do the theorteical physicists respond to this?

Here's an article from Scientific American responding to Ellis. (H/T Uncommon Descent)

Excerpt:

> This picture of the universe, or *multiverse*, as it is called, explains the long-standing mystery of why the constants of nature appear to be fine-tuned for the emergence of life. The reason is that intelligent observers exist only in those rare bubbles in which, by pure chance, the constants happen to be just right for life to evolve. The rest of the multiverse remains barren, but no one is there to complain about that.
>
> Some of my physicist colleagues find the multiverse theory alarming. Any theory in physics stands or falls depending on whether its predictions agree with the

> data. But how can we verify the existence of other bubble universes? Paul Steinhardt and George Ellis have argued, for example, that the multiverse theory is unscientific, because it cannot be tested, even in principle.
>
> […]Our universe appears surprisingly fine-tuned for life in the sense that if you tweaked many of our constants of nature by just a tiny amount, life as we know it would be impossible. Why? **If there's a Level II multiverse where these "constants" take all possible values**, it's not surprising that we find ourselves in one of the rare universes that are inhabitable, just like it's not surprising that we find ourselves living on Earth rather than Mercury or Neptune.
>
> […]**George argues that if we take seriously that anything that could happen does happen, we're led down a slippery slope toward even larger multiverses, like the Level IV one. Since this is my favorite multiverse level, and I'm one of the very few proponents of it, this is a slope that I'm happy to slide down!**

Is the multiverse theory a good response to the fine-tuning argument? It seems to me that the fine-tuning rests on solid experimental evidence, while the multiverse rests on what-if speculations about unobservable entities.

Calls for Geithner resignation in wake of credit downgrade

August 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

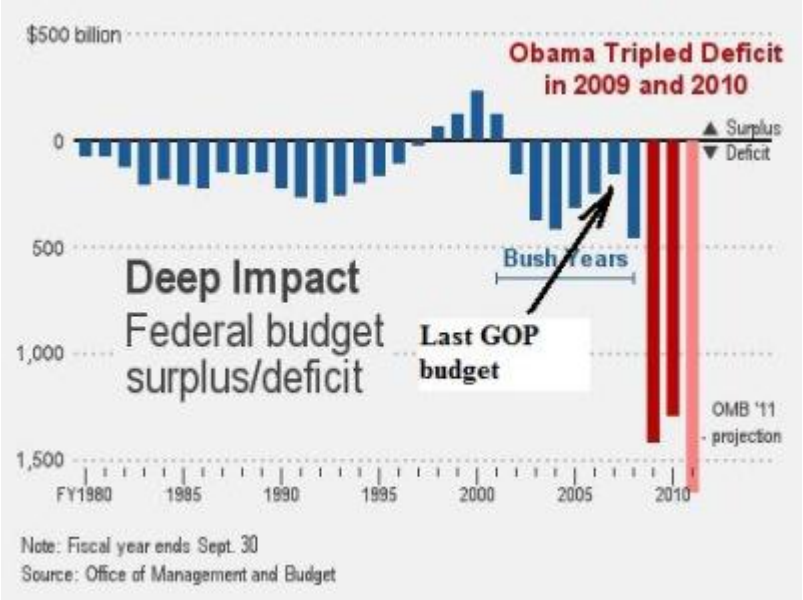

Obama Budget Deficit 2011

First, some details about the recent downgrade of America's credit rating by Standard & Poor's.

Excerpt:

> Standard & Poor's announced Friday night that it has downgraded the U.S. credit rating for the first time, dealing a symbolic blow to the world's economic superpower in what was a sharply worded critique of the American political system.
>
> Lowering the nation's rating to one notch below AAA, the credit rating company said "political brinkmanship" in the debate over the debt had made the U.S. government's ability to manage its finances "less stable, less effective and less predictable." It said the bipartisan agreement reached this week to find at least $2.1 trillion in budget savings "fell short" of what was necessary to tame the nation's debt over time and predicted that leaders would not be likely to achieve more savings in the future.
>
> […]The downgrade to AA+ will push the global financial markets into uncharted territory after a volatile week fueled by concerns over a worsening debt crisis in Europe and a faltering economy in the United States.The AAA rating has made the U.S. Treasury bond one of the world's safest investments — and has helped the nation borrow at extraordinarily cheap rates to finance its government operations, including two wars and an expensive social safety net for retirees.
>
> Treasury bonds have also been a stalwart of stability amid the economic upheaval of the past few years. The nation has had a AAA rating for 70 years.

> Analysts say that, over time, the downgrade could push up borrowing costs for the U.S. government, costing taxpayers tens of billions of dollars a year. It could also drive up interest rates for consumers and companies seeking mortgages, credit cards and business loans.
>
> A downgrade could also have a cascading series of effects on states and localities, including nearly all of those in the Washington metro area. These governments could lose their AAA credit ratings as well, potentially raising the cost of borrowing for schools, roads and parks.

Jim Demint responds by calling for Tim Geithner's resignation.

Excerpt:

> Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) responded to the nation's downgrade at the hands of Standard & Poor's by calling for the resignation of Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner.
>
> Saying "enough is enough," the Tea Party favorite pressured President Obama to remove his top economic official and adopt a new perspective.
>
> "The President should demand that Secretary Geithner resign and immediately replace him with someone who will help Washington focus on balancing our budget and allowing the private sector to create jobs," he said in a statement. "For months he opposed all efforts to reduce the debt in return for a debt ceiling increase. His opposition to serious spending and debt reforms has been reckless and now the American people will pay the price."
>
> After S&P put the nation's rating on negative watch back in April, Geithner said there was "no risk" the US would be downgraded.
>
> "No risk of that, no risk," he said at the time in an **interview** with Fox Business Network.

Yes, there is no risk the same way that the 864 billion stimulus was supposed to keep unemployment below 8% – except that unemployment shot up over 10%.

I saw this status update from a friend on Facebook:

> If you don't understand the current financial crisis in our country, here's a simplified explanation: "If the US Government was a family, they would be making $58,000 a year, they spend $75,000 a year, & have $327,000 in credit card debt. They are currently proposing BIG spending cuts to reduce their spending to $72,000 a year. These are the actual proportions of the federal budget & debt, reduced to a level that we can understand." – Dave Ramsey

The Obama administration has had three one-and-a-half trillion dollar deficits in a row. That is nearly TEN TIMES the last Republican budget deficit in 2007. That was the last year that the Republicans held the House and Senate. The last year before Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid came into power.

Women becoming less committed to Christian orthodoxy

August 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Christian Post, survey findings from George Barna.

Excerpt:

> Pollster and researcher George Barna released a report on religious changes in America this week revealing some surprising results. Barna concludes that women have experienced a significant spiritual change in the past two decades.
>
> Women today are attending church and Sunday school less, reading the Bible less, and consider their faith less important in their lives, according to the new survey.
>
> The Barna report also shows that over the last two decades women have become less likely to hold traditional views of God as the all-knowing creator and ruler of the universe. Women today are less likely to see the devil as a real person, considering him more a "symbol of evil."
>
> "Women used to put men to shame in terms of their orthodoxy of belief and the breadth and consistency of their religious behavior. No more; the religious gender gap has substantially closed," said George Barna in his report.
>
> "We can posit that while tens of millions of Americans seem to be wrestling with their faith – what to believe and how to experience and express it – women have been more radically redefining their faith than men in the past two decades."

Does anyone have a hypothesis to explain this? Is it because Christianity is no longer viewed by the majority of people as "nice"? Are women dropping out because of the social pressure to not make truth claims or moral judgments?

How the Democrat worldview leads to massive debt and unemployment

August 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an explanation of why the Democrat policies have led us so far into economic desolation.

Excerpt:

> The "philosophical starting point" of today's Democrats, as Mr. Cantor sees it, is that they "believe in a welfare state before they believe in capitalism. They promote economic programs of redistribution to close the gap of the disparity between the classes. That's what they're about: redistributive politics." The Virginian's contempt is obvious in his Tidewater drawl. "The assumption . . . is that there is some kind of perpetual engine of economic prosperity in America that is going to just continue. And therefore they are able to take from those who create and give to those who don't. We just have a fundamentally different view."
>
> […]Like Mr. Cantor, President Obama is also a man of deep and strong convictions, and perhaps that's why they seem to dislike each other so much. Call it, to adapt Freud, the narcissism of big differences. Mr. Cantor cautions that he isn't a "psychoanalyst"—before politics, he was a real-estate lawyer and small businessman—but he says, "It's almost as if someone cannot have another opinion that is different from his. He becomes visibly agitated. . . . He does not like to be challenged on policy grounds."
>
> In a meeting with the Journal's editorial board Wednesday, Mr. Cantor, 48, gives his side of one of his more infamous altercations with the president. In a mid-July Cabinet Room meeting, Mr. Cantor made a suggestion that Mr. Obama and other Democrats took as impertinent. "How dare I," Mr. Cantor recalls of the liberal sentiment in the room. He was sitting between Nancy Pelosi and Steny Hoyer, "and they were in absolute agreement that [the president] was such a saint for having endured all this."
>
> […]Somewhat surprisingly, Mr. Cantor was in fact prepared to bargain on about $20 billion in higher taxes on "the shiny balls of the millionaires, billionaires, jet owners and oil companies" that Mr. Obama so often mentioned in public. "If they wanted to be able to claim the win on that," Mr. Cantor says, he wanted net revenue neutrality in return, by lowering the corporate income tax rate or perhaps enacting an even larger tax reform. In effect, he was calling Mr. Obama's bluff on "cheap politics."
>
> In private, however, the debate always returned to the status of the top marginal rate for individuals earning over $200,000 and $250,000 for couples—aka the Bush tax cuts for people who do not own private aircraft. Mr. Cantor argued that

> some large portion of the income that flows through the top bracket comes from "pass-through entities"—that is, businesses—and "to me, that strikes at the core of what I believe should be the policy, and that is to provide incentives for entrepreneurs to grow."
>
> By contrast, he says, "Never was there ever an underlying economic argument" from Democrats. "It was all about social justice. Honestly, one of them said to me, 'Some people just make too much money.'"

They think that embraces policies that make them feel good about themselves and look good in front of others will automatically be good policies. But they are disastrous policies. The numbers don't really matter to them, it's all about the emotions. They feel that they need to demonstrate their superiority to us all by "solving" problems. And the way they find "solutions" to problems is by choosing whatever option makes them feel good and look good. Demonizing the wealthy makes them feel good and look good. They don't care if it increases debt and raises unemployment. It's all about their feelings and intuitions.

New study: reducing government regulation creates jobs

August 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> According to the Phoenix study, "even a small 5% reduction in the regulatory budget (about $2.8 billion) would result in about $75 billion in expanded private-sector GDP each year, with an increase in employment by 1.2 million jobs annually. On average, eliminating the job of a single regulator grows the American economy by $6.2 million and nearly 100 private sector jobs annually." The reverse is true as well, according to Phoenix, which said "each million dollar increase in the regulatory budget costs the economy 420 private sector jobs."
>
> "Our statistical analysis of historical data indicates that federal expenditures on regulatory activity have a significant impact on the size of the private-sector economy and private-sector employment," says Dr. George S. Ford, chief economist at the Phoenix Center. "While the entire federal budget must be cut to address the deficit problem, the evidence indicates that reductions in the overall federal regulatory budget may substantially impact the growth of economic output and employment."
>
> It's hard to imagine any way of making it clearer: Whatever merits it may otherwise have, the federal regulatory bureaucracy is a tremendous drag on the economy, diverting and destroying the very precious investment capital that is essential to generating the growth that creates jobs that pay the taxes that fund the government. This provides an important insight into why federal offices like the Environmental Protection Agency do not consider the effect of proposed regulations on the ability of the economy to generate jobs.

If you want job creators to create jobs, ask the job creators what is stopping them from creating jobs. At the top of their list will be *government regulations.*

Are the poor getting richer in America?

August 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Bill Whittle.

Here's a write up of the video from Hot Air.

Excerpt:

> Have the rich gotten richer? Indeed they have, Bill Whittle says in his latest Afterburner — but so have the poor. As wealth expands, living standards rise, and Whittle shows just exactly how it did over the last 40 years in the US. In fact, he argues that the better comparison is not between the rich and the poor in this country, but between the American poor and the *average* citizen in Europe, Asia, and Africa…
>
> The ultimate arguments are this: what exactly does "poor" mean, and what is the best way to alleviate poverty? If poor in the US is defined such that 97.7% of those households have televisions, 98% have refrigerators, almost 40% have computers, and 78% have air conditioning, then we're defining "poverty" rather loosely — and that's the point. The Left wants the definition as wide as possible in order to keep more Americans on public-subsidy rolls, which then incentivizes them to support larger and more intrusive government.
>
> What is the best way to alleviate *real* poverty? The data Whittle presents shows that a dynamic economy based on private property and capital choice lifts the living standard for *everyone*. Europe went in the nanny-state direction, and now their average qualifies as our poor, at least by living-standard metrics. That's something to keep in mind while we debate the nature of safety nets, government spending, and fiscal reform.
>
> *Addendum:* The data here comes from the Heritage Foundation, so be sure to check it out.

This could be useful when getting into debates with leftists.

Standard and Poor's: there may be more downgrades

August 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNBC.

Excerpt:

> Standard & Poor's may downgrade the long-term credit rating of the U.S. once again in less than three months after sending shockwaves through the bond and stock markets by stripping the nation of its top notch triple-A rating last week, according to an emergency Sunday night conference call for clients of Bank of America Merrill Lynch.
>
> "We do expect further downgrades," said Ethan Harris, North American economist, on the call. "We doubt the newly appointed bipartisan commission will come up with a credible long-term deficit reduction plan. Hence by November or December we would not be surprised to see S&P downgrade the debt again from AA-plus to AA."
>
> Harris said that the U.S. should have avoided the downgrade in the first place by meeting S&P's demands of a $4 trillion deficit cut and a "demonstrating a sensible budget process." What they got instead was a "deficit cut of $2.1 trillion and a budget process that's been extremely chaotic," said Harris.
>
> […]"If a disorderly Treasury market leads to the Fed embarking on QE3, repercussions for the dollar will be catastrophic," said David Woo, head of global rates and currencies research, on the call. "Investors will be quick to conclude that U.S. monetary policy has been subjugated by fiscal policy and the Fed's independence would be placed seriously into question."

In other news, Estonia has actually received a recent debt rating UPGRADE:

> In the midst of a world embroiled in economic turmoil, a few nations have managed to do surprisingly well—among them, Estonia. After near economic collapse during the 2008–2009 financial crisis, the country has managed to successfully bounce backwith substantial GDP growth, a vibrant trade environment, and a notable budget surplus.
>
> During the first quarter of this year, Estonia had the highest rate of growth in the EU and the biggest drop in unemployment. In July, its credit rating was raised by Fitch to A+, a reflection of substantial economic growth.
>
> But how did Estonia get here? Estonia possesses a flexible, open economy and investment climate that encourages competition and economic growth. It remains one of the world's freest economies, according to The Heritage Foundation's *Index of Economic Freedom*. However, prudent fiscal policies have

> played the largest role in Estonia's impressive economic performance, particularly in recent years. Still, the path to fiscal conservatism was not easy; it required a lot of rigorous, painful cutback involving 9 percent of GDP in fiscal adjustments and large cuts to nominal wages.

Notice that Estonia's economic policies are *tea party conservative* policies, not socialist policies.

Meanwhile, the White House has yet to respond to our first credit downgrade.

Democrats raging recall war in Wisconsin

August 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> The Badger State will hold six recall elections for state senators on Tuesday, the final battle of a war between Gov. Scott Walker (R) and organized labor that began months ago. Walker's decision to strip public-sector unions of their collective-bargaining right set off a national firestorm — with the labor movement promising retribution for legislators who voted in favor of the proposal.
>
> […]Democrats have targeted six Republican state senators for recall, while two of their own face recall fights. Republicans have a 19-14 majority in the chamber, so to seize control, Democrats must win three GOP-held seats and lose none of their own.Most analysts consider Sen. Dan Kapanke (R) the most endangered, because his district gave Obama more than 60 percent of the vote in 2008. Many Democrats are counting that seat as a pickup. Sen. Randy Hopper (R) also faces a tough race in a Democratic-leaning district. Sens. Luther Olsen and Alberta Darling, both Republicans, are vulnerable, too, and their races are likely to decide whether Democrats get to the majority on Tuesday.
>
> […]Tens of millions of dollars have poured into the state — some experts estimate that more than $30 million has been spent — as every interest group on either side of the aisle is trying to make its voice heard before the vote.
>
> Democrats — and especially organized labor groups — have cast the Wisconsin recall elections as a sign that they retain significant political power and are more than willing to fight when they think Republicans have overreached.

This is a big story that is happening at the state level. It might be worth sending a few bucks to the Republican state senators.

New study: feminism pressures women into unwanted sex

August 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This Yahoo News article explains, citing the research of Mark Regnerus. Notice that they use the phrase "gender equality" as a euphemism for feminism. The idea that men and women have no innate differences and no differing roles is the core feminist belief.

Excerpt:

> In his presentation, "Sexual Economics: A Research-Based Theory of Sexual Interactions, or Why the Man Buys Dinner," Baumeister, a psychologist, explained how applying economic principles helps understand people's sexual decision-making, especially when they're just beginning a relationship.
>
> "Women's sexuality has a kind of value that men's sexuality does not," he says. "Men will basically exchange other resources with women to have sex, but the reverse doesn't work. Women … can trade sex for attention, for grades, for a promotion, for money, as in prostitution or sex with a celebrity."
>
> The idea, he says, is that men want sex more than women do (on average) and that sex in a relationship begins when women decide it's time. Supply and demand rule, so whichever sex is more scarce has more power. The theory focuses on heterosexual interactions only.
>
> When women outnumber men (as on many college campuses today) there's more competition among women for those guys, says Mark Regnerus, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Texas-Austin. He addressed that in the book he co-wrote, *Premarital Sex in America*, out earlier this year.
>
> Regnerus says Baumeister's theory of sexual economics was a key element. "It's a perspective through which to understand sexual relationships and sexual behavior," he says.
>
> Regnerus' research attributes the rise of the "hookup" culture on campus to the fact that there are so many more women in college. He says Baumeister and Kathleen Vohs "wrote the key work on the subject" in 2004. Because a woman's sexuality has a value to men, a man who wanted sex typically had to give her something of value, such as a marriage proposal.

Notice that marriage proposals don't just come out of the blue. They need supporting evidence and accomplishments, or they look ridiculous.

Traditionally, a man would have to show a woman his suitability for the traditional roles of husband and father. He would have to demonstrate that to the woman, and to her father. He would have to declare his intentions, produce his "prospects", including his degree transcripts, work history and financial holdings. That was before feminism. After feminism, women decided that men don't have any special roles to fill, so there was no

need for men to “apply for the job”, so to speak.

After feminism, we also had no-fault divorce made into law. This was done to accommodate women who had made poor choices when they married. No-fault divorce led to a massive exodus of fathers from the home. So now many women are growing up without fathers. We have also witnessed the rise of single motherhood by choice. With sex education, and the free availability of contraception and abortion, men have been taught to assume that sex is no big deal, and they are able to avoid committing and just get sex from the women who are giving it away for free. The remaining women who want a commitment quickly lower their expectations in order to avoid being passed up entirely. Consequently, many women have decided to get pregnant without a man, just so that they can have a relationship with someone who will not leave them. And this fatherless procreation is all taxpayer subsidized, often including free IVF for childless single women who put recreational sex and careers above marriage and child-bearing for the first 40 years of their lives.

Fatherlessness causes women to have sex at earlier and earlier ages, without any guarantee that the man can fulfill traditional roles or hold to a commitment. Feminism denies that men have distinct male roles, so women are giving up sex to men based solely on the man’s appearance and based on the approval of their peers, which is determined by a pop culture that denigrates chastity, courtship and marriage.

Fathers matter to daughters. In order to make a good choice of a man, a woman needs to see her father’s husband/father behavior to use as a measure. She needs to have a father to help her to moderate her emotions and to make romantic decisions based on practical demands of marriage and parenting. She needs to employ means/ends reasoning to evaluate a man for those roles. But feminism ejected fathers from the home, reducing the male role to sperm donor and taxpayer for welfare programs. Today, we have a generation of women who are basically giving away sex for free, with no romance or commitment in sight.

The feminist idea that “a woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle” sounded good to a generation of feminists who had been mistreated by the “bad boys” whom they freely chose, but now we can see the result of that policy for their daughters. Oral sex on the first date is not uncommon for many teens, with no expectation of a follow-up phone call. That’s what feminism got women. All this raving about rape epidemics… and it turns out that feminism is itself largely responsible for the epidemic of forced/coerced sex. Surprise!

It looks like all those bossy, controlling, judgmental, logical, exclusive, intolerant, Christian fundamentalism men were actually more concerned with women’s happiness than feminists were all along. Maybe those boundaries were there for a reason? Maybe the Bible knows what it is talking about when it speaks about marriage, courting, family and chastity? Maybe.

The basics of education policy explained in three videos

August 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I love the Heritage Foundation videos.

First of three.

Second of three.

Third of three.

Awesome!

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

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The Obama administration and the debt to GDP ratio

August 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Understand the debt crisis with this article from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> The Bush Presidency and previous GOP Congresses contributed to the current problem by not insisting on domestic cuts to finance the cost of war, and by adding the prescription drug benefit without reforming Medicare. But as recently as 2008 spending was still only 20.7%, and debt held by the public was only 40.3%, of GDP.
>
> In the name of saving the economy from panic, the White House and the Pelosi Congress then blew out the American government balance sheet. They compounded the problem of excessive private debt by adding unsustainable public debt.
>
> They boosted federal spending to 25% of GDP in 2009, 23.8% in 2010 (as TARP repayments provided a temporary reduction in overall spending), and back nearly to 25% this fiscal year. Meanwhile, debt to GDP climbed to 53.5% in 2009, 62.2% in 2010, and is estimated to hit 72% this year—and to keep rising. These are all figures from Mr. Obama's own budget office.
>
> Rather than change direction this year, Mr. Obama's main political focus has been to preserve those spending levels by raising taxes. His initial budget in February for fiscal 2012 proposed higher spending. He then resisted the modest spending cuts that the GOP proposed for the rest of fiscal 2011.
>
> He responded to Paul Ryan's proposal to reform Medicare and Medicaid by calling it un-American and unworthy of debate. In the most recent budget talks, he would only consider small entitlement reforms (cuts in payments to providers) if Republicans agreed to raise taxes. He has refused even to discuss ObamaCare or serious reforms in Medicare and Social Security. Meanwhile, federal payments to individuals continue to grow as a share of all spending, as the nearby chart shows.
>
> This is how you become the Downgrade President.

Barack Obama owns this credit downgrade. It was his party that increased spending starting in 2007.

Is redistribution of wealth a substitute for marriage and family?

August 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From MercatorNet. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> The circumstances of the half-million indigenous people of Australia are quite varied, from integration in capital cities to isolated outback townships where people barely speak English. But they are united in being disadvantaged. Life expectancy for Aboriginal men and women is about 10 years less than non-indigenous Australians. Other indices of social welfare – employment, education, housing, infant mortality – are appalling. It would paint a rosy picture to describe some Aboriginal settlements as Third World. They are Fourth World camps with unimaginable levels of squalor, domestic violence, child sex abuse, drunkenness, and drug abuse.
>
> […]…over the past 40 years, the conditions of indigenous people, relative to the rest of Australia, have hardly changed. Not that the government has been sitting on its hands. In fact, as a scathing review of the effectiveness of its programmes showed this week, it has been busy spending money hand over fist — A$3.5 billion a year for many years. And, says the report, these billions have "yielded dismally poor returns to date".
>
> "The history of Commonwealth policy for Indigenous Australians over the past 40 years is largely a story of good intentions, flawed policies, unrealistic assumptions, poor implementation, unintended consequences and dashed hopes. Strong policy commitments and large investments of government funding have too often produced outcomes which have been disappointing at best and appalling at worst."
>
> How to raise the standard of living of indigenous people is bitterly disputed. This vast and intractable morass has defeated generations of government bureaucrats, both white and indigenous. Unhappily, as the report acknowledges, "good intentions in Indigenous affairs do not translate easily into good policy, and … the risk of unintended consequences in this domain is often extremely high."
>
> There is one promising approach on the table – to abandon the welfare mentality to which so many Aborigines are addicted. Some Aboriginal leaders, like Noel Pearson and Galarrwuy Yunupingu are trying to convince their people and the Federal and state governments that less sit-down money is needed, not more. They argue forcefully that welfare is a poison which is killing their people.
>
> […]But both governments and these impressive leaders have failed to address a central issue– the state of the Aboriginal family. For decades, the government

> has tried to give its indigenous citizens everything they needed to access the benefits of a developed economy: education, housing, health care and so on. But it withholds the pincode, which is the traditional Western family.
>
> All the indices for Aboriginal families are dire. About 70 percent of indigenous mothers have never been married. The vast majority of children are born out of wedlock. If Aboriginal families are dysfunctional, is it any wonder that literacy levels are in the basement and drug and alcohol abuse is sky-high?
>
> For the bureaucrats, the figures for indigenous marriage are far less important than those for literacy or health. There are probably two reasons for this. For one, they are loath to criticise customary marriage — even though it includes polygamy and child brides – lest they appear paternalistic and patronising. But the main reason must surely be that marriage is not important for them either. The high rates of divorce, co-habitation, and single-motherhood in white Australia do not trouble them.
>
> […]If Aborigines had strong families, their child mortality rates and maternal mortality rates would not be the same as East Timor or the Solomon Islands.
>
> What is happening, effectively, is we are shutting Aboriginals out of Australian society by refusing to promote the most powerful social technology of all: the traditional nuclear family. Families teach orderliness, self-restraint, industriousness, ambition, respect for others' rights – all the virtues that children need to be healthy, to take advantage of their education and to succeed in working life.

The reason why left-wing bureaucrats are opposed to strengthening marriage is because they don't like the differing gender roles that are inherent in marriage, they don't like chastity and sexual restraint, and they don't like people having the ability to make a living independent of the state. If there was no "crisis" to solve, then how could the compassionate left get elected? How could they feel good about themselves by redistributing other people's wealth and imposing their enlightened values on the poor? They need to create the crisis – they don't want to solve it. Subsidizing risky and reckless behavior just throws gasoline on the fire – which is exactly what the left wants. They don't like religion. They don't like morality. They don't think that people should feel bad about being immoral. They don't care about encouraging people to be careful about conceiving and raising children. They care about getting elected and being perceived as generous. And they will only be stopped when people see that redistributing wealth is not as good as helping the poor to make their own way in the world – to earn their own success, independent of the state's social programs.

We need to realize that the secular left elites are not wise, and they are not good. They do not have a plan to do good, they do what makes them feel good. They are not helping the poor, they are helping themselves. Undermining religion and morality while favoring dependence on government does not help the poor.

Do mainstream journalists understand the controversy over human origins?

August 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When it comes to evolution, liberal *and* conservative commentators often have *no idea* what the controversy is actually about.

James Klinghoffer explains in this post on Evolution News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Among hot-button controversies of the day, Darwinian evolution may be unique in being a question on which people express forceful opinions all the time, at high levels of the media and politics, all under a protocol where it's the norm to have not even a basic idea what you're talking about.
>
> So *Wall Street Journal* online columnist James Taranto tries to take to task author Jacob Weisberg for Weisberg's column on Slate that includes this derisive reference to Republicans in Congress:
>
> > Some of the congressional Republicans who are preventing action to help the economy are simply intellectual primitives who reject modern economics on the same basis that they reject Darwin and climate science.
>
> Weisberg has demonstrated ignorant prejudice in the past. He has written elsewherethat intelligent design is the assertion "that gaps in evolutionary science prove God must have had a role in creation." But Taranto, a conservative, seems to understand even less than Weisberg.
>
> He nicely offers that Weisberg could be more polite in casting insults:
>
> > Darwin is a red herring here. Although disparaging people for holding harmless religious beliefs as "intellectual primitives" is awfully uncivil, we agree with Weisberg that people who "reject" the theory of natural selection are mistaken.
>
> I've never met a single person, nor heard of one, who "rejects" natural selection. This is not a matter of science but of sociology: They do not exist.
>
> If anyone *did* reject natural selection, they would be not only "mistaken" but probably delusional. In reality, the evolution debate turns, in part, on the question of how much of life's history can be explained in the neo-Darwinian terms of natural selection operating unguided on chance genetic variation. Darwin skeptics argue, not on the basis of "religious beliefs" whether harmless or otherwise, that the development of complex life may be explained in this Darwinian fashion only up to a point.

Read the rest.

If you are reading an article about intelligent design and evolution, and it is devoid of references to specified complexity, probability bounds and protein sequences, then stop reading that article. If the article contains any mention of God or the Bible, then it is also a useless article, because the controversy is about what the scientific evidence shows – not about religion.

Intelligent design is a scientific theory. Opposition to evolution is based solely on scientific concerns. There should be no talk of “beliefs” in articles about evolution and ID. There should only the experimental results showing what natural causes can and cannot do to produce certain effects in nature, like functional proteins. Either we have the means to create these effects using natural mechanisms, or we require intelligent causes to explain them (as in other sciences, like archaeology). That is the issue. Unfortunately, most journalists don’t know that, because they are not reading any science books written in the last 20 years.

To understand intelligent design, read this FAQ. Then read “Signature in the Cell” by Stephen C. Meyer.

What does the mainstream media think about religion and morality?

August 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Newsbusters analyzed how the mainstream media covered Rick Perry's day of prayer.

Excerpt:

> On both Good Morning America and World News, two different ABC correspondents filed separate reports recounting that some Christians oppose Texas Governor Rick Perry's prayer rally from the weekend, but, in both reports, clips of left-wing figures like the Reverend Barry Lynn of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, and Drew Courtney of People for the American Way were shown, instead of showing any more mainstream Christians as examples of dissent.
>
> And at one point on World News, ABC's Aaron Katersky asserted that the American Family Association opposes "women's rights," presumably referring to "abortion rights," as he noted:
>
> The sponsor of Perry's rally, the American Family Association, opposes homosexuality, women's rights and religious diversity.

The ABC journalists quote "mainstream" Christians from radical secular leftist groups like Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, and People for the American Way. This would be like quoting Josef Stalin as a "mainstream capitalist" and Nancy Pelosi as a "mainstream conservative". But that's what you get from the media – pure propaganda meant to marginalize those who they disagree with as mean-spirited and extreme.

We need to be more careful about the worldview of the secular left, and be mindful about what is causing them to write their propaganda.

Many on the secular left think that unborn children deserve the same protection under the law as cockroaches have (abortion). Many of them think that children should be raised without a mother or without a father (same-sex marriage). Many of them think that religious liberty should be curtailed because some people are offended by moral rules that prohibit things like polygamy. Many of them think that children who are raised by Christians should be seized by the government and placed into public schools. Many of them think that no-fault divorce and single motherhood by choice is just fine for children and doesn't hurt them at all. And so on.

It's important to realize where the secular left is coming from. They are not going to come out and say what they believe about abortion, marriage, religious liberty, etc. They are just going to nit-pick on Christians for being "mean" and "judgmental". They marginalize conservative values and theological views by focusing on the feelings of "victims" who are offended. Instead of arguing against God's existence on scientific grounds, they'll

portray reckless, sinful people as being “victims” because they are made to feel bad by those nasty Christians for behaving selfishly and hurting others. They’ll never explain what they really hate about Christians – moral prohibitions on sin and moral accountability after death.

People on the secular left just don’t like being told that anything they do is wrong, and that God will hold them accountable for their selfishness. It’s important to understand the “isms” that animate the secular left: postmodernism, moral relativism, universalism. That’s what is driving these “Christians are mean and judgmental for thinking that God is real and for holding to objective moral standards” stories. They don’t want to feel bad for sinning, so they undermine the credibility of the one group that actually believes in right and wrong: evangelical Christians.

The facts about media bias

Here’s a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS’ “Evening News,” The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News’ “Special Report With Brit Hume” and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the “NewsHour With Jim Lehrer.” CNN’s “NewsNight With Aaron Brown” and ABC’s “Good Morning America” were a close second and third.
>
> “Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill,” Groseclose said. “If these newscasters weren’t centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators.”
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was “Special Report With Brit Hume” on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC’s “World News Tonight” and NBC’s “Nightly News” to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> “If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox’s ‘Special Report’ as ABC’s ‘World News’ and NBC’s ‘Nightly News,’ then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news,” said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia.”

Here’s a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

And here's a bit from that same article about The New Yorker:

> The last bulwark against bias's slipping into The New Yorker is the copy department, whose chief editor, Ann Goldstein, gave $500 in October to MoveOn.org, which campaigns for Democrats and against President Bush. "That's just me as a private citizen," she said. As for whether donations are allowed, Goldstein said she hadn't considered it. "I've never thought of myself as working for a news organization."

Those are the facts.

So what?

Now consider this column from Brent Bozell, which explains the difference media bias makes to political intelligence.

Excerpt:

> The Republican presidential contest is picking up steam. Obama is consistently polling under 50 percent. This one's a toss-up, and in the thick of it is the Fox News Channel. It's not just their role in hosting and vetting the candidates. It's their role as the chief villain in the eyes of liberal Democrats struggling to push their version of the "truth" about Obama.
>
> Jon Stewart rhetorically asked Chris Wallace about Fox on "Fox News Sunday, because he thought he knew the answer: "Who are the most consistently misinformed media viewers? The most consistently misinformed? Fox, Fox viewers, consistently, every poll."
>
> In the real world – outside Stewart's smug bubble – this is garbage. A 2008 survey by the Pew Research Center asked media consumers three questions: which party was in control of Congress (Democrats), who was the secretary of

> state (Condi Rice) and who was the prime minister of Britain (Gordon Brown).
>
> Let's document how the viewers of "Hannity &Colmes" were better informed than Stewart's "Daily Show" gigglers on basic political facts. Hannity viewers beat Stewart's on the Democratic majority (84 percent to 65 percent correct answers), Condi Rice (a dramatic 73 percent to 48 percent gap) and Gordon Brown (49 percent to 36). Overall, as a percentage getting all three questions right, Hannity won 42-30.

Just keep that in mind when you are watching the mainstream media news shows. A very good site to bookmark and read is Newsbusters, which documents mainstream media bias daily. I even have an RSS feed of their latest stories on the front page on this blog.

UPDATE: New York Times cites abortion advocates as neutral sources.

Law professor uses same-sex marriage law to argue for legalizing polygamy

August 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Los Angeles Times.

Excerpt:

> Jonathan Turley is probably not the most popular man right now with supporters of same-sex marriage. The George Washington University law professor has filed a suit challenging the constitutionality of Utah's anti-polygamy laws — and his argument is based on a landmark 2003 Supreme Court gay rights decision. That's not good news in the view of most gay rights supporters, who don't want their cause linked to that of polygamists any more than they want to see parallels drawn with people who engage in incest, bestiality and other taboo sexual practices.
>
> The Utah case involves Kody Brown, his legal wife, Meri Brown, and three other "sister wives." It's not actually about marriage, and it doesn't challenge the right of the state to refuse to issue wedding licenses to polygamous families. The Browns are in court because they fear they will be prosecuted.
>
> The 2003 gay rights case, Lawrence vs. Texas, was also a criminal matter unrelated to same-sex marriage. The court overturned the conviction of two men found to have violated a state law against same-sex sodomy. But in reaching that conclusion, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy offered a paean to intimate relationships defined by sexuality that easily can be transferred to the context of same-sex marriage, and potentially to polygamous marriages as well:
>
> "The case does involve two adults who, with full and mutual consent from each other, engaged in sexual practices common to a homosexual lifestyle. The petitioners are entitled to respect for their private lives. The state cannot demean their existence or control their destiny by making their private sexual conduct a crime. Their right to liberty under the [Constitution's] due process clause gives them the full right to engage in their conduct without intervention of the government."
>
> Kennedy emphasized in Lawrence that same-sex marriage wasn't before the court. Similarly, in an interview with the New York Times, Turley suggested that decriminalizing polygamy will not inevitably lead to a movement for polygamous marriage.

This is what happens every time with liberal social policies like no-fault divorce, etc. First, offended victims of the mean, judgmental Christians are trotted out and sobbed over. Second, we are assured that de-criminalizing behaviors that the mean, judgmental Christians oppose will not hurt anyone. Third, Christians themselves abandon morality

and support decriminalizing the behaviors because they they are more concerned about the sob stories of the “victims” than assessing the consequences of policy/law changes. Fourth, the predictable consequences of normalizing the behaviors are labeled as “unexpected” and require higher taxes and social programs to “fix”. It all starts with people who just don’t want to be told “no” – they just don’t like moral boundaries. And they don’t care who is harmed.

Should Christians be prudent and responsible when planning their lives?

August 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a great article from Relevant Magazine that talks about the realities of the Christian life.

Excerpt:

> "What are you doing this summer after classes?" a college student asks his friend late in the spring semester.
>
> "Well, I'm working with an electrician."
>
> "Oh, OK."
>
> "What about you? What are your summer plans?"
>
> "I'm actually gonna be living in an orphanage in Africa, loving on those kids and doing some community development stuff."
>
> "Oh …"
>
> In conversations like this, it is likely that the 20-year-old working with the electrician will feel spiritually inferior to the 20-year-old who has plane tickets in hand for Kenya. There is also the tendency for the guy with the ticket to feel as though he is a bit more sincere in his devotion to Jesus.
>
> Believe me, I do not wish to discourage young people from boarding flights to Africa. But I also do not wish to disparage electrical work as spiritually insignificant.
>
> Scripture calls us into radical service—but that does not allow others to eviscerate tedious, less "spiritually" glamorous tasks of their meaning in God's Kingdom. Scripture also calls us to embrace the mundane and ordinary as holy and beautiful: "… aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands" (1 Thessalonians 4:11).
>
> **Many of us want to do something awesome, something epic. We tend to think that the more normal, the less "spiritual." So it is quite possible that our aspirations to be radical stem from dangerous ambitions to perform biography-worthy feats of global glory.**
>
> **But radical discipleship is not adventure tourism.**
>
> **Following Jesus is not to be romanticized through impressive Facebook status updates or photos of exotic places on our blog. Discipleship is often ugly, messy and painful. Faithful service will regularly lead us into dull labors and bewildering struggles that would make unexciting press. To romanticize social justice or cross-cultural evangelism is to promote an idealism that will be inevitably vaporized on the field, inadvertently**

> **leading to burnout and cynicism.**

This reminds me of a must-read post I wrote about former fundamentalist Christian Dan Barker. He also acted imprudently with financial issues, compromised all of his beliefs in order to appeal to a wider base of donors, and ended by rejecting Christianity completely because being nice paid more than being faithful to the exclusive truth claims and moral rules of orthodox Christianity. You can actually destroy your own faith by being a lousy steward of your finances. Uninformed, lazy Christians with emotion-fueled expectations of bliss don't stay Christians for very long. The less you know about apologetics, the more you start to care about pleasing people and making them feel good, so that they like you. It's a short jump from fideism to apostasy.

You may also be interested in this post that I wrote about the futility and narcissism of certain wasteful short-term mission trips that are undertaken in order to have emotional experiences and cheap peer approval. There are plenty of people *in your workplace or neighborhood* who need love and evangelism and apologetics just as much as people in warm, sunny vacation spots. (Note: some short-term mission trips are worthwhile, *for Christians who are qualified and who make longer-term commitments to form relationships*). It's much better to toil anonymously and in secret, and to have God see what you are doing in secret. It's better to help others without anyone knowing that you are the one helping.

Is Obama smart? How can we measure his intelligence?

August 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a very interesting assessment of Barack Obama's intelligence from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Melissa)

Excerpt:

> When it comes to piloting, Barack Obama seems to think he's the political equivalent of Charles Lindbergh, Chuck Yeager and—in a "Fly Me to the Moon" sort of way—Nat King Cole rolled into one. "I think I'm a better speech writer than my speech writers," he reportedly told an aide in 2008. "I know more about policies on any particular issue than my policy directors. And I'll tell you right now that I'm . . . a better political director than my political director."
>
> On another occasion—at the 2004 Democratic convention—Mr. Obama explained to a Chicago Tribune reporter that "I'm LeBron, baby. I can play at this level. I got game."
>
> […]Then there is Mr. Obama as political tactician. He makes predictions that prove false. He makes promises he cannot honor. He raises expectations he cannot meet. He reneges on commitments made in private. He surrenders positions staked in public. He is absent from issues in which he has a duty to be involved. He is overbearing when he ought to be absent. At the height of the financial panic of 1907, Teddy Roosevelt, who had done much to bring the panic about by inveighing against big business, at least had the good sense to stick to his bear hunt and let J.P. Morgan sort things out. Not so this president, who puts a new twist on an old put-down: Every time he opens his mouth, he subtracts from the sum total of financial capital.
>
> Then there's his habit of never trimming his sails, much less tacking to the prevailing wind. When Bill Clinton got hammered on health care, he reverted to centrist course and passed welfare reform. When it looked like the Iraq war was going to be lost, George Bush fired Don Rumsfeld and ordered the surge.
>
> Mr. Obama, by contrast, appears to consider himself immune from error. Perhaps this explains why he has now doubled down on Heckuva Job Geithner. It also explains his insulting and politically inept habit of suggesting—whether the issue is health care, or Arab-Israeli peace, or change we can believe in at some point in God's good time—that the fault always lies in the failure of his audiences to listen attentively. It doesn't. In politics, a failure of communication is always the fault of the communicator.
>
> Much of the media has spent the past decade obsessing about the malapropisms of George W. Bush, the ignorance of Sarah Palin, and perhaps soon the stupidity

> of Rick Perry. Nothing is so typical of middling minds than to harp on the intellectual deficiencies of the slightly less smart and considerably more successful.

Obviously, you can't really measure a person's intelligence using their statements about their own intelligence in speeches read from a teleprompter. And it's hard to assess the intelligence of someone who refuses to release any of his university transcripts. The WSJ article is right to imply that a more important way to measure intelligence is by measuring success. And we certainly are capable of looking at raw numbers to measure Obama's success – like the unemployment rate:

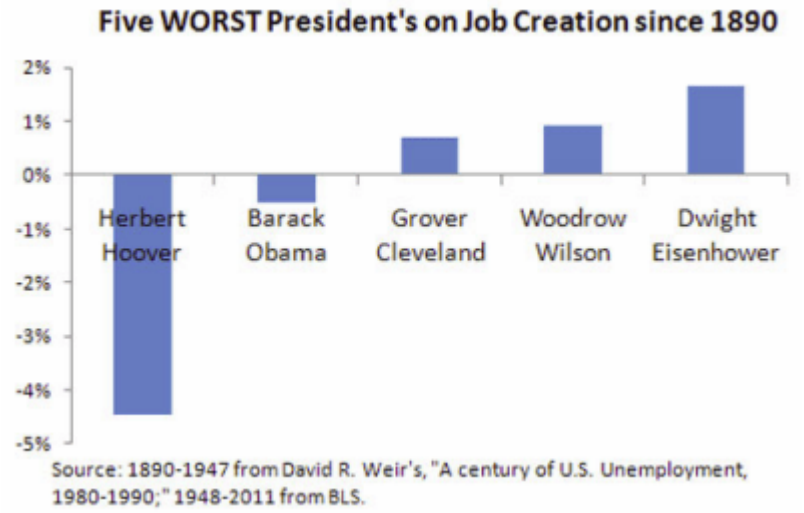

The Five Worst Job Creation Presidents

And the budget deficit:

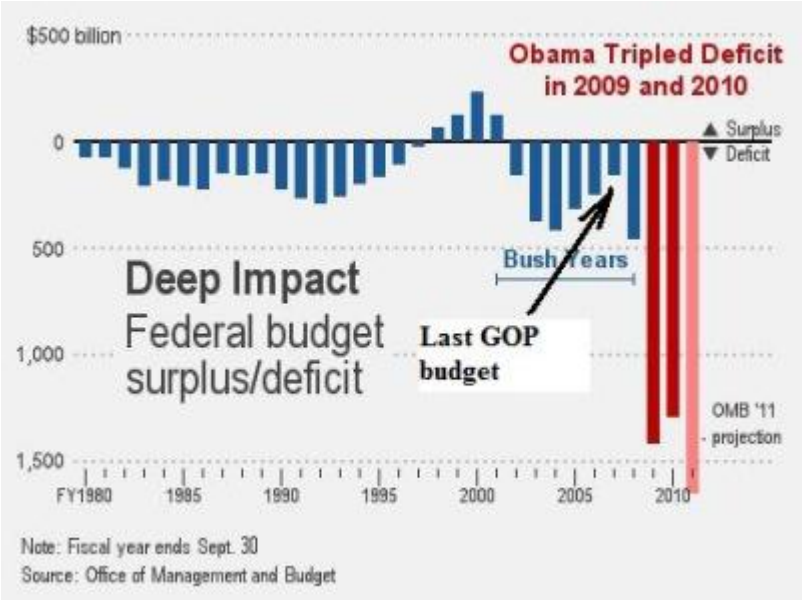

Obama Budget Deficit 2011

It's pretty easy to assess someone's intelligence from those two numbers alone. Obviously, none of these numbers are going to matter to people who get their news by watching Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert. Obama is the Comedy Channel president. If provoking laughter is your standard for measuring intelligence, then Obama is very smart indeed.

What are Obama's smart policies?

Who voted for Obama?

I notice that some people in the mainstream media have begun to pick on Texas Governor Rick Perry. It turns out that Perry is also a dastardly Darwin-doubter. (H/T Mary) For the mainstream media, if you believe in traditional Christian views on theology and morality and free market capitalism, it doesn't matter that you created more jobs than all the other states combined. You're still "stupid" because you value prayer and doubt materialist explanations of the origins of life.

But the mainstream media thinks that secular leftists are smart regardless of practical measures like job creation. If you are a secular leftist, and you support abortion and same-sex marriage, and you spend 864 billion taxpayer dollars on things like building underground turtle tunnels, and you actually *raise* the unemployment rate instead of lowering it, then you are are "smart". Understand?

So who is smart?

Thomas Sowell is smart in the traditional sense of understanding how things work in the real world.

Thomas Sowell is smart: he understands economics

If you want to understand the realities of economic policy, why not pick up some books by an actual economist?

Here are some of his books that I recommend:

- Basic Economics, 4th edition
- Applied Economics, 2nd edition
- Intellectuals and Society
- Economic Facts and Fallacies, 2nd Edition
- A Conflict of Visions, 2nd Edition
- The Housing Boom and Bust, 2nd edition
- Inside American Education

Disclaimer: I have only read the first editions of Applied Economics, Economic Facts and Fallacies, A Conflict of Visions, and The Housing Boom and Bust. And I've only read the second edition of Basic Economics.

I have male and female friends who go through multiple Thomas Sowell books per month. It's impossible to read just one. The first Thomas Sowell book you should read is Intellectuals and Society. That one is an introduction to his thought over a wide range of topics.

Why are youth rioting in the UK's socialist welfare state?

August 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If the UK is so secular and socialist, then why are young people rioting? Don't young people like secularism and socialism? I thought that the enlightened Labour Party would have fixed all the problems of society with their progressive fiscal and social policies over the last decade.

This National Post article explains what the rioting youth said of their exploits.

Excerpt:

> It is the joy on display that is so unsettling.
>
> People who are protesting are by nature angry, or at least solemn. They have upraised fists and homemade signs.
>
> But young Britons haven't even bothered to come up with a slogan or a decent chant. They are blissfully happy as they destroy other people's property. They are without guilt.
>
> It can be seen in the images of giddy youths hauling flat-screen televisions out of plundered shops. It can be read in the reports where, as one witness described, a young woman looted so many sweaters from a high-end London store she tottered under their weight.
>
> And it can be heard, starkly, in the conversation between a BBC Radio reporter and two women in Croydon who were, at 9: 30 a.m. Tuesday, drinking from a bottle of stolen rosé and talking about their night of adventure.
>
> "Everyone was chucking things, chucking bottles, breaking into stuff," one said.
>
> "It was good, though; it was madness," her friend chimed in, giggling about the craziness of it all. The first girl agreed, it was "good fun."
>
> The reporter asked if they had been drinking all night. "Free alcohol," one said. Then she caught herself. "It's the government's fault, though. The Conservatives. It's not even a riot. It's showing the police we can do what we want."
>
> The reporter gamely tried to crack through the cognitive dissonance she was hearing. These are local people whose shops are being torched, she said. "Why are you targeting your own people?"
>
> "It's the rich people," came the explanation. "It's the people who have all got businesses. That's why all this is happening, because of the rich people."
>
> Tell that to the kid, captured on video, who was sitting on the ground with a bleeding nose when someone came to his aid. He was helped up, then had his backpack emptied.
>
> Tell that to the shop owners whose only asset was their inventory and who have

> lost it all to self-centred, marauding thugs. If only they had known they were "rich," they might have taken time to enjoy their vast wealth. Instead of, you know, working.
>
> […]They have convinced themselves someone else is to blame, even if they identify a different culprit in consecutive breaths, and therefore they are off to pillage, loot and burn. If homes are lost to the fires? Blame the rich. Or the police. They started it all, you see.

Does that view sound familiar? Why yes – it's the view of mainstream Democrats, including Obama and his allies in the news media.

And here's an article that Mary and Dina sent to me explaining where these amoral children came from.

Excerpt:

> An underclass has existed throughout history, which once endured appalling privation. Its spasmodic outbreaks of violence, especially in the early 19th century, frightened the ruling classes.
>
> Its frustrations and passions were kept at bay by force and draconian legal sanctions, foremost among them capital punishment and transportation to the colonies.
>
> Today, those at the bottom of society behave no better than their forebears, but the welfare state has relieved them from hunger and real want.
>
> When social surveys speak of "deprivation" and "poverty", this is entirely relative. Meanwhile, sanctions for wrongdoing have largely vanished.
>
> […]But it will not do for a moment to claim the rioters' behaviour reflects deprived circumstances or police persecution.
>
> Of course it is true that few have jobs, learn anything useful at school, live in decent homes, eat meals at regular hours or feel loyalty to anything beyond their local gang.
>
> This is not, however, because they are victims of mistreatment or neglect.
>
> It is because it is fantastically hard to help such people, young or old, without imposing a measure of compulsion which modern society finds unacceptable. These kids are what they are because nobody makes them be anything different or better.
>
> A key factor in delinquency is lack of effective sanctions to deter it. From an early stage, feral children discover that they can bully fellow pupils at school, shout abuse at people in the streets, urinate outside pubs, hurl litter from car windows, play car radios at deafening volumes, and, indeed, commit casual assaults with only a negligible prospect of facing rebuke, far less retribution.
>
> Anyone who reproaches a child, far less an adult, for discarding rubbish, making a racket, committing vandalism or driving unsociably will receive in return a

torrent of obscenities, if not violence.

So who is to blame? The breakdown of families, the pernicious promotion of single motherhood as a desirable state, the decline of domestic life so that even shared meals are a rarity, have all contributed importantly to the condition of the young underclass.

The social engineering industry unites to claim that the conventional template of family life is no longer valid.

[…]**This has ultimately been sanctioned by Parliament, which refuses to accept, for instance, that children are more likely to prosper with two parents than with one, and that the dependency culture is a tragedy for those who receive something for nothing.**

The judiciary colludes with social services and infinitely ingenious lawyers to assert the primacy of the rights of the criminal and aggressor over those of law-abiding citizens, especially if a young offender is involved.

The police, in recent years, have developed a reputation for ignoring yobbery and bullying, or even for taking the yobs' side against complainants.

"The problem," said Bill Pitt, the former head of Manchester's Nuisance Strategy Unit, "is that the law appears to be there to protect the rights of the perpetrator, and does not support the victim."

Police regularly arrest householders who are deemed to have taken "disproportionate" action to protect themselves and their property from burglars or intruders. The message goes out that criminals have little to fear from "the feds".

Figures published earlier this month show that a majority of "lesser" crimes – which include burglary and car theft, and which cause acute distress to their victims – are never investigated, because forces think it so unlikely they will catch the perpetrators.

[…]**A teacher, Francis Gilbert, wrote five years ago in his book Yob Nation: "The public feels it no longer has the right to interfere."**

Discussing the difficulties of imposing sanctions for misbehaviour or idleness at school, he described the case of a girl pupil he scolded for missing all her homework deadlines.

The youngster's mother, a social worker, telephoned him and said: "Threatening to throw my daughter off the A-level course because she hasn't done some work is tantamount to psychological abuse, and there is legislation which prevents these sorts of threats.

"I believe you are trying to harm my child's mental well-being, and may well take steps… if you are not careful."

That story rings horribly true. It reflects a society in which teachers have been deprived of their traditional right to arbitrate pupils'

> **behaviour. Denied power, most find it hard to sustain respect, never mind control.**

I think that last example explains the root of the problem.

Here's the chain of causation. First, people get annoyed with the talk of moral values and moral duties that comes from religious people. They don't want anyone telling them to set boundaries on their pursuit of pleasure.

Agnostic evolutionist Aldous Huxley explains:

> I had motive for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently I assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way that they find most advantageous to themselves … For myself, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political.

The secular left government is only too happy to push this philosophy of meaninglessness in the public schools. It makes the secular left elites feel good when they undermine the moral standard that religious people use when making judgments. Judgments are bad because they make bad people feel bad about behaving badly. Judgments have to go. And if religion is the ground for moral judgments, then religion has to go. And the public schools can be used to make sure that it does go.

This new view of morality is called "moral relativism", and it is the official view of the secular left. Basically, if there is no designer of the universe, then there is no way we ought to be. If there is no way we ought to be, then no one has a right to tell anyone how they ought to be. This is the view that the Labour Party enshrined into law, using all the power of the public schools and the state-run media. The position of the secular left is that making people feel bad by judging them is the only real evil left in the world. Just let people do whatever they want, they say – we can always tax the rich and the corporations more to make everyone come out equal in the end.

You may have noticed that my post about Theodore Dalrymple's book "Life at the Bottom" is back in the top 10 popular posts today. Check out the post – it has links to all the chapters of a free book that explains exactly what the rioters believe, and why. The thesis of the book is that the secular left elites deliberately cause the poor to avoid taking responsibility for their actions, and to prevent anyone from holding them accountable for their own choices. It's a must-read.

Mandatory sex education for 11-year olds and up in New York city

August 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News. (H/T Wes)

Excerpt:

> Students in New York City will be required to take sex education classes that include lessons on how to use a condom – a curriculum that the head of the school system said is long overdue.
>
> It's the first time in nearly two decades that middle and high school students will be forced to take the mandatory classes, according to a report first published in The New York Times.
>
> One of the lessons includes instruction on how to properly use a condom.
>
> "We must be committed to ensuring that both middle school and high school students are exposed to this valuable information so they can learn to keep themselves safe before, and when, they decide to have sex," NYC Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott wrote in a letter to principals and obtained by Fox News Radio.
>
> Children as young as 11 years old will take part in discussions on a variety of topics ranging from the risks of unprotected sex to the appropriate age for sexual activity, the newspaper reported.
>
> "I believe the school system has an important role to play with regard to educating our children about sex and the potential consequences of engaging in risky behavior," he said. But there are concerns about the mandatory classes among New York City's religious community.
>
> […]Until now, sex education classes had been left to the discretion of local principals, but Family Research Council senior fellow Peter Sprigg said now the city is trying to "impose a mandatory, top-down curriculum."
>
> "I think there's a lot of virtue in allowing the local principals to make decisions based on the needs of their students," Sprigg told Fox News Radio, noting that parents would have a lot of concern about the "explicit nature" of the lessons.

It's a shame that taxpayers have to pay for a failing system that sexualizes children. If you want to opt out, you have to come up with the money for homeschooling or private schools. How is that fair?

Is belief in God's existence something that you just accept on faith?

August 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Actually, you can find evidence for the existence of a Creator in peer-reviewed science journals.

Consider this peer-reviewed article. It appears in a scientific journal focused on astrophysics.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole article is posted online here.

Here's an excerpt in which Craig explains the Big Bang cosmology:

> The monumental significance of the Friedman-Lemaitre model lay in its historization of the universe. As one commentator has remarked, up to this time the idea of the expansion of the universe "was absolutely beyond comprehension. Throughout all of human history the universe was regarded as fixed and immutable and the idea that it might actually be changing was inconceivable."{8} But if the Friedman-Lemaitre model were correct, the universe could no longer be adequately treated as a static entity existing, in effect, timelessly. Rather the universe has a history, and time will not be matter of indifference for our investigation of the cosmos. In 1929 Edwin Hubble's measurements of the red-shift in the optical spectra of light from distant galaxies,{9} which was taken to indicate a universal recessional motion of the

light sources in the line of sight, provided a dramatic verification of the Friedman-Lemaitre model. Incredibly, what Hubble had discovered was the isotropic expansion of the universe predicted by Friedman and Lemaitre. It marked a veritable turning point in the history of science. “Of all the great predictions that science has ever made over the centuries,” exclaims John Wheeler, “was there ever one greater than this, to predict, and predict correctly, and predict against all expectation a phenomenon so fantastic as the expansion of the universe?”{10}

As a GTR-based theory, the Friedman-Lemaitre model does not describe the expansion of the material content of the universe into a pre-existing, empty, Newtonian space, but rather the expansion of space itself. This has the astonishing implication that as one reverses the expansion and extrapolates back in time, space-time curvature becomes progressively greater until one finally arrives at a singular state at which space-time curvature becomes infinite. This state therefore constitutes an edge or boundary to space-time itself. P. C. W. Davies comments,

> An initial cosmological singularity . . . forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity. . . . On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.{11}

The popular expression “Big Bang,” originally a derisive term coined by Fred Hoyle to characterize the beginning of the universe predicted by the Friedman-Lemaitre model, is thus potentially misleading, since the expansion cannot be visualized from the outside (there being no “outside,” just as there is no “before” with respect to the Big Bang).{12}

The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, “At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*“{13}

[…]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Now such a conclusion is profoundly disturbing for anyone who ponders it. For the question cannot be suppressed: *Why does the universe exist rather than nothing?* In light of the universe’s origin *ex nihilo*, one can no longer dismiss this question with a shrug and a slogan, “The universe is just there and that’s all.” For

> the universe is not "just there;" rather it *came into being*. The beginning of the universe discloses that the universe is not, as Hume thought, a necessarily existing being but is contingent in its existence. Philosophers analyzing the concept of necessary existence agree that the essential properties of any necessarily existing entity include its being eternal, uncaused, incorruptible, and indestructible{14}–for otherwise it would be capable of non-existence, which is self-contradictory. Thus, if the universe began to exist, its lacks at least one of the essential properties of necessary existence-eternality. Therefore, the reason for its existence cannot be immanent, but must in some mysterious way be ultra-mundane, or transcendent. Otherwise, one must say that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of absolutely nothing, which seems absurd. Sir Arthur Eddington, contemplating the beginning of the universe, opined that the expansion of the universe was so preposterous and incredible that "I feel almost an indignation that anyone should believe in it–except myself."{15} He finally felt forced to conclude, "The beginning seems to present insuperable difficulties unless we agree to look on it as frankly supernatural."{16}
>
> I find that most scientists do not reflect philosophically upon the metaphysical implications of their theories. But, in the words of one astrophysical team, "The problem of the origin [of the universe] involves a certain metaphysical aspect which may be either appealing or revolting."{17}

Every theist should able to understand and defend this argument. It is a scientific refutation of materialism, and it is supported by six lines of scientific evidence – all of which emerged as science has progressed.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies
3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

Several naturalistic/materialistic cosmologies are refuted in Craig's peer-reviewed paper, including the steady-state model, oscillating model, the vacuum fluctuation model, the chaotic inflationary model, and the quantum gravity model. These naturalistic (no God) alternatives all have theoretical or observational difficulties. Atheism is at odds with modern cosmology – and the progress of science itself.

This is the kind of evidence I expect all my readers to be using when discussing whether God exists. Scientific evidence. Please do not talk about your testimony, or the Bible, or what your pastor said on Sunday. We need to show that we understand science, because science is a reliable and respected way of getting knowledge about the universe. Science

(experimental, testable, repeatable science) should set limits on what we can believe. Leave the wishing and hoping and praying and dreaming to the atheists.

You should definitely print this article out and read it, then send it to your atheistic friends. I have tried this out on atheists, and the response I get is that scientific discoveries will soon emerge that falsifies all of these six scientific discoveries, and the kalam cosmological argument, and will prove that the universe is eternal. When I ask them for reasons to believe that these discoveries will be forthcoming, they appeal to science fiction novels, television shows and movies. *I will take a peer-reviewed research paper over Star Trek any day of the week.*

Atheism hates science

- Physicist Frank Tipler weighs in on Stephen Hawking's theory
- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Stephen Meyer debating Michael Shermer on the origin of life
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens' case against God

Theism loves science

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

Can citizens rely on politically correct police to enforce the law?

August 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This Wall Street Journal article provides more insight into why the unionized police did nothing during the UK riots.

Excerpt:

> The night before, at approximately 9:30 p.m., between 30 and 40 teenagers broke into the shop and left with all its liquor, cigarettes and cash. Mr. Raif, his brother and a handful of customers were inside at the time.
>
> "I saw them coming and started to lock the doors, but they kicked through the glass and forced the doors open. All the customers ran to the back and my brother called the police," he recalls.
>
> […]Once inside, the looters snatched six-packs of Supermalt from the shelves nearest the entrance and hurled them at the cigarette and alcohol cases behind the register. They appeared to be 16 or younger and sober to Mr. Raif. He doesn't know if they were kids from the neighborhood, but despite their hoods and balaclavas he could tell "from their hands" that his looters were mostly white.
>
> "They were very shameful. It was a horrible experience."
>
> The police never did appear, although they followed up nine hours later with a phone call. "Everything we pay here—taxes, rates, rents—it's all so expensive. And we can't even get the police when there are people robbing our shop."
>
> […]"I've been here 12 years," says the Pakistan native. "I've never seen anything like it."
>
> So what's the problem? Welfare cuts, racist police, the "rich"?
>
> "Please," he laughs. "We're all poor.
>
> "Look, my point of view is this: It started in Tottenham, on Saturday, when a man got shot by the police. People protested, and then some people went and burned down a police car. And the police did nothing. They burned down more police cars, they burned down a bus, they burned down a building—and the police did nothing. They needed to respond. Instead the police retreated in Tottenham. So this, whatever you call it, it started as something against the police. The police did not show the strength to push back, and it spread. And that is why I'm out here now like a security guard."
>
> As we speak, "it" is spreading to Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, Wolverhampton. Elsewhere in London, locals have formed vigilante groups and are patrolling their own streets.
>
> Home Secretary Theresa May earlier on Tuesday had defended the government's

> use-of-force policies, declaring that "the way we police in Britain is not through use of water cannon. The way we police in Britain is through consent of communities."

Perhaps if the police had been privatized, and had to please customers in order to *get paid*, then this would not have happened. But the market forces of choice and competition are *nowhere* to be found when government has a monopoly on some service. Taxes are deducted automatically, and you get the service they provide. They have no incentive to risk their necks for you – they get paid regardless. If they want a raise, then they go on strike.

Now where do you suppose that this disdain for the use of force against lawlessness came from? Could it be from the secular left, that is so uncomfortable with the ideas of moral standards, moral duties and moral accountability? They have been in power in the UK for over a decade. You may also recall that they have passed many measures opposing private property, self-defense, legal firearm ownership – and weakened prosecution and incarceration of convicted criminals. Bleeding heart liberals just hate the idea that criminals might be shot while committing crimes against law abiding citizens – they don't want criminals to be frightened by gun-wielding property owners. That's why they banned hand guns in 1997, leading to a doubling of the violent crime rate in the next four years.

This story reminds me of what happened in Canada a while back, when the police refused to do anything about vandalism committed by the native Canadians. It's not politically correct to enforce laws against groups who vote for secular leftists, didn't you know?

Ron Paul in Iowa debate: Iran should be allowed to develop nuclear bomb

August 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The best clip from the Thursday night Republican primary debate.

From NewsMax.

Excerpt:

> Iran should be allowed to have a nuclear bomb, Republican candidate Ron Paul suggested during Thursday's presidential debate.
>
> The maverick Texas Congressman also said it was time to stop the half-century old embargo on Cuba and all troops should be brought home.
>
> His comments brought scorn from rival candidates. Michele Bachmann said she would do everything in her power to prevent Iran becoming nuclear.
>
> Rick Santorum said "Iran is not Iceland, Ron. "It's been at war with us since 1979.
>
> "Anyone who suggests Iran is not a threat to this country is not seeing the world very clearly."
>
> Paul said it is natural for Iran to want a bomb as it is surrounded by countries such as India, Pakistan and Israel which all have one and with China, the United States and Russia all involved in the region. He said the U.S. should not get involved in the country's internal affairs.

Consider this recent article on Iran's weapons development, from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Tehran's navy deploys ships to the Atlantic capable of launching long-range missiles. This is not a joke. This is a dress rehearsal for the day an EMP attack ends our way of life.
>
> 'Is it possible for us to witness a world without America and Zionism?" Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad asked at "The World Without Zionism" Tehran conference in 2005. "But you had best know that this slogan and this goal are attainable, and surely can be achieved." He added that Iran had a "war preparation plan" for, as he put it, "the destruction of Anglo-Saxon civilization."
>
> Electromagnetic pulse, or EMP, is not a subject familiar to most Americans. But it's quite familiar to the Iranian military.
>
> It's been practicing for the day when an Iranian missile tipped with a nuclear warhead lifts off from a vessel parked in international waters off our shores, the warhead detonating high above the American heartland, sending electromagnetic waves rippling across the American landscape, frying every

> electronic circuit within range.
>
> In a July 18 statement, Rear Adm. Habibollah Sayyari said the Iranian navy plans on deploying warships in the Atlantic Ocean as part of a program to ply international waters.
>
> Two days later, another Iranian rear admiral, Seyed Mahmoud Mousavi, revealed for the first time that his navy has equipped a number of its logistic vessels and units with long-range missiles.
>
> The squadron will be equipped with the Nur missile, which is based on China's long-range Silkworm C-802 anti-ship cruise missile and has a 125-mile range and 365-pound warhead.
>
> It is not these ships and their missiles that threaten us, but what comes later as they use these forays to gain experience operating far from Iranian shores.
>
> A simple Scud missile, with a nuclear warhead, could be fired from an inconspicuous freighter in international waters off our coast and detonated high over the U.S.
>
> It would wreak devastation on America's technological, electrical and transportation infrastructure. Masked as a terrorist attack, Iran would have plausible deniability of any responsibility.
>
> Iran has practiced launching and detonating Scuds in midflight, launched from ships in the Caspian Sea. It's also tested high-altitude explosions of its Shahab-3 ballistic missile, a test consistent with an EMP attack.
>
> The warhead need not be of a staggeringly high yield — nor must the missile have an intercontinental range.
>
> "One nightmare scenario posed," according to Peter Vincent Pry, an expert on EMP who sits on a congressional panel looking into the threat of such a weapon, "was a ship-launched EMP attack against the U.S. by Iran, as this would eliminate the need for Iran to develop an ICBM to deliver a nuclear warhead against the U.S. and could be executed clandestinely, taking the U.S. by surprise."

Iran has previously called for Israel, our ally, to be "wiped off the map".

Excerpt:

> Leaders around the world on Thursday condemned a call by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that Israel be "wiped off the map," and a top Iranian official said that mass demonstrations in his country on Friday would rebuff the rising criticism from abroad.
>
> "I have never come across a situation of the president of a country saying they want to . . . wipe out another country," British Prime Minister Tony Blair said at a summit outside London of the 25 leaders of the European Union's member states.
>
> Blair said Ahmadinejad's comment was "completely and totally unacceptable."

> In a joint statement, the E.U. leaders “condemned in the strongest terms” the Iranian president’s call, saying it “will cause concern about Iran’s role in the region and its future intentions.” President Jacques Chirac of France told reporters that Ahmadinejad risked Iran “being left on the outside of other nations.”
>
> Russia’s foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, in Israel, called the Iranian president’s statement “unacceptable.”
>
> The statement was widely reported in the Arab world; leaders there reacted for the most part with silence. Most Arab countries have no diplomatic relations with Israel. But the Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erekat, said, according to the Associated Press: “We have recognized the state of Israel and we are pursuing a peace process with Israel, and . . . we do not accept the statements of the president of Iran. This is unacceptable.”
>
> U.S. and European leaders have grown increasingly worried about the bellicose attitude of Iran at a time when it is pursuing a nuclear program that they have said may be intended to produce a nuclear weapon.

Iran is also sharing weapons technology with North Korea.

Is Ron Paul right to want to let Iran have nuclear weapons and long-range missiles? Does he understand modern weapon systems? Is he aware of the threats that Achmadinejad has made to Israel and the United States? Is he aware of Iran’s military interference in Iraq? Does he understand how Iran influences Syria, which is now imitating Iran in shooting innocent people in the streets? Is he letting facts influence his ideology?

Harriet Harman is the person most responsible for the UK riots

August 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's see two articles about the riots by well-known authors Melanie Phillips and Theodore Dalrymple.

Here's Melanie Phillips in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> The causes of this sickness are many and complex. But three things can be said with certainty: every one of them is the fault of the liberal intelligentsia; every one of them was instituted or exacerbated by the Labour government; and at the very heart of these problems lies the breakdown of the family.
>
> For most of these children come from lone-mother households. And the single most crucial factor behind all this mayhem is the willed removal of the most important thing that socialises children and turns them from feral savages into civilised citizens: a father who is a fully committed member of the family unit.
>
> Of course there are many lone parents who do a tremendous job. But we're talking here about widespread social collapse. And there are whole areas of Britain, white as well as black, where committed fathers are a wholly unknown phenomenon.
>
> In such areas, successive generations are being brought up only by mothers, through whose houses pass transitory males by whom these women have yet more children — and who inevitably repeat the pattern of lone and dysfunctional parenting.
>
> The result is fatherless boys who are consumed by an existential rage and desperate emotional need, and who take out the damage done to them by lashing out from infancy at everyone around them. Such children inhabit what is effectively a different world from the rest of society. It's a world without any boundaries or rules. A world of emotional and physical chaos.
>
> A world where a child responds to the slightest setback or disagreement by resorting to violence. A world where the parent is unwilling or incapable of providing the loving and disciplined framework that a child needs in order to thrive.
>
> Yet instead of lone parenthood being regarded as a tragedy for individuals, and a catastrophe for society, it has been redefined as a 'right'.
>
> When Labour came to power in 1997, it set about systematically destroying not just the traditional family but the very idea that married parents were better for children than any other arrangement.
>
> Instead, it introduced the sexual free-for-all of 'lifestyle choice'; claimed that the

> idea of the male breadwinner was a sexist anachronism; and told girls that they could, and should, go it alone as mothers.
>
> This was the outcome of the shattering defeat of Tony Blair, in the two years or so after he came to power, at the hands of the ultra-feminists and apostles of non-judgmentalism in his Cabinet and party who were determined, above all, to destroy the traditional nuclear family.
>
> Blair stood virtually alone against them, and lost.
>
> One of these ultra-feminist wreckers was Harriet Harman. The other night, she was on TV preposterously suggesting that cuts in educational allowances or youth workers had something to do with young people torching and looting shops, robbing and leaving people for dead in the streets.
>
> But Harman was one of the principal forces in the Labour government behind the promotion of lone parenthood and the marginalisation of fathers. If anyone should be blamed for bringing about the conditions which have led to these appalling scenes in our cities, it is surely Ms Harman.
>
> And this breaking of the family was further condoned, rewarded and encouraged by the Welfare State, which conceives of need solely in terms of absence of money, and which accordingly subsidises lone parenthood and the destructive behaviour that fatherlessness brings in its train.
>
> Welfare dependency further created the entitlement culture that the looters so egregiously display. It taught them that the world owed them a living. It taught them that their actions had no consequences. And it taught them that the world revolved around themselves.

Read the rest.

And now, Theodore Dalrymple in the Australian. (H/T Ari from Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> THE riots in London and elsewhere in Britain are a backhanded tribute to the long-term intellectual torpor, moral cowardice, incompetence and careerist opportunism of the British political and intellectual class.
>
> They have somehow managed not to notice what has long been apparent to anyone who has taken a short walk with his eyes open down any frequented British street: that a considerable proportion of the country's young population (a proportion that is declining) is ugly, aggressive, vicious, badly educated, uncouth and criminally inclined.
>
> Unfortunately, while it is totally lacking in self-respect, it is full of self-esteem: that is to say, it believes itself entitled to a high standard of living, and other things, without any effort on its own part.
>
> Consider for a moment the following: although youth unemployment in Britain is very high, that is to say about 20 per cent of those aged under 25, the country

> has had to import young foreign labour for a long time, even for unskilled work in the service sector.
>
> The reasons for this seeming paradox are obvious to anyone who knows young Britons as I do.
>
> No sensible employer in a service industry would choose a young Briton if he could have a young Pole; the young Pole is not only likely to have a good work ethic and refined manners, he is likely to be able to add up and — most humiliating of all — to speak better English than the Briton, at least if by that we mean the standard variety of the language. He may not be more fluent but his English will be more correct and his accent easier to understand.
>
> This is not an exaggeration. After compulsory education (or perhaps I should say intermittent attendance at school) up to the age of 16 costing $80,000 a head, about one-quarter of British children cannot read with facility or do simple arithmetic. It makes you proud to be a British taxpayer.
>
> I think I can say with a fair degree of certainty, from my experience as a doctor in one of the areas in which a police station has just been burned down, that half of those rioting would reply to the question, "Can you do arithmetic?" by answering, "What is arithmetic?"
>
> British youth leads the Western world in almost all aspects of social pathology, from teenage pregnancy to drug taking, from drunkenness to violent criminality. There is no form of bad behaviour that our version of the welfare state has not sought out and subsidised.
>
> British children are much likelier to have a television in their bedroom than a father living at home. One-third of them never eat a meal at a table with another member of their household — family is not the word for the social arrangements of the people in the areas from which the rioters mainly come. They are therefore radically unsocialised and deeply egotistical, viewing relations with other human beings in the same way as Lenin: Who whom, who does what to whom. By the time they grow up, they are destined not only for unemployment but unemployability.
>
> For young women in much of Britain, dependence does not mean dependence on the government: that, for them, is independence. Dependence means any kind of reliance on the men who have impregnated them who, of course, regard their own subventions from the state as pocket money, to be supplemented by a little light trafficking.

Read the rest.

Harriet Harman and the UK Labour Party

The Labour Party of the UK is responsible for the destruction of marriage, and especially Harriet Harman.

Let's take a look at two articles about Harriet Harman and her opposition to marriage and

family.

Why does Harriet Harman hate marriage?

Excerpt:

> For decades, feminist zealots have told us that family structure is irrelevant, fathers are unnecessary for child-rearing and marriage is outdated.
>
> These views have had a disastrous influence, encouraging the state to preside over the breakdown in the traditional family. The results are everywhere – in crime, in benefits dependency, poverty and the rising costs to public services.
>
> Yet, amid all this wreckage, hardliners still cling to their dogma. And none is more hardline than the High Priestess of British Feminism, Harriet Harman.
>
> In an extraordinary interview published yesterday, she declared marriage was 'irrelevant' to public policy and described high rates of separation as a 'positive development', as it reflected 'greater choice' for couples – never mind the children.
>
> If nothing else, Harman can be credited with consistency. Neither the facts nor the passage of time have changed her mind. She was preaching this dangerous gospel of feminist fascism when she was first elected to Parliament in 1982.
>
> When I came to work for her as a parliamentary aide in the early Nineties, Harman was questioning whether fathers were necessary at all.

Marriage is irrelevant to public policy, says Harriet Harman

Excerpt:

> Harriet Harman, who has been accused of contributing to family breakdown by drawing up policies that benefited unmarried couples, claims in a new book that promoting marriage is not part of ministers' jobs, and they may as well just say they want everyone to be happy.

> She also says there is no ideal type of household in which to bring up children – despite research showing that having two parents is best – and that couples should not stay together if they feel their relationship has broken down.
>
> Miss Harman, who is married to Jack Dromey, the Labour Party treasurer, says the Government should "respect people's choices" about how to bring up their families.

> Her comments led to accusations that Labour was trying to destroy traditional family life in Britain, and in the process condemning children to lives of poverty in single-parent households.
>
> […]Miss Harman was behind moves to give more rights to unmarried couples who lived together, such as the ability to make divorce-style financial claims if they split up.

> […]Maria Miller, the shadow minister for families, said: “Labour seems reluctant to help families stay together: the benefits system provides an incentive for couples to live apart.”

Harriet Harman is not pro-marriage. Does her feminism drive her to oppose marriage?

Feminism and marriage: are they compatible?

Here’s a research paper written in 2003 from the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> Marriage is good for men, women, children–and society. Because of this simple fact, President George W. Bush has proposed a new pilot program to promote healthy marriage. Despite demonstrated evidence in every major social policy area of the need to rebuild a strong and healthy culture of marriage, President Bush’s new marriage initiative is still opposed by the extreme wing of feminism that sees no good in marriage or in unity between men and women, and between mothers and fathers.
>
> Moderate, mainstream feminists have long rejected this animus against marriage; the vast majority of such feminists either are married or intend to marry. Mainstream feminists are focused on a worthy concern: removing obstacles to the advancement of women in all walks of life.
>
> Radical feminists, however, while embracing this mainstream goal–even hiding behind it–go much further: They seek to undermine the nuclear family of married father, mother, and children, which they label the “patriarchal family.” As feminist leader Betty Friedan has warned, this anti-marriage agenda places radical feminists profoundly at odds with the family aspirations of mainstream feminists and most other American women.

The next part of the paper quotes from leading third-wave feminists who oppose marriage.

Here are some of the recent ones:

> In her 1996 book In the Name of the Family: Rethinking Family Values in the Postmodern Age, Judith Stacey, Professor of Gender Studies and Sociology at the University of Southern California, consigned traditional marriage to the dustbin of history.36 Stacey contended that “Inequity and coercion…always lay at the vortex of that supposedly voluntary `compassionate marriage’ of the traditional nuclear family.”37 She welcomed the fact that traditional married-couple families (which she terms “The Family”) are being replaced by single-mother families (which she terms the postmodern “family of woman”):
>
> > Perhaps the postmodern “family of woman” will take the lead in burying The Family at long last. The [married nuclear] Family is a concept derived from faulty theoretical premises and an imperialistic logic, which even at its height never served the best interests of women, their

> children, or even many men…. The [nuclear married] family is dead. Long live our families!38

Stacey urged policymakers to abandon their concern with restoring marital commitment between mothers and fathers and instead "move forward toward the postmodern family regime," characterized by single parenthood and transitory relationships.39

In 1996, Claudia Card, professor of Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, continued the attack:

> The legal rights of access that married partners have to each other's persons, property, and lives makes it all but impossible for a spouse to defend herself (or himself), or to be protected against torture, rape, battery, stalking, mayhem, or murder by the other spouse…. Legal marriage thus enlists state support for conditions conducive to murder and mayhem.40

Other radical feminists suggested that a culture of self-sufficiency and high turnover in intimate relationships is the key to independence and protection from hostile home life. Activist Fran Peavey, in a 1997 Harvard article ironically titled "A Celebration of Love and Commitment," suggested that "Instead of getting married for life, men and women (in whatever combination suits their sexual orientation) should sign up for a seven-year hitch. If they want to reenlist for another seven, they may, but after that, the marriage is over."41 Also in 1997, radical feminist author Ashton Applewhite, in her book Cutting Loose–Why Women Who End Their Marriages Do So Well proclaimed: "Women who end their marriages are far better off afterward."42

Another feminist widely read during the 1990s was Barbara Ehrenreich, a former columnist with Time magazine who now writes for The Nation.43 Throughout her work, Ehrenreich extols single parenthood and disparages marriage. Divorce, she argues, produces "no lasting psychological damage" for children. What America needs is not fewer divorces but more "good divorces."44 Rather than seeking to strengthen marriage, policymakers "should concentrate on improving the quality of divorce."45 In general, Ehrenreich concludes that single parenthood presents no problems that cannot be solved by much larger government subsidies to single parents.46

Ehrenreich writes enthusiastically about efforts to move beyond the narrow limits of the nuclear married family toward more rational forms of human relationship:

> There is a long and honorable tradition of "anti-family" thought. The French philosopher Charles Fourier taught that the family was a barrier to human progress; early feminists saw a degrading parallel between marriage and prostitution. More recently, the renowned British anthropologist Edmund Leach stated, "far from being the basis of the

> > good society, the family with its narrow privacy and tawdry secrets, is the source of all discontents.”47
>
> While Ehrenreich recognizes that men and women are inevitably drawn to one another, she believes male-female relationships should be ad hoc, provisional, and transitory. She particularly disparages the idea of long-term marital commitment between fathers and mothers. In the future, children will be raised increasingly by communal groups of adults.48 These children apparently will fare far better than those raised within the tight constraints of the nuclear married family “with its deep impacted tensions.”49

The paper goes on to explain how these messages have entered into college textbooks.

It’s important for people to understand that supporting feminism (third-wave gender feminism, not first-wave equal-opportunity feminism, which I support) means opposing traditional marriage. When feminist policies get enacted into law, marriage declines. And when marriage declines, children suffer.

Here is a helpful presentation from the Heritage Foundation on marriage and child poverty. Liberals like to blame poverty for criminal behavior, but they really should blame themselves. When they attack marriage as being “unequal and sexist”, then they cause the very poverty that they blame for violence.

An excerpt from Dr. Laura's "The Proper Care and Feeding of Marriage"

August 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Found here. This is from chapter 1 of the book "The Proper Care and Feeding of Marriage".

Is there really ever such a thing as a perfect marriage? The answer to that question is, "YES." I know you're stunned. Stay with me here: "perfect" doesn't mean that everything goes right, or your way for that matter, or that you're feeling romantically perky all the time. There are just too many unpredictable events, challenges, and tragedies in life for any of us to feel content and satisfied for any prolonged period of time. Yet, even in the midst of misery, you can still feel and believe that your marriage is perfect if you have the right attitude; and I don't mean that you think positively – I do mean that you think outwardly. When you do so, married life becomes perfect no matter what difficulties you're going through.

I took a call from Michelle, a seventeen-year-old high-school student, which will clarify:

Michelle: Hi, Dr. Laura! It's a pleasure to speak with you. My question is this: this Saturday is my boyfriend's and mine senior prom. As it turns out, we have a conflict because it is also his championship lacrosse game, at the same time as the dance. He has told me that I could decide which one we should do.

Dr L: Really? So, what's your decision?

Michelle: Well, personally, I want to go to the prom because it's our senior prom and it's our last dance together, it's meaningful, you know? But it's also his major opportunity because scouts will be at this game for college recruitment. So, for him the best choice would be for the game but I want to go to prom… selfishly.

Dr L: Do you love him?

Michelle: Of course. Yes.

Dr L: Do you imagine you're going to marry him? I'm asking you that because I just want to know the depth of your compassion and caring for him.

Michelle: I can see it. I can definitely see it working, but I'm only seventeen… Yes, I care for him a lot.

Dr L: Well then, I guess he's going to his lacrosse tournament.

Michelle: (sounding deflated) Okay.

Dr L: Because that's what we do when we're in love – we give them gifts… that doesn't mean you go to the store and buy something. It means you give up something that's very important to you to give them something that's very important to them. O'Henry wrote a short story called, The Gift of the Magi. There was a young couple, very poor, married, and very much in love with each other. Christmas is coming and there is no money to buy gifts for one another. Her prized possession was her long, lovely hair which she had

grown since childhood. His prized possession was his solid gold pocket watch – an heirloom, passed down from generation to generation.

Come Christmas morning, she hands her beloved a package. It is a solid gold chain for his pocket watch. He hands his beloved a package. It is a bejeweled comb to hold her beautiful hair in a bun on top of her head. They both cried with joy… even though… he no longer had the pocket watch, as he had sold it to buy her the jeweled comb… and she no longer had long hair, as she had sold it to buy him the gold chain.

Neither could use the gift the other had given them from a store – but look at the gift they truly got from the other.

Michelle: WOW!

Dr L: So, when you love somebody you give them what they really need – and your boyfriend needs you to be supportive of the fact that this game is important to his college career – for scholarships. If you do get married, you'll be dancing together for the rest of your lives.

Michelle: That's true. Well, I guess he'll be playing this game and I'll be sitting on the sidelines cheering.

Dr L: Good for you! That's the kind of woman a man should marry.

Michelle: Thank you so much, Dr. Laura.

Oh, wait a minute, friends! The story does not end there. A few days later I received this email from Michelle:

"A few days ago I called in with a dilemma I had with prom because my boyfriend's championship lacrosse game (with college scouts) was the same night. You told me the story of the Gift of the Magi, and that if you really loved someone you would be willing to give up whatever was most important to you – which for me was the prom. I took your advice and called up my boyfriend telling him that we would be going to his lacrosse game instead of senior prom. He explained to me that he knew I would decide to go to his game, so he went ahead and bought our prom tickets so we would go to the prom.

So, basically, I was willing to give up senior prom for him, and he was willing to give up what was most important to him, his championship game – proving the story of the Gift of the Magi…

But hold on! The story gets better! Yesterday we found out that because of some unknown factor, his championship game was changed from 7 o'clock to 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Is this a God thing? I think so! Now we not only get to go to prom and his lacrosse game, but we have the knowledge that we are both willing to sacrifice what is most important to us because our love is stronger.

I know that I am only 17, but I think I found a keeper!! Thank you so much for your wonderful advice to let my MAN know how important he is to me. This experience not only made me grow as a person, but is strengthening our relationship as well."

Now, dear friends, even some seventeen year olds can understand the beauty and meaning of having somebody care enough about you to put themselves aside for you –

that beats every prom and game imaginable. And when you are living this scenario, no matter what grunge is going on in your life, your marriage is PERFECT!

Here is my previous post on her earlier book, The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands.

Conservative Michael Gove defeats Labour's Harriet Harman in debate

August 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Jonah Goldberg at National Review.

It's a knock-out! She tries to defend the rioters as victims, and justifies their rioting.

Here is my previous post on Harriet Harman and the riots. She is opposed to marriage, fathers, shared-parenting and law and order. She just doesn't like men parenting their own children. She wants to treat everyone as victims, and coddle them when they act irresponsibly. She favors subsidizing women who have children out of wedlock with taxpayer money.

And here's another article from Life Site News about the riots.

Excerpt:

> In fact, all of these are valid observations, but some factors are more fundamental than others. Social order in some communities – and unfortunately more often in the most vulnerable communities – is breaking down. And it is being driven by an unprecedented breakdown of the family, which in turn is causing a vicious cycle of poverty, lack of education, lawlessness and further erosion of the basic values people need to keep society in order.
>
> It is difficult to say this without being accused of targeting single mothers or attacking absent fathers. I know many single mothers who are doing an amazing job, in difficult circumstances, and who have raised the best of kids. And there certainly are other pressing issues which need to be tackled, such as the fact that there are huge inequalities of income and opportunity in British society.
>
> But some facts are so startling, and some effects so obvious, that even the most liberal newspaper of the British press, the Guardian, is now acknowledging that lack of family structure is creating a huge problem. On Wednesday, the paper interviewed a youth worker from Tottenham who has spent 30 years working with disadvantaged communities. He said that parental authority had now been eroded to the point where the parents of rioting children would be afraid to discipline them.
>
> His views were echoed by the local MP David Lammy who commented, "There is none of the basic starting presumption of two adults who want to start a family, raise children together, love them, nourish them and lead them to full independence. The parents are not married and the child has come, frankly, out of casual sex; the father is not present, and is not expected to be. There are not the networks of extended families to make up for it. We are seeing huge consequences of the lack of male role models in young men's lives."
>
> There are 3.5 million children from broken homes in Britain. Their growing

> numbers, and the effect on of family breakdown on children, caused a leading family law court judge, Sir Paul Coleridge, to recently describe the scale of the problem as “social anarchy” and to urge the government to work to promote marriage.
>
> The decline of marriage has left a significant proportion of children with a confused understanding of stability and of boundaries. And the lack of a male role model means that young men in particular seek out the toughest in the gang for an authority figure rather than their father. That means just one bad apple can influence a whole community of young teens.

I was recently talking with someone online who was a fiscal conservative, but a social liberal. I think that view is mistaken. It turns out that government will expand to deal with the problems caused by people being irresponsible and reckless in their private lives. That will have an impact on tax rates and the free market, but it will also impact the very liberty that the social liberals want to protect. The more government grows to restrain these riots, the less liberty we will have. Being too permissive on social issues is bad for liberty, in the long run.

Humanist Association president Polly Toynbee runs away from debate on God

August 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this what atheism amounts to?
Here's the story at BeThinking.

Excerpt:

The President of the British Humanist Association has pulled out of debating renowned Christian philosopher William Lane Craig. Polly Toynbee, Guardian columnist and prominent critic of religion, readily agreed in April to debate Craig on the Existence of God but withdrew her involvement last week saying ***"I hadn't realised the nature of Mr Lane Craig's debating style, and having now looked at his previous performances, this is not my kind of forum".***

The event, hosted by Premier Christian Radio and due to take place at London's Westminster Central Hall in October, has already been advertised and hundreds of pounds of ticket sales banked. Toynbee apologised for the *"inconvenience"*. Organisers will be contacting ticket holders, but are hoping to find an alternative leading atheist voice for the debate [see note below], who is willing to dispute the strong rational grounds for Christian theism that Professor Craig is renowned for defending.

William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, California. He has debated leading atheists the world over including Anthony Flew, Lewis Wolpert, Christopher Hitchens, and most recently Sam Harris, who described him as *"the one Christian apologist who has put the fear of God into many of my fellow atheists."* Following the debate with Hitchens, an atheist website concluded that Craig had *"spanked Hitchens like a foolish child."*

Craig says of his debates, ***"These are academic forums, where one concentrates on the arguments and counter arguments, the truth of the premises in those arguments and objections to them, and not on personality or ad hominem attacks."***

Richard Dawkins recently described Craig as a *"deeply unimpressive … ponderous buffoon"*, who uses logic for *"bamboozling his faith-head audience."* Yet he still has not

responded to the actual content of the arguments presented by Craig. Dawkins' refusal to debate one-to-one with Craig was recently described as *"apt to be interpreted as cowardice"* by Dr Daniel Came, a lecturer in Philosophy at Oxford University. Dr Came, who is himself an atheist, called it *"a glaring omission"* on Dawkins' CV.

Meanwhile, A.C. Grayling, who this year published a humanist 'bible' called *The Good Book* has refused to debate with Craig on the foundations of atheist morality. With secular Britain beset by moral difficulties, not least among politicians, police and the press, this seems to be a neglect of his moral and intellectual duty. Grayling stated that he would rather debate *"the existence of fairies and water-nymphs"*.

Bolstering his own refusal to debate, Richard Dawkins posted this statement by A.C. Grayling on his website: *"Craig claims to have debated me before – that is not correct, unless a brief and rather pointless exchange of emails counts as such."* Why should Craig claim to have debated Grayling, if it was not true?

This embarrassing lapse of memory on Grayling's part has been exposed by Premier Radio who on 3rd July broadcast a recording of the entire Grayling vs. Craig debate on the Problem of Evil from 2005 and placed it on their website. Within the next 10 days, 10,000 people had downloaded it. It is now available on YouTube.

The Chairman that evening, Roger Preece, remembers it well. *"The Debate was excellent. Craig and Grayling spoke to a packed house of 4-500 students at the Oxford Union. I enjoyed chairing the debate and it was a memorable and robust exchange, as the audio tapes confirm."*

Grayling has since commented *"I was wrong about debating Lane Craig – but Lane Craig is wrong about everything else in the universe, so I guess I don't do too badly in the deal."*

Dr Peter May, Director of the Craig Tour, said, *"If Craig is 'wrong about everything else in the universe' and his arguments for the existence of God are so easy to refute, it is hard to see why the leading atheist voices in the country are running shy of having a debate with him. Rather than hurling 'ad hominem' attacks on Craig from their bunkers, it would be good to see these figures come forward to rationally defend the atheism they publicly espouse. At the moment it's looking like a rout."*

While Toynbee is President of the British Humanist Association, Dawkins and Grayling are both Vice-Presidents. The BHA describes one of its core values as *"engaging in debate rationally, intelligently and with attention to evidence"*. [View the BHA core values here.]

And now we sing the atheist theme song:

If I were an atheist, I would be ashamed. This woman turned down a formal academic debate with a leading Christian scholar. The debate format is neutral, featuring fixed length speeches and no interruptions. Craig's style is to use scientific evidence and formal logical arguments. I thought atheists were supposed to be good at logic and science? I guess not, though. "I don't like God telling me what to do" is apparently as far ahead as they've thought. Is that all atheism is? Is it just a childhood tantrum that has run

on too long? Is there no argument or evidence to sustain it at all? Are the “best” atheist debaters simply the ones who can rant the most shrilly? Is there anything more to atheism than whining and insults?

If you are interested in seeing William Lane Craig debate, check out the two videos below:

Yes, that is Christopher Hitchens in the first debate.

Related posts

- Coward A.C. Grayling and chicken Dawkins flee debate with William Lane Craig
- Physicist Frank Tipler weighs in on Stephen Hawking’s theory
- Peter Atkins claiming that nothing exists, (the physical universe is actually nothing)
- Stephen Meyer debating Michael Shermer on the origin of life
- How good are the arguments in the new book by Richard Dawkins?
- Richard Dawkins cites fraudulent research, runs from public debate
- Richard Dawkins thinks that aliens may have caused the origin of life
- Analyzing Christopher Hitchens’ case against God

Scientists discover how molecular motors go into energy saving mode

August 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> The transport system inside living cells is a well-oiled machine with tiny protein motors hauling chromosomes, neurotransmitters and other vital cargo around the cell. These molecular motors are responsible for a variety of critical transport jobs, but they are not always on the go. They can put themselves into “energy save mode” to conserve cellular fuel and, as a consequence, control what gets moved around the cell, and when.
>
> A new study by Carnegie Mellon University biochemists, published in the Aug. 12 issue of *Science*, describes how the motors fold in on themselves, or save energy, when their transport services aren’t required. According to the researchers, the solution to this molecular puzzle provides new insight into how molecular motor proteins are regulated, and may open new avenues for the treatment of various neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer’s and Huntington’s.

Very interesting. So cells are not clumps of jello, then.

Unwed mother of ten says £30,000 per year in welfare benefits is not enough

August 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A disturbing story about subsidized single motherhood from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A mother-of-ten who nets more than £30,000-a-year in benefits has begged for charity donations to help raise her brood – because her state 'wage' is not enough.
>
> Moira Pearce, 34, has insisted her weekly government handout of £600 is insufficient to feed and clothe her children and she needs donations to survive.
>
> The single mum – whose kids are fathered by four ex-partners – has insisted her range of child and family allowance benefits do not meet her weekly outgoings.
>
> Her annual payments funded by the public purse work out at a staggering £31,200-a-year – or £3,120 per child.
>
> Ms Pearce – who lives with unemployed ex-boyfriend Mark Austin, 19, seven daughters and three sons – now wants extra help to save her from going under.

Stephen Baskerville has noted some of the risks of this kind of arrangement in a Washington Times article.

Excerpt:

> A British study found children are up to 33 times more likely to be abused when a live-in boyfriend or stepfather is present. "Contrary to public perception," write Patrick Fagan and Dorothy Hanks, "research shows that the most likely physical abuser of a young child will be that child's mother, not a male in the household." Mothers accounted for 55% of child murders according to a 1994 Justice Department report (and fathers for a tiny percentage). As Maggie Gallagher writes in her 1996 book, "The Abolition of Marriage": "The person most likely to abuse a child physically is a single mother. The person most likely to abuse a child sexually is the mother's boyfriend or second husband. . . . Divorce, though usually portrayed as a protection against domestic violence, is far more frequently a contributing cause." Adrienne Burgess, head of the British government's Fathers Direct program, observes that "fathers have often played the protector role inside families."

There was a time when society frowned on single motherhood and divorce – back when we put the needs of children over the happiness of adults. There was support available for those women who needed help from private charities, but the government didn't get involved. Women chose to marry men who had moral character, so that they could teach their children right and wrong in these sexual matters. But then women began to prefer

men who had less-defined ideas about religion and morality. Those men were “better” because they were more fun, and less judgmental. Somehow, women began to view men telling children about right and wrong as a bad thing. Setting up moral boundaries was no longer viewed as protective, but as incompatible with “liberty”.

Here is some research showing how single motherhood and divorce increases the frequency of child poverty and child abuse. Should we be subsidizing fatherlessness? The more we subsidize something, the more of it we will get. Do we want more of these things? Can we afford it? Is it what is best for innocent children?

Michele Bachmann: Submissive doesn't mean subservient

August 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

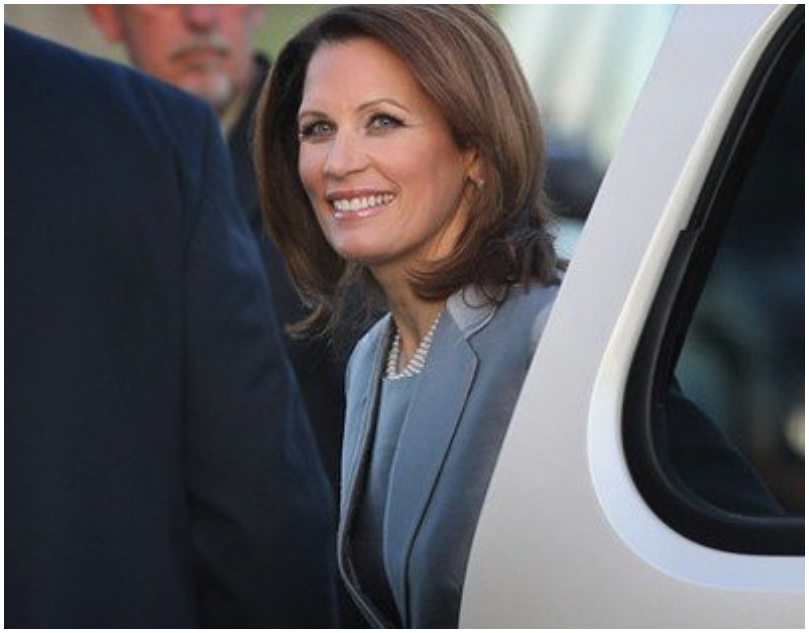

Michele Bachmann at the Iowa Debate

Wes from Reason to Stand sent me this CBS News article about my favorite candidate for President, Michele Bachmann.

Excerpt:

> Appearing on "Face the Nation" Sunday, Rep. Michele Bachmann stood by her comment in Thursday's Republican debatethat when she said that wives should be submissive to their husbands, she meant that married couples should have mutual respect.
>
> In 2006, Bachmann said her husband had told her to get a post-doctorate degree in tax law. "Tax law? I hate taxes," she continued. "Why should I go into something like that? But the lord says, be submissive. Wives, you are to be submissive to your husbands.'"
>
> Asked about the comment by CBS News' Norah O'Donnell Sunday, Bachmann reaffirmed that to her, "submission means respect, mutual respect."
>
> "I respect my husband, he respects me," she said. "We have been married 33 years, we have a great marriage…and respecting each other, listening to each other is what that means."
>
> O'Donnell asked Bachmann if she would use a different word in retrospect.
>
> "You know, I guess it depends on what word people are used to, but respect is really what it means," Bachmann replied.
>
> "Do you think submissive means subservient?" O'Donnell asked.
>
> "Not to us," Bachmann said. "To us it means respect. We respect each other, we

> listen to each other, we love each other and that is what it means."

Michele won the Ames straw poll in Iowa, narrowly beating out libertarian Ron Paul.

I was very upset by her harsh words for Tim Pawlenty in the Iowa debate, but she is still my top candidate. Now that Pawlenty is out, my second choice is Rick Perry. I have to tell you, I am really sorry to see Tim Pawlenty out of the running. Whoever wins should pick him to be Secretary of State, for his strong foreign policy comments on Syria and Iran.

You can find out more about Michele Bachmann in the links below, stuff the mainstream media will never tell you.

Campaign speeches, interviews and debates

Speeches:

- Michele Bachmann's Republican Leadership Conference speech
- Michele Bachmann's speech at the Right Online Conference

Reactions from her recent debate performance:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

Profiles of Michele Bachmann:

- The Weekly Standard
- Wall Street Journal
- ABC News
- WORLD Magazine

Michele Bachmann on television news

Let Americans spend their own money

Time to prioritize spending

Obama's plan is to raise your taxes

Michele Bachmann in the legislature

Against socialism:

For economic growth:

Against ACORN funding:

Did George W. Bush's tax cuts cause Obama's trillion dollar budget deficits?

August 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at the budget deficits again, keeping in mind that the last Republican budget was the 2007 budget. In January of 2007, the Democrats took control of the House and Senate, and all spending was in Democrat control until January of 2011, when the Republicans took back the House.

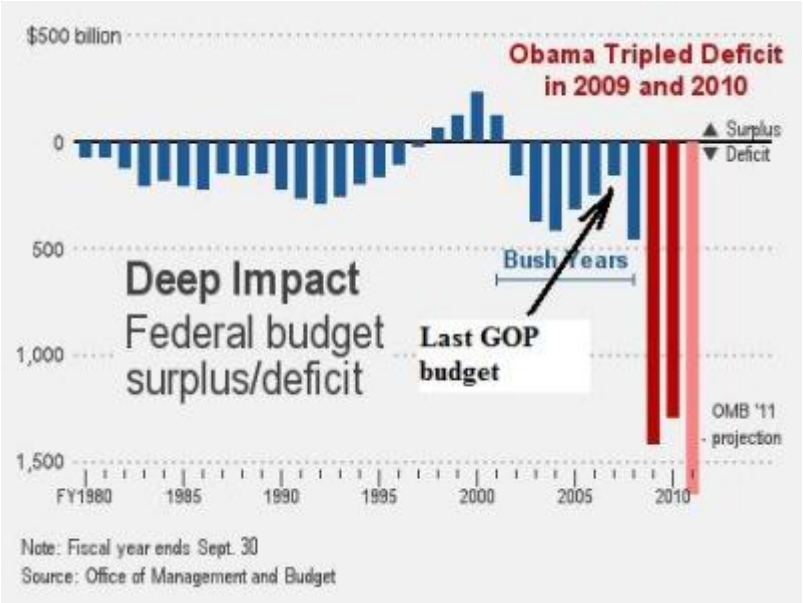

Obama Budget Deficit 2011

Next, let's see what impact the Bush tax cuts from 2001 and 2003 had on tax revenue:

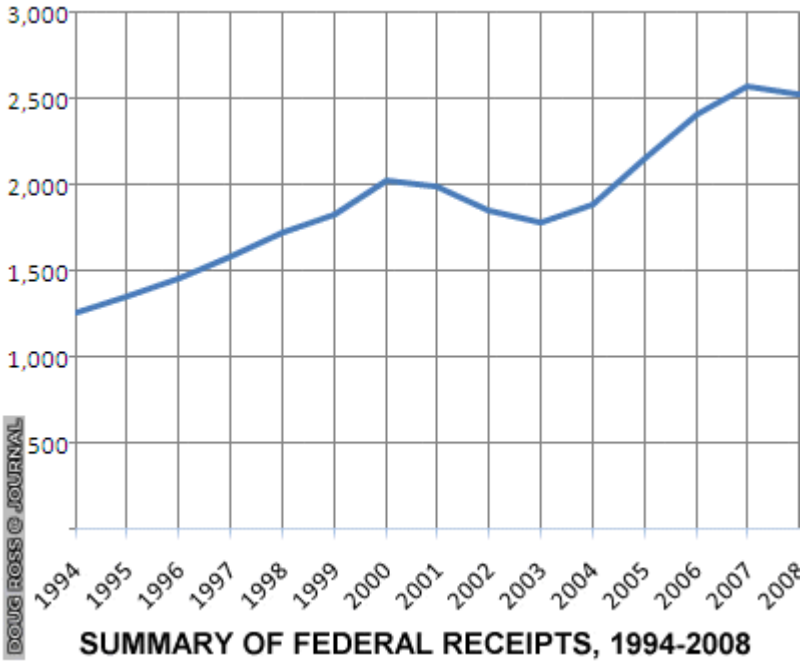

Federal receipts (1994-2008)

From the chart:

- Revenue in 2001 was 2.0 trillion in the year of the first round of tax cuts

- Revenue in 2003 was 1.8 trillion in the year of the second round of tax cuts
- Revenue then rose in each subsequent year, ending at 2.6 trillion in 2007, when the Democrats took over the House and Senate
- In 2007, Bush was only spending about 2.8 trillion – very close to what he was taking receiving in tax revenues
- The budget deficit went down in each year after both tax cuts were in place (2004), until the Democrats took over the House and Senate
- Obama is currently spending over 3.8 trillion per year, but he is only receiving about 2.2 trillion in revenue.
- It's a *spending problem*, not a *revenue problem*

Doug Ross explains:

> According to the OMB's own figures, the Bush tax cuts resulted in an *explosion* of revenue to the U.S. government.
>
> That's not to say Bush wasn't a profligate spender — he was. But in virtually no cases were Democrats arguing that he spend less (unless you count national security).
>
> In fact, fiscal conservatives opposed Bush's absurd policies on spending, amnesty and the expansion of Medicare.
>
> But no one in world history has ever spent money like Barack Obama.
>
> These statements are indisputable.
>
> Which is why they are certain to be rejected by the diminishing cadre of Obama-Democrat drones, who appear to be completely immune to facts, logic and reason.

And let's just see what happened to the unemployment rate since the Democrats took over spending in January of 2007:

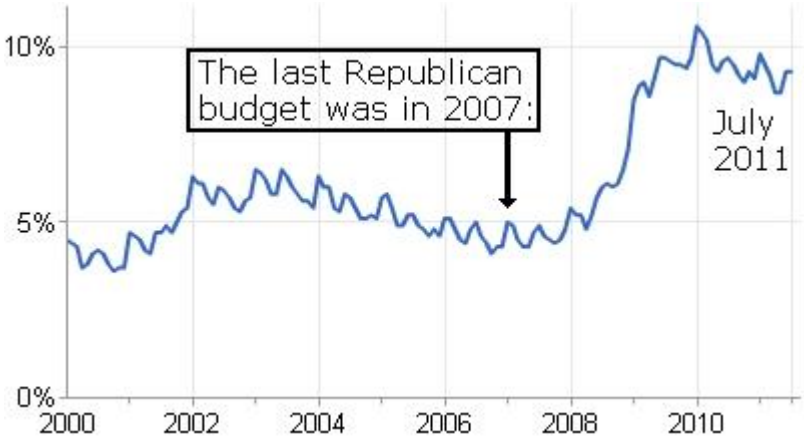

Unemployment Rate (Not seasonally adusted)

There are a lot of people who don't know about these numbers because they watch Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert on the Comedy Channel, or Rachel Maddow and Ed Schulz on MSNBC.

I actually spoke to someone who voted for Obama about these numbers. He said that 2.6

trillion in tax revenues was worse than 2.0 trillion in tax revenues. And he said that a 4.3% unemployment rate was WORSE than a 9.2% unemployment rate. And he also said that a $160 billion dollar deficit was WORSE than a $1650 billion dollar deficit. Ok I just made that up, but still. That’s how Democrats think. Tax and spend.

How to apologize effectively: responsibility, restitution, repentance

August 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my friends recommended this book "Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Got Married" by Gary Chapman, so I got it and read it this weekend. The book re-capped one of his other books about the 5 languages of apologies or something.

Here's a re-cap of his five languages of apologies.

Here are the two that I want to emphasize:

Apology Language #3: Making Restitution

In the public arena, our emphasis upon restitution is based upon our sense of justice. The one who commits the crime should pay for the wrongdoing. In contrast, in the private sphere of family and other close relationships, our desire for restitution is almost always based upon our need for love. After being hurt deeply, we need the reassurance that the person who hurt us still loves us.

"How could they love me and do that?" is the question that lingers in our minds. The words "I'm sorry; I was wrong" may not be enough.

For some people, restitution is their primary apology language. For them the statement, "It is not right for me to have treated you that way," must be followed with "What can I do to show you that I still care about you?" Without this effort at restitution, this person will question the sincerity of the apology. They will continue to feel unloved even though you may have said, "I am sorry; I was wrong." They wait for the reassurance that you genuinely love them.

The question, then, is how do we make restitution in the most effective way? Since the heart of restitution is reassuring the spouse or family member that you genuinely love him or her, it is essential to express restitution in the love language of the other person.

[…]If restitution is the primary apology language of an individual, then this becomes the most important part of the apology. "I'm sorry; I was wrong" will never be taken as sincere if these words are not accompanied by a sincere effort at restitution. They wait for the assurance that you still genuinely love them. Without your effort to make amends, the apology will not have the desired results of forgiveness.

Apology Language #4: Genuinely Repenting

The word repentance means "to turn around" or "to change one's mind." In the context of an apology, it means that an individual realizes that his or her present behavior is destructive. The person regrets the pain he or she is causing the other person, and he chooses to change his behavior.

Without genuine repentance, the other languages of apology may fall on deaf ears. What people who've been hurt want to know is, "Do you intend to change, or will this happen again next week?"

How then do we speak the language of repentance?

> - **It begins with an expression of intent to change.** When we share our intention to change with the person we have offended, we are communicating to them what is going on inside of us. They get a glimpse of our heart—and this often is the language that convinces them we mean what we say.
> - **The second step down the road of repentance is developing a plan for implementing change.** Often apologies fail to be successful in restoring the relationship because there is no plan for making positive change.
> - **The third step down the road of repentance is implementing the plan.** Following through with the plan gives evidence to the offended party that your apology was sincere.

Most people do not expect perfection after an apology, but they do expect to see effort.

Thus, expressing your desire to change and coming up with a plan is an extremely important part of an apology to this person. Inviting the offended person to help you come up with a plan for change is perhaps the best way to effectively show repentance.

I think this is somewhat useful, but I wanted to add some of my own thoughts to make it more practical.

Here are some practical tips that I recommend to someone who has done something morally wrong and who wants to apologize.

To fix the problem you need more than talk

To me, the only thing that needs an apology is breaking a moral rule – you can't beat someone up for just making a mistake. Whenever someone breaks a moral rule with me, like disrespecting me or being selfish, then I pick out a book for them to read and ask them to read it and then write something about how what they learned in the book applies to what they did to me. I don't pick very long books! But I do this for a very important reason.

The very important reason is that I don't trust people who just agree with me. I don't trust people's words. If someone is really sorry about something, then I want them to read something that describes the moral rule that they broke, and explains what place the moral rule has in some plan for achieving some greater goal. Let me give an example.

Suppose that I am friends with a young lady who wants me to help her to get her atheist uncle, who has a degree in physics, to consider whether Christian theism might not be true. I accept her quest and begin to negotiate with Dr. Michael Strauss, a particle physicist who does research on the top quark at Fermilab, and also teaches physics at the University of Oklahoma – Norman. I contact Dr. Strauss, and contact Lawrence Krauss, the atheist physicist, and I set up a debate between them at the local university. I notify her of my plan, and she promises to bring her uncle to the debate.

The day of the debate comes and it goes off without a hitch – Strauss demolishes Krauss, and Krauss cries for his mommy. The audience laughs at Krauss and he runs away sobbing into the night, clutching his Darwin doll tightly. I beam with delight at a plan perfectly executed, and then look around for the young lady and her uncle, so that we can all go out for a late dinner with Dr. Strauss. But she and her uncle are nowhere to be found! I rush around the auditorium frantically, but to no avail. Finally, in desperation, I call her cell phone.

She answers. I say "where are you? where is your evil uncle Dawkins? The debate is over and we won!". She says "Oh, I totally forgot. The worship leader at the local mega church had a better idea anyway. She invited me over to her church with my uncle to try snake-handling instead." Me: "You did *what???!!!"* She (excited): "Yes, this is a lot more fun than a stuffy debate, and my uncle is about to play patty-cake with a harmless rattlesnake, and… uh oh". Me: "Oh no…" She: "Um, I'll call you back. I need to make a call *right now.*". Click.

Wow, that's pretty awful.

So here's what I would expect from her by way of apology.

1. Read something on science apologetics as a make-up assignment. Something like Edgar Andrews' "Who Made God?".
2. Listen to Dr. Michael Strauss' lecture on science apologetics, which he delivered at Stanford University.
3. Go back to the uncle and sit down with him and watch Dr. Michael Strauss' lecture on science apologetics from Stanford University, which is up on Youtube.
4. When the lecture is over, talk with the uncle about his remaining questions, and be available should he think of any more questions.

This would make up for all the work I put into the event because it fixes the problem, and it makes sure that it will never happen again.

The goals of this apology is not just to hear the words "I'm sorry". It's not even just about making me feel better. I think the real customer of a mistake like this is God, who is not well served by ineffective Christians. My goal is to prepare her for future evangelism, and for future nurturing of any children she might have. The only way to convince someone to take the right course of action the next time is to change their mind between the time they failed and the next time they try again. There is no way to change how a person behaves unless they convince themselves by reading about the issues, on their own time, through their own effort.

For more on how beliefs change, see this lecture by J.P. Moreland, entitled "Love Your God With All Your Mind".

Should Christians be socialists?

August 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Philosopher and theologian Jay Wesley Richards discusses Christianity, the Bible, capitalism and socialism in the leftist Washington Post. He is responding to someone who thinks that Christianity is somehow socialist.

Excerpt:

> His assertion that Jesus and Christianity are inherently socialist fares no better. Although he refers to Jesus as a socialist, the only biblical texts he appeals to are from the book of Acts (chapters 2-5), which describes the early church in Jerusalem (after Jesus ascension into heaven). The central text is worth quoting:
>
> > Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. . . . There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it as the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. (Act 4:32-35)
>
> Mr. Paul insists, "Now folks, that's outright socialism of the type described millennia later by Marx-who likely got the general idea from the gospels." No serious biblical scholar, or economist, would mistake the practice of the early Jerusalem church for Marxism. First of all, Marx viewed private property as oppressive, and had a theory of class warfare, in which the workers would revolt against the capitalists-the owners of the means of production-and forcibly take control of private property. After that, Marx thought, private property would be abolished, and the state would own the means of production on behalf of the people. There's none of this business in the books of Acts. These Christians are selling their possessions and *sharing freely.*
>
> Second, the state is nowhere in sight. No Roman centurions are breaking down doors and sending Christians to the lions (that was later). No government is confiscating property and collectivizing industry. No one is being coerced. The church in Jerusalem was just that-the church, not the state. The church doesn't act like the modern communist state.
>
> Mr. Paul completely misreads the later text in Acts 5, in which Peter condemns Ananias and Sapphira for keeping back some of the money they received from selling their land. Again, it helps to actually read the text:
>
> > Ananias . . . why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the lands? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your

> heart? You did not lie to us but to God! (Acts 5:3-4)
>
> Mr. Paul asks, “Does this not sound like a form of terror-enforced-communism imposed by a God who thinks that Christians who fail to join the collective are worthy of death? Not only is socialism a Christian invention, so is its extreme communistic variant.” The only problem is that the text says exactly the opposite. Peter condemns Ananias and Sapphira not for failing to join the collective, but for lying about what they had done. In fact, Peter says explicitly that the property was rightfully theirs, even after it was sold. This isn’t communism or socialism.

Here’s a related lecture that Jay Richards did for the Family Research Council, on the topic of Christianity and Economics. It’s a very good lecture that discusses some basic economic principles and some common economics myths. You can also listen to the MP3 file, but it’s 60 megabytes.

I really recommend the following books for Christians trying to understand economics:

- “Intellectuals and Society” by Thomas Sowell
- “Money, Greed and God” by Jay Richards
- “Basic Economics” by Thomas Sowell
- “Politics According to the Bible” by Wayne Grudem

These are all must-reads.

Related posts

- Peter Hitchens distinguishes the deserving and undeserving poor
- Should Christians support wealth redistribution as a way to alleviate poverty?
- Should Christians pray for the economy?
- Fiscal and social conservatives unite in new free e-book “Indivisible”
- First Things reviews Jay Richards’ Money, Greed and God
- Cato Institute talks with Jay Richards about Christianity and capitalism
- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible
- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards’ Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

Paul Krugman’s plan to stimulate the economy with an alien invasion

August 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, it’s CNN. What do you expect?

Newsbusters explains what is wrong with Paul Krugman’s plan to stimulate the economy based on an episode of the Twilight Zone.

Transcript:

> PAUL KRUGMAN, NEW YORK TIMES: Think about World War II, right? That was actually negative social product spending, and yet it brought us out.
>
> I mean, probably because you want to put these things together, if we say, “Look, we could use some inflation.” Ken and I are both saying that, which is, of course, anathema to a lot of people in Washington but is, in fact, what fhe basic logic says.
>
> It’s very hard to get inflation in a depressed economy. But if you had a program of government spending plus an expansionary policy by the Fed, you could get that. So, if you think about using all of these things together, you could accomplish, you know, a great deal.
>
> If we discovered that, you know, space aliens were planning to attack and we needed a massive buildup to counter the space alien threat and really inflation and budget deficits took secondary place to that, this slump would be over in 18 months. And then if we discovered, oops, we made a mistake, there aren’t any aliens, we’d be better –
>
> ROGOFF: And we need Orson Welles, is what you’re saying.
>
> KRUGMAN: No, there was a “Twilight Zone” episode like this in which scientists fake an alien threat in order to achieve world peace. Well, this time, we don’t need it, we need it in order to get some fiscal stimulus.

It’s important to note that Paul Krugman’s plan is actually better than Obama’s plan, because Obama doesn’t have a plan.

The Newsbusters piece explains what’s wrong with stimulating the economy with an alien invasion, as seen on the Twilight Zone TV show.

Excerpt:

> But more importantly, let’s look at the numbers involved to really get a sense of what Krugman advocated here.
>
> The money unsuccessfully thrown at the Depression prior to World War II was staggering. From 1929 to 1939, government spending tripled from $3 billion a year to $9 billion.

> And yet unemployment at the end of 1939 was still 17.2 percent.
>
> Not a very good advertisement for Keynesian economics, is it?
>
> Now imagine that kind of "stimulus" today. That would mean the current $3.8 trillion budget would have to rise to $11.4 trillion which would generate about $9 trillion of debt a year.
>
> What do you think would happen to our credit rating and our dollar then? Wouldn't be pretty, would it?
>
> Yet that didn't work in the '30s – a fact that most liberals other than Krugman still contest – so the Nobel laureate is advocating that we spend like we're being attacked by space aliens in order to get to the level of outlays during World War II.
>
> Total federal spending in 1940 was $9.5 billion. By 1945, this had risen almost tenfold to $93 billion.
>
> Such an increase in today's budget would create a deficit greater than $30 trillion per year making our dollar and our Treasuries totally worthless.
>
> […]Consider too that the lasting stimulative quality of even the World War II spending is up for debate.
>
> The National Bureau of Economic lists a recession that began in February 1945 that lasted until October of that year. This recession happened despite the federal government spending almost tens times as much as it had only five years prior and 30 times more than in 1929.
>
> Once again, not a very good advertisement for Keynesian economics.
>
> But let's take this a step further, for NBER's recession numbers might be too conservative. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Gross Domestic Product shrank by 1.1 percent in 1945, a staggering 10.9 percent in 1946, and 0.9 percent in 1947.
>
> Again, this was after the largest explosion in federal spending in our nation's history, and this is what Krugman is advocating we repeat.

So what is stimulus spending? Stimulus spending is when you take money OUT of the hands of people who create jobs, and put it into the hand of people who the government thinks deserves that money more. Let's see who the government thinks deserves the money more than employers.

CBS News reports:

ABC News reports:

And this one features a real economist:

Obama promised that if we let him redirect $864 billion dollars from taxpayers to other people he chose, then that would make unemployment stay below 8%. So did all that "stimulus" keep unemployment below 8%?

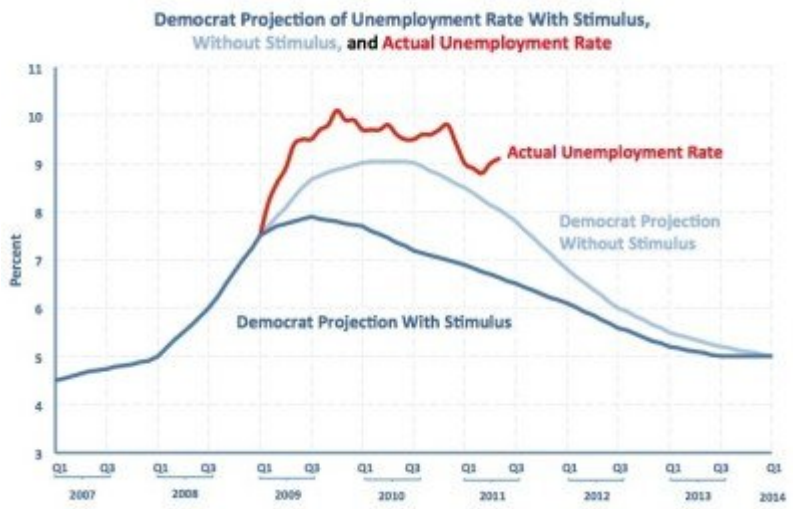

The stimulus was worse than doing NOTHING AT ALL
(Click for larger image)

Let's learn some economics and find out why that happened.

Economics in One Lesson

Perhaps it is time to review Henry Hazlitt's book on basic economics "Economics in One Lesson". Let's look in chapter 4, which is entitled "Public Works Mean Taxes".

Excerpt from that chapter:

> Therefore, for every public job created by the bridge project a private job has been destroyed somewhere else. We can see the men employed on the bridge. We can watch them at work. The employment argument of the government spenders becomes vivid, and probably for most people convincing. But there are other things that we do not see, because, alas, they have never been permitted to come into existence. They are the jobs destroyed by the $10 million taken from the taxpayers. All that has happened, at best, is that there has been a *diversion* of jobs because of the project. More bridge builders; fewer automobile workers, television technicians, clothing workers, farmers.

And consider Chapter 5 as well, entitled "Taxes Discourage Production".

> In our modern world there is never the same percentage of income tax levied on everybody. The great burden of income taxes is imposed on a minor percentage of the nation's income; and these income taxes have to be supplemented by taxes of other kinds. These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to

> become employers at all. Improved machinery and better-equipped factories come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.
>
> There is a similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. **The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment that they profess to solve.**

And the results we see today are consistent with the predictions of basic economic theory.

George W. Bush cut taxes in his first term and created 1 million NEW JOBS. On the other hand, Obama transfered BILLIONS from the private sector to the public sector, where government waste is rampant. Government spending is a *job killer*. Obama might be a nice man, but he is just wrong on economics and business. What we should have done is elected someone who doesn't repeat the mistakes made in other countries, like in Japan where massive government spending failed to stimulate the economy. We just need to look at where the ideas of Paul Krugman, Fareed Zakaria and Barack Obama have been tried – like in Spain and Greece – and see whether all of this government spending led to economic prosperity and a low unemployment rate. I know that it makes them feel good to think that they are responsible for punishing those who work, and rewarding those who don't work. But maybe we should look at the results of their policies and decide that we just can't afford to sacrifice the entire economy to make three people feel good about themselves. As far as I can tell, Keynesian economics has never created jobs whenever it's been tried – although it does make the liberal elite feel superior to job creators. It works to do that.

Solar power firm goes bankrupt after receiving millions of taxpayer dollars

August 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Boston Herald, a look at what happens when the government redistributes wealth based on political correctness.

Excerpt:

> Evergreen Solar Inc., the Massachusetts clean-energy company that received millions in state subsidies from the Patrick administration for an ill-fated Bay State factory, has filed for bankruptcy, listing $485.6 million in debt.
>
> Evergreen, which closed its taxpayer-supported Devens factory in March and cut 800 jobs, has been trying to rework its debt for months. The cash-strapped company announced today has sought a reorganization in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware and reached a deal with certain note holders to restructure its debt and auction off assets.
>
> The Massachusetts Republican Party called the Patrick administration's $58 million financial aid package, which supported Evergreen's $450 million factory, a "waste" of money.
>
> "The bankruptcy of Evergreen Solar is another sad event for the Massachusetts company and highlights the folly of the Patrick-Murray Administration which has put government subsidies into their pet projects instead of offering broad based relief to all Bay State employers," said Jennifer Nassour, head of the state GOP.

Here's a previous story about another solar-power boondoggle, from the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> Solyndra, Inc. was supposed to have showcased the effectiveness of the Obama administration's stimulus and green jobs initiatives, but instead it has become the center of congressional attention for waste, fraud and abuse of such programs.
>
> According to a Feb. 17 letter signed by Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton, Michigan Republican, and Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Cliff Stearns, Florida Republican, to Energy Secretary Steven Chu, the Fremont, Calif.-based solar panel manufacturer should never have received a $535 million loan guarantee from the stimulus.*
>
> The company became the first recipient of an Energy Department loan guarantee under the stimulus in March 2009, which was intended to "finance construction of the first phase of the company's new manufacturing facility" for photovoltaic solar panels.
>
> The Energy Department estimated in a March 20, 2009 press release that the

loan guarantee would create 3,000 construction jobs and a further 1,000 jobs after the plant opened.

And President Barack Obama and Vice President Joseph Biden each personally showcased Solyndra as an example of how stimulus dollars were at work creating jobs, during appearances at the company over the course of the following year.

Biden personally announced the closure of Solyndra's $535 million loan guarantee in a Sept. 9, 2009 speech, delivered via closed-circuit television, on the occasion of the groundbreaking of the plant.

The vice president justified the federal government's investment in Solyndra in front of employees and other dignitaries, including Secretary Chu and former Calif. Gov. Arnold Schwartzenegger, saying the jobs the company intended to create would "serve as a foundation for a stronger American economy."

"These jobs are the jobs that are going to define the 21st century that will allow America to compete and to lead like we did in the 20th century," Biden said.

According to Biden's speech, the $535 million loan guarantee was a smaller part of the $30 billion of stimulus money the administration planned to spend as part of its Green Jobs Initiative.

Obama made similar claims in a May 26, 2010 speech at the plant, but the 1,000 jobs he and Biden touted in their respective speeches failed to materialize.

Instead, Solyndra announced on Nov. 3 it planned to postpone expanding the plant, which put the taxpayers on the hook to the tune of $390.5 million taxpayers**, or 73 percent of the total loan guarantee, according to the Wall Street Journal.

It also announced that it no longer planned to hire the 1,000 workers that Obama and Biden had touted in their speeches and that it planned to close one of its older factories and planned to lay-off 135 temporary or contract workers and 40 full-time employees.

A closer look at the company shows it has never turned a profit since it was founded in 2005, according to its Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings.

And Solyndra's auditor declared that "the company has suffered recurring losses, negative cash flows since inception and has a net stockholders' deficit that, among other factors, [that] raise substantial doubt about its ability to continue as a growing concern" in a March 2010 amendment to its SEC registration statement.

"While we understand the purpose of the Loan Guarantee Program is to help private companies engaging in clean energy products to obtain financing by providing loan guarantees, subsequent events raise questions about Solyndra was the right candidate to receive a loan guarantee in excess of half a billion dollars," Upton and Stearns wrote.

> A June 2010 Wall Street Journal report indicating that Solyndra's majority owner, Oklahoma billionaire George Kaiser, was a major fundraiser for the 2008 Obama-Biden campaign has stimulus opponents such as Citizens Against Government Waste crying foul.

Even the radically left-wing Huffington Post is getting the picture, in this article entitled "The Party's Over for Big Wind".

Excerpt:

> Here's the reality: the backlash against industrial wind is real, it's global, and it's growing. The U.S. has about 170 anti-wind groups. AWEA doesn't want you to know that a number of towns in New York state have prohibited the construction of industrial wind turbines. In April, the town of Falmouth, Massachusetts enacted a year-long moratorium on construction of new wind turbines. And earlier this month, a pair of environmental groups in Massachusetts called for a ban on new turbines in the state until more work is done on the health effects of wind turbine noise.
>
> The wind lobby is desperate to downplay the problem of infrasound from wind turbines. But this month, in a peer-reviewed article in the *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, Carl V. Phillips, a Harvard-trained PhD, concludes that there is "overwhelming evidence that wind turbines cause serious health problems in nearby residents, usually stress-disorder type diseases, at a nontrivial rate."
>
> The subsidies for wind energy are in peril. A recent report from the Energy Information Administration shows that in 2010, the wind energy sector got more federal subsidies than any other energy sector other than biofuels. The report found that wind energy got a total of $4.986 billion in subsidies, or nearly twice as much as was given to the oil and gas sector, which got $2.82 billion. The majority of the wind energy money came from the federal stimulus package passed in 2009. But much of that stimulus money has been spent.
>
> Last December, AWEA cheered after Congress approved a tax bill that included a one-year extension of the investment tax credit for renewable energy. But another high-profile renewable energy subsidy, the tax credit for the corn ethanol scam, is due to expire at the end of this year. And given that Republicans in Washington are eager to cut all types of federal spending, the investment tax credit is likely to, once again, be in legislators' cross hairs.
>
> Bode was right a year ago when she said the wind industry is in distress. Her industry's still in peril today because it cannot survive without mandates and taxpayer subsidies. And unless or until it can, she cannot expect any sympathy from cash-strapped voters.

Why are we wasting money on unproven technologies? Do we have money to waste on old-time religion?

Does Christianity justify violence against innocent people?

August 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from the Evangelical Philosophical Society.

Excerpt:

> To properly assess a true Christian ethic of violence we must focus on Christianity's distinguishing person, Jesus Christ, and Christianity's distinguishing text, the New Testament. And when we do so, what do we find? A consistent ethic of non-violence. Consider the following:
>
> **The Example of Christ** – Jesus' entire life was characterized by peace and reconciliation, earning him the moniker "Prince of Peace."Even in the face of extreme injustice and merciless torture, he did not resist his abusers. Jesus even rebuked a disciple for resorting to violence to defend him (Mt. 26:52).
>
> **The Ministry of Christ** – Jesus consistently worked for peace and reconciliation. He declared, "blessed are the peacemakers" (Mt. 5:9) and instructed people to "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you (Luke 6:27-28). Jesus explicitly taught an ethic of personal non-violence, saying, "Do not [violently] resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also" (Mt. 5:39).
>
> **Other New Testament Teachings** – The Apostle Paul taught fellow Christians to live peacefully with others, saying, "so far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Rom. 12:18).He makes the same admonition repeatedly (see I Cor. 7:15; 1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Cor. 13:11; and 1 Thess. 5:13). Paul and Peter also expressly reject rebellion against government authorities (Rom. 13:1-3; 1 Pet. 2:13-17).
>
> The influence of these teachings in the history of the church is well-known, including:1) significant pacifist theological traditions (e.g., the Quakers and Mennonites), 2) Christian non-violent social movements (e.g. anti-war organizations, anti-death penalty groups, and Martin Luther King's work in the civil rights movement), and 3) Christian martyrdom, as thousands of believers have been, and continue to be, tortured and killed rather than to violently defend themselves against oppressors.

The burden of proof is on the skeptic to show that Jesus' teachings or actions justify violence against innocent people.

Where does Republican candidate Rick Perry stand on social issues?

August 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

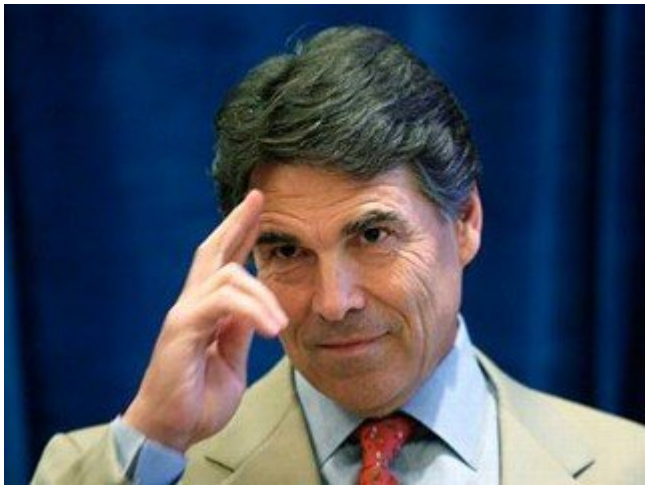

Texas Governor Rick Perry

The first post from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Upon entering politics, Perry has maintained a record of defending religious expression in the public sphere.
>
> **He supported and signed a Texas bill in 2007, the "Religious Viewpoint Anti-Discrimination Act," clarifying that students and school employees alike had the right to express religious views in public, and that religious groups had the same right of access to public facilities as secular groups.**
>
> […]But one thing that distinguishes Perry from the typical right-wing politician is his unabashedly public prayer life: the governor has called on Texans to pray and even fast in response to state crises or disasters.When wildfires were raging during a drought in Texas this spring, Perry released an official proclamation over the Easter weekend asking people of all faiths to pray for rain for three days, and to pray for firemen and other officials in danger.

And:

> Perry is increasingly famous for championing the 10th Amendment of the US Constitution, by which states are granted whatever powers are not explicitly reserved to the federal government.
>
> Despite a conservative record on marriage – Perry supported Texas's 2005 amendment defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman – his 10th Amendment loyalties led to some confusion among pro-family advocates when he indicated that New York's decision to legalize same-sex "marriage" in June

> was “their business, and that’s fine with me.”
>
> Perry later clarified that he was not defending same-sex “marriage,” but the principle allowing states to decide without intrusion by the federal government. He added that he supported a federal marriage amendment, which would mean an agreement by 3/4 of the states, to define marriage as the union of a man and a woman nationwide.
>
> The Texas governor also defended Texas’s sodomy law, which the US Supreme Court struck down in 2002 in Lawrence v. Texas

I still think Bachmann is better, but Perry has socially conservative accomplishments. In my opinion, this makes him better than Romney, who has nothing to show that he is a social conservative, and much to show that he is a social liberal.

Here’s more about Perry in a second post from Life News.

Excerpt:

> **As governor, Rick Perry signed Texas’s informed consent law, the Woman’s Right to Know Act in 2003, and legislation giving unborn children at any point in gestation separate victim status in a crime (the Prenatal Protection Act 2003). He also signed a parental consent law in 2005, and made Texas the 10th U.S. state to fund abortion alternatives beginning in 2005.**
>
> **Perry also signed into law a 2005 measure banning abortion after 26 weeks gestation. The law allows exceptions in the cases where the mother faces substantial risk of death, “imminent, severe, irreversible brain damage or paralysis,” or if her unborn child has “severe, irreversible brain impairment.”**
>
> **During the most recent legislative session, Perry declared a new sonogram bill an “emergency” priority, allowing the legislature to swiftly enact the law that requires abortionists to provide women an ultrasound of their unborn child and an opportunity to hear the fetal heartbeat before making a decision on abortion.**
>
> […]Perry adheres to a strong 10th amendment, or states rights philosophy, especially on abortion. The 10th amendment to the U.S. Constitution iterates that either the states or the people retain governmental powers not explicitly given to the federal government in the Constitution.
>
> Perry has made the case that the states would be in a better position to defend the unborn than the federal government, which has been a prime donor to the abortion industry at home, through subsidizing Planned Parenthood, or funding abortion groups overseas.
>
> The U.S. Supreme Court curtailed the power of the states to restrict or regulate abortion with the Roe v. Wade decision in 1973, making abortion a constitutional right, and therefore a federal issue. This has prevented states from passing pro-

> life laws that would greatly restrict or ban abortion.
>
> Perry, however, has said that while he believes abortion is a matter for the states, he would support a Human Life Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Such an amendment would be consistent with his states-based approach, because it would require the common consent of three-quarters of the States and supermajorities in both chambers of Congress.

There's more in those two articles.

Again, he's more moderate than I would like, but also more electable. He sounds like he would strike a middle ground between my views and Mitt Romney's views. He'll have more broad appeal with Democrats and independents. He's not conservative enough for me on social issues, but he's conservative enough to move the ball forward on social issues from where things stand today. I still prefer Michele Bachmann to anyone else by far, but a Perry/Bachmann or Perry/Pawlenty ticket makes sense to me, if it comes to that, with the remaining Minnesota candidate running for the Senate seat in 2012 against that miserable Amy Klobuchar.

I notice that the Club for Growth has a white paper on Michele Bachmann's record views, but none for Rick Perry, yet. Bachmann gets an excellent review from Club for Growth, naturally. And she's tied for first place on social issues with Rick Santorum, in my opinion.

Do gun control laws cause crime rates to go down?

August 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, here's a story from the Richmond Times-Dispatch regarding their new law relaxing restrictions on legal firearm ownership.

Excerpt:

> Virginia's bars and restaurants did not turn into shooting galleries as some had feared during the first year of a new state law that allows patrons with permits to carry concealed guns into alcohol-serving businesses, a Richmond Times-Dispatch analysis found.
>
> The number of major crimes involving firearms at bars and restaurants statewide declined 5.2 percent from July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2011, compared with the fiscal year before the law went into effect, according to crime data compiled by Virginia State Police at the newspaper's request.
>
> And overall, the crimes that occurred during the law's first year were relatively minor, and few of the incidents appeared to involve gun owners with concealed-carry permits, the analysis found.

Columnist Don Surber adds:

> So the gun crimes dropped and the gun crimes that they had were not by people with concealed gun permits but rather by outlaws.
>
> In fact, the newspaper reported: "Only two fatal shootings occurred during the last fiscal year — one outside a Petersburg nightclub and the other at a Radford restaurant — but neither involved concealed-gun permit holders. And only two of the 18 aggravated assaults reported could be linked definitively to concealed-carry holders."
>
> Once again, our moral and intellectual superiors on the left are wrong.

But is that the normal outcome of relaxing gun control laws, or an anomaly? What do the government statistics show?

Even the leftist MSNBC agrees that legal gun ownership reduces crime.

Excerpt:

> Americans overall are far less likely to be killed with a firearm than they were when it was much more difficult to obtain a concealed-weapons permit, according to statistics collected by the federal Centers for Disease Control. But researchers have not been able to establish a cause-and-effect relationship.

> In the 1980s and '90s, as the concealed-carry movement gained steam, Americans were killed by others with guns at the rate of about 5.66 per 100,000 population. In this decade, the rate has fallen to just over 4.07 per 100,000, a 28

> percent drop. The decline follows a fivefold increase in the number of "shall-issue" and unrestricted concealed-carry states from 1986 to 2006.The highest gun homicide rate is in Washington, D.C., which has had the nation's strictest gun-control laws for years and bans concealed carry: 20.50 deaths per 100,000 population, five times the general rate. The lowest rate, 1.12, is in Utah, which has such a liberal concealed weapons policy that most American adults can get a permit to carry a gun in Utah without even visiting the state.
>
> The decline in gun homicides also comes as U.S. firearm sales are skyrocketing, according to federal background checks that are required for most gun sales. After holding stable at 8.5 to 9 million checks from 1999 to 2005, the FBI reported a surge to 10 million in 2006, 11 million in 2007, nearly 13 million in 2008 and more than 14 million last year, a 55 percent increase in just four years.

So even liberal MSNBC thinks that legal firearm ownership reduces crime rates.

Let's learn about the issue from the news

ABC News explains in this short 6-minute clip:

And here is a longer 44-minute show from Fox Business: (featuring a debate between economist John Lott and the Brady Campaign spokesman)

The debate is about John Lott's book "More Guns, Less Crime", published by the University of Chicago Press. There are other debates in the show as well.

Now watch a 3-on-3 debate on gun control

This debate is in 13 parts, featuring the two of the *best* proponents of legal firearm ownership – John Lott and Gary Kleck. The real sparks fly during the Q&A, so don't miss that. (If you can't watch the debate, then you can read this post and this post instead).

Here's part 1, which contains the introduction.

Here are the remaining speeches:

- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John R. Lott (2 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: R Gil Kerlikowske (3 **of 13**)
- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Stephen Halbrooke (4 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John J Donohue III (5 **of 13**)
- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Gary Kleck (6 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Paul Helmke (7 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 1 (8 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 2 (9 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 3: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 3 (10 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 4: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 4 (11 **of 13**)
- Conclusions Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 1 (12 **of 13**)
- Conclusions Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 2 (12 **of 13**)

This is everything you need to know about whether legal ownership of firearms reduce crime.

New survey finds that Canadian health care system quality is declining

August 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

A story about a recent survey on Canada's universal health care system, from the National Post.

Excerpt:

> A new survey on attitudes about the health-care system reveals some interesting responses, confirming that Canadians have widespread misgivings about the system, even while not fully understanding how it works. They also favour using tax incentives to encourage healthier living and eating.
>
> The survey of 2,300 Canadians carried out in April by the consulting firm Deloitte was part of a larger poll covering 12 countries. It is considered accurate to within two percentage points, 95% of the time.
>
> Some of the highlights include:
>
> – Just 5% of respondents gave the system an A grade; 45% giving it a B, 36% a C, 10% a D, and 4% a failing F.
>
> – 33% of Canadians said they understood how the system works, down from 39% in 2009 when Deloitte did a similar survey.
>
> – 69% feel that the system has not improved in the last two years, while there were slightly more who thought it had deteriorated, as opposed to improved, in that period.
>
> – 36% believe that half the money spent on health care is wasted; interestingly, half of those skeptics blame the waste on people failing to take responsibility for their own health.

> – 13% reported that they are caring for another person, up from 10% in 2009, a possible sign of the increasing personal burden posed by the aging population. In a third of those cases, the individual is caring for a spouse.
>
> – 55% rated their health as excellent or very good … even though 52% report having been diagnosed with one or more chronic diseases.
>
> – 63% favour some kind of tax-based incentive to encourage more healthy diets and lifestyles.
>
> – About 80% favour expanding medical-school enrollments to increase the supply of doctors.

You can find some more videos describing horror stories in the Canadian system in this previous post.

Everyone agrees that the American health care system is too expensive, but do we at least get better quality outcomes? Let's see.

How good is the American health care system?

Consider this article from the Hoover Institute at Stanford University.

> Medical care in the United States is derided as miserable compared to health care systems in the rest of the developed world. Economists, government officials, insurers, and academics beat the drum for a far larger government role in health care. Much of the public assumes that their arguments are sound because the calls for change are so ubiquitous and the topic so complex. Before we turn to government as the solution, however, we should consider some unheralded facts about America's health care system.
>
> **1. Americans have better survival rates than Europeans for common cancers.** Breast cancer mortality is 52 percent higher in Germany than in the United States and 88 percent higher in the United Kingdom. Prostate cancer mortality is 604 percent higher in the United Kingdom and 457 percent higher in Norway. The mortality rate for colorectal cancer among British men and women is about 40 percent higher.
>
> **2. Americans have lower cancer mortality rates than Canadians.** Breast cancer mortality in Canada is 9 percent higher than in the United States, prostate cancer is 184 percent higher, and colon cancer among men is about 10 percent higher.
>
> **3. Americans have better access to treatment for chronic diseases than patients in other developed countries.** Some 56 percent of Americans who could benefit from statin drugs, which reduce cholesterol and protect against heart disease, are taking them. By comparison, of those patients who could benefit from these drugs, only 36 percent of the Dutch, 29 percent of the Swiss, 26 percent of Germans, 23 percent of Britons, and 17 percent of Italians receive them.

4. Americans have better access to preventive cancer screening than Canadians. Take the proportion of the appropriate-age population groups who have received recommended tests for breast, cervical, prostate, and colon cancer:

- Nine out of ten middle-aged American women (89 percent) have had a mammogram, compared to fewer than three-fourths of Canadians (72 percent).
- Nearly all American women (96 percent) have had a Pap smear, compared to fewer than 90 percent of Canadians.
- More than half of American men (54 percent) have had a prostatespecific antigen (PSA) test, compared to fewer than one in six Canadians (16 percent).
- Nearly one-third of Americans (30 percent) have had a colonoscopy, compared with fewer than one in twenty Canadians (5 percent).

5. Lower-income Americans are in better health than comparable Canadians. Twice as many American seniors with below-median incomes self-report "excellent" health (11.7 percent) compared to Canadian seniors (5.8 percent). Conversely, white, young Canadian adults with below-median incomes are 20 percent more likely than lower-income Americans to describe their health as "fair or poor."

6. Americans spend less time waiting for care than patients in Canada and the United Kingdom. Canadian and British patients wait about twice as long—sometimes more than a year—to see a specialist, have elective surgery such as hip replacements, or get radiation treatment for cancer. All told, 827,429 people are waiting for some type of procedure in Canada. In Britain, nearly 1.8 million people are waiting for a hospital admission or outpatient treatment.

7. People in countries with more government control of health care are highly dissatisfied and believe reform is needed. More than 70 percent of German, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, and British adults say their health system needs either "fundamental change" or "complete rebuilding."

8. Americans are more satisfied with the care they receive than Canadians. When asked about their own health care instead of the "health care system," more than half of Americans (51.3 percent) are very satisfied with their health care services, compared with only 41.5 percent of Canadians; a lower proportion of Americans are dissatisfied (6.8 percent) than Canadians (8.5 percent).

9. Americans have better access to important new technologies such as medical imaging than do patients in Canada or Britain. An overwhelming majority of leading American physicians identify computerized tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) as the most important medical

> innovations for improving patient care during the previous decade—even as economists and policy makers unfamiliar with actual medical practice decry these techniques as wasteful. The United States has thirty-four CT scanners per million Americans, compared to twelve in Canada and eight in Britain. The United States has almost twenty-seven MRI machines per million people compared to about six per million in Canada and Britain.
>
> **10. Americans are responsible for the vast majority of all health care innovations.** The top five U.S. hospitals conduct more clinical trials than all the hospitals in any other developed country. Since the mid- 1970s, the Nobel Prize in medicine or physiology has gone to U.S. residents more often than recipients from all other countries combined. In only five of the past thirty-four years did a scientist living in the United States not win or share in the prize. Most important recent medical innovations were developed in the United States.
>
> Despite serious challenges, such as escalating costs and care for the uninsured, the U.S. health care system compares favorably to those in other developed countries.

The author of that article is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a professor of radiology and chief of neuroradiology at Stanford University Medical School.

So, we saw that the quality of the U.S. health care system is good, but how can we lower the costs? Is government controlled rationing (like Canada) the answer, or is there another way?

Choice and competition in health care

The Center for Freedom and prosperity seems to have found another way: choice and competition.

Excerpt:

> In many ways, America's health care system is the best in the world. It has state-of-the-art technology and highly-skilled medical professionals. America is also home to most of the cutting-edge medical research in the world. However, there are also important problems, such as the "third-party payer" model where consumers rarely pay the full cost of their own health care. This creates an incentive for both excessive and expensive use of health care, a problem that would be exacerbated by current proposals for greater government control of the health care system.
>
> But the third-party payer problem is not the only reason that health care costs are high. State governments impose health insurance coverage mandates, often for "gold-plated" coverage, that drive up the cost of insurance. These regulations, which are unique to each state, are imposed at the behest of interest groups seeking to increase demand for their services. Combined with protectionist barriers that prevent consumers from buying policies from providers in other states, these mandates have severe unintended consequences:

> - They limit competition in the health insurance market by preventing insurance buyers from shopping across state lines, creating monopolistic and oligopolistic situations in many states;
> - They impose coverage mandates that force health insurance buyers to purchase coverage that they either do not want or cannot afford;
> - They force insurers to use community rating instead of experience rating, which means healthy people are forced to subsidize unhealthy people – to the effect that insurance premiums rise for many buyers and healthy people are driven out of the market.
>
> The symptoms of a dysfunctional health insurance market – foremost the significant number of uninsured, but also rising costs – are recognized by many legislators. But the problem cannot be solved, as some suggest, by means of increased government regulation. Indeed, government regulation is the cause of most problems in the health insurance market, not the solution.
>
> Restoring a free market health care system would be a daunting task, one that would involve, 1) sweeping reforms to the 45 percent of health care directly financed by government programs, and 2) a complete rewrite of the tax code to remove the distortions that exist in employer-provided health insurance. This paper focuses on the so-called third leg of the stool – policies to remove government barriers and restore competition to the market for individual health insurance.

Reforming the government-financed programs is definitely necessary because there is so much fraud and waste, as there always is with government, when compared to the private sector. Private sector businesses have to turn a profit, so they actually try to prevent fraud and waste.

Here's a documentary featuring John Stossel that explains the health insurance problem. (And featuring Regina Hertzlinger, too)

Part 1 of 5:

Part 2 of 5:

Part 3 of 5:

Part 4 of 5:

Part 5 of 5:

Choice and competition govern the way we buy things that we want normally, especially when we buy things online. I am pretty happy buying things from online retailers, because I have so many stores to choose from, with lots of product reviews and retailer ratings. I usually like what I buy, because I know that I am buying a good product from a good seller. And if I don't get a good outcome, I can leave a review of the product, service or seller as a warning for the next person. That helps to encourage producers to make quality products and services Seller rating helps to make sellers care for customers, and to accept returns on items that don't perform. Maybe we should do that with health care,

and just leave health insurance for catastrophic care – like car insurance is for accidents, but not for oil changes.

A closer look at the Christian doctrines of guilt and forgiveness

August 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Randy Alcorn's Eternal Perspectives web site.

Excerpt:

> It is a critical mistake to try to eliminate feelings of guilt without dealing with the root cause of guilt. No matter how often someone says "you have nothing to feel guilty about" to someone who has sinned against God and others, his guilt feelings will remain. Why? Because he knows better. Only by a denial of reality can he avoid guilt feelings. But such a denial is inherently unhealthy. It sets him up for emotional collapse whenever something reminds him of the sin. People need a permanent solution to their guilt problem, a solution based on reality, not denial or pretense.
>
> Because it offers a solution to the guilt problem found nowhere else, I will quote from the Bible and cite references to specific biblical books, chapters and verses. This way you may look up these verses in a Bible yourself and think about them on your own.
>
> Because of Christ's death on our behalf, forgiveness is available to all.
>
> The word "gospel" means "good news." The good news is that God loves you, and desires to freely forgive you for all your sins, no matter how ugly or destructive. But before the good news can be appreciated we must know the bad news. The bad news is that there is true moral guilt, that all of us are guilty of many moral offenses against God. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
>
> The Hebrew word for sin means literally "to miss the mark." Sin is falling short of God's holy standards. Sin separates us from a relationship with God (Isaiah 59:2). Sin deceives us and makes us think that wrong is right and right is wrong (Proverbs 14:12). The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).
>
> Jesus Christ is the Son of God who loved us so much that he became a member of the human race to deliver us from our sin problem (John 3:16). He came to identify with us in our humanity and our weakness, but did so without being tainted by our own sin, self-deception and moral failings (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15-16). Jesus died on the cross as the only one worthy to pay the penalty for our sins that was demanded by the holiness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). Being God, and being all-powerful, he rose from the grave, defeating sin and conquering death (1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 54-57).
>
> When Christ died on the cross for us, he said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). The

> Greek word (*teleo*) translated "it is finished" was commonly written across certificates of debt when they were canceled. It meant "Paid in Full." Christ died so that the certificate of debt consisting of all our sins could once and for all be marked, "Paid in Full."

Here's an article from CARM that talks about feeling guilty after getting forgiveness. Excerpt:

> There is an important lesson you need to learn about forgiveness that begins with understanding two things: justification and sanctification. Justification is God's legal declaration upon a sinner in which the sinner is **declared** righteous in God's sight; this is also known as salvation. Sanctification is God working in the Christian, through the Holy Spirit, to make the Christian more like Christ. Justification is instantaneous; sanctification lasts a lifetime. Justification is easy because we receive it by faith (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:8). Sanctification is difficult because it is something we do in cooperation with God as He works in our hearts daily. If we are not very sanctified in our actions, thoughts, and words, we are still justified; we are still saved because of Jesus. Justification does not depend upon our sanctification. In other words, our salvation is not dependent on our works in any way. Justification (salvation) is based upon what Jesus did. Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24). Jesus paid for our sins, all of them. They are gone because He removed them. It is all because of Jesus and what He did, and not because of what we have done. Praise be to Him.
>
> Now, I have a question for you. Can you earn your salvation or do anything at all to merit forgiveness from God? No, of course not. That is why salvation is by faith, and not by works or faith **and** works. If you did not get your salvation by your works, then you do not keep it by your works, either. In other words, you do not keep your salvation by doing good or by suffering for your sins so that you might, somehow, be made good enough to be with God. It can never happen!
>
> Finally, here is the point. Some Christians, after they have committed a sin, punish themselves by retaining the guilt of their sin and do not receive the full forgiveness of Christ until they have put themselves through enough suffering that they have then "earned" the right to be forgiven. Of course, this isn't the intention of holding on to guilt, but sometimes it's the underlying reason. It is a danger because it is nothing more than trying to earn the forgiveness of God through our works; in this case, through suffering. This is an insult to the cross of Christ.
>
> Now, I am not saying that we should never feel guilty for doing something wrong. I am saying that you should confess your sins and be forgiven (1 John 1:9). Once confessed and forgiven, it is wrong to harbor the feelings of guilt as a way to punish yourself so that afterwards you might feel you've done enough to "feel" good enough to have fellowship with God. **That** is what's wrong, and it is sin. If that is what you are doing, then you need to realize that God does not

> require you to pay for your sins through feeling guilty. He has already paid the full price. Your part is to humbly and truly confess your sin to the Lord, turn from it, and leave it. By looking to Jesus and what He has done, you can let the guilt and the guilty feelings fall away from you. Put your eyes on Jesus. Praise Him for His great love and forgiveness, and continue in your walk of sanctification. Lay it all before the cross.

I think the key thing to look for when you are asking for forgiveness is that you have to be sure that what you did really was wrong, based on the Scripture, whether it worked out for you or not. If you do something that the Bible forbids, then there is no excuse for what you did. No desire that you have allows you to sin. No noble purpose you have allows you to sin. No unfair condition allows you to sin. No imagined success or hope of victory allows you to sin. No failure of anyone else allows you to sin. Either you sinned or you didn't. If you think you didn't sin then you're not needing forgiveness, and you don't have it. If you think you did sin, then you can get forgiveness if you ask Jesus for it, and if you know that he is able to give forgiveness to you.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford university

August 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of my favorite lectures, by one of the people I admire the most for his scientific work and robust, evangelical Christian faith.

About Michael Strauss:

His full biography is here. (I removed his links from my excerpt text below)

Excerpt:

> I had an interest in science and theology, so in 1977 I chose to go to Biola University where I could study both subjects in detail. I thoroughly enjoyed college and participated in intramural sports, was elected to student government, served as a resident assistant, competed in forensics, and studied a lot. As I neared college graduation my dual interest continued so I applied to seminary and to graduate school. After graduating *summa cum laude* from Biola, I decided to pursue a graduate degree in physics at UCLA.
>
> During my first few years of graduate school, I developed an increased interest in quantum mechanics and subatomic physics and decided to do research in a field that dealt with these subjects. I joined a High Energy Physics experimental group doing research at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to actively participate in research at SLAC. I graduated in 1988 with my Ph.D in High Energy Physics (a.k.a. Elementary Particle Physics). If you would like to know more about High Energy Physics, the Particle Data Group at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory has a very nice interactive adventure that teaches you all about the subject. My research advisor was professor Charles Buchanan and my disertation was titled "A Study of Lambda Polarization and Phi Spin Alignment in Electron-Positron Annihilation at 29 GeV as a Probe of Color Field Behavior."
>
> After graduation, I accepted a post-doctoral research position with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I continued to do research at SLAC where I joined the SLD experiment. My research interests centered on the SLD silicon pixel vertex detector. I wrote most of the offline software for this device, and did physics analysis which used the vertex detector, including tagging *b* quark events for flavor specific QCD (Quantum Chromodynamics) analysis. In the seven years I was employed by UMASS, I only spent 3 days on the Amherst campus. The rest of the time was spent in California.
>
> […]In August 1995, I accepted a job as an Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of Oklahoma (OU) in Norman, Oklahoma. The University of Oklahoma has a vibrant high energy physics research group involved in experiments at the

> Fermi National Accelerator Center (Fermilab), and CERN. I joined the DØ experiment at Fermilab where I continue to do research in elementary particle physics. As a member of the DØ collaboration I have made contributions to the testing of silicon sensors for the upgraded vertex detector, to the track finding algorithms, to a measurement of the photon production cross section which probes the gluon content of protons, and to other QCD measurements. I am currently studying properties of *B* mesons that contain a *b*-quark, the production cross section of jets coming from quarks and gluons, and other QCD analyses. At CERN, I am a collaborator on the ATLAS detector.
>
> I received tenure in 2001 and was promoted to the rank of Professor in the summer of 2010. Most of the time at OU I have taught introductory physics classes to physics majors, engineers, and life science majors. In these classes I have used a number of interactive techniques to facilitate student participation and learning. I have been privileged to win a few awards for my teaching. In 1999, the Associated Students selected me as the Outstanding Professor in the College of Arts and Science, and in 2000 I was awarded the BP AMOCO Foundation Good Teaching Award. In 2002, I was given the Regents Award for Superior Teaching. I received the Carlisle Mabrey and Lurine Mabrey Presidential Professorship in 2006 which is given to "faculty members who excel in all their professional activities and who relate those activities to the students they teach and mentor."

He seems to have done a fine job of integrating his faith with a solid career in physics research. It would be nice if we were churning out more like him, but that would require the church to get serious about the integration between science and faith.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips, one of which I was able to try out recently at IHOP, and it worked.

You can also listen to the audio here. (MP3)

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been

tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

William Lane Craig defends Michele Bachmann's Christian faith

August 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The world foremost living Christian academic debater defends Michele Bachmann from the scurrilous charges of the secular left elite.

The MP3 file is here. (13 MB | 14 minutes)

My friend Dennis Fuller sent him the New Yorker article, and he made this podcast. If anyone can defend Michele's faith and her Christian views, it's William Lane Craig. He calls the New York article "religious McCarthyism". His purpose here is not really to defend Michele, but more to defend the works of Francis Schaeffer.

In case you'd like to see who William Lane Craig is, and what he can do, watch this debate between Craig and Christopher Hitchens, the famous atheist.

That's why he's number one.

More about Michele Bachmann

Speeches:

- Michele Bachmann's Republican Leadership Conference speech
- Michele Bachmann's speech at the Right Online Conference

Reactions from her first debate performance:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

Profiles of Michele Bachmann:

- ABC News
- WORLD Magazine

And here are some of her media interviews and speeches in the House of Representatives.

Related posts

- New Michele Bachmann interviews on the economy
- MUST-HEAR: Michele Bachmann gives the best speech ever
- Michele Bachmann beats RINO Mitt Romney in fundraising
- Michele Bachmann looking presidential against the liberal media
- Michele Bachmann courts homeschoolers in Iowa speech
- Michele Bachmann and Paul Ryan on the Wisconsin teacher union pensions
- Video and transcripts of response speeches by Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann
- What was the context of Michele Bachmann's "armed and dangerous" comment?

- AT LAST: Michele Bachmann open to presidential run in 2012
- Megyn Kelly and Michele Bachmann on the Bush tax cut deal
- CNS News interviews Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann requests the resignation of Attorney General Eric Holder
- Michele Bachmann attacks government bailout of unions
- Michele Bachmann makes the case for limited government
- Why is the left so angry with Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin?
- Michele Bachmann on Fox News with Laura Ingraham
- Democrats kill Michele Bachmann's attempt to freeze federal salaries
- Michele Bachmann on the US taxpayer-funded bailout of Greece
- Michele Bachmann explains the Obama's Wall Street bailout bill
- Michele Bachmann promises to work to repeal Obamacare
- Video of Michele Bachmann defending unborn children
- Michele Bachmann's passionate and inspiring speech at CPAC 2010
- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama's latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare's rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

Academic researchers gather for conference on… pedophilia?

August 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> If a small group of psychiatrists and other mental health professionals have their way at a conference this week, pedophiles themselves could play a role in removing pedophilia from the American Psychiatric Association's bible of mental illnesses — the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), set to undergo a significant revision by 2013. Critics warn that their success could lead to the decriminalization of pedophilia.
>
> The August 17 Baltimore conference is sponsored by B4U-ACT, a group of pro-pedophile mental health professionals and sympathetic activists. According to the conference brochure, the event will examine "ways in which minor-attracted persons [pedophiles] can be involved in the DSM 5 revision process" and how the popular perceptions of pedophiles can be reframed to encourage tolerance.
>
> Researchers from Harvard University, the Johns Hopkins University, the University of Louisville, and the University of Illinois will be among the panelists at the conference.
>
> B4U-ACT has been active attacking the APA's definition of pedophilia in the run up to the conference, denouncing its description of "minor-attracted persons" as "inaccurate" and "misleading" because the current DSM links pedophilia with criminality.
>
> "It is based on data from prison studies, which completely ignore the existence of those who are law-abiding," said Howard Kline, science director of B4U-ACT, in a July 25, 2011 press release. "The proposed new diagnostic criteria specify ages and frequencies with no scientific basis whatsoever."
>
> The press release announced a letter the group sent to the APA criticizing its approach, and inviting its leaders to participate in the August 17 conference. "The DSM should meet a higher standard than that," Kline continued. "We can help them, because we are the people they are writing about."

My previous article (see below for link) along these lines talked about how arguments are now being made to advance polygamy, using the same reasoning that was used to push for same-sex marriage. Social conservatives always get a bad rap for being party poopers and raining on everyone's fun and "liberty". I wonder if things will ever go far enough to where normal people realize that children need to be protected, and that can sometimes mean telling grown-ups NO.

Right now, it seems as though society is in a place where moral judgments have been

outlawed, because it makes people feel bad to be judged. It seems to me that the people who say that there should be no moral boundaries are winning.

Comments to this post will be strictly filtered in accordance with the Obama administration's laws restricting speech on controversial topics.

UPDATE: My friend ECM just linked this story on Facebook and also put this post by Robert Stacy McCain as a follow-up.

Excerpt:

Since the Sexual Revolution of the 1960s, the Freudian concept of "repression" has been hijacked by the advocates of liberation, who insist that it is an infringement of civil rights to expect people to resist sexual urges. I've sometimes called this the "Desire Is Destiny" theory of sexuality, but you could also think of it as a particular manifestation of the Veruca Salt Syndrome: *I want what I want and I want it now!*

Given the high-profile status of the Official Gay Rights Movement as a loudly influential constituency of the Democratic Party, we most often encounter this liberationist argument in association with homosexuality, and most people never even notice how this dangerous idea — the belief that we are entitled *as a matter of right* to the satisfaction of our erotic desires — is well-nigh ubiquitous throughout our society.

When you see a businessman divorce his wife of 30 years in order to marry his receptionist, or when Mary Kay LeTourneau wrecks her life to pursue a taboo romance with Vili Fualaau, these are manifestations of the same basic concept at the root of the gay-rights lobby's "born that way" argument: Desire is destiny, and of all the happiness that we are free to pursue, no pursuit is more important than a sexual partner who fulfills our deepest longings.

When a belief so pervades a culture as this one has pervaded our culture, it becomes impossible for most people to understand it rationally, for they have no other frame of reference. We might compare it to liberal bias in the news media. As I've often said, most journalists don't notice liberal bias for the same reason fish don't notice water — it's everywhere, and it's all they've ever known.

So, too, with the Desire Is Destiny theory of sexuality, promulgated so relentlessly (first by Kinsey, then by Hugh Hefner, and then by damned near *everybody*) that we cannot think about sex in any other terms. What is overlooked is that this liberationist theory denies the power of human will and human choice. If we desire someone, the liberationist argument would have us believe, we must act on that desire or else suffer psychological trauma as a result of the (harmful) repression of our desire. The only "moral" standard by which any such pursuit may be judged is whether the resulting sexual encounter is between *consenting adults*.

Stacy wrote a lot about this in that post. I recommend reading the whole thing. Although he is a popular conservative blogger, Stacy is not afraid to take on these cultural issues. In fact, I am linking to him on another topic in the 6 PM post.

Related posts

- Law professor uses same-sex marriage law to argue for legalizing polygamy
- Queen's University feminist professor says that polygamy should be permitted
- Taxpayer-funded polygamy in the UK, France and Canada
- British Columbia Supreme Court considers striking down ban on polygamy

If a small group of psychiatrists and other mental health professionals have their way at a conference this week, pedophiles themselves could play a role in removing pedophilia from the American Psychiatric Association's bible of mental illnesses — the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), set to undergo a significant revision by 2013. Critics warn that their success could lead to the decriminalization of pedophilia.

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APA spokeswoman Erin Connors told The Daily Caller in an emailed statement that her organization was not participating in the conference and would not comment on its aims.

In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter

August 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Robert Stacy McCain has the whole story.

Excerpt:

> Say hello to Soya Keaveney, shown in a bikini photo she posed for at age 12, when the British girl was featured in a July 2008 magazine article:
>
> Wearing a skimpy bikini and **flaunting herself in an overtly sexual manner**, Soya looks every bit the wannabe glamour model. . . .
> **Soya never goes out without putting on eyeliner and mascara**, although once at school she's often told to remove it by her teachers. Shockingly, she also frequently wears **padded bras, short skirts, cropped tops, high heels and fishnet tights**.
>
> And now, the sequel:
>
> A SCHOOLGIRL who posed aged 12 for controversial bikini pictures in a magazine is now pregnant at 15 — to the joy of her mum. . . .
> Soya got pregnant by a **17-year-old boyfriend** who is allowed by Janis to stay overnight at the family home.
> **Jobless single mum Janis, 48, said she was delighted because the council will now have to give her a bigger house**. . . .
> She added: "Our three-bedroom place was already overcrowded with her **sisters Coco and Ritzy, her brother Tarot, Soya's boyfriend Jake and one of her sister's babies**.
> "Once the new baby comes the **council will have to find us a place with four or five bedrooms**. . . .
> "**I'm sure she'll make a wonderful mum** and will teach her children discipline like I have."
>
> So "mum" Janis, 48, has apparently never had a husband or a job, and lives with her four children, one of them already herself a mother and the other now pregnant by the 17-year-old boyfriend whom Janis permitted to spend the night in their 3-bedroom public housing apartment. All of this social pathology is *subsidized by the British taxpayer!*

But there's more. I just posted about this single mother of ten children who is receiving £30,000-a-year in benefits.

Excerpt:

> A mother-of-ten who nets more than £30,000-a-year in benefits has begged for charity donations to help raise her brood – because her state 'wage' is not

> enough.
>
> Moira Pearce, 34, has insisted her weekly government handout of £600 is insufficient to feed and clothe her children and she needs donations to survive.
>
> The single mum – whose kids are fathered by four ex-partners – has insisted her range of child and family allowance benefits do not meet her weekly outgoings.
>
> Her annual payments funded by the public purse work out at a staggering £31,200-a-year – or £3,120 per child.
>
> Ms Pearce – who lives with unemployed ex-boyfriend Mark Austin, 19, seven daughters and three sons – now wants extra help to save her from going under.

Recall another recent story I posted about that has yet another example of single motherhood by choice – subsidized by the feminist welfare state.

Excerpt:

> She tells her children to do as she says and not as she does.
>
> But the words of mother of 14 Joanne Watson – who receives more than £2,000 a month in state handouts – have fallen on deaf ears.
>
> Her 15-year-old daughter Mariah is pregnant, the father has 'left the scene', and the youngster is about to start living off benefits.
>
> Mrs Watson, 40, is raising her giant brood alone after parting from her husband John, 46, three years ago, and breaking up with subsequent partner Craig le Sauvage, 35, last year.
>
> Despite this, she has still managed to squirrel away enough cash for a £1,600 breast enhancement and a sunbed. She claims she has always encouraged her daughters to use contraception – but, inevitably, it seems they would rather follow the family tradition.
>
> Mariah's pregnancy comes after Mrs Watson's oldest daughter Natasha, 22, got pregnant with her son Branford, now six, when she was 16. Her second eldest daughter Shanice, 19, also got pregnant at 16 with her 22-month-old son Marley.
>
> Mariah says she has no concerns about becoming a teenage mother, as it seems the most natural thing in the world. Initially, she and her child will be supported by the taxpayer.
>
> She is expected to move into a housing complex for single mothers and will receive supplementary benefit and child allowance for her baby.
>
> The youngster, who is due to have a boy, said: 'I'm not nervous. I've been around babies my whole life so I know what to expect and that I can handle it. The father isn't involved and I don't want him to be either. I'm really excited and think I will be a great mum.'

And studies show that this is being passed on from mother to daughter.

Excerpt:

> Girls who grow up without their fathers are at more at risk of becoming pregnant while still teenagers, long-term studies in the US and New Zealand suggest.
>
> Researchers say the absence of biological fathers from the home is the most significant factor for teenage pregnancy.
>
> The link between a father's absence and teenage girls having sex has long been noted, but many researchers have attributed it to factors associated with divorce such as poverty and family conflict. But the new findings suggest the link is more direct.
>
> The study's author, Bruce Ellis, said: "These findings may support social policies that encourage fathers to remain in families with their children." This would not apply to families with high conflict or violence.
>
> Dr Ellis, who teaches at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, said the findings warranted serious attention in Australia, which has the sixth highest teenage pregnancy rate in the world, according to an article published Medical Journal of Australia last month.
>
> Dr Ellis worked with teams of scientists from the Christchurch School of Medicine and three US universities. Nearly 800 American and New Zealand girls were tracked from early in life to age 18.
>
> The study revealed that the earlier a father left, the greater the risk of teenage pregnancy. Rates increased from about one in 20 in the US sample and one in 30 in the NZ sample for girls whose fathers were present, to one in three in the US and one in four in NZ for girls whose father left early in their life. Early absence was defined as the first five years of a girl's life.
>
> Girls who grew up in otherwise socially and economically privileged homes were not protected, Dr Ellis said.

When a woman grows up in a home where money is delivered by government check, she has no idea what men are for. She chooses men solely based on physical appearance, popularity, and peer approval, and she has no idea what love really looks like between men and women. That's why they repeat the mistakes of their mothers. And it's not a problem that can be solved by confiscating more money from working fathers and giving it to single mothers – even wealthy single mother homes are not immune. If men are not seen as protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders *in the home they grow up in*, then they will choose "bad boy" predatorial men as sexual partners, using shallow criteria to judge them – like the 180-second rule. This is exactly what feminism dictates, since feminism denies that men have the traditional sex roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. Young women growing up in single mother families have learned to resent men who make exclusive truth claims, especially about religion, and exclusive moral claims, too. They prefer the moral relativist men, who have postmodernist/universalist views of religion. The only difference in men that they know is strictly on physical appearance – what else are men supposed to do other that look good

and be fun?

I think that this social trend is most reasonably blamed on Labor Party MP Harriet Harman, the most anti-family, anti-marriage, anti-father politician the UK has ever seen. Her militant feminist policies have taken money away from working fathers in intact marriages in order to redistribute it to women who choose to have premarital sex and then to get pregnant out of wedlock. This is now considered "normal" in the UK, and it's because of Harriet Harman's feminism-inspired push against traditional marriage, which she views as sexist. It is no surprise to anyone in the know that the fist generation of militant socialist feminists would raise the first generation of unmarried mothers. Single motherhood is the direct result of feminism – they want to replace men with government handouts.

Read more to find out more about how fatherlessness harms children, and leads to child poverty and child abuse. We have to stop this, and the only way to do that is to get informed and to persuade others. We can't continue to hurt children like this.

Related posts

- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama's new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being

- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?

Good news for pro-lifers from Arizona and Texas

August 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Governor Jan Brewer

Good news for pro-lifers from Arizona!

Excerpt:

> Thanks to a comprehensive pro-life law a court recently upheld, the Planned Parenthood abortion business will be stopping abortion at seven locations throughout the state, the abortion agency announced today.
>
> As LifeNews.com reported earlier this month, the Arizona Court of Appeals issued a decision upholding a pro-life law that protects the health and safety of women and their unborn children by giving them information they don't normally receive.
>
> The Arizona Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in June in Planned Parenthood Arizona v. Horne, a case the abortion business filed which challenges key aspects of the 2009 Abortion Consent Act. The law is a pro-life measure Governor Jan Brewer signed which tells women of the risks associated with and alternatives to abortion. Planned Parenthood sued the state soon after its signing and a Superior Court judge blocked the law from taking effect while the case moves forward.
>
> The law will now go into effect and it makes it so Arizona will require a notarized parental signature before an abortion can be performed on a minor child, women will be provided with full and accurate information by a doctor in person at least 24 hours before an abortion, medical professionals cannot be forced to perform

> abortions if it contradicts their sincerely held religious or moral beliefs and non-doctors will not be permitted by law to perform surgical abortions.
>
> **Responding to the decision, Planned Parenthood announced today that it will no longer do abortions at seven locations — including communities outside of Phoenix and Tucson. Planned Parenthood President Bryan Howard told the Arizona Republic newspaper the abortion business would be appealing the court's decision but it has no choice to stop doing abortions until and unless another court rules because the laws are in effect now.**

Jan Brewer is the famous Republican governor of Arizona. She's tough as nails!

Republican Governor Rick Perry

And now more good news for pro-lifers from Texas.

Excerpt:

> Still reeling from funding cuts in Texas, Planned Parenthood is closing clinics and merging affiliates throughout the state, Texas Right to Life reports.
> The national abortion giant received a major blow this summer when Texas Governor and presidential contender Rick Perry signed into law a bill that stripped the organization of its funding, and prohibited the state government from contracting with any organization that provides abortions.
>
> A July report in the Gainesville Daily Register confirmed the closure of a Planned Parenthood clinic in Gainesville as a direct result of these legislative developments.
>
> Texas Right to Life Legislative Director John Seago told LifeSiteNews.com that his organization called over 70 Planned Parenthood clinics in Texas and confirmed six additional closures in Arlington, Mesquite, Plano, Sherman, Terrell, and Waxahachie. All seven locations are scheduled to be closed by the end of September.

> Additionally, Planned Parenthood's website indicates that a center in Groesbeck is "temporarily closed."
>
> […]He also said that a planned merger between Planned Parenthood's Waco affiliates in Central Texas and their Austin affiliates is believed to be related to budget cuts, based on press reports of layoffs related to the merger.
>
> […]Elizabeth Graham, Director of Texas Right to Life, called the developments "historic for the pro-life movement and the protection of women's health."
>
> Pro-life advocates in the state are also celebrating an end to tax-funded abortions as a result of the new law, which denies state funds to county hospital districts that use local tax money to fund abortion services.
>
> The Austin American-Statesman reports that the Central Health Board in Travis County, formerly the only county in the state financing abortions with tax revenue, voted unanimously last week to end publicly funded abortion services.
>
> As LifeSiteNews reported in April, funds stripped from family planning organizations have been re-allocated to pregnancy centers, among other programs.
>
> According to a recent Texas Tribune report, the Texas legislature allocated an additional $300,000 to the state's Alternative to Abortion Services program, for a total of $8.3 million in state funding.

Don't mess with Texas.

Rick Perry's record on teaching the controversy is mixed

August 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> It has to be challenging to be a presidential candidate. After all, you are expected to dispense wisdom (or at least comments) on almost everything under the sun, and you never know what question is going to come up next. Still, some questions should be easier to anticipate than others. For example, it has become pretty typical for candidates (especially Republican ones) to be grilled at some point about their views on evolution. So Governor Rick Perry shouldn't have been surprised when asked earlier today about his own views on evolution, especially given all the controversy over the topic in his home state of Texas. What *was* a surprise was Perry's answer. According to the *New York Times*, Perry claimed: "In Texas, we teach both creationism and evolution in our public schools."
>
> That's news to me. In fact, Texas public schools do not teach creationism, at least not anywhere in the approved curriculum. But under science standards adopted in 2009, Texas students *are* asked to "analyze, evaluate, and critique scientific explanations… including examining all sides of scientific evidence of those scientific explanations, so as to encourage critical thinking by the student." This sort of critical inquiry is supposed to apply to the discussion of Darwinian theory, and Texas students are also expected to "analyze and evaluate" the evidence for Darwinian claims about natural selection, mutations, cellular complexity, the fossil record, and more.
>
> Alas, most Texas schools probably don't engage in this sort of scientific weighing of the merits of Darwinian theory — due in large part to Perry's own education appointees! Earlier this summer, Perry's education commissioner recommended for use supplementary science curricula that fail to offer any critical analysis of Darwinian claims, contrary to the state's own science standards. At the same time, Perry's education commissioner allowed his staff to spike the one proposed curriculum that did try to follow the Texas science standards.
>
> Perry will likely be excoriated for his comments by those on the left who think Perry is somehow a proponent of creationism. Ironically, the Texas Education Agency that Perry oversees has done its best to scuttle even a scientific discussion of the limits of Darwinian claims.

He's not as good as Michele Bachmann on this education issue. I think that Bachmann would push control down to the state and local level, and abolish the federal Department of Education. She has had personal conflicts with the public school system – she's hostile

to them. She had conflicts with the school board, she homeschooled her own children, she started a charter school. I think she has had it with educational bureaucrats, and she would do more radical things to put control of children's education in the hands of parents. She would be more likely to emphasize choice and competition, which is proven to lower costs and raise quality. She is more of a radical, and Perry isn't radical enough.

Can atheists distinguish between right and wrong actions?

August 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Take a look at two atheists who try to affirm that morality is simultaneously objective and subjective.

Atheists deny that there is any design for the universe – they think there is no Designer. That means there is no way that the universe ought to be, objectively speaking. I.e. – when there were no humans around, there was no way the universe ought to have been. When humans appear, they evolve arbitrary customs and conventions in order to live together more peaceably. These are not real in any sense – they are just aids to survival and group cohesion. Different groups in different times and places evolve different rules, and no set of rules is any better than any other, because there is no way we ought to be. We call this atheistic/evolutionary form of morality "moral relativism". It stands in contrast with the theistic view of morality, which is called "moral objectivism".

In their view, slavery is not really right or wrong, it's just a matter of opinion decided by majority rule in different social groups living in different places and times. Some groups in certain places and times think it's right, and some groups in some places and times think it's wrong. In our view (theism), God creates the universe, and he designs it to be a certain way. There is a certain way we ought to be. So if God thinks slavery is wrong, then it really is wrong, and his opinion of right and wrong becomes a duty for us.

What's wrong with moral relativism?

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Australian site Faith Interface.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as

> most are quick to impose their own moral rules like “It’s wrong to push your own morality on others”. This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don’t let them make any moral statements without asking first them to ground morality on their worldview. And that’s because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can’t answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people’s personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It’s all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be “it depends”. It depends on the person who is speaking because it’s a subjective claim, not an objective claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave, on atheism. What atheists are really talking about when they say that something is right or that something is wrong is that in our group, we have evolved these beliefs that this behavior is good or this behavior is bad – we have these group preferences.

The horror of atheism, then, is that they reduce murder and slaver to being *matters of opinion*. And these majority opinions are *arbitrary* and can be different in different times and places. When you are talking to an atheist, you are talking to a person who literally thinks that the decision to rape or not rape is the same as the decision to drive on the left side of the road or the right side of the road. In both cases, it’s just something that groups decide one way or another arbitrarily, depending on how they evolved in different places and at different times.

All Christians should be able to draw out the moral relativism of atheists and challenge them on it, because once they are forced to affirm objective morality, they have to affirm God as the moral lawgiver. Take some time and read the linked article, then ask your atheistic friends to justify their talk about right and wrong. What do they mean by right and wrong? Why would they sacrifice their own self-interest in order to do “right”? Is the only reason that atheists have to be “good” far of being caught and punished by their group for breaking these arbitrary rules that vary by place and time? Do atheists only do the “right” thing when others are watching?

Obama’s new fuel economy standards will raise car costs by over $5000

August 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From U.S. News and World Report.

Excerpt:

> Within a span of three weeks, President Obama has announced back-to-back new fuel economy standards for passenger vehicles and trucks. New regulations put in place will require a corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) of 54.5 miles per gallon for passenger vehicles by 2025. New standards for trucks will require a 10 to 20 percent increase in fuel efficiency before 2018.
>
> Whether President Obama realizes it or not, fuel efficiency does not come without compromising other aspects of a vehicle. One feature that will undoubtedly be affected by these new rules is vehicle cost.
>
> According to a study conducted by the Center for Automotive Research, the new passenger vehicle standards could eventually cost consumers an additional $5,000-$6,000 for each new vehicle. Even if gas prices rose to $6.00 per gallon, the average American driver may not recoup that huge price increase through fuel savings. Similarly, new rules for trucks are expected to add an additional $1,050 for work trucks and $6,220 for supercab tractors.
>
> One of the most efficient ways to increase the amount of miles a vehicle can travel per gallon of gasoline is to reduce the weight of the vehicle. Therefore, auto manufacturers will be forced to make cars that are smaller and lighter in order to meet President Obama’s new CAFE standards. Far from a win for consumers, this type of government-knows-best policy is the exact opposite of how a market economy functions. Instead of making their own demands, car buyers will be forced to comply with a federal mandate that insists on prioritizing fuel efficiency above all else—safety, comfort, size, and performance all take a back seat. Car buyers will be forced to pay more and have fewer vehicle options to choose from.
>
> Given the fact that this is such an important policy goal for President Obama, it is fair to look at his own driving habits. The president is chauffeured in a vehicle known as The Beast, a 10,000-pound limousine that gets 8 miles to the gallon. In order to achieve maximum safety and security for the president, the vehicle must be extremely heavy which, of course, decreases its fuel efficiency.

Obviously, lighter vehicles are not nearly as safe for families as heavier vehicles, so there will be increases in traffic fatalities as well.

This is consistent with Obama’s desire for equality. Americans are too wealthy – we need to produce less and consume less so that we are more like other nations. Nations like

North Korea and Cuba. Naturally, Obama himself will be exempt from these standards, just as he and his family are exempt from Obamacare. Oh, and his union supporters are also getting exemptions from Obamacare in record numbers.

Fox News: cowardly atheists refuse to debate William Lane Craig

August 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this what atheism amounts to?
From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> American Evangelical theologian William Lane Craig is ready to debate the rationality of faith during his U.K tour this fall, but it appears that some atheist philosophers are running shy of the challenge.
>
> This month president of the British Humanist Association, Polly Toynbee, pulled out of an agreed debate at London's Westminster Central Hall in October, saying she "hadn't realized the nature of Mr. Lane Craig's debating style."
>
> Lane Craig, who is a professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, Calif., and author of 30 books and hundreds of scholarly articles, is no stranger to the art of debate and has taken on some of the great orators, such as famous atheists Christopher Hitchens and Sam Harris. Harris once described Craig as "the one Christian apologist who has put the fear of God into many of my fellow atheists".
>
> Responding to Toynbee's cancellation, Lane Craig commented: "These folks (atheists) can be very brave when they are alone at the podium and there's no one there to challenge them. But one of the great things about these debates is that, it allows both sides to be heard on a level playing field, and for the students in the audience to make up their own minds about where they think the truth lies."
>
> […]Others have refused to challenge Lane Craig, too, including Richard Dawkins, one of the Four Horseman of the new Atheist movement, which include Hitchens,

> Harris and Daniel Dennett.

Craig has debated Hitchens, Harris and Dennett, and defeated them all easily.

More:

> Dawkins, who has labeled the Roman Catholic Church "evil" and once called the Pope "a leering old villain in a frock," refused four separate invitations, extended through religious and humanist organizations, to take part in debates with Lane Craig during his fall tour.
>
> The controversy wafted into the British press after fellow atheist and philosophy lecturer, Daniel Came, accused Dawkins of simply being afraid, saying, "The absence of a debate with the foremost apologist for Christian theism is a glaring omission on your CV and is of course apt to be interpreted as cowardice on your part."

Here's an example of William Lane Craig debating the famous atheist Christopher Hitchens, arguably the top popular atheist in the world today.

Here's a review of that debate fromCommon Sense Atheism, a popular atheist web site.

Excerpt:

> I just returned from the debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens at Biola University. It was a bigger deal than I realized. Over 3,000 people were there, and groups from dozens of countries – including Sri Lanka, apparently – had purchased a live feed.
>
> Of three recent Craig debates, I was most looking forward to his matchup with Morriston, which has yet to be posted online. I was somewhat excited for his debate with Carrier, which was disappointing. I was least excited for this debate with Hitchens, but it was the only one in my area, so I went.
>
> The debate went exactly as I expected. Craig was flawless and unstoppable. Hitchens was rambling and incoherent, with the occasional rhetorical jab. Frankly, Craig spanked Hitchens like a foolish child. Perhaps Hitchens realized how bad things were for him after Craig's opening speech, as even Hitchens' rhetorical flourishes were not as confident as usual. Hitchens wasted his cross-examination time with questions like, "If a baby was born in Palestine, would you rather it be a Muslim baby or an atheist baby?" He did not even bother to give his concluding remarks, ceding the time instead to Q&A.

So why isn't there a British atheist brave enough to face Craig on his UK speaking tour?

Well, what William Lane Craig offers in his debates is a set of deductive arguments that are logically valid, and supported by the latest scientific evidence (which he has published in peer-reviewed scientific journals), and the consensus of academic historians, using *standard* historical methods. Atheists are ill-equipped to respond to this case, because atheism is not really a rational worldview that is based on evidence. It's really

adopted because people cannot be bothered with the demands of the moral law. They make these faith commitments about there being no evidence, or that religious people have blind faith, or that all religions are the same (especially the ones they haven't studied), or that religion is unfalsifiable. But the root cause is simply the desire to not have to care about right and wrong.

Consider the famous agnostic Aldous Huxley:

> "I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way that they find most advantegous to themselves… For myself, the philosophy of meaningless was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political."
> — Aldous Huxley in *Ends and Means*, 1937

What about the atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel?

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

The famous philosopher Mortimer Adler rejected religion for most of his life because it "would require a radical change in my way of life, a basic alteration in the direction of my day-to-day choices as well as in the ultimate objectives to be sought or hoped for …. The simple truth of the matter is that I did not wish to live up to being a genuinely religious person."

As G.K. Chesterton says,"The Christian way has not been tried and found wanting, it has been found to be *hard* and *left untried*". Atheists want to believe that there is no God, so they do. And they carefully avoid studying anything that might threaten what they want to believe – or having to *debate* people who might *challenge* what they want to believe.

What you will see from atheists instead of a willingness to study science and to debate qualified Christians is things like one-line ads on the sides of buses, lawsuits forbidding people to exercise their right to free speech, and demands that Christians not oppose abortion and slavery – because that cramps their pursuit of pleasure, don't you know.

Here's an example of an atheist learning about history from Bart Ehrman, a famous secular historian:

Of course, William Lane Craig has debated Bart Ehrman (video) as well. And defeated him. Badly.

Atheism really isn't a knowledge tradition. It's not really something that they think is true – it's just that they want to be hedonists, and they want you to stop making them feel guilty with your moral superiority and moral judgments and your "unfair" moral prohibitions on bestiality and infanticide. Often, these people believe that the universe is eternal, that there are millions of unobservable universes, and that unobservable aliens can explain the origin of life. Craziness. And yet they are allowed to vote. I'm scared that these people can vote – especially since most of them voted for 1.65 trillion dollar annual deficits, because of "hope and change". Maybe we should try to reform the education system to help them to get used to arguments, evidence and debates.

Does contemporary Christian music build up a lasting Christian faith?

August 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting account by a young woman who became secular by becoming very involved in Christian music and then jumped to secular music because it was better music.

Excerpt:

> "Who's in the House" is a hip-hop track about the presence of the Lord. Through megaphone distortion, Carman rapped a few lines: "You take him high / you take him low / you take JC wherever you go," then led into a call and response hook reminiscent of '80s-era De La Soul. "Tell me who's in the house? JC!"
>
> If you're wondering what teenager in her right mind would listen to a forty-year-old Vegas showman with a Jersey accent rap about Jesus, the answer is: me. In junior high, I saw Carman in concert three times. *The Standard* was the first CD I ever bought. I rocked out to Carman on my Walkman on the way to youth group and dished with my girlfriends about what a hottie he was. At the concerts, I bought his T-shirts and posters, and when he called out "Who's in the House?" I made my arms into letters, YMCA-style, with the rest of the crowd and shouted "JC!"
>
> I was homeschooled up until tenth grade, and my social life revolved around church. I grew up submersed in evangelical youth culture: reading *Brio* magazine, doing devotions in my *Youth Walk* Bible, eagerly awaiting the next installment of the *Left Behind* series, and developing a taste in music that ran the gamut from Christian rap to Christian pop to Christian rock.

And she ends with this:

> Basically, CCM caught on to the number one rule of coolness: don't let your marketing show. The best bands—the successful ones, at least—learned to gloss over the gospel message the same way TV producers camouflaged corporate sponsorship. Explicitly Christian lyrics prevented DC Talk from crossing over to the secular market in the '90s; today it's difficult to imagine their unapologetic faith making it in the Christian circuit.
>
> This trend spreads beyond CCM into many areas of evangelical culture. The church is becoming increasingly consumer-friendly. Jacob Hill, director of "worship arts" at New Walk Church, describes the Sunday service music as "exciting, loud, powerful, and relevant," and boasts that "a lot of people say they feel like they've just been at a rock concert." Over the past ten years, I've visited churches that have Starbucks kiosks in the foyer and youth wings decked out with air hockey tables. I've witnessed a preacher stop his sermon to play a five-

> minute clip from *Billy Madison*. I've walked into a sanctuary that was blasting the Black Eyed Peas's "Let's Get it Started" to get the congregation pumped for the morning's message, which was on joy. I have heard a *pastor* say, from a *pulpit*, "Hey, I'm not here to preach at anyone." And yet, in spite of these efforts, churches are retaining only 4 percent of the young people raised in their congregations.
>
> Despite all the affected teenage rebellion, I continued to call myself a Christian into my early twenties. When I finally stopped, it wasn't because being a believer made me uncool or outdated or freakish. It was because being a Christian no longer meant anything. It was a label to slap on my Facebook page, next to my music preferences. The gospel became just another product someone was trying to sell me, and a paltry one at that because the church isn't Viacom: it doesn't have a Department of Brand Strategy and Planning. Staying relevant in late consumer capitalism requires highly sophisticated resources and the willingness to tailor your values to whatever your audience wants. In trying to compete in this market, the church has forfeited the one advantage it had in the game to attract disillusioned youth: authenticity. When it comes to intransigent values, the profit-driven world has zilch to offer. If Christian leaders weren't so ashamed of those unvarnished values, they might have something more attractive than anything on today's bleak moral market. In the meantime, they've lost one more kid to the competition.

So, I'd like to look at whether listening to contemporary Christian music is a good way to build a strong faith that lasts.

Should people sing about things that they don't know are true?

I would not be comfortable singing about a state of affairs that I did not know was true. And yet, that is exactly what happens in churches and youth groups. Young people are brought up to sing about a story without any evidence that the story is true. Imagine what that does to a person – what are they thinking about the purpose of the singing? They don't know these things are true, but they sing anyway! And as they grow up, the church makes it a badge of honor to speak only about what the Bible says, and never links what the Bible says to anything in the real world. Naturally, as soon as children hit the university, they fall away. Their questions about the problem of evil, the problem of suffering, the problem of world of religious pluralism, the hiddenness of God, justice of Hell, etc. were never answered.

I think this anti-intellectual approach is really damaging. The impression of Christianity that young people will have is that truth doesn't matter, that you can sing about something just to be part of a group, and for emotional pleasure. Then with the end-of-the-world fiction and other Christian fiction – all for enjoyment, and all not connected to knowledge. How does any of that connect to the real world? When young people are taught that being a Christian has no connection to reason, evidence or the real world, then their Christianity doesn't survive leaving the safety of their home and church. If

Christian parents wanted their children to be able to integrate their faith with what is taught at the university, then they would have to do better than singing, end-of-the-world fiction, praying about romantic relationships, and so on.

Christian music reinforces the idea that Christianity makes you feel good

The problem with Christian music is that a person listening to it can quickly develop the idea that what Christianity is about is having happy feelings, because people feel happy when listening to music. I've noticed that a lot of Christians leave the faith because they have this idealized notion that the world should be a happy place, where no one ever feels bad. Then they find verses in the Bible that are exclusive and judgmental, and they leave the faith because Christianity is too "mean". This is especially the case with young women who are inclined to doubt God's existence because of the problem of evil and the doctrine of Hell. If young women are not aware of the reasons why Christianity is true, then the experience of being perceived by others as "mean" can cause them to abandon their faith. Social pressure is an enormous factor in the behavior of women – they want to be accepted and liked by everyone.

Those emotions of compassion and intuitions about happiness are not compatible with hard verses of the Bible and exclusive Christian doctrines. Many people If we teach children that happiness and doing good things are what Christianity is about, then eventually they will dump it when the open profession of their faith causes them to have bad feelings and to lose friends. I think Christian women especially feel pressure to jettison Christian rules when it comes to dating and marriage – because they want to be happy, and they think that the rules shouldn't stop them from pursuing happiness. If they don't know why the rules are there (truth) then they will just reject anything that conflicts with their intuitions, emotions and desire to be happy. If the purpose of life is to have good feelings about yourself, and to have everyone like you, then Christianity is not the answer. If the purpose of life is to know the truth and to live according to it, then Christianity is the answer.

English is not a subject that is very friendly to Christian beliefs

I note that she seems to have studied English at the undergraduate level and is currently studying it at graduate level, which I think is significant. English is well known to be a hotbed of postmodernism, deconstructionism, feminism and socialism on campuses. She would therefore be under enormous pressure there to abandon her faith, especially in order to get good grades. Nothing that she did as a young person would equip her to deal with the pressure from peers and teachers when challenged on her Christian faith. Singing, reading fiction, Bible reading and prayer do not help a young person who is confronted by peer pressure and secular left professors holding the grading pen – especially in English where marking of essays is subjective.

My first career choice was to be an English teacher – I won simultaneous awards for English and Computer Programming in high school (public school, not homeschool). But then I took an early university course in English, while still a high school student, and realized that it had been compromised by feminism and postmodernism and other

untestable ideologies. Personally, I think that mathematics, computer science and engineering are much safer fields for Christians to study. My background is in computer science, and I have an undergraduate and graduate degree in that area. These areas are safer because it is much harder for the professors to inject politics into the curriculum, so that students don't have to be forced to accept things on faith, without any critical thinking or debate. Math features answers that are right or wrong regardless of politics, and programming features programs that either run or not, regardless of religion.

It's not a good idea to stay a student all your life

To be a Christian, it helps to be able to have your own source of income so that you can buy books and debates to learn with. I have been working in the field of computer science for 15 years, starting in middle school, and have saved pretty much everything I've earned. I saved about half of what I make. I never take money from the government, although I accepted scholarships from the university because I just considered it a reduction in tuition. The problem with getting things for free is that you get what other people give you – in this case, the government and the university. If you want to rebel against the secular leftist zeitgeist, you have to have arms to rebel with – and arms cost money. William Lane Craig debates and F.A. Hayek books cost money. And you can't depend on the government or the university to provide you with those.

Our CCM woman seems to have been a student all her life. She doesn't have the skills or the money to make it on her own. She has to agree with them in order to get tuition, student loans, etc. – in order to live away from her parents. This would be another pressure on her to turn away from her Christian faith. She is trapped by not having any marketable skills that would allow her to earn a living without having to agree with anyone's views. Students also have the things they read handed to them – it's much harder for her to find the time to read things that the professors don't want her to read – and she could never bring those things up in class safely anyway. A lot of people who thrive on being told that they are good prefer to stay in school where it is easy to just do whatever the (secular left) teacher says in order to get good grades.

Avoid women who do not know why they believe what they say they believe

I just want to reiterate to Christian men that they should be asking questions of Christian women before falling in love with them, to make sure they know why they believe what they say they believe. Here are some questions to ask to find out if a woman is a solid Christian that should help men to detect women like the one who wrote the essay. This post may also be useful. Christian men: be careful with women like this who look good, but who fall away. Don't get hurt.

Related posts

- Is Christianity false or is it just mean and judgmental?
- Should Christians be prudent and responsible when planning their lives?
- Why do atheists like Dan Barker abandon their faith?
- Greg Koukl and Kevin DeYoung discuss Brian McLaren's apostasy

- What caused Da Vinci Code author Dan Brown to abandon his Christian faith?
- Why do young Christians become atheists in college?
- William Lane Craig asks John Dominic Crossan: do you believe in God?
- Is it ok to judge people? Is Hell a real place?
- Should you reject the Biblical notion of Hell based on emotions?
- Is there a Tea Party faction within the Christian Church? Who is it?
- Jay Richards investigates whether George Soros is funding Jim Wallis
- Why does talking about religion make people uncomfortable?
- Do people choose their religion based on their country of birth?
- How to talk to your co-workers about your faith
- Tom Sowell explains how to counter leftist indoctrination in the schools
- Doug Groothuis states the central problem with Rob Bell's book
- Does God scare people into loving him with the threat of Hell?
- Why doesn't God gives us more evidence that he exists?
- Book review of "If there's a God, why are there atheists?"
- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

Where are all the good men and why aren't men marrying?

August 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Captain Capitalism responded to an article on that topic, explaining why men aren't giving women what they want.

Excerpt from his massive bullet-point list:

- Did you hear of this "divorce fad" going around? Apparently men get to pay out the majority of the time be it alimony or child support.
- Did you hear about this "divorce fad" going around? Apparently 65% of the time it's women who initiate divorce.
- Kids cost around $500,000 each to raise. given employment prospects we can't afford that. Much rather buy a boat or frankly work all that much less.
- Hey, you hear about this federal budget deficit and debt? Apparently we elected this guy "Barack Obama" and a bunch of democrats into office who are now mortgaging the future. This means our expenses in the future will be higher. Well, of course us "foolish, immature, pooping, farting boys" were too "immature" to vote for him like you wise women, but then again we're too busy flinging poo at each other to ponder the future macro-economic ramifications of a collapsing dollar.
- Hey, you hear about this social security medicare thing? Apparently enough "smart wise women" disproportionately kept voting for democrats to essentially have those immature 20 something men pay for the livelihood for these aging people. This added expense on our futures make's it that much harder economically to commit to a wife and children.
- Hey, you hear about this "welfare state" "medicaid" thing? Apparently enough "smart wise women" disproportionately over the years voted in enough democrats to essentially replace the role of fathers with government programs making fathers not only unnecessary, but an increasingly risky and unrewarding proposition, not to mention, making it easier for women to just up and leave their husbands, because well, "they needed to find themselves" and the government will take care of the kids while they go pursue their EPL fantasy.
- Hey, did you hear about this "welfare state" thing? Apparently because we've now outsourced bringing up children to the government and have to create government jobs for all the "sociology majors" and "education majors"and "communications majors" our tax bill will go through the roof. Oh! Wait!!! No it doesn't! I forgot! I'm a guy! I can live on very little, work a crappy job, work part time, live in a crappy apartment with my buds and STILL have enough disposable income to play video games and buy booze.

Remember that 77% of young, unmarried women voted for Obama (70% of unmarried women, but 77% of young unmarried women). And research shows that women

consistently vote for bigger and bigger government, more wealth redistribution for the "poor", and more intrusion into the family by the state. More government means higher taxes, and that makes it harder for men to have the authority in the home that comes from being the principle provider.

Not only that, but you have problems like no-fault divorce and biased domestic violence laws. Not to mention how feminism in the schools have left men earning fewer and fewer degrees, so that men lose the lion's share of jobs during recessions. Women also lobbied Barack Obama to make sure that the stimulus was slanted towards preserving women's jobs. I've merely touched on *a few* of the incentives against marriage. I could list even more factors, such as the easy availability of hook-up sex – why should men commit to the wife when they can get the sex for free?

What to make of all these facts? Well, men don't like paying more in taxes and getting less liberty. It makes it harder for us to justify marriage rationally. We want to get married, but when we run the numbers, we see red, not black. Men can either afford marriage and family or government social programs, but we cannot afford both. We can either be husbands and fathers, or we can pay for welfare checks and social programs that replace men, for women who don't want to have to deal with relating to a man.

I think the problem of men not wanting to marry is caused by women actually believing feminism – that men and women are identical. Once you believe that, there is no special role that men are supposed to play, and no way to distinguish a man who fills that role from one who doesn't. According to feminism, which most young women believe, men aren't meant to be providers, protectors or moral/spiritual leaders. Chastity is out. A boring, good-paying job is out. Morality is out. Sobriety is out. Apologetics and theology are out.

What's in? Being good-looking, inoffensive, and entertaining. Women are not selecting responsible men because they think that the men can be changed to be responsible, through sex, or maybe through nagging, and eventually through the threat of losing all his money and custody of his children. Men aren't stupid. They've noticed that responsibility and morality are out, and they're acting like clowns because that's what women prefer when getting drunk and hooking up, the Duke University student and her report on all the men she slept with – they were graded by physical attractiveness, sexual technique, popularity and *athletic ability*.

Many women today accept feminism, with its strong emphasis on selfishness and career advancement. Those women end up wasting their 20s on their careers and only pursue men who are attractive and entertaining. They aren't looking to settle down with a protector/provider/moral leader/spiritual leader. They don't want anyone to judge them or lead them. (Just try offering a woman a book on apologetics, and you'll see what I mean). By the time they hit 35 and decide to get married, all the men are cautious. Men want to get married to women in their early 20s. What is the point of marrying a 35-year old woman who has lost her looks and her fertility? What is the value proposition for a man at that time? Plus, two decades of binge drinking, partying and hook-ups are not good

preparations for creating a helpful, loving wife. Men are not stupid. We know the difference between a bitter, cynical harpy and chaste, loving princess.

Men do what women expect them to do in order to get sex. Just read the peer-reviewed studies on hooking up. If women don't select men who can do specific things as husbands and fathers, then men won't prepare themselves to do specific things. If they are already getting sex for playing the fool, then why should they do more than play the fool? If women obsessed over Paul Ryan and William Lane Craig, then that's what men would aspire to. They don't, and so men don't. Mature men intimidate women with their strong opinions, moral judgments, and exclusive theological claims. Much better to have an immature man who is shallow and politically correct.

There is a way for women to get what they want from men, but they actually have to engage in conversations with men and find out what men want from women. And what men want from a marriage. What they want from children. What they want from government. What they want from schools. What they want from the workplace. What they want from the church. You can't take away everything men need to marry and then expect them to marry. Nagging, belittling, withholding sex and controlling are not incentives for men to marry. Every time you break a man down, that is one less husband and father candidate. And eventually, the money flow dries up for the sperm-banks and social programs that substitute for men. What will women do then?

For myself, I am NOT on the same track as secular men (video games, alcohol, girlfriends and TV). I'm earning and saving to support Christian scholars and apologetics events in churches and universities. That's my role right now until women destroy feminism with their own hands. Marriage is only good for me if it is good for God. And I need to be convinced that it will be good for God by whoever is applying for the job. I would like to see the reasons why I should marry in a woman's moral decisions, her studying of difficult apologetic topics, and her political and economic conservatism. I would like to see that she understands men and marriage and understands how marriage and parenting can serve God, if done in an unselfish, moral and disciplined way. No pursuing happiness. No reducing moral obligations to "legalism".

Making one woman feel happy with a diamond ring and an expensive wedding is not a good choice for me when I could spend a lot less money sponsoring a stack of debates over my lifetime on Christian topics, in front of hundreds of thousands of university students, or even in churches. There are ways that marriage could be a good deal for God, but I want to see the value proposition for marriage before I sign up. So far, most women seem to resent the idea that marriage should be have to be proven good for God. They resent being asked questions that test their authenticity and capabilities as Christians. But everything we do is for God, don't I have a right to ask what is in it for him? I think a lot of Christian men are asking that question. What's in it for God? In fact, Paul recommends the single life in 1 Cor 7 precisely because of the dampening effect that ineffective Christian women have on men. Most Christian women refuse to "woman up" and learn how to be a good wife and mother – so why should a man choose that?

Related posts

- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- Conservative woman blames liberal women for choosing bad men
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the “hook-up” culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama’s new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism’s war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?

Teacher's job in jeopardy due to opposition to same-sex marriage

August 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A former "Teacher of the Year" in Mount Dora, Fla. has been suspended and could lose his job after he voiced his objection to gay marriage on his personal Facebook page.
>
> Jerry Buell, a veteran American history teacher at Mount Dora High School, was removed from his teaching duties this week as school officials in Lake County investigate allegations that what he posted was biased towards homosexuals.
>
> "We took the allegations seriously," said Chris Patton, a communication officer with Lake County Schools. "All teachers are bound by a code of special ethics (and) this is a code ethics violation investigation."
>
> Patton said the school system received a complaint on Tuesday about something Buell had written last July when New York legalized same sex unions. On Wednesday, he was temporarily suspended from the classroom and reassigned.
>
> Patton said Buell has taught in the school system for 22 years and has a spotless record. Last year, he was selected as the high school's "Teacher of the Year."
>
> […]According to the school system, what Buell wrote on his private account was disturbing. They were especially concerned that gay students at the school might be frightened or intimidated walking into his classroom. Patton also disputed the notion that Buell's Facebook account is private.
>
> "He has (more than) 700 friends," he said. "How private is that – really? Social media can be troubling if you don't respect it and know that just because you think you are in a private realm – it's not private."
>
> Buell's attorney strongly disagreed and accused the school system of violating his First Amendment rights.
>
> "The school district is being anti-straight, anti-First Amendment and anti-personal liberty," said Horatio Mihet, an attorney with the Liberty Counsel. "The idea that public servants have to whole-heartedly endorse homosexual marriage is repugnant to the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution," Mihet told Fox News Radio.
>
> "All he did was speak out on an issue of national importance and because his comments did not fit a particular mold, he is now being investigated and could possibly lose his job. What have we come to?"
>
> Buell said he does not know the individual who filed the complaint, but the past

> week has caused his family “heartache.”
>
> “To try and say you could lose your job over speaking about something in the venue that I did in the manner that I did is not just a knee-jerk reaction,” he said. “It’s a violent reaction to one person making a complaint.”
>
> But Patton said the school system has an obligation to take the comments seriously. He said Buell will not be allowed back in the classroom “until we do all the interviews and do a thorough job of looking at everything – past or previous writings.”
>
> To accomplish that, he said people have been sending the school system screenshots of Buell’s Facebook page.
>
> “Just because you think it’s private, other people are viewing it,” Patton said, noting that the teacher’s Facebook page also contained numerous Bible passages.
>
> Mihet said he was livid.
>
> “These are not fringe ideas that Mr. Buell espoused on his personal Facebook page,” he told Fox News Radio. “They are mainstream textbook opposition to homosexual unions – and now he’s been deemed unfit to teach children because he opposes gay marriage? My goodness.” Buell believes the school system is trying to send a message to Christian teachers.
>
> “There is an intimidation factor if you are a Christian or if you make a statement against it (gay marriage) you are a bigot, a homophobe, you’re a creep, you’re intolerant,” he said. “We should have the right to express our opinions and talk about things.”

I have a friend who is going through an encounter with the tolerant secular left right now. They tend to go after your job and your finances, and they do it publicly, in order to intimidate anyone else from speaking out against them.

Relate posts

- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- Do Democrats like Chai Feldblum believe in religious liberty?
- Do Democrats like Martha Coakley believe in religious liberty?
- UK judge rules that Christians have no right to religious liberty
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- How the government forces Christians to affirm homosexuality
- Christian preacher arrested for saying that homosexuality is a sin
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- Outgoing UK Labour government aims to make sex education compulsory

- How Harriet Harman's Equality Bill will impact religious liberty
- Christian doctor fired in the UK for acting in the best interests of children
- Christian man fired after gay rights group contacts his employer to complain
- Catholic church will stop all charity work if same-sex marriage passes in DC
- New Mexico Human Rights Commissions fines couple $6000 for being Christians
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

Can you rely on government to defend your Christian values?

August 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a story from the UK, and appears in the UK Telegraph. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Last month, the Equality and Human Rights Commission warned that British courts had failed to safeguard the rights of Christians who wanted to wear the cross at work, and urged judges to be more sensitive to religious discrimination.

> The watchdog said it would call on the European Court of Human Rights to support the principle that employers should make "reasonable adjustments" to accommodate the religious beliefs of their staff.
>
> However, a document posted on the commission's website disclosed that the watchdog, which is chaired by Trevor Phillips, had abandoned the plan.
>
> Traditionalist Christians claimed that the commission had dropped its support for religious freedom in the face of criticism from secular campaigners and gay rights groups.
>
> The controversy erupted after the watchdog was granted permission to intervene in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, in the cases of Nadia Eweida, Shirley Chaplin, Lillian Ladele, and Gary McFarlane.

> All four are Christians who are bringing legal action against the United Kingdom because they believe that British laws have failed to protect their human rights, specifically the right to freedom of religion.
>
> Mrs Eweida, a check-in clerk at BA, was barred from wearing a small crucifix at work while Mrs Chaplin, a nurse, was banned from working on wards after she failed to hide her cross.
>
> Miss Ladele was a registrar who lost her job at Islington town hall, in north London, after saying her beliefs meant she could not officiate at civil partnership ceremonies. Mr McFarlane was sacked for refusing to give sex therapy counselling to gay couples.
>
> Last month, the commission promised to argue in the European court that existing laws had been interpreted in ways that are "insufficient to protect freedom of religion". It proposed that employers should be able to reach "reasonable accommodations" with their staff to "manage" how workers manifest their beliefs.
>
> However, the watchdog has now launched a public "consultation" on the arguments it should make and has abandoned the plan to call for a new "reasonable accommodation" principle to be introduced, arguing that "this idea

> needs more careful consideration".
>
> Don Horrocks, from the Evangelical Alliance, said the Commission had been "successfully intimidated against proceeding as they initially announced".
>
> "Being forced to be morally complicit in activities which directly violate people's religious conscience involves fundamental human rights principles," he said. "There is likely to be a deep sense of injustice within religious communities."
>
> The gay rights organisation, Stonewall, said it was "deeply disturbed" by the commission's original plan to support Christians "who have refused to provide public services to gay people".
>
> Ben Summerskill, chief executive of Stonewall, said last night that it was "perfectly reasonable" for workers to be able to wear a "discreet" cross or other "symbols of identification" at work. "That is very different from saying 'I wish to work in a public service but to exempt myself from delivering public services to people who have paid for them.'"
>
> **A spokeswoman for the Commission said: "Our job is not to take sides in political arguments between activist groups, it is to make sure people do not face unjustified discrimination."**

So what do we learn from this? The Equality and Human Rights Commission was created by the Labour Party, with arch-feminist Harriet Harman playing a key role in its administration. The goal of the commission was to fix unfair discrimination and other injustices. But apparently, they don't mean discrimination against Christians. So we shouldn't vote for parties on the left – they don't stand up for Christians.

Russians develop fifth-generation PAK FA stealth multi-role fighter

August 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The American F-22, the Russian T-50 and the Chinese J-20

From the Heritage Foundation blog, some disturbing news about fifth generation fighter technology.

Excerpt:

> The chief of Russia's air force announced this week that the PAK FA, Russia's fifth-generation stealth fighter, will enter service in 2015. This would be close to the time when two U.S. F-35 Joint Strike Fighter variants for the U.S. Air Force (F-35A) and the Navy (F-35C) are expected to attain initial operational capability in 2016. This display means the U.S. must keep its own Joint Strike Fighter program on schedule for production.
>
> The public flight of a PAK FA's T-50 prototype before the world, at the MAKS–2011 International Aviation and Space Salon, is a demonstration of Russia's firm commitment to develop this aircraft for its own use and to sell it around the world.
>
> Russian authorities have declared that they intend to acquire 60 PAK FA aircraft by 2020. Russia's stated objective is to acquire 250 fifth-generation aircraft, but more are possible. India would acquire at least 250 and up to 300 of its PAK FA version, the Fifth-Generation Fighter Aircraft.
>
> With the closure of the U.S. F-22 stealth fighter production line at 187 aircraft, America's main answer—and that of U.S. allies—to the PAK FA is the F-35, a multirole fighter. While it is too soon to know, the F-35 may ultimately have inferior specifications to the Russian fighter in terms of speed, maneuverability, range, weapons load, and possibly even stealth. In this regard, the Russians have described the future operational PAK FA as a fighter whose "use of composite materials and advanced technologies…minimizes its radio-frequency, optical and infrared visibility."

> […]Congress should consider the implications of Russia exporting this stealth fighter to other nations. In addition to India, Russia could sell the PAK FA to Iran if the U.N. arms embargo is lifted, or to Arab countries if the U.S. refuses to sell them the F–35, as well as to Venezuela, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and perhaps even China, since the PAK FA appears to have more internal bomb capacity than the J–20.

The J-20 is China's 5th generation stealth fighter.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration has shuttered production of the only thing that can stop these Russian and Chinese fighters – the F-22 Raptor. And the Democrats would love to cut anything else they can get their hands on in order to buy more votes before the 2012 election. It's like putting drug addicts in charge of a bank vault. They love power, and they'll do anything to get their fix in the short-term.

A closer look at Michele Bachmann's record on fiscal policy

August 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele Bachmann: On the Issues

An analysis of Michele Bachmann's record on economic policy, courtesy of the Club for Growth.

Summary:

> Congresswoman Michele Bachmann was first elected to Congress in 2006 after serving in the Minnesota State Senate from 2001 to 2006. If elected President, she would be the first woman President and the second person elected directly from the U.S. House of Representatives since James Garfield. Congresswoman Bachmann received a 100% score in the Club for Growth's 2010 scorecard and has a lifetime score of 94%. The average house Republican score from 2007-2010 was 78%. Congresswoman Bachmann also has a lifetime score of 94% from the Minnesota Taxpayers League during the time she served in the State Senate. The average score for Republican State Senators during that time was 76%.

These guys do the most thorough job of anyone vetting the candidates – they go over every bill, every speech, every vote, every editorial – even campaign advertisements.

The report covers the following areas:

- TAXES
- SPENDING
- ENTITLEMENT REFORM
- REGULATION

- FREE TRADE
- SCHOOL CHOICE
- TORT REFORM
- POLITICAL FREE SPEECH
- POLITICAL ACTIVITY & ENDORSEMENTS

Excerpt:

SCHOOL CHOICE

The Club for Growth supports broad school choice, including charter schools and voucher programs that create a competitive education market including public, private, religious, and non-religious schools. More competition in education will lead to higher quality and lower costs.

Congresswoman Bachmann not only has a strong record on school choice, she is the first major presidential candidate to actually found a charter school. In fact, Congresswoman Bachmann co-founded the first K-12 charter school in the nation, New Heights Charter School back in 1993. Her record on school choice has, predictably, been flawless since then.

In 2011, Bachmann voted to re-establish the DC school voucher program. As a member of the State Senate, Bachmann voted to prohibit teacher strikes during the school year. She also voted to allow parents to use education tax credits for tuition at private schools. She's introduced legislation to make foster children eligible for education vouchers.

As far back as 2003, Bachmann was fighting the No Child Left Behind Act, filing a bill in the Minnesota legislature that would have prohibited the Dept. of Children, Families and Learning or any other state agency "from entering into a contract or other agreement under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, unless the financial consequences to the state and each school district have been identified." Another bill, S.F. 1921, "requires all state plans, agreements and contracts associated with NCLB compliance to be nullified and revoked on June 1, 2004, unless the Legislature specifically affirms implementation of the federal law by that date."

Conclusion:

> With very few exceptions, Congresswoman Bachmann has supported pro-growth policies throughout her career. She especially deserves praise for her consistent defense of school choice. After reviewing her record, we are confident that Congresswoman Bachmann would be a pro-growth President.

For my social conservative friends: please print out the paper and read it. These guys are not indifferent to your concerns *at all*.

Pat Toomey and the Club for Growth

The past director of the Club for Growth is current Pennsylvania senator Pat Toomey.

Here's a blurb from his web site:

> Pat is pro-life and believes that children should be welcomed into the world and

> protected by its laws.
>
> While reasonable people may differ on the question of abortion rights, we should all be able to agree on policies that encourage adoption over abortion, that avoid taxpayer funding of abortions, and that allow parental involvement in decisions that involve minors. As a senator, Pat will support policies that further these important goals.
>
> Pat also believes the tradition of marriage is sacred and is best defined as between a man and a woman. As a congressman, Pat voted to protect the institution of marriage in many ways. For example, Pat voted to reduce the tax penalty on married couples and will support similar policies as a U.S. senator. Throughout his time in Congress, Pat voted for legislation to protect innocent life, strengthen marriage, and protect the traditional values upon which this country was founded.

His voting record on abortion:

- Voted YES on making it a crime to harm a fetus during another crime. (Feb 2004)
- Voted YES on banning partial-birth abortion except to save mother's life. (Oct 2003)
- Voted YES on forbidding human cloning for reproduction & medical research. (Feb 2003)
- Voted YES on funding for health providers who don't provide abortion info. (Sep 2002)
- Voted YES on banning human cloning, including medical research. (Jul 2001)
- Voted YES on banning Family Planning funding in US aid abroad. (May 2001)
- Voted YES on federal crime to harm fetus while committing other crimes. (Apr 2001)
- Voted YES on banning partial-birth abortions. (Apr 2000)
- Voted YES on barring transporting minors to get an abortion. (Jun 1999)
- Rated 0% by NARAL, indicating a pro-life voting record. (Dec 2003)

And on marriage:

- Voted YES on establishing nationwide AMBER alert system for missing kids. (Apr 2003)
- Voted YES on reducing Marriage Tax by $399B over 10 years. (Mar 2001)
- Rated 100% by the Christian Coalition: a pro-family voting record. (Dec 2003)

This is the record of the former leader of the most fiscally conservative PAC. The most pro-business group. The most anti-spending group.

Fiscal conservatives are more socially conservative than you think. If you are a social conservative, but not a fiscal conservative, then you should print out the paper on Michele Bachmann, a *radical* social conservative, and see how these fiscal conservatives at the Club for Growth judge what counts as fiscally conservative. It might be the case that fiscally conservative positions actually dovetail nicely with socially conservative

positions. I think they do.

Campaign speeches, interviews and debates

Speeches:

- Michele Bachmann's Republican Leadership Conference speech
- Michele Bachmann's speech at the Right Online Conference

Reactions from her recent debate performance:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

Profiles of Michele Bachmann:

- The Weekly Standard
- Wall Street Journal
- ABC News
- WORLD Magazine

Michele Bachmann on television news

Let Americans spend their own money

Time to prioritize spending

Obama's plan is to raise your taxes

Michele Bachmann in the legislature

Against socialism:

For economic growth:

Against ACORN funding:

Obamanomics: $500,000 stimulus grant to grow trees creates 1.72 jobs

August 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

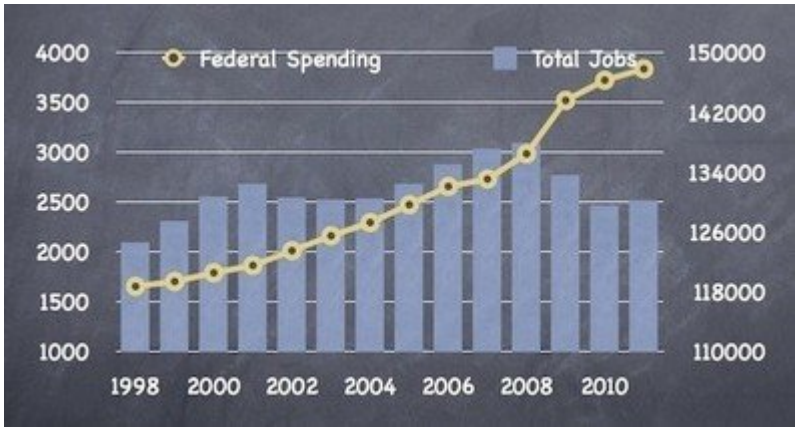

Government Spending Vs Jobs
From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A federal stimulus grant of nearly $500,000 to grow trees and stimulate the economy in Nevada yielded a whopping 1.72 jobs, according to government statistics.
>
> In 2009, the U.S. Forest Service awarded $490,000 of stimulus money to Nevada's Clark County Urban Forestry Revitalization Project, aimed at revitalizing urban neighborhoods in the county with trees, plants, and green-industry training.
>
> According to Recovery.gov, the U.S. government's official website related to Recovery Act spending, the project created 1.72 permanent jobs. In addition, the Nevada state Division of Forestry reported the federal grant generated one full-time temporary job and 11 short-term project-oriented jobs.
>
> […]Repeated calls by FoxNews.com to the U.S. Forest Service were not returned.
>
> […]"Looking at the failure of the stimulus to live up to its promises, not just in Nevada, but throughout America, I think the question becomes 'is there any good use of stimulus money?'" said Douglas Kellogg, communications manager for National Taxpayers Union, in an email to FoxNews.com.
>
> […]"The president may well propose new stimulus efforts when Congress returns from recess," said Kellogg, "and those who learn from past stimulus debacles will not be fooled again."

The Heritage Foundation explains how government spending has *never* worked to create jobs. Not even when Republicans do it.

Excerpt:

> Indeed, President Obama's stimulus bill failed by its own standards. In a January 2009 report, White House economists predicted that the stimulus bill would create (not merely save) 3.3 million net jobs by 2010. Since then, 3.5 million more net jobs have been lost, pushing the unemployment rate above 10 percent.[1] The fact that government failed to spend its way to prosperity is not an isolated incident:
>
> - During the 1930s, New Deal lawmakers doubled federal spending–yet unemployment remained above 20 percent until World War II.
> - Japan responded to a 1990 recession by passing 10 stimulus spending bills over 8 years (building the largest national debt in the industrialized world)–yet its economy remained stagnant.
> - In 2001, President Bush responded to a recession by "injecting" tax rebates into the economy. The economy did not respond until two years later, when tax rate reductions were implemented.
> - In 2008, President Bush tried to head off the current recession with another round of tax rebates. The recession continued to worsen.
> - Now, the most recent $787 billion stimulus bill was intended to keep the unemployment rate from exceeding 8 percent. In November, it topped 10 percent.[2]

Why is this? It's because the government never spends money as efficiently as the private sector. Private sector firms have to stay lean and mean in order to stay afloat – because they have competitors who are always trying to sell better goods and services for less money. In a capitalist economy, the consumer is king – all the businesses fight to earn the customers' money. But the government has no competitors, and so they neither care about efficiency, nor pleasing their customers.

CBS News reports:

ABC News reports:

And this one features a real economist:

We shouldn't let the government take money out of the private sector and let the public sector spend it on "stimulus". Stimulus means taking money away from your boss, or your possible bosses, and spending it on trees. It's how you lose jobs – and that's what we have today.

Related posts

- Solar power firm goes bankrupt after receiving millions of taxpayer dollars
- Public schools spend $130,000 of stimulus money on diversity training books
- Democrat economists: "stimulus" cost $278,000 per job
- Obama blasts private jet tax breaks created by his own stimulus
- Green energy firm run by Obama fundraiser gets $535M loan guarantee
- Obama spent $80 billion dollars on green jobs so where are the jobs?

How pro-life apologetics helps strengthen your evangelism

August 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Scott Klusendorf's Life Training Institute.

Excerpt:

> Beyond the obvious obligation we have as thinking human beings to clarify the status, and defend the value, of innocent, unborn human life, engaging in the pro-life project is also a way to make the case for the truth of Christianity in general. It stands to reason that if the scientific, philosophical, and moral arguments we offer in defense of the humanity of the unborn also happen to align exactly with the biblical notion of what it means to be a human being made "in the image of God," then the Bible might also have something to say about other things of importance.
>
> This is a point Scott makes repeatedly but it was recently driven home in a very concrete way by, of all people, a hard core atheist in the most recent issue of ***Salvo*** magazine. A secular skeptic, law school professor, renowned blogger, and mocker of deluded "Godiots," the "Raving Atheist" attended a blogger party where he serendipitously sat next to a Catholic blogger named Benjamin. As the "Raving Atheist" explains:

> At one point the conversation turned to abortion, and I asked Benjamin's opinion of the practice. I was stunned. Here was a kind, affable, and cogently reasonable human being who nonetheless believed that abortion was murder. To the limited extent I had previously considered the issue, I believed abortion to be completely acceptable, the mere disposal of a lump of cells, perhaps akin to clipping fingernails.

> This unsettling exchange spurred me to further investigate the issue on Benjamin's blog. I noticed that pro-choice Christians did not employ scientific or rational arguments but relied on a confused set of "spiritual" platitudes. More significantly, the pro-choice atheistic blogosphere also fell short in its analysis of abortion. ***The supposedly "reality-based" community either dismissed abortion as a "religious issue" or paradoxically claimed that pro-life principles were contrary to religious doctrine. Having formerly equated atheism with reason, I was slowly growing uncertain of the value of godlessness in the search for truth.***

> Though the "Raving Atheist" continued to rave, there was now a stone in his God-rejecting shoe, placed there by a reasoned defense of the pro-life view. He couldn't disconnect himself from it and later admitted that the "selfless dedication [of pro-life advocates] to their cause moved [him] deeply." Later, he

> met a woman named Ashli whose work in pregnancy care drew him to further consider the pro-life position. Soon thereafter, the "Raving Atheist" became, in part, a pro-life blogsite …

Click here to read the astonishing conclusion. Then come back here.

Back? Ok, so what did we learn from this? Well, the moral of this story is that it is *very* important for Christians to have a good understanding of moral issues like abortion and same-sex marriage so that they can talk about these issues based on what they know. When someone can stake out a *moral* position on these kinds of issues, using science and history and other hard evidence – *not just the Bible* – then it helps non-Christians to take us seriously *as thinkers*.

Unless we demonstrate the ability to reason out there in the real world – outside the church – then we are not going to be viewed as authoritative on any subject – *especially* on spiritual subjects. We really need to study up on other issues, and show that we care about the unborn (abortion issue) and children (same-sex marriage issue). We have to show that there is more to us than just doing what feels good. We have to show that we are smart and that we are willing to be unpopular in order to do the right thing. That we didn't just inherit these views from our parents, or from our culture. That we have actually thought things through more than just reading the Bible, and that it makes a difference in how we view the world, and in how we live.

And I also think that it is just as important to read about economics, because we care about the poor. Socialists don't know anything about economics. Whenever their wealth redistribution policies are tried, people get poorer and are less likely to be employed. If we really cared about the poor, we would study economics. Entrepreneurs stop hiring workers when they think that there is no profit to be made from undertaking an enterprise.

We also need to read about military and foreign policy issues, because we care about peace. Pacifists don't know anything about military affairs and terrorism. Whenever their appeasement policies are tried, wars start and innocent people die. If we really cared about preventing wars and terrorism, we would study military history, counter-terorism and foreign policy. Bad men become aggressive when they think there is no cost to bear for it.

Ignorance is never a good idea when you are trying to do good – and you can't know what is really good just by your feelings and intuitions. If you want to do good, you need to be 1) convincing and 2) effective. And that takes study. Don't choose policies based on what makes you feel good and what sounds good to others. Push for *effective* policies – what actually *does* good – and then have your arguments and evidence ready to convince people, using evidence from authorities *that they accept as non-Christians*. If you have the will to study a little, you can be passionate *and* convincing. Non-Christians respect passion and knowledge. They don't respect fideism and mysticism. They can spot a fake a mile away.

The best book to read on Christian worldview is Wayne Grudem's "Politics According to

the Bible“.

If you want to see Scott in a good debate against an ACLU spokeswoman, click here. He is also the author of the best introductory book on pro-life apologetics, entitled “The Case for Life“.

A gay man and a lesbian decide to have a child through IVF

August 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Seven years ago, when Sabrina Morgan, 33, was single and desperate for a child, she found herself chatting to Kam Wong, 41, a gay man who was longing to be a father, in an online fertility forum. 'I instantly thought he was genuine, down-to-earth, laidback and flexible,' says Sabrina.

> 'We exchanged pictures. It wasn't about sexual attraction, obviously, but it was important what he looked like. I asked him if he had any history of baldness and loose teeth. It was part humour but it was also my way to steer towards more serious questions, like does he have any genetic health conditions.'
>
> For Kam, who is in a long-term relationship, contacting Sabrina was about more than being a sperm donor: 'I adore children. The desire to have my own has always been with me. Because of my sexuality I thought it might never happen. The urge grew stronger in my thirties until one day I researched options. When I met Sabrina I was very nervous. This was my chance to fulfil my dreams.'
>
> It took Sabrina six years to conceive through IVF. By then she had met Kirsty Slack, 37, who is now her romantic partner. Sabrina and Kirsty live together and are Zaide's primary carers. Kam visits weekly, which will increase as Zaide gets older.

> Kam and Sabrina are one of the growing number of couples in so-called 'co-parenting' relationships – biological parents who have a close but platonic relationship and both contribute to child-rearing . Co-parenting isn't just for the gay community. Straight men and women are choosing to put romance aside in the name of reproduction.
>
> […]Catherine, 41, met Steve, 39, on the website [xyz]. He is gay and she has been single for two years. He lives in London for his job as an analyst but will join Catherine in Swansea if and when he gets her pregnant, through artificial insemination (AI).
>
> It isn't that Catherine doesn't want to find love but that she wants a child more: 'I've stopped looking for a partner. Of course I need love, but I can have a partner at any age. I can only have a child now,' she says.
>
> […]Catherine started her online search after a break-up from a three-year relationship with a man who didn't want children. 'I'd just turned 39 and thought, "I don't have time for this to happen again." In a worst-case scenario I would

> seek an anonymous donor, but I've always thought a child needs a father. At the very least I wanted a donor who would visit regularly.'
>
> Catherine chatted to Steve for a month online before meeting: 'When I saw him my heart jumped. I thought, "Finally it's going to happen!" I was happy for him to stay in London, but he wanted to be fully involved. Now I'm helping him find a job in Swansea.'
>
> If Catherine conceives they plan to live together for a trial period: 'We know we could end up like a bickering couple. If so we will live separately. I have friends with small children – I could see how hard it would be for me to live alone. Who would go out to get nappies and milk if I ran out?'

Mary actually found this post for me on the Boundless web site, where she found these two comments.

A very bad man: (Bryan)

> We can condemn surrogacy by a single man or woman all we want. But at the end of the day, NO ONE can deny the fact that the biological urge to reproduce is strong and sometimes defy reason.
>
> I do understand that young man's desire to have a biological baby because to be honest, I feel that way myself. Boundless readers may want to condemn people like us but let it be known that there are people who, confronted with such a strong biological urge, have no choice but conduct surrogacy with a woman in India. I must admit, although I am a man and not a woman, I still long to hold the tiny fingers of a helpless baby in my hands, gaze at the cute eyes of mini-me and caress the soft baby skin in my arms. It is just natural. Boundless readers, if you want to condemn single young men with desires like me, go ahead. But let it be known that people like me exist but are just keeping quiet (until now, of course).

Men aren't supposed to talk like that – they are supposed to protect children from the selfishness of predators. Not ruin the child's life because of their own selfishness. It's completely backwards.

A very good woman: (Kim)

> My heart just breaks for men in our society (American). How horrible to always be faced with low expectations, being made fun of, thought of as the unneccessary "moron"… How wrong!
>
> For what it is worth, a man who is willing to fight against culture and strives to be a man of honor and respect- with everything that entails- certainly commands my respect.
>
> What a sad, sad society we have become. I feel for that child and the emotional and mental anguish he will feel. Read any literature on abuse and at the very least this arrangement will leave this child open for abuse via a low self esteem. Can you imagine being passed back and forth when it is convenient for your

> parents? Getting older and finding out you were a child of convenience and want, want in a selfish form and not a giving form?

I think it’s important for Christians to connect issues like this to their Christian worldview. Instead of tolerating and excusing every sin to make people like us, we should take a step back and ask ourselves if the Bible might not be correct when it prohibits certain conduct as sinful. Obviously selfish atheists are going to want to blur the lines of morality, redefining it so that chastity, fidelity and sobriety are out, but yoga, recycling and vegetarianism are in. But there is no reason that we have to go along with them. We should be on the side of the children. The new generation of secularists have turned their backs on chastity, courting and traditional self-sacrificial marriage. Now they are struggle to desperately grasp for their happiness, no matter how much harm they cause to innocent children. Let’s tell them that some things are wrong.

Pro-life conservative Richard Mourdock challenges Richard Lugar in Indiana Senate primary

August 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) is currently in the fight for his political life. Despite his status as the most senior Republican member of the US Senate, Lugar is in danger of losing his 2012 primary to Indiana State Treasurer Richard Mourdock. A poll conducted by Basswood Research on behalf of the conservative Club for Growth put Mourdock at 34% with Lugar trailing by 2 points. The numbers reflect the opinions of 500 likely Republican voters and come with a margin of error of +/- 4.4%.
>
> […]Lugar's relationship with pro-life advocates has been rocky during his time in the Senate. Lugar should be commended for supporting pro-life initiatives like the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, the Mexico City Policy, the de-funding of Planned Parenthood and the repeal of Obamacare. However, Lugar alienated pro-life advocates with votes in favor of embryonic stem cell research and his enthusiastic support for President Obama's two pro-abortion Supreme Court nominees, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan.
>
> Even before Sotomayor's nomination made it out of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Lugar announced he would vote to confirm her. A year later, Lugar jumped at the chance to support Elena Kagan, becoming the first Republican not on the Judiciary Committee to support her confirmation.

National Review has more about Mourdock and Lugar.

Excerpt:

> Mourdock is a mainstream conservative: pro-life, opposed to gay marriage, and committed never to support a tax hike. As a trained geologist who worked in the energy industry, he speaks with authority on the need for more domestic production, as well as the dangers of global-warming alarmism. He's a history buff, too. Recent readings include *Lincoln's Sword*, a study of Abraham Lincoln's rhetoric by Douglas L. Wilson. On the day of our meeting at a hotel in Indianapolis, Mourdock wore a yellow tie with blue script on it. "I can't remember if this is my Emancipation Proclamation tie or my Gettysburg Address tie," he said. (A close inspection revealed that it was the Emancipation Proclamation tie.)
>
> […]In most of his Senate races, Lugar has won about two-thirds of the vote, but that's been against Democratic opposition. In 2006, his last election, the Democrats didn't even bother to run a candidate against him, even though that was a good year for their party — the year of Nancy Pelosi. Perhaps they knew

> what they were doing. In 2010, only four Republican senators registered more liberal voting records, according to the American Conservative Union. In a separate analysis, *National Journal* ranked Lugar as the Senate's fourth most liberal Republican. He's a moderate to the core: a pro-lifer who voted to confirm both of Obama's nominations to the Supreme Court, a hawk on farm subsidies who opposed the ban on earmarks, and a foe of Obamacare who has supported more federal spending on health care. Lugar also has favored stronger gun-control laws, minimum-wage hikes, and the DREAM Act, which would provide an amnesty to illegal aliens who attend college or serve in the military.
>
> […]Last summer, GOP activists began to approach Mourdock about running against Lugar. He says he didn't take it seriously at first. "What did I ever do to you?" was his stock response. But the suggestions kept coming. After the election, Mourdock began to consider a race. "When Lugar refused to do away with earmarks in the lame-duck session, I decided to get in," says Mourdock. "I'll be the first to admit that in the world of budgets, earmarks are a rounding error. But I thought it was important."

Erick Erickson of Red State endorses Mourdock.

Excerpt:

> For the better part of his Senate career, Richard Lugar has defined leadership as reaching across the aisle to screw conservatives. He was a thorn in President Reagan's side. He is a problem now for conservatives.
>
> He has supported earmarks, refused to sign a brief opposing Obamacare, and routinely laments "polarization", by which he means conservatives actually standing up and fighting back.
>
> As much as conservatives need to stop Heather Wilson from winning the GOP nomination in New Mexico, conservatives and tea party activists can and should seize this moment and beat Richard Lugar.In fact, I hear that the GOP establishment in D.C. is deeply worried. There is independent polling out showing Lugar is extremely vulnerable to be beaten in a Republican primary.
>
> Let's do it. And let's do it with Richard Mourdock.
>
> While Lugar has been in the Senate fighting against conservatives, Mourdock has been in Indiana fighting for conservatives. Mourdock has been out on the campaign trail withstanding attack after attack from Lugar and his acolytes. And the attacks have all largely been to cast Mourdock as . . . wait for it . . . too conservative for Indiana.

You can see them compared issue by issue here. Lugar voted to confirm Ruth Bader-Ginsburg. RUTH BADER-GINSBURG!

Mourdock has also been endorsed by Mark Levin, so you know he's better than Lugar. Now is the time to throw the RINOs out, while the people still know what socialism does to

the economy and what secularism does to the unborn.

According to the latest poll, Mourdock leads Lugar by 2 points.

Brian Auten interviews astrophysicist Jeff Zweerink about the multiverse

August 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 has a new interview with Jeff Zweerink on the multiverse.

Brian's summary:

> Today's interview is with astrophysicist Jeff Zweerink. Jeff is a research scholar with Reasons to Believe, and serves part-time on the physics and astronomy research faculty at UCLA. He is author of *Who's Afraid of the Multiverse?*, the main topic of our interview today. He talks about his background and how he got into astrophysics, scientific evidences pointing to God, the role of natural theology, the strongest (and weakest) arguments from science, the multiverse, the various types of multiverses, why scientists postulate the multiverse, various objections to the multiverse, should Christians, how to be well-informed in scientific evidences, advice for apologists, and more.
>
> Full Interview MP3 Audio here *(55 min)*

Krista Bontrager writes this about Jeff's book:

> Reasons To Believe has a new booklet out. It addresses the multiverse controversy: Who's Afraid of the Multiverse? (And when I say "booklet" it would really be more accurate to call it a short book. It's a "good-sized" short treatment.)
>
> RTB's newest research scholar, physicist, Dr. Jeff Zweerink, explores the multiverse idea and its implications for biblical creation models. He addresses such questions as:
>
> - Does the multiverse pose problems for the Christian worldview?
> - Does the multiverse offer atheists an escape-hatch, one that is capable of explaining away design of the universe?
>
> Zweerink's answers to these questions may surprise some readers. He believes it is quite possible that particular types of multiverses to exist. (Whereas I think it would be fair to characterize Hugh Ross as being a little more cautious about this issue.)
>
> Zweerink does a good job of explaining the appeal of the multiverse approach for some athetists. In fact, he is so fair and even-handed that, at times, the reader may wonder whether he's defending the multiverse in all of its forms.
>
> I am not aware of any other treatment of this quality by a Christian physicist. If you have a teenager who is planning on a career in science, especially in astronomy or physics, Who's Afraid of the Multiverse? is a must-read. It would

> probably also be of interest to those who are curious about the topic.

It sounds like Jeff actually is open to the multiverse. BOOOO! James Sinclair's essay in Contending With Christianity's Critics also seemed to give the idea a fair treatment. Oh well, I have to be open to being proven wrong, so here is the podcast and let's see the evidence!

Democrat Joe Biden has no objection to forced abortions and sterilizations

August 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about 2012 Presidential election

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> The criticism continues for pro-abortion Vice-President Joe Biden following his refusalto condemn the forced abortions and human rights abuses associated with the one-child policy in China.
>
> In a speech, Biden talked about demographic concerns associated with the policy but said he would not "second-guess" it and "understood" why Chinese put the policy in place.
>
> Now, Biden faces criticism from Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney, the first Republican to have addressed the statement.
>
> "China's one-child policy is gruesome and barbaric," Romney told the Washington Post. "Vice President Biden's acquiescence to such a policy should shock the conscience of every American. Instead of condoning the policy, Vice President Biden should have condemned it in the strongest possible terms. There can be no defense of a government that engages in compulsory sterilization and forced abortions in the name of population control."
>
> Later Tuesday, GOP candidate Rick Perry released a statement condemning

> Biden's comments, and the forced abortion policy.
>
> "China's one child policy has led to the great human tragedy of forced abortions throughout China, and Vice President Biden's refusal to 'second-guess' this horrendous policy demonstrates great moral indifference on the part of the Obama Administration. Americans value life, and we deserve leaders who will stand up against such inhumanity, not cast a blind eye," he said.
>
> […]The one-child policy, instituted by the Communist government in the late 1970s to stem rising population, compels couples in urban areas to have just one child and limits couples in rural areas to two children if the first child is a girl, as girls are seen as having lesser value than boys in some parts of the Asian nation.
>
> The policy has stirred global controversy since it was implemented, as it has resulted in massive campaigns of forced abortions and sterilizations, fines for families violating the rule, sentences to prison and forced labor camps for violators and their families who shelter them from government officials, home detention, loss of jobs or government benefits, beatings and other human rights abuses.

This is really not a big surprise considering that Barack Obama is the most pro-abortion president ever, and Obama's Science Czar John Holdren even advocated for mass sterlizations, forced abortions and a world police force. (Presumably to perform the forced abortions)

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Rep. Mike Pence drafts amendment to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

Related posts on Republican bills

- House Republicans win vote to defund Planned Parenthood
- Texas Senate approves pre-abortion ultrasound law
- North Dakota Republican Dan Ruby wants to slash tax rates and ban abortion
- Ohio Republican proposes ban on abortions after baby has a heartbeat
- Iowa House passes constitutional amendment to define marriage
- Arkansas Senate votes to block taxpayer funding of abortion
- Republican Governor Rick Perry demands sonograms before abortions

- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- Michael Medved explains why Republicans should not drop social issues

What happened to Illinois businesses when Democrats raised taxes?

August 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

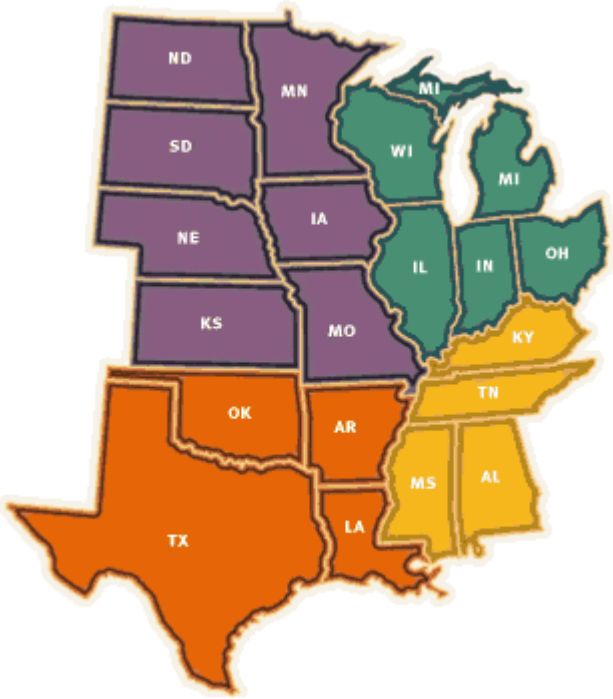

Central United States

How do Illinois businesses respond to Democrat Governor Quinn's tax increases?

From CBS News. (H/T Marathon Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The Chicago area will soon have a few hundred fewer jobs, while Northwest Indiana will have a few hundred more.
>
> As CBS 2's Susanna Song reports, sources say Modern Forge is moving from Blue Island across the state line to Merrillville, Ind., and the new town is rolling out the its welcome mat for the plant.
>
> […]On Tuesday, Indiana succeeded as Blue Island-based manufacturer Modern Forge announced it was moving across the state line. CEO Greg Heim said Illinois made it impossible to stay.
>
> "The environment in Illinois, I would say there was no — we did not see any change coming in Illinois," Heim said. "Illinois continues to stay on a path of not being – for us – a (pro-business) environment and the excitement and energy here in Indiana, that's very important to us."
>
> That's why, after 97 years in Blue Island, Modern Forge is picking up and moving its building and 240 jobs to Indiana.
>
> "It's a huge thrill for us," Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels said.

> Daniels didn't mince words when he said luring business is the Hoosier State's #1 priority. And there's no question that Illinois – and companies like Modern Forge – are main targets.
>
> He claimed that "well over a dozen" businesses have moved from Illinois to Indiana in the past few months. "And it's not like this just started recently," he added.
>
> In fact, it really ramped up last year when Illinois lawmakers hiked the state's income tax. Since then, some businesses have bailed and others threatened to do so, citing high taxes, worker's compensation issues, lack of incentives and an overall lack of encouragement from the Quinn administration.
>
> […]According to U.S. Labor Bureau statistics, Quinn needs to do something. Statistics show a steady jobs decline beginning in January, shortly after the tax hike passed.
>
> Daniels said he sees tax concerns in Illinois as a potential Indiana win.
>
> "We've had a big upsurge in contacts from businesses who want to explore an Indiana location because the arithmetic tells them it's less expensive to hire people here," Daniels said.

And more from the Illinois Policy Institute:

> In a trend that continues to worsen, more Illinoisans found themselves unemployed in the month of July.
>
> Illinois lost more jobs during the month of July than any other state in the nation, according to the most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics report. After losing 7,200 jobs in June, Illinois lost an additional 24,900 non-farm payroll jobs in July. The report also said Illinois's unemployment rate climbed to 9.5 percent. This marks the third consecutive month of increases in the unemployment rate.
>
> Illinois started to create jobs as the national economy began to recover. But just when Illinois's economy seemed to be turning around, lawmakers passed record tax increases in January of this year. Since then, Illinois's employment numbers have done nothing but decline.
>
> Data released today by the bureau confirms this downward trajectory. When it comes to putting people back to work, Illinois is going backwards. Since January, Illinois has dropped 89,000 people from its employment rolls.

Democrats complain a lot about companies that outsource jobs. And now we see what causes companies to outsource jobs – *Democrats*.They cause the very thing that they complain about. That's insane.

Historian James Hannam debunks myths about Christianity and science

August 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

James Hannam has written a book about Christianity and the history of science.

The Daily Caller has posted an interview with James Hannam.

> James Hannam is the author of "The Genesis of Science: How the Christian Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution," set to be officially released Monday.
>
> Hannam earned his undergraduate degree in physics from St. Anne's College at Oxford University and a PhD in the History and Philosophy of Science from Cambridge University. He has been published in numerous scholarly and non-scholarly publications and is also the author of "God's Philosophers."

Wow, we could certainly use more scholars like this to plead our case.

That article features 10 questions and answers with Dr. Hannam, and here are the three best ones:

> **2. You contend that contrary to popular belief, there was great scientific advancement during the Middle Ages because of the Church. How did the Church help spur this scientific discovery and why do most people believe the Church was a hindrance to science?**
>
> The Church made math and science a compulsory part of the syllabus at medieval universities for anyone who wanted to study theology. That meant loads of students got grounding in these subjects, and professors could hold down jobs teaching it.
>
> The myth that the Church held back science dates from the "enlightenment" when Voltaire and other French *philosophes* invented it to attack the Catholics of their own day as impediments to political progress.
>
> […]**4. You write that it is a myth that people in the Middle Ages believed the world was flat. How did this supposedly erroneous notion about the Middle Ages become part of our conventional wisdom?**
>
> The earliest record I've found of this myth is from a book by Sir Francis Bacon written in the sixteenth century. Sir Francis was a Protestant who claimed believing the Earth is flat was evidence for medieval Catholic stupidity. So the myth started off as Protestant propaganda but was soon used to denigrate the Middle Ages in general.
>
> **5. What are some of the other great myths of the Middle Ages that we haven't touched upon so far but our readers would find intriguing?**
>
> There are loads! For example, witch trials didn't get going until the Renaissance and reached their peak in the seventeenth century, so they are not really

> medieval at all. Even medieval torture devices like the iron maiden turn out never to have existed until 1800 when they were invented as gruesome hoaxes. My favorite myths, because they are so ridiculous, is that a pope excommunicated Halley 's Comet and that medieval theologians liked to ask how many angels can dance on the head of a pin.

If you get objections about Christianity and science, now's your chance to prepare your answers. It's amazing how people who don't know the history believe what they want to believe. And I think that is interesting – it shows that the Bible is right in diagnosing the human condition. We don't know, because we don't want to know. We speculate, because we want to have a buffer to do what we want without having to be accountable.

Hmmn. Isn't it funny that in secular public schools, atheists don't put more science into the curriculum, but instead inject more religion, e.g. – Darwinism, global warming, feminism, socialism, multiculturalism, etc. Ideology, not math and science. But the religious people put in math and science.

Gay activist explains how same-sex marriage will change marriage

August 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From THE ADVOCATE, the leading gay newspaper. (Note: This article contains vulgar language)

The URL is here: [http://www.advocate.com/printArticle.aspx?id=211497]

Excerpt:

> We often protest when homophobes insist that same sex marriage will change marriage for straight people too. But in some ways, they're right. Here's how gay relationships will change the institution—but for the better.
>
> […]Anti-equality right-wingers have long insisted that allowing gays to marry will destroy the sanctity of "traditional marriage," and, of course, the logical, liberal party-line response has long been "No, it won't." But what if—for once—the sanctimonious crazies are right? Could the gay male tradition of open relationships actually alter marriage as we know it? And would that be such a bad thing? With divorce rates at an all-time high and news reports full of famous marriages crumbling at the hand of flagrant infidelities (see: Schwarzenegger, Arnold), perhaps now is the perfect time for the gays to conduct a little marriage makeover.
>
> […]Even many gay male couples, who [Dan] Savage describes as having "perfected nonmonogamy," fear disclosing that their relationship is anything but one-on-one. Gary (not his real name) is out in every area of his life, and his family is completely supportive. "But I don't tell my family, even my brother—who I'm incredibly close with—that I have sex outside of the relationship with Ben," his partner of 14 years, he says. "I have never said that to him."
>
> Gary and Ben, who live in Los Angeles, won't reveal their real names because Ben has a high-profile career in television. "We have too much to lose," Gary says. "But we also don't want people passing judgment on us." Which is why they don't even tell most of their friends.
>
> Sex therapist Timaree Schmit says she can understand gay couples' desire to conform—at least outwardly—to the kind of conventional relationship that society deems "deserving" of marriage rights. "It's been a big part of campaigning for marriage equality to repeatedly prove the 'normalcy' and stability of same-sex couples. People may feel pressure to make their relationship fit into a more acceptable box."
>
> Blake Spears and Lanz Lowen recently completed The Couples Study (TheCouplesStudy.com), an examination of nonmonogamy among 86 gay couples. A long-term gay couple themselves (36 years), they had found that little

> research had been conducted on how gay men navigate this terrain, so they embarked on an admittedly limited and self-selective study (they found many long-term couples who fit the bill, but relatively few who were willing to participate), but one that gives a view of the diversity of experiences. In fact, the thing they found most striking is that while nonmonogamy seems to be fairly pervasive among gay couples (though they did not hear from the many monogamous pairs), there is surprisingly little support within the gay population for such relationships.
>
> Spears and Lowen were also surprised to discover such a wide range of kinds of nonmonogamy. "We thought we might find some models that we could slot some couples into," says Spears, "but people had such a wide variety of approaches to nonmonogamy. And I think it spoke to the amount of creativity in the gay community." They did identify some key characteristics and outlined the various ways in which couples live out their agreements, including having sex beyond the couple (12% do so together; 56% do it both together and separately; 32% play only independently — stats that seem to shift as relationships evolve), degrees of talking about their experiences together (40% had full disclosure; 40% had varying degrees of it; 20% took a "don't ask, don't tell" approach…), and kinds of outside sexual contact (34% will only have no-strings, anonymous encounters; 40% have friends with benefits; and some couples in both the aforementioned categories have differing preferences, meaning one likes it anonymous and the partner likes to have sex with friends). Seventy-five percent of the study's participants put some rules on what constitutes their commitment and what will violate it.
>
> Forty-two percent of the study's participants agreed to open up within the first three months of their relationship, while 20% agreed on nonmonogamy only after a period of turmoil in which one partner was caught having cheated.

This article dovetails nicely with the research I had written about showing that gay unions are nothing like traditional married couples. And the differences matter when children are brought into the mix. It seems to me that this is nothing like traditional male-female marriage, where two opposite sex people join tightly in an exclusive, life-long, love relationship in order to provide a stable environment for the children they create – whom they are both bonded to by blood. Children growing up with two opposite-sex parents bonded to each other for life will learn a very different view of love, marriage and self-sacrifice than will children being raised by gay couples.

The article seems to argue that the distinctive characteristics of same-sex unions would come to influence society's perception of what marriage is, if same-sex marriage were to be viewed as being equal to marriage in the eyes of the law. A very good article to read about this is Dennis Prager's article, entitled "California Decision Will Radically Change Society".

Public schools are part of the plan

In a related article, New Jersey public schools are pulling gay erotic literature out of the hands of children in response to parent complaints.

Excerpt:

> A New Jersey school district has apologized to parents after requiring high school students to read books that include graphic depictions of lesbian sex and a homosexual orgy.
>
> The books were on a required summer reading list for middle school and high school students. The district decided to pull the book off the list, with the start of school just days away.
>
> […]One book, "Norwegian Wood," was on a list for incoming sophomores in an honors English class. The book includes a graphic depiction of a lesbian sex scene between a 31-year-old woman and a 13-year old girl, according to a report first published in the Gloucester County Times.
>
> "I don't think that's relevant for any teenager," parent Robin Myers told the newspaper. Her daughter was assigned to read the book. "I was just kind of in shock," she said.
>
> The other book in question was "Tweak (Growing up on Methamphetamines)." That book included depictions of drug usage and a homosexual orgy.
>
> […]Peter Sprigg, with the Family Research Council, said he's not surprised by the controversy surrounding the books.
>
> "Here we see the intersection of parental values being offended, the hyper-sexualization of our youth and the homosexual agenda being pushed," Sprigg told Fox News Radio. "This just illustrates why a lot of American parents are not willing to entrust their children to the public schools anymore."
>
> So whose idea was it to put books featuring explicit sex scenes on a summer reading list for teenagers?
>
> [Public school superintendent] Earling said the school district's summer reading list was prepared by a committee made up of teachers, librarians and school administrators. The board of education ultimately approved the list.

Recall that Obama's "Safe Schools Czar" Kevin Jennings promoted child pornography to *children.*

This New Jersey story also shows what public schools want to do with your children. It's not an unusual story. Here is my recent story about how teacher unions deliberately try to evade parental oversight. Public schools are paid by taxpayers through compulsory taxes, regardless of the quality of education they provide to children. They aren't responsive to the needs of parents and children – because they aren't private companies in competition. Public schools are a monopoly, and they have enormous influence in politics. They don't have to care about parents and kids, because you have to pay for them regardless of how they perform. And a lot of their initiatives have *no parental opt-*

out. Because they not only want to force you to pay, but to force you to agree with their views.

Comments to this post will be strictly filtered in order to comply with Obama's prohibitions on free speech for controversial topics.

What could Stephen Harper teach Michele Bachmann about winning elections?

August 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele Bachmann should adopt Stephen Harper's plan

Michele Bachmann is soliciting questions for her townhall meeting on her Facebook page. Please "like" her page and then like my question, so that it will be asked.

The post that she is asking for questions in has this text:

> Excited to join Tim Scott for Congress for a town hall live on Facebook from Charleston, SC tomorrow at 7PM ET, where we'll be taking questions from our community of constitutional conservatives. Have a question? Please ask in the comments below:

My question is reproduced below:

> Mrs. Bachmann, in the 2011 Canadian federal election, Stephen Harper, a conservative, managed to win a majority in a country that is only one-third conservative. He did this by creating N-point plans that clearly laid out his plans for each term.
>
> - Here is the 5-point plan from 2006
> - Here is the 6-point plan from 2008
> - Here is the 5-point plan from 2011
>
> The reason I think this is important is because he was able to neutralize the attacks of the media and the three left-leaning political parties because they were not able to accuse him of having a "hidden agenda". My question for you is, have you considered laying out a clean, specific N-point plan for what you would do as President of the United States? You could even have 3 plans, one for social issues, one for fiscal issues, and one for foreign policy.

If you like my question, please like the "TeamBachmann" Facebook page, and then go to her post asking for questions, and like my question.

Here are the Harper plans:

2006: (won minority)

- Cleaning up government by passing the Federal Accountability Act
- Cutting the GST (the national sales tax)
- Cracking down on crime
- Increasing financial assistance for parents
- Working with the provinces to establish a wait-times guarantee for patients

2008: (won minority)

- The minister of finance and the Bank of Canada will constantly monitor financial markets and the impact of developments in other countries.
- The global financial crisis will be discussed at the Canada-European Union Summit, which Harper will attend on Friday.
- Parliament will be summoned to meet this fall and the minister of finance will table an economic and fiscal update before the end of November.
- Canada will be represented at the meeting of G-20 finance ministers scheduled for early November in Brazil. Canada has also called for a second meeting of G-7 finance ministers.
- Government spending will be focused and kept under control as the strategic review of departmental spending — now in the second year of a four year review – continues.
- Harper will hold a first ministers meeting on the economy to discuss with premiers and territorial leaders a joint approach to the global financial crisis.

2011: (won majority)

- Creating jobs through training, trade and low taxes.
- Supporting families through our Family Tax Cut and more support for seniors and caregivers.
- Eliminating the deficit by 2014-2015 by controlling spending and cutting waste.
- Making our streets safe through new laws to protect children and the elderly.
- Standing on guard for Canada by investing in the development of Canada's North, cracking down on human smuggling and strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces.

Actually, Canadian conservatives are much more liberal than we Republicans are – they are soft on social issues. Harper himself is an evangelical Christian, though, but his hands are tied when it comes to social issues. He tries to support stronger families as a way to reduce abortion and to ensure that children grow up with mothers and fathers. Even Stephen Harper is not able to do anything about same-sex marriage and abortion, which are both legal in Canada.

I think Michele would do well to pretend that she was running for office in Canada, and then create her plans that way. All the conservatives already know that she is a solid

evangelical and a Tea party stalwart. What she needs to do is come up with a list of specific smart policies that will win over two-thirds of the independents.

Some things I would like to see: transparency in government, sensible spending cuts, tort reform, cut employer payroll tax to 0%, cut federal funding for abortion/Planned Parenthood, increased tax credits for MARRIED couples, matching grants for states that create voucher programs, etc, a federal right-to-work law, a tax credit, usable at any time in the future, for all salary income earned by young people under the age of 22. Etc.

Marco Rubio’s finest speech yet… at the Reagan Forum

August 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Greatness. He is everything that America has always been. (45 minutes)

Excerpt from the transcript: (scroll down)

> And so, if defining the proper role of government was one of the central issues of the Reagan era, it remains that now. The truth is that people are going around saying that, well, we’re worried about – let me just add something to this because I think this is an important forum for candor.
>
> I know that it is popular in my party to blame the president, the current president. But the truth is the only thing this president has done is accelerate policies that were already in place and were doomed to fail. All he is doing through his policies is making the day of reckoning come faster, but it was coming nonetheless.
>
> What we have now is not sustainable. The role of government and the role that government plays now in America cannot be sustained the way it is. Now some are worried about how it has to change, we have to change it. The good news is it is going to change. It has to change. That’s not the issue.
>
> The issue is not whether the role that government now plays in America will change. The question is how will it change. Will it change because we make the changes necessary? Or, will it change because our creditors force us to make these changes?
>
> And over the next few moments I hope to advocate to you –- I don’t think that I have to given the make up of the crowd –- but I hope to advocate to you that, in fact, what we have before us is a golden opportunity afforded to few Americans.
>
> We have the opportunity –- within our lifetime –- to actually craft a proper role for government in our nation that will allow us to come closer than any Americans have ever come to our collective vision of a nation where both prosperity and compassion exist side-by-side.
>
> To do that, we must begin by embracing certain principles that are absolutely true. Number one: the free enterprise system does not create poverty. The free enterprise system does not leave people behind.
>
> People are poor and people are left behind because they do not have access to the free enterprise system because something in their lives or in their community has denied them access to the free enterprise system. All over the world this truism is expressing itself every single day. Every nation on the Earth that embraces market economics and the free enterprise system is pulling millions of its people out of poverty. The free enterprise system creates prosperity, not

> denies it.
>
> The second truism that we must understand is that poverty does not create our social problems, our social problems create our poverty. Let me give you an example. All across this country, at this very moment, there are children who are born into and are living with five strikes against them, already, through no fault of their own.
>
> They're born into substandard housing in dangerous neighborhoods, to broken families, being raised by their grandmothers because they never knew their father and their mom is either working two jobs to make ends meet or just not home. These kids are going to struggle to succeed unless something dramatic happens in their life.
>
> These truisms are important because they lead the public policies that define the proper role of government. On the prosperity side, the number one objective of our economic policy, in fact the singular objective of our economic policy from a government perspective is simple — it's growth. It's not distribution of wealth; it's not picking winners and losers.
>
> The goal of our public policy should be growth. Growth in our economy, the creation of jobs and of opportunity, of equality of opportunity through our governmental policies.

And the most gripping part of the speech:

> To me, this is extremely special, and I'll tell you why. During the '80s, politically especially, there were two people that deeply influenced me. One clearly was Ronald Reagan, the other was my grandfather, who lived with us most of the time in our home.
>
> We lived part of our life, especially the key years, '80-'84, in Las Vegas, Nev. And my grandfather loved to sit on the porch of our home and smoke cigars. He was Cuban. Three cigars a day, he lived to be 84. This is not an advertisement for cigar smoking, I'm just saying to you that …
>
> He loved to talk about politics. My grandfather was born in 1899. He was born to an agricultural family in Cuba. He was stricken with polio when he was a very young man, he couldn't work the fields, so they sent him to school. He was the only member of his family that could read. And because he could read, he got a job at the local cigar rolling factory.
>
> They didn't have radio or television, so they would hire someone to sit at the front of the cigar factory and read to the workers while they worked. So, the first thing he would read every day, of course, was the daily newspaper. Then he would read some novel to entertain them.
>
> And then, when he was done reading things he actually went out and rolled the cigars because he needed the extra money. But through all of those years of reading, he became extremely knowledgeable about history, not to mention all

> the classics.
>
> He loved to talk about history. My grandfather loved being Cuban. He loved being from Cuba. He never would have left Cuba if he didn't have to. But he knew America was special. He knew that without America, Cuba would still be a Spanish colony. He knew that without America, the Nazis and Imperial Japan would have won World War II. When he was born in 1899 there weren't even airplanes. By the time I was born, an American had walked on the surface of the moon.
>
> **And he knew something else. He knew that he had lost his country. And that the only thing from preventing other people in the world from losing theirs to communism was this country – this nation.**
>
> **It is easy for us who are born here –- like me –- and so many of you, to take for granted how special and unique this place is. But when you come from somewhere else, when what you always knew and loved, you lost, you don't have that luxury.**
>
> My grandfather didn't know America was exceptional because he read about it in a book. He knew about it because he lived it and saw it with his eyes. That powerful lesson is the story of Ronald Reagan's presidency. It's our legacy as a people. And it's who we have a chance to be again. And I think that's important for all of us because being an American is not just a blessing, it's a responsibility.
>
> As we were commanded to do long ago, "Let your light shine before men" …
>
> [PAUSE – he is overcome by emotion]
>
> …"that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."
>
> Well, as we gather here today in this place, that pays homage and tribute to the greatest American of the twentieth century, we are reminded that for him and for our nation, being a light to the world, that's not just our common history, it remains our common destiny.

I cried at the part in bold above.

Here's the verse he cited – Matthew 5:16 – in context: [NASB]

[13] "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

[14] "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;

[15] nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

[16] Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

I notice that he cites the NASB, which is my favorite translation – the translation closest to the original Greek.

On my Facebook page, I have Matthew 5:13, which is the verse that comforts me when things look bad in my life – when my plans haven't worked out the way I hoped they would. Things look bad for us right now as a nation. Maybe we need to reconsider these words.

This speech is being well-received everywhere. Permit me just one reaction from the UK Telegraph, which is still punch-drunk from socialism-induced rioting caused by the anti-marriage, anti-family, anti-father policies of the secular left Labour Party.

Excerpt:

> Two of the brightest rising young stars in American conservatism today are Paul Ryan and Marco Rubio. Neither are running for president in 2012, but both will be strong contenders for the vice presidential running mate slot, whoever wins the Republican nomination. And I wouldn't be surprised to see Ryan or Rubio eventually sitting in the Oval Office itself at some stage in the future. After all, Congressman Ryan of Wisconsin is only 41, and Senator Rubio of Florida is just 40; they have decades of public life ahead of them. They are both deeply principled politicians in the Reagan mould who grew up during the late Cold War years, and share a profound belief in American exceptionalism and the need for the United States to maintain its position as the world's leading power.
>
> A few weeks ago, I wrote about Congressman's Ryan's superb speech on foreign policy to the Alexander Hamilton Society in Washington, remarks which outlined in stark terms the challenges the United States faces if it is to avoid decline. Ryan's address, which I attended, was probably one of the most important statements by a US politician on American leadership this year.
>
> Senator Rubio's speech yesterday at the Reagan Presidential Library in the presence of Nancy Reagan, was another key address by a Member of Congress that deserves to be widely read, both at home and abroad. Like Ryan, Rubio offers a powerful rejection of the Big Government approach that has crippled America's economy, and outlines a firm defence of the free market, championed by Ronald Reagan.

There is something very different and special about America. And Marco Rubio reminds us all what it is in this speech. A speech heard 'round the world! A reminder of our principles – of our role – and of our responsibility to the world.

On a side note, Marco Rubio also rescued Nancy Reagan from a fall by alertly grabbing her arm when she slipped.

Why do some Christians think that government should provide free meals to children?

August 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, read this story from the Korea Herald.

Excerpt:

> After months of political dispute, Seoul citizens will decide on free school meals in a vote on Wednesday. The referendum will ask voters to choose between providing free meals to all school students regardless of income straight away, as favored by Seoul City Council, or gradually covering students from the poorest 50 percent of households, as backed by Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon. At least one third of the electorate must vote for the result to be valid.
>
> The road to this point has been fraught with controversy and division. In protest of Seoul City Council's decision to implement a universal meals program, Oh earlier this year boycotted council meetings for six months, prompting the council to accuse Oh of a "dereliction of duty." On Tuesday, Oh put his political career on the line, promising to step down as mayor should his proposal fail. For Oh and many conservatives, the vote is a last bid to safeguard the city's finances from welfare populism. To many liberals, the referendum demonstrates more about Oh's political ambitions than his principles. Where their conservative peers see waste in a universal program, they see inclusiveness that avoids stigmatizing poorer children. But in the end, the voters' voice will be the one that matters.

The article features two opinions, pro and con.

Here is the pro excerpt:

> We cannot stand by and watch classmates be divided between the well-off and the less well-off, nor can we stand idly by as some children feel ever more left out, branded "poor" by their own peers, and all because of school meals. The constitution of Korea is very clear in its declaration that compulsory education ought to be free as well.

And here is the con excerpt:

> Kwak begins: "If we harbor the idea of universal welfare …"
>
> This justifies suspicions that the goal is to establish a universal welfare program, not just to help poor kids. "Welfare populism" has defined the current election cycle, with Korean politicians pushing and shoving each other out of the way to announce the latest "free" or "half-free" proposal: "Free" school lunches, "free" medical services, "half-tuition," "free" childcare.

I obviously agree with the second opinion. These hard-cases are regularly used as a way

to push through full-blown socialism. Even many Christians fall for this, and have been tricked into voting for left-wing activists who went on to enact many objectionable things like taxpayer-funded abortion, taxpayer-funded sex changes, taxpayer-funded day care, taxpayer-funded IVF, etc.

Why would Christians support government-provided meals?

Recently I was listening to an interview with an apostate on the Unbelievable radio show. She is a pastor's kid, listened to Christian music, went on short-term mission trips to Haiti to help the poor, (but no apologetics conferences – eww, yucky!), and did all kinds of Christian activities that would not help her to pass my screening questions at all . I don't think she was ever a Christian, because I don't think this happy-clappy pastor's-kid sing-in-church stuff is any indication of having a Christian worldview.

Anyway, her *stated* reasons for her apostasy were as follows:

- I don't like that people aren't equal financially (she said she annoyed her father by wearing a pin that said "Jesus was a socialist", which, of course, he isn't – unless you decide these questions based on feelings not facts)
- I don't like that people are not happy (she talked about the problem of suffering, and was annoyed that God was failing to give people happiness, which she assumed was his job because of her impressions of God from her happy-clappy worship music view of Christianity)
- I don't like the idea of a God who could punish people in Hell for disrespecting his existence and character (because knowing God as a real person and caring about his character when you make decisions is such a drag on her autonomy and her need for peer approval)
- I don't like some things that Jesus says that are mean (her examples were all misinterpretations of the text that a preschooler could solve)
- I don't like where the Bible says that men and women have different roles (she claimed to be a feminist in the interview, which provides a clue about what really happened)

This reminds me of when Lewis Wolpert said in his debate with William Lane Craig that God didn't help him find his cricket bat so he became an atheist. What sort of investigation of the truth of Christian theism is possible for people who became atheists in their teens? None. They do it because they don't like rules, and don't like how the real world doesn't fit with their emotions and intuitions about what God should be like. They don't want answers, they want emotions and intuitions.

Often, when people say "God doesn't prevent suffering", what they really mean is that God didn't meet their personal expectations for making them happy. And when they say , "God doesn't prevent poverty", what they really mean is that God didn't give me lots of money for acting irresponsibly. They believed that they could act recklessly and that God would make their emotional flights of fancy work out somehow. Just read my post on Dan Barker: this is not at all out of the ordinary.The air of intellectualism and critical thinking

that atheists put on come much later after the wounded narcissism.

Atheism starts with wanting to be popular or a missing cricket bat. Dan Barker sang songs for most of his life – he was an uneducated man. He was in no position to become an atheist for intellectual reasons. As a young man, he invented a God in keeping with his fundamentalist praise and worship songs, and then he expected his golem-God to make him happy – which it didn't. He rejected his caricature of God because it didn't produce the expected benefits. If God can't be what they want – happiness provider, money provider – then they quit. They are not in it to serve – but to be served.

I see this a lot where people choose to have romantic relationships with non-Christians, and it doesn't work out. Instead of taking responsibility for breaking the rules while trying to get happiness, and realizing that Christianity isn't there to make them happy, they blame their Santa Claus caricature of God for not giving them what they want.

And that's why Christians support government-funded meals. They have this idea that God ought to be in the business of providing for our needs. Many of them fall away from the faith and become socialists when those expectations about God fail to prove out. So they look to government to change the world into something it isn't. They have an intuition that the world should conform to their happy expectations. When God fails to deliver, they become atheists and turn to government as the solution to their problem. But is happiness really the goal of life?

Do Christian socialists really understand what Christianity is about?

But back to the government-provided school meals. Undoubtedly, this apostate socialist feminist from the radio show would favor the government taking over the duties of parents to feed their children.

But she isn't alone. I would think that many Christian women also express delight at the idea of the government using family money to "help the poor". I've heard opinions like this from a number of Christian women. They just think that Christianity is consistent with a secular government confiscating wealth and redistributing for secular purposes. Because Christianity isn't about things like evangelism and private charity – it's about people of all religions feeling good regardless of what they think about God. It's also about people who make reckless and/or immoral decisions getting money from the government to make the consequences go away.

Christian socialists think that it's better for a Christian family to give up their money and lose their ability to share the gospel as they meet the needs of others. Let government do it instead, and let government get the credit for helping the poor. The main point of Christianity, they think, is making people feel good regardless of what they believe and how they act – by means of wealth redistribution by a secular state.

Christianity is not about the equalization of wealth by government, or the elimination of suffering, or allowing people to be reckless and immoral and then feeling happy about what they've done. Christianity finds meaning in suffering – look at the example of Jesus – and Christianity is concerned with knowing God and making him known to others, and respected by others. Many Christians reject the real goals of Christianity and substitute

alternative goals – and that's why they are so open to socialism.

Christianity is about loving God and loving your neighbor. To love God you have to know him, integrate his values with your decision making and priorities. Loving your neighbor doesn't mean shoveling money at them regardless of what they know about God or how bad their decisions are. Giving to your neighbor in the Bible is a private matter – not a government-run redistribution operation. You give SO THAT the recipient gets the better of your input and judgment.

The government in Canada hands out drug needles, and pays for abortions. Is that what Christianity is about? If it isn't, then stop being suckered by extreme case sob stories and voting to hand more and more money to the government. They will never spend it as well as you will – so long as you think that how you spend money is ALSO under the authority of God. Many Christians don't.

Are Christian socialist women ready for marriage and family?

To me, I take socialist convictions as if the woman is saying that she doesn't want her husband to be the leader in the home, she wants to diminish his purchasing power, increase the uncertainty of his job, add to the national debt her children will pay, and to empower the government to get into the business of making more and more citizens dependent on the government instead of being dependent on parents or independent as adults. Many of these women *also* favor welfare for single mothers, and a whole host of other social programs.

Money that husbands earn is family money, not government money

One of my friends on Facebook who is a pro-life capitalist feminist (not a Christian) wrote this to me as a summary of how to understand what a woman means when she expresses support for government to provide meals to children so that they will be equal:

> How about, "I want my husband to give his money to women who didn't marry the fathers of their babies, rather than keeping it in our family."
>
> I, for one, am tired of children being used as bludgeons and shields by the Left to argue against any actual repercussions for their actions. While I don't think that children should go hungry, and I can't work up much anger at a state-funded (not federal-funded) school lunch for poor kids, but… reality is that parents work their butts off to give their kids advantages. My father didn't work 80 hour weeks for someone else's kid (well, he gives away a lot of time and money, but that's his choice); he did it so that his four kids could have a stable life, food on the table, and college educations. Not so that some other brat he's never met could have all of that.

Isn't it amazing that non-Christian women actually acknowledge the importance of the male roles of father and husband *more* than the many Christian women? I find that amazing. Women who oppose socialism think that the results of my hard work are not better spent by Harriet Harman than by families. If families want to help the poor and to give God honor by being known to be Christians by those they help, good. If families want

to share the gospel and answer questions with those they help, good. If families want to choose who to help based on their Christian worldview, good. But government does none of that, so they should not get family money.

And this is why I warn you Christian young men. Money is the fuel that you use to run your lives. It is the flour that you use to bake the bread that you will offer to God as a gift. A woman who thinks that the Christian life is about giving money *to a secular government* is *not ready to marry*. A Christian family can *always* spend their money better for Christ than a secular government.

Men: Do not assume that just because a woman likes baby pictures and weddings that she is qualified for marriage. Marriage is a very particular thing. Wanting it is not the same as being ready for it. Men are not sperm-donors, and they are not bank accounts. They do not exist to cater to the whims of women who want to feel good about themselves and the world. Men are there to execute their own plans to serve God, with help from women. My role is not to make a woman feel better by creating utopia here and now. I am a Christian man. I have Christian goals. Giving money that I earned to a secular government does *not* help me to achieve those goals. And a woman who thinks that the secular government should spend my money does *not* help me to achieve those goals.

Christian women especially ought to know this, but many don't. They have completely given up on the Christian message of sin and forgiveness and reduced it to 1) being liked, 2) feeling good. Abandoning Christian particularism makes them feel liked by people in other religions, and redistributing the money of hard workers, including their own husbands, makes them feel good because government is helping the poor… to a taxpayer-funded abortion at Planned Parenthood. But that's not Christianity.

Many, many women want this feeling of putting the world right. And since they don't read about things like education vouchers and consumer-driven health care, they settle on the obvious, but incorrect, solution – reduce "inequality" by redistributing wealth through a secular government. They know nothing at all about the free market, and less still about how the free market works to solve social problems. They don't read – they just feel. And then they are shocked when a bloated government starts to encroach on religious liberty, right to life, homeschooling, etc.

Christian men, listen. Just because a woman can sing hymns, prayer, dance, read the Bible, and attend church, it doesn't mean that she has a Christian worldview. She can just be like that apostate on the Unbelievable show, having the form of Christianity, but without any real faith in God or knowledge of his character. She may not support God's purposes of being known by all and honored by all. She may not support private charity instead of public social programs.

Obama says that adding 4 trillion to the debt is unpatriotic… then does it

August 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the speech from July 3, 2008:

Ha! That looks like Obama giving that speech. Oh, it is Obama. Ha ha.

In that clip, Obama says:

> The problem is, is that the way Bush has done it over the last eight years is to take out a credit card from the Bank of China in the name of our children, driving up our national debt from $5 trillion for the first 42 presidents – #43 added $4 trillion by his lonesome, so that we now have over $9 trillion of debt that we are going to have to pay back — $30,000 for every man, woman and child. That's irresponsible. It's unpatriotic.

Obama liked to talk about the credit card from the bank of China during the campaign. And many people who watch Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert and Rachel Maddow believed him. They believed him because the comedians told them to believe him. They did not want to stop laughing long enough to look at Obama's voting record to see that he was consistently getting F ratings on spending and government waste and pork in all of his years as a legislator.

So Obama said that spending 4 trillion is "unpatriotic". But then Obama did a funny thing. CBS News reports.

> The latest posting by the Treasury Department shows the national debt has now increased $4 trillion on President Obama's watch.
>
> The debt was $10.626 trillion on the day Mr. Obama took office. The latest calculation from Treasury shows the debt has now hit $14.639 trillion.
>
> It's the most rapid increase in the debt under any U.S. president.
>
> The national debt increased $4.9 trillion during the eight-year presidency of George W. Bush. The debt now is rising at a pace to surpass that amount during Mr. Obama's four-year term.
>
> Mr. Obama blames policies inherited from his predecessor's administration for the soaring debt. He singles out:
>
> "two wars we didn't pay for"
> "a prescription drug program for seniors…we didn't pay for."
> "tax cuts in 2001 and 2003 that were not paid for."
>
> He goes on to blame the recession, and its resulting decrease in tax revenue on businesses, for making fewer sales, and more employees being laid off. He says the recession also resulted in more government spending due to increased unemployment insurance payments, subsidies to farms and funding of

> infrastructure programs that were part of his stimulus program.

Obama's explanation for the deficits doesn't wash, since the deficit was only $162 billion in 2007, the last year the Republicans had control of the House and Senate.

The Washington Times explains.

Excerpt:

> A favorite liberal narrative is that President George W. Bush squan- dered the Clinton-era budget surpluses and piled up deficits with expensive wars and tax cuts for the rich. Candidate Barack Obama used this tale to great effect, and President Obama tells it still. Take his State of the Union address last week, when Mr. Obama attributed the Bush-era deficits to "paying for two wars, two tax cuts, and an expensive prescription drug program."
>
> The truth is that Mr. Bush's deficits were the product of spending, not tax cuts. In fact, Mr. Obama could learn an important lesson for his own economic plan by studying Mr. Bush's two very different attempts at tax-cutting.
>
> As the Wall Street Journal's Stephen Moore illuminates in his 2008 book "The End of Prosperity" (Threshold Editions), Mr. Bush's 2001 tax cuts failed to revive an economy still staggering from the bursting of the dot-com bubble. Mr. Bush's strategy had been to adopt a demand-side, Keynesian stimulus, hoping that putting a few extra dollars in Americans' pockets would jump-start the economy through increased consumption. This approach faltered, not just because Americans opted to save their rebates, but because it neglected the importance of business investment to overall growth. Predictably, the economy lagged and government revenues stagnated. What the United States needed then (and needs now) was to stimulate investment, not consumption.
>
> By 2003, Mr. Bush grasped this lesson. In that year, he cut the dividend and capital gains rates to 15 percent each, and the economy responded. In two years, stocks rose 20 percent. In three years, $15 trillion of new wealth was created. The U.S. economy added 8 million new jobs from mid-2003 to early 2007, and the median household increased its wealth by $20,000 in real terms.
>
> But the real jolt for tax-cutting opponents was that the 03 Bush tax cuts also generated a massive increase in federal tax receipts. From 2004 to 2007, federal tax revenues increased by $785 billion, the largest four-year increase in American history. According to the Treasury Department, individual and corporate income tax receipts were up 40 percent in the three years following the Bush tax cuts. And (bonus) the rich paid an even higher percentage of the total tax burden than they had at any time in at least the previous 40 years. This was news to theNew York Times, whose astonished editorial board could only describe the gains as a "surprise windfall."
>
> Unfortunately, Mr. Bush allowed Congress to spend away those additional tax revenues. The fact is that the increase in tax revenues that flowed from the '03

> tax cuts could have paid for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and then some but for rampant discretionary domestic spending.

So, Bush passed his tax cuts in 2001 and 2003, but revenue went up:

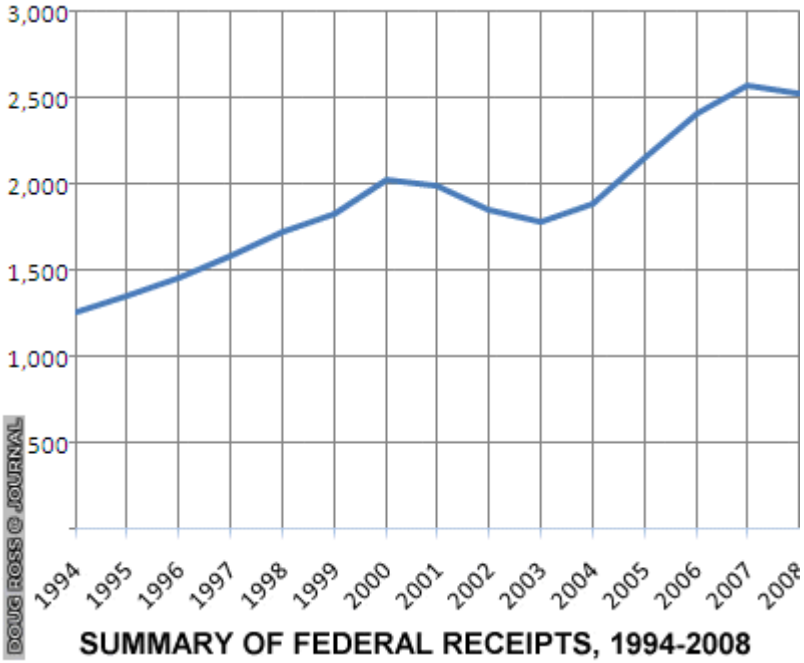

Federal receipts after Bush tax cuts

And the deficits went down from 2004 to 2007:

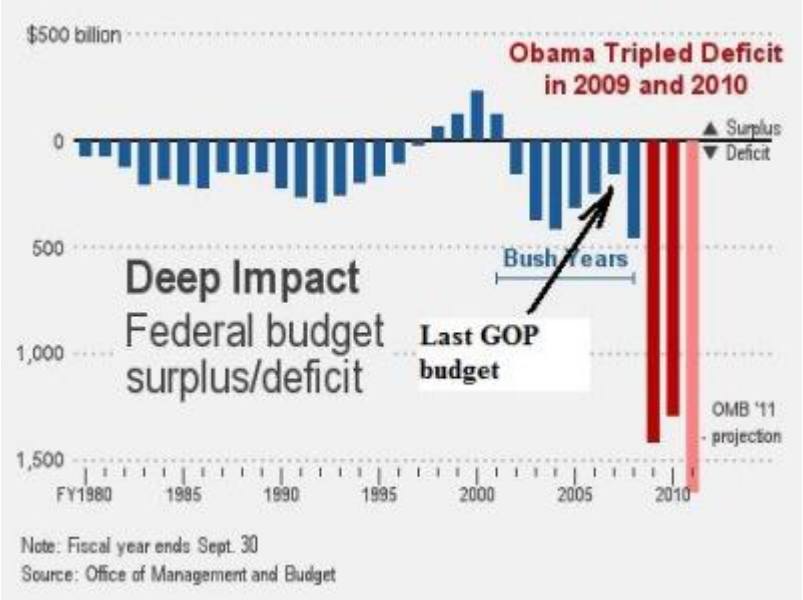

Obama Budget Deficit 2011

Bush was on track to balance the budget, then Nancy Pelosi came along and added 5.34 trillion to the debt in her 4 years as Speaker.

William Lane Craig’s favorite philosopher, debate and books

August 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From his Reasonable Faith podcast. (H/T Chris)

This man is by far the greatest defender of Christianity operating today… maybe the best (mortal) ever. If you can think of an atheist, he has probably debated him. The debate he calls his “favorite” carried me through my undergraduate degree – I printed out the transcript and kept it in my binder. I was a big fan of Leadership University then, so I had all of their Craig debates, plus I was ordering tapes from Integrated Resources.

The book he names “An Introduction to Christian Apologetics” by E.J. Carnell, was also *my* first book on apologetics, given to me by a Young Life youth pastor. I had the purple 1948 edition. Mine got to be in such a bad state of disrepair that I had to photocopy the entire book in order to save the binding, which was falling apart.

John Bolton assesses Obama’s Syrian foreign policy

August 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of the Middle East

From the NY Post, an editorial former UN ambassador John Bolton.

Excerpt:

> The end of the Khadafy regime in Libya has focused new attention on the rebels in Syria — as has last week’s belated call by President Obama for the ouster of Bashar al-Assad. But it will take a more radical Obama course correction to make a real difference. After six months of bloodshed, with thousands dead, and only mild White House responses earlier, this belated pronouncement is likely too little too late.

Here’s one of the five reasons why Obama has failed in Syria:

> Third, Obama has never understood Iran’s domineering role in Syria. Beyond the Ba’ath Party’s historical propensity for brutality and repression, long ago perfected by Bashar’s father, Iran’s increasingly hegemonic position has virtually ensured that he will not contravene Tehran’s will.
>
> Given Iran’s use of Syria to fund and arm Hezbollah, Hamas and other terrorist groups, and its likely use of Syria to hide aspects of its nuclear-weapons program, Iran was never going to permit “reform.”
>
> Indeed, the administration needs to face Iran’s influence across the region. Syria’s and Hezbollah’s murderous intervention has rendered Lebanon virtually prostrate yet again. Hamas’s indiscriminate terrorism against Israel has destroyed the prospects for Palestinian unity and a responsible path to statehood and representative government. Now, with Mubarak’s fall in Egypt, Hamas can conspire in public with its parent organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, to

> radicalize Egyptians as well as Palestinians.
>
> Obama either didn’t comprehend this relationship, or was simply unwilling to cross the Iranians because of his ethereal hopes to negotiate with Tehran to end its nuclear-weapons program. White House mistakes continue to allow Iran to prevail in Syria.

I wrote before that I thought that we should not be fighting in Libya, but that Syria was a much better place for non-violent actions to de-stabilize the Assad regime.

I hope that John Bolton will be the Secretary of State or Secretary of Defense in 2012.

New study finds that cohabitation is harmful to children

August 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: I had to pull the Mike Adams column because it was mistakenly published today when it was supposed to be posted on Monday. So I re-scheduled my post to Monday.

From communist NPR, of all places. (H/T Mark Driscoll via Mary)

Excerpt:

> In a new report out on Tuesday, they say research shows the children of cohabiting parents are at risk for a broad range of problems, from trouble in school to psychological stress, physical abuse and poverty.
>
> The study is put out by the National Marriage Project and the Institute for American Values, groups whose missions include strengthening marriage and family life. It suggests a shift in focus is needed away from the children of divorce, which has long been a preoccupying concern for such scholars.
>
> Brad Wilcox, a report co-author and head of the National Marriage Project, says divorce rates have steadily dropped since their peak in 1979-80, while rates of out-of-wedlock childbearing have soared. Forty-one percent of all births are now to unwed mothers, many of them living with — but not married to — the child's father.
>
> […]Wilcox says the children of the divorce revolution grew up to be understandably gun-shy about marriage. Many are putting it off, even after they have kids. But research shows such couples are twice as likely to split.
>
> "Ironically," he says, "they're likely to experience even more instability than they would [have] if they had taken the time and effort to move forward slowly and get married before starting a family."
>
> In fact, another recent study finds that a quarter of American women with multiple children conceived them with more than one man. Psychologist John Gottman, a co-author of Tuesday's report, says that kind of instability can have a negative impact on kids in all kinds of ways.
>
> "Both in externalizing disorders, more aggression," Gottman says, "and internalizing disorders, more depression. Children of cohabiting couples are at greater risk than children of married couples."

I think the story of this post is that pastor Mark Driscoll posted this. If there is one hope for saving society, it is that Christian pastors like Mark Driscoll and Wayne Grudem get widely imitated in their habit of showing WHY what the Bible says is true, and linking WHAT the Bible says is true with real, published evidence – scientific, historical, statistical, etc. Either we start to think about emphasizing Christianity as a true

worldview, or Christianity is done, and Western Civilization with it. A lot of men would immediately return to church if church involved more apologetics and worldview content.

Here's my previous mean, snarky post opposing cohabitation.

Marriage is the best way to prevent child poverty, so let's have some policies that promote marriage and discourage cohabitation.

Related posts

- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New study finds that pre-marital sex reduces quality of relationships
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama's new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Why did 77% of young unmarried women vote for Obama in 2009?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children's sexual choices
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being

New study finds that 86% of doctors unwilling to perform abortions

August 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wes from Reason to Stand sent me this article from the Freakonomics blog.

Excerpt:

> A new study released by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, from main author **Debra Stulberg**, surveys 1,144 ob-gyns (1,800 were initially approached) to see how many provide abortion services. Though legal, abortion is much harder to come by than one might expect: while 97% of ob-gyns reported having encountered women seeking an abortion, only 14% said they were willing to perform the service.

And here is the breakdown by religious affiliation:

- 40.2 percent of Jewish doctors say yes, compared with
- 1.2 percent of Evangelical Protestants
- 9 percent of Roman Catholics or Eastern Orthodox
- 10.1 percent of Non-Evangelical Protestants
- 20 percent of Hindus
- 26.5 percent of doctors who said they had no religious affiliation

Naturally evangelical Protestants (like me!) are the best.

I do not recommend the Freakonomics book for learning about economics, and I would recommend John Lott's book "Freedomnomics" as an antidote to anyone who has read Freakonomics, particularly on the issue of whether abortion reduces or increases crime rates. The authors of Freakonomics are liberal, while John Lott is conservative. You can read a popular article about his refutation of Freakonomics here, or read the research paper here.

But the main thing is that Democrats *do not like* the idea that you would be allowed to stop them from being happy by having a will of your own. For Democrats, you exist to serve the will of the state – both by paying taxes, and if necessary by killing babies. You are not there to have your own plan and your own family and your own life, as Republicans believe. And they really don't like you making them feel bad by resisting what *they* think of as good. They don't want anyone to say that what they are doing is wrong. They would just like everyone to pay for what they are doing and to help them do it and to help them feel good about doing it after they've done it – and they don't care what you think.

Now consider this 2009 article from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> During the last months of the Bush administration, the feds adopted a new rule that could allow health-care workers to refuse to provide birth control on moral grounds. Now the Obama administration is moving to reverse that rule, the Chicago Tribune reports.
>
> Existing federal law allows health-care workers to refuse on moral grounds to provide abortions. The new rule strengthened and extended those protections. While some groups, such as the Christian Medical & Dental Associations, supported the move, many others, including several state attorneys general and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, opposed the rule.
>
> There have been recent reports of women being denied emergency contraception, which is federally approved for use within 72 hours of intercourse, the Trib says.
>
> The Obama administration will start the process of reversing the rule today. Final action won't be taken until after the public is allowed a 30-day comment period.

The Democrats went on record in 2009 as being opposed to conscience protections.

Excerpt:

> The Senate on Thursday night rejected an amendment from a pro-life senator that would have provided conscience protection on abortion for doctors and medical centers. The amendment comes at a time when President Barack Obama is considering overturning further protections.
>
> Sen Tom Coburn, an Oklahoma Republican, sponsored an amendment to the Senate budget bill that would protect the right of conscience for health care workers.
>
> His budget amendment was to "protect the freedom of conscience for patients and the right of health care providers to serve patients without violating their moral and religious convictions."
>
> However, the Senate rejected the conscience amendment on a 56-41 vote with most of the chamber's Democrats voting against it along with a handful of pro-abortion Republicans.
>
> Three Democrats joined most of the Senate Republicans in voting for the Coburn amendment.
>
> […]The amendment comes at a time when Obama is considering rescinding the Provider Conscience Clause that further protects the rights of health workers.
>
> President Bush put the provision into place to provide more enforcement for the three federal laws that make it so medical professionals and facilities are not required to do abortions.
>
> However, President Obama has proposed overturning those conscience protections and will likely do so after a 30-day public comment window expires on April 9.

Earlier this year, Obama succeeding in overturning many of Bush's protections for individuals whose morality differs with the morality of the government.

Excerpt:

> After two years of struggling to balance the rights of patients against the beliefs of health-care workers, the Obama administration on Friday finally rescinded most of a federal regulation designed to protect those who refuse to provide care they find objectionable on moral or religious grounds.

Be careful who you vote for. If free enterprise and capitalism strike you as unfair, then pick up a book by Thomas Sowell or Arthur Brooks and read about it until it makes sense to you. Don't vote to violate your own conscience because you have a mistaken view of which economic system helps the poor most. Similarly with foreign policy. If opposition to war causes you to vote Democrat, then pick up a book by Frank Gaffney or Douglas Feith and learn about how a strong military is needed to prevent war. Don't vote to violate your own conscience because you have a mistaken view of which foreign policy helps peace most.

Should teachers be paid more money?

August 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the American Enterprise Institute.

> Excerpt:
>
> Mark Perry posts regarding the new AEI Education Outlook by University of Missouri economist Cory Koedel which shows Education to be by far the easiest course of study in most colleges. Mark finds additional evidence from Cornell University to back up Koedel's claim. Education majors enter college with lower SAT scores than students majoring in other fields but leave college with higher GPAs.
>
> […]But, as a forthcoming paper that I have co-authored with Jason Richwine will show, the low standards applied in education degrees also complicate the task of determining whether public school teachers are fairly paid. Teachers claim to be underpaid because they receive lower average salaries than private sector workers with similar levels of education. (Our paper shows that, even if this is true, they more than make up the gap through generous benefits, but we'll ignore that for now.) But note that the control variable here is the *level* of education — meaning, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, and so on — and not the quality of education nor, more importantly, the ability or productivity of the worker.

> […]Put bluntly, public school teachers enter college with below-average SAT scores, major in the easiest undergraduate course of study, take Master's degrees in education that have no appreciable impact on teaching quality, and then wonder why they're not as well paid as someone who got a Master's in chemical engineering. They shouldn't.

Education is what you study when you can't get into anything else, and you don't learn anything in it. What we really need is to hire teachers with real degrees in math, science and business. There should not even be an education MAJOR.

Here's a fun story about the Chicago Teacher Union (CTU).

Excerpt:

> Like many Illinois citizens, the CTU has seen reports that three out of four state high school graduates are not ready for college. And the union's response has been, well … the CTU hasn't really said anything about it.
>
> You see, the fact that students are leaving Illinois' K-12 public education system totally unprepared for college, the workplace or life in general – that's not really the CTU's *thing*.
>
> Instead, the union is "upset" and feeling very "disrespected" because the

> Chicago Board of Education doesn't have the money to pay CTU members the four percent pay raise they were promised in their contract.
>
> The union is also steaming over the fact that more than 1,500 teachers have been laid off, some of which have been placed on a "secret" do-not-hire list, CTU President Karen Lewis told the Chicago Sun-Times.
>
> Pay, benefits, working conditions – *these* are the things that the teachers unions are willing to strike over. If only 23 percent of Illinois high school grads pass a college-readiness test, well, what do you expect them to do about it? Lewis is quick to point out that union teachers are just simple "workers," doing the best they can with the kids they are given. (It's mostly the parents' fault, anyway.)
>
> Sure, some trouble making education reformers may suggest that kids are doing badly on the tests because their school days have been frittered away on silly social justice lessons, but the fact that the CTU is being stiffed on its four percent pay raise only underscores the need for such a curriculum.

Teachers don't like it when you expect them to earn their salaries. They just go on strike.

Bank of America fires Dr. Frank Turek for his religious and political views

August 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Mike Adams explains how Bank of America discriminates against Christians and conservatives.

Excerpt:

> In late May of this year Dr. Turek was hired to present at a meeting of your Global Business Management & Analysis Team within Global Wealth and Investment Management. The title of his presentation was called "*Why Can't You Be Normal Just Like Me*?" The presentation helps participants adapt to diverse personalities to improve productivity and relationships—the essence of inclusion and diversity. The meeting was scheduled to take place at your Merrill Lynch facility in Pennington, New Jersey on June 17.
>
> Three days before the event Dr. Turek was abruptly fired by an HR representative. Why? She explained that someone Googled his name and discovered that he had written Correct, Not Politically Correct: How Same-Sex Marriage Hurts Everyone. Marriage was not the topic of his presentation, nor has it ever been in all his years of working with the bank. Moreover, as his book reveals (although no one at the Bank is likely to have read it), Dr. Turek treats all people with respect, whether he agrees with them politically or not. Nevertheless, in the name of "inclusion" and "diversity," he was immediately excluded for his political and religious viewpoint. Mr. Moynihan, please answer this question: Do you have to have certain political or religious views to work at Bank of America?
>
> I know you cannot really believe that free speech and religion rights vanish when one works with Bank of America. I know that you cannot believe that all political conservatives, Jews, Christians, Mormons and Muslims should be fired for their deeply held beliefs. But that is how the Bank of America policy of "inclusion" was applied to Dr. Turek. He was fired because of his personal political and religious beliefs—beliefs that are undoubtedly shared by thousands of your very large and diverse workforce. Or is it really diverse?

Dr. Turek was previously fired by the HR people at Cisco Systems for the same reason. Cisco is another company that either silences or fires Christians for their views. No free speech is allowed if it offends certain groups. Bank of America also supports illegal immigration.

How would same-sex marriage affect your life?

BONUS: Frank Turek explains how to talk about the same-sex marriage issue without sounding like a jerk.

Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 interviewed by… the Wintery Knight!

August 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten interviewed by Wintery Knight
Click here for the interview on Apologetics 315.

Summary:

Questions for WK:
• Why not use your real name?
• What's the focus on WinteryKnight.com?
• What's your goal in interviewing Brian?

Questions for Brian:
• How did you come to be in Northern Ireland?
• How did you get interested in apologetics?
• What would you do with unlimited funding to propagate apologetics resources?
• What arguments are the most persuasive for you?
• What arguments should we use with others?
• Do we need a million "one dollar" apologists, or one "million-dollar" apologist?
• How important do you think it is for apologists to focus on scientific evidences?
• How can the *lay person* get up to speed on these evidences?
• What's the best way to make the case for the resurrection[image]?
• Use a sledgehammer approach, or a velvet glove approach?
• What about psychological reasons for rejecting the arguments ?
• How does apologetics benefit Christians?
• What about dealing with fear when speaking with people?
• What are the unique resources on the blog?

The audio is 53 minutes long!

Is Christianity about doing nice things or upholding God's reputation?

August 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This comment seemed to get a lot of response on Facebook. It's short, so I am posting it to see if anyone has any opinions about it.

> I have been thinking about how people can be raised as Christians and yet become non-Christians. I am beginning to think that the problem is twofold. Early-raised Christians may get the idea from the typical Christian life that Christianity is like what goes on in church. Happiness, singing, families and games, and mostly well-off people dressed in their Sunday best. When they see the suffering and poverty in the real world, they get annoyed with God for not making people happy and healthy and wealthy, and they then turn to government to meet those needs and create happiness and freedom from poverty here on Earth.
>
> I think we need to tell people early on that Christianity is about knowing God and suffering like Jesus suffered. They have to get used to the idea that other people in other religions are not "bad" but they are WRONG and they aren't doing their homework. (My Hindu friends, for example, take it as a point of pride that they don't update their religious beliefs for facts, but just believe what is their national and family religion – it's about nationalism and culture, not truth) And they have to get the idea that Jesus is not championing the elimination of suffering through wealth redistribution, but private charity.
>
> I think this idea that Christianity is about making people feel good and getting along and being liked is pernicious. A relationship with God doesn't mean projecting YOUR needs onto him, and having a fit if he has different goals and priorities. A relationship with God means caring about what he wants, and suffering with him when things happen that grieve him. I do believe God is sovereign and allows these things to happen.

A previous post from last week had my preliminary thoughts on this, and my friends and I are talking it over. Mariangela has a lot to say about this topic for sure, if she wants to comment.

But not all the news is bad… I was in church on Sunday and I was thinking about this more. Our sermon had a mix of good works and defending God's existence and character, but it was more the latter than the former. A solid focus on defending God's reputation and moral standards, and then doing good was mentioned as well at the very end. But this is an exceptional church I was at. They have apologetics book studies featuring Lee Strobel books, and they have hosted Greg Koukl as a speaker. I think in churches where they DON'T have that focus, people will just stop going since they can be good and do

nice things without having to go to church.

What do you think?

Friend me on Facebook here. Follow me on Twitter here.

Is evolution compatible with Christianity?

August 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Denyse O'Leary found this article at the Washington Post about a Christian woman who discovered Darwinian evolution through the works of Richard Dawkins and Jerry Coyne. She found it to be incompatible with Christianity. (H/T Uncommon Descent)

Excerpt:

> But of course evolution poses a problem for Christianity. That's not to say it poses a problem for all Christians, since many Christians happily accept evolution: they see Genesis 1 as merely a metaphor, and declare that if God chose to create us using evolution, that's fine by them. I used to be this kind of Christian myself; but I must confess that my blitheness was only possible because I had only the vaguest possible idea of how evolution works and certainly didn't know enough about it to realize that unguided-ness is central to it.
>
> While I welcome anyone who recognizes that the evidence for evolution is such that it cannot sensibly be denied, to attempt to co-opt evolution as part of a divine plan simply does not work, and suggests a highly superficial understanding of the subject.

And:

> Evolution poses a further threat to Christianity, though, a threat that goes to the very heart of Christian teaching. … Evolution could not have produced a single mother and father of all future humans, so there was no Adam and no Eve. No Adam and Eve: no fall. No fall: no need for redemption. No need for redemption: no need for a redeemer. No need for a redeemer: no need for the crucifixion or the resurrection, and no need to believe in that redeemer in order to gain eternal life. And not the slightest reason to believe in eternal life in the first place.

That's the understanding of evolution that she got from Richard Dawkins and Jerry Coyne.

Denyse O'Leary mentions that there is a group of "Christian" Darwinists who have no problem at all with the scientific claims made by atheistic Darwinists. They oppose intelligent design – the idea that science can detect effects in nature, like protein sequences, that are best explained as the result of intelligent causes. When it comes to what the science can show, atheists and "theistic evolutionists" agree: God didn't do anything. So why are these "theistic evolutionists" pushing a theory that leads people to become atheists, when properly understood?

Breast cancer charity Susan G. Komen gives $569,159 to Planned Parenthood

August 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here on Life News.

Excerpt:

> Affiliates of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure breast cancer foundation gave more than half a million dollars to Planned Parenthood in 2010, according to federal tax records.
>
> The American Life League obtained copies of the financial documents, which totaled donations from 18 Komen affiliates at $569,159.
>
> Affiliates in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Washington all gave money. You can view a full spreadsheet of the donations here.
>
> According to the data, the Dallas County chapter donated the largest amount, giving $68,000 to Planned Parenthood of North Texas. The Orange County, Calif. chapter gave the second-highest amount at $58,754.
>
> Nevertheless, the $569,159 tag is lower than the donations from 2009, which totaled $731,303.
>
> […]Rita Diller, director of the American Life League's Stop Planned Parenthood initiative, told Life News that aside from the abortion issue, it doesn't make sense for Komen to donate money to Planned Parenthood when the organization does not provide any kind of advanced breast care, including mammograms. "Komen's support of Planned Parenthood is defeating its own mission of fighting breast cancer," Diller said. "In the first place, Planned Parenthood is not licensed to do anything beyond Level 1 breast examinations….Add to that the fact that Planned Parenthood's two big money-makers, abortion and contraceptives, are directly linked to breast cancer by numerous studies conducted from the 1960s through the present."
>
> […]A Jan. 2010 study from the Seattle Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center called abortion a "known risk factor" for breast cancer, reporting a 20 to 50 percent increased chance for cancer among women who had had an abortion compared to women who carried their pregnancies to term

Don't give money to Susan G. Komen for the Cure if you are pro-life.

UPDATE: Wow! Steve Ertelt of LifeNews left a comment linking to this follow-up story. Please read.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the lawResearchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity
- Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Indiana voucher program offers hope to low-income students

August 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Courier Press, news of the latest success for Republicans in their long war against public sector teacher unions.

Excerpt:

> Kristy Wentworth of Evansville said she was never dissatisfied with public education, and her three children, who attended schools in the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corp., were making good grades.
>
> But when friends told her about Indiana's new private school voucher program, she was intrigued.
>
> After some discussion, Wentworth enrolled her children this year at Evansville Lutheran School, which is near her home. It didn't take the single mother long to decide her choice was correct. Her children — who are in grades 7, 6 and 4 — are thriving at Evansville Lutheran. Wentworth noted the school's small class sizes, and she marveled at the frequent communication she receives from her teachers.
>
> "They come home from school excited, they leave for school excited. They can't wait to get there," Wentworth said. "(The school) encouraged them to sign up for Boy Scouts and volleyball, and on the first night they made the kids feel so welcome."
>
> Wentworth recently lost her job, and she said she couldn't have afforded a private school without the voucher program, which proponents say helps overall educational achievement and closes achievement gaps along socioeconomic lines.

And these private schools help children to perform better in testing.

> Can greater competition among schools help? That's what state education officials are banking on. While scars from the lengthy spring debate over vouchers heal, they are encouraging local school districts to embrace the new environment.
>
> Local nonpublic schools have courted voucher students. As of Friday, 114 were awarded to students in the EVSC district — the fourth highest number in the state.
>
> Officials with the EVSC, meanwhile, point to recent academic progress, its network of community partnerships aimed at meeting students' most fundamental needs and classroom innovations.
>
> Delaware Elementary School, which is in the same neighborhood as Evansville

> Lutheran, has made strides in several areas in a short period of time, said Heather Ottilie, parent of a Delaware third-grader.
>
> Delaware is in its second year as an EVSC "equity school." Along with two other schools of similar socioeconomic demographics — McGary Middle School and Evans School — Delaware is free to have longer school days and longer school years and has more leeway in curriculum and rules. The three equity schools all showed gains on the spring ISTEP.
>
> Ottilie said Delaware has placed heavy emphasis on independent reading. Other innovations include the use of netbook computers and iPod Touches in classrooms, world language instruction and new learning programs such as LEGO robotics, which emphasize problem-solving skills.
>
> "I love it," Ottilie said. "Everything is hands-on … the kids aren't just doing worksheets."

What is the conservative plan to help the poor? Is it wealth redistribution? Does that even work? Or is there a way to produce *better results for the poor* through free market capitalism? Those who advocate big government never bother to ask these questions. For those who take the time to *study economics*, the answer is clear – what works to reduce costs and raise quality is choice and competition.

Related posts

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Atlanta public schools caught helping students to cheat on standardized tests
- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries

- How teacher’s unions make war on charter schools

Vermont governor blames tropical storms on global warming

August 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the interview of the left-wing site Democracy Now.

Excerpt:

> **AMY GOODMAN:** You have a climate cabinet—you're unusual in this way, Governor Shumlin—in Vermont, dealing with the issue of climate change. Can you talk about something that the networks, as they covered what wasn't happening in New York and then came very late to what is happening in Vermont, have not talked about through this massive coverage, and that is those two words, "climate change" or "global warming"?
>
> **GOV. PETER SHUMLIN:** Well, you know, I find it extraordinary that so many political leaders won't actually talk about the relationship between climate change, fossil fuels, our continuing irrational exuberance about burning fossil fuels, in light of these storm patterns that we've been experiencing. Listen, since I've been sworn in as governor just seven months ago, I have dealt with—this is the second major disaster as a result of storms. We had storms this spring that flooded our downtowns and put us through many of the same exercises that we're going through right now. **We didn't used to get weather patterns like this in Vermont. We didn't get tropical storms. We didn't get flash flooding. It wasn't—you know, our storm patterns weren't like Costa Rica; they were like Vermont.**
>
> And the point is, we in the colder states are going to see the results of climate change first. We are. Myself, Premier Charest up in Quebec, Governor Cuomo over in New York, we understand that the flooding and the extraordinary weather patterns that we're seeing are a result of our burnings of fossil fuel. We've got to get off fossil fuels as quickly as we know how, to make this planet livable for our children and our grandchildren. And I do think that there's a relationship between the storms that we've been getting here in Vermont and the example, frankly, of what—they are an example of what lies ahead for us.

Yes, it's politicians like this that cause oil prices to go through the roof because they refuse to develop domestic sources of energy. And when you raise the price of oil and gas, you raise the prices of food, and anything else that needs to be transported.

But I digress… is the Vermont governor right about tropical storms never happening in Vermont? Let's see.

Excerpt:

> **1927 November** – A tropical storm spawned torrential rains as it rose over the Green Mountain in Vermont, Nov. 3-4. The record flooding caused $40 million in

> damage and killed 84 people in Vermont and 1 in Rhode Island. The storm ended as snow in the mountains. Note that this flood was unrelated to the 1927 Mississippi Flood.
>
> **1938 September** – New England Hurricane of 1938 – Strong Category 3. Wind gusts reached Category 5 strength in eastern Connecticut, Rhode Island and southern Massachusetts west of Buzzards Bay and Cape Cod. The anemometer at the Blue Hill Observatory registered a peak wind gust of 186 m.p.h. before the instrument broke. The hurricane lost strength as it tracked into interior areas of New England, but it is believed to have been at Category 2 intensity as it crossed into Vermont and at minimal Category 1 intensity as it tracked into Quebec. The storm killed over 600 people and is considered to be the worst hurricane to strike New England in modern times.

Ooops!They've had hurricanes in Vermont… and those are much worse than tropical storms.

But what about scientists… what do *pro-global warming scientists* think of the link between hurricane frequency and global warming?

Excerpt:

> Ever since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, hurricanes have often been seen as a symbol of global warming's wrath. Many climate change experts have tied the rise of hurricanes in recent years to global warming and hotter waters that fuel them.
>
> [image]Another group of experts say there is no link. They attribute the recent increase to a natural multi-decade cycle.
> What makes this study different is Knutson, a meteorologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's fluid dynamics lab in Princeton, N.J.
>
> He has warned about the harmful effects of climate change and has even complained in the past about being censored by the Bush administration on studies on the dangers of global warming.
>
> He said his new study argues "against the notion that we've already seen a really dramatic increase in Atlantic hurricane activity resulting from greenhouse warming."
>
> The study, published online Sunday in the journal Nature Geoscience, predicts that by the end of the century the number of hurricanes in the Atlantic will fall by 18 percent. The number of hurricanes making landfall in the United States and its neighbors will drop by 30 percent because of wind factors. The biggest storms – those with winds of more than 110 mph – would only decrease in frequency by 8 percent.

So what are we to make over the media freaking out over ~~hurricane~~ tropical storm Irene?

As Dennis Prager argues, meteorologists can't even predict the intensity of a "hurricane"

one day before the event, but they are certain about their predictions for catastrophic global warming. Is that not “irrational exuberance”? I can see why politicians on the left would sign on to this – they are always trying to make everyone equal by limiting individual freedoms and regulating businesses.

Does New York Times executive editor Bill Keller understand Christianity?

August 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hey look! The executive editor of the New York Times, the most liberal "newspaper" in the country is comparing conservative Christian beliefs to belief in space aliens!

Excerpt:

> If a candidate for president said he believed that space aliens dwell among us, would that affect your willingness to vote for him? Personally, I might not disqualify him out of hand; one out of three Americans believe we have had Visitors and, hey, who knows? But I would certainly want to ask a few questions. Like, where does he get his information? Does he talk to the aliens? Do they have an economic plan?
>
> Yet when it comes to the religious beliefs of our would-be presidents, we are a little squeamish about probing too aggressively.
>
> […]Rick Perry and Michele Bachmann are both affiliated with fervid subsets of evangelical Christianity — and Rick Santorum comes out of the most conservative wing of Catholicism — which has raised concerns about their respect for the separation of church and state, not to mention the separation of fact and fiction.

Got that? If you're a conservative Christian, then Bill Keller thinks that your view should raise concerns about whether you are able to separate fact and fiction – like the people who believe in space aliens.

Well – I am going to help Bill Keller with this problem. In fact, I'll address the rest of this post to him.

Bill Keller – I know that in New York, you might never have to face questioning by anyone who disagrees with you. I understand that. But you really need to be more careful about hearing *both sides* of debates before you start talking about the issues in public. I can help you, Bill. I can point you to the debates where you will hear both sides. Many people get their impressions of Christianity from movies like "Jesus Camp", "Footloose" and "Inherit the Wind", and we don't want you to be one of those people.

Below are some actual academic debates featuring an actual Christian scholar debating on topics like whether God exists, whether Jesus rose from the dead, and whether atheism is an adequate foundation for morality. You can watch those to find out what Christians really believe and why.

Formal academic debates for New York Times executive editors

William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens on the existence of God:

William Lane Craig vs Bart Ehrman on the resurrection of Jesus:

William Lane Craig vs Sam Harris on morality:

And here are a couple of extra ones on social issues: (yes, we've thought about those issues, too)

- Scott Klusendorf vs Nadine Strossen on abortion
- Michael Brown vs. Eric Smaw on same-sex marriage

You recognize those prominent atheists, don't you Bill? Hitchens, Harris, Ehrman? That's right – those are the people you've read about in Time magazine and in Newsweek! But you don't know who Willliam Lane Craig is, do you? Well you won't read about him in popular magazines, Bill. Yes, he's a *scholar*. You have to read about him in academic presses, like Oxford University Press, where he is published. Yes, Bill – evangelical Christians even publish on social issues in prestigious academic presses, like Cambridge University Press, too. No, I know you don't read academic books right now. We'll get there, Bill. Baby steps. Baby steps.

Well, now. Wouldn't you like to watch those debates and learn how the ideas of prominent atheists ideas hold up under questioning? You wouldn't? Oh, that's just being intolerant and close-minded, Bill. Just watch them anyway. No, your side doesn't win. No, the outcomes are not even close. But that's good Bill – that's how people form accurate views – by listening to both sides, not just one side. That's how you gain knowledge, Bill. It's good for you to know what you are talking about, instead of just forming your entire worldview based on mockery and prejudice, and isolated from all logical analysis and empirical validation.

And when you're done with the debates, we'll find you some nice books on these topics featuring evangelical Christians from top academic presses, like Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, and so on. Just let me know when you're ready, Bill.

Further study

To my regular readers: I've written before about what scientists know about bias in the mainstream media.

Is it “racial discrimination” to ask someone for a photo ID before they vote?

August 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

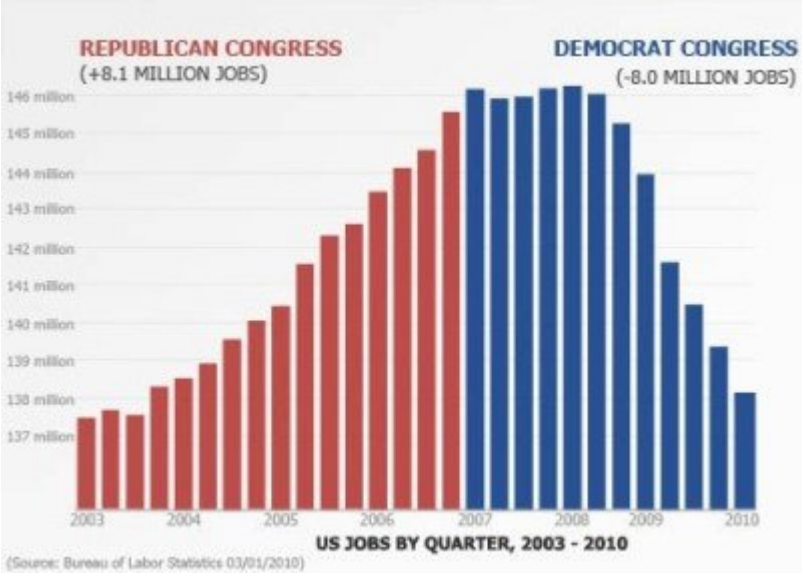

Can Obama get re-elected based on these results?
From National Review.

Excerpt:

> Once you get past the race-baiting, you will find that opponents of voter ID generally rely on two arguments, equally specious: 1) There is no need for photo ID, because there is no voter fraud in the United States; 2) This is a deliberate effort to suppress the turnout of minority voters, who often don’t have photo ID. Liberals keep repeating these false claims despite the fact that they have been disproved both in the courtroom and at the polling place.

> […]The claim that there is no voter fraud in the U.S. is patently ridiculous, given our rich and unfortunate history of it. As the U.S. Supreme Court said when it upheld Indiana’s photo-ID law in 2008, “Flagrant examples of such fraud . . . have been documented throughout this Nation’s history by respected historians and journalists.” The liberal groups that fought Indiana’s law didn’t have much luck with liberal justice John Paul Stevens, who wrote the 6–3 decision. Before being named to the Supreme Court, Justice Stevens practiced law in Chicago, a hotbed of electoral malfeasance . . .
>
> […]Election data in Georgia demonstrate that concern about a negative effect on the Democratic or minority vote is baseless. Turnout there increased more dramatically in 2008 — the first presidential election held after the state’s photo-ID law went into effect — than it did in states without photo ID. Georgia had a record turnout in 2008, the largest in its history — nearly 4 million voters. And Democratic turnout was up an astonishing 6.1 percentage points from the 2004

> election, the fourth-largest increase of any state. The black share of the statewide vote increased from 25 percent in 2004 to 30 percent in 2008, according to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. According to Census Bureau surveys, 65 percent of the black voting-age population voted in the 2008 election, compared with only 54.4 percent in 2004, an increase of more than ten percentage points.

Read the full refutations of those two arguments in the post, currently the second most popular post on National Review. This is a very, very good article, and it references the relevant studies.

If it’s not close, they can’t cheat. Remember that in 2012.

Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels

August 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CBS News. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Acting Director Kenneth Melson is being moved out of the top job at the bureau, ATF special agents in charge announced during an internal conference call today. He will transfer to the Justice Department and assume the position of senior advisor on forensic science, Office of Legal Programs.
>
> […]Also, U.S. Attorney for Arizona Dennis Burke has submitted his resignation to President Obama, effective immediately.
>
> […]Sources tell CBS News that the Assistant U.S. Attorney in Phoenix, Emory Hurley, who worked under Burke and helped oversee the controversial case is also expected to be transferred out of the Criminal Division into the Civil Division.

Why all of these "re-assignments"?

> The flurry of personnel shifts come as the Inspector General continues investigating the so-called gunwalker scandal at the Justice Department and theATF.
>
> The gunwalking scandal centered on an ATF program that allowed thousands of high-caliber weapons to knowingly be sold to so-called "straw buyers" who are suspected as middlemen for criminals. Those weapons, according to the Justice Dept., have been tied to at least 12 violent crimes in the United States, and an unknown number of violent crimes in Mexico.
>
> Dubbed operation "Fast and Furious," the plan was designed to gather intelligence on gun sales, but ATF agents have told CBS News and members of Congress that they were routinely ordered to back off and allow weapons to "walk" when sold.
>
> Previously, ATF Phoenix Special Agent in Charge Bill Newell was reassigned to headquarters, and two Assistant Special Agents in Charge under Fast and Furious, George Gillett and Jim Needles, were also moved to other positions.

Pajamas Media provides more of the history.

Excerpt:

> The public scandal began when ATF whistleblowers disclosed that a multi-agency federal law enforcement operation in Arizona — Operation Fast and Furious — supplied weapons found at the crime scene of murdered U.S. Border Patrol Agent

Brian Terry.

It was quickly revealed that federal law enforcement officers, supervisors, and administration appointees ensured that straw purchasers would be able to purchase weapons intended for the Sinaloa drug cartel without the threat of arrest. As federal agents watched — essentially acting as cartel security — 2,020 firearms were purchased, and the majority of them were "walked" by straw purchasers into the hands of the violent drug gang.

Mexican authorities claim that an estimated 150 Mexican law enforcement officers and soldiers, plus an unknown number of civilians have been murdered with weapons "walked" under the eyes of the federal task force. Three U.S. federal agents have also been shot in crimes using Fast and Furious weapons. Two died.

Initially, the Obama administration attempted to scapegoat acting ATF Director Kenneth Melson. When that failed, they colluded with the *Washington Post* and later possibly the *New York Times* on attempted character assassinations of Congressman Darrell Issa. Issa, along with Senator Charles Grassley, is leading the charge to investigate the scandal.

A month following Melson's testimony to Issa's committee, the Gunwalker landscape has changed considerably. Emails have been unearthed, additional figures with inside knowledge of the operation are testifying, and more congressmen and senators have joined the probe of the Department of Justice to see just how wide and high the administration's knowledge of and participation in the gunwalking program — or programs — truly went.

All of these evolving disclosures are increasing the pressure on administration officials such as U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, both of whom simply must have known of the operations considering the high-level collaboration between multiple agencies under their control.

[…]**A National Security Council (NSC) operative in the White House named Kevin O'Reilly was in direct contact with Bill Newell, the agent in charge of the operation. (Are we to believe that the benign emails released between the two men were their only Gunwalker conversations, and that O'Reilly wasn't briefing the National Security Council or the president?)**

The U.S. attorney involved in Fast And Furious, Dennis Burke, is a long-time Napolitano ally and was her chief of staff while she was governor from 2003-2008. Burke is also on the attorney general's Advisory Committee border and immigration law enforcement subcommittee. He recently opposed a routine filing by murdered Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry's family, in a move that appears designed to protect him in

> **criminal and civil trials regarding Gunwalker.**

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, you remember, is the woman who thinks that returning vets, opponents of illegal immigration, believers in the Constitution and small government, pro-lifers, etc. are all potential terrorists. I suppose that she thinks that actual terrorists are not potential terrorists, because that would be mean. I really don't know for sure.

The thing to understand about liberals is that they are fine with criminals and drug cartels having guns. What they don't like is when law-abiding citizens have guns, because they might hurt the innocent criminals who commit crimes against law-abiding people while running drugs, etc. The only people who follow gun control laws are law-abiding people, not criminals.

Related posts

- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference
- Homeland Security Secreary Janet Napolitano to counter global warming threat
- Obama administration investigates Wisconsin pro-lifers
- Homeland Security head says that "the system worked"
- Democrats will push amnesty to give 12-20 million illegal aliens citizenship
- Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?
- Michele Bachmann calls for Napolitano to resign
- Civil rights commission finds that Obama administration has racist double standard
- Is Obama's Department of Justice enabling voter registration fraud?
- Department of Justice won't purge dead or ineligible voters from roll
- Is the Department of Justice refusing to defend the voting rights of whites?
- Obama's attorney general has his head in the sand on national security
- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training
- Obama administration threatens South Carolina for saving prisoner's lives

New study finds that cosmic rays and the sun cause global warming

August 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is ManBearPig to blame for global warming?
From the Financial Post.

Excerpt:

> The science is now all-but-settled on global warming, convincing new evidence demonstrates, but Al Gore, the IPCC and other global warming doomsayers won't be celebrating. The new findings point to cosmic rays and the sun — not human activities — as the dominant controller of climate on Earth.
>
> The research, published with little fanfare this week in the prestigious journal Nature, comes from über-prestigious CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, one of the world's largest centres for scientific research involving 60 countries and 8,000 scientists at more than 600 universities and national laboratories. CERN is the organization that invented the World Wide Web, that built the multi-billion dollar Large Hadron Collider, and that has now built a pristinely clean stainless steel chamber that precisely recreated the Earth's atmosphere.
>
> In this chamber, 63 CERN scientists from 17 European and American institutes have done what global warming doomsayers said could never be done — demonstrate that cosmic rays promote the formation of molecules that in Earth's atmosphere can grow and seed clouds, the cloudier and thus cooler it will be. Because the sun's magnetic field controls how many cosmic rays reach Earth's atmosphere (the stronger the sun's magnetic field, the more it shields Earth from incoming cosmic rays from space), the sun determines the temperature on Earth.
>
> […]Yet this spectacular success will be largely unrecognized by the general

> public for years — this column will be the first that most readers have heard of it — because CERN remains too afraid of offending its government masters to admit its success. Weeks ago, CERN formerly decided to muzzle Mr. Kirby and other members of his team to avoid "the highly political arena of the climate change debate," telling them "to present the results clearly but not interpret them" and to downplay the results by "mak[ing] clear that cosmic radiation is only one of many parameters." The CERN study and press release is written in bureaucratese and the version of Mr. Kirkby's study that appears in the print edition of Nature censored the most eye-popping graph — only those who know where to look in an online supplement will see the striking potency of cosmic rays in creating the conditions for seeding clouds.

Well, this is no surprise to me. We've KNOWN that the planet was warmer in the Middle Ages than it is now. We've KNOWN that the surface temperatures on Mars increased when ours was increasing.

Why do secular socialists have to insist on believing what they want to believe against the scientific evidence, and then lie to everyone else, using taxpayer money? If they want to propagate their myths, why do they have to get the government involved? Why can't they just have a global warming church and go to that, and leave government to serious people who don't believe in myths and superstitions?

We really need to get leftist ideology out of the business of government. I don't mind if they want to teach their flat-Earth myths to each other with their own money, but why do I have to pay for it?

If you are curious about this story, James Delingpole has more on it in the UK Telegraph.

Related posts

- Drowning polar bears scientist being investigated for misconduct
- NASA data shows that atmosphere will trap far less heat than UN predicted
- Former alarmist scientist admits global warming is a "fiction"
- Scientist quits American Physical Society over "global warming scam"
- How reliable are the "independent" reviews of Climategate?
- NASA admits that their data is worse than CRU Climate-gate data
- 19 points that undermine the claims of global warming alarmists
- Global warmist Phil Jones admits there's been no global warming since 1995
- UN IPCC global warming alarmism based on student essay and magazine article
- How the UN's IPCC cites non-scientific claims from the World Wildlife Fund
- Chairman of UN's IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal

- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline
- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Princeton University physicist testifies against global warming

Why should Christians study church history?

August 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary send me this article from Probe. (H/T Mary via The Poached Egg)

Excerpt:

> When I was in college, we had to do what was called "evangelism night." It was a night in which a group of us would pile into someone's old, broken-down car (we were all poor back then) and skirt downtown to the city's walking bridge, a large half-mile overpass extending over the Chattanooga River. We were always sure that plenty of people would be there that needed our message. One night I began talking to a man about Christ and he quickly cut me off, "I am a Christian," he exclaimed. "Great," I replied. As we continue talking, though, I soon discovered that he was a "different" Christian than me. He said he believed in an expansive New Testament that contained many more books than the twenty-seven I was accustomed to, and he had six or seven Gospels, where I only had four. When I told him that I didn't think he was right, that the New Testament only contained twenty-seven books and four Gospels, he asked me an important question, "How do you know that there are only four Gospels? Maybe there are more books to the Bible than you think!" I stood there, knowing that he was wrong. But I didn't know *why* he was wrong. I had no idea of how to combat him—I didn't know church history well enough in order to provide, as 1 Peter 3:15 says, an account of the assurance that lies within me.
>
> This is one of the great reasons why we as Christians need to study church history. In this article I am going to make a passionate plea for the study of church history and give five reasons why I believe it is essential for every follower of Christ.

And here's one of the five reasons:

> The second reason is that Christians, just like any other people, go through many times of loneliness and despair. The book of Psalms reveals multiple times where various psalmists reveal that they feel as though God has left them, that their enemies are closing in, and that no one, including God, really cares. Suffice it to say that this often leads to a crisis of faith. Many of us suffer that same crisis from time to time, and the one thing that usually helps to be encouraged is to get around God's people. When we are with others who believe as we do, it helps to stabilize, and to build, our faith. There is a sense in those moments of being with other Christians that our faith is bigger and more expansive—that it is communal, not merely individual.
>
> Studying church history is about being with the community of faith. Reading the stories, learning the truths, examining the insights of these faithful men and

> women down through the centuries gives to us the sense that our faith is not shallow, but as the song used to say, it is “deep and wide.” Church historian John Hannah claims that studying Christian heritage “dispels the sense of loneliness and isolation in an era that stresses the peripheral and sensational.”{2} It breaks us away from this modern culture that emphasizes the glitz and the glamour of the here and now, and helps us to establish confidence in the faith by examining the beliefs central to our faith that have been developed over a long period of time. Christian theology does not invent beliefs; it finds beliefs already among Christians and critically examines them. The excavation site for Christian theology is not merely in the pages of Scripture, though that is the starting point, but it expands from there into the many centuries as we find the Holy Spirit leading His church. For us today, it gives us the ability to live each day absolutely sure that what we are believing in actually is true; to know and understand that for over 2000 years men and women have been worshipping, praising, and glorifying the same God that we do today.
>
> It’s similar to those grand, majestic churches, the cathedrals that overwhelm you with the sense of transcendence. The expansive ceilings, high walls, and stained glass leaves the impression that our faith, our Christian heritage, is not small but large. Entering into a contemplation of our faith’s history is like going into one of those churches. It takes away the loneliness, the isolation, and reminds us of the greatness of our faith.

I probably spend too much time focused on science apologetics, so it’s nice to read something different.

If there were such a thing as Christian art, what would it look like?

August 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Maybe like this:

Indomitable. Defiant. Unbreakable.
(Click for larger image)

There is actually a pretty strong theme of defiance, courage and non-conformity that runs through the Bible, in the Old and New Testaments.

Here are a few verses that come to mind.

"In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you…"
(1 Pet 4:4)

"But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled…"
(1 Pet 3:14)

And a longer one:

1 This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed.

2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.

4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

(1 Cor 4:1-5)

Or this one:

12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

(1 Cor 4:12-14)

Or this one:

[16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

[17] If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand.

[18] But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

(Dan 3:16-18)

Do you have any verses that draw out this tradition of defiance?

But If Not
(Click for larger image)

One of my friends who is a pro-life activist recently was going through some difficult trials and posted the short message “But If Not” on his Facebook page. Every Christian needs to understand the meaning of the phrase “But If Not” from Daniel 3.

Defiance is a very, very Christian thing to feel. So often we have this feminized, sanitized view of Christianity as happiness, politeness and cleanliness. We don’t want to offend anyone, or to be disliked by anyone, or to make anyone feel bad about what they are doing about the God who is there and is not silent.

Here is a trustworthy saying:

> "Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means, at the point of highest reality. A chastity or honesty or mercy which yields to danger will be chaste or honest or merciful only on conditions. Pilate was merciful till it became risky."
>
> *– from "The Screwtape Letters" by C.S. Lewis*

I think we have to get used to this idea that being a Christian is no guarantee of happiness or popularity.

In my life, I have had to say things like this: "I'm really sorry that you don't like me. I'm really sorry that my decision to honor God makes you uncomfortable. But I'm not going to change for you. I'm OK with being the underdog. I don't have to be happy right now. I don't need you to approve of what I am doing."

It makes me laugh that people think I care what they think of me just because I don't act against my conscience to approve of their sinning. I've thought through my views, and seen the evidence from peer-reviewed publications, and debated with people who disagree and won. I couldn't care less about their desire for me to approve their reckless, selfish behavior. I interpret their desire for approval as weakness and I scorn their weakness.

Every Christian comes to a point where the things we hoped that God would do for us do not happen, when our former allies fall away from us, when the people entrusted with caring for us failed in their obligations… at that point we have to decide what we are going to do with God. I think Psalm 27 is an excellent thing for people to read who are in that situation.

By the way, Christians should have an eye out for other Christians who are in distress while striving mightily for the Lord. Act self-sacrificially in a way that you strengthen their relationship with God in Christ. Make plans to support that person, and carry them out. Most of what you are doing elsewhere in your life probably isn't as important as the deliberate, strategic, intelligent support that you give to other Christians. Love isn't agreeing with someone's bad decisions or evasions – it's being there and telling them the truth, and neutralizing threats to their faith. That could involve the use of money, spending time, expending effort, resolving intellectual challenges, defeating a challenger in a discussion for them, writing them with advice… anything.

You may enjoy listening to this lecture entitled "Giants in the Land", by Dr. Walter Bradley.

Government charges man who shot a grizzly bear on his own property

September 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Spokesman-Review. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> A Boundary County man pleaded not guilty Tuesday to unlawfully killing a female grizzly bear in his yard.
>
> So many friends and family members showed up to support Jeremy M. Hill at his arraignment that the hearing was forced to move into a larger room at the U.S. Courthouse in Coeur d'Alene. Hill, 33, faces one charge of killing a grizzly – a federally protected species.
>
> Supporters said that Hill, a father of six, acted responsibly in shooting the female grizzly on May 8, which appeared with two cubs in the yard of his home near Porthill, Idaho, while his children were playing outside.
>
> "It seems unjust to me that someone would be charged when they were protecting their family," state Sen. Shawn Keough, R-Sandpoint, said after the hearing. "I'm at a loss to understand why the U.S. government is pursuing this in the manner they are."
>
> After shooting the grizzly with a bolt-action rifle, Hill contacted the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.
>
> "Jeremy did the right thing, he called Fish and Game," Keough said. "I think that prosecuting this case really sets back the grizzly bear recovery effort. … People are saying, 'Boy, if that happened to me, there's no way that I'd report it.' That's a human reaction."
>
> Hill's wife and six children – the oldest is 14 and the youngest is an infant – attended the arraignment. The family declined to comment.

It seems as though this is just another one of the ways that government tries to take over the role of husbands/fathers to protect their family by criminalizing the use of firearms to perform that role. What man wants to get married when he cannot protect his family?

After causing the first recession, Democrats plant seeds of the next recession

September 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Competitive Enterprise Institute. (links removed, please see original article for links)

Excerpt:

> The Wall Street Journal today writes about how the Obama administration is repeating the "mistakes of the past by intimidating banks into lending to minority borrowers at below-market rates in the name of combating discrimination." Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Thomas Perez has argued that bankers who don't make as many loans to blacks as whites (because they make lending decisions based on traditional lending criteria like credit scores, which tend to be higher among white applicants than black applicants) are engaged in a "form of discrimination and bigotry" as serious as "cross-burning." Perez has compared bankers to "Klansmen," and extracted settlements from banks "setting aside prime-rate mortgages for low-income blacks and Hispanics with blemished credit," treating welfare "as valid income in mortgage applications" and providing "favorable interest rates and down-payment assistance for minority borrowers with weak credit," notes Investors Business Daily.
>
> Under Perez's "disparate impact" theory, banks are guilty of racial discrimination even if they harbor no discriminatory intent, and use facially-neutral lending criteria, as long as these criteria weed out more black than white applicants. The Supreme Court has blessed a more limited version of this theory in the workplace, but has rejected this "disparate impact" theory in most other contexts, such as discrimination claims brought under the Constitution's equal protection clause; discrimination claims alleging racial discrimination in the making of contracts; and discrimination claims brought under Title VI, the civil-rights statute governing racial discrimination in education and federally-funded programs. Despite court rulings casting doubt on this "disparate impact" theory outside the workplace, the Obama administration has paid liberal trial lawyers countless millions of dollars to settle baseless "disparate impact" lawsuits brought against government agencies by minority plaintiffs, even after federal judges have expressed skepticism about those very lawsuits, suggesting that they were meritless.
>
> Fearing bad publicity from being accused of "racism", banks have paid out millions in settlements after being sued by the Justice Department, even though they would probably prevail before most judges if they aggressively fought such charges (although doing so would probably cost them millions in legal fees). A Michigan judge called one proposed settlement "extortion." These settlements

> provide cash for "politically favored 'community groups' " allied with the Obama Administration, and the Journal's Mary Kissel predicts that "many" of the loans mandated by these settlements "will eventually go bad."

This is exactly what caused the first recession.

Who caused the first recession?

Here's a summary of how we got into the first recession – it was caused by the Democrats, and the Republicans tried to stop them.

First, watch this video of Barney Frank obstructing regulators and defending Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. (H/T Verum Serum)

Now look at this Boston Globe article.

Excerpt:

> When US Representative Barney Frank spoke in a packed hearing room on Capitol Hill seven years ago, he did not imagine that his words would eventually haunt a reelection bid.
>
> The issue that day in 2003 was whether mortgage backers Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were fiscally strong. Frank declared with his trademark confidence that they were, accusing critics and regulators of exaggerating threats to Fannie's and Freddie's financial integrity. And, the Massachusetts Democrat maintained, "even if there were problems, the federal government doesn't bail them out.''
>
> Now, it's clear he was wrong on both points — and that his words have become a political liability as he fights a determined challenger to win a 16th term representing the Fourth Congressional District. Fannie and Freddie collapsed in 2008, forcing the federal government to buy $150 billion worth of stock in the enterprises and $1.36 trillion worth of mortgage-backed securities.
>
> Frank, in his most detailed explanation to date about his actions, said in an interview he missed the warning signs because he was wearing ideological blinders. He said he had worried that Republican lawmakers and the Bush administration were going after Fannie and Freddie for their own ideological reasons and would curtail the lenders' mission of providing affordable housing.
>
> "I was late in seeing it, no question,'' Frank said about the lenders' descent into insolvency.

This is not in doubt – this is a known fact. Democrats caused the recession by meddling in the free market.

Democrats caused the recession and Republicans tried to stop them

Here is Barney Frank in 2005 claiming that fears of a housing bubble are unfounded.

Here's the timeline showing who wanted to regulate Fannie and Freddie, and who blocked their attempts.

Here’s video from a hearing showing Democrats opposing regulations:

That’s right – Republicans wanted to regulate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and Democrats said Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are “doing a tremendous job”.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac had paid the Democrats off handsomely during multiple election cycles, but I’m sure that the Democrats’ opposition to regulations had nothing to do with those political contributions.

The only ones to try and stop the Democrats were George W. Bush in 2003 and John McCain in 2005. Both attempts were blocked by Democrats.

Answering some silly objections to the fine-tuning argument

September 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Review: In case you need a refresher on the cosmological and fine-tuning arguments, as presented by a professor of particle physics at Stanford University, then click this link and watch the lecture.

If you already know about the standard arguments for theism from cosmology, then take a look at this post on Uncommon Descent.

Summary:

> In my previous post, I highlighted three common atheistic objections to to the cosmological fine-tuning argument. In that post, I made no attempt to answer these objections. My aim was simply to show that the objections were weak and inconclusive.
>
> Let's go back to the original three objections:
>
> 1. If the universe was designed to support life, then why does it have to be so BIG, and why is it nearly everywhere hostile to life? Why are there so many stars, and why are so few orbited by life-bearing planets? (Let's call this the *size problem*.)
>
> 2. If the universe was designed to support life, then why does it have to be so OLD, and why was it devoid of life throughout most of its history? For instance, why did life on Earth only appear after 70% of the cosmos's 13.7-billion-year history had already elapsed? And Why did human beings (genus Homo) only appear after 99.98% of the cosmos's 13.7-billion-year history had already elapsed? (Let's call this the *age problem*.)
>
> 3. If the universe was designed to support life, then why does Nature have to be so CRUEL? Why did so many animals have to die – and why did so many species of animals have to go extinct (99% is the commonly quoted figure), in order to generate the world as we see it today? What a waste! And what about predation, parasitism, and animals that engage in practices such as serial murder and infant cannibalism? (Let's call this the *death and suffering problem*.)
>
> In today's post, I'm going to try to provide some positive answers to the first two questions: the size problem and the age problem.

Here's an excerpt for the size argument:

> (a) The main reason why the universe is as big as it currently is that in the first place, the universe had to contain sufficient matter to form galaxies and stars, without which life would not have appeared; and in the second place, the density of matter in the cosmos is incredibly fine-tuned, due to the fine-tuning of gravity.

> To appreciate this point, let's go back to the earliest time in the history of the cosmos that we can meaningfully talk about: the Planck time, when the universe was 10^-43 seconds old. If the density of matter at the Planck time had differed from the critical density by as little as one part in 10^60, the universe would have either exploded so rapidly that galaxies wouldn't have formed, or collapsed so quickly that life would never have appeared. In practical terms: if our universe, which contains 10^80 protons and neutrons, had *even one more grain of sand* in it – or one grain *less* – we wouldn't be here.

If you mess with the size of the universe, you screw up the mass density fine-tuning. We need that to have a universe that expands at the right speed in order to form galaxies, stars and planets. You need planets to have a place to form life – a place with liquid water at the surface.

And an excerpt for the age argument:

> (a) One reason why we need an old universe is that billions of years were required for Population I stars (such as our sun) to evolve. These stars are more likely to harbor planets such as our Earth, because they contain lots of "metals" (astronomer-speak for elements heavier than helium), produced by the supernovae of the previous generation of Population II stars. According to currently accepted models of Big Bang nucleosynthesis, this whole process was absolutely vital, because the Big Bang doesn't make enough "metals", including those necessary for life: carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus and so on.

Basically, you need heavy elements to make stars that burn slow and steady, as well as to make PEOPLE! And heavy elements have to be built up slowly through several iterations of the stellar lifecycle, including the right kinds of stellar death: supernovae.

Read the rest! These arguments come up all the time in debates with village atheists like Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins. It's a smokescreen they put up, but you've got to be able to answer it using the scientific evidence we have today.

By the way, the first post in that series got over 1200 views and over 100 comments. It's worth reading as well.

UPDATE: Lenny from Come Reason has an article answering similar questions here.

How did Dutch women get to be the happiest women in the world?

September 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sends me this article from Macleans, which she found on pastor Mark Driscoll's blog. Excerpt:

> Like many Dutch women, Marie-Louise van Haeren views herself as liberated. "Every woman in Holland can do whatever she wants with her life," says Van Haeren, 52, who lives just outside of Rotterdam and rides her bicycle or the train to work three days a week at a police academy, where she counsels students. She has worked part-time her entire career, as have almost all of her friends—married or unmarried, kids or no kids—save one or two who logged more hours out of financial necessity. Van Haeren, who wasn't married until last year and has no children, says she's worked part-time "to have time to do things that matter to me, live the way I want. To stay mentally and physically healthy and happy."
>
> Many women in the Netherlands seem to share similar views, valuing independence over success in the workplace. In 2001, nearly 60 per cent of working Dutch women were employed part-time, compared to just 20 per cent of Canadian women. Today, the number is even higher, hovering around 75 per cent. Some, like Van Haeren, view this as progress, evidence of personal freedom and a commitment to a balanced lifestyle.
>
> […]…Dutch women appear deaf to the siren call of the workplace. Asked whether they'd like to increase their hours, just four per cent said yes, compared to 25 per cent of French women. And while across the Channel, British media are heralding the resurgence of feminism—last weekend, some 500 women crowded into a feminist training camp, UK Feminista, to be trained in direct action and activism—in Holland, women like Van Haeren baldly proclaim no further need for the movement. "Feminism wasn't necessary anymore by the time I grew up," she says. "In my eyes, it was a thing of the past."
>
> The relationship between personal lifestyle choices and the socio-economic standing of women has been under the microscope in Holland ever since the publication of *Dutch Women Don't Get Depressed* in 2008. Ellen de Bruin, who patterned her book after Mireille Guiliano's bestseller *French Women Don't Get Fat*, began by defining the stereotypical Dutch woman: naturally beautiful with a no-fuss sense of style, she rides her bike to fetch the groceries, has ample time with her kids and husband, takes art classes in the middle of the week, and spends leisurely afternoons drinking coffee with her friends. She loves to work part-time and does not earn as much as her husband, but she's fine with that—he takes care of the bills. The book went on to note that Dutch women rank

> consistently low, compared to those in other Western countries, in terms of representation in top positions in business and government—and rank consistently near the top in terms of happiness and well-being. In fact, just about everyone in Holland seems pleased with the status quo; in 2009, the Netherlands ranked highest of all OECD countries in terms of overall well-being.

Could it be that the Bible actually speaks truly about the differences between men and women? That doesn't mean that women and men should be careless when choosing a spouse – they should choose wisely. But maybe it is better for men and women to play complementary roles. Maybe they were designed to be able to do different things, because they have different strengths? Maybe they fit together hand in glove in marriage, canceling out the weaknesses of the other?

Conservative MP Nadine Dorries draws fire for pro-life proposal

September 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UK Conservative MP Nadine Dorries

His Grace Archbishop Cranmer explains.

Excerpt:

> Dr Evan Harris (LibDem), David Allen Green (LibDem) and Chris Bryant (Labour) aren't at all happy with Nadine Dorries. In what is being billed as the biggest shake-up to abortion law in a generation, her modest proposal is that women should be offered independent counselling to give them a breathing space before proceeding with termination. 'Pro-life' campaigners estimate that some 60,000 children would be saved every year. 'Pro-choice' campaigners insist that it will mean more stress for the women concerned.
>
> […]At the moment, abortion providers like BPAS and Marie Stopes offer counselling to women, but they are paid only when the termination is carried out. Each year in the UK, some 180,000 children are dispensed with through this method, at a cost of some £60 million to the tax-payer. There is an evident bias because companies like BPAS and Marie Stopes are profit-making businesses and have a vested interest in procuring abortion: when women are dissuaded, it hits the profit margin. There is nothing independent about BPAS advice or impartial about Maries Stopes' counselling at all. Mrs Dorries says:
>
>> 'Abortion has become a factory-efficient process that denies women the right to independent, professional counselling. Many women who are given the opportunity to talk through their situation in a calm environment cease to panic and begin to consider other options. It is

> every woman's right to be given the choice of access to professional help at the time of a crisis pregnancy.'
>
> According to former MP Dr Evan Harris, Nadine Dorries is 'mad'. According to lawyer David Allen Green, she is 'illiberal'. According to Labour MP Chris Bryant, she is 'misguided'.
>
> […]All across Europe, there is legislation requiring informed consent, and these countries have significantly lower abortion rates. In the UK, there is no requirement in law for women to be informed about the abortion procedure or the alternatives. If you want evidence of the present 'conveyer belt' approach to abortion, read this report in the *Telegraph*, and then thank God there are people like Nadine Dorries and Frank Field in Parliament with the conviction to confront this systematic state slaughter of our children. Oh, and they're both Anglican, by the way.

Now you know what Liberal Democrats mean by "pro-choice".

I note that Nadine also supports abstinence-only sex education and school choice and has run her own business. Nadine blogs here. You can see a picture of her here. I don't endorse everything about her, but she has some good ideas.

Republicans create new ad from failure of subsidized solar power firm

September 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do “green jobs” programs work? Why do they need money from the government if they work?

Story here.

Excerpt:

> Solyndra, a major manufacturer of solar technology in Fremont, has shut its doors, according to employees at the campus.
>
> “I was told by a security guard to get my [stuff] and leave,” one employee said. The company employs a little more than 1,000 employees worldwide, according to its website.
>
> Shortly after it opened a massive $700 million facility, it canceled plans for a public stock offering earlier this year and warned it would be in significant trouble if federal loan guarantees did not go through.
>
> The company has said it will make a statement at 9am California time, though it’s not clear what that statement will be. An NBC Bay Area photographer on the scene reports security guards are not letting visitors on campus. He says “people are standing around in disbelief.” The employees have been given yellow envelopes with instructions on how to get their last checks.
>
> Solyndra was touted by the Obama administration as a prime example of how green technology could deliver jobs. The President visited the facility in May of last year and said “it is just a testament to American ingenuity and dynamism and the fact that we continue to have the best universities in the world, the best technology in the world, and most importantly the best workers in the world. And you guys all represent that. ”
>
> **The federal government offered $535 million in low cost loan guarantees from the Department of Energy.**

I’m so shocked that government wasted a bunch of money on politically correct nonsense.

Jonah Goldberg had an interesting comment about the Democrat war on science.

Excerpt:

> During the Larry Summers fiasco at Harvard, comments delivered in the classic spirit of open inquiry and debate cost Summers his job. Actual *scientists* got the vapors because he violated the principles not of science but of liberalism. During the Gulf oil spill, the Obama administration dishonestly claimed that its independent experts supported a drilling moratorium. They emphatically did not.

> The president who campaigned on basing his policies on “sound science” ignored his own hand picked experts. According to the GAO, he did something very similar when he shut down Yucca Mountain. His support for wind and solar energy, as you suggest, isn’t based on science but on faith. And that faith has failed him dramatically.

The Democrat party lets ideology trump science, and economics too. To be “smart”, you need to not believe in nonsense.

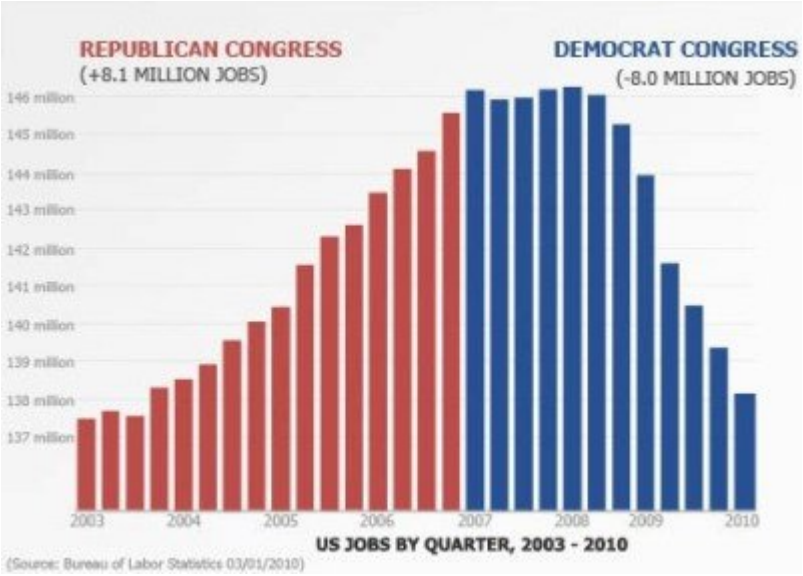

To judge intelligence, just look at the results

The only way to measure intelligence is by looking at results. If the goal is to create jobs, then the smartest person is the one who creates the most jobs with the least amount of money spent.

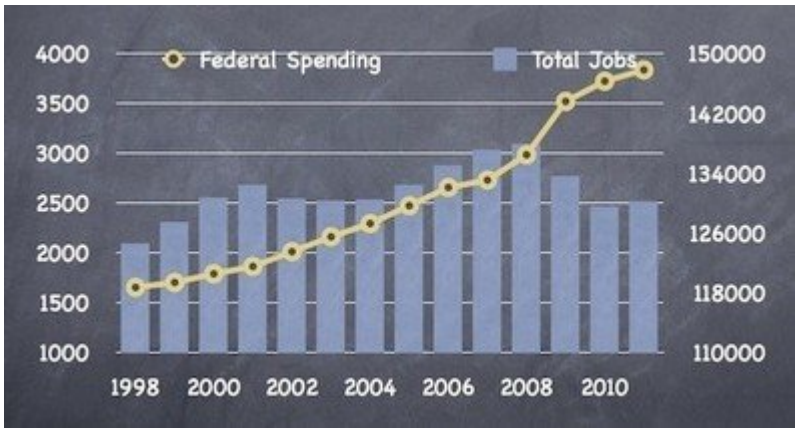

Government Spending vs Jobs

Obama spent a ton of money and he failed to create jobs. He said that his plans would create jobs, and they didn’t. The Democrats have been losing jobs since they took control of Congress in 2007.

Republicans create new ad from failure of subsidized solar power firm

New study finds that unmarried women can harm their children by dating

September 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage proponent Maggie Gallagher writing in Human Events.

Excerpt:

> Marriage matters, but why?
>
> For more than 20 years, social scientists have consistently found that children do better raised by their mothers and fathers united by marriage.
>
> For most of that time policymakers have focused on the problem of "father absence," and it is a real problem. Very few boys and girls have involved, loving, supportive fathers if the man that made them is not married to their mama.
>
> But a new crop of research is challenging the idea that the main or only problem with the decline of marriage is the absence of fathers. An equally big or even bigger problem may be the churning romantic lives of unmarried and divorced mothers.
>
> […]It's not just cohabitation that puts children at risk; it's dating instability as well. Even after controlling for the parent's marital status at birth, maternal age, race, immigrant status, parents' education, poverty, gender and low birth weight, the researchers conclude:
>
> "We found that both types of partnership instability (coresidential and dating) are associated with lower verbal ability, more externalizing problems and more social problems, and that coresidential instability is associated with attention problems. Our study is the first to provide strong empirical evidence that dating transitions are similar to marital and cohabiting transitions in terms of their association with children's school readiness."
>
> The dating lives of mothers who are not married when their children are born are particularly tumultuous as the researchers note:
>
> "Half of children born to unmarried parents experience three or more changes by age 5. … These findings suggest that children born into alternative family forms are at a significantly higher risk for both academic and behavioral problems at school entry."

This is an issue that I have long been interested in having observed the effects of this problem firsthand with my friends whose parents were going through divorces. In fact, this situation is even touched on in Shakespeare's play Hamlet, when Hamlet's mother remarries very soon and throws Hamlet's world into turmoil.

Richard Dawkins, A.C. Grayling and Polly Toynbee refuse to debate atheism

September 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest video from Birdie Upon.

What does this say about atheism? Not only are most atheists unaware of the arguments made by dual-PhD-holding scholars like William Lane Craig, but they think that it is no problem at all when the people *they read* refuse to debate. Is atheism a defensible view?

Read more:

Dawkins is not the only culprit in shying away from Craig's October 2011 UK Tour. He is but one of a Humanist Trinity who have all, in their own way, run away from William Lane Craig's willingness for open dialogue. Based on the press release from BeThinking.org. The example these BHA leaders are setting is disappointing, to say the least.

Material in this video is used either with permission or under Fair Use for purposes of documentary, journalism, evidenitialism, illustration and education. Non-profit. Designed to complement a major press release which has been generating responses from outlets including Fox News. It expresses concerns about academic expression and exchange which, as you will see, are shared by both the secular and non-secular. Happy to discuss with any third parties about crediting, links or ammendments etc.

Press Release: http://www.bethinking.org/what-is-apologetics/british-humanists-take-to-the-b...

Craig Tour Page: http://www.bethinking.org/craig

Craig Tour Booking: http://www.premier.org.uk/craig

Dawkins "Cowardice" article:http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/8511931/Richard-Dawkins-accused-of-c...

Fox News on the Rout: http://www.foxnews.com/us/2011/08/19/christian-pastor-atheists-debates/

AC Grayling's article encouraging debate:http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/article515162.ece

Dawkins quotes Grayling as denying ever debating Craig:http://richarddawkins.net/articles/630517-why-dawkins-disappoints/comments?pa...

Grayling reacts to his mistake: http://richarddawkins.net/articles/630517-why-dawkins-disappoints/comments?pa...

Craig's website: http://www.reasonablefaith.org

Dr. Craig is willing to debate. Where are the atheist debaters? Why are atheists afraid of Dr. Craig? Why are they afraid of his arguments? What do they have to lose that stops

them from putting their arguments and evidences up against his?

Previous William Lane Craig debates

William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens on the existence of God:

William Lane Craig vs Bart Ehrman on the resurrection of Jesus:

William Lane Craig vs Sam Harris on morality:

Employers added ZERO net jobs in August

September 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Bloomberg News.

Excerpt:

> Employment in the U.S. **unexpectedly** stagnated in August and the jobless rate held at 9.1 percent as American employers became less confident in the strength of the recovery.
>
> Payrolls were unchanged last month, the weakest reading since September 2010, after an 85,000 gain in July that was less than initially estimated, Labor Department data showed today in Washington. The median forecast in a Bloomberg News survey called for a rise of 65,000. Hourly earnings and hours worked both declined. The August data included a 48,000 drop in information industry jobs, mostly reflecting striking Verizon Communications Inc. workers.
>
> The first U.S. credit downgrade, political squabbling over the budget and mounting fear of a default in Europe caused the Standard & Poor's 500 Index to plummet 17 percent from July 22 to Aug. 8, prompting companies and consumers to cut back. The lack of hiring is one reason Federal Reserve Chairman Ben S. Bernanke last week said the central bank still has tools available to stimulate growth.
>
> "Net employment flat-lined in August," Ellen Zentner, a senior U.S. economist at Nomura Securities International Inc. in New York, who forecast a decline of 5,000, said before the report. "When the outlook is uncertain, businesses don't hire. Calls that we're on the cusp of a recession or already there are not completely unwarranted."
>
> Estimates of the 86 economists surveyed by Bloomberg for overall payrolls ranged from a decline of 20,000 to a 160,000 increase. The unemployment rate was projected to hold at 9.1 percent, according to the survey median. Estimates ranged from 9 percent to 9.2 percent.

Don Surber comments:

Excerpt:

> Unexpectedly?
>
> Only a mouth-breathing, in-bred moron was surprised to learn that President Obama's policies have put the economy in a stupor. I thought Bloomberg News was a wire service that specialized in commerce. Have they no one at that agency who does anything but kiss-up to the socialists who are now in charge of our government?
>
> What a mess. The month of August began with the first downgrade of America's

> credit rating in memory. That failure alone should cost him his job.
>
> Youth unemployment tops 25%. Black unemployment is at 16.7%. Hispanic unemployment is at 11.3%.
>
> 14 million people are jobless.
>
> 6 million people have not had a job for more than 6 months.
>
> 86 million working-age people are not in the job market.
>
> […]Few companies are expanding as they wonder what in the heck his EPA policies will do to them, what in the heck his health insurance policies will do to them and what in the heck his tax policies will do to them. The 9.1% unemployment rate in August matches July as the economy hits the horse latitudes, where it will stay for about another year until hope of a new regime change begins to take hold.
>
> Barack Obama's presidency has hurt the poor and minorities the hardest. Their jobs were the first to go and on his watch, 1.5 million fewer Americans have jobs than on his Inauguration Day. This is terrible. He may have inherited a recession but he seems bound and determined to make it a depression.

What does Bloomberg mean by "unexpectedly". Does letting the government take money from taxpayers and businesses create jobs?

CBS News reports on what the stimulus does:

ABC News reports on more stimulus spending:

And this one features a real economist:

Let's learn some economics and find out why Obama's government spending, green jobs, tax the rich, regulate businesses approach hasn't work to create jobs.

Economics in One Lesson

Perhaps it is time to review Henry Hazlitt's book on basic economics "Economics in One Lesson". Let's look in chapter 4, which is entitled "Public Works Mean Taxes".

Excerpt from that chapter:

> Therefore, for every public job created by the bridge project a private job has been destroyed somewhere else. We can see the men employed on the bridge. We can watch them at work. The employment argument of the government spenders becomes vivid, and probably for most people convincing. But there are other things that we do not see, because, alas, they have never been permitted to come into existence. They are the jobs destroyed by the $10 million taken from the taxpayers. All that has happened, at best, is that there has been a *diversion* of jobs because of the project. More bridge builders; fewer automobile workers, television technicians, clothing workers, farmers.

And consider Chapter 5 as well, entitled "Taxes Discourage Production".

> In our modern world there is never the same percentage of income tax levied on

> everybody. The great burden of income taxes is imposed on a minor percentage of the nation's income; and these income taxes have to be supplemented by taxes of other kinds. These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to become employers at all. Improved machinery and better-equipped factories come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.
>
> There is a similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. **The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment that they profess to solve.**

And the results we see today are consistent with the predictions of basic economic theory.

Journal editor resigns after publishing paper critical of global warming

September 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Secondhand Smoke.

Excerpt:

> This appears to me to be the scenario in the resignation of the editor of a journal that published a paper by warming skeptics claiming NASA measurements showed that the earth sheds more warming into space than models predicted. From the BBC story:
>
> The editor of a science journal has resigned after admitting that a recent paper casting doubt on man-made climate change should not have been published. The paper, by US scientists Roy Spencer and William Braswell, claimed that computer models of climate inflated projections of temperature increase. It was seized on by "sceptic" bloggers, but attacked by mainstream scientists.
>
> Wolfgang Wagner, editor of Remote Sensing journal, says he agrees with their criticisms and is stepping down. "Peer-reviewed journals are a pillar of modern science," he writesin a resignation note published in Remote Sensing. "Their aim is to achieve highest scientific standards by carrying out a rigorous peer review that is, as a minimum requirement, supposed to be able to identify fundamental methodological errors or false claims. "Unfortunately, as many climate researchers and engaged observers of the climate change debate pointed out in various internet discussion fora, the paper by Spencer and Braswell… is most likely problematic in both aspects and should therefore not have been published."
>
> Interestingly, the paper was not retracted, so I guess it still stands despite the resignation. I mean, if the paper was really unworthy of publishing, it should be withdrawn. Perhaps that is because the authors would sue and all the external pressure would come to light? I'm just askin'.
>
> Here's what paper's co-author, warming skeptic Roy Spencer, said about the brouhaha. From his blog:
>
> But let's look at the core reason for the Editor-in-Chief's resignation, in his own words, because I want to strenuously object to it:
>
> *…In other words, the problem I see with the paper by Spencer and Braswell is not that it declared a minority view (which was later unfortunately much exaggerated by the public media) but that it essentially ignored the scientific arguments of its opponents. This latter point was missed in the review process, explaining why I perceive this paper to be fundamentally flawed and therefore wrongly accepted by the journal*

> But the paper WAS *precisely* addressing the scientific arguments made by our opponents, and showing why they are wrong! That was the paper's starting point! We dealt with specifics, numbers, calculations…while our critics only use generalities and talking points. There is no contest, as far as I can see, in this debate.
>
> All of this reminds me of what happened to my friend and colleague Richard Sternberg after he published an intelligent design peer reviewed paper while an editor at the *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*. Boy did "the scientists" pounce! The Smithsonian was pressured to punish him for his heresy–and even though Sternberg's work for the Institute was not in question, he consequently came under terrible pressure, eventually resigning when it became clear that he would be allowed to do nothing useful there in the future. The U.S. Office of Special Council found that Sternberg was indeed punished politically. Read the whole letter. It reveals vividly how politicized science destroys those whom it disdains for giving safe harbor to dissidents.

Global warming and Darwinism research seem to operate more like an academic theocracy, in which the twin religions of socialism and naturalism are protected from scientific inquiry by ensuring that dissenters are publicly shamed and excommunicated by a religious Inquisition.

See my previous post on the recent CERN research that two significant causes of global warming are related to humans. This should be obvious because of the Medieval Warming Period and the global warming on Mars which coincides with the warming cycles on Earth. But just think of all the taxpayer money that's been wasted propping up these ideologies.

Obama administration regulations causes outsourcing of manufacturing jobs

September 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the news story.

What causes outsourcing?

Democrats cause outsourcing:

- regulation of private companies
- massive government spending
- high corporate taxes
- high income taxes
- EPA carbon taxes
- forced unionization
- NLRB interference
- interfering with bankruptcy contracts
- massive national debt
- legal uncertainty
- appointing anti-business judicial activists
- one word: CZAR

They hate businesses and that's why we have such a high unemployment rate – double what it was under Bush in 2006.

New study finds that choice to abort nearly doubles the risk of mental illness

September 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about a new research paper

Here is the study published in the British Journal of Psychiatry. (H/T Mary)

Abstract:

> **Background** Given the methodological limitations of recently published qualitative reviews of abortion and mental health, a quantitative synthesis was deemed necessary to represent more accurately the published literature and to provide clarity to clinicians.

> **Aims** To measure the association between abortion and indicators of adverse mental health, with subgroup effects calculated based on comparison groups (no abortion, unintended pregnancy delivered, pregnancy delivered) and particular outcomes. A secondary objective was to calculate population-attributable risk (PAR) statistics for each outcome.
>
> **Method** After the application of methodologically based selection criteria and extraction rules to minimise bias, the sample comprised 22 studies, 36 measures of effect and 877 181 participants (163 831 experienced an abortion). Random effects pooled odds ratios were computed using adjusted odds ratios from the original studies and PAR statistics were derived from the pooled odds ratios.
>
> **Results** Women who had undergone an abortion experienced an 81% increased

> risk of mental health problems, and nearly 10% of the incidence of mental health problems was shown to be attributable to abortion. The strongest subgroup estimates of increased risk occurred when abortion was compared with term pregnancy and when the outcomes pertained to substance use and suicidal behaviour.

> **Conclusions** This review offers the largest quantitative estimate of mental health risks associated with abortion available in the world literature. Calling into question the conclusions from traditional reviews, the results revealed a moderate to highly increased risk of mental health problems after abortion. Consistent with the tenets of evidence-based medicine, this information should inform the delivery of abortion services.

Life News has more about the study.

Excerpt:

> A new study published in the British Journal of Psychiatry by leading American researcher Dr. Priscilla Coleman of Bowling Green State University finds women who have an abortion face almost double the risk of mental health problems as women who have their baby.
>
> Coleman's study is based on an analysis of 22 separate studies which, in total, examine the pregnancy experiences of 877,000 women, with 163,831 women having an abortion. The study also indicated abortion accounts for one in ten of every adverse mental health issue women face as a whole.
>
> "Results indicate quite consistently that abortion is associated with moderate to highly increased risks of psychological problems subsequent to the procedure," the study says. "Overall, the results revealed that women who had undergone an abortion experienced an 81 percent increased risk of mental health problems, and nearly 10 percent of the incidence of mental health problems were shown to be directly attributable to abortion."
>
> The peer-reviewed study indicated abortion was linked with a 34 percent chance of anxiety disorders, and 37 percent higher possibility of depression, a more than double risk of alcohol abuse (110 percent), a three times greater risk of marijuana use (220 percent), and 155 percent greater risk of trying to commit suicide.
>
> When compared to unintended pregnancy delivered women had a 55% increased risk of experiencing any mental health problem.
>
> […]"The paper is being published in a very prestigious journal, the British Journal of Psychiatry, which is considered one of the top psychiatry journals in the world. This means the paper has been extensively scrutinized by well-respected scientists and the results of studies are trusted by practitioners throughout the world," Coleman said.

I was always told when debating the abortion issue not to talk about the effects on women, because the studies conflict. Some women have positive reactions after an abortion (relief) and some have negative reactions (guilt). This paper tips the balance in favor of the view that abortion is harmful to women. It confirms other recent studies that showed that abortion does have a negative impact on women's mental health.

Abortion and breast cancer

Recent studies have also confirmed that there is a link between abortion and breast cancer.

Consider this article in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> **An abortion can triple a woman's risk of developing breast cancer in later life, researchers say.** A team of scientists made the claim while carrying out research into how breastfeeding can protect women from developing the killer disease. While concluding that breastfeeding offered significant protection from cancer, they also noted that the highest reported risk factor in developing the disease was abortion. Other factors included the onset of the menopause and smoking. **The findings, published in the journal Cancer Epidemiology, are the latest research to show a link between abortion and breast cancer.** The research was carried out by scientists at the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka. **It is the fourth epidemiological study to report such a link in the past 14 months, with research in China, Turkey and the U.S. showing similar conclusions.**
>
> […]There has been an 80 per cent increase in the rate of breast cancer since 1971, when in the wake of the Abortion Act, the number of abortions rose from 18,000 to nearly 200,000 a year.
>
> Earlier this year, Dr Louise Brinton, a senior researcher with the U.S. National Cancer Institute who did not accept the link, reversed her position to say she was now convinced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer by about 40 per cent.

Note that there were only 300 people in the new study, so it is a small study. But it confirms the Turkey study that I blogged on before, and the China study that I blogged about before, and the American study that I blogged about before.

Abortion, Associated, Breast Cancer, Breast Cancer Risk, China, Colombia, Contraceptive Use, Cost, Expenditures, Feminism, Feminist, Findings, Government, Health-care, Induced Abortion, Link, Louise Brinton, National Cancer Institute, NCI, Oral Contraceptive, Paper, Peer-Reviewed, Research, Research Treatment, Sri Lanka, Study, Turkey, Women

William Lane Craig: do all roads lead to God?

September 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do all roads lead to God? Christian philosopher William Lane Craig explains the Christian view of how imperfect humans are related to a morally-perfect God in this lecture presented to the students at the University of California, Santa Barbara in 2004. He also defends against the charges of intolerance made by religious pluralists, who believe that all religions are basically the same – and all valid paths to God.

About the speaker:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

The lecture and discussion

Here's the lecture and Q&A in 10 parts.

First part:

The lecture is in 6 parts:

Part 1 of 10
Part 2 of 10
Part 3 of 10
Part 4 of 10
Part 5 of 10
Part 6 of 10

And then 4 more parts for Q&A:

Part 7 of 10
Part 8 of 10
Part 9 of 10
Part 10 of 10

There is also a paper that follows the lecture very closely, for those who do not have the bandwidth for the videos.

Everything you need to know about Paul Krugman and the New York Times

September 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

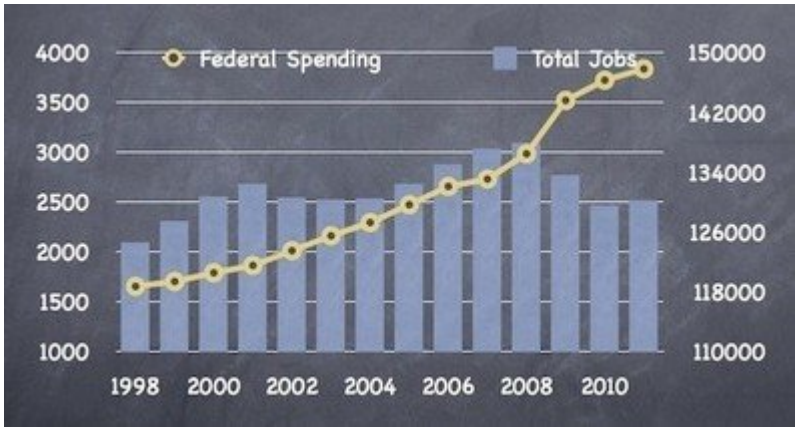

Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid took control in 2007
From Newsbusters.

Excerpt:

> Exactly what country does New York Times columnist Paul Krugman actually reside in?
>
> Before you answer, consider the following sentence from his article Monday:
>
> Although you'd never know it listening to the ranters, the past year has actually been a pretty good test of the theory that slashing government spending actually creates jobs.
>
> For the past year to be a good test of this theory, there would have needed to be a slash to government spending, right?
>
> Was this the case?
>
> Hardly.
>
> In fiscal 2010, total federal outlays were $3.72 trillion. In fiscal 2011 which ends September 30, we're projected to spend $3.83 trillion. That's a $111 billion increase.
>
> Yet this Nobel laureate in economics thinks government spending was slashed.
>
> In reality, since the last time such outlays declined year over year was 1965, we should really be testing Krugman, Obama, and the Democrats' theory that dramatic increases in government spending creates jobs.
>
> **Democrats have been radically increasing outlays since they took over Congress in 2007. During this time, as spending rose by 41 percent, the economy lost roughly seven million jobs sending unemployment skyrocketing from 4.4 percent to 9.1 percent.**
>
> If Krugman wasn't delusional, the above referenced sentence from his Monday

> column would read, “Although you’d never know it listening to the ranters *like Barack Obama, the Democrats, Robert Reich, and me*, the past *four years have* actually been a *fabulous* test of the theory that *exploding* government spending actually creates jobs.
>
> Isn’t that really the only conclusion that one could draw given what’s happened since this recent Keynesian experiment began in 2007?
>
> Of course, it’s unfair to expect this Nobel laureate in economics to make such an obvious determination.
>
> He thinks a $111 billion increase in spending is a slash.

I think that Paul Krugman is going beyond mere mendacity these days, as his Keynesian worldview is disproved right before his eyes. The whole country is being treated to a massive disproof of all of his ideas, and this must be causing him some mental strain.

Is Paul Krugman seen as reliable?

I’m not the only one to point out how nutty Krugman has become of late.

Here’s a bunch of non-conservatives:

- Megan McArdle (CENTER-LEFT)
- Richard A. Epstein (LIBERTARIAN)
- The Von Mises Institute (LIBERTARIAN)
- The Cato Institute (LIBERTARIAN)

Why does the New York Times hire a deluded person? Because they don’t so much report the news as they provide their readers with “confirmation” of a worldview that allows them to feel that they are right without having to care about reality. In short, Krugman is a well-paid writer of fiction.

Related posts

- Paul Krugman’s plan to stimulate the economy with an alien invasion
- Paul Krugman smears Michele Bachmann with out-of-context quote

NHS makes patients wait unnecessarily in order to avoid “raising expectations”

September 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T Secondhand Smoke)

Excerpt:

> NHS managers are making patients wait longer than necessary for operations, with one claiming that treating them quickly “raises expectations” At least 10 primary care trusts (PCTs) have told hospitals to increase the length of time before they see patients in order to save money, an investigation by The Daily Telegraph has found. In some areas, patients endured delays of 12 or 15 weeks after GPs decided they needed surgery, even though hospitals could have seen them sooner. The maximum permitted time between referral and treatment is 18 weeks. In one case a manager said the policy keeps patients in line as “short waiting times also create more demand for treatment due to the expectations this raises”. It comes after an NHS watchdog suggested that if patients are forced to wait a long time, they will remove themselves from lists “either by dying or by paying for their own treatment”.

Wesley J. Smith writes:

> And the lessons are? Patients are people, not objects to be maneuvered to meet check list goals. Centralized control has no place in health care. Bureaucrats are not patient friendly. What a disgrace.

Indeed. The best way to run a health care system is to let consumers hold onto their own money. When you keep your own money, you make the decisions. Not some health insurance company nor some government bureaucrat.

Related posts

- NHS refuses to treat woman who is starving to death
- Former NHS hospital director dies on surgery waiting list
- Women gives birth after NHS nurses send her home from hospital
- UK patients denied treatment as “public option” system makes cutbacks
- How do governments control costs in a single-payer health care systems?
- NHS patients giving birth in waiting rooms
- What does universal health care really mean?
- How well is government-run health care working out in the UK?
- British national health care system prepares to cut 20 billion dollars
- NHS kills a man’s wife by delaying cancer treatment for 7 months
- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
- Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water

- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care
- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care
- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- NHS refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

New study: marriage and church attendance help kids finish high school

September 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Marriage & Religion Research Institute. (I grabbed the PDF in case it disappears)

Excerpt:

> *The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that students who now worship weekly and who grew up with two married parents are most likely to have received a high school degree.*
>
> Examining current religious attendance and structure of family of origin, 93 percent of students who grew up in intact married families and who attend weekly religious services have received a high school degree. Only 68 percent of students from all other family structures who never attend religious services received a high school degree. Eighty-nine percent of those who never worship but grew up in intact families and 81 percent of those who attend religious services weekly but come from other family structures received high school degrees.
>
> Examining current religious attendance only, 87 percent of students who attend weekly religious services received a high school degree. In contrast, only 70 percent of those who never worship received a high school degree. Between these two extremes are those who attend at least monthly (81 percent) and those who attend less than monthly (76 percent).
>
> Examining structure of family of origin, 91 percent of individuals who grew up with married biological parents received a high school degree. They are followed by those who grew up in a married stepfamily (80 percent), those who grew up with a single, divorced parent (76 percent), those who grew up in a cohabiting stepfamily (68 percent), those who grew up with an always-single parent (63 percent), and those who grew up in an intact cohabiting family (60 percent).

See the original article for footnotes, including links to other studies that confirm this finding.

The reason why this matters is because finishing high school is very important in order for people to avoid being poor.

Black economist Walter Williams explains.

Excerpt:

> Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. **First, graduate from high school.** Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And, finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior.

> If you graduate from high school today with a B or C average, in most places in our country there's a low-cost or financially assisted post-high-school education program available to increase your skills.
>
> Most jobs start with wages higher than the minimum wage, which is currently $5.15. A man and his wife, even earning the minimum wage, would earn $21,000 annually. According to the Bureau of Census, in 2003, the poverty threshold for one person was $9,393, for a two-person household it was $12,015, and for a family of four it was $18,810. Taking a minimum-wage job is no great shakes, but it produces an income higher than the Bureau of Census' poverty threshold. Plus, having a job in the first place increases one's prospects for a better job.

Finishing high school is a major factor to prevent poverty, but research shows that the greatest preventer of child poverty (and child abuse) is marriage. Marriage stability also increases with regular church attendance. So, church attendance promotes both the completion of high school as well as the stability of marriage. Therefore, regular church attendance prevents poverty by helping two of the causes of poverty-avoidance.

Now… should we expect the secular left to promote church attendance based on this evidence? I think not.

One other point. The more marriage declines, the more children are raised without fathers, which makes it much less likely that children will accept the faith of their parents, leading to lower church attendance for the children of these fatherless homes. It's a vicious cycle. The policies of the left that undermine marriage stability, like sex education, taxpayer-funded abortion, no-fault divorce and single motherhood welfare, actually cause the decline in church attendance that drives marriage rates and high school graduation rates down.

Rejecting Christian theism because it’s just too much work

September 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jim Wallace was discussing the possibility of eternal life with an atheist, and I thought some of her response were very helpful to understand why some people are atheists.

Jim asks whether it is worth her time to investigate the God question.

She replies:

> “**No, I don’t think it’s worth my investigation. I also don’t think I should spend my time investigating UFO’s, zombies, or Big Foot. I hate things that require lots of time and thought where you are virtually guaranteed not to accomplish anything or get a definitive answer.**“

Jim asks her why she is coming to conclusions before examining the evidence.

She replies:

> “Well,” she said, “you are assuming people meet god; that’s a pretty big leap too. Who do you know who has met him? **And I think most believers do so blindly; I don’t believe most of those people do any scholarly inquiry and draw conclusions based on evidence. They believe what they raised on, like me, or what they want to believe.**“

That’s the genetic fallacy, discredit a belief because of the origin of that belief, instead of whether the belief is true or false.

Jim then writes this:

> “The fact that people believe what they were raised to believe,” I countered, “does not amount to a real argument. It’s a variant of the genetic fallacy. You’re trying to prove why believers might be wrong – they just were raised that way – without first proving that they are wrong. So, if I told you that I believed the earth was flat, and I was raised that way, you wouldn’t just shrug your shoulders and say I’m entitled to that belief. You would show me evidence that the earth is round and expect me to use reason to conform my view to the evidence. If I told you that you were entitled to that belief but you just believed it because you were raised by some round earthers and you never saw the whole earth so you couldn’t really know, then… you’d start to see how I feel.”
>
> “One last analogy. Let’s say this was 50 years ago, and when I saw you, you were chain smoking cigarettes with your kids always nearby. I know where medical science is headed, so I tell you that you are hurting yourself, and your kids. You respond that no one can really know those things; after all, you can point to doctors who advertise cigarettes and smoke them themselves, and you feel fine when you smoke. I point to other doctors who think that its really bad for you.

> You respond, ‘see, it’s a tie, so stop bothering me. Each believes what they were raised to believe. Plus, other things can kill me too, so why should I worry about cigarettes? Or, maybe you say that even if I am right, you’ll be one of the lucky ones who won’t be hurt by it.
>
> Do you see that the conflict between the doctors should not lead you to conclude that neither is right, or that the answer is not knowable? As a friend, should I keep trying to bring you back to the truth about cigarettes, or should I let you persist in believing something that is, in the end, hurting you and your loved ones?”

And here is her response:

> “**Have you ever noticed how so many things are bad/wrong only at certain points in a cycle?** Eat eggs, don’t eat eggs; give your kids soy, soy is bad; babies should sleep on their backs, no their stomachs, no their sides, no their backs etc., etc. When my daughter was born I would put her on her back to sleep and when I left the room my mother would put her on her side and when my mother left the room my grandmother would put her on her stomach. **Over time the answer comes full circle**. **Why go around and around with it? What I am saying is not just throw up your hands and quit; what I am saying is that I do what feels right to me and that is the best I can do**. Sometimes I listen to friends (and doctors) and sometimes I don’t. **I think the ‘answer’ to many of these things is unknowable**. At one time it would have been totally unacceptable to all of society for a mother to work and put a child in daycare 10 hours a day. Now, 10 hours of daycare is the norm. I get that most people think that daycare schedule is fine, but I don’t. **I make up my own mind by doing what feels right**. **Have you ever considered that the answer doesn’t matter? Maybe the search is the whole point and maybe I am done already and you’re just slow**.
>
> **I don’t think you can prove God like you can prove that the world is round**. To prove the world was really round and have everyone believe, we needed real-time pictures from space. Bring me a picture of god and we’ll talk.”

Jim then replies to her.

So what do we get from this? Well, here are the five reasons she gave. 1) she knows in advance, before investigating, that there is no definitive answer to the question of whether God exists, 2) people believe what they are raised to believe and want to believe, including her, so your beliefs aren’t under the control of evidence anyway, 3) facts change all the time so it’s pointless to try reasoning about what is true on the basis of what the facts are today – so I don’t really care what anyone in authority says since they all change their minds the next day anyway, 4) I don’t think anyone can construct an argument for God’s existence based on evidence, 5) the burden of proof is on others to show me the evidence for God, I don’t have to look into myself, my job is to do what feels

right to me, and I don't conduct any inquiries into the evidence that might override what feels right to me.

How can you know in advance of inquiry that there is no definitive answer? You can only *assume* that there is no definitive answer, since you admit that you haven't looked into it yourself. And this person seems to have made the decision without evidence that there is no definite answer, and that looking into it is not worth her time and effort. What I am trying to emphasize is that those are decisions. And you can be held responsible for making decisions. Notice how she is able to get around the authority of someone who talks about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, just by saying that expert opinions change all the time, so no expert *has to be listened to,* (unless it feels right to her). In fact, she is not even aware of these arguments, but she has already pre-judged them as less authoritative than her feelings.

So often, we Christians get caught in the trap of judging atheists based on whether they do good deeds, by which we mean, they make other people feel good – they are nice. We neglect to ask whether they are *being good to God* – by puzzling about his existence and character, and by regularly dialoging with believers to see if they might not be mistaken. Heaven is for people who desire God, and who spend time studying the evidence so that they can make an informed decision about his existence and character. Heaven is not for people who are content doing what feels right to them without any desire to know what God thinks about it, because they just don't think his existence and character is important at all. To me this is just another way of saying, I want to do what feels good and learning that there is another person there might override my right to do what feels good, so I don't want to know whether there is another person there.

When you see atheists like Lawrence Krauss, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens get that deer in the headlights look the first time they hear William Lane Craig's arguments in a debate, and his citing of peer-reviewed scientific evidence to support his premises, it becomes immediately clear that these people are not atheists because they know God doesn't exist, but because they *don't want God to exist.* And avoiding the arguments for Christian theism is an important part of keeping God, and his moral demands on us, at a safe distance.

What does the Bible say? Look at the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:36-40:

36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

I think that the first part of loving God if you are not sure he is there is to have an open mind about his existence and character, and a willingness to re-prioritize your life in case he is there and has a personality different from yours. People have a rational obligation to

conduct an inquiry without pre-judging what the outcome will be. If God exists and Jesus rose from the dead, then people ought to care what Jesus thought about things.

I think that non-Christians understand what Christianity would require of them if it were true – radical abandonment to God's calling on their lives. And they turn away from investigating the existence of God and the resurrection of Jesus precisely in order to keep their freedom to do what they feel is right, without having to care about conforming their will to an objective state of affairs where there is another person there that they have to care about. Whatever guilty feelings they have for doing this can be dealt with by adopting a new moral standard, maybe involving recycling, vegetarianism, animal rights activism and yoga. Whatever it takes to make the people around them call them "good", so that they feel good. Do what feels right, don't worry about what is true – that's too much work and we don't want to find out anything that's going to take away our ability to do what feels right – *to us*.

Video of Republican debate at the South Carolina Palmetto Freedom Forum

September 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michele Bachmann: On the Issues

Here's the video of Republican debate at the South Carolina Palmetto Freedom Forum! In eight parts. Famous Princeton philosopher Robert George is the moderator.

All 8 parts:

- Part 1 of 8
- Part 2 of 8
- Part 3 of 8
- Part 4 of 8
- Part 5 of 8
- Part 6 of 8
- Part 7 of 8
- Part 8 of 8

Below is some news coverage for those who don't have broadband.

Here's a story from ABC News.

Excerpt:

> On a day usually marked by end-of-summer barbecues, five presidential candidates came here on Labor Day for a grilling of a different kind.
>
> Mitt Romney, Michele Bachmann, Ron Paul, Newt Gingrich and Herman Cain spent the afternoon in front of a panel of three conservative inquisitors, including Tea Party icon, Sen. Jim DeMint. They peppered each candidate with a detailed

> series of questions on everything from gay marriage to their view of the 14 Amendment to whether the United States was still the "shining city on a hill" that Ronald Reagan famously envisioned.
>
> And when they weren't explaining the depth of their commitment to conservative principles, each used Monday's Palmetto Freedom Forum to take a few swipes at President Obama.
>
> When asked what he would do differently in the area of foreign policy, Romney replied, "A lot. First, I'd have one."
>
> Gingrich dismissed the jobs speech President Obama plans to deliver this week, predicting that it would be a "collection of minor ideas surrounded by big rhetoric."
>
> Michele Bachmann said that Obama has failed in his responsibility "to act under the Constitution and not place oneself over the Constitution."
>
> The candidates did not engage with each other face-to-face as they will two days from now at a debate in California and notably, the current Republican front-runner, Texas Gov. Rick Perry was a no-show at the forum. Though Perry took part in another campaign event across the state Monday morning he cancelled on event organizers at the last-minute in order to return to Texas to deal with the wildfires there.

Bloomberg reports on Bachmann's performance.

Excerpt:

> Republican presidential candidate Michele Bachmann said President Barack Obama has skirted the U.S. Constitution on several fronts, as she and rivals in the race to challenge him next year courted support from Tea Party activists at a forum yesterday in South Carolina.
>
> Bachmann criticized Obama for the health-care overhaul he helped shepherd into law last year, saying it paves the way for "socialized medicine." She also attacked his hiring of high- level advisers — sometimes called "czars" — who aren't vetted by Congress, and his refusal to defend federal marriage and immigration laws, as she billed herself the "constitutional conservative" in the Republican race.
>
> "The current United States government and its framework is acting outside of the bounds of the Constitution," Bachmann, 55, a Minnesota congresswoman, said at the gathering in the state that holds one of the nomination contest's earliest primaries.
>
> […]Bachmann, who helped start a charter school in Minnesota before winning her House seat in 2006, pinpointed education as an area where the federal government has overreached. "The Constitution does not specifically enumerate, nor does it give to the federal government, the role and duty to superintend over education," she said. "That historically has been held by the parents and by local

> communities and by state government."

And from USA Today.

Excerpt:

> Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann threw a jab at former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, saying state laws that require residents to obtain health care coverage are unconstitutional — such as the one Romney signed as governor of Massachusetts.Romney tried to turn political lemon into lemonade, saying the state health care plan differed in fundamental ways from the federal health care law that followed. The contrast would make the issue "one of my best assets if I'm able to debate President Obama," Romney said, saying the Bay State version didn't raise taxes or cut Medicare.
>
> "It's simply unconstitutional; it's bad law; it's bad medicine," Romney said of the federal version. "It has got to be stopped, and I know it better than most."
>
> […]In a speech Tuesday, Romney plans to unveil a 59-point plan, including 10 "concrete actions" he said he would take on his first day in the Oval Office. He endorses several conservative prescriptions: curbing taxes; requiring agencies to cut old regulations to "offset" any new ones; creating "Reagan Economic Zones" with foreign partners to encourage free trade; taking a tougher line against China; cutting spending and passing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution; encouraging more oil and gas drilling and nuclear power.

Here's an article about Mitt Romney's 10-point plan.

You might remember that I had recommended to Michele Bachmann that she adopt the Canadian prime minister's strategy of creating 5-point plans and 6-point plans clearly listing her priorities in order to avoid being accused of having a hidden agenda. So far, she hasn't taken my advice, and her campaign appears to be suffering some difficulties. But Romney seems to have adopted it. I think Mitt Romney is actually a Democrat in Republican clothing, but you have to admire his 10-point plan. I looked it over briefly and it is exactly what I wanted Michele Bachmann to do. Still backing Bachmann, because I don't trust Romney at all.

UPI has more on Romney's liberalism.

UPDATE: This Human Events article has more detail on what Ron Paul, Michele Bachmann, and Mitt Romney said.

Stephen Harper says Islamicism is the biggest threat to Canada

September 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBC. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> In an exclusive interview with CBC News, Prime Minister Stephen Harper says the biggest security threat to Canada a decade after 9/11 is Islamic terrorism.
>
> In a wide-ranging interview with CBC chief correspondent Peter Mansbridge that will air in its entirety on *The National* Thursday night, Harper says Canada is safer than it was on Sept. 11, 2001, when al-Qaeda attacked the U.S., but that "the major threat is still Islamicism."
>
> "There are other threats out there, but that is the one that I can tell you occupies the security apparatus most regularly in terms of actual terrorist threats," Harper said.
>
> Harper cautioned that terrorist threats can "come out of the blue" from a different source, such as the recent Norway attacks, where a lone gunman who hated Muslims killed 77 people.
>
> But Harper said terrorism by Islamic radicals is still the top threat, though a "diffuse" one.
>
> "When people think of Islamic terrorism, they think of Afghanistan, or maybe they think of some place in the Middle East, but the truth is that threat exists all over the world," he said, citing domestic terrorism in Nigeria.
>
> The prime minister said home-grown Islamic radicals in Canada are "also something that we keep an eye on."
>
> Harper said his government will bring back anti-terrorism clauses that were brought in in 2001 but were sunset in 2007 amid heated political debate.

Can you imagine Janet Napolitano taking the threat of Islamic terrorism as seriously? She thinks that screening Muslim males under 35 who enter the United States is "not good logic". But groping babies and grannies is good logic.

Here's more:

> Janet Napolitano, 51, is President Obama's new Homeland Security Secretary. She spoke with SPIEGEL about immigration, the continued threat of terrorism and the changing tone in Washington.
>
> **SPIEGEL:** Madame Secretary, in your first testimony to the US Congress as Homeland Security Secretary you never mentioned the word "terrorism." **Does Islamist terrorism suddenly no longer pose a threat to your country?**

> **Napolitano:** Of course it does. I presume there is always a threat from terrorism. In my speech, although I did not use the word “terrorism,” I referred to “man-caused” disasters. That is perhaps only a nuance, but it demonstrates that we want to move away from the politics of fear toward a policy of being prepared for all risks that can occur.

Making judgments is wrong for people on the secular left – everyone has to be equal, and no one is ever right or wrong. This moral equivalence is going to get a lot of people killed, as in the Major Nidal Hasan incident. Political correctness kills, but you won’t get that from Stephen Harper.

“You’re not using good logic there. You’ve got to use actual intelligence that you received. And, so, you might — all you’ve given me is a kind of status. You have not given me a technique for tactic or behavior. Something that would suggest somebody is not Muslim, but Islamic, that has actually moved into the category of violent extremists,” Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said at a forum on U.S. security and preventing terrorist attacks.

“We have ways to make some of those cuts. And they involve the intel that comes in, the analysis that goes on. For example, we often times, for travelers entering the United States, we won’t not do what is called a secondary inspection just because they are a 35-year- old male who appears to be Muslim, whatever that means. But we know from intelligence that if they have a certain travel pattern over a certain period of time, that should cause us to ask some more significant questions than if we don’t.”

Republican primary debate tonight features eight candidates

September 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Humans Events.

Excerpt:

> Eight Republican presidential candidates will debate on September 7 at the famed Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California.
>
> Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who is currently at the front in many national polls, will join Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich, Rick Santorum, Jon Huntsman, Herman Cain, Michele Bachmann, and Ron Paul on stage.
>
> NBC News and POLITICO will moderate the debate, and it will be co-hosted by NBC Nighlty News anchor Brian Williams and POLITICO's editor-in-chief John Harris.
>
> The debate will be significant because it is Perry's debut on the national debating stage. Even more so, it is first debate in which someone other than Romney will most likely be the leader in the polls.
>
> This dynamic can impact debate strategy in a number of ways.
>
> Will Perry be above the fray and take a page out of Romney's playbook or will the combative Texan go straight after Romney?
>
> Will Romney act like an underdog and make it seem as if he is punching up in a weight class to Perry?
>
> For Ron Paul, who has been at a stable 10-15 percent in the polls, how will he break out? Can he put together a crisp debating performance that highlights the areas where Republicans have moved toward his views and not come across as too professorial and absent-minded?
>
> Michele Bachmann and Herman Cain will come into the debate sharing a similar set of debate experiences. Both splashed onto the national scene during a debate. For Cain, it was in South Carolina. For Bachmann, it was in New Hampshire. But both candidates have not been able to maintain the initial burts of momentum they received from their respective debates due to a mixture of gaffes and staffing questions though Bachmann did win the Ames Straw Poll, which, in the end, seems to not have given her a bounce in the polls.
>
> Newt Gingrich, fresh off his last stellar debate performance, must kick his campaign into gear. He said his campaign would be like Walmart in terms of being innovative. September seems like the time when he should be rolling out his campaign innovations.

The debate is going from 8 PM to 10 PM Eastern. I am concerned about the moderators

being mainstream media. I hope they don't ask stupid questions like John King did last time.

UPDATE: Newsbusters warns about the liberal bias of the debate moderators.

Excerpt:

> Tonight Brian Williams will moderate, along with Politico's John F. Harris, the GOP presidential candidate debate at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. If recent performances by the NBC Nightly News anchor are an indication, candidates (particularly those favored by the Tea Party) should recognize his hostility to their agenda and be prepared for a number of topics and questions from the left.
>
> Ever since its emergence, Williams has undercut the Tea Party, its champions within the GOP, and its cause of fiscal conservatism. At the same time, Williams has heralded its chief opponent Barack Obama.

> In the summer of 2010 Williams began mocking the Tea Partiers as unsavvy paranoids. On the August 23 Late Show With David Letterman, Williams made fun of the signs he had seen at Tea Party rallies, as he told the late night talk show host: "It makes people feel better to say 'Take our country back.' If you ask them, they would say from, 'from the Trilateral Commission, from the big bankers, from the Council on Foreign Relations.'…You see a lot of signs, 'Federal Government Out of My Social Security,' 'Federal Government Out of My Medicare and Medicaid,' but for the federal government, of course, those programs would not exist."

> […]Williams has also attacked those in the GOP who have championed the Tea Party cause, namely – Texas governor and presidential candidate Rick Perry, former Alaska governor and 2008 vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin and current Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker.

> Williams introduced Perry to his viewers, on the August 16 Nightly News, as a name-caller who came out "swinging and talking" and alerted his audience that the White House had already warned him "to watch what he says."
>
> "On the broadcast tonight, fighting words. Rick Perry comes out swinging and talking, and the White House tells him to watch what he says.…The rest of the country is learning what Texans already know about their Governor, what he says, what he does, how he does business.…Today's debate had to do with money, name-calling, and whether or not the President of the United States loves his country."

Uh oh. I don't think the Republicans should let radical leftists moderate their debates. It's just stupid. Let Paul Ryan and Marco Rubio be the moderators.

Philosopher Ron Nash lectures on capitalism, morality and freedom

September 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Watch the lecture. (H/T Luis)

Nash speaks from 0:06 to0:45. Then he takes questions.

His two favorite economists are… WALTER WILLIAMS and THOMAS SOWELL! Just like me!

Christianity isn't something you do in church to have happy feelings, or to get along with your parents and friends. It's a worldview. And the whole point of it is that is is true, and helps us to make sense of the world because it is true.

By the way, he even talks about how Jesus uses hyperbole to get people's attention in the question and answer time. I blogged about that a while back because one of our Christian commenters told me that Jesus never uses hyperbole. (She is a Calvinist, so… you know…). F.A. Hayek also comes up in the Q&A time. Hayek is my third favorite economist. I think all Christians should have favorite economists. I think we should think about how Christianity relates to every area, from science to history to philosophy to ethics to marriage and family. And to politics and economics, as with this lecture!

We should all have favorite scholars, just like non-Christians have favorite musicians and movie stars. Ron Nash is one of my favorite philosophers.

Who is Ron Nash?

I learned about economics by listening to all the lectures in this course taught by Dr. Nash. He presents a view of economics that is consistent with the laws of logic and the Bible. And this course is *comprehensive.* I've moved on from Dr. Nash's course to read F. A. Hayek and Thomas Sowell, and then Walter Williams. And I found that Dr. Nash's course was excellent preparation for these more advanced books.

Take a look at some of the topics:

- the role of the government in regulating commerce
- the meaning of justice
- capitalism and socialism
- interventionism vs free market capitalism
- introduction to economics
- marxism
- wealth and poverty
- liberation theology and the religious left
- judicial activism vs legal positivism
- pollution
- public education

You can grab the lectures here.

A little blurb about Dr. Nash

> Nash taught theology and philosophy for four decades at three schools. He was chairman of the department of philosophy and religion and director of graduate studies in humanities at Western Kentucky University, where he was on faculty from 1964-91. He was a professor at Reformed Theological Seminary from 1991-2002 and at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1998-2005.
>
> Nash wrote more than 35 books on philosophy, theology and apologetics, including “Faith & Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith,” “Life’s Ultimate Questions” and “Is Jesus the Only Savior?” Nash received his Ph.D. from Syracuse University; his master’s degree from Brown University; and his undergraduate degree from Barrington College.

From this Baptist Press article.

Related posts

- Peter Hitchens distinguishes the deserving and undeserving poor
- Should Christians support wealth redistribution as a way to alleviate poverty?
- Should Christians pray for the economy?
- Fiscal and social conservatives unite in new free e-book “Indivisible”
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- Cato Institute talks with Jay Richards about Christianity and capitalism
- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible
- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards’ Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

Newt Gingrich outstanding in Wednesday night's Republican primary debate

September 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Not my favorite candidate, but he turned in the best performance.

The Washington Times reports.

Excerpt:

> Mitt Romney and Rick Perry wasted little time in going straight at each other Wednesday night, sparring over whether the former's business experience or the latter's decade as governor of Texas is better training for boosting jobs.
>
> "Michael Dukakis created jobs three times faster than you did, Mitt," Mr. Perry said, referring to the former liberal Democratic governor who lost the 1988 presidential election.
>
> "George Bush and his predecessor created jobs at a faster rate than you did, governor," retorted Mr. Romney, a one-term Massachusetts governor who made his fortune leading a capital investment firm, as he pointed to the man whom Mr. Perry succeeded in 2000.
>
> With the Republican presidential nomination on the line, the Republican field squared off at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in a nationally televised debate in which the candidates clawed slightly at each other, but aimed their chief darts at President Obama on issues such as the economy and his health care initiative.
>
> "Obamacare took over one-sixth of the economy," said Rep. Michele Bachmann, Minnesota Republican. "This is the issue of 2012, together with jobs. This is our window of opportunity. If we fail to repeal Obamacare in 2012, it will be with us forever and it will be socialized medicine."
>
> But even that issue opened up Mr. Romney to more attacks, this time from the rest of the field, none of whom backed the individual mandate that requires everyone to purchase insurance and that lies at the heart of the health care bills that Mr. Romney signed in Massachusetts and the one Mr. Obama signed, a few years later, for the whole country.
>
> Mr. Perry said Massachusetts' experiment "was a great opportunity for us as a people to see what will not work, and that is an individual mandate in this country."
>
> For Mr. Perry, the debate was his first chance personally to mix things up with his fellow candidates, and to show Republican voters that he deserves the early adulation he's received from many of them.
>
> He seemed to stumble over a couple of answers when asked to square his past rhetoric with his stances as a presidential candidate, but had his strongest

> moments when he was defending his state's specific record during his decade as governor.
>
> He also didn't back down on his criticism of Social Security as a Ponzi scheme, and said that applied despite former Vice President Dick Cheney, who earlier Wednesday had suggested such language was over the top.
>
> "If Vice President Cheney or anyone else says that the program that we have in place today, and young people who are paying into that expect that program to be sound and for them to receive benefits when they reach retirement age, that is just a lie," Mr. Perry said.

John Ruberry (Marathon Pundit) posted this summary:

> Here's my brief summation of tonight's Republican presidential candidate at the Reagan Presidential Library.
>
> Perry was the winner, mainly because he didn't make any gaffes–no one did–and he answered some tough questions. He refused to back down from calling Social Security a "Ponzi scheme." However, if he wins the GOP nomination, he just wrote his own attack ad and supplied the video. Granny-scaring is what the Dems do best. The other top-tier candidate, Mitt Romney, was well-spoken and on top of the issues, as he always is.
>
> **Michele Bachmann:** Held her own but didn't gain ground. But she needed to move up tonight.
>
> **Rick Santorum:** Inspired, articulate, and passionate. He won't be going away.
>
> **Jon Huntsman:** I like his jobs plan, but he muffed the global warming question.
>
> **Newt Gingrich:** The best performance tonight. But I fear he has dug himself to big a hole for him to even contend for the nomination.
>
> **Ron Paul:** I'm not a supporter, but he stood firm with his Libertarian beliefs.
>
> **Herman Cain:** What happened? The biggest washout tonight. He came across unsure, and his 9-9-9 program sounds like he's marketing toothpaste, but he's selling it without confidence.
>
> As for the questions from the moderators, NBC's Brian Williams and Politico's Jonathan Martin, I have this to say: Man, do I miss Tim Russert. And why do you think a question about evolution is relevant?

I was not impressed with Perry's speaking ability, but he had command of the facts, which is good. Santorum also did well.

Erick Erickson's summary of the debate at Red State.

Excerpt:

> First, I don't think Perry had as strong a performance tonight as he could have. He stumbled several times. Romney had a stronger performance. But then, Romney has been in this dog and pony show since 2007. Perry is just stepping up

> to this level. He made no major mistakes, but could have been stronger on the HPV issue and a few other issues.
>
> Second, it is clear Perry is the front runner given the pile on from the other candidates. It was not just pushed by MBNBC and the Politico. The other candidates took willful potshots against Rick Perry. Perry, despite some stumbles and the pile on by the moderators and other participants, held his own and will only get stronger the more of these he does.
>
> Third, Michele Bachmann's star has faded. The recognition of this is the reporter focus on Perry v. Romney buttressed by Bachmann's own outgoing campaign manager, Ed Rollins, that the race was a two man race between Perry and Romney.
>
> Fourth, Newt Gingrich. What an intellect. What a mind. What a debater. What might have been.
>
> […]Finally, I think Mitt Romney's "play it safe" strategy is about to come crashing down on his. In the exchange between Perry and Romney on social security and ponzi schemes, Perry gave a less than stellar answer. But Romney then tried to pile on by rejecting the idea that social security is a failure.Republicans should pay attention to this. Mitt Romney proclaimed making several generations of Americans dependent on the federal government for their retirement a success. That may play well to Washington, D.C. But it increasingly doesn't even play well with senior citizens worried about their grandchildren's futures.

I think Romney is just too liberal to win this primary.

GOP plan would create 1.2 million new jobs by expanding energy production

September 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. (H/T Reuben, indirectly)

Excerpt:

> Americans are angry and with good reason. They are hurting from unemployment, uncertainty in stock market investments and declining retirement funds. And they are weary of waiting for a real workable plan to get us out of this rut.
>
> This is not a time to try the same failed policies of borrowing, debt and calls for tax increases. So we offer these ideas as President Barack Obama prepares to address Congress Thursday if he really wants to make some major bipartisan moves to get our country moving again.
>
> […]First, allow U.S. employers to repatriate $1 trillion sitting in overseas banks. The current tax rate of 35 percent is a huge barrier blocking those dollars from being invested in jobs, boosting the stock market and raising the value of retirement funds.
>
> Some companies use armies of attorneys and accountants to find ways to cut those taxes, followed by the Internal Revenue Service tracking them down. Stop the nonsense. Offer a lower tax rate, perhaps 15 percent, for a limited time (maybe even a lower rate if the money is invested in job creation or in purchasing U.S. goods).
>
> […]Second, freeze the massive number of proposed regulations until Congress can review and approve them. Regulations cost U.S. employers more than $1.75 trillion per year. Federal agencies are moving forward with more than 4,257 new regulations that will add tens of billions in regulatory costs — more than tripling the burden of agency mandates from 2009.Employers are worried how this tsunami of new regulations will overwhelm their businesses so they are holding back on growth and hiring. Unless a regulation is absolutely necessary to protect the public's health and safety, it should be stopped now. Enactment of House Resolution 10, the REINS Act, would require congressional review and approval for any mandate costing the economy more than $100 million annually.
>
> **Third, pass our bipartisan Infrastructure Jobs and Energy Independence Act (H.R. 1861), to expand safe offshore oil and gas exploration, create 1.2 million new jobs annually and launch $8 trillion in economic output. Our bipartisan bill dedicates a portion of up to $3.7 trillion in federal oil and gas revenues from the new exploration for investments in new energy technologies, power generation and grid modernization to help**

> **put us on a path to energy independence.**
>
> […]Finally, to preserve a free global market for trade, we must hold foreign nations accountable to abide by international agreements. This year, America will lose its position as the global manufacturing leader to China, in large part because Beijing illegally gives its exports a 20 percent to 40 percent discount by manipulating and devaluing its currency.

Another good idea would be to sign the free trade deals with Panama, South Korea and Colombia. Heritage explains what would happen if we did.

Excerpt:

> The Obama Administration—after allowing U.S. free trade agreements (FTAs) with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama to languish unapproved for nearly four years—lately appears eager to push Congress to ratify all three soon. The problem now is that some in Congress are trying to make their approval contingent upon an extension of the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA).
>
> That would be a mistake. The three FTAs are intrinsically worth passing without any strings. Congress should act on them without further delay.
>
> **The Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS) would be America's largest free trade agreement in Asia. It would increase U.S. exports by an estimated $10 billion annually, increase U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) by $11 billion, and add 70,000 U.S. jobs—all without a dime in federal government spending.**[1] The accord would also serve as a powerful statement of the U.S. commitment to East Asia at a time when many perceive declining American interest, presence, and influence in the region. The FTA would strengthen U.S. commercial ties and expand the bilateral relationship with South Korea beyond traditional military ties or the North Korean threat.
>
> […]**Rejecting KORUS would disadvantage U.S. companies by locking in discriminatory trade barriers. During the four years the agreement was held hostage by special interest groups and congressional protectionists, the U.S. lost $40 billion in potential exports.** American companies continued to lose market share to foreign competitors. The U.S. used to be South Korea's largest trade partner, but in less than a decade it has been displaced by China, the European Union, and Japan. As Korea's market opens further, it will be foreign competitors and not U.S. companies that will benefit.
>
> […]Until this year, the Obama Administration and congressional leadership took its orders on the U.S.–Colombia FTA from protectionist U.S. labor unions and U.S. anti-globalization groups, joined by far-left allies in the region, who succeeded in delaying congressional approval of the FTA. **The cost of delay has been significant. So far, according to the Latin America Trade Coalition's "Colombia Tariff Ticker,"[2] U.S. companies have paid $3.5 billion (as of this writing) in unnecessary duties to the Colombian treasury in the**

> **more than 1,600 days since the FTA was signed.**
>
> **That $3.5 billion has translated into higher prices in Colombia for U.S. goods and services, which are now at a competitive disadvantage in the Colombian market. It has also meant reduced profits for U.S. companies and lost jobs at home.**

There are plenty of good ideas from people who live in the real world where real economic laws apply. Keynesianism has been tried since Pelosi and Reid were elected in 2007. It has *failed*. We need to move on to what works.

Mark Steyn on the decline of free speech

September 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From his blog. Mr. Steyn wonders why Americans take their freedom of speech for granted, when it is under attack everywhere else in the world. (H/T ECM via Mary)

Excerpt:

> And what I found odd about this was that very few other people found it odd at all. Indeed, the Canadian establishment seems to think it entirely natural that the Canadian state should be in the business of lifetime publication bans, just as the Dutch establishment thinks it entirely natural that the Dutch state should put elected leaders of parliamentary opposition parties on trial for their political platforms, and the French establishment thinks it appropriate for the French state to put novelists on trial for sentiments expressed by fictional characters. Across almost all the Western world apart from America, the state grows ever more comfortable with micro-regulating public discourse—and, in fact, not-so-public discourse: Lars Hedegaard, head of the Danish Free Press Society, has been tried, been acquitted, had his acquittal overruled, and been convicted of "racism" for some remarks about Islam's treatment of women made (so he thought) in private but taped and released to the world. The Rev. Stephen Boissoin was convicted of the heinous crime of writing a homophobic letter to his local newspaper and was sentenced by Lori Andreachuk, the aggressive social engineer who serves as Alberta's "human rights" commissar, to a lifetime prohibition on uttering anything "disparaging" about homosexuality ever again in sermons, in newspapers, on radio—or in private e-mails. Note that legal concept: not "illegal" or "hateful," but merely "disparaging." Dale McAlpine, a practicing (wait for it) Christian, was handing out leaflets in the English town of Workington and chit-chatting with shoppers when he was arrested on a "public order" charge by Constable Adams, a gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community-outreach officer. Mr. McAlpine had been overheard by the officer to observe that homosexuality is a sin. "I'm gay," said Constable Adams. Well, it's still a sin, said Mr. McAlpine. So Constable Adams arrested him for causing distress to Constable Adams.
>
> In fairness, I should add that Mr. McAlpine was also arrested for causing distress to members of the public more generally, and not just to the aggrieved gay copper. No member of the public actually complained, but, as Constable Adams pointed out, Mr. McAlpine was talking "in a loud voice" that might theoretically have been "overheard by others." And we can't have that, can we? So he was fingerprinted, DNA-sampled, and tossed in the cells for seven hours. When I was a lad, the old joke about the public toilets at Piccadilly Circus was that one should never make eye contact with anyone in there because the place was crawling with laughably unconvincing undercover policemen in white polonecks itching to

> arrest you for soliciting gay sex. Now they're itching to arrest you for not soliciting it.
>
> In such a climate, time-honored national characteristics are easily extinguished. A generation ago, even Britain's polytechnic Trots and Marxists were sufficiently residually English to feel the industrial-scale snitching by family and friends that went on in Communist Eastern Europe was not quite cricket, old boy. Now England is Little Stasi-on-Avon, a land where, even if you're well out of earshot of the gay-outreach officer, an infelicitous remark in the presence of a co-worker or even co-playmate is more than sufficient. Fourteen-year-old Codie Stott asked her teacher at Harrop Fold High School whether she could sit with another group to do her science project as in hers the other five pupils spoke Urdu and she didn't understand what they were saying. The teacher called the police, who took her to the station, photographed her, fingerprinted her, took DNA samples, removed her jewelry and shoelaces, put her in a cell for three and a half hours, and questioned her on suspicion of committing a Section Five "racial public-order offence." "An allegation of a serious nature was made concerning a racially motivated remark," declared the headmaster, Antony Edkins. The school would "not stand for racism in any form." In a statement, Greater Manchester Police said they took "hate crime" very seriously, and their treatment of Miss Stott was in line with "normal procedure."

This column is a must-read. It's long and it's very rewarding to those who persist.

Bible study: on the importance of truth in religion

September 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting passage of the Bible. What do you all think the practical value of this passage is?

[1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

[2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

[3] he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

[4] Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

[6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

[7] Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[8] Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

[9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

[10] The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

[11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

[12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king."

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him."

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

[27] Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

[29] "As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

[30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

This passage is interesting to me because it shows the kind of attitude that God answers. I believe that the middle knowledge perspective on divine sovereignty is correct, and that God places people and events in the right times and at the right places so that those who are honestly seeking God will be able to find someone to talk to, or something to learn from. The King in this passage was tired of hearing man-made stories from his servants – stories that were undoubtedly influenced by the servants desire to survive the King's wrath. The servants would only have told the King things that were vague and happy, so that they could never be proved wrong or found to be judgmental or offensive. But the King was tired of that. He wanted someone with authority to tell him the truth about the way the world was.

In the rest of the chapter, Daniel interprets the dream, and concludes by saying this: "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.". The King replies: "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

I think it is is going to be difficult for Christians living today to be able to tell people their dreams like that. But what we can do is talk about God's miracles as revealed by science and history. We can study astrophysics, biochemistry and history and we can explain what God did in creating and fine-tuning the universe for life, in sequencing amino acids into functioning proteins, in creating brand new body plans in the Cambrian explosion, in raising Jesus from the dead as a matter of historical record, and so on. We have to show how great God is to people who do not even think he exists, and without assuming that they believe in the Bible. There are still people out there like the King who are looking for someone who can speak to them with authority. All it takes from us is a little studying, and we can be like Daniel, too. But we have to know what God has done from science and history, and speak with authority about how we can know that God has acted *supernaturally*. Authority to speak comes from having knowledge about what we are talking about, and knowledge comes from studying and debating with people we disagree with.

Obama’s plan: raise taxes and borrow $447 billion for more stimulus spending

September 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

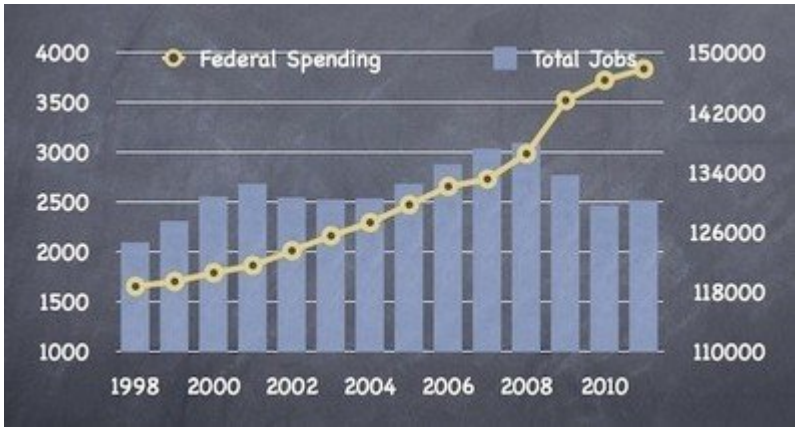

The Democrats took over the House and Senate in January 2007 - and it all went downhill from there

From the liberal Globe and Mail: IT’S JUST ANOTHER STIMULUS BILL.

Excerpt:

> Barack Obama is seeking legislative backing for economic stimulus worth $450-billion (U.S.), making the U.S. President a lonely advocate for spending at a moment dominated by calls for austerity.
>
> Mr. Obama told a joint session of Congress Thursday evening that the United States must get a grip on its rising debt, but not at the expense of condemning millions of people to the unemployment rolls and welfare because traumatized companies refuse to hire.
>
> […]The President’s proposals Thursday were the same as those telegraphed in the U.S. media over the previous 48 hours. He’s responding to an economy that is quickly losing momentum, expanding at an annual rate of only 0.7 per cent in the first half of the year. The unemployment rate is 9.1 per cent, compared with 8.8 per cent in March, and 14 million Americans are unemployed more than two years into the recovery.
>
> […]Like the roughly $800-billion stimulus program Mr. Obama shepherded through Congress in early 2009, his new proposal would ease the tax burden on the middle class; send money to states, which have cut almost 500,000 jobs since 2010; and seek to create jobs for millions of unemployed construction workers by plowing millions into refurbishing roads and schools.
>
> […]The U.S.’s publicly held debt is on track to reach 82 per cent of gross domestic product by the end of the decade, higher than in any year since 1948, according to the Congressional Budget Office.
>
> […]The U.S. economy is faltering in part because previous stimulus programs are

> dwindling, while private demand has yet to return in robust way.
>
> […]Mr. Obama also proposes direct transfers worth $140-billion. Some $35-billion will go to states to help them retain teachers, police officers and fire fighters, while $30-billion would be used to refurbish schools, an initiative the White House likes because the work involved tends to be labour intensive and the contracts can be signed quickly.

I found this amusing summary of the jobs speech on National Review.

> Spend $450 billion dollars now, it will create jobs, and I'll tell you how I'm going to pay for it a week from Monday. If you disagree, you want to expose kids to mercury.
>
> That about sums up the Obama years.

Yes, that about sums it up. Obama says: Let me spend your money on turtle tunnels, or you will be blamed and insulted for being "greedy".

Fact-checking Obama's speech

The very liberal AP fact-checks Obama's speech here. (H/T Doug Ross)

Excerpt:

> A look at some of Obama's claims and how they compare with the facts:
>
> OBAMA: "Everything in this bill will be paid for. Everything."
>
> THE FACTS: Obama did not spell out exactly how he would pay for the measures contained in his nearly $450 billion American Jobs Act but said he would send his proposed specifics in a week to the new congressional supercommittee charged with finding budget savings. White House aides suggested that new deficit spending in the near-term to try to promote job creation would be paid for in the future – the "out years," in legislative jargon – but they did not specify what would be cut or what revenues they would use.
>
> Essentially, the jobs plan is an IOU from a president and lawmakers who may not even be in office down the road when the bills come due. Today's Congress cannot bind a later one for future spending. A future Congress could simply reverse it.
>
> Currently, roughly all federal taxes and other revenues are consumed in spending on various federal benefit programs, including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, veterans' benefits, food stamps, farm subsidies and other social-assistance programs and payments on the national debt. Pretty much everything else is done on credit with borrowed money.
>
> So there is no guarantee that programs that clearly will increase annual deficits in the near term will be paid for in the long term.
>
> —OBAMA: "It will not add to the deficit."
>
> THE FACTS: It's hard to see how the program would not raise the deficit over the

> next year or two because most of the envisioned spending cuts and tax increases are designed to come later rather than now, when they could jeopardize the fragile recovery. Deficits are calculated for individual years. The accumulation of years of deficit spending has produced a national debt headed toward $15 trillion. Perhaps Obama meant to say that, in the long run, his hoped-for programs would not further increase the national debt, not annual deficits.

Let's now look at some of the specific proposals.

But will it work?

Hans Bader explains the plan in this excellent post at the Competitive Enterprise Institute. (He has lots of links, so I removed them, but you can find them in his post on the CEI web site)

Excerpt:

> It contains more money for the long-term unemployed, more infrastructure spending, and funds for hiring laid-off teachers. It also would extend a cut in the portion of payroll taxes paid by employees. The measures would be financed mostly by deficit spending, but partly by raising taxes on the so-called "rich" — a category that includes most of the small business owners who actually hire people — and by eliminating what the administration refers to as "tax loopholes" — which are not really tax loopholes at all, but rather provisions that allow industries disfavored by the administration to benefit from the same tax code provisions as other industries.
>
> […]Even the least-bad of Obama's proposals will not grow the economy. Aid for the long-term unemployed will reduce the size of the economy by encouraging some people to not accept jobs that pay far less than they were accustomed to, even when those are the only jobs available to them. Obama's proposed infrastructure spending will not grow the economy either, as Veronique de Rugy and others note, since it will be accompanied by costly Davis-Bacon mandates designed to favor unions (which raise the cost of transportation projects and exclude many small non-union contractors), and some of it will be wasted on rail boondoggles and pork rather than roads and bridges, or on Obama Administration pet projects, like energy efficiency, that require specialized skills that most unemployed construction workers lack. (Ironically, Obama removed most transportation spending from the original $800 billion stimulus package for political reasons, replacing it with more harmful welfare and social spending.)

How about Obama's previous stimulus plan?

> Meanwhile, by sucking money out of the private-sector economy, the stimulus wiped out a million private-sector jobs, even as other stimulus provisions outsourced American energy jobs to foreign countries, and wiped out jobs in America's export sector, resulting in a net loss to the economy of 550,000 jobs, according to two economists. The Obama administration's use of taxpayer money

> to subsidize above-market wages for government employees is at odds with what economists like Lord Keynes (the father of the Keynesian school of economics) counseled in past recessions, and what Franklin Roosevelt did in the Great Depression, when he hired people to do construction and transportation projects in the WPA but paid them only very modest wages, providing opportunities to the unemployed without siphoning off useful talent from private-sector businesses.

But isn't it a good idea to help the unemployed and public school teachers?

> As the Heritage Foundation notes, "The consequences of extended unemployment benefits are some of the most conclusively established results in labor economic research. Extending either the amount or the duration of UI benefits increases the length of time that workers remain unemployed. UI benefits subsidize unemployment. They reduce the incentive unemployed workers have to search for new work and to make difficult choices–such as moving or switching industries–to begin a new job."
>
> The President's proposed subsidies for laid-off teachers discriminate in favor of one occupation, without any legitimate reason for doing so: the unemployment rate among teachers is vastly lower than for many occupations, and lower than for most. It is best understood as the Administration pandering to the teachers' unions.

This man only has one thing in his mind and it's spending your children's money and giving speeches about how great that makes him. He likes to hear the crowds applaud him for spending your children's money. I do not think well of people who, in tough economic times, come into my house, take my credit card, and spend a bunch of my money on public sector union workers who have job security, benefits and pensions that I can only dream about. Where does he think that the money he is spending comes from in the first place?

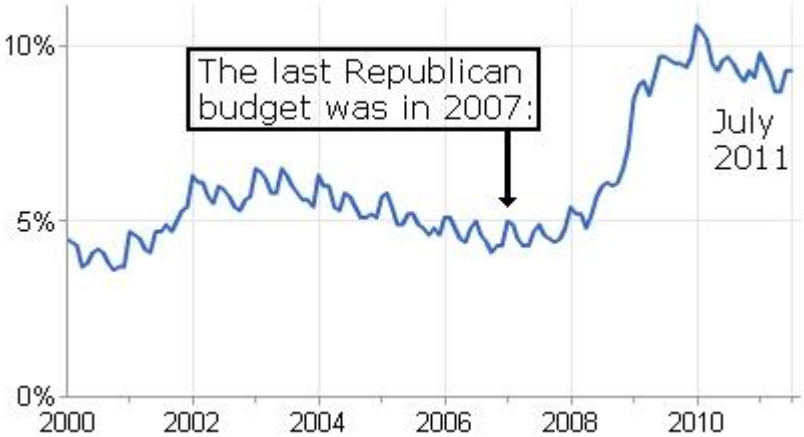

Unemployment Rate (Not seasonally adjusted)

We need an exit strategy from this Keynesian deficit spending quagmire. This man has spent over a trillion dollars on the job-killing Obamacare program, and over a trillion more on stimulus spending. He is running 1.65 trillion dollar annual deficits and he wants to spend even more. And what have we got to show for it? The worst economic recovery in

the history of the country – after a recession caused by *his own party* – and an unemployment rate that is more than double what Bush's unemployment rate was when he had a Republican House and Senate in 2006.

Related posts

- Obamanomics: $500,000 stimulus grant to grow trees creates 1.72 jobs
- Solar power firm goes bankrupt after receiving $535 million taxpayer dollars
- Public schools spend $130,000 of stimulus money on diversity training books
- Democrat economists: "stimulus" cost $278,000 per job
- Obama blasts private jet tax breaks created by his own stimulus
- Obama spent $80 billion dollars on green jobs so where are the jobs?

Republicans react to Obama's new $447 billion borrow-and-spend stimulus

September 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

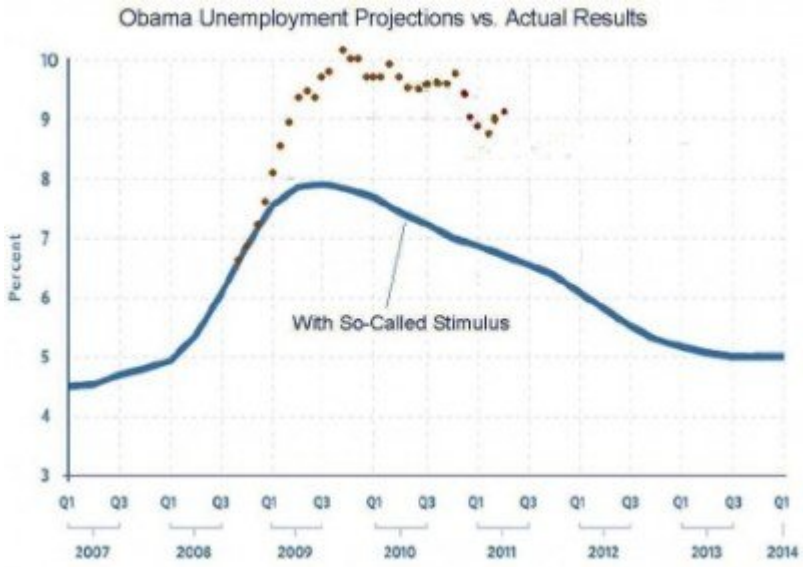

Obama Unemployment Stimulus Graph
From the conservative Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> As they filed out of the Capitol Thursday evening, a few Republican House members told the WEEKLY STANDARD what they thought of President Obama's address to Congress on jobs:
>
> Ben Quayle (R-Ariz.): "For somebody who keeps saying we should get beyond politics, that was a pure political speech tonight. It was unfortunate."
>
> Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.): "It was, um, I didn't hear any new ideas. The only new idea from him that I was encouraged by is corporate tax reform. Broad based, lower rates. That's something we called for in our budget, we've always wanted to do. So perhaps some room for common ground there…**I lost count of all the straw men up there. I mean, I was losing count at about 14 or 15. But we're used to hearing that. I think the last third of it was pretty much straw men…All the ideas in the front that he ticked off were the same things that he put in the stimulus that he proposed earlier, which are more Keynesian-style ideas that have already sort of proven to fail. I would rather we pass ideas that have proven to work rather than double down on ones that have proven to fail."**
>
> Tom Price (R-Ga.): "I felt it was desperate. I felt he was desperate and I though the speech was desperate…**He mocked many of the proposals that we've put forward, and none of it was productive or constructive to the political discourse. Somehow, he's incapable of appreciating that many**

> **of the things that he says actually thwart positive political discourse.**"
>
> Diane Black (R-Tenn.): "There was something new. The president was saying we should look at Medicare, Medicaid. First time I ever heard that…**What he does in there is like what my kids do. They take my credit card, they spend, and then they want me to pay for it.**"
>
> Renee Ellmers (R-N.C.): "At one point, he said, some of you believe if we cut regulation and cut spending, that's going to be enough. I couldn't have applauded harder. I believe that very much…His approach is not very pro-business. When he talks about Warren Buffett, that's a little far-removed from the average businessperson. If any of those guys want to send in more tax dollars to the treasury, they can. They can just write the check."
>
> Michael Grimm (R-N.Y.): "I thought it was a little bit of a campaign speech…Part of it was a little bit demeaning. The president sometimes can be a bit arrogant."
>
> Patrick McHenry (R-N.C.): "It's a rehash. I think this is the stimulus part deux or, I guess when you're talking about multiple stimuluses, stimuli. You could call it the stimuli speech."

Obama is just a petulant child. One minute, he is in his ranting mood and has a tantrum against the responsible grown-ups. The next minute he wants to borrow the car keys. We elected a 14-year old to be President. One who has no experience as a job creator in the private sector. He is out of his league.

Robert Stacy McCain posts many more reactions to the President's stimulus speech from the scholars at the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> In his remarks tonight, President Obama argued that his jobs proposal would create more jobs for teachers. He went as far as to say laying off teachers…"has to stop".
>
> But since 1970, student enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools has increased just 7 percent, while public elementary and secondary staff hires have increased 83 percent. Moreover, in the 1950´s, there were approximately 2.36 teachers for every non-teacher in a school district. Today, in our nation's school systems, that ratio is closer to 1 to 1. So every teacher in the classroom has an administrative counterpart in your local public school district. That is a tremendous strain on state budgets. But it is also a huge boon the education unions.
>
> President Obama's call to spend more precious taxpayer dollars to "prevent teacher layoffs" may do more to inflate schools' non-teaching rosters than to retain teachers.
>
> On a per-pupil basis, federal spending on education has nearly tripled since the 1970´s. And those who have benefited the most from this profligacy aren't the children sitting in the nation's classrooms. No, the increase in federal education

> spending (and commensurate increase in Washington's involvement in local schools) hasn't led to improvements in academic achievement, to increased graduation rates, or even to a narrowing of the achievement gap. It hasn't served to improve outcomes for children, but it has propped-up the public education jobs program that too often aims to meet the needs of the adults in the system, not the children it was designed to educate.

And more:

> As expected, tonight President Obama called on taxpayers to send their hard-earned money to the federal government so that Washington can pour that money into public school construction. In an attempt to boost job growth, the president suggested spending billions on school infrastructure projects to "modernize 35,000 public schools."
>
> Since President Obama came into office, spending on public education has skyrocketed:
>
> Education budget in 2008: $59.2 billion
> Education budget in 2011: $69.9 billion
> Department of Education "stimulus" award (Spring 2009): $98 billion
> "Edujobs" public education bailout (Summer 2010): $10 billion
>
> And state and local school construction spending has also seen significant increases.
>
> By some estimates, inflation-adjusted school construction spending has increased 150 percent in the last two decades. And unfortunately, profligacy and waste are the norm. Remember the $500 million RFK high school in Los Angeles, built last year after a California bond referendum was enacted? There are certainly schools in ill-repair, but this maintenance should be a local concern. Washington should not be in the business of school window repair, updating facilities, or repainting buildings. Schools don't need increased federal funding for school repairs; they need more flexibility with funding to be able to use dollars for needs they consider pressing.
>
> The president's proposal to funnel more taxpayer dollars into school construction has both constitutional and pragmatic problems. School construction has historically been – and should remain – the job of states and localities. Federal forays into school construction have been rare and indirect. Federally-funded school construction is also a terribly expensive way to build schools: Washington-funded jobs must pay prevailing wages, increasing costs on average by 22 percent.
>
> In calling for federally-funded school construction, President Obama is once again supporting Washington overreach in education. But he's also behind the game in terms of the direction school policy is trending. As states and localities begin embracing online learning – and as education shifts to a world outside of the

> walls of physical school buildings – President Obama is pushing to subsidize the old model. The administration might think “school construction” polls better than other government “jobs” projects, but it’s just as destined to be a waste of taxpayer money, and a public policy failure.

Robert Stacy McCain is a Herman Cain supporter. Wouldn’t it have been great to see Herman Cain debating Obama? The job creator against the community organizer?

Kevin DeYoung: where do jobs come from?

September 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Kevin DeYoung, posted at the Gospel Coalition. This is a must-read. (H/T Mary)

He lays out the general case for why employers hire workers in four points.

Here is point #2:

> (2)The employer must believe that spending his money on new employees will be good for his business. We may wish that employers hired people just cuz. But that's not the way the world works. When employers want to be charitable they give to church or to their alma mater. But with their business they know they need to make money. Consequently, they hire new workers only when they believe that paying more people will eventually be offset by making more money.

Ah, this is nice. And it goes on and on like that. Click here and read this sweet, sweet post!

This is Mr. Moo. He is a capitalist business owner.
But I have to steal this story about a capitalist cow who starts a business:

> Mr. Moo sells milk. He charges $5 a gallon. Everyone in town wants milk so everyone pays Mr. Moo $5 a gallon. But Mr. Moo wants to make even more money. Maybe he's greedy. Maybe he wants to give more to his church. Maybe he wants to buy a new car. Maybe he just had a new baby that needs food and clothes. Maybe he wants to bet on horses. No matter the reason, Mr. Moo (like almost everyone) wants to make more money. What should he do?

He could charge more for his milk, but he realizes that at $6 a gallon some of his customers will drive to the next town where milk is only $4.75. So instead he tries to lower his costs. He needs $4 to make a gallon of milk, but he'd like to do better. So next month he replaces his milkmaids with new milking machines. This requires a substantial up front investment, but within a year the milking machines have paid for themselves. Without having to pay milkmaids, his milk only costs $3 to produce. Now he charges $4.25—a savings to his customers and more profit for him.

This simple example shows how productivity fuels profits. Mr. Moo found a way to make the same thing for less money.

But, you ask, how is this good for anyone but Mr. Moo? Well, as the other farmers purchased their milking machines their costs went down too. So they started to lower prices, hoping to attract more customers. Mr. Moo did the same. Even if he is now getting richer, his customers are too. They save 75 cents on every gallon of milk (paying $4.25 when they used to pay $5.00). Now they have the same milk as before but more money. The economy has expanded.

And that's not all, with more money in his pocket Mr. Moo goes out to eat more, which helps the local burger joint hire one more cook. And all the new machines need servicing, so the local repairmen hires an apprentice. The grocer spends less on milk so he can add another bagger. The doctor, who is saving money on dairy, has more money to spend so he donates to the local art museum which can afford to purchase two new paintings from an aspiring artist. No one knew Mr. Moo's machines would help so many people and create so many jobs. No one really notices either, but it happens.

But what about the poor milkmaids? True, they are out of work. Their lives, at least in the short run, are worse because of the new innovation. Those dreaded milking machines seemed to have ruined everything. In fact, the mayor almost outlawed them. Others wanted to institute a new milking machine tariff to discourage farmers from buying them and to help save milkmaid jobs. But none of this happened. Instead farmers kept buying milking machines and milkmaids kept losing their jobs. Which was really hard on the milkmaids and their families.

And yet, that's not the end of the story. Some of the milkmaids went to work for Mr. Pump who manufactures milking machines. His business was booming. He needed more workers to help make more machines. So he hired a few milkmaids. And remember, as the price of milk dropped, so did the price of cheese and pizza and yogurt. Everyone's grocery bill was less. The whole town had the same stuff but more money. So Mr. Wall and Mr Mart decided to open a new thrift store. Mrs. Lovejoy, who started watching busy Mr. Wall's and Mr. Mart's kids during the day, decided to open a daycare. She hired some former milkmaids to help, as did Mr. Wall and Mr. Mart. **A few of the married milkmaids decided they didn't have to work anymore because groceries were cheaper than they used**

> **to be and the family could get by on less.** It was hard and humiliating to lose their jobs, but five years later the whole town is better off because Mr. Moo bought his milking machines. There are more jobs. Families are able to purchase more things. And there is more ice cream for everyone.

Yes, I know cows are girls. Shut up!

I love it when conservative pastors step into areas outside of theology and knit together a full Christian worldview spanning patches from all areas of life. It's especially good when they use evidence from the sciences, economics and history.

I find it alarming that the best people who do this are all Calvinists, though. Mark Driscoll, Wayne Grudem and Kevin DeYoung. Grrrr. Oh well. The bottom line is that we need pastors like this to be encouraging us to know how the world works, so that we can think about how we can read our Bibles and achieve the results that were are supposed to be achieving intelligently, instead of being tossed to and fro by our emotions, intuitions and intentions. (For example, what do you think lowers unemployment for the poor, young, minority workers? Raising the minimum wage, or lowering it? Click here to see why it is important to understand economics in order to help the poor with real results, instead of just feeling good while you hurt the poor)

If people who read these practical theologians could send me practical posts that they write where they encounter evidence from the real world, I can post them. I don't know of many famous non-Calvinist theologians who I respect on economics and politics. I like Jay Richards, but he's Catholic.

Click here for more on Christianity and economics from Dr. Ron Nash and Dr. Jay Richards and Dr. Wayne Grudem.

Michael Licona on the resurrection of the saints in Matthew 27

September 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

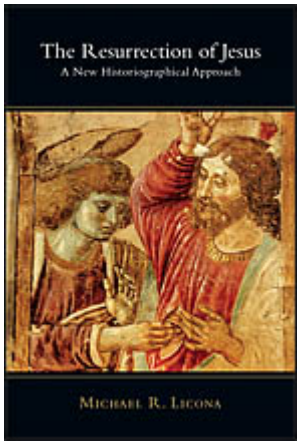

Mike Licona's new book on Jesus' resurrection: buy it!

Michael Licona, in his awesome must-read book on the resurrection, argues that the earthquake and resurrection of the saints story is probably not historical, but is instead apocalyptic imagery. Norman Geisler, another Christian apologist, disagreed with this view publicly, claiming that it compromises inerrancy. Must we accept that the earthquake and resurrection of the saints is real history in order to be inerrantists?

I got permission from Michael to post this Facebook note verbatim.

Full text:

> Norman Geisler has taken issue with a portion of my recent book, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach*, in which I proposed that the story of the raised saints in Matthew 27:52-53 should probably be interpreted as apocalyptic imagery rather than literal history. In response, Dr. Geisler has offered strong criticisms in two Open Letters to me on the Internet. Until now I have been unable to comment because I have multiple writing deadlines, two September debates in South Africa for which to prepare, and, consequently, no time to be drawn into what would probably turn into an endless debate. I shared these first two reasons with Dr. Geisler in an email several weeks ago. Yet he insisted that I "give careful and immediate attention" to the matter. I simply could not do this and fulfill the pressing obligations of my ministry, which is my higher priority before the Lord.
>
> Dr. Geisler questions whether I still hold to biblical inerrancy. I want to be clear that I continue to affirm this evangelical distinctive. My conclusion in reference to the raised saints in Matthew 27 was based upon my analysis of the *genre* of the text. This was not an attempt to wiggle out from under the burden of an inerrant text; it was an attempt to respect the text by seeking to learn what Matthew was trying to communicate. This is responsible hermeneutical practice. Any reasonable doctrine of biblical inerrancy must respect authorial intent rather than

> predetermine it.
>
> When writing a sizable book, there will always be portions in which one could have articulated a matter more appropriately. And those portions, I suppose, will often be located outside the primary thesis of the book, such as the one on which Dr. Geisler has chosen to focus. When writing my book, I always regarded the entirety of Matthew 27 as historical narrative containing apocalyptic allusions. I selected the term “poetic” in order to allude to similar phenomena in the Greco-Roman literature in general and Virgil in particular. However, since Matthew is a Jew writing to Jews, “apocalyptic” may be the most appropriate technical term, while “special effects” communicates the gist on a popular level.
>
> Further research over the last year in the Greco-Roman literature has led me to reexamine the position I took in my book. Although additional research certainly remains, at present I am just as inclined to understand the narrative of the raised saints in Matthew 27 as a report of a factual (i.e., literal) event as I am to view it as an apocalyptic symbol. It may also be a report of a real event described partially in apocalyptic terms. I will be pleased to revise the relevant section in a future edition of my book.
>
> Michael R. Licona, Ph.D.
>
> August 31, 2011

And then there is this addendum to the letter:

> We the undersigned are aware of the above stated position by Dr. Michael Licona, including his present position pertaining to the report of the raised saints in Matthew 27: He proposes that the report may refer to a literal/historical event, a real event partially described in apocalyptic terms, or an apocalyptic symbol. Though most of us do not hold Licona’s proposal, we are in firm agreement that it is compatible with biblical inerrancy, despite objections to the contrary. We are encouraged to see the confluence of biblical scholars, historians, and philosophers in this question.
>
> It has come to my attention that this matter may become a political/theological hot potato. The scholars on the list have stood with me. It was not my intent to amass a huge list. It was my intent to demonstrate that a significant number of the most highly respected evangelical scholars, all of whom are members of ETS, see no incompatibility between the position I took in my book and the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. The list has served its purpose. I have no desire to be the cause of pressure brought on those who have stood with me or on their academic institutions. Therefore, I have decided to remove the list of names for the present time at least. In no case, did an institution demand that their professors withdraw their names.
>
> A number of scholars have suggested that this discussion is better played out in the theatre of an academic forum. I could not agree more! Southeastern

> Theological Review(STR) has offered to host a 'virtual' roundtable discussion involving several significant scholars commenting on my book. A main subject of this roundtable will be the raising of the dead saints in Matthew 27:52-53. This roundtable discussion(s) will be posted on the STR web site and will precede a full journal devoted to my book in the Summer 2012 edition of STR.

[UPDATE: Originally, Dr. Licona had included a list of incredibly conservative evangelical scholars but then asked for the names to be withdrawn, and replaced with the two paragraphs above.]

My take

I think that Matthew is using apocalyptic imagery in Matthew 27. I also think that if the event was historical, then it would have been recorded by Josephus or other historians. And I hold to inerrancy.

Dr. Licona is hardly a squish on doctrine, so I don't think it was nice for Dr. Geisler to attack him in public like that. Bringing additional facts to a debate is permissible, but attacking someone like Dr. Licona over inerrancy is personal. Frankly if I had to choose who is making a bigger impact for Christ at this time, I would choose Dr. Licona. I haven't read anything by Dr. Geisler in about a decade, nor has he been in any debates recently that I am aware of. I would not recommend his work either.

Learn more about Dr. Licona

Here is Dr. Licona's web site. I have an autographed copy of Mike's new book, and I bought another one for reading. I highly, highly recommend this book, but for students who have read an introductory book on the resurrection first. Here is the best introductory book on the resurrection of Jesus, authored by Michael Licona and Gary Habermas. Both books I would say are essential for anyone who claims to be a mature Christian. These are required reading.

If you would like to hear Michael in a debate with skeptical scholar Bart Ehrman, click here for the playlist. This is their 2nd debate, and Michael pwns Bart.

Can you use the Bible to prove that the Bible is true?

September 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Melissa's blog Hard-Core Christianity.

Excerpt:

> What bothers me about young-earth organizations (more so than their accusations of compromise aimed at old-earth creationists) is that they shoot themselves in the feet when it comes to offering a viable apologetic to non-believers. You often hear them make statements like, "We should start with the Bible, view everything in the world through the lens of Scripture, and adjust our beliefs about the natural world accordingly." Of course the Bible should be our ultimate authority on everything; if we hold Scripture to be the inspired word of God, and we understand its factual reliability based on centuries of rigorous historical and textual research, we should trust it to be completely and utterly true (while accepting that there is some latitude in how some passages can be interpreted).
>
> However, when it comes to defending the faith and keeping our hearts united with our God-given intellect, we need to examine this approach more closely. When someone asks you why you believe the biblical claim that "God created the heavens and the earth," how far do you think you're going to get with them by answering, "For the Bible tells me so"? This is a fallacy known as circular reasoning, and it is fatal to our apologetic and to having a reasonable faith ourselves!
>
> What we need instead is *extra-biblical evidence* that *supports* the truth of the Bible. (Notice that I did not use the word "prove.") Philosophers use the fancy phrase "epistemic grounding." We need to meet the non-believer where they are–observable nature–and carry them towards the truth of Christianity. As believers, we benefit from having both intellectual AND spiritual reasons for our beliefs, and we escape the trap of having a privatized theology where our confidence in the Bible is based exclusively on internal feelings.

Find more good posts on Melissa's blog.

Ground Zero: Why truth matters for preventing another 9/11-style attack

September 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Philosopher Michael J. Murray wrote an interesting research paper that I think is relevant to the 10th anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center by Islamic terrorists. The title of the paper is "Who's Afraid of Religion?", and he begins by discussing why it is that people are so hesitant to talk about religion.

He writes:

> …we would be perfectly happy to have a discussion of claims like…"Mahayana Buddhism emerged in the first century BCE with the appearance of the Mahayana sutras." … It is OK to speak of religion… as a historical phenomenon or a socio-cultural influence. It is something altogether different to discuss religious commitments that one owns. That is the sort of religion that troubles us.

And:

> …think about the last time you heard a devoutly religious person argue, on explicitly religious grounds, that gay marriage should be banned, or that intelligent design should be taught in the public school biology curriculum, or that abortion is murder and thus should be outlawed.

Why are religious commitments difficult to discuss? Well, I think most people think that religious convictions, no matter what the religion, are not rooted in logic or evidence. That's the perception of religion that many people have. Even religious people have this idea that religion, no matter which religion it is, is not really something that people have arrived at by a careful process of investigation and study. Many people believe that religions are just stories that religious people grow up with and they "believe" those stories in order to get along with the families or their cultures.

The problem is that people often act in public on the basis of these religious convictions. Sometimes, they just vote in laws and policies that we all have to live by. But other times, they take over airplanes loaded with innocent people and fly them into buildings. What are we supposed to do when people act on convictions that are not rooted in logic or evidence? How should we respond to that?

So what's the answer?

In his paper, Murray argues that the evil actions of people acting on religion can be opposed by falsifying the underlying religion using reason and evidence. He points out that refuting of a religion is possible because *religions all make testable claims.* So, if we are afraid of the excesses of a dangerous religion, they we should *argue that its testable claims are false.*There is no reason to be afraid of expressions of religious belief when you are free to argue against the testable truth claims of that religion.

Here are just a couple different claims made by different religions that can be opposed using widely-accepted facts:

- Hinduism is committed to an eternally oscillating model of the universe, but this model has been falsified by the measurements from 1998 that showed that the mass-density of the universe was not sufficient to halt the expansion of the universe. That means the universe will expand forever, and there are *no cycles of creation and destruction*, as required by Hinduism.
- According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. However, eternal models of the universe have been falsified by the Big Bang cosmology, which requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* The Big Bang has been confirmed by experimental evidence such as redshift measurements, light element abundances and the cosmic microwave background radiation.

So it's quite easy to argue against an entire world religions like Hinduism and Atheism simply by using universally accepted facts.

How is it relevant to the 9/11 tragedy?

On the anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy, it might be a good idea for us to consider whether there is any similar evidence, accepted by virtually everyone, that falsifies Islam – the religion that motivated the 9/11 terrorists.

And it turns out that there is. The Islamic Scriptures contain the following verse *that Muslims must accept in order to be Muslims.*

Surah 4:157 from Quran.com:

> And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah ." And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain.

They think that Jesus didn't actually die – that he was never crucified by the Romans.

Now the interesting thing about this is that there is no non-Muslim historian who believes that Surah 4:157 is true. The crucifixion of Jesus is a fact that is acknowledged by atheist historians, Jewish historians, Christian historians, Buddhist historians, Hindu historians, and every other non-Muslim historian who has ever existed. There is not one shred of evidence that the Quran's view, which is recorded hundreds of years after the death of Jesus, should supercede the attestation of Jesus' death found in earlier Christian *and non-Christian* sources.

Eminent *secular* scholar E.P. Sanders of Duke University lists the facts about Jesus that

the broad consensus of historians consider to be almost *indisputable.*

In his book, “Jesus and Judaism” (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985)., he lists the following almost indisputable facts about Jesus on p. 11:

> 1. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.
> 2. Jesus was a Galilean who preached and healed.
> 3. Jesus called disciples and spoke of there being twelve.
> 4. Jesus confined his activity to Israel.
> 5. Jesus engaged in a controversy about the temple.
> **6. Jesus was crucified outside of Jerusalem by the Roman authorities.**
> 7. After his death Jesus’ followers continued as an identifiable movement.
> 8. At least some Jews persecuted at least parts of the new movement . . . .

That book won the annual Grawemeyer Award in 1990 – a prize given to the best book in religion published that year.

The death of Jesus is corroborated in every source inside the Bible and outside the Bible, up until the Quran is written about 600 years after the death/non-death is supposed to have taken place.

Watch it disputed in debates

The best way to assess this testable claim made by Islam is by seeing how well Muslim scholars can defend this claim in formal, academic debates with non-Muslim scholars.

Here is a debate on the question “Was Jesus crucified?”:

And here’s a debate on the resurrection of Jesus featuring a Muslim scholar, which has a substantial discussion of the crucifixion:

So it turns out that there is a way for us to make sure that another terrorist attack like 9/11 never happens, quite apart from national security or foreign policy concerns. And the way that we do that is by arguing against religions and ideologies like Islam that can cause harm, using logic and evidence. There is *no reason* to treat religious ideologies- and non-religious ideologies – as being somehow above inquiry and investigation.

George W. Bush’s speech at the Flight 94 memorial

September 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Former President George W. Bush gave a wonderful speech on Saturday in Shanksville, Pennsylvania for the 10 year anniversary of 9-11. It was one of his best. The audience including Vice President Joe Biden and former President Bill Clinton gave him a standing ovation.

Excerpt:

“One of the lessons of 9-11 is that evil is real and so is courage.”

Where are all the Christian women? Are Christian women ready for marriage?

September 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I have noticed some very alarming things about single Christian women lately, and I want to write about some of them.

I think that the main thrust of courting from the man's perspective is that you want to 1) communicate your plan to make the marriage and the children have a positive impact for Christ and his kingdom, 2) you want to demonstrate that you understand the needs of women and that you are capable of meeting those needs, especially the needs for love and companionship, 3) that you understand the roles of a man and you have made preparations and decisions to be ready to fulfill those roles, and 4) you want to ask the kinds of questions that will allow you to ensure that the woman you are courting is ready to fulfill her roles – because she has also made preparations and good decisions.

Well, the problem I wanted to talk about has to do with objective 1). I have communicated my plan to many women and I find that there are particular parts where they resist. The main thing I would like to do is to have four children who all go into different interesting fields and make an impact for Christ. Here are some of the areas I think would be most useful:

- cosmologist or astrophysicist
- biochemist/bioinformatics
- economist to research marriage and parenting
- lawyer to join the Alliance Defense Fund

The goal here is that the children will be able to pursue their field of study without being persecuted by secular leftists, and be able to earn a living, and be able to make a contribution in an area that matters.

So what I normally do is lay out this plan to the woman and then see if she is supportive and helpful and starts to take action to help with that. But I have had some alarming reactions and I want to talk about some of those below.

1) Several women have told me that children can have as much impact for Christ as a ballet dancer or poet as they could as a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or as a President. The part of this objection that I find most alarming is not that it is obviously false, but that my authority to lead, which is secured by my role as provider and saver of money, is being denied. I am still expected to bring savings and income into the family, but without any of the decision making authority about how hard the children should study and what fields they should be steered towards.

For me, the whole point of getting married is to serve the Lord – and if my plans to serve are threatened by marriage, then I will not do it. I would rather use the fortune I have to make donations to individual events than to be married and have those resources wasted

on ballet dancers and poets. Further on this point about education and careers, I feel that one of the things that a man struggles with is the fear that his children will not be able to grow up and be prosperous and independent in the world. I especially worry that they will feel pressure to compromise their faith because of financial concerns.

Many people think that there is this Santa Claus in the sky who will magically provide money no matter how reckless they are – but I don't think God is like that. I think he values stewardship, wisdom and prudence – and that's what I intend to teach my children. I want my children to have enough money so that they can be independent of the state, and resilient against peer pressure. I see many many people who get degrees in fields where they fall under pressure to adopt viewpoints that are non-Christian simply because of financial concerns. Money matters a lot to keeping your convictions, especially when you get married and have children – it's something that needs to be planned for.

I am afraid of getting overruled by someone who thinks that the world is a safe place for Christians, or that any field is as good as any other for serving Christ. There is a reason why people know who William Lane Craig and Michele Bachmann are – they have the skills. But what I am seeing from Christian women is that Christianity can be reduced to just reading the Bible, singing in church and praying to hear the voice of their emotions. (Which they call the voice of God) There is no thought being put into how to make children achieve at a high level by setting goals and funneling them into areas that matter.

It's like Christian women think that the children's happiness is more authoritative in the family than my knowledge and experience about how to build up children who will retain their faith, maintain their financial independence and have an influence in the world. Often, the women who tell me that the choice of career doesn't matter are themselves riddled with credit card debt. And the ones who tell me that science apologetics doesn't matter are the ones whose parents and siblings are becoming apostates after reading Richard Dawkins books. If I am the one who is earning the money and providing the savings up front, then I am the one who should be leading on things like education, careers, jobs and so forth. If I was smart enough to study the right things, to work and to save before I got married, then I shouldn't be overloaded after the marriage by someone else's feelings, emotions and desire to be her children's "friend".

2) Another concern I have is about how these Christian women are moved by liberal sob stories so that they vote against a strong foreign policy, self-defense, deterrence, capital punishment, and men using force to punish evildoers in general. On the foreign policy front, one woman complained to me that American helicopter gunships had used excessive force by attacking Islamic terrorist infantry with the gunship's machine gun. Now some of you will have caught on that military issues and platforms are an interest of mine because I am a war gamer. I play military simulations ranging from squad-level infantry combat right up to full-scale carrier strike groups. So I am informed about tactics, strategy, weapons, vehicles and so on.

Anyway, I took a look at the full guncam footage she linked me and read the AARs and

noticed that there was a convoy of BLUFOR Humvees coming into range of the OPFOR infantry, and that the OPFOR infantry was armed with RPGs. I asked her to tell me what she thought an RPG could do to a Humvee. She had no idea what an RPG was or what it could do to a Humvee. I explained that RPGs are ROCKETS that explode and it would kill all the occupants of Humvees. It seemed to me that her only reason for complaining about it was that her friends had sent it to her, and she felt pressured to agree with them. She had no understanding of the capabilities of the arms and vehicles at all, yet she felt qualified to make judgments about unnecessary violence. In fact, it became clear that she was taking this position because she thought that it made her look morally superior. She felt "compassion" for the poor Islamic terrorists. It's so easy to second guess American military forces when you know nothing at all about war in general, or Islamic extremism in the Middle East in particular.

This terrifies me. I do not want to be overruled by someone who makes decisions based on ignorance, emotions, intuitions and peer pressure. This person went on to assure me that shooting terrorists was the same as blowing up busloads of children, and that killing convicted serial killers was the same as killing unborn babies. Because killing is killing, right? That scares me. Who would want to be a passenger in a car with someone who was drunk and color-blind? Not me. It's hard to consider someone for marriage who can't see the difference between good and evil or guilt and innocence, but instead tries to lift up evil and bash down good. (Not only was she anti-capital punishment but also anti-self-defense – all without having done a moment's worth of research on the peer-reviewed studies showing how capital punishment deters crime, and how concealed-carry laws reduce rates of violent crime).

Should I marry someone who is uncomfortable with the male role of making moral judgments and exercising force against evil? Someone who takes positions without knowing anything about the details of what she is talking about? Of course not. No one can be happy married to someone who takes positions on moral issues based on ignorance, emotions, vanity and peer pressure. And some Christian women are unwilling to learn anything about war, or even to come to the firing range to fire a handgun. They have opinions, they make pronouncements about how they will overrule you if you get married to them, they vote to undermine national security and world peace by emboldening aggressors and then they refuse to learn anything about the issues. All they need to know are their feelings. And they vote based on those feelings, not based on studies or history or anything factual.

3) A final example has to do with Christian women embracing socialism because it is "compassionate". Believe it or not, some women do not really understand the effect of having the government spend more and more money equalizing life outcomes. Most of the Christian women I spoke to had enormous difficulty understanding how single motherhood by choice creates child poverty. They wanted to believe that child poverty was just spilled milk – it just happened, and wasn't anyone's fault, and that subsidizing it wouldn't create more of it.

One Christian pro-life activist wrote to me that she was "great with kids" and was going

to have one out of wedlock and raise it with money from the government. This woman never finished college and had not held any sort of serious job. She complained that no men were marrying her (note: this woman was completely irresponsible and penniless and unsuitable for marriage) and blamed the men. I told her that the reason why men were not marrying her was because they were paying a third of their income in taxes and looking at the 1.65 trillion deficits and 14.5 trillion national debt. She said that men didn't really care about money and numbers and that if they loved her, they would marry her anyway, but they were just selfish lazy cowards. She was willing to inflict fatherlessness and day care on a child, but she was "great with kids".

Another Christian woman told me that the government should provide free meals to children so that they were all equal regardless of whether their mothers had married or not. I explained that every time that government takes a responsibility away from men, that our household income would go down because of higher taxes, and my job would be put in jeopardy because of government debt. I also explained that the more government does, the less control there is inside the family – like when Christians have to pay for public schools so that all the children will be equal. Equally illiterate and innumerate. Instead of proposing free market solutions to poverty that retain family integrity – like school voucher programs – they always seem to leap to the big government solutions first.

But you can see how this idea of economic equality captures the emotions of some Christian women and they don't even realize how they are undermining men's desire and ability to achieve their goals for the marriage. They don't read economics and they don't realize that Christian marriage plans cost money. Men need money in order to put their own children through college. Men need money for homeschooling, stay-at-home moms and private schools. And men need money for apologetics books and to take children to apologetics conferences. It's amazing because this woman expected me to keep her at home as a stay-at-home mom, but she wanted my salary to go to subsidize the single mothers by choice in the next neighborhood over.

That is the level of self-destructive economic ignorance I am seeing from some Christian women. They look at social problems like child poverty, and the only solution they can come up with to these problems is government-controlled redistribution of wealth by a secular government. (Together with all the high unemployment that this deficit spending creates). Why are they so opposed to men and marriage and family? Because they have never taken the time to read even a basic book on economics. Newsflash: free market capitalism is better for the poor than socialism – that's why the poor are wealthier in the United States than in any other country, and their standard of living has gone up over time.

For example, take health care. I know another Christian woman who complained to me about some poor child of a single mother who could not get treatment for some condition or other. Notice how there was no emphasis on what this single mother chose to study, whether she chose to work, whether she chose to save, or whether she married a good provider. No. The problem is taken as is – as a case of spilled milk and all questions of

responsibility and accountability are dismissed. I was asked how capitalism can solve the problem.

Well the first thing to point out is that her solution is to defund the family, grow government, reward irresponsibility, undermine my plan by diminishing the earnings I save that fund my plan. And why? So that she could feel better and see God's aim of making us all happy achieved. It is very important to understand this point. Women who claim to be Christians may not actually be Christians. If a woman thinks that God's job is to make his human pets happy, then she is not a Christian at all, but a socialist-to-be, with an unnecessary Santa Claus riding on top of her emotional delusions. These are the people who claim to be opposed to abortion and then vote for single-payer health care which provides… taxpayer-funded abortion. Don't believe a word of it. No one can be a Christian who is a socialist, and if they don't know anything about economics, that's what they are. No matter what a woman says, if her solution to poverty is the secular government taxing your family and your employer, and reducing the family's earnings and destabilizing the family's revenue stream, then she does not have a Christian view of family, government and charity. She will undermine your role as provider because she values socialism MORE than she values marriage and family.

Secondly, there are solutions to poverty that are compatible with the Bible and capitalism that she ought to know about, if she had actually done any reading about it. The first thing that should have come into her mind is private charity. If the government has any role at all, it should be to provide tax credits for private charity. It is important for government not to crowd out the virtuous character of the people by taking over the job of helping neighbors. But even more than that, every Christian woman should be familiar with the horrors of socialized medicine in countries like Canada and the UK, and the alternative to socialized medicine – consumer-driven health care. If a woman is not well-read on consumer-driven health care policy, then she is at risk for being taken in by this socialist undermining of the family. Real Christian women choose policy based on economics, not based on their emotions and their ridiculous theology of God making his human pets happy regardless of what they believe about him. Our job as Christians is not primarily to make people have equal net worths regardless of their personal decisions. Our job is to make them know about God's existence and character, and we can do that better with private charity – certainly better than any secular government can. Your money is your voice. Don't give it to a SECULAR government that will turn around and enact taxpayer-funded abortion, taxpayer-funded IVF, taxpayer-funded day care, taxpayer-funded fatherlessness welfare, and so on.

And more

I'm going to stop now, but I could go on and on about how some Christian women neglect to study Christian apologetics or theology, but instead learn about trendy secular practices like yoga, vegetarianism, recycling, etc. Or how they think there is no Hell. Or how they think that the Bible was written by men and that they can just pick the verses they like. Or how they think that science is not worth studying to confirm the Bible. Or how they know nothing at all about how premarital sex and cohabitation decrease the

stability of marriage. Or how they think that same-sex unions are no different than married couples when comparing stability, domestic violence, promiscuity, and so on. Or how they want to subsidize single motherhood by choice because fathers are not really important to children and can easily be replaced by taxpayer-funded welfare and taxpayer-funded IVF. Or how they think that single-payer payer health care is good, even though it means taxpayer-funded abortion, in practice. Or how they think that taxpayer-funded day care is good for children. Or how they think that public schools need to be funded with more family money, so that all children will be "equal".

I could go on forever with examples of how woefully unprepared some single Christian women are for marriage. But I'm going to end by explaining what the underlying problem for all of these symptoms is, and then you can leave your comments.

Conclusion

Basically the underlying problem is this: when some Christian women say they want marriage, they actually don't want marriage at all – not a marriage to a man who is going to take on the traditional male roles anyway. The reason why men work is so that they are the sole or primary breadwinners – so that they have the authority to make decisions and lead in the home. Men want to have children who are self-sufficient and morally upright, and who can have an influence for Christ and his Kingdom. And they know that although the compassion of their wives is useful in the early years of a child's development, that moral responsibility and accountability are needed later on to change children into adults.

Men need to be providers SO THAT they can be respected as protectors, when they set out moral boundaries and push their children to know truth from lie, right from wrong, and practical from impractical. Men also need to be able to make arguments about theology and apologetics using evidence, and not to be overruled by emotions, intuitions, and even e-mails that are debunked on snopes.com (yes, one woman told me that Splenda was not safe – I sent her 100 peer-reviewed studies from the NCI web site and she responded with a CONSPIRACY E-MAIL that was debunked on snopes.com).

So the real problem is that some Christian women say they want marriage, but what they actually want is a Stepford husband who will perform none of the traditional roles of a man, which they find icky and mean. They want the money to be brought into the home and the wedding to be photographed and the babies to play with, but they don't want the men to act in the traditional male role of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. It is very important for men to get this out there and in the clear during the courting process. And I also really recommend that men avoid sex before marriage, because sex makes you stop caring about male roles and serving God. If you want to serve God by executing a plan, then stay away from premarital sex. I have had to play defense against women trying to push me too far physically when I was not satisfied with them from a Christian point of view. Just say NO.

Please see this post for questions you can ask a woman to verify whether a woman is an authentic Christian. And the most important thing to do is to give her books to read and

tasks to perform to see if she is willing to follow your lead. Science apologetics and fiscal conservativism are key. If the person is not talking about the Big Bang, the fine-tuning and biological information, you cannot even be sure she is a Christian – it could all just be emotions and youth. Some women I know just give the name "Christianity" to their feelings of happiness and goodness and pacifism and postmodernism and relativism and socialism and universalism. They do not actually KNOW that there is a Creator and Designer of the universe who raised Jesus from the dead independent of their feelings of happiness and goodness and pacifism and postmodernism and relativism and socialism and universalism. They just think that the world is a place where people feel good and only good things ever happen and they agree with everyone else's religion so that more people will like them. The thing about Christian women that you need to fear most is this emotional happy-clappy intuition they have that the world is a happy, safe place and that people can do whatever they want and that God's job, (and later government, as they drift into atheism), is to make everyone happy and prosperous. That is completely incompatible with a marriage designed to serve God.

Note: for those who think I am too critical of Christian women, Michele Bachmann has none of these flaws and I am backing her to be President. So there are Christian women who do know what they are doing, and I would like them to run for President and win. There is nothing in what I wrote that opposes smart, strong women being in control at the very top.

Related posts

- Questions to ask to find out if a woman is a solid Christian
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting

- Why Christian men should be chaste

Many Iraqis having second thoughts about U.S. forces pulling out

September 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the crazy left-wing New York Times.

Excerpt:

> Sheik Kamal Maamouri, the leader of one of the largest Shiite-dominated tribes in Iraq, used to call the United States troops here occupiers, demanding that they withdraw because he said they killed and imprisoned innocent members of his tribe.
>
> But now he is not so sure he wants the Americans to go, at least not yet. Like many others across Iraq, he felt conflicted, and a bit frightened, after it was revealed last week that the United States may keep 3,000 to 4,000 troops in Iraq next year.
>
> “The political changes that have occurred here and the security problems have led a lot of Iraqis, including me, to change our minds about the withdrawal of U.S. forces,” Mr. Maamouri said. That was a view that few Shiites, empowered by the fall of Saddam Hussein’s Sunni government, would ever have spoken — when it seemed the United States was never going to go.
>
> “They bring a balance to Iraqi society,” he said.
>
> Though Iraqis have called for Americans to leave from the start of the occupation in 2003, the prospect of such a drastic drawdown, from the 48,000 troops here now, has revealed another side of the Iraqi psyche. This is a nation that distrusts itself, with little faith in the government’s own security forces or political leaders. It is as if people here never actually believed that the United States would leave, so all along demands for a pullout were never carefully weighed against the potential fallout.
>
> This is not to say that Iraqis no longer want to be liberated from a foreign military, which of course they say they do. But Iraqis who once cheered the fall of a dictator recall all too vividly the chaos and bloodshed that came after Mr. Hussein’s iron rule was broken. Iraq still has the fault lines of that past, Sunni versus Shiite, Arab versus Kurd. What it does not have are strong institutions, or a collective sense of national purpose, to hold it together.
>
> “We shouldn’t think about the occupation emotionally,” said the governor of Anbar Province, Mohammed Qasim Abed, who for eight years wanted the Americans out, but now has had second thoughts as violence in his area escalates. “Iraq is just not ready, and it’s necessary for the Americans to stay to prevent Iran from overrunning the country and helping to prevent violence. But we know 3,000 troops will not be enough.”

Interesting.

Videos from the Monday night Tea Party Republican debate

September 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here are the videos of the debate on Youtube:

- Part 1 of 10 Social Security
- Part 2 of 10 National Debt
- Part 3 of 10 Economic Growth
- Part 4 of 10 Employers and Employees
- Part 5 of 10 Federal Reserve
- Part 6 of 10 Tax Policy
- Part 7 of 10 Executive Orders
- Part 8 of 10 Health Care Policy
- Part 9 of 10 Illegal Immigration
- Part 10 of 10 Defense Spending

ABC News says Michele won, and I can't disagree, since she is my preferred candidate, by far. Go Michele!

Excerpt:

> With her standing in the polls slipping, Michele Bachmann needed to find a way to capture the spotlight she held earlier this summer.
>
> She just may have done that tonight at the Tea Party Express/CNN debate in Tampa, Florida.
>
> Bachmann, the founder of the Tea Party Caucus in the House, knew her audience well and it showed.
>
> Unlike former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, Bachmann took a pass at criticizing front-runner Texas Gov. Perry on Social Security and she refused to weigh in on Perry's comment last month that Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke may be "treasonous."
>
> Instead she waited patiently to pounce on Perry when the debate turned to the issues she knew would connect with the audience in the hall.
>
> She attacked Perry for his decision to require **HPV vaccinations in Texas**, calling it "a government injection through executive order" and a "violation of a liberty interest."
>
> She knows that while the Tea Party activists are not fans of the federal government, they don't love big business either.
>
> "We cannot forget that in the midst of this executive order," said Bachmann, "there was a big drug company that made millions of dollars because of this mandate…The drug company gave thousands of dollars in political donations to

> the governor and this is just flat out wrong”
>
> She also attacked Perry on **illegal immigration** – another issue that plays well in a GOP primary.

A longer review from the UK Telegraph emphasizes that Perry got beat up Monday night.

Ron Paul got booed for his foreign policy views:

More Michele in the latter half of this clip:

Christian philosopher Doug Geivett has another review of the debate here. He thinks Bachmann won, as well.

I think right now my candidates are 1) Bachmann and 2) Santorum a distant second. I really think we need to make Michele Bachmann the nominee.

EPA regulations cause the loss of 500 energy sector jobs

September 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> It was sadly ironic that Texas energy company Luminant announced it would lay off 500 employees on the same morning that President Obama unveiled legislation designed to promote job growth. The company said that a new rule from the Environmental Protection Agency will force it to cease operations at two electricity generating plants, and close three coal mines.
>
> "We have hundreds of employees who have spent their entire professional careers at Luminant and its predecessor companies," Luminant CEO David Campbell said in a news release. "At every step of this process, we have tried to minimize these impacts, and it truly saddens me that we are being compelled to take the actions we've announced today."
>
> The company cited the EPA's new cross-state pollution rule as the impetus for the decision, and noted that it had worked to identify other means of reducing emissions, but that "meeting this unrealistic deadline also forces us to take steps that will idle facilities and result in the loss of jobs," Campbell said.
>
> Campbell also announced that the company has filed a lawsuit against the EPA in an effort "to achieve [EPA emissions] goals without harming critically important Texas jobs and electric reliability." The suit seeks to block the cross-state pollution rule for Texas companies, and to grant a stay to Texas companies to prevent them from having to comply with sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions standards by the existing January 1, 2012 deadline.

Can we afford to lose jobs in a recession?

Which countries have the worst ratings for religious freedom?

September 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Muslim-majority countries score worst across a range of measures in a comprehensive new study tracking government restrictions on religion as well as social hostilities involving religion around the world.
>
> The study by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, released Tuesday, found that nearly one-third of the world's population lives in countries where religion-related government restrictions or social hostilities rose significantly between mid-2006 and mid-2009.
>
> […]A separate index in the Pew report graded countries according to levels of social hostility involving religion. Eight of the top ten countries in that index were Muslim-majority states – Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Bangladesh and Egypt. The other two, India and Israel, have Hindu and Jewish majorities respectively, and large Muslim minorities.
>
> In an index measuring official interference with religious practice, 18 out of 26 countries (69 percent) whose government "prohibits worship or religious practices of one or more religious groups as a general policy," were OIC members – Brunei, Chad, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
>
> The other eight were Burma, China, Eritrea, Laos, Madagascar, Monaco, Tuvalu and Vietnam.
>
> **A grading of countries where conversion from one religion to another is restricted was also dominated by Islamic states, accounting for 25 out of 29 countries listed (86 percent). They were Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Comoros, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Yemen.**
>
> **The four non-Muslim countries were Eritrea, India, Israel and Vietnam.**
>
> Taking the conversion issue a step further, among 13 countries where there were incidents of physical violence over conversions from one religion to another, 10 (77 percent) were Muslim – Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Comoros, Egypt, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Syria. The other three were India, Mongolia and Nepal.

I found it interesting that the tolerant religious pluralists in India are actually not very tolerant of conversions at all. You'll recall that there are many Hindus who push for anti-conversion laws. That doesn't sound like pluralism to me – it sounds like totalitarianism.

And more:

> The Pew report also examined the issue of "defamation" of religion, tracking countries where various penalties are enforced for apostasy, blasphemy or criticism of religions.
>
> "While such laws are sometimes promoted as a way to protect religion, in practice they often serve to punish religious minorities whose beliefs are deemed unorthodox or heretical," it said.
>
> It found 21 Muslim countries in that category – Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Brunei, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Western Sahara and Yemen.
>
> **The study also found 23 non-Muslim countries where penalties are enforced for such criticism of religion – Austria, Brazil, Burma, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Iceland, India, Italy, Malta, Mauritius, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Samoa, Singapore, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.**

This whole article is worth reading. Religious liberty is not as common as you might think if you are an American.

Woman who strangled newborn baby given suspended sentence with probation

September 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scheming unborn baby contemplates becoming a judge
From Yahoo News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> An Alberta woman won't be going to prison for strangling her newborn baby with her thong underwear.
>
> Katrina Effert, 25, wiped away tears as an Edmonton judge ruled Friday she can serve a three-year suspended sentence with probation.
>
> Effert was 19 when she secretly gave birth in her parent's basement in Wetaskiwin, south of Edmonton, in April 2005. She then tossed the baby's corpse over a fence into a neighbour's backyard.
>
> Court of Queen's Bench Justice Joanne Veit said the public naturally grieves for the dead baby boy.
>
> **"But Canadians also grieve for the mother," she said.** "This is a classic infanticide case — killing a newborn after a hidden pregnancy by a mother who was alone and unsupported."
>
> Effert was twice convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison with no possibility of parole for 10 years. But the Alberta Court of Appeal ruled earlier this year that the murder conviction was unreasonable and

> substituted one of infanticide.
>
> Medical experts testified Effert had a disturbed mind when she killed her baby.
>
> The Crown has already asked the Supreme Court of Canada to review the case.
>
> **Prosecutor John Laluk said Effert deserved four years in prison because she showed no remorse for her crime by lying to police and initially blaming her boyfriend for the killing.**
>
> **The maximum sentence for infanticide is five years, but Veit said prison time is rarely handed out for such offences. She said the wildly inconsistent stories Effert gave police were actually "painful evidence" of her mental imbalance at the time.**
>
> As part of her probation, Effert must notify officials if she becomes pregnant again so she can receive assistance and counselling.
>
> **Veit described Effert as a person of good character with no prior criminal record who spent nearly six years living under restrictive bail conditions.**

More from the judge from Life News.

Excerpt:

> But part of the ruling that also has pro-life advocates troubled is Judge Veit's decision that Canada's acceptance of legalized abortion entitled Effert to kill her child. Judge Veit ruled, according to multiple media reports, that because Canada allows abortions it reflects how "while many Canadians undoubtedly view abortion as a less than ideal solution to unprotected sex and unwanted pregnancy, they generally understand, accept and sympathize with the onerous demands pregnancy and childbirth exact from mothers, especially mothers without support."
>
> "Naturally, Canadians are grieved by an infant's death, especially at the hands of the infant's mother, but Canadians also grieve for the mother," said Veit, who said that, while what Effert did was "very grave," there were no aggravating factors. Prosecutors said the aggravating factors included how Effert initially lied to police about whether she was a virgin and how she initially tried to blame the father of the child for her actions.
>
> "I am of the view that those actions, along with the action of throwing her baby's body over her back fence, are painful evidence of Ms. Effert's irrational behavior as a result of her disturbed mind,"the judge said, according to the Sun News Network. "In summary, this is a classic infanticide case – the killing of a newborn or a justborn after a hidden pregnancy by a mother who was alone and unsupported."
>
> Ultimately, the judge rejected prosecutors' call for a four-year prison term, saying the suspended sentence is "just" in the case.

At times like this, I think that it is a good thing for us to consider what it takes to make a judge like this, to see whether it might be possible to make one by having a plan. That way, instead of having a judge who opposes protecting unborn on the bench, we can have one who supports protecting the unborn instead. So how do we make our own judges?

How to make a judge

Let's take a look at the judge's credentials and see why she was picked to be a judge.

Details:

> Born September 9, 1942 at Brantford, Ontario. Education at University of Ottawa; London School of Economics. Chair, Alberta Securities Commission 1977-81. Appointed judge of the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench, and ex officio member of the Alberta Court of Appeal, June, 1981. Appointed deputy judge of the Superior Court of the Northwest Territories, August 21, 1991. Appointed judge of the Court Martial Appeal Court of Canada June 7, 1990.

Wow, she is a smart lady – she has a good resume, too. I don't think that too many people have qualifications like hers. Making a good twin of her would be pretty tough to do, and there are no guarantees of success.

Here are some steps that I would recommend to Christian parents if they wanted to have a better than average chance to make a judge like this judge.

1. The Christian man, when single, should study in a tough field, even if he hates it, like computer science.
2. The Christian woman, when single, should study in a tough field, even if she hates it, like computer science.
3. Both of them should work at jobs that pay well, even if they hate them, and save their money in preparation for their marriage.
4. They should get married, and then she should stay at home to homeschool several children.
5. They should try to be as frugal as possible so they can afford homeschooling, private schools and college tuition.
6. They should teach their children about all the different areas in the world where the truth of Christianity or Christian values are being attacked by different ideologies and speculations, in this case, by feminism and abortion.
7. They should analyze the skills and talents of each of their children, and try to lead them towards fields where they can have an influence on the world for truth and for goodness. The main criteria is not what the child wants, but what the child can do well, and what serves God the most. What the child wants is a factor, but not the main factor.
8. One of the children might go on to become a judge.

Might this work? It seems to me that it is more likely to produce the judge than the

alternative view, which is not studying hard topics, not taking hard jobs, not being frugal, not having a stay-at-home homeschooling mom, and not saving up college tuition. I don't think it would be fun or easy, but it is the good and loving thing to do, if we care about what happens to little babies.

I remember taking second year calculus back when I was doing my undergraduate degree in computer science, (I also have the Masters degree in computer science), and I was crying because it was so hard for me to understand it. I failed my first calculus test in that class, and ended up with a B as a final grade. I remember that my Dad felt very badly about how hard it was for me, and he would keep bringing me tea and snacks and he would try to encourage me and drive me to my night classes and pick me up afterwards – even though he hated driving at night.

I graduated with highest honors. I was the first one in my family – a family of immigrants – to go on to graduate school, and graduated with a 3.9 GPA. But when I was crying, and there was no one to help me, I felt very sad about it. You do what you have to do, not what you want to do. And as a result of that suffering, I now have the money I need to pay for Christian scholars to come out to churches and universities where my friends have organized lectures and debates for people to see.

UPDATE: My buddy Justin tells me to link to this post at the Canadian bioethics site Unmasking Choice.

Household incomes fell and number of poor hit record 46 million in 2010

September 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

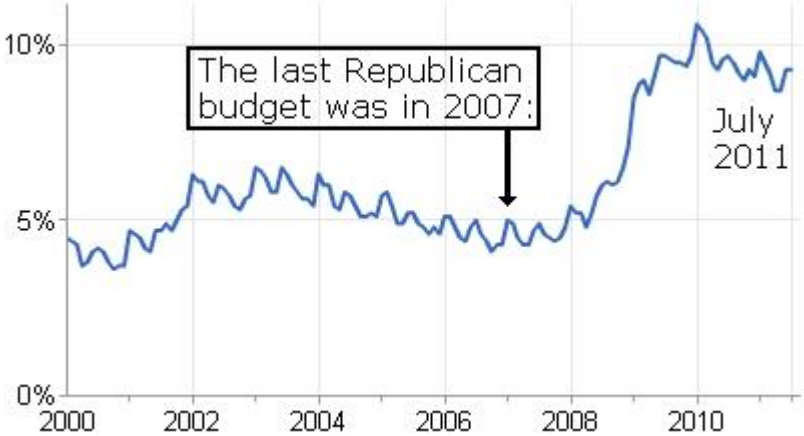

Unemployment Rate (Not seasonally adusted)

From Reuters:

> The number of Americans living below the poverty line rose to a record 46 million last year, the government said on Tuesday, underscoring the challenges facing President Barack Obama and Congress as they try to tackle high unemployment and a moribund economy.
>
> The Census Bureau's annual report on income, poverty and health insurance coverage said the national poverty rate climbed for a third consecutive year to 15.1 percent in 2010 as the economy struggled to recover from the recession that began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009.
>
> That marked a 0.8 percent increase from 2009, when there were 43.6 million Americans living in poverty.
>
> The number of poor Americans in 2010 was the largest in the 52 years that the Census Bureau has been publishing poverty estimates, the report said, while the poverty rate was the highest since 1993.
>
> The specter of economic deterioration also afflicted working Americans who saw their median income decline 2.3 percent to an annual $49,445.

From Bloomberg:

> Since the low point in the labor market downturn in February 2010, nonfarm payrolls have increased by 1.9 million, showing that without stronger growth, it will take years to recoup about 8.7 million jobs lost as a result of the recession that began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009.
>
> The jobless rate rose to 9.6 percent in 2010 from 9.3 percent in 2009. Long-term unemployment, the percent of those without a job for 27 weeks or longer, increased to 43 percent from 31 percent, according to the Washington-based

> Economic Policy Institute.

This is the third consecutive annual increase in the poverty rate. Keep in mind that the Democrats took over Congress in January of 2007 and their first budget was in 2008, the beginning of the recession. But at least we had turtle tunnels to nowhere.

What about Obama's new 447-billion stimulus? Will it create jobs?

Let's see, using this article from the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> Tom Porcelli, an RBC Capital Markets analyst, told *The Wall Street Journal* that he expected it to have "little" effect on hiring. "Mr. Porcelli was skeptical that the short-term employer tax breaks would prompt job growth. 'I don't think that you're at the stage where small businesses are incentivized to hire,' because demand is still so low, he said. 'These companies are basically still trying to hunker down and hope that they're around in the next year.'" "Larry Schaffert, owner of Schaffert Construction, said Obama is 'totally clueless of what it takes to run a business.'"
>
> Business leaders do not think Obama's plan would succeed in getting America's economy growing, nor do they think it would get "unemployed people back to work": "Business executives say it will take more than tax credits proposed by President Barack Obama to convince them to expand their payrolls to help get thousands of unemployed people back to work. Instead, they'd prefer an easing of the regulatory environment and an overhauling of the business tax structure, which would lead to lower operating costs."
>
> Employers cited in *The New York Times* said Obama's jobs plan would not result in their hiring any additional employees: "David Catalano, who helped found Modea, a digital advertising company in Blacksburg, Va., said that he was wary of the president's pledge to ask the 'wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations to pay their fair share.' His company was organized as an S Corporation, in which profits are passed through to shareholders, so it would face higher taxes under the president's proposal, he said. He added: 'My partner and I have reinvested 100 percent of the profits that our agency has made over the last five years back into the company. If the government takes a bigger share of that from me, it directly impedes my ability to grow the agency."
>
> […]People should take Obama's claims about "job creation" with a grain of salt. His earlier claims about creating jobs turned out to be false. The Obama administration said that if the $800 billion stimulus package passed, unemployment would not go above 8 percent, but it actually skyrocketed to 10.3 percent less than a year later. The "green jobs" the Obama Administration promised to create in the stimulus package are largely non-existent. Indeed, the stimulus package's green-jobs provisions ended up inadvertently outsourcing American jobs to China. As the Associated Press notes, Obama is also not

> leveling with the American public when he minimizes the budget-busting nature of his so-called "American Jobs Act." That lack of fiscal honesty is nothing new for Obama, who falsely promised a "net spending cut" in 2008, only to immediately propose massive budget increases once he was elected, including proposed budgets that would add $4.8 trillion to the national debt.

This is from Hans Bader, so I removed all his links – he likes to put lots of links to lots of facts, because he's a lawyer. You have to click on his post to get all the links.

I don't think numbers like those will help the Democrats. I am watching the election results come in for Anthony Weiner's seat right now and the Democrat has lost in BROOKLYN and QUEEN'S. Can you believe that? New York is Republican. I wonder if M.C. Spinster is still a Democrat.

New study: adult stem cells are almost identical to embryonic stem cells

September 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Life News.

Excerpt:

> Scientists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison have used detailed, high-tech analysis to examine the differences between human embryonic stem cells (ESC) and induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSC).
>
> Their findings, published online in the journal *Nature Methods*, for the first time measured the differences between ESC and iPSC in terms of their proteins (the workhorses of the cell that provide structure, function, and identity for a cell), phosphorylation of proteins (a common type of protein modification used to control protein activity), and RNA (an intermediate messenger from DNA that codes for specific proteins.) The results indicate that there is significant similarity between ESC and iPSC, with less than 1 percent difference.
>
> ESC research relies on the destruction of a young human embryo, while iPS cells are produced by adding a few genes to normal cells, such as skin, thereby reprogramming the cell to look and act like an ESC, yet without the use of embryos, eggs, or cloning techniques. The iPS cells thus have a couple of advantages over ESC, including their ethical production as well as the ability to produce pluripotent stem cells directly from any person, to study disease or for potential transplant matching (though the latter has not been proven.) The similarities indicate, however, that iPSC are more than adequate alternatives to ESC.
>
> The study points out that some differences do still exist between ESC and iPSC, likely as a result of the different origins of the two stem cell types, and that further studies will examine those differences. But the authors state in their paper that "These differences do not appear to appreciably alter cellular function in the pluripotent state," as in not affecting the growth and function of iPSC as a stem cell, and the "remarkable similarity between ESCs and iPSCs."
>
> It's time to stop the destruction of embryos for experiments, and focus on ethical science.

See below for some adult stem cell successes.

Related posts

- New study: adult stem cells used in breast cancer treatment
- Doctors grow new trachea from patient's own adult stem cells
- Adult stem cells used to grow a new heart

- CBS News discovers that adult stem cells produce more treatments
- Adult stem cells used to restore sight to patients blinded by chemical burns
- British boy becomes first in the world to have stem cell transplant
- ABC News reports on how adult stem cells produce innovative cures today
- Round up of articles on adult stem-cell research from FRC
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama’s plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

Should Christians normally hear the voice of God in their daily lives?

September 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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There are two views on the topic of decision making and the will of God. The view you learn in the church is called "the traditional view". I call this view the feminized/postmodern view. The more practical view is called "the wisdom view". I call this view the battlefield/military view. I am a proponent of the wisdom view.

Let's learn about the two different views:

> [The traditional view is] that God has a plan for our lives and that we receive guidance through methods such as "open and closed doors", "feeling led" and "the still, small, voice". Once the view has been well explained, through the foil of a fictional seminar, the book continues to critique this view, explaining how it is based on a poor use and understanding of scriptures, and how some of the reasons given in support of the view do not apply.
>
> [The wisdom view] holds that God does not have an "individual will" for our lives, but rather that all of God's will can be summed up within two categories, God's sovereign will and God's moral will. Basically God's sovereign will is all the things that god decrees will happen. It is hidden (mostly) from us, and does not play an active part in our decision, although some of it is revealed in the bible. God's moral will is the part that we must concern ourselves with in making decisions. It is fully revealed in the bible and our decisions must be made within it. We may use wisdom in applying god's moral will to our lives, or we may be in an area not covered by god's moral will. We must finally submit in advance to God's sovereign will, being prepared for him to sovereignty intervene and redirect us through whatever means he wills (see James).

Here's a bit more from someone else:

> Regarding the view that God has a personal will for us individually that we have to discern and find, J.I. Packer says, "The first thing to say is that the idea of guidance is actually a novelty among orthodox evangelicals. It does not go back farther than the last century. Second, it has led people to so much foolish action on the one hand, and so much foolish inaction on the other, as well as puzzlement and heartbreak when the 'hotline' to God seems to go silent, that it has to be discredited. Third, it must be said that Scripture gives us no more warrant constantly to expect personal 'hotline,' 'voice-from-the-control-tower' guidance than to expect new authoritative revelations to come our way for the guidance of the whole church." (Hot Tub Religion, page 118).
>
> As to the point of the question, how do I make decisions, I attempt to make decisions in light of three factors: God's moral will, wisdom, and my personal

> desires. If something is opposed to God's moral will, then I should obviously flee from it. If it's not opposed, then I consider the wisdom of the choices. For example, would it be wise for me to marry a woman who loves Jesus, though we have nothing else in common? Probably not. If the options pass the criteria of wisdom, then I'm free to choose how I wish. If I'm offered two jobs, and both are honoring to God, and both would be wise to take, then I'm free to choose the job I would like more. I don't need to put out a fleece or await some other confirmation from God. If it's moral and wise, then the only question as to whether or not it will honor Him is my attitude.
>
> Some examples of this model used in the Bible (in theological circles referred to as the Wisdom Model) are in Paul's planning of a mission to Rome in Romans 1:9-15, 15:22-24, the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29), and Paul's instructions for legal disputes (1 Cor 6:3-6).

The best book on this topic is Garry Friesen's "Decision Making and the Will of God". In it, you'll find a full assessment about what the Bible teaches on this topic.

When I am trying to decide what will be effective, I look at Christian scholars, at their papers, books, and public debates. That's effectiveness because it is addressed to a non-Christian audience in public with the force of reason and evidence. It is persuasion and it is addressed to rational minds. I want to change the minds of people who have a large influence on society on the whole. I don't think that offering Christianity as life-enhancement or self-help is really "having an influence". I think that offering Christianity as truth, with support, is "having an influence".

So let me be clear about what I believe:

- I don't think that God normally talks to people directly
- I don't believe that life is an Easter egg hunt, filled with clues accessible only to emotion and intuition
- I don't believe that God expects people to discover a specific will for their lives using non-rational means
- I think that people make up their own life plan that is consistent with the Bible
- The goal of the life plan is to be effective, and there are no other considerations
- I think that there are many good things a person can do, but that some are more effective than others
- I think that with respect to the goal of serving God effectively, *my happiness is expendable*
- I don't think that the purpose of doing something for the Lord is to feel good about ourselves
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they like them
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they are good at them
- I think people should do hard things that they don't like – as long as it's more

effective
- I don't think that any course of action is as effective as any other – some plans accomplish more
- I don't think that life is totally unpredictable and irrational and subjective
- I think that we can know what is or is not effective by studying and learning about the world
- I think life is like a battlefield that must be surveyed, understood and acted upon deliberately

I think that every person is the commanding officer of his or her own life, and each person must study everything they can, make a plan that is consistent with the Bible's moral prescriptions, execute the plan and achieve whatever they can achieve for the Lord. And the goal is not comfort or happy feelings, but real achievements. Life is more like a war than a vacation resort or a buffet or a shopping center. God's will for us is not have happy feelings, but that we freely choose to sacrifice ourselves out of obedience and service to him. In my case, that means studying hard things, making money, saving money, and giving money away to good scholars, sponsoring good events and being persuasive to non-Christians. I cried when I had to learn calculus, because it was so hard. But who cares?

I think that it is very important to realize that God is not impressed by our not being smart and not being effective. If we have the ability to be smart, then we should be smart, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability to make money, then we should make money, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability have a great influence, then we should have a great influence, whether it makes us happy or not. There will be plenty of time for happiness after we're dead. With respect to God's purposes in the world, my happiness is expendable. The thought about what "I want" doesn't enter into my mind.

Whenever someone questions my plans by saying that I am asserting my will over God's will, the first question I want to ask that person is this: "how do you know what God's will is?" and "what is your basis for thinking that my plan will not be effective?". I want to know if I have misunderstood something about the way the world is, or miscalculated in some way. I want someone to look at my calculations and show where they are going to produce a less optimal result for the Lord. That's the only concern I have – effectiveness.

This article by Greg Koukl may be helpful.

And I also found this summary of the Friesen book useful:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4
- Part 5
- Part 6

- Part 7
- Part 8
- Part 9

In nine parts.

Democrat explains why you don't deserve to keep all the money you earn

September 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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(H/T Reason to Stand)

Here's an article that my good friend Tom found.

Excerpt:

> A lot of reaction Wednesday morning to Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky's interview with Don Wade and Roma.
>
> Schakowsky said that Americans don't deserve to keep all of their money because we need taxes to support our society.
>
> "I'll put it this way. You don't deserve to keep all of it and it's not a question of deserving because what government is, is those things that we decide to do together. And there are many things that we decide to do together like have our national security. Like have police and fire. What about the people that work at the National Institute of Health who are looking for a cure for cancer," Schakowsky said.
>
> Schakowsky also says one reason the 2009 stimulus bill did not succeed was because it was not large enough.
>
> Schakowsky also admitted there are questions about the Obama administration's connection to the now bankrupt Solyndra solar panel company.
>
> The administration approved nearly $528 million in federal loans to the company, before Solyndra filed for bankruptcy.

Let's find out more about what Democrats like Jan believe.

She's a socialist

Here is Illinois socialist Jan Schakowsky at a town hall meeting.

Ed Morrissey explains what's in the clip:

> At least Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) gives it a few tries. First she argued "If we can build national highways," but Adam Sharp noted that the Constitution does include the authority to build interstate "post roads." Next, Schakowsky says enacting civil-rights legislation creates some sort of odd precedent, even though those acts existed to *enforce* the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments of the Constitution. Schakowsky gives it one last try on Medicare and Social Security, even though the former is voluntary and the latter is an explicit government program (albeit also of dubious Constitutional authority). There exists no Constitutional reference to force Americans to buy a private product, and Schakowsky winds up walking away…

You’ll remember that this is the same woman who thinks that Obama’s public option would lead to single-payer health care.

If she loves communism so much, why doesn’t she just move to North Korea right now where she can personally imprison, torture and execute people who want to keep the money they earn? Just jump to the end game, Jan – don’t beat around the bush. Isn’t abortion enough for you?

Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky

September 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

FBI agents remove evidence from Solyndra Headquarters

Here's the latest from the radically leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> Republican lawmakers, escalating the political furor over the collapse of a solar equipment manufacturer that received a $528 million government loan, released excerpts from Obama administration e-mails on Wednesday suggesting that the White House pressed federal officials to wrap up their review of the loan quickly for political purposes.

> In the e-mails, officials at the Office of Management and Budget expressed frustration that they were being put under time pressure to sign off on the loan to the company, Solyndra, two years ago so that Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. could announce its approval at a groundbreaking for a factory. The White House wanted an announcement that would show progress on job creation.
>
> The disclosure became a focus of a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee hearing on Wednesday about the loan to Solyndra, which has developed into a political headache for the Obama administration. The administration used the company as a prime example of stimulus bill dollars creating "green jobs." But Solyndra recently filed for bankruptcy protection and closed its factory, and its headquarters was raided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, apparently in connection with the loan.
>
> The bankruptcy filing and the raid "clearly show that the committee was more than justified in its scrutiny of the deal," said the panel's chairman, Representative Fred Upton, Republican of Michigan. "Why did the administration

> think Solyndra was such a good bet?"
>
> […]Suspicions that the administration might have pushed the loan for political reasons have centered on the fact that a major investor in the company is a charitable foundation associated with George B. Kaiser, a billionaire from Tulsa, Okla., who raised $50,000 to $100,000 as a "bundler" for President Obama's 2008 presidential campaign.
>
> Logs show that Mr. Kaiser visited the White House on several occasions during the spring and summer of 2009, while the loan to Solyndra was being considered. Among the officials he met with were the chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, and Pete Rouse and Valerie Jarrett, both senior advisers to Mr. Obama.
>
> […]While Mr. Kaiser's connection to the Obama campaign and to Solyndra, based in Fremont, Calif., have helped draw attention to the loan, he was not a major topic of discussion at the hearing on Wednesday. **Republicans did, however, press those testifying on whether the Solyndra bankruptcy offered proof that the government should not be lending to companies that have trouble raising money from private investors.**
>
> **"In this time of record debt, I question whether the government is qualified to act as a venture capitalist, picking winners and losers in speculative ventures and shelling out billions of taxpayer dollars to keep them afloat," Mr. Upton said.**

ABC News reported on the contents of the e-mails: (H/T Director Blue)

> The company's solar panel factory was heralded as a centerpiece of the president's green energy plan — billed as a way to jump start a promising new industry. And internal emails uncovered by investigators for the House Energy and Commerce Committee that were shared exclusively with ABC News show the Obama administration was keenly monitoring the progress of the loan, even as analysts were voicing serious concerns about the risk involved. "This deal is NOT ready for prime time," one White House budget analyst wrote in a March 10, 2009 email, nine days before the administration formally announced the loan.
>
> "If you guys think this is a bad idea, I need to unwind the W[est] W[ing] QUICKLY," wrote Ronald A. Klain, who was chief of staff to Vice President Joe Biden, in another email sent March 7, 2009. The "West Wing" is the portion of the White House complex that holds the offices of the president and his top staffers. Klain declined comment to ABC News.

I think people need to get very clear on what "stimulus" spending is. Stimulus spending is nothing more and nothing less than taking money from the private sector job creators ("tax the wealthiest Americans") and giving it to the people who got the socialists elected ("rebuilding our crumbling roads").

More details from the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> In light of the Solyndra bankruptcy, terms like “economic stimulus package” and “green jobs” now appear to be Team Obama code words for “kickbacks to political supporters so huge they would make a third-world despot green with envy.”
>
> Solyndra is (or, more accurately, was) a California solar energy company that was the crown jewel of Obama’s first economic stimulus package, which cost $787 billion. Solyndra’s chief investor, George Kaiser, was also a bundler for Obama’s 2008 campaign, gathering over $50,000 in campaign contributions. Kaiser, together with Solyndra executives and board members, donated $87,050 to Obama’s campaign.
>
> As part of the economic stimulus, Obama’s Department of Energy (DOE) fast-tracked a loan of $535 million (at the lowest interest rate granted by the DOE program) to Solyndra in 2009 to create green jobs. All other energy companies that received loans are paying an interest rate three to four times higher, and Solyndra got this amazing deal despite a Dun & Bradstreet credit rating that was only “fair.”
>
> About a year later, Solyndra wasn’t making the payments and needed refinancing. In 2011, Solyndra’s CEO communicated with members of Congress, claiming that the company was on sound financial footing and would be able to repay a refinanced loan. DOE had a man attending Solyndra’s meetings, so they should have known whether the CEO was telling the truth. DOE arranged for refinancing.
>
> Just a few months later, Solyndra laid off nearly all of its 1,100 workers and declared bankruptcy. Just a few days after that, agents of the FBI and the inspector general were raiding Solyndra headquarters and the homes of the CEO and two other executives, with search warrants.
>
> That means that criminal charges are possible. But in the bankruptcy, DOE allowed Kaiser and other investors to recover their investments first, before DOE attempted to recover the $535 million in taxpayers’ money. What a sweetheart deal. America’s taxpayers have been left holding the bag.

Mark Levin took a call from a Solyndra worker who says that “everyone already knew that China had developed a more inexpensive way to manufacture these solar panels. Everyone knew that the plant wouldn’t work. But they still did it. They still built it.”

How well do young people reason about morality?

September 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's take a look at this post by an atheist philosopher who explains his view on morality. (H/T Reason to Stand)

Here's his conclusion:

> I conclude that morality is largely superfluous in daily life, so its removal – once the initial shock had subsided – would at worst make no difference in the world. (I happen to believe – or just hope? – that its removal would make the world a better place, that is, more to our individual and collective liking. That would constitute an argument for amorality that has more going for it than simply conceptual housekeeping. But the thesis – call it 'The Joy of Amorality' – is an empirical one, so I would rely on more than just philosophy to defend it.)
>
> A helpful analogy, at least for the atheist, is sin. Even though words like 'sinful' and 'evil' come naturally to the tongue as a description of, say, child-molesting, they do not describe any actual properties of anything. There are no literal sins in the world because there is no literal God and hence the whole religious superstructure that would include such categories as sin and evil. Just so, I now maintain, nothing is literally right or wrong because there is no Morality. Yet, as with the non-existence of God, we human beings can still discover plenty of completely-naturally-explainable internal resources for motivating certain preferences. Thus, enough of us are sufficiently averse to the molesting of children, and would likely continue to be so if fully informed, to put it on the books as prohibited and punishable by our society.

Now what would happen if the entire education system were secularized by people like that philosopher?

Consider this post from secular-leftist evolutionist David Brooks in the New York Times. (H/T Uncommon Descent)

Excerpt:

> During the summer of 2008, the eminent Notre Dame sociologist Christian Smith led a research team that conducted in-depth interviews with 230 young adults from across America. The interviews were part of a larger study that Smith, Kari Christoffersen, Hilary Davidson, Patricia Snell Herzog and others have been conducting on the state of America's youth.
>
> Smith and company asked about the young people's moral lives, and the results are depressing.
>
> […]The interviewers asked open-ended questions about right and wrong, moral dilemmas and the meaning of life. In the rambling answers, which Smith and company recount in a new book, "Lost in Transition," you see the young people

> groping to say anything sensible on these matters. But they just don't have the categories or vocabulary to do so.
>
> When asked to describe a moral dilemma they had faced, two-thirds of the young people either couldn't answer the question or described problems that are not moral at all, like whether they could afford to rent a certain apartment or whether they had enough quarters to feed the meter at a parking spot.
>
> "Not many of them have previously given much or any thought to many of the kinds of questions about morality that we asked," Smith and his co-authors write. When asked about wrong or evil, they could generally agree that rape and murder are wrong. But, aside from these extreme cases, moral thinking didn't enter the picture, even when considering things like drunken driving, cheating in school or cheating on a partner. "I don't really deal with right and wrong that often," is how one interviewee put it.
>
> The default position, which most of them came back to again and again, is that moral choices are just a matter of individual taste. "It's personal," the respondents typically said. "It's up to the individual. Who am I to say?"

Recognize that view? Yes, that's moral relativism – that's the atheist view of morality. That is the system of morality that is *rationally grounded* by the worldview of atheism.

Who said this?

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, **no design, no purpose, no evil and no good**, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.

Richard Dawkins said it. That's the morality of atheists.

Hey – let's be clear. If the universe is an accident like Dawkins says it is, there's no objective way we ought to act. That's it. Right and wrong are just personal preferences for atheists – do whatever makes you feel good. And you know what? Evil makes some people feel *very* good. A christian theist has the worldview to say that slavery is wrong. All an atheist can say is "slavery is wrong *for me*". Or an atheist can say "slavery is wrong *for them* in *that period* and in *that place*". And why would they say that? The only reason an atheist can give for expressing preferences is because it makes them feel good. That's atheist "morality".

New York TV meteorologist admits rape accusations were false

September 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From CBS News.

Excerpt:

> A TV meteorologist admitted Wednesday she'd made up claims of being repeatedly attacked by a stranger on the city streets, allegations that sparked an extensive investigation before police said she told them she'd invented the story to get attention.
>
> Heidi Jones, who has worked for stations in New York and Texas and filled in on ABC's "Good Morning America," pleaded guilty to misdemeanor false-reporting charges.
>
> Her plea deal calls for three years' probation, continuing psychiatric counseling and 350 hours of community service — the amount of time police spent looking into her phony claims, prosecutors said. Jones is due to be sentenced Oct. 26.
>
> […]Jones, 38, told police Dec. 1 the same man attacked her while she was running in Central Park last September and again outside her Manhattan apartment in November, authorities said.
>
> After she provided a detailed description — including the alleged attacker's race, height and clothing — detectives spoke to possible witnesses and canvassed the area to look for a suspect.
>
> Ultimately, when a detective interviewed Jones again around midnight on Dec. 13, she admitted she'd concocted the assaults, according to a court document prosecutors filed in January.
>
> "I made it up for attention. I have so much stress at work, with my personal life and with my family," she said, according to the document.

What I find alarming about these stories is how often the accuser is not charged, or not given jail time. But men can spend years in jail on a false charge, (see links below), for which there could not be any evidence, of course.

Studies show about 40-50 percent of rape accusations are false

False accusations of rape or sexual assault are commonly used by women to get attention and sympathy, or to get an alibi when they've done something wrong, or to get revenge on someone.

Here's a Fox News article from a prominent equity feminist, Wendy McElroy.

Excerpt:

> "Forty-one percent of all reports are false."

> This claim comes from a study conducted by Eugene J. Kanin of Purdue University. Kanin examined 109 rape complaints registered in a Midwestern city from 1978 to 1987.
>
> Of these, 45 were ultimately classified by the police as “false.” Also based on police records, Kanin determined that 50 percent of the rapes reported at two major universities were “false.”
>
> Although Kanin offers solid research, I would need to see more studies with different populations before accepting the figure of 50 percent as prevalent; to me, the figure seems high.
>
> But even a skeptic like me must credit a DNA exclusion rate of 20 percent that remained constant over several years when conducted by FBI labs. This is especially true when 20 percent more were found to be questionable.
>
> False accusations are not rare. They are common.

If you would like to get an idea of how false rape accusations are handled by the police, here is an example. Usually no charges are filed, or if charges are filed, then they get off without jail time. (But the accused men can go to jail for years, see below)

False accusations in divorce trials

False accusations of domestic violence and sexual abuse are also commonly made during divorce settlements in order to get custody of the children, and the attendant benefits.

Consider this article from Touchstone magazine, by Stephen Baskerville.

Excerpt:

> Today it is not clear that we have learned anything from these miscarriages of justice. If anything, the hysteria has been institutionalized in the divorce courts, where false allegations have become routine.
>
> What is ironic about these witch-hunts is the fact that it is easily demonstrable that the child abuse epidemic—which is very real—is almost entirely the creation of feminism and the welfare bureaucracies themselves. It is well established by scholars that an intact family is the safest place for women and children and that very little abuse takes place in married families. Child abuse overwhelmingly occurs in single-parent homes, homes from which the father has been removed. Domestic violence, too, is far more likely during or after the breakup of a marriage than among married couples.
>
> Yet patently false accusations of both child abuse and domestic violence are rampant in divorce courts, almost always for purposes of breaking up families, securing child custody, and eliminating fathers. “With child abuse and spouse abuse you don’t have to prove anything,” the leader of a legal seminar tells divorcing mothers, according to the *Chicago Tribune*. “You just have to accuse.”
>
> Among scholars and legal practitioners it is common knowledge that patently trumped-up accusations are routinely used, and virtually never punished, in

> divorce and custody proceedings. Elaine Epstein, president of the Massachusetts Women's Bar Association, writes that "allegations of abuse are now used for tactical advantage" in custody cases. The *Illinois Bar Journal* describes how abuse accusations readily "become part of the gamesmanship of divorce." The *UMKC Law Review* reports on a survey of judges and attorneys revealing that disregard for due process and allegations of domestic violence are used as a "litigation strategy." In the *Yale Law Review*, Jeannie Suk calls domestic violence accusations a system of "state-imposed *de facto* divorce" and documents how courts use unsupported accusations to justify evicting Americans from their homes and children.
>
> The multi-billion dollar abuse industry has become "an area of law mired in intellectual dishonesty and injustice" writes David Heleniak in the *Rutgers Law Review*. Domestic violence has become "a backwater of tautological pseudo-theory," write Donald Dutton and Kenneth Corvo in the scholarly journal *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. "No other area of established social welfare, criminal justice, public health, or behavioral intervention has such weak evidence in support of mandated practice."

Makes you want to run right out and get married, doesn't it? Me too!

Domestic violence rates

Here's a recent article in the liberal UK Guardian that summarizes the evidence.

Excerpt:

> Domestic violence has traditionally been understood as a crime perpetrated by domineering men against defenceless women. Research spanning over 40 years has, however, consistently found that men and women self-report perpetrating domestic violence at similar rates. Professor John Archer from the University of Central Lancashire has conducted a number of meta-analytic reviews of these studies and found that women are as likely to use domestic violence as men, but women are twice as likely as men to be injured or killed during a domestic assault. Men still represent a substantial proportion of people who are assaulted, injured or killed by an intimate partner (50%, 30% and 25% respectively).
>
> If the empirical research is correct in suggesting that between a quarter and half of all domestic violence victims are men, a question follows: why has women's domestic violence towards men been unreported for so long, and what has changed in the last five years to make it more visible?
>
> One reason may be the feminist movement. Feminism took up the cause of domestic abuse of women in the 1970s, with the world's first women's refuge being opened by Erin Pizzey in 1971. Feminism understood domestic violence as the natural extension of men's patriarchal attitudes towards women, leading men to feel they had the right to control their partners, using violence if necessary. Feminists campaigned successfully to bring the issue into the public arena,

> thereby securing resources to establish services to help victims. This activism and advocacy led to governmental and public acceptance that "domestic violence" was synonymous with violence against women.
>
> […]The dual stereotypes of the violent man and passive woman have undoubtedly obscured the existence of male victims of domestic violence in the past. Men were also unlikely to view their own victimisation as either domestic violence or a criminal assault, and so were unlikely to seek help.
>
> Large sums of money have been spent on educational campaigns to encourage female victims to seek help. Until there are similar campaigns for men, it is unlikely that the true number of male victims needing help will be known. If the current trends continue however, women may find themselves increasingly likely to be charged with domestic assault, and men more likely to be offered help and protection.

I wonder how many women believe the official feminist line on domestic violence? The raw numbers are so rarely discussed.

More domestic violence studies from multiple countries are discussed here.

Related posts

- Woman recants rape charge after man spends 2 years in jail
- Judge blames husband for his wife's decision to murder their children
- Is lenience towards women increasing domestic violence against men?
- Why are sentences for domestic violence committed by women so lenient?
- Women are becoming more violent towards their partners
- Do men and women commit domestic violence in equal numbers?
- Woman recants false rape charge, freeing man after 3 years in prison
- Woman who made false rape accusation gets zero jail time
- UK woman makes EIGHT false rape accusations and gets no jail time
- New research shows that drug-facilitated "date rape" is a myth
- Lehigh University student could stand trial for false rape accusation
- Are women held to a different standard than men under the law?
- No charges planned for accuser in Hofstra rape hoax

Michael Licona responds to Al Mohler on Matthew 27

September 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

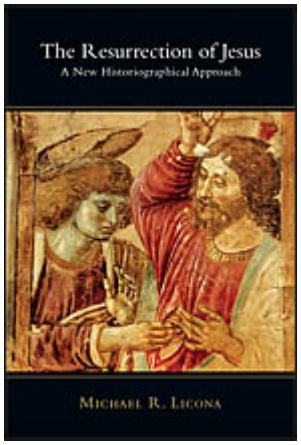

Mike Licona's new book on Jesus' resurrection: buy it!

Here's Michael Licona's response to Al Mohler's disapproval of his historical analysis of Matthew 27.

Full text:

> Because I am leaving the country today and must attend to last minute preparations, brevity is required. I am grateful to Dr. Mohler for his kind remarks pertaining to both me and my book, which has recently raised quite a bit of controversy in certain evangelical circles. Although I disagree with much of what he has asserted pertaining to my treatment of the raised saints in Matthew 27:52-53, one should not doubt my respect for him and gratitude for the contributions he has made for the cause of Christ and to the Southern Baptist Convention.

> An accurate interpretation of a particular biblical text is assisted by an accurate understanding of the cultural milieu in which it was written. It is unfortunate that this does not appear to be a practice of my detractors Drs. Mohler and Geisler. Their judgment that an incompatibility exists between the doctrine of biblical inerrancy and interpreting Matthew's raised saints at Jesus' -death as apocalyptic symbols—or even to consider this interpretation as a viable way of understanding what Matthew was communicating (which is my present position)—without engaging in a thorough and sophisticated discussion of the milieu in which Matthew wrote is quite premature.

> Dr. Mohler asks, "What could one possibly find in the Greco-Roman literature that would either validate or invalidate the status of this report as historical fact?" This is the wrong question. For it presupposes that Matthew intends the report of the raised saints to be understood as a historical event. So, the first question one should ask is how Matthew intended for his readers to understand this text. If he intended for us to regard the raised saints as apocalyptic symbols, then Drs. Mohler and Geisler are mistaken when regarding them as "historical fact." It is

only **IF** one can determine after an exhaustive study that Matthew intended for us to regard the raised saints as an event that occurred in space-time that Dr. Mohler could legitimately claim that the Greco-Roman literature offers nothing to assist us toward a correct interpretation of the text. Instead, Drs. Mohler and Geisler have pre-determined what the text means. But it is Scripture that is inerrant. Thus, we must be careful not to canonize our interpretation of Scripture so that we come to believe that it, too, is inerrant.

Article XX of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics states,

"We affirm that since God is the author of all truth, all truths, biblical and extrabiblical, are consistent and cohere, and that the Bible speaks truth when it touches on matters pertaining to nature, history, or anything else.**WE FURTHER AFFIRM THAT IN SOME CASES EXTRABIBLICAL DATA HAVE VALUE FOR CLARIFYING WHAT SCRIPTURE TEACHES, AND FOR PROMPTING CORRECTION OF FAULTY INTERPRETATIONS** [emphasis mine]. We deny that extrabiblical views ever disprove the teaching of Scripture or hold priority over it."

Thus, the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics asserts that extrabiblical data can assist us in clarifying what Matthew is teaching and correct faulty interpretations.

We find a similar statement in the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy:

"We affirm that canonical Scripture should always be interpreted on the basis that it is infallible and inerrant. However, in determining what the God-taught writer is asserting in each passage, we must pay the most careful attention to its claims and character as a human production. In inspiration, **GOD UTILIZED THE CULTURE AND CONVENTIONS OF HIS PENMAN'S MILIEU, A MILIEU THAT GOD CONTROLS IN HIS SOVERIGN PROVIDENCE; IT IS MISINTERPRETATION TO IMAGINE OTHERWISE** [emphasis mine].

"So history must be treated as history, poetry as poetry, hyperbole and metaphor as hyperbole and metaphor, generalization and approximation as what they are, and so forth. **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LITERARY CONVENTIONS IN BIBLE TIMES AND IN OURS MUST ALSO BE OBSERVED**" [emphasis mine].

Thus, the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy asserts that an inattention to the culture and literary conventions in Bible times could lead to a misinterpretation of the biblical text.

Examples in the extrabiblical literature of phenomena similar to the raised saints in Matthew 27 may provide insights pertaining to how Matthew intended for us to interpret his raised saints. When we study the literary conventions in Bible times, we identify specific language in the Greco-Roman (Virgil, Dio Cassius, Plutarch),

> Jewish (Josephus) and biblical (Matthew 24, Acts 2) literature that may be employed to accent an event believed to have cosmic or even divine significance. Thus, when I noticed what might be similar language in Matthew 27:52-53, the interpretive possibility I proposed in my book emerged. Couldn't the same be said 2,000 years from now pertaining to a proper interpretation of a text in which it was asserted that "the events of 9/11 were earth-shaking" while others may wrongly interpret the statement "Hell will freeze over before Ahmadinejad converts to Christianity" as a prophecy of two events rather than as a statement of enormous improbability?

> The charge that I have "dehistoricized" the text is also problematic, since it likewise presupposes that Matthew intended the raised saints to be understood as historical. But what if he intended for them to be understood as apocalyptic symbols? It would then be misguided to "historicize" them. This would be little different than regarding as historical the seven-headed great red dragon in Revelation 12:3-4 whose tail sweeps up a third of the stars and casts them to earth. I regard this description as entirely symbolic and that to regard it as a real space monster would be to "historicize" the text.

> The text in Matthew 27:52-53 has puzzled many New Testament scholars for years and will continue to do so. I remain puzzled but continue to seek a better understanding of what Matthew intended to communicate here. The calls of Drs. Geisler and Mohler for me to retract my opinion that it is possible Matthew intended for his readers to understand the raised saints in Matthew 27:52-53 as apocalyptic symbols is not helpful. Instead, such premature calls stifle scholarship and authentic quests for truth. I will be happy to retract my opinion once I am convinced that Matthew's authorial intent was to communicate that the raised saints are to be understood as an event that occurred in space-time. So far, I have found the arguments offered by Drs. Geisler and Mohler to be unpersuasive and misguided.

> I am grateful to the *Southeastern Theological Review* for their invitation to participate in a roundtable discussion on the meaning of this text and whether the solution I proposed in my recent book is compatible with the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. It is their desire to publish that discussion within the next 60 days. I will reserve my defense and further criticisms for that discussion and want to express my gratitude to the many who have sent words of support and to those who have written in my defense on the web. It is sad—and perhaps telling—that they have been ignored by Drs. Mohler and Geisler, since some of their arguments are quite good.

Below, I outline some problems I have with Al Mohler attacking anyone about anything.

Opinions not confirmed by evidence

There are degrees of understanding topics based on what sort of learning you have done

to understand them. Reading about how to replace an engine is one thing, but replacing an engine is a completely different level of knowledge. Michael Licona has actually had to read a lot of history that he disagrees with, and to write papers that were peer-reviewed, and to defend his views with opposing scholars in formal academic debates. Al Mohler hasn't done nearly as much of that, especially the debating. And that tells me something about Al Mohler. You see, the danger with not having to prepare for debates with your opponents is that you don't really know whether what you say you believe is actually true. Everything sounds good to a person before they are cross-examined.

For example, take the existence of God. Al Mohler believes in a Creator, but he is a young-Earth creationist. Young-Earth creationism is completely unsupported by scientific evidence, although evidence could emerge to support it in the future. However, the cosmology that most scientists support today, the Big Bang cosmology, supports the existence of God as Creator, because it requires that a non-material agent outside of time brings space, matter, energy and time into being out of nothing. Now, Mohler can write column after column assuming that God exists – we all agree on that – but he will never *know* that God exists from cosmology, because he doesn't believe that cosmology provides us with reliable evidence. He couldn't make an argument for his view that God created the universe out of nothing using science. So he has a belief in a Creator, but not knowledge.

On the other hand, Christian scholars make a case for God's existence based on mainstream cosmology that confounds atheists in public debates. I submit that people who understand mainstream cosmology and use it in debates have gone beyond mere opinion about God's existence and into knowledge of God's existence, based on scientific evidence from experiments. Mohler is in the opinion stage – he *doesn't know* that God created the universe, *based on scientific evidence.* And similarly with history. When involved in disputers with historians who have studied and debated, he is at a disadvantage. He may have beliefs, but those beliefs might be in conflict with the evidence. It doesn't bother him that he is in conflict with the evidence, but it shows us that it is at least possible that he makes claims without knowing whether they are true or not.

Preaching to the choir instead of persuading opponents

When you take a look at Al Mohler's writings, it seems to me that he just compares his views to other people who disagree with him, and then he shuns the other people, and urges people who have the same preferences as he does to shun them, too. He doesn't make factual arguments against the people with whom he disagrees. Let's see some specific posts.

In this column, Mohler argues that a church should sanction an atheist pastor. We agree on that. Atheists should not be pastors. But does Al Mohler know how to argue against atheists? His response to the atheist pastor problem is to urge churches to expel him by force. He doesn't urge them to get better at debating with atheists, and he doesn't suggest that they try to persuade the atheist. He doesn't mention any arguments to

defend theism, or to defeat atheism. He has an opinion, and when he finds someone with a different view, he just shuns that person and urges others to shun them as well. He doesn't seem to know how to use evidence one way or the other to decide what is true.

In this column, he disagrees with abortion. We agree on that. But again, in this column, he doesn't try to make a case against abortion, or to urge his readers to learn how to make a case against abortion. He just shuns the bad abortionists without arguing against the pro-abortion view. He has nothing to say to persuade those who disagree with him. He just shuns them, and urges people who have the same preferences as he does to shun them too.

In another column, he disagrees with same-sex marriage. We agree on that. But he doesn't discuss why same-sex marriage is wrong. He just expects that everyone reading will agree with his opinions. He just wants to say that it's not OUR thing, it's THEIR thing, and then shun it. He doesn't talk about the purpose of marriage, or the needs of children for mothers and fathers, or the demographic crisis, or the dangers of the gay lifestyle, or anything. He just stays at the surface level of mere disagreement without reasons.

And in this column, he surveys the opinions of theistic evolutionists. Again, I agree with him on that. But he presents no positive, evidence-based case evolution is false, or that there was a literal Adam and Eve. He doesn't talk about mitochondrial Eve or Y-chromosome Adam, or intelligent design, or fossils or any evidence at all. He talks about how theistic evolution is troubling, without giving any scientific arguments against it.

I call his writing style "fundamentalist hand-wringing". I AM a fundamentalist, but I don't whine and wring my hands and complain that things are changing and urge retreat and shunning of other views. His columns are always addressed to Christians, urging us to shun the other, and providing us with no reasons or evidence to buttress our own views as being *true*, or providing us with neutral arguments and evidence to show our opponents why their views are *false*.

In case you are wondering what my posts look like compared to his, here is a post against atheism, a post against abortion, a post against same-sex marriage, and a post against theistic evolution. And I write lots of posts like those ones, filled with new studies, new research, new evidence, debates and arguments – all the time! With evidence like this, you don't have to shun your opponent – you can take them out to lunch and try to persuade them that you are right. I try to write about issues using evidence that NON-CHRISTIANS would find persuasive. I don't just wring my hands and say "woe is us! woe is us!". Even though I agree with Mohler on his conclusions practically across the board, I wish he would try to be more convincing to people who don't agree with him by using actual evidence. One thing is for sure – he isn't qualified to make statements about the way the world is, because all he has is opinions without reasons.

His disagreement with Licona is just his opinion

So we've seen that Mohler basically does the same thing over and over. He expresses an opinion. He has not studied anything in detail. He doesn't do debates with other scholars. He just wants to disagree with others and then shun them – without explaining why he is

right or why they are wrong.

Here are some words that Mohler uses to describe Licona's argument:

- shocking
- disastrous
- greatest concern
- deeply troubling
- very troubling
- disappointing in the extreme

That's it. That's his entire argument against Licona. He has nothing persuasive to say, except "Oh noes! Oh noes!" like some sort of low-self-esteem spook worried about becoming irrelevant. If Mohler wants people to take him seriously, then maybe he should do some research of his own and publish a rebuttal to Licona, instead of using scare quotes and smear tactics (the Robert Gundry story he trots out). A threat is not an argument. A smear is not a refutation.

And by the way, I have very conservative views on things like God creating the animals directly, non-material souls, a literal, eternal Hell with active tormenting and real flames, and a literal Adam and Eve, and so on. I'm sure Licona does, too. Conservatism is not the issue. The issue is what the author of Matthew meant to convey in that passage. If what Matthew intended to convey is apocalyptic imagery, then that is the literal, conservative interpretation.

Finally, consider a different scenario. Gary Habermas is at least as conservative as Al Mohler, but I do think that if HE disagreed with Licona then that would be worth listening to – and they could even have a debate about whether Matthew was using the styles of the authors of his time, which allow for this apocalyptic imagery. Because that would be a debate about historical concerns, not opinions.

Learn more about Dr. Licona

Here is Dr. Licona's web site. I have an autographed copy of Mike's new book, and I bought another one for reading. I highly, highly recommend this book, but for students who have read an introductory book on the resurrection first. Here is the best introductory book on the resurrection of Jesus, authored by Michael Licona and Gary Habermas. Both books I would say are essential for anyone who claims to be a mature Christian. These are required reading.

If you would like to hear Michael in a debate with skeptical scholar Bart Ehrman, click here for the playlist. This is their 2nd debate, and Michael pwns Bart.

Republicans focus on job creation, abstinence education and tax reform

September 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Protecting Jobs From Government Interference Act

Rep. Tim Scott

Limits on the NLRB = pro-jobs bill.

Excerpt:

> In response to a series of controversial decisions by the National Labor Relations Board, the House of Representatives passed a bill curtailing the power of the NLRB Thursday afternoon.
>
> The Protecting Jobs From Government Interference Act, H.R. 2587, passed the Republican-controlled House by a vote of 138-186. The bill would prohibit the National Labor Relations Board from ordering any employer to close, relocate, or transfer employment under any circumstance.
>
> The NLRB has been the target of Republican ire since the board filed a complaint against Boeing in April for opening a plant in South Carolina, a right-to-work state. The NLRB said Boeing was punishing workers in Washington state with the decision.
>
> Since then, the NLRB has handed down a spate of pro-union rules that have infuriated labor critics and Republican lawmakers.
>
> Republican legislators say the board shouldn't have power to dictate where private businesses locate. Union advocates claim the bill would strip the board's ability to enforce labor laws.
>
> The bill was sponsored by Republican Rep. Tim Scott of South Carolina and introduced in July.
>
> "Today's vote is important for our entire nation, as well as for my home district in South Carolina, where the NLRB is currently pursuing an agenda which, if successful, would kill thousands of jobs," Scott said in a statement. "By removing

> the NLRB's ability to dictate where private industry creates jobs, we are preventing an unelected, Presidentially-appointed government board from pitting state against state, inserting themselves into the business decisions of private companies, and scaring away investment in our nation."
>
> Scott has also introduced a bill rolling back several other rules recently passed by the NLRB.

By the way, I've been informed that something like 40% of union members vote Republican. It's not the union members who are bad, it's the unions. Imagine how those people feel about having dues taken out of their salaries to fund left-wing causes?

Abstinence Education Reallocation Act

Rep. Randy Hultgren

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> Newly-proposed legislation in Congress would restore federal funding for abstinence education as the Obama administration continues to discriminate against grants to programs that promote abstinence over sex education.
>
> Recently, the Department of Health and Human Services announced new funding opportunities for initiatives on the subject, but included a caveat that grants would no go to agencies promoting abstinence education. Applicants for the FOA must include a written statement, according to a National Catholic Register report, that abstinence education is not part of the program, because the Obama administration considers it an "unallowable activity."
>
> Organizations receiving funding under the program must make a "commitment

> to not use funds for unauthorized activities, including, but not limited to, an abstinence-education program." Some $75 million has been authorized under the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 for the programs.
>
> […]On Tuesday, legislation was announced on the floor of the House of Representatives that could change this and restore funding for abstinence education. The Abstinence-Centered Education Reallocation Act, sponsored by Rep. Randall Hultgren, an Illinois Republican, is a bill that will put a priority on the sexual risk avoidance message found in abstinence programs.

Abstinence education isn't just about STIs, it's about love and marriage. Marital stability is stronger when single men and women avoid premarital sex.

Pro-growth Tax Reform

This one is part of Paul Ryan's "Path to Prosperity" plan. This time he is explaining his 3-step plan to reform the tax laws to promote job creation.

Here's the transcript of the video above:

> America's economy has been hit really hard. A lot of people have lost their jobs. More borrowing and spending and higher taxes are not going to bring jobs back to America. The last thing we need to be doing is to complicate job creation in America with this complicated tax code that we have today.
>
> A tax code should be fair, competitive and simple, and the US tax code fails on all three counts. Here are common-sense ideas we've advanced before…ideas that have bipartisan support.
>
> First, we have to make our tax code fair.
>
> It's full of deductions, credits and special carve-outs – otherwise known as "loopholes" – that let politically-connected companies avoid paying taxes. Every dollar that businesses spend lobbying for a better tax deal, is a dollar they're not spending on making a better product.
>
> And, since every dollar hidden in a loophole doesn't get taxed – politicians make up for this lost revenue by increasing overall tax rates. So we need to close these loopholes.
>
> But if we just close loopholes, then our federal corporate tax rate is 35 percent, which is really high.
>
> Add in state and local taxes, the rate climbs to 39.2 percent – the second highest tax rate among developed countries.
>
> On top of sending almost 40 cents out of every dollar earned, straight to the government, businesses pay investment taxes, payroll taxes, and a handful of other taxes our government makes job creators pay.
>
> In the 21st century global economy – and when American families need jobs – this approach just doesn't make any sense.

> We need to make our tax code competitive.
>
> The budget we passed in the House of Representatives calls for closing the loopholes and lowering the rates.
>
> The President's bipartisan Fiscal Commission proposed something similar.
>
> Its plan would reduce the corporate tax rate to as low as 26 percent, and to lower the top individual rate that many small businesses pay to as low as 23 percent.
>
> So if we lower tax rates, does that mean the wealthy pay less in taxes? Not if we do it by closing loopholes. Because the people who use most of the loopholes are those in the top tax brackets. For all the money that's parked in these tax loopholes, all that money's taxed at zero. Take away the tax loophole; lower everybody's tax rates – that money's now taxed. But its taxed at a fair more simple, more competitive way so the small business men and women who are out there striving and competing have a better tax rate so they can compete in this global economy.
>
> Third, let's make the tax code simple.
>
> All together, individuals and businesses spend over six billion hours and 160 billion dollars, every year, just trying to understand and comply with the tax code.
>
> Let's simplify the code, not just by closing loopholes, but also by decreasing the number of different tax brackets taxpayers fall in.
>
> Fewer brackets, along with lower individual rates, will make the tax code less complicated, and let more people keep more of the money they earn.
>
> There's a reason this approach has attracted bipartisan support: It's Fair, It's Competitive, and It's Simple.
>
> America's been knocked down before. We've had tough recessions before, and we know that the secret to growing jobs and prosperity in America are through the ingenuity and the hard work of our businesses – of our small businesses, of our large businesses, of job creators. We don't want a tax system that rewards people for coming to Washington and getting special favors. We want a tax system that rewards Americans for hard work, risk taking, entrepreneurship , investment and innovation. These are the kinds of things that have made America great in the past. And these are the kinds of ideas the we're going to need if want to grow our economy in the future and compete in the 21st century global economy.

Imagine if the United States were the best place for companies to do business. Imagine the job growth that would stimulate.

Greg Koukl asks: why are people disappointed with marriage?

September 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I found a post on Reformed Seth's blog that discusses an interesting article from Stand to Reason.

Here's how Reformed Seth starts the article:

> Fun. Laughter. Happiness. Good times. No worries. Is this how life is supposed to be? Is our definition of loving life and seeing good days measured by the amount of happiness in our lives? Now, this isn't just aimed at the "singles," rather the post is aimed at marriage and what people tell us a good marriage is.
>
> I was contemplating the notion that a marriage is defined as "good" by how "happy" the couple is. Now, I don't want you to get the impression from me that I think a couple isn't supposed to be happy in a marriage, no-no, I want to give you something to "munch" on. I found this article by Greg Koukl. The topic was on happiness and this is just one gem from the article:
>
> "In the pursuit of happiness, human institutions are valid not because of transcendent ethic but because of temporal fulfillment, which is essentially self-centered. For example, marriage is a valid commitment as long as you're happy. If you're not happy anymore in the marriage, then you have reason to dissolve the marriage. But I would contend that if you're getting married to be happy, then you're getting married for the wrong reasons. Not that personal fulfillment is not a valid goal in some measure, but that's not what it's all about."
>
> Notice Greg didn't condemn happiness in a marriage, rather he was making the point that happiness isn't the goal of marriage. So, what is the goal of marriage?
>
> "You marry as a covenant agreement between two people to maintain a family unit in society to accomplish certain things, to help each other and embrace the events and issues of life together as helpmates, to raise a family and provide a stable environment for them. Though all of those things may breed a measure of happiness, they breed a measure of misery as well. That's why the covenant, the agreement, the commitment between husband and wife is not based on happiness. If it was you'd have to amend your vows to say, 'Until unhappiness do us part.'"
>
> Did you catch it? We don't marry to be happy. Why do we marry? To "maintain a family unit in society to accomplish certain things, to help each other and embrace the events and issues of life together as helpmates, to raise a family and provide a stable environment for them." That's why man and woman marry. A person pursuing happiness alone will be horribly disappointed with marriage because marriage is not an institution for happiness alone.

Recommended read!

This post made me think of another post I saw on Neil Simpson's blog about Phil 4:13.

Excerpt:

> Philippians 4:13 ("I can do all things through him who strengthens me") is one of the most misinsterpreted verses in the Bible. I used to misquote it. I can't remember the last time I heard it used correctly. It is one of the top 10 searched verses on biblestudytools.com, along with another frequently abused verse, Jeremiah 29:11.
>
> […]It is technically true that we could accomplish great things with Jesus, of course, but that isn't what Philippians 4:13 means. The verse refers to Christ's power doing something very specific in the believer, not some sort of general power.
>
> I love using Phil 4:13 as an example of how to read in context. You don't need to read the entire Bible, or all of Philippians, or chapter 4 or even a paragraph to get the real meaning. Just go back one verse!
>
> Philippians 4:12-13 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, **I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need**. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
>
> Verse 13 is Paul's secret for being content in all situations. That's it. Do every thing through Jesus and you can be content in everything. It isn't about what you *accomplish*, it is about *how* you do whatever you do.

Phillipians is one of my favorite books in the New Testament, but you have to read the verses in context.

So is marriage about happiness, or something else?

I actually do think that there are many other uses for marriage other than the "produce super-kids" plan that I always talk about. I think that men and women complement each other well, so I would look forward to have all of my nasty parts worked on, like the messiness, laziness, meanness, snarkiness, selfishness, driving too fast, and so forth. I really enjoy the feelings I get from self-sacrificial love for someone, especially when I try to lead a woman upward, and she follows my lead, and I can see her getting stronger and better.

I think the appeal of marriage for me, other than the super-kids, is that I would have someone to watch over and protect and nurture at really close quarters. Normally, I just send people books to read, or mail checks for apologetics events, or reply to e-mails. Marriage would be much better, because we could work on things together everywhere we went. I have these daydreams about being surprised in the kitchen with a hug from behind, because I am washing the dishes without being asked to. That would be fun for me. Or of coming home from work and having the children all cleaned up and dressed and hugging me right when I get in the door, because my wife has been pumping up my

reputation with them while I was at work. I have lots of things like that I would like to try out that I can't do on non-wife and non-kid people. I could do all kinds of good things if I had a family.

I think a pretty test to see if you are ready for marriage is to see how much you enjoy taking care of other people, and to a lesser degree, pets and cars and stuff like that that need maintenance. If you spend all your time trying to go places and do things and trying to squeeze a lot of fun out of life, that probably isn't the best training for marriage. But if you like teaching people new things, and cleaning out the bird cage, waxing the car, and mowing the lawn and performing acts of service for others, then I think that's a good sign you are ready for marriage.

I am still struggling a lot with this… on the one hand, I would do anything for my pet bird. But on the other hand, I struggle a lot to read what people ask me to read and to reply to e-mails and stuff. I haven't waxed my car all year! This is an area where I really need to improve – getting used to being helpful to others. I seem to be able to avoid the need to be happy, but I just pour all my time into learning and writing, and not doing hard things to help others.

Is the Jesus of the Bible meek and mild, or harsh and judgmental?

September 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Stan from Bird of the Air explains.

Excerpt:

> Here, test yourself. Is your view of Jesus "meek and mild", perhaps a "laughing Jesus", a quiet, soft-spoken guy? Is He the compassionate one who never said a harsh word? Well, then, I suggest that *you* are correcting Jesus, because that's not the *biblical* image. Consider the following.
>
> Jesus wasn't some "nice guy" when He instructed His disciples on their traveling mission:
>
> > Whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. The one who hears you hears Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me, and the one who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me" (Luke 10:10-16).
>
> Oh, my, that's pretty harsh language. Even more so when you understand that the biblical "woe" isn't our standard "woe is me", but a curse pronounced against a sinful person or group. I mean, seriously, how is a Jew of His day supposed to take it when He says "it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom"? That can't be considered "warm" or "sensitive". It is certainly not "inclusive". Wasn't Jesus supposed to be the lover of all sinners? What's all this?
>
> His diatribe in Matthew 23 is much worse. At least *seven times* He describes the local religious rulers as "hypocrites". He has "friendly" (not very) descriptions like "white-washed tombs", "vipers", and "blind fools". He accuses them of making converts and then "you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves." Oh, it's big, and its an entire chapter. Seriously, Jesus, describing them as "a child of hell"? That's not friendly at all. It doesn't coincide with our "nice guy" image of Jesus. The image of Christ in the Temple with whip in hand doesn't really fit well with the soft-spoken, laughing Jesus we like so well. His repeated references to people who will "be thrown into the fire" (Matt 7:19; 13:40; 18:8-9;

> 25:41; John 15:6) don’t come across as humble or kind. Jesus, in fact, has the most definitive descriptions of eternal judgment in terms of “where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched”.

We have a lot of compassionate readers who are always disapproving of me for being mean. Well… how do you like those verses? Jesus isn’t always Mr. Nice Guy, which is fine because I really like mean Jesus. Matthew 10:34-38 is one of my favorite passages – I like to bug my mother with it. She’s not a Christian, so it’s pretty fun.

Nobel prize winning scientist resigns to protest global warming

September 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is ManBearPig to blame for global warming?
From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Ivar Giaever, a former professor with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and the 1973 winner of the Nobel Prize in physics, abruptly announced his resignation Tuesday, Sept. 13, from the premier physics society in disgust over its officially stated policy that "global warming is occurring."
>
> The official position of the American Physical Society (APS) supports the theory that man's actions have inexorably led to the warming of the planet, through increased emissions of carbon dioxide.
>
> Giaever does not agree — and put it bluntly and succinctly in the subject line of his email, reprinted at Climate Depot, a website devoted to debunking the theory of man-made climate change.
>
> "I resign from APS," Giaever wrote.
>
> Giaever was cooled to the statement on warming theory by a line claiming that "the evidence is incontrovertible."
>
> […]**Giaever earned his Nobel for his experimental discoveries regarding tunneling phenomena in superconductors. He has since become a vocal dissenter from the alleged "consensus" regarding man-made climate fears, Climate Depot reported, noting that he was one of more than 100 co-signers of a 2009 letter to President Obama critical of his position on climate change.**

> Public perception of climate change has steadily fallen since late 2009. A Rasmussen Reports public opinion poll from August noted that 57 percent of adults believe there is significant disagreement within the scientific community on global warming, up five points from late 2009.
>
> The same study showed that 69 percent of those polled believe it's at least somewhat likely that some scientists have falsified research data in order to support their own theories and beliefs. Just 6 percent felt confident enough to report that such falsification was "not at all likely."

And this isn't the first story like this, remember – the last one was Harold Lewis is Emeritus Professor of Physics at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Related posts

- New study finds that cosmic rays and the sun cause global warming
- Drowning polar bears scientist being investigated for misconduct
- NASA data shows that atmosphere will trap far less heat than UN predicted
- Former alarmist scientist admits global warming is a "fiction"
- Scientist quits American Physical Society over "global warming scam"
- How reliable are the "independent" reviews of Climategate?
- NASA admits that their data is worse than CRU Climate-gate data
- 19 points that undermine the claims of global warming alarmists
- Global warmist Phil Jones admits there's been no global warming since 1995
- UN IPCC global warming alarmism based on student essay and magazine article
- How the UN's IPCC cites non-scientific claims from the World Wildlife Fund
- Chairman of UN's IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal
- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline
- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now
- Princeton University physicist testifies against global warming

Mary Jo Sharp asks: what is the solution to the problem of evil?

September 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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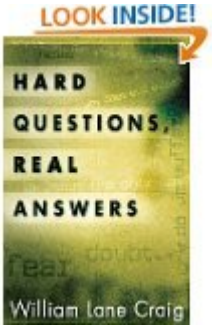

Hard Questions, Real Answers

I saw that Roger Sharp had tweeted this post from Confident Christianity on Twitter. It's Mary Jo's book review of William Lane Craig's chapter on the problem of evil, taken from his book "Hard Questions, Real Answers". I highly recommend that book, even for beginners, and the second edition has chapters on abortion, homosexuality and exclusive salvation.

Excerpt:

> In *Hard Questions, Real Answers*, Craig organizes the problem of evil into two categories: the internal and external problem. The internal problem of evil addresses the premises that are consistent within the Christian worldview; analyzing whether the Christian worldview, itself, is based on inconsistent beliefs. The external problem of evil concentrates on whether or not the Christian worldview is adequate to explain evil; focusing on premises Christians would not necessarily commit to as tenet of Christian theism, but would generally recognize as true. Craig explains, "The first approach tries to expose an inner tension within the Christian worldview itself; the second approach attempts to present evidence against the truth of the Christian worldview."
>
> Craig further breaks down the internal problem into two areas: the logical problem and the probabilistic problem. The logical problem states that it is illogical for both God and evil to coexist. Craig asserts that this argument is seriously flawed, because there is no reason to think that God and evil are logically incompatible.There are no overt contradictions between them. He demonstrates that it can be proven God and evil are actually logically consistent, "So long as it is even possible that God has morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil, it follows that God and evil are logically consistent."
>
> The probabilistic argument states that it is highly improbable that both God and evil exist. Craig makes three major points regarding the probabilistic argument. First, relative to the full range of evidence available, God's existence is probable. The probabilistic argument relies on God's existence being improbable strictly in

> relation to evil, which could appear as a solid argument. However, in light of *all* the evidence for God, the probability of his existence far outweighs the probability against. Second, we are not in the best position to discern whether God has morally sufficient reasons for permitting the evil that occurs. We are finite beings who are attempting to understand an infinite God. Obviously, we will experience some deficiency here. Third, the doctrines of Christianity increase the probability that God and evil coexist. **One of the most important areas Craig addresses on this point is, according to Christian doctrine, happiness is not the chief purpose of life; rather, it is the knowledge of God. God's role is not to provide a comfortable world for his "human pets." The relationship between humanity and God is much deeper than this surface view of mankind's happiness. Innocent human suffering can provide a "deeper dependency and trust in God," which the Bible describes as true fulfillment: "His divine power has given *us everything we need* for life and godliness *through our knowledge of him* who called us by his own glory and goodness" (2 Peter 1:3).**

And more:

> This past year, a friend of mine, David, debated an atheist on the intellectual problem of evil. David answered nearly every single philosophical argument the atheist offered; however, the end result was not what I expected. Instead of conceding *any* of the philosophical arguments (intellectual problem of evil), the atheist began to singularly argue from the emotional problem of evil. From the review on the *Answering Infidels*website,
>
> Throughout the debate, David Wood and John Loftus approached the problem of evil from two different aspects. Wood adhered to the formal argument and explained that an argument from animal and human suffering cannot negate the theistic worldview. Loftus, however, kept reverting back to examples of suffering, almost as if he expected Wood to give an explanation for each instance of suffering. However, the argument from evil, to be an *argument*, must include adherence to the formal argument: otherwise, the experiential side, which is subjective to each person, will just create a convoluted mess of argumentation. On several occasions, Loftus had to avert the original question just to continue to argue against Wood.
>
> **The intellectual problem, once answered, did not negate the atheist's commitment to the emotional problem of evil. David's debate was a poignant illustration of how the emotional problem can be the root of skepticism; a point we, as Christians, must be sensitive to when dealing with objections from evil. And if we find the skeptic at this point, we "must proceed very cautiously" with the person who is experiencing the emotional problem of evil.**

Very good post. A lot of people get disappointed with God because of evil, and sometimes

it’s just simple stuff like expecting God to help them to find their cricket bat or something silly like that. Just keep this in mind. Don’t just answer the problem, be aware of the mistaken view of God as Happy-Clappy Santa Claus that is lurking under the surface of the objection.

Rejecting God because he doesn’t make us happy

Often, when people say “God doesn’t prevent suffering”, what they really mean is that God didn’t meet their personal expectations for making them happy. Atheist Lewis Wolpert said in his debate with William Lane Craig that God didn’t help him find his cricket bat so he became an atheist.

Other atheists say , “God doesn’t prevent poverty”, but what they really mean is that God didn’t give them an emergency bailout when they acted irresponsibly. Just read my post on Dan Barker: this is not at all out of the ordinary. Other people dump God when they rush a romantic relationship forward on feelings with a non-Christian and it fails. Bye-bye God.

I just think that this is something we should be aware of when people push the problem of evil. You just have to tell them that God is not their butler or their mommy. Life isn’t like that. And if we knew God, and reflected on the suffering of Jesus in obedience, we wouldn’t expect life to be Heaven on Earth. If it wasn’t for Jesus, then it won’t be for us, either. I am not sure exactly how to respond to this caricature of God, but telling the story of Jesus and how teh Father let Jesus suffer in order to do good things and to learn obedience and endurance is good.

Does anyone have a really good story about a Christian who persisted through suffering and came to know God more fully, and serve him better? That would be a good response to this. Craig has one in the book chapter about the woman who is sick. There is evidential value for apologetics in someone who has suffered but who has nevertheless managed to keep their faith intact. If anyone has a good story I can link to on this, send it to me.

Learn more

I’ve written a comprehensive post on the problem of evil here, in case you guys want to learn more about it. And you can listen to a good debate on the problem of evil here, between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, who is a VERY good atheist and knows what he is talking about. Their debate was made into a book published by Oxford University Press. I don’t rally recommend BUYING it because it is expensive, for a paperback. But you can read this debate between William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen FOR FREE instead.

Woman who survived abortion tells her story

September 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Life News.

Excerpt:

> How could my biological mother have ever fathomed that as she attempted to abort me in 1977 that she was not only ending the life of her child, but she was wiping out every future generation to come from that one life-her grandchildren, her great-grandchildren, her great-great grandchildren?
>
> She may not have been able to fathom it, the thousands of women who end the lives of their children everyday through abortion may not be able to fathom it, but as an abortion survivor now pregnant with my second child, **I** can fathom it.
>
> In fact, I can't get my mind off of it. This is the reality that I live with every day. I should not be here, all in the name of someone else's choice, all in the name of a woman's right. Yet I, as a baby girl, I didn't have a right. Our 3 ½ year old daughter, Olivia, and our 2nd child, due to be born in May 2012, would never have existed, would never have had life, because of that one "choice" thirty-four years ago.

A good reminder about what abortion costs.

Paul Ryan explains why the millionaire tax causes unemployment to rise

September 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News Sunday.

Partial transcript:

> "If you tax something more, Chris, you get less of it," Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) told Fox News' Chris Wallace. "Class warfare, Chris, may make for really good politics, but it makes for rotten economics. We don't need a system that seeks to divide people and prey on peoples' fear, envy and anxiety. We need a system that creates jobs and innovation, and removes these barriers for entrepreneurs to go out and hire people. I'm afraid these kinds of tax increases don't work."
>
> "This is being called the 'Buffet rule" because it comes after Warren Buffet, the multi-billionaire owner of Berkshire Hathaway said, 'I get so much of my money from capital gains, I end up paying a lower effective tax rate than my secretary who gets her money in salary,'" Wallace noted. "What about the question of fairness, sir?"
>
> "What he forgets to mention is that is a double tax," Ryan insisted. "Capital gains and dividends are taxes on money that has already been taxed once before based on income… It looks like the president wants to move down the class warfare path. Class warfare will simply divide the country more, attack job creators, divide people and it doesn't grow the economy."

That's the way it is – we may not like it, but the rich create jobs. If you attach the rich, they move their capital overseas and the jobs go with the capital. That's the way the world works. If you tax job creators less, and regulate them less, the jobs stay here.

Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors

September 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration restructured a half-billion dollar federal loan to a troubled solar energy company in such a way that private investors — including a fundraiser for President Barack Obama — moved ahead of taxpayers for repayment in case of a default, government records show.
>
> Administration officials defended the loan restructuring, saying that without an infusion of cash earlier this year, solar panel maker Solyndra Inc. would likely have faced immediate bankruptcy, putting more than 1,000 people out of work.
>
> Even with the federal help, Solyndra filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection earlier this month and laid off its 1,100 employees.
>
> The Fremont, Calif.-based company was the first renewable-energy company to receive a loan guarantee under a stimulus-law program to encourage green energy and was frequently touted by the Obama administration as a model. Obama visited the company's Silicon Valley headquarters last year, and Vice President Joe Biden spoke by satellite at its groundbreaking.
>
> Since then, the implosion of the company and revelations that the administration hurried Office of Management and Budget officials to finish their review of the loan in time for the September 2009 groundbreaking has become an embarrassment for Obama as he sells his new job-creation program around the country.
>
> An Associated Press review of regulatory filings shows that Solyndra was hemorrhaging hundreds of millions of dollars for years before the Obama administration signed off on the original $535 million loan guarantee in September 2009. The company eventually got $528 million.
>
> Given the company's shaky financial condition, Republican lawmakers say the decision to restructure the loan raises questions about whether the administration protected political supporters at taxpayers' expense.
>
> "You should have protected the taxpayers and made some forceful actions here after this analysis," Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla., told a top Energy Department official this week. "Because you should have seen the problems. And you should have said, 'Taxpayers need to be protected and this has got to stop.' "

In other news, another Obama fundraiser has been linked to the loan to Solyndra.

Excerpt:

> Steve Spinner, who helped monitor the Energy Department's issuance of $25 billion in government loan guarantees to renewable energy projects, was one of Obama's top fundraisers in 2008 and is raising money for the president's 2012 reelection campaign.
>
> Spinner did not have any role in the selection of applicants for the loan program and, in fact, was recused from the decision to grant a $535-million loan guarantee to Solyndra Inc. because his wife's law firm represented the company, administration officials said Friday.
>
> But Spinner's role as a top official in the Energy Department program, which had not been previously revealed, is likely to spur new inquiries into whether political influence played a role in the handling of the "green" energy fund. Solyndra faces a congressional probe, a criminal investigation and separate internal inquiries at the Energy and Treasury departments.
>
> "This will fuel more questions, and now you've got real people involved at the inspector-general level who will be turning over chairs and cabinets, asking questions," said Stanley Brand, a criminal defense and ethics lawyer in Washington who has served as general counsel to the U.S. House of Representatives.
>
> […]Spinner, who raised at least $500,000 for Obama in 2008, is leading efforts to raise money from the technology industry for the president's reelection campaign. He did not respond to requests for comment Friday.
>
> Last week, he invited Obama fundraisers who were in Chicago for a national finance committee meeting to the launch of the Technology for Obama fundraising program. In July, the Obama campaign credited Spinner with raising between $200,000 and $500,000 so far this year.
>
> Spinner was a Silicon Valley investor who founded a sports and wellness company before he joined the administration in April 2009 after serving on Obama's transition team. He was named an advisor to Energy Secretary Steven Chu and was charged with helping oversee a loan guarantee program authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the economic stimulus program.
>
> […]During his tenure, the program approved 20 loan guarantees totaling $25 billion for energy storage, wind power and solar generation, according to Spinner's resume on LinkedIn. Among them was final approval for Solyndra, which planned to manufacture thin solar modules for flat rooftops.

So who benefited from the loan restructuring? More Obama fundraisers:

> The largest investments in Solyndra were funds operated on behalf of the family foundation of billionaire George Kaiser, another major fundraiser for Obama in 2008. Kaiser has denied personally investing in the solar energy company or talking to White House officials about the loan.

I can hardly wait for this story to unfold. Maybe the mainstream media will start covering the Gunwalker story soon, too. That scandal has been out there for months.

CNN poll finds that 62% want all or most abortions made illegal

September 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Life News. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> A new CNN national poll of Americans finds results that are almost identical to a Gallup survey earlier this year, and it shows 62% of Americans want all or most abortions made illegal.
>
> CNN asked the question, "Do you think abortion should be legal under any circumstances, legal under only certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?" The survey found 25 percent of Americans want all abortions legal while 21 percent want all abortions illegal, and it had a large group of 53 percent of Americans saying abortions should be legal only under certain circumstances.
>
> However, with a large percentage of Americans opposing abortions except in cases such as taking of the life of the mother, or cases of rape or incest — both of which, combined, constitute less than two percent of all abortions in the nation, according to the Guttmacher Institute — most Americans truly want 100% of 98 percent of the 1.2 million abortions a year made illegal.
>
> A follow-up question CNN asked showed that to be the case.
>
> When asked, "Do you think abortion should be legal under any circumstances, legal under only certain circumstances, legal in a few circumstances or illegal in all circumstances? " CNN found the same 25 percent and 21 percent want either all abortions legal or all illegal. But, breaking down that 53 percent group further, CNN shows just 12 percent want abortions legal in most circumstances while 41 percent want most abortions to be made illegal.
>
> In total, 62 percent of Americans want all or most abortions to be prohibited while only 37 percent of Americans want all or most abortions kept legal — the position of President Barack Obama and Planned Parenthood, the nation's biggest abortion business.
>
> […]Republicans are considerably more pro-life on abortion than independents or Democrats, with 79 percent of them saying they want all or almost all abortions prohibited, whereas 60 percent of independents take that position and 44 percent of Democrats agreeing.

The pro-life issue is a winning issue for Republicans.

If you defend your home from armed intruders in the UK, you get arrested

September 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story here in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Officers were called to Vincent Cooke's house in the affluent Stockport suburb of Bramhall, just before 8pm on Saturday following reports of a break-in.

> Mr Cooke, 39, a married father of one who has run a number of small courier and logistics companies, was relaxing alone in the detached interwar property when the two intruders struck, Greater Manchester Police said.
>
> His wife Karen, 34, and 12-year-old son returned home during the incident but escaped unharmed. Police said that during the break-in Mr Cooke was threatened and one of the intruders, Raymond Jacob, 37, of was stabbed.

> Mr Cooke, who is one of five children, was being questioned on suspicion of murder on Sunday night.

I thought the response of the police was interesting – self-defense is murder:

> "Clearly this is a serious incident in which a man has lost his life and at this time we believe the dead man was one of two men who were attempting to carry out a burglary at the house."
>
> The other suspected intruder fled in a small white Citroen van. Police last night confirmed a second man had been arrested in connection with the incident.
>
> On Sunday afternoon relatives of Mr Jacob, of Northern Moor, Greater Manchester, laid flowers outside Mr Cooke's home.
>
> One read: "To my baby boy who will always be my baby boy. I will miss you, but never stop loving you. Mum."
>
> Last night friends and relatives also left tributes for Mr Jacob social networking websites.
>
> "Still doesnt feel real, cant believe your gone we will all miss you," said Danielle Leach on Facebook.

Just to be clear about the facts, here's the UK Sun.

Excerpt:

> Two knife-wielding intruders burst into the home of company director Vincent Cooke, 39.
>
> Burglar Raymond Jacob, 37, is believed to have been stabbed with his own knife.

> Mr Cooke was later arrested in Bramhall, Cheshire. His wife and son fled the house unhurt.

Isn't the mother's reaction interesting? It's not unexpected coming from the feminized UK, though, where no one is responsible for anything they do. In fact, the one who judges and refuses to bail others out is the bad one. How mean! Defending your home from armed intruders! Just let them kill you! After all, the government already takes your money, so why not not ban self-defense so they take your life as well?

This is not unusual in the new Harriet Harman-onized UK. It happens all the time.

Consider this story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Miss Klass, a model for Marks & Spencer and a former singer with the pop group Hear'Say, was in her kitchen in the early hours of Friday when she saw two teenagers behaving suspiciously in her garden.
>
> The youths approached the kitchen window, before attempting to break into her garden shed, prompting Miss Klass to wave a kitchen knife to scare them away.
>
> Miss Klass, 31, who was alone in her house in Potters Bar, Herts, with her two-year-old daughter, Ava, called the police. When they arrived at her house they informed her that she should not have used a knife to scare off the youths because carrying an "offensive weapon" – even in her own home – was illegal.
>
> Jonathan Shalit, Miss Klass's agent, said that had been "shaken and utterly terrified" by the incident and was stepping up security at the house she shares with her fiancé, Graham Quinn, who was away on business at the time.
>
> He said: "Myleene was aghast when she was told that the law did not allow her to defend herself in her own home. All she did was scream loudly and wave the knife to try and frighten them off.

You can read more about how the 1997 ban on handguns in the UK doubled violent crime in the four years after the ban at Reason magazine. Similarly, in the United states, legalizing the concealed carrying of firearms resulted in dramatic declines in violent crime. But that is just common sense. The more people who own guns and can defend themselves, the less crime there will be. But I think that the feminized state is just hostile to men acting in their traditional role as protectors, and they don't like the idea that anyone is judged for doing evil things – like criminals.

The left, feminism and "equality"

And I can tell you what's behind this. The secular left believes in equality. So if one person has money, and another doesn't, it doesn't matter what their personal decisions were. The poorer person should be allowed to take things from the richer person, and without getting hampered by laws and "self-defense". That's their view. That's why they are soft on crime and release criminals early instead of punishing them. And this doesn't just apply to criminals – this attitude goes right into the education system ("we need to

make sure that families have no choice except the public schools, that way all the children will be equal") the day care system ("we need to nationalize day care so that all the children are raised equally instead of by their own mothers") the health care system ("we need to nationalize health care so that chaste men who are saving for their future marriage and children can pay for the abortions, sex changes, breast implants, contraceptives and IVF"), and so on.

I think Christians need to be especially careful with this compassionate impulse for "equality", and consider whether equality might not make achieving Christian goals like liberty, marriage, and family more difficult. I don't think it's good for families to vote for higher taxes and bigger social programs that make men unnecessary as providers, protectors and leaders. All the responsibilities of the man to provide, protect and lead morally and spiritually are being handed off to the government, via police, schools, etc. That's wrong.

Replacing men with government is bad for children – you don't want to make it easier for women to not prepare to be mothers and wives, to not be careful about choosing the right men for marriage and parenting, and to not perform as wives and mothers once they are married in order to support men in their male roles. And that's not my opinion – single motherhood by choice is known to increase child poverty and child abuse. And I don't think that replacing men with government helps God any, either, since fathers are important for passing religion on to kids. You don't serve God by undercutting his goals just because it feels good to you. You serve God by delivering results. His goal is not for you to feel good, but to do good. I recommend that anyone who votes based on feelings read more economics to find out what really works, and what strengthens marriage and family.

Related posts

- Marriage: Still the Safest Place For Women and Children
- Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty
- UK family arrested for defending their home from burglar
- UK man arrested by police for cutting up fruit with pen knife
- Police warn UK woman for scaring away burglars with kitchen knife

Historian Michael F. Bird assesses the historicity of Matthew 27

September 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Australian historian Michael F. Bird responds to the Geisler/Licona dust-up on the Euangelion blog, a blog that "exists for the purpose of promoting the gospel by commenting on issues relating to the Christian Scriptures and evangelical faith in contexts of the academy and the church". (H/T Near Emmaus)

Excerpt:

> But people need to evaluate the debate for themselves. Here is the text in question, Matt. 27.51-53:
>
> 51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split
> 52 and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.
> 53 They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.
> (NIV)
> What is the fuss? Well, Lincona calls Matt. 27.52-53 a "strange little text" (p. 548). Many strange phenomena like earthquakes and cosmic portents were said to accompany the death of great leaders in ancient sources. Licona writes: "[I]t seems to me that an understanding of the language in Matthew 27:52-53 as 'special effects' with eschatological Jewish texts and thought in mind is most plausible. There is further support for this interpretation. If the tombs were opened and the saints being raised upon Jesus' death was not strange enough, Matthew adds that they did not come out of their tombs until *after* Jesus' resurrection. What were they doing between Friday afternoon and early Sunday morning? Were they standing in the now open doorways of their tombs and waiting?" Lincona then regards "this difficult text in Mathew as a poetic device added to communicate that the Son of God had died and that the impending judgment awaited Israel" (pp. 552-53).
>
> In my chapter about the resurrection in *How Did Christianity Begin: A Believer and Non-Believer Examine the Evidence*, co-authored with James Crossley (London: SPCK, 2008/ Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010), I said in a footnote about Matt. 27.51-53: "My understanding of this text is that it is not historical and it blends the present and the future together so that Matthew provides a cameo of the future resurrection at the point of Jesus' death to underscore its living-giving power" (p. 69, n. 30). That was my off-the-cuff thought, but I stand by it, since Matt. 27.51-53 is a strange story that is reported nowhere else in Christian or non-Christian literature.

> I don't see any reason why Licona's or my interpretation of Matt. 27.51-53 does not conform to a view of scripture as infallible, inspired, and authoritative. **I think it explains the text and it explains why you don't hear Josephus or Tacitus talking about the day that many Jewish holy men came back to life.**
>
> But I see further problems with Licona's critics. If I can give another example, is the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16.19-31 a "true" story or a "parable"? Now the word parable does not occur! What if I said that it was a true, literal, and factual story about the afterlife in Hades and everyone who called it a parable about riches and possessions was using ancient genres to dehistoricize the Bible and deny the existence of the intermediate state? Does believing that Luke 16 is a parable violate inerrancy? To employ the logic of Geisler and Mohler, I'd have to say, "yes". But is it hermeneutically responsible to rule certain literary genres out of bounds based on theological prolegomena, rather than discern them based on the phenomenon of the text and its relationship to extant biblical and non-biblical literature? Moreover, Geisler and Mohler are systematicians, not New Testament scholars, and most of those who came to Licona's aid in his open letter are New Testament scholars. I think there's a big lesson to be learned in that!

About Michael F. Bird:

Biography:

> Dr. Michael Bird (Ph.D University of Queensland) is Lecturer in Theology and New Testament at Crossway College in Brisbane, Australia. He is the author of several books including *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission* (2006), *The Saving Righteousness of God* (2007), *A Bird's-Eye View of Paul* (2008), *Colossians and Philemon* (2009), *Crossing Over Sea and Land: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period* (2009), and *Are You the One Who is to Come? The Historical Jesus and the Messianic Question* (2009). He attends Acacia Ridge Presbyterian Church where he preaches regularly. He is married to Naomi and has four children.

Michael F. Bird is an evangelical historian, and has debated atheist James Crossley on the Unbelievable show (part 1, part 2). I have the book he mentions, which is a debate with Crossley, but haven't had a chance to dig into it, yet. I really enjoyed the Bird/Crossley debates though. Sometimes, Unbelievable picks a bad defender of the Christian side, but Bird was solid. If I recall correctly, the Matthew 27 passage came up in that debate, and it came up in Crossley's debate with William Lane Craig as well.

By the way, the other passage that is disputed a lot in the New Testament is the guard at the tomb in Matthew. I wrote a post about it before, featuring a clip from William Lane Craig. William Lane Craig wrote an essay about the guard at the tomb story. My take on that one is that the guard is historical, although I would not want to defend that tradition

as a minimal fact in a debate, because it fails all the tests. However, the genre there is clearly historical, not apocalyptic imagery. I do understand the case against the guard story being an apologetics response to the Jewish accusation that the disciples stole the body.

New Testament scholar Richard Bauckham has debated Crossley as well, and you can find the shows here.

How well did Obama's green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?

September 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Investor's Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> As solar panel manufacturer Solyndra was sliding into a long-predicted bankruptcy, Energy Department officials began negotiations with the company and two of its main investors about restructuring its $535 million loan to keep afloat the business that was supposed to be a good investment.
>
> Under the restructuring agreement, Solyndra's private investors were moved to the front of the line and taxpayers were put on the hook for at least the first $75 million if the company should default. Subordinating taxpayers to private investors in recovering loan money is an "apparent violation of the law," according to Fred Upton, R-Mich., chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.
>
> During hearings last week, Rep. Steve Scalise, R-La., and other Republicans noted that the Energy Policy Act of 2005 says obligations, or loan guarantees, shall not be subordinated to other financing.
>
> In other words, taxpayers get first dibs on any money recovered and private investors take a number.
>
> Why was the Solyndra loan restructured in this way? Was it because a major donation bundler for President Obama's 2008 campaign was also a principal investor in Solyndra? Is that why the administration ignored repeated warning's of Solyndra's insolvency?
>
> A 2009 report by the Energy Department's inspector general warned that DOE lacked the necessary quality control for the $38.6 billion loan-guarantee program. In July 2010, the Government Accountability Office said DOE had bypassed required steps for funding awards to five of 10 loan recipients.
>
> […]Solyndra was the third U.S. solar manufacturer to fail in a month. SpectraWatt Inc., a solar company backed by units of Intel Corp. and Goldman Sachs Group Inc., filed for bankruptcy protection Aug. 19, and Evergreen Solar filed Chapter 11 on Aug. 15.
>
> Other failed companies receiving stimulus funds include Mountain Plaza Inc., which took $424,000 in grants to install "truck stop electrification systems" so truckers could plug in and shut off their idling diesel engines, and Olsen's Crop Service and Olsen's Acquisition Co., which were handed $10 million.
>
> […]The administration claims that as a whole this loan guarantee program, which was supposed to create 65,000 jobs, was a success, creating or "saving" some

> 44,000 jobs. An analysis by the Washington Post says the actual number of permanent jobs created is 3,545.
>
> […]Even if you accept the administration's questionable job accounting, divide the $38.6 billion by 65,000 and ask yourself if the administration is spending your money wisely — or honestly.

The Obama administration has already spent about half of the 38.6 billion set aside for Democrat cronies. I mean green energy. If you divide 17.5 billion by 3,545 jobs created, that's $5 million per job. That's sound Democrat fiscal policy. Bible-thumping morons like Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann could never think of intelligent policies like spending $5 million per job created. To get to that level of intelligence, you need to have degrees from Columbia and Harvard Law School (grades never released). And to vote for Obama's policies, you need to be smart enough to watch the Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert on the Comedy Channel, and think that it's news.

So we took *billions of dollars* out of the private economy, in order to punish those evil oil companies and coal companies, and we spent it on magic beans – sold to us by Obama's Democrat cronies. Instead of lowering energy prices, Obama's policies have resulted in *higher* energy prices. Was this unexpected?

Actually, for anyone who was paying attention, Obama made clear that he was OK with higher energy prices before he was elected in 2008.

And that's what we got:

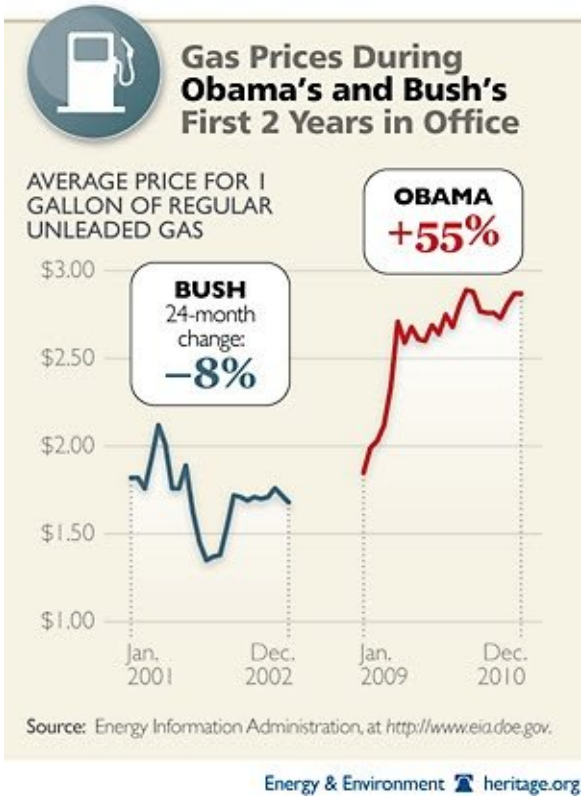

Gas Prices under Obama and Bush

Only two kinds of people voted for Obama in 2008 – the people who were informed about Obama's record by watching Ed Schultz and Rachel Maddow on MSNBC, and the people who were about to receive stimulus grants for the green energy companies. The people

who think that Michael Moore tells the truth about health care, and that Al Gore is an authority on climate science. The people who think that the New York Times is unbiased news.

Obama’s $1.5 trillion in taxes on the rich will hurt the middle class most

September 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

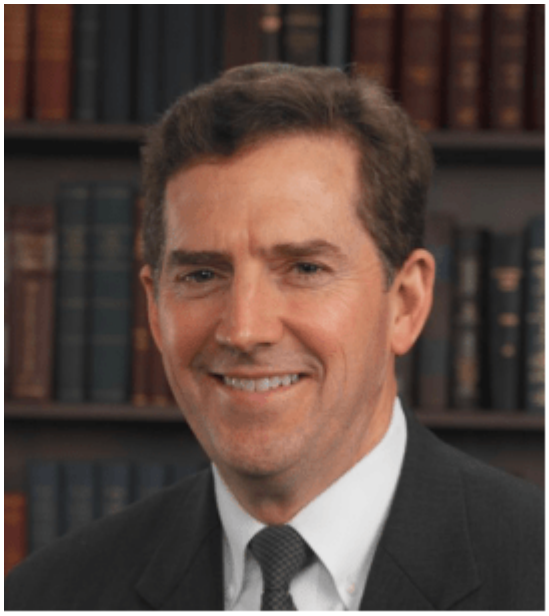

Sen. Jim Demint

Consider this editorial from senator Jim DeMint.

Excerpt:

> Here are the facts.
>
> Americans who make $200,000 or more a year make up about 3 percent of the country. Those 3 percent earn roughly 30 percent of our national income and pay 52 percent of all income taxes.
>
> Raising taxes on these top brackets would mean that nearly 40 percent of all new tax revenue would be taken from hundreds of thousands of small businesses. About half of the top 3 percent, around 750,000 Americans, report business income on their personal returns.
>
> The president talks about Warren Buffett, but his planned tax hikes would hit Mom & Pop businesses that employ your friends and family.
>
> It boils down to simple economics. If we want the millions of jobs that small businesses create, then we cannot confiscate an even greater share of the incomes that generate those jobs.
>
> When politicians talk about “the rich,” they want to conjure an image in your mind of an idle, entitled elite somehow exploiting the rest of us. (That actually sounds more like the U.S. Senate.)
>
> But the real picture is more like that of a man or woman who owns a small, local business, who started with little but has done well, and who now has a handful of employees with decent incomes and health insurance.

> The fiction behind the “tax the rich” ideology is that these folks have extra money just lying around, and that the government can take a big chunk of it without harming anyone.
>
> What the liberals fail to recognize is that the money isn’t just lying around, stuffed in a mattress. It’s out in the world, growing the economy. Rich people, like everyone else, put their money to productive use.
>
> The top 5 percent of American earners account for 37 percent of all consumer spending, about as much as the bottom 80 percent put together.
>
> The top 10 percent of families hold 64 percent of all major investment assets. Those making over $200,000 give 36 percent of all charitable contributions.
>
> This is the heart of the liberals’ misunderstanding. Raising taxes on America’s job creators who spend, invest and donate will punish the middle class, not the rich. It will hurt the local businesses they patronize, the companies they invest in, and the charities they support.
>
> Money that used to create jobs, wealth, and opportunity will instead be sucked into the economic black hole of the federal bureaucracy, never to return.
>
> The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that it costs businesses about $63,000 to create one job. Put another way, every $63,000 in new taxes risks an American job. And every $100 billion in tax increases – on the rich or anyone else – could threaten nearly 1.6 million jobs.
>
> Now, who do you think loses those jobs? Will it be “the rich,” or will it be the clerk at their grocery store, the mechanic at their gas station, and the receptionist at their dentist’s office?
>
> Make no mistake: When the taxman aims at “the rich,” he ends up hitting everyone else instead.

Obama keeps talking about making people pay “their fair share”, so he has plenty of money to hand out hundreds of millions of bailout dollars to solar power companies linked to his Democrat fundraisers. But nearly half the people in this country don’t pay federal taxes. Are they paying their fair share? Why isn’t Obama going after them? Well, if what DeMint says is true, he will be going after them – but most of them don’t realize it.

There’s a reason why companies are not hiring domestically, but are instead expanding operations abroad, where corporate taxes are lower and regulations are less of a burden. Companies create jobs where they can make a profit. If the Obama administration attacks their profit-making ability, they will stop creating jobs here and move their production and capital elsewhere. Obama’s rhetoric isn’t going to change the way the world works.

Possible schism between conservative and liberal United Methodists

September 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Christian Post.

Excerpt:

> Hundreds of United Methodist clergy are expressing deep concerns over a pledge made by a large group of fellow ministers to marry same-sex couples. They argue that if the pledge is carried through, the future of the denomination is in jeopardy.
>
> "We do not know how many, if any, marriages or 'holy unions' of same-sex couples will be performed by UM clergy in the near future," reads a letter, currently signed by more than 400 pastors, to the Council of Bishops. "But we do know the destructive effects that will result in our local churches and throughout the denomination if such services are performed by UM pastors."
>
> The concerned clergy are referring to a pledge that some 900 ministers have endorsed in support of same-sex civil unions. By signing the pledge, they agreed to defy the denomination's ban on blessing same-sex unions.

If you're wondering whether you are in a liberal denomination, here's a Touchstone Magazine article listing the ones that are soft on homosexuality and same-sex marriage.

Excerpt:

> Debates over homosexuality within the Christian community are largely confined to the liberal-led mainline or oldline Protestant denominations: the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the American Baptist Churches, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the United Church of Christ.

To me, a liberal denomination is one where these disputes occur. Homosexuality and same-sex marriage should not even be up for discussion, in my view.

There are conservative Presbyterians (PCA), conservative baptists (SBA), and conservative Lutherans (LCMS) that are better on these issues. I don't know of any conservative Episcopalians or Methodists in North America. Other ways to tell if a denomination is conservative is by looking at their position on abortion, on wealth redistribution, on war, and on the ordination of women.

How many jobs have wind and solar power produced in Spain and Denmark?

September 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The problem with the Obama administration is that they keep making policy based on their intentions, instead of known results. They've allocated nearly 39 billion for green energy subsidies – that's as much money as the entire annual Minnesota state budget. That's a lot of money being taken away from job creators in the private sector.

So what can we learn about "green energy" from other countries? Is it good value for the money?

Well, we know that in Spain, the green jobs programs failed.

Excerpt:

> Subsidizing renewable energy in the U.S. may destroy two jobs for every one created if Spain's experience with windmills and solar farms is any guide.
>
> For every new position that depends on energy price supports, at least 2.2 jobs in other industries will disappear, according to a study from King Juan Carlos University in Madrid.
>
> U.S. President Barack Obama's 2010 budget proposal contains about $20 billion in tax incentives for clean-energy programs. In Spain, where wind turbines provided 11 percent of power demand last year, generators earn rates as much as 11 times more for renewable energy compared with burning fossil fuels.
>
> **The premiums paid for solar, biomass, wave and wind power – – which are charged to consumers in their bills — translated into a $774,000 cost for each Spanish "green job" created since 2000, said Gabriel Calzada, an economics professor at the university and author of the report.**
>
> **"The loss of jobs could be greater if you account for the amount of lost industry that moves out of the country due to higher energy prices," he said in an interview.**

The Heritage Foundation cites a study from Denmark, which shows that wind power has also failed.

Excerpt:

> But according to a new study from the Danish Centre for Political Studies (CEPOS), commissioned by the Institute for Energy Research, the road to increased wind power is less traveled for a reason. The study refutes the claim that Denmark generates 20 percent of its power from wind stating that its high intermittency not only leads to new challenges to balance the supply and demand of electricity, but also provides less electricity consumption than

> assumed. The new study says, “wind power has recently (2006) met as little as 5% of Denmark’s annual electricity consumption with an average over the last five years of 9.7%.” Furthermore, the wind energy Denmark exports to its northern neighbors, Sweden and Norway, does little to reduce carbon dioxide emissions because the energy it replaces is carbon neutral.
>
> The study goes on to say that the only reason wind power exists in Denmark is “through substantial subsidies supporting the wind turbine owners. Exactly how the subsidies have been shared between land, wind turbine owners, labor, capital and its shareholders is opaque, but it is fair to assess that no Danish wind industry to speak of would exist if it had to compete on market terms.”
>
> **But there’s a cost involved. When government spends more money, it necessarily diverts labor, capital and materials from the private sector. Just like promises are made in the United States about green jobs creation, the heavily subsidized Danish program created 28,400 jobs. But “this does not, however, constitute the net employment effect of the wind mill subsidy. In the long run, creating additional employment in one sector through subsidies will detract labor from other sectors, resulting in no increase in net employment but only in a shift from the non-subsidized sectors to the subsidized sector.”**
>
> And because these resources are being diverted away from more productive uses (in terms of value added, the energy technology underperforms compared to industrial average), “Danish GDP is approximately $270 million lower than it would have been if the wind sector work force was employed elsewhere.”

And the libertarian Cato Institute doesn’t think that any renewal energy program will work.

Excerpt:

> A multi-billion-dollar government crusade to promote renewable energy for electricity generation, now in its third decade, has resulted in major economic costs and unintended environmental consequences. **Even improved new generation renewable capacity is, on average, *twice* as expensive as new capacity from the most economical fossil-fuel alternative and *triple* the cost of surplus electricity. Solar power for bulk generation is substantially more uneconomic than the average; biomass, hydroelectric power, and geothermal projects are less uneconomic. Wind power is the closest to the double-triple rule.**
>
> The uncompetitiveness of renewable generation explains the emphasis pro-renewable energy lobbyists on both the state and federal levels put on quota requirements, as well as continued or expanded subsidies. Yet every major renewable energy source has drawn criticism from leading environmental groups: hydro for river habitat destruction, wind for avian mortality, solar for desert

> overdevelopment, biomass for air emissions, and geothermal for depletion and toxic discharges.
>
> **Current state and federal efforts to restructure the electricity industry are being politicized to foist a new round of involuntary commitments on ratepayers and taxpayers for politically favored renewables, particularly wind and solar. Yet new government subsidies for favored renewable technologies are likely to create few environmental benefits; increase electricity-generation overcapacity in most regions of the United States; raise electricity rates; and create new "environmental pressures," given the extra land and materials (compared with those needed for traditional technologies) it would take to significantly increase the capacity of wind and solar generation.**

A recession is not the time to be making policies based on what sounds nice. We need to do what works in a recession.

An all-of-the-above, drill-here-drill-now policy would increase supply at a time when demand for oil is growing in India and China. Increasing domestic supply would create jobs and lower energy prices – an excellent thing to do in a recession. But Obama is busy putting in drilling moratoriums and subsidizing green energy, instead. We elected someone who thought that "climate change" was a justification for raising electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket. He is fine with electricity prices skyrocketing. And that's what we've gotten from him.

Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing

September 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama gave $535 million taxpayer dollars to Solyndra, a company backed by a billionaire Obama-supporter

The Washington Examiner has the story. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Two members leading the Congressional investigation into bankrupt solar energy firm Solyndra said the company's executives broke their promise to testify openly during a hearing scheduled for this Friday, instead electing to exercise their Fifth amendment rights not to answer questions.
>
> In a statement released moments ago, House Energy and Commerce Chairman Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., and oversight subcommittee chairman Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla., said:
>
> "Our investigation has gotten this far without much cooperation from Solyndra, and it will continue with or without their voluntary testimony. It's disappointing that the officials who canvassed the halls of Congress in mid-July and misled our members about the financial state of their company are now unwilling to answer direct questions, but any effort to cover up the truth will ultimately not succeed. We will not allow stonewalling by DOE, OMB, Committee Democrats, Solyndra, or anyone else to stop this investigation into what happened to half a billion dollars of the taxpayers' money.
>
> "Both Mr. Stover and Mr. Harrison will be sworn in under oath this Friday. We have many questions for Solyndra's executives on their dealings with the Obama administration, their efforts to secure federal support for a project that appeared doomed from the outset, and why they made certain representations to Congress regarding their dire financial situation just two months ago. We would encourage Mr. Harrison and Mr. Stover to reconsider this effort to dodge questions under oath and hide the truth from those American taxpayers who are now on the hook for their $500 million bust."

I wonder why the beneficiaries of a $535 million dollar stimulus grant would refuse to answer questions from Congress, now that they've declared bankruptcy. I wonder if it's

because of Solyndra's links to Obama fundraisers?

Excerpt:

> A key unanswered question in the Solyndra loan investigation concerns the role George Kaiser, the Oklahoma billionaire and major Obama fundraiser whose Family Foundation owned a large stake in the failed solar-panel company. Kaiser made multiple visits to the White House in the week before the Department of Energy approved a $535 million guaranteed loan to Solyndra on March 20, 2009, and helped arrange 16 separate meetings between top White House officials and Solyndra executives around that time. Yet Kaiser maintains that he "did not participate in any discussions with the U.S. government regarding the loan."
>
> But as the following video clip reveals, when it comes to steering government funds his way, Kaiser knew exactly what he was doing. Indeed, here he is July 2009 openly boasting about his ability to get his hands on stimulus funding. "There's never been more money shoved out of the government's door in world history, and probably never will be again, than in the last few months and in the next 18 months," he says. "And our selfish parochial goal is to get as much as it for Tulsa and Oklahoma as we possibly can."
>
> Kaiser cites his "multiple trips to Washington" and his ability to secure meetings with "all the key players in the West Wing of the White House." He also touts his "almost unique advantage," through his foundation, of being able to match public dollars with private funding. That way, Kaiser says, the Obama administration will know "we'll watch over it because we don't want to be embarrassed with the way our money is spent and so we won't make you be embarrassed with the way your money is spent either." Sure, what could possibly go wrong?

Here's the video:

And more from that National Review article:

> **While Solyndra's failure is an embarrassment for both parties, Kaiser's foundation still stands to recoup a large chunk of its investment in the company, whereas taxpayers will recoup very little, if any, of the $535 million investment the White House made on our behalf. That's because once Solyndra's financial troubles became too obvious to ignore, the DOE negotiated a loan restructuring that gave priority status to private investors over taxpayers with respect to the first $75 million recovered in the event of Solyndra's collapse. As Republicans on the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations pointed out last week, this appears to be a blatant violation of federal law.**
>
> Obama may take issue with the fact that "millionaires and billionaires" like Kaiser make too much money, but he obviously has no qualms about showering them with taxpayer dollars.

Remember, it’s not just one Obama fundraiser who has been linked to Solyndra.

Audio tapes reveal details of Democrat-facilitated arms sales to drug cartels

September 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Obama administration approves of smuggling guns to drug cartels - in fact, they facilitate it!

(Click for larger image)

From CBS News.

Excerpt:

> In a series of secretly recorded audio tapes believe to have been recorded last March and obtained by CBS News, an Arizona gun dealer and an ATF agent involved with ATF's "Fast and Furious" operation worried about the unraveling scandal.
>
> The tapes were made just weeks after CBS News broke the story in February.
>
> The conversations were recorded by Andre Howard who ran the Lone Wolf Trading Company. Howard's gun dealership had been cooperating with the ATF in "Fast and Furious." **At least two of his weapons were sold to a straw buyer before turning up later at the murder scene of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry. Hope MacAllister, the ATF agent heard in the conversations, was the lead case agent.**
>
> **The ATF's controversial "Fast and Furious" operation allowed thousands of weapons to be smuggled into Mexico and into the hands of drug cartels. Agents involved describe it as "letting guns walk."**
>
> **Among other things, Howard and MacAllister expressed concerns about ATF Special Agent John Dodson, who by that point had gone public about "Fast and Furious" in an exclusive interview with CBS News**

> **correspondent Sharyl Attkisson.**
>
> **They also spoke of their concerns that Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) was investigating, with Agent MacCallister saying of her superiors in Washington, DC, "they're gonna say have to say Grassley you're just gonna have to sit your a– down."**
>
> These recordings are important because MacAllister has never spoken publicly about her involvement in the operation and its fallout and Howard's role as a gun dealer cooperating with the ATF placed him in position to see "Fast and Furious" firsthand . The audio recordings contain new revelations about the guns involved, and ATF's efforts to respond to the breaking scandal. The tapes were turned over to Congressional investigators and the Inspector General in connection with their probe into "Fast and Furious."

Why would the Democrats facilitate selling dangerous firearms to Mexican drug cartels? Arms that would later be used to murder American border patrol agents? Could it be that the Obama administration wanted to create a gun "crisis" that would allow them to impose draconian gun control laws? The left hates the idea that criminals might get hurt while committing crimes, and that means that law-abiding people shouldn't be allowed to hurt the nice criminals. Never mind self-defense and the second amendment.

Now, another question. Why is it that only CBS News and the blogs are covering this story? Why can't I hear about this story on the Comedy Channel and on MSNBC and on CNN? Are Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert, Chris Matthews and Rachel Maddow real journalists? Don't they report on all the news?

You can listen to the tapes and read the transcripts at the CBS News web site.

Related posts

- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Operation Fast and Furious: The ATF gunrunning scandal
- Civil rights commission finds that Obama administration has racist double standard
- Is Obama's Department of Justice enabling voter registration fraud?
- Department of Justice won't purge dead or ineligible voters from roll
- Is the Department of Justice refusing to defend the voting rights of whites?
- Obama's attorney general has his head in the sand on national security
- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training
- Obama administration threatens South Carolina for saving prisoner's lives

How Obama's tax increases affect private charity and non-profit organizations

September 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Washington Examiner takes a closer look at President Obama's latest stimulus bill.

Excerpt:

> A significant portion – $400 billion over 10 years – of President Obama's jobs bill is apparently funded through the limitation of itemized deductions for the "wealthy."
>
> This proposal would create a perfecta of unintended public policy consequences.
>
> First, taxes for wealthy philanthropists would go up while taxes for wealthy Scrooges, those who make no charitable contributions, would remain virtually the same.
>
> Second, if the philanthropists decide to reduce their philanthropy because of the additional taxes due, charities would have less revenues and would need to contract their charitable missions. Not good.
>
> Over the years, the Internal Revenue Code has been amended and amended again. These amendments have severely reduced or eliminated the availability of most itemized deductions for the "wealthy."
>
> The article explains how the current tax code limits the wealthy from claiming most tax credits that are available to lower and middle income earners. The only tax credits that the wealthy can use are the mortgage interest deduction and the charity deduction. Whatever taxes that Obama wants to raise before he can raise the income tax brackets will have to come out of those two credits.

The article continues:

> The home mortgage deduction is currently limited to the interest on a $1 million mortgage. With interest rates at 5% or so, the maximum tax increase related to home interest for any individual taxpayer from the proposed limitation on itemized deductions would approximate only $3500.
>
> Therefore, the expected increase of $40 billion dollars a year in federal revenues for the next decade must be funded from "wealthy" individuals losing a portion of their itemized tax deduction resulting from their charitable contributions.
>
> Consequently, we get to this unusual social result. If a "wealthy" philanthropist donates $1 million dollars to the Red Cross in 2012 and then does so again in 2013, his or her taxes would increase by $70,000 in 2013 over 2012.
>
> If the "wealthy" next-door neighbor, Scrooge, made no charitable donations in 2012 and continued that pattern in 2013, Scrooge's taxes would not increase in 2013. Now there is a piece of public policy – let's raise taxes only on the good

> guys!
>
> Most ‘wealthy’ individuals donate to charity only after determining how much they can afford in after-tax dollars. One has to think that the practical result here is that many, if not most, “wealthy” taxpayers would reduce their contributions to achieve the same after-tax cost of their charity.
>
> So, by raising the taxes on the “wealthy” philanthropist, the proposed bill would very likely punish the poor by reducing the funds received by the local food bank etc. as large charitable donations decline. It is odd public policy, in troubled times, to propose a jobs bill that would hurt charities and therefore the poor.

This policy of Obama’s will result in a massive cut in funding for private charities and non-profits, including churches. Including churches. But that is *exactly* what a secular leftist like Obama wants. The state has to be everything, and all rivals to the state must fade away. The family has to be destroyed, and the church, too.

What is the future of the European Union?

September 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> In 1965, government spending as a percentage of GDP averaged 28% in Western Europe. Today it hovers just under 50%. In 1965, the fertility rate in Germany was a healthy 2.5 children per mother. Today it is a catastrophic 1.35. During the postwar years, annual GDP growth in Europe averaged 5.5%. After 1973, it rarely exceeded 2.3%. In 1973, Europeans worked 102 hours for every 100 worked by an American. By 2004 they worked just 82 hours for every 100 American ones.
>
> […]What is now happening in Europe isn't so much a crisis as it is an exposure: a Madoff-type event rather than a Lehman one. The shock is that it's a shock. Greece was never going to be bailed out and will, sooner or later, default. The banks holding Greek debt will, sooner or later, be recapitalized. The recapitalization will be borne by German taxpayers, and it will bring them—sooner rather than later—to the outer limit of their forbearance. The Chinese will not ride to the rescue: They know not to throw good money after bad.
>
> And then Italy will go Greek. Europe's crisis will lap on U.S. shores, and America's economic woes will lap on Europe's—a two-way tsunami.
>
> America will survive this because America is a state. But as Bismarck once remarked, "Whoever speaks of Europe is wrong. Europe is a geographical expression." The "fiscal union" that's being mooted will never come to pass: German voters won't stand for it, and neither will any other country that wants to retain fiscal independence—which is to say, the core attribute of democratic sovereignty.
>
> What comes next is the explosion of the European project. Given what European leaders have made of that project over the past 30-odd years, it's not an altogether bad thing. But it will come at a massive cost. The riots of Athens will become those of Milan, Madrid and Marseilles. Parties of the fringe will gain greater sway. Border checkpoints will return. Currencies will be resurrected, then devalued. Countries will choose decay over reform. It's a long, likely parade of horribles.

Wow… things really are bad in Europe. And here, too.

Check out this editorial in the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> [A] congressional report released last week added another layer of explanation for the abject failure of Obamanomics since 2009. Along with the explosion of

> federal spending, Obama directed his appointees at key federal departments and agencies to embark on an unprecedented expansion of bureaucratic regulation. Thousands of new bureaucrats were hired at places like the Department of Heath and Human Services and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and legions of costly new regulations soon poured forth.
>
> The report by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee headed by Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., took aim at Obama's "regulatory tsunami" and concluded that the pace and scale of new regulations threatens the ability of the government to fulfill even its most basic regulatory functions. Here's how the congressional panel summarized its conclusions:
>
> "The Obama Administration has created a regulatory environment that is suffocating America's entrepreneurs' ability to create jobs and grow businesses, … This regulatory tsunami has caused job creators to lock down at a time when we need them to expand. The committee has found that the problems created by this regulatory tsunami goes far beyond the cost of the regulations themselves, but also include breakdowns in the regulatory process itself that is having a severe impact on large and small businesses alike."
>
> Specifically, the panel found at least 219 "economically significant regulations in the pipeline, which if finalized, will impose costs of $100 million or more annually on the economy." That's a minimum of $219 billion in added costs to do business in this country over the next decade. Even worse, the panel found the Obama bureaucrats have already imposed 75 major new regulations that are projected to add another $380 billion in costs.
>
> The Issa panel concluded that, as a result of this flood of new rules, "the regulatory process is broken" and that it is "being manipulated and exploited in an effort to reward allies of the Obama administration such as environmental groups, trial lawyers and unions."

All we have to do to screw up this economy is do what the Europeans are doing – and we are.

Should Christian doctors be forced to act like atheists at work?

September 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The UK Telegraph has this interesting article.

Excerpt:

> The General Medical Council is asking medics if it should "regulate doctors' lives outside medicine" in a review of its guidelines on ethics.

> Currently it would only be a disciplinary matter if behaviour after hours affected a doctor's work or brought the profession into disrepute, or if they imposed their views on others.
>
> Some respondents to an online consultation have already said they would be unhappy if health professionals "supported racist organisations" or those that "promote conflict", or "advocated religious fundamentalism".
>
> […]The GMC is to launch a full consultation on a review of its Good Medical Practice document in October.
>
> It comes as the watchdog prepares to investigate the case of a GP in Margate, Dr Richard Scott, who is accused of upsetting a patient by offering to pray for them.
>
> The GP says their conversation turned to religion after they had finished discussing medical options, and that he asked permission to raise his Christian beliefs with the patient, who is of another faith.
>
> But the GMC sent him a warning letter, claiming his comments had "distressed" the patient and "did not meet with the standards required of a doctor".
>
> Dr Scott refused to accept a written warning, however, and so the GMC's Investigation Committee will consider the case on Thursday and Friday, which could lead to a fitness to practise hearing.
>
> A GMC statement on the case said: "The Committee will consider whether it is appropriate to issue Dr Scott with a warning in light of his alleged inappropriate expression of religious beliefs during a consultation, which distressed his patient.
>
> "It is further alleged that Dr Scott subsequently confirmed, via national media, that he had sought to suggest his own faith had more to offer than that of the patient.

And this gets extended to cases where pro-life medical doctors and nurses are forced to perform abortions against their conscience. It's not just evangelism that is threatened, it's the freedom to *not murder* at the state's bidding. This pressure to comply with the state doesn't come out of nowhere – it occurs when the state is in control of an industry and there is nowhere else for Christians to go to find work. And it is stronger for those

who work in government monopolies. Although the UK has protections for NHS doctors, things are worse in Canada and the US. Nurses in Calgary, Alberta and in New York, New York have had to perform abortions against their will.

If you are a doctor in a government-run single payer health care system, then you have a choice of one employer – the government. In the West, that government will likely be secular, and the main job of that government will be to get themselves re-elected. Conservative political parties will be able to get re-elected by delivering national security and economic growth. Even moderate conservatives like George W. Bush can deliver unemployment rates of 4.4% and 160 billion dollar deficits – so the voters re-elect conservatives because they have jobs and because they are safe. But liberal parties can't produce jobs or balance a budget – like with Obama's 9.5% unemployment rate and his 1.7 trillion dollar deficits. Liberals screw up the economy, and then they have to resort to *bribing the electorate with government spending* in order to be re-elected.

So what goodies do the liberal parties provide? Well, take health care. There is a block of voters who want to be able to engage in risky activities that make them feel good, and then get out of them by having the government take their neighbors' money to pay for their medical bills. (Or, their neighbor's *children's* money, to be more precise, since it is much more politically acceptable to run up 1.7 trillion dollar debts than to embrace pro-growth economic policies that would *lower* the unemployment rate, as with Bush's tax cuts). For example, may liberal voters want the government to provide things like taxpayer-funded abortions, so that they can engage in reckless premarital sex without being burdened by the consequences of their own choices. And the liberal party buys their votes by transferring wealth from other taxpayers to pay for these abortions.

Now, when these liberal parties go before the voters, they don't talk about wanting to provide taxpayer-funded abortions to liberal voters. They tell sob stories about people who need medical treatment but who can't afford it, or about hungry children who have less to eat than other children. Boo, hoo, hoo, they explain. They play on people's fears and emotions, and, for some ignorant voters, that works. Even many Christians who decide who to vote for based on their emotions and peer pressure will fall for this – they are too busy watching "Dancing With the Stars" to read about reducing health care costs through consumer-driven health care or improving educational outcomes through school choice.

So many people vote to expand and empower government to fix problems, instead of relying on the free market. They forget about how Wal-Mart provides goods to poor families, and how Amazon.com provides a huge variety of goods to consumers at low prices. Having the government shuffle money around just seems to make more sense for them – it's much simpler for them to understand than complicated things like Adam Smith. Wealth redistribution calms their fears and makes them feel "compassionate" – even though they are using other people's money to solve problems instead of solving problems themselves with charity. But to be able to ensure that hospitals perform abortions free of charge for the whiny voters, government has to be big enough to have

oversight over the daily operations of health care providers.

How do Christians fare in a health care system that is run by a secular government? Well, in the private sector, if a Christian doctor loses his job, he can find another job. But for Christian doctors in a government-run single-payer health care system, there is nowhere to run – you have to leave the country entirely. So many Christians will feel pressured to just settle with the secularists and perform the abortions. And the ones who resist are just crushed by the state.

And this is *exactly* what happens in Canadian hospitals, in their single-payer health care system, which liberal politicians and voters admire so much.

Many Christians vote for single-payer health care, or its precursor "Obamacare", without knowing where this leads. But if Christians vote for bigger government, then they will find themselves losing the freedom to profess Christianity in public, as government grows to regulate and control the economy. When the secular government controls everything, anything in Christianity that they disagree with becomes a target. Again, we have already seen this in Canada. A secular government is good for Christians, and we support that, but it needs to be limited and respectful of human rights and human liberties, including the right to own property and the right to express your religion in public.

Helping people isn't the government's job, it's your job. Stop trying to resolve your fears and uncertainties about life by making the government into God. Government shouldn't have that power. It's not their job to help others – it's *your* job. It's not their job to provide you with happiness in this life by taking your neighbor's money, either.

A very good book to read about this is "The Road to Serfdom", by F.A. Hayek. There is a free abridged version of "The Road to Serfdom" here, and it is number one on the list of books that all conservatives should read, according to the conservative Human Events.

The Wintery Knight’s favorite apologetics lectures

September 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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These are the lectures that made me who I am today. Each of these is awesome.

Dr. J.P. Moreland

B.S. in Chemistry, University of Missouri
M.A. in Philosophy, University of California Riverside
Th.M. in Theology, Dallas Theological Seminary
Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Southern California

- Atheism, Theism, and the Meaning of Life
- The Importance of the Mind in Christian Living
- Love Your God with All Your Mind (for Christians)

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Ph.D. in Materials Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1968
B.S. in Engineering Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1965

- Truth in Religion
- Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer
- Journey to Faith (his testimony)
- Giants in the Land

Dr. Philip E. Johnson

A.B., Harvard University, 1961
J.D., University of Chicago, 1965

- The Grand Metaphysical Story of Science
- Can Science Know the Mind of God?
- Darwinism on Trial

Dr. Douglas Geivett

Ph.D., University of Southern California
M.A., Dallas Theological Seminary
M.A., Gonzaga University
B.S., Multnomah School of the Bible

- The Problems of Evil and Suffering (at Apologetics 315)

Dr. William Lane Craig

D.Theol., University of Munich
Ph.D., University of Birmingham (UK)
M.A., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

M.A., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
B.A., Wheaton College

- In Intellectual Neutral (at Apologetics 315)

Do secretaries usually pay more in taxes than their rich bosses?

September 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From ABC News.

Excerpt:

> Treasury Secretary Geithner yesterday declined to answer a key question about the president's proposed "Buffett Rule": How many millionaires and billionaires pay lower tax rates than middle-income families?
>
> The answer: not that many.
>
> **The nonpartisan Tax Policy Center has crunched the numbers and found that Warren Buffett and his secretary are the exception to the rule. For the most part, the wealthy pay a significantly higher percentage of their income in taxes than middle-income workers.**
>
> **The key numbers: this year those earning over $1 million will pay, on average, 29.1 percent on federal taxes. Those earning between $50,000 and $75,000 will pay 15 percent.**
>
> That's not to say that there aren't wealthy people who are even better than Buffett at avoiding taxes. In 2009, 1,470 people with incomes over $1 million a year paid absolutely no taxes. But that represents less than 1 percent of those earning over $1 million a year. Raising their taxes may be the fair thing to do, but it will not bring in much revenue.

The Cato Institute has a lovely graph of income tax rates by income earned.

Well, how much revenue can we generate if we take 100% of everything that people making over earn? (Assuming that they keep working solely for the government, of course, which Democrats would assume)

The Tax Foundation explains.

Excerpt:

> So taking *half* of the yearly income from every person making between one and ten million dollars would only decrease the nation's debt by 1%. Even taking every last penny from every individual making more than $10 million per year would only reduce the nation's deficit by 12 percent and the debt by 2 percent. There's simply not enough wealth in the community of the rich to erase this country's problems by waving some magic tax wand.
>
> **Finally, to put everything in perspective, think about what would need to be done to erase the federal deficit this year: After everyone making more than $200,000/year has paid taxes, the IRS would need to take *every single penny of disposable income they have left*. Such an act**

> **would raise approximately $1.53 trillion.**

George W. Bush's last deficit, with a Republican House and Senate, was 160 billion. But Obama's deficits are about TEN TIMES that amount.

See:

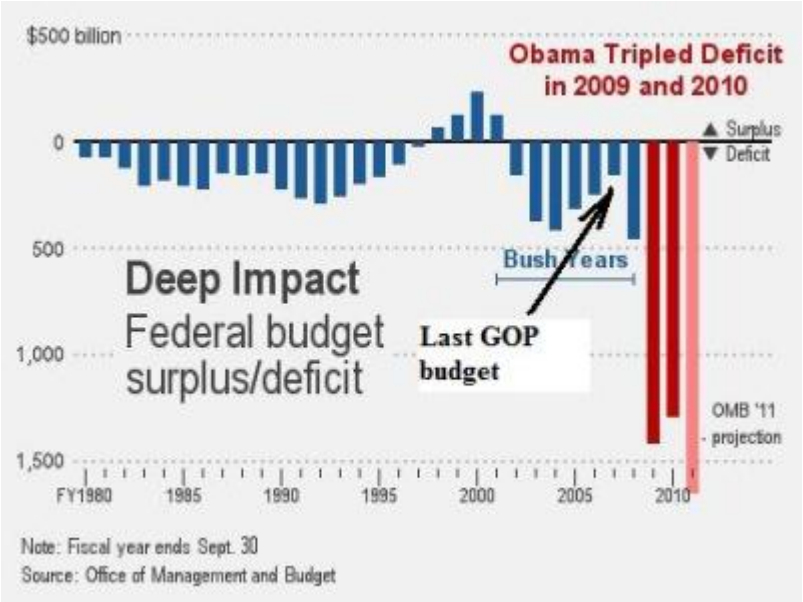

Obama Budget Deficit 2011

But Obama's current annual budget deficits exceed 1.53 trillion. So taxing the rich at 100% isn't enough to pay for All of Obama's spending. That's how big a hole Barack Obama has got us into.

By the way, Warren Buffett's blathering about wanting to pay more taxes is a load of garbage. His company is currently in a dispute with the IRS to avoid paying as much as ONE BILLION DOLLARS in back taxes. You would not have heard of this if all you watched was Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert on the Comedy Channel, or Chris Matthews and Rachel Maddow on MSNBC.

Eight Republicans will participate in tonight's Fox News debate in Orlando

September 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Fox News:

> ORANGE COUNTY, Fla. (WOFL FOX 35) – Fox News and Google announced today that they will present a presidential debate on Sept. 22 from 9:00-11:00 p.m. ET in Orlando, Fla., in conjunction with the Republican Party of Florida.
>
> In making the joint announcement, Michael Clemente, senior vice president of news editorial, Fox News, said, "For access to news and information, it's hard to imagine two more powerful brands than Fox News and Google, which is why we are proud to partner with a leader in global technology. The strength and reach of both should ensure a thorough and engaging debate that anyone can participate in."
>
> Moderated by Special Report anchor Bret Baier with panelists Chris Wallace, host of "Fox News Sunday" and Megyn Kelly, anchor of "America Live," the debate will incorporate video and text questions submitted by the public on YouTube.com/FoxNews.
>
> Viewers will be able to vote on the questions they want the candidates to answer, and Fox News will use the votes to help choose which questions are posed to the candidates. In addition, Fox News and Google will present public data and Google search trends on air to help provide context to the questions and inform the debate throughout the evening.
>
> Steve Grove, head of news and politics for YouTube, said, "We're delighted to give voters across the country this opportunity to ask their questions of the GOP candidates. Through this joint debate with Fox News we hope to bring more voices into the arena to create an informed and lively dialogue about the future of our country."
>
> The Fox News/Google debate will be presented live from the Orange County Convention Center on Fox News Channel (FNC) and live-streamed on YouTube.com/FoxNews, in addition to Fox News Radio, Fox News Mobile, and FoxNews.com.

I'll be watching, hope you will too! Bret Baier, Chris Wallace and Megyn Kelly are my three favorite people on Fox News.

Rick Santorum wins Fox News Republican primary debate (with video)

September 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Santorum wins, Gingrich came second.

Part 1 of 11:

All the parts:

- Part 1 of 11
- Part 2 of 11
- Part 3 of 11
- Part 4 of 11
- Part 5 of 11
- Part 6 of 11
- Part 7 of 11
- Part 8 of 11
- Part 9 of 11
- Part 10 of 11
- Part 11 of 11

Here's a review from Jennifer Rubin at the Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> When the Republican presidential contenders debated in Orlando tonight, it was really *two* debates. In the first third of the evening, a series of disjointed questions without follow-ups, Texas Gov. Rick Perry seemed strong and well-prepared. But he faded over the rest of the debate, appearing to lose his steam just as he was trying to paint Mitt Romney as a flip-flopper.
>
> The big winner of the night, however, was Rick Santorum.
>
> Santorum has been waiting for the chance to supplant Rep. Michele Bachmann (Minn.) as the third-ranking candidate in the race. Tonight he went a long way toward achieving that. Bachmann never managed to make a presence. Santorum, however, socked Perry on in-state tuition breaks for Texas college students who are illegal immigrants, making the point that Perry is subsidizing those people over non-Texan American citizens. On Afghanistan, he hit a home run, telling off Jon Huntsman Jr. over the latter's suggestion to bug out of a war short of victory. He barked, "Just because our economy is sick doesn't mean America is sick." When asked about right-to-work laws, Santorum smartly steered the discussion to public employee unions. As the debate went on, he received more and more questions, a sure sign he was becoming a contender.

And another review:

> Republican presidential candidate and former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum breathed new life into his bid for the Republican presidential nomination Thursday, issuing a string of critiques at his Republican counterparts
>
> Speaking in a GOP debate hosted by Google and Fox News, the Pennsylvania Republican slammed critics of his campaign, calling for a renewed commitment in Iraq and Afghanistan, and condemning a repeal of the military's controversial "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.
>
> Mr. Santorum on Thursday said the military has one responsibility: protecting the country. He says that allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly is a distraction to that role. The former U.S. senator made the statement in response to a video question from a gay soldier that yielded boos from the debate audience.
>
> Mr. Santorum said that "sexual activity has absolutely no place in the military," adding that the repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, which took effect this week, was injecting "social policy into the military."
>
> "What we're doing is playing social experimentation with our military right now, and that's tragic," Mr. Santorum said.
>
> The Pennsylvania Republican slammed former Utah governor Jon Huntsman, questioning his recent comments on on U.S. foreign policy in the Mideast. Mr. Santorum took issue with Mr. Huntsman's suggestion that the U.S. should leave Afghanistan short of victory.
>
> "Just because our economy is sick doesn't mean America is sick," Mr. Santorum said.
>
> Mr. Santorum, who continues to trail former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney and Texas Republican Rick Perry in the latest polls, had struggled to gain support in recent months. The Pennsylvania Republican has focused his campaign on Iowa, where recent polls seems to suggest Minnesota congresswoman Michele Bachmann and Mr. Perry as the leading candidates. Still, the Pennsylvania Republican has repeatedly said he remains confident of his chances of securing the 2012 nomination.
>
> The performance at Thursday night's GOP debate comes as Mr. Santorum has sought to increase his presence within the national debate. Speaking Tuesday, Mr. Santorum launched a scathing rebuke of Mr. Perry's assessment of U.S. relations with Israel.
>
> "I've forgotten more about Israel than Rick Perry knows about Israel," Mr. Santorum told Politico. "There he is, reading a speech that I'm sure he didn't write, and has never taken a position on any of this stuff before, and [the media is] taking this guy seriously."
>
> Preceding the debate hosted by Google, Mr. Santorum made national headlines after issuing a plea to the search engine, requesting that the address search

> results related to his name. Mr. Santorum’s contacting of Google comes as Google searches for Mr. Santorum’s name have generated some inappropriate results since gay columnist Dan Savage organized an online campaign to link graphic sexual terms to Mr. Santorum’s campaign.

It was a great debate, I recommend watching at least the first half.

White Horse Inn interviews Michael Shermer on skepticism

September 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Look at what Reformed Seth sent me in my e-mail on Thursday morning! A podcast!

Here is the description:

> On this program, Michael Horton talks with Michael Shermer, editor of *Skeptic* magazine and author of numerous books including, *Why People Believe Weird Things*, *Why Darwin Matters,* and most recently *The Believing Brain: From Ghosts and Gods to Politics and Conspiracies—How We Construct Beliefs and Reinforce Them as Truths*. The conversation centers on Shermer's new book, and why he believes his skeptical and agnostic worldview presents a better explanation for the universe than the claims of the Christian faith. Following the interview, Michael Horton talks with Dean L. Overman, author of *The Case Against Accident & Self Organization*, about the mathematical improbability of life forming by chance.

You can listen on their web page, or grab the MP3 file here.

And here are the questions asked:

- Tell us about your background, how did you transition to agnosticism?
- Are you firm in your convictions, or are you open to changing your mind?
- What is your new book "The Believing Brain" about?
- Was your skepticism also the result of the subjective, emotional belief-generating process described in the book?
- How do you explain the mathematical underpinnings of nature?
- How do you account for the foundational beliefs that make science possible?
- Are these precursor beliefs for science also the result of the subjective, emotional belief-generating process?
- How do you explain the fine-tuning of the universe on naturalism?
- How do you respond to the historical claims of Christianity, like the resurrection of Jesus?
- Is it accurate to put all religious claims in the same category without evaluating the claims specifically?
- Why do you think that if there are two large groups that disagree about a claim, that no one is right?
- Explain why reason itself is not undermined if man is the result of a random process of evolution?

This interview reminded me a lot of the post I wrote analyzing the apostasy of Dan Barker.

I wanted to write an angry refutation of Shermer's ignorant speculations. But then I found this follow-up program (MP3 here) featuring the magnificent Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason. Greg's refutation of Shermer is a lot more respectful than what I would say. Maybe it's better if I wait a bit and then weigh in later in the comments.

You will also benefit enormously from this debate transcript featuring Michael Shermer and Greg Koukl.

Greek men deprived of provider role commit suicide in record numbers

September 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Wall Street Journal, a reminder that recessions hit men the hardest. (H/T Tom)

Excerpt:

>]Gross domestic product in the second quarter was down more than 7% from a year before, amid government spending cuts and tax increases that, combined, will add up to about 20% of GDP. Unemployment is over 16%. Crime, homelessness, emigration and personal bankruptcies are on the rise.The most dramatic sign of Greece's pain, however, is a surge in suicides.
>
> Recorded suicides have roughly doubled since before the crisis to about six per 100,000 residents annually, according to the Greek health ministry and a charitable organization called Klimaka.
>
> […]Suicide has also risen in much of the rest of Europe since the financial crisis began, according to a recent study published in the British medical journal The Lancet, which said Greece is among the hardest hit.Suicide has also risen in much of the rest of Europe since the financial crisis began, according to a recent study published in the British medical journal The Lancet, which said Greece is among the hardest hit.
>
> […]A suicide help line at Klimaka, the charitable group, used to get four to 10 calls a day, but "now there are days when we have up to 100," says a psychologist there, Aris Violatzis.
>
> The caller often fits a certain profile: male, age 35 to 60 and financially ruined. "He has also lost his core identity as a husband and provider, and he cannot be a man any more according to our cultural standards," Mr. Violatzis says.
>
> Heraklion, commercial center of the island of Crete, has had a spate of such deaths.
>
> […]Victims once were typically adolescent males or old people facing severe illness, and in normal times suicide cases often involve a mixture of factors including mental illness, says local psychiatrist Eva Maria Tsapaki.
>
> But the economic crash has created a "new phenomenon of entrepreneurs with no prior history of mental illness who are found dead every other week," she says. "It's very unusual."

Hans Bader had a recent post about Obama's stimulus bill that is relevant.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> A logical place to have financed road and bridge repairs would have been Obama's $800 billion stimulus package. But the stimulus package was purged of

> most investments in roads and bridges, and filled instead with welfare and social spending, out of political correctness, after feminist leaders complained that building and repairing roads and bridges would put unemployed blue-collar men to work, rather than women.
>
> Christina Hoff Sommers points out that "of the 5.7 million jobs Americans lost between December 2007 and May 2009, nearly 80 percent had been held by men," because men "predominate in manufacturing and construction, the hardest-hit sectors, which have lost more than 3 million jobs since December 2007." But when some administration officials floated the concept of "an ambitious . . . stimulus program to modernize roads, bridges, schools, electrical grids, public transportation, and dams" as a way of "reinvigorating the hardest-hit sectors of the economy," "Women's groups were appalled," asking "Where are the New Jobs for Women?" and denouncing what they called "The Macho Stimulus Plan."
>
> As Sommers notes, the Obama administration quickly knuckled under to this pressure, replacing its recovery package with an $800 billion stimulus package that instead "skews job creation somewhat towards women" by spending money instead on social services like welfare that are administered mostly by female employees.
>
> As a 2009 Associated Press story reported, "Stimulus Funds Go to Social Programs Over 'Shovel-ready' Projects." A team of six AP reporters who have been tracking the funds find that the $300 billion sent to the states is being used mainly for health care, education, unemployment benefits, food stamps, and other social services." Or, as another AP report put it, "Stimulus Aid Favors Welfare, Not Work, Programs."
>
> The stimulus package also repealed welfare reform, as Slate's Mickey Kaus and the Heritage Foundation have noted. (In 2008, Obama ran campaign ads claiming to support welfare reform, even though he had sought to undermine welfare reform as an Illinois legislator. The stimulus package largely repealed the 1996 welfare-reform law.)

Men: don't vote for this man in 2012.

Related posts

- How feminist groups skewed the Obama stimulus towards women's jobs
- Does Obama's stimulus bill discriminate against men?

New study: health insurance premiums will rise 55% to 85% under Obamacare

September 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From National Underwriter. (H/T Don Surber)

Excerpt:

> The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) could cut the number of uninsured Ohio residents by 790,000 in 2017, but it also could increase premiums for the 735,000 residents who have individual coverage by more than 55%.
>
> Consultants at Milliman Inc., Seattle, have included those projections in a forecast report prepared for the Ohio Department of Insurance.
>
> The Ohio department commissioned the report to help regulators know what to expect in 2014, when major PPACA provisions are set to kick in, and a few years further along, in 2017.
>
> PPACA opponents are still fighting in the courts and in Congress to block implementation of PPACA.
>
> If the act takes effect as written and works as drafters expect, PPACA is supposed to require major medical insurers to sell policies that meet minimum benefits requirements on a guaranteed issue, mostly community-rated basis starting in 2014. Individuals and employees at small employers are supposed to be able to buy coverage using tax credits through a new system of health insurance exchanges.
>
> Today, about 10 million non-elderly Ohio residents have some kind of government or commercial health coverage or go uninsured. About 15%, or 1.5 million, were uninsured in 2010, and that percentage could drop to 7.1%, or 712,000, in 2017, the Milliman consultants estimate.
>
> The Milliman consultants suggest that the total number of people covered by insured and self-funded group plans could fall to 5.4 million in 2017, from 6.1 million in 2010.
>
> The number with some kind of individual commercial coverage could increase 735,000, from 350,000.
>
> The percentage with some kind of government coverage, or coverage provided by a private insurer but paid for in whole or in part by the government, could increase to 31%, from 20% in 2010.
>
> Although the percentage of residents with coverage could rise by about 7.9%, the price of individual health insurance coverage might rise about 55% to 85%, excluding the impact of medical inflation, the Milliman consultants predict.

How can this be… it’s named the blah-blah-blah… AFFORDABLE CARE ACT. I swear – if that nutcase in the White House passed a bill banning Christianity, he would call it the Christian Freedom of Religion Act.

Repeal and replace Obamacare.

Obama administration set to ban asthma inhalers to save the planet

September 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From liberal MSNBC. (H/T Robert)

Excerpt:

> Asthma patients who rely on over-the-counter inhalers will need to switch to prescription-only alternatives as part of the federal government's latest attempt to protect the Earth's atmosphere.
>
> The Food and Drug Administration said Thursday patients who use the epinephrine inhalers to treat mild asthma will need to switch by Dec. 31 to other types that do not contain chlorofluorocarbons, an aerosol substance once found in a variety of spray products.
>
> The action is part of an agreement signed by the U.S. and other nations to stop using substances that deplete the ozone layer, a region in the atmosphere that helps block harmful ultraviolet rays from the Sun.
>
> But the switch to a greener inhaler will cost consumers more. Epinephrine inhalers are available via online retailers for around $20, whereas the alternatives, which contain the drug albuterol, range from $30 to $60.

From what I understand, the legal asthma inhalers are not as good, and they cause discomfort to asthma sufferers. But who cares? As long as our band of elite do-gooders have happy feelings about controlling our lives, it's "mission accomplished"!

Public school teacher suspends student for disagreeing with homosexuality

September 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> An honors student in Fort Worth, Texas, was sent to the principal's office and punished for telling a classmate that he believes homosexuality is wrong.
>
> Holly Pope said she was "absolutely stunned" when she received a telephone call from an assistant principal at Western Hills High School informing her that her son, Dakota Ary, had been sent to in-school suspension.
>
> "Dakota is a very well-grounded 14-year-old," she told Fox News Radio noting that her son is an honors student, plays on the football team and is active in his church youth group. "He's been in church his whole life and he's been taught to stand up for what he believes."
>
> And that's what got him in trouble.
>
> Dakota was in a German class at the high school when the conversation shifted to religion and homosexuality in Germany. At some point during the conversation, he turned to a friend and said that he was a Christian and "being a homosexual is wrong."
>
> **"It wasn't directed to anyone except my friend who was sitting behind me," Dakota told Fox. "I guess [the teacher] heard me. He started yelling. He told me he was going to write me an infraction and send me to the office."**
>
> **Dakota was sentenced to one day in-school suspension – and two days of full suspension. His mother was flabbergasted, noting that her son had a spotless record, was an honor student, volunteered at his church and played on the school football team.**
>
> […][Liberty Counsel attorney Matthew] Krause called the incident "mind blowing" and said the teacher had frequently brought homosexuality into ninth grade classroom discussions.
>
> "There has been a history with this teacher in the class regarding homosexual topics," Krause said. "The teacher had posted a picture of two men kissing on a wall that offended some of the students."
>
> Krause said the picture was posted on the teacher's "world wall."
>
> "He told the students this is happening all over the world and you need to accept the fact that homosexuality is just part of our culture now," Krause said.
>
> The school district would not comment on why a teacher was discussing

> homosexuality in a ninth grade German class.

Wow, this happened in Texas? But in a way, it's not surprising because the public education segment of society is so liberal. (It's a public school) I find the fact that the boy's parents are forced to pay taxes to support this school alarming. I find the power differential between student and teacher and the power of the marking pen alarming. If people are going to discuss these issues, they should have a free choice of where to go to school and speak about these issues without fear of being graded down by activists. This is a case where you have the government forcing their opinions onto individuals using the individual's own money to pay for the indoctrination.

I do think we can learn something from this, though. I think you can have a lot more success talking about moral issues like this if you don't say "The Bible says" or "X is wrong", but instead just talk about what social science says about what children need growing up, and the health risks of the homosexual lifestyle, and so on. If you're going to talk about anything like this with non-Christians, you're exposing yourself to persecution, because they are not accustomed to discussing morality objectively. So the best thing to do is to talk about the evidence, and worry more about how behaviors can harm children, society, and even the person who is choosing to do the behaviors. Start with a simple example like fatherlessness and no-fault divorce. It is easier and safer to talk about evidence, and whether the evidence is true or false, than to make judgements without evidence, and to erect barriers. The student has not been well prepared by his parents for the world as it is, and he is in for a world of hurt because of his ignorance.

Be sure you are aware of the secular case against gay marriage before you start to talk about things like this. I can also recommend excellent books about homosexuality to anyone who is interested, which explain what causes it and how it affects a person's health.

Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient

September 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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More green jobs crony capitalism.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama will raise money in early October with a Missouri businessman whose company benefited from a $107 million federal tax credit to develop a wind power facility in his state.
>
> Tom Carnahan, a scion of Missouri's most prominent Democratic political family, is listed on Obama's campaign website as a host of a $25,000-per-person fundraiser to be held in St. Louis on October 4.
>
> His energy development firm, Wind Capital Group, was helped by a sizable credit authorized in the stimulus, for an energy project in northwest Missouri.
>
> Republicans argue that it's inappropriate for the Obama campaign to raise money from a donor who has benefited directly from the Recovery Act.
>
> Missouri Republican Party executive director Lloyd Smith compared the situation to the Solyndra affair, in which the Obama administration reportedly rushed federal support to a green-energy firm that subsequently collapsed.
>
> "At a time when Barack Obama is under fire for steering hundreds of millions of dollars in stimulus funds to a failed company linked to a major campaign donor, it is stunning that he would come to Missouri and raise money with another recipient of stimulus cash," Smith said in a statement to POLITICO. "Sadly, Missourians have come to expect this kind of pay-to-play from the Obama administration. November 2012 can't come soon enough."
>
> The Obama campaign did not respond to a request for comment.

Read more about the Solyndra affair here:

- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors
- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing

Do you know how to stop this? I'll tell you. Put money in the hands of individual workers and businessmen who have to work to earn their money and are more careful with how it gets spent. When you raise taxes on individuals and businesses, big-spending liberal politicians use that to get elected, and to get re-elected. Democrats are also the party of taxpayer-subsidized voter fraud.

Do British humanists want to debate their opponents or silence them?

September 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Now, you might remember that British humanists Polly Toynbee, A.C. Grayling and Richard Dawkins soiled their knickers at the thought of debating Christian philosopher William Lane Craig.

Here's the press release from BeThinking, in case you didn't hear about it:

> The President of the British Humanist Association has pulled out of debating renowned Christian philosopher William Lane Craig.Polly Toynbee, Guardian columnist and prominent critic of religion, readily agreed in April to debate Craig on the Existence of God but withdrew her involvement last week saying "*I hadn't realised the nature of Mr Lane Craig's debating style, and having now looked at his previous performances, this is not my kind of forum".*
>
> The event, hosted by Premier Christian Radio and due to take place at London's Westminster Central Hall in October, has already been advertised and hundreds of pounds of ticket sales banked. Toynbee apologised for the *"inconvenience"*. Organisers will be contacting ticket holders, but are hoping to find an alternative leading atheist voice for the debate [see note below], who is willing to dispute the strong rational grounds for Christian theism that Professor Craig is renowned for defending.
>
> […]Richard Dawkins recently described Craig as a*"deeply unimpressive … ponderous buffoon"*, who uses logic for *"bamboozling his faith-head audience."* Yet he still has not responded to the actual content of the arguments presented by Craig. Dawkins' refusal to debate one-to-one with Craig was recently described as *"apt to be interpreted as cowardice"* by Dr Daniel Came, a lecturer in Philosophy at Oxford University. Dr Came, who is himself an atheist, called it *"a glaring omission"* on Dawkins' CV.
>
> While Toynbee is President of the British Humanist Association, Dawkins and Grayling are both Vice-Presidents. The BHA describes one of its core values as *"engaging in debate rationally, intelligently and with attention to evidence"*.

So British humanists say they are interested in debate, but they run away from debates. But it's worse than that – they don't want *anyone else* to be debating whether humanism is true or false, either!

From Access Research Network. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> This week has seen the launch of a new website, with the title: "Teach evolution, not creationism!" registered by the British Humanist Association. The issue

relates to education and the way the subject of origins is handled. The organisations in the campaign are the British Humanist Association, the Association for Science Education, the British Science Association, the Campaign for Science & Engineering and Ekklesia. There are 30 individual signatories and most publicity has been given to Sir David Attenborough. The *Daily Telegraph*'s report said that "The naturalist joined three Nobel laureates, the atheist Richard Dawkins and other leading scientists in calling on the government to tackle the "threat" of creationism." What they want is "enforceable statutory guidance" that will allow legal sanctions to be taken if any publicly-funded school allows creationism or intelligent design to be presented as science.

[…]At this point, most normal people will wonder what all this fuss is about. Why this campaign – when the two prime examples are compatible with government guidelines? Why the apoplectic comments about "threats" and why are they insisting that teaching "that God created the world is dangerous and must be prevented by law"? To explain this, it is necessary to see the relevance of their demarcation arguments. They deem it vital to show that creationism and ID are delusions that belong outside science. They are not prepared to contemplate a situation where scientific arguments are used to falsify the evolution of molecules to man. Yet this is what they are faced with: arguments about information that allow design inferences to be made (as here and here); arguments about the fossil record that falsify gradualism (as here and here); arguments based on exquisite design rather than 'tinkering' design (as here and here), and so on.

The only way such discussions can be excluded from science is to redefine science. This is exactly what the humanists/atheists are seeking to do. This means that they are re-framing science so it fits their philosophical preconceptions. This results in them wanting to trample all over the academic freedom of people (teachers, parents, students, scientists) who do not share their philosophical stance. The ID community has drawn attention to these issues repeatedly, as in this past ARN blog. Here is a recent example from Dr Alastair Noble, Director of the Centre for Intelligent Design, UK.

"You might rule out an explanation which invokes intelligent mind because it does not fit within the ideological naturalism which is invading science. In that case you're no longer doing science, but have adopted an overarching philosophy of nature into which you then try to fit the data – a faith position in effect. [. . .] If the science of origins cannot be debated freely, in schools or anywhere else, then it's not creeping creationism we should be concerned about, but galloping intolerance."

There's much more that needs to be said. What is needed though is a wider debate. Until parents, educators and scientists generally see the practical importance of these issues, we face the prospect of a small elite group imposing its will on the majority by influencing policy-makers, journal editors and science

> organisations. We need academic freedom in schools, colleges and universities, but unless we stand against the thought-police, we have only ourselves to blame when we lose it.

So what's really going on here?

Here's what's going on. When Christians stand up to defend God's existence, we use reliable science, like the Big Bang theory and the fine-tuning argument and the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion and the habitability arguments (galactic, stellar and planetary). Atheists don't use science to debate, they instead use the power of the police to stifle criticism of their view. Their worldview is built on a religious presupposition which cannot be proved: *naturalism*. Naturalism is the view that the natural world is not, in *all areas*, ever the product of a creative intelligence.

Is the religion of naturalism compatible with science?

According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* The Big Bang has been confirmed by experimental evidence such as redshift measurements, light element abundances and the cosmic microwave background radiation. This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by atheist Scriptures.

So it's really no surprise that the High Priests of atheism like Toynbee, Dawkins and Grayling want to run away from debates where science will be used by their opponents – they *hate* science. It falsifies their religion of naturalism.

This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy

September 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

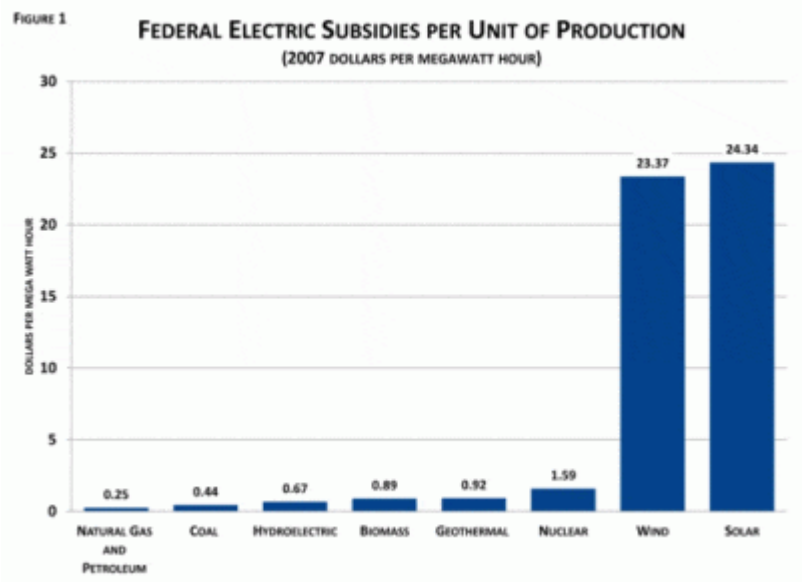

Federal subsidies per unit of electricity
(Click for larger image)

From a U.S. House of Representatives report. (H/T Doug Ross)

Excerpt:

> In the fall of 2008, then-candidate Barack Obama made a campaign promise to jumpstart the economy with an influx of green jobs… The President has kept his promise to spend billions of borrowed dollars on green energy, but his promises that such spending would create a new, self-sufficient industry capable of providing millions of jobs for Americans have proven empty.
>
> […]Two years later, the President's promise of millions of jobs stands in stark contrast with reality. As a recent report from a Bay-Area news organization made clear, green jobs predictions are "proving a pipe dream."
>
> […]Since its introduction in the 2009 stimulus bill, the Department of Energy (DOE) has issued $40 billion in new loan guarantees for private-sector loans for renewable energy projects that might not otherwise have been market-viable. Already, multi-million dollar projects, initially labeled as successes, have failed:
>
> • The first renewable energy loan guarantee recipient, solar start-up Solyndra, received a loan guarantee for $535 million in the fall of 2009, even after repeated warnings from federal financial analysts. In the spring of 2010, it failed to complete its initial public offering after an independent audit questioned the ongoing viability of the firm. Then, in the fall of 2010, the firm closed one of its manufacturing facilities and laid off 180 workers. Finally, the firm declared bankruptcy and laid off 1,100 employees only 15 months after Obama visited a

> company factory.
>
> • Beacon Power, received a $43 million loan guarantee in July of 2009. Since then, its stock price has dropped by 90 percent – a period during which the NASDAQ exchange on which it is listed has increased by 40 percent. The company has not been in compliance with NASDAQ listing requirements, leading to a delisting determination from the exchange.
>
> • First Wind Holdings, received a $117 million loan guarantee in March of 2010. First Wind withdrew its initial public offering in October of 2010, due to a lack of investor demand. According to the Boston Globe, investors shied away from the company because "First Wind owes more than $500 million, loses money on a steady basis, and reports a negative cash flow."
>
> Even in the midst of these failures, DOE has been advertising additional loan guarantee recipients, announcing a $1.2 billion loan guarantee to another solar company just one day after the FBI raided Solyndra's offices. Congressional investigators are initiating a review to examine how many future Solyndras have been already financed by this loan-guarantee program or approved through shoddy review, and how can we prevent future examples of this kind of wasteful federal spending.

Why are we in a recession and bleeding jobs? Because we voted for an anti-science ideologue whose energy policy is designed to 1) pay off his Democrat campaign fundraisers and 2) allow him to put on a show about caring for the planet more than those nasty Republicans. We aren't going to have a lower unemployment rate and lower consumer prices on energy until we kick out the anti-science crowd. I understand that some people believe in religious nonsense like global warming and Keynesianism. That's fine – let them keep that in the university classroom. Let the Democrat professors of rhetoric like Christina Romer and Paul Krugman make fine-sounding speeches and build castles in the sky there. But out here in the real world, we have to be more practical than that.

In other news, I note that naturalist High Priest Eugenie Scott is claiming that there is no evidence against Darwinism and global warming. God, save us from being ruled by flat-Earth religious nutcases. I don't mind if they want to say these things in atheist churches, but the rest of us should NOT have to be ruled by their dangerous religious delusions. There's a place for blind faith, and it's not in legislature. They shouldn't be subsidizing their religion with taxpayer dollars. Separation of church and state.

Announcing the Reasonable Faith 2011 UK tour with Dr. William Lane Craig

September 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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And here's the schedule:

The details of the tour are still being arranged, and the schedule below will be updated as events are finalised.

Monday 17th October 2011
7.30pm *"Does God Exist?"*
Public Debate with Stephen Law, lecturer in Philosophy at Heythrop College, London and Editor of the magazine of the Royal Institute of Philosophy THINK. Arranged by Premier Radio.
Westminster Central Hall, Storeys Gate, London, SW1H 9NH

Tuesday 18th October 2011 **NEW**
12.30 Student Lecture *"The Evidence for God"*
Pippard Lecture Theatre (Sherfield Building), Imperial College London (South Kensington Campus), Exhibition Road, London SW7 2AZ
Refreshments from 12.00. Start promptly at 12.30.
We hope this event will be webstreamed to the world – details will be announced here on bethinking.org when available.

Wednesday 19th October 2011
7.30pm Public lecture on Stephen Hawking's *The Grand Design* followed by a panel response
St. Andrew the Great, Cambridge

Thursday 20th October 2011
7.30pm Debate at the Cambridge Union: *"This House Believes that God is not a Delusion"*
Proposing the motion: William Lane Craig and Peter S. Williams
Opposing the motion: Arif Ahmed and Andrew Copson
The Cambridge Union, Cambridge
[**N.B. This event is open only to members of the Cambridge Union**]

Friday 21st October 2011
7.30pm *"Does God Exist?"*
Debate with Professor Peter Millican, Gilbert Ryle Fellow and Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, Oxford University
The Great Hall, Birmingham University, Edgbaston, B15 2TT

Saturday 22nd October 2011
9.30am – 5.30pm **Bethinking** National Apologetics Day Conference
Westminster Chapel, London
Opening and closing lectures from William Lane Craig

Further lectures from Gary Habermas, John Lennox and Peter J. Williams

Sunday 23rd October 2011

Monday 24th October 2011

7.30pm Lecture *"The Historicity of Jesus' Resurrection"*
Southampton Guildhall, Southampton SO14 7LP

Tuesday 25th October 2011

7.30pm Lecture "*Is God a Delusion?*" A Critique of Dawkins' *The God Delusion*
[or a debate with Richard Dawkins if he should accept the invitation]
Sheldonian Theatre, Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3AZ

Wednesday 26th October 2011

7.30pm *"Does God Exist?"*
Debate with Dr Peter Atkins, former Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University
University Place Lecture Theatre, Manchester University, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

"Why isn't there more of this kind of thing being preached from church pulpits? If there were, I'd go more often and I'd stay awake during the sermon!"
Comment from a self-confessed irregular churchgoer during the 2007 Reasonable Faith Tour.

N.B. All the events will be recorded and will eventually become available to the public.

I note that Craig will be facing Arif Ahmed and Peter Atkins again for re-matches. I hope they do better than they did the first time around…

Herman Cain wins straw poll in Florida!

September 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Washington Times reports.

Excerpt:

> Former Godfather's Pizza CEO Herman Cain won the Presidency 5 straw poll here Saturday, delivering a blow to Texas Gov. Rick Perry's front-runner status and a victory for a candidate who has struggled to transform his grass-roots popularity into strong showings in national polls.
>
> "Tonight's winner is Herman Cain," Florida Gov. Rick Scott announced. "It shows you something: The road to the White House comes through Florida, and it pays to spend time here."
>
> Mr. Cain received 37 percent of the more than 2,600 votes cast.
>
> "Thank you to the Republican voters for this incredible honor of being named the winner of the Presidency 5 straw poll in Florida today," Mr. Cain said. "This is a sign of our growing momentum and my candidacy that cannot be ignored. I will continue to share my message of 'common-sense solutions' across this country and look forward to spending more time in Florida, a critical state for both the nomination and the general election."
>
> The two national front-runners — Mr. Perry and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney — placed second and third. Former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, meanwhile, landed in fourth place; Rep. Ron Paul of Texas was in fifth place; and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, sixth. Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann finished last. (See the poll results here.)
>
> […]Minutes before the vote, Mr. Cain, Mr. Santorum and Mr. Gingrich each personally addressed the crowd Saturday afternoon, while some of the other candidates sent surrogates to speak on their behalf.

I am really disturbed that Romney is so high in the polls. He is not even a Republican, in my opinion. He is more like a moderate Democrat.

Public schools warn coaches for bowing heads at student-led prayer

September 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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It's bad enough that public schools don't educate children well, but they also do things like this.

Excerpt:

> Some football coaches are in trouble for something they did with their players. They said a prayer.
>
> That has the school district taking action.
>
> And the policy, while it may be the law, has plenty of people up in arms.
>
> Every school district has a responsibility to follow the law, and separate private faith from public school. It can be a fine line at times. One crossed in Sumner County, it seems, when the coaches didn't say a word during a student-led prayer, but they did bow their heads.
>
> In a town like Westmoreland, faith and football seem to matter.
>
> "We're just respectful, God-fearing people up here," resident Tony Bentle said.
>
> Bentle called games for Westmoreland High School for 42 years.
>
> "A lot of history. A lot of changes. A lot of football," he said.
>
> So when he, like a lot of people, heard what happened after a recent game at the middle school.
>
> "It actually blew my mind, that we had come to that point," he said. "Nobody in this town is offended if you pray. Nobody."
>
> During a student-originated, student-led prayer, four coaches bowed their heads. They didn't say a word.
>
> But the principal and the district found out.
>
> "We've been telling our principals to kind of be looking for those things, because that is kind of a shift in how things have been done," Sumner County Schools spokesperson Jeremy Johnson said. "It can in no way appear like it's endorsed by Sumner County Schools personnel."

Where do you think this happened? It happened in TENNESSEE. But this is what you can expect from public schools – they are run by the government, and religion is a rival to the government in terms of having conflicting views of what people should be doing with their lives.

Christians really need to get serious about cutting funding for these public schools and voting for politicians who support school choice. Michele Bachmann has the best record on that issue.

In the past 12 months, Greece hasn't fired even one government worker

September 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> "The present government has done absolutely nothing during the last 12 months to speed up privatizations, reduce the public sector or open up closed professions," Athanasios Papandropoulos, a leading economic analyst, told me recently in an interview. "In these 12 months it has not fired even one civil servant. The only thing it is doing is trying to tax the private sector out of existence. Why should we believe that they will do something different now?"
>
> One commentator writing in the newspaper Kathimerini this week made the point even more forcefully: "Whereas more than 1,000 Greeks were losing their jobs in the private sector every day in August, the government was assuring civil servants with lifetime tenure that their job privileges were not in danger."
>
> Structural reforms have been repeatedly announced by Greek officials during the past. Yet nothing has happened. Greece's plans tend to resemble Soviet Five Year Plans: They look good on paper but have absolutely no bearing on reality. Anyone in the government who tries to point this out is forced to resign. Economist Stella Balfousia, the head of the Greek Parliament budget office, had to tender her resignation after her office published a report contradicting the government's official forecasts on debt and deficit.
>
> Privatization is a case in point. Greece will have to raise some €1.7 billion by the end of September from the privatization program and €5 billion by the end of the year from the medium-term fiscal strategy program. Yet in the past year and a half not a single privatization has taken place. The explanation given for this is the low share prices of the listed companies. The real reason is probably that Greek politicians are loath to give up the system of spoils that they have long run through these enterprises, which are staffed by the party faithful in exchange for votes.

Would you like to know who has been running Greece lately? The current party in power is called the "Panhellenic Socialist Movement". They won a majority in 2009. Surprised? Socialism never works.

Iran prepares to execute evangelical Christian pastor for apostasy

September 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Middle East Map
From National Review.

Excerpt:

> The American interfaith delegation — Catholic cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Episcopal bishop John Bryson Chane, and Council on American Islamic Relations director Nihad Awad — who made headlines when they traveled to Tehran and secured the release of the two American hikers last week should pack their bags again. They need to make a return trip. And they better hurry.
>
> As early as this week, the British-based Christian Solidarity Worldwide reports, Iran may execute Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani for refusing to recant his Christian faith.
>
> As my colleague Paul Marshall recently wrote, evangelical Pastor Nadarkhani was sentenced to death for apostasy because he converted to Christianity. He had been tried and found guilty a year ago, even though the court also found that he had never been a practicing Muslim as an adult. Nadarkhani, from Rasht, on the Caspian Sea, converted to Christianity as a teenager.
>
> Iran's Supreme Court, which upheld the verdict in June, ordered that the pastor be given four chances to renounce Christianity and accept Islam. Two hearings for this purpose took place yesterday and today. Two more are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday.
>
> The Pastor had been arrested in 2009 when he tried to register his church with authorities. His defense lawyer Mohammed Ali Dadkhah was himself sentenced in July to nine years imprisonment for "actions and propaganda against the Islamic

> regime.” He is now appealing.

I think the solution to this is to take a tougher foreign policy stand against Iran’s Muslim theocracy.

It is funny to me how many Americans make a fuss over executing convicted cop-killers, but no fuss at all over innocent Christian pastors getting the death penalty. Whenever stories like this come out, I think about how much ink is spilled by Western journalists crying about the convicted criminals, and how little is written about the plight of Christians facing persecution for their faith abroad. But I guess they don’t want to portray Christians as victims, otherwise that might interfere with their “Christians are evil, Muslims are good” narrative.

New edition of British atlas exaggerates global warming effects by 1500%

September 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the radically leftist New York Times. (H/T Dennis Prager)

Excerpt:

> The news release promoting the latest edition of Britain's influential Times Comprehensive Atlas of the World hailed it as "the Greatest Book on Earth."
>
> Not the way climate scientists see it.
>
> "Fiasco" was the word chosen by one scientist in an e-mail to the National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, Colo., alerting his colleagues to erroneous claims made by the publishers of the atlas (whose name derives from The Times of London) about the speed at which Greenland's glaciers are melting.
>
> He also feared that a map in the atlas, along with news accounts repeating an error in the news release, could pull climate scientists into another vortex of damaging controversy.
>
> The news release, echoed by the news media, claimed that Greenland had lost 15 percent of its permanent ice cover from 1999 to 2011. That translates to 125,000 cubic miles, according to a rough calculation by Etienne Berthier, a glaciologist with the University of Toulouse, enough melted ice to raise sea levels three to five feet.
>
> The corresponding map in the atlas itself indicated that significant portions of Greenland's coastline had become ice-free.
>
> Glaciologists, previously bruised by an exaggerated claim about the melting of Himalayan glaciers in a 2007 United Nations report that became fodder for global warming skeptics, mobilized as a truth squad.
>
> On blogs, on radio programs and in newspaper columns, they stated emphatically that Greenland has not lost 15 percent of its ice cover in recent years. The retreat, they said, is more like one-tenth of 1 percent. They were quick to add that nobody at the atlas had consulted them.
>
> "It was a case where, really, the community came together really fast with both barrels blazing," said Mark Serreze, director of the snow and ice center in Colorado. "Everyone had some real bad memories of this whole fiasco that had to do with Himalayan glaciers. No one wanted to see that again."
>
> The glaciers error in the 2007 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on Climate Change, although just a footnote, led to a torrent of criticism focused on climate scientists after it was identified early in 2010.

I blogged about the Himalayan fraud here.

I also wrote before about how Greenland used to be *much less cold* during the Medieval Warming Period.

What does the Bible say about capital punishment?

September 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Note: This post has a twin post which talks about the evidence against capital punishment from science.

First, let's take a look at what the Bible says in general about capital punishment, using this lecture featuring eminent theologian Wayne Grudem.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

A PDF sermon outline is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?
- what did God say to Noah about CP?
- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?
- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?

- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?
- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?
- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the "whole life ethic" and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

You can find more talks by Wayne Grudem here.

What about the woman caught in adultery?

Some people like to bring up the woman caught in adultery as proof that Jesus opposed capital punishment. But that passage of the Bible was added much later after the canon was decided.

Daniel B. Wallace is an eminent New Testament scholar who also teaches at Dallas Theological Seminary, an extremely conservative seminary.

About Dr. Wallace:

> Dr. Daniel B. Wallace
>
> - Professor of New Testament Studies
> - B.A., Biola University, 1975; Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; Ph.D., 1995.

> Dr. Wallace influences students across the country through his textbook on intermediate Greek grammar. It is used in more than two-thirds of the nation's schools that teach that subject. He is the senior New Testament editor of the *NET Bible* and coeditor of the *NET-Nestle Greek-English diglot*. Recently his scholarship has shifted from syntactical and text-critical issues to more specific work in John, Mark, and nascent Christology. However he still works extensively in textual criticism, and has founded The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, an institute with an initial purpose to preserve Scripture by taking digital photographs of all known Greek New Testament manuscripts. His postdoctoral work includes work on Greek grammar at Tyndale House in Cambridge and textual criticism studies at the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster.

And Dr. Wallace writes about the passage in John on Bible.org.

Excerpt:

> One hundred and forty years ago, conservative biblical scholar and Dean of

Canterbury, Henry Alford, advocated a new translation to replace the King James Bible. One of his reasons was the inferior textual basis of the KJV. Alford argued that "a translator of Holy Scripture must be…ready to sacrifice the choicest text, and the plainest proof of doctrine, if the words are not those of what he is constrained in his conscience to receive as God's testimony." He was speaking about the Trinitarian formula found in the KJV rendering of 1 John 5:7–8. Twenty years later, two Cambridge scholars came to the firm conclusion that John 7:53–8:11 also was not part of the original text of scripture. But Westcott and Hort's view has not had nearly the impact that Alford's did.

For a long time, biblical scholars have recognized the poor textual credentials of the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11). The evidence against its authenticity is overwhelming: The earliest manuscripts with substantial portions of John's Gospel (P66 and P75) lack these verses. They skip from John 7:52 to 8:12. The oldest large codices of the Bible also lack these verses: codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both from the fourth century, are normally considered to be the most important biblical manuscripts of the NT extant today. Neither of them has these verses. Codex Alexandrinus, from the fifth century, lacks several leaves in the middle of John. But because of the consistency of the letter size, width of lines, and lines per page, the evidence is conclusive that this manuscript also lacked the *pericope adulterae*. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, also from the fifth century, apparently lacked these verses as well (it is similar to Alexandrinus in that some leaves are missing). The earliest extant manuscript to have these verses is codex Bezae, an eccentric text once in the possession of Theodore Beza. He gave this manuscript to the University of Cambridge in 1581 as a gift, telling the school that he was confident that the scholars there would be able to figure out its significance. He washed his hands of the document. Bezae is indeed the most eccentric NT manuscript extant today, yet it is the chief representative of the Western text-type (the text-form that became dominant in Rome and the Latin West).

When P66, P75, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus agree, their combined testimony is overwhelmingly strong that a particular reading is not authentic. But it is not only the early Greek manuscripts that lack this text. The great majority of Greek manuscripts through the first eight centuries lack this pericope. And except for Bezae (or codex D), virtually all of the most important Greek witnesses through the first eight centuries do not have the verses. Of the three most important early versions of the New Testament (Coptic, Latin, Syriac), two of them lack the story in their earliest and best witnesses. The Latin alone has the story in its best early witnesses.

[…]It is an important point to note that although the story of the woman caught in adultery is found in most of our printed Bibles today, the evidence suggests that the majority of Bibles during the first eight centuries of the Christian faith did not contain the story. Externally, most scholars would say that the evidence for it

> not being an authentic part of John's Gospel is rock solid.But textual criticism is not based on external evidence alone; there is also the internal evidence to consider. This is comprised of two parts: *intrinsic evidence* has to do with what an author is likely to have written; *transcriptional evidence* has to do with how and why a scribe would have changed the text.
>
> Intrinsically, the vocabulary, syntax, and style look far more like Luke than they do John. There is almost nothing in these twelve verses that has a Johannine flavor. And transcriptionally, scribes were almost always prone to add material rather than omit it—especially a big block of text such as this, rich in its description of Jesus' mercy. One of the remarkable things about this passage, in fact, is that it is found in multiple locations. Most manuscripts that have it place it in its now traditional location: between John 7:52 and 8:12. But an entire family of manuscripts has the passage at the end of Luke 21, while another family places it at the end of John's Gospel. Other manuscripts place it at the end of Luke or in various places in John 7.
>
> The *pericope adulterae* has all the earmarks of a pericope that was looking for a home. It took up permanent residence, in the ninth century, in the middle of the fourth gospel.

As this debate between Peter Williams and Bart Ehrman shows, there are only TWO disputed passages in the entire NT that are theologically significant. The long ending of Mark and this adultery passage. A good case can be made for the long ending of Mark, but it's best not to assume it in a debate. The adultery passage is practically impossible to defend as authentic. Dr. Wallace talks about both passages in this Parchment & Pen article. Wallace has also debated Bart Ehrman in the Greer-Heard Forum. What that debate showed is that the New Testament text is actually quite reliable except for those two passages, but it's important to be honest about the two places that are not well supported.

Capital punishment and deterrence: what the research shows

September 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This post has a twin post which talks about the evidence against capital punishment from the Bible.

Why do people support the death penalty? Because research conducted by multiple teams of scholars at multiple universities have shown that capital punishment deters crime.

Excerpt:

> "Science does really draw a conclusion. It did. There is no question about it," said Naci Mocan, an economics professor at the University of Colorado at Denver. "The conclusion is there is a deterrent effect."
>
> A 2003 study he co-authored, and a 2006 study that re-examined the data, found that each execution results in five fewer homicides, and commuting a death sentence means five more homicides. "The results are robust, they don't really go away," he said. "I oppose the death penalty. But my results show that the death penalty (deters) — what am I going to do, hide them?"
>
> Statistical studies like his are among a dozen papers since 2001 that capital punishment has deterrent effects. They all explore the same basic theory — if the cost of something (be it the purchase of an apple or the act of killing someone) becomes too high, people will change their behavior (forego apples or shy from murder).

And specifically:

> • Each execution deters an average of 18 murders, according to a 2003 nationwide study by professors at Emory University. (Other studies have estimated the deterred murders per execution at three, five and 14).
>
> • The Illinois moratorium on executions in 2000 led to 150 additional homicides over four years following, according to a 2006 study by professors at the University of Houston.
>
> • Speeding up executions would strengthen the deterrent effect. For every 2.75 years cut from time spent on death row, one murder would be prevented, according to a 2004 study by an Emory University professor.

In case anyone is wondering what sort of crimes are deterred by the death penalty, you can read this graphic description of a recent death-penalty crime.

What sort of crimes are eligible for the death penalty?

Here's an example of a dealth-penalty eligible crime from the Hartford Courant.

(WARNING: graphic!)

Excerpt:

> A Superior Court jury today sentenced Steven Hayes to death for the murders of Jennifer Hawke-Petit and her daughters, Hayley and Michaela, during a seven-hour home invasion, robbery and arson at their Cheshire home in July 2007.
>
> Outside the courthouse after the verdicts, Hawke-Petit's father, the Rev. Richard Hawke, said "There are some people who do not deserve to live in God's world."
>
> Asked what he had in his heart, Dr. William Petit Jr. struggled with his answer. "….Probably many of you have kids," he said, pausing to choke back tears. "Michaela was an 11-year-old little girl…tortured and killed in her own bedroom, surrounded by her stuffed animals…."
>
> Petit then talked about his daughter Hayley's bright future and her strength and the children that his wife, Jennifer, helped.
>
> "So, I was really thinking of the tremendous loss" during the verdict, Petit said, adding that he was pleased with it, but "mostly I was sad for the loss we have all suffered."
>
> Asked if he thought there'd be closure now, Petit said, "There's never closure. There's a hole…. with jagged edges…that may smooth out with time, but the hole in your heart and the hole in your soul" remains.
>
> "This isn't about revenge," Petit said. "Vengeance belongs to the Lord. This is about justice."
>
> […]The jury sentenced Hayes to death on six counts: killing Hawke-Petit and Michaela and Hayley in the course of a single action; killing a child under the age of 16; killing Hawke-Petit in the course of a kidnapping; killing Hayley in the course of a kidnapping; killing Michaela in the course of a kidnapping; and killing Hawke-Petit in the course of a sexual assault.
>
> […]Hayes, 47, of Winsted, was convicted Oct. 5 of breaking into the Petit home, beating Petit, tying up and torturing the family as Hayes and another man ransacked the home for cash and valuables and tortured the family for seven hours. Testimony during Hayes' trial showed that at one point in the break-in, Hayes forced Hawke-Petit to go to the bank to withdraw money. During that time, according to testimony, Komisarjevsky sexually assaulted Michaela Petit, 11.
>
> When Hawke-Petit and Hayes returned from the bank, Hayes raped and strangled Hawke-Petit. The house was doused with gasoline and set on fire as the intruders fled, testimony showed. Hayley, 17, and Michaela died of smoke inhalation.
>
> […]Prosecutors used the words of Hayes' younger brother Matthew to counter testimony that home-invasion crime was an aberration in Hayes otherwise troubled but basically nonviolent life.
>
> Matthew Hayes portrayed his brother as a conniving, sadistic, violent thief who

> saw Matthew take countless beatings from his brutal father for Steven Hayes' misdeeds. At one point, Steven Hayes held a gun to Matthew's head, according to the statement, which was given to state police after the home invasion.
>
> Examples of Hayes' sadistic behavior toward his brother included hooking Matthew to the garage door by his belt and raising the door up and down, and holding Matthew's hand to a red-hot burner. Matthew said his brother's life of crime was not a result of bad parenting or poor childhood. He said Hayes never learned to take responsibility for his actions.

Sometimes, I think that we have stopped judging others *because* we do not want to be judged *ourselves*. We hope that by not judging anyone, that we will somehow escape being judged by anyone – especially by God himself. The opposition to punishing the guilty is, I think, really just a way of expressing our desire to do away with punishment entirely. We would rather have the freedom to sin with impunity than to protect the victims of sinfulness from harm. We want to escape responsibility for anything we do that harms others.

Dennis Prager has a neat expression from Rabbinical literature that describes the problem with people who are anti-death-penalty: "those who are kind to the cruel, will be cruel to the kind".

I actually consider the death penalty to be an important test of whether a person is a Christian or not, because it shows what they think about the serious of moral crimes, and whether they accept what research says, and what the Bible says, instead of valuing peer approval more than justice. It tells you how seriously a person feels about their own sinfulness. Death penalty supporters don't view sinners as victims – they view victims as victims, and they believe that evil people need to be punished. It's hard for me to see how someone can claim to be a Christian and oppose justice.

Herman Cain in FIRST PLACE in new national poll

September 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Before you read anything, click this link to see how the audience responded to Cain in the last debate. Frank Luntz's focus group went NUTS over Cain's answers.

Ok, now here's the story about new poll from Human Events. (H/T Robert Stacy McCain)

Excerpt:

> A new Zogby poll puts Herman Cain at the top of the Republican field, as the top choice of 28% of poll respondents. (IBOPE Zogby International says the polling sample consists of "all likely voters and of likely Republican primary voters.")
>
> Rounding out the top three are Rick Perry at 18%, and Mitt Romney at 17%. Fourth place goes to Ron Paul at 11%. Paul's the most solid performer in Zogby's polling history for the 2012 GOP race – his 11% might as well be chiseled in stone.
>
> Interestingly, this poll was conducted after the Orlando GOP debate, but *before* Cain won the Florida straw poll. It's a huge surge for Cain, who was polling at 12% just two weeks previously, and was floating at a campaign low of 8% two weeks before that. Aside from that bitter 8% number, Cain has generally done quite well in the Zogby poll, usually good enough for second or third place.
>
> On the other hand, Rick Perry's numbers in the Zogby poll have cratered, falling 19% in just two weeks. His debut last month was also his high-water mark thus far, when Zogby had him at 41%.
>
> Michelle Bachmann has also been slipping steadily, chugging in at 4%. That puts her just below Jon Huntsman, which is the same way she finished the Florida straw poll. Bachmann was actually the leading candidate in Zogby's polling from June 21 through July 25… then she plunged to 9% in the next poll and continued sliding down from there.
>
> Romney's been holding fairly steady in the Zogby poll. He bounces a few points up and down, but seems to hover in the 15-17% range.
>
> Zogby's also got President Obama's approval rating at 42%, with 57% disapproval. That's actually a bit better than his September 5 low of 39-61. His poor approval numbers seem to hold fairly steady, while his disapproval bounces around.

Zogby is considered one of the least reliable polls, but even with plus or minus 8%, it's still quite amazing. I am totally OK with a Cain as the nominee. I would love to see the businessman defeat Obama in head-to-head debates. Obama is a nobody, who has never done a damned thing in his whole life except repeat what his professors told him to repeat. Obama had a rich grandmother and went to expensive private schools. Cain started from nothing and he accomplished everything on his own steam. He's a self-made

man – everything he has he got on his merits.

Quick biography of Herman Cain:

> Cain earned a degree in mathematics from Morehouse College in 1967 and later earned a master's degree in computer science from Purdue University, while working as a mathematician for the Department of the Navy. He then worked as a business analyst for The Coca-Cola Company. In 1968, he married his wife, Gloria and they have two grown children.
>
> In 1977, Herman Cain joined The Pillsbury Company and within three years, at the age of 34, rose to the position of Vice President of Corporate Systems and Services. Cain, reflecting his father's drive to seek greater challenges, then set his sights on a corporate presidency.
>
> With this goal ahead of him, Cain resigned his senior position and started on another career path – the restaurant industry. He started from the ground up by making hamburgers at Pillsbury's Burger King Division. Nine months later, he was managing 400 Burger King units in the Philadelphia region. In 1986, Pillsbury appointed Cain to the presidency of the then financially-troubled Godfather's Pizza, Inc. In 14 short months, the chain regained profitability. In 1988, he led a buyout of the company from Pillsbury.
>
> Cain was elected to the Board of Directors of the National Restaurant Association in 1998. In 1994/1995, he served as Chairman of the Board of Directors. While leading this association, he developed the organization into a pro-business voice via national debates and speeches concerning health care reform, employment policies, and taxation. Following this experience, he was appointed to serve on the Economic Growth and Tax Reform Commission. He then became a senior advisor to the 1996 Dole/Kemp campaign for the Presidency.
>
> Herman Cain continued the responsibilities of President and Chairman of Godfather's Pizza, Inc., while beginning a second career delivering national keynote speeches. Using his messages as the foundation, he created his own leadership consulting company, T.H.E. Inc. (The Hermanator Experience). T.H.E. packages his speaking and develops his products, including books, videotapes and audio tapes, CDs of gospel music, and promotes his keynote speeches. He has authored three books to date on topics ranging from leadership to self-empowerment. In 2002, he became an Executive Lecturer for the Gallup Organization.
>
> In 1996, Cain became CEO and President of the National Restaurant Association (NRA). Cain became the only volunteer chairman to become the full-time CEO and President of the Association while still a member of the Board. Cain headed the NRA in this position for two and a half years. In 1999, Cain sought to leverage his restaurant experience with the technology market and he became CEO and President of RetailDNA. Its mission is to provide innovative marketing solutions to the retail sector.

> Cain remains President and CEO of T.H.E., Inc. and serves on the Boards of Directors for Aquila, Inc., Reader's Digest Association, Inc., and Hallmark Cards Incorporated.

Here's a bit more about Cain's quantitative background, which I think is much harder to succeed at than anything in the liberal arts (except for analytical philosophy).

> Cain was born in Memphis, Tennessee, on December 13, 1945, the son of Lenora (née Davis) and Luther Cain, Jr.His mother was a cleaner and his father was a chauffeur.He was raised in Georgia. He graduated from Morehouse College in 1967 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics and received a Master of Science degree in computer science from Purdue University in 1971,while he was also working full-time in ballistics for the U.S. Department of the Navy. Cain has authored four books: *Leadership is Common Sense* (1997), *Speak as a Leader* (1999), *CEO of SELF* (October 2001), and *They Think You're Stupid* (May 2005). He also authored an article titled "The Intangibles of Implementation" in the technical journal *Interfaces* (Vol. 9, No. 5, 1979, pp. 144-147), published by the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS).

Like Michele, he has excellent academic qualifications, and a better business background than Michele to boot.

The Lonely Conservative also backs Cain, and he writes:

> The only reason Cain wasn't higher in the polls before is that the media didn't give him the time of day. Now that people are getting to know him, they're starting to like him. What's not to like? He's a successful man who clearly loves life, has good ideas and shares the values most of us hold dear. Oh, and did I mention that he's not a professional politician?

McCain notes that conservative Dennis Miller has now endorsed Cain for President.

UPDATE: Robb sent me this Yahoo News article about Cain.

Excerpt:

> Even though he's known as the "pizza" candidate for his years as head of Godfather's Pizza, his background is much broader than that. After he graduated from Morehouse College with a degree in mathematics and a minor in chemistry in 1968, Cain landed a job as a ballistics analyst for the Department of the Navy, where he was responsible for the calculations that ensured battleship rockets hit their targets.
>
> "It's not an easy thing to do," he said.
>
> Cain later completed a master's degree in computer science and entered the business world where he led several companies–most recently Godfather's–and chaired the National Restaurant Association and the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. His résumé–from mathematician and rocket scientist to restaurateur

> and now politician–isn't exactly a typical one for a presidential candidate.
>
> […]After a few caffeine-heavy refills at our corner table, I asked him about President Obama's new effort to raise taxes on the wealthy, and Cain just about blew a blood vessel–especially when I mentioned the part where Obama says it's about "math" not "class warfare."
>
> "Can I be blunt? That's a lie," Cain said, before the sound of his voice began to rise noticeably higher. "You're not supposed to call the president a liar. Well if you're not supposed to call the president a liar, he shouldn't tell a lie. If it's not class warfare, it's highway robbery. He wants us to believe it's not class warfare, oh okay, it's not class warfare. Pick my pockets, because that's what he's doing!"
>
> Cain paused, took a breath and looked at me.
>
> "I'm not mad at you, I just get passionate about this stuff," he said. "I have to tell people because I get so worked up . . . . I'm listening to all this bullsh*t that he's talking about, 'fairness' and 'balanced approach' to get this economy going."
>
> […]As the straw poll and his recent fundraising numbers suggest, Cain's message is resonating with the conservative movement's influential base of tea-party activists; for these supporters his status as a non-career politician with an extensive background in the private sector is nearly as strong a draw as his ideas and policy proposals.

Read the whole thing, this might be our guy in 2012.

Berkeley College Republicans hold affirmative action bake sale

September 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Berkeley College Republicans affirmative action bake sale
From the NY Daily News.

Excerpt:

> A controversy over cupcakes is heating up at UC Berkeley in California, where campus Republicans are planning to hold an affirmative action bake sale on Tuesday.
>
> At the sale, white men will be charged $2 for a baked good, Asians will pay $1.50, Latinos $1, African-Americans 75 cents and 25 cents for Native Americans, KGO-TV reported.
>
> Women will get a 25 cent discount.
>
> "The pricing structure is there to bring attention, to cause people to get a little upset," Campus Republican president Shawn Lewis told the TV station. "But it's really there to cause people to think more critically about what this kind of policy would do in university admissions."
>
> The Campus Democrats immediately slammed the sale, which Lewis said is meant to take a stand against an affirmative action-like bill for the University of California system that is awaiting Gov. Jerry Brown's signature.
>
> On Friday, the student newspaper reported that the student government could

> vote to defund the Republican group over the bake sale. A hearing is scheduled for Sunday on the fiery issue.

So the response of the left is to censor the people who offend their feelings. But that's not all.

Look at the emotional language from the opposition in this CNN article.

Excerpt:

> ASUC President Vishalli Loomba said many students who attended a community meeting Monday night **expressed disgust** that the bake sale would take place.
>
> "**As a woman of color**, when I first saw the event, I was **appalled** someone would post something like this on the Internet — not only a different pay structure, but also to rank the races," she said. "It **trivializes the struggles** that people have been through and **their histories**."

Now, for anyone who wants the research on affirmative action, and why it hurts minorities, I recommend two books by my favorite economist Thomas Sowell. (I also have to mention that he's black, because otherwise the secular leftist commenters will cry racism, which is all they learn to do in four years of college). The first book is "Inside American Education" and the second book is "Affirmative Action Around the World: An Empirical Study", published by Yale University Press. I only recommend the best to my readers. The first book is better for beginners, the second is more academic. Sowell's conclusion? Affirmative action certainly doesn't help minorities, and in many cases it actually *hurts* minorities. You can read a summary of Sowell's findings here.

So on the one hand, you have the whiny secular left woman expressing real racism and sexism ("woman of color"), whining, blaming, and being disgusted and appalled. And on the other hand, you have Hoover Institute economist Thomas Sowell and the Yale University Press.

How Vanderbilt persecutes Christian groups on campus

But there's more! I notice that the secular left is becoming increasingly bold about censoring Christians as well. (H/T Wes from Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> Is Vanderbilt University flirting with the suppression of religion? Yes, according to Carol Swain, a professor at Vanderbilt's Law School.
>
> Specifically, Swain is referring to four Christian student groups being placed on "provisional status" after a university review found them to be in non-compliance with the school's nondiscrimination policy.
>
> Vanderbilt says the student organizations cannot require that leaders share the group's beliefs, goals and values. Carried to its full extent, it means an atheist could lead a Christian group, a man a woman's group, a Jew a Muslim group or vice versa.

> If they remain in non-compliance, the student organizations risk being shut down.
>
> So what's behind this? Flashback to last fall. An openly gay undergrad at Vanderbilt complained he was kicked out of a Christian fraternity. The university wouldn't identify the fraternity, but campus newspaper the "Hustler" reported it was Beta Upsilon Chi. As a result, the school took a look at the constitutions of some 300 student groups and found about a dozen, including five religious groups to be in non-compliance with Vanderbilt's nondiscrimination policy. All were placed on provisional status.
>
> Among the groups threatened with shut down is the Christian Legal Society. It ran afoul with this language from its constitution. "Each officer is expected to lead Bible studies, prayer and worship at chapter meetings." CLS President Justin Gunter told me, "We come together to do things that Christians do together. Pray, and have Bible studies."
>
> […]**Vanderbilt officials refused to be interviewed, and instead released a statement saying in part "We are committed to making our campus a welcoming environment for all of our students." In regard to the offending student organizations, officials said they "continue to work with them to achieve compliance."**

Some people who are Christians give money to Vanderbilt, and other universities. But they shouldn't do that. The only two colleges worth giving money to are Hillsdale College and Grove City College.

“Jobs” bill proposes letting unsuccessful job applicants sue employers

September 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Yahoo News. (H/T Wes from Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> Advocates for the unemployed have cheered a push by the Obama administration to ban discrimination against the jobless. But business groups and their allies are calling the effort unnecessary and counterproductive.
>
> The job creation bill that President Obama sent to Congress earlier this month includes a provision that would allow unsuccessful job applicants to sue if they think a company of 15 more employees denied them a job because they were unemployed.
>
> […]Democratic lawmakers in both the House and the Senate have introduced similar measures. Obama said recently that discrimination against the unemployed makes “absolutely no sense,” especially because many people find themselves out of work through no fault of their own.
>
> […]Lawrence Lorber, a labor law specialist who represents employers, told the paper the president’s proposal “opens another avenue of employment litigation and nuisance lawsuits.”
>
> Louie Gohmert, a Republican representative from Texas, went further. He told the Times that the proposal would send the following message: “If you’re unemployed and you go to apply for a job, and you’re not hired for that job, see a lawyer. You may be able to file a claim because you got discriminated against because you were unemployed.”

Now the question I have for you is this: will this law encourage companies to post more open positions? Or will it discourage companies from posting any new jobs? It seems to me that companies will hire fewer people, since trying to hire people will now carry the treat of a lawsuit from each of the people who does not get the job. Why would a business expose themselves to a lawsuit? They will instead just ship their jobs overseas where they can hire people without being sued.

So it turns out that I was exactly right about how Obama names his bills according to the exact opposite of what they will actually do. The “job creation bill” will destroy jobs. Period.

And I think that sheds light on the policies of this administration. This is why we have double the unemployment rate that we had under George W. Bush. Because we are being governed by people who don’t understand the first thing about business or economics. They have been borrowing massive amounts of cash from future generations and lowering interest rates in order to artificially “goose” the economy. It hasn’t worked, but

they haven’t learned their lesson. They want to make policy that sounds good – policy that gets them applause from their special interest groups – but those people (e.g. – Hollywood celebrities) don’t understand how jobs are created. So why make policy based on their applause? Instead, we should be making laws that tax and regulate businesses *less.* That’s what makes them hire more people.

New trial for father convicted of assault for spanking child

September 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Maritime Provinces in Canada
From Life Site News. (H/T Carolyn)

Excerpt:

> A New Brunswick father who was convicted of assault for spanking his 6-year-old son in 2009 has been granted a re-trial by the New Brunswick Court of Appeal.
>
> The court found that the original trial judge was too "subjective" in determining the severity of the spanking, and pointed out that Canadian law allows corporal punishment as long as the child is between two and 12 years old and only reasonable force is used.
>
> In the original trial, the father told the court that he, his wife and their three children were driving from their home in Durham Bridge to a museum in Fredericton in August 2009 when his 6-year-old son became unruly. The court heard that the boy was screaming in the back seat, kicking the front seats, throwing things and unbuckling his seatbelt. The father said he repeatedly tried to calm the boy down and threatened to spank him if the bad behavior continued.
>
> The mother eventually stopped the car and the father spanked the boy three times on the clothed buttocks, according to his testimony, adding that he slapped his own leg several times to warn the boy before administering the spanking.
>
> Millicent Boldon, who testified at the original trial as a witness of the event, told the court she called the police after seeing the man slap the boy "at least ten

> times," and heard the child yelling, "You're beating me senseless. Stop. You're hurting me."
>
> Another witness, Jim Burns, said he couldn't tell if the father was striking the boy or not, as their backs were turned to him, but testified that he saw 18 "blows" delivered.
>
> But Justice Richard Bell and Justice Wallace Turnbull said in their decision that they overturned the original conviction because the original judge, who is not named in the appeal ruling, erred in giving more credence to witnesses whose testimony was inconsistent than to the father, stating the original judge "applied a subjective standard when she said 'no spanking should go on and on to the point that strangers pick up the phone and call the police.'"
>
> According to Justice Bell, "In this case the trial judge's sole basis for convicting the appellant flowed from the duration of the punishment. In my view she applied a subjective standard by delegating to an onlooker the determination of guilt or innocence."

The disturbing thing about this situation is that the husband and wife did not make any mistake. Normally, I can blame the man for marrying a feminist who opposes moral judgment and discipline of any kind. But in this case, it's not the wife who is to blame. It's some other woman who calls the police. I think it's significant that the caller in question is female and that the judge was female. It's similar to the other case from Quebec in which a daughter and mother got a female lawyer and went to a female judge in order to get the father's grounding of the daughter overturned. This case is much worse than that case, because there was nothing that could be done by the husband and wife to prevent it.

Why would any man get married in a society in which men are not respected as providers or the protectors in the family? Where men don't have the right to try to form the character the children will have, (instead of the public schools, where a huge majority of the teachers are female)? What is the point of marriage for a man if he is just going to be a sperm donor and ATM? Do men have any role in disciplining children who behave in an abusive and selfish manner – especially to their own mothers? If not, then why should a man bother marrying at all, if he is just going to produce children who start out their lives by not respecting their own mothers? Do people not realize that boys who are raised without fathers are exactly the men who are more likely to treat women badly? No man should get involved in a family if all he is going to do is pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to produce children who lack self-control and responsibility. What is the point of that?

By the way, I think it would be very ironic if the woman who made the call were pro-abortion, which is quite likely to be the case, in Canada.

Republican speaker John Boehner urges Iran to spare Christian pastor

September 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Middle East Map
From AFP.

Full text:

> US House Speaker John Boehner urged Iran on Wednesday to spare the life of an Iranian pastor reportedly facing execution for refusing to recant his Christian faith and return to Islam.
>
> “I urge Iran?s leaders to abandon this dark path, spare Yusef Nadarkhani’s life, and grant him a full and unconditional release,” Boehner, a Republican and the number-three US elected official, said in a statement.
>
> Nadarkhani, now in his early 30s, converted from Islam to Christianity at the age of 19 and became a pastor of a small evangelical community called the Church of Iran.
>
> He was arrested in October 2009 and condemned to death for apostasy under Iran’s Islamic Sharia laws, which however allow for such verdicts to be overturned if the convicted person “repents” and renounces his conversion.
>
> After his conviction was upheld by an appeal court in Gilan province in September 2010, Nadarkhani turned to the supreme court. His wife, who was initially sentenced to life imprisonment, was released on appeal.
>
> In July, Nadarkhani’s lawyer told AFP that Iran’s supreme court and overturned the death sentence and sent the case back to the court in his hometown of Rasht — but fresh media reports this week said a provincial court in Gilan had again sentenced him to death.

> “Religious freedom is a universal human right,” Boehner declared, saying the prospects Nadarkhani could be executed “unless he disavows his Christian faith are distressing for people of every country and creed.
>
> “While Iran’s government claims to promote tolerance, it continues to imprison many of its people because of their faith. This goes beyond the law to an issue of fundamental respect for human dignity,” said Boehner.

He’s the top Republican, so his voice carries weight.

Inspector General finds that EPA climate science fails tests

September 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> The Environmental Protection Agency's Inspector General has found that the agency based its 2009 "Endangerment Finding" on a flawed and inadequate assessment of climate science.
>
> The IG's report, released today, provides support to claims by Senator James M. Inhofe, (R-Okla.), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, CEI, and many others that the EPA's justification for its decision to regulate greenhouse gas emissions using the Clean Air Act relied on politically-biased science that does not meet minimal federal Information Quality Act requirements for objectivity.
>
> "The Inspector General's report requested by Senator Inhofe is just the latest evidence that the EPA is relying on junk science, bending the rules, and ignoring its own procedures in order to do whatever the White House wants them to do," said Myron Ebell, Director of CEI's Center on Energy and Environment. "Under President Obama, the EPA has become a lawless agency."
>
> "The EPA avoided rigorous peer review of its endangerment finding Technical Support Document by not classifying it as a 'highly influential' scientific document," said Marlo Lewis, CEI Senior Fellow. "In fact, the TSD may be *the* most influential document claiming scientific content any U.S. government agency has ever produced. It is the scientific rationale for EPA's audacious – and congressionally unauthorized – project to de-carbonize the U.S. economy."
>
> "The EPA failed – or refused – to comply with the legal standards required of federal agencies, standards that are crucial because of serious impact regulations can have on the economy," said Christopher Horner, CEI Senior Fellow.
>
> "This is not the first time an activist administration has been reprimanded for producing junk climate science," Horner added. "As a result of a lawsuit brought by CEI, Senator James Inhofe, and others, the Clinton/Gore administration put a disclaimer on the National Assessment on Climate Change that the report had not been subjected to the requirements of the Federal Information Quality Act."

I notice that the EPA is one of 5 factors listed by John Hawkins in his recent post about the Obama administration's war on job creators.

Excerpt:

> **3) The EPA:** The EPA has been waging a one bureaucracy war against American business and capitalism for a long while, but it's stepping up its attacks to draconian levels under the Obama Administration. The EPA is pushing new greenhouse gas rules that could cost "***7.3 million jobs and add $32.2 billion annually in new regulatory costs.***" Additionally, although environmentalists have claimed it's a "myth," the EPA is indeed planning to tighten its standards for how much **dust can be in the air** to a level lower than you'd find in *"an average windy day in Dodge City."* The EPA's new rules on boilers would wipe out **18% of the workforce in the pulp and paper mills**. If you're a business owner in one of these industries and you see that the EPA is about to begin waging this sort of economic war against you, would you be creating any new jobs?

We need to be very skeptical of government-funded "research" that finds that more government is needed to control more of the private sector.

Should America do anything to save left-wing hikers in Iran?

September 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Middle East Map
From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Imagine you are Shane Bauer, one of two American hikers released from Iranian captivity last week.
>
> On July 31, 2009, you're traversing a mountain trail in Iraqi Kurdistan, near the Iranian border. You're with one of your best friends and your girlfriend. Suddenly a group of Iranian border guards capture you, and the next thing you know you're in Tehran's infamous Evin prison accused of "illegal entry" and "espionage."
>
> Your girlfriend is kept in solitary confinement and you can see her only for an hour each day. The Iranian government prevents you from contacting your family for almost a year, at which point they decide to let your mother visit you for two days at a Tehran hotel.
>
> While your captors treat you humanely and provide three square meals a day, your Iranian co-prisoners aren't so lucky. Every night you hear their screams. Evin is the world's most notorious torture dungeon, where political dissidents (men and women) are routinely raped, beaten and subjected to all manner of physical and psychological abuse.
>
> Ahmad Batebi, a student activist who spent 17 months in solitary confinement there, reports that guards kicked him in the teeth, dunked his head into a toilet "stopped up with feces," and whipped his back and testicles with a cable. When he tried to sleep, they slashed his arms with a knife and rubbed salt in the

> wounds.
>
> […]Following two years of strenuous work on the part of committed American diplomats, you are freed on $500,000 bail, paid by the billionaire Sultan of Oman. And what is the first thing you say upon your release?
>
> **“Two years in prison is too long and we sincerely hope for the freedom of other political prisoners and other unjustly imprisoned people in America and Iran.”**
>
> **Mr. Bauer didn’t name any of the “political prisoners” allegedly held in America’s jails—because there aren’t any. So is this a case of Stockholm Syndrome? Perhaps, but Mr. Bauer likely came to his views while earning a degree in “Peace and Conflict Studies” at Berkeley, if not before. On a website calling for his release, a friend attests to his “strong critic[ism] of the US-led brutal war on Iraq and Israel’s ongoing violence against the Palestinian people.”**
>
> **On Sunday, Mr. Bauer said that he opposes “U.S. policies toward Iran which perpetuate this hostility”—as if American belligerence, and not Iranian tyranny and terror, causes tension between the countries. Though he criticized Tehran’s “brutality,” he gave credence to his captors’ grievances when he said that “every time we complained about our conditions, the guards would immediately remind us of comparable conditions at Guantanamo”—as if the claims of a government that denies the Holocaust have any validity.**
>
> […]A website calling for Mr. Bauer’s release asked, “Why is Iran holding anti-war activists?” The answer eludes Mr. Bauer and his ilk for the same reason that they believe a moral equivalence exists between the Islamic Republic and America: Tehran does not care for international norms of behavior. A student of the Middle East, Mr. Bauer should know that his ordeal at the hands of the Iranian government is but an echo of the crime that inaugurated the Islamic Republic itself—the 1979 seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran and the holding of our diplomats hostage for 444 days.

If I were in charge, I would not have wasted a second or a penny on these three. I’m furious at these people. Why don’t they stay in Iran, if they hate America so much? Hypocrites.

When I think of all the people who are not Americans, but who love America more than these natural-born traitors, it makes me sick.

$737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law

September 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Does Obama give taxpayer money millionaires and billionaires?
As if Solyndra's $535 million loan wasn't enough, now we find out about where more of the stimulus spending went.

Story from the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> Companies like First Solar, SolarReserve, SunPower Corporation and Abengoa SA have already, collectively, received billions in loans through Obama administration stimulus programs to build solar power plants in the southwestern United States.
>
> Yet each, with the exception of the privately held SolarReserve, has seen its stock price hammered at the same time it was lobbying the Obama administration and Congress for billions in loan guarantees.
>
> The Hill newspaper reported Wednesday that the Santa Monica, Calif.-based SolarReserve has secured a $737 million loan guarantee from the Department of Energy for a Nevada solar project.
>
> That company has ties to George Kaiser, the Oklahoma billionaire who raised $53,500 for President Obama's campaign in 2008. Through his Argonaut Private Equity firm, Kaiser holds a majority stake in Solyndra.
>
> Argonaut has a voting stake on SolarReserve's board of directors in the person of Steve Mitchell, who also serves on Solyndra's board of directors.
>
> Additionally, Federal Election Commission records made available by the Center for Responsive Politics show that SolarReserve board member James McDermott has contributed $61,500 to various Democratic campaigns since 2008, including $30,800 to Obama's presidential election campaign.
>
> McDermott's U.S. Renewable Energy Group has a significant financial stake in SolarReserve, and has drawn scrutiny for its ties with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid — and for reportedly driving green jobs to China.
>
> And Lee Bailey, a fellow SolarReserve board member and U.S. Renewables Group

> investor, has donated $21,850 since 2008 to Democratic candidates including President Obama, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, California Sen. Barbara Boxer and then-presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.
>
> SolarReserve's board of directors also includes Jasandra Nyker of Pacific Corporate Group Asset Management, where former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law, Ronald Pelosi, holds a leadership position.
>
> Other data from the Center for Responsive Politics show that SolarReserve paid $100,000 in lobbying fees in 2009 to the Podesta Group. That firm's principal, Tony Podesta, is the brother of John Podesta — who ran Barack Obama's presidential transition team.

I hope everyone is now very clear on what we got for these three trillion-and-a-half trillion dollar deficits. And very clear on why unemployment went *up* and not *down*.

Public school teacher penalizes students for saying “bless you” after sneezes

September 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From NBC News.

Excerpt:

> The common practice of saying “God bless you” after someone sneezes is a part of American culture.
>
> But it sparked a new controversy at a Bay Area high school this week.
>
> Teacher Steve Cuckovich docked his students scores if after they said “bless you” in the middle of class. He says talking of any kind is disruptive and takes time away from class.
>
> Cuckovich teaches health at William C. Wood High School in Vacaville.
>
> “The blessing doesn’t make any sense anymore,” Cuckovich told the Fox affiliate in Sacramento.“When you sneeze in the old days, they thought you were dispelling evil spirits out of your body. So they were saying, ‘God bless you,’ for getting rid of evil spirits. But today, what you’re doing doesn’t really make any sense.”

I’m not at all surprised that a public school teacher would impose his secular point of view on his students, and using the power of the grading pen to make it stick. People on the secular left are very likely not to want to engage in critical thinking or debate with those who dissent from their view. They often use the power of the state to drum out any alternative source of values from individuals, especially religion.

Child adopted by lesbians takes drugs to delay puberty

September 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the West Australian. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> An American boy with lesbian parents is taking hormone blocking treatment to stop him going through puberty as a boy as part of his quest to become a girl.
>
> Thomas Lobel, who calls himself Tammy, wears dresses and lives as a girl.
>
> His lesbian mothers, who adopted him when he was two, have been criticised but say the decision is his.
>
> The Daily Mail reported that Thomas' parents, Pauline Moreno and Debra Lobel, say he is now much happier.
>
> Thomas liked to read Wonder Woman comic books and play with dolls.
>
> By the age of seven, after threatening genital mutilation on himself, he was diagnosed with gender identity disorder.
>
> "As soon as we let him put on a dress, his personality changed from a very sad kid who sat still, didn't do much of anything to a very happy little girl who was thrilled to be alive," Pauline told CNN.
>
> Thomas has now started taking the hormone-blocking drugs.
>
> The hormone-suppressant will postpone the 11-year-old developing broad shoulders, deep voice and facial hair.The diagnosis has been hard to accept for Tammy's parents, but they insist their sexuality has nothing to do with it.

This reminds me of the story of the gay Duke University official and his adopted son. That was much worse.

Comments to this post will be filtered.

Republicans will introduce bill to de-fund the pro-abortion UNFPA

September 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Renee Ellmers
From Life News.

Excerpt:

> Legislation that would cut federal taxpayer funding for the pro-abortion UNFPA agency will get a hearing in a House committee next week, after Republicans put forward the bill following a vote from people saying they wanted it.
>
> Spurred on by a public vote in which pro-life advocates said cutting funding for the pro-abortion UNFPA agency was their top desire, Congressional Republicans filed legislation over the summer to yank millions from the UN organization.
>
> Rep. Renee Ellmers, of North Carolina, introduced the bill and House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a pro-life Florida Republican, has announced a markup of H.R. 2059 will take place Wednesday.
>
> "This is going to save American taxpayers $400 million dollars over a 10 year period and it's just another part of what we're doing here in Washington to cut wasteful spending that we see happening," Ellmers said in a video introducing the bill. "And I am very excited to be part of this program and each week we will have more cuts coming forward."
>
> The legislation would result in cutting the funding President Barack Obama put in place for the UNFPA, an agency that promotes abortion and works hand-in-hand with family planning officials in China enforcing the one-child, forced-abortion policy.
>
> After Obama restored the funding, Rep. Chris Smith tried to offer an amendment to revert the language back to the original ban on such funding, but House Democrats blocked him from doing so. Then, pro-life Sen. Roger Wicker offered a similar amendment but the Senate defeated it.
>
> […]Since fiscal year 1985, a policy known as "the Kemp-Kasten Amendment" has

> been included in every foreign aid appropriations bill. Kemp-Kasten specifies that funds may not be “made available to any organization or program which, as determined by the President of the United States, supports or participates in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization.” Citing Kemp-Kasten, Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush cut off funding to the UNFPA from 1986 to 1993.
>
> President Bill Clinton resumed funding for UNFPA at the beginning of his presidency, but signed a foreign aid appropriations bill for FY99 that zeroed out funding for UNFPA.
>
> Citing Kemp-Kasten, President George W. Bush cut off funding to UNFPA for fiscal years 2002-2008. In 2008 Secretary of State Colin Powell explained the reason for withholding funds saying, “UNFPA’s support of, and involvement in, China’s population-planning activities allows the Chinese government to implement more effectively its program of coercive abortion. Therefore, it is not permissible to continue funding UNFPA at this time.”

Republicans aren’t giving up on the the twin goal of reducing spending AND protecting the unborn from violence.

UK police force man not to display Bible DVDs in his cafe

October 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From UK Daily Mail. (H/T Adina via Mary)

Excerpt:

> The Salt and Light cafe in Blackpool has for years repeatedly played the entire 26-hour-long Watchword Bible, a 15-DVD set produced in America in which a narrator reads the whole of the New Testament, on a small flatscreen TV on the back wall.
>
> The sound is turned down but the words flash on to the screen against a series of images.
>
> […]Mr Murray said the two uniformed officers from Lancashire Constabulary arrived at lunchtime on Monday, the cafe's busiest time of day. WPC June Dorrian, the community beat manager, told him there had been a complaint and he was breaching the Public Order Act 1986.
>
> Mr Murray said: 'I told them that all that appeared on the screen were the words of the New Testament. There is no sound, just the words on the screen and simple images in the background of sheep grazing or candles burning. I thought there might be some mix-up but they said they were here to explain the law to me and how I had broken it.
>
> 'I said, "Are you really telling me that I am facing arrest for playing the Bible?" and the WPC fixed me with a stare and said, "If you broadcast material that causes offence under the Public Order Act then we will have to take matters further. You cannot break the law." '
>
> Mr Murray, who worked in a homeless shelter for five years before taking over the cafe three months ago, said he realised the only way to appease the police was to pull the plug on the Bible.
>
> 'I was worried about being handcuffed and led out of the shop in front of my customers. It wouldn't have looked good so I thought it was better to comply. It felt like a betrayal. They left the shop and told me they would continue to monitor if we were displaying inflammatory material. At no stage had they spoken to me like I was a law-abiding citizen trying to earn a living. I felt like a criminal.'
>
> […]Lancashire Police said they had received a complaint on Saturday afternoon from a female customer who was 'deeply offended' by the words she had seen on the screen.
>
> A spokesman said they were 'duty bound' to respond to the complaint and had concluded the cafe could be in breach of Section 29E of the Public Order Act,

> which warns that people who play images or sounds that stir up hatred against homosexuals could be guilty of an offence.
>
> However, it also says criticism of sexual conduct ‘shall not be taken of itself to be threatening or intended to stir up hatred’.

I think that if I went in to most Christian churches today and asked them whether Christianity was more about telling people the truth or about making people feel good, that they would think it was the latter.In fact, I can believe that the woman who complained was probably a straight Christians who had simply reinterpreted Christianity to mean “the voice of God speaking in my head” or “my emotions and intuitions”. I have seen many Christian women deny offensive Bible verses, deny Hell, and deny other passages, and yet still claim to be Christians. We aren’t doing a good enough job of separating out the moral claims of the Bible and setting them against our emotions, intuitions and feelings. And I think the reason why this happens is because the church presents the Bible in a feminized way – Christianity as personal preference, Christianity as life enhancement. Instead of presenting the words of the Bible, and then the evidence from outside the Bible. E.g. – the words against same-sex marriage, then the evidence against same-sex marriage. The words against abortion, then the evidence against abortion. The words for capital punishment and then the evidence for capital punishment.

How about showing this instead:

Or this?

Those should be real winners in the UK, because the bad guys are both British.

Sometimes, I think that Christians have their heads so stuck in Christian culture that they are unaware of how to present Christianity to non-Christians. Throwing Bible verses in someone’s face is not the right way to go. Instead of showing Bible verses, the cafe owner should switch to showing debates about God’s existence, the resurrection, the reliability of the Bible, abortion, and same-sex marriage. That would be more practical, and would be less inflammatory that Romans 1, since it concentrates on claims of fact and evidence.

Chile’s transition from Social Security to private retirement accounts

October 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

South America Map

Herman Cain favors transitioning the existing Social Security program to a privatized model, and he cites Chile as an example of how it can be done. Did it work in Chile? Let’s find out.

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Chile’s system, enacted in 1981, took government out of the pension business altogether and replaced it with a system of personal retirement accounts.
>
> It’s one of most successful fiscal reforms in history.
>
> It outperforms Social Security on returns, yielding about 9.23% compounded annual returns over 30 years under private management.
>
> That means Chilean retirees take home pension checks four times what they would have gotten if they had remained in their old Social Security system.
>
> Workers chose the types of investments, the level of risk, the size of their contributions — 10% to 20% — and the day they intended to retire.
>
> Unlike Social Security, accounts are by law property. A worker who dies early can will his account to heirs.
>
> […]Moving from public to private accounts spooks some because of the

> continuing cash-flow need to pay out retirees and people nearing retirement.
>
> Chile solved this problem by issuing bonds for 40% of its transition, selling off state assets, and temporarily using a small portion of the old payroll tax.
>
> Because Chile's architect, Labor Secretary Jose Pinera, motivated the government to make it work, the size of government was cut too. The move boosted savings and economic growth — increasing the country's tax base.
>
> As for the other concern —that fund managers would steal the money or make risky investments — that too has never happened in the well-regulated Chilean system, where private managers must invest their funds broadly in easy-to-understand investments, and are subject to strict reporting requirements and supervision.
>
> Would it work here? Chilean economists, such as Pinera, believe it would. Something similar has already been done in more than 30 countries, most of which were in far worse financial shape when they started.
>
> Incredibly, the benefits of this privatization do not stop at just the retirees themselves. The private pension pools have given Chile the widest, deepest capital market in Latin America. That turned the country into an economic powerhouse.
>
> After the program began, per-capita incomes soared — from $4,000 in 1981 to $17,000 in 2010. GDP grew for nearly 20 years at a 7% average, while joblessness plunged from nearly 30% to around 5% today.
>
> Most Tea Party-friendly of all, private pensions meant Chile's savings rose to 100% of GNP, leaving Chile with no net debt. In 1981, its debt was north of 100% of GNP.

More about Chile's privatized retirement program from IBD.

Excerpt:

> Instead of paying a 12.4% Social Security tax as we do here, Chilean workers must pay in 10% of their wages (they can send up to 20%) to one of several conservatively managed and regulated pension funds. From the accumulated savings, they get a life annuity or make programmed withdrawals (inheriting any funds left over).Over the last three decades these accounts have averaged annual returns of 9.23% above inflation. By contrast, U.S. Social Security pays a 1% to 2% (theoretical) return, and even less for new workers.
>
> […]In 2005, New York Times reporter John Tierney worked out his own Social Security contributions on the Chilean model and found that his privatized pension would have been $53,000 a year plus a one-time payout of $223,000. The same contributions paid into Social Security would have paid him $18,000.

We don't have to do things the old way. The old way just leads to more debt, and more tax hikes, and, as surely as night follows day, higher unemployment – as capital moves

outside of our country for greener pastures.

Will McGuinty revive plan for no-parental-notification, no-opt out sex education?

October 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remember a while when I blogged about the Ontario Liberal government's plan to push sex education onto kindergarden and elementary children, with no parental notification and no opt-out option for parents? The end result of that was that Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal leader, backed down. But, apparently there is an election going on up there, and McGuinty might get another chance to appease his gay-rights special interest groups with some new education proposals put forward by the Toronto District School Board.

Here's Michael Coren explaining: (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Brian Lilley interviews a Toronto pastor about McGuinty's plan: (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Prince Albert now explains what's in the proposed standards:

Excerpt:

> As the Ontario election campaign moved into the final two weeks Friday, Dalton McGuinty, the self-proclaimed education premier, was accused of keeping parents in the dark about a new policy to combat homophobia in schools.
>
> The Toronto District School Board developed a 219-page curriculum resource guide for the new school year to cover kindergarten through Grade 12 called "Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism."
>
> Among other things, it recommends schools not advise parents when teachers will be introducing concepts such as gender discrimination, homophobia and non-traditional families in the classroom.
>
> […]The school board guide recommends schools not send home notes or permission slips before starting any class work on lesbian, gay, bisexual transgendered or queer issues.
>
> If a school treats sexual orientation or anti-homophobia differently from the other curriculum topics "this could be construed as discriminatory practice," concludes the curriculum guide.
>
> The guide also says there should be no accommodations for parents who want their children exempted from the anti-homophobia discussions because of religious reasons or for teachers who feel it contradicts their beliefs.
>
> "If a parent asks for his or her child to be exempted for any discussions of LGBTQ family issues as a religious accommodation, this request cannot be made because it violates the human rights policy," states the guide.

I think that this proposal will become Ontario law if the Ontario Liberal Party wins the election on October 6th.

McGuinty is also pushing the cap-and-trade carbon tax, which will wreck the Canadian

economy even more by raising the price of electricity even higher than he already has raised it, with his existing green energy policies.

New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official

October 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBS News. (H/T Director Blue)

Excerpt:

> Late Friday, the White House turned over new documents in the Congressional investigation into the ATF "Fast and Furious" gunwalking scandal.
>
> The documents show extensive communications between then-ATF Special Agent in Charge of the Phoenix office Bill Newell – who led Fast and Furious – and then-White House National Security Staffer Kevin O'Reilly. Emails indicate the two also spoke on the phone. Such detailed, direct communications between a local ATF manager in Phoenix and a White House national security staffer has raised interest among Congressional investigators looking into Fast and Furious. Newell has said he and O'Reilly are long time friends.
>
> ATF agents say that in Fast and Furious, their agency allowed thousands of assault rifles and other weapons to be sold to suspected traffickers for Mexican drug cartels. At least two of the guns turned up at the murder scene of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry last December.
>
> The email exchanges span a little over a month last summer. They discuss ATF's gun trafficking efforts along the border including the controversial Fast and Furious case, though not by name. The emails to and from O'Reilly indicate more than just a passing interest in the Phoenix office's gun trafficking cases. They do not mention specific tactics such as "letting guns walk."
>
> […]Among the documents produced: an email in which ATF's Newell sent the White House's O'Reilly an "arrow chart reflecting the ultimate destination of firearms we intercepted and/or where the guns ended up." The chart shows arrows leading from Arizona to destinations all over Mexico.
>
> […]Congressional investigators for Republicans Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) and Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) have asked to interview O'Reilly by September 30. But the Administration informed them that O'Reilly is on assignment for the State Department in Iraq and unavailable.

Director Blue has posted some of the e-mails featuring ATF Special Agent in Charge of the Phoenix office William D. Newell, Obama's homeland security adviser John Brennan and then-White House National Security Staffer Kevin M. O'Reilly.

He concludes:

> It's no longer a question of whether Eric Holder knew; it's whether President Obama knew and approved of Operation Fast and Furious. The rogue ATF

> operation sent thousands of military-grade weapons to Mexican drug cartels. And at least two of the weapons were discovered at the scene of last December's killing of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry.

When will the rest of the mainstream media (non-CBS) start to cover this story? Or are they afraid to? Is this too big for them to cover? Are they afraid of the White House exerting pressure on them?

Related posts

- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference
- Homeland Security Secreary Janet Napolitano to counter global warming threat
- Obama administration investigates Wisconsin pro-lifers
- Homeland Security head says that "the system worked"
- Democrats will push amnesty to give 12-20 million illegal aliens citizenship
- Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?
- Michele Bachmann calls for Napolitano to resign
- Civil rights commission finds that Obama administration has racist double standard
- Is Obama's Department of Justice enabling voter registration fraud?
- Department of Justice won't purge dead or ineligible voters from roll
- Is the Department of Justice refusing to defend the voting rights of whites?
- Obama's attorney general has his head in the sand on national security
- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training
- Obama administration threatens South Carolina for saving prisoner's lives

Bradford Wilcox: Is cohabitation a bigger problem for society than divorce?

October 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bradford Wilcox answers questions about cohabitation and divorce in the Washington Post.

The intro:

> A new report says cohabitation has replaced divorce as the biggest source of instability for American families. Brad Wilcox, the report's author, chatted about why this is.

Here are some of the questions:

> Can you talk a little about the reasons behind the shift toward cohabitation, rather than marriage?
>
> What is the definition of "cohabitation"? Is there a difference in the study between a child living with biological parents who are unmarried or when one adult in the house is a non-biological parent (boyfriend or girlfriend). I can see the disadvantage for kids living in a household where mom or dad is living with a girlfriend or boyfriend. From my personal experience the whole situation rests on the mother. I know women who have not made the best choices in life and invite boyfriends to live with them and this causes instability in home for the kids. I guess I'm wondering if it is really the type of cohabitation or the reasons behind the couple living together unmarried that causes bad outcomes for the children involved?
>
> How does the problem of cohabitation and its detrimental effects on children correlate with social class? It is my impression that cohabitation is less common in middle-class households with college-educated parents. Isn't there something of a vicious cycle with parents not marrying because of low incomes, so their children aren't exposed to marriage and the resulting improved incomes and other benefits? It seems that this may be contributing to the income inequality that is widely reported in the US.
>
> Were you able to sift families based on the length of cohabitation? It seems unlikely to me that a family with parents cohabiting for 10 years with children would be less stable than a family with parents married for 10 years. I would buy that a family with a serial monogamist parent who lives with each partner for a short amount of time (under 5 years) would be quite unstable.
>
> Mr. Wilcox, what does your research (or what is your opinion) regarding those families in which the married couple functions day-to-day essentially as a divorced couple whilst living under one roof? Does research favor parents remaining married and physically under one roof with irreconcilable differences

> for the sake of children, or is it healthier for the parents to divorce and live physically separately?
>
> Dr. Wilcox, I'm curious what your research indicates about the stability of children in families with two moms or two dads who are not able to get married in their state. Do you find that this type of co-habitation is any stronger/weaker than not? Do civil unions (where applicable) make an adequate substitute for marriage in this instance? Regards
>
> Is "worse" meant to suggest that cohabitation is simply more prevalent than divorce, or does it really mean there is evidence that cohabitation leads to worse outcomes (of some kind) for children than divorce does?

And here's a sample:

> **Correlation vs. causation on cohabitation**
>
> Q. It seems to me that those negative consequences of cohabitation are derived not from the cohabitation itself but from social trends in communities that tend to cohabit. Is encouraging people to marry really the answer, or does the answer lie in fighting drug abuse, child abuse, and neglect within the communities that most experience it?
>
> A. Good question.

> It certainly is the case that cohabiting couples who have children tend to be less educated, poorer, and less committed to their relationship than couples who have children in marriage.
>
> So one reason that children are less likely to thrive in cohabiting families than in intact, married families is that their parents, or the adults in their lives, have fewer of the resources that they need to be good parents.
>
> But the best research on cohabitation and child well-being controls for factors like income, education, and race/ethnicity. And even after you control for these factors, you still find that children in cohabiting families are significantly more likely to suffer from depression, delinquency, drug use, and the like.
>
> For instance, one study from the University of Texas at Austin found that teens living in a cohabiting stepfamily were more than twice as likely to use drugs, compared to teens living in an intact married family–even after controlling for differences in income, education, race, and family instability.
>
> In fact, children in cohabiting stepfamilies did worse on this outcome than children in stable single-parent families.
>
> Research like this suggests to me that cohabitation has an independent negative impact on children, above and beyond the factors that make some Americans more likely to cohabit with children in the first place.
>
> So the answer, I think, is for the nation to improve our children's home environments in a variety of ways–from improving our nation's educational

> system to improving job opportunities to discouraging parents from cohabiting.
>
> **Cohabitation vs. single mothers**
>
> Q. How does cohabitation compare with children brought up by single mothers?
>
> A. The *Why Marriage Matters* report focused in its first two editions on divorce and single parenthood.
>
> But as I was reviewing the literature on families for this third edition with my colleagues, I was struck by this fact:
>
> On many outcomes, children in bio- and step-cohabiting families look a lot like children in single-parent families, even after controlling for socioeconomic differences.
>
> So even though kids in cohabiting families have access to two adults they don't generally do better than kids in single-parent families except on economic outcomes.
>
> I think this is probably because cohabiting relationships tend to be characterized by less commitment, less sexual fidelity, more domestic violence, more instability, and more insecurity, compared to married relationships. Needless to say, these kinds of relationship factors don't foster an ideal home environment for children.
>
> And it's also very clear from the research that kids living in a stable, single-parent home are less likely to be abused than kids living in a cohabiting household with an unrelated adult male.

I think this is a great area for Christians to be doing quality research in, because it helps us to be able to speak with authority on marriage and family issues when we have evidence. I think people take the decision to have sex, move in together, and marry lightly because they aren't aware of the consequences of having things not work. If they knew the consequences up front, then they might put more effort into reading about how to do things right. A friend of mine on the East coast has been chatting with me about how little effort people there put into preparing themselves for marriage, selecting a mate and studying marriage and parenting. It's scary. Even in my office a lot of people are doing this thinking there is nothing wrong with it… how did we get so far away from chastity and courting?

Herman Cain on Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace

October 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My Dad alerted me about Herman Cain being on Fox News – he likes Herman Cain best.

Here's a summary from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Presidential candidate Herman Cain, who's now polling third in the latest Fox News poll, joined "Fox News Sunday" to discuss his recent success and his strategy for winning the Republican nomination.
>
> Anchor Chris Wallace asked Cain what's the reason behind his rise in the polls. The candidate answered, "The voice of the people is much more powerful than the voice in the media. As you know, some of the media outlets have been trying to make the Republican contest, a contest between two people, two governors. The people said something differently."
>
> The other big political story this week was whether or not New Jersey Governor Chris Christie will enter the presidential race. Christie, who has garnered enthusiasm over the way he has governed his state, has a few positions that some conservatives might have a problem with, which include his positions on global warming and immigration.
>
> The candidate had this to say about the New Jersey governor's chances, "I think that is absolutely a liability for him if he gets in the race." He continued, "Most of the conservatives believe that we should enforce our borders. They do not believe people should be here with documentation. They do not believe global warming is a crisis or a threat."
>
> Cain caused a bit of controversy this week when he said that many in the African American community are "brainwashed" when it comes to the political process. He defended his comments and pointed to something that President Obama said just last week.
>
> "That's not as insensitive as the president of the United States standing in front of a major black audience, the Congressional Black Caucus, and scolding them because his policies have failed the country, his policies have failed black people. That's more insensitive — that's more insulting to me than me using a term brainwashed."

I can tell that Chris Wallace likes him – because he gives these direct answers to all his questions. It's so nice to see a businessman answer questions. You can really see the problem solving approach coming through from his Masters degree in computer science at Purdue University.

My Facebook friend Walter posted this Wall Street Journal article from last week about Cain.

I read it, and here is the best bit:

> Though he's got the governorship credential, Mr. Romney's emphasis in this campaign is on his private-sector experience. It's good, despite the knock on Bain Capital's business model. But measured by résumés, Herman Cain's looks deeper in terms of working on the private sector's front lines.
>
> […]In the late 1970s, Mr. Cain was recruited from Coca-Cola in Atlanta, his first job in business, to work for Pillsbury in Minneapolis. His rise was rapid and well-regarded. He joined the company's restaurant and foods group in 1978 as director of business analysis. In the early 1980s, Pillsbury sent him to learn the hamburger business at a Burger King in Hopkins, Minn. Then they assigned him, at age 36, to revive Pillsbury's stumbling, franchise Burger King business in the Philadelphia region. He succeeded. According to a 1987 account in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Pillsbury's then-president Win Wallin said: "He was an excellent bet. Herman always seemed to have his act together."
>
> […]Put it this way: The GOP nominee is running against the incumbent president. Unlike the incumbent, Herman Cain has at least twice identified the causes of a large failing enterprise, designed goals, achieved them, and by all accounts inspired the people he was supposed to lead. Not least, Mr. Cain's life experience suggests that, unlike the incumbent, he will adjust his ideas to reality.
>
> Herman Cain is a credible candidate. Whether he deserves to be president is something voters will decide. But he deserves a serious look.

By the way, I love the 9% sales tax. I want *everyone* to pay *something* so *everyone* has skin in the game – even criminals who don't declare incomes should have to pay sales tax, at least. By the way, Cain also backs a phased-in privatization of Social Security for younger workers, and he uses Chile as a model – because they've done it. You can read about how well Chile was able to do it in this previous post of mine.

Related posts

- Who is Herman Cain and why is he in first place in this national poll?
- Herman Cain wins straw poll in Florida!
- Herman Cain gaining momentum with the Tea Party conservatives
- The top article on National Review is about Herman Cain
- Video of the first Republican presidential debate in South Carolina

Where’s Dawkins? Debating or promoting his books to his gullible followers?

October 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

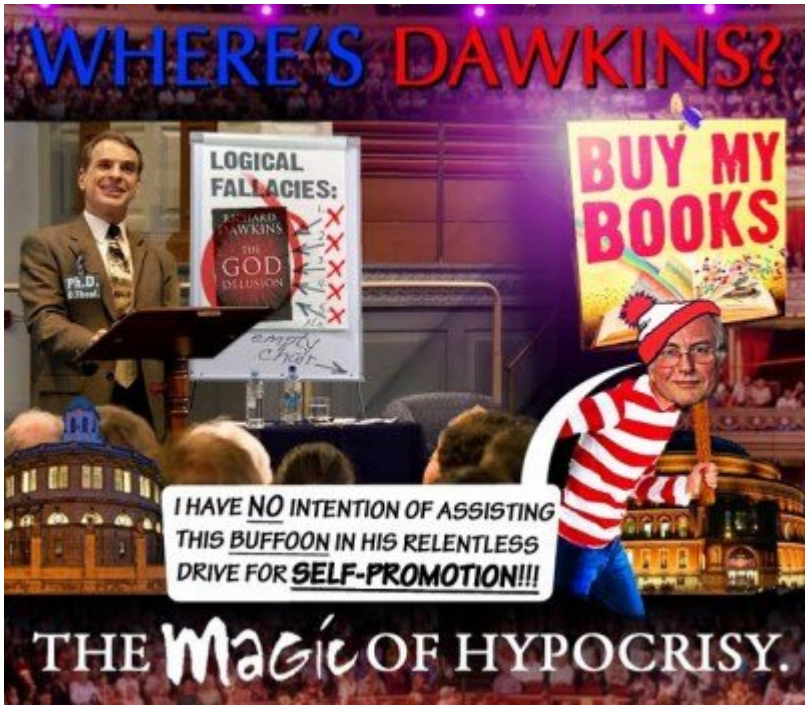

BirdieUpon asks: Where's Dawkins?

So the top defender of Christianity operating today is going to be doing a speaking/debating tour of the UK. The organizers have asked Richard Dawkins to come out and defend atheism, but Dawkins is not willing to discuss atheism with anyone who isn’t… already an atheist.

What is Dawkins doing instead of debating?

From BirdieUpon’s blog. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

> Craig has not sought to debate Dawkins. He’s responded to invitations from independent organisations who have tried to set this up – in fact he’s never set up a single debate, himself, in his life!
>
> Best of all, Dawkins will actually be spending October… ***self-promoting!*** He’ll be charging around the country and in TV studios plugging his new book *The Magic of Reality: How We Know What’s Really True*! In fact, Dawkins will be promoting it in the Royal Albert Hall on October 19th, while Craig is in Cambridge delivering a lecture on Stephen Hawking’s *The Grand Design*.
>
> Dawkins’ calendar, on his website, indicates that October 25th (the night of Dawkins’ challenge to fill Oxford Sheldonian Theatre’s empty debating chair) is free for him. It also, however, mentions a movie-screening in New York, so one hopes Dawkins isn’t planning on fleeing the country!

William Lane Craig's speaking and debating tour of the UK is almost upon us, and now might be a good time to review some of his debates.

Dr. Craig normally debates two topics: 1) Does God exist? and 2) Did Jesus rise from the dead?

Does God Exist?

For the question of God's existence, he uses 5 arguments.

You can see them being used in this debate against Christopher Hitchens:

Did Jesus Rise from the dead?

For the question of Jesus' resurrection, he uses 1 argument based on four "minimal facts", which are all accepted by the majority of scholars.

You can see them being used in this debate against Bart Ehrman:

If you watch both of these, that should prepare you for the news of the UK debates when it comes out. The tour starts on October 17th and will go until October 26th. You can learn more about Dr. Craig from this radio interview that he just did on the Unbelievable radio show, with Justin Brierley.

Mexico considers converting lifelong marriage to 2-year contracts

October 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the radically leftist MSNBC.(H/T Steven)

Excerpt:

> Mexico City lawmakers want to help newlyweds avoid the hassle of divorce by giving them an easy exit strategy: temporary marriage licenses.
>
> Leftists in the city's assembly — who have already riled conservatives by legalizing gay marriage — proposed a reform to the civil code this week that would allow couples to decide on the length of their commitment, opting out of a lifetime.
>
> The minimum marriage contract would be for two years and could be renewed if the couple stays happy. The contracts would include provisions on how children and property would be handled if the couple splits.
>
> "The proposal is, when the two-year period is up, if the relationship is not stable or harmonious, the contract simply ends," said Leonel Luna, the Mexico City assemblyman who co-authored the bill.
>
> "You wouldn't have to go through the tortuous process of divorce," said Luna, from the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution, which has the most seats in the 66-member chamber.
>
> Luna says the proposed law is gaining support and he expects a vote by the end of this year.
>
> Around half of Mexico City marriages end in divorce, usually in the first two years.
>
> The bustling capital, one of the world's largest cities, is much more liberal than the rest of the country, where the divorce rate is significantly lower although on the rise.
>
> Abortion is legal in Mexico City, while the Supreme Court ruled this week to uphold state laws in Baja California that say life begins at conception.
>
> Leftist Mayor Marcelo Ebrard, who angered the Catholic Church when he made Mexico City the first Latin American city to legalize gay marriage in late 2009, announced this month he would soon step down to run for president.

More from the CBC.

Excerpt:

> "Two years is the minimum amount of time it takes to know and appreciate what life is like as a couple," Lizbeth Rosas, who is spearheading the proposed

> legislation on behalf of the Party of the Democratic Revolution, said to BBC Mundo in Spanish.
>
> “If you renew, that means you have an understanding with your partner, and that you are clear on the rules of the relationship.”
>
> […]The proposal has sparked a furor among conservative politicians in Mexico city, who previously failed to prevent gay and lesbian couples from obtaining marriage licenses.

Yes, the PRD is a socialist party. Mexico has TWO major socialist parties – the PRD is the more left-wing than the PRI, though.

New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood

October 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Denny Rehnberg
Story from Life News.

Excerpt:

> The battle over yanking federal taxpayer funding of the Planned Parenthood abortion business is back in Congress as House Republicans have unveiled new legislation attempting to remove its Title X funding.
>
> Republicans tried earlier this year to de-fund Planned Parenthood but Obama refused overtures from pro-life Speaker John Boehner to do so when Republicans and Democrats were working on ironing out legislation to fund the federal government. Obama eventually agreed to a compromise that allowed both the House and Senate to vote on a stand-alone bill de-funding Planned Parenthood and, while House Republicans approved their measure, Senate Democrats defeated it in the upper chamber.
>
> […]Now, Rep. Denny Rehberg of Montana, the chairman of the House Labor, Health, and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee has introduced new legislation to fund the federal government that prohibits any funds going to Planned Parenthood unless the organization stops doing abortions.
>
> "This bill is the result of the cumulative effort of members of the Subcommittee, and Americans I heard from at 81 listening sessions and in countless meetings in Washington and in Montana. Now, it's posted online for the only test that matters, and that's the approval of the American people," Rehberg said.

Naturally, the head abortionist is outraged – someone is taking away her dollars!

> Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards issued a statement last week condemning the legislation.
>
> "Eliminating funding for the Title X family planning program and prohibiting Planned Parenthood from providing preventive health care through federal

> programs will result in millions of women across the country losing access to basic primary and preventive health care," Richards said.
>
> The new bill also came under attack from both pro-abortion organizations and pro-abortion lawmakers.
>
> "Another health-related provision prohibits any funding under the bill from going to any Planned Parenthood affiliate unless the organization promises not to perform abortions with non-federal funds," Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, a pro-abortion Connecticut Democrat and a member of the subcommittee, groused. "The main effect would probably be to prohibit Medicaid patients from choosing to receive services such as contraception and cancer screenings from Planned Parenthood clinics."

I listed Planned Parenthood *AND* the Democrats as being interested in the dollars. It's a vicious circle. Planned Parenthood gets the dollars to kill the babies, and then they make campaign contributions to the Democrats who give them the taxpayer money. It's all about the money. They kill babies for money. It's a big business, and we subsidize it with our taxes.

Hon. Maurice Vellacott

And even in Canada, some Canadian conservatives are trying to push to de-fund Planned Parenthood.

Excerpt:

> Two more Tory MPs are taking swipes at the International Planned Parenthood Foundation.
>
> One claims the group conned the government when it applied for and got a federal grant of $6 million over three years.
>
> Another is linking it to the sinister and long-discredited science of eugenics.
>
> Saskatchewan MP Maurice Vellacott says the federation was deceitful in claiming that the money would only go to countries where abortion is illegal.
>
> Alberta MP Leon Benoit wants to condemn the foundation over an award named for Margaret Sanger.

> Sanger was a pioneer in planned parenthood who embraced a type of eugenics.
>
> Saskatoon MP Brad Trost started the ball rolling earlier this week with a web post condemning the decision to fund the international family-planning group.
>
> While the Prime Minister's Office is adamant that abortion is not an issue for the Conservative government, it still seems to be a touchy subject for backbenchers.
>
> The Planned Parenthood grant is a case in point.
>
> Trost said in his web post that the government's claim that the money would be used in countries that bar abortion is "hair-splitting."
>
> Vellacott said the federation is "trying to dupe" the government over abortion.
>
> "Even in those countries where abortion is technically illegal, it's naive to think that Canadian tax dollars are not being used to promote abortion," he said in a news release.

Maurice Vellacott is my favorite Canadian MP. He is the Canadian-equivalent to Iain Duncan-Smith in the UK. And don't think these guys aren't good on fiscal issues – they are. They just are also good at social issues, which should go together anyway.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Breast cancer charity Susan G. Komen gives $569,159 to Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the lawResearchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity
- Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Herman Cain now tied for second place in new GOP primary poll

October 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Cain Mutiny
(Click for larger image)

From the liberal Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> After a quick rise in the race for the Republican presidential nomination, Texas Gov. Rick Perry has experienced an almost equally dramatic decline, losing about half of his support over the past month, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll.
>
> Perry's slide, which comes after several uneven performances in candidate debates, has allowed former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney to resurface atop the GOP field. But the most direct beneficiary of the disenchantment with Perry is businessman Herman Cain, who is now tied for second place.
>
> Among announced candidates — without Christie or Palin in the race — Romney leads with 25 percent, which is identical to his support from a month ago. Perry and Cain are tied for second with 16 percent, numbers representing a 13-point drop for Perry and a 12-point rise for Cain since early September.
>
> Rep. Ron Paul (Tex.) is the only other candidate in double figures, at 11 percent. Just behind him are former House speaker Newt Gingrich (Ga.) and Rep. Michele Bachmann (Minn.), both with 7 percent. Gingrich's support has held steady through the late summer. Bachmann's numbers fell sharply after Perry announced his candidacy.
>
> Former senator Rick Santorum (Pa.) and former Utah governor Jon Huntsman Jr. bring up the rear, with Santorum at 2 percent and Huntsman at 1 percent.

I would rather have Cain than Perry (can't debate) or Romney (I think he is socialist, pro-abortion and pro-gay-rights), but Michele Bachmann is still my ideal candidate.

JUST FOR FUN: By the way, my regular readers know that I love wargaming, from squad level tactics (e.g. – Arma II), to combined arms (e.g. – Combat Mission), right up to multi-ship naval engagements (e.g. – Harpoon). I wonder if any of my readers can identify the ship in the cartoon for me. I think it is important for Christians to know a little something about war and counter-terrorism, even if it's just reading Tom Clancy and Vince Flynn novels, and playing Harpoon. I'll post the answer to the question at noon Eastern time in the comments with a link to the real ship.

Related posts

- Herman Cain on Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace
- Who is Herman Cain and why is he in first place in this national poll?
- Herman Cain wins straw poll in Florida!
- Herman Cain gaining momentum with the Tea Party conservatives
- The top article on National Review is about Herman Cain
- Video of the first Republican presidential debate in South Carolina

Review of the SMU debate on textual reliability with Wallace and Ehrman

October 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Kacie at "The Well-Thought-Out Life" blog.

Here are the speakers:

> Bart Ehrman is a professor and scholar in the field of textual criticism. He literally wrote the book of textual criticism with his own professor, Metzger. Isaac has had his books as textbooks in his graduate studies on textual criticism. He's also become known on the popular level, though, because he came out of fundamentalism to evangelicalism to liberalism to agnosticism (he's a Moody and Wheaton grad). At the moment I'd call him an agnostic evangelist, and that's why he intentionally is willing to do debates like this in the Bible Belt. He wants to engage conservative Christians and directly challenge their beliefs. He's written books like Jesus, Interrupted, Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible, and Misquoting Jesus, The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why. His work is quite personal to me not only because of his attendance at Moody, but because his writings have drawn my friends away from Christianity.
>
> On the opposite side you have Daniel Wallace. Wallace is also a textual critic, and on the scholarly level has written the textbook on Greek grammar that everyone uses, Harvard, Princeton, etc. He's started the Center for Biblical Manuscripts, which is going around the world doing high quality photography of all of the ancient biblical manuscripts so that they are recorded for history. He's a professor at Isaac's school and has directly engaged the ideas of Ehrman in an essay, "The Gospel According to Bart: A Review Article of Misquoting Jesus by Bart Ehrman." He is an evangelical Christian and one of my husband's professors.

Excerpt:

> Isaac and I went to a debate on Saturday night between Bart Ehrman and Daniel Wallace over the topic of "Can we trust the text of the New Testament."
>
> […]In any case, this debate had a lot of buzz surrounding it and we bought tickets immediately. The first 500 went fast so they moved the debate to the larger auditorium on the campus of SMU. 1,500 people sold out the place. Why? Because of the speakers. Experts in the field of text criticism with opposite conclusions. I put both of their bios on the bottom of the post. In the crowd I saw DTS students, people with "atheist" on their t-shirts, Isaac's professors, church staff, and a couple I know where she is a Christian and he's an atheist.
>
> It was fascinating. Both men were lucid and funny, but it ended up not being a debate so much about the evidence for the New Testament text as it was about presuppositions. I expected Ehrman to attack the text itself, since he is a textual

> critic and that's what the title of his books hint at. Instead he sort of argued from our points of ignorance – the first 150 years after the texts were originally written before our early fragments and manuscripts. Ehrman granted so many of Wallace's points – that the New Testament has a vast amount more evidence supporting it than any other ancient document. That while there are lots of little variants in the text, the vast majority of them make no difference in the actual meaning, and few if any make any difference to Christian theology. That even without the early documentary evidence that we have, the early church fathers quote the scripture so much that you can almost recreate the entire NT from their quotes alone.
>
> What was his point? The statement he made again and again was that while the evidence for the text was good and actually unparalleled, we don't **know for sure**. Can we be certain? Is it proven? Wallace kept coming back and pointing out that he wasn't saying that we could absolutely know for sure or that we couldn't know for sure – he was just examining the evidence and saying that based on the mountains of evidence it looks as though we probably have a trustworthy text today.
>
> It was fascinating. Wallace sounded like the scientist, since he was the one following where the evidence led him. Wallace gave loads of evidence, often from Ehrman himself, for the unmatched reliability of the NT text, and for the field of text criticism to help solve the places where there are variants – to get back to the "original" text. Most of it Ehrman didn't disagree with. Ehrman just kept saying that before the earliest fragments begin there's a gap and so we can't know for sure that the text is trustworthy.
>
> […]In the Q & A later someone asked Ehrman what sort of manuscript evidence he would need in front of him to convince him of the reliability of the text. He said that he'd want a copy made within the first week of writing and with .01% variance. Really? So essentially he says it's not trustworthy unless it's one step away from the original. Wallace's first and perhaps most necessary point was that there are three paths to take, and Ehrman walks the far left – radical skepticism. Wallace is a moderate. He may be a theological conservative, but his approach to the text is moderate.

If you want to see a nice debate feature Ehrman on textual reliability, you can listen to the Ehrman-Williams debate. I recommend a lot of debates, but this one is one of the best I have heard on this topic. At least read my snarky summary, it's one of my favorite snarky summaries.

Report finds Labor Department's green jobs program failing

October 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> A $500 million Labor Department program designed to train workers for green jobs has come up far short of its goals, with only 10 percent of participants finding work so far, the agency's assistant inspector general has found.
>
> The report said the low rate makes it unlikely the program will meet the goal of placing nearly 80,000 workers in careers in energy efficiency or renewable energy by 2013.
>
> "Grantees have expressed concerns that jobs have not materialized and that job placements have been fewer than expected for this point in the grant program," said the report from Assistant Inspector General Elliott Lewis.
>
> The report comes as the Obama administration has been on the defensive about making a $528 million loan to Solyndra LLC, a now-bankrupt solar panel maker that has become a target for critics of the administration's green energy program.
>
> The $500 million for green jobs training was part of the $787 billion stimulus act passed in 2009. Although the money was awarded in a series of grants in 2009 and 2010, only one-third has actually been spent by grantees. Lewis' report said the rate of expenditures has been decreasing. He suggested the department should consider returning unused money that may not be needed.
>
> "At this point, there is no evidence that grantees will effectively use the funds and deliver targeted employment outcomes by the end of the grant periods," the report said.
>
> […]Another problem the report highlighted is that workers who completed training and were placed in green jobs have had trouble retaining their posts. Of the 8,035 workers placed, only 1,336 — or 2 percent of the overall target — have held those jobs for at least six months.
>
> Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, who requested the audit, said the report "paints a pretty bleak picture of the program's effectiveness in job creation."
>
> "It's hard to see how leaving $300 million in unused funding for the program in the hands of the Labor Department benefits either the taxpayers or the unemployed," Grassley said.

The news media loves the Democrats and they are constantly making fun of Republicans for doubting evolution and global warming. I submit to you that believe in green jobs

programs is the scientific equivalent of flat-Earthism. And I have the numbers to prove it. They have the blind faith and the insults. We have the evidence.

Related posts

- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- How well did Obama's green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors
- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing

Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?

October 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On the Laura Ingraham show, CBS News reporter Sharyl Attkisson explains the latest about the Obama administration plan to oversee the sale of 2,000 guns to Mexican drug cartels – some of them extremely dangerous, like the Barrett M82 sniper rifle that can hit targets a MILE away. (H/T Kelly)

Excerpt:

> Today, CBS News reporter Sharyl Attkisson was on the Laura Ingraham show to discuss new documents that show Attorney General Eric Holder was briefed about Operation Fast and Furious as early as July 2010, which contradict Holder's Congressional testimony on May 3 when he said, "I'm not sure of the exact date, but I probably heard about Fast and Furious for the first time over the last few weeks."
>
> Attkisson revealed that she had been yelled and screamed at by the Justice Department and White House spokesmen for asking about what Holder knew and when he knew it.
>
> 1:31 – In between the yelling that I received from Justice Department yesterday, the spokeswoman–who would not put anything in writing, I was asking for her explanation so there would be clarity and no confusion later over what had been said, she wouldn't put anything in writing–so we talked on the phone and she said things such as the question Holder answered was different than the one he asked. But he phrased it, he said very explicitly, 'I probably heard about Fast and Furious for the first time over the last few weeks.'
>
> 6:05 – Laura: So they were literally screaming at you?
> Attkisson: Yes. Well the DOJ woman was just yelling at me. The guy from the White House on Friday night literally screamed at me and cussed at me. [Laura: Who was the person? Who was the person at Justice screaming?] Eric Schultz. Oh, the person screaming was [DOJ spokeswoman] Tracy Schmaler, she was yelling not screaming. And the person who screamed at me was Eric Schultz at the White House."
>
> 7:33 – Laura: Do we know the exact number [of guns] that went over to Mexico?
> Attkisson: We know more than 2,000 in Fast and Furious and I will soon be reporting on the fact that that is not the only case. 2,000 for that operation according to the agents involved.
>
> 8:28 – …It is sort of a drip, drip. And I'm certainly not the one to make the case for DOJ and White House about what **I'm doing wrong. They will tell you that I'm the only reporter–as they told me–that is not reasonable. They say**

> **the Washington Post is reasonable, the LA Times is reasonable, the New York Times is reasonable, I'm the only one who thinks this is a story, and they think I'm unfair and biased by pursuing it.**
>
> How has the Obama Justice decided to handle reporters inquiring about this lethal operation? They have denied access to, lied and yelled at reporters.

Fox News reports that the Republicans are requesting a special counsel to investigate Eric Holder's connection to the Fast and Furious scandal.

Excerpt:

> **House Republicans are calling for a special counsel to determine whether Attorney General Eric Holder misled Congress during his testimony to the House Judiciary Committee on Operation Fast and Furious, Fox News has learned.**
>
> House Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith, R-Texas, was sending a letter to President Obama on Tuesday arguing that Holder cannot investigate himself, and requesting the president instruct the Department of Justice to appoint a special counsel.
>
> **The question is whether Holder knowingly made false statements of fact under oath during a Judiciary Committee hearing on May 3. At the time, Holder indicated he was not familiar with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives program known as Fast and Furious until about April 2011.**
>
> "I'm not sure of the exact date, but I probably heard about Fast and Furious for the first time over the last few weeks," Holder testified.
>
> The Department of Justice defended Holder in a statement Tuesday.
>
> "The Attorney General's testimony to both the House and the Senate was consistent and truthful," it read. "He said in both March and May of this year that he became aware of the questionable tactics employed in the Fast and Furious Operation in early 2011 when ATF agents first raised them publicly, and at the time, he asked the Inspector General's office to investigate the matter."
>
> **However, newly discovered memos suggest otherwise. For instance, one memo dated July 2010 shows Michael Walther, director of the National Drug Intelligence Center, told Holder that straw buyers in the Fast and Furious operation "are responsible for the purchase of 1,500 firearms that were then supplied to the Mexican drug trafficking cartels."**
>
> **Other documents also indicate that Holder began receiving weekly briefings on the program from the National Drug Intelligence Center "beginning, at the latest, on July 5, 2010," Smith wrote.**
>
> **"These updates mentioned, not only the name of the operation, but also**

> **specific details about guns being trafficked to Mexico," Smith wrote in the letter to Obama.**
>
> "Allegations that senior Justice Department officials may have intentionally misled members of Congress are extremely troubling and must be addressed by an independent and objective special counsel. I urge you to appoint a special counsel who will investigate these allegations as soon as possible," Smith wrote.
>
> […]Issa, R-Calif., told Fox News on Tuesday that Holder saying he didn't understand the question rather than he didn't know of the program is not a successful defense to perjury.

Even the liberal Los Angeles Times is covering the story. CBS News has been covering the story for a while.

I wonder if some of our Democrat commenters (e.g. – McSpinster) would like to explain to me why it is OK for drug cartels to have .50 caliber sniper rifles, but it's not OK for law-abiding fathers to defend their families with handguns. Can someone explain why Democrats are OK with murderous drug-smuggling criminals having assault rifles, but not OK with women carrying pistols so that they can feel safe when they go jogging at night? I want to know why the Obama administration indirectly approved the murder of a U.S. Border Patrol agent.

Is this the scandal that's going to bring down the Obama administration? At least with Watergate, nobody *died*.

Related posts

- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference
- Homeland Security Secreary Janet Napolitano to counter global warming threat
- Obama administration investigates Wisconsin pro-lifers
- Homeland Security head says that "the system worked"
- Democrats will push amnesty to give 12-20 million illegal aliens citizenship
- Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?
- Michele Bachmann calls for Napolitano to resign
- Civil rights commission finds that Obama administration has racist double standard
- Is Obama's Department of Justice enabling voter registration fraud?
- Department of Justice won't purge dead or ineligible voters from roll
- Is the Department of Justice refusing to defend the voting rights of whites?
- Obama's attorney general has his head in the sand on national security
- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training
- Obama administration threatens South Carolina for saving prisoner's lives

Herman Cain is now tied for first place with fiscal/social liberal Romney

October 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Cain Mutiny
From CBS News.

Excerpt:

> Herman Cain has moved into a tie with Mitt Romney atop the field of Republican presidential candidates, according to a new CBS News poll, while Rick Perry has fallen 11 percentage points in just two weeks.
>
> The poll shows Cain, who stood at just five percent support two weeks ago, now holding 17 percent support among Republican primary voters. That puts the former Godfather's Pizza CEO into a tie with Romney, the former Massachusetts governor, whose support has essentially held steady over the past two weeks.
>
> Perry, meanwhile, has dropped from 23 percent support to just 12 percent support over the past two weeks, a sign that the Texas governor's shaky debate performances – in which he has alienated portions of both the Republican base and the party establishment – have taken their toll.
>
> Eight in ten Republican primary voters said the candidates' debate performances are at least somewhat important to them, and 58 percent said they have watched the debates that have already taken place. Just ten percent of Republican primary voters said they agreed with Perry that the children of illegal immigrants should be allowed to get in-state tuition, a contentious topic in recent debates.
>
> The silver lining for Perry is the race remains fluid: Three in four Republican primary voters who chose a candidate also said it was too early to make up their minds completely. Just 19 percent said they had definitively decided who they

> would support.
>
> Rounding out the field are Newt Gingrich with eight percent support, Ron Paul with seven percent, Michele Bachmann with four percent, Rick Santorum with three percent and Jon Huntsman with two percent. Eighteen percent said they were undecided or unsure.

Learn more about Herman Cain below.

Related posts

- Herman Cain now tied for second place in new GOP primary poll
- Herman Cain on Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace
- Who is Herman Cain and why is he in first place in this national poll?
- Herman Cain wins straw poll in Florida!
- Herman Cain gaining momentum with the Tea Party conservatives
- The top article on National Review is about Herman Cain
- Video of the first Republican presidential debate in South Carolina

Nobel prize award for accelerating universe is relevant to Christian apologetics

October 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the story – and then we'll see how the accelerating universe relates to the existence of God.

Excerpt:

> Three astrophysicists who discovered that the universe's expansion is accelerating rather than decelerating, as had been expected, win the Nobel Prize in physics.
>
> Adam Riess was sure he'd spotted a blatant error in his results. It was 1997, and the young post-doc's measurements of distant, exploding stars implied that the universe was expanding at a faster and faster rate, instead of slowing down, as he had expected.
>
> It wasn't an error at all. Instead, what was at fault were some basic assumptions about the workings of the universe.
>
> On Tuesday, the Johns Hopkins University astrophysicist received the Nobel Prize in physics for the revolutionary discovery and its implications, along with team leader Brian Schmidt of Australian National University and astrophysicist Saul Perlmutter of UC Berkeley and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, who had reached the same conclusion independently.
>
> At the time of their work, astrophysicists believed that the rate of expansion of the universe — set in motion by the Big Bang 13.7 billion years ago — would be slowing down as matter was pulled together by gravity. The goal at the time was to figure out how rapid the deceleration was.
>
> What the two teams found instead was that the expansion of the universe was accelerating — an observation that could best be explained by the existence of a mysterious "dark energy" that pushes matter farther and farther apart.
>
> Many scientists had thought that, just as the universe started with the Big Bang, it would end with a Big Crunch — with gravity pulling all the matter in the universe inward.

Does anyone remember that week that I wrote those posts about "Why I am not a… <insert some religion here>"? I explained why I was not all kinds of different religions and denominations, including Roman Catholicism, Calvinism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, etc. Everyone was offended and we fought about it. Ah, I remember it well.

Well, recall the evidence I used to defeat Hinduism.

Excerpt:

Why I am not a Hindu

> 1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
> 2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
> 3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
> 4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
> 5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a collapse, (= crunch).
> 6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
> 7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
> 8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

So that's one reason why I am not a Hindu.

(The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with Buddhism, Mormonism, etc. because they also require an eternally existing universe)

Notice anything? That's right! I used this discovery, which was named the discovery of the year at the time, to argue that the universe would expand forever, thus contradicting the Hindu cosmology, which oscillates in cycles of existence and non-existence.

I think it's important that you guys realize that when it comes to Christianity, we need to not mess around with church, Bible-y stuff. Bring the Nobel-prize-winning data and win the debate decisively. Leave no doubt. Do not use Christianese. Do not sing praise hymns. Do not cite Bible verses. You want to use the Nobel-prize-winning science. You want what works.

You can find some more refutations of other world religions here.

And it works on atheism

I think it's important for all of you to be familiar with the scientific evidence for the Big Bang. It will help you with your cosmological argument, and it will help you to refute many, many other religions that require eternal universes, including atheism.

I wrote about how the Big Bang theory falsifies atheism before.

Excerpt:

> According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* The Big Bang has

> been confirmed by experimental evidence such as redshift measurements, light element abundances and the cosmic microwave background radiation. This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by atheist Scriptures.

You all need to know about the experimental evidence that confirms the Big Bang creation out of nothing.

Crime rates in Chicago and DC drop after gun control laws are struck down

October 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News – what happens to crime rates when gun control laws are repealed? (H/T Reason To Stand)

Excerpt:

> Murder and violent crime rates were supposed to soar after the Supreme Court struck down gun control laws in Chicago and Washington, D.C.
>
> Politicians predicted disaster. "More handguns in the District of Columbia will only lead to more handgun violence," Washington's Mayor Adrian Fenty warned the day the court made its decision.
>
> Chicago's Mayor Daley predicted that we would "go back to the Old West, you have a gun and I have a gun and we'll settle it in the streets…"
>
> The New York Times even editorialized this month about the Supreme Court's "unwise" decision that there is a right for people "to keep guns in the home."
>
> But Armageddon never happened. Newly released data for Chicago shows that, as in Washington, murder and gun crime rates didn't rise after the bans were eliminated — they plummeted. They have fallen much more than the national crime rate.
>
> Not surprisingly, the national media have been completely silent about this news.
>
> One can only imagine the coverage if crime rates had risen. In the first six months of this year, there were 14% fewer murders in Chicago compared to the first six months of last year – back when owning handguns was illegal. It was the largest drop in Chicago's murder rate since the handgun ban went into effect in 1982.
>
> Meanwhile, the other four most populous cities saw a total drop at the same time of only 6 percent.
>
> Similarly, in the year after the 2008 "Heller" decision, the murder rate fell two-and-a-half times faster in Washington than in the rest of the country.
>
> It also fell more than three as fast as in other cities that are close to Washington's size. And murders in Washington have continued to fall.
>
> If you compare the first six months of this year to the first six months of 2008, the same time immediately preceding the Supreme Court's late June "Heller" decision, murders have now fallen by thirty-four percent.
>
> Gun crimes also fell more than non-gun crimes.
>
> Robberies with guns fell by 25%, while robberies without guns have fallen by eight percent. Assaults with guns fell by 37%, while assaults without guns fell by

> 12%.
>
> Just as with right-to-carry laws, when law-abiding citizens have guns some criminals stop carrying theirs.

Read the whole thing, there are more lovely facts in there. If you ever need to debate this, I recommend buying these academic studies published by the University of Chicago Press and by Harvard University Press. The former shows how crime rates dropped in the USA when Americans rescinded gun control laws, and the latter shows how crime rates rose in the UK when the British strengthened their gun control laws. Sometimes is good to have the data handy.

Let's learn about the issue from the news

ABC News explains in this short 6-minute clip:

And here is a longer 44-minute show from Fox Business: (featuring a debate between economist John Lott and the Brady Campaign spokesman)

There are other debates in the show as well.

Now watch a 3-on-3 debate on gun control

This debate is in 13 parts, featuring the two of the *best* proponents of legal firearm ownership – John Lott and Gary Kleck. The real sparks fly during the Q&A, so don't miss that. (If you can't watch the debate, then you can read this post and this post instead).

Here's part 1, which contains the introduction.

Here are the remaining speeches:

- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John R. Lott (2 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: R Gil Kerlikowske (3 **of 13**)
- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Stephen Halbrooke (4 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John J Donohue III (5 **of 13**)
- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Gary Kleck (6 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Paul Helmke (7 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 1 (8 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 2 (9 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 3: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 3 (10 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 4: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 4 (11 **of 13**)
- Conclusions Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 1 (12 **of 13**)
- Conclusions Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 2 (12 **of 13**)

This is everything you need to know about whether legal ownership of firearms reduce crime.

Lee Strobel interviews Douglas Groothuis on his new apologetics book

October 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

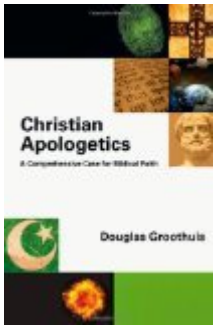

Christian Apologetics

Mary sent me this article from the BibleGateway site.

Excerpt:

Q. *What's the strongest argument in the arsenal of atheists these days? And why does it fall short?*

A. That's a big question. Different atheists will use different arguments, but they often confront Christians with two things: **(1)** Darwinism has refuted the idea of Designer and so defeats Christianity (and every other form of theism). They claim that undirected, purely material causes and entities can explain all of biology. **(2)** The existence of the amount of evil in the world destroys the idea that there is a God who is all-good and all-powerful. No such God would allow this to happen. This is called the problem of evil.

I address (1) in chapters 13 and 14 of *Christian Apologetics*. To put it into a nutshell: Darwinism is terribly overrated scientifically. Darwinists usually presupposes a materialistic worldview—this is their philosophy, not something derived from science itself—and then interpret everything in biology according to those categories. In other words, "What my net don't catch, ain't fish."

But once we admit intelligent design as a legitimate category of explanation, we find that Darwinism loses its persuasive power as a comprehensive explanation of the biosphere. In fact, Darwinism cannot explain the existence of molecular machines (such as the bacterial flagellum) or the information in DNA code. Nor can it even present a compelling case that all life evolved from a common ancestor.

In addition, my book builds what I hope is a strong cumulative case for Christian theism before addressing the vexing problem of evil in the final chapter. First I consider "dead ends" to explain the fact of evil in the world. Every worldview—and not just Christianity—needs to give an account of the meaning of evil and how to deal with it.

So every worldview has to answer "the problem of evil." I argue that atheism has no intellectual resources to bring to bear on the problem. It cannot explain the very existence of evil, since it lacks a transcendent and personal standard for good and evil, nor can it give any hope for how to wrestle with evil. This is because all the atheist can

say is (to put it politely): “Stuff happens.”

However, Christianity, while challenged by the fact of evil, is not overwhelmed by it. Apart from the problem of evil, we can stand on the foundation of natural theology. There are compelling arguments for, among other things, a First Cause who designed the universe and who is the source of moral law and meaning. Moreover, we find historically reliable documents that speak of Jesus Christ as God incarnate—one who vindicated himself through his matchless life, death, and resurrection. Thus, we do not stand before the problem of evil intellectually naked. Rather, we are girded in strong rational armor.

The Christian answer to the problem of evil is that while God is sovereign, some of God’s creatures (angelic and humans) brought evil into the world through their rebellion. God did not create evil. However, as an all-wise God, God uses evil for greater goods that would not be achievable otherwise. Further, God proves his love and goodness by experiencing the worst possible evil through the crucifixion of Jesus, Christ, God, the Son. Christ’s resurrection three days later stamps history and eternity with the verdict that good (that is, God) wins out over evil in the end.

Q. *You offer a compelling case for the resurrection of Jesus. What’s the strongest counter-argument to him rising from the dead? And why does that alternative fail?*

A. None of the counter-arguments are as rationally strong as the claim that Jesus left an empty tomb and rose from the dead in space-time actuality. The naturalistic accounts all fail to explain key elements of what we know from history.

However, in recent years, the hallucination theory has generated the most attention, as Gary Habermas has pointed out. This theory affirms that Jesus did not objectively rise from the dead; instead, his followers subjectively hallucinated a resurrection and subsequently built their movement on this delusion. While this counter-argument may be “the best of the bad,” it is still very bad indeed.

First, hallucinations are not group phenomena, but rather individual experiences. But we have well-attested records that many people in their right minds observed the risen Jesus at the same time, as well as other individual appearances (as to Paul).

Second, if many people were deluded about Jesus and began a movement in his name, the Roman government could have put a stop to the young Jesus movement by producing his corpse publicly. They had both the means and the motive to do so. But we have no record of anything like that.

Third, Jesus’ followers did not expect him to rise from the dead. This was not part of their theology and they did not understand Jesus when he made reference to this fact before his resurrection. N.T Wright strongly argues for this. But hallucinations usually involve some form of wish fulfillment: people strongly desire something, and then hallucinate about it. This does not fit the objective historical evidence about Jesus’ followers at all.

I think if you follow apologetics at all, you can see that Doug knows his stuff. But look how precisely he gets the material out – so concisely. I think Doug’s apologetics book and Mike Licona’s resurrection book are the books of the year. But for intermediate to advanced apologists only! Doug and Michael are two of my absolute favorite Christian

apologists.

Mitt Romney on the issues: Mitt Romney political views and positions in 2012

October 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The libertarian Cato Institute think tank explains why Obamacare and Romneycare are identical in many ways.

Excerpt:

> As part of his liberal phase when governor of Massachusetts — political principles have been ever-flexible for Romney — he orchestrated passage of legislation with eerie similarities to ObamaCare. Massachusetts mandates purchase of insurance, decides what benefits must be offered, and maintains a complex system of subsidies and penalties. Declared Boston Globe columnist Adrian Walker, the two programs are "not identical, but they're certainly close kin." MIT economist Jonathan Gruber, who advised both Gov. Romney and President Obama on health care, asserted: "Basically, it's the same thing."[…]Alas, even the former governor's constitutional scruples are suspect. In 1994 he backed a federal mandate. His concern about the overweening federal government apparently was not so finely developed then.
>
> […]However, paying for more benefits for more people inevitably makes medicine more expensive. Costs for Commonwealth Care, the Massachusetts government's subsidized insurance program alone are up a fifth over initial projections. Last year State Treasurer Timothy P. Cahill wrote: "The universal insurance coverage we adopted in 2006 was projected to cost taxpayers $88 million a year. However, since this program was adopted in 2006, our health-care costs have in total exceeded $4 billion. The cost of Massachusetts' plan has blown a hole in the Commonwealth's budget."
>
> […]State finances have not collapsed only because RomneyCare spread the costs widely, forcing virtually everyone in and out of the state to share the pain. Cahill cited federal subsidies as keeping the state afloat financially. Indeed, a June study from the Beacon Hill Institute concluded that "The state has been able to shift the majority of the costs to the federal government." The Institute pointed to higher costs of $8.6 billion since the law was implemented. Just $414 million was paid by Massachusetts. Medicaid (federal payments) covered $2.4 billion. Medicare took care of $1.4 billion.
>
> But even more costs, $4.3 billion, have been imposed on the private sector — employers, insurers, and residents. This estimate is in line with an earlier study by the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, which figured that 60% of the new costs fell on individuals and businesses.
>
> As expenses have risen, so have premiums. Noted Kuttner, "because serious cost containment was not part of the original package, premium costs in the

> commonwealth have risen far faster than nationally — by 10.3%, the most recent year available." Economists John F. Cogan, Glenn Hubbard, and Daniel Kessler figured that RomneyCare inflated premiums by 6% from 2006 to 2008. This at a time where the state-subsidized Commonwealth Care was displacing private insurance for many people, thereby reducing demand, which should have reduced cost pressures.
>
> Unfortunately, noted the Beacon Hill Institute, "private companies have no choice but to pass the higher costs onto the insured. Some of these costs fall in the double-digit range." That naturally displeased public officials, since it undercut their claim to have solved Massachusetts' health care problems.

And the Boston Herald notes that Romneycare caused the loss of 18,000 jobs. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> The Bay State's controversial 2006 universal health-care plan — also known as "Romneycare" — has cost Massachusetts more than 18,000 jobs, according to an exclusive blockbuster study that could provide ammo to GOP rivals of former Gov. Mitt Romney as he touts his job-creating chops on the campaign trail.
>
> "Mandating health insurance coverage and expanding the demand for health services without increasing supply drove up costs. Economics 101 tells us that," said Paul Bachman, research director at Suffolk University's Beacon Hill Institute, the conservative think tank that conducted the study. The Herald obtained an exclusive copy of the findings.
>
> "The 'shared sacrifice' needed to provide universal health care includes a net loss of jobs, which is attributable to the higher costs that the measure imposed," said David Tuerck, the institute's executive director.
>
> …Despite Romney's vaunted business acumen as a successful venture capitalist, Bachman said the former governor "was a little naive about what would become of the law."
>
> The Beacon Hill Institute study found that, on average, Romneycare:
>
> - cost the Bay State 18,313 jobs;
> - drove up total health insurance costs in Massachusetts by $4.311 billion;
> - slowed the growth of disposable income per person by $376; and
> - reduced investment in Massachusetts by $25.06 million.

And from the Heartland Institute, an article showing how Romneycare could actually lead to single-payer health care in Massachussetts.

Excerpt:

> The 2006 reform jeopardized the solvency of private health plans in the Bay State. Unfortunately, insurers' solvency is not something patients, physicians,

> and voters have reason to observe closely, so the political class suffers from perverse incentives once it starts micromanaging health insurance. As a result, higher costs have been passed on through higher per capita spending and premium growth.
>
> According to the state's 2010 annual report, today "per capita spending on health care in Massachusetts is 15 percent higher than the rest of the nation, even when accounting for wages and spending on medical research and education in Massachusetts." Indeed, Professor John F. Cogan of Stanford University has concluded the 2006 reform led to premium growth 6 percent higher in Massachusetts than in the rest of the United States between 2006 and 2008.
>
> **Because it was politically intolerable to allow premiums to rise in line with the costs of Romneycare, the state's insurance commissioner denied 235 of 276 rate increase requests in April 2010. For a short time, no new policies were offered, and plans suffered significant losses. The next month, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, the state's largest carrier, announced a $55 million provision for anticipated losses in the second quarter alone.**
>
> **Of the 12 largest carriers, five were already operating at a loss. At this point, even if the state allows Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts to increase rates in line with medical costs, my analysis concludes the carrier will become insolvent in the vicinity of 2017. Other carriers will soon follow.**

Campaign speeches and debate zingers *today* don't cancel out a liberal leftist record on policy *yesterday*.

Mitt Romney on the issues in 2012

Mitt Romney's record

And a comprehensive overview of Mitt Romney's record from the Examiner.

Excerpt:

> He often claims to have balanced the Massachusetts budget without raising

> taxes. The first part of that claim is true, but the second part is a matter of semantics.
>
> **As Cato pointed out in a 2006 report, while Romney didn't raise general tax revenues, he raised various fees by $500 million and then proposed $140 million in business tax hikes by closing "loopholes." His health care plan also increased spending, prompting tax increases after he left office to cover cost overruns.**
>
> This time around, by sticking by his health care law, Romney is attempting to avoid the "flip flopper" label that dogged his last campaign. But this shift in tactics isn't going to make the problem of his past positions suddenly disappear.
>
> As governor, Romney was no friend of gun owners. In 2004, when the Clinton-era federal assault weapons ban expired, he signed a permanent one at the state level.
>
> Despite his tough talk on immigration during his last campaign, in 2005 Romney told the Boston Globe that reform along the lines that McCain proposed was "reasonable."
>
> Romney also, at various times, supported campaign finance regulations far more sweeping than McCain-Feingold, even though he subsequently blasted that law as an attack on free speech.
>
> Romney's support for "No Child Left Behind," President Bush's expansion of the federal government's role in education, not only puts him at odds with conservatives, but it also undercuts the federalist defense of his health care law. If a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work for health care, why should it work for education?
>
> Furthermore, there's no reason to believe that social conservatives who were suspicious of Romney's conveniently timed conversion from pro-choice to pro-life before his last presidential run will see him as any more authentic this time around.

Consider this article from the Boston Globe.

Excerpt:

> "I don't speak for the scientific community, of course," Romney said, in response to the first question of the morning. "But I believe the world's getting warmer. I can't prove that, but I believe based on what I read that the world is getting warmer. And number two, I believe that humans contribute to that."
>
> He also said he wanted to wean the country from its dependence on foreign oil by seeking alternative sources of energy, and said that Americans should do more to conserve.
>
> "I'm told that we use almost twice as much energy per person as does a European, and more like three times as much energy as does a Japanese citizen,"

> Romney said. “We can do a lot better.”

This makes me think that Mitt Romney wants to surpass Obama’s $535 million loan to Solyndra.

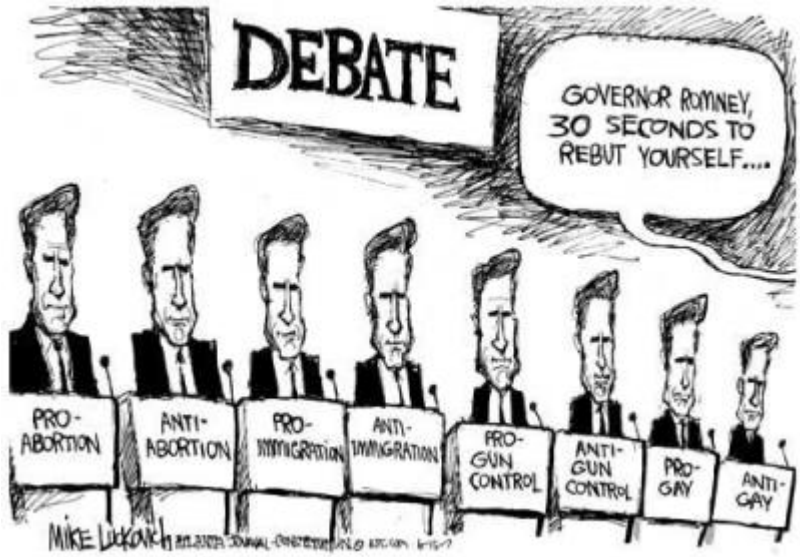

Mitt Romney position on abortion, gun control, gay marriage
(Image: H/T Robert)

Mitt Romney’s record on social issues

From the 1994 Massachusetts Senate debate between Mitt Romney and Edward Kennedy.

Here he is again in 2002 in his run for government of Massachusetts:

And again in May 2005, as governor of Massachusetts:

And on embryonic stem cell research in 2005:

And on gun control in 2002:

Mitt Romney is *not* a social conservative. He is a center-leftist who will *say anything* in order to get elected in 2012. Nothing he says can be trusted – he adapts himself to any environment when campaigning – he says what people want to hear, and it is not at all what his actual record shows.

Mitt Romney political views in 2012

What do conservatives think of Mitt Romney’s record?

Well-known conservative magazine Human Events listed Mitt Romney as #8 on their list of 10 RINOs. This list is from December 27, 2005.

Excerpt:

> 8. Gov. Mitt Romney (Mass.)
> Has said, “I believe that abortion should be safe and legal in this country.”
> Supports civil unions and stringent gun laws. After visiting Houston, he criticized the city’s aesthetics, saying, “This is what happens when you don’t have zoning.”

Those are the facts on Mitt Romney’s record.

E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra

October 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

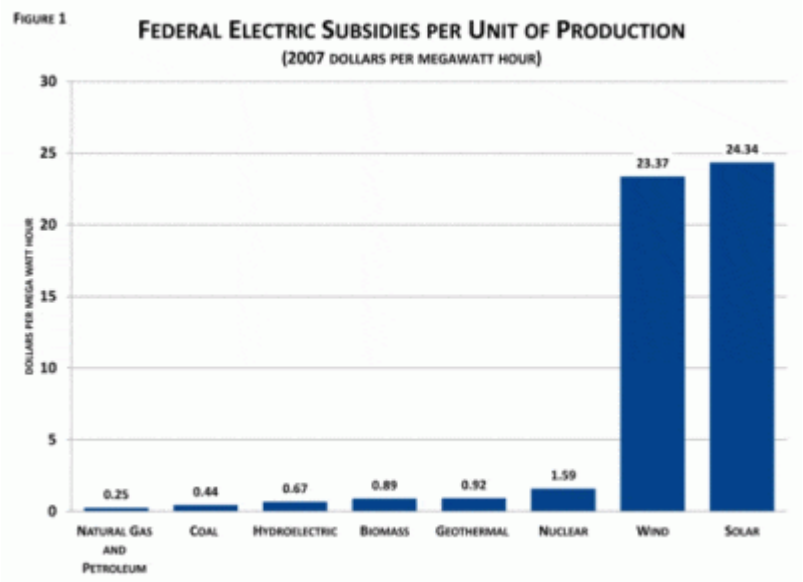

Federal subsidies per unit of electricity

From the Washington Post – e-mails reveal that the Obama administration was planning to approve a second green jobs loan for Solyndra, just as they were going bankrupt.

Excerpt:

> Newly released e-mails show the Obama administration's Energy Department was poised to give Solyndra a second taxpayer loan of $469 million last year, even as the company's financial situation grew increasingly dire.
>
> The department was still considering providing the second loan guarantee to the solar-panel manufacturer in April and May 2010, at a time when Solyndra's auditors were already warning that the company was in danger of collapsing.
>
> Details of the plan are revealed in e-mails released this week by Democrats on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which is investigating the original loan. On Wednesday, the probe intensified as committee Republicans requested that the White House provide all documents, dating back to President Obama's inauguration, that would show communications between staff members and other officials regarding Solyndra's original $535 million federal loan guarantee.
>
> Republican leaders said that documents obtained in recent weeks show that Obama's "closest confidantes" monitored the loan, and that his campaign donors offered advice on the company.
>
> "Documents reveal a startlingly cozy relationship between wealthy donors and the president's confidantes, especially in matters related to Solyndra," Cliff Stearns (R-Fla.), chairman of the committee's investigations panel, said in a statement.

> E-mails already made public in the eight-month investigation have kept the White House and the Energy Department on the defensive for weeks, showing in part that Valerie Jarrett and Lawrence H. Summers, top Obama advisers at the time, took part in discussions about Solyndra.
>
> The Energy Department provided Solyndra with its first taxpayer-backed loan guarantee in September 2009. Documents released this week show that White House career staffers, who first questioned the loan that fall, by April 2010 were using gallows humor to describe the prospect of giving Solyndra a second round of help. That spring, industry analysts were publicly questioning how the Silicon Valley start-up could be spending cash so quickly from the federal loan and $933 million in private capital.

I got the above story from Powerline blog, and they noted something else interesting. Excerpt:

> In related news, the Inspector General of the Department of Labor released a report on the $500 million green jobs training program that was part of the original "stimulus" act. The IG's findings are not pretty:
>
> ETA and grantees have reported achieving limited performance targets for serving and placing workers. Grantees have reported serving 52,762 (42 percent) of the targeted 124,893 participants with 61 percent of training grant periods having elapsed, and have reported placing 8,035 participants (10 percent) into employment out of the target of 79,854 participants 17 months after the grants were awarded. Of the 52,762 participants served, grantees reported that 20,818 (39 percent) were individuals who already have jobs and enrolled in training in order to retain their jobs, obtain new work, or otherwise upgrade their skills. In addition, according to interviews conducted early in 2011 with regional officials, grantees have expressed concerns that jobs have not materialized and that job placements have been fewer than expected for this point in the grant program.
>
> "Jobs have not materialized"? Really? This is no surprise to anyone who understands what a boondoggle the whole "green jobs" initiative is. The report's grimmest finding relates to job retention: the forecast for the training program was that 69,717 trainees would find jobs lasting for at least six months. So far, the actual number is 1,336. Sure, as time goes by some additional trainees may hit the six-month mark, but as of the time period covered in the report, only 6,662 had found jobs at all. With over 60% of the grant period gone by, only one-third of the amount allocated has been spent by the grantees.

Is this what Obama means by "economic stimulus"? I think that "stimulus" might be the word that Democrats use to mean "paying off the people who get you elected with taxpayer money".

Related posts

- Report finds Labor Department’s green jobs program failing
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi’s brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- How well did Obama’s green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors
- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing

Should Eastern Michigan University expel Christians from graduate school?

October 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> An attorney for a graduate student claiming she was wrongfully dismissed from her counseling job at a Michigan college because she refused to counsel gay and bisexual clients on their relationships argued in federal court Tuesday that his client was discriminated against because of her religious beliefs — while the school insists her actions violated school policy.
>
> The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in Cincinnati heard arguments in the case involving Julea Ward, a Detroit-area public school teacher. In July 2010, a federal judge dismissed Ward's lawsuit against Eastern Michigan University (EMU) after the school successfully contended she violated school policy and the American Counseling Association's code of ethics, which forbids counselors from discrimination in clinical practice.
>
> […]…Jeremy Tedesco, an attorney for the conservative Alliance Defense Fund, said he believes the Appeals Court will overturn the ruling because it violated Ward's First Amendment rights.
>
> "Ultimately, the university has a really tough battle here," Tedesco told FoxNews.com. "The bottom line to us is that this is very clear violation of her First Amendment rights in a couple of different contexts."
>
> Tedesco argued that Ward's rights were violated when she was required to enter a remediation program to change her beliefs toward homosexuality. He said EMU officials violated the U.S. Constitution when they refused to accommodate Ward's sincerely held beliefs by not allowing her to refer her client to another qualified candidate.
>
> "Rather than allow Julea to refer a potential client to another qualified counselor — a common, professional practice to best serve clients — EMU attacked and questioned Julea's religious beliefs and ultimately expelled her from the program because of them," Tedesco said in a statement. He said there is no timetable for the appellate court's decision.
>
> According to ADF attorneys, Ward was assigned a potential client seeking assistance regarding a homosexual relationship shortly after she enrolled in the counseling program in January 2009. Realizing she could not affirm the client's relationship without violating her own religious beliefs, Ward then asked a supervisor for assistance. After being advised to reassign the potential client, EMU officials informed Ward she would need to undergo a "remediation" program

> in order to stay in the counseling program, the attorneys claim.
>
> Ward was later dismissed from the program, and EMU officials denied her appeal.

So, the secular left state forces Christians to act like secular leftists in public. Because you have no Constitutional rights.

Conservative Herman Cain now leads liberal Mitt Romney 38 to 18

October 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's a Zogby poll, so it could be off by 6-8%, in my opinion. But still.

Excerpt:

Herman Cain has opened up a 20 percentage point lead among likely Republican primary voters in the race for the Presidential nomination, and also holds a narrow lead among all likely voters over President Barack Obama.

Cains share of the GOP primary has jumped 10 percentage points since Sept. 26 and is now at 38%. Mitt Romney is second with 18%, followed by both Rick Perry and Ron Paul, at 12% each.

The Oct. 3-5 IBOPE Zogby interactive poll also matches Cain, Romney and Perry against Obama. Cain led Obama, 46%-44%, while Obama is one-point ahead of Romney, 41%-40%, and leads Perry, 45%-40%.

As for President Barack Obama, both his job approval (41%) and the percentage who believe he deserves re-election (38%) are virtually unchanged from recent polls.

Republican Candidates (asked only of the party's primary voters)

If the Republican primary for President were held today, for whom would you vote?

Candidate	Oct 5	Sept 26	Sept 12	Aug 29
Herman Cain	38%	28%	12%	8%
Mitt Romney	18%	17%	14%	12%
Rick Perry	12%	18%	37%	41%
Ron Paul	12%	11%	11%	11%

By the way, in that video up above, he mentions AEGIS warships, like the Arleigh Burke DDG I posted earlier. He explains that his foreign policy will be "peace through strength". Watch that video, it will you help to understand why people are raising Cain.

I wonder what you all think about Herman Cain's frank opinion of the Wall Street anarchists?

Excerpt:

> Unemployed Wall Street protesters only have themselves to blame for lacking a job, so says Herman Cain.
>
> The Republican presidential candidate insisted that the demonstrations were being "orchestrated" to help President Obama.
>
> "I don't have the facts to back this up, but I happen to believe that these demonstrations are planned and orchestrated to distract from the failed policies

> of the Obama Administration," Cain told the Wall Street Journal.
>
> **The Tea Party favorite then argued that the plight of the unemployed was their own fault.**
>
> **"Don't blame Wall Street, don't blame the big banks, if you don't have a job and you're not rich, blame yourself. It is not someone's fault if they succeeded, it is someone's fault if they failed," the ex-Godfather's Pizza CEO declared.**
>
> The fiery remarks come as protest organizers plan for their biggest demonstrations yet — at least 2,000 people are expected to gather in lower Manhattan Wednesday.
>
> Last week, 700 protesters who spilled onto the streets near the Brooklyn Bridge were arrested on charges of disorderly conduct.
>
> Cain acknowledged that the banking industry played a role in the 2008 economic meltdown, but argued they were no longer responsible.
>
> "They did have something to do with the crisis that we went into in 2008, but we're not in 2008, we're in 2011," Cain said."…These demonstrations, I honestly don't understand what they're looking for. To me, they come across more as anti-capitalism."
>
> Cain's campaign has been picking up steam since he won Florida's straw poll last month.
>
> And in a recent Rasmussen Reports poll, Cain trails Obama by just five points in a head-to-head matchup.

Normal politicians don't talk like that. Can you imagine RINO Romney saying something like that? No way.

Racist leftist hack interviews Herman Cain

UPDATE: Full video of radical leftist and racist Lawrence O'Donnell interviews Herman Cain on MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> I'm not sure if I've ever heard a more offensive interview on MSNBC than the one I just heard from Lawrence O'Donnell with Herman Cain. In one interview O'Donnell managed to accuse Herman Cain of not only sitting on the sidelines during the civil rights movement, but also of dodging the Vietnam war. His contempt for a black Republican has never been more clear.
>
> At one point in the interview, O'Donnell asked Cain where America would be right now if Rosa Parks took his dad's advice to stay out of trouble and just sit in the back of the bus. Seriously. It was like he was trying to prove that Cain hadn't earned his black skin or something. It was terribly offensive and I hope Cain never steps foot again in the studios of MSNBC.
>
> I will say that Cain proved he could hold his own and not be rattled by the

> offensive assumptions of these whackos on MSNBC. He hit back in the interview several times but always kept his cool. He could have hit back more in my opinion but overall I think he did great.
>
> It's a long interview but it covers four main topics: Brainwashing, Civil Rights Movement, War dodging, and the 9-9-9 plan.

Even *Mediaite's* radical leftist Tommy Christopher doesn't like the interviewer:

> Based on his interview with GOP supernova Herman Cain, a cynical person might think that MSNBC's Lawrence O'Donnell is trying to push the upstart candidate over the finish line for the Republican presidential nomination. On Thursday night's The Last Word, O'Donnell conducted an interview that surpassed unfair, sped through the tollbooth at offensive, and came to rest in the parking spot marked "Reserved For Despicable.". . .
>
> Let me start by saying this: I like Lawrence O'Donnell, and not just for his contribution to the ultimate liberal television show, *The West Wing*. O'Donnell is part of a new breed of liberal commentator who doesn't talk himself into a corner, and viewers into a coma. He takes strong positions, and expresses them with aggression and clarity.
>
> I also don't like Herman Cain, for a variety of good reasons, some of which O'Donnell touched on in his interview. His victory in the GOP primary race would be great for America, as it would keep a party, hell-bent on fundamentally crippling the government's ability to govern, out of the White House for at least four more years.
>
> That's why my reaction to O'Donnell's interview with Cain was so shocking. I'm not the kind of person who says things out loud to himself, or to the TV screen, but throughout O'Donnell's grilling of Cain, I found myself doing just that. "What the f***?. . . Are you f***ing *kidding* me?"
>
> Rather than debate Herman Cain on his substantive weaknesses, O'Donnell opted to pull at symbolic threads from Cain's own personal history. The portion of the interview that will cause most stomachs to churn will probably be when O'Donnell tried to shame Herman Cain for "sitting on the sidelines" during the Civil Rights movement.

(There really isn't any racism, but from now on, any leftist who disagrees with Herman Cain is going to be called a racist on my blog)

Related posts

- Herman Cain is now tied for first place with fiscal/social liberal Romney
- Herman Cain now tied for second place in new GOP primary poll
- Herman Cain on Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace
- Who is Herman Cain and why is he in first place in this national poll?
- Herman Cain wins straw poll in Florida!

- Herman Cain gaining momentum with the Tea Party conservatives
- The top article on National Review is about Herman Cain
- Video of the first Republican presidential debate in South Carolina

Do people go to Hell just because they don't accept Jesus?

October 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Jim Wallace at Please Convince Me. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Excerpt:

> A "just" God does justice, which means to punish or reward appropriately. In the Western tradition, we punish people for the actions they commit, but the extent of punishment is dependent also on the person's mental state, and a person's mental state is reflective of his or her beliefs. Premeditated murder is worse than manslaughter, and is punished more severely, and a hate crime is a sentencing enhancement that adds more punishment to the underlying crime. In both examples, a person's beliefs are at play: the premeditated murderer has reflected on his choices and wants the victim dead; a hate crime reflects a belief that the rights of a member of the protected group are especially unworthy of respect. So, considering a person's beliefs may well be relevant, especially if those beliefs have motivated the criminal behavior.
>
> But the challenger's mistake is even more fundamental. He is wrong to assert that people are condemned for not accepting the gospel. Christians believe that people are condemned for their sinful behavior – the "wages of sin is death" – not for what they fail to do. The quoted challenge is like saying that the sick man died of "not going to the doctor." No, the person died of a specific condition – perhaps cancer or a heart attack – which a doctor might have been able to cure. So too with eternal punishment. No one is condemned for refusing to believe in Jesus. While Jesus can – and does – provide salvation for those who seek it, there is nothing unjust about not providing salvation to those who refuse to seek it. After all, we don't normally feel obliged to help someone who has not asked for, and does not want, our assistance. So too the Creator has the right to withhold a gift – i.e. eternity spent in His presence – from those who would trample on the gift, and on the gift-giver.
>
> The quoted assertion also demonstrates an unspoken belief that we can impress God with our "kind" or "generous" behavior. This fails to grasp what God is – a perfect being. We cannot impress Him. What we do right we should do. We don't drag people into court and reward them for not committing crimes. This is expected of them. They can't commit a murder and then claim that punishment is unfair, because they had been kind and generous in the past. When a person gets his mind around the idea of what perfection entails, trying to impress a perfect Creator with our "basic goodness" no longer seems like such a good option.

Here's a related answer from CARM. This one answers the question about degrees of punishment in Hell.

Excerpt:

> Yes, there are different degrees of punishment in hell.
>
> […]But, not all people are equally bad. Though all deserve damnation because all are sinners, different people have committed different degrees of sin.
>
> - Mt. 11:20-22, "Then He began to reproach the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 "Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you…I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you."
> - Luke 12:47-48, "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."
> - John 19:11, "Jesus answered [Pilate], 'You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin.' "
> - Heb. 10:29, "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?"
>
> So, if Jesus speaks of greater condemnation for Chorazin and Bethsaida than Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 11:21-22), one slave received more punishment than another (Luke 12:47-48), the one who delivered Jesus to Pilate has the greater sin (John 19:11), and a more severe punishment is reserved for those who trample underfoot the Son of God, then does not greater sin mean that greater punishment will also happen in hell? Yes it does.

Not only are there degrees of punishment in Hell, but there are degrees of reward in Heaven, based on what you do on Earth and what strengths you start out with.

Philippians 4:10-18:

[10] I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

[11] I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever

the circumstances.

[12] I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

[13] I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

[14] Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

[15] Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;

[16] for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

[17] Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.

[18] I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Everyone who believes in Jesus gets salvation, but your experience in Heaven will be different based on what you do while you are alive. And that's also the answer to another common question – about deathbed conversions. Both deathbed converts and William Lane Craig will get the same experience of being in the presence of God, but there are completely different levels of reward. One person has an empty account, and the other person has huge massive amounts of virtuous action on deposit. But I think the real reason that Christians are trying to do good things here on Earth is that they like God, and they want to be his friend. They want to work on the relationship, even if it means a little self-denial, and a little sacrifice. We all have things that we would rather be doing for ourselves, but sometimes we have to things that work – things that are effective – for someone else. My values are not his values. Sometimes it is good to do something based on what He values. I don't always have to get my way, because then it wouldn't be a real relationship.

I enjoy thinking about Bible puzzles like this… so often in church we just make Christianity a checklist of things that we are supposed to believe somehow, by brute force willpower. I think reflecting on these problems, asking questions, and making sense of them on our own, is a much better approach.

Nearly half of U.S. households are receiving some government benefits

October 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

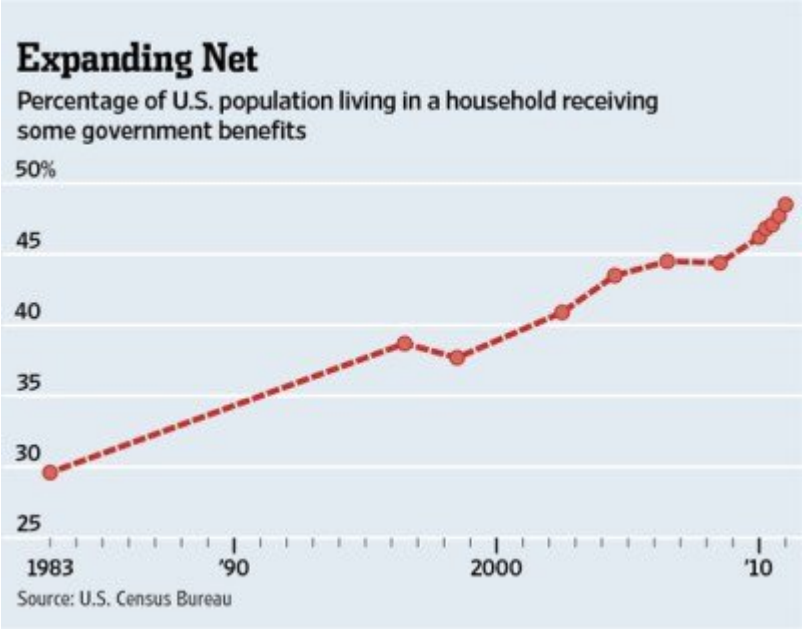

Percentage of households receiving some government benefits
(Click for larger image)

This is the top story on the Wall Street Journal at the time I am writing this (Thursday at midnight).

Excerpt:

> Families were more dependent on government programs than ever last year.
>
> Nearly half, 48.5%, of the population lived in a household that received some type of government benefit in the first quarter of 2010, according to **Census** data. Those numbers have risen since the middle of the recession when 44.4% lived households receiving benefits in the third quarter of 2008.
>
> The share of people relying on government benefits has reached a historic high, in large part from the deep recession and meager recovery, but also because of the expansion of government programs over the years. (See a timeline on the history of government benefits programs here.)
>
> Means-tested programs, designed to help the needy, accounted for the largest share of recipients last year. Some 34.2% of Americans lived in a household that received benefits such as food stamps, subsidized housing, cash welfare or Medicaid (the federal-state health care program for the poor).
>
> Another 14.5% lived in homes where someone was on Medicare (the health care program for the elderly). Nearly 16% lived in households receiving Social Security.
>
> High unemployment and increased reliance on government programs has also

> shrunk the nation's share of taxpayers. Some 46.4% of households will pay no federal income tax this year, according to the nonpartisan **Tax Policy Center**. That's up from 39.9% in 2007, the year the recession began.

A plan like Herman Cain's 9-9-9 plan would make sure that everybody is paying their fair share of taxes, and maybe then people who collect these benefits without paying their fair share would have a reason to want to cut government spending.

Friday Night Funny: There’s probably no Dawkins showing up to debate Craig

October 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There's Probably No Dawkins

Full story here. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

‘THERE’S PROBABLY NO DAWKINS’ SLOGAN FOR OXFORD BUSES

‘Reasonable Faith Tour’ with William Lane Craig Responds to Dawkins Boycott

A message with a familiar ring to it will be rolling out on the side of buses in Oxford from 10th of October. **‘There’s Probably No Dawkins. Now Stop Worrying and Enjoy Oct 25th at the Sheldonian Theatre’**

The advertising campaign follows Richard Dawkins’ refusal to publicly debate the existence of God with philosopher William Lane Craig when he visits the UK in October. He has an open invitation to debate Craig at Oxford’s Sheldonian Theatre on 25th October.

The Oxford bus campaign echoes the 2009 London atheist bus advertisements: ‘There’s Probably No God. Now Stop Worrying And Enjoy Your Life.’

The ‘Reasonable Faith Tour’ organisers, supported by Premier Christian Radio, commissioned the advert, which will roll out on 30 buses in Oxford from 10th October for two weeks. **‘There’s Probably No Dawkins. Now Stop Worrying and Enjoy Oct 25th at the Sheldonian Theatre’** promotes this significant event.

BACKGROUND: William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, California and is arguably the world’s foremost defender of historic Christianity. Widely respected among academic philosophers, he has debated with many leading atheists across the world, including Peter Atkins, Daniel Dennett, Anthony Flew, A.C.Grayling, Christopher Hitchens, Lewis Wolpert and most recently, Sam Harris.

Harris has described him as *"the one Christian apologist who has put the fear of God into many of my fellow atheists."*

THE REFUSALS: Dawkins' refusal to debate Craig highlights the lack of leading British Humanists prepared to debate him.

Dawkins, author of *The God Delusion*, and outspoken atheist and critic of religion, has refused four separate invitations to debate Craig, sent from The British Humanist Association, The Cambridge Debating Union, the Oxford Christian Union and Premier Christian Radio.

Dawkins' refusal to debate led fellow Oxford academic Dr Daniel Came, who is an atheist himself, to write a letter to Dawkins stating that,*"the absence of a debate with the foremost apologist for Christian theism is a glaring omission on your CV and is of course apt to be interpreted as cowardice on your part."*

[…]The Sheldonian evening will be chaired by an Oxford Professor of Philosophy, who is himself an atheist. The stage will be set for a debate or a lecture should Dawkins not show up. Craig intends to tackle the central arguments in Dawkins book before a panel of academics who will respond to his lecture, before questions are invited from the audience.

[…]An open invitation has been sent to Richard Dawkins to change his mind and debate with Craig in Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre on October 25th. If he does not come, an empty chair will be placed on the stage, and will remain there.

How can you get tickets to the events? Look here:

- For a full list of events, view the Tour Programme.
- To see a video outlining the tour schedule see www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&v=pQifJkVCFaQ
- To book tickets for Craig events in October: go to www.premier.org.uk/craig

I think this is a good reminder about why Christians should care about the economy. No government will ever fund ads like this, it's up to us to do it. We should vote conservative *so that* we keep more of our own money for things like this that a secular left government will never fund. Always vote conservative, and save your money.

Just one more small thing for this Friday night's fun.

Happy Friday!

UPDATE: If you would like to see Dawkins' opponent in action, watch this debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens:

This is what Dawkins is afraid will happen to him.

Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails

October 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest from The Hill describes the new Fast and Furious e-mails released on Friday.

Excerpt:

> The fierce battle over a botched gun-tracking operation is intensifying and has put Attorney General Eric Holder on a collision course with his critics in Congress.
>
> Republicans are calling for his resignation in the wake of Fast and Furious, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives operation that may have inadvertently contributed to the death of at least one federal agent.
>
> The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee has called for an independent investigation of Holder, and the chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee wants to have Holder testify again before Congress.
>
> […]The torrent of scrutiny comes after a series of internal Justice Department memos were released this week and show that Holder was informed about the existence of Operation Fast and Furious last year.
>
> Holder testified in May before the House Judiciary Committee that he did not learn about the operation until earlier this year. Officials with the DOJ say Holder was referring to when he learned about the controversial tactics, known as "walking" guns into the hands of known and suspected criminals, that were employed by the operation.
>
> […]"The Attorney General's denials of any personal knowledge will have to be tested against all the evidence as the investigation continues, just as the Department's initial denials were," Beth Levine, a Grassley spokeswoman, said.

The article also has a nice timeline of events in case you are new to the story.

Arizona sheriffs urge Obama to appoint an independent counsel to investigate the gun-smuggling scandal.

Excerpt:

> A majority of Arizona's county sheriffs on Friday called upon President Obama to appoint an independent counsel to investigate the government's botched gun-smuggling case known as Operation Fast and Furious.
>
> At a Phoenix news conference, Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu said the sting operation, which allowed an estimated 2,000 firearms to reach narcotics cartels in Mexico, was a betrayal that should lead to the removal of Attorney General Eric Holder and possible criminal charges against those responsible.

> "I believe that this is a much larger scandal than what took place in Watergate," said Babeu, who is president of the Arizona Sheriff's Association.
>
> […]ATF whistleblowers first exposed the practice after U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry was killed in a December shootout with banditos near Nogales, Ariz., involving a pair of semi-automatic rifles that traced back to Operation Fast and Furious. Their revelations led to congressional hearings in which agents and Justice Department officials have been criticized for evasive and dishonest testimony.
>
> To date, the scandal has forced the replacement of ATF administrator Ken Melson; reassignment of the bureau's top Arizona agent, William Newell; and the resignation of Dennis Burke, former U.S. Attorney for Arizona.
>
> […]Ten of Arizona's 15 sheriffs joined in the call for an independent counsel probe. The sheriffs, including Democrats and Republicans, said they were motivated by public-safety concerns, not political partisanship.
>
> "I feel like we've been betrayed by our government," said Tom Sheahan, sheriff of Mohave County.
>
> "We're in a fight for our country, our constitution and for our very lives," added Larry Dever, sheriff of Cochise County. "Who really is responsible for helping to arm the people we are fighting every day on the border?"

My prediction? Holder resigns before the end of October. I would like to see Obama put on the stand to testify as well on this issue and on Solyndra. It would nice if Holder and Spinner were both in jail before election day 2012. Like in real jail cells.

Related posts

- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
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- Department of Justice won't purge dead or ineligible voters from roll
- Is the Department of Justice refusing to defend the voting rights of whites?

- Obama’s attorney general has his head in the sand on national security
- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training
- Obama administration threatens South Carolina for saving prisoner’s lives

Many professional women spend their 20s getting drunk and having “fun”

October 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sends me this depressing article from the UK Daily Mail. This is a must-read.

Excerpt:

> The street smells of urine and lager, police struggle to break up a fight outside the Walkabout bar and a paramedic bundles a comatose girl on to a wheelchair. But it’s a quiet night for 20-year-old Naomi Jenkins. She has ‘only’ drunk three shots of peach schnapps, cider and three shots of Jagermeister (during a drinking game called I Have Never) and still feels ‘a bit sober’. Her friend Hannah Freeman, 19, was punched in a fight and stumbles about swearing and searching for a bathroom.
>
> ‘We only do embarrassing things when we’re really drunk,’ Naomi says. ‘I kiss random men in the street and Hannah has had sex behind a chicken coop.’ She screams with laughter as Hannah lurches unsteadily in the stairwell of Charleston Bar and Grill on Caroline Street (known locally as Chip Alley) and unashamedly urinates in front of us.
>
> Amazingly, none of the 80-strong throng of passers-by seems to notice – or perhaps care. Hannah rearranges her minuscule dress, steps over her own urine, shouts ‘f*** off’ and the pair stumble back to Walkabout. It’s only midnight, after all.
>
> […]But as I found out on the streets of Cardiff after midnight, many of these women are – by day at least – well qualified pillars of the community. Among them I met teachers, nurses, occupational therapists, personnel professionals and full-time mothers, all determined to shake off responsibility and have fun in the only way they know how. By getting ‘smashed’.
>
> Every week, the ritual is the same: Groups of between four and six girls congregate to dress up and competitively drink bottles of cheap wine or sickly shots. Competition ramps up over who can wear the tiniest mini-dress, the highest heels or the reddest lipstick. Drinking carries on during the bus ride to Cardiff (many young women travel from the surrounding Valleys) and continues in bars between 9pm and 11pm, or until they feel bold enough to dance.
>
> Condom in purse and telephone number for a pre-booked 3am taxi in handbag, they stagger between nightclubs. The ritual continues long into the morning when, dulled by hangovers, they congregate for McDonald’s or fried breakfasts to giggle about the drunken ‘fun’.
>
> New figures show that alcohol misuse costs the nation £7.3 billion in crime and antisocial behaviour and that one woman in five drinks at levels hazardous to

> health (more than 14 units each week).
>
> I went looking for the answer to the real question: Why? In a series of raw but illuminating interviews, I discovered that beyond the superficial bravado, their nights of booze-fuelled excess make them anything but happy – but they still have no intention of changing. Naomi Jenkins is a classroom assistant from Carmarthen and is adamant that downing sickly Jagermeister shots (which she nicknames medicine) is 'a laugh'.
>
> I hear the same knee-jerk answer again and again. Human-resources administrator Becky Sherlock
> from Chepstow tells me: 'Tomorrow morning, I'll lift my head off the pillow and think, "Oh s***." But it's worth it.'
>
> 'A hangover is the sign of a good night,' says her friend Danielle Malson, a secondary-school teacher.
>
> What quickly becomes apparent is the ease with which these young women distinguish their responsible weekday personas from their 'fun' selves. Naomi easily switches from diligent teaching assistant to Saturday night party girl when she squeezes into a skintight minidress. She tells me: 'I wouldn't do this if it affected my work.'
>
> Occupational therapist Sally Baldwin, 24, added: 'If I bumped into any of my patients or their relatives, I'd hide. It doesn't give off the right image… But as long as it doesn't interfere with my work, I'll carry on.' By splitting their characters into two personas (professional and social), these young women appear confident that their professional reputations remain unblemished. In their own minds, at least.
>
> 'I just like knowing I haven't lost my mojo,' admits a 27-year-old full-time mother, dressed in a skimpy football kit and slumped in a shop doorway on St Mary Street. 'The world seems a better place when you're wearing beer goggles.'
>
> […]It is a sad testimony that obliteration of reality is the highlight of the week for many of these young women. For Alicia Howley, 20, and Lucy Griffiths, both shop assistants, the ritual of dressing up in tight minidresses and wearing lashings of make-up begins at 4.30pm, straight after their Saturday shifts at Matalan.
>
> Lucy says: 'After a few drinks, you feel like you can do anything. It's amazing. The only time I usually talk to new people is speaking to customers at work. Alcohol makes me loads more confident… Like the time I had a foursome.' They laugh.

Read the whole thing, as this is going on with women from late high school right through college, until they are age 35, when they suddenly want to have a baby. And that doesn't mean they want to get married first. They are happy to conclude from their careful search for Mr. Right during drunken "foursomes" that there are no good men. After all, they are already perfectly suitable for marriage as they are, so if Mr. Right doesn't come along,

then it's not the woman's fault. And it's nothing that a little IVF, day care and public school won't solve – all taxpayer-funded, of course.

This story makes me think about why men like me (chaste, and marriage minded) are in the situation that we are in today. I have been taking some flak from friends of both sexes about my reticence to try to get married. I think that people who are criticizing need to realize what is out there right now to choose from. This is what is normal for most women who go through college today. And even if I could find a girl who managed to stay chaste while getting herself mature and independent, the laws are being made by the majority of women, who are more like the ones in the article.

Even when people mouth the words "I'm a Christian" you have to understand that most people who claim to be Christians go through 15 years of church and learn nothing at all that is useful about Christianity. I understand that once women become aware of what men like me want, that they are able to do it and to see the reasons for doing it. But it's very difficult to convince women to be serious about things like economics and apologetics these days – many of them aren't being serious about preparing for marriage in the time that they should be doing that.

Related posts

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- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- New study links father absence to increased bullying
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House passes bill to protect cement industry from job-killing EPA regulations

October 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The EPA is considering regulations that would kill American jobs by the bushel.

Excerpt:

> According to [Sen. James] Inhofe, the administration's proposed CO2/greenhouse gas-emission regulations—due out in November—could chop $300 billion to $400 billion alone off the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) each year. Estimates from the Senate Energy and Public Works Committee's Republican staff estimates this regulation could cost in excess of the 2 million jobs that would have been lost as a result of Waxman-Markey Climate Change Bill.
>
> Other estimates suggest that the EPA's Utility MACT and Transport Rule could cost $184 billion and 1.4 million jobs. Statistics Inhofe provided suggest the rule could shutter hundreds of coal-fired power plants around the country—equaling as much as 20% of the nation's total energy output.
>
> […]"We are relying on coal for as much as 45% of our nation's energy," Inhofe said. "He's intentionally passed a rule that will shut down coal in America, and there are lots of jobs that either directly or indirectly rely on coal. It's going to make it a lot much more expensive."
>
> **These increased costs are underscored by a Bernstein Research report that found: "We expect the loss of this generation to translate into higher wholesale energy and capacity prices. … We estimate that this will raise the price of electricity during on-peak hours by $3 to $5 per MWh."**
>
> **The rule's impact hit closer to home for 120 workers at a Cincinnati-area coal-fired power plant when Duke Energy announced it would be closing the plant if the rule is approved in November.**
>
> **"The anticipated retirement date is contingent on potential changes to the implementation [of the] EPA's MACT rule and other environmental regulations," Duke Energy said in a statement released in July.**
>
> **And Texas-based Luminant followed suit last week, announcing it would be laying off 500 workers in anticipation of the implementation of the EPA's cross-state air pollution rule, set to take effect on Jan. 1, 2012.**
>
> […]The National Associations of Manufacturers estimates the Utility MACT and cross-state air pollution rules will cost its members $18 billion annually, and drive its members' electricity costs up by 11.5%. It also shares Inhofe's analysis that these regulations could cost 1.4 million jobs annually.

But there is some good news from the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Excerpt:

> The U.S. House of Representatives declared another victory today in its ongoing battle against destructive regulation with passage of H.R. 2681, the Cement Sector Regulatory Relief Act. The measure passed the full House with strong bipartisan support by a vote of 262 to 161.
>
> H.R. 2681, authored by Reps. John Sullivan (R-OK) and Mike Ross (D-AR), will protect the domestic cement manufacturing industry from costly new rules issued by the EPA, which currently threaten widespread plant closures and thousands of American jobs. This legislation provides a remedy to EPA's flawed cement MACT rules with a directive to EPA to propose achievable standards and timelines. This legislation will ensure public health and the environment is protected without sacrificing jobs.
>
> "President Obama likes to talk about the need to invest in our nation's infrastructure and this bipartisan legislation will remove regulatory barriers to growth in the construction and cement manufacturing industries," said Sullivan. "The bottom line is that if EPA's Cement MACT rules are not revised, thousands of jobs will be lost due to cement plant closures and higher construction costs. These rules threaten to shut down up to 20 percent of the nation's cement manufacturing plants in the next two years, sending thousands of jobs permanently overseas and driving up cement and construction costs across the country. Additionally, the Portland Cement Association estimates it will cost $3.4 billion – half of the industry's annual revenues – just to comply with EPA's current Cement MACT rule."

I was surprised that a Democrat supported this bill, but it's really important to protect American jobs.

What’s behind the explosion of sexual activity among college students?

October 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article about the problem first, from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> The two most serious ethical challenges college students face are binge drinking and the culture of hooking up.
>
> Alcohol-related accidents are the leading cause of death for young adults aged 17-24. Students who engage in binge drinking (about two in five) are 25 times more likely to do things like miss class, fall behind in school work, engage in unplanned sexual activity, and get in trouble with the law. They also cause trouble for other students, who are subjected to physical and sexual assault, suffer property damage and interrupted sleep, and end up babysitting problem drinkers.
>
> Hooking up is getting to be as common as drinking. Sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, who heads the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, says that in various studies, 40%-64% of college students report doing it.
>
> **The effects are not all fun. Rates of depression reach 20% for young women who have had two or more sexual partners in the last year, almost double the rate for women who have had none. Sexually active young men do more poorly than abstainers in their academic work. And as we have always admonished our own children, sex on these terms is destructive of love and marriage.**
>
> Here is one simple step colleges can take to reduce both binge drinking and hooking up: Go back to single-sex residences.
>
> I know it’s countercultural. More than 90% of college housing is now co-ed. But Christopher Kaczor at Loyola Marymount points to a surprising number of studies showing that students in co-ed dorms (41.5%) report weekly binge drinking more than twice as often as students in single-sex housing (17.6%). Similarly, students in co-ed housing are more likely (55.7%) than students in single-sex dorms (36.8%) to have had a sexual partner in the last year—and more than twice as likely to have had three or more.

Now this is where things get interesting. The religious conservative people don’t like students drinking, hooking up, and getting depressed. Who could possibly be in favor of hurting women?

Well, consider this article in the College Fix.

Excerpt:

> Now John Banzhaf, a law professor at George Washington University, is suing CUA for discrimination.
>
> Banzhaf filed a complaint with the Washington D.C. Human Rights Office alleging that the university had violated D.C.'s Human Rights Act. CUA lawyers met with Banzhaf at the Human Rights Office on September 15 to defend the university's decision.
>
> Banzhaf, who has a history of using lawsuits to fight against what he sees as discrimination, compared the university's decision to separate students by sex to separating them by religion or race. He specifically linked the single-sex dorm policy to the "separate but equal" racial policy in place in the U.S. before civil rights movement.
>
> He also told CUA's student newspaper, The Tower, that the decision is "the same as saying that since Muslims and Jews don't get along we should force them to live apart."

What's behind the push to make women drink and hook-up with men? Feminism.

What feminism says, in practice, is that men have no special duties when compared to women. To say that men have anything special that they are responsible for is to be "sexist". Therefore, men and women have to be lumped together from kindergarten to college graduation so that they can be identical in every way. Anything less would be "discrimination".

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- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste

Fast and Furious assault weapons seized from drug cartel enforcer's home

October 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the L.A. Times.

Excerpt:

> High-powered assault weapons illegally purchased under the ATF's Fast and Furious program in Phoenix ended up in a home belonging to the purported top Sinaloa cartel enforcer in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, whose organization was terrorizing that city with the worst violence in the Mexican drug wars.
>
> In all, 100 assault weapons acquired under Fast and Furious were transported 350 miles from Phoenix to El Paso, making that West Texas city a central hub for gun traffickers. Forty of the weapons made it across the border and into the arsenal of Jose Antonio Torres Marrufo, a feared cartel leader in Ciudad Juarez, according to federal court records and trace documents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.
>
> The smugglers' tactics — quickly moving the weapons far from ATF agents in southern Arizona, where it had been assumed they would circulate — vividly demonstrate that what had been viewed as a local problem was much larger. Six other Fast and Furious guns destined for El Paso were recovered in Columbus, N.M.
>
> "These Fast and Furious guns were going to Sinaloans, and they are killing everyone down there," said one knowledgeable U.S. government source, who asked for anonymity because of the ongoing investigations. "But that's only how many we know came through Texas. Hundreds more had to get through."
>
> Torres Marrufo, also known as "the Jaguar," has been identified by U.S. authorities as the enforcer for Sinaloa cartel chieftain Joaquin "Chapo" Guzman. The Fast and Furious weapons were found at one of Torres Marrufo's homes.

I want to see how the media tries to help the Obama administration out of this mess. Be sure and share these stories on Facebook, especially the ones from CBS News, the L.A. Times, etc.

Related posts

- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien

- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent’s family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano’s indifference

Dodd-Frank causes Bank of America to cut 30,000 jobs and raise debit card fees

October 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> What is the cost of overregulation? Bank of America appears to have provided part of the answer by announcing yesterday that the nation's largest bank will cut 30,000 jobs between now and 2014. CEO Brian Moynihan said the bank's plan is to slash $5 billion in annual expenses from its consumer businesses.
>
> Mr. Moynihan didn't say this, but we will: These layoffs are part of the bill for the last two years of Washington's financial rule-writing. After loose monetary policy had combined with insane housing policy to create a financial crisis, the Democrats who ran Washington in 2009 and 2010 enacted myriad new rules that had nothing to do with easy money or housing.
>
> Take the amendment that Illinois Democrat and Senator Dick Durbin (with the help of 17 Senate Republicans) attached to last year's Dodd-Frank financial law. Mr. Durbin's amendment instructed the Federal Reserve to limit the amount of "swipe fees" that banks can charge merchants when customers use debit cards.
>
> How exactly does forcing banks to charge Wal-Mart less money for operating an electronic payment system prevent the next financial crisis? Readers may wait a long time for a satisfactory answer, but the cost of this Dodd-Frank directive is straightforward.
>
> The Fed dutifully ordered banks to cut their fees almost in half. Bank of America disclosed in its most recent quarterly report that this change will reduce the bank's debit-card revenues by $475 million in just the fourth quarter of this year. The new rules take effect on October 1, so BofA seems to have sensible timing as it begins to shed workers from a consumer business that has become suddenly less profitable by federal edict.
>
> Make that the *latest* federal edict. In 2009, when a comprehensive overhaul of financial regulation was still a gleam in Barney Frank's eye, President Obama signed the CARD Act into law. It limited the ability of banks to increase rates on delinquent borrowers and to charge fees on unprofitable customers. As Washington encouraged card issuers to be more selective in advancing credit and to demand higher rates when they do, interest rates on card customers predictably increased relative to other types of lending in the months after the law took effect.
>
> Restricting bank profits on a particular product may have obvious populist appeal, but politicians shouldn't be surprised if banks decide that such consumer

> credit operations aren't good businesses and can function with fewer employees. Add in the various federal programs aimed at extracting penalties for this or that mortgage-foreclosure error and it's understandable that a bank would have trouble forecasting growth to justify its current work force.

But that's not all. The Dodd-Frank regulation also caused Bank of America to raise fees on debit cards to $5 a month ($60 a year).

Excerpt:

> Throwing their weight around at the height of the banking crisis, House Financial Services Chairman Barney Frank of Massachusetts and Sen. Chris Dodd of Connecticut vowed to stick it to banks. They blamed them for the mess to cover up the fact that they forced banks to lend to favored constituencies who could not repay.
>
> The two Democrats pushed through the much-vaunted Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, which President Obama signed and touted as one of the signature accomplishments of his presidency.
>
> That act, which included a micromanaging amendment on fees, carried a $2.9 billion implementation cost for that alone over five years, according to the Government Accountability Office.
>
> It was nothing but the same old pandering to special interests. Named after Illinois Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin, the amendment limited fees that banks can collect from sellers when their customers make debit card purchases — cutting 44 cent fees to 21 cents.
>
> That little bomb is now why battered Bank of America has no choice but to impose a $5 monthly fee — $60 a year — to consumers to make up for lost revenue.
>
> The "economics of offering a debit card have changed with recent regulations," a bank spokeswoman told ABC News Friday.
>
> BofA says it stands to lose $2 billion from the arbitrary Durbin price-fixing amendment and now has no choice but to make up for the lost revenue some other way.
>
> Now that consumers will be stuck with that fee, they can thank Dodd, Frank and Obama for that special little spike in inflation tailored just for them.
>
> Other banks, by the way, might follow. And like banks, consumers may respond in a way that is logical to their interests, too.

If there is one person who is to blame for this recession, it's Barney Frank. Chris Dodd isn't far behind. Who elected these people, and do they understand economics? I think not.

Related posts

- Thomas Sowell on the root causes of the mortgage lending crisis
- Democrat Barney Frank admits his role in causing the recession
- If you had to blame the recession on one person, who would it be?
- Who benefits from the Democrats financial regulation bill?
- Wall Street bankers gave Obama millions in campaign contributions
- Who are the ten most corrupt politicians of 2009?
- Thomas Sowell explains how politicians cause recessions while getting elected
- Democrats planning government regulation of more large companies
- Democrats use TARP money to shore up personal fortunes
- Democrats caused the recession and Republicans tried to stop it

Jennifer Roback Morse debates same-sex marriage at SMU

October 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Description:

> Southern Methodist University hosts a debate between Dr J (invited by the Federalist Society) and Dallas attorney (invited by OutLaw) on the legal definition of marriage.

The MP3 file is here.

Here is my snarky summary. Just bear in mind that Dr. J's opponent is a lawyer, so I want to be clear that I am caricaturing and satirizing her speeches deliberately for humor, and these are not factual statements about what she said at all. So don't sue me.

I do think you should listen to her actual words to see what factual arguments she makes, and whether her reasoning about what marriage is is compatible with polygamy, incestuous marriage, and anything else involving loving, committed consenting adults. And it you like this debate, you can find other debates on the Ruth Institute podcast. Jennifer Roback Morse is the William Lane Craig of the marriage issue.

Dr. Morse opening speech

No-Fault divorce as a case study:
– studies were produced to show that as long as divorced parents were happy, the divorced children would be fine
– but that research was wrong, children do suffer from divorce
– when you change the understanding of marriage, you change the way that generations relate
– you have to wait for one or more generations to see the effects of the change

The essential public purpose of marriage:
– to attach mothers and fathers to their children and to one another
– marriage exists in virtually every known society
– societies need marriage in order to allow children to develop over a period of time
– human babies have a long period of dependency, and we need parents to sick around for the duration
– there are many private reasons to get married, but we are insterested in the public purpose
– marriage identifies two people who made the child as having responsibility for the child

Marriage and the law
– currently there is the presumption of paternity – the woman's husband is presumed to be the father
– the presumption of paternity is being changed to the presumption of the parent
– now, the other partner is presumed to be the other parent

– but if same-sex marriage were legal, the partner is never the child's biological parent
– so, if you redefine marriage, then you are necessarily re-defining parenthood as well
– the children of same-sex unions are not being treated equally
– the children of same-sex unions are not going to have the same access to their biological parents

Children:
– children have a right to know who their mother and father are
– in general, children need a mother and father when they are growing up
– we have lots of data from single parents, divorced parents, divorced/remarried parents to show it

Biological parents and the state:
– in countries that redefine marriage, the state determines who the parents are
– the state creates criteria independent of biology to decide who parents are
– this is too much power for the state to have.

Opponent's opening speech:

Marriage is about people having feelings of love, not the rights of children:
– marriage has no definition outside of what the state says it is
– there are lots of children being raised in same-sex households
– marriage is not necessarily about parenting, because old infertile people get married
– it doesn't matter what children need or want, so long as adults feel happy
– lots of liberal organizations say that same-sex parents are BETTER than married bio-parents
– a family can be anything that we decide it is
– marriage has no basis biologically, marriage is assigned by the state with a civil license

Boohoohoo:
– there are lots of rights and responsibilities that married couples have that same-sex couples don't
– for example bereavement leave, property inheritance, visitation rights, joint tax returns, etc.

Same-sex marriage is the same as multi-racial marriage:
– men and women are indistinguishable and interchangeable

Keep your morality off my selfishness:
– it's nobody else's business if children don't grow up with their mothers and fathers

Dr. Morse's rebuttal:

Rebuttal:
– your statistics on the number of children in same-sex households are false: here are the actual numbers
– interracial marriage IS marriage: it produces children and requires parents be attached to those children
– a better solution to same-sex couples with children is adoption, not redefining marriage

Opponent’s rebuttal:

You’re a meany!
– if you don’t like same-sex marriage, then you opposed desegregation
– if you don’t like same-sex marriage, then you opposed women getting the right to vote
– I believe in justice, equality and civil rights, you don’t
– Yay social justice! I’m on the right side of history!

Rick Santorum explains his support for “Don’t ask, don’t tell”

October 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Rick Santorum explains his support Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell on Fox News Sunday. Excerpt:

> Someone’s race is not a factor in his ability to serve in the military because it’s a passive trait, but homosexuality requires active behavior and that makes it a potential barrier to unit cohesion in the military, former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum said Sunday, distinguishing between an earlier argument against integration in the Armed Forces.
>
> Explaining his opposition to the repeal of don’t ask, don’t tell, the defunct military policy that prohibits gays from serving openly in the military, the 2012 Republican presidential candidate said the two situations are “very, very different.”
>
> “I mean, we are talking about people who are, you know, simply different because of the color of their skin, not because of activities that would cause problems for people living in those close quarters,” said Santorum, considered one of the most socially conservative candidates in the race.
>
> […]”It’s not the same. And I know people try to make it the same, but it is not. It is a behavioral issue, as opposed to a color of the skin issue, and that makes all the difference when it comes to serving in the military,” he added.
>
> Santorum said members of the military live in close proximity to one another, and by necessity must shower together in the barracks or out in the field.
>
> That makes some people uncomfortable, he said, and “it could hurt our ability to retain and recruit and to put the best fighting force in place.”
>
> “You’re talking about the ability for people to be able to have that unit cohesion, to be able to work together in a efficient fighting way,” he said.
>
> […]”I know the whole gay community is trying to make this the new Civil Rights Act. It’s not. It’s not the same. You are black by the color of your skin. You are not homosexual necessarily by — obviously by the color of your skin or anything — it’s by a variety of things.”

Rick Santorum may be the only conservative running in this primary who understands these social issues enough to tell the truth about them. We’ve looked at the studies and seen that he’s right about sexual orientation being co-related with a variety of factors, some genetic and some environmental. But that’s not the view of people in the mainstream media, nor in the culture at large. Many people don’t take the time to look at the studies, such as the identical twin studies, which show that there is no genetically

determined behavior called homosexuality – homosexuality is, at least in part, a choice. For those who haven't looked at the actual research, that may come as a surprise, though. I think that for contentious issues like gay rights and same-sex marriage, it's a good idea to hear both sides in a formal debate.

Video and transcript of Herman Cain's Value Voter Summit speech

October 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you see Herman Cain's speech at the Value Voter Summit? (transcript linked)

Part 1:

Part 2:

Excerpt:

> And so the pursuit of happiness, just like my parents pursued their definition of happiness. Mom was a domestic worker. Dad was a barber, a janitor and a chauffeur. When Dad walked off of that small farm, Dad went to pursue his American dream with the only kind of equity he had — sweat equity. And he was able to achieve his American dream, he and my mother. And Dad wanted to give us a little bit better start in life, and they did. And Dad wanted to make sure that one day he could buy a whole house for the family.
>
> You see, growing up in Atlanta, most of the time we lived in what my brother and I called a half a house. It was a six-room house with three rooms on one side, three rooms on the other side. We lived in half of it. My brother and I, being typical kids, used to say: Dad, why do we live in a half a house? (Laughter.) Dad said: It's a duplex. (Laughter.) Because we didn't know that Dad was saving for his dream, which was to one day buy a whole house for the family; and he did. Dad knew that the pursuit of happiness meant working those three jobs.
>
> And Dad also knew that the pursuit of happiness meant the three things that they instilled in my brother and I if you want to achieve your American dream; and that is, your belief in God, belief in yourself and belief in the greatest country in the world, the United States of America. And we are exceptional!

And:

> A reporter asked me just yesterday: Well, aren't you angry — (laughter) — about how America has treated you?
>
> AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Laughs.)
>
> MR. CAIN: I said: Sir, you don't get it. (Laughter.) I have achieved all of my American dreams and then some — (cheers, applause) — because of the great nation United States of America. (Cheers, applause.) What's there to be angry about? Angry? (Applause continues.)
>
> America's — one of America's greatest strengths is its ability to change. We have weathered those changes. That's what makes this nation great.

And:

> Now Mr. Cain, what are you going to do about Iran?
>
> Well, here's what I'm going to do about Iran. I'm going to utilize a capability that we have that most people are unaware of. I learned about these capabilities when I served on an advisory board for the Strategic Air Command before they changed it to STRATCOM. We are the only nation in the world that has the ballistic missile detection capability at sea as well as on land — better than any other country in the world. We have the ability to upgrade those ballistic missile defense systems on all of our AEGIS warships, and we have the ability to double the number of AEGIS warships and strategically place them anywhere in the world to detect missiles fired from those locations toward a friend or toward us and knock it out of the sky before it reaches its apex.
>
> And so I would upgrade — make it a priority to upgrade all of our AEGIS surface-to-air ballistic missile defense capability on all of our warships all the way around — all the way around the world, make that a priority, and then say to Ahmadinejad: Make my day. (Extended cheers, applause.)

And:

> They want you to believe that we can't do this. Just like three months ago I was — the pundits, the political pundits said Herman Cain can't get the nomination, Herman Cain cannot win the presidency, because he doesn't have high name-ID, he doesn't have a kajillion dollars and he's never held public office.
>
> But let me tell you what the American people are saying. They don't care about a katrillion dollars! America wants to raise some Cain, not raise more money! (Cheers, applause.) That's what the voters are saying. (Cheers, applause.)

Read the whole thing! Especially for those people who don't think they need to know what an AEGIS-enabled warship is. Herman Cain knows, because he worked on missile ballistics for the Department of the Navy.

Believe it: the reliable Gallup poll has Cain down by 2

From Gallup:

Preferences for 2012 Republican Presidential Nomination

Based on Republicans and Republican-leaning independents

	Jul 20-24, 2011	Aug 17-21, 2011	Sep 15-18, 2011	Oct 3-7, 2011
Romney	23	17	24	20
Cain	4	4	5	18
Perry	18	29	31	15
Paul	10	13	13	8
Gingrich	6	4	5	7
Bachmann	13	10	5	5
Santorum	2	3	2	3

Cain trails liberal Romney by two points

Steve Ertelt from Life News notes some other recent polls.

Excerpt:

> The tidal wave of recent support for Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain is manifesting itself in two new polls showing the pro-life businessman now running competitively with pro-abortion President Barack Obama.
>
> The first poll, conducted by the firm Poll Position, shows Cain beating Obama in a potential head-to-head matchup by a 43.3 percent to 41.3 percent margin. In the results the firm found in its automated voice survey technology poll, Cain takes a whopping 24 percent of the African-American vote — a much higher percentage that actual Republican presidential candidates have received in elections past.
>
> […]Meanwhile, a new Rasmussen poll shows Cain has pulled within three points of Obama in its most recent national telephone survey of likely voters. The latest 2012 hypothetical matchup finds the president earning 42% support, while Cain picks up 39% of the vote. Seven percent (7%) prefer some other candidate, and 12% are undecided.
>
> "The latest results represent the best showing for Cain who appears to be experiencing a surge of support among Republican voters. Late last month, the former radio host trailed the president 39% to 34%. Obama held a seven-point lead a month earlier and led Cain by 18 points in March," Rasmussen notes.
>
> "Cain draws support from 70% of Republican voters, while Obama picks up the vote from 79% of Democrats. Voters not affiliated with either party are evenly divided between the candidates. Eighty-five percent (85%) of Tea Party voters support Cain, but 55% of non-members prefer Obama," Rasmussen continued.
>
> Cain likely would do better against Obama, but the Rasmussen poll shows some Republican voters are concerned about his "9-9-9" tax reform plan, as most of those polled agree that if it becomes law, Congress won't wait long to raise the tax rates higher. Fifty-six percent (56%) of GOP voters favor Cain's plan, but 66% of all voters think Congress would raise tax rates within five to 10 years of the plan's adoption.
>
> The businessman has acknowledged and addressed that concern, saying his plan would require a two-thirds vote in Congress to raise taxes.
>
> Rasmussen polls show Obama leads all of the current GOP hopefuls except former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney with whom he is essentially tied. New numbers on the Romney-Obama match-up will be released tomorrow, Rasmussen indicates.

If you want to know why he is surging, watch the speech, or read the transcript.

Related posts

- Herman Cain is now tied for first place with fiscal/social liberal Romney
- Herman Cain now tied for second place in new GOP primary poll

- Herman Cain on Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace
- Who is Herman Cain and why is he in first place in this national poll?
- Herman Cain wins straw poll in Florida!
- Herman Cain gaining momentum with the Tea Party conservatives
- The top article on National Review is about Herman Cain
- Video of the first Republican presidential debate in South Carolina

American Atheists: are they much different from Stalin and Mao Tse Tung?

October 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I do want to make a distinction between ordinary individual atheists and militant atheists. This post is about militant atheists, the kind that organizes into groups and then exerts political power to try to trample the rights of religious people. This post is about that kind of atheist, not the ordinary kind that is honest and open to being convinced that God exists. If you are an atheist, and you don't have any thoughts about silencing religious people, or making religious people deny their convictions, or taking away their rights to speak freely or assemble, then this post isn't about you. But there is another group of atheists that does have these and other goals, and this post is an answer to them.

Consider this post on the American Atheists web site. (The PDF is saved here)

Excerpt:

> It should come as no surprise that the individuals who abide by fundamentalist Christian… doctrines would be the first to cry out that they are being persecuted when their dangerous, damaging and disingenuous beliefs come under attack. Most of these people lack the maturity and intelligence to act in a socially acceptable manner. Many of them are sociopaths and quite a good number of them are psychopaths. All of them are clearly delusional.
>
> The fact is that fundamentalist Christians… are not interested in coexisting or getting along. They have no desire for peace. They do not want to sit down with us in diplomatic efforts to iron out our differences and come to an agreement on developing an integrated society.
>
> They want us to die.
>
> Their interpretation of the Bible… are such that there is no other course of action but to kill the infidel, and if anyone believes otherwise they are only fooling themselves. It is not just in the best interests of atheists to be intolerant of fundamental Christianity and radical Islam, but it is also in the best interest of mainstream believers within these faiths, as well. Moderates and even Progressives who stand in support of extremists just because there is a claim to the same deity are not doing themselves any favors. Fundamental Christians make all Christians look bad…
>
> …the underbelly of fundamentalist Christianity… does not operate in the legal system. They don't respond to lawsuits, letters, amicus briefs or other grass-roots campaigns and they must, must, must be eradicated.

Wow, that's some pretty strong rhetoric. Has anyone actually ever tried to eradicate Christianity? Let's see.

The death toll of atheism: over 100 million in the last century

Here's a quick introduction (from Harvard University Press) to the body count for atheist regimes in the last century.

Excerpt:

> Already famous throughout Europe, this international bestseller plumbs recently opened archives in the former Soviet bloc to reveal the actual, practical accomplishments of Communism around the world: terror, torture, famine, mass deportations, and massacres. Astonishing in the sheer detail it amasses, the book is the first comprehensive attempt to catalogue and analyze the crimes of Communism over seventy years.
>
> "Revolutions, like trees, must be judged by their fruit," Ignazio Silone wrote, and this is the standard the authors apply to the Communist experience—in the China of "the Great Helmsman," Kim Il Sung's Korea, Vietnam under "Uncle Ho" and Cuba under Castro, Ethiopia under Mengistu, Angola under Neto, and Afghanistan under Najibullah. The authors, all distinguished scholars based in Europe, document Communist crimes against humanity, but also crimes against national and universal culture, from Stalin's destruction of hundreds of churches in Moscow to Ceausescu's leveling of the historic heart of Bucharest to the widescale devastation visited on Chinese culture by Mao's Red Guards.
>
> As the death toll mounts—as many as 25 million in the former Soviet Union, 65 million in China, 1.7 million in Cambodia, and on and on—the authors systematically show how and why, wherever the millenarian ideology of Communism was established, it quickly led to crime, terror, and repression. An extraordinary accounting, this book amply documents the unparalleled position and significance of Communism in the hierarchy of violence that is the history of the twentieth century.

It's important to understand that these communist regimes *were run by militant, organized atheists*. And atheism was at the center of their worldview, and their political involvement.

Here is a citation from **a communist web site**:

> In the body of his study Marx pointed out that: "The proofs of the existence of God are either mere hollow tautologies… all proofs of the existence of God are proofs of his non-existence." (Marx, The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature, 1841, MECW 1.)
>
> …In 1841 Marx and Bauer planned to publish a radical philosophical periodical, Archives of Atheism. The views of some contemporaries give some indication of the scope of their project.
>
> Arnold Ruge wrote: "**Bruno Bauer, Karl Marx, Christiansen and Feuerbach are forming a new montagne and are making atheism their slogan. God,**

> **religion, immortality are cast down from their thrones and man is proclaimed God.**"
>
> And Georg Jung wrote to Ruge: "If Marx, Bruno Bauer and Feuerbach associate to found a theological-philosophical review, God would do well to surround himself with all the angels and indulge in self-pity, for these three will certainly drive him out of his heaven… **For Marx, at any rate, the Christian religion is one of the most immoral there is.**" (David McLellan, Marx before Marxism, 1970)
>
> **Flowing from his atheism, Marx opposed organised religion and the role of religion in politics.** A flavour of Marx's attitude can be gleaned from his journalism at the time.
>
> …in "The Leading Article" in No. 179 of the Kölnische Zeitung (1842), Marx accused the Prussian state of disseminating Christian dogma, criticised the police and the censor for protecting religion and insisted that no distinction should be made between religion as belief and the religious establishment. (MECW 1)

But this is ancient history right? Or is this still going on today?

Anti-Christian violence in atheist regimes

The problem hasn't gone away… it's still here wherever militant atheism is the state religion.

Here's an example of how Christians are treated by the atheist regime in North Korea. This is just one of these atheist dictators who is taking the anti-Christian rhetoric of Karl Marx seriously.

Excerpt:

> North Korea publicly executed a Christian woman last month for distributing the Bible, which is banned in the communist nation, South Korean activists said Friday.
>
> Ri Hyon Ok, 33, was also accused of spying for South Korea and the United States and organizing dissidents. She was executed in the northwestern city of Ryongchon near the border with China on June 16, according to a report from an alliance of several dozen anti-North Korea groups.
>
> Ri's parents, husband and three children were sent to a political prison camp in the northeastern city of Hoeryong the following day, the report said, citing unidentified documents it says were obtained from North Korea. It showed a copy of Ri's North Korean government-issued photo ID. It is virtually impossible to verify such reports about secretive North Korea, where the government tightly controls the lives of its citizens and does not allow dissent.
>
> On Thursday, an annual report from a state-run South Korean think tank on human rights in the North said that public executions, though dropping in number in recent years, were still carried out for crimes ranging from murder to circulating foreign movies.

> North Korea claims to guarantee freedom of religion for its 24 million people but in reality severely restricts religious observances. The cult of personality surrounding national founder Kim Il Sung and his son, current leader Kim Jong Il, is a virtual state religion.
>
> The government has authorized four state churches, one Catholic, two Protestant and one Russian Orthodox, but they cater to foreigners and ordinary North Koreans cannot attend. However, defectors and activists say more than 30,000 North Koreans are believed to practice Christianity secretly.
>
> The U.S. State Department reported last year that "genuine religious freedom does not exist" in North Korea.
>
> "North Korea appears to have judged that Christian forces could pose a threat to its regime," Do Hee-youn, a leading activist, told reporters, claiming public executions, arrest and detention of North Koreans are prevalent.

The BBC reports on some eradicating of Christianity in China.

Excerpt:

> Human rights groups have documented an increasing number of arrests of Chinese Christians since the beginning of 2004.
>
> According to the charity Christian Solidarity Worldwide, persecution is becoming more systematic and targeted at large-scale Christian gatherings.
>
> Since June the charity has documented three mass arrests of unregistered Christians. In each case more than 100 people were detained.
>
> Amnesty International has reported many cases of detained church leaders in recent years, especially in the provinces of Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Hebei.
>
> One of the most high-profile cases is that of Gong Shengliang, head of the South China Church, who was sentenced to death in 2001. His sentence was commuted to a prison term, but Amnesty has received reports that he has been severely tortured in jail.
>
> In August three Christians were sentenced to jail terms for passing information to foreign governments, and in July state media reported that a woman had been beaten to death after being arrested for handing out bibles.
>
> Peter Xu said that while he was in jail, he saw several people even being killed for their faith.
>
> "A believer was praying, so a jailer made other prisoners lift him up to the ceiling and drop him to the ground many times until he died," Mr Xu said.

So, judging from these examples, at least some atheists have taken the desire to "eradicate Christianity" and put it into practice.

Can atheism ground human rights and morality?

So does atheism rationally ground a prohibition on mass murder? Well think about what

atheism involves. Atheism is the view that there is no design to the universe. The universe is an accident. Matter is all there is. There is no way the universe ought to be, objectively – because there is no designer, objectively. And there is no way humans ought to act, objectively – because there is no moral lawgiver, objectively. Humans have no free will to make moral choices – we are just matter in motion, and that means that our behavior is fully determined by our genetic programming and sensory inputs. Moreover, there is no one we are accountable to after we die, so even if we had free will, there would be no reason to do good self-sacrificially, or to abstain from evil, self-sacrificially. When you die, that's the end, so there's no point in sacrificing your happiness for some arbitrary social conventions that vary by time and place. There is no reason to put anyone else's interests above our own unless it gives us pleasure or helps us to avoid pain or social disapproval.

On atheism, if you feel pleasure from hurting or killing others, and there's no one there strong enough to stop you, then there is nothing objectively wrong with hurting or killing others. Morality is just a convention on atheism – it varies by time and place. If the majority of people like slavery, then slavery becomes "moral". There is no transcendent source of morality or human rights, such as the right to life or the right to liberty, on atheism. I repeat: on atheism, morality is the same as traffic laws or clothing fashions – they just evolve as a result of biological evolution and social evolution. So atheist morality is just "do whatever makes you feel good, but don't get caught by those who might have different arbitrary preferences than you do".

Don't believe me? Consider a couple of prominent atheists:

William Provine says:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Michael Ruse says:

> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. **Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory.** (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

Richard Dawkins says:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, **no design, no purpose, no evil and no good**, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

No ultimate foundation for ethics? Ethics is illusory? No evil and no good? Then why is this American Atheist article saying that some things are evil and that some things are good? It's not rational to make claims about what's evil and good on atheism, because on atheism, as Richard Dawkins tells us, there is no evil and no good.

When a Christian theist says slavery is wrong, he means it really is wrong. And he can make a rational argument for it based on the existence of a designer who has revealed that slavery is wrong – as Christian abolitionists like William Wilberforce argued when he single-handedly ended slavery in the UK. But when an atheist says slavery is wrong, he means 1) that the morality of slavery is a matter of opinion, and 2) that the two opinions "slavery is right" or "slavery is wrong" are both equally warranted depending on where and when each convention evolved, and 3) that he has a personal preference for one view over the other, in keeping with his social group. In one time and place, slavery is "wrong", and in another time and another place, slavery is "right". *Whatever has evolved in a culture at some time and in some place is right for that culture.* There is no rule, on atheism, to say that one society is better than any other. Whatever evolved, biologically and sociologically, is right, on atheism.

Are atheists at least scientifically literate?

It's also important to realize what we are dealing with in atheism.

According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* The Big Bang has been confirmed by experimental evidence such as redshift measurements, light element abundances and the cosmic microwave background radiation. According to this peer-reviewed astrophysics journal article, the best explanation for the Big Bang event is a supernatural agent. This cosmology falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by atheism.

So you have an entire group of people who basically make a faith commitment to an unscientific cosmology, and then they go on to advocate the eradication of Christianity (and therefore, of the eradication of the followers of Christianity). They believe what they want to believe – *regardless* of logic and science. Now why is that? Let's consult a famous

non-theist to find out what's really going on.

Consider the famous agnostic Aldous Huxley:

> "I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way that they find most advantageous to themselves… For myself, the philosophy of meaningless was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political." — Aldous Huxley in *Ends and Means*, 1937

That's what's really going on here. They assume a reality that corresponds to their desires, and then they disregard any evidence that falsifies it – even scientific evidence.

What happens to atheists in debates?

Consider this debate with Christopher Hitchens and William Lane Craig:

If you watch the debate closely, you will find that although Christopher Hitchens is very aggressive, that he makes only one argument very briefly, in his very last speech. Instead, about 99% of his speeches he expresses his dislike for God and his preference that God would do things differently, so that it's more in line with Mr. Hitchens' preferences about the way the world ought to be.

The same thing happens in this debate with Sam Harris:

It's really not about truth – it's more like "Yuck! I don't like Christianity!". As we've seen, atheists don't really believe that morality is real at all, it has no existence outside people's opinions, on their view.

One final point, since it gets mentioned a lot: slavery. I find it particularly interesting when atheists complain about slavery. Slavery occurs when one group of people who have power de-humanize another group of people with less power based on some characteristic of that other group, so that they can exploit them or prevent them from interfering with their own pursuit of pleasure. Now consider the issue of abortion today. Conservative Christians oppose abortion, because we don't think that entire groups of people lose their right to life just because they are small or insufficiently developed. Atheists on the other hand tend to favor of abortion.

In the time of slavery, the most committed evangelical Christians like William Wilberforce were active in the abolition movement. Similarly, the most committed evangelical Christians today oppose abortion. Both issues are the same – a whole group of people are having their basic human rights removed by some other powerful group. Now abortion is much worse than slavery – 50 million unborn Americans have died since 1973. And generally, atheists do not oppose abortion today. This leads me to suspect that atheists would not have been opposed to slavery back in the time of slavery, certainly not in the way that William Wilberforce opposed it. In fact, here is good old Richard Dawkins

expressing his support for infanticide. Richard Dawkins recently made comments about wanting to destroy Christianity – even though he fled from an opportunity to debate William Lane Craig. It's not debate they want.

So what's my view of what to do with atheists? I advocate reasoning with atheists, using arguments and evidence. I also advocate treating them gently and respectfully and charitably. This is no surprise, since religious people are known to be more charitable than non-religious people.

Related posts

- Thinking Matters New Zealand: New milestone: fundamentalist atheism now indistinguishable from parody of itself
- Here is a post I wrote about the recent Reason Rally, and the organizer's desire not to engage in discussion or debate

Which politician received the most money from Wall Street in the last 20 years?

October 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Caller explains how Barack Obama has received the most money from Wall Street bankers of all politicians in the last 20 years. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt: (with links removed)

> Despite his rhetorical attacks on Wall Street, a study by the Sunlight Foundation's Influence Project shows that President Barack Obama has received more money from Wall Street than any other politician over the past 20 years, including former President George W. Bush.
>
> In 2008, Wall Street's largesse accounted for 20 percent of Obama's total take, according to Reuters.
>
> When asked by The Daily Caller to comment about President Obama's credibility when it comes to criticizing Wall Street, the White House declined to reply.
>
> […]In fact, the Sunlight Foundation, a nonpartisan watchdog group that tracks lobbyist spending and influence in both parties, found that President Obama has received more money from Bank of America than any other candidate dating back to 1991.
>
> An examination of the numbers shows that Obama took in $421,242 in campaign contributions in 2008 from Bank of America's executives, PACs and employees, which exceeded its prior record contribution of $329,761 to President George W. Bush in 2004.
>
> According to the Center for Responsive Politics, Wall Street firms also contributed more to Obama's 2008 campaign than they gave to Republican nominee John McCain.
>
> "The securities and investment industry is Obama's second largest source of bundlers, after lawyers, at least 56 individuals have raised at least $8.9 million for his campaign," Massie Ritsch wrote in a Sept. 18, 2008 entry on the Center for Responsive Politics's OpenSecrets blog.
>
> By the end of Barack Obama's 2008 campaign, executives and others connected with Wall Street firms, such as Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, Citigroup, UBS AG, JPMorgan Chase, and Morgan Stanley, poured nearly $15.8 million into his coffers.
>
> Goldman Sachs contributed slightly over $1 million to Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, compared with a little over $394,600 to the 2004 Bush campaign. Citigroup gave $736,771 to Obama in 2008, compared with $320,820 to Bush in 2004. Executives and others connected with the Swiss bank UBS AG donated $539,424 to Obama's 2008 campaign, compared with $416,950 to Bush in

> 2004. And JP Morgan Chase gave Obama's campaign $808,799 in 2008, but did not show up among Bush's top donors in 2004, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> Obama's close relationship with JP Morgan Chase was highlighted earlier this year when he tapped Bill Daley, a former top executive with the bank, to replace Rahm Emanuel as his chief of staff.
>
> Wall Street's generosity to Obama didn't end with his 2008 campaign either. Wall Street donors contributed $4.8 million to underwrite Obama's inauguration, according to a Jan. 15, 2009 Reuters report.
>
> So far Wall Street has raised $7.2 million in the current electoral cycle for President Obama, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Obama's 2012 Wall Street bundlers include people like Jon Corzine, former Goldman Sachs CEO and former New Jersey governor; Azita Raji, a former investment banker for JP Morgan; and Charles Myers, an executive with the investment bank Evercore Partners.

This ought to put to rest the myth that Wall Street is composed of greedy Republicans. But it will only work for people who care about the facts.

I blogged before about the Wall Street bailout that Obama pushed through – remember that? Do you think that maybe he was paying off the people that got him elected? Is that what "stimulus" spending really means? Is Solyndra just another example of "stimulus" spending to bail out the people who got him elected?

Useful idiot Jim Wallis accepts $150,000 more from leftist atheist George Soros

October 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From World Magazine. (H/T Jay Richards)

Excerpt:

> Last year Jim Wallis encountered a barrage of criticism when WORLD reported that his religious left organization, Sojourners, took $325,000 from the world's most notorious billionaire, pro-abortion atheist George Soros (July 17 and Sept. 11, 2010). Now he's at it again: In an email note to me, Wallis confirmed that Soros' Open Society Foundation has just given Sojourners $150,000 more.
>
> The donation is more evidence that Wallis and Sojourners are on the left, even though the organization appeals to young evangelicals by claiming to be apolitical—in Wallis' summation, not left but "deep." Sojourners has paid its bills through contributions from co-religionists but also with $250,000 from The Tides Foundation, $200,000 from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, and additional sums from Barbra Streisand and others.
>
> For some contributors, Sojourners is a useful tool in reducing evangelical support for conservatives. Others have grander motives: Soros himself has stated, "The main obstacle to a stable and just world order is the United States."

I think all Christians should have a view of economics, because we need to understand how to be effective at helping the poor. It may sound like a good idea to raise the minimum wage, but economists understand that raising the minimum wage actually hurts the poor, especially the young. It never hurts to study and to understand the way the world works – in any area of knowledge. I think that Christians should know how Christianity relates to every area, from science to history to philosophy to ethics to marriage and family.

Related posts

- Peter Hitchens distinguishes the deserving and undeserving poor
- Should Christians support wealth redistribution as a way to alleviate poverty?
- Should Christians pray for the economy?
- Fiscal and social conservatives unite in new free e-book "Indivisible"
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Cato Institute talks with Jay Richards about Christianity and capitalism
- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible
- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

Who really won the Value Voter Summit straw poll? Cain and Santorum

October 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CBS News explains who really won the straw poll at the Value Voter Summit.

Full text:

> Rep. Ron Paul scored a decisive victory Saturday in a mock presidential election at the Values Voter Summit, trouncing fellow Texan, Gov. Rick Perry, but an organizer of the straw poll suggested ballot-stuffing may have skewed the results.
>
> In a press conference following the announcement of the straw poll results at the annual Washington gathering of social conservatives, Family Research Council President Tony Perkins all but dismissed the results as irrelevant, citing 600 people who registered Saturday morning and, he said, “left after Ron Paul spoke.”
>
> A total of 1,983 ballots were cast. “You do the math,” Perkins said.
>
> A year ago in the same contest, Paul came in second-to-last. Speaking briefly with reporters before the straw poll results were announced, the Republican lawmaker said, “If I win, it wouldn’t be as important to the media than if I lose.”
>
> Paul has a history of scoring unlooked-for straw poll wins by packing the electorate with diehard supporters. But Perkins said it’s too early to take much away from Paul’s win. “Let me just take you back four years to this event, when we had a straw poll. Mitt Romney won that straw poll,” he said. “I think people are still in the process of deciding where they want to go.”
>
> Paul got 37 percent of the vote. The rest of the ballots showed how widely social conservatives support is splintered among the rest of the field.
>
> Two other conservative favorites, businessman Herman Cain and former Sen. Rick Santorum, took second and third place, respectively, with 23 percent for Cain and 16 percent for Santorum.
>
> Perry and Michele Bachmann won 8 percent apiece. Mitt Romney got 4 percent of the vote and Newt Gingrich, 3 percent.
>
> For Perry, who is struggling to regain momentum after some disappointing showings in debates and the polls, the results represent a disappointment. The Texas governor is counting on voters who share his socially conservative views to help power his candidacy into the top tier of Republicans. He didn’t get the ringing endorsement he might have wished out of the Values Voter Summit. Instead, the gathering put Perry in the midst of a controversywhen the Dallas pastor who introduced him Friday later told reporters that Romney’s Mormon faith is a “cult” and “not Christian.”

> Perkins said his organization did “everything to preserve the integrity of this straw poll,” including denying campaigns from buying blocks of tickets, “which they attempted to do this year.” But Santorum on Friday seemed dubious, and told National Journal that his success in the polls would depend “on how many people, how many campaigns, tried to buy a bunch of tickets and try to stack the poll, which unfortunately happens.”
>
> The victory for the longtime congressman and three-time presidential contender over his Republican rivals in the presidential contest was all the more surprising because Paul’s principled libertarianism sometimes puts him at odds with the views of social conservatives on issues such as gay marriage and drug laws.
>
> But in a speech hours before the straw poll results were announced, Paul argued that his staunch fiscal conservatism and dogmatic views on liberty were in tune with family values and the Bible.

A friend of mine “Neil” who attended the Value Voter Summit had these comments about what really happened:

> Because these folks did not stay for the entire Summit.Those of us who were there knew the difference. It’s like a big family, everyone is kind and talks to each other. We see each other in the hotel halls and we chat and ask where people are from. It’s a special group of people who donate to FRC, AFA, Heritage and are Evangelicals, Catholics and Orthodox and a few Jewish believers. We had lunch with each other, shared stories of frustrations with our churches and our elections and compared notes.
>
> The Ron Paulites, didn’t mix, didn’t go to any break out sessions, didn’t eat with us.
>
> So they did not share the same values, the same goals or the same relationship with FRC or AFA. They didn’t even listen to the rest of the speakers (all day Friday and the rest of the day Sat). They were not Values Voters or part of our family.
>
> The straw poll was supposed to reflect the VVS family. This is what we guys voted.

If you delete the 600 Ron Paul voters, you get this:

- Herman Cain 456 33%
- Rick Santorum 317 23%
- Rick Perry 159 11%
- Michele Bachmann 159 11%
- Ron Paul 134 10%
- Mitt Romney 79 6%
- Newt Gingrich 59 4%

Ron Paul thinks that protecting the unborn and protecting a child's right to a mother and father are "state issues". He is moderate on social issues – nothing like Rick Santorum and Michele Bachmann, for example. He doesn't have the history of activism on these issues because he thinks that they are not federal issues. Fair enough, but that's not socially conservative.

Herman Cain in first place in new South Carolina and Virginia polls

October 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

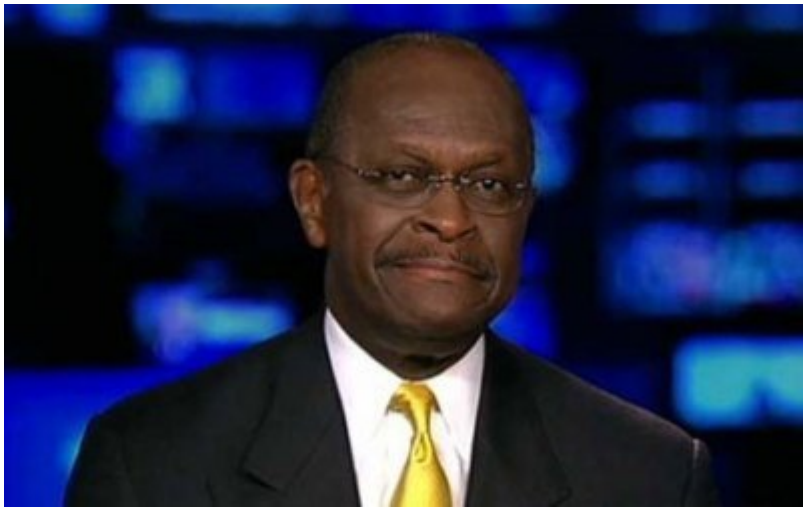

Presidential candidate Herman Cain

Here's the new Virginia poll, where Herman Cain is tied for first place.

Excerpt:

> Businessman Herman Cain has surged into the top tier of presidential candidates in Virginia, according to a new poll of the state, moving into a tie in the Republican nomination contest with former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney.
>
> Texas Gov. Rick Perry has faded considerably.
>
> The Quinnipiac University Poll of Virginia released Tuesday shows Romney and Cain at 21 percent apiece among Republican voters, while Perry sits at 11 percent–less than half the support he registered in the same poll a month ago.
>
> Rep. Ron Paul (Texas) gets 9 percent, while Rep. Michelle Bachmann (Minn.) and former House speaker Newt Gingrich receive 7 percent apiece.
>
> […]"Herman Cain is moving up the ladder at breakneck speed," said Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Polling institute, in a news release.

Virginia is a swing state… so this is impressive.

And a new poll in South Carolina, where Herman Cain leads Romney by 1 point.

Excerpt:

> Businessman Herman Cain has edged out former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney in the first primary state of the South, according to a new poll released Tuesday.
>
> The conservative radio talk show host received 26% support in the Palmetto State poll, only one percentage point ahead of Romney and within the margin of

> error for the American Research Group survey, indicating the two are statistically tied.
>
> South Carolina is slated to go fourth in the nation's primary and caucus calendar, preceded by Iowa, New Hampshire, and Nevada.
>
> The longest-serving Texas Gov. Rick Perry placed third with 15% support, followed by former House Speaker Newt Gingrich at 8%, Texas Rep. Ron Paul at 7%, and Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann at 5%.
>
> […]When the survey is narrowed to Republican respondents who consider themselves likely primary voters, Cain and Romney are tied at 27% each.

I am hoping that Romney stalls out… as I've blogged before, Romney is liberal on everything from abortion, to gay rights, to gun control, to global warming to government-run health care. The man is really more of a moderate-to-liberal Democrat, ideologically, and we don't need that right now.

Related posts

- Video and transcript of Herman Cain's Value Voter Summit speech
- Herman Cain is now tied for first place with fiscal/social liberal Romney
- Herman Cain now tied for second place in new GOP primary poll
- Herman Cain on Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace
- Who is Herman Cain and why is he in first place in this national poll?
- Herman Cain wins straw poll in Florida!
- Herman Cain gaining momentum with the Tea Party conservatives
- The top article on National Review is about Herman Cain
- Video of the first Republican presidential debate in South Carolina

Is Mormonism a cult? Is Mormonism like Christianity? Are Mormons Christians?

October 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm seeing a lot of ignorance in the mainstream media, including in the conservative media, and even from some Republican politicians. So it's time to set the record straight on what Mormons and Christians really believe.

Do Mormons and Christians have the same beliefs?

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed.

What do the best Christian theologians believe about the origin of the universe?

> "By what means did you make heaven and earth? What tool did you use for this vast work? You did not work as a human craftsman does, making one thing out of something else as his mind directs… Nor did you have in your hand any matter from which you could make heaven and earth, for where could you have obtained matter which you had not yet created, in order to use it as material for making something else? It must therefore be that you spoke and they were made. In your Word you created them." (Augustine, *Confessions* 11.5.7.)
>
> "As said above (Question 44, Article 2), we must consider not only the emanation of a particular being from a particular agent, but also the emanation of all being from the universal cause, which is God; and this emanation we designate by the name of creation. Now what proceeds by particular emanation, is not presupposed to that emanation; as when a man is generated, he was not before, but man is made from "not-man," and white from "not-white." Hence if the emanation of the whole universal being from the first principle be considered, it is impossible that any being should be presupposed before this emanation. For nothing is the same as no being. Therefore as the generation of a man is from the "not-being" which is "not-man," so creation, which is the emanation of all being, is from the "not-being" which is "nothing"." (Summa Theologica, part 1, question 45)
>
> "Let this, then, be maintained in the first place, that the world is not eternal, but was created by God." (John Calvin, Genesis)
>
> "We firmly believe and simply confess that there is only one true God … the Creator of all things visible and invisible, spiritual and corporeal; who from the very beginning of time by His omnipotent power created out of nothing both the spiritual beings and the corporeal." (The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215)

So who is right? Has the universe always existed or did it come into being out of nothing?

Breaking the tie

To break the tie, we must use the ordinary tools of investigation – logic, science, historical methods, and so on. Let's use science this time.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It is based on several lines of evidence, and is broadly compatible with Genesis. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before

> the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Taking religion seriously

You can find other disagreements between Christianity and Mormonism, if you are not so busy putting on make-up like politicians and journalists are. For example, Christianity is monotheistic (one God) and Mormonism is polytheistic (many gods). That means Mormonism is more like Hinduism than it is like Christianity – Mormonism and Hinduism even agree on the eternally oscillating universe. You can read all about it, with citations from Mormon scholars, in this article, authored by Baylor University professor Francis J. Beckwith. Or you could take a look at the history of Mormonism, and see if the claims made in the religious texts of Mormonism are historical. Or you could take a look at the prophetic claims of the founder of Mormonism and see if they were accurate.

Here's an examination of the historical basis for the Mormon Scriptures, for example:

This is how responsible people evaluate religions to see whether they are all the same as the others, and, more importantly, *if one is true*. The point of religion is not to make people feel good, or to make them have a sense of community. The point of religion is to know how we got here, where we are going, and what we are supposed to be doing – *as matters of fact*.

As long as you don't assume, *before doing any research,* that all religions are the same, and that all of their claims are equally untestable, then you can actually investigate things and come to some conclusions. Investigating is good, but watching debates with different views that feature public, testable evidence is also a good idea. The important thing is that you are serious about *evaluating the testable claims of different religions*, and that you don't *assume* that choosing a religion is just like taste in clothes or taste in food, which varies by time and place and is really not making objective propositional claims about reality, instead of subjective claims about individual tastes and preferences. Just because you were born into a country that believed that the Earth was flat (or round) that wouldn't take away the obligation on you to test those views and go looking at other views using the tools of logic, science and historical analysis.

White House used Mitt Romney's Romneycare as a blueprint for Obamacare

October 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

MSNBC reports that Obamacare was designed using Romney's health care plan as a blueprint.

Excerpt:

> Newly obtained White House records provide fresh details on how senior Obama administration officials used Mitt Romney's landmark health-care law in Massachusetts as a model for the new federal law, including recruiting some of Romney's own health care advisers and experts to help craft the act now derided by Republicans as "Obamacare."
>
> The records, gleaned from White House visitor logs reviewed by NBC News, show that senior White House officials had a dozen meetings in 2009 with three health-care advisers and experts who helped shape the health care reform law signed by Romney in 2006, when the Republican presidential candidate was governor of Massachusetts. One of those meetings, on July 20, 2009, was in the Oval Office and presided over by President Barack Obama, the records show.
>
> "The White House wanted to lean a lot on what we'd done in Massachusetts," said Jon Gruber, an MIT economist who advised the Romney administration on health care and who attended five meetings at the Obama White House in 2009, including the meeting with the president. "They really wanted to know how we can take that same approach we used in Massachusetts and turn that into a national model."
>
> […]The White House visitor logs suggest that, if Obama officials didn't talk directly with Romney, senior presidential aides did consult with others — like Gruber — who played important roles in helping to craft and implement the Massachusetts law.
>
> In addition to Obama himself, the meetings attended by Gruber were presided over by the president's chief economic adviser, Lawrence Summers, then budget director Peter Orzag and Nancy-Ann DeParle, the president's chief adviser on health care, the records show. Gruber was also given a $380,000 contract by the Obama administration in 2009 to work with Congress on drafting a new federal law based on the Massachusetts law, records show.
>
> Another Romney administration adviser consulted by the White House was Jon Kingsdale, a health-care expert who was appointed in 2006 by one of Romney's Cabinet secretaries, Thomas Trimarco, to serve as executive director of the Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector Authority — the state agency charged with implementing the new Massachusetts health-care law.

Let’s have a quick re-cap of Romneycare, shall we?

The libertarian Cato Institute think tank explains why Obamacare and Romneycare are identical in many ways.

Excerpt:

> As part of his liberal phase when governor of Massachusetts — political principles have been ever-flexible for Romney — he orchestrated passage of legislation with eerie similarities to ObamaCare. Massachusetts mandates purchase of insurance, decides what benefits must be offered, and maintains a complex system of subsidies and penalties. Declared Boston Globe columnist Adrian Walker, the two programs are “not identical, but they’re certainly close kin.” MIT economist Jonathan Gruber, who advised both Gov. Romney and President Obama on health care, asserted: “Basically, it’s the same thing.”[…]Alas, even the former governor’s constitutional scruples are suspect. In 1994 he backed a federal mandate. His concern about the overweening federal government apparently was not so finely developed then.
>
> […]However, paying for more benefits for more people inevitably makes medicine more expensive. Costs for Commonwealth Care, the Massachusetts government’s subsidized insurance program alone are up a fifth over initial projections. Last year State Treasurer Timothy P. Cahill wrote: “The universal insurance coverage we adopted in 2006 was projected to cost taxpayers $88 million a year. However, since this program was adopted in 2006, our health-care costs have in total exceeded $4 billion. The cost of Massachusetts’ plan has blown a hole in the Commonwealth’s budget.”
>
> […]State finances have not collapsed only because RomneyCare spread the costs widely, forcing virtually everyone in and out of the state to share the pain. Cahill cited federal subsidies as keeping the state afloat financially. Indeed, a June study from the Beacon Hill Institute concluded that “The state has been able to shift the majority of the costs to the federal government.” The Institute pointed to higher costs of $8.6 billion since the law was implemented. Just $414 million was paid by Massachusetts. Medicaid (federal payments) covered $2.4 billion. Medicare took care of $1.4 billion.
>
> But even more costs, $4.3 billion, have been imposed on the private sector — employers, insurers, and residents. This estimate is in line with an earlier study by the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, which figured that 60% of the new costs fell on individuals and businesses.
>
> As expenses have risen, so have premiums. Noted Kuttner, “because serious cost containment was not part of the original package, premium costs in the commonwealth have risen far faster than nationally — by 10.3%, the most recent year available.” Economists John F. Cogan, Glenn Hubbard, and Daniel Kessler figured that RomneyCare inflated premiums by 6% from 2006 to 2008. This at a time where the state-subsidized Commonwealth Care was displacing private

> insurance for many people, thereby reducing demand, which should have reduced cost pressures.
>
> Unfortunately, noted the Beacon Hill Institute, "private companies have no choice but to pass the higher costs onto the insured. Some of these costs fall in the double-digit range." That naturally displeased public officials, since it undercut their claim to have solved Massachusetts' health care problems.

And the Boston Herald notes that Romneycare caused the loss of 18,000 jobs. (H/T Michelle Malkin)

Excerpt:

> The Bay State's controversial 2006 universal health-care plan — also known as "Romneycare" — has cost Massachusetts more than 18,000 jobs, according to an exclusive blockbuster study that could provide ammo to GOP rivals of former Gov. Mitt Romney as he touts his job-creating chops on the campaign trail.
>
> "Mandating health insurance coverage and expanding the demand for health services without increasing supply drove up costs. Economics 101 tells us that," said Paul Bachman, research director at Suffolk University's Beacon Hill Institute, the conservative think tank that conducted the study. The Herald obtained an exclusive copy of the findings.
>
> "The 'shared sacrifice' needed to provide universal health care includes a net loss of jobs, which is attributable to the higher costs that the measure imposed," said David Tuerck, the institute's executive director.
>
> …Despite Romney's vaunted business acumen as a successful venture capitalist, Bachman said the former governor "was a little naive about what would become of the law."
>
> The Beacon Hill Institute study found that, on average, Romneycare:
>
> - cost the Bay State 18,313 jobs;
> - drove up total health insurance costs in Massachusetts by $4.311 billion;
> - slowed the growth of disposable income per person by $376; and
> - reduced investment in Massachusetts by $25.06 million.

And from the Heartland Institute, an article showing how Romneycare could actually lead to single-payer health care in Masachusetts.

Excerpt:

> The 2006 reform jeopardized the solvency of private health plans in the Bay State. Unfortunately, insurers' solvency is not something patients, physicians, and voters have reason to observe closely, so the political class suffers from perverse incentives once it starts micromanaging health insurance. As a result, higher costs have been passed on through higher per capita spending and premium growth.

> According to the state's 2010 annual report, today "per capita spending on health care in Massachusetts is 15 percent higher than the rest of the nation, even when accounting for wages and spending on medical research and education in Massachusetts." Indeed, Professor John F. Cogan of Stanford University has concluded the 2006 reform led to premium growth 6 percent higher in Massachusetts than in the rest of the United States between 2006 and 2008.
>
> **Because it was politically intolerable to allow premiums to rise in line with the costs of Romneycare, the state's insurance commissioner denied 235 of 276 rate increase requests in April 2010. For a short time, no new policies were offered, and plans suffered significant losses. The next month, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, the state's largest carrier, announced a $55 million provision for anticipated losses in the second quarter alone.**
>
> **Of the 12 largest carriers, five were already operating at a loss. At this point, even if the state allows Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts to increase rates in line with medical costs, my analysis concludes the carrier will become insolvent in the vicinity of 2017. Other carriers will soon follow.**

Clever campaign speeches and witty debate zingers *today* don't cancel out a liberal leftist record on policy *yesterday*.

Herman Cain leads liberal Mitt Romney by 4 in latest national NBC/WSJ poll

October 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From MSNBC, the latest national poll shows Herman Cain leading Mitt Romney 27 to 23. Excerpt:

> Fueled by Tea Party supporters, conservatives and high-interest GOP primary voters, former Godfather's Pizza CEO Herman Cain now leads the race for the Republican presidential nomination, according to the latest NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll.
>
> And in yet another sign of how volatile the Republican race has been with less than three months until the first nominating contests, the onetime frontrunner, Texas Gov. Rick Perry, has plummeted to third place, dropping more than 20 percentage points since late August.
>
> "Cain is the leader … That's the story," said Democratic pollster Peter D. Hart, who conducted this survey with Republican pollster Bill McInturff.
>
> […]Cain checks in as the first choice of 27 percent of Republican voters in the poll, followed by former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney at 23 percent and Perry at 16 percent. After those three, it's Texas Rep. Ron Paul at 11 percent, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich at 8 percent, Bachmann at 5 percent and former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman at 3 percent.
>
> In the previous survey, conducted in late August, Perry led the field at 38 percent, Romney stood at 23 percent, while Cain was at only 5 percent.
>
> […]Cain's numbers are sky-high among Republican primary voters. Fifty-two percent view him favorably, versus just 6 percent who see him unfavorably. Among Tea Party supporters, his favorable/unfavorable score is 69 percent to 5 percent. And among Republicans who identify themselves as "very conservative," it's 72 percent to 2 percent.
>
> In follow-up interviews with respondents supporting Cain, they argue that he's not a politician, and that he seems real. "He has common-sense answers and is in touch with the heartbeat of America," said one respondent, a 46-year-old male from Florida.
>
> "Cain gives direct answers. He is succinct. He isn't a politician," answered another who's a 56-year-old male from Washington.
>
> "Cain presents himself as a real person. He speaks from the heart. He is plainspoken and down to Earth," added a third respondent, a 56-year-old female from Texas.

I would offer Mr. Cain the same advice that I offered Michele Bachmann – come up with

short n-point plans for social policies and foreign policy. Increasing the number of ships in the Navy would be good, as would restarting production of the F-22 Raptor and reducing troop deployments in Europe. And he needs a simple n-point border security plan, a health care policy plan and an education policy plan. No more than 6 points each.

Related posts

- Herman Cain in first place in new South Carolina and Virginia polls
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- Herman Cain gaining momentum with the Tea Party conservatives
- The top article on National Review is about Herman Cain
- Video of the first Republican presidential debate in South Carolina

House passes free trade deals with Colombia, South Korea and Panama

October 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The biggest free-trade pacts since NAFTA were passed by the House Wednesday night, with the Senate likely to follow. As a result, America will reap 250,000 jobs and $13 billion in exports. Where are the celebrations?
>
> The strangest aspect of the passage of free trade treaties with Colombia, South Korea and Panama, with final votes taken after five long years, is the disconnect between the big economic gains expected for the U.S., and the reticence of congressional Democrats and the White House, both of which finally got something right on the economy.
>
> As we went to press, the pacts had been passed by the House, with the Senate expected to vote soon. With bipartisanship like that, lawmakers should be cheering loudly for a true "jobs bill" that costs nothing.
>
> Yet as a Democratic aide told Roll Call on Wednesday, "Republicans don't want to give the president a victory, Democrats are split and everyone is distracted."
>
> Excuse us, but this is some of the best economic news in three years. It deserves a victory dance.
>
> It's a fact these treaties will bring new orders for factories, save family farms, strengthen strategic alliances with countries well worth having as allies, and open up breathtaking new opportunities in fast-growing markets. It needs to be acknowledged.
>
> […]President Obama paid lip service to the treaties, but wasted nearly three years attaching protectionist amendments and dithering. It harmed the economy and never changed this fact: Free trade had to pass if there was to be a real recovery.

Economist Greg Mankiw of Harvard University lists free trade as the #2 top item that economists of all ideological stripes agree on. This is a no-brainer.

Passing the free trade deals is important because it would make up for other anti-business policies of the Obama administration.

Excerpt:

> Obama appointees at the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) have not only blocked Boeing from making planes in South Carolina, but they have greased the speed of union elections, made decertification votes impossible, changed the requirement that a majority of workers vote for a union, and required almost

> every workplace in America to put posters up advising workers of their unionization rights.
>
> The Obama Administration claims to want to double exports and support free trade, but it took it nearly three years to send the pending trade agreements with Panama, Colombia and South Korea to Congress. Which means that in all this time American companies have been paying higher tariffs for exports.
>
> The Obama Administration has proposed 219 new rules affecting industries, each of which will cost at least $100 million to comply. While the Washington legal business is growing, every industry and business is affected, scared, and confused by the massive new proposals. Small businesses are especially overwhelmed and must hire lawyers to understand and comply with the massive amount of new regulation.
>
> The Obama crown-jewel "achievements" of the new health care and Dodd-Frank financial laws adversely affect almost every American business, totaled almost 3,000 pages of statutory language, and will result in huge costs on employers.

Let's hope the Senate passes these deals and Obama signs it. We need lower priced goods in a recession, and we need more markets to sell into. If this passes, it will be *the first pro-growth action taken by the administration in three years.*

Arizona abortions drop 30% after pro-life law takes effect

October 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> Showing pro-life legislation protecting women and unborn children has a tremendous impact in saving lives, new figures from Arizona show a new pro-life law has resulted in dropping abortions 30 percent.
>
> Last week, Cathi Herrod of the Center for Arizona Policy indicated the state released new abortion figures comparing the number of abortions in September 2011 with those done in September 2010.
>
> "In September of 2010, 1,053 abortions were performed in Arizona. This September, 729 abortions – that's 324 fewer abortions – a 30% decrease," Herrod explained. "That number is also down from 1,069 abortions in August of this year. Simply incredible."
>
> The news follows on the heels of an appeals court upholding a pro-life law that protects the health and safety of women and their unborn children by giving them information they don't normally receive. The Arizona Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in June in Planned Parenthood Arizona v. Horne, a case the abortion business filed which challenges key aspects of the 2009 Abortion Consent Act. The law is a pro-life measure Governor Jan Brewer signed which tells women of the risks associated with and alternatives to abortion. Planned Parenthood sued the state soon after its signing and a Superior Court judge blocked the law from taking effect while the case moves forward.
>
> The law makes it so Arizona will require a notarized parental signature before an abortion can be performed on a minor child, women will be provided with full and accurate information by a doctor in person at least 24 hours before an abortion, medical professionals cannot be forced to perform abortions if it contradicts their sincerely held religious or moral beliefs and non-doctors will not be permitted by law to perform surgical abortions.
>
> Responding to the decision, Planned Parenthood announced it will no longer do abortions at seven locations — including communities outside of Phoenix and Tucson rather than comply with the law.
>
> Herrod says the new law and its effects are responsible for the abortion decline.

What could possibly be wrong with providing women with more information about abortion before they have an abortion? Shouldn't they know what they are choosing before they choose? Even pro-choicers should support *more information*.

Christian men: give a Christian woman the gift of white roses

October 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What do white roses mean?

I actually wrote this post last year, but lately, I noticed that it's been getting 35-50 page views per day. I think that's a signal to me to re-post it! (I've changed it slightly, since I was in love when I wrote it the first time, having just sent roses to a fatherless Christian woman, and with remarkably good results!)

I wrote this post to encourage Christian men to find faithful Christian women and support them with a gift of white roses. If you know a woman who is faithful but neglected, then white roses are the perfect gift. And in the rest of the post, I want to explain why.

I'll start with a couple of articles that explain the message I am trying to send a woman with white roses.

First, the obvious.

Excerpt:

> The meaning of shimmering white roses is not very hard to decipher if you go by their appearance. The color white has always been synonymous with purity and virtue. And so, sincerity, purity, and chastity are some of the obvious meanings of a white rose. When you need to convince that your affections are straight from the heart and are as pure as virgin snow, use a white rose. But there are more hidden meanings in a white rose than meets the eye.
>
> White has ever been a symbol of innocence, of a world unspoiled and

> untarnished. The meaning of a bunch of glowing white roses is innocence and spiritual love. The white rose glorifies a love that is unaware of the temptations of the flesh and resides only in the soul. As opposed to the red rose that speaks of passionate promises, the meaning of a white rose is in its simplicity and pristine purity.

That's the standard mainstream meaning of white roses. I normally give three of them, to symbolize the Trinity. (My banner is a pure black field with 3 narrow horizontal pure white stripes)

And now, the not-so-obvious.

How about this?

> It has also come to mean loyalty and faith, which can be strongly linked to purity. In true love, faithfulness and loyalty are implicit, despite distance or time. For these symbols, white roses are a perfect gift to a beloved who is far away, as they will display not only your love, but also your fidelity. White roses are also the perfect gift to send to a platonic friend, for a similar reason: constant, faithful love, mixed with the symbolism of innocence, is a wonderful way to show your love for a dear friend.
>
> […]At the same time, as the uses throughout history have shown, the white rose is also a symbol of strong resistance and the will to stand for one's beliefs at any cost. Giving a white rose as a gift is a very strong gift. It is not fleeting passion or romance, which is too often what the red rose conveys. The white rose is a strong and consistent love, which is pure, faithful and sacrificial. Not many flowers have such a powerful meaning to their name. And this meaning comes to the rose not only through folklore and stories, but through true histories of brave people fighting for their cause. The white rose is a beautiful flower, with beautiful symbolism, and a friend or lover should be proud to give this flower as a gift to those they love steadily and faithfully.

White roses also stand for humility, reverence, honor and secrecy.

Desert Rose by White Heart

I like this old song by the Christian band White Heart a lot.

Desert Rose Lyrics:

> Lost in a windswept land
> In a world of shifting sand
> A fragile flower stands apart
>
> There in that barren ground
> Feel like the only one
> Trying to serve Him with all your heart
>
> And you wonder, wonder
> Can you last much longer?

> This cloud you are under
> Will it cover you?
>
> Desert rose, desert rose
> Don’t you worry, don’t be lonely
> Heaven knows, Heaven knows
> In a dry and weary land a flower grows
> His desert rose, desert rose
>
> Sometimes holiness
> Can seem like emptiness
> When you feel the whole world’s laughing eyes
>
> If it’s a lonely day
> Know you’re on the Father’s way
> He will hear you when you cry
>
> And He will hold you, hold you
> Your Father will hold you
> He will love you, love you
> For the things you do
>
> Desert rose, desert rose
> Don’t you worry, don’t be lonely
> Heaven knows, Heaven knows
> In a dry and weary land a flower grows
> His desert rose, desert rose
>
> Desert rose, desert rose
> Don’t you worry, don’t be lonely
> Heaven knows, Heaven knows
> In a dry and weary land a flower grows
> His desert rose, desert rose
>
> Desert rose, don’t be lonely, don’t be lonely
> Desert rose, ooh, don’t you worry
> Desert rose, don’t you know He’ll be with you
> Heaven knows, Heaven knows
> He will call your tattered heart on
> Desert rose

For all the flak I give women on my blog, you have to understand that in private, I am a love machine. I find it very easy to spend 3-4 hours talking to women face-to-face, maybe over a board game, and saying things that really make them feel loved and special. I think in public, you want to be critical of women in general, and to hold them accountable so that they are solid theologically and morally. But when you find one who is really following the Lord, in spite of the pressure and disapproval she faces from her peers, then you have to consider giving her something to build her up. And when you give the roses, give them as if you are her brother or father. Expect nothing in return. As Christian men,

we really need to get used to the idea that it is our job to make authentic Christianity comfortable for women. God knows, it's hard for them to resist the culture without support. And that's our job. And it's something we need to do.

You don't have be attracted to her before you do it, either. Women have value *regardless* of whether you desire them or not. In any case, I can *guarantee* that you will feel about as good as a man can feel afterwards. It is a truly wonderful thing to act on behalf of Jesus and express platonic love for a Christian woman. We need to be conscious of the fact that *every* woman on the planet was made to know God in Christ. It is the man's responsibility to lead them, to protect them by telling them the truth and explaining moral standards, and to provide them with intellectual stimulation and emotional support. It's your job as a Christian man to put her hand in God's hand and hold them together. Choose a woman who is willing to follow your lead, regardless of whether she meets your needs. True love is self-sacrificial. When she is bad, hold her accountable. When she is good, give her praises and compliments. How you respond affects her relationship with the Lord. This is a man's work.

White roses: a hug without the touching

Note: This advice applies only to women who are conservative theologically and who reject moral relativism, postmodernism, universalism, radical feminism, political liberalism, etc. Be careful, and do not try to rescue people who are not already engaged, informed followers of Jesus Christ.

UPDATE: MBelina posted her thoughts about what it is like to get white roses in the comments:

> I recently had the priviledge not only of visiting the USA, but of meeting WK himself in person. He gave me 3 white roses on 2 occasions.

> How did it make me feel? Very blessed, appreciated, encouraged. I have a number of decent, Christian male friends. But this gesture stood out because of the thought that went into it and the meaning that stands behind these flowers. I took a whole lot of photos of the flowers he gave me. Whenever I see them, I smile.
>
> It also made me appreciate the sort of man that we have in WK in regard to how he treats women. Bad men take advantage of women, regular men don't take advantage of them, but good men appreciate them and build them up. WK is one of the good guys, one of the honorable guys. There is a nobility of character in his approach to women. I felt cared for as a Christian sister, not only with the flowers, but with the concern he has shown for my growth, and with the fantastic books he has sent me (and to others who frequent this blog) – the sort of books that improve my knowledge and my ability to live as a Christian in all spheres of life.
>
> This is my favourite line in this post:
> "It's your job as a Christian man to put her hand in God's hand and hold them together."
> I feel quite emotional (in a girly, but good way!) reading that line.
>
> Thank you, Sir Knight. [curtseys] :)

This is very encouraging.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Late night fun: Occupy Wall Street pick-up lines!

October 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily, some Occupy Wall Street pick-up lines.

Excerpt:

> @jpodhoretz What time do you get off from not working?
>
> @mdrache Can I have my mom's debit card buy you a drink?
>
> @adamsbaldwin So, do you not work here?
>
> @derekahunter I don't know why I'm here either. We have so much in common!
>
> @DanaPerino I could get lost in your bloodshot, burned out eyes.
>
> @kiradavis422 I luv how u reject the fascistic American standard of beauty by refusing to shave, bathe or wear attractive clothing. Its hot.
>
> @derekahunter Your parent's basement or mine?
>
> @jimgeraghty I know a patch of sidewalk right in front of this great little Italian place.
>
> @chuck_dizzle I bet my degree is more worthless than yours.
>
> @a1776patriot My parents think I'm in class too!!!
>
> @informedblackmn Your eyes are like cesspools in the moonlight.
>
> @DonnaBonnell You remind me of a female Janeane Garafalo.
>
> @brandondarby Seeing you with that Molotov really gets me hot.
>
> @mattysprings Want to help me offset my carbon emissions?
>
> @Aslan444 I just got my Pell Grant & food stamps, let's party!
>
> @CDR My dad would hate you! Let's do it!!

See the latest additions over here.

Here's one: @JamesTaranto: What's your sign? I don't know how to read. **#OWSpickuplines**

Paul Ryan explains how raising taxes hurts job creation

October 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s Republican budget guru Paul Ryan, explaining WHY Republicans fight so hard against higher taxes on job creators.

I think more Republicans need to explain the basics of job creation to the people, and often.

Should the Occupy Wall Street protesters move their protest to Washington, D.C.?

October 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Still, if anyone in the Occupy Wall Street movement wants an intellectually honest explanation for why they can't find a job, they might start by considering what happens to an economy when the White House decides to make pinatas out of the financial-services industry (roughly 6%, or $828 billion, of U.S. GDP), the energy industry (about 7.5% of GDP, or $1 trillion), and millionaires and billionaires (who paid 20.4% of all federal income taxes in 2009). And don't forget the Administration's rhetorical volleys against individual companies like Anthem Blue Cross, AIG and Bank of America, or against Chrysler's bondholders, or various other alleged malefactors of wealth.
>
> Now move from words to actions. Want a shovel-ready job? The Administration has spent three years sitting on the Keystone XL pipeline project that promises to create 13,000 union jobs and 118,000 "spin-off" jobs. A State Department environmental review says the project poses no threat to the environment, but the Administration's eco-friends are screaming lest it go ahead.
>
> Then there are the jobs the Administration and its allies in Congress are actively killing. In June, American Electric Power announced it would have to shutter five coal-fired power plants, at a cost of 600 jobs, in order to comply with new EPA rules. Those same rules may soon force the utility to shutter another 25 plants. Bank of America's decision last month to lay off 30,000 employees is a direct consequence of various Congressional edicts limiting how much the bank can charge merchants or how it can handle delinquent borrowers.
>
> These visible crags of the Obama jobs iceberg are nothing next to the damage done below the waterline by the D.C. regulations factory, which last year added 81,405 pages of new rules to the Federal Register, bringing the total cost to the U.S. economy of regulatory compliance to an estimated $1.7 trillion a year.
>
> Less easy to quantify, but no less harmful, are the long-term uncertainties employers face in trying to price in the costs of ObamaCare, Dodd-Frank, the potential expiration next year of the Bush tax cuts, the possible millionaire surcharge, the value of the dollar and so on. No wonder businesses are so reluctant to hire: When you don't know how steep the trail ahead of you is, it's usually better to travel light.

If you want to know who is really to blame for poverty, try looking at the Obama administration.

House passes bill to block taxpayer funds from being used for abortions

October 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> The House approved legislation, the Protect Life Act, to stop abortion funding in Obamacare. Senate Democrats are not expected to approve the bill and, pro-abortion President Barack Obama is expected to veto the measure if it reaches his desk.
>
> Members voted 251-172 for the pro-life legislation, with 236 Republicans and 15 Democrats supporting the bill and 170 Democrats and two Republicans voting against it. (See how your member voted here).
>
> **H.R. 358, Protect Life Act, makes it clear that no funds authorized or appropriated by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), including tax credits and cost-sharing reductions, may be used to pay for abortion or abortion coverage. It specifies that individual people or state or local governments must purchase a separate elective abortion rider or insurance coverage that includes elective abortion but only as long as that is done with private funds and not monies authorized by Obamacare.**
>
> […]The bill also specifies that insurance issuers may offer health plans that include elective abortion and may offer separate elective abortion riders, so long as they ensure PPACA funds are not used for premiums or administrative costs. The bill also clarifies that issuers who offer elective abortion coverage must also offer a qualified health benefits plan that is identical except that it does not cover elective abortion.
>
> The pro-life measure also ensures that state laws "protecting conscience rights, restricting or prohibiting abortion or coverage or funding of abortion, or establishing procedural requirements on abortion" are not abrogated by Obamacare. It also makes it so any state or local governments receiving funding under Obamacare may not subject any health care entity to discrimination or require any health plan to subject any entity to discrimination on the basis that it refuses to undergo abortion training, refuses to require abortion training, refuses to perform or pay for abortions, or refuses to provide abortion referrals.

The Democrats will block this bill in the Senate, or Obama will not sign it if it somehow gets through. And do you know why? Because the Democrats are committing to subsidizing baby-killing with taxpayer dollars. Pro-life taxpayer dollars.

Nancy Pelosi doesn't like the bill. She thinks that this bill will cause women to "die on the

floor”.

Excerpt:

> Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi took her pro-abortion rhetoric to a new level, today saying Republicans “want women to die on the floor” in expressing her opposition to a bill stopping taxpayer funding of abortions in Obamacare.
>
> “For a moment, I want to get back to what was asked about the issue on the floor today that Mr. Hoyer address,” Pelosi said. “He made a point and I want to emphasize it. Under this bill, when the Republicans vote for this bill today, they will be voting to say that women can die on the floor and health care providers do not have to intervene if this bill is passed. It’s just appalling.”

This is the same woman ran up 5.34 trillion dollars of debt while she was Speaker of the House from 2007 to 2011. The Republicans want to stop spending taxpayer money on elective abortion to stop the national debt from growing, and this woman thinks that not spending that money would cause people to die on the floor. I wonder if we will ever get spending cut when people on the left use rhetoric like this to stop spending cuts.

I do think it is encouraging that nearly all Republicans voted for this bill. They truly are a pro-life party.

> Nancy Pelosi: Republicans Want Women To Die On The Floor

Paul Ryan and Art Laffer love Herman Cain's 9-9-9 plan

October 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two big endorsements for Herman Cain's 9-9-9 plan from two proven conservative supply-side economists.

Here's Paul Ryan's interview with the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> House Budget Committee chairman Paul Ryan said in an interview with The Daily Caller that he "loves" the idea of having "specific and credible" plans, like presidential candidate Herman Cain's signature "9-9-9″ proposal, in the national debate about tax policy.
>
> Ryan told The Daily Caller in an exclusive interview that Cain's plan is a good starting point for debate, and shows the GOP presidential campaign season has entered into a more advanced stage where ideas — not just personalities — have come to the forefront.
>
> "We need more bold ideas like this because it is specific and credible," Ryan said. "I'm more of a flat-tax kind of a guy."
>
> The budget chairman went on to say that ideas like Cain's plan could help shape the debate over tax reform moving into 2013.
>
> "It's great to see such bold ideas," Ryan told TheDC.
>
> […]"I consider Paul Ryan to be one of the brightest minds in Washington, D.C.," said Mark Block, Cain's chief of staff, "Mr. Cain looks forward to sitting down with Congressman Ryan.

Here's more about a possible VP nomination for Ryan.

Excerpt:

> House Budget Committee chairman Paul Ryan "loves" Herman Cain's 9-9-9 tax plan and sees the proposal as "specific and credible" – a major endorsement for a surging GOP presidential candidate.
>
> "We need more bold ideas like this because it is specific and credible," Ryan said in an interview with the Daily Caller. "I'm more of a flat-tax kind of a guy."
>
> Cain is returning the love. He said Wednesday that he sees Ryan as the type of person he would want as a Vice Presidential nominee were he to win the Republican primary, **the Hill reported.**
>
> "I'll give you a name, like representative Paul Ryan. I'm not saying he would be a V.P. pick. He might be. But that's the type of person that I would want in my cabinet. He is the type of person," said Cain on the Steve Gill Show.

> Ryan said hoped Cain's plan – which would replace the current code with a 9 percent tax on all personal income, corporate income and sales – would encourage legislators to consider tax reform in coming sessions, the Hill reported.
>
> Ryan says that Cain is thinking the right way, and that he believed that critiques of the plan would make it stronger.
>
> "It's great to see such bold ideas," Ryan said.

And here's Art Laffer talking to Human Events.
Excerpt:

> The famed economist told HUMAN EVENTS that the proposal was pro-growth and would create the proper conditions for America's economy to expand and thrive again.
>
> "Herman Cain's 9-9-9 plan would be a vast improvement over the current tax system and a boon to the U.S. economy," Laffer told HUMAN EVENTS in a statement. "The goal of supply-side tax reform is always a broadening of the tax base and lowering of marginal tax rates."
>
> Added Laffer: "Mr. Cain's plan is simple, transparent, neutral with respect to capital and labor, and savings and consumption, and also greatly decreases the hidden costs of tax compliance. There is no doubt that economic growth would surge upon implementation of 9-9-9."
>
> Laffer also said that "such a system provides the least avenues to avoid paying taxes, yet also maintains the strongest incentives for work effort, production, and investment."

Everyone is talking about Chris Christie's endorsement of Mitt Romney… but Christie is a RINO. I'm sure that Romney will get endorsements from John McCain, Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe, too. But Paul Ryan's endorsement is the endorsement that really matters.

Mitt Romney on abortion and stem cell research in his own words

October 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What does Mitt Romney believe about abortion? He’s had the same view from 1994 to 2008, when he decided to run for President.

From the 1994 Massachusetts Senate debate between Mitt Romney and Edward Kennedy.

Here he is again in 2002 in his run for government of Massachusetts:

And again in May 2005, as governor of Massachusetts:

And on embryonic stem cell research in 2005:

If he says any different today, it’s not because he has a record to run on – his record has been pro-abortion since 1994.

Were the Crusades unprovoked attacks against peaceful Muslims?

October 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from a historian specialized in the history of the Crusades.

Excerpt:

> For starters, the Crusades to the East were in every way defensive wars. They were a direct response to Muslim aggression—an attempt to turn back or defend against Muslim conquests of Christian lands.
>
> Christians in the eleventh century were not paranoid fanatics. Muslims really were gunning for them. While Muslims can be peaceful, Islam was born in war and grew the same way. From the time of Mohammed, the means of Muslim expansion was always the sword. Muslim thought divides the world into two spheres, the Abode of Islam and the Abode of War. Christianity—and for that matter any other non-Muslim religion—has no abode. Christians and Jews can be tolerated within a Muslim state under Muslim rule. But, in traditional Islam, Christian and Jewish states must be destroyed and their lands conquered. When Mohammed was waging war against Mecca in the seventh century, Christianity was the dominant religion of power and wealth. As the faith of the Roman Empire, it spanned the entire Mediterranean, including the Middle East, where it was born. The Christian world, therefore, was a prime target for the earliest caliphs, and it would remain so for Muslim leaders for the next thousand years.
>
> With enormous energy, the warriors of Islam struck out against the Christians shortly after Mohammed's death. They were extremely successful. Palestine, Syria, and Egypt—once the most heavily Christian areas in the world—quickly succumbed. By the eighth century, Muslim armies had conquered all of Christian North Africa and Spain. In the eleventh century, the Seljuk Turks conquered Asia Minor (modern Turkey), which had been Christian since the time of St. Paul. The old Roman Empire, known to modern historians as the Byzantine Empire, was reduced to little more than Greece. In desperation, the emperor in Constantinople sent word to the Christians of western Europe asking them to aid their brothers and sisters in the East.
>
> That is what gave birth to the Crusades. They were not the brainchild of an ambitious pope or rapacious knights but a response to more than four centuries of conquests in which Muslims had already captured two-thirds of the old Christian world. At some point, Christianity as a faith and a culture had to defend itself or be subsumed by Islam. The Crusades were that defense.
>
> Pope Urban II called upon the knights of Christendom to push back the conquests of Islam at the Council of Clermont in 1095. The response was tremendous. Many thousands of warriors took the vow of the cross and prepared for war. Why did

> they do it? The answer to that question has been badly misunderstood. In the wake of the Enlightenment, it was usually asserted that Crusaders were merely lacklands and ne'er-do-wells who took advantage of an opportunity to rob and pillage in a faraway land. The Crusaders' expressed sentiments of piety, self-sacrifice, and love for God were obviously not to be taken seriously. They were only a front for darker designs.
>
> During the past two decades, computer-assisted charter studies have demolished that contrivance. Scholars have discovered that crusading knights were generally wealthy men with plenty of their own land in Europe. Nevertheless, they willingly gave up everything to undertake the holy mission. Crusading was not cheap. Even wealthy lords could easily impoverish themselves and their families by joining a Crusade. They did so not because they expected material wealth (which many of them had already) but because they hoped to store up treasure where rust and moth could not corrupt. They were keenly aware of their sinfulness and eager to undertake the hardships of the Crusade as a penitential act of charity and love. Europe is littered with thousands of medieval charters attesting to these sentiments, charters in which these men still speak to us today if we will listen. Of course, they were not opposed to capturing booty if it could be had. But the truth is that the Crusades were notoriously bad for plunder. A few people got rich, but the vast majority returned with nothing.

Since this question comes up in apologetics, and even William Lane Craig screws it up by calling the Crusades evil, I thought it might be a good idea for us to have some background so that we would be able to set the record straight if it's called into question. It's important to know this because a lot of people appeal to the Crusades to take shots at Christianity and introduce a kind of moral equivalence that excuses real wars of aggression and real terrorism.

The article also includes some of the real mistakes made by some of the Crusaders, so be ready to own up to those.

Iran, the Zetas drug cartel and our porous Southern border

October 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East

Here's an excellent assessment of the threat from the American Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> The revelation that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps and its Quds Force had plotted to kill Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States–by blowing him up as he dined at a Washington restaurant–is a stark reminder of the nature of the Tehran regime and its ambitions. But perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the story is that Iran's thugs are developing a strategic partnership with Mexico's most violent thugs: Los Zetas may only be the second-largest drug cartel in the Drug Enforcement Administration's rankings, but they're probably the most lethal. The gang is said to have formed around a platoon's worth of deserters from Mexico's special operations forces, and became the elite troops of another Mexican drug organization, the Gulf Cartel. The leader of that cartel got himself arrested, and the Zetas moved out on their own.
>
> […]The alliance with the Zetas is only the tip of the Iranian iceberg in Latin America. As Roger Noriega and Jose Cardenas have recently written, "Iran has made the Western Hemisphere a priority….The real game changer has been the alliance developed between Iran's Mahmoud Ahmedinejad and Venezuela's Hugo Chavez." In addition to the Quds Force, Iran often operates through Hezbollah, which has established networks in the Lebanese communities that have long-standing enclaves in the trading and port cities of South America. In addition to Chavez, Iran has established closer ties to the Bolivian government of Evo Morales's and Rafael Correa's regime in Ecuador.

> […]We underestimate the Quds-Zeta partnership at our peril. The distinction between law enforcement and warfare is increasingly blurred; the Mexican government claims it had a hand in exposing the plot and it was a DEA agent who foiled the attack. While the Obama administration was right to bring charges against the operatives who plotted to kill the Saudi ambassador, this is a response to symptoms, not the disease. The larger problem is the maturing anti-America coalition governments and extremely rich, powerful, and violent groups; thinking of these organizations simply as criminals obscures their political interests–in keeping governments like Mexico's or Colombia's weak, in securing sanctuary, in access to the "international commons," and the like. An appropriate response demands an integrated strategy. The biggest danger is not "militarizing" U.S. policy but in failing to address the fundamental security issues at stake.

The Obama administration's lack of concern about border security is very disturbing, but they don't dare to offend their open-borders constituency for a little thing like national security. Even so, the best defense might be a good offense – but is Obama willing to go on the offensive? Not so much. Instead, Obama seems to be resigned to letting Iran have nuclear weapons.

Excerpt:

> Khamenei probably approved a strike in Washington because he no longer fears American military might. Iran's advancing nuclear-weapons program has undoubtedly fortified his spine, as American presidents have called it "unacceptable" yet done nothing about it. And neither George W. Bush nor Barack Obama retaliated against Iran's murderous missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.
>
> President Obama has clearly shown he wants no part—or any Israeli part—in a preventive military strike against Iran's nuclear sites. And Mr. Obama has pulled almost all U.S. troops out of Iraq and clearly wants to do the same in Afghanistan. Many Americans may view that as a blessing, but it is also clearly a sign that Washington no longer has the desire to maintain hegemony in the Middle East.
>
> That's an invitation to someone like Khamenei to push further, to attack both America and Iran's most detested Middle Eastern rival, the virulently anti-Shiite Saudi Arabia. In the Islamic Republic's conspiracy-laden world, the Saudis are part of the anti-Iranian American Arab realm, which is currently trying to down Iran's close ally, Bashar al-Assad's Syria, and squash the Shiites of Bahrain. Blowing up the Saudi ambassador in Washington would be an appealing counterstroke against the two foreign forces that Khamenei detests most.
>
> The Obama administration will be tempted to respond against Iran with further unilateral and multilateral sanctions. More sanctions aren't a bad idea—targeted sanctions against the Revolutionary Guards and the sale of gasoline made from Iranian crude can hurt Tehran financially. But they will not scare it. The White

> House needs to respond militarily to this outrage. If we don’t, we are asking for it.

The longer Obama leaves this, the worse the eventual war in the Middle East is going to be. We should at the very least be pursuing aggressive covert operations against Syrian and Iranian targets. I hope everyone remembers the slap on the wrist that Obama is giving Iran now, so that when we get attacked more and more, with more dangerous weapons, the correct people get the blame.

Republicans introduce bill to let Warren Buffett pay more taxes

October 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News, a plan to allow people who talk about wanting to pay more in taxes to do so.

Excerpt:

> President Obama's proposed "Buffett Rule"– which would force the wealthiest Americans to pay higher taxes to help cut the nation's deficits — has met its Republican match.
>
> Republican lawmakers have introduced their own "Buffett Rule" that would allow billionaire investors like Warren Buffett who say they're not paying enough taxes to voluntarily give more money to the federal government.
>
> Under the legislation, authored by Sen. John Thune of South Dakota and Rep. John Scalise of Louisiana, taxpayers can donate at least a $1 to the Treasury fund for deficit reduction when they file their federal income tax returns starting next year.
>
> "If individuals like Warren Buffett or President Obama are inclined to donate their own personal money toward paying down the federal government's debt, they ought to have that right to do so voluntarily," Thune said. "This bill would make it easier for those wealthy individuals who feel they are currently under-taxed to pay more to the U.S. Treasury above and beyond their current obligations, without raising taxes on America's job creators."

The first thing to note is that John Thune is a Biola University graduate. He defeated that leftist jackass Tom Daschle to become Senator in South Dakota.

The second thing to note is that Warren Buffett is a big fat hypocrite, since his company is involved in a massive dispute with the IRS over unpaid taxes.

Rasmussen poll: Cain beats Obama by two in hypothetical match-up

October 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

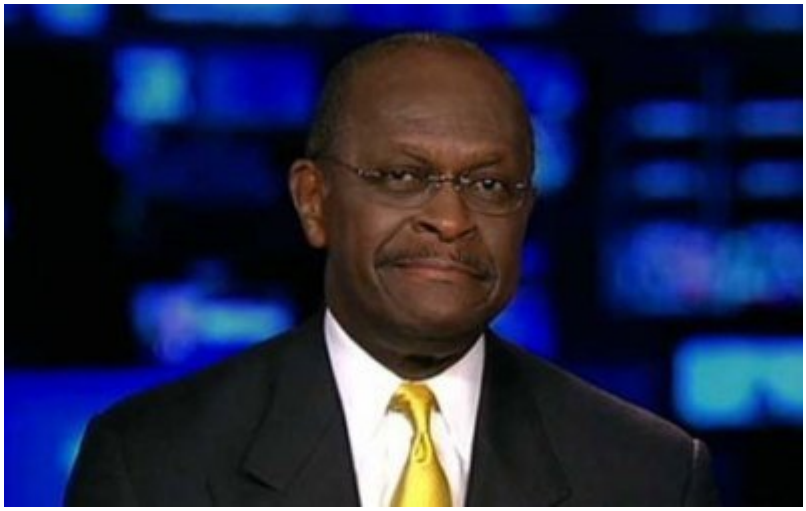

Presidential candidate Herman Cain
From Rasmussen Reports, a reliable pollster.

Excerpt:

> Whether Herman Cain's surge in the polls is temporary or has staying power, he's enjoying a big enough bounce to take a very slight lead over President Obama in a hypothetical 2012 matchup. At the moment, the Georgia businessman is the only Republican with a lead of any kind over Obama, although former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney has held a similar advantage several times and is currently trailing the president by just two points.
>
> The latest Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey of Likely U.S. Voters shows Cain attracting 43% support, while Obama earns 41%. Given such a matchup, eight percent (8%) prefer some other candidate, and another eight percent (8%) are undecided. (To see survey question wording, click here.)
>
> Cain is tied with Romney for the lead in the race for the GOP presidential nomination. Nobody else is even close at the moment.
>
> Last week, Cain trailed Obama by three. The week before, he was behind by five. "Cain now has the chance to make the case for why he should be the challenger to Mitt Romney," says Scott Rasmussen, president of Rasmussen Reports. "Many others have auditioned for the role and fallen flat, and it remains to be seen whether Cain's fate will be similar." Rasmussen interviewed Cain for the Rasmussen Report on radio show.

There is no reason why we should settle for a squishy moderate who is liberal on social issues when we can have Herman Cain and still win the election.

California public schools introduce gay indoctrination starting in kindergarten

October 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal Los Angeles Times. (H/T Come Reason)

Excerpt:

> At Wonderland Avenue Elementary School in Laurel Canyon, there are lesson plans on diverse families — including those with two mommies or daddies — books on homosexual authors in the library and a principal who is openly gay.
>
> But even at this school, teachers and administrators are flummoxed about how to carry out a new law requiring California public schools to teach all students — from kindergartners to 12th graders — about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans in history classes.
>
> "At this point, I wouldn't even know where to begin," Principal Don Wilson said.
>
> Educators across the state don't have much time to figure it out. In January, they're expected to begin teaching about LGBT Americans under California's landmark law, the first of its kind in the nation.

Notice how dissent from GLBT indoctrination is portrayed in the mainstream media:

> In 2005, L.A. Unified debuted the nation's first chapter in a high school health textbook on LGBT issues covering sexual orientation and gender identity, struggles over them and anti-LGBT bias. A section on misconceptions says sexual orientation is not a choice — a statement many religious conservatives disagree with.

Unfortunately for the leftist media, the peer-reviewed studies show that homosexuality is a choice – but that's not what young people are going to learn in California public schools. They'll learn what the GLBT lobby wants children to believe, instead.

And it's OK to deprive a child of a mother or father:

> On a recent morning, teacher Jane Raphael invited her two dozen kindergartners, first-graders and second-graders to sit in a circle and tell a story about their family. The students described a cross section of modern-day America: moms and dads and athletic siblings, crazy dogs, a cat named Lulu, a fish that died, divorced parents, a girl with two mommies.

You can bet that the public schools won't be teaching the children about gay crime horror stories like Joshua Brown or Frank Lombard. These stories are a thousand times more horrifying than Matthew Shepard, but no one has ever heard about those stories. No, that's not what the GLBT lobby wants children to learn about at all.

And that's the problem with public schools – they only tell children what the government

wants the special interest groups who get them elected want children to hear. The government wants to get re-elected, so they put public functions up for sale to the highest bidder. Special interest groups like the GLBT lobby promise them votes and campaign donations in exchange for telling children what they want the lobby wants them to believe. They only want to minimize the damage is to cut off the funding for government functions – perhaps by giving parents more control over education with voucher programs.

Even some Christian conservatives support this by voting to transfer money from private taxpayers into public schools. I once knew a Christian woman who told me that forcing her husband to pay more in taxes for public schools was a good idea, because public schools fed children free breakfasts so that all the children would be "equal". Although she denied it, what she was really voting for was the indoctrination of children with gay proganda using her family's money – money earned by her Christian husband. Apparently, she thought that the public schools needed her husband's money more than her family did. When pressed by me, she admitted that she held that view because it made her feel good – she had never thought about the consequences of her voting for her husband's ability to lead the family in a Christian direction.

Lenny has more to say about this decision by the California public schools.

Stephen C. Meyer explains the evidence for the Big Bang on John Ankerberg show

October 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a short post, because I can't embed the video – so I'm just going to post the link to the Lightsource web site which has the video.

Here's a web page from Caltech that goes over 3 of the 6 evidences for the Big Bang.

Excerpt:

> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

The article explains all three evidences in detail. It is important to show atheists how the progress of science has dashed their hopes for an eternal, uncaused universe. One discovery – that could be reversed. Two discoveries – that's conclusive. Three – discoveries – that's an open and shut case. (And there are three more discoveries not mentioned in the article – the second law of thermodynamics, radioactive element abundances and the stellar lifecycle itself).

And, of course, William Lane Craig uses this scientific evidence in his kalam cosmological argument, which is described in a peer-reviewed paper from this Astrophysics journal.

Audio from William Lane Craig's debate with Stephen Law

October 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: The audio for the debate has been posted here at Apologetics 315.

Reactions from the first debate of the Reasonable Faith UK speaking tour, featuring Dr. William Lane Craig.

These are just cut and pasted by me from Facebook with names removed.

J:

> I cant believe Law didnt offer any objections to Theism other than the problem of evil.. The heckling was a bit disappointing, entertaining debate though. Law made some bad admissions in the after discussion which was quite funny :)

M:

> so i just got home from the debate between william lane craig and stephen law.
>
> was a very interesting debate, and law turned out to be one of the few atheists who had clearly carefully considered his debating strategy. Not once did he even attempt to argue for atheism, all he was ever trying to do was argue against "Craig's God" (which is what he said himself).
>
> wlc presented just three arguments this time, the kalam, the moral and the resurrection.
>
> law didn't respond at all to the kalam and literally just left it with "i don't know".
>
> law's opening speech was all on the evidential problem of evil without responding to any of Craig's arguments. Then in first rebuttals he completely ignored all the arguments again, only seeking to defend his evidential argument from evil. I have to say his strategy was interesting but I think it backfired, simply because atheism just came out to be utterly indefensible. The kalam was not challenged once, only the moral nature of the Creator of the cosmos. As WLC said numerous times, "it's a strange form of atheism that holds to the existence of an uncaused, immaterial, timeless, spaceless, powerful, transcendent and personal being who just isn't morally perfect"!
>
> atheism was definitely left in a bad state in this debate!
> wlc had some good responses to the evil God challenge

More M:

> it was quite an interesting debate. wlc presented just 3 arguments: kalam, moral & resurrection. then law spent his whole first speech on the evidential problem of evil, with his evil God challenge mixed in. In the whole first rebuttals again law COMPLETELY ignored wlc's 3 arguments, and didn't respond to them until the

> FINAL rebuttal!
>
> law didn't even argue for atheism. he didn't challenge the kalam once, and i mean not once! for me, he conceded that atheism was false (even though he doesn't believe that himself) and instead just tried to show that whoever this Creator is, we can't know whether he is good or evil. I thought he was really weak on the moral argument as well. I found that overall his tactics were to not specifically deny any of the premises of any of the arguments, instead he just kept repeating that craig hasn't proved ____(insert premise) to his satisfaction. But check it out for yourselves later in the week!

C:

> I give respect to Stephen Law, he seems like a nice guy who is very intelligent and took this debate seriously.
>
> The evidential problem of evil is tougher to fend off, but once again another Non-theist (as I think Law is an agnostic) tries his argument for personal preference.
>
> Law basically stated " I don't find God to be good under my standards of what I think is good, therefore I don't think he exists, but if he does exist he is an evil God"
>
> And was it me or did Law mix up what is "prescriptive" morality and "descriptive" morality when he spoke about ethical naturalism? It seems as if he had it backwards.
>
> Law gave me the impression he was either an agnostic or a closet Deist

Some selected Tweets as of Tuesday morning at 2 AM:

> reNewedAtheist Tom Samuel:
> i think it's safe to say that Law didn't do his homework. i even tweeted at him telling him to come prepared….
>
> UnbelievableJB Justin Brierley:
> Did Law defend atheism or agnosticism tonight? #RFTour one person left saying deism perfectly plausible on Law's arguments tonight

And most importantly:

> UnbelievableJB Justin Brierley:
> Complete Craig vs Law debate goes online as an early podcast tomorrow. premier.org.uk/craig #RFTour
>
> UnbelievableJB Justin Brierley:
> @BenMartinBass video will go online after tour is over but I'm putting the audio out as an early poddie tomorrow @RFupdates

You should follow @UnbelievableJB on Twitter for more updates. It's Justin Brierley's feed, and he is posting updates continously.

The thing you need to realize about the evidential/probabilistic argument from evil is that it has to be weighed along with other countervailing evidence in favor of God's existence. It is not a deductive argument. Craig presented three arguments in favor of the proposition, so Law *has to respond to those* in order to win the debate. Moreover, I am sure that he would not be able to answer the challenge of how he knows that any particular instance of evil is gratuitous. I hope Brian posts the debate audio soon.

Planned Parenthood loses fight for $397,000 in taxpayer-funding

October 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news from Life News.

> The Planned Parenthood abortion business has lost its battle to keep a $397,000 taxpayer-funded contract in Memphis, Tennessee after pro-life advocates contacted members of the county commission requesting that the grant be given to someone else.
>
> Shelby County Health Department director Yvonne Madlock had announced in September that , after significant lobbying from pro-life advocates, Christ Community Health Services would receive the $397,000 contract with the county for family planning rather than Planned Parenthood. Then, in a 6-4 party-line vote, the Shelby County Commission decided to postpone its decision and allow Planned Parenthood more time to make its case that it should continue receiving the tax money.
>
> Now, the Shelby County Commission voted 9-4 on Monday to give Christ Community Health Services the family planning contract instead of renewing it with Planned Parenthood Greater Memphis Region. However, the Memphis Commercial newspaper reportsthat the abortion business has a pending bid protest with the county government.
>
> […]The money comes from the Title X family planning grants states are given by the federal government and Davidson County, the location of Nashville, made the decision earlier this year to move the recipient of its funding elsewhere from the Planned Parenthood abortion business. Because Shelby County was the lone holdout, pro-life advocates focused their efforts on persuading the county government to de-fund Planned Parenthood.

So, it sounds like things are not *quite settled yet.* But still – good news so far.

Related posts

- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Breast cancer charity Susan G. Komen gives $569,159 to Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations

- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
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- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the lawResearchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity
- Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Those who complain about corporate greed may be greedy themselves

October 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the moderately leftist National Post.

Excerpt:

> But what about that 99%? What responsibility do they bear for the situation the world finds itself in? The answer is: plenty. Greed doesn't just live on Wall Street: it finds a home on Main Street too. And when people think it's perfectly OK to take out mortgages they can't afford, or rack up credit card debt to buy flat screen TVs, clothes and appliances, or draw on their home's equity to finance cars and vacations, well, as they say, you reap what you sow.
>
> […]But you only have to crack open the business pages, or watch a reality TV show like Gail Vaz-Oxlade's "Princesses" (about heavily indebted young women) to start questioning the moral purity of the 99%. Many of these people are the authors of their own misery: they consider credit to be cheap, if not free, money. The result is that even here in Canada, the ratio of household debt to personal income has hit a whopping 150%, up 78% in real terms in the past twenty years.
>
> I have no pity for those heavily indebted people, in part because I was once one of them. My love affair with credit started in university. While the limit on that first card was low – $1500 – it allowed a student with a part-time job to buy things she couldn't otherwise afford (and mostly didn't need). After getting married, I kept spending, even cashing in my meagre RRSP to help finance the wedding. Post-divorce, I racked up consumer debt, over $15,000 at its peak, at which point I took a harsh look at myself and said: enough. At the time, I was selling my condo: I took the proceeds, paid off the debt, invested the balance, and vowed to both save and pay monthly bills in full, promises I have kept ever since.
>
> Luckily, I got religion well before the meltdown of 2008. But many people didn't. And this makes them responsible not only for their own problems, but those of their neighbours.
>
> Sure, it's easy to blame the Wall Street CEOs for bundling rotten mortgages and contriving arcane debt instruments that weren't worth the paper they were written on. But someone took out those mortgages. Millions of people, actually, who bought more house than they could afford. Did someone hold a gun to their head? No. They were just as greedy as the 1%, only on a smaller scale.
>
> Governments are also just as guilty. In the U.S., Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac granted mortgages to people deemed disadvantaged – minorities, the poor – in the hopes of increasing home ownership. This spurred the private sector to

> compete and fuelled the infamous subprime mortgage market.

The Canadians have special tax-free savings accounts that encourage them to save money instead of spending it. That’s something that we should do – provide people with tax-free savings accounts. Give people the incentive to save their money instead of spending it.

Why do conservatives accuse Obama of engaging in "class warfare"?

October 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-leaning Politico. (H/T Dennis Prager)

Excerpt:

> Obama has characterized Republican votes against his jobs bill — which are predicated, at least in part, over concern that new, temporary spending financed by tax increases will not help the economy — as a rejection of the most wholesome of American workers.
>
> "They said no to more jobs for teachers, no to more jobs for cops and firefighters," Obama said during a speech Wednesday to the administration's Forum on American Latino Heritage, "no to more jobs for construction workers and veterans, no to tax cuts for small-business owners and middle-class Americans."
>
> But in these same remarks, Obama also subtly suggested something far worse — that his opponents are racially biased.
>
> "I ran for president for the same reason many people came to this country in the first place," he explained. "Because I believe America should be a place where you can always make it if you try, a place where every child, no matter what they look like [or] where they come from should have a chance to succeed. I still believe in that America. I believe we can be that America again."
>
> The clear suggestion is that someone has made this country a place where what a child looks like can hinder them — and Obama is the one who can erase the discrimination that has been permitted to return.
>
> First lady Michelle Obama made this point more explicitly at a Washington fundraiser the night before.
>
> "Will we be a country where opportunity is limited to just the few at the top?" the first lady asked. "Or will we give every child — every child — a chance to succeed, no matter where she's from, or what she looks like, or how much money her parents [have]? Who are we? That's what's at stake here."
>
> Her suggestion that "what's at stake here" in the 2012 race is whether a child will be judged by color is an outrage, implying that a Republican victory would result in discrimination.

Obama's rhetoric has become increasingly shrill. I find it very alarming that the President of the United States is somewhere to the left of celebrity blowhards like Michael Moore. How does he expect to negotiate with people in good faith when he is constantly impugning their motives and caricaturing their policies?

In other news, Herman Cain, who is black, leads by 8 points in the Iowa Caucuses. Wouldn't it be funny to see Barack Obama, who is only half-black, take on Herman Cain in a debate, and accuse him of racism? The rich, pampered Ivy-league ACORN trainer against the businessman with a Masters in Computer science from Purdue, whose mother was a cleaning woman, and whose father worked three jobs.

Is Herman Cain's 9-9-9 plan revenue neutral? Does it tax the poor more?

October 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

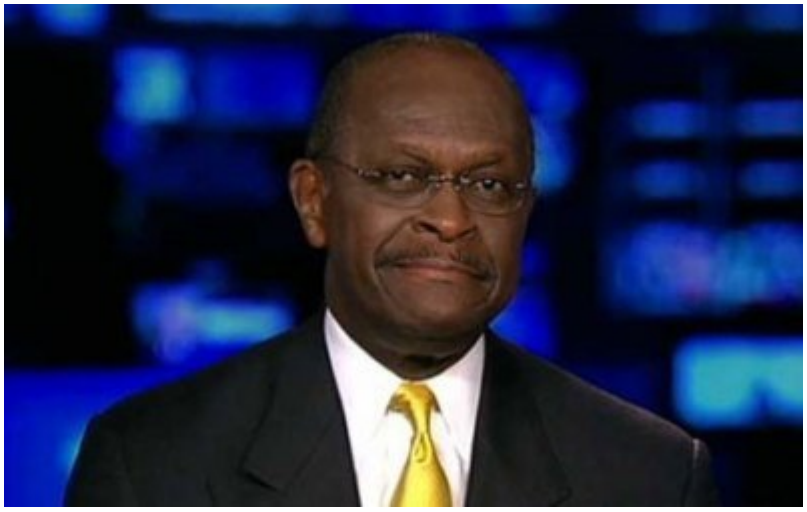

Presidential candidate Herman Cain

Consider this article by rock-star economist Arthur Laffer.

Excerpt:

> In the recent past, federal tax revenues from the personal and business income taxes, all payroll taxes, and the capital gains, gift and estate taxes have averaged $2.3 trillion, while gross domestic product has averaged about $14.5 trillion. The total revenue from these taxes as a share of gross domestic product averages around 16%. Sometimes it's a good deal higher, as in the boom of the late 1990s, and sometimes its lower, as in today's "Great Recession." But a number in the 16%-19% range is as good as you'll get under our current tax code.
>
> **By contrast, the three tax bases for Mr. Cain's 9-9-9 plan add up to about $33 trillion. But the plan exempts from *any* tax people below the poverty line. Using poverty tables, this exemption reduces each tax base by roughly $2.5 trillion. Thus, Mr. Cain's 9-9-9 tax base for his business tax is $9.5 trillion, for his income tax $7.7 trillion, and for his sales tax $8.3 trillion. And there you have it! Three federal taxes at 9% that would raise roughly $2.3 trillion and replace the current income tax, corporate tax, payroll tax (employer and employee), capital gains tax and estate tax.**
>
> **The whole purpose of a flat tax, à la 9-9-9, is to lower marginal tax rates and simplify the tax code. With lower marginal tax rates (and boy will marginal tax rates be lower with the 9-9-9 plan), both the demand for and the supply of labor and capital will increase. Output will soar, as will jobs. Tax revenues will also increase enormously—not because tax**

> **rates have increased, but because marginal tax rates have decreased.**
>
> By making the tax codes a lot simpler, we'd allow individuals and businesses to spend a lot less on maintaining tax records; filing taxes; hiring lawyers, accountants and tax-deferral experts; and lobbying Congress. As I wrote on this page earlier this year ("The 30-Cent Tax Premium," April 18), for every dollar of business and personal income taxes paid, some 30 cents in out-of-pocket expenses also were paid to comply with the tax code. Under 9-9-9, these expenses would plummet without a penny being lost to the U.S. Treasury. It's a win-win.

I have heard precious few conservative commentators reporting the facts on Herman Cain's plan, so it's nice to see Art Laffer looking at the details.

Here are three facts about Cain's plan:

- Fact #1: People below the poverty line are exempt from ALL the taxes.
- Fact #2: It is a *stupid* objection to say that the tax rate can be raised. *ALL* taxes can be raised, and Cain has already said that his plan would require a 2/3rds majority to raise the tax rates.
- Fact #3: This plan has nothing to do with state income taxes or state sales taxes or state corporate taxes – his plan only reforms federal taxes. State tax laws are outside of the jurisdiction of the President.

I was really disappointed to hear some of the people in Tuesday night's debate disparaging Herman Cain's plan, especially Michele Bachmann, who ought to know better because this is her strength. When people say that a tax is regressive, that means that it is not progressive. And a progressive tax is *communist.* It punishes success. What we want to have is a flat tax rate that doesn't punish success and broadens the tax base so that everyone pays something. What Cain's plan does is lower the punishment on job creators and workers, and raises the tax on consumers who spend money. And isn't that a good thing? Aren't we in this whole mess because we spend too much money? Maybe we should incentivize job creation and work instead of spending. Cain's plan would be the greatest boon to job creation that this company has ever seen – it's brilliant precisely because it eliminates the cost of having to comply with an onerous, complicated tax code. We are getting this wealth for free, and the only losers will be the IRS and the Washington lobbyists.

Canadian Supreme Court refuses to hear appeal on infanticide case

October 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The Supreme Court of Canada declined last Thursday to hear an appeal in the case of a mother who smothered two of her children. The decision means that a Canadian mother can continue to plead to the lesser charge of "infanticide" rather than "murder" when she ends the life of her newborn child.
>
> The mother in the case, referred to as "L.B," was 15 years old when in 1998 she smothered her 6-week-old son Alexander. She smothered another one of her children, 10-week-old son Cameron, in 2002.
>
> […]In a statement to the police, L.B. testified that 6-week-old Alexander's crying made her "angry." When he would not stop crying, she placed him in his crib, covered him entirely with blankets and a plastic cover, left the room, and began listening to music. She admitted that she was "very confused" but insisted that she "wanted to help Alexander feel better."
>
> L.B. also testified to police that on the day she killed her 10-week-old son Cameron, she was "very upset" and feared that she would do her child harm. Police heard how L.B. "wanted Cameron to die," since she believed it was "the right thing to do." As Cameron slowly suffocated, she told her son that he was "going to a better place."

Here's the prosecutor:

> Jennifer Woollcombe, acting for the Crown, appealed Justice Herold's 2008 decision, arguing that L.B's "infanticide defence" was based on antiquated laws that were created to give juries an alternative to the death penalty for mentally unstable mothers who killed their children. The Crown argued that the "infanticide defence" constitutes an "unacceptable devaluation of the worth of a newborn child."
>
> "The trial judge found that these murders were planned and deliberate. There is no principled reason for acquitting her of murder. She made a choice to kill while her husband was at home, called an ex-boyfriend rather than 911 after killing him, maintained a facade that the babies died of SIDS, and accepted and sought out sympathy and attention."
>
> "The respondent intentionally killed two babies," said the Crown brief during the mother's trial, as reported in the Globe and Mail.

Recall the horrifying story about the recent slap-on-the-wrist handed down to the

Edmonton woman who strangled her own baby. What is wrong with Canada on the life issue?

Walter Williams on CEO salaries and celebrity salaries

October 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams
From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> It turns out that the top 10 CEOs have an average salary of $43 million, which pales in comparison with America's top 10 celebrities, who earn an average salary of $100 million.
>
> When you recognize that celebrities earn salaries that are some multiples of CEO salaries, you have to ask: Why is it that rich CEOs are demonized and not celebrities? A clue might be found if you asked: Who's doing the demonizing?
>
> It turns out that the demonizing is led by politicians and leftists with the help of the news media, and like sheep, the public often goes along. Why demonize CEOs? My colleague Dr. Thomas Sowell explained it in his brand-new book, "The Thomas Sowell Reader." One of his readings, titled "Ivan and Boris – and Us," starts off with a fable of two poor Russian peasants.
>
> Ivan finds a magic lamp and rubs it, and the jinni grants him one wish. As it turns out, Boris has a goat, but Ivan doesn't. Ivan's wish is for Boris' goat to die. That vision reflects the feelings of too many Americans. If all CEOs worked for nothing, it would mean absolutely little or nothing to the average American's bottom line.
>
> For politicians, it's another story: Demonize people whose power you want to usurp. That's the typical way totalitarians gain power. They give the masses someone to hate. In 18th-century France, it was Maximilien Robespierre's promoting hatred of the aristocracy that was the key to his acquiring more dictatorial power than the aristocracy had ever had.
>
> In the 20th century, the communists gained power by promoting public hatred of

> the czars and capitalists. In Germany, Adolf Hitler gained power by promoting hatred of Jews and Bolsheviks. In each case, the power gained led to greater misery and bloodshed than anything the old regime could have done.
>
> Let me be clear: I'm not equating America's liberals with Robespierre, Josef Stalin and Hitler. I am saying that promoting jealousy, fear and hate is an effective strategy for politicians and their liberal followers to control and micromanage businesses.

Tom sent me this article that shows that raising taxes on the wealthy doesn't even produce more revenue.

Excerpt:

> All this nostalgia about the good old days of 70% tax rates makes it sound as though only the highest incomes would face higher tax rates. In reality, there were a dozen tax rates between 48% and 70% during the 1970s… the individual income tax actually brought in less revenue when the highest tax rate was 70% to 91% than it did when the highest tax rate was 28%.
>
> […]President John F. Kennedy's across-the-board tax cuts reduced the lowest and highest tax rates to 14% and 70% respectively after 1964, yet revenues (after excluding the 5%-10% surtaxes of 1969-70) rose to 8% of GDP. President Reagan's across-the-board tax cuts further reduced the lowest and highest tax rates to 11% and 50%, yet revenues rose again to 8.3% of GDP. The 1986 tax reform slashed the top tax rate to 28%, yet revenues dipped trivially to 8.1% of GDP.

Why would a Christian care how much money other people have at all? If you see someone who is poor, help them. If you see someone who needs a gift, give them a gift. The Bible teaches individual charity – you choose who to give your money to and how much to give, after you've paid your taxes to Caesar. I think it's time that we took the Bible seriously on money… there are an awful lot of people sinning by breaking people into groups based on how much money they have – or what the color of their skin is. You do the best you can with what you can earn, and stop being concerned about taking money from people who have more than you do. The purpose of life is not to make everyone happy by making the secular government allocate everyone an equal amount of stuff – how unBiblical.

Joe Biden: Pass Obama's stimulus bill or somebody is going to get raped

October 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

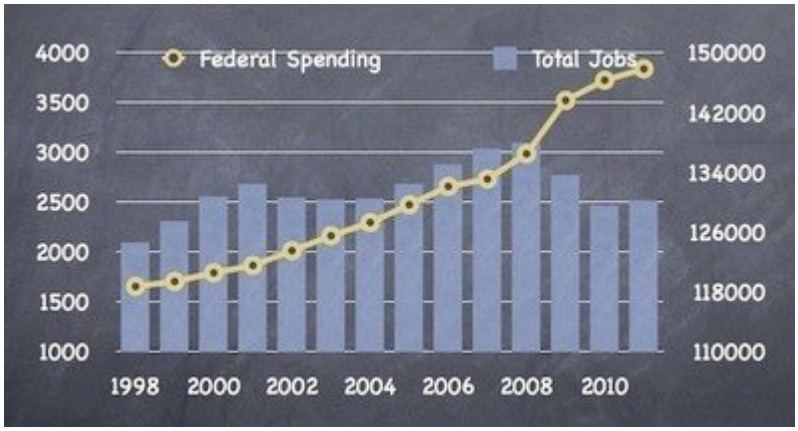

Is stimulus spending reducing unemployment?

UPDATE: Welcome, visitors from Doug Ross @ Journal!

The title of this post is just my snarky paraphrase of what he said, he didn't say exactly that.

Human Events covers the story, here are the videos:

Here's the text:

> It was on Tuesday during a speech at the University of Pennsylvania where Biden initially argued that another round of government spending was needed to prevent sexual assaults. "It's not temporary [administration's proposed stimulus] when that 911 call comes in and a woman's being raped, if a cop shows up in time to prevent the rape. It's not temporary to that woman." Then in the same speech he wished Republicans were themselves rape victims. "I wish they had some notion of what it was like to be on the other side of a gun, or [to have] a 200-pound man standing over you, telling you to submit."

And here's how he responded to this Human Events reporter:

Here's the text:

> Vice President Joe Biden now says he didn't make a reference to rape, and got testy with HUMAN EVENTS when we asked if he would like to retract his comments that the number of sexual assaults would increase if Republicans don't sign on to Barack Obama's latest "jobs" proposal.
>
> "I didn't use, no no no…Let's get it straight, guy. Don't screw around with me," Biden lashed out at HUMAN EVENTS. Then Biden confirmed that he indeed did talk about rape in terms of the President's spending measure. "Murder will continue to rise, rape will continue to rise, all crimes will continue to rise," if the Democrats agenda isn't passed, he added.

> […]The exchange between the vice president and HUMAN EVENTS was taken on Wednesday after Biden gave a speech calling for yet another government stimulus program. This one is union-backed, and aimed at getting teachers and public-sector employees back to work.

I'm wondering if these provocative comments by Vice President Joe Biden are some sort of threat. Because I'm familiar with union thuggery, so this would not be a stretch at all. Obama's advocated violence before, too.

This isn't the first time that Joe Biden has committed a gaffe.

Excerpt:

> According to multiple sources, as reported by the liberal *Politico*, Representative Mike Doyle (D-PA) was delivering a spittle-flecked rant about Republicans, and the Vice President of the United States decided to chime in:
>
> "We have negotiated with terrorists," an angry Doyle said, according to sources in the room. "This small group of terrorists have made it impossible to spend any money."
>
> Biden, driven by his Democratic allies' misgivings about the debt-limit deal, responded: "They have acted like terrorists."

How do you negotiate with someone like that?

Herman Cain leads in Ohio, Hawaii, Iowa, North Carolina, Nebraska, West Virginia

October 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Cain Mutiny
From the Democrat Public Policy Polling firm.

Excerpt:

> Herman Cain's poll momentum is continuing for at least another week. PPP surveys conducted over the weekend in Ohio and Hawaii find him with a large lead in both states. That now makes 7 consecutive polls over the last 3 weeks- a national one and state polls in Ohio, Hawaii, Iowa, North Carolina, Nebraska, and West Virginia- that have found Cain leading the way.
>
> […]Tea Party voters continue to be the primary driver of Cain's momentum. In Ohio he gets 46% of their support to 15% for Gingrich and 11% for Bachmann with Romney finishing all the way back in 4th place at 9%. It's a similar story in Hawaii- there Cain and Romney actually tie at 30% each among non-Tea Party Republicans. But with the Tea Pary crowd Cain gets a whooping 52% to 12% for Bachmann and 9% for Romney. These numbers represent a recurring theme in our polls- Romney doesn't necessarily need to win Tea Pary voters but he sure needs to not lose them by 40 points if he hopes to win the nomination.
>
> […]The big loser in these polls is Rick Perry. The low numbers of Republicans planning to vote for him is a concern but his even bigger issue is that GOP voters are now saying that they just flat out don't like him. In Ohio his favorability is 40/42 with the primary electorate and in Hawaii it's 36/40. His problem isn't that Republican voters just like someone else better than him- it's that at this point they don't even like him at all. He has some serious image rehabilitation to do to get back in this race.
>
> […]In addition to Cain the other candidate continuing to show some surprising

> momentum in Newt Gingrich. He gets a solo third in Ohio and a tie for third in Hawaii, and the numbers in the Buckeye State show the improvement in his image over the last 5 months. When PPP last tested his favorability in May he was at 42/34 with primary voters. Now that's improved to 56/32 and the only Republican with a better net favorability is Cain.

Results:

Poll	Cain's lead (%)	Second place (%)
National	30	Romney 22
Ohio	34	Romney 19
Hawaii	36	Romney 24
Iowa	30	Romney 22
North Carolina	27	Romney/Gingrich 17
Nebraska	30	Gingrich 16
West Virginia	24	Gingrich 18

I wonder when the liberal Mitt Romney will be dropping out of the race? Perhaps he can go work for Obama, since he seems to agree so much with him.

Related posts

- Is Herman Cain's 9-9-9 plan revenue neutral? Does it tax the poor more?
- Rasmussen poll: Cain beats Obama by two in hypothetical match-up
- Paul Ryan and Art Laffer love Herman Cain's 9-9-9 plan
- Herman Cain leads liberal Mitt Romney by 4 in national NBC/WSJ poll
- Herman Cain in first place in new South Carolina and Virginia polls
- Video and transcript of Herman Cain's Value Voter Summit speech
- Herman Cain is now tied for first place with fiscal/social liberal Romney
- Herman Cain now tied for second place in new GOP primary poll
- Herman Cain on Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace
- Who is Herman Cain and why is he in first place in this national poll?
- Herman Cain wins straw poll in Florida!
- Herman Cain gaining momentum with the Tea Party conservatives
- The top article on National Review is about Herman Cain
- Video of the first Republican presidential debate in South Carolina

What conditions support the minimum requirements for complex life?

October 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Circumstellar Habitable Zone (CHZ)

What do you need in order to have a planet that supports complex life? First, you need liquid water at the surface of the planet. But there is only a narrow range of temperatures that can support liquid water. It turns out that the size of the star that your planet orbits around has a lot to do with whether you get liquid water or not. A heavy, metal-rich star allows you to have a habitable planet far enough from the star so the planet can support liquid water on the planet's surface while still being able to spin on its axis. The zone where a planet can have liquid water at the surface is called the circumstellar habitable zone (CHZ). A metal-rich star like our Sun is very massive, which moves the habitable zone out further away from the star. If our star were smaller, we would have to orbit much closer to the star in order to have liquid water at the surface. Unfortunately, if you go too close to the star, then your planet becomes tidally locked, like the moon is tidally locked to Earth. Tidally locked planets are inhospitable to life.

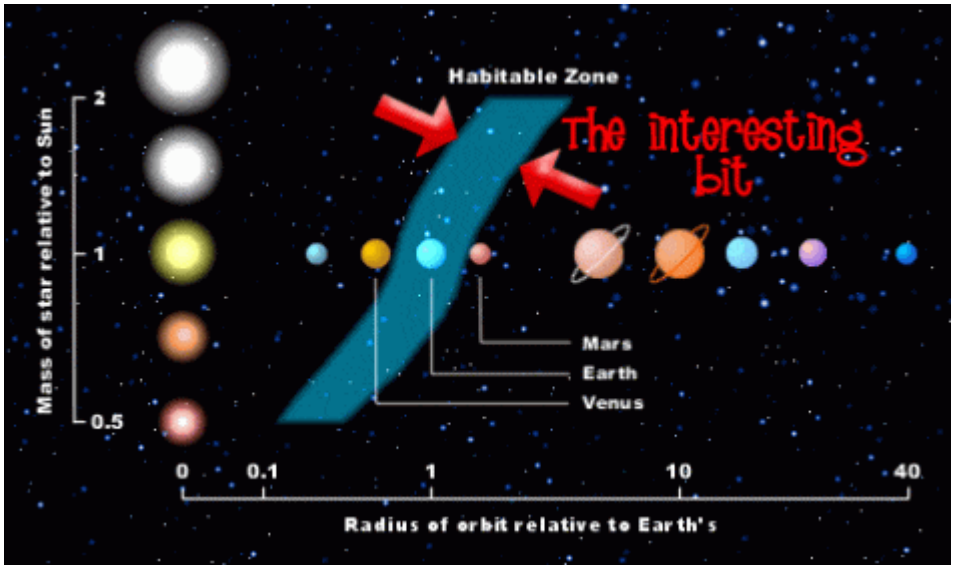

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

Here, watch a clip from The Privileged Planet: (Clip 4 of 12, full playlist here)

But there's more.

The Galactic Habitable Zone (GHZ)

So, where do you get the heavy elements you need for your heavy metal-rich star?

You have to get the heavy elements for your star from supernova explosions – explosions that occur when certain types of stars die. That's where heavy elements come from. But you can't be TOO CLOSE to the dying stars, because you will get hit by nasty radiation and explosions. So to get the heavy elements from the dying stars, your solar system needs to be in the galactic habitable zone (GHZ) – the zone where you can pickup the heavy elements you need but not get hit by radiation and explosions. The GHZ lies

between the spiral arms of a spiral galaxy. Not only do you have to be in between the arms of the spiral galaxy, but you also cannot be too close to the center of the galaxy. The center of the galaxy is too dense and you will get hit with massive radiation that will break down your life chemistry. But you also can't be too far from the center, because you won't get enough heavy elements because there are fewer dying stars the further out you go. You need to be in between the spiral arms, a medium distance from the center of the galaxy.

Like this:

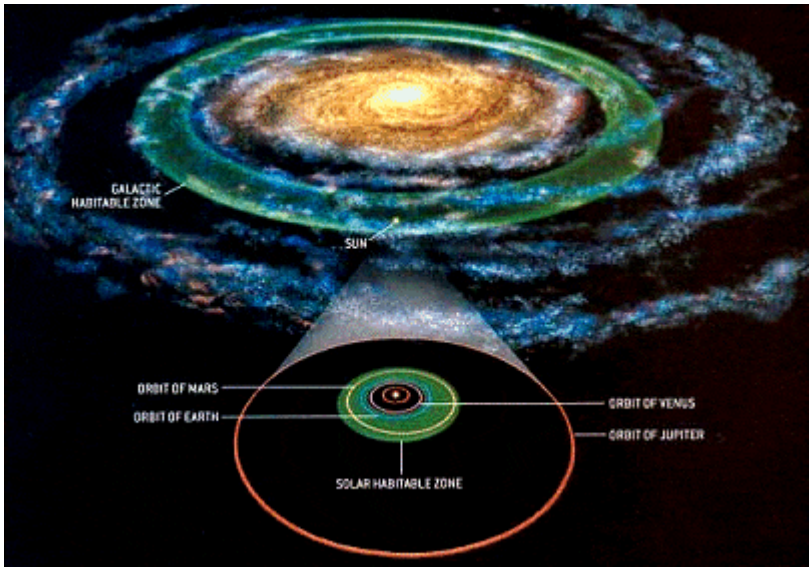

Galactic Habitable Zone and Solar Habitable Zone

Here, watch a clip from The Privileged Planet: (Clip 10 of 12, full playlist here)

The GHZ is based on a discovery made by astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez, which made the front cover of Scientific American in 2001. That's right, the cover of Scientific American. I actually stole the image above of the GHZ and CHZ (aka solar habitable zone) from his Scientific American article (linked above).

These are just a few of the things you need in order to get a planet that supports life.

Here are a few of the more well-known ones:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.

- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

By the way, you can watch a lecture with Guillermo Gonzalez explaining his ideas further. This lecture was delivered at UC Davis in 2007. That link has a link to the playlist of the lecture, a bio of the speaker, and a summary of all the topics he discussed in the lecture. An excellent place to learn the requirements for a suitable habitat for life.

Obama raised more money from rich bankers than any Republican candidate

October 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Despite frosty relations with the titans of Wall Street, President Obama has still managed to raise far more money this year from the financial and banking sector than Mitt Romney or any other Republican presidential candidate, according to new fundraising data.
>
> Obama's key advantage over the GOP field is the ability to collect bigger checks because he raises money for both his own campaign committee and for the Democratic National Committee, which will aid in his reelection effort.
>
> As a result, Obama has brought in more money from employees of banks, hedge funds and other financial service companies than all the other GOP candidates combined, according to a Washington Post analysis of contribution data. The numbers show that Obama retains a persistent reservoir of support among Democratic financiers who have backed him since he was an underdog presidential candidate four years ago.
>
> […]One top banking executive who raises money for Obama and who requested anonymity to discuss fundraising efforts said reports of disaffection with the president "are exaggerated and overblown." He said a strong contingent of financiers in New York, Chicago and California remain supportive of Obama and his economic policies, even as some have turned on him.

The Daily Caller explains how Barack Obama has received the most money from Wall Street bankers of all politicians in the last 20 years. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt: (with links removed)

> In fact, the Sunlight Foundation, a nonpartisan watchdog group that tracks lobbyist spending and influence in both parties, found that President Obama has received more money from Bank of America than any other candidate dating back to 1991.An examination of the numbers shows that Obama took in $421,242 in campaign contributions in 2008 from Bank of America's executives, PACs and employees, which exceeded its prior record contribution of $329,761 to President George W. Bush in 2004.
>
> According to the Center for Responsive Politics, Wall Street firms also contributed more to Obama's 2008 campaign than they gave to Republican nominee John McCain.
>
> "The securities and investment industry is Obama's second largest source of

> bundlers, after lawyers, at least 56 individuals have raised at least $8.9 million for his campaign," Massie Ritsch wrote in a Sept. 18, 2008 entry on the Center for Responsive Politics's OpenSecrets blog.
>
> By the end of Barack Obama's 2008 campaign, executives and others connected with Wall Street firms, such as Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, Citigroup, UBS AG, JPMorgan Chase, and Morgan Stanley, poured nearly $15.8 million into his coffers.
>
> […]Wall Street's generosity to Obama didn't end with his 2008 campaign either. Wall Street donors contributed $4.8 million to underwrite Obama's inauguration, according to a Jan. 15, 2009 Reuters report.So far Wall Street has raised $7.2 million in the current electoral cycle for President Obama, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Obama's 2012 Wall Street bundlers include people like Jon Corzine, former Goldman Sachs CEO and former New Jersey governor; Azita Raji, a former investment banker for JP Morgan; and Charles Myers, an executive with the investment bank Evercore Partners.

It should be no surprise to anyone that Barack Obama *voted for* the $700 billion Wall Street bailout in 2008. He also supported extending the bailout powers of the federal government in 2010. Those are the facts.

Obama gives $529 million loan to firm that outsources manufacturing to Finland

October 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From ABC News. (H/T Doug Ross Journal)

Excerpt:

> With the approval of the Obama administration, an electric car company that received a $529 million federal government loan guarantee is assembling its first line of cars in Finland, saying it could not find a facility in the United States capable of doing the work.
>
> Vice President Joseph Biden heralded the Energy Department's $529 million loan to the start-up electric car company called Fisker as a bright new path to thousands of American manufacturing jobs. But two years after the loan was announced, the job of assembling the flashy electric Fisker Karma sports car has been outsourced to Finland.
>
> […]**The loan to Fisker is part of a $1 billion bet the Energy Department has made in two politically connected California-based electric carmakers producing sporty — and pricey — cutting-edge autos. Fisker Automotive, backed by a powerhouse venture capital firm whose partners include former Vice President Al Gore, predicts it will eventually be churning out tens of thousands of electric sports sedans at the shuttered GM factory it bought in Delaware. And Tesla Motors, whose prime backers include PayPal mogul Elon Musk and Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin, says it will do the same in a massive facility tooling up in Silicon Valley.**
>
> **An investigation by ABC News and the Center for Public Integrity's iWatch News that will air on "Good Morning America" found that the DOE's bet carries risks for taxpayers, has raised concern among industry observers and government auditors, and adds to questions about the way billions of dollars in loans for smart cars and green energy companies have been awarded. Fisker is more than a year behind rolling out its $97,000 luxury vehicle bankrolled in part with DOE money. While more are promised soon, just 40 of its Karma cars (below) have been manufactured and only two delivered to customers' driveways, including one to movie star Leonardo DiCaprio.** Tesla's SEC filings reveal the start-up has lost money every quarter. And while its federal funding is intended to help it mass produce a new $57,400 Model S sedan, the company has no experience in a project so vast.

Doug Ross' post linked to a description of the car's features:

> Yikes. The EPA has finally released its official fuel economy rating for the Fisker Karma, and it's not high: just 52 MPGe, an all-electric range of 32 miles and 20 miles per gallon on gasoline when the battery runs dry. This is well below the numbers that Fisker reps were bandying about in past years: 67.2 mpge and an all-electric range of 50 miles.

The Wall Street Journal explains who stands to gain from these taxpayer-funded loans. Excerpt:

> A tiny car company backed by former Vice President Al Gore has just gotten a $529 million U.S. government loan to help build a hybrid sports car in Finland that will sell for about $89,000.
>
> The award this week to California startup Fisker Automotive Inc. follows a $465 million government loan to Tesla Motors Inc., purveyors of a $109,000 British-built electric Roadster. Tesla is a California startup focusing on all-electric vehicles, with a number of celebrity endorsements that is backed by investors that have contributed to Democratic campaigns.
>
> […]Kalee Kreider, a spokeswoman for Mr. Gore, confirmed that the former vice president backs Fisker and purchased a Karma. "He believes that a global shift of the automobile fleet toward electric vehicles, accompanying a shift toward renewable-energy generation, represents an important part of a sensible strategy for solving the climate crisis," she said in a statement.
>
> **Fisker's top investors include Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, a veteran Silicon Valley venture-capital firm of which Gore is a partner. Employees of KPCB have donated more than $2.2 million to political campaigns, mostly for Democrats, including President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan group that tracks campaign contributions.**
>
> Officials at Kleiner Perkins didn't return requests for comment.

We have been in a massive economic downturn that started when Nancy Pelosi took the gavel from John Boehner in January of 2007. And this is what the Democrats have been doing?

Richard Dawkins responds to Craig's debate challenge in a UK Guardian editorial

October 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Atheist Richard Dawkins explained why he wouldn't debate Craig in this UK Guardian column. This is his latest excuse for not debating Craig, (see the full list of excuses here). I guess this is Dawkins' way of striking at Craig without giving Craig a chance to respond. If he wanted to hear a response, he would have attended the debate at Oxford, and put his arguments on the table to be answered.

Defeating the column

His entire column is easily dispatched using Dawkins' own words against him, because he contradicts himself.

Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

Meanwhile, in his column, Dawkins claimed that God's command to destroy the Canaanites was an instance of evil:

> Most churchmen these days wisely disown the horrific genocides ordered by the God of the Old Testament. Anyone who criticises the divine bloodlust is loudly accused of unfairly ignoring the historical context, and of naive literalism towards what was never more than metaphor or myth. You would search far to find a modern preacher willing to defend God's commandment, in Deuteronomy 20: 13-15, to kill all the men in a conquered city and to seize the women, children and livestock as plunder.

So, in one statement, there's no good or evil, and in the next statement, there's evil. That's a contradiction, and it undermines his entire column, Q.E.D. You can't claim that

there is no standard of good and evil in one breath, and then make judgments of good and evil in the next. It's self-refuting. Dawkins didn't even try to respond to any of Craig's standard arguments for God's existence in the editorial, he just went off on a tangent about a few Bible verses that, even if true, might only defeat Judaism and Christianity in particular, but not the existence of God in general. And the debate "Does God Exist?" is about the latter.

Responding to the argument

If we ignore Dawkins' first statement denying that morality is real, and just respond to the verses he is complaining about, then we can look at this response online by William Lane Craig, or we can watch a lecture in two parts featuring Christian philosopher Paul Copan (part 1, part 2). So, a response to this objection is not hard to find. We have entire books written to answer this challenge – to say nothing of academic papers.

It's troubling to me that Dawkins would not reference any responses to his argument in his editorial, since they clearly exist, and can easily be found just by searching the world wide web. Dawkins' failure to interact with his critics is not surprising, though, given the fact that he didn't reference any opposing scholars in his latest book. Moreover, Dawkins has cited a professor of German language as an authority on the historical Jesus and suggested that unobservable aliens could explain the origin of life. These are not actions of a genuine scholar, and the refusal to debate William Lane Craig in public is part of that same pattern.

But the main point to realize is that Richard Dawkins refuses to debate William Lane Craig, and that means that nothing Richard Dawkins says can be taken seriously. He isn't willing to take the stage with an opponent and defend his views. He prefers to take pot shots at peripheral matters, (disputing particular Bible passages has *nothing whatsoever* to do with the question of whether a Creator of the universe exists or not), from the safety of the UK Guardian's editorial page. I cited responses to the passages from Craig and Copan above, but Craig could even just reject the passages as mistaken and Dawkins' argument would be neutralized – the debate is about the existence of God – the bare philosopher's God who creates and designs the universe. The debate is not about the Christian God in particular, or even about the inerrancy of the Bible. Evidence against inerrancy is not evidence against a Creator and Designer of the universe.

Finally, it's important to note that Richard Dawkins has peculiar views on morality himself. Not only does he support abortion, which resulted in the death of over 50 million unborn babies since 1973 in the United States *alone*, but he actually has no problem with infanticide.

(H/T Anglican Samizdat)

That's why it's important to make these arguments in a debate – instead of preaching them in an editorial to the UK Guardian choir. Theists do have responses to these and other objections, and it would be nice to be able to give those responses in public. If truth is the goal, then hearing both sides is the best way to reach the goal. It's part of the scientific method that we should be open to being disproved by the evidence.

About William Lane Craig

William Lane Craig is currently conducting a debating and speaking tour of the UK, with stops at Oxford, Cambridge, London and points in between.

Let's review William Lane Craig's qualifications:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

Here are some of Craig's recent publications: (it's a little out of date, now)

From 2007:

- Ed. with Quentin Smith. *Einstein, Relativity, and Absolute Simultaneity*. Routledge Studies in Contemporary Philosophy. London: Routledge, 2007, 302 pp.
- "Theistic Critiques of Atheism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, pp. 69-85. Ed. M. Martin. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- "The Metaphysics of Special Relativity: Three Views." In *Einstein, Relativity, and Absolute Simultaneity*, pp. 11-49. Ed. Wm. L. Craig and Quentin Smith. Routledge Studies in Contemporary Philosophy. London: Routledge, 2007.
- "Creation and Divine Action." In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* pp. 318-28. Ed. Chad Meister and Paul Copan. London: Routledge, 2007.

From 2008:

- *God and Ethics: A Contemporary Debate*. With Paul Kurtz. Ed. Nathan King and Robert Garcia. With responses by Louise Antony, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, John

Hare, Donald Hubin, Stephen Layman, Mark Murphy, and Richard Swinburne. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.
- "Time, Eternity, and Eschatology." In *The Oxford Handbook on Eschatology*, pp. 596-613. Ed. J. Walls. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

From 2009:

- Ed. with J. P. Moreland. *Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- "The *Kalam* Cosmological Argument." With James Sinclair. In *Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*. Ed. Wm. L. Craig and J. P. Moreland. Oxford: Blackwell.
- "In Defense of Theistic Arguments." In *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath and Daniel Dennett in Dialogue*. Ed. Robert Stewart. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Forthcoming:

- "The Cosmological Argument." In *Philosophy of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Issues*. Ed. Paul Copan and Chad Meister. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- "Cosmological Argument"; "Middle Knowledge." In *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Ed. G. Fergusson *et al*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- "Divine Eternity." In *Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*. Ed. Thomas Flint and Michael Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

He seems eminently qualified to debate the existence of God, doesn't he? And he's done it dozens of times, against the top atheist scholars.

What is Richard Dawkins is afraid of?

Here's an example of William Lane Craig debating the famous atheist Christopher Hitchens, arguably the top popular atheist in the world today.

Here's a review of that debate from Common Sense Atheism, a popular and respected atheist web site.

Excerpt:

> I just returned from the debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens at Biola University. It was a bigger deal than I realized. Over 3,000 people were there, and groups from dozens of countries – including Sri Lanka, apparently – had purchased a live feed.
>
> […]The debate went exactly as I expected. Craig was flawless and unstoppable. Hitchens was rambling and incoherent, with the occasional rhetorical jab. Frankly, Craig spanked Hitchens like a foolish child. Perhaps Hitchens realized how bad things were for him after Craig's opening speech, as even Hitchens' rhetorical flourishes were not as confident as usual. Hitchens wasted his cross-examination time with questions like, "If a baby was born in Palestine, would you rather it be a Muslim baby or an atheist baby?" He did not even bother to give his concluding remarks, ceding the time instead to Q&A.

The atheist web site “Debunking Christianity” called it a “landslide” victory for Craig. And I want to suggest that this outcome is exactly what Richard Dawkins was afraid of.

Craig has also debated other prominent atheists like Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, Bart Ehrman, Peter Atkins, Victor Stenger, and so on. And many of these can be seen *for free* on Youtube.

What William Lane Craig offers in his debates is a set of deductive arguments that are logically valid, and supported by 1) the latest scientific evidence (which he has published in peer-reviewed scientific journals), and 2) the consensus of academic historians of all persuasions, using *standard* historical methods. Dawkins should have no trouble debating empirical arguments from science and history, if his beliefs were testable against objective evidence. The debate is about scientific and historical evidence, and we can investigate that evidence.

Finally, I want to note that Craig is not the only person who Dawkins refuses to debate. He was challenged to debate Stephen C. Meyer, whose Ph.D is from Cambridge, and again declined to have his ideas debated in a public forum. Meyer’s book was as a Times Literary Supplement Best Book of 2009 – and it was nominated by the respected atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel.

Mitt Romney on global warming, climate change, environmental regulations

October 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An alarming article from the Washington Examiner about Mitt Romney's environmental regulations on business.

Excerpt:

> Make no mistake, if Mitt Romney secures the nomination, the Tea Party almost assuredly suffers a mortal wound. As Newt Gingrich just said, while Romney is an exceptionally nice person and a very hard worker, he is also a Rockefeller Republican.
>
> As their standard bearer going into battle with Barack Obama next fall, do Republican primary voters really want the person who drew up the blueprint for Obama-care?
>
> Worse, do Republican primary voters really want the person who the out-of-control job and freedom killing Obama EPA looked to for some of its most draconian ideas?
>
> As reported in the conservative blogs Moonbattery and HOTAIR; "the Romney administration in 2005 essentially did what Barack Obama's EPA wants to do now. He imposed CO2 emission caps — the "toughest in the nation" — in an effort to curtail traditional energy production.
>
> "Not only did Romney impose these costly new regulations, he then imposed price caps to keep power companies from passing the cost along to the consumer. As we have seen in Romney-Care, regulation and price controls eventually drive businesses into bankruptcy or relocation."
>
> More chilling than that bit of socialist nanny-state big government interference is who Romney looked to for advice regarding the plan. As reported by these two conservative sites, it was none other than Obama's Chief "science" adviser, John Holdren.
>
> Are you kidding me? Is *anyone* in the GOP paying attention to what is going on here? Is the Republican establishment so desperate to hold on to its power that it will continually look the other way as a chameleon-like candidate not only dreams up the ideas used by far-left Obama White House, but praises one of the people most reviled by the conservative movement?
>
> With regard to this subject, then-Gov. Romney's office trumpeted its energy and job-killing plan by saying in part: "Today's regulations will achieve our aggressive environmental goals and provide incentives to push technological development," said Stephen Pritchard, Secretary of Environmental Affairs.
>
> "In the development of greenhouse gas policy, Romney Administration officials

> have elicited input from environmental and economic policy experts.
>
> "These include John Holdren,professor of environmental policy at Harvard University and chair of the NationalCommission on Energy Policy and Billy Pizer, an economist at Resources for the Future, anenvironmental policy think-tank based in Washington D.C"
>
> Again, is *anyone* paying attention to these surreal, anything but conservative, facts?
>
> Governor Romney's office then closed the memo by proudly stating:
>
> "Implementing these regulations represents the latest in a series of initiatives that theRomney administration has undertaken to address air pollution.
>
> "In 2004, Governor Romney announced the Massachusetts Climate Protection Plan, which laid out acoordinated statewide response to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the climate."
>
> You can't make this up. Something that sounds as if it was drafted in the bowels of the Obama EPA was actually part of a memo released with great fan-fare by Governor Romney on December 7, 2005.

Do you remember who John Holdren is? Let me help.

Excerpt:

> President Obama's "science czar," John Holdren, once floated the idea of forced abortions, "compulsory sterilization," and the creation of a "Planetary Regime" that would oversee human population levels and control all natural resources as a means of protecting the planet — controversial ideas his critics say should have been brought up in his Senate confirmation hearings.
>
> […]…many of Holdren's radical ideas on population control were not brought up at his confirmation hearings; it appears that the senators who scrutinized him had no knowledge of the contents of a textbook he co-authored in 1977, "Ecoscience: Population, Resources, Environment," a copy of which was obtained by FOXNews.com.The 1,000-page course book, which was co-written with environmental activists Paul and Anne Ehrlich, discusses and in one passage seems to advocate totalitarian measures to curb population growth, which it says could cause an environmental catastrophe.
>
> The three authors summarize their guiding principle in a single sentence: "To provide a high quality of life for all, there must be fewer people."
>
> As first reported by FrontPage Magazine, Holdren and his co-authors spend a portion of the book discussing possible government programs that could be used to lower birth rates.
>
> Those plans include forcing single women to abort their babies or put them up for adoption; implanting sterilizing capsules in people when they reach puberty; and spiking water reserves and staple foods with a chemical that would make people

> sterile.
>
> To help achieve those goals, they formulate a “world government scheme” they call the Planetary Regime, which would administer the world’s resources and human growth, and they discuss the development of an “armed international organization, a global analogue of a police force” to which nations would surrender part of their sovereignty.

Is that what Mitt Romney believes, too? It would be consistent with his other liberal views.

Click here to learn more about Mitt Romney’s political views on abortion, gay rights, health care, gun control and other issues.

Ohio Issue 2: Should voters vote yes or vote no on Ohio State Issue 2?

October 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the 2010 mid-term elections, Republican John Kasich won the governorship and promised to balance the state's budget by reining in the state's spending on salaries and benefits for public sector union employees. To accomplish this, the Ohio legislature pass Senate Bill 5. However, an effort is on the ballot to repeal the law, and Ohio voters will get a chance to keep or scrap the law on Tuesday, November 8th, 2011.

Here's what Ohio's Issue 2 is all about:

> Issue 2 makes some very fair and common sense requests of our government employees to give local communities the flexibility they need to get taxes and spending under control, while providing the essential services that we rely on.
>
> - It allows an employee's job performance to be considered when determining compensation, rather than just awarding automatic pay increases based only on an employee's length of service.
> - It asks that government employees pay at least 15 percent of the cost of their health insurance premium. That's less than half of what private sector workers are currently paying.
> - It requires that government health care benefits apply equally to all government employees, whether they work in management or non-management positions. No special favors.
> - It asks our government employees to pay their own share of a generous pension contribution, rather than forcing taxpayers to pay both the employee and employer shares.
> - It keeps union bosses from protecting bad teachers and stops the outdated practice of laying off good teachers first just because they haven't served long enough.
> - Finally, it preserves collective bargaining for government employees, but it also returns some basic control of our schools and services to the taxpayers who fund them, not the union bosses who thrive on their mismanagement.
>
> Even under the reforms of State Issue 2, Ohio's government employees will still receive better pay, better health care and better retirement benefits, on average, than the vast majority of Ohioans who work in the private sector.

There are a number of myths going around about Issue 2, and it's important to set the record straight, so I'll do that below.

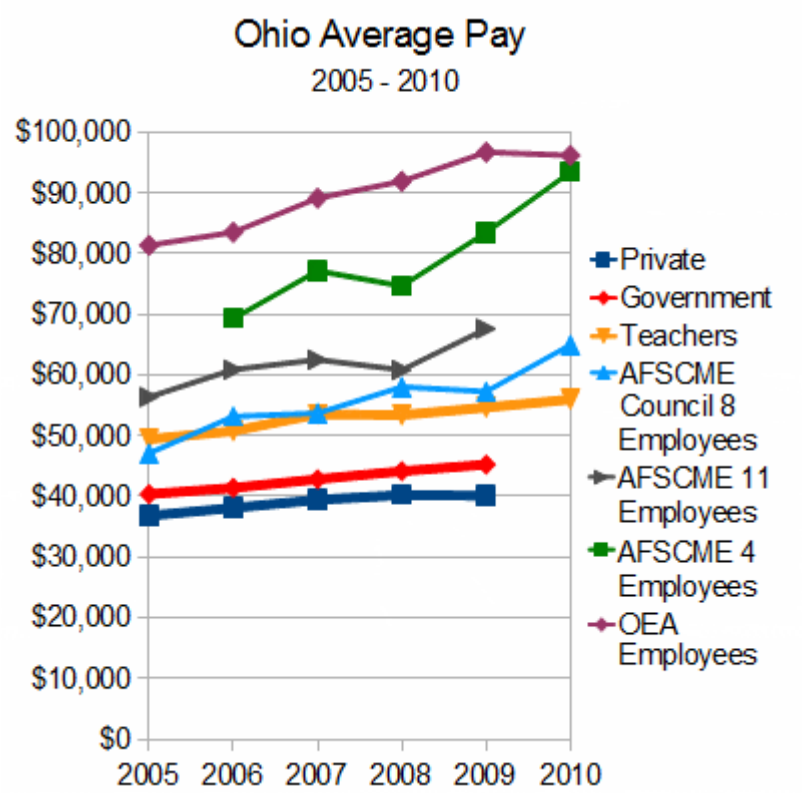

Ohio Average Pay: Public Unions vs. Private

Myths and truths about Ohio State Issue 2

Here's a common myth:

> State Issue 2 would "cut salaries and benefits."

The truth:

> Issue 2 would not cut salaries or benefits for any government employee. Employees would simply be asked to pay a modest share of their benefits, just like employees in the private sector do. For health care coverage, they would pay at least 15% of their overall plan. (Many local government employees currently pay less than 9% of their health care premium, while the average private sector worker pays upwards of 30%.) In addition, employees would be required to pay their personal share of a retirement plan (only 10%), rather than asking taxpayers to pay that share. That's not too much to ask at a time when many private sector workers get no retirement benefit at all. Finally, Issue 2 requires that benefits apply equally to all public employees, so no one gets special treatment.

And another common myth:

> State Issue 2 will eliminate government employee pensions.

The truth:

> Government employees will still get a very generous pension benefit – an annual payment that averages their three highest annual salaries. That's a pretty nice

> deal, when many private sector workers get no retirement benefit at all. State Issue 2 only ends a practice where some government union contracts require taxpayers to pick up the tab for BOTH the employer AND employee shares of a required pension contribution. In this economy, it's simply not right to ask struggling taxpayers to foot the bill so government employees can get a free retirement. Issue 2 simply says government employees should pay their required share (10 percent) and taxpayers will contribute the employer share (14 percent).

Another myth:

> State Issue 2 will cut teacher salaries.

The truth:

> That's one of the scare tactics government unions are using to turn people against these reforms. Nothing in Issue 2 determines salary levels. It only ends the practice of handing out automatic pay raises, or "step" increases, and longevity pay – or bonuses just for holding the job for a certain period of time. Issue 2 also asks that performance be added as a factor in teacher compensation, a goal President Barack Obama set out in his national education policy in 2009.

And another myth:

> State Issue 2 will cost jobs

The truth:

> Just the opposite is true. Ohio's state and local tax burden ranks among the top third in the nation. As a result, companies large and small have left our state in pursuit of better tax incentives elsewhere, taking hundreds of thousands of jobs with them. If Ohio hopes to compete for new job growth, we have to make our state a more affordable place to live, work and do business. That starts with getting the cost of government under control so we can direct more of our limited resources into economic development, community revitalization and better schools.

More myths are corrected on this page.

Newspaper endorsements

So far, Issue 2 has been endorsed by several Ohio newspapers, including the biggest ones.

The Cleveland Plain Dealer:

> *The fiscal picture of local governments and school districts, especially, will improve as they are able to right-size their work forces and their expenditures on services. That will happen over time, not overnight, as new contracts are*

> *established.*
>
> ***Repeal SB 5, though, and it's going to be awfully hard for local governments to manage their payrolls without resorting to larger-scale layoffs than would otherwise be necessary. And local governments will continue to be hamstrung by anti-merit seniority rules that lead to worker complacency and protect dead weight and time-servers.***

Voting YES on Issue 2 will prevent layoffs by keeping public sector wages and benefits in line with what the private sector can afford to pay.

The Columbus Dispatch:

> *Despite the insistence of opponents, the effort to reform Ohio's out-of-balance collective-bargaining law is not an expression of disrespect for or dissatisfaction with Ohio teachers, police officers, firefighters and other government employees. It is a much-needed attempt to restore control over public spending to the public officials elected to exercise that control.*
>
> *It does not assert that public employees are worth less than the compensation they're receiving, only that the compensation has grown faster than the public's ability to pay for it.*
>
> *[…]**With more ability to control the escalation of salary and benefit costs, governments won't be forced as often to impose layoffs, and might be able to afford to keep even more police and firefighters on the streets.***

Again, no one is saying that public sector workers don't matter – the question is whether we can afford to give them better wages and benefits than the private sector workers who are their customers and their employers. Public sector workers work for the public, and the public can only afford to pay so much.

Conclusion

Government employees are paid 43% more than private sector employees, in salary and benefits:

I think that people who care about the long-term prosperity of Ohio should vote "YES" on Issue 2 to make public and private salaries and benefits MORE EQUAL. Ohio is facing enormous economic pressure from the global recession, and everyone has to make sacrifices. Now is not the time for public sector workers to insist on higher wages and benefits, especially when the private sector workers who pay their salaries don't make as much money, nor do they get the pensions, nor do they get the better job security. Ohio voters can certainly go back and renegotiate union salaries and benefits when Ohio is out of the recession.

Click here to learn more about Ohio Issue 2.

Is Herman Cain pro-life? What are Cain's views on abortion and Planned Parenthood?

October 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(Video: Herman Cain's speech at the 2011 National Right to Life Convention)

Let's do analysis this in two parts: 1) what Cain says, and 2) what Cain does.

Life News explains what Cain said about abortion to Piers Morgan that confused people about his pro-life position.

> As LifeNews.com reported, Cain gave an interview to CNN in which he used typical "pro-choice" language about government not making abortion decisions for women that applied, depending on the listener, to either abortions in the case of rape and incest or abortion policy in general. Either way, pro-life advocates have been disappointed today following the comments and they have called on Cain to clarify the comments — which he did in a short message on twitter later in the day saying he is "100% pro-life."
> The statement reads:
> So, basically, Cain was saying that the lay of the land should be that abortion is illegal, and then women will have to get together with their families and decide whether they want to break the law or not, and that it was not Herman Cain's job to be in that discussion. His job would come after in prosecuting the doctors who perform abortions, because he thinks that life begins at conception and the laws should reflect that commitment to protect the unborn.
>
> Yesterday in an interview with Piers Morgan on CNN, I was asked questions about abortion policy and the role of the President.
>
> I understood the thrust of the question to ask whether that I, as president, would simply "order" people to not seek an abortion. My answer was focused on the role of the President. The President has no constitutional authority to order any such action by anyone. That was the point I was trying to convey.
> As to my political policy view on abortion, I am 100% pro-life. End of story.
> I will appoint judges who understand the original intent of the Constitution. Judges who are committed to the rule of law know that the Constitution contains no right to take the life of unborn children.
> I will oppose government funding of abortion. I will veto any legislation that contains funds for Planned Parenthood. I will do everything that a President can do, consistent with his constitutional role, to advance the culture of life.

Here are Cain's exact comments:

> "Whats your view of abortion?" Morgan asks Cain in the interview.
>
> "I believe that life begins at conception and abortion under no circumstances. And here's why," Cain said before Morgan interrupted him and asked, "No

> circumstances?" to which the presidential candidate replied, "No circumstances."
>
> Morgan told Cain that that sets him apart from many other Republican candidates who are pro-life but also believe in exceptions such as rape or incest or the life of the mother. He continued by asking Cain if he would want his daughter or granddaughter, if raped, to keep the baby — which Cain said "was mixing two things."
>
> "It's not the government's role, or anybody else's role to make that decision," Cain responded. "Secondly, if you look at the statistical incidence, you're not talking about that big a number. So what I'm saying is, it ultimately gets down to a choice that that family or that mother has to make. Not me as president. Not some politician, not a bureaucrat. It gets down to that family, and whatever they decide, they decide. I shouldn't have to tell them what decision to make for such a sensitive issue."
>
> Morgan told Cain that his views on the question of abortion are important because he may very well become president someday and turn into public policy.
>
> "Not they don't," Cain said of his views becoming law. "I can have an opinion on an issue without it being a directive on the nation. The government shouldn't be trying to tell people everything to do, especially when it comes to a social decision that they need to make."
>
> Cain finished by saying he agreed with Morgan that his view is a departure from the political norm.

Cain's view is that the government should prohibit abortion, and then you should be left free to decide whether to comply with the law.

Cain's position reminds me of a famous story about the British in India, who were opposed to the Hindu practice of suttee/sati which involves burning widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands. Sir Charles Napier responded to the Hindu custom as follows:

"Be it so. This burning of widows is your custom; prepare the funeral pile. But my nation has also a custom. When men burn women alive we hang them, and confiscate all their property. My carpenters shall therefore erect gibbets on which to hang all concerned when the widow is consumed. Let us all act according to national customs."

(Napier, William. (1851) *History Of General Sir Charles Napier's Administration Of Scinde*, p.35)

That's exactly what Cain's position was, although I think that he would enforce the prohibition on abortion by fining or jailing the doctor who performed the abortion, and eventually the practice would stop, because there would be no money in it. Abortion is all about the money. When you take away the money, people stop providing abortions.

Cain's pro-life record

What has Cain done for the pro-life cause with his own money? Life News explains.

Excerpt:

> With the balance of power in Congress hanging in the air, a leading African American businessman says black voters in the United States should put their historical pro-life values above political party. That means voting for pro-life candidates rather than supporting Democratic candidates across the board.
>
> Herman Cain is best known as the former chairman and CEO of Godfather's Pizza. He is a political commentator and was a candidate for the U.S. Senate.
>
> "More and more African Americans are pro-life," Cain said in a statement LifeNews.com obtained. "Our message to African Americans is simple — it's time you vote for candidates who support our values."
>
> Cain will underscore that message with a $1 million advertising campaign in key states and congressional districts targeting black radio programs and urban radio stations young African Americans enjoy. Some of the ads focus on abortion.

But there's more to his pro-life record than just giving up a million dollars of his own money. He is a pro-life activist.

What has Cain done with pro-life groups? Life News explains.

Excerpt:

> The National Right to Life Committee is today vouching for Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain's bona fides, saying the businessman who is considered by many to be the current GOP frontrunner is pro-life.
>
> NRLC's comments come after a 48-hour period during which Cain has confused pro-life voters where he stands — by first using seemingly pro-abortion language saying government should have no involvement before finally clarifying he is pro-life and saying he wants abortions illegal.
>
> "Herman Cain's pro-life," David O'Steen, executive director of the National Right to Life Committee, told National Review. "He addressed our convention last June. We are quite confident in his pro-life position. When he ran in the primary for senate some years back … he ran as a pro-life candidate then in Georgia. We've known of him for a number of years, and he's always taken a pro-life position."
>
> At that event, Cain, the former businessman and candidate, said the "Founding fathers got it right" including the right to life from conception.
>
> "Don't infringe on the rights of somebody else and that includes the unborn," Cain said of what the Constitution requires.
>
> Cain spent most of his time talking about the moral crisis and lack of God in the cultural conversations in America, saying, "We've got a moral crisis in this nation. One of the reasons we have this moral crisis today is because too many people are trying to take God out of our culture, little by little."
>
> "Those that believe taking the life of the unborn is a choice has gotten away from the Godly principles," he said. "The way we're going to protect the unborn in this

> nation is to work on the right problem, get God back in our culture."
>
> Cain said pro-life advocates must change hearts and then minds will follow and he urged pro-life advocates to do more to promote the work of pregnancy centers.
>
> "Let young women know about alternatives to these so-called Planned Parenthood facilities. We have to inform and educate people and let them know about resources like the one in Dallas Texas where I visited called the Source for Women. When young women show up there, the first option isn't getting an abortion, the first option is counseling to show these young ladies the alternatives to abortion," he said.

Herman Cain's opposition to Planned Parenthood is quite strong. Life News explains. Excerpt:

> During a presentation before a set of conservative bloggers in the nation's capital today, likely Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain, a pro-life businessman, bashed the Planned Parenthood abortion business — which went after him in return.
>
> Cain said he supports revoking the federal taxpayer funding for the abortion business: "I support de-funding Planned Parenthood. "Tactically how [Congress] does it…I can't tell you."
>
> The African-American then went further and talked about the racial overtones behind the founding of the abortion business by Margaret Sanger.
>
> "You probably don't hear a lot of people talking about this," Cain said. "When Margaret Sanger – check my history – started Planned Parenthood, the objective was to put these centers in primarily black communities so they could help kill black babies before they came into the world."
>
> "It's planned genocide. It's carrying out its original mission," he said. "I've talked to young girls who go in there, and they don't talk about how you plan parenthood. They don't talk about adoption as an option. They don't say, 'Well, bring your parents in so we can sit down and talk with you, and counsel with you before you make this decision.'"
>
> […]In January, Cain also went after Planned Parenthood.
>
> He told American Family Radio's "Focal Point" program that he is pro-life and opposes the agenda of Planned Parenthood, the nation's biggest abortion business.
>
> "I absolutely would defund Planned Parenthood — not because I don't believe in planning parenthood, [but because] Planned Parenthood as an organization is an absolute farce on the American people," he said.
>
> Cain, who is African-American, accused the abortion business of engaging in a racist agenda.

> “People who know the history of Margaret Sanger, who started Planned Parenthood, they know that the intention was not to help young women who get pregnant to plan their parenthood. No — it was a sham to be able to kill black babies,” he added.
>
> Cain also talked about his pro-life views in general and alluded to judicial appointments.
>
> “I believe that life begins at conception, period. And that means that I will have to see enough evidence that someone I would appoint shares that same view. I believe that the current Supreme Court is leaning too much to the liberal side,” he said. “I’m a Christian, I’ve been a Christian all my life. I’ve been a believer in the Bible since I was 10 years old. I’m very active in my church, and there is no way I would compromise my religious beliefs about the sanctity of life. And so it starts with, will they have demonstrated in their career, in some of their other rulings, if they come from the federal judge bench, whether or not they also share that.”
>
> “Because I believe that the principles that our Founding Fathers cherished, when they founded this country, and wrote the Declaration of Independence which inspired the Constitution, they were based upon biblical principles. I want to get back to those principles as president, if I run and get elected — not rewrite those documents,” he added.

I do think that Cain needs to be challenged now rather than later to clarify his views and to increase his knowledge. He has a year to do it before the election. Right now he is leading Romney in the national polls, and that’s good, because Mitt Romney’s record has been pro-abortion since 1994 and Mitt Romney refused to sign a pro-life pledge. So, if we have to pick a nominee in 2012, we have to pick Herman Cain over Mitt Romney. But Cain needs to improve his thinking and speaking on pro-life issues to prevent gaffes from occurring that make people think that he isn’t pro-life. His previous words were pro-life, his allies are pro-life, and more importantly, his previous record has been pro-life – right up to use a million dollars to support pro-life causes.

Atheist philosopher: Dawkins refusal to debate is cynical and anti-intellectual

October 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article by atheist Daniel Came about Richard Dawkins' refusal to debate William Lane Craig was published today in the UK Guardian. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> In his latest undignified rant, Dawkins claims that it is because Craig is "an apologist for genocide" that he won't share a platform with him. Dawkins is referring to Craig's defence of God's commandment in Deuteronomy 20: 15-17 to wipe out the Canannites. Here is Craig's offending passage:
>
> > "[If] God's grace is extended to those who die in infancy or as small children, the death of [the Canannite] children was actually their salvation. We are so wedded to an earthly, naturalistic perspective that we forget that those who die are happy to quit this earth for heaven's incomparable joy. Therefore, God does these children no wrong in taking their lives."
>
> I am disinclined to defend the God of the Old Testament's infanticide policy. But as a matter of logic, Craig is probably right: if an infinite good is made possible by a finite evil, then it might reasonably be said that that evil has been offset. However, I doubt whether Craig would be guided by logic himself in this regard and conduct infanticide. I doubt, that is, that he would wish it to be adopted as a general moral principle that we should massacre children because they will receive immediate salvation.
>
> But whatever you make of Craig's view on this issue, it is irrelevant to the question of whether or not God exists. Hence it is quite obvious that Dawkins is opportunistically using these remarks as a smokescreen to hide the real reasons for his refusal to debate with Craig – which has a history that long predates Craig's comments on the Canaanites.

There is a lot more in the article that is worth reading, including a quick review of Dawkin's "The God Delusion" that echoes Craig's own comments. I don't mind that atheists think atheism is true, and that theism is irrational. That's their view, and they are entitled to hold it and speak it and teach it. But I think that Came is right to say that they should also be willing to defend it in public. Dawkins is clearly not willing to defend his views, and that tells me that he has no reasons to believe them.

Please read my earlier post about Dawkins' editorial in the UK Guardian. It contains a response to Dawkins' attack on Craig, an analysis of Craig's qualifications, an assessment of Dawkins' ability to debate, and a previous debate between Craig and prominent atheist

Christopher Hitchens.

Justin Brierley interviews William Lane Craig on the apologetics project

October 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Justin Brierley has posted an interview with William Lane Craig in the UK magazine "Christianity". (H/T Mary)

Here's the introduction:

> Type 'William Lane Craig' into Google and you find some surprisingly varied views. For example, you'll find Rick Warren tweeting about his 'friend' for whom he has written a recent foreword, and other Christian leaders praising an academic who combines intellect with humility. On the other hand, you may come across Richard Dawkins labelling him a 'ponderous buffoon' along with other commentators on his atheist website who describe Craig in even more colourful terms.
>
> So what is it about one American philosophy professor that inspires such divergent views? Craig is arguably the best known defender of the intellectual case for Christianity in the world today. As a philosopher, his work is published in academic journals and books. As a popular apologist for the existence of God, his high-profile debates with leading atheists have been viewed by hundreds of thousands around the world. His style is polished, systematic and devastatingly thorough.
>
> To his fans he is the commander-in-chief of a resistance movement against the populist New Atheism – the man who can floor Goliaths such as Christopher Hitchens and Sam Harris. To his detractors, he is a wordsmith and a showman – a professional debater who, to quote Richard Dawkins, 'brandishes impressive-sounding syllogisms from Logic 101 to bamboozle his faithhead audience'.
>
> To me, he comes across as sincere, humble and somewhat bemused by the opinions that are expressed about him online. Is he affected by the words that some atheists write about him? Laughing, he responds: 'It doesn't get to me because I don't read it. I am in blissful ignorance of what these folks are saying about me.'
>
> So why is Richard Dawkins even bothering to comment on William Lane Craig? It is because he has refused multiple invitations to debate Craig when he comes to the UK this October. They met once briefly in a panel debate in Mexico in 2010, an encounter that led to those online comments. Craig's supporters (and many of his opponents) would like to see a more substantive one-on-one debate, but Dawkins has resolutely refused to face the philosopher again.
>
> To Craig, it is a confirmation that 'New Atheism' is more bluster than substance. 'I would describe it as a pop culture movement, rather than a serious intellectual

> one. But as pop culture I do take it very seriously. They have the momentum, and it's very important that we as Christians expose it for the superficiality that it is.'

Here's are a few of the questions he answers:

You've debated leading atheists all over the world. What is your ultimate hope in participating in these events?

Well, one hope is to help to reshape Western culture, which has become deeply secularised, so that Christianity becomes an intellectual option again. I hope especially to reach out to British students seeking for truth and to show that making a commitment to Christ is not a delusion, but perfectly in step with the dictates of reason.

Is this a biblical approach to evangelism?

I think so, especially in Acts. Paul would argue from the scriptures with his Jewish brethren that Jesus was the Messiah. When dealing with a Gentile audience he would present reasons from nature and conscience, moral and cosmological arguments, and appeal to the eyewitness testimony of Jesus' resurrection. Paul would do things like rent the Hall of Tyrannus and hold daily lectures there to argue and discuss with anybody who wanted to come. So I see myself as very much following the model of Paul.

Are local churches failing young people by not preparing them for the tough questions they run into at university?

I think we are failing them. If we simply read our children Bible stories and give them entertainment and emotional worship experiences, then we are leaving them unprepared for the tremendous intellectual challenges that they will encounter in secondary school and university. I think it is vital that from an early age Christian parents teach their children to think 'Christianly' about the world, and to articulate and defend what we as Christians believe.

Do you see people becoming Christians through your ministry?

We really do. It happens when I speak on a university campus… people will register commitments through comment cards at the meetings, and there are also the wonderful emails that we receive weekly from people all around the world saying 'Thank you, thank you, thank you, this has transformed my life.' Added to that is the effect that this has had in the lives of people who are Christian believers. Once they become confident that this is really the truth, it has an energising effect on them that makes them want to share the gospel. It gives them a zeal for God and a desire to read his word and know him.

I really recommend you read the whole thing. I hope that we are making more scholars like Craig, because Christian scholarship is the best defense to the secularism that threatens to suffocate Christianity once and for all. I really do think that the church has to get serious about motivating and funding scholars like Craig, and not just in the area of philosophy, but in all the areas that are relevant to the task of apologetics. I think that young Christians should choose to study areas that are relevant to the task of apologetics, especially, science, history and philosophy. That's where the action is.

About William Lane Craig

William Lane Craig is currently conducting a debating and speaking tour of the UK, with stops at Oxford, Cambridge, London and points in between.

Let's review William Lane Craig's qualifications:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

Here are some of Craig's recent publications: (it's a little out of date, now)

From 2007:

- Ed. with Quentin Smith. *Einstein, Relativity, and Absolute Simultaneity*. Routledge Studies in Contemporary Philosophy. London: Routledge, 2007, 302 pp.
- "Theistic Critiques of Atheism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, pp. 69-85. Ed. M. Martin. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- "The Metaphysics of Special Relativity: Three Views." In *Einstein, Relativity, and Absolute Simultaneity*, pp. 11-49. Ed. Wm. L. Craig and Quentin Smith. Routledge Studies in Contemporary Philosophy. London: Routledge, 2007.
- "Creation and Divine Action." In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* pp. 318-28. Ed. Chad Meister and Paul Copan. London: Routledge, 2007.

From 2008:

- *God and Ethics: A Contemporary Debate*. With Paul Kurtz. Ed. Nathan King and Robert Garcia. With responses by Louise Antony, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, John Hare, Donald Hubin, Stephen Layman, Mark Murphy, and Richard Swinburne.

Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.
- "Time, Eternity, and Eschatology." In *The Oxford Handbook on Eschatology*, pp. 596-613. Ed. J. Walls. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

From 2009:

- Ed. with J. P. Moreland. *Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- "The *Kalam* Cosmological Argument." With James Sinclair. In *Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*. Ed. Wm. L. Craig and J. P. Moreland. Oxford: Blackwell.
- "In Defense of Theistic Arguments." In *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath and Daniel Dennett in Dialogue*. Ed. Robert Stewart. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Forthcoming:

- "The Cosmological Argument." In *Philosophy of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Issues*. Ed. Paul Copan and Chad Meister. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- "Cosmological Argument"; "Middle Knowledge." In *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Ed. G. Fergusson *et al*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- "Divine Eternity." In *Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*. Ed. Thomas Flint and Michael Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Craig has debated dozens of times against the top atheist scholars. If you have never taken in any of his debates, take a look at his debate against Christopher Hitchens on Youtube.

UK Independent joins UK Guardian in call for Dawkins to debate Craig

October 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A call for Richard Dawkins to debate William Lane Craig, from the other major secular-left UK newspaper. (H/T Michael & Czar Berstein)

Excerpt:

> William Lane Craig is a formidable debater. He has done battle with celebrity academic atheists including Lawrence Krauss, Lewis Wolpert, Peter Atkins, and Sam Harris. Not long after his exchange with the philosopher Anthony Flew, perhaps the leading atheist thinker of the late 20th century, Flew converted, if not to Christianity, to deism. Harris described Craig as "the one Christian apologist who has put the fear of God into many of my fellow atheists".
>
> Christopher Hitchens said: "I can tell you that my brothers and sisters in the unbelieving community take him very seriously. He's thought of as a very tough guy: very rigorous, very scholarly, very formidable." After a debate in which the two locked horns, one US atheist website pronounced: "Craig was flawless and unstoppable. Hitchens was rambling and incoherent, with the occasional rhetorical jab. Frankly, Craig spanked Hitchens like a foolish child."
>
> William Lane Craig is the Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in California. He is a conservative evangelical, but he is smart, with a doctorate in philosophy from Birmingham and one in theology from Munich. He has developed such a reputation that when he began a 10-day speaking tour of Britain on Monday he drew an audience of 1,700 at the cavernous Central Hall in Westminster.
>
> The titles of his UK lectures give a clue to his breadth: "Does God Exist?", "Can We be Good without God?", "The Origins of the Universe – Has Stephen Hawking Eliminated God?", "The Historicity of Jesus's Resurrection". He is unafraid to range across ontological theology and moral philosophy and talks with ease about new developments in cosmology, mathematics and physics. He has a ready command of easy analogy and can be funny. He is a million miles away from the evangelical rhetoric that amuses and bemuses our secularist and modernist establishment. Proof, he says, is not about scientific or mathematical certainty; it is about a cogent and logical argument which is more plausible than what opponents argue.
>
> This is not the style of the Dawkinsites' preferred adversaries. Their debating techniques tend to be catalogues of religion's historical atrocities, coupled with psychological sideswipes about the Tooth Fairy and Father Christmas. Dawkins in the past has been notable for seeking out extreme oddball fundamentalists. He and his followers routinely erect a straw man – defining religion in ways

> unrecognisable to many mainstream believers – and then knock their caricature to the ground. But Craig is an opponent of a different calibre who focuses ruthlessly on failures of internal logic in his rivals' arguments.
>
> What is striking to the outsider is the ad hominem abuse that has been hurled his way. Dawkins has blogged of his "almost visceral loathing" of Craig's "odiously unctuous, smug and self-satisfied tone of voice". Craig, he says, is a "deeply unimpressive… ponderous buffoon" who uses "chopped logic" for "bamboozling his faith-head audience". On Dawkins's website his supporters have called Craig a "debased freak" and "snakeoil salesman".

The writer of this article not so much sympathetic with Craig as he is disappointed with Dawkins for not being willing to debate and defeat Craig. I think that most of the atheists on the Richards Dawkins site have never heard Craig's arguments, otherwise, they would be pointing out the flaws in them and linking to evidence. When someone dodges what I am saying and instead insults me personally, I think it's fair to assume that they don't have a case against me based on substance. If they had substance, they would argue substance.

The UK Guardian article denouncing Dawkins for cowardice is here. The conservative UK Telegraph explicitly called Dawkins a fool or a coward for not debating Craig. But I don't think it's going to happen, because Dawkins is a coward. That's just what he is. And I think he isn't even intelligent enough to lose as badly as Hitchens did – it would be a much worse defeat for atheism. The man has never expressed any substantial arguments for atheism in any of his books – it was always just bile. And I never saw William Lane Craig's publications or those of any other major Christian thinker referenced in the footnotes of his books – he is oblivious to the arguments on the other side.

My response to Dawkins' refusal to debate Craig is here. In it, I go over Craig's qualifications, Dawkins' reason for not debating him, and link to Craig's debate with Christopher Hitchens.

Audio, summary and review of William Lane Craig vs. Stephen Law debate

October 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You can also download the audio at Apologetics 315.

Scorecard:

Craig's case:

- The origin of the universe: Law had no response.
- The moral argument: Law denied that there are objective moral values.
- The resurrection argument: Law told a story about a UFO sighting.

Law's case:

- The evidential argument from evil: Law later denied that evil existed, thus undermining his entire argument. Christian theists DON'T consider it evil when people suffer, if that suffering is necessary in order to get people to know God. We don't agree with Law's definition of evil that "people suffering" is automatically evil – because there can be a morally sufficient reason why that suffering is allowed by God to happen, since his goal is not our happiness but for us to know him. Law was not able to show how we know that God doesn't have a morally sufficient reason to permit the evils we do see. And he has to prove that in order to assert (in his premise 1) that gratuitous evil exists. How does he know that? How does he know that some specific instance of evil is pointless for the purpose of improve the knowledge of God overall? The one good thing that Law did was to press Craig to defend his premise that if God doesn't exist, then objective moral values also don't exist. Craig did talk about how if there is no God, then morality is just a herd morality that evolves by accident, though.

Final score: 3 to 0 for Craig. Law was better than Craig's average opponent though, for all the snarky things I might say about him, below.

Below is the snarky summary of the debate. I sometimes paraphrase entire sentences and insert commentary in order to explain what's going on without the spin.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

Two contentions:

C1) There are good reasons to think that God exists.
C2) There are no good reasons to think that God does not exist.

Arguments for the existence of God.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. Whatever begins to exist requires a cause.

2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe requires a cause.

The beginning of the universe is confirmed by philosophy and science.

An actual infinite number of past events is impossible. The concept of an actual infinite is mathematically unintelligible for the operations of subtraction and division.

Cosmologists have now proven that any universe that is now in a state of expansion must have begun to exist, independent of any physical description of the model. Even speculative alternatives to the current Big Bang model require a beginning at some point.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The moral argument.

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a “herd morality” that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional.

Dr. Law affirms objective morality in his written work (but can he ground it on atheism?).

In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God’s existence by pointing to the “evil” in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values, in order to make the charge. Therefore, it is impossible to complain about the evil in the world without assuming the existence of God.

A3) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum; the empty tomb, the post-mortem appearances of Jesus, the early belief in the resurrection of Jesus.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

Craig’s opponent thinks that Jesus never existed, a position that virtually no historian holds.

Stephen Law’s opening statement:

A1) The evidential argument from evil

1. Gratuitous evil exists.
2. God would be able to remove evil, would know about the evil, and would want to remove gratuitous evil.
3. It is implausible that God exists.

There are moral evil actions committed by agents
There are natural evils like earthquake.

Animals suffer. e.g. – from being eaten by other animals.
Humans suffer, e.g. – from disease.

Craig's cosmological argument does prove that a Creator exists, but the evidential argument from evil proves that this Creator is not good.

If the Creator really were good, then we would all be spared from all suffering, both physical and mental, because God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing anyone to suffer. God, if he existed, would prevent humans from committing moral evil by removing our free will. God would also prevent us from having any unhappy feelings caused by natural evil.

A2) Theodicies offered by Christians fail

Freedom Will Theodicy: An evil God might like to allow humans to have free will.

Laws of Nature: An evil God might like to have laws of nature to allow predictable consequences.

Afterlife compensation: An evil God might like an evil afterlife to make us suffer more.

Craig's first rebuttal:

RA1) Law's evidential argument from evil fails

The mere presence of evil is not a problem if God has morally sufficient reasons for permitting instances of evil. Since Dr. Law is making the claim that God would not allow the evil, then he has to bear the burden of proof for showing that there is no morally sufficient reason for God to permit evil and sufering.

The purpose of life on the Christian view is not merely to have happy feelings. The purpose of life on the Christian view is coming to know God and having a relationship with him. Many evils that are not good for giving us happy feelings may be good for getting us to think seriously about whether God is there and what to do to have a relationship with him.

Theists don't infer the goodness of God because they survey the universe and find lots of good things. They infer the goodness of God based on the mere fact that they are aware of an objective moral standard of good and evil, and inalienable human rights, and they identify God as the source of that standard of Good and evil. Those things cannot exist unless there is a God to ground an objective standard of right and wrong. Since the source of the standard is God's own unchanging nature, he cannot act in a way that is evil.

Moral evil actually proves the existence of God. If Dr. Law claims that there is moral evil, then he has to have an objective moral standard that allows the distinction between good and evil. The only way to make an objective distinction between good and evil is if there is a Design for the universe that determines what is good and evil. And a design for the universe requires a Designer of the universe.

With respect to animal suffering, any ecosystem require predators in order to control population. For example, in Canada, Canadians have had to reintroduce wolves into the ecosystem in order to cull the populations of caribou, which was de-stabilizing the ecosystem. Since humans depend on the existence of these animals, God has to allow these predators in order to balance the ecosystem.

Animals do not suffer pain the same way as humans do, research shows that although they suffer pain, they are not aware of that suffering in the way that humans are. Once you understand the biology of animals, you understand that they do not experience pain the same way as humans.

Law's first rebuttal:

Craig thinks that you need an objective standard in order to judge things as objectively good or evil. But that's false. I can use my subjective opinions to claim that some things are objective evil. If God doesn't do what I like (prevent moral and natural evil), then he isn't objectively good. I don't need to buy into the notion of objective good and evil in order to say that something is good or evil. I can say that something is good or evil while denying the existence of objective good and evil. (IMPORTANT NOTE: DR. LAW HAS AT THIS POINT RETRACTED HIS SUPPORT FOR OBJECTIVE MORAL VALUES, WHICH MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO EMPLOY THE EVIDENTIAL ARGUMENT FROM EVIL)

Dr. Craig says that I think that people determine the goodness or evilness of God by counting good things and evil things. But that's false. My argument is that people determine the goodness or evilness of God by counting good things and evil things. It's completely different!The presence of good things undermines the existence of evil God, and the existence of evil things undermines the existence of good God.

Craig's second rebuttal:

Dr. Law has not yet responded to any of the 3 arguments for God's existence.

A1) No response to the argument from the origin of the universe. How can you admit to a Creator of the universe and still be an atheist? His argument from evil doesn't refute a supernatural cause of the universe.

A2) Dr. Law is now denying that objective moral values exist, contrary to his written work. This means that he is not able to use the terms "good" and "evil" intelligibly. He is merely expressing his subjective opinions, and therefore he cannot press the evidential argument from evil, because there is no such thing as evil, objectively speaking, on his view. It's just his personal preference.

A3) No response to the argument concerning the resurrection.

RA1) He has to show that God doesn't have morally sufficient reasons for permitting the

evils we see. He admits that he can't.

He says that the world is morally ambiguous and you can't infer the goodness of God by counting the amount of evil and good in the world, just like you can't infer the evilness of God by counting the amount of evil and good in the world. And that's correct, and theists don't infer God's goodness by counting good and evil instances. The point is that if you can't infer God's goodness or evilness by counting instances of good or evil, then you can't infer that God isn't good, because you don't know whether God has a morally sufficient reason for permitting the evils that we see. And it's the atheist's burden of proof to show that God DOESN'T have a morally sufficient reason, and Dr. Law is unable to do that.

Dr. Law says that you don't need to have a standard of good and evil to press the problem of pain and suffering. But if you deny that there is any good or evil independent of pain and suffering, then you can't impugn God's goodness because you don't have a standard in place to say that gratuitous pain and suffering is evil.

Any event that occurs in history can have effects far into the future or in another country. Physicists understand that small effects can trigger results that cannot be foreseen. And what this means is that humans are simply not in a position to know whether God has a moral sufficient reason for permitting specific instances of evil.

Finally, the purpose of life on the Christian view is not to have happy feelings and be free from suffering. God's purpose for us is to know him and to be rightly related to him. Many instances of evil may be pointless for making people feel good, but may be effective for drawing people towards God.

Law's second rebuttal:

RA2) The vast majority of philosophers reject the moral argument, for example Richard Swinburne. (No reasoning for the denial is explained, just the denial of the argument's effectiveness by citing Richard Swinburne as an authority). This is a fallacy of arguing from an authority.

Dr. Craig has to prove that no atheistic account of morality can be given. He has disprove them all, even the ones that no one has thought of yet. It's not my job, AS THE ATHEIST, to prove that I can give an account of objective truth of moral claims can be given ON ATHEISM. I don't have to do anything except stand here and speculate about some possible account of morality on atheism and I win.

The existence of objective moral values is not obvious to me. I.e. – I don't see anything objectively wrong with torturing babies for fun, it's a matter of opinion. I also don't see anything evil about those things that I said were evil in my first speech. I was just kidding, people, can't you take a joke? It just seems to some people like Dr. Craig that there are objective moral values, but actually there aren't. Dr. Craig merely wants to believe that evil is real, but actually it isn't. Except when I want to argue that it is in in my evidential argument FROM EVIL.

RA3) Although the majority of ancient historians accept the historicity of the empty tomb because of the early sources, multiple attestation, enemy attestation etc., the tomb was

not empty because of this story I'm going to tell about a UFO.

Although virtually all ancient historians accept the post-mortem appearances because of the early sources, multiple attestation, etc., the post-mortem appearances did not occur because of this story I'm going to tell about a UFO.

Although virtually all ancient historians accept the early belief that Jesus was bodily resurrected because of the early sources, multiple attestation, etc., the early belief that Jesus was bodily resurrected did not occur because of this story I'm going to tell about a UFO.

Craig's final rebuttal:

A1) Dr. Law accepts that the universe was created by an eternal, non-material, uncaused being. What a strange sort of atheist, who admits that there exists a supernatural Creator of the universe.

A2) Dr. Law employed the fallacy of arguing from authority. But Dr. Craig can cite a much longer list of atheists who agree that if God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist, e.g. – Nietzche, Russell, Sartre, Mackie, etc. Consistent atheists understand that if there is no God, there is no design for how the universe ought to be (natural evil), or how we ought to be (moral evil).

A3) We have to be careful when inferring a supernatural explanation and use objective criteria. All natural explanations fail to explain the full set of minimal facts that virtually all historians accept. In addition, the resurrection takes place within a religio-historical context where one might expect God to intervene if what Jesus was saying was true.

RA1) You can't disprove God's goodness by appealing to instances of evil, nor can you disprove God's evilness by appealing to instances of good. This is because humans are not in a position to assess the ripple effects of permitting any instance of evil (good). It is therefore possible and inscrutable as to whether God has a morally sufficient reason for permitting any and all instances of apparent evil (good).

Dr. Law's final rebuttal:

A2) There is a lot of pain and suffering in the history of the world. This is a challenge to God's goodness because God's purpose for us is to make us happy, and not at all for us to know him or for us to be related to him, as the Bible says.

Here's my argument. Craig thinks that you can determine God's goodness by counting instances of good and evil in the world, although he explicitly denies that. And I've actually done the counting and found that you can't determine God's goodness because there's too much gratuitous evil. Never mind what Craig said about the ripple effect through time and space, or about chaos theory, or about morally sufficient reasons. These instances of gratuitous evil I'm telling you about have no morally sufficient reasons, in any time or in any place. Trust me, I looked everywhere and in the future, using my time machine.

Now, in my argument, when I said the word evil, I don't really mean evil, because to use an objective standard of good and evil, I would have to have a moral lawgiver to ground

that objective standard. So when I say moral and natural evil, I don't mean moral and natural evil, I actually mean things that I don't personally like. So I'm going to change my argument's name to the Evidential Argument From Things That I Find Yucky.

Dr. Craig provided no justification for his premise that "if there is no God, there there are no objective moral values". And it's not my job to produce an atheistic theory about how objective moral values could exist, especially since my argument from evil relies on objective moral values.

A3) UFOs.

Merril Lynch analyst: U.S. credit rating likely to be downgraded again

October 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Reuters. (H/T Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> The United States will likely suffer the loss of its triple-A credit rating from another major rating agency by the end of this year due to concerns over the deficit, Bank of America Merrill Lynch forecasts.
>
> The trigger would be a likely failure by Congress to agree on a credible long-term plan to cut the U.S. deficit, the bank said in a research note published on Friday.
>
> A second downgrade — either from Moody's or Fitch — would follow Standard & Poor's downgrade in August on concerns about the government's budget deficit and rising debt burden. A second loss of the country's top credit rating would be an additional blow to the sluggish U.S. economy, Merrill said.
>
> "The credit rating agencies have strongly suggested that further rating cuts are likely if Congress does not come up with a credible long-run plan" to cut the deficit, Merrill's North American economist, Ethan Harris, wrote in the report.
>
> "Hence, we expect at least one credit downgrade in late November or early December when the super committee crashes," he added.
>
> The bipartisan congressional committee formed to address the deficit — known as the "super committee" — needs to break an impasse between Republicans and Democrats in order to reach a deal to reduce the U.S. deficit by at least $1.2 trillion by November 23.
>
> If a majority of the 12-member committee fails to agree on a plan, $1.2 trillion in automatic spending cuts will be triggered, beginning in 2013.

What I am hearing from my sources is that the debt super-committee is not doing well at all on deciding on the cuts that everyone agreed were needed to raise the debt ceiling. I really do not feel good about the defense cuts, given what I am hearing about new Russian and Chinese 4th generation fighters. This is going to put a lot of pressure on our military if things go badly in Afghanistan and Iraq.

One day of substitute teaching qualifies union lobbyists for teacher pensions

October 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Chicago Tribune. (H/T Marathon Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Two lobbyists with no prior teaching experience were allowed to count their years as union employees toward a state teacher pension once they served a single day of subbing in 2007, a Tribune/WGN-TV investigation has found.
>
> Steven Preckwinkle, the political director for the Illinois Federation of Teachers, and fellow union lobbyist David Piccioli were the only people who took advantage of a small window opened by lawmakers a few months earlier.
>
> The legislation enabled union officials to get into the state teachers pension fund and count their previous years as union employees after quickly obtaining teaching certificates and working in a classroom. They just had to do it before the bill was signed into law.
>
> Preckwinkle's one day of subbing qualified him to become a participant in the state teachers pension fund, allowing him to pick up 16 years of previous union work and nearly five more years since he joined. He's 59, and at age 60 he'll be eligible for a state pension based on the four-highest consecutive years of his last 10 years of work.
>
> His paycheck fluctuates as a union lobbyist, but pension records show his earnings in the last school year were at least $245,000. Based on his salary history so far, he could earn a pension of about $108,000 a year, more than double what the average teacher receives.
>
> […]Over the course of their lifetimes, both men stand to receive more than a million dollars each from a state pension fund that has less than half of the assets it needs to cover promises made to tens of thousands of public school teachers. With billions of dollars in unfunded liabilities, the Illinois Teachers' Retirement System, which serves public school teachers outside of Chicago, is one of several pension plans that are in debt as state government reels in a fiscal crisis.

This is why we need to rein these unions. Not only do they not provide quality educations for poor students in the inner city, but they are corrupt and wasteful.

If you missed my post on Ohio State Issue 2, then you should read it here.

Christian demoted for expressing disagreement with same-sex marriage

October 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail, worrying news about the state of free speech in the UK. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Mr Smith has worked for 18 years for Trafford Council and Trafford Housing Trust, which manages more than 9,000 homes in Sale, Greater Manchester.
>
> But he now finds his career in tatters over a comment he wrote on his personal Facebook page one Sunday morning in response to a BBC story headlined 'Gay church "marriages" get go-ahead'. The story referred to Government plans to lift the ban on homosexual couples holding civil partnerships in churches and other religious settings.
>
> Mr Smith, whose Facebook profile identified him as working for the Trust as a housing manager, commented: 'An equality too far.'
>
> A few hours later, one of his Facebook friends, a work colleague whose identity is not known to The Mail on Sunday, posted: 'Does this mean you don't approve?'
>
> The following evening after work, Mr Smith, who attends an evangelical church in Bolton, responded: 'No, not really. I don't understand why people who have no faith and don't believe in Christ would want to get hitched in church.
>
> […]Mr Smith was disciplined after a second colleague complained to the Trust's 'equality and diversity lead', Helen Malone.
>
> A few days later, Mr Smith was summoned from his home to a meeting at the Trust's headquarters in Sale, where he was told he was being suspended while the complaint was investigated.
>
> He was warned that even though his Facebook page could be viewed only by registered friends, rather than by the general public, those readers included colleagues who had taken issue with his comments.
>
> A shocked Mr Smith, who managed a team looking after local housing issues, immediately removed the reference to where he worked from the page.
>
> The following month he was called to a disciplinary meeting before Mike Corfield, the Trust's Assistant Director, Customers. Although Mr Smith was allowed to put his case, insiders described the meeting as 'tense and fraught'.
>
> According to legal documents lodged at Manchester County Court, Debbie Gorman, a 'neighbourhood manager' also at the meeting, said Mr Smith's comment could cause offence.
>
> She said she had interpreted it as saying 'gay people are not as equal as people

> who are not gay' and that the comment could be viewed as homophobic.
>
> Mr Corfield said it was not the comment but its potential misinterpretation that was at issue, but still ruled that Mr Smith had committed a serious breach of discipline for which he could be dismissed.
>
> But because of his loyal service, Mr Smith was instead demoted to money support adviser, handling rent collection. His pay was reduced to £21,396, phased in over a year, and he was given a final written warning.
>
> Mr Smith has been advised he cannot speak to the press, but his solicitor Tom Ellis, of Aughton Ainsworth in Manchester, said: 'Adrian was shocked and distressed to have been disciplined in this way. He never expected this to happen – it came completely out of the blue.

When people on the secular left talk about tolerance, equality and diversity, this is what they mean. You can't even make a comment on your on personal Facebook page without being censored by state for thought crime.

The fact is that gay rights and religious liberty are on a legal collision course. (H/T Ruth Blog)

Excerpt:

> When the relationships of "gay people" need societal validation, some of them, at least, have made it clear that it's not all that wrong to stop dissenters from living according to their beliefs.
>
> "There can be a conflict between religious liberty and sexual liberty, but in almost all cases, the sexual liberty should win because that's the only way that the dignity of gay people can be affirmed in any realistic manner," said sexual activist and former ACLU attorney Chai Feldblum before President Obama appointed her to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, where she now has power to try to enforce that view. "I'm having a hard time coming up with any case in which religious liberty should win," she said.
>
> Indeed, isn't this the reason that the religious liberty exemptions in the New York marriage redefinition bill don't include conscience exceptions for individuals or businesses? The idea is that everyone must accept the newly imposed values and live accordingly. A wedding photographer who can't in good conscience use her artistic expression to make a same-sex ceremony look good as part of her creative work will be regarded no differently than the racist behind the lunch counter who doesn't want to serve blacks. As Feldblum explained in *The Brooklyn Law Review*:
>
>> Just as we do not tolerate private racial beliefs that adversely affect African-Americans in the commercial arena, even if such beliefs are based on religious views, we should similarly not tolerate private beliefs about sexual orientation and gender identity that adversely affect LGBT

> people.

And if you're a New York clerk who has a problem of conscience with issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples, Gov. Andrew Cuomo says you need to give up your job, despite New York law that states otherwise. After all, as one Albany law professor who apparently doesn't bat an eye about putting this on par with racism says, "There is just not a good legal argument that you have the right to discriminate."

So if you've been on the fence about protecting marriage—wondering how someone else's same-sex "marriage" will affect your marriage—now you've got a good bit of the answer: if you're part of the 62 percent of Americans who believe marriage should be defined only as the union of a man and a woman, prepare to be regarded as the Ku Klux Klan member next door—and for your children to be taught the same perspective at your local government-run school. As a post titled "Can We Please Just Start Admitting That We *Do* Actually Want To Indoctrinate Kids?" on the Queerty website put it:

> They accuse us of exploiting children and in response we say, "NOOO! We're not gonna make kids learn about homosexuality, we swear! It's not like we're trying to recruit your children or anything." But let's face it—that's a lie. We want educators to teach future generations of children to accept queer sexuality. In fact, our very future depends on it.

The message is frequently that recognition for same-sex unions will have no effect on those who disagree with them, but the evidence clearly says otherwise. As Princeton politics professor Robert P. George notes, "once one buys into ideology of sexual liberalism, the reality that has traditionally been denominated as 'marriage' loses all intelligibility . . . one will come to regard one's allegiance to sexual liberalism as a mark of urbanity and sophistication, and will likely find oneself looking down on those 'ignorant,' 'intolerant,' 'bigoted' people—those hicks and rubes—who refuse to get 'on the right side of history.'"

And let this be a lesson to all of you who don't have aliases, and who do have your colleagues who can see your comments on sites like Facebook. Don't be surprised when things like this happen to you.

Obama’s decision to retreat in Iraq is a disaster for American foreign policy

October 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let’s see what everyone thinks about Obama’s decision withdraw 40,000 troops from Iraq, effectively handing control of much of the Middle East to Iran.

Disregards the advice of his own generals

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> No doubt this will be politically popular—at least in the short-term. Mr. Obama can say he honored a campaign pledge, Congress will move to spend the money on domestic programs, and a war-weary American public will be relieved to carry fewer overseas burdens. Or at least Americans will feel such relief as long as this total withdrawal doesn’t cost the hard-fought political and strategic gains that our intervention has won.
>
> There are serious risks in this complete withdrawal. Iraq has made great progress in providing its own security, with some 600,000 Iraqi troops gradually taking the handoff from U.S. forces. But the Iraqis still lack vital military assets in intelligence and logistics, not to mention naval and air power. Mr. Obama said the U.S. will continue to discuss “how we might help Iraq train and equip its forces,” but this is no substitute for a more robust, long-term presence of the kind we retain in South Korea and Japan 60 years after the end of the Korean War.
>
> The U.S. commander in Iraq, General Lloyd Austin, had requested between 15,000 and 18,000 troops, before reducing it to 10,000 under pressure. Such a U.S. presence would reassure Iraq and its neighbors of our continuing commitment to the region. It would help play the role of honest broker among Iraq’s ethnic factions as it continues to build a more durable political system.
>
> And above all it would reduce Iran’s ability to meddle in Iraq, building local militias on the Hezbollah model with a goal of making its neighbor a Shiite vassal state. Iran’s Quds force—the same outfit that wanted to assassinate a Saudi ambassador on U.S. soil—is the biggest winner from Mr. Obama’s pullout.

Bungled negotiations

From Foreign Policy magazine. (H/T The Washington Post)

Excerpt:

> “Iraq is not a normal country, the security environment is not normal, the embassy is not a normal embassy,” said **Marisa Cochrane Sullivan**, managing director at the Institute for the Study of War, who traveled to Iraq this summer

> and has been sounding the alarm about what she saw as the mishandling of the negotiations ever since.
>
> For more evidence that the administration actually wanted to extend the troop presence in Iraq, despite today's words by Obama and McDonough, one only has to look at the statements of Defense Secretary **Leon Panetta**.
>
> In July, Panetta urged Iraqi leaders to, "Dammit, make a decision" about the U.S. troop extension. In August, he told reporters that, "My view is that they finally did say, 'Yes.'" On Oct. 17, he was still pushing for the extension and said, "At the present time I'm not discouraged because we're still in negotiations with the Iraqis."
>
> Sullivan was one of 40 conservative foreign policy professionals who wrote to Obama in September to warn that even a residual force of 4,000 troops would "leave the country more vulnerable to internal and external threats, thus imperiling the hard-fought gains in security and governance made in recent years at significant cost to the United States."
>
> She said that the administration's negotiating strategy was flawed for a number of reasons: it failed to take into account Iraqi politics, failed to reach out to a broad enough group of Iraqi political leaders, and sent contradictory messages on the troop extension throughout the process.
>
> "From the beginning, the talks unfolded in a way where they largely driven by domestic political concerns, both in Washington and Baghdad. Both sides let politics drive the process, rather than security concerns," said Sullivan.

Emboldens Syria and their puppet-master, Iran

From National Review.

Excerpt:

> The announcement of our total withdrawal comes just weeks after the revelation of an Iranian plot to execute the Saudi ambassador to the U.S. on our soil. It comes as Iran's key Arab ally, the Assad regime in Syria, is rocked by a revolt. Just as Tehran's dangerousness is put in stark relief and as events in Syria threaten to deal it a strategic setback, it gets this windfall.
>
> […][Obama's] commanders on the ground wanted to keep more than 20,000 troops in Iraq (the administration had bid this number down to several thousand, perhaps convincing Iraqi political players that cutting a painful deal on immunity wouldn't have enough of a corresponding upside). Such a force would have enhanced our political leverage in Baghdad, checked Iran's already considerable influence, ensured against a return of al-Qaeda, and helped keep a lid on Arab–Kurdish tensions in the north. Now, we'll simply have to hope for the best. Deputy National Security Advisor Dennis McDonough said Iraq is "secure, stable, and self-reliant." It is none of these things. Its government is still inchoate and it is not capable of defending itself from Iran in the air or on the ground.

> Our pullout is a bonanza for Tehran. Its militias were already active in Iraq. Now, it can use Iraq for bases for its proxy forces to spread its tentacles in the rest of the Persian Gulf. Independent ayotollahs in Iraq will have an incentive to keep their heads down. Political decisions of the Iranian-influenced Shiite bloc running the country are sure to begin to tilt more and more Iran's way. Our diplomatic leverage will diminish, even as maintain our largest embassy in the world in Baghdad. The Iranians will crow in Iraq and throughout the region that they were right that the Americans would eventually leave.
>
> We expended a great deal of blood and treasure to topple Saddam Hussein, and then to establish enough order so that George W. Bush's successor would only have to consolidate our gains. President Obama is careless enough to risk throwing it all away, and shameless enough to call it success.

For those who are not aware of the looming storm in the Middle East, you should read in full this article from the Washington Times. It is authored by Frank Gaffney, the President of the Center for Security Policy. He covers several troubling data points in Libya, Egypt, Afghanistan, Iraq, China, Russia and Mexico. As if that were not bad enough, it looks as if the debt limit super-committee is now deadlocked in negotiations, which will trigger automatic cuts to our defense budget, at the worst possible moment.

Economists: Jobs outlook the worst since January 2010

October 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

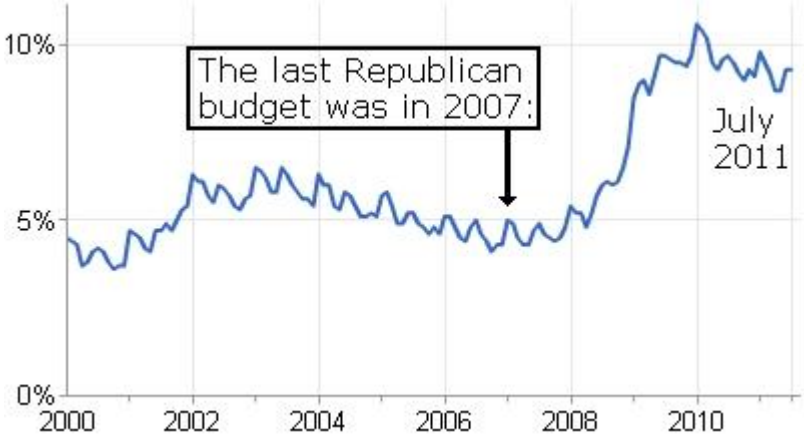

Unemployment Rate (Not seasonally adusted)
From Bloomberg Businessweek.

Excerpt:

> U.S. companies' hiring plans reflect the worst employment outlook since January 2010 as demand slows in the world's largest economy, a private survey showed.
>
> Fewer companies project payrolls to rise in the next six months compared with a July survey, while more plan to cut workers, the National Association for Business Economics said today in Washington. The share of firms planning to raise prices was the smallest in almost two years.
>
> Businesses are concerned about the European debt crisis, with 30 percent of participants anticipating it will cause a decline in sales through early 2012, the survey showed. While companies said they expect the U.S. will keep expanding, they trimmed projections for the pace of growth and pared capital spending plans, helping explain why the recovery has failed to gain momentum.
>
> "Expectations are muted," Shawn DuBravac, chief economist at the Consumer Electronics Association in Arlington, Virginia, who analyzed the results, said in a statement. The latest survey's "respondents remain cautiously confident."
>
> Within the employment outlook, 29 percent of companies said they would increase hiring, down from 43 percent in July, while 59 percent reported they plan no change in staff, a 10-point jump.
>
> […]The dimming outlook for employment and investment stems from the slowdown in growth. Eighty-five percent of companies surveyed said that the economy may expand 2 percent or less in the period ending this quarter compared with the final three months of 2010. In the prior survey, just one of every five economists polled predicted growth would be that slow.
>
> The debt crisis in Europe already is hurting U.S. firms and is likely to continue,

> according to a special question in the latest survey, conducted between Sept. 20 and Oct. 5. Twenty percent of participants reported developments in Europe have led to as much as a 10 percent drop in sales so far this year.

This is not a surprise. Aside from signing the three free trade deals with Colombia, Panama and South Korea, the Obama administration has done *everything wrong* with respect to stimulating economic growth – the necessary precursor for private sector job creation.

BBC London radio interviews William Lane Craig

October 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten from Apologetics 315 tweeted this interview. It was uploaded by the always excellent BirdieUpon.

Dr. Craig did a GREAT job on that interview, sounding very clear and intelligent. The host was laughing with him.

And while you're having fun with that, read this:

> Here at the Unofficial W. L. Craig Public Relations Office LLC we have uncovered news which is very concerning to us. We uncovered information that Dr. Richard Dawkins likes to top pumpkin flavored ice cream with sautéed portobello mushroom, Top Ramen noodles, eggs, and grated pickles. Apparently, Dr. Dawkins thinks the obtaining of this state of affairs results in a *good* tasting ice cream. He has even defended his right to make and eat said ice cream concoction.
>
> We find this a *disgusting* view to hold, and we are shocked, revolted, and horrified that a person who claims to be a descent human being would engage in such ice cream apologetics. We understand that Dr. Craig has claimed in many of his books that matters of taste are not objective matters of fact that obtain in the universe. We understand that Dr. Craig has claimed that in this universe there is no objective fact of the matter regarding whether Dr. Dawkins's tastes in ice cream are any *better* or more *correct* than Dr. Craig's—who happens to like, through God's instantiation of certain circumstances, peanut butter and chocolate ice cream. However, this is quite beside the point. For we are completely abominated, bothered, disenchanted, displeased, disturbed, grossed out, insulted, irked, nauseated, offended, outraged, palled, piqued, put off, repulsed, revolted, shocked, sickened, unhinged and upset by Dr. Dawkins's subjective tastes in ice cream. Dr. Craig doesn't care if this has *absolutely nothing* to do with whether Dr. Dawkins's argument that the design argument implies that God must have had a designer is a good argument or not. Dr. Craig doesn't care that this has absolutely nothing to do with the soundness of the Kalam cosmological argument. Those concerns are petty when placed next to Dr. Dawkins's disgusting tastes in ice cream. His statements on ice cream are so yucky as to nullify discussion about whether belief in God *as such* is a mind virus.
>
> In light of these most heinous facts, we cannot, and will not, debate such a scurrilous individual as Dr. Richard Dawkins. We ask, would you shake hands with a man who could eat something like that? Would you share a platform with him (imagine if he passed gas)? Dr. Craig wouldn't, and he won't. Even if he were not engaged to be in London on the day in question, he would be proud to leave that chair in Oxford eloquently empty and head to the nearest ice cream shop.

> And if any of Dr. Craig's colleagues find themselves browbeaten or inveigled into a debate with this deplorable apologist for mushroom, noodle, egg, and pickle topped pumpkin ice cream, our advice to them would be to stand up, read aloud Dawkins's recipe as quoted above (maybe even show the picture), then walk out and leave him talking not just to an empty chair but, one would hope, to a rapidly emptying hall as well, as we all make our way to Cold Stone Creamery for a proper ice cream.

I found it here on the Analytic Theology blog. So what was the point of that? The point of that is that Richard Dawkins is complaining at Dr. Craig for being evil and immoral, but he doesn't have any way to make distinctions between good and evil *in his own worldview.*

Look at what Dawkins says:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

So what was that whole "I'm not going to debate you because you're evil and so is genocide" thing? It makes no sense. But he says it anyway, because that's how atheists like Dawkins are. They don't have any way to ground morality on their own view, and then they complain about God and Christians failing to act morally. It's ridiculous.

Brian Auten interviews former Muslim apologist Nabeel Qureshi

October 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Interview with Nabeel Qureshi

Here is Brian Auten's interview with former Muslim Nabeel Qureshi.

You can download the MP3 file at the link above.

Details:

> Today's interview is with Nabeel Qureshi, former Muslim and now Christian defender. He is director of Creed 2:6 ministries found at www.creed26.com. He talks about Creed2:6, his journey from Islam to Christianity, his interactions with the Muslim community and Muslim apologists, his response to critics of his conversion, the occurrence of visions and dreams from God to Muslims, the greatest challenges to sharing the Gospel with Muslims, the social consequences for leaving Islam, cultural vs. religious opposition, common errors to avoid, key factors to focus on, recommended resources on Islam, his personal message to those in Islam, and more. His full testimony is here. Video testimony here.

You might remember Nabeel because of his run-ins with the Dearborn police.

New Herman Cain campaign ad features his chief of staff smoking a cigarette

October 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I *love* the ad. ESPECIALLY the cigarette. And, of course, the ad has gone viral. Duh. That was the whole point of Mark Block smoking the cigarette. It grabs your attention.

CBS News reports on the latest poll. (H/T The Other McCain)

Excerpt:

> Businessman Herman Cain is now atop the field of Republican White House hopefuls, squeaking past former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney in the latest CBS News/New York Times poll.
>
> Cain garnered 25 percent support of Republican primary voters in the poll released on Tuesday, compared to Romney's 21 percent.

Stacy McCain notes that this poll was taken during October 19-24, entirely *after* the Las Vegas debate.

This lead will only go up, now that Cain has 100% of the Marlboro Man vote because of this cigarette campaign ad. I love listening to the cigarette ads on old time radio shows, and this ad reminds me of those days before political correctness. There are so many immoral things that people minimize, but they fuss about things like smoking bans and recycling. I think we should let people smoke in bars if they want to. And not force people to wear seat belts. I think that ad is going to resonate with mainstream America.

McCain writes:

> The big news? This poll was taken Oct. 19-24, entirely *after* last week's Vegas debate (Perry's best performance to date) and covers the period during which the abortion controversy was supposedly (if you believe Karl Rove) destroying the viability of the Cain campaign.

You can read my response to the Herman Cain pro-life controversy here. It's being blown out of proportion by several RINOs like Mike Huckabee, who is not by any stretch of the imagination a conservative, and isn't even 100% pro-life.

Excerpt:

> Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee last year accepted $52,000 in speaking fees from a biotech giant that wants to research human embryonic stem cells, a non-profit working to expand access to the morning-after pill and a group pushing to study whether tightening gun control laws will reduce violence.

You know how I pick on Romney for being liberal? Huckabee is more of a RINO than Romney.

UPDATE: Here’s the song used in the campaign ad:

With lyrics. And they are *good* lyrics.

Canada’s state run broadcaster fights back against probe of finances

October 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Toronto Sun. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> The CBC — the mega-corporation that is demanding yet another $1.1-billion bailout from taxpayers this year, just like it demanded a $1.1-billion bailout from us last year — is panicking.
>
> For weeks it’s been sweating about a parliamentary investigation into its bad behaviour, including its violation of the Access to Information law. That’s an important law to allow taxpayers to scrutinize how government agencies spend our money.
>
> The non-partisan information commissioner has given the CBC a grade of “F” for its secrecy — but it still violates her order for it to disclose the truth. It’s spending millions in legal expenses to hide how it’s spending billions in other expenses.
>
> This bad behaviour was coming to a head last week when Parliament was going to turn over some rocks and see what was going to go scurrying.
>
> And so it panicked.
>
> On the eve of the Parliamentary inquiry, it used part of its $1.1 billion — money that is supposed to go to journalism — to launch a crazy, personal attack on the president of Quebecor and QMI Agency, Pierre Karl Peladeau, one of Canada’s most successful private-sector media entrepreneurs.
>
> Unlike the CBC, Peladeau built his company honestly and with his own efforts. He took a newspaper company started by his father, Pierre Peladeau, and turned it into Quebec’s most successful media company, Quebecor — and then joined with English-Canada’s biggest newspaper company, Sun Media Corp. And then he built the Sun News Network.
>
> All without a billion-dollar-a-year bailout.
>
> And so last week, the night before Peladeau’s testimony to Parliament, the CBC freaked out.
>
> In an unprecedented move, it issued what can only be called an attack ad against Peladeau. It wasn’t a news story. It was a false and defamatory attack on our company, as vengeance for our questions about how the CBC spends taxpayer money.
>
> If any other government department had done something like this, whoever responsible would be fired immediately. It wasn’t just unprofessional. It wasn’t just outside of its mandate of what it is given its government money for. It was

> an attempt to destroy a private-sector competitor.

Why is this interesting? Because it shows what happens when the government oversteps its bounds and starts to compete with the private sector in areas that are totally unrelated to its enumerated powers and specific responsibilities. Not only will you find corruption in nationalized corporations, but massive waste as well. Private sector companies face competitive pressures that government monopolies do not face. That forces them to root out corruption and waste, because there is always the firm next door looking to serve the customer better – with higher quality and at a lower cost.

We need to be very careful about handing money to people in government who simply don't care as much about the needs of their customers. Do you think that the CBC could ever favor tax cuts or spending cuts or even more choices for taxpayers? Of course not. They have to tell people whatever causes them to vote for bigger government, because that's where their money comes from.

If God wanted us to believe in him, why doesn't he give us more evidence?

October 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard someone say that if God existed, he would give us more evidence? This is called the "hiddenness of God" argument. It's also known as the argument from "rational non-belief".

Basically the argument is something like this:

1. God is all powerful
2. God is all loving
3. God wants all people to know about him
4. Some people don't know about him
5. Therefore, there is no God.

You may hear have heard this argument before, when talking to atheists, as in William Lane Craig's debate with Theodore Drange, (audio, video).

Basically, the atheist is saying that he's looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that's logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden when our eternal destination depends on our knowledge of his existence.

What reason could God have for remaining hidden?

Dr. Michael Murray, a brilliant professor of philosophy at Franklin & Marshall College, has found a reason for God to remain hidden.

His paper on divine hiddenness is here:
"Coercion and the Hiddenness of God", American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us. Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him. God places a higher value on people having the free will to respond to him, and if he shows too much of himself he takes away their free choice to respond to him, because once he is too overt about his existence, people will just feel obligated to belief in him in order to avoid being punished.

But believing in God just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants for us. If it is too obvious to us that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and behave morally out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out of interest *in him*, just like we might try to get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is

actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God's veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don't seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to reach out to us and draw us to him. But I do think that we are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist's argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. In order to derive a contradiction, God MUST NOT have any possible reason to remain hidden. If he has a reason for remaining hidden that is consistent with his goodness, then the argument will not go through.

When Murray offers a possible reason for God to remain hidden in order to allow people to freely respond to him, then the argument is defeated. God wants people to respond to him freely so that there is a genuine love relationship – not coercion by overt threat of damnation. To rescue the argument, the atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free choice of his creatures to reject him.

People choose to separate themselves from God for many reasons. Maybe they are professors in academia and didn't want to be thought of as weird by their colleagues. Maybe they didn't want to be burdened with traditional morality when tempted by some sin, especially sexual sin. Maybe their fundamentalist parents ordered them around too much without providing any reasons. Maybe the brittle fundamentalist beliefs of their childhood were exploded by evidence for micro-evolution or New Testament manuscript variants. Maybe they wanted something really bad, that God did not give them. How could a good God allow them to suffer like that?

The point is that there a lot of people who don't want to know God, and God chooses not to violate their freedom by forcing himself on them. God wants a relationship – he wants you to respond to him. (See Matthew 7:7-8) For those people who don't want to know him, he allows them to speculate about unobservable entities like the multiverse. He allows them to think that all religions are the same and that there is nothing special about Christianity. He allows them to believe that God has no plan for those who never hear about Jesus. He allows them to be so disappointed because of some instance of suffering that they reject him. God doesn't force people to love him.

More of Michael Murray's work

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007). The book chapter from the Cambridge book is here. The book chapter from the Routledge book is here.

Michael Murray's papers are really fun to read, because he uses hilarious examples. (But I disagree with his view that God's work of introducing biological information in living creatures has to be front-loaded).

Here’s more terrific stuff from Dr. Murray:

- “Who’s Afraid of Religion?“, Inaugural Lecture delivered March 30, 2006. Franklin and Marshall College.
- “Seek and You Will Find“, in God and the Philosophers. Thomas Morris, editor. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1994.

Is there any evidence of God’s existence?

Yes, just watch this lecture by Dr. William Lane Craig. It contains 5 reasons why God exists and 3 reasons why it matters.

Ten resources to help you defend the historicity of Jesus' resurrection

October 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's briefly talk about whether the Bible supports talking about the resurrection with non-Christians.

There are lots and lots of Christians in the world, but almost none of them are comfortable talking about the resurrection with non-Christians, in a way that doesn't use crazy Christianese language and doesn't assume that the Bible is inerrant. But I think that this situation is wrong for three reasons.

First, Jesus says that his resurrection is a sign so that peope will believe in his other theological claims.

Matthew 12:38-40:

[38]Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

[39]He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

[40]For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Second, Paul says that if the resurrection didn't happen then we are all wasting our time with Christianity.

1 Corinthians 15:13-19:

[13]If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

[14]And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

[15]More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

[16]For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

[17]And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

[18]Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

[19]If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

And third, Peter uses the resurrection as evidence in his evangelistic efforts.

Acts 2:22-24, 29-33, 36:

[22]"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[23]This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you,

with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

[24]But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

[29]"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

[30]But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

[31]Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

[32]God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

[33]Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

[36]"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

So, how can you do what Jesus, Paul and Peter do with your non-Christian friends?

You can do it, too – and you must

It's true that non-Christians don't like to hear that they will go to Hell unless they have a relationship with Jesus. And do you know why they think that? Because they think that sin and Hell are just your personal opinions. Not-very-nice opinions. Opinions that they can ignore because it's just your personal preference that you were raised in. They think that religion is like Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy – myths designed to make people feel good about themselves.

Just think for a minute what they must think of your blind-faith pronouncement that they are going to Hell unless they "believe in Jesus" (whatever that means to a non-Christian). How would you like to hear someone tell *you* that *you* are going to Hell for not liking vanilla ice cream? You'd think they were crazy! And that's what non-Christians think of you, unless… Unless what? Unless you present publicly testable arguments and evidence to show them *why* they should consider the claims of Jesus.

No one complains that it is "mean and divisive" if their doctor diagonoses them with cancer. Because a challenging diagnosis is not the doctor's personal opinion – it's true objectively. You need to make your presentation of the gospel *exactly like* a doctor's diagnosis. Am I making sense here?If you are telling them the truth and you can show them publicly testable reasons and evidence, what sense does it make for them to be offended? They might as well be offended by their credit card statement or their speeding ticket.

I have Jewish friends, Hindu friends, Muslim friends, atheist friends, etc. Telling people the truth with publicly testable arguments and evidence that they can assess for themselves works. What doesn't work is denying the reality of sin and Hell and then trying to be nice to non-Christians who are going to Hell so that they will like you. *That's not Biblical.* That's just reinventing Christianity based on your own emotional need to be happy and to

be liked by others and to feel good about yourself.

Some things to help you talk about the resurrection

The main thing to remember about talking about the resurrection in public with non-Christians is that *you can't assume that the Bible is true.* Serious Christians get around this by using standard historical criteria to filter out the passages of the Bible that are most likely to be historical. A passage could be as small as 1 verse or it could be several verses. Some of the criteria would be things like: 1) how early after the events was the passage written? 2) in how many places does it appear? 3) Are the places where it appears independent from one another (e.g. – Mark and Paul), 4) does it embarass the author in some way? Using these criteria, historians can extract a bare minimum set of facts about Jesus.

Once you establish these minimal facts, you argue that the best explanation of the facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead. Your opponent either has to disprove one of your minimal facts, or he has to propose an alternative explanation of those minimal facts that explains the data better.

Usually, the only point of disagreement is whether the tomb was empty. Most atheists will give you the crucifixion, the burial, the post-mortem appearances, and the early belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus in the early church.

The top 10 links to get you started

So with that out of the way, here are the top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Two debates where you can see this play out:

- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Obama administration may miss deadline on Keystone pipeline approval

October 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Actress Daryl Hannah demands higher unemployment
From liberal Reuters.

Excerpt:

> The State Department may miss a year-end target to approve TransCanada Corp's Canada-to-Texas Keystone oil sands pipeline, a U.S. official told Reuters on Tuesday, risking a further delay to the most important new crude oil conduit in decades.
>
> The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the State Department still hoped to make a decision by the end of this year, which has been its target, but that its highest priority was to carry out a thorough, rigorous review. The decision has already been pushed back once.
>
> A further delay would not only be a blow to TransCanada, it could also prolong a massive gap between U.S. and global oil prices because oil traders are counting on Keystone's 700,000 barrel-per-day capacity to relieve a build-up of crude in the Midwest, which doesn't have enough pipelines to ship growing Canadian output to Gulf Coast refineries for use around the United States.
>
> The ruling, which falls to the State Department because the line crosses national borders, is forcing President Barack Obama into a decision that effectively pits environmental safety against job creation and energy security.

The Independent Women's Forum comments:

> [B]usinesses actually want to do something with the oil that would be transferred on the pipeline, and the delay in moving the oil through the refining process and to market will impact those businesses, the energy supply, and ultimately energy

> prices and the broader economy.
>
> Reuters describes the Administration's dilemma in ruling on the Keystone pipeline as pitting "environmental safety against job creation and energy security." That may be how some environmental extremists are trying to frame it, but it's really a false choice. As I wrote before, Canada's oil sands are going to be developed one way or another. The State Department's decision is whether the U.S.—with our many environmental regulations—will being doing the job or if Canada will find another, much less environmentally-friendly, partner.

Barack Obama is blocking job creation in order to appease his environmentalist constituents.

Unemployed college graduate ran up $90,000 of debt while studying English

October 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Occupy Wall Street		TEA Party
40	Days of Protest	989
2,511	Arrests	0
4	Rapes	0
$2,400,000	Cost	$0

as of October 26, 2011

Occupy Wall Street vs Tea Party
And do you think he is out looking for jobs with his English degree? NO!

The L.A. Times explains. (H/T Dennis Prager)

Excerpt:

> For almost a week, Nate Grant has sat cross-legged on a wall at the Occupy Wall Street encampment, holding a cardboard sign that bears his scrawled grievance: "Students Ought Not Be a Means of Profit."
>
> […]It doesn't take long before any conversation in the strikingly youthful crowd in Lower Manhattan turns to the loans many of the twenty-somethings have racked up. It's not a central theme, like corporate greed and unemployment, but rather a subtext to all the chanting and marching.
>
> Grant left Ithaca College in upstate New York in May with a degree in English and $90,000 in private and federal loans.
>
> An honor student in high school, he could have had a "free ride" if he had gone to a public university in his home state. But he loaded up on student loans so he could enroll in Ithaca's communications program to study film directing. Within a year, Grant became disenchanted with the program and switched his major.
>
> Unable to find a good job that pays a decent wage using his degree, Grant decided this summer to join the military, hoping to take advantage of a student loan repayment program that could shave $60,000 off his debt.
>
> "I just felt I had to do something to get this monkey off my back," he said.
>
> Since graduation Grant has been living with his parents in Little Egg Harbor, N.J., and doing odd jobs.

Oh, I hope this turnip doesn't join the military. Although it would be good for him to get yelled at. It might help him to get his head out of his ass.

The entire student loan system should be *privatized* so that students who want to study

subjects that are highly politicized cannot pay for it with anyone else's money.

The use of taxpayer funds for college education has to be changed BEFORE the students can run up tens of thousands in debt. Loans should only be granted by corporations to students who are studying math, science, technology and engineering. It's so easy for the government to hand out taxpayer money for degrees that are more about indoctrination than they are about producing a return on the investment. But it would be a lot less likely to happen if the person doing the lending actually expected to *get the money back*. We need to grow up as a society. There is no free lunch, somebody has to pay.

UPDATE: My bad, it looks as if some of the Occupy Wall Street protesters are being paid after all. Maybe he is one.

Excerpt:

> The former New York office for ACORN, the disbanded community activist group, is playing a key role in the self-proclaimed "leaderless" Occupy Wall Street movement, organizing "guerrilla" protest events and hiring door-to-door canvassers to collect money under the banner of various causes while spending it on protest-related activities, sources tell FoxNews.com.
>
> The former director of New York ACORN, Jon Kest, and his top aides are now busy working at protest events for New York Communities for Change (NYCC). That organization was created in late 2009 when some ACORN offices disbanded and reorganized under new names after undercover video exposes prompted Congress to cut off federal funds.
>
> NYCC's connection to ACORN isn't a tenuous one: It works from the former ACORN offices in Brooklyn, uses old ACORN office stationery, employs much of the old ACORN staff and, according to several sources, engages in some of the old organization's controversial techniques to raise money, interest and awareness for the protests.
>
> **Sources said NYCC has hired about 100 former ACORN-affiliated staff members from other cities – paying some of them $100 a day – to attend and support Occupy Wall Street. Dozens of New York homeless people recruited from shelters are also being paid to support the protests, at the rate of $10 an hour, the sources said.**
>
> At least some of those hired are being used as door-to-door canvassers to collect money that's used to support the protests.
>
> Sources said cash donations collected by NYCC on behalf of some unions and various causes are being pooled and spent on Occupy Wall Street. The money is used to buy supplies, pay staff and cover travel expenses for the ex-ACORN members brought to New York for the protests.
>
> In one such case, sources said, NYCC staff members collected cash donations for what they were told was a United Federation of Teachers fundraising drive, but the money was diverted to the protests.

> Sources who participated in the teachers union campaign said NYCC supervisors gave them the addresses of union members and told them to go knock on their doors and ask for contributions—and did not mention that the money would go toward Occupy Wall Street expenses. One source said the campaign raked in about $5,000.

I should have known that this was not so much grass roots as astroturf.

Video review of the 2011 William Lane Craig vs Peter Atkins debate

October 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From someone who attended the debate, a review:

So, just who is this Peter Atkins, and why is he a good spokesman for atheism?

From his Wikipedia bio.

Peter William Atkins (born August 10, 1940) is an English chemist and a fellow and professor of chemistry at Lincoln College of the University of Oxford. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, 8th ed. (with Julio de Paula of Haverford College), *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*, 4th ed. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.

[…]He was the first Senior Member for the Oxford Secular Society and an Honorary Associate of the National Secular Society. He is also a member of the Advisory Board of The Reason Project, a US-based charitable foundation devoted to spreading scientific knowledge and secular values in society. The organisation is led by fellow atheist and author Sam Harris.

While we wait for Brian Auten or Justin Brierley to post the audio of the *second* debate, why not watch the first Craig/Atkins debate?

The first Craig vs. Atkins debate

Here's a clip from the first debate:

You can watch the whole debate here, posted by ChristianJR4. Moderated by William F. Buckley! If you watched the audience closely, you'll see Michael Behe, Ravi Zacharias and Henry F. Schaefer III. All-star crowd!

Budget guru Paul Ryan discusses the economy at the Heritage Foundation

October 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite GOP ideas-man speaking at my favorite think tank. Here's the full transcript courtesy of National Review.

Excerpt:

> The Treasury Department's latest study on income mobility in America found that during the ten-year period starting in 1996, roughly half of the taxpayers who started in the bottom 20 percent had moved up to a higher income group by 2005.Meanwhile, half of all taxpayers ended up in a different income group at the end of ten years. Many moved up, and some moved down, but economic growth resulted in rising incomes for most people over this period.
>
> Another recent survey of over 500 successful entrepreneurs found that 93 percent came from middle-class or lower-class backgrounds. The majority were the first in their families to launch a business.
>
> Their stories are the American story: Millions of immigrants fled from the closed societies of the Old World to the security of equal rights in this land of upward mobility.
>
> Telling Americans they are stuck in their current station in life, that they are victims of circumstances beyond their control, and that government's role is to help them cope with it – well, that's not who we are. That's not what we do.
>
> Our Founding Fathers rejected this mentality. In societies marked by class structure, an elite class made up of rich and powerful patrons supplies the needs of a large client underclass that toils, but cannot own. The unfairness of closed societies is the kindling for class warfare, where the interests of "capital" and "labor" are perpetually in conflict. What one class wins, the other loses.
>
> The legacy of this tradition can still be seen in Europe today: Top-heavy welfare states have replaced the traditional aristocracies, and masses of the long-term unemployed are locked into the new lower class.
>
> The United States was destined to break out of this bleak history. Our future would not be staked on traditional class structures, but on civic solidarity. Gone would be the struggle of class against class.
>
> Instead, Americans would work, compete, and co-operate in an open market, climb the ladder of opportunity, and keep the fruits of their efforts.
>
> Self-government and the rule of law would secure our equal, God-given rights. Our political and economic systems – rooted in freedom and responsibility – would reward, and thus cultivate, traditional virtues.
>
> Given that the President's policies have moved us closer to the European model,

> I suppose we shouldn't be surprised that his class-based rhetoric has followed suit.
>
> We shouldn't be surprised… but we have every right to be disappointed. Instead of appealing to the hope and optimism that were hallmarks of his first campaign, he has launched his second campaign by preying on the emotions of fear, envy, and resentment.
>
> This has the potential to be just as damaging as his misguided policies. Sowing social unrest and class resentment makes America weaker, not stronger. Pitting one group against another only distracts us from the true sources of inequity in this country – corporate welfare that enriches the powerful, and empty promises that betray the powerless.
>
> Ironically, equality of outcome is a form of inequality – one that is based on political influence and bureaucratic favoritism.
>
> That's the real class warfare that threatens us: A class of bureaucrats and connected crony capitalists trying to rise above the rest of us, call the shots, rig the rules, and preserve their place atop society. And their gains will come at the expense of working Americans, entrepreneurs, and that small businesswoman who has the gall to take on the corporate chieftain.
>
> It's disappointing that this President's actions have exacerbated this form of class warfare in so many ways:
>
> While the EPA is busy punishing commercially competitive sources of energy, a class of bureaucrats at the Department of Energy has been acting like the world's worst venture capital fund, spending recklessly on politically favored alternatives. While the unemployment rate remains stuck above 9 percent, a class of bureaucrats at the National Labor Relations Board is threatening hundreds of jobs by suing an American employer for politically motivated reasons. And while millions of Americans are left wondering whether their employers will drop their health insurance because of the new health care law, a class of bureaucrats at HHS has handed out over 1,400 waivers to those firms and unions with the political connections to lobby for them.
>
> These actions starkly highlight the difference between the two parties that lies at the heart of the matter: Whether we are a nation that still believes in equality of opportunity, or whether we are moving away from that, and towards an insistence on equality of outcome.
>
> If you believe in the former, you follow the American Idea that justice is done when we level the playing field at the starting line, and rewards are proportionate to merit and effort.
>
> If you believe in the latter kind of equality, you think most differences in wealth and rewards are matters of luck or exploitation, and that few really deserve what they have.

> That’s the moral basis of class warfare – a false morality that confuses fairness with redistribution, and promotes class envy instead of social mobility.

When you think of talented Republicans who will one day be President, you think of people like Paul Ryan, Marco Rubio, Bobby Jindal, Ted Cruz and Josh Mandel. It’s to take a look at these guys before they become famous. Paul Ryan is the best we have on the budget – he is universally respected. And, he is also 100% pro-life and 100% solid on foreign policy. You don’t have to pick and choose with Paul Ryan – *you get everything*. All of the above.

Related posts

- Paul Ryan explains how raising taxes hurts job creation
- Paul Ryan explains why the millionaire tax causes unemployment to rise
- Paul Ryan: cut current spending, cap future spending and balance the budget
- Paul Ryan talks about the looming American debt crisis
- Where does Paul Ryan stand on foreign policy and social issues?
- Paul Ryan responds to his critics on Medicare reform
- What’s wrong with the American economy and how Paul Ryan would fix it
- Republican Paul Ryan proposes over 6 trillion in spending cuts
- Paul Ryan discusses economics at the liberal Brookings Institute
- Paul Ryan explains taxes and spending to Chris Matthews
- Paul Ryan takes on Democrat Brad Sherman on the worsening economy
- Paul Ryan debates Robert Reich on Larry Kudlow show
- Paul Ryan debates on the relationship between tax rates and job creation
- Paul Ryan talks about health care with Chris Matthews and Chris Wallace
- Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander
- Paul Ryan discusses Obamacare and the federal budget
- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan’s plan for economic recovery
- Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama’s 1.56 trillion budget deficit
- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama’s record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism

Does the progress of science lead to theism or atheism?

October 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. Here's a bio from his faculty page at Baylor University:

> Walter Bradley (B.S., Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin) is Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He comes to Baylor from Texas A&M University where he helped develop a nationally recognized program in polymeric composite materials. At Texas A&M, he served as director of the Polymer Technology Center for 10 years and as Department Head of Mechanical Engineering, a department of 67 professors that was ranked as high as 12th nationally during his tenure. Bradley has authored over 150 refereed research publications including book chapters, articles in archival journals such as the Journal of Material Science, Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites, Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials, Journal of Composites Technology and Research, Composite Science and Technology, Journal of Metals, Polymer Engineering and Science, and Journal of Materials Science, and refereed conference proceedings.
>
> Dr. Bradley has secured over $5.0 million in research funding from NSF grants (15 yrs.), AFOSR (10 years), NASA grants (10 years), and DOE (3 years). He has also received research grants or contracts from many Fortune 500 companies, including Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, 3M, Shell, Exxon, Boeing, and Phillips.
>
> He co-authored The Mystery of Life Origin: Reassessing Current Theories and has written 10 book chapters dealing with various faith science issues, a topic on which he speaks widely.
>
> He has received 5 research awards at Texas A&M University and 1 national research award. He has also received two teaching awards. He is an Elected Fellow of the American Society for Materials and the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the largest organization of Christians in Science and Technology in the world. He is President elect of the ASA and will serve his term in 2008.

You can read more about his recent research on how to use coconuts to make car parts in

this article from Science Daily.

Below, I analyze a lecture I chose from the hundreds of public lectures he has given all over the world on the integration of Christian faith with other public, testable areas of knowledge. In this lecture, entitled “Is There Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer?”, Dr. Bradley explains how the progress of science has made the idea of a Creator and Designer of the universe more acceptable than ever before.

The MP3 file is here.

Evidence #1: The design of the universe

1. The correspondence of natural phenomena to mathematical law

- All observations of physical phenomena in the universe, such as throwing a ball up in the air, are described by a few simple, elegant mathematical equations.

2. The fine-tuning of physical constants and rations between constants in order to provide a life-permitting universe

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants and ratios: (there are more examples in the lecture)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would be able to build up the nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.

- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – "carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can't be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

3. Fine-tuning to allow a habitable planet

- A number of factors must be fine-tuned in order to have a planet that supports life
- Initial estimates predicted abundant life in the universe, but revised estimates now predict that life is almost certainly unique in the galaxy, and probably unique in the universe.
- Even though there are lots of stars in the universe, the odds are against *any* of them supporting complex life.
- Here are just a few of the minimal requirements for habitability: must be a single star solar system, in order to support stable planetary orbits, the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to have liquid water at the surface, the planet must sufficient mass in order to retain an atmosphere, etc.

The best current atheist response to this is to speculate that there may be an infinite number of unobservable and untestable universes.

Evidence #2: <u>The origin of the universe</u>

1. The progress of science has shown that the entire physical universe came into being out of nothing (= "the big bang"). It also shows that the cause of this creation event is non-physical and non-temporal. The cause is *supernatural*.

- Atheism prefers an eternal universe, to get around the problem of a Creator having to create the universe.
- Discovery #1: Observations of galaxies moving away from one another confirms that the universe expanded from a single point.
- Discovery #2: Measurements of the cosmic background radiation confirms that the universe exploding into being.
- Discovery #3: Predictions of elemental abundances prove that the universe is not

eternal.
- Discovery #4:The atheism-friendly steady-state model and oscillating model were both falsified by the evidence.
- And there were other discoveries as well, mentioned in the lecture.

The best atheistic response to this is to speculate that there is an unobservable and untestable hyper-universe outside our own.

Evidence #3: The origin of life

1. The progress of science has shown that the simplest living organism contains huge amounts of biological information, similar to the Java code I write all day at work. This is a problem for atheists, because the sequence of instructions in a living system has to come together all at once, it cannot have evolved by mutation and selection – because there was no replication in place prior to the formation of that first living system!

- Living systems must support certain minimum life functions: processing energy, storing information, and replicating.
- There needs to be a certain amount of complexity in the living system that can perform these minimum functions.
- But on atheism, the living system needs to be simple enough to form by accident in a pre-biotic soup, and in a reasonable amount of time.
- The minimal functionality in a living system is a achieved by DNA, RNA and enzymes. DNA and RNA are composed of sequences of proteins, which are in turn composed of sequences of amino acids.

Consider the problems of building a chain of 100 amino acids

- The amino acids must be left-handed only, but left and right kinds are equally abundant in nature. How do you sort out the right-handed ones?
- The amino acids must be bound together using peptide bonds. How do you prevent other types of bonds?
- Each link of the amino acid chain needs to be carefully chosen such that the completed chain with fold up into a protein. How do you choose the correct amino acid for each link from the pool of 20 different kinds found in living systems?
- In every case, a human or other intelligence could solve these problems by doing what intelligent agents do best: *making choices.*
- But who is there to make the choices on atheism?

The best current atheistic response to this is to speculate that unobservable and untestable aliens seeded the earth with life.

The problem of the origin of life is not a problem of chemistry, it is a problem of engineering. Every part of car functionality can be understood and described using the laws of physics and chemistry. But an intelligence is still needed in order to assemble the components into a system that has the minimal requirements for a functioning vehicle.

Conclusion

In all three areas, scientists expected that the data would be consistent with atheism. First, scientists expected that life could exist even if the physical constants and ratios were altered. The progress of science said *NO*. Second, scientists expected that the universe would be eternal. The progress of science said *NO.* Third, scientists expected that the origin of life would be simple. The progress of science said *NO.* I think we all need to try to align our beliefs with the progress of science.

Dennis Prager: are evangelicals or secular leftists more irrational?

October 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

His column on National Review is the second most popular at the time I write this (Wednesday night).

Excerpt:

> And as regards same-sex marriage, why is the normative Christian and Jewish belief that marriage should be between a man and a woman anti-science and anti-intellectual? What we have here is the usual left-wing tactic of smearing opponents. If you disagree with race-based affirmative action, you are a racist; disagree with the ever-expanding welfare state, you lack compassion; disagree with redefining marriage in the most radical way ever attempted in history, and you are a hater. No wonder the Left developed the foolish and destructive self-esteem movement — no one has anywhere near the self-esteem leftists have. They are certain that they are better human beings in every way than those who have the temerity to oppose them.
>
> This Jew will take the evangelicals' values and the evangelicals' America over those of left-wing intellectuals any day of the year. If evangelicals come with some views I find irrational it is a tiny price to pay compared to the price humanity has paid for the Left's consistently broken moral compass — about America; about Communism and Islamism; about the superiority of peace studies over waging war against evil; about America's role in the world; about Israel; about the welfare state; about Fidel Castro, Hugo Chavez, and all the other left-wing dictators the Left has celebrated; about the belief that men and women are basically the same; about the greater worth of any animal than of the unborn human; and about nearly every other major moral issue.
>
> If these professors typify the views of Eastern Nazarene College, which is officially listed as a Christian university, it is reason for despair. Once left-wing values enter the evangelical bloodstream, there is almost no hope for America.

I've been noticing that a lot of the New Atheists who complain the loudest about the violent wars in the Old Testament are the same ones who line up to defend abortion – a practice that has killed over 50 million unborn children since 1973, in America alone. Not all atheists are pro-abortion, but I think they are more likely to be pro-abortion than evangelicals and conservative Jews.

It reminds me of this Wall Street Journal article from a while back, entitled "Look Who's Irrational Now".

Excerpt:

> The reality is that the New Atheist campaign, by discouraging religion, won't

> create a new group of intelligent, skeptical, enlightened beings. Far from it: It might actually encourage new levels of mass superstition. And that's not a conclusion to take on faith — it's what the empirical data tell us.
>
> "What Americans Really Believe," a comprehensive new study released by Baylor University yesterday, shows that traditional Christian religion greatly decreases belief in everything from the efficacy of palm readers to the usefulness of astrology. It also shows that the irreligious and the members of more liberal Protestant denominations, far from being resistant to superstition, tend to be much more likely to believe in the paranormal and in pseudoscience than evangelical Christians.
>
> The Gallup Organization, under contract to Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion, asked American adults a series of questions to gauge credulity. Do dreams foretell the future? Did ancient advanced civilizations such as Atlantis exist? Can places be haunted? Is it possible to communicate with the dead? Will creatures like Bigfoot and the Loch Ness Monster someday be discovered by science?
>
> The answers were added up to create an index of belief in occult and the paranormal. While 31% of people who never worship expressed strong belief in these things, only 8% of people who attend a house of worship more than once a week did.
>
> Even among Christians, there were disparities. While 36% of those belonging to the United Church of Christ, Sen. Barack Obama's former denomination, expressed strong beliefs in the paranormal, only 14% of those belonging to the Assemblies of God, Sarah Palin's former denomination, did. In fact, the more traditional and evangelical the respondent, the less likely he was to believe in, for instance, the possibility of communicating with people who are dead.
>
> This is not a new finding. In his 1983 book "The Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener," skeptic and science writer Martin Gardner cited the decline of traditional religious belief among the better educated as one of the causes for an increase in pseudoscience, cults and superstition. He referenced a 1980 study published in the magazine Skeptical Inquirer that showed irreligious college students to be by far the most likely to embrace paranormal beliefs, while born-again Christian college students were the least likely.
>
> Surprisingly, while increased church attendance and membership in a conservative denomination has a powerful negative effect on paranormal beliefs, higher education doesn't. Two years ago two professors published another study in Skeptical Inquirer showing that, while less than one-quarter of college freshmen surveyed expressed a general belief in such superstitions as ghosts, psychic healing, haunted houses, demonic possession, clairvoyance and witches, the figure jumped to 31% of college seniors and 34% of graduate students.

And naturally, studies show that religious people are both more generous and more likely

to stay married than their secular counterparts. It’s not a cause and effect relationship, but the probabilities are suggestive. More probable than not, as Dr. Craig says.

Wife-sharing: the consequences of sex-selection abortions in India

October 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of India

From Reuters India, disturbing news.

Excerpt:

> When Munni arrived in this fertile, sugarcane-growing region of north India as a young bride years ago, little did she imagine she would be forced into having sex and bearing children with her husband's two brothers who had failed to find wives.
>
> "My husband and his parents said I had to share myself with his brothers," said the woman in her mid-40s, dressed in a yellow sari, sitting in a village community centre in Baghpat district in Uttar Pradesh.
>
> "They took me whenever they wanted — day or night. When I resisted, they beat me with anything at hand," said Munni, who had managed to leave her home after three months only on the pretext of visiting a doctor.
>
> "Sometimes they threw me out and made me sleep outside or they poured kerosene over me and burned me."
>
> […]Social workers say decades of aborting female babies in a deeply patriarchal culture has led to a decline in the population of women in some parts of India, like Baghpat, and in turn has resulted in rising incidents of rape, human

> trafficking and the emergence of “wife-sharing” amongst brothers.
>
> Aid workers say the practice of female foeticide has flourished among several communities across the country because of a traditional preference for sons, who are seen as old-age security.
>
> “We are already seeing the terrible impacts of falling numbers of females in some communities,” says Bhagyashri Dengle, executive director of children’s charity Plan India.
>
> “We have to take this as a warning sign and we have to do something about it or we’ll have a situation where women will constantly be at risk of kidnap, rape and much, much worse.”
>
> […]According to India’s 2011 census, there are only 858 women to every 1,000 men in Baghpat district, compared to the national sex ratio of 940.
>
> Child sex ratios in Baghpat are even more skewed and on the decline with 837 girls in 2011 compared to 850 in 2001 — a trend mirrored across districts in states such as Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat.
>
> “In every village, there are at least five or six bachelors who can’t find a wife. In some, there are up to three or four unmarried men in one family. It’s a serious problem,” says Shri Chand, 75, a retired police constable.

The majority of the East Indians I know support abortion, which implies support for sex-selection abortions.

But there’s more to the problem than just abortion… I think there’s a problem of missing romantic love. In the Western, we are more influenced by the Judeo-Christian values. In the Judeo-Christian ethic, there is a *strong* tradition of men falling in love and then taking the lead to woo a women and then providing for her. Obviously, a man would be stupid to marry a woman who didn’t want to work hard or help him, but I don’t think there is anything in the tradition about dowries and such.

Take a look at the clip below from King Lear, where the King disowns his virtuous daughter Cordelia for refusing to flatter him in front of his guests. She is being courted by the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy, and now she has no dowry. What are France and Burgundy going to do? Let’s see.

Quote:

- **King of France.** Is it but this- a tardiness in nature
  Which often leaves the history unspoke
  That it intends to do? My Lord of Burgundy,
  What say you to the lady? Love’s not love
  When it is mingled with regards that stands
  Aloof from th’ entire point. Will you have her?
  She is herself a dowry.

- **Duke of Burgundy.** Royal Lear,

Give but that portion which yourself propos'd,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

- **Lear.** Nothing! I have sworn; I am firm.
- **Duke of Burgundy.** I am sorry then you have so lost a father
  That you must lose a husband.
- **Cordelia.** Peace be with Burgundy!
  Since that respects of fortune are his love,
  I shall not be his wife.
- **King of France.** Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;
  Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd!
  Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon.
  Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.
  Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect
  My love should kindle to inflam'd respect.
  Thy dow'rless daughter, King, thrown to my chance,
  Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France.
  Not all the dukes in wat'rish Burgundy
  Can buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me.
  Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind.
  Thou losest here, a better where to find.

And the whole story shows the consequences of the King's stupidity. So Shakespeare is telling us that Lear is a fool, and France has wisdom.

In the West, we believe in love and romance. That doesn't mean we don't believe in prudence, chastity, self-control and wisdom when courting, because crazy love is frowned upon in Shakespeare (Romeo and Juliet), Dickens (Great Expectations), and Austen (Sense and Sensibility). Not to mention Samson and Delilah in the Bible. It just means that we think that women have value even if all they have is goodness and wisdom. I could go on about what Western literature says about how men and women should get along, but it's nothing like what goes on in India. Now, if you can marry a rich version of Cordelia, then I do recommend doing that. Especially if it's a self-made fortune.

Audio, summary and review of the Wiliam Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

October 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The audio of the debate can be downloaded from Apologetics 315.

Description:

> Christian philosopher William Lane Craig debates atheist Peter Millican on the topic: *Does God Exist?*The debate was organised by the Philosophy Society at Birmingham University on October 21, 2011 for the Reasonable Faith tour. The Tour was co sponsored by UCCF, Damaris and Premier Christian Radio (audio via their Unbelievable podcast). Want to hear every audio debate by William Lane Craig? Check out the audio debate feed here.
>
> Full Debate MP3 Audio here. *(2hr 23min)*

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any errors. The debate audio has 32 minutes of Q&A.

And if you like my summary, check out another summary by J.W. Wartick.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It’s not just that the settings are unlikely, it’s that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a “herd morality” that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved “herd morality”. However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a

God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It's possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It's also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the

universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in

the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the

resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Should women think more carefully about age and fertility?

October 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an excellent, controversial, interesting post from Robert Stacy McCain. He critiques a feminist who has postponed becoming a mother, and she is now age 33.

Excerpt:

> It is one of the bitter ironies of the Contraceptive Culture: Many women spend years scrupulously using birth control — making what they have been told was the only safe, responsible decision — only to discover that when they decide they are finally ready for motherhood, they can't become pregnant. Unknown to them, their fallopian tubes were so badly scarred by some long-forgotten infection during their youth that, for many years, they have been as sterile as if they had undergone tubal ligation surgery.
>
> > "Chlamydia . . . can go undetected for years and can cause permanent sterility. The top four [sexually transmitted infections] that affect fertility are Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis, and HPV. PID (pelvic inflammatory disease), caused by STI's will cause more than 100,000 women in the U.S. to experience infertility annually."
> > – **American Fertility Association**, "Infertility Prevention Handbook"
>
> The genuinely important thing to realize is that the ways we think about sex, romance, marriage and parenthood are shaped by our culture and society. And the dominant ideas associated with the Contraceptive Culture have become so deeply entrenched in our society that most people (especially most young people) are incapable of understanding how profoundly *unnatural* these ideas are.
>
> Postponing marriage until you are 30, and then imagining that you have plenty of time to wait around deciding when you want to become a mother, is not a natural way of thinking. To a greater extent than Rachel Birnbaum or her young readers may understand, this way of thinking is an artifact — or perhaps we might call it a side-effect — of the Contraceptive Culture, which fosters the belief that the procreative process is infinitely subject to human control. Yet while it is true that childbirth can always be prevented, by contraception or abortion, the logical obverse is not equally true: Pregnancy and childbirth cannot be magically conjured up in compliance to human will.
>
> Ideas have consequences, and the ideas of the Contraceptive Culture result not merely in attitudes, but in lifetyles reflecting those attitudes. How many thousands of Rachel Birnbaums are out there, living their 20s and early 30s with the idea that they want to become mothers *eventually*, but not now? And how

> many of these women are destined to discover that, when they finally decide they are ready for motherhood, the decision has already been made for them by their own bodies, and that the decision is an irrevocable ”no”?
>
> Whenever I write about subjects like this, it provokes strong reactions, many of them from people who accuse me of judgmentalism, or of trying to “tell women what to do.” Such responses – and they are often quite vehement — indicate how firmly rooted the ideas of the Contraceptive Culture have become. People simply are not used to hearing these ideas examined in a critical way and, having become accustomed to thinking and living in accordance with such ideas, feel that any criticism of the ideas is a personal judgment, a moral condemnation of their lives and beliefs.

I like Mr. McCain’s blog because, like me, he isn’t afraid to take on these cultural issues, and to attack feminism. And yet his blog is enormously popular. On so many blogs that are popular, the authors just find news stories and make these short comments about the news. But with McCain’s blog, you get long form essays that don’t shy away from controversy. Like it or not, it’s worth reading. And I couldn’t agree more with him about this essay – it never hurts to think ahead and take into account these limitations.

Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of my favorite TV show

October 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite espionage TV show is “Danger Man” with Patrick McGoohan, which later morphed into “Secret Agent”. The show takes place during the 1960s, right at the height of the Cold War.

The actor, Patrick McGoohan, refused to perform romantic scenes on camera because of his religious beliefs. He turned down the roles of James Bond and Simon Templar because of these moral concerns (see below). And that dedication to moral excellence shines through in every frame of “Danger Man”.

Here’s a description of Patrick McGoohan.

Excerpt:

> Main character John Drake worked for NATO as a special security agent and was free to travel the world working on special problems for free world governments. The story lines set an early precedent for non-violence, preferring to have Drake use his wits and his fists rather than a gun. McGoohan influenced the program from the start.
>
> The themes of morality and individuality fit in with his personal philosophy as well as his vision of what the character John Drake was supposed to be.
>
> As both a moral and opinionated man, McGoohan held strong views and was forceful about seeing that they were carried out. He had insisted at the very first meeting on the script for the first episode that the bedroom scene be cut out. In fact, he stipulated that romantic involvements would have to be eliminated if he were to play the role, and consequently none appeared in either this series or the ‘Secret Agent’ series that followed.

> […]It should come as no surprise that when McGoohan was offered the role as the first James Bond, he turned it down – several times – as being incompatible with the type of role he wanted to play. He says it was a decision he has never regretted.

> […]As an actor, McGoohan had now carved out a voice all his own…. John Drake was a loner, an individual, and a moral character.

From the UK Telegraph:

> [H]e was offered the roles of James Bond and Simon Templar (The Saint). He turned both down.
>
> He once recalled: “When we started Danger Man the producer wanted me to carry a gun and to have an affair with a different girl each week. I refused. I am

> not against romance on television, but sex is the antithesis of romance. Television is a gargantuan master that all sorts of people watch at all sorts of time, and it has a moral obligation towards its audience."

Here are four of my favorite episodes.

Episode 1 of 4: "Time to Kill"

Drake is tasked with eliminating an East German assassin.

Episode 2 of 4: "The Key"

Drake is sent to Vienna to find out who is leaking secrets from the American Embassy.

Episode 3 of 4: "Colonel Rodriguez"

Drake travels to the Carribean to free a journalist who has been arrested for espionage.

Episode 4 of 4: "The Trap"

Drake travels to Venice to investigate the disappearance of a cipher clerk.

Danger Poll

If you watch ALL FOUR episodes, you can vote in the poll:

Happy Friday!

Melanie Phillips explains how feminism impacted the nursing profession

October 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article by Melanie Phillips from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Last week, a devastating report detailing what can only be described as the widespread collapse of the ethic of nursing was produced by the Care Quality Commission.
>
> This revealed that more than half of all hospitals in England do not meet standards for the dignity and nutrition of elderly people. One in five hospitals were found to be failing the elderly so badly that they were breaking the law.
>
> In hospitals where essential standards were not met, inspectors found that patients' call bells had been placed out of reach or were not responded to quickly enough, or staff were talking to patients in a condescending or dismissive way.
>
> In one hospital, inspectors witnessed a patient being made to go to the lavatory in full view of the rest of the ward. In another, doctors had to prescribe water to make sure that patients did not become dehydrated.
>
> These horrifying revelations do not signify merely incompetence nor — that perennial excuse — the effect of 'the cuts'.
>
> No, they illustrate instead something infinitely grimmer: the replacement of altruism by indifference, and compassion by cruelty.
>
> […]Nursing was effectively created by that 19th-century feminist pioneer, Florence Nightingale. To her, nursing was in essence a moral act. In her book Notes On Nursing, published in 1860, she wrote that 'the greater part of nursing consists in preserving cleanliness'.
>
> That wasn't just because hygiene was essential for recovery and health. It was because keeping both hospital and patients clean meant the nurse needed to be motivated by the most high-minded concern for the care and dignity of the patient.
>
> Accordingly, lowly functions such as washing, dressing and administering bedpans were functions that were invested with the highest possible significance.
>
> […][D]uring the Eighties, nursing underwent a revolution. Under the influence of feminist thinking, its leaders decided that 'caring' was demeaning because it meant that nurses — who were overwhelmingly women — were treated like skivvies by doctors, who were mostly men.
>
> To achieve equality, therefore, nursing had to gain the same status as medicine. This directly contradicted an explicit warning given by Florence Nightingale that

> nurses should steer clear of the ‘jargon’ about the ‘rights’ of women ‘which urges women to do all that men do, including the medical and other professions, merely because men do it, and without regard to whether this is the best that women can do’.
>
> That prescient warning has been ignored by the modern nursing establishment. To achieve professional equality with doctors, nurse training was taken away from the hospitals and turned into an academic university subject.
>
> Since caring for patients was demeaning to women, it could no longer be the cardinal principle of nursing. Instead, the primary goal became to realise the potential of the nurse to achieve equality with men. (The great irony is that more women than men are now training to be doctors in British medical schools, thus making this ideology out of date.)
>
> In an important book on the nursing profession, Ann Bradshaw, a specialist in palliative care, described how this agenda removed caring, kindness, compassion and dedication from nurse training.
>
> Student nurses now studied sociology, politics, psychology, microbiology and management, and were assessed for their communication, management and analytical skills. ‘Specific clinical nursing skills were not mentioned,’ she wrote.
>
> In short, nursing ditched its core vocation to care. Bedbaths and feeding those who are helpless are tasks vital to the care of patients — but are now considered beneath the dignity of too many nurses.
>
> Dame Joan Bakewell, the former government-appointed Voice of Older People, has suggested nurses be given ‘empathy training’. But, of course, you can’t train people in compassion.
>
> Dame Joan was much nearer the mark when she observed that the decline in kindness and sympathy was linked to the decline in religious observance. In other words, the crisis in nursing is part of a far broader and deeper spiritual malaise.
>
> Duty to others and respect for the innate humanity of every person have been eroded by the ‘me society’ of ruthless, self-centred individualism.

This is something I have often thought about… what it would be like to go to a hospital filled with non-Christians who had no rational basis for morality and virtue. Especially in a single-payer system, where you couldn’t withhold payment if care was not of a good enough quality. When you put together secularism (removes the rational basis for acts of self-sactifice and the dignity of the individual) together with socialism (where the individual pays mandatory taxes and must seek products and services from a politicized, unionized government monopoly) then it becomes a scary situation indeed.

Feminism affects nurses in other ways, too

I think I’ll just paste some more about these British nurses here, from Theodore Dalrymple’s book “Life at the Bottom” – even though it’s a little off topic.

All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.

This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.

Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.

This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.

Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.

At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was

> foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how*they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

You see, feminism also has the effects of telling women that there are no special roles that men are meant to perform, like provider, protector, moral leaders, spiritual leader. And when more and more women grow up in fatherless homes where money comes in from the government, and morality and spirituality are taught in public schools, it becomes harder and harder for women to have the wisdom to choose good men. Instead, they end up choosing men who are attractive and entertaining, using the 180-second rule.

You can read the entire Dalrymple book on moral relativism online. I posted links to the full text of Theodore Dalrymple's "Life at the Bottom".

Newt Gingrich on the issues: what are his political views?

October 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Newt Gingrich on health care

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> White House hopeful Newt Gingrich called the House Republican plan for Medicare "right-wing social engineering," injecting a discordant GOP voice into the party's efforts to reshape both entitlements and the broader budget debate.
>
> In the same interview on Sunday, Mr. Gingrich backed a requirement that all Americans buy health insurance, complicating a Republican line of attack on President Barack Obama's health law.
>
> The former House speaker's decision to stick with his previous support for an individual mandate comes days after former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney defended the health revamp he championed as governor, which includes a mandate.
>
> The moves suggest the Republican primary contest, which will include both men, could feature a robust debate on health care, with GOP candidates challenging the Democratic law while defending their own variations.

Newt Gingrich opposes Paul Ryan's reforms

Consider this article from National Review.

Excerpt:

> Newt Gingrich's appearance on "Meet the Press" today could leave some wondering which party's nomination he is running for. The former speaker had some harsh words for Paul Ryan's (and by extension, nearly every House Republican's) plan to reform Medicare, calling it "radical."
>
> "I don't think right-wing social engineering is any more desirable than left-wing social engineering," he said when asked about Ryan's plan to transition to a "premium support" model for Medicare. "I don't think imposing radical change from the right or the left is a very good way for a free society to operate."
>
> As far as an alternative, Gingrich trotted out the same appeal employed by Obama/Reid/Pelosi — for a "national conversation" on how to "improve" Medicare, and promised to eliminate 'waste, fraud and abuse,' etc.

Newt Gingrich on Hillary Clinton

More from the leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> For Ms. Clinton, standing side by side with her husband's onetime nemesis gives her the chance to burnish her credentials among the moderates she has been courting during her time in the Senate.
>
> But in comments this week, she portrayed the rapprochement as one born of shared policy interests, not calculated politics.
>
> "I know it's a bit of an odd-fellow, or odd-woman, mix," she said. "But the speaker and I have been talking about health care and national security now for several years, and I find that he and I have a lot in common in the way we see the problem."
>
> For his part, Mr. Gingrich, who helped lead the impeachment fight against President Bill Clinton, called Mrs. Clinton "very practical" and "very smart and very hard working," adding, "I have been very struck working with her."

Newt Gingrich on global warming

Newt Gingrich on foreign policy

Newt Gingrich endorsed a pro-abortion, pro-same-marriage candidate

Remember when Newt Gingrich endorsed the RINO Dede Scozzafava in New York?

Excerpt:

> In a major coup for her campaign, Republican Dede Scozzafava today will pick up the endorsement of Newt Gingrich, one of the nation's leading conservative figures and the architect of the "Republican Revolution" in the mid-1990s.
>
> "The special election for the 23rd Congressional District is an important test leading up to the mid-term 2010 elections," Gingrich said in a statement to supporters. "Our best chance to put responsible and principled leaders in Washington starts here, with Dede Scozzafava."
>
> The endorsement is important for Scozzafava, a social moderate, as she attempts to hold onto a conservative base eroded by Doug Hoffman, the Conservative Party candidate in the thee-way 23rd District race.
>
> […]Hoffman has mounted a late surge in the special election with endorsements by prominent conservatives that include former Republican Sen. Fred Thompson; Campaign for Working Families founder Gary Bauer; and the conservative Club for Growth in Washington, D.C.
>
> Scozzafava's candidacy is also reported to have triggered a deep divide among House Republicans, with some of the most conservative members refusing to support her campaign.
>
> But Gingrich, who served as Speaker of the House from 1995 to 1999, wants to unite the party. He sees Scozzafava and the Upstate special election – the only House race in the nation this fall — as the best hope for Republicans to start a comeback and regain control of Congress.
>
> Gingrich is apparently willing to overlook Scozzafava's support for same-sex

> marriage and abortion rights.

The conservative Club for Growth lists some of his fiscal blunders.

Excerpt:

> The second large error in Gingrich's entitlement record was equally troubling: the former Speaker played a high profile advocacy role on behalf of President George W. Bush's Medicare prescription drug benefit bill in 2003. Gingrich penned several op-eds supporting the general thrust and specific provisions of the bill, urging House Republicans to pass what was billed at the time to be a $400 billion expansion of the federal government.
>
> […]In the 2009 special election for Congress in New York's 23rd district, Gingrich was outspoken in his support of liberal Republican nominee Dede Scozzafava, up to the moment she finally quit the race after center-right voters rallied behind Conservative Party nominee Doug Hoffman. **Long after most prominent conservatives had endorsed Hoffman, Gingrich held firm in his advocacy for a liberal candidate who supported Obama's stimulus plan and the pro-union "card check" proposal, among other bad positions.**
>
> In 2010, Gingrich openly campaigned for embattled U.S. Senator Robert Bennett in Utah, whom Gingrich's wrongly called "a true-blue conservative." In 2008, Gingrich aggressively supported and campaigned for liberal Congressman Wayne Gilchrist (R-MD) when he faced a conservative challenge from now-Congressman Andy Harris. In 2006, same thing, when Gingrich backed liberal Congressman Joe Schwarz (R-MI) when he was challenged by conservative now-Congressman Tim Walberg.
>
> Unfortunately, the problems in Speaker Gingrich's record are frequent enough and serious enough to give pause. On two of the most important recent issues that confronted limited government conservatives (creating the new budget busting Medicare drug entitlement, and the Wall Street bailout), Gingrich was on the wrong side. His advocacy of an individual health care mandate is problematic. His penchant for tinkering with rewards for favored industries and outcomes shows a troubling willingness to use federal power to coerce taxpayers into his preferred direction. And his occasional hostility toward conservatives who do not share his desire to support liberal Republicans or to compromise on matters of principle is worrisome.

Maybe he is actually running to win the Democrat nomination this time.

Muslim Conservative MP says that Christians should be proud of their faith

October 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Conservative MP Sayeeda Warsi
From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> First, it is a mistake to assume that you compromise your identity the more you try to understand others. The stronger your understanding of your neighbour, the stronger your own religious identity becomes. For many years, I have been saying that the stronger we are as a Christian nation, the more understanding we will be of other faiths. That is why, a year ago, I went to a bishops' conference and said that this Government would "do God". It is why the Pope's visit was so important for our country. And it is why I am proud that this year, for the first time, the Prime Minister held an Easter reception in Downing Street.

> **We need to create a country in which people can be unashamedly proud of their faith – where they don't feel that they have to leave religion at the door. That means being proud of Christianity, not downgrading it. It means encouraging people to say that their faith inspires what they do. It means supporting religious charities in delivering public services in schools, hospices and rehabilitation.**
>
> […]We also need to take the lead internationally. That means pressing other governments to safeguard religious minorities – be it the Copts in Egypt or Christians and other minorities in Pakistan. It means raising problems of persecution at the highest level, as the Archbishop of Canterbury recently did in Zimbabwe. Above all, it means all of us – as communities and individuals, believers and non-believers – taking inspiration from Shahbaz and Paul Bhatti,

> and giving all minorities in every country the courage and freedom to believe and worship in peace.

And here's another Conservative MP.

Conservative MP Priti Patel

Here's an article from IB Times about Hindu Conservative MP, Priti Patel.

Excerpt:

> Priti Patel is one of the most fascinating (and controversial) politicians in contemporary Britain. The 39-year-old Conservative MP is not only blessed with stunning good looks, but she is also of Asian Indian descent – somewhat of a rarity among Tory lawmakers.
>
> **Moreover, Patel (whose Indian Gujarati parents fled Idi Amin's Uganda for Britain in the early 1970s) has hewed to a hard-right line on many political issues, including the death penalty, illegal immigration, labor unions and the UK's integration with Europe.**
>
> **Regarding the death penalty, Patel recently told a television news affairs program: "I would actually support the re-introduction of capital punishment to serve as a deterrent. I have no issue on having a debate — I think far too many politicians do run away from debating issues like this."**
>
> She is frequently described in the British press as a "rising star" in the Conservative Party and some believe she might one day become the first Asian Prime Minister of the U.K.
>
> Indeed, Patel might even be considered a "British" version of Nikki Haley, the very telegenic young governor of South Carolina in the U.S., who is not only of Indian Sikh descent, but also a darling of the right-wing Tea Party and hailed as a potential future Vice President or even Presidential candidate.

I like to beat up on the UK, but they do have some MPs who take bold conservative

positions on certain issues. I like Iain Duncan-Smith the best, for example.

In other news, I noticed that the Indian-American governor of Louisiana Bobby Jindal recently won re-election with 66% of the vote. He has a 63% approval rating. He is a Republican, of course – just like the Indian-American governor of South Carolina, Nikki Haley.

Book review of “The Cell’s Design” by Fazale Rana

October 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J.W. Wartick reviews “The Cell’s Design” by biochemist Fazale Rana.

Excerpt:

> The first line of evidence comes from the machines in the cell. Again, Rana’s approach is analogical, rather than negative. The machine-like nature of the flagellum, along with other motor-like cellular functions presents an argument: “Organisms display design. Therefore, organisms are the product of a creator” (86).
>
> The case doesn’t rest merely upon molecular machines. Rather, that is but one of the many lines of evidence. Rana draws out the implications of several “chicken-and-egg” paradoxes. These include the “mutual interdependence of DNA and proteins” (99), the origin of proteins themselves (100ff), and more (105ff). These systems present a kind of “irreducible complexity in which the system depends on the system to exist” (108).
>
> Other elements of design are present in the cell as well. Aquaporins intricate and detailed workings illustrate the design that is present in the system (111ff). Other detailed, intricate designs (such as collagen, mRNA, and the breakdown of proteins) hint at the need for a designer. But the reasoning is not only supported by the details, it is also bolstered by the structural composition of the cell (126ff). The analogy of cells to machines is strengthened further by the quality control systems within the cell (198ff). Again, the reasoning is analogical–these things are designed, therefore they need a designer.
>
> “Information can’t be separated from the activity of an intelligent agent” (142). The numerous examples of information in the cell lead to the inference of an agent. But it is not only the information’s presence that hints at a designer. Here Rana’s case really builds on and develops the work of other ID theorists. The information alone could be enough to infer an agent, but one must also account for the fact that cellular information follows rules like syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (144ff). It is not merely information, it is the use of that information and the rules governing that use that strengthen the case for an agent behind the information.

It never hurts to know a lot about cosmology and biochemistry, those seem to be the best areas for offensive science apologetics.

I have this book and a later book by Rana called “Creating Life in the Lab” sitting on my ironing board (which is where I put all my to-read books) . Maybe it’s time for me to start reading those and posting book reviews.

Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 interviews historian Craig Evans

October 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Interview with Craig Evans

I'm not sure how I missed this, but this interview is definitely in the top 5 that Brian has done.

Description:

> Today's interview is with Biblical scholar Professor Craig Evans. He talks about his background and how he got into this area of scholarship (Jesus, the Gospels and Biblical manuscripts), what impresses him most about the Bible, handling manuscripts, the quest for the historical Jesus (and its overall timeline), the scholarly opinion on the "Jesus never existed" claim, the consensus of scholarship (and why scholarship is important), the contemporary distortion of Jesus, the demonstrable flaws in the thinking of particular scholars, evaluating presuppositions, a case for the reliability of the Gospels, the contrasting view of the "other" gospels, how to investigate the miracle claims within the Gospels, responding to the "failed apocalyptic prophet" objection, the faults in Bart Ehrman's reasoning, advice for those taking their Biblical studies seriously, the do's and don'ts of arguing for Bible reliability, and more.

> Find Craig Evans' website here. His author page here. See also *Fabricating Jesus*.

You can grab the MP3 file here. It's 73 minutes! But worth the time.

Berkeley warmist Richard Muller accused of “hiding the decline” by team member

October 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> It was hailed as the scientific study that ended the global warming debate once and for all – the research that, in the words of its director, ‘proved you should not be a sceptic, at least not any longer’.
>
> Professor Richard Muller, of Berkeley University in California, and his colleagues from the Berkeley Earth Surface Temperatures project team (BEST) claimed to have shown that the planet has warmed by almost a degree centigrade since 1950 and is warming continually.
>
> Published last week ahead of a major United Nations climate summit in Durban, South Africa, next month, their work was cited around the world as irrefutable evidence that only the most stringent measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions can save civilisation as we know it.
>
> But today The Mail on Sunday can reveal that a leading member of Prof Muller’s team has accused him of trying to mislead the public by hiding the fact that BEST’s research shows global warming has stopped.
>
> Prof Judith Curry, who chairs the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at America’s prestigious Georgia Institute of Technology, said that Prof Muller’s claim that he has proven global warming sceptics wrong was also a ‘huge mistake’, with no scientific basis.
>
> Prof Curry is a distinguished climate researcher with more than 30 years experience and the second named co-author of the BEST project’s four research papers.
>
> Her comments, in an exclusive interview with The Mail on Sunday, seem certain to ignite a furious academic row. She said this affair had to be compared to the notorious ‘Climategate’ scandal two years ago.
>
> Like the scientists exposed then by leaked emails from East Anglia University’s Climatic Research Unit, her colleagues from the BEST project seem to be trying to ‘hide the decline’ in rates of global warming.
>
> In fact, Prof Curry said, the project’s research data show there has been no increase in world temperatures since the end of the Nineties – a fact confirmed by a new analysis that The Mail on Sunday has obtained.
>
> ‘There is no scientific basis for saying that warming hasn’t stopped,’ she said. ‘To say that there is detracts from the credibility of the data, which is very

> unfortunate.'
>
> […]Prof Muller also wrote an article for the Wall Street Journal. It was here, under the headline 'The case against global warming scepticism', that he proclaimed 'there were good reasons for doubt until now'.
>
> This, too, went around the world, with The Economist, among many others, stating there was now 'little room for doubt'.
>
> Such claims left Prof Curry horrified.
>
> 'Of course this isn't the end of scepticism,' she said. 'To say that is the biggest mistake he [Prof Muller] has made. When I saw he was saying that I just thought, "Oh my God".'
>
> In fact, she added, in the wake of the unexpected global warming standstill, many climate scientists who had previously rejected sceptics' arguments were now taking them much more seriously.
>
> They were finally addressing questions such as the influence of clouds, natural temperature cycles and solar radiation – as they should have done, she said, a long time ago.
>
> […][Guelph University professor]Prof McKittrick added: 'The fact is that many of the people who are in a position to provide informed criticism of this work are currently bound by confidentiality agreements.
>
> 'For the Berkeley team to have chosen this particular moment to launch a major international publicity blitz is a highly unethical sabotage of the peer review process.'
>
> In Prof Curry's view, two of the papers were not ready to be published, in part because they did not properly address the arguments of climate sceptics.
>
> As for the graph disseminated to the media, she said: 'This is "hide the decline" stuff. Our data show the pause, just as the other sets of data do. Muller is hiding the decline.
>
> 'To say this is the end of scepticism is misleading, as is the statement that warming hasn't paused. It is also misleading to say, as he has, that the issue of heat islands has been settled.'

Should I be surprised that the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, the Huffington Post, etc. would publish alarmist propaganda before doing their homework? Every single one of them trumpets the fact that this man is a "global warming skeptic". The truth is, of course, that he is nothing of the kind.

The San Francisco Chronicle explains. (H/T Junk Science)

Excerpt:

> Although **Muller estimates 2 in 3 odds that humans are causing global warming**, "the fact that the original conclusion of Mann et al. is 'plausible' is damning with faint praise," he said. "Theories are plausible; discoveries are

> supposed to be proven."

Can these mainstream media journalists check anything before swallowing hoaxes hook, line and sinker?

Related posts

- MUST-READ: How reliable are the "independent" reviews of Climategate?
- NASA admits that their data is worse than CRU Climate-gate data
- 19 points that undermine the claims of global warming alarmists
- UN IPCC global warming alarmism based on student essay and magazine article
- How the UN's IPCC cites non-scientific claims from the World Wildlife Fund
- Chairman of UN's IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Britain to be hit by coldest winter in 100 years
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal
- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline
- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now

Mitt Romney flip-flop videos: flat tax, abortion, health care, public sector unions, global warming

October 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Most of the other Republican candidates are supporting flat taxes. But what does Mitt Romney support?

Human Events explains.

Excerpt:

> In a full page Boston Globe advertisement in 1996, Romney attacked Steve Forbes' flat tax proposal as being unfair and a "tax cut for fat cats!"
>
> In the ad, he took an entirely populist theme saying among other things that the Forbes flat tax will drop taxes on the super-rich while stiffing the middle class.
>
> The ad said, "0% Forbes tax on Kennedy's, Rockefellers, and Forbes down and gone," and on the other side said, "Forbes tax on you up and up!"

The Club for Growth noted Romney's opposition to the flat tax in it's white paper:

> His strident opposition to the flat tax is most curious and difficult to explain since Romney wasn't a political candidate at the time. In 1996, he ran a series of newspaper ads in Boston, New Hampshire, and Iowa denouncing the 17% flat tax proposed by then presidential candidate Steve Forbes as a "tax cut for fat cats." In 2007, Romney continued to oppose the flat tax with harsh language, calling the tax "unfair."

That's Romney's actual view on tax reform. Whatever he says during an election campaign cannot be believed, because the man will say anything to get elected. Don't believe me? Watch the videos below.

This short video shows a few of Romney's biggest flip flops.

Note: I don't support John Huntsman, but that's a good look at Romney's flip-flops.

Another one on global warming:

Another one on health care:

And another one on public sector unions:

Why is this man getting 20% of the vote in the Republican primary? He is not a serious candidate. Stop judging on appearances and make a right judgment.

Read more about Mitt Romney's horrible policies in Massachusetts in this post.

Nancy Pelosi: 1800 waivers for Obamacare were given to small firms – like McDonald's

October 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Guy Benson at TownHall. Nancy Pelosi thinks that the waivers for Obamacare were only given to small companies… some of them very, very, small companies.

Excerpt:

> The spin:
>
> *[Nancy Pelosi speaking]: "They're small. I couldn't speak to all 1,800 of them, but some of the lists that I have seen have been **very, very small companies**. They will not have a big impact on the economy of our country."*
>
> Flashback I:
>
> Nearly a million workers won't get a consumer protection in the U.S. health reform law meant to cap insurance costs because the government exempted their employers. Thirty companies and organizations, **including McDonald's and Jack in the Box**, won't be required to raise the minimum annual benefit included in low-cost health plans, which are often used to cover part-time or low-wage employees.
>
> Flashback II:
> Of the 204 new Obamacare waivers President Barack Obama's administration approved in April, 38 are for fancy eateries, hip nightclubs and decadent hotels in House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's Northern California district.

And more:

> **UPDATE** – Obama: *Bring back Speaker Pelosi!*

> President Obama on Saturday said Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) was a great House Speaker and that she will get that job back after the 2012 elections. "I am biased, but **I think Nancy was one of the best Speakers of the House this country ever had**," Obama said after Pelosi had introduced him at the National Italian American Foundation gala. "She was no doubt the best Italian American Speaker of the House we ever had. And **I believe that she will be the best Speaker of the House again in 2013**."

The Weekly Standard notes that over half of the Obamacare waivers were given to big unions – the same big unions that spent millions to get Obama elected.

Excerpt:

> Not surprisingly, it helps to be a Democratic ally when seeking a waiver. The Republican Policy Committee reports that over half of the workers that have been

> exempted so far belong to unions:
>
> The plans newly approved for waivers cover more than 160,000 people, bringing to nearly 3.1 million the number of individuals in plans exempted from the health law's requirements. Of the participants receiving waivers, more than half – over 1.55 million – are in union plans, raising questions of why such a disproportionate share of union members are receiving waivers from the law's requirements. The percentage of participants receiving waivers that come from unions also continues to rise – the number was 48% in April, and 45% in March.
>
> Unions already received a generous concession in the health care bill. Their generous "cadilac" insurance plans were exempted from being taxed until 2018, adding about $120 billion to the bill's cost over ten years.

This is the woman who treated the national debt like her own personal credit card and rang up 5.34 trillion in purchases over the four years that she was Speaker of the House.

Theologian R.C. Sproul interviews Stephen C. Meyer

November 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Five clips featuring one my of all round favorite Christian scholars – in the top 3 for sure.

Clip 1 of 5:

Clip 2 of 5:

Clip 3 of 5:

Clip 4 of 5:

Clip 5 of 5:

Dr. Meyer's Ph.D is in the philosophy of science, obtained from Cambridge University.

Related posts

- Stephen Meyer explains what intelligent design is in a CNN editorial.
- Stephen Meyer's Signature in the Cell in top ten science books on Amazon.com
- Stephen Meyer debate against Michael Shermer on Lee Strobel's TV show

A closer look at Herman Cain's business experience

November 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal Minneapolis Star Tribune. (H/T Powerline Blog)

Excerpt:

> Herman Cain, the Republican presidential hopeful, says he can turn around the country just as he did Godfather's Pizza 25 years ago.
>
> Business success has never guaranteed political success. But Cain demonstrated during a tour with Pillsbury Co. in the 1980s that he is a successful, charismatic leader. With flair and hard work, he turned around Pillsbury's struggling Philadelphia Burger King region and revived a near-dead Godfather's Pizza.
>
> "My career spans 38 years and I've worked for 26 different managers," said Frank Taylor, a recently retired Burger King financial executive whom Cain hired as his regional controller in 1983. "Herman was far and away the best I've worked for in terms of getting a team together, sharing a vision and accomplishing the goals. And nothing diverted him."
>
> Cain also shared the wealth. When Burger King distributed $50,000 apiece to the regional vice presidents as reward for good performance in 1985, most of the regional bosses spent it on a trip to a posh resort for themselves and other managers and spouses. The enlisted troops got a dinner. Cain took everybody in his office, including administrative staff, on the same three-day reward cruise, Taylor recalled.
>
> Cain, 65, the son of a domestic worker and a chauffeur, earned degrees in math and computer science and worked in computer systems and business analysis during 10 years in the Navy and at Coca-Cola. He moved to Pillsbury as a business analyst in 1977. He managed the move of Pillsbury into its new downtown Minneapolis headquarters in 1982. And, in 1983, Cain got a shot in field management at Pillsbury's restaurant division.
>
> The Philadelphia region of Burger King ranked near the bottom among Burger King's 12 groups. Cain brought analytical strengths and energy. He fired and hired. He praised and exhorted the survivors. He turned the region into a top performer within two years.
>
> "I worked with him fairly closely at Burger King," recalled George Mileusnic, a former Pillsbury executive, now a Twin Cities consultant. "He was good strategically and good with people, including working long hours in Burger King stores to get that bottom-up experience. He had about 500 stores in that Philadelphia region and he did a great job."

Herman Cain leads Romney by 1 point in the latest Iowa poll and leads Perry by 1 point in the latest Texas poll.

Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers

November 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> An energy company that received a $43 million loan guarantee through the same federal program that backed Solyndra has followed the path of the failed solar firm and filed for bankruptcy.
>
> Beacon Power Corporation filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Sunday in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware. The company, which develops energy storage systems based on what are known as "flywheels," had received the federal guarantee for a 20-megawatt energy storage plant in Stephentown, N.Y., back in August 2010.
>
> […]The Massachusetts-based company also received $29 million in grants from the Energy Department and the state of Pennsylvania through separate programs for a plant in Hazle Township, Pa.
>
> Beacon Power Corporation has not responded to a request for comment from FoxNews.com.
>
> […]Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., ranking member of the Senate Banking Committee, called the revelation of the bankruptcy another example of "the reckless abuse of taxpayers' dollars in the pursuit of green jobs." He also suggested that crony capitalism had a hand in the decision to give Beacon a loan.
>
> One of the most controversial aspects of the Solyndra case — aside from the sheer size of the $535 million guarantee — was a decision earlier this year to prioritize private investors over taxpayers in case of bankruptcy. Republicans have accused the administration of giving precedence to investors in the companies who are also Obama backers.
>
> "As with Solyndra, the head of Beacon Power appears to have been a supporter of President Obama's," Sessions said in a statement.
>
> "Increasingly, we are moving away from our capitalist heritage and towards a system where most Americans play by the rules while some are able to rig the game in their favor. The real divide is not split along income lines, but between the politically-connected and those—whether businesses or individuals—who just want the freedom to earn a living."
>
> […]Campaign finance records show top Beacon officials contributing to Democratic candidates. Capp apparently was an Obama supporter, giving at least $500 to the Obama campaign in 2008. He also donated to Rep. Niki Tsongas, D-Mass.

> Beacon employee Matthew Polimeno has donated $750 since 2008 to Tsongas' campaign and another $250 to the failed campaign of Massachusetts Democratic Senate candidate Martha Coakley. CFO James Spiezio also donated $250 to the Coakley campaign in 2009.

Marsha Blackburn is also involved in investigating the $535 million loan to Solyndra.

Solyndra is another Democrat-connected company that went bankrupt after getting taxpayer dollars from the Obama administration.

Related posts

- E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra
- Report finds Labor Department's green jobs program failing
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- How well did Obama's green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors
- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing
- Marsha Blackburn beats up Al Gore on cap and trade corruption

Women and apologetics: heads for men and hearts for women?

November 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting essay about women and apologetics posted by Mary from South Africa.

Here's her thesis:

> If you like to potter around apologetics blogs on the internet (my guess, if you're reading this, is that you do), or if you attend apologetics events, you'll notice that the ratio of men to women is skewed somewhat towards there being a lot more men involved in such things than women.
>
> Now before anyone thinks this is going to be a feminist diatribe about glass ceilings and male domination, hear me out. I have no problem with there being plenty of men in apologetics. I want every Christian I can get to take an interest in apologetics – male or female. Moreover, I'm a pretty traditional Christian woman who believes in male leadership in the home and church, so a radical feminist agenda is most definitely not my aim. My aim is not to discourage men from taking part in apologetics, or to advocate for any artificially imposed gender balance, but to encourage more women to get involved in apologetics.
>
> To do that, we need to consider why this imbalance exists to the degree that it does.

And here's a sample:

> It may well be that there will still be fewer women taking part in debates because of women's avoidance of emotionally upsetting situations. However, if a woman feels she can deal with such situations, all strength to her! Particularly when radical feminism lashes out at the Christian worldview as it applies to women there is a real opportunity for women to demonstrate that they can be strong in the way God intended without having to compromise their commitment to Christ or His plan for women.
>
> Organized debates are also not the only platform to exercise apologetics. We're not all able to be William Lane Craig, but we are all able to "(a)lways be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks [us] to give the reason for the hope that [we] have" (1 Peter 3:15). Moreover, Peter goes on to make clear that this should be done "with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against [our] good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander". This is quite the opposite of cold and being hard. Yes, it is always a challenge (for men and for women) to be gentle and respectful while being uncompromising on the truth. But it's certainly not a cold, unfeminine way to do things.

> In fact, women's greater tendency to connect with and express their emotions may actually help them to keep Peter's suggested manner of apologetic practice in mind. It may also help them to strike up one-to-one connections with others which lead very naturally to discussions in which apologetics are useful in presenting the Christian faith.
>
> Within the family too, every Christian wife and mother can play a vital role by using apologetics to encourage and support her husband and to instruct and bring up her children with a good, solid basis for Christian faith. We are so much stronger in a team than on our own and marriage is the best human team, designed by God, for navigating the world together for Him. One's children too will be faced with a variety of arguments as to why they shouldn't follow the faith of their parents. Thankfully there are good, logical reasons why they can make the Christian faith their own. It is an important parental responsibility to convey these reasons to one's children and to help them grapple with the questions that will arise as they grow up. While this is important for both men and women to do, women usually spend more time with their children than men do, and they need to be prepared for the particular opportunities that this presents. Women have immense power as mothers to affect future generations. William Ross Wallace was right when he said that "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." Mothers and those who would be mothers need to equip themselves so that they may equip their children for godly influence in all spheres of life, not least of all in Christian apologetics.

It's nice when women look forward to practicing apologetics in their roles of wife and mother. I think if women were more forward thinking, then they would not only see the value of learning apologetics for themselves, but they would also expect men to know apologetics.

I think I remember something about Mary… this other post on the prosperity gospel posted at Far Above Rubies was written by a "Mysterious M" from South Africa. Could it be the same person?

Ron Paul on the issues: Ron Paul's positions on abortion and gay marriage

November 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ron Paul on gay marriage

Let's look in this article from the Advocate to find out Ron Paul's views on same-sex marriage.

Excerpt:

> Paul was asked whether his libertarian views on such controversial issues — mainly his belief that personal liberties should not be encroached upon by the federal government — could help him attract socially conservative voters. Paul said he believes that states should have the right to legalize gay marriage, marijuana, and prostitution if they choose to do so.
>
> "If you do not protect liberty across the board, it's a First Amendment–type issue," he said. "We don't have a First Amendment so we can talk about the weather. We have the First Amendment so we can say very controversial things. So, for people to say that, 'Yes, we have our religious beliefs protected, but people who want to follow something else, or a controversial religion — you can't do this' … if you have the inconsistency, then you're really not defending liberty. But there are strict rules on freedom of choice of this sort, because you can't hurt other people, you can't defame other people, but yes, you have a right to do things that are very controversial. If not, you're going to end up with a government that can tell you what to eat or drink or whatever."
>
> Gay conservative group GOProud released a statement in support of Paul and the other politicians seeking the party's nomination.
>
> "[We] thank Congressman Ron Paul for rightly making the case that marriage and family laws should be decided at the state level, not by the politicians in Washington," the organization said Friday.

That's Ron Paul's view of marriage.

Ron Paul on abortion

Here's what Ron Paul wrote about abortion.

Excerpt:

> As the Senate prepares to vote on the confirmation of Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito this week, our nation once again finds itself bitterly divided over the issue of abortion. It's a sad spectacle, especially considering that our founders never intended for social policy to be decided at the federal level, and certainly not by federal courts. It's equally sad to consider that huge numbers of Americans believe their freedoms hinge on any one individual, Supreme Court

> justice or not.
>
> Roe v. Wade was wrongly decided, but not because the Supreme Court presumed to legalize abortion rather than ban it. Roe was wrongly decided because abortion simply is not a constitutional issue. There is not a word in the text of that document, nor in any of its amendments, that conceivably addresses abortion. There is no serious argument based on the text of the Constitution itself that a federal "right to abortion" exists. The federalization of abortion law is based not on constitutional principles, but rather on a social and political construct created out of thin air by the Roe court.
>
> Under the 9th and 10th amendments, all authority over matters not specifically addressed in the Constitution remains with state legislatures. Therefore the federal government has no authority whatsoever to involve itself in the abortion issue. So while Roe v. Wade is invalid, a federal law banning abortion across all 50 states would be equally invalid.

What states would legalize abortion if Ron Paul allowed states to decide whether abortion should be legal?

Here's the map:

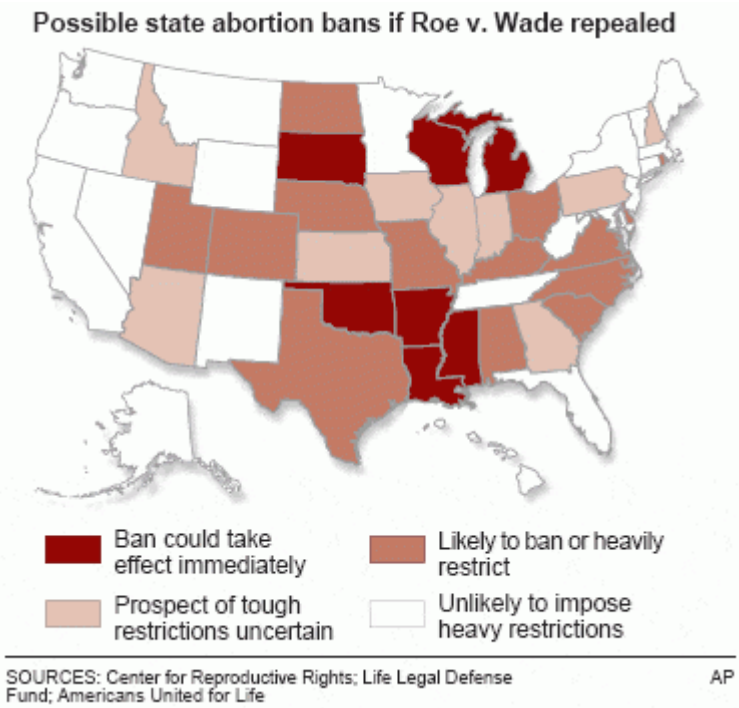

Which states would Ron Paul allow to legalize abortion?
That's Ron Paul's view of abortion.

You can read more about Ron Paul's troubling views on social issues on Caffeinated Thoughts.

But there's more. Here's Ron Paul's view of the Middle East. He is indifferent to Iran having nuclear weapons. Especially troubling, given the recent terrorist attack on American soil, which implicated the elite Iranian Quds Force.

UPDATE: A commenter adds:

> It’s more accurate to say that these are Paul’s views on how states should go about answering these issues. His personal views on these issues are quite clear, that he ascribes to the natural view of marriage and abhors abortion. However he advocates relegating these issues to individual states because of his overriding commitment to a limited federal government and because he believes the constitution does not enumerate such decisions to the federal government for it to answer such questions for all states in the union.

This is true. But if the man becomes President, a lot of unborn babies will still be killed in states that he allows to legalize abortion, and a lot of children will still grow up without a mother or a father, in states that he allows to redefine marriage. So despite his personal views, the net effect of electing him will be that abortion is permitted in some states, and same-sex marriage, too. So clearly, Ron Paul is not as pro-life or as pro-marriage as other candidates like Michele Bachmann or Rick Santorum.

Republicans want Obama to cancel Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac bonuses

November 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A Republican senator is calling on President Obama to cancel the $12.8 million in bonuses that were approved for 10 executives at the government-seized mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac that received a $170 billion taxpayer-funded bailout.
>
> "I am calling on the president of the United States to cancel those bonuses and explain to the American people, the taxpayers who bailed out Freddie and Fannie, why he continues to reward failure," Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., said at a news conference Tuesday.
>
> The two housing giants have received about $141 billion in taxpayer funds since the government took them over in 2008 during the financial crisis.
>
> Politico first reported the $6.46 million in bonuses for the top five officers at Freddie Mac — including $2.3 million for CEO Charles E. Haldeman Jr., who is stepping down next year — and $6.33 million for Fannie Mae officials, including $2.37 million for CEO Michael Williams, for meeting modest goals.
>
> A second bonus installment for Freddie executives in 2010 has yet to be reported to the Securities and Exchange Commission, Politico reported.

So where will these million dollar bonuses come from?

Fannie and Freddie Bailout Chart

They come from taxpayers. Obama's millionaires and billionaires get the bailouts, you get the bill.

In case you are looking for a good summary of the subprime mortgage crisis, read this recent article from Investors Business Daily.

Dennis Prager offers the best concise analysis of the effects of feminism ever

November 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager has summarized many of my viewpoints on this blog in a tiny, tiny little article. He calls it "Four Legacies of Feminism".

Read the whole glorious thing and bask in its wisdom!

Full text:

> As we approach the 50th anniversary of the publication of Betty Friedan's feminist magnum opus, *The Feminine Mystique*, we can have a perspective on feminism that was largely unavailable heretofore.
>
> And that perspective doesn't make feminism look good. Yes, women have more opportunities to achieve career success; they are now members of most Jewish and Christian clergy; women's college sports teams are given huge amounts of money; and there are far more women in political positions of power. But the prices paid for these changes — four in particular — have been great, and outweigh the gains *for women*, let alone for men and for society.
>
> 1) The first was the feminist message to young women to have sex just as men do. There is no reason for them to lead a different sexual life than men, they were told. Just as men can have sex with any woman solely for the sake of physical pleasure, so, too, women ought to enjoy sex with any man just for the fun of it. The notion that the nature of women is to hope for at least the possibility of a long-term commitment from a man they sleep with has been dismissed as sexist nonsense.
>
> As a result, vast numbers of young American women had, and continue to have, what are called "hookups"; and for some of them it is quite possible that no psychological or emotional price has been paid. But the majority of women who are promiscuous do pay prices. One is depression. *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat recently summarized an academic study on the subject: "A young woman's likelihood of depression rose steadily as her number of partners climbed and the present stability of her sex life diminished."
>
> Long before this study, I had learned from women callers to my radio show (an hour each week — the "Male-Female Hour" — is devoted to very honest discussion of sexual and other man-woman issues) that not only did female promiscuity coincide with depression, it also often had lasting effects on women's ability to enjoy sex. Many married women told me that in order to have a normal sexual relationship with their husband, they had to work through the negative aftereffects of early promiscuity — not trusting men, feeling used, seeing sex as unrelated to love, and disdaining their husband's sexual overtures. And many

> said they still couldn't have a normal sex life with their husband.
>
> 2) The second awful legacy of feminism has been the belief among women that they could and should postpone marriage until they developed their careers. Only then should they seriously consider looking for a husband. Thus, the decade or more during which women have the best chance to attract men is spent being preoccupied with developing a career. Again, I cite woman callers to my radio show over the past 20 years who have sadly looked back at what they now, at age 40, regard as 20 wasted years. Sure, these frequently bright and talented women have a fine career. But most women are not programmed to prefer a great career to a great man and a family. They feel they were sold a bill of goods at college and by the media. And they were. It turns out that most women without a man do worse in life than fish without bicycles.
>
> 3) The third sad feminist legacy is that so many women — and men — have bought the notion that women should work outside the home that for the first time in American history, and perhaps world history, vast numbers of children are not primarily raised by their mothers or even by an extended family member. Instead they are raised for a significant part of their childhood by nannies and by workers at daycare centers. Whatever feminists may say about their only advocating choices, everyone knows the truth: Feminism regards work outside the home as more elevating, honorable, and personally productive than full-time mothering and making a home.
>
> 4) And the fourth awful legacy of feminism has been the demasculinization of men. For all of higher civilization's recorded history, becoming a man was defined overwhelmingly as taking responsibility for a family. That notion — indeed the notion of masculinity itself — is regarded by feminism as the worst of sins: patriarchy.
>
> Men need a role, or they become, as the title of George Gilder's classic book on single men describes them: *Naked Nomads*. In little more than a generation, feminism has obliterated roles. If you wonder why so many men choose not to get married, the answer lies in large part in the contemporary devaluation of the husband and of the father — of men as men, in other words. Most men want to be honored in some way — as a husband, a father, a provider, as an accomplished something; they don't want merely to be "equal partners" with a wife.
>
> In sum, thanks to feminism, very many women slept with too many men for their own happiness; postponed marriage too long to find the right man to marry; are having hired hands do much of the raising of their children; and find they are dating boy-men because manly men are so rare.
>
> Feminism exemplifies the truth of the saying, "Be careful what you wish for — you may get it."

I wish I could add something to this, but I can't because every time I think of something

to add, he says it in the next sentence.

If you like this short essay, then this medium essay arguing against feminism authored by Barbara Kay would be nice follow-up.

It might be worth forwarding these articles along to your friends. And I highly recommend books on male-female relationships and roles by George Gilder, especially "Men and Marriage".

We can’t wait: the do-nothing Democrat Senate is blocking 15 bipartisan jobs bills

November 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you heard about “The Forgotten 15“? Here’s a news article by the Washington Times that explains it.

Excerpt:

> Last week, the House passed a strongly bipartisan bill which would prevent a job-killing 3 percent withholding tax on all government contractors from going into effect. Even though the White House supports the measure, Mr. Reid, a Nevada Democrat, has chosen instead to bring another “small bite” from the president’s failed American Jobs Act to the floor. He wants to hike taxes on business owners so he can blow $60 billion in more stimulus for bike paths, choo-choo trains and bus stops.
>
> Mr. Reid can’t even round up all the Democrats behind his partisan plan, but he continues to drag his feet on items that could pass because the last thing he wants to do is adopt legislation that gives the GOP the chance to take some credit with the public.
>
> The Senate has not been this inactive in at least a quarter-century. As of Tuesday, the Senate had held 194 votes for the year, 54 fewer than at this time last year.
>
> The intransigence has real-world implications. In March, the House passed a strongly bipartisan bill which would have stopped a court order from imposing duplicate and expensive regulations on farmers and ranchers. The Senate never brought the bill up for a vote, and on Monday a key deadline passed, allowing new regulations on pesticide applications to go into effect. That’s bad for jobs.
>
> House Republican leaders want the public to know that they aren’t to blame for the stalemate on Capitol Hill. Speaker John A. Boehner produced a card listing the “forgotten 15” jobs bills that have passed the House but not the Senate. The Ohio Republican gave the card to members, telling them to carry it with them, hold it up at events at home, and flash it during interviews to remind Americans that Republicans are doing everything they can to address the employment situation.
>
> The Democratic strategy is to set up Republicans as a foil for their 2012 re-election bids. Even though the congressional approval rating is down in the single-digits, Mr. Reid wants to draw a distinction between his party and the GOP by only bringing up bills that Republicans will oppose so his caucus can send out accusatory press releases.
>
> The messaging is carefully crafted to fit with Mr. Obama’s latest campaign trail

> slogans about how “we can’t wait” for Congress to act. He showed his true motives on Tuesday when the president invited congressional Democrats to the White House to ostensibly talk about the jobs agenda. He has no plans to invite Republicans over to chat.

You can print a PDF of the The Forgotten 15 card right here.

Remember, Democrats are great at spending money – not so good at creating jobs.

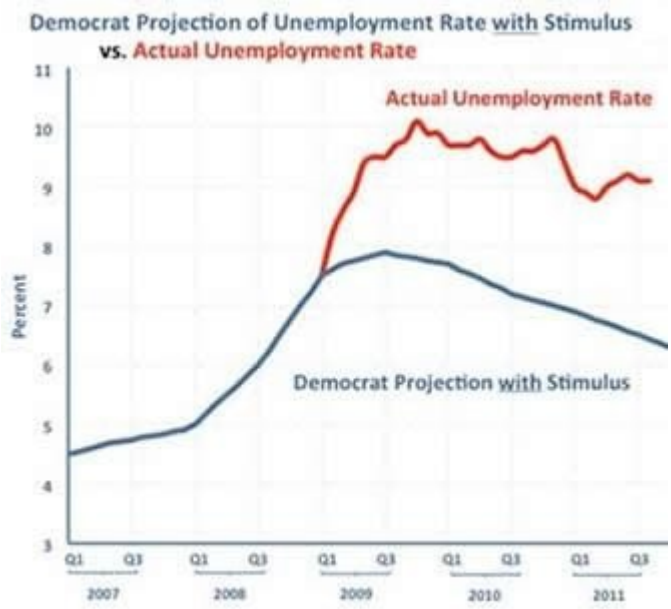

Projected vs Actual Unemployment With Stimulus 2011

Back in 2007, when the Republicans controlled the House and Senate, the unemployment rate was near 4%. FOUR PERCENT. And we had a deficit of $160 billion – NOT 1.6 TRILLION.

Let’s take a closer look at the Forgotten 15 from an article on John Boehner’s web site.

Excerpt:

> Campaigning for another failed stimulus and more job destroying taxes, President Obama has repeatedly—and falsely—asserted that “Congress isn’t willing to move” legislation to facilitate job growth. While the president plays politics, House Republicans have been working and approving legislation to promote economic growth and job creation. The House has approved more than 15 bills that, if enacted, would immediately help to grow the economy without more failed stimulus spending. These bills are currently stalled in the Democrat-controlled Senate and the president has not encouraged the Senate to act.

Here is a sample:

> **4) H.R. 1230—Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act**: H.R. 1230 would require the Department of the Interior (DOI) to auction offshore oil and gas leases in the Central and Western Gulf of Mexico, as well as in an area off the coast of Virginia. The bill would help to reduce energy prices and promote job creation by expediting offshore oil and natural gas exploration in the Gulf of

Mexico and the Virginia coast.

6) H.R. 1231—Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act: H.R. 1231 would require that each five-year offshore oil and gas leasing program offer leasing in the areas with the most prospective oil and gas resources, and would establish a domestic oil and natural gas production goal. The bill would essentially lift the President's ban on new offshore drilling by requiring the Administration to move forward on American energy production in areas estimated to contain the most oil and natural gas resources.

7) H.R. 2021—The Jobs and Energy Permitting Act of 2011: H.R. 2021 would eliminate needless permitting delays that have stalled important energy production opportunities off the coast of Alaska. The bill would also eliminate the permitting back-and-forth that occurs between the EPA and its Environmental Appeals Board. Rather than having exploration air permits repeatedly approved and rescinded by the agency and its review board, the EPA will be required to take final action – granting or denying a permit—within six months.

10) H.R. 1938— North American-Made Energy Security Act: H.R. 1938 would direct the President, acting through the Secretary of Energy, to coordinate with all federal agencies responsible for an aspect of the President's National Interest Determination and Presidential Permit decision regarding construction and operation of Keystone XL, to ensure that all necessary actions are taken on an expedited schedule. The bill would promote job creation and energy security by ending the needless delay of the construction and operation of the Keystone XL pipeline.

11) H.R. 2587—Protecting Jobs From Government Interference Act: H.R. 2587 would prohibit the National Labor Relations Board (NRLB) from ordering any employer to close, relocate, or transfer employment under any circumstance.

16) H.R. 2433—Veterans Opportunity to Work Act: H.R. 2433 would create or modify programs that provide employment and training services to veterans and service members separating from active duty. The bill would also make changes to programs that offer home loan guarantees, ambulance services, and pension payments to qualifying individuals. Among other things, the bill would provide up to 12 months of Veterans Retraining Assistance to no more than 100,000 unemployed veterans that enter education or training programs at community colleges or technical schools to prepare them for employment in an occupational field that is determined by Department of Labor to have significant employment opportunities.

17) H.R. 674—To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the imposition of 3 percent withholding on certain payments made to vendors by government entities: H.R. 674 would permanently repeal the imposition of 3 percent withholding on certain payments made to vendors by government entities. Currently, the imposition of the 3 percent withholding is set

> to take effect on January 1, 2013. If the 3 percent withholding tax were implemented as scheduled, government entities would be required to withhold 3 percent of payments to persons providing property or services to the government. For example, on an invoice for $20,000 the government would pay the business $19,400 and withhold $600 as a preemptive tax. These added costs would almost certainly translate into fewer private-sector jobs and higher costs for the government and taxpayers.

They are actually up to 17 jobs bills now.

And finally, I have to post this funny John Boehner clip:

We need more of that Mr. Boehner. I think that was a good opportunity to say “freaking” as well. Because he should be pissed off with this Solyndra-bailout President.

New study: total compensation of public school teachers is 52% greater than fair market value

November 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Whenever advocates of greater spending on education try to argue that teachers are not paid enough, they always compare teachers to other workers to other workers in terms of years spent in college. On that view, a software engineer with 6 years of college (B.S. and M.S. in computer science) is the same as an English teacher with 6 years of "Education college" (B.Ed and M.Ed in education). But is the ability to write code to perform real-time commercial transactions in a distributed database environment really deserving of the same total compensation as teaching 6-year olds how to read Dr. Seuss books? Is the supply of each skill set the same? Is the demand for each skill set the same? What should the price of each kind of labor be?

Let's see what this new study from the American Enterprise Institute says.

Excerpt:

> The teaching profession is crucial to America's society and economy, but public-school teachers should receive compensation that is neither higher nor lower than market rates. Do teachers currently receive the proper level of compensation? Standard analytical approaches to this question compare teacher salaries to the salaries of similarly educated and experienced private-sector workers, and then add the value of employer contributions toward fringe benefits. These simple comparisons would indicate that public-school teachers are undercompensated. However, comparing teachers to non-teachers presents special challenges not accounted for in the existing literature.
>
> First, formal educational attainment, such as a degree acquired or years of education completed, is not a good proxy for the earnings potential of school teachers. Public-school teachers earn less in wages on average than non-teachers with the same level of education, but teacher skills generally lag behind those of other workers with similar "paper" qualifications.

Here's what the study shows:

- The wage gap between teachers and non-teachers disappears when both groups are matched on an objective measure of cognitive ability rather than on years of education.
- Public-school teachers earn higher wages than private- school teachers, even when the comparison is limited to secular schools with standard curriculums.
- Workers who switch from non-teaching jobs to teaching jobs receive a wage increase of roughly 9 percent. Teachers who change to non-teaching jobs, on the other hand, see their wages decrease by roughly 3 percent. This is the opposite of what one would expect if teachers were underpaid.

- Pension programs for public-school teachers are significantly more generous than the typical private sector retirement plan, but this generosity is hidden by public-sector accounting practices that allow lower employer contributions than a private-sector plan promising the same retirement benefits.
- Most teachers accrue generous retiree health benefits as they work, but retiree health care is excluded from Bureau of Labor Statistics benefits data and thus frequently overlooked. While rarely offered in the private sector, retiree health coverage for teachers is worth roughly an additional 10 percent of wages.
- Job security for teachers is considerably greater than in comparable professions. Using a model to calculate the welfare value of job security, we find that job security for typical teachers is worth about an extra 1 percent of wages, rising to 8.6 percent when considering that extra job security protects a premium paid in terms of salaries and benefits.

And they conclude:

> We conclude that public-school teacher salaries are comparable to those paid to similarly skilled private sector workers, but that more generous fringe benefits for public-school teachers, including greater job security, make total compensation 52 percent greater than fair market levels, equivalent to more than $120 billion overcharged to taxpayers each year.

Well, maybe teachers are overpaid – but that would be OK if they were somehow super intelligent and productive.

Are teachers intelligent?

CBS Moneywatch explains what the research shows about teachers.

Excerpt:

> Research over the years has indicated that education majors, who enter college with the lowest average SAT scores, leave with the highest grades. Some of academic evidence documenting easy A's for future teachers goes back more than 50 years!
>
> The latest damning report on the ease of majoring in education comes from research at the University of Missouri, my alma mater. The study, conducted by economist **Cory Koedel** shows that **education majors** receive "substantially higher" grades than students in every other department.
>
> Koedel examined the grades earned by undergraduates during the 2007-2008 school year at three large state universities that include sizable education programs — University of Missouri, Miami (OH) University and Indiana University. The researcher compared the grades earned by education majors with the grades earned by students in 12 other majors including biology, economics, English, history, philosophy, mathematics, chemistry, psychology and sociology.
>
> Education majors enjoyed grade point averages that were .5 to .8 grade points

> higher than students in the other college majors. At the University of Missouri, for instance, the average education major has a 3.80 GPA versus 2.99 GPA (science, math, econ majors), 3.12 GPA (social science majors) and 3.16 GPA (humanities majors).

So it is easy for teachers with lower SAT scores to get much higher grades than other applicants to non-teaching programs with much higher SAT scores. It doesn't sound like the smartest people go to teachers college. Nor does it sound as if they learn anything very challenging when they are there.

Are teachers doing a good job of teaching useful skills?

CNN sheds some light on how well teachers perform.

Excerpt:

> Last week, the College Board dealt parents, teachers and the education world a serious blow. According to its latest test results, "SAT reading scores for the high school class of 2011 were the lowest on record, and combined reading and math scores fell to their lowest point since 1995."
>
> The reading scores, which stand at 497, are noticeably lower than just six years ago, when they stood at 508. And it's just the second time in the last 20 years that reading scores have dropped so precipitously in a single year.
>
> […]The 2011 budget for the Department of Education is estimated to top $70 billion, while overall spending on public elementary and secondary education is about $600 billion a year. By comparison, in 1972, before the Department of Education even existed, SAT critical reading scores for college-bound seniors were above 525, more than 20 points higher than they are today, while today's math scores are only slightly better than in 1972.

So, not only are these highly-paid teachers less intelligent (on average) than other college applicants, but they also fail to educate our children properly. And we are forced to pay them, through taxes, regardless of how they perform. Our children who are suffering from this failed monopoly.

Do teacher unions improve teacher quality?

And do you know who protects bad teachers from being fired, and prevents good teachers from being paid more?

This is why we need to abolish the federal Department of Education and teacher unions. Why are we paying these people ridiculous salaries and benefits to fail our children?

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- One day of substitute teaching qualifies union lobbyists for teacher pensions
- California public schools introduce gay indoctrination starting in kindergarten
- Atlanta public schools caught helping students to cheat on standardized tests
- Does the NAACP care more about children's educations or union jobs?
- NY state public schools spend the most money but get lousy results
- New Jersey per-pupil cost is $17,800
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

Can atheists know whether God has a reason for allowing pain and suffering?

November 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This tiny little thing is a No-See-Um

Have you heard about the terrible noseeums? Then read on, for Steven Cowan will tell you about them.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude. Consider the recent Tsunami in the Indian Ocean that took the lives of almost 200,000 people. Consider as well the infamous Nazi Holocaust in which millions of Jews and others were mercilessly slaughtered. Moreover, we can watch the evening news on almost any day and hear of people in our neighborhoods being robbed, beaten, and murdered. How and why could God allow such things?

Excerpt:

> However, perhaps God's existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God's existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By "pointless evil," Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe's argument may be simply stated as follows:

> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the "noseeum inference." Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a "noseeum" is something that you cannot see—it is a "no-see-um." And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I "no-see-um" a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous. Humans just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a

noseeum. Just because we don't see it doesn't mean it isn't there, and the burden of proof is on the person who says there is NO morally sufficient reason. They're making the claim, they have to shoulder the burden of proof.

By the way, I HAVE the PDF of the William Alston paper. But I can't post it publicly because it's copyrighted.

However, here is a summary of his argument: (it's unnecessarily wordy – this is not Thomas Sowell or Theodore Dalrymple writing this)

> The recent outpouring of literature on the problem of evil has materially advanced the subject in several ways. In particular, a clear distinction has been made between the "logical" argument against the existence of God ("atheological argument") from evil, which attempts to show that evil is logically incompatible with the existence of God, and the "inductive" ("empirical", "probabilistic") argument, which contents itself with the claim that evil constitutes (sufficient) empirical evidence against the existence of God. It is now acknowledged on (almost) all sides that the logical argument is bankrupt, but the inductive argument is still very much alive and kicking.
>
> In this paper I will be concerned with the inductive argument. More specifically, I shall be contributing to a certain criticism of that argument, one based on a low estimate of human cognitive capacities in a certain application. To indicate the point at which this criticism engages the argument, I shall use one of the most careful and perspicuous formulations of the argument in a recent essay by William Rowe (1979).
>
> 1. There exist instances of intense suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse. ,
> 2. An omniscient, wholly good being would prevent the occurrence of any intense suffering it could, unless it could not do so without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.
> 3. There does not exist an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good being (p. 336).
>
> Let's use the term 'gratuitous suffering' for any case of intense suffering, E, that satisfies premise 1, that is, which is such that an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented it without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.'
>
> […]The criticism I shall be supporting attacks the claim that we are rationally justified in accepting 1, and it does so on the grounds that our epistemic situation is such that we are unable to make a sufficiently well grounded determination that 1 is the case. I will call this, faute de mieux, the agnostic thesis, or simply agnosticism. The criticism claims that the magnitude or complexity of the question is such that our powers, access to data, and so on are radically insufficient to provide sufficient warrant for accepting 1.And if that is so, the

> inductive argument collapses.

What the atheist has to show is that God could have prevented some instance of evil that appears to be pointless without losing any overall goodness. I.e. – suppose someone gets sick and has to stay home instead of going to a party. The person is suffering, but how do we know that God isn't justified in allowing this suffering? What if, by allowing this suffering, God protects the person from being killed by a drunk driver? If the atheist says that there cannot be ANY moral justification for allowing the suffering, he has to be able to know what would happen in the future to know that nothing good would never come out of it. That's the burden of proof on the atheist, and Alston claims that the atheist is not in a position to know that.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

But as I said before, atheist confuse the purpose of life. They think that the purpose of life is to have happy feelings, and they wonder "how could allowing me to suffer create MORE happy feelings?" And that's where the problem arises. They can't accept the idea that God has a right to form their character, to put them through certain experiences, and to place humans in times and places where he can orchestrate a world that meets his needs, not our needs.

You can hear William Lane Craig use the noseeum inference in his debate with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong on the problems of evil and suffering. (MP3)

I also found this opening speech from a debate that Steven Cowan did on the problem of evil, which may also be useful to you.

The *best* place to learn about no-see-ums is in this amazing, perfect lecture by Biola University professor Doug Geivett.

China continues to sell advanced anti-ship cruise missiles to Iran

November 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Firing a Chinese-manufactured C-802 anti-ship cruise missile

The Washington Times reports.

Excerpt:

> China is continuing to provide advanced missiles and other conventional arms to Iran and may be doing so in violation of U.N. sanctions against the Tehran regime, according to a draft report by the congressional U.S.-China Commission. "China continues to provide Iran with what could be considered advanced conventional weapons," the report of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission says. According to the report, which will be made public Nov. 16, China sold $312 million worth of arms to Iran, second only to Russia, after Congress passed the Iran Freedom Support Act in 2006 that allows the U.S. government to sanction foreign companies that provide advanced arms to Iran. The report also noted that, after Russia began cutting back arms transfers to Iran in 2008, China became the largest arms supplier to the Iranian military. Most of the weapons transfers involved sales of Chinese anti-ship cruise missiles, including C-802 missiles that China promised the United States in 1997 would not be exported to Iran. China also built an entire missile plant in Iran last year to produce the Nasr-1 anti-ship cruise missile.

The Nasr-1 has a range of 19 miles. The C-802 has a range of 75 miles. That means that the C-802 has about the same range as a Harpoon SSM. Not good. I am not worried about the Nasr-1, but the C-802 is a problem. These weapons could be used by terrorists to attack allied naval vessels. In fact, the New York Times reported that Hezbollah, a terrorist group linked to Iran, used the C-802 missile to sink an Israeli Saar 5 corvette back in 2006.

Excerpt:

> The power and sophistication of the missile and rocket arsenal that Hezbollah has used in recent days has caught the United States and Israel off guard, and officials in both countries are just now learning the extent to which the militant group has succeeded in getting weapons from Iran and Syria.
>
> While the Bush administration has stated that cracking down on weapons proliferation is one of its top priorities, the arming of Hezbollah shows the blind spots of American and other Western intelligence services in assessing the threat, officials from across those governments said.
>
> American and Israeli officials said the successful attack last Friday on an Israeli naval vessel was the strongest evidence to date of direct support by Iran to Hezbollah. The attack was carried out with a sophisticated antiship cruise missile, the C-802, an Iranian-made variant of the Chinese Silkworm, an American intelligence official said.
>
> At the same time, American and Israeli officials cautioned that they had found no evidence that Iranian operatives working in Lebanon launched the antiship missile themselves.
>
> But neither Jerusalem nor Washington had any idea that Hezbollah had such a missile in its arsenal, the officials said, adding that the Israeli ship had not even activated its missile defense system because intelligence assessments had not identified a threat from such a radar-guided cruise missile.
>
> […]Officials said it was likely that Iran trained Hezbollah fighters on how to successfully fire and guide the missiles, and that members of Iran's Al Quds force — the faction of the Revolutionary Guards that trains foreign forces — would not necessarily have to be on the scene to launch the C-802.
>
> At the same time, some experts said Iran was not likely to deploy such a sophisticated weapon without also sending Revolutionary Guard crews with the expertise to fire the missile.

Note that this is the same Quds force that likely trained Iraqi terrorists in the use of IEDs and is suspected of being involved with the recent attack on the Saudi ambassador on American soil. I have no idea why we were dicking around in Libya and Egypt when we have major problems with Iran, and, by extension, Syria and Lebanon.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration sends $47 million a year to China for foreign aid.

Democrats hire Soros-backed pro-abortion activist to do outreach to Christians

November 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> The Democratic National Committee (DNC) has hired a prominent pro-abortion activist to lead the religious outreach program as it prepares to support the re-election campaign of pro-abortion President Barack Obama.
>
> The Demcoratic Party has hried Rev. Dr. Derrick Harkins, the senior pastor of the prestigious Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, one of the largest historic black congregations in Washington, DC. In addition to serving on the board of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Harkins serves on an advisory board for the pro-abortion Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.
>
> He also serves on the board of the liberal advocacy group Faith and Public Life, funded by leftist philanthropies like George Soros and the Tides Foundation, both of which support abortion.
>
> In 2009, Harkins argued that Obamacare is morally imperative even though pro-life groups virtually unanimously opposed it (except for one, Democrats for Life of America) because of concerns related to taxpayer funding of abortions, rationing issues, and lack of conscience protections for pro-life medical workers.
>
> […]Family Research Council Action president Tony Perkins says he doesn't think the new director will have any luck reaching pro-life advocates who are upset that Obama has repeatedly promoted abortion, forced them to pay for abortions or funding pro-abortion organizations in multiple circumstances, or cozied up with leaders of pro-abortion groups like NARAL and Planned Parenthood.
>
> "A Barna Research Survey conducted earlier this year shows that President Obama has a 6 percent favorability rating among evangelicals. A more recent Quinnipiac survey reports that the President has a 39 percent favorability rating among Catholics," Perkins said. "The DNC and the President may hope this effort will reverse his falling poll numbers among religious voters, but I predict that as the fruit of this administration is examined by Christian voters, the President will find little support."
>
> "The President's policies that promote abortion also undermine family formation," Perkins added.
>
> "Abortion does this by contributing to infant mortality, victimizing women, and encouraging the abdication of responsibility by men. He has issued executive orders to fund foreign abortion organizations and use tax dollars for experimentation on human embryos. He is even opposed to commonsense

> parental notification laws. These laws reaffirm the unique role that a mother and father have in the life of a child," the FRC leader continued.
>
> Perkins said real religious outreach from the Obama campaign would require him to defend human life at its earliest stages.
>
> The FRC leader also said his organization would join others in making sure voters understand the depths to which Obama has gone to promote abortion and abortion funding.

Obama is not just pro-choice – he promotes abortion and wants pro-life taxpayers to subsidize it. He wants pro-life doctors and nurses to be *forced* to perform abortions, under the threat of being fired from their jobs. No authentic Christian can vote for this man in good conscience.

Induced abortions, drinking and use of contraceptives all increase breast cancer risk

November 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the latest study from the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), showing that excessive consumption of alcohol is a rish factor for breast cancer.

Excerpt:

> Consumption of 3 to 6 alcoholic drinks per week is associated with a small increase in the risk of breast cancer, and consumption in both earlier and later adult life is also associated with an increased risk, according to a study in the November 2 issue of JAMA.
>
> "In many studies, higher consumption of alcohol has been associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. However, the effect of low levels of drinking as is common in the United States has not been well quantified," according to background information in the article. "In addition, the role of drinking patterns (i.e., frequency of drinking and 'binge' drinking) and consumption at different times of adult life are not well understood."
>
> Wendy Y. Chen, M.D., M.P.H., of Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, and colleagues examined the association of breast cancer with alcohol consumption during adult life, including quantity, frequency, and age at consumption. The study included 105,986 women enrolled in the Nurses' Health Study who were followed up from 1980 until 2008 with an early adult alcohol assessment and 8 updated alcohol assessments. The primary outcome the researchers measured was the risk of developing invasive breast cancer.
>
> During the follow-up period, there were 7,690 cases of invasive breast cancer diagnosed among the study participants. Analyses of data indicated that a low level of alcohol consumption (5.0 to 9.9 grams per day, equivalent to 3-6 glasses of wine per week) was modestly but statistically significantly associated with a 15 percent increased risk of breast cancer. In addition, women who consumed at least 30 grams of alcohol daily on average (at least 2 drinks per day) had a 51 percent increased risk of breast cancer compared with women who never consumed alcohol.
>
> The researchers also found that when examined separately, alcohol consumption levels at ages 18 to 40 years and after age 40 years were both strongly associated with breast cancer risk. The association with drinking in early adult life still persisted even after controlling for alcohol intake after age 40 years.
>
> Binge drinking, but not frequency of drinking, was also associated with breast cancer risk after controlling for cumulative alcohol intake.

Now let’s take a look at some other factors that raise the risk of breast cancer.

Abortion and breast cancer

Many studies show a link between abortion and breast cancer.

Study 1: (September 2010)

> Based on the expression of estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2/neu (HER2), breast cancer is classified into several subtypes: luminal A (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2-), luminal B (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2+), HER2-overexpressing (ER-, PR-, and HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-, PR-, and HER2-). The aim of this case-control study is to determine reproductive factors associated with breast cancer subtypes in Chinese women. A total of 1,417 patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the First Affiliated Hospital, China Medical University, Shenyang, China between 2001 and 2009 and 1,587 matched controls without a prior breast cancer were enrolled.
>
> […]Postmenopause and spontaneous abortion were inversely associated with the risk of luminal tumors. By contrast, multiparity, family history of breast cancer and **induced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer**.

Study 2: (March 2010)

> OBJECTIVE: To explore the risk factors of breast cancer for better control and prevention of the malignancy.
>
> METHODS: The clinical data of 232 patients with pathologically established breast cancer were investigated in this 1:1 case-control study to identify the risk factors of breast cancer.
>
> RESULTS: The history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and **multiple abortions were the statistically significant risk factors of breast cancer**, while breast feeding was the protective factor.
>
> CONCLUSION: A history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and multiple abortions are all risk factors of breast cancer.

But wait, there’s more.

Birth control pills

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9) and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed childbearing was a

> risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

Why are these risk factors so prevalent today?

Now let's put it all together by looking at this New York Times article by Nancy Bauer.

Excerpt:

> If there's anything that feminism has bequeathed to young women of means, it's that power is their birthright. Visit an American college campus on a Monday morning and you'll find any number of amazingly ambitious and talented young women wielding their brain power, determined not to let anything — including a relationship with some needy, dependent man — get in their way. **Come back on a party night, and you'll find many of these same girls (they stopped calling themselves "women" years ago) wielding their sexual power, dressed as provocatively as they dare, matching the guys drink for drink — and then hook-up for hook-up.**

The article was written by:

> *Nancy Bauer is associate professor and chair of philosophy at Tufts University. She is the author of "Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism," and is currently completing a new book, "How to Do Things With Pornography."*

Her comments cause me to ask some questions. Where did women *ever* get the idea that they had to drink as much as men drink? Where did women *ever* get the idea that using contraceptives to enable hook-up sex was healthy and normal? Where did women *ever* get the idea that aborting their own unborn children was healthy and normal? Is there one unifying worldview that stipulates all of these beliefs? Why has this worldview become so popular that so many young women who now believe in it, rather than believing in traditional Judeo-Christian values?

Who is paying for all of this increased health care spending?

The total cost for breast cancer treatment, which raises medical insurance premiums (private health care) or taxes (single-payer health care), has been estimated to be

between $1.8 billion and $3.8 billion dollars. In addition, the government spends billions of dollars each year on breast cancer research. All of this spending is costing taxpayers a lot of money, as people demand more and more government funding of breast cancer research and breast cancer treatment (with either private or single-payer health care).

Is the news media's treatment of Herman Cain an example of media bias?

November 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

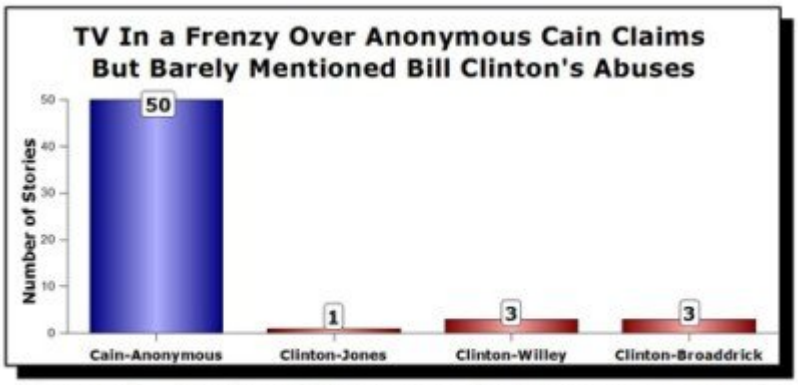

Stories on the ABC, CBS and NBC morning and evening news programs in the first 3 days after each scandal first broke.

What is the simplest explanation for these differences?
From Newsbusters.

Excerpt:

> Over a period of just three and a half days, NBC, CBS and ABC have developed an insatiable hunger for the Herman Cain sexual harassment story, devoting an incredible 50 stories to the allegations since Monday morning. In contrast, over a similar period these networks mostly ignored far more substantial and serious scandals relating to Bill Clinton.
>
> […]In comparison, over a similar three-day period these same programs were far less interested in charges against Democrat Bill Clinton. After Paula Jones held a public press conference in February of 1994, there was only one report on her allegations.
>
> Following Kathleen Willey's July 1997 claims of being groped by the President, there were a mere three reports. For Juanita Broaddrick, who came forward in February of 1999 to say Clinton raped her, only three stories followed charges appearing in the Wall Street Journal.
>
> It should also be pointed out that all these women offered their names. They weren't anonymous. Additionally, the accusations of assault and rape go far beyond what's being mentioned with the Cain scandal.

Cain has a new ad out that calls the media out for media bias:

The news media doesn't want Cain to be President. Why not? What is the most obvious reason for this egregious case of media bias?

Understanding sexual harassment laws and incentives

ECM sent me this interesting article by a trial lawyer who specializes in these lawsuits.

Excerpt:

> When you consider that, more than a decade ago, Herman Cain settled some unspecified sexual-harassment claims, you also need to consider that the only things you need to file a lawsuit are the filing fee and a printer. Facts are optional.
>
> Maybe Cain did harass some employees. But the dirty little secret among lawyers that defend business people from lawsuits — and among those lawyers who bring them — is that an enormous percentage of such claims are frivolous, if not flat-out lies.
>
> Concepts like "truth" and "justice" have little meaning in the world of big-money litigation. Thanks to ravenous plaintiffs' lawyers empowered by the politicians they buy with campaign contributions, every business person is in the crosshairs.
>
> […]Lawsuits are so expensive to defend that it makes good business sense to settle even the most frivolous cases. And businesses do.
>
> TV and movies would have you believe that most lawsuits end up with a jury hearing the evidence and rendering a verdict. That almost never happens. Close to 97 percent of civil cases never see a courtroom. The vast majority settle, with the business paying good money to end the nightmare — money that could have gone to hiring struggling young people, buying new equipment or expanding.
>
> And, as Herman Cain has learned, you never really can buy your peace. The accusers apparently signed nondisclosure agreements so that Cain and his company could put the accusations behind them. A lot of good that did. Whether it was the accusers or others who revealed the claims, the effort to buy peace now looks like wasted money.
>
> In the world of sexual-harassment law, the accusations are bad enough. You're guilty until proven innocent. The law is skewed toward the plaintiffs — it's hard to get even the silliest charges tossed out, and even then it often costs upward of six figures to do so.
>
> Businesses almost never collect their legal fees back after defeating frivolous claims, but a winning plaintiff usually does. And when the lawyer is working on a contingency, taking 40 percent or more of the haul and fronting the costs of the suit, there's little incentive not to march down to the courthouse and file even the flimsiest case.

I've written before about the epidemic of false rape accusations – a recent Purdue University study has shown that 40-50% of rape accusations are false. Not unproven, but false – just like with the Duke University lacrosse team and the stripper. That post I linked to is filled with news stories of women recanting false rape charges. The same thing happens in divorces when women want to get custody of the children and the child support dollars. The easiest thing in the world to do is to make a false charge of child abuse – it never even goes to trial.

Excerpt:

> A mother who consults a divorce attorney will be advised that her best chance of gaining custody is simply to take the children and all their effects and leave without warning. If she has no place to go, she will be told that by accusing the father of sexual or physical abuse, however vaguely (often simply stating that she is "in fear"), she can easily obtain a restraining order immediately forcing him out of the family home. She will also learn that even if her claims are false, there are no legal consequences she will face for making them; her trumped-up accusations cannot even be used against her in a custody decision. In fact, they work so strongly in her favor that failure to advise a female client of these options may constitute legal malpractice.
>
> Far from being punished for child-snatching and false accusations, then, she is almost certain to be rewarded. Mothers who abduct children and keep them from their fathers, with or without abuse charges, are routinely given immediate "temporary" custody. But it is almost never "temporary." Once a mother has custody, it cannot be changed without a lengthy (and, for the lawyers involved, lucrative) court battle. The sooner and the longer she can establish herself as the sole caretaker, the more difficult and costly it is to dislodge her. Further, the more she cuts the children off and alienates them from the father, slings false charges, delays the proceedings, and obstructs his efforts to see his children, the better her chance for obtaining sole custody. She can then claim child support and perhaps her own legal fees from the father.

We can't fly off the handle based on anonymous charges. We have to wait for the evidence. There are lot of people who want Cain to lose, and those people will say anything. And they don't have to prove any of it to hurt him in the polls.

What do studies tell us about mainstream media bias?

Now let's take a look at media bias in general.

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for

> one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican

> contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

And here's a bit from that same article about The New Yorker:

> The last bulwark against bias's slipping into The New Yorker is the copy department, whose chief editor, Ann Goldstein, gave $500 in October to MoveOn.org, which campaigns for Democrats and against President Bush. "That's just me as a private citizen," she said. As for whether donations are allowed, Goldstein said she hadn't considered it. "I've never thought of myself as working for a news organization."

Those are the facts.

So what?

Now consider this column from Brent Bozell, which explains the difference media bias makes to political intelligence.

Excerpt:

> The Republican presidential contest is picking up steam. Obama is consistently polling under 50 percent. This one's a toss-up, and in the thick of it is the Fox News Channel. It's not just their role in hosting and vetting the candidates. It's their role as the chief villain in the eyes of liberal Democrats struggling to push their version of the "truth" about Obama.
>
> Jon Stewart rhetorically asked Chris Wallace about Fox on "Fox News Sunday, because he thought he knew the answer: "Who are the most consistently misinformed media viewers? The most consistently misinformed? Fox, Fox viewers, consistently, every poll."
>
> In the real world – outside Stewart's smug bubble – this is garbage. A 2008 survey by the Pew Research Center asked media consumers three questions: which party was in control of Congress (Democrats), who was the secretary of state (Condi Rice) and who was the prime minister of Britain (Gordon Brown).
>
> Let's document how the viewers of "Hannity &Colmes" were better informed than Stewart's "Daily Show" gigglers on basic political facts. Hannity viewers beat Stewart's on the Democratic majority (84 percent to 65 percent correct answers), Condi Rice (a dramatic 73 percent to 48 percent gap) and Gordon Brown (49 percent to 36). Overall, as a percentage getting all three questions right, Hannity won 42-30.

Just keep that in mind when you are watching the mainstream media news shows. A very good site to bookmark and read is Newsbusters, which documents mainstream media bias daily. I even have an RSS feed of their latest stories on the front page on this blog.

UPDATE: New York Times cites abortion advocates as neutral sources.

What you need to know: videos about the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem (BGV theorem)

November 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you all read my summary of the excellent debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican? That was probably the best debate I have seen in since 2005. Millican knew all about Craig's argument from the Big Bang cosmology and he proposed a dozen challenges to Craig's premises. But Craig was able to establish the beginning of the universe by appealing to something called the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem. This theorem is new – but it is worth learning about.

First, let's review Craig's cosmological argument:

> A1) The origin of the universe
>
> 1. The universe began to exist.
> 2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
> 3. The universe has a transcendent cause.
>
> The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.
>
> There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.
>
> The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.
>
> Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.
>
> The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

So he appealed to the Bord-Guth-Vilenkin theorem right from the start in order to guarantee a space-time boundary in the past – i.e., a beginning of the universe, which is his premise 1.

Ok, now let's take a look at the videos.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem, explained

Part 1:

Part 2:

Millican tried to argue that there was a way to get a beginning in an eternal universe if the universe was contracting. I'm guessing he means that the new universe would begin to exist within some outside hyper-universe.

But Craig had a response:

Further study

If you would like to read a nice LONG article about Craig's cosmological argument, just check this post I wrote a while back. And it even contains a nice peer-reviewed paper that Craig wrote for an Astrophysics journal – and the abstract is *online* on Springer! Now put your Evil Hat on and think with me – think of the fun you could have by sending that paper to all your atheist friends. Send them the abstract on Springer, and send them the full text of the article. Then send them the link to my summary of the Craig-Millican debate which has the audio. If that doesn't rehabiliate God's reputation and honor in their eyes, then nothing will. At the very least, they should be ready to accept that atheism is not as well supported by science, which is exactly the way that God intended things to be.

What does the Bible say in Psalm 19:1-6:

1 The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
2 Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
3 They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
4 Yet their voice[b] goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.
5 It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
6 It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth.

And in Romans 1:20:

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

And in Hebrews 11:3:

3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Indeed. And it's our job to make his glory know to the unbeliever – using good science.

Mitt Romney's political views on gay marriage, abortion and global warming

November 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this article about Mitt Romney's political views from the Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Mitt Romney was firm and direct with the abortion rights advocates sitting in his office nine years ago, assuring the group that if elected Massachusetts governor, he would protect the state's abortion laws.
>
> Then, as the meeting drew to a close, the businessman offered an intriguing suggestion — that he would rise to national prominence in the Republican Party as a victor in a liberal state and could use his influence to soften the GOP's hard-line opposition to abortion.
>
> He would be a "good voice in the party" for their cause, and his moderation on the issue would be "widely written about," he said, according to detailed notes taken by an officer of the group, NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts.
>
> "You need someone like me in Washington," several participants recalled Romney saying that day in September 2002, an apparent reference to his future ambitions.
>
> Romney made similar assurances to activists for gay rights and the environment, according to people familiar with the discussions, both as a candidate for governor and then in the early days of his term.
>
> […]Melissa Kogut, the NARAL group's executive director in 2002, recalled Wednesday that as she and other participants in the meeting began to pack their belongings to leave after the 45-minute session, Romney became "emphatic that the Republican Party was not doing themselves a service by being so vehemently anti-choice."
>
> The abortion rights supporters came away from the meeting pleasantly surprised. Romney declined to label himself "pro-choice" but said he eschewed all labels, including "pro-life." He told the group that he would "protect and preserve a woman's right to choose under Massachusetts law" and that he thought any move to overturn the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision would be a "serious mistake for our country."
>
> "We felt good about the interview. He seemed genuine," said Nicole Roos, the NARAL official who took the notes and shared them with a reporter.

Same-sex marriage:

> Romney's approach to reassuring the left was first evident in 1994, when he tried to unseat Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D) by offering himself as an unconventional

> Republican in the mold of the popular and socially liberal Gov. William Weld.
>
> In a widely publicized letter to the Log Cabin Republicans, a gay group, he touted himself as a stronger advocate on gay rights issues than the liberal lion himself.
>
> In an Aug. 25, 1994, interview with Bay Windows, a gay newspaper in Boston, he offered this pitch, according to excerpts published on the paper's Web site: "There's something to be said for having a Republican who supports civil rights in this broader context, including sexual orientation. When Ted Kennedy speaks on gay rights, he's seen as an extremist. When Mitt Romney speaks on gay rights he's seen as a centrist and a moderate.
>
> "It's a little like if Eugene McCarthy was arguing in favor of recognizing China, people would have called him a nut. But when Richard Nixon does it, it becomes reasonable. When Ted says it, it's extreme; when I say it, it's mainstream."
>
> In his campaign for governor eight years later, he publicly opposed gay marriage. But he again courted Log Cabin Republicans, meeting with them at a gay bar in Boston and sitting for another interview with Bay Windows, leaving some in the community with a vaguer impression of his stance.
>
> In that interview, he called himself the "token Republican" who could use the power of his office to push lawmakers toward supporting certain domestic-partner benefits. He singled out the speaker of the state House at the time, who opposed legislation on that issue.
>
> "I will support and endorse efforts to provide those domestic partnership benefits to gay and lesbian couples," Romney said.
>
> One participant in the Log Cabin session said Romney simply seemed opposed to the word "marriage" being used for same-sex couples.
>
> "I certainly inferred from that that he didn't have a problem with me as long as I called it something other than the M-word," said Boston businessman Richard Babson.
>
> Another participant, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that Romney "left the impression of being friendly to the concept of some sort of same-sex union and not being vehemently opposed to gay marriage."

Global warming:

> On the environment, Romney seemed interested in carving out an agenda largely in line with the state's most fervent activists on the left.
>
> After he took office in 2003, some state employees and activists were nervous about how the new governor would approach the climate-change issue. Massachusetts had already reached an agreement with other Northeastern states and some Canadian provinces on a plan to limit greenhouse gas emissions.
>
> Romney surprised them by taking a hands-on approach, personally helping craft a "Massachusetts Climate Protection Plan" that he unveiled in 2004.

> He reorganized the state government to create the Office of Commonwealth Development — with the former president of the liberal Conservation Law Foundation, Douglas Foy, as its head — to better coordinate climate work and sustainable-growth activities among different agencies.
>
> As he worked on the plan, according to people familiar with the process, he even overruled some objections by his chief of staff, who criticized the plan as potentially too left-leaning.
>
> Romney backed incentives for buying efficient vehicles, tougher vehicle emissions rules and mandatory cuts in emissions linked to global warming.
>
> The plan not only called for reducing the state's overall greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2010 and cutting them another 10 percent by 2020, but it said that "to eliminate any dangerous threat to the climate . . . current science suggests this will require reductions as much as 75-85 percent below current levels."
>
> […]Beyond the state climate plan, Romney repeatedly pushed to promote clean energy and cut the use of fossil fuels.
>
> In March 2003 he pledged to buy up to $100 million worth of electricity from renewable sources. That month, he declared, "the global warming debate is now pretty much over."

That's his record as governor. Why should we listen to his speeches now when we have his record as governor to tell us what the man really believes?

I previously posted videos of Mitt Romney explaining his views on abortion, gun control, gay rights, socialized medicine, stem cell research, etc.

Top ten foreign policy and national security issues for 2012

November 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Asia

From the American Enterprise Institute.

Here's the list:

1. Iran, and the American retreat from Iraq
2. Dealing with Islam and China in South Asia
3. America's strategy for Pakistan
4. Defense spending priorities
5. American support for Israel
6. The Islamization of Turkey
7. Collapse of the European economies
8. Demographic crisis in Europe
9. Demographic crisis in Russia
10. Strategy for the Middle East

They have one article linked for each topic, so I chose the Islamization of Turkey.

Full text:

> Turkey was a key American ally throughout the Cold War. As one of only two NATO countries to share a border with the Soviet Union, Turkey proved pivotal not only to the defense of Europe but also for American interests in Asia. The Turkish army fought alongside U.S. troops in Korea. Americans embraced Turkey not only for its strategic role, but also for its values. The Turkish government was

> decidedly Western-leaning. Turkey may have been majority Muslim, but most Turks saw their future tied more to the West than the Middle East.
>
> Over the past nine years, however, Turkey has changed. No longer can Turkey be called a democracy. The Pew Global Attitudes Project now ranks Turkey as the most anti-American country it surveys. Reporters Without Frontiers ranks Turkish press freedom below even Zimbabwe and Venezuela. Turkey has imprisoned more journalists than even China and Iran. As Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has sought to Islamize society, Turkish women have lost both their equality and safety: The murder rate of women has increased 1,400 percent since Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party took power.
>
> Erdoğan has reoriented Turkey's foreign policy as well. Turkey now not only embraces the Arab world, but it allies itself with its more radical factions: Turkey endorses Hamas, Hezbollah, Sudan's genocidal dictator Omar al-Bashir, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Whereas a decade ago, the alliance between Turkey and Israel stabilized the Eastern Mediterranean, today diplomats worry that Turkey's antagonism toward both Israel and Cyprus could lead to military conflict in the region. In September 2010, Turkey raised eyebrows at the Pentagon when it held secret war games with the Chinese air force without first alerting Washington. Because Turkey increasingly is the obstacle to NATO consensus, its future in the defensive alliance may now be open to question.
>
> Any new president will be faced with serious decisions regarding Turkey. Should Turkey remain in NATO? If so, should the United States share its next generation F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, Predators, and AWACS aircraft with Turkey? Lastly, if Erdoğan fulfills his promise to use the Turkish navy to challenge Israel's blockade of Gaza, leading to a fight between two traditional American allies, on whose side will the White House be, and what actions would the new president take?

This is a primer, so the articles are fairly short. Just enough to give you background information on the hot spots that the next President will have to deal with. Can you think of any issues they left out? I think that we should also be concerned with the drug cartels in Mexico, the continuous sabre-rattling from Venezuela, threats to our Asian allies from China, and whether we still need to have so many troops in Europe and South Korea.

It's good for Christians to have some awareness of national security and foreign policy issues. It only takes an hour to read a few articles and to have some understanding of the issues we are facing, so that we can discuss them with others and vote properly. There's going to be a foreign policy debate for the GOP primary on November 22, 2011, so it would be good for us to study up so we can understand what they are talking about.

Evidence for the soul from science in the book “The Spiritual Brain”

November 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a great book review of “The Spiritual Brain” on the Poached Egg – an excellent place for Christian apologists to find things to read. The book review is hosted at Probe Ministries and is authored by Heather Zeiger. The book talks about evidence from neuroscience showing that the mind cannot be reduced to merely physical processes.

Excerpt:

> We have shown, however, how the evidence from neuroscience doesn’t seem to fit the materialistic worldview. As we will see, some experiments reported in *The Spiritual Brain* cannot be explained from this worldview. What we will find is that they fit nicely within a Christian worldview.
>
> The first example is obsessive compulsive disorder therapy. Obsessive compulsive disorder, or OCD, occurs when a person has distressing or unwanted thoughts that dominate their thinking, and these obsessions trigger an urge to do some kind of ritual behavior, also known as a compulsion. The interesting thing about OCD is that the person knows that the obsession is irrational and the ritual won’t really fix it, but their feelings tell them otherwise. Scientific studies have shown that the brain is actually misfiring. The part of the brain that tells a person, “There’s a problem, do something to fix it,” is firing at the wrong times. OCD is a clear case of a healthy mind and a malfunctioning brain.
>
> A materialistic worldview would say that the only way to treat OCD is by *physically* fixing the bad neurons. However, the treatment that actually works involves the patients *mentally* fixing the bad neurons. Patients learn to take control of their OCD by recognizing when their brain is misfiring, and try to starve the urges to do the ritual. After treatment, brain scans show that the brain of an OCD patient is starting to fix itself. The patient is changing his physical brain with his mind!
>
> Similar kinds of therapies have been applied to depression and phobias.In both cases, *The Spiritual Brain* reports instances where a patient’s brain chemistry was directly affected by their mind.
>
> Another phenomenon that can’t be explained from a materialist’s worldview is the placebo effect. The patient is given a medicine that they are told will help them, but in actuality they are given a sugar pill. Interestingly, the patient’s belief that the sugar pill will help them has caused measurable, observable relief from symptoms. Many doctors say that a patient’s attitude oftentimes can help or hinder real medicines or therapies from working.
>
> The ability of the mind to change the brain’s chemistry does not fit within a

> materialistic worldview. But as Christians we know that our minds are very real and can have a very real effect on our physical bodies.

You can read more about the OCD research here. The scientist is Jeffrey M. Schwartz. He has also published work on this in peer-reviewed journals.

I liked "The Spiritual Brain" so much that I gave away copies to my co-workers a few years back. When I am talking to people about the mind and the brain, I like to augment the philosophical arguments (free will, intentionality, identity over time, etc.) with arguments from neuroscience, and even corroborative near death experiences. You can make a pretty good case for the soul if you pull together evidence from lots of disciplines.

By the way, if you like this topic, and want a resource to show your friends, be sure and get a hold of the debate on mind vs. brain between Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Michael Shermer.

UPDATE: I just received word from a commenter (below) that Dr. Beauregard has a new book coming out next year. Good news!

What is issue 2? Should you vote no on Ohio issue 2?

November 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the 2010 mid-term elections, Republican John Kasich won the governorship and promised to balance the state's budget by reining in the state's spending on salaries and benefits for public sector union employees. To accomplish this, the Ohio legislature pass Senate Bill 5. However, an effort is on the ballot to repeal the law, and Ohio voters will get a chance to keep or scrap the law on Tuesday, November 8th, 2011.

Here's what Ohio's State Issue 2 is all about:

> Issue 2 makes some very fair and common sense requests of our government employees to give local communities the flexibility they need to get taxes and spending under control, while providing the essential services that we rely on.
>
> - It allows an employee's job performance to be considered when determining compensation, rather than just awarding automatic pay increases based only on an employee's length of service.
> - It asks that government employees pay at least 15 percent of the cost of their health insurance premium. That's less than half of what private sector workers are currently paying.
> - It requires that government health care benefits apply equally to all government employees, whether they work in management or non-management positions. No special favors.
> - It asks our government employees to pay their own share of a generous pension contribution, rather than forcing taxpayers to pay both the employee and employer shares.
> - It keeps union bosses from protecting bad teachers and stops the outdated practice of laying off good teachers first just because they haven't served long enough.
> - Finally, it preserves collective bargaining for government employees, but it also returns some basic control of our schools and services to the taxpayers who fund them, not the union bosses who thrive on their mismanagement.
>
> Even under the reforms of State Issue 2, Ohio's government employees will still receive better pay, better health care and better retirement benefits, on average, than the vast majority of Ohioans who work in the private sector.

There are a number of myths going around about Issue 2, and it's important to set the record straight, so I'll do that below.

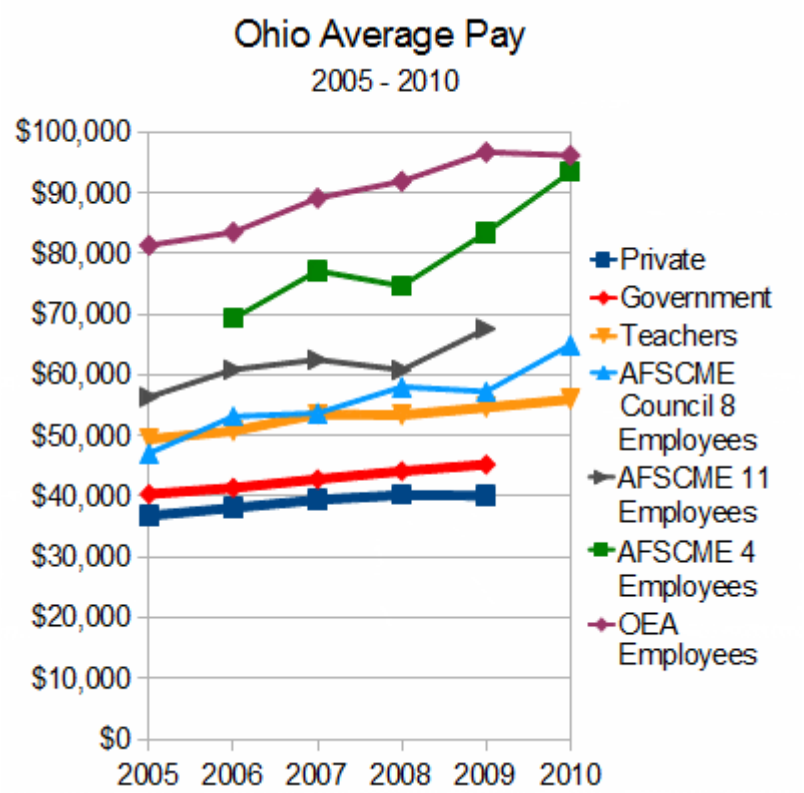

Ohio Average Pay: Public Unions vs. Private

Myths and truths about Ohio State Issue 2

Here's a common myth:

> State Issue 2 would "cut salaries and benefits."

The truth:

> Issue 2 would not cut salaries or benefits for any government employee. Employees would simply be asked to pay a modest share of their benefits, just like employees in the private sector do. For health care coverage, they would pay at least 15% of their overall plan. (Many local government employees currently pay less than 9% of their health care premium, while the average private sector worker pays upwards of 30%.) In addition, employees would be required to pay their personal share of a retirement plan (only 10%), rather than asking taxpayers to pay that share. That's not too much to ask at a time when many private sector workers get no retirement benefit at all. Finally, Issue 2 requires that benefits apply equally to all public employees, so no one gets special treatment.

And another common myth:

> State Issue 2 will eliminate government employee pensions.

The truth:

> Government employees will still get a very generous pension benefit – an annual payment that averages their three highest annual salaries. That's a pretty nice

> deal, when many private sector workers get no retirement benefit at all. State Issue 2 only ends a practice where some government union contracts require taxpayers to pick up the tab for BOTH the employer AND employee shares of a required pension contribution. In this economy, it's simply not right to ask struggling taxpayers to foot the bill so government employees can get a free retirement. Issue 2 simply says government employees should pay their required share (10 percent) and taxpayers will contribute the employer share (14 percent).

Another myth:

> State Issue 2 will cut teacher salaries.

The truth:

> That's one of the scare tactics government unions are using to turn people against these reforms. Nothing in Issue 2 determines salary levels. It only ends the practice of handing out automatic pay raises, or "step" increases, and longevity pay – or bonuses just for holding the job for a certain period of time. Issue 2 also asks that performance be added as a factor in teacher compensation, a goal President Barack Obama set out in his national education policy in 2009.

And another myth:

> State Issue 2 will cost jobs

The truth:

> Just the opposite is true. Ohio's state and local tax burden ranks among the top third in the nation. As a result, companies large and small have left our state in pursuit of better tax incentives elsewhere, taking hundreds of thousands of jobs with them. If Ohio hopes to compete for new job growth, we have to make our state a more affordable place to live, work and do business. That starts with getting the cost of government under control so we can direct more of our limited resources into economic development, community revitalization and better schools.

More myths about Ohio State Issue 2 are corrected on this page.

Newspaper endorsements

So far, Issue 2 has been endorsed by several Ohio newspapers, including the biggest ones.

The Cleveland Plain Dealer:

> *The fiscal picture of local governments and school districts, especially, will improve as they are able to right-size their work forces and their expenditures on services. That will happen over time, not overnight, as new contracts are*

> *established.*
>
> ***Repeal SB 5, though, and it's going to be awfully hard for local governments to manage their payrolls without resorting to larger-scale layoffs than would otherwise be necessary. And local governments will continue to be hamstrung by anti-merit seniority rules that lead to worker complacency and protect dead weight and time-servers.***

Voting YES on Issue 2 will prevent layoffs by keeping public sector wages and benefits in line with what the private sector can afford to pay.

The Columbus Dispatch:

> *Despite the insistence of opponents, the effort to reform Ohio's out-of-balance collective-bargaining law is not an expression of disrespect for or dissatisfaction with Ohio teachers, police officers, firefighters and other government employees. It is a much-needed attempt to restore control over public spending to the public officials elected to exercise that control.*
>
> *It does not assert that public employees are worth less than the compensation they're receiving, only that the compensation has grown faster than the public's ability to pay for it.*
>
> *[…]**With more ability to control the escalation of salary and benefit costs, governments won't be forced as often to impose layoffs, and might be able to afford to keep even more police and firefighters on the streets.***

Again, no one is saying that public sector workers don't matter – the question is whether we can afford to give them better wages and benefits than the private sector workers who are their customers and their employers. Public sector workers work for the public, and the public can only afford to pay so much.

Conclusion

Government employees are paid 43% more than private sector employees, in salary and benefits:

I think that people who care about the long-term prosperity of Ohio should vote "YES" on Issue 2 to make public and private salaries and benefits MORE EQUAL. Ohio is facing enormous economic pressure from the global recession, and everyone has to make sacrifices. Now is not the time for public sector workers to insist on higher wages and benefits, especially when the private sector workers who pay their salaries don't make as much money, nor do they get the pensions, nor do they get the better job security. Ohio voters can certainly go back and renegotiate union salaries and benefits when Ohio is out of the recession.

Click here to learn more about Ohio State Issue 2.

Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?

November 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News, a story showing how the United Way charity gave money to Planned Parenthood.

Excerpt:

> Each fall, United Way focuses on fundraising campaigns. Most people encounter these requests for giving through their workplace. The United Way encourages individuals to donate to a variety of local charitable organizations or to the United Way itself. Each local United Way determines whom they will support through their grant programs and their lists of charitable organizations in the area. While most United Way organizations claim they do not fund programs for abortion services, in truth, some do support Planned Parenthood or other abortion-advocate agencies.
>
> […]Any finances being donated to Planned Parenthood (even if not specifically for abortion services) will free up more of their money to be used toward abortion services.
>
> Some area United Ways, like New York City and Atlanta, provide grants to Planned Parenthood. The Dallas, Houston, and Austin United Ways do not give money directly to Planned Parenthood. However, Austin and Houston Planned Parenthoods do encourage donors to give money through the United Way's workplace campaign. Many of the local United Ways also send volunteers to Planned Parenthood.
>
> Nationally, the main United Way website (www.LiveUnited.org) also directs volunteers toward Planned Parenthood. Again, not every state or city agency promotes Planned Parenthood, but several do. One is too many.

If you are pro-life, you should not help the United Way in any way. They give money to people who perform abortions – even after those same groups got $363 million dollars in taxpayer subsidies, and paid their President Cecile Richards nearly $400,000 dollars. Planned Parenthood made a profit of $63 million in the most recent year for which records are available. There are plenty of other places to give your money to, like

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Breast cancer charity Susan G. Komen gives $569,159 to Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?

- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure charity funds Planned Parenthood
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the lawResearchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity
- Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Bobby Jindal cuts Louisiana budget by 25%… and gets re-elected in landslide?

November 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gov. Bobby Jindal
From the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Excerpt:

> One gubernatorial election ended early this fall, when Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal won the state's blanket primary Oct. 22. Under Louisiana's system, all candidates of all parties are listed on the ballot, and if no one gets 50 percent, the top two finishers go to a runoff. Jindal blew past the threshold with 66 percent.
>
> Jindal's reelection was unusual in several respects. The only previous time the state has not had a runoff was his election in 2007. He is only the fourth Republican governor in the last 125 years in Louisiana, and one of those four switched over from the Democrats in office. Jindal's best-known challenger this year was a schoolteacher, who raised less than 1 percent of the incumbent's campaign treasury. The Democratic State Central Committee declined to endorse any candidate running on its party label.
>
> But perhaps most unbelievable is that Jindal faced no serious competition after cutting state spending more than 25 percent. In January 2008, the state had a budget of $34.3 billion. This summer, Jindal signed into law a budget spending $25 billion. As governors from Harrisburg to Trenton to Columbus to Madison

have learned, cutting a state's budget is difficult enough; doing so without a significant backlash seems a politically impossible task.

A key part of Jindal's story is recognizing that he took the helm of a state that had hit bottom: Decades of mismanagement and corruption had taken their toll even before Hurricane Katrina wreaked such devastation and exposed such colossal unresponsiveness in state government. The state, recognizing the bitter fruit of its traditions of colorful corruption, was ready to take a chance on a then-37-year-old Indian American congressman who speaks roughly 100 words per minute. The state was willing to try a new approach to governing; how much worse could it be?

Privatization played a big role in Jindal's reinvention of state government, with private contractors taking over state-run operations for a lesser cost. The companies often hired the state workers who would often be the centerpiece of opponents' criticism.

His administration privatized the state's Office of Risk Management. Then the state's Division of Administration privatized claims management and loss prevention in the self-insurance program, saving $20 million over five years. The Department of Health and Hospitals privatized six inpatient, residential-treatment programs around the state, saving $2.5 million. Separately, patients were moved from state-operated institutions that cost $600 or more per patient per day to community-based services and private group homes that average $191 per day, saving an additional $23.8 million.

Consolidation was another key element: The state's Department of Revenue shrank from eight offices statewide to three. The Department of Children and Family Services consolidated its offices from 157 to 90, saving a total of $2.7 million.

But some of Jindal's cuts are the old-fashioned kind. The state sold 1,300 vehicles from its fleet of automobiles. Louisiana's Transportation Department shut down a ferry that was used by only 7,200 drivers per year, saving the state roughly three-quarters of a million dollars.

In fiscal 2011, Louisiana eliminated more than 3,500 full-time government positions. Add the 6,363 previous reductions during Jindal's term, and that means a total of almost 9,900 full-time positions reduced since he took the oath, a savings of almost $600 million. Louisiana now has the lowest level of full-time state government employees in almost 20 years.

"You change people's expectations and you make structural changes," Jindal said, while racing around the state about three weeks before the election. "The most important is this cultural change, to say government is not the answer to everything. In a weird way, I want the office of governor to be less important than it is. What I mean by that is, there was an old joke that kids in Louisiana don't grow up wanting to be president; they grow up wanting to be governor. You

> should want them to want to business leaders or doctors or teachers."
>
> Some cuts were more noticeable to the public, but Louisianans found shorter hours and workweeks at state facilities more palatable than complete shutdowns or higher taxes: Historic sites are now open five days a week instead of seven, pools at a half dozen state parks were closed on Mondays and Tuesdays this summer, and entrance stations at all state parks had shorter hours. Finally, 54,000 rank-and-file state workers are going without a raise for the second consecutive year.
>
> Jindal's first term was marked by several high-profile crises he successfully managed – Hurricane Gustav and the response to the BP oil spill, along with the Obama administration's six-month moratorium on all drilling in the Gulf of Mexico – but the state's economy has generally chugged along: Louisiana's unemployment rate is 7.1 percent, two percentage points lower than the national average, and a comparably booming economy makes cuts in state spending much easier to take.
>
> **"If you have a good-paying job with benefits, you wouldn't need the state to do so many things for you," Jindal says. "You become less dependent, and that diminishes the role of the state and so you need fewer state employees, and it's a virtuous cycle. You can lower taxes and lower government spending."**

Louisiana is a swing state. If Bobby Jindal can cut government spending in a swing state and get re-elected with 66% of the vote, then we do have hope that the American people will do the right thing. Maybe we just need to hit bottom with Obama so that we realize that competence does matter after all. We have a deep, deep bullpen for future elections. Governors like Scott Walker (Wisconsin), Rick Scott (Florida) and John Kasich (Ohio)would be excellent presidential candidates. And of course we have Marco Rubio and soon-to-be senators Josh Mandel and Ted Cruz waiting in the wings.

John Kasich signs pro-life parental consent bill

November 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gov. John Kasich

John Kasich, Republican governor of Ohio has signed another pro-life bill into law.

Excerpt:

> Governor John Kasich of Ohio has signed into law a bill meant to strengthen the parental consent law in place that prohibits teens from getting an abortion without their parents' consent is moving along in the legislative process.
>
> House Bill 63 and Senate Bill 8 would revise Ohio's current judicial bypass provision in the parental consent on abortion law. This bill will strengthen current law by requiring a "clear and convincing evidence" standard, require judges to specifically inquire about the minor's understanding of the possible physical and emotional complications of an abortion, and require judges to question how much the minor has been prepped to respond to such questions.
>
> […]"We thank Governor Kasich, Senate President Tom Niehaus, and Speaker Bill Batchelder who continue to advance life-saving policies," said Mike Gonidakis, Executive Director of Ohio Right to Life. "H.B. 63 strengthens parents' ability to care for their children and prevents lawyers and others from taking mom and dad's place when their child needs them most."
>
> […]In July, Kasich signed into law a bill to ban late-term abortions in Ohio — something Gonidakis applauded.
>
> "2011 has been a banner year for significant and responsible pro-life legislation. Ohio is witnessing the blessings of having the most pro-life Governor and General Assembly in our state's history working together to save lives," said Gonidakis.

This is good news for pro-lifers voters in Ohio. Ohio voters were careful to choose a pro-

life candidate for governor, and now they are reaping the rewards for all of their hard work. The important thing is to choose the right candidate – someone who means business on social issues.

Video and summary of the Cain-Gingrich Lincoln-Douglas-style debate in Texas

November 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video of the debate.

And some reactions below.

Jeff G. from Protein Wisdom:

> First, let me say that I very much liked the format — and my wife, whom I made watch it with me (SEXUAL HARASSMENT!) said after that she learned a whole lot more than she thought she would. The format was far more useful for vetting a potential President than is the soundbite format the mainstream media prefers — the end result of the latter being that an activist press gets to shape both the debate and the field by way of their "moderation" and their control over the length and breadth of answers, and as a result, it has become more important for a candidate to learn 30-second canned answers and fend off gotcha questions than it is that he or she can offer and then defend ideas that require more time to explain.
>
> […]What most impressed me — and perhaps this is merely because it is something I've been writing on for years — was that the entire debate exposed a truly conservative / classical liberal governing strategy *for the long term*: solutions offered were not only practical, from the standpoint of economics and fiscal sanity, but *as importantly* they outlined in broad strokes a plan to change the political and civil culture, creating in the aggregate a paradigm shift away from statism and back toward individual ownership and autonomy, self-reliance, and limited government as an inevitable result of the rebirth of personal responsibility and economic accountability.
>
> That is is to say, what Gingrich and Cain both posited repeatedly last evening were solutions that empowered the individual to make choices, to see clearly the flow of money for services and goods, and to feel the effects of big government by allowing them to recognize how the government's centralized administration of programs through the bureaucracies is a poorly-run, wasteful, and largely unaccountable middle stage that, in addition to being ineffectual, is also completely unnecessary.
>
> […]So while others take away from last night's debate yet another supposed gotcha moment — which of course plays into old paradigms and explains why election cycle after election cycle we in the GOP nominate polished career politicians whose most impressive attributes are that they can remain largely gaffe free and can effectively pander — what I took away is that, finally, we are seeing what conservatism means and how it can and should be applied to thinking through problems to their solutions, and how its reintroduction into the

> culture can, as a function of sheer momentum, turn back the tide of statism that threatens to turn the US into a post-Constitutional soft tyranny.
>
> I don't care how much a particular candidate has memorized to meet the demands of a thirty-second answer to a loaded question from Anderson Cooper or Chris Wallace; we give the media far too much power by allowing them to shape our political culture. Instead, I want to see a set of core convictions — adherence to the Declaration and Constitution and the unalienable rights of the individual — and an overarching strategy for its implementation.
>
> Last night, I was greatly pleased with what I saw.

And John Hayward from Human Events:

> As it turned out, Cain and Gingrich had substantially fewer disagreements than Lincoln and Douglas did. In fact, they had only minor differences of opinion on how to go about implementing their reforms. Both were firmly in agreement on the importance of block-granting Medicaid funds to the states, abolishing ObamaCare in favor of market-based health care reforms, and providing a way for younger workers to opt out of Social Security and into privately owned accounts. Cain, of course, believes Social Security privatization will require his 999 Plan as a runway in order to achieve takeoff, as the 999 Plan does away with payroll taxes.
>
> Neither candidate began a response with an express or implied cry of "You're wrong!" or engage in the sort of verbal frenzy that ends with heated accusations about the sinister forces providing Mitt Romney with lawn care services. These two were so collegial that I couldn't help thinking they'd look great on a ticket together. Cain had the most riotously funny line of the evening when, given an opportunity to ask a single question of his opponent, he thought for a moment and inquired: "If you were Vice President of the United States, what would you want the President to assign you to do first?"
>
> […]The most strongly emphasized Big Idea from Gingrich tonight was the fallacy of allowing Big Government to measure its own performance, and predict the future costs and benefits of tax and spending policies, when its predictions of cost and benefit have never come anywhere near reality. (Cain buttressed this point by relating the amazing history of Medicare, originally sold to the public with a price tag of $6 billion, and projected to cost no more than $12 billion by 1990. The actual cost of the program in 1990 was $109 billion.)
>
> […]Another major point from Gingrich was the absurdity of money-for-nothing welfare-state programs. "Nobody should get something for nothing unless they have a very severe disability," he declared. "If you're an able-bodied person, and you're getting something for nothing, we're pretty stupid for giving it to you." Among the tough-love proposals he suggested was attaching a mandatory training requirement to unemployment benefits. As he noted with both acid and

> accuracy, people could be earning college degrees in the time they've been sitting around and waiting for Barack Obama to create jobs.
>
> […]Cain strongly believes in the importance of moving Americans from "entitlement to empowerment." Block granting both money *and* responsibility for programs like Medicaid to the states is part of this strategy, as is the creation of a private account option for Social Security recipients. "People spend other people's money recklessly than they spend their own," he observed, brilliantly condensing much of the Obama disaster into a single sentence.
>
> Looking back on his transition from private-sector business success into the politics, Cain made the interesting observation that it's "dangerous" for businessmen to stay out of public debates, confident they can mitigate the damage from legislation with good lobbyists somewhere down the line. When the government becomes as large and intrusive as ours has, politics must be practiced defensively. It's really not possible for a high-level businessman to declare himself uninterested in the affairs of government, because the government is most certainly interested in *him.*

I would like to see MORE debates like this – something more like what William Lane Craig does where people get 20 minutes for an opening speech. Cain and Gingrich both seem to have a dislike of the media, and that's a good thing. I don't like Gingrich as the nominee for president, because of his habit of trying to appear as a centrist by dealing with people like Nancy Pelosi. But I would be supportive of a Cain/Gingrich ticket. Heck, I've read Newt's "Winning the Future" a half-dozen times. He's a smart guy – he just needs to be in a supporting role.

Some arguments for substance dualism, and one objection

November 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Philosophy of mind is not something I've studied very much, but I do know about the different views like physicalism, epiphenomenalism, property dualism and substance dualism. I also know some of the basic arguments for and against each view.

In this post, I just wanted to show people a little bit about how you argue for substance dualism, using philosophical and scientific arguments. I find this topic to be really really dry, and I can barely stay awake when J.P. Moreland talks about it in lectures. But I hope a little bit of exposure won't put you all to sleep.

Philosophical arguments

Let's start with this old paper by John Depoe.

He writes about the persistent identity argument:

> Another argument supporting substance dualism is that one maintains personal identity through change. Even though one is continuously going through physical changes and experiencing different mental states, a person continues to be the same person. If persons were identical with their physical parts or mental states, they would cease to be the same persons as these changes occurred. Therefore, it is necessary to postulate an immaterial, substantial self that endures through change.
>
> Suppose that someone believes that people do not maintain identity through change and concludes that the previous argument for substance dualism fails. This denial of personal identity through change, I contend, presents untenable difficulties. First, there is one's own awareness of being the same person through change. Moreover, if one is not literally the same person through these changes, how can a person maintain long-term goals and desires?

If you are your body, and your body is always changing, then you aren't the same person now as 5 minutes ago.

There are more arguments for substance dualism here, from J.P. Moreland.

Experimental evidence

Doug Groothuis talks about some experimental evidence in this paper.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Wilder Penfield was known for his ground-breaking work with epilepsy. His work involved stimulating brain tissue in conscious patients in order to find the causes of epilepsy. During these sessions Penfield found that the prodding of certain areas of the brain triggered vivid memories of past events. The patients reported remembering clearly such things as the taste of coffee. One patient,

while on an operating table in Montreal, Canada, remembered laughing with cousins on a farm in South Africa. What amazed Penfield was that his patients, who were not under anesthetic, were simultaneously conscious of the re-experienced memories and of being prodded by an electrode in an operating room. Penfield called this a “double consciousness” wherein a memory was stimulated physically but was attended to and recognized as a memory by a conscious patient. Penfield likened this to the patient watching a television program while remaining aware that it wasn’t now happening.

Penfield repeated these results on hundreds of epileptic patients and concluded that a separable mind was able to track what the brain was doing as a result of the artificial stimulation. One’s mind in a sense could transcend the operations of the brain, monitoring memories without actually placing oneself in the situation remembered. Penfield noted that “The mind of the patient was as independent of the reflex action as was the mind of the surgeon who listened and strove to understand. Thus, my argument favours independence of mind-action.” Penfield also stated that if we liken the brain to a computer, it is not that we are a computer, but that we *have* a computer.

Penfield, who began his research as a materialist, switched to dualism after extensive research with epileptic patients. He said, “Something else finds its dwelling place between the sensory complex and the motor mechanism. . . . There is a switchboard operator as well as a switchboard.”

Although nonepileptic patients do not respond similarly to brain stimulation, other researchers, such as Sir John Eccles, a neurobiologist, have similarly concluded that the brain alone cannot account for a many phenomena. Eccles’ hypothesis is that the self-conscious mind is an independent entity that is actively engaged in reading from the multitude of active centres in the modules of the liaison areas of the dominant cerebral hemisphere. The self-conscious mind selects from these centres in accord with its attention and its interests and integrates its selection to give unity of conscious experience from moment to moment.

Thus, Eccles’ conclusions agree with Penfield’s, and his areas of research extend farther than that of epileptic patients. Eccles deems the “monist materialist” hope for an eventual physical explanation for mental events as wrongheaded in principle because mental events are not “simply derivative of aspects of nerve endings. There is no evidence for this whatever.” Further, Eccles argues that his “strong dualist-interactionist hypothesis . . . has the recommendation of its great explanatory power. It gives in principle at least explanations of the whole range of problems relating to brain-mind interaction.”Eccles notes that it has been impossible to develop a materialist explanation of “how a diversity of brain events come to be synthesized so that there is a unified conscious experience of a global or gestalt character.” Given this impasse, Eccles proposed that “the self-conscious mind” serve to integrate the apparently disparate brain processes into

> a unified consciousness.

I think that Alvin Plantinga, Keith Yandell, J.P. Moreland, William Lane Craig, Stephen Davis, John Depoe, Douglas Groothuis and Charles Taliaferro all defend substance dualism. I'm a substance dualist, myself.

What's the objection to substance dualism?

The big objection to substance-dualism is the problem of how you get the non-physical substance to interact with the physical substance. It's like how people put forward the grounding objection when talking about middle knowledge and where God's knowledge of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom comes from. I wonder if anyone can post a comment for me to point me to a resource on answering the interaction problem in the comments.

UPDATE: One of my elite special forces ninja commenters writes:

> Here's Ed Feser on the Interaction Problem:
>
> http://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/2008/10/interaction-problem.html
>
> and
>
> http://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/2009/04/interaction-problem-part-ii.html
>
> The thrust of his argument is that, if the soul is the extension of the body's "form" without matter, then it interacts with the more material parts of us in the same way that forms in general interact with matter- this approach involves rethinking our metaphysical understanding of matter, rather than coming up with a clever idea of the soul, and it does get rather involved in Thomistic metaphysics, but I think it's pretty interesting.

Obamacare contains billions of dollars in pork for Obama's union allies

November 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily. (H/T Jan)

Excerpt:

> According to a new Government Accountability Office report, the federal government has so far handed out $2.7 billion out of a $5 billion program squirreled away in ObamaCare.
>
> The Early Retiree Reinsurance Program is advertized as a way to "stabilize the availability of employer-sponsored coverage for early retirees," according to a Health and Human Services memo.
>
> The argument goes that companies are increasingly dropping retiree health benefits, leaving those who retire before becoming eligible for Medicare in a jam — either they face exorbitant rates for insurance or expose themselves to potentially catastrophic health costs.
>
> […]According to figures obtained by IBD, 10 of the top 12 recipients are either unions or public employee groups. In fact, the biggest single recipient was the UAW Retiree Medical Benefits Trust, which alone grabbed more than 8% of all the funds handed out so far. Other union beneficiaries include the United Food and Commercial Workers, the United Mine Workers and the Teamsters.
>
> Meanwhile, almost half of the money doled out has gone to state and local governments, the GAO found.
>
> […]The problem is that these groups are the least likely to drop their retiree health benefits, calling the lie to the Obama administration's whole "stabilizing" excuse.
>
> In fact, over the past 10 years, the share of state and local governments offering retiree benefits increased — climbing to 83% from 80% in 2001, according to an annual Kaiser Family Foundation health benefits survey.
>
> That's at a time when private companies have been dropping retiree health plans to cut costs, with the share of large firms offering such benefits falling to 26% this year from 37% in 2001, the Kaiser survey shows.
>
> So this ObamaCare money is really being used mainly to pay off unions and governments that would have provided these benefits anyway.
>
> While the law forbids employers from using the funds for anything other than retiree health costs, money is fungible, freeing up union and government resources for other uses like, say, helping Obama get re-elected.

And what will the unions do with that money? IBD explains.

Excerpt:

> United Steelworkers President Leo Gerard, speaking on radio host Ed Schultz's show last Monday, declared, "What we need is more militancy." Asked to clarify, Gerard said: "I think we've got to start a resistance movement. If Wall Street Occupation doesn't get the message, I think we've got to start blocking bridges and doing that kind of stuff."
>
> The Canadian union leader then denounced Americans' 2008 election of Tea Party representatives to the House as "nut jobs," and called for more force and illegality: "We ought to be doing more than occupying parks. We ought to start occupying bridges. We ought to start occupying the banks' places themselves."
>
> […]Two months ago another White House ally, Teamsters chief Jimmy Hoffa, openly called for his members to "take these sons of bitches out" in Congress, as Obama stood silently at his side. "They got a war with us and there's only going to be one winner," he growled.
>
> Hoffa's Teamsters, it should be noted, have the most violent record of all labor unions, clocking in 454 incidents of violence since 1991, according to the National Institute for Labor Relations Research in Washington.
>
> Then there's the SEIU-linked Acorn, which has made OWS its latest cause. The Obama-tied group had supposedly disbanded, but now operates as New York Communities for Change (NYCC), using the strong-arm political tactics of community organizer Saul Alinsky.
>
> Since it was discovered that NYCC was a prime funder and director of the Occupy movement, Fox News reports that the group has been shredding documents, firing staff, offering up alibis and surveilling Fox News personnel.
>
> One starts to wonder: Is Occupy Wall Street a grass-roots movement, or a corrupt, violent organization whose real center is the Obama administration itself? One thing's for sure: It isn't interested in democracy.

You can see the full list of Occupy Wall Street crimes here – it's up to 167 crimes right now, including rape. The unions are heavily involved in the Occupy Wall Street protests.

I'm concerned that the government is getting too closely involved with groups of people who are not peaceful and law-abiding.

IAEA report expected to show that Iran now has the ability to build a nuclear bomb

November 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East
From Fox News.

> Pakistan, North Korea and a former weapons scientist from the Soviet Union reportedly all helped Iran with its nuclear weapons quest, according to an impending U.N. nuclear watchdog report expected to show the Islamic regime has mastered the science of building a bomb.

> The International Atomic Energy Agency's report due out this week will lay out findings collected over years of intelligence gathering. It is expected to reinforce concerns that Iran didn't actually abandon its weapons-related research in 2003, as indicated by a 2007 National Intelligence Estimate given to then-President George W. Bush.

> U.S. intelligence agencies reported in 2007 that they believed Tehran halted its experiments in response to international and domestic pressures. But an ongoing investigation by the Fox News Specials Unit concludes that more than 600 entities were working inside Iran to support its program, and at least 40 sites where the work is taking place are suspected to exist across the country.
>
> For British, French and American investigators, one of the most concerning sites is the Qom uranium enrichment construction site, hidden deep in the mountains. The latest intelligence shows that security walls have doubled around the site. Its scale cannot be explained by any known civilian nuclear energy use.
>
> David Albright, a former IAEA official and president of the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security who reviewed the intelligence

> files, told The Washington Post that Iran's nuclear weapons program "never really stopped" and also concluded that Iran "has sufficient information to design and produce a workable implosion nuclear device."
>
> Western diplomats and nuclear experts briefed on the findings in the IAEA report also told the Post that foreign scientists offered assistance in overcoming key technical hurdles.
>
> The documents reportedly show that a former Soviet weapons scientist named Vyacheslav Danilenko allegedly tutored Iranians for several years on building high-precision detonators needed to trigger a nuclear chain reaction. The Post reported that Pakistani and North Korean officials also gave to Iran mathematical formulas and codes as well as a so-called neutron initiator, which shoots a stream of atomic particles into the weapon's fissile core at the start of the chain reaction.

There are two things to point out about this story. The first thing is that it was a strategic disaster for us to back out of Iraq, because that's where we need to be to be able to gather intelligence, mount covert ops, run interdiction on attempts to transfer WMDs to Syria, etc. We really need to be in theater in order to deal with Iran, Syria and groups like Hezbollah, Iran's Quds force and Muqtada Al Sadr's Mahdi Army.

Unfortunately, I think that David Axelrod is running our national security now, which is why Obama pulled out forces out of Iraq.

Excerpt:

> Three years, two abject failures. The first was the administration's inability, at the height of American post-surge power, to broker a centrist nationalist coalition governed by the major blocs — one predominantly Shiite (Maliki's), one predominantly Sunni (Ayad Allawi's), one Kurdish — that among them won a large majority (69 percent) of seats in the 2010 election.
>
> Vice President Biden was given the job. He failed utterly. The government ended up effectively being run by a narrow sectarian coalition where the balance of power is held by the relatively small (12 percent) Iranian-client Sadr faction.
>
> The second failure was the SOFA [Status of Forces Agreement] itself. U.S. commanders recommended nearly 20,000 troops, considerably fewer than our 28,500 in Korea, 40,000 in Japan and 54,000 in Germany. The president rejected those proposals, choosing instead a level of 3,000 to 5,000 troops.
>
> A deployment so risibly small would have to expend all its energies simply protecting itself — the fate of our tragic, missionless 1982 Lebanon deployment — with no real capability to train the Iraqis, build their U.S.-equipped air force, mediate ethnic disputes (as we have successfully done, for example, between local Arabs and Kurds), operate surveillance and special-ops bases, and establish the kind of close military-to-military relations that undergird our strongest alliances.

> The Obama proposal was an unmistakable signal of unseriousness. It became clear that he simply wanted out, leaving any Iraqi foolish enough to maintain a pro-American orientation exposed to Iranian influence, now unopposed and potentially lethal. Message received. Just this past week, Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurds — for two decades the staunchest of U.S. allies — visited Tehran to bend a knee to both President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The second thing to point out is the question of what we should be doing to restrain Iran's nuclear ambitions. Click here for a run-down of some of our options. There are a lot of things we could do short of all-out war, but that would require that we had a statesman in the White House – someone who takes foreign policy seriously and treats it as more than a political issue.

A previous post I wrote showed how arms that China sells to Iran make their way to Hezbollah to be used against Israeli assets. That's what we can expect will happen with nuclear weapons that Iran develops. Are we willing to accept that? There is also the matter of the Mexican drug cartels, the Quds force, Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and our porous border with Mexico. Are we willing to risk that?

We need to take the gloves off our national security agencies, especially the CIA, and do what has to be done.

FARC terrorist leader Alfonso Cano killed by Colombian armed forces

November 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of South America
From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> The armed forces of Colombia have scored a major battlefield victory. They finally hunted down, confronted, and killed the leader of the narco-terrorist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Guillermo Leon Saenz, widely known by his alias Alfonso Cano.
>
> A guerrilla for decades, Cano assumed the top leadership of the FARC following the natural death of founder Manuel Marulanda (2008) and the elimination of senior figures Raul Reyes (2008) and Jorge Briceno (aka Mono Jojoy, 2010).
>
> Seen by some as a modern-day version of the "good revolutionary," Cano—a life-long advocate of armed violence and terrorism—fell in combat with the Colombian armed forces as they rappelled their way into his secret jungle hideout. Cano was also indicted in a U.S. court for drug trafficking along with dozens of other FARC leaders and had a $5 million price on his head.

FARC is a Marxist terrorist group.

The Economist reports that the Colombian economy is also doing well.

Excerpt:

> WHEN the figures are finally tallied, Colombia may prove to have weathered the world recession better than any other of the larger Latin American countries. After a slight contraction at the end of 2008, the economy has been growing modestly this year. This resilience stems from continued foreign investment, an increase in government spending on public works and easier money: since December the central bank has cut interest rates by six percentage points, to 4%, a steeper drop than anywhere in the region outside Chile.
>
> […]President Álvaro Uribe's security policies have helped to restore confidence. Investment soared, from 15% of GDP in 2002 to 26% last year, says Mr Zuluaga. Private business has retooled. After many delays, the government has issued licences to expand several ports; this month it hopes to award a contract for the first of four big road schemes, costing a total of $7.5 billion over four years. It hopes for investment of up to $50 billion in mining and oil over the next decade.

And liberal MSNBC has more on the booming Colombian economy.

Excerpt:

> …Colombia's revival is benefiting U.S. economic and political rivals as much as or more than the U.S. itself.
>
> The long delay in signing the treaty allowed Latin America's fourth-largest economy to strengthen ties with China. It also damaged U.S. credibility in the region, says Eric Farnsworth, vice-president of the Council of the Americas in Washington. "The delay in passing this called into question the United States' reliability as a partner," Farnsworth says. "There's a strategic component to this. It's not just about economics and trade."
>
> […]As talks between the U.S. and Colombia dragged on, Colombia and China forged plans for a rail link between the Pacific and Caribbean that could draw freight away from the Panama Canal. Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos aims for a trade deal with South Korea. To tighten his connections to high-growth Asia, he's also seeking membership in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group. "While Washington was debating whether the accord with Colombia was opportune, we advanced in our foreign policy strategy," says Trade Minister Sergio Diaz-Granados.
>
> Santos has cooperated more with his South American neighbors, organizing a meeting of finance ministers to discuss ways to protect their currencies and economies from the debt crisis in the U.S. and Europe. He supports a stock trading platform with Colombia, Chile, and Peru and wants to bring Mexico and Panama on board. Exports to Brazil have surged tenfold. While the U.S. remains Colombia's biggest export market, with $16.8 billion in 2010 sales, up 30 percent from a year earlier, sales to China more than doubled last year, to $1.2 billion. Sales to the European Union are also rising, to $5.4 billion this year through August, more than in all of 2010. An EU trade accord could come next year.

> The government has reduced cocaine cultivation 37 percent and halved the number of insurgents to about 8,000. Improved security has spurred enough growth to win an investment-grade credit rating from Standard & Poor's as well as investment from billionaires. Colombia's victories over the guerrillas opened up swathes of countryside to exploration for oil, gold, and coal. Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim's push into crude has helped fuel foreign investment that the government says may reach a record $12 billion this year. The economy grew 5.2 percent in the second quarter.
>
> The U.S. faces more competition from Colombia's neighbors and Canada. In 2010, U.S. agricultural exports to Colombia fell more than 50 percent from 2008, to $827 million, as Argentina's more than doubled, to $1 billion, according to a report by Senator Richard Lugar's staff. Diaz-Granados attributes the U.S. setback to the delay in the free-trade agreement.
>
> An August accord reduces or ends Colombian tariffs on Canadian wheat, paper, and machinery. Bank of Nova Scotia, Canada's third-largest lender, agreed in October to buy 51 percent of Banco Colpatria Red Multibanca Colpatria for about $1 billion—Scotiabank's largest international takeover. "This is not the Colombia of old," says Brian J. Porter, group head of international banking for Scotiabank. "The more we looked at Colombia, the more excited we got about the economic potential."

We really should have signed that trade deal 3 years ago – it would have helped out economy a lot. But unions got Obama elected, and the unions decided that the trade deal needed to be held up for 3 years. And that's one of the reasons why we've had over 9% unemployment. Our economic policy is being set by unions, not by economists. But in Colombia, economic policy is set by economists, not unions.

Brian Auten interviews Dr. Angus Menuge on philosophy of mind

November 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Click here for the interview. It's up at Apologetics 315!

Details:

> Today's interview is with Dr. Angus Menuge, Professor of Philosophy at Concordia University, and author of *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science*. He talks about his background and work, the philosophy of mind, what reason (or reasoning) is, what materialism is as a worldview, things excluded from a materialistic worldview, methodological naturalism and materialism, accounting for free will, materialistic accounts of reason, the epistemological argument from reason, the ontological argument from reason, finding the best explanation for reason, problems with methodological naturalism, implications of materialism, practical application of the argument from reason, advice for apologists, the International Academy of Apologetics, and more.

If what Dr. Menuge says in this interview is true, and I think it is, then a person who believes in materialism can neither ground free will nor rationality! So atheism wouldn't really be freethought so much as it would be… un-free… non-thought.

In case people don't want to listen to the podcast, then I've got some things for you to read below.

The ontological argument from reason

Dr. Menuge presented a paper at the real Evangelical Philosophical Society conference for students and professors of philosophy, and you can download the paper here in Word format. (here's a PDF version I made)

Here is the introduction to the paper that Dr. Menuge read at the EPS conference:

> The argument from reason is really a family of arguments to show that reasoning is incompatible with naturalism. Here, naturalism is understood as the idea that foundationally, there are only physical objects, properties and relations, and anything else reduces to, supervenes on, or emerges from that. For our purposes, one of the most important claims of naturalism is that all causation is passive, automatic, event causation (an earthquake automatically causes a tidal wave; the tidal wave responds passively): there are no agent causes, where something does not happen automatically but only because the agent exerts his active power by choosing to do it. The most famous version of the argument from reason is *epistemological*: if naturalism were true, we could not be justified in believing it. Today, I want to focus on the *ontological* argument from reason, which asserts that there cannot be reasoning in a naturalistic world, because

> reasoning requires libertarian free will, and this in turn requires a unified, enduring self with active power.
>
> The two most promising ways out of this argument are: (1) Compatibilism—even in a deterministic, naturalistic world, humans are capable of free acts of reason if their minds are responsive to rational causes; (2) Libertarian Naturalism—a self with libertarian free will emerges from the brain. I argue that neither of these moves works, and so, unless someone has a better idea, the ontological argument from reason stands.

The paper is 11 pages long, and it is helpful for those of you looking for some good discussion of one of the issues in the area of philosophy of mind.

You may also be interested in Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason, which is related to this argument. It shows that even to have the ability to think, you have to have a certain anthropology and you have to have mental faculties that are designed for reason, not survival.

Methodological naturalism

Dr. Menuge also wrote an article entitled "Is methodological materialism good for science?".

Intro:

> Should science by governed by methodological materialism? That is, should scientists assume that only undirected causes can figure in their theories and explanations? If the answer to these questions is yes, then there can be no such thing as teleological science or intelligent design. But is methodological materialism a defensible approach to science, or might it prevent scientists from discovering important truths about the natural world? In my contribution to The Waning of Materialism (Oxford University Press, 2010), edited by Robert Koons and George Bealer, I consider twelve of the most common arguments in favor of methodological materialism and show that none of them is convincing.
>
> Of these arguments, perhaps the most prevalent is the "God of the gaps" charge, according to which invoking something other than a material cause is an argument from ignorance which, like a bad script writer, cites a *deus ex machina* to save our account from difficulty. Not only materialists, but also many Christian thinkers, like Francis Collins, worry that appeal to intelligent design commits the God of the gaps fallacy.
>
> As I argue, however, not only is an inference to an intelligent cause not the same as an inference to the supernatural, it is a mistake to assume that all gap arguments are bad, or that only theists make them. If a gap argument is based solely on ignorance of what might explain some phenomenon, then indeed it is a bad argument. But there are many good gap arguments which are made both by scientific materialists and proponents of intelligent design.

So how do you make an argument like that?

> As Stephen Meyer has argued in his *Signature in the Cell*, intelligent design argues in just the same way, claiming not merely that the material categories of chance and necessity (singly or in combination) are unable to explain the complex specified information in DNA, but also that in our experience, intelligent agents are the only known causes of such information. The argument is based on what we know about causal powers, not on what we do not know about them.
>
> Since the inference is based on known causal powers, we learn that the cause is intelligent, but only further assumptions or data can tell us whether that intelligence is immanent in nature or supernatural. It is a serious mistake to confuse intelligent design with theistic science, and the argument that since some proponents of design believe that the designer is God, that is what they are claiming can be inferred from the data, is a sophomoric intensional fallacy.

If you think this is interesting, then do have a listen to the podcast. Dr. Menuge is not an ordinary academic – he is very direct. He calls materialism “a catastrophe” in the podcast! Not a shrinking violet.

Irony: the young men who voted for Obama now suffer from record unemployment

November 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the Wall Street Journal explain why men are in decline. (H/T Mary, Tom)

Excerpt:

> Few groups were hit harder by the recession than young men… The unemployment rate for males between 25 and 34 years old with high-school diplomas is 14.4%—up from 6.1% before the downturn four years ago and far above today's 9% national rate. The picture is even more bleak for slightly younger men: 22.4% for high-school graduates 20 to 24 years old. That's up from 10.4% four years ago.
>
> […]The share of men age 25-34 living with their parents jumped to 18.6% this year, up from 14.2% four years ago and the highest level since at least 1960, according to the Census Bureau.

Suzanne Venker comments on the consequences of this data for women for National Review.

Full text:

> New data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows the percentage of men between the ages of 25 and 34 living at home rose from 14 percent in 2005 to 19 percent in 2011. Women, on the other hand, are doing just fine. Not only do they dominate today's college campuses, they have little trouble staying away from mom and dad's place. That's because women are flourishing in the workforce while men are not. Writers and pundits blame this phenomenon on the economy, but the trend reflects a much larger sociological problem. America is in the midst of a sea change: Never before has it been more difficult for men and women to find their way to one another, settle in for the long haul, and build strong families together.
>
> To read about it, you'd think the entire mess is out of our hands. You'd think the circumstances involving the roles of men and women in society have happened to us, rather than the other way around. The truth is that we created this new world — and while we may not be able to undo it, we can certainly stop the freight train from running off the tracks.
>
> Hardly a day goes by that we aren't made aware of this heartbreaking reality. It is so acute we now have not one but six new television series dedicated to men's social demotion. In these programs, husbands are made to look like fools — while the wives wield a power so ugly it's no wonder marriage has become so elusive. The modern generation has been sold a bill of goods about human nature, and the result is that men now have no idea how to be men. Why? Because women

> won't let them.
>
> There is a large and powerful group of women who see this shift in gender roles as a good thing. Hanna Rosin's provocative piece in *The Atlantic*, called "The End of Men," and Kate Bolick's new piece "All the Single Ladies" (which may now become a TV series) make light of the demise of masculinity and the role men once played in society. They represent the kind of movers and shakers who help lead the feminist fight. Pointing to the latest statistics about men, they'd be likely to respond, "See how hopeless men are? Everything we've been saying about men all these years has proven to be true."
>
> But the laugh will be on them — if not for their own families, then for their children's. The feminist policies that were put in place to help women flourish outside the home have suffocated men's opportunities for economic self-sufficiency. In short, men's desire to be good workers and family providers has been undermined. This is more than unfortunate; it is a loss of catastrophic proportions, for it is men's consistent, full-time, year-round work that women depend on in order to live that ever-coveted "balanced life." What too many women don't understand (because they've been unduly influenced by feminist groupthink) is that male nature is ultimately beneficial to them, for women continue to put family — not career — at the center of their lives and are thus dependent on men to pick up the slack at the office.
>
> It is a dangerous thing to create a society of frustrated young men. Feminists have no idea what a can of worms they've created — and what it's about to do to our nation.

I think if we want men to marry, not only do we have to ask why the recession is affecting men disproportionately, but why the education system isn't working for boys. We need to ask whether men learn better from female teachers or male teachers. We need to ask whether boys learn better in all-boys schools or in co-ed schools. We need to ask whether the promotion of sex education and contraception, which produces freely available sex, is the best way to encourage young men to prove themselves to women by trying hard to fit the traditional roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. We need to ask whether the denial of male-female differences encourages men to take on traditional male roles, and whether women are encouraged to prefer men who take on those roles. We need to ask whether our energy and economic policies favor job creation in areas dominated by men. We need to ask whether stimulus programs should be slanted towards industries dominated by women. We need to ask whether affirmative action for women in education and at work helps men to be able to provide for a family. We need to ask whether men are well-served by no-fault divorce laws and biased domestic violence laws that promote false charges – especially during custody hearings. And lastly, we need to ask whether church serves men when it accepts or rejects postmodernism, anti-intellectualism and moral relativism.

But can't we just tell men to "Man Up"?

The answer to the discincentives facing marriage-minded men is not a lazy, ignorant pronouncement for men to “Man Up”. That doesn’t solve any of the problems that cause men not to marry.

I think the desire of certain people to remove every incentive and capacity for men to perform as husbands and fathers – and then to nevertheless *demand* they marry and take on the traditional roles of men *anyway* without incentives or capacities – is the height of narcissism. Men are people too – we are not inanimate objects. We are not sperm donors and wallets. And if society decides to go in a direction where the traditional roles of men are replaced with government social programs funded by high taxes and deficit spending, then marriage will die in this society.

Cain accuser Sharon Bialek has been sued a half dozen times and filed for bankruptcy twice

November 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Photo of Sharon Bialek

See this link? It will take you to Robert McCain's post on the Cain press conference. McCain has been following Cain before his campaign even started. He knows everything about Cain's campaign. He has links to a half-dozen news sources with reactions in his post.

McCain writes:

> It is too early to analyze or evaluate the long-term impact. The immediate reaction toward Cain's press conference has been generally positive. If he didn't "hit a home run," as they say, he at least got a solid stand-up double. And his vow that he will continue the campaign, without regard to his accusers or their accusations, is perhaps the most important thing he said during the press conference.

Here's the press conference:

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 3 of 3:

Sharon Bialek's background

Here's a press release from the Cain campaign talking about the Sharon Bialek's background.

Excerpt:

> In the courts, Ms. Bialek has had a lengthy record in the Cook County Court system over various civil lawsuits. The following cases on file in Cook County are:
>
> - 2000-M1-707461 Defendant against Broadcare Management
> - 2000-M1-714398 Defendant in lawsuit against Broadcare Management
> - 2000-M1-701522 Defendant in lawsuit against Broadcare Management
> - 2005-M1-111072 Defendant in lawsuit against Mr. Mark Beatovic.
> - 2007-M1-189176 Defendant in lawsuit against Midland Funding.
> - 2009-M1-158826 Defendant in lawsuit against Illinois Lending.
>
> **Ms. Bialek was also sued in 1999 over a paternity matter according to ABC 7 Chicago (WLS-TV). Source: WLS-TV, November 7, 2011.**
>
> In personal finances, PACER (Federal Court) records show that Ms. Bialek has filed for bankruptcy in the Northern District of Illinois bankruptcy court in 1991 and 2001. The respective case numbers according to the PACER system are 1:01-bk-22664 and 1:91-bk-23273.
>
> Ms. Bialek has worked for nine employers over the last seventeen years. Source: WLS-TV, November 7, 2011

More from the Chicago Tribune.

Excerpt:

> Records show she twice has filed for personal bankruptcy, first in 1991 and then again in 2001. In the latter case, she claimed $5,700 in assets and more than $36,000 in liabilities. Among the creditors seeking payment was a management firm demanding back rent of $4,500, four credit card companies and a lawyer asking for his legal fees.
>
> After the case was discharged, she accused a former boyfriend of harassing her for repayment of a loan, court records in the bankruptcy case show. Bialek borrowed $4,500 from William Concha, though Concha now believes she had no intention of paying him back, according to his brother, Mario.
>
> Reached Monday night in Spain, William Concha declined comment.
>
> At least two liens have been filed against Bialek, according to records from the Cook County recorder of deeds.
>
> The IRS filed a tax lien against her in 2009 for nearly $5,200. In August, the Illinois Department of Revenue claimed Bialek owed the state more than $4,300, including penalties and interest, relating to income taxes from 2004, according to county records.
>
> Court records also show creditors took legal action against her during the past decade, including at least one lawsuit filed in Cook County.

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It's not surprising to me that a woman like this would make such accusations – she is getting a lot of attention, and possibly is being paid off by another candidate. There might even be a nice book deal for her.

Consider a parallel case, featuring Mariah Yeater's paternity suit against Justin Bieber.

Excerpt:

> The 20-year-old woman who claims teen idol Justin Bieber is the father of her child originally told her ex-boyfriend that he — and not Bieber — was the baby-daddy, the New York Post reported Friday.
>
> "She came back here from California telling me she was pregnant with my child and I said this is impossible, you've been in California two months and back here for only a week," said Las Vegas resident John Terranova, 19, about his ex-girlfriend Mariah Yeater, 20, who has sued Bieber for support for the son she later bore.
>
> "After I told her that's not my kid, you've only been here for a week, then she told me, 'No, I got pregnant before I left by you," Terranova told The Post. "But it didn't make sense because she had a doctor's note saying she wasn't pregnant enough for that to be possible. It didn't add up."
>
> Terranova said he had dated Yeater for nearly four years after meeting her at a Las Vegas high school that caters to students who had been thrown out of other schools. He said he broke up with her after he learned she had cheated on him.

> Terranova scoffed at Yeater's claim that it was the then-16-year-old Bieber who impregnated her in October 2010 during a 30-second sex session after the singer performed in Los Angeles.
>
> "I know it's not Justin Bieber," Terranova said. "She just wants money. It's a scam."
>
> His girlfriend Lacy Jensen, who herself is pregnant now, agreed.
>
> "Poor kid. He's worked so hard for his career and to deal with this. She just wants to get her name out there," said Jensen.
>
> "She's a gold digger and just wants someone to take care of her," Jensen said. "She was a really big party animal who got around a lot. She was a big slut. She's scandalous."
>
> Yeater was arrested for battery last December for allegedly slapping Terranova in a jealous rage after she returned from her sojourn in California to find him dating a new girlfriend, Jensen.

I see no reason to think that this Bialek's claims have any more validity than Yeater's claims. It seems plausible to me that both women are making false claims for the same reason – they want fame and money.

Do women ever make false claims about sexual matters? Its more common than you might think. Studies show that false allegations are made about 20-40% of the time, depending on the study. These sorts of false accusations are usually made in order to 1) get attention or money, by trying to appear as an innocent victim, 2) in order to get an alibi for something the woman has done wrong (see below), or 3) to get revenge on someone who has mistreated the woman, as with the Duke lacrosse scandal.

Consider this case of a Hofstra student Danmell Ndonye who invented a false rape accusation.

Excerpt:

> The Hofstra freshman who had a raunchy restroom romp and then cried rape made up the twisted tale because she didn't want her schoolmates — particularly her new boyfriend — to think she was easy, the beau told The Post yesterday.
>
> "I think she needs a psychologist. She probably felt like, 'They'll think I'm a slut,' " her boyfriend, who asked not to be identified, told The Post.
>
> Danmell Ndonye, 18, who had accused five men of gang rape, admitted the truth only when prosecutors confronted her after learning of a cellphone video that captured the whole sordid episode and showed she had willingly participated, officials said.
>
> She created her outlandish tale when her boyfriend, a Hofstra student who's been dating her since the semester began a few weeks ago, demanded to know where she had disappeared after a wild frat party early Sunday.
>
> The two had been dancing together at the Alpha Kappa Alpha mixer at the

> school's on-campus club, Hofstra USA, but got separated when a fight broke out.
>
> The boyfriend said he called her repeatedly, but she didn't answer her cellphone, so he went to her seventh-floor dorm room at Estabrook Hall. Moments later she appeared.
>
> "As I was about to leave, she comes up and she has no shoes on, she is holding them in her hands. She looked like she just finished hot sex," he said. "I said, 'Where were you? What were you doing?' She told me, 'Nothing.' I said, 'What do you mean, nothing?' "
>
> Ndonye then dropped a bombshell.
>
> "I said, 'Don't lie to me, what's going on?' And she said, 'Oh, I just got raped,' " he said.
>
> "It didn't seem real to me. She was calm," he continued. "Then she started crying and saying, 'I was raped.' She lied to me. I think she was embarrassed. I said to her, 'You have to call public safety.' She hesitated. It seemed like she didn't want to."
>
> She then tried to backpedal.
>
> "Oh, you know, no, it's OK," she told him, but he was incredulous.
>
> "How could it be OK that you just got raped?" the boyfriend said.
>
> So she relented — and a four-day nightmare began for four innocent men: Stalin Felipe, 19, his stepbrother, Kevin Taveras, 20, Jesus Ortiz, 19, and 21-year-old Rondell Bedward, a Hofstra senior who had invited the others to the party.
>
> Cops also hunted for a fifth man, who has not been publicly identified.

False allegations of abuse are *routinely used* in divorce custody hearings. They virtually never go to trial.

In the absence of ANY evidence, why think that these anonymous charges against a black conservative who is leading in national polls are anything but *greed and attention-whoring*? Surely, we need to see some charges laid against Cain that where brought forward in a real criminal trial, so we can see the evidence. Otherwise, it just seems to me like another case of false paternity claims and false sexual allegations. We need to see real criminal charges, with real evidence and real witnesses from a real trial, before we can draw any conclusions.

My previous post analyzed the media bias evident in how this story is being covered.

Video: William Lane Craig debates Richard Dawkins at the Sheldonian Theater in Oxford

November 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, I guess everyone knows that Richard Dawkins refused to show up and defend his published work… so instead, William Lane Craig lectured to the empty chair where Richard Dawkins was supposed to sit.

Description:

> Richard Dawkins was invited by the Oxford student Christian Union to defend his book The God Delusion in public debate with William Lane Craig. The invitation remained open until the last minute. However, Dawkins refused the challenge and his chair remained empty. Craig then gave a lecture to a capacity audience on the weaknesses of the central arguments of the book and responded to a panel of academics. The event, which was chaired by atheist Prof. Peter Millican, was part of The Reasonable Faith Tour 2011 sponsored by UCCF, Damaris & Premier Christian Radio.

I summarized the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican here. If you missed this debate, please click the link to watch it, or at least read my summary.

BONUS: Click here for a picture of the empty chair that Richard Dawkins refused to fill.

Eric Holder testifies on Fast and Furious gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels

November 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Human Events.

Excerpt:

> In a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Republicans questioned Attorney General Eric Holder about the smuggling of weapons to Mexican gun cartels through Operation Fast and Furious, when he knew about its existence and what he did about it when he learned of it.
>
> Republicans pushed Holder on why it took him nine months to respond to memos sent to the Department of Justice.
>
> "I am eager to hear whether the Attorney General thinks that is acceptable and what he intends to do about it," said Ranking Member Chuck Grassley (R.-Iowa).
>
> While the Fast and Furious gun smuggling scandal was at the top of everyone's mind, and what conservatives specifically wanted to hear about, only a few Republican senators grilled him on it. Democrats on the committee tried to talk about nearly everything else, including treatment of Muslims by the Department of Justice, bath salt regulations, and anti-bullying measures.
>
> The Republicans that did come out swinging on Fast and Furious got Holder to give stammering and often inconsistent testimony.
>
> […]Cornyn also had the most intense exchanges with Holder during the entire hearing, asking about the murder of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry and whether or not Holder would like to apologize to the family.
>
> "It pains me whenever there is the death of a law enforcement official, especially under the circumstances. It is not fair, however, to assume that the mistakes that happened in Fast and Furious directly led to the death of Agent Terry," Holder said.
>
> Cornyn also asked whether or not anyone in the Department of Justice has been made accountable for the errors that have been made.
>
> "Can you name me one person who's been held accountable for this Fast and Furious Operation? Just one in the Department of Justice?" Cornyn said.
>
> Holder responded: "Well we have made a number of changes with regard to personnel both in the Phoenix U.S. Attorney's Office, also at the ATF Headquarters here. I will certainly await the report that comes out of the Inspector General. And I will assure you and the American people that people will be held accountable for any mistakes that were made in connection with Fast and Furious."

Wow… I think the Republicans might be a bit angry about how that Border Patrol agent got murdered because of this gun-smuggling operation, which was administered by the Department of Justice. I think Eric Holder knows more than he is admitting to, based on his evasive, politicized answers.

Related posts

- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference
- Homeland Security Secreary Janet Napolitano to counter global warming threat
- Obama administration investigates Wisconsin pro-lifers
- Homeland Security head says that "the system worked"
- Democrats will push amnesty to give 12-20 million illegal aliens citizenship
- Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?
- Michele Bachmann calls for Napolitano to resign
- Civil rights commission finds that Obama administration has racist double standard
- Is Obama's Department of Justice enabling voter registration fraud?
- Department of Justice won't purge dead or ineligible voters from roll
- Is the Department of Justice refusing to defend the voting rights of whites?
- Obama's attorney general has his head in the sand on national security
- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training
- Obama administration threatens South Carolina for saving prisoner's lives

132 economists prefer the Republican job creation strategy

November 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From John Boehner's web site.

Excerpt:

House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) today released a list of 132 American economists who believe the job creation strategy used in the House GOP Plan for America's Job Creators will do more to boost private-sector job growth in America in both the near-term and long-term than the "stimulus" spending approach favored by President Obama.

"This list underscores the need for immediate action on the now-22 bipartisan jobs bills passed by the Republican-led House that are awaiting a vote in the Democratic-controlled Senate," Boehner said. *"All 22 of these bills passed the House with bipartisan support, but to date have not been brought to a vote by Senate Democrats. To help support job creation in both the short-term and long-term, we need bipartisan action to halt unnecessary government regulations and fix the tax code to help private-sector job creators. Our plan does that. The Senate needs to pass these 22 bills and send them to the president's desk."*

Last month, Boehner asked a group of economists across the nation: which do you believe is more likely to provide a boost for private-sector job growth in America in both the near- and long-term: a plan focused on billions of dollars in additional "stimulus" spending by government – or a plan focused on halting excessive government regulations and fixing the tax code to help private-sector job creators? A total of 132 economists indicated they clearly favor the latter strategy. The list of 132 economists includes experts from Stanford University's Hoover Institution, Carnegie Mellon University, and Harvard University; economists from the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Manhattan Institute, and the American Action Forum; and many others.

On Friday, in response to the U.S. Department of Labor's announcement that October 2011 marked the 33rd consecutive month in which the national unemployment rate exceeded eight percent, Boehner asked President Obama to prod the Democratic-controlled Senate for action on the stalled jobs bills. Boehner and other Republicans have called for President Obama to be more engaged in the legislative process this fall and less focused on his re-election campaign.

"I urge the president to call on Senate Democrats to bring these common-sense jobs bills to a vote," Boehner said. *"As long as these bipartisan jobs bills are stalled in the Senate, it is unacceptable for the White House to be anything less than 100 percent engaged in the legislative process."*

Here's the plan:

Empower Small Business Owners and Reduce Regulatory Burdens:

- Require congressional review and approval of any government regulations that have a significant impact on the economy or burden small businesses.
- Audit existing and pending regulations to identify and address those that hinder economic growth.

Fix the Tax Code to Help Job Creators:

- Increase American competitiveness to spur investment and create more American jobs by streamlining the tax code and lowering the tax rate for businesses and individuals including small business owners to no more than 25%.
- Reform the tax code to allow American businesses to bring back their overseas profits without having to pay a tax penalty so they can invest in our economy and create American jobs.

Increase Competitiveness for American Manufacturers:

- Pass the three pending free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea to create up to 250,000 jobs.
- Continue to open new markets to American made products. Encourage Entrepreneurship and Growth:
- Modernize our patent system to protect our nation's innovators, discourage frivolous lawsuits, and expedite patent reviews.
- Re-Authorize and improve federal programs and approval processes to streamline development of new products.
- Remove barriers to building a first class workforce so that the United States can compete in the global marketplace and lead the way in technological development and growth.

Maximize Domestic Energy Production to Ensure an Energy Policy for the 21st Century:

- Promote lower energy prices through increased domestic production.
- Encourage all forms of energy production.
- Pay Down America's Unsustainable Debt Burden and Start Living Within our Means:
- Build upon the House Republicans' Budget by enacting significant spending cuts.

And they already passed about 20 bills through the House with bipartisan support.

The American Enterprise Institute explains the top 5 myths about overpopulation

November 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The American Enterprise Institute lists 5 big myths about overpopulation.

They are:

1. The world is overpopulated.
2. Rapid population growth keeps poor countries poor.
3. For all its ethical problems, China's one-child policy boosts its economy.
4. If your population declines, your economy does, too.
5. The world will have 10 billion people by 2100.

Number 2 is the one I liked best:

> In 1960, South Korea and Taiwan were poor countries with fast-growing populations. Over the two decades that followed, South Korea's population surged by about 50 percent, and Taiwan's by about 65 percent. Yet, income increased in both places, too: Between 1960 and 1980, per capita economic growth averaged 6.2 percent in South Korea and 7 percent in Taiwan.
>
> Clearly, rapid population growth did not preclude an economic boom in those two Asian "tigers" — and their experience underscores that of the world as a whole. Between 1900 and 2000, as the planet's population was exploding, per capita income grew faster than ever before, rising nearly fivefold, by the reckoning of economic historian Angus Maddison . And for much of the last century, the countries with faster economic growth tended to be the ones where population was growing most rapidly, too.
>
> Today, the fastest population growth is found in so-called failed states, where poverty is worst. But it's not clear that population growth is their central problem: With physical security, better policies and greater investments in health and education, there is no reason that fragile states could not enjoy sustained improvements in income.

This is a good post to read and store away, because what I've found is that fears of overpopulation is underneath many of policies pushed by the left, from abortion, to government regulation of production, to government regulation of consumption. I'm not entirely sure why this fear exists, but I know it's there for many secular leftists. It's not rational, it's not supported by evidence, but it's there and it animates much of their political agenda.

Cain accuser Karen Kraushaar filed a sexual harassment claim at her next job, too

November 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Photo of Karen Kraushaar
From the left-leaning Associated Press.

Excerpt:

> A woman who settled a sexual harassment complaint against GOP presidential candidate Herman Cain in 1999 complained three years later at her next job about unfair treatment, saying she should be allowed to work from home after a serious car accident and accusing a manager of circulating a sexually charged email, The Associated Press has learned.
>
> Karen Kraushaar, 55, filed the complaint while working as a spokeswoman at the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the Justice Department in late 2002 or early 2003, with the assistance of her lawyer, Joel Bennett, who also handled her earlier sexual harassment complaint against Cain in 1999. Three former supervisors familiar with Kraushaar's complaint, which did not include a claim of sexual harassment, described it for the AP under condition of anonymity because the matter was handled internally by the agency and was not public.
>
> To settle the complaint at the immigration service, Kraushaar initially demanded thousands of dollars in payment, a reinstatement of leave she used after the accident earlier in 2002, promotion on the federal pay scale and a one-year fellowship to Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, according to a former supervisor familiar with the complaint. The promotion itself would have increased her annual salary between $12,000 and $16,000, according to salary tables in 2002 from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.
>
> […]Kraushaar's complaint was based on supervisors denying her request to work full time from home after a serious car accident in 2002, three former supervisors said. Two of them said Kraushaar also was denied previous requests to work from home before the car accident.

> The complaint also cited as objectionable an email that a manager had circulated comparing computers to women and men, a former supervisor said. The complaint claimed that the email, based on humor widely circulated on the Internet, was sexually explicit, according to the supervisor, who did not have a copy of the email. The joke circulated online lists reasons men and women were like computers, including that men were like computers because "in order to get their attention, you have to turn them on." Women were like computers because "even your smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory for later retrieval."
>
> […]Cain said he remembered gesturing to Kraushaar and noting that she was the same height as Cain's wife, about chin-high to Cain. The Georgia businessman said Kraushaar did not react noticeably, but he said the restaurant association lawyer later told him that was the most serious claim that Kraushaar had made against him, "the one she was most upset about."
>
> […]The New York Times reported previously that Kraushaar received $45,000 in the settlement with the restaurant association.

This is the woman who the liberal news networks are using to impugn the character of Herman Cain.

Cain's only other named accuser, Sharon Bialek

There are reports that she was fired from the NRA *for making a false allegation of sexual harassment*. If that is true, then her allegations against Cain are really in doubt. (H/T Pat Dollard)

Excerpt:

> "She was fired from her job, and her boyfriend suggested she contact Cain in hopes he could help her find employment.".
>
> **In this particular incident she was fired for falsely accusing her boss of sexual harassment**, a charge denied by co-workers, as well as being pretty much a pain in the ass to work with.
>
> "**I remember her as a time-waster, and rabble-rouser. If she didn't get her way she cried about sexual harassment**". A former co-worker, a female no less, emailed me. "She was trouble with a capital "T". The fact that she waited 13 years and never said a word not even during Cain's earlier forays into politics. She only now magically appears because Cain is leading in some polls and proving a threat to Barack Obama?

Here's a press release from the Cain campaign talking about the Sharon Bialek's background.

Excerpt:

> In the courts, Ms. Bialek has had a lengthy record in the Cook County Court system over various civil lawsuits. The following cases on file in Cook County are:

> - 2000-M1-707461 Defendant against Broadcare Management
> - 2000-M1-714398 Defendant in lawsuit against Broadcare Management
> - 2000-M1-701522 Defendant in lawsuit against Broadcare Management
> - 2005-M1-111072 Defendant in lawsuit against Mr. Mark Beatovic.
> - 2007-M1-189176 Defendant in lawsuit against Midland Funding.
> - 2009-M1-158826 Defendant in lawsuit against Illinois Lending.
>
> **Ms. Bialek was also sued in 1999 over a paternity matter according to ABC 7 Chicago (WLS-TV). Source: WLS-TV, November 7, 2011.**
>
> In personal finances, PACER (Federal Court) records show that Ms. Bialek has filed for bankruptcy in the Northern District of Illinois bankruptcy court in 1991 and 2001. The respective case numbers according to the PACER system are 1:01-bk-22664 and 1:91-bk-23273.
>
> Ms. Bialek has worked for nine employers over the last seventeen years. Source: WLS-TV, November 7, 2011

More from the Chicago Tribune.

Excerpt:

> Records show she twice has filed for personal bankruptcy, first in 1991 and then again in 2001. In the latter case, she claimed $5,700 in assets and more than $36,000 in liabilities. Among the creditors seeking payment was a management firm demanding back rent of $4,500, four credit card companies and a lawyer asking for his legal fees.
>
> After the case was discharged, she accused a former boyfriend of harassing her for repayment of a loan, court records in the bankruptcy case show. Bialek borrowed $4,500 from William Concha, though Concha now believes she had no intention of paying him back, according to his brother, Mario.
>
> Reached Monday night in Spain, William Concha declined comment.
>
> At least two liens have been filed against Bialek, according to records from the Cook County recorder of deeds.
>
> The IRS filed a tax lien against her in 2009 for nearly $5,200. In August, the Illinois Department of Revenue claimed Bialek owed the state more than $4,300, including penalties and interest, relating to income taxes from 2004, according to county records.
>
> Court records also show creditors took legal action against her during the past decade, including at least one lawsuit filed in Cook County.

In my previous post, I explained how false accusations are *regularly made* by a significant minority of women in certain cases, such as in divorce trials when custody (and the child support payments that go with custody) are in play. Not all women do this, but ones who have a certain profile are more prone to do it than others.

E-mails reveal that Obama fundraiser discussed Solyndra loan with White House

November 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

FBI agents remove evidence from Solyndra Headquarters

From the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> A major donor to President Barack Obama discussed with White House officials a solar energy company that received a half-billion dollar federal loan and later went bankrupt, newly released emails show.
>
> The emails released by a House committee appear to contradict repeated assurances by the Obama administration that the donor, George Kaiser, never talked about Solyndra Inc. with the White House.
>
> Solyndra's name came up at a White House meeting with Kaiser last year at a time when the California company was seeking a second federal loan, after it had already received a $528 million loan in 2009, the emails show.
>
> The second loan was not approved. Instead, an investment venture controlled by Kaiser made a private loan that resulted in the firm and other investors moving ahead of taxpayers in line for repayment in case of a default by Solyndra.
>
> Solyndra, the first renewable energy company to receive a federal loan under the 2009 stimulus law, declared bankruptcy in September and laid off its 1,100 workers, leaving taxpayers on the hook for more than a half-billion dollars.
>
> The company's implosion and revelations that administration officials rushed to complete the loan in time for a September 2009 groundbreaking have become an embarrassment for Obama and a rallying cry for GOP critics of his green energy program.
>
> Kaiser, an Oklahoma billionaire, was a "bundler" for Obama's 2008 campaign,

> raising between $50,000 and $100,000 for the president, records show. He also was a frequent White House visitor in 2009 and 2010. White House officials for months have denied that Kaiser talked about Solyndra during those visits. One the nation's richest men, Kaiser owns an oil company and other energy interests and is chief donor to the George Kaiser Family Foundation, which invests in early childhood education and community health.
>
> In one email released Wednesday by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Kaiser said that when he and a foundation official visited the White House last year, officials showed "thorough knowledge of the Solyndra story, suggesting it was one their prime poster children" for renewable energy.
>
> In another email, a Kaiser associate appears confident that Energy Secretary Steven Chu would approve a second loan for Solyndra.
>
> "It appears things are headed in the right direction and Chu is apparently staying involved in Solyndra's application and continues to talk up the company as a success story," Steve Mitchell, managing director of Kaiser's venture-capital firm, Argonaut Private Equity, wrote in a March 5, 2010, e-mail. Mitchell also served on Solyndra's board of directors.

It's very important for voters to understand what the Obama administration means when it talks about "jobs bills", "shovel-ready projects", "infrastructure development" and "economic stimulus". What they mean by those words is giving taxpayer money to their campaign fundraisers. And that's why the unemployment rate has been over 9% for the last three years, and we are running 1.3 trillion dollar deficits.

Do you know what Republicans would do if they were in office? They would let you keep more of the money you earn, and to hell with corruption. That's what a tax cut is – more money for you, and less money for politicians. Think about it. The smaller the government, the less opportunity there is for this sort of greed and corruption.

Related posts

- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
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Frank Turek interviews William Lane Craig about Christian apologetics and debate

November 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This interview is getting good reviews on Facebook. I would say it is a must-see, because it will change your view of what we should be emphasizing as Christians. Please watch the lecture and then mail this post to all of your friends – we need to be challenged by this man William Lane Craig.

(H/T BirdieUpon)

This interview occured after William Lane Craig's debate tour of the UK, and they talk a lot about it. I think the lesson for us is that apologetics is the best evangelistic tool that Christians have, and people really do show up by the thousands to see these debates. Maybe we should do more of them? And maybe we should be encouraging young people to follow Craig's path and become solid philosophers and debaters? And are we going to take seriously the duty to sponsor events like this? We have to ask ourselves these tough questions, and be practical and effective about defending God's honor when it's called into question. Having a relationship with God *is not* just about us getting what we want. There are things that *we* need to be doing to hold up our end of the relationship. Hard things. Self-sacrificial things. Things that we may not like at all. Things that work.

In Intellectual Neutral

Here's an article that I think might be appropriate for this interview.

Excerpt:

You may see, perhaps for the first time in your life, that here is a need in your life and as a result resolve to become intellectually engaged as a Christian. This is a momentous decision. It is a step that is desperately needed in the lives of millions of American Christians today. No one has issued the challenge to become intellectually engaged more forcefully than did Charles Malik, in his inaugural address at the dedication of the Billy Graham Center on this campus. He emphasized that we as Christians face two tasks in our evangelism: saving the soul and saving the mind, that is to say, not only converting people spiritually, but converting them intellectually as well. And the Church, he said, is lagging dangerously behind with regard to this second task. Listen to what he says:

> I must be frank with you: the greatest danger confronting American evangelical Christianity is the danger of anti-intellectualism. The mind in its greatest and deepest reaches is not cared for enough. But intellectual nurture cannot take place apart from profound immersion for a period of years in the history of thought and the spirit. People who are in a hurry to get out of the university and start earning money or serving the church or preaching the gospel have no idea of the infinite value of spending years of leisure conversing with the greatest minds and souls of the past, ripening and sharpening and enlarging their powers

> of thinking. The result is that the arena of creative thinking is vacated and abdicated to the enemy. Who among evangelicals can stand up to the great secular scholars on their own terms of scholarship? Who among evangelical scholars is quoted as a normative source by the greatest secular authorities on history or philosophy or psychology or sociology or politics? Does the evangelical mode of thinking have the slightest chance of becoming the dominant mode in the great universities of Europe and America that stamp our entire civilization with their spirit and ideas? For the sake of greater effectiveness in witnessing to Jesus Christ, as well as for their own sakes, evangelicals cannot afford to keep on living on the periphery of responsible intellectual existence.

These words hit like a hammer. Evangelicals really have been living on the periphery of responsible intellectual existence. The average Christian doesn't realize that there is an intellectual war going on in the universities and the professional journals and the scholarly societies. Christianity is being attacked from all sides as irrational or bigoted, and millions of students, our future generation of leaders, have absorbed this viewpoint.

This is a war which we cannot afford to lose. As J. Gresham Machen warned in his article, "Christianity and Culture" in the *Princeton Theological Review* of 1913, on the even of the Fundamentalist Controversy, if we lose this intellectual war, then our evangelism will be immeasurably more difficult in the next generation. He wrote,

> False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation to be controlled by ideas which prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. Under such circumstances, what God desires us to do is to destroy the obstacle at its root.

You can get the video and audio from a later version of this talk from Apologetics 315. I was present in the Wheaton College chapel when he gave the talk I excerpted above. It was moving.

We need a three part approach. We need to be intellectually engaged ourselves. We need to be intentional about marrying well and raising up young people who are intellectually engaged. And we need to study hard subjects so we can be good earners, and support the right kinds of operations. We can't just do whatever makes us feel good, willy-nilly, and then hope that things will work out – we have to work at this.

Jon Huntsman’s anti-Romney ads are awesome

November 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out these ads by Jon Huntsman.

Backflip:

Weather Vane:

Scared Mittless:

Mitt Romney is the most liberal candidate running in the primary – there are even more videos showing that the man is liberal on abortion, gay rights, global warming, gun control, government-controlled health care, and so on. He is a moderate Democrat – he has no record as a conservative. If elected, he would govern about 80% as liberal Barack Obama governs now. He is to the left of John McCain, in my view.

Obama pleases environmental lobby by killing 20,000-job Keystone XL pipeline

November 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Obama Economic Record			
	INAUGURATION DAY	TODAY	CHANGE
Unemployed Americans	12 million	14 million	↑ 2 million
Unemployment Rate	7.8%	9.1%	↑ 17%
Gas Prices	$1.85	$3.43	↑ 85%
Federal Debt	$10.6 trillion	$14.7 trillion	↑ 39%
Debt per person	$34,731	$47,047	↑ $12,316
Misery Index	7.8	12.9	↑ 65%
Food Stamp Recipients	32 million	45 million	↑ 41%
Health Insurance Premiums	$3,354	$4,129	↑ 23%
Home Values	$193,400	$172,600	↓ 11%
U.S. Global Competitiveness	1st	5th	↓ 4 places
Americans in Poverty	39.8 million	46.2 million	↑ 6.4 million

Obama Economic Record November 2011
From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> Roughly 20,000 oil industry construction jobs are being thrown under Obama's 2012 campaign bus, largely because the president needs to pump up his sagging support among the environmentalists.
>
> The pitch came Thursday when President Barack Obama put his leadership behind a State Department plan to study alternative routes for the pipeline, which is intended to bring oil from Alberta in Canada to oil refineries along the Gulf Coast.
>
> "We should take the time to ensure that all questions are properly addressed and all the potential impacts are properly understood," said Obama's afternoon statement.
>
> The construction jobs, and the revenue from operating the Keystone XL pipeline, may now go to Canadian workers.
>
> That's because Canadian government officials are already planning to help build a competing pipeline from Alberta's oil fields to new West Coast ports near Vancouver. The likely destination point is the port of Kitimat in British Columbia.

> The U.S. Department of State will begun studying an alternative route for the Keystone pipeline, even though an earlier department study had concluded the proposed route is the best of several alternatives. The new study will delay any final approval until after the 2012 election, allowing Obama to boost his support among environmentalist groups, activists and voters.
>
> But the delay may kill the U.S. segment of any pipeline, because the decision increases the environmentalist movement's clout during any future round of approval disputes, and also spurs the development of a pipeline through Canada.
>
> The job-killing decision was panned by GOP legislators and business groups.
>
> "More than 20,000 new American jobs have just been sacrificed in the name of political expediency," said a statement from Ohio Rep. John Boehner, the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
>
> "This is clearly a political decision and everyone knows it… Politics has trumped jobs in this decision and we can only wonder if the Administration's delay will cause Canada to turn their pipeline west and ship their energy and American jobs elsewhere," said statement from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.
>
> But the decision helps the Democratic-allied green-energy industry, which is now reliant on government subsidies to compete against the oil energy industry.
>
> The oil that would be pumped through the Keystone XL pipeline would make gas cheaper for drivers, and worsen the competitiveness of the green-tech companies.
>
> The stock value of green-energy companies, and their supply of commercial investment, has already dropped in the last several months because investment analysts believe an Obama loss in 2012 will prompt GOP legislators to cut federal subsidies.
>
> Before his 2008 election, Obama predicted he would raise oil-energy prices to spur the green-energy industry.

The Wall Street Journal explains more.

Excerpt:

> In April 2010 and again this August, State produced multivolume environmental impact statements that concluded the pipeline would have "no significant impacts" on the environment. That should have ended the matter.
>
> But the President's environmentalist friends have decided to make Keystone a test of his green virtue. "We'll see if [Mr. Obama] is an oil guy or a people guy," eco-agitator Bill McKibben recently warned at an Occupy Wall Street event, and the Sierra Club has threatened that it won't "mobilize the environmental base" in 2012 if he approves the project. Various Hollywood worthies have marched in front of the White House in protest.
>
> […]We're guessing this decision to abdicate was really made by President

> Plouffe, as in David Plouffe, the White House political aide who seems to be running most of the executive branch these days. The Keystone cop-out couldn't be a clearer expression that this Administration puts its anticarbon obsessions—and Big Green campaign donors—above job creation and blue-collar construction workers. He's President of the 1%.

This reminds me of the way that Obama hurt the economy by delaying three free trade deals for three years, in order to appease his union supporters.

When Obama tries to create jobs, he ends up doing thinks like giving $535 million taxpayer dollars to Solyndra – to repay his Democrat fundraisers. And then they go bankrupt, because green energy is a hoax. The right way to create jobs is by letting businesses keep the money they earn, and keeping government out of their operations. Unfortunately, Obama doesn't like it when people earn money by selling services and products, and he thinks that government needs to regulate businesses. So, we are stuck with high unemployment.

Related posts

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Christianity and the doctrines of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism

November 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you familiar with the differences between *exclusivism, inclusivism* and *pluralism?* This article from Leadership University explains all three of them.

Here's exclusivism:

> The following is a succinct explanation of the central characters and ideas behind each position. The exclusivist position has been the dominant position of the church as a whole through much of its history until the Enlightenment. Major representatives include Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Hendrick Kraemer, D.A. Carson, William Lane Craig, and R. Douglas Geivett.
>
> Key to this position is the understanding of God's general and special revelations. God is manifested through creation (general revelation), but Man has responded by freely going against this revelation and, thus, stands guilty before a holy God. However, God has demonstrated a reconciliatory mercy through His word and deed, fulfilled completely in Jesus Christ. The historical person of Jesus, then, is the unique, final, decisive, and normative self-revelation of God to Man (special revelation). Exclusivists believe that Jesus Christ is the sole criterion by which all religions, including Christianity, should be understood and evaluated. Calvin Shenk explains:
>
> > Christ did not come just to make a contribution to the religious storehouse of knowledge. The revelation which he brought is the ultimate standard. Since in Christ alone is salvation and truth, many religious paths do not adequately reflect the way of God and do not lead to truth and life. Jesus is not, therefore, just the greatest lord among other lords. There is no other lord besides him.
>
> Specific texts often employed by exclusivists include Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 3:11; and 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

And inclusivism:

> Inclusivism is a blanket term to characterize a sort of "middle way" between exclusivism and pluralism. Most prominent within mainline Protestantism and post-Vatican II Catholicism, its notable proponents (in one formor another) include Karl Rahner, Raimundo Panikkar and Stanley Samartha, and Hans Kung. Evangelical theologians such as Clark Pinnock, Norman Anderson, and John Sanders have also identified themselves with this position. Herein, the agnosticism associated with the latter option above is replaced with outright optimism. Christian salvation is not confined to the historical or geographic

> extent special revelation has spread, rather it must be available to all cultures, irrespective of age or geography.Salvation is still posited wholly in Christ and his salvific work. Specific knowledge of this work, however, is not necessary for the effect (i.e., salvation) to apply to those within a different religious culture who have responded to the general revelation available. Once again, Shenk explains:
>
> > Inclusivists want to avoid monopolizing the gospel of redemption. They acknowledge the possibility of salvation outside of Christian faith or outside the walls of the visible church, but the agent of such salvation is Christ, and the revelation in Jesus is definitive and normative for assessing that salvation. Jesus Christ is believed to be the center, and other ways are evaluated by how they relate to him. Other religions are not just a preparation for Christ, but Christ is actually present in them.
>
> The fundamental differences between exclusivism and inclusivism… are the nature and the content of "saving faith." The former emphasizes explicit faith while the latter points to an implicit faith.

And pluralism:

> Finally, there is the pluralist position. This is undoubtedly the most difficult of the three to define in any general sense. The spectrum of pluralistic thought is as wide as it is long. The focusof this particular study will examine the contributions of its key figures: Paul Knitter, John Hick, and Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Just as in the previous positions, the interpretative range within just these three individuals varies. It is fitting, however, to focus primarily on them since they are the most vocal and influential figures espousing pluralism today.
>
> Hick and Knitter argue the case for pluralism on the following grounds: (1) ethically, it is the only way to promote justice in an intolerant world; (2) in terms of the "ineffability of religious experience," so no religion can claim an absolutist stance; and (3) through the understanding that historical and cultural contexts must be the filter for any absolute religious claim. Hick has argued that all world religions attempt to relate to the unknowable Ultimate Reality (or, the Real), but because of their various cultural and historical contexts these attempts are all naturally different. Hence the various conceptions of the Real and the salvation(s) sought. The common soteriological goal, toward which all religions strive, though, is rooted in the desire to transcend self-centeredness and, in turn, encounter a new (unexplainable) experience with the Real. But, he emphatically emphasizes the fact that there is "no public evidence that any one religion is soteriologically unique or superior to others and thus has closer access to Ultimate Reality."
>
> Therefore, with pluralism, Christ is no more definitive or normative than any religious figure or concept. Or, as Andrew Kirk explains, "Rather than confessing that Jesus Christ is the one Lord over all, this view asserts that the one Lord who

> has manifested himself in other names is also known as Jesus." By "crossing the Rubicon," as Hick and Knitter illustrate, Christians are encouraged to abandon any claim of Christian uniqueness and the possibility of absolute revelation, accepting the fact that the Christian faith is one among many options.

Now maybe you didn't know this, but Roman Catholics seem to have taken a turn away from exclusivism and towards inclusivism in the last century.

So, I thought I would post a rebuttal to the Roman Catholic embrace of inclusivism from one of my favorite Christian apologists, Greg Koukl.

Excerpt:

> There are some issues of Christianity that are intra-Nicene, intramural discussions between believers, in which I think a charitable person can easily see how another Christian can hold a different view because there are things that are difficult to understand in Scripture. For instance, though I'm Reformed in my soteriology, my understanding of salvation–I'm a Calvinist–I am sympathetic to an Arminian perspective because I can see how they, in lines of reasoning from the New Testament and verses themselves from the New Testament, can come to their view. So, though I would disagree, and I think they're mistaken, I understand how they can see it.But there are other positions that I cannot understand because there is no New Testament evidence in favor of it, and, to the contrary, almost to a word, as the New Testament touches the issue, it says quite the opposite.
>
> Earlier this week, I was honored, flattered, and, frankly, humbled to have a very unique opportunity on Monday to address an audience of about 150 Jewish people that were in the midst of Jewish High Holy Day services–morning services, evening services–at kind of a pause time in the afternoon, in which my host and I and another guest had a discussion about Jews and Christians. The three of us were on the panel: my host, Dennis Prager, a man I have a tremendous admiration and affection for, and Greg Coiro, a Roman Catholic priest and a professional friend. I've known both of these men over 20 years and have been in many discussions, both in private and public on the air with Dennis and Greg Coiro.
>
> It was in this opportunity that, in a sense, the ancient quarrel of sorts, theologically, was revisited, that I've had in the past many years ago when we were talking about this in interfaith dialogues. This difference of opinion is a historically new development in Roman Catholicism that stunned me when I first encountered it in the early days of being on Religion on the Line in the late eighties, a radio panel Dennis Prager hosted for many years. The priests on the panel uniformly held the conviction, informed by Vatican II, that Jews don't have to believe in Jesus in order to receive the benefits of Jesus' salvation. This is a view called "inclusivism." It's not the same as pluralism, but in my view, it seems to have the same impact: "Yes, Jesus is necessary for salvation, but you don't

> have to believe in Jesus to benefit from Jesus."
>
> Now, at this afternoon panel recently, the very first question that came up was whether trust in Jesus is necessary for salvation. "Greg, do you believe that? Do Protestants believe that?" I answered, "Yes, I believe that. And no, not all Protestants believe that. But let me try to explain it to you in a way that doesn't sound so stark. Let me try to give it some perspective." I explained that it wasn't as if God was up there looking down at a bunch of religious clubs and prefers some over others. He used to prefer the Jewish club and now He prefers the Christian club. It may sound that way to many when this doctrine of Christianity is put forward: Jesus is the only way of salvation; you must believe in Jesus in order to benefit from what Jesus did.

Talk about Daniel in the lions' den. Anyway, click through and read the whole article to get an idea of how to make your stand for exclusivism in difficult places.

For a general article defending the Christian doctrine of exclusivism, check out this article by William Lane Craig. One of my favorites, from way way back to when I was an undergraduate.

And, if you would like to listen to a debate on pluralism, then here is a debate featuring pluralist John Hick.

EEG device detects consciousness in persons in persistent vegetative state

November 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting article from the New Scientist.

Excerpt:

> Signs of consciousness have been detected in three people previously thought to be in a vegetative state, with the help of a cheap, portable device that can be used at the bedside.
>
> "There's a man here who technically meets all the internationally agreed criteria for being in a vegetative state, yet he can generate 200 responses [to direct commands] with his brain," says Adrian Owen of the University of Western Ontario. "Clearly this guy is not in a true vegetative state. He's probably as conscious as you or I are."
>
> [Owen's team] devised a test that uses the relatively inexpensive and widely available electroencephalogram (EEG).
>
> An EEG uses electrodes attached to the scalp to record electrical activity in the brain.
>
> Owen and his team used an EEG on 16 people thought to be in a PVS and compared the results with 12 healthy controls while they were asked to imagine performing a series of tasks.
>
> Each person was asked to imagine at least four separate actions – either clenching their right fist or wiggling their toes.
>
> In three of the people with PVS, brain regions known to be associated with those tasks lit up with activity, despite physical unresponsiveness. This suggested to the researchers that the subjects were carrying out a complex set of cognitive functions including hearing the command, understanding language, sustaining attention and tapping into working memory.
>
> "It isn't the case that just because somebody doesn't respond they're not conscious," Owen says. "There's a growing body of data now demonstrating that many of these patients aren't what they appear."

The rest of the article talks about how the scientists are planning to use their new technique to communicate with patients by asking them to think of specific things which will mean "yes" or "no". The long-term goal is to get the patients to be able to communicate, perhaps even allow them to move a mouse pointer by triggering reactions in their brains by using their thoughts.

I think this research dovetails nicely with the OCD research I mentioned before. Maybe now would be a good time to talk more about that research.

William Dembski discusses the OCD research of Jeffrey Schwartz.

Excerpt:

> Schwartz provides a nonmaterialist interpretation of neuroscience and argues that this interpretation is more compelling than the standard materialist interpretation. He arrived at this position as a psychiatrist specializing in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). OCD sufferers recognize obsessive-compulsive thoughts and urges as separate from their intrinsic selves. For instance, after a few washings, the compulsive hand-washer realizes that his hands are clean and yet feels driven to keep washing them. It was reflection on this difference between the obvious truth (the hands are clean) and the irrational doubts (they might still be dirty) that prompted Schwartz to reassess the philosophical underpinnings of neuroscience.
>
> From brain scans, Schwartz found that certain regions in the brain of OCD patients (the caudate nucleus in particular) exhibited abnormal patterns of activity. By itself this finding is consistent with a materialist view of mind (if, as materialism requires, the brain enables the mind, then abnormal patterns of brain activity are likely to be correlated with dysfunctional mental states). Nonetheless, having found abnormal patterns of brain activity, Schwartz then had OCD patients engage in intensive mental effort through what he called relabeling, reattributing, refocusing, and revaluing (the 4 Rs). In the case of compulsive hand-washing, this involved a patient acknowledging that his hands were in fact clean (relabeling); attributing anxieties and doubts about his hands being dirty to a misfunctioning brain (reattributing); directing his thoughts and actions away from handwashing and toward productive ends (refocusing); and, lastly, understanding at a deep level the senselessness of OCD messages (revaluing).
>
> **Schwartz documents not only that patients who undertook this therapy experienced considerable relief from OCD symptoms, but also that their brain scans indicated a lasting realignment of brain-activity patterns. Thus, without any intervention directly affecting their brains, OCD patients were able to reorganize their brains by intentionally modifying their thoughts and behaviors. The important point for Schwartz here is not simply that modified thoughts and behaviors permanently altered patterns of brain activity, but that such modifications resulted from, as he calls it, “mindful attention”-conscious and purposive thoughts or actions in which the agent adopts the stance of a detached observer.**

It turns out that people can freely choose to exert “mental effort” in order to change what their brains are doing.

By the way, if you like this topic, and want a resource to show your friends, be sure and get a hold of the debate on mind vs. brain between Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Michael

Shermer.

Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sexual liberation and social justice

November 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My *favorite* marriage scholar.

Topics:

- what is sexual liberation?
- what effects has it had on the poor?
- can government be neutral about morality?

I am a man who admires passionate women, and she really impresses me. She makes social issues seem as interesting as national security and counter-terrrorism. Not only does she know what she is talking about, but she is soooooo passionate about it.

Here is some research from the Heritage Foundation to back up some of her claims.

This lecture makes me think of books by Theodore Dalrymple. Are all my readers aware of Theodore Dalrymple? Here's a free book (his first) online – chapter by chapter. If you need something GRRRREAT to read on Friday night, this will knock your socks off. Just read a little, and you won't be able to put it down.

Obama gave $443 million no-bid contract to drug firm run by Democrat fundraiser

November 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically leftist Los Angeles Times.

Excerpt:

> Over the last year, the Obama administration has aggressively pushed a $433-million plan to buy an experimental smallpox drug, despite uncertainty over whether it is needed or will work.
>
> Senior officials have taken unusual steps to secure the contract for New York-based Siga Technologies Inc., whose controlling shareholder is billionaire Ronald O. Perelman, one of the world's richest men and a longtime Democratic Party donor.
>
> When Siga complained that contracting specialists at the Department of Health and Human Services were resisting the company's financial demands, senior officials replaced the government's lead negotiator for the deal, interviews and documents show.
>
> When Siga was in danger of losing its grip on the contract a year ago, the officials blocked other firms from competing.
>
> Siga was awarded the final contract in May through a "sole-source" procurement in which it was the only company asked to submit a proposal. The contract calls for Siga to deliver 1.7 million doses of the drug for the nation's biodefense stockpile. The price of approximately $255 per dose is well above what the government's specialists had earlier said was reasonable, according to internal documents and interviews.
>
> […]Dr. Thomas M. Mack, an epidemiologist at USC's Keck School of Medicine, battled smallpox outbreaks in Pakistan and has advised the Food and Drug Administration on the virus. He called the plan to stockpile Siga's drug "a waste of time and a waste of money."

Yet another Solyndra to add to the pile of Solyndras. It turns out that Obama actually does like millionaires and billionaires – enough to give them millions of taxpayer dollars from the middle class.

Related posts

- E-mails reveal that Obama fundraiser discussed Solyndra loan with White House
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra
- Report finds Labor Department's green jobs program failing

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- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing
- Marsha Blackburn beats up Al Gore on cap and trade corruption

What should you study to prepare yourself for a career?

November 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting post from the Chapman Kids blog. The father is a software engineer like me, and he's serious and intentional about how he is leading his children.

In a recent post, he talks about one of the adventures that the two kids are having with a community college professor of English writing. The post is entitled "Continued conversation with the kid's commie teacher".

He writes:

> As many already know, Kelly and Christian take a "writing" class at the community college where the dear leader of the class lectures on the evils of all things Christian, the beauty of communism and atheism, and the righteousness of drug legalization and abortion. Today's topic was Christianity.
>
> […]At the point when he made the claim that Adam and Eve could not have existed because of the scientific evidence for evolution, Christian raised his hand and said, "There is just as much scientific evidence against macroevolution as there is for it."
>
> "You don't believe in evolution!" exclaimed the professor incredulously with a look of disdain and horror.
>
> "We DO believe in microevolution. It is grossly arrogant for you NOT to question your own beliefs when it comes to evolution" said Kelly. "That is what you are demanding from us."
>
> The professor said, "Evolution is established scientific fact" and used several of the standard canards (fossil record, etc.) to establish his point.
>
> Then they were off to the races. Fortunately, during homeschool, Christian and Kelly had read books like The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success by Rodney Stark, Understanding Intelligent Design: Everything You Need to Know in Plain Language by William Dembski and Sean McDowell, Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions by Greg Koukl, and Intellectuals by Paul Johnson. The professor was armed with shibboleths about the truth of macroevolution and quotes from John Shelby Spong about the virgin birth. John Shelby Spong!?!! You have to be WILDLY out of touch with both current scholarship and reality if you quote John Shelby Spong about virtually anything. He quotes the likes of losers like Noam Chomsky and Bertrand Russell, too.

I tweeted Kelly a link to the William Lane Craig vs John Shelby Spong. Here is part 1 and part 2 of that debate on Youtube. It's worth watching if you haven't seen it before.

Mr. Chapman continues his post:

> It is frustrating. Here is a *writing* a professor who fervently believes he is making students question their beliefs through these profoundly silly arguments. The subject matter is objectionable, but this guy's incompetence is even more objectionable. He does not appear to understand the difference between scientific method and historic method (very important in discussion of the resurrection). Neither does he understand that it is impossible to argue for the primacy of scientific method without consideration of its philosophical underpinings. I guess I should be grateful he is incompetent with respect to his arguments–he does nothing to get the kids to question their faith or worldview. Still, a lot of taxpayer money is wasted on professors like this throughout the land.

Well, the kids have to learn how to write, but I think it is important to note English classes are especially politicized. There is an awful lot of ideology in English classes, because that's the easiest place for people who want to teach to go if they want to avoid being corrected by real life. In English, and other similar areas, it's easier for a teacher to go on and on about their ideas without have to test them against the real world. It's the easiest subject for teachers to force students to agree with your ideology without allowing them to be able to bring in facts to disagree. Basically, a secular lefty teacher can always find literature (usually modern literature, blech!) that casts Christians as brutes, Christian moral standards as outdated and harmful, and non-Christian behavior as praiseworthy. Because literature is necessarily made-up – it's just opinion.

Even someone like me who gets courting and chivalry guidance from Shakespeare and Austen is cautious about taking courses in literature. Plus, you can can get into a lot of trouble for disagreeing with the teacher. I took English electives during my undergraduate degree and they do grade you on your viewpoint, something which is much harder for them to do in math, science, physics, chemistry, etc.

Another post from Mr. Chapman discusses how children should study STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) topics, even if those children intend to work in a non-STEM field.

He writes:

> I found a great article in the Wall Street Journal this morning titled Generation Jobless: Students Pick Easier Majors Despite Less Pay. It had some startling statistics:
>
> Workers who majored in psychology have median earnings that are $38,000 below those of computer engineering majors, according to an analysis of U.S. Census data by Georgetown University.
>
> Wow. The article tells a story about a student who switched from Electrical and Computer Engineering because her team stayed up past midnight in a lab to write a soda machine program. They could not get it to work, so to keep from

> getting a bad grade, she withdrew from the course. Then she switched from engineering to a double major in psychology and policy management. Her grades went from B's and C's to A's. She said her high school did not prepare her for the rigor of an engineering degree.
>
> So the upshot is that she is willing to work in a low-paying career *for the rest of her life* because she was unwilling to do what was necessary to pass a few hard classes. I have had this discussion with people before. If you cannot handle a specifc course, you can do a TON of things to make it happen. You can get a tutor. You can take the class two or even three times if needed. You can take a more remedial course, then try the tough one again. Is it worth it to go to school for a year or two more to do something you like and that pays well for the next forty or fifty year? It seems like a no brainer.
>
> The crazy part is that even for those who want to do less technical jobs, it is best to prepare for that non-technical job with a hard degree.
>
> Research has shown that graduating with these majors provides a good foundation not just for so-called STEM jobs, or those in the science, technology, engineering, and math fields, but a whole range of industries where earnings expectations are high. Business, finance and consulting firms, as well as most health-care professions, are keen to hire those who bring quantitative skills and can help them stay competitive.
>
> We joked about this quite a bit, but I wanted to get it into the kids head that, if they went to college (not necessarily a given–preparation for many careers–pilot, electrician, writer, and small business owner are monumentally better served through some type of preparation other than college), they could study their passion, but they needed to start with a rigorous degree. We defined rigorous as anything that involves hard math. The use of hard math and statistics is creating new breakthroughs in a lot of fields right now: medicine, agriculture, sociology, etc., etc. etc.

I agree with Mr. Chapman. And I think that he is definitely going to raise successful, influential Christians, because he and the children are well prepared and engaged. He has a great relationship with his kids. They are definitely more advanced than I was when I was their age. It's encouraging to me to see a Christian Dad who is focused and purposeful about having solid relationships with his kids, and preparing them for the dangerous world they are entering as adults. I think it's important to admire the people who are getting it right (the parents and the kids together) and learn from their successes. I like that he is still involved with what his children are learning even after they are finished with high school.

I really do think that engineers make the best husbands and fathers. Engineers learn how to gather requirements, evaluate alternative solutions, and then implement. Engineers care about designing to support expandability, maintenance, security and unexpected emergencies. They are easy to argue with, because they believe in logic and evidence.

They are pragmatic – they make decisions based on what works, not what sounds good or feels good. Good engineers also have training in project management, budgeting, leadership and resource management, too. The best engineers are the entrepreneurs, who understand business, economics, business law and politics. It really is an ideal skill set for marriage and parenting. Engineers try to build things, and those building skills can be re-used to build a family.

Gay Penn State coach Jerry Sandusky charged with sexually assaulting boys

November 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Warning: this post contains very graphic subject matter. Reader discretion is advised. Do not read this if you are under the age of 18.

Associated Press reports on the homosexual Penn State coach who sexually abused boys.

Excerpt:

> An explosive sex abuse scandal and allegations of a cover-up rocked Happy Valley after former Penn State defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky, once considered Joe Paterno's heir apparent, was charged with sexually assaulting eight boys over 15 years. Among the allegations was that a graduate assistant saw Sandusky assault a boy in the shower at the team's practice center in 2002.
>
> […]Sandusky, 67, was arrested Saturday and released on $100,000 bail after being arraigned on 40 criminal counts. Curley, 57, and Schultz, 62, were expected to turn themselves in on Monday in Harrisburg.
>
> The allegations against Sandusky, who started The Second Mile in 1977, range from sexual advances to touching to oral and anal sex. The young men testified before a state grand jury that they were in their early teens when some of the abuse occurred; there is evidence even younger children may have been victimized. Sandusky's attorney Joe Amendola said his client has been aware of the accusations for about three years and has maintained his innocence.
>
> […]A preliminary hearing scheduled for Wednesday would likely be delayed, Amendola said. Sandusky is charged with multiple counts of involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, corruption of minors, endangering the welfare of a child, indecent assault and unlawful contact with a minor, as well as single counts of aggravated indecent assault and attempted indecent assault.
>
> […]The grand jury said eight boys were targets of sexual advances or assaults by Sandusky. None was named, and in at least one case, the jury said the child's identity remains unknown to authorities.
>
> One accuser, now 27, testified that Sandusky initiated contact with a "soap battle" in the shower that led to multiple instances of involuntary sexual intercourse and indecent assault at Sandusky's hands, the grand jury report said.
>
> He said he traveled to charity functions and Penn State games with Sandusky, even being listed as a member of the Sandusky family party for the 1998 Outback Bowl and 1999 Alamo Bowl. But when the boy resisted his advances, Sandusky threatened to send him home from the Alamo Bowl, the report said.
>
> Sandusky also gave him clothes, shoes, a snowboard, golf clubs, hockey gear and football jerseys, and even guaranteed that he could walk on to the football team,

> the grand jury said, and the boy also appeared with Sandusky in a photo in Sports Illustrated. He testified that Sandusky once gave him $50 to buy marijuana, drove him to purchase it and then drove him home as the boy smoked the drug.
>
> The first case to come to light was a boy who met Sandusky when he was 11 or 12, the grand jury said. The boy received expensive gifts and trips to sports events from Sandusky, and physical contact began during his overnight stays at Sandusky's home, jurors said. Eventually, the boy's mother reported the allegations of sexual assault to his high school, and Sandusky was banned from the child's school district in Clinton County in 2009. That triggered the state investigation that culminated in charges Saturday.
>
> But the report also alleges much earlier instances of abuse and details failed efforts to stop it by some who became aware of what was happening.
>
> Another child, known only as a boy about 11 to 13, was seen by a janitor pinned against a wall while Sandusky performed oral sex on him in fall 2000, the grand jury said.
>
> And in 2002, Kelly said, a graduate assistant saw Sandusky sexually assault a naked boy, estimated to be about 10 years old, in a team locker room shower. The grad student and his father reported what he saw to Paterno, who immediately told Curley, prosecutors said.

This reminds me of the case where a gay Duke University official adopted a black 5-year old child and then offered him to other gay men for sex on the internet, in exchange for money.

Excerpt:

> Frank Lombard is an associate director at Duke University's Global Health Institute and a homosexual who was charged last week with the molestation of his adopted 5-year-old black son and actively trying to sell him for sex on the internet.
>
> The 40 words above are 40 more than the Main Stream Media has said on this horrible story.
>
> In nearly a week since Lombard was arrested, not one national broadcast or cable television news show has picked up the story. Compare this to the weeks on end of sensational coverage of the white male lacrosse players of the same university charged with rape several years ago.
>
> At the time of this post not one television show has reported the story and only 17 newspapers in the United States featured it – a majority of which are only small local newspapers.
>
> And most of these articles cited the American Press' report on the events, which was as follows:

> **AP)** WASHINGTON – A Duke University official has been arrested and charged with offering his adopted 5-year-old son for sex.
>
> Frank Lombard, the school's associate director of the Center for Health Policy, was arrested after an Internet sting, according to the FBI's Washington field office and the city's police department.
>
> According to an affidavit by District of Columbia Police Det. Timothy Palchak, an unnamed informant facing charges in his own child sex case led authorities to Lombard.
>
> Authorities said that Lombard tried to persuade a person -who he did not know was a police officer -to travel to North Carolina to have sex with Lombard's child.
>
> The detective's affidavit charges Lombard identified himself online as "perv dad for fun," and says that in an online chat with the detective, Lombard said he had sexually molested his son, whom he adopted as an infant.
>
> The court papers say Lombard also invited the undercover detective to North Carolina to have sex with the young boy, and even suggested which hotel he should use."
>
> In response to the AP report, which most of the newspapers used almost verbatim, Mike Adams of Townhall made the observation that "The Associate Press (AP) did not mention the fact that the five-year old offered up for molestation was black. Bringing that fact to light might be damaging to the political coalition that exists between blacks and gays. Nor did the AP mention that the adopted child is being raised by a homosexual couple. Bringing that fact to light might harm the gay adoption movement."
>
> With this shocking lack of coverage of an even more shocking story, many are asking why this did not make the front pages and top headlines like the Duke lacrosse team scandal did. Thomas Lifson of American Thinker posited that "identity politics … apparently trumps all sense of outrage."

And here's another similar story, this time from Scotland where the head of a gay youth organization was running a child sex ring.

Excerpt:

> Eight men in a Scottish paedophile ring have been found guilty of a series of "horrific" sex offences against children and babies.
>
> […]Two of the men – convicted sex offender Neil Strachan and gay rights campaigner James Rennie – were convicted of sex attacks on children.
>
> Strachan, 41, and Rennie, 38, both from Edinburgh, were also found guilty of conspiring to abuse youngsters, as were three other members of the gang.
>
> […]The jury found Rennie, the former chief of LGBT Youth Scotland, an organisation dedicated to helping young gay people, guilty of molesting a young boy over more than four years.

> The child was just three months old when the abuse began.

Those are the facts. I have no comments on them, and I will be strict about filtering comments to this post because of Obama’s law governing speech on controversial issues.

Obama fundraisers got 80% of green energy loans ($16.4 billion)

November 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Obama Economic Record			
	INAUGURATION DAY	TODAY	CHANGE
Unemployed Americans	12 million	14 million	↑ 2 million
Unemployment Rate	7.8%	9.1%	↑ 17%
Gas Prices	$1.85	$3.43	↑ 85%
Federal Debt	$10.6 trillion	$14.7 trillion	↑ 39%
Debt per person	$34,731	$47,047	↑ $12,316
Misery Index	7.8	12.9	↑ 65%
Food Stamp Recipients	32 million	45 million	↑ 41%
Health Insurance Premiums	$3,354	$4,129	↑ 23%
Home Values	$193,400	$172,600	↓ 11%
U.S. Global Competitiveness	1st	5th	↓ 4 places
Americans in Poverty	39.8 million	46.2 million	↑ 6.4 million

Obama Economic Record November 2011

From the Daily Beast, an article that explains how Obama rewarded many of his campaign fundraisers with green energy loans backed by taxpayer dollars.

Excerpt:

> It would take an entire book to analyze every single grant and government-backed loan doled out since Barack Obama became president. But an examination of grants and guaranteed loans offered by just one stimulus program run by the Department of Energy, for alternative-energy projects, is stunning. The so-called 1705 Loan Guarantee Program and the 1603 Grant Program channeled billions of dollars to all sorts of energy companies. The grants were earmarked for alternative-fuel and green-power projects, so it would not be a surprise to learn that those industries were led by liberals. Furthermore, these were highly competitive grant and loan programs—not usually a hallmark of cronyism. Often fewer than 10 percent of applicants were deemed worthy.

> Nevertheless, a large proportion of the winners were companies with Obama-campaign connections. Indeed, at least 10 members of Obama's finance committee and more than a dozen of his campaign bundlers were big winners in getting your money. At the same time, several politicians who supported Obama managed to strike gold by launching alternative-energy companies and obtaining

> grants. How much did they get? **According to the Department of Energy's own numbers … a lot. In the 1705 government-backed-loan program, for example, $16.4 billion of the $20.5 billion in loans granted as of Sept. 15 went to companies either run by or primarily owned by Obama financial backers—individuals who were bundlers, members of Obama's National Finance Committee, or large donors to the Democratic Party. The grant and guaranteed-loan recipients were early backers of Obama before he ran for president, people who continued to give to his campaigns and exclusively to the Democratic Party in the years leading up to 2008. Their political largesse is probably the best investment they ever made in alternative energy. It brought them returns many times over.**

Think of it as a welfare program paid by the middle class to enrich the secular leftist millionaires and billionaires. Taxing the poor to pay for the rich. That's what the Democrats mean by stimulus spending. And that's why we have been running trillion-dollar deficits for 3 years with an unemployment rate of 9% or more. They got elected in order to enrich themselves, because they are motivated by greed.

Related posts

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How to pick a husband who will love you for a lifetime

November 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my female Facebook friends was concerned about the way that some men seem to be able to cheat on their wives so easily, and she asked me for a piece of advice on how to avoid being the victim of adultery.

My advice for her was to choose a man who is interested in her for the right reasons – reasons that go beyond 1) her appearance and 2) her ability to be fun. The first thing to know is that a good man understands the value of women beyond superficial things. And the second thing is that a woman has to understand what men need from women in their roles as wives and mothers and then 1) take steps to prepare for those roles, and 2) be willing to improve in their abilities to perform those roles.

Choose a man who wants a woman for the right reasons

Let's talk about the first point – finding a man who needs a woman for more than beauty and entertainment. Think of going for a job interview. Let's say that a woman was interviewed by a man for a job as a combination of 1) housekeeper, 2) therapist, 3) investment manager, and 4) teacher. There's more that wives do than that, but let's leave it at those 4. Now, suppose that the man hires that woman and she is able to perform all 4 of those duties well – so well that the man really really appreciates her. Does it matter if she gets a little older? Of course not! That just means that she is even better now than she was when she started, and her value has gone up! So if the job is based on the right criteria, getting older actually makes the woman a better employee.

But what if the job description is 1) look sexy, 2) go out to nightclubs, 3) play ice hockey, 4) go parachuting. Well, now we have a problem… because getting older usually means that those things are less likely to happen well – or happen at all. And what happens with workers that don't perform? They get unappreciated and their work gets handed off to someone else who can do the job. The thing to realize here is that there is nothing wrong with a woman who is rejected because she isn't sexy or fun. The problem is with the man – with his wrong desires. A man who wants sexy looks isn't really a candidate for marriage – marriage isn't for people who want recreational sex and thrills. Marriage is for life-long love and parenting.

So the first thing that a woman needs to do is to *choose a man who needs her to perform tasks that she can still perform when she is older*. It's even better if you choose a man who values you for things that you can do even better as you get older.

How to do it

So how are we going to find a man who has a requirement for a woman who will get better and better at over time?

1. How does he treat his previous girlfriends?

It’s a good idea to interview his previous girlfriends and ask them what it was like for them with this guy. Can those ex-girlfriends explain his long-term plan? Where did the ex-GF fit into that plan? What did he do to prepare her to fit into his plan? How much emphasis did he place on appearance and entertainment as opposed to talking about finances, parenting, education and moral values? What kinds of activities did he choose – fun things (ballroom dancing and yoga) or things that would prepare the couple for marriage (talking to the woman’s father)? What did he talk about – silly stuff like sports and beer, or apologetics and public policy? How did he lead on moral issues – did he just assert his view, or did he try to persuade? How was he on spiritual questions – had he thought about his religion or was it just what he grew up with? How did he evaluate ex-GF for his plan? How did he lead – did he just give her orders or did he try to persuade her? How did he try to explain to her what men are like and what men need from women, practically and emotionally? What was his plan for having children? How did a woman fit into that plan to have children? What was the goal for having children at all?

If we are specifically worried about not getting cheated on, then the only way to judge that IS by having each of his previous girlfriends come forward and tell you that he was opposed to sex outside of marriage. I think absolute chastity is required, because what it says to you is 1) the man can control himself, 2) the man wants to retain his judgment during courting, 3) the man does not think that relationships are for recreation but for commitment, 4) the man is child-focused – he thinks that marriage is the safest place for raising babies. If a man does not believe that the place for sex is in a marriage, then he is basically going to have affairs whenever he thinks he can get away with it. Either he knows what sex is for, or he doesn’t. Either he is serious about having a stable, loving marriage, or he isn’t. Either he has a purpose for women that is not just for recreation, or he doesn’t. Either he can control himself or he can’t.

2. What decisions has he made to prepare for marriage?

The best thing to do here is to make a list of the roles that men play in marriage and just ask the man point blank – what have you done to prepare for these roles? The roles are 1) provider, 2) protector and 3) moral/spiritual leader.

For 1) just ask him what he studied in school, what his resume looks like, and what his balance sheet looks like. Don’t ask him about the future – ask him about the past. A man can make up any lies about the future he wants. Remember: only money he earned counts as “provider” evidence. Beware of men who take out loans or spend a lot. Beware of men who study political science or psychology. Beware of men who drive their parents’ cars or live in their parents’ homes. Beware of men with expensive addictions to alcohol or cigarettes. Beware of men who spend a lot of money trying to appear trendy and macho.

For 2) we care more about ideas than physical brawn or weapons training. A man is far more likely to have to go to bat for his family armed with his mind than with his fists or weapons in this day and age. And that means understanding logic and evidence and having studied issues like economics, education, science and so on. It’s easy enough to

spring secular leftist friends on him and see if he can handle debating them.

For 3) we are looking for a man who holds to Biblical values, whether they are popular or not. A man who can lead morally should be able to argue for Bible-based moral values using secular arguments and public evidence – preferably peer-reviewed. He needs to have a record of being to be persuasive on moral issues with non-Christians. It's not enough to express opinions. He has to accept the Bible's teaching on moral issues and then be able to be convincing to people who don't accept the Bible. That's the requirement.

The example I like to use is that he needs to be able to explain why premarital sex is morally wrong by showing the evidence that it reduces the stability and quality of the marriage, and this is unacceptable because his goals for the marriage require that the children be developed in a stable, loving marriage. Don't listen to his opinions – demand the evidence. Why does morality matter to him? How do we know he is telling the truth? For spiritual leadership, it's the same thing. He needs to be convincing – not just give his opinion. He needs to explain the alternative views and then refute the false ones and prove the true ones. He needs to appeal to logic and observable, testable evidence. Church attendance is not a good way to test a man for being a spiritual leader, since you learn almost nothing of value in most churches.

I think this is important because today there is a lot of pressure from people to just be nice – to back away from unpopular moral values and from exclusive theological statements. If a man cannot defend his views using public, testable evidence, then he is not safe to marry. A man who can only state his opinions and say "the Bible says" is not reliable. To make the right choices, he needs to know why. He needs to not be twisting what the Bible says just because he wants people to like him.

3. Fathers know best

It is very, very important to get to know that man's father before you marry him. Make sure his parents are still married, then sit down and talk to the father to find out how he treats his wife. It's also a good idea to just talk about the man's character with the father. He will be able to think of anecdotes to show what the man is really like. Test the man's father for his ability to provide, his ability to protect, and his ability to lead on moral and spiritual issues.

But most important of all is to let your father (the woman's father) have all the time in the world to ask the man questions, to see his resume, financial statements, and letters of reference from past girlfriends (and past girlfriend's fathers). The father of a woman is the one who cares the most about her – he is her protector. So he has to be given complete carte blanche to perform investigations and interviews. In my experience, the mothers of young women are not as reliable as the fathers.

4. Make him work for it

The man's job during courting is to evaluate the woman by asking her difficult questions. But the woman also has a job – her job is to make the man prove that he is worthy by making him invest in her life. That means giving him plenty of tasks to do – tasks related

to his roles. Not stupid things like being a good dancer, but important things like scheduling time with her to talk and listen about specific topics related to the relationship. And he has to do work, like solving her problems and performing tasks for her, and bringing her gifts. A man should keep a woman supplied with books and build her up so that she has confidence and strength to put forward her views convincingly.

He also needs to understand the role of emotions and do what it takes to keep her spirits up – frequent flowers, notes, poems, essays, etc. A man should know how to make a bad woman into a good woman – so that he can compliment her when he is finished building her up. That's what men do. That could involve careful use of praise and blame to point in the right direction, or it might involve correcting her false beliefs and confirming her true beliefs with evidence. Men are supposed to make women more moral and more effective – that way the man has someone he can trust and rely on to turn to for care and help.

A woman has to make sure that the man has the habit of making commitments and following through on them when things get hard. A woman should look for evidence of long-term friendships, long-term ownership of pets or property, long-term stability in career or housing. No quitting or dropping out.

Conclusion

I hope that those ideas will at least provide some food for thought. The main point I want to make is that there are some men who are capable of love and marriage and some who aren't. A woman cannot pick a man who is handsome and fun and penniless and non-judgmental and then nag him into making more money, being interested in religion, being able to set moral boundaries for kids, being faithful, etc. The only sure way to get a man to love you for life is to choose a man for that specific purpose, and for no other purpose.

Related posts

- Christian men: give a Christian woman the gift of white roses
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Why did Nancy Pelosi not allow a vote on the Credit Card Fair Fee Act?

November 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The San Francisco Chronicle reports on a suspicious stock deal involving Nancy Pelosi.

Excerpt:

> House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi is the subject of a report on the stock investments of members of Congress that is to air Sunday on CBS' "60 Minutes."
>
> […]Kroft asked Pelosi why she and her investor husband, Paul Pelosi, bought an initial public offering of stock in Visa, the San Francisco-based credit card company, in March of 2008.
>
> The same month, former House Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers, D-Mich., introduced the Credit Card Fair Fee Act, which would have given merchants the power to negotiate lower fees with credit card companies. The bill, hostile to the credit card industry, was passed by the committee but never brought to the floor. Pelosi was speaker at the time, and controlled which legislation came to a vote.
>
> The Pelosis bought the Visa stock in three transactions totaling $1 million to $5 million, according to financial disclosure reports. The first was the IPO, followed by two other purchases of the stock at higher prices, Pelosi said.

It certainly seems suspicious to me. She owns millions of dollars of stock in a credit card company, and then proposed legislation to regulate that industry is not allowed a vote on the floor of the House.

CIA Director Leon Panetta confirms that waterboarding led to Osama Bin Laden

November 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CIA Director Leon Panetta confirms that waterboarding / enhanced interrogation techniques led to Osama Bin Laden, in this MSNBC interview by Brian Williams.

Excerpt:

> **Brian Williams:** I'd like to ask you about the sourcing on the intel that ultimately led to this successful attack. Can you confirm that it was as a result of waterboarding that we learned what we needed to learn to go after Bin Laden?
>
> **Leon Panetta:** You know, Brian, in the intelligence business you work from a lot of sources of information, and that was true here. We had a multiple series of sources that provided information with regards to this situation. Clearly, some of it came from detainees and the interrogation of detainees, but we also had information from other sources as well. So it's a little difficult to say it was due just to one source of information that we got.
>
> **Williams:** Turned around the other way, are you denying that waterboarding was in part among the tactics used to extract the intelligence that led to this successful mission?
>
> **Panetta:** No, I think some of the detainees clearly were — you know, they used these enhanced interrogation techniques against some of these detainees. But I'm also saying that the debate about whether we would have gotten the same information through other approaches I think is always going to be an open question.
>
> **Williams:** So, final point, one final time: enhanced interrogation techniques, which has always been kind of a handy euphemism in these post-9/11 years, that includes waterboarding.
>
> **Panetta:** That's correct.

This is the waterboarding that Obama opposed. Obama opposed enhanced interrogations. Obama opposed military tribunals. Obama opposed CIA prisons. Obama opposed Guantanamo Bay. Obama opposes counter-terrorism in general.

And don't forget how waterboarding prevented a similar 9/11-style attack on Los Angeles.

Excerpt:

> The Central Intelligence Agency told CNSNews.com today that it stands by the assertion made in a May 30, 2005 Justice Department memo that the use of "enhanced techniques" of interrogation on al Qaeda leader Khalid Sheik Mohammed (KSM) — including the use of waterboarding — caused KSM to reveal information that allowed the U.S. government to thwart a planned attack on Los

> Angeles.
>
> Before he was waterboarded, when KSM was asked about planned attacks on the United States, he ominously told his CIA interrogators, “Soon, you will know.”
>
> According to the previously classified May 30, 2005 Justice Department memo that was released by President Barack Obama last week, the thwarted attack — which KSM called the “Second Wave”– planned “ ‘to use East Asian operatives to crash a hijacked airliner into’ a building in Los Angeles.”
>
> KSM was the mastermind of the first “hijacked-airliner” attacks on the United States, which struck the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Northern Virginia on Sept. 11, 2001.
>
> After KSM was captured by the United States, he was not initially cooperative with CIA interrogators. Nor was another top al Qaeda leader named Zubaydah. KSM, Zubaydah, and a third terrorist named Nashiri were the only three persons ever subjected to waterboarding by the CIA.

Waterboarding works. It is not torture. We waterboard all our our naval aviators as part of their SERE training.

But do you know what is torture? Partial-birth abortion. We don’t partial-birth abort our naval aviators as part of their SERE training – yet the same people who oppose waterboarding support partial-birth abortion.

Related posts

- How George W. Bush’s secret CIA prisons and waterboarding killed Osama Bin Laden
- Terrorist attacks under George W. Bush and Barack Obama
- Thomas Sowell explains how liberal pacifism causes wars
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- Is the Obama administration deliberately weakening our military?
- Democrats favor terrorist rights over national security in latest intelligence bill
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- Al-Quaeda linked to failed terrorist attack on Northwest Airlines airliner
- What are the consequencs of treating terrorism as a law enforcement issue?
- Which is more cruel and immoral? Waterboarding or abortion?
- Are Democrats fixing national security or fixing the blame on others?
- Homeland security chair says Swedish grandmothers just as likely to be terrorists
- Homeland Security director says that “the system worked”
- What is Obama working on instead of making Americans safer?
- Is waterboarding really torture? Does it enhance our national security?
- Obama cuts missile defense as Iran test-fires missile that can hit Israel
- What is the conservative doctrine of “peace through strength”?

Hospital told nurses: assist in abortions or lose your job

November 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> A dozen nurses have filed a lawsuit against their employer, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, which told them they had to either assist in abortions or risk losing their jobs.
>
> The Alliance Defense Fund filed a lawsuit on behalf of 12 nurses in New Jersey who work for a hospital receiving federal health funds who were told they needed to assist abortions or be terminated from their employment. The mandate violates several federal conscience laws and state law, ADF senior legal counsel Matt Bowman tells LifeNews.
>
> "Pro-life nurses shouldn't be forced to assist in abortions against their beliefs," Bowman told LifeNews. "No less than 12 nurses have encountered threats to their jobs at this hospital ever since a policy change required them to participate in the abortions regardless of their religious objections. That is flatly illegal."
>
> According to a copy of the complaint ADF sent LifeNews, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey was "demanding that the Nurses must assist abortions in violation of their religious objections or they will be terminated. Defendants have illegally coerced some of the Nurses to train to assist abortions already, and Defendants are presently scheduling the others to do so."

Keep in mind, though, that the Obama administration is opposed to these conscience protections for pro-life doctors and nurses. Democrats believe that Christians should act like non-Christians in public. They think that it is ok to force their views on Christians, using the power of the law and the courts.

Democrat introduces bill to defund adoption agencies that favor married couples

November 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> For the first time in Senate history, a bill has been introduced to encourage agencies not to discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender couples seeking to adopt.
>
> "As more and more LGBT couples are getting married and starting families, we have a great opportunity to place children without a family into happy homes," said Sen. Kirsten E. Gillibrand, New York Democrat and lead sponsor of the Every Child Deserves a Family Act, Monday at the Huffington Post.
>
> The past year has seen many moves toward gay equality, and "the momentum is there to build on our progress," she said, noting the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell," passage of gay marriage in New York and the "unprecedented assault" on the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in the U.S. Senate and in the courts.
>
> Ms. Gillibrand's bill would deny federal funding to any entity that considers sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status when contemplating prospective foster or adoptive families. A companion bill already has been introduced in the House by Rep. Fortney Pete Stark, California Democrat.
>
> […]In recent years, many religious organizations have protested when governments have begun insisting that unmarried couples be considered as foster and adoptive parents. Notably, Catholic agencies have withdrawn from child-placement services.
>
> Still, many such adoptions occur. The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute recently issued a report that said about 65,000 adopted children and 14,000 foster children live in homes headed by non-heterosexuals.
>
> Part of the reason child-welfare and health associations support gay adoption is because advocates say research indicates that children raised in gay homes do as well as, or even better than, children raised by heterosexual couples.
>
> However, a new in-depth review of 59 studies on gay parenting has concluded that such "strong assertions" about gay parenting are "not empirically warranted."
>
> Most of the 59 gay-parenting studies involve children of high-income white lesbian mothers or tended to use very small samples; studied children but not teens; and either had no comparison families or compared lesbian-led homes with single-mother-led homes, wrote Louisiana State University family science professor Loren Marks.

> These and other weaknesses cannot support broad statements that there are “no significant differences” between being raised in same-sex versus mother-father homes, wrote Mr. Marks, whose analysis was included in the Oct. 15 briefs filed by the House of Representatives in its defense of DOMA in Pedersen v. Office of Personnel Management.

The basic intuition behind this initiative is that children either do not need a mother or they do not need a father. Is that really true? I know for sure that children have a host of behavioral problems if they grow up without fathers, for example. I would expect that problems would also occur for children raised without mothers.

Is it OK for Christians to make moral judgments?

November 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this short article by Paul Copan. I've gotten some flak from liberal Christian women for my disagreement with certain liberal causes, so I thought I would link to this article to defend myself.

Excerpt:

> It's been said that the most frequently quoted Bible verse is no longer John 3:16 but Matthew 7:1: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged." We cannot glibly quote this, though, without understanding what Jesus meant. When Jesus condemned judging, he wasn't at all implying we should never make judgments about anyone. After all, a few verses later, Jesus himself calls certain people "pigs" and "dogs" (Matt. 7:6) and "wolves in sheep's clothing" (7:15)! Any act of church discipline (1 Cor. 5:5) and rebuking false prophets (1 John 4:1) requires judgment. What Jesus condemns is a critical and judgmental spirit, an unholy sense of moral superiority. Jesus commanded us to examine ourselves first for the problems we so easily see in others. Only then can we help remove the speck in another's eye—which, incidentally, assumes that a problem exists and must be confronted.[1] But let's take a closer look at this charge that Christians are judgmental when we speak out on moral issues.

He then goes on to make some points:

- If judging is wrong, then no one can judge you for being judgmental
- In other places, Jesus urges people to make a right judgment
- Is it possible to have convictions yet still treat people with respect?
- Are inclusivists and pluralists (e.g. – Hindus) tolerant of exclusivists?
- What is tolerance, and how does it relate to truth?
- Comparison of "equality of persons" with "equality of viewpoints"
- Are moral standards variable by time and place, or fixed?
- Are moral standards merely descriptive, or also prescriptive?
- Should atheists be moral? What reason do they have to be moral?
- Can non-illusory morality exist in an atheistic universe?
- Can there be real morality if there is no design in the universe?

And he also talks about what else the Bible says about judging.

It's a good article. Moral judgments are necessary for us to warn ourselves and others about the harm that may occur if we cross boundaries.

Thomas Sowell explains the historical effects of tax cuts

November 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell

Here's part 1 of 3.

Excerpt:

> The actual results of the cuts in tax rates in the 1920s were very similar to the results of later tax-rate cuts during the Kennedy, Reagan and George. W. Bush administrations — namely, rising output, rising employment to produce that output, rising incomes as a result and rising tax revenues for the government because of the rising incomes, though the tax rates had been lowered.
>
> Another consequence was that people in higher-income brackets paid not only a larger total amount of taxes, but a higher percentage of all taxes, after what were called "tax cuts for the rich." It was not simply that their incomes rose, but that this was not taxable income, since the lower tax rates made it profitable to get higher returns outside of tax shelters.
>
> The facts are unmistakably plain, for those who bother to check the facts. In 1921, when the tax rate on people making over $100,000 a year was 73%, the federal government collected a little over $700 million in income taxes, of which 30% was paid by those making over $100,000.
>
> […]By 1929, after a series of tax-rate reductions had cut the tax rate to 24% on those making over $100,000, the federal government collected more than a billion dollars in income taxes, of which 65% was collected from those making over $100,000.
>
> There is nothing mysterious about this. Under the sharply rising tax rates during the Wilson administration, fewer and fewer people reported high taxable incomes, whether by putting their money into tax-exempt securities or by any of the other ways of rearranging their financial affairs to minimize their tax liability.

> Under Wilson's escalating income-tax rates to pay for the high costs of the First World War, the number of people reporting taxable incomes of more than $300,000 — a huge sum in the money of that era — declined from well over a thousand in 1916 to fewer than three hundred in 1921. The total amount of taxable income earned by people making over $300,000 declined by more than four-fifths in those years.
>
> Secretary Mellon estimated in 1923 that the money invested in tax-exempt securities had tripled in a decade, and was now almost three times the size of the federal government's annual budget and nearly half as large as the national debt. "The man of large income has tended more and more to invest his capital in such a way that the tax collector cannot touch it," he pointed out.
>
> Getting that money moved out of tax shelters was the whole point of Mellon's tax-cutting proposals. He also said: "It is incredible that a system of taxation which permits a man with an income of $1,000,000 a year to pay not one cent to the support of his government should remain unaltered."

Here's part 2 of 3.

Excerpt:

> Empirical evidence on what happened to the economy in the wake of those tax cuts in four different administrations over a span of more than 80 years has also been largely ignored by those opposed to what they call "tax cuts for the rich."
>
> Confusion between reducing tax rates on individuals and reducing tax revenues received by the government has run through much of these discussions over these years.
>
> Famed historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., for example, said that although Andrew Mellon, secretary of the treasury from 1921 to 1932, advocated balancing the budget and paying off the national debt, he "inconsistently" sought "reduction in tax rates."
>
> Nor was Schlesinger the only highly regarded historian to perpetuate economic confusion between tax rates and tax revenues. Today, widely used textbooks by various well-known historians have continued to misstate what was advocated in the 1920s and what the actual consequences were.
>
> According to the textbook "These United States" by Irwin Unger, Mellon, "a rich Pittsburgh industrialist," persuaded Congress to "reduce income tax rates at the upper-income levels while leaving those at the bottom untouched."
>
> Thus "Mellon won further victories for his drive to shift more of the tax burden from the high-income earners to the middle and wage-earning classes."
>
> But hard data show that, in fact, both the amount and the proportion of taxes paid by those whose net income was no higher than $25,000 went down between 1921 and 1929, while both the amount and the proportion of taxes paid by those whose net incomes were between $50,000 and $100,000 went up — and the

> amount and proportion of taxes paid by those whose net incomes were over $100,000 went up even more sharply.

And here's part 3 of 3.

Excerpt:

> President Kennedy, like Andrew Mellon decades earlier, pointed out that "efforts to avoid tax liabilities" make "certain types of less-productive activity more profitable than other more valuable undertakings" and "this inhibits our growth and efficiency." Therefore the "purpose of cutting taxes" is "to achieve a more prosperous, expanding economy."
>
> "Total output and economic growth" were italicized words in the text of Kennedy's address to Congress in January 1963, urging cuts in tax rates. Much the same theme was repeated yet again in President Reagan's February 1981 address to a joint session of Congress, pointing out that "this is not merely a shift of wealth between different sets of taxpayers."
>
> Instead, basing himself on a "solid body of economic experts," he expected that "real production in goods and services will grow."
>
> Even when empirical evidence substantiates the arguments made for cuts in tax rates, such facts are not treated as evidence relevant to testing a disputed hypothesis, but as isolated curiosities. Thus, when tax revenues rose in the wake of the tax-rate cuts made during the George W. Bush administration, the New York Times reported:
>
> "An unexpectedly steep rise in tax revenues from corporations and the wealthy is driving down the projected budget deficit this year."
>
> Expectations, of course, are in the eye of the beholder. However surprising these facts may have been to the New York Times, they are exactly what proponents of reducing high tax rates have been expecting, not only from these particular tax rate cuts, but from similar reductions in high tax rates at various times going back more than three-quarters of a century.

It's Thomas Sowell – the official economist of the Tea Party.

Obama urged Solyndra to delay layoff announcements until after 2010 elections

November 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Obama Economic Record			
	INAUGURATION DAY	TODAY	CHANGE
Unemployed Americans	12 million	14 million	↑ 2 million
Unemployment Rate	7.8%	9.1%	↑ 17%
Gas Prices	$1.85	$3.43	↑ 85%
Federal Debt	$10.6 trillion	$14.7 trillion	↑ 39%
Debt per person	$34,731	$47,047	↑ $12,316
Misery Index	7.8	12.9	↑ 65%
Food Stamp Recipients	32 million	45 million	↑ 41%
Health Insurance Premiums	$3,354	$4,129	↑ 23%
Home Values	$193,400	$172,600	↓ 11%
U.S. Global Competitiveness	1st	5th	↓ 4 places
Americans in Poverty	39.8 million	46.2 million	↑ 6.4 million

Obama Economic Record November 2011
From the left-wing Washington Post. (H/T PJ Media)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration urged officers of the struggling solar company Solyndra to postpone announcing planned layoffs until after the November 2010 midterm elections, newly released e-mails show.
>
> Solyndra, the now-shuttered California company, had been a poster child of President Obama's initiative to invest in clean energies and received the administration's first energy loan of $535 million. But a year ago, in October 2010, the solar panel manufacturer was quickly running out of money and had warned the Energy Department it would need emergency cash to avoid having to shut down.
>
> The new e-mails about the layoff announcement were released Tuesday morning as part of a House Energy and Commerce committee memo, provided in advance of Energy Secretary Steven Chu's scheduled testimony before the investigative committee Thursday.
>
> Solyndra's chief executive warned the Energy Department on Oct. 25, 2010, that he intended to announce worker layoffs Oct. 28. He said he was spurred by numerous calls from reporters and potential investors about rumors the firm was

> in financial trouble and was planning to lay off workers and close one of its two plants.
>
> But in an Oct. 30, 2010, e-mail, advisers to Solyndra's primary investor, Argonaut Equity, explain that the Energy Department had strongly urged the company to put off the layoff announcement until Nov. 3. The midterm elections were held Nov. 2, and led to Republicans taking control of the U.S. House of Representatives.

PJ Media notes:

> It's worth waybacking a bit to see how things were going inside Solyndra. To many on the staff, the place never seemed like it was being run as a serious business. It had spectacular facilities, a lavish conference room, and inventory piled up with no plan to ever sell it. There was no market for its product. One worker says that after the DoE loan came in, the company just went on a "sloppy" spending spree. Around that same time, Solyndra was telling Congress that its financial future was bright, even while in the background it was desperately scrambling for more money to keep going.
>
> And it's against that backdrop that we find the Obama Dept. of Energy pressuring Solyndra, a company that seems to have gotten its massive federal loan chiefly because billionaire George Kaiser donates massively to Democrats and Obama, to politicize its layoffs. Half a billion taxpayer dollars, up in smoke. But you can rest assured that Kaiser's personal fortune remains untouched and Obama's campaign coffers are stuffed to bursting.

The only losers are the taxpayers – the ones Obama claims to be protecting from "millionaires and billionaires".

Related posts

- Obama fundraisers got 80% of green energy loans ($16.4 billion)
- Obama gave $443 million no-bid contract to drug firm run by Democrat fundraiser
- E-mails reveal that Obama fundraiser discussed Solyndra loan with White House
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra
- Report finds Labor Department's green jobs program failing
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- How well did Obama's green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors
- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing
- Marsha Blackburn beats up Al Gore on cap and trade corruption

Dennis Prager: Does a full-time homemaker swap her mind for a mop?

November 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On National Review, Dennis Prager argues that going to work full-time is not as intellectually fulfilling as being a stay-at-home mother – if it's done right.

Excerpt:

> I seek to refute the idea that full-time home making is intellectually vapid and a waste of a college education.
>
> Let me first state that I have no argument with those mothers who need or even just wish to work outside the home. My argument is with those who believe that staying at home is necessarily mind-numbing.
>
> Nor do I wish to romanticize child rearing. As a rule, little children don't contribute much to the intellectual life of a parent (although older children who are intellectually curious can spur a parent to seek answers to challenging questions they may not have considered before). Any intellectually alive woman who is a full-time mother must therefore find intellectual stimulation elsewhere.
>
> The point is that she can find such stimulation without leaving her house. Furthermore, the intellectual input she can find is likely to be greater than most women (or men) find working outside the home. There is a reason that about half the audience of my national radio show is female — they listen to talk radio for hours a day and broaden their knowledge considerably. To the Left, the notion that talk radio enhances intellectual development is akin to fish needing bicycles. But that is because the Left's greatest achievement is demonizing the Right, and because they never actually listen to the best of us.
>
> I am syndicated by the Salem Radio Network. My colleagues are Bill Bennett, Mike Gallagher, Michael Medved, and Hugh Hewitt. Two of us attended Harvard, one Yale, and one Columbia; one of us taught at Harvard, another at the City University of New York, and a third teaches constitutional law at a law school. In addition to reviewing the news and discussing our own views, we all routinely interview authors and experts — left and right — in almost every field. The woman who listens to us regularly will know more about economics, politics, current events, world affairs, American history, and religion than the great majority of men and women who work full-time outside of the home.
>
> Lest the latter seem a self-serving suggestion, there are many other opportunities for full-time homemakers to broaden their intellectual horizons: recorded books and a few television networks, for example. And if a woman can get help from grandparents, neighbors, older children, or a baby sitter, there are also myriad opportunities for study outside the house — such as community-

> college classes, book clubs, etc. — and for volunteer work in intellectually more stimulating areas than most paid work.
>
> **Let me give an example of the woman I know best, my wife. She is a non-practicing lawyer with a particular interest in, and knowledge of, taxation and the economy. She decided to stay home to be a full-time mother to her two boys (one of whom is autistic) and her two nieces (who lost their mother, my wife's sister, to cancer when they were very young). Between talk radio, History Channel documentaries, *BookTV* on C-SPAN2, recorded lectures from The Teaching Company/The Great Courses, and constant reading, she has led a first class intellectual life while shuttling kids, folding laundry, and making family dinners.**

I guess by now everyone knows my view on this. I expect a good wife to have a college degree, and preferably a graduate degree, and then a couple of years experience before the children start to arrive. At that point, her job becomes the most important job in the world: making sure that the children that the husband entrusts her with are able to have *more* of an impact for Christian than either the wife or the husband. That is one of the major reasons why Christians get married in the first place, in my view.

The husband's job is to go to work and do mindless, useless drudgery in exchange for money. This is *the more self-sacrificial role in marriage.* He does this so that he can afford to keep a professional teacher in the house to bond with the young children, make sure that they learn empathy and relational skills, and then go on to get bachelor and graduate degrees and influential jobs. She has to plan all of this out and then navigate their path to success – which means she has to know how to follow the path, and how to neutralize any obstacles that may appear. The woman's role in the home is a massive undertaking, and more significant (ultimately) than the man's role outside the home.

It's very important for a woman to choose a man to marry who has this vision for what a woman does in the home. He has to have set the pattern in courtship that it is his responsibility to help her to know as much as possible about all kinds of different subjects. She has to study more than the man, and then impart the knowledge the children. The man only has to have an overall big picture, but the woman has to know the details. In order for the woman to get the details of math, science, foreign policy, economics, etc., she needs to have a constant feed of intellectually challenging materials, and quiet time for study. And it's the man's job to provide these materials and that time, so that she can produce influential children.

Please note that I do not endorse any of the other hosts on the Salem Radio Network. In particular, Medved, Bennett and Hewitt are center-left and support Mitt Romney, with all that that entails.

Does the Christian life involve taking the initiative and executing plans?

November 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Does God expect us to make plans and achieve goals?

I've noticed a disturbing view that many Christians seem to absorb who grow up in the church. Basically, the church view says that life is so unpredictable and unknowable that it's pointless for Christians to make plans to achieve goals. In fact, the only thing that Christians can do, on this view, is to wait for God to provide whatever he's going to provide, without the person having to know or do anything that they don't feel like knowing or doing. On this view, it's best not to know too much about how the world really works, because what God wants from us is not to produce a return on our talents, but for us to just muddle through on our prayers, intuitions and feelings.

Well, which view is right? Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason has an opinion on this question.

Excerpt:

> In Matthew Jesus talks about prayer and says, "Ask and it shall be given to you." But Jesus didn't stop there. He went on to say, "Ask and it shall be given to you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and the door will be opened." So it's not just asking, there's seeking and knocking as well. In the same passage Jesus gives us this famous promise. He tells us not to worry about food and clothing because food and clothing will be provided by Him. He says, Look at the lilies of the field, they don't toil or weave. Look at the birds in the field, they don't plant and harvest. The Father takes care of them. He'll take care of you as well.
>
> Now, are we going to read that verse and conclude that God doesn't expect us to weave or till the soil? Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 3, "Anyone who does not work ought not eat." It seems to me we could say to Paul, "Why should we work? Jesus has promised to take care of us." We all understand that in a verse like there is a corporate effort. God has promised to take care of us, but we have to couple that command with other commands that God has given us to toil and weave, as well.

> To work, as well. And, I would say, to try and find ways to get pregnant that are morally acceptable. The same thing with dating and getting married. We have the liberty to find a mate, and I don't see in any way, shape or form that that's not trusting God.
>
> Now, in any of these things there may be a sense of franticness in getting a job, or getting pregnant, or getting a mate that represents an attitude that's wrong. It can be taken to extremes, but then our Christian ethic would inform our attitudes. The very act of taking the initiative in itself is not unbiblical.
>
> In fact, the way I would put it is that it's 100% God and 100% man. What does that mean? It means that God, even though He is in control and we must look to Him, still delegates a portion of active responsibility to us so that He can see to it that we're fed and clothed, but it's our responsibility to go out and look. You can do the act of looking with confidence that God will provide. I think that that obtains in all of these other circumstances, as well.
>
> So there's is not this sharp dichotomy between God working and our working. They go hand in hand. If God expects our initiative in the area of food and clothing, though He has promised to provide, by what standard do we disqualify taking initiative in the ares of reproductive technology and dating? It appears that He's in control here, too.

I think that there are three places where the fatalistic view is most likely to creep up. Those are: 1) romantic relationships, 2) parenting and 3) money management. I think people really want to be free to do whatever "feels good" in those areas. Praying about these matters is a way of stealing God's blessing for a decision that we are making based on feelings, because we don't want to be bothered to take the initiative and do what we have reasons to believe will work. We don't want to have to put in the work to study something and then bind our will to what our investigation shows is the most prudent course – even if it's more difficult.

Some things aren't going to work whether we pray about them or not, because of the way the world works. For example, buying lottery tickets instead of stocks as our retirement plan or marrying the buxom blonde stripper. Praying about a bad idea isn't going to make it work, because our feelings don't change the universe in any way. The universe is the way it is. My advice is to set specific goals, find out how the world really works, and then make informed decisions to achieve those goals. At the very least, don't think that praying about something morally wrong gives you permission to do it.

I really recommend that people consider reading "Decision Making and the Will of God". And, if you are male and you like fiction, then read "Rifleman Dodd". In case you missed my previous post on decision making and the will of God, you should definitely click through and read it.

Social conservative hero James Dobson endorses Ted Cruz

November 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Senate candidate Ted Cruz

Remember how I was freaking out about Marco Rubio from the day he announced his candidacy for the Florida Senate seat? Well, I think that Ted Cruz is another Marco Rubio. He may even *eclipse* Marco Rubio.

And James Dobson likes him, too.

Excerpt:

> Today, we are excited to announce that national pro-life, family values leader Dr. James Dobson is endorsing our Senate campaign.
>
> In his endorsement announcement, Dr. Dobson said: "**I'm pleased to endorse Ted Cruz for U.S. Senate because he's exactly the kind of candidate we need to turn this country around**. Religious freedom is under assault every day. We need leaders with the courage to stand strong for conservative values in this battle. Ted Cruz is such a leader—one who will not only vote his convictions in the Senate, but will also lead the fight to defend life, traditional marriage, and religious liberty."
>
> Dr. Dobson added: "Ted Cruz stands out among conservative leaders across the country today. **He has a consistent record of standing up for faith, family, and freedom, and winning values battles on a national level**….I urge all Texans who love life, family, faith, and freedom to not only vote for Ted Cruz, but to work hard for his campaign."

Here's an interview with Ted Cruz from non other than Robert Stacy McCain!

About Ted Cruz

George Will thinks that Republican candidate Ted Cruz is the man to replace Kay Bailey Hutchison in Texas.

Excerpt:

> For a conservative Texan seeking national office, it could hardly get better than this: In a recent 48-hour span, Ted Cruz, a candidate for next year's Republican Senate nomination for the seat being vacated by Republican Kay Bailey Hutchison, was endorsed by the Club for Growth PAC, FreedomWorks PAC, talk-radio host Mark Levin and Erick Erickson of RedState.com.
>
> For conservatives seeking reinforcements for Washington's too-limited number of limited-government constitutionalists, it can hardly get better than this: Before he earned a Harvard law degree magna cum laude (and helped found the Harvard Latino Law Review) and clerked for Chief Justice William Rehnquist, Cruz's senior thesis at Princeton — his thesis adviser was professor Robert George, one of contemporary conservatism's intellectual pinups — was on the Constitution's Ninth and 10th amendments. Then as now, Cruz argued that these amendments, properly construed, would buttress the principle that powers not enumerated are not possessed by the federal government.

Robbie George??? Robbie George??? Holy snouts! That guy is one of the top academic pro-lifers. *Every* Christian apologist knows about Robbie George. It's the law! Well, it isn't. But it should be!

I continue:

> At age 14, Cruz's father fought with rebels (including Fidel Castro) against Cuba's dictator, Fulgencio Batista. Captured and tortured, at 18 he escaped to America with $100 sewn in his underwear. He graduated from the University of Texas and met his wife — like him, a mathematician — with whom he founded a small business processing seismic data for the oil industry.
>
> By the time Ted Cruz was 13, he was winning speech contests sponsored by a Houston free-enterprise group that gave contestants assigned readings by Frederic Bastiat, Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises. In his early teens he traveled around Texas and out of state giving speeches. At Princeton, he finished first in the 1992 U.S. National Debate Championship and North American Debate Championship.
>
> As Texas's solicitor general from 2003 to 2008, Cruz submitted 70 briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court, and he has, so far, argued nine cases there. He favors school choice and personal investment accounts for a portion of individuals' Social Security taxes. He supports the latter idea with a bow to the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who said such accounts enable the doorman to build wealth the way the people in the penthouse do.

> Regarding immigration, Cruz, 40, demands secure borders and opposes amnesty for illegal immigrants but echoes Ronald Reagan's praise of legal immigrants as "Americans by choice," people who are "crazy enough" to risk everything in the fundamentally entrepreneurial act of immigrating.

Ted Cruz has Republican life experiences: legal immigrant, fought communism, studied something that required actual work, founded a small business, etc. This is the prototypical Republican!

You can find out more about him on his positions page. I was interested in his stance on social issues, in particular.

Excerpt:

> **Ted Cruz has fought to protect innocent human life. He played a leading role in several important cases, including defense of the partial-birth abortion ban, parental consent laws, and prohibiting state funds from going to abortion. These cases have all been part of the ongoing effort to ensure that every child in America receives the protection and respect he or she deserves.**
>
> - Authored an amicus brief for 13 states, successfully defending the federal Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act. The ban was upheld 5-4 before the U.S. Supreme Court;
> - Authored an amicus brief for 18 states, successfully defending the New Hampshire parental notification law. The law was upheld 9-0 before the U.S. Supreme Court [note: this brief was awarded the Best Brief Award from the National Association of Attorneys General for U.S. Supreme Court briefs written in 2005-06];
> - Successfully defended Texas's Rider 8, which prohibits state funds for groups that provide abortions, winning unanimously before the Fifth Circuit court of appeals.
>
> **Ted Cruz has worked hard in defense of traditional marriage, including his intervention in a case protecting Texas marriage laws. In addition, he has fought on the federal level to defend marriage between one man and one woman as the fundamental building block of society.**
>
> - When a Beaumont state court granted a divorce to two homosexual men who had gotten a civil union in Vermont, Cruz, under the leadership of Attorney General Greg Abbott, intervened in defense of the marriage laws of the State of Texas, which successfully led to the court judgment being vacated;
> - Worked with Attorney General Abbott to send a letter to Congress in support of the federal Defense of Marriage Act.

He has lots of nice actions related to lots of conservative policies on that page. What a resume! Energy production, voter fraud prevention, border security, legal firearm ownership – you name it, this guy has been fighting for conservative principles. Like Michele Bachmann, (and unlike RINO Mitt Romney), he has actually tried to do pro-life and pro-marriage things. We don't just have to take his word for it, he has the actions to prove his words. Just look at the list of issues on his page!

Seven of the ten richest congressman are Democrats

November 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the PJ Tatler. (H/T ECM and The Conscience of Young Conservative)

Excerpt:

> Yes America, there is a wealth gap. Seven of the top ten wealthiest members in Congress are Democrats.
>
> The results are based on **a new study** released today by the non-partisan Center for Responsive Politics. The Center did an analysis of the financial statements filed by members of Congress for 2010 income and net worth.
>
> This revelation of extreme wealth by Democratic politicians is completely contrary to the public image of the Democratic Party. President Obama has castigated "millionaires and billionaires," suggesting they are evil people, largely Republican or conservative. The issue of the Democratic Party as the millionaire party has not yet made it into the mainstream media. But the facts are indisputable. Democratic members of Congress tend to be wealthier than their Republican counterparts.
>
> **According to the Center, 36 Senate Democrats and 30 Senate Republicans reported an average net worth in excess of $1 million in 2010. The median estimated net worth among members of the Senate Democrats was $2.58 million. Senate Republican median net worth was $2.43 million.**
>
> **And, the wealthy Democrats tend to inherit their money. Republicans tend to earn it.**
>
> Senators John Kerry (D-MA), Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) all came by their fortunes through marriage or inheritance. Senator Kerry, who was born into wealth, has listed his net worth as high as $281 million, while his wife Teresa is estimated to be worth $1 billion. Ms. Heinz did not earn her wealth either. She inherited the money from her husband Senator John Heinz, who died in an airplane crash.
>
> Senator Rockefeller, representing dirt poor West Virginia, inherited his fortune from his family. He is reported to be worth $136 million.
>
> While the economy continued to tank in 2010, Rep. Pelosi reported her own wealth **to grow by 62%**. Pelosi's husband, Paul, is a financier. They own a multi-million dollar vineyard and a number of million dollar homes. They have a net worth of $196 million.
>
> […]Among those who actually got their money by earning it, Republicans were in the slight majority. Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), a self-made millionaire earned his wealth by creating the Viper car security system. He is estimated to be worth

> more than $700 million. Sen. Jim Risch (R-Idaho) started as a rancher and attorney. His wealth is cited as $88 million.
>
> Rep. Vernon Buchanan (R-FL), one of only three Republicans to make the top ten earned his money through real estate and car dealerships. He is estimated to be worth over $323 million.
>
> Much has been made about Senator Bob Corker (R-TN) being the wealthiest Republican in the U.S. Senate. But he is ranked only number 14 because there are so many wealthier Democrats ahead of him. He doesn't make the Top Ten. He worked as a construction superintendent. Then started his own company. Today he is worth $107 million.
>
> […]**The issue of politics and money has been a complicated one. President Barack Obama brought in far more money from Wall Street in his 2008 campaign than his Republican opponent Sen. John McCain (R-AZ). Obama raked in $1 million from Goldman Sachs employees that year. While his numbers are lower this year, the President has attracted $15.2 million from the financial services industry that he attacks so frequently.**
>
> **Many Democrats run institutions on Wall Street. Jamie Dimon, the CEO of J.P. Morgan has been a long-time Democratic supporter. So too has Goldman Sachs Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Lloyd C. Blankfein.**

Who are the real millionaires and billionaires?

Obama administration gives Democrat-connected BrightSource Energy $1.4 billion loan

November 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Obama Economic Record

	INAUGURATION DAY	TODAY	CHANGE
Unemployed Americans	12 million	14 million	↑ 2 million
Unemployment Rate	7.8%	9.1%	↑ 17%
Gas Prices	$1.85	$3.43	↑ 85%
Federal Debt	$10.6 trillion	$14.7 trillion	↑ 39%
Debt per person	$34,731	$47,047	↑ $12,316
Misery Index	7.8	12.9	↑ 65%
Food Stamp Recipients	32 million	45 million	↑ 41%
Health Insurance Premiums	$3,354	$4,129	↑ 23%
Home Values	$193,400	$172,600	↓ 11%
U.S. Global Competitiveness	1st	5th	↓ 4 places
Americans in Poverty	39.8 million	46.2 million	↑ 6.4 million

Obama Economic Record November 2011

Big Government explains the latest example of the Obama administration handing out billions of taxpayer dollars to their cronies in the green energy racket.

Excerpt:

> President John F. Kennedy's nephew, Robert Kennedy, Jr., netted a $1.4 billion bailout for his company, BrightSource, through a loan guarantee issued by a former employee-turned Department of Energy official.
>
> […]The details of how BrightSource managed to land its ten-figure taxpayer bailout have yet to emerge fully. However, one clue might be found in the person of Sanjay Wagle.
>
> Wagle was one of the principals in Kennedy's firm who raised money for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. When Obama won the White House, Wagle was installed at the Department of Energy (DOE), advising on energy grants.
>
> From an objective vantage point, investing taxpayer monies in BrightSource was a risky proposition at the time. In 2010, BrightSource, whose largest shareholder is Kennedy's VantagePoint Partners, was up to its eyes in $1.8 billion of debt obligations and had lost $71.6 million on its paltry $13.5 million of revenue.
>
> Even before BrightSource rattled its tin cup in front of Obama's DOE, the company made it known publicly that its survival hinged on successfully

> completing the Ivanpah Solar Electrical System, which would become the largest solar plant in the world, on federal lands in California.
>
> In its Securities and Exchange Commission filings, BrightSource further underscored the risky nature of the Ivanpah venture and, more broadly, the company's viability:
>
> Our future success depends on our ability to construct Ivanpah, our first utility-scale solar thermal power project, in a cost-effective and timely manner… Our ability to complete Ivanpah and the planning, development and construction of all three phases are subject to significant risk and uncertainty.
>
> Ironically, in 2008, Kennedy wrote a CNN article praising Obama as reminiscent of his famous father and uncle. The article, titled "Obama's Energy Plan Would Create a Green Gold Rush," proved prophetic. However, the "green gold rush" came in the form of $1.4 billion of taxpayers' money flowing into the pet projects of rich venture capital investors like Kennedy, not average citizens.
>
> What's more, BrightSource touted the Ivanpah project as a green jobs creator. Yet as its own website reveals, the thermal solar plant will only create 1,400 jobs at its peak construction and 650 jobs annually thereafter. Even using the peak estimate of 1,400 jobs, that works out to a cost to taxpayers of $1 million per job created.

These revelations and more are described in the forthcoming book "Throw Them All Out" by Peter Schweizer. This could be a game-breaker.

Related posts

- Obama urged Solyndra to delay layoff announcements until after 2010 elections
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- E-mails reveal that Obama fundraiser discussed Solyndra loan with White House
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra
- Report finds Labor Department's green jobs program failing
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- How well did Obama's green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors
- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing
- Marsha Blackburn beats up Al Gore on cap and trade corruption

George Will on the secular left's opposition to freedom of association

November 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Illustrating an intellectual confusion common on campuses, Vanderbilt University says: To ensure "diversity of thought and opinion" we require certain student groups, including five religious ones, to conform to the university's policy that forbids the groups from protecting their characteristics that contribute to diversity.
>
> Last year, after a Christian fraternity allegedly expelled a gay undergraduate because of his sexual practices, Vanderbilt redoubled its efforts to make the more than 300 student organizations comply with its "long-standing nondiscrimination policy." That policy, says a university official, does not allow the Christian Legal Society "to preclude someone from a leadership position based on religious belief." So an organization formed to express religious beliefs, including the belief that homosexual activity is biblically forbidden, is itself effectively forbidden. There is much pertinent history.
>
> […][I]n 2010 the [Supreme] court held, 5 to 4, that a public law school in California did not abridge First Amendment rights when it denied the privileges associated with official recognition to just one student group — the Christian Legal Society chapter, because it limited voting membership and leadership positions to Christians who disavow "sexual conduct outside of marriage between a man and a woman." Dissenting, Justice Samuel Alito said the court was embracing the principle that the right of expressive association is unprotected if the association departs from officially sanctioned orthodoxy.
>
> In wiser moments, the court has held that "this freedom to gather in association . . . necessarily presupposes the freedom to identify the people who constitute the association and to limit the association to those people only." In 1984, William Brennan, the court's leading liberal of the last half-century, said:
>
> "There can be no clearer example of an intrusion into the internal structure or affairs of an association than a regulation that forces the group to accept members it does not desire. Such a regulation may impair the ability of the original members to express only those views that brought them together. Freedom of association therefore plainly presupposes a freedom not to associate."
>
> As professor Michael McConnell of Stanford Law School says, "Not everything the government chooses to call discrimination is invidious; some of it is

> constitutionally protected First Amendment activity." Whereas it is wrong for government to prefer one religion over another, when private persons and religious groups do so, this is the constitutionally protected free exercise of religion. So, McConnell says, "Preventing private groups from discriminating on the basis of shared beliefs is not only not a compelling governmental interest; it is not even a legitimate governmental interest."
>
> Here, however, is how progressivism limits freedom by abolishing the public-private distinction: First, a human right — to, say, engage in homosexual practices — is deemed so personal that government should have no jurisdiction over it. Next, this right breeds another right, to the support or approval of others. Finally, those who disapprove of it must be coerced.
>
> Sound familiar? It should. First, abortion should be an individual's choice. Then, abortion should be subsidized by government. Next, pro-life pharmacists who object to prescribing abortifacients should lose their licenses. Thus do rights shrink to privileges reserved for those with government-approved opinions.
>
> The question, at Vanderbilt and elsewhere, should not be whether a particular viewpoint is right but whether an expressive association has a right to espouse it. Unfortunately, in the name of tolerance, what is tolerable is being defined ever more narrowly.
>
> Although Vanderbilt is a private institution, its policy is congruent with "progressive" public policy, under which society shall be made to progress up from a multiplicity of viewpoints to a government-supervised harmony. Vanderbilt's policy, formulated in the name of enlarging rights, is another skirmish in the progressives' struggle to deny more and more social entities the right to deviate from government-promoted homogeneity of belief. Such compulsory conformity is, of course, enforced in the name of diversity.

I'm surprised by George Will. I always thought he was a moderate. But since I started writing this blog, I've been happy to see that he is a lot more conservative than people like Charles Krauthammer, Michael Barone, and other well-known moderate conservatives. I don't require that he agree with me – I just want him to understand my views. And he does.

My Experience

When I've spent time talking to secular leftists in my office, they seem to have a horror of disagreements. They are desperate to make sure that everyone believes the same thing on every issue. The conversations typically proceed as follows:

1. They express their view on some subject and imply that it is the only intelligent view, since they learned it from their college professors. (Evolution is a fact)
2. I produce peer-reviewed experimental data that falsifies their view. (The synthesis of functional proteins by unintelligent forces is impossible)
3. They try desperately to find some area that we agree on that is unrelated to my

evidence. (But you agree that the Earth is older than 6,000 years, right?)

This is what the left means by diversity of opinion. Everyone has to agree, even if no one can prove that what is agreed to is actually true. They believe that rent controls doesn't result in a shortage of affordable apartments, even though this is not what has been observed. They believe it because it sounds nice, and it makes people think that they are nice people. And they get very confused and flustered if you try to prove them wrong with evidence.

Answering the question “Who Designed the Designer?”

November 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Jay Richards.

The Privileged Planet

Jay Richards is famous for his work on Christianity and economics, but he is also very good at origins issues, having co-authored the famous book “The Privileged Planet”. The thesis of the book is that there is a correlation between the conditions needed for habitability and the conditions needed for “measurability”. For example, you can ask the question “where is the best place in the universe to observe a solar eclipse?” The answer is “The same place that is also best for complex life to exist”.

Here’s an introduction.

Excerpt:

> The fact that our atmosphere is clear; that our moon is just the right size and distance from Earth, and that its gravity stabilizes Earth’s rotation; that our position in our galaxy is just so; that our sun is its precise mass and composition — all of these facts and many more not only are necessary for Earth’s habitability but also have been surprisingly crucial to the discovery and measurement of the universe by scientists. Mankind is unusually well positioned to decipher the cosmos. Were we merely lucky in this regard? Scrutinize the universe with the best tools of modern science and you’ll find that a place with the proper conditions for intelligent life will also afford its inhabitants an exceptionally clear view of the universe. Such so-called habitable zones are rare in the universe, and even these may be devoid of life. But if there is another civilization out there, it will also enjoy a clear vantage point for searching the cosmos, and maybe even for finding us.
>
> To put it both more technically and more generally, “measurability” seems to correlate with “habitability.” Is this correlation simply a strange coincidence? And even if it has some explanation, is it significant?

Or you can watch an hour-long DVD on Youtube:

You can find more articles by Jay Richards on the Privileged Planet web site.

Why do Christians leave the faith? The surprising importance of apologetics

November 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Black, White and Gray.

Excerpt:

> Several colleagues and I recently finished a study of why Christians leave the faith, and we were surprised at what made a difference as well what didn't seem to matter. In the next few weeks, I'll be reviewing our findings in a series of posts.
>
> To start with, let me tell you how we conducted our study. We were interested in how people who left the faith—let's call them deconverts—explained their actions; i.e., why did they think they left the faith. In order to do this, we found a website on-line in which former Christians post their "testimonials" about their religious history. We chose 50 of these testimonials and read, reread, and reread again each one and then we discussed them as a group. Our goal was to find themes in these deconversion narratives, and several themes did emerge.
>
> […]All told, we found four general explanations offered by these 50 people as to why they left Christianity.
>
> The first explanation regards intellectual and theological concerns about the faith. A full two-thirds of the testimony writers emphasized these concerns and some wrote about little else.
>
> Some of the intellectual concerns were issues that would be faced by members of any religion, not just Christianity. For example, what is the relationship between religion and science? Does believing in one negate the other? What is the role of logic versus faith?
>
> One man, who was a fundamentalist Christian in young adulthood, defined faith and reason as mutually contradictory, and he described his departure from Christianity as a victory of reason. He wrote: "for most of us, the battle was entirely within ourselves. It was a pitched battle between our faith and our reason, and eventually our reason just refused to be suppressed any longer, no matter what the potential consequences."
>
> Many other writers, though, focused on theological issues specific to Christianity. One of the issues that arose with the existence of hell and how that could be reconciled with the Christian image of a loving God. Basically, how could a loving God throw his children into hell for eternity?
>
> A man raised as a Baptist expressed what he viewed as a contradiction between love and hell: "Would a loving father really not allow some people to have a chance and send them to hell for eternity? I don't think so!"

> One woman, who loved her grandparents, now deceased, wondered how God could condemn them for not having believed in Him. She exclaimed: “what the hell kind of jerk was God if he’d condemn people like my grandparents?”
>
> A related theological issue regarded human suffering here on Earth. If God is powerful and loving, why is there suffering? One writer likened God’s allowance of suffering to a negligent police officer. ““What if a police officer sat and watched silently as a child was murdered even though he had the power to stop it?”
>
> Other writers attributed to God a more active role in human suffering, often pointing to His actions in the Old Testament. A former Methodist wrote of his doubts about God starting early in his life when he learned about Noah’s Ark. “The turning argument for me was actually a story that is in children’s Sunday school books – Noah’s Ark. I started to really think about the fact that God pretty much killed the ENTIRE planet.” Similarly, a former Pentecostal described God’s actions in the Old Testament as “atrocity after atrocity.”
>
> The final frequently-expressed concern regarded the Bible and its reliability. Is it accurate? Is it believable? A former Catholic dismissed the Bible altogether. She wrote: “Science has all but proven that the Old Testament could not have happened. It is also fast proving that the New Testament is nothing but fiction.”

My friend ECM had a different take on it, commenting on Facebook:

> I’m going to go out on a limb and state that most people simply don’t care.
>
> You can refute arguments/do apologetics all day long to the run-of-the-mill village atheist, but that’s not going to do you much good in reaching the average non-believer since they’re generally apathetic about the whole project–God, etc., simply has no impact on their daily lives.
>
> What I think would help is if *actual* Christians walked the walk a bit–I think this is, really, the crux of your problem. Too many of you say you believe in God and are Christians, but how many actually abide by the general strictures of the faith?
>
> This has a rather disconcerting effect on non-believers and it makes people like me, who are at least open to the idea*, more wary because how can I very well take you seriously if you’re not actually practicing it? It smacks of “do as I say, not as I do.” (It also gives the media et al a hammer w/ which to beat Christians over the head with ad nauseaum, causing massive damage to credibility.)
>
> (It doesn’t give me an pleasure in saying any of this, but there it is from someone that’s at least open to the concept.)
>
> (And please! Please let’s not turn this into a thread on apologetics aimed at ‘showing me the light’–I know all the arguments and have gone over them a thousand times w/ the Knight via email, chat, etc., so I’m well-versed on all it.)
>
> *I would classify myself as a small ‘d’ deist.

> I should clarify: when I say “average non-believer” I am also referring to, in far too many (most?) cases, those that actually profess a belief in God and identify as Christian.

And my friend Dina wrote this:

> Apologetics should be more than winning debates with athiests. Today, defending the faith ought to be more concerned with ridding the church of the crowd pleasing rot that has infiltrated it over the last century. The problem is exactly what Eriku and lots of us see in professing Christians. Sadly, many many people who profess to be Christians are no different from the world, so the world views us all as either hypocrites or liars. Times may change, society may change but God and the bible does not. The bible is the only rule to direct us and while philosophy has much to offer, if it backs up the bible do we need it in the first place? If it goes against the bible, then its worthless man made opinions. The problems with Christianity started in the church, and the solution will have to start in the church as well. He did it before and He will do it again.

I replied and said that stronger, more consistent Christians are important, but I think apologetics is needed in order to build them up – because, as I’ve written before – people only act Christianly when they have reasons to believe that Christianity is objectively true.

Leave your comment below!

Obama-connected General Electric paid no taxes on $14 billion profit

November 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Weekly Standard, a possible explanation of why GE CEO Jeffrey Immelt is tightly linked to Barack Obama.

Excerpt:

> General Electric, one of the largest corporations in America, filed a whopping 57,000-page federal tax return earlier this year but didn't pay taxes on $14 billion in profits. The return, which was filed electronically, would have been 19 feet high if printed out and stacked.
>
> The fact that GE paid no taxes in 2010 was widely reported earlier this year, but the size of its tax return first came to light when House budget committee chairman Paul Ryan (R, Wisc.) made the case for corporate tax reform at a recent townhall meeting. "GE was able to utilize all of these various loopholes, all of these various deductions–it's legal," Ryan said. Nine billion dollars of GE's profits came overseas, outside the jurisdiction of U.S. tax law. GE wasn't taxed on $5 billion in U.S. profits because it utilized numerous deductions and tax credits, including tax breaks for investments in low-income housing, green energy, research and development, as well as depreciation of property.
>
> "I asked the GE tax officer, 'How long was your tax form?'" Ryan said. "He said, 'Well, we file electronically, we don't measure in pages.'" Ryan asked for an estimate, which came back at a stunning 57,000 pages. When Ryan relayed the story at the townhall meeting in Janesville, there were audible gasps from the crowd.

Meanwhile, Obama's General Motors bailout is going to cost taxpayers *at least $23.6 billion dollars*.

Excerpt:

> The Treasury Department dramatically boosted its estimate of losses from its $85 billion auto industry bailout by more than $9 billion in the face of General Motors Co.'s steep stock decline.
>
> In its monthly report to Congress, the Treasury Department now says it expects to lose $23.6 billion, up from its previous estimate of $14.33 billion.
>
> The Treasury now pegs the cost of the bailout of GM, Chrysler Group LLC and the auto finance companies at $79.6 billion. It no longer includes $5 billion it set aside to guarantee payments to auto suppliers in 2009.

Obama's millionaires and billionaires get another bailout and taxpayers get the bill.

Related posts

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- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- How well did Obama's green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
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- Marsha Blackburn beats up Al Gore on cap and trade corruption

Did Jesus come back to life? Two scholars debate the evidence

November 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christians believe that God caused Jesus to live again after he had been killed because that's the best explanation of the historical evidence. And they are even able to debate about the historical evidence with other scholars in universities and colleges, as we can see below.

Here's an example of a debate on the resurrection of Jesus:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is

missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history

- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates

invented legendaryt story-telling
- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and

resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should

prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

How did the Reagan tax cuts and Bush tax cuts affect unemployment?

November 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, which discusses how the Reagan tax cuts affected the unemployment rate.

Excerpt:

> In 1980, President Carter and his supporters in the Congress and news media asked, "how can we afford" presidential candidate Ronald Reagan's proposed tax cuts?
>
> Mr. Reagan's critics claimed the tax cuts would lead to more inflation and higher interest rates, while Mr. Reagan said tax cuts would lead to more economic growth and higher living standards. What happened? Inflation fell from 12.5 percent in 1980 to 3.9 percent in 1984, interest rates fell, and economic growth went from minus 0.2 percent in 1980 to plus 7.3 percent in 1984, and Mr. Reagan was re-elected in a landslide.
>
> […]Despite the fact that federal revenues have varied little (as a percentage of GDP) over the last 40 years, there has been an enormous variation in top tax rates. When Ronald Reagan took office, the top individual tax rate was 70 percent and by 1986 it was down to only 28 percent. All Americans received at least a 30 percent tax rate cut; yet federal tax revenues as a percent of GDP were almost unchanged during the Reagan presidency (from 18.9 percent in 1980 to 18.1 percent in 1988).
>
> What did change, however, was the rate of economic growth, which was more than 50 percent higher for the seven years after the Reagan tax cuts compared with the previous seven years. This increase in economic growth, plus some reductions in tax credits and deductions, almost entirely offset the effect of the rate reductions. Rapid economic growth, unlike government spending programs, proved to be the most effective way to reduce unemployment and poverty, and create opportunity for the disadvantaged.

The conservative Heritage Foundation describes the effects of the Bush tax cuts. (H/T The Lonely Conservative)

Excerpt:

> President Bush signed the first wave of tax cuts in 2001, cutting rates and providing tax relief for families by, for example, doubling of the child tax credit to $1,000.
>
> At Congress' insistence, the tax relief was initially phased in over many years, so the economy continued to lose jobs. In 2003, realizing its error, Congress made

> the earlier tax relief effective immediately. Congress also lowered tax rates on capital gains and dividends to encourage business investment, which had been lagging.
>
> It was the then that the economy turned around. Within months of enactment, job growth shot up, eventually creating 8.1 million jobs through 2007. Tax revenues also increased after the Bush tax cuts, due to economic growth.
>
> In 2003, capital gains tax rates were reduced. Rather than expand by 36% as the Congressional Budget Office projected before the tax cut, capital gains revenues more than doubled to $103 billion.
>
> The CBO incorrectly calculated that the post-March 2003 tax cuts would lower 2006 revenues by $75 billion. Revenues for 2006 came in $47 billion above the pre-tax cut baseline.
>
> Here's what else happened after the 2003 tax cuts lowered the rates on income, capital gains and dividend taxes:
>
> - GDP grew at an annual rate of just 1.7% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the six quarters following the tax cuts, the growth rate was 4.1%.
> - The S&P 500 dropped 18% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts but increased by 32% over the next six quarters.
> - The economy lost 267,000 jobs in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the next six quarters, it added 307,000 jobs, followed by 5 million jobs in the next seven quarters.
>
> The timing of the lower tax rates coincides almost exactly with the stark acceleration in the economy. Nor was this experience unique. The famous Clinton economic boom began when Congress passed legislation cutting spending and cutting the capital gains tax rate.

Those are the facts. That's not what you hear in the media, but they are the facts.

Obama administration blocks oil production in Ohio: 200,000 jobs lost

November 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

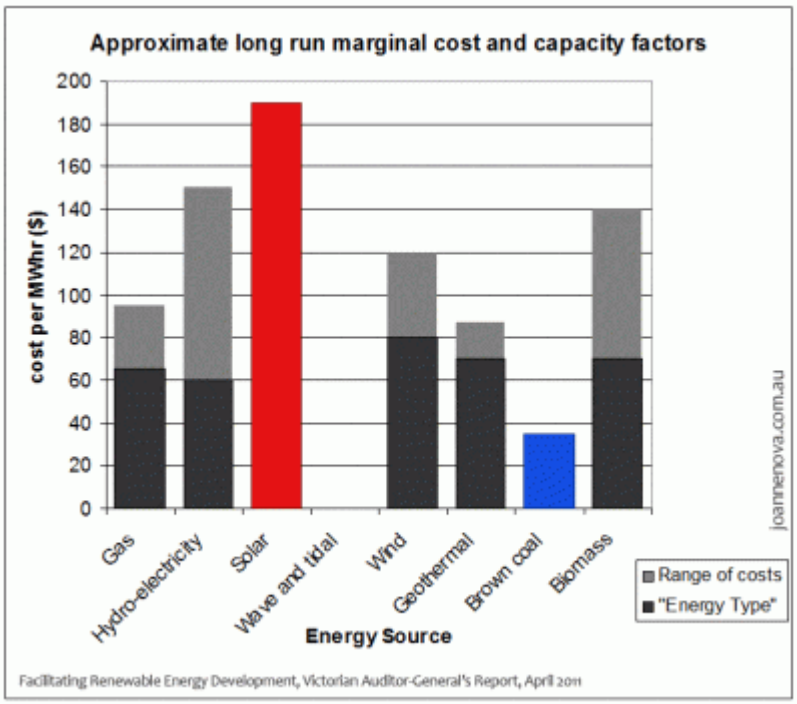

Cost of renewable wind and solar energy

The Heritage Foundation explains Obama's latest effort to appease the environmentalist cult.

Excerpt:

> First, it was 20,000 jobs the Obama Administration delayed by punting a decision to approve the Keystone XL pipeline, which would bring 700,000 barrels of oil per day from Canada into the United States. Multiply that number by 10 and you have the amount of jobs the President is putting on hold by delaying a mineral lease sale in Ohio's Wayne National Forest for oil and gas drilling. This decision kills jobs and denies Americans access to affordable energy.
>
> *The Washington Examiner* reports that Wayne National Forest already has 1,300 oil and gas wells in operation, but access to Utica's shale gas reserves would require hydraulic fracturing. The United States Department of Agriculture announced a six-month delay in the leasing of 3,000 acres in the forest to study the environmental effects of hydraulic fracturing. This decision not only delays access to the jobs and energy that Americans need now, but it blocks an important revenue source for federal and state governments. The Ohio Oil and Gas Energy Education Program estimated that:
>
> Natural gas and crude oil industry could help create and support more than 200,000 Ohio-based jobs from the leasing, royalties, exploration, drilling, production and pipeline construction activities for the Utica shale reserve. The

> state could experience an overall wage and personal-income boost of $12 billion by 2015 from industry spending.
>
> The study also projects royalty payments to landowners, schools, businesses and communities could increase to as much as $1.6 billion by 2015—a number that exceeds the total amount of royalties distributed by Ohio's natural gas and crude oil industry in the last decade. Total tax revenue from oil and gas exploration and development in the Utica shale formation from 2011 until 2015, including severance, commercial activity, ad valorem (property), federal, state and local taxes, is projected to be approximately $479 billion. Industry expenditures related to Utica shale development could generate approximately $12.3 billion in gross state product and result in a statewide output or sales of more than $23 billion.
>
> Hydraulic fracturing, known as "fracking," is a long-proven process by which producers inject a fluid (composed of 99 percent water) and sand into wells to free oil and gas trapped in rock formations. Used in over 1 million wells in the United States over more than six decades, fracking has been successfully used to retrieve over 7 billion barrels of oil and over 600 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.
>
> Spencer Hunt of the *Columbus Dispatch* reports that "Tom Stewart, vice president of the Ohio Oil and Gas Association, said shale well drilling would be less harmful to the forest than conventional drilling because as many as six shale wells can be drilled on a single pad."
>
> Fracking is subject to both federal and state regulations, and there have been no instances of contamination to drinking water. Groundwater aquifers sit thousands of feet above where fracking takes place, and studies by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Ground Water Protection Council, and other agencies have found no evidence of groundwater contamination. Where there have been unwanted environmental outcomes—such as gas migration—they were the result of poor well construction or problems with the concrete and steel casings around the well bore. Those instances have been rare, and they were not a result of the fracking process itself.
>
> Hydraulic fracturing will be a critical process in developing energy supplies in the future. The National Petroleum Council estimates that fracking will allow 60–80 percent of all domestically drilled wells in the next 10 years to remain viable.
>
> You can study the effects of hydraulic fracturing for six more months, but the facts are going to remain the same. Fracking is a long-proven process that can help access our nation's abundant oil and gas reserves. Delaying lease sales is delaying the creation of much-needed jobs.

So let me get this straight. If Obama isn't handing out $535 million of taxpayer dollars to Solyndra and $1.4 billion of taxpayer dollars to BruightSource, then he's busy blocking oil drilling in the Gulf and blocking oil drilling in Ohio and blocking the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. It's no wonder we have a 9% unemployment rate – this man

doesn't want to create jobs. He wants to reward the people who got him elected by handing out millions and billions of taxpayer dollars to millionaires and billionaires – in effect, transferring wealth from the middle class to rich Democrat fundraisers. I find it very surprising that labor unions back this man in elections. What sense does that make?

Global warming alarmism is nothing but a religion. Why do we have to have so much religion in politics? I understand if environmentalists want to practice their religion in their own homes and in the churches, but why do we have to give them taxpayer money for their environmentalist devotions? And why to we have to put our economy on hold just so that we are compliant with their religious beliefs? Why did we elect a President for believes in forcing a religious ideology onto the rest of us? Why do we have to have our freedom and prosperity – our right to produce goods and our right to purchase goods – limited by a religious ideology?

Related posts

- Obama urged Solyndra to delay layoff announcements until after 2010 elections
- Obama fundraisers got 80% of green energy loans ($16.4 billion)
- Obama gave $443 million no-bid contract to drug firm run by Democrat fundraiser
- E-mails reveal that Obama fundraiser discussed Solyndra loan with White House
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra
- Report finds Labor Department's green jobs program failing
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
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Saturday night fun: Mark Driscoll on teenage vampire novels and cougars

November 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is pretty funny. Now I don't agree with EVERYTHING Mark Driscoll says, so don't beat me up!

"'If he loves you, he'll never bite you' – that's what it should say!"

I still think that Wayne Grudem is the best though, while Driscoll is just more fun. To me, a good pastor is a pastor who can navigate the Bible, spot the overarching themes, and then make plans that respect the Bible, given the realities we face in the world today. A good pastor knows the Bible, but he also knows how the world works, so that he can apply the Bible and make things happen. You need both. And when you find a pastor who can do both, then you go to church and you like it.

And I'm not a Calvinist, I just know what a good pastor looks like – they are the ones that use real evidence to make their points, and for application. Pastors ought to be the smartest people in the world. That's what they should aspire to. They ought to be able to inspire their flock to make good decisions and plans that really will please God. Plans that work.

The New York Times on Christian marriage guru Gary Chapman

November 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal New York Times.

Excerpt:

> "As a senior in high school, I had a strong sense that God wanted me in some kind of ministry," he told me. "There were only two things I knew in a Christian framework that I could do. One would be the pastor of a church, the other would be a missionary. I didn't particularly like snakes, so I decided I should probably be a pastor."
>
> As a young pastor in Winston-Salem, N.C., he began offering classes on marriage and family, and was stunned by the number of couples who asked if they could stop by his office to chat. "I had the personality that listens and empathizes," he said.
>
> But he also had the personality that sought out patterns of miscommunication. Combing through dozen of years of notes, he identified different ways that individuals express love. As he explained to the audience near Nashville: "Adults all have a love tank. If you feel loved by your spouse, the whole world is right. If the love tank is empty, the whole world can begin to look dark."
>
> The problem: individuals fill their tanks in different ways.
>
> To illustrate, he told the crowd a story of a couple on the verge of divorce who came to see him. The man was dumbfounded. He cooked dinner every night for his wife; afterward he washed the dishes and took out the trash. "I don't know what else do to," the man said. "But she still tells me she doesn't feel loved."
>
> The woman agreed. "He does all those things," she said. Then she burst into tears. "But Dr. Chapman, we never talk. We haven't talked in 30 years."
>
> In Dr. Chapman's analysis, each one spoke a different love language: he liked to perform acts of service for his wife, while she was seeking quality time from him.
>
> "Each of us has a primary love language," Dr. Chapman said, and often secondary or tertiary ones. To help identify your language, he recommended focusing on the way you most frequently express love. What you give is often what you crave. Challenges in relationships arise because people tend to be attracted to their opposites, he said. "In a marriage, almost never do a husband and wife have the same language. The key is we have to learn to speak the language of the other person."
>
> He eventually labeled these different ways of expressing love "the five love languages": words of affirmation; gifts; acts of service; quality time; and physical touch.

> He outlined his ideas, along with some homespun wisdom and a sprinkling of homily, in the book, “The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate,” published in 1992 by Moody, a division of the Bible Institute. It sold 8,500 copies the first year, quadrupling the publisher’s expectation. The following year it sold 17,000; two years later, 137,000.
>
> In a feat of endurance that would make New York publishers swoon, every year (except one) for the last 19 years, the book has outsold its haul for the previous year, putting total sales in North America at that 7.2 million figure; the book has also been translated into 40 languages.
>
> Even more striking, those numbers were achieved without Oprah and without an appearance on a broadcast network. (Though in a rare bit of publicity, Elisabeth Hasselbeck held up the book on “The View” earlier this year and credited it with saving her marriage.)

I really recommend Gary Chapman’s book “The Five Love Languages“. My love language is words of affirmation. I like Gary Chapman because he is an evangelical Christian having an influence on the culture by defending marriage. It’s important for people to be thoughtful about marriage, and not to be swept along by emotions. To think about how the other person is and to be ready to treat them as a different person with different needs. It’s good to look at other people and to think “what’s my responsibility to you?”. When you make a commitment to love someone else for life, you have to think about actually achieving that goal, and that means knowing what counts as love to them.

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Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?

November 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, I want every one to take a look at this verse on providing for a family in context: (1 Tim 5:3-8)

3 Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need.

4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.

5 The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help.

6 But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.

7 Give the people these instructions, so that no one may be open to blame.

8 Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

And these verses on charity in evangelism: (Phil 4:10-19)

10 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;

16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.

18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Now I want to talk about a very disturbing trend that I see in the church. I see a lot of women who are not prepared to choose men who are going to fill this provider role. Men have a role, straight from the Bible, to provide for their wife and children, and to donate to support evangelistic efforts. And providing is not predicated on how a man makes a woman feel. Providing is based on the things such as:

- working for money before you are legally able to work for money
- working summer jobs during high school and college
- working during college or doing college degrees while working full-time
- doing consulting work or running your own business from home in the evenings
- studying science, technology, engineering and math (no exceptions!)
- not drinking alcohol or smoking cigarettes – no addictions of any kind
- not spending money on hair, tattoos, clothes, shoes or flashy junk
- own your own car, and keep it well-maintained
- own your own pet, and keep it healthy and well-trained
- pay your rent or mortgage payments on time
- carry no debt, borrow no money
- avoid depending on government welfare or student loans
- not taking sick days, not getting sick at all
- purchasing resources for others, especially things like apologetics books, to build them up
- giving charity to solid Christian speakers and funding apologetics events (William Lane Craig debates)
- making investments in stocks or real estate
- maxing out 401K contributions and Roth IRAs
- taking women out on dates, driving them in the man's own car, and paying for everything
- spending money to help the pro-life and pro-marriage causes (Morse, Klusendorf)

And I think you have to give bonus marks for getting up early, although I can't do that. I know someone who does, though – the hardest working software engineer I know.

Women should not prefer young men who are studying political science, psychology, English, education, grievance studies, and other non-quantitative subjects which do not equip a man to provide enough salary and savings to run a Christian life plan (homeschooling or private Christian schools or both). What ends up happening is that there is a lot of fighting over money, especially with women who don't have savings of their own before marrying. Without money, the children will likely get pushed into public school and they influenced by secularism and leftism.

What to do? Pick a man with a proven record of taking his responsibilities to study and earn seriously.

Here are some of the top earning careers:

Best Undergrad College Degrees By Salary – Full List

	STARTING MEDIAN PAY	MID-CAREER MEDIAN PAY
Petroleum Engineering	$97,900	$155,000
Chemical Engineering	$64,500	$109,000
Electrical Engineering (EE)	$61,300	$103,000
Materials Science & Engineering	$60,400	$103,000
Aerospace Engineering	$60,700	$102,000
Computer Engineering (CE)	$61,800	$101,000
Physics	$49,800	$101,000
Applied Mathematics	$52,600	$98,600
Computer Science (CS)	$56,600	$97,900
Nuclear Engineering	$65,100	$97,800
Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$53,800	$97,800
Economics	$47,300	$94,700
Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$58,400	$94,500
Statistics	$49,000	$93,800
Industrial Engineering (IE)	$57,400	$93,100
Civil Engineering (CE)	$53,100	$90,200
Mathematics	$47,000	$89,900
Environmental Engineering	$51,700	$88,600
Management Information Systems (MIS)	$51,000	$88,200
Software Engineering	$54,900	$87,800

I think that marrying someone who is not in one of these careers makes no sense at all, especially in light of a global recession.

And just to be clear, this is an area I struggle in myself. I am great at working for money, and saving it and investing it. But I say a lot of controversial things and a lawsuit would not be good for my fortune. I should be spending more time on evenings and weekends keeping my skills up, and that's what I'm going to be doing on my vacation. But I think the standard stands regardless of my own abilities to meet it. It is the standard.

Money is an important part of the Christian life. The Bible says that if a man does not work, neither shall he eat. We have a tradition on what men are supposed to do in Christianity. Men are supposed to take care of business, and women are supposed to prefer men with *proven records* of taking care of business. Being handsome and fun is *nowhere in the Bible* as a qualification for men to be good husbands and fathers. But earning money and providing for others in the community is a non-negotiable requirement. It's as required as the obligation to not marry a non-Christian man.

Women who are serious about Christianity will prefer men who meet the specifications laid out in the Bible. And this has to have been demonstrated over the course of *years* – a pattern of studying hard things, working multiple jobs, spending little, saving much and supporting family and evangelism. To me, a woman who prefers a man who has no record of providing is a woman who has been influenced by feminism. She rejects the

traditional roles of men and insists on a man who is *has no authority to lead because he does not have the provider role*. That's what's really going on here. Men who earn have authority to lead and hold a woman accountable when she misbehaves, and some women hate being led and being held accountable. (By being held accountable I mean disagreeing with the woman, canceling optional goodies, etc.)

I think we have a major problem in this society, and in the church, where we think that women are above criticism. We think that anything they feel like doing is a good idea. We think that their complete lack of rational thought and lack of planning in relationships is somehow "romantic". We think that women who embrace spontaneity and ignorance of statistical data are "free spirits". Is it any wonder that the out-of-wedlock birth rate is 42%, the divorce rate for first time marriages is 45%, and women are shacking up with unqualified men instead of getting married?

This is all – *all* – caused by the fact that women have no idea what men are for, and they deliberately prefer non-judgmental, non-theologically-exclusive, non-rational, tolerant, intuitive, wusses instead of men who give them hard books to read and who hold them accountable when they misbehave. Women today think it is a *bad thing* when a man holds her accountable when she disrespects him in public, but think it is a good thing to date a man who asks his parents to borrow the car keys before taking her out. Huh? I had a current year car with only 7500 miles on it at age 17 – because I was working two jobs in high school, and part-time IT/desktop publishing in my own business on the side.

Women who are interested in testing a man's abilities can use my checklist for finding authentic Christian women. Those questions work on men too.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Conservatives defeat socialists by a landslide in Spain election

November 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Europe

The UK Telegraph explains.

Excerpt:

> With almost 98 per cent of the vote counted the Popular Party won 186 seats in the 350 seat congress garnering a strong mandate to push through further austerity measures in an attempt to turn around an economy that risks being engulfed by the sovereign debt crisis.

> […]The socialists suffered their biggest defeat since Spain became a democracy more than 30 years ago, punished by an electorate for their perceived bungling of the economic crisis that has left 5 million unemployed.
>
> […]Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba, 60, the prime ministerial candidate who took the helm of the PSOE when Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero said he would not seek a third term, conceded defeat after the party won just 110 seats down from 169 in 2008.
>
> "The Socialist Party did not have a good result. We clearly lost the elections," he told party faithful in Madrid.
>
> The conservatives won roughly 44 per cent of the votes and the Socialists took 29 per cent, according to official election results.

The Wall Street Journal analyzes the election result.

Excerpt:

> Formerly a solid growth engine for the region's economy, Spain today is grappling with a burst housing bubble, a 21% unemployment rate and borrowing costs near levels that triggered the international bailouts of several fiscally frail euro-zone peers.
>
> Analysts said the election of Mariano Rajoy, the conservative leader who has committed to austerity and economic overhauls, could help improve investor sentiment toward Spain, but won't fundamentally change perceptions that Spain and other peripheral nations are risky investments. For that, they said, European Union institutions will have to extend more support, possibly by converting the European Central Bank into a lender of last resort.
>
> […]The groundswell of support for Mr. Rajoy is chiefly the result of a deep economic crisis that has forced Socialist Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero to make unpopular budget cuts and economic overhauls. Earlier this year, Mr. Zapatero said he wouldn't seek re-election and his party chose the veteran Mr. Pérez Rubalcaba to succeed him.
>
> Analysts said the fact that change in Spain was coming via the ballot box was another sign of a better track record on governance, which has helped to keep Spanish borrowing costs below those of its fiscally frail peers.
>
> Although Mr. Zapatero lacked a parliamentary majority, he was able to deliver all the measures he promised last year, including a public-sector wage cut, a pension freeze and a labor-market overhaul.
>
> As a result, a clear victory for Mr. Rajoy, who has promised to take overhauls much further than his Socialist rivals, is widely expected to shore up confidence in the Spanish economy inside and outside the country.
>
> Many recall the Popular Party-led governments of José María Aznar of 1996-2004 for their far-reaching moves that helped set the stage for a lengthy economic boom. Mr. Rajoy headed various ministries during that time.
>
> At a polling station in Madrid's Chamberí district, 18-year-old engineering student Diego Cubero said he had voted for the first time and chosen the Popular Party.

This is the end of a huge mistake made by the Spanish people in 2004 when they elected the socialists. Never, ever, ever elect socialists unless you want your economy to end up like Greece. That's what socialists do to economies.

Has Obama's buddy Jon Corzine misplaced $1.2 billion of customer funds?

November 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> The facts are that on Oct. 25, Jon Corzine, a former New Jersey governor, stated he was confident that MF Global would successfully manage its $6.3 billion exposure to European debt (Spain, Portugal, Belgium and Italy). Yet a week after a failed attempt to sell the company, MF Global filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Oct. 31.
>
> Now let's discuss the failure of management at MF Global. Mr. Corzine who is considered by many one of the smartest fixed-income minds in the business took immeasurable risk with the capital of his firm. It was revealed that the company was leveraged 40-1. In summary, the company only had 2.5 percent equity invested against risk positions. Note: Even in the height of the subprime crisis a 40-1 leverage would have been considered extremely risky, where small movements in underlying positions could represent deleterious outcomes for investors.
>
> Did the great Jon Corzine not learn from the greatest financial meltdown seen in the U.S. economy? The answer is simple, here is another example to the entrusted "gambling with other people's money." The irony of this is that in the August 2011 bond deal there is a key clause that states if Mr. Corzine departs as MF Global's full-time chief executive officer prior to July 1, 2013, because of an appointment to a federal position by the president and confirmation of that appointment by the U.S. Senate, investors would get an additional 1 percent coupon on their existing 6.250 percent bonds. I beg to differ in that the "clause" should have said if Mr. Corzine decides to increase the risk-taking at MF Global similar to previous risk positions at Goldman Sachs, investors should be redeemed their money at 100 cents on the dollar. **We will find out more but another concern, there is approximately $600 million of unaccounted for customer funds.**

UPDATE: The figure is now $1.2 billion.

Excerpt:

> The court-appointed trustee overseeing MF Global's bankruptcy says up to $1.2 billion is missing from customer accounts, double what the firm had reported to regulators last month.

Obama is the Solyndra president. He's been raiding the public coffers to reward his

billionaire campaign fundraisers from day 1 with from his “stimulus” funding – running 1.3 trillion deficits to pay off all the people who got him elected. The young people who will have to pay off this debt still keep voting for him like lemmings – they have no idea about his connections to rich Wall Street bankers. They buy the rhetoric. And the Obama-media has no interest of informing anyone about his connections to dodgy people and organizations.

Look for Corzine to get a presidential pardon in 2012, when Obama leaves office.

Conservative MP introduces bill to abolish Section 13 speech code

November 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the description for that video, posted by SDAMatt: (Note: Tory = Conservative)

> Tory backbencher Brian Storseth wants to eliminate Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA). That is the provision in federal law that gives the Canadian Human Rights Commission authority to hear complaints of hate speech on the Internet. We wish Mr. Storseth, the MP from Westlock-St. Paul in Alberta, well in this campaign. Section 13 is a particularly pernicious infringement on free speech. Originally added to the CHRA in 2001 as a protection for vulnerable groups against racist or violence-promoting websites, the clause has more often been used by minority activists (or those purporting to act on behalf of minorities) to silence those who do not share their opinions.
>
> The biggest problem with Sec. 13 is that its provisions make it far too easy for commissioners to find an alleged offender guilty. Unlike in a court of law – where the presumption of innocence, rules of evidence and bans on hearsay testimony protect defendants from wrongful prosecution – at a human rights tribunal complainants may remain anonymous and complaints may be filed by third parties with no direct interest in the case at hand. (Some folks even make a profitable hobby out of launching these complaints.) Hearsay evidence is perfectly acceptable, the onus to prove one's innocence often falls on the accused, and tax dollars pay for the plaintiff's lawyers while the accused is on his or her own to fund a defence.
>
> A further flaw in Sec. 13 is that neither the truth nor the lack of intent to harm is permitted as a defence. It does not matter whether the offending Internet message was truthful or if adjudicators find it "likely to expose an identifiable group to hatred or contempt" (the standard employed under criminal law) – the owner of the website on which it appears and the person who posted it are guilty anyway.
>
> In 2007, Sec. 13 was used against writer Mark Steyn for material he wrote in Maclean's magazine that four Muslim students claimed had offended them. That same year, a similar provision in Alberta provincial human rights law was used to prosecute Ezra Levant for publishing the infamous Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in the now-defunct Western Standard magazine. In both cases, the clear intent of the complainants was to limit legitimate debate about religious extremism.
>
> Fears that getting rid of Sec. 13 will lead to a flood of vicious anti-Semitism and the like are unfounded. Sections 318 through 320 of the Criminal Code already prohibit "hate propaganda" – including "any writing, sign or visible

> representation that advocates or promotes genocide." And it has been used several times to prosecute true hatemongers, James Keegstra, most famously. Nothing in Mr. Storseth's proposal would affect those laws.

The Conservatives have a majority in the House of Commons and the Senate, and they have Prime Minister Stephen Harper there to sign the bill. They need to do this right away, and then ban political contributions by large corporations and public sector unions.

But wait! There's more! (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> The Supreme Court of Canada recently laid the smack down on Human Rights Tribunals across the country. In a recent decision, *B.C. Workers' Compensation Board v. Figliola*, a five-judge majority dramatically reduced the discretion of human rights tribunals to rehear discrimination complaints already decided by other administrative bodies such as workers' compensation boards.
>
> According to lawyer Peter Gall, who is also representing Dr. Brian Day in a health care related case that the Canadian Constitution Foundation is also assisting in, "the practice of workers taking a second kick at the can in front of human rights tribunals after their discrimination complaints had already been dismissed by a labour board or other administrative decision-maker 'was happening often enough that it was a real problem'".
> This Supreme Court decision applies to all human rights tribunals across Canada and is very important to the business community of British Columbia and Canada because it provides for finality and prevents "forum shopping" and the issue of multiple proceedings.

I know that there are a lot of conservative voters who are disillusioned with the Canadian Tories over the abortion issue and the free speech issue. The Conservatives need to get something done on these issues, immediately.

JPL employee who was fired for loaning ID DVDs will get jury trial

November 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News. (H/T Uncommon Descent)

Excerpt:

> A Los Angeles County Superior Court judge ruled Friday that a jury will decide whether NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab (JPL) unlawfully discriminated against a former employee for discussing the scientific theory of intelligent design (ID) at work.
>
> David Coppedge, a 14-year JPL veteran and team lead computer administrator on the Cassini Mission to Saturn, was demoted for lending ID-related DVDs to coworkers, behavior that one JPL complainant called "harassment," and another branded "pushing religion." After he filed suit to vindicate his free expression rights, JPL terminated Coppedge.
>
> Evidence shows that JPL demoted and terminated Coppedge because he expressed a pro-ID scientific viewpoint disliked at JPL and labeled "religion" by JPL decision-makers.
>
> "The court's ruling allows a jury to vindicate David Coppedge's rights," said Joshua Youngkin, a legal affairs policy analyst with Discovery Institute. "California law forbids employers who view an employee's expression as religion to punish or diminish the employee on that basis."
>
> "Although ID is not religion, it can't be singled out by JPL or other employers in this way," added Youngkin.
>
> In its ruling, the court found there "are triable issues of fact as to whether Plaintiff's demotion, written warning, negative performance evaluations, and ultimate termination were adverse employment actions" that involved discrimination.
>
> Coppedge is represented by William J. Becker Jr. of the Becker Law Firm, who was supported in the case by Alliance Defense Fund.

So on the one hand, you have Richard Dawkins ducking out of debates, and on the other hand, you have taxpayer-funded government employees firing people who offering to lend someone a DVD that questions the religion of naturalism – a religion that is flatly contradicted by the Big Bang, by the way.

Law schools are not preparing law students to practice law

November 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The New York Times explains why law school may not be worth the money.

Excerpt:

> The lesson today — the ins and outs of closing a deal — seems lifted from Corporate Lawyering 101.
>
> "How do you get a merger done?" asks Scott B. Connolly, an attorney.
>
> There is silence from three well-dressed people in their early 20s, sitting at a conference table in a downtown building here last month.
>
> "What steps would you need to take to accomplish a merger?" Mr. Connolly prods.
>
> After a pause, a participant gives it a shot: "You buy all the stock of one company. Is that what you need?"
>
> "That's a stock acquisition," Mr. Connolly says. "The question is, when you close a merger, how does that deal get done?"
>
> The answer — draft a certificate of merger and file it with the secretary of state — is part of a crash course in legal training. But the three people taking notes are not students. They are associates at a law firm called Drinker Biddle & Reath, hired to handle corporate transactions. And they have each spent three years and as much as $150,000 for a legal degree.
>
> What they did not get, for all that time and money, was much practical training. Law schools have long emphasized the theoretical over the useful, with classes that are often overstuffed with antiquated distinctions, like the variety of property law in post-feudal England. Professors are rewarded for chin-stroking scholarship, like law review articles with titles like "A Future Foretold: Neo-Aristotelian Praise of Postmodern Legal Theory."
>
> So, for decades, clients have essentially underwritten the training of new lawyers, paying as much as $300 an hour for the time of associates learning on the job. But the downturn in the economy, and long-running efforts to rethink legal fees, have prompted more and more of those clients to send a simple message to law firms: Teach new hires on your own dime.
>
> "The fundamental issue is that law schools are producing people who are not capable of being counselors," says Jeffrey W. Carr, the general counsel of FMC Technologies, a Houston company that makes oil drilling equipment. "They are lawyers in the sense that they have law degrees, but they aren't ready to be a provider of services."

> […]Consider, for instance, Contracts, a first-year staple. It is one of many that originated in the Langdell era and endures today. In it, students will typically encounter such classics as Hadley v. Baxendale, an 1854 dispute about financial damages caused by the late delivery of a crankshaft to a British miller.
>
> Here is what students will rarely encounter in Contracts: actual contracts, the sort that lawyers need to draft and file. Likewise, Criminal Procedure class is normally filled with case studies about common law crimes — like murder and theft — but hardly mentions plea bargaining, even though a vast majority of criminal cases are resolved by that method.
>
> […]"We should be teaching what is really going on in the legal system," says Edward L. Rubin, a professor and former dean at the Vanderbilt Law School, "not what was going on in the 1870s, when much of the legal curriculum was put in place."

This is one of the reasons why I give the advice I do about studying STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). Universities are politicized. They are run by people who want to push a secular leftist ideology. For such people, the more isolated you can be from feedback from the real world, the better. And that is why it is often (but not always) useless to study anything that isn't STEM. If you're going to the university at all, study STEM areas. That is, if your goal is to actually make money so you can support a family.

So you have two choices, in my view. Trade school/apprenticeship right out of high school. Or study STEM areas in university. That's it.

A friend of mine who is a software engineer was thinking of doing an MBA a while back, and then decided on a Masters in securities and investing. I think that's the right way to go. Stay as far away from anything that can be politicized as possible. Don't give people who are embarked on perpetual adolescence any of your money (than they already get through taxpayer-funded research subsidies).

Real greed is when adults force children to give them a bailout from debt

November 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must-read by Mark Steyn.

Excerpt:

> While President Obama was making his latest pitch for a brand new, even more unsustainable entitlement at the health care "summit," thousands of Greeks took to the streets to riot. An enterprising cable network might have shown the two scenes on a continuous split screen – because they're part of the same story. It's just that Greece is a little further along in the plot: They're at the point where the canoe is about to plunge over the falls. America is further upstream and can still pull for shore, but has decided instead that what it needs to do is catch up with the Greek canoe. Chapter One (the introduction of unsustainable entitlements) leads eventually to Chapter 20 (total societal collapse): The Greeks are at Chapter 17 or 18.
>
> What's happening in the developed world today isn't so very hard to understand: The 20th century Bismarckian welfare state has run out of people to stick it to. In America, the feckless insatiable boobs in Washington, Sacramento, Albany and elsewhere are screwing over our kids and grandkids. In Europe, they've reached the next stage in social democratic evolution: There are no kids or grandkids to screw over. The United States has a fertility rate of around 2.1, or just over two kids per couple. Greece has a fertility rate of about 1.3: 10 grandparents have six kids have four grandkids – i.e., the family tree is upside down. Demographers call 1.3 "lowest-low" fertility – the point from which no society has ever recovered. And compared to Spain and Italy, Greece has the least worst fertility rate in Mediterranean Europe.
>
> So you can't borrow against the future because, in the most basic sense, you don't have one. Greeks in the public sector retire at 58, which sounds great. But, when 10 grandparents have four grandchildren, who pays for you to spend the last third of your adult life loafing around?
>
> By the way, you don't have to go to Greece to experience Greek-style retirement: The Athenian "public service" of California has been metaphorically face-down in the ouzo for a generation. Still, America as a whole is not yet Greece. A couple of years ago, when I wrote my book "America Alone," I put the Social Security debate in a bit of perspective: On 2005 figures, projected public pensions liabilities were expected to rise by 2040 to about 6.8 percent of GDP. In Greece, the figure was 25 percent. In other words, head for the hills, Armageddon, outta here, The End. Since then, the situation has worsened in both countries. And really the comparison is academic: Whereas America still has a choice, Greece

> isn't going to have a 2040 – not without a massive shot of Reality Juice.
>
> Is that likely to happen? At such moments, I like to modify Gerald Ford. When seeking to ingratiate himself with conservative audiences, President Ford liked to say: "A government big enough to give you everything you want is big enough to take away everything you have." Which is true enough. But there's an intermediate stage: A government big enough to give you everything you want isn't big enough to get you to give any of it back. That's the point Greece is at. Its socialist government has been forced into supporting a package of austerity measures. The Greek people's response is: Nuts to that. Public sector workers have succeeded in redefining time itself: Every year, they receive 14 monthly payments. You do the math. And for about seven months' work – for many of them the workday ends at 2:30 p.m. When they retire, they get 14 monthly pension payments. In other words: Economic reality is not my problem. I want my benefits. And, if it bankrupts the entire state a generation from now, who cares as long as they keep the checks coming until I croak?
>
> We hard-hearted, small-government guys are often damned as selfish types who care nothing for the general welfare. But, as the Greek protests make plain, nothing makes an individual more selfish than the socially equitable communitarianism of big government. Once a chap's enjoying the fruits of government health care, government-paid vacation, government-funded early retirement, and all the rest, he couldn't give a hoot about the general societal interest. He's got his, and to hell with everyone else. People's sense of entitlement endures long after the entitlement has ceased to make sense.
>
> The perfect spokesman for the entitlement mentality is the deputy prime minister of Greece. The European Union has concluded that the Greek government's austerity measures are insufficient and, as a condition of bailout, has demanded something more robust. Greece is no longer a sovereign state: It's General Motors, and the EU is Washington, and the Greek electorate is happy to play the part of the United Auto Workers – everything's on the table except anything that would actually make a difference. In practice, because Spain, Portugal, Italy and Ireland are also on the brink of the abyss, a "European" bailout will be paid for by Germany. So the aforementioned Greek deputy prime minister, Theodoros Pangalos, has denounced the conditions of the EU deal on the grounds that the Germans stole all the bullion from the Bank of Greece during the Second World War. Welfare always breeds contempt, in nations as much as inner-city housing projects. How dare you tell us how to live! Just give us your money and push off.

This is the real character of people who avoid having to care about producing goods and services to please customers – people who join public sector unions and work for the government. They elect candidates who will provide them with a standard of living much higher than what they can produce by their own efforts, and pass the bill down to real

workers in the private sector, or worse, workers who are not even born. It’s a shame. It’s a shame that parasites should enslave children who are not yet born so that they can have a standard of living they haven’t paid for. And it’s laughable that they impugn the character of productive private sector workers and business owners by talking about “Greed”. The parasites in the public sector unions are the greedy ones. What could be more greedy than intergenerational theft?

Intelligent design theorist Stephen C. Meyer debates evolutionist Keith Fox

November 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable" podcast.

Details:

> Stephen Meyer is a leading proponent of Intelligent Design who directs the Centre for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. His most recent book "Signature in the Cell" claims to show that the DNA code is the product of intelligent mind, not naturalistic processes. Keith Fox is Professor of Biochemistry at Southampton University. He chairs the UK Christians in Science network but disagrees strongly with ID. They debate how life could have originated and whether design is allowed as an explanation in science.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary: (stuff in italics is my snarky paraphrase)

Meyer:

- background and how he got interested in intelligent design
- his research focus is on the origin of life – the first replicator
- summarizes the history of origin of life studies
- authored the book "Signature in the Cell"
- the DNA enigma: where did the information in DNA come from?
- naturalistic explanations of the DNA information have failed
- but intelligent agents are known to be able to produce information
- the best explanation of the information in DNA is that an intelligent agent authored it
- Meyer's book was named by atheist philosopher of science Thomas Nagel as a Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year in 2010
- why is design so controversial? Many people think that Darwin explained why nature appears design
- the Darwinian view is that nature can create the appearance of design using mutation and selection
- however, Darwinian mechanisms cannot explain the origin of the first living cell, it assumes replication, and the origin of life is about where the first replicator comes from

Fox:

- Meyer's argument is not about the evolution of life after the first cell
- Meyer's case for design is about the origin of life

- naturalists do not know a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- there are a number of naturalistic hypotheses for the origin of life, like the RNA-first hypothesis
- maybe in a few years one of them will turn out to be correct
- what intelligent design is arguing from a gap in our current naturalistic knowledge to infer that God intervened in nature

Meyer:

- that's not what intelligent design is at all
- the approach ID theorists use is the inference to best explanation
- you evaluate all explanations, non-intelligent causes and intelligent causes
- you prefer the best possible explanation
- we know that minds are capable of producing information just like the information we find in DNA

Fox:

- living cells replicate, so they have the ability to introduce mutations as they replicate and then some of those mutations can be selected
- so maybe the process of replicating that living cells do created the first living cell
- maybe the first living cell created itself, X brought X into being, self-creation, what's irrational about that?

Meyer:

- the issue is the origin of life – where did the first living cell come from?
- you cannot appeal to the operations that a living cell can perform to explain the origin of the first living cell
- there was no first living cell operating before the first living cell
- there was no replication, mutation or selection before the first living cell
- in fact, in my book I show that there is no known naturalistic mechanism that is able to produce the information needed for the first living cell
- *nothing can create itself, that is self-contradictory*

Fox:

- Well, you are just saying that because something is complex that God did it

Meyer:

- Sadly, no. What I actually said needed to be explained was the information, not complexity
- And we know from software engineering that the process of adding information to code is performed by programmers
- in the absence of any adequate naturalistic explanation for information, we are

justified in taking the explanation that we are familiar with – namely, intelligent agency – based on our uniform, universal experience of what causes information

Fox:

- well, maybe we can appeal to the mutation and selection in existing living cells to explain the origin of the first living cell
- maybe there were living cells before the first living cell, and then these other living cells created the first living cell

Meyer:

- we can't keep invoking mutation and selection when those processes are not operating prior to the origin of the first living cell

Fox:

- well maybe some bare-bones self-replication molecule was a precursor to the first living cell

Meyer:

- even to generate very limited replicator would require a large amount of information
- the argument I am making is – where does the evolution come from?

Fox:

- well, maybe we will think of an explanation for information that is naturalistic in 20 years
- we've thought of explanations to things that were NOT information before
- so maybe we will be able to think of something to explain information based on our ability to explain NOT information before

Moderator: Change topics: the Dover decision

Meyer:

- the Discovery Institute opposed the policy that causes the trial
- the wording of the statute was poor
- the judge was completely wrong in his decision
- young earth creationists used the phrase "intelligent design" to cover their agenda
- intelligent design is an inference using the normal methods of science

Fox:

- intelligent design is a science stopper because it stops looking for a naturalistic explanation
- everything in nature must have a naturalistic explanation
- everything has to be explained using matter and time and chance

- it just has to be that way!!!!

Meyer:

- well, what luck would you have explaining an effect like Mt. Rushmore?
- can you explain that using matter,time and chance?
- Mt. Rushmore was the product of intelligence, not wind and erosion
- similarly, there is information in the cell, and we know that intelligence causes information

Fox:

- So you are saying that we don't understand and therefore an intelligence is necessary?

Meyer:

- no I am saying we DO understand and we are making an inference based on that understanding
- you are the one who is insisting on a material explanation because you pre-suppose materialism
- we know that minds have causal powers, and we can infer mind as an explanation from information

Fox:

- well nature is a seamless chain of material causes and effects

Meyer:

- agents can act without violating the laws of nature
- even humans can act as intelligent agents to create information in books, and they don't violate the laws of nature
- intelligent causes are real, and they explain effects in nature

Fox:

- you're trying to impose on science something to do with meaning and purpose

Meyer:

- no that's not what we're doing, we're inferring from from the fact that we ourselves are known causes of information to the fact that an intelligence cause is the best explanation for information in the cell

Fox:

- *but I am a materialist*, I need a materialist explanation

Meyer:

- mind IS an answer to the how question
- we infer to mind in many other scientific disciplines, like cryptography, archaeology, etc.
- a materialist might accuse an archaeologist of engaging in a “scribe-of-the-gaps” argument, but the best explanation of an artifact with information is a scribe
- we are inferring that mind is the cause from the nature of the effect: information

Moderator: is it appropriate to call DNA “information”
Fox:

- well DNA is just a molecular polymer, any reference to information is just by analogy

Meyer:

- DNA is a molecular polymer, but it also exhibits the property of specified complexity
- the arrangement of bases, which function as machine instructions in a software program, for performings task in the cell
- we have observed that the property of specified complexity always comes from an intelligence

Fox:

- well, maybe there are other sequences that would work, so maybe it’s really not uncommon to develop functioning sequences by chance alone, without an intelligence

Meyer:

- you can measure how precise the functional specificity is in DNA and proteins

Moderator: is Shannon information the same as functional information
Meyer:

- Shannon information refers to the sequences of digits or symbols that do not necessarily have any function, i.e. – a four character string QSZX has as much Shannon information as WORD. However, only the latter is functional against the pattern of the English language. There are arrangements of DNA bases and amino acids that have the same number of symbols/characters as a functional sequence would have, but they have no biological function – they do not exhibit specified complexity

Fox:

- Well, maybe there are lots and lots of sequences of DNA and proteins so that it is fairly easy to get a functional one by chance

Meyer:

- DNA sequences that are functional are extremely rare, protein sequences are even more rare
- this is not my opinion, this is what the research shows – functional protein sequences are rare

Fox:

- well maybe there are other functional sequences that are occur before the first functional sequence that are precursors to the first functional sequence
- maybe there are billions of years of replication, mutation and selection before the first replication, mutation and selection

Meyer:

- you can't get to the first selectable functional sequence by appealing to precursor selectable functional sequences – there are no selectable functional sequences before the FIRST one
- you have to get the first selectable functional sequence by chance alone, because there is nothing to mutate or select before the first replicator
- the chance hypothesis has been rejected because the minimal amount of information for the simplest replicator is too high to get by chance alone, given the resources, including time, that are available

Moderator: *Keith are you confident that naturalism will be able to substantiate these naturalism-of-the-gap speculations that you offer in response to Meyer's actual science that we have today?*

Fox:

- well, it is hard to know for sure because it was just a fluke event
- but there's nothing irrational or unscientific or miraculous about it – the fluke would have a material explanation
- there is nothing that we can detect that would implicate God, my speculations about a fluke which I cannot observe or measure or test would all be compatible with an atheistic worldview that omits God as a causal entity

Meyer:

- where are those material processes that could account for this fluke then?
- the whole point of this argument is that the information in DNA transcends the material components in the sequence
- it's the arrangement of the material parts/letters/characters/symbols/instructions that needs to be explained

Fox:

- Well, I just have a different philosophy of science that rules out intelligent causation a priori

Meyer:

- Yes, that's the difference between us – you pre-suppose that all explanations of natural phenomena must exclude intelligent causes

There is a bit more where Meyer talks about how parts of the cell are implementations of various design patterns (Gang of Four design patterns) that are used by software architects who design software.

You may also be interested in Keith Fox's previous debate with Michael Behe. I think Fox did better in this one than in that one, so I didn't make fun of him as much. Find more posts on Stephen C. Meyer by me here.

Michele Bachmann wins foreign policy debate, Santorum second

November 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a summary from the highly-biased pro-Romney Jennifer Rubin of the Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> The foreign policy debate Tuesday night was a surprise on many counts. It was lively and serious, which many debates haven't been. Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) exceeded expectations. Rick Santorum showed personal restraint (not complaining about the lack of attention) and displaying his depth of knowledge.
>
> [Bashes Gingrich for a while]
>
> […]At the other extreme was Bachmann who was poised, informed and knowledgable throughout. She made clear that Obama's lack of leadership is responsible for Iran's progress on a nuclear weapon. She defended aid to Pakistan which is in our national security interest. She made an excellent point about sending our dollars to China, which in effect builds up its military at the expense of ours. She pivoted on an energy question to chide Obama for delaying on the Keystone pipeline. If she performs this well in future debates, look for her to make progress reclaiming support in Iowa.
>
> [Praises Romney for a while]
>
> […]Santorum also had a strong night. He turned the conversation on the "war on terror" to a discussion of jihadism. He defended foreign aid (a smart, but not popular position). On the immigration issue he wove in his support for an economic plan focused on reviving American manufacturing. And he got Romney to agree in the closing round that we have an acute national security problem in this hemisphere. He was calmer and more presidential than he has been in past debates.

However, Gingrich definitely got stung by his support for amnesty. He may be smart, but he's quite moderate on many issues. Not as liberal as Romney, though.

I think it's time that the Republican party give Michele Bachmann another look. And I think Santorum is a solid on social and foreign policy issues. He's just moderate on fiscal issues.

More about Michele Bachmann

Speeches:

- Michele Bachmann's Republican Leadership Conference speech
- Michele Bachmann's speech at the Right Online Conference

Reactions from her first debate performance:

- Washington Post
- UK Telegraph

Profiles of Michele Bachmann:

- ABC News
- WORLD Magazine

And here are some of her media interviews and speeches in the House of Representatives.

Related posts

- New Michele Bachmann interviews on the economy
- MUST-HEAR: Michele Bachmann gives the best speech ever
- Michele Bachmann beats RINO Mitt Romney in fundraising
- Michele Bachmann looking presidential against the liberal media
- Michele Bachmann courts homeschoolers in Iowa speech
- Michele Bachmann and Paul Ryan on the Wisconsin teacher union pensions
- Video and transcripts of response speeches by Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann
- What was the context of Michele Bachmann's "armed and dangerous" comment?
- AT LAST: Michele Bachmann open to presidential run in 2012
- Megyn Kelly and Michele Bachmann on the Bush tax cut deal
- CNS News interviews Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann requests the resignation of Attorney General Eric Holder
- Michele Bachmann attacks government bailout of unions
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- Michele Bachmann on Fox News with Laura Ingraham
- Democrats kill Michele Bachmann's attempt to freeze federal salaries
- Michele Bachmann on the US taxpayer-funded bailout of Greece
- Michele Bachmann explains the Obama's Wall Street bailout bill
- Michele Bachmann promises to work to repeal Obamacare
- Video of Michele Bachmann defending unborn children
- Michele Bachmann's passionate and inspiring speech at CPAC 2010
- Michele Bachmann talks about Obamacare and the stimulus package
- Michele Bachmann wants to cancel bonuses for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac CEOs
- Michele Bachmann analyzes Obama's latest foreign policy blunders
- Congresswomen denounce Obamacare's rationing of breast cancer exams
- Michele Bachmann video on the future of Obamacare
- Moderate George Will lauds the virtues of Michele Bachmann
- Michele Bachmann is Mrs November in new calendar (and her best video clips)

Has Obama succeeded in spreading the wealth around?

November 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Obama Economic Record			
	INAUGURATION DAY	TODAY	CHANGE
Unemployed Americans	12 million	14 million	↑ 2 million
Unemployment Rate	7.8%	9.1%	↑ 17%
Gas Prices	$1.85	$3.43	↑ 85%
Federal Debt	$10.6 trillion	$14.7 trillion	↑ 39%
Debt per person	$34,731	$47,047	↑ $12,316
Misery Index	7.8	12.9	↑ 65%
Food Stamp Recipients	32 million	45 million	↑ 41%
Health Insurance Premiums	$3,354	$4,129	↑ 23%
Home Values	$193,400	$172,600	↓ 11%
U.S. Global Competitiveness	1st	5th	↓ 4 places
Americans in Poverty	39.8 million	46.2 million	↑ 6.4 million

Obama Economic Record November 2011
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> According to an IBD review of various economic data, while corporations and Wall Street investors have made significant gains under Obama's economic leadership, average Americans have seen their fortunes steadily decline.
>
> Since the start of the Obama administration, corporate profits have climbed 68% (about 59% after inflation), and are now 19% above their pre-recession peak, according to the latest Commerce Department data out Tuesday morning.
>
> Meanwhile, companies are sitting on a pile of cash that's grown 38% from Q1 2009 to Q2 2011, according to the Federal Reserve's quarterly "Flow of Funds" report.
>
> And since Obama's inauguration, the Dow Jones Industrial Average has climbed 45%.
>
> However, these solid gains haven't translated into prosperity down the economic ladder.
>
> Since Obama took office, median weekly earnings have dropped almost 5% after inflation, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Home prices are below their

> January 2009 levels; unemployment is higher, as is the inflation rate. Gas prices alone have more than doubled since January 2009.
>
> […]Household income: Since the recovery started, household income has fallen 6.7%, according to a study by former Census Bureau officials. That's a bigger decline than during the 18-month recession, when income fell 3.2%.
>
> Jobs: Despite job growth since the recession ended, there are still 1.4 million fewer private sector jobs today than when Obama was sworn in, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. And the pace of growth — 1.6 million new jobs over the past two years — is far below what's needed just to keep up with growth in the labor force.
>
> Income inequality: After remaining essentially flat under President Bush, the gap between rich and poor has climbed in each of Obama's first two years, according to the Census Bureau.
>
> Consumer confidence: The Consumer Confidence Index dropped to 39.8 in October, down almost 10 points from when the recession ended, and almost right where it stood when Obama took office.
>
> Misery Index: This index, which combines the unemployment rate with the inflation rate and is meant as a proxy of middle class pain, is 60% higher than when Obama took office, and it's at a level not seen since mid-1983.
>
> Home prices: The median price for existing home sales has dropped 4.6% since January 2009, according to monthly National Association of Realtors data. And the number of underwater mortgages is up, according to Core Logic.
>
> Union membership: The share of private sector workers who belong to a union fell to 6.9% in 2010, compared with 7.6% the year before Obama took office, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The article explains why Obama's rhetoric differs from reality – it turns out that the very policies he enacted created the poverty he claims he was going to reduce. Because he's not an economist. He's trying to do things that sound good so that people will like him. But those things *don't work*.

Why do Christians leave the faith? Dashed expectations of a “nice” God

November 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Part 2 of a brilliant series by Bradley Wright. This time he explains how people leave Christianity because they expect God to meet their needs and he doesn’t.

Excerpt:

> In a study of religious deconversion, we analyzed 50 on-line testimonies posted by former Christians, and in these testimonies we found four general explanations for deconversion. The first explanation, which I wrote about last week, regarded intellectual and theological concerns about the Christian faith. The second, which I elaborate here, regards a failed relationship with God. Almost half (22 of 50) of the writers expressed sentiments that in some way God had failed them by His not doing what they thought He should.
>
> God’s perceived failure took various forms, most of which fall under the general heading of “unanswered prayers.”
>
> One way that people felt that God had failed them happened when He did not respond to requests for help during difficult times. A young man raised in a Baptist church epitomized this feeling of failure when he wrote about God not answering his prayers about family difficulties. He wrote: “The first time I questioned the faith was when my grandmother shriveled up in front of me for 6 month’s due to cancer. I was 13 & my mother & father [were] getting a divorce. My father told me I should have been aborted. I prayed to God but nothing fails like prayers.”

So you can see here where people have this expectation that it is God’s job to give them good health. But is that anywhere in the Bible? Is it God’s job to make us healthy so that we can have a happy life, even if we are busy spending that happy life ignoring him and not knowing his character. When you ask a serious Christian what it is like to be a Christian, we will tell you that what God is about is NOT making us healthy or happy, but instead giving us time and peace to study him, to make plans to serve him, to execute those plans, and to have (sometimes unhappy) experiences that cause our sympathies to change as we feel what God feels. In short, life is about getting closer to him, and suffering and sickness is one of the tools God uses in order to get us to know him as he is and to participate in the relationship.

> Likewise, a woman raised in a Methodist household described her step-father as “cruel and abusive” to her, and she could not understand why “if God loves me, why won’t he protect me instead of letting this happen to me?”

I think the reason why God allows suffering like this is to create people who take his rules

about sexual morality seriously. When I was growing up I had front-row seats to the divorces of many of my friends. I remember vividly talking to children who cried to me about how they felt when their mothers invited new men into the house after the divorce. Pain and suffering like this is a reminder to us that the moral law is real, that God expects us to follow it in order to prevent harm. One of the reasons why I am chaste is because I listen to the stories of men whose girlfriends aborted their babies, the stories of women who cohabitated and then were betrayed, the stories of the children of divorces. And from this I learn that morality is real and it matters.

> In a variation of this theme, some deconverts lamented God's inactivity amidst spiritual difficulties. A man in his forties, a former elder at a charismatic church, wrote: "In my own life, no matter how much I submitted to 'God' and prayed in faith, 'sin' never seemed to leave me. Well, what's the point of being 'saved' if you aren't delivered from 'sin'?"

This is why accurate theology matters. No serious Christian thinks that you stop sinning after you become a Christian, and no serious Christian thinks that prayer alone is a solution to sin. To stop sinning, you need to engage more than the spirit, you need to engage the mind. Most people want to spiritualize things because prayer is easier than study. But if you want to stop sinning, the best way is a combination of prayer and study. If you want to stop premarital sex, study how premarital sex affects STD infection, risk of divorce, future marital stability, oxytocin, quality of marriage, and so on. Study the risks of divorce. That's how you stop sinning. Some people want to dumb Christianity down to the level of superstition then they complain that it doesn't work. But Christianity is better when you learn more and work harder.

> A former Southern Baptist described the various good things that God failed to give him: "God promises me a lot in the bible and he's not come through. Ask and it shall be given. Follow me and I will bless you. I promise you life and promise abundance. Man should not be alone. I have a plan for you. Give tithe and I will reward you. All broken promises. This god lacks clarification. This god lacks faith in me. He wants my faith. I want his too."

Do you know what I expect from God after reading the Bible? I expect what Jesus got: pain and suffering during obedience. What kind of simpleton reads the Bible and thinks that it is about getting goodies from God? That is NOWHERE in the Bible. It's projecting Santa Claus onto God and that isn't going to work – God has other plans for us, and those plans involve work and pain. People become Christians because they want to be like Jesus, and they understand that Jesus was not having fun. He was doing a job, and he wasn't happy or appreciated.

> Other writers took a different approach to God's failures. They too sought God's help, but when they did not receive it, they simply concluded that God did not exist. A former member of an Assemblies of God church explicitly linked unanswered prayers and the existence of God: "How many humble and totally

> selfless prayers offered up to and ignored by the imaginary skydaddy does it take for the average person to finally throw in the towel and say [God doesn't exist]!!!!" His answer: "Too damn many."

It's so strange to me that people think that the best way to see God interfere is to pray. The way I see God working in my life is when I go home and listen to some debate about the problem of evil, and then the next day some atheist asks me out to lunch to talk about why God allows evil. Maybe instead of doing easy things, we should actually invest in our relationship with God and then see if he responds by giving us work to do. Maybe a relationship with God is about serving him, and the joy is about seeing him reward those efforts by working with us and through us. Maybe God has more for us than just entertainment.

> Still others sought a tangible sign of God's presence. A former Pentecostal exclaimed: "There were many nights while in bed I would ask God to show me the truth, or give me some type of sign to show that he or she existed. These prayers would never be answered. So I would just go on with my life having doubts." Likewise, a former Baptist missionary wrote: "I've begged God to show himself to me and put an end to my inner torture. So far it hasn't happened and the only thing I know for sure is that I have unanswered questions."

I think this paragraph is interesting, since I consider attending church, praying and singing hymns to be useless when compared with practical and difficult things like chastity, apologetics, charity, studying hard things, getting a good job, committing to caring for others who have special needs, etc. If you want to feel the presence of God, then do the right thing and take the punishment for doing it. That's what Christianity is really about. When William Dembski was drummed out of Baylor University for opposing the presupposition of naturalism in the sciences, he experienced God more than all snake-handling, tongue speaking Pentecostals in the history of the universe. Similarly for Michele Bachmann's decision to take in 23 foster children into her home. Christianity is a serious religion, and it is not accessible to superstitious people who reduce it to singing and praying alone. Christianity is about serious people doing serious things. Even reading the Bible is not enough – you need to study the Bible.

The example of Dan Barker

I've actually written about this before in the context of Dan Barker, a charismatic fundamentalist praise hymn singer and writer who expected God to validate all of his irresponsible ministry decisions. Eventually, he fell away from the church because he had this ludicrous Santa Claus caricature of God that didn't match reality. Dan Barker is the complete opposite of everything I consider a manly Christian to be. He is the polar opposite of what I recommend to men when I recommend that they study math, science, engineering and technology, avoid music, singing and dancing, and prefer apologetics and conservative politics over speaking in tongues and apocalyptic fiction. This man, when he was a "Christian", was the complete opposite of the WK Christian man model. However, he is more welcome in most churches than I am, because most Christians reject

my views.

I think that Christians should protect themselves from that by being aware of how emotional experiences and praise hymns warp your view of God. God is a person, and he has a goal for you – to know him. To achieve that goal, it may not be effective to just give you everything you want. It may be the case that God has to allow you to experience some suffering, to increase your character and to bring your goals in line with his character. Children have to grow up, and shielding them from pain and responsibility doesn't allow them to grow up.

In my own case, I have my own disappointment with God, revolving around my chastity while waiting for marriage. But does that cause me to reject God? Hell, no. I just assume that he has something else he wants me to do instead of being married, and I am OK with that. It's part of this relationship that God's goals are important to me. I have to participate and hold up my end of the relationship. When it comes to God's purposes in the world, my happiness and comfort are expendable. That is an appropriate response, I think, to Jesus' own self-sacrificial behavior on the cross. I was born obligated to him, and I am OK with that. It does not bother me.

By the way, I wrote about Part 1 in the series, which was about how the #1 cause of apostasy is lack of apologetics.

UPDATE: Commenter Mbelina adds this much-needed and valid correction:

> You make some very good points.
>
> However, I think you're a bit too dismissive of people's very real pain. Imagine being told by your parent that you should have been aborted. That would mess anyone up. It's not just expecting to get what you want (I have no sympathy for that). It's people struggling intellectually and emotionally with the problem of evil in a very real way.
>
> Moreover, I think you need to realize that a lot of people who believe these rubbish things and have expectations based on a warped reading of scripture got that from a church where they respected the pastor as someone who "knows". There's a lot of bad theology coming from many pulpits and when things don't go well it doesn't stand up to the test of reality. I think churches need to be held accountable for verse-byte culture, trite "answers", and platitudes. People need REAL Christianity, not the prosperity gospel or "seeker sensitive" hogwash.

And she is 100% correct of course.

What I came to realize is that whenever a person was mistreating me like this, that they also were mistreating God. He wasn't the cause of this evil, and he has to let people be free to be evil. It was this that allowed me to make the move from being a victim to being sympathetic with God and then finally being a servant of God. God is at least as upset with evil that happens to me as I am. In fact, that is the message of the cross. Sin was so hated by God the Father that he literally had to send his own Son to atone for it on the cross. One you understand that, then you don't think of human evil as something that

happens to “me” but as something that happens to “we”. And then you feel a lot less like a victim.

Seven ways for the church to get started with Christian apologetics

November 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Apologetics 315.

Summary:

> Looking to get apologetics into your church? (There's a podcast about that.) To get started sometimes all it takes is an idea and the vision to make something happen, even if it is small. In Jonathan Morrow's book *Think Christianly* (interview here) he lists 21 ways for your church to engage at the intersection of faith and culture. Are you ready to look at just seven of them and think about how you might be able to incorporate them into your own church?

Here are the first two to wet your whistle:

1. Briefly mention current events relevant to faith and culture and include a reference to an article or blog for further exploration.
2. Sponsor a debate on the existence of God. Consider partnering with another church to sponsor a live event, or you can show a recent one on a DVD. This will provide opportunities for conversations to occur.

I left this comment on the post:

> I like #1! Wooohooo! I have long trumpeted the value of linking what goes on in church with the real world. Not just apologetics and evidence, but current events.
>
> Here is a story showing how linking math to current events interests young people in math.
>
> Link:
> http://www.buffalo.edu/news/11562
>
> Quote:
> "When families chat about societal issues, they often create simple mathematical models of the events," says Ming Ming Chiu, a professor of learning and instruction at UB's Graduate School of Education with extensive experience studying how children from different cultures and countries learn. "Unlike casual chats, these chats about societal issues can both show the real-life value of mathematics to motivate students and improve their number sense."
>
> The findings, published in the current issue of Social Forces, an international journal of sociology, was the first international study on how conversations among family members affect students' mathematical aptitude and performance in school. Chiu's findings were based on data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; its Program for International Student Assessment

> collected almost 110,000 science test scores and questionnaires from 15-year-olds from 41 countries, including 3,846 from the U.S.
> —-
>
> If it works for math, it should work for Christianity, too. I think so.
>
> That’s one of the reasons why I cover current events relevant to Christianity.

I think that sponsoring Brian Auten would also be a good way to have an impact. He does great work posting all those debates, apologist interviews, lectures and book reviews. I’m sure that he could use the support!

Full video of the CNN Republican primary debate on foreign policy

November 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video is here:

I highly recommend this debate.

What is an EMP attack and what does it mean to our national security?

November 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> [Tuesday] night at The Republican National Security Debate, hosted on CNN by The Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute, an electromagnetic pulse attack (EMP) was mentioned as one of the most important national security issues that is not discussed often. This is true. Despite the gravity of the threat, the United States remains unprotected from the effects of an EMP.
>
> An EMP is a high-intensity burst of electromagnetic energy caused by a rapid acceleration of charged particles. The EMP would disrupt all electronic devices within its zone of impact. It would burn circuits and immobilize electronic components and systems. It addition, the EMP would flow through electricity transmission lines and would damage distribution centers and power lines.
>
> Detonating a singular nuclear weapon at a high altitude can create an EMP large enough to envelop the entire continental United States. The nuclear weapon could be delivered by a long-range ballistic missile from Iran, China, Russia, or North Korea. Even a short-range nuclear-tipped missile launched off of the U.S. shore could cause a devastating EMP effect.
>
> […]The effects of an EMP on today's society would be even more devastating. According to Heritage's James Carafano, "communications would collapse, transportation would halt, and electrical power would simply be nonexistent. Not even a global humanitarian effort would be enough to keep hundreds of millions of Americans from death by starvation, exposure, or lack of medicine."
>
> There are some simple steps that can be taken to prevent against the crippling effects of an EMP attack. First, the U.S. needs to build and adequately fund a robust missile defense system composed of *Aegis* ballistic missile capable ships, and *Aegis Ashore*, the land-based ballistic missile component. Second, both the public and private sectors should harden vital infrastructure to make it more resilient and resistant to the EMP—to hedge against an attack or prepare for a solar flare. Third, the U.S. should develop a national plan to respond to EMP emergencies. This would involve educating federal, state, and local officials along with the public about the risks and response options.

In case you missed the debate, you can watch the whole thing here: (and you should – it was awesome)

For the record, the consensus in the Republican debate was that there were “under-the-radar” threats, in addition to threats from Iran, Pakistan, North Korea, China, etc. These were: 1) Cyber attacks like the recent attacks that originated in China, 2) EMP attacks such as I described above and 3) terrorist attacks coordinated with actors in Latin America and South America that exploit our porous southern border.

Study finds that attitude of gratitude has many health benefits

November 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Harvard Mental Health Newsletter.

Excerpt:

> Two psychologists, Dr. Robert A. Emmons of the University of California, Davis, and Dr. Michael E. McCullough of the University of Miami, have done much of the research on gratitude. In one study, they asked all participants to write a few sentences each week, focusing on particular topics.
>
> One group wrote about things they were grateful for that had occurred during the week. A second group wrote about daily irritations or things that had displeased them, and the third wrote about events that had affected them (with no emphasis on them being positive or negative). After 10 weeks, those who wrote about gratitude were more optimistic and felt better about their lives. Surprisingly, they also exercised more and had fewer visits to physicians than those who focused on sources of aggravation.
>
> Another leading researcher in this field, Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, tested the impact of various positive psychology interventions on 411 people, each compared with a control assignment of writing about early memories. When their week's assignment was to write and personally deliver a letter of gratitude to someone who had never been properly thanked for his or her kindness, participants immediately exhibited a huge increase in happiness scores. This impact was greater than that from any other intervention, with benefits lasting for a month.
>
> Of course, studies such as this one cannot prove cause and effect. But most of the studies published on this topic support an association between gratitude and an individual's well-being.
>
> Other studies have looked at how gratitude can improve relationships. For example, a study of couples found that individuals who took time to express gratitude for their partner not only felt more positive toward the other person but also felt more comfortable expressing concerns about their relationship.
>
> Managers who remember to say "thank you" to people who work for them may find that those employees feel motivated to work harder. Researchers at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania randomly divided university fund-raisers into two groups. One group made phone calls to solicit alumni donations in the same way they always had. The second group — assigned to work on a different day — received a pep talk from the director of annual giving, who told the fund-raisers she was grateful for their efforts. During the following

> week, the university employees who heard her message of gratitude made 50% more fund-raising calls than those who did not.

My editor Mary writes: *There is a health bonus to thankfulness but health isn't why we should be thankful. We should be thankful because we are the recipients of many good things and it is appropriate under such circumstances to express gratitude. It is also the overflow of a heart made happy by the generosity of another.*

To help us be thankful, here is a famous Thanksgiving day proclamation.

Here it is:

> PRESIDENTIAL THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATIONS
>
> 1789-1815 : George Washington, John Adams, James Madison
>
> THANKSGIVING DAY 1789
>
> BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION
>
> Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor – and Whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me "to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."
>
> Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be – That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks – for his kind care and protection of the People of this country previous to their becoming a Nation – for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his providence, which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war –for the great degree of tranquillity, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed – for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.
>
> And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions – to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually – to render our national government a blessing to all the People, by constantly being a government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly

> and faithfully executed and obeyed – to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord – To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and Us – and generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.
>
> Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.
>
> (signed) G. Washington

That’s from George Washington.

Happy Thanksgiving Day!

Should people of faith have a right to disagree with homosexuality?

November 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Ari, a post pleading for people of faith to defend their right to civil disagreement with others on moral questions.

Excerpt:

> In Canada, citizens have been much more successful in getting the government to correct the thoughts of political heretics. Moslem extremists and gay activists seem to be particularly keen in the use of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunals to cleanse Canada from impious speech, thought and action.
>
> Ezra Levant, for instance, is one of my main inspirations for Bias Incident: The World's Most Politically Incorrect Novel. He was hauled before the tribunal for, among other things, republishing the now infamous Danish mohommad cartoons. Pastor Stephen Boisson was fined and forbidden from preaching about the topic of homosexuality by the commission because his views on the subject offended gay activists. (Is my mind playing tricks on me, or am I beginning to notice a pattern here?)
>
> Although homosexual conduct is forbidden by my faith, just as it is forbidden for Christians, I have never heard a rabbi mention the topic in all my years as a congregant. I'm glad of this, because the unequivocal nature of the authentic Jewish teaching about this subject would make for a boring sermon. Better to hear from the pulpit words of inspiration or discussion of issues that are made more interesting by there being some sort of gray area.
>
> There are people who are offended by my opinion. They are offended by my right and the right of my religious teachers to express that opinion, even if they almost always decline that right. They are offended even though homosexual conduct is one of many, many acts that are forbidden by my religion and even though homosexual conduct occupies no special place among the things forbidden by my beloved faith.
>
> I have little doubt that the persecution of Stephen Boisson has had a chilling effect on the speech of Canadian clergy. This has to change. Religious people must act if they are not to lose their rights one piece at a time. They must defy the "enlightened" and "tolerant" forces that would oppose them.
>
> The defiance doesn't have to be hateful. It doesn't have to be over-the-top. The simple, defiant declaration to conclude every sermon in the manner of Cato the Elder will suffice. "Furthermore, I feel it my duty to call your attention to Leviticus 18:22 and Leviticus 20:13," should be all that is necessary to stand up for free speech and to defy the bullies who would use the government to correct

> the thinking of its citizenry.
>
> If enough clergy were to do so, it would be all the harder for Canada to trample on the rights of its citizens.

My secular case against same-sex marriage is here, which shows that you don't need to be religious in order to oppose same-sex marriage.

New video by Yale scientist Alex Tsiaras shows fetal development

November 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mbelina sent me this amazing video, which shows how babies develop from the earliest stages.

This article from Life Site News explains more.

Excerpt:

> Alexander Tsiaras, Chief of Scientific Visualization in the department of Medicine at Yale University, employs new kinds of visualization technologies to view the human body.

> What he has discovered, he says, "just made you marvel."
>
> Using micro-magnetic resonance imaging, Tsiaras tracked the development of the baby from conception to birth.
>
> Tsiaras claims that the developing human body is "so perfectly organized a structure that it was hard not to attribute divinity to it."
>
> "When you actually start working on this data, its pretty spectacular," he said at a conference affiliated with TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design).
>
> In the video viewers see the moment when the egg is inseminated. The baby's first cellular division takes place within 24 hours and divides anew every 12 to 15 hours.
>
> At four weeks, the baby's cells are now developing at one million cells per second.
>
> After 25 days, one can see the heart chamber developing. Within 32 days, arms and legs. At 52 days, the baby's retina, nose, and fingers have developed.
>
> Tsiaras calls the entire process — beginning with two simple cells and resulting in what he says is the "magic of you and me" — an "unbelievable machinery."
>
> "The magic of the mechanisms inside each genetic structure saying exactly where that nerve cell should go — the complexities of these — the mathematical models on how these things are indeed done are beyond human comprehension, even though I am a mathematician."
>
> "It's a mystery, it's magic, it's divinity," says Tsiaras, adding that the complexity of building the human organism within a single system is "beyond any existing mathematics today."

It's important to know what unborn babies look like, especially when having discussions about abortion.

The problem of anti-intellectualism in the church and some solutions

November 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this article from a talented Christian blogger named Eric Chabot while perusing Brian Auten's latest weekly apologetics bonus links. You might want to bookmark his blog if you haven't already. His topic this time is how to remedy the anti-intellectual climate that exists in the church.

Introduction:

> Over the years I have had the opportunity to teach apologetics. Apologetics is the branch of Christian theology that offers reasons for the truthfulness of the Christian position/worldview. Most of the classes I have taught are about 8 weeks long. After the first class I can guarantee that the hands will go up. Several students lament that their local congregation has zero interest in apologetics. When we start to discuss the reasons for problem, one issue that always surfaces is that there is little emphasis on the discipleship of the mind. It is apparant that many in the Church have been taught to that it is more spiritual to be simple-minded. In other words, don't think so hard. God is only pleased by simple faith.

That's tough talk.

And here's an excerpt I really liked:

> It could not be more evident to me that one of the reasons that Christians are discipled into anti-intellectualism is because of poor exegesis.
>
> Let's look at some of the Scriptures that can be misunderstood as speaking against anti-intellectualism:
>
> […]2. Colossians 2:8: "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ." Some have concluded from this passage that Paul is commanding people to avoid secular studies or philosophy. If we look at this passage in context, Paul was dealing with a proto-Gnostic philosophy that was threatening the Colossian church. If Paul had not had a vast understanding of philosophy, he could not have addressed the problem in the Colossian church. It is important to note that Paul quoted pagan philosophers in Acts 17:28.

Some people in the church make a big fuss over this passage, insisting that all thinking is to be discouraged. I find that sort of evasiveness very self-serving since the passage is clearly a warning against *bad* philosophy. One wonders if the people who take this passage as a justification for lazy emotionalism would pass on all food if I told them not to eat the *spoiled* food. One of the best ways to distinguished good philosophy from bad

philosophy is to study philosophy.

More:

> 4. Matthew 18:3-5: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.”
>
> In interpreting this passage, it is important to note that Jesus challenged his followers to be like children morally, not intellectually. Christians are called to exhibit childlikeness in being sensitive to evil and sin, in being humble and contrite in spirit. Jesus contrasts the need for humility with tough-mindness in Matt. 10:16, when He says, ” Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.” (3)

Read the whole thing, send it to your pastor.

By the way, if you would like to read my post on this topic, which I think is *really* worth reading as well, then just click here. Send that to your pastor, too.

Leftist ABA rates record number of Obama judicial appointees “not qualified”

November 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Judicial Watch.

Excerpt:

> President Obama’s quest to transform federal courts by appointing unqualified leftist ideologues is worse than previously imagined, according to a mainstream newspaper that reports the notoriously liberal American Bar Association (ABA) has rejected a “significant number” of potential judicial nominees, most of them minorities and women.
>
> This is hardly earth-shattering news considering Obama’s judicial appointments so far. However, the ABA rebuff sheds light into the magnitude of the president’s crusade to stockpile the federal court system, where judges get lifetime appointments, with like-minded activists. In fact, Obama has made it an official policy to “diversify” the federal bench when it comes to gender, race and even life experiences.
>
> But the White House has agreed not to nominate any candidates deemed unqualified by the ABA, the 400,000-member trade association that provides law school accreditation. Though it claims to be an impartial group of lawyers, the ABA usually takes liberal positions on divisive issues and Democratic/liberal nominees are more likely to receive the group’s highest rating of “well qualified” compared to their Republican/conservative counterparts. This has been documented in various studies, including a recent one conducted by political science departments at three Georgia universities.
>
> With this in mind, one can only imagine how deficient Obama’s rejected candidates really are. Their identities and negative ABA ratings have not been made public, but inside sources tell the paper that broke the story this week that nearly all of the prospects were women or members of a minority group. Nine are reportedly women—five white, two black and two Hispanic—and of the five men one his white, two are black and two are Hispanic.
>
> The number of Obama hopefuls stamped “not qualified” already exceeds the total opposed by the ABA during the eight-year administrations of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, the story points out. That means Obama’s rejection rate is more than triple what it was under either of those previous administrations.

I don’t know for sure, but I expect that the nominees would be people like Obama’s friends: the racist Jeremiah Wright, domestic terrorist Bernadine Dohrn and Marxist Bertha Lewis.

I posted this to highlight another way that electing an unqualified leftist harms the

country. It’s no wonder that companies are shipping jobs overseas – what company would want to run afoul of a judge whose only judicial qualification is being a member of politicized left-wing hate groups?

Should this ad opposing gay activism in Ontario schools be censored?

November 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the ad, from the Institute for Canadian Values.

Brian Lilley, a journalist with Sun News, explains why he opposes censorship of the ad.

Excerpt:

> Michael Erickson, a high school teacher in Toronto and a candidate for the New Democrats in the last federal election has petitioned the board of directors of our parent company Quebecor, the Canadian Broadcaster Standards Council and the Advertising Standards Council over our decision to air an ad that he doesn't like.
>
> The ad, from the Institute for Canadian Values, is against the introduction of the McGuinty government's graphic sex-ed curriculum.
>
> […]Erickson's complaint and his online petition, claim that "This ad promotes intolerance against people who might stand out from traditional male or female gender roles."
>
> I'd disagree with that and I have several times. The ad highlights what was in McGuinty's proposed curriculum and what has been found in existing guides for teachers at the elementary school level.
>
> Is teaching about transgendered issues, gender identity and gender fluidity in grade three a good idea?

Dalton McGuinty thinks that it is a good idea. He is the Liberal premier, and most people in Ontario supported him in the last election, because he loves to spend money buying votes with social programs.

Here's more about the proposed curriculum of the the Liberal party of Ontario.

Excerpt:

> The new curriculum, replacing a previous version from 1998, aligns with the Ministry's campaign to p romote "equity and inclusive education" in Ontario's schools, which includes the advancement of homosexualism and transgenderism. A notable aspect of the curriculum's revision is the attempt to instil a sense that homosexuality and transgenderism are normal.
>
> Under the curriculum, students begin to explore "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" in grade 3, as part of an expectation to appreciate "invisible differences" in others. In grade 5, a student is expected to recognize that "things I cannot control include … personal characteristics such as … my gender identity [and] sexual orientation."
>
> In addition to learning about masturbation in grade 6, the curriculum suggest

> that students can better understand “sexual orientation” by “reading books that describe various types of families and relationships,” including those involving two “mothers” or “fathers.” In grades 7 and 8, “preventing pregnancy and disease,”“gender identity,” and “sexual orientation” become “key topics.”
>
> Grade 7s are expected to be taught about “using condoms consistently if and when a person becomes sexually active.” In grade 8, the use of contraception is a key component of the curriculum, and students are expected to “demonstrate an understanding of gender identity (e.g., male, female, two-spirited, transgendered, transsexual, intersex) and sexual orientation (e.g., heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual).”

More:

> In February, homosexual Liberal MPP Glen Murray, who serves as Minister of Research and Innovation, praised the new revision of the curriculum and said it will be coming soon.
>
> Dubbing opponents of the graphic sex ed program “rightwing reactionary homophobes,” he told Xtra that the main issues that offended parents are already being covered under the current version of the curriculum from 1998.
>
> “I have to tell you, many of the things that offended people are already in the curriculum. We talk about all kinds of families and human sexuality in our elementary schools,” he said.

I am not sure why Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal premier of Ontario, wants to force the gay agenda onto young, impressionable children. But that’s what liberals and leftists believe. Recall that the Liberal party is the socialist party of Canada, and the NDP are the communist party. Is it really surprising that political parties on the secular left are anti-family values? When you vote for left-wing parties, this is what you get.

UPDATE: More here from Brian Lilley. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

The video above was posted by SDAMatt and he notes that the Erickson person is gay. What a surprise!

Which companies discriminate against supporters of traditional marriage?

November 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a video in which Frank Turek explains how he was firfed by Cisco and Bank of America for supporting traditional marriage.

This video got me thinking – which companies would support firing people who support traditional marriage?

The Human Rights Campaign

You may have seen a logo on car bumpers that feature a yellow equal sign on a purple background. That logo is the logo of the Human Rights Campaign, which opposes traditional marriage and believes that children do not deserve to grow up with their biological mother or biological father. They also believe in firing people who support traditional marriage, as we shall see below.

Here is an example of what the Human Rights Campaign does to people who support traditional marriage.

Story from the magazine Down East.

Excerpt:

> Larry Grard admits he had "a lapse in judgment." But Grard – who's been a reporter for thirty-five years, the last eighteen of them at the *Morning Sentinel* in Waterville – says the e-mail he sent from his personal account to a national gay rights group shouldn't have been grounds for his dismissal.
>
> Grard was fired by Bill Thompson, editor of the *Sentinel* and its sister paper the *Kennebec Journal* in Augusta, shortly after the Nov. 3 election in which Maine voters repealed a same-sex marriage law approved by the Legislature. Grard said he arrived at work the morning after the vote to find an e-mailed press release from the Human Rights Campaign in Washington, D.C., that blamed the outcome of the balloting on hatred of gays.
>
> Grard, who said he'd gotten no sleep the night before, used his own e-mail to send a response. "They said the Yes-on-1 people were haters. I'm a Christian. I take offense at that," he said. "I e-mailed them back and said basically, 'We're not the ones doing the hating. You're the ones doing the hating.'
>
> "I sent the same message in his face he sent in mine."
>
> Grard thought his response was anonymous, but it turned out to be anything but. One week later, he was summoned to Thompson's office. He was told that Trevor Thomas, deputy communications director of the Human Rights Campaign, had Googled his name, discovered he was a reporter, and was demanding Grard be fired. According to Grard, Thompson said, "There's no wiggle room."

> He was immediately dismissed.
>
> […]The week after Grard was fired, he said, his wife, Lisa, who wrote a biweekly food column for the *Sentinel* as a freelancer, received an e-mail informing her that her work would no longer be needed.

That's what the Human Rights Campaign does.

Companies that support the Human Rights Campaign

I found a list of companies on the Human Rights Campaign web site that are also strongly oppose traditional marriage. Presumably, these are the companies that would fire people who support a child's right to grow up with a mother and a father.

Platinum Partners:

- American Airlines
- Citi
- Microsoft
- Nationwide Insurance
- VPI Pet Insurance

Gold Partners:

- **Bank of America**
- Deloitte
- Ernst & Young LLP
- Lexus
- Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams
- Prudential

Silver Partners:

- Beaulieu Vineyard
- BP
- Caesars Entertainment
- Chevron
- Google
- MGM Mirage
- Nike

Bronze Partners:

- Chase
- Cox Enterprises
- Cunard
- Dell
- Goldman Sachs

- IBM
- Macy’s Inc.
- MetLife
- Morgan Stanley
- Orbitz
- Paul Hastings
- PwC
- Replacements, Ltd.
- Shell
- Starbucks
- TD Bank
- Tylenol PM

And you can find the full listing of companies that promote discrimination against traditional marriage on the Human Rights Campaign web site. I notice that they have about 1 million people who like them on Facebook and 85 thousand Twitter followers. Comments to this post will be strictly moderated in light of Obama’s signing of the hate crimes bill which prohibits free speech on controversial issues.

Liberal media silent as ESCR pioneer Geron halts ESCR research

November 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story from CBS News.

Excerpt:

> The company doing the first government-approved test of embryonic stem cell therapy is discontinuing further stem cell work, a move with stark implications for a field offering hope of future medicines for conditions with inadequate or no current treatments.
>
> Geron Corp., a pioneer in stem cell research that has been testing a spinal cord injury treatment, said late Monday that it's halting development of its stem cell programs to conserve funds. It is seeking partners to take on the programs' assets and is laying off much of its staff.
>
> […]The company is eliminating 66 full-time jobs, or 38 percent of its staff, a process that will bring about $8 million in costs— about $5 million in the current quarter and about $3 million in the first half of 2012.

Now consider this article in the Weekly Standard by Wesley J. Smith. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> For years, the media touted the promise of embryonic stem cells. Year after year, Geron Corporation announced that its embryonic stem cell treatment for acute spinal cord injury would receive FDA approval "next year" for human testing. And year after year, the media dutifully informed readers and viewers that cures were imminent. When the FDA finally did approve a tiny human trial for 10 patients in January 2009, the news exploded around the world. This was it: The era of embryonic stem cell therapy had arrived!
>
> Not exactly. Last week, Geron issued a terse statement announcing it was not only canceling the study, but abandoning the embryonic stem cell field altogether for financial reasons.
>
> You would think Geron's failure would be very big news. Instead, it turns out that the mainstream media pay attention only when embryonic stem cell research seems to be succeeding—so far, almost exclusively in animal studies. When, as here, it crashes and burns, it is scarcely news at all.
>
> [M]ost of the same news outlets that gave Geron star treatment when it was heralding supposed breakthroughs provided only muted coverage of the company's retreat into producing anti-cancer drugs.
>
> The *Los Angeles Times* may be the most egregious offender. A chronic booster of Geron's embryonic stem cell research, it reported the FDA's approval of a human

> trial on January 24, 2009, in a story that began, “Ushering in a new era in medicine . . . ” The paper stayed on the story. In October 2010, it reported that the first patient had received an injection, then a few days later it ran a feature about the study under the headline “Hope for Spinal Cord Patients.” During the same period, however, the paper did not report the encouraging results of early human trials of treatments for spinal cord injury developed using adult stem cells.
>
> Then last May, the *Times* celebrated the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine’s $25 million loan to support Geron’s study, noting that the company’s stem cell product had performed as hoped in rat -studies. Yet the day after Geron’s embryonic stem cell research unit was laid off, the *Times* couldn’t find the space to print the story, though the following day a blog entry ran on the *Times* website.

The vast majority (all?) of medical successes with stem cell research have come from ethical adult stem-cell research. Adult stem cell research does not kill unborn children. And that’s why it doesn’t draw funding from pro-abortion politicians or get positive coverage by pro-abortion media outlets. The politics is driving the science – just like with global warming research and alternative energy funding.

Related posts

- Doctors grow new trachea from patient’s own adult stem cells
- Adult stem cells used to grow a new heart
- CBS News discovers that adult stem cells produce more treatments
- Adult stem cells used to restore sight to patients blinded by chemical burns
- British boy becomes first in the world to have stem cell transplant
- ABC News reports on how adult stem cells produce innovative cures today
- Round up of articles on adult stem-cell research from FRC
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama’s plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

Bank run in socialist Europe begins

November 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Europe: Annual Budget Deficit as % of GDP
From CNBC.

Excerpt:

> **Money-market funds** in the United States have quite dramatically slammed shut their lending windows to European banks. According to the Economist, Fitch estimates U.S. money market funds have withdrawn 42 percent of their money from European banks in general.
>
> And for France that number is even higher — 69 percent. European money-market funds are also getting in on the act.
>
> Bond issuance by banks has seized up because buyers have gone on strike.
>
> From the Economist's **Free Exchange Blog**:
>
> In the third quarter bonds issues by European banks only reached 15 percent of the amount they raised over the same period in the past two years, reckon analysts at Citi Group. It is unlikely that European banks have sold many more bonds since.
>
> Corporate depositors are also pulling their cash.
>
> **Free Exchange**:
>
> "We are starting to witness signs that corporates are withdrawing deposits from banks in Spain, Italy, France and Belgium," an analyst at Citi Group wrote in a recent report. "This is a worrying development."
>
> And there are troubling signs that banks are even running out of collateral to back their borrowings from the **European Central Bank** .
>
> So far the liquidity of the European Central Bank (ECB) has kept the system alive.

> Only one large European bank, Dexia, has collapsed because of a funding shortage. Yet what happens if banks run out of collateral to borrow against?

And from the leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> The flight from European sovereign debt and banks has spanned the globe. European institutions like the Royal Bank of Scotland and pension funds in the Netherlands have been heavy sellers in recent days. And earlier this month, Kokusai Asset Management in Japan unloaded nearly $1 billion in Italian debt.
>
> At the same time, American institutions are pulling back on loans to even the sturdiest banks in Europe. When a $300 million certificate of deposit held by Vanguard's $114 billion Prime Money Market Fund from Rabobank in the Netherlands came due on Nov. 9, Vanguard decided to let the loan expire and move the money out of Europe. Rabobank enjoys a AAA-credit rating and is considered one of the strongest banks in the world.
>
> American money market funds, long a key supplier of dollars to European banks through short-term loans, have also become nervous. Fund managers have cut their holdings of notes issued by euro zone banks by $261 billion from around its peak in May, a 54 percent drop, according to JPMorgan Chase research.

This is really disturbing. I wonder if any of my economics-minded commenters can explain to me what happens when there is a run on banks. I am guessing that there will be some rioting over benefits as austerity measures are imposed, and interest rates will go up.

Climategate 2.0: Leaked e-mails show scientists intended to deceive public

November 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Telegraph's James Delingpole writes in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Last week, 5,000 files of private email correspondence among several of the world's top climate scientists were anonymously leaked onto the Internet. Like the first "climategate" leak of 2009, the latest release shows top scientists in the field fudging data, conspiring to bully and silence opponents, and displaying far less certainty about the reliability of anthropogenic global warming theory in private than they ever admit in public.
>
> The scientists include men like Michael Mann of Penn State University and Phil Jones of the University of East Anglia, both of whose reports inform what President Obama has called "the gold standard" of international climate science, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
>
> […][A]t least one scientist involved—Mr. Mann—has confirmed that the emails are genuine, as were the first batch released two years ago.
>
> […]Consider an email written by Mr. Mann in August 2007. "I have been talking w/ folks in the states about finding an investigative journalist to investigate and expose McIntyre, and his thus far unexplored connections with fossil fuel interests. Perhaps the same needs to be done w/ this Keenan guy." Doug Keenan is a skeptic and gadfly of the climate-change establishment. Steve McIntyre is the tenacious Canadian ex-mining engineer whose dogged research helped expose flaws in Mr. Mann's "hockey stick" graph of global temperatures.
>
> One can understand Mr. Mann's irritation. His hockey stick, which purported to demonstrate the link between man-made carbon emissions and catastrophic global warming, was the central pillar of the IPCC's 2001 Third Assessment Report, and it brought him near-legendary status in his community. Naturally he wanted to put Mr. McIntyre in his place.
>
> The sensible way to do so is to prove Mr. McIntyre wrong using facts and evidence and improved data. Instead the email reveals Mr. Mann casting about for a way to smear him. If the case for man-made global warming is really as strong as the so-called consensus claims it is, why do the climategate emails show scientists attempting to stamp out dissenting points of view? Why must they manipulate data, such as Mr. Jones's infamous effort (revealed in the first batch of climategate emails) to "hide the decline," deliberately concealing an inconvenient divergence, post-1960, between real-world, observed temperature data and scientists' preferred proxies derived from analyzing tree rings?

What I can't believe is that we've spent billions of dollars funding myths. They lied because they were being paid by the government to lie. The government wanted a crisis that would require more government control over businesses and consumers. And the scientists found that evidence in their "research", because that's what the government was paying them to do.

Related stories

- NASA admits that their data is worse than CRU Climate-gate data
- 19 points that undermine the claims of global warming alarmists
- UN IPCC global warming alarmism based on student essay and magazine article
- How the UN's IPCC cites non-scientific claims from the World Wildlife Fund
- Chairman of UN's IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Britain to be hit by coldest winter in 100 years
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal
- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline
- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now

Can naturalism account for the origin of the 20 amino acids in living systems?

November 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The origin of life

There are two problems related to the origin of the first living cell, on atheism:

1. The problem of getting the building blocks needed to create life – i.e. the amino acids
2. The problem of creating the functional sequences of amino acids and proteins that can support the minimal operations of a simple living cell

Normally, I concede the first problem and grant the atheist all the building blocks he needs. This is because step 2 is impossible. There is no way, on atheism, to form the sequences of amino acids that will fold up into proteins, and then to form the sequences of proteins that can be used to form everything else in the cell, including the DNA itself. But that's tomorrow's topic.

Today, let's take a look at the problems with step 1.

The problem of getting the building blocks of life

Now you may have heard that some scientists managed to spark some gasses to generate most of the 20 amino acids found in living systems. These experiments are called the "Miller-Urey" experiments.

The IDEA center has a nice summary of origin-of-life research that explains a few of the main problems with step 1.

Miler and Urey used the wrong gasses:

> Miller's experiment requires a reducing methane and ammonia atmosphere,[11, 12] however geochemical evidence says the atmosphere was hydrogen, water, and carbon dioxide (non-reducing).[15, 16] The only amino acid produced in a such an atmosphere is glycine (and only when the hydrogen content is unreasonably high), and could not form the necessary building blocks of life.[11]

Miller and Urey didn't account for UV of molecular instability:

> Not only would UV radiation destroy any molecules that were made, but their own short lifespans would also greatly limit their numbers. For example, at 100ºC (boiling point of water), the half lives of the nucleic acids Adenine and Guanine are 1 year, uracil is 12 years, and cytozine is 19 days[20] (nucleic acids and other important proteins such as chlorophyll and hemoglobin have never been synthesized in origin-of-life type experiments[19]).

Miller and Urey didn't account for molecular oxygen:

> We all have know ozone in the upper atmosphere protects life from harmful UV radiation. However, ozone is composed of oxygen which is the very gas that Stanley Miller-type experiments avoided, for it prevents the synthesis of organic molecules like the ones obtained from the experiments! Pre-biotic synthesis is in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. The chemistry does not work if there is oxygen because the atmosphere would be non-reducing, but if there is no UV-light-blocking oxygen (i.e. ozone – O_3) in the atmosphere, the amino acids would be quickly destroyed by extremely high amounts of UV light (which would have been 100 times stronger than today on the early earth).[20, 21, 22] This radiation could destroy methane within a few tens of years,[23] and atmospheric ammonia within 30,000 years.[15]

And there were three other problems too:

> At best the processes would likely create a dilute "thin soup,"[24] destroyed by meteorite impacts every 10 million years.[20, 25] This severely limits the time available to create pre-biotic chemicals and allow for the OOL.

> Chemically speaking, life uses only "left-handed" ("L") amino acids and "right-handed" ("R)" genetic molecules. This is called "chirality," and any account of the origin of life must somehow explain the origin of chirality. Nearly all chemical reactions produce "racemic" mixtures–mixtures with products that are 50% L and 50% R.

Two more problems are not mentioned in the article. A non-peptide bond anywhere in the chain will ruin the chain. You need around 200 amino acids to make a protein. If any of the bonds is not a peptide bond, the chain will not work in a living system. Additionally, the article does not mention the need for the experimenter to *intervene* in order to prevent interfering cross-reactions that would prevent the amino acids from forming.

Usually when you hear the origin of life debated, they sort of skirt about the problem of where the amino acids come from, but there is no reason not to make that an issue. The naturalist has to explain how the first living cell could come about *naturalistically.*

Further study

One of my favorite resources on the origin of life is this interview from the University of California with former atheist and origin of life researcher Dean Kenyon. Kenyon, a professor of Biology at San Francisco State University, wrote the textbook on "chemical evolution", which is the view that chemicals can arrange themselves in order to create the first living cell, without intervention.

This interview from the University of California with another origin of life researcher, Charles Thaxton, is also one of my favorites.

You'll need Quicktime to see the videos, or buy the videos from ARN. (Kenyon, Thaxton) I have both of them – they rock!

Do men commit domestic violence and child abuse more than women?

November 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Before we look at the statistics, here's a news story about the issue.

Excerpt:

> Police say a man was struck and killed by his girlfriend after a heated argument in the Grays Ferry section of Philadelphia.
>
> At approximately 1:52 a.m., police received a call concerning the incident at Morris and Ringgold streets.
>
> Upon arrival, officers observed the male victim, identified as 28-year-old Tyrone Taylor, lying against the wall with a woman standing next him.
>
> The woman, 30-year-old Keisha Jones, identified herself as Taylor's girlfriend and stated to the officers that she struck him with the vehicle.
>
> Medics were called to the scene and pronounced Taylor, who was pinned against a home, dead.
>
> Police say Taylor and Jones were involved in a verbal altercation which continued inside the vehicle.
>
> Taylor was driving the vehicle at the time of the altercation; he then stopped and exited the vehicle at 2400 Morris Street.
>
> After Taylor exited the vehicle, Jones told police she jumped in the driver's seat and struck him.
>
> The investigation continues and charges are pending.

Now let's see the numbers.

What do the government studies say?

First of all, let's see what's happening with domestic violence rates in the UK.

Excerpt:

> Data from Home Office statistical bulletins and the British Crime Survey show that men made up about 40% of domestic violence victims each year between 2004-05 and 2008-09, the last year for which figures are available. In 2006-07 men made up 43.4% of all those who had suffered partner abuse in the previous year, which rose to 45.5% in 2007-08 but fell to 37.7% in 2008-09.
>
> Similar or slightly larger numbers of men were subjected to severe force in an incident with their partner, according to the same documents. The figure stood at 48.6% in 2006-07, 48.3% the next year and 37.5% in 2008-09, Home Office statistics show.
>
> The 2008-09 bulletin states: "More than one in four women (28%) and around

> one in six men (16%) had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16. These figures are equivalent to an estimated 4.5 million female victims of domestic abuse and 2.6 million male victims."
>
> In addition, "6% of women and 4% of men reported having experienced domestic abuse in the past year, equivalent to an estimated one million female victims of domestic abuse and 600,000 male victims".

And you see similar results in Canada.

Canada numbers:

> An estimated 7% of women and 6% of men in a current or previous spousal relationship encountered spousal violence during the five years up to and including 2004, according to a comprehensive new report on family violence.

So it's pretty even. Women are about as likely to commit violence as men are. And in lesbian relationships, the rate of domestic violence is extremely high, from 17% to 45%, depending on the study. I think in general, women are more violent when there is no man present, because they have more difficulty restraining their emotions and resolving disagreements with rational arguments instead of fist, feet and weapons.

You also see higher rates of violence by mothers against their own children, than with fathers. Mothers are more than twice as likely to abuse children as fathers. Biological fathers are programmed to protect children – it's the stepfathers and live-in boyfriends who harm children.

So it's not clear to me at all that men are the only ones who engage in violence and abuse. And we haven't even talked about verbal abuse. I would imagine that women have a huge edge in that department.

A recent study

And things are not getting better. Consider this recent study on domestic violence. It surveyed 2,500 students at the University of Florida.

Excerpt:

> Women are more likely than men to stalk, attack and psychologically abuse their partners, according to a University of Florida study that finds college women have a new view of the dating scene.
>
> "We're seeing women in relationships acting differently nowadays than we have in the past," said Angela Gover, a UF criminologist who led the research. "The nature of criminality has been changing for females, and this change is reflected in intimate relationships as well."
>
> In a survey of 2,500 students at UF and the University of South Carolina between August and December 2005, more than a quarter (29 percent) reported physically assaulting their dates and 22 percent reported being the victims of attacks during the past year. Thirty-two percent of women reported being the perpetrators of this violence, compared with 24 percent of men. The students

> took selected liberal arts and sciences courses. Forty percent were men and 60 percent were women, reflecting the gender composition of these classes.
>
> In a separate survey of 1,490 UF students, one quarter (25 percent) said they had been stalked during the past year and 7 percent reported engaging in stalking, of whom a majority (58 percent) were female.

Strangely enough, though, there is no Violence Against Men Act – just a Violence Against Women Act. And virtually no government funding goes to men's shelters – it's all for women. How can that be? And what incentives does this inequality create for men to either marry or not marry? When you put that together with the leniency shown to women who commit violence, it really starts to push marriage-minded men away from marriage.

Excerpt:

> The Federal criminal sentencing guidelines struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2005 required that males and females who commit the same crime and have the same prior criminal record be sentenced equally. Using data obtained from the United States Sentencing Commission's records, we examine whether there exists any gender-based bias in criminal sentencing decisions. We treat months in prison as a censored variable in order to account for the frequent outcome of no prison time. Additionally, we control for the self-selection of the defendant into guilty pleas through use of an endogenous switching regression model. A new decomposition methodology is employed. Our results indicate that women receive more lenient sentences even after controlling for circumstances such as the severity of the offense and past criminal history.

Finally, I want to point out that the out-of-wedlock birth rate is increasing, and that means more children raised without fathers. But children raised in fatherless homes are more likely to be violent. I expect the rate of violence among women to increase as more of them are raised without fathers. Fathers restrain the emotions of their wives and daughters – they act as a stabilizing influence. Even boys raised without fathers are more likely to be violent and to have run-ins with the police. You can't replace a father with a welfare check from the government.

Canada’s economic boom: low tariffs, low corporate tax and more oil drilling

November 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper
From Canoe.

Excerpt:

> Finance Minister Jim Flaherty announced Sunday the government will scrap 70 tariff items to save Canadian businesses about $32 million a year.
>
> “This builds on our government’s commitment in Budget 2010 to make Canada a tariff-free zone for industrial manufacturers,” Flaherty said in a statement. “By lowering costs for these businesses, we are enhancing their ability to compete in domestic and foreign markets and helping them invest and create jobs here at home.”
>
> Various sectors — including food processing, apparel, electrical equipment and furniture — will benefit from the move.
>
> The Conservatives had previously eliminated the duty on imported machinery and equipment in an attempt to make Canada a tariff-free zone for industrial manufacturers by 2015.
>
> **The Tories say that since 2009 they have eliminated more than 1,800 tariff items and have provided more than $435 million in annual tariff relief to Canadian businesses.**

According to the leftist CTV news, Canada also has lower corporate taxes.

Excerpt:

> **The study released Wednesday by KPMG International found Canada's corporate tax rate has dropped by more than 16 per cent over the last 11 years.**
>
> Canadian companies are actually paying less than their American counterparts.
>
> On average, Canadian companies pay 28 per cent of their income in federal and provincial tax, well below the 40 per cent paid by American companies.
>
> But Canada's corporate tax rate is higher than Europe's 20 per cent and the OECD average of 26 per cent.
>
> Canadian corporate taxes fell three per cent in 2011, from 31 per cent in 2010.
>
> "Canada's corporate tax rate falls around the middle of the pack among the OECD countries," said Elio Luongo, KPMG's Canadian Managing Partner for Tax.
>
> **"But Canada's general corporate tax rate is anticipated to continue to fall in 2012, when the federal tax rate will be 15 per cent, versus 16.5 per cent in 2011."**

I've written before about how Democrats oppose the job creation that would occur if the United States developed energy in Alaska, the Gulf of Mexico and the Ohio shale. Additionally, Obama has also opposed building the Keystone XL pipeline, which would have created 20,000 jobs paid for by a Canadian company. But Canada has no problems with developing their own energy resources, because their government operates independently of the environmentalist left.

Excerpt:

> As world leaders gather in South Africa to discuss climate change this week and next, Canada's environment minister says he plans to defend Alberta's oilsands and is willing to argue they are an "ethical" and reliable energy source.
>
> **Heading into the 17th Conference of the Parties meeting, Environment Minister Peter Kent says he will not sign on to any deals that mandate some countries reduce greenhouse gas emissions while others don't — as his government argues was the case under the Kyoto Protocol.** He is also unequivocal in his defence of northern Alberta's bitumen production, a position he expects will be supported by Alberta Environment Minister Diana McQueen when she joins him at the end of the week.
>
> "We still need to — and the industry needs to and our provincial partners need to — be aggressive in ensuring international friends and neighbours and customers recognize Alberta's heavy oil is no different from heavy oil produced in any number of other countries which don't receive nearly the negative attention or criticism," he says. "It is a legitimate resource."
>
> Kent has made headlines in the last year by arguing that Alberta's oil is "ethical."
>
> "We talk about this on quite a regular basis," Kent says. "I think it's important we correct where we find … misunderstanding, misinformation or deliberate

> ignorance to demonize, to criticize and to attempt … to create a boycott."
>
> In January, on his second day as environment minister, Kent referred to Alberta's oilsands product as "ethical oil" during an interview with a newspaper reporter.
>
> Reports immediately linked Kent's comments to the title of conservative activist Ezra Levant's recent book, *Ethical Oil: The Case for Canada's Oil Sands*.
>
> The book essentially compares Canada's human rights record to those of other oil-producing countries, and argues Canada's "ethical oil" is preferable to "conflict oil" produced in countries with poor human rights records, such as Sudan, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia or Iran. The argument removes environmental issues, such as greenhouse gas emissions, from the equation, though Levant notes Alberta's data on environmental issues is more transparent than information shared by other countries.

So in total I've presented three reasons why the Canadian economy is booming, while the American economy is stuck in neutral. Obama opposes free trade, lower corporate taxes and domestic energy production. When you elect a socialist lawyer, you get a Greece/Spain economy. When you elect a capitalist economist, you get Canada's booming economy, and consequently, a lower unemployment rate. Recall that our recession began exactly when we elected Nancy Pelosi to the House leadership and Harry Reid to the Senate leadership in 2007. Democrats wreck economies. There is no reason why America cannot be more prosperous than Canada, but we have to not elect an abject buffoons as our leaders.

Are evangelical Christians less interested in religious liberty than Catholics?

November 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From First Things.

Excerpt:

> The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has responded vigorously to the restrictive and unworkable "conscience regulations" being imposed on health care providers by the Obama Administration's Health and Human Services (HHS) Department. The Catholic Archdiocese for Military Service has said "no" to allowing priests in the Armed Forces perform homosexual "weddings," now that the historic prohibition on homosexuals in the military has been lifted. And most recently, eighteen Catholic colleges and universities banded together and, through the Alliance Defense Fund, submitted comments to HHS citing a violation of religious freedom regarding the interim final rules on preventative services.
>
> We applaud the efforts of America's Catholic leadership in defense of religious liberty. But we do so with a certain measure of consternation. As Evangelical Protestants, we wonder: Why is organized Evangelicalism so silent?
>
> Where is the National Association of Evangelicals?
>
> Where is the (Evangelical) Council for Christian Colleges and Universities?
>
> Where are the editorials and feature articles in Evangelical publications?
>
> At a time when our religious liberty is being eroded by an Administration that insists on forcing its anti-Christian policies on American public life, why are so many of our leaders shuffling their feet and staring at the ground?
>
> […]Every Christian school in the nation that offers insurance to its employees or students will be affected by the 2010 health care law—as schools like the University of Dallas, Franciscan University of Steubenville, and Ave Maria University immediately recognized. While Evangelicalism does not have specific teachings on contraception in the way that the Catholic Church does, no Christian organization in the United States should be comfortable with the requirement that insurance must cover abortions. Since that is the intention of the Obama administration, why are Evangelical Protestant colleges and universities, and Evangelical leaders generally, not speaking out? Why are they not joining with Catholic leaders and institutions in opposition to these anti-religious liberty measures?

I try to talk about these issues on my blog, but I agree that evangelicals are disengaged. Evangelicals are the most conservative voters, but we have to do more than vote Republican. We have to think about these issues between elections. We have to vote in primaries. We have to knock on doors. We have to write blog posts and editorials. We

have to get advanced degrees. We have to get involved in the debate. It’s not enough to have the right opinion, we have to be convincing.

A closer look at Obama's three-point plan to create American jobs

November 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

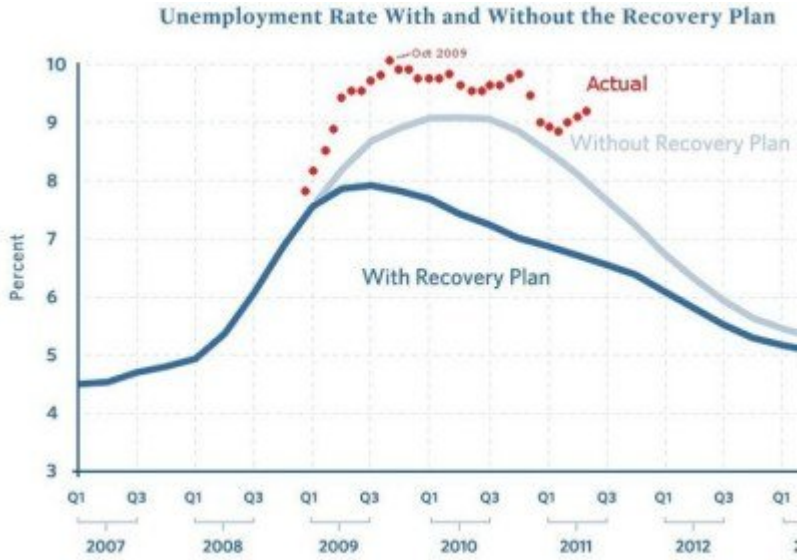

Democrats take over the House and Senate in January 2007
The Heritage Foundation outlines three of Obama's job creation plans.

Excerpt:

> This week, President Obama is again set to make a pitch for his latest plan to stimulate the economy, but meanwhile he is turning his back on projects that would put tens or even hundreds of thousands of Americans to work. And he's doing it all to appease his left-wing, environmentalist base at the expense of domestic energy production.
>
> Heritage's Rob Bluey reported last week on a new finding by a New Orleans-based group that the Obama administration is approving just 35 percent of the oil drilling plans for the Gulf of Mexico so far this year. It is also taking an average of 115 days — nearly four months — to secure approval from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement. Those numbers are a sharp drop from previous years, well below the historical average 73.4 percent approval rate and 61 days it takes to approve plans. And for plans that require drilling activity, the numbers are even worse with an average approval time of 222 days.
>
> That's bad news for job creation. One deepwater rig alone can create 700 jobs locally. But slowing down oil drilling in the Gulf isn't the only way the President is blocking jobs. Earlier this month, the Obama Administration announced it would delay the construction of the $7 billion Keystone XL pipeline that would bring in more than 700,000 barrels of oil per day from Alberta, Canada, to the Texas Gulf coast–and could have produced upwards of 20,000 jobs. Heritage's Nicolas Loris explains the impact:

> What this delay really means is that President Obama is putting off an important election year decision in which two of his largest supporters–labor unions and environmentalists–are split on the issue. This tactic allows the decision to be delayed until after the 2012 elections.
>
> More importantly, this means a delay in access to easy imports from our northern neighbor, the creation of thousands of jobs, and the generation of revenue for the states where the pipeline passes. Montana, South Dakota, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and Texas are collectively projected to collect $5.2 billion in property tax revenue as a result of building the pipeline.
>
> As if that weren't enough, the White House made another decision blocking energy-related jobs in the United States. In mid-November, the Obama Administration delayed a mineral lease sale in Ohio's Wayne National Forest for oil and gas drilling. Apart for providing Americans access to affordable energy, the project could have had a tremendous impact in the state, including the creation of an estimated 200,000 jobs, an overall wage and personal-income boost of $12 billion by 2015, and a billion-dollar boon to Ohio landowners, schools, businesses, and communities.

So Obama has three plans to create more American jobs:

1. Block drilling in the Gulf of Mexico
2. Block the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline
3. Block drilling for oil and gas in Ohio

I don't think Obama's three job creation plans are working.

Maybe he just just do the opposite: 1) more drilling in the Gulf, 2) build the Keystone XL pipeline, and 3) allow development of the Ohio oil shale. And while he's at it, 4) drill for oil in Alaska. That would create real jobs.

Is Luke 10:13 more of problem for Calvinists or Molinists?

November 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Calvinism is the view that God decides whether you go to Heaven or Hell and nothing that you do affects where you end up. If God wants to save you, then he will, and you can't resist it. If God wants to damn you, then he will, and you can't resist that. God saves some people and not others, but not based on anything that the people themselves do. God does not want everyone to be saved.

Molinism is the view that God draws people to him, and they can resist his drawing, just like in any ordinary love relationship where the beloved is not drawn against his or her will. On Molinism, God also places people in the best time and place for them to respond to him, depending on what evidence they need. He can do this because he knows how people respond in any set of circumstances. If people go to Hell, then the people are responsible, on Molinism. But God wants everyone to be saved, but not against their will. God actualizes a world in which he is sovereign over everything that happens, and gets the outcome that he wants, but without violating free will.

So here's a verse that I think is troubling to both sides, Luke 10:13:

[13] "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

This verse is a problem for Molinists, because if the people in these cities *would have* repented if they got better miracles, then why didn't they get the better miracles they needed? If God loves them, then why didn't he give them better miracles?

And this verse is a problem for Calvinists, because it shows that people do have free will to respond to evidence that God allows them to see. Why would evidence matter on Calvinism, since God can just flip the person's switch (or not). If God wanted those people to repent, he could just do it without having to care about evidence, since he is the one who decides whether they believe in him or not, totally apart from their free will.

Richard Epstein explains why economic inequality is required in order to promote innovation

November 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Matt, who blogs at The Conscience of a Young Conservative, posted this on Facebook.

Epstein explains how the profit motive creates economic value that raises the standard of living of all people, who are able to exchange their money for valuable products and services that they did not create. He explains how wealth redistribution is wasteful and harmful to economic growth.

(Found here)

Now let's look at some myths that Christians believe about economics.

We need to understand basic economics

Christian philosopher Jay Richards explains basic economics.

Excerpt:

> **THE ZERO-SUM GAME MYTH.**
>
> There are three kinds of games: win-lose, lose-lose, and win-win. Win-lose games, like basketball, are sometimes called "zero-sum games." When the Celtics and the Bulls compete, if the Celtics are up, then the Bulls are down, and vice versa. The scales balance. It's a zero-sum.
>
> Besides lose-lose games, which most of us avoid, there are positive-sum, or win-win, games. In these games, some players may end up better off than others, but everyone ends up at least the same if not better off than they were at the beginning.
>
> Millions of people think that the free trade in capitalism is a dog-eat-dog competition, where winners always create losers. This is the zero-sum game myth, which leads many to think that the government should somehow redistribute wealth. While some competition is a part of *any* economy, of course, an exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game. When I pay my barber $18 for a haircut, I value the haircut more than the $18. My barber values the $18 more than the time and effort it took her to cut my hair. We're both better off. Win-win.
>
> **THE MATERIALIST MYTH.**
>
> A similar myth leads people to think of the economy as some fixed amount of material stuff—money in safes or gold bars in a vault. Since two firms competing for one customer can't both get the customer's money, we might think the whole economy looks that way: wealth itself isn't created, it's merely transferred from one party to another.

> A common image of this "Materialist Myth" is a pie. If one person gets too big a slice, someone else will get just a sliver. To serve it fairly, you have to slice equal pieces.
>
> This isn't how a free economy works, however. Over the long run, the total amount of wealth in free economies *grows*. We can create wealth that wasn't there before. The "pie" doesn't stay the same size. Under capitalism, someone can get wealthy not merely by having someone else's wealth transferred to his account, but by creating new wealth, not only for himself, but for others as well.
>
> **THE GREED MYTH.**
>
> Friends and foes of capitalism often claim that it is based on greed. Writer Ayn Rand even claimed that selfishness is a virtue (see the accompanying feature article). But greed is one of the seven deadly sins. If capitalism is based on it, then Christians can't be capitalists.
>
> In truth, Adam Smith and other capitalist thinkers did not believe this "Greed Myth." Rather, Smith argued that capitalism, unlike static economies, channels even greedy motives into socially beneficial outcomes. "In spite of their natural selfishness and rapacity," Smith wrote, business people "are led by an invisible hand…and thus without intending it, without knowing it, advance the interest of the society."[3]
>
> Rather than inspire miserliness, capitalism encourages enterprise. Entrepreneurs, including greedy ones, succeed by delaying their own gratification, by investing their wealth in creative but risky ventures that may or may not pan out. Before they ever profit, they must first create.
>
> In a fallen world, we should want an economic system that not only channels greed into productive purposes, but unleashes human ingenuity, creativity, and willingness to risk as well.

I think Christians who don't understand economics really need to make the effort to understand the basics. I recommend Robert Murphy's "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism" and Thomas Sowell's "Basic Economics". If you want to see how economics works together with Christianity, then you also want Jay Richards "Money, Greed and God" and Wayne Grudem's "Politics According to the Bible".

Cain accuser Ginger White was found guilty of libeling former business partner

November 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Herman Cain Accuser Ginger White - Another Nutcase

From ABC News. (H/T Richard M.)

Excerpt:

> The female bodybuilder who once ran a bicycle business with latest Herman Cain accuser Ginger White says the Atlanta woman never mentioned the Republican presidential candidate, who she says was her lover for 13 years.
>
> "His name has never come up," said Kimberly Vay, who told ABC News that she and White were former business partners.
>
> But Vay, who filed and won a libel lawsuit against White, refused to comment directly when asked whether she considers White's accusations about Cain credible. "When you see the details of my lawsuit," said Vay, "they will speak for themselves." She then referred ABC News to her attorney.
>
> According to Vay's suit, which was filed in June 2011, White and Vay were partners in a fitness coaching business called No Limit Cycling, and held spinning classes inside the Martin Luther King Recreation Center, which is owned by the City of Atlanta. In November 2010, claimed Vay, White asked to end their partnership, with White continuing to operate No Limit Cycling, and Vay agreed.
>
> On December 9, according to the complaint, White sent a "defamatory" note to a master email list of the company's clients and to city officials. The email said that White's business had "come tumbling down [on] the day I invited Kim Vay into my life and my business" and that Vay had turned her "dream" into a "nightmare." According to the complaint, the email alleged that Vay, a competitive bodybuilder, injected veterinary drugs into her system prior to

> contests," and also said that Vay preferred to date black men but had made derogatory comments about black women's hair.
>
> Vay's complaint termed the allegation about drug use "false, malicious, defamatory" and "reckless," and therefore libelous.
>
> Both women retained attorneys, according to Vay's account, and reached an out-of-court settlement in April 2011. In June, Vay filed suit, claiming that White had failed to live up to the settlement and that she was entitled to sue for libel. Vay's attorney Kurt Martin told ABC News that White had failed to honor the financial agreement that had settled the case.

Here's a bit more about Ginger White from the NY Daily News.

Excerpt:

> The Atlanta woman who says she was Herman Cain's mistress for 13 years is a down-on-her-luck single mom who once sued a former employer for sexual harassment.
>
> Ginger White surfaced in bombshell fashion on Monday, telling an Atlanta TV station that she's "not proud" of what she described as long-running sexual shenanigans with the married GOP White House contender.
>
> "I didn't want to come out this way," she said in an interview with Atlanta's FOX affiliate WAGA-TV that put Cain on the defensive even before it was aired.
>
> White described herself in the interview as a jobless former businesswoman. She is middle-aged, has two children and was evicted from her Atlanta home earlier this month, according to a background check done by the TV station.
>
> WAGA reporters also found records showing she has been hit with several eviction notices in DeKalb County, Ga., over the past six years.
>
> She filed for bankruptcy 23 years ago, the station reported. In 2001, she also filed a sexual harassment suit, which was later settled, according to the station.
>
> Her former business partner, Kimberly Vay, once sued her and accused her of stalking, the station reported.
>
> Vay, who did not respond to calls for comment Monday, also sought an order of protection against White, charging that she was bombarded with emails and texts "threatening [a\] lawsuit" and defaming her character.
>
> A judge ruled in favor of Vay in a libel suit she had filed against White, the station reported.

It's not surprising to me that a woman like this would make such accusations – she is getting a lot of attention, and possibly is being paid off by another candidate. There might even be a nice book deal for her.

Consider a parallel case, featuring Mariah Yeater's paternity suit against Justin Bieber.

Excerpt:

> The 20-year-old woman who claims teen idol Justin Bieber is the father of her child originally told her ex-boyfriend that he — and not Bieber — was the baby-daddy, the New York Post reported Friday.
>
> "She came back here from California telling me she was pregnant with my child and I said this is impossible, you've been in California two months and back here for only a week," said Las Vegas resident John Terranova, 19, about his ex-girlfriend Mariah Yeater, 20, who has sued Bieber for support for the son she later bore.
>
> "After I told her that's not my kid, you've only been here for a week, then she told me, 'No, I got pregnant before I left by you," Terranova told The Post. "But it didn't make sense because she had a doctor's note saying she wasn't pregnant enough for that to be possible. It didn't add up."
>
> Terranova said he had dated Yeater for nearly four years after meeting her at a Las Vegas high school that caters to students who had been thrown out of other schools. He said he broke up with her after he learned she had cheated on him.
>
> Terranova scoffed at Yeater's claim that it was the then-16-year-old Bieber who impregnated her in October 2010 during a 30-second sex session after the singer performed in Los Angeles.
>
> "I know it's not Justin Bieber," Terranova said. "She just wants money. It's a scam."
>
> His girlfriend Lacy Jensen, who herself is pregnant now, agreed.
>
> "Poor kid. He's worked so hard for his career and to deal with this. She just wants to get her name out there," said Jensen.
>
> "She's a gold digger and just wants someone to take care of her," Jensen said. "She was a really big party animal who got around a lot. She was a big slut. She's scandalous."
>
> Yeater was arrested for battery last December for allegedly slapping Terranova in a jealous rage after she returned from her sojourn in California to find him dating a new girlfriend, Jensen.

I see no reason to think that White's claims have any more validity than Yeater's claims. It seems plausible to me that both women are making false claims for the same reason – they want fame and money.

Do women ever make false claims about sexual matters? Its more common than you might think. Studies show that false allegations are made about 20-40% of the time, depending on the study. These sorts of false accusations are usually made in order to 1) get attention or money, by trying to appear as an innocent victim, 2) in order to get an alibi for something the woman has done wrong (see below), or 3) to get revenge on someone who has mistreated the woman, as with the Duke lacrosse scandal.

Consider this case of a Hofstra student Danmell Ndonye who invented a false rape

accusation.

Excerpt:

> The Hofstra freshman who had a raunchy restroom romp and then cried rape made up the twisted tale because she didn't want her schoolmates — particularly her new boyfriend — to think she was easy, the beau told The Post yesterday.
>
> "I think she needs a psychologist. She probably felt like, 'They'll think I'm a slut,' " her boyfriend, who asked not to be identified, told The Post.
>
> Danmell Ndonye, 18, who had accused five men of gang rape, admitted the truth only when prosecutors confronted her after learning of a cellphone video that captured the whole sordid episode and showed she had willingly participated, officials said.
>
> She created her outlandish tale when her boyfriend, a Hofstra student who's been dating her since the semester began a few weeks ago, demanded to know where she had disappeared after a wild frat party early Sunday.
>
> The two had been dancing together at the Alpha Kappa Alpha mixer at the school's on-campus club, Hofstra USA, but got separated when a fight broke out.
>
> The boyfriend said he called her repeatedly, but she didn't answer her cellphone, so he went to her seventh-floor dorm room at Estabrook Hall. Moments later she appeared.
>
> "As I was about to leave, she comes up and she has no shoes on, she is holding them in her hands. She looked like she just finished hot sex," he said. "I said, 'Where were you? What were you doing?' She told me, 'Nothing.' I said, 'What do you mean, nothing?' "
>
> Ndonye then dropped a bombshell.
>
> "I said, 'Don't lie to me, what's going on?' And she said, 'Oh, I just got raped,' " he said.
>
> "It didn't seem real to me. She was calm," he continued. "Then she started crying and saying, 'I was raped.' She lied to me. I think she was embarrassed. I said to her, 'You have to call public safety.' She hesitated. It seemed like she didn't want to."
>
> She then tried to backpedal.
>
> "Oh, you know, no, it's OK," she told him, but he was incredulous.
>
> "How could it be OK that you just got raped?" the boyfriend said.
>
> So she relented — and a four-day nightmare began for four innocent men: Stalin Felipe, 19, his stepbrother, Kevin Taveras, 20, Jesus Ortiz, 19, and 21-year-old Rondell Bedward, a Hofstra senior who had invited the others to the party.
>
> Cops also hunted for a fifth man, who has not been publicly identified.

False allegations of abuse are *routinely used* in divorce custody hearings. They virtually

never go to trial.

In the absence of ANY evidence, why think that these anonymous charges against a black conservative who is leading in national polls are anything but *greed and attention-whoring*? Surely, we need to see some charges laid against Cain that where brought forward in a real criminal trial, so we can see the evidence. Otherwise, it just seems to me like another case of false paternity claims and false sexual allegations. We need to see real criminal charges, with real evidence and real witnesses from a real trial, before we can draw any conclusions.

My previous post analyzed the media bias evident in how this story is being covered.

Related posts

- Cain accuser Sharon Bialek has been sued a half dozen times and filed for bankruptcy twice
- Cain accuser Karen Kraushaar filed a sexual harassment claim at her next job, too

Trent Franks introduces bill to ban sex-selection and race-selection abortions

November 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scheming unborn baby is pleased with incremental pro-life laws

Life News news reports on the new Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act "PRENDA" bill.

Excerpt:

> A U.S. congressman has reintroduced legislation that would ban sex-selection or race-based abortions. Congressman Trent Franks, an Arizona Republican who is a member of the House Judiciary Committee, has brought back the Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act.
>
> The measure would prohibit knowingly performing or financing sex-selection or race-based abortions.
>
> […]"[T]he Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act, or "PRENDA," … restricts sex-selection abortion and race-selection abortion, and the coercion of a woman to obtain either. The woman seeking an abortion is exempted from prosecution, while abortion providers are held to account," wrote Franks in a letter to colleagues on Monday.
>
> "Sex-selection abortion is happening in the United States. A study published in the April 2008 Journal of the National Academy of Sciences shows through U.S. Census data that certain segments of the U.S. population – particularly those coming from countries that practice sex-selection abortion – have unnaturally skewed sex-ratios at birth caused by sex-selection 'most likely at the prenatal

> stages,'" Franks added.
>
> Franks also noted that abortion centers are disproportionately placed in African-American communities and he pointed out that Planned Parenthood has come under fire for accepting donations from people claiming to want the abortion business to target blacks.
>
> "Following the unearthing of the nation-wide race-targeted abortion donations, civil rights activists and African-American pastors from across the country protested government acquiescence in race-targeted abortion and the government funding of clinics that they believe are purposefully placed in the inner city and targeted to minority women," he said.
>
> A few years ago, a national study showed the possibility that the practice of sex-selection abortions has made its way from Asia to the United States. Researchers Douglas Almond and Lena Edlund of the National Academy of Sciences say their analysis of the 2000 Census shows the odds prematurely increasing for Asian-American families from China, Korea and India to have a boy if they already have a girl child.
>
> The data "suggest that in a sub-population with a traditional son preference, the technologies are being used to generate male births when preceding births are female," they wrote in the paper.
>
> **Meanwhile, a 2006 poll showed a majority of Americans would likely support the bill. A 2006 Zogby International poll shows that 86% of the American public desires a law to ban sex selection abortion. The poll surveyed a whopping 30,117 respondents in 48 states.**

Democrats favor abortion through all 9 months of pregnancy – for any reason, or no reason. Therefore, Democrats favor killing a baby *because* it is a girl, and killing a baby *because* it is black. That's what it means to be for abortion.

A look at how a former skeptic changed his mind about God's existence

November 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reformed Seth sent me this post from the ultimate object blog.

Excerpt:

> "There has been some confusion and more than a few requests for explanation about what is going on with my core beliefs. Some time last week, I realized that I could no longer call myself a skeptic. After fifteen years away from Christianity, most of which was spent as an atheist with an active, busy intent on destroying the faith, I returned to a church (with a real intention of going for worship) last Sunday. Although I know I may struggle with doubt for the rest of my life, my life as an atheist is over.
>
> **The primary motivator in my change of heart from a Christ-hater to a card-carrying Disciples of Christ member was apologetic arguments for God's existence. Those interested in these arguments may pursue them in the comments section, but I don't want to muddle this explanation up with formal philosophical proofs. Briefly, I grew tired of the lack of explanation for: the existence of the universe, moral values and duties, objective human worth, consciousness and will, and many other topics. The only valid foundation for many of those ideas is a personal, immaterial, unchanging and unchangeable entity.** As I fought so desperately to come up with refutations of these arguments – even going out of my way to personally meet many of their originators, defenders, and opponents – I realized that I could not answer them no matter how many long nights I spent hitting the books. The months of study rolled on to years, and eventually I found an increasing comfort around my God-believing enemies and a growing discontent and even anger at my atheist friends' inability to kill off these fleas in debate and in writing, an anger that gave birth to my first feeling of separateness from skepticism after reading comments related to a definitively refuted version of the Christ Myth theory, the idea that Jesus Christ never even existed as a person at all. Line after line after line of people hating Christianity and laughing at its "lie," when solid scholarship refuting their idea was ignored completely. It showed that the motive of bashing and hating Christianity for some skeptics wasn't based in reason and "free thinking" at all, although it would be unfair to lump many of my more intellectually rigorous and mentally cool skeptic friends in this way.
>
> As time went on, I reverted the path I traced after giving up Christianity so long ago: I went from atheist to agnostic to … gulp … *leaning* in the direction of God, to finally accepting that he very well could exist, and then to coming out

> and admitting (quietly) He did exist. After considering Deism (the belief in a God who abandons His creation), Islam, Hinduism (yes, Krishna, don't laugh), Baha'i, and even Jainism briefly, **I have decided to select Christianity due to its superior model for human evil and its reconciliation, coupled with the belief that God interacted with man directly and face-to-face and had *the* crucial role in this reconciliation.** This, of course, doesn't prove that Christianity is absolutely true (although I can prove that God exists), but rather reflects my recognition that Christianity is exactly what I would expect to be the case given that God exists.

I feel guilty when I read posts like that… I think to myself "you shouldn't be so mean to people who disagree with you, maybe they are like this guy – honestly thinking things through and willing to change their minds". Sigh. I feel so guilty right now.

I really like what he had to say about reconciliation, though. I feel the pressure to reconcile people to God through Christ's offer of forgiveness – that's why I work so hard on apologetics, and to have money to buy people things they need for their studying. To really get people to be reconciled, you have to be convincing. You have to be persuasive. And you can't do that without having studied the arguments and the evidence.

I also agree with him about the reconciliation. The resurrection is a good argument, but it's inductive – it's the best explanation based on the historical bedrock that we have. But what clinches the case for Christianity in the end is Christ descending from his glory to suffer with us – and *for* us, too.

In case any of you haven't read my testimony, it's right here.

Seth also found evidence that this guy really was a skeptic before. (That link goes to John Loftus' "Debunking Christianity" web site)

How to easily develop your knowledge of the way the world works

December 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you're not reading IBD editorials every day, you are missing out. I agree with them on practically everything they write. I try to stay in touch with what's happening in the world, with respect to economics and foreign policy, and Investors Business Daily is indispensable. (And sometimes, they even cover social issues like school choice, affirmative action and stem cell research). It's not just the news that I want, it's the analysis. They fit every data point into an argument – and that makes the world a very interesting place.

Here are four sample articles.

Did the latest European bailout fix anything?

Excerpt:

> Led by the Fed, top central banks added dollars to the global financial system on Wednesday as Europe's crisis deepened. We hate to rain on anyone's parade, but this won't solve the EU's problems.
>
> The central banks' bold action, though met with wild enthusiasm by financial markets, amounts to little more than a multibillion dollar Band-Aid on a deep, dangerous wound.
>
> […]But even as they juggle and sell off their portfolios of bad loans, major banks in Europe, the U.S. and Asia are being forced to raise capital to meet new international banking standards. The result: a credit crunch.
>
> In short, the global financial system is near collapse, and the central banks are madly pumping dollars into it to keep the collapse from happening.
>
> It's an emergency, we get it. But while such actions might help in the short run, they won't in the long run.
>
> The EU faces the same problems today as it did yesterday, and no amount of central bank money-printing changes that.
>
> Namely, its 17 members, used to an ever-expanding welfare state and leisure-class lifestyle, can't sustain that way of life with their chronically weak economies and aging, low-productivity workforces.
>
> Contrary to recent actions, the EU's problems aren't short-term and financial, but long-term and fiscal.

The same kind of problems that we are having USA, as we have moved from 160 billion dollar deficits under Bush in 2007 to approximately 1.4 trillion dollar deficits in ever year that Obama has been President. Maybe we can learn some lessons from the mistakes that others have made and are making instead of making those mistakes again

ourselves?

If global warming is real, where are all the hurricanes?

Excerpt:

> Sunday will be the 2,232nd consecutive day that the U.S. has gone without being hit by a major hurricane. This is a big enough deal to be covered by the mainstream media. But of course it won't be.
>
> On Dec. 4, a new record will be set for the number of days between landfalls of category 3 or stronger storms. The previous streak, according to Roger Pielke Jr., began on Sept. 8, 1900, and ended on Oct. 19, 1906, when the Great Galveston Hurricane hit.
>
> The record won't be broken by just a day or even a week. Pielke, a professor of environmental studies at University of Colorado, says it will be crushed.
>
> "Since there won't be any intense hurricanes before next summer, the record will be shattered, with the days between intense hurricane landfalls likely to exceed 2,500 days," he writes in his blog.
>
> Why is this significant? Because the global warming alarmists have been telling us that man's carbon dioxide emissions would bring bigger storms.
>
> […]The mainstream media has happily trafficked this nonsense, but it's not likely to mention Pielke's point even though it would be appropriate in stories covering our very mild hurricane season, which ended Wednesday.
>
> Why won't they do it? Because it's inconsistent with their narrative. It's like the latest batch of Climategate emails, which show again a group of scientists manipulating the process for political gain. News that contradicts the alarmists' tale simply isn't news to the media.

If you think that global warming alarmism has no effect on you, then you need to realize that it is being used to justify all kinds of job-killing regulations. If you want to know why companies ship jobs overseas and expand their operations outside the United States, then look no further than the EPA.

Is existing U.S. oil drilling in the EPA's crosshairs?

Excerpt:

> The latest salvo in the administration's war on energy may be new rules and permits to regulate a process to get oil and gas from porous rock, sacrificing jobs and economic growth while under review.
>
> There are a few areas of the U.S. that are booming. Two of these are in North Dakota and Pennsylvania, states that sit atop two massive shale rock formations, the Bakken and the Marcellus.
>
> Extraction of oil and natural gas from these formations have created jobs and economic growth in the midst of a stagnant and parched economy.

> […]Yet the Environmental Protection Agency, bowing to environmentalists' pressure and faithful to the administration mantra that fossil fuels are harmful and obsolete, is preparing to nip this economic boom in the bud by regulating it to death.
>
> […]Pennsylvania's Department of Labor and Industry estimates fracking in the Marcellus created 72,000 jobs between the fourth quarter of 2009 and the first quarter of 2011. Drilling in the Bakken formation along the North Dakota-Montana border helps explain North Dakota's unemployment rate of 3.2%, the nation's lowest.
>
> The Gulf Coast energy industry has never fully recovered from a similar moratorium and a new glacial permitting process.
>
> Similarly, the job-creating Keystone XL pipeline project to bring Canadian tar sands oil to American refineries is stalled on environmental grounds.

It's not enought that Obama blocks the creation of hundreds of thousands of *new* energy sector jobs – and wastes money on alternative energy companies connected to his campaign fundraisers – but now he might be going after *existing* energy production jobs, too.

Should we continue to send our "ally" Pakistan foreign aid?

Excerpt:

> In what's become a common occurrence, the Pakistani military — in an unprovoked attack — fired on coalition troops based across the border in Afghanistan. We responded by hitting two Pakistani border posts. The airstrikes killed two dozen Pakistani soldiers, sparking anti-American riots and threats of reprisal by Islamabad.
>
> […]So why still coddle Pakistan, diplomatically? Several reasons, not the least of which is Pakistan's arsenal of nuclear weapons and cold war with India. But it's mainly because we need its permission to transport military supplies across its border into landlocked Afghanistan, the terror swamp believed most worthy of draining.
>
> More than 40% of the fuel, food, ammunition, equipment and other supplies sent to U.S. forces in Afghanistan are shipped via Pakistani ports and roads. Islamabad also gives us access to airspace — including landing rights at three air bases, where we launch the Predator drone aircraft targeting Pakistani-based terrorist camps in lieu of U.S. boots on the ground.
>
> Islamabad could easily deny us those landing rights and cut off supply routes at any time, hamstringing our Afghan operations. Sure enough: Islamabad did exactly that over the weekend. After the coalition air strike that killed 24 of its troops, Pakistan blocked two coalition supply routes running through Pakistan. It also gave the U.S. two weeks to vacate the Shamsi air base in Balochistan, which has been used for drone sorties.

> These moves make reducing our dependence on Pakistan all the more critical.
>
> The Pentagon should hike supplies coming into Afghanistan from the north through Central Asia. To fund the added expense, it could use the billions in aid Pakistan is secretly using against us by funding and arming Afghan insurgents. It could also use a chunk of U.S. aid dollars to build larger fuel-storage facilities on the ground in Afghanistan, so that military operations can withstand major disruptions to supplies.

So there you have it – four great articles on the European crisis, global warming science, the employment situation at home, and foreign policy. And you get this analysis for free every day with Investors Business Daily. You can check out their editorials at this link, and bookmark it. Even if you don't read the Heritage Foundation's blog "The Foundry" and the American Enterprise Institute blog "The American", you can still stay *well* informed by reading IBD every day. If you are interested in raw news without the analysis, then read CNS News.

It's very important for Christians to understand that we have to be seen by others as aware and informed on other topics in order to be seen as aware and informed on religious issues. Part of that involves studying apologetics and being familiar with opposing arguments and evidence. Part of it is being informed about social issues like abortion, marriage and education. But part of it is just being a well-informed person in general. When topics like politics and economics and national security come up, our goal should not be to take whatever position is popular, or whatever position will make us look "nice". We should have our own position, and we should be informed enough about the world to participate in – and even to dominate – conversations on those topics. We have to be the people who know how the world works.

Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent's murder

December 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Judicial Watch.

Excerpt:

> The Obama Administration has abruptly sealed court records containing alarming details of how Mexican drug smugglers murdered a U.S. Border patrol agent with a gun connected to a failed federal experiment that allowed firearms to be smuggled into Mexico.
>
> This means information will now be kept from the public as well as the media. Could this be a cover-up on the part of the "most transparent" administration in history? After all, the rifle used to kill the federal agent (Brian Terry) last December in Arizona's Peck Canyon was part of the now infamous Operation Fast and Furious. Conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the disastrous scheme allowed guns to be smuggled into Mexico so they could eventually be traced to drug cartels.
>
> Instead, federal law enforcement officers lost track of more than 1,000 guns which have been used in numerous crimes. In Terry's case, five illegal immigrants armed with at least two semi-automatic assault rifles were hunting for U.S. Border Patrol agents near a desert watering hole just north of the Arizona-Mexico border when a firefight erupted and Terry got hit.
>
> We know this only because Washington D.C.'s conservative newspaper , the Washington Times, got ahold of the court documents before the government suddenly made them off limits. The now-sealed federal grand jury indictment tells the frightening story of how Terry was gunned down by Mexican drug smugglers patrolling the rugged desert with the intent to "intentionally and forcibly assault" Border Patrol agents.
>
> You can see why the administration wants to keep this information from the public and the media, considering the smugglers were essentially armed by the U.S. government. Truth is, no one will know the reason for the confiscation of public court records in this case because the judge's decision to seal it was also sealed, according to the news story. That means the public or media won't have access to any new or old evidence, filings, rulings or arguments.

My Dad sent me this article about how the people responsible for the Fast and Furious gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels are being promoted – while the whistleblowers are being punished.

Excerpt:

> Here's what has happened to the managers of the [gun smuggling] operation:
>
> — Acting ATF Chief Ken Melson, who oversaw the operation, is now an adviser in the Office of Legal Affairs. He remains in ATF's Washington, D.C., headquarters.
>
> — Acting Deputy Director Billy Hoover, who knew his agency was walking guns and demanded an "exit strategy" just five months into the program, is now the special agent in charge of the D.C. office. He, too, did not have to relocate.
>
> — Deputy Director for Field Operations William McMahon received detailed briefings about the illegal operation and later admitted he shares "responsibility for mistakes that were made." Yet, he also stays in D.C., ironically as the No. 2 man at the ATF's Office of Internal Affairs.
>
> — Special Agent in Charge of Phoenix Bill Newell, the man most responsible for directly overseeing Fast and Furious, was promoted to the Office of Management in Washington.
>
> — Phoenix Deputy Chief George Gillette was also promoted to Washington as ATF's liaison to the U.S. Marshal's Service.
>
> — Group Supervisor David Voth managed Fast and Furious on a day-to-day basis and repeatedly stopped field agents from interdicting weapons headed to the border, according to congressional testimony. ATF boosted Voth to chief of the ATF Tobacco Division, where he now supervises more employees in Washington than he ever did in Phoenix.

But what about the whistleblowers?

> Case in point, he said, is field agent John Dodson. Dodson uprooted his family from Virginia in 2010 to join a new elite anti-gun trafficking group in Phoenix, known as Group 7. Dodson quickly witnessed what was wrong and loudly voiced his objections to Voth and Newell.
>
> Management reassigned Dodson to weekend duty and the wire room, a relatively boring job monitoring telephone traffic and subordinate to junior agents. Soon thereafter, Dodson was temporarily assigned to another group for an additional menial assignment, until ultimately sent to an FBI Task Force, completely away from the ATF, even turning off his ATF building access pass.
>
> Dodson continued to challenge Voth, saying the operation was killing people in Mexico and suggested it was only a matter of time before a "border agent or sheriff's deputy" would be killed by one of the guns they let go.
>
> "If you're going to make an omelet, you've got to scramble some eggs," Voth replied, according to a congressional report.
>
> Voth moved Dodson out of Group 7 shortly before Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry was shot by weapons traced to Fast and Furious. Newell, Gillette and Voth began to cover up their tracks. According to an e-mail 24 hours after Terry was shot, Voth wrote:

> "We are charging Avila (Jaime Avila bought the alleged murder weapons) with a stand-alone June 2010 firearms purchase. This way we do not divulge our current case (Fast and Furious) or the Border Patrol shooting case."
>
> "Great job," Newell replied.
>
> Dodson first complained internally to the ATF Office of Chief Counsel and Ethics Section, OIG, Office of Special Counsel, and Office of Professional Responsibility. They were unresponsive. Dodson was then contacted by congressional investigators, who began their own investigation.
>
> Because of Dodson, the Terry family hopes to hear the truth about what happened to their son and the American public learned that senior Obama administration officials did nothing to stop guns from reaching an insurgency south of the border.
>
> And what did Dodson get for telling the truth? In Phoenix he was isolated, marginalized and referred to as a "nut job," "wing-nut" and "disgruntled," according to sources.
>
> In Washington, ATF command ordered that "Contact with Dodson was detrimental to any ATF career."

Could this be the issue that sinks Obama in the 2012 election? Or will it be his subsidies for alternative energy companies connected to his Democrat fundraisers? Or will it be his job-destroying stimulus and regulation bills?

Related posts

- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference
- Homeland Security Secreary Janet Napolitano to counter global warming threat
- Obama administration investigates Wisconsin pro-lifers
- Homeland Security head says that "the system worked"
- Democrats will push amnesty to give 12-20 million illegal aliens citizenship
- Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?
- Michele Bachmann calls for Napolitano to resign
- Civil rights commission finds that Obama administration has racist double standard
- Is Obama's Department of Justice enabling voter registration fraud?
- Department of Justice won't purge dead or ineligible voters from roll
- Is the Department of Justice refusing to defend the voting rights of whites?
- Obama's attorney general has his head in the sand on national security

- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training
- Obama administration threatens South Carolina for saving prisoner's lives

Will Obama force Catholics to buy insurance that covers abortions?

December 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

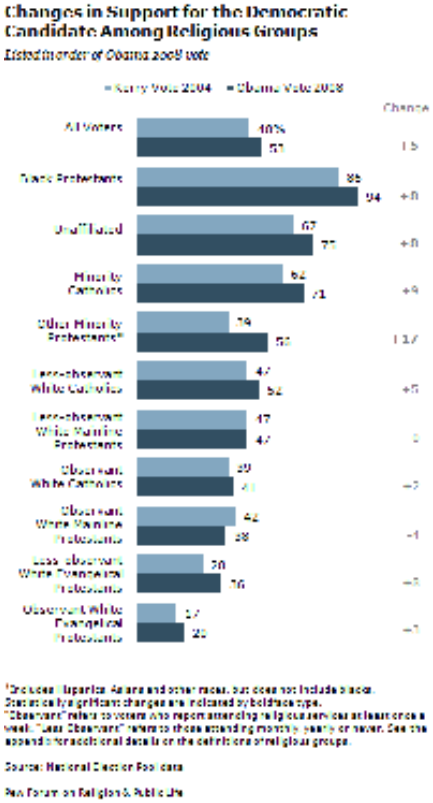

Which religions supported Obama most in 2008?
From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama has not yet decided whether to go forward with a proposed regulation under the health care law he signed last year that would force Catholic individuals and instutions to act against the teachings of the Catholic church.
>
> In August, Health and Human Service Secretary Kathleen Sebelius proposed a regulation–that would take affect next fall–that would require all health care plans to cover sterilizations and all FDA-approved contraceptives, including abortifacients. The proposed regulation includes a very narrow religious exemption that does not cover individual Catholics, or Catholic universities, hospitals or charitable institutions.
>
> The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops have called the regulation an “unprecedented attack on religious liberty” and have called on American Catholics to contact HHS and demand that the regulation be rescinded.
>
> […]Because of Obamacare’s mandate that all individuals must buy health insurance, the “preventive services” regulation would mean individual American Catholics would be forced to buy health insurance that pays for sterilizations,

> contraceptives and abortions–all of which violate Catholic moral teachings.
>
> Many major Catholic institutions and Catholic business owners would be forced to choose between dropping health insurance coverage for their employees and students or violating their religious beliefs.
>
> “Indeed, such nationwide government coercion of religious people and groups to sell, broker, or purchase ‘services’ to which they have a moral or religious objection represents an unprecedented attack on religious liberty,” the bishops said in commentary on the proposed regulation they submitted to HHS.

As an evangelical Protestant, I get so confused when I see many people who label themselves as “Catholic” voting to equate abortion with health care.

Insurance is about sharing costs. Why should people who choose not to have sex outside of marriage (like me) be *compelled* to pay the bills of people who freely choose to engage in risky, recreational sex? When you subsidize something, you get more of it. So why should pro-lifers be forced subsidize something that we don’t want more of? Why should pro-lifers want to make it less costly for people to engage in behaviors that result in the killing of an innocent child?

Can a Christian date a non-Christian? Can a Christian marry a non-Christian?

December 1, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think that the best way to answer the question, "should I marry a non-Christian?", is to ask whether it makes any difference if your spouse is on board with your plans for your ministry and with your marriage. So let's take a look at a case where someone chose a Christian wife, and we'll see how much that affected his ministry and his marriage.

I want to draw your attention to a talk on "Vision in Life" given by William Lane Craig. Bill is the ablest defender of the Christian faith operating today, having defeated all of the best known atheists in formal academic debates, in front of *thousands* of university students. This list includes people like Christopher Hitchens and Victor Stenger. The Hitchens debate took place in an auditorium filled with 5000 students, and many thousands more were watching at churches all over the world. No one has done more to defend Christianity on university campuses. So how did Bill do it? Well, he owes a lot of his success to his amazing wife Jan, as we shall see below.

The MP3 file is here. (32 minutes)

This was Bill's chapel address to Biola University students, and he is introduced by his son, John, a Biola grad.

In the talk, it becomes clear that Bill's wife Jan plays an *enormous* role in his success. Indeed, you will see that if it were not for her, he never would have gotten *either* of his doctorates, or even his second Masters degree. Why was she so supportive of his plans? Because she had the same broad goal of evangelism through scholarship. Let's see how she encouraged him.

Here is a quotation that occurs about 11 minutes into the talk, as Bill describes the completion of his Bachelor's degree at Wheaton:

> And it was at Wheaton that my vision began to focus on presenting the gospel in the context of giving an intellectual defense of the faith, to appeal not only to the heart but also to the head, as well. And so I determined that I would go on to seminary for further training.
>
> But, my senior year, in chapel, we heard a speaker who challenged us, before going on to further education, to take a couple of years out, and to wring out the sponge, so to speak, that had been soaking up all that knowledge, and to work with university students while we were still about the same age.
>
> And so I joined the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for 2 years, and was assigned to Northern Illinois University. And that was where I met my wife Jan. She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota where she had come to faith in Christ. And she had a similar vision for her life of evangelism and discipleship.

> And as we worked at NIU together, she with gals and I with the guys, leading students to Christ and discipling them to walk with the Lord, we fell in love. And we decided that we would be more effective if we joined forces and became a team.

It is at this point in the talk where Bill begins to explain just how Jan molded him into the lean, mean debating machine that travels the world striking terror into the hearts of atheists.

Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

In an article on his web site, he talks about how Jan encouraged him to do his first PhD:

> As graduation from Trinity neared, Jan and I were sitting one evening at the supper table in our little campus apartment, talking about what to do after graduation. Neither of us had any clear leading or inclination of what we should do next.
>
> So Jan said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really like to do next?"
>
> I replied, "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to England and do a doctorate under John Hick."
>
> "Who's he?" she asked.
>
> "Oh, he's this famous British philosopher who's written extensively on arguments for the existence of God," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a cosmological argument for God's existence."
>
> But it hardly seemed a realistic idea.
>
> The next evening at supper Jan handed me a slip of paper with John Hick's address on it. "I went to the library today and found out that he's at the

> University of Birmingham in England," she said. "Why don't you write him a letter and ask him if you can do a doctoral thesis under him on the cosmological argument?"
>
> What a woman! So I did, and to our amazement and delight Professor Hick wrote back saying he'd be very pleased to supervise my doctoral work on that subject. So it was an open door!

And in the same article, he explains how Jan encouraged him to get his second Ph.D:

> As Jan and I neared the completion of my doctoral studies in Birmingham, our future path was again unclear to us. I had sent out a number of applications for teaching positions in philosophy at American universities but had received no bites. We didn't know what to do.
>
> I remember it like yesterday. We were sitting at the supper table in our little house outside Birmingham, and Jan suddenly said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really *like* to do next?"
>
> I laughed because I remembered how the Lord had used her question to guide us in the past. I had no trouble answering the question. "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to Germany and study under Wolfhart Pannenberg."
>
> "Who's he?"
>
> "Oh, he's this famous German theologian who's defended the resurrection of Christ historically," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus."
>
> Our conversation drifted to other subjects, but Jan later told me that my remark had just lit a fire under her. The next day while I was at the university, she slipped away to the library and began to research grants-in-aid for study at German universities. Most of the leads proved to be defunct or otherwise inapplicable to our situation. But there were two grants she found that were possibilities. You can imagine how surprised I was when she sprung them on me!

Both of these Ph.D experiences are also described in the talk. And the talk concludes as follows:

> I am so thankful to be married to a woman who is tremendously resourceful, tremendously talented and energetic, who could have pursued an independent career in any number of areas, but instead, she has chose to wed her aspirations to mine, and to make it her goal to make me the most effective person I can be, for Christ. And she has been like my right arm in ministry over these many years. And it is a tremendous privilege to be a team with a person like that.
>
> And you young men, I would encourage you, if you marry, to find a gal who shares your vision, not some independent vision, but who is interested in aligning herself with you, and pursuing together a common vision and goal that will draw

> you [together], so that you will avoid the growing separateness that so often creeps into marriages.

And now you know the rest of Bill's story. *The person you marry will have an enormous influence on the impact you will have for Christ and his Kingdom.* It is up to you to decide whether that influence is going to be positive or negative, by deciding if you will marry, and if you do marry, by deciding whom you will marry. If you marry a non-Christian, you cannot expect to achieve the same things for God as you can with someone who accepts your core convictions and is willing to sacrifice their happiness so that God can be made happier.

You may also be interested in this talk given by William Lane Craig, entitled "Healthy Relationships" (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008) (audio here)

Conclusion

The level of influence of a significant other in a non-platonic relationship greatly impacts your ability to achieve the vocational task that the Lord has set for you. My recommendation is to avoid engaging in *any* romantic relationship in which self-sacrificial service to the Lord is not the main focus.

Since I am male, I decided to prepare a set of questions that a man can use to test a woman to see if she is a marriage-ready Christian. You can use those, if you like.

Islamic extremists dominate Egypt's parliamentary elections

December 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East
From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Unofficial initial results from the first two days of Egypt's parliamentary elections pointed to a dominant showing for Islamist candidates, fulfilling most analysts' expectations that conservative religious politicians could have the upper hand in next year's drafting of a new Egyptian constitution.
>
> Initial tallies put the powerful Muslim Brotherhood's political arm, the Freedom and Justice Party, or FJP, in a leading position, followed by the Nour Party, which represents the ultraconservative Salafi school of Islam, FJP said.
>
> An FJP official said the party's vote-counting observers expect the group to win as much as 50% of the vote. A Nour Party spokesman said the early returns point to a Salafi capture of about 10% to 15% of seats in the incoming Parliament.
>
> The Egyptian Bloc, a list of liberal parties dominated by the left-leaning Social Democrat Party and the pro-market Free Egyptians Party, appeared to be in third place. Official early results are expected to be announced on Thursday, the High Elections Commission said.
>
> The results are far from final—a second and third round of elections covering two-thirds of Egypt's 27 governorates are scheduled to take place in December

> and January. Individual candidate races that didn't secure at least 51% will face runoffs beginning next week.
>
> But the early results indicate that Egypt—the largest Arab country and under former President Hosni Mubarak one of the region's staunchest defenders of secular governance—is set to pivot toward political Islam. The next voting rounds include mostly smaller Egyptian cities and villages, where Islamist rule is popular.
>
> Such an outcome would surprise few Egyptians or political observers. Egypt's deeply religious population grated under the ousted regime's secular policies, and Tunisia and Morocco have recently awarded pluralities to moderate Islamist parties.
>
> […]Both Salafi and Brotherhood representatives said it was too early to say whether the two groups would form a coalition in Parliament—an alliance that would give Islamists a powerful majority.

This is what Obama bought us by taking his eye off the ball in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Pakistan and Iran. We had no business firing a shot in Libya and Egypt. There was no strategic reason for us to be there.

Mitt Romney gaffe: Romney fails miserably in interview with Bret Baier

December 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So everyone knows I don't have a TV and that the only thing on TV that I think is worth watching is Bret Baier on Fox News' Special Report. Let's see why, below.

Here's Bret Baier interviewing Mitt Romney:

The full transcript is here.

Excerpt:

> BAIER: Like the "Union Leader," your critics charge that you make decisions based on political expediency and not core conviction. You have been on the both sides of some issues, and there's videotape of you going back years, speaking about different issues, climate change, abortion, immigration, gay rights.
>
> How can voters trust what they hear from you today is what you will believe if you win the White House?
>
> ROMNEY: Well, Bret, your list is just not accurate. So, one, we're going to have to be better informed about my views on issues. My view is, you can look at what I've written in my book. You can look at a person who has devoted his life to his family, to his faith, to his country, and I'm running for president because of the things I believe I think I can do to help this country.
>
> And I know in politics there are going to be those who try in every way they can to tear down one another, but the real question is, does Barack Obama have the capacity to lead this country out of a very difficult economic setting? And the answer is no. He's proven he doesn't. And I do.
>
> That's my experience. That's what I know how to do. The American people want someone who knows how to lead, who believes in the free economy, and understands the principals it takes to get America strong, economically, militarily, and culturally.
>
> BAIER: But I'm sure you've seen these ads, using videotape of you in previous years, speaking on various issues.
>
> ROMNEY: Uh-huh.
>
> BAIER: And it seems like it's in direct contrast to positions you take now.
>
> ROMNEY: Well, I'm glad that the Democratic ads are breaking through and you got —
>
> BAIER: Jon Huntsman has a couple ads that do the exact same thing.

So Romney is saying to Republican voters "never mind what I am saying in my own words

in those videos, just read my book instead".

It's easy to find videos of Mitt Romney speaking in his own words endorsing abortion, embryonic stem cell research, gay rights, gun control, man-made global warming, amnesty, and pretty much every position that Obama holds. His Romneycare health care plan is quite similar to Obamacare, and has created enormous budget deficits in Massachussetts.

Anyway, Bret's questions seem fair to me, but it turns out that Romney was offended by them:

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, who is now seeking the Republican presidential nomination, complained to Fox News Special Report anchor Bret Baier after an interview on Tuesday that Baier's questioning had been "overly aggressive" and "uncalled for," according to Baier.
>
> "He was irritated by the interview after we were done," Baier said of Romney when he appeared on Fox News's "O'Reilly Factor" on Wednesday to discuss the interview.
>
> O'Reilly asked Baier: "How do you know he was irritated? Did he slap you? Or what did he do?"
>
> Well, he just made it clear at the end of the interview," said Baier.
>
> "Tell me how he made it clear?" asked O'Reilly. "What it is–did he say something to you?
>
> **"He said he thought it was overly aggressive," said Baier.**
>
> **"He did, he said that to you?" said O'Reilly. "He said it was overly aggressive?"**
>
> **"He did," affirmed Baier.**
>
> **"And as we were walking in the walk and talk and then after he finished he went to his holding room and then came back and said he didn't like the interview and thought it was uncalled for," said Baier.**

Is this thin-skinned RINO the person we want in the Oval office in 2012? Why elect a clone of Obama?

You can see some of the videos featuring Mitt Romney in this post and this post.

Republicans introduce bill to build Keystone XL pipeline and create 20,000 jobs

December 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports on the activities of the grown-up party.

Excerpt:

> Senate Republicans have introduced legislation that would direct the State Department to issue permits to begin construction of the 1,700-mile Keystone XL crude oil pipeline from Canada to U.S. refineries – a project they say will create 20,000 jobs, increase domestic energy security and generate revenue.
>
> "Jobs will be created right away and billions of dollars in investment will be unleashed through legislation introduced to permit the $7 billion Keystone XL pipeline, the largest infrastructure project ready in the United States, to commence construction," Sen. Dick Lugar (R-Ind.) told a press conference on Wednesday.
>
> Lugar, ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is lead sponsor of the new North American Energy Security Act.
>
> In a jab to President Obama's promotion of creating jobs through new or improved infrastructure and "shovel-ready" projects, the GOP senators said the pipeline qualifies as both. Obama's decision to delay the approval process until after the 2012 election is putting politics above job creation, they charged.
>
> "There is absolutely no reason to delay a permit decision on the Keystone pipeline – and the jobs that come with it – for another year in a blatant attempt to appease the president's political base," Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said at the conference.
>
> […]The lawmakers said the pipeline could reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil by bringing as much as 700,000 barrels of oil a day into the country from Canada.
>
> Aside from jobs directly created in construction and pipeline operation, the private sector project is expected also to boost economic growth for the more than 1,400 U.S. companies that sell products and services for oil sands production and transport.

We need jobs, so let's hope this bill passes.

Josh Mandel wants to create jobs in Ohio with more oil drilling

December 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Josh Mandel is pushing for energy development and more jobs in Ohio.

Excerpt:

> Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel, a candidate for the U.S. Senate, was in Tuscarawas County this week touting the potential benefits the oil and gas industry could bring to Ohio, including the possibility of 200,000 additional jobs.
>
> Mandel is stepping into the debate over whether Ohio's federal lands should be used for oil and gas exploration.
>
> "I believe responsible exploration for oil and gas will be a win-win-win for families and senior citizens in Tuscarawas County," Mandel told The Times-Reporter during a telephone interview Monday, hours before he held a meet-and-greet in Bolivar.
>
> "It will create jobs, bring down utility bills, and it will contribute to the national security of our country. With more energy produced here in America, we will be safer as a nation."
>
> Mandel, a Republican from Lyndhurst, near Cleveland, is running for the seat in the Senate held by Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Avon.
>
> […]The oil and gas boom in eastern Ohio will benefit not only the men and women working on the rigs, but also construction workers, truck drivers and service industry employees, Mandel contends. He said it will help waiters and waitresses, who will serve more customers, owners of hotels and motels and people who own businesses up and down the supplier's chain.
>
> But Mandel says he does see a threat to the industry.
>
> "There are bureaucrats in Washington and in the state who are trying to block responsible oil and gas exploration," Mandel said. "I will do everything in my power to combat the Washington bureaucrats who are trying to block new jobs and affordable energy in Ohio."
>
> […]Mandel served two terms in the Ohio House of Representatives before ousting incumbent state Treasurer Kevin Boyce in 2010. He is a Marine Corps veteran who served two tours of duty in Anbar Province, Iraq.

Josh has a stellar record to run on.

Excerpt:

> Amidst this week's news of of Fitch downgrading the United States' outlook from stable to negative, Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel has announced that Fitch has

> given *the highest* possible short term rating of F1+ for Ohio's general obligation (GO) bonds. Fitch credited Treasurer Mandel's conservative investment strategy and cautious management of our tax dollars as key factors in making their rating determination:
>
> *"The rating reflects the strength of the state's general obligation credit, the ample liquidity provided by investments in the state treasurer's liquidity account, and the procedures in place to insure timely payment of optional tenders of bonds that have not been remarketed."*
>
> They also noted:
>
> *"The investment profile is conservative as the fund is invested in U.S. Treasury and agency securities, highly rated commercial paper, and money market funds."*
>
> Amidst a struggling economy and sluggish national growth, Fitch spoke of notable increases in the state treasurer's liquidity account, as well as the state's bolstering of its rainy day fund.
>
> Fitch also noted Ohio's improved budget stabilization fund balance in their rating. Ohio's budget stabilization fund reached a low point in 2009 under previous administrations when the fund had been depleted down to just $0.89. In July, Ohio's AA+ credit rating outlook was raised by Standard & Poor's from "negative" to "stable," in part because of conservative management of debt in the Treasurer's office.
>
> Since being elected, Treasurer Mandel has focused on reining in state budget costs by streamlining operations, eliminating waste, and serving as a steadfast fiscal watchdog for Ohio taxpayers' hard-earned money.
>
> The Republican-led General Assembly and Governor Kasich tackled Ohio's $8 billion budget shortfall and spending imbalances head on, thus improving our state's credit ratings.

Josh is going to be running for the Senate seat current occupied by left-wing radical Sherrod Brown in 2012.

William Lane Craig presents the moral argument to his Sunday school class

December 2, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is great. He is presenting this argument to ordinary people, so everyone can understand it.

The lecture is in four parts.

Part 1 of 4: (28 minutes)

Part 2 of 4: (43 minutes)

Part 3 of 4: (29 minutes)

Part 4 of 4: (32 minutes)

Outline:

> MORAL ARGUMENT
>
> 1. IF GOD DOES NOT EXIST, OBJECTIVE MORAL VALUES DO NOT EXIST.
>
> 1.1 “Objective” defined.
> 1.2 Objective human value on naturalism.
> 1.3 Atheistic Moral Realism.
>
> 1.31 Unintelligibility of Atheistic Moral Realism
> 1.32 Lack of Moral Obligation on Atheistic Moral Realism
> 1.33 Improbability of Atheistic Moral Realism
>
> 2. OBJECTIVE MORAL VALUES DO EXIST.
>
> 2.1 Moral values and physical objects.
> 2.2 Illustrations.
>
> 3. THEREFORE, GOD EXISTS.
> 3.1 Euthyphro Objection
> 3.2 Why God as the foundation?

The playlist is here, if you want to mail it to someone.

Happy Friday!

Michael Medved: is he a conservative radio talk show host?

December 3, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Medved is a strong supporter of Mitt Romney. Let's look at Romney's views.

Here is Mitt Romney on abortion:

And more:

Mitt Romney on immigration:

Mitt Romney on global warming:

Here is Mitt Romney on gun control:

Here is Mitt Romney on embryonic stem cell research:

Here is Mitt Romney on the flat tax:

So long as Michael Medved endorses Romney, then Michael Medved is not a conservative in any sense of the word.

Marriage researcher Brad Wilcox's lecture on marriage and society

December 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two parts. The lecture and then the Q&A.

Let's learn a bit about Brad first:

> W. Bradford Wilcox is Director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia, and a member of the James Madison Society at Princeton University.
>
> He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia and his Ph.D. at Princeton University. Prior to coming to the University of Virginia, he held research fellowships at Princeton University, Yale University and the Brookings Institution.
>
> Mr. Wilcox's research focuses on marriage, parenthood, and cohabitation, and on the ways that gender, religion, and children influence the quality and stability of American marriages and family life. He has published articles on marriage, cohabitation, parenting, and fatherhood in *The American Sociological Review, Social Forces, The Journal of Marriage and Family* and *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. His first book, *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands* (Chicago, 2004), examines the ways in which the religious beliefs and practices of American Protestant men influence their approach to parenting, household labor, and marriage. With Nicholas Wolfinger, Wilcox is now writing a book titled, *Soul Mates: Religion, Sex, Children, & Marriage among African Americans and Latinos*, for Oxford University Press. With Eric Kaufmann, Wilcox is finishing a book on the causes and consequences of low fertility in the West.

The MP3 file for the lecture is here.

The MP3 file for the Q&A is here.

This lecture covers marriage, cohabitation, single parenthood and divorce.

James Dobson lists ten potential sources of depression for wives

December 4, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been reading this interesting book by James Dobson, entitled "What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women". In the book he asks the reader to rank the 10 common sources of depression for wives in order:

- low self-esteem
- fatigue and time pressure
- loneliness, isolation, and boredom
- absence of romantic love in marriage
- financial difficulties
- sexual problems in marriage
- menstrual and physiological problems
- problems with the children
- aging
- in-law problems

He has surveyed a whole bunch of Christian and the order above is the order that they gave him from most severe to least severe.

There is room in the book for ranking these and my ranking was like his, pretty much, except that I had two things reversed. I had the financial difficulties and in-law problems reversed, because I have this idea that women are really bad with money and that they care more about relationships. I also had aging and sexual problems reversed because I don't think that sex is very important to women, and they are sort of unaware of how much of a problem it is for men. However, I think they are terribly concerned about aging.

Note: Commenter Maureen points out to me that women are better than men with money these days. I can't go against this evidence showing that she is right.

So I thought I would post this to see if anyone else has any thoughts about this list. Does it seem right to you?

I noticed in this article that more and more women are suffering from depression, so it's important to know why they do that.

Excerpt:

> One in four women aged between 45 and 64 now experience some form of mental disorder – an increase of 20 per cent in the last 15 years.

> This decline in mental health is greater than any other age or gender group, according to the research.
>
> The study also found that women in general suffer more mental problems – or

> talk about it more -with 21.5 per cent complaining of stress or depression compared to 13.6 per cent of men.
>
> Mental health charity Mind said women in their 40s and 50s were becoming increasingly affected by trying to manage the responsibilities of family, home and work.

> The figures emerged as the independent psychiatric Capio Nightingale Hospital reported a 20 per cent rise in enquiries relating to depression since the start of the year, many related to financial pressures.
>
> The NHS Information Centre report, entitled the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2007, was carried out by the National Centre for Social Research and the University of Leicester and questioned 7,461 adults.
>
> It followed on from two similar NHS studies carried out in England in 1993 and 2000.
>
> The report concluded that the number of 45 to 64 year old women with a common mental disorder rose from 20.5 per cent in 1993 to 25.2 per cent in 2007.
>
> The survey also found that the number of women aged between 16 and 74 who reported thinking suicidal thoughts in the previous year rose from 4.2 per cent in 2000 to 5.5 per cent in 2007.
>
> Dr Peter Byrne, director of public education at the Royal College of Psychiatrists, said the role of woman had changed significantly in the last 15 years.
>
> “This particular age group was probably reared by their stay-at-home mothers and they are almost certainly now working mothers, who face the financial pressure of being part of a two income family,” he said.

It’s also important to pick a woman who can be made happy by things that the man can do. I think the wise man has to be careful to choose a woman whose interests are not based on her emotions but on a plan with outward-facing goals. Someone who likes to work at projects and get things done, rather than be dominated by her feelings. Someone who tries to control her feelings when she sees that they are not rooted in reality.

I think it’s a better situation for a man where he is in a relationship with a woman where he can do things in the world and that will drive her emotions. The situation to avoid is where a woman’s emotions are not rooted in anything in the real world and she in’t impressed by what a man does that accomplishes tasks to achieve specific goals that she is passionate about. You want to avoid a woman who is concerns about Betty Friedan’s “the problem that has no name” and one who is impressed with the apologetics course that you are teaching at the church.

You don’t want a woman who says “I’m depressed and since I don’t care about anything except my feelings and victimhood, nothing you can do for me impresses me”. You want a woman who says “I’m depressed but if you do things in the real world that help to

achieve goals that I care about, then I'll feel better". This is something that has to be tested for in the courtship. At the very least, women ought to know how to identify when they are being tricked by their emotions. They have to be able to talk it out and see that there is nothing specific that is bothering them, and then realize that their feelings are playing tricks on them.

New study : Earth’s climate is not as sensitive to carbon dioxide as IPCC claims

December 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this article from the Economist concerning some recent research that was published in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal *Science*.

Excerpt:

> Climate science is famously complicated, but one useful number to keep in mind is “climate sensitivity”. This measures the amount of warming that can eventually be expected to follow a doubling in the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its most recent summary of the science behind its predictions, published in 2007, estimated that, in present conditions, a doubling of CO2 would cause warming of about 3°C, with uncertainty of about a degree and a half in either direction.
>
> […]But a paper published in this week’s *Science*, by Andreas Schmittner of Oregon State University, suggests it is not. In Dr Schmittner’s analysis, the climate is less sensitive to carbon dioxide than was feared.
>
> Existing studies of climate sensitivity mostly rely on data gathered from weather stations, which go back to roughly 1850. Dr Schmittner takes a different approach. His data come from the peak of the most recent ice age, between 19,000 and 23,000 years ago. His group is not the first to use such data (ice cores, fossils, marine sediments and the like) to probe the climate’s sensitivity to carbon dioxide. But their paper is the most thorough. Previous attempts had considered only small regions of the globe. He has compiled enough information to make a credible stab at recreating the climate of the entire planet.
>
> […]The group’s most likely figure for climate sensitivity is 2.3°C, which is more than half a degree lower than the consensus figure, with a 66% probability that it lies between 1.7° and 2.6°C. More importantly, these results suggest an upper limit for climate sensitivity of around 3.2°C.

I think that it is a good thing for the reputation of scientists that articles like this can be published at all. I have lost a lot of confidence in government-funded science lately, especially when the conclusion of the government-funded research supports the need for more government and high taxes.

In case you missed my recent post on the newly-release Climategate e-mails, then you should read that to see how biased climate scientists can be.

Here are the latest surface temperature measurements.

Evaluating common criticisms of American health care

December 5, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a must-read article from my friend Matt Palumbo at the American Thinker. It's extremely high quality. (I removed the links in my excerpt – but he linked all the sources in his post)

Excerpt:

> The oft-cited "46 million uninsured" is breathtakingly easy to break down to size. Keep in mind that there is overlap in the following statistics, as many people listed in them belong to multiple categories. Around 10 million of the uninsured aren't even citizens. Another 8 million are aged 18-24, which is the group least prone to medical problems. The average salary of a person in this age group is $31,790, so affording health care would not be a problem. Seventeen million of the uninsured make over $50,000 a year, and within that group, 8 million make over $75,000. These people are usually referred to as the "voluntarily uninsured." Another large group of these 46 million are uninsured in name only, as they are eligible for government programs that they haven't signed up for. Estimates on how large this group is vary, the range being from 5.4 million as estimated by the Kaiser Family Foundation to as large as one third of all the uninsured, as estimated by BlueCross BlueShield. The number of people without care because they cannot afford it is around 6 million — still a large number, but a fraction of 46 million, and no reason to restructure the entire health care system.
>
> Then comes the issue of lifespan. Of all attempts to discredit the American system, lifespan has been the worst. Although lifespan gives a good indicator of a nation's health at a glance, it does have its problems under analysis. We get a strange paradox when examining two statistics: life expectancy and cancer survival rates. Estimates vary on how we rank exactly; the World Fact Book showing that we rank as poorly as 50th worldwide. Even the best estimates in our favor place us far behind most developed nations. Despite this, the United States excels at cancer survival. Of the 16 most common cancers, the United States has the highest survival rate for 13 of them. Overall, the five-year cancer survival rate for men in the States is 66.3%, and 47.3% in Europe. Women have an advantage too, with a survival rate of 62.9% in the States, and 55.8% in Europe. So that said, how is it that our system takes better care of us, and doesn't grant added lifespan to boot? Quite simply, the lifespan measurement commonly cited doesn't factor in many variables which shorten lifespan, many of which medical care cannot prevent. Among these factors are murders, suicides, obesity, and accidents.

He looks at the uninsured number, the infant mortality rate, and other interesting things in the article, showing how the statistics that impugn the US health care system have been misused. There are some good articles linked, like this post from Commentary magazine by Scott Atlas, entitled “The Worst Study Ever?”. Atlas is the same guy who listed out how the US health care system compares to others, which I blogged about before.

You can check out Matt’s blog “The Conscience of a Young Conservative“. Not sure how scalable that blog name is. Because of the “young” part, not because of the conscience or conservative part.

Praxman interviews professor Ditchkins and Zeitgeistscheizer

December 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

More humor:

And:

These are from Justin Bierley, who hosts the Unbelievable radio show in the UK.

Did the early Christians believe in an eternal hell or annihilationism?

December 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Please Convince Me. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Introduction:

> As we seek to understand what the Bible teaches about Hell, it may be helpful to understand what the earliest believers believed and taught. The teachings of the early believers have been preserved for us in the writings of the earliest church leaders (known as the Early Church Fathers). While their writings are not canonical (they are not on par with the words of the Bible), they do help us to see what those closest to the apostles first understood as Biblical Truth.
>
> As we assemble the teachings of these first church leaders, several patterns emerge related to the nature of Hell. The Early Church Fathers, with very few exceptions, agree with the teaching of the Bible in the way they describe Hell:

> *1. Hell is a place of judgment for those who have rejected God and denied Jesus as their Savior*
> *2. Hell is a place of separation from God*
> *3. Hell is a place of torment in which the rebellious are in anguish and pain*
> *4. Hell is a place where the rebellious are tormented forever and are CONSCIOUS of this torment for all eternity (In fact, the eternal duration of their torment is often compared to the eternal duration of the reward of the saved)*

> At the same time, the earliest Church Fathers are ambiguous on those areas where the Bible is ALSO ambiguous.

> *1. The exact nature of the torment of the rebellious is unknown*
> *2. The manner in which the rebellious are kept alive in spite of 'deathly' anguish is also un-described*

> The Early Church Fathers simply reflected the clearest teachings of the Bible related to the nature of Hell. They believed that Hell was a place of eternal conscious torment, reflecting the clearest teaching of the scriptures (more on that HERE).

Excerpt:

> From Ignatius of Antioch (110AD)
>
> Ignatius was a student of the Apostle John, and succeeded the Apostle Peter as the Bishop of Antioch. He wrote a number of important letters to believers in churches in the area:
>
> Corrupters of families will not inherit the kingdom of God. And if they who do

these things according to the flesh suffer death. how much more if a man corrupt by evil reaching the faith of God. for the sake of which Jesus Christ was crucified? A man become so foul will depart into unquenchable fire: and so will anyone who listens to him. (Letter to the Ephesians 16:1-2)

From Clement of Rome (150AD)

Clement was Bishop of Rome from 88 to 98AD, and his teaching reflects the early traditions of the Church. “Second Clement” reportedly a recorded sermon, and Clement discusses the nature of Hell:

If we do the will of Christ, we shall obtain rest; but if not, if we neglect his commandments, nothing will rescue us from eternal punishment (“Second Clement” 5:5)

But when they see how those who have sinned and who have denied Jesus by their words or by their deeds are punished with terrible torture in unquenchable fire, the righteous, who have done good, and who have endured tortures and have hated the luxuries of life, will give glory to their God saying, ‘There shall be hope for him that has served God with all his heart!’ (“Second Clement” 17:7)

From Irenaeus (189AD)

Irenaeus was bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul (now Lyon, France) at the end of the second century. He was a disciple of Polycarp and a notable early apologist for the faith. He wrote several volumes defending the faith against Gnosticism and other early heresies of the Church, and he often compared eternal punishment to eternal reward, drawing the conclusion that one endured as long as the other:

…Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, ‘every knee should bow, of things in heaven,, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess’ to Him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all; that He may send ‘spiritual wickednesses,’ and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning of their Christian course, and others from the date of their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory. (“Against Heresies” 1:10:10)

The penalty increases for those who do not believe the Word of God and despise his coming. . . . [I]t is not merely temporal, but eternal. To whomsoever the Lord shall say, ‘Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire,’ they will be damned forever (“Against Heresies” 4:28:2)

From Clement of Alexandria (195AD)

Titus Flavius Clemens was the first significant and recorded Christian from the church of Alexandria, Egypt. His parents were Greek and he was raised with a

> solid, formal Greek education. While he had a tendency to blend Greek and Christian philosophies, his view on the issue of Hell was derived from the scriptures:
>
> All souls are immortal, even those of the wicked. Yet, it would be better for them if they were not deathless. For they are punished with the endless vengeance of quenchless fire. Since they do not die, it is impossible for them to have an end put to their misery. (from a post-Nicene manuscript fragment)
>
> From Tertullian (197AD)
>
> Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus was a Romanized African citizen who was born in Carthage (now Tunisia). He became a Christian and was a powerful and influential apologist for the faith, writing prolifically in defense of the doctrines of orthodoxy:
>
> These have further set before us the proofs He has given of His majesty in judgments by floods and fires, the rules appointed by Him for securing His favor, as well as the retribution in store for the ignoring, forsaking and keeping them, as being about at the end of all to adjudge His worshippers to everlasting life, and the wicked to the doom of fire at once without ending and without break, raising up again all the dead from the beginning, reforming and renewing them with the object of awarding either recompense. (“Apology” 18:3)
>
> Then will the entire race of men be restored to receive its just deserts according to what it has merited in this period of good and evil, and thereafter to have these paid out in an immeasurable and unending eternity. Then there will be neither death again nor resurrection again, but we shall be always the same as we are now, without changing. The worshipers of God shall always be with God, clothed in the proper substance of eternity. But the godless and those who have not turned wholly to God will be punished in fire equally unending, and they shall have from the very nature of this fire, divine as it were, a supply of incorruptibility (“Apology” 44:12–13)
>
> Therefore after this there is neither death nor repeated resurrections, but we shall be the same that we are now, and still unchanged–the servants of God, ever with God, clothed upon with the proper substance of eternity; but the profane, and all who are not true worshippers of God, in like manner shall be consigned to the punishment of everlasting fire–that fire which, from its very nature indeed, directly ministers to their incorruptibility. (“Apology” 48:12)

Just to be clear, I am one of those Christians who holds to the traditional doctrine of hell. Eternal, conscious punishment for eternity. I think most, if not all, people who object to the traditional doctrine of hell do it for one reason only – because they don’t want to appear to be mean, so that non-Christians will like them. Well, I don’t think there is any wiggle room here – conscious, eternal torment is what the Bible teaches, and what the earliest Christians believed.

Having said that, if someone has a *historical* case to make, then I’d like to see how they

interpret the Bible and where the line of tradition is for their view. There is always room for scholars to make a case against the traditional view, but that case has to be on the merits. But I think for the vast majority of people who reject the traditional notion of hell, they are just asserting their emotions and intuitions over the Bible and the traditional interpretations of the early church. I don't think that wanting to feel "nicer" than others, or wanting to be liked by others, is a good rationale for overruling the text and the traditional interpretations.

Related posts

- Jim Wallace explains and defends the doctrine of Hell (podcasts)
- Does God scare people into loving him with the threat of Hell?
- Is it ok to judge people? Is Hell a real place?
- Why doesn't God gives us more evidence that he exists?
- Book review of "If there's a God, why are there atheists?"
- Should you reject the Biblical notion of Hell based on emotions?
- Why do people go to Hell?
- Why are some Christians uncomfortable with the doctrine of Hell?
- How can Christians become more comfortable with the doctrine of Hell?

Should Christians give money to help the poor or to apologists and scholars?

December 6, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from Triablogue, the Internet lair of the most fearsome Calvinist bloggers! Excerpt:

> As you make donations over this Christmas season, are you including apologetics ministries in your giving? People will donate many millions of dollars to helping the poor, finding cures for diseases, and other such causes. Governments, universities, and other segments of society will also invest large amounts of money in such things. On an average day, you might hear a few advertisements for charities on the radio, see a few more on television, see a couple others in a magazine, and get an email about one from your employer. Part of the money you earn by going to work will go to government programs intended to do things like providing food and shelter for the poor, in this country and around the world. These efforts involve a tremendous number of organizations and individuals and a tremendous amount of time and money, among other resources. But you'll rarely be encouraged to give a single penny to any apologetic work.
>
> One of the excuses sometimes cited to justify Christian neglect of apologetics is that God doesn't need apologetics in order to work in people's lives. He doesn't need to use something like a philosophical, historical, or scientific argument.
>
> Let's apply that same reasoning to other areas of life. God doesn't need our prayers. Let's stop praying. Or just let a tiny minority of the church do it occasionally. God also doesn't need Bible translators and publishers, and He doesn't need to have you read the Bible. He can just implant the information directly into your heart. He also doesn't need parents. Or pastors. He's omnipotent. He can accomplish things without using us. Let's not just neglect apologetics. Let's neglect these other things, too, and see what happens.
>
> I'm convinced that one of the most significant weaknesses of the modern church is a neglect of apologetics. And we're living in an information age, when apologetics is even more important than it was previously. What if God sometimes allows us to suffer the normal consequences of our intellectual carelessness? What if, instead of constantly supernaturally intervening in order to make up for our neglect, He sometimes lets us suffer the natural consequences of our bad choices?
>
> Ideas have consequences, and persuading people to hold one belief rather than another can have major significance. It's something that can "greatly help" (Acts 18:27-28). If you give money to alleviate something like poverty or a disease, then why not give money to uproot *ideas* that produce those symptoms? We're often focused more on shallow solutions than ones that are deeper and more

> lasting. We give money in response to poverty, a tsunami, or the spread of a disease, but we give much less, if anything, in response to the false ideas that surround us. Instead of feeling guilty for giving money to an apologetics ministry rather than something like a ministry that helps the poor, we ought to feel guilty for giving such a low percentage of our donations to apologetic work. If you give all of your donations to non-apologetic causes and none to apologetics, the world will applaud you. But we should be judging things by a different standard.

That's a perfect post, and I left some of it out. The Triabloguers also give a list of charities that they support, and I support those too.

But here are the ones I personally like best: (in alphabetical order)

- Brian Auten (Apologetics 315)
- Scott Klusendorf (Life Training Institute)
- Michael Licona (Risen Jesus)
- Frank Turek (Cross Examined)
- Jim Wallace (Please Convince Me)

Jim Wallace is a bit of a neat case, because as far as I can tell, he doesn't accept donations. But I list him here anyway, because I respect him highly.

And by the way, if you know any Christian scholars who are busy getting their undergraduate and graduate degrees, why not fire them a book or two? I have five good friends on Facebook who are working hard on their degrees, and it's a good thing for us to take an interest in their progress.

UPDATE: Justin Brierley, the force behind the recent Reasonable Faith UK Speaking Tour, writes this in the comments:

> Well since we're in a generous mood… follow the link below to contribute towards funding the production of the videos from the UK Reasonable Faith Tour!
>
> http://www.bethinking.org/what-is-apologetics/introductory/helping-fund-the-reasonable-faith-tour.htm

Not a bad idea. Getting the recordings of those debates out there is good work, and deserves funding.

How do donor-conceived children cope with not knowing their biological fathers?

December 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sends me this article from Life Site News. This is a must-read.

Excerpt:

> There are only four things Alana Stewart knows about her father: he has blonde hair, blue eyes, a college degree, and his assigned number at the sperm bank where he sold half of Alana's genetic code is 81.
>
> She is one of an estimated 30,000 – 60,000 children conceived each year in the United States through sperm donation. A former egg donor herself, Alana is now a vocal critic of the practice, which she calls "the violent act of buying and selling a child."
>
> […]Many of the children conceived through sperm donation are now adults, and some of them are speaking out against the practice that brought them into existence.
>
> Their stories are revealing that the experience of being a donor conceived child is not what many proponents of the technology expected it would be. Such children were supposed to think of the man married to their mother as their father, and of their biological father as just the man who masturbated at a sperm bank and walked away with a $75 check. But according to Alana, it's not that simple.
>
> "The biological parent's absence is impossible to ignore because their presence is impossible to ignore – when you're living in a version of their body and thinking in a version of their brain," she told LifeSiteNews. "I do very much feel separated from not only my father, but my entire paternal relatives."

And more:

> My Daddy's Name is Donor, a report released last year by the Commission on Parenthood's Future, surveyed young adults conceived through sperm donation and compared their responses to those of peers raised by adopted parents and biological parents.
>
> The study found that 43% of donor offspring compared to 15% of adopted children and 6% who were raised by biological parents agreed with the statement: "I feel confused about who is a member of my family and who is not."
>
> Moreover, 48% of donor offspring compared to only 19% of adopted children agreed: "When I see friends with their biological fathers and mothers, it makes me feel sad."
>
> Strikingly, the report also found indications of a correlation between sperm donor conception and marriage failure.

> 27% of donor children parents are divorced compared to only 14% of parents of adopted children. The number of donor child marriages that fail is only slightly higher than the failure rate of a marriage with biological children – 25%. As the study points out, however, the comparison with adoptive parents is more significant because most couples do not consider fertility technology or adoption until later in life, when marriages tend to be more stable.
>
> For Stewart, the finding is consistent with her own experience. "Mothers can say things like, 'Well it's not your kid anyways.' The father is left constantly insecure about his place and role in the family," she said.
>
> She added that turning to sperm or egg donation to conceive a child can be evidence of a "materialistic" attitude on the part of the couple.
>
> "They are people that find it difficult to accept not having something and often put their own needs before others (i.e. their need to have a child before their child's need to have its father/mother), and these personalities often fail in marriage."

This is why Christians fight so hard against challenges to the parent-child bond. We oppose depriving children of a relationship with both of their biological parents. We do not want them to feel pain because of the selfishness of adults. When you make marriage fragile with no-fault divorce, or equate traditional marriage to same-sex marriage, you are weakening the standard of every child being born into a stable family where both biological parents are present, and committed to the child over the long-term. That's the gold standard. And that's what we should be celebrating and affirming as a society. Sometimes, you can cause harm to the little ones by trying to make the grown-ups feel better about breaking the standard. We have to err on the side of the children.

Related posts

- A secular case against gay adoption
- A secular case against gay marriage
- A secular case against abortion rights

Gendercide: Planned Parenthood and NARAL oppose ban on sex-selection abortions

December 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Letitia, who blogs at Talitha, Koum, notified me about this article in Life News.

Excerpt:

> As members of Congress hold a hearing today on legislation that would ban sex-selection abortions and abortions done if the unborn child is of a specific race, leading pro-abortion advocacy groups are strongly opposed to it.
>
> Their opposition could explain why organizations like Planned Parenthood, NARAL and the ACLU almost never speak out against the horrible human rights abuses associated with the one-child policy in China – ranging from sex-selection abortions, to forced abortions, to coercive sterilizations and infanticides.
>
> […]Planned Parenthood, NARAL, ACLU and a total of 30 pro-abortion groups banded together for a letter opposing the legislation, the Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act.
>
> The claim the bill, sponsored by pro-life Rep. Trent Franks, an Arizona Republican, is "simply more of the same from the anti-choice extremists choice extremists in the House" and they urged a no vote on it.
>
> "[T]he bill will effectively exacerbate already existing disparities by limiting some women's access to comprehensive reproductive health care and penalizing health care providers," they allege.
>
> They claim: "Instead of addressing health disparities and ensuring accessible and culturally competent medical care for all women, the Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act will further isolate and stigmatize some women — particularly those in the Asian American and Pacific Islander and African American communities — from exercising their fundamental human right to make and implement decisions about their reproductive lives."
>
> Nancy Northup, President of Center for Reproductive Rights talked about her group's opposition to the bill with Fox News and said it is an "anti-choice" measure that she claims is a "trumped up bill for a trumped up problem," and a "ridiculous waste of congressional resources at a time when the U.S. economy is faltering."
>
> "This bill is a cynical and offensive attempt to evoke race and sex discrimination when actually it's about taking women's rights away," she said.

Got that? If you want to kill a baby simply because it's a girl, and you wanted a boy, then Planned Parenthood and NARAL are all in favor of that. They support sex-selection abortions. They don't just permit it, they lobby in favor of it. That's how "pro-woman"

they are.

Here's an article from the Economist that explains how gendercide is happening in India and China.

Excerpt:

> In January 2010 the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) showed what can happen to a country when girl babies don't count. Within ten years, the academy said, one in five young men would be unable to find a bride because of the dearth of young women—a figure unprecedented in a country at peace.
>
> The number is based on the sexual discrepancy among people aged 19 and below. According to CASS, China in 2020 will have 30m-40m more men of this age than young women. For comparison, there are 23m boys below the age of 20 in Germany, France and Britain combined and around 40m American boys and young men. So within ten years, China faces the prospect of having the equivalent of the whole young male population of America, or almost twice that of Europe's three largest countries, with little prospect of marriage, untethered to a home of their own and without the stake in society that marriage and children provide.
>
> Gendercide—to borrow the title of a 1985 book by Mary Anne Warren—is often seen as an unintended consequence of China's one-child policy, or as a product of poverty or ignorance. But that cannot be the whole story. The surplus of bachelors—called in China *guanggun*, or "bare branches"— seems to have accelerated between 1990 and 2005, in ways not obviously linked to the one-child policy, which was introduced in 1979. And, as is becoming clear, the war against baby girls is not confined to China.
>
> Parts of India have sex ratios as skewed as anything in its northern neighbour. Other East Asian countries—South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan—have peculiarly high numbers of male births. So, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, have former communist countries in the Caucasus and the western Balkans. Even subsets of America's population are following suit, though not the population as a whole.
>
> The real cause, argues Nick Eberstadt, a demographer at the American Enterprise Institute, a think-tank in Washington, DC, is not any country's particular policy but "the fateful collision between overweening son preference, the use of rapidly spreading prenatal sex-determination technology and declining fertility." These are global trends. And the selective destruction of baby girls is global, too.
>
> Boys are slightly more likely to die in infancy than girls. To compensate, more boys are born than girls so there will be equal numbers of young men and women at puberty. In all societies that record births, between 103 and 106 boys are normally born for every 100 girls. The ratio has been so stable over time that

> it appears to be the natural order of things.
>
> That order has changed fundamentally in the past 25 years. In China the sex ratio for the generation born between 1985 and 1989 was 108, already just outside the natural range. For the generation born in 2000-04, it was 124 (ie, 124 boys were born in those years for every 100 girls). According to CASS the ratio today is 123 boys per 100 girls. These rates are biologically impossible without human intervention.

Letitia has written a post about the prevalence of sex-selection abortions in the Asian community. Go here to read that. And Letitia also writes about the legalization of sex-selection abortions in Sweden here.

You can learn more about the Republican bill to end sex-selection and race-selection abortions.

Women in business report that regulatory uncertainty hurts job growth

December 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Independent Women's Forum explains what happened at a panel discussion of women CEOs.

Excerpt:

> Rep. Cathy McMorris-Rodgers hosted a panel discussion on Capitol Hill today that focused on the economy and job creation. All of the panelists were CEOs. All of them were women.
>
> In their opening remarks, one word was mentioned by every panelist: uncertainty.
>
> Another word, that went hand-in-hand with the uncertainty that America's job creators are facing was "regulations." This word was also mentioned by every panelist.
>
> Sandra Parrillo, President & CEO of Providence Mutual Fire Insurance, said that, as a property and casuality insurance company, they are very familiar with risk. This year has been unprecedented in the amount of claims they've paid out due to an usually high number of natural disasters. But Parrillo said her company faces enough uncertainty from nature; they don't need uncertainty coming from Washington, DC, where hundreds of new rules are being written – often to solve problems that don't really exist.
>
> Lisa Hook, President & CEO, Neustar, Inc., said, "The outcome of the budget is less important to us than that there is a budget." Her company is traded on the stock market, and she says that the uncertainty fueling the ups and downs of the market, often driven by headlines from D.C., affects her business and her borrowing costs.
>
> Several of the panelists derided Congress for failing to pass a budget for FY 2011. They want to know that Congress is working to get its fiscal house in order. They want to know what to expect from the executive branch as well, rather than having to readjust their budgets to deal with costly new regulations as soon as they are written.
>
> Alison Brown, President & CEO, NAVSYS Corporation, went on to explain how difficult it is for small businesses to find access to working capital. She said, "I have had to become my own bank." Her company isn't publicly traded, and she pointed to Dodd-Frank and Sarbanes-Oxley as two laws that have wrestled working capital from the hands of small business.
>
> Catherine Heigel, President of Duke Energy South Carolina, echoed the sentiments of the other panelists. She also pointed out Duke Energy would like

> to repatriate their foreign earnings, but without reform, they would face an effective tax rate of over 50 percent. All of the panelists agreed that certainty (that often comes from having more cash available) could be restored to the American economy with regulatory reform, tax reform, and health care reform. They pointed to these three areas as the areas that currently are most burdensome to businesses.
>
> In many ways the panel today was depressing. All of the CEOs recognized that we are in a tough time, and all of them expressed disappointment that they could not expand and add more jobs in the current business climate.

There is a problem on the left where they have this idea that they can seize profits, control businesses, impose politically correct agendas, and engage in judicial activism and businesses will just keep hiring, producing and so on. It’s the ultimate narcissism. Bureaucrats are so busy spending other people’s money and making speeches about how generous they are that they completely forget who is paying the bill.

Should Christians support social justice? Is wealth redistribution good for the poor?

December 7, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Discovery Institute fellow Jonathan Witt pens this article in the American Spectator on the Gospel, business and social justice.

Excerpt:

> The third term, *social justice*, is unlike the other two in its having a justifiable raison d'être. It stretches back to 19th century Catholic social thought and was used in the context of nuanced explorations of law, ethics, and justice. Unfortunately, this nuance and precision usually falls away in popular usage, and the term has been co-opted by the left to imply that ordinary justice is a mere tool of the ruling elite, with the real deal being "social justice."
>
> This impoverished meaning needs to be addressed. If a society extends justice to the rich and well-connected but allows the poor to be bullied and swindled by corrupt players inside and outside of the government, the problem isn't unsocial justice but a lack of justice. If the poor in many developing nations can't get access to credit or the courts because they can't register their businesses, and they can't register their businesses because they don't have the bribe money and connections to navigate a byzantine regulatory maze, the problem is injustice, plain and simple. Such a society doesn't need a social brand of justice any more than a poor neighborhood without stores needs a *social grocery store*. The neighborhood needs an ordinary grocery store, and the unjust society needs basic justice. Grocery stores and justice are already intrinsically social.
>
> More than accurate semantics is at stake here. Often the popular call for "social justice" boils down to an ill-conceived call for coercive wealth transfers — for instance, getting rich countries to transfer more of their tax revenues to the governments of poor countries as foreign aid. It'd be nice if this approach actually helped the poor, since we've been using it for the past 60 years. Unfortunately, the statistical and narrative testimony on this strategy hovers between mixed and scandalous.
>
> The reasons for this are complex but not so complex as to excuse the status quo. Much of the aid money gets quietly funneled into the pockets of corrupt politicians. In other cases the aid money reaches its intended target but, since the aid money is fungible, it still supports bad actors. It does so by freeing a regime of the political necessity of paying for the schools, road projects and emergency relief already covered by the foreign assistance. This, in turn, allows the regimes to spend more of their tax revenues for enhancing their own wealth and power.
>
> Worse, the small fraction of aid money that actually reaches its intended

> destination often puts indigenous producers out of business, since it's difficult to compete against free goods from abroad. Haiti's rice farmers, for instance, once exported rice, but today their livelihoods have been all but wiped out by subsidized U.S. rice dumped on the country as foreign aid.
>
> Add to all of this international "social justice" the devastating cultural effects of America's welfare state. The neighborhoods flooded with 50 years of this domestic "social justice" now face far higher levels of criminal injustice and anti-social behavior than before the justice arrived.
>
> Much of the problem stems from welfare's effect on the institution of the family. The percentage of children being raised by both of their biological parents in America's poorest neighborhoods used to be low and fairly comparable to what was found in middle and upper class neighborhoods, but the Great Society programs of the 1960s changed that.
>
> As George Gilder put it in *Wealth and Poverty*, the underclass husband and father was "cuckolded by the compassionate state," a violation which has incited "that very combination of resignation and rage, escapism and violence, short horizons and promiscuous sexuality that characterizes everywhere the life of the poor."
>
> Yale University sociologist Elijah Anderson put it almost as bluntly in a 1989 journal article: "It has become increasingly socially acceptable for a young woman to have children out of wedlock — significantly, with the help of a regular welfare check."
>
> The plain testimony of history is that the left's strategy for saving the poor has been a tragic failure. It has stifled development in poor countries, bred a fatherless underclass in the United States, and all but bankrupted the European Union. Cloaking all of this in the guise of "social justice" serves only to perpetuate the tragedy.

It turns out that the very people who cry the loudest about wanting to help the poor – by redistributing wealth from those who produce to those who don't – are the ones who incentivize people to make decisions that will make them poorer and expose them to more violence. Sure, there is a certain amount of uncertainty in life, but when you reward failure and punish success, you get more takers and fewer makers. The alternative to taxation and redistribution is to leave wealth in the hands of the individuals and businesses and trust them to make the decision about sharing. When businesses pay less in taxes, they expand – and more people start up new businesses, because they are attracted by the chance to make higher profits. Although letting individuals and business keep their own money is frowned on by the secular left, that's because they themselves project their tendency not to give to charity and create jobs onto everyone else. They don't understand charity and entrepreneurialism, that's why they take money away from people who work and who create wealth.

I do want to say one other thing. I find it troubling when Christians present themselves to me as being social conservative, and fiscally liberal. There is no such thing as a social

conservative and a fiscal liberal. If a person demands that the state provide cheese sandwiches to the children of single mothers in public schools, then it creates more of an incentive to become a single mother, and less of an incentive to marry. That redistribution *lowers* the cost of single motherhood and *raises* the cost of marriage. It has been shown that single motherhood is the leading cause of child poverty – so why would we put into place incentives that encourage people to not make good decisions about sex? Why subsidize people who refuse to exercise self-control in sexual matters? Why make it encourage people to inflict fatherlessness on their own innocent children? Marriage is correlated with increased safety for women and children. Lowering the moral standards and paying people to make mistakes *isn't good for them*. And it's *not good for their children*.

The more you tax those who produce, the fewer of them you get. And the more you subsidize those who collect, the more of them you get. When men see themselves as slaves of the state – working only to be plundered – they stop working and they stop marrying. Why would a man work to feed the children of someone who could not even bother to get married before having babies? Why would a man get married knowing that half of what he earns will go to the state? Let families keep more of their own money, so that families are empowered – and not government. Let families keep their own money so they decide how to spend it, instead of depending on government. Let single mothers have to face the cost of their decisions. Let them ask charities for help, not the government. When people have to ask their neighbors for help, they know that they have done wrong, and that the money they get came from someone who worked for it. That is not there when government taxes and writes them a no-guilt check. Then it's an entitlement, and they don't learn their lesson.

Instead, let individuals and businesses make the decision to help those who *they think* are truly willing to try to improve their lot in life. Those are the ones who need support. When you leave wealth distribution to the government, no one is there to make those moral judgments. And it's worse than that. When government takes over industries like health care, they are often supported by naive pro-lifers who think that wealth redistribution is compassion. But a secular government has no interest in women who stay home to raise their children – they want women to get out into the work force and pay income taxes. A single-payer health care system is *always* going to be pro-abortion for that reason. And any pro-lifer who votes "with their heart" for single-payer health care is a fool. They are, in effect, pro-abortion. Think before you vote.

Obama says that limited government and capitalism have never worked

December 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Obama Economic Record			
	INAUGURATION DAY	TODAY	CHANGE
Unemployed Americans	12 million	14 million	↑ 2 million
Unemployment Rate	7.8%	9.1%	↑ 17%
Gas Prices	$1.85	$3.43	↑ 85%
Federal Debt	$10.6 trillion	$14.7 trillion	↑ 39%
Debt per person	$34,731	$47,047	↑ $12,316
Misery Index	7.8	12.9	↑ 65%
Food Stamp Recipients	32 million	45 million	↑ 41%
Health Insurance Premiums	$3,354	$4,129	↑ 23%
Home Values	$193,400	$172,600	↓ 11%
U.S. Global Competitiveness	1st	5th	↓ 4 places
Americans in Poverty	39.8 million	46.2 million	↑ 6.4 million

Obama Economic Record November 2011

Investors Business Daily explains the latest speech on economics from the man who has *doubled* Bush's 2007 unemployment rate, and increased Bush's 2007 budget deficits *tenfold*.

Excerpt:

> One thing is certainly true about President Obama — no matter how many times people point out the falsehoods in his speeches, he just keeps making them. Case in point: his latest "economic fairness" address.
>
> In that speech Tuesday, Obama once again tried to build a case for his liberal, big-spending, tax-hiking, regulatory agenda. But as with so many of his past appeals, Obama's argument rests on a pile of untruths. Among the most glaring:
>
> • Tax cuts and deregulation have "never worked" to grow the economy. There's so much evidence to disprove this claim, it's hard to know where to start. But let's begin with the fact that countries with greater economic freedom — lower taxes, less government, sound money, free trade — consistently produce greater overall prosperity.
>
> Here at home, President Reagan's program of lower taxes and deregulation led to an historic two-decade economic boom. Plus, states with lower taxes and less

> regulation do better than those that follow Obama's prescription.
>
> Obama also claimed the economic booms in the '50s and '60s somehow support his argument. This is utter nonsense. Taxes at the time averaged just 17% of the economy. And there was no Medicare, no Medicaid, no Departments of Transportation, Energy or Education, and no EPA. Had Obama been around then, he would have decried it all as un-American.
>
> • Bush's tax cuts on the rich only managed to produced "massive deficits" and the "slowest job growth in half a century." Budget data make clear that Obama's spending hikes, not Bush's tax cuts, produced today's massive deficits.
>
> And Obama only gets his "slowest job growth" number by including huge job losses during his own term in office. Also, monthly pre-recession job growth under Bush was about 40% higher than post-recession growth has been under Obama.
>
> • During the Bush years, "we had weak regulation, we had little oversight." This is patently false. Regulatory staffing climbed 42% under Bush, and regulatory spending shot up 50%, according to a Washington University in St. Louis/George Washington University study. And the number of Federal Register pages — a proxy for regulatory activity — was far higher under Bush than any previous president.
>
> • The "wealthiest Americans are paying the lowest taxes in over half a century." Fact: the federal income tax code is now more progressive than it was in 1979, according to the Congressional Budget Office. IRS data show the richest 1% paid almost 40% of federal income taxes in 2009, up from 18% back in 1980.
>
> • We can keep tax breaks for the rich in place, or make needed investments, "but we can't do both." Not true. Repealing the Bush tax cuts on the "rich" would raise only about $70 billion a year, a tiny fraction of projected deficits. With or without the Bush tax cuts, the country can't afford Obama's agenda.

The Heritage Foundation describes the effects of the Bush tax cuts.

Excerpt:

> President Bush signed the first wave of tax cuts in 2001, cutting rates and providing tax relief for families by, for example, doubling of the child tax credit to $1,000.
>
> At Congress' insistence, the tax relief was initially phased in over many years, so the economy continued to lose jobs. In 2003, realizing its error, Congress made the earlier tax relief effective immediately. Congress also lowered tax rates on capital gains and dividends to encourage business investment, which had been lagging.
>
> It was the then that the economy turned around. Within months of enactment, job growth shot up, eventually creating 8.1 million jobs through 2007. Tax

> revenues also increased after the Bush tax cuts, due to economic growth.
>
> In 2003, capital gains tax rates were reduced. Rather than expand by 36% as the Congressional Budget Office projected before the tax cut, capital gains revenues more than doubled to $103 billion.
>
> The CBO incorrectly calculated that the post-March 2003 tax cuts would lower 2006 revenues by $75 billion. Revenues for 2006 came in $47 billion above the pre-tax cut baseline.
>
> Here's what else happened after the 2003 tax cuts lowered the rates on income, capital gains and dividend taxes:
>
> - GDP grew at an annual rate of just 1.7% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the six quarters following the tax cuts, the growth rate was 4.1%.
> - The S&P 500 dropped 18% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts but increased by 32% over the next six quarters.
> - The economy lost 267,000 jobs in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the next six quarters, it added 307,000 jobs, followed by 5 million jobs in the next seven quarters.
>
> The timing of the lower tax rates coincides almost exactly with the stark acceleration in the economy. Nor was this experience unique. The famous Clinton economic boom began when Congress passed legislation cutting spending and cutting the capital gains tax rate.

If, in the 2012 election, half the country decides to vote for the person who gives the best speeches and who is cheered on the Comedy Channel, then we are going to have four more years of 9% unemployment and 1.4 trillion dollar deficits. Barack Obama knows nothing whatsoever about economics.

UPDATE: Obama says that small business owners didn't build their own businesses

New study: the early Earth's atmosphere contained oxygen

December 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a new paper published in the prestigious peer-reviewed science journal *Nature*, entitled "The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere".

Evolution News explains what the paper is about.

Excerpt:

> A recent *Nature* publication reports a new technique for measuring the oxygen levels in Earth's atmosphere some 4.4 billion years ago. The authors found that by studying cerium oxidation states in zircon, a compound formed from volcanic magma, they could ascertain the oxidation levels in the early earth. Their findings suggest that the early Earth's oxygen levels were very close to current levels.
>
> […]Miller and Urey conducted experiments to show that under certain atmospheric conditions and with the right kind of electrical charge, several amino acids could form from inorganic compounds such as methane, ammonia, and water. Several experiments have been done using various inorganic starting materials, all yielding a few amino acids; however, one key aspect of all of these experiments was the lack of oxygen.
>
> If the atmosphere has oxygen (or other oxidants) in it, then it is an oxidizing atmosphere. If the atmosphere lacks oxygen, then it is either inert or a reducing atmosphere. Think of a metal that has been left outside, maybe a piece of iron. That metal will eventually rust. Rusting is the result of the metal being oxidized. With organic reactions, such as the ones that produce amino acids, it is very important that no oxygen be present, or it will quench the reaction. Scientists, therefore, concluded that the early Earth must have been a reducing environment when life first formed (or the building blocks of life first formed) because that was the best environment for producing amino acids. The atmosphere eventually accumulated oxygen, but life did not form in an oxidative environment.
>
> The problem with this hypothesis is that it is based on the assumption that organic life must have formed from inorganic materials. That is why the early Earth must have been a reducing atmosphere. Research has been accumulating for more than thirty years, however, suggesting that the early Earth likely did have oxygen present.
>
> […]This brings us back to that *Nature* letter, which offers another reason to question the reducing environment of the early Earth. The authors looked at the

> cerium oxidation levels within zircon. Zircon is a hard rock that forms from the solidification of magma. Several studies have been done with zircon because of its age and durability. (See here for a report on using zircon to determine when oceans and land were present on Earth.) Cerium (Ce) is an element that can be found in early Earth zircon. The ratio of cerium's +3 and +4 oxidation states indicates the environmental conditions at the time the cerium was trapped in the zircon. Specifically, cerium's oxidation ratio is related to the amount of oxygen in the atmosphere. The authors created cerium-infused zircon in the lab at various oxidative ratios to make a calibration curve to which they could then compare the early Earth samples.
>
> Their findings not only showed that oxygen was present in the early Earth atmosphere, something that has been shown in other studies, but that oxygen was present as early as 4.4 billion years ago. This takes the window of time available for life to have begun, by an origin-of-life scenario like the RNA-first world, and reduces it to an incredibly short amount of time. Several factors need to coincide in order for nucleotides or amino acids to form from purely naturalistic circumstances (chance and chemistry). The specific conditions required already made purely naturalist origin-of-life scenarios highly unlikely. Drastically reducing the amount of time available, adding that to the other conditions needing to be fulfilled, makes the RNA world hypothesis or a Miller-Urey-like synthesis of amino acids simply impossible.

So here's where we stand. If you are a materialist, then you need a reducing environment on the early Earth in order to get organic building blocks (amino acids) from inorganic materials. However, the production of these organic building blocks (amino acids) *requires* that the early Earth atmosphere be oxygen-free. And the problem with this new research, which confirms previous research, is that the early Earth contained huge amounts of oxygen – the same amount of oxygen as we have today. This is lethal to naturalistic scenarios for creating the building blocks of life on the Earth's surface.

Other problems

If you would like to read a helpful overview of the problems with a naturalistic scenario for the origin of life, check out this article by Casey Luskin.

Excerpt:

> The "origin of life" (OOL) is best described as the chemical and physical processes that brought into existence the first self-replicating molecule. It differs from the "evolution of life" because Darwinian evolution employs mutation and natural selection to change organisms, which requires reproduction. Since there was no reproduction before the first life, no "mutation – selection" mechanism was operating to build complexity. Hence, OOL theories cannot rely upon natural selection to increase complexity and must create the first life using only the laws of chemistry and physics.

> There are so many problems with purely natural explanations for the chemical origin of life on earth that many scientists have already abandoned all hopes that life had a natural origin on earth. Skeptical scientists include Francis Crick (solved the 3-dimensional structure of DNA[1]) and Fred Hoyle (famous British cosmologist and mathematician), who, in an attempt to retain their atheistic worldviews, then propose outrageously untestable cosmological models or easily falsifiable extra-terrestrial-origin-of-life / panspermia scenarios[2] which still do not account for the natural origin of life. So drastic is the evidence that Scientific American editor John Horgan wrote, "[i]f I were a creationist, I would cease attacking the theory of evolution … and focus instead on the origin of life. This is by far the weakest strut of the chassis of modern biology."[3]

The article goes over the standard problems with naturalistic scenarios of the origin of life: wrong atmosphere, harmful UV radiation, interfering cross-reactions, molecular oxygen, meteorite impacts, chirality, etc.

Charles Thaxton explains the origin of life

Here's a helpful little video on the problem from origin of life chemist Charles Thaxton, who authored "The Mystery of Life's Origin" with Walter Bradley and Roger Olsen.

There's another video like this one featuring Dean Kenyon, and you can get the video clips online here. I really wish someone would post it online. I have the video and ripped it from my VHS tape, so maybe I should do it! It's a great interview. Both of these videos (Thaxton, Kenyon) are highly recommended for intermediate and advanced Christians. For beginners, I would recommed "Unlocking the Mystery of Life", which you can watch for free right here:

If you are looking for a hot issue to put some time into, then this is a good place to start. And note that this problem of the building blocks of life is *logically prior* to the problem of forming functional sequences of amino acids (e.g. – proteins), which people like Stephen C. Meyer debate about. In debates on the origin of life, ID people usually just assume that the amino acids exist, and then get on with discussing the problem of generating sequences of amino acids and base pairs into sequences that exhibit specified complexity. But as you see from the research, it's an unwarranted assumption – those building blocks are not a given, and the naturalist has to account for them.

Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home

December 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBS News. (H/T Wes from Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> It's the last thing two burglary suspects expected to hear when they broke into a Coon Rapids home. From within the house came the unmistakable sound of a pump shotgun. At the other end of that gun was a 22-year-old woman who is nine weeks pregnant.
>
> The young woman asked not to be identified because the two suspects are still at large. However, she says when the men ignored her barking pit bull and black lab, and broke through a kitchen door, she had no other choice but to chamber a round into the 12-gauge shotgun.
>
> There's perhaps no other sound that commands as much respect and fear. The young woman at the business end of that gun was home alone and prepared to protect herself.
>
> […]With a single pump of her 12-gauge shotgun, the would-be burglars bolted out the door and through the backyard.
>
> "Yes, a shotgun racking is something you don't forget if you've ever heard one. So, it frightened these two suspects off right away, they took off running," said Coon Rapids Police Captain John Hattstrom.
>
> They ran across the backyard and into a nearby church parking lot where they were seen getting into a two-door, newer model automobile. But they didn't escape without notice. The woman was able to get a long look at the two and provided police with a description.

The thing that liberals never understand about legally-owned firearms is that the people who own them are law-abiding people and they would prefer *not to have to fire the weapon at all* when they have to use the weapon to deter or halt a crime. This is known as peace through strength – the best way to stop an evil person from doing something evil is to raise the cost of doing evil. And weapons in the hands of law abiding people accomplishes that.

For those who would like to know what the Bible says about self-defense, check out this podcast featuring famous theologian Wayne Grudem.

The case for legal firearm ownership… in videos!

ABC News explains in this short 6-minute clip:

And here is a longer 44-minute show from Fox Business: (featuring a debate between economist John Lott and the Brady Campaign spokesman)

There are other debates in the show as well.

Neurosurgeon calls Mark Levin show and explains what Obamacare really does

December 8, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this on my friend Wes' Facebook page.

Consider this news story from the UK, where they have a massive state-run health care system called the National Health Service.

Excerpt:

> A young woman who is starving to death after being diagnosed with a paralysed stomach has been told that NHS bosses refuse to fund an operation to save her.
>
> Rudi Hargreaves, 22, has shrunk from a healthy 10st to a skeletal 5st 10lb after being diagnosed with the crippling condition last year.
>
> Within weeks of being diagnosed with gastroparesis, Rudi found her size 12 clothes were hanging off her – as her stomach became unable to digest food at a normal rate.
>
> The condition can be treated with a £14,000 operation to fit a gastric pacemaker – although this is still considered to be an experimental treatment.
>
> But health chiefs have refused to fund the surgery, saying 'insufficient supporting information' has been provided by her GP.
>
> […]A spokesperson for NHS Hull said: 'To date, the application in question has not been agreed as, crucially, insufficient supporting information has been provided to allow due consideration to take place.
>
> 'Any requested procedures must also fall in line with the provider trust's priorities for service development and delivery.
>
> 'The patient's clinician has been invited to provide the necessary clarification, receipt of which should enable the patient's case to be progressed within the PCT.'

What's even more troubling is the situation in countries like Canada, where the government decides whether you will be treated. And worse, if they deny you treatment, you *cannot* pay for treatment out of pocket. You have to leave the country and pay someone else out of pocket for the treatment, even though you have have already paid some huge amount of your earned income into the system for many years – which will go to treat other people who need abortions, breast implants , sex changes and IVF. So your money is good enough for them to collect over your life, but when you need treatment, you may not be allowed to get it, and you may not even have the money (after taxes) to go abroad for treatment.

Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership

December 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Newly obtained documents show that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives discussed using its covert operation Fast and Furious to argue for new rules about gun sales. We told you so.
>
> […]As CBS' Sharyl Attkisson reports, emails show ATF officials discussed using the deliberate transfer of weapons to Mexican drug cartels to justify a new gun regulation known as "Demand Letter 3."
>
> We say deliberate because congressional testimony by ATF agents demonstrates how the tracking of Fast and Furious weapons stopped at the border and that requests to interdict the weapons transfers and arrest the gun traffickers were denied by higher-ups.
>
> Demand Letter 3 was so named because it was the third ATF attempt to have Southwest gun shops report all long-gun (rifle or shotgun) sales to the ATF — even those to law-abiding American citizens with all the proper registration and other forms.
>
> On July 14, 2010, five months before Terry's murder, ATF Field Ops Assistant Director Mark Chait emailed Bill Newell, the ATF's Phoenix special agent in charge of Fast and Furious: "Bill, can you see if these guns were all purchased from the same (licensed gun dealer) and at one time? We are looking at anecdotal cases to support a demand letter on long-gun sales. Thanks."
>
> On Jan. 24, as the ATF was preparing to announce arrests in Fast and Furious, another email showed Newell saw it as an opportunity "to address multiple sales on long guns issue."
>
> After the press conference, Chait emailed Newell that in "light of our request for Demand Letter 3, this case could be a strong supporting factor if we can determine how many multiple sales of long guns occurred during the course of the case."

You can read the news article from CBS News right here. The headline is "Documents: ATF used "Fast and Furious" to make the case for gun regulations".

Related posts

- Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent's murder
- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?

- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference
- Homeland Security Secreary Janet Napolitano to counter global warming threat
- Obama administration investigates Wisconsin pro-lifers
- Homeland Security head says that "the system worked"
- Democrats will push amnesty to give 12-20 million illegal aliens citizenship
- Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?
- Civil rights commission finds that Obama administration has racist double standard
- Is Obama's Department of Justice enabling voter registration fraud?
- Department of Justice won't purge dead or ineligible voters from roll
- Obama's attorney general has his head in the sand on national security
- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training

College student discovers election fraud in Indiana's 2008 primary

December 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Shocking election fraud allegations have stained a state's 2008 presidential primary – and it took a college student to uncover them.
>
> "This fraud was obvious, far-reaching and appeared to be systemic," 22-year-old Ryan Nees told Fox News, referring to evidence he uncovered while researching electoral petitions from the 2008 Democratic Party primary in Indiana.
>
> Nees' investigation centered on the petitions that put then-senators Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton on the ballot. As many as 150 of the names and signatures, it is alleged, were faked. So many, in fact, that the numbers raise questions about whether Obama's campaign had enough legitimate signatures to qualify for a spot on the ballot.
>
> **"What seems to have happened is that a variety of people in northern Indiana knew that this fraud occurred, and actively participated and perpetuated the fraud, and did so on behalf of two presidential campaigns," according to Nees.**
>
> **Prosecutors are now investigating. The scandal has already led to the sudden resignation Monday night of Butch Morgan, chairman of the St. Joseph County Democratic Party. He denied any wrongdoing, saying he looks "forward to an investigation that will exonerate me."**
>
> Nees, a junior at Yale University, served as an intern in the Obama White House last year and supports the president's re-election. But as an intern at the non-partisan political newsletter Howey Politics Indiana, he delved into the Byzantine and complicated world of petition signatures and found reams of signatures that he says appeared to be written in the same handwriting, some apparently copied from previous petitions.

This is why we need to have a mandatory government-issued photo ID presented by anyone who wants to vote. But Democrats oppose voter identification laws.

Excerpt:

> **Democratic National Committee Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, saying that voter fraud in the U.S. is almost nonexistent, vowed Thursday to "get photo IDs into the hands" of people in states with Republican-sponsored voter-ID laws.**
>
> **"Republicans across the country have engaged in a full-scale attack on**

> **the right to vote, seeking ways to restrict or limit voters' ability to cast their ballots for their own partisan advantage," said Rep. Wasserman Schultz, Florida Democrat. "Democrats refuse to stand by and watch this happen."**
>
> This year, 17 states controlled by Republicans have approved tougher laws to prevent voter fraud, some including measures that require voters to present a government-issued photo ID at the polls. A total of 31 states now require voters to show a photo ID, and similar laws are pending in Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.
>
> Republican officials say the new laws have been necessary in light of recent examples of voter fraud linked to the Democratic Party and its supporters, such as the now-defunct group ACORN, which was responsible for an estimated 400,000 fraudulent registrations in 2008.
>
> Other recent examples of voter fraud include a case in Wake County, N.C., where three voters were charged in August with voting twice in the 2008 presidential election, and a member of the executive committee of the NAACP in Tunica County, Miss., who was sentenced in April to five years in prison for fraudulently casting absentee ballots. She was convicted of voting in the names of six other voters, as well as in the names of four dead voters.
>
> […]Mrs. Wasserman Schultz dismissed evidence of past voter fraud as isolated.

The truth is that Democrats get a huge boost from voter fraud, probably in the neighborhood of 3-5%.

Gay student gets Christian campus club suspended at SUNY Buffalo

December 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Christian Post.

Full text:

> The State University of New York-Buffalo (SUNY Buffalo) is looking into allegations that a Christian campus group is in violation of school policy and the law by requiring its leaders to sign a faith-based statement.
>
> This week's investigation by a committee of the Student Association comes after sophomore Steven Jackson stepped down from a leadership position with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship over differing views on sexuality.
>
> JoAnna Datz, president of the Student Association at SUNY Buffalo, told The Christian Post Wednesday that "the [investigative] committee has been meeting and collecting objective information, reviewing the Student Association Constitution, clubs documents, and just collecting information."
>
> She said there is a lot of information that the senators need to be educated on regarding what happened between Jackson and the club.
>
> On Friday, the university's newspaper, The Spectrum, reported on a letter sent to InterVarsity's executive board informing the group of its suspension. It stated: "All peripheral privileges afforded to Student Association clubs are revoked for Intervarsity Christian Fellowship until further notice."
>
> […]Jackson served as InterVarsity's treasurer and is openly gay.
>
> Datz told The Christian Post that when a club is formed at SUNY Buffalo their constitution is reviewed before they can become recognized. So originally InterVarsity's constitution was approved. But if they made any changes since its inception, none of those have been reviewed by the SA. It wasn't until last year, Datz said, that a rule was put in place that any changes to club constitutions must be reviewed.
>
> The investigation committee will be looking over InterVarsity's constitution. The campus group requires leaders to be in agreement with its doctrinal statement, purpose statement, and living a life of Christian integrity. Membership, however, is open to all.
>
> The requirement that leaders sign a certain set of beliefs is at the heart of the controversy. Datz said this week they have also been debating the differences between membership and leadership in this particular case.
>
> Jim Lundgren, director of Collegiate Ministries for Intervarsity, stressed to The Christian Post that the organization does not discriminate based on sexual orientation. In Jackson's case, however, "he decided to pursue a sexually active

> homosexual relationship" and InterVarsity doesn't affirm a sexually active relationship outside of marriage.
>
> SA's executive board is expected to make a decision this coming Sunday at their meeting.
>
> If InterVarsity is found to be in violation of antidiscrimination policies, Datz said the senate could choose to derecognize them as a club, take away their funding or require that they change their constitution.

But now I turn to the underlying problem.

Some Christians don't think there is a problem with that

The Biblical standard is no sex before or outside of marriage and marriage is defined as being between one man and one woman. In general, even divorce isn't permitted. That's what Christians believe about sex. So what happens when someone who doesn't believe that wants to join a Christian organization in a leadership capacity?

Christians are not being mean when they exclude a person from an assembly of Christians because of a public, unrepented, sinful lifestyle.

Look at 1 Cor 5:

[1] It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife.

[2] And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?

[3] For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this.

[4] So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, [5] hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.

[6] Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?

[7] Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

[8] Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

[9] I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—

[10] not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.

[11]But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people.

[12] What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?

[13] God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked person from among you.”

So, this might be a surprise to many of you, but there is actually a lot of support for the idea of shunning someone who claims to be a Christian, yet who openly commits to a lifestyle that opposes the Bible’s moral standards. 1 Cor 5 actuallysays that it is ok to get along with non-Christian sinners, and *not OK* to get along with people who claim to be Christians but who are in some serious sinful situation that they are not sorry about at all. I think it’s a great idea to be friends with people who are non-Christian, and to treat them nicely, so long as they know that we disagree with them on certain issues and they are OK with letting us do that. Everyone sins – but Christians shouldn’t sin unrepentantly and repeatedly and then try to justify it as consistent with Christianity. But non-Christians are exempt from Christian moral rules, obviously.

What annoys me is when nice “Christians” try to make me feel guilty for taking the Bible seriously on sexual morality. Just because you want to think of yourself as “nice” according to the standards of the age, and you want non-Christians to like you and ask you out with them to movies, it doesn’t mean that suddenly it has become OK to redefine the Bible to mean what you want it to mean. Those rules are there for a reason, and your job is to adapt your views and defend them. You aren’t in charge.

The problem is that Christianity has been redefined so that people in the Church now think that their job is to sing happy songs, feel good, and then go out into the world telling everyone that the Bible has nothing at all to say about right and wrong. Instead of telling people “you are free to do what you like, but doing X is not wise or moral”, now we say “whatever you want to do is fine with me, as long as you feel good”. We want to be liked by men more than we want to be liked by God.

Could tougher gun control laws lower the violent crime rate?

December 9, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's look at what happened after gun laws changed in Washington, D.C. and Chicago.

Excerpt:

> Murder and violent crime rates were supposed to soar after the Supreme Court struck down gun control laws in Chicago and Washington, D.C.
>
> Politicians predicted disaster. "More handguns in the District of Columbia will only lead to more handgun violence," Washington's Mayor Adrian Fenty warned the day the court made its decision.
>
> Chicago's Mayor Daley predicted that we would "go back to the Old West, you have a gun and I have a gun and we'll settle it in the streets…"
>
> The New York Times even editorialized this month about the Supreme Court's "unwise" decision that there is a right for people "to keep guns in the home."
>
> But Armageddon never happened. Newly released data for Chicago shows that, as in Washington, murder and gun crime rates didn't rise after the bans were eliminated — they plummeted. They have fallen much more than the national crime rate.
>
> Not surprisingly, the national media have been completely silent about this news.
>
> One can only imagine the coverage if crime rates had risen. In the first six months of this year, there were 14% fewer murders in Chicago compared to the first six months of last year – back when owning handguns was illegal. It was the largest drop in Chicago's murder rate since the handgun ban went into effect in 1982.
>
> Meanwhile, the other four most populous cities saw a total drop at the same time of only 6 percent.
>
> Similarly, in the year after the 2008 "Heller" decision, the murder rate fell two-and-a-half times faster in Washington than in the rest of the country.
>
> It also fell more than three as fast as in other cities that are close to Washington's size. And murders in Washington have continued to fall.
>
> If you compare the first six months of this year to the first six months of 2008, the same time immediately preceding the Supreme Court's late June "Heller" decision, murders have now fallen by thirty-four percent.
>
> Gun crimes also fell more than non-gun crimes.
>
> Robberies with guns fell by 25%, while robberies without guns have fallen by eight percent. Assaults with guns fell by 37%, while assaults without guns fell by 12%.

> Just as with right-to-carry laws, when law-abiding citizens have guns some criminals stop carrying theirs.

And it's not just in big cities. MSNBC explains how legal gun ownership reduces crime. Excerpt:

> Americans overall are far less likely to be killed with a firearm than they were when it was much more difficult to obtain a concealed-weapons permit, according to statistics collected by the federal Centers for Disease Control. But researchers have not been able to establish a cause-and-effect relationship.

> In the 1980s and '90s, as the concealed-carry movement gained steam, Americans were killed by others with guns at the rate of about 5.66 per 100,000 population. In this decade, the rate has fallen to just over 4.07 per 100,000, a 28 percent drop. The decline follows a fivefold increase in the number of "shall-issue" and unrestricted concealed-carry states from 1986 to 2006.The highest gun homicide rate is in Washington, D.C., which has had the nation's strictest gun-control laws for years and bans concealed carry: 20.50 deaths per 100,000 population, five times the general rate. The lowest rate, 1.12, is in Utah, which has such a liberal concealed weapons policy that most American adults can get a permit to carry a gun in Utah without even visiting the state.
>
> The decline in gun homicides also comes as U.S. firearm sales are skyrocketing, according to federal background checks that are required for most gun sales. After holding stable at 8.5 to 9 million checks from 1999 to 2005, the FBI reported a surge to 10 million in 2006, 11 million in 2007, nearly 13 million in 2008 and more than 14 million last year, a 55 percent increase in just four years.

In fact, just this week a pregnant woman thwarted burglars who invaded her home by pumping a shotgun to load a shell. The noise alone was enough to scare them off.

If you ever need to debate this, I recommend buying these academic studies published by the University of Chicago Press and by Harvard University Press. The former shows how crime rates dropped in the USA when Americans rescinded gun control laws, and the latter shows how crime rates rose in the UK when the British strengthened their gun control laws. Sometimes is good to have the data handy.

Want both sides? Then watch a debate on gun control

This debate is in 13 parts, featuring the two of the *best* proponents of legal firearm ownership – John Lott and Gary Kleck. The real sparks fly during the Q&A, so don't miss that. (If you can't watch the debate, then you can read this post and this post instead).

Here's part 1, which contains the introduction.

Here are the remaining speeches:

- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John R. Lott (2 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: R Gil Kerlikowske (3 **of 13**)

- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Stephen Halbrooke (4 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John J Donohue III (5 **of 13**)
- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Gary Kleck (6 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Paul Helmke (7 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 1 (8 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 2 (9 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 3: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 3 (10 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 4: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 4 (11 **of 13**)
- Conclusions Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 1 (12 **of 13**)
- Conclusions Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 2 (12 **of 13**)

This is everything you need to know about whether legal ownership of firearms reduce crime.

Does going to university necessarily educate you and provide you with job skills?

December 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation explains why universities don't necessarily provide students with a useful education, at least in the non-STEM areas.

Excerpt:

> Guess how many top-tier universities offer a course on Lady Gaga? Four! The University of Virginia, the University of South Carolina, Wake Forest University, and Arizona State University all now offer semester-long explorations of Lady Gaga's apparently profound influence—since 2007—on music, fashion, and the LGBT lifestyle. Yet none of these universities requires students to take a course in U.S. history before graduation. Professors and faculty at top-ranked institutions are giving preference to frivolous classes at the expense of true education.
>
> In a new study by the National Association of Scholars, only one in 75 top universities required students to study western civilization. In 1964, more than half required students take a two-semester course that covered the history of western civilization from Greece to the modern era. The other half of universities required courses that guaranteed graduates understood the history of their society. But studying the foundations of our society no longer seems to be a priority for American universities.
>
> It is not just studying western civilization that has been tossed out the window. There is a dearth in all general requirements. Asking "What Will They Learn," the American Council of Trustees and Alumni has found that only 20 percent of universities require students to take a U.S. government or history class. Only 5 percent require students to take a class in economics. Many, including top liberal arts colleges, have *no* general education requirements. With this setup, it is increasingly unlikely that college graduates will leave their alma maters even grasping the basics.

I recommend going to university and I have the BS and MS in computer science, myself. But if, you have a child in university, my advice is to 1) monitor every course they choose, and 2) have a career mentor meet with them periodically to make sure that what they are learning is what is actually needed in the field.

Regarding the general need for history and economics, I think this is something that it might be better for students to learn before they get to university. It's probably safer to learn history on your own, and then just take economics. I would try to avoid any course where the teacher can teach their point of view and isolate it from reality. Stick with math, science, engineering and physics.

Mitt Romney supports the anti-Christian and anti-business ENDA law

December 10, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an article from 2007 from the Christian post. I thought it might be a useful reminder of what Mitt Romney really believes when he's not running for office.

Excerpt:

> Romney during an interview with NBC's "Meet the Press" said he supports the contentious Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which adds "sexual orientation" to a list of federally protected classes that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.
>
> The bill upsets conservative leaders because it grants special protection to employees based on their "actual or perceived" sexual orientation. Moreover, it would force Christian organizations that oppose homosexuality to hire gay employees.
>
> "Mitt Romney's Christmas present to the homosexual lobby disqualifies him as a pro-family leader," said Peter LaBarbera, longtime pro-family advocate and founder of the Republicans For Family Values website.
>
> "Laws that treat homosexuality as a civil rights are being used to promote homosexual 'marriage,' same-sex adoption and pro-homosexuality indoctrination of schoolchildren," he said. "These same laws pose a direct threat to the freedom of faith-minded citizens and organizations to act on their religious belief that homosexual behavior is wrong."
>
> The former Massachusetts governor responded on "Meet the Press" that ENDA "makes sense" at the state level. But LaBarbera warns that if Romney "openly" promotes homosexual agenda at the state level then he cannot be trusted at the federal level.
>
> He pointed out that the state's "sexual orientation" nondiscrimination law laid the groundwork for Massachusetts legalizing gay "marriage" – the first in the country to do so.
>
> Moreover, the ENDA-like law forced Boston's Catholic Charities to shut down its century-old adoption agency because it refused to place children in gay households against Catholic teaching.
>
> "Given Romney's extensive pro-homosexual record and willingness now to depart from principle on this crucial issue, should we trust a 'President Romney' not to reverse course again on federal pro-homosexual laws such as 'Hate Crimes' and ENDA?" LaBarbera posed.

The Washington Times explains more about what it is exactly that Romney supports.

Excerpt:

> According to its leftist proponents, ENDA would merely insulate people who choose to engage in homosexual conduct (sexual orientation) or those who suffer from gender confusion (gender identity) against employment intolerance. In truth, however, this legislation effectively would codify the very thing it purports to combat: workplace discrimination.
>
> ENDA would force – under penalty of law – Christian, Jewish or Muslim business owners to adopt a secular-humanist viewpoint, ignoring all matters surrounding sexual morality while making hiring and firing decisions. Unlike race or sex, homosexual and cross-dressing behaviors are both volitional and mutable. Nonetheless, and despite the reality that such conduct is in direct conflict with every major world religion, thousands of years of history and uncompromising human biology, ENDA would compel business owners with 15 or more employees to leave sincerely held religious beliefs at the workplace door and submit to the demands of the homosexual activist lobby.
>
> This is government-sanctioned viewpoint discrimination. It is no different from forcing a deeply religious business owner to hire and accommodate an "out and proud" adulterous "swinger." It directly alienates the unalienable rights of people of faith. It pits the government directly against the free exercise of religion and is, therefore, unconstitutional on its face.
>
> During his second term, President George W. Bush issued a Statement of Administration Policy on ENDA, highlighting its unconstitutionality: "[ENDA] is inconsistent with the right to the free exercise of religion as codified by Congress in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA)."
>
> President Obama, however, has publicly endorsed the bill and promises to sign it into law should it pass. This is in perfect keeping with his demonstrated belief that the federal government's constitutionally limited powers are more of a suggestion than a requirement. Mr. Obama has appointed at least one like-minded ENDA heavy. Chai R. Feldblum is a lesbian activist and sexual nihilist lawyer who in the past has publicly supported legalized polygamy and bisexual polyamory.
>
> One of Mr. Obama's recent 15 controversial recess appointments, Ms. Feldblum was sworn in on April 7 as a commissioner of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). As ENDA's chief framer, Ms. Feldblum would be charged with its primary enforcement. This is the classic fox-guarding-the-henhouse scenario.
>
> In the past, Ms. Feldblum has repeatedly and candidly summed up the mindset behind the bill. She has publicly stated that the battle between religious freedom and unfettered sexual license (aka homosexual "rights") is a "zero-sum game," meaning the two cannot possibly coexist in harmony. It's a "winner takes all" approach.

> When asked about the Christian business owner or religious organization that morally objects to hiring people openly engaged in the homosexual lifestyle, Ms. Feldblum snapped: “Gays win, Christians lose.” And where Americans’ constitutionally guaranteed right to religious liberty comes into conflict with the postmodern concept of homosexual “rights,” Ms. Feldblum has admitted having “a hard time coming up with any case in which religious liberty should win.”

And Mitt Romney supported this in 2007.

Newt Gingrich and Michaele Bachmann won the Iowa debate, Romney lost

December 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

That's not me saying that… that's CBS News.

Excerpt:

> **WINNERS**
>
> **Newt Gingrich**
>
> Newt Gingrich is now clearly the front-runner for the Republican nomination for president. Saturday's debate in Iowa was the first one since he has surged in the polls and Gingrich handled it with his usual aplomb. Many expected the debate to be a full-throated attack on the former House speaker, but shots were fired at both Gingrich and Mitt Romney, which helps Gingrich.
>
> His recent surge stemmed in part because of impressive debate performances and he was clearly at ease on the stage Saturday. Many of his answers showed more depth than his rivals, especially his lengthy factual explanation of why he changed his position on a very important issue for voters: the individual mandate to buy health insurance. He also struck Mitt Romney hard in the early part of the debate, telling Romney that the reason he is also not a professional politician is because he lost a 1994 bid to unseat Massachusetts Sen. Ted Kennedy. And, perhaps most significantly, the thrice-married Gingrich had as strong an answer on questions of infidelity as could be expected. He directly addressed the issue, acknowledging mistakes and said he is older and wiser now.
>
> **Michele Bachmann**
>
> Bachmann also did quite well for herself Saturday night, and sought to go after both Gingrich and Romney by calling them "Newt Romney" in a sustained attack for what she called their similarities (Gingrich and Romney both took issue with the characterization). It may be too late for the Minnesota lawmaker. She has essentially bet her entire campaign on winning Iowa, but she has struggled to get out of the lower tier in opinion polls and Gingrich's surge makes it even harder for her to be a top-tier candidate. Saturday was the first debate since businessman Herman Cain dropped out of the race, and Bachmann sought to woo his former supporters but it appeared a bit too transparent and insincere. Not to mention that most of Cain's supporters have already moved on, many even before his officially ended his bid last week.

And the loser:

> **LOSERS**
>
> **Mitt Romney**

> Romney has been strong in most of the debates until now, though this debate he may have lost for not winning. While most of his answers were adequate, Saturday's debate was about whether Gingrich could take the heat and Gingrich clearly won. On top of that, Romney challenged Texas Gov. Rick Perry to a $10,000 bet about what he said in his book about the Massachusetts health care plan and its connection to President Obama's signature legislative achievement. Romney may have won the spat with Perry (who didn't actually bite), but betting that kind of money may have backfired and perpetuated Romney's image as someone who does not have empathy with average voters because of his enormous wealth.

I think I just heard Michael Medved, Hugh Hewitt, Jennifer Rubin, and the entire staff of National Review sobbing uncontrollably. It was a bad night for RINOs who want to give short shrift to social issues. They just saw their RINO candidate go down in flames on national television.

And more, this time from the left-wing The Daily Beast.

Excerpt:

> Newt not only survived, but thrived, and showed why he deserves to be the frontrunner and why he's not likely to lose altitude quickly.
>
> And Mitt Romney, after a series of flawless debate performances, made a huge unforced error proposing a $10,000 bet. Basic errors and bad moments are one thing. But when you make a mistake that reminds people of your greatest vulnerability, it can be a campaign killer.
>
> The Mitt moment reminds me of when John Kerry took the stage in front of a hall of veterans and tried to explain a vote against funding American troops in battle, and said: "I actually voted for it, before I voted against it."

> Michelle Bachmann had a very strong performance and tied together the two frontrunners as Newt Romney: both similarly inconsistent in their conservative orthodoxy.
>
> Newt wins hands down. The whole story line as I wrote earlier was whether Newt would walk off the stage without being bloodied. And he walked off the stage like Mohammed Ali without a scratch. And knocked Romney to the canvas by reminding the audience that Mitt Romney would be a career politician if he hadn't lost to Ted Kennedy.
>
> And voters will long remember and Mitt will long regret his bet that reminded everyone of a candidate who seems rich, elite, and out of touch.

I was in the Indian restaurant on Saturday reading my lunch book – I am just starting Arthur Brooks' "The Battle: How the Fight between Free Enterprise and Big Government Will Shape America's Future ". I was surprised to see that Newt Gingrich gave the foreword to the book, and it was really very conservative. (Here's a paraphrase of his

foreword). Newt is not my candidate, but if he's the nominee, I'll support him. I am still hoping that Michele Bachmann or Rick Santorum can win in Iowa.

UPDATE: Watch the full debate here.

Hugh Hewitt: is he a conservative radio talk show host?

December 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hugh Hewitt is a strong supporter of Mitt Romney. Let's look at Romney's views.

Here is Mitt Romney on abortion:

And more:

Mitt Romney on immigration:

Mitt Romney on global warming:

Here is Mitt Romney on gun control:

Here is Mitt Romney on embryonic stem cell research:

Here is Mitt Romney on the flat tax:

So long as Hugh Hewitt endorses Romney, then Hugh Hewitt is not a conservative in any sense of the word.

Only one Democrat senator voted to limit future IMF bailouts for Europe

December 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

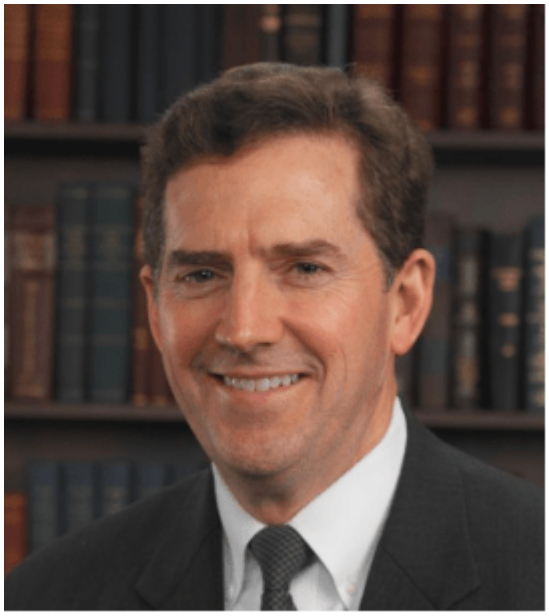

Sen. Jim Demint

First, a quick re-cap on Jim Demint's Amendment 501, which would have prevented the IMF from using $108 billion of American money to bail out foreign nations.

Excerpt:

> The Senate on Wednesday defeated an amendment in a 44-55 vote that would have prevented the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from using $108 billion in U.S. monies to bail out foreign nations.
>
> The author of the amendment, Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.), said he is concerned that the IMF is using U.S. funds to rescue irresponsible nations and banks. He said the U.S. can no longer afford to offer such aid.
>
> "There is no excuse for us giving away money around the world when we cannot even keep our promises here in America today, promises we have made to our seniors, promises we have made to our veterans," said DeMint.

Now, Jim explains in the Wall Street Journal why 55 Democrat senators shouldn't have voted against it.

Excerpt:

> If the United States wants to help Europe find a way out of its current debt crisis, we must be a strong, world economic leader, not merely the lender of last resort.
>
> American taxpayers sent $40 billion to Greece last year, through the International Monetary Fund, to stave off an economic collapse. But the bailout did not prevent Greece's day of fiscal reckoning. It only delayed it. Austerity

> measures are still needed throughout Europe's socialized economy and the debt contagion has not been stopped. Financial chaos has spread from Greece to Ireland, Portugal, Italy and Spain, and it now threatens the very future of the 17-member euro zone.
>
> Undeterred, President Obama last month told the press after breaking from a closed-door meeting with European leaders, "the United States stands ready to do our part to help them resolve this issue." He would do better to focus his attention stateside. The most dangerous threat to the U.S. economy is not across the pond. It's in the swampland of Washington, D.C.
>
> […]Greece's economy reached its tipping point and was bailed out when government debt topped 137% of its gross domestic product. Despite all the measures that have been taken to aid it, Greece's debt-to-GDP-ratio is even higher now, at 160%. Ireland was bailed out at 74% of GDP and is now at 80%. Portugal was bailed out at 94% of GDP and is now expected to top 100%. The bailouts have arguably made the European debt crisis worse, not better.
>
> Total U.S. debt, including entitlement liabilities, reached 100% of GDP when Congress increased the debt ceiling in August. Our $15 trillion debt now rivals the size of the entire U.S. economy.
>
> When he first took office, President Obama promised to cut the federal deficit in half by 2013. But instead he's increased it by more than $4 trillion. Indeed, under his direction, the U.S. government spent about $1 trillion on a Keynesian-style stimulus that failed to create the jobs promised, will spend trillions more creating a European-style health-care entitlement with ObamaCare, and has more Americans on welfare than ever before.
>
> **[…]This year the U.S. sent about $67 billion to the IMF, which represents 17.7% of the IMF's yearly budget—nearly three times more than any other nation. On top of that, taxpayers provided an additional $108 billion credit line to the IMF in 2009.**
>
> **In 2010, the IMF sent nearly $40 billion in assistance to Greece, which did nothing to prevent the country's economic collapse in 2011. On Monday, the IMF approved another $2.95 billion worth of bailout funds for the struggling country.**
>
> **[…]Earlier this year, I offered an amendment to repeal the IMF's authority to use the additional $108 billion credit line to provide any more bailouts. It was overwhelmingly rejected by the Democrat-controlled Senate. Forty-four senators voted for it; only one was a Democrat.**

This has to stop. We have to stop electing people who don't believe that people are responsible to create their own wealth, instead of stealing it from others – and impoverishing generations yet unborn. The right way to solve economic problems is to create the conditions that incentivize people to create wealth, not to discourage them by

confiscating what they earn. There is a problem in Europe right now – huge numbers of benefits are being taken from those who produce (the private sector) and given to those who don't (the public sector). The first step is to stop the bailouts.

Donald Sensing posted some thoughts from Abraham Lincoln on his blog that seem appropriate for this post.

Excerpt:

> If destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of free men we must live through all time, or die by suicide.

> You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

> Any society that takes away from those most capable and gives to the least will perish.

> Few can be induced to labor exclusively for posterity. Posterity has done nothing for us.

> No man is good enough to govern another man without that other man's consent.

> You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence.

> Let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty. Let reverence for the laws … become the political religion of the nation.

> If ever this free people, if this Government itself is ever utterly demoralized, it will come from this incessant human wriggle and struggle for office, which is but a way to live without work.

> We have to distrust each other. It's our only defense against betrayal.

> Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle.

> Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

> Property is the fruit of labor; property is desirable; is a positive good in the world. That some should be rich shows that others may become rich and, hence, is just encouragement to industry and enterprise. Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him labor diligently and build one for himself, thus, by example, assuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built.

> It has ever been my experience that folks who have no vices have very few virtues.

I understand that stealing money from working people and their employers and giving it to lazy people is an important goal for Democrat politicians, because it builds up their self-esteem and it makes them feel admired and popular. But it’s not their money. They need to stop. Obama’s desire to “spread the wealth around” is not a moral policy, it’s an immoral policy – because it’s not his wealth. He didn’t produce it.

The top 5 myths about Christmas

December 11, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Take Two Apologetics. It's an interview with Krista Bontrager. I removed the links from the excerpt below, so you can click through to their site if you want the links.

Excerpt:

> **Krista, many of us were taught that Jesus was born in a stable because "there was no room in the inn." Was He born in a stable?**
>
> Probably not. Nowhere in the Bible does it state that Joseph went from home to home looking for a place to stay. That story stems from many translations' use of the word "inn" in Luke 2:7. From that, we extrapolate a whole slew of events—the innkeeper, innkeeper's wife, a No Vacancy sign flashing. The problem is that the word used in Luke 2 (*kataluma*) is not the word for inn—that's a bad English translation. The word is better translated as "upper room" or "guest room." In fact, the 2011 translation of NIV makes that correction. Luke 22:11 also uses *kataluma* to describe the guest room where the last supper took place. In contrast, *pandocheion* (correctly translated as "inn") appears inthe parable of the Good Samaritan.
>
> **Where was Jesus born, then, if not in a stable?**
>
> It's much more likely He was born in a home. Mary and Joseph were going to their ancestral home, which means they had extended family there. It's almost inconceivable that their family would not have taken them in considering the cultural practices of that time.
>
> **So if Jesus was born in a home, why does the Bible say He was placed in a manger?**
>
> That's an important detail because it tells us what part of the house they were in. In those days, homes had an upper level where the family would sleep and a lower level where animals were kept at night for the animals' protection and to provide heat. It seems that Jesus was born in that lower level where the animals were kept. And he was placed in a manger (feed trough) because they make for a great little cradle. In fact it reminds me of the makeshift bed my husband and I once made for our daughter when we stayed overnight at a hotel.
>
> **What about some of the characters often suggested as being present at Christ's birth?**
>
> The shepherds were present, but the three wise men were not. Matthew's account apparently takes place during a different time frame than Luke's. One clue is that the Greek word Matthew used to describe Jesus is a *paidion*, which can mean anything from an infant to a toddler. This range of definitions would be consistent with King Herod killing all the Jewish boys ages two and under

> (Matthew 2). This would mean that Jesus was probably two or younger when He was visited by the wise men.
>
> **Okay, so we've eliminated the stable and the wise men from the Nativity. What about the date? Was Jesus born on December 25?**
>
> Maybe. The standard story is that December 25 was adopted after Constantine's conversion to Christianity because it was on a pagan holiday and the winter solstice. Christians then co-opted the holiday and Christianized it. What's interesting is that the early church put almost no emphasis on celebrating the birth of Christ. They were much more concerned with the resurrection. It's not until AD 200 where possible dates are mentioned for the celebrating of Christ's birth. By about AD 300 there were two dates: December 25 (for the west) and January 6 (for the east). There does seem to be a tradition of December 25 long before Constantine's conversion, so that's why I say maybe. This article from the *Biblical Archaeology Review* gives a good summary of "How December 25 Became Christmas."

I found this post over on Apologetics 315. Brian puts up a post with apologetics stories every Friday. There's more in there – I am listening to the 5 part lecture series on church history right now. (It's Calvinist, but polite)

Why do people hate Tim Tebow? Why do people want Tim Tebow to fail?

December 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Denver Broncos, their amazing kicker and their amazing Christian quarterback, all won again in an exciting overtime win. That's three games in a row (at least, I'm not following it closely) where Tim Tebow and the Broncos have managed to come from behind to win at the last possible second.

Here's the scoop on the latest nail-biting victory by the Denver Broncos.

> Tim Tebow has led the Broncos to five fourth-quarter comebacks since replacing Kyle Orton at starting quarterback eight games ago, when Denver was 1-4.
>
> "I guess I've just got to get to the stadium and start practicing a little bit earlier," Tebow said.
>
> The win is Denver's sixth in a row, and secures the Broncos (8-5) the AFC West lead, which they shared with Oakland entering Sunday's games. Chicago dropped to 7-6, further clouding its playoff chances.
>
> The Broncos could be playoff bound, but the only prediction coming out of Denver locker room Sunday was this: "I'm definitely going to be going bald by the end of the season," said the 27-year-old Prater, who has made four game-winning field goals this season. "Bald or gray, one of the two."
>
> Denver could have made Sunday's game much less of a heart-stopper but muffed two scoring chances earlier in the game. A 28-yard attempt by Prater was blocked in the second quarter. In the third quarter, Broncos receiver Demaryius Thomas broke away from coverage near the end zone but let a deep pass slip from Tebow through his hands.
>
> Tebow said he told Thomas not to worry about it, that Thomas would score the game-winning touchdown.
>
> The prediction was off, but not by much.
>
> With 4:34 left in regulation, the Broncos were trailing 10-0. Tebow completed seven straight passes to lead Denver on a 63-yard scoring drive, capped by two receptions by Thomas. The 10-yard touchdown catch came with 2:08 remaining.
>
> "It was just a big relief," Thomas said.
>
> Chicago, still leading by three points, lost the opportunity to run off time on the clock when running back Marion Barber, starting in place of the injured Matt Forte, ran out of bounds with less than two minutes left in regulation.
>
> "I might have thanked the Lord when he did that," Tebow said.
>
> Tebow and the Broncos offense regained possession with 53 seconds left. Tebow completed three passes to put the Broncos in field-goal range, then Prater kicked

> a career record-tying 59-yarder with eight seconds left to send the game into overtime.
>
> "You can't say enough about Prater and how clutch he is," Tebow said.

Man, can the Denver kicker kick field goals – he nailed a 59-yard field goal today. But the quarterback Tim Tebow is the one getting all the attention lately. And I think because this is a Christian blog, we need to take a look at why that is.

I read this article in the Wall Street Journal about Tim Tebow, and I asked myself the question "does God care whether Tim Tebow wins football games?".

First, Tim doesn't think that God cares about who wins football games:

> In the waning moments against the New York Jets, Mr. Tebow manufactured a 95-yard game-winning drive, punctuated by his own 20-yard touchdown dash. He brought the Broncos back from imminent defeat, just as he had done in previous weeks against the Miami Dolphins, Oakland Raiders and Kansas City Chiefs.
>
> And when the shouting was over, Mr. Tebow did what he always does—he pointed skyward and took a knee in prayer. In postgame interviews, the young quarterback often starts by saying, "First, I'd like to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" and ends with "God bless." He stresses that football is just a game and that God doesn't care who wins or loses.

He's right about that. God doesn't care about who wins and loses football games. He doesn't care about making us feel happy or sad, either. He doesn't care about giving us what we want. God has one reason and one reason alone for creating us. To give us time on Earth to respond to his drawing us toward him. It's our job to puzzle about science and history and logic now and try to see if he is there and what he is like. Our job is to know God and to serve God. You're not going to be able to tell whether God exists based on the Denver Broncos' wins and losses. Football is not a premise in any argument for God's existence or Jesus' resurrection.

But that doesn't mean that Tim Tebow can't use football to serve God. Here are a couple of ways he helps to do that.

First, charity:

> While at Florida, Mr. Tebow became well known for spending his summers helping the poor and needy in the Philippines. He also spoke in prisons and appeared to accept every opportunity to volunteer. He encouraged his teammates and classmates to follow his lead.
>
> As Mr. Tebow recounts in his book "Through My Eyes" (written with Nathan Whitaker), after he won the Heisman Trophy in 2007, he had the idea to use his fame to raise money for the orphanage that his family runs and for other organizations. Since National Collegiate Athletic Association rules prevented him from raising money for his own causes, he worked with the university to found a student society that could be used for charity.

> According to the former Florida coach Urban Meyer, Mr. Tebow's philanthropic efforts reshaped campus culture, and for a time, volunteering became fashionable. In his senior year, the powder-puff football tournament that he launched, with the help of the university's sororities and fraternities, raised $340,000 for charity.
>
> Mr. Tebow's acts of goodwill have often been more intimate. In December 2009, he attended a college-football awards ceremony in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. The night before, at another gala at Walt Disney World Resort, he met a 20-year-old college-football fan named Kelly Faughnan, a brain-tumor victim who suffers from hearing loss and visible, continual tremors. She was wearing a button that said "I love Timmy." Someone noticed and made sure that the young woman had a chance to meet the player.
>
> Mr. Tebow spent a long while with Ms. Faughnan and her family, and asked her if she'd like to be his date for the award ceremony the following night. She agreed, and the scene of Mr. Tebow escorting the trembling young woman down the red carpet led much of the reporting about the event.

You can read more about their date here. (H/T Tim McGrew) Tim Tebow considers his presence something to be given away to others who would benefit from it. It's not something he uses to gratify his own needs. He gives himself as a gift to people and he leaves them better than he found them.

Second, Tim Tebow gets people curious and/or angry about Christianity, because he acts on his beliefs:

> In 2010, while still at the University of Florida (where he won the Heisman Trophy and helped the Gators to win two national championships), Mr. Tebow filmed a Super Bowl commercial for Focus on the Family, the mega-ministry known for its conservative political advocacy. The ad is about how Mr. Tebow's mother was advised to abort her son following a placental abruption, but she refused and, well, now we have Tim Tebow.
>
> The ad takes the softest possible approach to the subject and never uses the terms "abortion" or "pro-life," but its intent was clear, and it generated controversy. Since then, feelings about Mr. Tebow have been a litmus test of political and social identity. If you think he's destined to be a winner, you must be a naive evangelical. If you question his long-term chances as an NFL quarterback, you must hate people who love Jesus.

In another article, Tim Tebow is quite honest about his refusal to engage in sex before marriage.

Excerpt:

> Tebow's successful college football career and current position as Denver Bronco's quarterback make him a manly-man in an everyday sense, but

> evangelical Christians say it's his unashamed willingness to adhere to the moral teachings of his faith that make him a man in a religious sense.
>
> Tebow, who told reporters that yes, he was a virgin and yes, he was waiting until marriage to have sex, has become an example of contemporary "biblical manhood," a good guy, willing to speak out for Christianity and actually practice what he preaches.
>
> The notion of biblical masculinity is based on a complementation view of gender roles, as described in Scripture, which positions men as head of the household. The leaders of the movement to restore biblical manhood say today's men aren't living according to that Christian call, and social and spiritual downfalls have caused them to be lazy and passive or overly authoritative. There's a man crisis in society, they say, and the church needs to educate men on how to fulfill their responsibilities.

Consistent Christians have to be different like that. People think that none of us actually take these things seriously. But there are people out there like Tim, who understand what sex and love and marriage and parenting are really about, and have the self-control to try to do things as correctly as they can. And we need people to see that there is something different about evangelical Christians – we are the ones who take this stuff seriously. We are the ones who care about children's need for a mother and a father and a stable marriage, and we advocate for chastity and traditional marriage so that vulnerable children get the stability and love they need as they develop.

But not everyone is going to respond to Tebow's chastity, charity and pro-life activism with admiration and curiosity. Some will hate Tim and will want him to fail. The reason why people hate him is because people who are sinning, especially sexually, feel better when they think that "everyone is doing it". In fact, that's exactly why the left tries so hard to sexualize children, to give them condoms, and to have Christians pay for their abortions and recognize gay marriages. The anti-Christians don't want to believe that anyone is out there trying to be good. They feel that if they could just bring everyone like Tebow down to their level, then all the evil that they are doing will be OK. What would be great, they think, is if people like Tebow could celebrate their sinful choices so that they would feel better about them.

The Bible actually talks about this in Romans 1, where the Bible explains that sinful people know about the moral law but "they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them." They want Tim Tebow to approve of their sinfulness and selfishness, and by choosing to go a different way, he is disapproving of their choices, and they don't like that. They oppose the idea that there is any purpose to sexuality other than feeling good. They don't want anyone to impose rules on their pursuit of pleasure. And they don't want anyone to tell them that what they are doing is wrong. I am not advocating coercing anyone to be moral, but I do think that people like Tim Tebow should be free to be chaste, and free to express his views on what he thinks is moral when it comes to sex and abortion.

Watch the ABC Republican primary debate that drew 7.6 million viewers

December 12, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video of the debate.

And here's the story from Reuters:

> Saturday night's GOP debate was the most-watched of the 2012 campaign as an average of 7.6 million viewers tuned in to watch the presidential candidates take on such hot topics as unemployment and immigration.
>
> Despite a relatively late start time — 9 p.m. on the East Coast — 2.1 million of those viewers were in the key adults 25-54 viewer group.
>
> Both of those numbers beat the previous highs, held by Fox News in total viewers (6.11 million on September 22) and MSNBC in the 25-54 demographic (1.73 million on September 7).
>
> They were also well ahead of the numbers for the only other debate on one of the major broadcast networks, CBS News' telecast on Nov 12.
>
> Moderated by Diane Sawyer and George Stephanopoulos, the ABC debate was broadcast live from Des Moines, Iowa, with the Iowa caucus — the first tally of the election season — less than a month away.
>
> Between the two current front-runners — Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich — Gingrich was seen as the winner of the contest, which was also hosted by Yahoo News, the Republican Party of Iowa and the Des Moines Register.

I wrote before about who won the debate: Newt Gingrich and Michele Bachmann tied for the win.

Navy buys fuel for $15 per gallon from Democrat-connected green energy firm

December 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this Hot Air story on Right Wing News. Hot Air was at the top of John Hawkins' list of the top 40 conservative blogs.

Excerpt: (with links removed)

> This is going to help the Defense Department weather looming budget cuts, for sure. Teaming up with the Department of Agriculture (which has a cheery Rotary Club ring to it), the Navy has purchased 450,000 gallons of biofuel for about $16 a gallon, or about 4 times the price of its standard marine fuel, JP-5, which has been going for under $4 a gallon.
>
> You won't be surprised to learn that a member of Obama's presidential transition team, T. J. Glauthier, is a "strategic advisor" at Solazyme, the California company that is selling a portion of the biofuel to the Navy. Glauthier worked – shock, shock – on the energy-sector portion of the 2009 stimulus bill.
>
> The Navy sale isn't Solazyme's first trip to the public trough, of course. The company got a $21.8 million grant from the 2009 stimulus package.

See, this is why we need to vote for lower and lower taxes. The more money that you give the government to spend, the more likely they are going to waste it buying votes and rewarding their supporters and fundraisers. Do you think that a private company could waste money like this, and stay afloat? No way – they have competitors to worry about. If they waste money, then they will go out of business. However, the government can just spend the money with abandon – it just gets added to the national debt. Eventually, the young people, who vote for for Obama in droves, will have to pay the money back. This will be hard for them to do given the fact that many of them are growing up without two parents supporting them, and often without a good education. What a mess. Leave the money in the hands of the private sector schools and private sector job creators – they actually have to care about pleasing customers and reducing wasteful spending.

Let's do a quick review of more instances of stimulus spending.

- Obama fundraisers got 80% of green energy loans ($16.4 billion)
- Obama gave $443 million no-bid contract to drug firm run by Democrat fundraiser
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky

What exactly was he trying to stimulate? His 2012 election campaign?

By the way, check out John’s list of the top 40 blogs – I am number 40.

Michael Shermer and Greg Koukl debate on God, atheism, meaning and morality

December 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The full transcript of a debate between Michael Shermer, editor of Skeptic magazine, and Greg Koukl, president of Stand to Reason. This debate occurred on Hugh Hewitt's radio show, and was moderated by Hugh Hewitt.

HH = Hugh Hewitt
GK = Greg Koukl
MS = Michael Shermer

HH: Special edition of the Hugh Hewitt Show. As we come to the end of what I call the decade of the atheists, I am taking a day here at the end of the year to look back at what that has been about, and what progress or lack thereof has been made in that conversation, what it meant, and what it ought to mean, and whether or not those of you who are just finished celebrating Christmas were in fact simply involving yourself in a pagan kind of ritual that grew up over the years, or whether you're worshipping the one, true God. All that and more, because this has been the decade of the atheists, Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, many others, but today, I want to ask did they make a difference at all, or is in fact faith in God generally stronger than ever. To join me in this all day special conversation in studio, two guests. Greg Koukl is the founder and the president of Stand To Reason, http://www.str.org. He is a leading Christian apologist. He's an author most recently of Tactics: A Gameplan For Discussing Your Christian Convictions from Zondervan Press. Before that, Relativism, he's got a lot of other books and pamphlets as well at Amazon.com. But you can find out most about Greg at http://www.str.org. Michael Shermer is the editor of Skeptic Magazine. He is the founder of the Skeptic Society, author of a number of books, including The Mind Of The Market: How Biology And Psychology Shape Our Economic Minds, and Why Darwin Matters: The Case Against Intelligent Design. Both Michael and Greg have been guests on the Hugh Hewitt Show before. They're both very generous with their time to spend an entire day doing this, and so welcome to you both. Gentlemen, I believe in biography before everything. Greg Koukl, K comes before S. Give people a little bit of a rundown on who you are and how you ended up doing this.

GK: Well, just a broad background here. I approach the issue that we're talking about today not as a philosopher or a theologian, though I have advanced degrees in both, but really as a human being that's trying to make sense out of my world. What worldview, what picture of reality does the best job of answering the questions? That wasn't always my perspective. I was raised in a religious home, nominally religious. And then in the 60s, during the counterculture, like a whole bunch of other young people, I went crazy. You know, you abandon the views of the establishment, you embrace all these new things that are invading the world in the 60s, and I did that. I was at Michigan State University in their Honors College there as a prelaw student, as it turned out. I had thought I had tried

Christianity because of my background. I thought I was too smart to be a Christian. And so I just didn't give real serious consideration to that until I went to the West Coast, and went, I was a student at UCLA. And at that time, I began to give fresh consideration to the claims that Jesus of Nazareth was making on my life. And in 1973, I made a commitment to follow Him. And that began to change everything. In 1976, I spent three months in Europe, five weeks of that behind the Iron Curtain working with Christians who are suffering there as a result of their own convictions as Christians, back when they had an Iron Curtain. A number of years later, in 1982, I went to Thailand to work with Cambodian refugees. My job was to feed 18,500 people in Sakeo refugee camp, which the result of the Cambodian holocaust of 1975-1976, and then in 1993, I decided to kind of focus my efforts and start an organization with some other people, particularly Melinda Penner, who many who are listening know as The Enforcer. And that organization is called Stand To Reason. And Hugh, I had two basic goals with starting Stand To Reason. One is to train Christians to think more carefully about their convictions. There just was a lot of nonsense being spewed by Christians who I think had the right ideas, but were not communicating them well, and were not thinking well about those ideas. And secondly, I wanted to develop some tools to show that Christianity is actually worth thinking about. Some of these were tools of engagement. There was too much of a bellicose atmosphere between those who believed in Jesus and the Christian worldview and those who don't. And I wanted to see that engagement look more like diplomacy than D-Day. And so there's kind of a general attitude thing that I wanted to see happen, building ambassadors for Christ. Secondly, I wanted to help them with the new tools of evidence, and the information that has been coming out in the last ten or fifteen years that have been very, very powerful, I think, to commend the Christian worldview to the rest of the world – things about big bang cosmology, for example, the design inferences that we find in the universe, the evidence for the existence of the soul, the evidence from the primary source documents about Jesus of Nazareth and his resurrection. All of these things, there's been a lot of work done in the last fifteen or twenty years. And so our goal is to try to bring these things down to a level where people can understand them, throw the ball so that they can catch it, for believers in Christ to do so, but without having a bunch of religious language attached to it, one, and two, using an external approach. In other words, using the philosophy and the science to demonstrate that their views are worth thinking about, instead of simply throwing Bible verses at them, and in the process, I've written a number of books, one of them on abortion called Precious Unborn Human Persons. It's basically a small monograph. The next one, Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted In Mid-Air that I co-authored with Frank Beckwith, who you know. And the one most recently is the one you just mentioned, Tactics: A Game Plan For Discussing Your Christian Convictions.

HH: With that introduction, Mike Shermer, how about you?

MS: Well, I was born and raised in the Southern California area, and my home was, neither of my homes, as my parents were divorced, neither of them were religious, but neither were they anti-religious. They were just not religious. But in the nascent Jesus

movement of the early 70s, I became a born again when I was in high school, 1971. And I remember it was a, my best friend, he was a Presbyterian, so on a Saturday night, I accepted Christ into my heart. And then Sunday, I went to the local Presbyterian church with his family, and went up to the alter and all that with the other people that were called forward. And then on Monday, I remember returning back to high school to tell my buddy, Frank, that I had finally become religious and accepted Jesus like he had been telling me about, and hoping I would. And instead of being excited, he was disappointed, because he was a Jehovah's Witness, and that I had gone to the wrong church, the Presbyterians. Anyway, so that always stuck in the back of my mind like wow, aren't we all on the same bus together in the same journey? Well, not always. Anyway, so…but I took it pretty seriously. I went to Bible study classes. There was a little place in La Crescenta called the Barn, where Christians met and had Bible study classes, things like that. And then I went to Pepperdine University in Malibu there to, really to matriculate initially into theology, but then I switched to psychology, really for logistical reasons. I just wanted to be a college professor, because it's, you know, it's a great gig that you hardly have to work and you get good pay. Don't ever listen to those professors complain about their pay. It's the best gig going. And I wanted in on that. And theology was my field, but to get a PhD, you have to do Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic and Latin. And I could barely get through Spanish, so I realized okay, I have to do something I'm actually good at, which was science, which was experimental psychology. And so I switched fields. But while I was at Pepperdine, I took courses in the New Testament, the Old Testament, the life of Jesus. I took an entire semester course in the writings of C.S. Lewis. We read everything that Lewis wrote, and I really loved C.S. Lewis. I still like C.S. Lewis. I think he's a great writer. But then eventually, when I went to graduate school, when I was in a different environment, not surrounded by Christians, and getting different perspectives. And for a number of reasons, I ultimately lost my faith, and let go of God, and became essentially a secularist, or a non-believer, whatever. I never really call myself an atheist. I mean, I don't like to identify myself or define myself by what I don't believe, because atheism doesn't really stand for anything. There's no principles behind it. There's no platform or set of planks that we live our lives by. We just simply don't believe in God. So then I got into, well, actually I had a ten year span where I was a bike racer living here in Orange County, and did Race Across America five times, and I was the assistant director, and the executive director of the race. And so I spent quite a bit of time in a completely different profession, but teaching part time psychology. Then after ten years of bike racing, I realized my body wasn't going to hold out forever, and I might have to use my brain again. So I went back and got a PhD in the history of science at Claremont, and then became a fulltime professor at Occidental College in L.A. But on the side, we just started the Skeptics thing as just sort of a hobby in my garage. It was nothing, really, just for fun, and a lecture series at Cal Tech. And it just got bigger and bigger, and by 1997-98, when my first book, Why People Believe Weird Things did really well, I had a literary agent that got me a big advance for my next book, and a lecture agent, and so on, and I realized you know, I think I could actually make a living as a writer and an editor and a public intellectual, and actually teach more people than I can teach in a classroom, that is just

reach more people. And so I've been doing that every since. I quit teaching at Oxy in 98, and returned to teaching just two years ago at Claremont Graduate University, just one class a year, Evolution, Economics & the Brain. It's a PhD level course. So it's just for fun. So my main job, my day job, is editing and writing.

HH: We've got a minute and a half to the break, so I'll let you go first, Greg. What's your first question for Michael? I'll lead most of this conversation, but in between, I'll let you pose each other questions. Do you have a question or anything that you're curious about his background?

GK: Well, about his background?

HH: Just anything.

GK: Well, I think, and this is just going to seed further conversation, Michael, but I think the biggest, one of the biggest problems, it's not the only big problem, but one of the biggest problems that atheists have to deal with is the problem of morality. Listen, if you have a guy who drags a woman into an alley, and then molests her, and then…that's our music. Okay, I'll finish my illustration in just a few moments. But I want to raise the nature of morality, is the question, or how best to explain the existence of real morality.

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HH: When we went to break, I began just the first opportunity to ask each other a question. So Greg, you were bringing up the…rephrase it for the audience who just tuned in for Michael.

GK: Right. Actually, the big question here, Hugh, is whether it's possible to be good without God. Now I'm not talking about whether it's possible to be good without a belief in God. I certainly think that's possible, but be good without God. And the answer to that question hinges entirely on precisely what you mean by good. And so I was going to give an illustration. So a man drags a young girl into the alley, he sexually abuses her, strangles here, and tosses her into the dustbin. Is that act wrong? Now I think everybody listening is going to admit it is wrong. But here is the real question. What do we mean when we say that that act of rape and abuse and murder is wrong? Are we describing the action itself, the object? Are we saying that the object, the rape, the murder, has a quality of being wrong, and therefore, wherever that rape goes, the wrongness follows it, just like your height, 6' 2", or whatever it is, is an objective quality of you. Wherever you go, your height follows you in the same way. Does the wrongness follow the rape? Well, if it's a quality of the rape, if it's an objective quality of the rape, then it does. And it doesn't matter what people think about it, or what cultures decides, or what your evolutionary conditioning is. The rape is still wrong. The other alternative is that you're not talking about the rape. You're talking about yourself. You're talking about your genetic conditioning. You're talking about your culture's decision about that kind of thing. And if that's the case, then the truth of the wrongness of the rape is simply in the individual or the subject. And this is why philosophers distinguish between ethical objectivism and ethical subjectivism. Now there's lots of different subjectivisms in ethics. But simply put, if you're an ethical subjectivist, you're a relativist. And actual ethics don't exist. Ethics are

an illusion. If you conclude that ethics are an illusion, there's lots of different ways to explain it. Michael's written a really great book, I think, called The Science Of Good And Evil. I've read most of it, and it's well written, and it's very compelling. But it's a description about how the illusion of ethics has taken place. If you want to go that route, you're welcome to go that route. But what you can't do is you can't then talk about morality as if it's objective when your explanations are subjective. So this is a problem that I think all atheists, including Michael, have to solve. Are ethics objective or relative? And if they're relative, then how can we make moral judgments that are meaningful on other people?

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Wow, let's just get right into it. Well, I don't think it's quite so black and white. That is to say I think there are provisional moral truths that exist whether there's a God or not. In other words, it's wrong, morally, absolutely morally wrong to rape and murder. And that would be true whether there was a God or not. In other words, if…is God saying that it's wrong because it's really wrong, and He's instructing us in his Holy Scripture that it's wrong? Or is it only wrong because He said so? And if it turned out there wasn't a God, would that make it okay? And my answer is no, it really is wrong, whether God says it's wrong or not. That is to say I think it really exists, a real, moral standard like that. Why? Well, because first, you could ask the person who is being affected, we should always ask the moral recipient of the act, how do you feel about being raped or murdered or stolen from or lied to. And the moral actor will tell you, it doesn't matter whether, if I could use a current example, I haven't any idea if Tiger Woods and his wife are religious or not. But you can just ask his wife whether it was morally right or wrong, and she'll tell you. It doesn't matter whether there's a God or not. It's wrong. And so that's the first principle. Just ask. Ask the moral recipient of whether it's right or wrong. But I think Greg's after something deeper, that is to say is there something even deeper still behind the moral actor's feelings about how they're treated. And the answer is yes, I think so. We're a social species. We don't live in isolation. We live as members of a group. And as such, there's no possible way our group could survive, be cohesive, be a unit of any kind of solidarity against other groups, or against a harsh environment. If there were too much violations of social norms, that is if there were constant lying and cheating and raping and murdering, there's no way a social group could hang together. And as such, as we all know, we're very tribal. We're tribal against other groups, but within our groups, we're very pro-social, altruistic, cooperative. We have a good and evil in our nature. So to this extent, I find myself interesting often in agreement with my conservative friends on most of the things they consider morally, moral truths. That is, we share the same moral values, even though I come at it from a different perspective.

HH: Greg?

GK: Yeah, I'm actually not after something deeper here, Michael. At least to start out the discussion, I'm trying to be as simple and clear and precise as possible, because it's very easy to weave together a bunch of things that sound persuasive, but turn out to be different things. Like for example, Darwinian evolution, which is a materialistic process,

and here I mean the blind watchmaker thesis, the neo-Darwinian synthesis, natural selection working on mutations, and a kind of a cultural evolution that Michael has just referred to as we work together as a group to survive as a group. Those are two entirely different things. One is materialistic, Darwinian, the other one is intelligent design, quite frankly, where the group gets together and makes some determinations to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What I'm trying to do is to be able to answer the question that came up initially, is God necessary for morality, which Michael denies. It's to say well, what is it that morality, that we're trying to describe? It is either objective, and therefore an immaterial obligation that applies to certain behaviors, or it is subjective. The things that Michael described were variously subjective, evolutionary elements, subjective cultural elements, but then he affirmed that we all have good and evil in our nature, or an awareness of that. I agree with that entirely. We all are aware of those things. That's why even if we don't believe in God, we can still know morality and follow it. The question is what accounts for real, genuine objective morality?

HH: One minute to the break, Michael Shermer.

MS: I'm not arguing for cultural evolution. I'm actually arguing as part of our, what you described as materialistic, natural selection, Darwinian evolution, that it's not enough to just pretend or fake being a good group member. You actually have to believe it, feel it, and live it. So what I'm arguing is that natural selected certain moral sentiments, as Adam Smith called them, moral feelings, an actual empathy, Adam Smith talked about, we actually empathize with somebody else, we can put ourselves into their shoes and feel their pain, I'm arguing that's very real. It's every bit as real a part of our evolutionary heritage as our eyes and our hands.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, you were saying that evolutionary biology has produced a real morality.

MS: Yeah, I think really, Adam Smith had it right in his very first book, The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, long before Darwin, that we actually have in our biological nature, our human nature, the capacity to feel other people's pain. He called it empathy, we think of it often either as empathy or sympathy. That is, we really do connect to other people. A lot of good research on this now, brain scans, you can show somebody a little video of somebody they know, or have feelings for, getting pricked with a pin, and the same areas of their brain light up, the pain receptors, as in the person getting the pin prick. In other words, we have an evolved tendency to really be deeply, emotionally connected to our fellow group members. And that's why I say groups like World Vision, where you want to adopt a child, it doesn't help to show a picture of 10,000 starving African kids. What does affect us is one child, a picture of one child with a little biography. That's how you get people to adopt a child to donate. The reason for that is because essentially they're tricking the brain, our brains into making that stranger an honorary family member, an honorary within group member, which is why I argue that free trade is one of the best ways of defusing normal tribal tensions between people. It makes them honorary friends,

honorary members. Well, what's going on there is we're tricking the brain into sort of this evolutionary rule of thumb – be nice to people that are like you and that are related to you, and that you know, and that are fellow group members, and don't do what our natural tendency is, is to be tribal and xenophobic against those other guys. And free trade is one of the best things you can do for that. So I'm arguing that's actually tapping something deep within us.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, basically, I agree with Mike completely here. We do have this tendency, and it seems to be universal among humankind. The question is, what is that tendency, actually? And what is the best way to explain it? And I see like a handful of significant problems with using evolution to explain morality. The first one is that evolution is a materialistic process. And here, I'm going back to an original point, and I don't want people to lose it. There is no way that you can take molecules, and reorganize them in any fashion, over any length of time, and have pop out of the mixture an objective moral principle that's immaterial, and that applies to human beings. All you're going to get is a reorganization of the molecules. And what they can produce, and this is what Mike has done in his book, and he mentioned just s few moments ago, they can produce sentiments. They can produce feelings. They can produce behavior. But this leads us to the second problem of using evolution to explain morality, is that morality is more than sentiments, feelings and behavior. Morality entails things like motive and intention. I mean, you could have a guy walk into a garage, walk out with a hose, and is that wrong? Well, it depends. Is it his hose or somebody else's hose? Did he intend to take the other person's hose? Is he borrowing the hose? So we can see here are elements that are part of the moral thing that needs to be explained, that are immaterial, and therefore the Darwinian explanation can't even in principle go there. It can't do that job. But here's the worst problem. Regardless of what our sentiments happen to be regarding moral actions, we can feel good or feel bad or whatever, the problem is that morality is prescriptive, not merely descriptive. That is it tells us not just what we did, but what we ought to have done in the past, and what we ought to do in the future. That is not something that any Darwinian mechanism can describe, because nothing about my biology can inveigh upon me to act a certain way for moral reasons in the future. It doesn't tell me why I should be good tomorrow. This is a huge difference between these two views, the descriptive and the prescriptive. Prescriptive is part of morality, and can't even, in principle, be explained by an evolutionary materialistic system.

HH: Michael Shermer, I'll give you a start on that. We have about 45 seconds to the break, so you may want to…we'll come back after the break and pick up. But what's your start to that?

MS: Well, the start would be that again, let's not think of evolution just as nature red and tooth and claw, and it's nasty, brutish and short, but that in fact, we have this whole other social evolution. And I'm not talking about cultural evolution where we consciously make decisions, but subconsciously, because it's in part of our nature to actually, seriously, deeply feel for other people and their actions, and the consequences of our

actions, so that we actually have a sense of right and wrong that we're born with, but then culture taps into and tweaks, one way or the other.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, Greg had made the argument that the Darwinian model simply cannot explain immaterial concepts like morality, that there's just no way you can rearrange the molecules to get there. You're saying well, yes you can.

MS: Yeah, I think so, because if we think of morality as another suite of emotions that are involved with other people's behaviors, the consequences of our actions, how we feel about them, how people feel about us when we do these things, that's as every bit as important a biological part of our nature as anything else we talk about. So let's take a real simple emotion. When you're hungry, nobody does any calculations about the caloric input/output ratios of eating an apple versus an ice cream, although now it's posted on the walls for us to see. But we just feel hungry, and we feel hungry for certain kinds of foods. The feeling of hunger is a proxy for something else. Evolution's done the calculating for us. You need food, so we're going to, your hypothalamus is going to secrete these certain chemicals that causes your stomach to rumble and so on. When you're attracted to somebody else, a member of the opposite sex, nobody does the calculation by, let's say, a man finds a woman attractive who has a .67 hip to waist ratio, and an hourglass figure, although that is pretty much universal. Nobody walks about with calipers taking measurements of who they're going to want to date or ask out. You just look around, and you just go wow, I really find this woman attractive. It's a feeling you have, okay? So those are kind of simple emotions, but sliding up the scale, the moral emotions are really no different. When I lie to somebody, I've violated a social norm, and they respond in a very angry, hostile way. So those emotions that we both share, guilt, shame, anger, disgust, involved a social relationship that whether it was a norm violation, those are the kinds of emotions that are just like hunger and sexual attraction that are built into us by nature, by evolution. Or, if you wish, this is how God created the moral sentiments, just like He created everything else in the universe, through a process of nature. I think that's equally reasonable to argue. So I don't see that it has to be an atheistic viewpoint versus a theistic viewpoint to get to our moral sentiments. Why couldn't God have used evolution to create the moral sentiments as I've described them?

GK: Yeah, well, you don't actually believe that, I know, Mike, so this is kind of like adding God to the soup, you know, if it makes people feel better. But the basic argument is that evolution all by itself can do the trick. And I think if your listeners are listening carefully, what they're going to hear is Mike has just described, and if I'm being unfair to your assessment here, let me know, Mike, that moral feelings are simply that. They are sophisticated emotions that do some work for us for survival, and even on a group level. Now there's a name for this. It's called emotivism. A.J. Ayer, the famous atheist, offered this description of morality. It's a relativistic scheme of morality. Morality doesn't actually exist, Ayer argued. There is no objective right or wrong. Rape isn't wrong itself. What happens is, we have feelings about it, and we express it in moral language, but rape isn't

really wrong. So your listeners are going to have to ask themselves the questions. When they just survey their own moral senses, and we all have access to this, do we want to believe that scientists have figured out that really what we're doing is feeling sophisticated, complicated emotions, and that the emotions are in us, and we are not seeing anything about the action? Or does it seem like rape is wrong? Look, when I say rape is wrong, I'm talking about the rape. When I say liver is awful, I'm talking about me. I'm talking about my own tastes and preferences. It's interesting, as Michael has given his explanation, though, that he's doing, and I don't know if you are aware of this, Michael, but you're doing the very thing that I kind of warned against. You give a description of the foundations of morality that turn out to be relativistic, but then there's a smuggling of a more objectivistic morality in the back door, like when Michael says you don't have to do what your nature tells you to do, in other words, what you've been programmed by evolution to do. You can kind of rise above that. Well, now we're talking about a morality that isn't dictated by evolution, but a morality that we can employ through our acts of will, to rise above this kind of brutish evolutionary morality. And that sounds suspiciously like the very thing that I'm talking about here.

MS: But I don't mean, there's nothing to rise above by itself. Yes, we have to say rise above our tribal instincts to be xenophobic when we meet somebody who's a stranger, who's different from us. We all struggle against that, particularly in a black and white America, where there's always been this underlying tension. Indeed, so culture helps us do that – education, travel, diversity of exposure to different people. That makes you a little more tolerant. Okay, but I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about is tapping into the good part of our nature, the fact that in addition to that xenophobic tribalism we have, we also have this other side that almost never gets discussed in evolutionary…even in evolutionary circles, you'll still hear evolutionary biologists talking about, in a way that Huxley did, and Herbert Spencer did in Darwin's own time, that we have to somehow struggle mightily against our genes to overcome that nasty tendency we have to want to rape, kill, pillage and destroy. Well no, actually, we have this whole other side that's just as genetically programmed into our nature. And the point of culture – education, politics, economics and so on, is to tap into the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said.

GK: Okay, here's the question I have for you, Michael, then. You've identified that really, we have good and we have bad. That's part of, under your terms, that's part of our genetic nature, and we can choose to tap into what you call the good side. Why ever should we do such a thing if there is not a higher standard that directs our action to the better side, your words, than the bad side, your words, if really, ultimately, they are both the result of a genetic evolution, and from outside terms, neither is better than the other. Why should we do that, Michael?

MS: Yeah, well I don't see how entering God into the equation changes that problem at all.

GK: Well, that's the next step. What I'm trying to show is that the should comes from the

outside, and if we can demonstrate that, then we can ask…

MS: But there's no outside.

GK: That's my point. On your view, morals are relative, and there is no difference.

MS: No, but I don't think even in your view, there's an outside.

GK: Well, we can get to that in the next step.

MS: …because adding God doesn't add anything.

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HH: Greg, reset the debate. What just happened there?

GK: Well, what I'm arguing is basically, you have two choices. You have objective morality, or subjective morality. Subjective morality means that when we say something's wrong, we're not talking about the action itself, we're talking about ourselves. Now there are sophisticated ways of characterizing how we're talking about ourselves, whether it's culture, whether it's evolution. But ultimately, you end up with no morality. I think that's false. I think people know there is objective morality. And if evolution, no materialistic system can explain it, given the discovery of objective morality, then we have to take the next step and ask what is the best explanation for objective morality. Michael, I think, wants to deny objective morality, but I think he's been smuggling the notion in subtly, as many times happens in these kinds of discussions. And he's, I'm not sure if he's denied that or not.

MS: Well, I think there's only two kinds of people – those who think there's only two types of morality, objective and subjective, and those that don't, which is the rest of us.

GK: Okay.

MS: Seriously, I mean, I reject your dichotomy of there's either objective reality or it's all subjective relativism and anything goes, and what Hitler did is perfectly fine. No, I don't believe that. I don't think anybody, hardly anybody actually really believes that, except for maybe a few academic philosophers who've never been in the real world. Really, I think we all recognize that there are deep, provisional truths, moral truths, that we recognize as real. And so what you want to get at is what's the outside source? And as you know, since you read my book, this is an old problem that everybody's familiar with in your business anyway, and that is Plato's Euthyphro's dilemma, in which Socrates asks his student, Euthyphro, the point which I should first wish to understand is whether the pious, or holy, is beloved by the gods because it is holy, or holy because it is beloved of the gods. In other words, which comes first, that the moral principle really exists out there in sort of an ideational world, and the gods say hey, look…

GK: They're beholden to that.

MS: …that's a real, moral principle…

GK: Right.

MS: …and we're going to instruct you through the holy book that's what you should do.

GK: And that makes the gods contingent…

MS: Or do they not really exist other than in the mind of God, who says listen, I've decided that killing is wrong, and I'm telling you in this particular book, and ignore those other holy books, because they're wrong. And so now we get to the problem of which is, which do you believe, for example?

GK: Okay, this is a famous dilemma you actually mentioned at one of the earlier segments, and it has been answered very carefully. I'll give a possible answer for it.

HH: One minute to the break.

GK: Okay, one minute. One answer is to say that God says something is right because it's, the rightness of it is grounded in His nature. It's not an arbitrary act of His will, voluntarism, it isn't that he has some external standard that makes him now contingent, but that God is good in Himself, and that His commands flow forth from His nature. That's a possible solution for it. What you can't do is you can't jump from evolution and say well, if you go your way, I see a difficulty there, so I can ignore the evidence that's facing me right now for moral objectivism. That, I think, is a false move. So I can answer the objection, but also I think it's a false move.

HH: But you'll do it after the break.

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HH: But I want to go back and pick up the thread that we were at right before the end of the break. And Michael Shermer, I'm going to have you reset the debate for people wandered in off the street in the middle of this. Where are we in the conversation right now between you and Greg Koukl?

MS: Okay, just in case anybody's just checking on online, it's http://www.skeptic.com instead of…

HH: I'm sorry.

MS: No big deal. Anyway, so, well, is there an outside source to these moral principles that God then recognizes and says yeah, this is part of the universe, it really is wrong to kill other people, and I as the Deity am telling you this is what I know as part of nature? Or, do no such moral principles actually exist anywhere outside of the Deity Himself, and then He tells us through His Holy books? Okay, so which is the right answer to that question? And two, assuming that…well, you did say something about it's in God's nature. Well, if we're made in God's image, wouldn't that also put the moral principles in our nature as well?

GK: It does…

MS: So then we're tapping into those principles that really exist in us. And how is that any different from what I've been arguing already?

GK: No, the difference there, just on that particular issue, is I agreed earlier when you said it's part of our nature. The source is what's different. What's part of our nature is the knowledge of external things. In my case, these things are external. They are external like math principles are external to my mind. I don't invent them in my mind. In your case, the way you account for them being universal, in the sense that they're part of all

humankind, is that evolution has created this. These are two entirely different things. In my case, I'm talking about an object of reality, and in your case, you're talking about a subjective reality. And I know you want to jump in. Just one more point here. I am not complicating things at all, or oversimplifying things. The issue is quite simple if you start at the bottom. Either moral obligations are objects, or they're part of the object, or they're part of the subject. They are objectively true, or they're not. There are no other options. Now if you agree that morality is not objective, then it's a crap shoot, really. It's not whatever you want, if what you mean your society isn't going to allow you to do whatever you want. It's not whatever you want if you meant that well, evolution is going to determine certain things for you, that aids the species. But it is whatever you want. What is is right, if there is no outside objective moral standard that's governing you. Now how you want to ground that, that has it's own…that's another issue. And grounding it in God makes a lot of sense, and it even, I'm not even subject to the kind of problems that you Euthyphro dilemma that was just offered there. There is an answer to that, that avoids that problem. But it seems to me if there are objective moral laws, then that suggests an objective moral law giver. And if it's not, then it's just deterministic biology, or it's whatever the group says. And then we could be all over the map.

MS: Well, then you have the problem, it seems to me, of determining which moral values in the Holy book that you embrace, the Bible, which not everybody embraces as the source, other people have different holy books and sources, so…but anyway, granting yours, which of the moral principles are you going to adhere to, and which not? So for example, I presume you would reject slavery, as everybody would today. And yet Christians of centuries past embraced slavery, and used Biblical references as political support for slavery, as you well know. And William Wilberforce, who over, you know, sort of single-handedly, against all his fellow Christians who were standing up against him, said no, this is a bad idea. And so I think you have the problem of, like, which moral principles are you going obey, and which not?

GK: Oh, no, you're absolutely right, Michael. We have the problem as human beings, actually, regardless of our understanding about where morality comes from, of trying to figure out which is the appropriate applicable principle in this given situation. Your system suggests that we're basically kind of following an evolutionary impulse, and that's what we're obeying, and so we're not really obeying goodness itself, where I'm suggesting that the problem of moral decision making is difficult, because there are a lot of competing moral goods. But there is an answer to the problem if we think through it carefully. And you don't have to have a Bible, and I think you understand this, Michael. People…my view isn't that people have to have a Bible to know right and wrong. The Bible itself, in Romans Chapter 2, teaches that that is on everybody's heart in some fashion that allows him to have access to it, which is what you said earlier. It's in all of our natures. We agree on that particular point. So you don't need to have the Bible. But if you do, then you have a problem with interpretation. That's true of everything. We don't make the issue simpler in a sense by saying oh, well, morals are objective, because now we have to ask which objective moral principles apply in this circumstance.

MS: Well, so…right…

GK: So I readily agree that there's a challenge there in moral decision making.

MS: So how do you know what's right and wrong? How do you personally know? Is it from the Bible? Do you listen to the still, small voice within? Do you pray?

GK: I reflect on my moral nature, on my moral intuitions. Just like I know how math principles are right and wrong, I reflect on those things as well.

MS: Well, me, too. So how is it any different, because I do the same thing.

GK: And I have a…well, the difference is, well, I just described. You are reflecting on a nature that you're compelled by certain evolutionary things to do something, and it could just as well have been that evolution pushed you in an entirely different direction, so that rape or child molesting, or something like that, is wrong. I mean, we're not even talking now so far, Hugh, about the details of how evolution accomplishes this, which is another issue. We're just talking about it conceptually right now.

MS: Actually, I don't do that. I don't even think about evolution or Darwinism or anything like that when I'm thinking about right and wrong.

GK: Right, I know.

MS: Like when I interact with other people…

GK: …in the explanation, you do.

MS: Yeah, in my explanation. Yeah, but when I think about well, what should I do in this situation, how should I treat this other person, is this really right or wrong, I just try to put myself in their shoes, and think well, how would I feel?

GK: Fair enough.

MS: And I think you do, too. I think that's what we all do.

GK: We are both drawing on the same faculties.

MS: Right.

GK: That isn't the question whether we have the faculties. The question is where do the faculties come from, and what ground them? What makes these things good or bad? You just told me a few moments ago, Michael, that you can go either direction. You could obey your baser nature, which is evolutionary determined, or the higher nature. Well, what is higher and lower in evolution?

MS: Well, this is a good question. Say…take the slavery issue, for example. How do you know that's wrong?

GK: Actually, you raised the question of xenophobia earlier. We could do our tribal instinct thing, which we're by nature dictated to follow, but we can rise above that. So I don't know why…what's above that, unless you're importing some external standard of morality?

MS: Right, so where does it come from?

GK: How do you adjudicate between the two on an evolutionary basis?

MS: I think…yeah, I think that there is a long term trend over the last, maybe, couple of thousand years, to expanding the circle of moral sentiments of who we're going to count as fellow group members that we do not rape, pillage, destroy and kill. And the question is why has that happened, let's say, since the Enlightenment, where we no longer want to treat blacks like we used to, and we want to give women the right to vote, and so on, and now gay marriage is up on the table for discussion and so on. We keep sort of expanding the circle of sentiments. Why would that be? I actually think that it's possible there is sort of a built-in to maybe the universe or something, a tendency toward, well, Robert Wright calls this playing more nonzero games, more win-win games, that is all of us benefit if we have more positive moral exchanges between us. This is why I promote free trade. I think it's one of these mechanisms of generating not just more wealth, but more goodwill between people. And I think that may be very well built into the system, whether there's a God or not. I think it might actually be there.

GK: Well, this is a very important juncture in our conversation, because what Michael has appealed to is something very much like a universal mind, that is this perspective over the whole enterprise, looking down saying as all the things fit together, this would be better for everyone, and that somehow directs the process.

MS: I'm not quite committed to that, by the way. I just think it's an interesting idea…

GK: But if…okay, now fair enough…

MS: And I'm not sure if it's a bottom up process, or a top down process, so…

GK: Well, this is the question then. If it is a bottom up process, if it's in the genes, how is it that the genes, then, in any of their working, can anticipate, in a sense, the greater good for all mankind? That strikes me as completely con…

MS: Not just the genes, no, something a higher order than that, that in the species itself, I mean, we're not talking just about natural selection of individuals, where the organism is the target of selection. But here, I'm talking about group selection. I think group selection has a reasonable case to be built around social organizations, that they themselves are the target of selection. So religion, for example, is a great unifying social force. It brings people together, it unifies them for both good and evil actions, and it's, I think, also part of our nature.

GK: Okay, very good, group selection. There's natural selection, which is on the genes, and then there is group selection. Natural selection is materialistic, and it's unguided. Group selection entails intelligent design, because the group is involved there, encouraging or discouraging the behaviors. And when you form your group, it's kind of a social contract thing, that's fine as an explanation, but just keep in mind that both of them are relativistic. And if one group thinks that their group will do better by destroying other groups, it is certainly "morally" within their rights to do so.

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HH: Gentlemen, for people who have just walked in on the middle of this, we've been not going around in circles, we've been actually moving towards a very sharply defined disagreement. But I want you both to state what that disagreement is in one minute or

less, not to each other, but for the audience who just walked in. If you had to summarize for them in a minute, or in 90 seconds each, what they missed, Greg Koukl, how would you say that?

GK: You have to make a decision, listener, as to whether morality is objective in some sense, or merely subjective. Is it a quality of the action, so when we say rape is wrong, we're talking about rape? Or are we just talking about our feelings or our emotions, or maybe our biological conditioning? As far as I'm concerned, you can go either direction with it at this particular point, but if you decide to go with a subjectivist view, a relativistic view, which is what the evolutionary explanation offers, then you have to be consistent with that to be fair. You can't start then smuggling what sounds like objective morality in the back door, because now you've got another morality that is not accounted for by your evolutionary scheme. And you've got to find another accounting for that, and I think this turns out to be one of the best arguments in favor of theism of some sort, the moral argument. But this is the essence of it, what we're discussing right now.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Well, I reject what I consider to be a false alternative between objective and subjective morality. I reject subjective morality, I reject relativistic morality. I believe there are objective moral standards. I prefer, I slightly prefer the word transcendent moral values. I don't believe in God, but I could be wrong. If there's a God, it seems to me that the moral standards, moral principles should exist anyway, whether there's a God or not, and that what God is doing, if He's doing anything, is He's telling us what those are. And here, I see a serious problem you have of interpreting what those are, because there's more than one holy book. People have many claims about moral values based on God, of which we vehemently disagree with. So when I asked you earlier about how do you know what's right and wrong, you said I reflect upon it, and I used the expression the still, small voice within. And so okay, so we all do that. I think it all begins with the Golden Rule. Everything else is commentary after that, as the great rabbi said, that is how do you feel, how would you feel if I did this, how would I feel if you did this to me? Well, maybe I should put myself in your shoes, and that's where morality begins, and I think that's absolute, whether there's a God or not.

HH: Okay, gentlemen, I had a lot to cover that is not related to this, but I don't want to move on too expeditiously. Do you think we have covered this issue?

GK: Yeah, I think we've done a pretty good job, and I think the differences are fairly clear in the, what, hour or so we've been talking about this issue. And I mean, I can take another shot here, then I'd get the last word on it, but I think we've summed up our views fairly accurately.

HH: All right, then let me ask you one question before we move to my second set. Michael, you've referred a few times to the presence of many holy books as though that somehow diminishes the idea that one may or may not have more authority than the other. Is that necessarily true, just that there are many holy books, there may be a hierarchy of authority among them, correct?

MS: Just take the current events of Islam. Clearly, they have a very different view of morality of how women should be treated than we do, and yet they're basing it on similar holy texts, and some different holy texts. And so how are people of goodwill, who genuinely believe to get along in the world? Clearly, appeals to God is not going to solve our problem, is it?

HH: Okay, I didn't state it very well, then. What I was asking is just does the fact there are many holy books in any way diminish the authority of any one in particular? Just because there are many of them, you've said it a few times, and it's usually as an aside that…it's kind of …

MS: Oh, okay. There could be one, yeah, there could be one that's really right, and the rest are wrong.

HH: You know, there's kind of an implied, and I don't want to put words in your mouth, but when I'm a believer, as I am, in Scripture, and I hear you say that, I hear a sneer, oh, many holy books, but not an argument that one of them can't be right. Do you see what I'm getting at?

MS: Oh, yes, one of them could be right, and the rest wrong, but how do you know which one?

GK: Well, that's a different question.

MS: Because people of genuine belief in faith like you, who are Islamic, believe just as strongly as you do that women should be treated certain ways, and you would disagree. So how are we to settle this?

GK: I'm so glad he put it that way, because that point has absolutely nothing to do with the discussion. You don't cancel out…

MS: But isn't it an interesting point, though?

GK: Wait, let me finish. No, it is an interesting point, maybe, for sociologists, but as to the issue at question, let me finish the thought, Mike, and then you can respond to it. You don't decide whether a book or revelation is true or false, or anything else for that matter, by looking at how strongly different people hold the views. You have to look at the reasons for the views. I mean, let's just talk about science for example. There are very strongly held views by scientists on a lot of different things, even opposing views about how the Darwinian project worked out. It wouldn't be fair of me to Michael to say well, your particular view, I don't know if you're a punctuated equilibrium guy, or you're a classical Darwinist, or whatever, but it would be unfair for me to say to Michael look, you couldn't be right, nor could they be right, because you both have equally strong beliefs that you are true. That is a non-issue in the discussion. Something else has to be focused on to try to break the tie.

MS: Okay, that's a good example, because in that example, at least in principle, it could be settled through more data collection, whether evolution moves along in fits and starts, as described by punctuated equilibrium, or it moves gradually by gradualism. We can at least in principle settle that dispute.

GK: Why can't the other one be settled in principle?

MS: How would you settle the dispute between a Muslim and a Christian on how women should be treated? How would you settle that? I mean, they go look, it says right here in the Scripture, and you say but it says in my Scripture, so how are we going to settle that?

GK: Well…the question here, yeah, well in principle, it can be settled in actually two different ways. One, based on the authority of the book, and so you can look at the books, and say do I have any good, independent reasons, not just leaps of faith, but any good reasons to believe that this is actually a communication of God over and against this one being a communication of God? And there are lots of different strategies to go about that. Or one could just look at the claims themselves, and say look, based on what seems to be a common sense of right and wrong and morality that we all seem to have, and using our best faculties to reflect on it, I have reasons to mistrust this one, and trust this one more. Those are two, at least in principle ways, that you can go about adjudicating between those claims.

MS: I have a better way to settle it. Ask the women. How do you feel being treated like this? Which would you prefer? I think you'll get a pretty straightforward answer there, unless the guy's behind the door with a shotgun, and she has to give a certain answer.

GK: Okay, this presumes that we ought to care what other people think about how they're treated, which presumes an objective morality, and now we're back into that thing again. So that plays into my hands, not his.

MS: And I agree, there's an objective morality.

HH: But I…when I come back from break, we've got to go to break, when I come back, and I'll ask you, Michael, when we start, is there a way to adjudicate between the reasonability of those books, because it seems to me that the audience driving around right now has on their mind, and I always try and put myself in the point of the audience, wait a minute, how do you decide between many books claiming to be the revealed wisdom of God, and if your answer is you can't, don't bother, fine. If your answer is you can, pick this one, fine. But let's get to that. Is there an objective way to pick between the books?

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HH: But I want to get back to the subject I was raising. As between the books that claim to be the revealed wisdom of God, is there an objective way to judge them on their merits? Greg Koukl, let me start with you.

GK: Well yes, let's say, for example, if the documents in question claim that God communicated in an historical way, penetrated history and certain, particular things happened, now you've got an historical test for that kind of thing. You can look at the details that are expressed. Maybe there's some prophecy that is proclaimed at one time, and you have reason to believe was fulfilled at another time. You ask me in principle how it could be done, this is a way in principle that it could be done. You could see whether the view of the world that the books portray seem to comport with one's deepest intuitions about the way the world really is. I actually think religion is a very messy and

untidy business. And with my philosophical training, I like to have all the loose ends tied up. But the fact is, life is not tidy. And no matter what view you take, there are going to be problems and unanswered questions. So I take the perspective, as I mentioned at the beginning of the show, Hugh, as a man looking at my universe trying to make the most sense out of it. What picture of the world, what worldview does the best job of answering most of the questions? And I think this worldview-type analysis would be helpful here. If you have a book that gives a worldview that has a certain feature that seem to resonate with your deepest intuitions about the world, that seems to me a plus for the book. If you have another book that seems to indicate something entirely different, like the Vedas, for example, that suggest that the universe is just an illusion, that it's all Maya. Well this, to me, does not resonate with my deepest intuitions. So here's another way that in principle, at least, one could test one worldview against another with their religious books.

HH: Mike Shermer?

MS: That does seem problematic to me, even within your own Holy book, of how much we, how many of the Old Testament rules and laws we no longer obey – death penalty for disobedient children and adulterous people and so on. We would no longer practice that ever in our country. Why is that? I mean, that was once considered to be Holy Scripture, now it's rejected by most believers. So obviously, there are decisions being made in people's minds about what's right and wrong that is external to the source itself, that comes from, what, culture, parents, upbringing and so on.

HH: Okay, I'm going to recede from it, although my question was how would you choose between the books. I want to come back to that, Michael, but Greg has a response to that.

GK: Yeah, of course. Look, the Old Testament law was written for Jews. This is not like we're just making something up out here. It is a proper hermeneutic It was written to Jews under a very specific situation, and it was meant to be applied to them under the theocracy. There are some people who hold this, but certainly not the majority, that these same laws in the same way ought to be applied today. That's why we call it the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Even within the Christian worldview, there is a place for that, and now there's a place for something new. So there's no contradiction there at all.

HH: Yeah, you know, Michael, that does seem to me, Hitchens has made that argument to me a number of times, and it's just a silly argument.

MS: Which argument?

HH: The argument that the Old Testament rules that have been abandoned somehow indict the New Testament laws and morality. It's just a silly argument.

MS: Well wait. You still obey some of the Old Testament rules. So how do you…

HH: Yes.

MS: Which ones do you pick and choose from?

HH: I'll give you Al Mohler's book. Again, I'm not a participant. I don't want to answer. I want to ask you, though. To me, it was nonresponsive when I said as between the books,

how do you judge which books?

MS: Okay, which books? I would just say…

HH: Of all the holy books that claim to have universal wisdom and knowledge about God, and I could name ten of them, is there a way to choose…

MS: I don't think so. I'm answering your question. I don't think there is any outside way to do that. Even in principle, because the ultimate, the original source of those books came through some human source, some revelatory experience that somebody had, that had to at some point put pen to paper and write down what the God said.

HH: Let me rephrase it, then. On the basis of human reason, there is no way to evaluate all those books as to which ones are at least more closely approximating the way that people ought to live or not?

MS: Oh, that's a different question. Maybe I misheard, because I think we could do that, but what's that standard of the way we ought to live? What are we using for that standard? I would argue there is such a standard, and it's not from religion.

HH: And so you would evaluate those books based upon your independently arrived at understanding of what is morality?

MS: I think we do do that.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, I think we do do that to a degree, too, and here Mike and I have no debate about the existence of a moral sense in human beings. The difference is whether that moral sense is merely an expression of our subjective emotions, which it seems to me what he argues for, though he wants to ennoble that and call that kind of objective morality, or is it our ability to grasp moral realities that are outside of us that would not change, even if our own opinions about it happen to change. That's the difference between objective and subjective. And Mike, you appealed for a kind of third category, but either…I don't see where there is a third category. It's either in the object or in the subject, and that's pretty much the law of excluded middle there.

HH: Remember that thought. We'll come right back to Michael Shermer.

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HH: Michael Shermer, what were you going to say?

MS: Well, so let's take another current example of whether homosexuality is a sin, leaving aside marriage as a political question, but just is homosexuality a sin or not. Now I presume you would argue it is, and it's right there in the Old Testament, a man shall not sleep with another man, it's an abomination. But why stick with that one, which seems to me equally culturally dependent as some of the other Old Testament on small populations struggling in a harsh environment, in which you want lots of marriage, lots of children and so on. I could kind of see that rules back then, but why bother now? I mean, why not abandon that one along with slavery and some of the other ones?

HH: Greg Koukl? Well, okay, this one goes to a matter of authority, because I think there are complicated, and for some, persuasive arguments that homosexuality is wrong, per

se, because of natural law arguments or whatever, but those don't resonate with most people. I think what Michael's getting at here is how is it that the New Testament, or now why are you still holding over that from the Old Testament when things have changed? And the reason is, it's not just an incidental part of the Old Testament law. It seems to be indicated there that the behavior itself transcends, morally speaking, any local law. Some of the laws in the Old Testament were for local things, but some seemed to transcend, like it's wrong to kill, or rather, wrong the murder is the Hebrew word. And so in the New Testament, even though we're not in the Old Covenant situation, we have these same kinds of things, these more transcendent things that apply to all human beings, prohibited. And one of those that's spoken to is the homosexuality issue. And the reason that Paul gives in Romans Chapter 1 is that God made human beings for one purpose, the man for the woman, and the man, in the case of male homosexuality, abandoned the woman that God made for them and burned in their passion against someone else. So there's a violation of the natural order. Now this isn't something that I'm probably going to come up with all on my own just thinking about, and this is where I think Divine revelation is helpful to have us dial down on some of the moral things. And you're certainly free not to accept that, but this is what makes homosexuality durable as a sin, in a sense, from the Old Testament times to the New Testament, because of the reasons that God gives that it's wrong.

MS: But using that sort of a moral intuition, and the still, small voice or the reflective aspects of morality, given that we live in a modern world in which we have plenty of people, we don't need more, and somebody, the evidence seems to show people are just born this way, it's like asking a gay person when they chose to become homosexual would be like me asking you when you chose to become heterosexual. And you'd say well, I didn't choose. This is my nature. And that's what gay people say. This is my nature. I've always felt like this. So why would you care? Who cares if somebody finds love with a member of the same sex, and love and marriage leads to fidelity and more moral behavior that we all agree is good for society? Why block that?

GK: Okay, just as a matter of fact, it is not the case that science has shown that this is genetic. There is no gay gene. This has not been demonstrated.

MS: No, not a gay gene…

GK: Or anything like that.

HH: Okay, we're going way off the off-ramp, gentlemen.

GK: Okay, the answer is, why would any Christian object to that?

MS: Yeah.

GK: Because out of fidelity to their God, because they believe that God has said this is wrong, and so they're going to oppose it in principle, even though it is not within their purview, then, to bring persecution upon that person, because there's another value that they hold, and that is that all human beings are made in the image of God.

MS: Okay, here's my prediction.

HH: I don't want a prediction. I want to get back to my question, Michael Shermer.

MS: Yup.

HH: Based upon what I would say your evolutionarily-constructed moral law, what you consider to be the societal moral law, have you evaluated the various holy books, and given them a hierarchy, which is best, which is not so good, which is terrible?

MS: No, I guess I have not.

HH: And why not, if that matters so much?

MS: I don't, I'm not that interested. I love studying religion, though I have not read the Koran, for example.

HH: Greg Koukl, is it necessary for someone who's going to say there's an evolutionary moral law, and talk about God, to have that kind of assessment?

GK: I actually don't, I'm sympathetic to Mike. I mean, there's a lot of books to read, you can't read them all. And if he thinks he has come upon a cogent and powerful explanation for the world as he sees it, then he doesn't have a motivation to go outside of that. My argument has been that it's not adequate, and that's why some other kind of solution is going to be necessary.

HH: Okay, here's my objection. If there's a moral law, and there's a societal good, and one of these books is really bad for it, and one of these books generally support it, then you ought to, even as an agnostic, make a choice between that which is really horrific, a Hitlerian approach to, you know, a Nazi, Mein Kampf, don't read that one, that's horrible, versus the New Testament is pretty nice. I think…

MS: Yeah, I guess I would attest that the New Testament's better than the Old Testament. I guess I would agree. I think Jesus was a big step forward. I think the feminization of some of the morality in the book of Ruth toward the end of the Old Testament is a big improvement over the early books, so yeah, I guess I do evaluate.

HH: And where do you put the Koran in that? You haven't read it at all, it just doesn't matter?

MS: Oh, I've read it, of course since 9/11, I've read lots of parts of it that everybody quotes, which are all the, you know, the horrific parts. And that seems to me far beneath the Bible in terms of what we would consider moral values. But anyway…

HH: Do any of the books have a better grounding in natural science?

MS: No, I don't think so.

HH: Do any of the books have a better grounding in history?

MS: It depends on which books. I mean, parts of the Old Testament have some good grounding in history, and others don't.

HH: This is a transition. Greg Koukl, how is the historical evidence for the accounts of these various books?

GK: Well, it depends on which one you're talking about. Some of these books aren't history books. They're poetic books that are meant in poetic language, the Bhagavad

Gita, for example, to tell something about reality. I think the unique thing about the Judeo-Christian revelation is that principally, the theological story is told through history, so the history is really important. The big event of the Old Testament is the exodus, you know, and this was the salvation event where God intervened. The big event in the New Testament is similar to that, parallel to that, is the resurrection of Christ. Now obviously, we have a lot more access to information about the life of Jesus of Nazareth than we do about the exodus. In fact, there's a kind of a big hole there in terms of archaeology for that period of time. But there's not a big hole when it comes to the life of Christ. And the documentary evidence is quite extensive. And not just the primary source documentation for the life of Jesus, which we call Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which by the way, should not be simply dismissed because they were written by Christians. Historians don't dismiss them for that reason. But we have to look at these as historical documents. And when we do, we find a tremendous amount of powerful testimony from those documents about the person of Jesus, what He taught, and what He did, which also points to a literal time-history resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Now if that actually happened, that puts this worldview in a whole different category.

HH: Well, that's my transition, is to the person of Christ, because most of our audience is Christian. And a lot of this argument has been, as I've had with many of the new atheists, silly to believe in Jesus.

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HH: Mike Shermer, as I said at the end of last hour, last segment, is it silly to believe in the historical person of Jesus Christ? And is it silly to believe in the claims and the accounts of him as recorded in the New Testament.

MS: I don't like the word silly, because it trivializes a serious issue. I think it's an empirical claim on one level, whether Christ rose from the dead or not, but on the other hand, I think it's an article of faith. You can show all 13 million Jews in the world that evidence for the risen Christ, and eyewitnesses, and the rock was rolled away or whatever, and they almost universally, except for the small population of Jews For Jesus, reject the evidence. So I don't think it's ultimately provable. I do think it's an article of faith, like many other articles of faith of religion. I don't like the word silly at all. I think that trivializes it unnecessarily.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, a frustrating situation for atheists is that the vast majority of people in this country, the rank and file, don't believe in Darwinian evolution. But I wouldn't be free then to say well, this is just, evolution's obviously an article of faith, because look at all the people who look at the evidence that you provide so persuasively and don't believe it. This is an observation that leads to no conclusion about this issue at all.

HH: And so, and it's frustrating as well, because it seems to me central for agnostics, atheists, to answer the question about the empirical evidence, and whether it is of high quality…I had this conversation with Richard Dawkins. Dawkins likes to argue you know, I'm a Latin teacher, and I'm just arguing that Rome existed, and a lot of people are

arguing Rome didn't exist. And it's the same with evolution. And I challenged him, I asked him the historical evidence for the personhood of Jesus is overwhelming, isn't it?

MS: Yes.

HH: And so, is the proof…

MS: Well, I don't know about overwhelming. I think Jesus existed.

HH: Well, is it overwhelming? Or just a guess?

MS: I think there's good enough evidence for us to conclude that somebody named Jesus of Nazareth existed.

HH: And on the basis of what we know generally about historical text, isn't there pretty good, and perhaps even overwhelming evidence that the Gospels are reliable, historically tested accounts about what this person did?

MS: Well now, it's getting a little fuzzier, because of the inconsistency of the accounts. And you could say well, okay, eyewitnesses saw things slightly differently. Yeah, but there's some important differences between the four Gospels. And what about the other Gospels that are not in the canonical books, the gospel of Thomas, for example? And there's legitimate, theological research on these other books, and why can't those be concluded?

HH: One minute, Greg.

GK: Well, there is legitimate, theological research, and not only on Thomas, but a whole bunch of other pseudepigrapha that come afterwards. There are all kinds of literary documents that make claims to write about Jesus that we know, because of their dating, couldn't possibly have the eyewitness accounts of the information that the Matthew, Mark, Luke and John canonical Gospels have. So just because there are other things that claim to be gospels, it doesn't mean that they're contenders as source of historical information. And the scholars in the field make this distinction. Now Thomas is one of those few documents where they seem to take seriously, but our documents of Thomas are like 3rd Century, and looks to have been written in the 2nd Century. So why is it that the 1st Century documents of the Gospels don't get preeminence there as historical documents? They should.

HH: When we come back, the third hour is given over to do the anti-God people have to put up with the same rigorous defense of their beliefs as they ask the theists to put up with theirs. Stay tuned.

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HH: And I want to spend this hour talking really about the debate over the debate. And it's occurring at an unusual time, because just a couple of weeks ago surfaced one of the greatest scandals in the history of modern science, Climategate, in which incredibly unscientific behavior on the part of scientists has been revealed. The atheists have often in the past few years tried to position the debate as between reason and faith. But now we find the tactics that people of faith are often accused of, absolutely evident on the part of the behavior of scientists – data manipulation, witch hunts against scientists with

whom they disagreed with, a refusal to confront contrary evidence. And I took that, and I applied it to this debate over intelligent design, Michael Shermer, and I'm wondering whether or not the opponents of intelligent design have been using the same tactics that the Climategate scientists, who are now deeply scandalized, embarrassed and discredited, have been using for the last, obviously, we just learned about it. But have the proponents of the anti-God view been just as intellectually dishonest as the Climategate scientists?

MS: Well, on the Climategate thing, I think the smoking guns are not what I thought they would be. I have some sympathy for the global warming skeptics. I was once one, and could be persuaded again. I think that's just a data question there. But what I think it revealed was how political scientists are. They're very liberal and very tribal, and like everybody else, they circle the wagons when they think they're being attacked from outside. And I think that's what we saw. So to that extent, do atheists, have atheists done that? Yes, they have. They've circled the wagons, they feel like they're under siege. At time, I think particularly since 9/11 with the fear of Islamic terrorism, and then since the Bush administration pushing an Evangelical agenda into politics, way more than Bush Sr., ever did as a Methodist, and certainly more than Reagan ever did, I think that's what caused non-believers to feel like they needed to push back somewhat. And then you just get specific cultural phenomenon like Dawkins' book takes off, or Hitchens' book takes off, something like that. I mean, the book sales on those books are more than cumulative all the other books they've ever written, plus all of a bunch of other books, so I think you get a combination of those events there.

HH: Greg Koukl, first your response, then I have a follow up.

GK: Well yeah, I think that there is kind of a shell game and a muscling going on, and we see it in the field. And I think what people don't realize, and I didn't realize this until maybe six or seven years ago when this was explained to me, and when explained, I really saw this, that there are actually two definitions of science that are in play here, Hugh. One of them is a methodological definition, the scientific method. You know, follow certain methods, and you come up with the right results. Now if you don't follow that method, then that's called bad science, and you can't trust the results you come up with. But there's more going on here. It isn't just a methodology. There is also a philosophical definition. This philosophical definition is metaphysical materialism, or called naturalism. A metaphysical view is a total view of reality, and on this view, nothing exists but the molecules in motion. That's materialism. That's also part of the definition. So currently, in the state of science, in order to be doing science, good science, you have to be doing the right methodology, but you also have to come to the right kinds of conclusions. You have to come to conclusions that comport with naturalism and materialism. And if you don't, you're accused of doing religion instead of science. I just want people to see that there's a difference here, and lots of times in this discussion, this metaphysical issue trumps the methodology. Notice that a lot of times, the arguments aren't against ID proper, that is the evidence that they've offered. It's a dismissal by saying you're not doing science, you're doing religion. This isn't real scientists at work like we are, these are phonies. And

so it's a way of discrediting based on the kind of conclusions that they come up. Now this happens all the time, and you can see a bullying that's going on in the field, and a lot of people have identified this, Guillermo Gonzalez for example, a famous example from Iowa State University, denied tenure though very qualified. Francis Beckwith, for goodness sake, a philosopher, not a scientist, but the same kind of thing happened to him at Baylor before it got reversed, and a lot of other people. There's a political game going on here, and it seems to me that if the evidence for Darwinian evolution is so powerful, then why do you have to do these political moves that are driven not by the methodology, but largely by the metaphysics doing the magic? Why? And I think because the metaphysics are doing a large part of the work, and the method doesn't give the evidence that's necessary to convince the most people.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Of course, other fields of science don't deal with these issues, like why are Christian groups not up in arms about the Krebs cycle being taught in biochemistry classes and biology classes. Why not? I mean, if you're going to object to methodological naturalism, why pick on just one, particular little subfield?

GK: Because it doesn't have any ramifications for these other things.

MS: Yeah, of course. That's right.

GK: But it does…

MS: Because certain fields of science do bump up against political and religious implications.

GK: But it's not just that, Michael. It has to do with the evidence in question. Nobody has, even from my side of things, has any difficulty with the Krebs cycle, because methodological naturalism is the thing that governs day to day science.

HH: Why don't you explain the Krebs cycle for our audience.

MS: Oh, it's just a…

GK: I can, but he…

HH: I know, but don't use terms like that for the audience.

MS: It's just a biochemical process in cells of using energy.

GK: Yeah. And so at this point, to finish my thought, though…

MS: Yeah.

GK: What this points out is that these kinds of issues are not the kind of thing that affect day to day science. But when it comes to the issue of origins, then it's something entirely different. You have a different category that you're talking about, and this is where the muscling has been done, and that's why the complaints have been raised, muscling that is illegitimate considering what's at stake.

MS: Well, muscling on both sides. I mean, it's political on both sides, so the left and the right both push back against each other, all the way back to the Catholic Church and Galileo.

GK: Well, okay, I'm glad…

MS: I mean, that tension has always been there. Let's not…

GK: Great. And it was wrong with Galileo, and it should be wrong now. That's my point. If it was wrong then, and with the monkey trial and everything, now everything is in reverse, and I think this is what Hugh was getting at. If the power plays were wrong in the past, then they should be wrong now, and why don't we just let everybody lay their cards on the table and play fair, and then let the best idea win?

MS: I agree. So just put it out there. Like the Climategate? Yeah, let's get that original data. I agree. Sure. Now let me just back up for a second on an example not related to religion, but on another field that I deal with, extra sensory perception. Can we actually read the minds of other people? Okay, setting aside the TV psychics and all that silly stuff, there are some scientists who actually believe that mind exists separate from brain, and that we can connect to each other, and there's a famous physicist named Roger Penrose, who has this theory about that quantum mechanics explains how when neurons fire, the collapse of the wave function inside the atoms, inside the nerves, fire in a sequence that my cells can read your cells. They're actually communicating, somehow, across a distance, all right? I don't happen to think that's true, but let's say it turned out to be true, and that now we have a naturalistic explanation for extra sensory perception. Well, that would no longer be the paranormal, would it? Now it would be quantum neuroscience, or neurophysics, or something like that. So at some point, you need some kind of a natural explanation for the phenomenon in question that we can test. So for example, when somebody, when cosmologists talk about well, the galaxies are structured in this odd way where there must be more matter out there, we'll call it dark energy or dark matter, they don't actually mean that as an explanation. It isn't an explanation. It's just a word filler until we can figure out what's going on. So at some point, it's not that no one's allowing you to introduce the supernatural, it's just that no different than calling it ESP, that doesn't explain it. We need some kind of a mechanism that causes it.

GK: Okay, to be fair, Michael, I was at the debate one week ago that you did with Professor Prothero and Steve Meyer, and the others from the ID thing. And you started out your presentation by saying this is all about religion, it's not about science. That's the first thing you said. And then you referred to the other guys as, you and your partner, as 'those guys,' and we are doing real science, and they're not. In fact, Steve Meyer raised a complaint at the personal attack there, because both of them have advanced degrees in their fields. Now I mean, this is an example of the kind of thing that I'm talking about. It's like, you didn't say to these guys well, you're real scientists, we're real scientists, but really, the facts matter, so let's look at the facts. There are all of these kind of subtle and sometimes not so subtle invectives, or shout across there. Now I've been in debates before. I know how that works. I'm just simply saying that your kind of tone of innocence here, it strikes me as disingenuous, because this is a game that you guys play all the time when in public circumstances. And sometimes, it's not just invectives, it's actually muscling, we won't publish your paper, we won't let people know about it, we're going to

criticize you in front of all these people and try to discredit you.

HH: A response coming back from Michael Shermer when we return.

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HH: Michael Shermer, I was not at this debate. I have no idea what Greg just referenced. So I want to give you a chance to go back to what he was just talking about. Did you attack Steven Meyer's scientific credentials?

MS: Actually, I didn't. My partner did. Well, you know…

HH: Did you correct your partner at that point?

MS: Well…

GK: Steven Meyer corrected him, actually, is what happened.

MS: Yeah, I mean, this is a part of the format of debate, right? I mean, it's a contest. It's competitive. You're supposed to, you know, you're supposed to come out…like a lawyer, you're supposed to defend your position. You're not supposed to…if it's a panel discussion, that's different than a debate. This was a debate. I actually do think that it's perfectly fine for Steven Meyer to publish books like his new book on DNA, and put forth testable hypotheses. Okay, at least now we're getting somewhere, where if you give us something we can take back to the lab and test, then we're doing science. If it's just I infer that there's a designer behind this, okay, that's nice, but what am I supposed to do with that? So the analogy I made is that let's say it turns out life did not originate on Earth, that it was seeded here either through meteorites or comets, or maybe even extra-terrestrials brought it here and seeded it, and they are from the Planet Vega, a planet around the Star Vega. Let's say something like that.

HH: A dysfunctional GM car, okay.

MS: Yeah, exactly, yeah. Right. Good, we needed some humor there. And…but and let's say we found a little pod out in Blythe or something in the desert with the blueprints of how they made DNA. Well, that would be interesting, but we'd still want to know well, where did the Vegans come from? I mean, who made those guys? Did they evolve on this planet? Or were they seeded there from someplace else? Or did God do it? Or…in other words, at some point, we need some natural explanation for where life came from. And if you take this back far enough, you will end up at an infinite regress. Well, God, outside of space and time, came into our space and time, stirred the particles, and created life. Okay, but where did, if not God, the intelligent designer, where did He come from? Did he evolve? Or is he a standalone, the last causal link? And there, we bump up against the great unknown. I don't see how that's resolvable.

GK: I've got so much to say about this, I'm not sure where to begin. Let me just start with the power play. At that debate, Richard Sternberg was the other I.D. guy there, and Richard Sternberg used to be with the Smithsonian. But he had the audacity of publishing a paper by Steven Meyer in a journal, a peer review journal that was associated with the Smithsonian, and he got bounced. This is the kind of thing that I'm talking about.

MS: You know, I just called them. He's still there. At least, he's still on their list.

GK: Okay, well, the firestorm…

MS: I don't think he got bounced.

GK: …surrounding that, you don't…okay, forget the bounce thing. The firestorm surrounding it you don't deny?

MS: Yes, of course. We're all emotional, yeah. Right.

GK: Well, it goes beyond that. And so the point to bringing up the debate, I understand that there is these things you do in debates, but this in the debate was the microcosm of the bigger issue, and that's why I pointed that out. Now with regards to, you know, life beginning on other planets, and then who designed the Designer and that kind of thing, it's a very odd question. And virtually all the guys on Mike's side of this debate ask the same question – who created God, or some variation of that. And what's curious is that Mike and none of these other guys believe that God was created, because they don't believe in God. I don't believe that God was created, because I think that God is eternal. So nobody in the discussion believes that God was created or designed. So why does the question come up that who designed the Designer, or who created God? Frankly, it's a distraction. It's a distraction from the evidence in front of us, for intelligent design. If I'm walking down the beach as we could here in Newport, Hugh, and I see a footprint in the sand, a shoeprint in the sand, I don't need to know who the manufacturer of the shoe is before I can properly conclude from the evidence that a shoe made the print. The same thing is true here. We're focusing on one issue, and that is whether the evidence suggests an intelligent designer. If we come to the conclusion that that's the case, much like forensic pathology, there's a dead man with five holes in his chest from bullets, gee, it doesn't look like natural causes, now let's go search for the person who did it. That's the next step. But we can't say, I think, vacuous challenges like who created God when none, all of these guys know that nothing about our view requires God's creation. They say this to, I think, distract from the main issue, the evidence for design itself, which is compelling, Hugh.

MS: Oh, I don't say it as a distraction. I think it's a really interesting question. Where did the universe come from in the first place. And if there were multiple universes, you still have the same problem – where did those come from.

GK: I agree. I agree.

MS: And I do think, Greg, at some point, we do bump up against limitations of our knowledge, of our language…

GK: Right.

MS: …of what our brains are capable of solving. And there is a leap of faith for all of us. You either decide to believe, or you decide not to believe. And I don't think it's ultimately provable one way or the other. Now on the other question positing a designer from the evidence of design, I think there is an inference there in which we have vast experience of people shooting each other, and we know what that is. And so you come across somebody with five bullet holes, okay, there's a natural inference there based on experience. And we've seen people make tennis shoes, so we know that they're made

when we see the print. Okay, there's a natural inference there. But we've never seen any designer design DNA. We just have the product, the artifact, from which we infer what? And there, it isn't the same as an artifact that's made by us.

HH: All right. Now gentlemen, I want to switch for the last three segments of the show leading into a larger question about belief in God generally. Is it good or bad for people? And regardless of whether it's true, or the true true, to use Francis Schaeffer, but is it good or bad? Because that leads me to the second question, are the new atheists involved in an evil project or a good project? Because these are both obvious question. So Greg, you want to take a first pass?

GK: Yeah, I'll take a shot at it, and again, I want to go back to my earliest comment when we started talking about morality. It depends on what you mean by good. And I'm just weighing in now to say that when you're using the word good, I'm taking this as good in the objective sense.

HH: Yes.

GK: Do objective goods, oughts that we should do and whatever, come to pass better when there is belief in God? There's a famous story of a Hassidic Jew that was standing in front of a German machine gun having just dug his own grave. And he said just before he was gunned down, he said God is watching. Now one thing that the German officer didn't believe at that point was that God was watching. Nor did Mao, nor did Lenin, nor did Stalin, nor did many other people who did great atrocities, did they believe that God was watching. As David Berlinski has pointed out, that's actually the definition of secularism. God is not watching. Now I don't think it takes, you know, a lot of deep thinking to realize, and Michael might call this a shallow motivation regardless, to realize that if people really believe that God is watching, their behavior is going to be better on balance than if they really believe that God is not watching.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Well, I do think that religion and belief in God is good when it does good, and evil when it does evil. And we can make a laundry list of goods and evils that religion does. You have Hitchens' book here, and he's got a laundry list in there of all the evils.

GK: And we agree on that, by the way, Michael.

MS: And you could take David Brooks' book, Who Really Cares, and he documents how Republicans and conservatives and religious people give more money and more time, and donate more blood and so on then securalists, atheists, nonbelievers, and Democrats. So I would say that's great. I mean, I sponsor a child through World Vision, because I think they do the job. They put the boots on the ground, and they make things happen. And religion is really good for that. And so I think it's too simple to say is religion good or evil. I mean, come on, it's a big, complex, social, historical force that does lots of good things, and lots of bad things.

HH: When we come back, I'll follow up, because I don't think it's too simple. I think it's actually the question about whether or not the anti-God people are engaged in evil if

they're destroying belief in God.

– – – –

HH: So Michael, I come back to this. You said yeah, religion's done a lot of good and a lot of bad, but generally speaking, and the utilitarian view, is belief in God good for the planet? And if it is good for the planet, have the anti-God people been involved in an evil project?

MS: I don't think they have been involved in an evil project. I think what it…it makes it okay to not believe in God. Remember, atheism isn't a thing. There's no, like, central set of tenets that we adhere to or believe in, or anything like that as you would a Republican or conservative, or something like that, or a Christian or a Jew or whatever. We don't have anything like that, because there is nothing. It's just simply we just don't believe. Now because we're social creatures, we like to feel like we belong to a family, an extended family, a group of friends, a bowling league, social capital, this is called. Everybody likes to feel like they belong. Because religion is so dominant in America, particularly the Christian religion, those of us who are either not Christian or not believers, we feel a little alienated, a little lonely, and a little left out. And we'd like to have our own group. So in part, what the new atheist movement is tapping into is that social feeling of wanting to belong to a group. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think it's good that there are people out there, groups out there that make that okay.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, your question was not whether religion does good, but whether belief in God does good, if I recall it correctly.

HH: Yup.

GK: And so I want to return specifically to that. The atheists do have a code. It's not very complicated. It's just that as Michael just put it, there is nothing. So what is the moral consequence on a people if they believe there is nothing? That's really the question. The 20th Century, which we just left, was the bloodiest century in the history of the world. And just a casual adding up of the numbers shows over 100 million that were dead at the hands of just three people – Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Tse Tung. Now these people had a particular ideology at which atheism was its foundation. Because they didn't believe in God, and there is a natural kinship here between worldviews and the actions that follow them, because they didn't believe in God, it was the state that was the greater power. And if the state is the greatest power, and they were the state, then they had no one to answer to. And consequently, they were able to do these things that everyone views as an atrocity. Now this, I think, is logical. This follows from that worldview. I'm not saying that atheists are all evil like that. They're not. Mike is a fine guy. What I'm saying is that given the atheistic worldview, you are allowed to do those kinds of things, because there is no transcendent rule that's keeping you from doing otherwise.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Nobody kills or dies in the name of atheism, because there's nothing to kill or die for.

People kill and die for causes, for ideologies, for beliefs. And communism is a faux religion. It is exactly like a religion, a set of tenets that people adhere to, and then we're going to go out and change people's minds, or impose our views on them and so on. That's what social groups do, whether they're political, ideological, economic, religious, whatever. And that's what communism is. And it's nothing more than that. Nobody killed in the name of that. In any case, Hitler's not a good example, because as we've seen now…

GK: I didn't use him.

MS: …with the indictment of the Catholic Church, they were very much involved in the whole Nazi process there…

HH: That's…time out, Michael. That's simply not true, but let's not go there. I would want to have an expert in the Vatican's many, many interventions to save lives, and then we'd have a long conversation…

MS: Oh, of course they did. Yes, yes.

HH: Let's just not throw it out there. Let's just not throw it out there.

GK: The real issue here is not whether people did it in the name of atheism or not. But it has to do with the kinship of behaviors to worldviews. Whether people are thinking of this as a rationale, gee, I'm an atheist, so I can go kill people, is not the issue. The issue is how is it that people actually live out the deep beliefs that they have about the world? And it seems obvious that when people have believed that there's nothing else but us and our rules, what we make, for whatever reasons we do, and we answer to no one, and there isn't going to be any final justice or final judgment or final reckoning, well, it seems very clear to see how this is going to have a deleterious effect on behaviors.

MS: Yeah, but if Torquemada had gas chambers, wow, what would the numbers have been in the Inquisition? I mean, in the name of God, Torquemada…

GK: So you're saying there is no relationship between the worldviews?

MS: Well, you brought up the numbers.

GK: Right.

MS: It isn't numbers that's important. It's what your capable of doing. And religious beliefs and political ideologies are no different as belief systems driving behavior that's moral or immoral. People kill in the name of religion just as much as they do in the name of a political ideology.

GK: This is false, just quantifiably, first of all.

MS: No, I disagree.

GK: But secondly, there is the idea…

MS: Not by the numbers.

GK: The idea is what's important. People just have to reflect in the idea. Which one is a better encourager to good behavior, that God exists. That was your question.

– – – –

HH: It seems that we're onto something very important here, and Michael, I sense defensiveness on your part, so I'm going to let you go first. If, in fact, the new atheists launch a series of responses that lead people to not believe in God, and those people in not believing in God act a certain way, that's causation. That's responsibility. Ought the new atheists ought to own their responsibility? If they kill God, ought they not to own the results of killing God?

MS: First of all, I don't think that's going to happen. It didn't happen at the turn of the 20th Century.

HH: Didn't ask that question, though.

MS: Yeah, yeah, I know. Sure, okay, I'll stand up and be responsible. Why not?

HH: Greg Koukl, have they been? It's a flippant response. That's okay. But…

GK: Yeah, well…

MS: No, it's a true response. Yes…

GK: What I was…okay, great. So what do we take away from that?

HH: Right.

GK: Listen, I'm arguing if there is no God, then everything is permitted. There is no objective morality.

MS: I don't agree with that. Come on.

GK: I understand that. I understand you don't, but you have ground objective morality…

MS: Yes, you can. We're back to where we began.

GK: Your morality is subjective.

MS: No, it's not.

GK: It's something that's in the subject. It's in the genes…

MS: That's objective.

GK: And it creates…yes, okay. Well, it is objective, but it's not objective in the way that I'm talking about it. It's objectively in the subject, and ethicists have made this distinction for a long time between objective and subjective. I'm not going to go there again. Let me just finish the equation here. If there is no God, then everything is permitted. If the new atheists are right, then there is no God. Therefore, if the new atheists are right, then everything is permitted. Now I think that follows. And I think this, then, creates a problem. Again, I don't think that all of the atheists are bad people in everything that they do. They're just as bad as the rest of us religious people. Let's face it. The question has to do with the impact of worldviews, and that is really what's in play here.

HH: I do agree, Michael, that's where I'm coming back down to. I take responsibility for it if in fact the people who allowed and facilitated the rise of the atheist monsters of the 20th Century were around today, they would deny responsibility for them, even though they facilitated it with the collapse of the orders that previously held back the monsters. It seems to me now that Dawkins, et cetera, your rhetoric is much milder than Dawkins, but that they were about unleashing the beast again, because the beast is eager. The

most eager thing in the world for the Devil, the Christians have always said, is not to be believed in. And you guys are doing a good job.

MS: If they, if Dawkins and Hitchens and so on were promoting some kind of a political agenda hooked to the atheism, whereby you're supposed to go out and do this or do that, then yes, I'd think you have a point, and I'd be concerned about it. That is, is it leading to greater liberty, or greater tyranny? That's the question, liberty and tyranny, is at stake in terms of the boots on the ground, actual change.

HH: Greg Koukl, if you take down a dam when it's not raining, and nothing happens for give years, ten years, fifteen years, twenty years, and then the hundred year flood comes, which happens every hundred years, and you destroy everything in front of it…

GK: Then you're in trouble. Right.

HH: You're responsible.

GK: Well, you made the point. And actually, Sam Harris is very explicit about this in his book. He said that there are some beliefs that are so dangerous, and he's talking about theism here, that it's justified to even kill people for that belief. Now two things are in play here. Sam Harris acknowledges the relationship between worldviews. You believe certain things that have certain consequences, which I think is true and that's what I'm arguing, and then he exemplifies it himself with the danger of atheism. He thinks that they, atheists, not all believe this, and certainly Michael doesn't, he is not going to get involved in this, but he seems to suggest that some people should be killed for their beliefs. And whether Dawkins has a political agenda or not is irrelevant. If he is laying the foundation that justifies a certain political agenda, then the dominoes are going to fall. It's a logical slippery slope, and it's one to be concerned about.

MS: You see, I place at the feet of the monstrous evil of the 20th Century Marxism, Leninism. If Marx and Lenin just simply said we're atheists, and they wrote atheist books, nothing would have happened. It's that they hooked it to something else, which is the confiscation of private property, the confiscation of individual liberties, the ownership of productivity. That's what destroyed those societies and led to the monstrous problems.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Well yeah, I agree with that as far as it goes, except to say that there was something else that was in place that allowed them to do such a thing, and that there was a, again, a kinship between the belief system and the results of that belief system, the particular things. Now could religious people have done that? Yes, but it's a lot harder to hang the behavior of Christians who say they're Christians that's evil, on Jesus Himself, because Jesus didn't teach that kind of thing. Instead, you have Christians that are acting contrary to Jesus' own behavior and teaching. In this case, you have behaviors that are fully consistent with an atheistic worldview.

MS: But you left out the first World War, which was Christian nations fighting Christian nations – Germany and France and England were all Christian nations. They all believed God was on their side. And they imposed just as much destruction as happened in World

War II. They just didn't have any…

HH: I actually don't believe any of them believed God were on their side when they went into that war. I know the history of World War I fairly well. They did not march to war on the basis…

MS: Well, but you would call them Christian nations.

HH: But they did not, then went to war on the basis of economics…

MS: Well, okay…

GK: But even if they did, it's not the point.

HH: It had nothing to do with God.

MS: Okay, I would agree.

GK: The point is what is it that, does the worldview that they have justify what they did? And now we're back to Jesus again, which they can't put it on Jesus, but the atheists can put it on atheism.

HH: Very quickly, this segment and last, of the various world religions, which has contributed the most to human progress in the alleviation of suffering? It's an objective question. It's not a question about which is correct or which is true. Just if you look through of all the world religions, which has contributed the most to human progress and the alleviation of suffering? Michael Shermer, do you have an answer to that?

MS: I'd say probably Christianity.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, this is well documented. Under The Influence, for example, is one of the books that has been written to show this is the case.

MS: Oh, that's a Judeo-Christian…

HH: Does that necessarily tell us anything about the truth claims of the religion, Greg Koukl?

GK: Well, when you look at the particular truth claims, I think it does. These things were done in a way that were consistent with the Christian worldview, and seem to resonate with the other people who didn't share their worldview as something that's good. This is why going back to worldview perspective is so valuable. I think these are outliving of a worldview that deeply resonates with our deepest intuitions about the way the world actually is.

MS: I'm in favor of any ideology that gives more people more freedom and liberty and individual power, whether that's religious or nonreligious.

HH: We'll be back. I'm going to give a minute to each of my guests to wrap this up. Don't go anywhere, America.

– – – –

HH: I want to thank Michael Shermer of Skeptic Society, http://www.skeptic.com, and Greg Koukl of Stand To Reason, http://www.str.org for their time and their patience. Greg

Koukl, a minute, fifteen for you.

GK: Yeah, I started out talking about worldviews. And as a man trying to make sense of my world and finding a worldview that seems to fit reality as I experience it. I think atheism is way too austere for me, Hugh. It commits me to too many counterintuitive things – everything comes from nothing, like comes from nonlife, consciousness comes from matter, morality comes from a reorganization of molecules. None of this seems to make sense to me. There is another alternative that seems to make a lot more sense, that a big bang needs a big banger, that a moral law comes from a moral lawgiver, that design comes from a designer. These notions are captured well, I think, in the Biblical account of life. And the person of Jesus, especially, exemplifying these notions, and then giving us a way to live that makes sense. And this is why I'm a Christian and not an atheist. I think it makes the best sense of the world as we know it.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: I'm an atheist, because I don't believe in God, and there's nothing to follow from that. I think we have an absolute moral standard, we have objective moral truths, we all know what they are, we listen to our small inner voice within that comes from our evolutionary heritage as a social primate species, in which we care deeply about our fellow group members. We have empathy and sympathy, and that's where the moral emotions come from. In terms of religion, I think religion is good when it does good, it's bad when it does bad. In general, I'm in favor of anything that leads to greater freedom, greater liberty, greater autonomy for more people in more places. And that has been the trend for the last five hundred years, that I attribute to the general secular idea, from the Enlightenment, that people have value in and of themselves, and I think religion has fostered, after the fact, sort of just slightly behind the wave, reinforcing those good, human values, and attenuating the bad ones. And that's why they've discarded so many of the Old Testament values that we no longer adhere to. So I think that's the long term trend, and I think we should continue to count people, more and more people as part of our fellow in-groups, and I think free trade and travel and the internet is the best way to encourage that.

HH: Thank you, Michael Shermer of Skeptic Magazine, http://www.skeptic.org, Greg Koukl of Stand To Reason, http://www.str.org. Once again, all their books I've been talking about are linked at Hughhewitt.com. I want to thank Adam and Generalissimo for all their work in producing today.

End of interview.

Wow: Ezra Klein admits the real unemployment rate is 11 percent

December 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-leaning Washington Post, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Typically, I try to tie the beginning of Wonkbook to the news. But today, the most important sentence isn't a report on something that just happened, but a fresh look at something that's been happening for the last three years. In particular, it's this sentence by the Financial Times' Ed Luce, who writes, "According to government statistics, if the same number of people were seeking work today as in 2007, the jobless rate would be 11 percent."
>
> Remember that the unemployment rate is not "how many people don't have jobs?", but "how many people don't have jobs and are actively looking for them?" Let's say you've been looking fruitlessly for five months and realize you've exhausted every job listing in your area. Discouraged, you stop looking, at least for the moment. According to the government, you're no longer unemployed. Congratulations?
>
> Since 2007, the percent of the population that either has a job or is actively looking for one has fallen from 62.7 percent to 58.5 percent. That's millions of workers leaving the workforce, and it's not because they've become sick or old or infirm. It's because they can't find a job, and so they've stopped trying. That's where Luce's calculation comes from. If 62.7 percent of the country was still counted as in the workforce, unemployment would be 11 percent. In that sense, the real unemployment rate — the apples-to-apples unemployment rate — is probably 11 percent. And the real un- and underemployed rate — the so-called "U6" — is near 20 percent.
>
> There were some celebrations when the unemployment rate dropped last month. But much of that drop was people leaving the labor force. The surprising truth is that when the labor market really recovers, the unemployment rate will actually rise, albeit only temporarily, as discouraged workers start searching for jobs again.

Yeah, because taking money away from private sector job creators costs jobs. That is straight out of Henry Hazlitt's "Economics in One Lesson": Public Works Means Taxes.

Look:

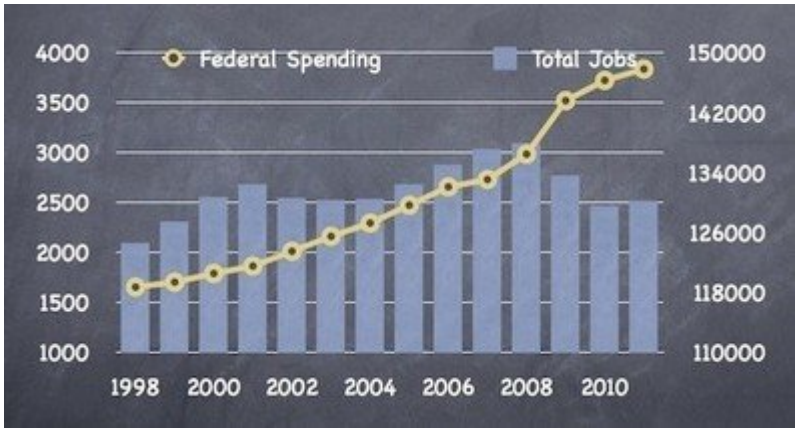

More stimulus spending means fewer jobs
From the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> When the Obama administration releases a report on the Friday before a long weekend, it's clearly not trying to draw attention to the report's contents. Sure enough, the "Seventh Quarterly Report" on the economic impact of the "stimulus," released on Friday, July 1, provides further evidence that President Obama's economic "stimulus" did very little, if anything, to stimulate the economy, and a whole lot to stimulate the debt.
>
> The report was written by the White House's Council of Economic Advisors, a group of three economists who were all handpicked by Obama, and it chronicles the alleged success of the "stimulus" in adding or saving jobs. The council reports that, using "mainstream estimates of economic multipliers for the effects of fiscal stimulus" (which it describes as a "natural way to estimate the effects of" the legislation), the "stimulus" has added or saved just under 2.4 million jobs — whether private or public — at a cost (to date) of $666 billion. That's a cost to taxpayers of $278,000 per job.
>
> In other words, the government could simply have cut a $100,000 check to everyone whose employment was allegedly made possible by the "stimulus," and taxpayers would have come out $427 billion ahead.

When the government takes a dollar from a job creator, they take half of it for themselves, and then they often give the other half to some favored group, like a "green energy" company or Planned parenthood or a labor union. Then they who turns around and give half of that handout right back to Obama as a campaign donation. The only way to stop them from doing more of this stimulus is to stop giving them money.

Do you know what has been proven to create jobs, though? TAX CUTS FOR THE RICH.

Consider this article by the Cato Institute, which discusses how the Reagan tax cuts affected the unemployment rate.

Excerpt:

> In 1980, President Carter and his supporters in the Congress and news media asked, "how can we afford" presidential candidate Ronald Reagan's proposed tax

> cuts?
>
> Mr. Reagan's critics claimed the tax cuts would lead to more inflation and higher interest rates, while Mr. Reagan said tax cuts would lead to more economic growth and higher living standards. What happened? Inflation fell from 12.5 percent in 1980 to 3.9 percent in 1984, interest rates fell, and economic growth went from minus 0.2 percent in 1980 to plus 7.3 percent in 1984, and Mr. Reagan was re-elected in a landslide.
>
> […]Despite the fact that federal revenues have varied little (as a percentage of GDP) over the last 40 years, there has been an enormous variation in top tax rates. When Ronald Reagan took office, the top individual tax rate was 70 percent and by 1986 it was down to only 28 percent. All Americans received at least a 30 percent tax rate cut; yet federal tax revenues as a percent of GDP were almost unchanged during the Reagan presidency (from 18.9 percent in 1980 to 18.1 percent in 1988).
>
> What did change, however, was the rate of economic growth, which was more than 50 percent higher for the seven years after the Reagan tax cuts compared with the previous seven years. This increase in economic growth, plus some reductions in tax credits and deductions, almost entirely offset the effect of the rate reductions. Rapid economic growth, unlike government spending programs, proved to be the most effective way to reduce unemployment and poverty, and create opportunity for the disadvantaged.

The Heritage Foundation describes the effects of the Bush tax cuts.

Excerpt:

> President Bush signed the first wave of tax cuts in 2001, cutting rates and providing tax relief for families by, for example, doubling of the child tax credit to $1,000.
>
> At Congress' insistence, the tax relief was initially phased in over many years, so the economy continued to lose jobs. In 2003, realizing its error, Congress made the earlier tax relief effective immediately. Congress also lowered tax rates on capital gains and dividends to encourage business investment, which had been lagging.
>
> It was the then that the economy turned around. Within months of enactment, job growth shot up, eventually creating 8.1 million jobs through 2007. Tax revenues also increased after the Bush tax cuts, due to economic growth.
>
> In 2003, capital gains tax rates were reduced. Rather than expand by 36% as the Congressional Budget Office projected before the tax cut, capital gains revenues more than doubled to $103 billion.
>
> The CBO incorrectly calculated that the post-March 2003 tax cuts would lower 2006 revenues by $75 billion. Revenues for 2006 came in $47 billion above the pre-tax cut baseline.

> Here’s what else happened after the 2003 tax cuts lowered the rates on income, capital gains and dividend taxes:
>
> - GDP grew at an annual rate of just 1.7% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the six quarters following the tax cuts, the growth rate was 4.1%.
> - The S&P 500 dropped 18% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts but increased by 32% over the next six quarters.
> - The economy lost 267,000 jobs in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the next six quarters, it added 307,000 jobs, followed by 5 million jobs in the next seven quarters.
>
> The timing of the lower tax rates coincides almost exactly with the stark acceleration in the economy. Nor was this experience unique. The famous Clinton economic boom began when Congress passed legislation cutting spending and cutting the capital gains tax rate.

It worked for Reagan and it worked for Bush – they made unemployment go down, while Obama’s public works spending has made unemployment go up. Those are the facts. And we have to live in the world as it is. We may not like it, it may not be intuitive to us, it may not line up with our feelings, but that is the way the world is. When you let people with capital keep more of the money they earn, they *hire more people* and they *try to make more money*. When the rich risk their capital, they take the rest of us up with them – either by giving us jobs, or by offering us things that we are free to buy or not. Things like iPods, laptops and kitchen appliances. And the more competition there is among sellers in a free market, the lower the prices go, and the higher the quality gets.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

December 13, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the full debate on video. Hugh Hewitt is the moderator.

Now I think most people are familiar with Christopher Hitchens and his arguments – he is widely regarded as the top atheist debater in the world, and has written bestselling books on atheism. So below is a little more about the Christian debater William Lane Craig. Craig is regarded as the top defender of Christianity in the world, although many people are unfamiliar with his arguments. Here is a written explanation of the five arguments he uses in the debate with Hitchens, if you want to follow along. This is a good debate for any of you who have never seen a debate on God's existence before.

About William Lane Craig

Let's review William Lane Craig's qualifications:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

Here is a partial list of his past debates against the top atheist scholars. Many of those have audio and video. His best recent debate was against the British philosopher Peter Millican. Recommended for advanced students only.

Iran laughs as Obama pleads for return of unmanned drone

December 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

"Ummm... can we have our drone back mister?" (H/T Sid)
CNN reports:

> President Barack Obama said Monday that the United States has asked Iran to return a U.S. drone aircraft that Iran claims it recently brought down in Iranian territory.
>
> “We’ve asked for it back. We’ll see how the Iranians respond,” Obama said in a news conference, alongside Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.
>
> A top Iranian military official previously vowed not to return the unmanned American stealth plane that it says it has.
>
> […]Former U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney on Monday criticized Obama’s decisions on the drone, but for an entirely different reason. He said that, after the aircraft went down, the president should have ordered an airstrike over Iran.
>
> “The right response to that would have been to go in immediately after it had gone down and destroy it,” the Republican, who served with President George W. Bush, told CNN’s Erin Burnett. “You can do that from the air … and, in effect, make it impossible for them to benefit from having captured that drone.”
>
> Instead, “he asked nicely for them to return it, and they aren’t going to,” Cheney said.

> […]One U.S. official said the United States can't be certain it's the real stealth drone, because U.S. personnel don't have access to it. But he added there's no reason to think it's a fake. However, a second senior U.S. military official said that a big question is to how the drone could have remained virtually intact given the high altitude it is believed to have crashed from.

All American Blogger found this story on Fox News:

> In an interview broadcast live Monday night on Venezuelan state television, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said nothing to suggest his country would grant the U.S. request.
>
> "The Americans have perhaps decided to give us this spy plane," Ahmadinejad said. "We now have control of this plane."
>
> Speaking through an interpreter, Ahmadinejad said: "There are people here who have been able to control this spy plane, who can surely analyze this plane's system also. … In any case, now we have this spy plane."
>
> He added, "Very soon, they're going to learn more about the abilities and possibilities of our country."
>
> On Tuesday, a semi-official Iranian news agency said authorities have shrugged off the U.S. request. Defense Minister Gen. Ahmad Vahidi said the United States should apologize for invading Iranian air space instead of asking for the return of the unmanned aircraft.

Remember when Iran was having their elections and they started shooting people down in the street? Unlike Germany, France and Canada, Obama had nothing to say about that. Ronald Reagan would have had something to say. Margaret Thatcher would have something to say. But Obama had nothing to say. Maybe the Iranians looked at what Obama did and decided that Obama is a paper tiger.

Lately, we've seen an Iranian-backed attack on U.S. soil, an Iranian-backed attack on a U.K. embassy, and increased Iranian operations in Latin America. What could be emboldening Iran to be so aggressive? If we are nice to them and bow down to them and give them money, won't that make them like us more?

Meet Rick Schenker, head of Ratio Christi, a pro-apologetics campus ministry

December 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rick Schenker president of Ratio Christi

Here's an interview with the founder of Ratio Christi, Rick Schenker.

About Rick:

> *Rick Schenker is president of Ratio Christi, a campus-based, Christian apologetics organization, which he joined in February, 2011. Rick has a visionary leadership style, and has experience in business, government, public and media relations, fundraising, and non-profit management. He has a bachelor's degree in Bible from Central Bible College, and has done graduate work in public policy at Regent University, along with additional postgraduate work in leadership and public administration. Rick has extensive experience in grass-roots political organization and campaigns in the state of Pennsylvania. As the chief elected official of the County government in Erie, Pennsylvania, he oversaw 1,100 employees and a $300 million budget.*

Excerpt:

> **TBS**: Thank you for allowing us to interview you for TheBestSchools.org. Please give our readers an overview of Ratio Christi? What is it? How did it get started? What are its goals?
>
> **RS**: **Ratio Christi** is a global movement that equips university students and faculty to give historical, philosophical, and scientific reasons for following Jesus Christ. Ratio Christi (Latin for "The Reason of Christ") is placing Christian apologetics clubs at universities both nationally and internationally. Bringing together faith and reason in order to establish the intellectual voice of Christ in the University, Ratio Christi is engaging in the battle for the mind of Christians and skeptics alike. We unashamedly defend the veracity of God, the Bible, and Christ's resurrection. Ratio Christ started three and a half years ago as a ministry of Southern Evangelical Seminary and became an independent non-profit

> organization in early 2011. Since that time, Ratio Christi has developed strong partnerships with many other seminaries and organizations, focusing on Christian apologetics and worldview issues. By working together, we now have approximately 60 clubs in various stages of development in universities across the country and around the world.
>
> **TBS**: Please give us a bit of background about yourself. What were some of the things you were doing before assuming the helm of Ratio Christi? How did the opportunity to head up Ratio Christi present itself?
>
> **RS**: I am a grass-roots political organizer. I was an elected official, and decided to leave politics to pursue work within Christian ministry. Unfortunately, even though I had run a few nonprofits, and a government with a $300 million budget, I couldn't find a job. Sometime in 2010, I was considering getting a master's degree in apologetics, and ran into the Ratio Christi web site. It was a student-run ministry at Southern Evangelical Seminary. In politics, I had become used to spotting trends that could turn into mass movements. As soon as I saw Ratio Christi, I knew it was a mass movement waiting to happen. I called them up and asked them to let me run it. Based on our 500% growth in the last six months, it is apparent that this is something that was not only needed, but ready and waiting to happen in God's timing.

Here's more:

> **TBS**: One of the striking claims you make on your web site is that "you are not building an organization, you are building a movement"? Could you please expand on what you see as the difference between the two? What would a Ratio Christi movement look like?
>
> **RS**: First, Ratio Christi is not the movement. We are simply a grass-roots organization for a greater movement. A movement is usually something that grows beyond the efforts or abilities of the leaders involved in starting it. Ratio Christi is involved in a movement in which apologetics is sweeping through the culture. Because of the rapid growth of neo-atheism in the university, Christian students are under attack. When confronted with intellectual challenges to Christianity, many Christian college students will abandon their faith. You can't blame them. If the faith of their parents is irrational, then it should be abandoned. In many cases, Christian students are ridiculed and openly humiliated by fellow students and sometimes faculty, for believing in God, the Bible, and Jesus Christ. Then along comes some good apologetics training, and suddenly the students realize that their faith can stand up to intellectual scrutiny. They see that the scientific, historical, and philosophical evidence is on the side of Christianity. They get pumped up about that. The same is true for adults and high school students. Most people didn't know there was so much evidence that supports the Christian worldview. Ratio Christi wants to help propogate the message that Christianity is not only good, it is true. We want to get the word

out, organize cooperation with like-minded ministries, put people and resources in universities and communities, and generally help facilitate what we see as a broader work of God.

TBS: You also say on your web site that you are not in competition with other "full-service" campus ministries, because Ratio Christi is more narrowly focused on "the battle of ideas that permeates the university." That seems like an admirable goal. But by placing so much emphasis on reasoned discourse, are you concerned at all that Ratio Christi may be raising the bar too high for a truly broad-based campus ministry? After all, you wouldn't want it seem like undergraduates needed to be philosophy majors in order to participate effectively in their local Ratio Christi chapter, would you?

RS: We do exactly what we say. We go onto a campus to support other Christian ministries. A highly trained apologist is placed on a campus to meet weekly with a small group of students that want to go deeper into the study of the intellectual framework of the Christian faith. RC offers to do training for other student ministries and extends the offer to Christian faculty members. The bar is not too high; this is stuff high school students could and should be learning. Yes, it takes hard work, but loving God with all our mind is part of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. There is a full range of students involved, from those who have already studied these things deeply to those with no previous exposure. Atheists, agnostics, and those of other belief systems are encouraged to attend. This is a safe place where you can bring your questions. And we do encourage all students to get involved with other campus ministries that do more Bible studies, have worship services, and other fellowship opportunities. RC is simply there to help them deal with the tough questions. Does God exist? Doesn't science disprove God? Did Jesus really rise from the dead? If God is good and all powerful, why is there evil and suffering? These are the hard questions, and that is what an apologist is trained to handle. Students love it. They love learning the critical-thinking skills necessary to analyze competing worldviews through logical discourse.

TBS: What has been your experience, so far, with the reception of your local Ratio Christi chapters on mainstream secular campuses? Has it been hard to get them recognized? Have there been any noteworthy cases of backlash against students on secular campuses for getting involved with their local Ratio Christi chapter?

RS: Actually it has been surprisingly easy. Since most universities are theoretically all about academic freedom, we approach it from this angle. They should welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues as long as it is done in a civil format. It helps that current case law supports the right of free association on campus. We have been blessed to have the expertise of the **Alliance Defense Fund** helping guide us in understanding the legal obligations that the universities are under. Since secular thought dominates most educational

> institutions, the backlash against Christianity is already there. We just try to even the playing field by giving a sound intellectual defense of the faith. Our arguments are appealing to those that are intellectually honest, so there is no need to back down in the face of opposition.

And more:

> **TBS**: One of the most striking things you say on your web site is that you want to make your local Ratio Christi campus chapters welcoming to agnostics and atheists. We certainly see the point of trying to provide a structure for believers and nonbelievers to meet with each other and get to know each other as people, in a nonthreatening environment. But we wonder, given the tensions that exist on college campuses and in American culture generally today, how much success you've had so far in this endeavor. Have the chapters had much luck in really engaging with agnostic and atheist students in a constructive way? If not, do you have any thoughts about how you might achieve a better result with this distinctive and important dimension of your work?
>
> **RS**: Actually, it is fairly normal for our chapters to engage with agnostic and atheist individuals, both in the meetings and around the campus. There has also been a lot of interaction with skeptic/atheist groups, such as co-sponsoring events or setting up discussion forums. Clubs representing other world religions have also been interested in engaging in discussion with our clubs. These interactions are very civil discussions, and our apologists teach Christian students to follow the advice of I Peter 3:15–16, to "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." It is easier to do this with gentleness and respect when you are confident in your answers. We have found the reception to a reasoned approach to faith to be quite positive. On the other hand, there are many students among the neo-atheists that have picked up on the tactics of Dawkins and others by practicing a lot of ad hominem arguments against Christians. This is usually some kind of generalized attack like "All Christians are stupid because of X," but the majority of the discourse on campus is usually quite civil.

Reading this interview was a real encouragement to me. I was very excited by what they are doing on these campuses.

I was in IVCF as an undergraduate and Campus Crusade as a graduate student, and we never did anything with apologetics. Not one thing in six years! They actually *blocked* every suggestion that the other students and I had to bring in speakers, show debate and lecture DVDs, and organize debates. I didn't learn one useful thing in 6 years. Everything was always about people sharing their feelings, prayer walks and testimonies. And lots of singing. I know that other IVCF and Crusade groups are different, because I know that

some of them do support apologetics, but the ones I attended were really dead set against apologetics.

If any of you are thinking about getting me a Christmas gift because you like the blog, just make a donation to Ratio Christi. Any amount would be great. They take PayPal! (At least – they took my donation through PayPal)

In case you are wondering what they do, here is a sample debate, featuring William Lane Craig and Michael Tooley:

That debate took place at the University of North Carolina.

You can watch another full debate they did (William Lane Craig vs Lawrence Krauss) with this Youtube playlist. That one occurred at North Carolina State University.

Here's my snarky summary of that debate, in case you don't want to watch it. The audio is not the best.

Unborn babies adapt their development based on cues from mom

December 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about the progress of science

From CNN:

> When does learning begin? As I explain in the talk I gave at TED, learning starts much earlier than many of us would have imagined: in the womb.
>
> I was surprised as anyone when I first encountered this notion. I'm a science writer, and my job is to trawl the murky depths of the academic journals, looking for something shiny and new — a sparkling idea that catches my eye in the gloom.
>
> […]What it all adds up to is this: much of what a pregnant woman encounters in her daily life — the air she breathes, the food and drink she consumes, the chemicals she's exposed to, even the emotions she feels — are shared in some fashion with her fetus. They make up a mix of influences as individual and idiosyncratic as the woman herself. The fetus treats these maternal contributions as information, as what I like to call biological postcards from the world outside.
>
> By attending to such messages, the fetus learns the answers to questions critical to its survival: Will it be born into a world of abundance, or scarcity? Will it be safe and protected, or will it face constant dangers and threats? Will it live a long, fruitful life, or a short, harried one?
>
> The pregnant woman's diet and stress level, in particular, provide important

> clues to prevailing conditions, a finger lifted to the wind. The resulting tuning and tweaking of the fetus's brain and other organs are part of what give humans their enormous flexibility, their ability to thrive in environments as varied as the snow-swept tundra in Siberia and the golden-grassed savanna in Africa.
>
> The recognition that learning actually begins before birth leads us to a striking new conception of the fetus, the pregnant woman and the relationship between them.
>
> The fetus, we now know, is not an inert blob, but an active and dynamic creature, responding and adapting as it readies itself for life in the particular world it will soon enter. The pregnant woman is neither a passive incubator nor a source of always-imminent harm to her fetus, but a powerful and often positive influence on her child even before it's born. And pregnancy is not a nine-month wait for the big event of birth, but a crucial period unto itself — "a staging period for well-being and disease in later life," as one scientist puts it.
>
> This crucial period has become a promising new target for prevention, raising hopes of conquering public health scourges like obesity and heart disease by intervening before birth. By "teaching" fetuses the appropriate lessons while they're still in utero, we could potentially end vicious cycles of poverty, infirmity and illness and initiate virtuous cycles of health, strength and stability.

For those who would like to hear an excellent, formal academic debate on abortion, I will steer you towards this debate between the ACLU's Nadine Strossen and Life Training Institute's Scott Klusendorf. You've probably never heard anything like this debate – it features real arguments on both sides that will help you to decide whether abortion is moral or not. Over 50 million unborn children have been aborted in the United States since abortion was legalized. Is it time for us to be more careful about with sex? Maybe it's not just another form of recreation.

For those of you who would like something to read, I recommend "The Case for Life" by Scott Klusendorf for beginners. Advanced students will benefit more from"Defending Life" by Francis J. Beckwith, published by Cambridge University Press.

What working at Wal-Mart taught a young conservative woman about the poor

December 14, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Jose sent me this wonderful article from The College Conservative.

Excerpt:

> During the 2010 and 2011 summers, I was a cashier at Wal-Mart #1788 in Scarborough, Maine. I spent hours upon hours toiling away at a register, scanning, bagging, and dealing with questionable clientele. These were all expected parts of the job, and I was okay with it. What I didn't expect to be part of my job at Wal-Mart was to witness massive amounts of welfare fraud and abuse.
>
> I understand that sometimes, people are destitute. They need help, and they accept help from the state in order to feed their families. This is fine. It happens. I'm not against temporary aid helping those who truly need it. What I saw at Wal-Mart, however, was not temporary aid. I witnessed generations of families all relying on the state to buy food and other items. I literally witnessed mothers of small children asking their mothers if they could borrow their EBT cards. I once had a man show me his welfare card for an ID to buy alcohol. The man was from Massachusetts. Governor Michael Dukakis' signature was on his welfare card. Dukakis' last gubernatorial term ended in January of 1991. I was born in June of 1991. The man had been on welfare my entire life. That's not how welfare was intended, but sadly, it is what it has become.

Here are just two short anecdotes:

> a) People ignoring me on their iPhones while the state paid for their food. (For those of you keeping score at home, an iPhone is at least $200, and requires a data package of at least $25 a month. If a person can spend $25+ a month so they can watch YouTube 24/7, I don't see why they can't spend that money on food.)
>
> d) A man who ran a hotdog stand on the pier in Portland, Maine used to come through my line. He would always discuss his hotdog stand and encourage me to "come visit him for lunch some day." What would he buy? Hotdogs, buns, mustard, ketchup, etc. How would he pay for it? Food stamps. Either that man really likes hotdogs, or the state is paying for his business. Not okay.

I urge you with every fiber of my body to click through and read the true story of Welfare Queen #1 and Welfare Queen #2. Read them, and weep. Just because someone is poor, it doesn't mean that they are automatically a good person. Maybe they are poor because they are irresponsible and selfish. Had you ever considered that? In any case, it's not the

government's job to hand out money without knowing anything about the person who is getting the money. Government should leave the money in the hands of people who earn it, and let *us* decide who deserves to receive charity. (At the most, they should give us a tax deduction for charity up to 10% of our gross income to encourage more private charity)

But wait! There's more!

From Human Events, toll workers being paid over $100,000 a year by the government.

Excerpt:

> Ladies and gentlemen, meet Princesella Smith, who raked in $89,599 for operating the toll lanes at the George Washington Bridge in 2011.
>
> Smith isn't alone. An investigation by the New York *Post* revealed that another toll booth operator pulled in a whopping $102,670 in 2011, $40K of that money coming in overtime. In total, as the *Post* notes, there are at least 24 New York and New Jersey workers who have raked in more than $80,000 as "public" workers at a job that requires us to hand them even more of our money.
>
> […]Besides excessive wages to people whose only skill requirement is to sit on a stool and count and collect dollar bills, tax dollars reserved for transportation uses have gone to a panoply of nonessential programs. As Ronald Utt of The Heritage Foundation points out, the "highway trust fund" has been raided to pay for Indian reservations, historic preservation sites, Appalachian and Mississippi Delta development, roadside beautification, bicycles, hiking paths, university research, and—the granddaddy of all expenses—feeding the $425 million beast that is the Department of Transportation.
>
> The Port Authority (PA), for instance, employees a gardener for $94,000 and a blacksmith for $146,000 a year. Heck, there are even retired PA employees who are making around that amount by cashing in on unused vacation and comp time. (Here's an idea: As we're facing budget deficits well into our future, how about requiring public employees to use their vaca time … or lose it. No cashing in allowed.)
>
> The larger problem highlighted with transportation spending, as Ronald Utt underscores, is the concept of public ownership. A paltry 65% of highway taxes collected actually go to making driving a more pleasant experience for commuters. The rest is squandered on whatever fancies a politician's spending appetite at a given moment. As the number of people driving has increased on the nation's roads and highways (up 71% since 1970), lawmakers in Washington, D.C., and around the country have funneled money to stupid bike lines and high-speed rail debacles.

If I were President, I would immediately cancel all pensions for retired public sector workers and outlaw public sector unions. What a colossal waste of money.

UPDATE: John Hawkins just posted a column entitled "The Five Things You Can Learn

From Wal-Mart“.

Pew Research: U.S. marriage rate slumps to a record low

December 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

UPDATE: Welcome, visitors from IOwnTheWorld. Thanks for the link! Readers should check out John Hawkins' list of the top 40 conservative blogs for more great blogs!

ECM sends me this depressing article from the BBC.

Excerpt:

> Barely half of Americans – a record low – are currently married, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of Census data.
>
> Just 51% of adult Americans are married, compared with 72% in 1960.
>
> The median age of first marriage has also hit a new high, of 26.5 for brides and 28.7 for grooms.
>
> Pew said the number of adults co-habitating, single-person households and single parents had meanwhile increased in recent decades.
>
> The study found that 20% of adults today aged 18 to 29 are married, compared with 59% in 1960.
>
> It is unclear whether they are delaying matrimony or abandoning it altogether.
>
> The analysis also found the number of new marriages in the US had declined by five percentage points between 2009-10.
>
> This may not necessarily have been caused by the economic downturn, since a similar trend has continued in Europe regardless of business cycles.
>
> Pew, a nonpartisan think tank and polling organisation, found the percentage of those Americans who have been married at least once had declined as well – 72% in 2010, from 85% in 1960.
>
> If the trend persists, in a few years less than half of Americans will be married, Pew said.

I think that there are many causes for this problem. One of them has to be that the recession has hit men harder than women, and it is harder for a man to contemplate marriage when he isn't the provider. A second reason is that the expansion of government makes it less important for women to men to fit the provider role, and men sink to those expectations and concentrate on other things that women want. A third reason is the men are performing poorly in school and earning fewer degrees, probably for the reasons that Christina Hoff Sommers explained in "The War Against Boys" – i.e. – feminism in the schools. A fourth reason would be the decline of prestige associated with marriage – men marry more when they get respect from their wives and society as a whole for doing something challenging and difficult. A fifth reason would be feminism's drive to push premarital sex as something natural and normal to women – if women offer premarital sex to men as a form of recreation, then men have a big disincentive not to marry – they can already get the sex without having to commit for life to one woman. Furthermore, I don't think that men feel comfortable about marrying a woman with a lot of previous sex partners – men know, and research confirms, that the higher number of prior sex partners is a huge risk of divorce. A sixth reason is that men's incomes are taxed more and more, so that the government has more and more authority to interfere with his leadership – e.g. – a man cannot afford to select a private school or a religious school because the government takes the money and he is left with a politicized, failing public school that doesn't accomplish the goals he wants for his children. A seventh reason would be that divorce is very bad for men's finances – men have to pay alimony and child support, too.

I was chatting about this post over with ECM, and he said that the easy availability of pornography was another cause for the decline of marriage.

I wrote a longer, snarkier post about the decline of marriage here.

New York Times profiles philosopher Alvin Plantinga and discusses his new book

December 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga

Alvin Plantinga is widely regarded as the top Christian philosopher in the world, and a former head of the largest professional association of philosophers – the American Philosophical Association (APA).

Mary sent me this article from the New York Times about Alvin Plantinga and his new book, published by Oxford University Press – the top academic press in the world. Excerpt:

> From Calvin [College], and later from the University of Notre Dame, Mr. Plantinga has led a movement of unapologetically Christian philosophers who, if they haven't succeeded in persuading their still overwhelmingly unbelieving colleagues, have at least made theism philosophically respectable.
>
> "There are vastly more Christian philosophers and vastly more visible or assertive Christian philosophy now than when I left graduate school," Mr. Plantinga said in a recent telephone interview from his home in Grand Rapids, adding, with characteristic modesty, "I have no idea how it happened."
>
> Mr. Plantinga retired from full-time teaching last year, with more than a dozen books and a past presidency of the American Philosophical Association to his name. But he's hardly resting on those laurels. Having made philosophy safe for theism, he's now turning to a harder task: making theism safe for science.
>
> For too long, Mr. Plantinga contends in a new book, theists have been on the defensive, merely rebutting the charge that their beliefs are irrational. It's time for believers in the old-fashioned creator God of the Bible to go on the offensive, he argues, and he has some sports metaphors at the ready. (Not for nothing did

> he spend two decades at Notre Dame.)
>
> In "Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion and Naturalism," published last week by Oxford University Press, he unleashes a blitz of densely reasoned argument against "the touchdown twins of current academic atheism," the zoologist Richard Dawkins and the philosopher Daniel C. Dennett, spiced up with some trash talk of his own.
>
> […] Longtime readers of Mr. Plantinga, who was raised as a Presbyterian and who embraced the Calvinism of the Christian Reformed Church as a young man, are used to such invocations of theological concepts. And even philosophers who reject his theism say his arguments for the basic rationality of belief, laid out in books like "Warranted Christian Belief" and "God and Other Minds," constitute an important contribution that every student of epistemology would be expected to know.
>
> But Mr. Plantinga's steadfast defense of the biochemist and intelligent-design advocate Michael Behe, the subject of a long chapter in the new book, is apparently another matter.
>
> "I think deep down inside he really isn't a friend of science," Michael Ruse, a philosopher of science at Florida State University, said of Mr. Plantinga. "I'm not objecting to him wanting to defend theism. But I think he gets his victory at the level of gelding or significantly altering modern science in unacceptable ways."
>
> Mr. Dennett was even harsher, calling Mr. Plantinga "Exhibit A of how religious beliefs can damage or hinder or disable a philosopher," not to mention a poor student of biology. Evolution is a random, unguided process, he said, and Mr. Plantinga's effort to leave room for divine intervention is simply wishful thinking.
>
> "It's just become more and more transparent that he's an apologist more than a serious, straight-ahead philosopher," Mr. Dennett said.
>
> When Mr. Plantinga and Mr. Dennett (who said he has not read Mr. Plantinga's new book) faced off over these questions before a standing-room-only crowd at a 2009 meeting of the American Philosophical Association, the event prompted ardent online debate over who had landed better punches, or simply been more condescending. (A transcript of the proceedings was published last year as "Science and Religion: Are They Compatible?")
>
> Mr. Plantinga, who recalled the event as "polite but not cordial," allowed that he didn't think much of Mr. Dennett's line of reasoning. "He didn't want to argue," Mr. Plantinga said. "It was more like he wanted to make assertions and tell stories."

Would you like to know how well Daniel Dennett can debate the naturalism/theism dispute? First of all, Plantinga has debated Dennett, and you can find the audio for it at Apologetics 315.

William Lane Craig also presented several arguments against naturalism to Daniel

Dennett in 2007, and Dennett responded by calling it a “first-rate piece of philosophical reasoning”. I link to the exchange and complain about Dennett’s weak response to Craig’s arguments in a previous post.

You may also find this recent interview with Alvin Plantinga, conducted by Brian Auten, informative.

The resurgence of Christian theism in analytical philosophy

Now let’s move from the specific to the aggregate. What is going on with these Christian philosophers?

Well, you can read an excellent article about the resurgence of Christian theism in philosophy departments in the peer-reviewed philosophy journal *Philo*, which, in my opinion, is the best journal for atheists and agnostic philosophers. The article is authored by the well-known atheist Quentin Smith.

He writes:

> THE DESECULARIZATION OF ACADEMIA THAT EVOLVED IN PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENTS SINCE THE LATE 1960s
>
> By the second half of the twentieth century, universities and colleges had been become in the main secularized. The standard (if not exceptionless) position in each field, from physics to psychology, assumed or involved arguments for a naturalist world-view; departments of theology or religion aimed to understand the meaning and origins of religious writings, not to develop arguments against naturalism. Analytic philosophers (in the mainstream of analytic philosophy) treated theism as an antirealist or non-cognitivist world-view, requiring the reality, not of a deity, but merely of emotive expressions or certain “forms of life” (of course there were a few exceptions, e.g., Ewing, Ross, Hartshorne, etc., but I am discussing the mainstream view).
>
> […]The secularization of mainstream academia began to quickly unravel upon the publication of Plantinga’s influential book on realist theism, God and Other Minds, in 1967. It became apparent to the philosophical profession that this book displayed that realist theists were not outmatched by naturalists in terms of the most valued standards of analytic philosophy: conceptual precision, rigor of argumentation, technical erudition, and an in-depth defense of an original world-view. This book, followed seven years later by Plantinga’s even more impressive book, The Nature of Necessity, made it manifest that a realist theist was writing at the highest qualitative level of analytic philosophy, on the same playing field as Carnap, Russell, Moore, Grünbaum, and other naturalists. Realist theists, whom hitherto had segregated their academic lives from their private lives, increasingly came to believe (and came to be increasingly accepted or respected for believing) that arguing for realist theism in scholarly publications could no longer be justifiably regarded as engaging in an “academically unrespectable” scholarly pursuit.

Naturalists passively watched as realist versions of theism, most influenced by Plantinga's writings, began to sweep through the philosophical community, until today perhaps one-quarter or one-third of philosophy professors are theists, with most being orthodox Christians. Although many theists do not work in the area of the philosophy of religion, so many of them do work in this area that there are now over five philosophy journals devoted to theism or the philosophy of religion, such as Faith and Philosophy, Religious Studies, International Journal of the Philosophy of Religion, Sophia, Philosophia Christi, etc. Philosophia Christi began in the late 1990s and already is overflowing with submissions from leading philosophers. Can you imagine a sizeable portion of the articles in contemporary physics journals suddenly presenting arguments that space and time are God's sensorium (Newton's view) or biology journals becoming filled with theories defending élan vital or a guiding intelligence? Of course, some professors in these other, non-philosophical, fields are theists; for example, a recent study indicated that seven percent of the top scientists are theists.1 However, theists in other fields tend to compartmentalize their theistic beliefs from their scholarly work; they rarely assume and never argue for theism in their scholarly work. If they did, they would be committing academic suicide or, more exactly, their articles would quickly be rejected, requiring them to write secular articles if they wanted to be published. If a scientist did argue for theism in professional academic journals, such as Michael Behe in biology, the arguments are not published in scholarly journals in his field (e.g., biology), but in philosophy journals (e.g., Philosophy of Science and Philo, in Behe's case). But in philosophy, it became, almost overnight, "academically respectable" to argue for theism, making philosophy a favored field of entry for the most intelligent and talented theists entering academia today. A count would show that in Oxford University Press' 2000–2001 catalogue, there are 96 recently published books on the philosophy of religion (94 advancing theism and 2 presenting "both sides"). By contrast, there are 28 books in this catalogue on the philosophy of language, 23 on epistemology (including religious epistemology, such as Plantinga's Warranted Christian Belief), 14 on metaphysics, 61 books on the philosophy of mind, and 51 books on the philosophy of science.

And how have naturalist philosophers reacted to what some committed naturalists might consider as "the embarrassment" of belonging to the only academic field that has allowed itself to lose the secularization it once had? Some naturalists wish to leave the field, considering themselves as no longer doing "philosophy of mind," for example, but instead "cognitive science." But the great majority of naturalist philosophers react by publicly ignoring the increasing desecularizing of philosophy (while privately disparaging theism, without really knowing anything about contemporary analytic philosophy of religion) and proceeding to work in their own area of specialization as if theism, the view of approximately one-quarter or one-third of their field, did not exist. (The numbers

> “one-quarter” and “one-third” are not the result of any poll, but rather are the exceptionless, educated guesses of every atheist and theist philosophy professor I have asked [the answers varied between “one-quarter” and “one-third”]). Quickly, naturalists found themselves a mere bare majority, with many of the leading thinkers in the various disciplines of philosophy, ranging from philosophy of science (e.g., Van Fraassen) to epistemology (e.g., Moser), being theists. The predicament of naturalist philosophers is not just due to the influx of talented theists, but is due to the lack of counter-activity of naturalist philosophers themselves. God is not “dead” in academia; he returned to life in the late 1960s and is now alive and well in his last academic stronghold, philosophy departments.

Quentin Smith is a good friend of William Lane Craig, who is a philosopher/theologian and the top Christian defender in the world, and probably of all time. Smith is the co-author, with William Lane Craig, of the book “Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology“, also published by Oxford University Press. Craig and Smith debated at Harvard University in 2003, and I transcribed the debate for posterity. If some of you are looking for a way to help promote Christian apologetics, you should pick a debate that hasn’t been transcribed and transcribe it. A lot of people read these debate transcripts. I had them printed out in my binder when I was an undergraduate student, in case my professors got boring! I like a good fight.

On a lighter note, my office plant is named Alvin Plantinga. It was grown in water and then given to me by an atheist with whom I work. We discuss these interesting topics over lunch every few months. And so should you. Why not send the New York Times article and the Philo article to an atheist in your office and get the conversation started? There’s enough in this post alone to help you sound like Alvin Plantinga!

RINO Mitt Romney deploys another RINO John Sununu to attack Newt Gingrich

December 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Richard Miniter posted this Washington Post article on Facebook.

Excerpt:

> In an effort to bring down surging front-runner Newt Gingrich, the Romney campaign has deployed a very strange choice of attack dog: former White House chief of staff John Sununu.
>
> Sununu is everywhere these days. On a campaign conference call with reporters last week, he accused Gingrich of "a pattern of anti-principled actions that really irritated his own leadership and produced 88 percent of the Republicans in Congress voting for his reprimand." On Sunday, the Romney campaign put him up against former Pennsylvania congressman Bob Walker on CNN's "State of the Union," where Sununu hit Gingrich for his "$500,000 outstanding bill at Tiffany's" and warned, "The conservatives that he has turned his back on should recognize the fact that he's not a conservative." And this week, Sununu has begun hitting the airwaves on conservative talk radio, telling host Scott Hennen that Gingrich is "not stable."
>
> All of this raises a question: Has the Romney campaign lost its mind?
>
> No doubt Sununu's support is important for Romney in New Hampshire, where he was a popular governor in the 1980s and served as chairman of the state Republican Party from 2009-2011. But Sununu is a discredited figure among conservatives. To deploy him on the national stage — in an effort to convince conservatives that Gingrich is not one of them — is, quite simply, insanity.
>
> The New Hampshire newspaper the Union Leader reports that Sununu said in an interview last week, "Then-House Minority Whip Gingrich reneged after telling then-President George H.W. Bush (41) that he approved of the 1990 budget agreement with Democrats that included tax increases." This is supposed to show that Gingrich is an unreliable leader. Gingrich denies ever supporting the deal, but even so: Gingrich ended up on the right side — opposing the Bush tax increase, which is still reviled by conservatives to this day. So the Romney campaign is attacking Gingrich for opposing a massive tax increase — and is doing so by using the White House chief of staff who *brokered* the deal in which Bush broke his "no new taxes" pledge.
>
> How on earth does trotting out the mastermind of Bush's still-hated "read my lips" tax flip-flop to attack Gingrich help Romney? This is not territory where Team Romney should want to tread. Conservatives' biggest worry is that Romney will flip-flop the way "41" did on his tax pledge. Sending out a man responsible

> for that reversal as a national spokesman only helps Gingrich and raises questions about Romney's judgment.
>
> […]As White House chief of staff, Sununu spent hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars flying on military jets to ski lodges, golf resorts, and even his dentist in Boston, as well as taking a government limousine to New York to attend a Christie's stamp auction. He was investigated by the White House counsel's office and forced to repay the government. A few months later, he was forced to resign. The New York Times reported "The uproar over the 1990 budget deal, in which Mr. Sununu was seen by many Republican lawmakers as a malevolent influence, exacerbated Mr. Sununu's troubles. In the same fashion, he was badly wounded by disclosures of his extensive use of military aircraft for personal and political trips."

But it's worse than that. John Sununu is the one responsible for recommending David Souter to then-President George H.W. Bush for a Supreme Court appointment.

The New York Times explains everything you need to now about John Sununu, (and, consequently, about Mitt Romney).

Excerpt:

> John H. Sununu, the White House chief of staff, said today that he had assured President Bush that David H. Souter would uphold conservative values on the Supreme Court. He also said he had given "strong personal support" to Judge Souter at a key moment in the President's decision-making.
>
> As Governor of New Hampshire, Mr. Sununu named Judge Souter an Associate Justice of its Supreme Court.
>
> "I was looking for someone who would be a strict constructionist, consistent with basic conservative attitudes, and that's what I got," the chief of staff said in an interview. "I was able to tell the President that I was sure he would do the same thing when he encountered Federal questions.
>
> "What he says and does is what he is. No pretense, no surprises." Their Kind of Man?
>
> The chief of staff's comments were designed to advance the overall White House strategy of seeking to convince conservatives that Judge Souter was their kind of man, who could be trusted to vote "right" on the big issues, without getting him involved in fierce debates about abortion or flag burning or other contentious specifics.
>
> […]Mr. Sununu said that President Bush had had two candidates under consideration when he retired to his office on Monday with a yellow legal pad to make his decision – the two he had just spoken with, Judge Souter and Judge Edith H. Jones, 41, who sits on the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, in Houston.

Let me tell you something. I am a strong conservative on fiscal issues, foreign policy and social issues. My candidates for President in 2012 are Michele Bachmann, followed by Rick Santorum, followed by Rick Perry. And if I had a choice to nominate anyone to be on the Supreme Court of the United States, the *last person in the world* that I would choose is David Souter, and the *first person in the world* I would choose is Edith H. Jones. She is my absolute favorite for the Supreme Court, followed closely by Janice Rogers Brown.

I recommended Jones and Brown in this old post from May 2009, and nothing has changed since then – they are my favorites. But John Sununu passed on Edith Jones and recommended *David Souter* – a staunchly liberal activist judge. Sununu is not a conservative.

If you would like to see some videos of Mitt Romney explaining his liberal views on everything from abortion to gun control to global warming, then click here.

Walter Bradley: three scientific phenomena that point to a designed universe

December 15, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. Here's a bio:

> Walter Bradley (B.S., Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin) is Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He comes to Baylor from Texas A&M University where he helped develop a nationally recognized program in polymeric composite materials. At Texas A&M, he served as director of the Polymer Technology Center for 10 years and as Department Head of Mechanical Engineering, a department of 67 professors that was ranked as high as 12th nationally during his tenure. Bradley has authored over 150 refereed research publications including book chapters, articles in archival journals such as the Journal of Material Science, Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites, Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials, Journal of Composites Technology and Research, Composite Science and Technology, Journal of Metals, Polymer Engineering and Science, and Journal of Materials Science, and refereed conference proceedings.
>
> Dr. Bradley has secured over $5.0 million in research funding from NSF grants (15 yrs.), AFOSR (10 years), NASA grants (10 years), and DOE (3 years). He has also received research grants or contracts from many Fortune 500 companies, including Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, 3M, Shell, Exxon, Boeing, and Phillips.
>
> He co-authored The Mystery of Life Origin: Reassessing Current Theories and has written 10 book chapters dealing with various faith science issues, a topic on which he speaks widely.
>
> He has received 5 research awards at Texas A&M University and 1 national research award. He has also received two teaching awards. He is an Elected Fellow of the American Society for Materials and the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the largest organization of Christians in Science and Technology in the world. He is President elect of the ASA and will serve his term in 2008.

You can read more about his recent research in this article from Science Daily.

Below, I analyze a lecture entitled “Is There Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer?”. Dr. Bradley explains how the progress of science has made the idea of a Creator and Designer of the universe more acceptable than ever before.

The MP3 file is here.

Evidence #1: The design of the universe

1. The correspondence of natural phenomena to mathematical law

- All observations of physical phenomena in the universe, such as throwing a ball up in the air, are described by a few simple, elegant mathematical equations.

2. The fine-tuning of physical constants and rations between constants in order to provide a life-permitting universe

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants and ratios: (there are more examples in the lecture)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would be able to build up the nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.
- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living

beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – "carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can't be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

3. Fine-tuning to allow a habitable planet

- A number of factors must be fine-tuned in order to have a planet that supports life
- Initial estimates predicted abundant life in the universe, but revised estimates now predict that life is almost certainly unique in the galaxy, and probably unique in the universe.
- Even though there are lots of stars in the universe, the odds are against *any* of them supporting complex life.
- Here are just a few of the minimal requirements for habitability: must be a single star solar system, in order to support stable planetary orbits, the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to have liquid water at the surface, the planet must sufficient mass in order to retain an atmosphere, etc.

The best non-theistic response to this argument is to postulate a multiverse, but that is very speculative and there is no experimental evidence that supports it.

Evidence #2: The origin of the universe

1. The progress of science has shown that the entire physical universe came into being out of nothing (= "the big bang"). It also shows that the cause of this creation event is non-physical and non-temporal. The cause is *supernatural*.

- Atheism prefers an eternal universe, to get around the problem of a Creator having to create the universe.
- Discovery #1: Observations of galaxies moving away from one another confirms that the universe expanded from a single point.
- Discovery #2: Measurements of the cosmic background radiation confirms that the universe exploding into being.
- Discovery #3: Predictions of elemental abundances prove that the universe is not eternal.
- Discovery #4:The atheism-friendly steady-state model and oscillating model were both falsified by the evidence.

- And there were other discoveries as well, mentioned in the lecture.

The best non-theistic response to this argument is to postulate a hyper-universe outside of ours, but that is very speculative and there is no experimental evidence that supports it.

Evidence #3: The origin of life

1. The progress of science has shown that the simplest living organism contains huge amounts of biological information, similar to the Java code I write all day at work. This is a problem for atheists, because the sequence of instructions in a living system has to come together all at once, it cannot have evolved by mutation and selection – because there was no replication in place prior to the formation of that first living system!

- Living systems must support certain minimum life functions: processing energy, storing information, and replicating.
- There needs to be a certain amount of complexity in the living system that can perform these minimum functions.
- But on atheism, the living system needs to be simple enough to form by accident in a pre-biotic soup, and in a reasonable amount of time.
- The minimal functionality in a living system is a achieved by DNA, RNA and enzymes. DNA and RNA are composed of sequences of proteins, which are in turn composed of sequences of amino acids.

Consider the problems of building a chain of 100 amino acids

- The amino acids must be left-handed only, but left and right kinds are equally abundant in nature. How do you sort out the right-handed ones?
- The amino acids must be bound together using peptide bonds. How do you prevent other types of bonds?
- Each link of the amino acid chain needs to be carefully chosen such that the completed chain with fold up into a protein. How do you choose the correct amino acid for each link from the pool of 20 different kinds found in living systems?
- In every case, a human or other intelligence could solve these problems by doing what intelligent agents do best: *making choices.*
- But who is there to make the choices on atheism?

The best current non-theistic response to this is to speculate that aliens may have seeded the Earth with life at some point in the past.

The problem of the origin of life is not a problem of chemistry, it is a problem of engineering. Every part of car functionality can be understood and described using the laws of physics and chemistry. But an intelligence is still needed in order to assemble the components into a system that has the minimal requirements for a functioning vehicle.

Is it moral for a woman to conceive a child from an anonymous sperm donor?

December 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am opposed to any policy or program that increases the odds that a child will not have a relationship with their biological father as they grow up. This would include anything that makes it easier for parents to divorce or that facilitates single motherhood. Consequently, I oppose premarital sex, abortion, sex education in schools, no-fault divorce, and giving legal recognition to cohabitation or same-sex marriage. I want children to be able to have their biological father and biological mother close at hand, and to be able to rely on them and know them, so that they don't feel alone and lost in the world. Although I am willing to permit other arrangements, I think society should celebrate traditional marriage – for the sake of the children.

Well, consider one challenge to this ideal situation where a child grows up with a mother and a father: conception via anonymous sperm donor.

Here's a video that shows how children are hurt when they are denied a relationship with their biological father: (H/T Stacy McCain)

Robert Stacy McCain writes this:

> The practice of anonymous sperm donors, and children fathered by them, is certainly legal and has a market. That would lead one to conclude that it is ethical, rather than unethical. In other words I'd say ethical means 'not illegal'.
>
> But is it moral? […]That is, does anyone think that the Almighty is pleased, and/or glorified by people thumbing their noses at the clear, simple, obvious, form-follows-function beauty of:
>
> Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. Gen 2:24
>
> There is vast capacity to use modern technology to tinker about with the natural order of things. I'd like to fall short of a sweeping judgement here, in the space of a blog post. It's possible that there may exist a really good case for why using an anonymous sperm donor is not immoral. But it seems that protecting the father's (or the mother's in the case of an egg donor) privacy at the expense of dropping a sizable existential dilemma on the offspring is immoral. That is, the biological parents (i.e. DNA providers) are doing to the child emotionally what the government is doing economically: casting debts upon them without any sort of dialogue. A variation on taxation without representation, if you will. Progressivism seems to be about finding the least vocal victim.

I don't think that it's enough for the child to just know who their biological father is, or to just see a picture of their biological father. I think it's important that we promote the best situation for children, where each child has a real *relationship* with their biological father.

And we can do that, if we are serious, in several ways.

Promoting marriage

Here are few wild, shoot-from-the-hip ideas to help children to have access to their fathers:

1. We can research how fatherlessness affects children
2. We can research what decisions are likely to lead to stable marriage, e.g. – regular church attendance and chastity
3. We can repeal laws that are hostile to lasting marriage, e.g. – no-fault divorce
4. We can enact laws that are hostile to divorce, e.g. – shared custody laws
5. We can stop paying unmarried women to have babies
6. We can give tax deductions to married couples who have babies
7. We can give tax deductions to couples planning on marrying if they undergo marital counseling from a program of their own choosing
8. We can give tax deductions to married couples whose children earn incomes, e.g. – the parents get a tax deduction for 1% of income earned by each child *for life*
9. We can give tax deductions to married couples whose children don't collect government assistance, e.g. – the parents get a 1% tax deduction on their household income for every child who doesn't collect government welfare during the year
10. We ban IVF for women who have not been married for at least 5 years
11. We ban all taxpayer funding of IVF treatments
12. We ban ban all private insurance coverage for IVF treatments

And so on, like that. This communicates to women that it is not OK to have a baby with an anonymous sperm donor. It communicates that we as a society want fathers to be around their children. It communicates that cohabitation is not the same thing as marriage. It communicates that marriages are for life. We need to get tough if we want children to be spared from the harm of not knowing their biological fathers.

Paul Ryan teams up with Democrat Ron Wyden to push Medicare reform plan

December 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Pity the poor Democrats. Here they were counting on scaring seniors about GOP plans to "destroy" Medicare when Rep. Paul Ryan teams up with a prominent Senate Democrat to offer a compromise reform.
>
> From the White House on down, Democrats were wringing their hands this week about the bi-partisan Medicare reform plan offered up by Ryan and Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore.
>
> Their plan would shift Medicare from an open-ended health benefit to one in which the government provides a set amount of money for insurance. Seniors could choose from a variety of private, approved plans, as well as the traditional government-run Medicare.
>
> The subsidy would be based on the second cheapest plan in an area, and if seniors wanted more expansive coverage, they'd have to pay the difference out of their own pockets. The reform would also cap the growth in Medicare.
>
> […]As one Democratic congressional aide told the New York Times, "this plan gives bipartisan political cover to Ryan and other Republicans against whom we have been waging a very successful political offensive."
>
> […]While we prefer Ryan's original proposal to his current one, it's to his credit

> that he realized the political need to produce a bi-partisan compromise. Wyden, too, deserves credit for his willingness to buck his party and sacrifice short-term political gain for much needed long-term reforms.

I took a look at Wyden's ACU ratings, and he has a 9.23 out 100. I have no idea how Ryan got this guy on board. It's magic.

Dept. of Labor: public school teacher compensation doubles average of private sector

December 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News. (H/T Doug Ross)

Excerpt:

> Public school teachers receive greater average hourly compensation in wages and benefits than any other group of state and local government workers and receive more than twice as much in average hourly wages and benefits as workers in private industry, according to a new report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
>
> Public primary, secondary and special education teachers are paid an average of $56.59 per hour in combined wages and benefits, BLS said in the report released last week.
>
> That is slightly more than twice the $28.24 in average hourly wages and benefits paid to workers in private industry.
>
> In fact, according the BLS, the $28.24 in average hourly wages and benefits that private-industry workers now earn in the United States is less than the overall national average for hourly wages and benefits of $30.11.
>
> That is because the overall national average compensation is dragged upwards from the private-industry average by the much higher wages and benefits paid to state and local government workers—who take in an average of $40.76 per hour, according to BLS.
>
> […]According to BLS, private school primary, secondary and special ed teachers worked an average of 1,560 hours per year—or an average of 155 hours more than their public school counterparts.
>
> According to the BLS report, private school teachers were not compensated as highly as public school teachers. When private school primary, secondary and special ed teachers were added to the pool with public teachers, average hourly wages and benefits for teachers dropped from $56.59 to $53.87. The report did not publish the disaggregated average compensation for private school teachers alone.
>
> The $56.59 average hourly compensation for an American public primary, secondary and special education teachers includes $39.69 in wages and $16.90 in benefits, BLS reported.
>
> For each hour at work, according to BLS, the average American public school teacher is paid $4.78 in retirement and savings benefits alone.
>
> The average private sector worker, according to BLS, is paid $1.02 per hour in retirement and savings benefits–or less than one-fourth the average hourly

> retirement and savings benefits paid to public school teachers.

And what do we get for overpaying public school teachers? ECM sent me this article from the Manhattan Insitute.

Excerpt:

> If an out-of-control national debt weren't reason enough to worry about America's global competitiveness, here's another. Virtually all education reformers recognize that America's ability to remain an economic superpower depends to a significant degree on the number and quality of engineers, scientists, and mathematicians graduating from our colleges and universities—scientific innovation has generated as much as half of all U.S. economic growth over the past half-century, on some accounts. But the number of graduates in these fields has declined steadily for the past several decades. A report by the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation concludes that "bachelor's degrees in engineering granted to Americans peaked in 1985 and are now 23 percent below that level." Further, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, only 6 percent of U.S. undergraduates currently major in engineering, compared with 12 percent in Europe and Israel and closer to 20 percent in Japan and South Korea. In another recent study, conducted by the Conference Board of Canada, the U.S. scored near the bottom relative to major European countries, Canada, and Japan in the percentage of college graduates obtaining degrees in science, math, computer science, and engineering. It's likely no coincidence that the World Economic Forum now ranks the U.S. fifth among industrialized countries in global competitiveness, down from first place in 2008.
>
> Making matters worse is mounting evidence that America's best students—kids we're counting on to become those engineers, scientists, and mathematicians—have had a drop-off in academic performance over the past decade. A recent Thomas B. Fordham Institute study finds that the country's highest-performing students in the early grades are losing some of that advantage as they move through elementary school and into high school.

The teacher unions want taxpayers to give them even more money, which no expectations of better performance. And Obama agrees.

Excerpt:

> Our president agrees it's a good idea. Obama took in more teachers' union campaign funds than any other donor — $50 million in 2008. Not surprising, he touts pay hikes to teachers as his chief economic plan. "How do we pay them more?" he asked last month.
>
> A quick search of the atmosphere around teachers' salaries on Google News suggests he's off base.
>
> - In Sudbury, Mass., teachers are expected to get an 8% annual raise.

> - Polk County, N.J. — in the same state where Gov. Chris Christie had to explain basic economics to an angry, six-figure teacher unwilling to accept a salary freeze — teachers will get step raises.
> - In Alameda County, Calif., unions are demanding the county drain its rainy day fund to pay teachers.
> - In Richmond, Va., Gov. Bob McDonnell has struggled to find an extra $1.6 billion for teachers' pensions.
>
> Oh yes, and don't forget that the largest chunk of the stimulus package of 2009 went to "education."
>
> Yet educational output isn't improving.
>
> Why throw more money at a costly and unproductive system without demanding better results?
>
> In reality, it's like pouring public money into bankrupt Solyndra — money straight down the drain.

This is not good. We have to stop falling for the old canard that if you raise taxes to give the Department of Education more money, then it will automatically result in better student performance. It's a lie.

Three debates on divine sovereignty, predestination and free will

December 16, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Earlier in the week I presented a philosophical debate on God and morality/purpose and a scientific/philosophical debate on God's existence and a scientific/philosophical debate on abortion. But this time I present to you three debates featuring a Calvinist debater and a foreknowledge debater. These debates are incredibly good and very friendly and cordial. If you have never heard a debate on theology before, then these are the ones to get you started. Theological debates are more fun than you think, you just need to choose the good ones.

The two views being debated are Calvinism and Foreknowledge. Calvinism is the view that God unilaterally predetermines a selected group of individuals who will know him – the "elect". Foreknowledge is the view that God draws people to him who he foreknows will freely respond to his overtures and come to know him. What does the Bible teach about these issues?

The Calvinist debater is Dr. James White:

> James White is the director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, a Christian apologetics organization based in Phoenix, Arizona. He is a professor, having taught Greek, Systematic Theology, and various topics in the field of apologetics. He has authored or contributed to more than twenty books, including *The King James Only Controversy*, *The Forgotten Trinity*, *The Potter's Freedom*, and *The God Who Justifies*. He is an accomplished debater, having engaged in more than one-hundred moderated, public debates with leading proponents of Roman Catholicism, Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mormonism, as well as critics such as Bart Ehrman, John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, and John Shelby Spong. He is an elder of the Phoenix Reformed Baptist Church, has been married to Kelli for more than twenty-eight years, and has two children, Joshua and Summer.

The Foreknowledge debater is Dr. Michael Brown:

> Michael L. Brown holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and has served as a visiting or adjunct professor at Southern Evangelical Seminary, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary (Charlotte), Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Fuller Theological Seminary, Denver Theological Seminary, the King's Seminary, and Regent University School of Divinity. He has contributed numerous articles to scholarly publications, including the Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religion and the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Dr. Brown is the author of twenty books, including, Our Hands Are Stained with Blood: The Tragic Story of the "Church" and the Jewish People, which has been translated into more than twelve languages, the highly-acclaimed five-volume

> series, Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, a commentary on Jeremiah (part of the revised edition of the Expositor's Bible Commentary), and several books on revival and Jesus revolution.

Now, let's get ready to rumble!

First debate

A nice friendly debate that introduces the topic. This is the best debate for casual listeners and non-Christians.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- Introduction to Calvinist James White and some of his 90 debates
- What is Calvinism and why is it important?
- Does God love all people the same way in Calvinism?
- Does God desire the salvation of all people in Calvinism?
- Is the offer of salvation to all people a genuine offer on Calvinism?
- Does Calvinism diminish or augment God's sovereignty?
- Can God accomplish his will by permitting evil creaturely actions?
- Did Jesus die only for the "chosen", or for the possibility of salvation for all?
- Does a person's responding to God's offer of savaltion detract from Gods glory?
- Does our ability to resist God's grace mean that we are "stronger" than God?

There is a little static in the audio for a few seconds every time they come back from a break, but nothing major.

Second debate, on specific passages in the Bible

Same two guys, but this time they tackle the meaning of specific Bible passages.

The MP3 file is here.

The passages being disputed:

- John 6
- Romans 8, 9
- Ephesians 1

Each person gets 8 minutes to exegete the text, followed by 4 minutes of cross-examination by the other debater, followed by 3 minute conclusions by each debater. These texts were chosen by the Calvinist debater.

Third debate, on specific passages in the Bible

Same two guys, but this time they tackle the meaning of specific Bible passages.

The MP3 file is here.

The passages being disputed:

- Luke 13:34-35 (Deuteronomy 5:28-29)

- Ezekiel 18:21-32 (Jeremiah 3:19-20; Ezekiel 22:30-31)
- 1 John 2:1-2 (2 Pet 2:1).

Each person gets 8 minutes to exegete the text, followed by 4 minutes of cross-examination by the other debater, followed by 3 minute conclusions by each debater. These texts were chosen by the foreknowledge debater.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley: Did Jesus rise from the dead?

December 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and so there isn't very much to mock him for.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing

- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don’t have any earlier sources, so we just don’t know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn’t check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

25% of UK women under 16 admit they've engaged in premarital sex

December 17, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> More than a quarter of young women today lost their virginity when they were below the legal age of consent, NHS figures reveal.
>
> Some 27 per cent of 16 to 24 year-olds admit they were 15 or under when they had sex for the first time.
>
> One in eight of this age group have already had sex with at least ten different partners.
>
> […][J]ust 4 per cent of women now aged 55 to 64 first had sex when they were under-age. This rises to 10 per cent of 45 to 54 year-olds, and 14 per cent of 35 to 44 year-olds.
>
> […]Norman Wells, director of the Family Education Trust said: 'Over recent years we have witnessed the systematic removal of every restraint which in previous generations served as a disincentive to underage sexual activity.
>
> 'Sex education in many schools has had the effect of breaking down the natural inhibitions of children with regard to sexual conduct, and the age of consent is rarely enforced, so young people no longer have any fear of legal proceedings.
>
> 'On top of that, the ready availability of contraception means that a girl's fear of pregnancy is no longer considered a good enough reason for rejecting her boyfriend's advances, and confidentiality policies mean that a girl need not worry about what her parents would think about her being sexually active, obtaining contraception, being treated for a sexually transmitted infection or even having an abortion, because they don't have to be told.'
>
> The figures have come from a survey of the sexual behaviours of 8,420 men and women aged 16 to 69, carried out by the NHS this year for the first time.
>
> They also reveal that one in seven women aged 16 to 24 who had lost their virginity had caught a sexually transmitted infection at least once. Only four in ten said they always used contraception when having sex.

The UK Daily Mail reports on a new study that shows that women who lose their virginity as teenagers are more likely to divorce. (H/T Dina, Mysterious C)

Excerpt:

> Women who lost their virginity as young teenagers are more likely to divorce – especially if it was unwanted, according to new research.

> The University of Iowa study shows that 31 per cent of women who had sex for the first time as teens divorced within five years, and 47 per cent within 10 years.
>
> Among women who delayed sex until adulthood, 15 per cent divorced at five years, compared to 27 per cent at 10 years.
>
> The findings were published in the April issue of the Journal of Marriage and Family.
>
> Author Anthony Paik, associate professor of sociology in the university's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, examined the responses of 3,793 married and divorced women to the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth.
>
> The study showed, however, that if a young woman made the choice to lose her virginity as a teenager, there was no direct link to a marital split later in life.
>
> If the sexual act took place before the age of 16 women were shown more likely to divorce, even if it was wanted.

So what caused this explosion of premarital sex?

Excerpt:

> Planned Parenthood's anointed sex missionaries received their first federal funding in the Lyndon Johnson administration. The sort of "sex education" now pushed in Santa Fe and elsewhere started in 1968 when the National Education Association Journal called for "sex education as an integral part of school curriculum beginning in early grades."[3] Planned Parenthood, the NEA, and herds of shrill progressives were following a behavioral pattern characteristic of the 1960s left.
>
> An early example of the pattern emerged in the reactions to Rachel Carson's 1962 Silent Spring scare-book, which got DDT banned and still enables the malaria deaths of about 3,000 children a day. Paul Ehrlich's 1968 Population Bomb — turned dud — warned of mass starvations unless humanity curbs its reproductive enthusiasm. Then also in 1968, the NEA Journal demanded solutions to imagined problems.
>
> Imagined, because calls for sex education were based on "problems" that lived only in the minds of anointed ones seeking to spread agendas. "Contraception education" would allegedly reduce unwanted pregnancies and illegitimate births.[4] A "crash educational program"[5] would arrest out-of-control venereal disease, while general sex education would address "the emotionally disastrous results of irresponsible sexual behavior."[6] The claims shared a common thread: fictitious bases.
>
> Not only were there no disease and illegitimacy crises, but indicators were solidly improving at the time of the alarmists' claims. As Sowell documents in The Vision of the Anointed,[7] teenage pregnancies and venereal disease declined during the 1950s and 1960s. Yet over skeptics' protests that sex education would

> increase sexual behavior, Planned Parenthood and public schools forged ahead to curtail behaviors that were already fading. Sex-ed was off and running.
>
> And results followed.
>
> During the 1970s, pregnancies among fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds jumped 41 percent.[8] Between 1970 and 1984, abortions among unwed fifteen- to seventeen-year-olds more than doubled and birth rates jumped 29 percent.[9] By 1976, five years of data showed unmarried girls fifteen to nineteen having sex at increasing rates.[10] And not only did venereal disease not subside, but teen gonorrhea rates tripled between 1956 and 1975.[11]
>
> In the 1950s, 13 percent of teen girls had been sexually active. By the late 90s, the figure had tripled. Premarital intercourse, approved by less than a third of women in the 1950s, was acceptable to 91 percent by the late 80s. By 2005, over two-thirds of Blacks and half of Latino high-schoolers were having intercourse, while over half of all teens fifteen to nineteen were performing oral sex. By 2006, babies born to unmarried women accounted for 37 percent of all births, [12] 70 percent among Blacks. The Black illegitimacy rate reflected a 218 percent explosion over forty-five years.
>
> Such realities have drawn dismissive responses from sex-ed advocates. Incredibly, the horrific trends of the 1970s and 1980s were offered as reason for more sex education.[13] **Yet amid cover-ups and excuses, the sex-ed crowd's true motives were exposed in 1978, in of all places, Congress. One committee report noted that despite sex education's stated objective of reducing teen pregnancies and sexually-transmitted disease, the real goal "of most sex educators appears to be encouragement of healthy attitudes about sex and sexuality."**

When I hear about things like this I think about the statistics that how that relationship stability is directly correlated to the number of pre-marital sexual partners. The more pre-marital sexual partners you have, the less like that your marriage will last. Those are the facts. And my concern is for the children who are being born from these women who will not have a stable development to grow up in, with a mother when they're young, and a father as they grow older.

Why does the left push premarital sex even when we know that it undermines marriage? Two reasons. First, they oppose marriage because it traditionally implies different sex roles – men work, women stay home. Feminists on the left want women to work like men work. They don't want women to aspire to marriage and family. Second, the left thinks that the best way to stop people from having feelings of shame and guilt when they have premarital sex is to encourage everyone to do it. They want to normalize it.

The way that the left deals with the skyrocketing numbers of teen pregnancies and sexually-transmitted infections that result from this policy is to double down with more sex education, free abortions and more government spending on social programs, followed by tax hikes to pay for all the lifestyle-outcome-equalizing. And then, of course,

fewer working men can afford to marry because of those tax rates, and fewer women can afford to stay home and raise their young children.

After all, the left things that there's no social problem in the world that can't be fixed by a little more government intervention and public school indoctrination. If worse comes to worse and the health care costs costs increase, we can just make health care "free" by nationalizing it to completely separate behaviors from consequences. That should get rid of the problem, because if you make getting sick free, people will stop getting sick. And if all of these broken homes create children who commit criminal acts, we can always ban guns. That should get rid of the crime problem, because if you make it impossible for law abiding people to defend themselves, then criminals will stop committing crimes. That's how the left thinks. Or rather – that's how the left *feels*.

60 Minutes edits out Obama's claim to be the fourth best President in US history

December 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Newsbusters has the 60 Minutes transcript. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> KROFT: Tell me, what do you consider your major accomplishments? If this is your last speech. What have you accomplished?
>
> PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well, we're not done yet. I've got five more years of stuff to do. But not only saving this country from a great depression. Not only saving the auto industry. But putting in place a system in which we're gonna start lowering health care costs and you're never gonna go bankrupt because you get sick or somebody in your family gets sick. Making sure that we have reformed the financial system, so we never again have taxpayer-funded bailouts, and the system is more stable and secure. Making sure that we've got millions of kids out here who are able to go to college because we've expanded student loans and made college more affordable. Ending Don't Ask, Don't Tell. Decimating al Qaeda, including Bin Laden being taken off the field. Restoring America's respect around the world.
>
> The issue here is not gonna be a list of accomplishments. As you said yourself, Steve, you know, **I would put our legislative and foreign policy accomplishments in our first two years against any president — with the possible exceptions of Johnson, F.D.R., and Lincoln — just in terms of what we've gotten done in modern history.** But, you know, but when it comes to the economy, we've got a lot more work to do. And we're gonna keep on at it.

Here are the facts:

The Obama Economic Record			
	INAUGURATION DAY	TODAY	CHANGE
Unemployed Americans	12 million	14 million	↑ 2 million
Unemployment Rate	7.8%	9.1%	↑ 17%
Gas Prices	$1.85	$3.43	↑ 85%
Federal Debt	$10.6 trillion	$14.7 trillion	↑ 39%
Debt per person	$34,731	$47,047	↑ $12,316
Misery Index	7.8	12.9	↑ 65%
Food Stamp Recipients	32 million	45 million	↑ 41%
Health Insurance Premiums	$3,354	$4,129	↑ 23%
Home Values	$193,400	$172,600	↓ 11%
U.S. Global Competitiveness	1st	5th	↓ 4 places
Americans in Poverty	39.8 million	46.2 million	↑ 6.4 million

Obama Economic Record November 2011
Is that the record of the 4th best President in U.S. history?

Failed Democrat politician sues pro-life group for exposing his voting record

December 18, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From U.S. News and World Report. (H/T Sense of Events)

Excerpt:

> When voters in Ohio's 1st Congressional District threw Democrat Steve Driehaus out of office after only one term, he did not bow out gracefully. No, he decided to get even. So he did what anyone does in today's culture: he sued somebody.
>
> Charging that its activities contributed to his defeat and thus to his "loss of livelihood," Driehaus is suing the Susan B. Anthony List, a group that supports pro-life candidates for Congress and which has been one of the leading and most effective organizations involved in the fight to cut off federal funding to Planned Parenthood.
>
> During the 2010 elections the Susan B. Anthony List engaged in a campaign to identify and call out a group of allegedly anti-abortion-rights members of Congress who provided the margin that allowed President Barack Obama's reform of the nation's healthcare system to get through the U.S. House of Representatives. The Susan B. Anthony List said their vote in favor of the law, which did not include any pro-life protections, amounted to a betrayal of their pro-life principles.
>
> According to Driehaus, who was one of that group, what the Susan B. Anthony List said in its public communications amounted to a malicious lie that contributed to his defeat. Amazingly, rather than laugh the suit out of court U.S. District Court judge Timothy S. Black, an Obama appointee, is allowing it to go forward. …
>
> Driehaus's suit is breaking new legal ground and may already be having a very chilling effect on political speech. It goes directly at the heart of our First Amendment protections and criminalizes what is at least a difference of opinion. And it's curious that the case has not received more attention from the national press.
>
> What is equally curious, however, is why Judge Black has allowed the case to move forward and why he did not recuse himself from it since, as Barbara Hollingsworth reported Friday in The Washington Examiner, he apparently is the former president and director of the Planned Parenthood Association of Cincinnati. As seeming conflicts of interest go this one is a real humdinger.

So this politician takes certain positions and the SBA List makes known to the public what those positions are, and he sues them. And an Obama-appointed judicial activist thnks that the case should go forward. This is just another example of the left wanting to

control speech and the flow of information. There is something alarming about the way that the left operates when dealing with dissent. They are so desperate to achieve uniformity of opinion, for all their misleading talk about diversity, that they don't blink about using force to silence anyone who disagrees with them. And this doesn't just happen on the abortion issue, where pro-life demonstrators are routinely hand-cuffed and arrested by police. It happens with everything from same-sex marriage to global warming to Darwinian evolution.

People on the secular left are the most close-minded people in the world, and they seem to think nothing about using force to punish those who disagree with them. They won't debate – they prefer to overpower. Is it really so hard to believe? We just came off of the 20th century where the secular leftists murdered 100 million people, in places like Cambodia, North Kora, China and the Soviet Union. Human rights, like the right to life and freedom of speech, are *invented* rights on a secular leftist worldview. They aren't objective – and that's why people on the secular left find it so easy to violate them – because their worldview has no capacity to ground fundamental human rights. If there is no Creator and Designer of the universe, then anything is possible – we are all just matter in motion. Whatever standards of conduct we agree on are arbitrary and subjective – just conventions that vary from by time and place – from one society to the next. For a secular leftist, any immoral act is permissible. Their rule is "do what you like, and don't get caught".

Not all secular leftists are fascists, to be sure. But their worldview does seem to lend itself to narrow-mindedness and intolerance.

Rick Santorum exposes Mitt Romney's record on gay rights in Iowa GOP primary debate

December 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to wait until till Monday to post this make sure everyone saw this.

Excerpt:

> After the debate, Romney issued a challenge that Santorum wouldn't be able to find any respected legal authorities that would agree with his characterization of Romney's culpability.
>
> Romney, as he has been on so many other things over the years, is wrong.
>
> When I contacted Mat Staver, Founder and Chairman of Liberty Counsel, for his response to the exchange, he sent me the following statement:
>
> *"Rick Santorum's statement during the debate about Mitt Romney's actions regarding same-sex marriage are correct. I litigated in Massachusetts by filing a suit in federal court to prevent the implementation of same-sex marriage. Due to federalism issues with the federal courts being asked to block a state court action, the federal courts were constrained not to get involved.*
>
> *Having spent considerable time reviewing the Massachusetts Constitution, drafted by John Adams, I can say that the Massachusetts Constitution is unique with respect to marriage and domestic relations by vesting the authority over marriage to the Legislature. The provision is explicitly set forth in the Massachusetts Constitution. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that the Legislature should act within a certain time to implement same-sex marriage, but the Legislature refused to act. Yet, Gov. Romney on his own went ahead of the Legislature and forced the implementation of same-sex marriage. Not only was he not required to implement same-sex marriage, the Massachusetts Constitution gave him no authority to do so. Gov. Romney should not have acted until the Legislature acted as that is the body vested by the Massachusetts Constitution with authority over marriage.*
>
> *Sen. Rick Santorum was right and Gov. Mitt Romney was wrong."*

And more:

> Likewise, Dr. Herb Titus was the founding dean of the School of Public Policy at Regent University, and later served as the founding dean of Regent Law School. Before that he studied under Dr. Francis Schaeffer, and graduated from Harvard Law School. Titus has worked with the U.S. Justice Department, and is admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court. His book *God, Man, and Law* is a must-read for anyone interested in preserving the rule of law for the next generation.

> I contacted Dr. Titus on Friday morning for his response to the Santorum-Romney exchange. He replied back with the following:
>
> *…I am a graduate of the Harvard Law School. I am an active member of the Virginia bar and the bar of a number of federal courts, including the United States Supreme Court. As a professor of constitutional law for nearly 30 years in four different ABA-approved law schools, and as a practicing lawyer, I have written a number of scholarly articles and legal briefs on a variety of constitutional subjects; including the nature of legislative, executive and judicial powers and the constitutional separation of those powers.*
>
> *I am generally familiar with the Massachusetts Constitution, and especially familiar with that constitution's provision dictating that no department shall exercise the powers that belong to either of the other two departments "to the end it may be a government of laws and not of men."*
>
> *As Governor, Mr. Romney has claimed that he had no choice but to obey the Supreme Judicial Court's opinion. This claim is false for several reasons….*

The quote continues listing SIX REASONS why Romney did not have to issue the marriage licenses to gay couples. But he did it anyway.

Here's a 2007 New York Times article to show that explains Romney's real record.

Excerpt:

> Mitt Romney seemed comfortable as a group of gay Republicans quizzed him over breakfast one morning in 2002. Running for governor of Massachusetts, he was at a gay bar in Boston to court members of Log Cabin Republicans.
>
> Mr. Romney explained to the group that his perspective on gay rights had been largely shaped by his experience in the private sector, where, he said, discrimination was frowned upon. When the discussion turned to a court case on same-sex marriage that was then wending its way through the state's judicial system, he said he believed that marriage should be limited to the union of a man and a woman. **But, according to several people present, he promised to obey the courts' ultimate ruling and not champion a fight on either side of the issue.**

Got that? Mitt Romney isn't going to fight anyone to protect traditional marriage.

More:

> Jonathan Spampinato, a Republican activist who is openly gay and worked as Mr. Romney's deputy political director during the run for governor, says he always felt that Mr. Romney was comfortable with gays. When it came to gay rights beyond the issue of marriage, Mr. Spampinato recalls, Mr. Romney asserted during that campaign that there was only the smallest difference between himself, a supporter of domestic partnership rights like survivorship and hospital visitation, and his Democratic opponent, Shannon O'Brien, who backed civil

> unions.
>
> “He explained his position to Log Cabin club members early on,” Mr. Spampinato remembered, “by saying, ‘Regardless of what you call it, if you look at the benefits I support and the benefits Shannon supports, there’s probably a hair of difference.’ ”
>
> […]Recollections by gay Republicans whom Mr. Romney courted and worked with during his campaign for governor, and in his unsuccessful run for the Senate in 1994, produce a portrait of a man they genuinely saw as their partner in their fight for broader acceptance.
>
> After the breakfast meeting in 2002, where the Log Cabin board unanimously decided to endorse him, he said in an interview with Bay Windows, a gay newspaper, that he would use his bully pulpit as governor to lobby legislators for domestic partnership benefits.
>
> “Those kinds of things I think I can generate a great deal of public support for,” he said, “and therefore create pressure for legislators that otherwise might not think in those terms.”
>
> **And, in the aftermath of the Massachusetts court decision, Mr. Romney, though aligning himself with the supporters of a constitutional amendment, did order town clerks to begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Some members of Log Cabin Republicans say that in doing so, he ultimately fulfilled his promise to them despite his own moral objections.**

Would Romney support legislation like ENDA, which would force Christian churches and ministries to hire gays?

> “He couldn’t have been more kind and interested in understanding gay rights,” said Rich Tafel, who was executive director of Log Cabin’s national organization at the time. “He struck me as a business person who just wanted to understand this issue, and he wanted to communicate that he wasn’t antigay at all.”
>
> **Leaders of the group worked with Mr. Romney’s Senate campaign to draft a letter, which he eventually released, about his commitment to gay rights. He declared that he would go beyond Mr. Kennedy’s considerable record on the issue. He pledged his support for federal legislation that barred discrimination against gay men and lesbians in employment, and praised President Bill Clinton’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy for the military as a first step toward “gays and lesbians being able to serve openly and honestly.”**

Mitt Romney’s record shows strong support for abortion and gay rights. Whatever he says now when he is running for President doesn’t count – he’s been pro-abortion and pro-gay rights since 1994. Nothing he does while on the campaign trail should cause us to doubt

his record.

Barack Obama's Hawaiian vacation estimated to cost $4 million dollars

December 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama plans to hit the golf course at taxpayer expense
From Hawaiian Reporter. (H/T Director Blue)

Excerpt:

> The U.S. Secret Service has arrived, street barricades are in place, and the U.S. Coast Guard has stationed itself in the waters surrounding Kailua, Oahu.
>
> That is a sure sign President Barack Obama's security team is preparing for the first family to arrive in the small beachside community as early as Friday night for what is expected to be a 17-day vacation.
>
> The President and his family are traveling separately to Hawaii because he wants resolve the payroll tax cut issue before leaving Washington – and his wife does not want to wait.
>
> But the advanced trip and the cost that comes with it – as much as $100,000 (flight and security) – adds to an already expensive vacation for the taxpayers.
>
> *Hawaii Reporter r*esearch shows the total cost for the President's visit for taxpayers far exceeded $1.5 million in 2010 – but is even more costly this year because he extended his vacation by three days and the cost for Air Force One travel has jumped since last assessed in 2000. In addition, ***Hawaii Reporter*** was able to obtain more specifics about the executive expenditures.
>
> The total cost (based on what is known) for the 17-day vacation roundtrip

> vacation to Hawaii for the President, his family and staff has climbed to more than **$4 million**. Here's why.
> **TRAVEL: $3,629,622**
>
> The biggest expense is President Barack Obama's round trip flight to Hawaii via Air Force One, a cost the GAO office estimated at $1 million in the year 2000. Contacted today, the GAO confirmed there is no report the independent office affiliated with Congress has prepared since 2000 to operate Air Force One and Air Force Two.
>
> However, the U.S. Air Force provides the most current numbers of $181,757 per flight hour. Travel time for Air Force One direct from Washington D.C. to Hawaii is about 9 hours or $1,635,813 each way for a total of **$3,271,622** for the round trip to Hawaii and back.
>
> The cost for USAF C-17 cargo aircraft that transports the Presidential limos, helicopters and other support equipment to Hawaii was not made available. However, the flight time between Andrews Air Force Base and Hawaii is at about 21.5 hours roundtrip, with estimated operating cost of $12,000 per hour. (Source: GAO report, updated by C-17 crew member). The United States Marine Corps provides a presidential helicopter, along with pilots and support crews for the test flights, which travel on another C-17 flight**.** That is **$258,000,** not including costs for the 4 to 6 member crew's per diem and hotel.
>
> Mrs. Obama's early flight to Hawaii costs about $63,000 (White House Dossier), but add security and personnel for a total of about **$100,000.**

The rest of that article calculates the remaining components of the FOUR MILLION DOLLAR bill.

On another topic, here is a re-cap on our budget situation in 2012:

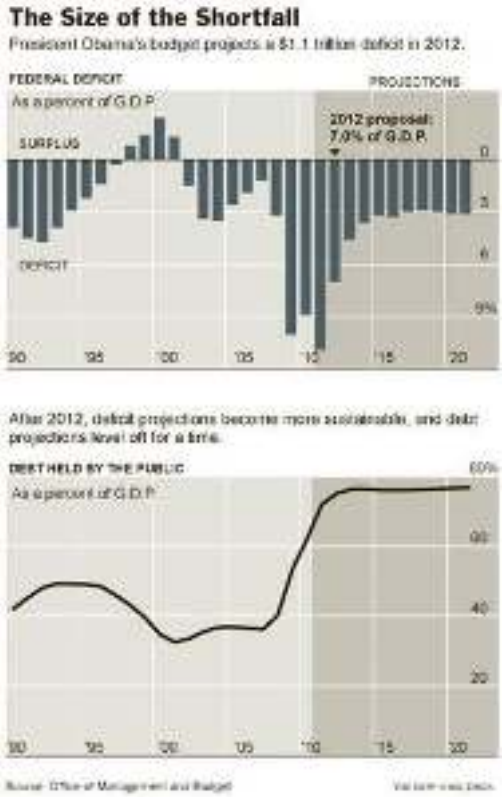

Barack Obama, Budget Deficit and Debt to GDP

Remember, the Democrats took control of the House and Senate in January 2007, and that's when the overspending started.

Why should we expect someone who can spend FOUR MILLION dollars on a vacation to have the discipline and frugality to balance the nation's books?

What opposition to Christmas displays tells us about atheism

December 19, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A post critical of litigious atheists, by Doug Giles.

Excerpt:

The atheists I grew up with in Texas were a tad bit pluckier than today's lardy hagfish atheists who file lawsuits every winter when they see a child wrapped in swaddling clothes.

Yep, the anti-theists I used to hang out with in the Lone Star state were rugged individualists who were so busy milking this existence that they didn't have time to bleat like a stuck sheep because a plastic baby Jesus statue endangered their delicate beliefs.

My other non-believing buddies who weren't the robust Hemingway types were usually heady stoners who were into physics, Pink Floyd and Frisbee and were completely comfortable around people of faith versus today's reflexively irate, touchy atheists who pop a blood vein in their forehead if they accidentally hear "Silent Night" playing at Macy's.

For God's sake atheists, *übermensch* up why don't you?

Giles then goes on to explain one of the latest attempts by former-Pentecostal-hymn-singer Dan Barker to ban nativity scenes and other Christmas stuff from being displayed.

Then concludes:

Yep, according to the 21st century metrosexual atheist motif, anything that offends them should now be banned. That makes me scratch my head because I thought the atheists were the tough-minded ones who could stare death in the face and mock God and His dictates, but now a silicone statue of Yeshua in diapers puts them in a tailspin. Hello, sweetie.

He mentions Dan Barker in his article, so I think it's worth linking to this post I wrote about how Dan Barker abandoned Christianity. To persist in the Christian life requires a certain amount of intelligence and wisdom. You have to be good at life. Dan couldn't cut it.

Video: William Lane Craig and Peter Millican debate "Does God Exist?"

December 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Justin Brierley and the Reasonable Faith UK Tour:

The debate was held at the University of Birmingham, England in 2011. I would put this debate in the top 3 Craig debates ever, along with his debates against Austin Dacey and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong.

My summary of the Craig-Millican is below. This debate is really meant for advanced students, but if you read my post "What you need to know about the BVG Theorem" before watching the debate, it should help you to follow along.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the

existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It's not just that the settings are unlikely, it's that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a "herd morality" that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved "herd morality". However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence

we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It's possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It's also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt

their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations.

But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that

makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they

undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

UK Liberal Democrats oppose tax breaks for getting married and staying married

December 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> In a speech designed to reassert the Liberal Democrats' voice in government, the embattled Deputy Prime Minister will also set out his vision of an "Open Society" — in direct contrast to the Big Society trumpeted by David Cameron, the Prime Minister.

> Tax breaks for married couples are a key demand of the Tory faithful and Mr Cameron has committed to their introduction before the next election. The issue has the potential to become a major source of friction within the Coalition in the New Year.
>
> As Mr Clegg delivers his speech in Westminster on Sunday, a number of Tory MPs will meet David Gauke, the Treasury minister, to press the government to introduce the tax break for married couples as soon as possible. It means Mr Clegg is now in open disagreement with the senior Coalition partner on two major areas of policy — the marriage tax break and Europe.
>
> **In his speech to Demos, the Left-leaning think tank, Mr Clegg will say: "We should not take a particular version of the family institution, such as the 1950s model of suit-wearing, breadwinning dad and aproned, homemaking mother, and try and preserve it in aspic.**

> "That's why Open Society Liberals and Big Society Conservatives will take a different view on a tax break for marriage. We can all agree that strong relationships between parents are important, but not agree that the state should use the tax system to encourage a particular family form."
>
> […] Research has suggested that children brought up by two married parents living together are happier, fare better at school and are less likely to become heavily involved in alcohol, crime or drugs.
>
> The Centre for Social Justice [CSJ], a pro-family think tank set up by Iain Duncan Smith, the Work and Pensions Secretary, said that just one in 11 married couples separated before their child's fifth birthday, compared with a third of unmarried couples.
>
> Gavin Poole, its executive director, said: "Nick Clegg's stance flies in the face of all the evidence, completely ignoring national and international data demonstrating how important marriage is to the health and wellbeing of children and families."

And this isn't surprising – Obama has said the same thing about not preferring traditional marriage over other arrangements.

Excerpt:

> President Obama has included homosexual couples raising children in a list of "American families" in a recent proclamation declaring Monday National Family Day.
>
> "Whether children are raised by two parents, a single parent, grandparents, a same-sex couple, or a guardian," said Obama in the proclamation, "families encourage us to do our best and enable us to accomplish great things."
>
> The president went on to encourage participation in Family Day by sharing an evening meal as a family unit. "A strong nation is made up of strong families, and on this Family Day, we rededicate ourselves to ensuring that every American family has the chance to build a better, healthier future for themselves and their children," he said.
>
> The family day proclamation is in keeping with Obama's oft-professed support for the homosexualist agenda.
>
> When Obama proclaimed June "LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) Pride Month," he reiterated that he supports several issues on the homosexual docket, including homosexual hate crime legislation, homosexual "affirmative action" in the workplace, allowing open homosexuals in the military, and adoption to homosexual couples.
>
> During the same month, Obama signed a presidential memorandum extending spousal benefits to homosexual partners and other unmarried partners of federal employees.

It's important to realize that the secular left, including our own Democrats here at home, are committed to the destruction of marriage. They support policies like sex education, single mother welfare, no-fault divorce, redefining marriage, and so on. They do not support traditional marriage. And they will oppose and and all incentives given to people who choose to marry and who choose to stay married. They do not care about providing children with a stable environment to grow up in, with a mother and a father who are biologically linked to the children. They would rather have more children growing up in poverty and exposed to violence, neglect and abuse than promote traditional marriage.

The secular left opposes traditional marriage for 2 reasons. First, they do not like the way that traditional marriage tends to lend itself to the man working and the woman staying at home – they want both people to work and pay taxes, so the parents are "equal" and they want the government feed and educate the children instead, so all the children are "equal". Second, they do want to encourage "healthy attitudes" about sex, so that people who have sex before marriage do not feel guilty about it – since the school has told them that "everyone is doing it". The left doesn't want people who decide not to marry to feel bad about sex. They prefer to remove the moral boundaries that protect children.

In fact, if you are a woman, and you vote for the leftists, and you are wondering why you are not married, you should understand that the very policies you vote for are the policies that take away a man's willingness to marry and his ability to perform the traditional obligations of a husband and father. He has no reason to commit in order to get sex – you're giving him sex for free. And he has no money to provide for a family – he paid it all to the state in taxes. And he has no ability to lead on moral and spiritual issues – that's all been beaten out of him in the public schools, where objective morality and theism are frowned on. Think before you vote.

Why do men become feminists? Why do men support feminism?

December 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must-read from Stuart Schneiderman.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> How does a man become a feminist? What would lead a normally constituted American male to throw in with an ideology that appears to be unfriendly to men?
>
> The answer is: gratitude.
>
> True enough, very few men openly identify themselves as feminists. Still, many men happily mouth the basic tenets of the feminist credo. They may not understand what they are saying, but they support the cause because they feel grateful for what feminism has done for them.
>
> Take Hugo Schwyzer. He has been married four times. He has had countless casual sexual encounters and no small number of relationships. Manifestly, he feels grateful and perhaps endebted to feminism for having provided him with so much free love.
>
> So, he defends the feminist party line.
>
> In debating Neely Steinberg Schwyzer does not dispute that feminism, especially sex-positive feminism, has helped create the hookup culture.
>
> Yet, Schwyzer thinks it's a good thing, for him, for his fourth wife, and for everyone who wants to learn from experience.
>
> […]Steinberg explains what feminism has done for men: "Instead of embracing the emotional and biological differences between men and women, or at least considering them, sex-positive feminists buried their heads in the sand, unintentionally creating, in the meantime, a veritable sexual playground for men, often times at the expense of women, many of whom just wanted relationships that were both sexually and emotionally satisfying. Women were told they could have their cake and eat it too, but the dessert in many ways has been a better payoff for men."
>
> How does feminism create male adherents to its cause? It provides them with an endless supply of young women.
>
> Of course, this assumes that men want nothing more from women than free sex. If men are looking for marriage and family, the hookup culture detracts from this goal. It teaches men to respect women less. It teaches women to respect themselves less.
>
> It should not surprise anyone that fewer and fewer Americans are getting married

> today.

That’s the excerpt, read the whole thing – but watch out for the F word, which occurs once. I think you’ll notice that he is talking about some of the same things I talk about.

Michele Bachmann takes on NBC leftist David Gregory on Meet the Press

December 20, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Newsbusters. (14 minutes)

Here's the partial transcript:

> **MICHELE BACHMANN: When I came into Congress in January of 2007, the country was $8.67 trillion in debt; today it's $15 trillion. Next year it'll be $17 trillion. We're acting like Greece and like Italy, and that's what people are frustrated with. They want us to act like a first world nation, not like what President Barack Obama's doing. He's acting like we're a banana republic. We've got to get our act together and stop spending money that we don't have.**
>
> DAVID GREGORY: You're not – I mean, you're seriously calling the United States acting like a banana republic compared to the sort of debt issues that, that the Eurozone countries have had?
>
> **BACHMANN: What, what I'm doing is I'm – what I'm doing is saying that what – the decisions that Barack Obama is making is acting like a banana republic. It's absolutely irresponsible what President Obama is doing to get behind measures to, to increase spending to such a level that we're going into debt $1.5 trillion every year. This compares to President George Bush. Back in 2007, our debt for the entire year was $160 billion.**
>
> GREGORY: Congresswoman, that just misstates the record.
>
> BACHMANN: Well, we topped that just in the month of November alone.
>
> GREGORY: I mean, the Bush presidency, the-
>
> BACHMANN: There's no comparison. We're talking-
>
> GREGORY: -the, the debt – wait a minute, Congresswoman.
>
> BACHMANN: David, let me just finish.
>
> GREGORY: No, wait a minute. I just want to stop you for accuracy.
>
> BACHMANN: Let me just finish. We're talking-
>
> GREGORY: For accuracy, Congresswoman.
>
> BACHMANN: -we're talking 10 times.
>
> GREGORY: For accuracy, the debt exploded under the Bush administration.
>
> **BACHMANN: For accuracy. For accuracy. David, David, then, then let me finish. Do a comparison. I agree with you that there was too much money that was spent under George Bush. But for the year 2007, the**

> **debt for the year was $160 billion. The debt for this last year was about $1 1/2 trillion. That's almost 10 times more in debt than George Bush. And just for the month of – for the month of, I think it's November of this year, it was more than the entire year for 2007. So there's no question that the debt has just skyrocketed under, under President Obama in comparison to George Bush.**
>
> GREGORY: Let me just point out, I don't want to appear to be cutting you off. Sometimes the satellite delay can exacerbate that, so I wanted to make sure you could finish your point.

Can you imagine that DAVID GREGORY doesn't even know what the deficit graph looks like?

Here it is:

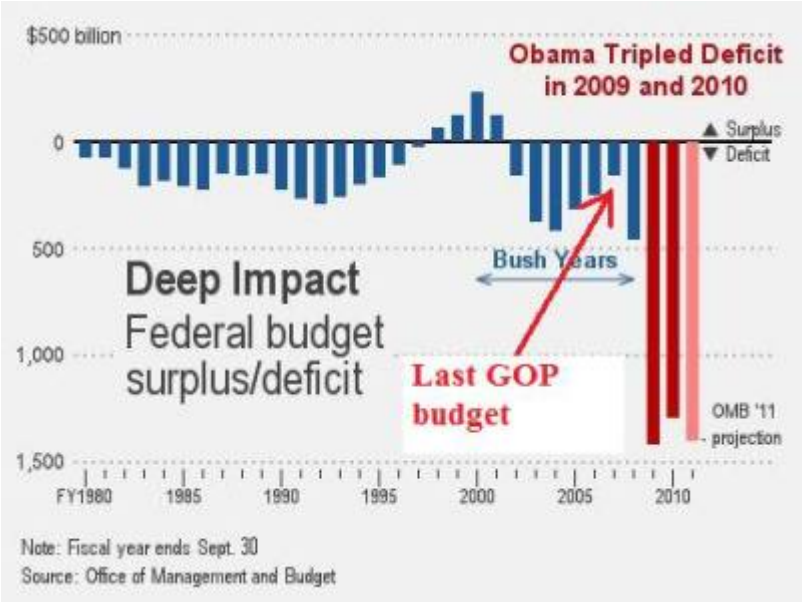

Last Republican budget was in 2007

The last Republican budget was 2007. The deficit was 160 billion. It's almost TEN TIMES that under Obama. The Democrats took over the House and Senate in the 2006 mid-term elections. Doesn't David Gregory know that? Does anyone in the mainstream media know ANYTHING?

Atlanta abortion doctor charged with Medicare fraud

December 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Excerpt:

> A metro Atlanta physician and his former office manager have been charged with Medicaid fraud after they billed the government nearly $400,000 for abortion services – which are barred from federal funding – and for ultrasounds not performed, authorities said.
>
> Dr. Tyrone Cecil Malloy and CathyAnn Edwards Warner are charged in an indictment handed up Dec. 8 by a DeKalb County grand jury with two counts each of Medicaid fraud, according to a news release issued Monday by the Georgia Attorney General's Office.
>
> Malloy was arrested last week and has been released on bond to await trial, Channel 2 Action News reported. An arrest warrant was issued for Warner, and DeKalb and Clayton county authorities working together took her into custody Monday afternoon.
>
> […]The alleged fraud occurred at Malloy's Old National Gynecology, a medical practice in the 6200 block of Old National Highway in College Park, whose website says it specializes in first-trimester abortions.
>
> According to the indictment, between Dec. 9, 2007 and Aug. 9, 2010, the defendants billed the Georgia Medicaid program approximately $131,615 for new patient visits when, in reality, the visits were for elective abortions.
>
> The Georgia Medicaid program is funded jointly by the state and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Under federal law known as the Hyde Amendment, federal funds cannot be used for elective abortion services; nor are abortions covered by Georgia Medicaid, the indictment states.
>
> Malloy and Warner also are charged in the indictment with billing Georgia Medicaid about $255,024 for detailed ultrasounds that actually were never performed during the same period from 2007 through 2010.

What happens when the government gets involved with paying medical bills? We get fraud. Government will never be as careful about how taxpayer money is spent as a private company will be about spending their own money.

Richard Dawkins, who claims to oppose genocide, vows to “destroy” Christianity

December 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rev. George Pitcher writes about an interview of Christopher Hitchens conducted by Richard Dawkins. (H/T Thinking Christian)

Excerpt:

> But the centrepiece of this Christmas edition is the main coup for the New Statesman – an interview by Prof. Dawkins with Christopher Hitchens, the great polymath who today lost his fight against cancer. It’s a fascinating read over three double-page spreads. Not least because Prof. Dawkins reveals a charming humility, allowing Hitchens to show his intellectual superiority at his own expense. Hitchens is thoughtful about CS Lewis and Christianity and rather leaves Prof. Dawkins floundering in his wake, occasionally interjecting little assents to show that he’s still there, as he struggles to keep up.
>
> But one of these interjections is most revealing. About half-way through, the Prof gets this in edgeways: ‘Do you ever worry that if we win and, so to speak, destroy Christianity, that vacuum would be filled by Islam?’
>
> So, ‘if we win…and destroy Christianity’. True, there’s a ‘so to speak’ in there, but it doesn’t do much. Try ‘If we win and, so to speak, kill all the Jews’ as an alternative. Doesn’t really work, does it? And Prof Dawkins can hardly claim that he was misquoted or taken out of context. He was editing the magazine, after all – there’s even a picture of him doing so, pen poised masterfully over page proofs.

Now you might think that Dawkins intends to destroy Christianity in debates, and not in the wars and purges of atheism that occurred last century in North Korea, Cambodia, China, the Soviet Union, and so on. Those atheist regimes caused the deaths of 100 million people, according to Harvard University Press. But Dawkins has refused to debate William Lane Craig on more than one occasion. So whatever he means by “destroy Christianity”, he doesn’t mean “defeat them in rational debate, using superior arguments and evidence”. He had his chance to do that, and he passed on it. So, he must mean something else by “destroying Christianity” other than persuasion.

Let’s find out what Richard Dawkins thinks about morality. Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will

> automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

Dawkins' view is that nothing is really good or bad objectively. Cultures just evolve certain conventions, and those conventions vary arbitrarily by time and place. I think we need to interpret his goal of destroying Christianity against the backdrop of his nihilism. 50 million unborn children have been killed in the United States since 1973 alone. That's 50 million people with distinct genetic codes different from their mothers or their fathers, who will never grow up to achieve their potential.

Dawkins himself is in favor of infanticide:

So what might destroying Christianity look like to an atheist?

Here it what destroying Christianity means in North Korea, the most atheistic country on the planet.

Excerpt:

> A Christian woman accused of distributing the Bible, a book banned in communist North Korea, was publicly executed last month for the crime, South Korean activists said Friday.
>
> The 33-year-old mother of three, Ri Hyon Ok, also was accused of spying for South Korea and the United States, and of organizing dissidents, a rights group said in Seoul, citing documents obtained from the North.
>
> The Investigative Commission on Crime Against Humanity report included a copy of Ri's government-issued photo ID and said her husband, children and parents were sent to a political prison the day after her June 16 execution.

That's what Kim Jong Il means by "destroy Christianity". What does Dawkins mean by it?

FLASHBACK: American Atheists calls for the eradication of Christianity.

If Ron Paul were President, 16 to 28 states would keep abortion legal

December 21, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

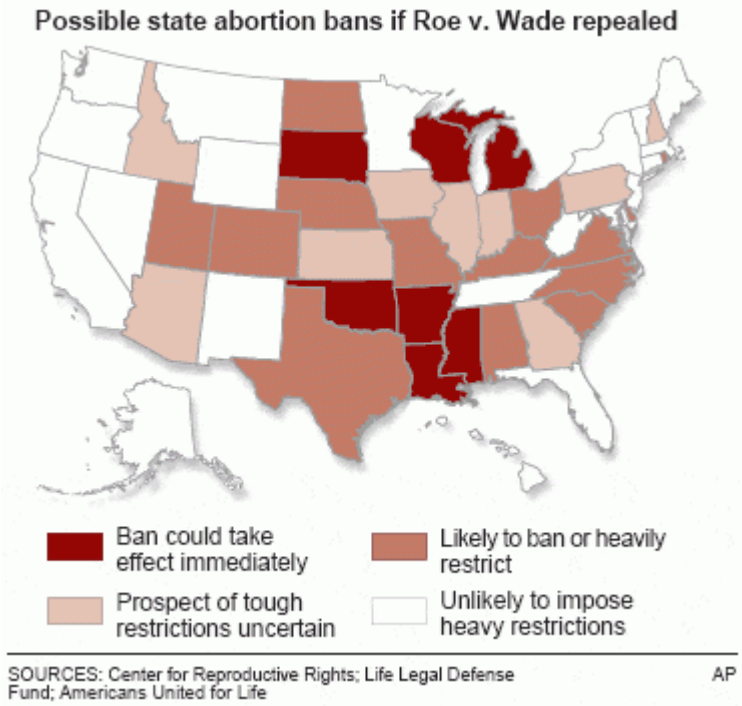

Which states would Ron Paul allow to legalize abortion?
From the Weekly Standard. (H/T Triablogue)

Excerpt:

> "[Ron Paul] has an outstanding chance of winning in Iowa," according to Bob Vander Plaats, who served as Mike Huckabee's 2008 state campaign chairman. "There's a lot about Ron Paul that people like," Vander Plaats says, pointing to Paul's "almost prophetic" vision of our economic problems and his commitment to do away with "politics as usual."
>
> But Paul could face trouble with values voters in Iowa, where 60 percent of GOP caucusgoers are evangelical Christians. Vander Plaats says his socially conservative umbrella organization, the Family Leader, has ruled out endorsing Paul because "sometimes [Paul's] libertarian views trump his moral compass."
>
> **"On abortion, [Paul] believes that's a states' rights issue, we believe that's a morality issue," says Vander Plaats. In a post-*Roe* v. *Wade* world, "We don't believe abortion should be legal in Maine and illegal in Iowa."** (Paul voted for the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act in 2003, but expressed deep reservations about voting for a federal law on abortion.)
>
> "We're very concerned" about Paul's position that the government shouldn't recognize civil marriage, Vander Plaats continues. The group also balks at some of Paul's foreign policy views. "Even though we may agree with him that we're

> not called to be the policeman of the world, we do believe we're called to stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel," says Vander Plaats. "And we do believe [a nuclear-armed] Iran is a definite threat not only to Israel, but to our freedom as well."
>
> […]Vander Plaats says he doesn't think very many Iowa voters are aware that Paul thinks it should be up to states to decide whether or not to protect human life. But now that Paul leading in the Iowa polls, his positions may come under greater scrutiny.

Here's a 2006 USA Today article listing the states that would make abortion legal under Ron Paul's plan.

Excerpt:

> •**Twenty-two state legislatures are likely to impose significant new restrictions on abortion.** They include nearly every state in the South and a swath of big states across the industrial Rust Belt, from Pennsylvania to Ohio and Michigan. These states have enacted most of the abortion restrictions now allowed.
>
> •**Sixteen state legislatures are likely to continue current access to abortion.** They include every state on the West Coast and almost every state in the Northeast. A half-dozen already have passed laws that specifically protect abortion rights. Most of the states in this group have enacted fewer than half of the abortion restrictions now available to states.
>
> •**Twelve states fall into a middle ground between those two categories.** About half are in the Midwest, the rest scattered from Arizona to Rhode Island.
>
> […]The 22 states likely to enact new restrictions include 50% of the U.S. population and accounted for 37% of the abortions performed in 2000, the latest year for which complete data were available.
>
> The 16 states likely to protect access to abortion include 35% of the U.S. population and accounted for 48% of the abortions performed.

So Ron Paul, *far from being pro-life*, would allow abortion on demand in 16 to 28 states, many of them the most populous states in the union – like California and New York. I understand that he calls allowing abortion in 16 to 28 states "pro-life", but voters have to think and decide – is that really pro-life? Is it really pro-life when the number of abortions per year will drop from 1.1 million to 550,000? Is that pro-life? (Assuming that the people in the pro-life states don't just cross the border to get an abortion elsewhere – which is false, of course). Paul's position is that he is personally pro-life, but he thinks that other people should be allowed to decide if an unborn baby can be killed or not, at the state level. Isn't that *pro-choice* though?

Similarly, Paul would allow states to redefine marriage to be anything they want it to be,

since he thinks that the definition of marriage is an issue that states should decide. That’s his view. Is that pro-marriage? Does that position take seriously the need for children to be raised by a mother and a father?

Ex-Planned Parenthood board member confirmed to 9th circuit court of appeals

December 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> Last week, the Senate confirmed the nomination of Alaska Supreme Court Justice Morgan Christen to become a member of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals,one of the most left-wing federal appeals courts in the nation.
>
> The confirmation has President Barack Obama adding yet another pro-abortion judge to the nation's judicial system. Although Christen had to wait months to be confirmed, she will now serve on a court that will decide pro-life legislation coming from Pacific Coast states — usually declaring it unconstitutional.
>
> […]When she submitted her application to become a state Supreme Court justice, Christen made no mention of the fact that she is a former board member of Planned Parenthood and served the pro-abortion group in the mid 1990s.
>
> In his statement announcing Christen's nomination, Obama said, "I am proud to nominate this outstanding candidate to serve on the United States Court of Appeals. I am confident Justice Morgan Christen will serve the American people with integrity and distinction."
>
> […]The Alaska Planned Parenthood organization on which Christen served has been a vocal opponent of pro-life legislation at the state capital — most notably opposing repeated attempts by state legislators to pass parental notification and consent legislation allowing parents to know when their minor daughter is considering an abortion and requiring Planned Parenthood, the nation's leading abortion business, to obtain permission from the girl's parents beforehand.

Barack Obama is the most pro-abortion President in the history of the United States.

The cellular machinery that creates proteins from DNA

December 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News.

H/T Jonathan.

Who gives more to charity? Religious people or secular people?

December 22, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barbara Kay explains in the National Post.

Full text:

> No matter where you live, charity begins at home. But, as we learn from the Fraser Institute's newly released annual report on charitable giving, the question of where charity ends depends on where you live. For the 13th year in a row, Quebec has come out on the bottom of the Fraser Institute's charity scale.
>
> Of the provinces, Manitobans are the biggest givers, with 26% of those filing taxes donating to a registered charity, and 0.89% of total income being donated. Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island tied for second place. Ontario, Canada's largest province, tied Alberta for fourth place with 24% of its tax filers donating 0.74% of total income to registered charities.
>
> And then there's Quebec. Oh dear. Only 21.7 % of Quebecers claimed donations to registered charities, and gave only 0.30% of their total income. On average dollar value donated, Alberta led with $2,112. And Quebec limped in at $606, half the national average of $1,399.
>
> Lest Albertans and Manitobans get swelled heads, they should know that no Canadian provinces are a patch on the Americans. Almost 27% of American tax filers donated to registered charities, compared with 23% of Canadians. Countrywide, Americans gave 1.32% of their aggregate personal income to charity, more than double the 0.64% that Canadians gave.
>
> What's up with these statistics? Aren't we supposed to be kinder and gentler than Americans?
>
> Well, one clue to deconstructing the Canadian figures, and in particular Quebec's lousy performance, comes from the news release: "Utah was by far the most generous jurisdiction in North America, with 33.4% of tax filers donating 3.09% of the total income earned in the state, nearly three-and-a-half times the share of aggregate income donated by Canada's top province (0.89%), Manitoba."
>
> Why? Here's a clue: Mormons constitute about 60% of Utah's population. Mormons give a lot to charity, in part because of their tithing system. And, countrywide, it's not just Mormons. The United States is a religious country – and research tells us that observantly religious people generally give more to charity (both in time and money) than non-religious people. Canada's secularism makes it a less generous place, no matter what we tell ourselves about the virtues of being Canadian.
>
> Another well-observed sociological phenomenon is that big government tends to

> discourage charity – both because people have less money to give to charity in high-tax jurisdictions, and because coddled nanny-state citizens believe that taking care of the poor huddled masses has become government's job. Statism dampens the impulse to be generous at an individual level.
>
> Quebec scores high on both secularism and nanny-statism. In fact, it is the least religious of the Canadian provinces (and in fact the most militantly anti-religious). Quebec also is the most statist (and highly taxed) of the provinces. Quebecers figure their taxes are taking care of all the social problems, or should be taking care of them, and it is therefore no surprise that they are the least likely to take responsibility for the afflictions of others.
>
> Taking personal responsibility for alleviating the sufferings of others is the mark of a mature individual. Statism tends to suffocate the blessing of empathy, and thereby promotes civic immaturity. One more in a long litany of reasons for working to bring down the size of government.

These findings echo Arthur Brooks' study on who gives most. Religious people give more than secular people, and that just stands to reason, given that the former generally takes morality to be objective, and the latter generally takes it to be subjective.

Typical working UK mother spends 19 minutes per day with her children

December 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> According to the Office of National Statistics, a typical working mother spends as little as 19 minutes a day with her children; working fathers even less.
>
> Time-neglect is what child psychologists call it, and they are studying its effect in middle-class families with increasing concern.
>
> 'We are seeing some of the most privileged and yet in some ways the most neglected children in history,' says child psychologist Dr Richard House, from the University of Roehampton.
>
> We have some of the longest working hours in Europe and the recession is piling pressure on parents to be the last to leave the office. The guilt parents feel about this has consequences for when they are with their children.
>
> 'Parents are reluctant to say "No" when they need to. They try to compensate by lavishing gifts on them. Neither is good for children's well-being and healthy development,' says Dr House.
>
> His warnings follow a Unicef report that admonished British parents for trapping their children in a 'cycle of compulsive consumerism' by showering them with toys and designer labels rather than time.
>
> […]Unicef's research also shows that what children actually want is more stable family time, as do many of the parents struggling to provide for them.
>
> More than two-thirds of mothers work, and no one would want to see the progress women have made in the workplace reversed.

No one except the husbands and the children, but who cares about them?

More:

> Historian Rebecca Fraser, mother of three daughters and author of A People's History Of Britain, says that while nostalgia for the Fifties is understandable, the progress of women in education makes a return to that model unlikely.
>
> 'In 1951, only one quarter of the tiny British student population (5 per cent of adults) were women, while in 2011 more than half the student population are female,' she says.
>
> 'With so many attending university, it is probably inevitable that most women are going to continue to want a career.'
>
> […]Child-care experts warn that time-neglect by high-achievers can have serious

> consequences on their children.
>
> Professor Suniya Luthar, a world expert in the welfare of children from affluent homes, has just completed research that shows the numbers of teenagers with significant mental health issues can be up to three times higher among those from high-achieving and prosperous families.
>
> ‘Traditionally, the view is that these children have it all, but the pressures on them are immense,’ says Professor Luthar.
>
> ‘The solution for any parent is to spend time with them.’
>
> They also need clear boundaries, she says, something that ‘uber-working’ parents often are less able to enforce.

Every decision a woman makes has to be based on the plan for a marriage, family and children. Ideologies like feminism and socialism are incompatible with marriage and family. What is the use of a woman crying crocodile tears over her voluntary neglect of her own children when every decision she made prior to marriage and after marriage is based on an anti-family, pro-government worldview?

When a woman votes for government to tax her future family, regulate her husband’s employer, and restrict the family to purchasing government services only (day care, public schools), then she must not complain when she is forced into the workplace and her child is handed to strangers to raise. That is the end result of being taken in by fashionable ideologies. When you oppose low taxes and small government, you oppose keeping money in the family. And that means that the wife will work, and the children will be raised by strangers. Women who vote for socialism, environmentalism, feminism, etc. are forcing themselves away from their future children.

Think before you act – don’t act on feelings and intuitions. If you want a marriage and a family, then vote accordingly.

Ron Paul ends CNN interview about his controversial newsletters

December 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video here:

Here’s a video of Ron Paul promoting the newsletters in 1995.

The conservative Weekly Standard has more about the Ron Paul newsletters.

I have to be diplomatic about this and not comment, but I think that this revelation is good for the Republican party. I recommend that Ron Paul voters look into backing Michele Bachmann, which gets you all of the conservatism, but without the conspiracy-theory baggage. If electability is a concern, then we should be looking to Newt Gingrich.

Is Mitt Romney a flip-flopper? What are his flip-flops?

December 23, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s an ad that the Democrats have prepared to use if Romney becomes the nominee. This is not the candidate we want.

Iraq plunges into chaos as U.S. troops withdraw

December 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> The Obama Administration's risky decision to seek the quickest possible exit from Iraq has contributed to a mushrooming political crisis there that is rapidly unraveling the hard-won gains of U.S. troops and threatens to plunge the country into a civil war that will greatly benefit Iran.
>
> Shortly after the December 15 end-of-mission ceremony for U.S. troops, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Malikipurged many senior Sunni Arab political leaders from his fractious governing coalition. Maliki's government, dominated by Shiite political parties of various stripes, also announced that it will prosecute Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi, a leader of the predominantly Sunni Arab Iraqiyah party, on terrorism charges. Hashemi, who denounced the allegations as propaganda cover for a political coup, has fled to the semi-autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq.
>
> Iraq's fragile unity is now dissolving in growing political tensions between the leaders of the Shiite majority and Sunni minority and between the Shiite-dominated central government and the non-Arab Kurdish minority. But the Obama Administration, blindsided by simmering tensions that it had downplayed in its rush for the exit, appears to be on auto-pilot.
>
> The Administration gave a higher priority to domestic political considerations than to Iraq's long-term security needs when it neglected to negotiate an extension of the U.S. troop presence past the end-of-year deadline set by the 2008 Status of Forces Agreement. Although the Bush Administration had envisioned a follow-on agreement to extend the military presence, and the Obama Administration had initially planned for a smaller residual force of military trainers and advisers, in the end politics trumped security in the White House's deliberations.

Pulling troops out of the Middle East will make it harder for us to gather intelligence and support our allies against Islamic aggression. This decision to pull troops out ahead of the 2012 election is very similar to the decision to delay the Keystone XL pipeline until after the election.

Excerpt:

> In November, the White House announced it would delay deciding on the project until after next year's election. Administration officials claim they need more time to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the $7 billion, 2,100-mile project to transport crude oil from Alberta, Canada, to major American refineries

> in the Gulf Coast.
>
> Not content to wait until 2013, Republicans inserted a Keystone approval provision into the payroll tax extension. The result of that move is still in flux, as House Republicans have rejected the Senate's measure.
>
> Regardless of the outcome, President Obama's desire to delay the pipeline is just the latest example of his pernicious proclivity for putting politics over sound policy when it comes to energy regulations.
>
> The president simply doesn't want to bear the political costs of deciding either way on Keystone until after his re-election bid. He's wants to remain non-committal.
>
> […]Shambling on Keystone might be smart politics — but there's no good policy reason to delay approval. And there is a huge cost of delay, which can be captured in just four letters: J-O-B-S.
>
> Keystone XL requires miles of pipe to be welded and installed, and at least 30 new pumping facilities to be constructed. American workers would staff many of those operations.
>
> Indeed, if Keystone XL were allowed to proceed as planned, oil sands development and related operations would directly create thousands of new jobs. Tens of thousands additional positions would be created indirectly at businesses along the pipeline's pathway.
>
> That same political strategizing driving the Keystone delay also undergirds the White House's stance on hydraulic fracturing.
>
> Colloquially know as "fracking," this technique has proven invaluable in extracting natural gas buried under the earth's surface. It involves pumping a high-pressure mixture of water and sand into the rock surrounding deposits to free up gas for collection.
>
> In the Marcellus shale — a massive reserve running from Ohio and Pennsylvania into New York — fracking is the only way for developers to get access to gas located deep underground. Unfortunately, policymakers high and low have succumbed to environmentalist alarmism on fracking.
>
> New York — with the tacit support of the White House — has instituted a fracking moratorium and effectively prohibited exploration of the parts of the Marcellus that run under the state.
>
> Again, the cost of currying favor with environmentalists? Jobs. According to the Department of Environmental Conservation, Marcellus development in New York could generate up to 80,000 new local positions.

The more we decline to develop our own energy resources here at home, the worse it is for our economy. But it's also bad for our national security to continue to buy oil from people who don't like us very much. If we could develop our own energy resources at home – and buy from Canada – then we could use the money we save to keep our

commitments in the Middle East. It’s not good for our economy or our national security to make short-sighted decisions that are going to hurt us in the long-run.

The meaning of Christmas, from a Charlie Brown Christmas

December 24, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

They don't show things like this anymore on TV…

Luke 2:1-14:

[1] Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

[2] This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

[3] And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city.

[4] Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,

[5] in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

[6] While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth.

[7] And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

[8] In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.

[9] And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

[10] But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;

[11] for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

[12] This *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

[13] And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

[14] "Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

And my friend Kelly posted this on Facebook:

God and sinners reconciled.

Merry Christmas, all!

What does Christmas mean to Christians?

December 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's the time of year when we explain what Christianity is about.

God exists

Basically, we know from a variety of scientific arguments that the universe was created and fine-tuned for life by an intelligent agent that existed causally prior to the beginning of the universe, because this agent brought the universe into being. Our purpose as humans is to enter into a two-way loving relationship with this Creator/Designer of the universe. This is the only way that we can ultimately be happy and fulfilled.

We avoid God

Now, when you look at human experience, none of us is interested in finding out about the character of this Creator/Designer, because we are afraid that if we find out too much about him then we will have our freedom to do as we please constrained by the demands of a relationship with an all-powerful, all-good being. Just knowing that such a person exists and has a character distinct from our own is enough to cause us to flee from him so that we can stay autonomous from the obligations of the moral law that he expects us to follow.

Christians believe that this universal desire to avoid an all-powerful, all-good God who will judge us is a result of bad behaviors inherited by us from the very first rebellion against God by our ancestors. Ever since that rebellion, the capability for relating to God has been lost, because we no longer have the ability to stop our rebellion against God. Christians call the first rebellion of our ancestors "The Fall of Man".

What does this rebellion look like for us today? Well, we want to do whatever we want, in order to be happy, and to ignore God's demands. We want to have happy feelings, including security, community and being morally good, all without a relationship with

God. We want to acquire and rearrange matter for our selfish ends without acknowledging and honoring the Creator/Designer of that matter. And, of course, we would like other people to affirm, voluntarily or involuntarily, that our rebellion against God is really the height of moral goodness.

Additionally, some people imagine that God, if he exists at all, must desire our happiness. And of course when their needs are not met by this invented God, then they become even more bitter at God, and eventually decide that God could not really exist since their selfish needs are not being met by him. It never seems to occur to us humans that some pain and suffering may be permitted by God in order to turn our attention away from pleasure and security in this life, and back towards a relationship with him.

This is the mess we find ourselves in. This propensity for turning away from God and trying to pursue selfish happiness and security apart from a relationship with God is what the Bible calls "sin". Every single one of us deserves severe punishment for refusing to pursue a genuine two-way love relationship with the God who is there. That is the mess we are in before Jesus appears to address this problem.

Jesus saves the day

I cannot say much about *how* Jesus solves the problem of rebellion against God, because that is really the story of Easter, and today we are dealing with the story of Christmas. But I can say that the solution to the problem requires that God step into history to communicate with his creatures and to perform actions in order to be reconciled with them. That is the message of Christmas: God is stepping into history to do something to end our rebellion. Easter is the story of *what he does*.

This is talked about in the Bible in John 1, for example.

John 1:1-5:

[1]In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[2]He was with God in the beginning.

[3]Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

[4]In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

[5]The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

You can substitute the word "Word" there for *Logos*, which really means *logic* or *reason* or *wisdom.* This is a person with a divine nature, identified with the eternal being of God, who exists causally prior to the creation of the universe, who is going to take on an additional human nature, including a human body. (Christians believe that there is one divine "what" being and three divine "who" persons). Software engineers, you can think of Jesus having two natures as multiple inheritance in C++.

And it continues in John 1:10-14:

[10]He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

[11]He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

[12]Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

[13]children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

[14]The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Here the word grace doesn't mean like a graceful ballet dancer. It means an instance of mercy received from a superior. A person (a "who") identified with the divine being (a "what") has decided to make us a top-down offer of mercy.

The same message of God stepping into history is found in the Christmas carols that people sing at Christmas.

Christmas carols

Here's the best one, "O, Holy Night", and it says:

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining.
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

When we were in rebellion, we had lost our most valuable capacity – the capacity of being in a direct relationship with God. And if Jesus can accomplish his mission, then we are going to regain that capacity for a direct relationship with God.

Now look at "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", which one of my favorites:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

Basically, as I often say, there are only two kinds of people in the world. There are people who are willing to respond to the offer of a relationship with God, with all the little sacrifices and compromises that a relationship entails, and then there are people who are not willing to respond. For the people who are willing to respond, the appearance of Jesus is the best thing that could possibly happen, because now we are finally going to have a chance to deal directly with God, face-to-face, to find out what he is like, and change ourselves to be more like him, with his help.

And that is why people celebrate Christmas. It's the anniversary of the birth of Jesus. It is the story of God stepping into history to be reconciled with his rebellious creatures. It's the story of the divine *Logos* divesting himself of his glory and subjecting himself to the life of a creature in order to rescue us from our sinful, self-destructive rebellion. This love for undeserving creatures is above and beyond the call of duty. We didn't love him, but instead he loved us first, and he loved us enough to come down here and suffer with us so that we could be reconciled with God.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Did Jesus speak and act with the authority of God?

December 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

4So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

5For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

6yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

5Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

6Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

7but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

9Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above

every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The “Q” source for Matthew and Luke

Here’s Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier “Q” source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Learn more

You can learn more about the early belief in the divinity of Jesus by listening to a lecture by William Lane Craig and reading the related paper, and by listening to the debate between Richard Bauckham and James Crossley on that topic. The first link contains other scholarly debates on Jesus.

Richard Bauckham and James Crossley debate the divinity of Christ

December 25, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Richard is very thorough and works only with minimal facts that skeptical scholars will agree with. James Crossley is an excellent atheist. I used to think he was mean, but now he seems so reasonable. I hope someone can befriend him and introduce him to some of the evidence for theism from the progress of science, so that he can perhaps becomes a Christian.

Here is the MP3 file.

I wrote a summary so you can follow along as you listen.

More stuff

In another recent discussion, Richard Bauckham defends the reliability of the gospels against James Crossley. Crossley debated against William Lane Craig before on the resurrection and he debated against Michael Bird here, (part 1, part 2). The topic was "How did Christianity Begin?".

Summary

Main topic:
– was belief in Jesus' divinity develop late, or was it there from the beginning?
– how did the early Jewish community reconcile the idea of Jesus' divinity with monotheism?

Moderator:
– was the the worship of Jesus as God a late development in history
– was it accepted by converts from the Jewish community

Bauckham:
– high Christology was not a result of pagan influences
– Jews reconciled Jesus' divinity with their Jewish monotheism

Moderator:
– is the degree of Christology a historian is willing to accept just the result of bias?

Crossley:
– bias is always a factor in what individual people think
– but in a public discussion, what matters is the evidence

Moderator:
– High-Christology is used by Christians as an argument for the resurrection
– Christians ask: what cause could account for the effect of early high Christology?

Crossley:
– we agree that the first Christians witnessed something after Jesus' death
– what they witnessed had a role in their forming their high opinion of Jesus
– the high opinion was because they believed he had been resurrected (1 Cor 15)

– whether he was or not is a separate question

Moderator:
– is a high Christology a good argument for inferring the resurrection?

Bauckham:
– the resurrection makes people think Jesus is unique, but not necessarily divine
– it was really the belief in the exaltation of Jesus to God's right hand that did it
– what God does in Judaism is to create the universe and rule over the universe
– if Jesus is seated at God's right hand, then is participating in ruling creation
– so Jesus is being identified with God very early
– the exaltation might have been caused by post-mortem visions of Jesus, e.g. – Stephen

Moderator:
– how were early monotheistic Jews able to reconcile the divinity of Jesus with monotheism?

Crossley:
– the high Christology may not be early because disputes about it are going on in John
– there were other figures in Judaism like the Word of God and Wisdom that were very high
– maybe Paul's Christology is not as high and he is thinking something high but not deity
– and in John the Christology is being pushed higher to deity, and then there are disputes

Moderator:
– Phillipians and 1 Corinthians are the first evidences of what people thought about Jesus
– John is actually much later

Crossley:
– it may be that Paul's Christology is high and that he just never got into any disputes

Bauckham:
– in Phillipians, Paul incorporates Jesus into the shema, the core of Jewish monotheism
– in 1 Corinthians, he does the same thing

Moderator:
– is this evidence consistent with the idea that Jesus is more like Wisdom or the Word of God

Crossley:
– in Paul's letters, there are no conflicts about Jesus' divinity, they appear later in John
– if Paul's letters taught a divine Jesus, there would be conflicts in the letters
– so there is possibly an evolving Christology from very high to divine

Bauckham:
– the Word and Wisdom of God are different from exalted figures – they are separate
– the Word and Wisdom of God are intrinsic to God's own identity
– and so Word and Wisdom are divine in the sense that they below to God's identity

Moderator:
– is Jesus an exalted human figure or someone identified with God?

– is the identification of Jesus with divinity compatible with Jewish monotheism?
– or was this concept developed later in a pagan context where one more God would not matter?

Bauckham:
– NT scholars typically separate functional Christology and ontic Christology
– but I say that there is no such disctinction
– if Jesus does the functions of God (like ruling), then it means he is identified with God
– there is a distinction between who God is (identity) and what God is (nature)
– Jews were not as concerned with the identification of a man with the God
– Jews were disturbed by the idea that THIS shamed and crucified man would be identified with God

Moderator:
– is this high Christology too much of a sharp break with Jewish monotheism to have been early?

Crossley:
– the Phillipians passage is a strong early passage for Richard's view
– definitely the crucifixion is a major problem for the early Jewish monotheists
– but the deification of a human being is also a strong problem in spite of what Richard says
– both Jews and Muslims will have objections to identifying Jesus with the divine

Moderator:
– How can Paul write something like this when he was such a high-ranking Jew?

Bauckham:
– Jewish monotheism could accomodate something surprising like this without surrendering anything
– John starts his gospel at the creation of the universe to say Jesus was there as "the Word"

Moderator:
– was the early church thinking of Jesus the same way that the church today does?

Crossley:
– it's hard to say because the language today reflects a lot of development
– in the early church people were still thinking about what to make of Jesus

Moderator:
– what about in the other gospels, do they indicate a strong notion of Jesus as divine?

Crossley:
– nothing as strong as Paul's letters and John, especiall the disputes with the Jews

Moderator:
– so did the writers of the other gospels have different views of Jesus' divinity than Paul and John?

Crossley:

– well the same claims are not there in the text, the claims are not as grand as in Paul and John

Bauckham:
– but in Mark, the earliest gospel, Jesus forgives sins and calms storm – acting as God acts
– Jesus also asks “why do call me good, only God is good”
– the “seated at the right hand of God” and “coming on the clouds” passages

Crossley:
– I don’t think those claims are as high as John, because Moses controls nature as well
– the other actions may be more that Jesus has authority to do these things

Moderator:
– but the author of Mark writes that the disciples are catching on that Jesus was more than a man

Bauckham:
– Jews were not as concerned with the unitary nature of God, but there is only one God (being)
– there can’t really be any evolution from Jesus as a created being to Jesus as divine
– in paganism, there are lower divinities, but that is not the case in Jewish monotheism

Moderator:
– the fact that Jesus was worshiped by Jews means he was already viewed as divine

Crossley:
– that point is debatable, but can be sustained with a careful exegesis like Richard does
– there is some room there for an evolving Christology – the gap may not be as big as Richard says

Moderator:
– do you think that the worship of Jesus was the result of increasing Christology over time?

Crossley:
– it may not have been conscious, but John is the clearest statement and it is the latest gospel
– it may be that a dispute with Jews was required to spell it out even if it was present before

Moderator:
– what about idea that the early church worshiped him because they just though it was a new revelation?

Bauckham:
– the early Christians worshiped as Jews and then met separately afterward to worship Jesus
– worship is about distinguishing God from the created world
– you wouldn’t worship Jesus without some idea of what you were doing

Crossley:

– other things that set Jesus apart were the exorcisms and the vision to Paul that converted him

Barack Obama is the worst President ever

December 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bill Whittle explains. (7 minutes)

This is not to mention his record on abortion – the most pro-abortion President ever. Or the election of hardline Muslim extremists in Egypt.

The man is a catastrophic failure.

Former Ron Paul campaign official explains Ron Paul's views on foreign policy

December 26, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Right Wing News, an exclusive interview with a Ron Paul insider who was working for Ron Paul from 1987-2003.

Excerpt:

> Ron Paul was opposed to the War in Afghanistan, and to any military reaction to the attacks of 9/11.
>
> He did not want to vote for the resolution. He immediately stated to us staffers, me in particular, that Bush/Cheney were going to use the attacks as a precursor for "invading" Iraq. He engaged in conspiracy theories including perhaps the attacks were coordinated with the CIA, and that the Bush administration might have known about the attacks ahead of time. He expressed no sympathies whatsoever for those who died on 9/11, and pretty much forbade us staffers from engaging in any sort of memorial expressions, or openly asserting pro-military statements in support of the Bush administration.
>
> On the eve of the vote, Ron Paul was still telling us staffers that he was planning to vote "No," on the resolution, and to be prepared for a seriously negative reaction in the District. Jackie Gloor and I, along with quiet nods of agreement from the other staffers in the District, declared our intentions to Tom Lizardo, our Chief of Staff, and to each other, that if Ron voted No, we would immediately resign.
>
> Ron was "under the spell" of left-anarchist and Lew Rockwell associate Joe Becker at the time, who was our legislative director. Norm Singleton, another Lew Rockwell fanatic agreed with Joe. All other staffers were against Ron, Joe and Norm on this, including Lizardo. At the very last minute Ron switched his stance and voted "Yay," much to the great relief of Jackie and I. He never explained why, but I strongly suspected that he realized it would have been political suicide; that staunchly conservative Victoria would revolt, and the Republicans there would ensure that he would not receive the nomination for the seat in 2002. Also, as much as I like to think that it was my yelling and screaming at Ron, that I would publicly resign if he voted "No," I suspect it had a lot more to do with Jackie's threat, for she WAS Victoria. And if Jackie bolted, all of the Victoria conservatives would immediately turn on Ron, and it wouldn't be pretty.
>
> If you take anything from this lengthy statement, I would hope that it is this final story about the Afghanistan vote, that the liberal media chooses to completely ignore, because it doesn't fit their template, is what you will report.
>
> If Ron Paul should be slammed for anything, it's not some silly remarks he's

> made in the past in his Newsletters. It's over his simply outrageously horrendous views on foreign policy, Israel, and national security for the United States. His near No vote on Afghanistan. That is the big scandal. And that is what should be given 100 times more attention from the liberal media, than this Newsletter deal.

I think Paul's comments on World War 2, which I didn't excerpt here, are pretty disturbing as well. I guess I just don't believe that he knows enough about national security and counter-terrorism to be President. If I asked him questions like "who is FARC?" or "who is the Quds force?" or "How is Iran working with the Mexican drug cartels?" or "How is Iran working with Hugo Chavez?" then all I'll get in response is Libertarian rhetoric.

Ron Paul doesn't know a thing about national security or Islamic terrorism, he can't quote any specifics at all about who terrorists are, what they've done, what they want to do, etc.. It's like asking a witch doctor to explain modern medicine. You'll only get conspiracy theories and unverifiable assertions – never any details. Everything Ron Paul asserts about how unilateral disarming would do this, or unilateral withdrawal would do that is really nothing more than his uninformed personal ideology. If you asked him to prove out any of his views on foreign policy, you would just get more excitable old crank rhetoric – devoid of data and history.

The best way to engage a libertarian who thinks that Ron Paul conspiracy theory diplomacy would work is to bring up a specific example when actual counter-terrorism produced results. For example, when KSM was waterboarded and gave up intelligence on the 9/11-style attack on Los Angeles, or when enhanced interrogation techniques led to the location of Osama Bin Laden. You can also point out how Clinton's policies of appeasement emboldened terrorists to commit actual terrorist attacks against American assets. And how Bush's invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan did actually dissuade terrorist attacks from occurring. And how large-scale attacks resumed under Obama, e.g. – the NYC subway bomb, the NYC Times Square bomb, the attempted assassination of the Saudi ambassador in New York, etc., to name a few. This is kryptonite to a fever-swamp libertarian who forms his foreign policy reading dead economists from the 1800s – prior to the invention of nuclear weapons.

Like this:

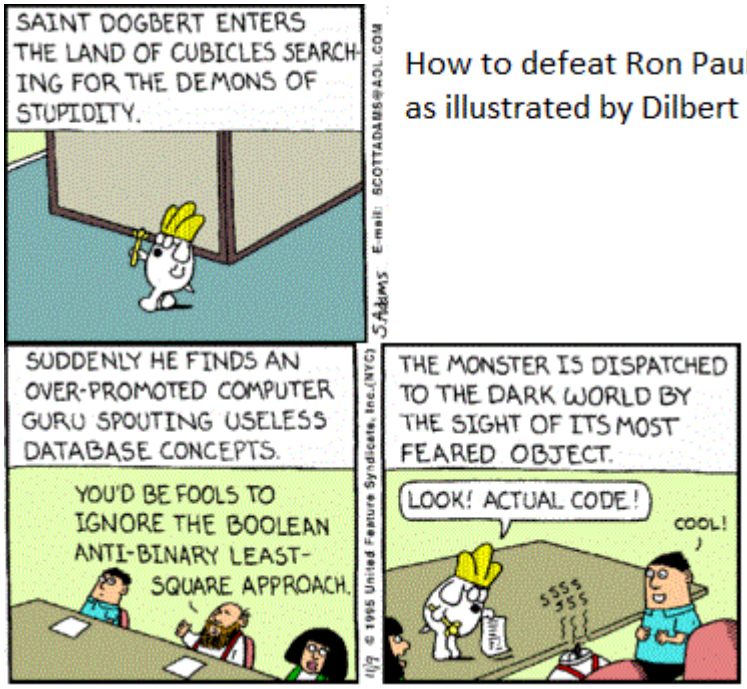

How to defeat Ron Paul in 2012

We can’t put someone like Ron Paul in charge of national security. It would be like putting a witch doctor in as the Surgeon General. Conspiracy theories are not good foreign policy. The antidote is to talk about the way things work in the real world.

Libertarian: a person who thinks waterboarding a terrorist to prevent a 9/11 attack is “cruel”, but who thinks aborting 50 million unborn babies since 1973 is “just”. Just understand what libertarianism is, and the scope in which it is useful, and don’t apply it to areas where it doesn’t apply.

WaPo: Obama's energy policies "infused with politics at every level"

December 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Hans Bader.

Excerpt: (with the links removed)

> Even the liberal *Washington Post*, which hasn't endorsed a Republican for President since 1952, seems to be souring on the Obama Administration's failed energy programs, saying they were "infused with politics at every level." As it noted in discussing the Solyndra scandal: "Obama's green-technology program was infused with politics at every level, The Washington Post found in an analysis of thousands of memos, company records and internal e-mails. Political considerations were raised repeatedly by company investors, Energy Department bureaucrats and White House officials. The records, some previously unreported, show that when warned that financial disaster might lie ahead, the administration remained steadfast in its support for Solyndra," which was owned by major Obama backers, like George Kaiser.
>
> As law professor Glenn Harlan Reynolds notes, "all the 'stimulus' and 'green energy' stuff was never anything but a program to put taxpayer money into the hands of cronies and supporters."
>
> The Obama Administration hastily approved the taxpayer subsidies for Solyndra despite obvious danger signs and warnings from accountants about the company's likely collapse, themisgivings of agency officials, and the company's mismanagement and lousy-quality products. (Solyndra executives are now pleading the 5th Amendment to avoid disclosing incriminating information.) The Obama administration was determined to shovel taxpayer money to its cronies as fast as it could. As an Obama fundraiser and Solyndra stakeholder exulted, "there's never been more money shoved out of the government's door in world history and probably never will be again than in the last few months and the next 18 months. And our selfish parochial goal is to get as much of it . . . as we possibly can." "At the time Solyndra received its grant, Vice President Joe Biden declared that the Solyndra investment is 'exactly what the [the stimulus package] is all about.'"
>
> While diverting taxpayer money away from productive and efficient businesses to corporate-welfare recipients controlled by political cronies, the Obama Administration is busy wiping out jobs through thousands of pages of counterproductive regulations. Some of these new regulations are designed to spawn lawsuits that will enrich trial lawyers at businesses' and consumers' expense.

Here's an excerpt from the Washington Post piece he linked:

> Since the failure of the company, Obama's entire $80 billion clean-technology program has begun to look like a political liability for an administration about to enter a bruising reelection campaign.
>
> Meant to create jobs and cut reliance on foreign oil, Obama's green-technology program was infused with politics at every level, The Washington Post found in an analysis of thousands of memos, company records and internal e-mails. Political considerations were raised repeatedly by company investors, Energy Department bureaucrats and White House officials.
>
> The records, some previously unreported, show that when warned that financial disaster might lie ahead, the administration remained steadfast in its support for Solyndra.
>
> The documents reviewed by The Post, which began examining the clean-technology program a year ago, provide a detailed look inside the day-to-day workings of the upper levels of the Obama administration. They also give an unprecedented glimpse into high-level maneuvering by politically connected clean-technology investors.
>
> They show that as Solyndra tottered, officials discussed the political fallout from its troubles, the "optics" in Washington and the impact that the company's failure could have on the president's prospects for a second term. Rarely, if ever, was there discussion of the impact that Solyndra's collapse would have on laid-off workers or on the development of clean-
> energy technology.
>
> "What's so troubling is that politics seems to be the dominant factor," said Ryan Alexander, president of Taxpayers for Common Sense, a nonpartisan watchdog group. "They're not talking about what the taxpayers are losing; they're not talking about the failure of the technology, whether we bet on the wrong horse. What they are talking about is 'How are we going to manage this politically?' "
>
> The administration, which excluded lobbyists from policy-making positions, gave easy access to venture capitalists with stakes in some of the companies backed by the administration, the records show. Many of those investors had given to Obama's 2008 campaign. Some took jobs in the administration and helped manage the clean-energy program.
>
> Documents show that senior officials pushed career bureaucrats to rush their decision on the loan so Vice President Biden could announce it during a trip to California. The records do not establish that anyone pressured the Energy Department to approve the Solyndra loan to benefit political contributors, but they suggest that there was an unwavering focus on promoting Solyndra and clean energy. Officials with the company and the administration have said that nothing untoward occurred and that the loan was granted on its merits.

I am really surprised to see such a strongly-worded denunciation of Obama's energy policies in a liberal newspaper.

Take a look at the rest of Hans' post where he talks about the effects of environmental regulations on job creation and the stimulus' effect on long-term economic growth. Basically, the only thing that Obama did right in 3 years was sign those free trade deals – and he sat on those for two years so as not to anger his union buddies. The rest has been a disaster from start to finish.

Christmas not so merry for Christians living under Islamic rule

December 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found that video on Right Scoop via Director Blue.

Gates of Vienna has more news coverage, and they are claiming that the death toll in Nigeria is at least 60 people from 5 separate bombings.

Here's a longer essay about the problem from Dave Warren. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The "Arab Spring," which was welcomed this year as an expression of "democracy" by the West's political, media, and chattering classes, has brought social convulsion to one Arab state after another. Against the background of what is to my view instead a large catastrophe, Christian communities that have existed in each state since centuries before the arrival of Islam, are being eliminated.
>
> …[W]ith the Americans gone, Iraq now slips the rest of the way off the world media map. It may crawl back on with full-scale civil war. And perhaps, eventually, notice will be taken that Iran's revolutionary regime, already represented within Maliki's entourage, is using the disorder to attach Iraq as a satellite. This is not something even Shia Iraqis could want; but they will have it as a consequence of disintegrative war between Sunni and Shia, Arab and Kurd, abetted by an utterly corrupt and dysfunctional "democratic" political class.

> Meanwhile, tonight's Midnight Mass has been cancelled, so far as I can see through the Internet, at Christian churches throughout the country. Estimates of the number of Christians who have fled Iraq now approach or exceed one million; and the reason for their leaving may be read in graffiti sprayed over their empty and assaulted churches. This persistently reminds worshippers of past massacres, and promises they will be next.
>
> The collapse of once-peaceful Egypt into disorder has had similar effects, as the old secular military establishment bids to retain some semblance of its former power and pomposity, while the Islamist parties sweep parliamentary elections.
>
> In the first moments of Egypt's "Arab Spring," triggered by the country's relatively tiny and secular middle class, Coptic Christians were already feeling the rise in heat. But there were several fine displays of solidarity, in which leading Muslims attended church services in defiance of Islamist terror threats.
>
> As ever, in revolutionary situations, the heroic phase ended quickly. We're advancing now through the squalid phases. For the safety of their parishioners, night church services are already switched to broad daylight, and as in Iraq,

> there are ever-more-cumbersome security measures to pass through, to get into a church at all.
>
> Nothing can be done, or more certainly, nothing will be done by our own "progressive" governing classes, even to anticipate the coming fallout.

Something to keep in your prayers. And when you get the chance to vote, keep in mind Christians living in other countries where there is no religious liberty. I find it interesting to note that the two situations Warren raised have different solutions. In Iraq, the right thing to do was to keep our forces in there to stabilize the region. In Egypt, the solution was not to get involved at all.

Obama will ask for $1.2 trillion dollar increase in the debt limit

December 27, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Obama Economic Record

	INAUGURATION DAY	TODAY	CHANGE
Unemployed Americans	12 million	14 million	↑ 2 million
Unemployment Rate	7.8%	9.1%	↑ 17%
Gas Prices	$1.85	$3.43	↑ 85%
Federal Debt	$10.6 trillion	$14.7 trillion	↑ 39%
Debt per person	$34,731	$47,047	↑ $12,316
Misery Index	7.8	12.9	↑ 65%
Food Stamp Recipients	32 million	45 million	↑ 41%
Health Insurance Premiums	$3,354	$4,129	↑ 23%
Home Values	$193,400	$172,600	↓ 11%
U.S. Global Competitiveness	1st	5th	↓ 4 places
Americans in Poverty	39.8 million	46.2 million	↑ 6.4 million

Obama Economic Record November 2011
From Reuters.

Excerpt:

> The White House plans to ask Congress by the end of the week for an increase in the government's debt ceiling… according to a senior Treasury Department official on Tuesday.
>
> The approval is expected to go through without a challenge, given that Congress is in recess until later in January and the request is in line with an agreement to keep the U.S. government funded into 2013.
>
> The debt is projected to fall within $100 billion of the current cap by December 30, when the United States has $82 billion in interest on its debt and payments such as Social Security coming due. President Barack Obama is expected to ask for authority to increase the borrowing limit by $1.2 trillion, part of the spending authority that was negotiated between Congress and the White House this summer.
>
> […]The debt limit currently stands at $15.194 trillion and would increase to $16.394 trillion with the request.

And yet some people apparently think that he is doing a good job with the economy.

Perhaps this story provides a clue about why things have gone so badly:

> After an hour of hiking, President Obama Monday got down to the serious business at hand, heading out to golf for the second day in his first three days of vacation. He was back on the course at Marine Corps Base Hawaii.
>
> With this one, Obama reaches a new milestone, having gone golfing 90 times in less than three years as president. That's about three months of golf, given that the excursions generally take about five hours – much of the useful portion of the day.
>
> What's more, it's the 32nd time he's been on the links this year, a record for the president. His 32 outings eclipses the 2010 mark of 30 and is far ahead of his 2009 tally of 28 rounds as president.
>
> And remember, there are still five days left in the year for Obama to pad his new record, which he almost certainly will.
>
> Along for Monday's round were three of Obama's Hawaii friends, Mike Ramos, Greg Orme and Bobby Titcomb. The latter, you may remember, was arrested in April in a prostitution sting.

It's the children who are going to be paying for Obama's spending spree. Remember, the last Republican budget was in 2007 – and the deficit then was $160 billion. Then the Democrats took over the House and the Senate and the deficit rose dramatically and is not going down in the near future.

RINO Mitt Romney now open to European-style VAT tax

December 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ABC News reports.

Excerpt:

> In a December 24 story in the **Wall Street Journal**, Romney is described not favoring the idea of "layering a VAT onto the current income tax system. But he adds that, philosophically speaking, a VAT might work as a replacement for some part of the tax code, 'particularly at the corporate level,' as Paul Ryan proposed several years ago. What he doesn't do is rule a VAT out."
>
> A value added tax, or VAT, is a form of the consumption tax in which the tax is levied based on a product's price, not including the cost of materials, that originated in and is popular in Europe, imposed by the European Commission, and the governments of France and the UK, among others.
>
> Gingrich's campaign was not the only one to notice. The **American Enterprise Institution**'s James Pethokoukis wrote that "(m)any conservatives/libertarians simply hate, hate, hate the idea of a VAT….They view it as a way to fund a massive expansion of government. I would be surprised if those quotes don't end up in a 30-second, anti-Romney ad in Iowa or New Hampshire"
>
> Anti-tax crusader **Grover Norquist** once called the VAT "a European-style sales tax. It's assessed on the profits generated at every stage of production (raw material, manufacturer, wholesaler, retailer, etc.), so there is constant reporting and payment. As such, it's an extremely efficient money machine for big government. The VAT is embedded inside the price of a good … As such, people forget they pay it, and European governments have found it too easy to raise the tax repeatedly over time."

People think that Romney should be the candidate because he "is the most electable". But is that true?

Seven reasons why Romney's electability is exaggerated

John Hawkins writing for Townhall.com lists the seven reasons. (H/T Right Wing News)

Reasons 2 and 3:

> 2) **He's a proven political loser**: There's a reason Mitt Romney has been able to say that he's "not a career politician." It's because he's not very good at politics. He lost to Ted Kennedy in 1994. Although he did win the governorship of Massachusetts in 2002, he did it without cracking 50% of the vote. Worse yet, he left office as the 48th most popular governor in America and would have lost if he had run again in 2006. Then, to top that off, he failed to capture the GOP

> nomination in 2008. This time around, despite having almost every advantage over what many people consider to be a weak field of candidates, Romney is still desperately struggling. Choosing Romney as the GOP nominee after running up that sort of track record would be like promoting a first baseman hitting .225 in AAA to the majors.
>
> 3) **Running weak in the southern states**: Barack Obama won North Carolina, Virginia, and Florida in 2008 and you can be sure that he will be targeting all three of those states again. This is a problem for Romney because he would be much less likely than either Gingrich or Perry to carry any of those states. Moderate northern Republicans have consistently performed poorly in the south and Romney won't be any exception. That was certainly the case in 2008 when both McCain and Huckabee dominated Romney in primaries across the south. Mitt didn't win a single primary in a southern state and although he finished second in Florida, he wasn't even competitive in North Carolina or Virginia. Since losing any one of those states could be enough to hand the election to Obama in a close race, Mitt's weakness there is no small matter.

For my own part, I find it surprising that people who are ostensibly pro-life are willing to appoint a Republican candidate who has no pro-life record. Until he started running for the Presidency, Mitt Romney was 100% pro-abortion. That's 12 years of abortion advocacy. His record is pro-abortion. Many of the other candidates, especially Santorum and Bachmann, have a pro-life record. Newt has a 98% pro-life voting record. So why are we settling for someone who has a question mark on social issues?

Ron Paul’s isolationist foreign policy views echo Neville Chamberlain

December 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Doug Ross at Director Blue, 10 fun facts about Ron Paul.

Here’s fact #7:

> And so I asked Congressman Paul: if he were President of the United States during World War II, and as president he knew what we now know about the Holocaust, but the Third Reich presented no threat to the U.S., would he have sent American troops to Nazi Germany purely as a moral imperative to save the Jews?
>
> And the Congressman answered:
>
> *“No, I wouldn’t. I wouldn’t risk American lives to do that. If someone wants to do that on their own because they want to do that, well, that’s fine, but I wouldn’t do that.”*
>
> Paul then looked at me, and I politely thanked him for his time. He smiled at me again and nodded his head, and many of his young followers were also smiling, and nodding their heads in agreement. Clearly, I was the only one in the room who was disturbed by his response.
>
> When I first presented the story of Paul’s comments about the Holocaust to major news media outlets two years ago, they were so stunned they were afraid to publish my story, and as a result it has remained unpublished until now.
>
> I went to great lengths afterwards to learn more about the basis for Paul’s comments. I spoke to Eric Dondero, a former senior aide for Paul, in February 2010. Dondero is quoted in a *Weekly Standard* article today about Paul’s isolationist beliefs.
>
> When I called Dondero again this morning, and told him I was finally going forward with the story, he told me that Paul had made similar comments to him.
>
> “He told me numerous times it was not worth it to intervene to save the Jews in World War II,” Dondero said. “I don’t think that’s because he’s an antisemite. It’s because he’s an extreme isolationist and he’s trying to be 100% principled–he doesn’t think there’s any reason to intervene for human rights or any other reason anywhere on the planet.”
>
> Calls to Rep. Paul’s congressional office and campaign office last week and this morning were not returned.

It’s not just the Holocaust, either. It’s the wholesale abandonment of the United Kingdom to conquest by Nazi Germany. And it’s not just the United Kingdom. It’s the complete takeover of the Asia-Pacific theater, and Australia, and New Zealand, by Imperial Japan.

That's what Ron Paul would have let happen.

Historians will tell you that Hitler could have been contained if Western leaders had responded militarily when he broke the Locarno treaties by remilitarizing the Rhineland in 1936. Do you think that Ron Paul would have gone to war in 1936 to stop Hitler – when he was still relatively weak? The Polyanna isolationism of Ron Paul is *exactly* what causes world wars. People like Ron Paul ignore aggressors when they make small invasions and then in a few years we have a world war on our hands. *Ron Paul is a warmonger – his naive isolationism gets us into world wars by emboldening and coddling tyrants with a naive stick-your-head-in-the-sand foreign policy*. Ron Paul doesn't know anything about the threat of terrorism – his foreign policy is based on economics theories authored by people who died before nuclear weapons were invented. You can't trust someone who makes foreign policy using theories, but who is ignorant of the real dangers we face.

"Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it"
– George Santayana

It's not a surprise to me that Ron Paul is popular with young people who don't understand military history and the threat of terrorism. They don't know who Neville Chamberlain was, or they would recognize Ron Paul as the second coming of Neville Chamberlain.

Thomas Sowell explains what causes wars

Let's take a look at the lessons of history and find out what really causes wars.

Here's an article from Townhall.

Excerpt:

> On the international scene, trying to assuage aggressors' feelings and look at the world from their point of view has had an even more catastrophic track record. A typical sample of this kind of thinking can be found in a speech to the British Parliament by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in 1938: "It has always seemed to me that in dealing with foreign countries we do not give ourselves a chance of success unless we try to understand their mentality, which is not always the same as our own, and it really is astonishing to contemplate how the identically same facts are regarded from two different angles."
>
> Like our former ambassador from the Carter era, Chamberlain sought to "remove the causes of strife or war." He wanted "a general settlement of the grievances of the world without war." In other words, the British prime minister approached Hitler with the attitude of someone negotiating a labor contract, where each side gives a little and everything gets worked out in the end. What Chamberlain did not understand was that all his concessions simply led to new demands from Hitler — and contempt for him by Hitler.
>
> What Winston Churchill understood at the time, and Chamberlain did not, was that Hitler was driven by what Churchill called "currents of hatred so intense as to sear the souls of those who swim upon them." That was also what drove the men who drove the planes into the World Trade Center.

> Pacifists of the 20th century had a lot of blood on their hands for weakening the Western democracies in the face of rising belligerence and military might in aggressor nations like Nazi Germany and imperial Japan. In Britain during the 1930s, Labor Party members of Parliament voted repeatedly against military spending, while Hitler built up the most powerful military machine in Europe. Students at leading British universities signed pledges to refuse to fight in the event of war.
>
> All of this encouraged the Nazis and the Japanese toward war against countries that they knew had greater military potential than their own. Military potential only counts when there is the will to develop it and use it, and the fortitude to continue with a bloody war when it comes. This is what they did not believe the West had. And it was Western pacifists who led them to that belief.
>
> Then as now, pacifism was a "statement" about one's ideals that paid little attention to actual consequences. At a Labor Party rally where Britain was being urged to disarm "as an example to others," economist Roy Harrod asked one of the pacifists: "You think our example will cause Hitler and Mussolini to disarm?"
>
> The reply was: "Oh, Roy, have you lost all your idealism?" In other words, the issue was about making a "statement" — that is, posturing on the edge of a volcano, with World War II threatening to erupt at any time. When disarmament advocate George Bernard Shaw was asked what Britons should do if the Nazis crossed the channel into Britain, the playwright replied, "Welcome them as tourists."

Most people think that Thomas Sowell is a libertarian, but he isn't a full libertarian. He just reports the evidence. If the evidence is pro-war, then he's pro-war. Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher called this view "peace through strength". There is only one reason why evil people do not attack – because they think that good people have the firepower to make them pay dearly for their aggression, and – and this is very important – the will to use it. We need to be wary of people like Ron Paul who minimize patriotism and heroism, and charge proponents of military power with "imperialism".

Here's an article that explains it more.

Excerpt:

> In France, after the First World War, the teachers' unions launched a systematic purge of textbooks, in order to promote internationalism and pacifism.
>
> Books that depicted the courage and self-sacrifice of soldiers who had defended France against the German invaders were called "bellicose" books to be banished from the schools.
>
> Textbook publishers caved in to the power of the teachers' unions, rather than lose a large market for their books. History books were sharply revised to conform to internationalism and pacifism.
>
> The once epic story of the French soldiers' heroic defense against the German

> invaders at Verdun, despite the massive casualties suffered by the French, was now transformed into a story of horrible suffering by all soldiers at Verdun— French and German alike.
>
> In short, soldiers once depicted as national heroes were now depicted as victims— and just like victims in other nations' armies.
>
> […]France, where pacifism and internationalism were strongest, became a classic example of how much it can matter.
>
> During the First World War, France fought on against the German invaders for four long years, despite having more of its soldiers killed than all the American soldiers killed in all the wars in the history of the United States, put together.
>
> But during the Second World War, France collapsed after just six weeks of fighting and surrendered to Nazi Germany.
>
> At the bitter moment of defeat the head of the French teachers' union was told, "You are partially responsible for the defeat."
>
> Charles de Gaulle, Francois Mauriac, and other Frenchmen blamed a lack of national will or general moral decay, for the sudden and humiliating collapse of France in 1940.
>
> At the outset of the invasion, both German and French generals assessed French military forces as more likely to gain victory, and virtually no one expected France to collapse like a house of cards — except Adolf Hitler, who had studied French society instead of French military forces.
>
> Did patriotism matter? It mattered more than superior French tanks and planes.

Everybody wants peace. Everyone – on both sides of the issue. But it is not weakness but strength that deters wars. Strength, and the will to defeat evil.

Read Theodore Dalrymple's "Life at the Bottom" online for free

December 28, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I want to recommend that you read a book that is available online for free.

The author is a psychiatrist in a British hospital that deals with a lot of criminals and victims of crime. So he gets to see the worldview of the "underclass" up close, and to understand how the policies of the compassionate secular left are really working at the street level. The theme of the book is that the left advances policies in order to feel good about themselves, even though the policies actually hurt the poor and vulnerable far more than they help them. And the solution of the elites is more of the same.

The whole book is available ONLINE for free! From City Journal!

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Lots more essays are here, all from City Journal.

My favorite passage

The only bad thing about reading it online is that you miss one of the best quotes from the introduction. But I'll type it out for you.

> The disastrous pattern of human relationships that exists in the underclass is also becoming common higher up the social scale. With increasing frequency I am consulted by nurses, who for the most part come from and were themselves traditionally members of (at least after Florence Nightingale) the respectable lower middle class, who have illegitimate children by men who first abuse and then abandon them. This abuse and later abandonment is usually all too predictable from the man's previous history and character; but the nurses who have been treated in this way say they refrained from making a judgment about him because it is wrong to make judgments. But if they do not make a judgment about the man with whom they are going to live and by whom they are going to have a child, about what are they ever going to make a judgment?
>
> "It just didn't work out," they say, the "it" in question being the relationship that they conceive of having an existence independent of the two people who form it, and that exerts an influence on their on their lives rather like an astral projection. Life is fate.

This is something I run into myself. I think that young people today prefer moral relativists as mates, because they are afraid of being judged and rejected by people who are too serious about religion and morality. The problem is that if you choose someone who doesn't take religion and morality seriously, then you can't rely on them to behave morally and exercise spiritual leadership when raising children. And being sexually involved with someone who doesn't take morality seriously causes a lot of damage.

An excerpt

Here's one of my favorite passages from "Tough Love", in which he describes how easily he can detect whether a particular man has violent tendencies on sight, whereas female victims of domestic violence – and even the hospital nurses – *will not* recognize the same signs.

> All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.
>
> This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious

> young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.
>
> Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.
>
> This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.
>
> Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.
>
> At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how* they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

Go read the rest!

Book reviews

- The Age of Bad Ideas
- Review of Life at the Bottom

Afghan teen imprisoned by in-laws for 5 months for refusing prostitution

December 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East
From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Sahar Gul, 15, was found in the basement of her husband's house in northeastern Baghlan province late on Monday after her parents reported her disappearance to the police.

> "She was beaten, her fingernails were removed and her arm was broken," district police chief Fazel Rahman told AFP.
>
> Three women including the teenager's mother in-law had been arrested in connection with the case but her husband had fled the area, he added.
>
> The case highlights how women continue to suffer in Afghanistan despite the billions of pounds of international aid which has poured into the country during the decade-long war.

> "The 15-year-old girl was brought to hospital with severe shock," said Pul-i-Khurmeri hospital chief Dr Gul Mohammad Wardak.
>
> "She had injuries to her legs and face and the nails on her left had been removed."
>
> Sahar Gul was married to her husband seven months ago in the neighbouring province of Badakhshan, but she was brought to Baghlan to live with her husband, said Rahima Zareefi, the provincial head of women affairs.

> During this time her parents were unable to contact her, she said.
>
> […]And according to figures in an Oxfam report in October, 87 per cent of Afghan women report having experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence or forced marriage.

I wonder if any of the billions of pounds of international aid has been spent on introducing Christianity as an alternative to Islam in these countries? Or is that not an option for solving the problem of the mistreatment of women? I know that Christian taxpayers are taxed to pay for this aid money. What’s the goal here, and are all options on the table?

Is the New York Times a reliable news source or leftist agitprop?

December 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the New York Times.

Excerpt:

> In state after state, guns are being allowed in places once off-limits, like bars, college campuses and houses of worship. And gun rights advocates are seeking to expand the map still further, pushing federal legislation that would require states to honor other states' concealed weapons permits. The House approved the bill last month; the Senate is expected to take it up next year.
>
> The bedrock argument for this movement is that permit holders are law-abiding citizens who should be able to carry guns in public to protect themselves. "These are people who have proven themselves to be among the most responsible and safe members of our community," the federal legislation's author, Representative Cliff Stearns, Republican of Florida, said on the House floor.
>
> To assess that claim, The New York Times examined the permit program in North Carolina, one of a dwindling number of states where the identities of permit holders remain public. The review, encompassing the last five years, offers a rare, detailed look at how a liberalized concealed weapons law has played out in one state. And while it does not provide answers, it does raise questions.
>
> More than 2,400 permit holders were convicted of felonies or misdemeanors, excluding traffic-related crimes, over the five-year period, The Times found when it compared databases of recent criminal court cases and licensees. While the figure represents a small percentage of those with permits, more than 200 were convicted of felonies, including at least 10 who committed murder or manslaughter. All but two of the killers used a gun.

National Review explains what's wrong with this analysis.

Excerpt:

> All of these numbers are completely meaningless; in any large population, there will be some crime. The only way to see what these numbers mean is to compare concealed-carry holders to the general population. Fortunately, state-level murder data are easy to find.
>
> North Carolina has a statewide murder rate of about 5 per 100,000. Even without counting manslaughter, that's 25 murders committed per 100,000 North Carolinians every five years. There are about 230,000 valid concealed-carry permits in North Carolina, so by pure chance, you'd expect these folks to be responsible for nearly 60 murders over five years. And yet only ten of them

> committed murder or manslaughter. Instead of "rais[ing] questions," the *Times* has demonstrated yet again that permit holders are more peaceful than the general population.

And do you know what else is missing from the New York Times analysis? Any investigation into *the number of crimes prevented by defensive handgun usage by licensed concealed carry permit holders*. After all, a good journalist would want to weight the bad consequences of a policy together with the good consequences, right? That would be a fair and balanced approach that would inform the readers instead of misleading them.

Do gun control laws reduce violent crime?

Here's what happened after gun laws changed in Washington, D.C. and Chicago.

Excerpt:

> Murder and violent crime rates were supposed to soar after the Supreme Court struck down gun control laws in Chicago and Washington, D.C.
>
> Politicians predicted disaster. "More handguns in the District of Columbia will only lead to more handgun violence," Washington's Mayor Adrian Fenty warned the day the court made its decision.
>
> Chicago's Mayor Daley predicted that we would "go back to the Old West, you have a gun and I have a gun and we'll settle it in the streets…"
>
> The New York Times even editorialized this month about the Supreme Court's "unwise" decision that there is a right for people "to keep guns in the home."
>
> But Armageddon never happened. Newly released data for Chicago shows that, as in Washington, murder and gun crime rates didn't rise after the bans were eliminated — they plummeted. They have fallen much more than the national crime rate.
>
> Not surprisingly, the national media have been completely silent about this news.
>
> One can only imagine the coverage if crime rates had risen. In the first six months of this year, there were 14% fewer murders in Chicago compared to the first six months of last year – back when owning handguns was illegal. It was the largest drop in Chicago's murder rate since the handgun ban went into effect in 1982.
>
> Meanwhile, the other four most populous cities saw a total drop at the same time of only 6 percent.
>
> Similarly, in the year after the 2008 "Heller" decision, the murder rate fell two-and-a-half times faster in Washington than in the rest of the country.
>
> It also fell more than three as fast as in other cities that are close to Washington's size. And murders in Washington have continued to fall.
>
> If you compare the first six months of this year to the first six months of 2008, the same time immediately preceding the Supreme Court's late June "Heller"

> decision, murders have now fallen by thirty-four percent.
>
> Gun crimes also fell more than non-gun crimes.
>
> Robberies with guns fell by 25%, while robberies without guns have fallen by eight percent. Assaults with guns fell by 37%, while assaults without guns fell by 12%.
>
> Just as with right-to-carry laws, when law-abiding citizens have guns some criminals stop carrying theirs.

And it's not just in big cities. MSNBC explains how legal gun ownership reduces crime. Excerpt:

> Americans overall are far less likely to be killed with a firearm than they were when it was much more difficult to obtain a concealed-weapons permit, according to statistics collected by the federal Centers for Disease Control. But researchers have not been able to establish a cause-and-effect relationship.

> In the 1980s and '90s, as the concealed-carry movement gained steam, Americans were killed by others with guns at the rate of about 5.66 per 100,000 population. In this decade, the rate has fallen to just over 4.07 per 100,000, a 28 percent drop. The decline follows a fivefold increase in the number of "shall-issue" and unrestricted concealed-carry states from 1986 to 2006.The highest gun homicide rate is in Washington, D.C., which has had the nation's strictest gun-control laws for years and bans concealed carry: 20.50 deaths per 100,000 population, five times the general rate. The lowest rate, 1.12, is in Utah, which has such a liberal concealed weapons policy that most American adults can get a permit to carry a gun in Utah without even visiting the state.
>
> The decline in gun homicides also comes as U.S. firearm sales are skyrocketing, according to federal background checks that are required for most gun sales. After holding stable at 8.5 to 9 million checks from 1999 to 2005, the FBI reported a surge to 10 million in 2006, 11 million in 2007, nearly 13 million in 2008 and more than 14 million last year, a 55 percent increase in just four years.

If you ever need to debate this, I recommend buying these academic studies published by the University of Chicago Press and by Harvard University Press. The former shows how crime rates dropped in the USA when Americans rescinded gun control laws, and the latter shows how crime rates rose in the UK when the British strengthened their gun control laws. Sometimes is good to have the data handy.

Want both sides? Then watch a debate on gun control

This debate is in 13 parts, featuring the two of the *best* proponents of legal firearm ownership – John Lott and Gary Kleck. The real sparks fly during the Q&A, so don't miss that. (If you can't watch the debate, then you can read this post and this post instead).

Here's part 1, which contains the introduction.

Here are the remaining speeches:

- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John R. Lott (2 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: R Gil Kerlikowske (3 **of 13**)
- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Stephen Halbrooke (4 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John J Donohue III (5 **of 13**)
- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Gary Kleck (6 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Paul Helmke (7 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 1 (8 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 2 (9 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 3: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 3 (10 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 4: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 4 (11 **of 13**)
- Conclusions Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 1 (12 **of 13**)
- Conclusions Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 2 (12 **of 13**)

This is everything you need to know about whether legal ownership of firearms reduce crime. And you get both sides – unlike in the New York Times.

Here is my previous article exposing the ignorance of NYT executive editor Bill Keller.

100 babies aborted by moms that had taxpayer-funded IVF

December 29, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> More than 100 unborn babies were aborted last year by women who were pregnant with twins, triplets or quintuplets but wanted to give birth to fewer children.
>
> With a rise in multiple pregnancies widely attributed to IVF treatment, increasing numbers of women are choosing to terminate one or more foetuses while continuing with their pregnancy to deliver at least one of their babies.
>
> Experts suggest that many of the women opt for abortions because of health concerns, as multiple pregnancies are considered more dangerous to mother and baby.
>
> But some women admitted they were considering the procedure because they did not feel able to cope with more than one baby at a time.
>
> The figures are likely to renew the controversial debate over whether IVF clinics should continue implanting several embryos in order to improve couples' chances of having a baby.
>
> The Department of Health statistics reveal 59 women aborted at least one foetus while continuing to give birth to another baby in 2006 – the number had risen to 85 by 2010.
>
> During 2010, 101 foetuses were selectively terminated because some mothers aborted one or more unborn babies.
>
> Of the 85 women undergoing selective reductions last year, 51 were reducing a pregnancy from twins to a single baby, up from 30 in 2006.
>
> There were also 20 procedures to reduce triplets to twins and nine terminations to take a pregnancy from triplets to a single child.
>
> Separate figures from the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) show that almost one third of selective abortions carried out in 2009 involved pregnancies that were a result of fertility treatment.
>
> […]Medical experts said there was a clear link between the rise in the number of selective abortions and the increasing use of IVF.

Under the NHS, up to three rounds of IVF can be obtained at taxpayer expense.

John Bolton: Ron Paul’s foreign policy is worse than Barack Obama

December 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Partial transcript:

> That’s why I think the debate on the Republican side is so important. And why when I see, I have to be candid, a candidate like Ron Paul whose foreign policy is if anything is worse than the Obama administration apparently leading in Iowa according to some polls, it just gives me great concern. …
>
> But I guess I’d say to people who look at Ron Paul and have some measure of support for his domestic policies on the libertarian side, I’d have to say look, I consider myself pretty libertarian but you cannot live in fantasy land. The rest of the world is not going to leave us alone and we need a Commander-in-Chief who understands that. A Ron Paul president would simply not address the challenges we face.
>
> So if you’re thinking about Ron Paul because of his domestic issues, think again and look at virtually any of the other candidates and consider how they would be as Commander-in-Chief. That’s the president’s first duty, defending the country.

John Bolton is probably the person I trust most on foreign policy.

In other news, Ron Paul endorses the Occupy Movement. Some capitalist.

Hypocrisy on the left: do the actions of liberals match their words?

December 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Funny video from American Power Blog.

That's one case, but are leftists always hypocrites?

Do As I Say Not As I Do

I had a long drive on the way to my parents' house for Christmas and I decided to listen to the audio book version of Peter Schweizer's 2004 book "Do As I Say Not As I Do". In that book, he profiles a number of leftist public figures, and he discovers that leftists don't practice what they preach, because even they know that leftist ideas *don't actually work*. I really recommend the book, so let's take a closer look at it and you'll see why you should read it, too.

Here's a 32 minute 2011 lecture about the book:

And here's an interview with the author from FrontPage magazine.

Excerpt:

> **FrontPage:** Give us some of the best examples of the gulf between some liberals' social criticisms and the ingredients of their private lives. Give us some insights, for instance, into the likes of Noam Chomsky, Michael Moore, Cornel West, Hillary Clinton, Ted Kennedy and Barbra Streisand.
>
> **Schweizer:** Looking for liberal hypocrisy is, as they say in the military, a target-rich environment. Noam Chomsky, for example, has attacked wealthy Americans who set up trusts to avoid paying inheritance taxes. But this self-professed "radical socialist" has a tax attorney and did the very same thing. (When I asked him about this hypocrisy he said it was okay because he and has family have been working on behalf of suffering people all these years.)

> Michael Moore's hypocrisy is pathological. He has said numerous times that he doesn't own a single share of stock and that capitalism is not acceptable "on any level." And yet, I found that, according to tax returns filed with the IRS, he has owned shares in Halliburton, numerous oil companies, defense contractors and other multinationals through a tax shelter. When it comes he race he's also wildly hypocritical. He says that Americans who happen to live in largely white neighbhorhoods do so because they are "racists." But he lives in Central Lake, Michigan, which according to the U.S. Census has more than 2,500 residents and not a single black person in the entire town.
>
> Cornel West has numerous times condemned middle class blacks that abandon the "chocolate cities" for the "vanilla suburbs" but guess what, his flavour of choice is vanilla, too.

> Ted Kennedy likes to pose as the Robin Hood of the Senate, forcing wealthy Americans to pay their taxes to help the poor. But I discovered that Kennedys record of actually paying taxes is horrible. Tax the inheritance tax. He says that Americans should pay 49% to the IRS when they die in the name of "social justice." But according to public records, the Kennedys have almost completely avoided contributing to "social justice" by placing their assets in trusts that are located overseas. The Kennedys, over the past thirty years, have paid less than 1% in inheritance taxes on more than $300 million. Ted Kennedy, like Hillary Clinton and George Soros, loves higher taxes. On other people.

And:

> **FrontPage:** Why do you think people are drawn to leftist ideals and what kind of people are they? Self-contempt appears to be a common ingredient, no?
>
> **Schweizer:** Yes, self-contempt is a big part of it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great German pastor who stood up to Hitler, wrote a book about "cheap grace." Liberals are guilty of cheap grace in the political sense. They feel guilty and their form of penance is embracing the destructive ideas of the progressive faith. But it's cheap grace because as I show it the book, they don't actually change the way they live. I think that the religious comparison makes sense because in many respects the modern day left represents a religious movement. They are motivated by a sense of sin, guilt, and the need for salvation and absolution in the political sense. Socialism offers salvation to them. Of course, they don't actually plan to live like socialists.

I would really recommend taking a look at this book. It's similar to Paul Johnson's "Intellectuals" if you've ever read that, but it's better.

Evangelicals in Iowa rally to Rick Santorum, pushing him into 3rd place

December 30, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The leftist Washington Post reports.

Excerpt:

> The CNN/Opinion Research poll released this week showed Santorum moving into third place in Iowa at 16 percent.
>
> […]The poll showed Santorum taking 22 percent of born-again Christians, moving him into first place among that group. And if he can make other born-agains believe that he's the one viable alternative to Romney and Paul, then maybe he can create enough of a rallying effect to unite evangelicals behind his campaign.
>
> "That bandwagon effect at the end can be very powerful in moving numbers dramatically in the last five days," said former Iowa Republican Party chairman Steve Grubbs, pointing to Huckabee's win.
>
> There's also the fact that many voters are receptive to Santorum; other polling has suggested he is a popular second-choice pick.
>
> That suggests voters want to vote for Santorum, but perhaps didn't see him as someone who could actually win. But if they now see him as a viable option, maybe they move into his camp.
>
> "So it means he still has upside — beyond evangelicals but certainly including them," said Nick Ryan, the founder of the pro-Santorum super PAC that is current running a quarter-million dollars worth of ads in the Hawkeye State.
>
> The problem, though, is that Santorum is running against two other lower-tier candidates — Texas Gov. Rick Perry and Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann — who have significant appeal to evangelicals as well. And they aren't so far behind Santorum (they take 11 percent and 9 percent, respectively) that they wouldn't also appear to be viable options.
>
> […]For either Perry or Bachmann, finishing behind Santorum in Iowa likely means the end of their campaign, and that means that Santorum is going to have to work at stealing their supporters.
>
> But at least for now, it appears that he has a genuine opportunity to steal votes from a large pool of voters that doesn't like either of the two frontrunners.
>
> And given the topsy-turvy nature of the race in Iowa, it isn't out of the question to think he he could pick up enough votes to win.

Let's confirm Santorum's surging poll numbers with this Fox News article.

Excerpt:

> After a poll Wednesday showed Santorum suddenly moving into third position in Iowa, a Rasmussen Reports survey released Thursday showed the same line-up. The poll showed Mitt Romney and Ron Paul in a dead heat, with 23 and 22 percent respectively, and Santorum in third with 16 percent.
>
> In a troubling sign for Newt Gingrich, the same survey showed the ex-House speaker tied for fourth with Rick Perry.
>
> The polls nationally and in Iowa have been notoriously fickle this season, and the shape of the race just five days out is no guarantee of any particular outcome on caucus day. Also, national polling continues to show Santorum in the low single digits, leading only former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman.

Just to be clear, if you are a pure social conservative, there here is the candidate ranking for you:

1. Rick Santorum (Persuasive, Good positions, legislative record, voting record)
2. Michele Bachmann (Good positions, legislative record, voting record)
3. Newt Gingrich (Good positions, voting record)
4. Rick Perry (Good positions, legislative record)
5. John Huntsman (Pro-life, pro-gay-rights)
6. Ron Paul (effectively pro-abortion, effectively pro-gay-marriage)
7. Mitt Romney (Record is pro-abortion, pro-gay-rights)

Santorum gets the edge over Bachmann because he is more persuasive on abortion and marriage – he actually tries to convince people who don’t agree with him. They both take the right positions and have good records of activism, but Santorum is a social conservative apologist. Social conservatives should not vote for anyone other than Bachmann or Santorum. Perry would be the lowest I would go when everything is factored in.

Bad news for believers in naturalistic explanations of the Cambrian explosion

December 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Before we see the new discovery, let's review what the Cambrian explosion is all about.

Video 1:

Video 2:

Casey Luskin explains the new discovery at Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> A recent article in *Science* begins by observing that the lack of evolutionary ancestors for the animal phyla that appear abruptly in the Cambrian explosion has been troubling to many evolutionary scientists:
>
> > Ever since Darwin there has been a disturbing void, both paleontological and psychological, at the base of the Phanerozoic eon. If his theory of gradualistic evolution be true, then surely the pre-Phanerozoic oceans must have swarmed with living animals — despite their conspicuous absence from the early fossil record.
> >
> > (N. J. Butterfield, "Terminal Developments in Ediacaran Embryology," *Science*, Vol. 334:1655-1656 (December 23, 2011).)
>
> The articles goes on to explain that in 1998, tiny fossil animal embryos were reported that offered "palpable relief" to those evolutionary scientists worried about the lack of Precambrian ancestors.
>
> However, new analyses of these microfossils now strongly suggest that they were not multicellular animals, and thus could not be Precambrian multicellular metazoa that have long been the holy grail for evolutionary paleontologists. Rather, they likely represent single-celled amoeba-like organisms.
>
> […]A Science Daily article on the study explains that many Darwinian scientists will be dismayed by the results of this study:
>
> > Professor Philip Donoghue said: "We were very surprised by our results — we've been convinced for so long that these fossils represented the embryos of the earliest animals — much of what has been written about the fossils for the last ten years is flat wrong. Our colleagues are not going to like the result."
>
> How did the investigators determine the nature of these ancient organisms? The fossils were exceptionally well preserved, such that, as the lead author on the paper stated, "the fossils are so amazing that even their nuclei have been preserved." These allowed the authors to determine that these were in fact

> eukaryotic organisms, but not multicellular animals.

Casey goes on to answer the response by naturalists that “the fossil record is incomplete”.

I think it’s important, when deciding whether naturalistic evolution happened, to be aware of these problem areas. So often when discussing Darwinian evolution, people like journalists and philosophers and economists, etc. will just accept the theory because they trust in what experts tell them. There can be a lot of pressure in the university to not be seen as a dumb person, so that people will just go along with whatever their professor tells them to believe. And, that’s not necessarily a bad policy when time is short. However, that is taking evolution on blind faith. It’s a good thing, as we get older, to go back and revisit these things to see if they are really true.

For example, a really educated Darwinian should be able to finish a sentence like this: “People who doubt fully naturalistic evolution do so because of the following pieces of scientific evidence…” If you meet someone who cannot finish this statement, but who still espouses Darwinian evolution, then you know that you are dealing with someone who has jumped to the answer without really working through the problem by themselves. It can be very tempting, especially for artsy types, to just try to jump to the answer that all the smart people believe without really working through the problem. But that’s not a good way to decide what’s true. Everyone has to work through these problems themselves, and listening to the best people on both sides is the way to do that. People who question evolution nowadays don’t question that the universe is billions of years old or that scientific methods have to be used to answer scientific questions. By all means, let’s decide how we got here by appealing to science.

If you would like to see a nice hour-long video on the Cambrian explosion, then click here.

By the way, if you missed my previous post on the new discovery of oxygen in the early Earth’s environment, and the challenge it represents to naturalistic scenarios for the origin of life, then do check that out.

Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?

December 31, 2011 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's start with an article from Stand to Reason which explains what pro-life politicians *should* sound like. (H/T Drew)

Excerpt:

> Why are major pro-life presidential candidates so bad at answering for the pro-life position?
>
> During the 1992 race, vice-presidential candidates Gore and Quayle went face to face. Quayle fumbled badly when Gore asked him directly, "Would you take away a woman's right to choose abortion?" Here was a great chance to bring some moral clarity to the discussion. Instead, he babbled.
>
> Mr. Quayle might have simply answered: I think the question is phrased wrong. Rather, "Why do you think it's OK to kill an innocent human being just because it's in the way and can't defend itself?" If Al Gore objected to that characterization, it would be very fair to say, "Which one of my terms is inaccurate? Kill? Innocent? Human being? Defenseless? In the way? (Maybe you'd prefer "troublesome," "expensive," or just simply "crippled"?)
>
> The most recent squandered opportunity came last night. (Alan Keyes went on a hunger strike. Maybe if that doesn't work he'll just hold his breath until he turns blue. That'll really show 'em.)
>
> "If a woman was brutally raped and would be emotionally traumatized by carrying to term, would you allow her to have an abortion, or would you force her to have the child?"
>
> This is a perfect forum for clarifying this issue, an ideal opportunity for a leader to offer clearheaded advocacy for the unborn, a terrific time to clear the rhetoric from the air and get to the real issue.
>
> The simple answer is: Why complicate the crime of rape with the crime of taking an innocent child's life? Or, to put it another way: Why should the child pay with its life because its father is a rapist? (This is even a better response because it asks a question.)

Greg was writing this in 1996, but we do actually have several pro-life candidates this time, and one of them, Rick Santorum, is actually pretty articulate on social issues.

Excerpt:

> As a member of the U.S. Senate from 1995 until 2007, Santorum was the prime author and champion of key pro-life bills, including the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, a ban on partial-birth abortion, and the Unborn Victims of Violence

> Act, which makes it a separate crime if an unborn child is harmed or killed during the commission of a stipulated list of federal crimes.
>
> Santorum not only has signed the Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life Presidential Pledge, but he has helped raise money for that organization, too.
>
> Santorum believes that abortion is never justified, including in cases of rape or incest. During a Republican presidential debate last summer in Ames, Iowa, when panelist Byron York noted that many Americans favor abortion under certain circumstances, Santorum didn't flinch or back off from his uncompromising position.
>
> "You know, the Supreme Court of the United States, in a recent case, said that a man who committed rape could not be killed, would not be subjected to the death penalty; yet the child conceived as a result of that rape could be," he said. "That sounds to me like a country that doesn't have its morals correct. That child did nothing wrong. That child is an innocent victim."

Rick Santorum actually tries to convince you if you don't see things his way on social issues. I think there are two candidates who would be pro-life activists if they were elected – Michele Bachmann and Rick Santorum. But I have more confidence in Santorum's ability to persuade people who are not already pro-life to be sympathetic to the pro-life view. He can build consensus, because he is a pro-life apologist, rather than just being pro-life. Rick Santorum is doing exactly what Greg Koukl said that real pro-lifers do.

Now let's take take a look at Mitt Romney's record on abortion.

Excerpt:

> Two months after his pro-life conversion, Mitt Romney appointed Matthew Nestor to the bench in Massachusetts. Romney seeming bowed to political pressure making Nestor a judge even after Nestor, according to the Boston Globe as far back as 1994, had campaigned for political office championing his pro-abortion views.
>
> One year after his pro-life conversion, in July of 2005, Mitt Romney vetoed legislation that would expand the use of the morning after pill arguing that it would contribute to abortions. But just three months later Mitt Romney slid back and signed a bill that expanded state subsidized access to the morning after pill.
>
> Writing in the Boston Globe on October 15, 2005, Stephanie Ebbert noted:
>
> Governor Mitt Romney has signed a bill that could expand the number of people who get family-planning services, including the morning-after pill, confusing some abortion and contraception foes who had been heartened by his earlier veto of an emergency contraception bill. … The services include the distribution of condoms, abortion counseling, and the distribution of emergency contraception, or morning after pills, by prescription …
>
> But that's nothing. Two whole years after the pro-life view had settled into Mitt

> Romney's conscience and a year after Mitt Romney had vetoed legislation expanding access to the morning after pill, he expanded access to abortion and gave Planned Parenthood new rights under state law. Yes, *that* Planned Parenthood.
>
> [Romneycare], in addition to providing healthcare coverage for the uninsured and forcing everyone to have insurance, expanded abortion services in the State of Massachusetts. It also required that one member of the MassHealth Payment Policy Board be appointed by Planned Parenthood of Massachusetts.
>
> From Chapter 58 of the Acts of 2006:

> SECTION 3. Chapter 6A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 16I the following 6 sections: . . . Section 16M. (a) There shall be a MassHealth payment policy advisory board. The board shall consist of the secretary of health and human services or his designee, who shall serve as chair, the commissioner of health care financing and policy, and 12 other members: … 1 member appointed by Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts … (Massachusetts General Court Website, http://www.mass.gov, Accessed 2/5/07)

That's an example of Mitt Romney's record on abortion. Those are the facts on Rick Santorum and Mitt Romney when it comes to abortion.

Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum on abortion – in their own words

We've already seen that Santorum has the pro-life record and Romney has the pro-abortion record. So now let's compare Mitt Romney in his own words with Rick Santorum in his own words.

Mitt Romney:

Rick Santorum:

Just to be clear, if you are a pure social conservative, there here is the candidate ranking for you:

1. Rick Santorum
2. Michele Bachmann
3. Newt Gingrich
4. Rick Perry
5. Ron Paul
6. John Huntsman
7. Mitt Romney

Social conservatives need to vote for a candidate that has a pro-life record, not just pro-life rhetoric and a charming smile.

Happy New Year, and a big thank you to all Wintery Knight readers!

January 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wintery Knight blog

It's the end of another year of blogging here at Wintery Knight.

I wanted to thank each and every one of our readers, especially those who leave comments, and those who send us tips.

We are ending the year with a final page visit count of 1,084,779.

Please click here for the full summary of our numbers since January of 2009.

We've got Blog Awards!

I also wanted to report to you that Wintery Knight was recently named to the Top 40 Conservative Blogs for the fourth quarter of 2011 by John Hawkins of Right Wing News. And we were also received one of the Fabulous 50 Blog Awards from Doug Ross. We tied for "Best Political Blogging". I also want to thank Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 for frequently linking to my posts on Christian apologetics and theology in his Weekly Apologetics Bonus Links.

Help Us Out

I wanted to ask you to please send me news tips for any stories that you find that are interesting and relevant to the blog, particularly those of you in the early Republican primary states. Also, if you see any stories related to Christian topics, especially apologetics, please send them to me.

To support the blog financially, please click on one of the book images in the center column when you are zoomed in on a specific post, and then buy anything (not just the

book you clicked) from Amazon.com. We receive a portion of all sales that are made after you click on one of the book images and go through to Amazon.com.

Also, if you are not already my friend on Facebook, then please friend me. Facebook is the place where you can get to know me more as a person. You can also follow me on Twitter. If you know someone else who might like our blog, won't you please consider telling them about us?

That's all for now! Happy New Year!

Rick Santorum surges past 20% support level in latest Iowa poll

January 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Real Clear Politics:

> Mitt Romney leads the Republican field in the Des Moines Register's final pre-Iowa caucuses poll released Saturday night.
>
> The Register's highly anticipated survey, which was accurate in predicting both the Democratic and Republican caucus winners in 2008, shows Romney holding the support of 24 percent of respondents. Ron Paul is in second place at 22 percent, while Rick Santorum has ascended into third with 15 percent.
>
> **However, Santorum appears to have all of the late momentum on his side, having surged significantly in the final two days of the four-day polling period. If considered separately, he is at 21 percent in that period, while Romney remained atop the pack at 24 percent during the second half of the poll's sample.**
>
> A whopping 41 percent of likely Republican caucus-goers said they are open to changing their minds.
>
> […]Perhaps the last significant wild card before Tuesday is the potential endorsement of Iowa Rep. Steve King, who told RealClearPolitics in an interview just hours before the Register's poll was released that there was about a 50/50 chance he would get behind a candidate at the last minute.
>
> "With big decisions, at some point your intellect is overcome by your instincts — at least mine is," King said. "If I make a bold decision in the next few days, it will be one of conviction, and I will be eager to advocate for that position and defend it against all critics, if I happen to have any, and I'm sure I will."
>
> The endorsement of King, perhaps Iowa's most influential conservative voice, has for months been heavily sought by the Republican candidates.
>
> Until recently, the five-term congressman has hinted that he was unlikely to back anyone publicly, but he suggested to RCP on Saturday that he may change his mind given the recent polling gains by Ron Paul, whose foreign policy King said is "so alarming to me."
>
> Just before the Register poll was released, King gave his sense of where the Iowa horse race stands.
>
> "If I had to pick them, I'd say this: Romney, Santorum, Paul, in that order — then I think likely Gingrich," he said. "I do think Romney's strong enough to win here in Iowa, and I do think Paul's support is drifting away from him — people are coming to grips with what that would really mean. And the third component of this is the ascendancy of Rick Santorum. Is his ascendancy a sharp enough incline to catch

> up with Ron Paul and Mitt Romney?”
>
> King said that the final poll conducted by Iowa’s largest newspaper “would be a factor” in his decision, since he wanted to get behind someone who had discernible momentum.
>
> In 2008, King endorsed Fred Thompson, whose campaign quickly fizzled after he finished third in the Hawkeye State.

I was for Fred Thompson in 2008. If I were Steve King, I would be endorsing Rick Santorum now. So, I am predicting an endorsement of Rick Santorum by Steve King today, and a second-place finish for Rick Santorum on Tuesday in the Iowa caucuses. Santorum is the most conservative of the top 3 candidates. Gingrich is also a conservative, but he is not in the top 3 in Iowa.

Could Obama have done better? He could learn from Canada's success

January 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Here's an editorial from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Away from the low growth and high regulation of an America under Washington's thumb, our northern neighbor is economically strong. As 2011 ends, Canada has announced yet another tax cut — and will soar even more.
>
> The Obama administration and its economic czars have flailed about for years, baffled about how to get the U.S. economy growing.
>
> In reality, the president need look no further than our neighbor, Canada, whose solid growth is the product of tax cuts, fiscal discipline, free trade, and energy development. That's made Canada a roaring puma nation, while its supposedly more powerful southern neighbor stands on the outside looking in.
>
> On Thursday, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that he will slash corporate taxes again on Jan. 1 in the final stage of his Economic Action Plan, dropping the federal business tax burden to just 15%.
>
> Along with fresh tax cuts in provinces such as Alberta, total taxes for businesses in Canada will drop to 25%, one of the lowest in the G7, and below the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development average.
>
> "Creating jobs and growth is our top priority," said Minister Jim Flaherty. "Through our government low-tax plan … we are continuing to send the message that Canada is open for business and the best place to invest."

> It's not just that Canada's conservative government favors makers over takers. Harper's also wildly popular for shrinking government. "The Harper government has pursued a strategic objective to disembed the federal state from the lives of citizens," wrote University of Calgary Professor Barry Cooper, in the Calgary Herald.
>
> Harper also has made signing free trade treaties his priority. Canada now has 11 free trade pacts in force, and 14 under active negotiation — including pacts with the European Union and India, among others.
>
> "We believe in free trade in Canada, we're a free-trading nation. That's the source of our strength, our quality of life, our economic strength," Flaherty said last month.
>
> Lastly, Canada has pursued its competitive advantage — oil. And it did so not through top-down "industrial policy," but by getting government out of the way.
>
> Harper has enacted market-friendly regulations to accomplish big things like the Keystone Pipeline — and urged President Obama to move forward on it or else Canada would sell its oil to China.
>
> These policies have been well-known since the Reagan era. But in a country that's been institutionally socialist since the 1950s, Harper's moves represent a dramatic affirmation for free market economics.
>
> For Canada, they've had big benefits.
>
> Canada's incomes are rising, its unemployment is two percentage points below the U.S. rate, its currency is strengthening and it boasts Triple-A or equivalent sovereign ratings across the board from the five top international ratings agencies, lowering its cost of credit.
>
> Is it too much to ask Washington to start paying attention to the Canadian success story?
>
> These sound principles work every time they are tried, and they have led to a transformation in Canada.

Although this article doesn't mention it, Stephen Harper is also the most solid statesman on foreign policy issues as well.

And here's a view from up north from Canadian journalist Brian Lilley.

Excerpt:

> Prime Minister Stephen Harper has put out his own list of accomplishments for the year that just ended but here are a few of the key conservative minded actions that spring to mind for me.
>
> - Ending political welfare. The per-vote subsidy that made political parties lazy and unresponsive to the voters of this country and insulated them from angering their core supporters will be gone by 2015-2016. Legislation

> ending the subsidy has already passed but the parties are slowly being weaned off the money and will get smaller amounts each year until the subsidy is gone.
> - They saw the light of common sense and released the names of those on their wanted list of suspected foreign war criminals. These were people that officials admitted should not be in the country, had been ordered out but that were still in Canada. At first officials would only admit there was a list of suspected war criminals but not say who they were. After much pressure, common sense won the day.
> - Ending the insane rules that would see farmers from certain provinces jailed for daring to sell their wheat to the customer of their choice. The Canadian Wheat Board still exists for those that want to use its centralized system. For those that want freedom, they now have that choice.
> - While much attention has been paid to Bill C-10, the omnibus crime bill, the government has passed C-2 (the mega-trials bill), this bill will make it easier to conduct the mega-trials now associated with organized crime without infringing on the right to a fair trial.
> - While the bill to end the gun registry has not been passed yet, it has been introduced and will pass early this year.
> - Immigration. On this file the Conservatives continue to push for ever higher numbers of newcomers while keeping those skeptical of high immigration onside by cracking down on fraud, cleaning up the system and putting Canada first.
>
> Another thought for those, often myself included, that like to say this government is not conservative enough.

Lilley also notes that electing Harper presented a national day care program (which punishes families with stay-at-home), increasing unemployment benefits (which encourages people not to work), etc.

Michael Murray explains how to talk about religion in the public square

January 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I want to discuss a research paper by evangelical Christian philosopher Michael J. Murray. The title of the paper is "Who's Afraid of Religion?"

Murray begins with a distinction, as philosophers love to do:

> …we would be perfectly happy to have a discussion of claims like…"Mahayana Buddhism emerged in the first century BCE with the appearance of the Mahayana sutras." … It is OK to speak of religion… as a historical phenomenon or a socio-cultural influence. It is something altogether different to discuss religious commitments that one owns. That is the sort of religion that troubles us.

People who aren't religious feel discomfort about hearing about the religious beliefs of others, because those beliefs influence public policy, but (they think) those beliefs are based non-rational factors, such as place of birth, parental beliefs, peer groups, emotions, prejudices, superstitions, etc. They are uncomfortable living in a government that was voted in by people whose views are based on irrational religious beliefs.

Murray has some illustrations of this "theo-phobia" here:

> …think about the last time you heard a devoutly religious person argue, on explicitly religious grounds, that gay marriage should be banned, or that intelligent design should be taught in the public school biology curriculum, or that abortion is murder and thus should be outlawed.

He thinks that arguing for views on pureliy religious grounds makes people uncomfortable.

And I agree with that. I feel uncomfortable when people argue for positions from faith-based premises, especially if I don't believe in their religion. But do discussions of religious beliefs necessarily have to be about faith-based personal preferences? Or is there another way to discuss religion that doesn't make non-religious people squirm with discomfort?

In the remainder of the paper, Murray explores five reasons why theo-phobia exists in academic settings:

1. Religion supports oppression, violence, and tyranny and is thus best ignored, excluded or perhaps even actively opposed.
2. Religion is a personal or subjective matter and as a result can't be subjected to canonical standards of rational scrutiny. It thus has no place in the academy.
3. Religion can't have a role in scholarly inquiry since it at best plays a balkanizing role in the scholarly world.

4. If religion is allowed to have a role in the academy it will quickly intrude into domains where it does not belong.
5. Reason #5 is kept secret until the end of the paper.

Regarding point 1, Murray argues that religious excesses can be controlled by falsifying the religion using reason and evidence, because *religions make testable claims.* So, if academics are afraid of the excesses of a dangerous religion, they should *falsify it by arguing that its claims are false.* There is no reason to be afraid of expressions of religious belief when you are free to argue against the testable truth claims of that religion.

I repeat: different religions make different claims about the external world. Either the universe had a beginning (Christianity) or it didn't (Mormonism). Either Jesus died on the cross (Christianity) or he didn't (Islam). If academics are worried about the effects of some religion, they *can* argue against it! If a religious person is *not* willing to defend the testable truth claims, then they are discredited anyway by refusing to engage.

For the remaining 4 points, especially the last one, *I recommend you read the whole article*. Give it to your friends, religious and non-religious, who believe that faith is fundamentally different from other academic disciplines. Some truth claims of different religions *can be tested*. And Christians especially should help others to feel comfortable talking to them by sticking to *testable truth claims and publicly accessible evidence.*

I'll give you a hint about reason #5, from atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel of New York University. Nagel is quoted as follows:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

So we learn from Murray that religions stand or fall based on logical consistency and empirical validation against the external world, *just like any other academic discipline*. So long as you stick to discussing the public, testable claims of religions, there is no reason to be uncomfortable about discussing religions. Don't discuss the parts of a religion that can't be tested, only discuss the parts that can be tested.

(Note: Nagel isn't all bad, he defends intelligent design as science in a research paper summarized here).

If you would like to see how you can discuss religion in a public forum, check out this debate between a Christian philosopher, William Lane Craig, and an atheist Christopher Hitchens:

It can be done. Theists just have to learn to stick to discussing things that can be tested and proved using public knowledge.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Rick Santorum for President of the United States

January 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am endorsing Rick Santorum for President.

Here's the break-down on the other two leaders in the Republican primary, Romney and Paul:

Mitt Romney: When Mitt Romney was running for office in Massachusetts, he tried to assure Mass voters that he was solidly pro-abortion and pro-gay rights. And when elected, that's how he governmed. The only thing that he has ever done to appeal to social conservatives is smile and look handsome, starting in 2006 – when he was out of office. I've written before about Romney's pro-abortion record and Romney's pro-gay-marriage record. He is a social liberal. The most socially liberal candidate in the primary.

Here is an excerpt from an assessment of Mitt Romney's economic record from Club for Growth:

> Because of his long tenure in public life, especially his presidential run in 2008, Mitt Romney is considered a well-vetted candidate by now. Perhaps to his consternation, he has developed an unshakeable reputation as a flip-flopper. He has changed his position on several economic issues, including taxes, education, political free speech, and climate change. And yet the one issue that he doesn't flip on – RomneyCare – is the one that is causing him the most problems with conservative voters. Nevertheless, he labels himself as a pro-growth fiscal conservative, and we have no doubt that Romney would move the country in a pro-growth direction. He would promote the unwinding of Obama's bad economic policies, but we also think that Romney is somewhat of a technocrat. After a career in business, quickly finding a "solution" seems to be his goal, even if it means more government intrusion as a means to an end. To this day, Romney supports big government solutions to health care and opposes pro-growth tax code reform – positions that are simply opposite to those supported by true economic conservatives. How much Romney's philosophy of governance will affect his policy goals if elected, we leave for the voters to decide.

There is no reason for us to counter Obama with Obama-lite.

Ron Paul: Ron Paul is the absolute worst candidate on foreign policy and national security, and bad on social policy, too. Ron Paul opposes a constitutional amendment defining marriage, because he doesn't think that the federal government should define traditional marriage as being between one man and one woman. He has a moderately pro-life voting record. NRLC says that he votes pro-life only 75% of the time.

Excerpt from the Club for Growth report on Ron Paul's fiscal policy:

> When it comes to limited government, there are few champions as steadfast and principled as Representative Ron Paul. In the House of Representatives, he plays

> a very useful role constantly challenging the status quo and reminding his colleagues, despite their frequent indifference, that our Constitution was meant to limit the power of government. On taxes, regulation, and political free speech his record is outstanding. While his recent pork votes are troubling, the vast majority of his anti-spending votes reflect a longstanding desire to cut government down to size.
>
> But Ron Paul is a purist, too often at the cost of real accomplishments on free trade, school choice, entitlement reform, and tort reform. It is perfectly legitimate, and in fact vital, that think tanks, free-market groups, and individual members of Congress develop and propose idealized solutions. But presidents have the responsibility of making progress, and often, Ron Paul opposes progress because, in his mind, the progress is not perfect. In these cases, although for very different reasons, Ron Paul is practically often aligned with the most left-wing Democrats, voting against important, albeit imperfect, pro-growth legislation.

Ron Paul has not been able to move legislation to implement his pro-growth vision. His fiscal positions are excellent, but he has *no record whatsoever* of being able to build enough consensus.

Let's meet Rick Santorum

Here's an article that explains the pros and cons of Rick Santorum as candidate. I really recommend this article. It is from a Catholic web site, so there is Catholic stuff in it, but it mentions all the weaknesses and strengths that I'm familiar with – it's a balanced article.

Excerpt:

> As a member of the U.S. Senate from 1995 until 2007, Santorum was the prime author and champion of key pro-life bills, including the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, a ban on partial-birth abortion, and the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, which makes it a separate crime if an unborn child is harmed or killed during the commission of a stipulated list of federal crimes.
>
> Santorum not only has signed the Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life Presidential Pledge, but he has helped raise money for that organization, too.
>
> Santorum believes that abortion is never justified, including in cases of rape or incest.
>
> […]Santorum has been similarly staunch in taking a stand against same-sex "marriage," which has earned him the enmity of homosexual-activist groups.
>
> […]"Rick Santorum has been a hero of the movement in every sense on marriage, life and religious liberty. No one has been braver or taken more hits for his courage than Rick," said Maggie Gallagher, co-founder of the National Organization for Marriage.
>
> For Santorum, the issues of marriage and abortion aren't just social issues —

> they spill over into his economic philosophy.
>
> "You cannot have limited government if you have broken families, because someone has to pick up the pieces; and the ones who pick up the pieces are the taxpayers," Santorum has said.
>
> While some argue that an emphasis on social issues is detrimental to a politician's chances of being elected, Santorum on Dec. 20 got two endorsements from family-issues leaders that some say could provide the needed boost in the Jan. 3 Iowa caucuses to make Santorum a first-tier candidate.
>
> Santorum was endorsed by Bob Vander Plaats, a leading Christian conservative in Iowa, and Chuck Hurley, another family-issues stalwart. Both are affiliated with The Family Leader, which Vander Plaats founded. Hurley is president of the affiliated Iowa Family Policy Center.
>
> "We care about any issue affecting the family, from the sanctity of human life to preserving a biblical view of marriage, and even issues such as gambling and economic issues," said Julie Summa, spokeswoman for The Family Leader.
>
> Summa said that the board of The Family Leader unanimously supported Santorum but decided that only the two leaders, not the organization, would endorse him because some of their conservative Christian constituency supports other candidates.
>
> "When you listen to Senator Santorum speak," Summa added, "he ties everything back to the family, including economics. Our economy is better when we have strong families."

And here is the Club for Growth report on Santorum's fiscal policy, which is his weakest link.

Excerpt:

> On the whole, Rick Santorum's record on economic issues in the U.S. Senate was above average. More precisely, it was quite strong in some areas and quite weak in others. He has a strong record on taxes, and his leadership on welfare reform and Social Security was exemplary. But his record also contains several very weak spots, including his active support of wasteful spending earmarks, his penchant for trade protectionism, and his willingness to support large government expansions like the Medicare prescription drug bill and the 2005 Highway Bill.
>
> As president, Santorum would most likely lead the country in a pro-growth direction, but his record contains more than a few weak spots that make us question if he would resist political expediency when it comes to economic issues.

It's not that weak for a weak link, is it?

My concerns about Rick Santorum are mostly on fiscal policy. I don't like his vote against

NAFTA in 1993, and I don't like his plan to focus corporate tax cuts on the manufacturing *only* – I want across the board tax cuts. His support for Arlen Specter over Pat Toomey was hard for me to get over, too. But it's minor – there is no perfect candidate.

Rev. James Leonard points out that Santorum has a good pro-growth record:

> First, Santorum was the first of the candidates to endorse the Ryan plan. No statist would ever do so. Santorum has pledged to cut 5 trillion dollars in the next 5 years.
>
> Second, Santorum co-sponsored and fought for a balanced budget amendment that failed by a single vote, prompting Santorum to demand that the RINO (Hatfield, OR) who voted against it be stripped of his chairmanship. He did so even against such stalwart Republicans as Jesse Helms who defended the RINO. Santorum's fight led to the RINO's early retirement.

One final thing: Rick Santorum introduced an amendment to No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 to encourage critical thinking on issues like evolution and global warming in the schools. That's good, but it's also good that Rick has been pushing away from the idea of a federal role in education at all. Another plus.

PPP poll of 1340 likely Iowa voters: Paul 20, Romney 19, Santorum 18

January 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Democrat pollster PPP.

Excerpt:

> Ron Paul is at 20%, Mitt Romney at 19%, and Rick Santorum at 18%. Rounding out the field are Newt Gingrich at 14%, Rick Perry at 10%, Michele Bachmann at 8%, Jon Huntsman at 4%, and Buddy Roemer at 2%.
>
> The momentum in the race is completely on Santorum's side. He's moved up 8 points since a PPP poll earlier in the week, while no one else has seen more than a one point gain in their support. Among voters who say they decided who to vote for in the last seven days he leads Romney 29-17 with Paul and Gingrich both at 13.
>
> Santorum's net favorability of 60/30 makes him easily the most popular candidate in the field. No one else's favorability exceeds 52%. He may also have more room to grow in the final 48 hours of the campaign than the other front runners: 14% of voters say he's their second choice to 11% for Romney and only 8% for Paul. Santorum's taken the lead with two key groups of Republican voters: with Tea Partiers he's at 23% to 18% for Gingrich, 16% for Paul, 15% for Bachmann, and only 12% for Romney. And with Evangelicals he's at 24% to 16% for Gingrich, and 15% for Paul and Romney.
>
> Other than Santorum's rise the other big story of this week is Paul's fall. He was at 24% earlier in the week but has dropped to 20%. That decline in support coincides with a precipitous drop in his favorability numbers. On our last poll he was at +13 (53/40), but that's gone down 21 points on the margin to -8 (43/51).

Robert Stacy McCain writes that Santorum has a decent ground game in New Hampshire.

If you missed my endorsement of Santorum, click here.

A Christian and a postmodern relativist debate atheism and Christianity

January 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to an episode of the the radio show "Unbelievable", which is broadcast in the UK by Premier Christian radio.

Details:

> "The Atheist's Bible" (Duckworth & Co) has been a bestseller in the USA. It brings together a mass of quotes from atheists, agnostics and more. Its compiler Joan Konner speaks to Justin Brierley about why she put it together and her own thoughts on atheism. She interacts with Christian apologist Peter Williams whose own book "The Sceptic's Guide to Atheism" (Paternoster) has just been published.
>
> Joan and Peter debate whether atheism has some fundamental faith assumptions of its own, as Peter argues that atheistic naturalism is a self-defeating notion. Joan argues that Christianity is arrogant in its exclusive claims.

The MP3 file is here.

Some people in our society believe that moral rules and the purpose of life should be decided based on an individual's feelings and intuitions, and not by any external state of affairs that can be reasoned about or proven. I call these people postmoderns. Postmoderns are opposed to organized religions as well, because they usually come with set ideas of what's right and wrong. Some organized religions, like Christian theism, try to show that their system of morality and their ideas about meaning and purpose in life should be accepted because their system is true – i.e. – because Christian claims about the way the world is are true, and therefore humans are obligated to act based on Christian morality and Christian ideas about the purpose of life. Postmoderns are especially hostile to these truth-claiming religions, and they attack them in several ways.

What postmoderns believe about religion

1. Postmoderns think that truth claims made by a religion cannot be proven true or false using public, testable evidence, because then people in some religions that contradict history or science would feel bad. I.e. – they think that claims made by a religion, like "the physical universe came into being out of nothing" cannot be tested using scientific experiments and shown to be true or false, because if you tested it and found that the universe did begin to exist, then people like Mormons who think that the universe is eternal would feel bad. So the safest thing for a postmodern to do is to assert that religions are all neither true nor false, and cannot be tested. This is, of course, not the view of religion that many religious people have – we think that morality and purpose are true objectively *because* we are able to make a case that the religion that defines them is true.

2. Postmoderns try to argue that changing their actions to comply with an objective moral reality or an object purpose, even if it has been shown to be true using logic and evidence, is “coercive” and opposed to individual freedom. I.e. – they think that even if a religion like Christian theism is shown to be true using science and history, they shouldn’t have to care about it, they should just be able to do whatever makes them feel good without caring about what’s true. It’s not that they have considered the case for Christian theism, it’s that they decide, in advance of considering the evidence, that they will not let the real state of affairs in the universe determine what is right or wrong, or what they are supposed to do with their lives. They don’t want to let what can be demonstrated about reality “coerce” their search for happiness.

3. For postmodernists, the purpose of religion cannot be to hold true beliefs about the external world. If the purpose of a religion were to have true beliefs, then religions that were false would be excluded, and that would make people in those false religions feel bad. So, the purpose of religions must be to make people behave well, because then they are all equivalent, and no religion is excluded. It is irrelevant to a postmodern that Christians claim that their religion hinges on a historical event, (the resurrection), which either happened or didn’t. Postmodernists refuse to assess the case for or against a religion by studying whether a religion’s claims are true. The want to treat them all as equal independently of truth, because, they claim, all religions are equally good at making people behave nicely. Postmoderns also like this view because it means that they do not have to waste any time assessing whether religions are true or false.

4. Tolerance, to a postmodernist, means that everyone has to behave as if morality is not real and that life has no objective meaning. If you think that the universe is any one way, or that people ought to act any particular way, then you are “intolerant” according to a postmodernist – because you think that your view of morality and purpose is real, and that it applies to others. Postmodernists want everyone to just arbitrarily decides their likes and dislikes, as well as the goals that give them significance. Postmodernists disagree with those who think that morality and meaning are objective – that they are set up by a Designer, and not up for individual humans to decide however they like.

Responding to postmodernism

I think that many people who have this postmodern/subjectivist/relativist view of morality and purpose are people who have been raised in strict religious environments that were focused more on rituals and compliance, and less on debate and truth. It’s a lot easier to persuade a postmodernist when you 1) express a genuine interest in them as a person, and 2) take the time to try to show them why you think that your religion is true. Trying to ram moral rules and a purpose to life down someone’s throat without settling the truth question is stupid and counter-productive. Never talk about religion and theology unless you can link it to analytical philosophy, history or science. When talking to a postmodern, try to avoid sounding like a pastor. Don’t sound mystical. Don’t speak Christianese. Try to show them that evaluating a religion’s claims is no different than evaluating any other testable claim.

It’s especially important to argue that religion is about truth, because no one is going to be able to defend morality and purpose in the context of a religion unless they can argue that the major claims of that religion are true. These days, most people are postmodern, and they’ve been trained to be offended by anyone who tells them that what they are doing is wrong or that what they are believing is false. If you aren’t coming from a truth perspective, with all your arguments and facts in order, then it is tremendously difficult to withstand the sobs and victimhood of an aggrieved postmodern. Pointing out the selfish motives of postmodernists is not a bad idea either – show how they care about truth in technical areas, say, but have a selective dislike of truth in religious and moral areas.

Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them

January 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fars News reports. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Senior Iranian officials announced here in Tehran on Monday that experts of the country's Science and Defense Ministries are likely to launch joint cooperation to study and analyze the technology of the US drone that was downed by Iran early in December.
>
> "We have had some meetings with the Defense Minister about the kind of cooperation that the academic community can have with our country's Armed Forces on the US spy drone and once we come to the final conclusions we will be ready for cooperation," Iranian Minister of Science, Research and Technology Kamran Daneshjou told FNA on Monday.
>
> "The country's universities have informed the Science Ministry that they are ready to study and analyze the US stealth drone and demanded the Science Ministry to inform the Defense Ministry of their preparedness in this regard," he added.
>
> Iran first announced on December 4 that its defense forces had downed the aircraft through a sophisticated cyber attack.
>
> The drone is the first such loss by the US. US officials have described the loss of the aircraft in Iran as a setback and a fatal blow to the stealth drone program.
>
> The RQ-170 has special coatings and a batwing shape designed to help it penetrate other nations' air defenses undetected.

So what was Obama doing when he refused to act to destroy the drone? (See video above)

Obama doesn't have time for national security

Obama golfs while Iranians neutralize our stealth drone program. George W. Bush golfed 24 times in 8 years. Obama has golfed 90 times in 3 years. I think he needs to do less golfing, and more national security decision making.

Gary Habermas and Joel Marcus discuss the resurrection of Jesus

January 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A dialog between Dr. Gary Habermas and Dr. Joel Marcus.

Dr. Habermas is a conservative evangelical who argues that the evidence for the resurrection is strong. Dr. Marcus is fairly moderate, definitely not an evangelical, so it makes for an interesting, but friendly, disagreement. He agrees with Gary on some things, but not on others.

About the speakers:

Gary Habermas

Chair, Department of Philosophy, Liberty University
Distinguished Research Professor

Ph.D., History and Philosophy of Religion, Michigan State University (1976)
M.A., Philosophical Theology, University of Detroit (1973)
B.R.E., Christian Education, Bible, Social Sciences; William Tyndale College (1972)

Distinguished Research Professor; Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and Graduate School; Chair, Department of Philosophy and Theology, Liberty University; current appointment: teaching in PhD program, Liberty University, 1981-Present.

Joel Marcus

Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins, Duke University

B.A., New York University
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D, Columbia University-Union Theological Seminary, New York

Joel Marcus teaches New Testament with an emphasis on the Gospels and the context of early Christianity in first-century Judaism. His publications include two monographs on Mark and a two-volume commentary on the same Gospel in the *Anchor Bible* series (Doubleday, 2000, 2009). His current research focuses on the parting of the ways between ancient Judaism and the Christianity of the first three centuries A.D.

This is MP3 audio of the discussion is in 3 parts.

- Part 1 of 3 (35 minutes)
- Part 2 of 3 (35 minutes)
- Part 3 of 3 (36 minutes)

Each part is 8 Mb. The last segment is Q&A with students.

The top 10 worst federal rules of 2011

January 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Here's the one that I disliked the most:

> **6. The Bring on the Blackouts Rule.** The EPA is proposing to force power plants to reduce mercury by 90 percent within three years—at an estimated cost of $11 billion annually. A significant number of coal-fired plants will actually exceed the standard—by shutting down altogether. Indeed, grid operators, along with 27 states, are warning that the overly stringent regulations will threaten the reliability of the electricity system and dramatically increase power costs. Just like candidate Obama promised.

Oh, one more:

> **9. The Chill the Economy Regulation.** The EPA issued four interrelated rules governing emissions from some 200,000 boilers nationwide at an estimated capital cost of $9.5 billion. These boilers burn natural gas, fuel oil, coal, biomass (e.g., wood), refinery gas, or other gas to produce steam, which is used to generate electricity or provide heat for factories and other industrial and institutional facilities. Under the so-called Boiler MACT, factories, restaurants, schools, churches, and even farms would be required to conduct emissions testing and comply with standards of control that vary by boiler size, feedstock, and available technologies. The stringency and cost of the new regulations provoked an outpouring of protest, including 21 governors and more than 100 Members of Congress. On May 18, the EPA published a notice of postponement in the Federal Register, but the regulations remain on the books.

If I were President, then the first thing that I would do is abolish the EPA, the Department of Energy and the Department of Education. We have too much government!

CBS News smears Santorum with racism because he is anti-welfare

January 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CBS News is painting Santorum's opposition to welfare as racism – by inserting words he didn't say into their "transcript" of his speech.

Excerpt:

> The left and media are sending out a false story about what Rick Santorum said at an Iowa event. A CBS News transcript falsely claimed that Santorum said if elected he plans to cut regulations and entitlements and he doesn't want to "make black people's lives better by giving them somebody else's money."
>
> The video is below. It's clear he did NOT say that, and he was referring to people on welfare in general, and race was not mentioned. But that doesn't keep people like this from using it as propaganda. It's frustrating because so many will read the false story and believe it. But that's the purpose of the propaganda.
>
> Here is what Santorum said in full:
>
> *"It [Medicaid] just keeps expanding. I was Indianola a few months ago, and I was talking with someone who works at the Department of Public Welfare here, and she told me that the state of Iowa is going to get fined if they don't sign up more people under the Medicaid program. They're just pushing harder and harder to get more and more of you dependent upon them so that they can get your vote. "I don't want to make [pause] lives, people's lives better by giving them somebody else's money."*
>
> Even liberal Tommy Christopher at Mediaite admits Santorum didn't say what the CBS transcript says he did.
>
> The left is determined to paint the GOP as bigoted because even if they lose a tiny portion of the black vote, it could be enough for Obama to lose, so they lie.

Journalists are indoctrinated in J-school to view conservatives as guilty of SIXHIRB – sexism, intolerance, xenophobia, homophobia, Islamophia, racism, bigotry. While the rest of learn quantitative, marketable skills, journalists spend 4 years learning how to be biased and how to mislead the public.

Santorum is pro-family, and so he opposes welfare. Welfare is anti-family because it makes fathers optional and encourages women to have children with men who will not commit for life and will not prepare to provide for a family. The mainstream media believes that it is too much of a burden on women to insist on these antiquated sex roles – they would rather tax working fathers to subsidize fatherlessness. And if they have to drum up popular support for subsidized fatherlessness by smearing conservatives, then that's what they'll do. Santorum says, and I agree, that people on welfare would be better

off if they were working, instead.

In other news, leftist Alan Colmes mocks Rick and Karen Santorum for grieving over their miscarriage.

Excerpt:

> National Review Editor Rich Lowry and Liberal commentator Alan Colmes clashed on Fox News Monday when Lowry interjected to rebuke Colmes' criticism of the way Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum and his wife handled the death of their infant newborn Gabriel, who lived for only two hours in 1996.
>
> "I even think some of the dastardly characters we have in the main stream media are not going to go as low as you just have Alan," Lowry said at one point.
>
> The heated rhetoric began early on in the segment when Colmes said undecided voters will ultimately not stick with the surging Santorum once people "get a load of some of the crazy things he's said and done, like taking his two-hour-old baby when it died right after child birth home and played with it so that his other children would know that the child was real."

You have to exercise judgment when dealing with the mainstream media. They have their worldview, and they fit the facts to it.

MIT physicist explains the challenge of cosmic fine-tuning for naturalism

January 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the article from Harper's magazine. The MIT physicist says that the fine-tuning is real, and is best explained by positing the existence of an infinite number of universes that are not fine-tuned – the so-called multiverse.

Excerpt:

> While challenging the Platonic dream of theoretical physicists, the multiverse idea does explain one aspect of our universe that has unsettled some scientists for years: according to various calculations, if the values of some of the fundamental parameters of our universe were a little larger or a little smaller, life could not have arisen. For example, if the nuclear force were a few percentage points stronger than it actually is, then all the hydrogen atoms in the infant universe would have fused with other hydrogen atoms to make helium, and there would be no hydrogen left. No hydrogen means no water. Although we are far from certain about what conditions are necessary for life, most biologists believe that water is necessary. On the other hand, if the nuclear force were substantially weaker than what it actually is, then the complex atoms needed for biology could not hold together. As another example, if the relationship between the strengths of the gravitational force and the electromagnetic force were not close to what it is, then the cosmos would not harbor any stars that explode and spew out life-supporting chemical elements into space or any other stars that form planets. Both kinds of stars are required for the emergence of life. The strengths of the basic forces and certain other fundamental parameters in our universe appear to be "fine-tuned" to allow the existence of life. The recognition of this finetuning led British physicist Brandon Carter to articulate what he called the anthropic principle, which states that the universe must have the parameters it does because we are here to observe it. Actually, the word *anthropic*, from the Greek for "man," is a misnomer: if these fundamental parameters were much different from what they are, it is not only human beings who would not exist. No life of any kind would exist.
>
> If such conclusions are correct, the great question, of course, is *why* these fundamental parameters happen to lie within the range needed for life. Does the universe care about life? Intelligent design is one answer. Indeed, a fair number of theologians, philosophers, and even some scientists have used fine-tuning and the anthropic principle as evidence of the existence of God. For example, at the 2011 Christian Scholars' Conference at Pepperdine University, Francis Collins, a leading geneticist and director of the National Institutes of Health, said, "To get our universe, with all of its potential for complexities or any kind of potential for

> any kind of life-form, everything has to be precisely defined on this knife edge of improbability…. [Y]ou have to see the hands of a creator who set the parameters to be just so because the creator was interested in something a little more complicated than random particles."
>
> Intelligent design, however, is an answer to fine-tuning that does not appeal to most scientists. The multiverse offers another explanation. If there are countless different universes with different properties—for example, some with nuclear forces much stronger than in our universe and some with nuclear forces much weaker—then some of those universes will allow the emergence of life and some will not. Some of those universes will be dead, lifeless hulks of matter and energy, and others will permit the emergence of cells, plants and animals, minds. From the huge range of possible universes predicted by the theories, the fraction of universes with life is undoubtedly small. But that doesn't matter. We live in one of the universes that permits life because otherwise we wouldn't be here to ask the question.

I thought I was going to have to go outside this article to refute the multiverse, but Lightman is honest enough to refute it himself:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.
>
> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

The multiverse is not pure nonsense, it is theoretically possible. The problem is that the multiverse generator itself would require fine-tuning, and, as Lightman indicates, we have no independent experimental evidence for the existence of the multiverse. Atheists just have to take it on faith, and hope that their speculations will be proved right. Meanwhile, the fine-tuning is just as easily explained by postulating God, and we have independent evidence for God's existence, like from the cosmological argument, the moral argument, and so on.

We need to be frank about atheists and their objections to the progress of science. Within the last 100 years, we have discovered that the physical universe came into being out of nothing 15 billion years ago, and we have discovered that this one universe is fine-tuned

for intelligent life. Atheists are 100 years out of date, and they are hoping that all of this 100 years of progress will be overturned, so that they can go back to their comfortable belief that the universe is eternal and that the parameters of this universe are undesigned.

While I was listening the Dennis Prager show, an atheist caller called Prager and asserted that atheism was true because he has a happy life as an atheist. And I think that's what atheism is. They believe that God, if he exists, should have the goal of making them happy. And if they are already happy, then why would they care about whether there is a God out there who might ask them to do things (like not kill babies) which might make them unhappy?

Atheists *don't care* about science as something that determines what they should or should not believe. If science proves that they are accountable to God, then they invent speculations and hope in those speculations against the science – as with the multiverse or the aliens seeding the Earth with life or the unobservable, untestable hyper-universe that spawned this universe.

To see these arguments examined in a debate with a famous atheist, simply watch the debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens, and judge which debater is willing to form his beliefs on scientific progress, and which debater is forming his beliefs *against* the science we have today, and hoping that the good science we have today based on experiments will be overturned by speculative theories at some point in the future. When you watch that debate, it becomes very clear that Christian theists are interested in conforming their beliefs to science, and atheists are very interested in speculating against what science has shown in order to promote their own happiness. Whatever standard of morality they invent for themselves has to be self-made, so that they can satisfy it merely by doing whatever they feel like doing. And if science shows that the universe doesn't conform to invented morality, because it is designed, then atheists just say "so much the worse for science".

Just to re-cap, we've had peer-reviewed scientific publications *in the last month* that have made the illusion of naturalism even less likely, in the areas of the fossil record and the origin of life. And we now have the Borde-Vilenkin-Guth theorem, showing that any cosmology that features an expanding universe will have a beginning. The progress of science marches on against atheism, in virtually every area, and all we see from the likes of Richard Dawkins is the complete refusal to engage in debates with theists about the evidence. So who is anti-science now?

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones

- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument

Perry and Bachmann to reassess their campaigns after disappointing loss in Iowa

January 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the Iowa election results from Fox News as of 2 AM on Wednesday morning:

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Santorum	29,968	25%
Romney	29,964	25%
Paul	26,186	22%
Gingrich	16,241	14%
Perry	12,592	11%
Bachmann	6,070	5%
Huntsman	744	<1%

And now the good news for Rick Santorum: Rick Perry and Michele Bachmann are both reassessing their campaigns.

Fox News:

> Michele Bachmann said she's soldiering on, giving no indication that she would bail on her Republican presidential campaign after a last-place showing in the contested Iowa caucuses, while Rick Perry, who finished just ahead of her in fifth, said he's going back to Texas to "determine whether there is a path forward."
>
> "I believe I am the best conservative who can and who will beat Barack Obama in 2012," Bachmann told supporters late Tuesday night following projections that she would be last in the six-way contest. Jon Huntsman decided not to compete in Iowa.
>
> "In 2012, there could be another president in the White House. Who knows? There could be another Michele in the White House," Bachmann said, referencing her shared name with first lady Michelle Obama.
>
> Despite her pledges to go on, Bachmann campaign manager Keith Nahigian told The Associated Press that he couldn't say with certainty whether Bachmann would go forward with her candidacy.
>
> "I don't know yet," he said. "It's hard to tell, but everything is planned."
>
> Asked about the report, Bachmann Communications Director Alice Stewart told Fox News that the AP story said it's "uncertain." "That's true," she said.
>
> Bachmann's 6 percent showing was a sharp turn after finishing in first place during the Ames, Iowa, GOP straw poll over the summer.
>
> Perry, who doubled Bachmann's raw vote total but earned only 11 percent

> overall, said he's reassessing what he will do. He's making that decision in light of the first-in-the-nation vote, but not before the Texas governor announced his campaign was making an ad buy in South Carolina, the third state to vote.
>
> Perry has described the GOP presidential race as a marathon, but after spending the most of any campaign on Iowa advertising, his poor showing in Iowa won't lend any momentum as the candidates go to New Hampshire, the first primary state of the election season, where Perry places last in polling.

The latest results are actually worse for Bachmann – 5%, not 6%. I think she should get out now and endorse Rick Santorum.

What's interesting is that Mitt Romney had to spend a heck of a lot more money than Rick Santorum did in order to get the same 25% of the vote. What does that tell you about Mitt Romney as a candidate?

UPDATE: Bachmann is out, Perry is still in.

Oil prices rise over tensions between US and Iran

January 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

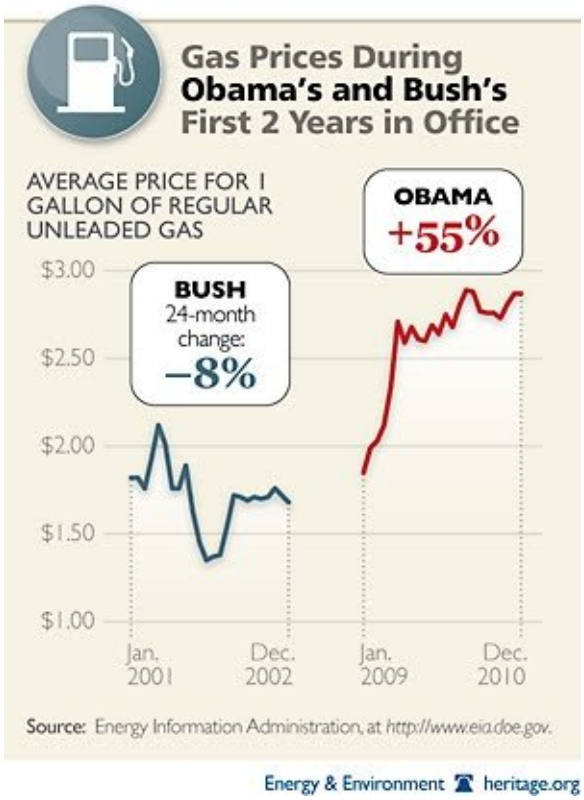

Gas Prices under Obama and Bush
From the liberal Los Angeles Times.

Excerpt:

> Oil prices soared Tuesday as tensions grew over key Persian Gulf oil shipments.
>
> In afternoon trading benchmark crude jumped $3.80, or 3.8 percent, to $102.63 per barrel in New York.
>
> Brent crude, which is used to price foreign oil varieties that are imported by U.S. refineries, rose $3.87, or 3.6%, to $111.25 per barrel in London.
>
> Prices climbed as soon as exchanges opened for the first day of 2012 trading. Commodity prices tend to rise at the beginning of January as investors start the new year with a fresh round of trading. This year prices were driven by heightened concerns that Iran might try to close the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf to oil tankers, if Western nations impose new sanctions.
>
> Iran warned the U.S. to stay out of the strategic waterway, where one-sixth of the world's oil shipments pass every day. On Monday its navy fired a cruise missile as part of a military exercise.
>
> The U.S. and European nations are mulling further economic sanctions against Iran because of its nuclear program. A standoff could result that would be damaging to the global economy.

> A dustup with Iran could slow crucial oil supplies at a time when the world needs every drop. Global oil demand is expected to rise to a record 89.5 million barrels per day in 2012.
>
> Three of the world’s largest economies — the U.S., China and India — continued to grow with increased manufacturing activity in December.

Meanwhile, Obama continues to dither over the Keystone XL pipeline.

How good a job is Obama doing running car companies?

January 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily explains.

Excerpt:

> President Obama's electric car vision is off to a hot start. First the heavily subsidized Chevy Volt started catching fire. Then government-backed Fisker Automotive had to recall all its cars due to a fire hazard.
>
> Late last month, Fisker, the electric car startup that is busy spending its $529 million in Department of Energy loans, announced a recall of its entire fleet of luxury Karmas because of a faulty battery that posed a fire risk.
>
> The battery maker at fault — A123 Systems — is another Obama grantee, having gotten $380 million in taxpayer support to make advanced car batteries.
>
> Fisker says it's already fixed the problem, but this is just the latest in a series of troubles plaguing the new car company.
>
> Although it once promised to be profitably churning out 1,200 cars a month by now, Fisker has so far sold only about 240 — at a price almost 14% higher than promised. And the more moderately priced electric sedan it says it will build in an abandoned Delaware plant is still nowhere to be seen.
>
> Bad as this is, Fisker's troubles are just a taste of the expensive and dangerous mess in store for car buyers should Obama succeed in forcing the industry to bend to his green dreams.
>
> In May, a Chevy Volt caught fire three weeks after a government crash test of the car. In follow-up tests in November, a second Volt caught fire after a test crash, and a third began to smoke and emit sparks.
>
> […]Volt sales came in about 30% below GM's forecast for 2011 — in a year when overall retail car sales beat industry analyst forecasts by almost 12% — earning the Volt third place on 24/7 Wall Street's list of worst product flops of 2011.
>
> And that's despite the substantial tax break to Volt buyers and the hundreds of millions in grant money to its suppliers.

Obama is spending a lot of taxpayer money on his Solyndra-style boondoggles. Taking money away from employers and families and just throwing it in the trash. We are now officially over 100% debt-to-GDP. We are entering a Greece-style debt situation and this dingbat is throwing our money away on Peter Pan energy policies.

Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech

January 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The speech is 20 minutes long, and it sounds like what a Republican sounds like.

Here is the full transcript of Rick Santorum's Iowa speech.

Excerpt:

> SPEAKER: FORMER SEN. RICK SANTORUM, R-PA.,
>
> PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE
>
> [*]
>
> SANTORUM: Thank you. Thank you. Game on.
>
> (APPLAUSE) As all of you know, I do not speak from notes, but there's a couple things I want to say that are a little — little more emotional, so I'm going to read them as I wrote them.
>
> C.S. Lewis said a friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you've forgotten the words. My best friend, my life mate, who sings that song when I forget the words, is my wife, Karen.
>
> (APPLAUSE)
>
> People have asked me how I've done this, sitting back at the polls and not getting a whole lot of attention paid to us. How did you keep going out to Iowa, in 99 counties, and 381 town hall meetings and speeches? Well, every morning when I was getting up in the morning to take on that challenge, I've required a strength from another particular friendship, one that is sacred. I've survived the challenges so far by the daily grace that comes from God.
>
> (APPLAUSE)
>
> For giving me his grace every day, for loving me, warts and all, I offer a public thanks to God.
>
> (APPLAUSE)
>
> Third, thanks. Thank you so much, Iowa.
>
> (APPLAUSE)
>
> You — you, by standing up and not compromising, by standing up and being bold and leading, leading with that burden and responsibility you have to be first, you have taken the first step of taking back this country.
>
> (APPLAUSE)
>
> This journey started officially just a few months ago in June, when I stood on the steps of the county courthouse in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. I decided to go there, not the typical place someone announces for president — it's not where I

was born, it's not where I ever lived — but it's where my grandfather came back in 1925. He came by himself, even though he was married with two children, one of them being my father. He came after having fought in World War I, because Mussolini had been in power now three years, and he had figured out that fascism was something that would crush his spirit and his freedom and give his children something less than he wanted for them.

So he made a sacrifice. He left to the coal fields of southwestern Pennsylvania. He worked in the mine at a company town, got paid with coupons, he used to call them, lived in a shack. Eventually, he figured out that that was a trip to nowhere, so he started taking less — taking money less so he could start to save, and he did. And after five years, he got his citizenship and brought my father over at the age of 7. He ended up continuing to work in those mines until he was 72 years old, digging coal. I'll never forget the first time I saw someone who had died. It was my grandfather. And I knelt next to his coffin. And all I could do — eye level — was look at his hands. They were enormous hands. And all I could think was those hands dug freedom for me.

And so to honor him, I went to Somerset County, because I believe foundationally, while the economy is in horrible condition, while our country is not as safe as it was, and while threats are rising around the world, while the state of our culture under this administration continues to decline with the values that are unlike the values that built this country, that the essential issue in this race is freedom, whether we will be a country that believes that government can do things for us better than we can do for ourselves, or whether we believe, as our founders did, that rights come to us from God and, when he gave us those rights, he gave us the freedom to go out and live those — live those rights out to build a great and just society not from the top down, but from the bottom up.

(APPLAUSE)

My grandfather taught me basic things that my dad taught me over and over again: Work hard, work hard, and work hard. And I think about that today. There are so many men and women right now who would love to work hard, but they don't have the opportunity.

And we have two parties who are out talking about how they're going to solve those problems. One wants to talk about raising taxes on people who have been successful and redistributing money, increasing dependency in this country, promoting more Medicare and food stamps and all sorts of social welfare programs, and passing Obamacare to provide even more government subsidies, more and more dependency, more and more government, exactly what my grandfather left in 1925.

And then there's another vision, with another vision, the Republican vision, which is, let's just cut taxes, let's just reduce spending and everyone will be fine.

I believe in cutting taxes. I believe in balancing budgets. I propose cutting $5

> trillion from this budget over the next five years. I support a balanced budget amendment that puts a cap at 18 percent of GDP as a guarantee of freedom for this country. But …
>
> (APPLAUSE)
>
> But I also believe we as Republicans have to look at those who are not doing well in our society by just cutting taxes and balancing budgets, and that's why I put forth a plan that Iowans responded to. It's a plan that says, yes, let's flatten the tax code, get rid of it, replace it with five deductions. Let's create two rates, 10 percent and 28 percent. Why 28 percent? If it's good enough for Ronald Reagan, it's good enough for me.
>
> (APPLAUSE) And then I take the corporate tax, cut that in half, because it's the highest in the world, and we need to be competitive. But when I traveled around Iowa to the small towns, I found a lot of those small towns were just like the small towns that I traveled around in Pennsylvania. They were towns that were centered around manufacturing and processing, those good jobs that built those towns, and those jobs slowly, whether it's in Hamburg, whether it's in Newton, or any place in between, we found those jobs leaving Iowa.
>
> Why? Because our workers didn't want to work? Because our workers weren't competitive? No. It's because government made workers uncompetitive by driving up the cost of doing business here. It's 20 percent more expensive to do manufacturing jobs in this country than it is in the top nine trading partners that we have to compete with. And that's why we're losing our jobs.
>
> And so when Republican purists say to me, well, why are you treating manufacturing different than retail? I say because Wal- Mart's not moving to China and taking their jobs with them.
>
> (APPLAUSE)
>
> So we eliminate the corporate tax on manufacturing so we can compete. We take the regulations, every regulation that's over $100 million, and we repeal all those regulations, repeal them all, and there's a lot of them. Under the Bush and Clinton administrations, they averaged 60 regulations over $100 million a year. This administration hit 150 last year.
>
> You don't want to know what's crushing business. This administration is crushing business.

I'm taking a second look at Santorum's economic policies and it seems to me that they will very good for blue collar workers especially. By cutitng corporate taxes, everyone in the country who makes anything at all is going to have about 6 job offers before noon.

As far as social policy and foreign policy, Santorum is number one. He really is a fine candidate. My endorsement of Rick Santorum is here. I previously liked Bachmann and Cain, but with those two now out, I find that Rick Santorum is actually better than either of them in many ways.

UPDATE: Wow! Rick Santorum raised over a million dollars already today!

Ten pitfalls of the foolish Christian apologist

January 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Apologetics 315, a list of ten common traps that Christian apologists fall into.

Here are my really bad ones: (links removed)

> **1. The foolish apologist speaks before listening**. Proverbs 18:13 says, "He who answers before listening – that is his folly and his shame." Not only does he communicate to others that he could care less about what they have to say, but he also becomes unable to give a well informed answer. *The wise apologist is patient, seeks to understand, and avoids monologue.*
>
> **7. The foolish apologist neglects spiritual disciplines**. He finds reading philosophy more interesting than reading the Bible, so he neglects the Bible. Prayer is seldom and rushed. In fact, prayer, meditation, Bible study, worship and fellowship take the back seat to study. The foolish apologist deceives himself that he is being spiritual, all the while drifting away. The wise apologist sits at the feet of Jesus.
>
> **9. The foolish apologist isolates himself from others**. He doesn't need their input. He doesn't appreciate correction. He has his own plans, his own agenda, and own personal ministry. He refuses to let iron sharpen iron. When he falls, he has no one to help him up. He's accountable to himself only. *The wise apologist surrounds himself with godly counsel and fellow laborers.*

I know that some people will think that I am guilty of number 8, but sometimes you have to break the rules in order to get the conversation started, and then walk it back later. That's how you get the other person to engage.

Do any of these pitfalls that Christian apologists fall into sound familiar to you?

Recently widowed mother uses legally owned gun to defend her child

January 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From liberal CNN. (H/T All American Blogger)

Excerpt:

> An Oklahoma 911 operator calmly advised a recently widowed mother who asked if it was permissible to shoot an intruder, officials said Wednesday.
>
> "I've got two guns in my hand. Is it OK to shoot him if he comes in this door?" asked Sarah Dawn McKinley of Blanchard.
>
> "Well, you have to do whatever you can do to protect yourself," dispatcher Diane Graham responded during the incident on New Year's Eve day. "I can't tell you that you can do that, but you do what you have to do to protect your baby."
>
> In the end, McKinley, 18, fired a 12-gauge shotgun and killed Justin Shane Martin after he entered her residence, according to a Blanchard Police Department affidavit filed in court Wednesday.
>
> "You have to make a choice, you or him. I chose my son over him," McKinley told CNN Oklahoma City affiliate KWTV. Her boy is 3 months old.
>
> First Assistant District Attorney James Walters told CNN that McKinley will not be charged because she acted in self-defense.
>
> "A person has the right to protect themselves, their family and their property," Walters said.
>
> As for the 911 operator's guidance?
>
> "I would agree with that advice," the prosecutor said.

In the United States, you still have the ability to defend your home from intruders. But I know that in leftist countries like the UK, the police are trained to arrest people who defend themselves from criminals.

In the UK, the police protect criminals from law-abiding citizens

Look at this recent article UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Officers were called to Vincent Cooke's house in the affluent Stockport suburb of Bramhall, just before 8pm on Saturday following reports of a break-in.

> Mr Cooke, 39, a married father of one who has run a number of small courier and logistics companies, was relaxing alone in the detached interwar property when the two intruders struck, Greater Manchester Police said.
>
> His wife Karen, 34, and 12-year-old son returned home during the incident but

> escaped unharmed. Police said that during the break-in Mr Cooke was threatened and one of the intruders, Raymond Jacob, 37, of was stabbed.

> Mr Cooke, who is one of five children, was being questioned on suspicion of murder on Sunday night.

I thought the response of the police was interesting – self-defense is murder:

> "Clearly this is a serious incident in which a man has lost his life and at this time we believe the dead man was one of two men who were attempting to carry out a burglary at the house."
>
> The other suspected intruder fled in a small white Citroen van. Police last night confirmed a second man had been arrested in connection with the incident.
>
> On Sunday afternoon relatives of Mr Jacob, of Northern Moor, Greater Manchester, laid flowers outside Mr Cooke's home.
>
> One read: "To my baby boy who will always be my baby boy. I will miss you, but never stop loving you. Mum."
>
> Last night friends and relatives also left tributes for Mr Jacob social networking websites.
>
> "Still doesnt feel real, cant believe your gone we will all miss you," said Danielle Leach on Facebook.

Just to be clear about the facts, here's the UK Sun.

Excerpt:

> Two knife-wielding intruders burst into the home of company director Vincent Cooke, 39.
>
> Burglar Raymond Jacob, 37, is believed to have been stabbed with his own knife.
>
> Mr Cooke was later arrested in Bramhall, Cheshire. His wife and son fled the house unhurt.

Isn't the mother's reaction interesting? It's not unexpected coming from the feminized UK, though, where no one is responsible for anything they do. In fact, the one who judges and refuses to bail others out is the bad one. How mean! Defending your home from armed intruders! Just let them kill you! After all, the government already takes your money, so why not not ban self-defense so they take your life as well?

This is not unusual in the new Harriet Harman-onized UK. It happens all the time.

Consider this story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Miss Klass, a model for Marks & Spencer and a former singer with the pop group Hear'Say, was in her kitchen in the early hours of Friday when she saw two teenagers behaving suspiciously in her garden.

> The youths approached the kitchen window, before attempting to break into her garden shed, prompting Miss Klass to wave a kitchen knife to scare them away.
>
> Miss Klass, 31, who was alone in her house in Potters Bar, Herts, with her two-year-old daughter, Ava, called the police. When they arrived at her house they informed her that she should not have used a knife to scare off the youths because carrying an “offensive weapon” – even in her own home – was illegal.
>
> Jonathan Shalit, Miss Klass’s agent, said that had been “shaken and utterly terrified” by the incident and was stepping up security at the house she shares with her fiancé, Graham Quinn, who was away on business at the time.
>
> He said: “Myleene was aghast when she was told that the law did not allow her to defend herself in her own home. All she did was scream loudly and wave the knife to try and frighten them off.

You can read more about how the 1997 ban on handguns in the UK doubled violent crime in the four years after the ban at Reason magazine. Similarly, in the United states, legalizing the concealed carrying of firearms resulted in dramatic declines in violent crime. But that is just common sense. The more people who own guns and can defend themselves, the less crime there will be.

How the Labor Party killed marriage in the UK

January 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kathy Gyngell explains in this UK Daily Mail article. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Across its various forms and rules [marriage] is a human universal and with good reason. Marriage everywhere is the bridge between affinal and kin relationships a bond integral to the functioning and survival of human society. It defines social relationships, social and economic responsibilities.
>
> It establishes genealogical connections and confers 'belonging' and social identity. It prevents incest now more prevalent in our underclass than we know (something of deep concern to the more thoughtful of our politicians and social workers). No other set of relationships or connections whether through friendship, work, sport or volunteering – replicate the function of marriage. The state certainly cannot the failure of communism demonstrated that.
>
> […]I believe governments (successive ones) are culpable for setting marriage adrift as the sexual/ cultural revolution swept in. This was not the case elsewhere.
>
> **Britain silently, casually and progressively abolished the family … first through liberalising the divorce laws; later came the official signal that marriage no longer mattered.**
>
> **Former Chancellor Nigel Lawson's reform of personal taxation set in train the abolition of the married couple's allowance. (He failed, as he had planned in his Green Paper, to balance independent taxation by transferring the unused personal allowance to a non-earning, most likely child-rearing-spouse.)**
>
> **But it was Gordon Brown's first budget that did the real damage. It marked, as Harriet Harman emphasized triumphantly at the time, "the end of the assumption that families consist of a male breadwinner and a female helpmate in the home". Labour's new measures did not just recognise that women were in paid work and needed help with childcare, they pushed this agenda aggressively with tax incentives and a massive expansion of childcare facilities.**
>
> **Married mothers at home were indeed marked as second class citizens. What¹s more their families were to subsidise, through their disproportionately burdensome taxes, those families with no breadwinner at all. Frank Field¹s intention to cut back on lone-parent benefits in order to discourage dependency was abandoned in the face of party fury and threatened rebellion.**

> **State support for lone parenthood has entrenched illegitimacy the word no one dares speak. This is our root social problem. It is why we are now Europe¹s pre-eminent 'transient shack up' society. We cannot rest the entire blame on the pill per se (available across Europe) or on women's lib. Betty Friedman and Germaine Greer (both made their way onto most European bookshop shelves) or cultural osmosis, though feminism and socialism have proved a pernicious mix.**
>
> The fact is other countries in Europe have done more to support and sustain marriage and married families. They have capitulated less to aggressive feminist ideologues people who viewed marriage as the tool of an oppressive patriarchal regime, if not as prostitution (Jenni Murray in the past) but never as an institution the majority of young women continued to aspire to.
>
> That marriage socialised men, and that women had power in marriage, did not occur to this particular monstrous regiment of women. Nor did men marshal the arguments against this craziness, for fear of falling foul of irrational and strident Gingerbread demands for lone parent economic independence – courtesy of the state of course.
>
> Whatever cost to the state and taxpayer – subsidising lone mothers back to work, putting their fatherless children into state paid for childcare and continuing to mop after what were never viable families in the first place, whether in the form of Louise Casey or Sure Start, remains the mantra of left and most of the centre of politics.

Marriage didn't just die in the UK by accident. It was a victim of a partnership of big government and militant feminism. Financial incentives were put in place by the secular left with the goal of discouraging people from marrying and have a mother stay at home and raise the children. The mistake that many women made is that they believed that they could keep marriage as is, with men seeking to commit for life, and add to it a government-provided safety net that would catch them if the men they freely chose fail to perform. Instead of getting serious about consulting with their parents, and choosing the right man for the responsibilities of marriage, women followed their hearts, and hoped to transform the wrong men using mystical powers. Somehow, they believed, premarital sex coupled with peer approval and an expensive wedding ceremony could transform a man who was not qualified for marriage at all into the perfect husband and father. When all of this failed, women refused to point the finger at themselves, and instead voted for more and more government social programs to equalize all households, regardless of their decisions about men. After all, men are so unpredictable! And courting intelligently and chastely is "too strict".

This is why the typical mother in the UK spends 19 minutes per day with her children, and the average father spends even less. If everyone has to work to pay taxes for the welfare state, then there is no money left in the family for a stay-at-home parent. This is exactly what the feminists wanted – the end of marriage, and it's unequal sex roles for wives and

husbands. And the only way to go back to the way it used to be is for women to stop outsourcing the roles of the husband and father to government, and start marrying the right men for those jobs.

George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class

January 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal Washington Post, a column by moderate conservative George Will.

Excerpt:

> On Sept. 26, 1996, the Senate was debating whether to ban partial-birth abortion, the procedure whereby the baby to be killed is almost delivered, feet first, until only a few inches of its skull remain in the birth canal, and then the skull is punctured, emptied and collapsed. Santorum asked two pro-choice senators opposed to the ban, Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) and Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), this: Suppose the baby slips out of the birth canal before it can be killed. Should killing it even then be a permissible choice? Neither senator would say no.
>
> On Oct. 20, 1999, during another such debate, Santorum had a colloquy with pro-choice Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.):
>
> Santorum: "You agree that, once the child is born, separated from the mother, that that child is protected by the Constitution and cannot be killed. Do you agree with that?"
>
> Boxer: "I think that when you bring your baby home . . . ."
>
> Santorum is not, however, a one-dimensional social conservative. He was Senate floor manager of the most important domestic legislation since the 1960s, the 1996 welfare reform. This is intensely pertinent 15 years later, as the welfare state buckles beneath the weight of unsustainable entitlement programs: Welfare reform repealed a lifetime entitlement under Aid to Families with Dependent Children, a provision of the 1935 Social Security Act, and empowered states to experiment with new weaves of the safety net.
>
> White voters without college education — economically anxious and culturally conservative — were called "Reagan Democrats" when they were considered only seasonal Republicans because of Ronald Reagan. Today they are called the Republican base.
>
> Who is more apt to *energize* them: Santorum, who is from them, or Romney, who is desperately seeking enthusiasm?
>
> **Romney recently gave a speech with a theme worthy of a national election, contrasting a "merit-based" or "opportunity" society with Barack Obama's promotion of an "entitlement society," which Romney termed "a fundamental corruption of the American spirit": "Once we thought 'entitlement' meant that Americans were entitled to the privilege of trying to succeed. . . . But today the new entitlement battle is over the size of the check you get from Washington. . . . And the only**

> **people who truly enjoy any real rewards are those who do the redistributing — the government."**
>
> **Romney discerns the philosophic chasm separating those who embrace and those who reject progressivism's objective, which is to weave a web of dependency, increasingly entangling individuals and industries in government supervision.**
>
> **Santorum exemplifies a conservative aspiration born about the time he was born in 1958. Frank Meyer, a founding editor of William F. Buckley's National Review in 1955, postulated the possibility, and necessity, of "fusionism," a union of social conservatives and those of a more libertarian, free-market bent.**

Please make sure you watch Rick Santorum's speech in Iowa, or read the transcript. The speech was very good, and it's also very interesting.

In a new national poll from today (Thursday), Santorum now trails Romney nationally 29%-21%. Gingrich is third with 16%. According to another poll, Santorum is now running third in liberal New Hampshire.

By the way, I am completely fine with a Gingrich/Santorum ticket. But I would prefer a Santorum/Gingrich ticket, if I can get it. Those are the two great conservative communicators in this Republican primary. Both candidates are from the working class, and both are men with bold ideas.

Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million while he was governor of Massachusetts

January 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Deroy Murdock explains in this Scripps Howard News Service article.

Excerpt:

> Hot on the heels of his eight-vote Iowa-caucus landslide, Willard Mitt Romney is crisscrossing New Hampshire before Tuesday's key primary. Romney is masquerading as a limited-government, free-market executive from next-door Massachusetts. From the Golden Gate to the Granite State, voters should greet Romney's impersonation with a quarry full of skepticism.
>
> **In fact, Romney increased taxes by $309 million, mainly on corporations.** These tax hikes, described by Romney apologists as "loophole closures," totaled $128 million in 2003, $95.5 in 2004, and $85 million in 2005. That final year, Romney proposed $170 million in higher business taxes, the Boston Globe reports. However, the Bay State's liberal, Democratic legislature balked and only approved an $85 million increase.
>
> "Tax rates on many corporations almost doubled because of legislation supported by Romney," Boston Science Corporation chairman Peter Nicholas explained in the January 6, 2008 Boston Herald. Also, Romney raised the tax on subchapter S corporations owned by business trusts from 5.3 percent to 9.9 percent — an 85 percent hike.
>
> "Romney went further than any other governor in trying to wring money out of corporations," the Council on State Taxation's Joseph Crosby complained.
>
> **Romney also created or increased fees by $432 million.** He was not dragooned into this by greedy Democratic lawmakers; Romney himself proposed these items. In 2003 alone, Romney concocted or boosted 88 fees. Romney charged more for marriage licenses (from $6 to $12), gun registrations (from $25 to $75), a used-car sales tax ($10 million), gasoline deliveries ($60 million), real-estate transfers ($175 million), and more. Particularly obnoxious was Romney's $10 fee per Certificate of Blindness. Romney also billed blind people $15 each for discount-travel ID cards.
>
> While Romney can take credit for a $275 million capital-gains tax rebate, property-tax relief for seniors, and a two-day, tax-free shopping holiday, he also must take responsibility for signing $740.5 million in higher taxes, plus that $85 million in business taxes that he requested and legislators rejected.
>
> "Romney did not even fight higher death-tax rates," notes former California State Assembly Minority Whip Steve Baldwin, a Romney critic. "When the (Massachusetts) legislature considered this issue, Romney's official position was

> ‘no position.’ This echoed Barack Obama’s ‘present’ votes in the Illinois State Senate.”
>
> As Romney drained his constituents’ pockets, the Public Policy Institute of New York’s Cost of Doing Business Index rated Massachusetts in 2006 as America’s fourth costliest state in which to practice free enterprise. The Tax Foundation dropped Massachusetts from America’s 29th most business-friendly state to No. 36. The Tax Foundation also calculated that, under Romney, Massachusetts’ per-capita tax burden increased from 9.3 percent to 9.9 percent. In real dollars, the Romney-era per-capita tax burden grew by $1,175.71.
>
> As if impoverishing his own taxpayers were not bad enough, Romney’s March 5, 2003 signature raised taxes on non-residents retroactive to that January 1. Perpetrating taxation without representation, Romney’s law declared that, “gross income derived from… any trade or business, including any employment,” would be taxable, “regardless of the taxpayer’s residence or domicile in the year it is received.”
>
> Consequently, according to data furnished by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, between 2002 and 2006, New Hampshire residents who work or do business in the Bay State shipped Massachusetts $95 million above what they paid when Romney arrived. The average tax paid by New Hampshirities to Massachusetts grew by 19.1 percent, from $2,392 in 2002 to $2,850 in 2006.

Romney has a pro-abortion record and pro-gay-marriage record. Not only did he pass Romneycare in Massachusetts, but now we know that he also raised taxes. Why is he running as a Republican? I don’t see anything in his record that would cause me to believe that he is a Republican.

You can see Mitt Romney explaining all of his liberal views in his own words in these videos.

Obama’s defense cuts undermine our national security

January 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The administration announces a leaner version of our military involving the cutting of tens of thousands of ground troops as a leading defense contractor closes a major plant due to budget cuts.
>
> In an unusual appearance at the Pentagon on Thursday, President Obama laid out his plans for a “leaner” military based on the need “to renew our economic strength here at home, which is the foundation of our strength in the world.”
>
> In other words, failed domestic policies require us to cut our military in a dangerous world.
>
> […]Yet as Russia rearms, Iran pursues its nukes and China pushes toward a global reach, it is hard to argue that less is more.
>
> […]**Defense cuts are already having a domestic effect. Boeing Co. announced Wednesday it will close its defense plant in Wichita, Kan., by the end of 2013, moving future aircraft maintenance, modification and support to other facilities.**
>
> **The closure, prompted by defense cuts, will cost 2,160 workers their jobs.**
>
> […]**A 14-page analysis by the Republican majority staff of the House Armed Services Committee says the cumulative cuts will result in the Army and Marines losing 200,000 troops.**
>
> **The Navy will shrink to 238 vessels from today’s 300 and would lose two carrier battle groups needed to project American power and influence. Strategic bombers will fall from 153 to 101. Air Force fighters would drop by more than half, from 3,602 aircraft to 1,512 planes.**
>
> As a chart produced by the committee shows, the cumulative cuts are real cuts, both in spending levels and in military capability. The Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, said in written statements released during his recent confirmation hearings, “National security didn’t cause the debt crisis, nor will it solve it.”
>
> We would note that defense is a constitutional imperative — not an optional budget item — and that the question should be what do we need to defend ourselves and our interests, not simply what we can afford as the result of failed administration policies.

If you are expecting the President to keep the country safe and to protect our interests abroad, then you don’t elect a Democrat. Democrats can’t do national security or foreign policy, because they think that a weaker America is better than a stronger America. And, when elected, Democrats weaken America.

Should men marry women who don't want to be wives and mothers?

January 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article by Suzanne Venker from National Review. (H/T Salvo Mag)

Excerpt:

> A new report by Pew Research Center shows that barely half — 51 percent — of adults in the United States are married. In place of marriage are nontraditional living arrangements — including cohabitation, single-person households, and single parenthood — that may likely continue. The share of adults who are currently married could drop to below half within several years.
>
> While the report says it's "beyond the scope of this analysis to explain *why* [emphasis mine] marriage has declined," senior writer D'Vera Cohn adds this: "I'm struck by the fact that a large percentage of people who say that marriage is obsolete still want to get married. I think they may be having two ideas in their head at once: one about the institution of marriage and what its status is in society today, which is to say that it's a lot less dominant, central, or important in society, [and another about] their own wishes for their future, in which they personally would very much like to be married."
>
> Indeed they do. But some major changes have to take place first.
>
> […][W]e must retract the message Boomers sent young women about female empowerment. Indeed, it isn't a coincidence that marriage rates have plummeted alongside America's fascination with the feminist movement. Empowerment for women, as defined by feminists, neither liberates women nor brings couples together. It separates them. It focuses on women as perpetual victims of the Big Bad Male. Why would any man want to get married when he's been branded a sexist pig at "hello"? In the span of just a few decades, women have managed to demote men from respected providers and protectors to being unnecessary, irrelevant, and downright expendable.
>
> […]Women have also been raised by their feminist mothers to "never depend on a man." As a result, couples no longer think of themselves as one unit but as separate entities sharing space. "The confusion over roles is there, as are the legacies of a self-absorbed, me-first, feminist-do-or-die, male-backlash society," wrote Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee in *The Good Marriage: How and Why Love Lasts.* Honestly, are we really surprised marriage is on the decline?
>
> […]There may be more than one reason Americans are delaying or eschewing marriage, but almost all of them can be attributed to feminism. Feminists assured women their efforts would result in more satisfying marriages, but that has not happened. Rather, women's search for faux equality has damaged

> marriage considerably (some might say irrevocably, but I'm an optimist) by eradicating the complementary nature of marriage — in which men and women work together, as equals, toward the same goal but with an appreciation for the unique qualities each gender brings to the table. Today, men and women are locked in a battle. The roles have changed too drastically, and the anger runs deep.
>
> I don't know about you, but I don't call that progress.

You know something? Women can't neglect the roles of men in a marriage and then expect to get married to a man. That is going to come to a shock to a lot of feminists who think that they can act selfishly and men will still continue to woo them and marry them and love them faithfully for life. Men have noticed that feminists are no longer interested in being wives and mothers. And that feminsts are no longer respecting men for their traditional roles as protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders. Feminists don't want men who earn and save – that's bad because men who earn and save have authority to make decisions, unless the woman works too. They don't want men who can use guns to defeat burglars and use reason and evidence to defeat lies – that's bad because guns and truth are scary. They don't want men who make moral judgments and exclusive theological statements – that's bad because moral judgments and exclusive theological statements can hurt people's feelings, and make women less popular with her friends.

According to feminists, men are supposed to be fun, funny and sexy! They should provide drama and turmoil – not stability. It's the government's job to provide, protect and lead. Men should be replaced by welfare checks, policemen and universal public school education for children – from birth to adulthood. But all of those views are completely opposed to marriage – so why do feminists think that are suitable for marriage? What man in his right mind would consider *marriage* to a feminist? Marriage isn't when a woman does whatever she feels like all the time, and neglects her husband and children. Marriage means that women take care of their husbands and children, and in return husbands take care of their wives and children, too.

Related posts

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- Why Christian men should be chaste

Rick Santorum helps liberal college students to understand the logic of marriage

January 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you do a search on this, you will find most of the mainstream media talking about how the students booed Santorum. Apparently, neither the college students nor the media are capable of understanding that if you can marry anyone you want, then that means that there can be no prohibition of polygamy. And, of course, this is exactly what is happening in countries that have embraced same-sex marriage, like Canada.

Excerpt:

> Canada's decision to legalize gay marriage has paved the way for polygamy to be legal as well, a defense lawyer said Wednesday as the two leaders of rival polygamous communities made their first court appearance.
>
> The case is the first to test Canada's polygamy laws.
>
> Winston Blackmore, 52, and James Oler, 44, are each accused of being married to more than one woman at a time. The charges carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison, British Columbia Attorney General Wally Oppal said.
>
> But Blackmore's lawyer, Blair Suffredine, said during a telephone interview that marriage standards in Canada have changed.
>
> "If (homosexuals) can marry, what is the reason that public policy says one person can't marry more than one person?" said Suffredine, a former provincial lawmaker. Canada's Parliament extended full marriage rights to same-sex couples in 2005.

Actually, law professors at Queen's University are already demanding that polygamy be legalized.

Take a look at this post from the Vancouver Sun.

Excerpt:

> A Queen's University law professor says that polygamy should be legal in Canada.
>
> Queen's issued a news release on the day that a polygamy reference opened in British Columbia, where the government is seeking a legal opinion on whether Canada's 128-year-old ban on multiple marriage violates the freedom of religion guarantees in the Charter of Rights.
>
> Bev Baines, head of the Department of Gender Studies and a constitutional law expert, argues that Canada is a multicultural country and it is therefore unconstitutional to criminalize people for their marital relationships.
>
> "The law achieves nothing," Baines said in the release. "We've had the law on

> the books since 1892 and we had no prosecutions in the last 60 years aside from a failed attempt last January. We don't stop polygamy by having a law."

What I find disturbing is that the media and the college students are unable to follow the logic that legal scholars in Canada are now following. Are they not aware of what is happening in nations that have legalized gay marriage? Or can they only understand who is booing who? The journalists certainly think that booing a Presidential candidate is more appropriate than the use of reason to evaluate moral arguments. Sometimes I wonder if journalists learn anything at all in college except how to accuse conservatives of SIXHIRB – sexism, intolerance, xenophobia, homophobia, Islamophobia, racism, bigotry.

Here's a previous post I write making the secular case against gay marriage.

Shared parenting: UK moms and dads could get legal right to see their children

January 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael sent me this article from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Courts will be put under a legal duty to ensure that both fathers and mothers are given access to children in divorce settlements.

> Parents who refuse to accept the orders will be in contempt of court and risk serious penalties or even jail.
>
> The news will give hope to campaign groups who have argued for years that the role of fathers in bringing up their children should be enshrined in law.
>
> Under the present system family courts tend to leave children with their mothers in the vast majority of cases.
>
> According to the Office for National Statistics, one in three children, equivalent to 3.8 million, lives without their father.
>
> Nick Clegg, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Iain Duncan Smith, the Welfare Secretary, are understood to support the plans. The Conservatives also pledged to introduce the reforms while in opposition.
>
> Tim Loughton, the children's minister, said: "Our vision is to establish that, under normal circumstances, a child will have relationship with both his or her parents, regardless of their relationship with each other.
>
> "We must do everything we can to improve the system so that it gives children the best chance of growing up under the guidance of two loving parents.
>
> "All the evidence tells us that children genuinely benefit from a relationship with both parents, with the potential to make different contributions to their child's development.
>
> "The culture has shifted away from the traditional view that mothers are primarily responsible for the care of children. Increasingly society recognises the valuable and distinct role of both parents.
>
> "We are looking closely at all the options for promoting shared parenting through possible legislative and non-legislative means."

This is good news. Not only is this good for parents who are already divorced, but the presumption of shared parenting will also deter people from divorcing. Many people are encouraged to divorce because they think they will not have to deal with their spouse ever again.

Newt Gingrich denounces bias and bigotry by George Stephanopoulos and Diane Sawyer

January 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you missed the debate on Saturday night, don't be concerned. It was completely ruined by the bias of the ABC News moderators and commentators.

I have never soon two people in the media with such outright disdain for conservative views, especially on social values. Newt was the only one to call them on it.

This article from CNS News explains.

Excerpt:

> Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich staunchly defended traditional marriage, describing the union of one man and one woman as the "core of our civilization," and an institution that is worth "protecting and upholding."
>
> […]Gingrich also raised the issue of bias in the news media. While homosexual activists blast discrimination against them, what about anti-Christian bigotry?
>
> "You don't hear the opposite question asked," Gingrich said.
>
> "Should the Catholic Church be forced to close its adoption services in Massachusetts because it won't accept gay couples, which is exactly what the state has done? Should the Catholic Church be driven out of providing charitable services in the District of Columbia because it won't give in to secular bigotry? Should the Catholic Church find itself discriminated against by the Obama administration on key delivery of services because of the bias and the bigotry of the administration?
>
> "The bigotry question goes both ways. And there's a lot more anti-Christian bigotry today than there is concerning the other side. And none of it gets covered by the news media."

Here's an article explaining how bad the moderation was. (H/T Director Blue)

> When questioning former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, Stephanopoulos, a former senior advisor in the administration of Democratic President Bill Clinton, premised some inquiries on the assertion — offered without supporting facts — that Romney's job-creation statistics were inaccurate.
>
> "Now, there have been questions about that calculation of 100,000 jobs. So if you could explain it a little more," Stephanopoulos asked Romney of the former governor's claims about jobs created by companies he has helmed. "I've read some analysts who look at it and say that you're counting the jobs that were created but not counting the jobs that were taken away. Is that accurate?"
>
> "No, it's not accurate," Romney bluntly responded. "It includes the net of both.

> I’m a good enough numbers guy to make sure I got both sides of that.”
>
> Stephanopoulos did not cite any analysts by name.
>
> In another line of questioning, Stephanopoulos asked Romney if he believes “that states have the right to ban contraception, or is that trumped by a constitutional right to privacy?”
>
> Romney responded by questioning Stephanopoulos’ logic and his choice to raise a hypothetical situation that would never happen.
>
> “You’re asking — given the fact that there’s no state that wants to do so, and I don’t know of any candidate that wants to do so — you’re asking could it constitutionally be done?” Romney asked, with a hint of incredulity.
>
> Stephanopoulos, undeterred, pressed Romney again: “I’m asking you, do you believe that states have that right or not?”
>
> Amid a chorus of “boos” from the audience, Romney again parried the impossible hypothetical.

That’s what I mean when I say the debate was not worth watching. It was a parody of a debate.

Wikipedia says: Prior to joining ABC News, he was a senior political adviser to the 1992 U.S. presidential campaign of Bill Clinton and later became the White House Communications Director for two years, before being replaced by David Gergen after political fallout from the mid-term election of 1994, in which the Republican party took over the U.S. House and Senate.

Is Rick Santorum conservative or liberal? What are Rick Santorum's political views?

January 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

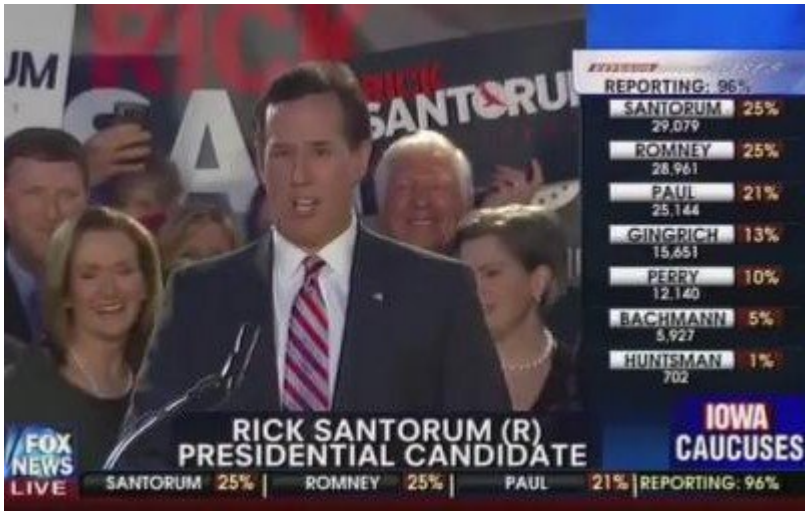

Rick Santorum Iowa Caucuses

Quin Hilyer explains, in the pro-Romney National Review, of all places.

Excerpt:

> On taxes, for instance, Santorum has always been superb. The Club for Growth's white paper on Santorum, calling his tax stances "very strong," confirms that "Santorum has consistently supported broad-based tax cuts and opposed tax increases either by sponsoring key legislation or by casting votes on relevant bills."
>
> His record on a host of other conservative issues is as solid as that of any politician in the past two decades. He has been firmly and repeatedly against all sorts of regulatory abuse, against McCain-Feingold and other restrictions on political speech, for school choice, for tort reform, for a strong military, and for a balanced-budget amendment.
>
> Obviously he has been as stalwart a defender of social conservatism, for 20 full years, as any other public figure. And as virtually every conservative involved in the judicial wars during Santorum's time in the Senate has confirmed, in person or in print, Santorum and his staff were *the* go-to people in the Senate when you needed to find tireless, committed advocates for conservative jurists. **Santorum is, wrote Ed Whelan of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, "the candidate in whom I have by far the greatest confidence" in terms of how likely he would be "to appoint excellent Supreme Court justices and lower-court judges and to work tenaciously to get them confirmed."**
>
> Meanwhile, as Santorum frequently (and entirely accurately) reminds anybody who will listen, his work on the single most important conservative policy reform of the past half century, the 1996 welfare-to-work effort that cut spending and

> poverty rates simultaneously, was seminal, indefatigable, and remarkably effective. **Iowa's Sen. Chuck Grassley explained to the *Des Moines Register* a week ago that he was unconvinced about welfare reform until Santorum paid him an office call and "took a lot of time to convince me of his point of view… The sincerity and effort that he has to get his point across in the presidential campaign is almost a total reflection of how he operated as a United States senator." Grassley yielded and voted for reform.**
>
> More broadly, until Rep. Paul Ryan's recent prominence, nobody in Congress has been as passionate and fearless an advocate for entitlement reform as Santorum. Medicaid block grants. Investment accounts for Social Security. Medicare payments controlled by the beneficiaries rather than third-party payers. Choice rather than government mandates. Indeed, **Santorum was the first candidate this year to fully embrace Ryan's proposed reforms — with this exception, as he reminded me in a phone interview on Thursday: "I've criticized Ryan on one thing: waiting ten years [for many of the reforms to kick in]. We can't afford to wait. We've got to start now."**
>
> […]As for overall spending and his much-discussed history of support for "earmarks" (a position also shared by tightwad Ron Paul), conservative groups' ratings show that Santorum was better than the average Republican, despite representing a state far bluer than those of most of his Republican colleagues. He demonstrated particular courage in his support for the Freedom to Farm Act and in frequent opposition to floor amendments that would have put additional spending in appropriations bills. Denizens of Capitol Hill in the 1990s fondly remember Santorum's repeated use of a prop during floor debate called the "Spendometer," which he used to make a persuasive (and entertaining) case against wasteful federal largesse.
>
> Out of office, he vociferously opposed TARP, the various "stimulus" packages, and the bailouts of car companies and of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. All those stances were perfectly in line with the voting record he had established in the House and Senate.

Evangelical Christian stalwart Gary Bauer is endorsing Rick Santorum.

Excerpt:

> Social conservative leader and former presidential candidate Gary Bauer will endorse Rick Santorum in South Carolina, he confirmed to The Hill on Saturday.
>
> Bauer said that he didn't want to get into the details of the endorsement since it was officially still embargoed, but confirmed his support and said he'll work to get other social conservatives on board for Santorum.
>
> "I want to do whatever I can to convince my colleagues that Sen. Santorum is the right man," he told The Hill.

> […]Bauer has organized a Friday meeting with top social conservatives in Texas to see if they can coalesce behind one candidate. He said the point of the meeting is not to try to stop Mitt Romney from being the Republican nominee, but that he believes Santorum would be the best candidate to beat President Obama, as well as the best commander in chief.

It's worth remembering what Rick Santorum did to encourage critical thinking in public school science education, too. This is good news for us who want to have evidence for and against things like naturalistic macro-evolution and anthropogenic catastrophic global warming presented to students. That's above and beyond the basics of conservatism, right there – and he's solid on school choice.

The best thing about Santorum, though, is that he has a working class background and he isn't afraid to debate with people instead of just speaking about his beliefs and generalities. He tries to convince people, and to reason things out with them.

Review of the book “Is God Just a Human Invention?”

January 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

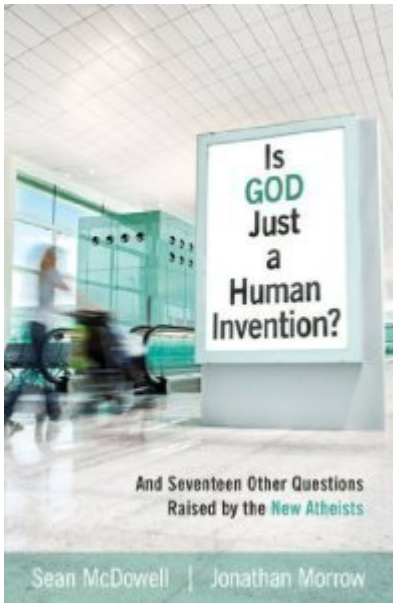

Is God Just A Human Invention?

The thorough, chapter-by-chapter review of the book is here at Apologetics 315.

Excerpt:

> One of the brashest challenges that religious truth has experienced over the past several decades is the remarkable rise of the pugnacious New Atheists. Sean McDowell and Jonathan Marrow, new generation Christian apologists, have undertaken the task of contesting this anti-theistic upsurge. And in *Is God Just a Human Invention? And Seventeen Other Questions Raised by the New Atheists* the authors have pulled together a wide range of research that powerfully critiques the arguments from the combative non-theists.
>
> […]The authors deal with the scientific and philosophical challenges to Christian theism in a reasoned and respectful manner.
>
> […]*Is God Just a Human Invention?* is loaded with exceptional quotes from Christian and non-Christian thinkers. Additionally, the book furnishes very short essays at the back of each chapter from various erudite Christian scholars that augment the thesis of what was advanced by the authors.
>
> This volume combines simplicity and applicability without forfeiting precision. The authors lead the reader into the full girth of the many contemporary discussions concerning the defense of Christianity. They offer several of the leading arguments for Christian theism while toppling some of the most belligerent of the objections promoted by the New Atheists. They have written, with abundant care, to attain a thoroughness that is not often established in popular books. The wisdom and excellence with which each chapter is written makes this a crucial volume for the budding apologist’s library.

Here are the 18 topics, and after each topic a Christian scholar discusses the relevance of each topic.

1. Is Faith Irrational? (Commentary by: Gregory Koukl)
2. Are Science and Christianity at Odds? (Commentary by: John Warwick Montgomery)
3. Are Miracles Possible? (Commentary by: Gary R. Habermas)
4. Is Darwinian Evolution the Only Game in Town? (Commentary by: William A. Dembski)
5. How Did the Universe Begin? (Commentary by: R. Douglas Geivett)
6. How Did Life Begin? (Commentary by: Fazale R. Rana)
7. Why Is the Universe Just Right for Life? (Commentary by: Jay W. Richards)
8. Has Science Shown There Is No Soul? (Commentary by: Dale Fincher and Jonalyn Fincher)
9. Is God Just a Human Invention? (Commentary by: Garry DeWeese)
10. Is Religion Dangerous? (Commentary by: Douglas Groothuis)
11. Does God Intend for Us to Keep Slaves? (Commentary by: Paul Copan)
12. Is Hell a Divine Torture Chamber? (Commentary by: Frank Turek)
13. Is God a Genocidal Bully? (Commentary by: Clay Jones)
14. Is Christianity the Cause of Dangerous Sexual Repression? (Commentary by: Kerby Anderson)
15. Can People Be Good Without God? (Commentary by: Mark D. Linville)
16. Is Evil Only a Problem for Christians? (Commentary by: Randy Alcorn)
17. What Good Is Christianity? (Commentary by: Glenn S. Sunshine)
18. Why Jesus Instead of the Flying Spaghetti Monster? (Commentary by: Darrell L. Bock)

If you're looking for a good book on Christian apologetics for beginners, this is a great choice.

By the way, my Dad is currently reading my copy of this book! So it's fine for normal people.

I have some book reviews that people have sent me in my inbox, so maybe I should be reading them and posting them too! I get a bit behind on e-mail, though.

Labor unions who lobbied for Obamacare receive the most waivers from Obamacare

January 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Labor unions continued to receive the overwhelming majority of waivers from the president's health care reform law since the Obama administration tightened application rules last summer.
>
> Documents released in a classic Friday afternoon news dump show that labor unions representing 543,812 workers received waivers from President Barack Obama's signature legislation since June 17, 2011.
>
> By contrast, private employers with a total of 69,813 employees, many of whom work for small businesses, were granted waivers.
>
> The Department of Health and Human Services revised the rules governing applications for health reform waivers June 17, 2011, amid a steady stream of controversial news reports, including The Daily Caller's story that nearly 20 percent of last May's waivers went to businesses in House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's district in California.
>
> The labor unions receiving waivers include those that are monitored under the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, and those that are not. The waivers granted since June 17 are valid until 2013, but recipients must make sure their employees understand the "limits of their coverage," according to HHS documents.
>
> HHS granted waivers on a year-by-year basis under its initial application process, but waivers granted after June 17 are valid for a maximum of two-and-a-half years.
>
> By and large, unions backed the health care overhaul, a law from which nearly a half million of their workers are now exempt.

By the way, be skeptical of what people on the left say – it's not necessarily what they actually do.

I wrote a post a while back showing that what liberals say in public is primarily designed to make them look good to others and feel good about themselves – but they don't live the way they talk. E.g. – Michael Moore owned stock in Haliburton, Noam Chomsky took money from the Pentagon, Nancy Pelosi evades environmental restrictions in a business she owns, etc. Liberals can be hypocrites. Sometimes, they are just selling an image to their followers.

New PLOS study finds that men and women have major personality differences

January 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Science Daily. (H/T Levin)

Excerpt:

> Men and women have large differences in personality, according to a new study published Jan. 4 in the online journal *PLoS ONE*.
>
> The existence of such differences, and their extent, has been a subject of much debate, but the authors of the new report, led by Marco Del Giudice of the University of Turin in Italy, describe a new method for measuring and analyzing personality differences that they argue is more accurate than previous methods.
>
> The researchers used personality measurements from more than 10,000 people, approximately half men and half women. The personality test included 15 personality scales, including such traits as warmth, sensitivity, and perfectionism. When comparing men's and women's overall personality profiles, which take multiple traits into account, very large differences between the sexes became apparent, even though differences look much smaller when each trait is considered separately.
>
> However, the study indicates that previous methods to measure such differences have been inadequate, both because they focused on one trait at a time and because they failed to correct for measurement error.
>
> The authors conclude that the true extent of sex differences in human personality has therefore been consistently underestimated.

This has implications for many questions, not the least of which is gay marriage. If men and women are different, then children get the benefits of those differences, and they get the benefit of seeing the two sexes interact in a love relationship that's about commitment and cooperation – not just lust and attraction.

I really appreciate it when my readers send me great articles like this that I can use, where we can all learn something about the way the world really is.

Atheist Jerry Coyne explains why morality is impossible and incoherent for atheists

January 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's review what you need in your worldview in order to have a rationally grounded system of morality:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Atheists can't ground any of these. Let's take a closer look at #4.

Atheists can't ground freedom of the will

Here's Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible.

Here are some more atheists to explain more about how atheists view morality.

William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Michael Ruse says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory.(Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

When village atheists talk about how they can be moral without God, it's important to ask them to justify the minimum requirements for rational morality. Atheists may act inconsistently with their worldview, expecting praise and blame for complying with the arbitrary standards of their peer group, but there is nothing more to morality on atheism that imitating the herd – when they are looking, anyway.

If you would like to hear a good debate where the importance of free will for morality is explained further, then click here.

Here is a good transcript of a debate on morality and atheism. And here's a debate between William Lane Craig and secular humanist Paul Kurtz that you can watch on Youtube.

Santorum and Gingrich expose Romney's liberal record in Sunday's NBC debate

January 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a clip from the NBC debate on Sunday.

Here's Rick Santorum on same-sex marriage:

You can watch the full video of the NBC debate here (70 minutes).

What about Mitt Romney?

Here's an excellent ad by Newt explaining Mitt Romney's record on tax hikes:

Mitt Romney has a net worth of $250 million dollars. He was born in a rich family and has no experience of what ordinary Americans are facing.

Romney has a pro-abortion record and pro-gay-marriage record. Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million as governor of Massachusetts. He passed Romneycare in Massachusetts, which is substantially similar to Obamacare. Why is he running as a Republican? I don't see anything in his record that would cause me to believe that he is a Republican.

You can see Mitt Romney explaining all of his liberal views in his own words in these videos.

Rick Santorum's pro-family economic plan TRIPLES the child tax deduction

January 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The title of this article in the liberal Washington Post is "Santorum wants tax code to reward traditional marriage and families". HOLY SNARK.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Rick Santorum's socially conservative brand has helped him break through with a last-minute surge in Iowa. But his agenda isn't restricted to reimposing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell,"outlawing gay marriage nationwide, or promoting prayer in public schools. Santorum also wants to use the federal tax incentives to promote traditional marriage and families.
>
> "Tax policy as social policy" is the most distinguishing characteristic of Santorum's tax reform platform. The Pennsylvania Republican wants to reduce taxes by tripling the child tax credit, which currently stands at $1,000 per child. Santorum also wants to reduce federal taxes that penalize married couples. Under the current tax code, some spouses who earn about the same salary on the middle-to-upper end of the spectrum pay more in taxes by filing jointly as a married couple than they would as individuals. Justin Wolfers explains further: "The U.S. has a household-based taxation system which subsidizes married families when one person stays home and taxes most people extra if they choose to marry and both work full-time. The average tax cost of marriage for a dual-income couple is $1,500 annually."
>
> As James Pethokoukis points out, such policies are in line with a pro-natalist policy that some policy analysts have pushed for, both for social and economic reasons, citing Robert Stein's commentary in National Affairs. "Too many free-market economists still consider families an afterthought — arguing that the tax code should be 'neutral' about raising children, as if parenting were merely one hobby among many. But raising children is hardly just another pastime: It is one of the most important services any American can perform for our country," Stein writes, arguing that higher fertility rates would also bolster the financial future of Social Security and Medicare. By contrast, candidates like Rick Perry would eliminate the child tax credit and most other kinds of deductions in the tax code.

Since when did politicians care about ordinary families? Rick Santorum cares about working class families.

Related posts

- Is Rick Santorum conservative or liberal? What are Rick Santorum's political views?

- Rick Santorum helps liberal college students to understand the logic of marriage
- George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class
- Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech
- Rick Santorum for President of the United States
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- Rick Santorum wins Fox News Republican primary debate (with video)
- Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

Why Christians and social conservatives should vote for Rick Santorum

January 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this article from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> GOP presidential candidate Rick Santorum has taken the Obama administration to task for its role in eroding traditional views on sexuality to make way for a more pluralistic view.
>
> During a campaign event in Muscatine, Iowa last month, Santorum took on a questioner challenging his marriage views by expounding on the benefits of a traditional household for children and society, and blasting the "hate" branding used by gay rights leaders and media against marriage defenders.
>
> Santorum said that he learned radio conservative pundit Bill Bennett's wife, who runs an abstinence program called Best Friends, had been pressured by the Obama administration not to use the word "abstinence" or uphold the traditional family as better than other lifestyles.
>
> "The Obama administration has said to them, they can't use the word abstinence anymore. They can't use it, because of course that is a cultural artifact of a bygone era, and therefore you can't promote that," said Santorum. "You can't promote traditional marriage, because it's one of a variety of different lifestyles, and it's no better or worse than any other lifestyle, which is simply not the case."
>
> "I love it when the left says, quit trying to impose your morality on us," he continued. "What's that? that's their morality, and they're now imposing it on us.
>
> "The idea that this is a morality that may not be based in faith does not make it more legitimate than one that may be based in part in faith. But in their eyes, it is different. They want to drive faith and moral conclusions that come from faith out of the public square of the public law, and replace it with their values."
>
> In a recent discussion with Dr. James Dobson, Bennett had said that his wife Elayne had been told by the Obama administration that they "strongly prefer that she not use the word 'abstinence'" in her program, which received public funds.
>
> Santorum went on to defend marriage as a fruitful union uniquely suited to raising children that society is best served by defending, and blamed its erosion beginning with the no-fault divorce movement of the 1960s and 70s.
>
> "We have seven children, and I can tell you that my wife brings a very different thing to our children's growth and development than I do, because we're different. It's not just we're different because we're different people, we're different because we're husband and wife, male and female, and there are different attributes and qualities that go with that. Yes, true: the way God made

> us.
>
> "So what we need is a society that promotes that. … other relationships are important in society: my relationship with my aunt, my relationship with my friends … but they don't have the unique benefit that men and women bonding together for the purposes of marrying, having, and raising children and nurturing them to be successful citizens of our country. That's why we should focus and promote marriage as something that is a good."
>
> **He also took a moment to criticize those who were poised to label his position or statements "hateful" because he defended marriage, something he said doesn't mesh with the values America promotes.**
>
> **"Everybody's trying to impose their values. … Come into the public square make your case as to why same-sex marriage should be the law of the land. I have no prob with that at all. Make the argument," he said. "But accept the fact that other people who disagree with you don't hate people who disagree with them, they just happen to believe that marriage is a good that should be preserved."**

I think there really is only one social conservative activist left in the Republican Primary. Rick Santorum. He knows how to debate social issues well enough to spot the self-refuting rhetoric of the "tolerant" left. The left wants to impose their moral relativism on society, and Rich Santorum will fight them. If you are sick and tired of being labeled as hateful because you think that traditional marriage is best for children, then vote for someone who can make the case for you.

The Christian Post says that social conservative stalwart Gary Bauer has endorsed Rick Santorum.

Excerpt:

> Social conservative leader Gary Bauer endorsed Rick Santorum at a campaign event in South Carolina on Saturday.
>
> In a Sunday press release, Bauer said, "the main 'pillars' of Senator Santorum's governing philosophy – smaller, constitutionally-based government, lower taxes, a strong and confident American role in the world to keep our nation safe, a commitment to defending America's families and defending the sanctity of life – is exactly the blueprint to put America back on the right track."
>
> Bauer was previously president of the Family Research Council and helped build that organization into the top advocacy organization and think tank representing social conservatives. Bauer also served in the Department ofEducation under President Ronald Reagan. Currently, he heads Campaign for Working Families and American Values.

Here is Rick Santorum's speech at the Right to Life convention in 2011.

Part 1:

Part 2:

If you are a pure social conservative, there here is the candidate ranking for you:

1. Rick Santorum
2. Newt Gingrich
3. Rick Perry
4. Ron Paul
5. John Huntsman
6. Mitt Romney

Santorum is the best, and Gingrich has a good voting record. Perry would be OK, but he can't persuade anyone in a debate. The rest are all social liberals. Mitt Romney would be the absolute worst candidate on social issues. And that's why the Republican establishment and the news media are pushing him as the nominee.

Related posts

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Chris Sinkinson debates John Hick on religious pluralism

January 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Looks like Justin Brierley on the Unbelievable radio show found a pastor with a Ph.D in philosophy, and he can really whip some ass.

The players:

> John Hick is a noted philosopher and theologian who is a proponent of a pluralist view of religion – that there is one light (God) but many lampshades (religious expressions).
>
> Chris Sinkinson is a pastor and Bible tutor who has critiqued Hick's work. He says that pluralism empties Christianity of any content and in its own way disrespects other religions more than his own exclusivist stance.

The MP3 file is here.

Justin does a great job as moderator of this debate. He said what I was thinking a number of times.

One quick thing. If you like this debate, then you need to order the Greer-Heard forum MP3s from the Harold Netland vs. Paul F. Knitter debate. Paul Knitter's case for pluralism is essentially the same as Hick's although he emphasizes the "evangelicals are mean" argument more than the "I want people of other religions to like me" argument.

if you can't buy the Knitter lectures, then at least read this.

Anyway, here is my snarky summary. I creatively paraphrase some of the things that Hick says to make it more clear. And funny.

—-

Hick:
– had an experience looking at the buildings of other religions
– other religions have buildings, so all religions are equal
– I spent some time in the East, and met nice Eastern people
– since Eastern people are nice that means all religions are equal

Justin:
– isn't Jesus' claim to be the exclusive path to salvation offensive?

Sinkinson:
– all religions that are exclusive and have to deal with religious pluralism
– even John Hick writes polemically in favor of his own view
– even John Hick thinks that religions that are exclusive are false

Justin:
– what about the blind man and the elephant?
– the story seems to say that other people have a partial grasp?

– but the story-teller himself has the privileged view
– so isn't the religious pluralist just as arrogant as exclusivists?

Hick:
– well, it's not arrogant to claim to have the right answer
– Jesus never made the claim to be God incarnate
– Jesus never made the claim to be the exclusive path to God
– historians don't think that John's gospel is reliable because it is late
– the proclamation of exclusivity was added by evangelists much later

Sinkinson:
– the historians who doubt the high Christology are radical skeptics
– the mainstream of historical scholarship accepts a high Christology
– the EARLIEST history about Jesus has the highest Christology

Hick:
– the moderate scholars do think Jesus was divine but that he didn't think he was divine
– the phrase "Son of God" was used to describe any remarkable person
– only later did the early church turn the generic term into "God the Son"

Sinkinson:
– there is reflection on Jesus' identity and developments, but not invention
– Jesus and his followers were in trouble precisely for linking him to deity
– why else would Jesus get into trouble and get crucified?

Hick:
– the Romans crucified him because people were saying he was the Messiah
– but the Messiah was not identified as being divine, but political
– and that's why the Romans crucified him

Justin:
– do you (Sinkinson) think that people in other religions can be saved?

Sinkinson:
– the traditional view is exclusivism
– the other world religions are logically contradictory with Christianity
– you have to respect their differences – they are not the same as Christianity
– exclusivists allow that people can be saved by responding to natural theology
– and there are also other cases where non-Christians are saved, like old testament saints and babies who die in infancy

Hick:
– but people's religions are based on where they are born
– so it's not fair for God to expect people to be saved in one religion only

Sinkinson:
– the plurality of religions grouped by location doesn't make christianity false
– that would be the genetic fallacy – rejecting an idea because of its origin
– the real question to consider is whether it is true
– and even the objection assumes that God is a God of love, who should be fair

– but how do you know that God is loving? that is an exclusive view
– how can the “blob” ultimate of religious pluralism be “loving” and “fair”

Hick:
– the ultimate reality is loving or not loving depending on each person’s religion

Sinkinson:
– but some religions and theistic and some are atheistic
– how can those God exist and not exist?

Hick:
– God is beyond everyone’s understanding, except mine
– God is beyond all definitions, except mine
– God is beyond all human understanding, except mine
– i’m not contradicting myself, it’s a mystery! a mystery!
– as long as you don’t look to closely, they’re all the same!
– allow me to tell you about God, which no one can do but me

Justin:
– doesn’t your religious pluralism mean that Christianity is false?

Hick:
– well, Christianity can’t be true, because it disagrees with other religions
– Christianity can’t falsify other religions, that would be mean to them
– other religions are just as “profound” as Christianity – and that’s what matters – not whether a religion makes true claims
– some religions are older than Christianity, that means they can’t be disagreed with
– we can’t let Christianity be true, because then some people will feel bad
– if people feel bad, then they don’t like me and then I feel bad
– if there’s one thing I know about the unknowable ultimate reality, it’s that it wants me to be liked by lots of people

Sinkinson:
– your view seems to be agnosticism – that nothing can be known about the “ultimate real”
– if we can’t express in words what God is like, then why are you saying what God is like?

Hick:
– the indescribable ultimate is described (falsely, but interestingly) by various tradition

Sinkinson:
– does the “ultimate real” exist?

Hick:
– no

Justin:
– are all the exclusive religions wrong, and only you are right?

Hick:
– all propositions about God in all the religions are false

– the experience of being deluded and having feelings about your delusions is “valid” in all religions
– all religions are equally good ways to believe false things and to have feelings about your false beliefs
– only my propositions about God are true
– everyone who disagrees with me is wrong

Sinkinson:
– so all the propositions of all the religions are wrong
– but all the experiences and feelings are “right”

Hick:
– yes
– all propositions about God are humanly constructed, and so false
– except mine – mine are true!

Sinkinson:
– so everything distinctive about Christianity are literally false?

Hick:
– yes, Christian doctrines are all false
– because if they were true, other religions would be false, and they would feel bad
– and we can’t have that, because everyone has to like me
– only things that don’t offend people in other religions can be true

Sinkinson:
– so do we have to then treat all religions as non-propositional?

Hick:
– well just don’t ask people about the content of their beliefs
– just treat their religion as non-cognitive rituals, feelings and experiences
– don’t inquire too deeply into it, because all religions are all nonsense
– i’m very respectful and tolerant of different religions!

Sinkinson:
– but Muslims, for example, think their religion is making truth claims

Hick:
– but there can be tolerance as long as you treat religions as non-propositional nonsense

Sinkinson:
– um, I have a higher respect for religions than you do
– I actually consider that the claims of other religions could be true
– I think that other religions make truth claims and not nonsense claims

Hick:
– well they are all useful because they are all false
– I don’t emphasize beliefs, I emphasize living, experiences and feelings
– as long as everyone accepts my view and rejects their religion, we’ll all be tolerant

Justin:

– erm, isn't that an exclusive claim?
– you're trying to say that your view of what religion is is right, and everyone else is wrong

Hick:
– I'm not arrogant, I just think that all the religions of the worlds are false
– only my statements about religion are true – everyone else is wrong
– I'm tolerant, and Christians are arrogant

Justin:
– but you think Sinkinson's view is wrong
– why should we accept your view and deny his view?

Hick:
– His view of salvation is false, and mine is true

Sinkinson:
– you use words with set meanings, but you mean completely different things
– when I say salvation, I mean deliverance from sins through Jesus

Hick:
– I get to decide what salvation means for everyone, you intolerant bigot

Sinkinson:
– but that word has a specific meaning that has held true in all of Christian history
– but what you mean by salvation is people having subjective delusions that are not true

Hick:
– I don't like using the word salvation

Sinkinson:
– but you just used it!
– and you think that it is present in different world religions, but it isn't

Hick:
– God is unknowable and indescribable
– God isn't a wrathful God though
– and the Christian description of God is false
– Evangelical Christians are mean
– I had experiences with people of other faiths
– and these experiences taught me that religions that think that the universe is eternal are true
– as long as you reduce religion to behaviors and not truth, then religions are all good at producing behaviors
– if you just treat all religions as clothing fashion and food customs, they are all valid
– the main point of religion is for people to agree on cultural conventions and stick to them
– never mind the propositional statements of religions… who cares about truth? not me!
– but Christianity is definitely false

Sinkinson:
– the Judeo-Christian God is different – he reveals himself to humans
– he is distinct from the other religions
– he is personal, and is loving but also angry at sin

Hick:
– But God isn’t a person, and he isn’t a non-person
– I can’t say what he is – I’ll offend someone if I say anything at all!
– except Christians – I can offend them because they are arrogant bigots
– I’m also very spiritual – I meditate on my breathing

Sinkinson:
– you can’t assess a religion by the experiences that people have
– people who have weird experiences do all kinds of evil things
– so the real question has to be about truth – is the New Testament reliable?, etc.

Why does God allow his creatures to suffer?

January 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Another great post from Christian Apologetics UK. This thing is so full of arguments, it's hard to choose what to excerpt!

I'll choose something from Section 2:

Third, there is the free-will defence. Love is only genuine when it is not coerced. True love requires the ability to exercise free will. Thus, to facilitate the ability of free creatures to genuinely *love* God requires that one take the risk that these free creatures will choose to *reject* God or to violate His commandments.

Fourth, as suggested by proponents of Molinism, it is possible that only a world which was suffused with a certain amount of evil and suffering would result in the maximum number of people *freely* coming to know God. The doctrine of divine middle knowledge attests that God has knowledge of counterfactuals: That is, God has knowledge of what His free creatures would do under any circumstances. If this is the case, then it is possible that God has chosen to actualise a world — out of an array of possible worlds — in which the maximum number of people would choose to know God as their Creator and Saviour, without being in violation of their rights of autonomy and existential freedom of the will.

Fifth, God often *uses* evil and suffering to accomplish his ends. One classic example of this is in the story of Joseph being sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, an incident which set in motion a chain of events which ultimately led to Joseph being falsely accused of a crime and subsequently being thrown into prison. Later, Joseph is promoted to the position of Pharaoh's right-hand man, and is in a unique position to be able to administer food during times of severe famine: Including the saving of his family. In Genesis 50:20, Joseph says, *"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."*

Everybody needs to know how to answer this objection, so read the post.

Here's an excellent lecture on the problems of evil and suffering by Doug Geivett, if you want something to listen to. And here's a good text post on the problem of proving that God doesn't have a morally sufficient reason to permit suffering.

Canadian Conservative MP Joe Oliver declares war on green radicals

January 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

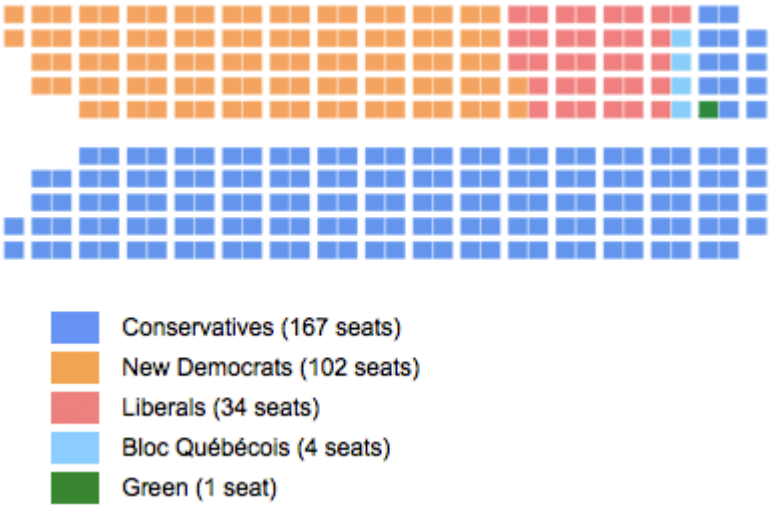

Canada 2011 Federal Election Seats

Terence Corcoran writes in the Financial Post about the Canadian Minister of Natural Resources Joe Oliver.

Excerpt:

> Through most of 2011, Canadian energy officials in politics and industry watched with bewildered helplessness and some shock as Washington allowed environmentalists to seize control of TransCanada's $7-billion Keystone XL pipeline issue. They stood by aghast as President Barack Obama, a captive of U.S. green activists and Hollywood movie stars, caved in to political pressure and postponed a decision to approve the project, a potential economic bonanza that promised to deliver thousands of jobs to Americans and billions of barrels of Canadian oil sands production to Texas.
>
> No such green hijacking is going to take place in Canada, at least not without an official fight. On the eve of hearings, which begin Tuesday in Kitimat, B.C., into the $5.5-billion Northern Gateway pipeline — to carry the same oil sands production from Alberta to the West Coast and on to China — the Harper government clearly aims to do what Barack Obama cannot or will not do in America, namely stand up to the growth-killing professional green movement.
>
> It is a cliché in journalism to declare metaphorical wars at the drop of a news release. **In this case, it looks like war is exactly what Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver launched Monday in an unprecedented open letter warning that Canada will not allow "environmental and other radical groups" to "hijack our regulatory system to achieve their radical ideological agenda."**
>
> **What a welcome war this is. Never before has a Canadian politician**

> **challenged the hitherto saintly protectors of the environment in such direct language. More importantly, Mr. Oliver took straight aim at a troubling trend in Canadian environmentalism — the foreign funding of Canadian green activist groups with the express purpose of shutting down Canadian resource development** — first documented in the *National Post* by Vancouver investigative writer Vivian Krause.
>
> **"These groups," said Mr. Oliver, "seek to exploit any loophole they can find, stacking public hearings with bodies to ensure that delays kill good projects. They use funding from foreign special interests to undermine Canada's national economic interest. They attract jet-setting celebrities with some of the largest personal carbon footprints in the world to lecture Canadians not to develop our natural resources."**

That's one reason why the Canadian economy is booming.

We elected a President who gave $535 million to Solyndra, blocked the Keystone XL pipeline, placed a moratorium on Gulf oil drilling and subsidized the Chevy Volt to by $250,000 PER VEHICLE. Note that all of the Chevy Volts sold have now been recalled for repairs. We could have been like Canada, if only we had not elected environmentalists and socialists.

Court of Appeals upholds Texas sonogram law

January 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> A federal appeals court has upheld a pro-life law in Texas allowing women a chance to see an ultrasound of their unborn child prior to an abortion.
>
> During the recent 82nd Texas Legislative Session, the Sonogram Bill (House Bill 15) was passed and signed into law by Governor Rick Perry. This historic law protects a pregnant woman's right to view her unborn child and hear the heartbeat of that child before making a decision about an abortion. On August 30, federal district court Judge Sam Sparks enjoined crucial parts of this law – further jeopardizing the health of women undergoing abortions—just two days before the law was to go into effect.
>
> The injunction was sought by the New York based Center for Reproductive Rights, an abortion advocacy group that files lawsuit against pro-life legislation.
>
> Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, who is pro-life, quickly filed an appeal on the same day that the lower court released the injunction with the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.
>
> Last Tuesday, a federal three-judge panel heard arguments to determine whether to lift the injunction. The panel was critical of the grounds for the injunction and Jonathan Mitchell, Solicitor General, argued for the law before the panel. Mitchell explained that the level of scrutiny and the arguments used to rule the law as unconstitutional — and thus block the law from going into effect — were misapplied and needed to be overturned.
>
> Chief Judge Edith Jones, of the three-judge panel, asked pro-abortion attorneys how medical sonogram imaging, and a factual description of that image could be viewed as radical or against the health of women.
>
> Today, the court ruled the state can enforce the law and said Judge Sparks was wrong to rule that abortion practitioners would likely win their case in court.
>
> […]The legislation allows women to see the ultrasound 24 hours before the abortion and abortion centers typically do ultrasounds to estimate the age of the baby before the abortion but they don't normally allow women a chance to see or explain to them in detail the development of their unborn child. When used in pregnancy centers offering abortion alternatives, approximately 80 percent of women change their mind about having an abortion.

There are so many incremental laws and initiatives that a pro-lifer like Rick Perry can implement. What I find disturbing is when people accept a candidate like Mitt Romney, who has a pro-abortion record, as being equal to candidates who have a pro-life record.

Does the Santorum Amendment promote critical thinking in the science classroom?

January 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from Evolution News to explain.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> With his near-win in Iowa and his recent rise in the polls, Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum is facing new scrutiny about his views on intelligent design and evolution. Reporters and others have expressed particular interest in the so-called "Santorum Amendment" authored by Senator Santorum, which was adopted in revised form in the Conference Report of the landmark No Child Left Behind Act. A media backgrounder on Rick Santorum, evolution, and intelligent design is available to download at: http://www.discovery.org/a/18071.

> The Santorum Amendment won overwhelming bipartisan support in the United States Senate. In fact, Sen. Ted Kennedy enthusiastically endorsed the Amendment on the Senate floor. Others voting in favor of the Amendment included Sen. Hillary Clinton, Sen. Joe Biden, Sen. Barbara Boxer, Sen. Harry Reid, Senator John McCain, and Senator Sam Brownback. (See Congressional Record, June 13, 2001, p. S6153.)
>
> The Santorum Amendment did not mandate teaching intelligent design, nor did it encourage teaching creationism or religion in the classroom. Instead, it encouraged open discussion and inquiry by teachers and students of the evidence both for and against controversial scientific theories such as Darwin's theory of evolution.
>
> The approach advocated in the Santorum Amendment is favored by the vast majority of Americans, no matter what their race, gender, or political party. According to a nationwide Zogby poll in 2009, 80 percent of likely voters "agree that teachers and students should have the academic freedom to discuss both the strengths and weaknesses of evolution as a scientific theory."
>
> "Allowing discussions of all the scientific evidence about evolution in the classroom is good for students and good for science. It's the mainstream approach supported by most Americans," says Dr. John West, Associate Director of Discovery Institute's Center for Science & Culture. "Those who are trying to put a gag order on teachers and students to insulate Darwin's theory from critical inquiry are the real extremists."

You can also listen a podcast with David DeWolf on this topic.

Supreme Court hands Obama administration a major defeat on religious liberty

January 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt: (most links removed)

> The Supreme Court has rejected the Obama administration's argument that it can dictate who churches hire as ministers or clergy in *Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School* v. *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*. The Obama administration unsuccessfully arguedthat the government can dictate who churches hire, as long as it also subjects secular employers to the same dictates regarding who they hire (so-called rules of general applicability). Taken to its logical conclusion, this argument would allow the government to ban a church or synagogue from hiring based on religion (defeating the whole purpose of religious freedom, which is to allow churches to promote their own religion) or sex (preventing the Catholic Church from having a male priesthood). No Supreme Court justice bought the administration's argument, made on behalf of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The Supreme Court unanimously found that such government control over who churches can hire would violate the religion clauses of the First Amendment.
>
> If federal antidiscrimination laws covered churches' hiring of clergy, as the Obama administration demanded, they would have to not just avoid discriminating based on things like sex or religion, but would also have to radically alter sensible hiring criteria by eliminating longstanding, neutral church practices that have the affect of inadvertently screening out more members of a minority group than of other groups (so-called "disparate impact" or "unintentional discrimination"). For example, some branches of the Lutheran Church have hiring criteria for religious broadcasters on their radio programs, such as "knowledge of Lutheran doctrine," and "classic music training," that few minorities satisfy (only 2 percent of all people with Lutheran training are minorities, and only 0.1 percent of people with both Lutheran training and classical music training are minorities), given the Lutheran Church's historical roots in overwhelmingly white areas like Scandinavia and Minnesota. Even though they are happy to have black applicants, and do not treat black applicants worse based on their race, the EEOC could easily sue them for racially disparate impact if the Obama administration's argument had been accepted. (The religion clauses of the First Amendment not only protect who churches hire as ministers, but also other people who serve as "voices of the church," such as theology professors, and religious broadcasters on behalf of a church.)

> We previously wrote about ways that the Obama administration is attacking religious freedom and separation of church and state at this link. We described how the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is wiping out jobs and discouraging hiring and job creation through onerous interpretations of federal employment laws, at this link.

Good news for religious liberty means bad news for Barack Obama.

Obama appoints amnesty advocate to head his Domestic Policy Council

January 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> In another move aimed at aiding his re-election, President Obama on Tuesday announced that Cecilia Munoz, a former senior vice president of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), would replace Melody Barnes as head of his Domestic Policy Council.
>
> […]The NCLR, whose name translates as "the race," is a tax-exempt nonprofit that describes itself as "the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States." It most recently led in vocal opposition against Arizona SB 1070, a law attacked by Attorney General Eric Holder as a discriminatory incarnation of profiling that usurped federal authority over immigration policy.
>
> When then-candidate Obama spoke to the NCLR national convention in 2008, he told the group what it wanted to hear — that Latino "communities are terrorized by ICE immigration raids." He also condemned those "communities taking immigration enforcement into their own hands," such as those that have passed state laws or local ordinances to check that those who are here are in fact here legally.
>
> At this year's La Raza convention, Obama touted the federal Dream (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act, a thinly disguised amnesty program that is part of "comprehensive immigration reform" designed to pit those who have successfully eluded the border patrol on a path to citizenship.
>
> Munoz has been serving since January 2009 as director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs at the time of that appointment. She was La Raza's vice president for research, advocacy and legislation.
>
> Since her entering the Obama administration, according to the watchdog group Judicial Watch, federal funding for La Raza has increased dramatically. In fiscal 2008, NCLR received $2.8 million in federal grants, and in fiscal 2009 it got $4.1 million. In 2010, the total rocketed to more than $11 million.
>
> […]La Raza has ties it refuses to condemn with groups such as MECHa, which has spent the last three decades indoctrinating Latino students on American campuses, claiming that California, Arizona, Mexico, Texas and southern Colorado were stolen and should be returned to their rightful owners, the people of Mexico.

> MECHa's slogan is derived from the rhetoric of Cuban dictator Fidel Castro: "Through the race, everything; outside the race, nothing."

Here's a good article summarizing all of the ways that the Obama administration has been pushing a backdoor amnesty since he was elected.

Does the Bible teach that faith is opposed to logic and evidence?

January 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

The article goes on to make some very informative comments on the relationship between apologetics and belief.

Should we legalize drugs and prostitution like Ron Paul wants?

January 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Telegraph explains how Ron Paul's policies have been tried and they have *failed*.

Excerpt:

> Amsterdam authorities say they are to halve the number of brothels and marijuana shops in the city's "red light" district and surrounding area

> The city announced plans to clean up the area a year ago and since then 109 sex "windows", from which prostitutes attract customers, have been closed. The new measures aim to reduce the number of windows to 243 from 482 last year, a city spokesman said.
>
> Amsterdam also wants to close half of the 76 cannabis shops in the city centre.
>
> "Money laundering, extortion and human trafficking are things you do not see on the surface but they are hurting people and the city. We want to fight this," deputy mayor of Amsterdam Lodewijk Asscher told Reuters.
>
> "We can still have sex and drugs but in a way that shows the city is in control."
>
> Prostitution was legalised in the Netherlands in 2000 and its soft drug policy, one of the most liberal in Europe, allows the sale of marijuana and possession of less than 5 grams (0.18 oz).

> But Amsterdam's toughening line is part of a wider trend in Holland.
>
> Two Dutch cities near the Belgian border want to close all their cannabis shops to combat drug tourism and crime.
>
> The 800-year-old red light district needs to diversify and showcase the city's history, Mr Asscher said.
>
> "This is a nice, old part of town. We can attract different groups of tourists. You should be able to have a beer at the old church square, watch fashion, and visit Chinatown," he added.

The Family Research Council explains how Ron Paul's drug policies don't actually work as advertised anywhere they've been tried.

Excerpt:

> Legalizers believe most black market and organized syndicate involvement in the drug business would die and that drug-induced crime would decrease with drug legalization. But these assertions are not supported by the facts. The United States experimented with legalization and it failed. From 1919 to 1922, government-sponsored clinics handed out free drugs to addicts in hopes of

> controlling their behavior. The effort failed. Society's revulsion against drugs, combined with enforcement, successfully eradicated the menace at that time.[32]
>
> California decriminalized marijuana in 1976, and, within the first six months, arrests for driving under the influence of drugs rose 46 percent for adults and 71.4 percent for juveniles.[33] Decriminalizing marijuana in Alaska and Oregon in the 1970s resulted in the doubling of use.[34] Patrick Murphy, a court-appointed lawyer for 31,000 abused and neglected children in Chicago, says that more than 80 percent of the cases of physical and sexual abuse of children now involve drugs. There is no evidence that legalizing drugs will reduce these crimes, and there is evidence that suggests it would worsen the problem.[35]
>
> Legalization would decrease drug distribution crime because most of those activities would become lawful. But would legalization necessarily reduce other drug-related crime like robbery, rape, and assault? Presumably legalization would reduce the cost of drugs and thus addicts might commit fewer crimes to pay for their habits. But less expensive drugs might also feed their habit better, and more drugs means more side effects like paranoia, irritability and violence. Suggestions that crime can somehow be eliminated by redefining it are spurious. Free drugs or legalizing bad drugs would not make criminal addicts into productive citizens. Dr. Mitchell S. Rosenthal, expert on drugs and adolescents and president of Phoenix House, a resident treatment center in New York, said, "If you give somebody free drugs you don't turn him into a responsible employee, husband, or father."[36] The Justice Department reports that most inmates (77.4 percent male and 83.6 percent female) have a drug history and the majority were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of their current offense. And a surprisingly large number of convicted felons admit their crime motive was to get money for drugs. For example, 12 percent of all violent offenses and 24.4 percent of all property offenses were drug-money motivated.[37]
>
> […]The extent to which individuals commit "drug-related crimes only" is overstated. Most incarcerated "drug"offenders violated other laws as well. Princeton University professor John Dilulio found that only 2 percent — i.e., 700 — of those in federal prisons were convicted of pure drug possession. They generally committed other and violent crimes to earn a sentence.[40]
>
> However, 70 percent of current inmates were on illegal drugs when arrested and, if drugs become cheaper, violent crime could reasonably be expected to increase.[41]

And more:

> History provides evidence that legalization of drugs in foreign nations has not been successful. For example, opium was legalized in China earlier this century. That decision resulted in 90 million addicts and it took a half-century to repair the

> damage.[59]
>
> Egypt allowed unrestricted trade of cocaine and heroin in the 1920s. An epidemic of addiction resulted. Even in Iran and Thailand, countries where drugs are readily available, the prevalence of addiction continues to soar.[60]
>
> Modern-day Netherlands is often cited as a country which has successfully legalized drugs. Marijuana is sold over the counter and police seldom arrest cocaine and heroin users. But official tolerance has led to significant increases in addiction. Amsterdam's officials blame the significant rise in crime on the liberal drug policy. The city's 7,000 addicts are blamed for 80 percent of all property crime and Amsterdam's rate of burglary is now twice that of Newark, New Jersey.[61] Drug problems have forced the city to increase the size of the police force and the city fathers are now rethinking the drug policy.[62]
>
> Dr. K. F. Gunning, president of the Dutch National Committee on Drug Prevention, cites some revealing statistics about drug abuse and crime. Cannabis use among students increased 250 percent from 1984 to 1992. During the same period, shootings rose 40 percent, car thefts increased 62 percent, and hold-ups rose 69 percent.[63]
>
> Sweden legalized doctor prescriptions of amphetamines in 1965. During the first year of legalization, the number of intravenous"speed" addicts rose 88.5 percent. A study of men arrested during the legalization period showed a high correlation between intravenous use and a variety of crimes.[64]
>
> Dr. Nils Bejorot, director of the Swedish Carnegie Institute and professor of social medicine at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, believes the solution to the growing drug problem is consistent social and legal harassment of both users and dealers.[65]
>
> Great Britain experimented with controlled distribution of heroin between 1959 and 1968. According to the British Medical Journal, the number of heroin addicts doubled every sixteen months and the increase in addicts was accompanied by an increase in criminal activity as well.[66] And British authorities found that heroin addicts have a very good chance of dying prematurely. On the crime front, Scotland Yard had to increase its narcotics squad 100 percent to combat the crime caused by the "legal" addicts.[67]
>
> The Swiss opened a "legalized drug" area in Zurich seven years ago and local addicts were given drugs, clean needles, and emergency medical care. Unfortunately, the liberal policy backfired and the number of addicts surged to 3,500; violence surged, too. "Needle Park," as it came to be known, was a place of open warfare among rival gangs, and even police faced gunfire. Their cars were attacked and overturned. In February 1995, officials ended the experiment, conceding that it had evolved into a grotesque spectacle.[68]

Why does legalizing drugs increase crime? Because drugs are addictive and they cost money to obtain. Addiction reduces the ability to hold down a job, which is a legal way of

getting money. Therefore, addicts will resort to crime in order to get the money to buy their drugs, since their addiction impairs their ability to hold down a job.

Here is an article that takes a look at Ron Paul's views on social policy and one that looks at Ron Paul's views on foreign policy.

William Lane Craig discusses Romans 9 and "corporate election"

January 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the post on Reasonable Faith. He's responding to a questioner who is an atheist,and who thinks that Calvinism makes belief in Christianity impossible.

Part of the question:

> In Romans 9, Paul describes Jacob and Esau as being judged as loved and hated (or "loved less") before they did any good or evil. Paul then goes on to liken all of us as clay molded by a potter, and states that it is not the will of he who runs but of He who shows mercy which saves us. Paul relates God telling Pharaoh: "for this purpose I have raised you up …" and then discusses an idea that the vessels God made for "common use" are there only for the purpose of showing His patience to his more special pots.
>
> Many Reformed think this passage shows double-predestination and unconditional election, and I am forced to agree with them – as is Christ Himself in John 6:65! The Reformed God is something I view as tyrannical and unworthy of worship, and indeed it is tough for someone outside the faith to respond to the Calvinist interpretation of Romans 9 with anything but hatred: as the prominent Reformed scholar James White describes this very chapter, "I understand that the only way one can believe this is by an act of grace."
>
> In my view, this defeats your position of molinism, since one cannot freely choose God on his own in any potential setting without God's prior help. Furthermore, the context of the related story in John 6 has disciples abandoning Christ, prompting what He says in 6:65 and proving that Christ is not offered as a free gift to all! What is left for the freedom of man to choose Christ given these passages?

Part of the answer:

> Second, let's talk about Paul's doctrine of election in Romans 9. I want to share with you a perspective on Paul's teaching that I think you'll find very illuminating and encouraging. Typically, as a result of Reformed theology, we have a tendency to read Paul as narrowing down the scope of God's election to the very select few, and those not so chosen can't complain if God in His sovereignty overlooks them. I think this is a fundamental misreading of the chapter which makes very little sense in the context of Paul's letter.
>
> Earlier in his letter Paul addresses the question of what advantage there is to Jewish identity if one fails to live up to the demands of the law (2. 17-3.21). He says that although being Jewish has great advantages in being the recipients of God's revelatory oracles, nevertheless being Jewish gives you no automatic claim

to God's salvation. Instead, Paul asserts the radical and shocking claim that "He is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is of the heart, spiritual and not literal" (2. 28-29).

Paul held that "no human being will be justified in God's sight by works of the law" (3.20); rather "we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law" (3. 29). That includes Gentiles as well as Jews. "Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one" (3. 29-30).

Do you realize what that meant to Paul's Jewish contemporaries? Gentile "dogs" who have faith in Christ may actually be more Jewish than ethnic Jews and go into the Kingdom while God's chosen people are shut out! Unthinkable! Scandalous!

Paul goes on to support his view by appeal to the example of none less than Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation. Abraham, Paul explains, was pronounced righteous by God *before* he received circumcision. "The purpose," says Paul, "was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised [*i.e*., the Gentiles] and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them and likewise the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised [note the qualification!] but also follow the example of faith which our father Abraham had before he was circumcised" (4.11-12).

This is explosive teaching. Paul begins chapter 9 by expressing his profound sorrow that ethnic Jews have missed God's salvation by rejecting their Messiah [= *Christ*]. But he says it's not as though God's word had failed. Rather, as we have already seen, "not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his descendants" (9. 6-7). Being ethnically Jewish is not enough; rather one must be a child of the promise—and that, as we've seen, may include Gentiles and exclude Jews.

The problematic, then, with which Paul is wrestling is how God's chosen people the Jews could fail to obtain the promise of salvation while Gentiles, who were regarded by Jews as unclean and execrable, could find salvation instead. Paul's answer is that God is sovereign: He can save whomever He wants, and no one can gainsay God. He has the freedom to have mercy upon whomever He wills, even upon execrable Gentiles, and no one can complain of injustice on God's part.

So—and this is the crucial point—*who is it that God has chosen to save?* The answer is: *those who have faith in Christ Jesus*. As Paul writes in Galatians (which is a sort of abbreviated Romans), "So you see that it is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham" (Gal. 3. 7). Jew or Gentile, it doesn't matter: God has sovereignly chosen to save all those who trust in Christ Jesus for salvation.

That's why Paul can go on in Romans 10 to say, "There is no distinction between

> Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. For ‘everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved'” (10. 12-13). Reformed theology can make no sense at all of this wonderful, universal call to salvation. Whosoever will may come.
>
> Paul’s burden, then, in Romans 9 is not to narrow the scope of God’s election but to broaden it. He wants to take in all who have faith in Christ Jesus regardless of their ethnicity. Election, then, is first and foremost a corporate notion: God has chosen for Himself a people, a corporate entity, and it is up to us by our response of faith whether or not we choose to be members of that corporate group destined to salvation.
>
> Of course, given God’s total providence over the affairs of men, this is not the whole story. But Molinism makes good sense of the rest. John 6. 65 means that apart from God’s grace no one can come to God on his own. But there’s no suggestion there that those who refused to believe in Christ did not do so of their own free will. God knows in exactly what circumstances people will freely respond to His grace and places people in circumstances in which each one receives sufficient grace for salvation if only that person will avail himself of it. But God knows who will respond and who won’t. So again the fault does not lie with God that some persons freely resist God’s grace and every effort to save them; rather they like Israel fail to attain salvation because they refuse to have faith.

My view of election and Romans 9 is corporate election. Like middle knowledge, once you understand the concept of corporate election and re-read Romans 9, it turns out that the whole thing reads naturally. If you reject corporate election and middle knowledge because you like Calvinism, then there are lots of problems with the rest of the Bible, as William Lane Craig described here.

If you’d like to see Bill take on an atheist professor from the prestigious University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, who argues that Calvinist theology disproves the existence of a benevolent God, then read this debate.

The problem with the slogan “Christianity is not a religion, it’s a relationship”

January 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From blogger Allston Dee.

Excerpt:

> Most people understand the word religion to mean a set of supposed truth claims about God and life after death; which are united with a way of life informed by those very truth claims. If this is how religion is defined, then Christianity surely is a “religion.”
>
> Think of it this way—without proper doctrine, beliefs and sacraments (visible religious acts to symbolize God’s grace), how could one know they are in right relationship with God in the first place? If there was no religion (as defined above) at all, how does one know they are in relationship with God?
>
> […]Take for example the Christians and the Jews. An essential doctrine of the Christian faith is that Jesus *is* God and *is* the promised Messiah. Conversely, Jews believe that Jesus *is not* the promised Messiah and that he *is not* God. The law of non-contradiction (this is the second of the three basic laws of logic) attests that both of these statements cannot be true at the same time and in the same way. Either the Christians are right, or the Jews are right, or they are both wrong.
>
> […]It’s worth noting that most religions have a sense of a relationship with God. Given that Mormons, Jews, Muslims and Christians all claim to have a relationship with God—and that we know contradicting views on the nature of God cannot be true at the same time and in the same way—there must be something that defines the true nature of God and how we come into relationship with Him.

He writes that you need to know who God is before you can have a relationship with him. I agree.

And Melinda Penner of Stand to Reason also had something interesting to add to this:

> First, we don’t know about Christianity by faith. Everyone knows about the claims of Christianity and the Bible in the same ways other things are known. Faith isn’t a way of knowing. It’s trusting in what we have come to know to be true. Faith is laying hold personally of what is true in the Bible. Knowledge is the first step and it’s no different than coming to know about anything else. So it can be discussed between those who have faith and those who don’t because they’re both operating in the same way to evaluate truth claims. Faith comes after knowing.
>
> Second, Christianity isn’t a private topic. This is a way to subjectivize Christianity – to relativize what Christians believe. But essential to the what the Bible

> teaches is that it's not subjective or relative. It's true for all people. Things happened in history that were witnessed and reported. And what the Bible teaches is for all people. So engage in consideration of the truth claims of Christianity, but don't dismiss them as private, subjective beliefs.

I agree with her, too. My concern with the notion of Christianity as a relationship is that people will cash it out as a subjective thing that they do for fun privately and that it is never the basis of public actions or words. And my fear is that without theology, people just project their own character onto God and discern his character through their feelings and intuitions, instead of through a study of the Bible and theology.

A relationship is not projecting your needs and desires onto the other person. A relationship is when you get to know the other person by studying him, and you start to incorporate his values and goals into your behavior. You re-prioritize to take his needs into account when you act. And when you act on his interests, it may be the case that other people won't like you, and that might make you feel bad. But when you are the other person's friend, you do what's right *for them* and you just live with the fact that not everyone is going to like that. The Christian life is not about a private relationship and private feelings. It's about the public actions you take because of your knowledge and convictions about God's character. It's not private. It's not meant to make you feel good. It's public.

Consider Matthew 10:32-33:

32"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.

33But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

And her's another like it 1 Corinthians 4:1-4:

1So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.

2Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

3I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.

4My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

And 2 Timothy 2:4:

4 No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.

And 2 Corinthians 5:20:

20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

A good ambassador doesn't represent himself – he doesn't project his character onto his sovereign. A good ambassador represents his sovereign, and that requires knowing about

him, as well as experiencing him. When you have a relationship, you have a responsibility to know who that other person is and to act on their interests – which may be quite different from your interests. And it really doesn’t matter what the people around you, who are not friends with your friend, think about you for doing that.

Nearly 1 million workers vanished under Obama: real unemployment rate at 11%

January 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily. (H/T Doug Ross)

Excerpt:

> Initial jobless claims unexpectedly jumped by 24,000 last week to 399,000 as more workers lost their jobs, the Labor Department said Thursday. At the same time, the economy continues to lose workers.
>
> In the 30 months since the recession officially ended, nearly 1 million people have dropped out of the labor force — they aren't working, and they aren't looking — according to data from Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. In the past two months, the labor force shrank by 170,000.
>
> This is virtually unprecedented in past economic recoveries, at least since the BLS has kept detailed records. In the past nine recoveries, the labor force had climbed an average 3.5 million by this point, according to an IBD analysis of the BLS data.
>
> "Given weak job prospects, many would-be workers dropped out of (or never entered) the labor force," noted Heidi Shierholz of the Economic Policy Institute in her analysis of the BLS jobs report issued last Friday. "That reduces the measured unemployment rate but does not represent real improvement."
>
> According to the BLS, the "labor force participation rate" — the ratio of the number of people either working or looking for work compared with the entire working-age population — is now 64%, down from 65.7% when the recession ended in June 2009. That's the lowest level since women began entering the workforce in far greater numbers several decades ago.
>
> If you adjust for this drop, the unemployment rate would be close to 11%, instead of the official 8.5%.

Stimulus spending doesn't create jobs. But we know from the past that tax cuts did cut the unemployment rate.

Margaret Thatcher explains conservatism in the House of Commons

January 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These are from Luanne, she's been posting Margaret Thatcher clips all week on Facebook.

Margaret Thatcher on socialism:

Margaret Thatcher on public works:

Margaret Thatcher on wealth inequalities:

If you are not already my friend on Facebook, then please friend me. Facebook is the place where you can get to know me more as a person. You can also follow me on Twitter.

Standard and Poor's cuts credit ratings for nine European Union countries

January 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNBC.

Excerpt:

> Standard & Poor's downgraded the credit ratings of nine euro zone countries, stripping France and Austria of their coveted triple-A status but not EU paymaster Germany, in a Black Friday 13th for the troubled single currency area.
>
> […]S&P lowered its long-term rating on Cyprus, Italy, Portugal and Spain by two notches, and cut its rating on Austria, France, Malta, Slovakia and Slovenia by one notch.
>
> The move puts highly indebted Italy on the same BBB+ level as Kazakhstan and pushes Portugal into junk status.
>
> The credit-rating agency affirmed the current long-term ratings for Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.
>
> […]The credit-rating agency put all 14 euro-zone nations — Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain — on "negative" outlook for a possible further downgrade.
>
> Germany was the only country to emerge totally unscathed with its triple-A rating and a stable outlook.
>
> A negative outlook indicates that S&P believes there is at least a one-in-three chance that a country's rating will be lowered in 2012 or 2013.

It's gotten so bad that Greek families are abandoning their children, and ordinary medicines like Aspirin are in short supply.

Greece is a socialist country

Why is this happening to Greece?

Well, Greece elected a socialist majority in 2009, and the socialist party was in power from 1981 to 1989, 1993 to 2004, and now 2009 to 2012.

Excerpt:

> The Panhellenic Socialist Movement, better known as PASOK, is a Greek centre-left political party and the current majority party in the Greek Parliament. In 1981 PASOK formed the first socialist government in Greece's history, and subsequently governed the country for most of the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s. PASOK served as the main opposition party between 2004 and 2009. It is a member of the Party of European Socialists and the Socialist International. In

> the European Parliament it has 8 out of 22 Greek MEPs. On 31 January 2006, the party's president, George Papandreou, was elected President of the Socialist International, the worldwide organisation of social democratic, socialist and labour parties. Following the 2009 legislative election, PASOK became the majority party and Papandreou became Prime Minister.

The Wall Street Journal explains what the socialists in Greece have been doing lately.

Excerpt:

> **"The present government has done absolutely nothing during the last 12 months to speed up privatizations, reduce the public sector or open up closed professions," Athanasios Papandropoulos, a leading economic analyst, told me recently in an interview. "In these 12 months it has not fired even one civil servant. The only thing it is doing is trying to tax the private sector out of existence. Why should we believe that they will do something different now?"**
>
> **One commentator writing in the newspaper Kathimerini this week made the point even more forcefully: "Whereas more than 1,000 Greeks were losing their jobs in the private sector every day in August, the government was assuring civil servants with lifetime tenure that their job privileges were not in danger."**
>
> **Structural reforms have been repeatedly announced by Greek officials during the past. Yet nothing has happened.** Greece's plans tend to resemble Soviet Five Year Plans: They look good on paper but have absolutely no bearing on reality. Anyone in the government who tries to point this out is forced to resign. Economist Stella Balfousia, the head of the Greek Parliament budget office, had to tender her resignation after her office published a report contradicting the government's official forecasts on debt and deficit.
>
> Privatization is a case in point. Greece will have to raise some €1.7 billion by the end of September from the privatization program and €5 billion by the end of the year from the medium-term fiscal strategy program. Yet in the past year and a half not a single privatization has taken place. The explanation given for this is the low share prices of the listed companies. The real reason is probably that Greek politicians are loath to give up the system of spoils that they have long run through these enterprises, which are staffed by the party faithful in exchange for votes.

I saw that Zero Hedge posted recently regarding the massive withdrawal of deposits from Greek banks.

Excerpt:

> The year is not over yet, and already Greece's banks have lost €36.7 billion of their deposit base in 2011, and a whopping €64.6 billion since the beginning of

> 2010, **which is down from €233 billion to €173 billion in under two years**. In October another €3.5 billion was withdrawn from Greek banks and likely either redeposited somewhere deep in the heart of Switzerland, or converted to various inert metals and buried somewhere in the back yard. The good news: the outflow is just over half of October's record €6.8 billion. The bad news: at this rate of outflows, Greek banks will have zero deposits in around 4 years. Which at the end of the day is all the matters, because while the Troica can keep funding capital shortfalls indefinitely, all faith in the country's banks has now been lost and Greece is officially a zombie economy. The fact that the country's deficit as a % of GDP is about to be re-revised even higher is no longer even meaningful: the Greek economy and its banking sectors are now officially dead. We merely feel bad for anyone who still has cash in banks as, just like gold in 1930s America, any residual cash may soon be "sequestered" for national security purposes. After all there are bankers who need record bonuses, and Military sales from Europe and the US that have to proceed using what will likely soon be "commingled" deposit cash.

Greece is a socialist nation. And they are reaping the rewards of socialism. You cannot spend your way out of debt. You cannot create jobs by taxing job creators. You cannot create wealth by punishing those who create wealth.

Since Barack Obama was elected, we have been running deficits of about $1.3 trillion dollars each year. The last Republican deficit under Bush and Boehner was $160 billion dollars. We made a mistake and we elected a socialist, and now we are Greece – just a little less far down the road to serfdom.

150 evangelical leaders agree to endorse Rick Santorum after two-day conference

January 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

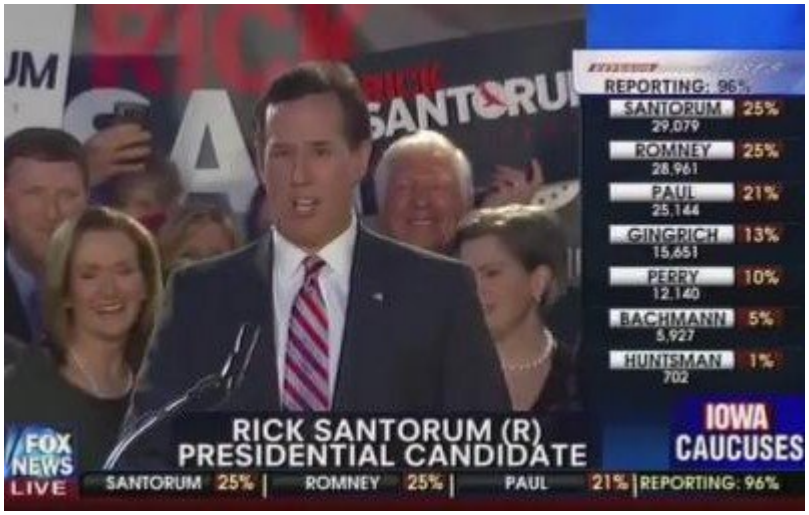

Rick Santorum Iowa Caucuses
From Life News.

Excerpt:

> After a Friday-Saturday meeting with more than 150 leaders and representatives of evangelical, pro-family and pro-life groups, the organizations have declared consensus support for Rick Santorum's Republican presidential campaign.
>
> Tony Perkins, the president of the Family Research Council and a participant in last night's private meeting, addressed a press conference call today to provide additional information about the decision and expected endorsements from some of those attending.
>
> Perkins said the leaders of the evangelical groups came to the meeting each supporting the various different GOP candidates seeking to replace pro-abortion President Barack Obama. Participants engaged in a question and answer session with representatives of each of the campaigns, except for former Utah Governor Jon Huntsman, who did not send a spokesman to the event.
>
> After the session, the leaders discussed the presidential race amongst themselves and then undertook a three-round ballot process. Perkins said the discussion culminated in an agreement that the groups and leaders each have "an overriding passion and desire to defeat Barack Obama" this November. Although the leaders of the various organizations strongly support various candidates, they eventually decided to support Santorum.
>
> "I think it was vigorous discussion of who they felt best represented the conservative movement and who they think had the best chance of succeeding," he said, but adding that there would not be a "coordinated effort" amongst the

> groups and leaders to endorse Santorum.
>
> "There is a hope and expectation that those represented by the constituency will make a difference in South Carolina," he said, adding that some in attendance threw their support behind Santorum to avoid having a repeat of 2008 where conservative candidates split the vote.
>
> Perkins indicated Santorum, Newt Gingrich and Rick Perry but only Gingrich and Santorum made the final ballot. There were 114 votes on the final ballot, as some leaders had to catch returning flights home, and Santorum emerged with a majority (85) of those voting, the FRC president said.
>
> […]The names and groups participating were not released, but Perkins mentioned former Republican presidential candidate Gary Bauer as another organizer of the private meeting. He said the names of organizations and leaders participating will become public as they begin making endorsements.
>
> […]Last week, the pro-life group CatholicVote issued an endorsement for Santorum.

Bauer has already endorsed Santorum. I agree that Gingrich is definitely the runner-up, and would be a fine choice for conservatives, but Santorum really is the best overall. My biggest concern about this is how younger evangelicals are so apathetic when it comes to politics and have no idea how to think carefully about things like free market capitalism, abortion, marriage and peace through strength. The young evangelicals are largely illiterate, making their decisions based on emotions and intuitions, because they think that Christianity is about being "nice" so that more people like them. Oh well.

What I find interesting is when even moderate conservative bloggers – ones who are not evangelical – are beginning to notice that there is an *integrity* argument for Rick Santorum.

Look at this comment from Jeff Goldstein – he's replying to some Ron Paul person, I guess:

> BMoe –
>
> We've talked at length about this here, so if you haven't already done so, I'd say go back and look at the various riffs on how Santorum's ideas of family as the unit of individual autonomy is tied to his Catholicism / Thomism. Also, how family communitarianism is not at all like collectivism.
>
> My own belief — and James Pethokoukis took this up, as well (I believe I did a post on it), is that Santorum is reacting in the excerpt on individualism you cite, to the Objectivists — those whose ideological foundation is Rand. That is, the libertarians. You may disagree with Santorum — and there's plenty of room to do so — but it does no good to caricature the belief. **Santorum is not a collectivist. And his ideas about the family — and government's role in nurturing that unit — amount to things like increased tax credits for producing new citizens, or increased credit for charitable giving, so that**

> **charity is taken away from the state.**
>
> And he tries to balance his own views with the constraints placed on elected officials by the Constitution, which for Santorum includes the 9th and 10th Amendments.
>
> These are often difficult waters to traverse. But with Santorum, he tells you what he thinks and believes. For me, that's a net positive.
>
> Romney mouths platitudes about limited government, and yet it's clear he doesn't believe a word of it. **Santorum believes in a social safety net for the truly disadvantaged and indigent, but he tempers that with an animus toward those who would game the system — and toward programs that have the net impact of institutionalizing dependence on government.**
>
> **What I liked about Cain — he didn't have all the answers, because he hasn't studied every question — I like about Santorum. You can see his thinking. He shows his work.**

And a bit later, same guy:

> **Also, BMoe, I think it pretty obvious by now I'm not a social conservative. I'm just far less bothered by them then I used to be back when I was given to accepting the caricature of such creatures.**
>
> Nowadays I see that it is the "liberal" secularists who are far more dangerous, because their God is the State, and they therefore serve their God by granting that ever more power comes from the State.
>
> The religious folk simply want the state to leave them the f**k alone, often times. And me and my spaghetti bulbs tend to commiserate.

I think that's right. I am not thrilled with Santorum's blue-collar worker economic plan. I'm an investor and a white collar software engineer. I'm chaste and have no children and no plans to marry, so Santorum's tripling of the tax deduction for children won't help me. But what is appealing about the man is his vision: he wants more working families and he wants them to face less financial pressure if they have more children, and more choice in education. I get that. It's not applicable to me, but I get it. I get what his vision is.

Rick Santorum at the Values Voters Summit

Here's a 3-part speech by Rick Santorum at the Family Research Council:

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

The Family Research Council is my third favorite think tank, behind the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute.

Here's something to read if you can't see the speech.

Related posts

- Why Christians and social conservatives should vote for Rick Santorum
- Rick Santorum's pro-family economic plan TRIPLES the child tax deduction
- Is Rick Santorum conservative or liberal? What are Rick Santorum's political views?
- Rick Santorum helps liberal college students to understand the logic of marriage
- George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class
- Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech
- Rick Santorum for President of the United States
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
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Rick Santorum would not stand idle while Iran develops nuclear weapons

January 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East
From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum said Saturday the U.S. was wrong to condemn the killing of an Iranian nuclear scientist this week.
>
> The Obama administration's public posture on the death Wednesday of Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan does not reflect the hard line Santorum supports in keeping Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, the former Pennsylvania senator said while campaigning in conservative upstate South Carolina.
>
> "Our country condemned it. My feeling is we should have kept our mouth shut," Santorum told about 200 people packed into a popular breakfast diner in Greenville.
>
> Santorum is vying to emerge as conservatives' alternative to former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney in the Jan. 21 South Carolina primary. Romney leads in public and private polls of likely voters, although former House Speaker Newt Gingrich is within striking distance, with a week to go before balloting begins.
>
> However, Santorum has risen here since his breakthrough near-tie with Romney in the Iowa caucuses on Jan. 3. He has a robust state organization and is making aggressive inroads with evangelical conservatives, like many of those who were at the Country Ham House Saturday morning.
>
> And while Santorum stresses values issues, he has also argued for a tough stand on Iran's nuclear capability. Responding to a question in Greenville, he said he

> supports missile strikes to stop its nuclear program, if Iran refuses to submit to inspections.
>
> "If these are people who are developing a weapon to be used to either destroy the state of Israel or to spread terror — a reign of terror — around the world, we shouldn't be sitting on the sidelines and letting it happen," he said. "They cannot have a nuclear weapon, because you, in Greenville, will not be safe."

That's what I've been saying for months. There are things we could be doing to show them that having nuclear weapons and interfering in Syria and Iraq are not good ideas for them. Covert operations, arming student groups, pro-West broadcasts, little "accidents" at Iranian training camps in Venezuela. Nice country you got there, guv'nor. Would be a shame if anything were to 'appen to it.

Related posts

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Typical working UK mother spends 19 minutes per day with her children

January 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a re-post of a story I posted during the Christmas holidays, and I wanted to make sure everyone saw it.

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> According to the Office of National Statistics, a typical working mother spends as little as 19 minutes a day with her children; working fathers even less.
>
> Time-neglect is what child psychologists call it, and they are studying its effect in middle-class families with increasing concern.
>
> 'We are seeing some of the most privileged and yet in some ways the most neglected children in history,' says child psychologist Dr Richard House, from the University of Roehampton.
>
> We have some of the longest working hours in Europe and the recession is piling pressure on parents to be the last to leave the office. The guilt parents feel about this has consequences for when they are with their children.
>
> 'Parents are reluctant to say "No" when they need to. They try to compensate by lavishing gifts on them. Neither is good for children's well-being and healthy development,' says Dr House.
>
> His warnings follow a Unicef report that admonished British parents for trapping their children in a 'cycle of compulsive consumerism' by showering them with toys and designer labels rather than time.
>
> […]Unicef's research also shows that what children actually want is more stable family time, as do many of the parents struggling to provide for them.
>
> More than two-thirds of mothers work, and no one would want to see the progress women have made in the workplace reversed.

No one except the husbands and the children, but who cares about them?

More:

> Historian Rebecca Fraser, mother of three daughters and author of A People's History Of Britain, says that while nostalgia for the Fifties is understandable, the progress of women in education makes a return to that model unlikely.
>
> 'In 1951, only one quarter of the tiny British student population (5 per cent of adults) were women, while in 2011 more than half the student population are female,' she says.
>
> 'With so many attending university, it is probably inevitable that most women are

> going to continue to want a career.'
>
> […]Child-care experts warn that time-neglect by high-achievers can have serious consequences on their children.
>
> Professor Suniya Luthar, a world expert in the welfare of children from affluent homes, has just completed research that shows the numbers of teenagers with significant mental health issues can be up to three times higher among those from high-achieving and prosperous families.
>
> 'Traditionally, the view is that these children have it all, but the pressures on them are immense,' says Professor Luthar.
>
> 'The solution for any parent is to spend time with them.'
>
> They also need clear boundaries, she says, something that 'uber-working' parents often are less able to enforce.

Every decision a woman makes has to be based on the plan for a marriage, family and children. Ideologies like feminism and socialism are incompatible with marriage and family. What is the use of a woman crying crocodile tears over her voluntary neglect of her own children when every decision she made prior to marriage and after marriage is based on an anti-family, pro-government worldview?

When a woman votes for government to tax her future family, regulate her husband's employer, and restrict the family to purchasing government services only (day care, public schools), then she must not complain when she is forced into the workplace and her child is handed to strangers to raise. That is the end result of being taken in by fashionable ideologies. When you oppose low taxes and small government, you oppose keeping money in the family. And that means that the wife will work, and the children will be raised by strangers. Women who vote for socialism, environmentalism, feminism, etc. are forcing themselves away from their future children.

Think before you act – don't act on feelings and intuitions. If you want a marriage and a family, then vote accordingly.

Wall Street Journal: Rick Santorum is a supply-sider for the working man

January 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Just to refresh everyone, a proponent of supply-side economics is someone who believes that economic growth is driven more by innovation and entrepreneurship, and less by consumer spending and government stimulus spending. Supply-siders are all about *creating wealth* – by letting creative people have the money invent something valuable that consumers will want to buy – like an iPhone or a Kindle. Demand-siders are all about *redistributing wealth* – by having the government take from one group of people to give it to another group of people – like a Solyndra loan or a Chevy Volt subsidy.

Here's the Wall Street Journal article about Rick Santorum, and where he fits on the scale.

Excerpt on his economic plan for businesses:

> 'I'm someone who believes that making things creates wealth," says Rick Santorum. It is primary day in New Hampshire, and the former Pennsylvania senator and current presidential candidate is describing his plan to slash corporate tax rates. To encourage companies to make things, he would completely eliminate the federal income tax on manufacturers. For all other businesses, the rate would be cut in half, to 17.5% from 35%.
>
> […]I ask if his corporate tax plan opens him up to criticism that he and President Obama are both favoring particular sectors of the economy, with Mr. Santorum picking manufacturing while Mr. Obama anoints green energy. "Oh, green energy is not a sector, I mean, come on. It's like a half-dozen companies," says Mr. Santorum.
>
> Does this mean the Obama policy would be more legitimate if the president were favoring a larger group of Solyndras?
>
> "He's talking about handing out tax-free grants and loans," says Mr. Santorum, who adds that his own plan "is a conservative approach. It's supply-side. It's cutting rates. Why are we cutting the corporate rate to 17.5% and making it simple? . . . Because we think it's what's necessary to grow the economy. . . . So if what's necessary to grow the economy in one sector of the economy is different from another, then why should we have the same tax rate?" He argues that manufacturing has been hit particularly hard by the costs of regulation and litigation.

That's pro-growth – we're all going to have multiple job offers if he executes this plan – back to 4% unemployment like under Bush.

But what about his economic plan for taxpayers?

> Mr. Santorum also believes that making babies creates wealth. It's very difficult

> to grow an economy with a shrinking population, he says, pointing to the "demographic winter in Europe" as a cause of that region's troubles. To help avoid that fate in the U.S., he wants to triple the per-child tax credit and also cut individual tax rates.
>
> […]On the personal tax side, rewarding child-rearing is consistent with the pro-life views of Mr. Santorum, who has seven children. But the case he makes seems to echo the analysis of some Wall Street economists, who view population growth as a critical advantage the United States will enjoy over China and the euro zone.
>
> Mr. Santorum argues that the cost of Europe's massive welfare states made it too expensive for young people to have families. He notes that with plummeting birth rates, many European countries have resorted to "baby bonuses" to try to reverse the tide, but the demographic picture remains bleak, while the costs of entitlement programs have exploded.
>
> "Who are benefits promised to, overwhelmingly? Well, they're promised to older people. And if you have a society like Europe that is upside down where there are a lot more older people than younger people, you have economic calamity," he says. Asked if giving generous per-child credits will result in an even larger number of households exempt from the income tax and therefore amenable to more spending, he says his plan will drive growth and that, in turn, will bring more people on to the tax rolls. Elimination of deductions might also keep some people paying income taxes. He aims to balance overall taxes and spending at 18% of GDP. Spending has soared to 24% in the Obama era.
>
> In a still-crowded field of non-Romneys trying to compete for the Republican nomination, Mr. Santorum could emerge in the Jan. 21 South Carolina primary as the man who can bring together the old Reagan coalition. A champion of cultural conservatives with a blue-collar background, he is also making the case for deep cuts in federal spending. His credibility on this last issue derives from the political price he paid for being an early promoter of entitlement reform.

And what about his plan for entitlement reform?

> To prevent an economic calamity on this side of the Atlantic, he also proposes to cut $5 trillion from federal spending in five years. He calls the plan advanced by House Budget Chairman Paul Ryan "a good starting point," but he notes that few of the spending cuts happen in the first decade of the plan. Also, Mr. Santorum says that he wants to reform Social Security, not just Medicare and Medicaid. "I like the Ryan plan on the Medicare side. I don't like waiting 10 years. I don't like waiting 10 years on anything. I've also talked about Social Security."
>
> Has he ever, going back at least to the 1990s. Says Mr. Santorum, "Some guy just walked up to me at the [New Hampshire campaign] headquarters with a picture of me standing at the presidential podium in Kansas City, Missouri, in

> April 1998 when I went with Bill Clinton to talk about Social Security reform. I was the Republican lead on the issue," he recounts, a dangerous proposition for someone representing Pennsylvania, a state with one of the oldest populations in the country. "And I won re-election after that, I might add."
>
> But after winning that 2000 election—his second Senate victory and his fourth straight win in Democratic territory—Mr. Santorum aggressively backed President George W. Bush's call for allowing younger workers to own personal accounts.

It's much easier to contemplate marriage when you 1) have multiple job offers and 2) you are keeping more of what you earn and 3) children are less of a burden on your income and 4) the government is not going to bankrupt those children with out of control entitlements. Marriage-minded men who want to start families will love this plan. It is a signal to men to start working, start marrying and start having children. Men think about these things, you know – losing our jobs, whether our children will be better off than we were, and so on. Santorum gets it – he has a pro-marriage, pro-family economic plan.

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Eric Metaxas endorses Rick Santorum, urges Gingrich and Perry to drop out

January 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Everyone knows Eric Metaxas – he is the author of great biographies of William Wilberforce and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The Wall Street Journal is talking about something Eric said on Sunday.

Excerpt:

> Republican presidential candidates Newt Gingrich and Rick Perry should drop out of the race before South Carolina's Saturday primary, prominent conservative author Eric Metaxas said at a Sunday prayer breakfast.
>
> Mr. Metaxas said he was optimistic some of the candidates competing for the state's conservative voters would take themselves out of contention to allow South Carolinians to coalesce around an alternative to former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney.
>
> "It's more likely that some of these wonderful men that are running will hear God's voice and get out of the race before Saturday for the good of this country," Mr. Metaxas, who has endorsed former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, said Sunday at a weekend gathering of the South Carolina Republican Party – a day after Mr. Santorum picked up strong support from conservative Christian groups. To be effective, the candidates must drop out before next Saturday's contest, he said.
>
> "This is the last exit before the bridge," Mr. Metaxas said in an interview later. "They've been dividing the vote and so if they don't do this now, they will harm the country because they can't hang on to the bitter end." Other presidential hopefuls, Texas Rep.Ron Paul and former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman, are less relevant, Mr. Metaxas said.
>
> Mr. Santorum, who spoke at the breakfast after Mr. Metaxas, did not explicitly urge other candidates to drop out, but appealed to voters to gather behind him, regardless of his perceived shot at seizing the White House.
>
> "Will the people of South Carolina vote their conscience or will they let people…. tell you who's the one you should choose because we have to win?" he asked.

Across the pond, Tim Stanley of the UK Telegraph is suggesting something similar.

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Why are gas prices so high? 11 more Solyndras in Obama's energy program

January 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hans Bader reviews Obama's energy plan.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> A liberal Congress must share the blame for this fiasco, since the massive $800 billion stimulus package it passed in 2009 funded these boondoggles. As a Solyndra stakeholder exulted, "there's never been more money shoved out the government's door in world history." But as the Washington Post noted, energy programs were "infused with politics at every level" under Obama. His Administration hastily approved subsidies for Solyndra, whose executives are now pleading the 5th Amendment, despite obvious danger signs and warnings about the company's likely collapse. (Later, federal officials successfully pressured Solyndra to delay its announcement about upcoming layoffs until just after the 2010 election, to avoid embarrassing the Obama Administration).
>
> The Obama Administration also used green-jobs money from the stimulus package to outsource American jobs to countries like China: "Despite all the talk of green jobs, the overwhelming majority of stimulus money spent on wind power has gone to foreign companies, according to a new report by the Investigative Reporting Workshop at the American University's School of Communication in Washington, D.C." As the Investigative Reporting Workshop noted, "79 percent" of all green-jobs funding "went to companies based overseas . . .In fact, the largest grant made under the program so far, a $178 million payment on Dec. 29, went to Babcock & Brown, a bankrupt Australian company." (The stimulus package also funnelled money to left-wing community organizers and liberal lobbying groups.)

What does it mean to you when Obama takes money from consumers and business owners in order to spend, spend, spennd on his campaign fundraisers and other beneficiaries of "green energy"?

Click here to see a graph of gas prices from January 2009.

Alexander Vilenkin: “All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning”

January 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Did the cosmos have a beginning? The Big Bang theory seems to suggest it did, but in recent decades, cosmologists have concocted elaborate theories – for example, an eternally inflating universe or a cyclic universe – which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos. Now it appears that the universe really had a beginning after all, even if it wasn’t necessarily the Big Bang.
>
> At a meeting of scientists – titled “State of the Universe” – convened last week at Cambridge University to honor Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday, cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University in Boston presented evidence that the universe is not eternal after all, leaving scientists at a loss to explain how the cosmos got started without a supernatural creator. The meeting was reported in *New Scientist* magazine (Why physicists can’t avoid a creation event, 11 January 2012).
>
> […]In his presentation, Professor Vilenkin discussed three theories which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos.

The three theories are chaotic inflationary model, the oscillating model and quantum gravity model. Regular readers will know that those have all been addressed in William Lane Craig’s peer-reviewed paper that evaluates alternatives to the standard Big Bang cosmology.

More:

> One popular theory is eternal inflation. Most readers will be familiar with the theory of *inflation*, which says that the universe increased in volume by a factor of at least 10^78 in its very early stages (from 10^−36 seconds after the Big Bang to sometime between 10^−33 and 10^−32 seconds), before settling into the slower rate of expansion that we see today. The theory of *eternal inflation* goes further, and holds that the universe is constantly giving birth to smaller “bubble” universes within an ever-expanding multiverse. Each bubble universe undergoes its own initial period of inflation. In some versions of the theory, the bubbles go both backwards and forwards in time, allowing the possibility of an infinite past. Trouble is, the value of one particular cosmic parameter rules out that possibility:
>
> > But in 2003, a team including Vilenkin and Guth considered what eternal inflation would mean for the Hubble constant, which describes

> mathematically the expansion of the universe. They found that the equations didn't work (Physical Review Letters, DOI: 10.1103/physrevlett.90.151301). "You can't construct a space-time with this property," says Vilenkin. It turns out that the constant has a lower limit that prevents inflation in both time directions. "It can't possibly be eternal in the past," says Vilenkin. "There must be some kind of boundary."

A second option explored by Vilenkin was that of a cyclic universe, where the universe goes through an infinite series of big bangs and crunches, with no specific beginning. It was even claimed that a cyclic universe could explain the low observed value of the cosmological constant. But as Vilenkin found, there's a problem if you look at the *disorder* in the universe:

> Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists – nothing like the one we see around us.
>
> One way around that is to propose that the universe just gets bigger with every cycle. Then the amount of disorder per volume doesn't increase, so needn't reach the maximum. But Vilenkin found that this scenario falls prey to the same mathematical argument as eternal inflation: if your universe keeps getting bigger, it must have started somewhere.

However, Vilenkin's options were not exhausted yet. There was another possibility: that the universe had sprung from an eternal cosmic egg:

> Vilenkin's final strike is an attack on a third, lesser-known proposal that the cosmos existed eternally in a static state called the cosmic egg. This finally "cracked" to create the big bang, leading to the expanding universe we see today. Late last year Vilenkin and graduate student Audrey Mithani showed that the egg could not have existed forever after all, as quantum instabilities would force it to collapse after a finite amount of time (arxiv.org/abs/1110.4096). If it cracked instead, leading to the big bang, then this must have happened before it collapsed – and therefore also after a finite amount of time.
>
> "This is also not a good candidate for a beginningless universe," Vilenkin concludes.

So at the end of the day, what is Vilenkin's verdict?

> "All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

This is consistent with the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin Theorem, which I blogged about before, and which William Lane Craig leveraged to his advantage in his debate with Peter Millican.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past. Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

Conclusion

If the universe cam into being out of nothing, which seems to be the case from science, then the universe has a cause. Things do not pop into being, uncaused, out of nothing. The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

Republican candidates should push incremental pro-life measures

January 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If Republicans want to stand out from Democrats on social issues, then we have to find ways to make our pro-family, pro-marriage, pro-child positions resonate with the public at large. For example, on the pro-life issue, we should not be focused on outright bans on abortion, but instead on incremental measures to restrict abortion accessibility.

Here are some ideas for incremental pro-life measures:

- Outlaw sex-selection abortions
- Require parental consent before having an abortion
- Require that additional information be provided to women considering abortions (e.g. – mandatory sonogram)
- Eliminate subsidies for abortion providers
- Require all private insurance plans to have a version of each plan offered that does not cover abortion
- Restrict the most vicious methods of abortion, such as partial birth abortion
- Recognizing unborn children who are harmed during a crime as victims of that crime
- Outlaw abortions after the time when the unborn child gains the ability to feel pain
- Increase the tax deduction for children
- Reward adults with tax incentives for getting married and staying married

Let's take a closer look at the first item in the list.

Consider this front page story from today in Canada's National Post newspaper. The title is "Canada is haven for parents seeking sex-selective abortions: medical journal". Canada is the only country in the developed world that has no law governing abortion. They are strongly pro-abortion.

But consider this excerpt from the article:

> An editorial in a major Canadian medical journal Monday urges doctors to conceal the gender of a fetus from all pregnant women until 30 weeks to prevent sex-selective abortion by Asian immigrants.
>
> A separate article in the same issue of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* warns that Canada has become "a haven for parents who would terminate female fetuses in favor of having sons" due to advanced prenatal testing and easy access to abortion.
>
> "Female feticide happens in India and China by the millions, but it also happens in North America in numbers large enough to distort the male to female ratio in some ethnic groups," said the editorial by interim editor-in-chief Rajendra Kale.
>
> While few studies have been done to assess how frequent the practice may be

> among immigrant communities in Canada, the editorial points to research that suggests sex-selection is more common among immigrants from India, China, Korea, Vietnam and the Philippines who already have at least one daughter.
>
> It cites U.S. census data from 2000 that shows male-biased sex ratios among U.S.-born children of Asian parents, and a study of 65 Indian women in the U.S. from 2004-2009 that showed 89% of them terminated pregnancies with female fetuses.
>
> Kale told AFP he believes that several hundred sex-selective abortions take place in Canada each year.
>
> […]Kale's controversial proposal was welcomed by conservative groups but opposed by the pro-choice advocates who warned that the debate extends much further than sex-selective abortion in minority groups.

Canadians are more liberal on social issues than Americans, yet they nevertheless oppose sex-selection abortions. According to a recent poll, 92% of Canadians oppose sex-selection abortions. It therefore seems reasonable for Republicans to pass a bill to ban sex-selection abortions.

And in fact the "PRENDA" bill that Trent Franks introduced that does just that.

Excerpt:

> A U.S. congressman has reintroduced legislation that would ban sex-selection or race-based abortions. Congressman Trent Franks, an Arizona Republican who is a member of the House Judiciary Committee, has brought back the Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act.
>
> The measure would prohibit knowingly performing or financing sex-selection or race-based abortions.
>
> […]"[T]he Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act, or "PRENDA," … restricts sex-selection abortion and race-selection abortion, and the coercion of a woman to obtain either. The woman seeking an abortion is exempted from prosecution, while abortion providers are held to account," wrote Franks in a letter to colleagues on Monday.
>
> […][A] 2006 poll showed a majority of Americans would likely support the bill. A 2006 Zogby International poll shows that 86% of the American public desires a law to ban sex selection abortion. The poll surveyed a whopping 30,117 respondents in 48 states.

So the majority of Americans would support this measure.

Now comes the interesting part – the pro-abortion group Planned Parenthood, which receives taxpayer funding to perform abortion procedures, opposes the bill.

Excerpt:

> As members prepare to hear from experts on how the sex-selection abortion

> culture has made its way from nations like China and India to the United States, according to one study, Planned Parenthood, NARAL, ACLU and a total of 30 pro-abortion groups banded together for a letter opposing the legislation, the Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act.
>
> The claim the bill, sponsored by pro-life Rep. Trent Franks, an Arizona Republican, is "simply more of the same from the anti-choice extremists choice extremists in the House" and they urged a no vote on it.
>
> "[T]he bill will effectively exacerbate already existing disparities by limiting some women's access to comprehensive reproductive health care and penalizing health care providers," they allege.
>
> They claim: "Instead of addressing health disparities and ensuring accessible and culturally competent medical care for all women, the Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act will further isolate and stigmatize some women — particularly those in the Asian American and Pacific Islander and African American communities — from exercising their fundamental human right to make and implement decisions about their reproductive lives."
>
> Nancy Northup, President of Center for Reproductive Rights talked about her group's opposition to the bill with Fox News and said it is an "anti-choice" measure that she claims is a "trumped up bill for a trumped up problem," and a "ridiculous waste of congressional resources at a time when the U.S. economy is faltering."
>
> "This bill is a cynical and offensive attempt to evoke race and sex discrimination when actually it's about taking women's rights away," she said.

So I think this is enough to show that abortion can actually be an asset to a Republican candidate. So long as the person is able to focus on incremental measures that are supported by 60% or more of the population, then the pro-life issue would not be a liability in the 2012 election contest. In fact, it could be very useful to have Obama have to go on record as being opposed to a ban on sex-selection abortions. Most voters have no idea exactly how liberal Obama is on the abortion issue. Raising incremental pro-life measures in a debate situation would be a good way to bring out his extremism on the life issue. Candidates like Rick Santorum, who actually have a record of proposing incremental measures, will be particularly effective in making such arguments.

To learn more about the effects of sex-selection abortions in countries that allow it, you can check out this Wall Street Journal article.

Video of the 2012 Fox News South Carolina Republican primary debate

January 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Debate re-cap is here for those who can't watch the video and didn't see the debate.

Here are two great clips from the debate.

Newt Gingrich lights up leftist moderator Juan Williams:

Santorum shows why Mitt Romney is a hypocrite:

This was the best debate since the Fox News / Google debate. It made me very proud to be a Republican, (except for Ron Paul).

The whole debate

Here's the whole debate in one clip:

I highly recommend this debate!

Darwinism-advocates at NCSE now want to indoctrinate children in global warming

January 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> On Monday, the National Center for Science Education, a nonprofit group that denounces intelligent design and supports an evolution-only curriculum in the classroom, will expand its mission. The organization of scientists, anthropologists and others is turning its attention to climate change, and it will mount an aggressive effort to teach the nation's schoolchildren that climate change is real and is being driven by human activity.
>
> "For 20 years, we've helped teachers cope with what we can only describe as societal or political problems in teaching evolution. They're running into the same opposition in teaching climate change," NCSE Executive Director Eugenie Scott said. "We worry, because of our experience with evolution, that basic science is going to be compromised as a result of this political and ideological opposition. Good science needs to be taught."
>
> Critics point out important distinctions between the defense of evolution and the promotion of climate change, since the latter carries more obvious and immediate policy implications. Alarmists call for broad federal policies to combat climate change, such as President Obama's proposed "cap-and-trade" legislation, which is designed to limit carbon emissions. Although that measure is on hold, a law imposed by the European Union requires all airline companies to pay for their carbon emissions during flights in and out of Europe. Officials at the United Nations have even called for a global tax on carbon dioxide emissions.

I've always said that there are only two beliefs that are accepted by most people that I do not accept. Darwinian evolution and man-made catastrophic global warming. I always find it telling when the people who push an ideology go after children, in order to indoctrinate them when they have the least understanding of how the real world works. Look at how the Darwinists and the global warmists handle criticism – by attacking and silencing anyone who dissents from their orthodoxy. That should tell you everything you need to know about their ability to win a debate. Notice also how they are not pushing for more Big Bang cosmology, fine-tuning or Cambrian explosion in the schools. That would not be germane to their secular leftist agenda.

A MUST-READ interview with Dr. William A. Dembski, author of “The Design Inference”

January 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Who is William Dembski?

> Dr. Dembski has taught at Northwestern University, the University of Notre Dame, and the University of Dallas. He has done postdoctoral work in mathematics at MIT, in physics at the University of Chicago, and in computer science at Princeton University. A graduate of the University of Illinois at Chicago where he earned a B.A. in psychology, an M.S. in statistics, and a Ph.D. in philosophy, he also received a doctorate in mathematics from the University of Chicago in 1988 and a master of divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1996. He has held National Science Foundation graduate and postdoctoral fellowships.

I found this fascinating interview posted at “The Best Schools”. It’s an exceedingly great read. I could not take my eyes off of it until I read the whole thing.

Excerpt:

> **TBS:** You have stated that “design theorists oppose Darwinian theory on strictly scientific grounds.” But then why is the ID movement so heavily populated with religious believers? Could we not expect more of the scientific community to support ID if your statement were true? Why do the majority of the world’s leading scientific bodies oppose ID and claim that it does not qualify as science?
>
> **WD**: The quote needs context. I’ve also written that intelligent design, besides being a scientific program, has a theological dimension, in trying to understand divine action, and a cultural dimension, in trying to overturn naturalism. So intelligent design is a number of things. But at its core, it is a scientific program. Indeed, unless there is good science to back it up, all the cultural and theological superstructures that people build on it will be in vain.
>
> As for why religious believers tend to be associated with design, I could turn the question around. If Darwinian evolution is strictly scientific, then why is that field so heavily populated with atheists? In one survey of around 150 prominent evolutionary biologists, only two were religious believers (as I recall, Will Provine was behind this survey). I see a scientific core to both intelligent design and Darwinian evolution. And I see no merit in questioning their scientific status by the company they keep. The character of the proposals that both approaches make is what really ought to count.
>
> But why, then, have so many scientific bodies turned against ID? I recall speaking at a symposium at Grove City College back in 2007, and University of Wisconsin historian of science Ron Numbers mentioning that over 100 professional scientific

> societies had issued formal denunciations of intelligent design. It's probably more by now.
>
> I've been unimpressed with these denunciations. In every case, they have seemed to me politically motivated, attempting to ensure that the professional society doesn't lose face should some of its wayward members be perceived as sympathizing with ID. I recall the AAAS denunciation of ID. I was a member at the time, though I let my membership lapse subsequently. When my colleagues inquired into who was behind their denunciation and what materials they had read that convinced them to issue it, it became clear that the materials were unread and the denouncers didn't understand what they were denouncing.
>
> As for more scientists coming on board with ID if it were legitimate, I think this question misses the point. The question is not legitimacy, but incentives. There are no incentives for coming on board with ID save that one thinks it offers some interesting ideas and true insights. There is no federal funding for ID research. If it's known that you accept intelligent design and you're in the mainstream academy, you can expect your career to be derailed. Support ID and expect some pain.
>
> On the other hand, if you denounce intelligent design, you score points. Think of Judge Jones (right) in the *Dover v. Kitzmiller* case. After ruling against ID in 2005, he was voted one of 2005's ten most sexy geeks by *Wired* magazine. *Time* magazine voted him one of the 100 most important thinkers of 2005. And the last I heard, he had been awarded four honorary doctorates (I've confirmed two of them). Jones's claim to fame prior to *Dover* was not expertise in the theoretical underpinnings of evolutionary biology, but rather heading the Pennsylvania liquor commission.
>
> I could recount case after case of mediocre academics who have done well for themselves (tenure, named professorships, etc.) by denouncing ID. And I can recount case after case of very bright individuals whose careers have been derailed for supporting, or even showing sympathy toward, ID. The documentary *Expelled* demonstrates this last point.

And more:

> **TBS:** In 2000, after organizing and hosting a very successful and visible international conference (whose proceedings, coedited by you and Bruce Gordon, are now published as *The Nature of Nature*[ISI, 2011]), you were first demoted, then essentially fired, by Baylor University, in Waco, Texas. Can you explain how this came about? What were the ramifications of Baylor throwing you under the bus for you personally? What do you think the long-term ramifications of this incident have been for our intellectual culture as a whole?
>
> **WD**: The short of it is that Baylor hired me to start an intelligent design think-tank, the Michael Polanyi Center, we put on a tremendously successful

> conference, and three days after the conference the faculty senate voted 27–2 to shut the center down. Not immediately, but a few months later, the Baylor administration acceded to the faculty senate's wishes.
>
> When I protested the center's dissolution, I was fired as director from a center that had already ceased to exist. This, at Baylor—an ostensibly Christian institution. But in fact, the science faculty at Baylor were probably more Darwinian than their secular counterparts, having to prove that they were as "reliable" in their science as those outside.
>
> The whole story is available online, arranged chronologically in a series of news articles: "**The Rise and Fall of Baylor University's Michael Polanyi Center**." If I had it to do again, I would never have gone to Baylor. But the past is past. It's all there. It made national news. And Baylor got a black eye for its failure to respect freedom of thought and expression. But massive institutions like Baylor can handle a bit of battering. Private individuals who get chewed up by them are less fortunate.
>
> The bottom line is that ID remains without the sort of institutional support that could accelerate its research and acceptance. I give the Darwinists credit here for their implacable opposition to ID. The Polanyi Center was the first and remains the last ID center at any college or university. It's a sad commentary, not just on higher education, but on Christian higher education specifically.
>
> One of the main lessons I've drawn from this is that most of the academic world, Christian included, is not so much concerned with truth as with fitting in and looking good. Perhaps I should have known that from the start. After the Polanyi Center closed, so too did much of the sympathy toward and curiosity about ID. In many people's minds, ID was no longer a winner, and people like to be associated with a winner. We saw the same phenomenon a few years later with the *Dover* trial.
>
> But history teaches that truth has little to do with winning and losing. Christ—the one who calls himself "the way, the truth, and the light"— is hardly a picture of victory on the Cross. So, I never lose heart.
>
> For me personally, the Baylor episode has been better in the aftermath than in its unfolding at the time. Lots of people rallied to me. And I gained many valuable conversation partners. I had enough visibility and support so that I could land on my feet. But it could easily have turned out worse.
>
> As for the ramifications of this incident for our culture as a whole, I don't want to read too much into this. I don't think it should be read as a decisive battle that changes the course of a war. Rather, I would see it as emblematic of the corruption that had existed in the academy already. This incident merely underscored the degree to which secular ideology was and remains entrenched in the academy.

This interview is fairly long, and well worth the read. William Dembski is someone I

admire a great deal. He is probably the toughest Christian I know. How could someone as intelligent as he is – with multiple Masters degrees, Ph.Ds and post-doctoral posts – persist in his Christian faith after having his career ruined by Darwinian fascists and cowardly Christian theistic evolutionists, too? If you ever wondered where my extreme disgust for theistic evolutionists comes from, the answers are in this interview. It is not easy to do what Bill Dembski did and come out the other side. People in evangelical circles seem to fixate on sports heros, musicians, theologians and pastors. But none of these comes close to the level of toughness and defiance of William Dembski. If the world were fair in any way, then Christians would know more about William Dembski *and his academic work* than they know about Tim Tebow – no offense to Tebow.

Three debates on Calvinism, Molinism and middle knowledge

January 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last month, I posted a philosophical debate on God and morality/purpose and a scientific/philosophical debate on God's existence and a scientific/philosophical debate on abortion. This time it's 3 debates featuring a Calvinist debater and a foreknowledge debater. These debates are incredibly good and very friendly and cordial. If you have never heard a debate on theology before, then these are the ones to get you started. Theological debates are more fun than you think, you just need to choose the good ones.

The two views being debated are Calvinism and Foreknowledge. Calvinism is the view that God unilaterally predetermines a selected group of individuals who will know him – the "elect". Foreknowledge is the view that God draws people to him who he foreknows will freely respond to his overtures and come to know him. What does the Bible teach about these issues?

The Calvinist debater is Dr. James White:

> James White is the director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, a Christian apologetics organization based in Phoenix, Arizona. He is a professor, having taught Greek, Systematic Theology, and various topics in the field of apologetics. He has authored or contributed to more than twenty books, including *The King James Only Controversy*, *The Forgotten Trinity*, *The Potter's Freedom*, and *The God Who Justifies*. He is an accomplished debater, having engaged in more than one-hundred moderated, public debates with leading proponents of Roman Catholicism, Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mormonism, as well as critics such as Bart Ehrman, John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, and John Shelby Spong. He is an elder of the Phoenix Reformed Baptist Church, has been married to Kelli for more than twenty-eight years, and has two children, Joshua and Summer.

The Foreknowledge debater is Dr. Michael Brown:

> Michael L. Brown holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and has served as a visiting or adjunct professor at Southern Evangelical Seminary, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary (Charlotte), Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Fuller Theological Seminary, Denver Theological Seminary, the King's Seminary, and Regent University School of Divinity. He has contributed numerous articles to scholarly publications, including the Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religion and the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Dr. Brown is the author of twenty books, including, Our Hands Are Stained with Blood: The Tragic Story of the "Church" and the Jewish People, which has been translated into more than twelve languages, the highly-acclaimed five-volume series, Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, a commentary on Jeremiah (part of

> the revised edition of the Expositor's Bible Commentary), and several books on revival and Jesus revolution.

Now, let's get ready to rumble!

First debate

A nice friendly debate that introduces the topic. This is the best debate for casual listeners and non-Christians.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- Introduction to Calvinist James White and some of his 90 debates
- What is Calvinism and why is it important?
- Does God love all people the same way in Calvinism?
- Does God desire the salvation of all people in Calvinism?
- Is the offer of salvation to all people a genuine offer on Calvinism?
- Does Calvinism diminish or augment God's sovereignty?
- Can God accomplish his will by permitting evil creaturely actions?
- Did Jesus die only for the "chosen", or for the possibility of salvation for all?
- Does a person's responding to God's offer of savaltion detract from Gods glory?
- Does our ability to resist God's grace mean that we are "stronger" than God?

There is a little static in the audio for a few seconds every time they come back from a break, but nothing major.

Second debate, on specific passages in the Bible

Same two guys, but this time they tackle the meaning of specific Bible passages.

The MP3 file is here.

The passages being disputed:

- John 6
- Romans 8, 9
- Ephesians 1

Each person gets 8 minutes to exegete the text, followed by 4 minutes of cross-examination by the other debater, followed by 3 minute conclusions by each debater. These texts were chosen by the Calvinist debater.

Third debate, on specific passages in the Bible

Same two guys, but this time they tackle the meaning of specific Bible passages.

The MP3 file is here.

The passages being disputed:

- Luke 13:34-35 (Deuteronomy 5:28-29)
- Ezekiel 18:21-32 (Jeremiah 3:19-20; Ezekiel 22:30-31)

- 1 John 2:1-2 (2 Pet 2:1).

Each person gets 8 minutes to exegete the text, followed by 4 minutes of cross-examination by the other debater, followed by 3 minute conclusions by each debater. These texts were chosen by the foreknowledge debater.

J.W. Wartick: a philosophical challenge to Mormonism

January 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's here on his blog "Always Have a Reason". He critiques two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. I think most of you will already know about the infinite regress critique of Mormon polytheism, so let's take a look at this Monarchotheism.

Excerpt:

> Stephen Parrish and Carl Mosser take Mormon teaching to expound the concept of God known as Monarchotheism, "the theory that there is more than one God, but one God is clearly preeminent among the gods; in effect, he is the monarch or ruler of all the gods" (Parrish and Mosser, 195, cited below). This concept of God is embodied (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* cited in P+M, 201). Furthermore, this God is contingent, the organizer of a world that was originally chaos, and one of many gods (Ibid, 201). Furthermore, Joseph Smith himself taught that this "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man…" (*TPJS* 345, cited in P+M, 202).
>
> […]There are many difficulties with this Mormon concept of God. Perhaps most crucial is the inclusion of contingency in the concept of God. If God is contingent, then it does indeed beg the question "Who Made God?" Consider this against classical theism, which holds that God exists necessarily. Classical theists can respond to this question by simply saying, "No one made God, because God, as necessarily existent, never came into being." Yet Mormons who hold God is contingent must answer this question.
>
> That's not the only difficulty with God as contingent either, for holding that God is contingent removes several of the reasons to believe that such a deity exists. Consider one of the classical arguments for the existence of God: that contingent things have all come into being, so there must be something which has always existed in order to terminate the infinite regress. Of course, if this deity which terminates the regress is, itself, contingent, then one must continue the regress to the next step. Thus, this Mormon concept of God provides no grounding for the universe itself.

He has a couple more critiques to this position as well. But relevant to the contingency problem is the evidence from modern physics. If the Mormon God does not exist eternally, then it could not be the cause of the universe. Therefore, the universe could not have come into being on Mormon theology. Mormon theology requires an eternal universe, putting it at odds with Christian theology, as well as the Big Bang cosmology.

You can read my article on Mormonism right here. I attack Mormonism on scientific and

historical grounds. First, the conflict with modern cosmology. Second, the Book of Abraham is a fraud – it’s an Egyptian burial narrative.

Republicans pushing to rescind Democrats' $100 billion EU bailout fund

January 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a shocking story from Matthew Boyle of the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> When California Democratic Rep. Nancy Pelosi was the Speaker of the House in 2009, President Barack Obama and congressional Democrats authorized $100 billion in spending as a line of credit for the International Monetary Fund to be used in times of emergency — funds that could now be used to bail out European banks.
>
> As the Eurozone takes a turn for the worse and chatter heats up about more European Union and IMF bailouts across the continent, Republicans in Congress are pushing to rescind the $100 billion set-aside.
>
> That $100 billion is an addition to the $64.4 billion the U.S. Treasury will provide in quotas to the IMF this year. That new funding has not been formally appropriated, but the IMF could request the money whenever it pleases.
>
> […]McMorris Rodgers is leading the charge, with more than 80 House Republicans, to rescind that line of credit before the IMF takes any more of it. She told TheDC that IMF officials confirmed to her that about $6 billion of the $100 billion has been used to help bail out Portugal, as well as St. Kitts and Nevis, a small Caribbean country.
>
> […]Europe has fallen into dire financial straits as of late. Just last week, the continent saw several of its countries hit with credit downgrades. Though Greece has received the most attention, McMorris Rodgers warns that Greece is just the beginning of what could be a larger and more out-of-control downward European spiral.
>
> "I think it's important to recognize that Greece — all the eyes have been on Greece — Greece is a relatively small country," she said. "You're talking two percent of the European Union, 11 million people, and yet there's already been over $300 billion in bailout funds made available to Greece through the European Union and the IMF. That's more than their entire GDP.
>
> "So, if they [the EU and the IMF] were to continue down that trend, the amount of money we could be talking about is just off the charts."
>
> As vice chair of the House Republican Caucus, McMorris Rodgers is the highest-ranking Republican woman in Congress. She has sponsored a bill that would rescind the extra bailout funds and use them for deficit reduction. South Carolina Republican Sen. Jim DeMint has already gathered more than 20 co-sponsors for the Senate's version of the legislation.

> The U.S. Treasury ordinarily has about $65 billion set aside for international banking emergencies, an IMF credit line that's already been tapped. Without any approval from Congress, Geithner promised the IMF in an official statement that he plans to double that $65 billion quota.
>
> "Our current quota is about $65 billion and now, so, that raises the question: 'How are you going to pay for that [doubled quota], Mr. Secretary?'" McMorris Rodgers said.

Bailing out the EU? But we have our own debts to worry about.

Thanks to Obama's trillion-dollar deficits in 2009, 2010 and 2011, the United States' gross debt is now more than our GDP. After Obama gets his $1.2 trillion debt limit extension approved, our new credit limit will be $16.3 trillion – which is 107% of our annual GDP. When Obama took office, our debt was at $8 trillion.

How bad is bad?

Greece's debt to GDP ratio is about 160%, which is higher than America's 107% ratio – but ours is rising. We can look at Greece and see what is in our future if we don't fix things now.

USA Today explains how this debt crisis is affecting ordinary Greek citizens.

Excerpt:

> Unable to pay off its loans, Greece has been forced to slash its spending and public benefits, raise taxes and rely on bailouts from the wealthier EU nations. Though its new prime minister says the country has a pathway to recovery, Greeks say they aren't hopeful about a change in their lives anytime soon.
>
> Higher taxes, high unemployment and little economic growth added to reductions in services and pensions that have been part of the attempted solution to Greece's financial ills have forced people to the brink who have never been there. Greeks have been taking to the streets to protest the changes. The government this week said that 1,580 demonstrations had been held in Athens this year.
>
> "After 34 years of work, I can't get a pension; I need at least four more years of work," Katsikadakos said. "Plus, I have to pay 450 euros every month to the state for health insurance and social security, just because I own a company, even when I have zero income."
>
> About 183,000 businesses will shut down by summer, according to a new study from the General Confederation of Professional Craftsmen. The study expects that 100,000 of those will close in the next month or two, leaving hundreds of thousands of people jobless.
>
> One out of four small- and medium-size-business owners say it's possible they'll declare bankruptcy in the next year, according to a recent state survey. If true, it would mean 320,000 lost jobs.

> […]Taxes to pay for the public sector and an expensive pension system have been high. Three new taxes have been added since 2009: a self-employment tax of 300 to 500 euros, a solidarity tax of about 1% to 5% of one's income and a real estate tax.

This is bad, but what is worse is the effect of this debt crisis on young people in Greece – they are the real victims of their parents' pattern of voting for the Greek socialist party over and over and over again – with predictable results. Youth unemployment in Greece is now near 50%. The young people are the ones who are having their futures ruined because of the voting choices of their parents.

Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal unveils education reform plan

January 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the details on Bobby Jindal's new education plan, from New Orleans Online Access.

Excerpt:

> Gov. Bobby Jindal on Tuesday outlined a far-reaching set of proposals aimed at improving education in Louisiana, including a state-wide voucher program for low-income students, an expansion of autonomous charter schools and steps to link a teachers' classroom performance to their job protections and their compensation. The governor has been promising for months now to make education reform the centerpiece of his second-term agenda.
>
> […]The voucher program may prove the most controversial aspect of the plan. Jindal is proposing to help pay tuition at private and parochial schools for any child of a low-income family who attends a school that receives a letter grade of C, D or F.
>
> More than 70 percent of Louisiana's public schools would fall into that category, opening up districts across the state to competition for public funding from private institutions. Parents who opt out of those public schools would be able to take the public funding set aside for their child with them to pay for tuition.
>
> Voucher opponents argue that offering private school tuition siphons money away from public education, but the governor is framing the idea as a way to put decision-making in the hands of parents.
>
> Also toward that end, Jindal is proposing to fast-track the approval of new charter schools for proven charter operators. Charters are publicly funded but privately managed and typically overseen by nonprofit boards. They compete with traditional public schools in their area for students.
>
> Jindal is also proposing to end regular annual pay increases for teachers based on years in the classroom, ban the use of seniority in all personnel decisions and weaken the power that local school boards have in hiring and firing decisions in favor of superintendents.
>
> Teachers coming into the classroom for the first time would also see major changes under Jindal's plan: districts would have greater flexibility to establish their own pay scales for new teachers and tenure would be set aside only for those who earn high ratings on evaluations five years in a row.

I thought it might be helpful to also post this quick introduction to the issue of school choice, from the Cato Institute.

I don’t agree with the Cato Institute on everything, but they’re right on this issue. The Heritage Foundation also has 3 small videos explaining school choice – with cartoons!

There’s an even longer video narrated by John Stossel that you can watch, that really explains the why school reform matters – and why it’s a conservative issue. Like the sex-selection abortion issue that I blogged about here before, this is an issue that conservatives need to seize on. Here, we can really let our compassionate side show by helping the poorest students, especially those in visible minorities, who simply cannot get a quality education in a public school monopoly that is not responsive to the needs of parents, or their children. This is an issue where we can win – the only losers are the educational bureaucrats and the teacher unions. But the kids are more important.

John Hawkins writes the most scathing anti-Romney column EVER

January 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Quin Hillyer of the American Spectator linked to the Anti-Romney post, and he called it "The Most Scathing Anti-Romney Column, Ever". The actual title of the post is "Five Ways Conservatives Will Have to Sell Their Souls if Romney Wins".

Excerpt:

> If you were trying to come up with the most atrocious candidate imaginable to go toe-to-toe with Barack Obama in 2012, you couldn't do much better than Mitt Romney. He was an unpopular moderate governor who lost 2 out of the 3 major elections he's run in and whose signature issue Romneycare is an enormous failure. Moreover, he's so uninspiring that he makes Bob Dole look like Ronald Reagan and that's before you consider his incessant flip-flopping that makes it impossible to really know where he stands on any issue.
>
> Romney's candidacy also runs counter to almost every political trend in the book right now. He's the antithesis of everything the Tea Party stands for — a moderate establishment-endorsed, principle-free Rockefeller Republican. On the other hand, he's like a bad guy straight out of central casting for the Occupy Wall Street crowd, a conscience-free 1 percenter who makes $10,000 bets and lectures the public about how corporations are people — while hordes of poor and middle class Americans that he fired trail in his wake telling tales of woe about how Romney made their lives into a living hell.
>
> At one time, I thought both Gingrich and Perry were more electable than Romney. I have, however, reassessed and now believe Gingrich, Perry, Santorum, and even Huntsman, who just left the race, are ALL more electable than Mitt. It's also worth noting that all of those candidates, including Huntsman, are more conservative than Romney. It's mind-boggling to consider the fact that if Romney wins, the conservative base will have chosen the guy behind Romneycare over the man behind the Contract with America, America's premier social conservative, and the best job-creating governor in America, all of whom would also be more electable.
>
> Here we are in what may be, forgive me for the cliché, the most important election of our lifetimes and the GOP may end up choosing a candidate who's one part Charlie Crist and one part John Kerry as our nominee. If that's the case, conservatives should certainly vote for him over Obama. After all, Mitt Romney will undoubtedly often do the wrong thing if he becomes President, but Barack Obama will almost always fail the country. So Romney would definitely be the lesser of two evils.
>
> Yet and still, conservatives will probably have to pay a big price if Romney

> becomes the nominee. Barring an unforeseen miracle, we're not going to see someone who was a third rate, unpopular moderate governor become a great, popular, and conservative President. The idea that Republicans in Congress will keep Romney in line isn't borne out by anything that has happened in the last decade. During the Bush years, time and time again, conservatives in Congress abandoned their principles to follow Bush's lead. It has been much the same under Obama. Many Democrats were willing to take votes that ended their careers because they felt compelled to stick by Barack. Mitt would have little to fear from the Tea Party or the rest of the conservative base either. After all, his thinking will be, if grassroots conservatives still had any sway in the Republican Party, he wouldn't be the nominee. What are they going to do after he gets the nomination? Vote for Obama? Same goes if he gets elected. No matter how Nixonian Mitt turns out to be, conservatives will still view our own Massachusetts version of Arnold Schwarzenegger as preferable to whatever socialist the Democrats run against him in 2016.

ANNOUNCEMENT: I am now cross-posting some of my posts at John Hawkins' Right Wing News, since he gave me permission to guest blog there. Right Wing News is one of the top conservative blogs.

Brian Auten interviews Casey Luskin on intelligent design

January 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten interviews Casey Luskin, one of my favorite intelligent design advocates.

Details:

> Today's interview is with Casey Luskin, Research Coordinator for the Discovery Center's Center for Science and Culture. In this interview Casey talks about his background and interest in Intelligent Design, defining terms (ID, evolution, creationism, Darwinism), common objections to ID as a scientific endeavor, some milestones in the history of the ID movement, the Dover trial, responding to critics who say "ID is dead," "not science," and more. This is a good overall introduction to Intelligent Design.

It's 75 minutes long or so, and very informative.

About Casey:

> Casey Luskin is an attorney with graduate degrees in both science and law. He earned his B.S. and M.S. in Earth Sciences from the University of California, San Diego. His Law Degree is from the University of San Diego. In his role at Discovery Institute, Mr. Luskin works as Research Coordinator for the Center for Science and Culture. He formerly conducted geological research at Scripps Institution for Oceanography (1997-2002).
>
> Luskin is also co-founder of the Intelligent Design and Evolution Awareness (IDEA) Center, a non-profit helping students to investigate evolution by starting "IDEA Clubs" on college and high school campuses across the country. For his work with IDEA, the Intelligent Design and Undergraduate Research Center named an award honoring college graduates for excellence in student advocacy of intelligent design (ID) the "Casey Luskin Graduate Award."

Please download the MP3 file at Brian's site, along with links to other relevant resources.

In Canada, a revolt against global warming socialism creates an economic boom

January 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Before we look at Canada, let's first look at how Barack Obama has decided to appease his green socialism supporters by rejecting the Keystone XL pipeline.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration rejected the long-delayed TransCanada oil sands crude project, a decision welcomed by environmental groups but blasted by the domestic energy industry.
>
> After delaying the project past the November 2012 election, President Barack Obama was compelled by Congress to decide by Feb. 21 on whether to approve the pipeline that would sharply boost the flow of oil from Canada's oil sands.
>
> […]Republicans, in turn, blasted Obama for breaking his promise to create jobs by scuttling the $7 billion pipeline.
>
> House Speaker John Boehner, R.-Ohio, said Republicans will keep fighting for the Keystone pipeline because it is "good for the U.S. economy because it would create thousands of jobs."
>
> "All options are on the table" for fighting for the sands pipeline between the western province of Alberta and Houston, Boehner told reporters. "This is not the end of the fight."
>
> Republicans in the Senate have said they could legislate an approval of the pipeline that could get around any rejection by President Obama.

Just to be clear, this pipeline would be paid for with billions of dollars from a Canadian company based in Calgary, Alberta – the Houston of the North. They would pay for the pipeline, they would create the jobs here, and it would cost us *nothing* to take their money. This would not only cut gas prices for consumers, but it would help us to stop sending money abroad to countries that don't like us very much.

How are the Canadians responding to Obama's stupidity? They are already talking about building the pipeline to the west coast and selling their oil to China.

Canadian conservatives have no time for global warming nonsense.

Excerpt:

> It is a cliché in journalism to declare metaphorical wars at the drop of a news release. In this case, it looks like war is exactly what Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver launched Monday in an unprecedented open letter warning that Canada will not allow "environmental and other radical groups" to "hijack our regulatory system to achieve their radical ideological agenda."

> […]Mr. Oliver took straight aim at a troubling trend in Canadian environmentalism — the foreign funding of Canadian green activist groups with the express purpose of shutting down Canadian resource development… "These groups," said Mr. Oliver, "seek to exploit any loophole they can find, stacking public hearings with bodies to ensure that delays kill good projects. They use funding from foreign special interests to undermine Canada's national economic interest. They attract jet-setting celebrities with some of the largest personal carbon footprints in the world to lecture Canadians not to develop our natural resources."

And they pulled out of the Kyoto Accord.

Excerpt:

> Canada will formally withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, the Minister of the Environment has said.
>
> Peter Kent said the protocol "does not represent a way forward for Canada" and the country would face crippling fines for failing to meet its targets.
>
> […]The protocol, initially adopted in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997, is aimed at fighting global warming.
>
> […]He said meeting Canada's obligations under Kyoto would cost $13.6bn (10.3bn euros; £8.7bn): "That's $1,600 from every Canadian family – that's the Kyoto cost to Canadians, that was the legacy of an incompetent Liberal government".

They want jobs. They don't have money to burn on a dozen Solyndras. They don't pass job-killing regulations on energy companies.

Since 2006, the Canadians have been electing and re-electing Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper. The man has a BA and MA in economics, and he comes from the same fold as Reagan and Thatcher on fiscal conservativism and foreign policy. He has no patience for leftist community organizers like Obama. The Conservatives were re-elected again in 2011, this time with a majority government. Their House of Commons is majority conservative. Their Senate is majority conservative. And Harper has been packing the Supreme Court with fresh conservatives, every time there's a vacancy. Canada's economy is booming. And Canadians know how to keep it booming – they are cutting corporate taxes to 15% – less than half of our 35% corporate tax rate. We could be taking their money for the Keystone XL pipeline right now, but we're not, because we elected an anti-business ideologue instead of an economist.

Related posts

- E-mails reveal that Obama fundraiser discussed Solyndra loan with White House
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra

- Report finds Labor Department’s green jobs program failing
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi’s brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- How well did Obama’s green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors
- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing
- Marsha Blackburn beats up Al Gore on cap and trade corruption

Norwegian authorities seize Indian couple's children for feeding them by hand

January 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> An Indian couple have had their children taken away by Norwegian social workers because they were feeding them with their hands and sleeping in the same bed as them.
>
> Anurup and Sagarika Bhattacharya lost custody of their three-year-old son and one-year-old daughter eight months ago after authorities branded their behaviour inappropriate.
>
> […]Norwegian Child Protection Services removed the youngsters from their home in May, 2011, leaving their parents horrified with the outcome of the report.
>
> Father Anurup told Indian television channel NDTV: 'They told me 'why are you sleeping with the children in the same bed?'.
>
> '(I told them) this is also a purely cultural issue. We never leave the children in another room and say goodnight to them.'
>
> Anurup added: 'Feeding a child with the hand is normal in Indian tradition and when the mother is feeding with a spoon there could be phases when she was overfeeding the child.
>
> 'They said it was force feeding. These are basically cultural differences.'
>
> […]The parents have been told that they can only see their children twice a year, for an hour during each visit until the kids turn 18 when they will no longer be bound by the current restrictions under current Norwegian law.
>
> Norway's Child Protective Service has come under much scrutiny in the past for excessive behaviour in their handling of child cruelty.
>
> Lawyer Svein Kjetil Lode Svendsen said: 'There has been a report in UN in 2005 which criticized Norway for taking too many children in public care.
>
> 'The amount was 12,500 children and Norway is a small country.'
>
> With the Bhattacharyas' visas set to expire in March, they have revealed that they will be forced to stay against their will until the return of their infants.

Norway is a welfare state with a big intrusive government and small citizens. But Norway isn't the only European country that likes to seize children from their families.

This article about homeschooling in Sweden was just posted this week.

Excerpt:

> A leader of Sweden's Liberal Party last week called for a change in the country's

> social services law so that the government can take children away from home-schooling families more easily by allowing social workers to do so.
>
> The call for the change comes amidst already stringent penalties in Sweden for home schooling. The Home School Legal Defense Association and Alliance Defense Fund have applied to the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of one family whose child was abducted by the government in 2009 and have filed a brief in a Swedish appellate court on behalf of another family fined an amount equivalent to $26,000 U.S..
>
> Liberal Party politician Lotta Edholm called for the change to the country's social services law in a Jan. 10 column in Aftonbladet, a prominent Swedish newspaper. Edholm then wrote on her blog: "Today I write with Ann-Katrin Aslund on Aftonbladet's debate page that the social services law should be amended so that social services are able to intervene when children are kept away from school by their parents—often for religious or ideological reasons."

This kind of thing happens all the time in Europe. It happens in Germany. It happens in France. It happens in the UK. This is what secular leftists believe – that children are the property of the state, citizens of the world, and they should not be overly influenced by their parents. It's the government's job to decide what children will believe, not the parents. The parents are just there to work to pay the taxes for the public day cares, public schools and social workers.

Four reasons why positing the resurrection best explains the historical data

January 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Ratio Christi at Ohio State University.

Introduction:

> When it comes to the Christian faith, there is no doctrine more important than the resurrection of Jesus. Biblical faith is not simply centered in ethical and religious teachings. Instead, it is founded on the person and work of Jesus. From a soteriological perspective, if Jesus was not raised from the dead, we as His followers are still dead in our sins (1Cor.15:7).

He lists four pieces of "historical bedrock". These are the facts that even really skeptical atheists like Bart Ehrman and James Crossley will give you in a debate.

1. The post-mortem appearances
2. Paul's use of the Greek word "soma", which means *body*
3. Identification of Jesus as divine by the earliest Christian community
4. The rapid growth of early Christianity even after its founder was dead

This is a very very minimal set. He did not even use the burial, much less the empty tomb, which is a harder sell.

Here's a closer look at Reason #2 of 4:

> **2.The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Explains Paul's Use of the Word "Soma"**
>
> Whenever the New Testament mentions the word body, in the context of referring to an individual human being, the Greek word (soma, always refers to a literal, physical body). This is significant because Paul uses the word soma to describe the resurrection body of Jesus (1 Cor.15:42-44).Greek specialist Robert Gundry says "the consistent and exclusive use of soma for the physical body in anthropological contexts resists dematerialization of the resurrection, whether by idealism or by existentialism." (1) Furthermore, N.T. Wright's The Resurrection of the Son of God shows that the Greek word for resurrection which is "anastasis" was used by ancient Jews, pagans, and Christians as bodily in nature, with this being the case until much later(A.D. 200).
>
> The only explanation that can be given to the emphatic insistence on the early proclamation of the bodily resurrection of Jesus, rather than translation or even a spiritual body is the fact that the apostles did in fact actually witness a material resurrection.

And one Bible passage from his Reason #3: 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

1 Corinthians is unanimously viewed by historians across the ideological spectrum – from evangelical to atheist – as a genuine epistle written by Paul, around 55 AD. I think this passage argues strongly that the *earliest* Christians thought of Jesus as other than an ordinary man. And the Ratio Christi post has many more passages to support Reason #3 as well.

Read the whole thing. If you want to see a great debate on the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus, you should watch William Lane Craig debate James Crossley.

Peer-reviewed paper in medical journal challenges Darwinian evolution

January 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Casey Luskin explains over at Evolution News.

Summary: (links removed)

> A new article by Dr. Joseph Kuhn of the Department of Surgery at Baylor University Medical Center, appearing in the peer-reviewed journal Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings, poses a number of challenges to both chemical and biological evolution. Titled "Dissecting Darwinism," the paper begins by recounting some of the arguments raised during the Texas State Board of Education debate that challenged chemical and biological evolution. Those challenges include:
>
> 1. Limitations of the chemical origin of life data to explain the origin of DNA
> 2. Limitations of mutation and natural selection theories to address the irreducible complexity of the cell
> 3. Limitations of transitional species data to account for the multitude of changes involved in the transition.
>
> (Joseph A. Kuhn, "Dissecting Darwinism," Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings, Vol. 25(1): 41-47 (2012).)

It's a good little introduction to where the action is on the origins debate but regular readers will have read it all before.

But there was one thing I found interesting.

The naturalistic response to this paper: (links removed)

> The journal also published a rebuttal to Dr. Kuhn by Charles Stewart Roberts, a cardiovascular surgeon in Virginia. Dr. Roberts's rebuttal simply asserted, as if it were a truth that required no scientific backing, that all biological features could be produced by evolution:

> The notion of "irreducible complexity" in a cell, as an argument against evolution, is beyond my present understanding. Knowing that life has existed on planet earth for billions of years, however, I suspect that there has been time enough for evolution, no matter how complex, with reducibility.

I was having a debate with an atheist on Facebook and this guy did nothing but duck and dodge by citations of peer-reviewed evidence, like the paper from December 2011 on the oxygen in the early Earth's atmosphere, which destroys naturalistic origin of life scenarios. My favorite of his speculations was when he responded to the Big Bang cosmology by saying "one can easily envision a scenario in which the universe has existed eternally". Or something like that. Atheists – always easily envisioning things that

are falsified by the available experimental evidence.

Casey comments on Roberts' "rebuttal": (links removed)

> We've addressed this sort of unsophisticated and poorly articulated argument in defense of defending Darwinian evolution many times. You can't just vaguely appeal to vast and unending amounts of time (and other probabilistic resources) and assume that Darwinian evolution can produce anything "no matter how complex." Rather, you have to demonstrate that sufficient probabilistic resources exist to produce the feature.
>
> Rather than making assumptions, proponents of intelligent design ask what the Darwinian mechanism can, or cannot, do. For example, a 2010 peer-reviewed research paper by pro-ID scientist Doug Axe modeled a population of evolving bacteria, and found that there are severe limits on the ability of Darwinian evolution to produce multi-mutation features. (A multi-mutation feature is one that requires multiple mutations to be present before there is any advantage given to the organism.)
>
> Axe's research makes assumptions very generously favoring Darwinian evolution. He assumed the existence of a huge population of asexually reproducing bacteria that could replicate quickly — perhaps nearly 3 times per day — over the course of billions of years. But he found that complex adaptations requiring more than six neutral mutations would exhaust the probabilistic resources available over the entire history of the earth.
>
> […]Axe's work suggests that we cannot assume, as Roberts does, that sufficient probabilistic resources exist to produce all the features we see in life, "no matter how complex." Indeed, follow-up research by Axe and Ann Gauger suggests that many features might require more mutations before conferring an advantage than could arise in the history of the earth. Their 2011 study attempted to convert one protein into another, closely related protein — the kind of transformation that evolutionists claim happened easily in the history of life. Through mutational analysis, they found that a minimum of seven independent mutations — and probably many more — would be necessary to convert the protein and its function into that of its allegedly close relative.

Evolutionary theory certainly can explain some things. It works up to a point. But there is only so much time available, so much material to react, and so many reactions per second. Hand-waving is not going to prove the neo-Darwinian hypothesis. It's going to take published experimental results. Like the results of Doug Axe and Ann Gauger.

Oh by the way, there's another peer-reviewed article confirming the inability of naturalistic mechanisms to create first life discussed on Evolution News. (David L. Abel, "Is Life Unique?," *Life*, Vol. 2:106-134 (2012)). I can't blog on all of them!

Newt Gingrich slams Jon King for leftist media bias in CNN debate

January 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video clip from the opening of the debate is 3 minutes, and Newt got a standing ovation.

Newt's daughters seem to like him.

More Newt from the debate:

More Newt:

Newt's conclusion:

Newt is mainting his 6 point lead over Romney in the latest South Carolina Republican primary poll. (Released Thursday night)

Excerpt:

> Thursday may have been one of the most eventful days of the Republican campaign so far, but the state of the race in South Carolina didn't change much. Newt Gingrich continues to lead Mitt Romney by 6 points, 35-29, with Ron Paul and Rick Santorum each tied for third at 15%.
>
> Revelations from the Marianne Gingrich interview haven't taken a toll on Newt's image yet. For the first time in our South Carolina tracking this month his favorability is better than Romney's, with 53% of voters holding a positive opinion of him compared to 51% for his chief competitor.
>
> Gingrich's lead with evangelicals held steady today at 40-22 over Romney. He's also doing well with Tea Party voters (46-21), registered Republicans (38-30), voters describing themselves as very conservative (41-21), men (39-27), and voters in the Upstate (36-25).
>
> Romney is leading with non-evangelicals (39-30), independents (30-26), moderates (44-23), and women (32-31). The problem for him is that all of those groups are a minority within the South Carolina Republican electorate.

> Both Gingrich (81%) and Romney (79%) have supporters who are pretty firmly committed to them. 81% of Paul's supporters say they'll definitely vote for him as well. Santorum has the voters most likely to abandon him for one of the more viable contenders in the final 36 hours, with 32% of them saying they could end up voting for someone else. Gingrich is the second choice of 45% of Santorum voters open to changing their minds, compared to 22% for Romney.
>
> Things look good for Newt. He has the lead, his support seems to have more room to grow than Romney's, and so far he's not seeing any ill effects from his ex-wife going to the media. It's important to note though that many average South Carolina voters- the non-political junkies- will get their first exposure to the

> Marianne Gingrich story in the morning paper or on the news sometime tomorrow. That may or may not end up having a big impact on his numbers. But it's important to keep in mind.
>
> PPP surveyed 836 likely Republican primary voters on January 18th and 19th. The margin of error for the survey is +/-3.4%.

Here are the last few polls:

South Carolina President Insider Advantage 1/18 – 1/18	Romney 29 Gingrich 32 Paul 15 Santorum 11 Perry 3
South Carolina President Rasmussen Reports 1/18 – 1/18	Romney 31 Gingrich 33 Paul 15 Santorum 11 Perry 2
South Carolina President PPP (D) 1/18 – 1/18	Romney 28 Gingrich 34 Paul 15 Santorum 14 Perry 5

I think at this point, it may be an all hands on deck situation to keep Romney out of the nomination.

Does Mitt Romney's Romneycare health care plan fund abortion with taxpayer dollars?

January 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fred Thompson made the point about Romneycare and abortion during the 2008 campaign, and Politifact agreed with Fred's charge against Romney.

Excerpt:

> Fred Thompson's campaign is trying to take the much-touted health insurance program that Mitt Romney helped create as governor of Massachusetts and turn it into a liability with conservative Republican voters who dominate the party's primary elections.
>
> The Thompson campaign, which has been playing up the former U.S. senator's antiabortion stances, sent out this e-mail in November 2007:
>
> "So what sort of services does Romney's health care plan provide? Per the state Web site: $50 co-pay for abortions.
>
> "While court mandate requires Massachusetts to cover 'medically necessary' abortions in state-subsidized health plans, Mitt Romney's plan covers ALL abortions — no restrictions."
>
> And it's true.
>
> One of the crowning moments of Mitt Romney's tenure as governor of Massachusetts was the creation of Commonwealth Care, a state-run, state-subsidized health insurance program for people making up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Although private insurers provide the coverage, the state helps pay the bills and determines what services must be covered.
>
> That list includes abortion. And the co-pay is indeed $50.
>
> Romney has recently sought to distance himself from some details of the plan, but he has touted it in debates and interviews as a model for the nation.
>
> "I love it. It's a fabulous program," Romney said during a May 3, 2007, Republican debate in Simi Valley, Calif. "Now I know there's some people who wonder about it. Sen. Kennedy at the signing of the bill, we were all there together, he said, 'You know, if you've got Mitt Romney and Ted Kennedy agreeing to the same bill, that means one thing — one of us didn't read it.'
>
> […]Although Romney shares responsiblity with the state legislature and the program's board, Commonwealth Care was his pet project, and he takes credit for it. We find Thompson's claims true.

Those are the facts. Romney may *say* he is pro-life, but he doesn't have the *record* of pro-life activism of Rick Santorum, or even the good pro-life voting record of Newt Gingrich.

Many more details of Romneycare and abortion here.

Watch Mitt Romney explain his views on abortion and stem cell research in his own words.

UK midwives protest ruling forcing them to perform abortions

January 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Mary Doogan, 57, and Concepta Wood, 51, told NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde they were not prepared to delegate, supervise or support staff who were looking after patients through "the processes of medical termination of pregnancy". Their position was rejected by officials and they hope to have the ruling set aside in a judicial review.

> The women claim the refusal to recognise their entitlement to conscientious objection violates their rights under Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
>
> They say they "hold a religious belief that all human life is sacred from the moment of conception and that termination of pregnancy is a grave offence against human life". Their involvement in the process would be wrongful and "an offence against God".
>
> Miss Doogan and Mrs Wood, both midwifery sisters at the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow, are seeking a ruling at the Court of Session in Edinburgh on their entitlement to conscientious objection under the 1967 Abortion Act. David Johnston QC, for the women, said the matter became an issue for the midwives, who were long-standing employees, in 2007.

> They had both previously given notice of conscientious objection to any involvement in abortions and said they were not expected to participate in such treatment. But in 2007 the health board introduced changes that meant patients undergoing medical terminations were cared for in the labour ward, where the women worked. They were not expected to administer abortion-inducing drugs but management said requiring conscientious objectors to provide care for patients through a termination was lawful.

If the health care system were private, then it would be easy for midwives to find another company to work for that did not violate their consciences. But when the government runs the whole health care system, where are you supposed to go? They are a monopoly and they make the rules. Yet another reasons for Christians to vote for smaller government. In a free market, if you don't want to buy something from one store, you can go to another store. There is competition. But where are these nurses supposed to go? They are midwives, and the government and the courts make the rules in a government-run health care system.

Even here at home, Obama is showing his hostility to rights of conscience.

Red Tails movie aims to revive old-fashioned, patriotic war movie genre

January 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The trailer:

And here's a review:

> "Red Tails" is almost certain to be derided as an 'old-fashioned' film, as if using cinematic forms and languages of the past were in and of itself a bad thing.
>
> It isn't.
>
> One of the traps of thinking about popular art is the idea that if artists aren't constantly pursuing the latest or the next ways of doing things that they're somehow failing. As a result, truly rich forms of expression are abandoned simply on the basis of arbitrary sell-by dates, even when they still have much to offer. Consider the films of Guy Maddin, which use the form of silent cinema to thrillingly modern effect; somewhat similarly, "The Artist" no doubt makes some audiences aware of how plastic and lively the silent film medium was.
>
> In the case of "Red Tails," the old-school inspiration derives from any number of patriotic and sentimental World War II movies of the sort that producer George Lucas grew up on. Following his lead, screenwriters John Ridley and Aaron McGruder and director Anthony Hemingway have told the story of the famed Tuskegee Airmen, the first African-Americans commissioned to fly and maintain planes by the U. S. military, almost as if they were doing so in the 1940s.
>
> […]In many ways, this film could've starred James Cagney, William Bendix or Audie Murphyand been made 60-odd years ago — with, of course, the crucial difference of race, which, in and of itself, is a worthwhile thing to achieve.

I might go see this on Saturday, because I love war movies. My collection of DVDs is about two-thirds black and white World War 2 movies! By far my favorite genre. More than that, the P-51 Mustang and the B-17 Flying Fortress hold special places in my heart (not so much the old Curtis P-40 Warhawks they are flying initially – blech!). The plot from the reviews I read reminds me of what it is like to be a Christian scholar and apologist. The Air Force is like the church, the generals are the pastors, and the Tuskegee airmen are the apologists and scholars.

B-17 Queen of the Skies

As a child, my mother bought me Avalon Hill's B-17 Queen of the Skies from the hobby shop downtown. I remember her telling me that I couldn't get anything over $10, so I scoured the store trying to find a game that was less than $10. I found B-17 – it was the only one! But when we got to the register, we found out that it was actually $16.99 not $6.99. But she bought it for me anyway, and I played it a lot – it was a 1-player game. Understanding the fight between the Allied Air Force and the Luftwaffe taught me a lot about the importance of having military superiority in war. I hope the movie is as realistic as the game was.

If you want to see another good war movie about the air war in Europe, try "12 O'Clock High" and "Memphis Belle". A good one in the Pacific theater is "Midway".

A summary of Dr. Laura's Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands

January 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sue Bohlin of Probe Ministries read the book and her assessment is here.

Excerpt:

> Talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written a book that is improving thousands of marriages: *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands.*{1} We need this book because millions of wives either don't know how to love their husbands wisely and well, or they're too self-centered to see it as important. Dr. Laura credits this dismal condition to forty years of feminist philosophy, "with its condemnation of just about everything male as evil, stupid, and oppressive, and the denigration of female and male roles in families."{2} While the women's movement certainly had a hand to play in the disintegration of relationships and the family, I believe the core cause is our sinful self-centeredness, just as the Bible says.{3}
>
> Which is why we need help, and God instructs older women to train younger women to love their husband and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.{4} *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* is a great resource for learning these important values and skills.

She talks about men's needs for direct communication, respect, appreciation, support, and sex.

And ends with this:

> I can't recommend *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* highly enough. In fact, I gave a copy to my new daughter-in-law! Let me close with one more piece of wisdom from Dr. Laura: "[M]en are simple creatures who come from a woman, are nurtured and brought up by a woman, and yearn for the continued love, admiration and approval of a woman. . . Women need to better appreciate the magnitude of their power and influence over men, and not misuse or abuse it."{25} Amen!

And here's another summary of the book that I found.

Full text:

> Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written another book that deserves a place on the best seller list with six of her other books, such as Ten Stupid Things Women Do to Mess Up Their Lives and Ten Stupid Things Men Do to Mess Up Their Lives. The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands, from this unmarried man's perspective, is an excellent manual for women on how to get want they want from men and

marriage and, generally, how to be happy. Dr. Laura makes a number of important, practical points, based on her experience in private practice, from advising her radio callers, and from literally hundreds of letters and emails she received from men and women while she was writing the book. Here are the points that struck this writer, together with commentary:

1. **Men Need Women, and This Need Gives Women Huge Influence**. Dr. Laura states the point as follows: "[M]en are simple creatures who come from a woman, are nurtured and brought up by a woman, and yearn for the continued love, admiration, and approval from a woman." Women have great power and influence over men, and wives in particular have tremendous power over their husbands. How they use this power essentially controls the relationship, because women are the masters of most relationships and marriages. That's why Dr. Laura says that she probably won't write The Proper Care and Feeding of Wives: wives already have most of the power and their marriages depend, for the most part, on them.

2. **Women Err in Favoring Children Over Husband**. A friend once told this writer that once a woman has children, her husband is relegated to the moral equivalence of a piece of furniture. How sad if this is true in many marriages. Here's how Dr. Laura puts it: "Once wives became mothers, they had no time to be wives. The men would even compliment their wives on being great mothers, but expressed considerable pain over not being shown love, affection, or sexual interest. The typical reply from a wife challenged with this was 'I only have time to take care of one person, and our child is that person. I'm just too tired for you.' This puts fathers in the ugly and uncomfortable position of feeling competitive with and resentful of their children, whom they love so much."

3. **Men and Women Are Different**. That men and women are deeply different ought not to be notable, but for the fact that it is so often challenged today. Dr. Laura says that society tries to make both men and women "unisex." But men are happiest being men, and women are happiest being women, with few exceptions. The differences start to manifest themselves very early. In one study Dr. Laura mentions, a barrier was placed between 1 year-old babies and their mothers. What did the little boys do? They attempted to get around the barrier or knock it down. The little girls? They cried until their mothers' picked them up. Men tend to respond to things physically, women verbally. In fact, the two sexes are just right for each other.

4. **Not Every Thought and Feeling Needs to be Said**. Women tend to be so verbal, so expressive, that they can tire out men easily unless they exercise some restraint. Dr. Laura reports that wives generally overwhelm their husbands with communication. "Husbands imagine (so foolishly) that their wives are telling them something they actually need to know because they're supposed to do

> something about it. Otherwise, men can't imagine why the 'communication' is happening at all. It confuses them, frustrates them, and their response is to turn off. That's when they unfairly become labeled insensitive." Husbands and fiances are not girlfriends or psychologists, and women who want attention should adjust their communication style accordingly when speaking with them.

> 5. **Men Are Not Mind-Readers**. Most men are not very intuitive compared to most women. Many women "get caught up in the absurdly romanticized notion that 'if he loved me, he'd just know what I'm thinking, what I'd like, what he should say.'" If a woman wants her man to do something, she should just ask him plainly, without nagging, and show appreciation when he does it. To act otherwise, as many women do, shows arrogance and lack of respect for the husband's difference, and it leads to unhappiness in the marriage and in the family.

> 6. **Man Is an Embodied Soul**. No, Dr. Laura didn't put it that way; "embodied soul" is a Catholic concept. But that concept is what underlies her discussion of how important it is to a man that his wife try to keep up her appearance. What does it mean that we are embodied souls? It means that our bodies are integral parts of who we are. We are not just souls. Our bodies are not like clothing that we can take on or off. There was no time during which we had only souls and not bodies, and in eternity as well we will have bodies. It is through our bodies, in fact, that we communicate to our loved ones and to the rest of the world. One thinks of the beautiful line from the old Anglican marriage rite: bride and groom pledge to each other "with my body I thee worship." It is ironic, but in many cases men–sex-crazed pigs in the minds of many women–actually have a truer understanding of the beauty of the body and the meaning of the marital embrace than their wives do. "Objectification" may come as much or more from the woman's side as from the husband's if the woman sees her own body as being separate from rather than an integral part of herself. Dr. Laura writes: "In reading all the letters from men, I was struck by their depth of senstivity about the issue of women's appearance. It wasn't an impersonal, animal reaction (as it is with women the men don't personally know), it was a deeply personal one. The wife's comfort with and appreciation of her own body and femininity, and her willingness to share that with her husband, actually fed his sense of well-being, his feeling of being loved as a husband and valued as a 'man.'"

> 7. **Infidelity by Omission**. Brides and grooms make a number of vows, not only of sexual fidelity. Marital vows include and imply words like love, honor, protect, and care for. "[W]hen one breaches those vows by neglect, is that also not a form of infidelity? Perhaps we should start looking at the act of intentionally depriving a spouse of legitimate needs as infidelity, too, because it stems from being unfaithful to the intent of the vows."

> 8. **In the Bedroom**. To her credit, Dr. Laura gives due place to the importance for marriage of the marital act: “The bedroom is the foundation of marriage and family.” St. Josemaria Escriva, founder of Opus Dei, that supposedly conservative institution within the Church, put it this way: “The marriage bed is an altar.” Enough said?

> 9. **Women Should Appreciate Men’s Masculinity**. Dr. Laura relates a trip she made recently to a swimming pool. A mom and a dad were wading with their infant child. Mom held the child against her chest, cooed to him, and swooped him up and down. She passed the baby to dad. He turned the baby’s face outward and swooshed him forward and up into the air. “Mom equals protection and nurturance. Dad equals autonomy and adventure. It is the perfect balance that helps produce a functional, secure human being.” Too many women, though, act like Alice Kramdens, constantly belitting their husbands, shooting down their aspirations, treating them like children. Dr. Laura writes: “When a wife treats her man like he’s one of her children, when she puts him down or thwarts his need for autonomy, adventure, risk, competition, challenge, and conquest, she ends up with a sullen, unooperative, unloving, hostile lump.”

> 10. **Thou Shalt Not Covet**. Dr. Laura contributes a novel (to this writer) and insightful contemporary application of the commandment, “thou shal not covet.” Specifically, she understands it as a rebuke to people who want it all, especially feminists. “Perhaps the feminist notions about women having power if they do it all has obstructed too many women’s ability to realize that in real life we all make choices, and that the true joy and meaning of life is not in how many things we have or do, but in the sacrifice and commitment we make to others within the context of the choices we’ve made. The Tenth Commandment, about coveting, reminds us that none of us can have everything there is nor everything we want. Without enjoying and appreciating our gifts and blessings, we create a hell on earth for ourselves and for those who love us.”

Please make an effort to buy this book and read it.

Scott Klusendorf: Five questions for pro-life candidates

January 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Pro-lifer Scott Klusendorf on pro-life issues and candidate selection. (H/T Scott)

Summary:

> In 2008, a handful of notable pro-life evangelicals and Catholics threw their support behind a presidential candidate sworn to uphold elective abortion as a fundamental right. They argued that doing so constituted an enlightened pro-life vote that was morally superior to the narrow party politics of religious conservatives. Instead of passing laws against abortion, so the argument went, the candidate and his party would "reduce" it by addressing its underlying causes.1 True, he was mistaken on abortion, but he was right on other, important "whole-of-life" issues such as opposition to war, concern for the poor, and care for the environment. The candidate's political strategy was simple: shrink the significance of abortion so it was more or less equal with other issues.2
>
> It worked. Twice as many white evangelicals age eighteen through forty-four voted for Barack Obama in 2008 than voted for John Kerry in 2004. Catholics, meanwhile, supported Obama at fifty-four percent, up seven points from what they gave Kerry four years earlier. The candidate got just enough pro-life votes from these groups to tip the election his way.3
>
> I submit that each of these alleged pro-life votes represents a profound misunderstanding of the pro-life position. The fundamental issue before us is not merely how to reduce abortion, but who counts as one of us. How we answer will determine whether embryos and fetuses enjoy the protection of law or remain candidates for the dumpster. As Francis Beckwith points out, a society that has fewer abortions but protects the legal killing of unborn humans is still deeply immoral.4 Given what's at stake, it's vital that pro-life Christians persuasively answer five key questions before the 2012 election

He makes 5 points in the article.

Here's point #4:

> 4. Instead of passing laws against abortion, shouldn't pro-life Christians focus on reducing its underlying causes?
>
> First and foremost, the abortion debate turns on the question of human equality. That is, in a nation dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, do the unborn count as members of the human family? With that fundamental question in mind, it's unreasonable for liberals to insist that pro-lifers surrender the legal fight to focus on underlying causes. As my colleague Steve Weimar points out, this is like saying the "underlying cause" of spousal abuse is

> psychological, so instead of making it illegal for husbands to beat their wives, the solution is to provide counseling for men. There are "underlying causes" for rape, murder, theft, and so on, but that in no way makes it misguided to have laws banning such actions.8
>
> Moreover, why are liberals even concerned about reducing the number of abortions in the first place? If destroying a human fetus is morally no different than cutting one's fingernails, then who cares how many abortions there are? The reason to reduce elective abortion is that human life is unjustly taken-but if that's the case, then restricting the practice makes perfect sense. Imagine a nineteenth-century lawmaker who said that slavery was a bad idea and we ought to reduce it, but owning slaves should remain legal. If those in power adopted his thinking, would this be a good society? True, politics isn't a sufficient answer to injustice, but it's certainly a necessary one. Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, "The law can't make the white man love me, but it can stop him from lynching me."9 Frankly, if Christians don't think the government-sanctioned killing of unborn children merits a political response, then they not only misunderstand the moral gravity of the situation, but also their mandate to love their neighbor as themselves.

Underlying causes talk reminds me of how liberals, once in power, push contraception as a way of preventing unwanted pregnancy. The numbers from the UK show that this is like throwing gasoline on a fire – the number of abortions just goes up because contraception is not foolproof, and it just normalizes sex all the more.

Point #5 is really worth reading, but too long to excerpt here.

Related posts

- Scott Klusendorf confronts a "pro-life" nun who voted for Obama
- Scott Klusendorf makes the case for protecting the unborn
- Scott Klusendorf discusses Obamacare and the pro-life cause

Mitt Romney’s tax returns would make him lose the election to Obama

January 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

MITT ROMNEY - 2012

Goldman Sachs	$367,200
Credit Suisse Group	$203,750
Morgan Stanley	$199,800
HIG Capital	$186,500
Barclays	$157,750
Kirkland & Ellis	$132,100
Bank of America	$126,500
PricewaterhouseCoopers	$118,250
EMC Corp	$117,300
JPMorgan Chase & Co	$112,250
The Villages	$97,500
Vivint Inc	$80,750
Marriott International	$79,837
Sullivan & Cromwell	$79,250
Bain Capital	$74,500
UBS AG	$73,750
Wells Fargo	$61,500
Blackstone Group	$59,800
Citigroup Inc	$57,050
Bain & Co	$52,500

Source: OpenSecrets.org

Wall Street banks make huge contributions to Mitt Romney

From The Hill. (H/T Riehl Worldview)

Excerpt:

> It’s important not to overstate the perils Romney faces. He is still by far the best-funded candidate in the race. He has a state-by-state infrastructure that is the envy of his rivals. Even if he were to lose Saturday’s South Carolina primary, he would likely remain the overall favorite to clinch the nomination.
>
> But the procession of errors has been striking nonetheless — and it has raised concerns among many in the GOP about his vulnerabilities in a general election contest with President Obama.
>
> Most of Romney’s awkwardness has revolved around questions about his wealth. During a heated exchange during a debate last month, he ill-advisedly offered to bet Perry $10,000 that his own account of what he had written in one of his books was correct. Perry declined, saying he was “not in the betting business,” but the episode heightened perceptions that Romney is out of touch with most Americans.
>
> The same pattern keeps cropping up. Earlier this week, he was asked about the effective tax rate he pays on his income, and managed to injure himself twice in the space of a few sentences. First, he acknowledged that his tax rate was

> “probably closer to the 15 percent rate than anything.” He then added: “I get speaker’s fees from time to time, but not very much.”
>
> The first claim was almost certainly true. Romney’s income is believed to come chiefly from long-term investments rather than earned income, and that would indeed make him liable for capital gains tax levied at a 15 percent rate. But it still places the multimillionaire in a more lightly taxed band than many voters — something which Newt Gingrich tried to take advantage of with his mocking proposal to introduce a “Mitt Romney 15 percent flat tax.”
>
> Perhaps even worse was Romney’s “not very much” comment. His latest financial disclosure form, which covered the period from February 2010 to February 2011, revealed that he earned $374,327 for speeches. The sum is approximately seven times the median household income in the United States.
>
> Those remarks had been preceded by a televised debate at which he gave a muddled response about whether he would release his tax returns.
>
> Romney flubbed the tax-return question for a second time at a debate last Thursday, eliciting boos from the crowd when he said he would “maybe” follow the example of his late father, former Michigan Gov. George Romney, who released 12 years of tax returns when running for the presidency in 1968.
>
> Romney’s mangled syntax on these occasions seems symptomatic of a wider personal unease in discussing his finances. GOP consultants say he needs to get over that discomfort if he is to prove an effective candidate.

Another concern that I have is that Mitt Romney has $20-100 million dollars in his retirement account.

Excerpt:

> Like many Americans, Mitt Romney has an individual retirement account. Unlike most Americans, Mr. Romney has between $20.7 million and $101.6 million in it, a big chunk of his fortune.
>
> Experts on estate planning said it is highly unusual to accumulate such a considerable sum in an IRA, an investment vehicle restricted by annual contribution limits. It appears that Mr. Romney’s grew so large mostly because it holds investments in Bain Capital, the private-equity firm he helped start.
>
> […]Mr. Romney is one of the richest presidential candidates in decades, and his GOP opponents increasingly are trying to turn wealth into a liability. President Barack Obama is expected to do the same if the former Massachusetts governor wraps up the nomination. Mr. Romney’s tax liability has emerged as a debating point in the GOP nominating contest, a proxy for a bigger argument over who should shoulder the nation’s tax burden.
>
> In recent days, Mr. Romney’s rivals have pressed him to release his tax returns. They have attacked him for his role at Bain Capital, the source of his wealth. When Mr. Romney revealed Tuesday that his effective federal income-tax rate

> had been about 15% in recent years, both the White House and GOP candidates used the number as a cudgel.
>
> […]Michael Whitty, a lawyer at Vedder Price in Chicago who advises private-equity executives, said it is impossible to determine from Mr. Romney's public disclosures how the IRA grew so large. Based on its listed holdings, which include many Bain Capital vehicles, Mr. Whitty theorizes Mr. Romney may have invested in Bain funds through a 401(k)-type plan, or directed some of his Bain holdings into such a plan, which he then rolled into an IRA.

How is he going to explain that? This might be one of the reasons why Romney is not releasing his tax returns. He needs to be pounded on this by Gingrich and Santorum until he drops out – we can't afford to choose a nominee who has no hope of beating Barack Obama.

Related posts

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- White House used Mitt Romney's Romneycare as a blueprint for Obamacare
- Mitt Romney on the issues: Mitt Romney political views and positions in 2012

How the left uses “bullying” to restrict free speech that offends them

January 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Hans Bader at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Full text: (links removed)

> A school superintendant has labeled a column in a school newspaper thatcriticized homosexuality as “bullying.” (The Shawano High School newspaper decided to run dueling student opinion pieces on whether same-sex couples should be able to adopt children; the student article that was labeled as “bullying” answered the question “no.” The school district also publicly apologized for the column, and said that it is “taking steps to prevent items of this nature from happening in the future.”)
>
> Whatever the wisdom (or lack thereof) of featuring something like that in a school newspaper, it seems strange to argue that a viewpoint in a student *newspaper* is “bullying.” (The Shawano School District’s bullying policy provides that “bullying” may lead to “warning, suspension,” “expulsion,” etc.) A conservative Christian who thought that homosexuality was immoral successfully challenged a school “harassment” code that punished students with such viewpoints in *Saxe* v. *State College Area School District*(2001), a case in which a federal appeals court ruled that there is no “harassment” exception to the First Amendment for speech which offends members of minority groups. Speech cannot be banned simply by labeling it as violence, either: for example, in *Bauer* v.*Sampson*, another federal appeals court ruled that a campus newspaper’s illustration depicting a college official’s imaginary death was protected by the First Amendment, even though the college declared it a violation of its policy against “workplace violence.”
>
> But schools and anti-bullying activists have adopted incredibly overbroad definitions of bullying. The anti-bullying website NoBully.com, and schools like Fox Hill and Alvarado Elementary, define even “eye rolling” and other expressions of displeasure or hostility as bullying, even though doing so raises First Amendment problems.
>
> The Obama administration claims bullying is an “epidemic” and a “pandemic.” But in reality, bullying and violence have steadily gone **down** in the nation’s schools, as studies funded by the Justice Department have shown. The Obama administration’s StopBullying.gov website defines a vast array of speech and conduct as bullying: it classifies “teasing” as a form of “bullying,” and “rude” or “hurtful” “text messages” as “cyberbullying.” Since “creating web sites” that “make fun of others” also is deemed “cyberbullying,” conservative websites that poke fun at the president are presumably guilty of cyberbullying under this

> strange definition. (Law professors such as UCLA's Eugene Volokh have criticized bills by liberal lawmakers like Congresswoman Linda Sanchez (D-Calif.) that would ban some criticism of politicians as cyberbullying.)

It's very important to understand what liberals mean when they say "bullying" and how they use it to silence those who might offend them. It's using government power to force individuals to accept the morality of the state. There's a word for that.

Hypocrisy on the left: do the actions of liberals match their words?

January 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Funny video from American Power Blog.

That's one case, but are leftists always hypocrites?

Do As I Say Not As I Do

I had a long drive on the way to my parents' house for Christmas and I decided to listen to the audio book version of Peter Schweizer's 2004 book "Do As I Say Not As I Do". In that book, he profiles a number of leftist public figures, and he discovers that leftists don't practice what they preach, because even they know that leftist ideas *don't actually work*. I really recommend the book, so let's take a closer look at it and you'll see why you should read it, too.

Here's a 32 minute 2011 lecture about the book:

And here's an interview with the author from FrontPage magazine.

Excerpt:

> **FrontPage:** Give us some of the best examples of the gulf between some liberals' social criticisms and the ingredients of their private lives. Give us some insights, for instance, into the likes of Noam Chomsky, Michael Moore, Cornel West, Hillary Clinton, Ted Kennedy and Barbra Streisand.
>
> **Schweizer:** Looking for liberal hypocrisy is, as they say in the military, a target-rich environment. Noam Chomsky, for example, has attacked wealthy Americans who set up trusts to avoid paying inheritance taxes. But this self-professed "radical socialist" has a tax attorney and did the very same thing. (When I asked him about this hypocrisy he said it was okay because he and has family have been working on behalf of suffering people all these years.)

> Michael Moore's hypocrisy is pathological. He has said numerous times that he doesn't own a single share of stock and that capitalism is not acceptable "on any level." And yet, I found that, according to tax returns filed with the IRS, he has owned shares in Halliburton, numerous oil companies, defense contractors and other multinationals through a tax shelter. When it comes he race he's also wildly hypocritical. He says that Americans who happen to live in largely white neighbhorhoods do so because they are "racists." But he lives in Central Lake, Michigan, which according to the U.S. Census has more than 2,500 residents and not a single black person in the entire town.
>
> Cornel West has numerous times condemned middle class blacks that abandon the "chocolate cities" for the "vanilla suburbs" but guess what, his flavour of choice is vanilla, too.

> Ted Kennedy likes to pose as the Robin Hood of the Senate, forcing wealthy Americans to pay their taxes to help the poor. But I discovered that Kennedys record of actually paying taxes is horrible. Tax the inheritance tax. He says that Americans should pay 49% to the IRS when they die in the name of "social justice." But according to public records, the Kennedys have almost completely avoided contributing to "social justice" by placing their assets in trusts that are located overseas. The Kennedys, over the past thirty years, have paid less than 1% in inheritance taxes on more than $300 million. Ted Kennedy, like Hillary Clinton and George Soros, loves higher taxes. On other people.

And:

> **FrontPage:** Why do you think people are drawn to leftist ideals and what kind of people are they? Self-contempt appears to be a common ingredient, no?
>
> **Schweizer:** Yes, self-contempt is a big part of it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great German pastor who stood up to Hitler, wrote a book about "cheap grace." Liberals are guilty of cheap grace in the political sense. They feel guilty and their form of penance is embracing the destructive ideas of the progressive faith. But it's cheap grace because as I show it the book, they don't actually change the way they live. I think that the religious comparison makes sense because in many respects the modern day left represents a religious movement. They are motivated by a sense of sin, guilt, and the need for salvation and absolution in the political sense. Socialism offers salvation to them. Of course, they don't actually plan to live like socialists.

I would really recommend taking a look at this book. It's similar to Paul Johnson's "Intellectuals" if you've ever read that, but it's better.

Did Obama really create jobs with his green energy and stimulus programs?

January 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Hans Bader writing for the DC Examiner.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> There are only 140,000 jobs in the whole renewable-energy sector, but in a new ad, Obama is taking credit for a "clean energy industry" that has "2.7 million jobs." Obama inflated the number of "clean-energy" jobs by adding people who have nothing to do with clean-energy, like "trash collectors" and bureaucrats. By inflating the total, Obama was able to paper over his complete failure to live up to his utterly unrealisticcampaign promise "to create 5 million new green jobs." Most of America's existing green jobs predate the Obama Administration, which did not create them: "from 2003-2010, the rate of growth for clean jobs was 3.4 percent."
>
> Indeed, the Obama Administration used federal green-jobs money to outsource American jobs to countries like China: "Despite all the talk of green jobs, the overwhelming majority of stimulus money spent on wind power has gone to foreign companies, according to a new report by the Investigative Reporting Workshop" at American University. "79 percent" of all green-jobs funding "went to companies based overseas," with the largest payment going to a bankrupt Australian company. "Most of the jobs are going overseas," said Russ Choma at the Investigative Reporting Workshop.
>
> Meanwhile, America actually lost jobs in wind-manufacturing: "Even with the infusion of so much stimulus money, a recent report by American Wind Energy Association showed a drop in U.S. wind manufacturing jobs last year." (CBS News recently reported that there are 11 more companies, in addition to Solyndra, that are embroiled in financial trouble after receiving billions of dollars in taxpayer money; five have already filed for bankruptcy).
>
> Obama's mythical green-jobs are like other imaginary jobs he claimed to have created with the $800 billion stimulus package. The Obama Administration took credit for jobs created in 440 non-existent Congressional districts, such as Arizona's 15th and 86th districts (Arizona only had 8 Congressional districts, as ABC News noted with amusement). The *Washington Examiner* noted that at least "75,000 jobs" Obama has claimed credit for are "clearly imaginary" or "highly doubtful." Readers can view its interactive map of "Inflated Jobs by State."

He's going to have trouble defending this in a debate, as long as we pick someone who will go after him.

Why Mitt Romney lost to Newt Gingrich in South Carolina

January 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A couple of days ago, Mitt Romney was leading by 14 points in South Carolina – and he lost it by 12 points. What happened?

First, here's a snippet from Gingrich's victory speech:

> "One of the key issues and I'm prepared to take this straight at the president and frankly straight at the elite media. One of the key issues is the growing anti-religious bigotry of our elites, and if you go to newt.org, my campaign site there's a 54-page paper there on the balance of power, putting the judiciary back in its proper role in eliminating dictatorial bigots such as justice Berry in San Antonio who issued a ruling not only could the students not pray at their graduation, if they used the word "benediction" the word "invocation," the word "God," asked the audience to stand or a moment of silence he would put the superintendent in jail. Now we don't have speech dictatorship in America by anti-religious bigots, period.
>
> The second big theme, frankly, is one that every South Carolinian understands. It's jobs, economic growth, balancing the budget, having stable money, and let's be very clear, and again this makes some of the elite media nervous. **President Obama has been historically the most effective food stamp president in American history**. I worked with ronald reagan to create jobs and 16 million jobs were created by the American people in the 1980s. i worked with Bill Clinton, a democrat to create jobs and 11 million jobs were created by the American people during the four years that I was speaker.
>
> I would like to be the best paycheck president in American history and I want to go into every neighborhood of every ethnic background in every part of the country and say to people very simply, **if you want your children to have a life of dependency and food stamps, you have a candidate as Barack Obama.** If you want your children to have a life of independency and paychecks, you have a candidate that's Newt Gingrich, and I'll bet you we have votes everywhere."

That's red meat for conservatives. We like policy papers and statistics. We like substance and bold contrasts.

Byron York explains how Newt won in the Washington Examiner. (H/T Smitty @ The Other McCain)

Excerpt:

> Romney stages perfect events. For example, on the eve of the primary, Romney's rally in North Charleston was perfect from a production point of view:

> stage just right, big flags, big Romney signs, smooth introductions from South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley and Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell, all topped off by a showy entrance by Romney, who arrived in his big campaign bus that drove right into the room.
>
> It was perfect in every sense but engaging with the voters. **Romney's stump speech was a clipped — some would say dumbed down — list of generalities, concluding with this: "I love this land, I love its Constitution, I revere its founders, I will restore those principles, I will get America back to work, and I'll make sure that we remain the shining city on the hill." Romney offered his supporters very little to chew on. In this primary race, voters are hungry for substance, and Romney didn't give them much.**
>
> Gingrich's last event before the voting, a couple of hours later, was a rally on the hangar deck of the USS Yorktown, a World War II aircraft carrier that is now a floating museum across the bay from Charleston. It was a most un-perfect affair. To begin with, it just so happened that dozens of Cub Scouts were having an overnight on the Yorktown at the same time as Gingrich and the press showed up for the rally. Their presence contributed to an air of happy chaos on board, and Gingrich was delighted to invite a few scouts on stage with him at the beginning of his speech. **When Gingrich got to the substance of his remarks, he was wandering, expansive, and detailed, where Romney had been brief and canned. But Gingrich kept the crowd with him the whole way, and in the end had engaged his audience more than Romney could have hoped for. Gingrich respected them enough to discuss issues with them seriously.**
>
> […]**Gingrich's success here in South Carolina shows more than just a skepticism toward establishment Republicanism. It also shows a hunger for real substance in the campaign, for a candidate who will talk to voters and give them more than phrases like "I believe in America."** Mitt Romney's team of seasoned campaign professionals may not think Newt Gingrich has any business playing a deciding role in the race. But they better believe it, and they better take seriously what the Gingrich challenge represents — before it's too late.

If you listen to Romney closely in debates, he never speaks like Newt Gingrich or Rick Santorum. With those two, you get specifics. Rick Santorum talks about his efforts to push for balanced budgets or his bill to ban partial birth abortions. Newt Gingrich talks about the millions of jobs created when he was Speaker of the House and his 98.5% pro-life voting record.

What does Mitt Romney talk about? He never talks about his record – because it's liberal. He passed socialized medicine with taxpayer subsidies for abortions. He raised taxes by $740 million dollars. He handed out licenses for gay marriages. When he speaks, he talks

about how much he loves the United States, and how he would like to achieve results – results he never achieved when he was governor of Massachusetts. Mitt Romney has a Democrat record.

Note: Gingrich was losing to Romney 43-18 in Florida according to the January 17th CNN poll, but the latest ARG poll has Gingrich up 34.4 to 25.6, and the latest Rasmussen Reports poll has it at 41-32 for Newt. That's how quickly things change because of a couple of good debates, with some real substance.

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Rick Santorum gets endorsements from James Dobson and John Stemberger

January 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First James Dobson.

Excerpt:

> James Dobson, the founder and former president of Focus on the Family, has joined a number of social conservative and pro-life leaders have who announced endorsements for Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum.
>
> Dobson today announced his personal endorsement of the former Pennsylvania senator, and is not speaking on behalf of the pro-life Christian group he led before his retirement.
>
> "The institution of the family is the key issue facing this great nation. It is the foundation, the bedrock, upon which every dimension of Western Civilization rests," he said. "If it is undermined or weakened by cultural and governmental forces, the entire superstructure will collapse in short order. And indeed, today it is in serious jeopardy. The very definition of marriage is threatened, which has implications for the next generation and the stability of society itself."
>
> "Of all the Republican candidates who are vying for the presidency, former Sen. Santorum is the one who has spoken passionately in every debate about this concern," Dobson continued. "He has pleaded with the nation and its leaders to come to the aid of marriages, parents, and their children. What a refreshing message."
>
> "The Congress voted in 1969 to impose a marriage penalty tax on husbands and wives who were struggling to raise their children. That unfair tax continued for 32 years, until George W. Bush rolled it back," Dobson added. "Now, if Democrats and some Republicans have their way, the marriage penalty tax will be re-imposed in 2013. We desperately need a president who will intercede on behalf of those who are caring for the next generation and working to build this nation."
>
> "While there are other GOP candidates who are worthy of our support, Sen. Santorum is the man of the hour. His knowledge of international politics, especially Israel and the turmoil in the Middle East, is highly relevant to the dangerous world in which we live. This is why I am endorsing former Senator Rick Santorum for president of the United States, and urge my countrymen to join us in this campaign," Dobson concluded.
>
> […]Previously, Concerned Women for America president Penny Nance, former Planned Parenthood director turned pro-life activist Abby Johnson, and pro-life nurse and blogger Jill Stanek issued endorsements for Santorum. They follow a weekend meeting in which key evangelical leaders saidthey supported him.

> Santorum also picked up the endorsement of CatholicVote as well as former Republican presidential candidate Gary Bauer.

You can't get a better pro-life and pro-family endorsement than James Dobson! I also like that Dobson talked about Santorum's foreign policy credentials. Indeed, Rick Santorum is the best candidate if you like social policy and foreign policy. He even sounds better on fiscal policy in the debates – and even better on illegal immigration than Gingrich. Those *were* his weak points.

But there's more – a key endorsement for Rick Santorum in Florida:

> The Rick Santorum for President campaign is proud to announce that Rick Santorum has received the endorsement of Florida pro-family leader John Stemberger. Stemberger had previously endorsed Gov. Rick Perry (R-TX) and served as Perry's state co-chairman during the Florida Presidency Five event in Orlando. This marks the latest in a line of national conservative leaders to coalesce behind theSantorum campaign.
>
> John Stemberger, in a statement released to his supporters, said: "Senator Santorum has been a champion for the timeless values of life, marriage, family and religious liberty. His personal life and character is a genuine reflection of the principles he stands for in every way. He is the only candidate in this race who has consistently argued during debates for the primacy of the family unit as the basis for social order and a sound economy. As an economic conservative, Rick Santorum can also unite the tea party, evangelicals and pro-life Catholics to form a winning coalition. I am proud to give my full support to Rick Santorum for President of the United States."
>
> Rick Santorum said: "I am honored to receive John's endorsement today. John has been a stalwart defender of the family and the traditional values. I am looking forward to working with John in the coming weeks to help our campaign win the primary in the critical swing state of Florida."
>
> Stemberger has been a leading conservative voice for Floridians, leading the successful marriage amendment campaign in 2008 and serving as the former political director for the Republican Party of Florida in the1990s.

Don't count Rick Santorum out yet in Florida – he has a week to make his pitch to Floridians.

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- Rick Santorum would not stand idle while Iran develops nuclear weapons
- 150 evangelical leaders agree to endorse Rick Santorum after two-day conference
- Why Christians and social conservatives should vote for Rick Santorum
- Rick Santorum's pro-family economic plan TRIPLES the child tax deduction
- Is Rick Santorum conservative or liberal? What are Rick Santorum's political views?

- Rick Santorum helps liberal college students to understand the logic of marriage
- George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class
- Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech
- Rick Santorum for President of the United States
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- Rick Santorum wins Fox News Republican primary debate (with video)
- Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

Peer-reviewed paper looks at the causes of homosexuality

January 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Muddling Towards Maturity writes about a new paper about homosexuality.

Excerpt:

> Stanton L. Jones, provost and professor of psychology at Wheaton College, has for years been a student of the latest research on homosexuality. His most recent article, "Same-Sex Science: The social sciences cannot settle the moral status of homosexuality," was published in the February 2012 issue of *First Things* magazine (http://www.firstthings.com/article/2012/01/same-sex-science) and is a condensed version of his longer paper with citations,"Sexual Orientation and Reason: On the implications of False Beliefs about Homosexuality" (http://www.wheaton.edu/CACE/Hot-Topic)
>
> Stanton offers authoritative analysis of current research. He sets the record straight and corrects popular misimpressions. I am posting the links in anticipation of giving these two articles a careful reading at my earliest opportunity. Stanton previously published (with Mark A. Yarhouse) in 2000, "*Homosexuality: the Use of Scientific Research in the Church's Moral Debate*."

I read over the condensed version of the paper, and found some interesting things.

Regarding the healthiness of homosexuality:

> Evelyn Hooker, in her 1957 study, was careful to reject only the claim that homosexuality is always pathological. She never made the logically distinct assertion that homosexual persons on average are just as psychologically healthy as heterosexuals. It is well that she did not, because the consistent findings of the best, most representative research suggest the contrary, despite a few scattered compatible findings from smaller studies of less representative samples. One of the most exhaustive studies ever conducted, published in 2001 in the *American Journal of Public Health* and directed by researchers from Harvard Medical School, concludes that "homosexual orientation . . . is associated with a general elevation of risk for anxiety, mood, and substance-use disorders and for suicidal thoughts and plans." Other and more recent studies have found similar correlations, including studies from the Netherlands, one of the most gay-affirming social contexts in the world. Depression and substance abuse are found to be on average 20 to 30 percent more prevalent among homosexual persons. Teens manifesting same-sex attraction report suicidal thoughts and attempts at double to triple the rate of other teens. Similar indicators of diminished physical health emerge in this literature.

And regarding the notion of being born gay:

> Recent studies show that familial, cultural, and other environmental factors contribute to same-sex attraction. Broken families, absent fathers, older mothers, and being born and living in urban settings all are associated with homosexual experience or attraction. Even that most despised of hypothesized causal contributors, childhood sexual abuse, has recently received significant empirical validation as a partial contributor from a sophisticated thirty-year longitudinal study published in the *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. Of course, these variables at most partially determine later homosexual experience, and most children who experienced any or all of these still grow up heterosexual, but the effects are nonetheless real.
>
> To say that psychological and environmental variables play a part in causation does not mean that biology does not, rather just not to the extent that many gay-affirming scholars claim. The two most influential contemporary theories of biological causation focus respectively on fraternal birth order and genetics; each has some level of support, but for modest-sized causal effects at best.
>
> […]Contrary to the assumptions of many social conservatives, biology does appear to play a modest part in determining sexual orientation. Contrary to the assumptions of many social progressives, psychological and environmental variables also appear to play at least a modest part in determining sexual orientation.

And what about reparative therapy?

> Is sexual orientation immutable? With Mark Yarhouse of Regent University, I recently studied people seeking to change their sexual orientation. We assessed the sexual orientations and psychological distress levels of 98 individuals (72 men, 26 women) trying to change their sexual orientation through ministries organized under Exodus International, beginning early in the process and following them over six to seven years with five additional, independent assessments. Our original round of findings was published in a book titled *Ex-Gays?*; the latest round, in the*Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy.*
>
> Of the 61 subjects who completed the study, 23 percent reported success in the form of “conversion” to heterosexual orientation and functioning, while 30 percent reported they were able to live chastely and had disidentified themselves from homosexual orientation. On the other hand, 20 percent reported giving up and fully embracing homosexual identity, and the remaining 27 percent continued the process of attempted change with limited and unsatisfactory success.

Are heterosexual and homosexual relationships the same?

> Even so, intriguing hints of differences, of “nonequivalency,” between

> heterosexual and homosexual couples emerge from Peplau and Fingerhut's survey. They mention one large study that found that 28 percent of lesbians had had sex outside their primary relationship—comparable to the 21 percent of women in relationships with men and 26 percent of men in relationships with women. By contrast, 82 percent of gay men had had sex with someone other than their main partner. However one construes such a striking difference in sexual monogamy, whether as a trivial stylistic difference or as indicative of something fundamental and pervasive, such a finding seriously challenges the equivalency hypothesis.
>
> Stability is a relational characteristic of direct relevance to the types of functional concerns intrinsic, for instance, to evaluation for adoption fitness. How does equivalence look in this area? Peplau and Fingerhut cite one study that found that over a five-year period, 7 percent of married heterosexual couples broke up, compared with 14 percent of cohabiting male couples and 16 percent of cohabiting lesbian couples. They also summarize, without mentioning specific numbers, a more representative study from Norway and Sweden, which have sanctioned same-sex partnerships since the 1990s, reporting "that the rate of dissolution within five years of entering a legal union is higher among same-sex partnerships than among heterosexual marriages, with lesbian couples having the highest rates of dissolution." Their rendering underplays the magnitude of the actual findings, which was that gay male relationships are 50 percent more likely to break up than heterosexual marriages, while lesbian relationships are 167 percent more likely to break up than heterosexual marriages. Odd that they would not mention these actual numbers.

There's more – I just cited a few bits that jumped out at me.

I recommend reading the condensed paper just to get an idea of what the issues are and what the research says.

Haitian man who could not be deported kills three people in Florida

January 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Miami Herald.

Excerpt:

> When burglar Kesler Dufrene became a twice-convicted felon in 2006, a Bradenton judge shipped him to prison for five years. And because of his convictions, an immigration judge ordered Dufrene deported to his native Haiti.
>
> That never happened.
>
> Instead, when Dufrene's state prison term was up, Miami immigration authorities in October 2010 released him from custody. Two months later, North Miami police say, he slaughtered three people, including a 15-year-old girl in a murder case that remains as baffling today as it did the afternoon the bodies were discovered.
>
> DNA on a rifle found inside the house and cellphone tracking technology later linked Dufrene to the Jan. 2, 2011, slayings.
>
> But North Miami detectives never got to interrogate him. Just 18 days after the murders, Dufrene shot and killed himself when he was cornered by Manatee County sheriff's deputies in Bradenton after an unrelated break-in and shooting there.
>
> **The episode is a black eye for U.S. authorities, who by law could not detain Dufrene indefinitely after the Obama administration ordered a temporary halt of deportations to the island nation.**
>
> […]The failure to deport Dufrene infuriates the victims' family members. "This guy shouldn't have been in America," said Audrey Hansack, 37, who moved back to her native Nicaragua after the murder of her daughter Ashley Chow. "I'm so upset with the whole situation. Because of immigration, my daughter is not alive."

Just to be clear, the policy of the Obama administration is *a backdoor amnesty*.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration is taking steps to grant what amounts to amnesty to as many as 300,000 illegal aliens.
>
> **In a recent announcement on a sleepy August Friday in Washington, D.C., the Department of Homeland Security directed immigration enforcement officials to start dropping cases against as many deportable alien lawbreakers as possible.**

> The administration is clearing out removal cases wholesale. Despite insisting that it will give them case-by-case treatment, an interagency committee is charged with finding all the cases it can to grant relief.
>
> This backdoor amnesty broadens and encourages use of “prosecutorial discretion” on behalf of foreigners who face removal orders. Not only will potentially thousands of illegals be allowed to remain in the United States, but the administration has also confirmed that those aliens can obtain work permits.

Democrats are soft on crime, and they favor amnesty for illegal immigrants. And this is the result of their views. Three dead people in Florida.

What happened to the ethics charges against Newt Gingrich?

January 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the facts from Legal Insurrection.

Excerpt:

> So Romney is going on attack. The centerpiece will be Newt Gingrich's consent to a single ethics violation (out of 84 charged) in the 1990s. The process was highly politicized by Democrats, including Nancy Pelosi. Newt ultimately was vindicated by the IRS on the issue, but you wouldn't know it from Romney's speech yesterday in Florida:
>
> "Speaker Gingrich has also been a leader," the former Massachusetts governor said. "He was a leader for four years as speaker of the House. And at the end of four years, it was proven that he was a failed leader and he had to resign in disgrace. I don't know whether you knew that, he actually resigned after four years, in disgrace.
>
> Romney continued:
>
> "He was investigated over an ethics panel and had to make a payment associated with that and then his fellow Republicans, 88 percent of his Republicans voted to reprimand Speaker Gingrich. He has not had a record of successful leadership."
>
> In 1999, Brent Bozell wrote a great column about how the media covered up Newt's vindication, Newt Is Vindicated, But Nobody Knows It:
>
> The judgment is in. After three and a half years of investigation, the IRS has cleared Newt Gingrich and his allied nonprofit groups of any violation of the tax laws in the controversy over his television history course "Renewing American Civilization."
>
> So after having run countless news reports highlighting the accusations that ultimately forced Gingrich to pay a $300,000 fine, did the media correct the record with a decent airing of the decision? Are you ready? ABC, CBS, and NBC devoted exactly zero seconds to Newt Gingrich's vindication. Only CNN's Brooks Jackson filed a decent TV report, on the early-evening show "Inside Politics." …
>
> Gingrich issued a statement that clearly expressed his feelings: "I consider this a full and complete vindication. I urge my colleagues to go back and read their statements and watch how they said them, with no facts, based on nothing more than a desire to politically destroy a colleague."
>
> But the damage hadn't been done simply by devious politicians like Bonior, but by journalists. In the face of Newt's innocence, some reporters couldn't muster even a regret.

> Bozell followed up that column last month, noting that the media continues to hide Newt's vindication.
>
> It has been 4,689 days since the IRS formally cleared Newt Gingrich of any violation of tax law. It's been 4,689 days since ABC, CBS, and NBC have had the opportunity to report it. What the heck. Why not today? Now is the time for these networks to report the truth for once. The networks owe it to the American people to report the fact that in 1999 the IRS completely vindicated Gingrich.
>
> Between December 15, 1996 and January 31, 1997 the network morning and evening newscasts filed a staggering 244 stories. Total number of network stories on the news that Newt was completely innocent? Zero. That's beyond pathetic. Oh and what about CNN? We found that the cable network filed one — count 'em, one — story. They're probably exhausted by all that effort, so we'll let them off the hook.
>
> Now you can add to the list the Romney campaign, which uses the worst of Nancy Pelosi's machinations to its advantage, and like the mainstream media, hides the truth.

What does it say about Romney that he would smear Newt with charges that were obviously politically motivated – pressed by radical leftist Democrat Nancy Pelosi? Well, it says that Romney is desperate and lacks honesty and integrity.

Assessing Obama's claims about income inequality in America

January 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Zero Hedge.

Excerpt:

> Tonight's stunning financial *piece de resistance* comes from Wyatt Emerich of The Cleveland Current. In what is sure to inspire some serious ire among all those who once believed Ronald Reagan that it was the *USSR* that was the "Evil Empire", **Emmerich analyzes disposable income and economic benefits among several key income classes and comes to the stunning (and verifiable) conclusion that "a one-parent family of three making $14,500 a year (minimum wage) has more disposable income than a family making $60,000 a year." And that excludes benefits from Supplemental Security Income disability checks. America is now a country which punishes those middle-class people who not only try to work hard, but avoid scamming the system.** Not surprisingly, it is not only the richest and most audacious thieves that prosper – it is also the penny scammers at the very bottom of the economic ladder that rip off the middle class each and every day, courtesy of the world's most generous entitlement system. Perhaps if Reagan were alive today, he would wish to modify the object of his once legendary remark.

And it gets worse for those who don't report their income:

> If the one-week-a-month worker maintains an unreported cash-only job on the side, **the deal gets better than a regular $60,000-a-year job.** In this scenario, you maintain a reportable, payroll deductible, low-income job for federal tax purposes. This allows you to easily establish your qualification for all these welfare programs. Then your black-market job gives you additional cash without interfering with your benefits. Some economists estimate there is one trillion in unreported income each year in the United States.

> This really got me thinking. Just how much money could I get if I set out to deliberately scam the system? **I soon realized that getting a low-paying minimum wage job would set the stage for far more welfare benefits than you could earn in a real job, if you were weilling to cheat.** Even if you dodn't cheat, you could do almost as well working one week a month at minimum wage than busting a gut at a $60,000-a-year job.
>
> SSI pays $8,088 per year for each "disabled" family member. A person can be deemed "disabled" if thy are totally lacking in the cultural and educational skills needed to be employable in the workforce.

> **If you add $24,262 a year for three disability checks, the lowest paid welfare family would now have far more take-home income than the $60,000-a-year family.**

Why am I getting up early every morning and going in to work to pay for the lifestyles of these other people? Well – this is how the Democrats are able to get elected. They buy votes from the people who are dependent on government by paying them off with money taken from people who work for a living. And they think that this Robin Hood redistribution of wealth is noble and compassion. I am “greedy” because I want to tax cuts to keep more of what I earn.

How well did Obama-style tax hikes on the rich work for Illinois?

January 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

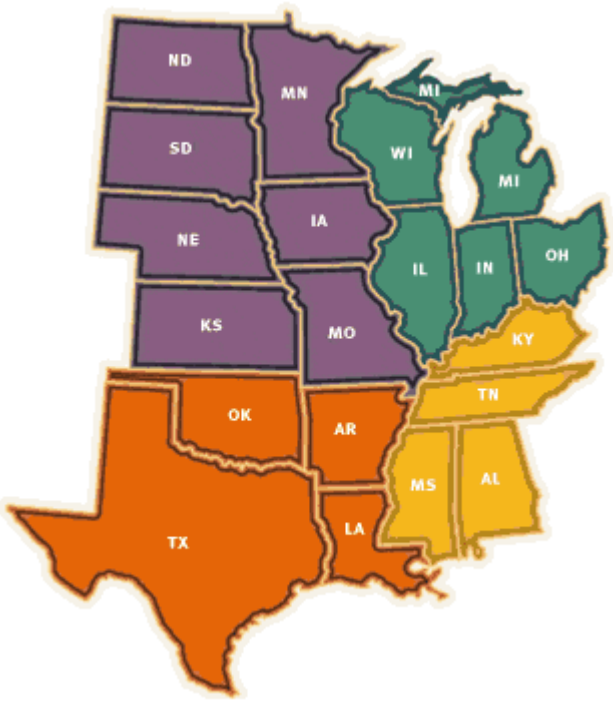

Central United States
From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Run up spending and debt, raise taxes in the naming of balancing the budget, but then watch as deficits rise and your credit-rating falls anyway. That's been the sad pattern in Europe, and now it's hitting that mecca of tax-and-spend government known as Illinois.
>
> Though too few noticed, this month Moody's downgraded Illinois state debt to A2 from A1, the lowest among the 50 states. That's worse even than California. The state's cost of borrowing for $800 million of new 10-year general obligation bonds rose to 3.1%—which is 110 basis points higher than the 2% on top-rated 10-year bonds of more financially secure states.
>
> This wasn't supposed to happen. Only a year ago, Governor Pat Quinn and his fellow Democrats raised individual income taxes by 67% and the corporate tax rate by 46%. They did it to raise $7 billion in revenue, as the Governor put it, to "get Illinois back on fiscal sound footing" and improve the state's credit rating.
>
> So much for that. In its downgrade statement, Moody's panned Illinois lawmakers for "a legislative session in which the state took no steps to implement lasting solutions to its severe pension underfunding or to its chronic bill payment delays." An analysis by Bloomberg finds that the assets in the pension fund will

> only cover “45% of projected liabilities, the least of any state.” And—no surprise—in part because the tax increases have caused companies to leave Illinois, the state budget office confesses that as of this month the state still has $6.8 billion in unpaid bills and unaddressed obligations.
>
> It’s worth contrasting this grim picture with that of Wisconsin north of the border. Last winter Madison was occupied by thousands of union protesters trying to bully legislators to defeat Republican Governor Scott Walker’s plan to require government workers to pay a larger share of their health-plan costs, and to shore up the pension system by trimming future retirement liabilities. The reforms passed anyway.
>
> In contrast to the Illinois downgrade, Moody’s has praised Mr. Walker’s budget as “credit positive for Wisconsin,” adding that the money-saving reforms bring “the state’s finances closer to a structural budgetary balance.” As a result, Wisconsin jumped in Chief Executive magazine’s 2011 ranking of each state’s business climate—moving to 17th from 41st. Illinois dropped to 48th from 45th as ranked by the nation’s top CEOs.

And in Ohio, Republican Governor John Kasich also saw success.

Excerpt:

> Ohio’s new fiscal responsibility is getting noticed and rewarded.
>
> Standard & Poor’s upgraded the state’s credit forecast from “negative” to “stable,” in time for a $417 million bond sale last week to refinance at a lower interest rate and restructure debt.
>
> Ohio’s lean budget will pay off with lower costs for borrowing, saving taxpayers as much as $1 million or more over the course of a year, according to the state’s Office of Budget and Management. It’s like having a credit-card company lower its annual percentage rate: The borrower can either accelerate the payoff or spend the savings elsewhere.
>
> So essentially, cutting state programs spared money for state programs.
>
> This is vindication for the Kasich administration. When Gov. John Kasich took office this year, the state was $8 billion in the hole and its rainy-day fund totaled $1.78. That’s not a typo; Ohio barely had enough in the bank to buy itself a cup of coffee. A small one.

> […]Investors pay attention to these ratings, especially since Ohio stands out as other states continue to struggle. “There are a lot of jitters in the credit market; I can’t imagine it won’t be helpful,” said Robin Prunty, primary credit analyst with Standard & Poor’s.

> […]Most states still are struggling with the economic recovery and phasing out one-time money from the federal stimulus program that Kasich’s predecessor used to paper over the deficit. S&P’s revised outlook reflects its view that Ohio’s

> economy “is steadily recovering.”
>
> “The outlook revision reflects the state’s progress in moving toward structural budget balance through fiscal 2013 and the modest economic recovery under way,” its report says.

Republican tax policies work, and Democrat policies don’t. Taxing the rich sounds good, but it doesn’t help the poor. To help the poor, we need to encourage people with capital to risk it by engaging in enterprises for profit. That is what causes workers to be hired and wealth to be created – forming valuable products and services through ingenuity and labor. Workers who build skills and experience while working have more confidence and can be more productive, making them more free because they can succeed independently of government handouts.

How Barack Obama used taxpayer dollars to outsource green energy jobs

January 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Hans Bader at GlobalWarming.org.

He links to this ABC News story.

Excerpt:

> Despite all the talk of green jobs, the overwhelming majority of stimulus money spent on wind power has gone to foreign companies, according to a new report by the Investigative Reporting Workshop at the American University's School of Communication in Washington, D.C.
>
> Nearly $2 billion in money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has been spent on wind power, funding the creation of enough new wind farms to power 2.4 million homes over the past year. But the study found that nearly 80 percent of that money has gone to foreign manufacturers of wind turbines.
>
> "Most of the jobs are going overseas," said Russ Choma at the Investigative Reporting Workshop. He analyzed which foreign firms had accepted the most stimulus money. "According to our estimates, about 6,000 jobs have been created overseas, and maybe a couple hundred have been created in the U.S." Even with the infusion of so much stimulus money, a recent report by American Wind Energy Association showed a drop in U.S. wind manufacturing jobs last year.
>
> […]Iberdrola, one of the largest operators of renewable energy worldwide, is based in Spain and has received the most U.S. stimulus dollars — $577 million. It buys some of its turbines from another Spanish manufacturer, Gamesa, which has a U.S. connection. Gamesa has two facilities to manufacture turbine blades in Pennsylvania, but the company said the market forced it to temporarily lay off nearly 100 workers.
>
> […]A Chinese company called A-power is helping to build a massive $1.5 billion wind farm in West Texas. The consortium behind the project expects to get $450 million in stimulus money.
>
> Walt Hornaday, an American partner on the project, said it would create some American jobs. "Our estimation," he said, "is that we are going to have on the order of 300 construction jobs just within the fence of the project."
>
> But that's in addition to 2,000 manufacturing jobs — many of them in China.

And this News Max story.

Excerpt:

> Gulf Oil CEO Joe Petrowski says President Barack Obama's weekend comments in

> Brazil that the United States looks forward to purchasing oil drilled for offshore by that nation “is rather puzzling,” and “hypocritical” as his administration has imposed a virtual moratorium on domestic drilling. The signal to purchase more foreign oil comes after the U.S. Export-Import Bank invested more than $2 billion with Brazil’s state-owned oil company, Petrobras, to finance exploration.
>
> “Any drilling, or any new production, especially production outside the Mideast – that is inherently unstable and probably is going to become more unstable as we move forward – is a positive,” Petrowski said Tuesday on Fox News.
>
> “But why Brazil, when we could have the jobs and foreign exchange in this country, is rather puzzling – and I’d say somewhat humorous,” Petrowski told Fox News’ Neal Cavuto. “What is it about Brazil that they have that we don’t have?

Read the rest here – there’s a lot more Obama outsourcing to read about.

Have you turned away from God? Here's what to do about it

January 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A good foundational article from Kevin Alan Lewis. It explains what Christians believe about how people who turn away from God can be reconciled with God. The Bible calls turning away from God "sin", and it also talks about how to fix the sin problem, and so be saved from God's anger.

Summary:

> While the means of biblical salvation includes many concepts such as justification, adoption and regeneration, the objective of biblical salvation is easy to understand: to enjoy a loving, mentoring relationship with our Creator, the one true God. As Adam walked with God, so should we. But how can one restore a broken relationship with God?
>
> **The requirements for restoring a broken friendship are easy to understand but difficult for most to do. To restore a lost friendship, the offended person must be willing to forgive by bearing the harm caused by the transgressor, electing not to hold it against him if certain conditions are met. The conditions for forgiveness are that the offending party must repent, confess his sin and want to restore the relationship with the offended party. Since the goal of forgiveness is the restoration of a genuine friendship, the offending party must begin with repentance. When the sinner genuinely repents, confesses and receives the offer of forgiveness, the estranged parties reconcile, walking together again in righteous harmony. If anyone has ever lost and genuinely restored a meaningful friendship, they know this is the only way to do it.**
>
> One purely hypothetical illustration may help. If I screamed at my wife, calling her unmentionable names, my wife would rightly be offended and our intimate fellowship would surely be broken. So how would I return to a genuine state of e-harmony with my wife? First, my wife must be willing to bear the harm I caused her and not hold it against me. But to restore the relationship in any meaningful sense, I need to realize that what I did was wrong, repent, and confess my sin to my wife — preferably with symbols of my repentance in hand, such as flowers and candy! When these conditions are fulfilled, my wife will forgive me.
>
> So how does this relate to Jesus Christ as the only way? Simple. To restore the broken relationship with the one true God, the offended party, God, must be willing to bear the consequences of our sin. God accomplishes this by means of the Second Person of the Trinity assuming a full human nature, living a sinless life, and satisfying our penalty for sin on the cross. Sinners, the offenders, need

> to repent, confess and trust God’s offer of forgiveness. When we do, we are reconciled to God for the purpose of fellowship with him as his beloved children. This is biblical salvation.

Very often, people don’t reflect on how they treat God. Many of us are born in wealthy countries, and are relatively free of pain and suffering, with many years of leisure in which to puzzle about things. Yet many of us are content to go through life without giving any serious consideration big questions; does God exist? what is God like? what does God want from me? People know that the answers to those questions can mean the end of our autonomy, so we just don’t ask them – or we ask them and don’t answer them honestly.

God certainly provides enough evidence in nature and conscience to cause us to puzzle about his existence and character, but many of us don’t We want to do our own thing, and can’t be bothered to care about what anyone else thinks about it, including God. Maybe, especially God. This is not the way that we should be treating the person who created us and who has designed us to know him. This turning away from God is not good. There is a way for us to be reconciled with God, but we have to be reconciled with him in a way that is on his terms.

Public school punishes boy for writing editorial critical of gay adoption

January 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A 15-year-old Wisconsin boy who wrote an op-ed opposing gay adoptions was censored, threatened with suspension and called ignorant by the superintendent of the Shawano School District, according to an attorney representing the child.
>
> […]Wegner, a student at Shawano High School, was asked to write an op-ed for the school newspaper about whether gays should be allowed to adopt. Wegner, who is a Christian, wrote in opposition. Another student wrote in favor of allowing gays to adopt.
>
> […]After the op-ed was published, a gay couple whose child attends the high school, complained.
>
> The school immediately issued an apology – stating Wegner's opinion was a "form of bullying and disrespect."
>
> "Offensive articles cultivating a negative environment of disrespect are not appropriate or condoned by the Shawano School District," the statement read. "We sincerely apologize to anyone we may have offended and are taking steps to prevent items of this nature from happening in the future."
>
> But Staver said what the school system did next was absolutely outrageous. He said the 15-year-old was ordered to the superintendent's office where he was subjected to hours of meetings and was accused of violating the school's bullying policy.
>
> "The superintendent called him ignorant and said he had the power to suspend him," Staver said. "He's using his position to bully this student. This is absolutely the epitome of intolerance."
>
> Staver said the boy's parents were never notified.
>
> At one point, Staver said the superintendent gave him a chance to say he regretted writing the column.
>
> "When Mr. Wegner stated that he did not regret writing it, and that he stood behind his beliefs, Superintendent Carlson told him that he 'had got to be one of the most ignorant kids to try to argue with him about this topic,'" Staver said.
>
> At that point, Staver said the superintendent told the boy that "we have the power to suspend you if we want to."
>
> The superintendent allegedly told Wegner that he was personally offended by Wegner's column.

Thoughtful Christians need to understand that their values are never going to be reflected in a secular public school system. Many public schools are run by unionized teachers and administrators who *must* support big government, because the bigger the government, the bigger their salaries. Quite often, public schools don't focus on making children educated so they can get jobs and be independent – they focus on making them favor bigger government.

Christians should not support parents being *forced* to pay into a failing public school system. Many Christian parents favor homeschooling and private schools. Why should they be forced to pay for failing public schools like the one in the story above? It's important for Christians to think clearly about education. Christians should favor school choice, a system in which parents get a voucher from the government and then can freely choose any school they want. If parents have the right to choose their school from many options, then schools will have to compete to provide what parents want.

Why does Warren Buffett pay less in taxes than his secretary?

January 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at this article from the libertarian Cato Institute.

Excerpt:

> In 2007, Buffett said that he paid a 17.7 percent tax rate. Alan Reynolds notes that Buffett earns large amounts of capital gains, which are taxed at a maximum federal rate of 15 percent. People in the top income groups do report a lot of capital gains, which reduces their overall effective tax rate. However, capital gains are included in chart 1, above, and you can see that the top income groups still pay much higher tax rates than others on average. One reason is that a large amount of income at the top is small business income, which is hit by ordinary income tax rates of up to 35 percent.
>
> You have to go to the extreme top end of the income spectrum in order for capital gains realizations to really push down overall effective tax rates. The IRS publishes data for the 400 highest-income taxpayers. For these taxpayers, the average effective income tax rate in 2008 was 18.1 percent.
>
> Since the beginning of the income tax, we have nearly always had special treatment of capital gains for some very good reasons, as I discuss here. I point out that virtually all high-income nations recognize that capital gains are different and that special rules are needed. A number of OECD nations have long-term capital gains tax rates of zero, including New Zealand and the Netherlands.
>
> Another important aspect to this debate regards the link between capital gains and dynamism in the economy and dynamism in tax payments. The political left makes it seem as if there were a permanent aristocracy at the top end of the income spectrum in America. However, IRS data show the exact opposite—the top 400 are a highly dynamic group. Notice first in IRS Table 1 that 57 percent of AGI for these taxpayers is capital gains. That is a key reason why the people in this group are constantly changing—large capital gains realizations are occasional events that rocket people to the top of the AGI heap. One example is when an entrepreneur sells her successful and longstanding business and retires.
>
> The last table in the IRS document reveals the dynamism. The IRS traced the identities of all taxpayers who showed up in the top 400 anytime between 1992 and 2008. The IRS found that there were a huge 3,672 different taxpayers who appeared during that timeframe. Of these 3,672, fully 73 percent only appeared once in the top 400! And 85 percent appeared only once or twice.
>
> So at the top end of our capitalist system is a continual generation of new wealth and new wealthy people, and that dynamism reflects the still-energetic and free-

> wheeling nature of our economy.

Another thing to keep in mind is that Warren Buffett is a big hypocrite.

Excerpt:

> Two weeks ago, when billionaire Warren Buffett called for higher taxes on rich people like him, the liberal media predictably gushed and fawned.
>
> Yet when Americans for Limited Government revealed last week that Buffett's company Berkshire Hathaway has been in an almost decade-long dispute with the IRS over how much taxes it owes, these same press members couldn't care less:
>
> According to Berkshire Hathaway's own annual report — see Note 15 on pp. 54-56 — the company has been in a years-long dispute over its federal tax bills.
>
> According to the report, "We anticipate that we will resolve all adjustments proposed by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service ('IRS') for the 2002 through 2004 tax years at the IRS Appeals Division within the next 12 months. The IRS has completed its examination of our consolidated U.S. federal income tax returns for the 2005 and 2006 tax years and the proposed adjustments are currently being reviewed by the IRS Appeals Division process. The IRS is currently auditing our consolidated U.S. federal income tax returns for the 2007 through 2009 tax years."
>
> Americans for Limited Government researcher Richard McCarty, who was alerted to the controversy by a federal government lawyer, said, "The company has been short-changing the tax collection agency for much of the past decade. Mr. Buffett's company has not fully settled its tax bills from 2002-2009. Yet he says he'd happily pay more. Except the IRS has apparently been asking him to pay more going on nine years."

As if that wasn't bad enough, Obama's cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline will benefit Buffett.

Excerpt:

> Some 20,000 middle-class jobs could have immediately come from Obama's approval of the Keystone XL pipeline from Canada, with hundreds of thousands more created over the project's lifetime. Yet he shut it down, even while he claimed in his address that he supported an "all of the above" energy strategy.
>
> As Bosanek might be aware, her boss stands to benefit handsomely from that decision, much as other Obama supporters, like the campaign donors who owned Solyndra and other green enterprises, cleaned up from the diversion of tax dollars from the middle class into green boondoggles.
>
> Keystone XL was designed to transport oil from the Canadian tar sands to the Gulf of Mexico. It apparently also would have enabled oil producers in the booming oil fields of North Dakota to ship their product to Gulf refineries more

> cheaply.
>
> Keystone XL would help to advance further development of the oilfields in the Bakken Shale formation, which has led to an economic boom in North Dakota.
>
> Plans were under way to tie into Keystone XL and ship increasing amounts of Bakken oil south through the pipeline to Gulf Coast refineries.
>
> Would we rather get our oil from Canada and North Dakota or from the Middle East through the Strait of Hormuz?
>
> Now Bakken producers say they'll be dependent on railway tank cars — Buffett's railway tank cars.
>
> Many of the rail shipments from the Bakken fields are being handled by Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway Co., which has more than 1,000 miles of track in the region.
>
> Buffett's holding company, Berkshire Hathaway, has agreed to buy BNSF in a deal valuing the railroad at $34 billion. Berkshire already owns 22% of Burlington Northern and will pay $100 a share in cash and stock for the rest.
>
> It is the American people who should benefit from our government's energy policies, not just billionaires and friends of Obama like Warren Buffett.
>
> Now, that would be fair.

And finally, Warren Buffett's secretary pays a lot in taxes because she has a huge income, which is highly taxed. Her annual income is at least $200,000.

Who pays the cost of raising taxes on imported goods?

January 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation explains the consequences of tariffs for *all* the groups who are affected.

Excerpt:

> "Over a thousand Americans are working today because we stopped a surge in Chinese tires," asserted President Obama in his State of the Union Address. President Obama referred to steep tariffs that his Administration imposed on tires imported from China.Not everyone sees it that way. According to the Tire Industry Association (TIA):
>
> TIA believes this was a politically motivated decision that will end up costing more jobs than it saves. These tariffs will not bring back the jobs that the union claims have been lost; it will not create any new tire manufacturing jobs, and it will most likely result in the loss of thousands of retail tire industry jobs here in the U.S., affecting everyone from the shop that services your tire to the tire wholesalers—many of whom are small businesspeople struggling to stay afloat in this economy. This, all during a time when we can ill afford to be losing more U.S. jobs.
>
> The Association pointed out that there is more at stake than dollars and cents:
>
> This tariff will price these tires out of reach of many consumers, and will lead to a tightening in the remaining supply of lower-cost tires. Also, given that the lower-cost tires imported from China help those most vulnerable in this current economy—working-class citizens—we are deeply concerned that many consumers may delay or even defer replacing their tires when necessary, thus creating a potential safety hazard on America's roads.

When you put a tax of lower-priced goods, the people who are hurt the most are *working class workers.* During a recession, people have even less money to spend and they need to be able to have the option of buying cheaper foreign goods. Tariffs take away that option, and force families to pay higher prices for the things they need.

Two things you can do to make your marriage last

January 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, don't have sex before you're married.

Story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Couples who reserve sex for marriage enjoy greater stability and communication in their relationships, say researchers at Brigham Young University.
>
> A new study from the Mormon college found that those couples who waited until marriage rated their relationship stability 22 percent higher than those who started having sex in the early part of their relationship. The relationship satisfaction was 20 percent higher for those who waited, the sexual quality of the relationship was 5 percent better, and communication was 12 percent better.
>
> The study, published in the American Psychological Association's Journal of Family Psychology, involved 2,035 married individuals who participated in a popular online marital assessment called "RELATE." From the assessment's database, researchers selected a sample designed to match the demographics of the married American population. The extensive questionnaire included the question "When did you become sexual in this relationship?"
>
> Couples that became sexually involved later in their relationship – but prior to marriage – reported benefits that were about half as strong as those who waited for marriage.
>
> […]Sociologist Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas at Austin, who was not involved in the study, responded to its findings, saying that "couples who hit the honeymoon too early – that is, prioritize sex promptly at the outset of a relationship – often find their relationships underdeveloped when it comes to the qualities that make relationships stable and spouses reliable and trustworthy." Regnerus is the author of *Premarital Sex in America*, a book forthcoming from Oxford University Press.
>
> Because religious belief often plays a role for couples who choose to wait, Busby and his co-authors controlled for the influence of religious involvement in their analysis.
>
> "Regardless of religiosity, waiting helps the relationship form better communication processes, and these help improve long-term stability and relationship satisfaction," Busby said.

Second, make sure you attend church regularly after you're married.

From Citizen Link.

Excerpt:

> It’s a number that is trumpeted from the rooftops — and the pulpit: Half of marriages among Christians and non-Christians alike end in divorce.
>
> But the reality is that Christians who attend church regularly get divorced at a much lower rate.
>
> Professor Bradley Wright, a sociologist at the University of Connecticut, found that among people who identify as Christians but rarely attend church, 60 percent have been divorced. Of those who attend church regularly, 38 percent have been divorced.
>
> W. Bradford Wilcox, a leading sociologist at the University of Virginia and director of the National Marriage Project, found a nearly identical spread between “active conservative Protestants” who regularly attend church and people with no religious affiliation.
>
> Professor Scott Stanley from the University of Denver, who is working on the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative, said couples with a vibrant religious faith have more and higher levels of the qualities that marriages need to avoid divorce.
>
> “Whether young or old, male or female, low-income or not, those who said that they were more religious reported higher average levels of commitment to their partners, higher levels of marital satisfaction, less thinking and talking about divorce and lower levels of negative interaction,” he said. “These patterns held true when controlling for such important variables as income, education and age at first marriage.”

I think that young people who are serious about having a successful marriage need to study research to find out what works (chastity, pre-marital counseling, church attendance, etc.) and then demand that prospective mates demonstrate those skills before the wedding.

UPDATE: Commenter Mbelina has a third thing to do: Christians should choose to marry other Christians who take their Christian worldview seriously.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford university

January 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of my favorite lectures, by one of the people I admire the most for his scientific work and robust, evangelical Christian faith.

About Michael Strauss:

His full biography is here. (I removed his links from my excerpt text below)

Excerpt:

> I had an interest in science and theology, so in 1977 I chose to go to Biola University where I could study both subjects in detail. I thoroughly enjoyed college and participated in intramural sports, was elected to student government, served as a resident assistant, competed in forensics, and studied a lot. As I neared college graduation my dual interest continued so I applied to seminary and to graduate school. After graduating *summa cum laude* from Biola, I decided to pursue a graduate degree in physics at UCLA.
>
> During my first few years of graduate school, I developed an increased interest in quantum mechanics and subatomic physics and decided to do research in a field that dealt with these subjects. I joined a High Energy Physics experimental group doing research at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to actively participate in research at SLAC. I graduated in 1988 with my Ph.D in High Energy Physics (a.k.a. Elementary Particle Physics). If you would like to know more about High Energy Physics, the Particle Data Group at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory has a very nice interactive adventure that teaches you all about the subject. My research advisor was professor Charles Buchanan and my disertation was titled "A Study of Lambda Polarization and Phi Spin Alignment in Electron-Positron Annihilation at 29 GeV as a Probe of Color Field Behavior."
>
> After graduation, I accepted a post-doctoral research position with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I continued to do research at SLAC where I joined the SLD experiment. My research interests centered on the SLD silicon pixel vertex detector. I wrote most of the offline software for this device, and did physics analysis which used the vertex detector, including tagging *b* quark events for flavor specific QCD (Quantum Chromodynamics) analysis. In the seven years I was employed by UMASS, I only spent 3 days on the Amherst campus. The rest of the time was spent in California.
>
> […]In August 1995, I accepted a job as an Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of Oklahoma (OU) in Norman, Oklahoma. The University of Oklahoma has a vibrant high energy physics research group involved in experiments at the

> Fermi National Accelerator Center (Fermilab), and CERN. I joined the DØ experiment at Fermilab where I continue to do research in elementary particle physics. As a member of the DØ collaboration I have made contributions to the testing of silicon sensors for the upgraded vertex detector, to the track finding algorithms, to a measurement of the photon production cross section which probes the gluon content of protons, and to other QCD measurements. I am currently studying properties of *B* mesons that contain a *b*-quark, the production cross section of jets coming from quarks and gluons, and other QCD analyses. At CERN, I am a collaborator on the ATLAS detector.
>
> I received tenure in 2001 and was promoted to the rank of Professor in the summer of 2010. Most of the time at OU I have taught introductory physics classes to physics majors, engineers, and life science majors. In these classes I have used a number of interactive techniques to facilitate student participation and learning. I have been privileged to win a few awards for my teaching. In 1999, the Associated Students selected me as the Outstanding Professor in the College of Arts and Science, and in 2000 I was awarded the BP AMOCO Foundation Good Teaching Award. In 2002, I was given the Regents Award for Superior Teaching. I received the Carlisle Mabrey and Lurine Mabrey Presidential Professorship in 2006 which is given to "faculty members who excel in all their professional activities and who relate those activities to the students they teach and mentor."

He seems to have done a fine job of integrating his faith with a solid career in physics research. It would be nice if we were churning out more like him, but that would require the church to get serious about the integration between science and faith.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips, one of which I was able to try out recently at IHOP, and it worked.

You can also listen to the audio here. (MP3)

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been

tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Rick Santorum destroys Mitt Romney on RomneyCare in CNN debate

January 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Rick Santorum right to criticize Romneycare as being essential a state-level version of Obamacare?

Reason magazine explains the similarities between Obamacare and Romneycare.

Excerpt:

> ObamaCare, which includes a health insurance mandate, is a near carbon copy of RomneyCare: a hefty Medicaid expansion coupled to equally large middle-class insurance subsidies, new regulations that all but turn health insurance into a public utility, and an individual mandate to buy a private insurance plan. Indeed, the same Obama administration that Romney accused of being fundamentally anti-American has on multiple occasions explicitly cited the plan that Romney signed into law as the direct model for their plan.
>
> Romney's only real contrast between his plan and the president's plan boiled down to a single, simple distinction: Obama's overhaul was a federal overhaul; Romney's was state-based. Romney would have us believe that the same system of mandates and regulations that constitutes an unconscionable imposition on individual liberty at the federal level is somehow a natural and great part of the American way of life at the state level.

Is Rick Santorum right about the number of "free riders" who choose to pay a fine and get free health care? Of course.

> As *The Wall Street Journal* pointed out this morning:
>
> Uncompensated hospital care [in Massachusetts] rose 5% from 2008 to 2009, and 15% from 2009 to 2010, hitting $475 million (though the state only paid out $405 million). "Avoidable" use of emergency rooms—that is, for routine care like a sore throat—increased 9% between 2004 and 2008.
>
> Romney also decried ObamaCare for failing to lower health costs. He's right. But the overbudget RomneyCare doesn't either: Indeed, its designers have explicitly admitted that the state's plan was to increase coverage first and hope to figure out how to control spending sometime later.

National Review cites a Boston Herald article to explain what RomneyCare did to Massachusetts:

> For Mitt Romney, who's been campaigning on his ability to create jobs, this study from the conservative Beacon Hill Institute can't be welcome. From the *Boston Herald*:

> The Beacon Hill Institute study found that, on average, Romneycare:
>
> - cost the Bay State 18,313 jobs;
> - drove up total health insurance costs in Massachusetts by $4.311 billion;
> - slowed the growth of disposable income per person by $376; and
> - reduced investment in Massachusetts by $25.06 million.

Here's another must-see clip from my friend Tim:

And another one I found for Jeremy:

Here's the full transcript of the debate.

Mitt Romney

- Mitt Romney's tax returns would make him lose the election to Obama
- Does Mitt Romney's Romneycare health care plan fund abortion with taxpayer dollars?
- John Hawkins writes the most scathing anti-Romney column EVER
- Santorum and Gingrich expose Romney's liberal record in Sunday's NBC debate
- Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million while he was governor of Massachusetts
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- RINO Mitt Romney now open to European-style VAT tax
- Is Mitt Romney a flip-flopper? What are his flip-flops?
- RINO Mitt Romney deploys another RINO John Sununu to attack Newt Gingrich
- Mitt Romney supports the anti-Christian and anti-business ENDA law
- Mitt Romney gaffe: Romney fails miserably in interview with Bret Baier
- Jon Huntsman's anti-Romney ads are awesome
- Mitt Romney's political views on gay marriage, abortion and global warming
- Mitt Romney flip-flop videos: flat tax, abortion, health care, public sector unions, global warming
- Mitt Romney on global warming, climate change, environmental regulations
- Mitt Romney on abortion and stem cell research in his own words
- White House used Mitt Romney's Romneycare as a blueprint for Obamacare
- Mitt Romney on the issues: Mitt Romney political views and positions in 2012

Rick Santorum

- Rick Santorum gets endorsements from James Dobson and John Stemberger
- Wall Street Journal: Rick Santorum is a supply-sider for the working man
- Rick Santorum would not stand idle while Iran develops nuclear weapons
- 150 evangelical leaders agree to endorse Rick Santorum after two-day conference
- Why Christians and social conservatives should vote for Rick Santorum
- Rick Santorum's pro-family economic plan TRIPLES the child tax deduction
- Is Rick Santorum conservative or liberal? What are Rick Santorum's political views?
- Rick Santorum helps liberal college students to understand the logic of marriage

- George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class
- Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech
- Rick Santorum for President of the United States
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- Rick Santorum wins Fox News Republican primary debate (with video)
- Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

Indiana passes right-to-work law and is now open for business – and jobs

January 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

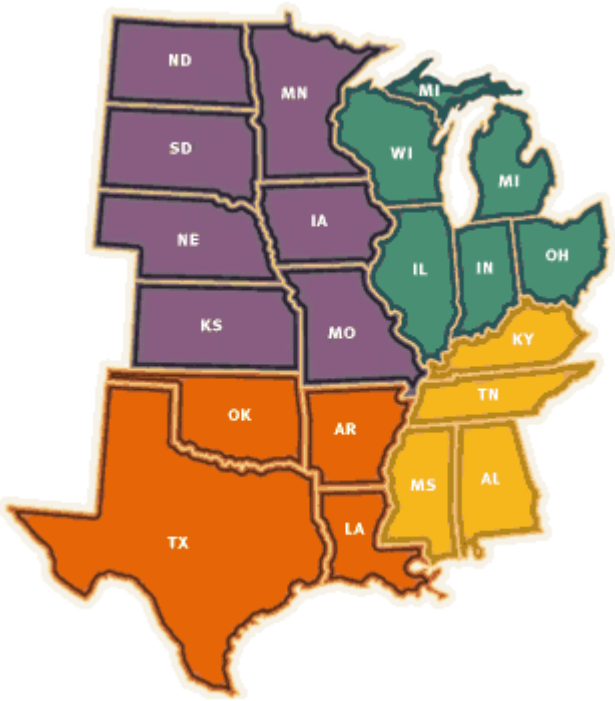

Central United States
From GOP USA.

Excerpt:

> Indiana is poised to become the first right-to-work state in more than a decade after the Republican-controlled House passed legislation on Wednesday banning unions from collecting mandatory fees from workers.
>
> It is yet another blow to organized labor in the heavily unionized Midwest, which is home to many of the country's manufacturing jobs. Wisconsin last year stripped unions of collective bargaining rights.
>
> The vote came after weeks of protest by minority Democrats who tried various tactics to stop the bill. They refused to show up to debate despite the threat of fines that totaled $1,000 per day and introduced dozens of amendments aimed at delaying a vote. But conceding their tactics could not last forever because they were outnumbered, they finally agreed to allow the vote to take place.
>
> The House voted 54-44 Wednesday to make Indiana the nation's 23rd right-to-work state. The measure is expected to face little opposition in Indiana's Republican-controlled Senate and could reach Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels' desk shortly before the Feb. 5 Super Bowl in Indianapolis.
>
> "This announces especially in the Rust Belt, that we are open for business here," Republican House Speaker Brian Bosma said of the right-to-work proposal

> that would ban unions from collecting mandatory representation fees from workers.
>
> Republicans recently attempted similar anti-union measures in other Rust-Belt states like Wisconsin and Ohio where they have faced massive backlash. Ohio voters overturned Gov. John Kasich's labor measures last November and union activists delivered roughly 1 million petitions last week in an effort to recall Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker.
>
> Indiana would mark the first win in 10 years for national right-to-work advocates who have pushed unsuccessfully for the measure in other states following a Republican sweep of statehouses in 2010. But few right-work states boast Indiana's union clout, borne of a long manufacturing legacy.

Every time one state enacts a right-to-work law, it puts competitive pressure on other states. The reason why is because businesses are attracted to right-to-work states, and they will prefer to expand there, rather than in union-friendly states. In fact, some companies will just up and move to right-to-work states, leaving the union-friendly states with no employers at all.

36 Obama aides owe $833,000 to IRS, federal employees owe $3.4 billion

January 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> How embarrassing this must be for President Obama, whose major speech theme so far this campaign season has been that every single American, no matter how rich, should pay their "fair share" of taxes.
>
> Because how unfair — indeed, un-American — it is for an office worker like, say, Warren Buffet's secretary to dutifully pay her taxes, while some well-to-do people with better educations and higher incomes end up paying a much smaller tax rate.
>
> Or, worse, skipping their taxes altogether.
>
> A new report just out from the Internal Revenue Service reveals that 36 of President Obama's executive office staff owe the country $833,970 in back taxes. These people working for Mr. Fair Share apparently haven't paid any share, let alone their fair share.
>
> Previous reports have shown how well-paid Obama's White House staff is, with 457 aides pulling down more than $37 million last year.
>
> […]The report finds that thousands of federal employees owe the country more than $3.4 billion in back taxes. That's up 3% in the past year.

Democrats are actually quite hypocritical. They say one thing in public, in order to give the appearance of being generous and compassion, but in private they do something completely different. I wrote more about hypocrisy on the left in this post.

Michael Licona and Shane Puckett debate the resurrection of Jesus

January 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate has got a lot of comments on Apologetics 315.

Details:

On January 11, 2012, Mike Licona debated agnostic Shane Puckett on the topic "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" Shane was ranked #32 in the world as a collegiate debater in 2000 and has trained 3 national debate champions. The debate was held at the First Baptist Church of West Monroe.

Dr. Licona takes the affirmation and speaks first. I have not seen the debate, but people seem to think that Michael Licona did well.

Full Debate MP3 Audio here *(1hr 45min)*

And you can visit Mike Licona's web site here.

Consider this your Friday night fun!

(Or you can watch Horatio Hornblower with Gregory Peck)

Fitch cuts credit ratings on 6 more European nations

January 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Zero Hedge.

Excerpt:

> Fitch Ratings-London-27 January 2012: Fitch Ratings has today concluded its review of the six eurozone sovereigns it placed on Rating Watch Negative (RWN) on 16 December 2011.
>
> The rating actions on the long-term (LT) and short-term (ST) Issuer Default Ratings (IDRs) are as follows:
>
> -Belgium LT IDR downgraded to 'AA' from 'AA+'; Negative Outlook; ST IDR affirmed at 'F1+'
> -Cyprus LT IDR downgraded to 'BBB-' from 'BBB'; Negative Outlook; ST IDR affirmed at 'F3'
> -Ireland LT IDR affirmed at 'BBB+'; Negative Outlook; ST IDR affirmed at 'F2'
> -Italy LT IDR downgraded to 'A-' from 'A+'; Negative Outlook; ST IDR downgraded to 'F2' from 'F1'
> -Slovenia LT IDR downgraded to 'A' from 'AA-'; Negative Outlook; ST IDR downgraded to 'F1' from 'F1+'
> – Spain LT IDR downgraded 'A' from 'AA-'; Negative Outlook; ST IDR downgraded to 'F1' from 'F1+'
>
> All the ratings have been removed from RWN, with the Negative Outlook on all six countries indicating a slightly greater than 50% chance of a downgrade over a two-year time horizon.
>
> […]**The Negative Outlooks on eight eurozone countries (the six sovereigns in this review along with 'AAA'-rated France and 'BB+'-rated Portugal) primarily reflect the risk that the crisis could intensify further**.

Now consider that Barack Obama is taking us down the same road as these European welfare states. The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people's money. That's what is happening in Europe, and it's going to happen here, unless we get serious about who we elect as President.

My previous post on S&P downgrades of the credit ratings of various European countries.

16 scientists explain why global warming is not a threat

January 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Levin)

Excerpt:

> Perhaps the most inconvenient fact is the lack of global warming for well over 10 years now. This is known to the warming establishment, as one can see from the 2009 "Climategate" email of climate scientist Kevin Trenberth: "The fact is that we can't account for the lack of warming at the moment and it is a travesty that we can't." But the warming is only missing if one believes computer models where so-called feedbacks involving water vapor and clouds greatly amplify the small effect of CO2.
>
> The lack of warming for more than a decade—indeed, the smaller-than-predicted warming over the 22 years since the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) began issuing projections—suggests that computer models have greatly exaggerated how much warming additional CO2 can cause. Faced with this embarrassment, those promoting alarm have shifted their drumbeat from warming to weather extremes, to enable anything unusual that happens in our chaotic climate to be ascribed to CO2.

And:

> Although the number of publicly dissenting scientists is growing, many young scientists furtively say that while they also have serious doubts about the global-warming message, they are afraid to speak up for fear of not being promoted—or worse. They have good reason to worry. In 2003, Dr. Chris de Freitas, the editor of the journal Climate Research, dared to publish a peer-reviewed article with the politically incorrect (but factually correct) conclusion that the recent warming is not unusual in the context of climate changes over the past thousand years. The international warming establishment quickly mounted a determined campaign to have Dr. de Freitas removed from his editorial job and fired from his university position. Fortunately, Dr. de Freitas was able to keep his university job.
>
> This is not the way science is supposed to work, but we have seen it before—for example, in the frightening period when Trofim Lysenko hijacked biology in the Soviet Union. Soviet biologists who revealed that they believed in genes, which Lysenko maintained were a bourgeois fiction, were fired from their jobs. Many were sent to the gulag and some were condemned to death.
>
> Why is there so much passion about global warming, and why has the issue become so vexing that the American Physical Society, from which Dr. Giaever resigned a few months ago, refused the seemingly reasonable request by many

> of its members to remove the word “incontrovertible” from its description of a scientific issue? There are several reasons, but a good place to start is the old question “cui bono?” Or the modern update, “Follow the money.”
>
> Alarmism over climate is of great benefit to many, providing government funding for academic research and a reason for government bureaucracies to grow. Alarmism also offers an excuse for governments to raise taxes, taxpayer-funded subsidies for businesses that understand how to work the political system, and a lure for big donations to charitable foundations promising to save the planet. Lysenko and his team lived very well, and they fiercely defended their dogma and the privileges it brought them.

Read the whole thing! This is a must-read.

UPDATE: My friend Neil Simpson has found another recent study showing that there has been no significant global warming for 15 years – and the numbers come from the British Met Office, and the University of East Anglia (home of Climategate).

Related stories

- New study : Earth’s climate is not as sensitive to carbon dioxide as IPCC claims
- Climategate 2.0: Leaked e-mails show scientists intended to deceive public
- NASA admits that their data is worse than CRU Climate-gate data
- 19 points that undermine the claims of global warming alarmists
- UN IPCC global warming alarmism based on student essay and magazine article
- How the UN’s IPCC cites non-scientific claims from the World Wildlife Fund
- Chairman of UN’s IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Britain to be hit by coldest winter in 100 years
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Russian economists accuse CRU of cherry-picking Russian temperature data
- UK Daily Mail summarizes the Climategate scandal
- Armed guard prevents questions on Climategate at UN conference
- Australian climate data also adjusted to hide the decline
- What does Climategate really prove about global warming?
- Comparison of hockey stick graph data to a larger data set in the same area
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now

Herman Cain endorses Newt Gingrich

January 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Herman Cain gives Newt Gingrich endorsement
From the liberal Washington Post. (H/T Richard)

Excerpt:

> Businessman Herman Cain threw his support to Republican presidential contender Newt Gingrich late Saturday.
>
> The move by the former GOP candidate and tea-party favorite comes three days before the Florida primary, at a moment when Gingrich is badly in need of something to rekindle the momentum he gained in the wake of his South Carolina primary victory.
>
> […]**Cain is the latest in a series of popular conservative figures to back the former House speaker, while much of the GOP establishment is marshaling against him. Among Gingrich's other recent supporters are former Alaska governor Sarah Palin; his onetime presidential rival, Texas Gov. Rick Perry; and former senator Fred Thompson (Tenn.)**
>
> […]He remains popular today among grassroots conservatives. He demonstrated particular popularity in Florida, where he earned a surprising win of a straw poll last summer — and launched his dramatic, if short-lived, rise to the top of the field.
>
> […]Gingrich said he hopes Cain will co-chair a commission to lead the policy discussion on the economy and taxes. He compared the idea to his request that Perry lead a commission on the 10th Amendment, which he proposed when Perry endorsed him in advance of last weekend's South Carolina primary.
>
> "I realize that as a co-chair fo a commission like that, there would be a little thing called 9-9-9 that would be brought in and put on the table. So I fully expect that," Gingrich said.

Gingrich also just got endorsed by the Florida Tea Party. He already had the endorsement of many other Tea Party groups nationwide.

I still like Rick Santorum better than Gingrich, because of his activism on social issues, but I admire the way that Gingrich is attracting so many endorsements from high profile conservatives. Nobody wants Romney to be the nominee except for Democrats , Barack Obama and the mainstream media, including Fox News.

A third Obama-subsidized green energy firm is bankrupt after $118.5 million loan

January 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News explains how well stimulus spending stimulates the economy.

Excerpt:

> The third federally subsidized green energy company to declare bankruptcy seems to indicate a pattern, said Rep. Cliff Stearns, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee on oversight and investigations.
>
> "One bankruptcy may be a fluke, two could be coincidence, but three is a trend," Stearns said in a written statement. "Our investigation continues, and we are working to ensure taxpayers never are never again stuck paying hundreds of millions of dollars because of the administration's risky bets."
>
> Ener1, which makes batteries for electric vehicles, announced Thursday it had filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The company had been awarded a $118.5 million from the Energy Department through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, better known as the stimulus.
>
> The Obama administration has already been under fire for a $535 million stimulus-funded loan it made to California-based solar panel company Solyndra, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last fall before being raided by the FBI. The House Energy and Commerce Committee has been investigating the Solyndra loan.Also late last fall, the Massachusetts-based Beacon Power, green energy storage plant that got $43 million in stimulus funds, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.
>
> Ener1 announced the Chapter 11 filing one year to the day that Vice President Joe Biden visited a Greenville, Ind. plant on Jan. 26, 2011.

If we want the economy to do well, then we need to elect someone who understands free market capitalism – not a socialist community organizer. Let the private sector create jobs. They know how to compete. They know how to survive. They know how to give customers what they want. They know how to be efficient.

Related posts

- How Barack Obama used taxpayer dollars to outsource green energy jobs
- Did Obama really create jobs with his green energy and stimulus programs?
- In Canada, a revolt against global warming socialism creates an economic boom
- E-mails reveal that Obama fundraiser discussed Solyndra loan with White House
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra

- Report finds Labor Department’s green jobs program failing
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi’s brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- How well did Obama’s green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors
- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing
- Marsha Blackburn beats up Al Gore on cap and trade corruption

Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God

January 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this piece of research from Medical News Today. (H/T Uncommon Descent)

Excerpt:

> Thinking about religion gives people more self-control on later, unrelated tasks; according to results from a series of recent Queen's University study.
>
> "After unscrambling sentences containing religiously oriented words, participants in our studies exercised significantly more self-control," says psychology graduate student and lead researcher on the study, Kevin Rounding.
>
> Study participants were given a sentence containing five words to unscramble. Some contained religious themes and others did not. After unscrambling the sentences, participants were asked to complete a number of tasks that required self-control – enduring discomfort, delaying gratification, exerting patience, and refraining from impulsive responses.
>
> Participants who had unscrambled the sentences containing religious themes had more self-control in completing their tasks.
>
> "Our most interesting finding was that religious concepts were able to refuel self-control after it had been depleted by another unrelated task," says Mr. Rounding. "In other words, even when we would predict people to be unable to exert self-control, after completing the religiously themed task they defied logic and were able to muster self-control."
>
> "Until now, I believed religion was a matter of faith; people had little 'practical' use for religion," Mr. Rounding explains. "This research actually suggests that religion can serve a very useful function in society. People can turn to religion not just for transcendence and fears regarding death and an after-life but also for practical purposes."

So why would religious people have more self-control than non-religious people? Speaking as a Christian, I would argue that self-control is not a by-product of religion, but that it is a tool used by Christians to achieve certain ends that fit with the Christian worldview.

First, let's look at how people who don't have self-control operate. I have been chatting with some friends recently about the lifestyle that people get into when they get away from their parents for the first time. (Assuming the parents don't take education and apologetics seriously). The fun lifestyle, it was explained to me, goes something like this:

1. A bunch of friends meet in a bar
2. They drink a lot, listen to music and dance around

3. They meet people and have conversations in which the men are careful not to express any moral judgments, religious convictions or conservative political views to the women
4. They gradually get more and more drunk, and it gets later and later
5. The friends retire to different people's houses in order to hook-up, which involves anything from kissing to intercourse
6. They keep doing this, there is no structured courting and no parental oversight, and occasionally people move in together or have kids out of wedlock by hooking up
7. Some of these children are aborted in order to keep the woman free for work and having more fun
8. The children who are born are often raised fatherless, causing all kinds of damage on them, especially making the girls prone to have sex much too early and the boys more violent
9. Any marriages that emerge break up shortly after since no one is willing to sacrifice for the marriage or the children
10. Government expands to address the broken homes with more police, day care, welfare, etc.

I never really knew much about this until recently when some of the people who read my blog have been explaining it all to me. The thing that strikes me the most about what secular people do is that they have no agenda for God when they go out and meet people – especially when it's men talking to women. They don't bring their relationships or group activities inline with religion, and so there is no reason to be self-controlled – they have no plan that they are are trying to achieve, they are just there to have fun.

Now what about Christians? When I go out with my male friends, we are not drinking anything – we're going to play a sport like racquetball/squash or something and then we are going to go to a restaurant to eat and talk about apologetics and science and war and education and investments and parenting and education and the threat of Islamic fundamentalism. After that, we might go back to someone's house to play video games or play pool or watch a debate and discuss that. But always we have an agenda – we are trying to build each other up in our Christian lives and planning different activities like conferences, debates, etc.

But when dealing with women, who are very often influenced by feminism these days, it's different. Most men seem to think that if a woman has sex with them, that this is some great affirmation of them. I don't think that and my friends don't think that. I have learned from women that they give up sex as a way to control men, to make them hang around and buy them things, but without having to be led by the man. Women who have been influenced by feminism *hate* the idea that men will tell them to read books, act morally, honor their obligations to men and children, develop religious convictions that exclude others and make them unpopular, mentor other Christians, and so on. They want to have men around, but they don't want to be told not to act selfishly/irresponsibly/amorally.

Sex is a tool that feminist women use in order to get men to "like" them, without having to let men do what men do – lead, provide, set moral boundaries, defeat lies, and fit the woman to a plan so that she can help him achieve it. So the bottom line is that a woman giving me sex is no good for me – in fact, it would be bad. It would be a way for her to control me and to prevent me from having the leverage to lead her and fit her to my plan – a plan that includes a stable home for raising children who will have an influence. Instead of standing her up with duties and obligations (read this book, stop spending money, debate your non-Christian friends), I would just shut up and let her continue to let her act in ways that are no good for marriage and parenting. Men with plans understand what women are for, and the thing that we are looking for is not sex, but help. We need someone to help us achieve our plan.

So that brings us back to the topic of the post. The reason why I don't play the hook-up game is because it gets me nothing. I cannot get a woman to do the things I need her to do by giving her leverage over me. When you first meet a woman, she is very likely not to be ready to do what you need her to do in a marriage – she needs to be mentored. Right from the start, I want her to know that what I am offering her is the ability to do useful work, to achieve important goals, and work together with someone who is supportive, appreciative, thoughtful, romantic, devoted, faithful, attentive and caring over a long period of time. And the way that I communicate that I am not here just to provide women with fun is by giving them tasks to do right from the start, and making it clear to them why I need them to do things.

Back to the original topic, I hope that this makes clear why religious people exhibit self-control when secular left people do not. Christian men have a goal for our relationships with women. We need them to support us in our plans by having particular skills and performing particular tasks. During the courtship, men refrain from sex to prevent a woman from escaping from her obligations to get those skills and train to perform those tasks. To have sex is to give up leadership in the relationship and to let women control the relationship. And when women control the relationship, it means that the goal of the relationship is almost always going to be to please them – and not God.

Christian men should never give up control of the relationship by giving up sobriety and chastity, because we know that relationships work better when men lead and emphasize what men care about most: morality, reason, chastity, evidence, theology, apologetics, marriage, family, parenting, free market capitalism, personal responsibility, law and order, illegal immigration, protecting the unborn, national security, traditional marriage, the debt crisis, etc. Self-control is the tool we use to lovingly prepare women for the tasks that we need them to perform – tasks that we often cannot perform ourselves – and always with the higher goal of making the relationship please God by achieving something for him.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?

- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Montreal Muslims found guilty of first degree murder in Shafia trial

January 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the National Post. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> After Canada's first mass-honour-killings trial, three members of a Montreal family have all been found guilty of first-degree murder in the drowning deaths of four other family members — including three teenage sisters.
>
> A jury on Sunday handed down its guilty verdicts for Mohammad Shafia and Tooba Mohammad Yahya, as well as their 21-year-old son, Hamed.
>
> They had been charged with murder after the bodies of three Shafia sisters — Zainab, 19, Sahar, 17, and 13-year-old Geeti — were discovered in a submerged vehicle in a canal near Kingston, in June 2009.
>
> Also in the vehicle was Rona Amir Mohammad, the 52-year-old first wife of Shafia, whom he married in his native Afghanistan before the polygamous family moved to Canada in 2007 and settled in Montreal.
>
> A conviction for first-degree murder carries with it an automatic life sentence with no chance of parole for 25 years.
>
> […]A dozen independent witnesses — including Montreal police, social workers, teachers and school officials — testified the girls feared their father and even some of their siblings, who they believed were spying on them, and were depressed and desperate to get away.
>
> On wiretap recordings played for jurors, Shafia called his daughters "whores," "filthy" and "rotten children" who betrayed the family and Islam and did "cruelty" to Shafia by secretly taking boyfriends and by wearing revealing clothes.
>
> Prosecutors alleged that the victims died in an honour killing orchestrated by Shafia to cleanse the shame he felt from the conduct of his daughters.
>
> The trial also heard that Shafia's first wife, who was living in Canada illegally, wanted a divorce from Shafia and was supportive of the daughters who were dating.

Blazing Cat Fur also points out this Montreal Gazette article, which says that the relatives of the Shafia murderers *approve* of honor killings.

Like the UK, Canada has major, major problems with immigrants who are not integrated properly into Western culture and values. The Liberal government that was in power for decades was always pushing for "diversity" and "multiculturalism", just like the UK Labour Party. Liberal professors, like those at Queen's University in Kingston, are even

pushing for Canada to adopt polygamy, in order to respect the cultural beliefs of Muslims.

In Canada, polygamous Muslims can already collect multiple welfare checks for their multiple wives.

Excerpt:

> Hundreds of [Greater Toronto Area] Muslim men in polygamous marriages — some with a harem of wives — are receiving welfare and social benefits for each of their spouses, thanks to the city and province, Muslim leaders say.
>
> Mumtaz Ali, president of the Canadian Society of Muslims, said wives in polygamous marriages are recognized as spouses under the Ontario Family Law Act, providing they were legally married under Muslim laws abroad.
>
> "Polygamy is a regular part of life for many Muslims," Ali said yesterday. "Ontario recognizes religious marriages for Muslims and others."
>
> He estimates "several hundred" GTA husbands in polygamous marriages are receiving benefits. Under Islamic law, a Muslim man is permitted to have up to four spouses.
>
> However, city and provincial officials said legally a welfare applicant can claim only one spouse. Other adults living in the same household can apply for welfare independently.
>
> The average recipient with a child can receive about $1,500 monthly, city officials said.

This is another situation where liberal Toronto lawmakers want to support "multiculturalism" and "diversity".

Oh, and did you know that multiculturalists also support sex-selection abortions? It turns out that sex-selection abortions are very popular in non-Western nations, like India. Yes – it's another area where leftists side with "multiculturalism" and "diversity". One wonders what multiculturalists think of honor killings and burning widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands. After all, if you accept all views on moral issues as valid, then you approve of all of these views as valid. That's what moral relativism and tolerance means – celebrating everyone's point of view as equally valid.

Well, I for one think that honor killings and sex-selection abortions and widow burning and polygamy are all morally wrong. I guess I am not multicultural and diverse enough.

You can read more about the Shafia trial and the verdict here at Blazing Cat Fur.

Paul Ryan takes Obama's State of the Union speech apart

January 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Budget hawk Paul Ryan on Fox News Sunday.

Snippet 1:

> "The irony of this is the president's policies do the exact opposite. We basically have this. The president can't run on his record. It's a miserable record. He is not going to change his tune and moderate like say Bill Clinton did in 1996 because he's really stuck with his ideology so he has no choice but to divide. So he is going to run a very decisive campaign for political gain and he has this concept of fairness and equality where he uses the kind of rhetoric we use, but the policies he's producing will result in crony capitalism will result in more power in the government to supervise our lives, to give us a stagnant economy where the rich and the powerful are the ones who are picking it. So what I'm trying to say is he is giving us a future of debt, doubt, and decline. "

And snippet 2:

> "The president isn't leading. The president isn't truthful with the American people about what kind of fiscal train wreck is coming, we're going to be. And we'll pass budgets to show the country exactly how we propose to fix the problem. You know the thing that is frustrating about this, Chris, is there is an emerging bipartisan census on fixing these big problems. There are Democrats who do agree with us on how to do tax reform. Get the loopholes out, lower the rates. We're getting a bipartisan consensus on Medicare reform. The problem is the president and his party leader are out on the left standing on the sidelines looking in. So what we clearly need is a new White House and a new Senate and then we can realize this emerging bipartisan consensus on how to fix these problems".

It's good that we have Paul Ryan to respond to Obama's rhetoric.

Related posts

- Paul Ryan teams up with Democrat Ron Wyden to push Medicare reform plan
- Budget guru Paul Ryan discusses the economy at the Heritage Foundation
- Paul Ryan explains how raising taxes hurts job creation
- Paul Ryan explains why the millionaire tax causes unemployment to rise
- Paul Ryan: cut current spending, cap future spending and balance the budget
- Paul Ryan talks about the looming American debt crisis
- Where does Paul Ryan stand on foreign policy and social issues?
- Paul Ryan responds to his critics on Medicare reform

- What’s wrong with the American economy and how Paul Ryan would fix it
- Republican Paul Ryan proposes over 6 trillion in spending cuts
- Paul Ryan discusses economics at the liberal Brookings Institute
- Paul Ryan explains taxes and spending to Chris Matthews
- Paul Ryan takes on Democrat Brad Sherman on the worsening economy
- Paul Ryan debates Robert Reich on Larry Kudlow show
- Paul Ryan debates on the relationship between tax rates and job creation
- Paul Ryan talks about health care with Chris Matthews and Chris Wallace
- Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander
- Paul Ryan discusses Obamacare and the federal budget
- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan’s plan for economic recovery
- Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama’s 1.56 trillion budget deficit
- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama’s record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism

New York teacher worth $10 million is paid $100,000 a year to do nothing

January 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The New York Post reports on the horror of teacher unions.

Excerpt:

> In a defiant raspberry to the city Department of Education — and taxpayers — disgraced teacher Alan Rosenfeld, 66, won't retire.
>
> Deemed a danger to kids, the typing teacher with a $10 million real estate portfolio hasn't been allowed in a classroom for more than a decade, but still collects $100,049 a year in city salary — plus health benefits, a growing pension nest egg, vacation and sick pay.
>
> Mayor Bloomberg and Gov. Cuomo can call for better teacher evaluations until they're blue-faced, but Rosenfeld and six peers with similar gigs costing about $650,000 a year in total salaries are untouchable. Under a system shackled by protections for tenured teachers, they can't be fired, the DOE says.
>
> […]Accused in 2001 of making lewd comments and ogling eighth-grade girls' butts at IS 347 in Queens, Rosenfeld was slapped with a week off without pay after the DOE failed to produce enough witnesses at a hearing.
>
> But instead of returning Rosenfeld to the classroom, the DOE kept him in one of its notorious "rubber rooms," where teachers in misconduct cases sat idle or napped. As The Post reported, Rosenfeld kept busy managing his many investment properties and working on his law practice. He's a licensed attorney and real-estate broker.
>
> […]Asked what work he does, Rosenfeld laughingly told his friend, "Oh, I Xeroxed something the other day."
>
> Rosenfeld could have retired four years ago at 62, but his pension grows by $1,700 for each year he stays — even without teaching. If he quit today, his annual pension would total an estimated $85,400.
>
> […]Rosenfeld will also get paid for 100 unused sick days when he leaves.
>
> New York has no mandatory retirement age for teachers.

Teacher unions are the base of the Democrat party. Democrats keep telling parents that the solution to public school failure is to shovel more tax money at the teacher unions, who just turn around and donate it right back to the Democrats. It's a vicious circle. The solution is to abolish public sector unions and the Department of Education. Let parents have a voucher and let them decide which school meets their needs. When parents have the money back in their pockets, schools will have to care about children again.

It's important for people to understand that Democrats are not good. They screw children

out of an education and then lie to parents about wanting what’s best for children. But they just want more money for their own campaign war chests, and that’s what they get when they persuade a gullible public to spend more on “education”.

What is the Christian doctrine of the Trinity?

January 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

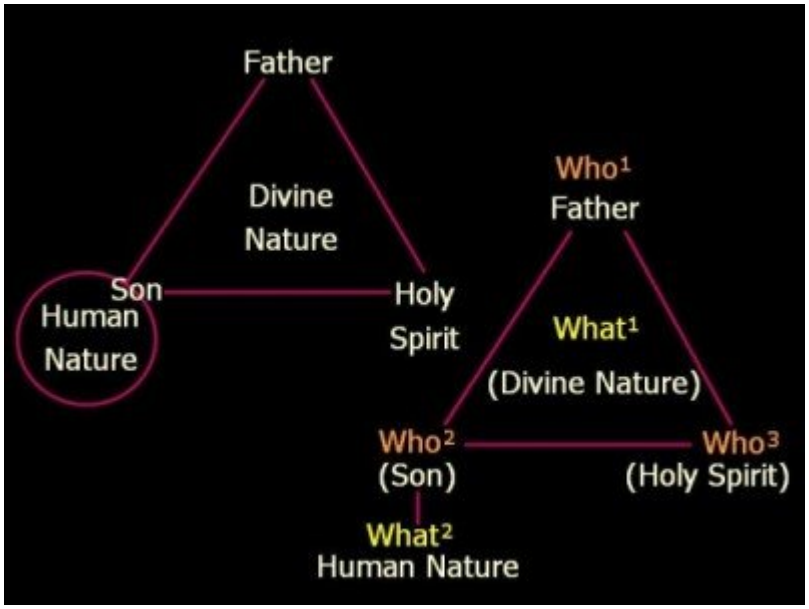

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity

I have a friend who is considering Christianity and he is stuck on the doctrine of the Trinity. Tom, this one's for you.

Excerpt:

> So, what exactly do we mean when we talk about the Trinity? Writing in the early third century, in hisAgainst Praxeas, Tertullian is credited with first employing the words "Trinity", "person" and "substance" to convey the idea of the Father, Son and Spirit being "one in essence — but not one in person". Indeed, Tertullian writes,
>
> > "Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct One from Another. These Three are, one essence, not one Person, as it is said, "I and my Father are One," in respect of unity of substance not singularity of number."
>
> This concept was established as church orthodoxy at the famous Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325. The Nicene Creed speaks of Christ as "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father."
>
> It is this definition that I am going to assume in the discussion that follows. Succinctly, then, the doctrine of the Trinity may be defined thusly: Within the one being or essence that is God, there exists three co-equal and co-divine distinct persons — namely the Father, Son and Holy Spirit — who share that essence fully and completely. This concept is not to be confused with polytheism, which maintains that there are multiple gods. While orthodox Christianity

> emphatically holds there to be only one God, we nonetheless understand God to be complex in his unity. The concept is also not to be confused with the ancient heresy of modalism, which maintains that God exists in three different modes. The Son has never been the Father and the Holy Spirit has never been the Son or the Father. Modalism is refuted by the picture given to us in all four gospels (Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34) in which the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus in the form of a dove and a voice is heard from Heaven "This is my beloved Son. With him I am well pleased." Similarly, it should be noted that the Father, Son and Spirit do not each make up merely a third of the Godhead. Rather, each of the three persons is God in the full and complete sense of the word.
>
> Having shown that Scripture emphatically rejects the notion that the Father, Son and Spirit are synonymous persons, only five propositions remain to be demonstrated in order to provide Biblical substantiation for the concept of the Trinity. Those propositions are:
>
> 1. There is only one eternal God.
> 2. The Father is the eternal God.
> 3. The Son is the eternal God.
> 4. The Holy Spirit is the eternal God.
> 5. Although the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are non-synonymous persons, the concept of the Trinity does not violate the law of non-contradiction.
>
> Let's take a look at each of these in turn.

He then takes a close look at what the Bible says about God with respect to those assertions. There can be no doubt that the Bible teaches that God is one divine substance, and three persons.

Why social conservatives should support free market capitalism

January 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The free enterprise system should not be adopted simply because it is the best system for creating wealth. The best reason to support free market capitalism is a *moral* reason. Arthur Brooks, President of the American Enterprise Institute, and a Christian, describes the moral argument for free market capitalism.

Excerpt:

> It might seem that the best case for free enterprise is the material one. Free enterprise lets people make more money, buy more and nicer stuff, and have a greater degree of comfort. The freer our economy is, the more competitive the US economy is vis-à-vis the rest of the world. And so on.
>
> But these aren't our best arguments. There is another reason, a transcendent reason, for which free enterprise matters most—and this is the case we all must be able to make today.
>
> We all learned early on in school that the Declaration of Independence claimed for each of us the unalienable right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Note that the founders didn't assert a right to be happy; such is the domain of tinpots and crackpots, of 1984's "Ministry of Plenty" and Josef Stalin's aggrandizing self-description as the Soviet Union's "Constructor of Happiness." So what, in practice, does this right to pursue happiness mean?
>
> It means the right to define and earn our happiness through our ideas, hard work, and gumption, to earn our success by creating value honestly, in our own lives and in the lives of others. It doesn't mean the pursuit of a big lottery win or an inheritance. Those bring money, but not happiness. And a mountain of evidence shows that after a fairly low threshold, more money doesn't make us happier. The best case for free enterprise has nothing at all to do with money or material goods or wealth. Those are just icing on the cake. We must stop talking about free enterprise as just an engine of wealth creation. It's much more than that.
>
> In short, the secret to the pursuit of happiness is earning our own success; creating value with our lives and in the lives of others. This earned success is the fruit of hard work and just rewards in a system built on merit. Only in a free enterprise system is effort and innovation rewarded over connections and predation. (And this means that we have to draw a distinction between free enterprise, which is based on opportunity and competition between ideas, and corporate cronyism, which is just another form of statism masquerading as free enterprise.)

Here are 3 reasons why I think that social conservatives should support free market

capitalism.

1) Right to work

It’s very important for Christians to have an economic system in place that allows them to work without having to promote anti-Christians ideas. But when government gets too big, what happens is that Christians are no longer free to take any job they want, and still keep a clear conscience. In some states, you have to join a union which uses your union dues to elect Democrats, who very often are liberal on social issues. Or, you have big government forcing Christians to perform abortions against their consciences. Or, you have big government forcing Christian organizations to provide health insurance plans that cover abortions and contraceptives. That’s why Christians need to vote against big government regulations on employment – we need the freedom to work at a job that does not violate our consciences.

2) Right to earn

It’s very important for Christians to keep what they earn so that they have the maximum amount of money to make decisions that make sense for them, according to their consciences. Take the example of day care and education. The big government statist is constantly trying to to create more and more government-run day care and public schools. Why? They want to take money away from families so that they cannot afford individualized private and parochial schools, and lump them all into government run schools that are more “equal”. The problem is that this is bad for Christians who want more oversight into what their children learn. For example, what sense does it make for a Christian man to pay for day care and public schools when he marries a teacher who becomes a stay at home homeschooling mother for his children? He has to pay for day care and public schools he will never use, and it eats into the money he has to afford a stay-at-home homeschooling mom. Christians should oppose a day care and education system run by a secular leftist government. They will never reflect the values of Christian parents.

3) Right to spend

It’s very important for Christians to have the freedom to purchase products and services that make sense in their worldview. Take the example of health care. Secular leftists would love to force private medical insurance companies to cover things like abortion and contraception as health care. In some states, these things are specified as mandatory for every health care plan. That means that Christians who purchase health care are being forced to pay for services like abortion which they will never use themselves. This is nothing more than the redistribution of wealth in order to lower the cost of abortions for people, in order to encourage them to be sexually active before they are able to accommodate children. Christians need to oppose this – we do not want to have to pay for things that go against our consciences.

So, in addition to the reasons that Brooks mentioned (the happiness of earning your own way and serving others), it’s important for Christians to understand how free market capitalism fits into their plans. We do not want to support big government, especially

when big government so often is not compatible with Judeo-Christian values. In the free market, it is much harder for ALL the businesses to conspire together to block Christians from working, earning and spending according to their consciences. We must resist top-down control of the free market so that we have the liberty to do what we ought to do in order to be virtuous.

Mitt Romney's record as governor is pro-abortion and pro-socialized medicine

January 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Byron York explains Mitt Romney's liberal record as governor of Massachusetts.

Excerpt:

> To win election as a Republican in Massachusetts, and then to govern effectively, Romney had to align himself with the left side of the GOP. And to do that, he adopted positions that haunt him still.
>
> Perhaps the most fateful was on abortion. Romney's reputation as a "perfectly lubricated weather vane" — to use the memorable phrase of former rival Jon Huntsman — comes from his decision to run for Senate in 1994 and governor in 2002 as a strongly pro-choice candidate, and then to run for president in 2008 as a strongly pro-life candidate.
>
> According to a new book by Boston journalist Ron Scott, when Romney was planning that '94 Senate run, he commissioned polling that showed a pro-life candidate could not win statewide election in Massachusetts. So Romney, who said he was personally pro-life, became politically pro-choice.
>
> And not just pro-choice, but ardently pro-choice. "I am not going to change our pro-choice laws in Massachusetts in any way," Romney said in an Oct. 29, 2002, debate. "I will preserve them. I will protect them. I will enforce them. I do not take the position of a pro-life candidate. I am in favor of preserving and protecting a woman's right to choose." When The Boston Globe said there was not a "paper's width" of difference between Romney and his Democratic opponent on abortion, Romney proudly quoted the paper.
>
> If Romney had chosen a less liberal state to live in, he would not have had to do that — and, of course, he would not have had to switch back to a pro-life position in 2004-2005, as he formed a political action committee and began working toward a run for the Republican nomination for president.
>
> As a candidate for office in Massachusetts, Romney also had to take positions on guns, global warming and gay rights that later caused him difficulties in Republican presidential politics. He even had to renounce Ronald Reagan — an extremely unwise thing to do in today's GOP. "Look, I was an independent during the time of Reagan-Bush," Romney said in a 1994 debate with Sen. Ted Kennedy. "I'm not trying to return to Reagan-Bush." Now, of course, Romney sings Reagan's praises at nearly every campaign stop.
>
> If he hadn't run in Massachusetts, he wouldn't have had to bash Reagan in the first place.
>
> But, after abortion, the most devastating consequence of Romney's choosing

> Massachusetts has been the issue of universal health care. In extending coverage to everyone in the state, Romney helped fulfill a long-time liberal goal; just look at the love-fest with Kennedy at the bill's 2006 signing ceremony. But Romney did not effectively control rapidly rising health care costs. And he could not have anticipated how deeply unpopular universal coverage schemes would become with the Republican base after Obamacare.
>
> In the campaign, Romney has blamed the Democratic Massachusetts legislature for Romneycare's problems and denied vigorously that he believes his bill would be a good model for the nation. It's a difficult position to take on his signature achievement in office. And it would not have happened had Romney not chosen to run in Massachusetts.

We can't afford to run a moderate against Barack Obama – Obama is going to win because he will just point out that Romney agreed with him on everything when he was governor of Massachusetts. Republican voters are pro-life and we oppose government-run health care. we need to elect someone who has a Republican record.

Related posts

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Did Obama's $800 billion dollar stimulus program stimulate the economy?

January 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The numbers are in.

Excerpt:

> Recall the original Obama economic team. It consisted of President Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, and White House economists Lawrence Summers, Christina Romer, Austan Goolsbee, and Jared Bernstein. It was the Democrats' Best and Brightest—but not one with a smidgen of executive experience in either the private or public sector. And into their hands was entrusted an $800 billion stimulus spending plan, a package whose details were fleshed out by Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi. What could go wrong?
>
> Lots, it turns out. And Michael Grabell, a reporter for ProPublica, documents the many failings of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in "Money Well Spent? The Truth Behind the Trillion-Dollar Stimulus, the Biggest Economic Recovery Plan in History," out this week. Rather than focus on questionable Keynesian economics behind the stimulus, Grabell focuses on its execution and management.
>
> In reporting on the stimulus over three years, I traveled to 15 states, interviewed hundreds of people and read through tens of thousands of government documents and project reports. What I found is that the stimulus failed to live up to its promise not because it was too small (as those on the left argue) or because Keynesian economics is obsolete (as those on the right argue), but because it was poorly designed. Even advocates for a bigger stimulus need to acknowledge that their argument is really one about design and presentation.
>
> Take the tax cut piece of the plan. Inspired by new research in behavioral economics, Team Obama constructed the $116 billion tax credit so it was "dribbled" out in paychecks at about $10 a week. Grabell:
>
> Perhaps that would have worked if the tax cut had been substantial. But spread out in tiny increments, it did little to overcome the prevailing fear of losing a job, a home and years of retirement savings. Not only did Obama lose the political credit but also the consumer excitement that a large check would have provided.
>
> Or how about the infrastructure spending. Grabell says it was beset by regulatory obstruction and union pandering:
>
> The timing of the stimulus was poor to bring about the flood of construction projects everyone expected in the first year. States had to advertise the project to allow contractors to submit bids. They needed to review those bids and sign the contracts. Then, they had to go back to the U.S. Department of

> Transportation for the final OK. ..
>
> Some projects in public housing, waterworks and home insulation remained paralyzed for six months to a year as short-staffed agencies reviewed Buy American waiver requests and calculated prevailing wages for weatherization work in every county in America.
>
> In Michigan, human services officials estimated that 90% of the homes in line for weatherization work would need a historic preservation review. But as of late fall 2009, the office responsible had only two employees.
>
> Public transit advocates expected a windfall for bus companies like New Flyer in St. Cloud, Minn. But the transit money took longer to get out the door because every grant had to be reviewed by the Labor Department to ensure that it wouldn't have a negative impact on transit unions.
>
> In short, Big Government screwed up the Big Spend. Biden said the stimulus would "literally drop kick us out of the recession." But Grabell concludes that "the stimulus ultimately failed to do what America expected it to do — bring about a strong, sustainable recovery. The drop kick was shanked."

Previously, I wrote about the $447 billion stimulus – son of stimulus. It was also a shank.

Related posts

- Obamanomics: $500,000 stimulus grant to grow trees creates 1.72 jobs
- Solar power firm goes bankrupt after receiving $535 million taxpayer dollars
- Public schools spend $130,000 of stimulus money on diversity training books
- Democrat economists: "stimulus" cost $278,000 per job
- Obama blasts private jet tax breaks created by his own stimulus
- Obama spent $80 billion dollars on green jobs so where are the jobs?

Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian

January 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was having a chat with a friend of mine a few days back and we were discussing how a man can tell if a woman is marriage material. Now this friend is not yet a Christian, but he is a conservative. So I suggested to him this list of questions (below) that I ask women when I want to test them.

Before we look at the list, let me just point out what kinds of questions are bad. You want to avoid asking leading questions that will allow the person to just give a yes or no answer. Don't ask "who did you vote for?" – that's much too easy to fake. You want them to argue for their positions on different issues at length, and in their own words, and with reference to their own experiences.

It's also a good idea for men to observe a candidate's behavior over time to see if it's consistent with her answers. Also, I think that even if the woman gets none of the questions right, but begins to ask you for books to read so that she can answer them, then that counts as a right answer. You just have to make sure she follows through, though. I sent one woman a book on Christianity and capitalism for her Christmas gift in 2009 and it took her 18 months for her to write the book review! In all honesty, these questions are pretty tough, so I think that the best you can hope for is that the person becomes curious. I had to learn the answers over many years. Having said that, you could probably cover most the topics with about $40 worth of introductory books.

When scoring the answers, you can award bonus points for extras, e.g. – naming any scholar as an authority (especially non-Christian scholars), referencing a book or a debate, referencing peer-reviewed papers, listing and refuting other points of view, recounting debates she herself has had with opponents, and pointing to her own past writings. Best of all is passion and aggression in answering the questions. Sometimes it is a good idea to pretend to disagree with her, or to pretend to be unconvinced, and then have her try to convince you. Another good thing to look for is susceptibility and vulnerability – she should have real feelings about these topics – it shows that she's invested in them.

Note: these questions can be used to test Christian men, as well.

QUESTIONS

1. Cosmology

What scientific evidence would you point to to show that God created the universe OR that God fine-tuned the universe, or parts of the universe, for intelligent life?

SAMPLE ANSWER: The big bang theory, the fine-tuning argument, galactic habitability, stellar habitability, or terrestrial habitability.

BONUS POINTS: referencing hard evidence like light element abundances, cosmic

microwave background radiation, or specific instances of fine-tuning.

WHY IT MATTERS: She can't be a Christian unless she *knows* God exists, and that can't just be based on feelings and community. An awareness of the scientific evidence shows a seriousness about spiritual things – that her belief is rooted in objective reality, not in subjective feelings, culture, community, etc. It's not "her truth", it's "the truth". If she doesn't know why she believes, then she can't be relied upon to make decisions as a Christian, especially in stressful situations. There is always going to be a conflict between doing what one feels like and doing what is consistent with reality. Having scientific facts helps a person to do what they ought to do.

2. Intelligent Design

Explain the concept of intelligent design and explain how it applies to the i) origin of life OR ii) to the fossil record.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the concept of specified complexity and Dembski's explanatory filter, then explain how it applies to (i) amino acid sequencing or the double helix, OR (ii) to the sudden origin of animal phyla in the Cambrian explosion.

BONUS POINTS: Ideally, for the origin of life question, she's going to mention things like UV radiation, chirality, cross-reactions and peptide bonds, then calculate the approximate probabilities for generating a protein by chance. For the Cambrian explosion, she should graph out the introduction of phyla over time, and explain the Ediacaran fauna and why they are not precursors to the Cambrian fauna. Bonus points for bashing theistic evolution, or talking about the early earth environment and the problems with forming amino acids.

WHY IT MATTERS: Darwinian evolution is bad science because it is really just philosophy (naturalism) masquerading as science. You can't marry anyone who pre-supposes a materialist view of metaphysics like naturalists do, and then allows that philosophical assumption to overrule the scientific evidence. You don't want to be paired up with someone who lets their prejudices overturn data.

3. The problems of evil and suffering

Assuming that Christianity is true, why do you think that God would allow suffering and evil in the world? Distinguish between human evil and natural evil in your answer. Also explain what role you think God's permission of evil and suffering has in maturing Christians.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Define the deductive and inductive problems of evil, explains several different responses to them, such as free will, character formation, natural law, the ripple effect, etc. Mention the burden of proof for claims that certain evils are gratuitous, i.e. – noseeums.

BONUS POINTS: explaining how evil relates to Christian theology and God's purposes for humans being knowledge of him and not just happiness, talking about Jesus' own suffering and the meaning and purpose of it. More bonus points for pointing out how atheists cannot even complain about evil without assuming objective morality, which

requires a moral lawgiver.

WHY IT MATTERS: Lots of nasty things can happen in a marriage. Children can get sick or die, jobs can be lost, and so on. It helps when you are dealing with a person who expects it and will not jettison their responsibilities and belief in Christ in order to pursue happiness unencumbered. The main thing is that the woman thinks that the purpose of life is to know God, and that suffering and evil play a role in gaining knowledge of God. You definitely do not want to marry someone who thinks that the purpose of life is happiness, and that God is some big bearded grandfather in the sky who just wants to hand out goodies to people and make sure they are having a good time regardless of what they choose to do.

4. The moral argument

What is the is-ought fallacy? What is the difference between moral objectivism and moral relativism? Give one reason why moral relativism is false. Give one reason why an atheist cannot rationally ground prescriptive morality. Explain why objective morality relates to God's existence.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the is-ought fallacy. Explain objective and subjective morality. Discuss the reformer's dilemma and how it refutes relativism. Explain that atheism requires materialism, and materialism denies free will – so moral choices are impossible. Outline the moral argument.

BONUS POINTS: Give more than one reason where only one was asked for, refute attempts to assert objective morality on atheism, explain how moral obligations are related to God's design for humans.

WHY IT MATTERS: You can't marry a person who thinks that the moral law is not a brake on their desire to be happy. There are going to be times in the marriage when self-sacrifice is required by the moral law – either for you, for God, or for the children. It will not be easy to be moral then, so you are looking for someone who thinks that morality is real, and not subject to their feelings and whims. It might be worth asking the person when she has had to do the right thing when it was against her self-interest, like those valedictorians who name Jesus in their speeches and then get censored.

5. The resurrection of Jesus

Assume you are talking to a non-Christian. Explain how you would make a case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus on historical grounds. This person does not accept the Bible as inspired and/or inerrant.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the criteria for establishing minimal facts / historical bedrock, list a set of minimal facts, explain why they pass the criteria, propose at least two naturalistic alternatives to the resurrection, and disprove them. MUST mention 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 in order to pass.

BONUS POINTS: listing atheist scholars who support each minimal fact, discussing N.T. Wright's work on the Jewish concept of resurrection, referencing Richard Bauckham's work on the gospels as eyewitness testimony, mentioning the pre-suppositions

(naturalism, relativism) of liberal scholars like Crossan and Borg.

WHY IT MATTERS: The resurrection is the cornerstone of Christian belief. A person cannot encounter skeptics and not be able to defend the resurrection on historical grounds to them. The resurrection matters to how people act: they act completely differently depending on whether they believe that this life is all there is, or that this life is just a precursor to eternal life with God. You want someone who takes the long-term perspective.

6. World religions

Name two major world religions and argue against them using either the laws of logic, scientific evidence or historical evidence. Explain the concept of middle knowledge, and why it is relevant to the problem of religious pluralism.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Refute Theravada Buddhism with the big bang, or refute Islam with the crucifixion of Jesus, etc. MUST mention specific beliefs of that religion that are testable, and not just argue that they reject Christianity and are therefore false. Explain how middle knowledge reconciles free will and divine sovereignty, and that it also helps to solve the problem of people who have never heard the gospel.

BONUS POINTS: Using evidence that is universally accepted by people outside of that religion. Using scientific evidence. Referencing Acts 17:27 or other Bible passages when explaining middle knowledge. Mentioning objections to middle knowledge, such as the grounding objection.

WHY IT MATTERS: Many younger Christians today believe that Christianity is moralistic therapeutic deism. They think that the purpose of religion is to have good feelings and to be nice to other people and to make other people feel good. It’s all about feelings. You need to make sure that she knows how to make people feel bad and is comfortable doing it, with evidence. Middle knowledge also grounds the person’s willingness to see people as being responsible for their acceptance or rejection of Christ. Instead of taking a hands-off fatalistic approach to salvation, someone who accepts middle knowledge is going to take persuasion seriously and expend effort to try to change the people around them.

7. Abortion

How would you establish that the unborn are fully human and deserve protection? Explain three pro-abortion arguments and then show why they are false. Name three incremental pro-life policies that you would introduce if you were a legislator.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Use the SLED test and the law of biogenesis. Talk about the DNA signature of the unborn being distinct from the mother. Explain and refute the back-alley abortions argument, the it’s the woman’s body argument, the Judith Jarvis Thompson violinist argument, etc. Legislation would be parental notification, banning funding for abortion providers, mandatory sonograms, etc.

BONUS POINTS: Refute more pro-abortion arguments, reference specific legislation that is in-flight or was recently signed into law. Experiences protesting abortion or debating abortion with pro-abortionists. Experience counseling a post-abortive or crisis pregnancy

woman. Mentioning biological details of foetus development.

WHY IT MATTERS: Basically, because people who think that sex is for recreation, and that it is ok to kill children to avoid any limits on the pursuit of happiness are not qualified for marriage. You can't enter into an intimate commitment with someone who is willing to commit murder in order to get out of the consequences of their own selfish pursuit of pleasure. That is not going to work in a marriage – you need someone who makes good decisions, avoids harming others, is chaste and self-controlled, and takes responsibility for her actions when they go awry.

8. Marriage

Explain the public purposes of marriage, and then outline three threats to marriage and explain what legislation you would propose to neutralize these threats. What choices should people make before marriage to make sure they will have a stable, loving marriage?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Some public purposes of marriage are i) to force moral constraints on sexual activity, ii) to produce the next generation of humans, iii) to provide children with a stable, loving environment in which to grow up. Three threats to marriage are i) cohabitation, ii) no-fault divorce – which leads to fatherlessness, and iii) same-sex marriage. There are others, too. For legislation, there are things like tax incentives, shared parenting laws, school choice to de-monopolize politicized public schools, etc. Pre-marriage behaviors are things like chastity, experience with children, having lots of savings, being physically fit, etc. Having a degree in experimental science, math or economics is excellent for a woman. Avoid artsy degrees, especially English.

BONUS POINTS: Name more threats to marriage, explain the effects of fatherlessness on children, explain how divorce courts work, explain how socialism impacts the family through taxation and wealth redistribution, explain what happens to women and children after a divorce.

WHY IT MATTERS: It's important for people who want to get married that they understand that marriage takes time and effort, and it requires both spouses to prepare for marriage, to be diligent at choosing a good spouse, and to understand what spouses and children need in order to stay engaged.

9. Children

Explain a person you admire and then tell me what you would do as a mother in order to produce that person from one of your children. What are some people and laws that you would change to make your job easier?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Jay Richards. Jay Richards is one of the most well-rounded Christian scholars operating today. He has knowledge of multiple areas, including economics and science. To make a Jay Richards, you need to be very careful about his education – which could mean homeschooling and saving money for later university tuition, as well as exposing him to apologetics and debates at an earlier age. He would need to have the dedicated attention of his mother for the first two years of his life, at least. Some laws

that would help would be lower taxes, school choice, and academic freedom laws.

BONUS POINTS: Explaining how different things like day care, public schools, divorce, etc. harm children. Explaining how mother and fathers contribute to the child's moral, cognitive, spiritual, etc. development at different times. Explain how the child is harmed if both parents are not present and engaged to play these roles.

WHY IT MATTERS: Marriage is an enormous sacrifice for a man. Not only is there the risk of divorce, but wives and children are very expensive. A man can serve God fine as a bachelor. He has to have compelling reasons why getting married would serve God more than staying single. Producing influential children seems to be one of the major reasons for a man to get married, and he needs to see evidence that his wife is on board with that.

10. Husbands

Explain the roles of a man in a marriage, and tell me some of the things you would do in order to help your man to achieve those roles. What groups would oppose your husband from fulfilling those roles, and what have you done in your life to prepare yourself to help your husband in his roles? What are some of the most important things that a man needs from a woman, and what specific things should a wife do to provide them?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Men are supposed to be protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders. In order to help men to be protectors, women have to give them time to study to discern truth from lie, and support their ability to be physically strong, and to own firearms. It is also a good idea for women to have a positive view of good men who use force to restrain evil, as with the American military. Women should support the use of force against radical Islam and terrorists, as well. In order to help men to be providers, women have to advocate for fiscal conservatism in the public square. That would mean advocating for lower taxes, less government spending and smaller government. It would also mean being frugal in the home and helping the man to move ahead at work. If the children are up and out of the house, it could mean going back to work or starting a business to help make ends meet – or monitoring investments. For a man to be a moral and spiritual leader, a woman has to be supporting of him making moral judgments in the home, disciplining the children, holding her accountable for moral errors, and for making exclusive truth claims when it comes to spiritual things. She should not censor him when he gets into debates about spiritual things, even if other people who disagree feel bad – so long as he is not being a jerk. Her goal is not to be popular or liked, but to support her husband in his roles. The most important thing a man needs is respect, and that means treating him as important and significant, being grateful for his contributions, soliciting his opinion on things, being mindful of his male nature, which is more visual and sexual.

BONUS POINTS: Having read "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands", "Men and Marriage", "Love and Economics" and "Taken Into Custody". More bonus points for having written about what she learned about men and marriage from books like that. The goal here is for her to have a real awareness and sympathy for what men are facing as husbands and fathers, and to have an idea of what women can do to support them in

their roles.

WHY IT MATTERS: As a man, you have certain needs – the biggest need is for respect. If you are thinking of marrying a woman who cannot define respect, and doesn't know how to give you respect, then you are going to be in for a world of hurt. The more she views marriage as a joint project with specific goals and external challenges, the more understanding and support you will get. No one wants to fly a plane with someone who doesn't know how to fly a plane, fix a plane or navigate a plane. The more she knows about men and marriage, the better it will go for you – and the children.

Parting thoughts

This list is not exhaustive, it's just to give you an idea of the kinds of things you should be looking for. A lot of it is the attitude. You are looking for a woman who does not shift blame onto you, who takes responsibility when she is wrong, who argues using logic and evidence, who loses arguments gracefully, and wins arguments gracefully, and who loves you and cares for you even if you are fighting. If the woman is resentful and doesn't want to learn anything to deepen her faith, then drop her and find someone who will learn – it will be much better for you to partner with someone lovable and helpful, instead of a selfish lazy feminist.

If I were making a list for women, I would emphasize different things more centered around the specific roles that men play in the marriage – asking for his resume, work history, savings, investments, past relationships with women, parenting ability, self-defense ability, mentoring ability, and especially on moral issues and Christian truth claims.The most important thing that a woman needs is love, and the man should be ready to speak about love at length, and explain how he is going to provide her with love during the courtship and during the marriage. Women need to know that they are significant and desired by the man.

UPDATE: Commenter straightright recommends this post on Dalrock blog, which contains general interview questions for a wife candidate, motivated by the concerns that men have about marriage. I really recommend this post.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!

- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Why would God want us to praise him?

January 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Amy K. Hall, staff apologist at Stand to Reason. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Excerpt:

> I was recently asked why God would want us to praise and worship Him. This is a question I hear every so often since we immediately assume that a person who demands praise is a pompous big-head. I think there are many Christians out there who secretly wonder about this—afraid to ask the question (lest they be thought unspiritual), but bothered all the same.
>
> God is completely self-sufficient and doesn't need our praise and worship. However, He does deserve it. Would you agree that it is right and good to praise someone who is worthy of praise? We instinctively know this and praise people for all sorts of achievements. We praise the people we love and admire, and it's not right or good for us to withhold praise from them.
>
> We all understand the concept of praise being due certain people. Imagine that you crafted an incredibly beautiful sculpture and won a prestigious award for your creation; but when the time came for the award ceremony, they gave the prize for your sculpture to the wrong artist! That would not be just, right, or good. In the same way, God—as the only being perfect in goodness, justice, love, etc.—is worthy of our praise. We do, in fact, owe Him that praise. He wants us to praise Him because it is right and good for us to do so. Since God wants us to do right and good things, of course he wants us to praise and worship Him.
>
> Beyond the praise being right and good (and *because* of its being right and good), worshiping God also brings us joy and enhances our relationship with Him. We see this in human relationships as well—think of a man with his wife. Doesn't it bring him great joy to praise her?

I think it it's interesting to note that very often, non-theists try to explain things like the creation of the universe and the fine-tuning of the universe and the origin of life as being the result of blind forces. That is the opposite of praise – that is speculating about nature to avoid giving credit to nature's Creator and Designer. They are trying to escape the obligation to worship by attributing the great miracles of God to no one, so they can be accountable to no one. This is not the kind of thought life that God looks kindly on.

One important result of studying the world, including science, is to be able to understand what God has done in the world and to give him appropriate recognition for it. It is part of being in a relationship with him that we know him and respond appropriately to his real character. The refusal to acknowledge God is one of the symptoms of rebellion against him.

Matthew 10:32-33:

[32] “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.

[33] But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

And this also appears in Luke 12:8-10:

[8] “And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God,

[9] but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

[10] And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

This passage is an early passage from Q, because it’s shared by Matthew and Luke, and Q is a source for those two early gospels. To get on the right side of this verse, it’s important to study what God has done, so you can give him the praise that he has earned. He wants to be acknowledged, and we want to hold up our end of the relationship and give him that acknowledgement. He did the deeds, and that means he should get the recognition for it.

One more thing I want to say about this. I see a lot of people singing songs about God in church, expressing praise for things they have no reason to believe that God has done. I think a good way to have authentic praise for God is to tone down the singing in groups and the emotional highs and the pretty buildings for a while, and focus on apologetics. Focus on learning the real stuff that God has actually done that we can know about – by studying science and history. In fact, it really scares me when I see young people singing and raising their hands and closing their eyes at church when I know good and well they have no intellectual grounding for these activities – it makes me feel like I am in some cult or something, surrounded by self-serving, fun-seeking weirdos.

You know that brings up an interesting question. What do you suppose would happen if I gathered together all the pastors and singing church people into a room and told them that we were going to do a scientific study of what God has done in nature, and a historical study of what God has done in history? My guess is that they would attack me, drive me out of the church, and go back to singing songs in groups with big musical bands and colorful lights in the ceiling. I think we need to guard against making Christianity about feelings and experiences and group gatherings, and make it more about knowledge. What has God really done that we can know about?

Let’s lay down a base of knowledge about God from nature and history, and then once we know he is real and he is good, we can talk about theology, and praising him for all of that. We don’t want what we do in church to be in anyway comparable to what non-Christians do in night clubs and concerts – gathering in groups and dancing around ecstatically. Blech! Christianity is about truth, not feelings.

Brian Auten interviews Peter J. Williams about New Testament reliability

January 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this interview at Apologetics 315. Click through to get the MP3.

Details:

> Today's interview is with Peter J. Williams, Warden ofTyndale House, Cambridge. He talks about his work and background in biblical languages, the reliability of the Gospels, internal vs. external evidences, the genre of the Gospels, the authorship of the Gospels, the Gospels as eyewitness testimony (link to talk here), historical methods past vs. present, oral culture and literacy in the first century, the dating of the Gospels (years vs. generations), approaching apparent contradictions, correcting substandard approaches to defending the Gospels, looking at morally difficult subjects in the Old Testament, tips for answering moral objections, advice on doing apologetics, and more.

But I have even more Peter J. Williams stuff!

This is a lecture I found from Dr. Peter J. Williams. He's giving the lecture in Texas! Isn't that a hoot?

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?

- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?
- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker. And this material was NEW TO ME. I like the way that this lecture is filled with little UK expressions like "mind the gap" and "Yah?". He doesn't say "if you like" as much as Justin Brierley, though. Just once I would like to have a discussion with Justin and have him say that, then I would say "no I don't like that". I think that would be funny, and I would love to see the expression on his face when I said that.

You can read an interview with Peter Williams here on Between Two Worlds.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate on Apologetics 315.

A Jewish rabbi explains what the Bible teaches about capitalism

February 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A Jewish rabbi explains what the Bible says about economics, in the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Tom)

Excerpt:

> More than any other nation, the United States was founded on broad themes of morality rooted in a specific religious perspective. We call this the Judeo-Christian ethos, and within it resides a ringing endorsement of capitalism as a moral endeavor.
>
> Regarding mankind, no theme is more salient in the Bible than the morality of personal responsibility, for it is through this that man cultivates the inner development leading to his own growth, good citizenship and happiness. The entitlement/welfare state is a paradigm that undermines that noble goal.
>
> The Bible's proclamation that "Six days shall ye work" is its recognition that on a day-to-day basis work is the engine that brings about man's inner state of personal responsibility. Work develops the qualities of accountability and urgency, including the need for comity with others as a means for the accomplishment of tasks. With work, he becomes imbued with the knowledge that he is to be productive and that his well-being is not an entitlement. And work keeps him away from the idleness that Proverbs warns leads inevitably to actions and attitudes injurious to himself and those around him.
>
> […]At the opening bell, Genesis announces: "Man is created in the image of God"—in other words, like Him, with individuality and creative intelligence. Unlike animals, the human being is not only a hunter and gatherer but a creative dreamer with the potential of unlocking all the hidden treasures implanted by God in our universe. The mechanism of capitalism, as manifest through investment and reasoned speculation, helps facilitate our partnership with God by bringing to the surface that which the Almighty embedded in nature for our eventual extraction and activation.
>
> Capitalism makes possible entrepreneurship, which is the realization of an idea birthed in human creativity. Whereas statism demands that citizens think small and bow to a top-down conformity, capitalism, as has been practiced in the U.S., maximizes human potential. It provides a home for aspiration, referred to in the Bible as "the spirit of life."
>
> The Bible speaks positively of payment and profit: "For why else should a man so labor but to receive reward?" Thus do laborers get paid wages for their hours of work and investors receive profit for their investment and risk.

> […]Many on the religious left criticize capitalism because all do not end up monetarily equal—or, as Churchill quipped, "all equally miserable." But the Bible's prescription of equality means equality under the law, as in Deuteronomy's saying that "Judges and officers . . . shall judge the people with a just judgment: Do not . . . favor one over the other." Nowhere does the Bible refer to a utopian equality that is contrary to human nature and has never been achieved.
>
> The motive of capitalism's detractors is a quest for their own power and an envy of those who have more money. But envy is a cardinal sin and something that ought not to be.
>
> God begins the Ten Commandments with "I am the Lord your God" and concludes with "Thou shalt not envy your neighbor, not for his wife, nor his house, nor for any of his holdings." Envy is corrosive to the individual and to those societies that embrace it. Nations that throw over capitalism for socialism have made an immoral choice.

I think that Christians are sometimes attracted to socialism because they think that the only way to help the poor is by state-controlled redistribution of wealth. Socialists might have the right goal of helping the poor (I actually believe that socialism is just the happy-face on fascism, but let us be charitable), but capitalism is the right way to achieve that goal of helping the poor.

Here is an article by Jay Richards for the American Enterprise Institute.

First, his introduction:

> If you're like me, when you think of wealth and poverty, you picture its material manifestations. To have wealth, we imagine, is to have money, stocks, real estate, or valuable commodities, which, in turn, gives us the means to achieve various material ends, such as food, clothing, cars, housing, and healthcare. Poverty, in contrast, is the lack of such goods, which, in turn, leads to a lack of food, shelter, basic medical care, and other such items. These mental associations can make it hard to discover the preconditions of wealth creation, many of which are immaterial, even spiritual, rather than material.
>
> For most of human history, discovering the sources of wealth creation would have been devilishly hard, since most economies, such as there were, tended to be static. If a Mesopotamian farmer or Greek shepherd in the second century BC ever asked, "Where does wealth come from?" he would have assumed that wealth came from rain, common labor, good luck, or some combination of these. He probably also would have assumed that to get really wealthy, you need to plunder other people.
>
> But we now have concrete examples of cultures that have created vast new wealth, moving the majority of their citizens from poverty to relative prosperity. And when we look at these cultures retroactively, we discover answers that, for

> most of us, are counterintuitive. I've argued elsewhere that we're able to discern ten crucial features allowing such cultures to alleviate poverty and create wealth. The more of these a culture has or does, the more likely it is to be prosperous.
>
> The Top Ten Ways to Alleviate Poverty
>
> 1. Establish and maintain the rule of law.
> 2. Focus the jurisdiction of government primarily on maintaining the rule of law, and limit its jurisdiction over the economy and the institutions of civil society.
> 3. Implement a formal property system with consistent and accessible means for securing a clear title to property one owns.
> 4. Encourage economic freedom.
> 5. Encourage stable families and other important private institutions which mediate between the individual and the state.
> 6. Encourage belief in the truth that the universe is purposeful and makes sense.
> 7. Encourage the right cultural mores.
> 8. Instill a proper understanding of the nature of wealth creation and poverty.
> 9. Focus on cultivating your comparative advantage rather than protecting what used to be your comparative advantage.
> 10. Work hard.
>
> There is a striking correlation between societies that exhibit these traits, or some subset of them, and the large-scale wealth creation. But notice that only one of them describes a material good. All the others are intangible, immaterial, spiritual. You can't find economic freedom or cultural mores on a map or put them in a safe. You can't bottle diligence or weigh the ingredients for stable families and voluntary institutions on a scale. These goods involve beliefs, social conventions, institutions, commitments, virtues, and creativity. Having listed them in brief, now I want to hold each of the ten immaterial ingredients up to the light and consider how each helps a society move from poverty to prosperity.

If someone has a spiritual or moral sickness that is preventing them from working, then the solution is not to hand them someone else's money. That's not going to make them happy. They need to earn their own pay and be responsible for their own independence.

Jay Richards on Christianity and Capitalism

Jay Richards actually wrote the book on Christianity and capitalism: "Money, Greed and God".

To understand what capitalism is, you can watch this lecture entitled "Money, Greed and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem" by Jay W. Richards, delivered at the Heritage Foundation think tank, and televised by C-SPAN2.

If you can't see the Richards video, here is an audio lecture by Jay Richards on the "Myths Christians Believe about Wealth and Poverty". Also, why not check out this series of 4

sermons by Wayne Grudem on the relationship between Christianity and economics? (a PDF outline is here)

And you can listen to Ron Nash's course on Christianity and economics.

CBO report predicts 30% higher taxes and trillion-plus dollar deficit

February 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> The amount of money the federal government takes out of the U.S. economy in taxes will increase by more than 30 percent between 2012 and 2014, according to the Budget and Economic Outlook published today by the CBO.
>
> At the same time, according to CBO, the economy will remain sluggish, partly because of higher taxes.
>
> "In particular, between 2012 and 2014, revenues in CBO's baseline shoot up by more than 30 percent," said CBO, "mostly because of the recent or scheduled expirations of tax provisions, such as those that lower income tax rates and limit the reach of the alternative minimum tax (AMT), and the imposition of new taxes, fees, and penalties that are scheduled to go into effect."
>
> The U.S. economy, CBO projects, will perform "below its potential" for another six years and unemployment will remain above 7 percent for another three.

Fox News reports that the deficit will remain above 1 trillion dollars.

Excerpt:

> A new budget report released Tuesday predicts the U.S. government will run a $1.1 trillion deficit in the fiscal year that ends in September, the fourth year in a row over $1 trillion, though a slight dip from last year.
>
> […]The report is yet another reminder of the perilous fiscal situation the government is in, but it is commonly assumed that President Barack Obama and lawmakers in Congress that little will be accomplished on the deficit issue during an election year.
>
> […]"Four straight years of trillion-dollar deficits, no credible plan to lift the crushing burden of debt," said House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, a Republican. "The president and his party's leaders have fallen short in their duty to tackle our generation's most pressing fiscal and economic challenges."
>
> "We will not solve this problem unless both sides, Democrats and Republicans, are willing to move off their fixed positions and find common ground," said Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad, a Democrat. "Republicans must be willing to put [tax increases] on the table."
>
> The study also predicts modest economic growth of 2 percent this year and forecasts that the unemployment rate will remain above 8 percent this year and next. That is based on an assumption that President Barack Obama will fail to win

> renewal of payroll tax cuts and jobless benefits by the end of next month.
>
> That jobless rate is higher than the rates that contributed to losses by Presidents Jimmy Carter (7.5 percent) and George H.W. Bush (7.4 percent). The study predicts unemployment to remain above roughly 5 percent — until 2016. The agency also predicts that unemployment will remain at 7 percent or above through 2015

Deficits in 2007 under George W. Bush were $160 billion and the unemployment rate was around 4-5%.

The CBO report also shows that the real unemployment rate is 10%.

Iran launches Spanish-language TV channel in Venezuela

February 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of South America
From the NY Daily News.

Excerpt:

> As tensions with the United States continue to heat up, Iran is looking for some new allies — with Spanish speakers.
>
> Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced on Tuesday that the country had launched a Spanish-language TV network meant to deal a blow to "dominance seekers" — which apparently means the U.S. and other Western countries, the Associated Press reported.
>
> The Spanish-language channel, Hispan TV, will run 24 hours a day with Iranian movies, news and documentaries.
>
> The channel is most likely targeted at countries that are friendly with Iran in Latin America, including Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba.
>
> Ahmadinejad said the channel had already been on the air on a trial basis since October.
>
> "The new channel will limit the ground for supremacy of dominance seekers," Ahmadinejad said during a Tehran ceremony marking the inauguration, according to the AP. "It will be a means for better ties between people and

> governments of Iran and Spanish-speaking nations.”

This is the kind of thing that we should have been doing in Iraq and Afghanistan instead of pulling our forces out and handing Egypt and Libya to the Islamofascists. You don’t have to fight a war to project power and influence, you just have to have ideas and convictions.

How faith, virtues and marriage are declining among blue collar Americans

February 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brad Wilcox writes about a new book entitled "Coming Apart" in the Wall Street Journal. Excerpt:

> So much for the idea that the white working class remains the guardian of core American values like religious faith, hard work and marriage. Today the denizens of upscale communities like McLean, Va., New Canaan, Conn., and Palo Alto, Calif., according to Charles Murray in "Coming Apart," are now much more likely than their fellow citizens to embrace these core American values. In studying, as his subtitle has it, "the state of white America, 1960-2010," Mr. Murray turns on its head the conservative belief that bicoastal elites are dissolute and ordinary Americans are virtuous.
>
> Focusing on whites to avoid conflating race with class, Mr. Murray contends instead that a large swath of white America—poor and working-class whites, who make up approximately 30% of the white population—is turning away from the core values that have sustained the American experiment. At the same time, the top 20% of the white population has quietly been recovering its cultural moorings after a flirtation with the counterculture in the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, argues Mr. Murray in his elegiac book, the greatest source of inequality in America now is not economic; it is cultural.
>
> He is particularly concerned with the ways in which working-class whites are losing touch with what he calls the four "founding virtues"—industriousness, honesty (including abiding by the law), marriage and religion, all of which have played a vital role in the life of the republic.
>
> Consider what has happened with marriage. The destructive family revolution of the late 1960s and 1970s has gradually eased—at least in the nation's most privileged precincts. In the past 20 years, divorce rates have come down, marital quality (self-reported happiness in marriage) has risen and nonmarital childbearing (out-of-wedlock births) is a rare occurrence among the white upper class. Marriage is not losing ground in America's best neighborhoods.
>
> But it's a very different story in blue-collar America. Since the 1980s, divorce rates have risen, marital quality has fallen and nonmarital childbearing is skyrocketing among the white lower class. Less than 5% of white college-educated women have children outside of marriage, compared with approximately 40% of white women with just a high-school diploma. The bottom line is that a growing marriage divide now runs through the heart of white America.

This whole article is worth reading, because it talks about some of the other areas that are declining in middle class America. I have added the book to my wishlist.

It seems as though Theodore Dalrymple's description of the British lower classes in his book "Life at the Bottom" has come to America. He argues in that book that the new moral relativism of the elites works well enough for them because they have money, but it is very harmful to the poor, if the poor adopt moral relativism. I always believed that America would be safe from moral relativism. Recently, I was trying to argue with some British Christians about how the secularization of Britain was leading to the decline of marriage and the nuclear family. I point out their 45% out-of-wedlock birth rate, and they pointed out our 40% out-of-wedlock birth rate. We are right behind them, and it really makes me sad. Children need a mother and a father to take care of them.

When arguing with liberals about the importance of marriage, I like to use two good articles from the Heritage Foundation. I argue that when marriage goes, many bad things happen, like child poverty and child abuse. You would think that the government would do something about the decline of marriage, but people on the secular left often don't like marriage, because there are traditional roles for husbands and wives that clash with their feminism. They don't like the working father and the mother staying at home – not even if that creates the most stable environment for the children

More evidence that Mitt Romney is a fiscal liberal and anti-growth

February 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Associated Press. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> Republican presidential contender Mitt Romney renewed his support Wednesday for automatic increases in the federal minimum wage to keep pace with inflation, a position sharply at odds with traditional GOP business allies, conservatives and the party's senior lawmakers.
>
> "I haven't changed my thoughts on that," the former Massachusetts governor told reporters aboard his chartered campaign plane, referring to a stand he has held for a decade.
>
> He did not say if he would ask Congress to approve the change if he wins the White House this fall.
>
> Congress first enacted federal minimum wage legislation in 1938 and has raised it sporadically in the years since. The last increase, approved in 2007, took effect in three installments and reached $7.25 an hour for covered workers effective July 24, 2009.
>
> It has never been allowed to rise automatically, as Romney envisions.
>
> Romney's chief rival for the nomination, Newt Gingrich, criticized Romney for the stance, pointing to previous periods of hyperinflation and saying it would end up costing way too much money. "That would be a very dangerous idea," Gingrich said.
>
> Romney also drew criticism from the anti-tax Club for Growth. "Indexing the minimum wage would be an absolute job killer," the group's president, Chris Chocola, said in a statement. He called the proposal "anti-growth."

Why are we flirting with someone who has the same anti-growth, anti-business policies as Barack Obama?

Mitt Romney

- Rick Santorum destroys Mitt Romney on RomneyCare in CNN debate
- Mitt Romney's tax returns would make him lose the election to Obama
- Does Mitt Romney's Romneycare health care plan fund abortion with taxpayer dollars?
- John Hawkins writes the most scathing anti-Romney column EVER
- Santorum and Gingrich expose Romney's liberal record in Sunday's NBC debate
- Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million while he was governor of Massachusetts
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?

- RINO Mitt Romney now open to European-style VAT tax
- Is Mitt Romney a flip-flopper? What are his flip-flops?
- RINO Mitt Romney deploys another RINO John Sununu to attack Newt Gingrich
- Mitt Romney supports the anti-Christian and anti-business ENDA law
- Mitt Romney gaffe: Romney fails miserably in interview with Bret Baier
- Jon Huntsman's anti-Romney ads are awesome
- Mitt Romney's political views on gay marriage, abortion and global warming
- Mitt Romney flip-flop videos: flat tax, abortion, health care, public sector unions, global warming
- Mitt Romney on global warming, climate change, environmental regulations
- Mitt Romney on abortion and stem cell research in his own words
- White House used Mitt Romney's Romneycare as a blueprint for Obamacare
- Mitt Romney on the issues: Mitt Romney political views and positions in 2012

Can the progress of science discover evidence of God's existence?

February 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must-read article over at Evolution News. I'm just going to quote the beginning, but you really need to read it!

Excerpt:

> "A point of creation would be a place where science broke down. One would have to appeal to religion and the hand of God." Guess who said that?
>
> The speaker was none other than the world's most eminent cosmologist, Stephen Hawking. Was he attacking proponents of intelligent design? No; he was lamenting his latest birthday presents.
>
> For Hawking's 70th birthday celebration, Lisa Grossman wrote in *New Scientist*, cosmologists got together to discuss the "State of the Universe." Hawking prepared a recorded statement for the occasion that included the comment quoted above. Good thing he didn't have to attend. His friends gave him "the worst presents ever," Grossman noted. Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University presented evidence that "the universe is not eternal, resurrecting the thorny question of how to kick-start the cosmos without the hand of a supernatural creator."
>
> The article explains why none of the proposals for an eternal universe are workable: eternal inflation, a cyclic universe, and the "cosmic egg" hypothesis. In each case, the mathematics and the laws of physics can't eliminate the need for a starting point. This forces the community of naturalistic astronomers to face what they have been trying to avoid: a beginning.
>
> The article is headlined, "Why physicists can't avoid a creation event." Astronomers wanted to "dodge this problem" Grossman explains, but they couldn't. What problem, exactly? An editorial in the same issue of *New Scientist* is forthright: it's titled, "The Genesis Problem." Grossman writes that the three alternative models provided hope for a universe without a starting point, but "that hope has been gradually fading and may now be dead."
>
> The point to ponder is how this relates to the intelligent design controversy. Opponents of ID routinely argue that a designer for the universe would necessarily be a supernatural God. That makes ID religious by definition, they say. Well, who is talking about the supernatural now? Guess what: Stephen Hawking does not work for Discovery Institute. Nor does Lisa Grossman, Alexander Vilenkin or the organizers of Hawking's birthday bash.

Please read the rest. The part I excerpted was *not* the best part. The last half of the article is very very snarky!

Oh, if only more Christians knew the blessings and opportunities of living in a time when the progress of science has basically made atheism into the intellectual equivalent of flat-Earthism. This is our time, and we need to be out there studying what science reveals about the universe we live in and then using it!

Democrat economics working: mass unemployment creating new jobs

February 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this article from NBC News New York.

Excerpt:

> Economic woes have forced at least one city agency into a hiring *spree* — adding more workers to process the demand for food stamps and other assistance.
>
> The Human Resources Administration added more than 100 workers last July and plans to hire another 100 to serve the burgeoning number of New Yorkers applying for food stamps and rent assistance at their offices,according to the Daily News.
>
> About 1.8 million New Yorkers are now on food stamps, which marks nearly a 65 percent increase from four years ago, according to city records. The increase in applicants has led to overcrowding at HRA offices throughout the city, and the agency said at a council hearing Tuesday that it had to hire scores of new workers and supervisors to manage the situation.
>
> The HRA has also expanded its waiting rooms to accommodate the swell in applicants.
>
> The city implemented a web-based food-stamp application program last year, but applicants still must be finger-printed at HRA centers before they can become eligible for benefits.

Just think: if *everyone* were on food stamps, then everyone would be equal, and there would be none of that nasty income inequality!

Being pro-life starts with having sensible views of sex and relationships

February 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary insisted that I blog on this snarky pro-life post. The author of the post likes to read Thomas Sowell, and like me, she blogs at Right Wing News.

Excerpt:

> 4. I have this habit — and I suggest you save time and energy and just go ahead and find it charming — of calling TV shows what they actually are. I got the idea from the movie *Snakes on a Plane*. I never saw the movie, but I appreciated the directness of the title. I like that it just cuts to the chase and tells you, "Hey, this is about snakes on a plane," instead of calling it something like *Dangerous Altitude*, and then you go see it and it's just snakes on a plane. And you're like, "Hey, that was just snakes on a plane!"
>
> So I took to naming TV shows the same way. Hence, the show "House" became "Mean Doctor." The Kyra Sedgwick police drama "The Closer" became "Lady Detective." "Intervention" became "Party Stoppers," and so on.
>
> I have watched exactly two episodes of "Grey's Anatomy," and that is all it took for me to name it "Sexy Hospital." The original "Sexy Hospital" back in the day, better known as "E.R.," cannot hold a candle to the wanton libertinism of the panting young surgeons of "Grey's Anatomy." I don't know how they ever even find the time to perform surgery. From what I can tell, all they do is jump out of their scrubs and into bed with one another, cheat on each other, have extramarital affairs, and utter dialogue that sounds like it was written by a Divorced Feminist Poets club after about four glasses of wine.
>
> Have you ever been to a real hospital? It is not sexy. It is full of sick people and it smells like wee and the chairs are made out of torture. The doctors look like regular people, not TV people, and the nurses are all bored and in a hurry and pokey. "Sexy Hospital" is not only bad television, it is a filthy lie.
>
> It also encourages the kind of behavior — namely, having lots of recreational sex — that leads to people visiting Planned Parenthood or, in TV world, Kate Walsh's "Private Practice," to have their babies sucked out of them by that mythical creature, the gentle, understanding abortionist who knows your name and cares about you and is not at all in it for the money.
>
> This is something I'm always hammering away at, and so should you be: abortion does not exist in a vacuum. It starts with viewing sex as something fun to do instead of something that was designed to lead to babies. Abortion is the effect, not the cause, of a tragic formula. Sex – nature = death. When we try to divorce sex from its natural purpose, we get problems. We get unwanted pregnancies,

> broken hearts, broken homes, diseases, and death.
>
> […]I don’t know if “Sexy Hospital” is still on the air… [b]ut if it is on the air, consider not watching it. It launched the career of Kate Walsh, who raises money to kill babies, and it pushes a sexual agenda that points straight to Walsh’s beloved Planned Parenthood.

I find a lot of people are pro-life without really being serious about developing a view of courting and marriage that is pro-life. The author of this post is right to urge us to be careful about where we get our views of romantic relationships. Abortions don’t just happen, someone has to have sex first. And whether you have sex or not is very likely to depend on what you think relationships are for. Are they for recreation?

Is there a gay gene? Are gay people born that way?

February 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stanton L. Jones writes about what the research shows in First Things.

Excerpt:

> Frank Bruni, in his essay "Genetic or Not, Gay Will Not Go Away"(*New York Times*, January 28, 2012), makes a broad point regarding which I am in complete agreement: Our societal, legal, and cultural debates will not be solved by science. But when you do cite the science, you ought to get it right.
>
> […]In support of the argument that at least sometimes sexual orientation is a condition of birth, Bruni describes how "One landmark study looked at gay men's brothers and found that 52% of identical twin brothers were also gay." This brief explanation both fails as a description of that 20+ year old study and fails to reflect the better research published since.
>
> Bruni gets the number right; the 1990 landmark study by Bailey and Pillard reported a 52% "probandwise concordance" for homosexual orientation among genetically identical sibling groups, but this does not mean what Bruni says it means. A proband wise concordance is a technical calculation, one that in this case results from the following actual results: There were 41 genetically identical sibling groups (40 identical twin pairs and one triplet trio) and of these 41 groups, only in 14 of the groups did the genetically identical brothers match for sexual orientation; in the remaining 27 sets the identical twin brothers did not match.
>
> But this 1990 study was actually based on a sample that was apparently distorted by volunteer bias and hence not representative of homosexual persons in general. Bailey's own study of a decade later, and the recently published "gold standard" study by Långström et. al. of the Swedish Twin Registry, both found even lower matching among identical twins with much larger and more representative samples. Both studies reported about 10% matching (for Långström, 7 identical twin pairs matched with both identical brothers gay out of 71 total pairs of male identical twin pairs).
>
> So in plain English, the best contemporary scientific findings are that when one identical twin brother is gay, the probabilities of the second twin being gay are approximately 10%. This suggests that the contribution of genetics to the determination of homosexual orientation is modest at best.

When forming your views on any controversial issue, it's important to get your facts straight.

My previous post discusses what the peer-reviewed research shows about homosexuality.

Does Planned Parenthood use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?

February 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Live Action. (H/T Neil Simpson via Mary)

Excerpt:

> A series of new undercover phone calls reveals that contrary to the claims of Planned Parenthood CEO Cecile Richards and other supporters of the nation's largest abortion chain, the organization does not provide mammograms for women.
>
> In the tapes, a Live Action actor calls 30 Planned Parenthood clinics in 27 different states, inquiring about mammograms at Planned Parenthood. Every Planned Parenthood, without exception, tells her she will have to go elsewhere for a mammogram, and many clinics admit that no Planned Parenthood clinics provide this breast cancer screening procedure. "We don't provide those services whatsoever," admits a staffer at Planned Parenthood of Arizona. Planned Parenthood's Comprehensive Health Center clinic in Overland Park, KS explains to the caller, "We actually don't have a, um, mammogram machine, at our clinics."
>
> Opponents of defunding Planned Parenthood have argued in Congress and elsewhere that the organization provides many vital health care services other than abortion, such as mammograms. Most prominently, Planned Parenthood CEO Cecile Richards recently appeared on The Joy Behar Show to oppose the Pence Amendment to end Planned Parenthood's taxpayer subsidies, claiming, "If this bill ever becomes law, millions of women in this country are gonna lose their healthcare access–not to abortion services–to basic family planning, you know, mammograms."

Just today I read a comment on Facebook asserting that Planned Parenthood provides mammograms. This is what you often hear in the mainstream media, because they are pro-abortion. But the fact of the matter is that Planned Parenthood does not do mammograms – says the Washington Post.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists

- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Researchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity
- Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Former DEA chief warns of cooperation between Hezbollah and drug cartels

February 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The Iranian-supported Shi'ite terrorist group Hezbollah has spread its influence all the way to the U.S. border with Mexico, a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on Iran's influence in the Western Hemisphere heard on Thursday.
>
> Michael Braun, a former chief of operations at the Drug Enforcement Agency, said Hezbollah had developed relationships with the powerful Mexican drug cartels to "move their agenda forward." He cited a plot, recently uncovered by the DEA, involving an Iranian operative in Mexico allegedly planning to assassinate the Saudi ambassador in Washington, D.C.
>
> "Hezbollah are absolute masters at forming close relationships with existing organized crime groups around the world that helps them facilitate what they need to do to move their agendas forward," Braun told CNSNews.com following the hearing. "And if anyone thinks for a moment that they don't have their eye on the southwest border and all of our country, then they couldn't be more wrong."
>
> In his prepared remarks Braun, who also served as interim director of the Department of Justice's Drug Intelligence Fusion Center, said Hezbollah and other terrorist groups understand that the Mexican cartels are already operating successfully inside the United States.
>
> "If anyone thinks for one moment that these terrorist organizations do not understand that the Mexican drug trafficking cartels now dominate drug trafficking in our country – reportedly in more than 250 cities – than they are very stupid or very naive," he said.
>
> "And these groups most assuredly recognize the strategic value of exploiting that activity, and all that has been built to support it, for moving their vision forward in this part of the world."

This is disturbing particularly given the news of Iran's new Spanish-language TV channel in Venezuela.

Iran and Hezbollah

The Washington Times reports on arms sales from China to Iran.

Excerpt:

> China is continuing to provide advanced missiles and other conventional arms to Iran and may be doing so in violation of U.N. sanctions against the Tehran

> regime, according to a draft report by the congressional U.S.-China Commission. "China continues to provide Iran with what could be considered advanced conventional weapons," the report of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission says. According to the report, which will be made public Nov. 16, China sold $312 million worth of arms to Iran, second only to Russia, after Congress passed the Iran Freedom Support Act in 2006 that allows the U.S. government to sanction foreign companies that provide advanced arms to Iran. The report also noted that, after Russia began cutting back arms transfers to Iran in 2008, China became the largest arms supplier to the Iranian military. Most of the weapons transfers involved sales of Chinese anti-ship cruise missiles, including C-802 missiles that China promised the United States in 1997 would not be exported to Iran. China also built an entire missile plant in Iran last year to produce the Nasr-1 anti-ship cruise missile.

The Nasr-1 has a range of 19 miles. The C-802 has a range of 75 miles. That means that the C-802 has about the same range as a Harpoon SSM. Not good. I am not worried about the Nasr-1, but the C-802 is a problem. These weapons could be used by terrorists to attack allied naval vessels. In fact, the New York Times reported that Hezbollah, a terrorist group linked to Iran,used the C-802 missile to sink an Israeli Saar 5 corvette back in 2006.

Excerpt:

> The power and sophistication of the missile and rocket arsenal that Hezbollah has used in recent days has caught the United States and Israel off guard, and officials in both countries are just now learning the extent to which the militant group has succeeded in getting weapons from Iran and Syria.
>
> While the Bush administration has stated that cracking down on weapons proliferation is one of its top priorities, the arming of Hezbollah shows the blind spots of American and other Western intelligence services in assessing the threat, officials from across those governments said.
>
> American and Israeli officials said the successful attack last Friday on an Israeli naval vessel was the strongest evidence to date of direct support by Iran to Hezbollah. The attack was carried out with a sophisticated antiship cruise missile, the C-802, an Iranian-made variant of the Chinese Silkworm, an American intelligence official said.
>
> At the same time, American and Israeli officials cautioned that they had found no evidence that Iranian operatives working in Lebanon launched the antiship missile themselves.
>
> But neither Jerusalem nor Washington had any idea that Hezbollah had such a missile in its arsenal, the officials said, adding that the Israeli ship had not even activated its missile defense system because intelligence assessments had not identified a threat from such a radar-guided cruise missile.

> […]Officials said it was likely that Iran trained Hezbollah fighters on how to successfully fire and guide the missiles, and that members of Iran's Al Quds force — the faction of the Revolutionary Guards that trains foreign forces — would not necessarily have to be on the scene to launch the C-802.
>
> At the same time, some experts said Iran was not likely to deploy such a sophisticated weapon without also sending Revolutionary Guard crews with the expertise to fire the missile.

Note that this is the same Quds force that likely trained Iraqi terrorists in the use of IEDs and is suspected of being involved with the recent attack on the Saudi ambassador on American soil.

List of peer-reviewed papers supporting intelligent design now up to 50

February 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Molecular biologist Ann Gauger working in her lab
From Evolution News.

Excerpt: (links removed)

While intelligent design research is a new scientific field, recent years have been a period of encouraging growth, producing a strong record of peer-reviewed scientific publications. New publications continue to appear, now listed at our updated page.

The current boom goes back to 2004, when Discovery Institute senior fellow Stephen Meyer published a groundbreaking paper advocating ID in the journal *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*. There are multiple hubs of ID-related research.

Biologic Institute, led by molecular biologists Doug Axe and Ann Gauger, is "developing and testing the scientific case for intelligent design in biology." Biologic conducts laboratory and theoretical research on the origin and role of information in biology, the fine-tuning of the universe for life, and methods of detecting design in nature. That's Dr. Gauger at the Biologic lab pictured above.

Another ID research group is the Evolutionary Informatics Lab, founded by senior Discovery Institute fellow William Dembski along with Robert Marks, Distinguished Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Baylor University. Their lab has attracted graduate-student researchers and published multiple peer-reviewed articles in technical science and engineering journals showing that computer programming "points to the need for an ultimate information source qua intelligent designer."

Other pro-ID scientists around the world are publishing peer-reviewed pro-ID scientific papers. These include biologist Ralph Seelke at the University of Wisconsin Superior, Wolf-Ekkehard Lönnig who recently retired from the Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research in Germany, and Lehigh University biochemist Michael Behe.

Researchers have published their work in a variety of relevant technical venues, including peer-reviewed scientific journals, peer-reviewed scientific books from mainstream university presses, trade-press books, peer-edited scientific anthologies, peer-edited scientific conference proceedings and peer-reviewed philosophy of science journals and

books.

These papers have appeared in scientific journals such as *Protein Science*, *Journal of Molecular Biology*, *Theoretical Biology and Medical Modelling*, *Journal of Advanced Computational Intelligence and Intelligent Informatics*, *Quarterly Review of Biology*, *Cell Biology International*, *Rivista di Biologia/Biology Forum*, *Physics of Life Reviews*, *Annual Review of Genetics*, and many others. At the same time, pro-ID scientists have presented their research at conferences worldwide in fields such as genetics, biochemistry, engineering, and computer science.

This body of research is converging on a consensus: complex biological features cannot arise by unguided Darwinian mechanisms, but require an intelligent cause.

My favorite area of ID research is the area of protein formation. I like to read about the research done by Doug Axe and Ann Gauger in that area. Research performed by Doug Axe at Cambridge University, and published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Molecular Biology, has shown that the number of functional amino acid sequences (ones that can form functioning proteins) is tiny:

> Doug Axe's research likewise studies genes that it turns out show great evidence of design. Axe studied the sensitivities of protein function to mutations. In these "mutational sensitivity" tests, Dr. Axe mutated certain amino acids in various proteins, or studied the differences between similar proteins, to see how mutations or changes affected their ability to function properly. He found that protein function was highly sensitive to mutation, and that proteins are not very tolerant to changes in their amino acid sequences. In other words, when you mutate, tweak, or change these proteins slightly, they stopped working. In one of his papers, he thus concludes that "functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences," and that functional protein folds "may be as low as 1 in 10^77."

The problem of forming DNA by sequencing nucleotides faces similar difficulties. And remember, mutation and selection cannot explain the origin of the *first* sequence, because mutation and selection require replication, which does not exist until that first living cell is *already in place*. I think that this very valuable research, indeed.

You can read more about the problem of protein synthesis in this previous post.

How historians assess the historicity of New Testament passages

February 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article by Gary Habermas on the resurrection. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Summary:

> The usual attempts to defend the historical reliability of the New Testament are often fairly general in nature. These arguments are typically based on the quantity, quality, and early date of the available New Testament manuscripts; the traditional authorship of the books; extrabiblical confirmation; and a few archaeological discoveries. This evidence for the trustworthiness of the New Testament is often contrasted with ancient classical Greek and Roman writings, which do not exhibit the same wealth of data.
>
> Lesser known among conservative scholars, however, are several, more recent and specific approaches that critical scholars apply to the Gospel texts. One of these approaches involves applying certain critical criteria of authenticity to particular texts, namely, to events and sayings that are reported in the four gospels. These contemporary techniques have mined many gems that indicate the historical richness of the Gospel accounts, while illuminating many aspects of Jesus' life.

This is a nice essay that will help you to answer question #5 in my list of courting interview questions, in case you are not able to yet!

1.2 million people dropped out of the labor force in one month

February 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Zero Hedge.

Excerpt:

> A month ago, we joked when we said that for Obama to get the unemployment rate to negative by election time, all he has to do is to crush the labor force participation rate to about 55%. Looks like the good folks at the BLS heard us: it appears that the people not in the labor force exploded by an **unprecedented record 1.2 million**. No, that's not a typo: **1.2 million people dropped out of the labor force in one month**! So as the labor force increased from 153.9 million to 154.4 million, the non institutional population increased by 242.3 million meaning, those not in the labor force surged from 86.7 million to 87.9 million. **Which means that the civilian labor force tumbled to a fresh 30 year low of 63.7% as the BLS is seriously planning on eliminating nearly half of the available labor pool from the unemployment calculation**. As for the quality of jobs, as withholding taxes roll over Year over year, it can only mean that the US is replacing high paying FIRE jobs with low paying construction and manufacturing. So much for the improvement.

Click here for the charts.

NYC mayor Bloomberg tries to ban churches from using schools after hours

February 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the NY Post. (H/T Joy) There's a petition to sign at the bottom of this post.

Excerpt:

> Come Feb. 12, Mayor Bloomberg and the city Department of Education are set to ban religious groups from off-hour use of public schools for worship services. This contradicts New York City's commitment to diversity, freedom of expression and accommodation of diverse religious beliefs — and there's still time to reverse course.
>
> […]The US Supreme Court last month opted not to review a lower-court decision upholding the city's "unequal access" policy. But even that ruling (by the Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit) did not*mandate*the city's policy, but merely said the Constitution permits it.
>
> In fact, no other major school district in the nation has a ban anything like New York's extreme anti-worship policy. That's why regular rallies across the city are urging the mayor to repeal this senseless targeting of religious groups.
>
> By state law, the city opens its 1,200 schools on weeknights and weekends to community groups for any use "pertaining to the welfare of the community." The public schools allow thousands of organizations — scout troops, labor unions, arts groups, etc. — to hold meetings, concerts and recitals. They've even allowed "Law and Order" to film in the schools.
>
> Why single out religious groups and churches, by prohibiting them from conducting worship services in vacant schools when students are gone?
>
> Bronx Household of Faith, a small evangelical church formed in 1971, triggered the current controversy in 1995 when it filed a lawsuit challenging the policy after being denied its request to meet in a public school. The federal district court in Manhattan issued an injunction in 2002 that stopped the city from enforcing the policy.
>
> So for nine years, religious groups have met in public schools — and helped their communities by painting school buildings, offering academic help to all students and providing services to disabled children, people learning English and those seeking counseling and spiritual comfort. The "faith communities" have been good neighbors, bettering the quality of life in the city by helping those in need.

You can sign a petition here to stop the mayor from carrying out his plan. The petition is hosted by Truth in Action / Coral Ridge Ministries.

In other news, Bloomberg is pushing for more gun control as well.

Saturday night spies: “The Counterfeit Traitor” with William Holden

February 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is what I watched earlier today, and it was awesome.

Part 1 of 2:

Part 2 of 2:

This movie is based on a non-fiction book – it really happened!

Rating on IMDB is 7.6/10. So, quite high.

They don’t make movies like this any more.

Here’s another one you might like as well, called “O.S.S.”:

If you get through the movies and want to see more spy shows, here are four episodes of Danger Man, my favorite spy show.

Pennsylvania begins drug testing welfare recipients

February 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> Pennsylvania officials are wading into the controversial territory of drug-testing welfare recipients, testing out a new program Republicans say is meant to prevent beneficiaries from getting a “free ride.”
>
> After a federal judge blocked a much broader drug-test rule in Florida, Pennsylvania is taking a more careful approach. Instead of mandating drug tests for all welfare recipients, Pennsylvania plans to randomly test only those with a felony drug conviction within the past five years and those on probation for such offenses.
>
> […]Proponents have argued it’s not unreasonable for the government to require drug tests in exchange for payment, just as some employers do.
>
> According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, at least three dozen states proposed bills pertaining to drug tests for welfare and food stamp recipients. Arizona and Missouri have joined Florida in passing drug-test bills, though theirs were more narrowly tailored.
>
> As Pennsylvania tests its approach, other states are moving forward. Indiana’s House recently approved a drug-test bill for welfare recipients, as did a Virginia House committee.

Opponents of measures like this think that although a person who works to pay taxes should be drug-tested, people whom the government pays not to work should not be drug-tested.

Stimulus-funded power grid project has cyber security vulnerabilities

February 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> A multibillion-dollar stimulus push to modernize the nation's power grid is raising cybersecurity concerns, as the Department of Energy's official watchdog reports that dozens of grant recipients came to the table with inadequate security plans.
>
> The finding comes amid new warnings about cybersecurity threats, and a rash of international cyber attacks.
>
> The power grid program in question is in the Energy Department, and received a $3.5 billion infusion in the 2009 stimulus package. That money was awarded to 99 recipients, with individual grants ranging up to $200 million.
>
> In a January report, the inspector general for the Energy Department found "shortcomings" in those recipients' cybersecurity plans.
>
> Though the projects are still being developed, the report noted that "existing gaps … could allow system compromise before controls are implemented."
>
> In one instance, the report said an unnamed recipient had never conducted a "formal risk assessment" — without which, "threats and weaknesses may go unidentified and expose the recipient's systems to an unacceptable level of risk."
>
> The IG report said 36 of the 99 cybersecurity plans were "lacking" in at least one area. Though the Energy Department told the recipients to update their plans, the report found "the initial weaknesses had not always been addressed."

No one spends someone else's money as wisely as they spend their own money.

Muslims crack down on freedom of religion in Kashmir

February 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the National Catholic Register. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The sharia court in Muslim-majority Kashmir has no constitutional or legal authority. But its recent verdict ordering the expulsion of five Christians from the troubled Indian side of Kashmir has sent alarm bells ringing among Christians in India.
>
> Apart from ordering the expulsion of the Christians, the court also directed the government of Jammu and Kashmir to take over the management of the Christian missionary schools besides monitoring their activities.
>
> Those ordered to be expelled include Father Jim Borst of the Dutch Mill Hill Missionaries, who has been based in Kashmir since 1963.
>
> "This is much more than conversion. It is humiliating and certainly threatening for us," Bishop Peter Celestine Elampassery of Jammu-Srinagar told the Register Jan. 27, reacting to the verdict.
>
> Srinagar is the capital of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, which is nestled in the Himalayas.
>
> On Jan. 19, the court ordered the expulsion of Father Borst, along with two Protestant pastors and their wives, accusing them of "luring the (Kashmir) valley Muslims to Christianity."
>
> The verdict focused more on Pastor Chander Mani Khanna of the Protestant All Saints Church at Srinagar and pronounced him guilty of conversion. The pastor of the Church of North India had been arrested in November by state police on the dubious charge of "fomenting communal trouble" after Muslim groups pressed charges against him. Though the civil court released him on bail, the sharia court went ahead with its own trial.
>
> "Khanna and his associates have been found guilty of spreading communal disaffection and were involved in immoral activities. They are ordered to be expelled from the state," deputy grand mufti of Jammu and Kashmir, Nasir-ul-Islam, said Jan.19 while reading the verdict of the sharia court.
>
> Father Borst, a well-known retreat preacher, runs the Good Shepherd School at Pulwama. The school had been partially burnt during widespread protests against the desecration of the Quran in the United States during the 9/11 anniversary in 2010.

I think it says something about a religion when the only way they can stop people from

leaving their faith is through coercion and violence.

Ross Douthat sheds light on the mainstream media's pro-abortion bias

February 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically leftist New York Times. (H/T Richard)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> But if you've followed the media frenzy surrounding the Susan G. Komen for the Cure foundation's decision — which it backpedaled from, with an apology, after a wave of frankly brutal coverage — to discontinue about $700,000 in funding for Planned Parenthood, you would think all these millions of anti-abortion Americans simply do not exist.
>
> From the nightly news shows to print and online media, the coverage's tone alternated between wonder and outrage — wonder that anyone could possibly find Planned Parenthood even remotely controversial and outrage that the Komen foundation had "politicized" the cause of women's health.
>
> "That ubiquitous pink ribbon … is sporting a black eye today," Claire Shipman announced on ABC News Thursday, while Diane Sawyer nodded along.On MSNBC, Andrea Mitchell dressed down the Komen foundation's founder, Nancy Brinker: "I have to tell you," Mitchell said, "this is shocking to a lot of your longtime supporters. … How could this have taken place?" In story after story, journalists explicitly passed judgment on Komen for creating a controversy where none need ever have existed.
>
> […]Planned Parenthood likes to claim that abortion accounts for just 3 percent of its services, for instance, and this statistic has been endlessly recycled in the press. But the percentage of the group's clients who received an abortion is probably closer to 1 in 10, and Planned Parenthood's critics have estimated, plausibly, that between 30 and 40 percent of its health center revenue is from abortion.
>
> By way of comparison, the organization also refers pregnant women for adoption. In 2010, this happened 841 times, against 329,445 abortions.
>
> For the minority of Americans who have no moral qualms about using surgery or chemicals to put an end to a growing embryo or fetus, there should be nothing troubling in these numbers. And if you think abortion rights are more important to female health and flourishing than the nearly $2 billion the pink ribbon has raised for breast cancer research, Komen deserved your scorn and Planned Parenthood deserves your donations.

This article is encouraging to me, because people in New York have to be some of the most close-minded, dogmatic people in all of the United States. It's very important to hear a different point of view on controversial issues.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the lawResearchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity
- Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Rick Santorum: Catholic bishops should not have supported Obamacare

February 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you all heard that the Obama administration is forcing religious organizations to cover contraception?

Excerpt: (links removed)

> HHS has issued a rule that requires non-exempt health care plans to cover all FDA-approved contraceptives, sterilization, and related education and counseling.
>
> On the ground that certain FDA-approved contraceptive methods can sometimes "cause the demise of embryos both after and before uterine implantation," many institutions also believe that the rule forces them to cover abortion.
>
> Paying for, providing, educating about, or otherwise participating in abortion, contraception, and/or sterilization violates the religious or moral conscience of many individuals and institutions. Coupled with Obamacare's new health care coverage mandates, the HHS rule therefore represents one of the broadest attacks on freedom of conscience ever in this country.
>
> The rule includes an exemption for religious employers. But as Heritage stated in public comments submitted to HHS in 2011, the exemption "is too narrow to accommodate properly the interests protected by First Amendment freedoms."
>
> Indeed, according to The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, the exemption is based on "the stingiest definition" of a religious organization ever to appear in federal law. The definition likely would not protect many religious charities, hospitals, colleges, nursing homes, universities, and others.
>
> The exemption also fails to protect individuals who object to enrolling in or contributing to plans that cover the morally controversial items now mandated by law.
>
> The HHS contraceptive mandate powerfully illustrates the principle that freedom of conscience in health care goes hand in hand with more personal control and freedom of choice over health care decisions.

Why would I want to get coverage for contraception? I'm chaste. It's wrong to force me to pay for contraceptives, when I don't want them or need them. And I don't want to lower the cost of premarital sex for other people by handing them free condoms. Medical insurance should not be a form of wealth redistribution or social engineering. I don't want to subsidize the lifestyle choices of others. And I don't want to normalize behaviors that I don't agree with by making everyone pay for them.

In any case, let's see what Rick Santorum thinks.

Here is an excerpt from an interview where Rick Santorum reacts to this attack on religion by the secular leftist Obama administration:

> HH: Now I want to talk to you about two substantive issues, Senator Santorum. The first are these new regulations from the Obama administration. I read the letter from Archbishop Olmstead of Phoenix on the air. Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles has written a new article in First Things. It's shocking, actually, what's going on. Should this be a centerpiece of whoever the nominee's campaign is?
>
> **RS: I talked about it in every speech I've given today. And here's what I said, though, Hugh. I said that I took issue with the Catholic Bishops Conference, because Hugh, you may remember, they embraced Obamacare.**
>
> HH: Yes.
>
> **RS: They embraced it and said…here's what I said to them. Be careful when you have government saying that they can give you rights, that you have a right to health care, and government's going to give you something, because once you are now dependant on government, they, not only can they take that right away, they can tell you how to exercise that right, and you can either like it or not. And that's the problem. That's what the Catholic Bishops Conference didn't get, that there's no free lunch here, folks. If you're going to give people secular power, then they're going to use it in a secular fashion. And that's why, you know, I hate to say it, but you know, you had it coming. And it's time to wake up and realize that government isn't the answer to the social ills. It's people of faith, and it's families, and it's communities, and it's charities that need to do this as it has in America so successfully for so long.**

The funny thing is that most Catholics voted for Obama. So Rick Santorum is really calling them to account for that. He sounds so much like an evangelical Protestant, no wonder we like him so much.

Rick Santorum

- Rick Santorum gets endorsements from James Dobson and John Stemberger
- Wall Street Journal: Rick Santorum is a supply-sider for the working man
- Rick Santorum would not stand idle while Iran develops nuclear weapons
- 150 evangelical leaders agree to endorse Rick Santorum after two-day conference
- Why Christians and social conservatives should vote for Rick Santorum
- Rick Santorum's pro-family economic plan TRIPLES the child tax deduction
- Is Rick Santorum conservative or liberal? What are Rick Santorum's political views?
- Rick Santorum helps liberal college students to understand the logic of marriage
- George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class

- Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech
- Rick Santorum for President of the United States
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- Rick Santorum wins Fox News Republican primary debate (with video)
- Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

Do all religions lead to God? A lecture by Mike Licona

February 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Licona is one of my favorite Christian apologists. I've met him, and he is very very down to Earth and direct.

Here's a lecture where he defends the view that having accurate views about Jesus is very important in order to be rightly related to God: (45 minutes)

Summary:

- even in the ancient world, Christians were persecuted for their exclusivity
- some people feel that exclusivity is unfair, but feelings don't determine truth
- there are three views of salvation: universalism, inclusivism, and exclusivism
- does the Bible teach universalism?
- Paul writes that sincerity is not enough to be saved (see verse below)
- Paul writes that an accurate view of God is required to be saved
- Paul writes that those who reject Christ will not be saved
- John also writes that those who reject Jesus will not be saved
- Jesus says that you have to have true beliefs about him to be saved
- Jesus says that the way to salvation is narrow and few find it
- there is broad agreement across the New Testament for exclusivism
- the earliest Christians held to exclusive salvation
- the probability, historically, that Jesus made exclusive claims, is high
- what about those who have never heard the gospel?
- what about babies and the mentally handicapped?
- what about those who are sincere but don't believe?
- what about the obligation to be tolerant?

If there is one good verse to take away from this lecture, it's Romans 10:1-4:

[1] Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

[2] For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.

[3] Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

[4] Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Sincerity doesn't count. What counts is knowledge.

Another thing I really, really liked the part at 33 minutes where he tells the story about the desert and discussion group he participates in with his wife and some non-Christian couples. If there is one reason for me to get married, it's that my wife and I could discuss

interest things with people we have over, and that would be fun.

Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell discuss the changing meaning of poverty

February 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My two favorite economists! (8.5 minutes)

They mention the book “Life at the Bottom”. The book is free, and you can read all the chapters online right here.

Electric car company that got $500 million in stimulus announces layoffs

February 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-wing Politico.

Excerpt:

> In another setback for President Obama's clean energy loan programs, the recipient of more than a half-billion dollars in federal loans is laying off workers at their Delaware and California operations.
>
> Delaware's News Journal reports that Fisker Automotive, a California-based electric car start-up company, is laying off an undisclosed number of staff to try to reserve enough capital in order to qualify for more federal help from the Department of Energy, according to a Delaware state development official.
>
> "They're trying to preserve the cash that they have," said Alan Levin told the News Journal. "And unfortunately, until they meet the milestone that DOE continues to set … they're not able to access the additional capital that they need."
>
> The company also came under fire last year for taking federal loans while producing cars in Finland. Company officials told ABC News at the time that "there was no contract manufacturer in the U.S. that could actually produce our vehicle." The company was working on reopening a shuttered General Motors plant in Wilmington to produce vehicles — an effort that top Obama administration officials lauded.
>
> […]"This is proof positive that our efforts to create new jobs, invest in a clean energy economy and reduce carbon pollution are working," said Energy Secretary Steven Chu. "We are putting Americans back to work and reigniting a new Industrial Revolution that is paramount for the economic success of this country."
>
> The company received $529 million in loans to produce two lines of plug-in hybrid cars.

The Wall Street Journal explains who stands to gain from the loans that were given to Fisker.

Excerpt:

> A tiny car company backed by former Vice President Al Gore has just gotten a $529 million U.S. government loan to help build a hybrid sports car in Finland that will sell for about $89,000.
>
> The award this week to California startup Fisker Automotive Inc. follows a $465 million government loan to Tesla Motors Inc., purveyors of a $109,000 British-

> built electric Roadster. Tesla is a California startup focusing on all-electric vehicles, with a number of celebrity endorsements that is backed by investors that have contributed to Democratic campaigns.
>
> […]Kalee Kreider, a spokeswoman for Mr. Gore, confirmed that the former vice president backs Fisker and purchased a Karma. "He believes that a global shift of the automobile fleet toward electric vehicles, accompanying a shift toward renewable-energy generation, represents an important part of a sensible strategy for solving the climate crisis," she said in a statement.
>
> **Fisker's top investors include Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, a veteran Silicon Valley venture-capital firm of which Gore is a partner. Employees of KPCB have donated more than $2.2 million to political campaigns, mostly for Democrats, including President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan group that tracks campaign contributions.**
>
> Officials at Kleiner Perkins didn't return requests for comment.

So let's recap. A company connected to Democrats gets a $500 million pay-off, then lays off employees to qualify for *more* payoffs. And all of this money is coming f

Related posts

- Navy buys fuel for $15 per gallon from Democrat-connected green energy firm
- Obama fundraisers got 80% of green energy loans ($16.4 billion)
- Obama gave $443 million no-bid contract to drug firm run by Democrat fundraiser
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky

Ayaan Hirsi Ali talks about the war on Christians in Muslim countries

February 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

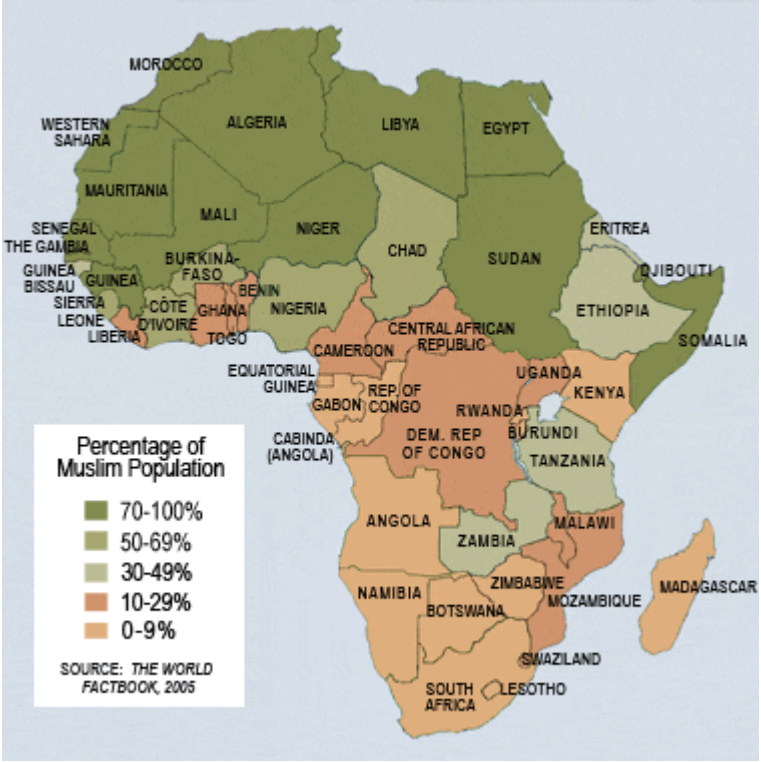

Map of Africa

This story appeared in the radically left-wing Newsweek, of all places.

Excerpt:

> From blasphemy laws to brutal murders to bombings to mutilations and the burning of holy sites, Christians in so many nations live in fear. In Nigeria many have suffered all of these forms of persecution. The nation has the largest Christian minority (40 percent) in proportion to its population (160 million) of any majority-Muslim country. For years, Muslims and Christians in Nigeria have lived on the edge of civil war. Islamist radicals provoke much if not most of the tension. The newest such organization is an outfit that calls itself Boko Haram, which means "Western education is sacrilege." Its aim is to establish Sharia in Nigeria. To this end it has stated that it will kill all Christians in the country.
>
> In the month of January 2012 alone, Boko Haram was responsible for 54 deaths. In 2011 its members killed at least 510 people and burned down or destroyed more than 350 churches in 10 northern states. They use guns, gasoline bombs, and even machetes, shouting "Allahu akbar" ("God is great") while launching attacks on unsuspecting citizens. They have attacked churches, a Christmas Day gathering (killing 42 Catholics), beer parlors, a town hall, beauty salons, and banks. They have so far focused on killing Christian clerics, politicians, students, policemen, and soldiers, as well as Muslim clerics who condemn their mayhem.

> While they started out by using crude methods like hit-and-run assassinations from the back of motorbikes in 2009, the latest AP reports indicate that the group's recent attacks show a new level of potency and sophistication.

> The Christophobia that has plagued Sudan for years takes a very different form. The authoritarian government of the Sunni Muslim north of the country has for decades tormented Christian and animist minorities in the south. What has often been described as a civil war is in practice the Sudanese government's sustained persecution of religious minorities. This persecution culminated in the infamous genocide in Darfur that began in 2003. Even though Sudan's Muslim president, Omar al-Bashir, has been indicted by the International Criminal Court in The Hague, which charged him with three counts of genocide, and despite the euphoria that greeted the semi-independence he grant-ed to South Sudan in July of last year, the violence has not ended. In South Kordofan, Christians are still subject-ed to aerial bombardment, targeted killings, the kidnap-ping of children, and other atrocities. Reports from the United Nations indicate that between 53,000 and 75,000 innocent civilians have been displaced from their resi-dences and that houses and buildings have been looted and destroyed.
>
> Both kinds of persecution—undertaken by extragovernmental groups as well as by agents of the state—have come together in Egypt in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. On Oct. 9 of last year in the Maspero area of Cairo, Coptic Christians (who make up roughly 11 percent of Egypt's population of 81 million) marched in protest against a wave of attacks by Islamists—including church burnings, rapes, mutilations, and murders—that followed the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak's dictatorship. During the protest, Egyptian security forces drove their trucks into the crowd and fired on protesters, crushing and killing at least 24 and wounding more than 300 people. By the end of the year more than 200,000 Copts had fled their homes in anticipation of more attacks. With Islamists poised to gain much greater power in the wake of recent elections, their fears appear to be justified.
>
> Egypt is not the only Arab country that seems bent on wiping out its Christian minority. Since 2003 more than 900 Iraqi Christians (most of them Assyrians) have been killed by terrorist violence in Baghdad alone, and 70 churches have been burned, according to the Assyrian International News Agency (AINA). Thousands of Iraqi Christians have fled as a result of violence directed specifically at them, reducing the number of Christians in the country to fewer than half a million from just over a million before 2003. AINA understandably describes this as an "incipient genocide or ethnic cleansing of Assyrians in Iraq."

> The 2.8 million Christians who live in Pakistan make up only about 1.6 percent of the population of more than 170 million. As members of such a tiny minority, they live in perpetual fear not only of Islamist terrorists but also of Pakistan's draconian blasphemy laws. There is, for example, the notorious case of a

> Christian woman who was sentenced to death for allegedly insulting the Prophet Muhammad. When international pressure persuaded Punjab Gov. Salman Taseer to explore ways of freeing her, he was killed by his bodyguard. The bodyguard was then celebrated by prominent Muslim clerics as a hero—and though he was sentenced to death late last year, the judge who imposed the sentence now lives in hiding, fearing for his life.
>
> Such cases are not unusual in Pakistan. The nation's blasphemy laws are routinely used by criminals and intolerant Pakistani Muslims to bully religious minorities. Simply to declare belief in the Christian Trinity is considered blasphemous, since it contradicts mainstream Muslim theological doctrines. When a Christian group is suspected of transgressing the blasphemy laws, the consequences can be brutal. Just ask the members of the Christian aid group World Vision. Its offices were attacked in the spring of 2010 by 10 gunmen armed with grenades, leaving six people dead and four wounded. A militant Muslim group claimed responsibility for the attack on the grounds that World Vision was working to subvert Islam. (In fact, it was helping the survivors of a major earthquake.)
>
> Not even Indonesia—often touted as the world's most tolerant, democratic, and modern majority-Muslim nation—has been immune to the fevers of Christophobia. According to data compiled by the *Christian Post*, the number of violent incidents committed against religious minorities (and at 7 percent of the population, Christians are the country's largest minority) increased by nearly 40 percent, from 198 to 276, between 2010 and 2011.
>
> The litany of suffering could be extended. In Iran dozens of Christians have been arrested and jailed for daring to worship outside of the officially sanctioned church system. Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, deserves to be placed in a category of its own. Despite the fact that more than a million Christians live in the country as foreign workers, churches and even private acts of Christian prayer are banned; to enforce these totalitarian restrictions, the religious police regularly raid the homes of Christians and bring them up on charges of blasphemy in courts where their testimony carries less legal weight than a Muslim's. Even in Ethiopia, where Christians make up a majority of the population, church burnings by members of the Muslim minority have become a problem.

Please read the whole thing.

I am actually perplexed as to how this got published in Newsweek, a magazine that might as well be edited by George Soros. But there it is, so we need to read it and share it while it lasts. I would expect that this is the first that any of Newsweek's readers have heard about how Christians are persecuted in the Middle East.

The return of the Life Training Institute podcast

February 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about the new LTI podcast

The LTI podcast features a pro-life look at news, law and policy.

You can grab the MP3 file here. (30 minutes)

Topics:

- Susan G. Komen and Planned Parenthood
- HHS forces religious organizations to cover contraception
- Evangelicals and political engagement
- Barack Obama: women need abortion in order to be equal
- what does the Bible say about abortion?
- do people have intrinsic value?

This podcast does not discuss how Susan G. Komen backed away from their decision to not fund Planned Parenthood after the mainstream media put pressure on them to continue funding the largest abortion provider in the United States. But the LTI guys are smart – they were skeptical about giving money to Susan G. Komen even after the initial announcement. Also note that one of the nice things about Scott Klusendorf is that he is an evangelical Christian – *not a Roman Catholic*. So it's nice to see an evangelical Christian taking the lead on moral issues – it makes me proud to be an evangelical. Evangelical men ought to be as well informed about moral issues as they are about politics, science and foreign policy.

Susan G. Komen and Planned Parenthood

Mary sent me a story on the Susan G. Komen Foundation that analyzes how they are linked to Planned Parenthood from the Wall Street Journal. It's by Robbie George of Princeton, so you have to read it!

Excerpt:

> The Susan G. Komen Foundation, an organization dedicated since 1982 to fighting, and one day curing, breast cancer, decided to extricate itself from the culture wars by discontinuing grants to Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest provider of abortions. The grants Komen had been making amounted to $650,000 last year, funding some 19 local Planned Parenthood programs that offered manual breast exams but only referrals for mammograms performed elsewhere.
>
> The reality is that Planned Parenthood—with annual revenues exceeding $1 billion—does little in the way of screening for breast cancer. But the organization is very much in the business of selling abortions—more than 300,000 in 2010, according to Planned Parenthood. At an average cost of $500, according to various sources including Planned Parenthood's website, that translates to about $164 million of revenue per year.
>
> So how did Planned Parenthood and its loyal allies in politics and the media react to Komen's efforts to be neutral in the controversy over abortion?
>
> Faced with even the tiniest depletion in the massive river of funds Planned Parenthood receives yearly, the behemoth mobilized its enormous cultural, media, financial and political apparatus to attack the Komen Foundation in the press, on TV and through social media.
>
> The organization's allies demonized the charity, attempting to depict the nation's most prominent anti-breast cancer organization as a bedfellow of religious extremists. A Facebook page was set up to "Defund the Komen Foundation." In short, Planned Parenthood took breast-cancer victims as hostages.
>
> Komen's leaders had good reason to believe their organization could disintegrate under Planned Parenthood's assault. On Friday the charity issued a statement "apologizing to the American public for recent decisions that cast doubt upon our commitment to our mission of saving women's lives." The statement assured Planned Parenthood's supporters that, like any other organization, it is eligible to apply for grants in the future.

I think the bottom line is this. There are plenty of non-Christians giving money to causes like this. If you are a Christians, you're much better off giving your money to an organization like Life Training Institute. At the very least, you should all buy "The Case for Life", which is the best small book on pro-life apologetics.

By the way, I blogged on the previous LTI podcast here. That one was from March 2010. I hope they make more of these regularly.

Is Eugenie Scott right? Are there no peer-reviewed papers supporting ID?

February 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video above is discussed in this *must-hear* podcast, featuring Casey Luskin.

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

> On this episode of **ID The Future**, Casey Luskin puts to rest once and for all the common assertion by opponents of intelligent design that there are no scientific papers supporting the claims of ID. This wasn't true in 2005 when Eugenie Scott of the NCSE stated it on MSNBC and it certainly isn't true six years later. Luskin discusses the most recent scientific paper, by Stephen Meyer and Paul Nelson, and talks about the importance of the peer-reviewed scientific literature: "These papers collectively make a case that intelligent causation is necessary to produce the sort of biological complexity that we are discovering in the cell today."

If you listen to the podcast, Luskin goes over some of the recent peer-reviewed papers that support ID. But much more importantly, he proves that Eugenie Scott is a *liar*. She is literally caught in a lie in the video above. She claims that there are no peer-reviewed papers that support ID. Stephen Meyer cites a peer-reviewed paper that he authored. Eugenie Scott claims that the paper does not mention ID. Casey Luskin *reads from the paper*. The paper *explicitly* supports ID. Eugenie Scott lied in order to defend her religion of naturalism from the scientific publication that falsifies it.

Here's an excerpt from the paper that Eugenie Scott claims doesn't support intelligent design:

> Does neo-Darwinism or any other purely materialistic model of morphogenesis account for the origin of the genetic and other forms of CSI necessary to produce novel organismal form? If not, as this review has argued, could the emergence of novel information-rich genes, proteins, cell types and body plans have resulted from actual design, rather than a purposeless process that merely mimics the powers of a designing intelligence? The logic of neo-Darwinism, with its specific claim to have accounted for the appearance of design, would itself seem to open the door to this possibility. Indeed, the historical formulation of Darwinism in dialectical opposition to the design hypothesis (Gillespie 1979), coupled with the neo-Darwinism's inability to account for many salient appearances of design including the emergence of form and information, would seem logically to reopen the possibility of actual (as opposed to apparent) design in the history of life.

And:

> Yet it is precisely for this reason that current advocates of the design hypothesis

> want to reconsider design as an explanation for the origin of biological form and information. This review, and much of the literature it has surveyed, suggests that four of the most prominent models for explaining the origin of biological form fail to provide adequate causal explanations for the discontinuous increases of CSI that are required to produce novel morphologies. Yet, we have repeated experience of rational and conscious agents–in particular ourselves–generating or causing increases in complex specified information, both in the form of sequence-specific lines of code and in the form of hierarchically arranged systems of parts.

And:

> There is a third reason to consider purpose or design as an explanation for the origin of biological form and information: purposive agents have just those necessary powers that natural selection lacks as a condition of its causal adequacy. At several points in the previous analysis, we saw that natural selection lacked the ability to generate novel information precisely because it can only act *after* new functional CSI has arisen. Natural selection can favor new proteins, and genes, but only after they perform some function. The job of generating new functional genes, proteins and systems of proteins therefore falls entirely to random mutations. Yet without functional criteria to guide a search through the space of possible sequences, random variation is probabilistically doomed. What is needed is not just a source of variation (i.e., the freedom to search a space of possibilities) or a mode of selection that can operate after the fact of a successful search, but instead a means of selection that (a) operates during a search–before success–and that (b) is guided by information about, or knowledge of, a functional target.

And the conclusion:

> An experience-based analysis of the causal powers of various explanatory hypotheses suggests purposive or **intelligent design** as a causally adequate–and perhaps the most causally adequate–explanation for the origin of the complex specified information required to build the Cambrian animals and the novel forms they represent. For this reason, recent scientific interest in the design hypothesis is unlikely to abate as biologists continue to wrestle with the problem of the origination of biological form and the higher taxa.

Those are just a few excerpts.

According to Eugenie Scott, this paper “doesn’t mention intelligent design”. *She is a liar.*

In listening to this podcast, it really struck me how proponents of evolution *must lie* in order to defend their religion – the religion of naturalism. You would think that the refutation of naturalism by the Big Bang cosmology would cause these naturalists to abandon the religion of naturalism, and be open to the reality of non-material intelligent causation. But it’s not the case. Naturalists *must* necessarily oppose the progress of

science. They oppose the Big Bang cosmology. They oppose the cosmic fine-tuning. They oppose origin of life research. They oppose the fossils found in the Cambrian explosion. They oppose findings showing the high requirements for habitable galaxies, solar systems and planets.

It's a case of religion versus science. The speculations of a blind-faith religion against the experimental results of scientific research. The anti-ID people have the religion of naturalism to defend, and the pro-ID people have the science. One side is willing to lie about nature, and the other side tells the truth about nature.

If you missed it, my previous post noted how the list of pro-ID peer-reviewed papers is now up to 50.

Liberal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals rules traditional marriage unconstitutional

February 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the news from Big Government.

Excerpt:

> Today, the 9th Circuit upheld the absurd ruling of Judge Vaughn Walker of the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of California, striking down Proposition 8, the voter-approved constitutional amendment that would uphold traditional marriage in the state. The ruling itself was highly political and in no way legally oriented. "Proposition 8 serves no purpose, and has no effect, other than to lessen the status and human dignity of gays and lesbians," wrote the Court, "and to officially reclassify their relationships and families as inferior… the Constitution simply does not allow for 'laws of this sort.'"

National Review assesses the decision to overrule the will of the people with the feelings and intuitions of two judges.

Excerpt:

> 2. For [Judge] Reinhardt, "'marriage' is the name that society gives to the relationship that matters most between two adults." (P. 37.) The right to marry that the state supreme court conferred on same-sex couples "symbolize[d] state legitimization and social recognition of their committed relationships." (P. 5.)
>
> Notice what's missing from Reinhardt's description? Any recognition that the very institution of marriage arose and exists in order to encourage responsible procreation and childrearing.
>
> 3. On pages 56-63, Reinhardt does confront the argument that Prop 8 advances California's interest in procreation and childrearing, but his analysis is badly flawed:
>
> a. Reinhardt first undertakes to address the argument that "children are better off when raised by two biological parents and that society can increase the likelihood of that family structure by allowing only potential biological parents—one man and one woman—to marry." But he somehow finds it dispositive that Prop 8 "had absolutely no effect on the ability of same-sex couples to become parents or the manner in which children are raised in California." What he utterly ignores is that it is eminently reasonable to believe that the less marriage is centered around the concerns of responsible procreation and child-raising, the less well marriage will serve those goals. That's an elementary lesson about mission confusion.
>
> The redefinition of marriage to encompass same-sex couples fatally severs the

> link between marriage and procreation. That's why Reinhardt has to misdescribe marriage (see point 2).

Over at Caffeinated Thoughts, Shane has the reactions from the two social conservatives still running in the Republican primary.

Excerpt:

> Rick Santorum while campaigning in Missouri today said:
>
> Today's decision by the 9th Circuit is another in a long line of radical activist rulings by this rogue circuit – and it is precisely why I have called for that circuit to be abolished and split up. Marriage is defined and has always been defined as 'one man and one woman.' We simply cannot allow 50 different definitions of marriage.
>
> The people of California spoke clearly at the ballot box that they wanted marriage defined in the traditional manner of one man and one woman. And for a court, any court, to usurp the power and will of the people in this manner on an issue this fundamental to the foundation of our society is wrong.
>
> We need to have a Judicial Branch that acts within its Constitutional bounds. We need to have a President that is willing to stand up to the Judiciary. We need to have a President who will fight to protect marriage once and for all with a federal marriage amendment. I am committed to being that President.
>
> Newt Gingrich blasted today's decision as well:
>
> With today's decision on marriage by the Ninth Circuit, and the likely appeal to the Supreme Court, more and more Americans are being exposed to the radical overreach of federal judges and their continued assault on the Judeo-Christian foundations of the United States.
>
> I was drawn back into public life by the Ninth Circuit's 2002 decision that held that the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance were unconstitutional. Today's decision is one more example that the American people cannot rest until we restore the proper rule of the judicial branch and bring judges and the Courts back under the Constitution.
>
> The Constitution of the United States begins with "We the People"; it does not begin with "We the Judges". Federal judges need to take heed of that fact.
>
> Federal judges are substituting their own political views for the constitutional right of the people to make judgments about the definition of marriage.

Ben Shapiro thinks that defending marriage will be a winning issue in the general election for Republicans.

Excerpt:

> President Obama has been able to elude the question of same-sex marriage overall. His slippery rhetoric indicates that he's pro-civil unions but anti-same sex

> marriage but is “evolving.” This ruling will force him to take a side. He will likely attempt to suggest that this is a decision best left to the courts, but he’s never taken that position before – see, for example, campaign finance reform. It’s unlikely that the gay community or the religious community will allow him to get away with that.
>
> If Obama is forced to answer for his position on same-sex marriage, he will be in serious trouble come election time. He is already suffering from low approval ratings among religious groups, and just this week he alienated Catholics with the Health and Human Services announcement that birth control coverage would be required from Catholic employers. Minority voters, especially Latinos and blacks, are anti-same sex marriage as a rule (which is why Prop. 8 passed in the first place – many blacks showed up to vote for Obama in California and voted in favor of traditional marriage at the same time).
>
> While the press likes to complain about the right wing on social issues, the fact remains that same-sex marriage is not a popular movement in key states for Obama. In Florida, for example, 53% believe that same-sex marriage should not be legal, as compared to 37% who believe it should be; in Ohio, that split is 53% to 33%; in Pennsylvania, it’s 51% to 38%. Overall, Americans are moving in the direction of same-sex marriage (a Pew poll showed that Americans now approve same-sex marriage by a 46-44 margin), but older people and nonwhites are particularly against it (just 39% of nonwhites support same-sex marriage). In short, this is not a winning issue for Obama.

I think Rick Santorum is more persuasive than Newt Gingrich on the marriage issue, because marriage is Santorum’s core. He forms his economic policy around marriage and parenting. Mitt Romney actually has a record of opposition to traditional marriage. Ron Paul has a record of opposition to traditional marriage. Neither of them could be counted on to defend traditional marriage at the federal level.

My secular case against same-sex marriage is here, in case you find yourself debating the issue.

Rick Santorum wins Missouri by 30, wins Minnesota by 18, wins Colorado by 5

February 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the liberal Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Rick Santorum had a breakthrough night Tuesday, winning GOP presidential contests in Missouri, Minnesota and Colorado, all of which is expected to breathe life into his struggling campaign and slow Mitt Romney's march to the Republican presidential nomination.
>
> The Santorum triumphs promise to, at least temporarily, alter the face of the campaign going into the crucial "Super Tuesday" contests, as the caustic tone of the primaries is expected to continue and intensify. Romney and his allies have signaled that they will use their financial advantage to launch stepped-up attacks on Santorum and on former House speaker Newt Gingrich, the other main challenger.
>
> Santorum solidly defeated Romney in Minnesota and Missouri, and he narrowly edged the former Massachusetts governor in Colorado, according to state GOP officials.
>
> The victories mark a sharp turnaround for the former Pennsylvania senator, whose candidacy had been sputtering after he failed to capitalize on his narrow win in Iowa last month. Santorum's wins across the Midwest could Tuesday bestow new legitimacy on his insurgent efforts and boost his fundraising in the critical period before next month's major contests.
>
> Santorum now appears to pose a more serious threat not only to Romney, but also to Gingrich, who had been positioning himself as the logical alternative to Romney.
>
> Santorum staked his own claim on Tuesday.
>
> "Conservatism is alive and well," he told supporters at his election night party in Missouri. "I don't stand here and claim to be the conservative alternative to Mitt Romney. I stand here to be the conservative alternative to Barack Obama."
>
> For Romney, his poor showing Tuesday raised anew the question that has dogged his candidacy all along: Can the relatively moderate, former Massachusetts governor become an acceptable standard-bearer of a party that is increasingly dominated by evangelical conservatives and tea party activists who have long been skeptical of Romney?

The reason why Romney is losing is because more and more people are realizing that his record is basically the same as Barack Obama. He's got a pro-abortion, pro-gay-marriage,

pro-socialized medicine, pro-tax-hike record. And that's not what Republicans want. Romney is a radical leftist on every issue.

Look at this article from liberal ABC News.

Excerpt:

> In 2006, Romney started a program to provide welfare recipients without access to public transportation with free cars. The idea was to provide them with a way to get to work so they could eventually get off welfare.
>
> The cars were donated by charities, while Massachusetts taxpayers funded — as the Boston Herald reported in 2009 — "repairs, registration, insurance, excise tax, the title and AAA membership for one year."
>
> Romney's Department of Transitional Assistance started the program, officially called "Transportation Support," and nicknamed "Welfare Wheels" by the Boston Herald.
>
> […]The program was discontinued in 2009.

And:

> [A]ccording to a 2011 analysis by the Boston Globe, "over the past 20 years, the percentage of inmates paroled while serving a life sentence … peaked in 2004″ — when Romney was governor — "and when all seven members of the state Parole Board had been appointed or reappointed by Republican governors."
>
> And that, according to the Boston Herald in 2008, "Some 118 killers and rapists were sprung early from prison under former Gov. Mitt Romney's watch … allowed to walk out the gates by the Department of Correction by claiming so-called 'good time' that in some cases substantially reduced their sentences."
>
> That's likely more of a concern to Republican primary voters than those ex-cons' suffrage.

And:

> Romney's Massachusetts health care reform law created an 11-member "Health Care Connector Board" that would ensure affordable pricing for various health insurance plans. Romney appointed actuary Bruce Butler, CEO of Associated Industries of Massachusetts Rick Lord, and economist Jonathan Gruber. Four administration officials from Romney's cabinet were also appointed to the board, per the law: his Secretary of the Executive Office for Administration and Finance; the Medicaid Director in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; the Commissioner of Insurance; and the Executive Director of the Group Insurance Commission.
>
> The law also allowed the governor to appoint the executive director of the Connector Authority, and Romney picked senior vice president for policy development at Tufts Associated Health Plan Jon Kingsdale.
>
> Kingsdale wrote a memo to the Connector Authority recommending that for

> abortions, insurance companies require co-pays between $0 and $100, depending on income level. In September 2006, that was approved by the Connector Authority. Every health care plan offered to low-income Massachusetts residents covers abortion.

Look at the most recent polls before the elections in Colorado, Missouri and Minnesota:

Colorado	Romney 37, Santorum 27	Romney +10
Minnesota	Santorum 33, Romney 24	Santorum +9
Missouri	Santorum 45, Romney 32	Santorum +13

Yet the results are:

- Missouri: Santorum beats Romney 55-25: +30.
- Minnesota: Santorum beats Romney 45-17: +28. (Paul got 27)
- Colorado: Santorum beats Romney 40-35: +5.

See below for more reasons to vote FOR Rick Santorum and AGAINST Mitt Romney.

Rick Santorum is a conservative

- Rick Santorum: Catholic bishops should not have supported Obamacare
- Rick Santorum gets endorsements from James Dobson and John Stemberger
- Wall Street Journal: Rick Santorum is a supply-sider for the working man
- Rick Santorum would not stand idle while Iran develops nuclear weapons
- 150 evangelical leaders agree to endorse Rick Santorum after two-day conference
- Why Christians and social conservatives should vote for Rick Santorum
- Rick Santorum's pro-family economic plan TRIPLES the child tax deduction
- Is Rick Santorum conservative or liberal? What are Rick Santorum's political views?
- Rick Santorum helps liberal college students to understand the logic of marriage
- George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class
- Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech
- Rick Santorum for President of the United States
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- Rick Santorum wins Fox News Republican primary debate (with video)
- Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

Mitt Romney is a liberal

- More evidence that Mitt Romney is a fiscal liberal and anti-growth
- Rick Santorum destroys Mitt Romney on RomneyCare in CNN debate
- Mitt Romney's tax returns would make him lose the election to Obama
- Does Mitt Romney's Romneycare health care plan fund abortion with taxpayer dollars?

- John Hawkins writes the most scathing anti-Romney column EVER
- Santorum and Gingrich expose Romney's liberal record in Sunday's NBC debate
- Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million while he was governor of Massachusetts
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- RINO Mitt Romney now open to European-style VAT tax
- Is Mitt Romney a flip-flopper? What are his flip-flops?
- RINO Mitt Romney deploys another RINO John Sununu to attack Newt Gingrich
- Mitt Romney supports the anti-Christian and anti-business ENDA law
- Mitt Romney gaffe: Romney fails miserably in interview with Bret Baier
- Jon Huntsman's anti-Romney ads are awesome
- Mitt Romney's political views on gay marriage, abortion and global warming
- Mitt Romney flip-flop videos: flat tax, abortion, health care, public sector unions, global warming
- Mitt Romney on global warming, climate change, environmental regulations
- Mitt Romney on abortion and stem cell research in his own words
- White House used Mitt Romney's Romneycare as a blueprint for Obamacare
- Mitt Romney on the issues: Mitt Romney political views and positions in 2012

Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors

February 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East

From Haaretz.

Excerpt:

> A top Iranian military official is activily aiding the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad in suppressing popular unrest throughout the country, a top member of the National Syrian Council said on Monday.
>
> According to the Syrian official, Kassam Salimani, commander of the Quds Force, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard special forces unit, has arrived in Syria recently and has taken up a spot in the war room which manages army maneuvers against opposition forces.
>
> […]The Quds Force includes 15,000 elite soldiers who operated, among other locations, in Iraq during the war, and the specialty of which is engaging in unconventional warfare on foreign soil. Among other duties, the Quds Force is in charge of traning and funding Hezbollah.
>
> Salimani's presence in Syria serves as an indication of the kind of battle that Assad is planning against opposition forces, with the Syrian army reportedly planning to wage all out war against the rebel city of Homs.
>
> […]The report also claimed that the Syrian army for the first time has been using rockets in order to target houses as well as mortars to hit populated areas. So far, 60 people were reportedly killed and hundreds wounded in this battle, as well as reports of the demolition of seven houses, residents and all.
>
> […]Syrian opposition organizations that are active internationally are currently

> trying to gain a political front bypassing the UN Security Council, where a resolution underwritten by the Arab League failed due to Russian and Chinese vetoes on Saturday.
>
> At this stage, opposition leaders are trying to find a way forward, as it is clear that Turkey and the Arab states oppose military action against the Assad regime, and the imposing of economic sanctions will not stop Assad.
>
> Facing Russia and Chinese opposition, and the Iranian threat to open a new front, there is doubt whether a western coalition will agree to act directly against Syria. The question is whether the Free Syrian Army will be able to get additional military assistance, and to arm itself with heavy artillery, tanks and shells so that it will be able to pose a real challenge to the Syrian army, and change the civilian resistance into a real military struggle, much like the rebel forces in Libya.

Where's Obama? Why isn't he supporting the civilians and the Syrian resistance?

Well, Obama only commits the US armed forces to wars that are likely to result in radical Islamist governments – as in Libya and Egypt. That's "smart diplomacy". America would benefit if the Assad regime were replaced in Syria – and that's why Obama isn't going to lift a finger to make that happen.

A comparison of Mormonism and Christianity: similarities and differences

February 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm seeing a lot of ignorance in the mainstream media, including in the conservative media, and even from some Republican politicians. So it's time to set the record straight on what Mormons and Christians really believe.

Do Mormons and Christians have the same beliefs?

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed.

What do the best Christian theologians believe about the origin of the universe?

> "By what means did you make heaven and earth? What tool did you use for this vast work? You did not work as a human craftsman does, making one thing out of something else as his mind directs… Nor did you have in your hand any matter from which you could make heaven and earth, for where could you have obtained matter which you had not yet created, in order to use it as material for making something else? It must therefore be that you spoke and they were made. In your Word you created them." (Augustine, *Confessions* 11.5.7.)
>
> "As said above (Question 44, Article 2), we must consider not only the emanation of a particular being from a particular agent, but also the emanation of all being from the universal cause, which is God; and this emanation we designate by the name of creation. Now what proceeds by particular emanation, is not presupposed to that emanation; as when a man is generated, he was not before, but man is made from "not-man," and white from "not-white." Hence if the emanation of the whole universal being from the first principle be considered, it is impossible that any being should be presupposed before this emanation. For nothing is the same as no being. Therefore as the generation of a man is from the "not-being" which is "not-man," so creation, which is the emanation of all being, is from the "not-being" which is "nothing"." (Summa Theologica, part 1, question 45)
>
> "Let this, then, be maintained in the first place, that the world is not eternal, but was created by God." (John Calvin, Genesis)
>
> "We firmly believe and simply confess that there is only one true God … the Creator of all things visible and invisible, spiritual and corporeal; who from the very beginning of time by His omnipotent power created out of nothing both the spiritual beings and the corporeal." (The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215)

So who is right? Has the universe always existed or did it come into being out of nothing?

Breaking the tie

To break the tie, we must use the ordinary tools of investigation – logic, science, historical methods, and so on. Let's use science this time.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It is based on several lines of evidence, and is broadly compatible with Genesis. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before

> the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Taking religion seriously

You can find other disagreements between Christianity and Mormonism, if you are not so busy putting on make-up like politicians and journalists are. For example, Christianity is monotheistic (one God) and Mormonism is polytheistic (many gods). That means Mormonism is more like Hinduism than it is like Christianity – Mormonism and Hinduism even agree on the eternally oscillating universe. You can read all about it, with citations from Mormon scholars, in this article, authored by Baylor University professor Francis J. Beckwith. Or you could take a look at the history of Mormonism, and see if the claims made in the religious texts of Mormonism are historical. Or you could take a look at the prophetic claims of the founder of Mormonism and see if they were accurate.

Here's an examination of the historical basis for the Mormon Scriptures, for example:

This is how responsible people evaluate religions to see whether they are all the same as the others, and, more importantly, *if one is true*. The point of religion is not to make people feel good, or to make them have a sense of community. The point of religion is to know how we got here, where we are going, and what we are supposed to be doing – *as matters of fact*.

As long as you don't assume, *before doing any research,* that all religions are the same, and that all of their claims are equally untestable, then you can actually investigate things and come to some conclusions. Investigating is good, but watching debates with different views that feature public, testable evidence is also a good idea. The important thing is that you are serious about *evaluating the testable claims of different religions*, and that you don't *assume* that choosing a religion is just like taste in clothes or taste in food, which varies by time and place and is really not making objective propositional claims about reality, instead of subjective claims about individual tastes and preferences. Just because you were born into a country that believed that the Earth was flat (or round) that wouldn't take away the obligation on you to test those views and go looking at other views using the tools of logic, science and historical analysis.

Can a person be a committed Christian while ignoring apologetics?

February 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I would like to describe a situation that arises frequently that concerns me. The situation I describe below brings out a flaw I see in the way that rank-and-file Christians respond to criticisms of Christianity in the public square.

Here is the situation

Eve is busy programming away at her desk, rushing to check in her unit tests so she can spend her lunch hour reading the latest Stephenie Meyer novel, or check on the schedule for her local sports team, "the Vicariouses" (she has tickets for Thursday). Suddenly Eve hears Alice talking to Bob on the other side of her cubicle. She stops typing to listen to the following unencrypted conversation.

Alice: I was watching a documentary on the Discovery Channel last night that said that the universe has always existed, so there is no God!

Bob: I was watching a documentary on PBS last night showing simulations of how the first life started on Earth! God didn't do it!

Alice: I saw "Inherit the Spin" on the weekend! The only reason people oppose evolution is because of the Bible! Not because of science!

Bob: I'm going to see "The Va Dinci Code" this weekend! It says that the Gospels are unreliable and that Jesus didn't even die on the cross!

Alice: I just bought the latest Dichard Rawkins book "Christians Should Be Fed to Lions and the Bible Should Be Burned"!

Bob: I will read that as soon as I finish Histopher Chritchens' book "Why God is the Evilest, Stupidest Person in the World"!

Eve double-majored in business and computer science at the Indian Institute of Technology, and has an MBA from the London School of Economics. She has spent a ton of time, effort and money studying very difficult subjects for her job, and she even publishes research papers. She works full-time and runs her own business part-time, and teaches night classes for a well-known university. She earns about 200K per year. She lives in a huge house, drives an expensive car, and goes on vacation abroad to all the best vacation spots.

Eve thinks she is a Christian. She has attended church since childhood, her husband is a church elder and she sings in the church choir. She reads the Bible and prays every night, because it helps her to get sleepy before bed. She gives lots of money to the poor. She teaches Sunday school to very small children. She has even read all of the Narnia novels *five times*! She even has a calendar filled with nature scenes and itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny Bible verses posted on her office wall at work! Judging from all of these facts, you might expect Eve to get in on that conversation with Alice and Bob, and set them

straight.

But she won't. Why not?

Why won't Eve stand?

I am wondering if anyone can explain to me why it is that most church Christians are not able or not willing to make a public defense when God's reputation is called into question. It seems to me that there are two bad effects that follow from Eve's unwillingness to stand up and invite Alice and Bob to lunch so that she can address their questions and concerns.

1. God's reputation is being trashed by Alice and Bob on the basis of lies they've swallowed from pop culture. These lies about God's existence and character could be easily corrected with a minimal amount of study, which Eve is capable of – she is a genius and has amazing entrepreneurial skills. If someone said similar lies about her husband or children, she *would* speak up, but she won't speak up for God.
2. Alice and Bob are bound for Hell unless someone cares enough to correct their mistaken beliefs, which, along with their sinfulness, is what is keeping them from a relationship with God that would go on in Heaven. If Eve's husband or children were mistakenly about to drink poison thinking it was Aspirin, then Eve *would* speak up. But to save her co-workers from Hell, she won't speak up.

Eve is capable of studying to defend the faith, because of her great success in other areas where so much time and effort were required to master difficult material. So why has she not applied herself to answering public challenges to her Christian faith from her professors, teachers, actors, the media, politicians, scientists, historians, etc.? She's heard these questions about God's existence and character all through high school and into university and then now in her career. Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says to prepare a defense? Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says to acknowledge God before men? Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says that all authentic believers in Jesus will suffer a little for their faith?

It seems to me that if she did spend some time studying, and then made her defense to her co-workers, then two good things would follow:

1. Eve would be demonstrating her love for God and her friendship with God by protecting his reputation when it is called into question by unbelievers in public settings. That's what friends do – if Eve wanted to be God's friend, she would care that no one believed lies about him and told lies about him in public settings.
2. Eve would be demonstrating her love for her neighbor if she was able to correct some of these false beliefs, such as that the universe is eternal, or that a historical case cannot be made for the resurrection, or that evil is not compatible with theism. It's important for Alice and Bob to know that Christianity is not stupid.

So why is it that Eve is able to go to church for 20 years, sing in the choir, read the Bible, read the Narnia stories, pray on her knees, and yet still be unwilling to do the best thing

for God and the best thing for her neighbor?

Questions for my readers

Can anyone help me to understand why Christians are willing to accept this? Why is this not being addressed by churches?

Do you have an experience where a Christian group stifled apologetics? Tell me about that, and why do you think they would do that, in view of the situation I outlined above? My experience is that atheists (as much as I tease them) are FAR more interested in apologetics than church Christians – they are the ones who borrow books and debates, and try to get their atheist wives to go to church after they becomes interested in going to church. Why is that?

I'm not saying we all have to be geniuses. I am just saying that we should put as much effort into learning apologetics as we put into learning school stuff and work stuff.

Note: I picked these names because there is a running gag in computer network security where these names are used to describe the actors. Eve is the eavesdropping hacker, get it?

I'm not the only one who is concerned

Christopher Copan Scott commiserates on Facebook:

> On several occasions while bringing up the importance of apologetics for not only the individual believer, but the church as a whole, I am instantly responded with an improper definition of faith that somehow excludes reason, and thus apologetics should not be used.
>
> Or, some may respond that the use of apologetics shows that we (those who advocate for the use of apologetics) value man's word over God's (that's probably the funniest claim out of the bunch).
>
> Few do express a spark of interest, yet seldom act upon it. These people respond enthusiastically initially, but never attempt to involve themselves in reading, listening to debates, or actually downloading the podcasts I recommend, etc.
>
> Lastly, I do find myself enjoying dialogue, at times, with atheists more than Christians. This is especially true when it comes to philosophical matters, since most Christians I converse with simply don't care for philosophy.
>
> Now, why is this so?
>
> The reasons are manifold.
>
> For one, (as Moreland talks about) the church is filled with empty selves. Christians desire that which entertains them, and have difficulty being able to reflect deeply on abstract ideas. So they would readily delve into sensational books, then read something that challenges them and takes careful thought.
>
> Also, I think Christians often equate disagreement with hostility. It's almost as if once one disagrees about a certain proposition, then you are therefore cantankerous and want to break the unity. Thus, in order to preserve this (facade

> of) unity, Christians wont allow rational disagreement.
>
> For these reasons and many more, I’m genuinely anxious about how the different bible studies at my future college will be. In spite of my attempts to kindly and respectfully disagree on certain points during dialogue with Christians, my motives are often misinterpreted and Im labeled as the argumentative kid who thinks too much.
>
> Okay, Im done.

I’m not the only one who is suffering with these experience, it seems.

Mike Licona explains the As, Bs, Cs, Ds and Es of New Testament reliability

February 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Licona is one of my favorite Christian apologists. This lecture is even better than the last one I posted. I think that both of these lectures are must-see lectures for men. Men will love these lectures.

He explains why the four biographies in the New Testament should be accepted as historically accurate: (55 minutes)

Summary:

- What a Baltimore Ravens helmet teaches us about the importance of truth
- What happens to Christians when they go off to university?
- The 2007 study on attitudes of American professors to evangelical Christians
- Authors: Who wrote the gospels?
- Bias: Did the bias of the authors cause them to distort history?
- Contradictions: What about the different descriptions of events in the gospels?
- Dating: When were the gospels written?
- Eyewitnesses: Do the gospel accounts go back to eyewitness testimony?

This is basic training for Christians. They ought to show this lecture whenever new people show up, because pastors should not quote the Bible until everyone listening has this information straight.

Dependency on government surges 23% under Barack Obama

February 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

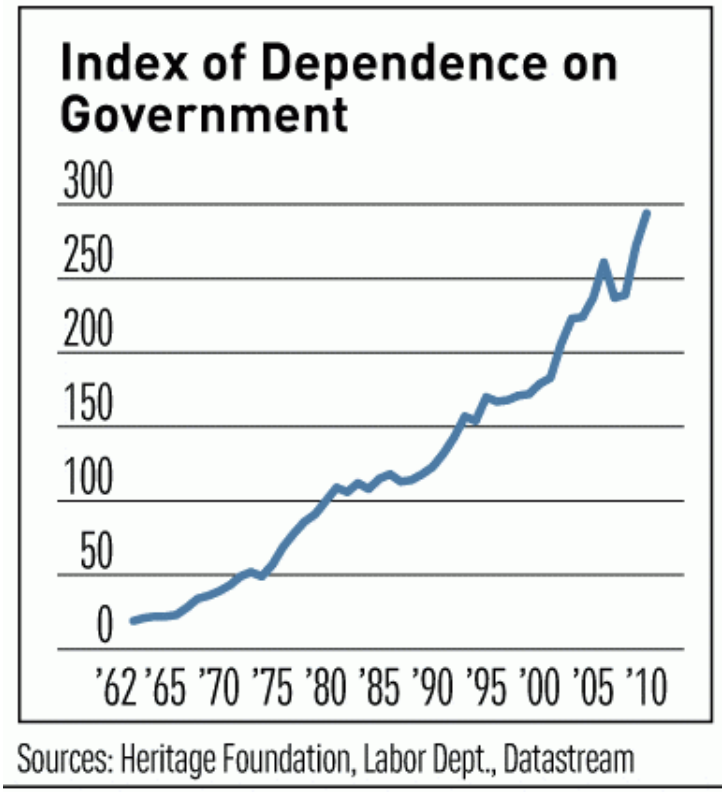

Government dependency on the rise
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The American public's dependence on the federal government shot up 23% in just two years under President Obama, with 67 million now relying on some federal program, according to a newly released study by the Heritage Foundation.
>
> The conservative think tank's annual Index of Dependence on Government tracks money spent on housing, health, welfare, education subsidies and other federal programs that were "traditionally provided to needy people by local organizations and families."
>
> The two-year increase under Obama is the biggest two-year jump since Jimmy Carter was president, the data show.
>
> The rise was driven mainly by increases in housing subsidies, an expansion in Medicaid and changes to the welfare system, along with a sharp rise in food stamps, the study found.
>
> […]The report also found that spending on "dependence programs" accounts for more than 70% of the federal budget. That, too, is up dramatically. In 1990, for

> example, the figure stood at 48.5%, and in 1962 just over a quarter of federal spending went to dependence programs.
>
> At the same time, fewer Americans pay income taxes, the report notes. Almost half (49.5%) didn't pay income taxes in 2009, the latest year for which the researchers have data. Back in the late 1960s, only 12% of Americans escaped the income tax burden.
>
> […]Various studies have shown that extending unemployment benefits can keep unemployment rates higher than they would otherwise have been.
>
> Obama's own former economic adviser, Larry Summers, noted in the 1999 Concise Encyclopedia of Economics that "government assistance programs contribute to long-term unemployment … by providing an incentive, and the means, not to work."

Democrats like the idea that more people are dependent on government – it makes them easier to control. For them, this isn't a bug, it's a feature.

Valentine’s Day: What to do if you don’t have a wife or sweetheart

February 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What do white roses mean?

I wrote this post to encourage Christian men to find faithful Christian women and support them with a gift of white roses. If you know a woman who is faithful but neglected, then white roses are the perfect gift. And in the rest of the post, I want to explain why.

I’ll start with a couple of articles that explain the message I am trying to send a woman with white roses. One you understand what the meaning of white roses is, then you’ll get ideas on how to communicate to a woman by giving them to her.

Excerpt:

> The meaning of shimmering white roses is not very hard to decipher if you go by their appearance. The color white has always been synonymous with purity and virtue. And so, sincerity, purity, and chastity are some of the obvious meanings of a white rose. When you need to convince that your affections are straight from the heart and are as pure as virgin snow, use a white rose. But there are more hidden meanings in a white rose than meets the eye.
>
> White has ever been a symbol of innocence, of a world unspoiled and untarnished. The meaning of a bunch of glowing white roses is innocence and spiritual love. The white rose glorifies a love that is unaware of the temptations of the flesh and resides only in the soul. As opposed to the red rose that speaks of passionate promises, the meaning of a white rose is in its simplicity and pristine

> purity.

That's the standard mainstream meaning of white roses. I normally give three of them, to symbolize the Trinity. (My banner is a pure black field with 3 narrow horizontal pure white stripes)

But there's more – there's a meaning to white roses that is much higher than mere feelings.

How about this?

> It has also come to mean loyalty and faith, which can be strongly linked to purity. In true love, faithfulness and loyalty are implicit, despite distance or time. For these symbols, white roses are a perfect gift to a beloved who is far away, as they will display not only your love, but also your fidelity. White roses are also the perfect gift to send to a platonic friend, for a similar reason: constant, faithful love, mixed with the symbolism of innocence, is a wonderful way to show your love for a dear friend.
>
> […]At the same time, as the uses throughout history have shown, the white rose is also a symbol of strong resistance and the will to stand for one's beliefs at any cost. Giving a white rose as a gift is a very strong gift. It is not fleeting passion or romance, which is too often what the red rose conveys. The white rose is a strong and consistent love, which is pure, faithful and sacrificial. Not many flowers have such a powerful meaning to their name. And this meaning comes to the rose not only through folklore and stories, but through true histories of brave people fighting for their cause. The white rose is a beautiful flower, with beautiful symbolism, and a friend or lover should be proud to give this flower as a gift to those they love steadily and faithfully.

White roses also stand for humility, reverence, honor and secrecy.

Desert Rose by White Heart

I like this old song by the Christian band White Heart a lot.

Desert Rose Lyrics:

> Lost in a windswept land
> In a world of shifting sand
> A fragile flower stands apart
>
> There in that barren ground
> Feel like the only one
> Trying to serve Him with all your heart
>
> And you wonder, wonder
> Can you last much longer?
> This cloud you are under
> Will it cover you?
>
> Desert rose, desert rose

> Don’t you worry, don’t be lonely
> Heaven knows, Heaven knows
> In a dry and weary land a flower grows
> His desert rose, desert rose
>
> Sometimes holiness
> Can seem like emptiness
> When you feel the whole world’s laughing eyes
>
> If it’s a lonely day
> Know you’re on the Father’s way
> He will hear you when you cry
>
> And He will hold you, hold you
> Your Father will hold you
> He will love you, love you
> For the things you do
>
> Desert rose, desert rose
> Don’t you worry, don’t be lonely
> Heaven knows, Heaven knows
> In a dry and weary land a flower grows
> His desert rose, desert rose
>
> Desert rose, desert rose
> Don’t you worry, don’t be lonely
> Heaven knows, Heaven knows
> In a dry and weary land a flower grows
> His desert rose, desert rose
>
> Desert rose, don’t be lonely, don’t be lonely
> Desert rose, ooh, don’t you worry
> Desert rose, don’t you know He’ll be with you
> Heaven knows, Heaven knows
> He will call your tattered heart on
> Desert rose

One of the nice things about giving a good woman white roses is that you don’t have to worry about being rejected by her. You’re not trying to start a relationship, necessarily. You just pick the woman who has the best developed Christian worldview, and then give her white roses to support her in her efforts. Has she been reading a good apologetics book? Then give her white roses. Has she been lecturing on the pro-life view in her church? Then give her white roses. Has she been explaining what’s wrong with gay marriage? Then give her white roses. Is she volunteering or donating to help a conservative political candidate? And so on.

I know women who are doing everything in that list, so they can’t be too hard to find. Don’t pick the ones that you like. Don’t pick the ones that meets cultural standards. Don’t pick the ones that your friends approve of. Pick the one who serves God self-sacrificially.

The one who has put God first, and her own happiness second.

Consider John 13:34-35:

[34] "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

[35] By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Jesus is speaking there – and he's saying that it matters how you treat other Christians.

One word of caution: you don't want to try this on anyone who is not a serious Christian. Pick one who likes apologetics, is conservative on fiscal policy, social policy and foreign policy, and who has a solid Christian worldview. If you link the white roses to specific good actions that the woman is doing, then there really is nothing to worry about. Just explain to her what the roses mean and the specific things that she has done to impress you. That takes the pressure off of her to have to do anything back.

Here's an e-mail I got from a regular commenter whom I met recently:

> I recently had the priviledge not only of visiting the USA, but of meeting WK himself in person. He gave me 3 white roses on 2 occasions.
>
> How did it make me feel? Very blessed, appreciated, encouraged. I have a number of decent, Christian male friends. But this gesture stood out because of the thought that went into it and the meaning that stands behind these flowers. I took a whole lot of photos of the flowers he gave me. Whenever I see them, I smile.
>
> It also made me appreciate the sort of man that we have in WK in regard to how he treats women. Bad men take advantage of women, regular men don't take advantage of them, but good men appreciate them and build them up. WK is one of the good guys, one of the honorable guys. There is a nobility of character in his approach to women. I felt cared for as a Christian sister, not only with the flowers, but with the concern he has shown for my growth, and with the fantastic books he has sent me (and to others who frequent this blog) – the sort of books that improve my knowledge and my ability to live as a Christian in all spheres of life.
>
> This is my favourite line in this post:
> "It's your job as a Christian man to put her hand in God's hand and hold them together."
> I feel quite emotional (in a girly, but good way!) reading that line.
>
> Thank you, Sir Knight. [curtseys] :)

Now is your chance to do the same! By the way, I usually give 3 in a vase, to symbolize the Trinity.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian

- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are feminized churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Rick Santorum and Barbara Boxer debate partial birth abortion in 1999

February 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's watch a video that explains what partial birth abortion looks like. (Using drawn images. Warning: Still graphic and disturbing, but no blood)

What is partial birth abortion? (from the South Dakota Department of Health):

> **Intact Dilation and Extraction (Partial Birth Abortion)**
>
> In this procedure, the physician pulls the fetus feet-first out of the uterus into the birth canal, except for the head which is kept lodged just inside the uterus.
>
> The base of the fetus's skull is punctured with a sharp instrument such as a long scissors or pointed metal tube.
>
> A catheter is inserted into the wound and removes the fetus's brain with a powerful suction machine. This causes the skull to collapse, and allows for the expulsion of the fetus.

Here's Rick Santorum on the floor of the Senate asking Democrat Senator Barbara Boxer to defend partial birth abortion in 1999, (when Mitt Romney was also pro-abortion).

(The clip is very low volume)

Transcript:

> **Santorum:** Good! All I am asking you is, once the baby leaves the mother's birth canal and is through the vaginal orifice and is in the hands of the obstetrician, you would agree that you cannot abort, kill the baby?
>
> **Boxer:** I would say when the baby is born, the baby is born, and would then have every right of every other human being living in this country. And I don't know why this would even be a question, to be honest with you.
>
> **Santorum:** Because we are talking about a situation here where the baby is *almost* born. So I ask the question of the senator from California, if the baby was born except for the baby's foot, if the baby's foot was inside the mother but the rest of the baby was outside, could that baby be killed?
>
> **Boxer:** The baby is born when the baby is born. That is the answer to the question.
>
> **Santorum:** I am asking for you to define for me what that is.
>
> **Boxer:** I don't think anybody but the senator from Pennsylvania has a question with it. I have never been troubled by this question. You give birth to a baby. The baby is there, and it is born. That is my answer to the question.
>
> **Santorum:** What we are talking about here with partial birth, as the senator

> from California knows, is a baby is in the process of being born —
>
> **Boxer:** "The process of being born." This is why this conversation makes no sense, because to me it is obvious when a baby is born. To you it isn't obvious.
>
> **Santorum:** Maybe you can make it obvious to me. So what you are suggesting is if the baby's foot is still inside of the mother, that baby can then still be killed.
>
> **Boxer:** No, I am not suggesting that in any way!
>
> **Santorum:** I am asking.
>
> **Boxer:** I am absolutely not suggesting that. You asked me a question, in essence, when the baby is born.
>
> **Santorum:** I am asking you again. Can you answer that?
>
> **Boxer:** I will answer the question when the baby is born. The baby is born when the baby is outside the mother's body. The baby is born.
>
> **Santorum:** I am not going to put words in your mouth –
>
> **Boxer:** I hope not.
>
> **Santorum:** But, again, what you are suggesting is if the baby's toe is inside the mother, you can, in fact, kill that baby.
>
> **Boxer:** Absolutely not.
>
> **Santorum:** OK. So if the baby's toe is in, you can't kill the baby. How about if the baby's foot is in?
>
> **Boxer:** You are the one who is making these statements.
>
> **Santorum:** We are trying to draw a line here.
>
> **Boxer:** I am not answering these questions! I am not answering these questions.

The full transcript is here.

It's important to note that Barack Obama is on record as a supporter of partial birth abortion. He voted for it several times.

The liberal Washington Post discusses Barack Obama's voting record on abortion.

Excerpt:

> Obama has had difficulty explaining some of his 129 "present" votes in the Illinois legislature on issues such as promoting school discipline and prohibiting sex shops near places of worship. In the case of his votes on the anti-abortion legislation, however, he has had a solid alibi. The Illinois branch of the Planned Parenthood organization has given him a"100 percent" pro-choice voting rating and depicted the present votes as part of a previously agreed strategy to provide political cover for other legislators.
>
> Under the rules of the Illinois legislature, a present vote effectively functions as a no vote because only yes votes count toward passage of a bill. Legislators vote "present" rather than "no" for a variety of tactical reasons, including making it

> more difficult for their political opponents to use their votes against them in campaign advertisements.
>
> "We worked on the 'present' vote strategy with Obama," said Pam Sutherland, chief lobbyist for the Illinois branch of Planned Parenthood, an abortion rights group. "He was willing to vote 'no', and was always going to be a 'no' vote for us."
>
> Sutherland said Planned Parenthood calculated that a 'present' vote by Obama would encourage other senators to cast a similar vote, rather than voting for the legislation. "They were worried about direct mail pieces against them. The more senators voted present, the harder it was to mount an issues campaign against the senator."
>
> Here is a full list of Obama's seven 'present' votes on issues related to abortion:
>
> **1997 Votes**
>
> - SB 230 Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act. Senate approved bill 44-7, with five senators voting present, including Obama.
> - HB 382 Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act. House version, passed Illinois State Senate, adopted as law. Under the bill, doctors who perform partial-birth abortions could be sent to prison for one to three years. The woman would not be held liable.
>
> **2001 Votes**
>
> - HB 1900 Parental Notice of Abortion Act. Bill passed 38-10, with nine present votes, including Obama.
> - SB 562 Parental Notice of Abortion Act. Bill passed Senate 39-7, with11 present votes, including Obama.
> - SB 1093 Law to protect Liveborn children. Bill passed 34-6, with 12 present, including Obama.
> - SB 1094 Bill to protect children born as result of induced labor abortion. Bill passed 33-6, with 13 present, including Obama.
> - SB 1095 Bill defining "born alive" defines "born-alive infant" to include infant "born alive at any stage of development." Bill passed 34-5, with nine present, including Obama.

Obama defended his voting record on abortion as recently as 2007.

If Rick Santorum were the nominee, he would ask Barack Obama about his views in the Presidential debates, just like he asked Barbara Boxer on the Senate floor. Wouldn't you like to hear Obama defend partial birth abortion in a debate? I would. Maybe it's about time that Obama had to do more than vote present to cover up his radical pro-abortion record.

Senator Marco Rubio's speech at the conservative CPAC 2012 conference

February 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to choose one Republican who gives great speeches on what it means to be a conservative, I would pick Marco Rubio. (25 minutes)

Here's an article from Human Events about the speech, for those who can't watch it or listen to it.

Excerpt:

> Rubio ranked the strength of the American people alongside the importance of economic and military strength, for it is our people – not our government – who have made us great. He sees critical institutions of society, which contribute to the strength of citizens and families, under assault by the Obama Administration. "We have a President who, just a few days ago, issued a mandate ordering religious institutions to follow *his* ideals… telling religious-based organizations that they must, by mandate of the federal government, pay for things that religion teaches is wrong. You may not agree with that religion's teachings, but that's not the point. The point is that the First Amendment still applies. Religious freedom still exists."
>
> He confessed he isn't sure what the foreign constitutions Justice Ginsburg admires might have to say on the matter, but he knows what the United States Constitution says: "The federal government does not have the power to force religious organizations to pay for things that organization thinks is wrong!"
>
> On the scale of history, only a "moment" has passed since world wars were fought against totalitarian evil. What followed could hardly be described as "world peace," and cleaning the blood from the edge of the statist hammer has not softened its essential nature. "Today millions of people around the world are part of the middle class because of the rise of democracy and free enterprise. Did that happen on its own? Is that the natural state of man?" Rubio suggested a study of humanity's long history beneath the boots of oppressors answers that question.
>
> Democracy and free enterprise spread, not because they are humanity's default condition, but because "the most powerful nation in the world *believed* in these things, fought for these things, spoke out for these things… and most importantly, was an *example* of these things." The power of the American example transcends military and political force, because "all around the world, there are people who know there is someone just like them, living *here,* doing things they cannot."
>
> "What happens if we diminish, because we can no longer afford to be the leader

> of the free world?" Rubio asked. "What happens if we diminish because our leaders decide they don't*want* to be the leaders of the free world anymore? What happens if we retreat? What happens is that we'll leave a space, and that space will be filled by someone else." The likely candidates for our successor as global hyperpower are totalitarian states like Russia and China… whose measure Rubio took by noting that they've vetoed United Nations efforts to rein in Syria's dictator, Bashar Assad, because they reserve the right to use such brutal tactics against their own people.
>
> Rubio understands that the clash of civilizations cannot be won from an easy chair, or a death bed. "The greatest thing we can do for the people of the world is *be America,*" he concluded. "That's what's at stake here. That's what November will be about."
>
> It would be a shame if all the people who flee to America, to escape from socialist decay and totalitarian repression, found the very things they fled awaiting them on our shores. It pays to take a moment and see our exceptional nation through the eyes of those tired, poor, huddled masses, as Marco Rubio has done.

You can listen to an MP3 of the speech here. (12 Mb)

He's only 40 years old. We have a deep, deep bullpen.

Colonel Martha McSally enters congressional race for vacant Arizona seat

February 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Colonel Martha McSally
From Military.com. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The first woman to fly fighters in combat for the Air Force, and first to command a fighter squadron in combat, is entering Arizona's special election to fill U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords' vacated congressional seat.
>
> Martha McSally confirmed her intentions Wednesday to join the Republican primary. She made her decision after analyzing three factors: was it feasible, was she electable, and did she feel called to run.
>
> McSally said she's sure she is the right person for the job. "I believe my leadership and my demonstrated moral courage and experience is what this community and this nation needs right now."
>
> […]She commanded a squadron of A-10 attack jets in Afghanistan. After that, she was sent to the Air War College in Alabama, where she finished first in a class of 225 people being groomed as senior leaders. She spent her final three years in the Air Force in Stuttgart, Germany.

Gateway Pundit adds:

> Southern Arizona is buzzing with the possible entrance of a new candidate in the special election to replace Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. Martha McSally, the woman who, in 2002, challenged the Department of Defense rule requiring American servicewoman in Saudi Arabia to dress in a Muslim Abaya and headscarf when travelling off base, reportedly plans to formally announce her candidacy Thursday.

> McSally, who retired from the Air Force as a colonel, was also the first woman in United States history to fly in combat, and the first woman to lead a squadron into combat, in the skies above Iraq and Afghanistan. McSally is a Distinguished Graduate of the Air Force Academy, earned her Master's Degree, in Public Policy, from the JFK School of Government at Harvard, and in 1995 was one of only seven active duty Air Force officers selected for the prestigious Legislative Fellowship Program in Washington. She spent the last few years teaching military and foreign affairs to world leaders at the George C. Marshall Center in Germany.
>
> She's also champion triathlete and has climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro
>
> Democrats in the Southern Arizona district, are lining up behind former Giffords' aide Ron Barber to replace the outgoing congresswoman. Barber is being described by local Democrats as a "placeholder" or "caretaker" until the end of Giffords' term. But it's hard not to wonder if the entrance of a dynamic, young Republican woman will change the nature of this race.
>
> McSally is conservative, pro-life, pro-2nd amendment, and everything else that voters in a Republican-leaning district are yearning for. So have the Democrats in Arizona's 8th congressional district made a mistake? Some people are starting to think so. Martha McSally isn't Gabrielle Giffords. But her dynamic personality, her clear convictions and accomplished resume could be just what conservatives need if they want to win the race that one Washington insider called, "the next biggest thing to the Presidential" race this year.

I'd like to know her views on the definition of marriage, but that's still a good resume. I think I know one reason why she might be running – her A-10 Thunderbolt II was targeted in the Obama's administration's most recent round of cuts to American defense capabilities.

Here's an interview she did with the radically left-wing 60 Minutes:

Here's a bit more about the A-10 Thunderbolt II that she flew. (Picture, Specifications)

Part 1 of 2:

Part 2 of 2:

I built a model of one of these as a child, and hung it from the ceiling of my room. A great strike platform. I have mounted Rockeye cluster munitions on these guys when playing Steel Panthers and used them to immobilize/destroy multiple Russian T-72s in one pass. The AGM-65 Mavericks are effective at long range, as well.

Are French parents superior to American parents?

February 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal, a shocking story.

Excerpt:

> Rest assured, I certainly don't suffer from a pro-France bias. *Au contraire*, I'm not even sure that I like living here. I certainly don't want my kids growing up to become sniffy Parisians.
>
> But for all its problems, France is the perfect foil for the current problems in American parenting. Middle-class French parents (I didn't follow the very rich or poor) have values that look familiar to me. They are zealous about talking to their kids, showing them nature and reading them lots of books. They take them to tennis lessons, painting classes and interactive science museums.
>
> Yet the French have managed to be involved with their families without becoming obsessive. They assume that even good parents aren't at the constant service of their children, and that there is no need to feel guilty about this. "For me, the evenings are for the parents," one Parisian mother told me. "My daughter can be with us if she wants, but it's adult time." French parents want their kids to be stimulated, but not all the time. While some American toddlers are getting Mandarin tutors and preliteracy training, French kids are—by design—toddling around by themselves.

And:

> Authority is one of the most impressive parts of French parenting—and perhaps the toughest one to master. Many French parents I meet have an easy, calm authority with their children that I can only envy. Their kids actually listen to them. French children aren't constantly dashing off, talking back, or engaging in prolonged negotiations.
>
> One Sunday morning at the park, my neighbor Frédérique witnessed me trying to cope with my son Leo, who was then 2 years old. Leo did everything quickly, and when I went to the park with him, I was in constant motion, too. He seemed to regard the gates around play areas as merely an invitation to exit.
>
> Frédérique had recently adopted a beautiful redheaded 3-year-old from a Russian orphanage. At the time of our outing, she had been a mother for all of three months. Yet just by virtue of being French, she already had a whole different vision of authority than I did—what was *possible* and *pas possible*.
>
> Frédérique and I were sitting at the perimeter of the sandbox, trying to talk. But Leo kept dashing outside the gate surrounding the sandbox. Each time, I got up to chase him, scold him, and drag him back while he screamed. At first, Frédérique watched this little ritual in silence. Then, without any condescension,

> she said that if I was running after Leo all the time, we wouldn't be able to indulge in the small pleasure of sitting and chatting for a few minutes.
>
> "That's true," I said. "But what can I do?" Frédérique said I should be sterner with Leo. In my mind, spending the afternoon chasing Leo was inevitable. In her mind, it was *pas possible*.
>
> I pointed out that I'd been scolding Leo for the last 20 minutes. Frédérique smiled. She said that I needed to make my "no" stronger and to really believe in it. The next time Leo tried to run outside the gate, I said "no" more sharply than usual. He left anyway. I followed and dragged him back. "You see?" I said. "It's not possible."
>
> Frédérique smiled again and told me not to shout but rather to speak with more conviction. I was scared that I would terrify him. "Don't worry," Frederique said, urging me on.
>
> Leo didn't listen the next time either. But I gradually felt my "nos" coming from a more convincing place. They weren't louder, but they were more self-assured. By the fourth try, when I was finally brimming with conviction, Leo approached the gate but—miraculously—didn't open it. He looked back and eyed me warily. I widened my eyes and tried to look disapproving.
>
> After about 10 minutes, Leo stopped trying to leave altogether. He seemed to forget about the gate and just played in the sandbox with the other kids. Soon Frédérique and I were chatting, with our legs stretched out in front of us. I was shocked that Leo suddenly viewed me as an authority figure.
>
> "See that," Frédérique said, not gloating. "It was your tone of voice." She pointed out that Leo didn't appear to be traumatized. For the moment—and possibly for the first time ever—he actually seemed like a French child.

There's a young woman I was very impressed by and I was spending some time with her last year. One day she and I were over at a friend's house and they have 3 kids. The lady was paying attention to the eldest boy – smiling and being gentle. He decided to start wielding a bean bag around and there was a danger of knocking things over. The lady leaned forward and said to the boy "NO" sternly. He sat there staring at her for a few seconds defiantly, and all conversation in the room stopped. He was trying to decide if she was in a position to command him, and if she was serious about her command. She kept looking sternly at him, right in the eyes. He never looked at his parents. Then he put the bean bag down, and his parents laughed. They were delighted. And so was I – with her. It was such a joy her to see how she paid attention to the boy and set boundaries on him – and he listened to her.

Caterpillar decides to not build its new manufacturing plant in Illinois

February 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

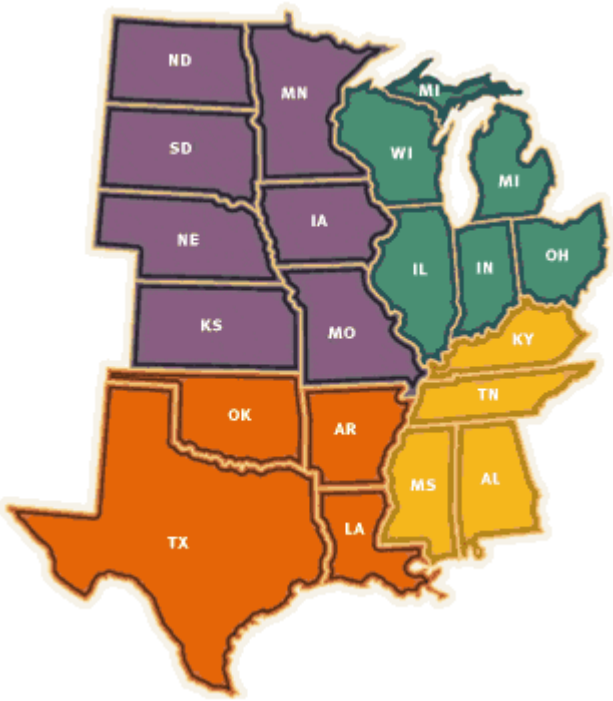

Central United States
From the Peoria Journal Star.

Excerpt:

> Caterpillar Inc. will not be building its new North American plant anywhere in the state of Illinois, officials with the company told local leaders Tuesday, with part of the reason being continued concerns about the business climate in the state.
>
> The company will instead focus on a location closer to its division headquarters in Cary, N.C., Peoria County officials were told in an email sent to them shortly after the close of business and later obtained by the Journal Star. The plant stood to bring with it from Japan roughly 1,000 jobs manufacturing track-type tractors and mini hydraulic excavators.
>
> Peoria County had submitted a regional proposal for the facility at the end of last year, and the Galesburg area also had a proposal on the table for the manufacturer. Peoria's proposal reportedly included economic incentives as well as a promise of a legislative effort to establish a tax increment financing district to benefit the company.
>
> At its core, Caterpillar's decision reflects some concerns its officials had previously expressed about the economic condition of the Land of Lincoln.
>
> "Please understand that even if your community had the right logistics for this project, Caterpillar's previously documented concerns about the business climate

> and overall fiscal health of the state of Illinois still would have made it unpractical for us to select your community for this project," the letter reads in part. "Caterpillar intends to continue calling for long-term changes in Illinois and to offer help to the state as it works toward real and fundamental reforms that will position communities like yours to compete for future projects."

And:

> Still, the rejection didn't come as much of a surprise to state Rep. David Leitch, R-Peoria.
>
> "I think Caterpillar has been very frustrated by the state's inability to improve the business climate," he said. "I still think that workers' comp is a very serious issue for Caterpillar and others. I think there's great concern about the financial situation within the state itself. The precarious nature of the state's finances and having the worst bond rating in the country and huge liabilities … have not been addressed."
>
> The decision to locate elsewhere — and the reasons for it — should serve as a wake-up call to the region and the state as a whole, Rand said.
>
> "I think the lessons learned here shouldn't read like recriminations but instead resonate like a call to action," he said. "Perhaps someone in Springfield will take notice. It's our job to make certain they do.
>
> "You can't move a mountain while wearing a pair of roller skates. The disadvantages Cat identifies in Illinois are all man-made. We have to make ourselves competitive. It won't happen because of a wish."

Illinois is one of the bluest states in the union – totally dominated by Democrats. It's very important for working Americans to understand that a Democrat can stand up and complain about outsourcing and greed and corporations and income inequality until they are blue in the face. It doesn't mean a thing. Democrats are for higher taxes and more regulations on businesses, and that's what *causes* outsourcing. Democrats cause unemployment. It doesn't matter what they say. What matters is how job creators respond to the incentives created by Democrat policies.

Earliest manuscript of the New Testament discovered?

February 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

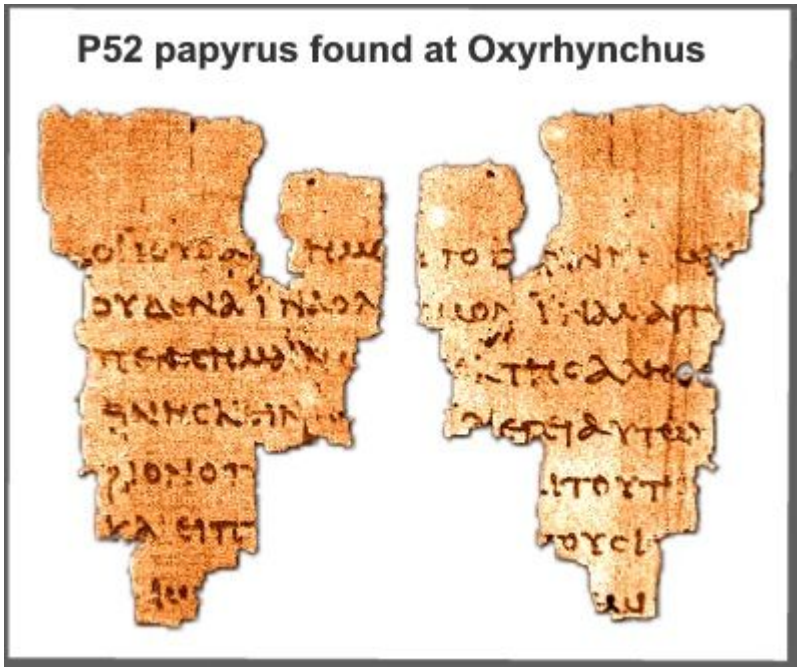

John Rylands manuscript fragment P52

The P52 manuscript fragment from the gospel of John is considered to be the earliest New Testament manuscript fragment. It is dated around 125 A.D.. But historians have found a new fragment from Mark that may be much, much earlier.

Top New Testament scholar and evangelical Christian Daniel B. Wallace reports.

Excerpt:

> On 1 February 2012, I debated Bart Ehrman at UNC Chapel Hill on whether we have the wording of the original New Testament today. This was our third such debate, and it was before a crowd of more than 1000 people. I mentioned that seven New Testament papyri had recently been discovered—six of them probably from the second century and one of them probably from the first. These fragments will be published in about a year.
>
> These fragments now increase our holdings as follows: we have as many as eighteen New Testament manuscripts from the second century and one from the first. Altogether, more than 43% of all New Testament verses are found in these manuscripts. But the most interesting thing is the first-century fragment.
>
> It was dated by one of the world's leading paleographers. He said he was 'certain' that it was from the first century. If this is true, it would be the oldest fragment of the New Testament known to exist. Up until now, no one has discovered any first-century manuscripts of the New Testament. The oldest manuscript of the New Testament has been P52, a small fragment from John's

> Gospel, dated to the first half of the second century. It was discovered in 1934.
>
> Not only this, but the first-century fragment is from Mark's Gospel. Before the discovery of this fragment, the oldest manuscript that had Mark in it was P45, from the early third century (c. AD 200–250). This new fragment would predate that by 100 to 150 years.

Evangelicals react to Wallace's statement here.

Right now, I think it's best to be skeptical. But I will be following the story closely.

Rick Santorum has 15-point lead in new PPP national poll

February 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> There is a new national poll of Republican primary voters just out from Public Policy Polling which has some good news for Rick Santorum the ex-Pennsylvania senator who on Tuesday beat Mitt Romney in Missouri, Minnesota and Colorado.
>
> Based on fieldwork that took place on Thursday and Friday Santorum is on 38%; Romney 23%; Gingrich 17% and Ron Paul on 13%. This is a huge margin which has been helped by the positive media coverage that he received following his three victories on Tuesday.
>
> In surveys ahead of the elections in those three states the pollster produced figures that suggested Santorum was going to have a good night but on nothing like the scale of what actually happened.
>
> The candidate will be only too aware that the nature of this battle to be the party's nominee has seen many contenders surge forward only to fall backwards quite soon afterwards. So far there have been eleven separate leaders in the polls most of whom either did not enter the race or have since pulled out.
>
> For Santorum the political effect of this and other polling expected this weekend is that it reinforces his position as the candidate from the conservative wing of the party who is most able to take on the Mitt Romney machine.
>
> This latest poll found that if Gingrich dropped out of the race then out 58% of his support would go to Santorum and 22% to Romney.
>
> The immediate worry for the Santorum campaign is that they are likely to be on the end of a furious negative advertising campaign ahead of the Arizona and Michigan primaries at the end of the month. That is how the Romney team dealt with others who threatened their position and what is likely to happen now.

I just heard from my Dad that Rick and Newt are not campaigning in Maine. It is a very blue state, so Romney and Paul will do well there.

Obama revises contraception mandate but Catholic groups still pay for abortion drugs

February 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News explains.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has revised its controversial mandate that had forced religious employers to pay for health insurance coverage that includes birth control and drugs like Plan B, the morning after pill, and ella that can cause abortions.
>
> Responding to a firestorm of opposition from pro-life organizations, Catholics groups and even some Democrats, the Obama administration has revised the mandate in a way that pro-life advocates are saying is even worse.
>
> **The revised Obama mandate will make religious groups contract with insurers to offer birth control and the potentially abortion-causing drugs to women at no cost. The revised mandate will have religious employers refer women to their insurance company for coverage that still violates their moral and religious beliefs. Under this plan, every insurance company will be obligated to provide coverage at no cost.**
>
> **Essentially, religious groups will still be mandated to offer plans that cover both birth control and the ella abortion drug.**
>
> According to Obama administration officials on a conference call this morning, a woman's insurance company "will be required to reach out directly and offer her contraceptive care free of charge. The religious institutions will not have to pay for it."
>
> The birth control and abortion-causing drugs will simply be "part of the bundle of services that all insurance companies are required to offer," White House officials said.
>
> "We are actually more comfortable having the insurance industry offer and market this to women than religious institutions," the White House said on the conference call LifeNews listened to because they "understand how contraception works" and it "makes sense financially."
>
> […]**Republican Study Committee Chairman Jim Jordan told LifeNews in response to the revised mandate that it violates the right to religious freedom guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution.**
>
> **"This ObamaCare rule still tramples on Americans' First Amendment right to freedom of religion. It's a fig leaf, not a compromise. Whether they are affiliated with a church or not, employers will still be forced to pay an insurance company for coverage that includes abortion-inducing**

> **drugs," he said. "This is not just a problem for church-affiliated hospitals and charities. Under these rules, a small business owner with religious objections to abortion-inducing drugs and contraception must either violate his religious beliefs or violate the law."**
>
> **"The liberal Obama administration thinks its political goals trump the religious faith of American citizens. That isn't right, fair, or constitutional," he said.**

The abortions *will still* be paid for by the religious groups. They are going to pay for the drugs through medical insurance premiums. So religious organizations are still being forced to provide abortions for their workers.

Who is to blame for this? I blame Catholic bishops. Catholic bishops do believe in socialism. They do want a secular government to take money from religious people. And they do want government to hand out medical care to people, instead of letting individuals, businesses and charities provide health care.

Rick Santorum agrees with me on this.

Consider this interview with Rick Santorum in which he reacts Obama's health care mandate.

Excerpt:

> HH: Now I want to talk to you about two substantive issues, Senator Santorum. The first are these new regulations from the Obama administration. I read the letter from Archbishop Olmstead of Phoenix on the air. Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles has written a new article in First Things. It's shocking, actually, what's going on. Should this be a centerpiece of whoever the nominee's campaign is?
>
> RS: I talked about it in every speech I've given today. And here's what I said, though, Hugh. I said that I took issue with the Catholic Bishops Conference, because Hugh, you may remember, they embraced Obamacare.
>
> HH: Yes.
>
> **RS: They embraced it and said…here's what I said to them. Be careful when you have government saying that they can give you rights, that you have a right to health care, and government's going to give you something, because once you are now dependant on government, they, not only can they take that right away, they can tell you how to exercise that right, and you can either like it or not. And that's the problem. That's what the Catholic Bishops Conference didn't get, that there's no free lunch here, folks. If you're going to give people secular power, then they're going to use it in a secular fashion. And that's why, you know, I hate to say it, but you know, you had it coming. And it's time to wake up and realize that government isn't the answer to the social ills. It's people of faith, and it's families, and it's communities, and it's charities**

> **that need to do this as it has in America so successfully for so long.**
>
> HH: Rick Santorum, what do you advise Catholic hospitals, Catholic colleges, Catholic…the centers of poverty assistance, the adoption agencies? What do you advise them to do in the face of, as Archbishop Olmstead said, we cannot comply with this unjust law?
>
> RS: Civil disobedience. This will not stand. There's no way they can make this stand. The Supreme Court, eventually, this thing's going to get to the Supreme Court just like the ministerial hiring issue that was just decided by the Supreme Court the other day. And it was a 9-0 decision that said the Obama administration can't roll over people of faith when it comes to hiring. Yet in the face of that decision, this radical, secular government of Barack Obama continues to have faith be the least important of the 1st Amendment. And I just think they fight. They fight in the courts, and they fight by civil disobedience, and go to war with the federal government over this one.

Evangelical protestants feel comfortable with Catholics like Rick Santorum. He gets it. If the bishops are wrong on socialized medicine and wrong on the death penalty and wrong on other things, then so much the worse for the bishops.

Obama did very well with Catholics in 2008 even though Obama is the most pro-abortion president in the history of the United States. Catholics tend to be more liberal on economic issues than evangelicals, which is why many of them voted for Obama. Evangelicals oppose economic liberalism, because they oppose government taking tax money from workers in order to provide services for other people aren't trying to be self-sufficient. Evangelicals oppose increasing the dependence of individuals on a secular government. Evangelicals don't want a secular government to take money from individuals and then use it to push secular leftist ideas like global warming, Darwinism and sex education in government run institutions, e.g. – public schools, public broadcasting, etc. Evangelicals trust individuals to care for the poor, and they don't want to make it too easy for people to make reckless decisions and then get a check in the mail or a free abortion.

What causes this difference between Catholics and evangelicals? Evangelicals believe in salvation through grace ALONE through faith ALONE in Christ ALONE. Evangelicals put the emphasis on what you believe – it has to be true in order to please God. Catholics, just like Mormons, Jews and other religions, emphasize good works as a requirement for salvation. Many Catholics also support inclusivism, which is the view that you can be saved in other religions like Judaism and Islam. This means that for these Catholics, specific Christian doctrines are not essential for salvation, so long as you have sincerity and good works. On the other hand, evangelicals are exclusivists who emphasize the need for each person to arrive at true beliefs about God in order to be saved, and good works are just natural outworkings of their beliefs.

Evangelicals emphasize the responsibility of the individual to discover truth with their Bibles, reasoning, science and history. This belief in individual responsibility carries over

into their approach to charity. Evangelicals believe individuals are responsible for deciding what to do about charity – you earn your own money and then you choose yourself how to share with others. But the responsibility to give away money wisely is an individual responsibility – you share *your* money in a way that is consistent with *your* beliefs. Evangelicals don't generally accept the idea of handing money off to someone else and letting them decide what to do with it. We think that everything is our responsibility, starting with Bible study and theology, and going on through to economics and politics.

And this emphasis on individuals over big government has this effect:

Presidential Vote by Religious Affiliation and Race

	2004		2008	
	Kerry	Bush	Obama	McCain
	%	%	%	%
Total	**48**	**51**	**53**	**46**
Protestant/Other Christian	40	59	45	54
White Prot/Other Christian	32	67	34	65
Evangelical/Born-again	21	79	26	73
Non-evangelical	44	56	44	55
Catholic	47	52	54	45
White Catholic	43	56	47	52
Jewish	74	25	78	21
Other faiths	74	23	73	22
Unaffiliated	67	31	75	23

(Source)

Note that this chart puts evangelicals together with born-again Christians. But evangelical Christians differ from born-again Christians, because they are firm on exclusive salvation and evangelism. Evangelicals like to study so that they can discuss their beliefs in public, using reasons and evidence to persuade others. A born-again Christian does not have that same emphasis on study and persuasion, because they don't focus on evangelism. So, if you separate out the born-agains from that 26%, number for Obama support, then you are likely to get a much lower number for evangelicals who support Obama. We don't like health care mandates covering abortion. Evangelicals are used to having to puzzle things out for themselves – so they puzzled out what Obama believed and then they voted against him.

Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold women accountable for their own choices?

February 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Watch this video.

Who is to blame for this woman's troubles? Well, I agree with Driscoll that her family, the church and other Christians were to blame for not telling her the truth about sex. On that we all agree. Christians do a lousy job of explaining sex to young people, because they don't want to talk about "dirty" stuff, and they don't want to use arguments and evidence, and they don't want to go outside the Bible to give real reasons and evidence. But thumping the Bible is a poor response to peer pressure and pop culture.

But she and Mark Driscoll also seem to think the man is to blame. Is the man to blame?

Well, the man certainly did bad things, but I think that none of these bad things could have happened *to this woman in particular* if this woman had not first chosen this man from all the other men that she knew, and then given him the opportunity to do these bad things. Without her own free choices, she would *never* have been harmed. So her own bad choices played a part in her suffering but she didn't mention her own choices at all. So, let me take a look at how she could have made better choices below.

Can women expect a non-Christian man to act like a Christian man?

Women need to be careful to realize that they should avoid being alone with non-Christian men, especially when they are not even old enough to be dating men at all. That's what courting is designed to prevent, by the way – the man has to go through the father to get to the woman, and they need to be accompanied by a chaperone at all times. And in any case, a woman can get love without touching a man just by listening to the man's words, reading his writings, letting him serve her, washing a car together, and accepting gifts from him.

Women: you don't go to a deserted beach with a non-Christian man. Don't take risks like that. Especially when you have probably already done a lot with the guy. And don't drink alcohol, it impairs your judgment. The purpose of men is to marry them, not to have a good time with them. No alcohol is allowed!

Paul says that you cannot expect non-Christians to act like Christians, which is exactly what many Christian women do.

1 Cor 5:9-13:

[9]I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—

[10]not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.

[11]But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

[12]What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?

[13]God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked man from among you.”

And, 2 Cor 6:14-16:

[14]Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

[15]What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

[16]What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

Christians should not pursue non-Christians romantically – it’s disrespectful to God to leave him out of your romantic operations.

Women can stop a lot of the bad behavior of men just by *choosing authentic Christian men* by using *rigorous objective criteria* to evaluate men. If a woman chooses a non-Christian man, then she cannot complain if he acts like a non-Christian man. And there is more to a man being a Christian than just saying that he is, memorizing Bible verses and singing praise hymns in church. Christianity is a worldview. It has to be applied across the board. Christian women need to study to develop a Christian worldview of their own so they know how to evaluate the worldviews of candidate men.

What else can we learn from the video?

Here are a few more things that stood out to me in the video:

- She should take more responsibility for their actions, instead of blaming others
- She should study these things (not just the Bible!) on her own before she starts dating, to know *why* God puts these boundaries in place to protect her from harm
- Her parents should have studied these things (not just the Bible!) more, and helped her more by being more convincing, to know *why* God puts these boundaries in place to protect her from harm
- The church she grew up in should provide her with *extra-biblical* arguments and evidence from the objective external world so that she could resist ideologies like atheism, postmodernism, liberalism, feminism, etc. – she can’t act morally unless she believes that God exists and that morality is real

Women should also know that the decision to have sex before marriage with a man who isn’t a Christian doesn’t magically change him into a Christian. Sex isn’t magic. It doesn’t cause a man to like a woman, or to fall under her control.

Women go to school for 4 years to learn a trade and they need to put some effort into studying courtship rules so they can be wise about their own choices with men. Jumping into a car and trying to drive it without lessons is a good way to get killed. And emotions, intuitions, peer-pressure and pop-culture don’t help you to know how to drive a car. Be

careful, think for yourself.

I also recommend that young, unmarried women become *informed* about anti-family, anti-father policies. If women don't want to be hurt by men, then vote for stronger families, lower taxes, and policies that promote good husbands and good fathers. Girls need to see love modeled between a husband and wife as they grow up, and they need to have fathers in the home. *Good public policies* encourage men to marry and stay married.

Women need to get better criteria for choosing men

A while back, I posted on some of the criteria women have for choosing men, and here are a few:

- Being tall
- Being aloof and disinterested
- Playing a musical instrument
- Well-dressed
- Stylish shoes
- A deep voice
- Handsome face

What do women expect when they choose men based on criteria like that? It makes no sense to blame a bad man for being bad. He's BAD! Don't go near him, he'll be bad to you, too!

Shouldn't women judge themselves first, before judging a man?

Shouldn't women begin by removing the plank in their own eye before removing the speck from the man's eye?

I think an excellent first step would be for Christian women to take a good look at the music they listen to, the movies they watch, and also what they read. Are they listening to Melissa Etheridge, watching "Thelma & Louise", and reading Margaret Atwood? Are they informing themselves about truth in many areas, like economics and cosmology, so that they can make informed choices of men? Are they building resistance to cultural trends?

What is wrong with the woman in that video?

Shouldn't this woman have put some effort into testing out the claims of her parents and the church by reading the Bible itself? I mentioned reading extra-biblical stuff but even the Bible doesn't ground anything that she was doing or anything the church was telling her to do that was wrong. Driscoll seems to think that women are not obligated to read the Bible, and that if someone in the church tells them a lie, then the church is to blame. But shouldn't we expect people who attend church to test these things out for themselves? I realize that she wasn't a Christian, but in order to take responsibility, she could have said "I should have checked things in my Bible and so I share the blame". She doesn't say that because she doesn't blame herself at all for anything that happened. Well, probably she went to church for the singing and never read what the Bible had to

say – or didn't take it as an authority. But she never blames herself for either one of those.

I noticed that she claims that if the church tells her something and she does it, then the church is to blame. Well, the church (or at least her parents) undoubtedly told her not to have sex before she was married, but she didn't mention that in the video. Why not? Well, she only mentions things that other people tell her to blame them. When they tell her the right thing and she doesn't do it, she doesn't mention what they told her. Because she won't blame herself for any reason. And Driscoll has nothing to say about that, either. Any time the church tells her something bad and she does it… it's the church's fault. Any time the church tells her something good and she DOESN'T do it… she just doesn't mention it because she isn't responsible for anything she does – it's always the fault of someone else.

I don't mind if she explains the circumstances surrounding WHY she made bad choices. I don't even mind the bad choices, because I make bad choices. I just don't like her blaming other people, I especially don't like her blaming bad men. Bad men are bad. Don't blame them for not being good – it's your fault for choosing them. There are other men who are good who get no attention from women at all.

We need to learn from Theodore Dalrymple

Remember this post?

Excerpt:

> With increasing frequency I am consulted by nurses, who for the most part come from and were themselves traditionally members of (at least after Florence Nightingale) the respectable lower middle class, who have illegitimate children by men who first abuse and then abandon them. This abuse and later abandonment is usually all too predictable from the man's previous history and character; but the nurses who have been treated in this way say they refrained from making a judgment about him because it is wrong to make judgments.

And again:

> Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.
>
> This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in

> order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.

Read the whole thing, you young women. And judge men hard. It's good to judge them beforehand so that you don't have to condemn them for being bad later.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are feminized churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage

February 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Disclaimer: I agree with Mark Driscoll and probably KevinDeYoung on the vast majority (like 99%) of what they teach, and I applaud them for being conservative in their theology. This post is attacking them from the right – I don't think that they are conservative ENOUGH. I disagree with all the people who attack pastors from the left. However, I do think that it is OK to attack them and expose them on the right. Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung are liberal on some issues, because they are uninformed about men and marriage, and influenced by feminism. They need to be held to account. And I will do that now.

At Dalrock blog, I found an interesting assessment of a column by the famous feminist man-blamer Mark Driscoll. (H/T Fred, straightright)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Several readers have asked that I share my perspective on Pastor Mark Driscoll's recent*Washington Post* piece "Why men need marriage". Driscoll opens his contribution to the man up and marry career gal sluts genre with an anecdote about a middle aged career woman who never married:
>
> She was smart, funny, interesting, successful, attractive, kind, in her 40s, and still single.
>
> A man of biblical wisdom would recognize that this woman had squandered her youth chasing a feminist dream of career and/or fornication. Were he a wise man, a story starting this way would be a cautionary tale to young Christian women not to make the same mistakes this woman did. However Pastor Driscoll is steeped in the foolishness of our feminist culture and not biblical wisdom. He finds no fault worth mentioning in this woman's own choices, and instead looks for a man to blame for her terribly mismanaged life:
>
> After my wife Grace and I spent some time with the woman from our church, we could not fathom why no one had married her.
>
> She has been of marriageable age for over twenty years, yet she never married. Pastor Driscoll seems to think this is because men have failed her. It is far more likely that she followed the feminist advice to delay marriage until at least her 30s, while in all likelihood riding the carousel. As a result she may well have lost the ability to experience love and attraction for a normal man. Note that amongst the marriageable attributes he mentioned about this woman he left two out; he didn't say she was a *virgin,* and he overlooked entirely the fact that she is almost certainly no longer able to bear children. In fact, notice that all of the attributes he lists are what one would normally advise a woman to look for in

> a *husband* (smart, funny, interesting, successful, attractive, kind). He seems to have gone out of his way to cleanse his mind of traditional views of the sexes in marriage. Why else would he refer to a woman using only terms which would apply to a man?

More: (links removed)

> But Driscoll is apparently entirely unaware of the trends of the last 40 years. Instead he coins a new euphemism for the carousel (fools parade) and ladles out a healthy serving of the Apex Fallacy.
>
> Eventually, some get tired of the fools parade and settle for some guy who is more likely to act like a baby than help raise a baby. These guys make the worst husbands: gambling away the money, out late with the boys a lot, unfaithful, can't seem to fit a full-time job in around his hobbies, and eventually trading in their 40-year-old wife for two 20-year-old girlfriends.
>
> He sees women thinking with their genitals and seeking out men with dark triad traits and instead of holding them accountable for the devastation they cause their children he blames men in general. Then he trots out the canard that men are driving the divorce epidemic by divorcing older wives when the data proves that divorce rates plummet as wives age.
>
> He ignores the epidemic of women kicking fathers out of their children's lives committing frivolous divorce and divorce theft and doesn't warn men to be extremely careful when choosing a wife. Like any other form of addict, he will do or say anything to get his next fix.
>
> Men are like trucks: they drive straighter with a weighted load. Young men are supposed to load themselves up first by being responsible for themselves and not expecting their mom to fill up their sippy cup with beer and push them in a stroller to the unemployment line. Young men who take responsibility for themselves are then ready to marry and take responsibility for the life and joy of their wife.

But what about young women? Do these pastors think that women have "load themselves up" with anything that men might expect them to know? Should they have strong informed views favoring chastity, opposing divorce, and really really opposing fatherlessness? Of course not – because Mark Driscoll is afraid to tell women that there are things that they ought to be doing in order to be prepared for marriage. I have a whole list of things that women should be encouraged by pastors to load themselves up with, but none of those are on Mark Driscoll's list.

Pastors don't ask the right questions of women. They somehow have gotten the idea that Christianity only imposes obligations on men. It is so bad that Mark Driscoll actually blames the non-Christian men that "Christian" women choose have relationships with when they act like non-Christians! Pastors shouldn't tell women that it's not their fault if they choose bad men – it makes them think that they are victims and that they

are not responsible for their own decisions. That will not protect woman from making more bad decisions in the future. We don't want women to get the idea that they don't need to have informed views on these issues so that they will make better decisions.

Here's Mark Driscoll explaining how men are to blame for single motherhood:

> Part of it is the unintended consequences of divorce. Forty percent of kids go to bed at night without a father. Not to be disparaging toward single moms, but if you're a single mom and you're working 60 hours a week, and you've got a boy, and he's home all by himself with no parents and no dad, he's just going to be hanging out with his buddies, feeding himself pizza rolls.
>
> The number one consumer of online pornography is 12- to 17-year-old boys. What that means is he's home eating junk food, drinking Monster energy drinks, downloading porn, masturbating and screwing around with his friends. That really doesn't prepare you for responsible adulthood. That's a really sad picture, especially if you're a single gal hoping to get married someday. You're like: "Seriously, that's the candidate pool? You've got to be kidding me." That's why 41 percent of births right now are to unmarried women. A lot of women have decided: "I'm never going to find a guy who is actually dependable and responsible to have a life with. So I'll just get a career and have a baby and just intentionally be a single mother because there are no guys worth spending life with."

Single motherhood is no problem for Mark Driscoll – which implies premarital sex. It's all totally OK – for women. Because he thinks that men are to blame for the decisions that women freely make. But I think that the men that Driscoll is complaining about are produced by the conditions that he refuses to condemn – like premarital sex, which is a risk factor for divorce, and single motherhood. So, he is basically supporting fatherlessness, and then complaining about the results of the fatherlessness that he supported. In his rush to avoid condemning women, he creates the very situations that result in men who do not do well in school, do not work and do not marry. All because he doesn't think that the Bible's moral teachings apply to women – but only to men.

What men expect from women when we pursue them is that they will be passionate about identifying the causes of social phenomena like the decline of men , and then demonstrate to us what actions they have taken in order to defeat those trends. We expect women to talk about no-fault divorce, shared parenting, cohabitation, hook-ups, binge drinking, day care, single motherhood, gay marriage, school choice – to show men that they have some familiarity with the issues that they would face as mothers and wives. But when pastors respond to the real problems facing men with "man up" and women believe them and accept the view that they are not responsible for solving these problems, then we all lose. Women today are complaining that the sons of single mothers and divorced mothers from yesterday will not man up. But where did these single mothers and divorced mothers come from? Surely pastors who refused to confront women about the morality of premarital sex (which reduces the stability of the marriage,

leading to divorce) and single motherhood by choice deserve some of the blame?

Men are getting 40% of the undergraduate degrees in many universities. Is it incumbent on pastors to read books like Christina Hoff Sommers' "The War Against Boys" and find out the root causes of this effect? Is it incumbent on pastors to read books like Stephen Baskerville's "Taken Into Custody" and find out another root cause of the marriage strike – no-fault divorce? Or should pastors just remain ignorant and lazy, and refuse to confront women with the causes of the decline of men? It seems to me that pastors like Kevin DeYoung and Mark Driscoll just dismiss these problems with the slogan "man up", because they are just not intelligent enough to be able to read books by Christian scholars that explain the causes for the decline of men. It's much easier to write blog posts bashing men, with no citations, and get accolades from the feminists in their churches, who are only too willing to blame men for problems that they themselves have caused by embracing anti-marriage, anti-family ideologies.

Pastors think that Bible doesn't apply to women

Here's my view:

- Bellow "How Dare You!" to men who have premarital sex and have babies out of wedlock and get divorced.
- Bellow "How Dare You!" to women who have premarital sex and have babies out of wedlock and get divorced.

Here's Driscoll's view:

- Bellow "How Dare You!" to men who have premarital sex and have babies out of wedlock and get divorced.
- Tell women that it's not their fault if they fornicate and have babies out of wedlock and divorce because they are not happy, and then bellow at men to "Man Up" and marry women who think that the Bible doesn't apply to them.

Many women who claim to be Christians are very sympathetic with the government handing out goodies to women who don't care what the Bible says.

It seems to me that what pastors like Driscoll are saying is this:

1. Women should not be told not to have babies out of wedlock
2. Women should not be told not to have premarital sex, which often leads to divorce (marital instability)
3. The poverty that results should be fixed by government redistribution of wealth

Where does government money come from for all of the social programs to deal with broken homes (112 millon per year)? It comes from men who work. We have to pay higher taxes to subsidize women who get into situations that are very expensive for working men to pay for. This in turn reduces out ability to afford to get married and have children.

And Mark Driscoll comes along and bellows at us “How Dare You Complain About High Taxes For Sin Subsidies! Man Up and Marry Those Sinners! Pay for their social programs!”

Here’s what one devout Calvinist Christian woman just wrote to me:

> I know there are some men who start out being really nice and sweet and they get the woman crazy about them and then slowly, little bit by little bit they persuade her that if she “really loves them” she’ll sleep with them and they’re “going to marry” her and they “love her” and all that rot. And one night she gives in because she’s weak. But she doesn’t really want to. But she’s bad at resisting the man and he’s manipulative.
>
> And he lied. He didn’t mean it. She did mean it. She believed him when he whispered sweet nothings in her ear.
>
> Yeah, she’s not too bright to fall for the liar. Yeah, she should be vigilant. Yeah, she should think logically instead of emotionally.
>
> But often she’s younger than he is and she falls for his good acting. It’s Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf.
>
> Between her and the liar, I’m with Driscoll.

See? The Bible doesn’t apply to women. It only applies to men. That’s what pastors have been telling women and this is what creates an entire generation of fatherless children, who the pastors then bellow at to “man up”. If the pastors had been man enough to challenge women with the Bible in the first place, we wouldn’t be in this mess. They caused this by refusing to believe what the Bible says.

Making men better without nagging

I sometimes wonder if pastors think that men are just there to serve women, and not to serve God. Pastors seem to have no idea where men are really needed in this society – to counter anti-Christian ideologies – and how to get them there. Pastors are supposed to inspire and encourage Christian men to become effective and influential in the areas where we need them to be, and to inspire women to select those men who are having an influence over non-Christian men who are just good looking and fun. But they fail miserably at these tasks. The don’t seem to be able to look at an effect (declining men) and trace it back to causes, and then address those causes.

Here are a few things that pastors could talk about in the church:

- how should schools change to help men to learn better?
- what sort of education policies will help parents educate their boys?
- what sort of books should boys be reading?
- what should parents be doing to make their
- what should a single man be doing to please God – not women?
- what economic policies encourage job creation?
- how does socialism (social programs) minimize the roles that men play in a family?
- how do we make church more interesting for men?

- how has feminism changed law and government to be more hostile to men?
- how has feminism changed the workplace to be less accessible to men?
- how can we convince women to stop getting drunk and hooking up?
- how can we get men to be able to understand the truth of Christianity?
- how can we get women to affirm men in their traditional roles?
- how can we point men towards careers in science, engineering, math and technology?
- how does the culture undermine strong Christian men?
- what are some areas where Christians are needed to be influential today?
- who are some of Christian men who are effective and influential?
- what academic disciplines should men focus on in order to have an influence?
- what laws and policies are hostile to the Christian life plan?
- how can we get men to speak intelligently about Christianity and how it relates to other areas of knowledge?

But questions like this never occur to most pastors. They often can't even *talk* about things like apologetics and politics for fear of being "divisive". Instead of complaining about men, pastors need to start thinking about how to solve the problem. That will involve deliberate study and taking action to address the root causes of the decline of men, providing men with a positive vision instead of just nagging them, and holding women accountable for their own sinful actions, like premarital sex (a risk factor for divorce) and single motherhood, which both cause their children to be raised without fathers.

Related posts

- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold women accountable for their own choices?
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- Conservative woman blames liberal women for choosing bad men
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama's new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents

- How feminism’s war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence

The Becket Fund assesses Obama's "compromise" on the contraception mandate

February 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eric Metaxas shared this on Facebook, so here it is.

Full text:

> Facing a political firestorm, President Obama today announced his intent to make changes to a controversial rule that would require religious institutions, in violation of their conscience, to pay for contraception, sterilization, and abortifacient drugs. But this "compromise" is an exercise in obfuscation, not a good faith effort to solve the problem. Thousands of churches, religious organizations, businesses, individuals, and others will still be forced to violate their religious beliefs.
>
> For example, the fake compromise will not help the Becket Fund's clients Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina, Colorado Christian University, and Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), a Catholic media organization. They will still be forced to pay for insurance that provides contraceptive coverage. The White House's claim that "the insurance companies will pay for it" is silly. For-profit insurance companies aren't going to donate contraceptives and abortion drugs to employees; the employer will pay for it one way or the other. More fundamentally, the Becket Fund's clients still face the same chilling dilemma they did yesterday: choosing between helping their employees buy immoral abortion drugs or paying huge fines.
>
> "This is a false 'compromise' designed to protect the President's re-election chances, not to protect the right of conscience," says Hannah Smith, Senior Legal Counsel for The Becket Fund. "No one should be fooled by what amounts to an accounting gimmick. Religious employers will still have to violate their religious convictions or pay heavy annual fines to the IRS."
>
> According to a White House "fact sheet," some religious employers will no longer be required to provide insurance coverage for contraception, sterilization, and abortion-causing drugs; coverage for those services will instead be provided for free directly by insurance companies. This does not protect anyone's conscience. First, the problem is helping employees get abortion drugs, not the cost of providing those drugs. Since providing insurance benefits would still help employees get insurance, religious employers still have to choose between providing health benefits that help employees get abortion drugs, and paying annual fines. Second, thousands of religious organizations self insure, meaning that they will be forced to pay directly for these services in violation of their religious beliefs. Third, it is unclear which religious organizations are permitted to claim the new exemption, and whether it will extend to for-profit organizations,

> individuals, or non-denominational organizations.
>
> “It is especially telling that the details of this fake ‘compromise’ will likely not be announced until after the election,” said Smith. “Religious freedom is not a political football to be kicked around in an election-year. Rather than providing full protection for the right of conscience, President Obama has made a cynical political play that is the antithesis of ‘hope and change.’”

My previous post in which I chastised the Roman Catholic bishops for supporting Obamacare is here.

Six Montreal Muslims arrested in a case of human trafficking and prostitution

February 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada with cities
From CTV Montreal.

Excerpt:

> The Montreal police Child Sexual Exploitation Investigations Section has announced the arrest of six young men in a case of human trafficking and prostitution.
>
> Two underage girls allegedly met the suspects in February 2011 and were forced into prostitution.
>
> The girls told police that they managed to flee to their freedom a week later.
>
> Police have arrested Abdul Karim Nassereddine, 20, Naib Ali Soilihi, 20 and Mohammed Rami Taha, 19. Mezri Mehdi Mohamed Hamza, 21, turned himself in Thursday after being sought by authorities.
>
> The two others arrested cannot be named, as they were minors at the time of the alleged offences.
>
> The suspects were charged with a variety of crimes related to sexual assault and prostitution of minors Thursday.

This is not surprise to me. Many people think of Islam as just another religion like Christianity or Judaism, but actually, they are not the same at all.

Rape epidemic in Norway and Sweden

I got these videos from Verum Serum.

Here’s the first: (3 minutes)

And here’s the second: (2 minutes)

Here is my previous story about the three Montreal Muslims convicted of first degree murder for murdering several of their own relatives in an “honor killing”.

Environmentalists and protectionists block economic growth in Puerto Rico

February 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Puerto Rico Map

Here's a story from Mary Anastasia O'Grady at the Wall Street Journal. She interviewed Puerto Rican Gov. Luis Fortuño and learned about his plan to boost the island's economic growth.

Excerpt:

> If [Luis Fortuño's] plan to boost the island's competitiveness by switching electricity generation from oil to natural gas is to succeed, he's going to need relief from the pernicious 1920 Jones Act. It prohibits any ship not made in the U.S. from carrying cargo between U.S. ports. There are no liquefied-natural-gas (LNG) tankers made in the U.S. Unless Puerto Rico gets a Jones Act exemption, it cannot take advantage of the U.S. natural gas bonanza to make itself more competitive.
>
> The Jones Act is good if you are a union shipbuilder who doesn't like competition, or a member of Congress who takes political contributions from the maritime lobby. But it's bad if you are a low-income Puerto Rican who needs a job. And there are plenty of those.
>
> Puerto Ricans are American citizens but they are significantly poorer than the rest of the country. Per capita income on the island in 2010 was roughly $16,300 compared to just over $47,000 for the nation as a whole.
>
> Life on the island is also expensive, in part because of the high price of electricity, 68% of which is produced using imported oil. The governor's office

> says that the price of electricity here went up 100% from 2001 to 2011.
>
> […][B]ringing down high energy costs remains a fundamental challenge, and one that is exacerbated by new costly federal regulations on emissions that would require the installation of scrubbers on oil-fired electricity plants. To meet those regulations affordably, Mr. Fortuño wants to convert the island's oil-fired plants to cheaper, cleaner natural gas. To that end, he proposes a pipeline from the southern LNG terminal at Punta Guayanilla across the island to San Juan. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has assessed the proposal and said it would produce no significant environmental impact.
>
> It sounds like a plan to help the poor and unemployed. There are only two problems. First, the Sierra Club and local environmentalists have ginned up fears about the project and promised to sue to stop construction. Second, the Jones Act is still in the way.
>
> The governor admits that his administration could have done a better job communicating the pipeline plan to Puerto Ricans, but he also points out that "some of the same groups that have opposed the pipeline have also opposed wind-power and solar projects. They are opposing everything, including waste-to-energy" projects which he maintains are less polluting than landfills.
>
> Mr. Fortuño says that he expects Washington to give him a carve-out for LNG tankers, but he doesn't have it yet. He also says that a large part of the environmentalist push-back is political, suggesting to me that he ought to be more worried than he is. This kind of politics needs to preserve the status quo of the welfare state. And that implies blocking Mr. Fortuño's development agenda no matter what it means to the poor.

I thought this article was a neat little way to see how groups of people who understand economics try to pull themselves up out of messes, and who stands in their way. It's something to think about when you think about poverty – what will really work to lift people out of poverty? And what is the real effect of labor unions and environmentalists on economies?

Were you taught that black and white moths are evidence of evolution?

February 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post by Jonathan Wells at Evolution News, which re-caps the history of the peppered moths experiment.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> The peppered moth story is familiar — even overly familiar — to most readers of ENV, so I will summarize it only briefly here. Before the industrial revolution, most peppered moths in England were light-colored; but after tree trunks around cities were darkened by pollution, a dark-colored ("melanic") variety became much more common (a phenomenon known as "industrial melanism"). In the 1950s, British physician Bernard Kettlewell performed some experiments that seemed to show that the proportion of melanic moths had increased because they were better camouflaged on darkened tree trunks and thus less likely to be eaten by predatory birds.
>
> Kettlewell's evidence soon became the classic textbook demonstration of natural selection in action — commonly illustrated with photos of peppered moths resting on light- and dark-colored tree trunks.
>
> By the 1990s, however, biologists had discovered several discrepancies in the classic story– not the least of which was that peppered moths in the wild do not usually rest on tree trunks. Most of the textbook photos had been staged.
>
> In the 2000s the story began disappearing from the textbooks. British biologist Michael Majerus then did some studies that he felt supported the camouflage-predation explanation. But before he died of cancer in 2009, he only managed to publish a report of his study in the Darwin lobby's in-house magazine *Evolution: Education and Outreach*. Now four other British biologists have presented his results posthumously in the Royal Society's peer-reviewed *Biology Letters*. In an accompanying supplement, the authors presented their version of what they call "the peppered moth debacle." And a debacle it certainly is, but not in the way they think.
>
> According to Charles Darwin, natural selection has been "the most important" factor in the descent with modification of all living things from one or a few common ancestors, yet he had no actual evidence for it. All he could offer in *The Origin of Species* were "one or two imaginary illustrations." It wasn't until almost a century later that Kettlewell seemed to provide "Darwin's missing evidence" by marking and releasing light- and dark-colored moths in polluted and unpolluted woodlands and recovering some of them the next day. Consistent with the camouflage-predation explanation, the proportion of better-camouflaged moths

> increased between their release and recapture.
>
> Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, however, researchers reported various problems with the camouflage-predation explanation, and in 1998 University of Massachusetts biologist Theodore Sargent and two colleagues published an article in volume 30 of *Evolutionary Biology* concluding "there is little persuasive evidence, in the form of rigorous and replicated observations and experiments, to support this explanation at the present time." (p. 318)
>
> The same year, Michael Majerus published a book in which he concluded that evidence gathered in the forty years since Kettlewell's work showed that "the basic peppered moth story is wrong, inaccurate, or incomplete, with respect to most of the story's component parts." (p. 116) In a review of Majerus's book published in *Nature*, University of Chicago evolutionary biologist Jerry Coyne wrote: "From time to time, evolutionists re-examine a classic experimental study and find, to their horror, that it is flawed or downright wrong." According to Coyne, the fact that peppered moths in the wild rarely rest on tree trunks "alone invalidates Kettlewell's release-and-recapture experiments, as moths were released by placing them directly onto tree trunks."
>
> In 1999, I published an article in *The Scientist* summarizing these and other criticisms of the peppered moth story, and in 2000 I included a chapter on peppered moths in my book *Icons of Evolution*. Then, in 2002, journalist Judith Hooper published a book about the controversy titled *Of Moths and Men*. Hooper accused Kettlewell of fraud, though I never did; my criticism was directed primarily at textbook writers who ignored problems with the story and continued to use staged photos even after they were known to misrepresent natural conditions.

Jonathan has actually written about a number of misleading things that you may mind in Biology textbooks.

Here are the sections in his book "Icons of Evolution":

- The Miller-Urey Experiment
- Darwin's Tree of Life
- Homology in Vertebrate Limbs
- Haeckel's Embroys
- Archaeopteryx–The Missing Link
- Peppered Moths
- Darwin's Finches
- Four-Winged Fruit Flies
- Fossil Horses and Directed Evolution
- From Ape to Human: The Ultimate Icon

There's also a documentary based on the book on Youtube.

Dr. Wells holds a Ph.D in Molecular and Cell Biology from the University of California at

Berkeley.

For Valentine’s Day, a story of lifelong love and marriage

February 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this story from ABC News on Dr Laura.com.

Excerpt:

> A devoted Iowa couple married for 72 years died holding hands in the hospital last week, exactly one hour apart.
>
> The passing reflected the nature of their marriage, where, “As a rule, everything was done together,” said the couple’s daughter Donna Sheets, 71.
>
> Gordon Yeager, 94, and his wife Norma, 90, left their small town of State Center, Iowa, on Wednesday to go into town, but never made it. A car accident sent the couple to the emergency room and intensive care unit with broken bones and other injuries. But, even in the hospital, their concerns were each other.
>
> “She was saying her chest hurt and what’s wrong with Dad? Even laying there like that, she was worried about Dad,” said the couple’s son, Dennis Yeager, 52. “And his back was hurting and he was asking about Mom.”
>
> When it became clear that their conditions were not improving, the couple was moved into a room together in beds side-by-side where they could hold hands.
>
> “They joined hands; his right hand, her left hand,” Sheets said.
>
> Gordon Yeager died at 3:38 p.m. He was no longer breathing, but the family was surprised by what his monitor showed.
>
> “Someone in there said, ‘Why, then, when we look at the monitor is the heart still beating?'” Sheets recalled. “The nurse said Dad was picking up Mom’s heartbeat through Mom’s hand.”
>
> “And we thought, ‘Oh my gosh, Mom’s heart is beating through him,'” Dennis Yeager said.
>
> Norma Yeager died exactly an hour later.
>
> “Dad used to say that a woman is always worth waiting for,” Dennis Yeager said. “Dad waited an hour for her and held the door for her.”
>
> The inseparable couple was engaged and married within 12 hours in 1939 on the day Norma Yeager graduated from high school.
>
> “She graduated from high school on May 26, 1939, at about 10 a.m., and at about 10 p.m. that night she was married to my dad at his sister’s house,” Sheets said.
>
> The vibrant duo had a “very, very full life.”
>
> They worked as a team. They traveled together, they were in a bridge club

> together and they worked in a Chevrolet dealership, creamery and other businesses together.
>
> “They always did everything together,” Sheets said. “They weren’t apart. They just weren’t.”

I think that this kind of lasting love is a mystery to many people who come from broken homes. It’s good for us to reflect on a couple who got it right on Valentine’s Day.

Obama’s new budget adds $8 trillion to the debt over the next 10 years

February 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

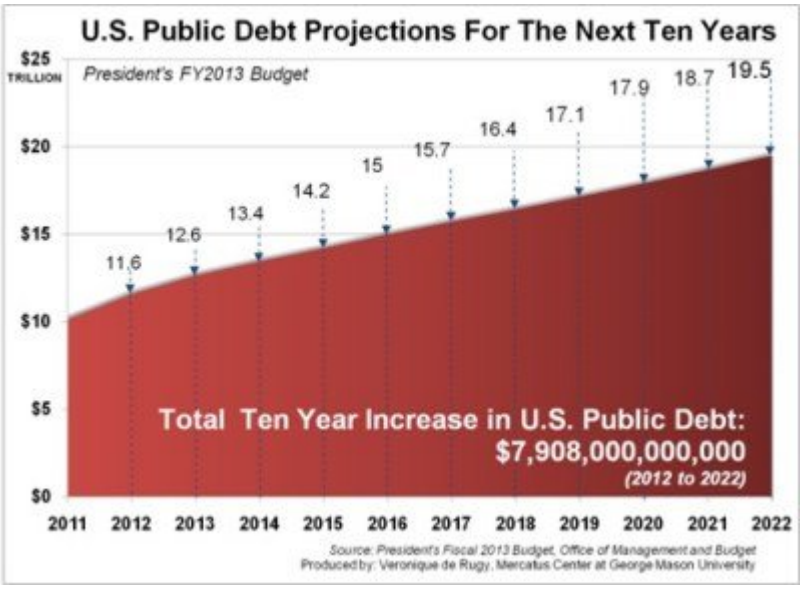

Obama 2013 Budget Debt Projection

What does the liberal Associated Press think?

Excerpt:

> Taking a pass on reining in government growth, President Obama unveiled a record $3.8 trillion election-year budget plan Monday, calling for stimulus-style spending on roads and schools and tax hikes on the wealthy to help pay the costs. The ideas landed with a thud on Capitol Hill.
>
> Though the Pentagon and a number of Cabinet agencies would get squeezed, Obama would leave the spiraling growth of health care programs for the elderly and the poor largely unchecked. The plan claims $4 trillion in deficit savings over the coming decade, but most of it would be through tax increases Republicans oppose, lower war costs already in motion and budget cuts enacted last year in a debt pact with GOP lawmakers.

> […]By the administration’s reckoning, the deficit would drop to $901 billion next year – still requiring the government to borrow 24 cents of every dollar it spends – and would settle in the $600 billion-plus range by 2015.The deficit for the current budget year, which ends Sept. 30, would hit $1.3 trillion, a near record and the fourth straight year of trillion-plus red ink.
>
> Obama’s budget blueprint reprises a long roster of prior proposals: raising taxes on couples making more than $250,000 a year; eliminating numerous tax breaks for oil and gas companies and approving a series of smaller tax and fee proposals. Similar proposals failed even when the Democrats controlled Congress.

> The Pentagon would cut purchases of Navy ships and F-35 Joint Strike Fighters – and trim 100,000 troops from its rolls over coming years – while NASA would scrap two missions to Mars.
>
> But there are spending increases, too: The Obama plan seeks $476 billion for transportation projects including roads, bridges and a much-criticized high-speed rail initiative.

The Heritage Foundation has more.

Excerpt:

> Spending in the President's budget rises inexorably from today's $3.8 trillion to $5.8 trillion in 2022. Throughout the decade, outlays hold stubbornly above 22 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), more than twice the New Deal's share of the economy in its peak years. In constant dollars, outlays are more than three times the peak of World War II.
>
> In 2012, his budget results deliver a fourth consecutive annual deficit exceeding $1 trillion and then make it worse with another round of not-so-shovel-ready construction projects and government "investments" totaling $178 billion. Among these are the typical road, bridge, and school construction, but then they go alarmingly beyond the usual "infrastructure" arguments to fund teachers' pay.
>
> Obama's future deficit reduction comes mainly from Budget Control Act cuts already in place, $848 billion in discredited phantom "savings" from the wind-down of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, taking credit for reductions in 2011 appropriations, and roughly $1.8 trillion in unnecessary tax increases on those earning above $250,000 and the oil and gas industry.
>
> Yet even with the hefty tax increases and illusory savings, the President's deficits over the next decade never fall below $575 billion (in 2018) and climb back to $704 billion (in 2022)—but again only assuming the tax increases and mystical savings cited above.
>
> Debt held by the public in the President's budget rises from 74.2 percent of GDP today to an economically hazardous 76.5 percent of GDP in 2022. These are historically high debt levels: the post–World War II average is just 43 percent. Moreover, the President's debt estimates are low because of the unreal nature of much of his proposed deficit reduction.
>
> Regarding the most critical fiscal challenge of the day—the need to restructure Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security—the President has once again taken a pass. By the middle of this century, these three programs and Obamacare will consume about 18 percent of GDP, soaking up all the historical average of federal tax revenue. The notion of "protecting" them through benign neglect only ensures their collapse, and the longer Congress and the President wait to address the problem, the more wrenching will be the consequences. But the President merely reruns previous ideas, such as more cuts to medical providers, ignoring

> the need for fundamental reform.
>
> For other entitlements, the President repeats a range of mere chipping-around-the-edges proposals from last year's budget, many of which are really tax or fee increases, not spending reductions.
>
> In short, the President's budget is the same worn-out collection of higher spending and higher taxes he has offered three times before—with the same inevitable result of more spending, higher taxes, and still more government debt.

Here's a Republican reaction from Senator Bob Corker:

The libertarian Reason magazine has more budget charts.

Jennifer Roback Morse on the injustice of the American family court system

February 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I find myself thinking about life-long married love on Valentine's Day, so I'm going to post an article by marriage-defender Jennifer Roback Morse about one of the biggest challenges to life-long married love.

Excerpt:

> Easy divorce opens the door for an unprecedented amount of government intrusion into ordinary people's lives. This unacknowledged reality is the subject of *Taken Into Custody,* by Stephen Baskerville**.** With penetrating insight, the political scientist exposes the truly breathtaking consequences of no-fault divorce for the expansion of state power and the decline of personal autonomy.
>
> First, no-fault divorce frequently means unilateral divorce: one party wants a divorce against the wishes of the other, who wants to stay married. Kim Basinger dumped Baldwin for no particular reason, unleashed the power of the Los Angeles Family Court system to inflict pain on him and, in the process, inflicted untold damage on their child. Second, the fact that one party wants to remain married means that the divorce has to be enforced. Baldwin wanted to stay married and to continue to be a husband and father. Yet, the coercive and intrusive machinery of the state must be wheeled into action to separate the reluctantly divorced party from the joint assets of the marriage, typically the home and the children.
>
> Third, enforcing the divorce means an unprecedented blurring of the boundaries between public and private life. People under the jurisdiction of family courts can have virtually all of their private lives subject to its scrutiny. If the courts are influenced by feminist ideology, that ideology can extend its reach into every bedroom and kitchen in America. Baldwin ran the gauntlet of divorce industry professionals who have been deeply influenced by the feminist presumptions that the man is always at fault and the woman is always a victim. Thus, the social experiment of no-fault divorce, which most Americans thought was supposed to increase personal liberty, has had the consequence of empowering the state.
>
> Some might think the legacy of no-fault divorce is an example of the law of unintended consequences in operation. That assumes its architects did not intend for unilateral divorce to result in the expansion of the state. But Baskerville makes the case in this book—as well as his 2008 monograph, "The Dangerous Rise of Sexual Politics," in The Family in America—that at least some of the advocates of changes in family law certainly have intended to expand the power of the state over the private lives of law-abiding citizens.

She explains who is really behind the attempt to destroy marriage, and the answer might shock you.

It's important for people to understand the real reasons why people are not getting married, so that we can do something to encourage them to marry that really fixes the problem. Talk to any man and he will tell you that aside from the concerns about the economy and the national debt, the main reason why he is not willing to get married is the unfairness of the family courts. If you don't understand the threats that men are seeing with respect to marriage, it might be a good idea to take a look at this essay by Stephen Baskerville, hosted by the Christian Touchstone magazine. It's a summary of the book that Dr. Morse reviewed. I consider that book "Taken Into Custody" to be a must-read for anyone contemplating marriage.

William Lane Craig discusses recent challenges to religious liberty

February 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Listening to William Lane Craig talk about current events and its relevance to theological and ethical concerns makes me very happy. I have 3 of his commentaries below, but if you have been following my blog, you know about all three of them already. Still, it's great to hear a philosopher and theologian way in on practical issues. I like it as much as when Wayne Grudem does it. I never, ever get tired of hearing Christian pastors and scholars talk about practical things.

I think that all of you who are suspicious of my efforts to link Christianity to other issues should listen to these podcasts.

Here's the MP3 file from the first lecture on religious liberty, dated January 22, 2012. (14 MB | 6:17 min)

Topics:

- The issue is whether churches should be allowed to be exempt from hiring restrictions
- The Supreme Court ruling saying that the state cannot intervene in church hiring decisions
- The Obama administration tried to erase the religious liberty protections for churches
- The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the Texas sonogram law
- The importance of an incremental pro-life approach

Here's the MP3 file from the second lecture, dated January 29th, 2012. Get MP3 (21 MB | 9:10 min)

Topics:

- The issue is whether Catholic organizations should be forced to cover abortion drugs
- The state is attempting to mandate what religious organizations must pay for
- The mandate would force churches to pay for abortion drugs: Ella and Plan "B"
- The issue is not contraception, which some Christians may support
- The issue is an issue of religious liberty and government control

Here's the MP3 file from the third lecture, dated February 10th, 2012. (43 MB | 18:59 min)

Topics:

- Obama's "compromise": making the insurance companies pay for abortion drugs
- Does the compromise really resolve the religious liberty issue?
- Many Catholic institutions have Catholic insurance companies

- Many faith-based organizations self-insure by pooling employee resources
- The compromise would require these groups to cover abortion drugs
- Another issue is the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling against Prop 8
- Did Prop 8 really take rights away from gays and lesbians?
- No – Prop 8 defined heterosexual marriage as valid or recognized
- Prop 8 doesn't even mention gays and lesbians
- Prop 8 says straights and gays have the same right to marry someone of the opposite sex
- Prop 8 says nothing about a person's sexual orientation
- This attempt to push for same-sex marriage is an attempt to deconstruct marriage
- **It is important to think of issues like this before voting**
- **Christians should care about politics and follow politics**
- **Christians who don't know politics are "naive" and "have their head in the sand"**
- The two judges in this decision were appointed by Democrats: Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton

I think this is good because I'm sure that a bunch of you think that Bill only ever talks about apologetics. But actually, he is very good about being practical about his faith. He does try to think through how current events, laws and policies affect the theological and moral positions of the Christian faith. I just recently e-mailed him about Rick Santorum's comments about how the Catholic church supported Obamacare, and then how it later caused problems for their religious liberty. So there is a case where top-down control of the private sector created a situation where religious liberty was negatively impacted… exactly as predicted by F.A. Hayek in "The Road to Serfdom".

State employee replaced preschoolers “unhealthy” lunch with chicken nuggets

February 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox North Carolina. (H/T Ari)

Excerpt:

> A Hoke County preschooler was fed chicken nuggets for lunch because a state worker felt that her homemade lunch did not have enough nutritional value, according to a report by the Carolina Journal.
>
> The West Hoke Elementary School student was in her More at Four classroom when a state employee who was inspecting lunch boxes decided that her packed lunch — which consisted of a turkey and cheese sandwich, a banana, apple juice and potato chips — “did not meet U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines,” the Journal reports.
>
> The decision was made under consideration of a regulation put in place by the the Division of Child Development and Early Education at the Department of Health and Human Services, which requires all lunches served in pre-kindergarten programs to meet USDA guidelines.
>
> “When home-packed lunches do not include all of the required items, child care providers must supplement them with the missing ones,” the Journal reports.
>
> The student’s mother told the Journal she received a note from the school about the incident and was charged $1.25 for the cafeteria tray, from which her daughter ate three chicken nuggets.
>
> The note explained how students who did not bring “healthy lunches” would be offered the missing portions and that parents could be charged for the cost of the cafeteria food, the Journal reports.

My friend Wes homeschools his kids, and he read this story and asked why these parents had their kid in a government-run day care in the first place.

I think that the reason why is because the family probably pays 30% in taxes already, including being forced to pay for public schools that often don’t provide a quality education. They have no money left over for private schools after paying for failing public schools, and every other ridiculous life-equalization social program. It’s amazing to me how parents have money automatically deducted from their pockets to pay for schools that do things like this to their children. And the answer is, of course, to stop funding public schools directly and provide parents with a voucher, so that parents can choose the education option that works *for them*.

Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign

February 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Anti-marriage gay activists vandalize church
From the Newcastle Herald (Australia). (H/T Bill Muehlenberg)

Excerpt:

> Vandals attacked Wallsend Presbyterian Church last night in response to a message criticising same-sex marriage displayed on the building's outside notice board.
>
> The church on Nelson Street had updated its message board last week to read "Even tradies know you need both male and female joints to make a marriage".
>
> The front of the 1867 building, which recently received a $12,000 makeover, was defaced with messages such as ''sexuality is not a choice'' and ''love thy neighbour not hate gays''.
>
> Reverend Dr Ian Copland said the sign was a play on words and he wanted people to talk about the issue being raised in federal parliament.
>
> He said he has no regrets despite the outcome.
>
> ''This is not going to stop me,'' he said.
>
> Two bills to legalise same-sex marriage were introduced in Federal Parliament this week.
>
> ''It's obviously a reaction to the sign but I have no malice towards the vandals,'' Rev Copland said.
>
> ''It only takes one or two cowards you can't blame the whole homosexual community. That would be wrong.''
>
> This is not the first time the church has been attacked regarding its stance on same-sex marriage.

> The signboard was vandalised about six months ago when the reverend posted a similar message.

Don't expect to see this story plastered on all the newspapers in the world for six months. It doesn't fit the mainstream media's secular leftist worldview.

Bill writes:

> So this is how the tolerant brigade makes its case: by attacking and defacing and causing damage to a church. Yep, we sure do love how you guys do business. All that love and tolerance is just oozing out here. But if this were not bad enough, look closely at that photo again.
>
> Did you see one of the bits of graffiti? It says this: "Tolerance is a virtue". I kid you not. Look at it again! Don't you just love how these guys demonstrate all their wonderful love of tolerance? They bend over backwards trying to be the most intolerant bunch in the country. And they are succeeding just fine.
>
> As I mentioned, no commentary is really needed here. Just soak in the irony, the duplicity, the double standards and the hypocrisy. I love it when these guys make our case for us. I could never have done such a good enough job to demonstrate all this. So they kindly go and do it for me.
>
> Thanks guys. Keep it up. We expect to see even more such cases of love, acceptance and tolerance in the near future. We know full well how you operate, and we look forward to more expressions of tolerance.

Click here for a sampling of anti-marriage vandalism, violence and harassment from anti-Prop 8 gay activists.

Please note: comments to this post will be filtered based on Obama's law restricting free speech on controversial issues.

What do the British believe about God and Christianity?

February 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Calum Miller has a depressing analysis of a recent Ipos poll, over at Apologetics UK.

Excerpt:

> What is the greatest threat to Christianity in the UK? Secularism? Growing atheism? Loss of Christian tradition? Less people identifying as Christians?
>
> For me, it is none of these. To the contrary, I think the greatest threat to Christianity in the UK is the presence of a 'Christian' tradition. Let me explain what I mean.
>
> Ipsos MORI have just released survey results, taken from those who say they were recorded as Christian in the 2011 census, or who would have put themselves down as Christian.
>
> To begin with, there are a few problems with the study: the obvious one is that this is not actually a survey of people who identify as Christians. Rather, it is a survey of people who were recorded as Christian – a lot of the respondents said they would not have filled in "Christian" if they filled it in themselves. So the results are probably not as bad as they come across. But nevertheless, I think there is serious cause for concern here.

Calum links to the full survey results, and then lists some of the answers that concerned him. I put the right answer in **BOLD**.

Here's one:

> Q19. Which of the following statements best describes YOUR personal view of God?
>
> I believe in God and I believe that Christianity is just one way of knowing him 37%
> **I believe in God and I believe that Christianity is the only true way of knowing him 17%**
> I think of God as being the laws of nature and everything in the universe 13%
> I don't believe in God but think there may be some kind of supernatural intelligence out there 10%
> I think of God as being whatever caused the universe 9%
> I don't believe in God 6%
> None of these 1%
> Don't know 4%
> Prefer not to say 2%

And here's another:

> Q49. When it comes to right and wrong, which of the following, if any, do you MOST look to for guidance?
>
> My own inner moral sense 54%
> Parents, family or friends 25%
> **Religious teachings and beliefs 10%**
> Philosophy and reason 7%
> None of the above 2%
> Don't know 1%
> Prefer not to say 1%

And one more:

> Q51. Which is the ONE statement that BEST describes what being a Christian means to you personally?
>
> I try to be a good person 40%
> It's how I was brought up 24%
> **I have accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour 15%**
> I believe in the teachings of Jesus 7%
> It's a British tradition 4%
> It gives me hope in an afterlife 3%
> Something else 0%
> Don't know 2%
> Prefer not to say 4%

I do think it is important for us, in the church, to connect Christianity as much as possible with the real world. We need to make sure that people in the pews understand that what is backing up all of these assertions about God and Jesus and the Bible is *the real world, including history*. We aren't just defining *our* dogma and setting it up against *their* dogma. We have to communicate to people that what we believe is objectively true, and knowable, and that it can be tested logically and evidentially, at least in some areas where testing is possible. If pastors don't connect the words they speak and the words they read from the Bible with the real world out there, then people will just get the impression that Christianity is just a cultural thing.

Democrat Jim Cramer explains how Obamacare forces businesses to outsource

February 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Transcript:

> **CNBC's Jim Cramer:** "This is — look, I think the debate is a fabulous one to have, but it has completely taken away from the fact that we are really going to have a hard time hiring once this plan is put in place. I've had a couple of CEOs come on just in the last few weeks. When you talk about whether they want to hire, this is what they bring up. Chipotle, look, use this as maybe one of the great job creators in this country and they pay a lot for their people. This is a company that is very forward. When I ask them, what does ObamaCare do for you? They just say well, nothing we hope because the Supreme Court has got to say no to it. I mean, this is at the front and center of what could derail the economy."
>
> **MSNBC's Joe Scarbarough:** "You're talking about health care reform?"
>
> **CNBC's Jim Cramer:** "I'm just saying, look, the issue the Catholic charities issue, front and center, I want church and state separation, but whatever I want doesn't matter as much as what I'm telling you. Business leaders fear this more than anything, they don't want to hire, this is part of the underground economy. It's gonna develop because no one wants people on the books because of ObamaCare and people have to recognize that this is a front and center issue for every CEO I deal with and another reason why they don't want to hire here, they want to hire there. They want to put the jobs in Asia, they want to put the jobs in Mexico because they don't want to think about how much more it's going to cost to hire a new person. Don't lose that debate. That is a major debate for the economy."

Is Jim Cramer some sort of radical tea party conservative?

He wrote this in 2008:

> What will New York look like a year from now? The answer: bad and probably worse, and perhaps downright catastrophic. Three degrees of awful. The first step was passing the bank-bailout legislation. Now that it's done—and if it didn't get done we would have been looking at a *guaranteed* economic collapse—the critical issue will be presidential leadership. And while any president will be an improvement over the current one, there is a growing belief on Wall Street that Barack Obama has the capacity to lead us out of this wilderness while John McCain does not. I'll go a step further: Obama is a recession. McCain is a depression.

Cramer back Barack Obama for President and is a well-known Democrat.

Democrat Barbara Boxer: right to be insured trumps religious liberty

February 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Senator Boxer warned yesterday that if the HHS contraception mandate was repealed it would set a dangerous precedence of religious rights trumping the right to be insured.
>
> On MSNBC's Politics Nation with Al Sharpton last night, Boxer affirmed that under the proposed amendment proposed by Sen. Roy Blunt, an employer would not be forced by the government to pay for medical practices against his religion.
>
> "I mean, are they serious? Sharpton exclaimed, "How do you make a law where an employer can decide his own religious beliefs violate your right to be insured?"
>
> "Oh absolutely," Boxer said, "Let's use an example, let's say somebody believes that medicine doesn't cure anybody of a disease but prayer does and then they decide no medicine.
>
> "No medicine!" she exclaimed, "Under the Blunt amendment, they could do just that."
>
> Senator Harry Reid announced yesterday that he would allow a vote on the Blunt Amendment. The vote allows Senate Democrats such as Robert Casey of Pennsylvania, and Joe Manchin of West Virginia to register a protest vote against the HHS contraception mandate.

Fascism is the ideology that states that the worldview of the government, especially on questions of religion, morality and meaning, should be pushed down onto individuals by force. The Democrat elites, including Obama, are pro-abortion. And now, they want to force you to be pro-abortion, too – by forcing you to subsidize the abortions of others, even if you have a conscientious objection based on your religion. Your money isn't your money – it's Obama's money. You just earn it. But Obama spends it. And if he spends in subsidizing abortion, and you don't like it, then tough luck for you. That's how secular leftist Democrats think.

Daniel Wallace and Bart Ehrman debate New Testament origins and reliability

February 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brought to you by The Ehrman Project.

I did watch this, but there is no snarky summary, because I was busy fixing my desktop hardware while it was playing on my laptop.

For those who cannot see the debate, I do have a consolation prize – a new article I found on the "earliest" manuscript fragment (P52). I said *earliest* in quotes, because Daniel Wallace thinks that there is a new fragment of Mark that can be dated to the first century – and he even brings it up in his debate with Ehrman (above).

Excerpt:

> This manuscript, called the **Rylands Library Papyrus P52**, is on exhibition at Rylands Library in Manchester, UK. It measures 3.5 by 2.5 inches, and has writing on both front and back. The front contains parts of 7 lines from John 18: 31-33; the back contains parts of 7 lines from John 18: 37-38. This fragment of John is probably the oldest New Testament manuscript discovered so far.
>
> You can see in bold (above) which Greek letters are actually on the front side of the papyrus. The papyrus is dated by paleographers between 117 and 138 AD. Why is this significant?
>
> Let's say you found a puzzle piece that had a date stamp of 1929 on the back. Let's say the partial picture on the puzzle piece that has not faded matches a puzzle piece from a complete 1982 puzzle that you own. Let's say the shape of the puzzle piece fits perfectly into your 1982 puzzle. You would be fairly sure that your 1982 puzzle was originally made in 1929 or before.
>
> **What do we learn from the "puzzle piece" called P52?**
>
> Early Date
>
> 1. It suggests a 1st century date of the original writing of John's gospel ~ not in the 2nd to 4th century, as some conspiracy theorists say. This papyrus was found in Egypt, having been copied in a particular Alexandrian script. Since it is dated 117-138 based on the particular script (a type of date-stamp), it means that the book of John (thought to be written in Ephesus) had to travel to Egypt and then be copied before early 2nd century. The P52 papyrus is so fragile that scholars do not want to run other types of tests, and so the dating, though considered very reliable by many, is not iron-clad. Some scholars even date P52 as early as 90 AD.
>
> Accuracy
>
> 2. It shows the accuracy of the preservation of this passage in John by its incredible agreement with later manuscripts. P52 has no significant variance

> with P66, a 2nd-3rd century papyrus fragment which includes much more of the gospel of John. P52 has no significant variance with our earliest gospels that are in codex (book) form, including 4th century Codex Sinaiticus, 4th century Codex Vaticanus, and 5th century Codex Alexandrinus. Variations that exist include word order and pronunciation (itacism) differences .
>
> **The early dating and high level of accuracy of P52 indicate that the gospel of John was written in the 1st century and preserved in a way that gives us confidence in the reliability of the gospel of John that we have in our Bibles.**

The article explains what P52 means to Bart Ehrman's case. You can make a similar case for the reliability of transmission by looking at how little the Old Testament has changed from the time of the Dead Sea scrolls to the previous earliest copies we had before the Dead Sea scrolls – a gap of a 1000 years.

Excerpt:

> Also on display through Dec. 31 will be three Dead Sea Scrolls, two on parchment and one on copper, on loan from the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.
>
> The scrolls were discovered in a cave, coiled inside clay vases, by a goat herder in 1947. Excavations at the Dead Sea region later discovered about 900 scrolls in 11 caves.
>
> Despite being safely stored in a dry container, 2,000 years took a toll on the scrolls, which were eaten away by fungi, worms and moisture. The scrolls on display, like all of the documents discovered in the find, are in fragments.
>
> After connecting about 100,000 pieces, scholars have found that the scrolls contain biblical books, hymns, prayers and other important documents many believe were written by a Jewish sect known as the Essenes, who lived near the Dead Sea.
>
> **The find was of great historical significance because it was about 1,000 years older than any known version of the Bible, placing its authors much closer to the time of the Bible's actual events.**
>
> Some of the scroll's contents were published soon after their find, but for various reasons some were not released until the 1990s. The secrecy fueled speculation that the scrolls contained some sort of bombshell revelation that would contradict or significantly alter traditional biblical interpretations.
>
> The eventual release of the scrolls seemed to prove just the opposite.
>
> **"To some degree, we didn't know how reliable later translations of the Bible were," said Risa Levitt Kohn, director of the Jewish Studies Program at San Diego State University and an associate professor of Hebrew Bible and Judaism in SDSU's Religious Studies Department. Kohn said the scrolls showed that translations of the Hebrew Bible, or**

> **the Old Testament, changed little in 2,000 years.**
>
> **Peter Jones, scholar in residence and adjunct professor at Westminster Seminary in Escondido, said he studied the scrolls at Princeton University and wrote a doctoral dissertation comparing the Apostle Paul with the founder of the ancient city of Qumran, where the scrolls were discovered.**
>
> **“It’s sort of amazing to see how well the text had been preserved for 1,000 years, because the text we had been using 1,000 years later can be verified by these very early texts, so that’s one good thing,” Jones said.**

I don’t talk much about textual reliability on this blog, because I prefer the scientific arguments – but everybody should know this stuff. Everybody has to know how to make the case.

Fact check: Mitt Romney's claim that Rick Santorum was a big spender

February 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard evaluates Mitt Romney's claim that Rick Santorum is fiscally liberal. (H/T Shane)

Excerpt:

> The National Taxpayers Union (NTU) has been rating members of Congress for 20 years. NTU is an independent, non-partisan organization that — per its mission statement — "mobilizes elected officials and the general public on behalf of tax relief and reform, lower and less wasteful spending, individual liberty, and free enterprise." Steve Forbes serves on its board of directors.
>
> For each session of Congress, NTU scores each member on an A-to-F scale. NTU weights members' votes based on those votes' perceived effect on both the immediate and future size of the federal budget. Those who get A's are among "the strongest supporters of responsible tax and spending policies"; they receive NTU's "Taxpayers' Friend Award." B's are "good" scores, C's are "minimally acceptable" scores, D's are "poor" scores, and F's earn their recipients membership in the "Big Spender" category. There is no grade inflation whatsoever, as we shall see.
>
> NTU's scoring paints a radically different picture of Santorum's 12-year tenure in the Senate (1995 through 2006) than one would glean from the rhetoric of the Romney campaign. Fifty senators served throughout Santorum's two terms: 25 Republicans, 24 Democrats, and 1 Republican/Independent. On a 4-point scale (awarding 4 for an A, 3.3 for a B+, 3 for a B, 2.7 for a B-, etc.), those 50 senators' collective grade point average (GPA) across the 12 years was 1.69 — which amounts to a C-. Meanwhile, Santorum's GPA was 3.66 — or an A-. Santorum's GPA placed him in the top 10 percent of senators, as he ranked 5th out of 50.
>
> Across the 12 years in question, only 6 of the 50 senators got A's in more than half the years. Santorum was one of them. He was also one of only 7 senators who never got less than a B. (Jim Talent served only during Santorum's final four years, but he always got less than a B, earning a B- every year and a GPA of 2.7.) Moreover, while much of the Republican party lost its fiscal footing after George W. Bush took office — although it would be erroneous to say that the Republicans were nearly as profligate as the Democrats — Santorum was the only senator who got A's in every year of Bush's first term. None of the other 49 senators could match Santorum's 4.0 GPA over that span.
>
> This much alone would paint an impressive portrait of fiscal conservatism on Santorum's part. Yet it doesn't even take into account a crucial point: Santorum

> was representing Pennsylvania.
>
> Based on how each state voted in the three presidential elections over that period (1996, 2000, and 2004), nearly two-thirds of senators represented states that were to the right of Pennsylvania. In those three presidential elections, Pennsylvania was, on average, 3 points to the left of the nation as a whole. Pennsylvanians backed the Democratic presidential nominee each time, while the nation as a whole chose the Republican in two out of three contests.
>
> Among the roughly one-third of senators (18 out of 50) who represented states that — based on this measure — were at least as far to the left as Pennsylvania, Santorum was the most fiscally conservative. Even more telling was the canyon between him and the rest. After Santorum's overall 3.66 GPA, the runner-up GPA among this group was 2.07, registered by Olympia Snowe (R., Maine). Arlen Specter, Santorum's fellow Pennsylvania Republican, was next, with a GPA of 1.98. The average GPA among senators who represented states at least as far left as Pennsylvania was 0.52 — or barely a D-.
>
> But Santorum also crushed the senators in the other states. Those 32 senators, representing states that on average were 16 points to the right of Pennsylvania in the presidential elections, had an average GPA of 2.35 — a C+.
>
> In fact, considering the state he was representing, one could certainly make the case that Santorum was the most fiscally conservative senator during his tenure. The only four senators whose GPAs beat Santorum's represented states that were 2 points (Republican Judd Gregg of New Hampshire), 10 points (Republican Jon Kyl of Arizona), 25 points (Republican James Inhofe of Oklahoma), and 36 points (Republican Craig Thomas of Wyoming) to the right of Pennsylvania in the presidential elections. Moreover, of these four, only Kyl (with a GPA of 3.94) beat Santorum by as much as a tenth of a point. It's an open question whether a 3.94 from Arizona is more impressive than a 3.66 from Pennsylvania.

Do you know who is a big tax and spend fiscal liberal, though? MITT ROMNEY.

So, why is liberal Mitt Romney telling lies about conservative Rick Santorum?

New national Rasmussen poll: Santorum leads Romney 39-27

From Newsmax. (H/T Doug)

Excerpt:

> Building on his triple play of victories in Minnesota, Colorado and Missouri, former Sen. Rick Santorum has now surged to a 12-point lead over Mitt Romney in the race for the GOP presidential nomination heading into a key battle in Romney's home state of Michigan.
>
> Political analyst and Democratic pollster Doug Schoen tells Newsmax that Romney's presidential bid is in "deep trouble" and his campaign badly needs a win in the Great Lakes State before heading into the do-or-die Super Tuesday contests on March 6, where voters in 10 states will pick their candidate to

> become the GOP presidential nominee.
>
> “Romney is in deep trouble. He’s out of arguments. People don’t buy the central premise of his candidacy that he’s a businessman who can get things moving again,” Schoen said in an exclusive interview on Wednesday. “He’s entirely negative — whether it’s about President Obama, Newt Gingrich and now Rick Santorum. And Rick Santorum’s ad basically sums up the case against Mitt Romney: He’s a serial attacker who offers nothing other than negative ads, super PACs, bundlers and special interest money. It’s a recipe for failure.”
>
> The latest Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey of likely Republican primary voters released on Wednesday shows Santorum leading with 39 percent support, compared with 27 percent for Romney nationwide.

The two latest polls in Michigan, a state where Mitt Romney grew up and where his father was *governor*, show Rick Santorum with a 10 point lead and a 9 point lead.

Mitt Romney

- Mitt Romney’s tax returns would make him lose the election to Obama
- Does Mitt Romney’s Romneycare health care plan fund abortion with taxpayer dollars?
- John Hawkins writes the most scathing anti-Romney column EVER
- Santorum and Gingrich expose Romney’s liberal record in Sunday’s NBC debate
- Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million while he was governor of Massachusetts
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- RINO Mitt Romney now open to European-style VAT tax
- Is Mitt Romney a flip-flopper? What are his flip-flops?
- RINO Mitt Romney deploys another RINO John Sununu to attack Newt Gingrich
- Mitt Romney supports the anti-Christian and anti-business ENDA law
- Mitt Romney gaffe: Romney fails miserably in interview with Bret Baier
- Jon Huntsman’s anti-Romney ads are awesome
- Mitt Romney’s political views on gay marriage, abortion and global warming
- Mitt Romney flip-flop videos: flat tax, abortion, health care, public sector unions, global warming
- Mitt Romney on global warming, climate change, environmental regulations
- Mitt Romney on abortion and stem cell research in his own words
- White House used Mitt Romney’s Romneycare as a blueprint for Obamacare
- Mitt Romney on the issues: Mitt Romney political views and positions in 2012

Rick Santorum

- Rick Santorum gets endorsements from James Dobson and John Stemberger
- Wall Street Journal: Rick Santorum is a supply-sider for the working man
- Rick Santorum would not stand idle while Iran develops nuclear weapons
- 150 evangelical leaders agree to endorse Rick Santorum after two-day conference

- Why Christians and social conservatives should vote for Rick Santorum
- Rick Santorum's pro-family economic plan TRIPLES the child tax deduction
- Is Rick Santorum conservative or liberal? What are Rick Santorum's political views?
- Rick Santorum helps liberal college students to understand the logic of marriage
- George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class
- Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech
- Rick Santorum for President of the United States
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- Rick Santorum wins Fox News Republican primary debate (with video)
- Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

Fact check of Obama's budget: is there really $4 trillion in deficit reduction?

February 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story from the House Budget Committee, where Paul Ryan is the leader.

Paul Ryan made these two charts to help him discuss Obama's new budget with Obama's budget director.

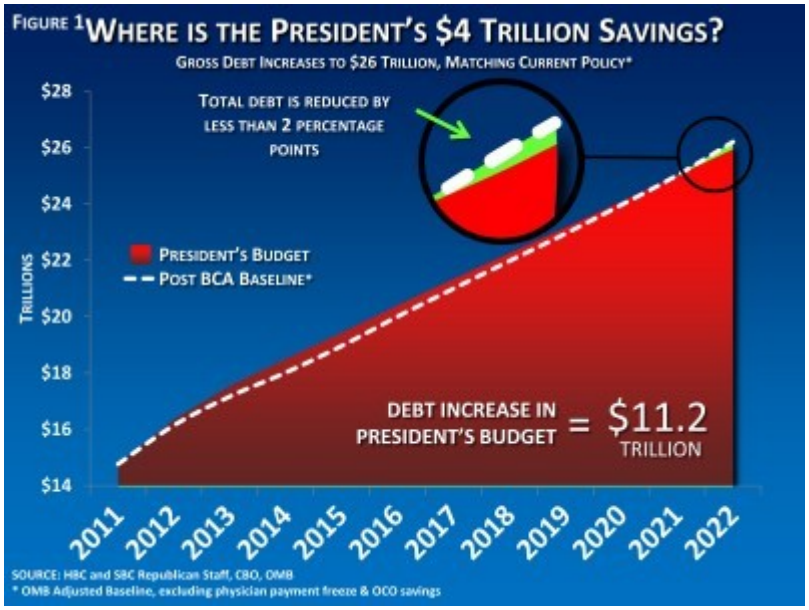

Debt Increase in President's Budget

And:

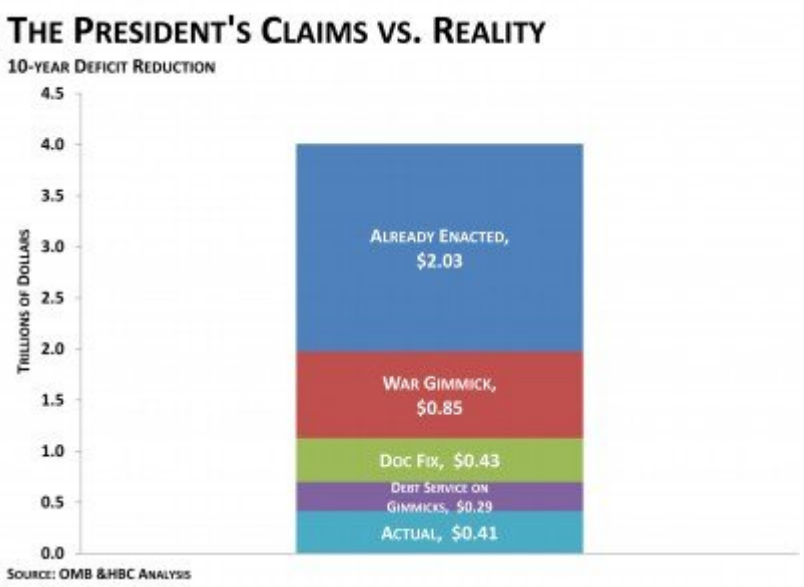

Actual savings is 410 billion, not 4 trillion

Watch these clips to see Paul Ryan and Scott Garrett use the charts to do nasty things to Obama's budget director.

Clip 1 of 3:

Clip 2 of 3:

Clip 3 of 3:

Guy Benson discusses both videos at Townhall.com.

Excerpt:

> Ryan does a masterful job of puncturing Zients' arguments, but let's reiterate a few points that may have gotten lost in the shuffle.
>
> **(1) The White House is claiming that spending cuts within the Budget Control Act of 2011 — which is entirely separate from the FY 2013 budget — should count as savings "achieved" by their new proposal. This is silly on its face, but crosses into laughable territory when one recalls that throughout much of the debt fight, President Obama adamantly opposed a cuts-for-debt-ceiling-hike *quid pro quo*. He was on the record in favor of — demanding, in fact — zero cuts. Republicans dragged him into the BCA against his will; now he's trying to take credit for that past action in next year's budget.**
>
> (2) The White House says Obama's budget "saves" $850 Billion by not fighting two wars at peak spending levels for another full decade. This money was never proposed because the scenario is pure fiction. These risible "savings" represent a White House bear-hug of Moon-Yogurt accounting. "Heaven help us" is right.
>
> (3) Zients' isn't able to recall how much money this budget adds to the national debt. You'd think the White House Budget Director would have that figure committed to memory (he likely does, but doesn't want to admit it on camera), but let's help him out: The budget he's defending adds nearly $11 Trillion to the debt, on top of the roughly $5 Trillion increase over which this president has already presided. I seem to recall an infamous Right-wing zealot calling this sort of governance "unpatriotic."
>
> Next, we have Rep. Scott Garrett, a strong conservative from Northern New Jersey, asking Zients when the president's budget comes into balance. Zients refuses to directly respond to the question, perhaps because the correct answer is "*never*"…
>
> Indeed, the closest Obama's budget ever comes to balancing (expenses = revenues) within the ten-year projection window is 2017's annual deficit of $617 Billion, which is still *more than double* the size of President Bush's average annual deficit. Finally, Garrett lures Zients into a trap over Obamacare. Garrett asks if a family making less than $250,000 per year ("the rich" cut off) is subject to a tax increase if they fail to comply with Obamacare's individual mandate…
>
> The president sold Obamacare to the public by characterizing the resulting

> mandatory pay-out as a “fine,” *not* a tax increase. He even mocked George Stephanopoulos’ suggestion that it met the dictionary definition of a tax hike. Once the law passed, however, the administration’s lawyers pulled an about-face and have defended the mandate in court by arguing that the fine *is,* in fact, a tax increase after all. Zients has apparently reverted back to the outmoded argument, thus undermining his own administration’s legal defense of their signature “accomplishment.”

What I find frustrating is the media does such a poor job of vetting these “4 trillion dollar” claims that Obama makes. Sometimes, I wonder why anyone listens to mainstream media at all. What do you really learn?

New paper on income inequality: Does taxing the rich hurt the middle class?

February 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Aparna Mathur (right)

Here's an article by Indian economist Aparna Mathur.

She writes (in part):

> In a recent paper that I co-authored with Kevin Hassett, we explored the effect of high corporate taxes on worker wages. The motivation for the paper came from the international tax literature (summarized by Roger Gordon and Jim Hines in a 2002 paper[1]) that suggested that mobile capital flows from high tax to low tax jurisdictions. In other words, in any set of competing countries, investment flows are determined by relative rates of taxation. The current U.S. headline rate of corporate tax is 35 percent. The combined federal and state statutory rate of 39 percent is second only to Japan in the OECD. With Japan set to lower its statutory rate later this year, the U.S. rate will soon be the highest in the OECD and one of the highest in the world. What effect do these high rates have on worker wages?
>
> **When capital flows out of a high tax country, such as the United States, it leads to lower domestic investment, as firms decide against adding a new machine or building a factory. The lower levels of investment affect the productivity of the American worker, because they may not have the best machines or enough machines to work with. This leads to lower wages, as there is a tight link between workers' productivity and their pay. It could also lead to less demand for workers, since the firms have decided to carry out investment activities elsewhere.**
>
> **Our paper was one of the first to explore the adverse effect of corporate taxes on worker wages. Using data on more than 100 countries, we found that higher corporate taxes lead to lower wages. In fact, workers shoulder a much larger share of the corporate tax burden (more than**

> **100 percent) than had previously been assumed. The reason the incidence can be higher than 100 percent is neatly explained in a 2006 paper by the famous economist Arnold Harberger.[2] Simply put, when taxes are imposed on a corporation, wages are lowered not only for the workers in that firm, but for all workers in the economy since otherwise competition would drive workers away from the low-wage firms. As a result, a $1 corporate income tax on a firm could lead to a $1 loss in wages for workers in that firm, but could also lead to more than a $1 loss overall when we look at the lower wages across all workers.**
>
> Following our paper, several academic economists substantiated our results, using different data sets and applying varied econometric modeling and techniques. Some examples of these studies include a 2007 paper by Mihir A. Desai and C. Fritz Foley of Harvard Business School and James Hines Jr. of Michigan University Law School, a 2007 paper by R. Alison Felix of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, a 2009 paper by Robert Carroll of The Tax Foundation, and a 2010 paper by Wiji Arulampalam of the University of Warwick and Michael Devereux and Giorgia Maffini of Oxford.[3] A recent Tax Notes article that I co-authored summarizes these various studies and also the lessons from the theoretical literature on the topic. The general consensus from theory and empirical work is that while we may argue academically about the size of the effect, there is no disagreement among economists that a sizeable burden of the corporate income tax is disproportionately felt by working Americans. On average, a $1 increase in corporate tax revenues could lead to a dollar or more decline in the wage bill.

Conservatives and liberals have the same goal. We both want to help the poor. Liberals think that taking money from the rich and giving it to the poor helps, but all it does it cause the rich to move their capital and jobs elsewhere, leaving the poor poorer. Conservatives let the rich keep their money and encourage them to risk it trying to make more money by engaging in enterprises that create wealth – creating products and services from less valuable raw materials. In a socialist system, the rich get poorer, but so do the poor. In a capitalist system, the rich get very rich, but the poor also gain more wealth. That's what happens when corporations like Apple make IPads out of junky raw materials. That's how wealth is created – by letting people who want to make things keep more of what they earn. We all benefit from encouraging people to make new things and provide value for their neighbors.

Related articles

- The Income-Inequality Myth (Michael Tanner of the Cato Institute)
- 5 reasons why income inequality is a myth (James Pethokoukis of the American Enterprise Institute)
- Understanding income inequality in the United States (Rea Hederman, Jr. and Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation)

Economy improving? New CBO report says that real unemployment is at 15%

February 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Washington Times reports. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama's reelection efforts received a terrible blow today from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), with numbers showing a very grim and poor outlook on the future of America's economy.
>
> Though the official Department of Labor number shows that the unemployment rate dropped from 8.5% in December 2011 to 8.3% in January 2012, the CBO report states that, *"The official unemployment rate excludes those individuals who would like to work but have not searched for a job in the past four weeks as well as those who are working part-time but would prefer full-time work; if those people were counted among the unemployed, the unemployment rate in January 2012 would have been about 15 percent."*
>
> […]The rate of unemployment has been above 8% since February 2009, making the past three years under President Obama the longest stretch of high unemployment in the United States since the Great Depression.
>
> Additionally, the CBO reports that the unemployment rate in America will stay above 8% through the election of 2012 and even until 2014.
>
> "…the unemployment rate will remain above 8 percent until 2014. The share of unemployed people who have been looking for work for more than six months — referred to as the long-term unemployed — topped 40 percent in December 2009 and has remained above that level ever since."
>
> When Obama took office in 2009, the official rate was 7.8%. He promised to keep unemployment under 8% when he took office, but only three years into his administration has it finally dropped below 9%.
>
> […]85% of small businesses are no longer hiring and only 13% rate the U.S. Economy as good or excellent.

Obama seems to think that taxing and regulating job creators is a good idea – that it will create more jobs. He raises taxes and passes more burdensome regulations. Business owners respond by expanding their businesses somewhere else where there is less regulation and lower taxes.

Does spending more money on public schools produce better students?

February 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Luis Woodhill in Forbes magazine.

Excerpt:

> Accordingly, the "investment in education" that Obama wants more (and more, and more) of is actually "federal-government-directed investment in education". When considering whether we really want more of this, it is important to remember that it was "federal-government-directed investment in energy" that gave us Solyndra, Ener1, and Beacon Power, and that it was "federal-government-directed investment in housing" that has cost taxpayers more than $150 billion in losses (thus far) at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.
>
> So, how would we know if increased government "investment" in education was producing a return? We would see a steady rise in the ratio of GDP to "nonresidential produced assets" over time. Our GDP is produced by a combination of physical capital and human capital. Accordingly, if the economic value of our human capital were rising, the impact would show up in the numbers as increasing productivity of physical capital.
>
> Now, here is the bad news. While total real ($2010) government spending on education increased almost 13-fold from 1951 to 2009, the measured GDP return on physical capital actually declined slightly, from 47.7% to 44.1%. This could not have happened if we were getting an appreciable economic return on our huge "investment" in education.
>
> What follows is a "first approximation analysis". The numbers could be done with more precision, but they are good enough to give us an idea of what the nation has been getting (actually, not getting) for its massive "investments" in education.
>
> Assuming that about 25% of our total population is in school at any one time, average real (2010 dollars) government spending per student rose from $1,763 in 1951 to $12,209 in 2009. This is an increase of about 7 times. Assuming an average of 13 years of education per student (some go to college, some drop out of high school), this means that during this 58-year time period, we increased our real "investment" in the human capital represented by each student from $22,913 to $158,717.
>
> Meanwhile, we have also been investing more in physical capital. Real nonresidential produced assets per worker increased from $79,278 in 1951 to $206,717 in 2009. So, each worker in 2009 had $127,439 more in physical capital and $135,804 more in educational "capital" to work with than he did in

> 1951.
>
> Unfortunately, it is clear from the numbers that GDP tracks only physical assets, and not the sum of physical assets and educational “assets”. Excluding the GDP produced by the housing stock, the ratio of GDP to nonresidential produced assets has been essentially constant over the 59 years 1951–2009 (it has oscillated with the business cycle around a midpoint of 48.2%).
>
> So, it appears that our massive “investments” in education have produced no measurable economic return. Should we be surprised by this? No. Average scores on standardized tests have not risen, despite the fact that we are “investing” seven times as much in real terms in each student than we did six decades ago. So, even by the measures used by the educational establishment, it is clear that the higher spending has not created any additional human capital.
>
> The nation and its people would be much better off today if most of the additional “investment” in education that we have made over the past six decades had been used to create more nonresidential produced assets. GDP, real wages, and our standard of living would all be considerably higher.
>
> **Also, imagine if, instead of being given a 2009 education for $158,717, an average student were given a 1967-style education for about $58,000, and $100,000 in capital with which to start his working life. This would be sufficient to start any number of small businesses. Alternatively, if put in an IRA earning a real return of 6%, the $100,000 would grow to about $1.8 million over 50 years.**
>
> **The huge government “investments” made in education over the past 50 years have produced little more than “Solyndras in the classroom”. They have enriched teachers unions and other rent-seekers, but have added little or nothing to the economic prospects of students. America does not need more such “investment”.**

There is no reason to believe that having government spend our money will produce a better return than letting us keep our money and then letting us spending it on schools that actually perform.

UK government aims to combat fatherlessness with shared parenting law

February 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Barbara Kay writes about a positive development across the pond. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Two weeks ago the U.K. government announced its intention to amend the 1989 Children's Act. Changes will include a "presumption of shared parenting" to ensure that children's relationships with both parents continues after separation. Under the current adversarial system, as in Canada, legal custody battles almost invariably end with mothers gaining sole custody.
>
> The decision was based more in pragmatism than compassion. Mounting sociological evidence confirms the terrible social costs of fatherlessness: triple the rates of truancy, teen pregnancies and drug abuse, to name a few.
>
> Also proposed is a £10-million mediation fund. One spokesman enunciated what has become obvious to rational observers: "The courts are rarely the best place for resolving private disputes about the care of children." In truth, no one but career stakeholders favours the status quo.
>
> Let's hope the U.K. example will hasten the inevitable arrival of equal shared parenting (ESP) as the default presumption, in the absence of abuse, in Canada. This is, after all, an idea whose time came decades ago. The 1978 Family Law reform Act interpreted the "best interests of the child" to mean: "where feasible, a child should have maximum access to both parents"; the "animosity of the parents should not interfere with this interest"; and the "needs of both parents should be considered."
>
> The in-depth 1998 Senate-House of Commons Joint Committee Report *For the Sake of the Children* also recommended ESP as a default presumption. But the report fell into a black political hole. Guided by feminism-inspired "social context" courses they take at the National Judicial Institute, unaccountable family-court judges with no expertise in children's best emotional and psychological interests privilege mothers' rights in hugely disproportionate numbers.
>
> Indeed, fathers' money is welcome, but the fathers themselves aren't considered necessary to their children's well-being at all, nor their children necessary to theirs. In 2003 justice minister Martin Cauchon stated, "Divorced fathers have no rights, only responsibilities." He might well have added, "Divorced mothers have no responsibilities, only rights." For fathers who fail to pay child support, even when they can't pay, may spend more time in jail than a cocaine dealer and have their faces plastered on the Internet as "deadbeat dads"; but how many

> Canadian mothers have spent a night in jail for arbitrarily denying a father court-appointed time with his children?
>
> Ideologues argue that fathers only demand equal parenting rights as a "patriarchal backlash" or to reduce their child support burdens or to punish their ex-mates. Some individual men are doubtless guilty of bad faith, just as some individual women seek sole custody for its material benefits or to punish their ex-mates.

Here's an excellent lecture by Jennifer Roback Morse about the divorce issue.

If you don't understand how divorce laws hurt fathers and their children, please read this excellent paper by Stephen Baskerville, published in Touchstone magazine, and this excellent paper from Touchstone magazine by Robbie Low, which explains how fathers are vital to passing on religion from parents to children. Every Christian should know as much about marriage as they know about abortion. Every Christian should have as much opposition to divorce as they have for abortion. And every Christian should put as much effort into preparing to be convincing on the marriage issue as they are on the abortion issue. This matters.

Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)

February 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Description:

> Biopic of aircraft designer R.J. Mitchell whose Spitfire became one of the mainstays of the RAF in World War II. Mitchell worked for Supermarine who specialized for many years on developing seaplanes. He enjoyed a good deal of success winning prestigious air races with the help of his test pilot Geoffrey Crisp. Money was always in short supply however and the government was always hesitant to invest. When Supermarine is bought out by Vickers, Mitchell has a bit more leeway. After a visit to Germany in the 1930s, he sees the Nazi threat first-hand and decides to design a fighter with a completely new engine. The result was the famed Spitfire.

Here's the Spitfire:

Supermarine Spitfire

The speech by Prime Minister Churchill

What does the title of the movie refer to? It's from a speech by the Conservative prime minister of Britain during the war – Sir Winston Churchill.

Excerpt:

> The great air battle which has been in progress over this Island for the last few weeks has recently attained a high intensity. It is too soon to attempt to assign limits either to its scale or to its duration. We must certainly expect that greater efforts will be made by the enemy than any he has so far put forth. Hostile air fields are still being developed in France and the Low Countries, and the movement of squadrons and material for attacking us is still proceeding. It is quite plain that Herr Hitler could not admit defeat in his air attack on Great Britain without sustaining most serious injury. If after all his boastings and bloodcurdling threats and lurid accounts trumpeted round the world of the

> damage he has inflicted, of the vast numbers of our Air Force he has shot down, so he says, with so little loss to himself; if after tales of the panic-stricken British crushed in their holes cursing the plutocratic Parliament which has led them to such a plight-if after all this his whole air onslaught were forced after a while tamely to peter out, the Fuhrer's reputation for veracity of statement might be seriously impugned. We may be sure, therefore, that he will continue as long as he has the strength to do so, and as long as any preoccupations he may have in respect of the Russian Air Force allow him to do so.
>
> On the other hand, the conditions and course of the fighting have so far been favorable to us. I told the House two months ago that, whereas in France our fighter aircraft were wont to inflict a loss of two or three to one upon the Germans, and in the fighting at Dunkirk, which was a kind of no-man's-land, a loss of about three or four to one, we expected that in an attack on this Island we should achieve a larger ratio. This has certainly come true. It must also be remembered that all the enemy machines and pilots which are shot down over our Island, or over the seas which surround it, are either destroyed or captured; whereas a considerable proportion of our machines, and also of our pilots, are saved, and soon again in many cases come into action.
>
> […]The gratitude of every home in our Island, in our Empire, and indeed throughout the world, except in the abodes of the guilty, goes out to the British airmen who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of the World War by their prowess and b~ their devotion. **Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few**.

But before you can have "the few" fighter pilots who saved Britain, you have to have the fighter! That's why R.J. Mitchell, the inventor of the fighter, is *the First of the Few*.

It's very important that we in the West understand the importance of investing in defense research, so we can develop new weapons, so that we can deter aggression. This is the doctrine of peace through strength.

The few mentioned in Shakespeare's Henry V

You may also be interested in a famous speech by Henry V.

Excerpt:

> **WESTMORELAND:** O that we now had here
> But one ten thousand of those men in England
> That do no work to-day!
>
> **KING HENRY V:** What's he that wishes so?
> My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin;
> If we are mark'd to die, we are enow
> To do our country loss; and if to live,
> The fewer men, the greater share of honour.

God’s will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires.
But if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.
No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England.
God’s peace! I would not lose so great an honour
As one man more methinks would share from me
For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more!
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purse;
We would not die in that man’s company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.
This day is call’d the feast of Crispian.
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is nam’d,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say ‘To-morrow is Saint Crispian.’
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say ‘These wounds I had on Crispian’s day.’
Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
But he’ll remember, with advantages,
What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words-
Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester-
Be in their flowing cups freshly rememb’red.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne’er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered-
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne’er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition;
And gentlemen in England now-a-bed
Shall think themselves accurs’d they were not here,

> And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
> That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

Henry V is on the short list of approved Wintery Knight movies.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Russians develop fifth-generation PAK FA T-50 stealth multi-role fighter
- China unveils new J-20 stealth fighter, rival to the canceled F-22 Raptor
- US Air Force decides not to close F-22 Raptor production plant
- What is the doctrine of peace through strength?

Fascism: Canadian Supreme Court overturns right to religious liberty

February 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canadian Provinces

UPDATE: Please vote "no" in this poll if you think tthat the Supreme Court is wrong.

Life Site News announces the death of religious liberty in Canada.

Excerpt:

> In what's sure to come down as a devastating blow to parental freedom, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously rejected this morning the pleas of a Christian family to have their child exempted from the Quebec government's mandatory ethics and religious culture course.
>
> "Exposing children to a comprehensive presentation of various religions without forcing the children to join them does not constitute an indoctrination of students that would infringe the freedom of religion of L and J," the justices wrote in the majority decision.
>
> The high court's ruling, released at 9:45 Friday morning, comes in the case of *S.L. et al. v. Commission scolare des Chênes et al.*, which involved a Catholic family who took their school board to court after it refused to grant their child an exemption from the province's controversial ethics and religious culture course (ERC).
>
> The course, which seeks to present the spectrum of world religions and lifestyle choices from a "neutral" stance, was introduced by the province in 2008 and has been widely criticized by the religious and a-religious alike. Moral conservatives and people of faith have criticized its relativistic approach to moral issues,

> teaching even at the earliest grades, for instance, that homosexuality is a normal choice for family life.
>
> Despite provincial legislation allowing for exemptions from school curriculum, the Ministry of Education has turned down over 1,700 requests, and had even moved to impose the course on private schools and homeschoolers.
>
> Critics warned that a ruling against the family would have frightening consequences for parental authority and risked emboldening provincial governments across the country as they move to impose their own versions of "diversity" education.

To me, what this means is that in Canada, the state decides what children will believe, not the parents. The state will tax parents in order to pay for government workers and government programs. And the state will use these government entities to make the children believe in the state's values.

What is ironic to me is that Canadians likely voted to grow government. There are a lot of people in Canada who think that it is a good thing for government to help the poor. Many, many economically illiterate Christians also voted to grow the size of government over the last few decades. They voted to empty their own pockets by raising tax rates. They voted to entrust secular leftist bureaucrats with more and more power. They voted to let the state educate their children with public schools and government-run day care. They voted to let government provide health care instead of letting individuals earn and save to pay for it themselves. They voted for taxes that are so high that women cannot afford to stay at home and homeschool their children – they have to work and hand their children off to strangers.

It is very important for Christians to understand that if they believe that it is government's job to redistribute wealth from rich to poor, then they voted for this. If you believe in "social justice" then you are opposed to religious liberty – and the free practice of Christianity itself. Many, many Christians who don't study economics and don't get their economic views from the Bible think that it is a good thing to vote for bigger and bigger government funded by higher and higher taxes. Christians in Canada seem to be proud of their self-inflicted secularism. They think that taxpayer-funded abortions and taxpayer-funded sex changes are a great idea – because "health care is a right". They think that taxpayer-funded abortion and taxpayer-funded sex changes are authentic Christianity, supported by the Bible.

I have had Christians in Ontario tell me on Facebook that they are pro-life, pro-marriage and pro-family but that they favor allowing a secular government to force all taxpayers to pay for abortions and sex changes. That is what Canadian Christianity amounts to, in many cases – because they don't understand economics, and what economic policies promote and secure rights – including the right to religious liberty. The right to religious liberty is only guaranteed when government is limited and the free enterprise system is strong. We need to stop deciding our views of politics and economics based on feelings and peer pressure and the desire to appear "compassionate". We need to ask what the

Bible says, and study economics in order to find out what guarantees the liberty we need to live out authentic Christian lives.

I think it’s time for Christians in Canada to get serious about applying the Bible to all of life – including economics.

Pro-religious liberty protesters arrested for praying outside White House

February 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News. (H/T Mommy Life via Mary)

Excerpt:

> Six pro-life activists, including one Catholic priest, were arrested this morning in front of the White House while holding a peaceful prayer vigil in protest against the Obama administration's birth control mandate. They were released shortly thereafter, after paying a $100 fine.
>
> Fr. Denis Wilde, the Associate Director of Priests for Life, told LifeSiteNews that by their arrests the protesters hoped to send a "wake-up call" to President Obama that opposition to his mandate is not going away.
>
> The six were arrested on a charge of "disobeying a lawful order." **The priest explained that while it is legal to hold protests in front of the White House, protesters are not allowed to remain stationary, including if they kneel down and pray.**
>
> "Occupy Wall Street protesters have been occupying federal property for months, but when we kneel in prayer, the police are called in and we are arrested," Father Wilde said. "We knew that was the risk when we gathered today, and we will do it again regardless of the risk. What people of faith – of every faith – need to do now is stand with us."

My previous story on Obama's war on religion is here: The Becket Fund assesses Obama's "compromise" on the contraception mandate.

Related posts

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- Pakistan woman sentenced to death for defending her faith against Muslims

For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage

February 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is from the liberal New York Times. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> It used to be called illegitimacy. Now it is the new normal. After steadily rising for five decades, the share of children born to unmarried women has crossed a threshold: more than half of births to American women under 30 occur outside marriage.
>
> Once largely limited to poor women and minorities, motherhood without marriage has settled deeply into middle America. The fastest growth in the last two decades has occurred among white women in their 20s who have some college education but no four-year degree, according to Child Trends, a Washington research group that analyzed government data.
>
> […]**The forces rearranging the family are as diverse as globalization and the pill. Liberal analysts argue that shrinking paychecks have thinned the ranks of marriageable men, while conservatives often say that the sexual revolution reduced the incentive to wed and that safety net programs discourage marriage.**

Actually, conservatives *do* argue that shrinking pay checks have discouraged marriage – shrinking paychecks caused by *higher taxes*, which are supported by single women and their overwhelming propensity to vote Democrat.

More:

> The recent rise in single motherhood has set off few alarms, unlike in past eras. When Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then a top Labor Department official and later a United States senator from New York, reported in 1965 that a quarter of black children were born outside marriage — and warned of a "tangle of pathology" — he set off a bitter debate.
>
> By the mid-1990s, such figures looked quaint: a third of Americans were born outside marriage. Congress, largely blaming welfare, imposed tough restrictions. Now the figure is 41 percent — and 53 percent for children born to women under 30, according to Child Trends, which analyzed 2009 data from the National Center for Health Statistics.
>
> […]Almost all of the rise in nonmarital births has occurred among couples living together. While in some countries such relationships endure at rates that resemble marriages, in the United States they are more than twice as likely to dissolve than marriages. In a summary of research, Pamela Smock and Fiona

> Rose Greenland, both of the University of Michigan, reported that two-thirds of couples living together split up by the time their child turned 10.
>
> **In Lorain as elsewhere, explanations for marital decline start with home economics: men are worth less than they used to be. Among men with some college but no degrees, earnings have fallen 8 percent in the past 30 years, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, while the earnings of their female counterparts have risen by 8 percent.**
>
> **"Women used to rely on men, but we don't need to anymore," said Teresa Fragoso, 25, a single mother in Lorain.**

Indeed. Ever since feminism produced such cultural advancements as coed classrooms, sex education and no-fault divorce, men have been so surrounded by freely available sex. Thanks to feminism, men don't have to lift a finger to prove to women that they are capable of performing their traditional roles before sex is offered to them. When women decided to agree with feminists that men are identical to women, they refused to set expectations on men to act like *men*. When women decide that it's not men's jobs to perform their traditional male roles in a marriage, then they choose other men based on other criteria, e.g. – broad shoulders, a deep voice, athletic ability, nice shoes – and other concerns that have *nothing whatsoever* to do with marital success. Feminism is not good for men – it turns them into boys, who don't have to prove themselves ready for marriage before they get sex. When men have sex handed to them on a silver platter, they stop caring about doing well in school, getting jobs and sacrificing to honor their commitments.

More:

> Others noted that if they married, their official household income would rise, which could cost them government benefits like food stamps and child care. W. Bradford Wilcox, a sociologist at the University of Virginia, said other government policies, like no-fault divorce, signaled that "marriage is not as fundamental to society" as it once was.
>
> **Even as many Americans withdraw from marriage, researchers say, they expect more from it: emotional fulfillment as opposed merely to practical support. "Family life is no longer about playing the social role of father or husband or wife, it's more about individual satisfaction and self-development," said Andrew Cherlin, a sociologist at Johns Hopkins University.**
>
> […]Reviewing the academic literature, Susan L. Brown of Bowling Green State University recently found that children born to married couples, on average, "experience better education, social, cognitive and behavioral outcomes."

Times have changed. Before, men and women looked to each other for support – that's why they married. Now the government gives single mothers support, so that they don't need protectors and providers. Legions of social workers, public schools and day care are

provided to teach children morality and religion – while women go to work to pay taxes for their salaries. Single mothers like this arrangement because government checks and government programs are much less demanding than husbands and fathers. It makes more sense to single women to choose exciting men to have sex with – men who are spontaneous, handsome, fun and dangerous – and then toss them aside if they try to hold her accountable to behave morally, or ask her to do anything that she doesn't make her feel happy.

Finally, you might think that the church is aggressive about telling women how wrong it is for them to have premarital sex, but you'd be wrong. Pastors are terrified of offending women in their churches by talking about moral obligations and success factors for marriage. Women don't want to believe that there are guidelines from morality and from social science research that could override their emotions and intuitions. They want to be happy, and whatever they decide while trying to be happy must be right. Pastors would never dream of telling women in their churches that there was anything from with the view of relationships they get from Bridget Jones' Diary, Pretty Woman, Kate and Leopold, Eat, Pray, Love, etc.

Men: never ever marry a woman who cannot denounce feminism, socialism, premarital sex, abortion, divorce, adultery, and *especially* single motherhood – in the strongest terms. That is a pre-condition for marriage. And don't accept her *opinion* on these questions. Expect her to *convince* you using *evidence* from research – books and research papers. Don't marry someone who knows nothing about marriage. Don't make a woman a parent when she knows nothing about parenting. Your future children are depending on your judgment. Fatherlessness puts children at risk for higher rates of poverty, neglect and abuse, and a host of behavioral problems.

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- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
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- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?

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Should Christians mourn the death of the famous singer Whitney Houston?

February 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably one of the most alarming things for me about Christians is their tendency towards moral equivalence and moral relativism. Take the death of Whitney Houston for instance. I noticed a lot of Christians posting feverishly about it in a way that they never post about real heroes. Apparently, for these Christians, the amount of fame that a person has should determine their importance to us – and not their moral character.

Here's why I don't like Whitney Houston:

> The singer's comments provided a sad coda to Brown and Houston's tumultuous 15 years of marriage, a union that unfolded like a gonzo soap opera across the pages of so many tabloids and a reality TV show, before crumbling under the weight of its numerous dysfunctions in 2007.
>
> Over their time together, Houston and Brown positioned themselves as a kind of '80s R&B edition of Bonnie and Clyde—he, a hard-partying bad-boy pioneer of New Jack Swing, and she, America's onetime sweetheart, the glowing beauty with a stunning multi-octave range—whose glaring personal disparities combined to create a dangerous codependent relationship. "He was my drug," Houston told Oprah Winfrey in a widely publicized 2009 interview. "I didn't do anything without him. I wasn't getting high by myself. It was me and him together, and we were partners, and that's what my high was—him. He and I being together, and whatever we did, we did it together. No matter what, we did it together."

> What they did together, according to her testimony, included a nightmarish descent into hard-core drugs, fistfights and bizarro behavior by Brown, such as him spray painting "evil eyes" on the walls and carpets of their home and cutting the heads off all photographs of Houston.
>
> The couple was married in 1992 and the following year they conceived a daughter, Bobbi Kristina. To hear Houston tell it, what doomed their relationship, though, was her movie breakthrough that year in the romantic thriller *The Bodyguard,* which includes the singer's epochal contribution to its soundtrack "I Will Always Love You." "Something happens to a man when a woman has that much fame," Houston explained on *Oprah.* "I tried to play it down all the time. I used to say, 'I'm Mrs. Brown, don't call me Houston.'"

> In 2000, Hawaiian airport authorities found nearly half an ounce of marijuana in the actress-singer's luggage, but she and Brown boarded a plane and flew off before Houston could be arrested and the charges were later dropped. Although she flat out denied to Diane Sawyer that she and Brown abused drugs—"We

> don't do crack. We don't do that. Crack is wack," Houston memorably said in the interview—by the mid-2000s, Houston had endured a roundelay of rehab stays. She admitted she made habitual use of marijuana and crack and specified that Brown's highs of choice were alcohol and marijuana laced with cocaine.
>
> By that point, the couple's fights had entered a physical realm. In 2003, police responded to a domestic-violence 911 call to their Georgia home and discovered Houston with a bruised cheek and a cut lip. Brown subsequently turned himself in and was charged with misdemeanor battery for striking the superstar and reportedly threatening to "beat her ass." Inexplicably, the couple left Brown's court hearing arm in arm and drove away in an SUV with Houston singing along to the Aretha Franklin song "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman."

> "They were like Mr. and Mrs. Smith," says a friend who's known them for roughly two decades. "It was a real, love-hate relationship." Still, the person never really bought the popular media-storyline about Bobby being the thing that brought down Whitney. "I hate when people blame Bobby for her drug use. He had his drug use and she had hers. They got divorced many years ago, she had all the opportunities in the world to get herself to together and she didn't. I actually think part of the reason they broke, up was that he was trying to get clean."

This is why I oppose talking about Whitney Houston – I have moral concerns. I take morality seriously, because I allow my Christian worldview to determine what I like and don't like in other areas – like my taste in music and art. I object to her moral standards and her choices in courtship and marriage, so I do not celebrate her success nor mourn her death any more than any other non-famous person. Moreover, I do not respect contributions to art that undermine traditional marriage and courting, which her singing clearly did. It is because of singers like her that women today feel justified in allowing emotions to dominate their choice of man and their interactions with men. They think that a roller-coaster of entertaining drama and spontaneity with a handsome man will result in a happy marriage.

These songs and movies teach them that you can marry a tiger (won't your friends be so envious!) and then after the wedding, it will be a kitten in your lap. It's stupid, but that's the view of marriage that people get after decades of indoctrination in non-Christian art. And when they adopt these Whitney Houston methods of living and it doesn't work out, that's when they turn to big government programs and pastors who blame men who refusing to "man up" – it's not their fault their plan failed – because it worked for Whitney Houston. Except it didn't. We should not be celebrating anyone in the popular culture who discourages the idea that there are objective constraints on the roles that women and men play in marriage – and that spouses should be selected for their ability to perform those roles.

Here is a comment I wrote about it on Facebook to some of the men and women who were celebrating Whitney Houston. I posted my link to the story of Medal of Honor winner Michael Murphy, and a Christian woman replied asserting a moral equivalence between

Whitney Houston and Michael Murphy.

I wrote:

> If we are serious about putting forward a vision of life that includes morality, then we should talk about self-sacrificial heroes more than drug addicts. There is a moral law, and because it sends a message to young people about who their role models should be. There is a huge redefinition of moral standards going on right now because young people, especially young women, are having their values redefined by culture. Women, more than men, crave the approval of their peers when it comes to things like choosing men and deciding how to be courted by men, for example. For example, it's possible for a woman to be swayed away from a man who has a record of protecting, providing, and being a moral and spiritual leader, simply because the culture's standard of what a good man is is being determined by music stars and celebrity. Whereas characteristics like chastity, sobriety, employment and investments USED to be regarded as desirable, women's views have changed so that they are allowed to have premarital sex with men who fire their emotions – that's what happens in Whitney Houston's "The Bodyguard" movie, isn't it? So why is she good? Patrick McGoohan refused to kiss on camera and turned down the role of James Bond because of too much sex.
>
> See:
> https://winteryknight.wordpress.com/tag/patrick-mcgoohan/
>
> Quote:
> —-
> As both a moral and opinionated man, McGoohan held strong views and was forceful about seeing that they were carried out. He had insisted at the very first meeting on the script for the first episode that the bedroom scene be cut out. In fact, he stipulated that romantic involvements would have to be eliminated if he were to play the role, and consequently none appeared in either this series or the 'Secret Agent' series that followed.
>
> …It should come as no surprise that when McGoohan was offered the role as the first James Bond, he turned it down – several times – as being incompatible with the type of role he wanted to play. He says it was a decision he has never regretted.
>
> [H]e was offered the roles of James Bond and Simon Templar (The Saint). He turned both down.
>
> He once recalled: "When we started Danger Man the producer wanted me to carry a gun and to have an affair with a different girl each week. I refused. I am not against romance on television, but sex is the antithesis of romance. Television is a gargantuan master that all sorts of people watch at all sorts of time, and it has a moral obligation towards its audience."
> —-

> Do you know more about Whitney Houston and her ilk than you know about Patrick McGoohan? Does it matter to you how popular art is going to influence young people away from traditional boundaries and requirements of relationships and marriage?
>
> As Ravi Zacharias says – be careful what you celebrate. I celebrate the bravery of Medal of Honor winners who give their lives protecting their country. I don't celebrate promiscuous, abusive drug addicts who makes millions of dollars singing about sentimental irrational immoral notions of love divorced from chastity, chivalry, commitment and traditional gender roles. There are many single mothers who derived their views on men and marriage from popular music, and think of the harm that caused. The values of Whitney Houston have been embraced by a younger generation, and now none of them will ever enjoy lasting married love – they don't know how to do it. They think you can act like a fool and somehow, lifelong marriage will obtain independent of our efforts.
>
> That is why one of my courting questions for women is: "Who do you admire most, and what is your plan for making your children become like him or her?" It's not a good thing when women cannot distinguish between the Hollywood celebrities and Medal of Honor winners. This view that ballet dancers are the same as William Lane Craig when it comes to effectiveness for the Kingdom is also an alarming view, which many women share.
>
> Is life about having happy feelings, or is there something else that we should be doing? What does God expect from us?

I just want to emphasize that I saw just as many air-headed Christian men as women posting about Whitney Houston.

One more thing that I didn't say in the comment thread is this. Do Christians have an obligation to think about life? I mean, anyone can see that there is a culture war going on right now, where young people are having their values undermined by new values being pushed in the mainstream media, by Hollywood, in the secular public schools, and so on. I think that Christians should be obligated to stand apart from the culture and be different. Most of the Christians I know are thoroughly compromised by postmodernism, feminism, socialism and a host of other doctrines incompatible with a robust Christian worldview and a Kingdom-centered life plan. They are so steeped in it that they don't even realize that they are identical to non-Christians in every respect, except for singing in groups on Sunday and reading the Bible for comforting feelings.

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Triablogue e-book: The End of Infidelity

February 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Triablogue:

> Last year, John Loftus and some colleagues published a book titled The End Of Christianity (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2011). The back cover and inside endorsements describe the book as “the sharpest set of intellectual criticisms [of Christianity] found under the cover of a single volume”, “tremendously useful”, “superb”, and “exceedingly well-researched”. One endorser claims, “This book should win the game: Christianity, it’s strike three and you are out!” Another tells us, “No collection better demonstrates how taking Christianity seriously reveals its all-too-human origin.” We’re told that “Loftus and his friends annihilate the Christian Goliath”.
>
> Steve Hays and I have written an e-book in response, which you can read here, titled The End Of Infidelity. We’d like to thank Peter Pike for editing it. We wouldn’t have been able to release it so soon, and it wouldn’t be so readable, without Peter’s help.
>
> Those of you who haven’t read Loftus’ book can find an overview of it here. You might want to read each chapter summary on the page I just linked before reading each of our chapter responses.
>
> Steve and I most likely will have more to say about Loftus’ book, especially if we get a response from the authors.

I took a look at it and it was filled with footnotes, so that’s good.

If Ron Paul were President, 16 to 28 states would keep abortion legal

February 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

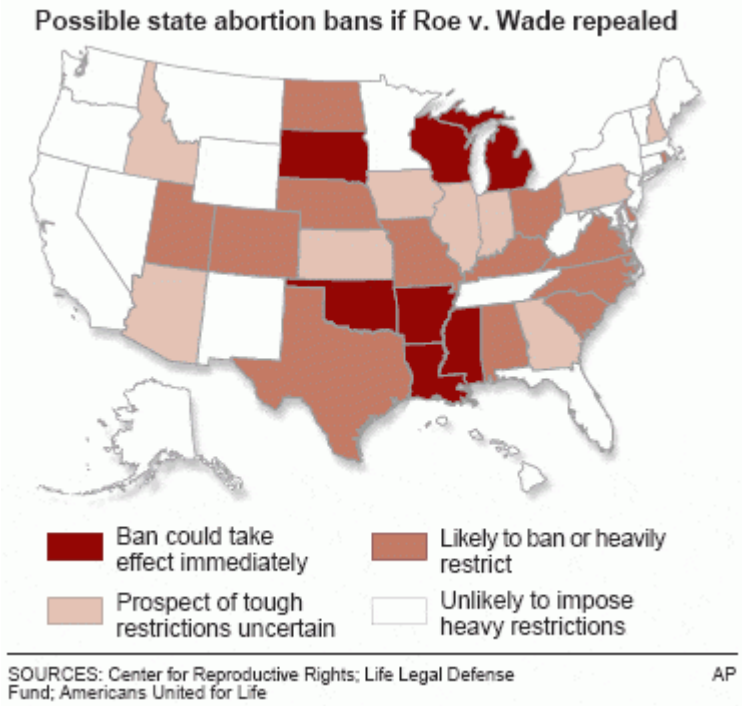

Which states would Ron Paul allow to legalize abortion?
From the Weekly Standard. (H/T Triablogue)

Excerpt:

> "[Ron Paul] has an outstanding chance of winning in Iowa," according to Bob Vander Plaats, who served as Mike Huckabee's 2008 state campaign chairman. "There's a lot about Ron Paul that people like," Vander Plaats says, pointing to Paul's "almost prophetic" vision of our economic problems and his commitment to do away with "politics as usual."
>
> But Paul could face trouble with values voters in Iowa, where 60 percent of GOP caucusgoers are evangelical Christians. Vander Plaats says his socially conservative umbrella organization, the Family Leader, has ruled out endorsing Paul because "sometimes [Paul's] libertarian views trump his moral compass."
>
> **"On abortion, [Paul] believes that's a states' rights issue, we believe that's a morality issue," says Vander Plaats. In a post-*Roe* v. *Wade* world, "We don't believe abortion should be legal in Maine and illegal in Iowa."** (Paul voted for the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act in 2003, but expressed deep reservations about voting for a federal law on abortion.)
>
> "We're very concerned" about Paul's position that the government shouldn't recognize civil marriage, Vander Plaats continues. The group also balks at some of Paul's foreign policy views. "Even though we may agree with him that we're

> not called to be the policeman of the world, we do believe we're called to stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel," says Vander Plaats. "And we do believe [a nuclear-armed] Iran is a definite threat not only to Israel, but to our freedom as well."
>
> […]Vander Plaats says he doesn't think very many Iowa voters are aware that Paul thinks it should be up to states to decide whether or not to protect human life. But now that Paul leading in the Iowa polls, his positions may come under greater scrutiny.

Here's a 2006 USA Today article listing the states that would make abortion legal under Ron Paul's plan.

Excerpt:

> •**Twenty-two state legislatures are likely to impose significant new restrictions on abortion.** They include nearly every state in the South and a swath of big states across the industrial Rust Belt, from Pennsylvania to Ohio and Michigan. These states have enacted most of the abortion restrictions now allowed.
>
> •**Sixteen state legislatures are likely to continue current access to abortion.** They include every state on the West Coast and almost every state in the Northeast. A half-dozen already have passed laws that specifically protect abortion rights. Most of the states in this group have enacted fewer than half of the abortion restrictions now available to states.
>
> •**Twelve states fall into a middle ground between those two categories.** About half are in the Midwest, the rest scattered from Arizona to Rhode Island.
>
> […]The 22 states likely to enact new restrictions include 50% of the U.S. population and accounted for 37% of the abortions performed in 2000, the latest year for which complete data were available.
>
> The 16 states likely to protect access to abortion include 35% of the U.S. population and accounted for 48% of the abortions performed.

So Ron Paul, *far from being pro-life*, would allow abortion on demand in 16 to 28 states, many of them the most populous states in the union – like California and New York. I understand that he calls allowing abortion in 16 to 28 states "pro-life", but voters have to think and decide – is that really pro-life? Is it really pro-life when the number of abortions per year will drop from 1.1 million to 550,000? Is that pro-life? (Assuming that the people in the pro-life states don't just cross the border to get an abortion elsewhere – which is false, of course). Paul's position is that he is personally pro-life, but he thinks that other people should be allowed to decide if an unborn baby can be killed or not, at the state level. Isn't that *pro-choice* though?

Similarly, Paul would allow states to redefine marriage to be anything they want it to be,

since he thinks that the definition of marriage is an issue that states should decide. That’s his view. Is that pro-marriage? Does that position take seriously the need for children to be raised by a mother and a father?

Does improved access to contraception reduce the number of abortions?

February 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the liberal New York Times answers that question. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> To begin with, a lack of contraceptive access simply doesn't seem to be a significant factor in unplanned pregnancy in the United States. When the Alan Guttmacher Institute surveyed more than 10,000 women who had procured abortions in 2000 and 2001, it found that only 12 percent cited problems obtaining birth control as a reason for their pregnancies. A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study of teenage mothers found similar results: Only 13 percent of the teens reported having had trouble getting contraception.
>
> At the same time, if liberal social policies really led inexorably to fewer unplanned pregnancies and thus fewer abortions, you would expect "blue" regions of the country to have lower teen pregnancy rates and fewer abortions per capita than demographically similar "red" regions.
>
> But that isn't what the data show. Instead, abortion rates are frequently higher in more liberal states, where access is often largely unrestricted, than in more conservative states, which are more likely to have parental consent laws, waiting periods, and so on. "Safe, legal and rare" is a nice slogan, but liberal policies don't always seem to deliver the "rare" part.
>
> What's more, another Guttmacher Institute study suggests that liberal states don't necessarily do better than conservative ones at preventing teenagers from getting pregnant in the first place. Instead, the lower teenage birth rates in many blue states are mostly just a consequence of (again) their higher abortion rates. Liberal California, for instance, has a higher teen pregnancy rate than socially conservative Alabama; the Californian teenage birth rate is only lower because the Californian abortion rate is more than twice as high.
>
> These are realities liberals should keep in mind when tempted to rail against conservatives for rejecting the intuitive-seeming promise of "more condoms, fewer abortions." What's intuitive isn't always true, and if social conservatives haven't figured out how to make all good things go together in post-sexual-revolution America, neither have social liberals.
>
> At the very least, American conservatives are hardly crazy to reject a model for sex, marriage and family that seems to depend heavily on higher-than-average abortion rates. They've seen that future in places like liberal, cosmopolitan New York, where two in five pregnancies end in abortion. And it isn't a pretty sight.

This is similar to what we know from other countries like Spain, where increased sex

education has led to *higher* rates of abortion.

What happens in other countries?

Here's the article from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Abortion advocates often promote contraception by claiming that as contraception use increases, the number of "unwanted" pregnancies and therefore abortions will decrease. But a new study out of Spain has found the exact opposite, suggesting that contraception actually increases abortion rates.
>
> The authors, who published their findings in the January 2011 issue of the journal *Contraception*, conducted surveys of about 2,000 Spanish women aged 15 to 49 every two years from 1997 to 2007. They found that over this period the number of women using contraceptives increased from 49.1% to 79.9%.
>
> Yet they noted that in the same time frame the country's abortion rate more than doubled from 5.52 per 1,000 women to 11.49.

This UK Daily Mail story explains how more contraception means more abortion in the UK.

Excerpt:

> Most pregnancies among girls under 18 ended in abortion last year.
>
> Out of around 40,000 pregnancies more than 20,000 were terminated – the first time more had chosen this option than become mothers.
>
> The figure is higher than 2007, when it just hit 50 per cent, and consistent with a steady upwards trend since the Government started its controversial Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in 1999.
>
> Figures out on May 21 will also show that for the first time the number of abortions performed on women living in England and Wales topped 200,000.
>
> **The teenage pregnancy strategy, which has cost taxpayers more than £300million, was meant to halve the number of conceptions among girls under 18 in England between 1998 and 2010.**
>
> **Ministers have tried to slash teenage pregnancies by freely handing out contraceptives and expanding sex education.**
>
> **But the fall in pregnancy rates has not met Government targets, and in 2007 the rate actually rose.**
>
> **Teenage pregnancy rates are now higher than they were in 1995. Pregnancies among girls under 16 – below the age of consent – are also at the highest level since 1998.**

So handing out contraceptives left and right at taxpayer expense *raised* the rate of abortion.

Birth control pills and breast cancer

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9) and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed childbearing was a risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

These are all things to think about when we start talking about using contraceptives as a way to reduce abortions.

New study finds that female teachers give male students lower marks

February 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal UK Independent.

Excerpt:

> A key reason why boys lag behind in the classroom is revealed for the first time today – female teachers.

> Ground-breaking research shows that boys lower their sights if they think their work is going to be marked by a woman because they believe their results will be worse.
>
> It also shows their suspicions are correct – **female teachers did, on average, award lower marks to boys than unidentified external examiners. Male teachers, by contrast, awarded them higher marks than external examiners.**
>
> **The findings, published by the Centre for Economic Performance today, could have immense repercussions for boys because of the dearth of male teachers in the profession. Only 15 per cent of primary school staff are men.**
>
> The findings were yesterday described as "fascinating" by one of the country's leading academic researchers, Professor Alan Smithers, of the Centre for Education and Employment at the University of Buckingham.
>
> He said the research, carried out among 1,200 children in 29 schools across the country, had shown a possible reason for the glaring gap in performance between girls and boys right through schooling.

I wonder if feminism and misandry (antagonism towards men) has anything to do with the results of this study?

Where are the male teachers?

Another contributing factor causing men to underperform in school is that there are almost no male teachers and also that boys don't learn well in co-ed classrooms – they get distracted by girls. The curriculum is not suitable for boys, who learn better with different materials that focus more on things that boys like, like wars, guns and adventures. Boys learn better with male teachers and all-male classrooms because they need male role models in order to succeed.

Consider this article on male/female teachers.

Excerpt:

> The organization MenTeach, a Minnesota organization dedicated to increasing

> the number of males working with young children, posted a survey on its Web site showing that males constitute less than 20 percent of America's 2.9 million elementary and middle school teachers. The 2008 survey, based on source data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, showed even more drastic differences among different grade levels:
>
> - 44 percent of America's 1.2 million secondary school teachers.
> - 18.8 percent of America's 2.9 million elementary and middle school teachers.
> - 2.4 percent of America's 685,000 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers.

No wonder women are earning 60% of college undergraduate degrees and men are struggling to find jobs. Most women want men to be strong husbands and fathers, so they'll need to make sure that men have jobs. In order for men to have jobs, they'll want to oppose feminists who discriminate against men in the education system.

The War Against Boys

An excellent book on this topic is Christina Hoff Sommers' "The War Against Boys". You can read a summary of her argument here.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> By the late 1990s the myth of the downtrodden girl was showing some signs of unraveling, and concern over boys was growing. In 1997 the Public Education Network (PEN) announced at its annual conference the results of a new teacher-student survey titled *The American Teacher 1997: Examining Gender Issues in Public Schools.* The survey was funded by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and conducted by Louis Harris and Associates.
>
> During a three-month period in 1997 various questions about gender equity were asked of 1,306 students and 1,035 teachers in grades seven through twelve. The MetLife study had no doctrinal ax to grind. What it found contradicted most of the findings of the AAUW, the Sadkers, and the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women: **"Contrary to the commonly held view that boys are at an advantage over girls in school, girls appear to have an advantage over boys in terms of their future plans, teachers' expectations, everyday experiences at school and interactions in the classroom."**
>
> **Some other conclusions from the MetLife study: Girls are more likely than boys to see themselves as college-bound and more likely to want a good education. Furthermore, more boys (31 percent) than girls (19 percent) feel that teachers do not listen to what they have to say.**
>
> At the PEN conference, Nancy Leffert, a child psychologist then at the Search Institute, in Minneapolis, reported the results of a survey that she and colleagues had recently completed of more than 99,000 children in grades six through

> twelve. **The children were asked about what the researchers call "developmental assets." The Search Institute has identified forty critical assets—"building blocks for healthy development." Half of these are external, such as a supportive family and adult role models, and half are internal, such as motivation to achieve, a sense of purpose in life, and interpersonal confidence. Leffert explained, somewhat apologetically, that girls were ahead of boys with respect to thirty-seven out of forty assets.** By almost every significant measure of well-being girls had the better of boys: they felt closer to their families; they had higher aspirations, stronger connections to school, and even superior assertiveness skills. Leffert concluded her talk by saying that in the past she had referred to girls as fragile or vulnerable, but that the survey "tells me that girls have very powerful assets."
>
> The Horatio Alger Association, a fifty-year-old organization devoted to promoting and affirming individual initiative and "the American dream," releases annual back-to-school surveys. Its survey for 1998 contrasted two groups of students: the "highly successful" (approximately 18 percent of American students) and the "disillusioned" (approximately 15 percent). The successful students work hard, choose challenging classes, make schoolwork a top priority, get good grades, participate in extracurricular activities, and feel that teachers and administrators care about them and listen to them. **According to the association, the successful group in the 1998 survey is 63 percent female and 37 percent male. The disillusioned students are pessimistic about their future, get low grades, and have little contact with teachers. The disillusioned group could accurately be characterized as demoralized. According to the Alger Association, "Nearly seven out of ten are male."**

That was all written in 2000 – the problem is much worse now.

Sommers' book is must reading for any parent of a boy. It would also be a good book for pastors to read, so that they have an accurate understanding of the problems facing men, and can mentor them so that they can succeed.

Newt Gingrich: is he liberal or conservative?

February 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Newt Gingrich on health care

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> White House hopeful Newt Gingrich called the House Republican plan for Medicare "right-wing social engineering," injecting a discordant GOP voice into the party's efforts to reshape both entitlements and the broader budget debate.
>
> In the same interview on Sunday, Mr. Gingrich backed a requirement that all Americans buy health insurance, complicating a Republican line of attack on President Barack Obama's health law.
>
> The former House speaker's decision to stick with his previous support for an individual mandate comes days after former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney defended the health revamp he championed as governor, which includes a mandate.
>
> The moves suggest the Republican primary contest, which will include both men, could feature a robust debate on health care, with GOP candidates challenging the Democratic law while defending their own variations.

Newt Gingrich opposes Paul Ryan's reforms

Consider this article from National Review.

Excerpt:

> Newt Gingrich's appearance on "Meet the Press" today could leave some wondering which party's nomination he is running for. The former speaker had some harsh words for Paul Ryan's (and by extension, nearly every House Republican's) plan to reform Medicare, calling it "radical."
>
> "I don't think right-wing social engineering is any more desirable than left-wing social engineering," he said when asked about Ryan's plan to transition to a "premium support" model for Medicare. "I don't think imposing radical change from the right or the left is a very good way for a free society to operate."
>
> As far as an alternative, Gingrich trotted out the same appeal employed by Obama/Reid/Pelosi — for a "national conversation" on how to "improve" Medicare, and promised to eliminate 'waste, fraud and abuse,' etc.

Newt Gingrich on Hillary Clinton

More from the leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> For Ms. Clinton, standing side by side with her husband's onetime nemesis gives

> her the chance to burnish her credentials among the moderates she has been courting during her time in the Senate.
>
> But in comments this week, she portrayed the rapprochement as one born of shared policy interests, not calculated politics.
>
> "I know it's a bit of an odd-fellow, or odd-woman, mix," she said. "But the speaker and I have been talking about health care and national security now for several years, and I find that he and I have a lot in common in the way we see the problem."
>
> For his part, Mr. Gingrich, who helped lead the impeachment fight against President Bill Clinton, called Mrs. Clinton "very practical" and "very smart and very hard working," adding, "I have been very struck working with her."

Newt Gingrich on global warming

Newt Gingrich on foreign policy

Newt Gingrich endorsed a pro-abortion, pro-same-marriage candidate

Remember when Newt Gingrich endorsed the RINO Dede Scozzafava in New York?

Excerpt:

> In a major coup for her campaign, Republican Dede Scozzafava today will pick up the endorsement of Newt Gingrich, one of the nation's leading conservative figures and the architect of the "Republican Revolution" in the mid-1990s.
>
> "The special election for the 23rd Congressional District is an important test leading up to the mid-term 2010 elections," Gingrich said in a statement to supporters. "Our best chance to put responsible and principled leaders in Washington starts here, with Dede Scozzafava."
>
> The endorsement is important for Scozzafava, a social moderate, as she attempts to hold onto a conservative base eroded by Doug Hoffman, the Conservative Party candidate in the thee-way 23rd District race.
>
> […]Hoffman has mounted a late surge in the special election with endorsements by prominent conservatives that include former Republican Sen. Fred Thompson; Campaign for Working Families founder Gary Bauer; and the conservative Club for Growth in Washington, D.C.
>
> Scozzafava's candidacy is also reported to have triggered a deep divide among House Republicans, with some of the most conservative members refusing to support her campaign.
>
> But Gingrich, who served as Speaker of the House from 1995 to 1999, wants to unite the party. He sees Scozzafava and the Upstate special election – the only House race in the nation this fall — as the best hope for Republicans to start a comeback and regain control of Congress.
>
> Gingrich is apparently willing to overlook Scozzafava's support for same-sex

> marriage and abortion rights.

The conservative Club for Growth lists some of his fiscal blunders.

Excerpt:

> The second large error in Gingrich's entitlement record was equally troubling: the former Speaker played a high profile advocacy role on behalf of President George W. Bush's Medicare prescription drug benefit bill in 2003. Gingrich penned several op-eds supporting the general thrust and specific provisions of the bill, urging House Republicans to pass what was billed at the time to be a $400 billion expansion of the federal government.
>
> […]In the 2009 special election for Congress in New York's 23rd district, Gingrich was outspoken in his support of liberal Republican nominee Dede Scozzafava, up to the moment she finally quit the race after center-right voters rallied behind Conservative Party nominee Doug Hoffman. **Long after most prominent conservatives had endorsed Hoffman, Gingrich held firm in his advocacy for a liberal candidate who supported Obama's stimulus plan and the pro-union "card check" proposal, among other bad positions.**
>
> In 2010, Gingrich openly campaigned for embattled U.S. Senator Robert Bennett in Utah, whom Gingrich's wrongly called "a true-blue conservative." In 2008, Gingrich aggressively supported and campaigned for liberal Congressman Wayne Gilchrist (R-MD) when he faced a conservative challenge from now-Congressman Andy Harris. In 2006, same thing, when Gingrich backed liberal Congressman Joe Schwarz (R-MI) when he was challenged by conservative now-Congressman Tim Walberg.
>
> Unfortunately, the problems in Speaker Gingrich's record are frequent enough and serious enough to give pause. On two of the most important recent issues that confronted limited government conservatives (creating the new budget busting Medicare drug entitlement, and the Wall Street bailout), Gingrich was on the wrong side. His advocacy of an individual health care mandate is problematic. His penchant for tinkering with rewards for favored industries and outcomes shows a troubling willingness to use federal power to coerce taxpayers into his preferred direction. And his occasional hostility toward conservatives who do not share his desire to support liberal Republicans or to compromise on matters of principle is worrisome.
>
> The totality leads one to be rather unsure what kind of president Newt Gingrich would be. Past is often prologue, and in Gingrich's case there is an enormous volume of past on which to base a judgment. One could reasonably expect a President Gingrich to lead America in a pro-growth and limited government direction generally, possibly with flashes of real brilliance and accomplishment, but also likely with some serious disappointments and unevenness.

Maybe he is actually running to win the Democrat nomination this time.

Another Life Training Institute podcast is here

February 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the link.

Details:

> Jay, Scott, and Rich are back to take on the most recent news in the bioethics community. This week we address the Obama administration's mandate for religious organizations to include contraceptive and abortifacient coverage in their health insurance. Is this just a "Catholic Issue", or is there significant ramifications for those of all faiths.

The MP3 file is here.

I really liked this one. It was just full of substance and boldness.

Rick Santorum, Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich's views on global warming

February 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rick Santorum does not accept global warming socialism

From WPXI News.

Excerpt:

> About 500 people showed up Monday at a local diner in Steubenville, Ohio, to support former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum as he gave a policy speech.
>
> Santorum said President Barack Obama is pushing a radical environmental agenda that unwisely limits energy production and turns its back on science.
>
> Santorum told voters in Steubenville Monday that science is on the side of those who want to aggressively produce more oil and natural gas in America. He said the notion of global warming is not climate science, but "political science."
>
> Santorum said Obama and his allies want to frighten people about new oil-exploration technologies so they can get their dollars and turn them over to politicians to win elections "so they can control your lives."

Here's Santorum in his own words: "There is no such thing as global warming"
And more Santorum: Global warming is "junk science"

Santorum calls global warming a "hoax" and opposes cap and trade carbon taxes:

Do you think that Rick Santorum would build the Keystone XL pipeline and create the 20,000 jobs? YES HE WOULD.

Mitt Romney accepts global warming socialism

What about Mitt Romney's view on global warming?

Excerpt:

> On the environment, Romney seemed interested in carving out an agenda largely in line with the state's most fervent activists on the left.
>
> After he took office in 2003, some state employees and activists were nervous about how the new governor would approach the climate-change issue. Massachusetts had already reached an agreement with other Northeastern states and some Canadian provinces on a plan to limit greenhouse gas emissions.
>
> Romney surprised them by taking a hands-on approach, personally helping craft a "Massachusetts Climate Protection Plan" that he unveiled in 2004.
>
> He reorganized the state government to create the Office of Commonwealth Development — with the former president of the liberal Conservation Law Foundation, Douglas Foy, as its head — to better coordinate climate work and sustainable-growth activities among different agencies.

> As he worked on the plan, according to people familiar with the process, he even overruled some objections by his chief of staff, who criticized the plan as potentially too left-leaning.
>
> Romney backed incentives for buying efficient vehicles, tougher vehicle emissions rules and mandatory cuts in emissions linked to global warming.
>
> The plan not only called for reducing the state's overall greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2010 and cutting them another 10 percent by 2020, but it said that "to eliminate any dangerous threat to the climate . . . current science suggests this will require reductions as much as 75-85 percent below current levels."
>
> […]Beyond the state climate plan, Romney repeatedly pushed to promote clean energy and cut the use of fossil fuels.
>
> In March 2003 he pledged to buy up to $100 million worth of electricity from renewable sources. That month, he declared, "the global warming debate is now pretty much over."

Here's Mitt Romney in his own words:

Do you think that Mitt Romney would create the Keystone XL pipeline and create the 20,000 jobs? I say NO HE WOULD NOT.

Newt Gingrich accepts global warming socialism

What about Newt Gingrich's view on global warming?

Excerpt:

> Republican presidential contender Newt Gingrich, as a U.S. House representative from Georgia in 1989, was among the co-sponsors of a sweeping global warming bill that, among other things, called for an international agreement on population growth.
>
> […]The… Global Warming Prevention Act of 1989 (H.R. 1078) had144 co-sponsors, the majority of which were liberal Democrats such as Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), then-Rep. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) and Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.). There were only 25 Republican co-sponsors, which included Rep. Gingrich.
>
> The legislation… set a national goal of reducing carbon dioxide levels by at least 20 percent by the year 2000 "through a mix of federal and state energy policies," as well as "the establishment of an International Global Agreement on the Atmosphere by 1992."
>
> In addition, the legislation's summary includes the section "Title XI: World Population Growth." That section states: "World Population Growth — Declares it is the policy of the United States that family planning services should be made available to all persons requesting them. Authorizes appropriations for FY 1991 through 1995 for international population and family planning assistance.

> Prohibits the use of such funds for: (1) involuntary sterilization or abortion; or (2) the coercion of any person to accept family planning services.
>
> […]In 2008, Gingrich appeared alongside Rep. Pelosi (D-Calif.) in a television ad calling for action to address the apparent global warming problem.

Here's Newt Gingrich in his own words:

Do you think that Newt Gingrich would create the Keystone XL pipeline and create the 20,000 jobs? I say NO HE WOULD NOT.

Which one of these three candidates is the *real* conservative?

Rick Santorum

- Fact check: Mitt Romney's claim that Rick Santorum was a big spender
- Rick Santorum and Barbara Boxer debate partial birth abortion in 1999
- Rick Santorum: Catholic bishops should not have supported Obamacare
- Rick Santorum gets endorsements from James Dobson and John Stemberger
- Wall Street Journal: Rick Santorum is a supply-sider for the working man
- Rick Santorum would not stand idle while Iran develops nuclear weapons
- 150 evangelical leaders agree to endorse Rick Santorum after two-day conference
- Why Christians and social conservatives should vote for Rick Santorum
- Rick Santorum's pro-family economic plan TRIPLES the child tax deduction
- Is Rick Santorum conservative or liberal? What are Rick Santorum's political views?
- Rick Santorum helps liberal college students to understand the logic of marriage
- George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class
- Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech
- Rick Santorum for President of the United States
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- Rick Santorum wins Fox News Republican primary debate (with video)
- Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

Mitt Romney

- Mitt Romney's tax returns would make him lose the election to Obama
- Does Mitt Romney's Romneycare health care plan fund abortion with taxpayer dollars?
- John Hawkins writes the most scathing anti-Romney column EVER
- Santorum and Gingrich expose Romney's liberal record in Sunday's NBC debate
- Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million while he was governor of Massachusetts
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- RINO Mitt Romney now open to European-style VAT tax
- Is Mitt Romney a flip-flopper? What are his flip-flops?
- RINO Mitt Romney deploys another RINO John Sununu to attack Newt Gingrich
- Mitt Romney supports the anti-Christian and anti-business ENDA law
- Mitt Romney gaffe: Romney fails miserably in interview with Bret Baier

- Jon Huntsman’s anti-Romney ads are awesome
- Mitt Romney’s political views on gay marriage, abortion and global warming
- Mitt Romney flip-flop videos: flat tax, abortion, health care, public sector unions, global warming
- Mitt Romney on global warming, climate change, environmental regulations
- Mitt Romney on abortion and stem cell research in his own words
- White House used Mitt Romney’s Romneycare as a blueprint for Obamacare
- Mitt Romney on the issues: Mitt Romney political views and positions in 2012

Adult stem cells therapy can fix a broken heart?

February 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this article from the Irish Times.

Excerpt:

> A new US study in which patients had their hearts repaired with stem cells has brought regenerative treatments for heart attacks a step closer.
>
> The therapy, reported today in the *Lancet* medical journal, halved the extent of normally permanent scarring on the heart, and led to the growth of new heart muscle.
>
> However, the treatment produced no significant change in "ejection fraction" – a measure of the heart's pumping capacity.
>
> The Caduceus trial recruited a total of 25 patients with an average age of 53 who had all suffered a heart attack in the previous month.
>
> Some 17 patients received coronary artery infusions of 12 to 25 million stem cells derived from healthy tissue taken from their own hearts. The remaining eight underwent standard post-heart attack care.
>
> A year later, the proportion of the heart left scarred in the stem cell-treated patients had been reduced from 24 per cent to 12 per cent. No change was seen in patients who did not receive the treatment.
>
> Professor Eduardo Marban, director of the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute in Los Angeles, who led the US team, said: "The effects are substantial, and surprisingly larger in humans than they were in animal tests.
>
> "This discovery challenges the conventional wisdom that, once established, scar is permanent and that, once lost, healthy heart muscle cannot be restored."
>
> The Phase I study, which was chiefly conducted to evaluate safety, was published today in an online edition of the *Lancet.* It follows a similar trial by US scientists at Harvard Medical School and the University of Louisville whose findings were reported last year, also in the *Lancet.*
>
> That study, which used a different kind of heart stem cell, produced a 12 per cent average increase in ejection fraction.

Yet another breakthrough for ethical adult stem cells.

Related posts

- New study: adult stem cells used in breast cancer treatment
- Doctors grow new trachea from patient's own adult stem cells
- Adult stem cells used to grow a new heart
- CBS News discovers that adult stem cells produce more treatments

- Adult stem cells used to restore sight to patients blinded by chemical burns
- British boy becomes first in the world to have stem cell transplant
- ABC News reports on how adult stem cells produce innovative cures today
- Round up of articles on adult stem-cell research from FRC
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Comparison of ASCR vs ESCR: which one produces real cures?
- Michele Bachmann opposes Obama’s plan to fund ESCR
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman debate the resurrection of Jesus

February 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Unbelievable radio show.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is well known as a US New Testament Scholar who lost his Christian faith and now questions many core precepts of Christianity, including the Resurrection of Jesus. When Mike Licona had doubts he devoted himself to investigating the evidence and became convinced that Jesus resurrection is the only rational explanation for the facts.
>
> They debate key historical facts about the resurrection – are the letters of Paul that report the resurrection and the Gospel accounts trustworthy or theologised and changed with time? What about apparent contradictions between the Gospels? Does the consensus of scholars count as evidence, or is there a Christian bias? Can a miracle count as an explanation for historical data?

The MP3 file is here.

Snarky summary of the radio debate: (items with * are my made-up paraphrases/clarifications)

Ehrman:
– Bart's new book is about forgeries in the ancient world
– some books were falsely attributed to prominent Christian figures
– there are mistakes in the Bible
– there are mistakes in the resurrection narratives
– the defeat of inerrancy led to his conversion to liberal Christianity
– the problem of evil and suffering caused him to become a non-Christian

Licona:
– there are minimal facts that are agreed to by a broad spectrum of scholars
– the minimal facts are accepted because they pass standard historical criteria
– Fact 1: Jesus died by crucifixion
– Fact 2: Individuals and groups had visions of Jesus after his death
– Fact 3: Paul, a skeptic and an enemy, had an appearance of Jesus that converted him
– these facts are agreed to atheist scholars, liberal scholars, etc.
– virtually 100% of scholars agree with these three facts
– there is no naturalistic explanation of these three facts
– therefore, the best explanation of these three facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Ehrman:
– all historians would accept these three facts, except for maybe the group appearances

– the death of Jesus is irrelevant to the resurrection
– the second and third point can be collapsed together
– so really there is only one fact

Moderator:
– the crucifixion is relevant because Muslims don't admit that fact
– the crucifixion important because it establishes a resurrection, not a resuscitation

Ehrman:
– well, if the point is that he died, then yes, this does require a resurrection

Licona:
– the crucifixion refutes Muslims who deny that Jesus died
– the crucifixion refutes the apparent death theory (swoon theory)
– the death is required for a bodily resurrection
– it's important to know what facts most scholars, regardless of worldview, agree on
– it's important to emphasize that Licona is working from historical bedrock facts
– the resurrection is the best explanation for the historical bedrock facts

Ehrman:
– you are trying to list 3 things, but really it is just one thing – the appearances
– and not ALL scholars agree that the group visions occurred

Licona:
– name one prominent scholar who denies the group appearances

Ehrman:
– the radically leftist atheist nutcase John Dominic Crossan denies the group appearances
* Crossan is so far on the left that I look like a nutcase for even citing him
* Crossan believes in the Secret Gospel of Mark, which is a hoax – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan believes that the synoptics are LATER than gnostic forged gospels – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan presupposes atheism, so he cannot admit to miracle stories as a pre-supposition – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan pre-supposes religious pluralism, so he cannot allow any exclusive claims Christians make – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan is a good historian, it's just that he is so far to the left that no one – NO ONE – agrees with his all of crazy theories
* I think it is a good idea to cite historians who pre-suppose atheism and political correctness before they sit down to do history

Licona:
– let me explain why most scholars accept the individual and group post-mortem appearances
– the best source for the appearances is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 15:3-8
– Paul himself had an appearance of Jesus after Jesus' death
– Paul received this material from a source very soon after the appearances – within 1-3 years

– we know that Paul met with Jesus disciples multiple times prior to writing
– Paul probably received it from Peter and James, who were themselves eyewitnesses

Moderator:
– this early dating presumably rules out legend

Licona:
– well legends CAN start quickly
– it does show that Paul was an eyewitness
– it does show that Paul was in contact with reliable eyewitnesses

Ehrman:
– 1 Corinthians is written around 55 AD, twenty-five years after Jesus died
– it is not implausible that Paul got the creed from the disciples, who were eyewitnesses
– but you don't need a long time for legends to emerge, so that is a possibility

Licona:
– only about 3% of people could read and write back them
– instead, people had enormous capacity for memorization
– the Pharisees were particularly good at memorization
– Jews were very serious about passing along traditions accurately
– Paul, a prominent Pharisee, would have been capable of passing on early creeds accurately
– Paul, in 1 Cor 7, shows that he is willing to separate his opinions from authentic tradition
– Paul had an opportunity in 1 Cor 7 to put words into Jesus' mouth, but he wouldn't do it

Ehrman:
– cultural anthropologists show that things do get changed in some oral cultures
– in these oral cultures, it is assumed that the story teller will change the story
– only in written cultures are they careful to avoid changing the story
– in the New Testament, you can compare the same story in two different gospels, there are differences

Licona:
– Ehrman is right that the gospel writers pick and choose things from the oral tradition that they want to include in their gospels
– different oral tradition transmission schemes have more or less embellishment
– african tribes embellish more, rabbinic teaching embellishes less
* Jesus' followers would have viewed him as a rabbi, and been careful about adding to his teachings
– Paul, an eyewitness, probably received the creed in 1 Cor 15 from other eyewitnesses
– Paul speaks about going twice to Jerusalem in Galatians
– he is meeting with Peter and James to check his facts

Ehrman:
– when you look at Mark and John, there are lots of differences in the narrative

Licona:
– I agree that the gospels have differences, but the oral tradition is likely fixed

Ehrman:
– but Mark and John have different sayings
– why doesn't Mark have the same explicit high Christology that John has?

Licona:
– first, John is trying to weave the oral tradition into a compelling story
– and second, when you look in Mark, the high Christology is there in the Son of Man sayings
– the apocalyptic Son of Man is in Mark, and everywhere in the New Testament

Ehrman:
– the "apocalyptic Son of Man" isn't in John

Licona:
– what about in John 9 with the man who was born blind

Ehrman:
– where is the apocalyptic part?

Licona:
– the healed man worships Jesus because he is the Son of Man
– that links to the apocalypic passages in the Old Testament

Moderator:
– what about the differences between the gospels?

Ehrman:
* well, now is the time for me to set up an inerrantist straw man and then knock it down!
* who was at the empty tomb: one angel or two angels? we don't know, so the whole Bible is false!
* I used to be an inerrantist, so one minor difference is enough for me to dump the whole Bible
* I'll kill you, you stupid straw man! I hate you, Moody Bible Institute! You lied to me!

Licona:
– many of these problems can be solved by realizing that the gospel writers compress time
– the stories don't have to list ALL the characters in every scene
– you don't have to force the Bible to meet some sort of wooden chronology
– the main thing is that the events happened, not that the descriptions match word for word across sources

Ehrman:
– you can't infer a miracle from history, David Hume says so
* extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, David Hume says so
* no I don't know what begging the question is, I'm not a philosopher
* no I don't remember when Bill Craig kicked my ass on this Hume objection in our debate
– the New Testament gospels contradict each other at every point, they are not reliable at all!
* they cannot even agree what Jesus' name is! There are 1 trillion variants of Jesus'

name!
* “one angel vs two angels” proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point
* my expansive list of FOUR theologically insignificant variants proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point

Licona:
– um, the gospels agree on the central narrative and disagree on the peripherals
– and they agree on the minimal facts I presented, even if they disagree about the number of angels

Ehrman:
* they have to agree on everything and be inerrant! The Moody Straw Man Bible Institute says so!
* I really really really need to have the number of angels be the same, or Jesus didn’t die on the cross

Licona:
– but you don’t deny any of the three minimal facts I presented (crucifixion, appearances, Paul)

Ehrman:
– well, I don’t know if the group appearances occurred – maybe they did
– i think Jesus died on the cross, and I think that people said they saw him alive afterward

Licona:
– if you deny the minimal facts, then you are outside the majority of scholars

Ehrman:
– the majority of scholars who agree to the minimal facts you presented are Christians
* Gerd Ludemann is an atheist Christian
* James Crossley is an atheist Christian
* Hector Avalos is an atheist Christian
* the majority of the atheist scholars are all Christians!
– VIRTUALLY EVERYBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IS A CHRISTIAN!!! (Yes, he said that)

Licona:
– you really think so?

Ehrman
– you name one non-Christian in the SBL

Licona:
– (incredulous) um, John Dominic Crossan is an atheist

Ehrman:
– but he CLAIMS TO BE A CHRISTIAN so that means HE IS A CHRISTIAN
* all you have to do to be a Christian is claim to be one
* you can even deny the existence of God and the divinity of Christ and still be one, you bigot!

Licona:
– would Jesus or the apostles recognize a Christian as being someone who doubts God's existence

Ehrman:
– my view is that Jesus and the apostles would not recognize evangelical Christians as Christians
* a non-theist can be a Christian just by claiming to be one, but evangelical Christians are not Christians even if they claim to be Christians
– Christians can't record accurate history about the resurrection because they are biased

Licona:
– on your view, if a person is a Christian then he can't write about the evidence for the resurrection
– so then similarly, you would not allow Jews to write about the historicity of the Holocaust
– because you think that if people have an interest in what they are recording then they can't be objective
– but you have to consider the evidence we have, taking the biases of the sources into account

Ehrman:
– but the only people who believe in the resurrection are Christians!

Licona:
– well, people can consider the evidence for the resurrection as non-Christians
– and then if they accept it they can become Christians

Moderator:
– what about your bias? you don't believe in God – doesn't that pre-supposition affect how you do history?

Ehrman:
– well, I presuppose naturalism, so I can't admit to anything in history that implicates supernatural causes
* no I have never heard of the arguments for the Big Bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, limits on mutations creating information, habitability and so on – I never heard about that stuff from my atheist university professors and even if I had I would have been expelled for talking about it because that would make people feel bad about their sinning

Licona:
– so it's not bias you are concerned about, it's that you don't want history to contradict your untested religion of naturalism?
– why not just do the history without pre-suppositions to gather the minimal facts and then see what the best explanation is?

Ehrman:
* well God is out of bounds as an explanation because I could not have got my PhD if I

mentioned God
* I really needed my smart atheist professors to like me and give me good grades so God is RIGHT OUT
* ideas like a real God and moral laws and Hell makes my atheist professors uncomfortable and that means low grades for me
* I'm not really interested in butting heads with professors – it's easier to just agree with them and move on to selling books to the gullible
* My books are much more sensational than Dan Brown books, so please buy lots of them!

Licona:
– what if the historical evidence is good enough to show that Jesus rose from the dead?

Ehrman:
– well I would not call someone rising from the dead a miracle – I would call it weird
* I also think that the Big Bang is "weird" but that doesn't prove that God created the universe out of nothing
* if it's a miracle then I'm going to have to not sin, and maybe even go to Hell, and we can't have that

Licona:
– well, you accept the three minimal facts
– what if we try all the naturalistic explanations for those three facts and there are problems with all of them?
– what if the resurrection is the best explanation for the three minimal facts?

Ehrman:
– but I want to arbitrarily rule God put because I want to pre-suppose naturalism
– there is not historical reason I have to rule put supernatural explanations a priori

Licona:
– I think you are struggling with the theological implications of a historical conclusion

Ehrman:
– well when you do theology, you have to avoid grounding your theology on science or history
– theology has to be completely made up or it's not good theology

Licona:
– I think you are letting your dislike of the implications of the resurrection determine your historical conclusions
– you have to use historical methods to gather the minimal facts that every scholar accepts, regardless of worldview
– then you weigh ALL the hypotheses, natural and supernatural, that could account for these minimal facts
– then you choose the hypothesis that best explains the minimal facts

More stuff

Debates

- Craig Evans and Bart Ehrman
- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

A lecture on Bart Ehrman by William Lane Craig.

Unmasking Bart Ehrman: A Review of “Misquoting Jesus”

More about Bart Ehrman here. More about Mike Licona here.

Wayne Grudem on the debate about the days of Genesis

February 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kenneth Heathley posted this excerpt from Grudem's "Systematic Theology".

Excerpt:

> Wayne Grudem appears to be as tired as I am of fights between young-earth creationists and old-earth creationists. In his *Systematic Theology*, he states:
>
> "How old is the earth then? Where does this discussion leave us? [Davis] Young's arguments for an old earth based on many kinds of scientific data from different disciplines seem (to the present writer at least) to be very strong.
>
> "Although our conclusions are tentative, at this point in our understanding, Scripture seems to be more easily understood to *suggest* (but not to require) a young earth view, while the observable facts of creation seem increasingly to favor an old earth view. Both view are possible, but neither one is certain.
>
> "Given this situation, it would seem best (1) to admit that God may not allow us to find a clear solution to this question before Christ returns, and (2) to encourage evangelical scientists and theologians who fall in both the young earth and old earth camps to begin to work together with much less arrogance, much more humility, and a much greater sense of cooperation in a common purpose.
>
> "Progress will certainly be made if old earth and young earth scientists who are Christians will be more willing to talk to each other without hostility, *ad hominem* attacks, or highly emotional accusations, on the one hand, and without a spirit of condescension or academic pride on the other, for these attitudes are not becoming to the body of Christ, nor are the characteristic of the way of wisdom, which is 'first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity,' and full of the recognition that 'the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace' (James 3:17-18)."–Wayne Grudem: 1994, 307-08

You can hear a great debate on the days of Genesis here, with both sides well represented. Hearing both sides is a good way to build tolerance.

Rick Santorum questions federal government control of education

February 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal New York Times.

Excerpt:

> With his candidacy surging, Rick Santorum on Saturday questioned the legitimacy of state-run public education systems… he said the idea of schools run by the federal government or by state governments was "anachronistic." Mr. Santorum did not say public schools were a bad idea, and he said that there was a role for government help in education.
>
> But it was the latest in a series of comments by the former Pennsylvania senator — who is tied in polls in the critical Ohio and Michigan primary contests — suggesting that he takes a dim view of public schooling. He and his wife home-schooled their children.
>
> For the first 150 years, most presidents home-schooled their children at the White House, he said. "Where did they come up that public education and bigger education bureaucracies was the rule in America? Parents educated their children, because it's their responsibility to educate their children."
>
> "Yes the government can help," Mr. Santorum added. "But the idea that the federal government should be running schools, frankly much less that the state government should be running schools, is anachronistic. It goes back to the time of industrialization of America when people came off the farms where they did home-school or have the little neighborhood school, and into these big factories, so we built equal factories called public schools. And while those factories as we all know in Ohio and Pennsylvania have fundamentally changed, the factory school has not."

This is much better than Barack Obama, whose administration opposes school choice, even for the poorest students.

UPDATE: Mitt Romney supporters stealing Rick Santorum lawn signs in Michigan. I'm not surprised. When you have no conservative ideas, you resort to thuggery.

Europe’s socialist debt crisis: who suffers most? Can bailouts fix it?

February 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the most popular article on Investors Business Daily right now.

Excerpt:

> Rational or not, Greece’s street riots and emigration rates signify one thing: Socialism offers very little to the young. So why is the EU’s $172 billion bailout geared toward saving so much of the failed socialist system?
>
> As Europe prepares to deliver a historic $172 billion bailout to Greece in a deal announced Monday, it’s pretty much a given that the austerity conditions required, in the absence of a true free market, will hit youth hardest. Athens will be trashed by another youth rampage, as many youths blame the pain on something other than Greece’s deeply rooted socialism.
>
> A bigger effect will come from Greeks who do recognize reality. They won’t riot. They’ll leave, voting with their feet just as Eastern Europe’s youth once did.
>
> The young in both cases are victims of socialism, which claims to make people equal but, in reality, penalizes the young. For Greece, a country already gutted by a below-replacement birth rate and an aging population, that’s a disaster.
>
> It’s not just Greece, but also every EU state with institutionalized socialism — where high government spending seeks to create a warm blanket insulating everyone from risk, but instead has led to bankruptcy.
>
> […]One out of five jobs in Greece is held by a bureaucrat, which is why unemployment among the under-24s runs at 42%. A 2010 poll shows that seven out of 10 Greek college graduates seek to leave.
>
> Some 9% of Greek college graduates and at least 51% of Greece’s Ph.D.s are already gone, according to University of Macedonia demographer Lois Lambrianidis.
>
> What jobs there are come from the bottom of a two-tier labor system that shields older workers in Greece’s rigid labor market. Young Greeks earn a 500-and-change euro monthly minimum wage as older workers doing the same work make 700.
>
> In contrast, immigrant-magnet Australia holds packed job fairs at its Athens embassy. In 2011, it took in 249,000 immigrants. In 2012, a 20% rise is expected.
>
> […]Meanwhile, Spain’s EFE News reports that the Spanish Embassy in Santiago, Chile, has seen a 10% rise in registered nationals to 48,000, while Chile reports a 25% rise in work permits issued to Spanish citizens.

> It’s not just jobs that are penalizing Europe’s young. Housing is stacked against youth, too. Eurostat reports that in 2008, 46% of young European adults ages 18-34 lived with their parents — 51 million people.
>
> The two-tier job market, which leans heavily toward unstable contract employment, affects housing choices for the young. Other socialist measures designed to protect current owners against the market also shut out the young.
>
> Perhaps most hostile of all to youth are the EU’s outdated state pension systems — which force the young to pay the pensions of the old as the population shrinks.
>
> In Italy, 14% of all economic output goes to pensions. It’s no coincidence that states attracting Europe’s young, like Chile and Australia, have privatized their social security systems that give youth a real shot at building personal wealth and a credible pension through their own efforts, instead of political favoritism.

This is the direction that the United States is also headed in. What I find mystifying is why young people in the United States are voting for these policies. Young people here have a higher rate of unemployment, and they ought to know that all of these entitlement programs won’t be there for them when they retire. What possible reason could they have for voting for more and more government control?

Are religious claims about the real world or just untestable assertions?

February 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

This lecture is based on the book "Truth in Religion" by famous philosopher Mortimer J. Adler. At the time of writing the book, he was not a Christian, but there is still a lot of value in the book for Christians who are trying to understand what religion is about. In one sense, the material on this lecture should be the *first thing that Christians learn about Christianity before they ever open the Bible.* And I mean before even knowing about the existence of the Bible. The most important question when it comes to religion is this: "IS RELIGION CONCERNED WITH TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT REALITY"? That is the first question to answer.

About the speaker

Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor.

Here's a bio from his faculty page at Baylor University:

> Walter Bradley (B.S., Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin) is Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He comes to Baylor from Texas A&M University where he helped develop a nationally recognized program in polymeric composite materials. At Texas A&M, he served as director of the Polymer Technology Center for 10 years and as Department Head of Mechanical Engineering, a department of 67 professors that was ranked as high as 12th nationally during his tenure. Bradley has authored over 150 refereed research publications including book chapters, articles in archival journals such as the Journal of Material Science, Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites, Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials, Journal of Composites Technology and Research, Composite Science and Technology, Journal of Metals, Polymer Engineering and Science, and Journal of Materials Science, and refereed conference proceedings.
>
> Dr. Bradley has secured over $5.0 million in research funding from NSF grants (15 yrs.), AFOSR (10 years), NASA grants (10 years), and DOE (3 years). He has also received research grants or contracts from many Fortune 500 companies, including Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, 3M, Shell, Exxon, Boeing, and Phillips.

> He co-authored The Mystery of Life Origin: Reassessing Current Theories and has written 10 book chapters dealing with various faith science issues, a topic on which he speaks widely.
>
> He has received 5 research awards at Texas A&M University and 1 national research award. He has also received two teaching awards. He is an Elected Fellow of the American Society for Materials and the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the largest organization of Christians in Science and Technology in the world. He is President elect of the ASA and will serve his term in 2008.

You can read more about his recent research on how to use coconuts to make car parts in this article from Science Daily.

The MP3 file is here. (31 minutes + Q&A)

Topics:

- what is pluralism?
- what is multiculturalism?
- what is relativism?
- some propositions are true culturally – just for certain groups in certain times (cultures)
- some proposition are true trans-culturally – true independently of what anyone wants or feels
- Mathematical truth is trans-cultural – it is true regardless of cultural fashions
- Scientific truth is trans-cultural – it is true regardless of cultural fashions
- Some truths are not like this – cooking traditions, clothing traditions and greeting traditions
- These kinds of truths are NOT trans-cultural, they vary by culture
- The question is – is religion true like math and science, or true depending on the culture
- Some people think that your religion depends on where you were born or what your family believes
- Religions make conflicting claims about the way the world really is, so they can't all be true
- And these conflicts are at the core of the religions – who God is, how can we be related to him, etc.
- So if religions convey trans-cultural truth, then either one is true or none are true
- If they are not trying to convey trans-cultural truth, then they are not like math and science
- Let's assume that religion is the same as trans-cultural truth
- How can we know which religion is true? 1) the laws of logic, 2) empirical testing against reality
- Logical consistency is needed to make the first cut – self-contradictory claims cannot be true
- To be true trans-culturally, a proposition must at least NOT break the law of non-

contradiction
- According to Mortimer Adler's book, only Christianity, Judaism and Islam are not self-contradictory
- All the others can be excluded on the basis of overt internal contradictions on fundamental questions
- The others that are self-contradictory can be true culturally, but not trans-culturally
- The way to proceed forward is to test the three non-contradictory religions against science and history
- One of these three may be true, or they could all be false
- We can test the three by evaluating their conflicting truth claims about the historical Jesus
- Famous skeptics have undertaken studies to undermine the historical Jesus presented in the Bible
- Lew Wallace, Simon Greenleaf and Frank Morrison assessed the evidence as atheists and became Christians
- There is a lot of opposition in culture to the idea that one religion might be true
- But if you take the claims of Jesus at face value, he claims to be the unique revelation of God to mankind
- Either he was telling the truth about that, or he was lying, or he was crazy
- So which is it?

Why don't religious people ask if their religion is true?

Truth claims are *necessarily* divisive. If God wants people to know him as he is, and I tell them a lie that they can invent their own view of him, then that is sinning against God. And the only reason I would lie about that is because I can't be bothered studying these things and taking the heat for standing up for God's real personality and goals for his creatures to his creatures. Nowhere in Bible does it say that our goal is to tell people that they can believe anything they want about God and he really doesn't care since he just wants us to be nice to each other and be happy and have fun and believe whatever we want about him whether it's true or not.

People who think that all religions are true are doing it for three reasons: 1) they don't want to study and be bound to one view through study, 2) they want to use religion to be comforted, but to leave it when it makes demands, 3) they want other people to like them so they want to say that all views of God are true. But this pluralism is not a view that is consistent with the plain meaning of the Bible – the people who embrace the idea that all religions are true based on personal preferences or cultures reject the plain meaning of the gospel, which makes exclusive claims. It is NOT TRUE that you can believe whatever you want as long as you are sincere – sincerity doesn't mean that you can't be mistaken. Not wanting to know whether Christianity is true is really just another way of saying that you don't think God's existence and character matters that much to you. Is that a good relationship? Is that the right way to be God's friend?

I think that God's existence and character can be assessed and known based on logic and

evidence. I think that God exists independently of whether I want him to or not, and I think that his character and desires are not the same as *my* character and desires. And I don't really care what my neighbors think of my disagreeing with them, my goal is not to keep silent and to just *get along with them* and *be happier in my community*. God's first commandment to us is not to love our neighbor – that's number two. Number one is to love him. And how can we love him, if we don't want to know him. And how can we love him, if we don't tell people the truth about him, (when asked to, and within the context of a respectful relationship, as in 1 Pet 3:15).

1 Cor 15:13-19:

[13]If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

[14]And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

[15]More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

[16]For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

[17]And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

[18]Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

[19]If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

You can read papers from Dr. Bradley here.

Iran court convicts Christian pastor to death for apostasy from Islam

February 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this article from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Germany's top human rights official is urging Iran to release a pastor sentenced to death for converting to Christianity.
>
> Markus Loening said Wednesday the German government is extremely concerned about Yusuf Naderkhani's fate amid reports of his imminent execution.
>
> Loening urged Tehran to "release Naderkhani, lift his death sentence and grant him a fair trial."
> He says an execution also breaches international obligations guaranteeing religious freedom.
>
> Naderkhani, who is in his early 30s, converted to Christianity when he was 19 and later became a pastor in the Iranian city of Rasht. He was convicted of apostasy in 2010.
>
> The U.S. government called for his release last year and Germany summoned the Iranian ambassador to protest Naderkhani's continued imprisonment.

Germany is not the only one trying to do something to free the convicted Iranian pastor.

Excerpt:

> Lawmakers in Congress have joined the fight to save an Iranian Christian pastor who has been sentenced to death for refusing to renounce his faith.
>
> A resolution sponsored by Rep. Joseph Pitts (R-PA) denounces Iran for its leaders' ruling of apostasy against Youcef Nadarkhani and calls for his immediate release.
>
> "Iran has become more isolated because of their drive for nuclear weapons, and the fundamentalist government has stepped up persecution of religious minorities to deflect criticism," Pitts told FoxNews.com. "The persecuted are their own citizens whose only crime is practicing their faith."
>
> Nadarkhani was born to a Muslim family and admits that he was introduced to the teachings of Islam, but claims he never accepted the faith. The charge of apostasy, which in Iran carries the death penalty, is leveled at those who abandon their faith.
>
> Pitts introduced the measure on Friday and so far has the support of seven other members. Nearly 90 members of Congress previously signed a letter supporting Nadarkhani.
>
> Nadarkhani, who also held house church services in Iran, was facing execution

> after being convicted of apostasy in November of 2010, but appealed his conviction all the way up to the Iranian Supreme Court. That trial was held in the Gilan Provence last September, when he refused to renounce his Christianity. Nadarkhani has been detained for a total of 858 days.

It would be nice if the President or the United Nations had something to say about this, but I don't think they will.

UPDATE: Jason from New Zealand writes in the comments:

> According to the Iranian Christian News Agency, Yousef Nadarkhani isn't a Christian. He denies the trinity and believes a whole lot of other strange things.
>
> Nevertheless, what is happening to him is abhorrent and we need to pray – and speak up – for his release.

Tolerant leftists threaten to murder 14-year old girl for defending marriage

February 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

That video contains the following testimony from a 14-year old girl:

> Hi, I'm Sarah Crank. Today's my 14th birthday, and it would be the best birthday present ever if you would vote "no" on gay marriage. I really feel bad for the kids who have two parents of the same gender. Even though some kids think it's fine, they have no idea what kind of wonderful experiences they miss out on. I don't want more kids to get confused about what's right and okay. I really don't want to grow up in a world where marriage isn't such a special thing anymore.

> It's rather scary to think that when I grow up the legislature or the court can change the definition of any word they want. If they could change the definition of marriage then they could change the definition of any word. People have the choice to be gay, but I don't want to be affected by their choice. People say that they were born that way, but I've met really nice adults who did change. So please vote "no" on gay marriage. Thank you.

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> A 14-year-old homeschooler who testified before the Maryland state senate against a bill redefining marriage has been the subject of cyberbullying, vicious name-calling, and death threats.
>
> Sarah Crank, 14, told the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee last month she believes children need a mother and a father. " I really feel bad for the kids who have two parents of the same gender," she told the senators. "Even though some kids think it's fine, they have no idea what kind of wonderful experiences they miss out on."
>
> She continued, "People say that they were born that way, but I've met really nice adults who did change."
>
> "Today's my 14th birthday, and it would be the best birthday present ever if you would vote 'no' on gay marriage," she said.
>
> After audio of her uncharacteristically mature testimony was posted on YouTube, the story went viral on homosexual activist websites—and death threats quickly followed.
>
> TFP Student Action, a Roman Catholic organization dedicated to traditional morality, recorded several of the most offensive threats in a press release. A commenter on the YouTube video wrote, "If I ever see this girl, I will kill her. That's a promise."

> Other YouTube comments ranged from, “Her parents should be exterminated,” to, “Kill this child and his [sic] parent, for my 11 birthday would be a wonderful gift, thanks.”
>
> A comment posted on LGBTNation.com said, ““And now everyone knows her name, so hopefully she will feel what its like to be harassed and bullied…”

I decided to leave out the comments with profanity, but they are really nasty. I doubt that the mainstream media will be covering these death threats to pro-marriage dissenters, though.

Should Christian men marry? What's the worst that could happen?

February 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This could happen.

Excerpt:

> I recently discovered your site while searching the net about frivolous divorce and I think it is great you are trying to educate people about the realities of divorce in America. I went through a divorce two years ago, although I did nothing "wrong" so to speak, but rather because my wife was bored. Under my questioning, she said there was nothing I could have done to have prevented the divorce, which I believe to be true. I was not really lacking "game" (hadn't heard of the term until recently, but I was manly and attractive), but she was very tired of the routine and banalities of married life, and wanted to, in her words, "find herself", whatever that means.
>
> As is typical, she did very well in the divorce and got the house, car, most of our assets (she cleaned out our bank accounts and savings and stripped the house bare while I was on a camping trip with a friend which she encouraged me to take – I should have been suspicious as it was the first time she had ever wanted me to do something like that, but I was overjoyed, and of course, completely taken by surprise when I returned to a house empty save for the divorce papers; I was never able to recover any of the things she took preemptively), full custody of both children, alimony until remarriage, and I got a disproportionate amount of debt and had to pay for the entire divorce, both lawyers. I have very restrictive visitation, usually I only get to see my children two days per month. I knew women usually were favored in divorce, but had no idea how unjust it was until it happened to me. In addition, I was completely blindsided. She was still very affectionate and sex had not dropped off at all. I never saw it coming.
>
> I am a traditional Christian man, and had always looked forward to fatherhood and raising my children. In fact, I would say having a family was my dream ever since I was little (I never felt "defined" by my career or that it was anything other than a means to an end, but I am not a CEO or doctor). Now I am watching my children grow up in fast-forward, without any say in how they are raised. I have missed all of the birthdays and Christmases (and other holidays) for the past two years, not by choice. It is truly devastating to spend a month not hearing my children's voice, or even touching them (let alone any human being) for weeks at a time, to say nothing of losing (who I thought to be) my soulmate after 15 years of marriage.
>
> What is the most painful realization is that I have lost my future. I make $70,000 a year, but have to live on $15,000 after the payments (which I pay the taxes for,

> can you believe it? – I am in the $70,000 bracket!). I went from a decent house to a $500/month apartment in a bad part of town, and now live alone. I realize that I am becoming estranged from my children (I don't really know anything about them) and my wife tries to make visitation difficult for me – it is awkward for her to arrange and for her new lover to deal with. I tried to be just a "fun dad", who takes the kids out for a day of fun and doesn't really "parent" besides providing paychecks and phone calls, but that is becoming difficult. Having a family is still my deepest longing in life, and I am so lonely, but I am unable to move on financially and start a new family with another woman (I am attractive enough and have the personality to get women quite a bit younger than me), because no woman wants a man that keeps $15,000 a year and goes deeper in debt every month to make ends meet. I could never support a family. I really see no hope of getting out of this vicious cycle – by the time all the payments stop I will be in my 50′s and I will have missed my opportunity, and be forced to live alone until I die. I can't even have the dignity of a retirement, because my wife took half of my retirement fund which I had been contributing to since I was 22, and now I am so far in the red I have been forced to withdraw rather than contribute under severe penalties in order to make ends meet.
>
> I have come to terms with the fact that this story can't possibly have a happy ending, and my life is so far removed from what I envisioned and planned it would be like during my youth that it is unbelievable. I feel like a fool for having done everything "right", because it ultimately made no difference in my happiness and fulfillment.
>
> I wanted to thank you for being a force promoting honoring commitments and discouraging divorce, because it seems like a rare opinion to take in today's society. You are helping the community by performing this service. I decided to relate my tale here for much the same purpose – if someone reads this and is able think more critically about what the legal implications of marriage are for men and be more cautious it will have served its purpose – I know as for myself I was really too overjoyed to be spending the rest of my life (ha ha) with the woman I loved to really understand what I was getting myself into, in addition to being ignorant and naive about the realities of divorce. If I had to do it all over again I would rather have remained single. It is truly better not to have known paternal and marital love than to have felt it and had it ripped away, regardless of what that folk wisdom quote says about loving and losing.
>
> Please men, think very critically about what you are getting into. The laws are equal, but in court it won't come out that way.

What's my advice? I would recommend that no Christian man marry unless the woman he is considering has studied these issues by reading books like these:

- Taken Into Custody by Stephen Baskerville
- Between Two Worlds by Elizabeth Marquardt

- The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce by Judith Wallerstein et al.
- The Abolition of Marriage by Maggie Gallagher

At least give her this essay to start. Either she is going to read it because she wants the marriage to succeed and is ready to work for it, or she's not going to read it because she wants marriage to be about her happiness.

It is also critical that she have firsthand experience dealing with children who are separated from their fathers through divorce. If she isn't aware of stories like the one above, then you can't really count on her to be opposed to divorce. Don't settle for "I promise not to divorce you" and a kiss. Ask her to read the books about marriage, divorce and how divorce affects children. And find out what her experiences are of understanding men and children who go through divorce. Favor women who have seen firsthand how women who divorce are cruel to their children during divorce proceedings. You want her to say "divorce is child abuse" and "fatherlessness is child abuse". That's what's required.

If she doesn't hate divorce as much as she hates abortion, don't marry her. If she makes excuses for single mothers, don't marry her. If she doesn't understand how government gives women inventives to divorce or to become single mothers by choice, don't marry her. If she doesn't understand how same-sex marriage would affect children, don't marry her. If she wasn't chaste before she married you, don't marry her. If she doesn't insist that you be chaste before you marry her, don't marry her. If she doesn't let you lead during the courtship, and value your advice and leadership, don't marry her. She has to value you for being a *man*. Do not marry feminists who think women are victims and are never responsible.

Here are the facts. 70% of divorces are initiated by women. The woman gets custody, and therefore child support, in 85% of the cases. Divorce rates decline as women get older – so men aren't trading in a 40 year old for two 20 year olds as some uninformed blowhards like to say. The problem with marriage today is that men *and* women are not acting in accordance with moral standards before marriage and after marriage. We shouldn't be encouraging people to do relationships apart from the moral law – it causes a lot of damage.

The only way to judge a woman's ability to commit is to assess how much she has done to *prepare* for marriage by studying what men and children need from her in a marriage. And the same goes for men. They have to show that they can do the job they are interviewing for.

Related posts

- New study finds that female teachers give male students lower marks
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold women accountable for their own choices?
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter

- Conservative woman blames liberal women for choosing bad men
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the “hook-up” culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama’s new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism’s war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence

Alberta joins Quebec in imposing “diversity” education on homeschoolers

February 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For those who aren’t following, the most conservative province in Canada has been taken over by a radical secular leftist named Alison Redford. She has not only gone crazy with the spending, but now she is taking aim at social issues, as well.

Excerpt:

> Homeschooling groups are sounding the alarm this week as the Alberta government prepares to pass a bill that they say threatens to mandate “diversity” education in the home.
>
> The province’s new Education Act, re-tabled Feb. 14th by Alison Redford’s majority Progressive Conservative government to replace the existing Schools Act, stipulates in section 16 that all instructional materials in schools “must reflect the diverse nature and heritage of society in Alberta, promote understanding and respect for others and honour and respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Alberta Human Rights Act.”
>
> But, in addition to publicly-funded school boards, the proposed Act defines “school” to include private schools and “a parent providing a home education program.”
>
> Paul Faris of Canada’s Home School Legal Defence Association (HSLDA) says the law subjects homeschoolers’ entire families life to the Human Rights Act, the provincial version of “human rights” legislation that has been used to target Christians and conservatives across the country, particularly those espousing traditional views on homosexuality.
>
> “Basically what it would mean is all learning that goes on in the home, all material that goes on in the home, would essentially be subject to the Alberta Human Rights Act,” Faris explained.
>
> “At least when the child leaves the school and goes home it no longer applies, but for a homeschooling family they never get away from this,” he added.
>
> Faris said Alberta already has some of the toughest regulations for homeschooling among the Canadian provinces. Parents have to register with a school board and submit a plan at the beginning of the year, followed by two visits from a certified teacher that normally occur in the home. He did note, however, that difficulties are somewhat mitigated by the fact that parents have some choice about which school board in which they register.
>
> […]The Alberta Home Education Association (AHEA) says the Education Act as written “provides opportunities to impose curriculum and practises upon all schools in Alberta, whereby special interest groups will have leverage to actively

> promote alternate lifestyles."
>
> "Individuals or groups with special interest agendas could take action against home educating families by utilizing [section 16] of the Act," they add.
>
> […]The Progressive Conservatives have 67 of the 83 seats in the province's legislature, so the bill's passage is essentially assured. But Faris noted that the province is set for an election so the government may be open to changing its mind on the homeschooling aspect to avoid controversy.

UPDATE: Here's more about Alberta's new "diversity" curriculum.

Excerpt:

> Under Alberta's new Education Act, homeschoolers and faith-based schools will not be permitted to teach that homosexual acts are sinful as part of their academic program, says the spokesperson for Education Minister Thomas Lukaszuk.
>
> "Whatever the nature of schooling – homeschool, private school, Catholic school – we do not tolerate disrespect for differences," Donna McColl, Lukaszuk's assistant director of communications, told LifeSiteNews on Wednesday evening.
>
> "You can affirm the family's ideology in your family life, you just can't do it as part of your educational study and instruction," she added.
>
> Reacting to the remarks, Paul Faris of the Home School Legal Defence Association said the Ministry of Education is "clearly signaling that they are in fact planning to violate the private conversations families have in their own homes."

Quebec already pushes religious pluralism and moral relativism onto homeschoolers, and Ontario is probably going to do the same, soon. I really think that Alberta needs to take a closer look at conservative Danielle Smith and elect her next time. No more "Progressive Conservatives" whatever that means.

Higher gas prices were caused by Obama's green energy policies

February 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Shell has fought the administration to begin drilling in the Chukchi Sea off Alaska.
>
> The federal government estimates there are 26.6 billion barrels of recoverable oil and 130 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the Arctic Ocean's Outer Continental Shelf but repeated safety reviews and designation of much of the region as critical polar bear habitat has slowed development to a crawl.
>
> Only 2.2% of federal offshore land is currently being leased for production.
>
> Then there are the 10 billion barrels locked up in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve, which would require drilling in just 2,000 acres out of 19 million.
>
> The Obama administration recently rescinded 77 oil and gas leases in Utah and stalled oil shale research and development in Utah, Colorado and Wyoming, where the federal government owns most of the world's oil shale reserves.
>
> Out West, we may have a "Persia on the Plains." A Rand Corp. study says the Green River Formation, which covers parts of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming, has the largest known oil shale deposits in the world, holding from 1.5 trillion to 1.8 trillion barrels of crude — most of it locked up by federal edict.
>
> Under President Obama, the American Petroleum Institute notes, leases on federal lands in the West are down 44%, while permits and new well drilling are both down 39% compared to 2007 levels.
>
> After the BP oil spill, President Obama shut down most Gulf of Mexico drilling and there's been a 57% drop in monthly deepwater permits since 2008, according to the Greater New Orleans Gulf Permit Index.

The demand for oil is increasing as India and China grow their economy. That means there are more people bidding on the supply of oil. In order to keep the price low, the supply would have to increase. But Obama has done everything in his power to reduce the supply. Increased demand and reduced supply means higher gas prices.

And he's not done yet.

Excerpt:

> Despite some green energy failures, such as the bankrupt Solyndra solar panel company and weak-selling Chevy Volt, President Barack Obama said that he wanted to "double down" on green energy spending, and would do what he could even without Congress to subsidize these companies.

> Obama's assertions, at the University of Miami on Thursday, come after numerous reports of green energy firms that received large sums of federal loans and grants but which have either declared bankruptcy or hit financial problems.
>
> […]CBS News has reported that the administration directed $6.5 billion in taxpayer dollars to a dozen different green companies that now face financial ship. The most notable of these is Solyndra, the solar panel firm that got a $535-million Energy Department loan guarantee before declaring Chapter 11 bankruptcy and being investigated by the FBI.
>
> Among the 12 companies, five others besides Solyndra have filed for bankruptcy. These are Beacon Power of Massachusetts; Evergreen Solar, of Massachusetts; SpectraWatt of New York State; AES' subsidiary Eastern Energy of New York State and Ener1 of Indiana.
>
> Obama acknowledged that not all companies backed by the federal government will succeed, but said he would not be deterred.
>
> "The payoffs on these public investments don't always come right away. Some technologies don't pan out; some companies will fail," Obama said.
>
> "But as long as I'm president, I will not walk away from the promise of clean energy," he said. "I will not cede the wind or solar or battery industry to China or Germany because some politicians in Washington refused to make the same commitment here in America."
>
> As CNSNews.com earlier reported, the Chevy Volt, touted by Obama as being the future of the government-owned GM and bailed-out Chrysler, was among the biggest market flops in 2011.

Please read this article and share it with your friends. It's important to understand what Obama's plan was, and what he did to achieve it. He wanted gas prices to be higher, and that's what he achieved.

Related posts

- A third Obama-subsidized green energy firm is bankrupt after $118.5 million loan
- How Barack Obama used taxpayer dollars to outsource green energy jobs
- Did Obama really create jobs with his green energy and stimulus programs?
- In Canada, a revolt against global warming socialism creates an economic boom
- E-mails reveal that Obama fundraiser discussed Solyndra loan with White House
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra
- Report finds Labor Department's green jobs program failing
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient

- How well did Obama’s green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors
- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing
- Marsha Blackburn beats up Al Gore on cap and trade corruption

UK doctors filmed agreeing to perform illegal sex-selection abortions

February 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this article from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Doctors at British clinics have been secretly filmed agreeing to terminate foetuses purely because they are either male or female. Clinicians admitted they were prepared to falsify paperwork to arrange the abortions even though it is illegal to conduct such "sex-selection" procedures.
>
> […]The disclosures will add to growing concerns about the regulation of abortion clinics and the apparent ability of women to secure terminations "on demand".

> The Daily Telegraph carried out an investigation into sex-selection abortions after concerns were raised that the procedures were becoming increasingly common for cultural and social reasons.
>
> […]Acting on specific information, undercover reporters accompanied pregnant women to nine clinics in different parts of the country. In three instances doctors were recorded offering to arrange terminations after being told the mother-to-be did not want to go ahead with the pregnancy because of the sex of the unborn child.
>
> One consultant, Prabha Sivaraman, who works for both private clinics and NHS hospitals in Manchester, was filmed telling a pregnant woman who said she wanted to abort a female foetus: "I don't ask questions. If you want a termination, you want a termination".
>
> […]Miss Sivaraman, who works for Pall Mall Medical in Manchester and is an obstetrician and gynaecologist at North Manchester General Hospital, said the cost of the termination would be £200 or £300, on top of the £500 already paid to the clinic for the consultation.
>
> […]The doctor booked the pregnant woman in for a termination the following week despite the reason for the abortion being clearly explained.
>
> Another consultant, Claudine Domoney, who works with 132 Healthwise clinic in Harley Street, central London, agreed to arrange for a woman to abort a boy after being told that she and her husband already had a son from his first marriage. The practice is known as "family balancing".
>
> In a consultation room in the Chelsea and Westminster hospital, the woman, who was about 18 weeks pregnant, explained her reasons for the termination "It's a boy, and that's the reason, we don't want to have a second boy."
>
> "It's obviously taken a little bit of time to decide this?" asked Miss Domoney, in

> reference to the fact that the woman was 18 weeks pregnant.
>
> The consultant was still happy to proceed but explained that as she was going away she would be unable to perform the procedure, so she telephoned a colleague to see if he could fit the pregnant woman in for the following week. “He is OK for Tuesday”, said Miss Domoney when she returned.

Here’s a second article about this story in the UK Telegraph. It talks about a doctor who hears that the real reason for the abortion is because the unborn child is female. The customer then offers a different reason and then the doctor writes that reason down and agrees to do the abortion.

It seems to me that sex-selection abortion is perfectly legal in the UK. You just don’t tell the doctor what your real reason is, and they do the abortion anyway. It may sound good to pro-abortion people to be able to say that they oppose sex-selection abortions, but they really don’t. They know perfectly well that people who want sex-selection abortions can get them right away so long as they don’t tell the real reason why they want it. Even if the customer does tell the real reason, doctors can apparently work around it.

What do PETA and animal rights activist Meredith Lowell have in common?

February 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Meredith Lowell, the main character in a *very* weird story.

Excerpt:

> Meredith Lowell, 27, of Cleveland Heights, appeared Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Cleveland, where a magistrate judge ordered her held by the U.S. Marshals Service pending a hearing next week, court records show.
>
> […]Investigators say the FBI was notified in November of a Facebook page Lowell created under the alias Anne Lowery offering $830 to $850 for the hit and saying the ideal candidate would live in northeast Ohio, according to an FBI affidavit filed with the court on Friday.
>
> The affidavit says an FBI employee posing as a possible hit man later began email correspondence with Lowell, and she offered him $730 in jewelry or cash for the killing of a victim of at least 12 years but "preferably 14 years old or older" outside a library near a playground in her hometown.
>
> "You need to bring a gun that has a silencer on it and that can be easily concealed in your pants pocket or coat. … If you do not want to risk the possibility of getting caught with a gun before the job, bring a sharp knife that is (at least) 4 inches long, it should be sharp enough to stab someone and/or slit their throat to kill them. I want the person to be dead in less than 2 minutes," says an email reprinted in the affidavit.
>
> She told the undercover employee she wanted to be on site when the slaying took place so she could distribute "papers" afterward, the affidavit says.
>
> […]**Reprinted emails also say Lowell wrote that she sees nothing wrong with "liberating" animals from fur factory farms and laboratories since "soldiers liberated people from Nazi camps in World War 2."**
>
> She also criticized a new aquarium in Cleveland – saying "it is wrong for animals to be taken against their will and put into their (equivalent) of a bathtub" – and research by the Cleveland Clinic, where she said animals should be "liberated and put somewhere where they are not tortured."

And here's what PETA believes:

> The graphic campaign and exhibit "Holocaust on Your Plate," devised by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, juxtaposes 60-square-foot panels displaying gruesome scenes from Nazi death camps side by side with disturbing photographs from factory farms and slaughterhouses. One shows a starving man in a concentration camp next to a starving cow.

> The exhibit opens Friday in San Diego, California, and went up Thursday at the University of California at Los Angeles. It also is posted on a PETA Web site, http://www.masskilling.com, which calls for support for the campaign from the Jewish community.
>
> The comparisons prompted an angry statement from Abraham Foxman, Anti-Defamation League national director and a Holocaust survivor.
>
> "The effort by PETA to compare the deliberate, systematic murder of millions of Jews to the issue of animal rights is abhorrent," the statement said. "PETA's effort to seek approval for their 'Holocaust on Your Plate' campaign is outrageous, offensive and takes chutzpah to new heights."
>
> **Lisa Lange, PETA's vice president of communications, told CNN's "American Morning With Paula Zahn" on Friday that the idea for the public relations effort came from the late Nobel Prize-winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer, who, she said, wrote: "In relation to them [animals], all people are Nazis; for them it is an eternal Treblinka" — a death camp in Poland.**
>
> **Lange said the campaign is appropriate because "Nazi concentration camps were modeled after slaughterhouses."**

One more thing about PETA. PETA is not a pro-life organization. Every single animal rights person I have ever spoken to is pro-abortion. I find it so weird that an organization that worries so much about animals has nothing at all to say about protecting humans.

Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)

February 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here you go:

IMDB rating: [7.4/10]

Description:

> WWII is entering its last phase: Germany is in ruins, but does not yield. The US army lacks crucial knowledge about the German units operating on the opposite side of the Rhine, and decides to send two German prisoners to gather information. The scheme is risky: the Gestapo retains a terribly efficient network to identify and capture spies and deserters. Moreover, it is not clear that "Tiger", who does not mind any dirty work as long as the price is right, and war-weary "Happy", who might be easily betrayed by his feelings, are dependable agents. After Tiger and another American agent are successfully infiltrated, Happy is parachuted in Bavaria. His duty: find out the whereabouts of a powerful German armored unit moving towards the western front.

Happy Friday!

If you need more spies, here are some more:

- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of my favorite TV show

Pro-lifers use abortion images to start debates and change minds

February 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s a new video put out by the Canadian Centre for Bioethical Reform.

Warning: graphic images!

Should the Obama administration be apologizing to Afghanistan?

February 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review. (H/T Doug Groothuis via Mary)

Excerpt:

> We have officially lost our minds.
>
> The *New York Times* reports that President Obama has sent a formal letter of apology to Afghanistan's ingrate president, Hamid Karzai, for the burning of Korans at a U.S. military base. The only upside of the apology is that it appears (based on the *Times* account) to be couched as coming personally from our blindly Islamophilic president — "I wish to express my deep regret for the reported incident. . . . I extend to you and the Afghani people my sincere apologies." It is not couched as an apology from the American people, whose frame of mind will be outrage, not contrition, as the facts become more widely known.
>
> The facts are that the Korans were seized at a jail because jihadists imprisoned there were using them not for prayer but to communicate incendiary messages. The soldiers dispatched to burn refuse from the jail were not the officials who had seized the books, had no idea they were burning Korans, and tried desperately to retrieve the books when the situation was brought to their attention.
>
> Of course, these facts may not become widely known, because no one is supposed to mention the main significance of what has happened here. First, as usual, Muslims — not al-Qaeda terrorists, but ordinary, mainstream Muslims — are rioting and murdering over the burning (indeed, the*inadvertent* burning**)** of a book. Yes, it's the Koran, but it's a book all the same — and one that, moderate Muslims never tire of telling us, doesn't really mean everything it says anyhow.
>
> Muslim leaders and their leftist apologists are also forever lecturing the United States about "proportionality" in our war-fighting. Yet when it comes to Muslim proportionality, Americans are supposed to shrug meekly and accept the "you burn books, we kill people" law of the jungle. Disgustingly, the *Times* would inure us to this moral equivalence byrationalizing that "Afghans are fiercely protective of their Islamic faith." Well then, I guess that makes it all right, huh?
>
> Then there's the second not-to-be-uttered truth: Defiling the Koran becomes an issue for Muslims *only when it has been done by non-Muslims*. Observe that the unintentional burning would not have occurred if these "fiercely protective of their Islamic faith" Afghans had not defiled the Korans in the first place. They were Muslim prisoners who annotated the "holy" pages with what a U.S. military official described as "extremist inscriptions" in covert messages sent back and

> forth, just as the jihadists held at Gitmo have been known to do (notwithstanding that Muslim prisoners get their Korans courtesy of the American taxpayers they construe the book to justify killing).
>
> Do you know why you are supposed to stay mum about the intentional Muslim sacrilege but plead to be forgiven for the accidental American offense? Because you would otherwise have to observe that the Koran and other Islamic scriptures instruct Muslims that they are in a civilizational jihad against non-Muslims, and that it is therefore permissible for them to do whatever is necessary — including scrawl militant graffiti on their holy book — if it advances the cause. Abdul Sattar Khawasi — not a member of al-Qaeda but a member in good standing of the Afghan government for which our troops are inexplicably fighting and dying — put it this way: "Americans are invaders, and jihad against the Americans is an obligation."
>
> Because exploiting America's hyper-sensitivity to things Islamic advances the jihad, the ostensible abuse of the Koran by using it for secret communiqués is to be overlooked. Actionable abuse occurs only when the book is touched by the bare hands of, or otherwise maltreated by, an infidel.

We're doomed. Our foreign policy is being run by idiots.

ECM sent me this article that talks about how the U.S. Navy wants to engage in affirmative action in order to get more non-white SEALs. That's right. Affirmative action for an ELITE military unit. Because elderly gay Hispanic women are not well represented in the Navy SEALs.

The verdict is in for the movie “Act of Valor”: it’s a hit!

February 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The new movie gets a review in the Houston Chronicle.

Full review:

> I don’t watch R rated movies. I’ve just found that I don’t like the filth in so many of them. I have never allowed my kids to see R rated movies as long as they were living in my house. But I made an exception last night. I took my 15 year son to see “Act Of Valor.” My 19 year son went with us as well, but for my youngest, it was a big deal. Mom was letting him see R rated movie! *Gasp* The R rating was for violence and some language.
>
> In case you haven’t heard about it, the movie was inspired by true events, but the unique thing about it is that it stars active-duty Navy SEALS. The plot and story line are nothing to talk about. The acting of the Navy SEALS is also nothing to write home about, but I promise you, you will be glued to the screen the entire movie. There is something about knowing these are real Navy SEALS, doing exactly what they have been trained to do, that just brings you into it. It is emotional, spell binding, and heart wrenching.
>
> This movie gives you such an appreciation of not only the valor and ability of our Navy SEALS, but an appreciation of what our boys go through on the battle field, and the caliber of men and women it takes to serve our country.
>
> In the movie the enemy are terrorists from Russia determined to get suicide bombers into the U.S. There is one scene where a Navy Seal Commander is interrogating (really just having a conversation) with the lead terrorist. The terrorist asked the Navy SEAL to just please not harm his family. The Commander says, “We would never harm your family.” And I thought to myself, “That is the difference between us and them.” After you see the movie, you will see exactly what I mean. Many of the action sequences used live ammunition, and the realism comes through, even when the acting does not.
>
> You walk away from this film, not thinking of the story, or the plot, but of the men who fight for our freedom, who give up *everything* for us. In the end, my heart was full of gratitude and love for our military. I thought my heart was pretty full of that already, but this film just makes it overflow. I saw how amazing our ships, planes, and equipment are. Some things they do, I wasn’t aware of. I was in awe.
>
> I’ve never been to a movie where when it ended, no one moved. The packed theatre was *completely*silent. No one got up to leave. The words on the screen said that this film was dedicated to the SEALS who had lost their lives since 9-11. Then came the list of names. No one moved. Well, that’s when I lost it. And I

> wasn’t alone.
>
> Run, don’t walk, to see this movie. You will thank me later. Pay no attention to the wussie pansy waist know nothing Hollywood critics who diss this film. We all know they don’t have a clue.
>
> God bless our military, and God bless this great country of ours.

I almost never see movies in the theater, but this is one we all need to support so that we get more like it!

Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins

February 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this disturbing article from Relevant Magazine.

Excerpt:

> [A] recent study reveals that 88 percent of unmarried young adults (ages 18-29) are having sex. The same study, conducted by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, reveals the number doesn't drop much among Christians. Of those surveyed who self-identify as "evangelical," 80 percent say they have had sex.
>
> […]Of those 80 percent of Christians in the 18-29 age range who have had sex before marriage, 64 percent have done so within the last year and 42 percent are in a current sexual relationship.
>
> In addition to having premarital sex, an alarming number of unmarried Christians are getting pregnant. Among unmarried evangelical women between the ages of 18 and 29, 30 percent have experienced a pregnancy (a number that's actually 1 percent higher than among those who don't claim to be evangelical).
>
> According to the Guttmacher Institute, nearly half of all pregnancies in America are unintended. And of those, 40 percent end in abortion. More than 1 million abortions occur in the United States each year. But perhaps the most disturbing statistic for the Church: 65 percent of the women obtaining abortions identify themselves as either Protestant or Catholic (37 percent Protestant and 28 percent Catholic). That's 650,000 abortions obtained by Christians every year.
>
> The pregnancy stats are shocking to many—and the abortion stats horrifying—but the root problem is the willingness to have sex before marriage. Without sex, pregnancies and abortions don't happen.
>
> If abstinence messages were actually working—and this generation of Christians was genuinely committed to saving sex for marriage—then the other issues would dwindle considerably.
>
> If this generation wants to reverse the trend and reduce the number of Christians having premarital sex, the first step is trying to figure out why so few are waiting.

What do I have to say to this? Well, I am in my mid-thirties. I am chaste. In fact, I have not even kissed a woman on the lips, since I am saving that for when I get engaged. So I know how to be chaste and I know why I am doing it. I don't see the value of sexual activity in a relationship. I don't see how it helps me to achieve any deeper intimacy with a woman or to increase the probability of having a stable marriage that influences others and produces effective Christian children, which are my goals for marriage. I think the reason why people resort to sex in relationships is because they don't have the same

goals as I do for their relationships. They want recreation, and they think that marriage is a continuation of the fun they are having as singles. But I have a different goal for my relationships, and sex doesn't fit into it my courting procedure.

What I do instead of sex is that I try to make Christian women read about apologetics, science, marriage, economics, parenting, foreign policy, politics, and so on. I try to undo the influence of non-Christian ideologies like feminism, socialism postmodernism, moral relativism, pacifism, etc. I try to get them to practice disagreeing and arguing with non-Christians so that they are more bold and persuasive in their witnessing. And finally, I try to provide them with a model of what a man should be, so that they find it easier to choose good ones and reject bad ones. All of this worldview development and debating tends to make them feel closer to God, because now they are able to serve him by understanding him and defending him in public. Premarital sex would not help any of my goals for women. I am not trying to have fun with them – I am trying to make them grow and be more effective.

The reason why most Christians don't follow a plan like mine, and instead prefer sex is because they think that marriage is not a lifelong commitment with the purpose of serving God, but a recreational arrangement in which they will get their needs met without having to do anything. They go to church, they listen to sermons, they sing songs, and they have feelings about all of their churchy stuff. But they don't really know what marriage is about or how to prepare for it or how to choose someone who will be a good mate. Rather than do the work, they try to short-circuit the process with sex, and then hope for the best. They trust their emotions and intuitions. They don't want to take away the spontaneity of romance by sitting down and evaluating people to see if they really are Christians and whether they think of marriage as being about commitment and self-sacrifice as a way of serving God.

I do blame pastors for not educating women about how to prepare for marriage. I think the problem is that Christians pastors are too focused on reading the Bible, and not focused on integrating the Bible with external truth from history, science, etc. They stand at the front of the church giving speeches, but they never explain why what they are saying is true. Pastors are notoriously bad at apologetics – they tend to just drone on and on about things that they are not able to support evidentially. And the people listening just don't bother to do it, since they are not persuaded that anything the pastor says is true. So, even if the pastors tell their flocks to get married and stay married, they don't really convince why they ought to care what the Bible says, or how to achieve the goals set in the Bible through practical preparation and wise decisions.

I think that the right place to start with people on chastity is by showing them the costs for children who grow up in broken homes. Just studying that brings up the question: what should adults do in order to make sure that they don't hurt children by being reckless and irresponsible? The answer is: adults should be chaste before marriage and then get married and be faithful and fulfill the roles or father/husband and mother/wife. And, adults should understand what laws and policies encourage or discourage people to get married and stay married, and vote for pro-marriage (anti-feminist) policies. All of the

studying laws, policies, economics, etc. flows from that desire to do no harm to children. Even better than doing no harm would be to have a plan to have a marriage that will be a model to non-Christians while producing influential Christian children at the same time.

Who is supposed to explain why people should get married and how to prepare for marriage and how to select someone to marry and how to proceed with a courtship? Well, pastors are the ones who should know about these things. But they are often afraid to put moral boundaries on people who want to be guided by their emotions and the moral standards of their same-age peers and popular culture. And it's not just a refusal to set moral boundaries and to prove them out using evidence – pastors also shy away from telling their flocks about how different laws and policies provide incentives and disincentives to people to either get married or not, or to stay married or not. How can people vote intelligently for a set of laws and policies that are marriage friendly when they never even think about such things? Pastors don't want to annoy their flock, and they think that reading and thinking annoys their flock.

I think that we need to ask pastors to do a better job of integrating their Bible teaching with real evidence and arguments, and to integrate Christian values with laws and public policies that support those values, and to have real, practical advice on how to prepare for and execute courtship and marriage.

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“Act of Valor” war movie takes first place at the box office this weekend!

February 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Los Angeles Times explains what happened.

Excerpt:

> As Hollywood’s A-listers prepare for the Academy Awards on Sunday, it was the Navy SEAL stars of the movie “Act of Valor” who dominated the box office.
>
> The intense action movie opened to a solid $24.7 million, according to an estimate from distributor Relativity Media, proving by far the most popular choice for audiences.
>
> “Good Deeds,” the latest movie from writer/director Tyler Perry, opened to $16 million. It’s the second-smallest opening ever for the prolific filmmaker and actor, ahead of only 2007’s “Daddy’s Little Girls.”
>
> “Wanderlust,” a new Judd Apatow-produced comedy starring Jennifer Aniston and Paul Rudd, and the thriller “Gone” starring Amanda Seyfried were both flops, opening to just $6.6 million and $5 million, respectively.
>
> […]”Act of Valor,” which has won plaudits for its ultra-realistic action sequences that feature the SEAL stars in training exercises, was a big bet for Relativity. The financially struggling independent studio topped other bidders by paying $13.5 million for rights to the movie produced by production company Bandito Brothers. It also committed tens of millions of dollars to an extensive marketing campaign that included four ads in and around the Super Bowl and online material targeting video game players.
>
> But the investment appears to be paying off, as box-office receipts came in at the high end of pre-release expectations. Just as important, audiences loved the film, giving it an average grade of A, according to market research firm CinemaScore. That was not only true for men, who made up 71% of the audiences, but women.

Here’s the “making of” clip showing how they made it:

Not only were the SEALs in this movie, they helped direct the action sequences!

Here’s a review from the liberal Boston Globe.

Excerpt:

> The casting in “Act of Valor,’’ of course, leads to the movie’s innovations. Dialogue that chiefly entails laying out tactics for missions executed in the next scene pretty much obviates any need for Kenneth Branagh. Having the military play itself is propaganda on one hand, and simple efficiency on the other. It also concentrates the movie-going public’s attraction to combat as spectacle. So why bother with a star if what we’ve come to see, ultimately, are the talents of the

> stunt crew?

> As it happens, “Act of Valor’’ was directed by Mike “Mouse’’ McCoy and Scott Waugh, a couple of veteran stuntmen, who don’t simply admire the SEALs’ defiance of death. They appear to relate to it. Written by Kurt Johnstad, who’s a credited writer of “300,’’ the film involves a typical doomsday plot that manages to combine separate international affronts. A SEAL platoon heads into the tropics to rescue a kidnapped CIA agent (Roselyn Sanchez) who’s been tracking the connection between a Ukrainian drug smuggler (Alex Veadov) and a mass-murdering Chechen jihadist (Jason Cottle), whose bond is tighter than initially suspected.
>
> […]Accordingly, there is beauty in this movie that you’d never experience in any film starring Chuck Norris or Michael Dudikoff. The sound mix keeps suspenseful quiet, while you marvel at what perfect amphibians the SEALs are and how, with them, killing people places a crucial premium on gentleness (the SEALs tiptoeing down a hallway, stirring the air with hand signals, tapping a shoulder, or falling through the night sky). If only the frantic editing had managed to linger longer on the dreaminess of those shots.
>
> […]Really, the film’s presiding spirit of American might and international intimidation is that of Tom Clancy. He’s credited as an advisor on this film, and his influence shows up from time to time. A scene between a SEAL and the smuggler is among the best in the movie. The two men trade insinuations, and the tension is strong. Veadov is a better actor than the SEAL. But this SEAL, with his graying beard and wry sense of humor, has better lines. A sharply done encounter like that implies just what Clancy may have advised.

> The SEALs’ profile is higher since a team killed Osama Bin Laden last year. There hasn’t been this much popular interest since Demi Moore fought to join a similar outfit in “G.I. Jane.’’ “Act of Valor’’ creates an illusion of authenticity while doing strategically little to dispel the group’s mystique. Often with an action film, you know that what you’re watching has been staged. You applaud the rigorous theater. Here, when the film’s climactic sequence has ended, there’s no impulse to clap. The verisimilitude holds you in moral check.

Please go see this movie in the theater! We have to send Hollywood a message.

New York judge grants injunction to allow churches to use school buildings

February 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting story from the Christian Post.

Excerpt:

> Churches in New York City will be allowed to return to public schools starting this weekend after winning a court order Friday.
>
> District Judge Loretta Preska granted a preliminary injunction against the city's ban on weekend worship services in vacant school buildings after determining that the plaintiff – the Bronx Household of Faith – demonstrated irreparable harm and will likely win its lawsuit against the Board of Education.
>
> The judge wrote in the court opinion that the church has a good chance of winning based on the argument that the ban "fosters excessive governmental entanglement with religion" and violates the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment – which provides that "Congress shall make no law … prohibiting the free exercise [of religion]."
>
> The city plans to appeal the ruling.
>
> […]The ban on worship services at public schools went into effect on Feb. 12, affecting more than 60 other churches in New York City.
>
> […]While Judge Preska recognized the Board of Education's concern that allowing schools to be used for religious worship services could be perceived as violating the Establishment Clause, she stated, "In this Court's view, losing one's right to exercise freely and fully his or her religious beliefs is a greater threat to our democratic society than a misperceived violation of the Establishment Clause."

Let's hope that the injunction survives the challenge by Michael Bloomberg.

Pro-lifers should not condone premarital sex as a pathway to marriage

February 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Adams on abortion: click for larger image.

Professor Mike S. Adams is pro-life, but he posted something on Facebook that I must disagree with.

He posted this:

> Over 80% of post-abortive women said they would have had the baby if the guy had been supportive. Five guys find out their girl is pregnant: The first two pressure abortion, the third walks away or was never present, the fourth sticks around for 80 to 120 days, and the fifth steps up totally. This not a woman's problem. It is a lack-of-manhood problem.

Mike has about 5000 friends, and 44 of them liked it. I would think that most of these people would call themselves pro-life conservatives. But I don't think what he posted promotes the pro-life cause.

I replied to him with this:

> Mike I could not disagree more. It's a woman's problem unless it is rape, since the woman consents to sex with a man she is not married to. In fact, the cause of abortion is YOUR opinion – namely, the opinion that women should not be obligated to be chaste or to think rationally about who they are having sex with. There is a path to marriage that goes through courtship, and that path has a name: self-control. Stop enabling the poor choices of women, because we have to stop the murder of unborn children.

Many of Mike's friends supported him. So I wrote this:

> Wow. I had no idea that so many of Mike's friends think that the Bible is a pack of lies when it says that fornication is morally wrong. I guess you guys aren't Christians then, since you feel so free and easy about revising the Bible when you feel like it.
>
> If fornication is wrong, it's wrong for women AND men. And you don't fornicate and then expect happy outcomes from it. There is a word for a person who sins and then expects a good outcome. A FOOL.

Then Mike replied to me:

> Sorry Wintery. Where I come from the man leads and is, therefore, responsible.

I replied to that with this:

> Mike, I agree with male leading – IF the man is a Christian. But the men that these women chose are not Christians. And you can't expect men to act morally unless they have a theistic framework that grounds morality.
>
> Women should not be told, by you and others, that they can choose to have sex with immoral men and then expect the immoral men to act morally. That is just enabling abortion by justifying a lack of prudence and wisdom. Instead, we should be holding women accountable to choose men who WILL control themselves.
>
> We should not be supporting the fantasy view of love that says that recreational sex magically leads men to commit to protect, provide and lead women for life. That view is neither wise nor Biblical. On the contrary, recreational sex leads men to NOT commit. Women have to learn how to select men, to evaluate them for marriage, and to make them prove themselves. We need to tell men AND women that sex before marriage is morally wrong. And we need to be convincing by showing them how recreational sex does not lead to stable marriages, and puts children, unborn and born, in harm's way. Telling the truth about the danger of premarital sex is the best way to stop the killing of unborn children.
>
> Here's an example to make the point. We do not blame bears for mauling campers. Bears are bears, and they were bears before the campers showed up in their cave. We ought to blame the camper for choosing to wander off the trail and into the bear's den in order to PET THE BEAR. Wild bears may eat free food that is offered to them, but they are not going to let you pet them and hug them. Women, like campers, need to be responsible. They need to choose the right man for marriage. They need to exercise self control. They need to make the man prove his ability to commit and support a family BEFORE they have sex with him. No one hires an employee without understanding what job they need done and then making sure that the candidate they choose can do the job. And that's what we need to tell women.

Obviously, I was a little upset when I wrote that, but I hope it wasn't *too* bad.

So what's the point I was trying to make by being critical of Mike? I think the problem we have today is that men who are pro-life are unwilling to hold women accountable for their own poor decisions about sex and marriage. Basically, conservative and/or Christian men think that women don't need to think through what choices are most likely to avoid abortion and most likely to achieve marriage. These men give tacit approval to the popular trend of trying to achieve marriage through premarital sex (or cohabitation), when the research shows that these behaviors do not result in long-lasting stable marriages. In fact, sex out of wedlock is a good way to get into a situation where an

abortion will occur.

In my view, Mike is ainadvertently *encouraging* women to get into the situations where they will be pressured to abort by reinforcing the idea that there is nothing wrong with their plan to achieve marriage by having premarital sex (or cohabitating), and then *expecting* men to respond to their pregnancy by MARRYING them. Mike seems to be telling women that it is normal for them to expect that marriage will follow from premarital sex with men who have not been vetted for the roles of provider, protector and leader As if marriage is natural for men who don't even have jobs and who are surrounded by women willing to have sex with them on the first date. Any man who will have recreational premarital sex with a woman is exactly the kind of person who *will not* commit to lifelong providing and fidelity – he is having sex before marriage because he wants recreation, without the commitment and self-sacrifice that marriage requires. Rationally speaking, it makes no sense for men to buy the cow, and to keep buying the cow with 40 years of labor, when they can get the milk for free. And that's what we need to tell women – think with your minds, not with your emotions.

Here is an interesting statistic from Relevant Magazine:

> [A] recent study reveals that 88 percent of unmarried young adults (ages 18-29) are having sex. The same study, conducted by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, reveals the number doesn't drop much among Christians. Of those surveyed who self-identify as "evangelical," 80 percent say they have had sex.
>
> […]In addition to having premarital sex, an alarming number of unmarried Christians are getting pregnant. Among unmarried evangelical women between the ages of 18 and 29, 30 percent have experienced a pregnancy (a number that's actually 1 percent higher than among those who don't claim to be evangelical).
>
> According to the Guttmacher Institute, nearly half of all pregnancies in America are unintended. And of those, 40 percent end in abortion. More than 1 million abortions occur in the United States each year. **But perhaps the most disturbing statistic for the Church: 65 percent of the women obtaining abortions identify themselves as either Protestant or Catholic (37 percent Protestant and 28 percent Catholic). That's 650,000 abortions obtained by Christians every year.**

Christian women are not told that premarital sex is wrong by many Christians and conservatives – and out of that refusal by "Christians" and "conservatives" to take a stand, we get 650,000 abortions per year. We need to have more courage to tell women to be more self-controlled and responsible when they choose who to have sex with, and when to have sex. We need to tell women to make good decisions that lead to stable marriages. We need to tell women to study these issues and to support policies that produce strong, moral men who are willing to marry – for example, by reforming education so that our schools produce men who can find jobs, perhaps by having more

male teachers in the classroom. We need to tell women to support policies that make marriage more friendly for men, like abolishing no-fault divorce, and promoting shared parenting. Christians in particular need to counteract the views of love and romance that are prevalent in popular culture with a view of relationships built around chastity and love. Although many people today are uncomfortable with moral absolutes and moral judgments, it would be a good be a good idea for women to promote these things, so that the men they are choosing from are more moral.

In the end, I agree with Mike S. Adams in one respect. Abortion *may* be caused by a lack of manhood problem. Only the lack of manhood doesn't come from the men that women choose to have premarital sex with. The lack of manhood comes from men who refuse to hold women accountable for their own free foolish decisions that put unborn children in harm's way. In addition to the abortion problem that results from those foolish decisions, there is also the explosion in out-of-wedlock births to weigh in the balance. Again, the more people tell women that they should expect men who engage in recreational sex to commit to marriage after premarital sex (or cohabitation), the more fatherlessness we get.

Giddy up, Mike.

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New paper in medical ethics journal argues for infanticide

February 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me a link to this paper.

Here is the abstract:

> Abortion is largely accepted even for reasons that do not have anything to do with the fetus' health. By showing that (1) both fetuses and newborns do not have the same moral status as actual persons, (2) the fact that both are potential persons is morally irrelevant and (3) adoption is not always in the best interest of actual people, the authors argue that what we call 'after-birth abortion' (killing a newborn) should be permissible in all the cases where abortion is, including cases where the newborn is not disabled.

Wesley J. Smith says that this sort of thing is not uncommon in bioethics.

Excerpt:

> So, if a woman has a mixed racial affair, she and her same race husband should be able to prevent gossip and embarrassment by killing the baby? (I know of one such case, although the woman wasn't married, she aborted simply because she didn't want to have a mixed race child.) Heck, if the baby's life is worth so little, let's harvest her organs and give them to those babies whose parents want them to live.
>
> As just one other example of many I could give, the *Journal of Medical Ethics* also published an article claiming that scientists should be able to remove the kidneys from people diagnosed with PVS–denigrated as merely "living cadavers"–and transplant in pig organs in the place of their own organs to test the safety of pig-to-human xenotransplantation. And it isn't "just" the *Journal of Medical Ethics*. Look at all the "respectable" bioethics journals that have published outright advocacy to allow doctors to kill for organs.
>
> This doesn't mean the law will accept come to accept the premise–although it could–this is precisely how the right to dehydrate the persistently unconscious started, with articles in bioethics and medical journals. The point is that such arguments are *deemed respectable in bioethics*, which would reject racist or homophobic advocacy out of hand.

I don't know why everyone is so interested in having fun all the time. Why do we have to be happy, even if our being happy means hurting other people?

Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million while he was governor of Massachusetts

February 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Deroy Murdock explains in this Scripps Howard News Service article.

Excerpt:

> Hot on the heels of his eight-vote Iowa-caucus landslide, Willard Mitt Romney is crisscrossing New Hampshire before Tuesday's key primary. Romney is masquerading as a limited-government, free-market executive from next-door Massachusetts. From the Golden Gate to the Granite State, voters should greet Romney's impersonation with a quarry full of skepticism.
>
> **In fact, Romney increased taxes by $309 million, mainly on corporations.** These tax hikes, described by Romney apologists as "loophole closures," totaled $128 million in 2003, $95.5 in 2004, and $85 million in 2005. That final year, Romney proposed $170 million in higher business taxes, the Boston Globe reports. However, the Bay State's liberal, Democratic legislature balked and only approved an $85 million increase.
>
> "Tax rates on many corporations almost doubled because of legislation supported by Romney," Boston Science Corporation chairman Peter Nicholas explained in the January 6, 2008 Boston Herald. Also, Romney raised the tax on subchapter S corporations owned by business trusts from 5.3 percent to 9.9 percent — an 85 percent hike.
>
> "Romney went further than any other governor in trying to wring money out of corporations," the Council on State Taxation's Joseph Crosby complained.
>
> **Romney also created or increased fees by $432 million.** He was not dragooned into this by greedy Democratic lawmakers; Romney himself proposed these items. In 2003 alone, Romney concocted or boosted 88 fees. Romney charged more for marriage licenses (from $6 to $12), gun registrations (from $25 to $75), a used-car sales tax ($10 million), gasoline deliveries ($60 million), real-estate transfers ($175 million), and more. Particularly obnoxious was Romney's $10 fee per Certificate of Blindness. Romney also billed blind people $15 each for discount-travel ID cards.
>
> While Romney can take credit for a $275 million capital-gains tax rebate, property-tax relief for seniors, and a two-day, tax-free shopping holiday, he also must take responsibility for signing $740.5 million in higher taxes, plus that $85 million in business taxes that he requested and legislators rejected.
>
> "Romney did not even fight higher death-tax rates," notes former California State Assembly Minority Whip Steve Baldwin, a Romney critic. "When the (Massachusetts) legislature considered this issue, Romney's official position was

> ‘no position.’ This echoed Barack Obama’s ‘present’ votes in the Illinois State Senate.”
>
> As Romney drained his constituents’ pockets, the Public Policy Institute of New York’s Cost of Doing Business Index rated Massachusetts in 2006 as America’s fourth costliest state in which to practice free enterprise. The Tax Foundation dropped Massachusetts from America’s 29th most business-friendly state to No. 36. The Tax Foundation also calculated that, under Romney, Massachusetts’ per-capita tax burden increased from 9.3 percent to 9.9 percent. In real dollars, the Romney-era per-capita tax burden grew by $1,175.71.
>
> As if impoverishing his own taxpayers were not bad enough, Romney’s March 5, 2003 signature raised taxes on non-residents retroactive to that January 1. Perpetrating taxation without representation, Romney’s law declared that, “gross income derived from… any trade or business, including any employment,” would be taxable, “regardless of the taxpayer’s residence or domicile in the year it is received.”
>
> Consequently, according to data furnished by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, between 2002 and 2006, New Hampshire residents who work or do business in the Bay State shipped Massachusetts $95 million above what they paid when Romney arrived. The average tax paid by New Hampshirities to Massachusetts grew by 19.1 percent, from $2,392 in 2002 to $2,850 in 2006.

Romney has a pro-abortion record and pro-gay-marriage record. Not only did he pass Romneycare in Massachusetts, but now we know that he also raised taxes. Why is he running as a Republican? I don’t see anything in his record that would cause me to believe that he is a Republican.

You can see Mitt Romney explaining all of his liberal views in his own words in these videos.

Mitt Romney

- Mitt Romney’s tax returns would make him lose the election to Obama
- Does Mitt Romney’s Romneycare health care plan fund abortion with taxpayer dollars?
- John Hawkins writes the most scathing anti-Romney column EVER
- Santorum and Gingrich expose Romney’s liberal record in Sunday’s NBC debate
- Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million while he was governor of Massachusetts
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- RINO Mitt Romney now open to European-style VAT tax
- Is Mitt Romney a flip-flopper? What are his flip-flops?
- RINO Mitt Romney deploys another RINO John Sununu to attack Newt Gingrich
- Mitt Romney supports the anti-Christian and anti-business ENDA law
- Mitt Romney gaffe: Romney fails miserably in interview with Bret Baier
- Jon Huntsman’s anti-Romney ads are awesome

- Mitt Romney’s political views on gay marriage, abortion and global warming
- Mitt Romney flip-flop videos: flat tax, abortion, health care, public sector unions, global warming
- Mitt Romney on global warming, climate change, environmental regulations
- Mitt Romney on abortion and stem cell research in his own words
- White House used Mitt Romney’s Romneycare as a blueprint for Obamacare
- Mitt Romney on the issues: Mitt Romney political views and positions in 2012

What does Rick Santorum's economic plan do?

February 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal, a column by Rick Santorum.

Excerpt:

> [I]n my first 100 days as president, I'll submit to Congress and work to pass a comprehensive pro-growth and pro-family Economic Freedom Agenda. Here are 10 of its main initiatives:
>
> - *Unleash America's energy.* I'll approve the Keystone Pipeline for jobs and energy security, and sign an order on day one unleashing America's domestic energy production, allowing states to choose where they want to explore for oil and natural gas and to set their own regulations for hydrofracking.
> - *Stop job-killing regulation.* All Obama administration regulations that have an economic burden over $100 million will be repealed, including the Environmental Protection Agency rule on CO2 emissions that's already shut down six power plants. I'll review all regulations, making sure they use sound science and cost benefit analysis.
> - *A pro-growth, pro-family tax policy.* I'll submit to Congress comprehensive tax policies to strengthen opportunity in our country, with only two income tax rates of 10% and 28%. To help families, I'll triple the personal deduction for children and eliminate the marriage tax penalty.
> - *Restore America's competitiveness.* The corporate tax rate should be halved, to a flat rate of 17.5%. Corporations should be allowed to expense all business equipment and investment. Taxes on corporate earnings repatriated from overseas should be eliminated to bring home manufacturing. I'll take the lead on tort reform to lower costs to consumers.
> - *Rein in spending.* I'll propose spending cuts of $5 trillion over five years, including cuts for the remainder of fiscal year 2013. I'll propose budgets that spend less money each year than prior years, and I'll reduce the nondefense-related federal work force by at least 10%, without replacing them with private contractors.
> - *Repeal and replace ObamaCare.* I'll submit legislation to repeal ObamaCare, and on day one issue an executive order ending related regulatory obligations on the states. I'll work with Congress to replace ObamaCare with competitive insurance choices to improve quality and limit the costs of health care, while protecting those with uninsurable health conditions. In contrast, Gov. Romney signed into law RomneyCare, which provided the model for ObamaCare. Its best-known feature is its overreaching individual health-care mandate. But it shares over a dozen other similarities with

> ObamaCare and has given Massachusetts the highest health-care premiums in the nation, and longer waits for health care.
> - *Balance the budget.* I'll submit to Congress a budget that will balance within four years and call on Congress to pass a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution which limits federal spending to 18% of GDP.
> - *Negotiate and submit free trade agreements.* Because many Americans work for companies which export, I'll initiate negotiations in the first 100 days and submit to Congress five free trade agreements during my first year in office to increase exports.
> - *Reform entitlements.* I'll cut means-tested entitlement programs by 10% across the board, freeze them for four years, and block grant them to states—as I did as the author of welfare reform in 1996. I'll reform Medicare and Social Security so they are fiscally sustainable for seniors and young people.
> - *Revive housing.* I'll submit plans to Congress to phase out within several years Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's federal housing role, reform and make transparent the Federal Reserve, and allow families whose mortgages are "underwater" to deduct losses from the sale of their home in order to get a fresh start in difficult economic times.

According to the Wall Street Journal, Santorum's a "supply-sider for the working man".

Rick Santorum

- Fact check: Mitt Romney's claim that Rick Santorum was a big spender
- Rick Santorum and Barbara Boxer debate partial birth abortion in 1999
- Rick Santorum: Catholic bishops should not have supported Obamacare
- Rick Santorum gets endorsements from James Dobson and John Stemberger
- Wall Street Journal: Rick Santorum is a supply-sider for the working man
- Rick Santorum would not stand idle while Iran develops nuclear weapons
- 150 evangelical leaders agree to endorse Rick Santorum after two-day conference
- Why Christians and social conservatives should vote for Rick Santorum
- Rick Santorum's pro-family economic plan TRIPLES the child tax deduction
- Is Rick Santorum conservative or liberal? What are Rick Santorum's political views?
- Rick Santorum helps liberal college students to understand the logic of marriage
- George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class
- Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech
- Rick Santorum for President of the United States
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- Rick Santorum wins Fox News Republican primary debate (with video)
- Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

UK government has “run out of money”

February 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> In a stark warning ahead of next month’s Budget, the Chancellor said there was little the Coalition could do to stimulate the economy.

> Mr Osborne made it clear that due to the parlous state of the public finances the best hope for economic growth was to encourage businesses to flourish and hire more workers.

> “The British Government has run out of money because all the money was spent in the good years,” the Chancellor said. “The money and the investment and the jobs need to come from the private sector.”
>
> […]Mr Osborne is under severe pressure to boost growth, amid signs the economy is slipping back into a recession.
>
> The Institute of Fiscal Studies has urged him to consider emergency tax cuts in the Budget to reduce the risk of a prolonged economic slump.
>
> But the Chancellor yesterday said he would stand firm on his effort to balance the books by refusing to borrow money. “Any tax cut would have to be paid for,” Mr Osborne told Sky News. “In other words there would have to be a tax rise somewhere else or a spending reduction.
>
> “In other words what we are not going to do in this Budget is borrow more money to either increase spending or cut taxes.”

What I thought was funny was the poll in the article. It had three choices. “Tax the rich more”, “Borrow more” and “We can’t afford tax cuts”. There was no option to cut spending! But maybe there is nothing that can be cut?

Look at this article from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> The Tavistock Clinic is based in an anonymous concrete building in North London. Once there, you have to go to the third floor to find the Orwellian-sounding Gender Identity Development Unit.
>
> The unit received £1,042,000 in funding last year from the local healthcare Trust. In layman’s terms, it treats patients who believe they are ‘trapped in the wrong body’.
>
> Few would associate such a place with children barely old enough to attend school.
>
> But it emerged this week that a little boy called Zach Avery, just five years old,

> now wears his hair permanently in bunches after being assessed by ‘experts’ at the Tavistock and ‘coming out’ as a girl.
>
> And Zach is not an isolated case.
>
> Over the past year, 165 children have been referred to the clinic’s team of social workers, child psychotherapists, psychologists and psychiatrists.
>
> Seven children under the age of five were officially diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder (GID) — when a person is born one gender, but feels they are the other.

The UK government wants economic growth, but they are not willing to do what works – cut spending and cut taxes. They just can’t give up their social programs. It’s not even an option for them to consider.

Research paper explains why college students abandon courtship for hook ups

February 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This study is from the Institute for American Values. It was done by Elizabeth Marquardt.

The PDF of study is here.

If you download the 88 page PDF, the first few pages are an executive summary.

I'd been exposed to this research before when I read Dr. Miriam Grossmann's book "Unprotected". (Boundless review here) I just got Dr. Miriam Grossmann's new book "You're Teaching My Child What?" and I also got Elizabeth Marquardt's new book "Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce". I don't think either of them is conservative, but I like their research anyway.

There are a couple of things that really struck me about this IAV study on hooking-up.

First, this one from p. 15:

> A notable feature of hook ups is that they almost always occur when both participants are drinking or drunk.
>
> A Rutgers University student observed, "You always hear people say, oh my gosh, I was so drunk, I hooked up with so and so…" Perhaps not surprisingly, many noted that being drunk helped to loosen one's inhibitions and make it easier to hook up. A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up. A Yale University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up." A New York University student observed, "[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking."
>
> A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."
>
> Other women observed that being drunk gives a woman license to act sexually interested in public in ways that would not be tolerated if she were sober. For instance, a University of Michigan student said, "Girls are actually allowed to be a lot more sexual when they are drunk…"
>
> A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."
>
> Some reported that drinking had led them to do things they later regretted. A University of Virginia student said, "My last random hook up was last October and it was bad. I was drunk and I just regretted it very much."

And this one from p. 30 on the effects of hooking-up on their future commitments:

> A few women did see an unambiguous connection between present relationships and future marriage.
>
> […]Many women either saw little or no connection between present and future relationships, or their understanding of this connection was curiously flat. A student at New York University said, "[The present and the future are] connected because I will still have the same values and principles that I have now, but I just won't be single anymore."A number of women said that the present and the future are connected because whatever heartache or confusion they experience now gives them lessons for the future.
>
> A University of Michigan student said, "Early relationships prepare you for marriage because it's like, oh, what type of person do I want to be with? Oh, I've had these bad experiences. Or, I've learned from this relationship that I should do this and I shouldn't do this."
>
> A sophomore at Howard University said that "I am kind of learning from a lot of the mistakes that I have made." At a further extreme, some women saw their future marriage as the reason to experiment widely in the present. A Rutgers University student said,"I think hooking up with different people and seeing what you like and don't like is a good idea. Because eventually you're going to have to… marry someone and I'd just like to know that I experienced everything."
>
> Although it is admirable to take risks and learn from one's mistakes, these women would probably find it difficult to explain how having your heart broken a few or even many times in your early years — or trying to separate sex from feeling, as in hooking up — is good preparation for a trusting and happy marriage later on.

And on p. 42, we learn what women think marriage is and isn't for:

> For instance, in the on-campus interviews one student complained, "[With] marriage…you have to debate everything… Why do you need a piece of paper to bond a person to you? …But I know if I don't get married I'll probably feel like… [a] lonely old woman… If anything, I'd get married [because of] that."
>
> This student went on to say that she would be satisfied to live with a man, but added that, if the man was committed to her, he would offer to marry her, and that this was the kind of commitment that she wanted. A student at the University of Washington said,"I don't want to get married right after I graduate from college. I just think that would stunt my growth in every way that there is. I would like to be in a very steady, committed relationship with a guy."

And on p. 44, we learn that they like co-habitation, which increases the risk of divorce by about 50% (but they don't know *that*):

> In the national survey, 58 percent of the respondents agreed that "It is a good

> idea to live with someone before deciding to marry him." This belief often coexists with a strong desire to marry, because it was embraced by 49 percent of the respondents who strongly agreed that marriage was a very important goal for them.
>
> […]Women we interviewed on campus reflected a similar range of attitudes about cohabitation. Some women thought that cohabitation was a good way to test whether one could spend a lifetime with a potential partner. In such cases, women often cited fears of divorce as the reason for trying cohabitation first. A senior at the University of Washington said, "I kind of don't really see marriages work ever, so I want to make sure that everything's all right before [we get married]. I don't see how people can get married without living together because I know like I have a best friend and I live with her and we want to kill each other, like, every few months."
>
> Other women felt that, in an age of divorce, cohabitation was a preferable alternative to marriage. A student at New York University said, "You see so [many] people getting divorces… I just don't see the necessity [of marriage]." She went on to say, "I think that I don't have to be married to [the] person that I'm with…. You know like… Goldie Hawn [and Kurt Russell]? They're not married."

But let's get back to the drinking and the hook-up sex…

Once a woman abandons femininity for feminism, then sex is all that she can use to get noticed by a man. Men are like hiring managers, and courting is like a job interview for the job of marriage and mothering. If a woman tries to get the job by having sex with the interviewer, he isn't going to hire her since sex has nothing to do with the job. There are children involved, you know – he has to think of them when he makes the hiring decision. But women have been taught to think bad things about men (they're rapists) and marriage (it's slavery) by feminists – so they don't even try to understand men, or to respect men, or prepare their character for being a wife and mother. Feminists just don't understand that hard work is needed to understand men and prepare for marriage.

In a previous post, I explained how feminists wanted to get women to drink like men, have sex like men, and to abolish courtship and marriage. Under the influence of feminism and Hollywood celebrities, women began to choose men to have sex with without any consideration of morality, religion, marriage, etc. They thought that sex was an easy way to trick a man into committing to them without having to treat him like a real person, or to take the demands of marriage and parenting seriously. (They have been taught to value education and careers over husbands and children, you understand). This results in a cycle of binge-drinking, one-night-stands, cheating, co-habitating, breaking-up, stalking, aborting, etc., until the woman's ability to trust and love anyone but herself is completely destroyed. And yet these college women somehow believe this is "adventurous", that it makes them feel "sexy", and that the experience of being selfish and seeing the worst kind of men acting in the worst possible ways, point blank, somehow prepares them for marriage and motherhood.

Often, a young unmarried woman's biological father was NOT selected by her mother based on his ability to make commitments and moral judgments. Many feminists prefer men who do not judge women morally, nor impose his religion on her. But those very things that young unmarried women today seem to dislike most about men, because they fear rejection on moral and religious grounds, are exactly the things that make men good husbands and fathers. They don't want to be judged or led spiritually, so they choose immoral, non-religious men. Men who are not firm on morality and religion do cannot be counted on to act morally and self-sacrificially. And when they fail, and the marriages break up, the children grow up fatherless and may develop negative views of men.

Every young unmarried woman who chooses a bad man, and then has a bad experience with him is pushing away marriage with both hands. The more she destroys her ability to trust, love and care for others, the less she is able to be happy and effective in a marriage.

Thoughts from William Lane Craig's debate with Louise Antony

February 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I read Dr. Craig's report of his debate with Louise Antony on the topic of God and morality. My impression from his review was that she hadn't prepared for the debate and didn't understand the moral argument at all (she is from Amherst, Massachusetts, so… they are pretty sheltered). She strikes me as the typical student who goes off to college, starts drinking and partying, and then adjusts her philosophy to suit her peer group – and her superiors.

My impressions of her were confirmed by J.W. Wartick's blog post.

Summary:

> It will be my purpose in the following arguments to show that secular humanistic theories which try to ground moral ontology fail–and fail miserably.
>
> Recently, I listened [again] to the debate between William Lane Craig and Louise Anthony. Some have lauded this debate as a stirring victory for secular ethics. (See, for example, the comments here–one comment even goes so far as to say "I swoon when someone evokes the Euthyphro Dilemma and frown at the impotent, goal-post-moving, 'Divine nature' appeal.") In reality, I think Louise Anthony did indeed present the case for secular metaethics. *The problem is that this case is utterly vacuous.*
>
> I'll break down why this is the case by focusing upon three areas of development in secular and theistic ethics: objective moral truths, suffering, and moral facts.

Here's the snarkiest part:

> Louise Anthony seems to be just confused about the nature of objective morality. She says in response to a question from the audience, "The universe has no purpose, but *I* do… I have *lots* of purposes…. It makes a lot of difference to a lot of people and to *me* what I do. That gives my life significance… The only thing that would make it [sacrificing her own life] insignificant would be if my children's lives were insignificant. And, boy you better not say that!"
>
> Craig responded, "But Louise, on atheism, their lives *are* insignificant." Anthony interjected, "Not to *me*!"
>
> But then she goes on to make this confused statement, "It's an objective fact that they [her children] are significant to me."
>
> Note how Anthony has confused the terms here. Yes, it is an objective fact that according to Louise Anthony, her children matter to her. We can't question Anthony's own beliefs–we must trust what she tells us unless we have reason to think otherwise. But that's not enough. What Craig and other theists are trying to

> press is that that simple fact*has nothing to do with whether her children are actually valuable.* Sure, people may go around complaining that “Well, it matters *to me*, so it does matter!” But that doesn’t make it true. All kinds of things can matter to people, that doesn’t mean that they are ontologically objective facts.
>
> It matters to me whether the Cubs [an American baseball team] win the World Series. That hasn’t happened in 104 years, so it looks like it doesn’t matter in the overall scheme of the universe after all. But suppose I were to, like Anthony, retort, “But the Cubs matter *to me*! It’s an objective fact that them winning the World Series is significant to me!” Fine! But all the Cardinals [a rival team] fans would just laugh at me and say “*SO WHAT!?*“
>
> Similarly, one can look at Anthony with incredulity and retort, “Who cares!?” Sure, if you can get enough people around Anthony who care about her children’s moral significance, you can develop a socially derived morality. But that’s not enough to ground objective morality. Why should we think that her values matter to the universe at large? On atheism, what reason is there for saying that her desires and purposes for her children are any better than my desires and purposes for the Cubs?

She doesn’t even understand the difference between objective and subjective morality! Sigh.

Obama administration refused to help pro-democracy forces in Iran

February 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Middle East Map
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> During their brutally suppressed protests in 2009, Iranian freedom fighters sent the White House an urgent memo calling for help. Under Obama, America ignored it.
>
> ‘So now, at this pivotal point in time, it is up to the countries of the free world to make up their mind,” Iranian opposition leaders told the Obama administration in an eight-page memo in 2009. “Will they continue on the track of wishful thinking and push every decision to the future until it is too late, or will they reward the brave people of Iran and simultaneously advance the Western interests and world peace.”
>
> President Obama made his choice, and like so often before it was to vote “present.”
>
> The memo, written by leaders of Iran’s Green Party after the summer 2009 anti-government demonstrations, was obtained by the Washington Examiner.
>
> The document confirms GOP candidate Rick Santorum’s charge that the U.S. squandered an opportunity to undermine the government established by the Ayatollah Khomeini three decades ago.
>
> In the Arizona GOP debate last week, Santorum noted that “we did absolutely nothing to help” the Green Revolution. But “when the radicals in Egypt and the radicals in Libya, the Muslim Brotherhood … rise against either a feckless leader

> or a friend of ours in Egypt, the president is more than happy to help them out."
>
> The memo refutes claims still being made by the State Department that the Green Party "did not desire financial or other support," because it "would discredit it in the eyes of the Iranian people."
>
> The secret memo's warning that the Islamist regime "with its apocalyptic constitution will never give up the atomic bomb" also contradicts conventional wisdom that the Green movement wants a nuclear Iran.
>
> The Obama administration is oddly proud that it does "not provide financial assistance to any political movement, party or faction in Iran." But Foundation for the Defense of Democracies scholar Michael Ledeen has argued for years that supporting Iran's real opposition can keep it from becoming the first jihadist nuclear power.
>
> In his 2007 book "The Iranian Time Bomb," Ledeen insists there must be "an explicit declaration that the United States wants regime change in Iran." The Voice of America Persian Service could help.
>
> As Ledeen notes, "Several Iraqi ayatollahs, including some who lived in Iran for many years, would love to do this, as would Khomeini's grandson Hossein Khomeini, who has openly criticized his grandfather's creation."
>
> The U.S. can also provide satellite phones and laptops to students, religious leaders and others, and fund large-scale strikes and mass demonstrations to bring Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei's regime down.
>
> With Iran close to a nuclear weapon, military action may be the only option. But the Green memo is a shameful blemish for a president who could have prevented a threat to the free world of nuclear terror, but didn't.

This is important. A lot of liberals ask me what I would do to resolve the Iran situation short of war. One of the things we could be doing is supporting pro-democracy movements in Iran with information warfare, money, arms, etc. I was very annoyed when Obama backed dictators in Iran, Venezuela and Honduras, while helping the Islamists to take power in Libya and Egypt. Why does he do that? Is he stupid? Is he evil? Or is it a combination of the two?

Conservative MP’s bill to repeal Section 13 moves to committee

February 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

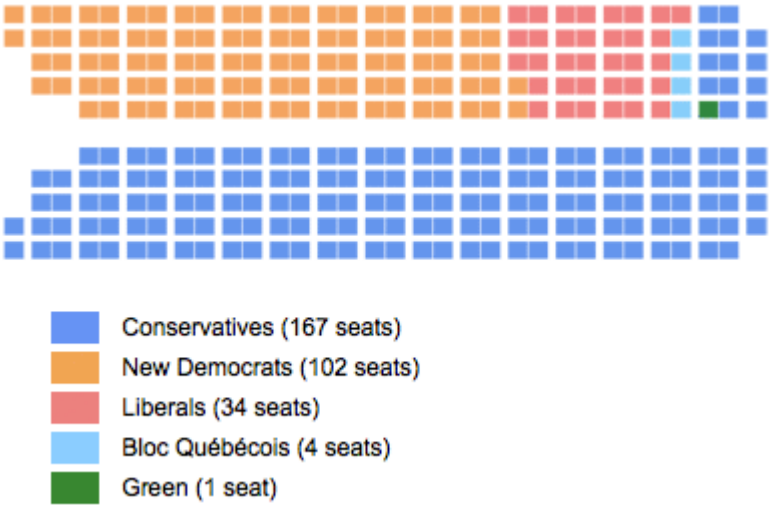

Canada 2011 Federal Election Results

Andrew sent me this article from the Chronicle Herald.

Excerpt:

> To protect freedom of expression in Canada, sometimes you need a majority government in Ottawa.
>
> That’s the moral of the story of a Conservative backbencher’s private member’s bill — which has now cleared second reading in the House of Commons and gone to committee — seeking to repeal Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act.
>
> Let’s recall the exact wording of that infamous clause. Hate messages, according to Section 13 (1), are communications “likely to expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt by reason of the fact that that person or those persons are identifiable on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination.”
>
> In other words, if I were to write something critical about Islam, for example, and someone reading my column felt it “likely” that my words could provoke “contempt” towards Muslims, they could lodge a complaint against me with one of Canada’s government-created human rights commissions.
>
> Truth would not be a defence. Neither would my intent. And the person complaining wouldn’t even have to be a Muslim.
>
> That’s because, on top of the appallingly loose wording of this section of federal human rights law — a clause echoed in its provincial counterparts — any complaints are adjudicated by government-appointed tribunals, where the standard protections afforded any accused in a court of law don’t necessarily apply.
>
> When complainants’ cases go forward, taxpayers pick up the tab. Meanwhile,

> those accused must pay to defend themselves out of their own pockets.
>
> It's a system ripe for abuse. And that's exactly what has happened. We've seen comics fined for insulting hecklers (B.C. human rights tribunal), former publishers spend $100,000 in legal fees over three years to defend themselves for printing "offensive" cartoons (Alberta human rights commission), and Maclean's magazine investigated by three human rights bodies (federal, Ontario and B.C.) for running an article on Muslim demographics in Europe.
>
> The Conservatives have long opposed Section 13, but didn't feel they had the support they needed from the other parties, as a minority government, to push the issue legislatively.
>
> They also were concerned, with good reason, that some opponents might twist the issue for political advantage, slamming the Tories for being soft on hate.
>
> Yes, Bill C-304, which aims to repeal Sections 13 and 54 (dealing with penalties under S.13), was put forward by Alberta MP Brian Storseth (Westlock-St. Paul) and is a private member's bill, but the legislation has the justice minister's endorsement. So there's a good chance the bill will be back in the Commons this spring for final reading, then on to the Senate and, hopefully, passage and royal assent.
>
> The bill, if made law, would take effect a year after receiving royal assent.

Canada does not protect free speech right now. Repealing Section 13 would be good, but Canada is not a good place for families to raise children. Even if they get Section 13 repealed, there is still the recent unanimous Supreme Court decision affirming that the provincial governments have a right to decide what children will believe – not parents. The Supreme Court was mostly selected by the previous Liberal governments.

UK Christians hammered by Harriet Harman's anti-Christian laws

February 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the United Kingdom UK
From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> Equality laws introduced by the last Labour Government have been attacked by a group of MPs for promoting 'unacceptable' discrimination against Christians.
>
> In a strongly worded report out tomorrow, they say the legal system now places the freedom of believers to express their faith below the rights of other groups, such as the gay community.
>
> The report, by an all-party committee of MPs and peers, criticises Government, the courts, employers and police for ignorance over religion and unfairly curbing expressions of faith.
>
> Calling for changes in the law, it says there are 'significant problems' with the controversial Equality Act 2010, steered though Parliament by deputy Labour leader Harriet Harman.
>
> Interpretation of the Act, the committee says, has resulted in religious belief being 'relegated' below the rights of other groups.
>
> Referring to a series of cases highlighted by The Mail on Sunday, it says: 'Critically, early indications from court judgments are that sexual orientation takes precedence and religious belief is required to adapt.'

> The report cites registrar Lillian Ladele who lost her job at Islington town hall, North London, after refusing to officiate at civil partnerships, and Roman Catholic adoption agencies banned from turning away gay couples.
>
> The report also refers to bed and breakfast owners Peter and Hazelmary Bull, who were fined for refusing a bed to a gay couple, even though they also barred unmarried heterosexual couples.
>
> The committee says it is 'clearly unfair' for the gay couple's rights to overrule those of the owners of the B&B.
>
> Similar problems were faced by those who expressed their faith at work by displaying a religious symbol, the report said.
>
> Electrician Colin Atkinson faced the sack from Wakefield District Housing after refusing to remove a cross from his van. The report concludes: 'It is hard to conceive how this common and ancient tradition could have caused any offence. The case became a symbol of the excesses of political correctness.'
>
> MPs and peers were also critical of the treatment of Cumbrian street preacher Dale McAlpine, arrested and charged for saying homosexuality was a 'sin'.
>
> In another case, Adrian Smith was demoted and had his pay slashed by Trafford Housing Trust after he criticised gay marriage on his Facebook site.
>
> The committee says: 'The cases show it is becoming increasingly difficult for Christians to speak out about their views on sexuality without fear of recrimination.'

I am trying to convince many of my apologetics-enabled British friends to think a second time about how they vote. I could have told you back then that Harriet Harman was a snake. But many good-natured, slightly naive Christians voted for her. They thought that it is the government's job to "spread the wealth around" and make people feel better about themselves – regardless of what they do. "Is it really such a bad thing for children to be fatherless?" they asked. "What is so wrong with passing laws to make sure that no one is ever offended by mean, hateful bigots?" they wondered.

Wake up, Christians! To the secular left, *you are the bigots*. Next time, pick up a book on economics and get yourself straightened out before you pull the leaver. Stop voting for bigger government. If poverty vexes you, get a job and give your *own* money away to people *you* want to help. That's what I do. Big government means less liberty.

UPDATE: Pat wrote this in a comment below:

> When I was living and working in England a Muslim doctor and I used to compare and contrast the differences in our religion as we wound down on a Friday afternoon. Not argueing, just discussing. He got a new secretary.
>
> First week she was there, we started out usual banter it always used to start this way. She started shouting 'Don't keep rowing about religion.' He looked at her in surprise and said 'We're not rowing, we're discussing.' She then shouted 'People

> start wars over religion.’ Again, he said we’re not rowing, we’re discussing.’
>
> We still carried on every Friday afternoon. next thing I know I was called down to my manager and told off in no uncertain terms for trying to convert him. When he found out he stormed down to my manager’s office and really had a go at her slaming her desk with his fist. He asked why I had been called down, when it could just as easily have been that he was trying to convert me to Islam. (Neither of us were actually trying to convert the other, but for months had been comparing the Q’ran and the Bible). The secretary was, by the way, an athiest.
>
> We still carried on our discussions, but he used to ring me and call me into his office. It was good actually, because the other doctor he shared with was also Muslim and he also started joining in.
>
> This was at least 10 years ago, so it had already started then.

She is in the UK.

Father arrested and strip-searched because daughter drew picture of gun

February 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of Canada
From the Toronto Sun.

Excerpt:

> The Sansone family is not getting any apologies after they were put through hell by school officials, social workers and police last week.
>
> And, the smoking gun — a child's drawing that triggered the whole thing — will never be seen.
>
> "I am really sorry that the family is as upset as they are, but we followed proper standards and procedures," said Alison Scott, executive director of Family and Child Services for the Waterloo Region.
>
> She told QMI Agency if the same situation happened again tomorrow, her organization would do the exact same thing over again.
>
> "I do not see any need for our agency to apologize for fulfilling our mandated responsibility," Scott said.
>
> The drawing that startled the teacher, who started the domino effect, has vanished.
>
> Scott told QMI Agency it was drawn on a white board and had been erased. She doesn't know if anyone other than the teacher ever saw it. She also doesn't know if anyone took an image of it.
>
> Jessie Sansone, a 26-year-old father of four, was arrested at his children's school,

> strip searched and held by police, told he was being charged with illegal possession of a firearm. Three of his children were taken by Family and Child Services to be questioned and his pregnant wife, Stephanie, was hauled down to the police station after their four-year-old daughter drew a picture of her dad holding a gun.
>
> Police searched their house and neighbours said cops were going through the house all afternoon.
>
> Eventually, police let Sansone go, saying all they found was a transparent plastic toy that shoots little plastic balls. The toy gun costs $16 at Canadian Tire.
>
> Scott said it wasn't just the picture, but the resulting conversation with the junior kindergarten teacher that caused the state workers to go into red alert – but she won't say what was said.
>
> "If there is a drawing where there is some information relayed through that drawing that children may have access to what is described as a gun, and that access may be unsupervised and these children may be concerned because the gun was pointed at them and they didn't feel safe, that would concern anyone," said Scott, speaking theoretically.
>
> The social workers still have an "open investigation" on the family, despite police dropping all charges and launching a review of their own conduct.
>
> The walls of the modest Sansone home are covered with family photos, certificates of achievement and framed scripture. The soft spoken young couple now have a lawyer and wanted to share with QMI Agency they are humbled and encouraged by all of the messages and posts supporting them.
>
> Sansone said earlier that he had felt humiliated and isolated sitting in a cell, not knowing where his children were, or why he was being charged with anything, but getting messages from Tahsis B.C. to Truro, N.S., is balm for the soul.

The education system is *dominated* by liberalism. There is strong desire for completely control of thoughts and actions in order to prevent anyone from being different from others. They think that absolute uniformity will prevent conflict and make everyone feel "happy". I wonder how happy that little girl was, though? And I wonder how happy her father was while he sat in a jail cell reflecting on how his tax dollars were being used by secular leftists to persecute him? I hope he did not vote for the Ontario Liberal Party or the NDP – they are ones who support this kind of thing.

A common occurence

This sort of thing happens all the time in socialist welfare states like Canada.
The Supreme Court just ruled that educational bureaucrats should have more authority than parents to educate children. In Alberta, the government wants to make it illegal for parents to tell children that homosexuality is morally wrong.

Here is a story from Canada that shows why we need to be careful about enacting compassionate, non-judgmental, liberal social policies.

Excerpt:

> A Gatineau father lost an appeal Monday after a lower court ruled last June that he had issued a too severe punishment against his 12-year-old daughter.
>
> The case involves a divorced man who says that in 2008 he caught the girl, over whom he had custody, surfing websites he had forbidden and posting "inappropriate pictures of herself" online. The girl's father told her as a consequence that she would not be allowed to go on her class' graduation trip to Quebec City, even though her mother had already given permission for her to do so.
>
> The girl then contacted a legal-aid lawyer who was involved in the parents' custody battle, who convinced the court to order that the girl be allowed to go on the trip with her class. The father appealed the decision on principle, although his daughter went on the trip in the meantime.
>
> The appeals court reportedly warned in its ruling that the case should not be seen as an open invitation for children to take legal action against their parents when grounded.
>
> The girl now lives with her mother.

The more you reduce the male role and male authority in the family, the fewer men will want to take on the responsibilities of being a Dad. We need to be careful not to replace husbands and fathers with big government social programs and intrusive, anti-male courts. Men like to make decisions. We don't want the nanny state telling us what to do – and paid for by the taxes we pay.

There is more to the story.

You may think that this would be overturned on appeal, but the father LOST his appeal, too.

Women need to stop voting for bigger government

So, what the daughter, wife, prosecuting attorney and judge (all feminists?) are all telling this Dad that he can donate sperm, pay bills, and pay taxes for social programs, but that he cannot PARENT his own children.

I have two questions:

- Does anyone care what men want, or should we just be ordered around like little boys?
- Do we really think that state coercion is going to make men be more involved with their marriages and children?

I think that marriage should allow men to express themselves as fathers, just as much as women can express themselves as mothers. Parenting should be an equally shared responsibility, and the father should have as much parental authority as the mother. Equality. It's very important to understand that women in general, and single women in

particular, tend to vote for bigger government, with the goal of making everyone feel good, shutting down free speech that offends people, and providing social programs and welfare to protect those who act recklessly and irresponsibly. But I think that's time that women realize that bigger government means less power for individuals and families.

If women want to get married and have a family and let a man be a father and husband, then they need to *stop voting for more social programs and higher taxes.* Voting for more government is killing the traditional family. Instead, women need to take responsibility for evaluating men and choosing men who can perform the traditional roles expected of men in marriage. Do not outsource the roles of men to government, it just results in fewer and fewer men who are willing and financially able to get married.

It's important to know what men want and need from marriage, and then to promote laws and policies that equip them to marry and provide incentives to them to get married and stay married. Marriages are best when men are respected as leaders, earners and decisions makers – that's how men are. If women don't want men to be empowered to lead and provide, then women don't want *real* marriage – and they're not going to get marriage. Marriage is dying right before our eyes already – because of of our own votes.

Paul Ryan questions Chief Actuaries of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security

March 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found all of this stuff on the House Budget Committee web site.

Medicare and Medicaid

Paul Ryan interviews Richard Foster, Chief Actuary of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Excerpt of transcript:

> HBC CHAIRMAN RYAN: As you may know, I've been working across the aisle with a member of the Oregon delegation from the Senate on a premium support plan that uses competitive bidding to help determine the contribution. Competitive bidding we've seen has worked well in Medicare Part D and Medicare Advantage. I'd like to get your thoughts on choice and competition as it relates to these previous successful reform plans. Given what we've seen in these aspects of Medicare, do you believe that competitive bidding is a process that can be successfully applied Medicare-wide?
>
> CMS CHIEF ACTUARY FOSTER: Yes, I think it can. Obviously, it would represent a large change from the status quo, but I think it could work. We've seen the signs of this – you mentioned the Part D prescription drug program, for example, where the different drug plans compete against each other on the quality of their benefit package and the premium level. And we've seen – every year since Part D started – a migration of beneficiaries to more efficient plans with lower premiums. So that can help. We've also seen for durable medical equipment that competitive bidding, in this particular area of Fee-For-Service Medicare, reduced prices that we had to pay by 40 percent.
>
> RYAN: By forty percent?
>
> FOSTER: Forty percent, that's right.
>
> RYAN: Those are the kinds of cost savings we're going to have to achieve if want to make good on the promise of the Medicare guarantee. This should not be a partisan issue. Competitive bidding is something Alice Rivlin has been a champion of, Ron Wyden has been talking about, the Bipartisan Policy Center, and more. There is a lot of data out there that competitive bidding when applied Medicare-wide can achieve the benefit of keeping these benefits going while attacking the root cause of cost growth.

It sounds to me like there is a real crisis, that Ryan has a plan to solve it, and that the person who is the most aware of the finances of these two entitlements agrees with Ryan.

Social Security

Paul Ryan interviews Stephen Goss, Chief Actuary of the Social Security Administration. Excerpt of transcript:

> HBC CHAIRMAN RYAN: If we do [nothing], then we have an across-the-board cut of about 23 percent that occurs in benefits. Is that correct?
>
> SSA CHIEF ACTUARY GOSS: Exactly… The Commissioner standing at that time would simply have 77 cents available for every dollar of scheduled benefits, and would not be permitted to spend more than that. We do not have borrowing authority. So a decision would have to be made about who would get the money. We could have an across-the-board 23% cut immediately, or a Commissioner could say, 'Well we're not going to pay the March benefits in March. We'll wait until April – wait until more revenues come in to allow full payment a month late.' After a few months we would perhaps then have to start paying benefits *two*months late. So this would be a way that it could be handled. Of course, if people have to pay rent on time, that would be a difficulty. There's no easy way out on this… We hope and pray that Congress would indeed act well before we ever hit the Trust Fund reserve exhaustion.
>
> RYAN: Given that we have this abrupt 23% cut that occurs in law – current law – is it not wise so start reforming now, sooner, so that the distribution of the change is spread more broadly and evenly across income cohorts? Let me ask it this way: does that abrupt 23% cut hit current senior cohorts? A person who is turning 62, or 65 today – that affects them as well, correct?
>
> GOSS: It certainly would. They would be at an older age at that time but clearly it would affect them. That is assuming that we wait and do absolutely nothing until that point.
>
> RYAN: So if one provides reforms soon, could you not prevent these kinds of effects from hitting those current cohorts? Could you not phase reforms in gradually that prevent that 23% cut from happening so it doesn't affect people who are currently in or near retirement? Could you structure reforms that prevent that from happening if you act sooner?
>
> GOSS: Absolutely. We have a number of proposals – including yours Chairman Ryan – and many other proposals that would take exactly that approach. Our trustees and everybody who speaks on this has opined extensively about the value of acting sooner rather than later, so that we can have gradual changes phased in and we have more options if we act relatively soon.

In 2006, Nancy Pelosi was asked when she would be willing to fix these entitlement programs. Her reply? "Never. Is never good enough for you?". Democrats hate children – they want to pile debt upon debt onto future generations, who will not even have mothers and fathers to take care of them. First they smash the family with no-fault divorce and same-sex marriage. Then they run up trillions and trillions of dollars in debt handing out bailouts and green energy grants to their election fundraisers. It's sick.

Sandra Fluke: Georgetown students spend $3000 on contraception

March 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News, a very funny story.

Excerpt:

> A Georgetown co-ed told Rep. Nancy Pelosi's hearing that the women in her law school program are having so much sex that they're going broke, so you and I should pay for their birth control.
>
> Speaking at a hearing held by Pelosi to tout Pres. Obama's mandate that virtually every health insurance plan cover the full cost of contraception and abortion-inducing products, Georgetown law student Sandra Fluke said that it's too expensive to have sex in law school without mandated insurance coverage.
>
> Apparently, four out of every ten co-eds are having so much sex that it's hard to make ends meet if they have to pay for their own contraception, Fluke's research shows.
>
> "Forty percent of the female students at Georgetown Law reported to us that they struggled financially as a result of this policy (Georgetown student insurance not covering contraception), Fluke reported.
>
> It costs a female student $3,000 to have protected sex over the course of her three-year stint in law school, according to her calculations.
>
> "Without insurance coverage, contraception, as you know, can cost a woman over $3,000 during law school," Fluke told the hearing.
>
> $3,000 for birth control in three years? That's a thousand dollars a year of sex – and, she wants us to pay for it.
>
> Yes, us. Where do you think the insurance companies forced to cover this cost get the money to pay for these co-eds to have sex? It comes from the health care insurance premiums you and I pay.
>
> But, back to this woman's complaint that she's spending $3,000 for birth control during her time in college.
>
> "For a lot of students, like me, who are on public interest scholarships, that's practically an entire summer's salary," she complains.
>
> So, she earns enough money in just one summer to pays for three full years of sex. And, yes, they are full years – since she and her co-ed classmates are having sex nearly three times a day for three years straight, apparently.

The problem with government-run health insurance is that it turns into nothing but vote buying. The government forces everyone to pay for coverages they don't want so that they can redistribute the wealth from people who don't engage in risky, costly behaviors

to people who do. It encourages people to be more reckless and irresponsible when someone else is paying for it. In economics, this is called “moral hazard”. Promiscuity costs money – money for contraceptives, abortions, etc. What happens when support for promiscuity it is counted as “health care” is that people who abstain from promiscuity end up subsidizing the promiscuity of others. And that’s why we get more of it – you get more of anything when you reduce the costs of it.

The most troubling thing about subsidizing premarital sex is that research has shown that premarital sex reduces the stability of marriages as well as the quality of marriages. Another study showed that teenage premarital sex increases the risk of divorce. Furthermore, the more marriages break down, the more society pays to deal with the fallout – $112 billion per year according to a recent study.

The same thing happens with subsidized single motherhood by choice – the more that the government subsidizes single motherhood by choice, the more of it you get. Many women want the baby without the husband now, and it’s easier for them when the government pays for it by taking money from workers and businesses. This is in spite of the research showing how harmful the decline of marriage is to society, especially because the decline of marriage leads to increased child poverty and increased violence to women and children.

The testimony by Sandra Fluke reminds me of that Christina Hoff Sommers book “Who Stole Feminism?” where the feminists just make up numbers out of nowhere in order to blame men and portray themselves as helpless victims in need of new laws, policies and bailouts. I guess this is what they learn to do in Women’s Studies programs.

What’s scary to me is that women like Sandra Fluke become lawyers and judges and they do influence what society will look like. Men have to make decisions about what to do in a society that does not support men or marriage very much anymore.

UPDATE: A little bit more information about Sandra Fluke.

> I put that in quotes because in the beginning she was described as a Georgetown law student. It was then revealed that prior to attending Georgetown she was an active women’s right advocate. In one of her first interviews she is quoted as talking about how she reviewed Georgetown’s insurance policy prior to committing to attend, and seeing that it didn’t cover contraceptive services, she decided to attend with the express purpose of battling this policy. During this time, she was described as a 23-year-old coed. Magically, at the same time Congress is debating the forced coverage of contraception, she appears and is even brought to Capitol Hill to testify. This morning, in an interview with Matt Lauer on the Today show, it was revealed that she is 30 years old, NOT the 23 that had been reported all along.
>
> In other words, folks, you are being played. She has been an activist all along and the Dems were just waiting for the appropriate time to play her.

The whole thing was engineered, but don’t expect the mainstream media to report that to

you.

Related posts

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- Should Christian men marry? What's the worst that could happen?
- New study finds that female teachers give male students lower marks
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold women accountable for their own choices?
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- Conservative woman blames liberal women for choosing bad men
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
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- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama's new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children

Is Barack Obama a Christian? Does he believe in Christianity?

March 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well there are at least two ways to look at this question. One way is to look at what Obama does, and see if it matches up with what Christians are supposed to do, and what they have done. Another way is to look at what Obama says, and see if it matches up with what the Bible says, and what the early Church believed.

What are Christians supposed to do?

There are a lot of places I could look to see whether or not Obama's actions are the actions of a Christian, but I will just choose one: abortion. If you want to know what Christians believe about abortion, you need to go back to the very earliest followers of Jesus. At that time, the Roman authorities believed not only in abortion but also infanticide. The earliest Christians opposed not only infanticide, but also abortion.

Let's see:

> Extrabiblical Jewish Literature
>
> The noncanonical Jewish wisdom literature further clarifies first-century Judaism's view of abortion. For example, the *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* 184–186 (c. 50 B.C.–A.D. 50) says that "a woman should not destroy the unborn in her belly, nor after its birth throw it before the dogs and vultures as a prey." Included among those who do evil in the apocalyptic *Sibylline Oracles* were women who "aborted what they carried in the womb" (2.281–282). Similarly, the apocryphal book *1 Enoch* (2nd or 1st century B.C.) declares that an evil angel taught humans how to "smash the embryo in the womb" (69.12). Finally, the first-century Jewish historian Josephus wrote that "*the law* orders all the offspring to be brought up, and forbids women either to cause abortion or to make away with the fetus" (*Against Apion* 2.202).
>
> Contrast these injunctions with the barbarism of Roman culture. Cicero (106–43 B.C.) records that according to the Twelve Tables of Roman Law, "deformed infants shall be killed" (*De Legibus* 3.8). Plutarch (c. a.d. 46–120) spoke of those who he said "offered up their own children, and those who had no children would buy little ones from poor people and cut their throats as if they were so many lambs or young birds; meanwhile the mother stood by without a tear or moan" (*Moralia* 2.171D).
>
> Early Christian Literature
>
> Against the bleak backdrop of Roman culture, the Hebrew "sanctity of human life" ethic provided the moral framework for early Christian condemnation of abortion and infanticide. For instance, the *Didache* 2.2 (c. A.D. 85–110) commands, "thou shalt not murder a child by abortion nor kill them when born."

> Another noncanonical early Christian text, the *Letter of Barnabas* 19.5 (c. A.D. 130), said: "You shall not abort a child nor, again, commit infanticide." There are numerous other examples of Christian condemnation of both infanticide and abortion. In fact, some biblical scholars have argued that the silence of the NT on abortion per se is due to the fact that it was simply assumed to be beyond the pale of early Christian practice. Nevertheless, Luke (a physician) points to fetal personhood when he observes that the unborn John the Baptist "leaped for joy" in his mother's womb when Elizabeth came into the presence of Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus at the time (Luke 1:44).
>
> More than merely condemning abortion and infanticide, however, early Christians provided alternatives by rescuing and adopting children who were abandoned. For instance, Callistus (d. c. A.D. 223) provided refuge to abandoned children by placing them in Christian homes, and Benignus of Dijon (3rd century) offered nourishment and protection to abandoned children, including some with disabilities caused by unsuccessful abortions.

What does Obama believe? Not only is Barack Obama the most pro-abortion President ever, but he also has voted for infanticide several times and he opposed the ban on partial birth abortions.

Excerpt:

> BAIPA [The Born Alive Infant Protection Act] (both the federal and Illinois state versions) on the other hand, was introduced to insure that babies who survive attempted abortions are provided the same medical care and sustenance as any other infant born alive. BAIPA was introduced after evidence was presented that babies born alive after unsuccessful abortions were simply discarded in utility closets without food, care, or medical treatment until they died.
>
> As both Andy and I pointed out last night (and numerous times before), state senator Obama fought against the Illinois version of BAIPA that was identical in all material respects to the federal version. During the 2008 presidential campaign, Obama claimed that he voted against the Illinois BAIPA because it failed to contain a "neutrality clause" making it clear that the bill did not affect the right to an *abortion*. This is false. Documents obtained by National Right to Life show that the Illinois BAIPA did, in fact, contain a neutrality clause identical to the federal version.
>
> As noted yesterday, not one U.S. senator voted against BAIPA. Even NARAL didn't oppose it. At the time of the vote, CNN reported that NARAL's spokesman said the following:
>
> We, in fact, did not oppose the bill. There is a clear legal difference between a fetus *in utero* versus a child that's born. ***And when a child is born, they deserve every protection that the country can provide.*** (Emphasis added).
>
> The logical import of Obama's vote against BAIPA is that he disagrees, i.e., once

> a baby has been targeted for abortion it thereafter has no inherent right to the food, comfort, and medical care provided to other babies born alive. Indeed, during Illinois state senate deliberations on BAIPA, Obama stated that one of his objections was that the bill was "designed to ***burden the original decision*** of the woman and the physician to induce labor and perform an abortion." Apparently, once the decision to abort has been made, a child is doomed even if born alive.

It seems to me that Obama's actions don't line up with what Christians have always believed. But he would make a great Roman. But let's keep going – maybe he's good on theology, apologetics and the Bible.

What are Christians supposed to say?

In order to be a Christian, you must accept that all people everywhere are in rebellion against God, and that Jesus is God stepping into history, and that there is no reconciliation with God apart from an explicit belief in Jesus' deity, and the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection. Namely, that his death was a payment for each person's rebellion against God. Christians also believe that a person must accept that those who do not know Jesus and believe in what he did will not go to Heaven, but will be separated from God for eternity in a place called Hell.

Let's look at what the Bible says.

Acts 4:8-12:

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!

9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed,

10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

11Jesus is

"'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.'

12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

John 14:1-6:(Jesus speaking)

1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.

2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

4You know the way to the place where I am going."

5Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know

the way?”

[6] Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Philippians 2:5-11:

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Romans 10:1-4:

[1] Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

[2] For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.

[3] Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.

[4] Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

And in Romans 10:9, “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” I could go on, but that should be enough. Christians do not think that these teachings are mere opinions – we think they are facts. We think they are true and binding and knowable.

To be believe in Jesus means to believe that he is who he says he is – God stepping in history, giving his own life up in order to take the punishment that each person deserves who rebels against God. And we *all* rebel against God, according to the Bible.

Now let’s take a look at what Obama says. Pay attention to whether he thinks that what he is saying are his own opinions or whether they are facts.

Excerpt:

> **Falsani:** What do you believe?
>
> **OBAMA:** […]I believe that there are many paths to the same place, and that is a belief that there is a higher power, a belief that we are connected as a people.

> That there are values that transcend race or culture, that move us forward, and there's an obligation for all of us individually as well as collectively to take responsibility to make those values lived.

And:

> **Falsani:** Do you believe in heaven?
>
> **OBAMA**: Do I believe in the harps and clouds and wings?
>
> **Falsani:** A place spiritually you go to after you die?
>
> **OBAMA**: What I believe in is that if I live my life as well as I can, that I will be rewarded. I don't presume to have knowledge of what happens after I die. But I feel very strongly that whether the reward is in the here and now or in the hereafter, the aligning myself to my faith and my values is a good thing.
>
> When I tuck in my daughters at night and I feel like I've been a good father to them, and I see in them that I am transferring values that I got from my mother and that they're kind people and that they're honest people, and they're curious people, that's a little piece of heaven.
>
> **Falsani:** What is sin?
>
> **OBAMA**: Being out of alignment with my values.
>
> **Falsani:** What happens if you have sin in your life?
>
> **OBAMA**: I think it's the same thing as the question about heaven. In the same way that if I'm true to myself and my faith that that is its own reward, when I'm not true to it, it's its own punishment.

And:

> **OBAMA**: […]This is something that I'm sure I'd have serious debates with my fellow Christians about. I think that the difficult thing about any religion, including Christianity, is that at some level there is a call to evangelize and proselytize. There's the belief, certainly in some quarters, that people haven't embraced Jesus Christ as their personal savior that they're going to hell.
>
> **Falsani:** You don't believe that?
>
> **OBAMA**: I find it hard to believe that my God would consign four-fifths of the world to hell.

Again, not only did Jesus mention Hell constantly, but the earliest Christians believed in a literal, eternal Hell. Obama doesn't get to override Jesus, the Bible and the early church and substitute his own religion, and his own standard of sin and salvation. What I find annoying is that he apparently cannot reconcile God's goodness with the existence of Hell. That's like Apologetics 101. You would have to know nothing at all about Christianity to say what he said. You would have had to avoided reading anything that answers any questions about Christianity – because that question is easy.

To me what Obama expressed there in his answers was religious pluralism, radical

subjectivism, postmodern relativism, and universalism. In no way shape or form are those beliefs consistent with what the Bible teaches. Not even close – this is not even disputable. To be a Christian, you have to believe that there are objective truths about God, independent of different people's opinions. And that these truths are knowable, through reason, science, history and revelation in the Bible. Only atheists think that religion is non-cognitive subjective wish-fulfillment meant to make people feel good and have community, etc. If you think religion is like picking a flavor of ice cream instead of picking a prescription drug for an illness, then you're not a Christian. Period.

So in both cases, when you look at what Obama says and what Obama does, it's very clear that he is not a Christian by any stretch of the imagination. There is a lot more to being a Christian than just calling yourself one. You have to act the way that Christians are supposed to act – the way they always acted since the beginning of Christianity. And you have to believe the basic things that Christians are supposed to believe. Things that are *clearly taught* in multiple books of the new Testament and things that were believed by the earliest followers of Jesus, right up to the present day. If I had to guess what Obama really believes, I would speculate that he inclines toward atheism, or agnosticism at best.

UPDATE: Barack Obama denies that Jesus is the unique son of God at the 2012 Easter Prayer Breakfast.

New government report finds $400 billion dollars of waste and duplication

March 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new Government Accountability Office report uncovers massive government waste.

Excerpt:

> The government could save tens of billions of dollars each year if redundant and duplicative programs were cut, according to a report released by the Government Accountability Office on Tuesday.
>
> The GAO report examines programs and services that could be streamlined to increase efficiency of government and save money. It looked at areas of where it found either duplication or overlap of services — when "two or more agencies or programs are engaged in the same activities or provide the same services to the same beneficiaries — and fragmentation, when "more than one federal agency (or more than one organization with an agency) is involved in the same broad national interest." Fragmentation often amounts to an overlap.

Here are some examples of the $400 billion of wasteful spending and duplication.

Excerpt:

> This year, GAO identified 32 new areas of duplication and 19 additional areas of waste and inefficiency. The report cites duplication in almost a thousand individual programs, costing taxpayers over $300 billion per year. This is on top of more than $100 billion identified in last year's report.
>
> Examples include:
>
> - 37 uncoordinated EPA laboratories and 94 "green building" programs for which costs cannot be determined because "information agencies provided was incomplete and unreliable."
> - $736 million spent on 14 different diesel emissions programs and federal funding for 55 surface freight transportation programs.
> - 160 various housing assistance programs at a cost of $170 billion annually.

But that's not the only way for the government to waste money… they can give it to green energy companies that go bankrupt!

Excerpt:

> Abound Solar Inc., which received a $400 million U.S. loan guarantee to build two factories, shut down production and fired 180 people after panel prices fell by half last year.
>
> Abound stopped making its first-generation solar panels and will refit its

> manufacturing lines to produce more efficient products, the Loveland, Colorado-based company said yesterday in a statement.
>
> The move is a response to the same forces that drove Solyndra LLC into bankruptcy after it received a $535 million loan guarantee from the same U.S. Energy Department program, said Pavel Molchanov, an analyst at Raymond James & Associates Inc. in Houston.

You can read this article to see how Abound Solar was connected to wealthy Democrat party contributors.

Studies show that religious involvement is beneficial to children

March 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found survey of the relevant literature at Reasons for God blog.

Excerpt:

> Imagine with me two different parenting styles: Type A and Type B. When these two types are scientifically compared to one another, and the outcomes of each approach to children are carefully measured, a wide difference emerges. Furthermore, the differences are controlled for factors such as race, age, sex, rural vs. urban residence, region, parental education, number of siblings, whether the mother works, and the presence of a father or male guardian at home.
>
> Still, it emerges that seniors in high school who are raised by the Type A approach, when compared to the Type B approach, are:
>
> 1. Less likely to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, drink excessively, go to bars, use, sell, or take drugs, get a traffic ticket, argue with their parents, skip school, be suspended or expelled from school, hit their teachers, be violent, and commit a variety of crimes from shoplifting to armed robbery.
> 2. In addition to avoiding these negative behaviors, they are more likely to exercise, play sports, volunteer, and participate in student government.
>
> As a parent who wants the very best for your child, on the basis of this data, which parenting approach makes more sense? If you want your children to be physically active, serving in the community, and leaders at their school, while avoiding violent behavior, criminal activity and drug use, you're better off with the Type A approach.
>
> […]Type A outcomes are for *the most* religious high school seniors when contrasted with *the least* religious high school seniors.
>
> So the data leads us to the conclusion that parents can strengthen the likelihood of good outcomes for their children, not by sending them to Camp Quest, but by fostering religious commitment for their children. The study quoted above is just the tip of the iceberg. In fact, a large number of studies demonstrate positive physical, emotional, and psychological benefits, all associated with greater rather than lesser religiosity.
>
> For instance, other studies have shown that the more religious parents are, the more likely the are to have strong and supportive relationships with their children. These positive effects of religion include:
>
> - Mothers who became more religious throughout the first 18 years of their

> child's life reported a better relationship with that child, regardless of the level of their religious practice before the child was born.
> - Mothers who attended religious services less often over time reported a lower-quality relationship with their adult child.
> - Grandmothers' religious practice illustrates an intergenerational influence. The more religious a mother's mother is, the more likely the mother has a good relationship with her own child.
> - Greater religious practice of fathers is associated with better relationships with their children, higher expectations for good relationships in the future, a greater investment in their relationships with their children, a greater sense of obligation to stay in regular contact with their children, and a greater likelihood of supporting their children and grandchildren.
> - Compared with fathers who had no religious affiliation, those who attended religious services frequently were more likely to monitor their children, praise and hug their children, and spend time with their children.
>
> Are these studies just cherry-picked in favor of religion? According to one review of the literature, which involved "a larger systematic review of 850 studies on the religion-mental health relationship published during the 20th Century"t:
>
> The majority of well-conducted studies found that higher levels of religious involvement are positively associated with indicators of psychological well-being (life satisfaction, happiness, positive affect, and higher morale) and with less depression, suicidal thoughts and behavior, drug/alcohol use/abuse. Usually the positive impact of religious involvement on mental health is more robust among people under stressful circumstances (the elderly, and those with disability and medical illness).
>
> The fact is that Dawkins and Humphrey, for all their rhetorical flair, have unsupported theories about the effects of religion on children and families, theories which are not supported by the scientific research. They are 'leaps of faith', in line with their preconceived secularism, rather than sober deductions from a look at the evidence. Likewise, Camp Quest is encouraging children to adopt exactly the wrong kind of worldview. From the data above, it appears that a religious summer camp is a distinctively better choice for the development of children.
>
> On the basis of these studies, the evidence-based conclusion is that religion is good for kids, good for their parents, and good for society overall.

Fascinating stuff, especially since it contradicts the assertions of Richard Dawkins. It's important to let evidence decide these questions, and the evidence is clear. Religion is good for children. Now, having said that, Christians don't practice their religion because it is a life enhancement – we practice it because it is *true*. And we have reasons to believe that it is true that hold up well in debates about Christianity.

Fraud and waste in government's program to distribute "free" cell phones

March 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBS Atlanta. (H/T Wes)

Excerpt:

> Georgians pay the federal government more than $262 million a year in mandatory universal service charges. That's the hidden fee you pay on your cell phone bill every single month.
>
> That fund is supposed to help the government pay for free phones for the poor.
>
> But CBS Atlanta News found multiple phones being given away to people who already had a free phone, and to people who don't need them or even want them. And the more phones these companies give away, the more money you pay.
>
> […]"Get your free government cell phones today, sign up today, get your free phone today," a Life Wireless contractor yelled out the door of his car.
>
> The pitch the salesman is making is for people to get something for nothing – a free cell phone. In some cases, they receive the phones whether they need them or not.
>
> "I signed up for two already, I got like two of them," one woman said.
>
> The woman was in line to get her third free phone. In some cases, the people lining up for free phones admitted they already had three or four government-supported phones.
>
> […]But the bigger problem is that the FCC has no database where companies can check if a person has received one, two, three or even four cell phones from various companies. All someone has to do is show they are on government assistance, show their I.D. and they can get a free phone.

This is nothing but wealth distribution – an effort to equalize life outcomes for all regardless of prudence, thrift and hard work.

Does intelligent design theory require that the designs be perfect?

March 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

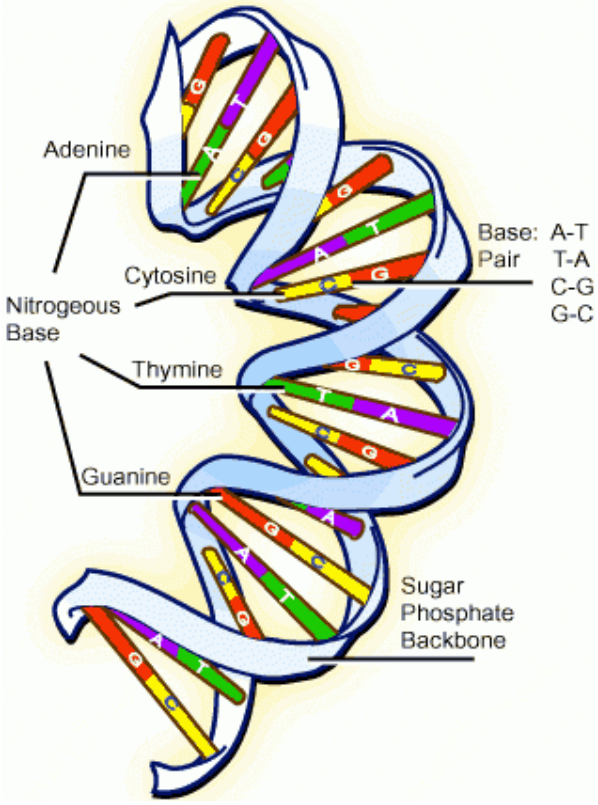

Structure of DNA
From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> By the word "intelligent," ID proponents simply mean to indicate that a structure has features requiring a mind capable of forethought to design the blueprint. Thus, ID proponents test ID by looking for **complex and specified information**, which is an indicator that some goal-directed process, capable of acting with will, forethought, and intentionality, was involved in designing an object.
>
> We do not test ID by looking for "perfect design" or "undesirable design," because minds don't always make things that are "perfect," and sometimes they make things that are "undesirable" (to other minds, at least). Holding biological systems to some vague standard of "perfect design" where they are refuted by "undesirable design" is the wrong way to test ID. Examples like broken machinery, computer failures, and decaying buildings all show that a structure might be designed by an intelligent agent even if it subsequently breaks or shows flaws. Intelligent design does not necessarily mean "perfect design." It doesn't even require optimal design. Rather, "intelligent design" means exactly what it sounds like: design by an intelligent agent.
>
> "Undesirable design" arguments share three general problems, some or all of

> which can be found in each of Gilmour's 130 examples. Here are the three main problems:
>
> 1. An object can have imperfections and be undesirable, but still be designed.
> 2. Critics' standards of perfection are often arbitrary.
> 3. "Bad design" arguments don't hold up under their own terms, as the objects often turn out to be well designed when we inspect them more closely.
>
> Problem (1) applies to every single example Gilmour gives. Problems (2) and (3) apply to many, though not all, of his examples. In fact, some of them are legitimate examples of undesirable design. I mean, who likes "easily worn out knees" or hernias — both examples of how our bodies break down? Objectively speaking, those are flaws or imperfections. But as much as you might not like "undesirable design," they don't refute ID because ID is a scientific argument that isn't concerned with the moral value, perfection, or desirable/undesirable quality of a structure. Computers break down but were still intelligently designed. In the same way, the fact that our bodies break down doesn't mean they weren't intelligently designed.

If you would like quick introduction to intelligent design, click here. The best introductory book on the subject is "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design" by Dr. Jonathan Wells, and the best complex book is "Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design" by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer.

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)

March 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB rating: [7.1/10]

Description:

> During the Allied Bombing offensive of World War II the public was often informed that "A raid took place last night over …, One (or often more) of Our Aircraft Is Missing". Behind these sombre words hid tales of death, destruction and derring-do. This is the story of one such bomber crew who were shot down and the brave Dutch patriots who helped them home.

Watch for this quote:

> [*as RAF bombers approach*]
> **Jo de Vries**: You see. That's what you're doing for us. Can you hear them running for shelter? Can you understand what that means to all the occupied countries? To enslaved people, having it drummed into their ears that the Germans are masters of the Earth. Seeing those masters running for shelter. Seeing them crouching under tables. And hearing that steady hum night after night. That noise which is oil for the burning fire in our hearts.

The bomber in the movie that they start with is called a Vickers Wellington. It's not very good, but the four-engine Avro Lancaster they get at the end of the movie is as good or better than the B-17 bomber used by the Americans during the war. Most people think that the Avro Lancaster was the best bomber of World War 2 on either side. My Canadian readers will be thrilled to know that Avro Canada constructed many Avro Lancasters to help with the war effort. You can still see an intact Lancaster in Alberta, Canada.

And if you want to go see a good movie this weekend, go see "Act of Valor" in the theaters! (Reviews: Wall Street Journal, Washington Times)

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of my favorite TV show

GM laying off 1300 workers due to low Chevy Volt sales

March 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> General Motors Co. announced the temporary suspension of Chevrolet Volt production and the layoffs of 1300 employees, as the company is cutting Volt manufacturing to meet lower-than-expected demand for the electric cars.
>
> “Even with sales up in February over January, we are still seeking to align our production with demand,” GM spokesman Chris Lee said. The car company had hoped to sell 45,000 Chevy Volts in America this year, according to the Detroit News, but has only sold about 1,626 over the first two months of 2012.
>
> “GM blamed the lack of sales in January on “exaggerated” media reports and the federal government’s investigation into Volt batteries catching fire, which officially began in November and ended Jan. 21,” the Ann Arbor (Mich.) News reported.
>
> The laid-off employees will be rehired April 23rd, when GM resumes production of the Volt.

I find lots of wonderful stories like this one on the Bad Blue conservative news aggregator. I recommend bookmarking them.

Christian woman tortured, paraded in streets for “anti-Islam” views

March 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Times of India.

Excerpt:

> Lahore: A Christian woman was brutally tortured and paraded in the streets of a village in Pakistan’s Punjab province by a mob for her alleged “anti-Islam views”, local residents and police officials said today.
>
> Some 30 residents of Kot Meerath village of Sialkot district, 80 km from Lahore, dragged Seema Bibi out of her house on February 26 and paraded her in the streets after shaving her head.
>
> She was targeted by the mob for her alleged “anti-Islam views”, members of the Christian community said.
>
> Following the assault, Seema Bibi and her family left the village to save their lives, local residents said.
>
> “She and her family had been facing threats from a group of extremist villagers. She left the village as she had no other option,” said Aslam Masih, a resident of Kot Meerath.
>
> […]Police had stepped up their vigil due to tensions between Muslims and Christians in the village, he said.

Please pray for this brave woman and her family.

Women who are serious about their faith are much less likely to divorce

March 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post that van Rooinek sent to me that contains marriage advice for Christian men.

Excerpt:

> There are a couple of reasons why I advise my sons and my fellow men to marry hard-core believers. First, is has been my consistent observation that in today's world, with women armed as they are with so many choices, choices that include whether a man's child escapes the uterus intact and whether a man gets to participate in the rearing of his own seed, indeed whether he remains free or is sold into a state of semi-slavery, a woman's locus of control becomes paramount. If she is internally controlled, as I've observed most women are, then her actions will be primarily driven by whim. Or biochemistry. Or modern chemistry. Or even a dartboard. Whatever heuristic a woman uses to govern her actions, if she peers inside herself to determine what to do and where to go, run, don't walk away. Such women is but a leaf in the autumn wind. Who knows where the air currents will take her, and by extension, where the man tied to such a woman finds himself.
>
> Hard core Believers, on the other hand, are externally governed. Their locus of control tends to be directed outside themselves, toward a fixed point that doesn't move. In the case of Believers, that fixed point is Scripture and the Holy Spirit, and women whose decision tree starts and ends there are a whole lot less likely to follow their Game-manipulable lizard hind brain into situations which their hamster must then rationalize away.
>
> […]This brings me to the second reason why I advise men to marry zealots: they take their faith seriously. A seriousness that is reflected in their church/synagogue attendance rates. And it turns out that said attendance rates are highly correlated with marital success. Read on:
>
> "Christians divorce at roughly the same rate as the world!"
>
> It's one of the most quoted stats by Christian leaders today. And it's perhaps one of the most inaccurate.
>
> The factor making the most difference is religious commitment and practice. Couples who regularly practice any combination of serious religious behaviors and attitudes – attend church nearly every week, read their bibles and spiritual materials regularly; pray privately and together; generally take their faith seriously, living not as perfect disciples, but serious disciples – enjoy significantly lower divorce rates than mere church members, the general public and

> unbelievers.
>
> […]Looking at the data, one thing is very clear. Those that are serious about their faiths stand a significantly lower risk of marital disruption than those that are not. Fine. This is great news, but not the end of the story, for what I also find very interesting about this table is that those who dabble in their faiths, those who are neither hot nor cold, are the ones setting themselves up for failure the most…+20 for Protestants, -5 for Catholics, and a whopping +53 for Jews.My advice for my sons and my fellow brothers is this: find and marry a woman who is zealous about her faith, a zealotry that is demonstrated by her actions.

I keep telling Christian women that men really do think about these things. We really are doing our homework first. And we really do have big plans that we are trying to fit you to. That's why we ask you so many questions, so you should be ready to answer.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Where are all the good men and why aren't men marrying?
- Are feminized churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Al Qaeda defense attorney promoted to No. 3 at Department of Justice

March 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Judicial Watch. (H/T Creeping Sharia)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> In a scary development, a major Obama fundraiser who defended a convicted al Qaeda terrorist will become the third highest ranking official at the Department of Justice (DOJ), which, ironically, is charged with defending the interests of the United States.
>
> Northern California lawyer Tony West has been named Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division, making him the No. 3 guy at the agency. In 2009 West, who helped Obama raise tens of millions of dollars as finance co-chairman of his first presidential campaign, was appointed to help run the DOJ's civil division which represents the government, Congress and presidential cabinet officers and handles cases dealing with significant policy issues.
>
> In a statement announcing the promotion this week, Attorney General Eric Holder says West has served the department with "professionalism, integrity and dedication." Holder also mentions West's work before coming to the DOJ a few years ago, including a stint as a Special Assistant Attorney General in California and a lengthier career at a large San Francisco law firm.
>
> Conveniently omitted in the press release is that West represented convicted al Qaeda terrorist John Walker Lindh, who is serving a 20-year prison sentence. Lindh was captured in Afghanistan in 2001 while fighting against the U.S.-backed Northern Alliance as a member of the Taliban army. He actually pleaded guilty to aiding the Taliban and carrying explosives while fighting U.S. troops in the region.
>
> Holder also knows a thing or two about defending terrorists. After all, he was a senior partner in a prestigious Washington D.C. law firm (Covington & Burling) that represented more than a dozen Yemeni terrorists held at the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay Cuba. While Holder was a senior partner the firm employed a number of radical attorneys to provide the Islamic extremists with thousands of hours of free legal representation, according to a news report.
>
> Another highlight in Holder's resume is that he orchestrated Bill Clinton's shameful last-minute pardons, including that of a fugitive financier and a pair of jailed domestic terrorists. In fact, shortly after the pardon scandal, Holder predicted that his public career was over. Under his leadership the DOJ has been embroiled in a number of high-profile scandals, including a gun-running operation (Fast and Furious) in which weapons were sold to Mexican drug cartels. One was later used to murder a federal agent. Judicial Watch has sued the DOJ to obtain

> records involving the operation.

I feel compelled to contrast that story with this one from Fox News (April 2009).

Excerpt:

> The government considers you a terrorist threat if you oppose abortion, own a gun or are a returning war veteran.
>
> That's what House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Lamar Smith, R-Texas, said Wednesday in response to a Department of Homeland Security report warning of the rise of right-wing extremist groups.
>
> Smith, who said the report on "right-wing extremism" amounts to "political profiling," said that DHS is "using people's political views to assess an individual's susceptibility to terror recruitment." He joins a growing chorus of protest from irate conservative groups that are protesting the report's findings.
>
> The report, titled "Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment," released last week by DHS' Office of Intelligence and Analysis, said while there is no specific information that domestic right-wing terrorists are planning acts of violence, it suggests acts of violence could come from unnamed "rightwing extremists" concerned about illegal immigration, abortion, increasing federal power and restrictions on firearms — and it singles out returning war veterans as susceptible to recruitment.
>
> […]DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano defended the report Wednesday, saying it is part of an ongoing series of assessments to provide information to state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies on "violent radicalization" in the United States.

This story goes to show you steeped in moral relativism the Obama administration is – the good people are evil, the evil people are good.

More details about the new first century fragment of the gospel of Mark

March 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Christian Examiner. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Excerpt:

> Following the discovery of a first-century fragment of Mark's Gospel in the Middle East, more new information has emerged, along with two new claims.
>
> Also found were an early sermon on Hebrews and the earliest known manuscripts of Paul's letters.
>
> **Details about the finds will be published in an academic book in 2013, says Dallas Theological Seminary's Daniel B. Wallace, a New Testament professor. Wallace started the buzz on Feb. 1 when, during a debate with author and skeptic Bart Ehrman, he made the claim about the Mark fragment, which would be the earliest-known fragment of the New Testament.**
>
> Wallace provided a few more details on his website and then a few more during a Feb. 24 interview with radio host Hugh Hewitt, saying the fragments and manuscripts were found in Egypt.
>
> **The significance of all the manuscripts, Wallace said, would be on par with the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls.**
>
> The Mark fragment is "a very small fragment, not too many verses, but it's definitely from Mark," Wallace said. "… To have a fragment from one of the Gospels that's written during the lifetime of some of the eyewitnesses to the resurrection is just astounding."
>
> To date, the earliest-known fragment of the New Testament is from John's Gospel and dates from around 125 A.D.
>
> The Mark fragment, Wallace said, will affirm what is already written in that portion of Mark's Gospel.
>
> The paleographer who dated it, Wallace said, is "one of the world's leading paleographers." Wallace previously said the paleographer is certain it's from the first century. Still, Wallace told Hewitt, several more paleographers will look at the Mark fragment before the book is published.
>
> The Mark fragment will be published in a book along with six other manuscripts, Wallace said. One of those will be a second-century sermon on Hebrews 11. The significance: It shows Hebrews — whose author is unknown — was accepted early by the church as Scripture.
>
> "What makes that so interesting is the ancient church understood by about A.D.

> 180 in what's called … the Muratorian Canon, that the only books that could be read in churches must be those that are authoritative," Wallace said. "To have a homily or a sermon on Hebrews means that whoever wrote that sermon considered Hebrews to be authoritative, and therefore, it could be read in the churches."
>
> Also among the finds are second-century fragments from Luke and from Paul's letters. Wallace did not state which letters were found.
>
> "Up until now, our oldest manuscript for Paul's letters dates about AD 200, [known as] P-46," Wallace said. "Now we have as many as four more manuscripts that predate that."

The transcript of the interview with Dan Wallace is here. We do not mention the name of the Romney-supporting radio show host.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

March 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Justin Brierley, host of the Unbelievable radio show, tweeted about this lecture.

This is a long form explanation of the resurrection argument that Dr. Craig makes in all of his debates on the existence of God. The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early

dating
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthew, which Mike Licona and I doubt is intended to be historical, but is more likely to be apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

You can see this evidence used in an actual debate, against a historian who disagrees with Dr. Craig. That post contains a point by point summary of the debate that I wrote while listening to it.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

Obama makes fifth attempt to reduce tax deduction for charity

March 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> Once again, President Barack Obama has proposed lowering the income tax deduction for charitable giving. In his proposed budget for fiscal year 2013, the President calls for reducing the charitable deduction rate from 35 percent to 28 percent for those in the top tax bracket (individuals making $200,000 or more or families making $250,000 or more). By decreasing the value of itemized tax deductions for higher-income taxpayers, Obama's proposal would weaken the incentive for the wealthy to give to organizations that help the poor.
>
> President Obama has tried this before. Not once, not twice, not three times, but on four previous occasions, he has put forward a plan to lower the deduction rate for wealthy donors (twice in previous budget proposals and twice in funding proposals for other priorities, including Obamacare).
>
> As The Heritage Foundation has previously noted, the President's plan would likely dampen charitable giving at a time when nonprofits have been forced to do more with less. The greatest impact would probably hit organizations like hospitals and educational institutions that depend on large gifts from wealthy donors. While these donors make up only a small percentage of total American households, they contribute almost half of the donations claimed each year as charitable deductions.
>
> How far would Obama's proposal cause total itemized contributions to fall? Experts predict up to $5.6 billion each year.

Why would a socialist like Obama want to discourage people from giving to charity? Well, socialists want to increase the amount of dependency that people in need have on the government, so that the government can control them. When people in need have options, they don't have to care as much about the opinions of the people who help them. But when the government squeezes charities out by cutting off their donations, then the people in need have to choose government. And what do you suppose happens at election time? A whole bunch of people in need vote for their savior – big government. This is not good.

People in need should be able to get help from their families, neighbors and charities, in that order. We don't want this becoming political – i.e. "vote for me or you don't eat". It should also be noted that when government takes over the task of helping the poor, the Christian church loses its influence. Do we really want Christians to lose influence at a time when millions of unborn children are being murdered and the family is being

redefined by liberal social engineers?

NHS offers foreigners free treatment for HIV and AIDS

March 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Foreigners are to be offered free treatment for HIV on the NHS for the first time under controversial plans backed by ministers.
>
> Those from abroad, including failed asylum seekers, students and tourists are currently barred from receiving free HIV treatment – unlike other infectious diseases.
>
> However, the Government is to support proposals recommended by peers which will end the "anomaly" and allow free treatment even for those not legally settled in Britain.
>
> […]It typically costs up to £7,000 a year to treat someone diagnosed with HIV and an average of £300,000 per patient over their lifetime with the disease.

> […]The number of people being treated for HIV in this country has trebled over the past decade and almost 100,000 people are thought to now suffer from the disease. Only one in three people with HIV was born in the UK.
>
> However, the infection rate in this country has doubled in the past decade – and the number of infections acquired within the UK exceeded those abroad in 2010 for the first time.
>
> […][T]he decision is expected to spark renewed concerns over so-called health tourism, which the NHS has recently taken steps to address.Entitlement to free NHS hospital treatment is based on a patient being "ordinarily resident" in the UK.
>
> Anyone else is supposed to be charged for the full cost of any treatment they receive unless an exemption applies to the particular therapy.
>
> Hospitals must take reasonable measures to recover any debt and most have overseas visitors' managers to do this. However, last year it emerged that so-called "health tourists" have taken at least £35 million of free treatment over the past eight years.
>
> The costs fall disproportionately on certain hospitals, particularly those close to Heathrow and other airports.

In a previous post, I pointed out that Britain is now broke. Shocking, but there it is.

A feminist explains why she wants to be a single mother by choice

March 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post appeared on the left-leaning Slate. (H/T Dalrock)

First, take a look at this woman's background:

> I grew up with one parent. My mother raised me with help from her mother.
>
> […]My grandma, a college professor (herself twice divorced), lived no more than a few miles away throughout my childhood and for a while even lived on the same block as we did. My mom worked as a public-school teacher.

University professors and public school teachers? I sense feminism dominated this woman's upbringing. And no positive male role models anywhere to be found.

Anyway here's her thesis:

> I've realized recently that when I picture myself with my own child, there's no father in the frame. I imagine it being just the two of us—a team, like my mom and me. Perhaps because of how I was raised and how happy my childhood was, I often wonder whether I wouldn't rather just have a kid alone.
>
> […]I feel apprehensive at the idea of sharing parenthood with another person. Having never experienced the traditional family unit, raising a kid in tandem with someone is as difficult for me to imagine as having another set of limbs. I can't help but think that having a partner there with an equal stake in the matter would complicate the process.
>
> […]It isn't conventional wisdom, but in many ways it seems easier to raise a kid alone. Being a single parent by choice would mean not having to deal with another person's sets of demands or expectations of what child-rearing means. I wouldn't burden a child with the emotional baggage of divorce or the highs and lows of an unhappy relationship. It would just be the two of us and a supporting cast of extended family.

Note how clearly she rejects men who might want to fulfill their traditional roles:

- provider
- protector
- moral leader
- spiritual leader

It actually bothers her that a man might disagree with her with respect to parenting.

Now think with me. What kind of man do you think a woman like that chooses in relationships? Does she choose men who have very firm views on morality? Of course

not. How about a man who has very firm views on religion? No way. How about a man who tells her that the children would need to be pushed towards careers that will make them independent? Not in a million years. How about a man who thinks that guns are good for self-defense, and that the armed forces do excellent work to protect us? No way.

And I think there is where the problem lies. Far from being helpless victims of selfish men, women today are actually undermining their own mines by preferring men who are not qualified to be fathers and husbands. After a few disappointing and embarrassing mistakes, many of them look at the free money, free health care, free public schools, free food stamps, free this and free that, being offered by the government, and they do exactly what this woman is planning to do. They just can't be bothered to choose men who can perform the traditional male roles. I have actually seen fatherless Christian women complain to Christian men for being chaste, for not drinking alcohol, for working in well-paid boring jobs, and for having too many strong opinions on morality and religion. The root of these comments is that they don't want men to lead them. They didn't have fathers so they disrespect the roles played by fathers.

Now let's take a look at some data on fatherlessness:

- Even after controlling for low incomes, children growing up with never-married lone mothers are especially disadvantaged according to standard scales of deprivation.[40]
- According to the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles, children from lone-parent households were more likely to have had intercourse before the age of 16 when compared with children from two-natural-parent households. Boys were 1.8 times as likely (42.3% versus 23%) and girls were 1.5 times as likely (36.5% versus 23.6%). After controlling for socio-economic status, level of communication with parents, educational levels and age at menarche for girls, the comparative odds of underage sex actually increased to 2.29 for boys and 1.65 for girls.
- Girls from lone-parent households were 1.6 times as likely to become mothers before the age of 18 (11% versus 6.8%). Controlling for other factors did not reduce the comparative odds.[59]
- In a sample of teenagers living in the West of Scotland, 15-year-olds from lone-parent households were twice as likely to be smokers as those from two-birth-parent homes (29% compared to 15%). After controlling for poverty, they were still 50% more likely to smoke.[65]
- In a sample of British 16-year-olds, those living in lone-parent households were 1.5 times as likely to smoke. Controlling for sex, household income, time spent with family, and relationship with parents actually increased the odds that a teenager from a lone-parent family would smoke (to 1.8 times as likely).[66]
- In the West of Scotland, 18-year-old girls from lone-parent households were twice as likely to drink heavily as those from intact two-birthparent homes (17.6% compared to 9.2%). This finding holds even after controlling for poverty.[67]
- British 16-year-olds from lone-parent households are no more likely to drink than those from intact households. This is mainly because higher levels of teenage

drinking actually are associated with higher family incomes. After controlling for household income and sex, teenagers from lone-parent families were 40% more likely to drink.[68]

- At age 15, boys from lone-parent households were twice as likely as those from intact two-birthparent households to have taken any drugs (22.4% compared with 10.8%). Girls from lone-parent homes were 25% more likely to have taken drugs by the age of 15 (8.2% compared with 6.5%) and 70% more likely to have taken drugs by age 18 (33.3% compared with 19.6%). After controlling for poverty, teenagers from lone-parent homes were still 50% more likely to take drugs.[69]

I consider single motherhood by choice to be child abuse. Not only does it impoverish children, but is puts children into dangerous situations. I think that we need to be clear and persuasive about arguing against women who are so self-centered that they are willing to deliberately expose a child to fatherlessness. We must not enable their poor choices by telling them that what they are doing is OK. It’s not OK.

Did Obama cause gas prices to go up?

March 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From House Speaker John Boehner, a timeline of events leading up to higher gas prices.

Excerpt:

> **[T]he Obama administration simply hasn't focused on reducing our dependence on foreign energy**. In fact, energy production on federal lands has dropped by 11 percent.
>
> While these represent only a fraction of the Obama administration's efforts to stifle new energy production, here's a look at some of the key data points from above:
>
> - **FEBRUARY 4, 2009** – Just months after President Obama's Energy Secretary said, "Somehow we have to figure out how to boost the price of gasoline to the levels in Europe," the Obama administration begins "scrapping leases for oil-shale development" and cancels 77 leases for oil and gas production in Utah. **Gas is $1.91 a gallon**.
> - **MARCH 7, 2009** – *ABC News* says the White House is closely monitoring the expedited Solyndra loan project even as it was delaying new American energy production that would help make us less dependent on foreign energy. **Gas is $1.94 a gallon**.
> - **JUNE 27, 2009** – President Obama urges the Senate to adopt House Democrats' "cap and trade" national energy tax, the same one the president once admitted would cause electricity rates to "necessarily skyrocket." Then-GOP Leader Boehner later said the bill "would raise electricity prices, increase gasoline prices, and ship American jobs to countries like China and India." **Gas is $2.50 a gallon.**
> - **JANUARY 7, 2010** – The Obama administration announces new bureaucratic hurdles to American energy production that Secretary Salazar admitted "could add delays to the leasing and drilling process." **Gas is $2.67 a gallon**.
> - **MARCH 31, 2010 –** Instead of opening new areas to energy exploration and development, President Obama blocks deep-ocean energy production on 60 percent of America's Outer Continental Shelf. **Gas is $2.80 a gallon**.
> - **DECEMBER 1, 2010** – The president re-imposes and expands the moratorium on offshore energy production. **Gas is $2.86 a gallon**.
> - **JANUARY 2, 2011** – *TIME* reported that the Obama administration issued

> the first in a series of regulations on January 2 designed to unilaterally impose a national energy tax. **Gas is $3.05 a gallon**.
>
> - **MAY 5, 2011** – The White House issues a formal statement opposing House-passed *Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act* (H.R. 1230) and *Putting the Gulf of Mexico Back to Work Act* (H.R. 1229), legislation designed to jumpstart American energy production, address rising gas prices, and help create new jobs. **Gas is $3.96 a gallon**.
> - **JUNE 21, 2011** – The White House opposes the House-passed *Jobs & Energy Permitting Act* that would unlock an estimated 27 billion barrels of oil and 132 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. **Gas is $3.65 a gallon**.
> - **NOVEMBER 8, 2011 –** The Obama Administration releases a plan for a five-year moratorium on offshore energy production, placing "some of the most promising energy resources in the world off-limits," according to the House Natural Resources Committee. **Gas is $3.42 a gallon**.
> - **JANUARY 18, 2012 –** President Obama rejects the bipartisan Keystone XL pipeline and the more than 20,000 jobs that would come with it. **Gas is $3.39 a gallon**, and rising faster and earlier than ever before.

In case you missed it, Obama's energy advisor admitted that he wanted gas prices to go much higher.

Related posts

- Higher gas prices were caused by Obama's green energy policies
- A third Obama-subsidized green energy firm is bankrupt after $118.5 million loan
- How Barack Obama used taxpayer dollars to outsource green energy jobs
- Did Obama really create jobs with his green energy and stimulus programs?
- In Canada, a revolt against global warming socialism creates an economic boom
- E-mails reveal that Obama fundraiser discussed Solyndra loan with White House
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra
- Report finds Labor Department's green jobs program failing
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- How well did Obama's green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors
- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing
- Marsha Blackburn beats up Al Gore on cap and trade corruption

Green socialists backing Romney campaign with huge donations

March 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist Politico. (H/T Doug Ross)

Excerpt:

> Will Mitt Romney flip-flop on climate change if he's elected president?
>
> Some big donors are betting on it.
>
> Romney and his super PAC have taken millions from funders with strong green streaks — despite the fact that the former Massachusetts governor has run to the right in the primary, proclaiming doubts about global-warming science and trashing President Barack Obama's greenhouse gas emissions policies.
>
> Julian Robertson, founder of the Tiger Management hedge fund, helped put cap-and-trade legislation on the map with $60 million in contributions over the past decade to the Environmental Defense Fund.
>
> Now, Robertson has given $1.25 million to Romney's Restore our Future super PAC, plus the maximum $2,500 to the Romney campaign.
>
> Other green-minded financial backers may not be giving as much as Robertson, but they still share the view that climate-change science and a solid environmental agenda wouldn't be a lost cause if Romney won the White House.
>
> "My feeling is that on these issues that people learn," said former Gov. Thomas Kean (R-N.J.), who maxed out last fall to Romney with a $2,500 check. "And my hope is, as time goes on, he will understand that not everybody agrees on how you deal with these issues, but I hope he will agree with 99 percent of the scientists who believe this is an issue that we have to deal with."
>
> As president, Kean said he hoped Romney could duplicate his Beacon Hill successes in building coalitions with Democrats on issues such as energy and the environment. In addition, Kean noted that Romney wouldn't face the same gridlocked climate debate of recent years, in large part because of the boom in domestic natural gas production that's helped lower the nation's greenhouse gas emission levels. "The whole game has changed," Kean said.
>
> Rob Sisson, president of the Republicans for Environmental Protection, said he's scraping together personal funds to write a check to the Romney campaign after getting a chance to meet him for the first time last month during a town hall campaign stop in Kalamazoo, Mich.
>
> "I think his record as governor was pretty good as far as Republicans go," said Sisson, who also gave $1,000 last June to Jon Huntsman's campaign. "I really get the sense from him and the folks around him with whom I've spoken that as president he'd really look at each situation, gather the data and really make a

> decision that's best for the country."
>
> "If that goes against the grain of how he's campaigning now, so be it," Sisson added. "He's going to be driven by data and facts and not emotions and getting pushed into one corner by one faction of the party."
>
> Among the other green Romney donors is Texas businessman and philanthropist Trammell S. Crow, founder of Earth Day Dallas and winner of the Republicans for Environmental Protection's Green Elephant Award in 2007. Crow and his family have given $71,000 this cycle to Republicans, including $15,000 to the Republican National Committee and $5,000 to Romney, according to donation data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> "I am voting for Mitt Romney and I believe in global warming," Crow said in a statement to POLITICO.

Please see below for more of Obama's disturbingly liberal positions.

Mitt Romney

- Mitt Romney's tax returns would make him lose the election to Obama
- Does Mitt Romney's Romneycare health care plan fund abortion with taxpayer dollars?
- John Hawkins writes the most scathing anti-Romney column EVER
- Santorum and Gingrich expose Romney's liberal record in Sunday's NBC debate
- Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million while he was governor of Massachusetts
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- RINO Mitt Romney now open to European-style VAT tax
- Is Mitt Romney a flip-flopper? What are his flip-flops?
- RINO Mitt Romney deploys another RINO John Sununu to attack Newt Gingrich
- Mitt Romney supports the anti-Christian and anti-business ENDA law
- Mitt Romney gaffe: Romney fails miserably in interview with Bret Baier
- Jon Huntsman's anti-Romney ads are awesome
- Mitt Romney's political views on gay marriage, abortion and global warming
- Mitt Romney flip-flop videos: flat tax, abortion, health care, public sector unions, global warming
- Mitt Romney on global warming, climate change, environmental regulations
- Mitt Romney on abortion and stem cell research in his own words
- White House used Mitt Romney's Romneycare as a blueprint for Obamacare
- Mitt Romney on the issues: Mitt Romney political views and positions in 2012

Rick Santorum’s economic plan is good for Ohio and Ohioans

March 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal, a column by Rick Santorum.

Excerpt:

> [I]n my first 100 days as president, I’ll submit to Congress and work to pass a comprehensive pro-growth and pro-family Economic Freedom Agenda. Here are 10 of its main initiatives:
>
> - *Unleash America’s energy.* I’ll approve the Keystone Pipeline for jobs and energy security, and sign an order on day one unleashing America’s domestic energy production, allowing states to choose where they want to explore for oil and natural gas and to set their own regulations for hydrofracking.
> - *Stop job-killing regulation.* All Obama administration regulations that have an economic burden over $100 million will be repealed, including the Environmental Protection Agency rule on CO2 emissions that’s already shut down six power plants. I’ll review all regulations, making sure they use sound science and cost benefit analysis.
> - *A pro-growth, pro-family tax policy.* I’ll submit to Congress comprehensive tax policies to strengthen opportunity in our country, with only two income tax rates of 10% and 28%. To help families, I’ll triple the personal deduction for children and eliminate the marriage tax penalty.
> - *Restore America’s competitiveness.* The corporate tax rate should be halved, to a flat rate of 17.5%. Corporations should be allowed to expense all business equipment and investment. Taxes on corporate earnings repatriated from overseas should be eliminated to bring home manufacturing. I’ll take the lead on tort reform to lower costs to consumers.
> - *Rein in spending.* I’ll propose spending cuts of $5 trillion over five years, including cuts for the remainder of fiscal year 2013. I’ll propose budgets that spend less money each year than prior years, and I’ll reduce the nondefense-related federal work force by at least 10%, without replacing them with private contractors.
> - *Repeal and replace ObamaCare.* I’ll submit legislation to repeal ObamaCare, and on day one issue an executive order ending related regulatory obligations on the states. I’ll work with Congress to replace ObamaCare with competitive insurance choices to improve quality and limit the costs of health care, while protecting those with uninsurable health conditions. In contrast, Gov. Romney signed into law RomneyCare, which provided the model for ObamaCare. Its best-known feature is its overreaching individual

> health-care mandate. But it shares over a dozen other similarities with ObamaCare and has given Massachusetts the highest health-care premiums in the nation, and longer waits for health care.
> - *Balance the budget.* I'll submit to Congress a budget that will balance within four years and call on Congress to pass a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution which limits federal spending to 18% of GDP.
> - *Negotiate and submit free trade agreements.* Because many Americans work for companies which export, I'll initiate negotiations in the first 100 days and submit to Congress five free trade agreements during my first year in office to increase exports.
> - *Reform entitlements.* I'll cut means-tested entitlement programs by 10% across the board, freeze them for four years, and block grant them to states—as I did as the author of welfare reform in 1996. I'll reform Medicare and Social Security so they are fiscally sustainable for seniors and young people.
> - *Revive housing.* I'll submit plans to Congress to phase out within several years Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's federal housing role, reform and make transparent the Federal Reserve, and allow families whose mortgages are "underwater" to deduct losses from the sale of their home in order to get a fresh start in difficult economic times.

According to the Wall Street Journal, Santorum's a "supply-sider for the working man".

Rick Santorum

- Fact check: Mitt Romney's claim that Rick Santorum was a big spender
- Rick Santorum and Barbara Boxer debate partial birth abortion in 1999
- Rick Santorum: Catholic bishops should not have supported Obamacare
- Rick Santorum gets endorsements from James Dobson and John Stemberger
- Wall Street Journal: Rick Santorum is a supply-sider for the working man
- Rick Santorum would not stand idle while Iran develops nuclear weapons
- 150 evangelical leaders agree to endorse Rick Santorum after two-day conference
- Why Christians and social conservatives should vote for Rick Santorum
- Rick Santorum's pro-family economic plan TRIPLES the child tax deduction
- Is Rick Santorum conservative or liberal? What are Rick Santorum's political views?
- Rick Santorum helps liberal college students to understand the logic of marriage
- George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class
- Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech
- Rick Santorum for President of the United States
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- Rick Santorum wins Fox News Republican primary debate (with video)
- Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

Sean McDowell takes a closer look at the Mormon Scriptures

March 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 tweeted this article from Conversant Life.

Excerpt:

> ***The view of faith in the Mormon Scriptures differs from the Bible***. Alma 32:17 says, "Yea, there are many who do say: If thou wilt show unto us a sign from heaven, then we shall know of a surety; then we shall believe. Now I ask, is this faith? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for if a man knoweth a thing he hath no cause to believe, for he knoweth it." In other words, faith involves believing something we do *not* know. If we knew it, there would be no need for faith. But the Bible proposes a different relationship between faith and reason. Rather than being opposites, the Bible presents a view of faith that is based upon what we do know. As philosopher J.P. Moreland put it, "Faith is trusting what we have reason to believe is true."
>
> For instance, in Exodus 7-14 Moses performs various miracles so the people will *know* there is a God and then in turn trust him (see 7:14 and 8:10). The pattern is:
>
> 1. God performs a miracle
> 2. The people have knowledge about God
> 3. They are called to believe
>
> Exodus 14:31 says, "When Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and believed in Him and in His servant Moses." The miracle that they could see and know came first, not the belief.
>
> Knowledge is not the opposite of belief, as the Mormon scriptures suggest. Faith does not involve believing something without evidence. Rather, it is a trust in God in light of what we*know* to be true. Jesus healed the paralytic so the people would *know* that he has the authority of God (Mark 2:10).
>
> I suspect the reason the Book of Mormon has this view of faith and knowledge is that the Mormons' claims cannot be investigated. The cities mentioned in the Book of Mormon have not been located (i.e. Zarahemla), the gold plates cannot be examined, the hill Cumorah cannot be excavated because LDS scholars can't even agree whether it's in North or Central America, and the millions of bodies destroyed in the Americas are nowhere to be found. When there is no convincing external evidence corroborating a belief, it must be based upon experience, feeling, and *blind* faith. This may be the view of faith in the Book of Mormon, but it is decidedly not the biblical view (see John 20:30-31).

This reminded me of a comment written by a Mormon named “Stacie” over at Answering Mormons:

> I feel very sad that you are so lost. I also find it sad that you do so much more ‘research’ on why the LDS beliefs are ‘wrong’ rather than simply living your life as you believe you should. I know that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is true. I have received confirmation that it is true, that every aspect of the LDS church is true. Joseph Smith was a true prophet and all prophets that have succeeded him have been and are true prophets of God. I know that the Book of Mormon is true. I know that the Bible is true as far as it is translated correctly. I know that Heavenly Father hears and answers our prayers, whether you are LDS or not. I know that Jesus Christ died for our sins and that through His Atonement and resurrection we have the ability to return to our Heavenly Father. I won’t use any more of my time to read anything on this blog, but I know that if you truly read the Book of Mormon, pray about it, do all that you can to learn about the LDS church and believe that Heavenly Father will answer your prayers then you, too, will know the truth of the Gospel. If we based our faith on logic it wouldn’t be faith would it? Faith is believing in something that you cannot see or feel. I wish you all the best and pray that you may find the peace and happiness that comes with the truth and light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This view by Stacie is consistent with my own experiences dealing with Mormons over the past two decades. Many of them can be quite “nice” and talented in every area *except* religion. When it comes to the religion, feelings and blind faith *dominate* over reason and evidence, for Mormons. They believe what they believe because they want to, and that’s all there is to it. I once had a Mormon in high school tell me that Mormons didn’t care at all about what scientists could show about the origin of the universe. Whenever what scientists could show contradicted their Scriptures, they always chose their Scriptures. There was a huge divorce between their religion and the real world.

I explained in a previous post that Mormonism is not only contradicted by science, but also by history. In addition, others have shown that Mormonism is incoherent philosophically. I recommend checking those posts out if you want three clear-cut reasons why Mormonism cannot be true.

One final thought. As Mormonism becomes more widespread, might we not expect that their unBiblical, irrational, unsupported view of faith will infect the larger culture, so that the the divorce between theology and truth becomes complete in the minds of the secular world? Let’s hope that Mormonism’s view of faith does not become mainstream.

For a good explanation of the Christian view of faith, read this post.

Sandra Fluke supports mandatory coverage of sex change surgery

March 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Other McCain has the scoop!

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Rather belatedly, we are becoming aware that this supposedly typical Georgetown coed is not very typical at all:
>
> [B]irth control is not all that Ms. Fluke believes private health insurance must cover. She also, apparently, believes that it is **discrimination deserving of legal action if "gender reassignment" surgeries are not covered by employer provided health insurance**. She makes these views clear in an article she co-edited with Karen Hu in the Georgetown Journal of Gender and the Law.
> The title of the article . . . is "Employment Discrimination Against LGBTQ Persons" and was published in the Journal's 2011 Annual Review.
>
> Remember, as Byron York previously reported, Fluke was rejected as a last-minute substitute witness at a Feb. 16 committee hearing because staffers for Chairman Issa were unable to discover Fluke's claim to expertise relevant to the subject of the hearing. This law school journal article is the sort of thing that might have been discovered about Fluke's background, had the Democrats who put Fluke forward as a witness done so with the usual 72-hour advance notice. Here's one brief quote from the article:
>
> Transgender persons wishing to undergo the gender reassignment process frequently face heterosexist employer health insurance policies that label the surgery as cosmetic or medically unnecessary and therefore uncovered.
>
> Now, imagine Fluke trying to defend this language about "heterosexist" policies in a public hearing, with Republican members of the committee questioning her about whether religious institutions (or private businesses, or taxpayers) should also be required to foot the bill for "gender reassignment."
>
> Congratulations, America: You've been scammed!

And if you think that's bad, check out this link that McCain provides.

Excerpt:

> Hormone treatments for transgendered detainees, abortion services and extensive outlets for complaints — these are just a few of the reasons Texas Republican House Judiciary Committee Chairman Rep. Lamar Smith is not pleased with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) recently released Performance-Based National Detention Standards (PBNDS).

> In the spirit of detention reform, in 2011, for the first time since 2008, ICE finished its revision of detention standards for those being held for being in the country illegally. Those new standards were released this month. ICE has already started to implement the changes. […]
>
> According to Smith, however, the revisions amount to a vast and expensive expansion of privileges.
>
> "The Obama administration's new detention manual is more like a hospitality guideline for illegal immigrants," Smith wrote in a statement. "The administration goes beyond common sense to accommodate illegal immigrants and treats them better than citizens in federal custody."
>
> The standards also outline a wide range of medical procedures available to those in detention facilities, including services such as abortion access, hormone treatments for transgendered people, dental work and a 15-day supply of medications upon release, deportation or transfer.

That's what the left really wants – in fact, that's already available in Canada's socialized health care system and in the UK's National Health Service, too. This is like the Holy Grail of the left – changing your sex from man to woman, or vice versa, and back again – all paid for by your stuck-up Christian neighbors and their children, who will have to work till they are 90 to pay for it all. Hurray for measly cheese sandwiches! Equality for all!

In addition, there is something else that emerged about this story since I wrote about it last week – the hypocrisy of the left.

Excerpt:

> During the 2008 election Ed Schultz said on his radio show that Sarah Palin set off a "bimbo alert." He called Laura Ingraham a "right-wing sl*t." (He later apologized.) He once even took to his blog to call yours truly a "bimbo" for the offense of quoting him accurately in a *New York Post* column.
>
> Keith Olbermann has said that conservative commentator S.E. Cupp should have been aborted by her parents, apparently because he finds her having opinions offensive. He called Michelle Malkin a "mashed-up bag of meat with lipstick." He found it newsworthy to discuss Carrie Prejean's breasts on his MSNBC show. His solution for dealing with Hillary Clinton, who he thought should drop out of the presidential race, was to find "somebody who can take her into a room and only he comes out." Olbermann now works for über-leftist and former Democratic vice president Al Gore at Current TV.

> But the grand pooh-bah of media misogyny is without a doubt Bill Maher…

And I'll just stop it right there – don't you dare click that link, because it is incredibly rude.

Here is my previous post on Sandra Fluke, in which I explain why her demand that we subsidize Yale Law School students who spend $1000 a year on contraception is bad for marriage and bad for children. (Note: I am not Catholic – I'm an evangelical Protestant).

At least if I pick on particular women, which is rare – because I normally stick to general issues – they have to say something to deserve it. And I would never say anything as bad as what the left-wing media says about Republican women, and for no other reason than because they are conservative.

Should abortion be legal in cases of rape? Rebecca Kiessling tells her story

March 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rebecca Kiessling: conceived by rape
In the liberal UK Guardian, of all places. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> I always knew I was adopted. My mother told me I'd been chosen and I should feel extra special. A tall blonde growing up with short, brunette Jewish parents, all I ever felt was awkward and out of place.
>
> When I was about nine, I began to think endlessly about my biological parents. Was my father athletic, like me? Did I have my mother's blue eyes? I stared at people on the street, fantasising that they were my birth parents.
>
> I was 12 when I told my adoptive parents I wanted to find my birth mother. I was being bullied at school, because I looked so different from the other girls, and felt lost and unhappy. I thought if I could find out where I came from, I would somehow fit in better.
>
> They were supportive, and gave me the name of the adoption lawyer they'd used, but he told me I had to be 18. I called him back on the day of my 18th birthday. I discovered my mother was Caucasian, with German, Irish and English ancestry, and had been 31 when she had me. I had a brother and a sister who were 11 and 13 when I was born. Under "Father" it simply stated: "Caucasian, of large build."
>
> I was confused. My father had obviously not been her husband, as I'd assumed. I read the file over and over, analysing every word. "It sounds like a police description," I said to my adoptive mum. Then an awful thought struck me. Had my mother been raped? The more I studied the file, the more convinced I became. I rang my case worker.
>
> "Was my mum raped?" I asked straight out, catching her off guard.

> “Yes,” she replied. The confirmation was devastating. No wonder my mother had given me up; I was an unbearable reminder of a violent attack. My adoptive parents tried to reassure me I was loved, but my confidence was destroyed.

Read the rest. It might change your view, if you believe that abortion in cases of rape are OK.

I did a little checking on Rebecca Kiessling and found these things:

> - Pro-Life Activist and International Pro-life Speaker, in NYC this week lobbying at the U.N.’s Status on Women Conference and speaking at 5 events.
> - Family law attorney with four pro bono cases of international attention all involving the protection of preborn human life, including the “frozen embryo” case in Michigan. Two of those cases involved rape and abortion. Also, represented a woman sued for not aborting. (practiced law as “Rebecca Wasser” before she married)
> - May 1994 graduate of Wayne State Law School in Detroit
> - Mother of 5 (two adopted)
> - Served as vice-chair of a crisis pregnancy center for two years and on the advisory board of Michigan Nurses for Life
> - Currently serves on the Advisory Board of Crossroads Pregnancy Center
> - Conducts workshops, “An Abortion-Minded Client’s Life-Giving Legal Options” based on Michigan law.
> - Testified before the Ohio Legislature on the Prefer Childbirth Over Abortion legislation which would, in part, remove the rape exception from the ban on Medicaid funding of abortions in Ohio

Here’s a video she did for CBN:

The logic of the pro-life position is pretty clear in these cases. Let the child live and put her up for adoption. That logic is enough to win the argument, but I hope that Rebecca will stick in your mind and give you courage on this issue. *Every* person was made to know God or to help others to know God, and therefore *every* person has infinite value.

Mitt Romney outspent Rick Santorum 4-1 in Super Tuesday states

March 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Romney is outspent his opponents and burning through cash.

Excerpt:

> Mitt Romney and the super PACs that support him have outspent Santorum and Co. four to one in Super Tuesday states, according to data passed along to BuzzFeed by a Democratic source. While Romney and Restore Our Future spent $7.82 million in states holding primaries today, Santorum and PACs Red White and Blue Fund and Susan B. Anthony's List spent only $1.84 million. Gingrich and his major super PAC, Winning Our Future, spent $2.76 million for Super Tuesday. Specifically, Romney and PAC nearly outspent Team Santorum four to one in Ohio alone, and they've spent 63 percent more than Gingrich and his PAC in Georgia, where Newt is leading.

Romney won two hard blue states solidly: Massachusetts and Vermont. Naturally. Those are Democrat states, and they voted for the Democrat running as a Republican. Virginia is irrelevant since Santorum and Gingrich were not on the ballot.

Melanie Phillips: the UK should reform the Child Benefit to favor marriage

March 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina send me this UK Daily Mail article by Melanie Phillips.

Excerpt:

> I would say that Child Benefit *itself* was always a really bad idea, and real reform should get rid of it altogether.
>
> This is because it rewards the wrong thing. It incentivises having children, whereas the state should *only* incentivise having children in circumstances which are advantageous for society. Since Child Benefit is awarded with the birth of every child regardless of circumstances, it has put rocket fuel behind Britain's astronomical rate – and rising – of fatherless children born to elective lone mothers.
>
> The rationale for this is, first, that welfare benefits should be focused on solving child poverty. This totally ignores the fact that lone parenthood is itself a major cause of child poverty; and no less important, that even more than material goods children desperately need their fathers.
>
> The second great cry that went up when Child Benefit was first introduced was that benefits for children should be given to the mother alone, because men are feckless no-goods and would only blow such money on drink and fags. And then people were surprised that young men felt marginalised and felt no need to anchor themselves to a wife!
>
> The unmentionable fact is that Child Benefit has been a disaster and should be replaced by incentives for marriage in the tax and benefits system — incentives which in turn do not penalise single-earner households. But that, of course, would require courage to face down the shibboleths of the left. And that is one thing that the Cameron government shows a near-pathological aversion to displaying.

UK conservatives aren't very conservative.

How Obama’s opposition to clean coal raises energy prices

March 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> GenOn Energy said it would shutter seven coal plants and one oil-fired plant in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Illinois with a total generating capacity of 3,140 megawatts. Midwest Generation followed suit with an advisory that it would close two coal plants serving Chicago.
>
> The shutdowns represent a victory for President Obama, who in a 2008 interview as a candidate signaled his intention to run the coal industry into the ground: “So if somebody wants to build a coal-powered plant, they can, it’s just that it will bankrupt them because they’re going to be charged a huge sum for all that greenhouse gas that’s emitted.”
>
> The president has made good on his promise. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has squeezed coal producers in its campaign to halt carbon dioxide, the same “greenhouse gas” all animals produce when exhaling. In December, the agency announced new regulations limiting mercury emissions that will force many power plants out of business within four years.
>
> The EPA estimates utilities across the country will need to shell out at least $9.4 billion in 2015 to meet its new mandate, but House Republicans put the true cost at $84 billion. Companies that stay in business will have to install expensive equipment that will drive up consumers’ monthly electric bills. The average retail price of electricity in America already has climbed 46 percent since 1997, says the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA).
>
> Cleaner-burning natural gas is touted as a viable substitute for coal but the transition can’t be completed overnight. In the meantime, the nation’s net electricity generation is falling, down 7.1 percent from 2010 to 2011, says the EIA. Demand for electricity is projected to rise by 35 percent by 2035.
>
> Green-energy enthusiasts look to windmills, solar panels and vegetable oil to save the day, but these trendy energy sources combined generate less than 5 percent of the nation’s energy – despite billions in subsidies. The net result of this policy could be electricity shortfalls when usage peaks in the summer. The energy brain trust has a remedy: Millions of homes across the country have been equipped with “smart meters” that can be instructed to hold back the juice. Brownouts might dim the future as Americans in the Age of Obama learn to get by with less.

The troublesome thing is that it is always the poorest families that have to pay the price

for Obama’s Peter Pan energy policy. The rich Hollywood celebrities and wealthy Wall Street bankers who backed Obama in 2008 don’t mind paying a few more dollars.

In California, students protest the results of their own liberal voting

March 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Victor Davis Hanson writes about it National Review.

Excerpt:

> Here in California, students just marched on Sacramento in outrage that state-subsidized tuition at the UC and CSU campuses keeps climbing. It is true that per-unit tuition costs are rising, despite even greater exploitation of poorly paid part-time teachers and graduate-student TAs. But the protests are sort of surreal. The California legislature is overwhelmingly Democratic. The governor is a Democrat. The faculties and administrative classes are largely Democratic. Who then, in the students' minds, have established these supposedly unfair budget priorities?
>
> Sales, income, and gas taxes are still among the highest in the nation (and are proposed to rise even higher) — prompting one of the largest out-of-state exoduses of upper-income brackets in the nation. The state budget is pretty much entirely committed to K–12 education (whose state-by-state comparative test scores in math and science hover between 45th and 49th in the nation), prisons, social services, and public-employee salaries and pensions. Whom, then, can the students be angry at?
>
> Are students angry at public-union salaries and pensions that are among the highest in the nation? Do they think the many highly compensated retired Highway patrol officers have shorted students at UC Davis? Are they mad at the 50,000 illegal aliens in the California prison system that might have siphoned off scholarship funds from CSU Monterey Bay? Or is the rub the influx of hundreds of thousands of children of illegal aliens who require all sorts of language remediation and extra instruction in the public schools, and so might in theory divert library funds from UC Santa Cruz?
>
> Perhaps the students don't want billions to be committed to high-speed rail that might rob Berkeley of needed funding, or environmental efforts to introduce salmon into the San Joaquin River, in which the $70 million spent so far in studies and surveys might have come from nearby CSU Fresno? Are they mad at state social services, whose medical expenses have skyrocketed to address the health-care needs of millions of illegal aliens, and thus in theory could curb the choice of classes at CSU Stanislaus? Are they angry that some $10–15 billion a year probably leaves the state as remittances to Mexico?
>
> If one cannot blame the wealthy for "not paying their fair share" (the top 1 percent of Californians now pay about 37 percent of all income-tax revenue — and their numbers have decreased by one-third in recent years, as the state has come to rely on the income tax for half its revenue), or Republican majorities in

> government, who, then, is left to blame?

Not only are their tuition costs going UP but their likely salary is going DOWN.

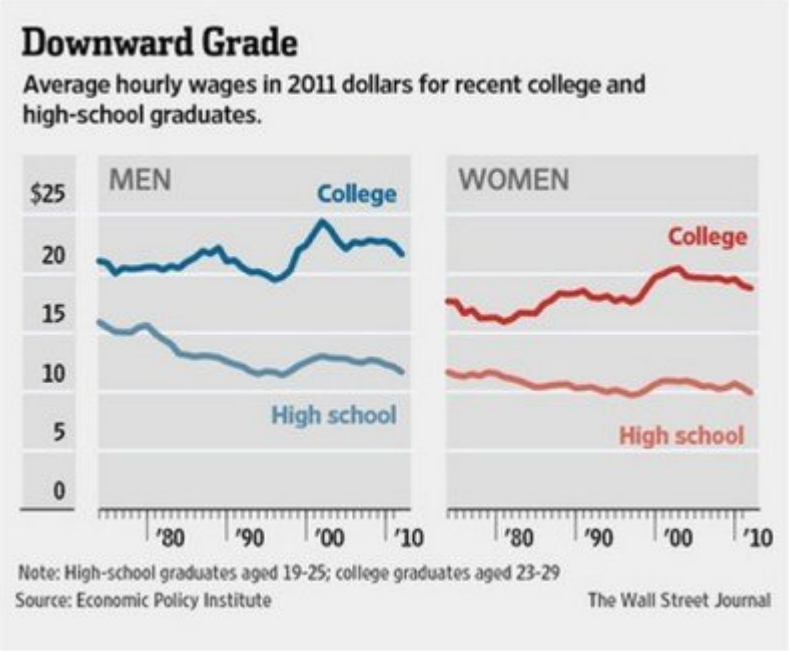

How's that hopey-changey stuff workin' for ya?
I got that image from a post at the American Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> - Only 35 percent of students starting a four-year degree program will graduate within four years, and less than 60 percent will graduate within six years.
> - The U.S. college dropout rate is about 40 percent, the highest college dropout rate in the industrialized world.
> - Over the past 25 years, the total number of students in college has increased by about 50 percent. But the number of students graduating with degrees in STEM subjects has remained more or less constant.
> - In 2009, the United States graduated 37,994 students with bachelor's degrees in computer and information science. That's not bad, but we graduated more students with computer-science degrees 25 years ago!
> - Few disciplines have changed as much in recent years as microbiology, but in 2009 we graduated just 2,480 students with bachelor's degrees in microbiology—about the same number as 25 years ago. Who will solve the problem of antibiotic resistance?
> - If students aren't studying science, technology, engineering, and math, what are they studying?
> - In 2009, the United States graduated 89,140 students in the visual and performing arts, more than in computer science, math, and chemical engineering combined and more than double the number of visual-and-performing-arts graduates in 1985.

> - Moreover, more than half of all humanities graduates end up in jobs that don't require college degrees, and those graduates don't get a big income boost from having gone to college.

I think this is interesting. What exactly are these students paying for?

If there is one thing I learned from my love of Shakespeare, it's that it is tragic to be the cause of your own downfall because of your own tragic flaw. Right now, there are a bunch of young people who have been totally brainwashed by the unionized public school teachers and professors to have views on economics that are completely opposite to what works in the real world. They keep voting for bigger and bigger government, which creates more and more debt in order to provide *their parents* with bigger and bigger benefits. They have lots of self-esteem, but very few marketable skills. Eventually, the bill for all the government spending on "helping the poor", (e.g. – food stamps for millionaires and bailouts for bankrupt green energy firms), comes due, and it's the students who will be paying the bill. I wonder if they will look as favorably on socialism and global warming alarmism then?

UPDATE: I noticed that in Quebec, the most liberal province in Canada, students are doing the same thing.

Wisconsin Republican introduces bill to protect children of single mothers

March 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Yahoo Parenting.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> In Wisconsin, a state senator has introduced a bill aimed at penalizing single mothers by calling their unmarried status a contributing factor inchild abuse and neglect.
>
> Senate Bill 507, introduced by Republican Senator Glenn Grothman, moves to amend existing state law by "requiring the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board to emphasize nonmarital parenthood as a contributing factor to child abuse and neglect."
>
> The bill would require educational and public awareness campaigns held by the board to emphasize that not being married is abusive and neglectful of children, and to underscore "the role of fathers in the primary prevention of child abuse and neglect."
>
> Saying that people "make fun of old-fashioned families," Grothman — who has never been married and has no children — criticized social workers for not agreeing that children should only be raised by two married biological parents, and told a state Senate committee that he hopes the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention board, of which he's a member, could "publicize something that's politically incorrect but has to be said in our society."
>
> "Whether that leads to more people paying attention and having children after they're married or whether that leads to some others making a choice for adoptions," he said.

Is he right about his assertion? Let's see what the research says.

Excerpt:

> The institution that most strongly protects mothers and children from domestic abuse and violent crime is marriage. Analysis of ten years worth of findings from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has conducted since 1973, demonstrates that mothers who are or ever have been married are far less likely to suffer from violent crime than are mothers who never marry.
>
> Specifically, data from the NCVS survey show that:
>
> - **Married women with children suffer far less abuse than single mothers.** In fact, the rate of spousal, boyfriend, or domestic partner abuse

> is twice as high among mothers who have never been married as it is among mothers who have ever married (including those separated or divorced).
> - **Married women with children are far less likely to suffer from violent crime in general or at the hands of intimate acquaintances or strangers.** Mothers who have never married–including those who are single and living either alone or with a boyfriend and those who are cohabiting with their child's father–are more than twice as likely to be victims of violent crime than are mothers who have ever married.
>
> Other social science surveys demonstrate that marriage is the safest place for children as well. For example:
>
> - **Children of divorced or never-married mothers are six to 30 times more likely to suffer from serious child abuse** than are children raised by both biological parents in marriage.2
>
> Without question, marriage is the safest place for a mother and her children to live, both at home and in the larger community. Nevertheless, current government policy is either indifferent to or actively hostile to the institution of marriage. The welfare system, for example, can penalize low-income parents who decide to marry. Such hostility toward marriage is poor public policy; government instead should foster healthy and enduring marriages, which would have many benefits for mothers and children, including reducing domestic violence.

That's just a summary, click the link for the all the data. Christians should care about the safety of children – and that means telling men *and women* the truth about the consequences of their choices. It's nice to see one legislator standing up for the safety of children. Grown-ups can't just do whatever they want in order to try to make themselves happy. We have to care what the consequences of our choices will be for the little ones – born and unborn.

Green beret dies trying to save his two daughters from house fire

March 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> A Green Beret recently home from Afghanistan died trying to rescue his two young daughters from their burning home near Fort Bragg in North Carolina early Tuesday. The girls were also killed in the blaze.
>
> Edward Cantrell and his wife escaped from the 2 a.m. blaze by jumping from the home's second floor, the Cumberland County sheriff's office said. Cantrell then wrapped himself in a blanket and re-entered the burning home in Hope Mills, about 10 miles from the Army base that is home to the Green Berets and other Special Forces units, sheriff's spokeswoman Debbie Tanna said.
>
> Cantrell, 36, was trying to reach 6-year-old Isabella and 4-year-old Natalia, who were trapped in second-floor bedrooms, Tanna said.
> "He never made it back out," Tanna said. Firefighters found their bodies inside the home, Tanna said.
>
> […]Cantrell was a member of the 3rd Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg. He held the rank of chief warrant officer 2, said Lt. Col. April Olsen, a spokeswoman for Army Special Forces Command. It was not clear when he served in Afghanistan.
>
> […]Louise Cantrell, 37, is being treated for smoke inhalation at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, reported FayObserver.com.

There's something about marriage that brings out the best in men.

Thomas Sowell: the longer we wait to stop Iran, the worse it will be

March 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell writing in National Review.

Excerpt:

> Members of the Obama administration have been pointing out how hard it would be to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities, now that they have been built deep underground and dispersed.
>
> That would have been something to consider during the time when President Obama was taking leisurely and half-hearted measures to create the appearance of trying to stop the Iranian nuclear program, while vigorously warning Israel not to take military action.
>
> Time was never on our side. The risks go up exponentially the longer we wait. When the Iranian nuclear program was just getting started, it could have been destroyed before it became so big, so dispersed, and so deeply dug in underground. Now, if we wait till they actually have nuclear bombs, the same kinds of arguments for inaction will carry even more weight, when the price of an attack on Iran could be the start of a nuclear Holocaust.
>
> Nor should we assume that we can remain safe by throwing Israel to the wolves, once the election is over, as might well happen if Obama is reelected and no longer has any political reasons to pretend to be Israel's friend.
>
> That kind of cynical miscalculation was made by France back in 1938, when it threw its ally, Czechoslovakia, to the wolves by refusing to defend it against Hitler's demands, despite the mutual defense treaty between the two countries. Less than two years later, Hitler's armies were invading France — using, among other things, tanks manufactured in Czechoslovakia.
>
> This was just one of the expedient miscalculations that helped bring on the bloodiest and most destructive war the world has ever known. Dare we repeat such miscalculations in a nuclear age?
>
> At the end of the Second World War, Winston Churchill said, "There never was in all history a war easier to prevent by timely action than the one which has just desolated such great areas of the globe." It might even have been prevented "without the firing of a single shot," Churchill said.

Those who do not learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them.

Animal homosexual behavior: does it justify homosexuality in humans?

March 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Alan Shlemon Stand to Reason.

Excerpt:

> The argument is that since animals engage in homosexual behavior that is instinctual, it must be natural for them and, consequently, natural and moral for humans since they are animals too.
>
> There's something wrong with this line of reasoning. In fact, a simple question composed of a two-letter word gets right to the heart of the problem: *So*? Even if animals exhibit homosexual behavior, *so*? What does that prove? It proves nothing. Do advocates of this view really want to say: Because animals engage in X behavior, therefore X is natural/moral for humans? This claim is absurd. Here's why.
>
> […]Imagine a father asks his daughter, "Why did you start smoking?" She answers, "Because all my friends were doing it." The father's response would be obvious: "If all your friends jumped off a cliff, would you do that too?" Notice the father's reasoning. He accepts his daughter's rational, for the sake of argument, and then asks himself a question: *If I apply my daughter's rationale to jumping off a cliff, that would mean she'd jump of a cliff too. But that's absurd! That means her rationale is also absurd.* And then he asks a question that exposes the absurdity of her thinking. That's *reductio ad absurdum*.
>
> With the claim about animal homosexuality, this tactic works equally well. The rationale for the argument is that if animals engage in a behavior, it must be natural and moral for humans do it too. Let's apply that logic to some other animal behavior: cannibalism. Animals eating their own kind has been observed in over a thousand animal species. Following the logic of the view would mean that cannibalism is natural and moral for humans. But that's absurd! And so is the rationale that led to that absurd conclusion.
>
> […]When humans have conflicting instinctive reactions, our intellect can reason between them and determine the most expedient or moral course of action. Animals, however, behave according to their strongest instinct given what they see, smell, hear, taste, and perceive. These natural impulses aid in their protection, survival, and reproduction.
>
> But internal or external stimuli can cause their instincts to clash or get confused, leading to unusual behavior. Sometimes a cat will kill his kittens. Unlike females whose strong maternal instinct protects her babies, the predatory instinct of a tom cat can confuse his offspring for prey. Are his hunting impulses natural? Yes.

> Can they be misdirected? Sure. Should we declare filicide or cannibalism as natural or moral for humans? No.
>
> The same is true for allegedly homosexual acts among animals. Their sexual drive and instinct to mate is extremely strong and can be confused. When animals are in heat, they release pheromones that trigger an instinctual behavior by males. According to an expert in the field, this inborn impulse is so strong, that it can "instigate a frenzy of mounting behaviors. Even other females who aren't in heat will mount those who are. Males will mount males who have just been with females [in heat] if they still bear their scent…And males who catch wind of the estrus odor may mount the first thing (or unlucky person) they come in contact with."[4] I've even seen a dog mount a couch. One might have good taste in sofas, but I doubt it's so good that your dog is sexually attracted to it. The poor pooch is confused.
>
> Plus, sexual activity among animals is known to be used for purposes other than reproduction. Although humans can express themselves by speaking, writing, gesturing, and a multitude of other ways, animals are limited. Consequently, they are known to use sexual behavior to express a range of sentiments: social dominance, aggression, avoiding conflict, and many other emotions. That's why many researchers think it's naive to impose a human understanding of homosexuality onto animal behavior.
>
> "Properly speaking, homosexuality does not exist among animals…. For reasons of survival, the reproductive instinct among animals is always directed towards an individual of the opposite sex. Therefore, an animal can never be homosexual as such. Nevertheless, the interaction of other instincts (particularly dominance) can result in behavior that appears to be homosexual. Such behavior cannot be equated with an animal homosexuality. All it means is that animal sexual behavior encompasses aspects beyond that of reproduction."[5]
>
> So we can't infer homosexuality when a male chimpanzee mounts another male any more than we can infer sofaphilia when a dog mounts your couch. Yes, I made up the word "sofaphilia."

This is a good one to keep in your back pocket for debating with gay activists. By the way, I think Alan Shlemon is very brave to tackle arguments like this.

If you like this post, be sure and check out my secular case against same-sex marriage.

Obama gave administration jobs to half of his 47 biggest fundraisers

March 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Big donors considering whether to work the phones raising money for President Obama's reelection campaign might consider the fate of his 2008 bundlers. Many of them, it turns out, won plum jobs in his administration.
>
> Obama campaigned on what he called "the most sweeping ethics reform in history" and has frequently criticized the role of money in politics. That hasn't stopped him from offering government jobs to some of his biggest bundlers, volunteer fundraisers who gather political contributions from other rich donors.
>
> More than half of Obama's 47 biggest fundraisers, those who collected at least $500,000 for his campaign, have been given administration jobs. Nine more have been appointed to presidential boards and committees.
>
> At least 24 Obama bundlers were given posts as foreign ambassadors, including in Finland, Australia, Portugal and Luxembourg. Among them is Don Beyer, a former Virginia lieutenant governor who serves as ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein.
>
> […]Nicole Avant, a music industry executive who raised at least $500,000, served as ambassador to the Bahamas until November.
>
> The inspector general wrote that her tenure was part of "an extended period of dysfunctional leadership and mismanagement, which has caused problems throughout the embassy." The report said Avant spent roughly 40 percent of her time out of the country over a two-year period.
>
> […]Avant is now helping the Obama campaign raise money from donors in Hollywood.
>
> Luxembourg Ambassador Cynthia Stroum, a Seattle venture capitalist who raised $500,000 for Obama, was also criticized in an inspector general's report, which said she sent her staff on a house-hunting mission, billed the government for bedding after being told she couldn't and was "keenly interested" in the materials used for remodeling two bathrooms in her residence.
>
> "Most employees describe the ambassador as aggressive, bullying, hostile, and intimidating," inspectors wrote of Stroum.

It's all funded by your taxes, folks. When you go to work, the government takes some of your money and this is what it gets used for.

Attention Deficit Disorder? The disorder is with lack of parental attention

March 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Stuart Schneiderman.

Excerpt:

> A month or so ago David Goldman, aka Spengler, wrote an extraordinary column about how America is failing its children.
>
> America is a country that likes to solve problems. If children are a problem America has a solution. Or, I should say, American science has the solution.
>
> If children are in trouble, cognitive neuroscience and child psychiatry are at the ready to solve the problem by changing their brain chemistry.
>
> I have often praised the interesting work being done by cognitive neuroscience and its adjunct field, behavioral economics. I have also warned, to the extent that I can, against an overly mechanized view of human behavior.
>
> Many neuroscientists replaced the mind with the brain, free will with determinism, and reason with irrational emotion.
>
> Cognitive neuroscientists are so caught up in their discoveries, so drunk with their newfound power and prestige that they now claim to have all the answers to all the questions.
>
> Of course, most psychiatrists today are gaga over the power of pills. Compared to the psychoanalytic therapy they had been offering, medication seems to represent a step in a better direction. Still, in many cases it is a step too far.
>
> Therapists used to believe that it was all in the mind. Now they have gone to the other extreme, thinking that it's all in the brain.
>
> Whatever the cause of the problem with American children, America, Spengler writes, has been trying to solve it by prescribing pills and technology.
>
> Imperiously, perhaps even tyrannically, it has diagnosed 10% of America's children with one or another form of attention deficit disorder. And it has filled classrooms with computers, the better to make learning fun and creative.
>
> But now, Spengler reports, physicians and psychologists are beginning to recognize that Ritalin and Adderall are not as effective as we like to think, and that, over time, these amphetamines are actually harmful.

If you're a parent, then you should read the rest. He gets quite judgmental and exclusive – and that's a good thing!

Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)

March 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB rating: [6.9/10]

Description:

> In the early years of World War II, the Nazis have overrun the Netherlands and have taken over the shipyard co-owned and run by Jaap van Leyden. The yard was making submarines for the Dutch Navy. The German 'Protector' Von Schiffer demands that they resume making submarines, but for the Nazis. By lowering food rations to starvation point, they induce some of the skilled workers to return to the yard.
>
> This leads to many problems for van Leyden and his wife when everyone sees them as collaborators. But van Leyden works out a way to appear to do what the Nazis want but to keep his conscience clear as well.

I like this movie better than last week's movie.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of my favorite TV show

Even in Canada, green energy socialism closes businesses and kills jobs

March 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A story from CANOE about the socialist premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty.

Excerpt:

> Dalton McGuinty constantly extols the virtues of so-called green energy.
>
> One North Bay company, however, is sounding the alarm that the costs of this expensive program are forcing companies to lay off staff — and will eventually force many of them to leave the province.
>
> John Spencer is an executive with Fabrene Inc., a company that makes industrial fabrics.
>
> The Liberal government's green energy plan has added $1 million a year to his hydro bill — an amount he says will eventually force his company out of this province.
>
> There's a line on corporate energy bills called the Global Adjustment." It's that line that pays for renewable energy projects.
>
> Spencer's seen the GA soar over the past few years — from 5% of his bill to 42%.
>
> In his most recent report, provincial auditor general Jim McCarter warned by 2014, the Global Adjustment is expected to be six cents per kilowatt hour — nearly two-thirds of the total electricity charge
>
> The GA is expected to increase tenfold province-wide, from about $700 million in 2006 to $8.1 billion in 2014, when the last of the province's coal-fired plants is phased out.
>
> Almost one-third of this $8.1 billion is attributable to costly green energy contracts.
>
> That will sound the death knell for his company in this province, Spencer said.
>
> "My company won't make it that far."
>
> The cost of hydro itself is competitive, he said. It's the GA — and the $1 million it's adding to his bill that's killing jobs.
>
> Electricity is now his third biggest cost — after raw materials and labour.
>
> He has to explain that non-competitive rate to plants in the U.S., South America, China and Europe.
>
> "It's a very bleak outlook," he says.
>
> "It's a runaway freight train. We've got to stop it in its tracks or we're going to kill a great majority of small and medium sized companies," Pearson said.
>
> Ironically, at least 42 of the largest companies in the province are exempt from

> the GA.

It’s important to learn from other countries what works and what doesn’t work.

Green energy and the Ontario economy

The National Post wrote about how the Ontario government wastes taxpayer money to subsidize big corporations who experiment with unproven, expensive energy programs, like solar power.

Excerpt:

> The Swedish retail giant IKEA announced yesterday it will invest $4.6-million to install 3,790 solar panels on three Toronto area stores, giving IKEA the electric-power-producing capacity of 960,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) per year. According to IKEA, that’s enough electricity to power 100 homes. Amazing development. Even more amazing is the economics of this project. Under the Ontario government’s feed-in-tariff solar power scheme, IKEA will receive 71.3¢ for each kilowatt of power produced, which works out to about $6,800 a year for each of the 100 hypothetical homes. Since the average Toronto home currently pays about $1,200 for the same quantity of electricity, that implies that IKEA is being overpaid by $5,400 per home equivalent.
>
> Welcome to the wonderful world of green economics and the magical business of carbon emission reduction. Each year, IKEA will receive $684,408 under Premier Dalton McGuinty’s green energy monster — for power that today retails for about $115,000. At that rate, IKEA will recoup $4.6-million in less than seven years — not bad for an investment that can be amortized over 20.
>
> No wonder solar power is such a hot industry. No wonder, too, that the province of Ontario is in a headlong rush into a likely economic crisis brought on by skyrocketing electricity prices. To make up the money paid to IKEA to promote itself as a carbon-free zone, Ontario consumers and industries are on their way to experiencing the highest electricity rates in North America, if not most of the world.
>
> The government’s regulator, the Ontario Energy Board, has prepared secret forecasts of how much Ontario consumers are going to have to pay for electricity over the next five years. The government won’t allow the report to be released. The next best estimate comes from Aegent Energy Advisors Inc., in a study it did for the Canadian Manufactures and Exporters group. Residential rates are expected to jump by 60% between 2010 and 2015. Industrial customers will be looking at a 55% increase.
>
> Going back to 2003, based on numbers dug up by consultant Tom Adams, the price of residential electricity in Ontario hovered around 8.5¢ a kWh in 2003 — the first year of the McGuinty Liberal regime. By 2015, Aegent Energy estimates the price will be up to 21¢, an increase of 135%. Doubling the price of electricity in a decade is no way to spur growth and investment.

Messing around with green energy doesn’t just hurt businesses – it hurts consumers, too.

Barack Obama caught on video praising and embracing racist university professor

March 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Obama's days at Harvard have been shrouded in secrecy. But a new video lifts a corner of the veil, revealing his creepy embrace of the "Jeremiah Wright of academia."
>
> It turns out his favorite law professor was the late Derrick Bell, a black radical who taught classes trashing the Constitution as racist.
>
> He liked Bell so much he led a law school "strike" in support of him in 1991, when the professor went on unpaid leave to protest the lack of affirmative-action hiring on campus.
>
> A video clip posted by Breitbart.com captures Obama praising Bell for "speaking the truth" and hugging him.
>
> Not long before this show of affection, Bell had been called into the university president's office to explain why he had sent him a letter filled with violent fantasies — including their own death from a bomb planted in his office by white racists. Bell explained that such extremism is what it would take to get the administration to agree to grant more affirmative-action programs.
>
> Harvard's honcho wasn't amused. Bell groused he just didn't get it. But who would? Apparently his star pupil. And that's what's so unsettling.
>
> Bell's nutty ideas — including that America is a "racist nation" carrying out a "quasi-genocide in the inner cities" — were well known to Obama. Bell came highly recommended by Obama's America-hating preacher Rev. Wright. He and Bell were pals. In fact, Obama just traded Wright's pews for Bell's desks.
>
> At the pro-Bell rally, Obama took to the mike as if he were his spokesman. He commended Bell's "excellence in scholarship," adding that he "changed the standards of what legal writing is about."
>
> His legal writings included this gem published in the Connecticut Law Review around the time Obama was defending him: "The whole (classical) liberal worldview of private rights and public sovereignty mediated by the rule of law needed to be exploded."
>
> Obama lapped it up. This was not some misguided youth flirting with radicalism. He was 30, and Harvard Law Review editor.

I'm not surprised.

Lee Strobel interviews resurrection historian Mike Licona

March 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video is here:

The discuss the minimal facts approach to the resurrection, as well as the views of skeptical scholar Bart Ehrman, who Mike has debated several times.

You can donate to Mike Licona's ministry here: Risen Jesus. I do recommend his ministry.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

Banks foreclosing on churches in record numbers

March 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Reuters. (H/T Muddling)

Excerpt:

> Banks are foreclosing on America's churches in record numbers as lenders increasingly lose patience with religious facilities that have defaulted on their mortgages, according to new data.
>
> The surge in church foreclosures represents a new wave of distressed property seizures triggered by the 2008 financial crash, analysts say, with many banks no longer willing to grant struggling religious organizations forbearance.
>
> Since 2010, 270 churches have been sold after defaulting on their loans, with 90 percent of those sales coming after a lender-triggered foreclosure, according to the real estate information company CoStar Group.
>
> In 2011, 138 churches were sold by banks, an annual record, with no sign that these religious foreclosures are abating, according to CoStar. That compares to just 24 sales in 2008 and only a handful in the decade before.
>
> The church foreclosures have hit all denominations across America, black and white, but with small to medium size houses of worship the worst. Most of these institutions have ended up being purchased by other churches.
>
> The highest percentage have occurred in some of the states hardest hit by the home foreclosure crisis: California, Georgia, Florida and Michigan.

Christianity requires a certain framework of laws and policies to practice, and churches need to make sure that their flocks vote intelligently in order to maintain an environment where churches can thrive. Part of that environment is economics.

“Problem families” cost British taxpayers £9 billion per year

March 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> The majority of Britain’s “problem families”, some of whom are blamed for last summer’s riots, are fatherless, official research has found.
>
> About 72,000 of the most troubled families, 60 per cent of those being targeted by the Government, are headed by a single mother. The rate is about triple the national average.
>
> An official review into the causes of last summer’s riots is expected to highlight the lack of “male role models” for many of the youths arrested in the wake of the widespread disturbances.
>
> The riot panel, set up to investigate the problem, is thought to have become frustrated that few details of the family backgrounds of problem children have previously been recorded, despite it being such an important influence on their behaviour.
>
> The issue has now quickly risen up the Prime Minister’s agenda and Downing Street aides believe that family breakdown is one of the most urgent problems facing Britain.

> Last night, Eric Pickles, the Communities and Local Government Secretary, said: “These troubled families are in total breakdown.
>
> “The absence of a positive father figure is a huge problem and often the fathers who are present have severe drug and alcohol addictions and are not working.
>
> “Clearly we want to work towards a situation where the fathers in these families provide stability, which means getting them back to work, so they can bring in money and be a positive role model to their children.”
>
> It is understood that another “problem” identified among the troubled families is the large number of children. About 20 per cent of the 120,000 families have at least five children, which can lead to a lack of parental attention.

That’s about $15 billion U.S. dollars per year. The cost of family breakdown in the United States is $112 billion per year, and rising as the illegitimacy rate rises.

Reconstructing marriage

We need to stop the destruction of marriage to stop these runaway costs.

One of the ways to do that is to encourage men to marry. But the problem is that men without fathers in the home will not be as likely to marry, since they have never seen the

way that a man operates in a marriage – as a protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. Men need to see an example of mature, married love that is different from lust – an example of steady self-sacrificial service. The more we subsidize the destruction of marriage, the fewer younger men will understand what marriage really requires of men at the experiential level.

But there is another problem. Where does this money for social programs come from? It comes from businesses and taxpayers. In particular, a lot of it comes from working men and their employers. When business taxes and income taxes go up to pay for this problem, it is much harder for men to bear the financial costs of marriage.

Young women, take note: if you do not do your part to fight against divorce and unwed motherhood, then you cannot complain that men are not marrying. To get men to marry, society has to have in place a framework of laws, policies and economic incentives that make marriage natural and inviting to men. Taxing employers and incomes is not the right way to encourage men to marry. If we want men to be providers and to take responsibility for families, then we need to encourage them and make it easier for them to do those things.

Christians ought to care

Christians have an extra reason to be opposed to divorce and unwed motherhood – Christianity is "appropriated" by children most when there is a father in the home who is engaged as moral and spiritual leader. That means when the mother lets the father lead on moral and spiritual issues.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the

> percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.

Women who are serious about serving God with their marriages should therefore get very comfortable with the idea with having a man in the home who will *lead* on moral and spiritual issues. I recommend that women prepare themselves by studying things like Christian apologetics, politics, economics, etc. so that they are able to test men on their knowledge of these things. There is simply no other way to know if a man can lead on moral and spiritual issues. The woman must study these things, and the woman must detect and select men who can lead. She must have enough of a developed, integrated Christian worldview in order to test his worldview. This is especially important if her own father does not have a well-developed worldview, since she will have to do more of the testing herself.

Christian women need to become comfortable with men who are solid on moral issues, especially when they can be persuasive using reason and evidence when articulating their views. Christian women need to become comfortable with men who are solid on exclusive truth claims, especially when they can be persuasive using reason and evidence when articulating their views. And the best way to get comfortable with men being bold and assertive on moral questions and truth questions is for women to study these things themselves.

Just as an example, I know a Christian woman who a year ago who was not using the standard arguments for God's existence from physics. She sent me some pictures of her bookshelves and they are literally filled with apologetics books. She sent me a snippet of a conversation she is in with an atheist scientist and she is pounding him with peer-reviewed articles from science journals showing how the progress of science supports theism. Women need to be like that *so that* they are capable of recognizing and preferring men who will lead.

What church leaders don't seem to get is that a man's ability to lead on moral and spiritual issues is not strong enough if it is merely based on his ""faith" opinions. Moral and spiritual leadership is stronger when it's grounded by studying the data and becoming familiar with the evidence pro and con. There is no shortcut to being a moral and spiritual leader through Bible reading, singing and praying. More is required. And more is required of women who expect to be able to be comfortable with such a man. Women need to study these things themselves, like my friend, *so that* they are able to recognize and prefer men who have those required skills.

To encourage marriage, we have to be practical. We have to think about dollars and cents. We have to think about incentives. We have to put ourselves in the place of men and ask ourselves: what does it take to make you commit? What are your needs? What are your fears? It's not going to work to just order men around and spout slogans like "man up". It's a problem and it needs a rigorous engineering/economics approach to

solve. We need leaders who think about problems as engineers and economists, not as charismatic speakers.

UK government: Christians do not have right to wear a cross at work

March 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tom sent me this article from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Christians do not have a right to wear a cross or crucifix openly at work, the Government is to argue in a landmark court case.
>
> In a highly significant move, ministers will fight a case at the European Court of Human Rights in which two British women will seek to establish their right to display the cross.
>
> It is the first time that the Government has been forced to state whether it backs the right of Christians to wear the symbol at work.

> A document seen by *The Sunday Telegraph* discloses that ministers will argue that because it is not a "requirement" of the Christian faith, employers can ban the wearing of the cross and sack workers who insist on doing so.
>
> […]The Government's refusal to say that Christians have a right to display the symbol of their faith at work emerged after its plans to legalise same-sex marriages were attacked by the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church in Britain.
>
> A poll commissioned by *The Sunday Telegraph* shows that the country is split on the issue.
>
> Overall, 45 per cent of voters support moves to allow gay marriage, with 36 per cent against, while 19 per cent say they do not know.
>
> However, the Prime Minister is out of step with his own party.
>
> Exactly half of Conservative voters oppose same-sex marriage in principle and only 35 per cent back it.
>
> There is no public appetite to change the law urgently, with more than three quarters of people polled saying it was wrong to fast-track the plan before 2015 and only 14 per cent saying it was right.
>
> The Strasbourg case hinges on whether human rights laws protect the right to wear a cross or crucifix at work under Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
>
> It states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance."
>
> The Christian women bringing the case, Nadia Eweida and Shirley Chaplin, claim

> that they were discriminated against when their employers barred them from wearing the symbols.
>
> They want the European Court to rule that this breached their human right to manifest their religion.
>
> The Government's official response states that wearing the cross is not a "requirement of the faith" and therefore does not fall under the remit of Article 9.
>
> Lawyers for the two women claim that the Government is setting the bar too high and that "manifesting" religion includes doing things that are not a "requirement of the faith", and that they are therefore protected by human rights.
>
> They say that Christians are given less protection than members of other religions who have been granted special status for garments or symbols such as the Sikh turban and kara bracelet, or the Muslim hijab.

I think that many of the people in the UK who push for the marginalization of religion from society are probably the same people who decry the decline of moral standards. It is a secularist fantasy that people will act as they ought to act when people think that there is no way that the universe ought to be. The UK is self-destructing because they are cutting themselves off from the ground of morality, and one of the pillars of Western Civilization.

Trial begins for former NASA employee fired for belief in intelligent design

March 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory has landed robotic explorers on the surface of Mars, sent probes to outer planets and operates a worldwide network of antennas that communicates with interplanetary spacecraft.
>
> Its latest mission is defending itself in a workplace lawsuit filed by a former computer specialist who claims he was demoted — and then let go — for promoting his views on intelligent design.
>
> […]David Coppedge, who worked as a "team lead" on the Cassini mission exploring Saturn and its many moons, alleges that he was discriminated against because he engaged his co-workers in conversations about intelligent design and handed out DVDs on the idea while at work. Coppedge lost his "team lead" title in 2009 and was let go last year after 15 years on the mission.
>
> Opening statements are expected to begin Monday in Los Angeles Superior Court after two years of legal wrangling in a case that has generated interest among supporters of intelligent design. The Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian civil rights group, and the Discovery Institute, a proponent of intelligent design, are both supporting Coppedge's case.
>
> "It's part of a pattern. There is basically a war on anyone who dissents from Darwin and we've seen that for several years," said John West, associate director of the Center for Science and Culture at the Seattle-based Discovery Institute. "This is free speech, freedom of conscience 101."
>
> […]Coppedge's attorney, William Becker, says his client was singled out by his bosses because they perceived his belief in intelligent design to be religious.

If Darwinism was all it was cracked up to be, then why do they have to resort to silencing people who disagree with them, and ruining their careers? This is not an isolated occurrence.

Democrats consider making gay marriage part of their policy platform

March 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> More Americans are embracing gay marriage, adding to calls from Democrats for President Barack Obama— who has said he is not sure where he stands — to publicly express his support before the November elections.
>
> […]Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, chairman of the Democratic National Convention, said last week that a gay-marriage plank should be part of the platform, echoing recent comments from House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.). Gay-rights activists say they have been making the case to the White Housethat polls show Obama has little to lose politically if he endorses gay marriage.Forty-nine percent of Americans now say they approve of gay marriage, up from 40 percent shortly after Obama took office in 2009.

It should be noted that Barack Obama is in favor of legalizing gay marriage. We know this because he refused to defend the Defense of Marriage Act. He is therefore *opposed*to traditional marriage, in practice. It does not matter what he says in campaign speeches. If he is elected in November 2012, then gay marriage will be rammed down the throats of Americans, especially through public schools.

Dissent and disagreement with the gay agenda will be criminalized as “hate speech” even more than it already is. Religious people will be forced to celebrate the gay lifestyle just as Catholic groups are being forced to subsidize contraception – against their religious beliefs – now. That’s the real agenda of the Obama administration: forcing Christians to act like atheists in public, and forcing Christians to subsidize an atheistic agenda.

You can read about how to make a secular case against gay marriage here.

Is the story of the woman being stoned for adultery in John 7-8 authentic?

March 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the leading conservative New Testament scholar Daniel Wallace to explain. Excerpt:

> One hundred and forty years ago, conservative biblical scholar and Dean of Canterbury, Henry Alford, advocated a new translation to replace the King James Bible. One of his reasons was the inferior textual basis of the KJV. Alford argued that "a translator of Holy Scripture must be…ready to sacrifice the choicest text, and the plainest proof of doctrine, if the words are not those of what he is constrained in his conscience to receive as God's testimony." He was speaking about the Trinitarian formula found in the KJV rendering of 1 John 5:7–8. Twenty years later, two Cambridge scholars came to the firm conclusion that John 7:53–8:11 also was not part of the original text of scripture. But Westcott and Hort's view has not had nearly the impact that Alford's did.
>
> For a long time, biblical scholars have recognized the poor textual credentials of the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11). The evidence against its authenticity is overwhelming: The earliest manuscripts with substantial portions of John's Gospel (P66 and P75) lack these verses. They skip from John 7:52to 8:12. The oldest large codices of the Bible also lack these verses: codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both from the fourth century, are normally considered to be the most important biblical manuscripts of the NT extant today. Neither of them has these verses. Codex Alexandrinus, from the fifth century, lacks several leaves in the middle of John. But because of the consistency of the letter size, width of lines, and lines per page, the evidence is conclusive that this manuscript also lacked the *pericope adulterae*. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, also from the fifth century, apparently lacked these verses as well (it is similar to Alexandrinus in that some leaves are missing). **The earliest extant manuscript to have these verses is codex Bezae, an eccentric text once in the possession of Theodore Beza. He gave this manuscript to the University of Cambridge in 1581 as a gift, telling the school that he was confident that the scholars there would be able to figure out its significance.** He washed his hands of the document. Bezae is indeed the most eccentric NT manuscript extant today, yet it is the chief representative of the Western text-type (the text-form that became dominant in Rome and the Latin West).
>
> **When P66, P75, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus agree, their combined testimony is overwhelmingly strong that a particular reading is not authentic. But it is not only the early Greek manuscripts that lack this text. The great majority of Greek manuscripts through the first eight**

> **centuries lack this pericope. And except for Bezae (or codex D), virtually all of the most important Greek witnesses through the first eight centuries do not have the verses. Of the three most important early versions of the New Testament (Coptic, Latin, Syriac), two of them lack the story in their earliest and best witnesses. The Latin alone has the story in its best early witnesses.**
>
> Even patristic writers seemed to overlook this text. Bruce Metzger, arguably the greatest textual critic of the twentieth century, argued that "No Greek Church Father prior to Euthymius Zigabenus (twelfth century) comments on the passage, and Euthymius declares that the accurate copies of the Gospel do not contain it" (*Textual Commentary*, 2nd ed., *loc. cit.*).
>
> It is an important point to note that although the story of the woman caught in adultery is found in most of our printed Bibles today, the evidence suggests that the majority of Bibles during the first eight centuries of the Christian faith did not contain the story. Externally, most scholars would say that the evidence for it not being an authentic part of John's Gospel is rock solid.
>
> But textual criticism is not based on external evidence alone; there is also the internal evidence to consider. This is comprised of two parts: *intrinsic evidence* has to do with what an author is likely to have written;*transcriptional evidence* has to do with how and why a scribe would have changed the text.
>
> Intrinsically, the vocabulary, syntax, and style look far more like Luke than they do John. There is almost nothing in these twelve verses that has a Johannine flavor. And transcriptionally, scribes were almost always prone to add material rather than omit it—especially a big block of text such as this, rich in its description of Jesus' mercy. One of the remarkable things about this passage, in fact, is that it is found in multiple locations. Most manuscripts that have it place it in its now traditional location: between John 7:52 and 8:12. But an entire family of manuscripts has the passage at the end of Luke 21, while another family places it at the end of John's Gospel. Other manuscripts place it at the end of Luke or in various places in John 7.
>
> The *pericope adulterae* has all the earmarks of a pericope that was looking for a home. It took up permanent residence, in the ninth century, in the middle of the fourth gospel.

Wallace teaches at the ultra-conservative fundamentalist Dallas Theological Seminary:

> Daniel B. Wallace

> Professor of New Testament Studies
>
> B.A., Biola University, 1975; Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; Ph.D., 1995.
>
> Dr. Wallace influences students across the country through his textbook on

> intermediate Greek grammar. It has become the standard textbook in the English-speaking world on that subject. He is a member of the Society of New Testament Studies, the Institute for Biblical Research, the Society of Biblical Literature, and the Evangelical Theological Society. Dr. Wallace is also the senior New Testament editor of the NET Bible and coeditor of the NET-Nestle Greek-English diglot. He has been a consultant on four different Bible translations. Recently his scholarship has begun to focus on John, Mark, and nascent Christology. He works extensively in textual criticism, and has founded The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (csntm.org), an institute with an initial purpose of preserving Scripture by taking digital photographs of all known Greek New Testament manuscripts. He has traveled the world in search of biblical manuscripts. His postdoctoral work includes work on Greek grammar at Tyndale House in Cambridge, textual criticism studies at the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster, and the Universität Tübingen, Germany.

He also blogs at Parchment & Pen and has been linked as an authority at Gospel Coalition, Monergism, Christian Research Journal, etc. He is the absolute best we have, he has debated liberals like Bart Ehrman many times, and his skepticism of John 7-8 has been written up in Christianity Today. (Note: I am not necessarily endorsing reformed theology, but they are conservative and generally quite correct, in my view). And if that were not enough, he has been interviewed by Brian Auten of Apologetics 315.

Why is this important? I think it is important because this story is very prominent for a great many Christians, especially Christian women, who use this to justify a variety of positions that are inconsistent with the rest of the Bible. These Christians *do not like the idea of anyone being judged* and so they are naturally inclined to blow this disputed passage into an entire theology that repudiates making moral judgments on such things as capital punishment. In fact, in another post, I was accused of being the equivalent of one of the people who wanted to stone the woman taken for adultery because I oppose fornication and single motherhood. That's how far this has gone, where some Christians, especially Christian feminists, have leveraged this passage to redefine the Bible so that women are no longer responsible to the Bible's moral rules and can never be blamed for acting irresponsibly.

Is WK a big liberal?

As this debate between Peter Williams and Bart Ehrman shows, there are only TWO disputed passages in the entire NT that are theologically significant. The long ending of Mark and this adultery passage. A good case can be made for the long ending of Mark, but it's best not to assume it in a debate. The adultery passage is difficult to defend as authentic. Dr. Wallace talks about both passages in this Parchment & Pen article (reclaimingthemind.org). Wallace has also debated Bart Ehrman in the Greer-Heard Forum. What that debate showed is that the New Testament text is actually quite reliable except for those two passages, but it's important to be honest about the two

places that are not well supported.

The other other NT passages that are a concern are the earthquake passage and the guard story in Matthew. I think that the earthquake is apocalyptic language and the guard is more likely historical than not.

For a closer look at what the Bible says about capital punishment, look here.

Democrats oppose checking immigration status during traffic stops

March 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Despite testimony from a man whose brother was killed by an illegal alien who was driving drunk and had five previous DWI arrests, Democrats spoke out against legislation that would allow arresting officers to check the legal status of aliens and transfer confirmed illegal immigrants into federal custody.
>
> […]Wednesday's hearing of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement focused on the Scott Gardner Act, sponsored by Rep. Sue Myrick (R-N.C.), who testified on the first panel.
>
> The bill is named after a University of North Carolina student, Scott Gardner, who was run over by Jorge Humberto Hernandez-Soto, an illegal alien who was driving drunk and who had been returned to Mexico 17 times before he killed the young college student, according to a 2005 article about the incident in the *Charlotte Observer.*
>
> "By directing state officers to treat people differently based upon their perceived alienage, the bill would essentially become a national version of the Arizona and Alabama immigration laws, inviting widespread racial profiling and discrimination in violation of the Constitution," Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), the ranking Democratic member, said at Wednesday's hearing.

It's ok for Americans to be killed by illegal immigrants with repeated offenses, but it's wrong to ask people who are stopped for their immigration status. Got that?

Iain Duncan Smith’s defense of traditional marriage in the UK

March 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Iain Duncan Smith will make the Coalition’s most explicit official statement in favour of parents marrying and staying together.

> He will say that children from such homes are most likely to end up with a good education and a job.
>
> The Work and Pensions Secretary will make the declaration as he announces an Early Intervention Foundation to raise millions of pounds from private investors to help disadvantaged children.
>
> The Social Justice Strategy Paper will set out plans to tackle the causes of poverty and disadvantage.

> It makes clear that the stability of parents’ relationships is a key factor in children’s prospects.
>
> Marriage is particularly good for children, the paper says. The Government is “concerned” by the long-term trend away from marriage, it says.
>
> Mr Duncan Smith will say the strategy marks a change in the approach to marriage. Successive governments have done too little to promote stable families, he will say.
>
> Mr Duncan Smith has had a long personal interest in family issues but the main paper he will publish today constitutes a government commitment to promote marriage.
>
> The command paper quotes evidence showing that “children tend to enjoy better life outcomes when the same two parents give them support and protection”.
>
> Children who have experienced the breakdown of their parents’ relationship are “more likely to have poor cognitive development and education and employment outcomes than those who have lived with both birth parents”.
>
> “Outcomes” are better for children when parents stay together, the paper says. Research shows that about one in three cohabiting couples splits up before a child’s fifth birthday, compared with one in 10 married couples.
>
> “This Government believes marriage often provides an excellent environment in which to bring up children,” it says. “The Government is clear that marriage should be supported.”
>
> Mr Duncan Smith said he was not “lecturing” parents on how to live, merely

> setting out the facts on the advantages of marriage and commitment.

I keep expecting to hear more statements like this from thoughtful conservatives here and abroad. There are so many conservatives, but very few of them are willing to make a case for marriage using the evidence.

Good Christian Bitches: why Christians should not support Hollywood

March 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Newsbusters.

Excerpt:

> At the same time Washington was ablaze with outrage at the idea that Rush Limbaugh insulted a woman as a "slut," ABC premiered a new Sunday night show called "GCB" – shortened from "Good Christian Bitches." Limbaugh apologized. ABC displays no such contrition. They insulted only those *Christians*. In the midst of this trashy debut, ABC promoted a new sitcom coming in April titled "Don't Trust The B—- in Apartment 23."
>
> ABC advertised the debut of "GCB" with a photo of actress Kristin Chenoweth in a choir robe cut way above the knee, as if such a thing exists. "Love One Another," it read, dripping in sarcasm. That's Hollywood's definition of a "good Christian."
>
> Chenoweth plays Carlene Cockburn, the wealthy "queen bitch," who routinely quotes Bible verses with venom on the show. When her realtor friend won't help her ruin the lead character, Amanda, Carlene threatens her business: "Read Job 1:21, the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away." She launches wicked plots while the auto shop puts a "John 3:16″ decal on her car. She tells her fellow plotters "God hates failure."
>
> Time TV critic James Poniewozik protested "I have a hard time believing that anyone will see themselves insulted by GCB: its target is not Christians but phonies." Not so. There are certainly Christian hypocrites that can make for great grist in entertainment. But this show offers the viewing public no authentic Christians at all.

Notice how the Hollywood people think that being a Christian means refusing to judge immorality, and that everyone who takes Biblical morality seriously is to be attacked as a hypocrite. It's good to be clear on this. That's their view of Christianity.

Frankly, I try to see one movie at most in theaters per year. I want to give as little as possible to be in Hollywood, because to me Hollywood is mostly populated by Roman Polanski types and supporters of Roman Polanski types.

What frustrates me is that Christians are the ones providing these people with revenues. We shouldn't be shoveling money to these anti-Christian bigots in Hollywood, and pastors should be speaking out about it. Frankly, I think that we shouldn't be spending anything near the amount of money we spend on entertainment – I don't even have a TV, and I certainly don't have cable. We need to be more careful how we spend our money. The way we spend our money is like a painting we produce for God – it ought to reflect our values and be constructive and helpful to him.

UPDATE: Luanne posts an another Newsbusters article on Facebook.

Brian Auten interviews C. Michael Patton on theology and apologetics

March 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten interviews Michael Patton of Credo House Ministries. (Click the link for the MP3 file)

This a must-hear interview.

Details:

> Today's interview is with C. Michael Patton, president of Reclaiming the Mind/Credo House Ministries, a ministry of theological development for lay-people. He blogs at Parchment and Pen and is also responsible for the development of the Credo House of Theology, a theological coffee house and bookstore. He talks about getting theology to the layperson, the relationship and interface between theology and apologetics, theological equipping for apologists, the importance of wresting with theological issues, pitfalls from neglecting theological training, advice for those considering seminary, the importance of community, important lessons and advice for doing theology and apologetics, and more.

I liked the point he made about how apologetics isn't just about defending theological claims to other people. It's about thinking these things through *yourself* and defending these things to *yourself*. I honestly do think that anyone who has been a Christian for any length of time should be engaged in learning basic apologetics – not for others, necessarily, but for themselves. The more you think through Christianity, the easier it is to act like a Christian.

Believing Christianity is not the result of trying to believe them by sheer will. It's the result of studying them – when you will to study, you find out what is true, and that forms the basis for acting consistently with what you say you believe. Christianity is about puzzling things out and scheming out plans on how to put what you believe into practice. It's not about rituals and believing things that you don't even know are true! It's a grave mistake to just believe what any organization or leader tells you to believe without checking things out for yourself in the Bible, history, etc.

New study: Gorilla genome calls common ancestry thesis into question

March 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this must-read article from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> A whopping 30% of the gorilla genome — amounting to hundreds of millions of base pairs of gorilla DNA — *contradicts* the standard supposed evolutionary phylogeny of great apes and humans. That's the big news revealed last week with the publication of the sequence of the full gorilla genome.
>
> […]The standard evolutionary phylogeny of primates holds that humans and chimps are more closely related to one-another than to other great apes like gorillas. In practice, all that really means is that when we sequence human, chimp, and gorilla genes, human and chimp genes have a DNA sequence that is more similar to one-another's genes than to the gorilla's genes. But huge portions of the gorilla genome contradict that nice, neat tidy phylogeny. That's because these gorilla genes are more similar to the human or chimp version than the human or chimp versions are to one-another. **In fact, it seems that *some 30% of the gorilla genome contradicts the standard primate phylogeny* in this manner.**
>
> […]The bottom line is that the gorilla genome has confirmed that there is not a consistent story of common ancestry coming from the genomes of the great apes and humans. Hundreds of millions of base pairs in the gorilla genome conflict with the supposed phylogeny of great apes and humans. They might think their explanation salvages common ancestry, but clearly the gorilla genome data badly messes up the supposedly nice, neat, tidy arguments which they use to claim humans are related to the great-apes.

Read the whole thing to see how the Darwinists wiggle and squirm to avoid the implications of the data.

We have to form our beliefs about origins based on scientific evidence, not based on philosophical assumptions. It does not good at all to *assume* materialism and then determine in advance that some sort of physical process *must be* responsible for the diversity of life. We have to *eschew* philosophical assumptions and led the scientific experiments determine our conclusions. Experiments are good, naturalistic religious dogma is bad.

Rick Santorum wins Alabama and Mississippi, big spending Romney places third

March 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum won the Alabama and Mississippi primaries Tuesday, pulling off another pair of surprise victories and boosting his claim to be the conservative alternative to Republican front-runner Mitt Romney.
>
> Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who built his campaign around the Southern strategy, appeared headed to a second-place finish in both states while Mr. Romney was trailing slightly in third.
>
> The result marked a surprisingly strong showing for Mr. Santorum, as polls had suggested a tight race between Messrs. Romney and Gingrich for the lead in both states. Mr. Santorum had even begun to suggest that he was fighting for a strong showing rather than a win.
>
> In jubilant remarks to supporters in Louisiana, another Southern state whose primary is coming up, Mr. Santorum took a shot at Mr. Romney. "People have said 'You're being outspent' and people are talking about the math and that this race is inevitable," Mr. Santorum said. "For someone who thinks this race is inevitable, he spent a whole lot of money against me."
>
> The results were an undeniable boost for Mr. Santorum in his bid to position himself as the conservative alternative to Mr. Romney. Since the beginning of the GOP nomination battle last year, Mr. Romney has benefited from a division among his more conservative rivals.
>
> "I don't think there was a single poll that had me anywhere close to a win in Mississippi," Mr. Santorum told supporters. He added, "This campaign is about ordinary folks…going out there and exceeding expectations, defying the odds, because we believe in something bigger than ourselves."
>
> The Romney campaign had devoted last-minute resources to put its candidate over the top. Mr. Romney made a hastily scheduled visit to Mobile, Ala., on Monday, and an outside group supporting his candidacy spent nearly $2.3 million in Alabama and Mississippi.

Is Santorum too socially conservative?

Let's see:

> The New York Times focused on the "treacherous political ground" occupied by President Obama as the election draws closer, while proving wrong pro-Obama assumptions made in recent stories by Times reporters Susan Saulny and Jackie

> Calmes, in Tuesday's front-page poll analysis "Obama's Rating Falls as Poll Reflects Volatility," by Jim Rutenberg and Marjorie Connelly.

> […]The responses to poll questions #73 and #74, asking whether employers and religious groups should be forced to cover birth control for their employees, showed that most respondents favor employers be allowed to opt out of covering birth control for moral reasons (51% were in favor of the opt out, while 40% favored making coverage mandatory. The gap grew when the question was narrowed down to "religiously affiliated employers" like hospitals (57% were in favor of the opt out, 36% in favor of the mandate).
>
> […]As Kaus puts it:
>
> If the *Times* says women were "split," you know that must mean they were actually narrowly *against* the *NYT*'s preferred position. Sure enough, when asked, "Should health insurance plans for all employees have to cover the full cost of birth control for female employees or should employers be able to opt out for moral or religious reasons?**"** women favored opting out by a 46-44 margin. The margin increased to a decisive 53-38 for "religiously affiliated employers, such as a hospital or university."
>
> The Times has pushed hard on the idea that the debate over birth control and abortion is hurting the party among women. Yet the actual poll data contradicted anti-Republican anecdotes forwarded by Times reporter Susan Saulny on Sunday suggesting "centrist women" were abandoning the GOP and fleeing to Obama.
>
> **CBS News broke the poll results from Republican primary voters down by male and female and found that, despite the liberal media insinuation that the issues of birth control and abortion were scaring away women voters, Republican women were actually breaking toward socially conservative candidate Rick Santorum over Mitt Romney by a strong 41%-27% margin. (Men went for Romney over Santorum 32%-27%.)**

Maybe voters should stop worrying about electability and just vote for the best candidate. With an economy like this, my keyboard could run against Obama and win. The man has failed at everything he has tried in the last 3.5 years.

More about Rick Santorum

- Fact check: Mitt Romney's claim that Rick Santorum was a big spender
- Rick Santorum and Barbara Boxer debate partial birth abortion in 1999
- Rick Santorum: Catholic bishops should not have supported Obamacare
- Rick Santorum gets endorsements from James Dobson and John Stemberger
- Wall Street Journal: Rick Santorum is a supply-sider for the working man
- Rick Santorum would not stand idle while Iran develops nuclear weapons

- 150 evangelical leaders agree to endorse Rick Santorum after two-day conference
- Why Christians and social conservatives should vote for Rick Santorum
- Rick Santorum's pro-family economic plan TRIPLES the child tax deduction
- Is Rick Santorum conservative or liberal? What are Rick Santorum's political views?
- Rick Santorum helps liberal college students to understand the logic of marriage
- George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class
- Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech
- Rick Santorum for President of the United States
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- Rick Santorum wins Fox News Republican primary debate (with video)
- Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

New study finds that Obama's regulations cost $46 billion per year

March 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Some 10,215 new federal regulations from the Obama administration are costing consumers, businesses and the economy overall $46 billion annually, more than five times the regulatory price tag of former President Bush in his first three years in office. Worse: just implementing those regulations had a one-time additional cost of $11 billion, according to a Heritage Foundation analysis provided to Washington Secrets.
>
> Ironically, Bush instituted more regulations, 10,674, but they cost just $8.1 billion annually, said the Heritage report, titled "Red Tape Rising: Obama and Regulation at the Three Year Mark." It will be released Tuesday.
>
> The analysis backs up complaints from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other business groups that the president's regulations are stalling the economy and employment growth. It also calls into question Obama's promise to put the brakes on new regulations and his State of the Union bragging about issuing less red tape than Bush.
>
> The fact is, said Heritage's review, hundreds more costly regulations are coming, especially those targeting energy companies and Wall Street. They threaten "to further weaken an anemic economy and job creation," said Heritage's James Gattuso and Diane Katz.
>
> […]The $46 billion price tag calculated by Heritage is staggering, as are those hitting the economy the hardest. Just consider the regulations tagged as "major" for costing $100 million or more. Obama's team issued 106 on private industry since taking office, compared to 28 by Bush. Last year alone, Obama's administration issued 32 major regulations impacting everything from clothes dryers, to toy labels.
>
> Heritage said that most expensive regulation of 2011 was from the Environmental Protection Agency, which added five major rules costing $4 billion. Among them, stricter limits on industrial and commercial boilers and incinerators, for a cost of $2.6 billion annually for compliance.
>
> The regulations are also hitting workers through higher fees on items such as checking accounts.

The link to the Heritage Foundation study is here. The title of the report makes me think of "Red Storm Rising", an excellent novel written by conservative author Tom Clancy.

Dave Coppedge was fired by NASA for distributing intelligent design DVDs

March 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Evolution News explains.

Excerpt:

> Before Coppedge was fired, he was demoted and punished — and this happened precisely because he was talking with colleagues about intelligent design. The evidence in the case is unmistakable on that point. Consider this exchange between Coppedge and his supervisor at JPL, Clark Burgess, on April 15 and 16, 2009:
>
> *Query from David Coppedge to Clark Burgess:* "Per our meeting this afternoon, I just wanted to be sure I didn't misconstrue what you told me. Is it correct to say that the allegation of harassment was limited to the activity of my handing out DVDs on intelligent design to coworkers, and that if I had not done that as to anyone here in the building, I would still be in good standing? (i.e., I would not have been investigated or gotten the written warning)? Or would you word it some other way? I just want to be crystal clear I was not being investigated/reprimanded for some other activity, personal flaw or deficiency in job performance." (See Declaration of William J. Becker, Jr. Re: Plaintiff's Opposition to Defendant's Motion in Limine #1, Exhibits, p. 13)

> *Reply from Clark Burgess:* "I believe the investigation was triggered by the discussion you had with Greg [Chin] on April 13th, when he demanded you stop passing out DVDs and discussing them in the workplace. When I first conversed with HR, they mentioned they were going to conduct an investigation based on that encounter. Whatever else they may have found, I do not believe entered into their decision to generate the written warning. It's my belief, if that incidence had not happened HR would not have been contacted and the written warning would not have been generated." (See Declaration of William J. Becker, Jr. Re: Plaintiff's Opposition to Defendant's Motion in Limine #1, Exhibits, p. 13)
>
> (Burgess accidentally gives the wrong date for when Greg Chin "demanded you stop passing out DVDs." The actual date was March 2, 2009.)
>
> This clearly shows that Coppedge's demotion and punishment had everything to do with his lending intelligent design DVDs to co-workers, and *in fact had nothing to do with anything else*.
>
> Even JPL admits that the demotion had to do with Coppedge's conversations at work. The AP story reports:
>
> In an emailed statement, JPL dismissed Coppedge's claims. In court papers, lawyers for the California Institute of Technology, which manages JPL for NASA,

> said Coppedge received a written warning because his co-workers complained of harassment. They also said Coppedge lost his “team lead” status because of ongoing conflicts with others.
>
> […]Indeed, as we expect Coppedge’s case will show, no one at JPL had complained of “harassment” against him until *after* Coppedge himself filed a harassment claim. Coppedge filed that harassment claim because on March 2, 2009, a JPL mid-level manager named Greg Chin yelled at Coppedge, ordered him to stop “pushing religion,” and told him to stop talking about intelligent design. No one ever stepped forward and proactively filed a harassment complaint against Coppedge for his conversations about ID. Rather, he was targeted by administrators who disliked his pro-ID views.

The reason I posted this is to just make it clear to everyone what is really going on here, as if there were any doubt about what happened. Darwinists, like global warmists, do not engage in debates. They exert power to coerce and silence dissent. Let’s be clear about that. They are the Spanish Inquisition and they smash anyone who dissents from their dogma.

Philosopher Doug Groothuis explains the logic of the pro-life position

March 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

At Christian Post, an article by Douglas Groothuis. (H/T Mary)

Here's the most useful bit:

> When we separate personhood from humanity, we make personhood an achievement based on the possession of certain qualities. But what are these person-constituting qualities? Some say a basic level of consciousness; others assert viability outside the womb; still others say a sense of self-interest (which probably does not obtain until after birth). All of these criteria would take away humanity from those in comas or other physically compromised situations.4 Humans can lose levels of consciousness through injuries, and even infants are not viable without intense and sustained human support. Moreover, who are we to say just what qualities make for membership in the moral community of persons?5 The stakes are very high in this question. If we are wrong in our identification of what qualities are sufficient for personhood and we allow a person to be killed, we have allowed the wrongful killing of nothing less than a person. Therefore, I argue that personhood should be viewed as a substance or essence that is given at conception. The fetus is not a lifeless mechanism that only becomes what it is after several parts are put together—as is the case with a watch or an automobile. Rather, the fetus is a living human organism, whose future unfolds from within itself according to internal principles. For example, the fertilized ovum contains a complete genetic code that is distinct from that of the mother or father. But this is not a mere inert blueprint (which is separable from the building it describes); this is a living blueprint that becomes what its human nature demands.
>
> Yet even if one is not sure when personhood becomes a reality, one should err on the side of being conservative simply because so much is at stake. That is, if one aborts a fetus who is already a person, one commits a deep moral wrong by wrongfully killing an innocent human life. Just as we do not shoot target practice when we are told there may be children playing behind the targets, we should not abortion fetuses if they may be persons with the right not to be killed. As I have argued, it cannot be disputed that abortion kills a living, human being.
>
> Many argue that outside considerations experienced by the mother should overrule the moral value of the human embryo. If a woman does not want a pregnancy, she may abort. But these quality of life considerations always involve issues of lesser moral weight than that of the conservation and protection of a unique human life (which considers the sanctity or innate and intrinsic value of a human life).6 An unwanted pregnancy is difficult, but the answer is not to kill a

> human being in order to end that pregnancy.

I think that the real question in the abortion debate right now is whether a living organism with a human nature and a human genetic code that is distinct from its mother and father deserves the right to life, or whether it needs to develop some other capability in order to be worthy of protection from violence.

Consider something from philosopher Francis J. Beckwith.

Excerpt:

> Some argue that personhood does not arrive until brain waves are detected (40 to 43 days).[11]Others, such as Mary Anne Warren,[12] define a person as a being who can engage in cognitive acts such as sophisticated communication, consciousness, solving complex problems, self-motivated activity and having a self-concept. This would put the arrival of personhood at some time after *birth*. Still others, such as L. W. Sumner, [13] hold a more moderate position and argue that human personhood does not arrive until the fetus is sentient, the ability to feel and sense as a conscious being. This, according to Sumner, occurs possibly as early as the middle weeks of the second trimester of pregnancy and definitely by the end of that trimester.
>
> Although these criteria differ from each other in important ways, they all have one thing in common: each maintains that if and only if an entity *functions* in a certain way are we warranted in calling that entity a person. Defenders of these criteria argue that once a human being, whether born or unborn, acquires a certain function or functions–whether it is brain waves, rationality, sentience, etc.– it is then and only then that a person actually exists. Those who defend these personhood criteria typically make a distinction between “being a human” and “being a person.” They argue that although fetuses are members of the species *homo sapiens*, and in that sense are human, they are not truly persons until they fulfill a particular set of personhood criteria.
>
> Although functional definitions of personhood may tell us *some* conditions that are *sufficient* to say that a being is a person, they are not adequate in revealing to us all the conditions that are sufficient for a particular being to be called a person. For example, when a human being is asleep, unconscious, and temporarily comatose, she is not functioning as a person as defined by some personhood criteria. Nevertheless, most people would reject the notion that a human being is not a person while in any of these states. In other words, while personhood criteria, such as the ones presented by Warren can tell us that a being is a person, these criteria are not adequate to declare a being a non-person: The exercise of rational thought tells us that a being is a person; when that person is sleeping, and thus is not exercising rational thought, that lack of exercise of the thought function does not make her a non-person at that time. Consequently, it seems more consistent with our moral intuitions to say that personhood is not something that arises when certain functions are in place, but

> rather is something that grounds these functions, whether or not they are ever actualized in the life of a human being. Thus, defining personhood strictly in terms of function is inadequate.

If you are pro-life because of your feelings, or because someone told you to be, you ought to know that being pro-life is quite rational and supported by medical evidence. People who are pro-abortion are pro-abortion because they want recreational sex without the complications of having to care for the consequences (babies!) of their own actions. Well, guess what. We ought to care about not hurting other people. If grown-up' selfish pursuit of happy feelings conflicts with another person's right to life, then maybe we need to take a step back from being happy and start trying to be good instead.

CBO report: four million will lose employer health care due to Obamacare

March 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

White House Dossier explains what's wrong with Obama's promise above.

Excerpt:

> A new report by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office states that by 2016, Obamacare will result in 4 million people fewer people getting health insurance coverage from their employers.
>
> The estimate is a vast increase from the CBO prediction just a year ago that 1 million would no longer obtain coverage from their employers. And it raises substantial questions about the veracity of one of Obama's key pledges in selling the health care law – that everyone who wants to keep their current health insurance plan and doctor could do it.
>
> It's not clear how many of the 4 million would be forced out as a result of employers dropping coverage. But it can be assumed that many will indeed lose their insurance and have to seek it elsewhere, since few people would seem likely to intentionally abandon coverage provided by an employer.
>
> And many employers have already indicated that they would rather drop coverage and incur fees from the government than continue to provide it.
>
> According to a survey published last summer by the Towers Watson consulting firm, almost one in ten medium to large size employers said they are likely or very likely to end health benefits for their workers.
>
> […]The CBO also projects that 2 million fewer uninsured will gain insurance under the law than previously thought, with the total uninsured population declining by 30 million instead of 32 million.

Here's an updated Obama promise about keeping your current health care coverage:

But don't worry – if you work for an Obama-supporting union, or a big Obama-supporting corporation, then you've probably got a waiver from Obamacare.

Canada’s tax revenues steady as they lowered corporate tax rates

March 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

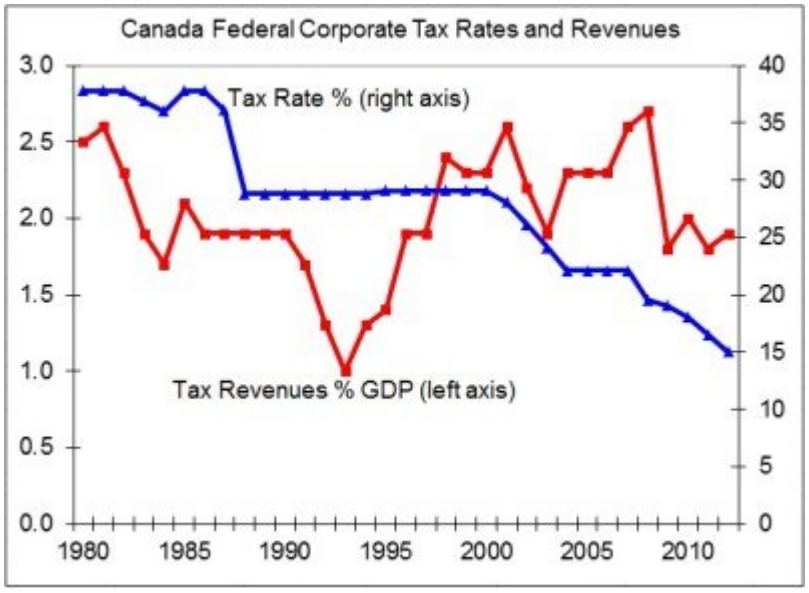

Canada: Corporate tax cuts, not stimulus spending

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> The chart shows Canada’s federal corporate tax revenues as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) and the federal corporate tax rate. The tax rate plunged from 38 percent in 1980 to just 15 percent by 2012. Amazingly, there has been no obvious drop in tax revenues over the period.
>
> **Canadian corporate tax revenues have fluctuated, but the changes are correlated with economic growth, not the tax rate.** In the late 1980s, a tax rate cut was followed by three years of stable revenues. In the early 1990s, a plunge in revenues was caused by a recession, and then in the late 1990s revenues soared as the economy grew.
>
> In 2000, Canadian policymakers enacted another round of corporate tax rate cuts, which were phased in gradually. Corporate tax revenues initially dipped, but then they rebounded strongly in the late 2000s.
>
> The rate cuts enacted in 2000 were projected to cause substantial revenue losses to the Canadian government. That projection indicates that the reform didn’t have much in the way of legislated loophole closing. But the chart shows that the positive taxpayer response to the rate cut was apparently so large that the government did not lose much, if any, revenue at all.
>
> In 2009, Canada was dragged into a recession by the elephant economy next door, and that knocked the wind out of corporate tax revenues. However, it is remarkable that even with a recession and a tax rate under 20 percent, tax

> revenues as a share of GDP have been roughly as high in recent years as they were during the 1980s, when there was a much higher rate. Jason Clemens of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute notes that Canadian corporate tax revenues have been correlated with corporate profits, not the tax rate.
>
> If a corporate tax rate is high, there is a "Laffer effect" when the rate is cut, meaning that the tax base expands so much that the government doesn't lose any money. Estimates from Jack Mintz and other tax experts show that cutting corporate tax rates when they are above about 25 percent won't lose governments any revenues over the long run.

This data is no surprise to supply siders – we expect this because of past experience with tax cuts.

Tax cuts: do they work?

Consider this article by the Cato Institute discusses how the Reagan tax cuts affected the unemployment rate.

Excerpt:

> In 1980, President Carter and his supporters in the Congress and news media asked, "how can we afford" presidential candidate Ronald Reagan's proposed tax cuts?
>
> Mr. Reagan's critics claimed the tax cuts would lead to more inflation and higher interest rates, while Mr. Reagan said tax cuts would lead to more economic growth and higher living standards. What happened? Inflation fell from 12.5 percent in 1980 to 3.9 percent in 1984, interest rates fell, and economic growth went from minus 0.2 percent in 1980 to plus 7.3 percent in 1984, and Mr. Reagan was re-elected in a landslide.
>
> […]Despite the fact that federal revenues have varied little (as a percentage of GDP) over the last 40 years, there has been an enormous variation in top tax rates. When Ronald Reagan took office, the top individual tax rate was 70 percent and by 1986 it was down to only 28 percent. All Americans received at least a 30 percent tax rate cut; yet federal tax revenues as a percent of GDP were almost unchanged during the Reagan presidency (from 18.9 percent in 1980 to 18.1 percent in 1988).
>
> What did change, however, was the rate of economic growth, which was more than 50 percent higher for the seven years after the Reagan tax cuts compared with the previous seven years. This increase in economic growth, plus some reductions in tax credits and deductions, almost entirely offset the effect of the rate reductions. Rapid economic growth, unlike government spending programs, proved to be the most effective way to reduce unemployment and poverty, and create opportunity for the disadvantaged.

The federal revenues as a % of GDP were steady.

The conservative Heritage Foundation describes the effects of the Bush tax cuts. Excerpt:

> President Bush signed the first wave of tax cuts in 2001, cutting rates and providing tax relief for families by, for example, doubling of the child tax credit to $1,000.
>
> At Congress' insistence, the tax relief was initially phased in over many years, so the economy continued to lose jobs. In 2003, realizing its error, Congress made the earlier tax relief effective immediately. Congress also lowered tax rates on capital gains and dividends to encourage business investment, which had been lagging.
>
> It was the then that the economy turned around. Within months of enactment, job growth shot up, eventually creating 8.1 million jobs through 2007. Tax revenues also increased after the Bush tax cuts, due to economic growth.
>
> In 2003, capital gains tax rates were reduced. Rather than expand by 36% as the Congressional Budget Office projected before the tax cut, capital gains revenues more than doubled to $103 billion.
>
> The CBO incorrectly calculated that the post-March 2003 tax cuts would lower 2006 revenues by $75 billion. Revenues for 2006 came in $47 billion above the pre-tax cut baseline.
>
> Here's what else happened after the 2003 tax cuts lowered the rates on income, capital gains and dividend taxes:
>
> - GDP grew at an annual rate of just 1.7% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the six quarters following the tax cuts, the growth rate was 4.1%.
> - The S&P 500 dropped 18% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts but increased by 32% over the next six quarters.
> - The economy lost 267,000 jobs in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the next six quarters, it added 307,000 jobs, followed by 5 million jobs in the next seven quarters.
>
> The timing of the lower tax rates coincides almost exactly with the stark acceleration in the economy. Nor was this experience unique. The famous Clinton economic boom began when Congress passed legislation cutting spending and cutting the capital gains tax rate.

Tax revenues *increased* after the Bush tax cuts – due economic growth.

Those are the facts. That's not what you hear in the media, but they are the facts.

CBO: Obamacare cost is $1760 billion, not $940 billion that Obama claimed

March 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner. (H/T Doug)

Excerpt:

> President Obama's national health care law will cost $1.76 trillion over a decade, according to a new projection released today by the Congressional Budget Office, rather than the $940 billion forecast when it was signed into law.
>
> Democrats employed many accounting tricks when they were pushing through the national health care legislation, the most egregious of which was to delay full implementation of the law until 2014, so it would appear cheaper under the CBO's standard ten-year budget window and, at least on paper, meet Obama's pledge that the legislation would cost "around $900 billion over 10 years." When the final CBO score came out before passage, critics noted that the true 10 year cost would be far higher than advertised once projections accounted for full implementation.
>
> Today, the CBO released new projections from 2013 extending through 2022, and the results are as critics expected: the ten-year cost of the law's core provisions to expand health insurance coverage has now ballooned to $1.76 trillion. That's because we now have estimates for Obamacare's first nine years of full implementation, rather than the mere six when it was signed into law. Only next year will we get a true ten-year cost estimate, if the law isn't overturned by the Supreme Court or repealed by then. Given that in 2022, the last year available, the gross cost of the coverage expansions are $265 billion, we're likely looking at about $2 trillion over the first decade, or more than double what Obama advertised.

When health care costs rise, it's important to know what causes it, so we cast the blame on the right people, and pursue the right solution: repeal Obamacare.

What is intelligent design? Dr. Stephen C. Meyer explains in this video

March 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell". (H/T Chris S.)

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (30 MB)

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell

- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

If you want to read something more about the material that he is covering, there is a pretty good article here.

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

Santorum campaign relies on donated buses and door-to-door campaigning

March 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From socially liberal Business Week.

Excerpt:

> With minimal campaign organization and less funds than his rivals, Santorum has boosted his campaign with the votes of a network of evangelical Christians, anti-abortion rights activists and home-schooling parents who are resisting frontrunner Mitt Romney. In a March 8-11 national Bloomberg Poll, likely voters who described themselves as "born again" or evangelical Christian backed Santorum by 42 percent compared with 28 percent for Romney.
>
> "Romney's inability to close out the race has given Santorum a golden opportunity to unite social conservatives behind him, and they are getting in line," said Keith Appell, a Republican public relations executive who works with social conservative groups.
>
> Parents who home school their children are spreading the message on Facebook. Southern Baptist pastors are promoting Santorum's candidacy to their members. Anti-abortion rights advocates are boarding the "Rick Bus" for multi-state voter mobilization tours.
>
> Two days before Tennessee's primary, Santorum attended services on March 4 at the Bellevue Baptist Church, a 7,000- member organization in the Memphis suburbs.
>
> […]Santorum won the state's primary.
>
> Such efforts are helping the former Pennsylvania senator compensate for a campaign operation that trails Romney in every measure of strength: money, staff, and organization.
>
> Romney raised $63 million for his campaign through January, compared with $7 million by Santorum. Santorum had spent $148,806 on salaries and benefits through January; Romney's personnel costs have exceeded $4.5 million. Santorum recently opened a national campaign headquarters in Virginia; Romney's offices near Boston Harbor have been open nearly a year.
>
> He's tapping into well organized yet loosely affiliated groups of activists whose leaders consider Santorum one of them. "Santorum has piggybacked on the top of other existing grassroots networks," said Cleta Mitchell, his campaign counsel. "They're basically activating their networks on his behalf."
>
> […]Romney and a political action committee supporting him ran 64 percent of the commercials that aired in Mississippi and Alabama in the month before the primaries, compared to just 15 percent aired by Santorum's backers, according

> to data from New York-based Kantar Media's CMAG, which tracks advertising.

The article tries to paint Santorum as a social conservative, and he is. But he also has a solid economic plan, that's targeted to the middle class, and especially manufacturing. Basically, Romney is burning through millions and millions of dollars to buy the nomination. But ordinary conservatives, especially social conservatives, like Rick Santorum best.

Rick Santorum

- Fact check: Mitt Romney's claim that Rick Santorum was a big spender
- Rick Santorum and Barbara Boxer debate partial birth abortion in 1999
- Rick Santorum: Catholic bishops should not have supported Obamacare
- Rick Santorum gets endorsements from James Dobson and John Stemberger
- Wall Street Journal: Rick Santorum is a supply-sider for the working man
- Rick Santorum would not stand idle while Iran develops nuclear weapons
- 150 evangelical leaders agree to endorse Rick Santorum after two-day conference
- Why Christians and social conservatives should vote for Rick Santorum
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- George Will: Rick Santorum connects with the working class
- Video and transcript of Rick Santorum's inspiring Iowa victory speech
- Rick Santorum for President of the United States
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- Rick Santorum wins Fox News Republican primary debate (with video)
- Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

Obama is spending more on his campaign than he is collecting from donors

March 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Last July, President Obama's campaign announced that it had raised an average of $29 million in each of the previous three months for itself and the Democratic National Committee (DNC)… well below the $50 million a month needed to reach the campaign's goal of a $1 billion war chest for the 2012 race.
>
> […]Through January, the president has raised an average of $24 million a month for his campaign and the DNC. Next week, the Obama campaign will release its February numbers, but the president is on track to be hundreds of millions of dollars shy of his original goal.
>
> It's not for lack of trying. Mr. Obama has already attended 103 fund-raisers, roughly one every three days since he kicked off his campaign last April (twice his predecessor's pace).
>
> The president faces other fund-raising challenges. For one, there are only so many times any candidate can go to New York or Hollywood or San Francisco for a $1 million fund-raiser. Team Obama is running through its easy money venues quickly.
>
> For another, many of Mr. Obama's 2008 donors are reluctant to give again. The Obama campaign itself reported that fewer than 7% of 2008 donors renewed their support in the first quarter of his re-election campaign. That's about one-quarter to one-third of a typical renewal rate: In the first quarter of the Bush re-election campaign, for example, about 20% of the donors renewed their support.
>
> […]The final financial challenge facing Mr. Obama's campaign is how fast it is burning through the cash it is raising. Compare the 2012 Obama re-election campaign with the 2004 Bush re-election campaign. Mr. Obama's campaign spent 25% of what it raised in the second quarter of 2011, while Mr. Bush's campaign spent only 9% in the second quarter of 2003. In the third quarter it was 46% for Obama versus 26% for Bush; for the fourth quarter it was 57% versus 40%. In January 2012 the Obama campaign spent 158% of what it raised, while the Bush campaign spent 60% in January 2004.
>
> At the end of January, Team Obama had $91.7 million in cash in its coffers and those of the DNC. At the same point in 2004, the Bush campaign and Republican National Committee had $122 million in cash combined.

Compare that with Rick Santorum who is running a very frugal campaign which spends less and focuses instead on meeting with voters face-to-face. I find it surprising that

Obama is struggling to find donors, though, given the amount of taxpayer money and favors that he’s favored his campaign fundraisers and “bundlers” with – e.g. government grants, political appointments, Wall Street bailouts, Obamacare waivers for unions, etc. Maybe even Democrats realize that buying votes while running the country into debt is not sustainable.

Vanderbilt University bans Christian groups from campus

March 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> Vanderbilt University has decided that Christian student groups that hold traditional Christian religious views are not welcome on campus. They will no longer be recognized as valid student organizations. Vanderbilt's reason is that such groups require that their leaders *be Christian*—that is, that their leaders embrace certain core principles of Christianity and try to live according to these principles. In Vanderbilt's view, religious beliefs and standards "discriminate" against those students who do not subscribe to them. Therefore, student religious groups with religious beliefs and standards are banned.
>
> The situation would be unbelievable—were it not true. The issue came to a head this year when a student group at Vanderbilt Law School, the Christian Legal Society, submitted its "constitution" to the university. The constitution provided that the group's leaders should believe in the Bible and in Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior; that they should be willing to lead members in worship, prayer, and Bible study; and that they should "strive to exemplify Christ-like qualities." Vanderbilt's Director of Religious Life, Reverend Gretchen Person, replied that such views were forbidden. Vanderbilt's policies "do not allow" religious groups to have such an "expectation/qualification of officers," she wrote. Last week, the administration officially declared the policy that Vanderbilt will exclude student religious groups that "impose faith-based or belief-based requirements for membership or leadership."

I wonder if they are preventing Muslim groups from having a statement of faith for their club?

Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes

March 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jeremy Brett is the best Sherlock Holmes *ever*.

Here are 2 episodes of “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes”.

The Speckled Band:

The Red-Headed League:

These are considered to be the two best Sherlock Holmes short stories.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of my favorite TV show

Santorum leading Romney among women and independents in Florida

March 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> In the biggest prize among November's swing states, the latest Rasmussen poll of likely voters shows Rick Santorum faring slightly better than Mitt Romney versus President Obama. In Florida, Santorum trails Obama by 2 percentage points (45 to 43 percent), while Romney trails Obama by 3 points (46 to 43 percent). Florida, by far the largest swing state, now has as many electoral votes as the state of New York (29).
>
> Interestingly, Santorum is faring better than Romney among women in the Sunshine State. Among women, Santorum trails Obama by 11 points (52 to 41 percent), while Romney trails Obama by 13 points (53 to 40 percent). Santorum is also faring better than Romney among independents and among likely voters who make close to the median income. Among independents, Santorum trails Obama by 19 points (50 to 31 percent), while Romney trails Obama by 24 points (55 to 31 percent). Among those making between $40,000 and $60,000, Santorum leads Obama by 4 points (49 to 45 percent), while Romney trails Obama by 3 points (50 to 47 percent).
>
> With 24 states still to come in the GOP race, Romney needs to win about half of the remaining delegates (48.2 percent) to reach the tally of 1,144 delegates necessary to win the Republican nomination.

I notice that the mainstream media, including Fox News, seem to be incapable of telling the truth about Santorum and Romney. Romney is a weak candidate, and he is only competitive with Santorum because he is burning through millions of dollars to pay for television ads. It's not sustainable.

Thousands of Muslims demand Sharia law in Tunisia

March 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Africa

Huntr sent me this disturbing AP article.

Excerpt:

> Several thousand men and women demonstrated outside the Tunisian parliament on Friday to demand the inclusion of Islamic law in the north African country's future constitution.
>
> "The people want the application of God's sharia", "Our Koran is our constitution", "No constitution without sharia," and "Tunisia is neither secular nor scientific, it is an Islamic state", cried the protesters, drawn mainly from the Islamist Salafist movement.
>
> Some men climbed on the roof of the building and unfurled a banner that read: "The people belong to God."
>
> Several women sported the niqab, or full-face veils.
>
> Tunisia's moderate Islamist leaders, who took power following last year's ouster of strongman Zine El Abidine Ben Ali after a popular uprising, are under pressure from a radical Muslim fringe.
>
> The ultra-conservative Salafists have in recent months demanded full-face veils for female university students, castigated a TV channel for an allegedly blasphemous film and beaten up journalists at a protest.

> “We are here today to peacefully demand the application of sharia in the new constitution. We will not impose anything by force on the Tunisian people, we just want that the people are convinced of the principles,” said Marwan, a 24-year-old trader.

Sharia law in Malaysia condones child marriages, even as young as 11 years old – as long as the Sharia court approves it. Here’s a story about about a child aged 9 given to someone in marriage, in Yemen.

Watch the full “Expelled” movie for free online

March 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is there a wall of separation between the religion of materialism and the scientific evidence? (H/T The Poached Egg)

What do the Darwinists do when someone tries to cross that wall?

Earlier in the week, I posted a lecture on the origin of life by Stephen C. Meyer, if you are interested in understanding what intelligent design is *really* about.

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
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- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

Electability: Obama trails Santorum but leads Romney in FL, OH, VA, NC

March 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's a Rasmussen Reports poll – a reliable poll.

Excerpt:

> President Obama now trails former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum by four points in a hypothetical 2012 matchup in combined polling of key swing states Florida, North Carolina, Ohio and Virginia. The president continues to hold a modest lead in those states.
>
> Santorum leads the president 48% to 44% in the so-called Core Four states. Five percent (5%) prefer some other candidate in this matchup, and two percent (2%) are undecided. This marks a shift from last week, when the president was slightly ahead of Santorum. (To see survey question wording, click here.)
>
> Obama remains ahead of Romney 46% to 42%, showing no change from last week. Six percent (6%) prefer some other candidate in this matchup, and six percent (6%) are undecided.
>
> (Want a free daily e-mail update? If it's in the news, it's in our polls). Rasmussen Reports updates are also available on Twitter or Facebook.
>
> The survey of 500 Likely Voters in Florida, Ohio, North Carolina and Virginia was conducted on March 10-15, 2012 by Rasmussen Reports. The margin of sampling error is +/- 4.5 percentage points with a 95% level of confidence.

In a previous post, I noted that Rick Santorum does better with women and independents in Florida.

Excerpt:

> In the biggest prize among November's swing states, the latest Rasmussen poll of likely voters shows Rick Santorum faring slightly better than Mitt Romney versus President Obama. In Florida, Santorum trails Obama by 2 percentage points (45 to 43 percent), while Romney trails Obama by 3 points (46 to 43 percent). Florida, by far the largest swing state, now has as many electoral votes as the state of New York (29).
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> Santorum leads Obama by 4 points (49 to 45 percent), while Romney trails Obama by 3 points (50 to 47 percent).

The people in the mainstream media keep tell us that Romney is electable. But they only do this is because Romney is liberal, like they are. Especially on social issues. Obama wants to run against the rich and Wall Street. None of his attacks will work on a blue collar, pro-manufacturing conservative like Rick Santorum. We should not run a candidate that Obama expects. We should run the candidate that Obama does not expect, and force him to come clean on his unpopular stances on social issues.

Rick Santorum

- Santorum leading Romney among women and independents in Florida
- Santorum campaign relies on donated buses and door-to-door campaigning
- Fact check: Mitt Romney's claim that Rick Santorum was a big spender
- Rick Santorum and Barbara Boxer debate partial birth abortion in 1999
- Rick Santorum: Catholic bishops should not have supported Obamacare
- Rick Santorum gets endorsements from James Dobson and John Stemberger
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- Rick Santorum explains why socialism is hostile to the family

William Lane Craig discusses faith and reason with university students

March 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an interview of Dr. William Lane Craig before college students at the University of Central Florida. (95 minutes)

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (33 MB)

Questions from the interviewer: (40 minutes)

- What started you on his journey of studying faith and reason?
- How would you define the word "faith"?
- Are faith and reason compatible? How are they related?
- How can reasonable faith help us to avoid the two extremes of superstition and nihilism?
- Who makes the best arguments against the Christian faith?
- Why are angry atheists like Dawkins and Hitchens more well known than better-informed academic atheists?
- Does the Bible require Christians to give the unbeliever reasons for their faith?
- How does faith spur Christians to think carefully about the big questions in life?
- Should the American church prod churchgoers to develop their minds so they can engage the secular culture?
- When talking about Christianity intellectually, is there a risk of neglecting the experience of being a Christian?
- Which Christian apologist has shaped your thinking the most?
- Which Christian philosopher has shaped your thinking the most?
- Does the confidence that comes from apologetics undermine humility and reverence?
- If you had to sketch out a 5 minute case for Christianity, what would you present?
- Can non-Christians use their reason to arrive at truth?
- Are there cases where atheists must affirm irrational things in order to remain atheists?
- Can the universe have existed eternal, so that there is no need to explain who created it?
- Even if you persuade someone that Christianity is true, does that mean they will live it out?

There is also a long period of questions, many of them hostile, from the audience of students (55 minutes).

- Haven't you said nasty things about some atheists? Aren't you a meany?
- What do you make of the presuppositional approach to apologetics?
- Can a person stop being a Christian because of the chances that happen to them as

they age?
- Why did God wait so long after humans appeared to reveal himself to people through Jesus?
- Can a person be saved by faith without have any intellectual assent to truth?
- How do you find time for regular things like marriage when you have to study and speak so much?
- How would you respond to Zeitgeist and parallels to Christianity in Greek/Roman mythology?
- Do Christians have to assume that the Bible is inerrant and inspired in order to evangelize?
- If the universe has a beginning, then why doesn't God have a beginning?
- Can you name some philosophical resources on abstract objects, Platonism and nominalism?
- How can you know that Christianity more right than other religions?
- Should we respond to the problem of evil by saying that our moral notions are different from God's?
- Define the A and B theories of time. Explain how they relate to the kalam cosmological argument.
- How can Christians claim that their view is true in the face of so many world religions?
- What is the role of emotions in Christian belief and thought?
- Can evolution be reconciled with Christian beliefs and the Bible?
- When witnessing person-to-person, should you balance apologetics with personal testimony?
- Is there a good analogy for the trinity that can help people to understand it? [Note: HE HAS ONE!]
- How can Christians reconcile God's omniscience, God's sovereignty and human free will?

This is a nice introductory lecture that is sure to get Christians to become interested in apologetics. As you watch or listen to it, imagine what the world would be like if *every* Christian could answer the questions of skeptical college students and professors like Dr. Craig. What would non-Christians think about Christianity if *every* Christian had studied these issues like Dr. Craig? Why aren't we making an effort to study these things *so that* we can answer these questions?

It is really fun to see him fielding the questions from the skeptical university students. My favorite question was from the physics student who sounds really foreign, (at 1:19:00), then you realize that he is a Christian. I do think that Dr. Craig went a little far in accommodating evolution, but I put that down to the venue, and not wanting to get into a peripheral issue. I'm also surprised that no one asked him why God allows humans to suffer and commit acts of evil.

If you are looking for a good basic book on apologetics, then I would choose "Is God Just a

Human Invention?" by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow. And you can even be part of a reading group that Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 just announced, that I will be participating in. We will all be reading the book together, chapter by chapter, and lots of people will be available to answer your questions.

Who is William Lane Craig?

About William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

William Lane Craig is, without a doubt, the top living defender of Christianity. He has debated all of the most famous atheists, including Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, etc. as well as academic atheists like Quentin Smith, Peter Millican, etc. if you search this blog, you'll find many debates posted here, sometimes even with snarky summaries.

What is Obama's position on gay marriage?

March 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the liberal Washington Post is dated July 19, 2011.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration announced Tuesday that it will support a congressional effort to repeal a federal law that defines marriage as a legal union between a man and woman.
>
> White House spokesman Jay Carney denounced the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), saying the administration will back a bill introduced this year by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) to remove the law from the books.
>
> Feinstein's bill, called the Respect for Marriage Act, would "uphold the principle that the federal government should not deny gay and lesbian couples" the same rights as others, according to Carney.
>
> The Senate is scheduled to hold an initial hearing on Feinstein's proposal on Wednesday.
>
> "The policy was wrong then and it is wrong today, and I believe it should be repealed," Feinstein said Tuesday morning during remarks at the National Press Club.
>
> Obama's decision came five months after his administration instructed U.S. Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. to stop defending DOMA and represents a continuing evolution in Obama's views on same-sex marriage. In February, Holder said parts of DOMA were unconstitutional because of "classifications based on sexual orientation."
>
> […]Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese hailed Obama's decision to back the congressional push.
>
> "We thank the President for his support of the Respect of Marriage Act," Solmonese said in a statement. "By supporting this legislation, the President continues to demonstrate his commitment to ending federal discrimination against tens of thousands of lawfully married same-sex couples."

I just want to leave no doubt about where Barack Obama stands on gay marriage: he is doing everything he can to destroy traditional marriage, and if he is re-elected, it will be the end of traditional marriage in the United States. In the churches, in the schools, in popular culture, in the arts. That is his aim.

Eric Holder wants to brainwash people against legal gun ownership

March 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> Attorney General Eric Holder supported using Hollywood, the media and government officials in order to "really brainwash people" into opposing firearm ownership, according to a 1995 C-SPAN video that emerged Sunday online.
>
> Holder, who was then the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, was addressing the Women's National Democratic Club on Jan. 30, 1995. In his speech, he held up anti-smoking campaigns as a model for an anti-gun campaign.
>
> "What we need to do is change the way in which people think about guns, especially young people, and make it something that's not cool, that it's not acceptable, it's not hip to carry a gun anymore, in the way in which we've changed our attitudes about cigarettes," Holder said.
>
> […]Holder explained that he wanted to use influential figures like then-Washington, D.C. Marion Barry and the Rev. Jesse Jackson, as well as widely watched TV shows like "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air" and "Martin," to forward his anti-gun campaign. He sought to push that same agenda through public schools as well, "every day, every school, at every level."
>
> Holder said these resources would be the driving force behind a campaign to "really brainwash people into thinking about guns in a vastly different way."

Consider that the Obama administration has been implicated in a plan to smuggle assault weapons to Mexican drug cartels, so that they could then turn around and push for more controls against law-abiding gun owners who want to defend themselves from criminals.

> The revelation that Holder wanted to "brainwash" people into being "anti-gun" appears to be supported by what Congress and the American people have learned about Operation Fast and Furious.
>
> **In Fast and Furious, the Obama administration's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives – in a program overseen by Holder's Department of Justice – sent about 2,000 guns south to Mexican drug cartels. The Obama administration did this via "straw purchasers" who bought guns in the United States with the intention of illegally trafficking them somewhere else.**
>
> **[…]In a July 2010 email that surfaced in a congressional investigation, ATF Assistant Director Mark Chait asked Bill Newell, his agency's lead**

> **agent in Phoenix to "see if these guns were all purchased from the same [dealer] and at one time. We are looking at anecdotal cases to support a demand letter on long gun multiple sales."**
>
> **Statistics collected from the program eventually formed the backbone of that new long-gun reporting rule, which the administration implemented after Fast and Furious became a national scandal.**

Got that? The Obama administration smuggled guns to Mexican drug cartels, and then turned around and used the gun smuggling they oversaw as an excuse to impose restrictions on legal gun owners who want to protect themselves from criminals – like the drug cartetls.

> **Also supporting allegations that Fast and Furious was a gun-control stalking horse are comments made by California Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein during a November 2011 hearing.**
>
> **"My concern, Mr. Chairman, is there's been a lot said about Fast and Furious, and perhaps mistakes were made, but I think this hunt for blame doesn't really speak about the problem," Feinstein said.**
>
> **"And the problem is, anybody can walk in and buy anything, .50-caliber weapons, sniper weapons, buy them in large amounts, and send them down to Mexico. So, the question really becomes, what do we do about this?"**
>
> **In his own written testimony in November, Holder complained that Congress "voted to keep law enforcement in the dark when individuals purchase multiple semi-automatic rifles and shotguns in Southwest border gun shops."**
>
> And on Sunday another sign of Holder's anti-gun advocacy surfaced when the blog The Right Scoop published excerpts from a Washington Post op-ed Holder wrote shortly after 9/11, in which he used the terrorist attacks as a rationale to push for more gun control laws.

Note that the Obama administration's gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels got two American law enforcement personnel killed and at least 300 Mexican civilians.

Excerpt:

> During Fast and Furious, which was organized by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and overseen by the Department of Justice, the Obama administration sent thousands of weapons to Mexican drug cartels via "straw purchasers" who bought guns in the United States with the intention of illegally trafficking them somewhere else. This tactic is known as "gunwalking."
>
> **Fast and Furious weapons were used to kill Border Patrol agent Brian Terry and at least 300 Mexican civilians.**
>
> **[Jaime] Zapata was killed with guns that were purchased in Texas by**

> **two different traffickers. According to CBS News reports, both of those traffickers were under ATF surveillance without being arrested for a period of time while they were trafficking guns. Both were arrested at a later date.**

The only question about this story is how high does it go up? Did Eric Holder order Operation Fast and Furious? Or did it come straight from Barack Obama? How far would Democrats go to make crime safe for criminals by enacting restrictions on legal gun ownership by law-abiding Americans?

Thomas Sowell takes a closer look at the Romney campaign

March 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

His latest column.

Excerpt:

> Regardless of what the polls or the pundits say about Mitt Romney's chances of winning the Republican nomination, the conditions that made him the front runner in the primaries are the direct opposite of the conditions for the general election.
>
> The biggest single reason why Governor Romney is the front runner is that he has had the overwhelming advantage in money spent and in "boots on the ground" running his campaign in states across the country.
>
> Romney has outspent each of his rivals — and all of his rivals put together. His campaign organization has been operating for years, and it has put his name on the ballot everywhere, while neither Santorum nor Gingrich had a big enough organization to get on the ballot in an important state like Virginia.
>
> In the general election, President Obama will have all the advantages against Romney that Romney currently has against his Republican rivals. Barack Obama will have boots on the ground everywhere — not just members of the Democratic Party organization but thousands of labor union members as well.
>
> Incumbency alone guarantees the president plenty of money to finance his campaign, not only from enthusiastic supporters but also from businesses regulated by the government, who know that holders of political power demand tribute. And the mainstream media will give Obama more publicity than Romney can buy.
>
> How does anyone ever defeat a sitting president then? They do it because they have a message that rings and resonates.
>
> The last Republican to defeat a sitting president was Ronald Reagan. He was the only Republican to do so in the 20th century.
>
> He didn't do it with polls. At one point during the election campaign, President Jimmy Carter led Ronald Reagan with 58 percent to 40 percent in the polls. So much for the polls that so many are relying on so heavily today.
>
> The question is not which Republican looks better against Barack Obama in the polls today, before the general election campaign begins. The question is which Republican can take the fight to Barack Obama, as Reagan took the fight to Carter, and win the poll that ultimately matters, the vote on election day.
>
> The biggest fighting issue for Republicans is ObamaCare. Can the author of RomneyCare as governor of Massachusetts make that an effective issue by

> splitting hairs over state versus federal mandates? Can a man who has been defensive about his own wealth fight off the standard class warfare of Barack Obama, who can push all the demagogic buttons against Mitt Romney as one of the one-percenters?
>
> Rick Santorum, and especially Newt Gingrich, are fighters — and this election is going to be a fight to the finish, with the fate of this country in the balance. Mitt Romney has depended on massive character assassination advertising campaigns to undermine his rivals. That will not work against Barack Obama.

I agree with Thomas Sowell. Although I was open to Gingrich as the nominee, I think that Rick Santorum is a more electable candidate in the Midwestern states, because of his blue collar credentials and his strong record on foreign policy and social conservatism. Mitt Romney is the weakest candidate – but that's being covered up by the massive amount of money he is spending. Mark my words – if Romney is the nominee, Obama will label him as a greed rich Wall Street speculator and we will lose in November.

Mitt Romney

- Green socialists backing Romney campaign with huge donations
- Mitt Romney's tax returns would make him lose the election to Obama
- Does Mitt Romney's Romneycare health care plan fund abortion with taxpayer dollars?
- John Hawkins writes the most scathing anti-Romney column EVER
- Santorum and Gingrich expose Romney's liberal record in Sunday's NBC debate
- Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million while he was governor of Massachusetts
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- RINO Mitt Romney now open to European-style VAT tax
- Is Mitt Romney a flip-flopper? What are his flip-flops?
- RINO Mitt Romney deploys another RINO John Sununu to attack Newt Gingrich
- Mitt Romney supports the anti-Christian and anti-business ENDA law
- Mitt Romney gaffe: Romney fails miserably in interview with Bret Baier
- Jon Huntsman's anti-Romney ads are awesome
- Mitt Romney's political views on gay marriage, abortion and global warming
- Mitt Romney flip-flop videos: flat tax, abortion, health care, public sector unions, global warming
- Mitt Romney on global warming, climate change, environmental regulations
- Mitt Romney on abortion and stem cell research in his own words
- White House used Mitt Romney's Romneycare as a blueprint for Obamacare
- Mitt Romney on the issues: Mitt Romney political views and positions in 2012

Mitt Romney’s pandering to Puerto Rico shows that he will say anything to win

March 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> CNN has projected that Mitt Romney will win Sunday’s primary in Puerto Rico, and Romney will most likely receive all 20 of Puerto Rico’s delegates. Romney had the support of Puerto Rico’s Republican governor, Luis Fortuño, and was expected to win handily.
>
> But Robert G. de Posada, the former president of the conservative Latino Coalition, has an op-ed at the *Daily Caller* charging that Romney “sold out his conservative principles” in order to win big in the Caribbean territory. De Posada points out that Congress has often required territories with large non-English speaking populations to agree to use English officially within government and in schools before allowing those territories to achieve statehood. Romney, he says, pandered to pro-statehood sentiments in Puerto Rico while ignoring this precedent as well as his own position back on the mainland:
>
> On Thursday, Romney called a radio station in San Juan (Noti-Uno) for an interview with a local reporter. When asked if he would support requiring that English became the principal language of government as part of a petition for statehood, Romney said no. When asked if he thought the legislature should have English as the principal language, once again Romney said no. He even opposed requiring English in the courts and public schools.
>
> In Louisiana and Alabama, Mitt Romney is for English as the official language of the United States. In 2008, when Romney sought the GOP nomination, he was upfront about his opposition to bilingual education and his support for ending it in Massachusetts. But in Puerto Rico, he is a strong advocate of bilingualism and opposes requiring the state to make English the principal language of the legislature, courts and public schools. This only makes sense in the Romney World of Flip Flops.
>
> But Romney took it a step further. He stated that a simple majority of 50% + 1 was enough for him to aggressively support statehood for Puerto Rico. As Rick Santorum said during his trip to Puerto Rico, “We need a significant majority supporting statehood before it’s considered. Why would we want a state where nearly half of its residents do not want to be part of the Union?”
>
> Santorum should be commended for staying true to his conservative principles even when it was not politically convenient. Santorum could have pandered to the pro-statehood governor of Puerto Rico in order to get the 20 delegates at

> stake, but instead the former senator spoke the truth and told Puerto Rican voters a reality they needed to hear. Immediately after, Romney's campaign started attacking Santorum and maliciously twisting his comments, telling voters that the former senator was advocating "English-only" and was against Spanish.

In contrast to what the Romney campaign said, Santorum Puerto Rico would have to stress English *in addition to Spanish,* before getting statehood.

Excerpt:

> Rick Santorum Wednesday became the first Republican presidential hopeful in this election to visit Puerto Rico before the island commonwealth's Sunday primary, taking a controversial stand on statehood that he was forced to defend this morning after losing a key supporter.
>
> […]"What I said is English has to be learned as a language and this has to be a country where English is widely spoken and used, yes," Santorum told reporters, stating that the use of English should be a "condition" if Puerto Rico is to become a state. The island, he said, "needs to be a bilingual country, not just a Spanish speaking country."
>
> "I think English and Spanish – obviously Spanish is going to be spoken here on the island – but this needs to be a bilingual country, not just a Spanish-speaking country, and right now it is overwhelmingly just Spanish speaking. But it needs to have, in order to fully integrate into American society, English has to be a language that is spoken here also and spoken universally," Santorum explained.
>
> "I think that would be a condition. I think it's important. And I think if you talk to most parents, they want their children to learn English. It is essential for children in America to be able to speak English to fully integrate and have full opportunities," he added. "I don't think we're doing any more than, you know, people who come to America on the mainland. We're not doing them any favors by not teaching them English.

There is a clear contrast between these two men: Mitt Romney is not a good man. He just says what people want to hear in order to win, and then when elected he will govern like a pro-abortion, pro-gay-marriage, tax-and-spend liberal – that's what he did in Massachusetts.

Would you like to Read Along with other Christian apologists?

March 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten has a plan to get you to read along with other Christian apologists from all over the world.

He writes:

> Six months ago Apologetics 315 started a Read Along project with the excellent apologetics textbook *Christian Apologetics* by Doug Groothuis. (The index can be found here.) It was *only* 700+ pages. But now it's time to move on to the next Read Along project.
>
> This time around we'll be tackling a much shorter book, under 300 pages, just 18 chapters… but it is another excellent book: *Is God Just a Human Invention: And Seventeen Other Questions Raised by the New Atheists* by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow. (Hear the interview with the authors here and book review here.)
>
> ***Why choose this book?*** For a number of reasons:
>
> **First**, the quality of the content is excellent. The authors have a wonderful ability to distill key ideas concisely without sacrificing depth. **Second**, the size is right. The chapters are a manageable size and the book isn't overwhelming. The diversity of content keeps it fresh, while staying relevant to key apologetic topics. **Third**, it introduces the reader to the key voices on the apologetic landscape. It also provides helpful pointers to key resources for further reading. This is a great place to get started down the right path in dealing with each particular issue. **Finally**, this book covers the kind of issues that we deal with everyday in conversation, on the internet, and as we grapple with the issues ourselves.
>
> **So what's the plan? For those who did the Read Along previously, you'll see that things will flow the same way: Audio will be provided each week with chapter summaries, a PDF study guide, and a place to discuss the reading online.**
>
> **Okay, so when do we start?** We'll announce that soon. (*It will be about two weeks.*) But in the meantime, you can pick up the paperback or the Kindle version of the book so you'll be ready to start.
>
> *Looking forward to reading along with you again!*

My advice is to go ahead and read the review above, and listen to the interview (both linked above). If the book sounds good, then order it now and we'll wait to hear more from Brian.

I will be participating in this Read Along, so you'll have me as company! I have read a few chapters of this book, and I think that the authors communicate *maximal knowledge* in *minimal pages*. My Dad read this book, and he thought it was quite good, as well.

Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million while he was governor of Massachusetts

March 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Deroy Murdock explains in this Scripps Howard News Service article.

Excerpt:

> Hot on the heels of his eight-vote Iowa-caucus landslide, Willard Mitt Romney is crisscrossing New Hampshire before Tuesday's key primary. Romney is masquerading as a limited-government, free-market executive from next-door Massachusetts. From the Golden Gate to the Granite State, voters should greet Romney's impersonation with a quarry full of skepticism.
>
> **In fact, Romney increased taxes by $309 million, mainly on corporations.** These tax hikes, described by Romney apologists as "loophole closures," totaled $128 million in 2003, $95.5 in 2004, and $85 million in 2005. That final year, Romney proposed $170 million in higher business taxes, the Boston Globe reports. However, the Bay State's liberal, Democratic legislature balked and only approved an $85 million increase.
>
> "Tax rates on many corporations almost doubled because of legislation supported by Romney," Boston Science Corporation chairman Peter Nicholas explained in the January 6, 2008 Boston Herald. Also, Romney raised the tax on subchapter S corporations owned by business trusts from 5.3 percent to 9.9 percent — an 85 percent hike.
>
> "Romney went further than any other governor in trying to wring money out of corporations," the Council on State Taxation's Joseph Crosby complained.
>
> **Romney also created or increased fees by $432 million.** He was not dragooned into this by greedy Democratic lawmakers; Romney himself proposed these items. In 2003 alone, Romney concocted or boosted 88 fees. Romney charged more for marriage licenses (from $6 to $12), gun registrations (from $25 to $75), a used-car sales tax ($10 million), gasoline deliveries ($60 million), real-estate transfers ($175 million), and more. Particularly obnoxious was Romney's $10 fee per Certificate of Blindness. Romney also billed blind people $15 each for discount-travel ID cards.
>
> While Romney can take credit for a $275 million capital-gains tax rebate, property-tax relief for seniors, and a two-day, tax-free shopping holiday, he also must take responsibility for signing $740.5 million in higher taxes, plus that $85 million in business taxes that he requested and legislators rejected.
>
> "Romney did not even fight higher death-tax rates," notes former California State Assembly Minority Whip Steve Baldwin, a Romney critic. "When the (Massachusetts) legislature considered this issue, Romney's official position was

> ‘no position.’ This echoed Barack Obama’s ‘present’ votes in the Illinois State Senate.”
>
> As Romney drained his constituents’ pockets, the Public Policy Institute of New York’s Cost of Doing Business Index rated Massachusetts in 2006 as America’s fourth costliest state in which to practice free enterprise. The Tax Foundation dropped Massachusetts from America’s 29th most business-friendly state to No. 36. The Tax Foundation also calculated that, under Romney, Massachusetts’ per-capita tax burden increased from 9.3 percent to 9.9 percent. In real dollars, the Romney-era per-capita tax burden grew by $1,175.71.
>
> As if impoverishing his own taxpayers were not bad enough, Romney’s March 5, 2003 signature raised taxes on non-residents retroactive to that January 1. Perpetrating taxation without representation, Romney’s law declared that, “gross income derived from… any trade or business, including any employment,” would be taxable, “regardless of the taxpayer’s residence or domicile in the year it is received.”
>
> Consequently, according to data furnished by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, between 2002 and 2006, New Hampshire residents who work or do business in the Bay State shipped Massachusetts $95 million above what they paid when Romney arrived. The average tax paid by New Hampshirities to Massachusetts grew by 19.1 percent, from $2,392 in 2002 to $2,850 in 2006.

Romney has a pro-abortion record and pro-gay-marriage record. Not only did he pass Romneycare in Massachusetts, but now we know that he also raised taxes. Why is he running as a Republican? I don’t see anything in his record that would cause me to believe that he is a Republican.

You can see Mitt Romney explaining all of his liberal views in his own words in these videos.

American Atheists' Reason Rally : eradicating Christianity, fleeing dialogue and debate

March 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The atheists are having a rally, so Christian apologist Tom Gilson sent them a message asking if they would be interested in hosting a debate at their "Reason Rally" and he got a reply.

He wrote this:

> Dear Mr. Silverman,
>
> Greetings to you… [mention of mutual friend],
>
> **I'm writing to ask if you would be interested in sharing sponsorship with me in giving Richard Dawkins and William Lane Craig one more opportunity to share a stage together in debate, while Dr. Dawkins is here in the U.S. later this month. I'm leading the True Reason project, which, as you may or may not be aware, is bringing Christians to the Reason Rally for respectful dialogue with attendees there.** Additionally, this morning we released an ebook that has already climbed to best-seller status in the atheism category at Amazon.com, and has attracted enough notice that I've been asked to write an op-ed on it for the Washington Post.
>
> I mention these things simply to give you some confidence that I'm representing a legitimate potential debate sponsorship partner to work on this with you and American Atheists. **Dr. Craig is again wiling to meet Dr. Dawkins in debate. I have a contact at Georgetown University that would work with us to provide a venue for debate. Would you be open to joining me in inviting Richard Dawkins?**
>
> I'll look forward to hearing you.
>
> Regards,
>
> Tom Gilson
> http://www.thinkingchristian.net

And the American Atheists guy replied with this:

> Mr. Gilson,
>
> The Reason Rally is an event by and for the nonreligious population and their supporters. It is not an opportunity for Christians to push themselves into other people's lives (yet again). I would never support infiltrating a Christian event with atheists on some kind of recruitment mission – that would be horribly rude.
>
> **Make no mistake – you are not welcomed guests at the rally. We are not going to DC for 'dialogue' with people who believe ridiculous things – we are going to have fun with other like-minded people. Those who**

> **proselytize or interfere with our legal and well-deserved enjoyment will be escorted to the 1st Amendment pen by security, which will be plentiful, where you can… shout yourselves hoarse.**
>
> **Spreading out among the crowd is not a substitute for a permit. Indeed, I will be meeting with the Parks Commission on Thursday to discuss how to handle your infiltrative permitless counter-protest.**
>
> Dr. Dawkins has made it clear that he doesn't want to debate Mr. Craig. I am not sure how much clearer he (or I) could be.
>
> Sincerely,
> David Silverman
> President
> American Atheists, Inc.

Why aren't American Atheists in favor of conversations and debates?

American Atheists on eradicating Christianity

Consider this post on the American Atheists web site. (The PDF is saved here because I knew they would withdraw the post, but you can still see it with Google Cache)

Excerpt:

> It should come as no surprise that the individuals who abide by fundamentalist Christian… doctrines would be the first to cry out that they are being persecuted when their dangerous, damaging and disingenuous beliefs come under attack. Most of these people lack the maturity and intelligence to act in a socially acceptable manner. Many of them are sociopaths and quite a good number of them are psychopaths. All of them are clearly delusional.
>
> The fact is that fundamentalist Christians… are not interested in coexisting or getting along. They have no desire for peace. They do not want to sit down with us in diplomatic efforts to iron out our differences and come to an agreement on developing an integrated society.
>
> They want us to die.
>
> Their interpretation of the Bible… are such that there is no other course of action but to kill the infidel, and if anyone believes otherwise they are only fooling themselves. It is not just in the best interests of atheists to be intolerant of fundamental Christianity and radical Islam, but it is also in the best interest of mainstream believers within these faiths, as well. Moderates and even Progressives who stand in support of extremists just because there is a claim to the same deity are not doing themselves any favors. Fundamental Christians make all Christians look bad…
>
> …the underbelly of fundamentalist Christianity… does not operate in the legal system. They don't respond to lawsuits, letters, amicus briefs or other grass-roots

> campaigns and they must, must, must be eradicated.

That doesn't sound very tolerant or open-minded. It was written by "Al Stefanelli – Georgia State Director, American Atheists, Inc.". This isn't the view of regular atheists, but it is the view of militant atheists like those in the American Atheists group.

What do they mean by eradicating Christianity?

From the correspondence with Tom Gilson, we now know that they don't want a conversation and they refuse to hear both sides in a debate. So they aren't trying to eradicate Christian *ideas* by *winning conversations* or *winning debates*. What does that leave as a meaning of the phrase "eradicating Christianity"? Can we infer what they mean by "eradicating Christianity" from the e-mail sent by David Silverman? Could it be that eradicating Christianity means using coercion to suppress disagreement and free speech in public places? That seems to be consistent with what Al Stefanelli and David Silverman said. They don't want to reason with anyone – they want to use force to make sure they never have to see another Christian again, or hear from one. How far would they go with that impulse?

One thing is for sure – there isn't going to be any reasoning at the "Reason Rally". As near as I can tell, being an atheist consists in 1) living without any foundation for objective morality and 2) trying to coerce religious people into acting if they are atheists by force. Not much reasoning going on, really, and that's what you'd expect of people who believe in eternal universes, untestable multiverses and unobservable aliens who seeded the Earth with life.

Note: It is possible that there is a more sinister meaning to their desire to eradicate Christianity, and I wrote about it here.

UPDATE: Amy Hall of STR has linked to us from Stand to Reason for this post. Everybody go read it! Amy wrote it, and I like her work.

Three ways that the progress of science conflicts with naturalistic speculations

March 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just got into a debate with some atheists recently on whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism. (People who have friended me on Facebook got to see me in action)

I offered the Facebook atheists 3 arguments:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the argument from information in the first replicator (origin of life)

These arguments are all supported by scientific evidence:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (From an article from Caltech)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning (there at least 40 examples of cosmic fine-tuning), (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)

They replied to my 3 arguments with 3 points of their own:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause
2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes

Ever heard any of these?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the 3 points from the Facebook atheists.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA

> †Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, USA
>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its

expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists. Leave no doubt.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.
>
> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities."
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. Leave no doubt.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can't make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can't make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth's interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them. Leave no doubt.

I do think it's important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see too much G. K. Chesterton and other postmodern stuff. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it's too hard. It's not too hard. Everyone can understand "Who Made God?" by Edgar Andrews – start with that! Then get Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". That's more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works.

You don’t want to be anti-science like atheists are.

Paul Ryan's Path to Prosperity plan balances the budget without raising taxes

March 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Americans for Tax Reform explains what's in it.

Excerpt:

> The main details are:
>
> **Revenue neutrality.** The budget calls for the House Ways and Means Committee to produce a tax reform package with a tax revenue target of between 18 and 19 percent of GDP. This is in line with historical revenue figures. By contrast, big government budgets like "Gang of Six," "Simpson-Bowles," and the Obama budget call for a long-range revenue target of over 20 percent of GDP. The Ryan budget is a no tax hikes budget.
>
> **Six personal rates down to two.** The Ryan budget replaces the current six-rate personal income tax structure (10, 15, 25, 28, 33, and 35 percent) with a two-rate system of 10 and 25 percent. This will result in a lower tax rate on the majority of small business profits, from 33 or 35 percent down to 25 percent.
>
> **Repeals Obamacare tax hikes.** The Ryan budget eliminates the entire Obamacare law. This includes repealing the 20 new or higher taxes which have taken or are about to take effect from that law.
>
> **Eliminate the AMT.** The Ryan budget eliminates the AMT, instead favoring a simpler system with lower rates and a broad tax base.
>
> **Lower rates on businesses**. As said above, the Ryan budget lowers the tax rate on the majority of small business profits to 25 percent. It also lowers the federal income tax rate on larger corporate employers from 35 percent (the highest in the developed world) to 25 percent (closer to the developed nation average). While this makes American companies more competitive, it would still leave us with a higher corporate income tax rate than the developed nation average, Canada, and the United Kingdom. In order to make us truly internationally-competitive, the federal rate must fall to 20 percent or less.
>
> **No more picking winners and losers in the tax code.** In order to target revenues at 18-19 percent of GDP with tax rates no higher than 25 percent, the Ways and Means Committee will have to curtail or eliminate most tax exclusions, adjustments, deductions, and credits. That means that all consumed income will be taxed once and only once. No longer will the tax code favor one type of economic behavior over another.
>
> **Moves tax code from "worldwide taxation" to "territoriality."** The Ways and Means Committee is directed to shift our tax code from one which seeks to tax income earned all over the world to one which only seeks to tax income

> earned in America. This is known as "territoriality," and it's already been adopted by and large by our trading competitors. By retaining a worldwide tax regime, we're exposing our own countries to double taxation–once when they pay the foreign nation's income tax, and again when they try to bring the money home.

This is what the budget does: (Debt as % of GDP)

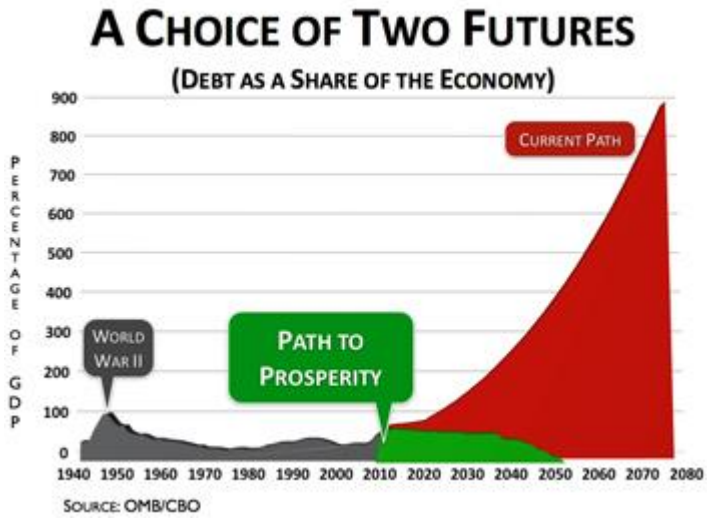

Paul Ryan's 2013: The Path to Prosperity
Doug Ross has three nice charts explaining the details.

Is Barack Obama going to do anything about the debt?

According to CBS News, Obama has exploded our national debt, so there is no reason to trust anything he says about reducing the debt.

Excerpt:

> The National Debt has now increased more during President Obama's three years and two months in office than it did during 8 years of the George W. Bush presidency.
>
> The Debt rose $4.899 trillion during the two terms of the Bush presidency. It has now gone up $4.939 trillion since President Obama took office.
>
> The latest posting from the Bureau of Public Debt at the Treasury Department shows the National Debt now stands at $15.566 trillion. It was $10.626 trillion on President Bush's last day in office, which coincided with President Obama's first day.
>
> The National Debt also now exceeds 100% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product, the total value of goods and services.
>
> Mr. Obama has been quick to blame his predecessor for the soaring Debt, saying Mr. Bush paid for two wars and a Medicare prescription drug program with borrowed funds.
>
> The federal budget sent to Congress last month by Mr. Obama, projects the National Debt will continue to rise as far as the eye can see. The budget shows

> the Debt hitting $16.3 trillion in 2012, $17.5 trillion in 2013 and $25.9 trillion in 2022.
>
> […]His latest budget projects a $1.3 trillion deficit this year declining to $901 billion in 2012, and then annual deficits in the range of $500 billion to $700 billion in the 10 years to come.
>
> If Mr. Obama wins re-election, and his budget projections prove accurate, the National Debt will top $20 trillion in 2016, the final year of his second term. That would mean the Debt increased by 87 percent, or $9.34 trillion, during his two terms.

Some of Bush's debt total can be explained by considering that Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid raised the debt by $5 trillion dollars over 4 years when they took control of the House and Senate in January of 2007. But they're Democrats, and that's what Democrats do.

Related posts

- Paul Ryan teams up with Democrat Ron Wyden to push Medicare reform plan
- Budget guru Paul Ryan discusses the economy at the Heritage Foundation
- Paul Ryan explains how raising taxes hurts job creation
- Paul Ryan explains why the millionaire tax causes unemployment to rise
- Paul Ryan: cut current spending, cap future spending and balance the budget
- Paul Ryan talks about the looming American debt crisis
- Where does Paul Ryan stand on foreign policy and social issues?
- Paul Ryan responds to his critics on Medicare reform
- What's wrong with the American economy and how Paul Ryan would fix it
- Republican Paul Ryan proposes over 6 trillion in spending cuts
- Paul Ryan discusses economics at the liberal Brookings Institute
- Paul Ryan explains taxes and spending to Chris Matthews
- Paul Ryan takes on Democrat Brad Sherman on the worsening economy
- Paul Ryan debates Robert Reich on Larry Kudlow show
- Paul Ryan debates on the relationship between tax rates and job creation
- Paul Ryan talks about health care with Chris Matthews and Chris Wallace
- Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander
- Paul Ryan discusses Obamacare and the federal budget
- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan's plan for economic recovery
- Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama's 1.56 trillion budget deficit
- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama's record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism

Blue collar Rick Santorum outspent 7 to 1 by wealthy Mitt Romney in Illinois

March 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Dealt a resounding defeat in Illinois' presidential primary, Republican Rick Santorum brushed off the latest loss to rival Mitt Romney and told his supporters on Tuesday to "saddle up like Reagan did in the cowboy movies" and help him narrow a seemingly insurmountable deficit in delegates.
>
> **Santorum had hoped to make a real contest of Illinois, the birthplace of actor turned president Ronald Reagan, but he was outspent in advertising by a 7-to-1 margin by Romney and his allies and fled the state before balloting began.**
>
> "We're heading to Louisiana for the rest of the week, then we're back here in Pennsylvania and we're going to pick up a whole boatload of delegates and close this gap and then on to victory," he told a packed hotel ballroom in Gettysburg, Pa., as more than 1,000 supporters waited outside.
>
> Santorum won the Southern states of Alabama and Mississippi last week. Romney has not posted a win in the South since his January triumph in Florida.
>
> "We're feeling very, very good about winning Louisiana on Saturday," Santorum said to cheers.
>
> A 10-day break follows Louisiana before Washington, D.C., Maryland and Wisconsin have primaries on April 3. Santorum is not on the ballot in the nation's capital, the latest example of his campaign's struggle to organize.
>
> But Santorum has shown new signs of political life. Aides said the campaign raised more than $9 million in February and has more than $2.6 million on hand for a Republican primary that shows no sign of ending soon.
>
> Santorum campaign sought to downplay the Illinois results, instead looking at adding delegates from rural areas to Santorum's column in any sum.

Who is funding all of this campaign spending? Here are Mitt Romney's top contributors:

Goldman Sachs	$521,180
JPMorgan Chase & Co	$356,400
Morgan Stanley	$297,550
Credit Suisse Group	$296,160
Citigroup Inc	$280,050
Bank of America	$245,900

Kirkland & Ellis	$225,202
Barclays	$217,150
HIG Capital	$188,500
PricewaterhouseCoopers	$185,550
Blackstone Group	$178,050
Bain Capital	$151,500
Wells Fargo	$148,950
UBS AG	$140,650
EMC Corp	$128,300
Citadel Investment Group	$123,625
Elliott Management	$123,500
Bain & Co	$112,800
Sullivan & Cromwell	$106,650
The Villages	$97,500

I pointed out before how Romney's campaign is fueled by green socialists. His PAC just got $6.4 million from only 98 donors.

Is the vastness of the universe evidence against God's existence?

March 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Physicist Hugh Ross writes about it in Salvo Magazine.

First a quick blurb about Hugh Ross:

> Hugh Ross launched his career at age seven when he went to the library to find out why stars are hot. Physics and astronomy captured his curiosity and never let go. At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver's Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or "quasars," some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

Now back to the topic "Is the vastness of the universe incompatible with God's existence?"

Here's Ross' introduction:

> Scientists seem more difficult to please than the golden-haired girl of fairy-tale fame. While Goldilocks troubled herself over the just-right porridge, chair, and bed, astronomers appear preoccupied with the size of the universe.
>
> In the days before telescopes, when an observer could count a few thousand stars in the night sky, many considered the universe too small and unimpressive to be the work of an almighty, all-knowing Creator. Only an infinite cosmos, they said, would befit an infinite deity. But then, others argued, an infinite cosmos might eliminate the need for a Creator.
>
> Thanks to the Hubble space telescope, scientists now see that the universe contains roughly 200 billion large- and medium-sized galaxies and about a hundred times as many dwarf galaxies. The stars in those galaxies add up to about fifty billion trillion, and they comprise a mere one percent of the mass of the observable universe.
>
> Because of the travel time of light, the universe humans can observe is really the universe of the past. What researchers know about the expansion and geometry of the universe informs us that the universe of today is at least several hundred times more enormous than the universe we can see. The universe is trillions of trillions of times larger and more spectacular than what the earliest astronomers presumed!

> And yet, this new knowledge of the vastness of the universe has led to new complaints. In his book, *God: The Failed Hypothesis,* Victor Stenger says, "If God created the universe as a special place for humanity, he seems to have wasted an awfully large amount of space." Stephen Hawking, in the best-selling science book of all time, *A Brief History of Time,* shares Stenger's view: "Our solar system certainly is a prerequisite for our existence. . . . But there does not seem to be any need for all these other galaxies." So now the universe is too big to befit the all-wise, all-powerful God of the Bible.

I like how he quotes an atheist physicist to get the challenge right. No sense in caricaturing the claim of your opponent.

I formalized Stenger's argument like this:

1. If all things in the universe are done the way that Victor Stenger likes them, then there is a God.
2. It is not the case that all things in the universe were done the way Victor Stenger likes them.
3. Therefore, there is no God.

I would deny premise 1, there, since there is no reason to believe that's it's true.

Anyway, let's see what Hugh Ross says:

> The hot big bang model (now firmly established by observations) tells us that at the moment of cosmic creation, the universe was infinitely or near-infinitely hot and compressed, and all the ordinary matter existed in the form of hydrogen. As the universe expanded, it cooled. The rate at which the universe expanded and cooled depended in large part on its mass—the greater the mass, the slower the expansion and cooling rate. The slower the expansion and cooling rate, the more time the universe would spend in the temperature range (13–150 million degrees Centigrade) at which nuclear fusion can occur.
>
> **Because of its mass, the universe spent about twenty seconds in the nuclear fusion temperature range when it was between three and four minutes old. As a result, 24.77 percent of the universe's hydrogen (by mass) fused into helium. Thus, when stars began to form—about 380,000 years later—they started off composed of about 75 percent hydrogen, 25 percent helium, and trace amounts of deuterium, lithium, and beryllium.**
>
> **In the nuclear furnaces of the stars themselves, more hydrogen fused into helium, and, in addition to the extra helium, all the rest of the elements that appear in the periodic table were synthesized (created). The capacity of stellar nuclear furnaces to produce an abundance of elements heavier than helium (all but two of the elements) depended critically on how much of the universe's initial hydrogen was fused into**

> **helium and heavier elements during the first several minutes after the cosmic creation event. How much fusion of the universe's primordial hydrogen actually occurred at this time depended, in turn, on the universe's mass or mass density.**
>
> If the universe's mass (or cosmic mass density) had been even the slightest bit less than a hundred times the fifty billion trillion stars occupying the observable universe, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes of its existence would have proceeded less efficiently. Thus, the cosmos would have been forever incapable of generating elements heavier than helium—elements such as carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, sodium, and potassium—all of which are essential for any conceivable kind of physical life.
>
> On the other hand, if the universe's mass had been even the slightest bit greater, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes after its beginning would have been too productive, and *all* the hydrogen in the universe eventually would have been fused (after just two generations of stars) into elements as heavy as iron or heavier. Again, all the most life-essential elements, including hydrogen itself, would have ceased to exist.

Basically, your body is made up of heavier elements, and if the universe was not as massive as it is (and as old as it is), then there would not be enough heavy elements to make you, or to make massive stars like our Sun which burn steady for long periods of time. We need the heavy elements and we need the steady source of heat.

Dr. Ross has another reason why God would use vast space and long periods of time, and if you want to read that, you can click here. I think that it's important for us all to get used to the idea that we all need to understand science apologetics. God put these evidences into the universe for us to discover and use.

By the way, I have been offered permission to blog for the Salvo Magazine blog, so now I am blogging at two places: Right Wing News and Salvo Magazine blog. However, I have not yet had time to put up anything at Salvo Magazine, yet.

Production of oil, gas and coal on federal lands sinks to 9-year low

March 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama claims that production of oil, gas and coal is up since he took office. It's true that areas under *state control* are producing more, but what about energy production on *federal lands?* That's the part of the country that Obama is responsible for.

Let's see what two recent studies from the Energy Information Administration and the Institute for Energy Research found.

Excerpt:

> **The updated EIA report revealed a 12 percent decline in production for coal, oil, and natural gas on federal and Indian lands from fiscal 2003 through fiscal 2011.**
>
> **During this same period, production on state and private lands has increased, boosting overall production numbers for the United States. That's a point even President Obama will acknowledge: "Under my Administration, domestic oil and natural gas production is up," he said upon announcing his rejection of the Keystone XL pipeline.**
>
> **Obama is correct. He just can't rightfully claim the credit, since the vast majority of America's new oil and gas production is happening on private lands in states like North Dakota, Alaska and Texas.**
>
> The administration, meanwhile, has also taken several steps to limit production…
>
> - Withdrew areas offered for 77 oil and gas leases in Utah that could cost American taxpayers millions in lost lease bids, production royalties, new jobs and the energy needed to offset rising imports of oil and natural gas.
> - Cancelled lease sales in the Western Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic coast and delayed exploration off the coast of Alaska and kept other resource-rich areas off-limits.
> - Finalized rules, first announced by Secretary Salazar on January 6, 2010, to establish more government hurdles to onshore oil and natural gas production on federal lands.
> - Withdrew 61 oil and natural gas leases in Montana as part of a lawsuit settlement over climate change.
>
> "The big picture is clear that government policies undertaken by the Obama administration have produced a significant decline in offshore oil production on federal lands in fiscal year 2011," the Institute for Energy Research said in response to last week's updated EIA analysis. "That is certainly not a way to increase domestic production of oil and keep oil and thus gasoline prices in

> check.”
>
> **While it was waiting for EIA to update its numbers, the Institute for Energy Research conducted its own analysis of Department of Interior data in February. It came to the same conclusion: “Production on federal lands is down, while production on state and private lands is up.”**

That’s the real story behind Obama’s claims about higher energy production. He’s doing his best to block energy production in the areas under his control. His energy plan is Solyndra, Solyndra, Solyndra – paying off his rich Democrat buddies with taxpayer money.

Is Obama telling the truth about U.S. oil reserves?

March 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

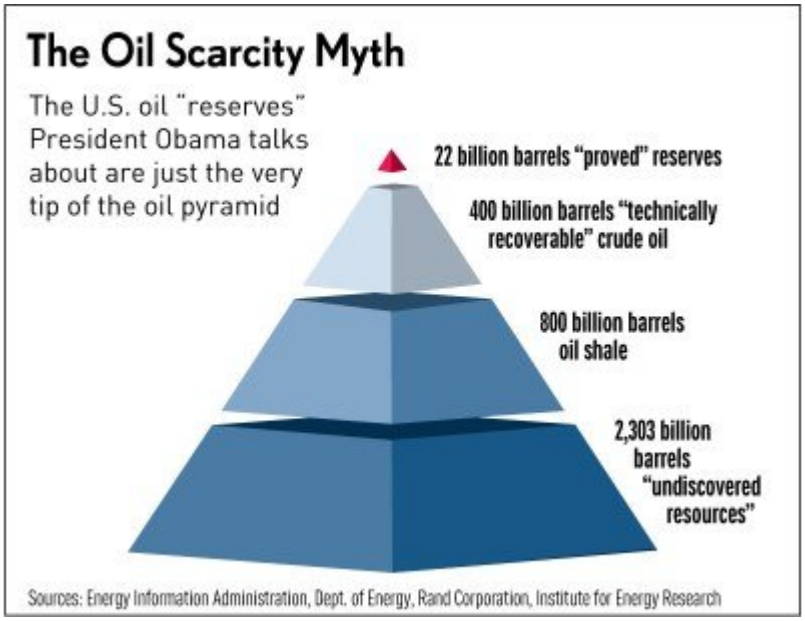

The Department of Energy's own figures

Investors Business Daily explains. (H/T Master Resource)

Excerpt:

> When he was running for the Oval Office four years ago amid $4-a-gallon gasoline prices, then-Sen. Barack Obama dismissed the idea of expanded oil production as a way to relieve the pain at the pump.
>
> "Even if you opened up every square inch of our land and our coasts to drilling," he said. "America still has only 3% of the world's oil reserves." Which meant, he said, that the U.S. couldn't affect global oil prices.
>
> It's the same rhetoric President Obama is using now, as gas prices hit $4 again, except now he puts the figure at 2%.
>
> "With only 2% of the world's oil reserves, we can't just drill our way to lower gas prices," he said. "Not when we consume 20% of the world's oil."
>
> The claim makes it appear as though the U.S. is an oil-barren nation, perpetually dependent on foreign oil and high prices unless we can cut our own use and develop alternative energy sources like algae.
>
> But the figure Obama uses — proved oil reserves — vastly undercounts how much oil the U.S. actually contains. In fact, far from being oil-poor, the country is awash in vast quantities — enough to meet all the country's oil needs for hundreds of years.
>
> The U.S. has 22.3 billion barrels of proved reserves, a little less than 2% of the

> entire world's proved reserves, according to the Energy Information Administration. But as the EIA explains, proved reserves "are a small subset of recoverable resources," because they only count oil that companies are currently drilling for in existing fields.
>
> When you look at the whole picture, it turns out that there are vast supplies of oil in the U.S., according to various government reports. Among them:
>
> At least 86 billion barrels of oil in the Outer Continental Shelf yet to be discovered, according to the government's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.
>
> About 24 billion barrels in shale deposits in the lower 48 states, according to EIA.
>
> Up to 2 billion barrels of oil in shale deposits in Alaska's North Slope, says the U.S. Geological Survey.
>
> Up to 12 billion barrels in ANWR, according to the USGS.
>
> As much as 19 billion barrels in the Utah tar sands, according to the Bureau of Land Management.
>
> Then, there's the massive Green River Formation in Wyoming, which according to the USGS contains a stunning 1.4 trillion barrels of oil shale — a type of oil released from sedimentary rock after it's heated.
>
> […]All told, the U.S. has access to 400 billion barrels of crude that could be recovered using existing drilling technologies, according to a 2006 Energy Department report.
>
> When you include oil shale, the U.S. has 1.4 trillion barrels of technically recoverable oil, according to the Institute for Energy Research, enough to meet all U.S. oil needs for about the next 200 years, without any imports.

Please share this article, because it is unlikely that Obama's Solyndra-supporting buddies in the mainstream media will report the facts on domestic energy production.

Top Romney aide: Romney can change his positions after primary, like an Etch-a-Sketch

March 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Finally, proof that Mitt Romney is a liberal masquerading as a conservative – from his own campaign spokesman.

Look:

ABC News has the raw story.

Excerpt:

> For a candidate who has spent months battling the title of "flip-flopper," perhaps the last thing he would want associated with his name is an Etch A Sketch, those do-over drawing boards that let you shake your scribbles away with the flick of a wrist.
>
> Unfortunately Mitt Romney won't be able to shake away this comparison any time soon. When his campaign spokesman Eric Fehrnstrom was asked this morning on CNN how the GOP frontrunner would make the pivot to the general election, Fehrnstrom compared Romney's primary campaign to an Etch A Sketch, a gaffe that spread like wildfire to Romney's rival's stump speeches.
>
> "Well, I think you hit a reset button for the fall campaign. Everything changes. It's almost like an Etch A Sketch," Fehrnstrom told CNN's John Fugelsang. "You can kind of shake it up and restart all of over again. But I will say, if you look at the exit polling data in Illinois, you'll see that Mitt Romney is broadly acceptable to most of the factions in the party. You have to do that in order to become the nominee…"
>
> Within hours, Romney's opponents seized on the comments, using them to reinforce the notion that the former Massachusetts governor will, as Rick Santorum said, "say anything to get elected."
>
> "We're not looking for someone who's the Etch A Sketch candidate," Santorum said in a campaign speech just hours after Fehrnstrom's comments. "We're looking for someone who writes what they believe in stone and stands true to what they say."
>
> Both the Santorum and Newt Gingrich campaigns made pit stops at the toy store to pick up Etch A Sketches of their own, deploying their new visual aids at speeches and rallies in Maryland and Louisiana today.

Conservative Republican Rick Santorum reacts to this clip. (H/T Robert Stacy McCain)

Excerpt:

> This morning on CNN, senior advisor to the Romney Campaign, Eric Fehrnstrom, admits his candidate and their campaign is based on the "etch-a-sketch" model

> when asked by if the positions he's taken in the Republican primary have been too conservative.
>
> Hogan Gidley, National Communications Director, said: "We all knew Mitt Romney didn't have any core convictions, but we appreciate his staff going on national television to affirm that point for anyone who had any doubts. With the two year anniversary of the signing of ObamaCare upon us, can voters really believe that the man who urged the President to use his healthcare plan in Massachusetts as a model would really repealObamaCare? Or is that promise just something they would 'shake up and restart' with when Romney hits the general election.
>
> Voters can trust that Rick Santorum will say what he believes, and do what he says. They may not always agree with Rick Santorum, but they can trust him because they know he is a man of principle. Clearly, the same cannot be said of Governor Romney."

Do you think Mitt Romney is a conservative? If you do, check out the links below.

Related posts

- Does Mitt Romney's Romneycare health care plan fund abortion with taxpayer dollars?
- John Hawkins writes the most scathing anti-Romney column EVER
- Santorum and Gingrich expose Romney's liberal record in Sunday's NBC debate
- Mitt Romney raised taxes by $740 million while he was governor of Massachusetts
- Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum: who has the pro-life record on abortion?
- RINO Mitt Romney now open to European-style VAT tax
- Is Mitt Romney a flip-flopper? What are his flip-flops?
- RINO Mitt Romney deploys another RINO John Sununu to attack Newt Gingrich
- Mitt Romney supports the anti-Christian and anti-business ENDA law
- Mitt Romney gaffe: Romney fails miserably in interview with Bret Baier
- Mitt Romney's political views on gay marriage, abortion and global warming
- Mitt Romney flip-flop videos: flat tax, abortion, health care, public sector unions, global warming
- Mitt Romney on global warming, climate change, environmental regulations
- Mitt Romney on abortion and stem cell research in his own words
- White House used Mitt Romney's Romneycare as a blueprint for Obamacare
- Mitt Romney on the issues: Mitt Romney political views and positions in 2012

Media bias on display in reporting of Tennessee Academic Freedom Bill

March 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Courtesy of Evolution News, here's the text of the bill.

Excerpt:

> This section only protects the teaching of scientific information, and shall not be construed to promote any religious or non-religious doctrine, promote discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs or non-beliefs, or promote discrimination for or against religion or non-religion.

And here's how it was reported by the secular leftist mainstream media: (links removed)

- The *Guardian* writes that the bill "comes at a time when science associations are increasingly concerned by moves to inject religious or ideological beliefs into science teaching…"
- *The Huffington Post* has two pieces, one with the outlandish title "Tennessee Science Bill Allowing Discussion of Creationism in Schools Passes State Senate," and another that states the bill would bring "religious doctrine within the public school system."
- *OpposingViews.com* carries a piece titled "Tennessee Bill to Push Creationism in Schools," which states: "Tennessee lawmakers have revived a scary bill that would open the door to promotion of creationism in public schools."
- The *Times Daily*, a Tennessee paper, has an op-ed claiming the bill is "a ploy to subvert science in favor of theology" where "Critics of the bills say the door is being opened in Tennessee schools for teaching religious views."
- And the far-left *ThinkProgress.org* has a sky-is-falling piece stating: "Critics call it a 'monkey bill' that promotes creationism in classrooms."

Let's review the research on media bias, so we understand how unreliable the mainstream media can be.

What research tells us about media bias

Here's an example of media bias:

Is it rare? Or does it happen all the time?

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times

> scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the “NewsHour With Jim Lehrer.” CNN’s “NewsNight With Aaron Brown” and ABC’s “Good Morning America” were a close second and third.
>
> “Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill,” Groseclose said. “If these newscasters weren’t centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators.”
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was “Special Report With Brit Hume” on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC’s “World News Tonight” and NBC’s “Nightly News” to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> “If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox’s ‘Special Report’ as ABC’s ‘World News’ and NBC’s ‘Nightly News,’ then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news,” said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia.”

Here’s a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data.”

From the Daily Caller, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and

> other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by The Examiner of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> Disclosure of the heavily Democratic contributions by influential employees of the three major broadcast networks follows on the heels of controversy last week when it was learned that media baron Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. contributed $1 million to the Republican Governors Association.
>
> The News Corp. donation prompted Nathan Daschle, executive director of the Democratic Governors Association and son of former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, to demand in a letter to Fox News chairman Roger Ailes that the cable news outlet include a disclaimer in its coverage of gubernatorial campaigns. Fox News is owned by News Corp., which also owns The Wall Street Journal.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

And here's a bit from that same article about The New Yorker:

> The last bulwark against bias's slipping into The New Yorker is the copy department, whose chief editor, Ann Goldstein, gave $500 in October to MoveOn.org, which campaigns for Democrats and against President Bush. "That's just me as a private citizen," she said. As for whether donations are allowed, Goldstein said she hadn't considered it. "I've never thought of myself as working for a news organization."

Those are the facts.

New Washington-ABC poll: Women prefer Rick Santorum to Mitt Romney

March 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

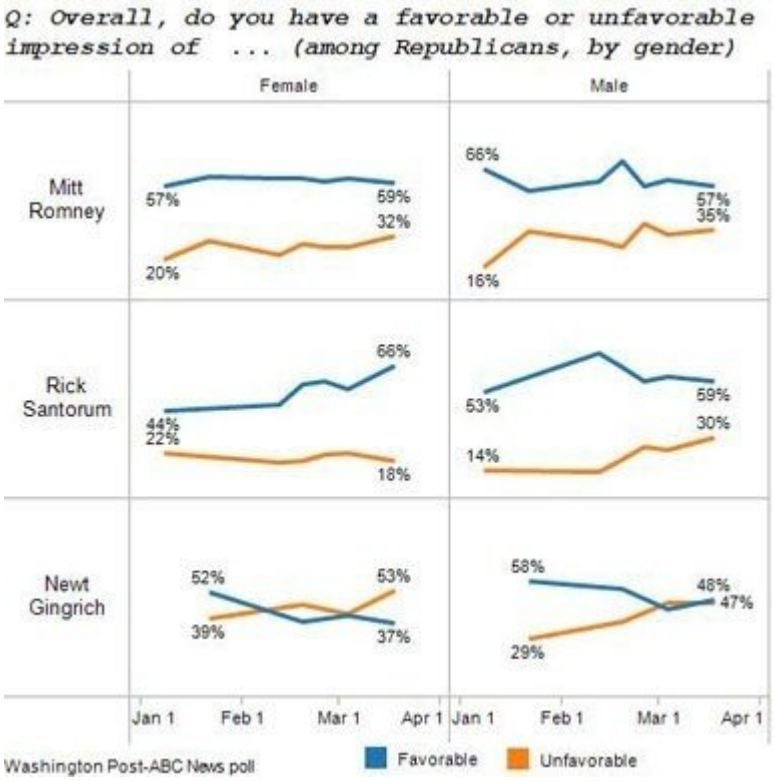

Republican women support Rick Santorum

From the liberal Washington Post, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Judging from the coverage of Rick Santorum's presidential campaign over the last few weeks, you might think that the former Pennsylvania Senator's numbers would be cratering among women.
>
> But you would be wrong. Way wrong.
>
> In a new Washington Post-ABC poll, Santorum's numbers among Republican and Republican-leaning women have soared over the past month. He now has the highest favorability rating among that group of any of the top-tier Republican presidential candidates.
>
> […]The poll numbers reinforce findings from recent exit polls that suggest Santorum is holding steady — if not strengthening — among Republican women. In Alabama, Santorum beat former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney by eight points among women; in Mississippi, Santorum took 35 percent among women to 32 percent for Romney.
>
> […]The third potential reason for Santorum's improved position among Republican women is that he has successfully framed the issue as one of government imposing on people's personal beliefs — an argument that hits home

> with the GOP base. Karen Santorum, the candidate's wife, made that case during an appearance on CNN Monday night. "I think the issue is the government forcing people to go against their conscience," she said. "That's really the issue here."
>
> Regardless of the reason, it's clear that Santorum's comments have not hurt him one bit with his target audience at the moment: Republicans — and, in particular, Republican women.

Now, why do you suppose that you have been hearing so much from the mainstream media about women voters not supporting Santorum? Well, it's because of liberal media bias, and this is not my opinion, it's a fact.

Obamacare requires virtually all health care plans to cover free sterilizations

March 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The "preventive services" guidelines issued by the HHS, say that new health insurance plans in the United States must "provide coverage without cost-sharing" that includes: "All Food and Drug Administration approved contraceptive methods, sterilization procedures, and patient education and counseling for all women with reproductive capacity."
>
> On Friday, the department of HHS announced a regulation making clear that this mandate extends to the student health care plans offered at American colleges and universities.
>
> […]As CNSNews.com has reported, the HHS regulation was announced on Friday, Mar. 16, and will be published in the Federal Register on Mar. 21.
>
> "Under the final rule, students will gain the same protections other people with individual market insurance have, like a prohibition on lifetime limits and coverage of preventive services without cost sharing," HHS said in a press release put out late Friday afternoon.
>
> In a request for comments on how the student-health-plan mandate will be implemented, HHS spelt out that its "proventive services" included the same items as the overall mandate–including sterilizations.
>
> "As relevant here, the HRSA Guidelines require coverage, without cost sharing, for '[a]all Food and Drug Administration [(FDA)] approved contraceptive methods, sterilization procedures, and patient education and counseling for all women with reproductive capacity,' as prescribed by a provider," said the HHS request for comments.
>
> In announcing the rule for college-based health plans, HHS said it would follow the same system for enforcing the rule on religious colleges and universities that object to purchasing sterilizations, contraceptives and abortifacients for its students that President Barack Obama has proposed for enforcing the regulation on religious non-profit organizations in the coverage for their employees: The insurer will be forced to provide the sterilizations, contraceptives and abortifacients to the students free of charge.

Do you want to know why you never heard about this requirement that Christian colleges and schools provide free sterilizations to women? Because the mainstream media was not neutral in reporting on Obamacare – they were trying to sway public opinion towards supporting Obamacare. Here is a nice post from Newsbusters that goes over some of the

worst examples of pro-Obamacare media bias. Read that post, and think about whether you should be trusting the media to tell you who to vote for in the Republican primary. They like Romney, and that means that Mitt Romney is the weakest candidate.

Douglas Groothuis' Christian Apologetics Manifesto

March 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If there's one thing I like about being a Christian, it's being surrounded by individuals who are intelligent and serious about taking Jesus' character and priorities seriously in their own decision making. One of the things that Jesus values is when we, his followers, take the time to study certain disciplines so that we can defend his identity, character and significance when they are called into question.

Now with that in mind, take a look at Doug Groothuis' apologetics manifesto. (H/T Mary)

Introduction:

> This is a manifesto to ignite the holy fire of apologetic passion and action. As did Jeremiah, we should have "fire in our bones" to communicate and commend Christian truth today (Jeremiah 20:9). This manifesto is not a sustained argument or a detailed development of themes. Rather, as a manifesto, it proclaims a short series of interrelated propositions crying out for both immediate and protracted reflection, prayer, and action. These challenges issue from convictions formed through my nearly thirty years of apologetic teaching, preaching, debating, writing, and Christian witness.
>
> Because of (1) the waning influence of the Christian worldview in public and private life in America today, (2) the pandemic of anti-intellectualism in the contemporary church, and (3) the very command of God himself to declare, explain, and defend divine truth, I strongly advise that the following statements be wrestled with and responded to by all followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It has 19 points, and here's a sample: (emphasis mine)

> 2. Any intellectual discipline, church practice, or teaching that minimizes or denigrates the importance of apologetics is unbiblical and must be repented of (Matthew 4:17; Acts 17:16-34; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; 1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3). The degradation of apologetics can only lead to the further vitiation of the life of the church. **"My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6)**.
>
> 3. The fundamental issue for apologetics is not how many apologists one has read, or what apologetic method one embraces (although that must be worked out carefully). Rather, the essential issue is whether or not one has a passion for God's transforming truth—reasonably pursued and courageously communicated—and a passion for the lost because of the love of God resident and active in one's life (Romans 9:1-3; 10:1). **Like the Apostle Paul at Athens, we should both be "greatly disturbed" because of the rampant unbelief in our day.** We, like that great apologist, should also be intellectually equipped and spiritually prepared to enter the marketplace of ideas for the cause of Christ (Acts 17:16-34).

4. **The apologist must be convinced of the truth, rationality, pertinence, and knowability of the Christian worldview, which is derived from Holy Scripture as it is logically systematized and rightly harmonized with general revelation (truth knowable outside of Scripture).** This is an intellectual goal for a lifetime as the disciple of Christ seeks to love God with one's mind and take more and more thoughts captive to obey Christ (Matthew 22:37-40; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5). The apologist should never rest content with an ad hoc or piecemeal worldview, as is so typical of those afflicted with postmodernist pastiche sensibilities.

6. **Any theology, apologetics, ethics, evangelism or church practice that minimizes or denigrates the concept of objective, absolute, universal and knowable truth is both irrational and unbiblical. As such it must be rejected and repented of. Thus, the postmodernist view of truth as socially constructed, contingent, and relative must be rejected by Christian apologists.** Anything that might be true in postmodernism can be found elsewhere in better philosophical systems. What is false in postmodernism (the vast majority of it) is fatal to Christian witness. Without a strong, biblical view of truth apologetics is impossible.

12. Since all Christians are called and commanded to have a reason for the hope within them (1 Peter 3:15), **Christian teachers, pastors, mentors and educators of all kinds are remiss if they avoid, denigrate, or minimize the importance of apologetics to biblical living and Christian witness.** The commonly heard canard, "No one comes to Christ through arguments" is patently false. Many people, such as the apologists C.S. Lewis and John Warwick Montgomery, were drawn to the gospel through apologetic arguments. By God's grace, I have been able to help unbelievers see the truth and rationality of Christianity through apologetic arguments. Well-respected Christian philosophers and apologists, William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland concur. Not all Christian teachers are equally gifted in apologetics, and some will emphasize this discipline more than others; but none should minimize the necessity of apologetics or preach around it when the biblical text requires otherwise.

13. **Those outside of the leadership positions mentioned in (12) should humbly but boldly request that apologetics be made a constitutive part of these institutions if this is not already the case and pray to that end.** We must stimulate each other to love and good deed in his area (Hebrews 10:24).

14. **In light of (12) and (13), Christian colleges, seminaries, and churches should incorporate apologetics into their institutional/educational life, mission, and vision. Specifically, every Christian high school, college, university, and seminary should require at least one class in apologetics for every degree in their curriculum.** Sadly, this is not now the case for most institutions of Christian learning. Moreover, every discipline should be taught

> from a Christian worldview, since all truth is God's truth. This has significant apologetic value in and of itself. Duane Litfin, President of Wheaton College, has written very insightfully on this practice with respect to the Christian college.
>
> Christian education within the church, especially the junior high level and above, should become more intellectually serious and thus more apologetically oriented. Classes should be taught by thoughtful teachers who engage students to outthink the world for Christ. These settings should become more like prayerful classrooms and less like chattering religious coffee and donut centers. Along these lines, churches should invest significantly in church library that is well stocked with books on apologetics and other topics.

I really recommend you read the whole thing. It seems as though we often take our relationships with God in Christ as being a one-way street. But relationships are never a one-way street. There is give and take, and looking out for the other person. Getting to know the other person, and taking their needs and values into account when we act. We just have to realize that that there is another person there and we are obligated to know that person and to act, as much as we can, in his best interests. It's not enough to say the words, we have to perform the actions and have the experiences. Some of those experiences will not be fun and will not make people like us, but that sadness and suffering is all part of the Christian life, and we might as well realize that God's ambition for us is NOT that we have happy feelings. Jesus did not have happy feelings, but he was obedient. He held up his end of that vertical relationship.

I do find that Doug's list is very humbling to me. Not only because of the things I don't do, but because of the bad things he says I shouldn't do, but which I do anyway. At times, I do become upset when dealing with certain people (village atheists). That's when I seem to be aggressive and overpowering to the casual onlooker. Although I think there are times when harshness is needed, I probably go too far. However, at other times when the person is genuinely seeking, I know I am capable of being supportive and fair. Yesterday, for example, I was quite vicious with some village atheists on Facebook. Today, I was very fair and patient with a different atheist, because she wasn't attacking me personally. I guess we could all be better, and I could certainly be better myself. But this manifesto gives us a set of rules of engagement and I think we can all agree to improve ourselves somehow.

By the way, Doug has written a book on Christian Apologetics, and it is excellent.

Obama administration retaliates against Texas by cutting funding for medical care

March 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> President Obama's Department of Health and Human Services has withdrawn $30 million worth of funding from a Texas Medicaid program that provides health care services for low-income women.
>
> It did so because Texas recently passed a law that said its Women's Health Program could not disperse funds to abortion and contraception providers such as Planned Parenthood.
>
> Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius personally traveled to Houston to make the announcement that the Obama administration would cut funding of the program and would no longer continue the waiver that Texas had previously been given to continue funding of the program temporarily.
>
> Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott has issued an opinion declaring that federal law allows states to exclude abortion providers and their affiliated organizations from Medicaid. In a letter to Obama, Texas Gov. Perry accused the administration of trying to violate states' rights "by mandating which health providers the state of Texas must use."
>
> WHP provides health services to 130,000 low-income women. Of the more than 1,000 certified WHP providers across the state, the Texas law excludes fewer than 100 Planned Parenthood providers. Yet the Obama administration is willing to cut off all the other providers and all the women who receive health care through them in pursuit of its ideological agenda.
>
> Texas considers Planned Parenthood, which performs 300,000 abortions a year, a poor allocation of public funds intended to promote women's health, noting they cannot treat breast cancer and do not have a single mammogram machine in the entire state of Texas. But if you want an abortion or contraceptives, Planned Parenthood provides one-stop shopping for that.
>
> Nor does Planned Parenthood need public funds. As we've noted, when the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation announced it was planning to stop giving money to Planned Parenthood, within hours some 6,000 donors pledged a total of $400,000. A family in Dallas offered $250,000, and New York's Mayor Bloomberg promised to match that.

In other news, Sandra Fluke admitted that she had no idea that she could get birth control from Target for $9 a month.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Researchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity
- Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Review of October Baby, a pro-life movie opening today

March 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the trailer:

Here's a review from Jay Watts of the Life Training Institute, my favorite pro-life organization.

Excerpt:

> This past weekend I was privileged to see an advanced screening of October Baby. You can read the promotional material for the film here.
>
> October Baby tells the story of young woman – Hannah, played by Rachel Hendrix – who finds out that there is an explanation for her lifetime severe physical and emotional struggles. She was adopted by her parents after she survived a botched abortion. With the help of her best friend – Jason played by Jason Burkey- they set out on a road trip to search out her birth mother and the full story of Hannah's past.
>
> Whatever concerns I had about the quality of the film I was screening were quickly allayed.October Baby is not an amateur production. The filmmakers, Andrew and Jon Erwin, understand how to make a movie. Anytime you watch an independent film you know that the producers sacrifice some elements of larger productions – usually film quality and acting – in order to tell a more personal and intimate story. The Erwin's seem to understand the limits of a production at this level and use their unusual skill to mitigate the weaker elements of small films, or – more simply put – they shot an independent film that looks great.

My only concern about movies about abortion is that they will bash the men and make the women out to be innocent victims. I did a little digging and it seems to be that this movie *does not do that.* I'm not sure, but I think it takes a subtle shot at feminism – something I read seemed to indicate that.

It's endorsed by Fathers.com. This interview with the actor who plays the adoptive father says this:

> **NCF:** The character you play, the father in this film, has his own journey through the film. Describe his journey and maybe what you saw as some of the mistakes he made and some of the things he did right and some of the things he learned through this journey that's portrayed in the film.
>
> **JS: Well, my guy, he did a very right thing when his wife and he lost their twins, miscarried their twins, when his wife came to him and said, "There are twins up for adoption that would have been born around the same time our twins would have been born." Obviously he supported**

> **that and they went and adopted these two little babies even though one of them was horrifically disfigured and not likely to make it out of the hospital—and the other one had health issues as well. So this is a guy who supported his wife's desire to have twins, he supported her faith that there was a reason why she was made aware of these twins. So, he did that right.**
>
> The only thing as far as I can see … there's a wonderful line of dialogue in there where the daughter says, "Why didn't you tell me?" And basically, without saying this exact line, he said that, "I was always going to, but life kind of got away from us. We were working and …" he was at that point trying to become a doctor, he was going to school, and they had financial trouble, and it just kind of got away from him. It didn't slip his mind, but the perfect time to have that conversation never really appeared. So he had to do it under duress. He had to do it in a doctor's office when she was wondering why she was always so sick. So if he did anything wrong, that was it. Because he's very protective of his daughter with her friend….
>
> I love that about the movie too—the platonic, wonderful, buddy relationship between my daughter and her pal in his movie is so real. And as a movie-goer, you think, *Okay these two have got to get together somehow*. But it just is so wonderfully real. **So my character, the dad in this movie, does a great job, I think, of protecting her against a teenage boy's stupidity [laughs] … his judgment, from an eighteen-year-old boy's perspective.**
>
> And I've said this to my kids many times. I haven't said it recently, but … "One of the biggest differences between me and you is that I've been seventeen, and you have not been fifty. So your perspective is very narrow, very short. It is your perspective, and I'm not going to discount it, but my job as a dad is … if I've sat on a stove that you're about to hike your butt up onto, my responsibility is to let you know it's hot. I'm not going to keep you from sitting on it, but I'm going to let you know that it's going to hurt when you do." I think there's that in this film as well, and I like that.
>
> As far as what he learns, I think he learns in this movie that the resiliency of a seventeen-year-old girl is more than he thought, that a young person can actually handle more emotional information, more potentially hurtful information than you think they can. So there's that wonderful scene where he tells her the whole thing about her brother, and it's so moving. He's a dad, and it pains fathers when their children go through that "Dad is an idiot" stage. It really pains them. It's not just confusing, it's hurtful. But the good news, dad, is that it does have a shelf life. They do love their dads through all that stuff too, they just don't let you know it. But later on they do. I used to tell friends of mine, "Don't worry. They turn back into people just as magically as they turned into aliens."

I think it's safe for us men to watch this – we won't be blamed and bashed. The father

character is strong and good. I have seen the trailer posted on men’s rights blogs AND pro-life blogs, so it looks like it’s worth a shot.

Please post comments below if you go see the movie.

Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)

March 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB rating: [7.2/10]

Description:

> The World War II U.S. Navy submarine commander P.J. Richardson (Clark Gable) has an obsession with the Japanese destroyer that had sunk his previous boat and three others in the Bungo Straits. He persuades the Navy Board to give him a new submarine command with the provision that his executive officer, or "exec", be someone who has just returned from active sea patrol. He is single-mindedly training the crew of his new boat, the USS *Nerka*, to return to the Bungo Straits and sink the destroyer, captained by a crafty ex-submariner, now destroyer captain, nicknamed Bungo Pete. Richardson's executive officer, Lieutenant Jim Bledsoe (Burt Lancaster), is worried about the safety of his boat and his crew. Bledsoe also is seething with resentment at Richardson and the Navy management for denying him command of the boat which he believes should rightfully have been his.

The new submarine used in the movie is a *Balao* class diesel submarine.

A Balao class diesel-electric submarine

SS Balao specifications:

Length: 312′
Beam: 27′
Speed: 20-1/4 knots (surfaced); 8-3/4 knots (submerged)
Diving Depth: 400′ (test depth); 600′ (emergency)

Range: 20,000 miles
Endurance: 75 days
Crew: 10 (officers); 70 (enlisted)
Deck Gun: 1 3″/50-calibre, or 1 4″/50-calibre, or 1 5″/25-calibre
Anti-Aircraft Weapons: 1 or 2-20mm Oerlikons, or 2-40mm Bofors, or 1-20mm and 1-40mm
Torpedoes: 10-21″ torpedo tubes (6 bow, 4 stern); 24 Mark-14 torpedoes; Mark III Torpedo Data Computer
Radar: Short range SD air detection radar; SJ surface search radar; ST periscope radar
Sonar: JP hydrophone, upper deck; JK/QC, QB Sonar under bow

As everyone knows, I have an interest in all things military, including submarine warfare. One of the first games I ever played was Gato by Spectrum Holobyte, on my old Apple Macintosh. A good newer game to play is Silent Hunter IV and Dangerous Waters. For something more macro, I recommend Harpoon.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of my favorite TV show

Tennessee Senate passes academic freedom bill with bipartisan support

March 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

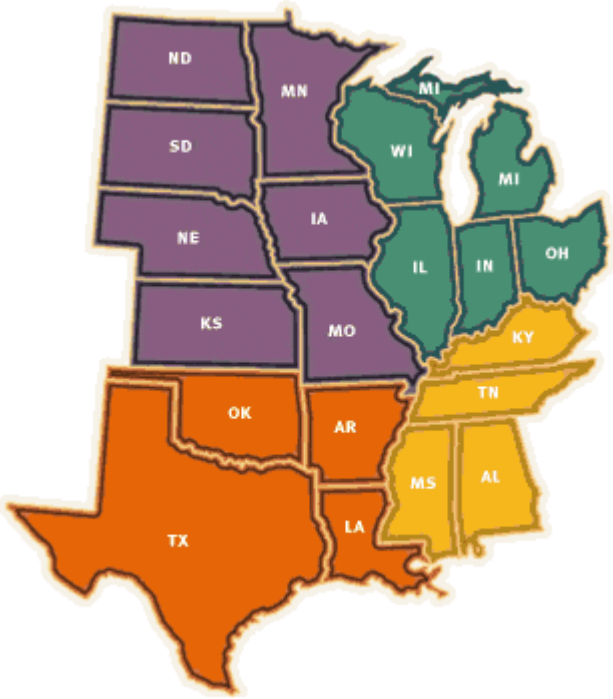

Central United States
From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> On Monday, an academic freedom bill, SB 893, passed the Tennessee State Senate by avote of 25-8. The bill enjoyed bipartisan support from all the Republicans, and over 35% of Democrats, in the Tennessee State Senate. The proposed legislation is a standard academic freedom bill that would apply generally to the teaching of controversial scientific theories, not just evolution. It contains the following good language:
>
> - "The teaching of some scientific subjects required to be taught under the curriculum framework developed by the state board of education may cause debate and disputation including, but not limited to, biological evolution, the chemical origins of life, global warming, and human cloning."
> - **"Neither the state board of education, nor any public elementary or secondary school governing authority, director of schools, school system administrators, or any public elementary or secondary school principal or administrators shall prohibit any teacher in a public school system of this state from helping students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner**

> **the scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses of existing scientific theories covered in the course being taught within the curriculum framework developed by the state board of education."**
>
> - **"This section only protects the teaching of scientific information, and shall not be construed to promote any religious or non-religious doctrine, promote discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs or non-beliefs, or promote discrimination for or against religion or non-religion."**
>
> Thus, the bill includes a clear statement that it *only* applies to teaching science and does *not* protect teaching religion. Don't expect that to satisfy critics, who will predictably ignore the actual language of the bill and falsely claim it would introduce religion in the classroom.

Make sure you read that part in bold, because it's not going to be reported in the media that way. They'll report the exact opposite of what the bill says, and probably mention Noah's Ark. In fact, they already have done so.

Naturally, the Darwinism/global warming cult is not happy about students being allowed to ask questions and debate the scientific merits of controversial theories:

> The National Center for Science Education (NCSE) is already mocking SB 893 as the "Tennessee monkey bill"– reminiscent of the law passed in the 1920s that criminalized the teaching of evolution in Tennessee, leading to the Scopes trial. However, the situation is the reverse of what it was in the 1920s. Today, Darwin-skeptics are the ones fighting for intellectual freedom, while Darwin-promoters try to squash and censor opposing views. The NCSE's "monkey bill" comparison is completely inapt: the effect of this bill would be to bring more, not less, instruction on evolution into the classroom. That's precisely why the Darwin lobbyists don't like it. It would allow students to learn the scientific weaknesses in biological evolution in addition to the strengths.

If secularism stands for anything, it stands for indoctrination and restricting free inquiry. They don't like debates. They get very uncomfortable with disagreement and different opinions. They want uniformity of thought.

Is there a war on women? Who started it?

March 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A few decades back, a vocal minority of women decided to revolt against chastity, small government, low taxes, marriage, courtship, and motherhood. They decided that it was better to be able to have recreational sex before marriage, to put their own careers ahead of motherhood, to liberalize divorce laws, to pay women to have children without being married, to vote for higher taxes, to expand government to offer social programs and redistribution schemes, and to assault the traditional gender roles of husbands and fathers. Most men had nothing to do with starting this revolution, but men in general went along with it because they wanted freely available recreational sex more than they wanted children to be safe in stable, married homes.

In the end, the vocal minority of women managed to convince the majority of women and men to accept their views in large part, and society has changed. And we can see the end of the revolution in the face of Sandra Fluke – the "victim" of the" conservative war on women" – as she pleads with Congress to force taxpayers to subsidize contraceptives, abortions, etc., so that women can substitute chastity, courtship, marriage and motherhood with recreational sex, careers and subsidized day care.

Has this change in society made women happy? Let's see what the research says.

Mary Eberstadt writes in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> This brings us to Myth No. 4, which is perhaps the most interesting one of all: *The sexual revolution has made women happier.*
>
> Granted, happiness is a personal, imponderable thing. But if the sexual revolution has really made women as happy as feminists say, a few elementary questions beg to be answered.
>
> Why do the pages of our tonier magazines brim with mournful titles like "The Case for Settling" and "The End of Men"? Why do websites run by and for women focus so much on men who won't grow up, and ooze such despair about relations between the sexes?
>
> Why do so many accomplished women simply give up these days and decide to have children on their own, sometimes using anonymous sperm donors, thus creating the world's first purposely fatherless children? What of the fact, widely reported earlier this week, that 26% of American women are on some kind of mental-health medication for anxiety and depression and related problems?
>
> Or how about what is known in sociology as "the paradox of declining female happiness"? **Using 35 years of data from the General Social Survey, two Wharton School economists, Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, made the case in 2009 that women's happiness appeared to be declining over**

> **time despite their advances in the work force and education.**
>
> The authors noted that women (and men) showed declining happiness during the years studied. Though they were careful not to draw conclusions from their data, is it not reasonable to think that at least some of that discontent comes from the feeling that the grass is greener elsewhere—a feeling made plausible by the sexual revolution?
>
> However one looks at the situation, it seems difficult to argue that the results of the revolution have been a slam-dunk for happiness.
>
> It is always hard to disentangle the weeds from the plants in such a large field. But if the sexual revolution has made women so happy, we can at least ask what it would look like for them to be unhappy. A broader inquiry might yield some results worth thinking about, in contrast to the shortsighted political theatrics over a supposed "war on women."

It's not only women who are victims of feminism, but children, too. The wife of one of my closest friends gave me Mary Eberstadt's book on daycare's effects on children, which is entitled "Home Alone America". I thought it was a pretty good read, and it shows the importance of not allowing children to come home to an empty home. It's not good for children to live in households where they are left unattended. But feminism supported that, too.

UPDATE: Donald Sensing pointed me to this post on his blog where he wonders why Democrat elites cannot understand why some women are rebelling against the sexual revolution, and get quite concerned by all of the massive costs of providing women with consequence-free sex.

Excerpt:

> "Basic health care" for women, in Democrat lexicon, means nothing at all but being given free contraceptives and abortifacients or abortions. That's it. In their mind, American women should not think of health care primarily in other terms.
>
> […]In the Democrat mind, sex without sex's consequences are the only thing that women should think about when they approach a voting booth. [Liberal women in the media] actually think that unless the government makes sure that women's sex lives are unencumbered, then a woman simply cannot manage her job, housing or children. Sex rules all else.
>
> The Democrat party truly cannot comprehend a woman going to vote who is more concerned about the dent in her paycheck caused by $5-per-gallon gasoline than finding free condoms, or who worries about the future impoverishment of her children and grandchildren because of Obama's borrow and spend binges more than she worries about buying the Pill, or whose most pressing concern is not sexual liberty, but a college-graduate son or daughter who has moved back to live with mom because s/he can't find a job and therefore can't make student loan payments and rent at the same time.

> Not in the Dems' world view is a woman who pays her mortgage every month but who knows that her home's market value is less than the mortgage principal remaining, and stupidly thinks that this is more important to her future (and thus her voting) than getting morning-after pills. There is no room in Democrat gender-identity politics for a woman who has been married to one man for 35 years and so never thinks about getting free contraceptives or an abortion (that is, what Dems say is "basic health care") but who is intensely concerned with her elderly parents' net worth falling as inflation rises.
>
> No, these women simply do not authentically exist in the Democrat universe. Such women simply have not heard the full message that there should be nothing more important to a woman than sex, sex, sex.
>
> To the Democrat party, women are simply sex objects, though with political and statist rather than fleshly purposes. But objects is all they are.

I hope that more women start voting for marriage and family again, and give up on recreational sex. It's not working for anyone.

Rick Santorum beats Mitt Romney 49 to 27 in Louisiana

March 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the pro-Romney Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Rick Santorum won the Louisiana primary Saturday, solidifying his support among conservatives in the Deep South as he faces a tough next couple of weeks in Northern states competitions that are predicted to favor frontrunner Mitt Romney.
>
> The former Pennsylvania senator won 49 percent of the vote, with Romney coming in second with 27 percent, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich in third with 17 percent and Texas Rep. Ron Paul finishing last with 6 percent.
>
> "People in Louisiana came through in a big way," Santorum said from a brewery in Green Bay, Wisc. "You didn't get the memo. We're still fighting. … I'm not running as the conservative candidate for president. I am the conservative candidate."
>
> Santorum said Romney called to congratulate him.
>
> "I told him I was in (Wisconsin.) He said he was out in California raising money," Santorum said. "I said leave a little bit for me. … We've always had cordial conversations."
>
> […]The candidates now head into April 3 contests in Maryland, Wisconsin and the District of Columbia.
>
> The key contest is expected to be in Wisconsin, which has Swing State status, with Maryland and the District largely Democratic territories. In addition, Santorum is not on the District ballot.
>
> Santorum has now won 11 states, while Romney has won 20 states or territories. Gingrich has won two states, while Paul has not won any.

How did Santorum do it?

> **Louisiana had a closed primary, meaning only registered Republicans could vote. Roughly eight in 10 in the exit poll said they consider themselves Republicans on most political matters, and three-quarters called themselves conservatives.**
>
> **Seven in 10 said they support the Tea Party movement, roughly the same numbers recorded 11 days ago in the Mississippi primary won by Santorum.**
>
> **Nearly a quarter of the Louisiana voters said choosing a candidate who**

> **is a true conservative was important, according to the exit polls.**

Mitt Romney seems to be winning a lot of states, and I think there are two reasons why. First, in a lot of open primary states, he gets a lot of Democrat votes. Democrats overwhelming support Mitt Romney, because his record fits with Democrat policies. Second, Romney is outspending Santorum by a huge margin – 7 to 1 in Illinois, for example.

Michael Coren: four reasons for St. Patrick's Day rioting in Canada

March 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Lilley posted this column by Michael Coren on his Lilley Pad blog. The topic is the recent riots by youths in London, Ontario and Toronto, Ontario.

Excerpt:

> Two incidents last weekend said more about Canada, and the west, than any number of political scandals.
>
> In London, Ont., there was violence and rioting, the ostensible cause being St. Patrick's Day. In Toronto's middle-class High Park, a highly expensive and enormously popular children's playground was burned to the ground.
>
> What is important is less the violence than the area and the perpetrators. Just as with hockey riots in Vancouver or demonstrations in Montreal, these were prosperous areas with little if any genuine social deprivation, and the criminals in London were overwhelmingly white, privileged and financially secure.
>
> This is extraordinarily significant.
>
> So if the youths were well off, why were they rioting?

Coren writes:

> First, they are no longer frightened of the police. Spare me the idea that they shouldn't be, and that the police are a service and not a force. It was, as so often, patrician liberals who decided a generation ago to transform the cops from tough but fair enforcers of the law into politically correct social workers, composed of sufficient women and minorities to make NDP candidates feel comfortable. Teens and students know the worst that will happen to them if they act like animals, is a stroke and a telling off.
>
> Second, the conscious destruction of fatherhood. While not all of these rioters come from broken homes — yes, the term is most applicable — many of them have no strong, male figure to look to, and even when a father is present he is often emasculated. We have lionized the single mother and made the role of the dad who provides boundaries and consequences to actions a figure of fun, a dinosaur.
>
> Third, we have tried to, and to an extent succeeded, in removing religion from the public square. Putting theology aside, faith provided structure and morality to individual lives, and a sense of community. If there is no right and wrong, there is no problem with smashing a police cruiser, or burning down a park that took so long and so much local effort to build. As for community, we have never used the term so much, and never had so little idea of what it really means.

> Fourth, while leftist politicians and labour leaders will tell you how poor we all are, the truth is that we've never had it to so good. It's easy being a Canadian, and simple being a young Canadian. Junk food and junk standards, student loans and student sloth, instant access and instant gratification. All this wrapped in the cheap paper of reality television, dumb media hosts affirming the worst attitudes of youth culture, and leaders too frightened and ambitious to tell the moaning masses to shut up and stop being so ungrateful.
>
> Oprah, teddy bears at shrines, pretending to care when children are abducted and killed, state intervention replacing family concern, killing God and killing truth, believing only we matter, screaming that the world owes us a living. It's not just High Park but Canada burning. Don't fiddle while it happens.

Secularism is basically the detachment of moral standards from any overarching design for the universe that would include objective moral standards. Secularism is opposed to objective morality.

And the same thing happened in the UK in August of 2011. An article written by Max Hastings about those riots identified similar root causes. (H/T Mary, Dina)

Excerpt:

> An underclass has existed throughout history, which once endured appalling privation. Its spasmodic outbreaks of violence, especially in the early 19th century, frightened the ruling classes.
>
> Its frustrations and passions were kept at bay by force and draconian legal sanctions, foremost among them capital punishment and transportation to the colonies.
>
> Today, those at the bottom of society behave no better than their forebears, but the welfare state has relieved them from hunger and real want.
>
> When social surveys speak of "deprivation" and "poverty", this is entirely relative. Meanwhile, sanctions for wrongdoing have largely vanished.
>
> […]But it will not do for a moment to claim the rioters' behaviour reflects deprived circumstances or police persecution.
>
> Of course it is true that few have jobs, learn anything useful at school, live in decent homes, eat meals at regular hours or feel loyalty to anything beyond their local gang.
>
> This is not, however, because they are victims of mistreatment or neglect.
>
> It is because it is fantastically hard to help such people, young or old, without imposing a measure of compulsion which modern society finds unacceptable. These kids are what they are because nobody makes them be anything different or better.
>
> A key factor in delinquency is lack of effective sanctions to deter it. From an early stage, feral children discover that they can bully fellow pupils at school, shout

> abuse at people in the streets, urinate outside pubs, hurl litter from car windows, play car radios at deafening volumes, and, indeed, commit casual assaults with only a negligible prospect of facing rebuke, far less retribution.
>
> Anyone who reproaches a child, far less an adult, for discarding rubbish, making a racket, committing vandalism or driving unsociably will receive in return a torrent of obscenities, if not violence.
>
> **So who is to blame? The breakdown of families, the pernicious promotion of single motherhood as a desirable state, the decline of domestic life so that even shared meals are a rarity, have all contributed importantly to the condition of the young underclass.**
>
> **The social engineering industry unites to claim that the conventional template of family life is no longer valid.**
>
> […]**This has ultimately been sanctioned by Parliament, which refuses to accept, for instance, that children are more likely to prosper with two parents than with one, and that the dependency culture is a tragedy for those who receive something for nothing.**
>
> The judiciary colludes with social services and infinitely ingenious lawyers to assert the primacy of the rights of the criminal and aggressor over those of law-abiding citizens, especially if a young offender is involved.
>
> The police, in recent years, have developed a reputation for ignoring yobbery and bullying, or even for taking the yobs' side against complainants.
>
> "The problem," said Bill Pitt, the former head of Manchester's Nuisance Strategy Unit, "is that the law appears to be there to protect the rights of the perpetrator, and does not support the victim."
>
> Police regularly arrest householders who are deemed to have taken "disproportionate" action to protect themselves and their property from burglars or intruders. The message goes out that criminals have little to fear from "the feds".
>
> Figures published earlier this month show that a majority of "lesser" crimes – which include burglary and car theft, and which cause acute distress to their victims – are never investigated, because forces think it so unlikely they will catch the perpetrators.

Here's Melanie Phillips in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> The causes of this sickness are many and complex. But three things can be said with certainty: every one of them is the fault of the liberal intelligentsia; every one of them was instituted or exacerbated by the Labour government; and at the very heart of these problems lies the breakdown of the family.
>
> For most of these children come from lone-mother households. And the single

most crucial factor behind all this mayhem is the willed removal of the most important thing that socialises children and turns them from feral savages into civilised citizens: a father who is a fully committed member of the family unit.

[…]In such areas, successive generations are being brought up only by mothers, through whose houses pass transitory males by whom these women have yet more children — and who inevitably repeat the pattern of lone and dysfunctional parenting.

The result is fatherless boys who are consumed by an existential rage and desperate emotional need, and who take out the damage done to them by lashing out from infancy at everyone around them. Such children inhabit what is effectively a different world from the rest of society. It's a world without any boundaries or rules. A world of emotional and physical chaos.

A world where a child responds to the slightest setback or disagreement by resorting to violence. A world where the parent is unwilling or incapable of providing the loving and disciplined framework that a child needs in order to thrive.

Yet instead of lone parenthood being regarded as a tragedy for individuals, and a catastrophe for society, it has been redefined as a 'right'.

When Labour came to power in 1997, it set about systematically destroying not just the traditional family but the very idea that married parents were better for children than any other arrangement.

Instead, it introduced the sexual free-for-all of 'lifestyle choice'; claimed that the idea of the male breadwinner was a sexist anachronism; and told girls that they could, and should, go it alone as mothers.

This was the outcome of the shattering defeat of Tony Blair, in the two years or so after he came to power, at the hands of the ultra-feminists and apostles of non-judgmentalism in his Cabinet and party who were determined, above all, to destroy the traditional nuclear family.

Blair stood virtually alone against them, and lost.

One of these ultra-feminist wreckers was Harriet Harman. The other night, she was on TV preposterously suggesting that cuts in educational allowances or youth workers had something to do with young people torching and looting shops, robbing and leaving people for dead in the streets.

But Harman was one of the principal forces in the Labour government behind the promotion of lone parenthood and the marginalisation of fathers. If anyone should be blamed for bringing about the conditions which have led to these appalling scenes in our cities, it is surely Ms Harman.

And this breaking of the family was further condoned, rewarded and encouraged by the Welfare State, which conceives of need solely in terms of absence of money, and which accordingly subsidises lone parenthood and the destructive

> behaviour that fatherlessness brings in its train.
>
> Welfare dependency further created the entitlement culture that the looters so egregiously display. It taught them that the world owed them a living. It taught them that their actions had no consequences. And it taught them that the world revolved around themselves.

And now, Theodore Dalrymple in the Australian.

Excerpt:

> The riots in London and elsewhere in Britain are a backhanded tribute to the long-term intellectual torpor, moral cowardice, incompetence and careerist opportunism of the British political and intellectual class.
>
> They have somehow managed not to notice what has long been apparent to anyone who has taken a short walk with his eyes open down any frequented British street: that a considerable proportion of the country's young population (a proportion that is declining) is ugly, aggressive, vicious, badly educated, uncouth and criminally inclined.
>
> Unfortunately, while it is totally lacking in self-respect, it is full of self-esteem: that is to say, it believes itself entitled to a high standard of living, and other things, without any effort on its own part.
>
> Consider for a moment the following: although youth unemployment in Britain is very high, that is to say about 20 per cent of those aged under 25, the country has had to import young foreign labour for a long time, even for unskilled work in the service sector.
>
> The reasons for this seeming paradox are obvious to anyone who knows young Britons as I do.
>
> No sensible employer in a service industry would choose a young Briton if he could have a young Pole; the young Pole is not only likely to have a good work ethic and refined manners, he is likely to be able to add up and — most humiliating of all — to speak better English than the Briton, at least if by that we mean the standard variety of the language. He may not be more fluent but his English will be more correct and his accent easier to understand.
>
> This is not an exaggeration. After compulsory education (or perhaps I should say intermittent attendance at school) up to the age of 16 costing $80,000 a head, about one-quarter of British children cannot read with facility or do simple arithmetic. It makes you proud to be a British taxpayer.
>
> I think I can say with a fair degree of certainty, from my experience as a doctor in one of the areas in which a police station has just been burned down, that half of those rioting would reply to the question, "Can you do arithmetic?" by answering, "What is arithmetic?"
>
> British youth leads the Western world in almost all aspects of social pathology,

> from teenage pregnancy to drug taking, from drunkenness to violent criminality. There is no form of bad behaviour that our version of the welfare state has not sought out and subsidised.
>
> British children are much likelier to have a television in their bedroom than a father living at home. One-third of them never eat a meal at a table with another member of their household — family is not the word for the social arrangements of the people in the areas from which the rioters mainly come. They are therefore radically unsocialised and deeply egotistical, viewing relations with other human beings in the same way as Lenin: Who whom, who does what to whom. By the time they grow up, they are destined not only for unemployment but unemployability.
>
> For young women in much of Britain, dependence does not mean dependence on the government: that, for them, is independence. Dependence means any kind of reliance on the men who have impregnated them who, of course, regard their own subventions from the state as pocket money, to be supplemented by a little light trafficking.

If we want to stop youths from rioting, the solution isn't to transfer more wealth to them by raising taxes and substituting government welfare checks for fathers. That's what feminism teaches, but it's not working. It's been tried in the UK and Canada and it doesn't work. To stop children from being violent, you need a father in the home, and he needs to be empowered to work and earn and to set up moral boundaries. Fathers do not just appear, they need to be given incentives, they need to be given authority, they need to be given respect, and they need to be encouraged by women and by government.

Greg West interviews Jonathan Morrow about the Christian worldview

March 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Poached Egg, a must-hear podcast.

Excerpt:

> In this edition of The Poached Egg Podcast, Greg interviews author, speaker, and pastor, Jonathan Morrow, about engaging culture, what it means to have a Christian worldview, and his latest book, *Think Christianly: Looking at the Intersection of Faith and Culture*.

The MP3 file is here.

Here's a related article where Greg reviews the book.

Excerpt:

> Apologist, author, speaker, and pastor, Jonathan Morrow has written one of the most important books in recent memory. An essential read for all Christians, but even more so for pastors, youth pastors, and lay leaders in the church.
>
> In *Think Christianly: Looking at the Intersection of Faith and Culture*, it is obvious that Jonathan Morrow has his fingers on the pulse of todays current (and rapidly changing) culture and not only makes a the case for why Christians and the church should be engaging culture but offers a lot of great advice on how to go about it.
>
> […]In part one of the book Morrow defines what he means by 'culture' and explains why we as Christians are called to engage culture in an educated and relevant manner, and how we need to equip the next generation of Christians to be able to properly engage culture as opposed to trying to protect them from it.
>
> Part two of the book focuses on what it means to 'think Christianly' by developing a Christian worldview. Morrow describes what a worldview is, how everyone has one, and gives examples of some of the worldviews competing with Christianity. He explains how there are certain life questions that a worldview must give an answer for and how we need to equip Christians with the knowledge of how the Christian worldview answers those questions. He goes on to explain how knowledge is essential for today's Christian as apposed to just a personal experiential faith, which can quickly crumble once young believers emerge from their protective covering and are assaulted with the tough issues and questions facing Christians in today's world.
>
> In part three, the final section of the book, Morrow delves into some of the specific areas that Christians must be equipped to engage, including: Tolerance and relativism, sexuality, media saturation, injustice, world religions, faith and

> science, and more. One unique feature (and one of the things I like best about the book) of Think Christianly, is that after every chapter Morrow devotes a page to providing other resources including books, dvds, websites, and articles that are relevant to each chapter and will aid the believer in furthering their knowledge on each topic covered. Also, a few pages in between each chapter are dedicated to short interviews with some of today's leading Christian thinkers including, Jay W. Richards, William Lane Craig, Paul Copan, and more.

Please download the podcast and give it a listen. It is first class.

Petition opposing UK gay marriage law gets 300,000 signatures

March 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Organisers claimed that their petition had become the biggest public campaign since the 2010 election.

> It highlights the support for the traditional definition of marriage as the union of a man and a woman, they said.
>
> Earlier this month, the Government proposed redefining civil marriage laws so that the term can apply to civil unions between same-sex couples.

> […]The Coalition 4 Marriage set up a petition against the plan, which has so far attracted more than 300,200 signatures. The group is calling on the Government to retain the current definition of marriage as the voluntary union between one man and one woman for life.
>
> Colin Hart, the campaign director, said the surge in support since the Government began its consultation was further evidence of the unpopularity of the proposal.
>
> "There has been a staggering response to the petition, launched last month, which shows just how many ordinary men and women care about this issue," he said.
>
> "I hope the Government will consider the growing opposition to its proposals, which are being pushed without the British people being given an opportunity to make their views clear."
>
> Mr Cameron is facing a backlash from his supporters, with senior Tory MPs expected to vote against the reforms. MPs have been promised a free vote on the issue, because it is deemed a matter of "conscience".
>
> However, the Prime Minister said the Conservatives should support homosexual marriage on the grounds that stability and commitment in relationships of any kind should be encouraged.

This is encouraging, because I always think of the UK as being very liberal on social issues. Even the conservatives they have are more fiscal conservatives than social conservatives. A while back I posted a secular case against gay marriage, and I hope that every one of these 300,000 signatories can explain why they believe what they believe in a similar way.

A review of Lawrence Krauss' book "A Universe From Nothing"

March 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lawrence Krauss is a physicist who affirms that the entire physical universe appeared out of nothing. How well does his theory hold up?

This review of Krauss' book was written by a non-theist in the liberal New York Times.

Excerpt:

> Lawrence M. Krauss, a well-known cosmologist and prolific popular-science writer, apparently means to announce to the world, in this new book, that the laws of quantum mechanics have in them the makings of a thoroughly scientific and adamantly secular explanation of why there is something rather than nothing.
>
> […]Never mind. Forget where the laws came from. Have a look instead at what they say. It happens that ever since the scientific revolution of the 17th century, what physics has given us in the way of candidates for the fundamental laws of nature have as a general rule simply taken it for granted that there is, at the bottom of everything, some basic, elementary, eternally persisting, concrete, physical *stuff*. Newton, for example, took that elementary stuff to consist of material particles. And physicists at the end of the 19th century took that elementary stuff to consist of both material particles and electromagnetic fields. And so on. And what the fundamental laws of nature are *about*, and *all*the fundamental laws of nature are about, and all *there is* for the fundamental laws of nature to be about, insofar as physics has ever been able to imagine, is how that elementary stuff is *arranged*. The fundamental laws of nature generally take the form of rules concerning which arrangements of that stuff are physically possible and which aren't, or rules connecting the arrangements of that elementary stuff at later times to its arrangement at earlier times, or something like that. But the laws have no bearing whatsoever on questions of where the elementary stuff came from, or of why the world should have consisted of the particular elementary stuff it does, as opposed to something else, or to nothing at all.
>
> The fundamental physical laws that Krauss is talking about in "A Universe From Nothing" — the laws of relativistic quantum field theories — are no exception to this. The particular, eternally persisting, elementary physical stuff of the world, according to the standard presentations of relativistic quantum field theories, consists (unsurprisingly) of relativistic quantum fields. **And the fundamental laws of this theory take the form of rules concerning which arrangements of those fields are physically possible and which aren't, and rules connecting the arrangements of those fields at later times to**

> **their arrangements at earlier times, and so on — and they have nothing whatsoever to say on the subject of where those fields came from, or of why the world should have consisted of the particular kinds of fields it does, or of why it should have consisted of fields at all, or of why there should have been a world in the first place. Period. Case closed. End of story.**

What does it mean? It means this. Physical laws are merely a description of how physical entities operate. They do not explain where the physical entities being described *came from.* Physical laws are like traffic laws – they describe how cars are supposed to drive around on roads – but they don't create the cars!

In any case, if you would like to find out how well Krauss' ideas hold up in a debate, you can watch him debate William Lane Craig right here:

Or listen to the debate and read my very very snarky summary here.

The debate itself was a slaughter. Krauss was one of the least rational opponents Craig has ever faced.

Is Obama promising the Russians more unilateral disarmament after the election?

March 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News, a conversation that was never meant for the public to hear.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama told Russia's leader Monday that he would have more flexibility after the November election to deal with the contentious issue of missile defense, a candid assessment of political reality that was picked up by a microphone without either leader apparently knowing.
>
> Outgoing Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said he would pass on Obama's message to his successor, Vladimir Putin, according to an audio recording of comments the two leaders made during a meeting in Seoul, South Korea. Obama and Medvedev did not intend for their comments to be made public.

What kind of promises might Obama be making?

How about something like this:

> Thirty-four lawmakers sent a letter to the White House on Thursday in response to news reports that President Obama had ordered his staff to study the option of reducing America's nuclear deterrent by 80 percent—down to as few as 300 deployed strategic nuclear warheads. The United States currently has a cap of 1,550 deployed strategic warheads under the so-called New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), the controversial arms control pact with Russia that passed the Senate in December 2010.
>
> The concerned lawmakers—who are led by Republican Congressmen Buck McKeon of California, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), and Mike Turner of Virginia, head of the HASC's Subcommittee on Strategic Forces—question whether the president is taking into account the full range of threats that face the United States in its allies. In the letter, they caution against further nuclear cuts given "the growth in quantity and quality of nuclear weapons capabilities in Russia, the People's Republic of China, India, Pakistan, North Korea and, perhaps soon the Islamic Republic of Iran" and "the divestment of U.S. conventional military capabilities under [Obama's] recently announced defense strategy."

Or maybe he wants to do more of this:

> The Obama administration disclosed on Tuesday that it is considering sharing some classified U.S. data as part of an effort to allay Russian concerns about a controversial antimissile shield.
>
> The administration is continuing negotiations begun under former President

> George W. Bush on a defense technical cooperation agreement with Moscow that could include limited classified data, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Brad Roberts told a House of Representatives' Armed Services subcommittee.
>
> He gave no details on the sort of data that might be shared under such an agreement.

Or maybe he would do more of this:

> U.S. officials have confirmed to Fox News that images aired by Iranian state television do in fact show the secret U.S. drone that went down last week in eastern Iran.
>
> "Yep, that's it," one senior official told Fox News. "And it's intact."
>
> U.S. officials had been expecting the video to appear. The footage, which shows the aircraft intact, confirms the Iranians have custody of the drone but appears to refute Iranian claims that it shot down the RQ-170 drone.
>
> With early knowledge that the aircraft had likely remained intact, the senior U.S. official also told Fox News that President Obama was presented with three separate options for retrieving or destroying the drone. The president ultimately decided not to proceed with any of the plans because it could have been seen as an act of war, the official told Fox News.
>
> Among the options the U.S. considered were sending in a special-ops team to retrieve the drone; sending in a team to blow up the aircraft; and launching an airstrike to destroy it.

Or even more of this:

> The most senior retired military officer to back President Obama's run for the White House says the president is making a "real mistake" in terminating F-22 production.
>
> Retired Gen. Merrill McPeak, who was the Air Force chief of staff during the 1991 Operation Desert Storm and who credited air power with winning the war, was the first four-star officer to endorse the one-term senator in his presidential campaign. McPeak traveled with Obama to bolster the candidate's commander-in-chief credentials, much to the chagrin of the general's fighter pilot colleagues.
>
> But now McPeak is breaking with Obama on the president's most contentious defense budget decision: ending production of the Air Force's top-line fighter at 187 aircraft.
>
> "I think it's a real mistake," McPeak told FOXNews.com. "The airplane is a game-changer and people seem to forget that we haven't had any of our soldiers or Marines killed by enemy air since 1951 or something like that. It's been half a century or more since any enemy aircraft has killed one of guys. So we've gotten use to this idea that we never have to breathe hostile air."
>
> McPeak's comments come as Obama is in the throes of a major battle with

> Democrats and Republicans who have voted in committee to fund seven more F-22s.
>
> Obama sent a letter to Congress Monday with a blunt warning.
>
> “I will veto any bill that supports acquisition of F-22s beyond the 187 already funded by Congress,” Obama wrote. “To continue to procure additional F-22s would be to waste valuable resources that should be more usefully employed to provide our troops with the weapons that they actually do need.”

Worst. President. Ever. Unless you are an enemy of the United States, in which case he’s the best president ever!

The Wintery Knight’s favorite apologetics lectures

March 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These are the lectures that made me who I am today. Each of these is awesome. If you only have time for two, listen to Dr. Bradley’s Journey to Faith and Giants in the Land.

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Ph.D. in Materials Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1968
B.S. in Engineering Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1965

- Journey to Faith (his testimony)
- Giants in the Land
- Truth in Religion
- Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer

Dr. J.P. Moreland

B.S. in Chemistry, University of Missouri
M.A. in Philosophy, University of California Riverside
Th.M. in Theology, Dallas Theological Seminary
Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Southern California

- The Importance of the Mind in Christian Living
- Atheism, Theism, and the Meaning of Life
- Love Your God with All Your Mind (for Christians)

Dr. Philip E. Johnson

A.B., Harvard University, 1961
J.D., University of Chicago, 1965

- The Grand Metaphysical Story of Science
- Can Science Know the Mind of God?
- Darwinism on Trial

Dr. Douglas Geivett

Ph.D., University of Southern California
M.A., Dallas Theological Seminary
M.A., Gonzaga University
B.S., Multnomah School of the Bible

- The Problems of Evil and Suffering (at Apologetics 315)

Dr. William Lane Craig

D.Theol., University of Munich
Ph.D., University of Birmingham (UK)

M.A., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
M.A., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
B.A., Wheaton College

- In Intellectual Neutral (at Apologetics 315)

Julia Gillard's carbon tax leads to massive defeat in Queensland election

March 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

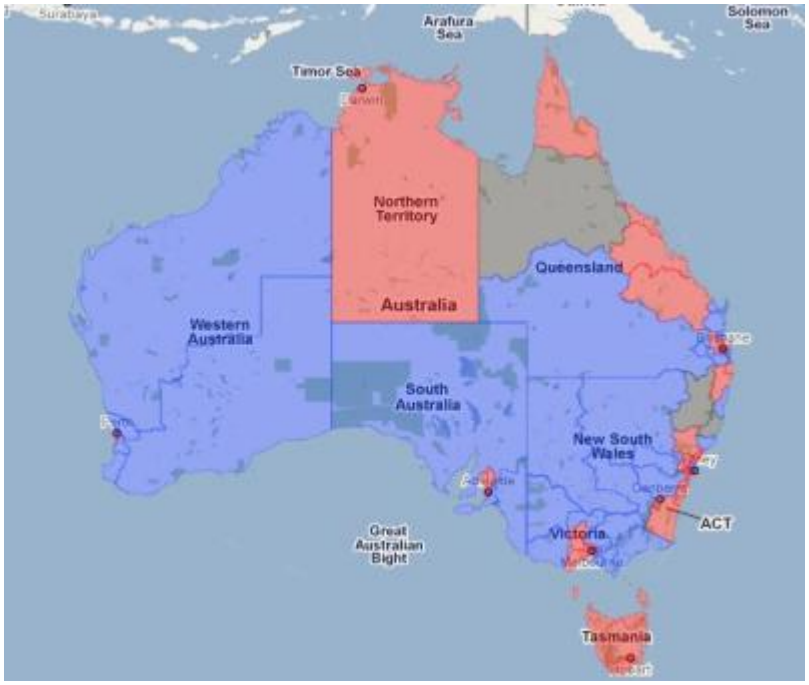

Australia 2010 federal election results (Red = Labor Party)

I was disappointed with Queensland because of the last federal election in 2010. They elected several Labor Party MPs. And now the federal Labor Party is pushing for a carbon tax and gay marriage, too.

Look what happened in 2010:

Turnout 94.41% (CV) — Informal 3.56%

Party	Votes	%	Swing	Seats	Change
Australian Labor Party	1,020,665	42.91	+8.13	15	+9
Liberal Party of Australia	818,438	34.40	–5.01	10	–7
National Party of Australia	239,504	10.07	+0.32	3	–1
Australian Greens	133,938	5.63	+0.57	0	0

The Liberal Party and the National Party are the two conservative parties – they form a conservative coalition, and they continued to lose seats, just like they did in 2007.

Given that, I was heartened by the results from this past weekend, when Queensland held state-level elections. (H/T Bill M.)

Excerpt:

> [Opposition leader] Tony Abbott has sought to capitalise on the Queensland election saying Labor MPs right across the country will be worried about the "fundamental lesson" from yesterday's landslide defeat.
>
> Speaking on Sky News's Australian Agenda the Opposition Leader said Labor needed to have a "good, long, hard look at itself" and said the party's brand was

> “toxic” around Australia.
>
> “This is a triumph for Campbell (Newman) and the LNP,” Mr Abbott said this morning of the Queensland result.
>
> “I think Labor members of parliament right around Australia would be very worried about the fundamental lesson from this which is that a government which isn’t competent, which isn’t frugal and which isn’t truthful loses and loses big time.
>
> “The basic message is that the Labor brand is toxic right around Australia.”
>
> “Certainly there were two candidates for Queensland one of them Anna Bligh, who was for the carbon tax, and the other Campbell Newman who was against it,” Mr Abbott said.
>
> Mr Newman’s Liberal National Party ended Labor’s 14-year reign in Queensland last night with a crushing win.
>
> **The latest forecasts have the LNP winning as many as 78 seats in the 89-seat parliament, with Labor expected to hold just seven seats of its former 51.**
>
> Mr Abbott said while the Queensland election had buoyed the Coalition’s hopes of winning the next federal election he conceded things could be different if Julia Gillard improves.
>
> “If the federal Labor government is able to lift its game and be truthful, yes things could be different,” the Opposition Leader said.
>
> “But I think federal Labor has clearly established its character.”
>
> Mr Abbott stood by his comments last week that the Queensland election would be a referendum on the carbon tax and dishonest politicians.

Those results are now final – Labor went from 51 seats to 7 seats! This is as bad as what happened to the leftist Liberal Party in Canada in 2011.

Let’s hope that Julia Gillard, the head of the Australian Labor party, doesn’t learn anything from this and continues to push for left-wing fiscal and social policies. Tony Abbott is quite awesome in general, so they do have a good candidate running against her whenever the next election is held.

New study shows that the medieval warming extended far and wide

March 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Current theories of the causes and impact of global warming have been thrown into question by a new study which shows that during medieval times the whole of the planet heated up.
>
> It then cooled down naturally and there was even a 'mini ice age'.
>
> A team of scientists led by geochemist Zunli Lu from Syracuse University in New York state, has found that contrary to the 'consensus', the 'Medieval Warm Period' approximately 500 to 1,000 years ago wasn't just confined to Europe.
>
> In fact, it extended all the way down to Antarctica – which means that the Earth has already experience global warming without the aid of human CO2 emissions.
>
> At present the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) argues that the Medieval Warm Period was confined to Europe – therefore that the warming we're experiencing now is a man-made phenomenon.
>
> However, Professor Lu has shown that this isn't true – and the evidence lies with a rare mineral called ikaite, which forms in cold waters.
>
> 'Ikaite is an icy version of limestone,' said Lu. 'The crystals are only stable under cold conditions and actually melt at room temperature.'
>
> It turns out the water that holds the crystal structure together – called the hydration water – traps information about temperatures present when the crystals formed.
>
> This finding by Lu's research team establishes, for the first time, ikaite as a reliable way to study past climate conditions.
>
> The scientists studied ikaite crystals from sediment cores drilled off the coast of Antarctica. The sediment layers were deposited over 2,000 years.
>
> The scientists were particularly interested in crystals found in layers deposited during the 'Little Ice Age,' approximately 300 to 500 years ago, and during the Medieval Warm Period before it.
>
> Both climate events have been documented in Northern Europe, but studies have been inconclusive as to whether the conditions in Northern Europe extended to Antarctica.
>
> Lu's team found that in fact, they did.

What that means is that the Medieval Warming Period was not local to Northern Europe,

but extended all the way to Antarctica, as well. Now you might be asking yourself “how could medieval knights riding around on horseback cause global warming? Wouldn’t they have to be driving SUVs and drilling for oil and generally do nasty capitalist things like that?” Yes, they would. But they weren’t. And so this clearly shows that the warming and cooling of the Earth has *nothing whatsoever to do with CO2 emissions*. Whatever will the socialists do now to trick people into voting for higher gas prices?

New study: low family income not a major cause of low student achievement

March 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From PhysOrg.com. Please click the “Like” button below and tweet this one on Twitter. This is one to share.

Excerpt:

> **Family income is associated with student achievement, but careful studies show little causal connection. School factors – teacher quality, school accountability, school choice – have bigger causal impacts than family income per se, according to a new analysis by Harvard’s Program on Education Policy and Governance (PEPG).**
>
> The analysis, prepared by PEPG director Paul E. Peterson, calls into question the Broader, Bolder Approach (BBA) to educational reform that has been advanced by a group of education scholars, teacher union leaders, and non-profit groups. The BBA recommends that proposals to enhance teacher quality, school accountability and student choice be dropped in favor of policies that would redistribute income and provide support services to families outside the regular school day.
>
> Peterson focuses on a paper presented by Duke University Professor Helen F. Ladd, a BBA co-chair, which was given as the presidential address before the Association of Public Policy and Management in Washington, D.C. in November of 2011, and is widely regarded as the key scholarly work underpinning BBA. Peterson’s article, “Neither Broad Nor Bold: A narrow-minded approach to school reform,” is available at http://www.educationnext.org and will appear in the Summer, 2012 issue of Education Next.
>
> BBA’s mission statement holds: “Weakening that link [between income and achievement] is the fundamental challenge facing America’s education policy makers.” **Peterson agrees that the connection between income and student performance “is no less true in the Age of Obama than it was in the Age of Pericles.” But, he points out, most of the connection is not causal, but due to other factors. He cites a study by Julia Isaacs and Katherine Magnuson (Brookings Institution, 2011), that examines an array of family characteristics – such as race, mother’s and father’s education, single parent or two-parent family, smoking during pregnancy – on school readiness and achievement. The Brookings study finds that the distinctive impact of family income is just 6.4 percent of a standard deviation, generally regarded as a small effect. In addition, Peterson calls attention to earlier research by Susan Mayer, former dean of the Harris School at the University of Chicago, which also found**

> **that the direct relationship between family income and education success for children varied between negligible and small.**
>
> […]**"A better case can be made that any increase in the achievement gap between high- and low-income groups is more the result of changing family structure than of inadequate medical services or preschool education," Peterson says. In 1969, 85 percent of children under the age of 18 were living with two married parents; by 2010, that percentage had declined to 65 percent. The median income level of a single-parent family is just over $27,000 (using 1992 dollars), compared to more than $61,000 for a two-parent family; and the risk of dropping out of high school increases from 11 percent to 28 percent if a white student comes from a single-parent family instead of a two-parent family. For blacks, the increment is from 17 percent to 30 percent, and for Hispanics, the risk rises from 25 percent to 49 percent.**
>
> **Peterson notes that most of the proposals to lift student achievement that Ladd and her BBA colleagues offer, such as expanded social services, preschool, and summer programs, ignore the many hours children spend at school and amount to a "potpourri of non-educational services (that) have never been shown to have more than modest effects on student achievement." He points out that many school reforms – merit pay, school vouchers, and student and school accountability – have been shown to have had equivalent or larger impacts. For example, school accountability initiatives have raised student performance by 8 percent of a standard deviation. Initiatives to improve teacher quality have the potential of raising student performance by 10 to 20 percent of a standard deviation.**

Read the rest here, this is important. So long as we keep looking to big government to solve all of our problems. We should instead be looking to our own good decision making, our own families and the free enterprises system.

Tennessee legislature passes academic freedom bill 72-23

March 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

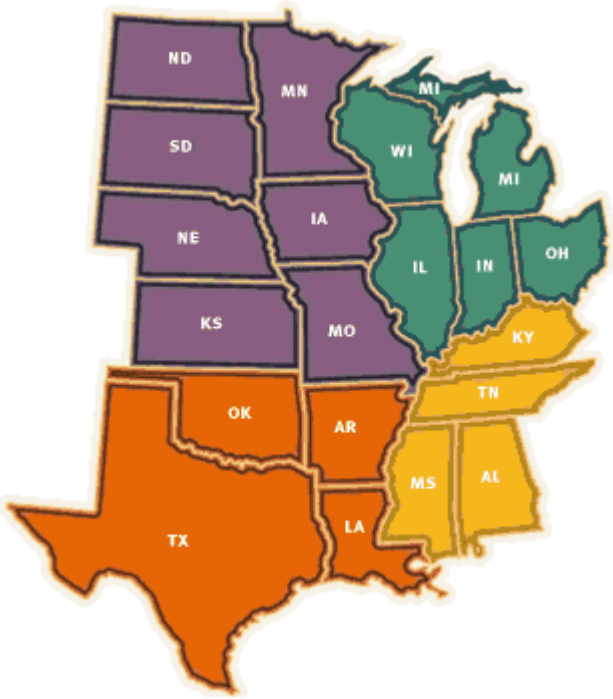

Central United States
From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> By a vote of 72-23, Tennessee's House of Representatives today passed an academic freedom bill that would protect teachers and school districts who wish to promote critical thinking and objective discussion about controversial science issues such as biological evolution, climate change and human cloning.
>
> "This bill promotes good science education by protecting the academic freedom of science teachers to fully and objectively discuss controversial scientific topics, like evolution," said Casey Luskin, science education expert and policy analyst at Discovery Institute's Center for Science & Culture. Mr. Luskin continued:
>
> > Critics who claim the bill promotes religion instead of science either haven't read the bill or are putting up a smokescreen to divert attention from their goal to censor dissenting scientific views.
>
> The bill expressly states that it…
>
> > …shall not be construed to promote any religious or non-religious doctrine.
> >
> > This section only protects the teaching of scientific information, and shall not be construed to promote any religious or non-religious doctrine,

> > promote discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs or non-beliefs, or promote discrimination for or against religion or non-religion.
>
> The Tennessee State Senate previously passed the bill with overwhelming bi-partisan support. The Tennessee bill is similar to an academic freedom policy adopted in 2008 by Louisiana, known as the Louisiana Science Education Act.

Wow! It’s now possible to make scientific criticisms of Darwinism and global warming socialism in the classroom without being prosecuted by the secular left. Well, at least in Louisiana and Tennessee.

New York Times: Santorum has support of Republican women

March 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the fifth-column New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> There is no mistaking the bond that Mr. Santorum has with conservative women — particularly married women — a group that has formed a core of his support since the primaries began in January. He has handily carried the votes of women in primaries that he has won, including those in Mississippi and Alabama. And where he has lost, in Arizona, South Carolina and Illinois, he has enjoyed a higher level of support among women than men.
>
> […]"He doesn't give up, so I'm not giving up," said Kay Verdi, 75, a mother of six from Belle Chasse, La., who spends much her time trying to persuade others to vote for Mr. Santorum. "I've never felt as strong about a candidate as I do for Santorum. I've usually had to pick the lesser of two evils when I vote. Not this time."
>
> How did Ms. Verdi explain the attraction?
>
> "I like that he's been married only once, and that he has character and faith; that's what touches me," she said.
>
> The Web site ricksantorum.com attracts more women than men, 60 percent of its visitors, a larger share than for the Web sites of other candidates, according to Nielsen ratings that were released last week. Among other things, there may be an empathy factor at work: A New York Times/CBS News poll taken this month found that 73 percent of Republican female voters said Mr. Santorum understood the needs and problems of people like them, compared with 52 percent who said the same about Mr. Romney.

My previous post also noted that Republican women support Santorum more than any other candidate.

What today's young adults think of marriage, commitment and happiness

March 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this article from Mercator/The Public Discourse. It talks about young people's views of marriage.

Excerpt:

> First, let's take a look at how working-class young Americans think about marriage.
>
> Meet Ricky, 27, an unmarried father who has been in "about eighteen" relationships and is in his fourth engagement (though never married). Although he has a wedding date set, he questions the point of marriage: "You're willing to be with that person and you're gonna spend the rest of your life with that person, so why sign a contract?"
>
> But Ricky does like "the whole thought of what it's actually about." What is the "whole thought" of marriage? "It's, like, being there for the other person and helping them when they're down, helping them get through tough times, cheering them up when they're sad," Ricky says, "You know, just pretty much improving each other's lives together." In other words, marriage is about mutual help and companionship.
>
> Ricky also sees marriage as permanent. "When I go into marriage divorce isn't even on my mind," he says. "It's like not even an option." He looks at his mom's three divorces and the divorces of his aunts, uncles, and cousins, and asks, "Why'd y'all get married? When I put in what I'm doing I give over one hundred percent. You know, I do what I'm supposed to do, I put pride behind it."
>
> And like everyone with whom we talked, Ricky believes that marriage is about commitment. Cheating is inexcusable.
>
> In short, while Ricky would be fine with an informal, common-law marriage arrangement, he definitely aspires to at least some of the ideals of marriage—namely, mutual help, fidelity, and permanence.
>
> **Missing in Ricky's discussion of the meaning of marriage is any connection to children. In fact, he specifically mentions that children and marriage are unrelated. "It's kind of biased if you say you have to be married because you have a kid, you know. 'Cause I mean, that's not the point. I mean, that doesn't matter." He goes on to say, "Of course a child needs a father figure and of course a child needs a mother figure." But that "really has nothing to do with the marriage."**
>
> **Further, we found that young adults' belief in marriage as commitment and permanence comes with an asterisk: so long as both spouses are**

happy and love each other.

For instance, Brandon, 27, who ended his engagement when his fiancée cheated on him, lauds marriage vows as a "beautiful thing" in which two people say, "Hey, I wanna be with you and nobody else." He laments that those vows aren't "necessarily taken so serious as maybe what it used to be." However, he adds, "But … if you're married and if you don't feel like it's working out—you know, if you guys don't wanna work it out, I don't really see a problem with getting a divorce. 'Cause, it's just like why live your life in misery?"

Or as another cohabiting young man put it, "I think that the people that get divorced and married and divorced and married are stupid, honestly. But I mean, if you're unhappy, you got to make yourself happy."

For as much as young adults express hopes of permanence and commitment, those ideals crumble against the specter of unhappiness. What should the unhappily married person do? A common response went something like this: "It probably means that you married the wrong person and were never in love in the first place. You might have married for the wrong reasons—maybe because the person had money, or just because you got the girl pregnant." As one roofer put it, "Maybe they was never in love at all!"

What is this enduring love that promises perpetual happiness and for which young adults are searching? Brandon's response was a common one: "Love is a feeling that you just get when you just know, man. I don't think there's a word for it. Like, if you like look into that person's eyes and it's, like, *you just feel it*. Maybe just by the kiss, or by the look, or by the touch."

Or as one woman defined love: "You know when your body lights up when you get that first kiss from a guy and your whole body is like in overload?….When you are still with that person ten years from now, and you still feel the same way."

Many of the young adults we interviewed emphasized love's subjective aspects—such as powerful emotions and "the spark"—as love's essence. While they recognize the objective aspects of love—such as genuine care for the other person, faithfulness, and friendship—they tend to see the subjective aspects as the authentic indicator of marital love.

Discerning whether the "spark" will endure is of the utmost importance, particularly if one is determined to avoid divorce. Maggie, a twenty-year-old whose parents divorced when she was 13, wants to "set up the life of the non-divorced … for my kids and the future. That's my plan, really, just normal, try to be normal." Given this goal, Maggie worries about finding the "right person" with whom she will always be happy.

John, 21, whose parents divorced in his early childhood and is now in a cohabiting

> relationship, struggles with the same uncertainty. When asked how one knows that he has found the right person, he stresses that you have to "know absolutely for certain, with 100 percent of your being" and that the person has to be "somebody who makes you happy." But evaluating whether or not the person will *always* make you happy is tricky and time consuming—especially if one believes, as John does, that happiness is essentially outside of one's control.

This unrealistic view of marriage is like the total opposite of the Wintery Knight method of courtship and commitment. I totally de-emphasize happiness seeking, the need for "in love" feelings, premarital sex, cohabitation and serial monogamy. I instead favor strict evaluation of spousal candidates over a long period of chastity and courtship – with the aim of maximizing the chance of providing a stable environment for the raising of effective, influential children.

What makes a commitment in my view is not the feelings, it's the decision of each spouse to work conflicts out – to honor the marriage vow no matter what. And how come no one cares about forming the character of children any more? That should be at the center of the courting evaluation process, because marriage is also for them – they are the vulnerable ones. The spouse you choose has to be suitable for stability – suitable for loving and raising children.

It seems to me that young people are only half right about the goals of marriage. They are right about permanence, but wrong about the needs of children. And when it comes to love and commitment, they are completely wrong. Their view of commitment is no commitment. Commitment is carrying out your obligations to someone when you don't feel happy – because you love them and want what is best for them regardless of how you feel. The promise comes first.

This is why I put such an emphasis on having a plan for the relationship. Actually there are multiple plans – a plan for the relationship, a plan for each person to grow their spouse, a plan to impact the culture with the relationship and a plan to raise effective and influential children. Once you are committed to specific plans that are *objective* and not *subjective*, it really doesn't matter whether you go some period of time without feeling happy. The relationship is about the plan – not your feelings.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Where are all the good men and why aren't men marrying?
- Are feminized churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal

- John Piper’s questions to ask before you get married
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Do gun registries solve crimes? Learning from the Canadian experience

March 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

John Lott explains in the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> The D.C. Council will soon vote on a new law that would eliminate several obstacles for gun buyers — a five-hour training course, ballistics testing, a vision test, and a ban on certain types of ammunition. But they will leave unchanged the registration requirement for gun owners. D.C. could learn a lot from Canada's decision to finally rescind its gun registry in February.
>
> Beginning in 1998, Canadians spent a whopping $2.7 billion on creating and running a registry for long guns — in the U.S., the same amount per gun owner would come to $67 billion. For all that money, the registry was never credited with solving a single murder. Instead, it became an enormous waste of police officers' time, diverting their efforts from traditional policing activities.
>
> Gun control advocates have long claimed that registration is a safety issue. Their reasoning is straightforward: If a gun is left at a crime scene, and it was registered to the person who committed the crime, the registry will link it back to the criminal.
>
> Unfortunately, it rarely works out this way. Criminals are seldom stupid enough to leave behind crime guns that are registered to themselves.
>
> From 2003 to 2009, there were 4,257 homicides in Canada, 1,314 of which were committed with firearms. Data provided last fall by the Library of Parliament reveal that murder weapons were recovered in fewer than one-third of the homicides with firearms. About three-quarters of the identified weapons were unregistered. Of the weapons that were registered, about half were registered to someone other than the person accused of the homicide.
>
> In only 62 cases — that is, nine per year, or about 1 percent of all homicides in Canada — was the gun registered to the accused. Even in these, the registry does not appear to have played an important role in finding the killer. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Chiefs of Police have not yet provided a single example in which tracing was of more than peripheral importance in solving a case.
>
> Note that the data provided above cover all guns, including handguns. It isn't just the long-gun registry — there is also no evidence that Canada's handgun registry, started in 1934, has ever been important in solving a single homicide.
>
> In parts of the United States where registration is required, the results have been no different. Neither Hawaii, D.C., nor Chicago can point to any crimes that have

> been solved using registration records.
>
> Nor is there any evidence that registration has reduced homicides. Research published last year by McMaster University professor Caillin Langmann in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence confirmed what other academic studies have found: “This study failed to demonstrate a beneficial association between legislation and firearm homicide rates between 1974 and 2008.” There is not a single refereed academic study by criminologists or economists that has found a significant benefit. A recent Angus Reid poll indicates that Canadians understand this, with only 13 percent believing that the registry has been successful.
>
> The problem isn’t just that the $2.7 billion spent on registration over 17 years hasn’t solved any crimes. It is that the money could have been used to put more police on the street or pay for more health care or cut taxes.

We have been trying all kinds of things since Obama was elected that were already tried in other countries. Green energy, stimulus spending, green jobs programs, socialized medicine, printing money to pay off record deficits, and so on. We need to start learning from the experiences of other countries. If something hasn’t worked in another country, then we shouldn’t be trying it here. We should do what has been known to work. Gun registries don’t solve crimes.

Scott Klusendorf will debate tonight at Bowling Green State University

March 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scott Klusendorf, the top pro-life debater on planet Earth, will be facing James Croft in Bowling Green, OH on Thursday at 7 PM.

- Where: 101 Olscamp Hall, Bowling Green State University
- When: 7 p.m. Thursday
- Speakers: Scott Klusendor and James Croft

Excerpt:

> The debate was organized by Veritas, the Christian Catholic Student Life Group that normally hosts similar events, but its members realized that a debate featuring speakers for the other side as well would be more constructive, said Eric Bower, president of the Bowling Green Secular Society that is now co-hosting the event.
>
> "We thought it would be an excellent opportunity for discussion," Bower said. "Hopefully the atmosphere will lead to a uniting of the community over the idea of healthy debate and talking."
>
> The focus of the debate will be two professional speakers, one brought in by each group, who will discuss and answer questions about abortion, according to a press release emailed by Veritas.
>
> The speaker for the abortion rights arguments will be James Croft, a doctoral candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education who is the vice president of the Humanist Graduate Community at Harvard and elected Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.
>
> The speaker for the anti-abortion arguments will be Scott Klusendorf, the founder and president of the Life Training Institute in Atlanta, Ga. He is a graduate of UCLA who has debated or lectured to student groups at more than 70 colleges and universities around the nation. He is also the author of "The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture."

You can see Scott Klusendorf in action in a previous debate against Nadine Strossen:

And you get the audio from that previous debate, too.

And you can get Scott Klusendorf's book right here! I highly recommend it for ALL pro-lifers, from beginner to expert.

Government spending bankrupts our children and grandchildren

March 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ohio conservative Jim Jordan speaks out for generations not yet born.

Excerpt:

> Government spending at its current level is "immoral, wrong and unfair" to the future generations that will be left to pay off ever increasing amounts of debt, Rep. Jim Jordan, the chairman of the Republican Study Committee tells Newsmax.TV.
>
> That's why the new budget proposal the committee revealed on Tuesday is so much better than another GOP proposal put forward by Budget Committee chairman, Rep. Paul Ryan, he said.
>
> "We have a debt that is bigger than our entire economy, a debt that's bigger than our GDP," said the Ohio congressman. "We have to talk straight with the American people and say we are now making interest payments of $230 billion a year and that is going to increase dramatically over the next 10 years to where interest payments will be bigger than what we currently spend on national defense.
>
> "It is immoral, it is wrong, it is unfair for one generation to live for the moment, to spend for the moment and send the bill to our kids and our grandkids. That is just wrong."
>
> Jordan said one of the things that makes America great is the concept that each generation makes sacrifices so their children can have a better life than they had. "Each generation has done it for the next until now.
>
> "For the first time in American history we have a generation of Americans living for the moment and saying, 'That's OK, and we will send the bill to someone else.'
>
> "We need to make that case and spell out what happens if we don't begin to fix it, that we will in fact have a debt crisis just like Greece, just like Italy, just like these other countries are facing today. That should not happen to the greatest country in the world and that's what our budget would prevent."

This is why we should not believe the Democrats when they tell us sob stories about need to spending more money "fore the children". The only thing that the children will get from the Democrats is unemployment and debt.

Video: William Lane Craig and Peter Millican debate "Does God Exist?"

March 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Which debate would I consider to be the best to show an intelligent skeptic?

This one, between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican.

The debate was held at the University of Birmingham, England in 2011. I would put this debate in the top 3 Craig debates ever, along with his debates against Austin Dacey and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong.

My summary of the Craig-Millican is below. This debate is really meant for advanced students, but if you read my post "What you need to know about the BVG Theorem" before watching the debate, it should help you to follow along.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It's not just that the settings are unlikely, it's that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a "herd morality" that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved "herd morality". However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence

we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It's possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It's also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt

their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations.

But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that

makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they

undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn’t shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don’t come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can’t explain what God’s specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?

March 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From ABC News. (H/T Director Blue)

Excerpt:

> **Two reports today about Iran's nuclear program and the possibility of an Israeli military strike have analysts in Israel accusing the Obama administration leaking information to pressure Israel not to bomb Iran and for Iran to reach a compromise in upcoming nuclear talks.**
>
> The first report in Foreign Policy quotes anonymous American officials saying that Israel has been given access to airbases by Iran's northern neighbor Azerbaijan from which Israel could launch air strikes or at least drones and search and rescue aircraft.
>
> The second report from Bloomberg, based on a leaked congressional report, said that Iran's nuclear facilities are so dispersed that it is "unclear what the ultimate effect of a strike would be…" A strike could delay Iran as little as six months, a former official told the researchers.
>
> "It seems like a big campaign to prevent Israel from attacking," analyst Yoel Guzansky at the Institute for National Security Studies told ABC News. "I think the [Obama] administration is really worried Jerusalem will attack and attack soon. They're trying hard to prevent it in so many ways."
>
> […]**Thursday's reports come a week after the results of a classified war game was leaked to the New York Times which predicted that an Israeli strike could lead to a wider regional war and result in hundreds of American deaths. In a column this afternoon titled "Obama Betraying Israel?" longtime defense commentator Ron Ben-Yishai at Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper angrily denounced the leaks as a "targeted assassination campaign."**
>
> **"In recent weeks the administration shifted from persuasion efforts vis-à-vis decision-makers and Israel's public opinion to a practical, targeted assassination of potential Israeli operations in Iran," Ben-Yishai writes. "The campaign's aims are fully operational: To make it more difficult for Israeli decision-makers to order the IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] to carry out a strike, and what's even graver, to erode the IDF's capacity to launch such strike with minimal casualties."**

With friends with the United States, Israel doesn't need enemies.

UPDATE: John Bolton is making the same accusation:

> Former U.S. diplomat John Boltonalleged Thursday that the Obama administration leaked a story about covert Israeli activity in order to foil potential plans by the country to attack Iran's nuclear program.
>
> Bolton, who served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in the George W. Bush administration, was responding to an article in **Foreign Policy magazine** that quoted government sources claiming Israel had been granted access to airfields in Azerbaijan — along Iran's northern border.
>
> The article did not state exactly what the Israelis' intentions were, but it suggested it could point to a possible strike on Iran.
>
> "I think this leak today is part of the administration's campaign against an Israeli attack," Bolton claimed on Fox News.
>
> The White House did not respond to Bolton's claims Thursday.
>
> […]The Foreign Policy article quoted what were identified as "high-level sources … inside the U.S. government." It specifically mentioned "four senior diplomats and military intelligence officers."
>
> One intelligence officer, who was unnamed, told the magazine that the U.S. was "watching" the activity and was "not happy about it."
>
> […]"Clearly, this is an administration-orchestrated leak," Bolton told FoxNews.com. "This is not a rogue CIA guy saying I think I'll leak this out."
>
> "It's just unprecedented to reveal this kind of information about one of your own allies," Bolton said.

Obama suffers the most disastrous week of his Presidency

March 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A must-read re-cap from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> Consider:
>
> • Last Friday, Mr. Obama wandered into the killing of Trayvon Martin. Aided by his ignorance of the situation, knee-jerk prejudices and tendency toward racial profiling, Mr. Obama played a heavy hand in elevating a tragic situation in which a teenager was killed into a full-blown hot race fight.
>
> Americans, he admonished, need to do some "soul-searching." And then, utterly inexplicably, he veered off into this bizarre tangent about how he and the poor dead kid look so much alike they could be father and son. It was election-year race-pandering gone horribly wrong.
>
> • By the start of this week, Mr. Obama had fled town and was racing to the other side of the planet just as the Supreme Court was taking up the potentially-embarrassing matter of Obamacare. While in South Korea he was caught on a hidden mic negotiating with the president of our longest-standing rival on how to sell America and her allies down the river once he gets past the next election.
>
> • Meanwhile, back at home, the Supreme Court took up the single most important achievement of Mr. Obama's presidency and, boy, was it embarrassing. The great constitutional law professor, it turns out, may not quite be the wizard he told us he was.
>
> By most accounts, Mr. Obama and his stuttering lawyers were all but laughed out of the courthouse. They were even stumbling over softball questions lobbed by Mr. Obama's own hand-picked justices.
>
> • Mr. Obama closed his week pulling off a nearly unimaginable feat: He managed to totally and completely unify the nastily-fighting Democrats and Republicans in Congress. Late Wednesday night, they unanimously voted — 414 to zip — to reject the budget Mr. Obama had presented, leaving him not even a thin lily's blade to hide behind.
>
> So, in one week, Mr. Obama got caught whispering promises to our enemy, incited a race war, raised serious questions about his understanding of the Constitution, and then got smacked down over his proposed budget that was so wildly reckless that even Democrats in Congress could not support it.

It's important the Obama's secular leftism be put on display.

Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man

March 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite espionage TV show is "Danger Man" with Patrick McGoohan, which later morphed into "Secret Agent". The show takes place during the 1960s, right at the height of the Cold War.

The actor, Patrick McGoohan, refused to perform romantic scenes on camera because of his religious beliefs. He turned down the roles of James Bond and Simon Templar because of these moral concerns (see below). And that dedication to moral excellence shines through in every frame of "Danger Man".

Here's a description of Patrick McGoohan.

Excerpt:

> Main character John Drake worked for NATO as a special security agent and was free to travel the world working on special problems for free world governments. The story lines set an early precedent for non-violence, preferring to have Drake use his wits and his fists rather than a gun. McGoohan influenced the program from the start.
>
> The themes of morality and individuality fit in with his personal philosophy as well as his vision of what the character John Drake was supposed to be.
>
> As both a moral and opinionated man, McGoohan held strong views and was forceful about seeing that they were carried out. He had insisted at the very first meeting on the script for the first episode that the bedroom scene be cut out. In fact, he stipulated that romantic involvements would have to be eliminated if he were to play the role, and consequently none appeared in either this series or the 'Secret Agent' series that followed.

> […]It should come as no surprise that when McGoohan was offered the role as the first James Bond, he turned it down – several times – as being incompatible with the type of role he wanted to play. He says it was a decision he has never regretted.

> […]As an actor, McGoohan had now carved out a voice all his own…. John Drake was a loner, an individual, and a moral character.

From the UK Telegraph:

> [H]e was offered the roles of James Bond and Simon Templar (The Saint). He turned both down.
>
> He once recalled: "When we started Danger Man the producer wanted me to carry a gun and to have an affair with a different girl each week. I refused. I am

> not against romance on television, but sex is the antithesis of romance. Television is a gargantuan master that all sorts of people watch at all sorts of time, and it has a moral obligation towards its audience."

Here are four episodes that I hope you will really like!

Episode 1 of 4: "The Prisoner"

Drake must rescue a diplomat convicted of espionage from a guarded American embassy.

Episode 2 of 4: "The Conspirators"

Drake travels to a remote island to rescue the widow and children of a murdered whistleblower.

Episode 3 of 4: "Hired Assassin"

Drake infiltrates a South American terrorist cell to thwart their plans of assassination.

Episode 4 of 4: "The Sanctuary"

Drake poses as a released convict in order to infiltrate an IRA cell based in the Scottish highlands.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

An apologetics reading plan for beginners

March 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Would you like to have as much fun defending your faith as the Wintery Knight does?

Here is a post from Apologetics 315 that lists 10 basic apologetics books for brand new Christian apologists – and they are in a sensible order, too.

Here are my favorite 4:

> 2. ***The Case for a Creator*** by Lee Strobel
>
> This book is just as readable as *The Case for Christ*, but this one delves into the evidence for the Creator. Another thing that makes this good reading for the beginner is this: whatever areas you find particularly interesting can be pursued further by reading the sources interviewed in the book.
>
> 6. ***Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*** by Greg Koukl
>
> Information without application results in stagnation when it comes to apologetics. That's why it's time for a good dose of *Tactics*, which will train you not only to *use* apologetic content in everyday life, but it will also *train* you to be a better, more critical thinker. This is another "must read" book, and mastering its contents early in your apologetic studies will put feet to your faith.
>
> 7. ***The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*** by Mike Licona & Gary Habermas
>
> The resurrection of Jesus is central to Christianity. This book equips you to understand and defend the resurrection from an historical perspective. Not only does the book have useful diagrams, summaries, and an accessible style, but it also comes with a CD-ROM with interactive software for teaching you the material. This is an essential book for the apologist.
>
> 8. ***Is God Just a Human Invention? And Seventeen Other Questions Raised by the New Atheists*** by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow
>
> Now it's time to look at some of the most common objections that have come against Christianity since the rise of the new atheism. There's no better book at dealing with these in a concise yet dense way, while providing additional reading suggestions and introducing some of the key apologists that deal with these questions. If you really want to master this material, consider taking part in the Read Along project for this book.

I've read 8 of them, and I have given 6 of them to my Dad (he's just an ordinary Dad) and he really liked all 6. These are meant for all ages.

I have been giving away books like this to friends, and even to potential Mrs. Wintery Knights, for many years. And what I've found in that time is that Christians have a very different experience in their relationships with God when they are prepared to defend his

existence and character in public. Instead of treating Christianity as a private set of beliefs which are mainly for feeling happy and getting along with family at holidays, they instead treat Christianity as *true*, and they have very interesting discussions with their friends about many topics related to Christianity. Instead of being frightened to speak up, they become bold and confident – that's what happens when Christians study and prepare.

Jesus doesn't want his followers to feel intimidated by non-Christians and non-Christian culture. He doesn't want us hiding what we believe. When we take the time to read books like this, it becomes possible for us to get into conversations that turn our relationships with God through Christ into a public activity. Instead of just taking, taking, taking from God, now we are in a position to give back. If you ask any experienced apologist, they will tell you what it feels like to work through questions with a non-Christian. It is a way of feeling closer to God, and a way of being faithful in our two-way friendship with him. You do not want to miss out on that experience – it is an important part of being a Christian.

Click here for the full list and Brian's mini-reviews.

Has the passage of Obamacare reduced health insurance premiums?

March 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily does the math.

Excerpt:

> The cost of an average family premium shot up 9.5% in 2011 — the highest rate in seven years and three times the rate of overall inflation, finds a major new survey of employer plans by Kaiser Family Foundation.
>
> Just before Obama signed his health overhaul, he vowed it would "bring down the cost of health care for families, for businesses and for the federal government." In December, he told CBS' "60 Minutes" he was "putting in place a system that's going to lower health care costs."
>
> In fact, there's evidence ObamaCare is fanning medical inflation.
>
> Kaiser attributes the premium spike to "changes from the new health reform law." The 200-page study explains: "Significant percentages of firms made changes in their preventive care benefits and enrolled adult children in their benefits plans in response to provisions in the new health reform law."
>
> In fact, 31% of covered workers are in a plan where the employer reported adding preventive services to comply with ObamaCare. And some 2.3 million adult children "were enrolled in their parent's employer-sponsored plan due to the Affordable Care Act," Kaiser said.
>
> Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., notes that Obama, as a candidate, promised he'd slash family premiums by $2,500 a year by the end of his first term. That was in 2008, when health care coverage cost the average employer and American family $12,680 in annual premiums. Now it's $15,073, nearly 20% higher. That means Obama has broken his promise by a whopping $4,893.
>
> Costs are projected to simply rise as ObamaCare fully goes into effect. A recent McKinsey & Co. study found that 30% of employers will stop offering benefits after 2014, since "the penalty for not offering coverage is significantly below" the costs of the new mandates. This will make millions more individuals eligible for government subsidies under ObamaCare.

Not everything that Obama says while he is reading from a teleprompter is necessarily true.

Evan Sayet explains “How Modern Liberals Think”

March 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A lecture given at the Heritage Foundation by Jewish pundit and former liberal Evan Sayet.

Excerpt:

Details:

> Speaker: Evan Sayet
> Writer, Lecturer and Pundit
> Host: Becky Norton Dunlop
>
> Vice President,
> External Relations,
> The Heritage Foundation
>
> Location: The Heritage Foundation’s Lehrman Auditorium
>
> Evan Sayet has been a top Hollywood writer and producer for more than 20 years. His credits range from The Arsenio Hall Show to Politically Incorrect. After the Sept. 11 attacks, Sayet decided to step from behind the camera and speak out in his own voice that of one of the nations top political satirists. At Heritage, his entertaining yet quite serious lecture will examine the modern liberal mindset and how it can lead to siding with evil over good and behaviors that produce failure rather than success.

This lecture is pretty strongly worded, so I would not recommend it to moderates. It’s very direct.

Obama imposes 5-year oil drilling moratorium on Atlantic coast

April 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Breitbart.

Excerpt:

> Yesterday the Obama administration announced a delaying tactic which will put off the possibility of new offshore oil drilling on the Atlantic coast for at least five years:
>
> The announcement by the Interior Department sets into motion what will be at least a five year environmental survey to determine whether and where oil production might occur.
>
> Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell notes that a planned lease sale, which the administration cancelled last year, will now be put off until at least 2018. As you might expect, Republicans were not impressed with the decision:
>
> "The president's actions have closed an entire new area to drilling on his watch and cheats Virginians out of thousands of jobs," said Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., who chairs the House Natural Resources Committee. The announcement "continues the president's election-year political ploy of giving speeches and talking about drilling after having spent the first three years in office blocking, delaying and driving up the cost of producing energy in America," he said.

This is in addition to the moratorium on drilling in the Gulf that Obama imposed before.

Excerpt:

> A moratorium on drilling in the Gulf of Mexico after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill plus a longer offshore oil and natural gas permitting processes will cost the U.S. more than $24 billion in lost oil and natural gas investment over the next several years, according to a report commissioned by the American Petroleum Institute.
>
> The study by the energy industry trade group also found that, because of the moratorium and longer permitting process, capital and operating expenditures fell over the last two years by $18.3 billion.
>
> The region saw $8.9 billion and $146 billion in investments in crude oil and natural gas, respectively — about 6 percent of global investment dollars. But that figure would have been closer to 12 percent for 2011 had the drilling moratorium not been put in place, the report said.
>
> "As a result of decreases in investment due to the moratorium, total U.S. employment is estimated to have been reduced by 72,000 jobs in 2010 and approximately 90,000 jobs in 2011," the report said.

In addition to closing an entire new area to drilling, Obama is also using environmental regulations to destroy jobs and raise energy prices.

Excerpt:

> Despite rhetoric to the contrary, the Obama administration is poised to deal a major blow to U.S. oil and natural gas, a leading industry group charged Thursday.
>
> Domestic production of both fuels could plummet if proposed Environmental Protection Agency regulations, designed to limit emissions from well sites, go into effect later this year, according to an extensive new study commissioned by the American Petroleum Institute.
>
> The natural gas extraction technique known as “fracking” would be hardest hit, and fuel extracted via the popular process would drop by about 52 percent, according to a new study commissioned by API. Total gas production would decrease by about 11 percent, while domestic oil production could fall by as much as 37 percent, the report says.

Make no mistake – this Democrat administration is opposed to job creation in the energy sector and opposed to lowering gas prices.

Australian apologist makes the case against gay marriage proposal

April 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Labor Party of Australia is trying to push for gay marriage, so Matthew Hamilton of Aristophrenium blog sent them an argument against it.

Excerpt:

> Man-woman marriage is an important social good. As a group, as a rule, and by nature, marriages produce children. The public purpose of marriage, therefore, associates the children produced from it to their father and likewise associates the father to their mother. This cohesiveness serves to foster the best environment within which to raise children[2], over and above all other forms of family combinations, and is in this real sense, a unique arrangement to be promoted.
>
> By contrast, same-sex unions, as a group, as a rule, and by nature, cannot produce children without the involvement of a third party. Homosexual unions are socially infertile; while some homosexual partnerships do involve children from previous relationships or conceived through IVF, these arrangements are intentionally designed to deny children the nurture of one or both of their biological parents. **While two homosexuals can be loving parents, it defies common sense that a homosexual man can be a good "mother" to a child, and likewise that a homosexual woman can be a good "father" to a child. Author and lawyer Dawn Stefanowicz, writing of her experience growing up with a gay father, remarked: "What makes it so hard for a girl to grow up with a gay father is that she never gets to see him loving, honoring and protecting the women in his life[3]."**

I think it's important to make those two points. Boys need to have a father as a role model and girls need to have a mother as a role model. And the children also need to see, up close, how men and women get along in a loving relationship – one that is not built on lust, but on commitment. By the time children grow, their parents are already into middle-age, usually, and the affection is more likely to be based on self-sacrifice and commitment. It's important for children to have that example of women caring for and listening to their husbands and husbands providing for and protecting their wives.

Hamilton also writes about the threat to religious liberty posed by gay activists:

> Where same-sex marriage is legalised (and even in some instances where it is not yet legal), ordinary citizens, business owners, religious believers and not-for-profit organisations will have their religious liberties and values and freedom of speech curtailed:

> - In Jan 2011, hotel owners Peter and Hazelmary Bull from Cornwall, UK, were ordered to pay $6000 in damages to a homosexual couple who sued them for declining to offer a room as it violated their hotel policy to only make board available to married couples[4]
> - In Illinois, Washington DC and Massachusetts, US, Catholic bishops voluntarily closed the Church's adoption and foster-care organisations rather than comply with new non- discrimination laws following the legalising of same-sex marriage in those states which would have forced them to place children with same-sex couples[5]
> - Massachusetts, US, 2005, father David Parker was arrested after talking with his son's school about opting his son out of mandatory pro-homosexuality teaching[6]. (Charges were later dropped.)
> - New Mexico, US, 2008, a Christian photographer was sued by a lesbian couple after refusing to shoot a gay wedding[7]
> - Canada, 2008, evangelical pastor Stephen Boisson was fined $5000 and banned from expressing his biblical understanding of homosexuality[8]
> - UK, Church of England lawyers state that legalising same-sex marriage in England will effectively force churches to comply[9]
> - UK, housing manager Adrian Smith was demoted[10] after posting a criticism of the UK's new gay rights law on his personal Facebook page, on his own time
> - Derbyshire, UK, Christians Mr and Mrs Johns denied the right to be foster parents[11] after refusing to teach children in their care that homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle

And recently in Canada, some provinces have introduced gay-activist propaganda into the schools, as well as making it illegal for homeschooling parents to tell their children that there is anything wrong morally with homosexuality.

Matt makes a pretty good case. I know that both the UK and Australia are both facing gay marriage bills right now. It's always a good idea for pro-marriage, pro-family conservatives to be able to make a secular case against gay marriage. Here's my case against same-sex marriage.

Will allowing free discussions of scientific theories hurt innovation?

April 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Some people are complaining that allowing students and teachers to question and debate scientific theories will *harm* economic growth and raise unemployment.

Evolution News explains:

> One common piece of rhetoric being lobbed against academic freedom legislation is the claim that the bills would kill jobs and have a negative overall economic effect. An anti-academic freedom op-ed in *The Tennessean* stated that Tennessee's academic freedom bill would have "adverse economic consequences for the state" and asked "What high-tech employer will want to open up shop in a state that allows ideology and prejudice to trump science education?"

If you actually read that op-ed, you will find that the authors make the following arguments against academic freedom:

1. scientific theories favored by the secular left should not be subject to falsification by scientific evidence
2. the *only* reason why some people oppose secular left ideologies like naturalism (e.g. – in the origin of life) and socialism (e.g – man-made global warming) is because of religious beliefs
3. some religious clergy accept ideologies like naturalism and socialism, so therefore everyone should have no problem with naturalistic speculations about the origin of life and doomsday predictions about catastrophic global warming – since there is no scientific reason to oppose these theories
4. scientific theories should be accepted or denied based on the pontifications of organizations like the AAAS or teacher associations, not on the basis of repeatable experiments and measurements
5. lawyers should be able to settle disputes about science using their ability to file lawsuits against school boards
6. although the new law explicitly forbids bringing religion into the classroom, it would bring religion into the classroom
7. environmental regulations, chevy volts on fire, green energy solyndra grants, cap and trade, drilling moratoriums, drilling permit delays and carbon taxes don't hurt the economy, but allowing students and teachers to ask questions about scientific theories would hurt the economy

Now look at that last argument (#7). Is there any evidence to show that allowing academic freedom and free discussions about scientific theories and scientific evidence

would hurt the economy and raise unemployment?

More from Evolution News:

> In late 2010, two-and-a-half years after it passed its Science Education Act, Louisiana won the "State of the Year Award" from *Business Facilities* magazine, in part because of its burgeoning high-tech industry. As the magazine noted:
>
> > "The diversity and growth potential of Louisiana's top projects in both high-tech and traditional manufacturing, as well as healthy total investments, overall job creation and innovative incentives made Louisiana a clear winner of our annual State of the Year Award," said Business Facilities Editor-in-Chief Jack Rogers.
>
> […]To determine the winner, *Business Facilities* reviews each state's top five projects in terms of overall investment and job creation. The magazine also evaluates the state's execution of its economic development strategy, and the diversity and growth potential of its target industries.
>
> "We were particularly impressed with the diversity of Louisiana's strategy for developing high-growth sectors, including digital media, alternative energy, advanced manufacturing, and modular nuclear power plant components," Rogers said.
>
> The *Business Facilities* editor noted that Louisiana "has emerged unbowed from a series of disasters that would have brought less-determined locations to their knees — including a major hurricane, an oil spill and the national economic downturn — and charted a course for the future that positions the state to be a national leader for years to come."
>
> So despite a massive recession, manmade and natural disasters, and — most terrifying of all — an academic freedom law, Louisiana's economy appears to be doing better than most all other states that *don't have academic freedom laws*. It appears that in the experimental laboratory of the real world, the Darwin lobby's claim that academic freedom bills harm the economy is resoundingly disproved.

To me, it seems intuitively true that students will be more interested in any topic where there are two sides presented fairly. No one likes to be preached at – it's boring. I realize that some people who are lazy-brained ideologues will try to bypass a fair investigation of scientific disputes and just jump right to agreeing with their government-paid educators, but that's not a good way of becoming educated. A better way to be educated is to consider the evidence for and against propositions, and not jump to believe whatever the people in authority say that you should believe in order to be considered "smart". It's better to really be smart rather than just to be told that you are smart because you agree with everyone.

Obama’s new economic plan: more money for unions and Solyndras

April 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama says that we need to take taxpayer money away from job creators and give it to teacher unions and green energy companies run by Obama fundraisers.

Excerpt:

> Obama said he wants to give public schools the “resources” they need to hire and reward good teachers.
>
> “So I don’t want folks in Washington to be bashing teachers,” he said. “I don’t want them to defend the status quo. I want us to give schools the resources they need to hire good teachers, reward great teachers.”

Of course, the evidence shows that throwing money at public schools doesn’t produce better outcomes. The right solution is to let parents choose the schools their children would attend with a voucher. That works, but Obama is opposed to that because it would take money away from Obama campaign – which is funded by money taken from union dues. So this part of Obama’s plan is just about funneling money through the teacher unions into his campaign war chest.

Next:

> Obama additionally said he wants to “double down” on the money he has already put into solar and wind power, biofuels and electric batteries.
>
> “Let’s double down on clean energy that has never been more promising — solar and wind and biofuels, and energy efficiency, electric batteries,” he said. “That’s what we need to be investing in.”

Again, we have seen with Solyndra and the other similar companies that go bankrupt, that green energy is nothing but Obama handing out taxpayer money to companies linked to people who give donations to Democrats running for office. The purpose of wasting money on green energy companies isn’t to reduce gas prices for poor people. Wasting money on green energy actually raises gas prices by devaluing our currency through deficit spending and money printing. The purpose of green energy grants is to reward people who fund Obama’s election campaign. If Obama cared at all about families facing high gas prices, he would have approved the Keystone XL pipeline – and he didn’t.

Next:

> President Barack Obama has released a new video in which he praises the nation’s largest abortion business, Planned Parenthood, which is a prime endorser of his presidential re-election campaign.
>
> “For you and for most Americans, protecting women’s health is a mission that

> stands above politics," President Obama says in a video message for the Planned Parenthood Action Fund. "And yet over the past year we've had to stand up to politicians who wanted to deny millions of women the care they rely on and inject themselves into the decisions that are best made between a woman and her doctor."
>
> "Let's be clear here, women are not an interest group. They're mothers, and daughters, and sisters, and wives. They're half of this country and they're perfectly capable of making their own choices about their health," Obama says.

Again, Planned Parenthood gets hundreds of million dollars of taxpayer money to kill babies, then they turn around and hand a bunch of their profits back to Obama with campaign contributions. All of this high sounding rhetoric from Obama is nothing but spending taxpayer money like a drunken sailor that will come back to him in the form of political contributions. That what all this "brother's keeper" rhetoric amounts to.

More here from Investors Business Daily.

What really happened to Jesus? A look at the early historical records

April 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Eric Chabot.

Excerpt:

> As historians evaluate the sources available for the resurrection of Jesus, a critical question is the dating of the sources. In relation to early testimony, historian David Hacket Fisher says, “An historian must not merely provide good relevant evidence but the best relevant evidence. And the best relevant evidence, all things being equal, is evidence which is most nearly immediate to the event itself.” (1) One key in examining the early sources for the life of Christ is to take into account the Jewish culture in which they were birthed. As Paul Barnett notes, “The milieu of early Christianity in which Paul’s letters and the Gospels were written was ‘rabbinic.’” (2)
>
> Given the emphasis on education in the synagogue, the home, and the elementary school, it is not surprising that it was possible for the Jewish people to recount large quantities of material that was even far greater than the Gospels themselves.
>
> Jesus was a called a “Rabbi” (Matt. 8:19; 9:11; 12:38; Mk. 4:38; 5:35; 9:17; 10:17, 20; 12:14, 19, 32; Lk. 19:39; Jn. 1:38; 3:2), which means “master” or “teacher.” There are several terms that can be seen that as part of the rabbinic terminology of that day. His disciples had “come” to him, “followed after” him, “learned from” him, “taken his yoke upon” them (Mt. 11:28-30; Mk 1). (3)
>
> […]There was tremendous care in ‘delivering’ the traditions that had been received. Jesus’ use of parallelism, rhythm and rhyme, alliterations, and assonance enabled Jesus’ words not only ‘memorizable’ but easy to preserve. (4) Even Paul, a very competent rabbi was trained at the rabbinic academy called the House of Hillel by ‘Gamaliel,’ a key rabbinic leader and member of the Sanhedrin. It can be observed that the New Testament authors employ oral tradition terminology such as “delivering,” “receiving,” “passing on” “learning,” “guarding,” the traditional teaching. Just look at the following passages:
>
> Romans 16: 17: “Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.”
>
> 1 Corinthians 11:23: “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread.”
>
> Philippians 4:9: “The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”

> 2 Thessalonians 2:15: “So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.”
>
> Paul applies this terminology in 1 Corinthians 15: 3-7 which is one of the earliest records for the historical content of the Gospel – the death and resurrection of Jesus. The late Orthodox Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide was so impressed by the creed of 1 Cor. 15, that he concluded that this “formula of faith may be considered as a statement of eyewitnesses.” (5)
>
> Paul’s usage of the rabbinic terminology “passed on” and “received” is seen in the creed of 1 Cor. 15:3-8:
>
> “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.”

The earliest creeds are the best sources to tell us what really happened to Jesus, and they are surprisingly consistent with the traditional Christians beliefs. Anyone who wants to know what *really* happened to Jesus should go to the earliest sources.

Low-income households spend 9% of their money on lotteries and gambling

April 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J Warner Wallace of Please Convince Me tweeted this story from the Atlantic.

Excerpt:

> The Mega Millions jackpot makes this the week to talk about lottery economics, so here's a whopper: Households earning less than $13,000 a year spend a shocking 9% of their money on lottery tickets, Henry Blodget relays from a PBS report.* Are they clueless? Are they desperate? Are they economical? Maybe, probably, and possibly.
>
> For the desperately poor, lotteries perform a role not unlike the obverse of insurance. Rather than pay a small sum of money in exchange for the guarantee of protection that you'll need in the future, you pay a small sum of money in exchange for the small probability that you'll win money to help your lot right away. It is, for lack of a better term, a kind of aspirational insurance.

So often, everyone acts as if low-income people are necessarily more virtuous than other for earn more, such that we should automatically redistribute wealth from frugal people to wasteful people. Instead of redistributing wealth, though, maybe we should be redistributing character and wisdom and restraint. Maybe the reason that the poor are poor is because although they have every advantage living in the prosperous west, that they just make poor decisions.

Black economist Walter Williams explains:

> Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And, finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior. If you graduate from high school today with a B or C average, in most places in our country there's a low-cost or financially assisted post-high-school education program available to increase your skills.
>
> Most jobs start with wages higher than the minimum wage, which is currently $5.15. A man and his wife, even earning the minimum wage, would earn $21,000 annually. According to the Bureau of Census, in 2003, the poverty threshold for one person was $9,393, for a two-person household it was $12,015, and for a family of four it was $18,810. Taking a minimum-wage job is no great shakes, but it produces an income higher than the Bureau of Census' poverty threshold. Plus, having a job in the first place increases one's prospects for a better job.

In fact, the number one cause of poverty is the decision by individual people *not to marry*

before having children. That's not caused by "corporate greed" or other bogeymen. It's an uncoerced decisiojn that each person makes. If anyone is causing poverty, it's the anti-marriage left which subsidizes and glamorizes single motherhood by choice and divorce.

Instead of making poverty more comfortable so that the poor can continue to make bad decisions, maybe we should be encouraging them to do the things that will life them out of poverty. Let's pay the poor to finish school, get married, stay married, get a job, and wait before having children. And let's support them by giving them school choice and other freedoms that allow them to escape the underperforming public schools. Fixing poverty doesn't just mean handing people money – there are deeper issues.

What I also like about this story is that it was tweeted by a Christian apologist. Arguing about philosophy and science and history is good, but if we aren't concerned about issues like abortion, marriage, poverty and freedom, then that's not a good sign. Wallace should be commended for his concern for the poor.

Why do the most educated conservatives sometimes doubt scientific consensus?

April 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On some issues, I do doubt the scientific establishment: 1) Darwinism and 2) global warming. Why? Because I think that in those two areas, science takes a back seat to ideology. Specifically, the ideologies of naturalism and socialism. And I'm not alone. Many the most informed conservatives also doubt the pontifications of the scientific establishment.

Reason magazine explains:

> The link in the [Instapundit] gloss above goes to a story in the excellent Inside Higher Ed (a must-read for anyone interested in post-secondary education issues, IMO). Here's the lede of the piece:
>
> > Just over 34 percent of conservatives had confidence in science as an institution in 2010, representing a long-term decline from 48 percent in 1974, according to a paper being published today in *American Sociological Review.*
>
> The paper in ASR draws on attitudes as reflected in the General Social Survey, a "long-term study asking people various demographic and self-identification questions (including political identity) and for their attitudes on certain groups, including confidence in certain institutions." The author of the paper, a post-doc at University of North Carolina, says:
>
> > **Less-educated conservatives didn't change their attitudes about science in recent decades. It is better-educated conservatives who have done so, the paper says.**
> >
> > In the paper, Gauchat calls this a "key finding," in part because it challenges "the deficit model, which predicts that individuals with higher levels of education will possess greater trust in science, by showing that educated conservatives uniquely experienced the decline in trust."
>
> [The wording of the key question in the survey]…stresses attitudes toward "the *people* running these institutions." It doesn't ask whether you think science has changed. It's specifically asking about the folks wearing literal and figurative lab coats who are running joints like the National Science Foundation, testifying before Congress, appearing on The Tonight Show while forecasting famine up the ying-yang and praising coercive population control measures, and who often end up being totally wrong about everything.
>
> If it's "educated conservatives" who have lost faith in scientists, a fully plausible possible explanation is simply that they recognize what libertarians and crypto-

> libertarians ranging from Thomas Szasz to Michel Foucault have been pointing out since the early 1960s in works starting with *The Myth of Mental Illness* and *The Birth of the Clinic*: That much if not all of what passes for dispassionate scientific discourse is hugely implicated in power struggles that have little or nothing to do with disinterested, true-for-all-times-and-all-places Truths with capital Ts.

So what the most educated conservatives are disagreeing about is not testable, repeatable, observable science. It's the politicization of science by the scientific establishment that conservatives are skeptical about. For example, in cases of outright fraud like "archaeoraptor" and "Climategate", where fake research is used to prop up a philosophy, i.e. – naturalism and socialism respectively.

It doesn't help when the scientific establishment responds to skepticism with stuff like this: (links removed)

> A whole slew of new "research" on conservatives' and global warming skeptics' "brains" has hit the academic circuit.
>
> First off, environment and sociology Prof. Kari Norgaard's new study claims skeptics of man-made global warming fears should be "treated" for their skepticism. The study compares skepticism to man-made climate fears to the struggle against racism and slavery.
>
> Prof. Norgaard's concept of "treating" those who do not follow the current day's political or social orthodoxy is, frighteningly, not new. A quick look at the 20th century totalitarian super states reveals many similar impulses.
>
> It's even more chilling that there is a whole new movement afoot by the promoters of man-made global warming theory to intimidate climate skepticsby using new brain "research."
>
> Other researchers have attempted to tie conservatism (which is identified with the highest number of climate skeptics) to "low brainpower."
>
> Some global warming promoters claim it is essentially "unethical" to be a skeptic.

That's not the evidence we are looking for.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

April 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing

- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don’t have any earlier sources, so we just don’t know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn’t check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Muslim police officer bullies Christian evangelists in UK

April 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Two Christian preachers were stopped from handing out Bible extracts by police because they were in a Muslim area, it was claimed yesterday.
>
> They say they were told by a Muslim police community support officer that they could not preach there and that attempting to convert Muslims to Christianity was a hate crime.
>
> The community officer is also said to have told the two men: 'You have been warned. If you come back here and get beat up, well, you have been warned.'
>
> A police constable who was present during the incident in the Alum Rock area of Birmingham is also alleged to have told the preachers not to return to the district.
>
> It comes amid growing concern over the development of Islamic 'no-go areas'.
>
> The preachers, Americans Arthur Cunningham and Joseph Abraham, are demanding an apology and compensation from West Midlands Police.
>
> They say their treatment breaks the Human Rights Act, which guarantees freedom of religious expression.
>
> The preachers, who have the backing of the Christian Institute pressure group, say they will take the force to court for breaching their human rights if they don't receive an apology.
>
> They have accused the officer, PCSO Naeem Naguthney, of behaving in an 'aggressive and threatening' manner. A complaint by their lawyers said he interrupted as they spoke to Muslim youths about their beliefs.
>
> […]'He said we were in a Muslim area and were not allowed to spread our Christian message. He said he was going to take us to the police station.'
>
> Mr Cunningham added: 'I am dumfounded that the police seem so nonchalant. They seem content not to make it clear that what we were doing was perfectly legal. This is a free country and to suggest we were guilty of a hate crime for spreading God's word is outrageous.'
>
> According to a complaint by the men's lawyers, Mr Naguthney summoned two other officers in support, one of whom, a full constable, is said to have told the men not to return to the area.
>
> Mr Naguthney, 30, was recruited as a community support officer last year after being unemployed for eight months.

How did all of this happen? Well, maybe it's because of the "multicultural" policies were enacted by the secular leftist Labour Party under Tony Blair.

Excerpt:

> The huge increases in migrants over the last decade were partly due to a politically motivated attempt by ministers to radically change the country and "rub the Right's nose in diversity", according to Andrew Neather, a former adviser to Tony Blair, Jack Straw and David Blunkett.

> He said Labour's relaxation of controls was a deliberate plan to "open up the UK to mass migration" but that ministers were nervous and reluctant to discuss such a move publicly for fear it would alienate its "core working class vote".
>
> As a result, the public argument for immigration concentrated instead on the economic benefits and need for more migrants.
>
> Critics said the revelations showed a "conspiracy" within Government to impose mass immigration for "cynical" political reasons.

> Mr Neather was a speech writer who worked in Downing Street for Tony Blair and in the Home Office for Jack Straw and David Blunkett, in the early 2000s.

I write this as someone who is colored, who has a Muslim side of the family and a Hindu/Catholic side of the family, and who favors *a lot more* legal immigration by skilled immigrants who are willing to assimilate to Western laws and customs. Skilled immigrants are a boon to the West, and we need more of them to come here legally – if they are willing to work hard and play by the rules. But that's not what the Labour's "mass immigration" policies aimed to achieve. They wanted to bring in more anti-conservative votes, and fundamentally transform the Western culture of the UK – even if it meant giving up basic human rights like the right to free speech.

Many Christians vote for these anti-evangelism policies indirectly, because they believed that letting government tax the wealthy and hand out goodies to the poor would be more "fair". It's a good idea for Christians to understand that being a Christian means having a complete worldview, including views on politics and economics. When you grow the size of government in order to "spread the wealth around", don't be surprised when a secular, leftist government uses their newly acquired loot to buy votes from different groups who may not believe in human rights, like the right to religious liberty. It will not do for Christians to sell their religious liberty for 30 pieces of silver from their neighbor's purse. Envy is a sin.

Mitt Romney outspent Rick Santorum 4-1 in Wisconsin

April 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From liberal CNN.

Excerpt:

> Ads, phone calls and mailers have bombarded voters in Wisconsin in the days leading up to Tuesday's vote — the next major battleground in the Republican presidential race.
>
> The Badger State primary has gained significance over the last week as both Mitt Romney's and Rick Santorum's campaigns have indicated it could dramatically alter the momentum and duration of the race.
>
> Romney and his allies have outspent their rivals by a little less than a 4-1 margin on television ads in the state, according to figures provided by an unaligned Republican media consultant that tracks ad spending in the nomination race.
>
> Romney leads polls in Wisconsin and is expected to win in the District of Columbia and Maryland, which also vote Tuesday.

And something interesting from The Other McCain:

> **UPDATE 10:50 p.m. ET**: Chris Moody of Yahoo News writes about Santorum's campaign in Wisconsin, which included visits to seven bowling alleys and more than a few beers:
>
> **He has arguably been one of the hardest working candidates in the race**, having labored his way up from the bottom of the polls when he held events in Iowa that literally no one showed up for, to becoming the lead rival to the frontrunner. The man has only taken five days off the campaign trail since last summer, and spent most of that time eking his way along financially. With weak organization to speak of and an entourage that consisted of little more than the candidate and a friend with a Dodge Ram, **Santorum went from being the candidate who could hardly get his name on the ballot in some states to becoming a household name**.

Ho-hum. Mitt Romney buys another state in the Republican primary. If they were spending the same amount of money, Santorum would win the primary by a landslide. This primary is being decided by money – Mitt Romney's millions, to be precise. Romney also gets lots of money from global warming socialists and rich Wall Street bankers.

Here are Mitt Romney's top contributors:

Goldman Sachs	$521,180
JPMorgan Chase & Co	$356,400

Morgan Stanley	$297,550
Credit Suisse Group	$296,160
Citigroup Inc	$280,050
Bank of America	$245,900
Kirkland & Ellis	$225,202
Barclays	$217,150
HIG Capital	$188,500
PricewaterhouseCoopers	$185,550
Blackstone Group	$178,050
Bain Capital	$151,500
Wells Fargo	$148,950
UBS AG	$140,650
EMC Corp	$128,300
Citadel Investment Group	$123,625
Elliott Management	$123,500
Bain & Co	$112,800
Sullivan & Cromwell	$106,650
The Villages	$97,500

Rick Santorum has to go door to door for his votes.

Alberta judge rules that it is legal to disagree with homosexuality

April 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of Canada

Good news in Alberta.

Excerpt:

> Alberta Court of Queen's Bench Justice Paul Jeffrey has dismissed a Crown appeal of a decision from a lower court that acquitted Bill Whatcott of trespassing charges for distributing "Truth about homosexuality" pamphlets at the University of Calgary in 2008.
>
> On Friday, March 30, Jeffrey upheld the November 2011 ruling by provincial court Judge John D. Bascom that stated the University of Calgary infringed on Whatcott's Charter rights to freedom of expression when campus security arrested and detained him for distributing a pamphlet that addressed the "harmful consequences" of homosexuality.
>
> The university had argued that the Charter only applied to "government actors and government actions," not to the university itself since it was a private entity.
>
> **Bascom ruled, however, that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to the University of Calgary since "the University is not a Charter free zone," in that it carried out "specific" governmental work by providing post-secondary education to the public in Alberta, making its actions subject to scrutiny under the Charter.**
>
> **"Mr. Whatcott entered the university property with a purpose to distribute his literature to students, staff and public," said the judge,**

> **adding, "His activity was peaceful and presented no harm to the university structures or those who frequented the campus. … Although Mr. Whatcott's pamphlet is not scholarly, freedom of speech is not limited to academic works."**
>
> **Bascom concluded that "the means used by campus security halted Mr. Whatcott's distribution of these flyers and violated his right of free expression."**
>
> The judge also lifted the University's ban against Whatcott that would have indefinitely prohibited him from setting foot on the campus again, stating that the ban was "arbitrary and unfair."

Do you all remember that the University of Calgary is one of the ones that harassed pro-lifers with armed policemen? That's still better than Carleton University, which actually had pro-lifers arrested by armed policemen.

This Alberta ruling dovetails nicely with a 2010 ruling from the province of Saskatchewan:

> In 2010 Whatcott won an appeal in Saskatchewan when Justice Darla Hunter of Saskatchewan's Court of Appeal overturned a 2006 Saskatchewan Human Rights Tribunal ruling that found him guilty of violating the province's human rights code by publicly criticizing homosexuality through a series of flyers he distributed in Saskatoon and Regina in 2001 and 2002.
>
> The tribunal had ordered Whatcott to pay $17,500 and imposed a "lifetime" ban on his freedom to publicly criticize homosexuality.
>
> In her decision Justice Hunter ruled that Whatcott did not violate section 14(1)(b) of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code by distributing flyers to oppose the teaching of homosexuality in Saskatoon's public schools.
>
> **"It is acceptable, in a democracy, for individuals to comment on the morality of another's behaviour. … Anything that limits debate on the morality of behaviour is an intrusion on the right to freedom of expression," Justice Hunter had remarked.**

Alberta and Saskatchewan are the two most conservative provinces in Canada. Let's hope that other provinces move in the same direction.

Should young people vote for Barack Obama and Obamacare?

April 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

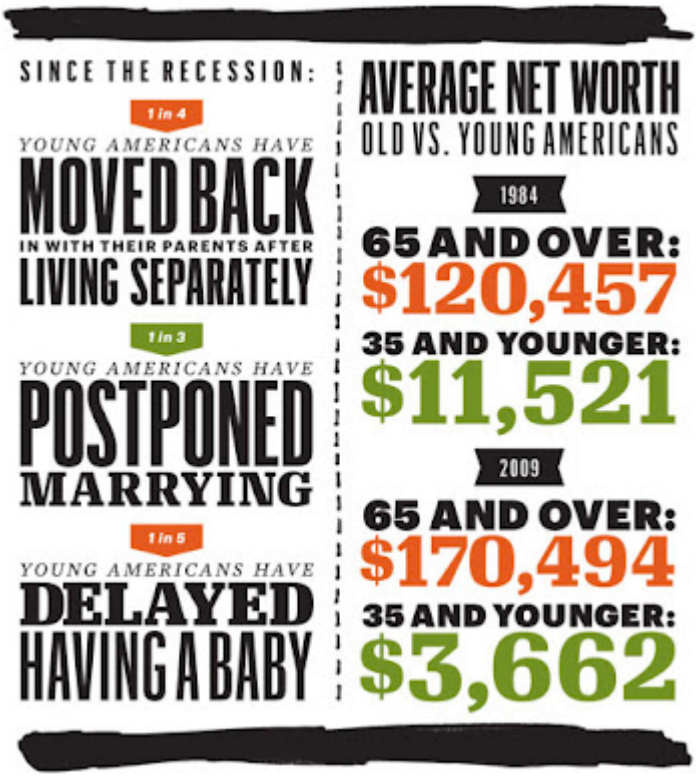

The real inequality: young America and old America
From Donald Sensing at Sense of Events blog.

Excerpt:

> Shikha Dalmia, responds to Slate's Dahlia Lithwick, who was so, "Shell shocked by the shellacking that the Solicitor General Donald Verrilli received at the hearing Tuesday, [that] she went into a deep sulk and threw the intellectual equivalent of a hissy fit." Shikha observes:
>
> > In our current health care system, a mix of taxpayers; (rich) hospitals/providers and (even richer) private insurers are stuck with the tab for uncompensated care. There are many problems with this. But isn't it at least more compassionate than ObamaCare that would force asset-poor young people – trying to pay off their college debt and hang on to some beer money – to subsidize the coverage of relatively wealthier prospective geezers? If maximizing compassion is the issue, shouldn't we stick with what we've got?
>
> In other words, under Obamacare the young overpay for health insurance in order to subsidize the old, whose medical costs are magnitudes higher than those of the young. That is a key feature of the "individual mandate" that makes

> it mandatory to buy health insurance under Obamacare. I remember reading during the SCOTUS hearings that men and women younger than 30 (or so) average using about $1,800 of health insurance per year, but will have to pay $5,400.

It's very important to understand that when government gets involved with spending money on handing out goodies, that it is tempting for them to buy the votes of those who are politically informed with the money taken from those who don't know a thing about real life.

Now consider these numbers from socialist Europe – where Obama's plan is a little further along.

Excerpt:

> Youth unemployment now exceeds 50pc in both Spain and Greece as the number of people out of work in the eurozone as a whole hit a 15-year high of 17.2m.
>
> The unemployment rate among Spain's under-25s rose to 50.5pc in January, and to 50.4pc in Greece in December, according to the latest available data from Eurostat, the European Union's statistics office. It compared with an average eurozone youth unemployment rate of 21.6pc. One of the lowest rates of youth unemployment is in Germany, where it remained at 8.2pc in February.
>
> The rise in Spain and Greece reflects the deep financial woes of both countries, which are in the midst of far-reaching and highly unpopular austerity programmes, considered necessary by the broader EU to reduce huge deficits.

> Spain's unemployment rate now stands at 23.6pc, compared with a eurozone average of 10.8pc. The extent of Spain's problems are further underlined by a housing market in crisis, with prices expected to fall the most on record this year. One-in-four homeowners in the country owes more than their property is worth.

I find it so sad that kids are brainwashed by unionized public school teachers to support nonsense like global warming, while despising free market capitalism. And then they go out and vote for more and more government, so that their "teachers" can be paid more and more. They will never fix their worldviews until they get out into the real world, and by then it they will have voted in many elections.

Is there a bullying epidemic against gay students?

April 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Lilley Pad – the blog of Canadian journalist Brian Lilley.

Excerpt:

> We are being told it is part of a bullying epidemic, specifically an anti-gay bullying epidemic. We are told that suicide rates are huge.
>
> Now the numbers don't back this up.
>
> We've talked before on this show that men between 35 and 54 are the most likely group to commit suicide, men in their 90s have among the highest success rates compared to attempts.
>
> Teen boys, specifically gay teen boys killing themselves is tragic, just as every suicide is but it is not an epidemic.
>
> Neither is there an epidemic of bullying in Canada or the United States.
>
> In an op-ed in the Saturday edition of the Wall Street Journal, Nick Gillespie detailed how bullying rates in the US have bounced from 28% of kids being bullied in 2005 to 32% in 2007 and then back down to 28% in 2009 the most recent year available.
>
> Here in Canada the rate sits at about 25% of children reporting bullying, a number that has remained fairly steady and is similar to the 20-22% reported by a pair of academics who have studied this issue across Canada.
>
> What are kids bullied about most often?
>
> You would think from the news media that it is sexual orientation but it's not.
>
> Body image is by far the leader, followed by grades or marks, cultural background, language, gender, religion and then income.
>
> So what is driving this?
>
> I'd say it is an agenda and that agenda was on display last week at the Ontario Legislature.
>
> We've discussed the attempt by the McGuinty government in Ontario to force Catholic schools to let kids set up and run their own gay-straight alliance clubs even though such a club would go against Catholic teaching.
>
> Well now it is clear they don't care. Liberal cabinet minister Glenn Murray selectively quoted from the Catholic Catechism last week. He read the part saying that homosexual acts are "intrinsically disordered" a fancy way of saying they are not the normal way sex is performed. As a gay man Murray obviously would object to that and many of you might as well. But here's what Murray said next that should worry everyone.
>
> "I have to say to the bishops: 'You're not allowed to do that anymore.'"

> He is now trying to dictate and bully a religion on what its doctrine should be.
>
> He wants to tell Catholics what they can believe, what they can say, what they can teach.
>
> You don’t need to be Catholic to be concerned that the Ontario government has gone from being co-parent to co-pastor as well.
>
> Forget separation of church and state, in Ontario the McGuinty government will tell you what to believe in your house of worship.
>
> Like the Redford government in Alberta trying to tell homeschooling parents and private schools what they could teach, even about faith, this is disturbing but not a surprising step for the progressive left.
>
> At its heart, this is about control.

Read the whole thing.

Brian Lilley actually talked about this issue on Sun TV, with another Canadian conservative Michael Coren. The video is worth a look.

Alison Redford opposes conscience rights for pro-life doctors and nurses

April 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

I'm monitoring the exciting election in Alberta between radical leftist Alison Redford and moderate conservative/libertarian Danielle Smith. The Progressive Conservative party has been dominating the province for years, but their new leader Alison Redford is a liberal extremist on social policy and fiscal policy.

Take a look at Alison Redford's radically pro-abortion and pro-gay-marriage views:

> In a list of party principles approved at the Wildrose annual general meeting last year, members voted in a clause that reads: "Wildrose members believe the Government of Alberta should…implement legislation protecting the 'conscience rights' of health-care professionals." Ms. Smith also told the Rocky Mountain Civil Liberties Association that "Wildrose will ensure conscience rights for marriage commissioners and health professionals," according to a summary of candidate positions published by the association in August, 2011.
>
> Ms. Redford, who opposes the notion of conscience rights, eagerly responded to a reporter when asked about it Wednesday, hoping it will cast the Wildrose as a hard-right party and win back supporters.
>
> "I was very frightened to hear the discussion today…. I certainly respect people's personal beliefs, but I believe in a province where we have to treat individuals with dignity and respect. We have to live in a community where we respect diversity and we understand that everyone feels safe and included," Ms. Redford said.
>
> She said doctors would be expected to prescribe birth control and perform abortions, regardless of personal beliefs, to ensure that "all of the unique families

> in this province have the opportunity to know that when they're accessing services, they can trust those services can be provided. And when they take on professional responsibilities, I expect them to be able to meet those professional responsibilities. I think it's a critical discussion in this election."
>
> […]The Wildrose says conscience rights cases will be among those heard by justices in a new Human Rights Division of the Alberta provincial court. Anyone filing a complaint and needing legal aid will be referred to a roster of "human rights advocates."
>
> These advocates will have specialized training in human rights law and be in good standing with the Law Society of Alberta. The division will be funded with money currently used for the Alberta Human Rights Commission, which Wildrose plans to scrap.

Danielle Smith's view is a moderate view – it's more moderate than Redford's leftist view.

On fiscal issues, Danielle Smith has proposed returning some of the money from budget surpluses to taxpayers, but the leftist Alison Redford opposes that.

Take a look at this column.

Excerpt:

> […]…Alison Redford wondered whether or not Albertans could be trusted to spend such bonuses wisely.
>
> Redford and the tut-tutting experts reveal one thing with their criticisms: They believe all money belongs to governments and you and I should be grateful for whatever crumbs we are permitted to keep. If you cannot demonstrate you have a higher purpose for the money you earn than the schemes proposed by politicians, bureaucrats and academics, then you have no right to complain if government taxes away giant gobs of your income to spend on the "public good."
>
> On the other hand, the proposal by Smith to send each Albertan a cheque whenever the provincial budget is in surplus is an indication that Wildrose believes what you earn is yours and government should tax away only as much as is necessary to fund essential services. If a government finds itself with more money on its hands than it needs to cover the spending it budgeted for in a given year, it should be obliged to return the overage to taxpayers rather than rub its hands with glee and look for new ways to spend.

Again, Danielle's view is a moderate view – it only returns money to taxpayers if there is a surplus. Redford, on the other hand, has been spending like a drunken sailor since she took office, and most Albertans I know think that tax increases are just around the corner.

The latest poll shows the Wildrose with a 13-point lead over the Alison Redford's leftist Progressive Conservative party.

Details:

Wildrose: 43% (+10)

PC: 30% (-6)

Danielle Smith: 56% approve, 32% disapprove (57-30 in Calgary, 50-42 in Edmonton)

Alison Redford: 48% approve, 43% disapprove (45-45 in Calgary, 45-43 in Edmonton)

You can watch an interview about the election here.

Should government get out of the marriage business?

April 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me three articles by Jennifer Roback Morse, post on The Public Discourse. The articles answer the charge from social liberals and libertarians that we should "get the government out of marriage".

Here's the first article which talks about how government will still be involved in marriage, even if we get rid of the traditional definition of marriage, because of the need for dispute resolution in private marriage contracts. She uses no-fault divorce as an example showing how it was sold as a way to get government out of the divorce business. But by making divorce easier by making it require no reason, it increased the number of disputes and the need for more government to resolve these disputes.

Here's the second article which talks about how the government will have to expand to resolve conflicts over decisions about who counts as a parent and who gets parental rights. With traditional marriage, identifying who the parents are is easy. But with private marriage contracts where the parties are not the biological parents, there is a need for the state to step in and assign parental rights.

Here's the third article which talks about how marriage is necessary in order to defend the needs and rights of the child at a time when they cannot enter into contracts and be parties to legal disputes.

The third article was my favorite, so here is an excerpt from it:

> The fact of childhood dependence raises a whole series of questions. How do we get from a position of helpless dependence and complete self-centeredness, to a position of independence and respect for others? Are our views of the child somehow related to the foundations of a free society? And, to ask a question that may sound like heresy to libertarian ears: Do the needs of children place legitimate demands and limitations on the behavior of adults?
>
> I came to the conclusion that a free society needs adults who can control themselves, and who have consciences. A free society needs people who can use their freedom, without bothering other people too much. We need to respect the rights of others, keep our promises, and restrain ourselves from taking advantage of others.
>
> We learn to do these things inside the family, by being in a relationship with our parents. We can see this by looking at attachment- disordered children and failure-to-thrive children from orphanages and foster care. These children have their material needs met, for food, clothing, and medical care. But they are not held, or loved, or looked at. They simply do not develop properly, without mothers and fathers taking personal care of them. Some of them never develop

> consciences. But a child without a conscience becomes a real problem: this is exactly the type of child who does whatever he can get away with. A free society can't handle very many people like that, and still function.
>
> In other words I asked, "Do the needs of society place constraints on how we treat children?" But even this analysis still views the child from society's perspective. It is about time we look at it from the child's point of view, and ask a different kind of question. *What is owed to the child*?
>
> **Children are entitled to a relationship with both of their parents. They are entitled to know who they are and where they came from. Therefore children have a legitimate interest in the stability of their parents' union, since that is ordinarily how kids have relationships with both parents. If Mom and Dad are quarreling, or if they live on opposite sides of the country, the child's connection with one or both of them is seriously impaired.**
>
> **But children cannot defend their rights themselves. Nor is it adequate to intervene after the fact, after harm already has been done. Children's relational and identity rights must be protected proactively.**
>
> **Marriage is society's institutional structure for protecting these legitimate rights and interests of children.**

I recommend taking a look at all three articles and becoming familiar with the arguments in case you have to explain why marriage matters and why we should not change it. I think it is important to read these articles and to be clear that to be a libertarian doctrine does not protect the right of a child to have a relationship with both his or her parents. Nor does libertarianism promote the idea that parents ought to stick together for their children.

The purpose of marriage is to make adults make careful commitments, and restrain their desires and feelings, so that children will have a stable environment with their biological parents. We do make exceptions, but we should not celebrate exceptions and we should not subsidize exceptions. It's not fair to children to have to grow up without a mother or father just so that they adults can make poor, emotional decisions and have fun.

Parents abort twin boys in quest for daughter

April 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this disturbing article from liberal Time magazine.

Excerpt:

> A couple in Australia — already parents of three sons —have announced they have aborted twin boys in their quest to replace their baby daughter, who died soon after birth. Although sex selection via IVF is illegal in Australia, they petitioned a patient review panel for permission, which was denied. They've now appealed to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, which is slated to hear their case in March.
>
> In the event that their appeal is unsuccessful, the couple has said they intend to travel to the U.S. for assistance conceiving a daughter. Since 2008, Victoria's Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act has prohibited sex selection except in cases where it would allow parents to avoid transmitting a genetic disease. It's legal — though still controversial in many circles — in the U.S., where pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PIGD) is used to separate XX from XY chromosomes for reasons of "family balancing."
>
> [The woman]… says she is griefstricken over the loss of her daughter. Conceiving a girl has become an obsession "that has become vital to her psychological health."
>
> The case is stirring up plenty of discussion Down Under, where one doctor — described as an IVF "pioneer" — lined up behind the couple to express his support.
>
> I can't see how it could harm anyone," said Gab Kovacs."Who is this going to harm if this couple have their desire fulfilled?"

Why are people treating children as if they are accessories instead of blessings? A long time ago, people were more used making sacrifices for their children, but now it seems like they are treating everything – including babies – as something to make them happy. It's all very selfish.

William Lane Craig on historical reliability of the gospels

April 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Reasonable Faith, a challenge from a non-Christian who watched the Craig-Ehrman debate. (PDF of the transcript here at Apologetics 315)

Here are his questions:

> 1) What outside sources (outside of the canon) are there that support Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection in bodily form, and ascension into heaven?
>
> 2) The message of Jesus was spread by word of mouth until the gospels were written. How do we know legend wasn't developed? Such as Jesus being buried by Joseph of Arimathea.
>
> 3) What about other pagan miracle workers such as Honi the Circle-Drawer, Hanina be Dosa, and Apollonius of Tyana (p 27). Doesn't the fact that these pagan people doing miracles similar to Jesus discredit Jesus as a miracle worker?
>
> 4) What about the seeming contradictions in the different gospel accounts? Please give me a different answer then "These are only secondary details and does not lie at the heart of the matter." If we go to a University that declares the Bible is inerrant, then shouldn't we be able to explain these?
>
> I quote from Mr. Ehrman in his debate vs Craig on p. 11:
>
> "What day did Jesus die on and what time of day? Did he die on the day before the Passover meal was eaten, as John explicitly says, or did he die after it was eaten, as Mark explicitly says? Did he die at noon, as in John, or at 9 a.m., as in Mark? Did Jesus carry his cross the entire way himself or did Simon of Cyrene carry his cross? It depends which Gospel you read. Did both robbers mock Jesus on the cross or did only one of them mock him and the other come to his defense? It depends which Gospel you read. Did the curtain in the temple rip in half before Jesus died or after he died? It depends which Gospel you read. Or take the accounts of the resurrection. Who went to the tomb on the third day? Was it Mary alone or was it Mary with other women? If it was Mary with other women, how many other women were there, which ones were they, and what were their names? Was the stone rolled away before they got there or not? What did they see in the tomb? Did they see a man, did they see two men, or did they see an angel? It depends which account you read. What were they told to tell the disciples? Were the disciples supposed to stay in Jerusalem and see Jesus there or were they to go to Galilee and see Jesus there? Did the women tell anyone or not? It depends which Gospel you read. Did the disciples never leave Jerusalem or did they immediately leave Jerusalem and go to Galilee? All of these depend on which account you read."

Now check this out – Dr. Craig *quoting Ehrman* to respond to a challenge raised by Ehrman:

4. *What about the seeming contradictions in the different gospel accounts?*

Here's your straight answer, Grant: *they don't matter*. I could accept that all of these apparent discrepancies are irresolvable, and it wouldn't affect my historical argument one wit. Don't believe me? Then let's let Bart Ehrman speak for himself. Does he think that the seeming contradictions he lists undermine the historical credibility of the facts upon which my argument is based? No! He says,

The resurrection of Jesus lies at the heart of Christian faith. Unfortunately, it also is a tradition about Jesus that historians have difficulty dealing with. As I said, there are a couple of things that we can say for certain about Jesus after his death. We can say with relative certainty, for example, that he was buried. . . .

Some scholars have argued that it's more plausible that in fact Jesus was placed in a common burial plot, which sometimes happened, or was, as many other crucified people, simply left to be eaten by scavenging animals (which also happened commonly for crucified persons in the Roman Empire). But the accounts are fairly unanimous in saying (the earliest accounts we have are unanimous in saying) that Jesus was in fact buried by this fellow, Joseph of Arimathea, and so it's relatively reliable that that's what happened.

We also have solid traditions to indicate that women found this tomb empty three days later. This is attested in all of our gospel sources, early and late, and so it appears to be a historical datum. As so I think we can say that after Jesus' death, with some (probably with some) certainty, that he was buried, possibly by this fellow, Joseph of Arimathea, and that three days later he appeared not to have been in his tomb ("From Jesus to Constantine: A History of Early Christianity," Lecture 4: "Oral and Written Traditions about Jesus" [The Teaching Company, 2003]).

The same goes double—well, many times more than double—for Jesus' crucifixion. This event is widely recognized as the most solidly established fact about the historical Jesus, denied only by kooks and Muslim true believers. Yet Ehrman's first five discrepancies are all connected, not with the burial and empty tomb narratives, but with the crucifixion accounts! So are you going to deny that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified under Roman authority at the time of the Jewish Passover feast in AD 30 because of these differences in the narratives? If so, Grant, then you will have not only intellectually marginalized yourself but also shown that you are not a sincere seeker after truth.

Do you see now, Grant, why I refused to be drawn into a dispute about how many angels there were at the tomb? Insofar as the historicity of the empty tomb is concerned, it just doesn't matter.

This article also contains a bit of broad, educational material on how to do history:

> In addition to these general considerations, scholars have enunciated certain "criteria of authenticity" to help detect historically reliable information about Jesus even in a document which may not be generally reliable. What the criteria

> really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events narrated in the sources. For some saying or event S, evidence of a certain type E, and our background information B, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, Pr (S|E&B) > Pr (S|B). In other words, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given, for example, its early, independent attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> 1. *Historical congruence*: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
> 2. *Independent, early attestation*: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor upon a common source.
> 3. *Embarrassment*: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
> 4. *Dissimilarity*: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
> 5. *Semitisms*: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebraic linguistic forms.
> 6. *Coherence*: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> Notice that these criteria do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same criteria are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the criteria do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' general reliability or every claim attributed to Jesus in the Gospels (much less their inerrancy!).

Click here for the rest. It is very important that Christians be able to use the Bible as a historical source with non-Christian challengers who do not accept the Bible as inerrant, nor even as generally reliable. The best way to learn is by seeing how Christian scholars make the case in debates and discussions.

Woman defends herself from intruder using legally-owned firearm

April 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From WSBTV.

Excerpt:

> An intruder who was shot and killed after a confrontation with a Duluth woman in her shower was likely stalking her for days and may have other victims, Gwinnett police said.
>
> The 53-year-old woman, who is also a veteran private school counselor, was alone at the time of the Wednesday morning attack. She lives on East Mount Tabor Circle in Duluth.
>
> The woman was getting out of the shower when she was met by a strange man with a kitchen knife, police said. They said there was a struggle in the bathroom, and she fell in the tub. Police later identified the man as Israel Perez Puentes, a Cuban national who lived in Alpharetta.
>
> "The male was armed with a kitchen knife, a struggle ensued between the two of them. She fell in the bathtub injuring herself," Gwinnett police spokesman Edwin Ritter said.
>
> The woman tried to fight the man off with a shower a rod, and he forced her into her bedroom, police said. They said she told her attacker she had money in the room. But she grabbed a .22-caliber handgun and shot the man nine times, police said.
>
> […]Dan Tucker, a friend and neighbor, said he was amazed at how the victim defended herself against the armed intruder.
>
> "She's smart, she's witty and obviously well prepared," Tucker said.
>
> Ritter said the shooting investigation was ongoing but defended the victim, saying the shooting appeared to be justified, and that she acted in self-defense. He said there are no plans to charge her.
>
> Police said Thursday that neighbors had spotted Puentes' car in the neighborhood several days before the attack but did not report it. Puentes' estranged wife told Kavanaugh he had been arrested for burglary in Johns Creek in December.

I think it's a very good idea for women, especially those who live alone, to have a legally owned firearm and to know how to use it.

NHS bans woman from surgery because her carbon footprint is too big

April 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this disturbing article from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Avril Mulcahy, 83, was told to address the "green travelling issues" over her journeys from her home in Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, to the West Road Surgery. The surgery wrote to Mrs Mulcahy, telling her to register with a new GP within 28 days.

> The letter said: "Our greatest concern is for your health and convenience but also taking into consideration green travelling issues. Re: Carbon footprints and winter weather conditions, we feel it would be advisable for patients to register at surgeries nearer to where they live.
>
> "We would be very grateful if you could make the necessary arrangements to re-register at another practice."

> Mrs Mulcahy, a grandmother, believes the decision was made because she complained about a doctor.
>
> […]Mrs Mulcahy said she was anxious and worried at having to try to find a new GP. "If they really cared, they could have found me a new practice instead of just basically saying do it yourself," she said.
>
> "It is a great worry to me as I am elderly and need to get repeat prescriptions for medication. This is really a stress I could do without. I won't let it rest though, because I feel like I am being treated poorly."
>
> The West Road Surgery declined to comment.

This is the problem with socialized medicine. You pay your money *up front* and then later on the government decides how much treatment you get. They have no reason to be nice to you – you already paid them. They don't get paid more or less based on the quality of care they give you. You can't get a refund on taxes paid. And where else can you go? It's a single payer system.

Obama’s Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city

April 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Chicago Tribune. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A rocket fired from Egypt’s Sinai desert struck the southern Israeli resort of Eilat on Thursday, police said, fuelling Israeli worries over militant activity in the border area.
>
> No casualties or damage were reported.
>
> An Egyptian security source told Reuters in Cairo that Egyptian forces were searching the area along the border but had not found any evidence indicating any rockets had been fired from the Sinai.
>
> The head of Eilat police, Ron Gertner, told Israeli Army Radio that explosions were heard in Eilat soon after midnight. Police found the remains of one rocket in a construction site, about 400 meters (yards) from a residential area.
>
> Asked if the rocket was fired from Sinai, Gertner said: “Based on our working assumptions and the range, yes.”
>
> Officials in Israel have been worried that the Sinai has become a base for Islamist militants since former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak’s downfall last year.
>
> “For a long while now we have been seeing that the Sinai peninsula is turning into a launching ground against the citizens of Israel, for terror,” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said after the attack.
>
> It was launched a day before the start of the Jewish Passover holiday, which commemorates the exodus of the biblical Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Eilat is expected to be full of vacationers during the week-long holiday.
>
> The Israel-Egypt border had been relatively quiet since the two countries signed a peace agreement in 1979. But Israel says that since Mubarak was overthrown, Cairo has lost its grip on the Sinai and militants are exploiting the lawlessness.

Here’s something related that I found on Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Egypt’s new parliament is dominated by the radical Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, which is busy rewriting the nation’s constitution and — contrary to its own past promises — is running a candidate for the nation’s presidency.
>
> Once the Brotherhood controls both the presidency and the legislature, it can pretty much do what it pleases — kill homosexuals, force women behind the veil, oppress Christians and other religious minorities, and unilaterally abrogate the

> 1979 Egypt-Israel peace deal.
>
> Despite this ominous turn of events, as the French news service AFP reports, White House officials held talks with Muslim Brotherhood representatives in Washington this week.
>
> “We believe that it is in the interest of the United States to engage with all parties that are committed to democratic principles, especially nonviolence,” said National Security Council spokesman Tommy Vietor, adding that the talks emphasized “the importance of respect for minority rights, the full inclusion of women and our regional security concerns.”
>
> Well, not only does the Muslim Brotherhood not “respect” minority rights, but it also wants to impose rigid Islamic Shariah law on all of Egypt.
>
> So much for “democratic principles.”
>
> As for the “inclusion of women”, westernized Egyptian women who dream of freedom will soon find themselves subjugated in a way they’ve never been before.
>
> What’s especially tragic is that as the Muslim Brotherhood takes over, it won’t take long for it to replace the 33-year-old peace of Camp David with a new state of war with Israel.
>
> So why are we talking to the Muslim Brotherhood and giving it credibility? What’s to be gained?
>
> The Muslim Brotherhood doesn’t recognize Israel’s right to exist. And it means to place Egypt under Shariah law — the antithesis of a regime based on democracy and human rights.
>
> As they prepare to take over, Egypt’s pending rulers make clear their contempt for us and for our Western values. So is Egypt’s military, which has arrested U.S. citizens for the odious crime of promoting democracy.
>
> Our response? After suspending $1.3 billion in military aid, we reinstated it last month. And we added $250 million in economic assistance to sweeten the pot.
>
> We’re deluding ourselves if we think this is going to end favorably. Islamists have taken over or are about to in Libya, Tunisia and now Egypt, something that our government largely applauded and aided.
>
> Turkey, once a solid ally of the West, has quietly moved to the hard-core Islamist side. Syria, now in the throes of a revolt against Bashar Assad and his socialist Baath Party, may soon join the ranks — a clean sweep.
>
> Today, Israel is friendless and vulnerable, more so than at any time in its modern existence. It will be on the receiving end of many more missile volleys.

We need to be taking steps to restrain aggression against us, our allies and our interests abroad. The Obama administration has done the exact opposite.

Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)

April 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB rating: [6.7/10]

Description:

> Marcellus is a tribune in the time of Christ. He is in charge of the group that is assigned to crucify Jesus. Drunk, he wins Jesus' homespun robe after the crucifixion. He is tormented by nightmares and delusions after the event. Hoping to find a way to live with what he has done, and still not believing in Jesus, he returns to Palestine to try and learn what he can of the man he killed.

This is one of my favorite Christian movies.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

What does “the resurrection” mean to Jewish theologians?

April 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s a helpful post from Eric Chabot talks about this and other interesting topics related to the resurrection.

Excerpt:

> **Where do we see resurrection in the Hebrew Bible?**
>
> As just stated, belief in a resurrection of persons from the dead are seen in eight passages: (Job 19:26; Ps. 17:15; 49:15; 73:24; Is. 26:19; 53:10; Dn. 12:2;12:13). The resurrection terminology is seen in two places (Ezek. 37:1-14; Hos. 6:2) to show a national and spiritual restoration brought about by the return from the exile. As far as the nature of the future bodily resurrection, it may involve a corpse or the receipt of a material body comparable to the present physical body (Job 19:26; Is. 26:19), or it may be a matter of transformation (Dn. 12:2-3 and perhaps 12:13); or glorification after reanimation, in the case of the righteous.
>
> As far as the function of the resurrection, it may be personal vindication (Is. 26:16; 53:10-12). Resurrection may also have a function in relation to reward or punishment (Dn. 12:2; 12:13), an assumption to heaven and enriched fellowship with God (Ps. 49:15; 73:24,26), or preface to the beatific vision of God (Ps. 17:15 and possibly Job 19:26). (1)
>
> The Greek word for resurrection is “anatasis” which means “a raising up” or “rising.” There are resuscitations in the Tanakh such as the example of Elijah and Elisha raising a person from death (1 Kings 17-23; 2 Kings 4:34-35). While these figures may have been raised in a resurrection sense, they were not raised immortal in the same way Jesus was.
>
> **Extra-Biblical Passages on Resurrection**
>
> There are also extra-biblical passages that speak about the resurrection (Enoch 92:2; 4 Ezra 7:32; Enoch 91:10; 2 Maccabees 7:9; 14; 28-29). Even the The Messiah Apocalypse, which is dated between 100 and 80 B.C.E mentions resurrection: “He [God] frees the captives, makes the blind see, and makes the bent over stand straight…for he will heal the sick, revive the dead, and give good news to the humble and the poor he will satisfy, the abandoned he will lead, and the hungry he will make rich.” (2)
>
> In the Rabbinical literature there are explicit teachings on the resurrection. It says in the Mishnah 10.1, it says, “All Israelites have a share in the world to come; … and these are they that have no share in the world to come: he that says that there is no resurrection of the dead prescribed in the Law.” Moses Maimonides, a Jewish rabbi and a medieval Jewish philosopher who has forever

> influenced the Jewish and non-Jewish world said:
>
> ” The resurrection of the dead is one of the cardinal principles established by Moses our teacher. A person who does not believe this principle has no real religion, certainly not Judaism. However, resurrection is for the righteous. This is the earning of the statement in Breshit Rabbah, which declares: “the creative power of rain is both for the righteous and the wicked, but the resurrection of the dead is only for the righteous.” Our sages taught the wicked are called dead even when they are still alive; the righteous are alive even when they are dead” (Bab. Talmud Brakhot 18 b).
>
> 3 points are made here: 1. Resurrection is a cardinal principle taught in the Torah which all Jews must believe 2. It is for the righteous alone 3. All men must die and their bodies decompose. (3)

It’s important to understand that the concept of resurrection had a meaning before Christianity ever started. And it’s interesting to ask why the early Christians applied the notion of resurrection to Jesus. What is the best explanation for their decision to do such a strange thing? Why not just give up on him and deny that he was the Messiah when he was killed by the Romans?

Number of Americans not in labor force hits record high of 87,897,000

April 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

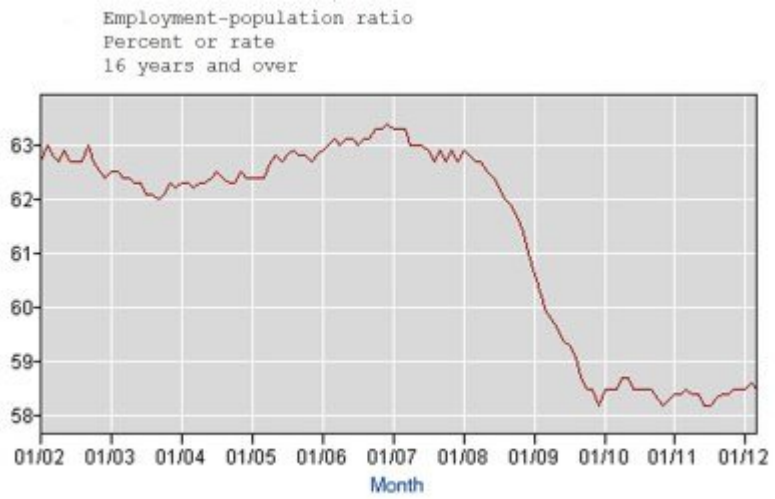

Employment to population ratio down 4.5% since Democrats took control of the House and Senate in January 2007

The Obama administration has pursued an economic policy of raising taxes on job creators, imposing regulatory burdens on businesses and shoveling mountains of taxpayer money into the hands of green energy firms which are often linked to Democrat fundraisers. Does it work to create jobs? Let's see.

A record number of Americans are unemployed

From Breitbart.

Excerpt:

> Amid disappointing unemployment numbers that fell 80,000 jobs short of projections, another number is raising eyebrows: the number of Americans not in the labor force has hit a record high 87,897,000.
>
> This figure explains why overall unemployment dropped from 8.3% to 8.2%, as the Department of Labor's unemployment figure does not include people who have given up hope and are not actively seeking employment.
>
> When the number of individuals who have stopped looking for a job and/or who are working part-time but desire full-time employment is included–a figure known as the "underemployment rate"–real unemployment stands at 19.1%.

If you want to know if the President is doing a good job of creating jobs, just count the number of people who are unemployed. If the number of people who are unemployed is at a RECORD HIGH, then you need to elect a new President. Preferably someone who understands basic economics.

The real unemployment rate is 14.5%

From the American Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> Recall that back in 2009, White House economists Jared Bernstein and Christina Romer used their old-fashioned Keynesian model to predict how the $800 billion stimulus would affect employment. According to their model—as displayed in the above chart, updated—**unemployment should be around 5.8% today**.
>
> But the true measure of U.S. unemployment is far worse:
>
> 1. If the size of the U.S. labor force as a share of the total population was the same as it was when Barack Obama took office—65.7% then vs. 63.8% today down from last month—**the U-3 unemployment rate would be 10.9%**.
>
> 2. But what if you take into the account the aging of the Baby Boomers, which means the labor force participation (LFP) rate should be trending lower. Indeed, it has been doing just that since 2000. Before the Great Recession, the Congressional Budget Office predicted what the LFP would be in 2012, assuming such demographic changes. Using that number, **the real unemployment rate would be 10.5%**.
>
> 3. Of course, the LFP rate usually falls during recessions. Yet even if you discount for that and the aging issue, **the real unemployment rate would be 9.4%**.
>
> 4. Then there's the broader, U-6 measure of unemployment which includes the discouraged plus part-timers who wish they had full time work. That unemployment rate, perhaps the truest measure of the labor market's health, **is still a sky-high 14.5%**.
>
> 5. The employment-population ratio dipped to 58.5% vs. 61% in December 2008. An historically low level of the U.S. population is actually working.

People keep talking about intelligent Barack Obama is. But shouldn't we judge a person's intelligence based on what they can produce? If you measure Obama's intelligence based on his results – adding trillions and trillions of dollars to the debt while *lowering* the number of people who have jobs to a record low – then a fair-minded observer would say that Barack Obama is a person of low intelligence. He simply is out of his league. He would be out of his league if he tried to run a lemonade stand. If no one – Republican or Democrat – would hire this man to work in a private business that they owned, why would we ever elect him to be President?

United States receives another credit downgrade under Obama's leadership

April 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Breitbart. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Credit rating agency Egan Jones downgraded the United States Thursday on concern over the sustainability of public debt. Egan Jones is one of the most important ratings firms in the world; they lowered our credit level from AA+ to AA. The firm reduced America from AAA to AA+ in July 2011, just before Standard & Poor's did the same.
>
> Egan Jones warned. "Without some structural changes soon, restoring credit quality will become increasingly difficult . . . without some structural changes soon, restoring credit quality will become increasingly difficult." They added that there was a 1.2% probability of U.S default in the next 12 months. The company cited the fact that the US's total debt, which now equals its total GDP, is rising and soon will eclipse the national GDP; the company sees the debt rising to 112% of the GDP by 2014.
>
> The debt grew 23.6% the first two years of Obama's presidency. When the debt is more than 100% of the GDP, treasury notes fall, which is a problem because they are used for transactions between financial institutions. This, in turn, could raise rates on mortgages and other loans, which would discourage growth in the economy, as well as state and local governments feeling the pinch, which could eliminate more services.
>
> Paul Ryan has offered a debt reduction plan which would reduce the current six federal income tax rates to just 2 — 10% and 25%. His plan would also reduce the federal corporate income tax rate from 35% to 25%, the same rate as the international average. Because of the additional revenue accrued from economic growth as a result of the tax reductions, federal revenues could double over the next 10 years; the added revenue would be more than the entire GDP of almost every other country in the world.
>
> Meanwhile, President Obama continues to vilify Ryan's ideas, saying they are, "a Trojan horse, disguised as deficit-reduction plans . . . thinly veiled social Darwinism." And White House projections show the federal debt's ratio to gross domestic product growing to a record 124 percent in 2050 under Obama's plan.

He just wants to keep spending and spending and spending money we don't have. Money that he didn't earn. Money that people not even born have not yet earned.

Easter is a good time to learn how to defend the resurrection of Jesus

April 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's briefly talk about whether the Bible supports talking about the resurrection with non-Christians.

There are lots and lots of Christians in the world, but almost none of them are comfortable talking about the resurrection with non-Christians, in a way that doesn't use crazy Christianese language and doesn't assume that the Bible is inerrant. But I think that this situation is wrong for three reasons.

First, Jesus says that his resurrection is a sign so that people will believe in his other theological claims.

Matthew 12:38-40:

[38]Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

[39]He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

[40]For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Second, Paul says that if the resurrection didn't happen then we are all wasting our time with Christianity.

1 Corinthians 15:13-19:

[13]If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

[14]And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

[15]More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

[16]For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

[17]And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

[18]Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

[19]If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

And third, Peter uses the resurrection as evidence in his evangelistic efforts.

Acts 2:22-24, 29-33, 36:

[22]"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[23]This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you,

with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

[24]But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

[29]"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

[30]But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

[31]Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

[32]God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

[33]Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

[36]"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

So, how can you do what Jesus, Paul and Peter do with your non-Christian friends?

You can do it, too – and you must

Most non-Christians don't like to hear about the resurrection, because if a religious teacher really rose from the dead, then they would have to care about what that person said. Many people don't want to have to adjust their lives to someone else's rules and values – they don't want to have to follow anyone but themselves. Many people have also heard that that they will separated away from God when they die unless they respond to the Easter story and develop a relationship with Jesus over the course of their lives.

But aside from the dislike of authority issue, there's another reason why people don't want to hear about the Easter story. Many people think that when Christians talk about Easter, that we are just telling our personal your personal opinions, not telling about what really happened in history. So not only are these stories threatening to their autonomy, but they are also just our opinions. And our opinions can be ignored – especially when they are opinions that put burdens on them to re-prioritize their lives.

Just think for a minute what they must think of you when you talk about how they must "believe in Jesus" (whatever that means to a non-Christian) in order to be "saved" from eternal separation from God. They think that your opinions about religion are just like opinions about which flavor of ice cream is best – just your personal preferences. They don't think that you are talking about anything real – something that really happened. How would you like to hear someone tell *you* that *you* are going to Hell for not liking vanilla ice cream? You'd think they were crazy! And that's what non-Christians think of you, unless… Unless what? Unless you present publicly testable arguments and evidence to show them *why* they should consider the claims of Jesus.

No one complains that it is "mean and divisive" if their doctor diagonoses them with cancer. Because a challenging diagnosis is not the doctor's personal opinion – it's true objectively. You need to make your presentation of the gospel *exactly like* a doctor's

diagnosis. Am I making sense here?If you are telling them the truth and you can show them publicly testable reasons and evidence, what sense does it make for them to be offended? They might as well be offended by their credit card statement or their speeding ticket. And that's why people in the New Testament were constantly appealing to evidence whenever they talked to people about why they ought to become Christians.

I have Jewish friends, Hindu friends, Muslim friends, atheist friends, etc. They do listen when you talk about the Bible as a historical document, and when you talk about what we can know about the life of Jesus using historical methods. Telling people the truth with publicly testable arguments and evidence that they can assess for themselves works.

Some things to help you talk about the resurrection

The main thing to remember about talking about the resurrection in public with non-Christians is that *you can't assume that they believe everything in the Bible is true.* Serious Christians get around this by using standard historical criteria to filter out the passages of the Bible that are most likely to be historical. A passage could be as small as 1 verse or it could be several verses. Some of the criteria that historians use to separate out the passages that are more likely to be "historical" would be things like: 1) how early after the events was the passage written? 2) in how many places does the passage appear? 3) Are the places where the passage appears independent from one another (e.g. – Mark's gospel and Paul's letters), 4) does it embarrass the author in some way? 5) Is the passage corroborated by other historical accounts not written by people who share the author's views? Using these criteria and others, historians (and I mean even non-Christian historians) can extract a bare minimum set of historical facts about Jesus. On this view, it matters more that you know things like when books of the Bible were written, who wrote them, and whether they agree with other books in the Bible, and books outside the Bible. You have to do good history in order to bee able to talk about Jesus in public.

Once you establish these minimal facts, you argue that the best explanation of the facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead. Your opponent either has to disprove one of your minimal facts, or he has to propose an alternative explanation of those minimal facts that explains the data better.

Here is an example set of facts that almost no historian denies:

- Jesus died by crucifixion
- Jesus was buried in a tomb and the location was known
- The tomb was later found empty by his women followers
- He was seen by individuals and groups alive after his death
- He was seen by skeptics like James after his death
- He was seen by enemies like Paul after his death
- The earliest message preached by the first Christians was that Jesus had been resurrected
- Christians faced persecution from the Roman authorities for proclaiming the resurrection

So why do historians accept these facts and not others? See below for some links and even a real formal academic debate where this “minimal facts” approach was used.

The top 10 links to get you started

So with that out of the way, here are the top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman’s case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright’s case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Here’s a formal debate between two scholars, one Christian and one not, where you can see how to talk about the resurrection – even at a university:

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Books on the resurrection

You can learn more about defending the resurrection on historical grounds by getting books by people who know how to make the case for the resurrection in formal academic debates. Mike Licona, for example, has debated skeptics like Bart Ehrman many times.

- Here is a good introductory book on the resurrection
- Here is a good intermediate book on the resurrection

William Lane Craig presents the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

April 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s Resurrection Day, so that means it’s time for a William Lane Craig lecture:

Christ is risen, and it’s a historical fact. And if you like the lecture, you can see these ideas defended in a formal academic debate right here.

Obama to hand out millions of taxpayer dollars in green energy firm bailouts

April 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Hill.

Excerpt:

> The Energy Department said Thursday it expects to begin tentatively approving new taxpayer-backed loans for renewable energy projects in the coming months.
>
> The announcement comes about seven months after Solyndra, the California solar firm that received a $535 million loan guarantee from the administration in 2009, went bankrupt, setting off a firestorm in Washington.
>
> […][Frantz] defended the loan program from GOP critics, who have alleged that the administration is wasting taxpayer money by supporting risky renewable energy projects.
>
> "By any measure, the Energy Department's loan programs have helped the United States keep pace in the fierce global race for clean energy technologies," Frantz wrote.

This direction is consistent with Obama's own words:

> Despite some green energy failures, such as the bankrupt Solyndra solar panel company and weak-selling Chevy Volt, President Barack Obama said that he wanted to "double down" on green energy spending, and would do what he could even without Congress to subsidize these companies.
>
> Obama's assertions, at the University of Miami on Thursday, come after numerous reports of green energy firms that received large sums of federal loans and grants but which have either declared bankruptcy or hit financial problems. In his remarks, Obama sought to draw a contrast between subsidies to green energy firms and $4 billion in tax breaks for oil and gas companies.
>
> "A century of subsidies to the oil companies is long enough," Obama said. "It's time to end taxpayer giveaways to an industry that's never been more profitable, and double-down on a clean energy industry that's never been more promising."

He wants to "double down" on handing out subsidies and bailouts to certain companies. What is the goal of this government spending? Is it a good deal for taxpayers? Who benefits?

What does giving money to green energy firms really accomplish?

Let's see an example. BrightSource, a company owned by the Kennedys, got 1.4 billion of taxpayer dollars:

> President John F. Kennedy's nephew, Robert Kennedy, Jr., netted a $1.4 billion

> bailout for his company, BrightSource, through a loan guarantee issued by a former employee-turned Department of Energy official.
>
> […]The details of how BrightSource managed to land its ten-figure taxpayer bailout have yet to emerge fully. However, one clue might be found in the person of Sanjay Wagle.
>
> Wagle was one of the principals in Kennedy's firm who raised money for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. When Obama won the White House, Wagle was installed at the Department of Energy (DOE), advising on energy grants.
>
> From an objective vantage point, investing taxpayer monies in BrightSource was a risky proposition at the time. In 2010, BrightSource, whose largest shareholder is Kennedy's VantagePoint Partners, was up to its eyes in $1.8 billion of debt obligations and had lost $71.6 million on its paltry $13.5 million of revenue.
>
> […]BrightSource touted the Ivanpah project as a green jobs creator. Yet as its own website reveals, the thermal solar plant will only create 1,400 jobs at its peak construction and 650 jobs annually thereafter. Even using the peak estimate of 1,400 jobs, that works out to a cost to taxpayers of $1 million per job created.

Here's another example of giving money to green energy firms: Solyndra, which got $535 million taxpayer dollars.

Excerpt:

> George Kaiser, the billionaire investor and fundraiser for President Barack Obama, discussed Solyndra LLC with administration officials, renewing debate about political influence in U.S. support for the company.
>
> A March 5, 2010, communication from Kaiser to representatives of his family foundation, the biggest private investor in Solyndra, and its venture-capital arm said the solar-panel maker came up in a meeting with "administration folks" a few weeks earlier.
>
> "Every one of them responded simultaneously about their thorough knowledge of the Solyndra story, suggesting it was one of their prime poster children," Kaiser, whose family foundation invested in Solyndra, wrote in the e-mail released today by Republican lawmakers.
>
> Kaiser's role has been among the subjects of a congressional inquiry into Solyndra since theCalifornia company that received a $535 million U.S. loan guarantee filed for bankruptcy in September.
>
> The e-mail and others released today contradict White House statements that "no political influence was brought to bear" and Kaiser "never discussed Solyndra during any of his 17 visits to the White House," Representatives Fred Upton of Michigan and Cliff Stearns of Florida, who are leading a House Energy and Commerce Committee probe, said in a letter to White House Counsel Kathryn

> Ruemmler.

This is an election year, and Obama's fundraisers would need to be paid off with taxpayer money first, if they are going to be able to turn around and donate some of it back to his election campaign.

To me, Obama's only plan for a recovery is to keep spending and spending and spending. And what is he spending? He is spending away the future prosperity of the next generation of Americans in order to buy votes from the current generation of Americans. What other President would be so incompetent as to blow through trillions and trillions of dollars in "stimulus" spending and get a lower number of working Americans on the other side? We elected a wastrel and he is doing what wastrels do – wasting money. It's not even his own money – it's your children's money. And the worse part is that he gets annoyed when people don't worship him for his failure – as if we should praise his high-minded rhetoric even when he fails to produce results.

Why do some people disagree with the gay lifestyle?

April 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from the liberal New York Times that explains one practical reason why social conservatives disagree with the gay lifestyle and prefer not to celebrate it. (H/T Neil)

Here's the set up:

> BOB BERGERON was so relentlessly cheery that people sometimes found it off-putting. If you ran into him at the David Barton Gym on West 23rd Street, where he worked out nearly ever morning at 7, and you complained about the rain, he would smile and say you'd be better off focusing on a problem you could fix.
>
> That's how Mr. Bergeron was as a therapist as well, always upbeat, somewhat less focused on getting to the root of his clients' feelings than altering behavior patterns that were detrimental to them: therapy from the outside-in.
>
> Over the last decade, he built a thriving private practice, treating well-to-do gay men for everything from anxiety to coping with H.I.V. Mr. Bergeron had also begun work as a motivational speaker, giving talks at gay and lesbian centers in Los Angeles and Chicago. In February, Magnus Books, a publisher specializing in gay literature, was scheduled to print a self-help guide he had written, "The Right Side of Forty: The Complete Guide to Happiness for Gay Men at Midlife and Beyond."
>
> It was a topic he knew something about. Having come out as gay in the mid-1980s, Mr. Bergeron, 49, had witnessed the worst years of the AIDS epidemic and emerged on the other side. He had also seen how few public examples there were of gay men growing older gracefully.
>
> He resolved to rewrite the script, and provide a toolbox for better living.
>
> "I've got a concise picture of what being over 40 is about and it's a great perspective filled with happiness, feeling sexy, possessing comfort relating to other men and taking good care of ourselves," Mr. Bergeron said on his Web site. "This picture will get you results that flourish long-term."
>
> But right around New Year's Eve, something went horribly wrong. On Jan. 5, Mr. Bergeron was found dead in his apartment, the result of a suicide that has left his family, his friends and his clients shocked and heartbroken as they attempt to figure out how he could have been so helpful to others and so unable to find help himself.

Look:

> To his friends, Mr. Bergeron maintained a positive tone. He went on vacation, dated some, visited museums.

> Still, he privately expressed misgivings about what the future held. Olivier Van Doorne, a patient of Mr. Bergeron and the creative director of SelectNY, a fashion advertising firm, recalled Mr. Bergeron telling him that every gay man peaks at one point in his life.
>
> "He said a number of times: 'I peaked when I was 30 or 35. I was super-successful, everyone looked at me, and I felt extremely cool in my sexuality.' "
>
> Mr. Siegel, the therapist who supervised Mr. Bergeron in the early days of his career, said: "Bob was a very beautiful younger man, and we talked a lot about how that shapes and creates a life. The thesis of his book is based very much on his own personal experience with that. And the book also emphasized what to do when you're not attractive or you no longer have the appeal you once had. The idea was to transcend that and expand your sexual possibilities."

And:

> With the book about to be printed, Mr. Bergeron became convinced that he'd written too much about the shame and isolation involved with hooking up online; that people weren't even really doing that anymore, now that phone apps like Grindr and Scruff had come along.
>
> His book, he felt, had become antiquated before it even came out.
>
> […]Though some of his friends, Mr. Rappaport among them, wondered whether drugs were involved, leading to a crash Mr. Bergeron did not anticipate, the suicide seemed to have been carried out with methodical precision. On an island in the kitchen, Mr. Bergeron had meticulously laid out his papers. There was a pile of folders with detailed instructions on top about whom to call regarding his finances and his mortgage. Across from that he placed the title page of his book, on which he also wrote his suicide note. In it he told Mr. Sackheim and Mr. Rappaport that he loved them and his family, but that he was "done."
>
> As his father remembered it, Mr. Bergeron also wrote, "It's a lie based on bad information."
>
> An arrow pointed up to the name of the book.
>
> The inference was clear. As Mr. Bergeron saw it at the end of his life, the only right side of 40 was the side that came before it.

What's the problem?

I think that the problem is that in the gay lifestyle, you have a typically male emphasis on physical appearance, sex and pleasure. There is none of the moderating influence of women, which tends to push men into commitments, responsibility and stability.

According to the research, the gay lifestyle is *very* different than the traditional heterosexual courting approach:

> The 2003-2004 Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census surveyed the lifestyles of 7,862 homosexuals. Of those involved in a "current relationship," only 15 percent

> describe their current relationship as having lasted twelve years or longer, with five percent lasting more than twenty years.[4]
>
> A study of homosexual men in the Netherlands published in the journal *AIDS* found that the "duration of steady partnerships" was 1.5 years.[6]
>
> In his study of male homosexuality in *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, Pollak found that "few homosexual relationships last longer than two years, with many men reporting hundreds of lifetime partners."[7]

And:

> The Dutch study of partnered homosexuals, which was published in the journal *AIDS*, found that men with a steady partner had an average of eight sexual partners per year.[12]
>
> In their study of the sexual profiles of 2,583 older homosexuals published in the *Journal of Sex Research*, Paul Van de Ven et al. found that "the modal range for number of sexual partners ever [of homosexuals] was 101-500." In addition, 10.2 percent to 15.7 percent had between 501 and 1,000 partners. A further 10.2 percent to 15.7 percent reported having had more than one thousand lifetime sexual partners.[14]
>
> A survey conducted by the homosexual magazine *Genre* found that 24 percent of the respondents said they had had more than one hundred sexual partners in their lifetime. The magazine noted that several respondents suggested including a category of those who had more than one thousand sexual partners.[15]

And:

> Even in those homosexual relationships in which the partners consider themselves to be in a committed relationship, the meaning of "committed" or "monogamous" typically means something radically different than in heterosexual marriage.
>
> A Canadian study of homosexual men who had been in committed relationships lasting longer than one year found that only 25 percent of those interviewed reported being monogamous." According to study author Barry Adam, "Gay culture allows men to explore different…forms of relationships besides the monogamy coveted by heterosexuals."[16]
>
> […]In their *Journal of Sex Research* study of the sexual practices of older homosexual men, Paul Van de Ven et al. found that only 2.7 percent of older homosexuals had only one sexual partner in their lifetime.[19]

In the gay lifestyle, men seem to have the most value when they are younger and more good-looking. The whole thing seems to be very much about appearance and sex – having as much sex as possible with as many different men as possible. (See, for example, the popular Grindr application on the iPhone, which allows gays to find other

gays for anonymous hook-up sex)

This is really sad, because it means that as the gay men get older and their looks fade, they lose value in the area that counts the most to many of them: sexuality. This is different than in a traditional heterosexual marriage, where the man retains his value longer since he can perform his traditional male roles as a husband and father even after he gets older and loses his looks. In fact, his ability to protect, provide and lead on moral and spiritual issues can actually get *better* as he gets older – so his self-esteem goes *up*. Now it's true that he can get depressed when he retires, but by then he's probably around 65! And at least he will have a wife there to take care of them, and probably children to support, too. My Dad, for example, does lots of things to help me even though he is retired.

I think this NYT article sheds light on why people with traditional values tend to disagree with homosexuality and also to refrain from celebrating and affirming the gay lifestyle. We treat the gay lifestyle as if it were similar to smoking. It's permissible, but not to be encouraged. We are not trying to make anyone feel badly just for the sake of being mean to them. If a certain lifestyle is not fulfilling, then it is a good thing to say to people "you should think twice about getting involved in this". It's not loving to tell people that harmful things are not really harmful. Telling someone that something unfulfilling or unhealthy is actually good for them doesn't help them any. It's not loving to tell a child that touching a hot stove won't burn them – the loving thing to do is to tell the truth and then let them choose.

Here's my previous post outlining a secular case against gay marriage.

Paul A. Rahe calls the Catholic church to account on fiscal policy

April 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Practicing Catholic Paul A. Rahe explains why he thinks that the Catholic Church made a mistake by supporting Obamacare.

Excerpt:

> In the 1930s, the majority of the bishops, priests, and nuns sold their souls to the devil, and they did so with the best of intentions. In their concern for the suffering of those out of work and destitute, they wholeheartedly embraced the New Deal. They gloried in the fact that Franklin Delano Roosevelt made Frances Perkins – a devout Anglo-Catholic laywoman who belonged to the Episcopalian Church but retreated on occasion to a Catholic convent – Secretary of Labor and the first member of her sex to be awarded a cabinet post. And they welcomed Social Security – which was her handiwork. They did not stop to ponder whether public provision in this regard would subvert the moral principle that children are responsible for the well-being of their parents. They did not stop to consider whether this measure would reduce the incentives for procreation and nourish the temptation to think of sexual intercourse as an indoor sport. They did not stop to think.
>
> In the process, the leaders of the American Catholic Church fell prey to a conceit that had long before ensnared a great many mainstream Protestants in the United States – the notion that public provision is somehow akin to charity – and so they fostered state paternalism and undermined what they professed to teach: that charity is an individual responsibility and that it is appropriate that the laity join together under the leadership of the Church to alleviate the suffering of the poor. In its place, they helped establish the Machiavellian principle that underpins modern liberalism – the notion that it is our Christian duty to confiscate other people's money and redistribute it.
>
> At every turn in American politics since that time, you will find the hierarchy assisting the Democratic Party and promoting the growth of the administrative entitlements state. At no point have its members evidenced any concern for sustaining limited government and protecting the rights of individuals. It did not cross the minds of these prelates that the liberty of conscience which they had grown to cherish is part of a larger package – that the paternalistic state, which recognizes no legitimate limits on its power and scope, that they had embraced would someday turn on the Church and seek to dictate whom it chose to teach its doctrines and how, more generally, it would conduct its affairs.
>
> I would submit that the bishops, nuns, and priests now screaming bloody murder have gotten what they asked for. The weapon that Barack Obama has directed at

> the Church was fashioned to a considerable degree by Catholic churchmen. They welcomed Obamacare. They encouraged Senators and Congressmen who professed to be Catholics to vote for it.

Now, when I think of Catholics, I think of fiscal conservatives like Jay Richards, Robert Scirocco and Jennifer Roback Morse. There are Catholics who understand the relationship between fiscal policy and religious liberty. But many lay Catholics who listen to the bishops, nuns and priests *don't* understand how fiscal policy relates to religious liberty. And I think that this is a good opportunity for lay Catholics to consider the fact that the church can sometimes be wrong – because they can be *too liberal* not because they are conservative! Imagine that. Sometimes, it's not a good idea to just take the word of "experts" on some matters. It's better to puzzle things out for ourselves by reading the Bible and studying things like economics, and then deciding how to reconcile the goals of the Bible with the way the world works. I think that it's the case that we can help the poor by keeping government small, and by letting individuals and families have more freedom – not less.

New study: polar bear population 66% higher than predicted

April 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of Canada
From the Globe and Mail. (H/T Neil)

Excerpt:

> The debate about climate change and its impact on polar bears has intensified with the release of a survey that shows the bear population in a key part of northern Canada is far larger than many scientists thought, and might be growing.
>
> The number of bears along the western shore of Hudson Bay, believed to be among the most threatened bear subpopulations, stands at 1,013 and could be even higher, according to the results of an aerial survey released Wednesday by the Government of Nunavut. That's 66 per cent higher than estimates by other researchers who forecasted the numbers would fall to as low as 610 because of warming temperatures that melt ice faster and ruin bears' ability to hunt. The Hudson Bay region, which straddles Nunavut and Manitoba, is critical because it's considered a bellwether for how polar bears are doing elsewhere in the Arctic.
>
> The study shows that "the bear population is not in crisis as people believed," said Drikus Gissing, Nunavut's director of wildlife management. "There is no doom and gloom."
>
> […]The debate over the polar-bear population has been raging for years, frequently pitting scientists against Inuit. In 2004, Environment Canada researchers concluded that the numbers in the region had dropped by 22 per

> cent since 1984, to 935. They also estimated that by 2011, the population would decrease to about 610. That sparked worldwide concern about the future of the bears and prompted the Canadian and American governments to introduce legislation to protect them.
>
> But many Inuit communities said the researchers were wrong. They said the bear population was increasing and they cited reports from hunters who kept seeing more bears.

It’s a bad idea to make scientific predictions based on Al Gore movies. It’s a better idea to do experiments and make observations.

Man gives his life to save the child of a vacationing family

April 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A 65-year-old man drowned while trying to save a 4-year-old girl struggling in rip currents at Florida's Honeymoon Island State Park, officials said Monday.
>
> Three children vacationing from Ohio became caught in rip currents at Pet Beach in the southern portion of the state park in Dunedin on Sunday, Florida Department of Environmental Protection spokeswoman Jennifer Diaz told FoxNews.com.
>
> The children's parents, Kevin and Nicole Monahan, responded and were able to rescue two of them, Bryden, 10, and Ruby, 5, Diaz said.
>
> Alan B. Hall, a resident of Land O' Lakes, Fla., then noticed the third child was still in distress and he ran into the water to save Lucy, the 4-year-old girl. After grabbing the girl and pushing her out of the current, she was able to swim back to shore. But Hall turned face down in the water, Diaz said.
>
> Hall was retrieved by a boater and was administered CPR on the shore, where he was unresponsive and not breathing. He later died upon arrival at Mease Dunedin Hospital, Diaz said.
>
> The incident remains under investigation by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Diaz said Hall was not related to the unidentified Ohio family. A medical examiner will determine a cause of death, she said.
>
> "The Florida Department of Environmental Protection offers our sincere condolences [to Hall's relatives]," Diaz said.
>
> Rip currents have been strong off the state park for several days, the Tampa Bay Times reports.

We hear so many negative stories about men in the news that it's important to balance them out with positive stories.

Obama wants to cut health care for our troops by $13 billion

April 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Washington Free Breacon. (H/T Doug)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration's proposed defense budget calls for military families and retirees to pay sharply more for their healthcare, while leaving unionized civilian defense workers' benefits untouched. The proposal is causing a major rift within the Pentagon, according to U.S. officials. Several congressional aides suggested the move is designed to increase the enrollment in Obamacare's state-run insurance exchanges.
>
> The disparity in treatment between civilian and uniformed personnel is causing a backlash within the military that could undermine recruitment and retention.
>
> The proposed increases in health care payments by service members, which must be approved by Congress, are part of the Pentagon's $487 billion cut in spending. It seeks to save $1.8 billion from the Tricare medical system in the fiscal 2013 budget, and $12.9 billion by 2017.
>
> Many in Congress are opposing the proposed changes, which would require the passage of new legislation before being put in place.
>
> "We shouldn't ask our military to pay our bills when we aren't willing to impose a similar hardship on the rest of the population," Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and a Republican from California, said in a statement to the Washington Free Beacon. "We can't keep asking those who have given so much to give that much more."
>
> Administration officials told Congress that one goal of the increased fees is to force military retirees to reduce their involvement in Tricare and eventually opt out of the program in favor of alternatives established by the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, aka Obamacare.
>
> "When they talked to us, they did mention the option of healthcare exchanges under Obamacare. So it's in their mind," said a congressional aide involved in the issue.

Those military people aren't going to vote for him anyway, and that's all that matters to Obama.

Correcting four myths about the Crusades

April 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an interesting article from First Principles Journal.

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the

> formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

This is always good to know when you are answering Muslims.

Jennifer Roback Morse debates Christine Sun on the definition of marriage

April 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse defends traditional marriage in this riveting debate.

Details:

> In this debate at the University of Arkansas Little Rock, Dr J and Christine Sun ponder the definition of marriage. Dr J, of course, is founding president of the Ruth Institute; Christine Sun is Deputy Legal Director at the Southern Poverty Law Center. The debate includes a long Q&A before closing statements.

The MP3 file is here. (90 megabytes for some odd reason) <– I had to fix the link because I somehow messed up the original link.

The debate is 79 minutes long.

Would the Buffett Rule “stabilize our debt and deficits”?

April 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

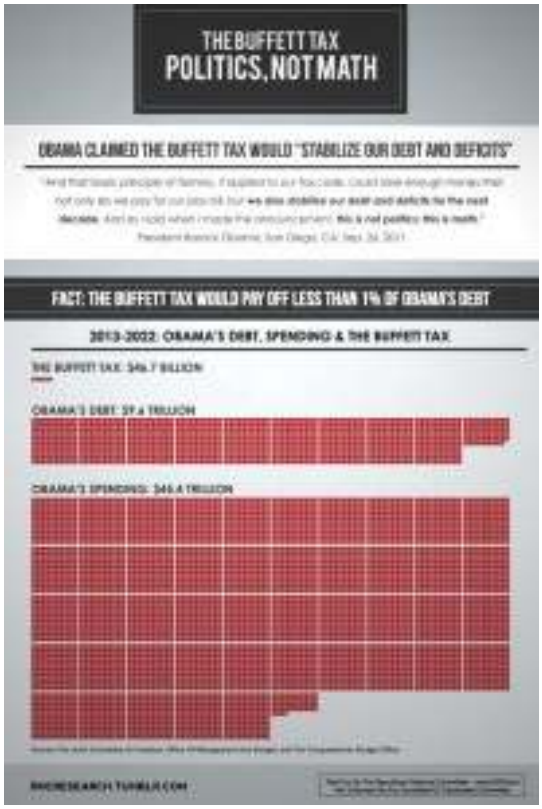

The Buffett Tax (click for larger image)

The Wall Street Journal assesses Obama’s claims about the Buffett Tax.

Excerpt:

> Forget Warren Buffett, or whatever other political prop the White House wants to use for its tax agenda. This week the Administration officially endorsed what in essence is the Obama Rule: Taxes must be high simply to spread the wealth, never mind the impact on the economy or government revenue. It’s all about “fairness,” baby.
>
> This was long apparent to those fated to closely watch the 2008 campaign, but some voters might have missed the point amid the gauzy rhetoric about hope and change. Now we know without any doubt. White House aides made it official Tuesday in their on-the-record briefing on the new federal minimum tax that travels under the political alias known as the “Buffett rule.”
>
> The policy goal is to impose an effective minimum tax of 30% on the income of anyone who makes more than $1 million a year. When President Obama first proposed this new minimum tax he declared that the rule “could raise enough money” so that we “stabilize our debt and deficits for the next decade.”
>
> Then he added: “This is not politics; this is math.” Well, remedial math maybe.

> **The Obama Treasury's own numbers confirm that the tax would raise at most $5 billion a year—or less than 0.5% of the $1.2 trillion fiscal 2012 budget deficit and over the next decade a mere 0.1% of the $45.43 trillion the federal government will spend. When asked about those revenue projections, White House aide Jason Furman backpedaled from Mr. Obama's rationale by explaining that the tax was never intended "to bring the deficit down and the debt under control."**

So if it doesn't do what Obama says it's supposed to do, what would really do?

> The Buffett rule is really nothing more than a sneaky way for Mr. Obama to justify doubling the capital gains and dividend tax rate to 30% from 15% today. That's the real spread-the-wealth target. The problem is that this is a tax on capital that is needed for firms to grow and hire more workers. Mr. Obama says he wants an investment-led recovery, not one led by consumption, but how will investment be spurred by doubling the tax on it?
>
> The only investment and hiring the Buffett rule is likely to spur will be outside the United States—in China, Germany, India, and other competitors with much more investment-friendly tax regimes. The Buffett rule would give the U.S. the fourth highest capital gains rate among OECD nations, according to a new study by Ernst & Young, to go along with what is now the highest corporate tax rate (a little under 40% for the combined federal and average state rate). That's what happens when politicians pursue fairness over growth.

When you make it less attractive for people with capital to invest their capital *here at home* then they will take their capital and invest it abroad. What Obama's proposal accomplishes is to outsource jobs – the exact thing that he is always complaining about. It's higher taxes and more regulation, especially EPA regulation, that causes capital (and consequently jobs) to move overseas. If you want capital to come into America, you lower the tax rates.

In other news, the Obama administration is suing a company owned by Warren Buffett for unpaid taxes.

William Lane Craig debates Peter Atkins: Does God Exist?

April 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that Apologetics 315 posted the video of a debate from the Reasonable Faith speaking tour in the UK:

This is a must-see debate. You will love this debate. LOVE IT. I LOVED THIS DEBATE.

Details:

> On Wednesday 26th October 2011 William Lane Craig debated Peter Atkins on the topic: *Does God Exist?* This debate took place at the University of Manchester as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig. The debate was chaired by Christopher Whitehead, Head of Chemistry School at the University. Post-debate discussion was moderated by Peter S Williams, Philosopher in Residence at the Damaris Trust, UK.

Dr. William Lane Craig:

> **William Lane Craig** (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich in 1984.

Dr. Peter Atkins:

> **Peter William Atkins** (born 10 August 1940) is a British chemist and former Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Lincoln College. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.
>
> Atkins studied chemistry at the University of Leicester, obtaining a bachelor's

> degree in chemistry, and – in 1964 – a PhD for research into electron spin resonance spectroscopy, and other aspects of theoretical chemistry. Atkins then took a postdoctoral position at the UCLA as aHarkness Fellow of the Commonwealth fund. He returned to Oxford in 1965 as fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, and lecturer in physical chemistry (later, professor of physical chemistry).

You can get the audio of the debate here, along with links to their previous debate from 1998. This debate is accessible and understandable to novice-level Christians.

I am happy when debates like this come out. I have friends who are Christians who doubt the importance of apologetics in evangelism, because they don't think that apologists can prove anything or win arguments. I have friends who are skeptical of using arguments that assume a 14-billion year old universe, because they think that the Big Bang is compatible with atheism (!). I have friends who think that philosophical arguments have no persuasive force. I have friends who think that nothing can be proven from history, beyond a reasonable doubt. I have co-workers who ask me whether anyone wins these debates. I think that this debate answers all of those questions.

This debate clearly shows why Christians should not shy away from studying science, philosophy and history. We will not discover anything that harms Christian theism by thinking logically and by looking at the evidence. To the contrary, it is the atheist who makes war on the progress of science, and who is forced to resist the clear experimental evidence, and to resort to baseless speculations and blind faith. If you want to see a good debate with an intelligent atheist, I recommend watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican instead. But if you want to see a really, really overwhelming defeat for atheism, watch this debate. It is very clear at the end of this debate why Richard Dawkins refused to debate William Lane Craig at Oxford.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING SPEECHES

I only had time to summarize the first two speeches. Keep in mind that Dr. Craig always shines in his rebuttals, and this debate is no different. So you'll want to watch those rebuttals. Dr. Atkins *literally* says in this debate in his first rebuttal "There was nothing here originally. There is nothing here now. But it is an interesting form of nothing which seems to be something." And the audience laughs nervously. This debate is like that. You will see a clear winner and clear loser in this debate. This fight is decided by knockout.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

1. the origin of the universe
2. the moral argument
3. the resurrection of Jesus

Peter Atkins opening speech:

1. Dr. Craig is stupid, lazy and evil:
– Dr. Craig's arguments are old: from the 11th century! Old arguments can't be true
– Dr. Craig is just asserting that "God did it" because he is lazy

– Dr. Craig feels pressured to agree with the theistic majority
– Dr. Craig needs a psychological crutch to comfort him
– Dr. Craig is fearful of death
– Dr. Craig is just wishing for an eternal life of bliss
– Dr. Craig is driven by his heart, and not by his head

2. Origin of the universe:
– Maybe the universe is eternal and has no beginning – we don't know
– Maybe mommy universes can give birth to daughter universes
– It is naive to think that a cause is needed to cause the creation of the universe from nothing
– Science is just about to show how it is possible that something appears out of nothing without cause
– Some scientists have already begun to speculate about about how something can come into being out of nothing
– Maybe nothing is not really nothing, but it is actually something
– It would be admitting defeat to say that God created the universe out of nothing

3. Fine-Tuning:
– It could be the case that the fundamental constants are not variable
– It could be the case that the fine-tuning of the cosmic constants is a happy accident
– It could be the case that there are billions of billions of unobservable universes that are not fine tuned
– It could be the case that the cosmic constants in these billions and billions of unobservable universes are all random so that some are fine-tuned
– Anyone who infers that an intelligence is the best explanation of a finely-tuned set of life-permitting cosmic constants is lazy

4. Purpose:
– Philosophers and theologians are stupid
– I don't think that there is purpose in the universe
– I think that the universe is more grand if there is no purpose, so there is no purpose

5. Miracles:
– I don't think that miracles happen
– The resurrection is a fabrication
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't exist
– It could be the case that Jesus wasn't really crucified
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't really die after being crucified
– It could be the case that the disciples stole his body
– It could be the case that the women went to the wrong hole in the ground
– the gospels are political propaganda written long after the events they are reporting on

6. Theodicy:
– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing humans to perform actions that result in suffering

– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing nature to cause suffering

7. Morality:

– customs and conventions emerges arbitrarily in different times and places based on an awareness of the consequences of actions, as well as various anecdotes and experiences

– these customs and conventions are decided based on the goal for survival, in much the same way as politeness and manners emerge for decorum and to avoid offense

– it is childish to presume that there is an umpire God who decides moral values and duties

8. Religious believers are stupid, lazy and evil:

– the notion of God has arisen because people are stupid and want to be comforted

– there are no arguments or evidences for belief in God

– people who believe in God do not think, but instead take refuge in incomprehensible nonsense

Another looming debt crisis: law school students racking up $100,000+ in debt

April 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this scary article from the Competitive Enterprise Institute. (H/T Hans)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Federal financial aid policies haveencouraged law students to borrow increasing amounts to attend law school, despite the glut of lawyers (oddly, government policies encourage more people to go to law school, driving up law schooltuition, even as the Obama administration seeks to cut back on vocational education aimed at training the skilled blue-collar workers who are in desperately short supply in much of the country). The result, says law professor Brian Tamanaha, is a "Quickly Exploding Law Graduate Debt Disaster" in which most recent graduates of many law schools will never be able to pay off their staggering student loan debt. At the liberal *Balkinization* blog, Tamanaha notes that the average student has over $100,000 in debt just from law school at many schools…
>
> […]As one commenter noted earlier, federal financial aid and student loans have driven up law school tuition and student loan debt: "education loans . . . often have implicit government guarantees," even those not explicitly backed by the government. As a result, "like the GSE's, the supply of credit for education loans has continued to expand. **So in a way colleges and universities, public and private have been in a bubble akin to the housing bubble. The benefits to the institutions are irresistible and so there is no way they will try to reign in costs and thus tuition. Not as long as students are willing and able to borrow." When the bubble pops, taxpayers will be on the hook for countless billions of dollars (many graduates already are not repaying their student loans). "Why is college so expensive? A new study points to a disconcerting culprit: financial aid," notes Paul Kix on page K1 of the March 25 Boston Globe.** I and professors and education experts commented earlier on that study at *Minding the Campus*. Other studies also have concluded that increased federal financial aid, such as student loans, drives up college tuition, and you can find links to some of them here.
>
> […]**When law school graduates are unable to pay off their student loans, lenders will come after their elderly parents who co-signed for the loans. As the *Washington Post* notes, "Americans 60 and older still owe about $36 billion in student loans . . . Many have co-signed for loans with their children or grandchildren to help them afford ballooning tuition."**

According to the liberal New York Times, law schools do a woeful job of preparing students to practice law.

Excerpt:

> The lesson today — the ins and outs of closing a deal — seems lifted from Corporate Lawyering 101.
>
> “How do you get a merger done?” asks Scott B. Connolly, an attorney.
>
> There is silence from three well-dressed people in their early 20s, sitting at a conference table in a downtown building here last month.
>
> “What steps would you need to take to accomplish a merger?” Mr. Connolly prods.
>
> After a pause, a participant gives it a shot: “You buy all the stock of one company. Is that what you need?”
>
> “That’s a stock acquisition,” Mr. Connolly says. “The question is, when you close a merger, how does that deal get done?”
>
> The answer — draft a certificate of merger and file it with the secretary of state — is part of a crash course in legal training. But the three people taking notes are not students. They are associates at a law firm called Drinker Biddle & Reath, hired to handle corporate transactions. And they have each spent three years and as much as $150,000 for a legal degree.
>
> What they did not get, for all that time and money, was much practical training. Law schools have long emphasized the theoretical over the useful, with classes that are often overstuffed with antiquated distinctions, like the variety of property law in post-feudal England. Professors are rewarded for chin-stroking scholarship, like law review articles with titles like “A Future Foretold: Neo-Aristotelian Praise of Postmodern Legal Theory.”
>
> So, for decades, clients have essentially underwritten the training of new lawyers, paying as much as $300 an hour for the time of associates learning on the job. But the downturn in the economy, and long-running efforts to rethink legal fees, have prompted more and more of those clients to send a simple message to law firms: Teach new hires on your own dime.
>
> “The fundamental issue is that law schools are producing people who are not capable of being counselors,” says Jeffrey W. Carr, the general counsel of FMC Technologies, a Houston company that makes oil drilling equipment. “They are lawyers in the sense that they have law degrees, but they aren’t ready to be a provider of services.”
>
> […]Consider, for instance, Contracts, a first-year staple. It is one of many that originated in the Langdell era and endures today. In it, students will typically encounter such classics as Hadley v. Baxendale, an 1854 dispute about financial damages caused by the late delivery of a crankshaft to a British miller.

> Here is what students will rarely encounter in Contracts: actual contracts, the sort that lawyers need to draft and file. Likewise, Criminal Procedure class is normally filled with case studies about common law crimes — like murder and theft — but hardly mentions plea bargaining, even though a vast majority of criminal cases are resolved by that method.
>
> […]"We should be teaching what is really going on in the legal system," says Edward L. Rubin, a professor and former dean at the Vanderbilt Law School, "not what was going on in the 1870s, when much of the legal curriculum was put in place."

Not only that, but the marketplace is *saturated* with lawyers already. When supply increases and demand decreases, prices fall. The new batch of lawyers are not going to be able to command the same salaries as the old batch.

Is free will compatible with God’s knowledge of future events?

April 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From PhiloChristos blog.

Excerpt:

> Suppose that God knows tomorrow, Ethel will boil some peas. “God knows Ethel will boil some peas tomorrow” implies that “Ethel will boil some peas tomorrow” is true. You can’t know something that isn’t true, so if God knows something, then it’s true. But the question is this: Is it true because God knows it, or does God know it because it’s true?
>
> If it’s true because God knows it, then God knowing it is what causes it to be true. If God knowing what Ethel will do tomorrow is what causes her to boil peas, then she is determined to boil peas by God’s foreknowledge. In that case, she doesn’t have free will.
>
> But if God knows it because it’s true, then it being true is what causes God to know it. This is the common sense understanding of the way knowledge works. Nothing is true because somebody knows it. Rather, the only way anybody can know anything is if it’s true already. In this case, Ethel can have free will with respect to boiling peas.
>
> By the law of excluded middle, Ethel will boil peas tomorrow, or she will not boil peas tomorrow. One of the following two propositions is true:
>
> 1. Ethel will boil peas tomorrow.
>
> 2. Ethel will not boil peas tomorrow.
>
> Regardless of which one happens to be true, the thing that makes it true is that it corresponds to what Ethel will actually do tomorrow. Let’s suppose that (1) is true. In that case, Ethel will boil peas tomorrow. Now we can form the following argument:
>
> 4. God knows (1) because it’s true.
> 5. (1) is true, because in reality Ethel will boil peas tomorrow.
> 6. Therefore, God knows (1) because Ethel will boil peas tomorrow.
>
> See? It’s all up to Ethel. She has free will. But her having free will is perfectly consistent with God having foreknowledge.

I quoted most of the post, because it was so good. I really recommend you read the post and make sense of it for yourself.

British sperm donor fathered as many as 600 children

April 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> A pioneering British scientist who set up a controversial London fertility clinic with his wife in the 1940s may have fathered up to 600 children, according to research from two men who have discovered they are his biological sons.
>
> Barry Stevens, a documentary film-maker from Canada, and David Gollancz, a London-based barrister, say that on the basis of recent DNA tests Dr. Bertold Wiesner made up to two-thirds of the clinic's total sperm donations.
>
> In 2007, DNA tests on 18 people who had been conceived at the clinic between 1943 and 1962 showed that 12 of the group — two-thirds — were Wiesner's children, The (London) Sunday Times reported.
>
> Using these results, Stevens and Gollancz believe that Wiesner, who died in 1972, must have fathered as many as 600 children.
>
> "A conservative estimate is that he would have been making 20 donations a year," Gollancz said.
>
> "Using standard figures for the number of live births which result, including allowances for twins and miscarriages, I estimate that he is responsible for between 300 and 600 children."

Imagine what would happen if a boy and a girl conceived by this nut decided to have children together. Sick.

The ten worst energy policies of the Obama administration

April 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Heritage Foundation put this list together.

Here are a few examples:

5) The EPA's Regulatory Train Wreck: The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) ream of new regulations will adversely affect existing power plants, requiring them to be retrofitted or in many cases shut down because it will be too costly to install emission-reduction controls The most recent announcement of the President's ongoing campaign against carbon-based fuel, the EPA released a new rule to regulate CO2 emissions from power plants, which would effectively ban new coal power plants, as its emissions standards are too low to be met by conventional coal-fired facilities. That will result in higher energy costs, fewer jobs, a less prosperous economy and no discernible difference in global temperatures.

6) Cap-and-Trade and the Clean Energy Standard: When he came into office, President Obama latched on to the notion of cap-and-trade — a system of energy taxes and credits designed to reduce carbon emissions. The end result would have been disastrous for American businesses and the economy. When that legislation failed, the President proposed a Clean Energy Standard mandating that the power industry meet government-determined goals with respect to renewable energy production. The effect, though, is the same. Both serve as a draconian energy tax that burdens businesses and consumers – with no environmental benefits.

8) **Terminating the Nuclear Waste Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada**. The Obama Administration says it wants to pursue nuclear power, but its rhetoric does not match its nuclear policy. Its decision to abandon the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository project without any technical or scientific data is a case in point. With nearly $15 billion spent on the project, the data indicates that Yucca would be a safe place to store America's used nuclear fuel. Yet purely for political reasons the Obama administration decided to terminate the program without having anything to replace it. Absent any nuclear waste disposal options, the United States simply will not significantly expand nuclear energy.

9) Green Jobs Stimulus: With the U.S. economy struggling to recover from a recession, President Obama turned to a trillion dollars in stimulus spending in an attempt to spend America out of the economic doldrums. A significant part of that stimulus was directed toward a new "green" economy with taxpayer dollars directed toward creating alternative energy jobs. Obama promised to create five million green jobs over 10 years. The trouble is that his plan didn't work, and the jobs didn't materialize. As *The New York Times* reported, it was nothing more than "a pipe dream." Further, these are taxpayer-funded jobs that destroy jobs elsewhere in the economy. When the government gives

money to build a windmill, for example, those resources cannot simultaneously be used to build other products. The net effect is job and income losses.

10) Job-Killing CAFE Standards: Obama's EPA has imposed a corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standard requiring auto makers to hit an average 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025—a 40 percent reduction in fuel consumption compared to today. The Center for Automotive Research warned that overly stringent standards could add $10,000 to the cost of a new car, decreasing sales and thereby reducing production, destroying as many as 220,000 jobs, according to a report by the Defour Group. And a 2002 National Academy of Sciences study concludes that CAFE's downsizing effect makes cars less safe and contributed to between 1,300 and 2,600 deaths in a single representative year.

Do you wonder why the unemployment rate is more than double what it was in during the Bush administration? Or why we are running deficits four times higher than what we had in the Bush administration? Or why gas prices have tripled compared to what they were under the Bush administration? Well, when you look at a list like this, you will realize that it is all the deliberate result of incompetence in policy making by the Obama administration. They did everything wrong, and now we are paying the price for it.

Jennifer Roback Morse interviews UK lawyer on religious liberty and free speech

April 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Ruth Institute podcast.

Details:

> (December 12, 2011) Dr J hosts "From the Front Lines of the Culture War" on Catholic Radio of San Diego. Today she's interviewing barrister Paul Diamond, who specializes in defending religious liberty in the United Kingdom.

The MP3 file is here.

This interview is sobering. I try to cover a lot of the infringements on religious liberty and free speech that came out of the secular left Labour Party era that just ended, but there are many more stories that I don't cover. This podcast fills in some of the gaps, and in particular, it explains the rhetoric used by the secular left in order to trick naive Christians into voting to give away their liberties in the name of "equality" and "tolerance".

If you want to know where the Democrats want us to be in 10 years, listen to this podcast.

Pro-abortion vandals: destroying pro-life display was “free speech”

April 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about catching vandals in a foot race

I see that Neil Simpson linked to this Life Site News article in his latest round-up.

Excerpt:

> A group of youths arrested and charged with vandalizing a Kentucky pro-life campus display said that destroying the display was an expression of their “right to free speech.”
>
> Pro-life leaders of Northern Right to Life at Northern Kentucky University (NKU) say they first set up the display on Monday morning. It consisted of tiny onesies hanging on a line with red “X” taped onto every fourth outfit to symbolize a life lost to abortion. The display included a sign explaining its significance and citing the Guttmacher Institute.
>
> But after the display was torn down twice within the first two days, members of the pro-life group began taking night shifts to watch for the vandals. On Friday morning around 1am, they say they spotted four young men beginning to cut down the line and throwing the clothing, which was to be donated to needy local children, in the trash.
>
> […]Both Piron and the Kentucky Post report that the three suspects police caught – Travis Black, Steven White and Montez Jenkins Copeland – have been charged

> with Criminal Mischief.
>
> “Though the vandals don’t think they deserve to be faced with consequences, we at NRTL believe that it’s important for people to understand that they cannot just rip down a display simply because they disagree with its message,” said Piron.
>
> **A fourth suspect who had turned himself in, Kyle Pickett, agreed with pro-lifers that they had a right to display the clothing as free speech – but justified the vandalism as equally protected.**
>
> **“Tearing it down was expressing our right to free speech,” he said, according to the Post.**

I think that the pro-life movement would do well to buckle down and learn how to defend the pro-life view with arguments and evidence. Because if undecided people have to decide between persuasion and violence, persuasion is going to win every time.

I recommend taking a look at Neil’s round-up. There were several good stories in there, but I just chose one to link to.

Who are you to judge? Answering the challenge of moral relativism

April 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brett Kunkle explains. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

> So how should Christians think about judging? First, we must ask what one means by "judge." The dictionary distinguishes several definitions. To judge can mean to pass legal judgment, like a judge sentencing a criminal at the conclusion of a courtroom trial. Nothing wrong with this kind of judging.
>
> To judge can also mean to form an opinion or conclusion about someone or something. These are assessments or evaluations. A coach judges the skill level of a player trying to make the team. A mom judges the nutritional value of food she serves her family. A plumber judges a clogged sink to fix it. Such judgments or assessments are made all the time, everyday. Again, nothing wrong with this kind of judging.
>
> But Jesus definitely suggests some sort of judging is wrong, so what was He talking about? Well, if you really want to know, never read a Bible verse. To determine the meaning of a single verse, you must read the surrounding verses. Context is king. When we look at the rest of Matthew 7, we actually discover Jesus doing the very thing most Christians think He has forbidden.
>
> In verse 6, He warns, "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine…" He calls out "false prophets" (v. 15) and says there will come a day when he will say to some, "depart from me, you who practice lawlessness" (v. 23). Ouch, those are harsh *moral* judgments. So clearly, not all judging is out-of-bounds for Jesus.
>
> The context makes clear Jesus is after a particular kind of judgment:
>
>> For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye (vv. 2-5).
>
> When Jesus warns "do not judge," He doesn't mean we should never assess moral behavior. Rather, he warns against self-righteous and hypocritical judgments. When you judge, take the log out of your own eye *first*. This is something we Christians need to work on. But notice that Jesus is not saying it is

> never right to judge, He is explaining how we are to judge rightly.

Now I don’t see why everyone seems to be so proud of not judging these days. I love to make moral judgments. My moral judgments aren’t arbitrary. I’m not trying to force anyone to agree with me if they don’t want to. But I do like to set out moral boundaries and then explain with evidence why those boundaries are there. And those boundaries are not arbitrary, they are there to protect myself and others from harm. It’s wrong to tell people that it’s fine for them to do whatever they want in order to feel “happy”. It is often in the pursuit of happiness that people break the rules and then cause the most harm to themselves and others.

Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)

April 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB rating: [7.4/10]

Description:

> In 1807, Captain Horatio Hornblower leads his ship the HMS Lydia on a perilous voyage around Cape Horn and into the Pacific. The men, even his officers, don't know exactly where he is leading them. England is at war with Napoleon and everyone wonders why they have been sent so far from the action. They eventually arrive on the Pacific coast of Central America where the HMS Lydia has been sent to arm Don Julian Alvarado, who is planning an attack against France's Spanish allies on the North American continent. The hope is that Alvarado's forces will require the French to divert some of their military resources to North American defense in the aid of their Spanish allies. He arrives to learn that a Spanish Galleon is en route and he no sooner captures it and hands it over to Alvarado that he learns the Spanish are now England's allies and he must take it from Alvarado. He also gets a very comely passenger in the form of Lady Barbara Wellesley.

Some nice swashbuckling and cannon-fire for a Friday night!

Mr. Lobster Pirate is pleased:

Lobster Pirate is pleased with this Friday's movie
Beat to quarters and clear for action!

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man

- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Arizona governor signs bill to protect unborn children after 20 weeks

April 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News, good news for unborn children in Arizona.

Excerpt:

> Gov. Jan Brewer on Thursday signed legislation making Arizona the latest state that generally bans abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy.
>
> The Republican-sponsored legislation also institutes new disclosure mandates that include requiring the state have a website with images of fetuses at various stages of development for women to view.
>
> The 20-week abortion ban does not apply in medical emergencies, and it would affect a tiny percentage of abortions performed in Arizona.
>
> […]Brewer signed the bill two days after House approval completed final legislative action.
>
> She said in a statement that the bill "strengthens Arizona's laws protecting the health and safety of women, and recognizes the precious life of the preborn baby."
>
> […]Nebraska enacted a 20-week ban in 2010. It was followed by Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, North Carolina and Oklahoma last year.
>
> The bill signed by Brewer would require the state health department maintain an extensive website that provides information about alternatives to abortion, medical risks and descriptions and images of fetuses at various stages of development.
>
> The proposal increases the current requirement that an ultrasound be performed before an abortion from one hour to 24 hours before. It also requires abortion clinics to post signs providing notice that it's illegal for anyone to coerce a woman to have an abortion.

Democrats like regulating businesses, so I don't see how they could complain about this. I think we need to regulate the abortion business more. And let this be a lesson to pro-life voters: Jan Brewer is a Republican governor, and Republicans are pro-life.

Lay Christians less likely than pastors to hold to exclusive salvation

April 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J Warner Wallace of Please Convince Me tweeted this alarming news on Friday.

Excerpt:

> Nearly eight in 10 Protestant pastors strongly disagree that eternal life can be obtained through religions other than Christianity in a new survey.
>
> The survey, conducted by LifeWay Research, of 1,000 Protestant pastors asked respondents for their reaction to the statement, "If a person is sincerely seeking God, he/she can obtain eternal life through religions other than Christianity." A full 77 percent of pastors strongly disagreed while 7 percent somewhat disagreed. Another 7 percent somewhat agreed, 5 percent strongly agreed and 3 percent were not sure.
>
> […]Pastors' beliefs regarding the exclusivity of Christianity differ from those of their parishioners, according to a new study conducted for the upcoming book "Transformational Discipleship" by Eric Geiger, Michael Kelly and Philip Nation. When presented with the same statement, just 48 percent of adults who attend a Protestant church once a month or more disagreed strongly and 9 percent disagreed somewhat. A total of 26 percent agreed, including 13 percent who agreed strongly and 13 percent who agreed somewhat. Sixteen percent indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed.
>
> "One fact is clear: pastors are less universalistic than their church members," Stetzer said. "A few heads nodding or an occasional 'Amen' does not indicate everyone believes Christianity is the only way. Church leaders will never know where their congregation stands unless they ask."
>
> According to the survey of pastors, those in large cities are more likely to believe that other religions lead to eternal life than their counterparts in other settings. Eleven percent of pastors in large cities strongly agreed. In comparison, 4 percent of pastors in small cities, 4 percent in the suburbs and 3 percent in rural areas feel the same.
>
> Pastors identifying themselves as evangelical are less universalistic than those self-identifying as mainline. Compared with mainline pastors, evangelicals are:
>
> - Less likely to strongly agree that other religions can lead to eternal life (evangelical pastors, 2 percent; mainline pastors, 11 percent).
> - More likely to strongly disagree (85 percent to 57 percent).

I've written about how people who do not think that Christianity is true are more likely to think that religion is really about happy feelings, community and being a good person,

especially when confronted by nice people doing nice things in other religions. The further a person gets from truth and apologetics, the more likely their theology is going to degrade into people-pleasing. That's why apologetics is so important.

It's much easier to say to a person "you are not saved" when you know enough to ask them "did the universe have a beginning?" and "was Jesus crucified?". When they answer no to both questions, you take the religion question out of the realm of community, happiness and good deeds, and put it in the realm of truth. It is much easier to see why God would separate away from someone who doesn't care enough about HIM (not other people, but HIM) that they would spend the time to study cosmology and history, etc. in order to form true beliefs.

As an evangelical Christian, it's easy for me to believe that non-Christians will not be saved. I ask them questions, I find that they have beliefs that are obviously false. Then, when I propose that they do some studying, they tell me they won't because religion is about being happy and being liked by your family and friends. When you understand salvation as being about truth, it's very easy to understand why refusing to study religion to see what is and isn't true isn't just another flavor of ice cream – it's sinful. It's rebelling against God. It's telling God "I don't value you enough to know if you are really there and what you are really like". And God isn't obligated to spend eternity with people who don't want him and who don't want to know him.

People like Rob Bell and Brian Maclaren and Dan Barker start their drift away from orthodoxy by caring more about the people around them than the Person above them. A relationship with God is not the same as happy feelings and popularity. A relationship with God is work and being unpopular. That's everywhere in the Bible, too. Followers of Judaism and Christianity are always taking the heat for sticking up for God. Nobody likes them except God. They perform for an audience of One, and they don't care whether anyone approves or not. We need to get that back in the church. We need to get apologetics back in the church. Nobody feels guilty about telling someone who thinks that eating chocolate will prevent cavities. That's what evangelism is – you tell the truth, graciously. If people get offended, that's no reason to change your message.

I wrote a post before showing how to falsify a religion using science or history. We need to be comfortable doing that.

Media bias evident in reporting of Muslim violence against Christians

April 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this post from Raymond Ibrahim.

Excerpt:

> Now consider some MSM strategies. The first one is to frame the conflict between Muslims and Christians in a way that blurs the line between persecutor and victim, for example, this recent BBC report on one of Boko Haram's many church attacks that left three Christians dead, including a toddler. After stating the bare-bone facts, the report goes on to describe how "the bombing sparked a riot by Christian youths, with reports that at least two Muslims were killed in the violence. The two men were dragged off their bikes after being stopped at a roadblock set up by the rioters, police said. A row of Muslim-owned shops was also burned…" The report goes on and on, with a special section about "very angry" Christians, till one all but confuses victims with persecutors, forgetting what the Christians are "very angry" about in the first place: unprovoked and nonstop terror attacks on their churches, and the murder of their women and children.
>
> This is reminiscent of the Egyptian New Year's Eve church bombing that left over 20 Christians dead: the MSM reported it, but under headlines like "Christians clash with police in Egypt after attack on churchgoers kills 21″(*Washington Post*) and "Clashes grow as Egyptians remain angry after attack"(*New York Times*)—again, as if frustrated Christians lashing out against wholesale slaughter is as newsworthy as the slaughter itself; as if their angry reaction "evens" everything up.
>
> The second MSM strategy involves dissembling over the jihadis' motivation. An AFP report describing a different Boko Haram church attack—which also killed three Christians during Sunday service—does a fair job reporting the facts. But then it concludes with the following sentence: "Violence blamed on Boko Haram, *whose goals remain largely unclear*, has since 2009 claimed more than 1,000 lives, including more than 300 this year, according to figures tallied by AFP and rights groups."
>
> Although Boko Haram has been howling its straightforward goals for a decade—enforcing Sharia law and, in conjunction, subjugating if not eliminating Nigeria's Christians—here is the MSM claiming ignorance about these goals (earlier the *New York Times* described Boko Haram's goals as "senseless"—even as the group continues justifying them on doctrinal grounds). One would have thought that a decade after the jihadi attacks of 9/11—in light of all the subsequent images of Muslims in militant attire shouting distinctly Islamic

> slogans such as “Allahu Akbar!” and calling for Sharia law and the subjugation of “infidels”—reporters would by now know what their motivation and goals are.
>
> Of course, the media’s obfuscation serves a purpose: it leaves the way open for the politically correct, MSM-approved motivations for Muslim violence: “political oppression,” “poverty,” “frustration,” and so forth. From here, one can see why politicians like former U.S. president Bill Clinton cite “poverty” as “what’s fueling all this stuff” (a reference to Boko Haram’s slaughter of Christians), or the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs insistence that “religion is not driving extremist violence” in Nigeria, which he said in response to last Sunday’s Easter day church bombing.

As I’ve argued before, the media is secular and leftist, and they will try to blame innocent victims in order to exonerate the evildoers. That’s the way that liberals are.

Does God pose an authority problem for you?

April 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm going to steal this entire post from Tough Questions Answered to get a conversation started:

> Many of the people I know who reject God or who have crafted a God that makes no demands on them have a fundamental problem with authority. They don't want anybody telling them what to do.
>
> For a person who wants complete autonomy, who chafes at the thought of anyone having authority over them, a creator God who makes demands is way inconvenient.
>
> Many people who believe in God, but also have this authority hang-up, create their own version of God. This God gives them what they want when they want it. He approves of everything they do, as long as they are just trying to be happy. He encourages them to follow their desires, wherever they lead. C. S. Lewis compared this God to a senile, old grandfather who never says "no" to his grandchildren. You want chocolate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? No problem!
>
> Is this the Christian God? Philosopher Paul Moser answers the question:
>
> It would be a strange, defective God who didn't pose a serious cosmic authority problem for humans. Part of the status of being God, after all, is that God has a unique authority, or lordship, over humans. Since we humans aren't God, the true God would have authority over us and would seek to correct our profoundly selfish ways.
>
> If you are "worshiping" a God who makes no demands on you, you're worshiping no God at all. You're just trying to find a deity to make you feel good about your selfish choices. What's the point?

I'm posting this because I'm looking for comments. Do you know anyone like this? I'll help by getting you started with some sample atheists.

Famous atheists agree: God is not the boss of them

Consider the words of Thomas Nagel, a famous atheist philosopher:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-

> informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)"

He is a widely respected atheist. He once named Stephen C. Meyer's Signature in the Cell as one of the Times Literary Supplement's best books of the year.

And what about atheist Richard Lewontin: (and by "science" he means "naturalistic science")

> "Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science *in spite of* the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite of* its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite of* the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our own a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, not matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door." (Richard Lewontin in *New York Review of Books*, January 9, 1997, p. 28)

Interesting. He's willing to tell people lies to keep the Divine Foot outside the door.

And one last one from Aldous Huxley:

> "I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way that they find most advantegous to themselves… For myself, the philosophy of meaningless was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political." — Aldous Huxley in Ends and Means, 1937

So this is pretty widespread among famous atheists. How about among ordinary atheists?

Survey says

Additionally, atheists are not as charitable as religious people:

Arthur Brooks' survey showed that atheists certainly give less in charity and do less community service as religious people on the right and left.

Quote:

> Drawing on some ten data sets, Brooks finds that religiosity is among the best predictors of charitable giving. Religious Americans are not only much more likely to give money and volunteer their time to religious and secular institutions, they are also more likely to provide aid to family members, return incorrect change, help a homeless person, and donate blood. In fact, despite expecting to find just the opposite, Brooks concluded: "I have never found a measurable way in which secularists are more charitable than religious people."
>
> Consider some examples. Religious citizens who make $49,000 gave away about 3.5 times as much money as secular citizens with the same income. They also volunteered twice as often, are 57 percent more likely to help homeless persons, and two-thirds more likely to give blood at their workplace. Meanwhile, those who insist that "beliefs don't matter as long as you're a good person" are not as good as those who do think beliefs matter. The former group gave and volunteered at much lower rates.
>
> Yet even these findings tend to obscure the impact of religion on charity. This is because some of the survey respondents that Brooks classified as secular are indirectly affected by religion if they were raised in a religious household.

Atheists also divorce more than committed Christians:

Quote:

> It's a number that is trumpeted from the rooftops — and the pulpit: Half of marriages among Christians and non-Christians alike end in divorce.
>
> But the reality is that Christians who attend church regularly get divorced at a much lower rate.
>
> Professor Bradley Wright, a sociologist at the University of Connecticut, found that among people who identify as Christians but rarely attend church, 60 percent have been divorced. Of those who attend church regularly, 38 percent have been divorced.
>
> W. Bradford Wilcox, a leading sociologist at the University of Virginia and director of the National Marriage Project, found a nearly identical spread between "active conservative Protestants" who regularly attend church and people with no religious affiliation.
>
> Professor Scott Stanley from the University of Denver, who is working on the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative, said couples with a vibrant religious faith have more and higher levels of the qualities that marriages need to avoid divorce.
>
> "Whether young or old, male or female, low-income or not, those who said that they were more religious reported higher average levels of commitment to their

> partners, higher levels of marital satisfaction, less thinking and talking about divorce and lower levels of negative interaction," he said. "These patterns held true when controlling for such important variables as income, education and age at first marriage."

My survey of atheists

I like to find out what atheists are really thinking. So a while back, I did this massive survey of the atheists in my life, and this fear of authority (and morality) seemed to be *the* central belief animating atheism.

Here's Question 11:

> What is your purpose in life, and why did you choose that purpose? Is it just yours, or for everyone else too?

And these were the responses:

- Mine is to feel good about myself and to feel respected by others.
- Mine is to enjoy it. I'd hope that I go about it in a way that doesn't interfere with others enjoyment and that when it does we can compromise.
- Mine is to relieve inordinate suffering, while leaving room for constructive suffering that lead to creativity and progress. Based on empathy.
- Mine is to help the species survive by having lots of children, because that lasts after you die
- Each person decides for themselves. My purpose is to have happy feelings
- My purpose is to have happy feelings by doing what most of the other people are doing and avoiding social disapproval
- I have no "objective" purpose. I do what I can to be happy, all things considered.
- To live as contented as possible. To find answers to big questions. To prepare my children for adulthood. I chose these things because that's what I like. I don't care what another's purpose is as long as they don't harm anyone.
- My purpose is to seek happiness while doing no harm (or as little harm as is it may be possible to do) for as long as I'm alive. Of course it's just my own purpose – I can't presume to choose another's purpose. That being said, I do presume everyone has more or less the same goal of happiness and fulfillment, but the precise methods of going about it are always going to vary from person to person.
- I want to be happy. I generally like other people, and I want them to be happy too.

Here's Question 12:

> Suppose Jesus appeared to us right now and addressed you directly with the following words: "I'm really here and you need to *follow me* in order to flourish and achieve the goal for which I created you". He then glares suspiciously at me, snatches a few fries from *my* plate, eats them, and then disappears. Later on, the Ghostbusters show up and confirm that Jesus was no ghost, but really God stepping into history. And everyone in the restaurant saw and heard exactly what

> you and I saw and heard. How would you proceed? How would you find out what to do? (i.e. – the atheist now knows Christianity is true, and I want to see what they think they should do in order to act like a Christian)

And these were the responses:

- I have no idea
- I would not follow. My own goals are all that I have, and all that I would continue to have in that unlikely situation. I would not yield my autonomy to anyone no matter what their authority to command me
- I would not follow, because God doesn't want humans to act any particular way, and he doesn't care what we do
- I would not follow. Head is spinning. Would go to physician to find out if hallucinating.
- If I found there was no trickery? I'd have to change my mind wouldn't I! Not really likely though is it?
- I would keep doing what I am doing now, acting morally. That's what all religions want anyway. (In response to my triumphant scribbling, he realized he had fallen into a trap and changed his answer to the right answer) Oh, wait. I would try to try to find out what Jesus wanted and then try to do that.
- I hope I would be courageous enough to dedicate my life to rebellion against God.
- I would not have to change anything unless forced to and all that would change is my actions not my values. I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran.
- He would have to convince me that what he wants for me is what I want for me.

Here's Question 13:

> What would be the most difficult thing about becoming a Christian for you? Would it be the moral demands? The demands on your time? The unpopularity, humiliation and persecution that you would face? How would you feel about publicly declaring your allegiance for Christ and facing the consequences? (i.e. – they have become a Christian, what is the most difficult adjustment from your current life?)

And these were the responses:

- I don't know
- It would not be that big of a change for me. I already act morally, I'm already public about my beliefs, and I don't care what people think about what I believe. I don't mind disagreeing with people and being unpopular for it. I think the 10 commandments are good. I could find out what to do and start doing those things.
- I would not be able to believe in miracles, so there would be cognitive dissonance
- Sacrificing my personal moral standards to take up a standard from a book that is

very old and outdated
- The most difficult would be the fact that I believe something without good evidence.
- I work many hours a week for institutions and organizations that are charitable. I'm certainly not going to swap those for hours for "prayer time" and waste them.
- I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran. Obviously, it is possible that if I became a Christian, then I would have different values then I have now.
- The most difficult thing would be trying to believe the ridiculous claims of Christianity. As for what a Christian finds difficult, how would I know?
- I could never obey God from gratitude and love, only from servility inspired by fear and cowardice. I do not see myself as servile, fearful or cowardly, and to behave in such a manner would injure my self-esteem and self-image.

So you might be surprised to know that even if Christianity were true, atheists have no intention of changing the way they live. That's the real issue – and that should be scary for any atheist to realize. If they just cracked open a Bible and read Romans 1, that should be enough to scare the crap out of them – because it's pretty obvious what is going on with humans – all of us have an authority problem. And a lot of the learning and striving that atheists do is just an effort to get people to think that they are so great and successful after they've dumped their relationship with God.

I hope that more atheists look in the mirror and are honest with themselves about what's really going on. Is it really such a terrible thing to have a relationship with the person who cares the most about you and wants the best for you? Is fun really that important that people have to push away a real, significant, eternal relationship just because it requires self-denial? If I didn't embrace chastity, as God wishes, where would I get to time to do the really heroic things I do – and how could I concern myself with a woman's real moral and spiritual needs if I got into the habit of using them selfishly? You can't experience imitating God when you shut him out. And that's what we are all here to do – to know him, to be his friend, to act in a way that allows us to feel what he feels, and to have sympathy with him.

Is cohabitation a better way to prepare for marriage compared than courting?

April 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Matt from Well Spent Journey sent me this assessment of cohabitation from the liberal New York Times.

Excerpt:

> AT 32, one of my clients (I'll call her Jennifer) had a lavish wine-country wedding. By then, Jennifer and her boyfriend had lived together for more than four years. The event was attended by the couple's friends, families and two dogs.
>
> When Jennifer started therapy with me less than a year later, she was looking for a divorce lawyer. "I spent more time planning my wedding than I spent happily married," she sobbed. Most disheartening to Jennifer was that she'd tried to do everything right. "My parents got married young so, of course, they got divorced. We lived together! How did this happen?"
>
> Cohabitation in the United States has increased by more than 1,500 percent in the past half century. In 1960, about 450,000 unmarried couples lived together. Now the number is more than 7.5 million. The majority of young adults in their 20s will live with a romantic partner at least once, and more than half of all marriages will be preceded by cohabitation. This shift has been attributed to the sexual revolution and the availability of birth control, and in our current economy, sharing the bills makes cohabiting appealing. But when you talk to people in their 20s, you also hear about something else: cohabitation as prophylaxis.
>
> In a nationwide survey conducted in 2001 by the National Marriage Project, then at Rutgers and now at the University of Virginia, nearly half of 20-somethings agreed with the statement, "You would only marry someone if he or she agreed to live together with you first, so that you could find out whether you really get along." About two-thirds said they believed that moving in together before marriage was a good way to avoid divorce.

That's a nice idea – wanting protection against divorce. If you asked me, I would tell you that courting is protection against a bad marriage. And the aim of courting is to interrogate and stress the other person so that you can see whether they understand the demands of the marriage and their duties to their spouse and children. In particular, men should investigate whether the woman has prepared to perform her roles as wife and mother, and women should investigate whether the man has prepared to perform his roles as protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. Courting is not fun. It is not meant to make people feel happy. And this is because you cannot translate fun and happy into marriage, because marriage is about well-defined roles, self-sacrifice and commitment.

Marriage is about following through for the other person, whether you get what you want or not.

Cohabitation is particularly stupid because what it says is that sex is not to be confined to marriage, but it is instead for recreational purposes outside of marriage. If men and women cannot demonstrate that they are capable of self-control prior to marrying by functioning in a relationship based on commitment and not based on pleasure, then they are not qualified for marriage. And that's why cohabitation is associated with *higher risks of divorce* – because thinking that relationships are recreational is inconsistent with a life-long self-sacrificial commitment. Research has shown that pre-marital chastity produces more stable and higher quality marriages. And that's because chastity helps people to focus on *conversations and obligations* instead of *recreational sex* which clouds the judgment and glosses over the seriousness of marriage.

Now look, the key to the difference between courtship and cohabitation is *right in the article.* You guys know about my ~~evil ten questions to scare fake Christian women away~~ ten questions to test Christian women for marriage, right? Those questions are designed to weed out women who are not interested in marriage as a commitment to serve God, regardless of whether it makes them happy or not. By making the woman work to prove herself in the courtship, the man is able to lead her to see that marriage is not some fairy tale of bliss where she will get her own way all the time. Those ten questions, if acted on by the woman, will clearly drive into her mind the idea that marriage is about her caring about her husband and children as a way of serving God. This sort of deliberate questioning is a reality check to women who think that peer-approval of the boyfriend and great sex and happy feelings and a big expensive wedding are all predictors of marital stability. That's a popular delusion that is unsupported by research.

More:

> Couples who cohabit before marriage (and especially before an engagement or an otherwise clear commitment) tend to be less satisfied with their marriages — and more likely to divorce — than couples who do not. These negative outcomes are called the cohabitation effect.
>
> Researchers originally attributed the cohabitation effect to selection, or the idea that cohabitors were less conventional about marriage and thus more open to divorce. As cohabitation has become a norm, however, studies have shown that the effect is not entirely explained by individual characteristics like religion, education or politics. Research suggests that at least some of the risks may lie in cohabitation itself.
>
> As Jennifer and I worked to answer her question, "How did this happen?" we talked about how she and her boyfriend went from dating to cohabiting. Her response was consistent with studies reporting that most couples say it "just happened."
>
> "We were sleeping over at each other's places all the time," she said. "We liked to be together, so it was cheaper and more convenient. It was a quick decision

> but if it didn't work out there was a quick exit."
>
> She was talking about what researchers call "sliding, not deciding." Moving from dating to sleeping over to sleeping over a lot to cohabitation can be a gradual slope, one not marked by rings or ceremonies or sometimes even a conversation. Couples bypass talking about why they want to live together and what it will mean.

The problem with young people today is that they want marriage as "a blissful state where I will get whatever I want without having to do anything, and where I am free from the consequences of my own selfishness". They don't want marriage as commitment, moral obligations, serving others and self-sacrifice. By avoiding conversations about who will do what, and what needs doing, they can fool themselves by thinking that happy sex and happy drinking and happy dancing will naturally turn into happy marriage. As if marriage is just an extension of drinking, friends and dancing, and nothing more. I once asked a woman to give me her vision of marriage and she literally said that it would be having her friends over to drink wine and dance around. They want happiness, they think marriage is a path to happiness, and that cohabitation will lead to marriage without the nasty work of having to answer questions and perform duties during a formal courtship. They don't want the work. They don't want the questions. They don't want the obligations. They don't want the self-sacrifice.

And that's why I encourage men to very gently and subtly guide the relationship in a way that will allow the woman to demonstrate her seriousness about marriage as marriage – the real marriage of self-sacrifice and commitment and serving God – instead of letting the relationship be about avoiding difficult conversations and just drifting from fun to happy and back again. Marriage is a job, and you need to be prepared to hold up your end of it, and to make sure that your partner is able to hold up their end.

Top North Carolina Democrat Party official named in same-sex sexual harassment claim

April 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> A top North Carolina Democratic Party official has reportedly been identified as the accused perpetrator in a sexual harassment claim made by a former staffer.
>
> Jay Parmley, North Carolina's Democratic Party executive director, has been accused of sexual harassment by Adriadn Ortega, a former communications staffer for the state party, according to a report by the J.W.P. Civitas Institute.
>
> An email chain The Daily Caller previously obtained didn't name the alleged perpetrator or the victim, but confirmed the existence of the alleged sexual harassment, a financial settlement paid to the victim and that Parmley and the victim had signed non-disclosure agreements. Civitas has since reported the names of those involved.
>
> On his Twitter account, Parmley describes himself as an "all around good guy and a Democrat!"
>
> North Carolina Democratic Party spokesman Walton Robinson has not responded to multiple requests for comment.
>
> At least one Democratic Party official in North Carolina revealed apparent concerns about the same-sex nature of the allegations going public, which could pose a political conflict with the party's attempts at defeating an anti-gay-marriage ballot amendment.
>
> In an email to state Democratic Party chairman David Parker, North Carolina Democratic statehouse candidate Watt Jones said this sexual harassment looks bad for Democrats.
>
> "With a Democratic Party which is suppose [sic] to be fighting to defeat Amendment One [which describes marriage as between one man and one woman] on the May 8 ballot, yet we have this in Goodwin House?," Jones said. "How does that look?"
>
> Parmley, the accused harasser according to the Civitas report, is still employed by the Democratic Party.

I don't think this will matter much to Democrat voters, who are OK with stuff like this. It might hurt their standing with some independents. This is the real Democrat Party on display though. These are the people who undermine marriage with their no-fault divorce laws, their sex education indoctrination in public schools, their subsidies for single mothers by choice, their support for gay marriage and their insistence on taxpayer-

funded abortion. They oppose traditional marriage and the traditional family. The Democrat Party motto: “If it feels good, do it. Just don’t get caught!”

Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses

April 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the facts from the National Organization for Marriage.

Excerpt:

> The National Organization for Marriage (NOM), today demanded a federal investigation of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to determine who was responsible for releasing NOM's confidential federal tax return information to the Huffington Post. Last week the publication posted a copy of NOM's federal tax return for 2008 (Form 990—Schedule B) listing its major donors, which is a confidential document filed only with the IRS. The tax return listed the names and addresses of dozens of NOM's major donors in 2008. All of this information is submitted to the IRS on a confidential basis and is not available for lawful public disclosure.

And the latest from the National Organization for Marriage.

Excerpt:

> The National Organization for Marriage (NOM) today released documents showing that their confidential U.S. tax return containing private donor information came directly from the Internal Revenue Service and was provided to NOM's political opponents, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). Joe Solmonese, president of the HRC, is a national co-chair of President Obama's reelection campaign.
>
> "The American people are entitled to know how a confidential tax return containing private donor information filed exclusively with the Internal Revenue Service has been given to our political opponents whose leader also happens to be co-chairing President Obama's reelection committee," said NOM President Brian Brown. "It is shocking that a political ally of President Obama's would come to possess and then publicly release a confidential tax return that came directly from the Internal Revenue Service. We demand to know who is responsible for this criminal act and what the Administration is going to do to get to the bottom of it."
>
> On March 30, 2012, the Huffington Post published NOM's confidential 2008 tax return filed with the IRS, which it said came from the Human Rights Campaign. The HRC has said on its own site the documents came from a "whistleblower." However, NOM has determined that the documents came directly from the Internal Revenue Service.

What does it mean that the names of pro-marriage donors are now in the hands of pro-gay-marriage groups, via the Obama administration's IRS?

What did some gay activists do to Proposition 8 donors?

Here's what happened to pro-marriage donors in California.

Excerpt:

> Gay rights supporters, dressed in pink and black, stormed a Lansing, Mich., church during its services Nov. 9 throwing condoms, pulling the fire alarm and yelling such things as "It's okay to be gay" and "Jesus was a homo."
>
> One media account said two lesbians then went to the pulpit at Mount Hope Church where they began making out in front of the congregants, which included children.
>
> Police were called and the demonstration, sponsored by a group called Bash Back, ceased. The group is described as pro-homosexual and pro-anarchist. The group's blog promoted its actions saying it was "targeting a well known anti-queer, anti-choice, radical right-wing establishment."
>
> […]The incident is one of dozens reported in California and across the country in the aftermath of the passage of Proposition 8, which has prompted passionate protests nationwide. In California, cases of violence were reported even before the election. Post-election, the Mormon church has been a major target because its members donated millions to the cause.
>
> Catholics, including the Knights of Columbus, have also been targeted for their support.
>
> […]Mormon temples in Los Angeles and Salt Lake City, as well as the Knights of Columbus headquarters in New Haven, Conn., were sent suspicious looking white powder, reminiscent of the 2001 anthrax attacks and scares.
>
> At least eight Mormon buildings in Salt Lake have been vandalized with spray-painted epithets criticizing the church's support of Proposition 8.
>
> A group of young Christians with the Justice House of Prayer— meeting on a sidewalk for their weekly prayer session in San Francisco's Castro district—had to be escorted out of the area by police, some in riot gear, as an angry mob turned on them shouting, "Shame on You," blowing whistles and screaming profanities.
>
> Marjorie Christoffersen, daughter of the owners of the Los Angeles restaurant El Coyote, left town after hundreds of protesters targeted her parent's eatery because she made a personal $100 contribution to the Yes on 8 fund. Police in riot gear were called to restore order. Gay rights activists also began a campaign to post negative restaurant reviews online. The restaurant employs several gays and lesbians who said they were taken aback by the protests.
>
> A Palm Springs news crew captured an unruly protest group ripping an oversized cross from a woman's hands and then stomping on it. A reporter trying to interview the woman, Phyllis Burgess, about the incident had to move the woman to safety as the crowd encircled them while shouting.

> Numerous blog sites reported that gay African-American men were the subject of racial slurs while trying to join the crowd in an anti-Proposition 8 protest. The men were targeted because exit polls showed a large amount of African-Americans supported Proposition 8. In one case a black man was warned to stay out of West Hollywood "if they knew what was best for them."
>
> The artistic director of a Sacramento theater was forced to resign his post after donors, ticket holders and others protested outside the theater because the man, Scott Eckern, a 25-year employee of the venue donated $1,000 in his personal money to the Yes on 8 campaign. In a separate case reported at press time, the director for the Los Angeles Film Festival resigned under pressure from gay activists for donating $1,500 to Yes on 8. Richard Raddon, who tried unsuccessfully to resign several days earlier but was blocked by his supportive festival board, resubmitted his resignation when the berating calls and e-mails failed to cease.
>
> […]A Carlsbad man was arrested Nov. 3 for punching two elderly neighbors in the face after they confronted him about trespassing on their property to place a No on 8 sign in front of their Yes on 8 sign.
>
> On election morning, a Carlsbad jogger was also attacked and bitten by a dog when he tried to stop two men from stealing a Yes on 8 sign. Several weeks ago police in that same city arrested at least two people for stealing Yes on 8 signs.
>
> In Fresno, a prominent pastor, who had campaigned publicly for Proposition 8, received credible death threats that also targeted the mayor, another traditional marriage supporter. The threats were deemed credible enough for the police department to assign officers to protect the men. The church was also targeted for vandalism.
>
> In Modesto, a Protect Marriage volunteer received 16 stitches under his eye after a man tried to steal his Yes on 8 signs outside a local church where he was waiting to distribute them after Mass.
>
> A week before the election, a San Jose couple, who posted a Yes on 8 sign in their front lawn, discovered that someone spray-painted "No on 8" on their car, their garage and the garage of their neighbor.
>
> Also in San Jose, vandals painted the back window of an SUV with the words "Bigot Live Here," with an arrow pointing to a house boasting a Yes on 8 sign.
>
> In other areas of the state, cars were keyed, signs defaced and a block was thrown through the window of an elderly couple who displayed a Yes on 8 sign in their yard.

But what about this "Human Rights Campaign" organization that sent the leaked list of donors to the Huffington Post for publication?

The Human Rights Campaign organization

You may have seen a logo on car bumpers that feature a yellow equal sign on a purple

background. That logo is the logo of the Human Rights Campaign, which opposes traditional marriage. They also believe in firing people who support traditional marriage, as we shall see below.

Here is an example of what the Human Rights Campaign does to people who support traditional marriage.

Excerpt:

> Larry Grard admits he had "a lapse in judgment." But Grard – who's been a reporter for thirty-five years, the last eighteen of them at the *Morning Sentinel* in Waterville – says the e-mail he sent from his personal account to a national gay rights group shouldn't have been grounds for his dismissal.
>
> Grard was fired by Bill Thompson, editor of the *Sentinel* and its sister paper the *Kennebec Journal* in Augusta, shortly after the Nov. 3 election in which Maine voters repealed a same-sex marriage law approved by the Legislature. Grard said he arrived at work the morning after the vote to find an e-mailed press release from the Human Rights Campaign in Washington, D.C., that blamed the outcome of the balloting on hatred of gays.
>
> Grard, who said he'd gotten no sleep the night before, used his own e-mail to send a response. "They said the Yes-on-1 people were haters. I'm a Christian. I take offense at that," he said. "I e-mailed them back and said basically, 'We're not the ones doing the hating. You're the ones doing the hating.'
>
> "I sent the same message in his face he sent in mine."
>
> Grard thought his response was anonymous, but it turned out to be anything but. One week later, he was summoned to Thompson's office. He was told that Trevor Thomas, deputy communications director of the Human Rights Campaign, had Googled his name, discovered he was a reporter, and was demanding Grard be fired. According to Grard, Thompson said, "There's no wiggle room."
>
> He was immediately dismissed.
>
> […]The week after Grard was fired, he said, his wife, Lisa, who wrote a biweekly food column for the *Sentinel* as a freelancer, received an e-mail informing her that her work would no longer be needed.

Is this some sort of poorly-funded, fringe organization like Earth First! or the Animal Liberation Front? Actually, despite the radical actions I described above, they are well-funded by mainstream corporations, who apparently endorse such tactics as normal and acceptable.

Companies that support the Human Rights Campaign

I found a list of companies on the Human Rights Campaign web site that are also strongly oppose traditional marriage.

Platinum Partners:

- American Airlines
- Citi
- Microsoft
- Nationwide Insurance
- VPI Pet Insurance

Gold Partners:

- Bank of America
- Deloitte
- Ernst & Young LLP
- Lexus
- Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams
- Prudential

Silver Partners:

- Beaulieu Vineyard
- BP
- Caesars Entertainment
- Chevron
- Google
- MGM Mirage
- Nike

Bronze Partners:

- Chase
- Cox Enterprises
- Cunard
- Dell
- Goldman Sachs
- IBM
- Macy’s Inc.
- MetLife
- Morgan Stanley
- Orbitz
- Paul Hastings
- PwC
- Replacements, Ltd.
- Shell
- Starbucks
- Toronto-Dominion (TD) Bank
- Tylenol PM

And you can find the full listing of companies that promote discrimination against traditional marriage on the Human Rights Campaign web site. I noticed that they have about 1 million people who like them on Facebook and 85 thousand Twitter followers.

Materialist neuroscientist: materialism is a “leap of faith”

April 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article by Matthew D. Lieberman appeared in the secular leftist magazine Psychology Today. (H/T Uncommon Descent)

Excerpt:

> Given a materialist view of the universe, it makes no sense to talk about consciousness or experience at all. We have absolutely no idea what it is about the three pounds of mush between our ears that allows it to perform this trick of being conscious. If you damage one spot in visual cortex, a person will cease to see motion. If you damage another spot, they may lose the ability to see things in the right side of their visual field. But we have no idea why those regions cause us to have conscious experience of motion or the right side of the visual field in the first place. Knowing that an engine can’t run without a particular part is not the same as knowing why it can run because of that part.

> […]I am a neuroscientist and so 99% of the time I behave like a materialist, acknowledging that the mind is real but fully dependent on the brain. But we don’t actually know this. We really don’t. We assume our sense of will is a causal result of the neurochemical processes in our brain, but this is a leap of faith. Perhaps the brain is something like a complex radio receiver that integrates consciousness signals that float around in some form. Perhaps one part of visual cortex is important for decoding the bandwidth that contains motion consciousness and another part of the brain is critical to decoding the bandwith that contains our will. So damage to brain regions may alter our ability to express certain kinds of conscious experience rather than being the causal source of consciousness itself.

> […]I don’t actually believe the radio metaphor of the brain, but I think something like it could account for all of our findings. Its unfalsifiable which is a big no-no in science. But so is the materialist view—its also unfalsifiable. We simply don’t know how to reverse engineer consciousness. Saying that the complexity of the brain explains why we are conscious is just an article of faith—it doesn’t explain anything. We don’t know why our brains are associated with conscious experience and nothing else in the universe besides brains seems to be. Maybe rocks have consciousness but no way of showing this. I don’t believe this—but again, I can’t prove its false.

This sounds similar to the car analogy used by J.P. Moreland, where the brain is the car, and the mind is the driver. If you damage the car, the driver cannot do certain things. That doesn’t mean the driver is the car, just like the brain is not the mind.

Two men intervene to prevent an attempted rape in Georgia

April 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wes from Reason to Stand send me this article from CBS Atlanta.

Excerpt:

> Zach Somerset may be homeless, but he certainly has a heart.
>
> "When it comes down to someone else's safety, I am going to put my life on the line to protect someone else," said Somerset.
>
> Symrna police say the 21 year-old and his friend, Shawn Thompson are heroes. Investigators say they stopped 27 year-old Maurice Jackson from raping a 15 year-old girl.
>
> "I wouldn't have expected that guy to do that because he was just a normal acting person, but he just spaced out that night," said Somerset.
>
> It happened a little more than a week ago while Somerset, Thompson, Jackson and the victim were walking along Church Rd. near South Cobb Drive.
>
> "We decided to go get something to eat and somehow the group got split up and me and Zach ended up in one group and they ended up like a couple hundred feet behind us," said Thompson.
>
> "We heard a scream," said Somerset.
>
> "I'm talking about like a traumatizing scream that I can not even forget," said Thompson.
>
> "I just kept repeating, keep screaming so I can find you. Keep screaming," said Somerset.
>
> Both men say they ran to the voice and came across Jackson and the girl.
>
> "We saw her in the bushes. He had her held down you know, punching her in the face and in the ribs," said Thompson.
>
> "I just grabbed him basically and I was like dude get off of her and he wouldn't get off of her," said Somerset.
>
> "I was like you are crazy. This is a friend of mine I am not going to let you do this man. So I grabbed him around his throat and his stomach and I picked him up and I told him I'm going to kill you dude. You better calm down right quick," said Thompson.
>
> Thompson says Jackson eventually calmed down, the victim ran away and he held Jackson until police came. Investigators say both men prevented a bad situation from getting worse
>
> "I never thought anything like that would happen," Somerset said.

It’s important to highlight stories like this to show that men must sometimes use force in order to protect others, and that this aggression and use of force is a *good thing*, which we should be grateful for. Using force by itself is not necessarily bad. What determines goodness and badness is the context.

Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal delivers effective education reform

April 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bobby and Supriya Jindal

Looks like Republican governor Bobby Jindal made it into the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Governors of both parties have promoted education reform, but so far no one has delivered more than Louisiana's Bobby Jindal. This week he'll sign two bills that offer a national model for competition and parental choice.
>
> Louisiana's new laws will essentially give all parents an average of $8,500 to use for their child's education as they see fit. They can keep their child in their local public school, but they can also try to get Johnny into a more demanding charter school, or a virtual school, or into special language or career-training courses, among other options.
>
> Nearly 400,000 low-income children—a bit more than half of all students—will also be eligible for vouchers to attend private schools. State officials estimate that about 2,000 students will use vouchers this September given private-school capacity limits, but that tens of thousands will do so over time.
>
> Louisiana is also making life easier for charter schools, with new authorizing boards, a fast-track for high-performing networks, and access to facilities equal to that of traditional public schools. The new laws seek to strengthen superintendents and principals over local school boards, which are bastions of bureaucratic and union intransigence.
>
> Nearly as dramatic are reforms in teacher tenure. To earn tenure, teachers will now have to rate in the top 10% (measured in part by student performance) for five of six consecutive years, and any teacher who falls into the bottom 10% loses tenure. No teacher in the bottom 10% can get a raise, while layoffs will no longer hit the junior-most teachers first while ignoring performance.

> Mr. Jindal made school reform a second-term priority after winning a landslide re-election last November. By then he had appointed or helped elect reformers to the state superintendent's office and board of education.
>
> Louisiana voters also had a preview of reform's potential. Since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, New Orleans schools have become almost exclusively charters—with dramatic academic improvements—and the city has run a small and oversubscribed voucher program since 2008. As for tenure, the reforms attach consequences to a teacher-evaluation system enacted in 2010.
>
> The result: the reforms attracted bipartisan legislative majorities of roughly 60%. Over four votes (two different bills, each having to pass the House and Senate), one-quarter to one-half of Democrats voted for reform, including many black representatives, especially those from New Orleans.
>
> Teachers unions were predictably opposed and even heavier-handed than usual. Michael Walker Jones of the Louisiana Association of Educators dismissed choice on grounds that "If I'm a parent in poverty I have no clue because I'm trying to struggle and live day to day." Unions pushed principals to cancel school—sometimes giving parents less than 24 hours notice—so teachers could protest at the state Capitol. It was a tired act.
>
> Mr. Jindal joins Indiana's Mitch Daniels in passing the most far-reaching school reforms, and now they'll have to follow through to produce better student outcomes. Unions will seize on any troubles as a sign of failure, but success might catalyze similar reforms across the country that could finally improve the life prospects for all American children.

Now is a good time to compare and contrast those reforms with the record of the Obama administration:

The Democrats worked with the teacher unions to kill voucher programs for the poorest students in Washington DC, many of them minority students.

Excerpt:

> "House and Senate Appropriators this week ignored the wishes of D.C.'s mayor, D.C.'s public schools chancellor, a majority of D.C.'s city council, and more than 70 percent of D.C. residents and have mandated the slow death of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program. This successful school voucher program–for D.C.'s poorest families–has allowed more than 3,300 children to attend the best schools they have ever known.
>
> The decision to end the program, a decision buried in a thousand-page spending bill and announced right before the holidays, destroys the hopes and dreams of thousands of D.C. families. Parents and children have rallied countless times over the past year in support of reauthorization and in favor of strengthening the OSP.
>
> Yet, despite the clearly positive results and the proven success of this program, Sen. Dick Durbin, Rep. Jose Serrano, Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, and Secretary

> Arne Duncan worked together to kill the OSP. Funding the program only for existing children shrinks the program each year, compromises the federal evaluation of the program, denies entry to the siblings of existing participants, and punishes those children waiting in line by sentencing them to failing and often unsafe schools.
>
> What is incredibly disappointing to low-income families in Washington, D.C. has been the silence of President Barack Obama. The President, who benefited from K-12 scholarships himself, worked on behalf of low-income families in Chicago, and exercises school choice as a parent, has stood silently on the sidelines while his Secretary of Education belittled the importance of helping such a small number of children in the nation's capital."

Another Wall Street Journal article explains why voucher programs work for children. They don't work for teacher unions, and that's why Democrats oppose them.

Excerpt:

> In a study published last year, Patrick Wolf of the University of Arkansas found that voucher recipients had graduation rates of 91%. That's significantly higher than the D.C. public school average (56%) and the graduation rate for students who applied for a D.C. voucher but didn't win the lottery (70%). In testimony before a Senate subcommittee in February, Mr. Wolf said that "we can be more than 99% confident that access to school choice through the Opportunity Scholarship Program, and not mere statistical noise, was the reason why OSP students graduated at these higher rates."
>
> The administration downplays these findings. But the students who attend D.C. public schools are overwhelmingly black and poor, and the achievement gap has a particularly devastating impact on their communities. High school dropouts are eight times more likely than someone with a diploma to wind up behind bars. Some 60% of black male high school dropouts in their 30s have prison records. And nearly one in four young black male dropouts is in jail or juvenile detention.
>
> Mr. Obama says he wants to help all students—not just the lucky few who receive vouchers. But that's an argument for offering more vouchers to those in need, not for reducing school choice. Policies ought to be weighed against available alternatives, not some unattainable ideal. The alternative to a voucher for families in D.C. ghettos and elsewhere is too often a substandard public school.
>
> The positive effects of the D.C. voucher program are not unique. A recent study of Milwaukee's older and larger voucher program found that 94% of students who stayed in the program throughout high school graduated, versus just 75% of students in Milwaukee's traditional public schools. And contrary to the claim that vouchers hurt public schools, the report found that students at Milwaukee public schools "are performing at somewhat higher levels as a result of competitive pressure from the school voucher program." Thus can vouchers benefit even the

> children that don’t receive them.
>
> Research gathered by Greg Forster of the Foundation for Educational Choice also calls into question the White House assertion that vouchers are ineffective. In a paper released in March, he says that “every empirical study ever conducted in Milwaukee, Florida, Ohio, Texas, Maine and Vermont finds that voucher programs in those places improved public schools.” Mr. Forster surveyed 10 empirical studies that use “random assignment, the gold standard of social science,” to assure that the groups being compared are as similar as possible. “Nine [of the 10] studies find that vouchers improve student outcomes, six that all students benefit and three that some benefit and some are not affected,” he writes. “One study finds no visible impact. None of these studies finds a negative impact.”
>
> Such results might influence the thinking of an objective observer primarily interested in doing right by the nation’s poor children. But they are unlikely to sway a politician focused on getting re-elected with the help of teachers unions.

There is a difference between Demcorats and Republicans, and the difference is that Republicans think that children do better when their parents can choose a school that works for their child. Republicans are the evidence-based party – they do what’s right. But Democrats do whatever it takes to please their special interest groups.

Obama’s neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk

April 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph, an outraged statement from across the pond.

Excerpt:

> Barack Obama may have rolled out the red carpet for David Cameron at the White House last month, flown the Prime Minister on Air Force One to Ohio, and lavished him with a state dinner, but he still won’t back America’s closest ally over the Falklands, sticking to a policy of “neutrality”.
>
> […]The President and his Secretary of State refuse to back the right of self-determination of the Falkland Islanders, and have not said a word condemning the increasingly belligerent stance and actions of Buenos Aires, including its threats to blockade the Islands and isolate it economically. The State Department has given no indication whatsoever that it has moved away from its support for direct negotiations between Argentina and Great Britain over the sovereignty of the Falklands. In fact, far from being neutral, the Obama administration has been siding with Argentina’s position for the last three years.
>
> For all its PR spin during the Cameron visit, when the prime minister was blatantly used as an election prop and a fundraising foil for Obama’s re-election campaign, the Obama administration could not care less for the Special Relationship. If Mr Obama really believed in the alliance with Britain he would be actively siding with the British people over the Falklands, instead of continuing to appease Buenos Aires and its South American cohorts, including Hugo Chavez’s Venezuela.
>
> Britain is standing shoulder to shoulder with the United States on the battlefields of Afghanistan and in the wider war against Islamist terrorism, and on countless fronts is an indispensable ally to Washington. Yet the current US president can’t even bring himself to support the right of 3,000 overwhelmingly British Falkland Islanders to continue to live under the protection of the Union Jack, 30 years after their liberation from Argentine occupation. A stance of “neutrality” is an act of cowardice by Barack Obama in the face of Latin American pressure, and another slap in the face for Britain.

You can read more about the special relationship between the USA and the UK here, in case you are not familiar with the term.

This administration has done everything possible to support our enemies (like Iran) while simultaneously stabbing our allies (like Israel and Georgia) in the back.

Is Christianity false or is it just mean and judgmental?

April 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you noticed lately that there is a decided lack of atheists who argue against Christianity on factual grounds? Instead of constructing arguments against Christian theism, what I am seeing more and more of is that people try to say that Christianity makes some group feel bad, and therefore Christianity is not worthy of pursuit and engagement.

Here's how it works. You have a person who has some sinful habit or other that they don't want to give up, and they notice that people are judging them and saying that what they are doing is wrong. And they feel bad. And they decide to attack Christianity to make the Christians stop judging them. So how do they do it? Do they argue that the concept of God is logically incoherent? No… Do they argue that some instances of evil and suffering are gratuitous? No… Do they argue that the universe is eternal so that it had no Creator? No…

What do they do?

What they do is pick on some statement by a conservative Christian that makes them feel bad, and then claim that they are victims of meanness. And apparently, making someone feel bad is some sort of disproof of Christian theism. Why is that? It's because we have decided as a culture that the purpose of religion is to make people feel good about themselves and to be "nice" to other people. And by "nice", we mean not making other people feel bad about the sinfulness of their behavior. So people are making Christianity irrelevant just by *assuming* that the purpose of life is happiness, and that any religion that makes people unhappy can be dismissed.

Before, people thought about Christianity as something that you investigated, and that was either true or false. People understood that Christianity made claims about the external world that were either true or false. For example, Christianity claims that the universe had a beginning in the finite past. And the people who disagreed with Christianity would try to produce arguments and evidence that the universe was eternal, as with the steady-state theory or the oscillating model of the universe. And people were willing to change their behavior to match what was true, even when it made them feel less happy. But not any more.

I think somehow, as a society, we have internalized the following beliefs:

- God wants me to have happy feelings
- the purpose of religion is to give me happy feelings
- God's moral will for me is that I be "nice" to others
- being nice to others means accepting whatever they want to do as "good"
- accepting whatever anyone does makes them like me

- when people like me, I feel happy, which is what God wants
- there is no need for me to study God's existence
- God exists when I want to be comforted, and doesn't exist when I want to sin
- there is no need for me to study God's character
- God's character is pretty much like my character, whatever I want is fine with God
- there are no moral rules or obligations from God that apply to me
- religions are all the same, I choose the one that makes me feel happy

So you can see that someone who believes things like this can claim to be a Christian, but would actually attack real Christians who hold to the old view of exclusive factual claims and moral judgments. The real Christians are people who have studied these questions, who know that God exists, and what he is like, and accept the Bible's moral teachings as authoritative. So you could have a famous pastor who defends the Bible's prohibition on sex before marriage, and have someone *feel bad about being judged*, and then a bunch of these "the purpose of life is happiness" people will appear and chastise that pastor for making people feel bad. And many of them will claim to be Christians, and attend church, too.

Now notice that this mob of happy-feelings people are not going argue against the pastor using the Bible, because the Bible is pretty clearly against fornication. What they'll do instead is they'll pick out some piece of the Bible that seems unfair, like the slaughter of some group of child-sacrificing pagans, and they'll rail against that Bible passage in order to discredit the Bible's authority on moral questions. And then the good conservative pastor is made to feel bad because he has broken those unwritten laws – he made someone feel bad using this evil book.

No factual claims about God's existence were made. No historical arguments were made. No evidence was presented. The mere fact that the Bible is mean to talk about killing the poor Canaanites is used to prove that the Bible has no moral authority at all, on any issue. "It's mean" entails that *it's false*. And you can have people who read the Bible for devotions, who sing in church, and who lead worship, who think that the Bible is false because it's mean, and it's mean because it can be used to judge people and make them feel bad.

An example

Now consider single motherhood, as in this case.

Excerpt:

> She tells her children to do as she says and not as she does.
>
> But the words of mother of 14 Joanne Watson – who receives more than £2,000 a month in state handouts – have fallen on deaf ears.
>
> Her 15-year-old daughter Mariah is pregnant, the father has 'left the scene', and the youngster is about to start living off benefits.
>
> Mrs Watson, 40, is raising her giant brood alone after parting from her husband John, 46, three years ago, and breaking up with subsequent partner Craig le

> Sauvage, 35, last year.
>
> Despite this, she has still managed to squirrel away enough cash for a £1,600 breast enhancement and a sunbed. She claims she has always encouraged her daughters to use contraception – but, inevitably, it seems they would rather follow the family tradition.
>
> Mariah's pregnancy comes after Mrs Watson's oldest daughter Natasha, 22, got pregnant with her son Branford, now six, when she was 16. Her second eldest daughter Shanice, 19, also got pregnant at 16 with her 22-month-old son Marley.
>
> Mariah says she has no concerns about becoming a teenage mother, as it seems the most natural thing in the world. Initially, she and her child will be supported by the taxpayer.
>
> She is expected to move into a housing complex for single mothers and will receive supplementary benefit and child allowance for her baby.
>
> The youngster, who is due to have a boy, said: 'I'm not nervous. I've been around babies my whole life so I know what to expect and that I can handle it. The father isn't involved and I don't want him to be either. I'm really excited and think I will be a great mum.'

Now there are two responses to this from people who profess to be Christians. The first response, my response, is to make a general argument against having sex before marriage, using the latest statistics to show the harm that fatherlessness causes to children, and more evidence besides. My response is not to pick on any one person, but to set moral boundaries, to make moral judgments against the selfishness of parents, and to not celebrate and subsidize anything that will harm innocent children. I don't want to make anyone person feel bad, I just want to say what the evidence is. However, even a general argument using evidence does make some people feel bad, so I am judged as "mean" for giving my opinion and backing it up with evidence.

But there is another response. This response comes from someone who professes to be a Christian, but they are actually a "God wants me to be happy and to be nice to people so they will like me and then we'll all be happy" person. They would never dream of judging anyone for anything they do. And they are very angry with me for getting my moral rules out of that horrible Bible, and for using facts and evidence to make people feel bad. They believe in *compassion*, which is the idea that says that the moral boundaries of the Bible are false, and that we have to celebrate and subsidize any and every variation on the traditional family, regardless of the harm caused, so that the selfish adults don't feel bad about their destructive choices.

And what do we make of a person who feels that saying "it's wrong" is mean, because it makes a guilty person feel bad? Well, here is the truth. A person who argues against the Bible based on the happy-feelings model is no friend of God, and no friend of the victims of selfish actions. They may think that they are being a good person by affirming the decision of the 15-year old to have a child with no father, but they are not good. Stealing money from their neighbors without providing anything in return isn't good either. They

may satisfied their invented happy-feelings God, but they have grieved the real God, and hurt the real child. And they did it by refusing to set clear moral boundaries.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

April 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to MP3 file)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> His new book "The Edge of Evolution" takes his conclusions further, arguing that the Darwinian processes of random mutation and natural selection are incapable of producing the variation and complexity we see in most of life.
>
> So can we conclude that life was intelligently designed by a creator?
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

I get the impression that Fox learned everything he knows about ID by reading Darwinists.

The MP3 file is here.

The summary below is rated VERY SNARKY.

Summary

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism
- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program
- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent
- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true
- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's

experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah

- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet X!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren't going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

Green firm that got $1.46 billion in bailouts announces 2000 layoffs

April 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Doug Ross linked to this Washington Examiner article about First Solar.

Excerpt:

> First Solar, a solar energy company that received a $1.46 billion loan guarantee from the Department of Energy, announced today that it will layoff 2,000 workers in the United States and world-wide.
>
> The company will "indefinitely idle" four production lines in Malaysia and shutter a plant in Germany. "These actions, combined with other personnel reductions in Europe and the U.S., will reduce First Solar's global workforce by approximately 2,000 positions, about 30 percent of the total," First Solar announced today.
>
> "After a thorough analysis, it is clear the European market has deteriorated to the extent that our operations there are no longer economically sustainable, and maintaining those operations is not in the best long-term interest of our stakeholders," said Mike Ahearn, Chairman and Interim CEO of First Solar, in a statement.
>
> In December, First Solar laid off 100 employees at a Santa Clara , Calif., plant. The DOE has committed $1.46 billion to a project in Riverside County, California expected to create 15 permanent jobs and 550 construction jobs.
>
> The Washington Examiner's Tim Carney reported last month that the Export-Import Bank also subsidizes First Solar, helping the company "to sell solar panels to itself" by having a Canadian solar company "wholly owned" by First Solar by its parent company's products.

Selling solar panels to a wholly-owned Canadian subsidiary??? YES.

Excerpt:

> A heavily subsidized solar company received a U.S. taxpayer loan guarantee to sell solar panels to itself.

> […]First Solar is an Arizona-based manufacturer of solar panels. In 2010, the Obama administration awarded the company $16.3 million to expand its factory in Ohio — a subsidy Democratic Gov. Ted Strickland touted in his failed re-election bid that year.

> Five weeks before the 2010 election, Strickland announced more than a million dollars in job training grants to First Solar. The Ohio Department of Development also lent First Solar $5 million, and the state's Air Quality Development Authority gave the company an additional $10 million loan.

> After First Solar pocketed this $17.3 million in government grants and $15 million in government loans, Ex-Im entered the scene.

> In September 2011, Ex-Im approved $455.7 million in loan guarantees to subsidize the sale of solar panels to two wind farms in Canada. That means if the wind farm ever defaults, the taxpayers pick up the tab, ensuring First Solar gets paid.

> But the buyer, in this case, was First Solar.

> A small corporation called St. Clair Solar owned the wind farm and was the Canadian company buying First Solar's panels. But St. Clair Solar was a wholly owned subsidiary of First Solar. So, basically, First Solar was shipping its own solar panels from Ohio to a solar farm it owned in Canada, and the U.S. taxpayers were subsidizing this "export."

How did this company get such a huge taxpayer-funded bailout from the Obama administration?

Because, like Solyndra and SolarReserve, etc., First Solar is linked to Democrats.

Excerpt:

> First Solar founder and Chairman Michael Ahearn, whom Reuters reported cashed in $68.9 million of his company's stock last month, has donated $123,650, along with his wife, to the Democratic Party and Democratic candidates during the three most recent cycles, mostly in Arizona.
>
> The solar energy giant, the nation's biggest, also spent more than $1.5 million lobbying Congress and the Obama administration since 2009 on the stimulus and subsequent green-jobs plans. This included approximately $400,000 paid to the Washington Tax Group, which also represented Solyndra.

If you click through on that article, you can read about how SolarReserve is linked to former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law, Ronald Pelosi and to Tony Podesta, the brother of John Podesta — who ran Barack Obama's presidential transition team. This is the energy policy of the Obama administration: stop drilling, stop coal, stop nuclear, stop pipelines, and give taxpayer money to people who can get you elected. All the Democrats do is provide bailouts for Democrat-connected businesses and subsidize exploding Chevy Volts built by overpaid unionized auto workers. That's it. That's their plan.

Canadian government to limit environmentalist obstruction of energy development

April 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox Business: the Canadians embrace federalism.

Excerpt:

> The Canadian government released details Tuesday of its plan to dramatically streamline reviews for big energy and mining projects, capping the timeline for federal reviews and ceding more regulatory oversight to the country's provinces.
>
> The Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said for months it would move to speed up the regulatory review of big energy, mining and infrastructure projects. It has expressed frustration at the sometimes-lengthy review timelines for big projects.
>
> Mr. Harper's government said in its annual budget announcement last month that it would cap federal reviews. Resources Minister Joe Oliver released details Tuesday, saying that federally-led hearings would be applied only to major initiatives that risk some environmental harm.
>
> Further, the government said it was prepared to hand over more responsibility for the review to Canadian provinces, so long as their regulations meet or exceed federal standards. Canadian provinces already enjoy considerable regulatory oversight.
>
> "It is counterproductive to have the federal and provincial governments completing separate reviews of the same project," Oliver said in a speech in Toronto.
>
> […]The government had previewed in its budget last month that reviews for major projects would be limited to 24 months. Meanwhile, regular inter-provincial pipeline reviews, as conducted by the National Energy Board, would be limited to 18 months.
>
> Oliver said Tuesday that Enbridge Inc.'s (ENB) proposed Northern Gateway pipeline – which envisions shipping oil from Alberta to Canada's West Coast — would benefit from the quicker review. The line has been mired in stiff opposition from native groups in British Columbia, and the government has accused foreign-funded environmental groups of tying up the project in regulatory hearings. Government officials said the new rules would also limit who could participate as intervenors in the review process.
>
> […]In Toronto, Oliver said the current process is unworkable, with over 40 federal departments involved in reviews. He said he would pare that back to only three federal agencies: the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency; the National Energy Board; and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

> The Canadian process, as it stands, forces investors to go "through hoops and hurdles as far as the eye can see," Oliver said. "We simply have to turn that around."

Canadians don't want to scare businesses away from Canada – they want the jobs to come to Canada. That's the exact opposite of what Obama's socialist "Environmental Protection Agency" does – they regulate energy development, in order to block it or slow it down.

And Canada lowered corporate taxes to 15% compared to our 35% – and their revenues *held steady*.

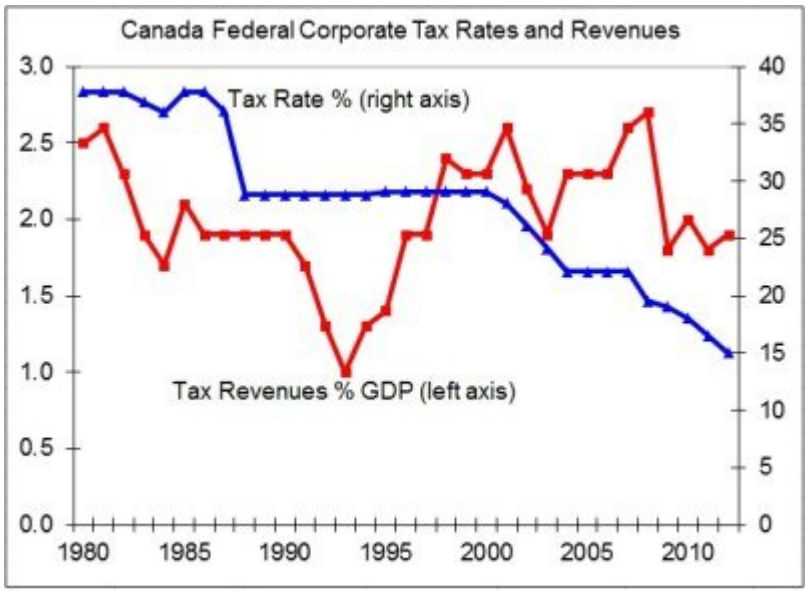

Canada: Corporate tax cuts, not stimulus spending

They cut their corporate tax rate, but then businesses saw the lower rate and just kept on expanding in order to make more money. As businesses grow, they pay more in taxes. So government revenues from taxes *haven't dropped at all,* even with the lower corporate tax rates! More businesses moved in to Canada to capitalize on the lower tax rates, generating revenue for the government. More workers moved off of unemployment and welfare as demand for labor grew, and they started paying income taxes and sales taxes, generating even more revenue for the government. Do you know what makes consumers more confident, so that they spend more? Having a job. Not being dependent on government.

Look at their unemployment rate:

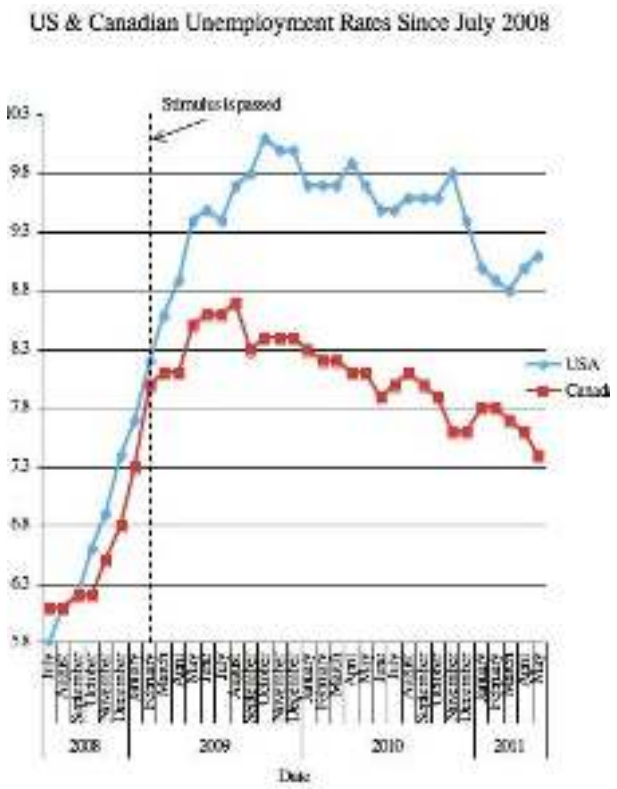

Canada and US unemployment rates

When we embraced “stimulus” spending, they went for the corporate tax cuts. Our unemployment rate used to be LOWER than theirs, before Pelosi and Reid took over Congress in January 2007. Now we are HIGHER than they are. That’s not rhetoric – that’s data. Even though Canada’s economy is linked to ours, and has suffered as a result of that, they have been signing free trade deals left, right and center. They did this in order to decouple themselves from our collapsing economy, massive debt and devalued currency. Barack Obama, of course, opposes free trade. He has to – he’s in the back pocket of the socialist labor unions.

Free trade empire: (click for larger image)

Canada: Free Trade Empire

What a contrast Canada's energy policy makes with Obama's politicized "Cash for Cronies" energy policy. But then again, Canada hired a conservative right-wing capitalist economist to run their country. We could have just done the same and put in economists like Thomas Sowell or Walter Williams to run our economy, but we put in an unqualified community organizer instead.

Brian Auten interviews pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf

April 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about making abortion unthinkable

Scott Klusendorf is a tough, practical pro-life debater. When you listen to him talk about moral issues, it's like listening to Tim Tebow talk about running the two-minute offense. Even if you are not into bio-ethics, you will have a good time listening to him work through the topics. Anyone who likes to understand issues *strategically* and *operationally* will enjoy this interview. It's extremely practical because Scott is the top pro-life debater in the world. He has had to defend all of his views on the field.

Details:

> Today's interview is witth Scott Klusendorf, president of Life Training Institute. LTI is the first place to look for excellent resources to get better equipped to defend the pro-life position. Scott talks about defining abortion and its terms, the issue of the debate, the legal history of abortion, defending the pro-life view using science and philosophy, the four pillars of the pro-life argument, answering a litany of objections to the pro-life position, the right and wrong use of emotional appeals, taking on the right tone in the debate, how to get better equipped, and more.

Click here to get the 45 minute interview. The article he mentions "How to Defend Your Pro-Life Views in 5 Minutes or Less" is worth the read, and it's a good summary of some of the points he makes in the lecture.

If you like this interview, please be sure and buy the best *basic* book on pro-life apologetics – Scott Klusendorf's "The Case for Life". I do have to mention that Scott is an evangelical Christian. Evangelicals are very much into understanding and debating pro-life and pro-marriage positions – we want to understand and we want to explain why we believe what we believe.

Learn more by reading

You can learn more by reading basic pro-life apologetics… from Francis Beckwith. You might recognize Frank Beckwith as the author of "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice". He wrote that book for Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal.

Here are four essays that answer common arguments in favor of legalized abortion.

Part I. The Appeal to Pity

Excerpt:

> Anyone who keeps up with the many pro-choice demonstrations in the United States cannot help but see on pro-choice placards and buttons a drawing of the infamous coat hanger. This symbol of the pro-choice movement represents the many women who were harmed or killed because they either performed illegal abortions on themselves (i.e., the surgery was performed with a "coat hanger") or went to unscrupulous physicians (or "back-alley butchers"). Hence, as the argument goes, if abortion is made illegal, then women will once again be harmed. Needless to say, this argument serves a powerful rhetorical purpose. Although the thought of finding a deceased young woman with a bloody coat hanger dangling between her legs is — to say the least — unpleasant, powerful and emotionally charged rhetoric does not a good argument make.
>
> The chief reason this argument fails is because it commits the fallacy of **begging the question**. In fact, as we shall see, this fallacy seems to lurk behind a good percentage of the popular arguments for the pro-choice position. One begs the question when one assumes what one is trying to prove. Another way of putting it is to say that the arguer is **reasoning in a circle**. For example, if one **concludes** that the Boston Celtics are the best team because no team is as good, one is not giving any reasons for this belief other than the conclusion one is trying to prove, since to claim that a team is the **best team** is exactly the same as saying that **no team is as good**.
>
> The question-begging nature of the coat-hanger argument is not difficult to discern: only by assuming that the unborn are not fully human does the argument work. If the unborn are not fully human, then the pro-choice advocate has a legitimate concern, just as one would have in overturning a law forbidding appendicitis operations if countless people were needlessly dying of both appendicitis and illegal operations. But if the unborn **are** fully human, this pro-choice argument is tantamount to saying that because people die or are harmed

> while killing other people, the state should make it safe for them to do so.

Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem

Excerpt:

> A woman who becomes pregnant due to an act of either rape or incest is the victim of a horribly violent and morally reprehensible crime. Although pregnancy as a result of either rape or incest is extremely rare, **[1]** there is no getting around the fact that pregnancy does occur in some instances.
>
> […]Despite its forceful appeal to our sympathies, there are several problems with this argument. First, it is not relevant to the case for abortion on demand, the position defended by the popular pro-choice movement. This position states that a woman has a **right** to have an abortion for **any** reason she prefers during the entire nine months of pregnancy, whether it be for gender-selection, convenience, or rape. **[3]** To argue for abortion on demand from the hard cases of rape and incest is like trying to argue for the elimination of traffic laws from the fact that one might have to violate some of them in rare circumstances, such as when one's spouse or child needs to be rushed to the hospital. Proving an exception does not establish a general rule.
>
> […]Fourth, this argument begs the question by assuming that the unborn is not fully human. For if the unborn is fully human, then we must weigh the relieving of the woman's mental suffering against the right-to-life of an innocent human being. **And homicide of another is never justified to relieve one of emotional distress**. Although such a judgment is indeed anguishing, we must not forget that the same innocent unborn entity that the career-oriented woman will abort in order to avoid interference with a job promotion is biologically and morally indistinguishable from the unborn entity that results from an act of rape or incest. And since abortion for career advancement cannot be justified if the unborn entity is fully human, abortion cannot be justified in the cases of rape and incest. In both cases abortion results in the death of an innocent human life. As Dr. Bernard Nathanson has written, "The unwanted pregnancy flows biologically from the sexual act, but not morally from it." **[5]**Hence, this argument, like the ones we have already covered in this series, is successful only if the unborn are not fully human.

Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?

(No excerpt)

Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Excerpt:

> Some ethicists argue that the unborn becomes fully human sometime after brain development has begun, when it becomes **sentient**: capable of experiencing sensations such as pain. The reason for choosing sentience as the criterion is

that a being that cannot experience anything (i.e., a presentient unborn entity) cannot be harmed. Of course, if this position is correct, then the unborn becomes fully human probably during the second trimester and at least by the third trimester. Therefore, one does not violate anyone's rights when one aborts a nonsentient unborn entity. **[13]**

There are several problems with this argument. First, it confuses harm with hurt and the experience of harm with the reality of harm. **[14]** One can be harmed without experiencing the hurt that sometimes follows from that harm, and which we often mistake for the harm itself. For example, a temporarily comatose person who is suffocated to death "experiences no harm," but he is nevertheless harmed. Hence, one does not have to **experience** harm, which is sometimes manifested in hurt, in order to be truly harmed.

Second, if sentience is the criterion of full humanness, then the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping would all have to be declared nonpersons. Like the presentient unborn, these individuals are all at the moment nonsentient though they have the natural inherent capacity to be sentient. Yet to countenance their executions would be morally reprehensible. Therefore, one cannot countenance the execution of some unborn entities simply because they are not **currently** sentient.

Someone may reply that while these objections make important points, there is a problem of false analogy in the second objection: the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping **once functioned** as sentient beings, though they are now in a temporary state of nonsentience. The presentient unborn, on the other hand, were **never** sentient. Hence, one is fully human if one was sentient "in the past" and will probably become sentient again in the future, but this cannot be said of the **pre**sentient unborn.

There are at least three problems with this response. First, to claim that a person can be sentient, become nonsentient, and then return to sentience is to assume there is some underlying personal unity to this individual that enables us to say that the person who has returned to sentience is the **same** person who was sentient prior to becoming nonsentient. But this would mean that sentience is not a necessary condition for personhood. (Neither is it a sufficient condition, for that matter, since nonhuman animals are sentient.) Consequently, it does not make sense to say that a person comes into existence when sentience arises, but it does make sense to say that a fully human entity is a person who has the natural inherent capacity to give rise to sentience. A presentient unborn human entity **does** have this capacity. Therefore, an ordinary unborn human entity is a person, and hence, fully human.

Second, Ray points out that this attempt to exclude many of the unborn from the class of the fully human is "**ad hoc** and counterintuitive." He asks us to "consider the treatment of comatose patients. We would not discriminate against one

> merely for rarely or never having been sentient in the past while another otherwise comparable patient had been sentient….In such cases, potential counts for everything." **[15]**
>
> Third, why should sentience "in the past" be the decisive factor in deciding whether an entity is fully human when the presentient human being "is one with a **natural, inherent** capacity for performing personal acts?" **[16]** Since we have already seen that one does not have to experience harm in order to be harmed, it seems more consistent with our moral sensibilities to assert that what makes it wrong to kill the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, the momentarily unconscious, and the presentient unborn is that they all possess the natural inherent capacity to perform personal acts. And what makes it morally right to kill plants and to pull the plug on the respirator-dependent brain dead, who were sentient "in the past," is that their deaths cannot deprive them of their natural inherent capacity to function as persons, since they do not possess such a capacity.

These four essays are a very good introduction to common responses to pro-abortion arguments. I recommend that people get familiar with this, as once you look into it, you will see that the abortion issue can be debated with as much confidence as William Lane Craig defends Christian theism. You will have the same access to scientific evidence and rational arguments on this topic, and so you will have the upper hand. And that's fun.

Obama tries to take credit for Ohio's resurgence under John Kasich

April 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

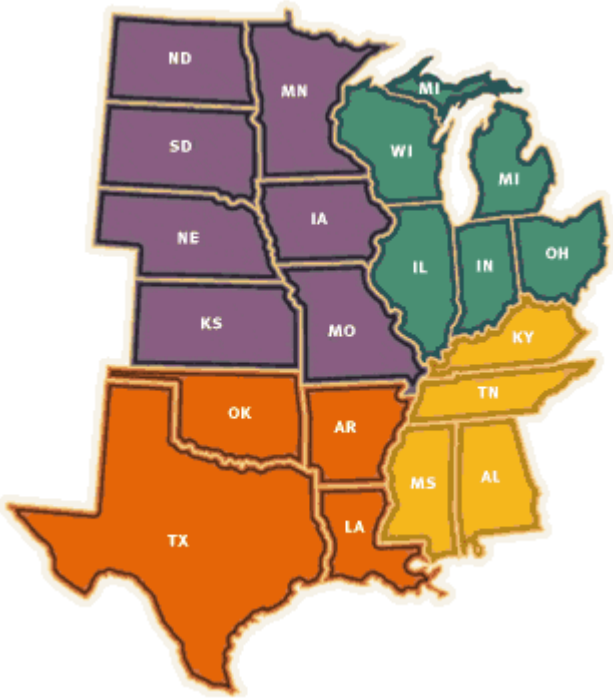

Central United States
Doug Ross writes about it at Director Blue.

Excerpt:

> In celebrating Ohio's comeback, Obama is unintentionally repudiating his own policies. It turns out that, in spite of Obama, Ohio is 4th in the nation in job creation and tops in the Midwest. In the previous four years before Republican Gov. Kasich came into office, Ohio was 48th.
>
> Even the states that are ahead of Ohio in job creation are *far larger*. Check out the other members of the top five job-creating states: Texas, New York, California and Florida. All are far more populous than Ohio. Florida, for instance, has 6.5 million more people, yet Ohio edged it out in job creation.
>
> In fact, February's BLS data showed that Ohio created *more jobs than any other state*. When was the last time that happened? Can't tell, because the BLS doesn't offer data prior to the Clinton era, so it's been at least that long.
>
> In short, Ohio proves that conservative fiscal policies work *in spite* of Barack Obama. While Obama's "leadership" destroyed America's pristine AAA credit rating, S&P was simultaneously *upgrading* Ohio's rating.
>
> […]Kasich has a damn good record when it comes to fiscal policies. Bill Clinton won't ever admit it in public, but the real architect of the much-ballyhooed 'Clinton Surplus' was none other than John Kasich, the Paul Ryan of Newt

> Gingrich’s House of Representatives.

John Kasich is one of three governors that I am watching closely. The other two really good ones are Scott Walker in Wisconsin and Bobby Jindal in Louisiana. I personally think that Kasich is the best governor in the United States of America. And Ohio has a great Senate candidate too, named Josh Mandel.

How well did tax hikes for the rich work in California?

April 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Art Laffer explains in Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> According to a new report from the Golden State's Franchise Tax Board, the top 1% of earners paid $25.7 billion in state income taxes in 2007. Two years later, the most recent for which data are available, that figure dropped by half — to $12.3 billion.
>
> Researchers note that the economic downturn contributed to this drop. But that's not the only cause. A huge number of high-income taxpayers have simply left the state.
>
> Between 1992 and 2008, California suffered a net loss of 869,000 tax filers. About 3.5 million moved into California, while 4.4 million left.
>
> Those that left were disproportionately wealthy. The average adjusted gross income for people leaving the state over that period was $44,700. Meanwhile, the average person moving into California posted income of just $38,600.
>
> So California lost wealthier, more productive residents. And poorer, less-productive folks took their places — some of them, at least.
>
> Smothered under a growing thicket of taxes and regulations, the Golden State's entrepreneurs and top earners have sought friendlier climes — taking their incomes and the taxes they pay with them.
>
> For many people, moving out of California is equivalent to getting a big raise — because their tax rates plummet. Of the top nine states Californians are flocking to, the average top personal income tax rate is 3.44%. California's is nearly triple that, at 10.3%.
>
> Also, among those nine states, the corporate tax rate averages 4.59% vs. California's 8.84%. And their combined state and local tax burden is 9%, versus California's 11%.

Similarly, if tax rats get to be too high, people will just work harder at getting their capital out of the country. In the case of businesses, they will stop hiring people here and instead open factories and plants in other low-tax countries. It's socialism that causes outsourcing – taxing and regulating businesses causes them to leave or expand elsewhere.

What’s the real cause of obesity in children?

April 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ari send me an article from the New York Times.

Excerpt:

> It has become an article of faith among some policy makers and advocates, including Michelle Obama, that poor urban neighborhoods are food deserts, bereft of fresh fruits and vegetables.
>
> But two new studies have found something unexpected. Such neighborhoods not only have more fast food restaurants and convenience stores than more affluent ones, but more grocery stores, supermarkets and full-service restaurants, too. And there is no relationship between the type of food being sold in a neighborhood and obesity among its children and adolescents.
>
> Within a couple of miles of almost any urban neighborhood, “you can get basically any type of food,” said Roland Sturm of the RAND Corporation, lead author of one of the studies. “Maybe we should call it a food swamp rather than a desert,” he said.
>
> Some experts say these new findings raise questions about the effectiveness of efforts to combat the obesity epidemic simply by improving access to healthy foods. Despite campaigns to get Americans to exercise more and eat healthier foods, obesity rates have not budged over the past decade, according to recently released federal data.
>
> “It is always easy to advocate for more grocery stores,” said Kelly D. Brownell, director of Yale University’s Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, who was not involved in the studies. “But if you are looking for what you hope will change obesity, healthy food access is probably just wishful thinking.”
>
> Advocates have long called for more supermarkets in poor neighborhoods and questioned the quality of the food that is available. And Mrs. Obama has made elimination of food deserts an element of her broader campaign against childhood obesity, Let’s Move, winning praise from Democrats and even some Republicans, and denunciations from conservative commentators and bloggers who have cited it as yet another example of the nanny state.
>
> […]In one neighborhood in Camden, N.J., where 80 percent of children are eligible for a free school lunch, children bought empanadas, sodas and candy at a grocer, while adults said they had no trouble finding produce. Wedged in among fast food restaurants, convenience stores, sit-down restaurants, take-out Chinese and pizza parlors were three places with abundant produce: Pathmark and Save-A-Lot supermarkets and a produce stand.

Wow! So there is fresh produce everywhere! Why aren’t the children eating it?

Here's another article Ari sent me from City Journal, by Theodore Dalrymple. Excerpt:

> About two-thirds of these malnourished young men take drugs, upon which they spend sums of money that, however obtained, would secure them nightly banquets. The drugs they take suppress their appetite: the nausea induced by heroin inhibits the desire to eat, while cocaine and its derivatives suppress it altogether. The prostitutes who stand on the street corners not far from where I live—they work a shift system and commute in from a nearby town in buses chartered by their pimps—are likewise grossly malnourished (they often end up in my hospital), and for the same reason. You'd think famine were stalking the land.
>
> Not all the malnourished are drug-takers, however. It is when you inquire into eating habits, not just recent but throughout entire lifetimes, that all this malnutrition begins to make sense. The trail is a short one between modern malnutrition and modern family and sexual relations.
>
> Take the young burglar whom I saw in the prison last week. There was nothing remarkable about his case: on the contrary, he was, if I may put it thus, an average British burglar. And his story was one that I have heard a thousand times at least. Here, if anywhere, is the true banality of evil.
>
> He smoked heroin, but the connection between his habit and his criminality was not what is conventionally assumed: that his addiction produced a craving so strong, and a need to avoid withdrawal symptoms so imperative, that resort to crime was his only choice. On the contrary—and as is usually the case—his criminal record started well before he took to heroin. Indeed, his decision to take heroin was itself a continuation, an almost logical development, of his choice of the criminal life.
>
> He was thin and malnourished in the manner I have described. Five feet ten, he weighed just over 100 pounds. He told me what many young men in his situation have told me, that he asked the court not to grant him bail, so that he could recover his health in prison—something that he knew he would never do outside. A few months of incarceration would set him up nicely to indulge in heroin on his release. Prison is the health farm of the slums.
>
> I examined him and said to him, "You don't eat."
>
> "Not much," he said. "I don't feel like it."
>
> "And when you do eat, what do you eat?"
>
> "Crisps [potato chips] and chocolate."
>
> This pattern, however, was not the heroin talking, as addicts sometimes put it. Rather, it was the story of his life.
>
> He had never known his father, who had not even achieved the status of myth in his mind. His father's existence was more of a logical deduction, the product of

> the syllogism that runs: all humans have fathers, I am a human, therefore I have a father. To make up for it, he had known stepfathers aplenty, the last of whom was in a steady, though violent, relationship with his mother, a relationship that required the frequent intervention of the police to prevent its premature end through murder. He had left home when he was 16 because his stepfather had made it clear that he was *de trop*.
>
> I asked the young man whether his mother had ever cooked for him.
>
> “Not since my stepfather arrived. She would cook for him, like, but not for us children.”
>
> I asked him what they—he and his brothers and sisters—had eaten and how they had eaten it.
>
> “We’d just eat whatever there was,” he said. “We’d look for something whenever we was hungry.”
>
> “And what was there?”
>
> “Bread, cereals, chocolate—that kind of thing.”
>
> “So you never sat round a table and ate a meal together?”
>
> “No.”
>
> In fact, he told me that he had never once eaten at a table with others in the last 15 years. Eating was for him a solitary vice, something done almost furtively, with no pleasure attached to it and certainly not as a social event. The street was his principal dining room, as well as his trash can: and as far as food was concerned, he was more a hunter-gatherer than a man living in a highly evolved society.

Maybe the solution to the problem of poor eating habits isn’t more government at all. Maybe the solution is more chastity and more marriage and more traditional families. More mothers and fathers in the home, and more family friendly policies like shared parenting, school choice and income-splitting. The UK just rejected that.

Iowa Republicans ban taxpayer-funding of abortion

April 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news from Iowa, as reported by Caffeinated Thoughts.

Excerpt:

> The Iowa House passed on a 58-37 vote an amendment (H-8489) to the SF 2336 the Health and Human Services appropriations bill. The amendment provided clear and strong language which defunds abortion of state and federal family planning funds with the only exception being to save the life of the mother. It removes exceptions for rape and incest, as well as, fetal abnormalities. It also largely defunds abortion providers in the state of Iowa. The amendment reads:
>
> > A department shall not distribute state or federal family planning funds under this section to any entity that performs abortions or that maintains or operates a facility where abortions are performed.
>
> In addition all state departments that distribute state and federal family planning money are required to report to the Governor and the General Assembly who received state or federal family planning funds. If they do distribute state or federal family planning funds to an entity that doesn't provide primary health services they have to explain why it was necessary to prevent severe limitation or elimination to family planning services to that region of the state. This amendment had the full support of the Republican caucus.

Shane also quotes Thomas Jefferson in his post as follows "to compel a man to furnish funds for the propagation of ideas he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical". I think that de-funding abortion is a great first step to reducing the number of abortions, and particularly sensible in a time of fiscal crisis. This is common sense.

William Lane Craig vs Klemens Kappel: Does God Exist?

April 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: I found the video on Youtube: (H/T Joona)

Apologetics 315 has the audio here.

Here's a debate summary (not snarky) from William Lane Craig's recent trip to Denmark.

Excerpt:

> After this Prof. Kappel compared **God** to **other mythical beings** like Thor or Aphrodite in effort to show the absurdity of such reasoning. Afterwards he explained that we ought to give space to science and common sense that tells us that such creatures do not exist and even though there are areas that science cannot yet give account for, we ought to stay careful in filling them with God. He stated that he**will not respond to the arguments given by Prof. Craig** for we should not give them so much credit, rather he will only give reasons to show why atheism is a better option. For **it is most likely impossible to show somehow with arguments that God does not exist.** Quote: "*Not to persuade you, but to illustrate*".
>
> […]Then he showed the **variety of religions** still present, but also those which are extinct and built his case around doubting the relevance of any religion since there are so many, finishing with the question: *"Why should we then consider atheism and theism equal?"* Then he proposed that the **burden of proof** thus **lies on the side of theism**.
>
> […]Kappel answered with repeating the controversy behind Craig's premises, putting them into a less certain light. In effort to give an alternative explanation to beginning of the universe he simply stated, that he does not find it irrational to believe that **universe just did not have a cause.**

My goodness, even I can list ten arguments for atheism… every Christian ought to know at least ten arguments for atheism from reading all the atheists we have to read to qualify as Christian apologists. It's our job to know both sides, otherwise how could we even know why we believe what we believe?

The three things the Danish guy said are not good arguments:

- I don't have to think of any reasons and evidence to substantiate what I believe, but you do
- If people disagree about a truth claim, then no one can know whether it's true or not
- The universe popped into being uncaused out of absolute nothing

It made me think about that recent post I wrote about how atheists seem to worry more

about having autonomy to make themselves happy than they worry about changing their beliefs and values to fit reality. I don't get the impression that they have been convinced into their view. It's more like they start with wanting to make themselves happy and then believe whatever they have to believe in order to make sure that nothing blocks that pursuit of pleasure.

Anyway, I found that debate summary in Brian Auten's Weekly Apologetics Bonus Links. There are many more goodies in there!

Please come back tonight, as the Friday Movie this week is one of my favorite movies. In fact, it's a movie I use when courting, and I explain a little about how I am like the main character.

Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)

April 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB rating: [7.4/10]

Description:

> Cyrano de Bergerac is a Parisian poet and swashbuckler with a large nose of which he is self-conscious, but pretends to be proud of. He is madly in love with his "friendly cousin" (they were not actually related as cousins), the beautiful Roxane; however, he does not believe she will requite his love because he considers himself physically unattractive. Soon, he finds that Roxane has become infatuated with Christian de Neuvillette, a dashing new recruit to the Cadets de Gascogne, the military unit of which Cyrano is the captain. Christian however, despite his good looks, is tongue-tied when speaking with women. Seeing an opportunity to vicariously declare his love for Roxane, he decides to aid Christian, who does not know how to court a woman and gain her love.

Gascony (*Gasgogne* in French) is the south-west of France, and Normandy is in the north of France. Cyrano and the other cadets are from Gascony, but Christian is from Normandy.

This movie is very special to me, because I share many of the character traits and experiences of Cyrano. In fact, whenever I want to explain myself to a woman, I show her this movie and highlight certain parts. Like me, Cyrano has a distant relationship with his mother, and no sisters. Like me, his favorite color is white. For him, it symbolizes independence. For me, it symbolizes independence and also chastity, fidelity and secrecy . He wears a white plume in his hat, symbolizing his independence.

At one point in the movie, Cyrano is shown to be fond of making enemies rather than friends, because he resents the way that people are constantly trying to make friends and trying to make people like them. I have that same view. I get very annoyed with Christians who hide their convictions about truth and morality in public in order to be liked by others. In fact, I think that the two biggest challenges to being a Christian are the expectation that if God is real, then he will make you happy and the expectation that following Jesus will make people like you. It's much better if Christians expect to not be happy and to not be liked – that's the normal Christian life. Many Christians fall away from their faith because they feel that God should make them happy and that people should like them.

I wish that everyone watching the movie could understand French, because Cyrano always speaks in rhymes in the French.

Here is one of my favorite parts:

> Annoying person:

> Quoi, pas un grand seigneur pour couvrir de son nom?…
>
> Cyrano, angry:
> Non, ai-je dit deux fois. Faut-il donc que je trisse?
> Non, pas de protecteur…
> (la main son epee)
> Mais une protectrice!

He is asked by someone how he expects to survive after he has offended some fool who is protected by a powerful nobleman. Does Cyrano have a powerful protector? His reply: "No, I have no patron… but a patroness" while putting his hand on his sword. In other productions of the play, like this one, he draws his sword.

Cyrano is also very lonely, and finds women very mysterious, and therefore very desirable.

> CYRANO:
> Regarde-moi, mon cher, et dis quelle esperance
> Pourrait bien me laisser cette protuberance !
> Oh ! je ne me fais pas d'illusion !–Parbleu,
> Oui, quelquefois, je m'attendris, dans le soir bleu;
> J'entre en quelque jardin oa[1] l'heure se parfume;
> Avec mon pauvre grand diable de nez je hume
> L'avril,–je suis des yeux, sous un rayon d'argent,
> Au bras d'un cavalier, quelque femme, en songeant
> Que pour marcher, a petits pas, dans de la lune,
> Aussi moi j'aimerais au bras en avoir une,
> Je m'exalte, j'oublie. . . et j'apercois soudain
> L'ombre de mon profil sur le mur du jardin !

Translation:

> CYRANO:
> Look well at me–then tell me, with what hope
> This vile protuberance can inspire my heart!
> I do not lull me with illusions–yet
> At times I'm weak: in evening hours dim
> I enter some fair pleasance, perfumed sweet;
> With my poor ugly devil of a nose
> I scent spring's essence–in the silver rays
> I see some knight–a lady on his arm,
> And think 'To saunter thus 'neath the moonshine,
> I were fain to have my lady, too, beside!'
> Thought soars to ecstasy. . . O sudden fall!
> –The shadow of my profile on the wall!

It's a bit sad to me that you guys are not getting the original French, but if you watch the

1990 version of the movie with subtitles, you can at least hear the rhymes. Here's the play in French and in English for those who prefer to read rather than watch. If you read the play, you get more details but you lose the swordfights. Cyrano is the best swordsman in Paris, and not afraid to use his sword to make a point.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

What is the case for intelligent design?

April 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Everyone knows that blog posts and Java programs are the result of an intelligent agent, who arranges symbols into long, improbable sequences that have function. I write blog posts and I write Java programs, and both are the result of my intelligence sequencing letters by typing into my keyboard. Now what should we infer if we look at the universe and we see similar sequences that have functions?

This article from Evolution News explains how a person can look at the universe, find functional sequences of symbols, and infer a designer. (H/T J Warner Wallace of Please Convince Me)

Excerpt:

> Intelligent design is a scientific theory that holds some aspects of life and the universe are best explained by reference to an intelligent cause. Why? Because they contain the type of complexity and information that in our experience comes only from intelligence.
>
> As a result, intelligent-design theorists begin by studying how intelligent agents act when they design things. Intelligence is a process, or a mechanism, which we can observe at work in the world around us. Human designers make a great dataset for studying how intelligent agency works.
>
> When we study the actions of humans, we learn that intelligent agents produce high levels of complex and specified information (CSI). Something is complex if it's unlikely, and specified if it matches some independent pattern. William Dembski and Stephen Meyer explain that in our experience, only intelligent agents produce this type of information:
>
> - "[T]he defining feature of intelligent causes is their ability to create novel information and, in particular, specified complexity." (William A. Dembski, *No Free Lunch: Why Specified Complexity Cannot Be Purchased without Intelligence*, p. xiv (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2002).)
> - "Agents can arrange matter with distant goals in mind. In their use of language, they routinely 'find' highly isolated and improbable functional sequences amid vast spaces of combinatorial possibilities." (Stephen C. Meyer, "The Cambrian Information Explosion," in*Debating Design* (edited by Michael Ruse and William Dembski; Cambridge University Press 2004).)
>
> Meyer further explains that in our experience, only intelligence produces high levels of CSI:
>
> **[W]e have repeated experience of rational and conscious agents — in particular ourselves — generating or causing increases in complex specified information, both in the form of sequence-specific lines of**

> **code and in the form of hierarchically arranged systems of parts. … Our experience-based knowledge of information-flow confirms that systems with large amounts of specified complexity (especially codes and languages) invariably originate from an intelligent source, from a mind or personal agent." (Stephen C. Meyer, "The origin of biological information and the higher taxonomic categories," *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*, Vol. 117(2):213-239 (2004).)Thus, in our experience, high levels of complex and specified information — such as in codes and languages — arise only from intelligence. By assessing whether natural structures contain the type of complexity — high CSI — that in our experience comes only from intelligence, we can construct a positive, testable case for design.**
>
> And what happens when we study nature? Well, the past 60 years of biology research have uncovered that life is fundamentally based upon:
>
> - A vast amount of complex and specified information encoded in a biochemical language;
> - A computer-like system of commands and codes that processes the information.
> - Molecular machines and multi-machine systems.
>
> But where in our experience do things like language, complex and specified information, programming code, or machines come from? They have one and only one known source: intelligence.

One of the strangest things about intelligent design is how many people use the phrase without even being able to define it or point to an academic book or paper where the concept is defined. There are several places where information is found in nature: the origin of life ("biological information") and Cambrian explosion ("higher taxonomic categories") are two of them. There is no known naturalistic method of producing large amounts of functional information in these two areas. But we know that human intelligence are capable of creating the sequences – we've seen it done. Intelligent design is the view that functional information sequences in nature are the result of intelligence. That's all we know that can produce it.

Do objective moral values really exist? Is moral relativism true?

April 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neil Shenvi has written an article about it on his apologetics web page.

Thesis:

> Do objective moral values exist? Many people in our culture today would say that they do not. Morality, says the moral relativist, is constructed by individuals or societies; what is moral for you might not be moral for me. In contrast, the claim of moral realism is that there are objective moral values which specify concepts like good and evil, right and wrong, and which transcend cultures and individuals. To my surprise, I found very little information on the Internet presenting evidence for moral realism, in spite of the fact that it is the majority position of academic philosophers. Although I do believe that we can have immediate personal knowledge through our conscience that objective moral values exist, I believe that there are also several pieces of objective evidence to support this position. Indeed, my claim is that we have many good reasons to believe that objective moral values exist and few -if any- reasons to believe that they do not exist.
>
> In the first section of this essay I will explain what we mean by "objective moral values." I will also emphasize the difference between moral ontology and moral epistemology, and between moral ontology and moral behavior. In the second section, I will present a positive case that objective moral values exist. I hope to show that there are many good reasons to accept the existence of objective moral values. In the third section, I will do something far less theoretical and far more personal; I will try to show that every one of us knows that objective moral values do exist but is surpressing this knowledge. And in the final section I will try to show why we are attracted to moral relativism despite its implausibility.

Outline:

> [L]et's look at the five pieces of evidence that objective moral values exist. If objective moral values exist and we can intuitively perceive them, this hypothesis explains five pieces of empirical evidence
>
> 1. Nearly universally across human cultures, there exist the same basic standards of morality. In addition, there exist in all cultures truly altrustic acts which lead to no personal or genetic benefit.
> 2. The majority of people who explicitly deny the existence of objective morality still act as if objective morality exists.
> 3. There exists a nearly universal human intuition that certain things are objectively right or wrong.

> 4. The majority of philosophers recognize the existence of objective moral facts.
> 5. Many naturalists (like Sam Harris or Shelley Kagan) affirm the existence of objective moral facts, despite the problems inherent in grounding these facts in the natural world.

And more:

> As I said in the first section, the basic premise of moral relativism is that there is no objective standard of moral behavior. All moral behavior is relative to individual persons or cultures; what is “good” or “bad” depends on the person, on the place and time, on the community, and on the culture. No action and no behavior can rightly be termed “bad” or “good” without qualification. Actions are only “good to you” or “bad to you”, “good to this culture” or “bad to this culture.” In the previous section, I tried to show that –based on the evidence– belief in moral relativism is unwarranted. It is theoretically possible to find ways around the evidence presented above, but each of these pieces of evidence seems to clearly point to the existence of objective moral values. In this secion, I will not attempt to show that belief in moral relativism is unwarranted; rather, I will try to show that no one actually believes in moral relativism. To do so, I will ask four questions. Each of them centers around a “thought experiment,” a highly hypothetical situtation which probes our reactions to admittedly unlikely circumstances. I urge the reader to take these questions very seriously.

The moral argument is probably the most intuitive and accessible argument for theism, with the possible exception of the cosmological argument.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

April 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the full debate on video. Hugh Hewitt is the moderator.

Now I think most people are familiar with Christopher Hitchens and his arguments – he is widely regarded as the top atheist debater in the world, and has written bestselling books on atheism. So below is a little more about the Christian debater William Lane Craig. Craig is regarded as the top defender of Christianity in the world, although many people are unfamiliar with his arguments. Here is a written explanation of the five arguments he uses in the debate with Hitchens, if you want to follow along. This is a good debate for any of you who have never seen a debate on God's existence before.

About William Lane Craig

Let's review William Lane Craig's qualifications:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

Here is a partial list of his past debates against the top atheist scholars. Many of those have audio and video. His best recent debate was against the British philosopher Peter Millican. Recommended for advanced students only. For a more basic debate against a very poorly prepared opponent, you can watch the Craig-Atkins debate. Atkins is a retired professor of chemistry from Oxford.

Stephen C. Meyer and Keith Fox debate intelligent design and evolution

April 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable" podcast.

Details:

> Stephen Meyer is a leading proponent of Intelligent Design who directs the Centre for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. His most recent book "Signature in the Cell" claims to show that the DNA code is the product of intelligent mind, not naturalistic processes. Keith Fox is Professor of Biochemistry at Southampton University. He chairs the UK Christians in Science network but disagrees strongly with ID. They debate how life could have originated and whether design is allowed as an explanation in science.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary: (stuff in italics is my snarky paraphrase)

Meyer:

- background and how he got interested in intelligent design
- his research focus is on the origin of life – the first replicator
- summarizes the history of origin of life studies
- authored the book "Signature in the Cell"
- the DNA enigma: where did the information in DNA come from?
- naturalistic explanations of the DNA information have failed
- but intelligent agents are known to be able to produce information
- the best explanation of the information in DNA is that an intelligent agent authored it
- Meyer's book was named by atheist philosopher of science Thomas Nagel as a Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year in 2010
- why is design so controversial? Many people think that Darwin explained why nature appears design
- the Darwinian view is that nature can create the appearance of design using mutation and selection
- however, Darwinian mechanisms cannot explain the origin of the first living cell, it assumes replication, and the origin of life is about where the first replicator comes from

Fox:

- Meyer's argument is not about the evolution of life after the first cell
- Meyer's case for design is about the origin of life

- naturalists do not know a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- there are a number of naturalistic hypotheses for the origin of life, like the RNA-first hypothesis
- maybe in a few years one of them will turn out to be correct
- what intelligent design is arguing from a gap in our current naturalistic knowledge to infer that God intervened in nature

Meyer:

- that's not what intelligent design is at all
- the approach ID theorists use is the inference to best explanation
- you evaluate all explanations, non-intelligent causes and intelligent causes
- you prefer the best possible explanation
- we know that minds are capable of producing information just like the information we find in DNA

Fox:

- living cells replicate, so they have the ability to introduce mutations as they replicate and then some of those mutations can be selected
- so maybe the process of replicating that living cells do created the first living cell
- maybe the first living cell created itself, X brought X into being, self-creation, what's irrational about that?

Meyer:

- the issue is the origin of life – where did the first living cell come from?
- you cannot appeal to the operations that a living cell can perform to explain the origin of the first living cell
- there was no first living cell operating before the first living cell
- there was no replication, mutation or selection before the first living cell
- in fact, in my book I show that there is no known naturalistic mechanism that is able to produce the information needed for the first living cell
- *nothing can create itself, that is self-contradictory*

Fox:

- Well, you are just saying that because something is complex that God did it

Meyer:

- Sadly, no. What I actually said needed to be explained was the information, not complexity
- And we know from software engineering that the process of adding information to code is performed by programmers
- in the absence of any adequate naturalistic explanation for information, we are

justified in taking the explanation that we are familiar with – namely, intelligent agency – based on our uniform, universal experience of what causes information

Fox:

- well, maybe we can appeal to the mutation and selection in existing living cells to explain the origin of the first living cell
- maybe there were living cells before the first living cell, and then these other living cells created the first living cell

Meyer:

- we can't keep invoking mutation and selection when those processes are not operating prior to the origin of the first living cell

Fox:

- well maybe some bare-bones self-replication molecule was a precursor to the first living cell

Meyer:

- even to generate very limited replicator would require a large amount of information
- the argument I am making is – where does the evolution come from?

Fox:

- well, maybe we will think of an explanation for information that is naturalistic in 20 years
- we've thought of explanations to things that were NOT information before
- so maybe we will be able to think of something to explain information based on our ability to explain NOT information before

Moderator: Change topics: the Dover decision

Meyer:

- the Discovery Institute opposed the policy that causes the trial
- the wording of the statute was poor
- the judge was completely wrong in his decision
- young earth creationists used the phrase "intelligent design" to cover their agenda
- intelligent design is an inference using the normal methods of science

Fox:

- intelligent design is a science stopper because it stops looking for a naturalistic explanation
- everything in nature must have a naturalistic explanation
- everything has to be explained using matter and time and chance

- it just has to be that way!!!!

Meyer:

- well, what luck would you have explaining an effect like Mt. Rushmore?
- can you explain that using matter,time and chance?
- Mt. Rushmore was the product of intelligence, not wind and erosion
- similarly, there is information in the cell, and we know that intelligence causes information

Fox:

- So you are saying that we don't understand and therefore an intelligence is necessary?

Meyer:

- no I am saying we DO understand and we are making an inference based on that understanding
- you are the one who is insisting on a material explanation because you pre-suppose materialism
- we know that minds have causal powers, and we can infer mind as an explanation from information

Fox:

- well nature is a seamless chain of material causes and effects

Meyer:

- agents can act without violating the laws of nature
- even humans can act as intelligent agents to create information in books, and they don't violate the laws of nature
- intelligent causes are real, and they explain effects in nature

Fox:

- you're trying to impose on science something to do with meaning and purpose

Meyer:

- no that's not what we're doing, we're inferring from from the fact that we ourselves are known causes of information to the fact that an intelligence cause is the best explanation for information in the cell

Fox:

- *but I am a materialist*, I need a materialist explanation

Meyer:

- mind IS an answer to the how question
- we infer to mind in many other scientific disciplines, like cryptography, archaeology, etc.
- a materialist might accuse an archaeologist of engaging in a “scribe-of-the-gaps” argument, but the best explanation of an artifact with information is a scribe
- we are inferring that mind is the cause from the nature of the effect: information

Moderator: is it appropriate to call DNA “information”
Fox:

- well DNA is just a molecular polymer, any reference to information is just by analogy

Meyer:

- DNA is a molecular polymer, but it also exhibits the property of specified complexity
- the arrangement of bases, which function as machine instructions in a software program, for performings task in the cell
- we have observed that the property of specified complexity always comes from an intelligence

Fox:

- well, maybe there are other sequences that would work, so maybe it’s really not uncommon to develop functioning sequences by chance alone, without an intelligence

Meyer:

- you can measure how precise the functional specificity is in DNA and proteins

Moderator: is Shannon information the same as functional information
Meyer:

- Shannon information refers to the sequences of digits or symbols that do not necessarily have any function, i.e. – a four character string QSZX has as much Shannon information as WORD. However, only the latter is functional against the pattern of the English language. There are arrangements of DNA bases and amino acids that have the same number of symbols/characters as a functional sequence would have, but they have no biological function – they do not exhibit specified complexity

Fox:

- Well, maybe there are lots and lots of sequences of DNA and proteins so that it is fairly easy to get a functional one by chance

Meyer:

- DNA sequences that are functional are extremely rare, protein sequences are even more rare
- this is not my opinion, this is what the research shows – functional protein sequences are rare

Fox:

- well maybe there are other functional sequences that are occur before the first functional sequence that are precursors to the first functional sequence
- maybe there are billions of years of replication, mutation and selection before the first replication, mutation and selection

Meyer:

- you can't get to the first selectable functional sequence by appealing to precursor selectable functional sequences – there are no selectable functional sequences before the FIRST one
- you have to get the first selectable functional sequence by chance alone, because there is nothing to mutate or select before the first replicator
- the chance hypothesis has been rejected because the minimal amount of information for the simplest replicator is too high to get by chance alone, given the resources, including time, that are available

Moderator: *Keith are you confident that naturalism will be able to substantiate these naturalism-of-the-gap speculations that you offer in response to Meyer's actual science that we have today?*

Fox:

- well, it is hard to know for sure because it was just a fluke event
- but there's nothing irrational or unscientific or miraculous about it – the fluke would have a material explanation
- there is nothing that we can detect that would implicate God, my speculations about a fluke which I cannot observe or measure or test would all be compatible with an atheistic worldview that omits God as a causal entity

Meyer:

- where are those material processes that could account for this fluke then?
- the whole point of this argument is that the information in DNA transcends the material components in the sequence
- it's the arrangement of the material parts/letters/characters/symbols/instructions that needs to be explained

Fox:

- Well, I just have a different philosophy of science that rules out intelligent causation a priori

Meyer:

- Yes, that's the difference between us – you pre-suppose that all explanations of natural phenomena must exclude intelligent causes

There is a bit more where Meyer talks about how parts of the cell are implementations of various design patterns (Gang of Four design patterns) that are used by software architects who design software.

Find more posts on Stephen C. Meyer here.

What is driving the middle class out of California?

April 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tom sent me this article from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Nearly four million more people have left the Golden State in the last two decades than have come from other states. This is a sharp reversal from the 1980s, when 100,000 more Americans were settling in California each year than were leaving. According to Mr. Kotkin, most of those leaving are between the ages of 5 and 14 or 34 to 45. In other words, young families.
>
> The scruffy-looking urban studies professor at Chapman University in Orange, Calif., has been studying and writing on demographic and geographic trends for 30 years. Part of California's dysfunction, he says, stems from state and local government restrictions on development. These policies have artificially limited housing supply and put a premium on real estate in coastal regions.
>
> "Basically, if you don't own a piece of Facebook or Google and you haven't robbed a bank and don't have rich parents, then your chances of being able to buy a house or raise a family in the Bay Area or in most of coastal California is pretty weak," says Mr. Kotkin.
>
> While many middle-class families have moved inland, those regions don't have the same allure or amenities as the coast. People might as well move to Nevada or Texas, where housing and everything else is cheaper and there's no income tax.
>
> And things will only get worse in the coming years as Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown and his green cadre implement their "smart growth" plans to cram the proletariat into high-density housing. "What I find reprehensible beyond belief is that the people pushing [high-density housing] themselves live in single-family homes and often drive very fancy cars, but want everyone else to live like my grandmother did in Brownsville in Brooklyn in the 1920s," Mr. Kotkin declares.
>
> […]Meanwhile, taxes are harming the private economy. According to the Tax Foundation, California has the 48th-worst business tax climate. Its income tax is steeply progressive. Millionaires pay a top rate of 10.3%, the third-highest in the country. But middle-class workers—those who earn more than $48,000—pay a top rate of 9.3%, which is higher than what millionaires pay in 47 states.
>
> And Democrats want to raise taxes even more. Mind you, the November ballot initiative that Mr. Brown is spearheading would primarily hit those whom Democrats call "millionaires" (i.e., people who make more than $250,000 a year). Some Republicans have warned that it will cause a millionaire march out of the state, but Mr. Kotkin says that "people who are at the very high end of the food chain, they're still going to be in Napa. They're still going to be in Silicon Valley.

> They’re still going to be in West L.A.”
>
> That said, “It’s really going to hit the small business owners and the young family that’s trying to accumulate enough to raise a family, maybe send their kids to private school. It’ll kick them in the teeth.”
>
> A worker in Wichita might not consider those earning $250,000 a year middle class, but “if you’re a guy working for a Silicon Valley company and you’re married and you’re thinking about having your first kid, and your family makes 250-k a year, you can’t buy a closet in the Bay Area,” Mr. Kotkin says. “But for 250-k a year, you can live pretty damn well in Salt Lake City. And you might be able to send your kids to public schools and own a three-bedroom, four-bath house.”
>
> According to Mr. Kotkin, these upwardly mobile families are fleeing in droves. As a result, California is turning into a two-and-a-half-class society. On top are the “entrenched incumbents” who inherited their wealth or came to California early and made their money. Then there’s a shrunken middle class of public employees and, miles below, a permanent welfare class. As it stands today, about 40% of Californians don’t pay any income tax and a quarter are on Medicaid.
>
> It’s “a very scary political dynamic,” he says. “One day somebody’s going to put on the ballot, let’s take every penny over $100,000 a year, and you’ll get it through because there’s no real restraint. What you’ve done by exempting people from paying taxes is that they feel no responsibility. That’s certainly a big part of it.
>
> And the welfare recipients, he emphasizes, “aren’t leaving. Why would they? They get much better benefits in California or New York than if they go to Texas. In Texas the expectation is that people work.”
>
> California used to be more like Texas—a jobs magnet. What happened? For one, says the demographer, Californians are now voting more based on social issues and less on fiscal ones than they did when Ronald Reagan was governor 40 years ago. Environmentalists are also more powerful than they used to be. And Mr. Brown facilitated the public-union takeover of the statehouse by allowing state workers to collectively bargain during his first stint as governor in 1977.
>
> Mr. Kotkin also notes that demographic changes are playing a role. As progressive policies drive out moderate and conservative members of the middle class, California’s politics become even more left-wing. It’s a classic case of natural selection, and increasingly the only ones fit to survive in California are the very rich and those who rely on government spending. In a nutshell, “the state is run for the very rich, the very poor, and the public employees.”

Another Wall Street Journal article I just spotted talks about how states with low income taxes have *much higher* population growth rates than states with high income tax rates.

Excerpt:

> Over the past decade, states without an income tax have seen 58% higher population growth than the national average, and more than double the growth of states with the highest income tax rates. Such interstate migration left Texas with four new congressional seats this year and spanked New York and Ohio with a loss of two seats each.
>
> The transfer of economic power and political influence from high-tax states toward low-tax, right-to-work ones is one of America's most momentous demographic changes in decades. Liberal utopias are losing the race for capital. The rich, the middle-class, the ambitious and others are leaving workers' paradises such as Hartford, Buffalo and Providence for Jacksonville, San Antonio and Knoxville.
>
> Illinois, Oregon and California are state practitioners of Obamanomics. All have passed soak-the-rich laws like the Buffett Rule (plus economically harmful regulations, like California's cap-and-trade scheme), and all face big deficits because their economies continue to sink. Illinois has lost one resident every 10 minutes since hiking tax rates in January. California has 10.9% unemployment, having lost 4.8% of its jobs over the past decade.
>
> Now these blue states may raise tax rates again. In California, a union-backed ballot initiative would raise the state's highest tax rate to 13.3%. Union-funded groups in Illinois aren't satisfied with last year's income tax rate hike to 5% from 3%, so they now want to go as high as 11%. That would put them in the big leagues with California and New York. And in Oregon, lawmakers are considering raising the highest rate to 13% from 9.9%. In all of these states, proponents parrot Mr. Obama, insisting that the rich can afford it.
>
> They can, but they can also afford to save hundreds of thousands or more each year by getting out of Dodge. Every time California, Illinois or New York raises taxes on millionaires, Florida, Texas and Tennessee see an influx of rich people who buy homes, start businesses and shop in the local economy.
>
> Republican governors in Florida, Georgia, Idaho, North Dakota, South Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Wisconsin and even Michigan and New Jersey are cutting taxes to lure new businesses and jobs.
>
> Asked why he wants to reduce the cost of doing business in Wisconsin, Gov. Scott Walker replies: "I've never seen a store get more customers by raising its prices, but I've seen customers knock down the doors when they cut prices."
>
> Georgia, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma are now racing to become America's 10th state without an income tax. All of them want what Texas has (almost half of all net new jobs in America over the last decade, for one thing).

This is important because voters need to understand that when you tax and regulate people, they don't just sit there are take it. The same thing can happen at the national

level if we pursue the same policies. People just move their money and businesses out, and eventually, themselves. If young people want to vote for socialists because of abortion, gay marriage and environmentalism, they may find themselves without jobs – without enough money to even support a family.

Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger's critique of cosmic fine-tuning

April 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Victor Stenger is a famous "Internet Infidel" atheist, but what makes him different is that he is has a PhD in physics. He wrote a book published by the atheist publisher Prometheus Press where he explains why he thinks that the universe is not fine-tuned for embodied sentient life.

An Australian physicist named Luke Barnes decided to write a response to his book, and the response is summarized (without the math!) on Uncommon Descent. Barnes has a PhD in Astronomy from Cambridge. He did postdoctoral research in Switzerland at the Institute for Astonomy, and now he is doing more postdoctoral research at the University of Sydney . The response that he wrote does not talk about God, or explanations of why the fine-tuning happened. I have no idea where his convictions are on any of that, because his response just talks about the fine-tuning itself from a scientific point of view.

Here's how Uncommon Descent explains Barnes' response.

Summary:

> Professor Victor Stenger is an American particle physicist and a noted atheist, who popularized the phrase, "Science flies you to the moon. Religion flies you into buildings". Professor Stenger is also the author of several books, including his recent best-seller, The Fallacy of Fine-Tuning: How the Universe is Not Designed for Humanity (Prometheus Books, 2011). Stenger's latest book has been received with great acclaim by atheists: "Stenger has demolished the fine-tuning proponents," writes one enthusiastic Amazon reviewer, adding that the book tells us "how science is able to demonstrate the non-existence of god."
>
> Well, it seems that the great Stenger has finally met his match. Dr. Luke A. Barnes, a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute for Astronomy, ETH Zurich, Switzerland, has written a scathing critique of Stenger's book. I've read refutations in my time, but I have to say, *this one is devastating.*
>
> In his paper, Dr. Barnes takes care to avoid drawing any metaphysical conclusions from the fact of fine-tuning. He has no religious axe to grind. His main concern is simply to establish that the fine-tuning of the universe is real, contrary to the claims of Professor Stenger, who asserts that all of the alleged examples of fine-tuning in our universe can be explained without the need for a multiverse.
>
> Dr. Barnes' ARXIV paper, The Fine-Tuning of the Universe for Intelligent Life (Version 1, December 21, 2011), is available online, and I shall be quoting from it below. Since the paper is quite technical at times, I've omitted mathematical equations and kept the references to physical parameters to a

> minimum, since I simply wish to give readers an *overview* of what Dr. Barnes perceives as the key flaws in Professor Stenger's book.

First, the abstract:

> The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life has received a great deal of attention in recent years, both in the philosophical and scientific literature. The claim is that in the space of possible physical laws, parameters and initial conditions, the set that permits the evolution of intelligent life is very small. I present here a review of the scientific literature, outlining cases of fine-tuning in the classic works of Carter, Carr and Rees, and Barrow and Tipler, as well as more recent work. **To sharpen the discussion, the role of the antagonist will be played by Victor Stenger's recent book *The Fallacy of Fine-Tuning: Why the Universe is Not Designed for Us*.** Stenger claims that all known fine-tuning cases can be explained without the need for a multiverse. Many of Stenger's claims will be found to be highly problematic. We will touch on such issues as the logical necessity of the laws of nature; objectivity, invariance and symmetry; theoretical physics and possible universes; entropy in cosmology; cosmic inflation and initial conditions; galaxy formation; the cosmological constant; stars and their formation; the properties of elementary particles and their effect on chemistry and the macroscopic world; the origin of mass; grand unified theories; and the dimensionality of space and time. I also provide an assessment of the multiverse, noting the significant challenges that it must face. **I do not attempt to defend any conclusion based on the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life.** This paper can be viewed as a critique of Stenger's book, or read independently.

Here's a quote that I wanted to put out there from the paper about how widely accepted fine-tuning is among scientists:

> There are a great many scientists, of varying religious persuasions, who accept that the universe is fine-tuned for life, e.g. Barrow, Carr, Carter, Davies, Dawkins, Deutsch, Ellis, Greene, Guth, Harrison, Hawking, Linde, Page, Penrose, Polkinghorne, Rees, Sandage, Smolin, Susskind, Tegmark, Tipler, Vilenkin, Weinberg, Wheeler, Wilczek. They differ, of course, on what conclusion we should draw from this fact. Stenger, on the other hand, claims that the universe is not fine-tuned.

That is a very diverse list. I know that Sandage, Ellis, Page, Tipler and Polkinghorne are theists. But I also know that Weinberg, Rees, Hawking, Greene, and Dawkins are atheists. So scientists all across the spectrum of worldview admit that the fine-tuning is real.

Now, let's look at Barnes' paper and see why Victor Stenger disagrees with the view of those scientists.

1) Stenger doesn't show why the entropy at the beginning of the universe isn't a case of

fine-tuning:

> **Entropy**
>
> We turn now to cosmology. **The problem of the apparently low entropy of the universe is one of the oldest problems of cosmology.** The fact that the entropy of the universe is not at its theoretical maximum, coupled with the fact that entropy cannot decrease, means that the universe must have started in a very special, low entropy state. (p. 23)
>
> Let's return to Stenger's proposed solution… Stenger takes it for granted that the universe is homogeneous and isotropic. We can see this also in his use of the Friedmann equation, which assumes that space-time is homogeneous and isotropic. Not surprisingly, once homogeneity and isotropy have been assumed, Stenger finds that the solution to the entropy problem is remarkably easy.
>
> **We conclude that Stenger has not only failed to solve the entropy problem; he has failed to comprehend it.** He has presented the problem itself as its solution. Homogeneous, isotropic expansion cannot solve the entropy problem – it is the entropy problem. Stenger's assertion that "the universe starts out with maximum entropy or complete disorder" is false. A homogeneous, isotropic spacetime is an incredibly low entropy state. **Penrose (1989) warned of precisely this brand of failed solution two decades ago.**.. (p. 26)

2) Stenger responds to calculations showing the need for fine-tuning by speculating that future calculations will overturn the ones we have now:

> **The Cosmological Constant, Lambda**
>
> The cosmological constant problem is described in the textbook of Burgess & Moore (2006) as "arguably the most severe theoretical problem in high-energy physics today, as measured by both the difference between observations and theoretical predictions, and by the lack of convincing theoretical ideas which address it". A well-understood and well-tested theory of fundamental physics (Quantum Field Theory – QFT) predicts contributions to the vacuum energy of the universe that are [approx.] 10^120 times greater than the observed total value. Stenger's reply is guided by the following principle:
>
> Any calculation that disagrees with the data by 50 or 120 orders of magnitude is simply wrong and should not be taken seriously. We just have to await the correct calculation. [FOFT p. 219]
>
> This seems indistinguishable from reasoning that the calculation must be wrong since otherwise the cosmological constant would have to be fine-tuned. One could not hope for a more perfect example of begging the question. **More importantly, there is a misunderstanding in Stenger's account of the cosmological constant problem.** The problem is not that physicists have made an incorrect prediction. We can use the term *dark energy* for any form of energy that causes the expansion of the universe to accelerate, including a

> "bare" cosmological constant (see Barnes et al., 2005, for an introduction to dark energy). Cosmological observations constrain the total dark energy. QFT [quantum field theory – VJT] allows us to calculate a number of contributions to the total dark energy from matter fields in the universe. Each of these contributions turns out to be 10^120 times larger than the total. There is no direct theory-vs.-observation contradiction as one is calculating and measuring different things. **The fine-tuning problem is that these different independent contributions, including perhaps some that we don't know about, manage to cancel each other to such an alarming, life-permitting degree.** This is not a straightforward case of Popperian falsification. (pp. 34-35)

3) Stenger doesn't consider the full range of values when deciding if something is fine-tuned or not:

> **Protons, Neutrons, Electrons**
>
> We turn now to the relative masses of the three most important particles in our universe: the proton, neutron and electron, from which atoms are made. Consider first the ratio of the electron to the proton mass, … of which Stenger says: "…we can argue that the electron mass is going to be much smaller than the proton mass in any universe even remotely like ours." [FOFT p. 164] (p. 50)
>
> The fact that Stenger is comparing the electron mass in our universe with the electron mass in universes "like ours" is all the evidence one needs to conclude that **Stenger doesn't understand fine-tuning.** The fact that universes like ours turn out to be rather similar to our universe isn't particularly enlightening. (p. 50)
>
> Finally, and most importantly, note carefully Stenger's conclusion. He states that no fine-tuning is needed for the neutron-proton mass difference in our universe to be approximately equal to the up quark-down quark mass difference in our universe. **Stenger has compared our universe with our universe and found no evidence of fine-tuning. There is no discussion of the life-permitting range**, no discussion of the possible range of [mass(neutron) – mass(proton)] (or its relation to the possible range of [mass(down quark) – mass(up quark)], and thus no relevance to fine-tuning whatsoever. (p. 51)

Those are just a few of the examples in the paper, highlighted in the Uncommon Descent article (emphasis theirs).

By the way, here is a good debate between William Lane Craig and Victor Stenger from 2010 (this is their re-match):

It's very important, I think, for theists and atheists alike to understand the force of the fine-tuning argument, and how *firmly rooted* the fine-tuning argument is in science. Christian theists look to science to ground the way we see the world. And this is really just an extension of Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians to Christians to be ready to dump Christianity if the resurrection didn't happen. If the world isn't the way we say it is, then

there is no point in going through the motions to make parents and church people happy.

UPDATE: Peter Sean Bradley note that Krauss is now walking back his rhetoric in response to criticisms from people like atheist John Horgan.

1 in 2 new graduates are jobless or underemployed

April 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The college class of 2012 is in for a rude welcome to the world of work.
>
> A weak labor market already has left half of young college graduates either jobless or underemployed in positions that don't fully use their skills and knowledge.
>
> Young adults with bachelor's degrees are increasingly scraping by in lower-wage jobs — waiter or waitress, bartender, retail clerk or receptionist, for example — and that's confounding their hopes a degree would pay off despite higher tuition and mounting student loans.
>
> An analysis of government data conducted for The Associated Press lays bare the highly uneven prospects for holders of bachelor's degrees.
>
> Opportunities for college graduates vary widely.
>
> While there's strong demand in science, education and health fields, arts and humanities flounder. Median wages for those with bachelor's degrees are down from 2000, hit by technological changes that are eliminating midlevel jobs such as bank tellers. Most future job openings are projected to be in lower-skilled positions such as home health aides, who can provide personalized attention as the U.S. population ages.
>
> Taking underemployment into consideration, the job prospects for bachelor's degree holders fell last year to the lowest level in more than a decade.
>
> […]You can make more money on average if you go to college, but it's not true for everybody," says Harvard economist Richard Freeman, noting the growing risk of a debt bubble with total U.S. student loan debt surpassing $1 trillion. "If you're not sure what you're going to be doing, it probably bodes well to take some job, if you can get one, and get a sense first of what you want from college."
>
> Andrew Sum, director of the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University who analyzed the numbers, said many people with a bachelor's degree face a double whammy of rising tuition and poor job outcomes. "Simply put, we're failing kids coming out of college," he said, emphasizing that when it comes to jobs, a college major can make all the difference. "We're going to need a lot better job growth and connections to the labor market, otherwise college debt will grow."

That bit about getting a job so you know what you need to study. It's important to get a job – any job – so that you understand what you are supposed to be learning in high

school and college – what employers want! The next most important thing is to have a career mentor – someone to steer you away from subjects like English and ballet and into engineering and science. A trade school is another good choice: nursing or electrical wiring or something like that. Something valuable that employers need – that should be the deciding factor – what employers want you to do for them. Here's a page listing degrees and expected incomes. Engineering, medicine and computer science are the three best fields.

I am still trying to puzzle out *why* young people vote for Democrats so much. I think that they have been brainwashed to think that making moral judgments is wrong, so they keep voting against Republicans who pro-life, pro-marriage, pro-family and pro-personal responsibility. That's what teachers tell them in school – don't have any moral standards, don't make any moral judgments, let the government spend your money for you to be more "fair", etc. So young people vote for Democrats. But voting for Democrats doesn't just weaken the social fabric, it also wrecks the economy. Who do young people expect to work for when they keep voting to bash corporations all the time? Corporations hire young people. It seems stupid to vote against the people who want to pay you to do work.

Now that I think about it, it might be a good idea for social conservatives to be ready to make a case for free market capitalism and limited government, using evidence like this that shows how socialism fails to create economic growth and jobs. Even if people vote for conservatism based on fiscal concerns or foreign policy concerns, it's still going to be helpful to social conservatives. We need to be like Paul and be able to speak intelligently to any audience on a wider variety of topics. Also, I think it helps social conservatives to be seen as competent in areas outside of social conservatism – it's important to have a well-rounded worldview in order to not be perceived as being narrow-minded and ideologically motivated.

Survey: young people losing their Christian faith in record numbers

April 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the very liberal Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> A growing tide of young Americans is drifting away from the religions of their childhood — and most of them are ending up in no religion at all.
>
> One in four young adults choose "unaffiliated" when asked about their religion, according to a new report from the Public Religion Research Institute and Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs.
>
> But most within this unaffiliated group — 55 percent — identified with a religious group when they were younger.
>
> "These younger unaffiliated adults are very nonreligious," said Daniel Cox, PRRI's research director. "They demonstrate much lower levels of religiosity than we see in the general population," including participation in religious rituals or worship services.
>
> Some of them will return to their faiths as they age, "but there's not a lot of evidence that most will come back," added Cox, who said the trend away from organized religion dates back to the early 1990s.
>
> The study of 2,013 Americans ages 18-24 focused on the younger end of the cohort commonly known as the "Millennials" or "Generation Y," which generally includes young adults as old as 29. Interviews were conducted between March 7 and 20.
>
> Across denominations, the net losses were uneven, with Catholics losing the highest proportion of childhood adherents — nearly 8 percent — followed by white mainline Protestant traditions, which lost 5 percent.
>
> Among Catholics, whites were twice as likely as Hispanics to say they are no longer affiliated with the church.
>
> White evangelical and black denominations fared better, with a net loss of about 1 percent. Non-Christian groups posted a modest 1 percent net increase in followers.
>
> But the only group that saw significant growth between childhood and young adulthood was the unaffiliated — a jump from 11 percent to 25 percent.

And this is very interesting:

> An overwhelming majority of white evangelical Protestants (68 percent) said they believe that some things are always wrong, compared to 49 percent of black

> Protestants, 45 percent of Catholics and 35 percent of the unaffiliated.

I’m a non-white evangelical Protestant, and I think that in general, evangelical Protestants are the ones who emphasize theology, apologetics and worldview integration the most. I think that any other church that wants to stop the losses will have to get serious about apologetics and worldview. It’s especially important for churches to emphasize that Christianity is about truth, to emphasize how we know it’s true (science, history) and to explain why some things are wrong and why Hell is fair. We just don’t have the requirements straight right now – too much emphasis on Christian culture and externals, and not enough emphasis on theology and apologetics and moral reasoning. And parents – not pastors – need to take the lead in teaching their own children after church is over.

Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument

April 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest interview from Apologetics 315 is up, and it's a must-listen.

Details:

> Today's interview is with Robin Collins, professor of philosophy at Messiah College. His training is in physics and in philosophy and he is a leading advocate for using the fine-tuning of the universe as a design argument for theism. He talks about his background and training, the fine-tuning argument, the different types of fine-tuning with examples and illustrations (laws, constants and initial conditions), two different ways of presenting the fine-tuning argument, answering common objections to the argument, the uniqueness of life, variations of the multiverse hypothesis, the failure of multiverse theory to explain away fine-tuning, objections to Victor Stenger, upcoming books, simplifying the fine-tuning argument for practical use, common mistakes when presenting the argument, the most common objection (*who designed God?*), and more.

Get the MP3 file from Apologetics 315.

Dr. Collins is extremely cautious and circumspect in his assessment of the fine-tuning argument. He takes the objections to the argument, like the multiverse, seriously and that comes across in the interview. He is familiar with criticisms of the argument and he has engaged with skeptics like Victor Stenger in his published work. I highly recommend it. It is a little more suited to intermediate-level Christians, but not so advanced that it's impossible for non-math beginners to follow the broad thrust of what's being said.

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered

> Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

You can read Robin Collins' testimony here.

The fine-tuning argument

Here's a short article where Collins gives TWO examples of the fine-tuning. He is very modest in his argument, merely asserting that the fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than it is with atheism.

Excerpt:

> Science is commonly thought to have undercut belief in God. As Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg famously remarked, "the more we find out about the universe, the more meaningless it all seems." Yet, the discoveries of modern physics and cosmology in the last 50 years have shown that the structure of the universe is set in an extraordinarily precise way for the existence of life; if its structure were slightly different, even by an extraordinarily small degree, life would not be possible. In many people's minds, the most straightforward explanation of this remarkable fine-tuning is some sort of divine purpose behind our universe.

> This fine-tuning falls into three categories: the fine-tuning of the laws of nature, the fine-tuning of the constants of physics, and the fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe. "Fine-tuning of the laws of nature" refers to the fact that if the universe did not have precisely the right combination of laws, complex intelligent life would be impossible. If there were no universal attractive force (law of gravity), for example, matter would be dispersed throughout the universe and the energy sources (such as stars) needed for life would not exist. Without the strong nuclear force that binds protons and neutrons together in the nucleus, there would not be any atoms with an atomic number greater than hydrogen, and hence no complex molecules needed for life. And without the Pauli-exclusion principle, all electrons would fall to the lowest orbital of an atom, undercutting the kind of complex chemistry that life requires.

> Some fundamental physical numbers governing the structure of the universe—called the constants of physics—also must fall into an exceedingly narrow range for life to exist. For example, many have estimated that the cosmological constant—a fundamental number that governs the expansion rate of empty space—must be precisely set to one part in 10^{120} in order for life to occur; if it were too large, the universe would have expanded too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form, and if it were too small, the universe would have collapsed back on itself. As Stephen Hawking wrote in his book A Brief History of Time, "The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life." Finally, the initial distribution of mass energy at the time of the big bang must have an enormously special configuration for life to

> occur, which Cambridge University mathematical physicist Roger Penrose has calculated to be on the order of one part in $10^{10^{123}}$. This is an unimaginably small number.

I know what you're thinking: How do we know that non-Christian scientists acknowledge the fine-tuning of gravity in the way that Collins describes?

Well, the New Scientist actually talks about the fine-tuning of the force of gravity. And they're not Christians.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe's birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15}at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Here's a very long paper by Collins on the fine-tuning argument, where he answers several objections to the argument, including the multiverse/many-universe hypothesis.

If you want a longer response to the multiverse argument, but you don't want to shell out big bucks for Collins' chapter in the "Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology", then you can just get James Sinclair's essay in "Contending With Christianity's Critics".

Rejecting Christian theism because it’s just too much work

April 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On J Warner Wallace’s Please Convince Me site, I saw that Al Serrato was discussing the possibility of eternal life with an atheist, and I thought some of her response were very helpful to understand why some people are atheists.

Al asks whether it is worth her time to investigate the God question.

She replies:

> “**No, I don’t think it’s worth my investigation. I also don’t think I should spend my time investigating UFO’s, zombies, or Big Foot. I hate things that require lots of time and thought where you are virtually guaranteed not to accomplish anything or get a definitive answer.**“

Al asks her why she is coming to conclusions before examining the evidence.

She replies:

> “Well,” she said, “you are assuming people meet god; that’s a pretty big leap too. Who do you know who has met him? **And I think most believers do so blindly; I don’t believe most of those people do any scholarly inquiry and draw conclusions based on evidence. They believe what they raised on, like me, or what they want to believe.**“

That’s the genetic fallacy, discredit a belief because of the origin of that belief, instead of whether the belief is true or false.

Al then writes this:

> “The fact that people believe what they were raised to believe,” I countered, “does not amount to a real argument. It’s a variant of the genetic fallacy. You’re trying to prove why believers might be wrong – they just were raised that way – without first proving that they are wrong. So, if I told you that I believed the earth was flat, and I was raised that way, you wouldn’t just shrug your shoulders and say I’m entitled to that belief. You would show me evidence that the earth is round and expect me to use reason to conform my view to the evidence. If I told you that you were entitled to that belief but you just believed it because you were raised by some round earthers and you never saw the whole earth so you couldn’t really know, then… you’d start to see how I feel.”
>
> “One last analogy. Let’s say this was 50 years ago, and when I saw you, you were chain smoking cigarettes with your kids always nearby. I know where medical science is headed, so I tell you that you are hurting yourself, and your kids. You respond that no one can really know those things; after all, you can point to doctors who advertise cigarettes and smoke them themselves, and you feel fine

> when you smoke. I point to other doctors who think that its really bad for you. You respond, 'see, it's a tie, so stop bothering me. Each believes what they were raised to believe. Plus, other things can kill me too, so why should I worry about cigarettes? Or, maybe you say that even if I am right, you'll be one of the lucky ones who won't be hurt by it.
>
> Do you see that the conflict between the doctors should not lead you to conclude that neither is right, or that the answer is not knowable? As a friend, should I keep trying to bring you back to the truth about cigarettes, or should I let you persist in believing something that is, in the end, hurting you and your loved ones?"

And here is her response:

> "**Have you ever noticed how so many things are bad/wrong only at certain points in a cycle?** Eat eggs, don't eat eggs; give your kids soy, soy is bad; babies should sleep on their backs, no their stomachs, no their sides, no their backs etc., etc. When my daughter was born I would put her on her back to sleep and when I left the room my mother would put her on her side and when my mother left the room my grandmother would put her on her stomach. **Over time the answer comes full circle**. **Why go around and around with it? What I am saying is not just throw up your hands and quit; what I am saying is that I do what feels right to me and that is the best I can do**. Sometimes I listen to friends (and doctors) and sometimes I don't. **I think the 'answer' to many of these things is unknowable**. At one time it would have been totally unacceptable to all of society for a mother to work and put a child in daycare 10 hours a day. Now, 10 hours of daycare is the norm. I get that most people think that daycare schedule is fine, but I don't. **I make up my own mind by doing what feels right**. **Have you ever considered that the answer doesn't matter? Maybe the search is the whole point and maybe I am done already and you're just slow**.
>
> **I don't think you can prove God like you can prove that the world is round**. To prove the world was really round and have everyone believe, we needed real-time pictures from space. Bring me a picture of god and we'll talk."

Al then replies to her.

So what do we get from this? Well, here are the five reasons she gave. 1) she knows in advance, before investigating, that there is no definitive answer to the question of whether God exists, 2) people believe what they are raised to believe and want to believe, including her, so your beliefs aren't under the control of evidence anyway, 3) facts change all the time so it's pointless to try reasoning about what is true on the basis of what the facts are today – so I don't really care what anyone in authority says since they all change their minds the next day anyway, 4) I don't think anyone can construct an argument for God's existence based on evidence, 5) the burden of proof is on others to

show me the evidence for God, I don't have to look into myself, my job is to do what feels right to me, and I don't conduct any inquiries into the evidence that might override what feels right to me.

How can you know in advance of inquiry that there is no definitive answer? You can only *assume* that there is no definitive answer, since you admit that you haven't looked into it yourself. And this person seems to have made the decision without evidence that there is no definite answer, and that looking into it is not worth her time and effort. What I am trying to emphasize is that those are decisions. And you can be held responsible for making decisions. Notice how she is able to get around the authority of someone who talks about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, just by saying that expert opinions change all the time, so no expert *has to be listened to,* (unless it feels right to her). In fact, she is not even aware of these arguments, but she has already pre-judged them as less authoritative than her feelings.

So often, we Christians get caught in the trap of judging atheists based on whether they do good deeds, by which we mean, they make other people feel good – they are nice. We neglect to ask whether they are *being good to God* – by puzzling about his existence and character, and by regularly dialoging with believers to see if they might not be mistaken. Heaven is for people who desire God, and who spend time studying the evidence so that they can make an informed decision about his existence and character. Heaven is not for people who are content doing what feels right to them without any desire to know what God thinks about it, because they just don't think his existence and character is important at all. To me this is just another way of saying, I want to do what feels good and learning that there is another person there might override my right to do what feels good, so I don't want to know whether there is another person there.

When you see atheists like Lawrence Krauss, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens get that deer in the headlights look the first time they hear William Lane Craig's arguments in a debate, and his citing of peer-reviewed scientific evidence to support his premises, it becomes immediately clear that these people are not atheists because they know God doesn't exist, but because they *don't want God to exist.* And avoiding the arguments for Christian theism is an important part of keeping God, and his moral demands on us, at a safe distance.

What does the Bible say? Look at the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:36-40:

36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

I think that the first part of loving God if you are not sure he is there is to have an open mind about his existence and character, and a willingness to re-prioritize your life in case

he is there and has a personality different from yours. People have a rational obligation to conduct an inquiry without pre-judging what the outcome will be. If God exists and Jesus rose from the dead, then people ought to care what Jesus thought about things.

I think that non-Christians understand what Christianity would require of them if it were true – radical abandonment to God's calling on their lives. And they turn away from investigating the existence of God and the resurrection of Jesus precisely in order to keep their freedom to do what they feel is right, without having to care about conforming their will to an objective state of affairs where there is another person there that they have to care about. Whatever guilty feelings they have for doing this can be dealt with by adopting a new moral standard, maybe involving recycling, vegetarianism, animal rights activism and yoga. Whatever it takes to make the people around them call them "good", so that they feel good. Do what feels right, don't worry about what is true – that's too much work and we don't want to find out anything that's going to take away our ability to do what feels right – *to us*.

Obama using executive power more frequently to bypass Congress

April 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the ultra-liberal NewYork Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> One Saturday last fall, President Obama interrupted a White House strategy meeting to raise an issue not on the agenda. He declared, aides recalled, that the administration needed to more aggressively use executive power to govern in the face of Congressional obstructionism.
>
> "We had been attempting to highlight the inability of Congress to do anything," recalled William M. Daley, who was the White House chief of staff at the time. "The president expressed frustration, saying we have got to scour everything and push the envelope in finding things we can do on our own."
>
> For Mr. Obama, that meeting was a turning point. As a senator and presidential candidate, he had criticized George W. Bush for flouting the role of Congress. And during his first two years in the White House, when Democrats controlled Congress, Mr. Obama largely worked through the legislative process to achieve his domestic policy goals
>
> But increasingly in recent months, the administration has been seeking ways to act without Congress.
>
> […]Each time, Mr. Obama has emphasized the fact that he is bypassing lawmakers. When he announced a cut in refinancing fees for federally insured mortgages last month, for example, he said: "If Congress refuses to act, I've said that I'll continue to do everything in my power to act without them."
>
> Aides say many more such moves are coming. Not just a short-term shift in governing style and a re-election strategy, Mr. Obama's increasingly assertive use of executive action could foreshadow pitched battles over the separation of powers in his second term, should he win and Republicans consolidate their power in Congress.

Recall that this is the same man who chastised George W. Bush for spending too much – then added more money to the national debt than all of the previous Presidents *combined.*

Remember this?

But then, as CBS News reports, this happened:

> The National Debt has now increased more during President Obama's three years and two months in office than it did during 8 years of the George W. Bush presidency.

> The Debt rose $4.899 trillion during the two terms of the Bush presidency. It has now gone up $4.939 trillion since President Obama took office.
>
> The latest posting from the Bureau of Public Debt at the Treasury Department shows the National Debt now stands at $15.566 trillion. It was $10.626 trillion on President Bush's last day in office, which coincided with President Obama's first day.
>
> The National Debt also now exceeds 100% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product, the total value of goods and services.
>
> […]The federal budget sent to Congress last month by Mr. Obama, projects the National Debt will continue to rise as far as the eye can see. The budget shows the Debt hitting $16.3 trillion in 2012, $17.5 trillion in 2013 and $25.9 trillion in 2022.

Wouldn't it be terrible for our children if we got fooled again by words, instead of looking at actions? What would happen in a second term in which Obama would not have to care about being re-elected?

Do Christians believe in a flat Earth? Does the Bible teach a flat Earth?

April 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from Jeffrey Burton Russell.

Excerpt:

> It must first be reiterated that with extraordinary few exceptions **no** educated person in the history of Western Civilization from the third century B.C. onward believed that the earth was flat.
>
> A round earth appears at least as early as the sixth century BC with Pythagoras, who was followed by Aristotle, Euclid, and Aristarchus, among others in observing that the earth was a sphere. Although there were a few dissenters–Leukippos and Demokritos for example–by the time of Eratosthenes (3 c. BC), followed by Crates(2 c. BC), Strabo (3 c. BC), and Ptolemy (first c. AD), the sphericity of the earth was accepted by all educated Greeks and Romans.
>
> Nor did this situation change with the advent of Christianity. A few–at least two and at most five–early Christian fathers denied the sphericity of earth by mistakenly taking passages such as Ps. 104:2-3 as geographical rather than metaphorical statements. On the other side tens of thousands of Christian theologians, poets, artists, and scientists took the spherical view throughout the early, medieval, and modern church. The point is that no educated person believed otherwise.
>
> Historians of science have been proving this point for at least 70 years (most recently Edward Grant, David Lindberg, Daniel Woodward, and Robert S. Westman), without making notable headway against the error. Schoolchildren in the US, Europe, and Japan are for the most part being taught the same old nonsense. How and why did this nonsense emerge?
>
> In my research, I looked to see how old the idea was that medieval Christians believed the earth was flat. I obviously did not find it among medieval Christians. Nor among anti-Catholic Protestant reformers. Nor in Copernicus or Galileo or their followers, who had to demonstrate the superiority of a heliocentric system, but not of a spherical earth. I was sure I would find it among the eighteenth-century philosophes, among all their vitriolic sneers at Christianity, but not a word. I am still amazed at where it first appears.
>
> No one before the 1830s believed that medieval people thought that the earth was flat.
>
> The idea was established, almost contemporaneously, by a Frenchman and an American, between whom I have not been able to establish a connection, though they were both in Paris at the same time. One was Antoine-Jean Letronne

> (1787-1848), an academic of strong antireligious prejudices who had studied both geography and patristics and who cleverly drew upon both to misrepresent the church fathers and their medieval successors as believing in a flat earth, in his *On the Cosmographical Ideas of the Church Fathers* (1834). The American was no other than our beloved storyteller Washington Irving (1783-1859), who loved to write historical fiction under the guise of history. His misrepresentations of the history of early New York City and of the life of Washington were topped by his history of Christopher Columbus (1828). It was he who invented the indelible picture of the young Columbus, a "simple mariner," appearing before a dark crowd of benighted inquisitors and hooded theologians at a council of Salamanca, all of whom believed, according to Irving, that the earth was flat like a plate. Well, yes, there was a meeting at Salamanca in 1491, but Irving's version of it, to quote a distinguished modern historian of Columbus, was "pure moonshine. Washington Irving, scenting his opportunity for a picturesque and moving scene," created a fictitious account of this "nonexistent university council" and "let his imagination go completely…the whole story is misleading and mischievous nonsense."
>
> But now, why did the false accounts of Letronne and Irving become melded and then, as early as the 1860s, begin to be served up in schools and in schoolbooks as the solemn truth?
>
> The answer is that the falsehood about the spherical earth became a colorful and unforgettable part of a larger falsehood: the falsehood of the eternal war between science (good) and religion (bad) throughout Western history. This vast web of falsehood was invented and propagated by the influential historian John Draper (1811-1882) and many prestigious followers, such as Andrew Dickson White (1832-1918), the president of Cornell University, who made sure that the false account was perpetrated in texts, encyclopedias, and even allegedly serious scholarship, down to the present day. A lively current version of the lie can be found in Daniel Boorstin's *The Discoverers,* found in any bookshop or library.
>
> The reason for promoting both the specific lie about the sphericity of the earth and the general lie that religion and science are in natural and eternal conflict in Western society, is to defend Darwinism. The answer is really only slightly more complicated than that bald statement. The flat-earth lie was ammunition against the creationists. The argument was simple and powerful, if not elegant: "Look how stupid these Christians are. They are always getting in the way of science and progress. These people who deny evolution today are exactly the same sort of people as those idiots who for at least a thousand years denied that the earth was round. How stupid can you get?"
>
> But that is not the truth.

What's scary about this is that I have actually debated with atheists who have cited Bugs Bunny cartoons showing the Columbus flat-Earth scene as an authority for this persistent

myth. I think it's safer to stick with a historian. Dr. Russell has written a book about "The Myth of the Flat Earth" and he has also been published by Oxford University Press and Cornell University Press and Princeton University Press – unlike the Bugs Bunny cartoon artists.

I think the big lesson here is that you don't want to create an entire worldview based on your feelings. If you don't like some group of people, or if you are mad at your parents for bossing you around, it doesn't provide a justification to dump history and start believing in Bugs Bunny cartoons as historically reliable. It's better to just never mind those other people and build your worldview on facts.

William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?

April 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the details of the debate that I got from Cloud of Witnesses:

> The OSU [Oregon State University] Socratic Club will sponsor a public dialogue entitled, "Two Philosophers Debate the Existence of God," on Monday, March 1, at 7 p.m. in the LaSells Stewart Center on the OSU campus. William Lane Craig will argue for the Christian view that a personal God exists and Victor J. Stenger the atheist position that there is no God.

In this debate, Victor Stenger does affirm his belief that the universe could be eternal in his second rebuttal (1:02:30), thus denying the standard Big Bang cosmology. He also denies the law of conservation of energy and asserts that something can come from nothing in his concluding speech (1:33:50). He also caused the audience to start laughing when he said that Jesus was not moral and supported slavery. There is almost no snark in this summary. Instead, I quoted Dr. Stenger *verbatim* in many places. I still think that it is very entertaining even without the snarky paraphrasing.

The debate includes 30 minutes of Q&A with the students.

Here is the MP3 file for the audio.

Here's the video of the debate:

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

- The ontological argument
- The contingency argument
- The cosmological argument
- The moral argument
- The resurrection of Jesus (3-fact version)
- Religious experience

Dr. Stenger's opening speech:

- There is no scientific evidence for God's existence in the textbooks
- There is no scientific evidence for God acting in the universe
- God doesn't talk to people and tell them things they couldn't possibly know
- The Bible says that the Earth is flat, etc.
- There is no scientific evidence that God answers prayers
- God doesn't exist because people who believe in him are ignorant
- Human life is not optimally designed and appears to be the result of a blind, ad hoc evolutionary process
- The beginning of the universe is not ordered (low entropy) but random and chaotic

- It’s theoretically possible that quantum tunneling explains the origin of the universe
- The laws of physics are not objectively real, they are “our inventions”
- Regarding the beginning of the universe, the explanation is that something came from nothing*
- Nothing* isn’t really nothing, it is “the total chaos that we project existed just before the big bang”
- If something has no structure, then “it is as much nothing as nothing can be”
- Consciousness is explainable solely on the basis of material processes
- There are well-informed, rational non-believers in the world and God would not allow that

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

Stenger’s argument that there is no objective evidence for God’s existence:

- First, it is not required that God rely only on objective evidence in order to draw people to himself (Alvin Plantinga)
- Second, God is not required to provide evidence to everyone, only to the people who he knows would respond to him
- Third, Craig gave lots of objective evidence, from science, history and philosophy
- Stenger asks for certain evidence (answered prayers, prophecy, etc.), but Craig presented the evidence we have

Stenger’s argument that the balance of energy is zero so “nothing” exists:

- if you have the same amount of assets and liabilities, it doesn’t mean that nothing exists – your assets and liabilities exist
- Christopher Isham says that there needs to be a cause to create the positive and negative energy even if they balance
- the quantum gravity model contradicts observations
- the vacuum is not the same as nothing, it contains energy and matter
- the BVG theorem proves that *any* universe that is expanding must have a beginning

Stenger’s argument that mental operations can be reduced to physical operations:

- mental properties are not reducible to physical properties
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with self-identity over time
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with thoughts about other things
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with free will
- substance dualism (mind/body dualism) is a better explanation for our mental experience
- God is a soul without a body

Dr. Stenger’s first rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- Craig's premise is "everything has a cause", but quantum mechanics has causeless events
- There are speculative theories about how something could have come into being uncaused out of nothing
- "I don't know of a single working cosmologist today who believes there was a singularity prior to the Big Bang"
- "If there wasn't a singularity then there's no basis for arguing that time began at that point"
- "There's no reason from cosmology that we know of that the universe can't be eternal"
- "When I talk about an eternal universe, I mean a universe that has no beginning or end"
- The Hartle-Hawking model doesn't have a beginning
- "There was no violation of energy conservation by having a universe coming from nothing"
- "The universe *could have* come from a previous universe for example or even just from a region of chaos"
- The paper by Vilenkin is counteracted by other papers (he doesn't specify which ones)

Craig's moral argument:

- Dr. Craig is arguing from ignorance
- But morality can be decided by humanity just like governments pass laws, and that's objective
- Dr. Craig has too little respect for the human intellect
- I don't need to tell me that slavery is wrong
- The Bible supports slavery
- Atheists can behave as good as theists
- Morality just evolved naturally as an aid to survival

Craig's resurrection argument:

- No Roman historians wrote about the execution of Jesus but none of them did
- The empty tomb is doubtful because it is only mentioned in the gospels, not by Paul
- John Dominic Crossan says there was no empty tomb
- Christianity only survived because the Roman empire thought that they were useful

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

Craig's cosmological argument:

- There is no reason to prefer an indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics
- Dr. Stenger himself wrote that deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics are possible

- The vacuum in quantum mechanics is not nothing
- The quantum vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal
- The cosmological argument does not require a singularity
- The Hartle-Hawking model is from 1983
- Hawking says that there is a beginning of space and time *after* that model
- The Hartle-Hawking model *does still have a beginning of time* – the model is not eternal
- The BVG theorem that requires a beginning for expanding universes is widely accepted among cosmologists

Craig's moral argument:

- Stenger redefined objective to mean that most people agree with it – but that's not what objective means
- Objective means right and wrong whether anyone accepts it or not
- Richard Dawkins himself says that on atheism there is "no evil and no good" – why is he wrong?
- Even Dr. Stenger says that morality is the same as passing laws – it's arbitrary and varies by time and place
- But on his view, right and wrong are the same as deciding which side of the road to drive on
- But somethings really are right and some things are really wrong

Craig's resurrection argument:

- Josephus is a Roman historian and he wrote about Jesus, for example
- There were four biographies of Jesus are the best sources for his life
- The scholars that Stenger mentioned are on the radical fringe

Dr. Stenger's second rebuttal:

Knowledge and the burden of proof:

- Dr. Craig has to bear the burden of proof, not me – because his claim is more "extravagant"
- "I don't have to prove that a God was not necessary to create the universe"
- "I don't have to prove that a God did not design the universe and life"
- "I don't have to prove that the universe did not have a beginning"
- "I don't have to prove that God did not provide us with our moral sense"
- There are a lot of books written about how morality evolved naturally
- "I don't have to prove that the events surrounding the supposed resurrection of Jesus did not take place"
- Bart Ehrman says that the gospels are generally unreliable (Note: Ehrman accepts all 3 of Craig's minimal facts)
- Just because people are willing to die for a cause, does not make their leader God,

e.g. – the Emperor of Japan

Aesthetic concerns about the universe:

- I don't like dark matter and I wouldn't have made the universe with dark matter
- I don't like the doctrine of penal substitution
- I don't like the doctrine of original sin
- I don't like the heat death of the universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion:

The case for atheism:

- Dr. Stenger had two arguments and he has to support his premises
- Dr. Craig addressed his two arguments and each premise and Dr. Stenger never came back on it

The contingency argument:

- Dr. Stenger has dropped the refutation of this argument

The cosmological argument:

- The theoretical vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal

The moral argument:

- He asserts that things are wrong, but there is no grounding for that to be objective on atheism

The resurrection of Jesus:

- There are surveys of scholars on the empty tomb and 75% of them agree with it
- Bart Ehrman agrees with all 3 of the minimal facts that Dr. Craig presented
- Ehrman's objection to the resurrection is not historical: he's an atheist – he thinks miracles are impossible

Religious experience:

- No response from Dr. Stenger

Dr. Stenger's conclusion

The cosmological argument:

- "I argued that we have very good physical reasons to understand how something can come from nothing"
- "There is a natural tendency in the universe… to go from.. simpler thing to the more complicated thing"

- The transition from a vapor to a liquid to ice shows how something could come from nothing
- “It cannot be proven that the universe had a beginning”

The moral argument:

- Objective morality, which is independent of what people think, could be developed based on what people think
- “Jesus himself was not a tremendously moral person… he had no particular regard for the poor… he certainly supported slavery… he was for the subjugation of women” (audience laughter)

The resurrection argument:

- Bart Ehrman says that the majority of the gospels are unreliable

Religious experience:

- I don’t see any evidence that there is anything more to religious experience than just stuff in their heads

God’s purpose of the world should be to make people feel happy:

- God could have made people feel happier
- God could have made people not die
- God could could have made the universe smaller: it’s too big
- God could have made it possible for humans to live anywhere “even in space”

The blind men and the elephant: an argument for religious pluralism?

April 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Please Convince Me, a post by Aaron outlining 7 problems with the blind man and the elephant story.

Here's the set up:

> Maybe you've heard the parable of the six blind men and the elephant. In this parable, six blind men feel a different part of an elephant and come to different conclusions regarding what the elephant is actually like.
>
> One blind man grabs the tusk and says, "An elephant is like a spear!" Another feels the trunk and concludes, "An elephant is like a snake!" The blind man hugging the leg thinks, "An elephant is like a tree!" The one holding the tail claims, "An elephant is like a rope!" Another feeling the ear believes, "An elephant is like a fan!" The last blind man leaning on the elephant's side exclaims, "An elephant is like a wall!"
>
> This parable is often used to illustrate a view known as religious pluralism. Like the blind men, no religion has*the* truth. Rather, all religions are true in that they accurately describe their personal experience and the spiritual reality they encounter, given various historical and cultural backgrounds.
>
> There are various types of religious pluralism, but one way to define it is as follows: "the view that all religious roads – certainly all major or ethical ones – lead to God or to ultimate reality and salvation."**1** This idea is commonly reflected in such statements as "All religions basically teach the same thing" or "All roads lead to the top of the mountain."
>
> The elephant parable, while attractive to many, suffers from a number of problems.

And here's one problem:

> **Problem #4: The parable commits the self-excepting fallacy.**
>
> The religious pluralist who tells this parable claims everyone is blind, except the religious pluralist himself! In other words, there *is* an objective perspective presented here. However, if all religious views are essentially blind, this would include the religious view of religious pluralism. But the religious pluralist conveniently exempts himself, having somehow escaped the spiritual blindness which has enveloped all *other* religious views and has come to see the truth of religious pluralism! In so doing, the religious pluralist claims to have the only objective perspective:

> In fact, he wouldn't know that the blind men were wrong unless he had an

> objective perspective of what was right! So if the person telling the parable can have an objective perspective, why can't the blind men? They could – if the blind men suddenly could see, they too would realize that they were originally mistaken. That's really an elephant in front of them and not a wall, fan, or rope. We too can see the truth in religion. Unfortunately, many of us who deny there's truth in religion are not *actually* blind but only *willfully* blind. We may not want to admit that there's truth in religion because that truth will convict us. But if we open our eyes and stop hiding behind the self-defeating nonsense that truth cannot be known, then we'll be able to see the truth as well.**5**

> **5** Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 49.

Read the whole thing!

UPDATE: Greg West of The Poached Egg tweets an announcement of his post on the same topic.

English professor decries the radicalization of the liberal arts on campus

April 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Pajamas Media, a post by a Canadian English professor at the University of Ottawa. Excerpt:

> When I finally landed a tenure-track position at a Canadian university, I was ecstatic and full of hope — exhilarated by the opportunity to teach students about literature and ideas and to have conversations with colleagues equally in love with literature and ideas. I didn't realize that my experience as a university teacher of English would have much less to do with these passions than with the distortion of the university's core mission in the name of pedagogical and political orthodoxy.
>
> To begin with, the student writing that came across my desk left me aghast. I had taught before, but I was unprepared for the level of illiteracy, the stunted vocabularies, near-complete absence of historical knowledge, and above all the extraordinary apathy of many English majors. The most basic of expression rules — the difference between it's and its, the incorrectness of "would of" for "would have," the role of the apostrophe or semi-colon, the fact that "a lot" was two words — were beyond the grasp of the majority, no matter how often I reviewed grammar or devised mnemonic devices. And the sheer sloppiness and muddled thinking in the essays, where the titles of poems and authors' names were frequently misspelled and dates were wildly inaccurate, suggested a fundamental indifference to the subject matter.
>
> Not only was my students' writing appalling, but I soon encountered their resentment at being told about it. "Who are you to tell me I can't write?" was the attitude — once expressed in those very words. More than one student insisted that her other teachers had always rewarded her with high marks for her "creativity." Most believed themselves more than competent. After sitting with one young woman explaining the cause of her failing grade, I was befuddled when her only response was a sullen: "This doesn't exactly make me feel good." When I responded that my job was not to make her feel good, she stood haughtily, picked up her paper with an air of injury, and left my office without another word. In her mind, I later realized, I had been unforgivably cruel.
>
> I was up against it: the attitude of entitlement rampant amongst university students and nurtured by the utopian ideology that permeates modern pedagogy, in which the imposition of rules and identification of errors are thought to limit student creativity and the fostering of a hollow self-esteem takes precedence over the building of skills on which genuine self-respect might be established. In the Humanities subjects in particular — and in English especially,

> the discipline I know best — such a philosophy has led to a perilous watering down of course content, with self-validation seen as more important than the mastery of specific knowledge.
>
> With this philosophy has come a steady grade inflation. The majority of students in English courses today can expect a B grade or higher merely for warming a seat and handing in assignments on time. The result, as I soon discovered, was a generation of students so accustomed to being praised for their work that when I told them it was inadequate, they simply could not or would not believe me. They seemed very nearly unteachable: lacking not only the essential skills but also the personal gumption to respond adequately to criticism.

I wonder what will happen when these students find out that the jobs they feel they are entitled to have have been shipped off to some country where young people don't have all of this attitude, and where business owners pay a corporate tax rate less than half of what American businesses pay. My guess is that they will blame the very capitalists who warned them not to do what they did.

Loosening of UK IVF laws causes spike in fatherless children

April 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> The number of single women and lesbian couples receiving fertility treatment has soared since the Government took the controversial decision to remove the legal requirement for any child conceived to have a father or father figure.
>
> In 2007, before the change in the law, only 350 single women had IVF. But by 2010, the last year for available figures, that had leapt 448 per cent to 1,571. The number of lesbian couples given IVF more than doubled in the same period, from 178 to 417. But the number of heterosexual couples treated rose by only 18 per cent.
>
> […]The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act in 2008 removed the requirement for clinics to take into account a child's need for a father or male role model before agreeing to treatment. Instead, gay couples or individuals have to prove only that they can provide 'supportive parenting'.
>
> The legislation also allowed birth certificates to record two mothers or two fathers for the first time.
>
> One beneficiary is single mother Elizabeth Pearce, who had treatment to have her son Leo, now two. She paid £900 for sperm from an anonymous donor.
>
> Unable to afford IVF after being made redundant from her job as a personal assistant, she cited the European Convention on Human Rights to compel her local NHS trust in Ealing, West London, to pay for her treatment.
>
> Ms Pearce, 40, who now lives in Kent, said: 'In an ideal world, Leo would have had a dad but that's not the way things worked out. Single women have as much right to a child as couples.'
>
> Natalie Woods and Betty Knowles, from Brighton, were the first lesbian couple to have a child that listed them both as parents on the birth certificate.
>
> Ms Woods, 40, who had IVF and gave birth to daughter Lily-May in 2010, said: 'The legal changes have given a clear message that it is OK to parent without a father. What's important is that there are either one or two big hearts filled with love for your children.'

Keep in mind that IVF is completely taxpayer-funded in the UK. Families where the man works and the wife stays home with the children are forced to subsidize IVF treatments for single women through the UK's very progressive income tax code.

Just in case anyone needs a refresher, here are some statistics showing the harm that

fatherlessness causes little boys and girls. It’s also important to realize that IVF typically results in some number embryos being thrown away because they are not wanted. So not only are there harmful effects on children caused by the fatherlessness, but there may also be the killing of innocent unborn children when discarding unwanted embryos. And if that were not enough, keep in mind that marriage prevents abuse of women and children as well as child poverty, according to the evidence we have.

The meaning of marriage: a lecture at Google by Tim Keller

April 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Disclaimer: I have reservations about Tim Keller. I consider him to be too liberal for my tastes, especially on scientific (intelligent design) and political/economic issues. However, I think he did a good job explaining marriage in the lecture below.

Here's the the video: (H/T Reason to Stand)

Details:

> Timothy Keller visits Google's New York, NY office to discuss his book "The Meaning of Marriage." This event took place on November 14, 2011, as part of the Authors@Google series.
>
> Timothy J. Keller is an American author, speaker, preacher, and the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. He is the author of several books, including "The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism."
>
> "The Meaning of Marriage" touches on topics that all readers can relate to, starting with the role of marriage in our culture, its history and the pessimism that is often associated with it. The Kellers also discuss the feelings of and acts of love, romantic relationships, gender roles, singleness, and the role of sex in a marriage.

I saw a lot of things in his lecture that echo my own views. One point where we agree is on not just looking for traits and virtues in the other person, but in seeing how they handle conflict and solve problems with you. You have to give the other person things to do and see if they make progress and work cooperatively with you. Wes, who linked me the lecture, introduced the link by saying that this is the way that Christians should explain marriage to non-Christians. I agree, and I've added the book to my cart.

Here's an article entitled "You Never Marry the Right Person", that discusses one of the points in the lecture.

Excerpt:

> In generations past, there was far less talk about "compatibility" and finding the ideal soul-mate. Today we are looking for someone who accepts us as we are *and* fulfills our desires, and this creates an unrealistic set of expectations that frustrates both the searchers and the searched for.
>
> […]The Bible explains why the quest for compatibility seems to be so impossible. As a pastor I have spoken to thousands of couples, some working on marriage-seeking, some working on marriage-sustaining and some working on marriage-saving. I've heard them say over and over, "Love shouldn't be this hard, it should come naturally." In response I always say something like: "Why believe that?

> Would someone who wants to play professional baseball say, ‘It shouldn’t be so hard to hit a fastball’? Would someone who wants to write the greatest American novel of her generation say, ‘It shouldn’t be hard to create believable characters and compelling narrative’?” The understandable retort is: “But this is not baseball or literature. This is love. Love should just come naturally if two people are compatible, if they are truly soul-mates. “
>
> The Christian answer to this is that no two people are compatible. Duke University Ethics professor Stanley Hauerwas has famously made this point:
>
> Destructive to marriage is the self-fulfillment ethic that assumes marriage and the family are primarily institutions of personal fulfillment, necessary for us to become “whole” and happy. The assumption is that there is someone just right for us to marry and that if we look closely enough we will find the right person. This moral assumption overlooks a crucial aspect to marriage. It fails to appreciate the fact that we always marry the wrong person.We never know whom we marry; we just think we do. Or even if we first marry the right person, just give it a while and he or she will change. For marriage, being [the enormous thing it is] means we are not the same person after we have entered it. The primary challenge of marriage is learning how to love and care for the stranger to whom you find yourself married.
>
> Hauerwas gives us the first reason that no two people are compatible for marriage, namely, that marriage profoundly changes us. But there is another reason. Any two people who enter into marriage are spiritually broken by sin, which among other things means to be self-centered—living life*incurvatus in se*. As author Denis de Rougemont said, “Why should neurotic, selfish, immature people suddenly become angels when they fall in love … ?” That is why a good marriage is more painfully hard to achieve than athletic or artistic prowess. Raw, natural talent does not enable you to play baseball as a pro or write great literature without enduring discipline and enormous work. Why would it be easy to live lovingly and well with another human being in light of what is profoundly wrong within our human nature? Indeed, many people who have mastered athletics and art have failed miserably at marriage. So the biblical doctrine of sin explains why marriage—more than anything else that is good and important in this fallen world—is so painful and hard.

When you are courting, don’t worry about appearances and feelings and passion so much, because that is all subject to change over time, and those things won’t help you with the real challenges you’ll face in a marriage. Worry about whether they are the kind of person who can make commitments and love other people self-sacrificially – even if they are unlovable. In the long run, their ability to read and understand issues, to care for others and serve them, to keep promises, to be respectful and supportive, to argue respectfully and reasonably, and to solve problems constructively, will all be far more important than appearances and feelings and passion.

And let me be clear again: give them things to do that challenge them during the courtship and see how they handle being given responsibilities – giving a person hard things to do is a much better way to test a person than recreational nights out with recreational drinking, recreational dancing and recreational sex. Marriage means commitment and hard work, not recreation. And that's what you should test for – the ability to work hard at the relationship and to keep promises and commitments and to communicate reasonably and to work through difficulties fairly.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Where are all the good men and why aren't men marrying?
- Are feminized churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Department of Labor to ban children from doing chores on family farm

April 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> A proposal from the Obama administration to prevent children from doing farm chores has drawn plenty of criticism from rural-district members of Congress. But now it's attracting barbs from farm kids themselves.
>
> The Department of Labor is poised to put the finishing touches on a rule that would apply child-labor laws to children working on family farms, prohibiting them from performing a list of jobs on their own families' land.
>
> Under the rules, children under 18 could no longer work "in the storing, marketing and transporting of farm product raw materials."
>
> "Prohibited places of employment," a Department press release read, "would include country grain elevators, grain bins, silos, feed lots, stockyards, livestock exchanges and livestock auctions."
>
> The new regulations, first proposed August 31 by Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, would also revoke the government's approval of safety training and certification taught by independent groups like 4-H and FFA, replacing them instead with a 90-hour federal government training course.

The Family Research Council comments:

> [Labor Department] Secretary Hilda Solis is convinced that "children employed in agriculture are some of the most vulnerable workers in America," so she and her team wrote 200 pages of rules dictating what kids can and cannot do on American farms.
>
> The list is so over the top that it bans anyone under 18 from working in grain elevators, feed lots, silos, stockyards, and livestock auctions. Operating power tools like screwdrivers, milk machines, or tractors? Also off-limits. Any work that "inflicts pain on an animal" is also outlawed, even though the department doesn't stipulate what that means. Would branding or tagging cattle be taboo? What about veterinary work?
>
> Apparently, these activities are all at Solis's discretion. Her department's press release is clear, "[The government] charges the secretary of labor with prohibiting employment of youth in occupations that *she* finds and declares to be particularly hazardous for them." Notice there is no mention of families or the parents' responsibility to keep children safe. Under this policy, even kids' chore charts will be dictated by a Washington bureaucrat. Solis insists that her agency

> is “working to prevent unnecessary child injuries or deaths.”
>
> […]The bottom line is that these decisions belong to the family–not the Feds. The government doesn’t need to swoop in and rescue children from their own relatives. In this or any legislation, family rights are the last things Washington should put out to pasture.

How does it help us if children don’t get experience in agriculture and develop a work ethic working with their parents on the family farm?

EPA administrator boasts about crucifying oil and gas firms

April 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tom sent me this article from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK) took to the Senate floor today to draw attention to a video of a top EPA official saying the EPA's "philosophy" is to "crucify" and "make examples" of oil and gas companies – just as the Romans crucified random citizens in areas they conquered to ensure obedience.
>
> Inhofe quoted a little-watched video from 2010 of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) official, Region VI Administrator Al Armendariz, admitting that EPA's "general philosophy" is to "crucify" and "make examples" of oil and gas companies.
>
> In the video, Administrator Armendariz says:
>
> "I was in a meeting once and I gave an analogy to my staff **about my philosophy** of enforcement, and I think it was probably a little crude and maybe not appropriate for the meeting, but I'll go ahead and tell you what I said:
>
> "It was kind of **like how the Romans used to**, you know, conquer villages in the Mediterranean. They'd go in to a little Turkish town somewhere, they'd **find the first five guys they saw and they'd crucify them.**
>
> "Then, you know, that town was really easy to manage for the next few years."
>
> "It's a deterrent factor," Armendariz said, explaining that the EPA is following the Romans' philosophy for subjugating conquered villages.
>
> Soon after Armendariz touted the EPA's "philosophy," the EPA began smear campaigns against natural gas producers, Inhofe's office noted in advance of today's Senate speech:
>
> "Not long after Administrator Armendariz made these comments in 2010, EPA targeted US natural gas producers in Pennsylvania, Texas and Wyoming.
>
> "In all three of these cases, EPA initially made headline-grabbing statements either insinuating or proclaiming outright that the use of hydraulic fracturing by American energy producers was the cause of water contamination, but in each case their comments were premature at best – and despite their most valiant efforts, they have been unable to find any sound scientific evidence to make this link."

We want to be careful with environmental regulations so that we don't hurt job creators. We need to work to have money, and we shouldn't have to give up our prosperity in order to make a few bureaucrats feel as if they are "saving the world".

Did the universe have a beginning or has it always existed?

April 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a short article from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Physics arXiv blog. (H/T Wes)

Excerpt:

> The Big Bang has become part of popular culture since the phrase was coined by the maverick physicist Fred Hoyle in the 1940s. That's hardly surprising for an event that represents the ultimate birth of everything.
>
> However, Hoyle much preferred a different model of the cosmos: a steady state universe with no beginning or end, that stretches infinitely into the past and the future. That idea never really took off.
>
> In recent years, however, cosmologists have begun to study a number of new ideas that have similar properties. Curiously, these ideas are not necessarily at odds with the notion of a Big Bang.
>
> For instance, one idea is that the universe is cyclical with big bangs followed by big crunches followed by big bangs in an infinite cycle.
>
> Another is the notion of eternal inflation in which different parts of the universe expand and contract at different rates. These regions can be thought of as different universes in a giant multiverse.
>
> So although we seem to live in an inflating cosmos, other universes may be very different. And while our universe may look as if it has a beginning, the multiverse need not have a beginning.
>
> Then there is the idea of an emergent universe which exists as a kind of seed for eternity and then suddenly expands.
>
> So these modern cosmologies suggest that the observational evidence of an expanding universe is consistent with a cosmos with no beginning or end. That may be set to change.
>
> Today, Audrey Mithani and Alexander Vilenkin at Tufts University in Massachusetts say that these models are mathematically incompatible with an eternal past. Indeed, their analysis suggests that these three models of the universe must have had a beginning too.
>
> Their argument focuses on the mathematical properties of eternity–a universe with no beginning and no end. Such a universe must contain trajectories that stretch infinitely into the past.
>
> However, Mithani and Vilenkin point to a proof dating from 2003 that these kind of past trajectories cannot be infinite if they are part of a universe that expands

> in a specific way.
>
> They go on to show that cyclical universes and universes of eternal inflation both expand in this way. So they cannot be eternal in the past and must therefore have had a beginning. “Although inflation may be eternal in the future, it cannot be extended indefinitely to the past,” they say.
>
> They treat the emergent model of the universe differently, showing that although it may seem stable from a classical point of view, it is unstable from a quantum mechanical point of view. “A simple emergent universe model…cannot escape quantum collapse,” they say.
>
> The conclusion is inescapable. “None of these scenarios can actually be past-eternal,” say Mithani and Vilenkin.
>
> Since the observational evidence is that our universe is expanding, then it must also have been born in the past. A profound conclusion (albeit the same one that lead to the idea of the big bang in the first place).

They link to this peer-reviewed paper featuring Alexander Vilenkin at the end of the article, which was published in the Proceedings of the 10th Incternational Conference on Gravitation, Astrophysics and Cosmology, Quy-Nhon, Vietnam, December 2011.

The paper concludes:

> Did the universe have a beginning?
>
> At this point, it seems that the answer to this question is probably yes. Here we have addressed three scenarios which seemed to offer a way to avoid a beginning, and have found that none of them can actually be eternal in the past. Both eternal inflation and cyclic universe scenarios have Hav > 0, which means that they must be past-geodesically incomplete. We have also examined a simple emergent universe model, and concluded that it cannot escape quantum collapse. Even considering more general emergent universe models, there do not seem to be any matter sources that admit solutions that are immune to collapse.

So where do we stand? There is no eternal universe. There was a beginning to space and time. The entire physical universe came into being out of nothing at some point in the past.

Here’s my previous post on the BVG theorem that explains a bit more about how this data applies to the question of God’s existence.

Peter Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospels

April 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Peter J. Williams

This is a lecture I found from British historian Dr. Peter J. Williams.

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?

- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?
- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

You can read an interview with Peter Williams here on Between Two Worlds.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate. That link contains a link to the audio of the debate as well as my snarky summary. It's very snarky.

And Apologetics 315 also posted Peter Williams' assessment of Bart Ehrman's "Misquoting Jesus".

Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll's Mars Hill Church

April 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> A satellite church affiliated with controversial Seattle pastor Mark Driscoll was vandalized early Tuesday (April 24) and a group calling itself the "Angry Queers" has reportedly taken responsibility.
>
> Stained glass and other windows were broken at the Mars Hill Church, according to a post on the Facebook page of Pastor Tim Smith.
>
> "Neighbors of the church reported seeing several young adults in black masks throwing large rocks into the windows," a church news release said. "Police stated that a bank in the area was also vandalized in the same way and that they believe the vandalism was planned ahead of time, most likely by an activist group."
>
> On Tuesday, KPTV FOX 12 reported it had received an email from someone using the name "Angry Queers" and claiming responsibility.
>
> Mars Hill Portland opened last October. During the first service, protesters gathered in front of the church and yelled obscenities at worshipers to speak out against the church's stance on homosexuality.

Here are some things from the e-mails sent by the gay activist group that performed the attack:

> The group that allegedly smashed up a Portland church hopes its "small act of vengeance will strike fear into the hearts of" Christian leaders who teach traditional sexual morality, according to an e-mail message the group released to the public.
>
> A group calling itself "Angry Queers" has claimed responsibility for throwing baseball-sized rocks through nine church windows in Portland's Mars Hill Church, including two 100-year-old stained glass panes.
>
> Two versions of the e-mail have been sent to the media, one longer and slightly more incendiary than the other, but both apparently originating from the same group. In the longer version, the LGBT activists state they destroyed church property in the names of several local transgender people who have died, and "all other trans women" whose deaths they blame on "this cissexist, femmephobic, racist, andtransmisogynistic society."
>
> "Churches are a major contributor to the culture that deems trans women of color to be disposable, as not worth keeping alive," the statement read.

> The “brand of Christianity” taught by Mark Driscoll, pastor of the largest Mars Hill Church in Seattle, “crusades against the ‘feminization’ of Jesus,” the e-mail stated. “We angry queers are not fans of Jesus, but we have a problem with anyone who has a problem with femmes.”
>
> The e-mail, which is peppered with foul language, berates the Q Center, a local LGBT activist organization, for engaging in a dialogue with the Mars Hill’s leadership. “What we have to say to the Q Center is this: F—K YOU, you don’t represent us. You are disgusting traitors who prioritize social peace and the bourgeois aspirations of rich white cis gay people over the more pressing survival needs of more marginalized queers.”
>
> “F—k dialog with people who want us dead,” the e-mail read. “The only dialog we need with scum like Mars Hill is hammers through their windows.”
>
> “We hope this small act of vengeance will strike some fear into the hearts of all of Mars Hill’s pastors, and warm the hearts of our friends and comrades (known or unknown). It may not get better, but we can certainly get even,” it concludes.
>
> […][A] commenter calling himself “Angry Queer” on a local homosexual website incited further vandalism, writing: “I hope some sexy, angry queers (like myself) smashed this s**t up and will continue to until Mars Hill cannot exist peacefully in Portland. There is no peace for queers — we are murdered, bashed and ridiculed every f**king day. To have some windows of a huge INSTITUTION THAT PERPETUATES AND BREEDS THE HELL WE LIVE IN EVERY DAY smashed is a small victory and a boost in morale.”

This sort of thing also happened recently in Australia, as well.

From the Newcastle Herald (Australia).

Excerpt:

> Vandals attacked Wallsend Presbyterian Church last night in response to a message criticising same-sex marriage displayed on the building’s outside notice board.
>
> The church on Nelson Street had updated its message board last week to read “Even tradies know you need both male and female joints to make a marriage”.
>
> The front of the 1867 building, which recently received a $12,000 makeover, was defaced with messages such as ‘‘sexuality is not a choice’’ and ‘‘love thy neighbour not hate gays’’.
>
> Reverend Dr Ian Copland said the sign was a play on words and he wanted people to talk about the issue being raised in federal parliament.
>
> He said he has no regrets despite the outcome.
>
> ‘‘This is not going to stop me,’’ he said.
>
> Two bills to legalise same-sex marriage were introduced in Federal Parliament this week.

> ‘‘It’s obviously a reaction to the sign but I have no malice towards the vandals,’’ Rev Copland said.
>
> ‘‘It only takes one or two cowards you can’t blame the whole homosexual community. That would be wrong.’’
>
> This is not the first time the church has been attacked regarding its stance on same-sex marriage.
>
> The signboard was vandalised about six months ago when the reverend posted a similar message.

How often does it happen? Is it common?

Here’s what happened to pro-marriage donors in California.

Excerpt:

> Gay rights supporters, dressed in pink and black, stormed a Lansing, Mich., church during its services Nov. 9 throwing condoms, pulling the fire alarm and yelling such things as “It’s okay to be gay” and “Jesus was a homo.”
>
> One media account said two lesbians then went to the pulpit at Mount Hope Church where they began making out in front of the congregants, which included children.
>
> Police were called and the demonstration, sponsored by a group called Bash Back, ceased. The group is described as pro-homosexual and pro-anarchist. The group’s blog promoted its actions saying it was “targeting a well known anti-queer, anti-choice, radical right-wing establishment.”
>
> […]The incident is one of dozens reported in California and across the country in the aftermath of the passage of Proposition 8, which has prompted passionate protests nationwide. In California, cases of violence were reported even before the election. Post-election, the Mormon church has been a major target because its members donated millions to the cause.
>
> Catholics, including the Knights of Columbus, have also been targeted for their support.
>
> […]Mormon temples in Los Angeles and Salt Lake City, as well as the Knights of Columbus headquarters in New Haven, Conn., were sent suspicious looking white powder, reminiscent of the 2001 anthrax attacks and scares.
>
> At least eight Mormon buildings in Salt Lake have been vandalized with spray-painted epithets criticizing the church’s support of Proposition 8.
>
> A group of young Christians with the Justice House of Prayer— meeting on a sidewalk for their weekly prayer session in San Francisco’s Castro district—had to be escorted out of the area by police, some in riot gear, as an angry mob turned on them shouting, “Shame on You,” blowing whistles and screaming profanities.
>
> Marjorie Christoffersen, daughter of the owners of the Los Angeles restaurant El Coyote, left town after hundreds of protesters targeted her parent’s eatery

because she made a personal $100 contribution to the Yes on 8 fund. Police in riot gear were called to restore order. Gay rights activists also began a campaign to post negative restaurant reviews online. The restaurant employs several gays and lesbians who said they were taken aback by the protests.

A Palm Springs news crew captured an unruly protest group ripping an oversized cross from a woman's hands and then stomping on it. A reporter trying to interview the woman, Phyllis Burgess, about the incident had to move the woman to safety as the crowd encircled them while shouting.

Numerous blog sites reported that gay African-American men were the subject of racial slurs while trying to join the crowd in an anti-Proposition 8 protest. The men were targeted because exit polls showed a large amount of African-Americans supported Proposition 8. In one case a black man was warned to stay out of West Hollywood "if they knew what was best for them."

The artistic director of a Sacramento theater was forced to resign his post after donors, ticket holders and others protested outside the theater because the man, Scott Eckern, a 25-year employee of the venue donated $1,000 in his personal money to the Yes on 8 campaign. In a separate case reported at press time, the director for the Los Angeles Film Festival resigned under pressure from gay activists for donating $1,500 to Yes on 8. Richard Raddon, who tried unsuccessfully to resign several days earlier but was blocked by his supportive festival board, resubmitted his resignation when the berating calls and e-mails failed to cease.

[…]A Carlsbad man was arrested Nov. 3 for punching two elderly neighbors in the face after they confronted him about trespassing on their property to place a No on 8 sign in front of their Yes on 8 sign.

On election morning, a Carlsbad jogger was also attacked and bitten by a dog when he tried to stop two men from stealing a Yes on 8 sign. Several weeks ago police in that same city arrested at least two people for stealing Yes on 8 signs.

In Fresno, a prominent pastor, who had campaigned publicly for Proposition 8, received credible death threats that also targeted the mayor, another traditional marriage supporter. The threats were deemed credible enough for the police department to assign officers to protect the men. The church was also targeted for vandalism.

In Modesto, a Protect Marriage volunteer received 16 stitches under his eye after a man tried to steal his Yes on 8 signs outside a local church where he was waiting to distribute them after Mass.

A week before the election, a San Jose couple, who posted a Yes on 8 sign in their front lawn, discovered that someone spray-painted "No on 8" on their car, their garage and the garage of their neighbor.

Also in San Jose, vandals painted the back window of an SUV with the words

> “Bigot Live Here,” with an arrow pointing to a house boasting a Yes on 8 sign.
>
> In other areas of the state, cars were keyed, signs defaced and a block was thrown through the window of an elderly couple who displayed a Yes on 8 sign in their yard.

I have previously written about how the Human Rights Campaign gay rights group leaked the names and addresses of pro-marriage donors to the Huffington Post. In that post, I also list the corporations that support the Human Rights Campaign.

Concealed carry permitholder stops stabbing rampage in Utah

April 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story from KSL TV, in Utah. (H/T All American Blogger)

Excerpt:

> A man stabbed two people at the Smith's Marketplace grocery store in downtown Salt Lake City before being subdued by a bystander.
>
> The attack took place around 5:30 p.m. in the parking lot of the store at 455 South and 500 East. According to a witness, it appears one man was stabbed in the side of the head and another was stabbed in the stomach. The exact condition of the victims is unknown, but police believe the injuries are very serious and possibly critical.
>
> Police say a bystander with a concealed carry permit witnessed the attack and stepped in to keep it from escalating.
>
> "(The bystander) was suspicious of what might be going on, and when he saw the stabbing, he just drew his pistol and challenged the individual," which caused the alleged attacker to lie down on the ground, Brian Purvis with the Salt Lake City Police Department said. By the time police officers arrived on the scene, the man was subdued and is now in custody.
>
> The attacker apparently bought the knife inside the store.

Guns in the hands of law-abiding citizens can be used to save lives.

Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?

April 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from Christian men's issues blogger Dalrock, in which he gives advice to Christian women about how early they should marry. He himself is happily married, but he does not like the way that Christian women have been influenced by feminism inside and outside of the church.

Excerpt:

> I propose that young women should take their husband hunt seriously from the beginning. This means not looking for boyfriends, dates, friends with benefits, etc. They should be looking for a husband from day 1, focusing exclusively on men who meet all three of the following criteria:
>
> 1. Men who are (or are likely to be) interested in marrying her.
> 2. Men she finds attractive enough that she is able to fall head over heels in love with him.
> 3. Men she is ready to submit to as a wife and follow his leadership for the duration of her life.
>
> Bullet number one should be obvious, but it is certainly worth stating. One difference I've noted between men and women is women often don't stick to the set of available options when making their selection. A woman considering her options in marriage shouldn't consider the recent interest (accepted or otherwise) from the exciting guy in the local band for some no strings attached sex, or even for a long term relationship. If he isn't interested in marriage, she shouldn't consider him when considering her options. The same goes for men who might be interested in marriage but don't demonstrate an interest in marrying*her*. Of course, *none of the above* is always a valid option so long as the woman is honest with herself that this means she is willing to risk foregoing marriage altogether with the hope that her available options will ultimately improve.
>
> Bullet number two is an interesting one. Many young women set out on a path to what Mentu describes as pursuing the *serial monogamy hall of fame*, falling in love with a series of (they hope) ever better men. Early in their search they would no doubt have this as their number one must have criteria. However, after some period of time even chaste women who find they haven't located a husband are tempted to lower their standards in this area in order to not have to compromise in the areas of wealth and success. I've argued strongly that women should not do this, and continue to feel this way.
>
> Bullet number three is where it gets interesting. While wives submitting to their

> husbands is a clear command in the new testament, very few devout Christians even take this seriously in practice. It flies against the norms of our culture, and even those who are very traditional are likely to be alarmed by the statement.
>
> In fact, bullet number three should frighten you. If it doesn't, you likely aren't understanding the gravity of the situation. I'm assuming it immediately raised questions in your mind like:
>
> - What if he is abusive?
> - What if he won't take her needs and wants into sufficient consideration when making decisions?
> - What if he is prone to make risky or irresponsible decisions?
> - What if he isn't faithful?
> - What if he isn't motivated to work to provide for his family?
> - What are his religious and moral values?
> - Is he a kind person?
> - Is he mentally and emotionally stable?
> - Is he capable of leading her in a way which she is comfortable following? (leadership style/game)
>
> The proof that this is the right process is that these are all of the right questions. These are the questions women looking to marry should be asking but very often aren't.

I think it is important to focus on that third point. Women today often are not evaluating men for the purpose of finding one who will lead them, especially on spiritual and moral issues. Many women today think that they can get into a relationship with a man and that the man will be happy with *not* being the spiritual and moral leader in the relationship. However, it must be said that men are meant to lead the relationship, and if they don't lead, then both the woman and the man will be miserable.

So it's important that both men and women have an idea of what leadership looks like. Here are some suggestions. The man should have certain goals. For example, mine are 1) earning and saving enough to keep my wife at home once the children arrive so we get effective children, 2) impacting the church with apologetics, 3) impacting the university with apologetics, 4) impacting the culture through writing about economics, politics, etc. The point of relationships is for the woman to ask the man what he intends to do, what preparations he has made, and what he needs her to do, and then to build her up so that she can do what's needed. The purpose of courting is for the man to explain how he wants to lead, and then the woman chooses the man who will lead her wisely and well, and while taking her needs into account.

What should happen during the relationship is that the man should communicate what he wants to do and then he should try to get the woman to participate in it. She should let the man know that she is interested in his plans and is willing to be prepared to support him. For example, she can ask for things to read and then take action on problems that

he cares about. If he is concerned about the skyrocketing debt, she should read economics and then write or speak about the problem convincingly to her friends. If he is concerned about single motherhood by choice or same-sex marriage, then she should read about those issues and then write or speak about those problems and move the ball forward. His job is to state his plan and supply her with tools, like books and lectures and tickets to apologetics conferences. The man practices leading and the woman practices supporting and helping. She is able to see whether she likes his plan and whether she likes helping him with it and whether he is good at motivating her and supplying her material and emotional needs so that she can help him properly.

And that's what women should be doing with men when they are young. Men are not for fun. Men are leaders. And women should be evaluating men to see which one has a good plan and good leadership skills. Women are not choosing entertainment and pleasure when they choose a man – they are choosing the person who will prepare them and lead them. And that's what men should be selected for. Life is an adventure. It's important to have goals and to work with someone you like.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)

April 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s tonight’s movie:

IMDB rating: [7.6/10]

Description:

> At the start of World War II, Cmdr. Ericson is assigned to convoy escort HMS Compass Rose with inexperienced officers and men just out of training. The winter seas make life miserable enough, but the men must also harden themselves to rescuing survivors of U-Boat attacks, while seldom able to strike back. Traumatic events afloat and ashore create a warm bond between the skipper and his first officer. Atmospheric sea footage.

The Battle of the Atlantic: British and Canadian convoys carry supplies across the North Atlantic to supply Allied forces in Europe and Africa.

Allied supply convoy crossing the Atlantic

Here’s a closer look at the Flower class corvette used by the heroes of the movie:

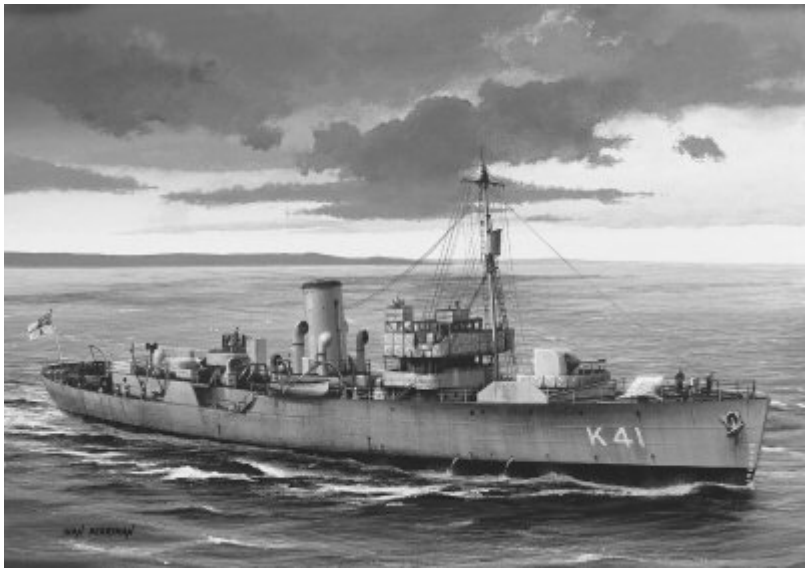

Flower class corvette
Specifications:

- Displacement: 950 tons
- Dimensions: 62.5 x 10.0 x 3.5 meters (205 x 33 x 11.5 feet)
- Propulsion: Single shaft; 2 fire tube Scotch boilers; 1 4-cyl. triple expansion steam engine, 2750 hp.; 16 knots
- Range: 3500 nm. at 12 knots
- Crew: 85
- Radar: SW1C or 2C (later)
- Sonar: Type 123A, later Type 127DV
- Fire control: none
- Main gun: 1 4″ BL Mk.IX single (range: 12,660 m / 13,850 yd)
- Anti-aircraft: 2 .50 cal mg twin, 2 Lewis .303 cal mg twin
- Anti-submarine: 2 Mk.II depth charge throwers, 2 depth charge rails with 40 depth charges

Here is a listing of common navy ships, ordered by size from largest to smallest:

- Aircraft Carrier (CV)
- Battleship (BB)
- Cruiser (CA)
- Destroyer (DD)
- Frigate (FF)
- **Corvette (K)**

Sound action stations! All ahead full!

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)

- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority

April 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Times of Israel. (H/T Rightscoop via BadBlue)

Excerpt:

> US President Barack Obama has lifted a ban on financial aid to the Palestinian Authority.
>
> Obama stated that the aid was "important to the security interests of the United States."
>
> The US Congress froze a $192 million aid package to the Palestinian Authority after its president, Mahmoud Abbas, defied US pressure and sought to attain UN endorsement of Palestinian statehood last September. The presidential waiver means that aid can now be delivered. …
>
> Section 3 of Congress's Palestinian Accountability Act, which applies to 2012, stipulates that "no funds available to any United States Government department or agency … may be obligated or expended with respect to providing funds to the Palestinian Authority." Obama has now signed a waiver, however, the White House said Friday, and asked Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to inform Congress accordingly.
>
> The AFP news agency quoted White House spokesman Tommy Vietor as saying the $192 million aid package would be devoted to "ensuring the continued viability of the moderate PA government under the leadership of [Palestinian Authority] President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad."
>
> **Vietor added that the PA had fulfilled its major obligations, such as recognizing Israel's right to exist, renouncing violence and accepting the Road Map for Peace.**

Just for reference, here is a recent rocket attack from the Palestinian area that occurred in March, and one that occurred in April. My opinion is that we should not be sending any foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority when they cannot stop the rocket attacks against Israel.

Gay activist Dan Savage bullies Christian teens and bashes Christianity

April 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Warning: the video contains vulgar language.

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> As many as 100 high school students walked out of a national journalism conference after an anti-bullying speaker began cursing, attacked the Bible and reportedly called those who refused to listen to his rant "pansy assed."
>
> The speaker was Dan Savage, founder of the "It Gets Better"project, an anti-bullying campaign that has reached more than 40 million viewers with contributors ranging from President Obama to Hollywood stars. Savage also writes a sex advice column called "Savage Love."
>
> Savage, and his husband, were also guests at the White House for President Obama's 2011 LGBT Pride Month reception. He was also invited to a White House anti-bullying conference.
>
> avage was supposed to be delivering a speech about anti-bullying at the National High School Journalism Conference sponsored by the Journalism Education Association and the National Scholastic Press Association. But it turned into an episode of Christian-bashing.
>
> Rick Tuttle, the journalism advisor for Sutter Union High School in California, was among several thousand people in the audience. He said they thought the speech was one thing – but it turned into something else.
>
> "I thought this would be about anti-bullying," Tuttle told Fox news. "It turned into a pointed attack on Christian beliefs."
>
> Tuttle said a number of his students were offended by Savage's remarks – and some decided to leave the auditorium.
>
> "It became hostile," he said. "It felt hostile as we were sitting in the audience – especially towards Christians who espouse beliefs that he was literally taking on."
>
> Tuttle said the speech was laced with vulgarities and "sexual innuendo not appropriate for this age group." At one point, he said Savage told the teenagers about how good his partner looked in a speedo.
>
> […]"The first thing he told the audience was, 'I hope you're all using birth control,'" she told CitizenLink. "he said there are people using the Bible as an excuse for gay bullying, because it says in Leviticus and Romans that being gay is wrong. Right after that, he said we can ignore all the (expletive deleted) in the Bible."

> As the teenagers were walking out, Tuttle said that Savage heckled them and called them pansy-assed.
>
> "You can tell the Bible guys in the hall they can come back now because I'm done beating up the Bible," Savage said as other students hollered and cheered. "It's funny as someone who is on the receiving end of beatings that are justified by the Bible how pansy-assed people react when you push back."

Dan Savage mentions slavery in the Bible . Please see the following articles by Dr. Paul Copan which address that charge: (H/T Apologetics 315)

- Does the Old Testament Endorse Slavery? An Overview
- Does the Old Testament Endorse Slavery? Examining Difficult Texts
- Why Is the New Testament Silent on Slavery — or Is It?

Dan Savage also mentioned atheist Sam Harris. Please see the debate in which Sam Harris loses badly to William Lane Craig on the question of morality with and without God.

Also, there's been an update from the recent attack on Mars Hill church by gay activists, detailing the contents of the e-mails sent by the gay activist group that performed the attack:

> The group that allegedly smashed up a Portland church hopes its "small act of vengeance will strike fear into the hearts of" Christian leaders who teach traditional sexual morality, according to an e-mail message the group released to the public.
>
> A group calling itself "Angry Queers" has claimed responsibility for throwing baseball-sized rocks through nine church windows in Portland's Mars Hill Church, including two 100-year-old stained glass panes.
>
> Two versions of the e-mail have been sent to the media, one longer and slightly more incendiary than the other, but both apparently originating from the same group. In the longer version, the LGBT activists state they destroyed church property in the names of several local transgender people who have died, and "all other trans women" whose deaths they blame on "this cissexist, femmephobic, racist, andtransmisogynistic society."
>
> "Churches are a major contributor to the culture that deems trans women of color to be disposable, as not worth keeping alive," the statement read.
>
> The "brand of Christianity" taught by Mark Driscoll, pastor of the largest Mars Hill Church in Seattle, "crusades against the 'feminization' of Jesus," the e-mail stated. "We angry queers are not fans of Jesus, but we have a problem with anyone who has a problem with femmes."
>
> The e-mail, which is peppered with foul language, berates the Q Center, a local LGBT activist organization, for engaging in a dialogue with the Mars Hill's leadership. "What we have to say to the Q Center is this: F—K YOU, you don't represent us. You are disgusting traitors who prioritize social peace and the

> bourgeois aspirations of rich white cis gay people over the more pressing survival needs of more marginalized queers."
>
> "F—k dialog with people who want us dead," the e-mail read. "The only dialog we need with scum like Mars Hill is hammers through their windows."
>
> "We hope this small act of vengeance will strike some fear into the hearts of all of Mars Hill's pastors, and warm the hearts of our friends and comrades (known or unknown). It may not get better, but we can certainly get even," it concludes.
>
> […][A] commenter calling himself "Angry Queer" on a local homosexual website incited further vandalism, writing: "I hope some sexy, angry queers (like myself) smashed this s**t up and will continue to until Mars Hill cannot exist peacefully in Portland. There is no peace for queers — we are murdered, bashed and ridiculed every f**king day. To have some windows of a huge INSTITUTION THAT PERPETUATES AND BREEDS THE HELL WE LIVE IN EVERY DAY smashed is a small victory and a boost in morale."

You may also want to read my previous post on the "tolerance" of gay activists. I think we need to have a discussion about what tolerance really means with gay activists, because I don't think that word means what they think it means.

Does atheism mean “a lack of belief in God”?

April 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Excerpt:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.
>
> But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.
>
> There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position,

and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.

One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.

So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of

> atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, “So is there a God or not?”

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these “subjective atheists”?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says “I lack a belief in the gravitational force!”. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God’s existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don’t care about a person’s psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over “I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God”? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: “I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!” What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: “Wintery Knight won’t listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!”. I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that’s why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don’t *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I’m not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Republicans prepare contempt citation for AG Eric Holder over Fast and Furious

April 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBS News.

Excerpt:

> House Republicans investigating the Fast and Furious scandal plan to pursue a contempt citation against Attorney General Eric Holder, senior congressional aides told CBS News.
>
> The resolution will accuse Holder and his Justice Department of obstructing the congressional probe into the allegations that the government let thousands of weapons fall into the hands of Mexican drug cartels.
>
> The citation would attempt to force Holder to turn over tens of thousands of pages of documents related to the probe, which has entered its second year.
>
> For months, congressional Republicans probing ATF's Fast and Furious "Gunwalker" scandal – led by California Republican Rep. Darrell Issa, have been investigating a contempt citation. They've worked quietly behind the scenes to build support among fellow Republicans, since it could ultimately face a full House vote.
>
> CBS News has confirmed that House Speaker John Boehner, an Ohio Republican, was provided a 48-page long draft by Issa, who heads the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.
>
> "While there are very legitimate arguments to be made in favor of such an action, no decision has been made to move forward with one by the Speaker or by House Republican leaders," a Republican leadership aide told CBS News.
>
> […]In the case of Holder and Fast and Furious, the Oversight Committee's contempt resolution could eventually have a full House vote and, if passed, Congress could seek enforcement through federal courts. Passage of the resolution itself could, however, encourage the Justice Department to comply even without a court order.
>
> […]A contempt citing by Congress against the executive branch, a strong sanction, is considered by some to be politically risky; especially if it doesn't succeed. Sources say that's why Republican staffers have taken a great deal of time trying to build support among colleagues in advance of the citation's formal release, which could come in the next few weeks if not sooner.

If you are not familiar with the Obama administration's plan to facilitate the sale of firearms to Mexican drug cartels, in order to provide justification for stiffer gun control laws, then please check out the links below.

Related posts

- Eric Holder wants to brainwash people against legal gun ownership
- Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent's murder
- Eric Holder testifies on Fast and Furious gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Fast and Furious assault weapons seized from drug cartel enforcer's home
- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference

Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist

April 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me news of Saturday’s episode of Unbelievable, which features Lawrence Krauss, who debated William Lane Craig. Krauss’ book was also reviewed in the New York Times.

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

> Lawrence Krauss is a Cosmologist at Arizona State University who describes himself as an “anti-theist”. His latest book “A Universe From Nothing” has received both acclaim and criticism for its attempt to answer the question “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Debating the issue with Krauss is Rodney Holder, Course director at the Faraday Institute, Cambridge. An astrophysicist and priest by background. In a lively exchange they debate whether Krauss’ “nothing” is “nothing”, fine tuning and multiverses, scientific knowledge, miracles and the usefulness of theology and philosophy.

This debate is quite entertaining, and do not be intimidated if your don’t understand science. You can understand pretty easily who is arguing based on facts and who is speculating about unobservable, untestable entities. At one point, Krauss actually denies that there is any fine-tuning in the universe, so please see this link to refute that claim as well as this podcast which explains some examples of fine-tuning. Krauss gets a bit angry at the beginning, but calms down.

Quotation marks are for direct quotes, italics is for made-up snark. See below the summary for more posts that are related to this one.

Summary of the discussion: (picked up at 9:30 when they start talking about the book)

Brierley:

- explain your theory of how the universe can come into being from nothing

Krauss:

- the nothing that preceded the universe is “no space, no time, no universe”
- theists say that God is responsible for creating the universe out of this nothing
- but the laws of nature can create the universe uncaused out of nothing

Holder:

- Krauss sometimes writes that the nothing is really a quantum vacuum, but that is

not nothing
- He even acknowledges in his book that a quantum vacuum is not nothing
- He thinks that the nothing has properties, even though it has no being
- It has the property of being unstable
- It has the property of being acted on by quantum fields
- It has the property of being acted on by gravity

Krauss:

- But nothing can have the potential to do things inside it
- For example suppose you have an electron, *which is not nothing*
- If it jumps from one level to another, it emits light
- There was no potential for the light in the electron, but it was there as part of atomic structure

Holder:

- But in cases like that, there is something physical that has the potential

Krauss:

- Well, how did God makes the universe then if it had no potential?

Holder:

- God existed, and the potential for creating the universe in himself

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times

Krauss:

- It was written by a philosopher, so I dismissed it

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the Scientific American

Krauss:

- These book reviewers have not even read my book!

Krauss:

- Science will be able to figure out how to make something from nothing in the future
- We are even now speculating about interesting questions, like is there a multiverse?

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times
- The author of the review claims that you equivocate on the term “nothing”
- In order to get things to pop into being, you have to make “nothing” mean “something”
- Reviewer: none of Krauss’ theories explain how something can come from actual nothingness

Krauss:

- In physics, something and nothing are not that different
- The reviewer doesn’t understand the physics
- He doesn’t understand quantum field theory
- You could call a quantum vacuum “nothing”, *(this is the vacuum fluctuation model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*
- Maybe there is an eternally existing multiverse that we can’t observe or test scientifically
- Maybe it has laws that we don’t know about which allow our universe to pop into being
- Maybe this popping into being is uncaused
- (alarmed) Who made God? Who made God?

Holder:

- God is eternal and necessary

Krauss:

- (interrupting, angry) What does it mean for something to be necessary?

Holder:

- Basically, you have to decide whether there is more evidence that the necessary being God or a multiverse

Brierley:

- So Dr. Krauss are you willing to say that the universe is a brute fact, in some sense, and requires no explanation

Krauss:

- (angry) Religious people are stupid because they just assume brute facts, *not like me and my unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry) Religious people are against the progress of science, they don’t want to figure out how things work

Brierley:

- But isn't it possible that naturalists can be opposed to the progress of science?
- What about the way the Fred Hoyle opposed the Big Bang because he wanted an eternal universe

Krauss:

- (angry) But naturalists like me let the facts determine our beliefs, *like the facts about the eternal unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry, shouting) Philosophers are stupid, they know nothing!

=== Break ===

Brierley:

- Do you see any evidence of purpose in the universe?

Krauss:

- Well maybe I would believe if the stars lined up to spell out a message from God

Brierley:

- Actually no, that wouldn't be evidence for God on your multiverse view
- if there an infinite number of universes existing for an infinite amount of time, then anything can happen no matter how unlikely it is
- therefore, no evidence could convince you that God exists, since the unobservable, untestable, eternal multiverse can make anything it wants

Krauss:

- That's a true statement, *and very convenient for atheists who don't want to be accountable to God, don't you think?*

Brierley:

- Back to the multiverse, how does it solve the fine-tuning?

Krauss:

- "We have no idea if the universe is fine-tuned for life", *even though the atheist Martin Rees who endorsed Krauss' book wrote his own book about the fine-tuning of the universe called "Just Six Numbers"*
- Inflationary theory does suggest a way to create multiple universes, *(this is the chaotic inflationary model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*

Brierley:

- But this theory is still very much a hypothesis, isn't it? We can't observe *or test* this hypothesis can we?

Krauss:

- "No, and that is really important to state"
- "I'm an empiricist, so if you can't falsify it and if you can't test it then it's not science"
- In my book, I speculate about a way that we could test the multiverse theory

Holder:

- Yes, in principle, the multiverse would be scientific if you could test it through other theories like inflationary theory
- There are a lot of speculations about multiverse theory, but no evidence from predictions that were validated in the lab

Krauss:

- "I agree completely with everything you just said"

Brierley:

- Roger Penrose agrees with Holder that the multiverse theory is too speculative
- (To Holder) Isn't the multiverse theory better than positing a completely different kind of being, which is God?

Holder:

- The multiverse theory is extremely speculative
- Even if the multiverse were true, you would still need to explain the multiverse

Krauss:

- People don't oppose my book because it's full of self-contradictory speculations
- People oppose my book because they are stupid and ignorant

Holder:

- There are things that exist that science cannot measure, like objective morality
- It's possible to give explanations for moral behavior by appealing to evolution
- But that does not ground self-sacrificial morality, such as what occurs in the Christian life

Brierley:

- Dawkins says there is no purpose or morality in in the universe, do you agree?

Krauss:

- “There is certainly no evidence of any of that”

Brierley:

- In the book, you talk about how we live in a special time in the universe’s history to be able to do science, *(i.e. – The Privileged Planet hypothesis)*
- You also write about how all the discoveries were are making will not be communicated to anyone in other places in the universe
- So what is the meaning of doing science on your view? And why are you sad at the knowledge that will not be available to people in the future?
- Are you longing for some kind of purpose?

Krauss:

- No, I just get enjoyment from studying the universe with science to gain understanding

Holder:

- What do you make of Einstein’s statement about the unexpected comprehensibility of the universe
- Theists would say that this is because God wanted us to study and understand and gain knowledge

Krauss:

- “It is remarkable that the universe is comprehensible”

Brierley:

- Why is the universe comprehensible?

Krauss:

- Well, maybe the universe just has to be that way

Brierley:

- What do you make of the heat death of the universe, when all life in the universe will die out?

Krauss:

- That’s the way the universe is

=== BREAK ===
Krauss:

- I wouldn't want to live in a universe where there was a God
- God is a cosmic Saddam Hussein
- "Religious people turn their minds off" and believe in God for consolation

Holder:

- First, Jesus is the revelation of God and he is no Saddam Hussein
- Second, the Christian life is anything but easy, we are facing some persecution already in the UK
- Third, there is also the problem of being accountable to God when we die
- It's very much like science – Christianity is the way it is, not the way we want it to be

Krauss:

- "If you don't believe in him, you don't get any of the benefits, so you have to believe"
- "And then if you've done something wrong, you're going to be judged for it"
- "So I don't want to be judged by God, I want to be… that's the bottom line"

Holder:

- Well, Jesus has died to pay the price for those things we've done wrong
- Although we will have to face the charges for what we've done, believers will ultimately be forgiven

UPDATE: Peter Sean Bradley note that Krauss is now walking back his rhetoric in response to criticisms from people like atheist John Horgan.

Related posts

- Ed Feser takes on Lawrence Krauss and Victor Stenger
- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?
- Lawrence Krauss debates "A Universe From Nothing" with an astrophysicist
- William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?
- Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument
- Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger's critique of cosmic fine-tuning
- A review of Lawrence Krauss' book "A Universe From Nothing"

William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?

April 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Audio of the William Lane Craig vs. Lawrence Krauss debate at North Carolina State University has now been posted at Apologetics 315.

And I also posted some background information on Craig's arguments.

William Lane Craig's case

William Lane Craig made 5 arguments for the existence of God:

- the contingency argument
- theargument from the origin of the universe (kalam)
- the argument from cosmic fine-tuning
- the moral argument
- the argument from the miracle of the resurrection

These arguments went unrefuted during the debate.

Lawrence Krauss's case

Lawrence Krauss made the following arguments in his first speech:

- Dr. Craig is a professional debater
- Dr. Craig is not a scientist
- Dr. Craig is a philosopher
- Disproving God's is a waste of my valuable time
- Dr. Craig has the burden of proof to show evidence
- My job is not to present any evidence
- I think that "extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence" is a nice slogan, but I have no evidence for it
- I don't like that God doesn't appear on Youtube, therefore he doesn't exist
- I don't like that God didn't appear to humans until recently, therefore he doesn't exist
- I don't like that the stars didn't come together to spell "I am here", therefore God doesn't exist
- Dr. Craig has to supply extraordinary evidence, because my favorite slogan says he has to
- Dr. Craig talks about logic, but the universe is not logical
- Dr. Craig doesn't have any arguments, just things he doesn't like
- Dr. Craig doesn't like infinity, and that's why he believes in the Big Bang cosmology
- Dr. Craig doesn't like chance, and that's why he believes in cosmic fine-tuning
- Dr. Craig doesn't like rape, and that's why he believes in the ontological foundations of morality

- If people believe in logic, then they can't do science
- The things that science discovers contradict the laws of logic
- For example, Dr. Craig doesn't like infinity, so he believes in the experimental measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation
- For example, Dr. Craig doesn't like chance, so he believes in the fine-tuning of the gravitational constant for the formation of stable stars
- Quantum mechanics shows that the universe is stranger than you think, therefore all of Craig's arguments are false
- My t-shirt says 2 + 2 = 5, therefore all of Craig's arguments are false
- Atheism may look ridiculous, but it's true, and if you don't like it, too bad – because the universe is very strange
- Accidents happen all the time, so that explains the cosmic fine-tuning
- We all have to convince ourselves of 10 impossible things before breakfast, and atheism is impossible, so you need to convince yourself of it
- I don't know about the Big Bang, so Dr. Craig cannot use the Big Bang to to prove the universe began to exist
- I don't know about the cosmic fine-tuning, so Dr. Craig cannot use the fine-tuning of cosmological constants to prove the fine-tuning
- I don't know anything about science, so Dr. Craig cannot use science in his arguments
- Dr. Craig says that the universe is contingent because it began to exist 13.7 billion years ago based on the state-of-the-art scientific evidence for the Big Bang creation out of nothing from 1) red-shift of light from distant galaxies, 2) cosmic microwave background radiation, 3) helium-hydrogen abundances, 4) experimental confirmation of general relativity, 5) the second law of thermodynamics, 6) radioactive element abundances, etc., but how does he know that? I don't know that
- It's fine not to know the answer to scientific questions like whether the universe began to exist, it's more exciting
- Thinking that the universe began to exist based on 6 pieces of scientific evidence is the "God-of-the-Gaps" fallacy, it's intellectual laziness
- But all kidding aside, the universe actually did begin to exist 13.72 billion years ago, exactly like Craig says in his argument
- I could argue that God created the universe 4.5 seconds ago with all of us sitting believing that we heard Dr. Craig, and how could you prove me wrong? It's not falsifiable
- Universes can spontaneously appear out of nothing, and in fact they have to appear out of nothing
- *Nothing is unstable*, and space and time can come into existence out of nothing, so that's not a problem
- Our universe could have appeared out of a multiverse, an unobservable, untestable multiverse that I have no way of observing or testing
- The universe is not fine-tuned for life, and no scientist says so, especially not Martin Rees, the atheist Astronomer Royal, and every other scientist

- What if God decided that rape was OK, would it be OK? God can change his moral nature arbitrarily, can't he?

Here are the arguments in Krauss' second speech:

- We don't understand the beginning of the universe
- We don't understand whether the universe had a cause
- Steven Weinberg says that science makes it possible to be an atheist, so therefore the universe didn't begin and didn't have a cause
- It's just intellectual laziness to say that the universe came into being 13.7 billion years ago, and that things that come into being of nothing have a cause
- Dr. Craig is an expert on nothing, ha ha ha!
- There are multiple versions of nothing, there's nothing, and then there is something, which is also nothing if I want it to be
- There was no space, there was no time, and then the space create the empty space
- I'm going to give Dr. Craig a break
- At least in the nothing there were laws like *F=ma*, and those laws created the empty space, because *descriptions of matter that does not even exist yet* can create space out of nothing
- Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin are good friends of mine and I talk to them all the time, unlike Dr. Craig
- Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin don't mention God in their scientific papers, therefore the universe didn't begin and didn't have a cause
- Maybe there is a multiverse that cannot be observed or tested? And my unscientific speculations are a refutation of Craig's scientific evidence for the fine-tuning
- Dr. Craig just doesn't like my speculations about the unobservable, untestable multiverse, and that's why he believes in the Big Bang cosmology
- And if you let me speculate about an unobservable, untestable multiverse, then maybe the inanimate invisible universes reproduce and compete for food and mutate like animals and then there is natural selection so that the finely-tuned universes survive and now we're in one!
- My cool animation of blue goo mutating proves that the multiverse is real! Empty space is not empty!
- Darwinism, which is a theory about the origin of species, explains the cosmic fine-tuning that occurred at the moment of creation
- The unobservable, untestable multiverse universes all have different laws, I believe
- We don't know what the right answer is, but we are willing to look at any possibility, as long as the possibilities we look at are not supernatural possibilities
- The discovery of the origin of the universe could be an accident, I don't know if the universe began to exist or not, maybe all the six scientific evidences are wrong because if I don't like the evidence we have, so I'll just wait for new evidence to overturn the evidence we have which I don't like
- Maybe there are other forms of life that are unobservable and untestable that are

compatible with a universe that has no stable stars, no planets, no elements heavier than hydrogen, no hydrogen, no carbon, etc.

Here are the arguments in Krauss' third speech:

- Dr. Craig is stupid
- Why should we even care about Dr. Craig's arguments and evidence, we can just count the number of scientists who are atheists and decide whether God exists that way – I decided everything based on what my teachers told me to believe
- I actually know general relativity, not like Dr. Craig who co-wrote a book on general relativity published by Oxford University Press
- What quantum mechanics shows is that virtual particles come into being in a quantum vacuum, and then go out of existence almost immediately – and that is exactly like how a 13.7 billion year old universe came into being in a quantum vacuum, and we're going to disappear *very soon*
- Space and the laws of physics can be created, possibly, if you accept my speculations about an unobservable, untestable multiverse
- I don't like the God of the Old Testament, therefore he doesn't exist
- Groups of people can decide what they think is good and evil, like the Nazis and slave-owners did, and then that becomes good for them in that time and place, and that's what I mean by morality
- Here's something I studied that wasn't fine-tuned, therefore there is no fine-tuning of the universe
- Not knowing things is really exciting! Dr. Craig is not really exciting because he knows things – phooey!

Here are the arguments in Krauss' fourth speech:

- If you will just grant me an observable, untestable multiverse, then there must be some universe where intelligent life exists
- Infinite numbers of things exist everywhere in nature, you can see lots of infinite collections of things, like jelly beans and bumblebees and invisible pink unicorns
- I don't like the fine-tuning, but if my speculations about the multiverse are proven true, then I won't have to learn to live with the fine-tuning
- Inflation, the rapid expansion of the universe which occurs at some time after the the origin of the universe ($t = 0$), explains the absolute origin of time, space, matter and energy out of nothing that occurred at $t = 0$
- Physical processes that develop subsequent to the creation of the universe at $t > 0$ can explain the fine-tuning of quantities that are set at $t = 0$
- Morality is just a bunch of arbitrary conventions decided by groups of people in different times and places by an accidental process of biological and social evolution, but *that* practice over there by *those* people is *objectively* wrong!
- 1 Cor 15:3-7, which most scholars, even atheists like James Crossley, admit is dated to within 3 years of the death of Jesus, is actually dated to 50 years after the death

of Jesus
- The historical case for the resurrection made by people like N.T. Wright in their multi-volume academic works is on par with the story of Mohammed ascending to Heaven on a horse

If you liked this, please check out my snarky summary of Christopher Hitchens' speeches in the Craig-Hitchens debate.

In the UK, criminals are being treated as victims

April 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Peter Hitchens, writing in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> The pro-crime lobby who run our injustice system have two fixed beliefs.
>
> One is that criminals are victims.
>
> Their misdeeds are not their fault but the inevitable result of non-existent poverty.
>
> They have no personal ability to overcome their backgrounds, and so it would be cruel to punish them.
>
> The other is that prisons are a waste of money, an 'expensive way of making bad people worse' as the supposedly Right-wing Tory Home Secretary David Waddington said in 1990.
>
> They would rather not have any prisons at all.
>
> They keep the jails we have only because of tiresome public opinion, and because of newspapers like this one that hold fast to traditional ideas of right and wrong, justice and punishment.
>
> That is why they deliberately run those prisons very badly – they are pointless, apologetic warehouses, largely under the control of the inmates and full of illegal drugs.
>
> Almost nobody is sent to these places until he or she is already a habitual, confirmed criminal.
>
> They are then almost always swiftly released, after learning for certain what they have long suspected, that they have nothing to fear from the police or the courts.
>
> Then the pro-crime liberals write reports pointing out how awful the prisons are (while ignoring the fact that their own ideas have caused this) and urging that even fewer people are sent to them.
>
> As a result, crime increases so much that – despite ultra-liberal guidelines on sentencing – the prisons still fill and overflow.
>
> […]Last week we saw two court cases which showed exactly what is going on.
>
> […]Case One concerns Caroline Pattinson (pictured above), an abuser of heroin, which is supposed to be illegal but isn't in practice.
>
> **Pattinson, 34, has committed 207 crimes in 20 years.**
>
> **These include 108 convictions for theft, many for cruel frauds on pensioners. But until last Tuesday she had never been sent to prison, except on remand.**

> **Now that she has, she’s not worried. Why should she be?**
>
> **On being sentenced to 30 months (of which she will serve at most 15 months), she mockingly called out: ‘Cushty! Easily done!’**

That’s what happens if you leave the secular leftist Labour Party in charge for a while, not that the Conservatives under Cameron are doing anything about it.

Ed Feser takes on Lawrence Krauss and Victor Stenger

April 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Ed Feser's blog. (H/T Chris R.)

Excerpt:

> I recently linked to philosopher of physics David Albert's take down of Lawrence Krauss's book*A Universe From Nothing*. (My own review of Krauss will soon appear in *First Things*.) A reader calls my attention to this blog post in which Victor Stenger — Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at the University of Colorado, Professor Emeritus of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Hawaii, and author of several atheist tomes — rides to the rescue of Krauss against Albert. (If only the other philosophically incompetent New Atheists had such a knight in shining armor! O Dawkins, where is your Stenger? O Coyne, where is your Victor?)
>
> Unfortunately for Krauss, the intrepid Stenger shoots only blanks. And misses. Krauss, as you may know, argues that the laws of quantum mechanics (QM) show how a universe can arise from nothing. Albert demurs, and Stenger responds:
>
> *[Albert] asks, "Where, for starters, are the laws of quantum mechanics themselves supposed to have come from?" Krauss admits he does not know, but suggests they may arise randomly, in which case some universe like ours would have arisen without a prescribed cause. In my 2006 book* The Comprehensible Cosmos*, I attempt to show that the laws of physics arise naturally from the symmetries of the void.*
> Later Stenger tells us that the "void" or "nothing" in question "can be described mathematically," "has an explicit wave function," and "is the quantum gravity equivalent of the quantum vacuum in quantum field theory."
>
> Of course, the problem with all of this is the same as the problem with the original suggestion that the laws of QM show that a universe can come from nothing. The laws of QM are not nothing, and neither are "the symmetries of the void" nor anything that "can be described mathematically," "has an explicit wave function," etc. In general, if you can characterize it in terms of physical law — which Krauss, Stenger, and like-minded atheists all want to do vis-à-vis "nothing" — then it isn't nothing. It's *something physical*, and thus*something* rather than nothing. Obviously.
>
> Obviously, that is, unless you are a New Atheist dogmatically attached to the utterly groundless proposition that all genuine questions simply *must* be susceptible of a scientific answer. At this juncture Stenger does what an increasing number of atheists do when it is pointed out to them that their "explanations" of how the universe arose from nothing merely change the

> subject — they feign ignorance of English. Writes Stenger:
>
> *Clearly, no academic consensus exists on how to define "nothing." It may be impossible. To define "nothing" you have to give it some defining property, but, then, if it has a property it is not nothing!*
> But this is the muddleheaded stuff of a freshman philosophy paper — treating "nothing" as if it were an especially unusual, ethereal kind of substance whose nature it would require tremendous intellectual effort to fathom. Which, as everyone knows until he finds he has a motive for suggesting otherwise, it is not. Nothing is nothing so fancy as that. It is just the absence of anything, that's all. Consider all the true existential claims that there are: "Stones exist," ""Trees exist," "Quarks exist," etc. To ask why there is something rather than nothing is just to ask why it isn't the case that all of these statements are false. Pretty straightforward.
>
> To admit the obvious, though, would be to admit that there are questions that physics cannot answer, such as where the laws of physics themselves came from — or more precisely, since "laws" are just abstractions from a concrete physical reality that behaves in accordance with the laws, where this concrete physical reality itself comes from. That nothing in physics answers this question was Albert's point, and Stenger says absolutely nothing to answer it.

Read the rest. It's really good! and there's a lot more goodness there. 176 comments at the time I am writing this.

UPDATE: Peter Sean Bradley note that Krauss is now walking back his rhetoric in response to criticisms from people like atheist John Horgan.

I have been writing about Stenger and Krauss a lot lately, so here are the links in case you missed anything:

- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?
- Lawrence Krauss debates "A Universe From Nothing" with an astrophysicist
- William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?
- Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument
- Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger's critique of cosmic fine-tuning
- A review of Lawrence Krauss' book "A Universe From Nothing"

Brian Auten interviews philosopher R. Scott Smith

April 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: I have changed the podcast in this post because the original one I linked to had some errors in it. I'm sorry!

Here's an interview from Apologetics 315 in two parts:

Part 1: (MP3 file)

> Today's interview is (part one of two) with R. Scott Smith, Associate Professor of Ethics and Christian Apologetics at Biola University. He talks about his background and influences in ethics (J.P. Moreland,Dallas Willard), his opinion on the moral argument, the idea of naturalism grounding morality, the benefits of understanding ethical theory, and his recommended books on morality: *Moral Choices[image]* by Scott Rae and *Relativism[image]* by Koukl and Beckwith. Scott's own published works include *Virtue Ethics and Moral Knowledge: Philosophy of Language after MacIntyre and Hauerwas[image]* and*T ruth and the New Kind of Christian: The Emerging Effects of Postmodernism in the Church[image]*. Scott also mentions the article "Knowledge & Naturalism" by Dallas Willard as well as J.P. Moreland's book *Scaling the Secular City[image]*.

Part 2: (MP3 file)

> Today's interview is (part two of two) with R. Scott Smith, Associate Professor of Ethics and Christian Apologetics at Biola University. He talks about postmodernism, what it is, and how it is affecting the Church. He shares his thoughts on the good and the bad in the emerging church movement and the works of Brian McClaren[image]. (See the first interview with Scott on ethical issues here.)

Sorry about this confusion.

Is it “brilliant” to accumulate $185,000 of debt studying the humanities?

May 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Des Moines Register, an article by Ms. Rehha Basu.

Excerpt:

> Sixteen years ago, Patricia (P.J.) Johnston of Des Moines made the front page of this paper for collecting her diploma from Drake University at just 19. “Johnston was reading books on French existentialism while others her age were still buying comic books,” wrote reporter Tom Alex of the young woman who majored in religion and philosophy, dabbled in music and astronomy and found time to take part in online discussions on the Bible.
>
> **“I think I’m probably meant to be an academic,” Johnston was quoted as saying. And she has been, getting a master’s in one institution, going to seminary at another, doing field research in India in her area of interest — Indian Catholicism — and currently working toward a Ph.D in religious studies at the University of Iowa.**
>
> President Barack Obama came through Johnston’s university on Wednesday, where he said there is no greater predictor of success than a good education. “This country has always made a commitment to put a good education within the reach of everybody who’s willing to work for it,” Obama said. “That’s part of what made us special. … That’s a commitment that we need to reaffirm today.”
>
> He talked about the untenable debt that’s limiting options for today’s college-goers — $25,000 on average — because tuition and fees have more than doubled since they were born.
>
> Johnston didn’t get to hear him since she was teaching a class on Buddhism. But she knows a lot about educational debt. **She has $185,000 in student loans to repay.**
>
> As it is, she sleeps on her office floor on the days she has to be in Iowa City, **riding the Greyhound bus in from Des Moines**. She helps support her mother with the approximately $16,000 she earns as a teaching assistant. But she is in danger of dropping out before getting her doctorate because she has hit her limit on loans, and most likely won’t be able to get a teaching assistant position next year because of cuts in undergraduate programs.
>
> If that happens, she wrote me, she would be this far along, “facing the job market in my mid-30s with no marketable job skills of any kind.”
>
> **Johnston grew up on welfare and other forms of public assistance. Her divorced mother was unable to hold down a job for reasons that were never diagnosed. Johnston got through college with scholarships,**

> **grants, some help from her late grandmother, and only $18,000 in debt.**

Student loans should not be connected to the government as they are now – they should be privatized. That way, taxpayers are not stuck with the bill if the person cannot make a career out of what they are studing. What is this person doing going abroad in India? What is she doing riding on Grayhounds? It makes no sense. If she had to go to a for-profit bank, then she would never get a student loan, because they know they would never get the money back. We have to have a system where people pay their own way, so that they can't take risks with anyone else's money but their own (or their loan guarantor's). No taxpayer money should be available to them, and no taxpayer money should be given to subsidize universities, either – it just raises the cost of tuition. Once the number of students applying to the humanities is reduced because no loans are available, then tuition will come down for those who *really intend to make a go of it.*

I think a lot of the problem here comes from growing up without a father. Fathers teach their children to be practical because they worry more than mothers about the children not being able to be independent and fend for themselves.

UPDATE: The Captain comments on this story here.

UPDATE: This is from the woman's Facebook page:

> I have never asked anybody to pay my student loan debt for me, and I will pay it down someday, even if I have to eat ramen noodles for the rest of my life. I was willing to undertake my studies at any cost and at any degree of personal risk because I believe in God and I am convinced that I am doing what God is calling me to do. If you read the New Testament, you will find a great deal about how people are called to give up everything they own – houses and wealth and family and respectibility and everything else – to do whatever it is that God calls them to do. I am not brave and no longer optimistic, but I have tried to take God at his word.
>
> I am not financing education entirely through student loan debt. I held work study jobs as an undergraduate, and have usually held some kind of on-campus employment. I have been a TA for the university for the last seven years. The fact is, government support of higher education is down and the cost of tuition has outpaced salaries to such a great degree in this country that virtually nobody is able to afford an education on their own wages without taking on a substantial burden of student loan debt. The vast majority of the anecdotes to the contrary concern degrees earned twenty or thirty years ago, before major structural changes in the financing of higher education – in the post-war years, government funding allowed the vast majority of expense for education to be met through Pell grants and scholarships, making it possible for many people to work themselves through school. That hasn't been possible for most people in most degree programs for at least thirty years, and these nostalgic memories of an entirely different time and set of circumstances are not doing the debate on

> higher education financing in this country any good at all.
>
> I am not a “professional student” nor am I taking an especially long time to pursue my degree – this is simply how long humanities education takes. http://chronicle.com/article/In-Humanities-10-Years-May/16231
>
> If you only see value in STEM disciplines, I probably will not convince you that humanities education is valuable. There used to be a sense in this country that certain things had value and meaning in their own right, not simply because they produced nice technological gadgets or made bundles of money for businesses. Even conservatives such as Allan Bloom used to realize that it impoverishes us spiritually when we turn away from the humanities, the cultural legacy of Western society. Would that their political descendants had as much grace or wisdom.

She’s not being forced into this course of action. She’s choosing it deliberately, and she wants other people to pay to make her impractical flight from reality financially sound.

Ex-CIA chief Jose Rodriguez says Nancy Pelosi lied about waterboarding

May 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Daily Beast.

Excerpt:

> The CIA's former top spook, unable for years to respond publicly to criticism of his role in waterboarding terrorist suspects after 9/11, is finally getting the chance to answer his critics. And to launch a counterattack.

> In a memoir being published Monday and obtained by The Daily Beast, the former CIA official Jose Rodriguez defends the waterboarding program and says he was right in 2005 to order the destruction of videotapes of the harsh interrogation sessions, in which suspected Al Qaeda terrorists were held down and subjected to a simulated drowning.
>
> In his book, *Hard Measures: How Aggressive CIA Actions after 9/11 Saved American Lives*, Rodriguez, a career undercover CIA officer who headed the agency's clandestine services from 2004 until his retirement in 2007, tries to turn the table on his critics, identifying many people—in and out of the United States government—who, he says, have hindered the fight against Al Qaeda and other international terrorist networks.

According to Rodriguez, Nancy Pelosi lied when she claimed she was not informed about the use of waterboarding:

> House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi and other CIA critics in Congress. Rodriguez challenges Pelosi's assertion that, while a ranking member of the House intelligence committee after 9/11, she was not informed in detail about the use of waterboarding.
>
> "Pelosi said that we only briefly mentioned waterboarding and left the impression that it had not been used," Rodriguez writes, insisting that the California Democrat was fully briefed—by Rodriguez himself—about waterboarding and its use. " He says that Pelosi was explicitly briefed on waterboarding and posed no objection to the technique. "I know she got it."

> "There is no doubt in my mind that she, like almost all Americans less than a year after, wanted us to be aggressive to make sure that Al Qaeda wasn't able to replicate their attack." He writes that "Pelosi was another member of Congress reinventing the truth."

And he takes a shot at the Obama administration:

> The Obama administration. Rodriguez says President Obama has abandoned

> interrogation techniques—including waterboarding—that allowed the CIA to prevent terrorist attacks after 9/11. He said the administration has become too reliant instead of the use of missile-armed drones in Pakistan and elsewhere to kill, instead of to capture, terrorists.
>
> “Drones can be a highly effective way of dealing with high-priority targets,” Rodriguez writes. “But they should not become the drug of choice for an administration that is afraid to use successful, legal and safe tactics of the past.” He adds, “Needless to say, there is no opportunity to interrogate or learn anything from a suspect who is vaporized by a missile launched by a keystroke executed thousands of miles away.”

Right Scoop posted an interview with Jose Rodriguez, in which he explains that he personally briefed Pelosi on the waterboarding.

Obama and family bill taxpayers for 17 lavish vacations

May 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

FrontPage Magazine explains.

Excerpt:

> When the president's 13-year-old daughter, Malia, took a Spring Break trip to Mexico with 12 of her friends and 25 Secret Service agents–one that reportedly cost taxpayers $2.5 million–it was covered by the mainstream media. AFP filed the initial report, and the story was subsequently picked up by *Yahoo*, the *Huffington Post,* and the *International Business Times*, as well as foreign publications, such as *Daily Mail*, the *Telegraph* and *The Australian*.
>
> Yet by the same evening, all of the stories had been removed from each of those sites. The updated links either directed one to a site's home page or 404 error pages, reading "page not found." What happened? The White House got a compliant media to scrub the story. Kristina Schake, Communications Director to the First Lady, confirmed this to *Politico*: "From the beginning of the administration, the White House has asked news outlets not to report on or photograph the Obama children when they are not with their parents and there is no vital news interest. We have reminded outlets of this request in order to protect the privacy and security of these girls."
>
> Again, such concerns for the safety of First Family members are entirely legitimate. Yet some questions remain unanswered. Why would the president allow his daughter to travel to Mexico despite a Texas Department of Public Safety warning not to go there because "cartel violence and other criminal activity represent a significant safety threat, even in some resort areas"? Why was it necessary to include a dozen friends, making the trip more expensive and security far more complicated? Why are members of the mainstream media taking marching orders from the White House? Why did the trip cost*taxpayers* $2.5 million?
>
> Perhaps, as the saying goes, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Last week, Judicial Watch released a report revealing that First Lady Michelle Obama's trip to Costa Del Sol, Spain in 2010 cost taxpayers $467,585. Again, no reasonable person begrudges a woman in the public spotlight some rest and relaxation. But as the New York Times reports, part of that R&R included a stay at the "five-star Hotel Villa Padierna near Marbella, where at least 30 rooms were reserved for the entourage, including those for security. The hotel is one of Spain's more luxurious establishments, with rooms ranging from $500-a-night to a $6,600 suite with 24-hour butler service."
>
> Furthermore, Mrs. Obama is hardly reticent when it comes to taking vacations.

> Her February 2012 trip to upscale Aspen, Colorado, for a President's Day ski weekend with daughters Sasha and Malia, marked the 16th vacation (the updated number is now 17) taken by Obama family members in just over three years, not including visits to the Camp David compound, or short trips like a New York City "date night" taken in May 2009. Nor is the First Lady or the president seemingly concerned saddling taxpayers with the cost of flying separately to the same vacation sites. It cost taxpayers $100,000 when the First Lady jetted to a 2010 Hawaii vacation ahead of her husband, and several thousands more when the First Lady traveled to a Martha's Vineyard vacation on a separate government jet only *four hours* prior to the president's trip there. While at Martha's Vineyard, the First Family stayed at Blue Heron Farm, a property that reportedly rents for approximately $50,000 per week. And on a trip to Maine in July of 2010, the President's dog, Bo, and his handler traveled on a separate plane to that destination.
>
> Such a penchant for extravagance has added up to some pretty daunting numbers. The UK's *Daily Mail,* citing White House sources who referred to the First Lady as "a vacation junkie," claimed Michelle Obama had "has spent $10 million of U.S. taxpayers' money on vacations alone in the past year"–as of August 2011. The unnamed source further notes that Mrs. Obama also enjoys "drinking expensive booze during her trips. She favors martinis with top-shelf vodka and has a taste for rich sparking wines."

We are now approaching a $16 trillion dollar national debt, with $8 trillion of it accumulated between the time when the Democrats took over the House and Senate in January 2007 to now. You would think that we might see some awareness of the situation from the man in charge. But he seems to be oblivious to what real Americans are facing as they try to make ends meet.

Obama administration linked to gay activist Dan Savage

May 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Breitbart.com.

Excerpt:

> Today, the Department of Health and Human Services has issued another of its mass emails on behalf of stopping cyberbullying:
>
> Cyberbullying, which happens online, can hurt feelings and damage relationships, and it is increasing with emerging technologies. One-click access to the Internet makes it that much more dangerous for kids.
>
> Marci Hertz is a health scientist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
>
> "It can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."
>
> The email recommends that readers check out stopbullying.gov, the government website set up specifically to teach about the dangers of bullying.
>
> Only one problem. **As we've been reporting, the Obama administration's anti-bullying efforts are closely linked to those of the It Gets Better Project, founded and led by Dan Savage. The same Dan Savage who recently called Christian high school students "pansy-assed" for walking out on his bigoted, obscene anti-religious harangue at a journalism event.**
>
> **The StopBullying.gov website carries an endorsement for It Gets Better by Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius. It also carries an endorsement by President Obama. And one from the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division.**
>
> And yet the founder of the It Gets Better Project is one of the most effective cyberbullies on the web. He's the guy who created the Santorum google bomb designed to turn Rick Santorum's name into an obscene term. He's the guy who then threatened to turn Santorum's first name, Rick, into an obscene term via Google bomb. He has done the same with the term "Saddlebacking" in order to target Rick Warren's Saddleback Church for supporting the pro-traditional marriage Proposition 8.
>
> So the Obama administration's anti-bullying partner is one of the world's more successful cyberbullies. The Obama administration clearly doesn't care about bullying, so long as the victims of the bullying are conservatives.

There's an updated post about what Savage did to the Christian teens, as well.

Excerpt:

Naman, who is a yearbook photographer at Arrowhead Christian Academy, thought Savage was going to talk about his anti-bullying campaign. But the Christian teenager soon learned that Savage had a very different message for the students.

“I hope you’re all using birth control,” Savage told the teenagers as he began his remarks. From there, he regaled the young people who stories about his husband, describing how he looked in a Speedo. At one point, Savage imagined what it would be like with his husband on stage – telling the kids that they would have to pry him off his partner.

[…]Naman was growing increasingly uncomfortable with the tone and tenor of Savage’s remarks. There were more lewd comments, profane words and innuendo. And then, Savage said something that made Naman take notice.

“The Bible,” Savage said with a elongated pause.

““The very second he said the Bible and paused, I knew it was going to get ugly,” Naman told Fox News. “It was about to be a bashing.”

[…]Some will say what happened next took courage – but Naman said he was simply following the prompting of the Holy Spirit. And the entire moment was captured on a video that has now gone viral on YouTube.

The 18-year-old Eagle Scout and captain of the high school track team rose to his feet – and walked out – passing by hundreds of other students who were cheering the anti-bullying advocate’s profanity-laced rant.

“I felt like in my heart I couldn’t just stay there at all,” he said. “It was a really weird feeling I just had to get out. I didn’t want to cause a scene but I really could not stand to be in that room anymore.”

Jake Naman said he felt – bullied.

[…]Naman thought that he was the only person who walked out – but when he got to the lobby – he learned that was far from the case. Arrowhead’s entire yearbook staff followed his lead – including his 16-year-old sister.

“I was shaking,” Julia Naman told Fox News. “I saw my brother pop up and leave and I took off after him.”

So did 17-year-old Haley Mulder.

“I never felt more hurt, felt persecuted,” Mulder said. “For me, my faith is what I want to be defined by. For someone to say it was B.S. is really hurtful. I felt put down and bullied because of my faith.”

And then it got worse for the Christian teenagers. Savage directly targeted them with his remarks.

“You can tell the Bible guys in the hall they can come back now because I’m done beating up the Bible,” he said. “It’s funny as someone on the receiving end of beatings that are justified by the Bible how pansy-assed people react when

> you push back."
>
> Naman said a number of the girls began crying. He said it seemed like such a safe environment "But then Dan Savage went off and it didn't seem that way anymore."
>
> "He had a position of power as a speaker and he was using that against a group of students who had never done anything to him," Naman said. "I would consider that bullying."
>
> "He was completely insulting and degrading our faith," his sister said.

In case you missed it, Savage bullied a bunch of Christian teens and bashed the Bible and Christianity at a recent speaking engagement. It's the kind of thing that should be a hate crime, but probably won't be, for obvious reasons, unless the Obama administration is voted out.

In this two-minute podcast excerpt, Dan Savage explains why he doesn't need the permission of parents to talk to their children about explicit, sexual issues. It's because he has the President as an ally, and the President supports what he does.

You may also want to refresh yourself on one of the President's previous appointees, Kevin Jennings (WARNING: Graphic content not suitable for children). This is what you get when you vote for Democrats.

Dad rescues “brain dead” son from organ-harvesting doctors, son recovers

May 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> According to the Daily Mail newspaper, a young British man owes his life to an insistent father who would not allow his son’s organs to be removed from his body, despite assurances from four doctors that his son could not recover from the wounds he had suffered in a recent car accident.
>
> The Mail reports that Stephen Thorpe, then 17, was placed in a medically-induced coma following a multi-car pileup that had already taken the life of his friend Matthew, who was driving the vehicle.
>
> Although a team of four physicians insisted that his son was “brain-dead” following the wreck, Thorpe’s father enlisted the help of a general practitioner and a neurologist, who demonstrated that his son still had brain wave activity. The doctors agreed to bring him out of the coma, and five weeks later Thorpe left the hospital, having almost completely recovered.
>
> Today, the 21-year-old with “brain damage” is studying accounting at a local university. “‘My impression is maybe the hospital weren’t very happy that my father wanted a second opinion,” he told the Mail.

The article lists a few more examples:

> In 2011, the Quebec Hospital Sainte Croix de Drummondville sought permission to extract the eyes of a patient who had choked on hospital food in the absence of a nurse, claiming she was “brain dead.” After the family demanded proof from physicians of her alleged condition, she regained consciousness, and recovered most of her faculties. The family declared its intention to sue the hospital.
>
> In 2008, a 45-year-old Frenchman revived on the operating table as doctors prepared to “harvest” his organs for donation, following cardiac arrest. In the subsequent investigation by the hospital’s ethics committee, a number of doctors admitted that such cases, while rare, were well known to them.
>
> That same year, a “brain dead” 21-year-old American, Zack Dunlap, was about to have his organs harvested when his two sisters, both nurses, decided to test the hospital’s theory that his brain was no longer functioning. Family members poked his feet with a knife and dug their fingernails under his nails, provoking strong reactions by Dunlap and proving he was conscious. He recovered completely. He later related that he was conscious and aware as doctors discussed harvesting

> his organs in his presence.

Wow. My buddy ECM likes to talk about “ghouls” who like to profit from practices like abortion. Well, I don’t think he’s going to find a better example of ghoulishness than these doctors.

In 2013, taxpayers will be paying more of their incomes to government

May 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The tax increases scheduled to take effect in January 2013 – dubbed Taxmageddon – could have the American people spending more days than ever working to pay for federal and state government, areport from the Tax Foundation shows.
>
> A host of tax rates are scheduled to rise in January 2013 – when George W. Bush-era tax rates and the annual patch for the Alternative Minimum Tax expire – leading to a tax increase of approximately $500 billion in 2013, according to the conservative Heritage Foundation.
>
> The Congressional Budget Office reported in January that taxes would increase by $4.6 trillion over ten years, if Congress allows the rates to rise as scheduled at the end of this year.
>
> Tax Foundation economist William McBride estimated that this historic tax increase would push Tax Freedom Day to its latest point ever.
>
> Tax Freedom Day is the day when – theoretically – Americans begin working for themselves and can stop paying for government. It assumes that 100 percent of a person's wages go to paying for federal and state tax burdens. The day when government operations are fully paid for is Tax Freedom Day.
>
> In 2012, Tax Freedom Day was April 17. However, Taxmageddon may push it until the end of April or beyond, McBride reported in a blog post on the foundation's website. At the federal level, the 2012 tax increases would add 11 days to the Tax Freedom Day calculation, pushing it to April 28.
>
> Adding in rising state and local tax revenues could push Tax Freedom Day beyond its May 1 record.
>
> The Taxmageddon provisions adding to the cost of government – measured in the days that Americans will spend paying for it – are as follows:
>
> - Bush tax rates – 2.6 days
> - Alternative Minimum Tax – 2.2 days
> - Small business tax cuts – 0.4 days
> - Corporate income tax – 3.4 days
> - Payroll tax cut – 2.5 days
> - Estate tax – 0.2 days

One of the problems with all of this voting for bigger government is that there is less money for people to make their marriages and families work. The more we vote for bigger government, the less we haves as individuals for our own plans, including our marriage and family plans.

Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5

May 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been thinking a lot about Christian women and respect lately, and reflecting over some of the things that I have experienced with different ones that either worked or did not work. Unfortunately, it is crunch time at work, so I might not be completely coherent in this post, but I thought I would write something out anyway.

There are times when the Bible suggests a way that Christians ought to behave, and one of those cases has to do with wives giving respect to husbands in the marriage:

Ephesians 5:21-33:

[21] Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

[22] Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

[23] For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

[24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

[25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

[26] to make her holy,cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

[27] and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

[28] In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

[29] After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—

[30] for we are members of his body.

[31] "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

[32] This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

[33] However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, **and the wife must respect her husband.**

I think it's important for us to think about how to implement the specification that the Bible sets out for men and women in marriage. The Bible sometimes sets out rules and goals for expected behaviors, which become moral obligations for anyone for follows Christ. It is up to us to convince ourselves through study that the Bible has authority to speak to us. And it is also up to us to decide the most effective way to achieve the goals that the Bible sets out. This post proposes some tips for women who want to learn how to

respect men, based on my experiences of what makes me feel respected as a man. I think this is beneficial for single women, as well, because it allows them to arouse the interest of a man *by performing good actions*.

A bit about me

There are some things you need to know about me before we can talk about what what women do to me that causes me to feel respected.

Here are some things that I want to accomplish:

- Be able to have a stay at home mother to raise our children so that they will know God, be moral and achieve great things for God in areas that matter
- Be able to fix the problem of anti-intellectualism in the church by training more and more Christians in apologetics and worldview, including politics, economics, etc.
- Be able to have a presence at the university, e.g. – by being a Christian professor, or by supporting Christian scholars, or by sponsoring Christian scholars to speak and debate at the university
- Be able to speak, write or teach about apologetics and worldview to the general public, for example people who read my blog or my co-workers, so that they either learn how to do it, or become more respectful of Christianity and its founder

I am actually working on all of those things, and many of the decisions and sacrifices that I've made so far have been to achieve those things at a higher level.

Things that women do that make me feel respected

1. Work

The first thing that really works is listening. I really feel respected when a woman listens to me explain my thoughts and feelings. This is especially true when I am talking about my work and my work day. When it comes to my work, I feel respected when a woman listens to me explain what I am doing. This allows her to be able to support me more because she understands what I am saying when I talk with terms like "unit tests", "web services", "source code repository", etc. The more time she invests in understanding software engineering (what I do for money), the more supported I will feel. I feel a lot better making sacrifices (studying hard things, working weekends, volunteering at work) when those sacrifices are understood, encouraged and supported. For example, I felt respected recently when I was working on the weekend and could not speak to a lady I really wanted to speak to. Instead of getting upset about my absence, she started making suggestions on how I could be more effective at work, by bringing healthy food so I don't go to the vending machine or my co-workers' candy dishes, by asking me about my progress every few hours. I feel respected when I can talk about my work and then be encouraged and supported in it.

2. Plan

Another area that is important to talk about is my plan. I like it when I can tell a woman the specific experiences that I had that cause me to have the plan that I have. For example, my struggles getting apologetics into the churches that I've attended have

really soured me on church leaders. Another thing I like to talk about are the Christian scholars who are my role models, and how I try to emulate them, and I want my children to emulate them, too. One lady I was speaking to has been studying areas that I care about on her own through books, lectures and debates and then going out into the world and engaging with the people around her. Sometimes just a few people, and sometimes with large groups. Recently she told me that she would like to start a group in her church to study useful books with them. This made me feel very respected. My goals matter to her, and she is trying to help with them on her own initiative, and with her own strategies. Note that women who want to respect men may find that it is useful to learn certain skills in order to be more effective at helping men with their plans. For example, she might study investing and start investing her own money, or she might study science apologetics and then engage her co-workers and friends with scientific arguments for Christian theism. She should find out what areas matter to him with respect to serving God and then come alongside him and help him.

3. Roles

A final area that is important is my roles as a man. I have been a Christian for a long time now, and I have noticed that many Christian women in the church are basically secular in the way that they choose men. Many Christian women are guided by their emotions, by pop culture notions of romance, and peer approval – even the approval of their peer group. According to the Bible, men are supposed to be the main provider for their families. So, I made the decision early in my life to prefer work to academics – so I have actually been earning money since the time I was 12 years old. My grades were As, but I was always working part-time, and in the summers. The money I earned went straight into investments, so that I would be able to afford two degrees in computer science (BS and MS) and have a nest egg saved for marriage. I had $9,000 before undergraduate school and $16,000 after, with no debts and a car. I chose computer science over English literature, because I knew that computer science was a more reliable way to earn a living. Marriages run more smoothly when money isn't a concern, so I had to take practical steps in order to avoid a known risk factor for divorce.

But women also have a role related to providing. Their role is to prefer men who take that provider obligation seriously. I feel very respected when a woman takes the time to ask me about my education, research, employment, and investments. Our culture today doesn't value men taking their provider roles seriously. Instead, many women prefer men who will not be able to exercise the authority in the home that comes from being a competent provider. They sometimes prefer to see all choices in education and work as equal, so that no man is more respected than any other man based on education, earning and saving. I see a lot of Christian women going after men who are much younger than they are, with non-STEM degrees, who have no savings, and no practical plan for financing a marriage – much less a homeschooling stay-at-home mother. That is disrespectful of the provider role, and I believe it stems from the desire to not acknowledge male leadership. When a woman minimizes the education, career and savings of the man, it diminishes her regard for his ability to navigate the world and take

responsibility. Many women want to be swept along by impressions of confidence and superficial indicators of success. But this is not wise: a man who has a gap-less resume and an investment portfolio is a good provider, and a man who lives with his parents at age 30 is not – even if he is confident, has a deep voice, nice shoes, big shoulders, and a square jaw.

To treat unequals as equals in this important area is disrespectful and unBiblical – it disrespects the Bible's mandate that the man be a good provider and instead substitutes an emotional/pop culture/peer-approval standard of what counts as a good man. Additionally, women need to have an understanding of the external conditions that strengthen a man's ability to take on the provider role. To respect a man acting as a provider also requires voting for policies that support a man's ability to work (e.g. – less regulation on business, lower corporate taxes) to keep what he earns (lower income tax, lower inflation) and to spend it the way he sees fit (privatization of health care, education, etc.) – and these issues need to be studied, not checked off on a checklist as "we agree". Studying economics and politics in depth, and being political active, are ways for women to respect men in their provider role. Women need to take action to enable policies and laws that promote liberty and prosperity. They should not be supporting policies that promote the redistribution of wealth, or reward irresponsibility and dependence. They should not support policies that punish men who work hard at being providers while rewarding men who refuse to be providers.

It also helps when a woman studies hard topics on her own – math, science, engineering and technology – and builds up her own investment portfolio. It helps her to be able to be respectful to a man because she understands exactly what he studies and exactly how hard work is and exactly how hard it is to save money in a society creeping towards socialism. A woman who experiences sacrifice and hardship herself is more likely to respect a man who does the same in order to be ready for marriage, even if she eventually gives up work when there are young children to raise. And this works for other male roles. For example, men who guard their chastity in order to protect women from infidelity should be respected for making that decision. It's important for women to study marriage research, e.g. – how factors like chastity and church attendance and cohabitation increase or decrease marriage stability, so that they have reasons and evidence to prefer men who choose to make that sacrifice.

Men also study moral questions like abortion and marriage, as well as spiritual areas like apologetics and theology, so that they can advocate for the victims of abortion and marital breakdown. Again, women must study the research on these issues so that they are able to prefer men who can do this over men who can't. Christianity is not a checkbox and you cannot equate someone who understands these issues with someone who doesn't because both attend church. When a woman puts in the effort to study apologetics, moral issues, economics and foreign policy, then a real man feels respected – because he knows that she has a standard for judging him that is a true measure of his ability to be a husband and father. It is important to treat a man who takes his male roles seriously differently from other men who do not take those male roles seriously.

Conclusion

One of the best ways to respect a man is to speak highly of his abilities in all 3 of these areas to others. If women are careful about the man they choose, then they should be able to speak highly of him with others. When a woman praises a good man, it is a signal to other men about what they should be doing in order to impress women. To change the culture and to encourage men towards marriage, women must be intentional about who they celebrate and why they celebrate them. It also helps if they understand what policies make marriage a more realistic undertaking for men, and then advocate for those policies. Again, this requires reading things like economics and law to understand what challenges a man will face from government and ideologies (feminism, socialism) should he choose to marry, and making sure that those challenges are reduced. A man feels respected when a woman has developed a detailed understanding of what marriage is about and how society needs to change to support and respect men who choose to marry and become fathers. The Bible says that divorce is morally wrong, so it is up to men and women to make decisions that reduce the risk of divorce. We can't just float through life relying on our emotions and thinking that God has a secret, mysterious plan and there is nothing for us to do. Usually, that attitude will just make us avoid learning and avoid making hard decisions to prepare for marriage, and that will not do – we are responsible to avoid divorce, and we have to make an effort in order to achieve that goal.

If any of my female readers are interested in learning about men and what men need in order to act competently as protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders, you can take a look at Dr. Laura Schlessinger's "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands" as well as Gary Chapman's "The Five Love Languages". To understand the connection between marriage and policy, try Jay Richards' "Indivisible". And don't merely read the books – put it into practice by advocating for men and marriage from church to university to workplace to courtroom to government. Make plans to show that you respect Christian men who know what they are doing and why. Don't rely on your emotions to guide you – this is more of an obligation requires training, recon, planning and execution. (The same way that a man prepares to love a woman and then loves her – because women need love just like men need respect). Men pay attention to women who respect them, and it's much better for women to get attention from men by learning about them and helping them than by trying to bypass respecting the man to get attention by leveraging appearance and sexuality to get attention. And, of course, some men cannot be respected, so don't choose one of those.

NOTE: Please post improvements for this post in the comments, as I may be posting this elsewhere if it gets a positive response. Please share it on Facebook and Twitter if you find it useful.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian

- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sex and sexuality at Harvard University

May 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Dr. Morse delivers a talk based on her book "Smart Sex" at Harvard University.

The MP3 file is here. (30 Mb)

Topics:

- the hook-up culture and its effects on men and women
- cohabitation and its effect on marriage stability
- balancing marriage, family and career
- single motherhood by choice and IVF
- donor-conceived children
- modern sex: a sterile, recreation activity
- the real purposes of sex: procreation and spousal unity
- the hormone oxytocin: when it is secreted and what it does
- the hormone vassopressin: when it is secreted and what it does
- the sexual revolution and the commoditization of sex
- the consumer view of sex vs the organic view of sex
- fatherlessness and multi-partner fertility
- how the "sex-without-relationship" view harms children

52 minutes of lecture, 33 minutes of Q&A from the Harvard students. The Q&A is worth listening to – the first question is from a gay student, and Dr. Morse pulls a William Lane Craig to defeat her objection. It was awesome! I never get tired of listening to her talk, and especially on the topics of marriage and family. She is a debater, as well (see below).

And just so everyone knows, the Wintery Knight is pro-chastity and pro-marriage. I believe in chastity and I am chaste. I recommend chastity to men who are contemplating a stable, effective marriage. The research shows that you will have a better marriage by being chaste before marriage.

Related posts

- Jennifer Roback Morse interviews UK lawyer on religious liberty and free speech
- Jennifer Roback Morse debates Christine Sun on the definition of marriage
- Should government get out of the marriage business?
- Jennifer Roback Morse on the injustice of the American family court system
- Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sexual liberation and social justice
- Jennifer Roback Morse debates same-sex marriage at Southern Methodist University
- Jennifer Roback Morse: Father's Day is also Husband's Day
- Jennifer Roback Morse explains how divorce laws changed marriage
- Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on marriage at Stanford University
- Jennifer Roback Morse on Obama's rejection of traditional marriage
- Three lectures in three days from Jennifer Roback Morse
- Jennifer Roback Morse on contraceptives, divorce, cohabitation, SSM and ART
- Is marriage just an arrangement for people for love each other?
- New version of Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse's Love and Economics talk
- Jennifer Roback Morse debates feminism with abortion radical
- Jennifer Roback Morse discusses the rise of single, childless women
- New talks on marrriage by Jennifer Roback Morse and Maggie Gallagher
- Are two mommies as good for a child as a biological mother and father?

James Shapiro: an honest naturalist admired by ID supporters

May 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

As a pro-ID person, I am naturally suspicious of naturalistic scientists. They always say that material forces and chance can explain every single thing in nature, and there are no effects in nature that are best explained by an intelligence. Well, some in nature are best explained by unintelligent causes alone. But I think there are some effects in nature that are more like meaningful sentences or meaningful computer code – and that those are best explained as a result of an intelligence.

One effect in nature where that is clearly analogous to language/code is the biological information in proteins and in DNA. ID people keep telling naturalists that functional information in *the first* living cell cannot be generated by blind forces in the time available in Earth's history. But naturalists always seem to diminish the problem and say that blind forces can create information. Well, most naturalists do.

Here's one who doesn't, though: James Shapiro. Dr. Shapiro is a microbiologist and a professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Chicago. His undergraduate is from Harvard University.

He is very frank about how much naturalistic mechanisms can explain when it comes to the origin of life.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Around here we have a lot of respect for microbiologist James Shapiro, who had the guts and integrity to come over to ENV recently and spar over evolution with William Dembski, Doug Axe and Ann Gauger. Besides having a new book out that details his own dissatisfactions with conventional Darwinian evolutionary theory and that champions a provocative alternative view, Shapiro also blogs at the Huffington Post.
>
> He continues to win our admiration, while evoking some poignancy as well.
>
> In one post that got a fair amount of attention he had some sensible things to say to fellow evolutionists. Rather than hide behind "absolutist statements like 'all the facts are on my side,'" as his University of Chicago colleague Jerry Coyne does, Shapiro advocates "active engagement" with Darwin critics. Enter into the controversy over evolution, he says, rather than pretend it doesn't exist.
>
> Perhaps even teach about it? Shapiro doesn't go that far, but the permissibility of admitting the truth even to young people would seem to follow from his premise:
>
> We need to demonstrate that evolution science is alive and well, as well as show how it is making remarkable progress through the application of molecular technologies — even though it does not have all the answers.
>
> To the thoughtful scientist whose job is to uncover natural processes, this is

> surely a better way of advocating the scientific method than dogmatically asserting that we found all the scientific principles we need in centuries past.
>
> Evolution supporters, he counsels, should admit they don't have all the answers, including on a key question like the origin of life. In a remarkably candid statement, he writes:
>
> In order to be truthful, we must acknowledge that certain questions, like the origins of the first living cells, currently have no credible scientific answer. However, given the historical record of science and technology in achieving the "impossible" (e.g., space flight, telecommunications, electronic computation and robotics), there is no reason to believe that unsolved problems will remain without naturalistic explanations indefinitely.

I don't mind a naturalist who is honest about what we do and do not know.

More:

> Surely there's room to question Shapiro on why our ability to fly to the moon gives grounds for certainty that a purely "naturalistic" explanation of life's origin will be forthcoming. Space flight is an accomplishment enacted in a material world but, more to the point, it's a triumph of engineering — aka, intelligent design. It could not be accomplished at all without the direction of purposeful designers.
>
> But note the implicit agreement with Stephen Meyer (*Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*): materialist explanations for "the origins of the first living cells" have, to date, indeed all miserably failed. In his book, Meyer shows how the evidence points persuasively to the action of some source of intelligent agency. Under the circumstances, if Shapiro is right, that would make intelligent design by default the lone viable theory of life's origin.
>
> Apart from gesturing to the advance of technology as a reason for keeping faith in naturalism, it would be interesting to know how Shapiro responds to Meyer's case.

James Shapiro has debated with pro-ID people before. I have a set of audio cassettes from WAY WAY BACK which contains a debate between Robert Shapiro and Walter Bradley, whose lectures on the evidence for design in nature I have featured before. Although some naturalists like Richard Dawkins run away from debates, some, like Shapiro do not. And that's good for science.

If you want to read a great book on what intelligent design is really about, you really need to read Signature in the Cell. This is the best on the argument for intelligent design in nature from the evidence of proteins and DNA. We are still waiting for a really great pro-ID book on the Cambrian explosion, the sudden origin of all major body plans 540 million years ago – but maybe Dr. Meyer is already working on that now, since he published a peer-reviewed paper on it in a science journal, a while back.

Israel calls up 6 army battalions to deal with threats from Egypt and Syria

May 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East
From the Times of Israel.

Excerpt:

> The IDF has issued emergency call up orders to six reserve battalions in light of new dangers on the Egyptian and Syrian borders. And the Knesset has given the IDF permission to summon a further 16 reserve battalions if necessary, Israeli media reported on Wednesday.
>
> An IDF spokesperson said intelligence assessments called for the deployment of more soldiers.
>
> According to 2008′s Reserve Duty Law, combat soldiers can be called for active reserve duty once every three years, and for short training sessions during the other two. Rising tensions between Israel and Egypt and the ongoing unrest in Syria caused the army to ask the Knesset for special permission to call up more soldiers, more often.
>
> The Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee approved the request recently, enabling the IDF to summon up to 22 battalions for active duty for the second time in three years. Already, the army has called up six of them.
>
> This signifies that the IDF regards the Egyptian and Syrian borders as the potential source of a greater threat than in the past," the former deputy chief of

> staff, Dan Harel, said on Wednesday night.
>
> “The army needs a better ‘answer’ than in the past to the threat,” he said, citing Egypt’s deteriorating control over the Sinai, marked by an upsurge in Bedouin smuggling of weapons and other goods. He also spoke of the growing threat of terrorism from Sinai, as exemplified by an infiltration last August in which eight Israelis were killed.
>
> The Syrian situation was also highly combustible, Harel said, “and it could explode at any moment… and pose a direct challenge to us.”

Could we be seeing a war soon in the Middle East?

Last April was CNN’s lowest-rated month in more than a decade

May 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Deadline Hollywood.

Excerpt:

> It’s no April Fool’s joke — last month CNN delivered its lowest-rated month in total day in over a decade, since August 2001, the month before the September 11 attacks. The once-dominant cable news network posted decade-lows among both total viewers (357,000) and Adults 25-54 (108,000). Versus April last year, CNN was down 21% in total viewers and 29% in 25-54. In comparison, leader Fox News CHannel was up 2% in total viewers (1.1 million) and 1% in 25-54 (273,000) and No.2 MSNBC was flat in total viewers (425,000) and down 5% in 25-54 (139,000).
>
> Things did not look brighter for CNN in the evening where its shows too posted across-the-board declines: *John King USA* at 6 PM was down 41% in the 25-54 demo, *Erin Burnett Outfront* at 7 PM was down 34%, *Piers Morgan* was down 14% at 9PM, and *Anderson Cooper 360* was down 8% at 8 PM and 28% at 10PM. In primetime, CNN had its lowest rated month in nearly two years, since August 2010, in both total viewers (508,000, down 16% from last year) and adults 25-54 (149,000, down 22%). Meanwhile FNC (1.9 million, 395,000 in 25-54) was flat in total viewers from last April and down 9% in 25-54. MSNBC (754,000; 236,000) was down 5% and 9%, respectively.

How could this be? Maybe it’s because of CNN’s outrageous media bias.

Are moral values and moral duties rationally grounded in atheism?

May 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten posted the audio a few milliseconds after the debate concluded!

Here is the MP3 file.

Sean's case is similar to the one I make, but he only has 3 minimal requirements for morality.

First, he explains the difference between objective and subjective truth claims, and points out that statements of a moral nature are meaningless unless morality is objective. Then he states 3 things that are needed in order to ground objective morality.

1. an objective moral standard
2. free will
3. objective moral value of humans

The question of the foundations of morality is without a doubt the easiest issue for beginning apologists to discuss with their neighbor. If you're new, then you need to *at least* listen to his opening speech. He's an excellent speaker, and his rebuttals are very, very smooth. The citations of atheist philosophers like Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, e.g. – to show that "religious" wars had *nothing* to do with religion, really hurt his opponent. He seems to cite prominent atheists like Thomas Nagel, Richard Taylor, Michael Shermer, etc., constantly in order to get support for his assertions. That took preparation. I can't believe that McDowell is this calm in a debate situation.

When I listen to Frank Turek, he seems to struggle in his rebuttals. McDowell sounds like he foreknew exactly what his opponent would say and pre-wrote responses. He even had powerpoint slides made *in advance* for his rebuttals! I am not making this up – Corbett even remarked on it.

For those of you who want to understand how these things work, listen to the debate. There is a period of cross-examination if you like that sort of thing. I do!

IRS refunding billions to illegal immigrants for children in Mexico

May 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From WTHR News. (H/T Doug Ross at Director Blue)

Excerpt:

> The Internal Revenue Service says everyone who is employed in the United States – even those who are working here illegally – must report income and pay taxes. Of course, undocumented workers are not supposed to have a social security number. So for them to pay taxes, the IRS created what's called an ITIN, an individual taxpayer identification number. A 9-digit ITIN number issued by the IRS provides both resident and nonresident aliens with a unique identification number that allows them to file tax returns.
>
> While that may have seemed like a good idea, it's now backfiring in a big way.
>
> Each spring, at tax preparation offices all across the nation, many illegal immigrants are now eagerly filing tax returns to take advantage of a tax loophole, using their ITIN numbers to get huge refunds from the IRS.
>
> The loophole is called the Additional Child Tax Credit. It's a fully-refundable credit of up to $1000 per child, and it's meant to help working families who have children living at home.
>
> But 13 Investigates has found many undocumented workers are claiming the tax credit for kids who live in Mexico – lots of kids in Mexico.
>
> "We've seen sometimes 10 or 12 dependents, most times nieces and nephews, on these tax forms," the whistleblower told Eyewitness News. "The more you put on there, the more you get back."
>
> The whistleblower has thousands of examples, and he brought some of them to 13 Investigates. While identifying information such as names and addresses on the tax returns was redacted, it was still clear that the tax filers had received large tax refunds after claiming additional child tax credits for many dependents.
>
> "Here's a return right here: we've got a $10,3000 refund for nine nieces and nephews," he said, pointing to the words "niece" and "nephew" listed on the tax forms nine separate times.
>
> "We're getting an $11,000 refund on this tax return. There's seven nieces and nephews," he said, pointing to another set of documents. "I can bring out stacks and stacks. It's just so easy it's ridiculous."

The story claims that one illegal immigrant claimed *twenty children* who had *never set foot in the United States.*

Obama administration abandons Chinese pro-life activist Chen Guangcheng

May 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life Site News writes about a pro-life activist in communist China who asked for help from the American government and was betrayed by them.

Excerpt:

> Chinese dissident Chen Guangcheng, who has suffered years of imprisonment and beatings for objecting to forced abortions and sterilizations in his native country, thought he could find shelter and friendship in the United States embassy following his recent escape from house arrest. He is now learning the hard way that the pro-abortion Obama administration, which helps to finance the same "one-child policy" that Chen is fighting, would rather see him disappear.
>
> Chen's presence in the embassy during the past week was little more than a dangerous irritant for Hillary Clinton's State Department. The main goal of the agency has long been the promotion and protection of American commercial interests abroad, and "human rights" often provide useful cover for criticizing regimes that are recalcitrant in the face of American economic pressure. The Chen affair, however, only threatens an amicable and highly profitable relationship between the U.S. and China, and presents no "upside" for the American bottom line.
>
> Worse for Chen is his uncomfortable and embarrassing opposition to China's population control agenda, a policy supported by the Obama administration and in particular the State Department, which is spendingtens of billions of dollars on such programs worldwide. Although the administration gives lip-service against coercive abortion and sterilization, it is simultaneously helping to finance the Chinese population control machine with tens of millions of dollars in subsidies to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which helps to administer China's brutal one-child policy.
>
> Perhaps that is why, according to Chen, his American "hosts" started to sound more like fellow-members of the international population-control mafia that is killing his country, than starry-eyed defenders of "human rights."
>
> Chen, who says he felt pressured to leave the embassy, adds that he finally decided to do so when American officials informed him that if didn't, his wife would be beaten by vengeful Chinese officials. Embassy personnel deny the claim, although they admit that they let Chen know that his wife would be taken back to the residence where the couple had been beaten many times.

I'm not surprised that the Democrats would not support Chen. Recall that Obama appointed John Holdren – a supporter of forced abortions and sterilizations – as his

“Science Czar”.

What kinds of things might Chen be protesting? Well how about this forced abortion of a nine month old unborn child?

Excerpt:

> A chilling photograph circulating in China shows the body of a 9-months-gestation baby submerged in a bucket of water, apparently a victim of the country’s one-child policy.
>
> Digital Journal reports that the photograph, in which the head and arm of a child can be seen underwater in a large red bucket on the floor, was posted to the Chinese web services company Baidu before it was circulated on Weibo, the country’s version of Twitter, last week.
>
> The abortion appears to have taken place on March 26 after Chinese family planning police in the town of Moshan hunted down the family because the couple already had one child.
>
> According to English reports regarding the original post, the pregnant mother was forcibly held down as she was given an injection to induce labor, after which the baby “even gave a cry when it came out,” but was left in a bucket to drown.
>
> In response to the photo, Reggie Littlejohn of Women’s Rights Without Frontiers, which opposes China’s one-child policy, confirmed that late-term abortions and infanticide are common means of enforcing China’s one-child population rule.
>
> “These violent procedures can happen up to the ninth month of pregnancy,” Littlejohn told LifeSiteNews.com. “Sometimes the women themselves die along with their full term babies. Forced abortion is China’s war against women. It is official government rape.”
>
> “Late term babies are injected with poison in their skulls or drowned in buckets,” she continued. “If the Chinese Communist Party wants to be a respected member of the international community, it must stop forced abortion and infanticide.”
>
> […]Littlejohn pointed out that the abortion allegedly took place in Linyi, the same city where forced-abortion opponent and human rights activist Chen Guangcheng still languishes under house arrest.

That’s the kind of thing that goes on in communist China. Communism, you’ll recall, is an economic theory based on materialism and atheism.

How to respond to an atheist who complains about slavery in the Bible

May 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I often hear atheists going on and on about how the Bible has this evil and that evil. Their favorite one seems to be slavery. Here are three things I say to atheists when they push this objection.

The Bible and slavery

First, you should explain to them what the Bible actually says about slavery. And then tell them about the person responsible for stopping slavery in the UK: a devout evangelical named William Wilberforce.

Here's an article that works.

Excerpt:

> We should compare Hebrew debt-servanthood (many translations render this "slavery") more fairly to apprentice-like positions to pay off debts — much like the indentured servitude during America's founding when people worked for approximately 7 years to pay off the debt for their passage to the New World. Then they became free.
>
> In most cases, servanthood was more like a live-in*employee*, temporarily embedded within the employer's household. Even today, teams trade sports players to another team that has an owner, and these players belong to a franchise. This language hardly suggests slavery, but rather a formal contractual agreement to be fulfilled — like in the Old Testament.3
>
> Second, inform them that moral values are not rationally grounded on atheism. In an accidental universe, there is no way we ought to be. There is no design for humans that we have to comply with. There are no objective human rights, like the right to liberty (that would block slavery) or the right to life (that would block abortion). Although you may find that most atheists act nicely, the ones who really understand what atheism means and live it out consistently are not so nice.

Atheism and moral judgments

Second, inform them that moral values are not rationally grounded on atheism. In an accidental universe, there is no way we ought to be. There is no design for humans that we have to comply with. There are no objective human rights, like the right to liberty (that would block slavery) or the right to life (that would block abortion). Although you may find that most atheists act nicely, the ones who really understand what atheism means and live it out consistently are not so nice.

Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

When people like Dawkins talk about morality, you have to understand that they are pretending. To them, morality is just about personal preferences and cultural conventions. They just think that questions of right and wrong are *arbitrary*. Things that are wrong in one time and place are right in another. Every view is as right as any other, depending on the time and place. That's atheist morality.

What's worse than slavery? Abortion!

Third, you should ask the atheist what he has done to oppose abortion. Abortion is worse than slavery, so if they are sincere in thinking that slavery is wrong, then they ought to think that abortion is wrong even more. So ask them what they've done to oppose the practice of abortion. That will tell you how sincere they are about slavery.

Here's Richard Dawkins explaining what he's done to stop abortion:

That's right. The head atheist supports killing born children.

Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)

May 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB rating: [7.6/10]

Description:

> The residents of a British village during WWII welcome a platoon of soldiers who are to be billeted with them. The trusting residents then discover that the soldiers are Germans who proceed to hold the village captive.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Nova Scotia student suspended for wearing Christian t-shirt

May 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of Canada
From CTV News.

Excerpt:

> A Grade 12 student in Nova Scotia has been suspended for wearing a T-shirt publicizing his religious beliefs.
>
> The South Shore Regional School Board suspended William Swinimer from Forest Heights Community School in Chester Basin for five days for wearing a shirt emblazoned with the words, “Life is wasted without Jesus.”
>
> School board Supt. Nancy Pynch-Worthylake said the wording on the shirt is problematic because it is directed at the beliefs of others.
>
> “If I have an expression that says ‘My life is enhanced with Jesus,’ then there’s no issue with that, everybody is able to quickly understand that that’s my opinion about my own belief,” she said.
>
> “If the shirt were to say ‘Without Jesus, your life is a complete waste,’ then that’s clear that it is an opinion aimed at somebody else’s belief.”
>
> Pynch-Worthylake said the school has spoken with Swinimer a number of times about the shirt, asking him not to wear it again.
>
> Swinimer was unavailable for comment.
>
> Varrick Day, the pastor at Swinimer’s Pentecostal church, said the young man feels that his religious freedom is being restricted at the school.

> “His reaction is that he is being bullied by the school itself, not the students, when it comes to his freedom of speech within the school and his freedom of sharing his faith,” Day said from Bridgewater, where he preaches at Jesus the Good Shepherd Church.
>
> Day said Swinimer was told that at least one student at the school complained about the shirt.
>
> Pynch-Worthylake said the school tried mediation with Swinimer before suspending him.
>
> A spokesman for provincial Education Minister Ramona Jennex said the minister believes the issue should be handled by the school board.

An atheist was offended, and complained, and brought the power of the state to bear on that Christian. Shocking.

UPDATE: More from Lydia McGrew here.

The Life of Julia: the Democrat push for more dependence on government

May 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an interesting post from Stuart Scheiderman about the Democrat's latest ad campaign, "the Life of Julia".

Excerpt: (links removed)

> What were they thinking? What was the crack Obama re-election campaign thinking when they launched their slideshow about "The Life of Julia"?
>
> How is it possible that highly skilled political operatives could have descended into such ham-handed manipulation?
>
> Have their minds been infiltrated and colonized by Republican gremlins? Or were they just trying to provide fodder for the conservative commentariat?
>
> If the latter, they have succeeded beyond their dreams.
>
> James Taranto describes the unfolding story of Julia:
>
> *Julia, who has no face, is depicted at various ages from 3 through 67, enjoying the benefits of various Obama-backed welfare-state programs.*
>
> *As a toddler, she's in a head-start program. Skip ahead to 17, and she's enrolled at a Race to the Top high school. Her 20s are very active: She gets surgery and free birth control through ObamaCare regulations, files a lawsuit under the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, and pays off her student loans at a low interest rate. We get updates at age 31, 37 and 42–and then the narrative skips ahead 23 years when she enrolls in Medicare. Two years later, she's on Social Security, at which point she can die at any time.*
>
> In its last frame Julia is retiring comfortably on her Social Security payments. Apparently, they are so generous that she does not need to worry about running out of money.

Is this what people on the left think of individuals? That we need to depend on government for success?

Consider this story from the UK about how government doesn't trust parents to feed their own children but instead insist that schools feed them, paid for through taxes, of course. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> This defence of free school meals against a posh government which "hates anyone who is not like them" is promoted as a radical stance. But in truth it is shot through with a cloying, Dickens-style pity for poor kids, who, it is presumed, never receive hot food at home and thus must receive it at school. Campaigners

> are really calling on the authorities to play in loco parentis and to provide less well-off children with nutrition, because apparently their parents are too poor or stupid to do so. So the Children's Society says free school meals are essential because "poor diets can be prevalent and child obesity is particularly high in low-income families". Apparently free school meals are often "the only healthy cooked food [poor children] get". These waifs and strays, who come from "disadvantaged families" whose eating habits "exceed recommended daily sugars and saturated fat intakes", must have their eyes opened to "healthy food options", says the Children's Society.
>
> It seems clear that the passion for free school meals is not driven by serious political thinking but by perverse middle-class fantasies about the "junk" that poor kids get fed at home. Likewise, when the government cut back on free school milk in 2010, commentators and campaigners were aghast, seeming seriously to believe that poor kids would become calcium-deprived, malnourished creatures without that daily third of a pint of milk. As one said, for children who "do not get a balanced diet high in fruit and vegetables and food like fish, milk [in schools] is the only real way of them getting enough calcium". One expert told the BBC that the reason it's so important to have milk and hot food in schools is because"the understanding from some parents about nutrition is so poor".
>
> In short, schools must do what feckless poor parents have allegedly failed to – care for children. The free school meals defenders are not just interested in feeding kids; they want to save them, fantasising that these urchins come from such unhealthy, morally dilapidated homes that it falls to schools to make them good, healthy, upstanding citizens. At least the school dinners crusader Jamie Oliver was a bit more upfront about his obsession with giving poor schoolkids hot meals, arguing that they come from "white trash" families where the parents are "t*ssers" or "*rseh*les" who feed their children "s**t". Those are the exact same sentiments behind the current fretting over free school meals, even if the lingo is a bit more PC.

Stuart concludes his article on "The Life of Julia" with this:

> As you know, Chinese thinkers grant the greatest importance to "face." Saving face is a vital psychological need. It's so important that I wrote a book about it.
>
> When the Chinese talk about face they are talking about the public presentation of self. Face is the way you present yourself in public. People know who you are because they identify your face.
>
> Imagine what it would be if you went through your day without having anyone recognize you, without having anyone know your name, without anyone acknowledging your existence. How long before you would think that you had gotten lost in the twilight zone?

> Having face means that you belong to the community. Losing face means that you have either lost status within the community or have been expelled from it.
>
> That is Julia's status, or her lack of status. She has been transformed into what the Obama campaign wants her to become, a parasite that depends entirely on government support and whose most significant relationships are with the government agencies who are trying to buy her vote.
>
> By the way, what do you call a woman who has been stripped of her name and her dignity, and who allows herself to be sold to the highest bidder?

That's how socialists view the people who pay them: as incompetent fools in need of micromanagement, so that you everyone will be equal – equally dependent on the government and indistinguishable. While you were completing your double major in economics and physics, they were majoring in feminist theory, race theory and queery theory – learning how their attitudes were better than yours. You learned how to be self-sufficient. They learned how to think that you are stupid and evil.

Your job is just to make money so that they can spend it on you to help you *and your children* to have the right views – their views. Even though their views have no practical value. They learned that they should be telling you where you should work, how much of your money you should keep, and how the money you earn should be spent. Not just the tax money they take from you, but the money you keep. They think they should decide how far you can drive, how much you can heat or cool your house, what food you can eat, and how much health care you are allowed to buy. And so on. That's the Democrat party.

Republicans ban taxpayer-funding of abortion in Arizona

May 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer on Friday signed into law a bill to cut off Planned Parenthood's access to taxpayer money funneled through the state for non-abortion services.
>
> Arizona already bars use of public money for abortions except to save the life of the mother, but anti-abortion legislators and other supporters of the bill have said the broader prohibition is needed to make sure that no public money indirectly supports abortion services.
>
> "This is a common sense law that tightens existing state regulations and closes loopholes in order to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not used to fund abortions, whether directly or indirectly," said Brewer, a Republican. "By signing this measure into law, I stand with the majority of Americans who oppose the use of taxpayer funds for abortion."
>
> Arizona has said a funding ban would interrupt its preventive health care and family planning services for nearly 20,000 women served by the organization's clinics. The organization has said it will consider a legal challenge.
>
> The measure targeting funding for Planned Parenthood for non-abortion services was one of several approved by Arizona's Republican-led Legislature related to contentious reproductive health care issues during a 116-day session that ended Thursday. Brewer is a Republican.
>
> Other approved Arizona bills include one generally banning abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy, which Brewer has already signed, and one loosening a state law that generally requires health care plans to cover contraception.

This is good news for pro-lifers in Arizona, but we are facing some setbacks in Ohio and Texas.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?

- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the lawResearchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity
- Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Should Barack Obama get credit for killing Osama Bin Laden?

May 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've written before about how George W. Bush deserves credit for the termination of that terrorist vermin.

But there are a couple of other data points to add that recently emerged, as well.

First, the decision on the Bin Laden raid was made by the American Armed Forces, not by Barack Obama, as a newly released memo reveals.

Second, Obama had already drafted a memo to blame the military if the operation failed.

In fact, Obama has weakening our counter-terrorism and defense capabilities from the day he took office.

Excerpt:

> Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, called the president's victory lap in Afghanistan on the anniversary of the death of Osama bin Laden at the hands of the Navy SEALs "an attempt to shore up his national security credentials, because he has spent the past three years gutting our military."
>
> Indeed he has. "He cut the F-22, future combat system, C-17 and our ground-based interceptor in Poland, to name a few," Inhofe noted.
>
> […]President Obama's defense policies fulfill a campaign pledge he made to the far-left group Caucus for Priorities a month before the January 2008 Iowa caucuses. Caucus for Priorities is an offshoot of a bigger group, Priorities Action Fund, created by Ben Cohen, the peace activist and co-founder of Ben & Jerry's ice cream.
>
> In a video made for the group, Obama called for a further deterioration in our military strength.
>
> "I will cut investments in unproven missile defense systems. I will not weaponize space. I will slow our development of future combat systems," he said.
>
> So far, he has kept his word.
>
> In the video, he also vowed, "I will set a goal of a world without nuclear weapons. To seek that goal, I will not develop new nuclear weapons, I will seek a global ban on the production of fissile material and I will negotiate with Russia to take our ICBMs off hair-trigger alert, and to achieve deep cuts in our nuclear arsenals."
>
> He has kept that promise as well.
>
> As the Heritage Foundation notes, since Obama took office, over 50 major weapons programs of more than $300 billion have been cut or delayed.
>
> Obama, who betrayed Poland and Czechoslovakia on missile defense and shut

> down key weapon systems like the F-22 Raptor, has vowed to veto any changes to the mandated cuts, including $650 billion from defense as called for by the Budget Control Act over the next decade.
>
> That comes on top of $460 billion in defense cuts already agreed to — a total of $1.1 trillion in defense cuts our commander in chief is OK with.
>
> A 14-page analysis by the Republican majority staff of the House Armed Services Committee says the cumulative cuts will result in Army and Marine Corps losing 200,000 troops.
>
> The Navy will shrink from 300 ships to 238 vessels and would lose two carrier battle groups needed to project American power and influence. Strategic bombers will fall from 153 to 101. Air Force fighters would drop by more than half, from 3,602 aircraft to 1,512 planes. These are real cuts, both in spending and in military capability.

In fact, the main priority of the Obama administration seems to be redirecting the U.S. military to fight global warming intervening in favor of South American socialist dictators, dismantling our nuclear arsenal, allowing Iranian Islamists to rig elections and shoot pro-democracy protesters, giving drone technology to the Iranians, setting up the the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Libya, and handing over the keys to our European missile defense system to the Russians.

This is not the full list of how this man has been a disaster for world peace and national security. And it is a list that is ignored by hist supporters who think with their emotions and who have their hands out for more of their share of their neighbor's earnings.

Unemployed college graduates resort to unpaid internships

May 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal New York Times, a story about how Obama's young supporters are being forced into unpaid labor because there are no jobs.

Excerpt:

> Although many internships provide valuable experience, some unpaid interns complain that they do menial work and learn little, raising questions about whether these positions violate federal rules governing such programs.
>
> Yet interns say they often have no good alternatives. As Friday's jobs report showed, job growth is weak, and the unemployment rate for 20- to 24-year-olds was 13.2 percent in April.
>
> The Labor Department says that if employers do not want to pay their interns, the internships must resemble vocational education, the interns must work under close supervision, their work cannot be used as a substitute for regular employees and their work cannot be of immediate benefit to the employer.
>
> But in practice, there is little to stop employers from exploiting interns. The Labor Department rarely cracks down on offenders, saying that it has limited resources and that unpaid interns are loath to file complaints for fear of jeopardizing any future job search.
>
> No one keeps statistics on the number of college graduates taking unpaid internships, but there is widespread agreement that the number has significantly increased, not least because the jobless rate for college graduates age 24 and under has risen to 9.4 percent, the highest level since the government began keeping records in 1985. (Employment experts estimate that undergraduates work in more than one million internships a year, with Intern Bridge, a research firm, finding almost half unpaid.)
>
> "A few years ago you hardly heard about college graduates taking unpaid internships," said Ross Eisenbrey, a vice president at the Economic Policy Institute who has done several studies on interns. "But now I've even heard of people taking unpaid internships after graduating from Ivy League schools."

Youth unemployment in America is about 20% for teens and college graduates. It's the capitalists who provide those jobs – the same capitalists who the young have been taught to hate. The same capitalists now shifting their capital abroad because of Obama's anti-business taxes, regulations, inflation and cronyism – which the young support. It's anti-business socialism that causes outsourcing – if you tax and regulate and insult businesses here, they just shift their production somewhere else.

Recall what happened in 2008:

> Strong support from young and minority voters propelled Barack Obama on the road to the White House, exit polls showed Tuesday.
>
> Voters in the 18 to 24 age group broke 68 percent for Obama to 30 percent for John McCain, according to the exit polling. Those in the 25 to 29 age bracket went 69 percent to 29 percent in Obama's favor.
>
> The only age group where McCain prevailed was 65 and over, and that by just a 10-percentage-point margin, 54 percent to 44 percent, the exit polls showed.

Since the election, Obama has been piling up 5 trillion of debt for these poor ignorant fools to pay off. They will be working until they are in their 90s to pay off the retirement benefits and health care of their parents, but when it's their turn to get Social Security and Medicare, the money will have run out. That's what Obama offers young people. And surprisingly, they take it. What else can they do? All they know about the world are the slogans that their secular leftist teachers have taught them in school. America is evil. Tax the rich. Stop global warming. Chastity and marriage are sexist. These teachers are the ones who are relying on their little slaves to make them rich – not the corporations. The slaves rally believe in slavery, and they want to be slaves. They want to save the planet by voting for bigger government benefits for their unionized teachers.

Greece and France vote against fiscal responsibility

May 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Greece is the most fiscally irresponsible country in Europe. Recently, their socialist government has been receiving bailouts from the more responsible nations of the EU, especially Germany. These bailouts have come with the requirement that austerity measures be imposes. The spoiled Greeks have now voted against austerity measures, which will certainly imperil future bailouts, and will probably lead to the collapse of Greece and its withdrawal from the European Union.

Here's a story that explains what happened on the weekend.

Excerpt:

> The two mainstream parties that approved the second international £110 billion rescue loan and its stringent requirements for cuts were heavily punished as support surged for the Left and Right.

> The shattering of the political status quo threw into doubt Greece's commitment to meeting the terms of its debt and could spread instability throughout the euro zone.
>
> Weeks of uncertainty are likely to follow as numerous parties vie to cobble a majority coalition, with a fresh election within two months a distinct possibility.
>
> There will also be fears that ensuing political instability will see a return to the street violence that has scarred Athens since the debt crisis surfaced two years ago.

> Exit polls said the conservative monolith New Democracy would finish first with a maximum of 20 per cent, while Pasok, the main socialist party, would suffer a dramatic fall to 13-14 percent, a third of what it received when winning the 2009 election. Voters held both responsible for years of mismanagement and corruption.
>
> […]Greeks angry at record unemployment, collapsing businesses and steep wage cuts ignored warnings that a vote against the harsh terms of the bailout would push Greece towards bankruptcy.
>
> "The exit polls confirm what has been patently clear for some time: there's no political consensus for the kind of reforms that Greece must implement if it wants to remain in the euro zone," said Nicholas Spiros of Spiro Sovereign Strategy.
>
> Othon Anastasakis, director of southeast European studies at Oxford University told Reuters: "Greeks are sending a very strong message abroad, which is enough with austerity."
>
> As they voted, many Greeks expressed their rage at the parties who accepted the harsh conditions of two bailouts that have kept the country from bankruptcy.

> “My vote was a protest vote because they cut my pension,” said 75-year-old pensioner Kalliopi, her fists clenched in anger. “I live in a basement but pay the same (property) tax as someone who lives in a penthouse,” said Kalliopi after voting.
>
> “I voted for Left Coalition, even if this means elections again in a month. I feel vindicated, things are changing little by little because people decided to speak up,” said 22-year-old student Klelia Avgerinopoulou.
>
> […]International lenders and investors fear success for the small anti-bailout parties could lead to Greece reneging on the harsh terms of the program, risking a hard sovereign default and dragging the euro zone back into the worst crisis since its creation.
>
> Euro zone paymaster Germany has warned there would be “consequences” to an anti-bailout vote and the EU and IMF insist whoever wins the election must stick to austerity if they want to receive the aid that keeps Greece afloat.

What is most disturbing to me are the quotations from Greek citizens. Their knowledge of economic policy seems to be limited to that of spoiled children.

> “The politicians who got us into this mess continue to mock us. Neither of them will do anything, all they are interested in is pulling the wool over our eyes so they can get into power again,” said Yiorgos Vrassidis, 55, after casting his vote at a “Voting for them would be like committing national suicide.”
>
> He opted for the anti-austerity Syriza, an acronym for Coalition of the Radical Left, which shocked political observers by heading for second place. Three years ago it received just a few percent.
>
> […]Yianna Kiritsi, who was made redundant 18 months ago, said: “I want Greek people to decide for themselves, not the troika to decide for us. They make decisions for everybody. We are not allowed to take decisions.” Greeks routinely and derisively refer to the EU, International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank which imposed the debt terms as “the troika”.
>
> Dimitris Davos, a Communist voter, said: “We have to restore our dignity and national sovereignty. This election in Greece will send a strong message from the south of Europe to the rest that we can’t take any more pain. We need to be rid of these loan sharks and bankers.”

France also had elections, and they are taking the same anti-austerity (anti-reality) stance.

Excerpt:

> On Sunday night Mr Hollande had won 51.56 per cent of the vote compared to Mr Sarkozy’s 48.41 per cent with 90 per cent of the ballots counted.
>
> Over 100,000 jubilant supporters gathered at Paris’s revolutionary Place de la Bastille, a pilgrimage site for the Left, chanting “François President”.

> Many were too young to remember that it was here that a gigantic crowd gathered for the 1981 victory of the last Socialist president, François Mitterrand.
>
> But even as the festivities got under way, officials close to both Mr Hollande and Mr Sarkozy were fearful of a market backlash against the Socialist's plans to tax the wealthy and expand jobs in the state sector.
>
> There are concerns that Mr Hollande will be unable to respect fiscal discipline targets while enacting a tax — and-spend programme that would see him create 60,000 more state education posts, partly revoke a pension reform and slap a 75 per cent tax on millionaire owners.
>
> A senior Conservative source told The Daily Telegraph that fears France was about to reverse course would cause turmoil and uncertainty.
>
> He said: "Clearly it's going to focus a lot of market attention on the French public finances, which are nothing to write home about. I don't think it is going to make life in the bond markets any easier next week.
>
> "We haven't chosen austerity because it's fun. We have to do austerity, and so does France.
>
> "He will have to be very careful about his public spending commitments and the lack of welfare reform."

So the grown-ups have been voted out and the children are now in power. European voters want their ice cream, and they want it now, and they don't want to have to behave to get it. How money is earned, how goods and services are produced, and how prices are set, etc. are all irrelevant to them. They have no idea why their goodies are being taken away, and they are having a tantrum.

The Best Schools interviews historian Mike Licona

May 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a long interview with one of our top resurrection scholars. (LINK FIXED!)

Excerpt:

> **TBS**: You have also been a prominent public apologist for the veracity of the New Testament. For example, you have engaged in public debates with such well-known atheists as Dan Barker and Richard Carrier, as well as with such revisionist New Testament scholars as Bart Ehrman, Elaine Pagels, and Stephen Patterson. Describe some of the high points in these debates. What are some key things that persons of faith should bear in mind as they face skeptics of the New Testament like this? What made you want to get involved in public controversy and debate? Looking back on your career on the debating platform, would you say, overall, it has been time well spent? If so, why?
>
> **ML**: Sometime in the mid-1990s, I purchased audio-cassette tapes of William Lane Craig debating Frank Zindler and John Dominic Crossan. I was very impressed when I heard Dr. Craig pick apart their arguments in an intellectually sound manner. I have never enjoyed heated discussions. But there was something about confronting bad philosophy and arguments and being able to present a sound case for the truth of Christianity that was very appealing to me. I never imagined I would participate in a debate. At that point, Dr. Craig had two doctorates while I had not even completed my master's thesis and had no intention of doing so. So, engaging in public debate in the type of forum he was doing was not even on my radar.
>
> In the spring of 2003, Gary Habermas was invited to debate Dan Barker (left). He didn't like debating and asked me if I would be interested in debating Dan. He said that if I ever wanted to get involved in debate, this would be a good first one for me, since Dan is not a scholar. So, I accepted an invitation to debate Dan and loved the experience. The next year, Gary turned down two more debates and referred them to me, which I accepted. Later Bill Craig passed along a few to me. And that's how I got started.
>
> Some items others should keep in mind if they decide to engage in debate or dialogue with nonbelievers is that your opponents are not your enemies. I don't regard anyone I have debated as an enemy. In fact, I now consider some of them as friends. Hopefully, we're all after truth. If Christianity is true, my opponents will have to answer to God some day. That's between them and God. Since Jesus taught for us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, there is no reason for us to act in a nasty way toward those with whom we have a disagreement. I'd also suggest that if you're going to get in the ring with some major scholars like Bart Ehrman and Stephen Patterson, you better be willing to

do your homework and prepare diligently. Debate is not easy. It takes a lot of work and it can be very emotionally draining. It's not for everyone. But if you have the personality for it and are willing to put in the effort, there will be plenty of opportunities to engage in public debate and we need more Christians who will join us. I love the challenge and doing something that I think has a lot of value.

Being engaged in public debate has been time well spent and there have been positive results. I've seen some who were on an authentic quest for truth become followers of Jesus after attending or viewing one of my debates, while others have returned to faith in Christ. Some have expressed that their faith was significantly strengthened after attending one of my debates, while others devoted their lives to full-time Christian ministry. Hey, I don't give an altar call. I just present truth and answer objections as best and as honestly as I can. Students are hungry for truth. They want a foundation on which to base their lives that's based on truth rather than wishful thinking.

TBS: In 2010, you published your doctoral dissertation as *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (IVP Academic, 2010). [Hereafter referred to as "*Resurrection*."] It is an extremely impressive piece of work, which has now set the standard for historiographical work on the historicity of Jesus and the Resurrection. Just the list of endorsers reads like a Who's Who of New Testament scholarship. What was the research path that led to your *magnum opus*?

ML: Gary Habermas and I were working on our book*The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Kregel Publications, 2004). I regard Habermas (right) to be the world's leading expert on the topic. For several years he had been compiling a bibliography on academic sources written on Jesus' resurrection and had more than 2,000 sources at that time. Today, that bibliography has expanded to around 3,400! Habermas had read the major works and catalogued where scholars stood on more than 100 topics related to Jesus' resurrection. So, I asked him to which discipline the majority of scholars writing on the subject belong. He said the overwhelming bulk of them are biblical scholars and a small percentage are philosophers. I asked him if any professional historians outside the community of biblical scholars had published on the subject and he said he recalled seeing perhaps a handful of journal articles and one short book. At that point I decided that I wanted to conduct a thorough investigation of Jesus' resurrection as a historian. I wanted to know how historians conduct their investigations and how those investigations differ from those conducted by biblical scholars and philosophers.

After being accepted into the doctoral program at the University of Pretoria, I immersed myself in literature written by philosophers of history and professional historians on the nature of historical knowledge and the various methods of discovering the past. It didn't take me long to discover that I had a serious challenge before me: Historians are virtually unanimous in admitting that the

> completely objective historian does not exist and that we are all persons of bias. I realized that I had my own biases. After all, I wanted to show that the resurrection of Jesus was an historical event. So, I put together a list of recommended steps for managing my bias and did my best to follow them. Did I obtain complete objectivity? No one can and I wasn't an exception. I discovered that I could get pretty close to my goal of complete objectivity if I genuinely wanted to be there and engaged in a serious effort to get there. However, I found that unless I took deliberate and sustained efforts toward remaining there, I would go back to my default position. It was a continuous struggle.
>
> I became obsessed with my research. I agonized over my biases and attempts to suspend judgment while my investigation proceeded. I was intentional in debating some of the finest and toughest minds taking a contrary view. I wanted to put my method and conclusions before them in order to see what they had to say and to learn from the process.
>
> My completed dissertation ended up being around four times the size of the average one. It was a long and laborious process. But it yielded priceless knowledge to me. So, I was thrilled when IVP decided to publish it.
>
> **TBS**: *Resurrection* is a 700-page work dense with scholarly annotation. Nevertheless, would you be able to summarize the main conclusions you reach in this work for our readers? What does this book add to conservative New Testament scholarship about the Resurrection? What's new here? How does it differ from other magisterial work in this area, such as that of Gary Habermas and N.T. Wright?
>
> **ML**: I think there are three major differences between my new book and where others have previously gone. First, I discuss issues pertaining to the philosophy of history and historical method with a depth that exceeds by far what other scholars have offered pertaining to the question of Jesus' resurrection. Second, I interact with the debate over whether historians are within their professional rights to investigate miracle claims to a far greater degree than has been previously offered. Third, I subject a variety of hypotheses to strictly controlled historical method in a more comprehensive manner than has been previously offered. There are other contributions the book makes to the discussion, such as a discussion pertaining to the historicity of Jesus' predictions pertaining to his imminent death and resurrection, as well as the meaning of two Greek terms upon which an important discussion hinges. But the above three are the major ones.

Worth the read. It sounds from the interview that things are going better for Dr. Licona.

China selling pills made of human babies to South Koreans

May 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Thousands of pills filled with powdered human flesh have been discovered by customs officials in South Korea, it was revealed today.
>
> The capsules are in demand because they are viewed as being a medicinal 'cure-all'.
>
> The grim trade is being run from China where corrupt medical staff are said to be tipping off medical companies when babies are aborted or delivered still-born.
>
> The tiny corpses are then bought, stored in household refrigerators in homes of those involved in the trade before they are removed and taken to clinics where they are placed in medical drying microwaves.
>
> Once the skin is tinder dry, it is pummelled into powder and then processed into capsules along with herbs to disguise the true ingredients from health investigators and customs officers.
>
> […]According to customs agents, 35 smuggling attempts have been made since August last year involving more than 17,000 capsules disguised as 'stamina boosters'.
>
> Hospitals and abortion clinics in China reportedly pass the remains onto drugs companies when a baby is stillborn or aborted, the South Korean SBS documentary team reported last year.
>
> The San Francisco Times reported that tests carried out on the pills confirmed they were made up of 99.7 per cent human remains.
>
> The tests were successfully able to establish the genders of the babies used.
>
> There is a huge demand for the pills which are thought to enhance stamina. Microwave-dried placenta is also sought after for its alleged 'medicinal' benefits.
>
> However, in reality the human flesh capsules contain super-bacteria and other harmful ingredients.

My previous post about China's disregard for human life is here.

A secular case against same-sex marriage

May 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: this post has a twin! Its companion post on a secular case against abortion rights is here.

Roxeanne de Luca challenged socially conservative bloggers to write a non-religious case against same-sex marriage, so here's mine.

I can't possible cover everything, but I will make three arguments.

1. Same-sex marriage is bad for children
2. Same-sex marriage is bad for civil society and business
3. Same-sex marriage is bad for public health

Let's look at these in order.

1. SSM is bad for children

Traditional marriage is beneficial for children for 4 reasons:

- traditional marriages last longer than same-sex unions
- traditional marriages are more peaceful than same-sex unions
- traditional marriages offer children male and female influences
- traditional marriages model life-long love between men and women

Space permits me to only discuss the first two, using this paper from the Family Research Council, which cites data from mainstream sources like the Department of Justice, peer-reviewed studies, etc.

That research paper compares same-sex couples and heterosexual married couples, in the following ways:

- relationship duration
- monogamy vs. promiscuity
- relationship commitment

- number of children being raised
- health risks
- rates of intimate partner violence

It turns out that same-sex unions are not as good for children as traditional marriage, on those measures.

Relationship duration

Claim: about 58% of traditional marriages last longer than 20 years.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2001)

Claim: about 5% of same-sex unions last longer than 20 years.

Source: 2003-2004 Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census

Monogamy vs Promiscuity

Claim: 85% of married women and 75.5% of married men report being faithful to their spouses. For homosexual males, the number is 4.5%

Sources: Laumann, The Social Organization of Sexuality, 216; McWhirter and Mattison, The Male Couple: How Relationships Develop (1984): 252-253; Wiederman, "Extramarital Sex," 170.

Rates of intimate partner violence

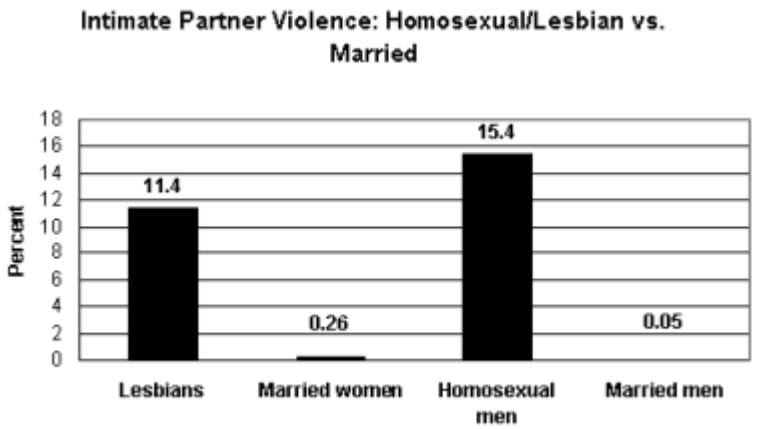

Married men and women experience significantly less intimate partner violence than do homosexual men and women.

Sources: "Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence," U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs: 30; "Intimate Partner Violence," Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report:11.

There is a lot more evidence cited in the research paper. Read the whole thing.

Consider this article by Dr. Trayce Hansen about which family configuration is best for children. The title is "Same-Sex Marriage: Not in the Best Interest of Children".

Excerpt:

> Only mother-father families afford children the opportunity to develop

> relationships with a parent of the same, as well as the opposite sex. Relationships with both sexes early in life make it easier and more comfortable for a child to relate to both sexes later in life. Overall, having a relationship with both a male and female parent increases the likelihood that a child will have successful social and romantic relationships during his or her life.[5]
>
> Moreover, existing research on children reared by homosexuals is not only scientifically flawed and extremely limited [6,7,8] but some of it actually indicates that those children are at increased risk for a variety of negative outcomes.[6] Other studies find that homosexually parented children are more likely to experiment sexually, experience sexual confusion, and engage in homosexual and bisexual behavior themselves.[5,6,9] And for those children who later engage in non-heterosexual behavior, extensive research reveals they are more likely to suffer from psychiatric disorders, abuse alcohol and drugs, [10] attempt suicide, [11] experience domestic violence and sexual assault, [12] and are at increased risk for chronic diseases, AIDS, and shortened life spans.[13,14,15]
>
> It shouldn't be surprising that studies find children reared by homosexuals are more likely to engage in homosexual behavior themselves [16,9,17] since extensive worldwide research reveals homosexuality is primarily environmentally induced. Specifically, social and/or family factors, as well as permissive environments which affirm homosexuality, play major environmental roles in the development of homosexual behavior.[18,19,20,21]

The rest of the article, with references, is here.

Research from the Heritage Foundation shows that traditional marriage is the safest place for women and children – women and children are much less likely to be the victims of domestic violence or violent crime when they are in a married home. Another Heritage Foundation research paper shows that child poverty is greatly reduced when children grow up in a married home.

So what do we learn from this? The evidence is clear: traditional marriage is better for children than same-sex marriage.

2. SSM is bad for civil society and business

SSM will *increase* the power of the state to regulate civil society and business. Let me quickly summarize the evidence for this to give you an idea how it would work, using Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse's testimony to the Rhode Island legislature.

Excerpt:

> Far from limiting the power of the state, your version of equality has become a tool for the hostile takeover of civil society by the state. Churches are already under attack for daring to dissent from the new state-imposed Orthodoxy that marriage is whatever the government says it is.7

> Parents are losing the right to direct the education of their own children.8 Foster parents in the UK must submit to the state's views about marriage.9 Reputable adoption agencies have been put out of business.
>
> And the pettiness of some of the complaints brought by same sex couples is simply staggering. Christian bed and breakfast owners have been sued for not allowing unmarried couples to stay in double rooms. They would have gladly rented them separate rooms, but that was not good enough for the thought police.10 Same sex couples have brought legal complaints against wedding photographers, as if there were a constitutional right to have your picture taken by the person of your choice.11

The details of the events she is describing can be found in the references for her speech.

Here are a few more examples of this infringement on civil society and business:

- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired
- Law firm that agreed to defend marriage pressured by gay groups
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Queen's University feminist professor says that polygamy should be permitted
- Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec
- Christians forced to perform same-sex marriages
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

Notice how same-sex marriage impacts businesses, clergy, non-profits, etc. and even leads to polygamy. Once you decide that marriage is not about putting guidelines around sex and producing and nurturing the next generation, but about letting consenting adults do whatever they want, then there are no rules.

Now consider this article about how the breakdown of marriage changes society and government, written by Dr. Frank Turek.

Excerpt:

> The law is a great teacher, and same sex marriage will teach future generations that marriage is not about children but about coupling. When marriage becomes

> nothing more than coupling, fewer people will get married to have children.
>
> So what? People will still have children, of course, but many more of them out-of wedlock. That's a disaster for everyone. Children will be hurt because illegitimate *parents* (there are no illegitimate children) often never form a family, and those that "shack up" break up at a rate two to three times that of married parents. Society will be hurt because illegitimacy starts a chain of negative effects that fall like dominoes—illegitimacy leads to poverty, crime, and higher welfare costs which lead to bigger government, higher taxes, and a slower economy.
>
> Are these just the hysterical cries of an alarmist? No. We can see the connection between same-sex marriage and illegitimacy in Scandinavian countries. Norway, for example, has had de-facto same-sex marriage since the early nineties. In Nordland,the most liberal county of Norway, where they fly "gay" rainbow flags over their churches, out-of-wedlock births have soared—more than 80percent of women giving birth for the first time, and nearly 70 percent of *all* children, are born out of wedlock! Across all of Norway, illegitimacy rose from 39 percent to 50 percent in the first decade of same-sex marriage.
>
> Anthropologist Stanley Kurtz writes,"When we look at Nordland and Nord-Troendelag — the Vermont and Massachusetts of Norway — we are peering as far as we can into the future of marriage in a world where gay marriage is almost totally accepted. What we see is a place where marriage itself has almost totally disappeared." He asserts that "Scandinavian gay marriage has driven home the message that marriage itself is outdated, and that virtually any family form, including out-of-wedlock parenthood, is acceptable." But it's not just Norway. Blankenhorn reports this same trend in other countries. International surveys show that same-sex marriage and the erosion of traditional marriage tend to go together. *Traditional marriage is weakest and illegitimacy strongest wherever same-sex marriage is legal.*
>
> You might say, "Correlation doesn't always indicate causation!" Yes, but often it does. Is there any doubt that liberalizing marriage laws impacts society for the worse? You need look no further than the last 40 years of no-fault divorce laws in the United States (family disintegration destroys lives and now costs taxpayers $112 billion per year!).
>
> No-fault divorce laws began in one state, California, and then spread to rest of the country. Those liberalized divorce laws helped change our attitudes and behaviors about the *permanence* of marriage. There's no question that liberalized marriage laws will help change our attitudes and behaviors about the *purpose* of marriage. The law is a great teacher, and if same-sex marriage advocates have their way, children will be expelled from the lesson on marriage.

So there are financial and social costs to the breakdown of marriage. The more government has to spend to deal with the problems SSM creates, the higher taxes will go,

and the less money is left in the hands of working families to accomplish their own plans.

To be fair, I think that sex education and no-fault divorce are worse threats to marriage than same-sex marriage. I would like to see more research to persuade people that chastity before marriage is important, like this research , so that we could see our way clear to push for policies that encourage young people to wait longer before having sex. And I would like to see other measures taken to strengthen marriage from no-fault divorce, such as a shared parenting laws. But SSM is the current topic, so I'll stick with that here.

3. SSM is bad for public health

Now we come to the sensitive part. We should not be encouraging SSM because it normalizes homosexuality and the homosexual lifestyle is associated with harmful behaviors.

Consider this recent Centers for Disease Control study. Life Site News discusses the findings in this article.

Excerpt:

> Students who report being gay or bisexual are more likely than heterosexual students to engage in unhealthy risk behaviors such as tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual risk behaviors, suicidal behaviors, and violence, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
>
> The study reported: "the prevalence among gay or lesbian students was higher than the prevalence among heterosexual students for a median of 63.8% of all the risk behaviors measured, and the prevalence among bisexual students was higher than the prevalence among heterosexual students for a median of 76.0% of all the risk behaviors measured."
>
> Specifically, gay or lesbian students had higher rates for seven of the 10 health risk categories (behaviors that contribute to violence, behaviors related to attempted suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, other drug use, sexual behaviors, and weight management).
>
> The study also found that only 1.3% of students self-identified as gay or lesbian at the eight sites where they were asked their "sexual identity." A median of 3.7% said they were bisexual.
>
> Researchers analyzed data from Youth Risk Behavior Surveys conducted during 2001–2009 in seven states and six large urban school districts. These sites collected data on high school students' sexual identity (heterosexual, gay or lesbian, bisexual, or unsure), sex of sexual contacts (sexual contact with the opposite sex only, with the same sex only, or with both sexes), or both.
>
> The study, "Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health Risk Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9–12 in Selected Sites—Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, United States, 2001–2009," was published as a Morbidity and

> Mortality Weekly Report Surveillance Summary.

Dr. Trayce Hansen summarizes some of the previously published research on the health care effects of the gay lifestyle.

Excerpt:

> Non-heterosexual behavior leads to increased risk of psychological and physical disorders
>
> Sadly, the research is also clear that individuals who adopt non-heterosexual lifestyles are more likely to suffer from a host of negative outcomes including psychiatric disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide attempts, domestic violence and sexual assault, and increased risk for chronic diseases, AIDS, and shortened lifespan. Schools should not affirm and thereby encourage young people to adopt lifestyles more likely to lead to such devastation. (To review these specific studies see references 5-10 below).

The footnotes she mentions are in the original article. That article also debunks the "gay gene" myth using identical twin studies, which show that only 10-11% of identical twins have the same sexual orientation.

Consider how society treats the practice of cigarette smoking. Certainly, we don't want to coerce people into not smoking – we want them to have the choice. But we should definitely not lie to people about the health effects of smoking. It does no good to tell people that dangerous things are not really dangerous. I would rather hurt someone's feelings gently by telling them the truth than see them suffer real harm after telling them lies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have seen three reasons why we should not legalize same-sex marriage:

1. Same-sex marriage is bad for children
2. Same-sex marriage is bad for civil society and business
3. Same-sex marriage is bad for public health

Notice that there are no arguments in this post that require a religious worldview or belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Further study

For a more academic case against SSM, see this peer-reviewed paper on traditional marriage and same-sex marriage, authored by two guys from Princeton University and one guy from the University of Notredame. One of those guys is the famous Robert P. George. For some simple, practical tips on defending traditional marriage, check out this

tip sheet from the National Organization for Marriage. Here's another good peer-reviewed paper in the Harvard University Journal of Law and Public Policy. And of course there are the two recent large-scale studies on gay parenting outcomes, and responses to the criticisms of those studies.

You can also watch the videos from a formal academic debate on same-sex marriage held at the University of Central Florida, featuring Dr. Michael Brown. Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse also debated same-sex marriage at Columbia University in a formal academic debate. You can see her give a lecture on same-sex marriage at Houston Baptist University here, as well.

A secular case against legalized abortion

May 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about being only two months old

Note: this post has a twin! Its companion post on a secular case against gay marriage is here.

Now, you may think that the view that the unborn deserve protection during pregnancy is something that you either take on faith or not. But I want to explain how you can make a case for the right to life of the unborn, just by using reason and evidence.

To defend the pro-life position, I think you need to sustain 3 arguments:

1. The unborn is a living being with human DNA, and is therefore human.
2. There is no morally-relevant difference between an unborn baby, and one already born.
3. None of the justifications given for terminating an unborn baby are morally adequate.

Now, the pro-abortion debater may object to point 1, perhaps by claiming that the unborn baby is either not living, or not human, or not distinct from the mother.

Defending point 1: Well, it is pretty obvious that the unborn child is not inanimate matter. It is definitely living and growing through all 9 months of pregnancy. (Click here for a video that shows what a baby looks like through all 9 months of pregnancy). Since it has human DNA, that makes it a human. And its DNA is different from either its mother or father, so it clearly not just a tissue growth of the father or the mother. More on this point

at Christian Cadre, here. An unborn child cannot be the woman's own body, because then the woman would have four arms, four legs, two heads, four eyes and two different DNA signatures. When you have two different human DNA signatures, you have two different humans.

Secondly, the pro-abortion debater may try to identify a characteristic of the unborn that is not yet present or developed while it is still in the womb, and then argue that because the unborn does not have that characteristic, it does not deserve the protection of the law.

Defending point 2: You need to show that the unborn are not different from the already-born in any meaningful way. The main differences between them are: *size, level of development, environment* and *degree of dependence*. Once these characteristics are identified, you can explain that none of these differences provide moral justification for terminating a life. For example, babies inside and outside the womb have the same value, because location does not change a human's intrinsic value. More at Stand to Reason, here.

Additionally, the pro-abortion debater may try to identify a characteristic of the already-born that is not yet present or developed in the unborn, and then argue that because the unborn does not have that characteristic, that it does not deserve protection, (e.g. – sentience). Most of the these objections that you may encounter are refuted in this essay by Francis Beckwith. Usually these objections fall apart because they assume the thing they are trying to prove, namely, that the unborn deserves less protection than the already born.

Finally, the pro-abortion debater may conceded your points 1 and 2, and admit that the unborn is fully human. But they may then try to provide a moral justification for terminating the life of the unborn, regardless.

Defending point 3: I fully grant that it is sometimes justifiable to terminate an innocent human life, if there is a moral justification. Is there such a justification for abortion? One of the best known attempts to justify abortion is Judith Jarvis Thomson's "violinist" argument. This argument is summarized by Paul Manata, one of the experts over at Triablogue:

> Briefly, this argument goes like this: Say a world-famous violinist developed a fatal kidney ailment and the Society of Music Lovers found that only you had the right blood-type to help. So, they therefore have you kidnapped and then attach you to the violinist's circulatory system so that your kidneys can be used to extract the poison from his. To unplug yourself from the violinist would be to kill him; therefore, pro-lifers would say a person has to stay attached against her will to the violinist for 9 months. Thompson says that it would be morally virtuous to stay plugged-in. But she asks, "Do you have to?" She appeals to our intuitions and answers, "No."

Manata then goes on to defeat Thomson's proposal here, with a short, memorable

illustration, which I highly recommend that you check out. More info on how to respond to similar arguments is here.

The best book for beginners on the pro-life view is this book:

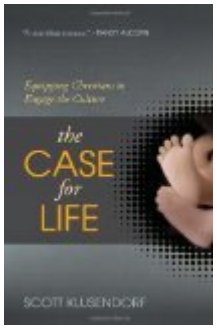

For those looking for advanced resources, Francis Beckwith, a professor at Baylor University, published the book Defending Life, with Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Video:10-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Objective truth in the abortion debate – a pro-life training video
- Alan Shlemon explains a classification system for pro-abortion arguments
- What is the best single book on the pro-life position?

And some posts motivating Christians and conservatives to take abortion seriously:

- Why Christians should focus on cultural issues as well as evangelism
- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion
- Are Christians too involved in politics?
- What did the early church fathers think about abortion?
- Scott Klusendorf confronts a "pro-life" nun who voted for Obama

Two astrophysicists dialog: Hugh Ross and Paul Davies on Unbelievable

May 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the description from the Unbelievable page:

> Hugh Ross is an astronomer and founder of Reasons To Believe, an apologetics organisation aiming to show why modern science confirms and supports the Christian worldview. Paul Davies is a British astrophysicist and popular science author currently based at Arizona State University. An agnostic, much of his writing has focussed on the extraordinary "fine tuning" of the Universe that allows life to exist and why the universe's order and intelligibility defy a purely naturalistic explanation. Hugh and Paul discuss whether the properties of our Universe may be the result of a creator God, competing hypotheses such as the multiverse, whether science can be used to test the Biblical worldview… and Hugh explains why he wants NASA to look for fossils on the moon.

The MP3 file is here.

Paul Davies is one of the scientists that William Lane Craig often quotes in his debates.

Like this quote for the cosmological argument:

> The evidence for the Big Bang theory of the origin of the universe points to the creation of the universe out of nothing. Not just matter and energy, but physical space and time themselves come into existence at the Big Bang. In the words of the British physicist P. C. W. Davies, 'the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.'

Or this quote for the fine-tuning argument :

> British physicist P. C. W. Davies has calculated that the odds against the initial conditions being suitable for later star formation (without which planets could not exist) is one followed by a thousand billion billion zeroes, at least. He also estimates that a change in the strength of gravity or of the weak force by only one part in 10^{100} would have prevented a life-permitting universe.

It's interesting that Craig chooses non-theistic scientists as sources to support his premises.

By the way, did you know that Unbelievable is having a conference later this month? Click here to find out about it, especially if you like science apologetics.

Archaeologist discovers artifacts from a 3,000 year old community

May 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ari sent me an article on the discovery, but I chose this one to link from the Jerusalem Post.

Excerpt:

> A Hebrew University archeologist has discovered artifacts from a 3,000-year-old community that have created a new understandings of how the First Temple was built, the university announced on Tuesday.
>
> Prof. Yosef Garfinkel, the Yigal Yadin Professor of Archeology at the university, displayed models of items excavated in Khirbet Qeiyafa, a fortified city in the Valley of Elah, about 30 km. southwest of Jerusalem.
>
> The religious community, which Garfinkel believes was Jewish, based on the lack of pig bones and graven images, kept small shrines in rooms of three buildings. The small ritual objects are box-like in shape and made from basalt or clay. The shrines predate the First Temple by at least 30 years, but utilize important architectural designs written in the Torah that describe how the Temple should be built.
>
> The discovery of these ritual objects has allowed archeologists a new understanding of the Temple's construction, explained Garfinkel.
>
> More than 20 architectural terms that describe the Temple no longer exist in modern language, so models of the Temple are based on educated guesses. For example, the Torah states that the Temple had "slaot," which was previously understood as "columns," and "sequfim," which was widely translated as "windows." But after studying the small shrines, Garfinkel concluded that the number of slaot corresponded to triglyphs, ornamental decorations above the columns, and the number of sequifim was consistent with a triple recessed doorway, rather than windows.

The Christian Post has more about what the discovery means.

Excerpt:

> "For the first time in history we have actual objects from the time of David, which can be related to monuments described in the Bible," the press release, provided by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, states.
>
> Hershel Shanks, editor of the Biblical Archaeology Review, told The Christian Post on Tuesday that the find is "extremely interesting" but needs to be examined further.
>
> "The unfortunate thing is we don't have enough information … to be all confident

> of the conclusions that Yosef Garfinkel is drawing," said Shanks.
>
> One thing that should be considered is the miniature shrines that were uncovered by Garfinkel are not the first to be discovered, and some might interpret the finding as evidence of a Canaanite cult rather than an Israelite one.
>
> The date of the artifacts is pretty accurate – they are from approximately 1,000 years Before Christ – although Shanks says it is impossible to say with certainty which biblical king was on the throne at the time.
>
> "This may well have been Davidic, but it's hard to come down hard on it. But within that range, yes … we have a lot of confidence in the date of it," he said.

So things are still up in the air on the significance of this discovery.

This reminds me of the story I am following about Dan Wallace's discovery of the early fragments of Mark. Scholars are still holding off judgment on that as well.

Landslide in North Carolina: traditional definition of marriage wins 61-39

May 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

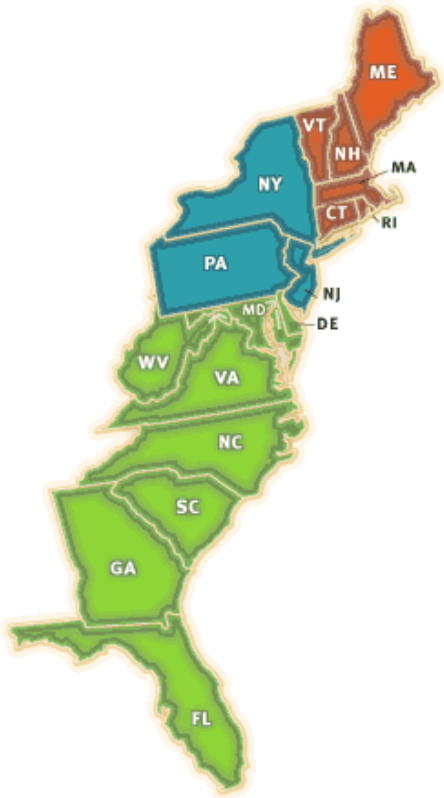

Eastern United States Map

The traditional definition of marriage was affirmed by North Carolina voters on Tuesday. The count was 61-39.

> North Carolina approved a constitutional amendment Tuesday defining marriage solely as a union between a man and a woman, becoming the latest state to effectively slam the door shut on same-sex marriages.
>
> With most of the precincts reporting Tuesday, unofficial returns showed the amendment passing with about 61 percent of the vote to 39 percent against. North Carolina is the 30th state to adopt such a ban on gay marriage.
>
> Tami Fitzgerald, who heads the pro-amendment group Vote FOR Marriage NC, said she believes the initiative awoke a silent majority of more active voters in the future.
>
> “I think it sends a message to the rest of the country that marriage is between one man and one woman,” Fitzgerald said at a celebration Tuesday night. “The whole point is simply that you don’t rewrite the nature of God’s design based on the demands of a group of adults.”
>
> In the final days before the vote, members of President Barack Obama’s cabinet expressed support for gay marriage and former President Bill Clinton recorded

> phone messages urging voters to oppose the amendment.

The Obama administration opposes traditional marriage and instead favors gay marriage.

Notice that there is nothing in the amendment about banning anything:

> Sec. 6. Marriage.
> Marriage between one man and one woman is the only domestic legal union that shall be valid or recognized in this State. This section does not prohibit a private party from entering into contracts with another private party; nor does this section prohibit courts from adjudicating the rights of private parties pursuant to such contracts.

That's something you hear in the leftist media, but this bill is no more a ban on gay marriage as it is a ban on polygamy. It simply affirms that the state will *only* recognize traditional marriages as valid. People can do whatever they want and live however they want. What they can't do is force other people to call relationships that do not affirm the right of a child to have a mother and father "marriage".

To understand why people oppose same-sex marriage, you can read my post from yesterday, in which I lay out 3 non-religious reasons to oppose gay marriage. In addition, my friend Melissa has another reason to support traditional marriage that Christians in particular will find compelling.

RINO Richard Lugar loses Indiana Senate primary to Tea party candidate

May 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

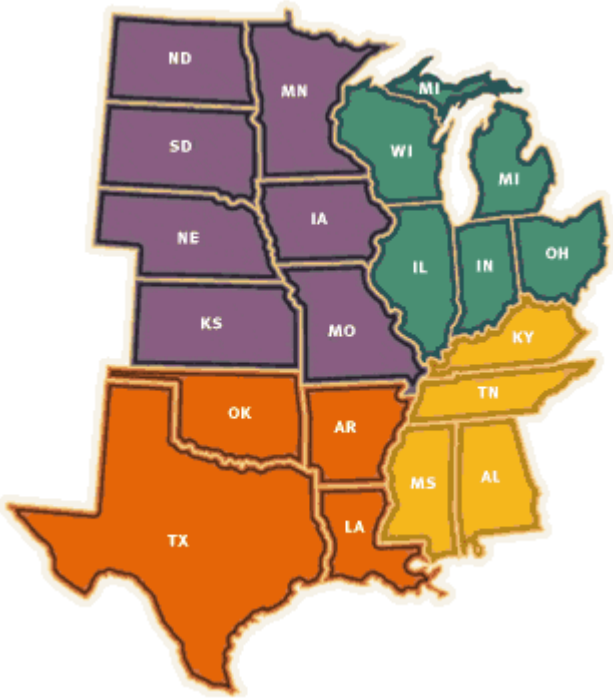

Central United States
From the radically leftist NPR.

Excerpt:

> The nearly four-decade career of Indiana Sen. Dick Lugar has come to an end. The Republican elder statesman, well known as an internationalist and as a moderate willing to reach across the aisle, lost his primary battle to state Treasurer Richard Mourdock, a conservative upstart backed by the Tea Party.
>
> […]Lugar becomes the latest incumbent to lose a re-election to a Tea Party candidate. *The Washington Post* reports that in 2010, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, from Alaska, and Sen. Robert Bennett, from Utah, also lost their primaries. That same year, voters also spurned GOP establishment favorites for Tea Party candidates in Colorado, Delaware and Nevada.
>
> "Richard Mourdock's victory truly sends a message to the liberals in the Republican Party: voters are rejecting the policies that led to record debt and diminished economic freedom, and they will continue to be rejected in elections throughout America," Chris Chocola, president of the Club for Growth, which infused the Mourdock campaign with cash, told the *Post*.
>
> The Tea Party Express, a political action committee, said it went after the longtime senator because he had "lost his conservative edge." Lugar's defeat, the organization said, is just the latest sign that the Tea Party movement is still

> going strong.
>
> Mourdock will face Democratic Rep. Joe Donnelly in November.

How liberal was Richard Lugar?

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> Lugar's relationship with pro-life advocates has been rocky during his time in the Senate. Lugar should be commended for supporting pro-life initiatives like the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, the Mexico City Policy, the de-funding of Planned Parenthood and the repeal of Obamacare. However, Lugar alienated pro-life advocates with votes in favor of embryonic stem cell research and his enthusiastic support for President Obama's two pro-abortion Supreme Court nominees, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan.
>
> Even before Sotomayor's nomination made it out of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Lugar announced he would vote to confirm her. A year later, Lugar jumped at the chance to support Elena Kagan, becoming the first Republican not on the Judiciary Committee to support her confirmation.

National Review has more about Mourdock and Lugar.

Excerpt:

> In 2010, only four Republican senators registered more liberal voting records [than Lugar], according to the American Conservative Union. In a separate analysis, *National Journal* ranked Lugar as the Senate's fourth most liberal Republican. He's a moderate to the core: a pro-lifer who voted to confirm both of Obama's nominations to the Supreme Court, a hawk on farm subsidies who opposed the ban on earmarks, and a foe of Obamacare who has supported more federal spending on health care. Lugar also has favored stronger gun-control laws, minimum-wage hikes, and the DREAM Act, which would provide an amnesty to illegal aliens who attend college or serve in the military.

I don't recommend throwing moderate Republicans out willy-nilly, but Lugar was a jerk.

We have a lot of good Senate candidates this year: Ted Cruz, Josh Mandel and Richard Mourdock. I hope they all win.

When women consent to have an abortion, is it an informed consent?

May 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting article from the Ottawa Citizen by McGill University ethicist Margaret Somerville. (H/T Laura Welch)

Excerpt:

> Anna explained, "Everyone in Quebec thinks that abortion is normal; nothing to fuss or be upset about; the obvious and easy solution to an unplanned pregnancy." But, when she unexpectedly found herself pregnant, she didn't feel that way and sought support to continue the pregnancy. Everyone told her, however, to "get on with it" – have an abortion.
>
> Anna, first, asked her mother whether she would help her, if she had the baby. Her mother flatly refused, saying, "I do not want to waste my life babysitting." Her male partner said he "wasn't interested in a kid" and their relationship has since broken up. She tried to get an appointment with her gynecologist to discuss her options, but the first available one was two months away. She then contacted an abortion clinic, which gave her an appointment in two weeks, at which time Anna was nine weeks pregnant. She said, "I went to them to get information on abortion, to know more about my options, the consequences of an abortion. I was open to getting an abortion, because that was what everyone around me recommended I do. I saw abortion as an option, but was really not sure. I was hoping for some answers."
>
> Anna met, first, with a nurse for a "consent interview." She said, "The nurse told me that at this stage of the pregnancy the fetus is just a bunch of cells. I also asked her if the abortion would have any impact on my health, my future pregnancies, and so on. She said abortions had no impact at all, no consequences at all, that all that I had read (to the contrary) were myths. The nurse said, 'In two weeks, it will be as if all this never happened'."
>
> Anna changed into a hospital gown and was taken into an examination room where a technician proceeded to do an ultrasound. Anna asked what the fetus looked like and could she see the ultrasound. She said, "The technician told me she was not allowed to show me the images and I was unable to see the screen," which showed the fetus. At nine weeks gestation, it would have had a beating heart. The technician then picked up the printout of the ultrasound, but dropped it on the floor. She scrambled to gather it up quickly, saying, "You don't want to see this." But that's exactly what Anna did want.
>
> Anna says she was left "waiting alone in a little room in the blue gown," before a nurse took her to the operating room, "where they gave me the sedative injection. At that point I was just crying, I was just thinking of all the reasons

> people told me I had to get the abortion, and that I did not have any help anyways, so I was crying. The doctor asked me if I was here on my own will and I said, ‘Yes’, while crying. So they gave me a double dose of sedative to calm me down. At that point, I felt it was pointless to protest further and that I couldn’t back out at that stage and would just have to go ahead.” So, she closed her eyes and let the abortion proceed.

Do you think that this woman was informed about what she was doing? If not, then how was she able to give her informed consent?

Arthur Brooks and the value of earned successs

May 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Earned success means defining your future as you see fit and achieving that success on the basis of merit and hard work. It allows you to measure your life's "profit" however you want, be it in money, making beautiful music, or helping people learn English. Earned success is at the root of American exceptionalism.
>
> The link between earned success and life satisfaction is well established by researchers. The University of Chicago's General Social Survey, for example, reveals that people who say they feel "very successful" or "completely successful" in their work lives are twice as likely to say they are very happy than people who feel "somewhat successful." It doesn't matter if they earn more or less income; the differences persist.
>
> The opposite of earned success is "learned helplessness," a term coined by Martin Seligman, the eminent psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania. It refers to what happens if rewards and punishments are not tied to merit: People simply give up and stop trying to succeed.
>
> During experiments, Mr. Seligman observed that when people realized they were powerless to influence their circumstances, they would become depressed and had difficulty performing even ordinary tasks. In an interview in the New York Times, Mr. Seligman said: "We found that even when good things occurred that weren't earned, like nickels coming out of slot machines, it did not increase people's well-being. It produced helplessness. People gave up and became passive."
>
> Learned helplessness was what my wife and I observed then, and still do today, in social-democratic Spain. The recession, rigid labor markets, and excessive welfare spending have pushed unemployment to 24.4%, with youth joblessness over 50%. Nearly half of adults under 35 live with their parents. Unable to earn their success, Spaniards fight to keep unearned government benefits.
>
> Meanwhile, their collective happiness—already relatively low—has withered. According to the nonprofit World Values Survey, 20% of Spaniards said they were "very happy" about their lives in 1981. This fell to 14% by 2007, even before the economic downturn.
>
> That trajectory should be a cautionary tale to Americans who are watching the U.S. government careen toward a system that is every bit as socially democratic as Spain's.
>
> Government spending as a percentage of GDP in America is about 36%—roughly

> the same as in Spain. The Congressional Budget Office tells us it will reach 50% by 2038. The Tax Foundation reports that almost 70% of Americans take more out of the tax system than they pay into it. Meanwhile, politicians foment social division on the basis of income inequality, instead of attempting to improve mobility and opportunity through education reform, pro-growth policies, and an entrepreneur-friendly economy.
>
> These trends do not mean we are doomed to repeat Spain's unhappy fate. But our system of earned success will not defend itself.

What I find most interesting is that the people who vote for Obama don't even realize how they are making themselves more and more unhappy by being more and more dependent on government. It's the bluest states that have seen the lowest income growth, the lowest job growth, lower home prices, and the highest unemployment. All of this talk about taxing the rich and spreading the wealth around through bigger and more intrusive government *hasn't worked*. More government means less prosperity, and less prosperity means fewer jobs, and fewer jobs means less happiness. Punishing your successful neighbor and borrowing huge amounts of money from the next generation does not create jobs. And without a job, you're not going to be happy. Even liberal CNN recognizes that more government intervention during Obama's first term has caused huge numbers of people to become unemployed.

We need to have a public policy that recognizes that human beings are spiritual creatures, and we aren't happy unless we chart our own course.

Obama openly supports gay marriage: 48 hours after top gay donors cut off funding

May 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Earlier this week, the liberal Washington Post had this story up. (H/T Free Beacon via ECM)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> **A review of Obama's top bundlers, who have brought in $500,000 or more for the campaign, shows that about one in six publicly identify themselves as gay. His overall list of bundlers also includes a number of gay couples who have wed in jurisdictions where same-sex marriage was legal.**
>
> "It's a very important constituency," said Los Angeles attorney Dana Perlman, a top Obama bundler who is helping organize a 700-person LGBT fundraiser for the president on June 6. "The community for the most part is wholeheartedly behind this man."
>
> But that relationship was put to the test this week after Vice President Joe Biden said he was "absolutely comfortable" with same-sex unions. The remarks led to mounting pressure on Obama to also shift his position on gay marriage, which he had previously characterized as "evolving."
>
> […]**Some liberal gay donors had threatened to withhold contributions over Obama's stance on gay marriage as well as his administration's decision to shelve an executive order banning sexual-identity discrimination by federal contractors.**
>
> […]**The Obama campaign's list of bundlers includes a number of prominent names in the gay community. Rainmakers at the top $500,000-and-up level include Perlman; interior designer Michael S. Smith and HBO executive James Costos; Chicago Cubs co-owner Laura Ricketts, a board member of the Lambda Legal gay rights group; and Colorado political activist Tim Gill and his husband, Scott Miller.**
>
> **The Advocate, a publication focused on the gay community, assembled a list of "Obama's Power Gays" last year that included many of his biggest fundraisers. In addition to Perlman and others, the Advocate list included Pfizer executive Sally Susman ($500,000-plus); activist Kevin Jennings ($50,000 to $100,000); and Texas philanthropist Eugene Sepulveda ($500,000-plus).**
>
> **Chad Griffin, the incoming president of the Human Rights Campaign, which has at times criticized Obama's stance on gay issues, has raised between $100,00 to $200,000 for the president's re-election campaign.**

> Griffin was the person who asked Biden at a recent closed meeting with gay activists, "How do you feel about us?" Biden recounted the question, and his emotional answer supportive of gay marriage, during his interview on NBC's "Meet the Press."
>
> Griffin said in an interview with the Washington Post earlier this week that he had repeatedly pressed Obama in private to support marriage equality.

And on Monday, a liberal columnist wrote this at the Washington Post: (H/T Free Beacon via ECM)

> **Some leading gay and progressive donors are so angry over President Obama's refusal to sign an executive order barring same sex discrimination by federal contractors that they are refusing to give any more money to the pro-Obama super PAC, a top gay fundraiser's office tells me. In some cases, I'm told, big donations are being withheld.**
>
> Jonathan Lewis, the gay philanthropist and leading Democratic fundraiser, is one of many gay advocates who has been working behind the scenes to pressure Obama to change his mind. When Obama decided against the executive order last month, arguing that he would pursue a legislative solution instead, advocates were furious — such a solution will never pass Congress, the executive order has been a priority for advocates for years, and the move smacked of a political cave to conservatives who will not support Obama no matter what he does.
>
> **Now these and other donors are beginning to withold money from Priorities USA, the main pro-Obama super PAC, out of dismay over the president's decision. (Some of these donors have already maxed out to the Obama campaign, I'm told.) It's the first indication that areas in which Obama is at odds with gay advocates — and in fairness, his record on gay rights has been very good — could dampen overall fundraising.**
>
> Paul Yandura, a political adviser to Lewis, emails me a statement:

> A number of gay and progressive donors, unsolicited, have indicated to us that they aren't considering requests to donate to the Obama SuperPac because of the president's refusal to the sign the order. And those are high-dollar asks, some in the seven digits. We have heard from at least half a dozen major gay and progressive donors that they stand united with us. There is still time for the President to do the right thing and sign this executive order, our great hope is that he does so immediately.

So it's no surprise, then, that Obama announced his support for gay marriage:

> President Obama today announced that he now supports same-sex marriage, reversing his longstanding opposition amid growing pressure from the

> Democratic base and even his own vice president.
>
> In an interview with ABC News' Robin Roberts, the president described his thought process as an "evolution" that led him to this decision, based on conversations with his staff members, openly gay and lesbian service members, and his wife and daughters.
>
> "I have to tell you that over the course of several years as I have talked to friends and family and neighbors, when I think about members of my own staff who are in incredibly committed monogamous relationships, same-sex relationships, who are raising kids together; when I think about those soldiers or airmen or marines or sailors who are out there fighting on my behalf and yet feel constrained, even now that 'don't ask, don't tell' is gone, because they are not able to commit themselves in a marriage, at a certain point I've just concluded that for me personally it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same sex couples should be able to get married," Obama told Roberts in an interview to appear on ABC's "Good Morning America" Thursday.

Let me be clear. If you voted for Barack Obama, then you voted for a pro-abortion, pro-gay-marriage leftist.

Click here for an explanation of the non-religious reasons why people oppose same-sex marriage.

Related posts

- Obama administration linked to gay activist Dan Savage
- Obama has appointed a record number of gay officials
- Obama appointee Kevin Jennings' web site has gay material for children
- Safe schools czar says respect for homosexuality begins in kindergarten
- Barack Obama is the most pro-abortion president ever
- Barack Obama attempt to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act
- Barack Obama is not a Christian

New study on tidal heating strengthens stellar habitability argument

May 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

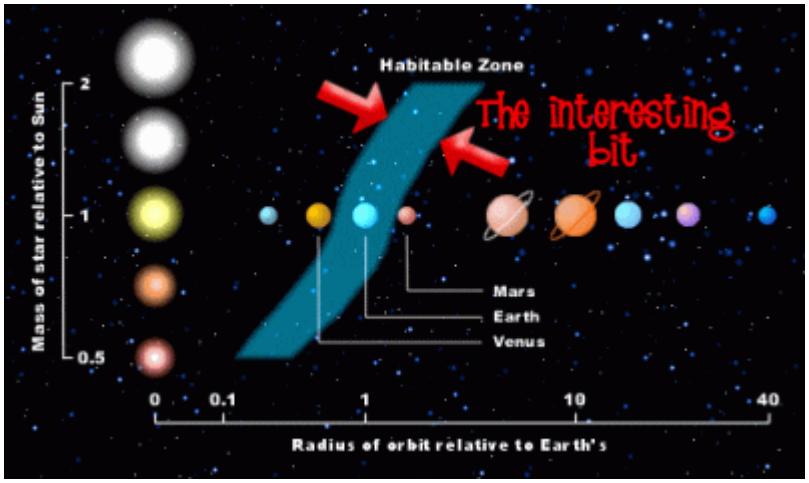

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

Note: If you need a refresher on the habitability argument, click here.

Here's an article entitled "Tidal heating shrinks the 'goldilocks zone': Overlooked factor suggests fewer habitable planets than thought". It appeared in *Nature*, the most prestigious peer-reviewed science journal.

The gist of it is that tidal forces can alter orbits so that planets don't spend *all* of their orbit in the habitable zone. If planets go outside the habitable zone, it damages their supply of liquid water, and any life chemistry going on in there is disrupted.

Excerpt:

> A previously little-considered heating effect could shrink estimates of the habitable zone of the Milky Way's most numerous class of stars — 'M' or red dwarfs — by up to one half, says Rory Barnes, an astrobiologist at the University of Washington in Seattle. That factor — gravitational heating via tides — suggests a menagerie of previously undreamt-of planets, on which tidal heating is a major source of internal heat. Barnes presented the work yesterday at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society's Division on Dynamical Astronomy in Timberline Lodge, Oregon.
>
> The habitable zone is the orbital region close enough to a star for a planet to have liquid water, but not so close that all of the water evaporates. For our Sun, the zone extends roughly from the inner edge of the orbit of Mars to the outer edge of that of Venus. For smaller, cooler stars, such as M-class dwarfs, the zone can be considerably closer to the star than Mercury is to the Sun. And because close-in planets are easier to spot than more distant ones, such stars have been a major target for planet hunters seeking Earth-like worlds.
>
> **There's just one problem with finding habitable planets around such**

> **stars, says Barnes. Because tidal forces vary dramatically with the distance between a planet and its star, closer orbits also result in massively larger tidal forces.**
>
> **Since planets do not have perfectly circular orbits, these tidal forces cause the planet to flex and unflex each time it moves closer to or further from its star; kneading its interior to produce massive quantities of frictional heat. Substantial heat can be produced, he added, with even slight deviations from a perfectly circular orbit. And, Barnes notes, other factors — such as the rate of the planet's rotation and its axial tilt — can also influence heat production.**
>
> **A similar tidal process makes Jupiter's moon Io the most volcanic body in the Solar System. "I'm just scaling that Io–Jupiter system up by a factor of 1,000 in mass," Barnes said at the meeting. "It's the same process, on steroids."**

So, stars that are smaller and cooler will have a habitable zone that is closer to the star, exposing them to more tidal forces. More tidal forces makes their orbits less likely to stay circular – within the habitable zone around the star. These variations cause an increase in heat production on the planet. Too much heat means that the planet is unable to support liquid water on the surface, making it inhospitable for life. Therefore, solar systems with less massive stars can be ruled out as possible sites for life, because of these tidal forces.

UK police knew about Muslim child sex gang but refused to prosecute

May 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the facts of the case from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A sex grooming gang targeted white girls because they were not part of their 'community or religion' said a judge as he jailed them for a total of 77 years yesterday.
>
> Detectives are now preparing to make more arrests after they revealed they suspect up to 50 mainly Pakistani-born men took part in the abuse.
>
> But despite the judge's hard-hitting comments, police in Greater Manchester continued to insist that the men's race and religion were not factors in their crimes.
>
> Yesterday senior politicians clashed over the case – with one former Labour MP claiming police and social workers ignored complaints because they were 'petrified of being called racist'.
>
> With experts on paedophilia insisting street grooming by Muslim men was a real problem, Judge Gerald Clinton made it clear he believed religion was a factor.
>
> He jailed the 59-year-old ringleader for 19 years and eight other men for between four and 12 years, telling them they had treated their victims 'as though they were worthless and beyond all respect'.
>
> He added: 'I believe one of the factors which led to that is that they were not of your community or religion.'
>
> But he branded outbursts by some of the men claiming the prosecution was racially-motivated 'nonsense', telling them they found themselves in the dock because of their 'lust and greed'.
>
> The gang raped and abused up to 47 girls – some as young as 13 – after plying them with alcohol and luring them to takeaways in Heywood, near Rochdale.
>
> Detective Inspector Michael Sanderson, of Greater Manchester Police, said none of the convicted men had ever shown 'the slightest bit of remorse'.

The keeping of sex slaves is sanctioned by the Qur'an.

What's interesting about this case is that the police knew about the ring years before, but refused to prosecute:

> A victim of the ring said she was 'let down' by police and the Crown Prosecution Service because the issue of Asian gangs grooming young white girls was 'unheard of' at the time.

> The girl, who was 15 when she was targeted by the gang, reported the abuse to police in August 2008 but the CPS decided not to prosecute because they did not believe a jury would find her 'credible'.
>
> After reporting the abuse she suffered for four more months at the hands of the gang and continued to be forced into having sex by her 'friend' – a teenage girl who was acting as a pimp for the men.
>
> She said the problem got 'worse' after telling the police.
>
> 'I felt let down. But I know that they (police) believed me… but… because they said to me at the end that something should have been done but the CPS just would not – what's the word? – prosecute is it?
>
> 'It's like, then, in 2008 it weren't really heard of… Asian men with white girls.
>
> 'It was just unheard of. I've never heard of it. Now it's going on everywhere. You think of Muslim men as religious and family-minded and just nice people. You don't think… I don't know… you just don't think they'd do things like that.'
>
> The girl, now 20, only escaped the gang in December 2008 when she fell pregnant and moved away. She was then made to wait until August 2009 for the CPS to tell her they were not taking the case to trial.
>
> She called the men who abused her 'evil' and said she hopes they pay for their crimes.
>
> 'They ripped away all my dignity and all my last bit of self-esteem and by the end of it I had no emotion whatsoever because I was used to being used and abused daily,' she said.
>
> 'It was just blocked out, it was just like it wasn't me any more. They just took everything away and I just think hopefully they'll pay for what they've done.'

Under the policies of the UK Labour Party, the police had all been fully trained in multiculturalism and political correctness. Some groups favored by the secular left are above the law and cannot be persecuted, even when they rape little children. We can thank Harriet Harman and her ilk for this. We can even thank her for the immigration policies that created isolated communities that do not respect the laws and values of Western civilization, and Judeo-Christian values in particular.

But that's not all. Think about what the feminism promoted by the Labour Party achieves. The feminism embraced by the Labour Party under Harriet Harman had one goal. To destroy the institution of marriage and eject men from the home. Men were to be replaced with government handouts and welfare payments. Under the rule of the Labour Party, illegitimacy has skyrocketed while marriage has declined. The UK government literally pays women to have children out of wedlock – children who will grow up fatherless. IVF is taxpayer-funded under the NHS.

When women do not have to care about whether a man is a good provider, they can have sex with any man – which ever one they like, based on the approval of their peers and the standards of the culture. But men who have not been carefully picked by women to be

husbands and fathers do not stick around. Who is left,then, to protect the girls who are born without fathers to raise them? No one. This is the end result of feminism’s attempt to destroy the traditional roles that men play in the home: protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. Government programs, politically correct social workers and welfare checks are not a substitute for a father.

William Dembski replies to theistic evolutionist Darrel Falk

May 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Dembski is much nicer than I am, and so he takes theistic evolutionist Darrel Falk to task very gently.

Excerpt:

> In the paper to which Falk responds, I lay out four non-negotiables of Christianity as well as four non-negotiables of Darwinism. Falk and I are united on the four non-negotiables of Christianity, but differ a bit on those of Darwinism. The four non-negotiables of Darwinism that I list are common descent, natural selection, human continuity, and methodological naturalism. Because Falk and I both reject Darwinism, there's quite a bit of overlap in how we view these four non-negotiables. Nonetheless, I think it will help readers of my essay and Falk's response to clarify some of our differences here, subtle though they may be.
>
> With regard to common descent, I agree with Falk that God could have brought about life by means of a large-scale form of evolution that links all organisms to a common ancestor. That said, I don't accept common descent. I think the scientific evidence is against it (for my reasons, see my book *The Design of Life*, coedited with Jonathan Wells). Also, even though common descent may be acceptable in broad theological terms, I think it is problematic exegetically with regard to Scripture. Simply put, I think you're going to have a hard time getting large-scale evolution out of Scripture or rendering the two compatible.
>
> With regard to natural selection, Falk appears to accept that this is the principal mechanism by which organisms are brought into existence successively by an evolutionary process. At the same time, Falk does not want to see natural selection as devoid of purpose but rather as a mechanism through which God is able to accomplish his purposes. But in that case, in what sense is selection "natural"? Is Falk's view of natural selection, when viewed as a scientific hypothesis, any different from Richard Dawkins's? And if their views, taken scientifically, are the same, what is the evidence for the creative power of this mechanism?
>
> Falk extols "God's marvelously ordinary processes of creation: ordinary because they follow his natural laws so faithfully, marvelous because they have resulted in a world of complex and beautiful life." In my view, the word "ordinary" is entirely out of place here. As I've argued with Robert Marks in a paper titled "Life's Conservation Law," even if life is the result of an evolutionary process driven by natural selection, it would have to be a form of selection finely tuned by an environment that is itself finely tuned (see our contribution to *The Nature of Nature*, edited by Bruce Gordon and me — the paper in question is available

> online here).
>
> Falk takes exception to my thinking it "odd" that God would create by natural selection, and thus by a process that gives no evidence of intelligence. And he rejects my charge that such a method of creation "occludes" God's activity. Falk, echoing Psalm 19, proclaims that all aspects of creation bespeak God's handiwork and glory. Now let me concede that "oddness," in the sense of what appears odd to us very limited human beings with our very limited vantages on the world, is not a good criterion for determining what God would and wouldn't do. Still, it hardly seems that God is mandated to create via a process that provides no evidence of his creative activity — and nowhere does Falk admit that God provides actual evidence of himself in creation (at best he allows that nature provides "signposts" — but what exactly are these signs? who is reading them? why should we take them as pointing to God?). Moreover, for Falk to echo the psalmist is hardly an argument for the world proclaiming God's handiwork and glory, because many atheistic evolutionists will deny Falk's confident affirmations of divine perspicuity.
>
> I've seen this directly. I recall posting on my blog a gorgeous picture of wildflowers, hinting at the wonders of God's creation, and seeing comments by atheistic evolutionists who dismissed it as merely "sex" run amuck. Thus, when Falk echoes Psalm 19, what more is he doing than giving expression to his own faith? Indeed, what more is he saying to atheists than merely "I see God's hand in all of this and you don't — you're blind and I see." Perhaps faith has given him sight that atheists lack. But in that case, how can it be claimed that God is not occluding his activity in nature? God, as omnipotent, can certainly make his existence and presence known to even the most ardent atheist – we can all imagine flamboyant enough miracles that would convince anyone.
>
> **Still, the more interesting question here is whether there is a rational basis for Falk's faith that is grounded in the order of nature. ID, in finding scientific evidence of intelligence in nature, says there is. Falk, along with BioLogos generally, denies this. But in that case, how can he avoid the charge that the faith by which he sees God's handiwork is merely an overlay on top of a nature that, taken by itself, is neutral or even hostile to Christian faith?** Note that I'm not alone in thinking it odd that God would create by natural selection. Many atheistic evolution see evolution as a brutal and wasteful process that no self-respecting deity would have employed in bringing about life. Jerry Coyne, Richard Dawkins, and the late Stephen Jay Gould were united on this point.

There are three things that annoy me greatly and cause me to lose my temper. One of those things is theistic evolution, which to me is essentially atheism with unnecessary subjective verbiage added on top. My advice for discussing evolution with a theistic evolutionist is to never, ever allow them to talk about anything about religion. Just focus

on the science and what the science can show. Anything else they say about their personal feelings and beliefs that isn't scientific is just an attempt to deceive the listener. Never ever allow a theistic evolutionist to talk about possibilities – what God could or could not do. That is irrelevant to the discussion because it is outside of what science can show.

The central question when discussing evolution is this: can we use the ordinary methods of science, just as Dembski's method for recognizing design based on specified complexity, in order to detect intelligent causes? Atheists and theistic evolutionists are united on the answer: NO. Darrel Falk and Richard Dawkins agree that there is no way for science to show that an intelligence is needed to explain some effect in nature, because natural mechanisms can do the job with the probabilistic resources available. Design theorists think that you can infer that intelligence is the best explanation – for some effects that pass the mathematical tests.

So you have atheists and theistic evolutionists on one side, and intelligent design people on the other side.

How public sector pensions force children to pay for the prosperity of adults

May 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> People retiring from the private sector need to save £250,000 to buy pension income equal to the national minimum wage – currently, £12,646 a year – or a total of £518,000 for a pension equal to national average earnings of £25,900.
>
> These are among many eye-stretching facts in a new analysis of how unfunded promises to pay index-linked pensions to public sector workers are way beyond what most private sector savers can hope to achieve – and how these debts will burden children who have not yet left school.
>
> The Intergenerational Foundation (IF) think tank used freedom of information requests to find out that 78,000 former public sector workers enjoy pensions of more than £25,900; and more than 12,000 get more than £50,000 a year. Three quarters of the latter are doctors and this index-linked income is irrespective of any private work or savings.
>
> While many public sector workers pay into pension schemes, benefits usually outstrip employee contributions and the difference – or deficit – must be funded by future generations. Taxpayers' total liability for public sector pensions, according to the report: 'Are Government Pensions Unfair on the Younger Generation?' is equivalent to £45,000 for every household in Britain and totals £1.2 trillion or £1,200,000,000,000.
>
> An IF spokesman said: "This demonstrates the true scale of pension apartheid in the UK with news that 88pc of public sector workers are currently entitled to pensions related to their final salaries, which are typically the most generous type of pension, compared to just 10pc of workers in the private sector."

Don't be fooled – this sort of thing happens in the United States as well, where teachers and government workers live high on the hog today and pass the bill to their children, who will be forced to pay for it all tomorrow. Is that fair?

Is intelligent design creationism? Dr. Stephen C. Meyer explains

May 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Meyer explains the truth in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> In 2004, the distinguished philosopher Antony Flew of the University of Reading made worldwide news when he repudiated a lifelong commitment to atheism and affirmed the reality of some kind of a creator. Flew cited evidence of intelligent design in DNA and the arguments of "American [intelligent] design theorists" as important reasons for this shift.
>
> […]Contrary to media reports, ID is not a religious-based idea, but an evidence-based scientific theory about life's origins. According to Darwinian biologists such as Oxford University's Richard Dawkins, living systems "give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose".
>
> But, for modern Darwinists, that appearance of design is illusory, because the purely undirected process of natural selection acting on random mutations is entirely sufficient to produce the intricate designed-like structures found in living organisms.

> By contrast, ID holds that there are tell-tale features of living systems and the universe that are best explained by a designing intelligence. The theory does not challenge the idea of evolution defined as change over time, or even common ancestry, but it disputes Darwin's idea that the cause of biological change is wholly blind and undirected.
>
> […]Consider an even more fundamental argument for design. In 1953, when Watson and Crick elucidated the structure of the DNA molecule, they made a startling discovery. Strings of precisely sequenced chemicals called nucleotides in DNA store and transmit the assembly instructions – the information – in a four-character digital code for building the protein molecules the cell needs to survive. Crick then developed his "sequence hypothesis", in which the chemical bases in DNA function like letters in a written language or symbols in a computer code. As Dawkins has noted, "the machine code of the genes is uncannily computer-like".
>
> The informational features of the cell at least appear designed. Yet, to date, no theory of undirected chemical evolution has explained the origin of the digital information needed to build the first living cell. Why? There is simply too much information in the cell to be explained by chance alone.
>
> The information in DNA (and RNA) has also been shown to defy explanation by forces of chemical necessity. Saying otherwise would be like saying a headline arose as the result of chemical attraction between ink and paper. Clearly,

> something else is at work.
>
> DNA functions like a software program. We know from experience that software comes from programmers. We know that information – whether, say, in hieroglyphics or radio signals – always arises from an intelligent source. As the pioneering information theorist Henry Quastler observed: “Information habitually arises from conscious activity.” So the discovery of digital information in DNA provides strong grounds for inferring that intelligence played a causal role in its origin.
>
> Thus, ID is not based on religion, but on scientific discoveries and our experience of cause and effect, the basis of all scientific reasoning about the past. Unlike creationism, ID is an inference from biological data.

It might be a good idea now to echo Meyer’s claim with something from the secular magazine Scientific American.

Excerpt:

> As recently as the middle of the 20th century, many scientists thought that the first organisms were made of self-replicating proteins. After Francis Crick and James Watson showed that DNA is the basis for genetic transmission in the 1950s, many researchers began to favor nucleic acids over proteins as the ur-molecules. But there was a major hitch in this scenario. DNA can make neither proteins nor copies of itself without the help of catalytic proteins called enzymes. This fact turned the origin of life into a classic chicken-or-egg puzzle: Which came first, proteins or DNA?
>
> RNA, DNA’s helpmate, remains the most popular answer to this conundrum, just as it was when I wrote “In the Beginning…” Certain forms of RNA can act as their own enzymes, snipping themselves in two and splicing themselves back together again. If RNA could act as an enzyme, then it might be able to replicate itself without help from proteins. RNA could serve as gene and catalyst, egg and chicken.
>
> But the “RNA-world” hypothesis remains problematic. RNA and its components are difficult to synthesize under the best of circumstances, in a laboratory, let alone under plausible prebiotic conditions. Once RNA is synthesized, it can make new copies of itself only with a great deal of chemical coaxing from the scientist. Overbye notes that “even if RNA did appear naturally, the odds that it would happen in the right sequence to drive Darwinian evolution seem small.”
>
> The RNA world is so dissatisfying that some frustrated scientists are resorting to much more far out—literally—speculation. The most startling revelation in Overbye’s article is that scientists have resuscitated a proposal once floated by Crick. Dissatisfied with conventional theories of life’s beginning, Crick conjectured that aliens came to Earth in a spaceship and planted the seeds of life here billions of years ago. This notion is called directed panspermia. In less

> dramatic versions of panspermia, microbes arrived on our planet via asteroids, comets or meteorites, or drifted down like confetti.

Naturalists who resort to aliens are still implicating intelligent causes to explain life, ironically enough.

Please share and re-tweet this post, because not understanding intelligent design is a mistake that virtually everyone in the mainstream media makes when discussing this topic. I would bet $100 that there is not a single journalist in the mainstream media who can define intelligent design by citing a peer-reviewed article or academic textbook, and then give an example of where proponents of ID think that intelligent design is evident in nature.

Related posts

- Stephen C. Meyer and Keith Fox debate intelligent design and evolution
- What is intelligent design? Dr. Stephen C. Meyer explains in this video
- Theologian R.C. Sproul interviews Stephen C. Meyer
- Stephen C. Meyer explains the evidence for the Big Bang
- Signature in the Cell – a review of the first year
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the 3-5 million year Cambrian explosion

Documentaries on intelligent design

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

Dr. Ben Carson faces the Darwinian Inquisition at Emory University

May 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Evolution News writes about an eminent scientist who is under by professors and students at Emory University because of his disagreement with Darwinian orthodoxy and his assertion that morality isn't possible on a materialistic worldview.

Here's the first article from Evolution News, which explains what got Dr. Carson in trouble with the Darwoids.

Excerpt:

> You can be a brilliant, innovative pediatric neurosurgeon at a sky-scraping top medical school, *in addition* to being a generous philanthropist with an inspirational up-from-dire-poverty personal story, *plus* a Presidential Medal of Freedom winner, *and* a best-selling writer whose memoir was turned into a TV movie starring Cuba Gooding Jr.
>
> All that, but if you once shared your critical thoughts on evolutionary science and its moral implications — everything else about you suddenly dwindles to very little.
>
> Dr. Ben Carson of Johns Hopkins University is that man. He's scheduled to give the Commencement address and receive an honorary degree at Emory University but close to 500 faculty members, students and staff protested, drawing up a gravely serious letter to the student paper expressing their "concerns." Over what? Carson had no intention of speaking about evolution but someone dug up an impromptu interview he once gave to a publication associated with his Christian denomination (he's a Seventh Day Adventist).
>
> Carson explained why he's not impressed by the evidence on offer for Darwinian theory and why a materialist philosophy is at odds with the idea of free will and therefore makes it tough to offer a coherent account of moral principles. The interview is casual in tone and it's not clear whether his views are more along the lines of theistic evolution, intelligent design, or some other perspective. Not that the protestors seemed inclined to make any careful distinctions.
>
> Emory isn't withdrawing the invitation and the letter's signatories don't demand that the university do so. But they do distort his opinions and make him sound far less thoughtful than he actually is. Because he says you can't, under materialism, give a sound rationale for morality, they claim he said that evolutionists are therefore morally defective, which is of course absurd.
>
> At the *First Things* website, Princeton University moral philosopher Robbie George comes to Carson's defense. Professor George agrees with Carson:

> But of course Gentle Ben (and he is indeed one of the gentlest, kindest people

> one could ever meet) doesn't believe that his Darwinist friends and colleagues are necessarily unethical. What he believes is that Darwinism is necessarily materialistic. (This is a view about Darwinism that he shares with some devout Darwinists themselves.) And he believes that materialism, if true, is incompatible with free will and with ethical norms (which must be, after all, norms for the guidance of free choices, if they are to have any standing, force, and validity at all). Now, he knows perfectly well that people who believe in materialism are in many cases decent, honorable, ethical people. But he thinks that they lead lives that are much better than their formal philosophical beliefs would require them to lead. He believes that their commitment to materialism makes it impossible for them to give a sound account of the ethical norms which they themselves, to their credit, live by. Of course, he might be wrong about that (though I don't think he is), just as he might be wrong about the validity of Darwinism as a scientific theory, or the compatility of Darwinism with the rejection of materialism. But it's certainly not a mean or crazy thing to believe or say. It's scarcely a cause for "concern" about having him as a Commencement speaker.

Robbie George is one of the best moral philosophers out there. If he says that morality is not rationally grounded on a materialist worldview, *then that's the way it is*. Naturally, people who believe in Darwinism can behave morally, because they are made in God's image. Therefore, they have free will and an awareness of the moral law, even though these things are not rationally grounded on materialism. The point that theists make is merely that materialists are not able to make sense of morality on a deterministic worldview. They can, however, act better than their worldview allows – but it's not rational for them to do that.

I note that Emory University is on the list of LEAST-FREE universities, according to the non-partisan, non-religious Foundational for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), so it's not surprising that they would be censor anyone who has different views than they do.

Here's another article from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Almost 500 Emory faculty and students have expressed their dismay that their commencement speaker on May 14 does not toe the ideological line on evolutionary biology. Yes, gasp, the renowned Johns Hopkins neurosurgeon Ben Carson does not believe in evolutionary theory. Not only that, but biology professors at Emory and their supporters also accuse Carson of committing a thought crime because he allegedly "equates acceptance of evolution with a lack of ethics and morality."
>
> Since I am a historian who has studied and published on the history of evolutionary ethics, I was rather surprised by the Emory faculty's consternation over Carson's belief that evolution undermines objective ethics and morality. Last summer I attended a major interdisciplinary conference at Oxford University on

> "The Evolution of Morality and the Morality of Evolution." So I am well aware that there are a variety of viewpoints in academe on this topic. Nonetheless, many evolutionists — from Darwin to the present (including quite a few at that Oxford conference) — have argued and are still arguing precisely the point that Dr. Carson highlighted: they claim that morality has evolved and thus has no objective existence.
>
> **One of the keynote speakers at the Oxford conference was a leading philosopher of science, Michael Ruse, who stated in a 1985 article co-authored with Harvard biologist E. O. Wilson: "Ethics as we understand it is an illusion fobbed off on us by our genes to get us to co-operate." Why do biologists at Emory try to make Carson appear foolish for asserting that evolution undermines ethics, while one of the leading evolutionary biologists and one of the leading philosophers of science admit that evolution destroys any objective morality? Wilson in his book *Consilience* (1998) argued: "Either ethical precepts, such as justice and human rights, are independent of human experience or else they are human inventions." He rejected the former explanation, which he called transcendentalist ethics, in favor of the latter, which he named empiricist ethics.**

Atheists who think about these issues agree – on a materialist interpretation of nature, ethics is arbitrary, made-up nonsense.

Even atheists like Richard Dawkins think so:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

Surprise! Atheism, which assumes that matter is all there is, implies the complete destruction of rationally grounded morality – including moral standards and human rights. This is denied by no one who has thought about this problem for more than 5 seconds. If you are talking to an atheist, you are talking to someone who thinks that any statement

about right and wrong is as true as it's opposite. On atheism, the morality of rape or slavery is as arbitrary as fashion or food. Any statement that rape is wrong has as much reason behind it, on atheism, as the statement that rape is right. Any statement that slavery is wrong has as much reason behind it, on atheism, as the statement that slavery is right. And that's what atheists mean by morality, on their view. It's just like picking which side of the road that people will drive on in different groups of people in different places in different times. That's "atheist morality". And when they die, there is no accountability in the afterlife for anything they've done and managed to escape judgment for in this life.

And, in point of fact, you can see it right now in the way that they are treating Dr. Carson.

What to do about it

If you are not happy with the actions of the Darwish Inquisition at Emory University, then please sign the petition!

And any atheists who are reading this post and don't support Carson's right to speak, please understand why theists have the opinion that atheism is nothing more than the practice of running from debates and silencing (one way or another) anyone who disagrees with you. That's our experience of dealing with secular humanists like Richard Dawkins – no debates, just insults and coercion. To us, secular humanism is just a phrase that means totalitarianism and censorship. That's our experience.

If you disagree, then sign the petition and prove us wrong.

Related posts

- Video: William Lane Craig lectures coward Dawkins' empty chair in Oxford
- UK Independent joins UK Guardian in call for Dawkins to debate Craig
- Atheist philosopher: Dawkins refusal to debate is cynical and anti-intellectual
- Richard Dawkins responds to Craig's debate challenge in a UK Guardian editorial
- Richard Dawkins, A.C. Grayling and Polly Toynbee refuse to debate atheism
- Humanist Association president Polly Toynbee runs away from debate on God
- Coward A.C. Grayling and chicken Dawkins flee debate with William Lane Craig
- UK Telegraph on Richard Dawkins' cowardly refusal to debate William Lane Craig
- Cowardly Richard Dawkins explains why he won't debate William Lane Craig
- American Atheists' Reason Rally : eradicating Christianity, fleeing dialogue and debate
- Richard Dawkins, who claims to oppose genocide, vows to "destroy" Christianity
- American Atheists: are they much different from Stalin and Mao Tse Tung?
- Paul Copan challenges Richard Dawkins on determinism and rationality
- Richard Dawkins' rhetoric about religion and child abuse

Stephen C. Meyer and Peter Atkins debate intelligent design

May 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This dialog occurred in 2010 on the Unbelievable radio show.

I made a rough transcript, so please see below for that.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

Details:

> The documentary film "Expelled" is presented by US Actor Ben Stein and makes the case that scientists who question Darwinian orthodoxy and support Intelligent Design are being "expelled" from academia.
>
> As the UK edition of the DVD is released we ask "Is freedom of thought at stake or is Intelligent Design out of bounds when it comes to biological science?"
>
> Stephen C Meyer is co founder of the Discovery Institute in the USA and a major proponent of Intelligent Design.
>
> Peter Atkins is Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University and an outspoken atheist.
>
> They both feature in "Expelled" and join Justin to debate the pros and cons of Intelligent Design theory.
>
> Mark Haville who is bringing the film to the UK also joins the discussion.

Meyer's PhD is from Cambridge, and he has a wonderful new book called "Signature in the Cell". He explains intelligent design for beginners here in his CNN editorial.

Note: The transcript below is quite snarky and may include paraphrases of Dr. Atkins for the sake of humor. Because it is Friday, and he is a fool.

My rough transcript of the Meyer-Atkins debate

Stephen Meyer:
– started researching on ID while doing his PhD at Cambridge
– the question is whether the information-bearing properties in DNA require a designer
– what cause is adequate to explain the digital code that in the simplest living cell
– alternative explanations like self-organization and RNA-first have failed
– so the best explanation for functional sequences of parts is an intelligent designer
– Darwinists have responded to this argument with insults and suppression of dissent

Peter Atkins:
– intelligent design is creationism
– there is no science at all in it
– information can emerge without an intelligent designer
– structures emerge spontaneously, no agent is needed to generate the structure

– information in DNA is also a structure

Stephen Meyer:
– structure and information are two different things
– many structures emerge spontaneously
– structure may be like the vortex that occurs when water goes down a drain

Peter Atkins:
– the vortex is information

Stephen Meyer:
– structures are different from functionally-specified digital information
– in DNA, there is a 4-digit alphabet that is used to create code sequences
– the thing to be explained is where do the functional sequences come from

Peter Atkins:
– information can grow without an agent
– the second law of thermodynamics
– the universe is falling into disorder
– but there are local abatements of chaos that create information
– evolution can cause the amount of information to grow

Stephen Meyer:
– that's just an assertion
– I agree that energy flow through a system can produce spontaneous order
– but spontaneous order is not the same thing as information

Peter Atkins:
– spontaneous order is the same as information

Stephen Meyer:
– it's not order that needs to be explained it's specified complexity

Peter Atkins:
– what do you mean by specified complexity?

Stephen Meyer:
– the chemical bonds that connect to each letter do not determine the letter
– the chemical bonding sites will accept any letter as easily as any other
– any one of the 4 bases (letters) can attach at any place along the backbone

Peter Atkins:
– the selection of which letter comes next is determined by evolution

Stephen Meyer:
– that is just an assertion
– there is no physical process that sequences the letters to have a function

Peter Atkins:
– do you believe in evolution? YES OR NO!

Mark Haville:
– for him to answer the question you have to define the word

– do you mean macro or micro? biological or stellar? directed or undirected?

Peter Atkins:
– undirected molecules to man evolution by natural processes

Stephen Meyer:
– but even Dawkins doesn't believe in evolution then
– you're including the origin of life from non-living matter in evolution
– Dawkins says that there is no naturalistic explanation for that

Mark Haville:
– you need to define your terms

[They discuss of the movie Expelled and the case of Richard Sternberg]

Stephen Meyer:
– the problem is people don't want to talk about the science
– they denounce dissent as unscientific
– they will not debate about whther natural causes can explain the information
– I want to talk about the science

Peter Atkins:
– ID people raise interesting questions for naturalists to work on
– but you want to tell us what the answer is (intelligence) before we begin
– you start from the idea that an intelligence was involved

Justin Brierley:
– but you start with the idea that natural mechanisms can explain everything!

Stephen Meyer:
– for Dr. Atkins, only explanations based on material processes are valid

Peter Atkins:
– that is correct

Stephen Meyer:
– but we think that the activities of mind can explain some effects
– e.g. – the best explanation of the Rosetta stone is a mind

Peter Atkins:
– but we naturalists think of minds as material as well

Stephen Meyer:
– that's a materialist pre-supposition on your part
– we would have to have a debate about mind and body

Mark Haville:
– I think that the materialist position is socially dangerous
– the problem with naturalism is that it is an ideology
– the ideology pushes absurdities, e.g. – the universe came from nothing uncaused
– and naturalists exert power over others to force them to believe nonsense

Stephen Meyer:
– science progresses as the result of scientists disagreeing

– both sides agree to the facts
– the debate is about the interpretation of those facts
– and one side is being ruled out a priori based on the pre-supposition of materialism

Peter Atkins:
– why do you say that an intelligence is involved in DNA but not general relativity

Stephen Meyer:
– it is always logically possible that intelligence can be invlved in any effect
– the main thing is that explanations based on intelligence should not be ruled out

Peter Atkins:
= well you can't appeal to any non-material process in expaining anything
– those are the rules

Moderator:
– what does intelligent design have to do with religion?

Stephen Meyer:
– creationism is about understanding the istory of life using the Bible
– intelligent design is about using the same method of inquiry as Darwin
– we know that information arises from intelligent causes
– humans create information all the time by using intelligence to sequence parts

Moderator:
– are intelligent design proponents disreputable?

Stephen Meyer:
– what's disreputable is shutting down debate by setting arbitrary rules

Peter Atkins:
– we are both interested in the same questions

Moderator:
– why won't you let Stephen publish his papers then?

Peter Atkins:
– because it breaks the pre-suppositions of naturalism and materialism

Stephen Meyer:
– you're shutting down inquiry by using an arbitrary definition of science

Mark Haville:
– we need to define the word science
– science should be based on what we can observe empirically
– we can observe micro-evolution empirically
– but Darwinism goes beyond what is observable to postulate macro-evolution

Peter Atkins:
– but paleobiology is replete with evidence

Stephen Meyer:
– paleobiology uses a method of inference that I think is valid

– but intelligent design uses the same mode of reasoning which is also valid

Peter Atkins:
= you're intellectually lazy
– we're smart, we're using our brains

Moderator:
– you're saying that appeals to intelligent causes ends science?
– is ID the view that some things are too complex to be explained with naturalism?

Peter Atkins:
– yes, and to teach children that materialism is false is child abuse

Stephen Meyer:
– let's drop the insults and the rhetoric and focus on the arguments
– the ID argument is not based on what we don't know, it's based on what we DO know
– first, we can ask what undirected natural processes can and cannot do
– second, we can ask what we know about intelligent causes from our own experience
– what we do know seems to me to require an intelligent agent as a cause

Peter Atkins:
– GOD! Do you mean God!? Do you mean God!?

Stephen Meyer:
– I personally mean God, but all that the arguments proves is a generic intelligent cause
– and I am using the same method of investigation that Darwin used to get there
– what we know from our experience is that a mind is needed to create information

Peter Atkins:
– NONSENSE! ABSOLUTE NONSENSE!

Stephen Meyer:
– in my book, I list 10 predictions made by ID, so it's not a science-stopper
– furthermore, the enterprise of science began with th goal of understanding God
– consider the earliest scientists, people like James Boyler and Johannes Kepler

Peter Atkins:
– that was 300 years ago, we've moved on

Mark Haville:
– what about Max Planck then?

Stephen Meyer:
– how about James Clark Maxwell?

Mark Haville:
– we need to focus on the facts

Peter Atkins:
– what do you mean by the facts?

Mark Haville:
– well the fact is that Darwinism has no mechanism to produce new information

Peter Atkins:
– well copying errors introduces beneficial mutations

Stephen Meyer:
– let’s focus on where we get the first information from the simplest organism
– you can’t account for the first organism by appealing to copying errors
– to add functionality to a program, you need new lines codes from an intelligence
– once you have life, you can generate some new information
– but you can’t generate macro-evolution either

Peter Atkins:
– if we give you your explanation for teh origin of life, will you give this up

Stephen Meyer:
– of course! I’m a former theistic evolutionist
– but right now the evidence is not there for it
– we have to decide these questions based on what we see with our own eyes today

Peter Atkins:
– but I pre-suppose materialism as the starting point of all explanations
– you’re just intellectually lazy to abandon my pre-supposition

Stephen Meyer:
– why is it is less intellectually lazy to insist that materialism is true
– we are making plenty of predictions, and isn’t that what science is about?
– consider Junk DNA – you guys said it had no use
– now we know it has a use

Peter Atkins:
– naturalists were open to the idea that junk DNA might have a use before ID

Moderator:
– Dr. Meyer, what about the wall that locks out intelligence as an explanation?

Stephen Meyer:
– if these are interesting questions, then we should allow freedom of inquiry
– that’s how science advances

Peter Atkins:
– for all their science-talk really they are just saying God did it
– people who don’t agree with me are not using their brains, like I do
– to give up on my pre-supposition of materialism is a denial of humanity

Mark Haville:
– there are important issues that are affected by our view of origins
– everyone who hasn’t seen Expelled movie should definitely see it

Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)

May 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

IMDB rating: [7.6/10]

Description:

> Two powerful German guns control the seas past the Greek island of Navarone making the evacuation of endangered British troops on a neighboring island impossible. Air attack is useless so a team of six Allied and Greek soldiers is put ashore to meet up with partisans to try and dynamite the guns. The mission is perilous enough anyway but are the Germans on the island getting further help too?

Sorry about the annoying subtitles. Also, note that this movie is using American vehicles instead of German vehicles for the tanks and armored cars. They used American M8 Greyhound armored cars instead of German Sd. Kfz. armored cars or even half tracks. Worse than that, they use American M24 Chaffee light tanks instead of Panzer IIIs, Panzer IVs or even Tigers. Very annoying!!!! The Stuka dive bombers were real, though. Oh, well.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

New study confirms greater risk of birth defects from IVF

May 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From BioEdge.

Excerpt:

> The contentious issue of birth defects in babies conceived with IVF is on the boil again after a major study was published this week in the New England Journal of Medicine. Researchers at the University of Adelaide, in Australia, confirmed earlier surveys that found an elevated risk of defect among IVF babies. The odds for any birth defect in pregnancies involving assisted conception are 8.3%, compared to 5.8% for unassisted pregnancies.
>
> However, they said that the risk seems due to "patient factors" like obesity or smoking, not to the procedure itself. "In vitro fertilization off the hook for causing birth defects" was the headline in Nature's news blog.
>
> However, this was only half the story. Some fertility treatments appear to be riskier.
>
> ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection), a technique which involves injecting a sperm into the egg, is one of these. The increased risk of birth defects is 57% over normal IVF, although the absolute size of the risk is relatively small. However, ICSI is very popular. In Europe, for some reason, it is used far more often than regular IVF.

It's also important to note that IVF often results in abortions because unused embryos are discarded.

Marriage advice from Christian philosopher William Lane Craig

May 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a question of the week from Dr. Craig on "Marriage Advice"!

Here's the question:

> Dear Dr. Craig,
>
> Marriage is in the foreseeable future, and I would like to ask you for any advice before it happens. Can we avoid any mistakes? Would it be helpful to meet with a pastor for premarital counseling? Are there any helpful tips you could give from a Christian perspective or from your own experience?
>
> Thank you in advance!
>
> Zareen

Here are the main pieces of advice Dr. Craig gives:

1. *Resolve that there will be no divorce*
2. *Delay having children*
3. *Confront problems honestly*
4. *Seek marital counseling*
5. *Take steps to build intimacy in your relationship*

And here's the controversial one (#2):

> 2. *Delay having children.* The first years of marriage are difficult enough on their own without introducing the complication of children. Once children come, the wife's attention is necessarily diverted, and huge stresses come upon you both. Spend the first several years of marriage getting to know each other, working through your issues, having fun together, and enjoying that intimate love relationship between just the two of you. Jan and I waited ten years before having our first child Charity, which allowed me the finish graduate school, get our feet on the ground financially, establish some roots, and enjoy and build our love relationship until we were really ready to take on the responsibilities of parenthood. The qualifier here is that if the wife desperately wants children now, then the husband should accede to her wish to become a mother, rather than withhold that from her. Her verdict should be decisive. But if you both can agree to wait, things will probably be much easier.

I wonder if the married readers agree with him about the "waiting at least a year after marriage bafore having children"?

Islam, rape, and sex-trafficking in European countries

May 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a helpful guide to practical Islam from the UK Telegraph.

Full text:

> If you want an insight into how cowardly public debate in Britain has become, look no further than the controversy over the Rochdale Asian sex gang. The discussion about the despicable crimes committed by these eight Pakistanis and one Afghani has revealed extraordinary levels of relativism and self-censorship in modern Britain. Indeed, it seems it is now virtually impossible to have a serious discussion about problematic cultural attitudes, because to do so would apparently offend minorities and, even worse, stir up the passions of the latently racist white masses. And so, in the name of protecting Muslim communities' sensitivities and dampening down white working-class people's alleged savagery, we keep quiet about certain things; we gag ourselves.
>
> One of the most striking things about the Rochdale debate is its competitive scaremongering. It's hard to know which side is worse: those who spread panic about the existence of sinister "networks" and "rings" of sex criminals and paedophiles across Britain, as if gangs like this exist everywhere, in every corner and community in the UK; or the coppers and commentators who stoke up fear about BNP thugs and ignorant white people who will apparently be provoked into violence if they so much as glimpse a headline containing the words "Asian sex gang". One side wants us to view the existence of sex gangs like the one in Rochdale as commonplace in our allegedly misogynistic era; the other tries to convince us that ordinary people are a racist pogrom-in-the-making who must not be told that some Asians did some bad things.
>
> Even the news reporting of the nine men's crimes has been shot through with a scaremongering vibe. Using words like "ring" to describe the men's gang and "trafficking" to describe their exploitation of young white women gives an impression of a super-evil, well-organised network of abusers. Such terminology, borrowed from the lexicon of feminist fearmongers, elevates the men's depraved opportunism into a coherent, cult-like activity. We often see this today – small groups of no-marks with weird sexual habits being described as a "ring" or even an "international network". This nurtures the nonsense notion that sects of paedophiles are widespread. Indeed, as the Deputy Children's Commissioner Sue Berelowitz rather madly told the Today programme this morning, these networks exist "across every single ethnic and religious group, so there are victims and perpetrators across all ethnic and religious groups". In short, "rings" of perverts are everywhere.

> Part of the motivation behind this crazy claim is to try to attenuate the allegedly racist instincts of the white mob. They are second only to "paedo networks" in the list of people most feared by the Great and the Good. The reason Berelowitz and others insist, without evidence, that there are "networks of abusers" in "every single ethnic group" is because they are terrified of what the masses might do if they get the impression that something like the Rochdale sex crimes are an exclusively "Asian thing". As one hack says, "Professional racists are keen to get their crowbars into cases such as this", and so maybe the authorities should eschew words like "Asian" or "culture" when discussing this instance of grooming. It speaks volumes about the elite's fear of white working-class communities that they feel more comfortable promoting the BS idea that all communities harbour networks of weirdos than they do grappling with what might be distinctive about the Rochadale gang.
>
> The truth is that there *is* something specific going on here, something which is more prevalent among Asian communities, particularly Muslim ones, than among other communities. For a variety of reasons – mainly because the attitudes and behaviour of white working-class women are so profoundly at odds with the outlook of conservative Muslim communities – there is a tendency among many Muslims to look upon such women as inferior, as "sluts". What's more, in our era of multiculturalism, ethnic minorities are implicitly encouraged to distance themselves from their "host community" and even to view the host community's culture as inferior to their own, as more shallow, hedonistic and consumer-orientated than their own authentic cultural lives. Mash these things together and it isn't really surprising that there are some cut-off, conservative ethnic groups which now view young, white, possibly "fallen" women as unworthy and acquire a superiority complex over white "slags". In Rochdale, certain individuals took that sense of cultural superiority in a terribly abusive direction.

When I contrast this with the Christians ideals of chastity, chivalry, romantic love and lifelong marriage, it's like night and day.

Liberal Democrat David Blankenhorn: Protecting marriage protects children

May 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an article from 2008 that appeared in the liberal Los Angeles Times. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> I'm a liberal Democrat. And I do not favor same-sex marriage. Do those positions sound contradictory? To me, they fit together.
>
> […]Marriage as a human institution is constantly evolving, and many of its features vary across groups and cultures. But there is one constant. In all societies, marriage shapes the rights and obligations of parenthood. Among us humans, the scholars report, marriage is not primarily a license to have sex. Nor is it primarily a license to receive benefits or social recognition. It is primarily a license to have children.
>
> In this sense, marriage is a gift that society bestows on its next generation. Marriage (and only marriage) unites the three core dimensions of parenthood — biological, social and legal — into one pro-child form: the married couple. Marriage says to a child: The man and the woman whose sexual union made you will also be there to love and raise you. Marriage says to society as a whole: For every child born, there is a recognized mother and a father, accountable to the child and to each other.
>
> […]Marriage is society's most pro-child institution. In 2002 — just moments before it became highly unfashionable to say so — a team of researchers from Child Trends, a nonpartisan research center, reported that "family structure clearly matters for children, and the family structure that helps children the most is a family headed by two biological parents in a low-conflict marriage."
>
> All our scholarly instruments seem to agree: For healthy development, what a child needs more than anything else is the mother and father who together made the child, who love the child and love each other.
>
> For these reasons, children have the right, insofar as society can make it possible, to know and to be cared for by the two parents who brought them into this world. The foundational human rights document in the world today regarding children, the 1989 U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically guarantees children this right. The last time I checked, liberals like me were supposed to be in favor of internationally recognized human rights, particularly concerning children, who are typically society's most voiceless and vulnerable group. Or have I now said something I shouldn't?
>
> Every child being raised by gay or lesbian couples will be denied his birthright to both parents who made him. Every single one. Moreover, losing that right will not

> be a consequence of something that at least most of us view as tragic, such as a marriage that didn't last, or an unexpected pregnancy where the father-to-be has no intention of sticking around. On the contrary, in the case of same-sex marriage and the children of those unions, it will be explained to everyone, including the children, that something wonderful has happened!

I am not a fan of David Blankenhorn at all, but he's right on this point. This is the argument that motivates most pro-marriage activists, although we have others. I think it's important for people to see that people who want to preserve the traditional definition of marriage are not anti-gay, they are pro-child. We want children to grow up with mothers and fathers who have every incentive to care for them.

Abortion-related violence: activist pleads guilty to making death threats

May 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News. (H/T Neil Simpson's latest round-up)

Excerpt:

> A pro-abortion activist from New York pled guilty yesterday to making death threats against two high-profile pro-life leaders. He could face up to 51 months in federal custody. Sentencing is scheduled September 12.
>
> Ted Shulman reached an agreement that allowed him to plead guilty to making the death threats against Fr. Frank Pavone of Priests for Life and Prof. Robert George of Princeton University.
>
> Shulman has also repeatedly threatened the lives of Operation Rescue's Troy Newman and Cheryl Sullenger and other pro-life leaders across the country, including Jill Stanek.
>
> […]Shulman has been held without bail since his arrest on February 24, 2011, after federal agents raiding his apartment found cyanide and two other deadly substances in his possession. The plea agreement dropped charges related to the deadly substances in return for his guilty plea on the threats.
>
> Schulman, who liked to style himself as the "first pro-choice terrorist" and hosted a blog called "Operation Counterstrike," is the son of pro-abortion feminist Alix Kates Shulman.
>
> His mother wrote the 1972 sex novel Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen and revealed she had four abortions – "not one" of which, she claimed, was "the result of carelessness." Schulman was born in the middle – two siblings were aborted before his birth, and two after.

This doesn't surprise me. See, to me, if your worldview includes the believe that it is OK to kill innocent unborn children if they infringe on your prosperity and happiness, then everything is permissible. To me, abortion is worse than slavery, so anyone who actually thinks it is a good thing is really far gone into immorality.

A couple of other examples of pro-abortion violence here and here.

Twenty years of fiscal conservatism in Sweden: has it worked?

May 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Europe

From Investors Business Daily, a story about about a nation that changed course – and won big.

Excerpt:

> The turnaround has been driven in no small part by the election of Fredrik Reinfeldt as prime minister in 2006. He took office in October of that year and by January of 2007, tax-cutting had begun. The Reinfeldt government also cut welfare spending — a form of austerity — and began to deregulate the economy.
>
> […][A]s Finance Minister Anders Borg told the Spectator, the Reinfeldt government was simply continuing the last 20 years of reform.
>
> […]Sweden fell into recession in 2008 and 2009, as did many developed nations. But it's pulled strongly out of the decline, posting GDP gains of 6.1% in 2010 and 3.9% last year, when it ranked at the top in Europe's list of fastest-growing economies.
>
> […]Under Borg, Sweden handled the downturn in the most un-European way. "While most countries in Europe borrowed massively, Borg did not. Since becoming Sweden's finance minister, his mission has been to pare back government. His 'stimulus' was a permanent tax cut," Fraser Nelson wrote last

> month in the Spectator.
>
> Borg strongly opposed the Keynesian solution, which the left continues to advance while it inveighs against an austerity that has yet to be implemented.
>
> He also refused to resort to the trickery of a stimulus, instead cutting the taxes that he knew were hindering entrepreneurs from giving the economy the kick it needed.
>
> The country needed innovators and capitalists — “the source of job creation,” says Borg — and he did what he had to, to attract new ones and to keep those already there from leaving.
>
> During Sweden’s decline into a welfare state, it became, as Borg told the Spectator, “a textbook case of European economic sclerosis” punished by “very high taxes and huge regulatory burden.”
>
> That lasted until the 1990s, when the nation realized it had to return to the market policies that had made it rich prior to the onset of its cradle-to-grave coddling.
>
> How much further can Borg and Reinfeldt take their reforms? Will voters ask them to come back and complete the job?
>
> After all, it’s not over. Though it continues to fall, Sweden’s government debt as a share of GDP is still too high at 38.4%. And while it’s dipped below 45% for the first time in decades, the country’s tax-to-GDP ratio is still far too steep.
>
> Despite this unfinished business, Sweden is still moving in the right direction. We might be able to say that about America after the 2013 Inauguration Day. But we can’t say that now.

If liberals are so smart, why can’t they take time off from taxing, spending and buying votes, in order to look at countries that are having economic success? Isn’t it “smart policy” to do what works? Why listen to Hollywood celebrities and people with journalism degrees when we can just *do what has been proven to work?* It’s not like what we are doing now is working.

NHS spends £1 million a week on repeat abortions

May 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> According to statistics, thousands of women are using the service to terminate unwanted foetuses; in some cases up to nine times.
>
> The abortions are understood to cost up to £1,000 every time, with five out of every six repeat terminations being requested by a woman who is unmarried.
>
> In 2010, 189,000 terminations took place, with more than 64,000 of them being performed on someone who had already undergone the procedure.
>
> The statistics, revealed by the Department of Health in response to a Parliamentary question entered by Diane Abbott MP, have led some critics to accuse women of using the procedure as a form of contraception.
>
> Josephine Quintavalle, from the Pro-Life Alliance, told the Daily Mail: 'The number of repeat abortions is simply extraordinary.
>
> "Abortion is an unpleasant and harrowing experience for women and to hear it is happening repeatedly makes your hair stand on end.
>
> "These figures show that sadly, abortion is being seen by many as a form of contraception.
>
> "But is this surprising when we live in a society which says it's all right to have an abortion once.
>
> "If it's fine once, why not two, three or four times."
>
> It is understood repeat abortions currently account for around a thirds of all terminations.
>
> The figures showed the majority of repeat abortions happened in London, with more than half of all of the procedures performed in Croydon being on women for the second time or more.
>
> Around 9,500 women across the country were married, with a further 50,000 being single or living with a partner. In 2010, 85 women had an abortion for the eighth time.

In the UK, schools teach sex education to 5 year olds. So they have quite naturally had an explosion in the number of abortions, as well as the number of out-of-wedlock births.

The UK has generous welfare benefits for single mothers who have children out of wedlock.

Excerpt:

> Single mother Tracey Turner, 26… currently receives £136.50 a week in benefits,

> which includes £42.50 income support and £94 child tax credit.
>
> On top of this, her local council pays all of her £161-a-week rent and gives her a hefty discount on local rates.

A British pound is worth about $1.60 USD. 300 pounds a week x 52 weeks = 15500 pounds = about $25000 USD per year in benefits, not including the "hefty discount on local rates". Local rates = local tax rates. This is not counting any other welfare programs that might be offered to those who choose to be sexually active before they have gotten a man to commit to provide for them for life. Why be accountable to a man when you can get free abortions and/or free welfare checks? Just pick the one you like best – who cares if can provide or not, as long as he's good looking and fun. What could go wrong?

Related posts

- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- British woman has sex with strangers in order to get fatherless child
- The UK has generous welfare benefits for single mothers
- Switzerland company to manufacture condoms for 12-14 year olds
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- Most children of British mothers born out of wedlock – UK Telegraph
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- Public schools hand out condoms to 5-year olds without parental consent
- Teacher union promotes sexualizing children at United Nations conference
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Canadian study suggests how parents can influence children's sexual choices

Do Christian music and Christian fiction create a good foundation for faith?

May 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting account by a young woman who became secular by becoming very involved in Christian music and then jumped to secular music because it was better music.

Excerpt:

> "Who's in the House" is a hip-hop track about the presence of the Lord. Through megaphone distortion, Carman rapped a few lines: "You take him high / you take him low / you take JC wherever you go," then led into a call and response hook reminiscent of '80s-era De La Soul. "Tell me who's in the house? JC!"
>
> If you're wondering what teenager in her right mind would listen to a forty-year-old Vegas showman with a Jersey accent rap about Jesus, the answer is: me. In junior high, I saw Carman in concert three times. *The Standard* was the first CD I ever bought. I rocked out to Carman on my Walkman on the way to youth group and dished with my girlfriends about what a hottie he was. At the concerts, I bought his T-shirts and posters, and when he called out "Who's in the House?" I made my arms into letters, YMCA-style, with the rest of the crowd and shouted "JC!"
>
> I was homeschooled up until tenth grade, and my social life revolved around church. I grew up submersed in evangelical youth culture: reading *Brio* magazine, doing devotions in my *Youth Walk* Bible, eagerly awaiting the next installment of the *Left Behind* series, and developing a taste in music that ran the gamut from Christian rap to Christian pop to Christian rock.

And she ends with this:

> Basically, CCM caught on to the number one rule of coolness: don't let your marketing show. The best bands—the successful ones, at least—learned to gloss over the gospel message the same way TV producers camouflaged corporate sponsorship. Explicitly Christian lyrics prevented DC Talk from crossing over to the secular market in the '90s; today it's difficult to imagine their unapologetic faith making it in the Christian circuit.
>
> This trend spreads beyond CCM into many areas of evangelical culture. The church is becoming increasingly consumer-friendly. Jacob Hill, director of "worship arts" at New Walk Church, describes the Sunday service music as "exciting, loud, powerful, and relevant," and boasts that "a lot of people say they feel like they've just been at a rock concert." Over the past ten years, I've visited churches that have Starbucks kiosks in the foyer and youth wings decked out with air hockey tables. I've witnessed a preacher stop his sermon to play a five-

> minute clip from *Billy Madison*. I've walked into a sanctuary that was blasting the Black Eyed Peas's "Let's Get it Started" to get the congregation pumped for the morning's message, which was on joy. I have heard a *pastor* say, from a *pulpit*, "Hey, I'm not here to preach at anyone." And yet, in spite of these efforts, churches are retaining only 4 percent of the young people raised in their congregations.
>
> Despite all the affected teenage rebellion, I continued to call myself a Christian into my early twenties. When I finally stopped, it wasn't because being a believer made me uncool or outdated or freakish. It was because being a Christian no longer meant anything. It was a label to slap on my Facebook page, next to my music preferences. The gospel became just another product someone was trying to sell me, and a paltry one at that because the church isn't Viacom: it doesn't have a Department of Brand Strategy and Planning. Staying relevant in late consumer capitalism requires highly sophisticated resources and the willingness to tailor your values to whatever your audience wants. In trying to compete in this market, the church has forfeited the one advantage it had in the game to attract disillusioned youth: authenticity. When it comes to intransigent values, the profit-driven world has zilch to offer. If Christian leaders weren't so ashamed of those unvarnished values, they might have something more attractive than anything on today's bleak moral market. In the meantime, they've lost one more kid to the competition.

So, I'd like to look at whether listening to contemporary Christian music is a good way to build a strong faith that lasts.

Should people sing about things that they don't know are true?

I would not be comfortable singing about a state of affairs that I did not know was true. And yet, that is exactly what happens in churches and youth groups. Young people are brought up to sing about a story without first having any evidence that the story is true. Imagine what that does to a person – what are they thinking about the purpose of the singing? They don't know these things are true, but they sing anyway! The church services almost never link what the Bible says to anything in the real world. Naturally, as soon as children hit the university, they fall away. Their questions about the problem of evil, the problem of suffering, the problem of world of religious pluralism, the hiddenness of God, justice of Hell, etc. were never answered.

I think this anti-intellectual approach is really damaging. The impression of Christianity that young people will have is that truth doesn't matter, that you can sing about something just to be part of a group, and for emotional pleasure. Then with the end-of-the-world fiction and other Christian fiction – all for enjoyment, and all not connected to knowledge. How does any of that connect to the real world? When young people are taught that being a Christian has no connection to reason, evidence or the real world, then their Christianity doesn't survive leaving the safety of their home and church.

Christian music reinforces the idea that Christianity makes you feel good

The problem with Christian music is that a person listening to it can quickly develop the idea that what Christianity is about is having happy feelings, because people feel happy when listening to music. I've noticed that a lot of Christians leave the faith because they have this idealized notion that the world should be a happy place, where no one ever feels bad. Then they find verses in the Bible that are exclusive and judgmental, and they leave the faith because Christianity is too "mean".

Those emotions of compassion and intuitions about happiness are not compatible with hard verses of the Bible and exclusive Christian doctrines. If we teach children that happiness and doing good things are what Christianity is about, then eventually they will dump it when the open profession of their faith causes them to have bad feelings and to lose friends. I think young Christians in particular feel pressure to jettison Christian rules when it comes to dating and marriage – because they want to be happy, and they think that the rules shouldn't stop them from pursuing happiness. If they don't know why the rules are there (truth) then they will just reject anything that conflicts with their intuitions, emotions and desire to be happy. If the purpose of life is to have good feelings about yourself, and to have everyone like you, then Christianity is not the answer. If the purpose of life is to know the truth and to live according to it, then Christianity is the answer.

English is not a subject that is very friendly to Christian beliefs

I note that she seems to have studied English at the undergraduate level and is currently studying it at graduate level, which I think is significant. English is well known to be a hotbed of postmodernism, deconstructionism, feminism and socialism on campuses. She would therefore be under enormous pressure there to abandon her faith, especially in order to get good grades. Nothing that she did as a young person would equip her to deal with the pressure from peers and teachers when challenged on her Christian faith. Singing, reading fiction, Bible reading and prayer do not help a young person who is confronted by peer pressure and secular left professors holding the grading pen – especially in English where marking of essays is subjective.

I think that mathematics, computer science and engineering are much safer fields for Christians to study. My background is in computer science, and I have an undergraduate and graduate degree in that area. These areas are safer because it is much harder for the professors to inject politics into the curriculum, so that students don't have to be forced to accept things on faith, without any critical thinking or debate. Math features answers that are right or wrong regardless of politics, and programming features programs that either run or not, regardless of religion.

It's not a good idea to stay a student all your life

Our CCM woman seems to have been a student all her life. She doesn't have the skills or the money to make it on her own. She has to agree with them in order to get tuition, student loans, etc. – in order to live away from her parents. This would be another pressure on her to turn away from her Christian faith. She is trapped by not having any marketable skills that would allow her to earn a living without having to agree with

anyone’s views. Students also have the things they read handed to them – it’s much harder for her to find the time to read things that the professors don’t want her to read – and she could never bring those things up in class safely anyway. A lot of people who thrive on being told that they are good prefer to stay in school where it is easy to just do whatever the teacher says in order to get good grades – especially in non-STEM fields like English.

The Antagonist Atheist debates pastor David Robertson on the New Atheism

May 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must-hear podcast from Justin Brierley and the Unbelievable radio show. (H/T Dina)

Details:

> Mike Lee aka "The Religious Antagonist" is a US atheist who makes YouTube videos mocking Christianity. His videos are popular but his approach earns him both praise and criticism from fellow atheists. David Robertson is Pastor of St Peter's Free Church, Dundee and director of the Solas Centre for Public Christianity. He often interacts with atheists online and has earned himself the title "the wee flea" for his provocative interactions on the Dawkins website. David and Mike debate whether Mike's approach is a helpful one. David accuses Mike of emotional atheism and an incoherent view of Christianity. Mike says mocking Christianity is the best way of policing its power in the US.

The MP3 file is here.

Justin Brierley does a great job of moderating this one. If you like the debates with Lawrence Krauss and Peter Atkins, you will LOVE this debate. The debate is 60 minutes long and worth every minute. This debate is suitable for complete beginners to apologetics.

SUMMARY:

Atheist:
– hypocrisy caused him to become an atheist
– why he takes the "antagonistic" approach to atheistic evangelism
– the antagonistic approach is emotionally driven
– the antagonistic approach is not driven by science or evidence

Theist:
– should we be concerned that antagonism provokes violence?

Atheist:
– no the antagonist approach is valid

Moderator:
– what about the video where you ask the homeless man to deny God for $20?

Atheist:
– that's to show how stupid Christians are that they don't deny God for money

Theist:
– do you really think it is stupid to deny God for $20?

Atheist:

– it’s common sense for Christians to deny God for $20

Theist:
– so the common sense approach to life is to accept money to insult God?

Atheist:
– anyone who doesn’t take money to insult God is uneducated and ignorant

Theist:
– isn’t there someone who you would refuse to insult for $20

Atheist:
– i would do anything – ANYTHING – that is legal in order to get $20

Theist:
– holy snark

Moderator:
– do you think that your video makes atheism look good?
– do you think that maybe you were udnermining their humanity?

Atheist:
– I didn’t mean to appear smug by insulting poor peopel for not blaspheming God
– it’s stupid to put your relationship with God ahead of your own happiness
– wouldn’t you two insult God for $20?

Theist:
– I would not insult God for a million dollars
– there is more to life than money and the things that money can buy
– the earliest christians were willing to go to their deaths to stay faithful to god
– they refused to confess allegiance to the emperor of rome to save their own lives
– there is a crassness to modern society such that we value money over honor and self-respect

=== BREAK ===

Theist:
– yes there is hypocrisy on the Christian side
– is there any hypocrisy on the atheistic side?

Atheist:
– yes there is hypocrisy on the atheist side

Theist:
– if hypocrisy is ground for rejecting Christianity, then why not reject atheism

Atheist:
– well you can’t compare Christianity and atheism that way

Theist:
– why not? they are both worldviews

Atheist:
– Atheism is just a philosophy not a religion

Theist:
– are you antagonistic to all religions?

Atheist:
– only to religions that have power in the public square

Theist:
– so do you also oppose groups that

Athist:
– only groups that use power that attack human rights?

Theist:
– what are those?

Atheist:
– treat others as you would like to be treated
– we all have a human right not to be judged by others as unequal

Theist:
– well you mock others, would you like it if they mocked you

Atheist:
– yes mocking is a great weapon against preposterous ideas
– it’s good to laugh at others who you disagree with

Theist:
– what about laughing at other ethinic groups and races, is that OK?

Atheist:
– no that’s not OK

Theist:
– so it’s ok to mock Christians, but not ok to mock other religions or races

Atheist:
– it’s not ok to blacks, jews or gays because they are all born that way

Theist:
– why did you quote Jesus as the authority on human rights?

Atheist:
– I wish Christians would act more like Jesus

Theist:
– you mean the Jesus who preaches on Hell and the radical self-sacrifice on the sermon on the mount

Atheist:
– Jesus didn’t really say that mean stuff just the nice stuff

=== SKIPPING ===

Moderator:
– do you think that making fun of people is going to make people change their minds

Atheist:

– well you have to subsitute insults for arguments when you are in the minority
– i am acting heroically when I insult people and laugh at them – it's a civil rights movement

Moderator:
– what about Martin Luther King? he was in the minority and didn't insult people

Atheist:
– well I agree with his views on equality, but not the religious underpinings of those views

Theist:
– but his views on equality are grounded in hist Christian worldview

Atheist:
– atheism works best when it is kept at the emotional level
– atheism is better when you speak at the level of the average person, not at the PhD level

Theist:
– you say that atheism doesn't claim to have the answers
– but people like Dawkins do claim to know how we got here

Atheist:
– well if tomorrow, Christianity were proved true, all atheists would convert
– but if tomorrow, the Big Bang theory were proved true, then Christians would not convert

Theist:
– the Big Bang theory supports the Christian version of origins not atheism
– atheists would absolutely not convert if they found out Christianity is true
– you admitted that atheism is largely driven by emotion
– atheists would not respond to overwhelming evidence if it appeared

Moderator:
– didn't Christopher Hitchens say that even if he met God face to face he would reject him?
– atheists wouldn't follow God even if they met him because he represents authority and they don't want authority

Atheist:
– if God does exist, then I doubt he's really worth worshiping
– God is the biggest jerk in the universe
– God's job is to make us all have happy feelings no matter what we do and he's failing at that
– God's job is to make the world safe enough for us to ignore him and he's failing at that
– Heaven is OK if it means being able to drink (alcohol) with your friends and hanging out with people you like
– Hell is OK if "the bad people" end up there

Moderator:

– but what if Heaven is populated by bad people who said yes to Jesus, would you still want to go then?

Atheist:
– that’s one of the things that is wrong with God, that he forgives people who do bad things
– it makes no sense that people who accept God and repent after doing really bad things should go to Heaven
– it makes no sense that people like Christopher Hitchens who spit on God and his moral law should go to Hell

Theist:
– how can you talk about concepts of justice and goodness as if they are real, on atheism?
– on your view, you have no standing to make judgments about good, evil and justice
– on atheism, good and evil are just arbitrary constructs that vary by place and time between various groups of people
– do you think that objective morality exists – that there are things that are right and wrong?

Atheist:
– i don’t believe in objective morality, I believe in social construct morality that we define

Theist:
– how can you say that anything is right or wrong if those concepts are arbitrary

Atheist:
– well some things in the Bible are wrong like X and Y

Theist:
– the Bible doesn’t actually say X or say Y
– but you can’t even judge that the Bible is wrong on anything unless you admit there is a real right and wrong
– even Richard Dawkins says that on atheist there “no evil and no good, nothing but pitiless indifference”
– when you make judgments as an atheist, you are saying that your opinions are the standard that everyone else is accountable to
– that is extraordinarily arrogant

== And so on ==

Moody’s downgrades credit rating of 26 Italian banks, Spain is next

May 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

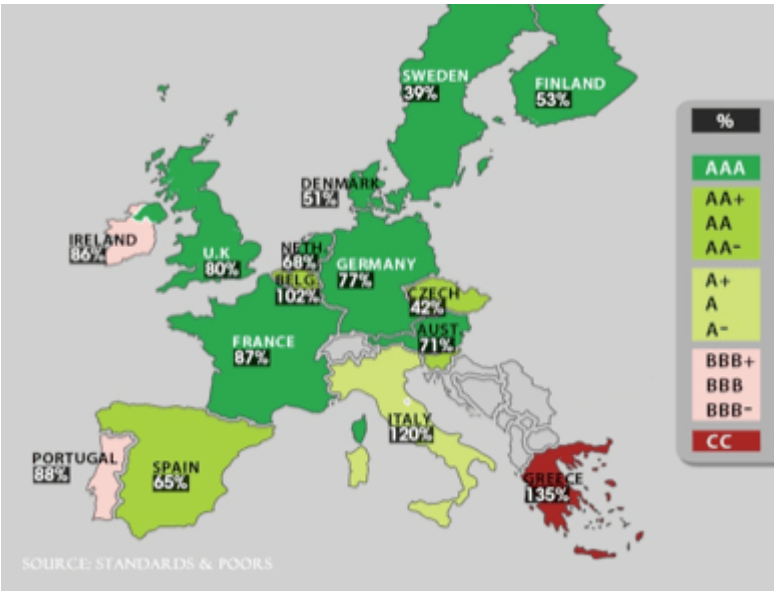

European Debt to GDP and Credit Rating

From Yahoo News.

Excerpt:

> Moody’s Investors Service has downgraded the ratings on 26 Italian banks as they struggled with the effect of government austerity measures.
>
> The rating agency said Monday that the banks are suffering because Italy is back in recession and government austerity measures are cutting demand for loans.
>
> The banks are struggling with more loan losses, limited access to funding and weaker profits.
>
> Moody’s noted that support of the European Central Bank lowered the default risk of many banks.
>
> Its outlook for all 26 banks is negative.

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> The ratings for Italian banks are now among the lowest within advanced European countries, reflecting these banks’ susceptibility to the adverse operating environments in Italy and Europe, Moody’s said in a statement. Two of the country’s largest institutions, UniCredit SpA (UCG.MI, UNCFF) and Intesa Sanpaolo SpA (ISP.MI, ISNPY), were included.
>
> Moody’s move came hours after the firm raised an alarm on Spain, arguing the country’s banks remain vulnerable even after Madrid moved to increase the

> banks' cushions against potential losses from real-estate loans.
>
> […]Italy, saddled with EUR1.9 trillion ($2.44 trillion) debt, has signed onto the EU's fiscal compact that sets strict limits on the country's deficit levels. In recent weeks, Mr. Monti has begun pressing Germany to give Italy more fiscal slack to stimulate its economy and create jobs. Mr. Monti has recently proposed that the EU create special exemptions to the budget rules when countries target their public spending on projects like broadband investments and infrastructure.
>
> Moody's downgrades come after the ratings firm in February placed various ratings of 114 financial institutions in 16 European countries on review for possible downgrade, highlighting the region's banks' vulnerability to the euro-zone sovereign debt crisis.
>
> Moody's is expected to follow the downgrade of Italian banks by cutting the ratings of Spanish banks. By the end of June, more than 100 European banks, as well as Wall Street giants like Bank of America Corp. (BAC) and Citigroup Inc. (C), are likely to have ratings that are at least one notch lower.
>
> […]Moody's also alluded to J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.'s (JPM) recent disclosures of more than $2 billion in trading losses as a reminder of potential problems lurking at some European banks.
>
> "Recent events highlight the risks for creditors from potential weaknesses in governance, controls and risk management, especially at some smaller, privately-held banks," Moody's said in its news release.
>
> Moody's says it will conclude its reviews by the end of June. In coming weeks, major U.S. financial institutions, Bank of America Corp., Citigroup Inc., Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley are likely to face downgrades.
>
> Banks in Austria and Sweden are expected to see downgrades after Spain.

Italy's debt is $2.44 trillion, ours is nearly $16 trillion.

GAO: Green River Formation has more oil than the rest of the world combined

May 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remember when Obama said that we have "2 percent of the world's oil reserves"?

This is an excerpt from his own speech:

> As a country that has 2 percent of the world's oil reserves, but uses 20 percent of the world's oil — I'm going to repeat that — we've got 2 percent of the world oil reserves; we use 20 percent. What that means is, as much as we're doing to increase oil production, we're not going to be able to just drill our way out of the problem of high gas prices. Anybody who tells you otherwise either doesn't know what they're talking about or they aren't telling you the truth.

Now let's find out who doesn't know what they're talking about and who isn't telling the truth.

The Government Accountability Office – a department of the federal government – tells us the facts.

Excerpt:

> The Green River Formation, a largely vacant area of mostly federal land that covers the territory where Colorado, Utah and Wyoming come together, contains about as much recoverable oil as all the rest the world's proven reserves combined, an auditor from the Government Accountability Office told Congress on Thursday.
>
> The GAO testimony said that the federal government was in "a unique position to influence the development of oil shale" because the Green River deposits were mostly beneath federal land.
>
> […]It also noted that developing the oil would have an environmental impact and pose "socioeconomic challenges," that included bringing "a sizable influx of workers who along with their families put additional stress on local infrastructure" and "making planning for growth difficult for local governments."
>
> **"The Green River Formation–an assemblage of over 1,000 feet of sedimentary rocks that lie beneath parts of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming–contains the world's largest deposits of oil shale,"Anu K. Mittal, the GAO's director of natural resources and environment said in written testimony submitted to the House Science Subcommittee on Energy and Environment.**
>
> **"USGS estimates that the Green River Formation contains about 3 trillion barrels of oil, and about half of this may be recoverable, depending on available technology and economic conditions," Mittal**

> **testified.**
>
> **“The Rand Corporation, a nonprofit research organization, estimates that 30 to 60 percent of the oil shale in the Green River Formation can be recovered,” Mittal told the subcommittee. “At the midpoint of this estimate, almost half of the 3 trillion barrels of oil would be recoverable. This is an amount about equal to the entire world’s proven oil reserves.”**
>
> In her oral statement before the subcommittee, Mittal said that developing the shale oil would create wealth and jobs for the country, but also challenges for government.
>
> “Being able to tap this vast amount of oil locked within this formation will go a long way to help to meet our future demands for oil. The U.S. Geological Survey, as you noted, estimates that the formation contains about 3 trillion barrels of oil of which half may be recoverable,” she said.
>
> “As you can imagine having the technology to develop this vast energy resource will lead to a number of important socioeconomic benefits including the creation of jobs, increases in wealth and increases in tax and royalty payments for federal and state governments,” she said.
>
> […]In her written testimony, Mittal noted that three-fourths of the Green River shale oil is under federal land.

Is Barack Obama a good President? Does he know how to be President? Does he understand economics?

Let’s look at the national debt and the labor force participation rates in Obama’s first term. Recall that the Republicans lost the House and Senate in January of 2007. At the time of the Pelosi/Reid takeover, the national debt was $8 trillion. It is now almost double that at $16 trillion.

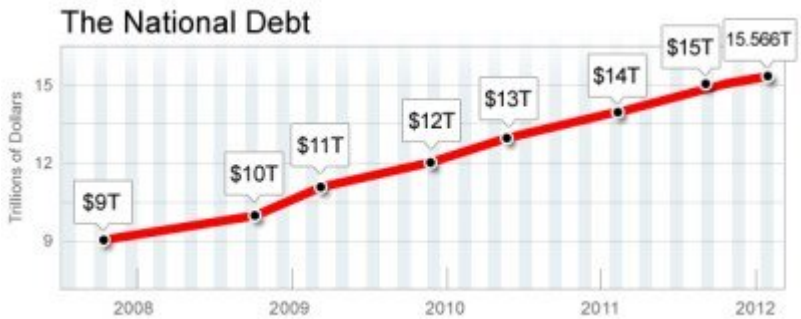

Obama added 5 trillion dollars to the debt since he took office

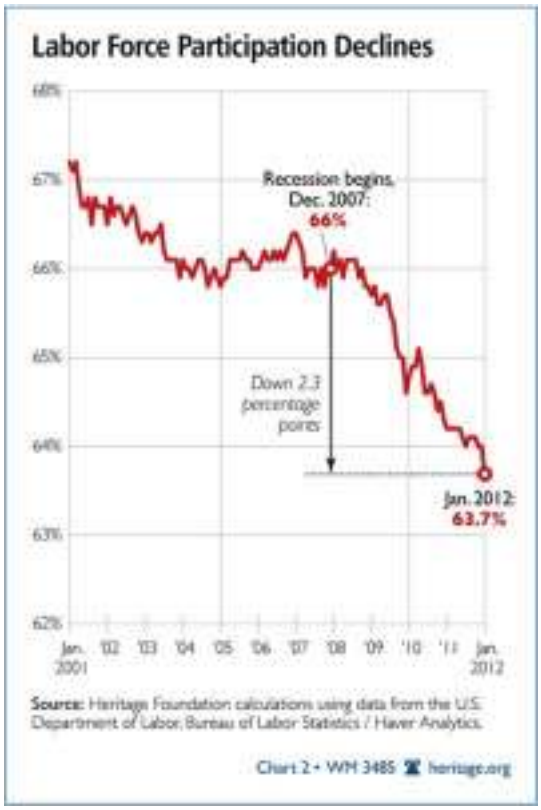

US Labor Force Participation down 4.9 million people

If these numbers seem bad to you, then I don’t think you should vote for Obama.

UK Law Society cancels event to silence dissent on same-sex marriage

May 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Sir Paul Coleridge, the Family Division judge who recently launched a new charity to combat marital break-up, had been lined up as the main speaker at the annual event at the Law Society's London headquarters later this month.

> But organisers were forced to cancel it at short notice after the Law Society ruled that the programme reflected "an ethos which is opposed to same sex marriage".
>
> They accused the Society, which represents solicitors in England and Wales, of an "extraordinary" attempt to stifle debate on current affairs and warned that the cancellation itself could be against equality laws.
>
> Lawyers, journalists and think tank chiefs were due to speak alongside Sir Paul at the annual conference organised by the World Congress of Families, a US-based non-religious group which promotes traditional family values.

> Around 120 people were expected to attend event which this year took as its theme: "One Man. One Woman. Making the case for marriage, for the good of society."
>
> Sir Paul, who made headlines last week as he launched a new charity, the Marriage Foundation, was due to speak on the effects of divorce on society.
>
> A follow-up event for MPs was being planned take place in Parliament after the conference.
>
> Organisers said the conference had been booked for up to six months and a deposit of around £4,700 has already been paid.
>
> But in an email on Thursday, Adam Tallis, general manager of Amper&and, the company which organises hospitality at The Law Society, informed them that the booking was being cancelled and the deposit refunded.
>
> "We regret the need to take this step," he wrote.
>
> "I can assure you that it is not something we do lightly.
>
> "However, where an event does not fit within this company's diversity policy, it is a step we must take.
>
> "The nature of your event has recently been drawn to our attention, and it is contrary to our diversity policy, espousing as it does an ethos which is opposed

> to same sex marriage."
>
> Same-sex marriage is not currently legal in Britain, although a consultation is under way on a possible change in the law.

So, disagreement with same-sex marriage is not "diverse" enough, but agreement with same-sex marriage is "diverse" enough. That's what diversity means – it means agree that marriage is anything that any vocal minority wants it to be, including polygamists, polyamorists and so forth, or be accused of rejecting "diversity". Diversity now means there is only one correct view, and anyone who dissents has to be silenced, coerced or worse.

How long are the days of Genesis? Hugh Ross and Jason Lisle debate

May 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this radio debate about the age of the Earth on the Apologetics 315 Twitter feed.

Speakers:

Jason Lisle

Dr. Lisle graduated *summa cum laude* from Ohio Wesleyan University where he double-majored in physics and astronomy, and minored in mathematics. He did graduate work at the University of Colorado where he earned a Master's degree and a Ph.D. in Astrophysics. While there, Dr Lisle used the SOHO spacecraft to investigate motions on the surface of the sun as well as solar magnetism and subsurface weather. His thesis was entitled "Probing the Dynamics of Solar Supergranulation and its Interaction with Magnetism." Among other things, he discovered a previously unknown polar alignment of supergranules (solar convection cells), and discovered evidence of solar giant cells. He has also authored a number of papers in both secular and creation literature.

Hugh Ross

At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver's Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or "quasars," some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

So both have impeccable scientific credentials.

The MP3 file is here. (This is the updated version that Brian Auten fixed to remove the commercials!)

I don't always agree with Frank Pastore, (only 95%), but he knows the topic of the debate back to front, and guides the discussion in an incredibly useful, accurate way. This is a fine debate to listen to! You will learn a lot. And you will have fun learning.

The Bible and the early church fathers

Jason Lisle

- we take Genesis literally
- the starting point of YEC is Scripture
- the plain meaning of Scripture is that the earth was made in 6 24-hour days
- science has to be interpreted in a way that fits a plain reading of Genesis 1
- the evidence for an old universe and old Earth must be rejected a priori

Hugh Ross

- we take Genesis literally
- the Hebrew word for day (yom) can mean 24 hours or a long period of time
- there are multiple creation accounts in the Bible
- interpreting yom as long periods of time harmonizes all the accounts
- the Bible says that the seventh day is not even ended
- we believe in a literal Adam and Eve living thousands of years ago

Jason Lisle

- there's only 1 account of creation in the Bible: Genesis
- the normal view in church history is 6 24-hour days
- there are some early church fathers who that the days are long
- the other places where creation is discussed are not real accounts

Hugh Ross

- the early church did not spend a lot of time talking about the age of the Earth
- there is not unanimous agreement about the age of the Earth
- there is no definitive statement on the age of the Earth until Isaac Newton
- Newton strongly favored an old earth, hundreds of years before Darwin
- there are other creation accounts, Job 38-39
- Pslam 104 is a creation account

Jason Lisle

- a Psalm is not written in the genre of historical narrative
- Psalm 104 is not a creation account – it talks about ships, etc
- it's talking about the modern era, not a creation account

The evidence from science

Hugh Ross

- both of us believe in an absolute beginning of time, space and matter
- both of us believe that space is expanding now
- stars form as matter coalesces during the expansion of the universe
- star formation requires a universe aged on the order of billions of years

Jason Lisle

- if you pre-suppose my interpretation of Genesis, then the universe is young

Hugh Ross

- the speed of the expansion of the universe proves an old universe

- the light emitted from the oldest stars also proves an old universe

Jason Lisle

- if you pre-suppose my interpretation of Genesis, then the universe is young

Was the universe made with the appearance of age

Jason Lisle

- any evidence for an old universe is wrong
- stars didn't form gradually, they were created by God instantly
- stars have the appearance of age, but they're actually young

Hugh Ross

- God doesn't lie in the Bible or in the book of nature
- Scientists can look back in time by looking further out into the universe
- Because light takes a long time to travel to the Earth, we can see the past
- we can see a time when there were no stars yet
- stars formed slowly over time, not instantaneously
- we have photos of the universe before stars and after stars
- we can see a history of the universe by looking closer and further away

Does nature provide us with knowledge about creation?

They discuss Psalm 19 now, so here's Psalm 19:1-5:

[1] The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

[2] Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

[3] There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

[4] Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

[5] which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

Jason Lisle

- nature isn't a book
- nature doesn't provide knowledge about God
- Psalm 19 doesn't say that nature communicates to us
- **verse 3 says "There is no speech nor language"**

Hugh Ross

- **If you read all of verse 3, it says the exact opposite of what you just said it says**
- Verse 1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his

hands”
- Verse 2: “Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.”
- Verse 3: “There is no speech or language **where their voice is not heard.**“
- Verse 4: “Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

Jason Lisle

- You can’t take the Bible literally all the time

How important is the age of the Earth?

Hugh Ross

- it’s a non-essential because it has nothing to do with salvation or inerrancy
- both sides of the debate affirm the same views of salvation and inerrancy
- professional scientists have multiple lines of evidence saying the universe is old
- the only reason it matters is that young earth creationism is a barrier to faith
- if you have to deny science to be a Christian, then it stops people from being saved
- young earth opposition to science has been used by secularists to marginalize Christianity

Jason Lisle

- there was no death in the Garden of Eden, animal or human, before the Fall
- the Bible says that death was a consequence of Adam’s sin
- so there was no death before the Fall, according to the Bible
- old earth people believe in death before the Fall

Consider Romans 5:12:

[12]Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Hugh Ross

- Romans 5:12 says that Adam’s sin caused death to come **to all men**
- old earth people believe that only animal death existed before the Fall, not human death
- plant and animal death existed before the Fall – Adam and Eve were eating!

Jason Lisle

- I interpret the Bible to say that plants aren’t living creatures

What about dinosaurs, the Flood, and Noah’s ark?

Jason Lisle

- dinosaurs were created on the 6th day
- dinosaurs lived alongside humans and were vegetarians before the Fall
- dinosaurs were on the Ark – they’re not that big – just take baby dinosaurs
- it’s a global flood

Hugh Ross

- dinosaurs were created on the 5th day
- they were extinct before before humans ever appeared
- nobody in history ever wrote about dinosaurs until 200 years ago
- it’s a local flood

Study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce

May 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports on a study that shows that women who lose their virginity as teenagers are more likely to divorce.

Excerpt:

> Women who lost their virginity as young teenagers are more likely to divorce – especially if it was unwanted, according to new research.
>
> The University of Iowa study shows that 31 per cent of women who had sex for the first time as teens divorced within five years, and 47 per cent within 10 years.
>
> Among women who delayed sex until adulthood, 15 per cent divorced at five years, compared to 27 per cent at 10 years.
>
> The findings were published in the April issue of the Journal of Marriage and Family.
>
> Author Anthony Paik, associate professor of sociology in the university's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, examined the responses of 3,793 married and divorced women to the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth.
>
> The study showed, however, that if a young woman made the choice to lose her virginity as a teenager, there was no direct link to a marital split later in life.
>
> If the sexual act took place before the age of 16 women were shown more likely to divorce, even if it was wanted.
>
> Thirty-one percent of women who lost their virginity during adolescence had premarital sex with multiple partners, compared to 24 per cent of those who waited.
>
> Twenty-nine percent experienced premarital conceptions, versus 15 percent who waited.
>
> One in four women who had sex as a teen had a baby before they were married, compared to only one in ten who waited until adulthood.
>
> Only one per cent of women surveyed said they chose to have sex at age 13 or younger, compared to five per cent at age 14 or 15, and 10 per cent at age 16 or 17.
>
> Forty two per cent reported that their first sexual intercourse before age 18 that was not completely wanted.
>
> Fifty eight per cent of the group waited until age 18 or older to have sex. Of those, 22 per cent said it was unwanted, compared to 21 per cent who said it was wanted.

> Researchers concluded sex itself may not increase the probability of divorce, while factors such as a higher number of sexual partners, pregnancy, or out-of-wedlock birth increased the risk for some.

If you're still a virgin, like me, (and I'm in my mid-thirties now, and I'm saving my first kiss for my engagement), then there is nothing wrong with you. If you want a stable marriage, then you don't have sex before you're married. There are tons of virgins out there, and there is a huge difference in the quality of romantic relationships when both parties exercise self-control with physical touching. Don't let it go too far – you lose some of what love and marriage can be.

Related posts

- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of chastity
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is third-wave feminism compatible with marriage?
- Why Christian men should be chaste

Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack

May 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Here's a disturbing update to last week's amazing story about the U.S. mole who infiltrated al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and thwarted an airliner attack with a more sophisticated underwear bomb.
>
> Someone in Washington whose boss stood to gain from an election year story about alert intelligence operatives successfully protecting American voters at great personal risk leaked the heroic story to the Associated Press. The AP held the story until Obama administration sources said the CIA operative was safe.
>
> But, it turns out, the mole was not a CIA operative. The Obama administration had nothing to do with the operation and, in fact, didn't even know about it until recently. Somehow such details got lost in all the excited espionage news coverage about the bomb that didn't go off.
>
> The sting was, in reality, an operation by Britain's MI6 intelligence service (see photo above of its unassuming headquarters tucked away in an obscure corner of London). It used a Yemeni native with dual British and Saudi citizenship with the cooperation of Saudi Arabia's intelligence service.
>
> And the folks overseas who actually conceived and executed the risky work are none too happy about their loose-lipped American cousins trying to bolster someone's domestic political standing by leaking the story prematurely, destroying the agent's cover and future usefulness. And possibly betraying that agent's contacts within Yemen.
>
> […]Without the excited U.S. news coverage, the agent, who reportedly did escape safely once word was flashed about the impending AP leak story, could have still been providing further intelligence on the location of al Qaeda leaders in Yemen, which resulted in only one successful drone strike before word got out, resulting in the explosive demise of senior leader Fahd al-Quso.
>
> According to Britain's Guardian, CIA professionals are furious at Obama administration officials for leaking the information for obvious political gain.
>
> The newspaper reported: "Mike Scheur, the former head of the CIA's Bin Laden unit, said the leaking about the nuts and bolts of British involvement was despicable and would make a repeat of the operation difficult. 'MI6 should be as angry as hell. This is something that the prime minister should raise with the president.'"
>
> Shashank Joshi, a British researcher, wrote in the Telegraph: "These unthinking

> leaks are reckless and irresponsible acts of posturing that could have far-reaching implications for counterterrorism operations in the future.”

This isn’t the first time,or even the second time, or even the third time, that we have seen these foreign policy blunders. Foreign policy and national security just are not their thing – just like economic policy isn’t their thing.

Australian doctor forced off of diversity panel for opposing same-sex marriage

May 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What happens when someone on a diversity committee has a different view? Are differences welcomed for the diversity advocates?

Consider this article from the Sydney Morning Herald. (H/T Matthew)

Here's our protagonist, a psychiatrist who stated publicly that children do best with a mother AND a father:

> Professor Kuruvilla George, who is Victoria's deputy chief psychiatrist, has signed a submission to a senate inquiry calling for a ban on same-sex marriage.
>
> He is among a group of doctors, who in a letter to the marriage equality inquiry, say limiting marriage between a man and woman "is important for the future health of our nation".
>
> "We submit that the evidence is clear that children who grow up in a family with a mother and father do better in all parameters than children without," the Doctors for the Family group says.

His view is supported by evidence. What do the diversity czars think of his evidence?

> Victorian opposition attorney-general Martin Pakula said Prof George needs to explain to the government and the community why he should remain a board member on the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC), given his views.
>
> "The equal opportunity commission are regularly asked to deal with matters where people are alleging discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and I don't know how Prof George can properly deal with those matters given the sentiments he's expressed," Mr Pakula told reporters.

The diversity elites do not have evidence – but they are very offended by views different from their own.

And here's how it all ended:

> Professor Kuruvilla George has resigned "due to time constraints and personal reasons", Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission chairman John Searle said today.
>
> […]The resignation does not affect Prof George's other role as Victoria's deputy chief psychiatrist.
>
> It comes less than 24 hours after Deputy Premier Peter Ryan defended Prof George's right to sign the submission in a private capacity.

> Mr Clark had also defended Prof George's right to free speech.

What do I learn from this? Well, what I learn is that qualifications do not matter to the secular left. It doesn't matter what you know about a problem, or how familiar you are with the evidence. What matters is whether you have the right answer – their answer. It's not competence that matters to the secular left – it's unanimity of thought. In order to serve on the diversity panel, there must be *no diversity of opinion* however much it is rooted in evidence.

New study finds that repeat abortions greatly increase the risk of breast cancer

May 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> A new study published in the *Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention* in February reported a very statistically significant increased risk of breast cancer for women with previous abortions as opposed to women who have never had one.
>
> The study, consisting of 1,351 women and led by researcher Ai-Ren Jiang, reported a statistically significant 1.52-fold elevation in risk for women with induced abortions and a "significant dose-response relationship between (the risk) for breast cancer and number of induced abortions," meaning the risk climbed with a higher number of previous abortions.
>
> For premenopausal women who have had abortions, the numbers were relatively small, and the observed 16% risk elevation was not statistically significant. However, for those with three or more abortions, the risk climbed to a statistically significant 1.55-fold elevation.
>
> "The results have revealed that induced abortion was related to increased risk of breast caner. Premenopausal women who had ≥3 times of induced abortion were at increased crude odds ratio (OR) (2.41, 95%CI: 1.09-5.42) and adjusted-OR (1.55, 95%CI: 1.15-5.68)," they wrote. "Postmenopausal women with a previous induced abortion were at increased crude OR (2.04, 95%CI: 1.48-2.81) and adjusted-OR (1.82, 95%CI: 1.30-2.54), and there was a significant increase trend in OR with number of induced abortions (p for trend: 0.0001)."
>
> […][A] Chinese study in 1995 by L. Bu and colleagues, including Janet Daling of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, reported a statistically significant 4.5-fold elevated risk among women with previous induced abortions who developed breast cancer at or before age 35, compared to older women (who experienced a statistically significant 2.5-fold elevated risk).

I've made the link between breast cancer and abortion before. It's another case where society has embraced an ideology, and now taxpayers are getting the bill for the harm caused. A recent study found that the annual cost of the breakdown of marriage and family was $112 billion a year.

Feminism sounds like such a good idea, but the problem is that it's not compatible with marriage and stable families. The things that feminism favors – premarital sex, no-fault divorce, day care, careerism, etc. – are not good for promoting stable marriages and healthy children. If you are growing up with divorced parents, you can thank feminism. If

you have breast cancer, or you know someone who does, you can thank feminism. If you are dealing with the grief of abortion, or know someone who is, you can thank feminism. If you were stuck in day care and then public schools and came out with high anxiety or other disorders, you can thank feminism. And if you vote for higher taxes, so that government can promote all of these things and fun them, then you are voting more and more people to make these anti-marriage, anti-child decisions.

Greeks withdraw $894 million from Greek banks in one day

May 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this article from MSNBC on The Other McCain.

Excerpt:

> Political leaders in Athens were due to discuss an emergency government Wednesday to deal with a possible run on banks as it emerged Greeks withdrew almost $900 million in a single day, fearing their country could crash out of the euro currency by the end of the week.
>
> An interim government would take the country through to new elections on June 17, triggered by the collapse on Tuesday of talks to form a coalition between winners of the inconclusive May 6 election.
>
> Greeks are withdrawing euros from banks, apparently afraid of the prospect of rapid devaluation if the country leaves the European single currency and returns to the drachma.
>
> President Karolos Papoulias warned of "great fear that could develop into a panic," the minutes of Papoulias' negotiations with political leaders showed, according to Reuters.
>
> […]Several banking sources told Reuters similar amounts had also been withdrawn on Tuesday. Nevertheless, there was no sign of panic or queues at bank branches in Athens on Wednesday. Bankers dismissed suggestions that a bank run was looming. A senior executive at a large Greek bank told Reuters: "There is no bank run, no queues or panic. The situation is better than I expected. The amount of deposit withdrawals the president mentioned referred to three days, not one."
>
> […]Greeks have already been withdrawing their savings from banks at a sharp clip – nearly a third of bank deposits were withdrawn between January 2010 and March 2012, reducing total Greek household and business deposits to 165 billion euros.

What I find really striking about stories like this is that Greece just had an election. 75% of them want to stay in the European Union and keep the Euro as a currency. But that can only happen if they accept that they are spending too much and they are not producing anything. They have to cut spending, lower taxes and deregulate so that there is economic growth. So what did they do? They voted against austerity. They think that by refusing to meet the conditions of the people who can bail them out, that they will get a bailout. It's just insane. Like whipping a thirsty camel with the expectation that whipping can somehow satiate its thirst and cause it to get up and keep moving.

Fascism: Obama administration objects to conscience protections for military chaplains

May 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fascism is the system of government in which the government pushes it's notions of purpose, meaning and morality onto the citizens. In a fascist government, values derived from religion, family and community are overridden by the state. Fascism is exclusively an outworking of the left. When government is big, secular and religious fascism are possible. In contrast, right wing conservatives always want government to be small, so that individuals, families, businesses and charities are left with the most freedom to decide.

So is the Obama administration left wing (fascist) or right wing (liberty)? Do they respect the right of individuals to decide what to do?

Consider this article from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration "strongly objects" to provisions in a House defense authorization bill that would prohibit the use of military property for same-sex "marriage or marriage-like" ceremonies, and protect military chaplains from negative repercussions for refusing to act against their consciences, as, for example, in being ordered to perform a same-sex marriage ceremony.
>
> In a policy statement released Wednesday, the White House Office of Management and Budget outlined numerous objections to aspects of the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Bill (H.R. 4310). The bill was reported out of the House Armed Services Committee last week and is set to be debated in the House, beginning Wednesday. (See related story)
>
> Overall, it recommends that President Obama veto H.R. 4310 if its cumulative effects "impede the ability of the Administration to execute the new defense strategy and to properly direct scarce resources."
>
> The veto warning is not specifically linked to the two provisions dealing with marriage, but they are listed among parts of the bill which the administration finds objectionable.
>
> The memo said the two provisions "adopt unnecessary and ill-advised policies that would inhibit the ability of same-sex couples to marry or enter a recognized relationship under State law."
>
> Section 536 of H.R. 4310 states in part that no member of the armed forces may "direct, order, or require a chaplain to perform any duty, rite, ritual, ceremony, service, or function that is contrary to the conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs of the chaplain, or contrary to the moral principles and religious beliefs of the endorsing faith group of the chaplain."

> Further, no member of the armed forces may "discriminate or take any adverse personnel action against a chaplain, including denial of promotion, schooling, training, or assignment, on the basis of the refusal by the chaplain to comply with a direction, order, or requirement" that is prohibited by the previous clause.
>
> The OMB complained that, "in its overbroad terms," section 536 "is potentially harmful to good order and discipline."
>
> Section 537 of H.R. 4310 states that "[a] military installation or other property owned or rented by, or otherwise under the jurisdiction or control of, the Department of Defense may not be used to officiate, solemnize, or perform a marriage or marriage-like ceremony involving anything other than the union of one man with one woman."
>
> That provision, the OMB said in the memo, would make it obligatory for the department "to deny Service members, retirees, and their family members access to facilities for religious ceremonies on the basis of sexual orientation, a troublesome and potentially unconstitutional limitation on religious liberty."
>
> Obama in December 2010 signed into law legislation repealing a ban on homosexuals and lesbians serving openly in the military. Last week he publicly endorsed same-sex marriage for the first time.
>
> The House Armed Services Committee passed H.R. 4310 on May 9 by a 56-5 bipartisan vote, the only nays coming from Democratic Reps. Chellie Pingree (Me.), John Garamendi (Calif.), Tim Ryan (Ohio), Hank Johnson (Ga.) and Jackie Speier (Calif.).

This is not the first time that Obama has shows disrespect for the religious liberty and freedom of conscious of individuals and private organizations. He thinks he knows better than you what to believe, and he thinks it's a good idea to force his views and priorities onto you, your family, your employer, your church, and any charitable organizations you might be affiliated with. He's a fascist, and his regime is fascist. That's just the way it is.

I really recommend that all of my Christian readers check out the book "The Road to Serfdom" by F.A. Hayek. Hayek is a Nobel prize winning economist who argues that all our liberties – including our freedom of religion – are rooted in free market capitalism and small government. He argues that only when individuals are free to choose where they work, to keep what they earn, and to spend it on goods and services they really want, will their be real freedom. It's important for Christians to choose an economic philosophy that guarantees the social conditions that allows them to thrive as Christians. Not just with respect to evangelism, but with respect to freedom of conscience, and freedom to promote their beliefs in public in the most effective, persuasive ways possible. We cannot allow ourselves to be silenced on our Kingdom plans just because we are lazy and want our neighbor to buy us health care and mail us Medicare checks. You do not give up your freedom to serve God in exchange for your neighbor's money.

Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?

May 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from the American Thinker answers the question that vexes many men. As you read this excerpt below, ask yourself if it is a man or a woman writing this.

First of all, liberal women seem to be having an awful lot of sex these days. They are losing their virginity early, and working their way through as many "alpha males" as possible, but all the while they insist that a stream of recreational-sex relationships is somehow a path to lifelong married love. Can you turn a man who wants nothing more than recreational sex into the perfect husband, simply by invoking the magical power of sex?

Liberal women think that you can:

> On the one hand, liberal women believe wholeheartedly in the idiotic social construct they call, "sexual liberation." They pride themselves on losing their virginity, as though that "accomplishment" had ever been above the challenge-scale of an alley cat in heat.
>
> These liberal women I've known, having given away their female V-card over and over and over again, all the while scour their host of intimate "trial runs" searching for that mythical, Hollywood-construct, Mr. Right. This Mr. Right guy, for whom they are searching, is known to them up front as even more sexually-liberated than they, but this little factoid seems not to register in their liberated little heads as they frantically search for the equally mythical family home with the white picket fence, which somehow never gets hit by any of life's roving tornadoes. One can almost hear them say in unison, "And they all lived happily ever after."

I think it's one of the deepest mysteries of the world why women think that a man who has lots and lots of recreational sex is somehow marriage material. When I think of men who are qualified for marriage, I think of men who have studied hard subjects, gotten marketable skills, worked and worked, saved and saved, and shown that they can be faithful in marriage by exhibiting self-control in the courtship. But liberal women think that all of this reasoning is junk, and you must just jump right into sex to see if the relationship will "work out" or to find out what you "like". Recreational sex, they insist, is a superior way of finding a husband. Discussing who will do what in a marriage and what the marriage is for is apparently ineffective.

More:

> Evidently, the liberal woman is capable of the most severe form of psychological denial known to humankind. Certain that one of the men with whom she has copulated without strings will suddenly morph into a faithfully monogamous

> creature the minute she can convince one of them to say "I do" in front of a few witnesses, the liberal woman marches blindly down the aisle towards near-certain, adulterous doom. Yet, no amount of honest reason can dissuade liberal women from this self-destructive, moral myopia.
>
> What other term but "morally schizoid" could possibly describe this blatantly contradictory tendency among liberal women?
>
> Having spent their youth casually throwing their own sexual morality to the winds of fairytale "liberation," these liberal women still steadfastly cling to the faithfully monogamous ideal for that sometime-later moment when they actually do desire all the traditional things — the husband, the kids, the white picket fence — those pesky female-nature embedded longings, which coincidentally ensure the continuation of the human race.
>
> But these liberal women somehow — in perfect schizoid manner — convince themselves that once married, they will be the gratuitous beneficiaries of the monogamous respect they still desire, but have never once demanded or deserved. Intuitively, women know that strict monogamy provides the only real security for themselves and their own offspring. Yet, they continue themselves to spurn the demands of monogamy until the very last minute, believing that fidelity springs forth naturally in miraculous profusion among all "married" humans. Such pure poppycock can only be explained as a mental disorder.

I think women need to ask themselves questions honestly and rationally:

- can recreational sex make an unemployed man get a job?
- can recreational sex make a violent man be courteous and respectful?
- can recreational sex make an atheist turn into a Christian?
- can recreational sex make a male slut stay faithful?
- can recreational sex make wastefulness turn into frugality?
- can recreational sex make laziness turn into diligence?
- can recreational sex make irresponsibility turn into commitment?

Marriages last because both partners have prepared themselves for self-sacrifice, rational discussions, problem solving and cooperation.

Previously, I provided the male perspective on liberal women's poor decision-making about men and marriage. Read the article from the American Thinker (*written by a woman*), then read mine.

Related posts

- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage

- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren’t men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste

Can anyone tell me what this pro-life teaser ad is foreshadowing?

May 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend of mine who works in the pro-life movement asked me to post this mysterious video:

Does anyone know what this is all about? I don’t want to wait until May 22nd to find out – I want to know now.

A look at redistribution of wealth from the workers to the non-workers in Canada

May 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Election 2011: Conservatives in Blue, Socialists in Red, Communists in Orange

I found two examples of policies that promote the redistribution of wealth from producers to non-producers in Canada. I think it's worth taking a look at their policies so that we understand more about our own redistribution policies.

The first example of redistribution has to do with unemployment insurance, where productive taxpayers who choose low-risk, high-pay jobs must subsidize other citizens who get high-risk, low-pay jobs. Their program is called "Employment Insurance". Canadians who work have to pay into the system, and when any of them loses their jobs, then they get to take money out of it. Those who work more pay more, those who work less pay less. Those with safe jobs collect nothing, and those with risky jobs collect more.

Is this program fair? In this article from Brian Lilley's Lilley Pad blog, Canadian columnist Lorne Gunter explains what's wrong with this program.

Excerpt:

> Employment Insurance is a lot of things, but an insurance plan to encourage employment it is not.
>
> For one thing, the premiums aren't based on the risk of making a claim.
>
> Young drivers pay higher auto insurance premiums because they are much more likely to get in an accident. Yet Canadians in high-unemployment industries and

> high-unemployment regions make no higher EI contributions than those who live where they are never likely to be without work.
>
> Indeed, those most likely to make EI claims will make far lower lifetime contributions than those who are unlikely ever to claim. That makes EI a welfare program underwritten by a tax on employment, rather than an insurance plan.
>
> In the 1990s, I interviewed a Statistics Canada researcher who had made the study of EI his life's work. He told me that he had discovered one New Brunswick town of 3,000 people where every adult had made at least one EI claim. Most had claimed three or more times.
>
> In some areas, EI is an accepted part of the culture. It's that entitlement mentality the Tories' changes are aimed at breaking.
>
> In the CBC's fawning 1994 biography of Pierre Trudeau, St. Pierre admitted that one of the goals of his government's '70s-era reforms to Unemployment Insurance (as it was more accurately known then) was to enable Canadians to stay in their home regions if they wanted to, even if they were never likely to find steady work there.
>
> So the scheme is also an interregional transfer of wealth — from have to have-not provinces.
>
> Of course, every year thousands of Canadians move from have-not regions to more prosperous areas in search of better jobs and higher pay. So it is not as though everyone who could collects EI to stay put.
>
> But the question is why should hard-working Canadians be compelled to subsidize anyone who refuses to move or turns down locally available work?

It's very similar to their health care programs, which transfers wealth from producers to health care users – and remember that not all health care is from stuff like car accidents. Abortions, IVF and sex changes are entirely voluntary – based on lifestyle choices.

But this is not the only program that transfers wealth from workers to non-workers. It turns out that there is an entire province of Canada that has a majority of secular socialist slackers who can't pay their own way, but must instead depend on the rest of Canada to support them.

Eric Duhaime explains in this article on the Lilley Pad.

Excerpt:

> Although we live in the same house, we certainly don't sleep in the same room anymore. Our romantic days are long gone. Quebec and the rest of Canada have grown apart. Young Quebecers have no appetite for constitutional quarrels, although they define themselves more and more as Quebecois and less and less as Canadians. They have even invented the word "decanadianization."
>
> Conversely, English-Canadians are becoming more and more fed up with paying for Quebec, which receives more than half the money given through the so-called

> equalization program, the equivalent of $8 billion a year.
>
> The solution might not be to ask Quebec to become an independent nation but to become less dependent on its neighbours and more fiscally autonomous. To calm English Canada down, the equalization formula — which will be reviewed before 2014 anyway — could be modernized.
>
> Canada has evolved over the years. The need for interprovincial welfare is not as necessary as it used to be. The principle of redistribution is part of our Constitution but could focus exclusively on funding very essential social programs, which wouldn't include $7-a-day daycare or a fully subsidized year of parental leave after the birth of each child.

I think it would be an excellent idea to cut Quebec loose. Whatever goods and services they produce could still be bought by the rest of Canada – if there are any such things. Let them pay for their own exorbitant abortion and day care costs, for a start.

Why am I posting about Canada? I think it's important for us to look at other countries so that we understand how public policies that are sold to us as "compassionate" actually punish hard work, thrift and risk-taking while at the same time rewarding ignorance, wastefulness and sloth. In fact, one could argue that Obamacare itself is nothing more than a way to transfer wealth from those who are take care of their health and work hard for their money, to those who are unemployed and want free contraceptives, abortions and sex changes. You can get all three of those things in the Canadian province of Ontario, and in the UK as well. But the UK goes even further and provides taxpayer-funded IVF and breast implants. This is what liberal compassion really means: pillaging those who sacrifice their leisure to work, in order to buy votes from unproductive, reckless and lazy special interest groups.

Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?

May 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is

stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this

passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The "Q" source for Matthew and Luke

Here's Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier "Q" source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Learn more

You can learn more about the early belief in the divinity of Jesus by listening to a lecture by William Lane Craig and reading the related paper, and by listening to the debate between Richard Bauckham and James Crossley on that topic. The first link contains other scholarly debates on Jesus.

William Lane Craig’s advice for balancing your career with your marriage

May 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I got this lecture from the Reasonable Faith web site. (H/T straightright)

Dr. William Lane Craig is the top living Christian apologist and debater in the world today, and has 2 Masters degrees and 2 Ph.Ds. He also has scores of academic publications including books from Oxford University Press, etc.

The MP3 file is here. (14.5 Mb, about 41 minutes)

Topics:

- the stresses of ministry on marriages
- the Christian position on divorce
- balancing marriage with academic pursuits
- the importance of marrying the right person
- Dr. Craig’s politically incorrect advice for choosing a spouse
- Advice for men: Marry someone who believes in you and who supports you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be the kind of person who can commit to being a helper and supporter
- Advice for men: Beware of the career woman who will put their career over supporting you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be careful about marrying if you think that your goals are more important than your husband’s goals
- Advice: Don’t try to find the right person *for you* but instead focus on learning about marriage and preparing for marriage
- Advice: Flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, love and peace
- Advice: God intends for sex to be within the bounds of marriage, so you need to guard yourself against unchastity
- Advice for men: be careful what images and movies you see with the goal of keeping your chastity
- Advice: your highest responsibility after your relationship with God is your spouse, and your studies are third
- Advice: it’s better to drop classes or give up your graduate studies entirely rather than destroy your marriage
- Advice for women: understand that you have to work at the marriage in order to help your man finish his studies
- Advice: set aside a period of the day for communicating and bonding with your spouse
- Advice: cultivate the ability to talk with your spouse on a personal level, and maintain eye contact

- Advice for men: do not break eye contact with your wife, and also hold her hand when communicating
- Advice: do not be embarrassed to seek out a marriage counselor, but make it a good counselor
- Advice: don't just be doing stuff for your mate, but also be vulnerable and transparent with your mate
- How your relationship with your wife helps you with your relationship with God
- How do you handle the rebellion of children without being overbearing and authoritarian?

There is a period of Q&A at the end. There is another piece of advice that comes out in the Q&A for women: take an interest in your spouse's work even if you don't care about it, and ask him about it every day and try to understand it. Go to the man's workplace and see what he does. Go to his presentations. Get involved in the man's ministry and help him in practical ways. Another piece of advice is to not paper over the differences – it's good to argue, because it means that problems are being confronted and worked through. Husbands should have a good male friend to talk to, and wives should have a good female friend to talk to.

I like how Dr. Craig has thought about how to have a successful marriage, how to choose the right woman, and how to love his wife. I like how he calls out men on the chastity thing. I think that chastity is more important for men than for women, because it's the men who take the lead in choosing and pursuing the right woman for their plan.

Here is my previous post on Craig's advice for married couples and my previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for choosing a good spouse, with illustrations from his own marriage.

If you want to hear another Christian husband talk about how his wife supports him, listen to this lecture called "Giants in the Land" with Dr. Walter Bradley. It's actually my favorite lecture. I also really like his testimony lecture.

Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)

May 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB rating: [7.4/10]

Description:

> This classic story by Herman Melville revolves around Captain Ahab and his obsession with a huge whale, Moby Dick. The whale caused the loss of Ahab's leg years before, leaving Ahab to stomp the boards of his ship on a peg leg. Ahab is so crazed by his desire to kill the whale, that he is prepared to sacrifice everything, including his life, the lives of his crew members, and even his ship to find and destroy his nemesis, Moby Dick.

If you're interested in reading about the real Ahab in the Bible, you can find it in 1 Kings 16:29 to 1 Kings 20:43.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Pro-life activist Chen Guangcheng escapes China for the USA

May 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this article from ABC News.

Excerpt:

> Blind dissident Chen Guangcheng and his immediate family have left China on a flight to the United States. They are expected to arrive in Newark, N.J., Saturday evening.
>
> State Dept Spokeswoman Victoria Nuland confirmed that Chen and his family left China so he can pursue studies at an American university.
>
> "We are looking forward to his arrival in the United States later today. We also express our appreciation for the manner in which we were able to resolve this matter and to support Mr. Chen's desire to study in the U.S. and pursue his goals," Nuland said.
>
> Their departure caps off three weeks of roller coaster diplomacy that reached the very highest levels of Chinese government and the White House.
>
> The human rights activist is best known for his fight against forced abortions and sterilisations under the One Child Policy.
>
> He served a four year prison sentence for what are widely believed to have been trumped up charges before being placed under a brutal, extra-judicial house arrest in his hometown province of Shandong.

Initially, it looked like the Obama administration would not honor their deal to take him, so this is surprising news.

I find it funny because although China has more repressive tactics against pro-lifers in practice, the Obama administration is on record as supporting China's one child policy, as well as supporting forced abortions and mass sterilizations.

Melanie Phillips: The real intolerance comes from secularism

May 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a great post by conservative British journalist Melanie Phillips. (I think she is Jewish, by the way)

Excerpt:

> I have a rather different take on this great division of our age. My view is that while we may be in a post-biblical — and post-moral — age, we have not disposed of belief. Far from it. We have just changed what we believe *in*. Our society may have junked the Judaeo-Christian foundations of the West for secularism. But this has given rise to a set of other religions. Secular religions. Anti-religion religions.
>
> These are also based on a set of dogmas. They proselytise. They involve faith. But unlike the Judaeo-Christian thinking they usurp, these secular anti-religions suspend truth and reason. What's more, I would say that it was the Judaic foundations of the West which, far from denying reason, gave the world both reason and science in the first place.
>
> God has been pronounced dead, and in his place have come man-made ideologies — in which people worship not a divine presence but an idea.
>
> These ideas, which brook no dissent, give rise inescapably to intolerance and indeed to tyranny. Indeed, they are far more tyrannical in their effect than the God of the Hebrew Bible who gets such a bad press for being so authoritarian. In fact, he has a truly terrible time getting his way. His people are always complaining, refusing to do what he tells them, blaming him for everything and always, always arguing with him. But ideologies which represent the will of man bend everything to the governing idea, which cannot be gainsaid. There can be no argument with *them.*
>
> Rather than being rational, I suggest these are irrational; not tolerant at all, but deeply illiberal; not open to other ideas, but as dogmatic as any medieval pope. Indeed, these atheistic ideologies are reminiscent not just of religion but of medieval persecutions, witch-hunts and inquisitions.
>
> Let me illustrate all this with an anecdote. After a debate in which he took part some time ago, I pressed Richard Dawkins on his belief that the origin of all matter was most likely to have been an entirely spontaneous event — which meant he therefore surely believed that something could be created out of nothing. Since this ran counter to the scientific principle of verifiable evidence which he tells us should govern all our thinking, this itself seemed to be precisely the kind of irrationality which he scorns.

> In reply, he acknowledged that I had a point but said that the alternative explanation — God — was more incredible. But then he remarked that he was not necessarily averse to the idea that life on Earth had been created by a governing intelligence — provided, however, that such an intelligence had arrived on Earth from another planet. Leaving aside the question of how that extra-terrestrial intelligence had itself been created in the first place, I put it to him that he appeared to be saying that "little green men" provided a more plausible explanation for the origin of life on Earth than God. Strangely, he didn't react to this well at all.
>
> However, Dawkins is not the first scientist to have suggested this. It is a theory which was put forward by no less than Professor Francis Crick, one of the discoverers of DNA.
>
> A committed atheist, Francis Crick found it impossible to believe that DNA could have been the product of evolution. In 1973, Crick and the chemist Leslie Orgel published a paper in the journal *Icarus* suggesting that life may have arrived on Earth through "directed panspermia". According to this theory, micro-organisms were supposed to have travelled in the head of an unmanned spaceship sent to Earth by a higher civilisation which had developed elsewhere some billions of years ago. The spaceship was unmanned so that its range would be as great as possible. Life started here when these organisms were dropped into the primitive ocean and began to multiply. Subsequently, Crick abandoned this theory and returned to the idea of the spontaneous origin of life from purely natural mechanisms.
>
> How can someone so committed to reason be so irrational as to entertain such a fantasy?

What I found great about this article is that even though Melanie Phillips is a popular columnist, she actually deals with evidence when talking about God. So often on Christian blogs, you can read tons of posts that are really just inside baseball for Christians. It's just pablum or lists of todos. The right way to talk about God is by talking about the evidence. Even Melanie Phillips sees that. Why don't we?

I think we need to be very forthright when speaking with atheists and call them out for what they are. They are the people who hate astrophysics, and despise the Big Bang cosmology. They are the believers in the unobservable, untestable multiverse. They are the believers in the unobservable, untestable aliens who seed the Earth with life. They are the believers in the as-yet-undiscovered Cambrian precursor fossils. They believe that material processes can somehow produce creatures that have free will and consciousness. They are the ones who think that right and wrong are purely arbitrary – matters of opinion that are decided one way or the other in different times and places. They are the ones who believe that when you die, you are not accountable for anything you've done, and nothing that you've done has ultimate meaning. Let's be up front about all of that, and hold them accountable for their anti-science, anti-morality, anti-human

views. And let’s hold them accountable for running away from debates with their tails between their legs – like that coward Richard Dawkins did.

N.A.A.C.P. follows Barack Obama and endorses gay marriage

May 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal New York Times. (H/T Bad Blue)

Excerpt:

> The board of the N.A.A.C.P. voted to endorse same-sex marriage on Saturday, putting the weight of the country's most prominent civil rights group behind a cause that has long divided some quarters of the black community.
>
> The largely symbolic move, made at the group's quarterly board meeting in Miami, puts the N.A.A.C.P. in line with President Obama, who endorsed gay marriage a little over a week ago. Given the timing, it is likely to be viewed as both a statement of principle as well as support for the president's position in the middle of a closely contested presidential campaign.
>
> All but two of the organization's 64 board members, who include many religious leaders, backed a resolution supporting same-sex marriage, according to people told of the decision.
>
> Borrowing a term used by gay right's advocates, the resolution stated: "We support marriage equality consistent with equal protection under the law provided under the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution."
>
> […]The group's endorsement could potentially bolster support for President Obama with a key constituency: black Democratic voters who remain skeptical of same-sex marriage.
>
> Black and white Americans are divided on same-sex marriage in similar numbers, according to the results of four aggregated polls conducted by The New York Times and CBS News over the past year.
>
> Yet there is greater opposition among black Democrats than white Democrats. Sixty-one percent of white Democrats supported legalizing marriage for gay couples, compared with 36 percent of black Democrats, while 35 percent of black Democrats opposed any legal recognition, compared with 18 percent of white Democrats.

When I interviewed some of my black co-workers before the 2008 election, they all thought that Obama was more pro-life than McCain, more pro-marriage than McCain, tougher on crime than McCain, more of a hawk on national security than McCain and more fiscally conservative than McCain. This is in spite of the fact that Obama's record up until that time was staunchly in favor of abortion, gay marriage, leniency for criminals, unilateral disarmament and weakening counter-terrorism, higher taxes, more anti-business regulations and more spending. My black co-workers were able to tell me the rosters of our local sports teams and recite entire conversations from popular movies, but

their beliefs about the Presidential candidates were *entirely counter-factual.*

About 95% of black voters support Democrats. I think it will be interesting to see how whether Obama's policies and voting record play a role in their voting this time.

By the way, if anyone is tempted to accuse me of racism for telling the truth, I'm darker-skinned than Obama.

A comprehensive guide to the European debt crisis

May 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stuart Schneiderman linked to this article on his blog "Had Enough Therapy?" and I found it worth the read. The article starts by noting that France and Greece both voted against austerity, which means they want someone else to keep paying for their benefits, and they aren't willing to grow up and recognize that no one wants to. But there's an additional problem – the problem of bank runs. People who have money on deposit in banks in countries that have a lot of debt are movie it out, which may cause some really bad problems going forward.

Here's an excerpt on the problem of bank runs:

> Bank runs, even virtual ones, are the method by which public fear can blow up the eurozone. A bank run, as hundreds of thousands of depositors decide to pull their money out of a bank or a banking system at the same time, is the financial equivalent of a dam break. Banks, even very well run ones, never have all the money that their customers have deposited in their vaults. They lend that money out to other people, and because they charge borrowers a higher rate on their loans than they pay savers on their deposits, they make money.
>
> […]When borrowers can't repay their loans, the bank sooner or later has to "write down" the value of those loans. In bad economic times, when borrowers are going bankrupt and the collateral on their loans loses value, banks can make huge losses. This is how Ireland lost its shirt; the banking system collapsed as the Irish real estate bubble burst, making building contractors and home owners bankrupt all over Ireland, and making the real estate that served as collateral for their loans almost worthless at the same time. The government — to prevent a panic and bank runs — guaranteed the deposits held by Irish banks, and ended up assuming such a massive debt that the Republic of Ireland needed a bailout from Europe.
>
> Since then, European bailouts have been the safety net for all the countries in the eurozone. When investors worry that countries like Spain, Portugal and Italy will have a Greek style financial meltdown and the interest rates on their bonds rise to reflect that risk, the ECB steps in to buy their bonds and the panic goes away — for a while. More, when individual banks are having trouble, the ECB has made huge amounts of money at extremely low interest rates available to them. Spanish banks, for example, can borrow cheap money from the ECB in order to buy Spanish government bonds at high interest rates. They pay one percent interest to the ECB and collect four percent interest from the Spanish government, and use the profit of three percent to offset their losses on their loans to private companies and consumers who are going belly up in Spain's savage recession.

> The success of this little merry-go-round is why Europe calmed down last December. The ECB in effect prints money which it gives to busted banks. The busted banks lend the money to insolvent governments at artificially low rates (but at rates that still allow the banks to make a profit). It was a neat little trick that kept the crisis quiet without forcing the Germans to admit openly that the ECB was in effect using German resources to bail out the rest of the zone.
>
> Bank runs, even virtual bank runs, would blow this fragile arrangements to bits. As the prospect of Greece leaving the euro becomes more likely, savers in Portugal, Spain and Italy have to start wondering if their countries, too, will have to jump ship. Sophisticated investors have been moving their money out of those countries for some time; things may soon reach a pass in which ordinary, unsophisticated investors start to do the same thing. Again, why have your money in some gut-shot Spanish bank when you can transfer it to a German, Austrian or Dutch bank with a mouse click? And if you are worried about the whole eurozone, or that devious financial trolls will find a way to convert all deposits held by Spanish citizens in European banks to pesos when and if the change comes, put the money in Switzerland, the UK or even the US.
>
> If a few thousands or a few tens of thousands do this in Portugal, Italy and Spain, no problem. But if hundreds of thousands or millions of people shift their money out of their home banking systems, then you have a new and very grave bank crisis that blows the December fix out of the water. Either the ECB would start creating trillions of euros to bail out the Club Med banks (and Club Med under some circumstances could stretch as far north as France), or banking systems start exploding like firecrackers across the southern tier. At the same time you would have a new panic on the bond markets; nobody is going to want to own Spanish or Italian debt under those circumstances.

This is something that we all need to be monitoring closely because the profligacy of socialist Europe is going to affect us all. What we have been doing here at home for the last four years, a flight from capitalism into Peter Pan economics, has not exactly prepared us for the coming storm.

Public school teacher threatens student with arrest for criticizing Obama

May 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Breitbart. (Note the Youtube video is about 9 minutes long, so I don't recommend sitting through the whole thing)

Excerpt:

> A YouTube video uploaded on Monday afternoon apparently shows a schoolteacher from the Rowan-Salisbury school district in North Carolina informing a student that failing to be respectful of President Obama is a criminal offense. Breitbart News has uncovered that the student is a high school junior, and that the teacher is apparently one Tanya Dixon-Neely.
>
> The video shows a classroom discussion about the Washington Post hit piece about Mitt Romney bullying a kid some five decades ago. One student says, "Didn't Obama bully someone though?" The teacher says: "Not to my knowledge." The student then cites the fact that Obama, in Dreams from My Father, admits to shoving a little girl. "Stop, no, because there is no comparison," screams the teacher. Romney is "running for president. Obama is the president."
>
> The student responds that both are "just men."
>
> The teacher yells — literally yells — that Obama is "due the respect that every other president is due … Listen," she continues, "let me tell you something, you will not disrespect the president of the United States in this classroom." She yells over the student repeatedly, and yells at him that it's disrespect for him to even debate about Romney and Obama.
>
> The student says that he can say what he wants.
>
> "Not about him, you won't," says the teacher.
>
> The teacher then tells the student – wrongly – that it is a criminal offense to say bad things about a president. "Do you realize that people were arrested for saying things bad about Bush? Do you realize you are not supposed to slander the president?"
>
> The student says that it would violate First Amendment rights to jail someone for such sentiments. "You would have to say some pretty f'd up crap about him to be arrested," says the student. "They cannot take away your right to have your opinion … They can't take that away unless you threaten the president."
>
> Clearly, the student should be teaching the class, and the teacher should be reading the Constitution more often.

This is why taxpayers need to support school choice. There are some teachers in public schools, especially in the STEM areas, who are qualified. But there are others who are

not. Education degrees are universally regarded as very easy, and very useless. We really should not be forced to fund a public school system that does not work for parents and children. Abolishing the federal Department of Education would be an excellent first step to improving the quality of education in state-run schools. We need to get the politics out of the classroom and focus on basic useful skills and career training.

UPDATE: This post has some more of the transcript, for those who can't see the video.

Why are people on food assistance programs allowed to buy luxuries?

May 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An editorial from the Wall Street Journal caused me to wonder why I have had to weekends for 6 weeks straight in order to make a deadline when 35% of my income is going to people who don't even work for a living.

Here's the anecdote the author recounts:

> Recently I had to run into that store and, sizing up the three lines, chose to stand behind a woman with one item in her cart. It was one of those large ice-cream cakes. When the checkout person said "Forty-one dollars," I wasn't the only one who blanched. The shopper's son, around 12, repeated it as a question: "Forty-one dollars?"
>
> I quickly calculated that the woman's cake was eight times more expensive than the kind I make at home to celebrate birthdays. The mother ignored her son's question.
>
> She took out her benefits card, swiped it through the machine, and they were off. My turn.
>
> I stood there, wondering what lesson the young boy takes away from this transaction. Does he grow up with the faintest understanding of delayed gratification—that you have to earn your money before you can buy candy—or, in this case, an ice-cream treat? I wondered how we arrived at this point as a nation. I also felt like a chump.

How can this happen? Here's how:

> [O]ver the last four decades, our government has quietly done away with almost all of the restrictions once placed on food assistance. SNAP cards (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) can be used to purchase practically anything with the exception of liquor and cigarettes. These cards are also openly and illegally sold for cash, which allows the recipient to buy anything they want, including cigarettes and liquor.
>
> Food assistance is helping many families keep their heads above water when they would otherwise not get by, and many of these families watch every dime. But the system also allows people to flagrantly disregard the program's original purpose.
>
> Of course there are instances of fraud in every corner of the government, from Congress to defense spending. Why single out food stamps? Because, with over 48 million Americans now using some form of food assistance and few restrictions, the possibilities of waste are unlimited.

Is there no shame in laziness and irresponsibility any more?

There are only 311 million people in the United States, and 48 million of us are on some welfare program, while half of us don't even pay income taxes. Why am I working to pay for these other people? Why do people who vote for big government social programs think that I can afford to get married and have a family when I have to pay for all of the single mothers on welfare? Why does everyone think that they are being generous by giving away the money I earn? Why does everyone think it's OK for people who don't work to steal from people who do work?

Maybe instead of redistributing money, we should redistribute work ethic.

The return of William Lane Craig videos to Youtube

May 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, the channel that hosted many of Dr. Craig's debates was shut down. But nothing to fear, it's back up now, and being managed by Reasonable Faith.

The full list of 900 videos is here, and there is also a list of 97 playlists for longer videos. You can find even more videos on ChristianJR4's Youtube channel.

One of the nice things about the channel's new management is that they do not allow comments on Youtube. I think that is a wise decision, and I hope they stick with it. You won't hear the same quality of argument at the lay-level of atheism that you hear at the lay-level of Christianity. Lay atheists typically don't try to make formal arguments against God's existence based on evidence, whereas more of the Christian rank and file have read basic stuff like Lee Strobel books and they sound pretty much like a William Lane Craig clone, if given the opportunity to debate. Unless you go to the level of a Peter Millican or a Walter Sinnott-Armstrong or a Paul Draper, you're not going to hear anything compelling from most atheists.

Here's a new lecture on the moral argument that I found, which I had not seen before.

Details:

> Is morality objective? Or is it subjective and relative? Is there such things as moral absolutes? Dr. William Lane Craig answers these questions and argues that if objective morals exists, then God exists.

The lecture was given at the First Baptist Church of Colleyville, Texas in their "Faith and Reason" class. Churches seem to be getting more and more into this sort of thing these days, and that's a good thing. If you just watch the first video, and see the church leader charge his flock to get ready to think carefully about apologetics, it's a good thing. I feel encouraged by it, but it's becoming more common for churches to take the intellectual approach, even as thinking is dying in the secular world.

The play list is here.

Here are the 5 parts:

Part 1 of 5:

Part 2 of 5:

Part 3 of 5:

Part 4 of 5:

Part 5 of 5:

The total time is one hour and 7 minutes, and there is Q&A at the end.

By the way, now may be a good time to mention that in the last year, the two leading atheistic web sites on the web, Common Sense Atheism (#1) and Debunking Christianity (#2) have both ceased operations, except as archives of past activity. My take on this? I

think that atheism *as a worldview* is dying out because it is just too difficult for them to defend a worldview that is contradicted by cosmology and astrophysics. At the very least, the good scientific evidence we have from the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the galactic habitability, the stellar habitability, the Cambrian era fossils, etc., show that there is at least a deistic God.

There are still fair-minded agnostics and open-minded atheists who haven't heard anyone make the case for theism to them out there. And that's something for Christians to address with their evangelistic efforts. But for atheist activists who know about the scientific evidence from William Lane Craig debates and elsewhere, atheism is no longer a viable worldview. I think it remains as a non-rational personal preference, but it's not something you can really argue rationally with anyone who follows the progress of science. The only question to decide now is which version of monotheism is true: deism, Christianity, Judaism or Islam. Since Islam is extremely easy to disprove on historical grounds, there are only three live options: deism, Christianity and Judaism.

How the secular left made a generation of public school students unteachable

May 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm totally swamped with a release deadline tonight, but I noticed that Stuart Schneiderman linked to this article earlier today and I thought you might like it. I chose an excerpt that talks about the well-known problem of students attacking TAs and professors after they get poor grades in order to make them change the grade – without doing any make-up work.

Excerpt:

> This pedagogy of self-esteem developed in response to the excesses of rote learning and harsh discipline that were thought to characterize earlier eras. In Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*, Mr. Gradgrind, the teacher who ridicules a terrified Sissy Jupe for her inability to define a horse ("Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth … "), was seen to epitomize a soulless pedagogical regime that deadened creativity and satisfaction. Dickens and his readers believed such teaching to be a form of mental and emotional abuse, and the need to protect students from the stigma of failure became an article of faith amongst progressive educators. For them, the stultifying apparatus of the past had to be entirely replaced. Memorization itself, the foundation of traditional teaching, came to be seen as an enemy of creative thought: pejorative similes for memory work such as "rote learning" and "fact-grinding" suggest the classroom equivalent of a military drill, harsh and unaccommodating. The progressive approach, in contrast, emphasizes variety, pleasure, and student interest and self-motivation above all.
>
> It sounds good. The problem, as traditionalists have argued (but without much success), is that the utopian approach hasn't worked as intended. Rather than forming cheerful, self-directed learners, the pedagogy of self-esteem has often created disaffected, passive pupils, bored precisely because they were never forced to learn. As Hilda Neatby commented in 1953, the students she was encountering at university were "distinctly blasé" about their coursework. A professor of history, Neatby was driven to investigate progressive education after noting how ill-equipped her students were for the high-level thinking required of them; her *So Little For the Mind* remains well-worth reading. In her assessment:
>
> The bored "graduates" of elementary and high schools seem, in progressive language, to be "incompletely socialized." Ignorant even of things that they might be expected to know, they do not care to learn. They lack an object in life, they are unaware of the joy of achievement. They have been allowed to assume that happiness is a goal, rather than a by-product.
>
> The emphasis on feeling good, as Neatby argued, prevents rather than encourages the real satisfactions of learning.

> Of course, the progressive approach has advantages, not the least of which is that it enables university administrators to boast of the ever-greater numbers of students taking degrees at their institutions. Previously disadvantaged groups have gained access to higher education as never before, and more and more students are being provided with the much-touted credentials believed to guarantee success in the workforce. Thus our universities participate in a happy make-believe. Students get their degrees. Parents are reassured that their money has been well-spent. And compliant professors are, if not exactly satisfied — it corrodes the soul to give unearned grades — at least relieved not to encounter student complaints.

I can remember when I was doing my Masters in computer science a few years back when I was taking a course in Network Security. Somehow, I botched the midterm so badly that I ended up with a 14 out of 20. I was disgusted with myself, and pleaded with the professor to give me something – anything – to help me get my grade back up. He gave me a programming assignment that was harder than the midterm, and it took about 20 hours to do. I gave up my weekend and got it done. He raised my grade. Professors are usually willing to give you a break if you want to demonstrate that you have the knowledge. But when you just go in there and complain to get the grade changed without learning anything, it's just not right.

When you get out into the real world, either you have the skills, or you don't. Your transcript doesn't really matter. It's rare for interviewers to even look at transcripts anymore. Instead, they want to see what you've actually done. I once had to do a 20 hour implementation of a multi-user clustered cache for one interview with a CRM company. I had to pass several interviews before they gave me that independent study, and they looked at my code line by line. It was a lot of code, too. Grades don't matter in the real world. What matters is what you can do. If you can't do the job that companies expect, they will find someone else – maybe in another country – who can do it. That's why students should not put so much emphasis on grades. You're only cheating yourself if you really can't do the work.

Arthur Brooks: true fairness means rewarding merit, not spreading the wealth

May 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Arthur Brooks is an economist, a Christian and the President of my third favorite think tank, the American Enterprise Institute. He has been making a push lately to convince conservatives to become more articulate when making the case for the free enterprise system. One of his major ideas is that happiness is not related to the amount of money you have, but it's related to how well you can achieve your own prosperity and independence by your own labor. His research shows that people are happiest when they feel in control of their own prosperity, even if they have less wealthy than people who depend on the government to take money away from others so they don't have to work.

Here's an article he posted on AEI entitled "True fairness means rewarding merit, not spreading the wealth".

Excerpt:

> There are two main ways to define fairness: fairness in terms of opportunity, and fairness in terms of outcomes. The first means leveling the playing field, and the second means spreading the wealth around. The first means lifting people up on the basis of merit, and the second means bringing successful people down.
>
> […]In a 2005 Syracuse University poll, researchers asked a cross-section of Americans if they b14elieve that "everyone in American society has an opportunity to succeed, most do, or only some have this opportunity." Some 71 percent of respondents said that all or most Americans can get ahead.
>
> This is consistent with most of our experiences. It's almost impossible to argue that American success is not earned. We can all think of times when our hard work has gotten us ahead or when we've been punished at work or in life for making poor decisions. Even if America's not perfectly meritocratic, we all see how hard work pays off.
>
> Now, of course, America is far from perfectly fair. But that's because life isn't fair. For instance, all other things being equal, taller men and prettier women make higher salaries than their shorter, plainer counterparts. Believe it or not, there are studies that show these things (as if we needed them). More seriously, some people have substandard elementary education or childhood nutrition, which creates a lifelong disadvantage. Worse still, some children are born into families that don't emphasize the values that beget opportunity: honesty, hard work, and education.
>
> We need to address these inequities. Still, we shouldn't abandon the idea of meritocratic fairness just because not everybody has completely equal opportunity. But this is what the president appears to be asking us to do.

> America is built around the shared values and aspirations of mobility, opportunity, and merit. Even if only, say, half the outcomes in our life are due to merit, that's still the half within our control. We should focus on increasing the role of merit, not dismiss the idea because it's imperfect. Without a belief in meritocratic fairness, we have little incentive to work hard, be honest and optimistic, and create value in our lives and the lives of others. Fatalism and envy are simply not American values.

We need to make the case for the free enterprise system now, using moral arguments like this, otherwise we are going to find ourselves treading the path of countries like Greece, where almost no one works and almost everyone depends on the government to take care of them. It's not sustainable.

Should Simon Fraser University build a Men's Center to match the Women's Center?

May 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political correctness gone mad at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, BC.

Excerpt:

> The student union at Simon Fraser University in B.C. has made the apparently contentious decision to finance the creation of a Men's Centre on campus. Motivated, surely, by deep-seated patriarchal values, the union approved a budget of $30,000 to launch the project — the exact same amount conferred on the university's Women's Centre, which was established back in 1974. The idea for the Men's Centre was proposed by fifth-year accounting student Keenan Midgley, who told SFU's student newspaper that he believes men, too, are entitled to safe space on campus.
>
> Unsurprisingly, however, not everyone at SFU is thrilled with the decision. The Women's Centre, for one, coolly brushed off the idea of a stand-alone Men's Centre on its website, simply stating that, "the men's centre is everywhere else." They did say they would welcome a men's centre that focused on "challenging popular conceptions about masculinity, confronting homophobia, sexism, racism, classism, and ability issues." In contrast, they would oppose a men's centre that "focussed on maintaining the old boys club … that promotes the status quo, encourages sexual assault, or fosters an atmosphere of competition and violence." Oh. OK, then. Good to know.
>
> Several other students have taken a more direct approach, compiling their objections to the Men's Centre in widely-circulated five-minute YouTube video. Deeming the project "not financially responsible," students take turns expressing their grievances. One woman with seemingly impeccable foresight declares that, "The Men's Centre will end up being a place to celebrate hegemonic masculinity." She later attacks the credibility of the Centre's proponents, scoffing that they have, "no experience being in a gender-studies class."
>
> Men, too, join in the criticism of the proposed Centre, one curiously warning that it may "become a highly masculinized space." Another cautions that the project risks creating a "heteronormative space," while yet another critical male dismisses the Men's Centre as simply, "a room with a PS3 and a bunch of douchebags playing games."
>
> […]While statistics show that comparatively, far fewer university-aged men are diagnosed with depression than women, the rate of suicide among men is four times as great. It's not hard to connect the dots: men are suffering in silence. And it's not hard, either, to see why. If the assumption on campus is that men have no use for a resource centre other than meeting up with new PlayStation

> buddies, it becomes that much more difficult for them to break down the barrier of bravado.
>
> Men, like women, struggle with issues of victimization, anxiety, and depression, but they must battle in addition with a societal expectation of stoicism. In short — it's not manly to talk about your feelings. And it's precisely for that reason that a Men's Centre on campus is such a necessary initiative.

I think if there is this much anti-male hatred coming from the students and faculty, then Men should get a resource center. Or abolish them both, and abolish all the other taxpayer laws and programs that discriminate in favor of women and gays and against heterosexual men.

And furthermore, it makes no sense for these secular leftists women to bash masculinity, and the traditional male roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader, then complain that men won't commit to them for life and stay faithful. You can't bash chivalry, chastity and enterprise and then expect men to be ready and willing to marry. To be a feminist is to be opposed to marriage, fidelity and parenting. if feminists hate men, then they shouldn't be surprised when men don't love them or commit to them or protect them or provide for them. You can't expect to be treated kindly by people you hate – they will just ignore you and withdraw. You can't tell a man that he has no special role and responsibility to be a protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader and then complain when he refuses to protect, provide or lead on moral and spiritual issues. If men aren't expected to be anything special, then they won't be anything at all.

Youtube reverses decision to ban video critical of gay activism in Canada

May 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the original story about the banning of the video from May 18th, 2012.

Excerpt:

> In a victory for gay rights extremists, YouTube has agreed to remove a video critical of Canadian laws concerning homosexuality from its website, even though the video discusses policy issues and does not use any derogatory language about gays and does not advocate violence against them.
>
> The video created May 16 by preacher and hard rock drummer Bradlee Dean to accompany his weekly column published by WorldNet Daily and other news outlets, exposes facts about the hatred and oppression directed at conservative Christians and opponents of gay marriage in Canada by the radical Left toward people of faith, those who hold to traditional marriage. The video also details a solemn warning to American's to get vocal on the issue or prepare for the cultural overhaul under way in Canada.
>
> Among the shocking examples of how gay rights extremists are using hate speech laws to silence conservatives is a ruling by a Canadian official that Christian parents who home-school their children can not teach their children that homosexuality is a sin.
>
> Within 2 hours, the video was taken offline by YouTube after it was flagged by a discriminatory individual for "hate speech."
>
> The video now appears in its original version on MRCTV.

And here is the updated story about the decision to reverse the charge.

Excerpt:

> YouTube has reversed its decision to censor the views of a pro-traditional marriage organization after attention was drawn to its removal of a video last week produced by Christian preacher and hard rock drummer Bradlee Dean.
>
> […]Dean's video did not attack or demean gays – it addressed serious policy questions raised by actual events and political decisions in Canada. By taking Dean's video offline, YouTube called into serious question its commitment to "defend everyone's right to express unpopular points of view" isn't all that strong when it comes to defending the right of people who hold traditional values.
>
> The situation was all the more worsened by the fact that Dean's video (which you can now watch on YouTube) was, among other things, denouncing censorship. We're glad Google has reversed course and stood up for political speech. No matter what your opinion on gay marriage or homosexuality in general is, Dean's

> clip didn’t deserve to be removed. His opponents should stick to criticizing his actions rather than trying to censor them.

Rank and file gay people deserve to be treated with respect, and they should treat those who disagree with them with that same respect. We can disagree without having to resort to taking away fundamental rights, like the right to free speech.

William Lane Craig explaining the Kalam cosmological argument in church

May 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the video from his appearance at Saddleback Church (Rick Warren) that got such a big response. Saddleback is a pretty ordinary church, which lots of people with different levels of knowledge. How did Bill explain the Kalam argument to so many different ordinary people?

Watch and see!

Part 1:

Part 2:

Part 3:

Part 4:

You can also find a more technical version of the lecture here. This version is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Craig has previously debated Stenger and Tooley. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A of this lecture.

Canadian pro-lifers to begin “The New Abortion Caravan” on May 29

May 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Finally, someone revealed to me what the secret pro-life project is all about. It’s a project of *Canadian* pro-lifers. They are planning a pro-life speaking and debating tour of Canada starting on the west coast in Vancouver and ending at the capital city of Ottawa.

Basically, they are retracing the steps of a group of pro-abortion activists who traveled that same route in 1970 while trying to shift public opinion towards legalized abortion. Eighteen years after “The Abortion Caravan” completed their journey, abortion was made legal in Canada, through all nine months of pregnancy, and full funded by taxpayers – even pro-life taxpayers. Three million unborn children were killed after the law was changed. Additionally, pro-life doctors and nurses have been forced to perform abortions against their consciences – or lose their jobs.

Here’s what the pro-lifers intend to do:

> On May 29, a team of young people who are survivors—all born at a time when their peers were being killed—will be re-tracing the steps of the 1970 Caravan. This New Abortion Caravan will also use vivid imagery. However, instead of focusing on a woman’s “choice,” this team from the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform (CCBR) will use abortion imagery to force the Canadian public to consider *what is being chosen*.
>
> The pre-born are Canada’s invisible children. It is time to make them, and their plight, visible to a public largely unaware of their fate.
>
> The New Abortion Caravan will do that in such a way that in every community the Caravan passes through, the public will be confronted by the reality of “choice.”

They then describe some of the things they intend to do, with pictures.

And more:

> In each city, the media will inevitably be compelled to cover the abortion issue once again as the New Abortion Caravan passes through. The presence of the dismembered pre-born victims will force Canadians and the media to recognize their plight. The historical resonance of the New Abortion Caravan confronting the injustices brought about by the original Abortion Caravan will force people to re-examine their conceptions about abortion.
>
> […]Besides its visual outreach, The New Abortion Caravan will stop in towns and cities and hold presentations and debates about abortion to answer the questions of the public and educate Canadians on this life and death issue.
>
> After crossing the country to Toronto, the New Abortion Caravan will end in Ottawa, where politicians and the public will be forced to face the shattered

> bodies of Canadian children they have failed so badly.

Here's an example of one of the events they have planned:

> Date: June 6, 2012
>
> Time: 7:30pm – 9:15pm
>
> Speakers:
>
> - Stephanie Gray
> - Howard Nye
>
> Event: Abortion Debate
>
> Location: Edmonton Clinic Health Academy, 2nd floor, Room 90 11405 87th Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Click here to read more, but be on the alert for graphic images of aborted children.

European court finds that UK must give prisoners the right to vote

May 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> The European Court of Human Rights upheld a previous ruling that a blanket ban on inmates being able to vote was unlawful.

> However, the court signalled that the UK government could decide which prisoners should be enfranchised, meaning serious offenders such as murderers and rapists could be excluded.
>
> Judges may even be handed discretion to decide which criminals are allowed the vote.
>
> The Government now has six months to comply with the ruling or face a raft of challenges and huge legal costs.

> The decision will spark fury among MPs who voted overwhelmingly last year to not lift the 140 year blanket ban.
>
> The case, now eight years old, has been at the centre of a deepening row in the UK over the influence of European judges on domestic law.
>
> Ministers and MPs have insisted the decision on whether prisoners in a country can vote is a political one not a matter for the European court.
>
> Last February, MPs backed a motion opposing the European judgment by a 234 to 22.
>
> The vote was not binding but the Government has used it as evidence that Parliament's wish is to maintain the ban.

Prisoners overwhelmingly vote for parties that are left-of-center, like the Democrats.

Democrat-connected PR firm gets $20 million taxpayer dollars to promote contraception/abortion mandate

May 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Health and Human Services has awarded a $20-million contract to a Democrat-connected public relations firm, which will promote awareness of Obamacare's "preventive services" mandate.
>
> Under that mandate, all health-care plans must cover — without any fees or co-pays — all FDA-approved contraceptives, including those that cause abortions, as well as sterilizations.
>
> The public relations firm hired to conduct the PR campaign, Porter Novelli, is a global firm whose leadership team features former Obama campaign surrogate and Democratic operative Catherine "Kiki" McLean.
> http://www.porternovelli.com/about/leadership/catherine-kiki-mclean/
>
> McLean appeared on television on behalf of the Obama campaign in 2008. She also worked as a senior adviser to Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign as well as the presidential campaigns of former Vice President Al Gore and Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.).
>
> The $20-million taxpayer-funded public relations campaign is mandated by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, an HHS official told CNSNews.com.
>
> "Section 4004 of the Affordable Care Act required the department to conduct this effort as one way to encourage utilization of preventive benefits and services," the official said.
>
> "This public education campaign is part of our ongoing education efforts that will inform the American people about the steps they can take to prevent disease and illness and stay healthy."
>
> Section 4004 of the legislation requires HHS to conduct an "education and outreach campaign regarding preventive benefits," using radio, television and online media in a campaign that, among other things, "explains the preventive services covered under health plans offered through [ObamaCare]."
>
> The campaign also "promotes the use of preventive services" including those covered under the sterilization-contraception-abortifacient mandate, HIV screenings for "at risk" youth, and diet and obesity prevention services for children.

I'm not sure if anyone remembers, but this is the same kind of scandal that brought down

the Liberal Party in Canada in 2006.

Excerpt:

> The **sponsorship scandal**, **"AdScam"**, **"Sponsorship"** or **Sponsorgate**, is a scandal that came as a result of a Canadian federal government "sponsorship program" in the province of Quebec and involving the Liberal Party of Canada, which was in power from 1993 to 2006. The program was originally established as an effort to raise awareness of the Government of Canada's contributions to Quebec industries and other activities in order to counter the actions of the Parti Québécois government of the province that worked to promote Quebec independence.
>
> The program ran from 1996 until 2004, when broad corruption was discovered in its operations and the program was discontinued. Illicit and even illegal activities within the administration of the program were revealed, involving misuse and misdirection of public funds intended for government advertising in Quebec. Such misdirections included sponsorship money awarded to ad firms in return for little or no work, which firms maintained Liberal organizers or fundraisers on their payrolls or donated back part of the money to the Liberal Party. The resulting investigations and scandal affected the Liberal Party of Canada and the then-government of Prime Minister Paul Martin. It was an ongoing affair for years, but rose to national prominence in early 2004 after the program was examined by Sheila Fraser, the federal auditor general. Her revelations led to the Martin government establishing the Gomery Commission to conduct a public inquiry and file a report on the matter. The official title of this inquiry was the *Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities*. In the end the Commission concluded that $2 million was awarded in contracts without a proper bidding process, $250,000 was added to one contract price for no additional work, and $1.5 million was awarded for work that was never done, of which $1 million had to be repaid.

Keep in mind that Canada is about one-tenth as big as the USA, for things like population, budget, etc. So their scandal was about the same amount of money as ours, if you correct for that.

That was the election that brought Conservative Party Prime Minister Stephen Harper into power. The Liberals also gave taxpayer money to Liberal-connected ad firms. When the truth came out, the Liberals went from having 135 seats in 2004 to 34 seats in 2011. So this is the kind of story that can bring down an entire political party. Using taxpayer dollars to promote your political party is serious, and when you put it together with Barack Obama already campaigning in swing states at taxpayer expense, it's even more egregious. This is America, not some banana republic.

Two more adult stem cell treatments discovered

May 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two kinds of stem-cell research. The first kind is called embryonic stem-cell research (ESCR). This kind is opposed by pro-lifers because it kills unborn persons by extracting their stem cells for use in medical research. The second kind is called adult stem-cell research (ASCR). This kind is supported by pro-lifers.

Which kind produces more scientific discoveries and new treatments?

Well, consider this article from Yahoo News which describes a new treatment made possible by ethical adult stem cell research.

Excerpt:

> Scientists have for the first time succeeded in taking skin cells from patients with heart failure and transforming them into healthy, beating heart tissue that could one day be used to treat the condition.
>
> The researchers, based in Haifa, Israel, said there were still many years of testing and refining ahead. But the results meant they might eventually be able to reprogram patients' cells to repair their own damaged hearts.
>
> "We have shown that it's possible to take skin cells from an elderly patient with advanced heart failure and end up with his own beating cells in a laboratory dish that are healthy and young – the equivalent to the stage of his heart cells when he was just born," said Lior Gepstein from the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, who led the work.
>
> The researchers, whose study was published in the European Heart Journal on Wednesday, said clinical trials of the technique could begin within 10 years.

Last month, Science Daily had another article on adult stem cells.

Excerpt:

> Organ replacement regenerative therapy is purported to enable the replacement of organs damaged by disease, injury or aging in the foreseeable future. A research group led by Professor Takashi Tsuji (Professor in the Research Institute for Science and Technology, Tokyo University of Science, and Director of Organ Technologies Inc.) has provided a proof-of-concept for bioengineered organ replacement as a next stage of regenerative therapy.
>
> Reporting in *Nature Communications* the group demonstrate that bioengineered hair follicle germ reconstructed from adult epithelial stem cells and dermal papilla cells can regenerate fully functional hair follicle and hair growth. Their bioengineered follicles showed restored hair cycles and piloerection through the rearrangement of follicular stem cells and their niches. The bioengineered hair follicle also developed the correct structures and formed proper connections with

> surrounding host tissues such as the epidermis, arrector pili muscle and nerve fibers.
>
> This study thus reveals the potential applications of adult tissue-derived follicular stem cells as a bioengineered organ replacement therapy.

These individual cases show the overall trend in stem cell research. ESCR is supported by Democrats, but it is ineffective – which is why biotech companies like Geron have abandoned it. Nevertheless, Obama has pushed millions of taxpayer dollars into embryonic stem cell research, and is still pushing for more ESCR. The politics is driving the science – just like with his global warming alarmism and alternative energy funding.

Related posts

- Adult stem cells therapy can fix a broken heart?
- New study: adult stem cells are almost identical to embryonic stem cells
- New study: adult stem cells used in breast cancer treatment
- Doctors grow new trachea from patient's own adult stem cells
- Adult stem cells used to grow a new heart
- Adult stem cells used to restore sight to patients blinded by chemical burns
- British boy becomes first in the world to have stem cell transplant
- ABC News reports on how adult stem cells produce innovative cures today
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

New Gallup poll: 50% of Americans now pro-life – only 41% are pro-choice

May 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this article at Secondhand Smoke. (H/T ECM and J Warner Wallace)

Here are the poll results:

> The 41% of Americans who now identify themselves as "pro-choice" is down from 47% last July and is one percentage point below the previous record low in Gallup trends, recorded in May 2009. Fifty percent now call themselves "pro-life," one point shy of the record high, also from May 2009.
>
> […]Since 2001, the majority of Republicans have consistently taken the pro-life position, but by a gradually increasing margin over "pro-choice." That gap expanded further this year, with the percentage of Republicans identifying as pro-life increasing to 72% from 68% last May, and those identifying as pro-choice dropping to 22% from 28%. Still, Republicans' current views are similar to those found in 2009.
>
> […]The percentage of political independents identifying as pro-choice is 10 points lower today than in May 2011, while the percentage pro-life is up by six points. As a result, pro-lifers now outnumber pro-choicers among this important swing political group for only the second time since 2001, with the first occurring in 2009.
>
> […]Democrats' views on abortion have changed the least over the past 12 years, with roughly 60% calling themselves pro-choice and about a third pro-life. Democrats' identification as pro-choice was above this range in May 2011, but has returned to about 60% in the current poll.

Why are the pro-lifers winning?

Wesley J. Smith explains:

> When you look at the poll, the pro life side has been the plurality/majority view for several years. The question is why? Here's my take:
>
> - The pro life movement has science on their side. A fetus is a human being in the gestating stage. He or she isn't a parasite nor a tissue mass.
> - The pro choice side became too strident and absolutist–as in fighting the bans on partial birth abortion and insisting on making abortion available to minors without parental consent.
> - Just as in the gay rights issue, familiarity breeds acceptance. Many people know pro life activists and understand they are not the kind of uncaring people the media and pro choice activists like to paint.
> - America remains a generally religious nation. Not all pro lifers are religious,

> to be sure, but the power of faith as a motivator on this issue can't be denied.
>
> Saying one is pro life isn't the same thing as saying abortion should be outlawed. But it does show, I think, that those who work indefatigable to value the lives of the unborn are respectable and mainstream. And that means the incremental approach activists have taken on this issue for decades is slowly working.

I think that pro-lifers, especially groups like CCBR and LTI who are able to do two-hour formal debates, do the most good. Show the pictures of abortions does a lot of good. When you see red blood next to a miniature human, you know that abortion is wrong. It is wrong to spill the blood of another human being without justification. And what possible justification could there be for hurting a little baby?

Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier

May 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wisconsin State Journal.

Excerpt:

> Janesville teachers and their supporters expressed outrage this week after an anonymous group distributed fliers listing their salaries and urging parents to request their child be assigned to a "non-radical teacher" next year.
>
> The fliers, which included the names, titles and salaries of the 321 highest-paid Janesville teachers, also urged readers to go to iverifytherecall.com to determine if the teachers signed the petition to recall Gov. Scott Walker.
>
> […]The flier angered teachers, who were already targeted by a flier earlier this year accusing them of having a "Marxist, globalist agenda," said Ted Lewis, regional union representative for Rock County teachers.
>
> "It's trying to intimidate them and make them feel guilty for earning salaries," Lewis said. "They're creating this witch hunt for people who engaged in their civic duty."
>
> Lewis said it was "ironic" that whoever distributed the fliers "very publicly posts the names of individuals and their salaries and yet he or she won't even divulge their identity."

Do you know what I find ironic? That unionized teachers want to hide how much money they steal from taxpayers – taxpayers who have to see their children graduating from these public schools with more left-wing ideology than marketable skills.

UK doctors who refuse to perform sex changes can be banned from practicing

May 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this alarming article from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> The General Medical Council has issued guidance warning that it would be "discriminatory" for doctors not to prescribe either the pill or morning-after pill because they disagree with people having sex before marriage.

> […]The draft GMC guidelines, entitled Personal Beliefs and Medical Practice, stipulate that doctors "cannot be willing to provide married women with contraception but unwilling to prescribe it for unmarried women".
>
> "This would be a breach of our guidance as you would be refusing to treat a particular group of patients," the document adds.

> **It also warns it would be illegal for doctors to refuse to carry out "gender reassignment", because it would also amount to discrimination.**
>
> "Serious or persistent failure to follow this guidance will put your registration at risk," the guidelines warn.
>
> […]Bishop Tom Williams of the Archdiocese of Liverpool claimed the advice discriminated against "certain groups of doctors" and risked creating an "atmosphere of fear" in which doctors would be "prohibited from ever expressing their own religion".
>
> Dr Peter Saunders, chief executive of the Christian Medical Fellowship and a former surgeon, said the rules would "marginalise Christian health professionals in Britain".
>
> He told the Daily Mail: "The problem is that 21st century British medicine now involves practices which many doctors regard as unethical."

In other secular left regimes like the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, conscience rights for medical professionals were similarly frowned upon. For a socialist, whatever the state wants is right, and who cares about the individual's freedom?

Many Christians today in the United States, and especially in socialist countries, think that it is a good idea for the government to provide medical care to everyone, regardless of their lifestyle choices. It doesn't matter if some people are freely choosing lifestyles that expose them to higher medical costs, like promiscuity or homosexuality. These socialist Christians think that individuals and their employers should be taxed in order to pay for abortions, sex changes, HIV treatments, and so on. The secular left things that birth

control pills, which can cause abortions, are “health care”, and socialist Christians agree with them.

A dollar can only be spent one way. It can be spent on an apologetics book, or it can be spent on a sex change. It can be spent on private Christian school tuition or it can be spent on a partial birth abortion. What would God prefer? Would he rather that people who are sinning face higher costs for their sins, so that they think twice about committing them? Or would he rather that people who are sinning have the costs paid by someone else who isn’t, so that the sin becomes cheaper? Well, when I talk to socialist Christians, especially in Canada, they think that God is happier with a bigger secular government, so that sinful people have lower costs and government approval. That doesn’t make sense to me, though.

William Lane Craig vs atheist Daniel Dennett on cosmology and fine-tuning

May 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This audio records a part of the Greer-Heard debate in 2007, between prominent atheist Daniel Dennett and lame theistic evolutionist Alister McGrath. Craig was one of the respondents, and this was the best part of the event. It is a little bit advanced, but I have found that if you listen to things like this over and over with your friends and family, and then try to explain it to non-Christians, you'll get it.

By the way, this is mostly original material from Craig, dated 2007, and he delivers the speech perfectly, so it's entertaining to listen to.

Craig presents three arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe:

- the contingency argument
- the kalam cosmological argument
- the teleological argument

He also discusses Dennett's published responses to these arguments.

Dennett's response to Craig's paper

Here is my snarky paraphrase of Dennett's reponse: (this is very snarky, because Dennett was just awful)

- Craig's three arguments are bulletproof, the premises are plausible, and grounded by the best cutting edge science we know today.
- I cannot find anything wrong with his arguments right now, but maybe later when I go home it will come to me what's wrong with them.
- But atheism is true even if all the evidence is against it today. I know it's true by my blind faith.
- The world is so mysterious, and all the science of today will be overturned tomorrow so that atheism will be rational again. I have blind faith that this new evidence will be discovered any minute.
- Just because the cause of the beginning of time is eternal and the cause of the beginning of space is non-physical, the cause doesn't have to be God.
- "Maybe the cause of the universe is the idea of an apple, or the square root of 7". (HE LITERALLY SAID THAT!)
- The principle of triangulation might have brought the entire physical universe into being out of nothing.
- I don't understand anything about non-physical causation, even though I cannot even speak meaningful sentences unless I have a non-physical mind that is causing my body to emit the meaningful sentences in a non-determined manner.
- Alexander Vilenkin is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat

him up good with phantom arguments.
- Alan Guth is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- This science stuff is so complicated to me – so Craig can't be right about it even though he's published about it and debated it all with the best atheists on the planet.
- If God is outside of time, then this is just deism, not theism. (This part is correct, but Craig believes that God enters into time at the moment of creation – so that it is not a deistic God)
- If deism is true, then I can still be an atheist, because a Creator and Designer of the universe is compatible with atheism.
- I'm pretty sure that Craig doesn't have any good arguments that can argue for Christianity – certainly not an historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus based on minimal facts, that he's defended against the most prominent historians on the planet in public debates and in prestigous books and research journals.

I was in the second row at the Baylor Conference on intelligent design when Guth debated Craig on the origin of the universe. Guth admitted afterwards that the universe did require a cause.

I do not recommend purchasing the whole 2007 debate, because McGrath is a squish. You're better off with the 2005 and 2008 sets. The 2006 one is OK, but not great. I don't have the 2009 one yet, but it looks good.

Convicted bomber Brett Kimberlin threatens conservative bloggers

May 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Conservative blogging titan Michelle Malkin has the story.

Excerpt:

> Over the past year, Aaron Walker (who blogged as "Aaron Worthing"), Patterico, Liberty Chick, and now Stacy McCain have been targeted by convicted Speedway bomber Brett Kimberlin because they dared to mention his criminal past or assisted others who did. The late Andrew Breitbart warned about Kimberlin and company.
>
> I have spoken directly with both Patterico and Aaron about their ongoing battles.
>
> **The mainstream press, not just the conservative blogosphere, needs to hear and report their stories.**
>
> This is a convoluted, ongoing nightmare that combines abuse of the court system, workplace intimidation, serial invasions of privacy, perjury, and harassment of family members. McCain was forced to move with his family out of his house this week, and has just gotten a small taste of what Aaron and Patterico have been enduring over the past year. Aaron and his wife were fired from their jobs after their employer feared the office would be targeted next. Convicted bomber Kimberlin has filed bogus "peace orders" against Aaron, when it is the *Walkers* who are the victims, not the perpetrators.
>
> And Patterico's plight will send chills up your spine when he is ready to tell it.
>
> Institutional inertia, incompetence, and apathy among law enforcement officials on both coasts have exacerbated the victims' suffering. It has moved far beyond a partisan or political story to a bottomless, Kafka-esque morass. And, via investigative journalist Matthew Vadum, it certainly doesn't help that "progressive," left-wing foundations that have funded Kimberlin continue to look the other way.

I am often asked by people why I have an alias. Well, this is why. I think that the typical rank and file Democrat is a lot more supportive of domestic terrorism, intimidation and coercion than most people think. Even if they don't support terrorism and coercion, they will keep silent about it. An important part of the secular leftist mindset is that everyone must agree, and that there can be no diversity of opinion or dissent. Diversity confuses them – it makes the angry.

John Hawkins of Right Wing News has a great interview with Robert Stacy McCain about his ordeal.

FrontPage magazine has a lot more details on Brett Kimberlin.

All American Blogger has a massive link around of all the people writing about Brett Kimberlin today.

5,300 UK teens who aborted a baby in 2010 had at least one prior abortion

May 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this disturbing article from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> **Pro-life campaigners said young women were being ”let down in an appalling way” after it emerged three of the 38,269 teenagers who had a termination in 2010 had undergone the procedure at least seven times.**

> NHS figures released to the Press Association under the Freedom of Information Act show another two teenage girls had their seventh abortion in 2010, the most recent year for which data is available, while four more teenagers had a termination for the sixth time.
>
> **Fourteen teenage girls had their fifth abortion in 2010, 57 teens had a termination for the fourth time and 485 women aged 19 or under went through the procedure for a third time.**
>
> Rebecca Mallinson, of the Pro Life Alliance, said: ”There is something seriously wrong with a country where teenagers are having even one abortion, let alone repeat abortions to this extent.

> “We are failing these young people in an appalling way, and storing up serious sexual health problems for the future, whether the direct issue of sexually transmitted diseases, but also the effects that multiple abortions can have on future fertility.
>
> […]**Of the abortions carried out on teenage girls in 2010, more than 5,300 were on teenagers who had already had at least one termination.**

In the UK, taxpayers are forced to provide free abortions as part of their government-run socialist health care system. Many Christian voters are OK with subsidizing abortions because they think that wealth redistribution is a good idea. They think that people should be able to live any way they want, disregarding morality, and then have someone else violate their conscience in order to pay for the messes that result. It’s just wrong, but many Christians who care more about feelings than economics support it. They think that paying for someone else’s murders is “fairness”.

Christians should support individual charity, and the best way to support that is to let people keep more of their own money and give them tax deductions for charitable contributions. Whenever you get a secular government involved in helping others, it quite often just makes it easier for them to sin and to do harm. Thoughtful Christians should

not support that. When you make sin “free” for someone by paying the costs, they will sin even more. We should never make it easier for people to sin. The first rule of sound economics – which Christians should know – is that when you subsidize a behavior, you get more of that behavior.

If you want to help someone in trouble, then use your own money – don’t take someone else’s money through taxes. People who make mistakes learn not to make them when they are accountable to the person who bails them out of it. There has to be oversight over how charity is being done at the individual level – not everyone deserves charity just because they are in a jam. Only if they have learned their lesson should they get it – go and sin no more, as Jesus says. That’s why individual charity is morally superior to government-run social programs. In a very real sense, Christians who claim to be pro-life can actually be pro-abortion in practice when they make it easier for women to have abortions.

In a previous post, I also wrote about how Christians should not tell women that premarital sex is a valid pathway to marriage – that men can be shamed and coerced into marriage after recreational sex with slogans like “man up”. That’s another mistake that many pastors make that increases the number of abortions. We have to start thinking things through if we are going to stop abortion.

Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)

May 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB rating: [8.5/10]

Description:

> ***Double Indemnity*** is a 1944 American film noir, directed by Billy Wilder, co-written by Wilder and Raymond Chandler, and produced by Buddy DeSylva and Joseph Sistrom. The script was based on James M. Cain's 1935 novella of the same title which originally appeared as an eight-part serial in *Liberty* magazine.
>
> The film stars Fred MacMurray as an insurance salesman, Barbara Stanwyck as a provocative housewife who wishes her husband were dead, andEdward G. Robinson as a claims adjuster whose job is to find phony claims. The term *double indemnity* refers to a clause in certain life insurance policies that doubles the payout in cases when death is caused by accidental means.
>
> Praised by many critics when first released, *Double Indemnity* was nominated for seven Academy Awards but did not win any. Widely regarded as a classic, it is often cited as a paradigmatic *film noir* and as having set the standard for the films that followed in that genre.
>
> Deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" by the U.S. Library of Congress in 1992, *Double Indemnity* was selected for preservation in the National Film Registry. In 1998, it was ranked #38 on the American Film Institute's list of the 100 best American films of the 20th century, and in 2007 it was 29th on their 10th Anniversary list.

This movie is good because it undoes the popular notion in today's culture that all women are sweet and cute and never do anything wrong, whereas all men are beasts. And it's a warning to men not do dismiss Judeo-Christian morality, specifically the prohibitions on murder and adultery. This movie is extremely consistent with the Bible's teachings, and it's a thriller to boot.

This movie had a formative influence on me when I was a young man, and helped me to be more realistic about separating a woman's physical appearance from her moral character. Just because a woman is physically attractive, it doesn't mean that she is morally good. And there is no corelation between physical beauty and suitability for marriage. This is a lesson that all men should learn. Sweetness and kindness and self-sacrifice are not automatic for any woman, you have to choose one who can do the job.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)

- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Saturday fun: 20 reasons why you should vote for Barack Obama in 2012

May 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this article by John Hawkins, posted at Townhall. (Don't worry, I linked to the printable version!)

Here's a few:

> 2) Obviously Republicans hate women like Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann! Wait, bad examples…uhm, let's see, they kill female babies, put **women's faces on pinatas and beat them**, and degrade women by **drawing them with penises in their mouth**! That's still us? Geeze, uh…war on women! Move on to the next item! Hurry, hurry!
>
> 5) Did you know Mitt Romney is a Republican? You're going to vote for a Republican? Seriously? Everybody in my lesbian studies class at Berkeley always says "no" when I ask that question.
>
> 9) Mitt Romney is mean! Republicans are mean! You're mean — unless you vote for Barack Obama, which makes you nice!
>
> 12) Did you see how good that guy was at reading speeches off a teleprompter back in 2008? That was really something, wasn't it? Now it's all kind of dull, but he might get better at it again.
>
> 15) Obama has driven up gas prices, which encourages people to buy more electric cars….ehr, wait, this is for an environmentalist group, right?

I am still very bitter that my Michele Bachmann is not the nominee! I must be one of those people making war on women, then. I think that everyone who thinks that two gay men can effectively parent a six-month old baby should definitely vote for Barack Obama. And so should anyone who thinks that it's OK to abort an unborn child because she is a girl and not a boy. If those are your views, then Obama is your candidate.

Hugh Ross debates Lewis Wolpert on scientific evidence for a Creator

May 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the 2012 Unbelievable UK conference, Peter Byrom (BirdieUpon) reports on a great debate on science and Christianity.

Excerpt:

> I had the great pleasure yesterday of attending the debate "Does the universe show evidence for a creator?" at Imperial College, London. Arguing in the affirmative was astrophysicist Hugh Ross of Reasons To Believe, a science-faith think tank from the USA; arguing the negative was Lewis Wolpert, Emeritus Professor of biology and British Humanist.
>
> […]But, onto the debate itself! A good turn-out. The lecture theatre was packed. It was hosted by Imperial College's Christian Union, but a decent number of atheists and sceptics showed up too – which is quite something given that AC Grayling was giving a lecture in the next room (he passed by me earlier as I was editing my latest Dawkins-critical video on my laptop… I don't think he noticed)!
>
> This is where it gets interesting. Hugh Ross went first, and outlined for 20 minutes his Creation Model, arguing that the Bible – and only the Bible – contains consistent, scientifically accurate predictions about the cosmos, the empirical data for which is only being discovered recently in the modern age. His case is essentially that the more we discover about the universe, the more the evidence for design and a transcendent creator piles up and confirms what the Bible has been telling us for the past thousands of years. Of particular note were passages from Jeremiah and Romans, which Hugh claims tell us about the expansion of the universe and the law of entropy. Alongside we have the opening of the Bible, that in the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth – the Big Bang is this beginning. When this was discovered, a great many scientists were reluctant to accept it, fearing that an absolute beginning of space and time gave too much leverage to those who believe in theistic creation.
>
> It was fascinating also to hear Hugh cite an article written by atheist physicists called "Disturbing Implications of the Cosmological Constant". In this article, its atheist authors were forced to concede that this particular cosmological constant left them no choice but to invoke a transcendent causal agent. Their solution? To "do a Daniel Dennett": conclude that this cosmological constant must, therefore, surely be false (!)

Go read the whole thing at Apologetics UK blog! It's great when we have smart guys to give us a ringside report.

Archaeologists find first artifact that mentions Bethlehem

May 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Israeli archaeologists have discovered a 2,700-year-old seal that bears the inscription "Bethlehem," in what experts believe to be the oldest artefact with the name of Jesus' traditional birthplace.
>
> Experts state the tiny clay seal's existence and age provide vivid evidence that Bethlehem was not just the name of a fabled biblical town, but also a bustling place of trade linked to the nearby city of Jerusalem.
>
> **Eli Shukron, the Israel Antiquities Authority's director of excavations, said the find was significant because it is the first time the name "Bethlehem" appears outside of a biblical text from that period.**
>
> Shukron said the seal, 1.5 centimetres (0.59 inches) in diameter, dates back to the period of the first biblical Jewish Temple, between the eighth and seventh century B.C., at a time when Jewish kings reigned over the ancient kingdom of Judah and 700 years before Jesus was born.
>
> The seal was written in ancient Hebrew script from the same time. Pottery found nearby also dated back to the same period, he said.

> Shmuel Achituv, an expert in ancient scripts at Israel's Ben-Gurion University who did not participate in the dig, said the discovery was the oldest reference to Bethlehem ever found outside of the Bible.
>
> Apart from the seal, the other mentions of Bethlehem, Mr Achituv said, "are only in the Bible".

There's some good news for your Sunday!

Should women be able to profit from false rape accusations?

May 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting story. (H/T Stuart Schneiderman)

Excerpt:

> Now that Brian Banks has been exonerated of a rape conviction that put him in prison for five years, the one-time prep football star has a message for NFL coaches: Give him a chance.
>
> […]t was the plan he left outside a prison door when he pleaded no contest to a childhood friend's false accusation of rape in 2002, a claim she has now recanted.
>
> The hearing that changed Banks' life took only minutes. Los Angeles Deputy District Attorney Brentford Ferreira said his office conceded the case should be dismissed. Superior Court Judge Mark C. Kim concurred and quickly announced it was over.
>
> One of his first moves was to report to the probation office to have the electronic monitoring ankle bracelet removed — a felon no longer.
>
> Banks said he is ready to move forward and is trying not to be angry.
>
> "I couldn't ask for more today," he told reporters after Thursday's hearing. "But there is always the question of why did it have to happen in the first place? Why wasn't I heard with the truth of what happened when I was 16?"
>
> Even after he was released from prison, he could not get work because he was a registered sex offender and had a felony record.
>
> Before the charges, Banks was a star middle linebacker at Long Beach Polytechnic High School and was attracting interest from college football powerhouses as the University of Southern California, Ohio State University and the University of Michigan, according to the website Rivals.com, which tracks the recruiting of high school football and basketball players.
>
> He verbally agreed to a full scholarship at USC.
>
> Then, a teenage girl he had known since childhood claimed he had raped her. He was arrested and, on advice of counsel, pleaded no contest to rape and an enhancement of kidnapping in order to avoid a possible life sentence if tried by a jury.
>
> […]The key, said Brooks, was the woman's admission she had lied. And it came out of the blue.
>
> After serving five years and two months in prison, Banks was released, and a strange thing happened. Wanetta Gibson, the woman who claimed he had

> attacked her on the high school campus when she was 15, contacted him on Facebook and asked to meet with him.
>
> He recalled being stunned. “I thought maybe it wasn’t real. How could she be contacting me?”
>
> He said he knew that if he became angry when he met with her it wouldn’t help, so he struggled to keep calm.
>
> “I stopped what I was doing and got down on my knees and prayed to God to help me play my cards right,” he said.
>
> **In two meetings, she said she had lied and offered to help him clear his name, but there was a catch. She did not want to return a $1.5 million payment from a civil suit brought by her mother against the Long Beach schools.**
>
> **She refused to repeat her new story to prosecutors but they accepted the account which had been secretly videotaped by the defense.**
>
> **It was uncertain whether Gibson will have to return the money and unlikely she would be prosecuted for making the false accusation so long ago.**

How common are these false rape accusations, though?

Studies show about 40-50 percent of rape accusations are false

False accusations of rape or sexual assault are commonly used by women to get attention and sympathy, or to get an alibi when they’ve done something wrong, or to get revenge on someone.

Here’s a Fox News article from a prominent equity feminist, Wendy McElroy.

Excerpt:

> “Forty-one percent of all reports are false.”
>
> This claim comes from a study conducted by Eugene J. Kanin of Purdue University. Kanin examined 109 rape complaints registered in a Midwestern city from 1978 to 1987.
>
> Of these, 45 were ultimately classified by the police as “false.” Also based on police records, Kanin determined that 50 percent of the rapes reported at two major universities were “false.”
>
> Although Kanin offers solid research, I would need to see more studies with different populations before accepting the figure of 50 percent as prevalent; to me, the figure seems high.
>
> But even a skeptic like me must credit a DNA exclusion rate of 20 percent that remained constant over several years when conducted by FBI labs. This is especially true when 20 percent more were found to be questionable.
>
> False accusations are not rare. They are common.

If you would like to get an idea of how false rape accusations are handled by the police, here is an example. Usually no charges are filed, or if charges are filed, then they get off without jail time. (But the accused men can go to jail for years, see below)

False accusations in divorce trials

False accusations of domestic violence and sexual abuse are also commonly made during divorce settlements in order to get custody of the children, and the attendant benefits.

Consider this article from Touchstone magazine, by Stephen Baskerville.

Excerpt:

> Today it is not clear that we have learned anything from these miscarriages of justice. If anything, the hysteria has been institutionalized in the divorce courts, where false allegations have become routine.
>
> What is ironic about these witch-hunts is the fact that it is easily demonstrable that the child abuse epidemic—which is very real—is almost entirely the creation of feminism and the welfare bureaucracies themselves. It is well established by scholars that an intact family is the safest place for women and children and that very little abuse takes place in married families. Child abuse overwhelmingly occurs in single-parent homes, homes from which the father has been removed. Domestic violence, too, is far more likely during or after the breakup of a marriage than among married couples.
>
> Yet patently false accusations of both child abuse and domestic violence are rampant in divorce courts, almost always for purposes of breaking up families, securing child custody, and eliminating fathers. “With child abuse and spouse abuse you don’t have to prove anything,” the leader of a legal seminar tells divorcing mothers, according to the *Chicago Tribune*. “You just have to accuse.”
>
> Among scholars and legal practitioners it is common knowledge that patently trumped-up accusations are routinely used, and virtually never punished, in divorce and custody proceedings. Elaine Epstein, president of the Massachusetts Women’s Bar Association, writes that “allegations of abuse are now used for tactical advantage” in custody cases. The *Illinois Bar Journal* describes how abuse accusations readily “become part of the gamesmanship of divorce.” The *UMKC Law Review*reports on a survey of judges and attorneys revealing that disregard for due process and allegations of domestic violence are used as a “litigation strategy.” In the *Yale Law Review*, Jeannie Suk calls domestic violence accusations a system of “state-imposed *de facto* divorce” and documents how courts use unsupported accusations to justify evicting Americans from their homes and children.
>
> The multi-billion dollar abuse industry has become “an area of law mired in intellectual dishonesty and injustice” writes David Heleniak in the *Rutgers Law Review*. Domestic violence has become “a backwater of tautological pseudo-theory,” write Donald Dutton and Kenneth Corvo in the scholarly

> journal *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. “No other area of established social welfare, criminal justice, public health, or behavioral intervention has such weak evidence in support of mandated practice.”

I often hear men, especially men in the church, complaining that young men won’t get married because they are too busy watching porn and playing video games. But maybe the real reason is that they don’t want to be exposed to domestic violence laws and divorced courts that are waiting to separate them from their earnings. And they can already get sex for free before marriage. If the church isn’t speaking out against premarital sex (to women) and against no-fault divorce and against biased domestic violence laws, then they have no one to blame for the so-called “marriage strike” but themselves.

Domestic violence rates

Here’s a recent article in the liberal UK Guardian that summarizes the evidence.

Excerpt:

> Domestic violence has traditionally been understood as a crime perpetrated by domineering men against defenceless women. Research spanning over 40 years has, however, consistently found that men and women self-report perpetrating domestic violence at similar rates. Professor John Archer from the University of Central Lancashire has conducted a number of meta-analytic reviews of these studies and found that women are as likely to use domestic violence as men, but women are twice as likely as men to be injured or killed during a domestic assault. Men still represent a substantial proportion of people who are assaulted, injured or killed by an intimate partner (50%, 30% and 25% respectively).
>
> If the empirical research is correct in suggesting that between a quarter and half of all domestic violence victims are men, a question follows: why has women’s domestic violence towards men been unreported for so long, and what has changed in the last five years to make it more visible?
>
> One reason may be the feminist movement. Feminism took up the cause of domestic abuse of women in the 1970s, with the world’s first women’s refuge being opened by Erin Pizzey in 1971. Feminism understood domestic violence as the natural extension of men’s patriarchal attitudes towards women, leading men to feel they had the right to control their partners, using violence if necessary. Feminists campaigned successfully to bring the issue into the public arena, thereby securing resources to establish services to help victims. This activism and advocacy led to governmental and public acceptance that “domestic violence” was synonymous with violence against women.
>
> […]The dual stereotypes of the violent man and passive woman have undoubtedly obscured the existence of male victims of domestic violence in the past. Men were also unlikely to view their own victimisation as either domestic violence or a criminal assault, and so were unlikely to seek help.

> Large sums of money have been spent on educational campaigns to encourage female victims to seek help. Until there are similar campaigns for men, it is unlikely that the true number of male victims needing help will be known. If the current trends continue however, women may find themselves increasingly likely to be charged with domestic assault, and men more likely to be offered help and protection.

I wonder how many women believe the official feminist line on domestic violence? The raw numbers are so rarely discussed.

More domestic violence studies from multiple countries are discussed here.

Related posts

- New York TV meteorologist admits rape accusations were false
- Woman recants rape charge after man spends 2 years in jail
- Judge blames husband for his wife's decision to murder their children
- Is lenience towards women increasing domestic violence against men?
- Why are sentences for domestic violence committed by women so lenient?
- Women are becoming more violent towards their partners
- Do men and women commit domestic violence in equal numbers?
- Woman recants false rape charge, freeing man after 3 years in prison
- Woman who made false rape accusation gets zero jail time
- UK woman makes EIGHT false rape accusations and gets no jail time
- New research shows that drug-facilitated "date rape" is a myth
- Lehigh University student could stand trial for false rape accusation
- Are women held to a different standard than men under the law?
- No charges planned for accuser in Hofstra rape hoax

Greg Koukl: The New Atheism: old arguments, new attitude

May 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a lecture that Greg Koukl delivered at the Apologetics Canada conference in March 2011.

The topic tonight is this: have the New Atheists made a persuasive case against God? It's one hour long.

Speaker bio:

> Greg started out thinking he was too smart to become a Christian and ended up giving his life for the defense of the Christian faith. A central theme of Greg's speaking and writing is that Christianity can compete in the marketplace of ideas when it's properly understood and properly articulated.
>
> Greg's teaching has been featured on Focus on the Family radio, he's been interviewed for CBN and the BBC, he's debated atheist Michael Shermer on Hugh Hewitt's national radio show, and did a one-hour national television debate with Deepak Chopra on Lee Strobel's "Faith Under Fire." Greg has been quoted in U.S. News & World Report and the L.A. Times. An award-winning writer, Greg is author of *Tactics—A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*, *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air* with Francis J. Beckwith, and *Precious Unborn Human Persons*. Greg has published more than 180 articles and has spoken on nearly 60 university and college campuses both in the U.S. and abroad.
>
> Greg received his Masters in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics at Talbot School of Theology, graduating with high honors, and his Masters in Christian Apologetics from Simon Greenleaf University. He is an adjunct professor in Christian apologetics at Biola University. He's hosted his own radio talk show for over 20 years advocating clear-thinking Christianity and defending the Christian worldview.

He's one of my favorite speakers – very practical, very realistic, very easy to listen to for non-Christians. He speaks in a normal tone of voice, and he is a regular guy. This is as interesting to listen to for non-Christians as it is for Christians, because he *was* a non-Christian.

By the way, I posted the entire transcript of his debate with Michael Shermer on the Hugh Hewitt show.

What is the meaning of Memorial Day?

May 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Arlington National Cemetary

What is Memorial Day? It's the day that we remember all those brave men and women who have sacrificed to protect our liberties and our lives so that we could be safe from harm.

This video may help you to understand.

From Hot Air, a quote from Ronald Reagan.

> Memorial Day is an occasion of special importance to all Americans, because it is a day sacred to the memory of all those Americans who made the supreme sacrifice for the liberties we enjoy. We will never forget or fail to honor these heroes to whom we owe so much. We honor them best when we resolve to cherish and defend the liberties for which they gave their lives. Let us resolve to do all in our power to assure the survival and the success of liberty so that our children and their children for generations to come can live in an America in which freedom's light continues to shine.
>
> The Congress, in establishing Memorial Day, called for it to be a day of tribute to America's fallen, and also a day of national prayer for lasting peace. This Nation has always sought true peace. We seek it still. Our goal is peace in which the highest aspirations of our people, and people everywhere, are secure: peace with freedom, with justice, and with opportunity for human development. This is the permanent peace for which we pray, not only for ourselves but for all generations.
>
> The defense of peace, like the defense of liberty, requires more than lip service. It requires vigilance, military strength, and the willingness to take risks and to make sacrifices. The surest guarantor of both peace and liberty is our unflinching

> resolve to defend that which has been purchased for us by our fallen heroes.
>
> On Memorial Day, let us pray for peace — not only for ourselves, but for all those who seek freedom and justice.

And check some of my Medal of Honor posts:

- Navy SEAL Michael Murphy awarded Medal of Honor
- How Sal Giunta earned a Medal of Honor and lived to tell about it
- What can Christians learn from Rob Miller's Medal of Honor story?

If you want to help out our troops, you can send them things through Soldier's Angels.

God Bless Our Troops!

UPDATE: I am listening to this podcast from the Heritage Foundation about the origin and meaning of Memorial Day.

For more reading, why not check out some of the military bloggers?

- BlackFive
- Mudville Gazette
- Froggy Ruminations
- Michael Yon
- Bill Roggio
- Adventures of Chester

If you want to help out our troops, you can send them things through Soldier's Angels.

A British journalist assesses the significance of Memorial Day in America

May 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Arlington National Cemetery
Timothy Stanley writing in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> The apparent paradox of ignoble sacrifice can be resolved by considering what Americans actually fight for. The USA is unique in that it was founded on an idea. That's why I've headlined this piece with the controversial statement that it's the "greatest country in the world." To qualify: Britain is clearly God's garden, but it belongs only to the British. America, because it is founded on the universal principle of free will,*belongs to humanity*. It can assimilate any individual, family or entire culture because the principle is so much more powerful than the nationality of the person who integrates into it. As a Briton living in America – even without being a citizen – I feel more American than British on the strength of enjoying free speech, a free market, the free exchange of ideas, freedom of faith. Most importantly, I am unencumbered by the European poison of class. In the US, folks are defined by the content of their individual character, not what their ma and pa did for a living. If they want to become a nun and feed the poor, they can. If they want to become Donald Trump and screw the poor, they can do that, too. The Americans leave judgement to God.
>
> […]…American imperialism is unlike any other. The Europeans came to exploit, then they built a cultural edifice upon the wasteland. The Americans, by contrast, have rarely physically stayed anywhere very long. The US went through a period of European colonialism in the late 19th century, but the goal of Korea, Vietnam or even Iraq was to create a democratic state that could defend itself. America has tirelessly pursued dialogue with countries that have been determined to destroy it (Maoist China, the Soviet Union); it ended the Cold War without firing a single shot. Given their reputation for being gung-ho, one of the greatest virtues

> of the American people is their patience. And throughout it all, there's always been a vocal opposition at home that reminds the soldiers of the precious freedoms for which they fight. For all the wrong reasons, Richard Nixon was right when he said "[Our enemies] cannot defeat or humiliate the United States. Only Americans can do that."
>
> But my need to understand the strange pride that even I – a foreigner – feel when I walk among the graves at Arlington is, ultimately, redundant. On days like Memorial Day, a civilian has to just shut up and stand in silence – an act of respect for the giants in the earth, and for the great country that made them. God bless America.

Everyone can be an American in spirit. You just have to honor American heroes for their sacrifices.

New study: global warming skeptics know more about science than alarmists

May 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM posted this Fox News story on Facebook.

Excerpt:

> A study published Sunday in the journal Nature Climate Change finds that people who are not that worried about the effects of global warming tend to have a slightly higher level of scientific knowledge than those who are worried, as determined by their answers to questions like:
>
> - *"Electrons are smaller than atoms — true or false?"*
> - *"How long does it take the Earth to go around the Sun? One day, one month, or one year?"*
> - *"Lasers work by focusing sound waves — true or false?"*
>
> The quiz, containing 22 questions about both science and statistics, was given to 1,540 representative Americans. Respondents who were relatively less worried about global warming got 57 percent of them right, on average, just barely outscoring those whose who saw global warming as a bigger threat. They got 56 percent of the questions correct.
>
> "As respondents' science literacy scores increased, their concern with climate change decreased," the paper, which was funded by the National Science Foundation, notes.

It reminds me of the debate between theists. On the one hand, you've got the theists with their Big Bang, fine-tuning and biological information. On the other hand, you've got the atheists with their eternally oscillating bouncy universe, their unobservable multiverse and their hypothetical aliens seeding the Earth with life. It's science vs. religion, all right. Or perhaps I should say science vs. science fiction.

Why do people become atheists? Can an unwise person be a Christian?

May 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why do people become atheists? Let's take a look at some examples.

From this post on "Atheist Nexus", there's this blurb about Michael Shermer:

> Dr. Shermer characterizes himself as a skeptic. As he confesses in his book, "What I want to believe based on emotions and what I believe based on evidence and empirical data may not coincide. I am a skeptic not because I don't want to believe, but because I want to know. How can we tell the difference between what we would like to be true or what is actually true" (p. 2)? Dr. Shermer succumbed to skepticism after his girlfriend, Maureen, was critically injured in an auto accident and he appealed to God for her healing. "What finally tipped my belief into skepticism was the problem of evil–if God is all knowing, all powerful, and all good, then why do bad things happen to good people?" "A just and loving God who had the power to heal would surely heal Maureen. He didn't. He didn't. I now believe, not because God works in mysterious ways or he has a special plan for Maureen, but because there is no God" (p. 45).

Here's what got John Loftus started on atheism, according to his own book:

> Loftus starts off reminiscing on his deconversion story by stating that it was an appeal to the emotions, and not so much for intellectual reasons: "Some former believers have rejected their faith based upon the evidence itself. My initial reasons for rejecting the Christian faith are not the same ones that others have had…For me there were three major circumstances that happened in my life that changed my thinking. They all happened within the space of about five years, from 1991 to 1996. These things are associated with three people: A woman I'll call Linda, Larry, and Jeff. It was Linda who brought a major crisis into my life. Larry brought new information into my life. Jeff took away my sense of a loving Christian community…" (first paragraph, pg. 25)
>
> Not far off, things start to get a little weird: "I was the founding president of a shelter for the homeless in Angola, Indiana, where I was ministered. It was devoted to giving temporary shelter to people in need. I worked day by day with Linda, the executive director. She practically idolized me. She did everything I said to do, and would call me daily to ask for help in dealing with various situations that came up from running the shelter, along with her own personal issues. I was also having problems with my marriage at the time, and Linda made herself available to me. I succumbed and had an affair with her…"
>
> Loftus does not hesitate to get into the details of his extramarital affair with someone who was an alledgely "a former stripper in her younger days" who "had

> it in for preachers."

He complains that other Christians were "quick to condemn" him. He didn't like being judged.

Previously, I wrote about Lewis Wolpert's decision to abandon God – because when he was a child, God would not help him find his cricket bat. (His own words in the linked pocast).

And here is the case of Dan Barker, who decided that wandering across the country singing for "love offerings" was a stable enough financial arrangement to support a family. When his sensible plan failed, he began appealing to more liberal Christians in order to make more money, and adapting his message to suit his audience. Eventually, the hypocrisy became uncomfortable and he dumped God. (This is my conclusion from his own words in the podcast).

Excerpt:

> I think [Dan Barker] abandoned his faith because he wanted people to like him and because he needed to be invited to liberal churches in order to make money to pay for the "real life" needs of his family.
>
> He seems to have thought that Christianity is about having his needs met and being liked by others. I think he wanted to feel good and to make people feel good with his preaching and singing. He seems to have become aware that the exclusive claims of Christianity made other people feel offended, so he cut them out. He hadn't studied philosophy, science or history so that he would have been able to demonstrate to other people whether what he was saying was true. It's hard to offend people when you don't really know whether your claims are true or not, and when you don't know how to demonstrate whether they are true or not.
>
> I also think money was a factor. It seems to me that it would have hurt his career and reduced his invitations from liberal churches if he had kept up teaching biblical Christianity. In order to appeal to a wider audience, (like many Christian singers do – e.g. – Amy Grant, Jars of Clay, etc.), he would have felt pressured to water down the unpleasant parts of his preaching and singing. Lacking apologetics skill, he instead abandoned his message. He needed to account for his family's needs and "real life", and exclusive truth claims and Hell-talk would probably have reduced his ability to do that. It seems to me that he should have scaled back his extreme schedule of preaching and singing, and instead gotten a steady job so that he could afford "real life" and a family without being pressured into altering his message.

There never was a cognitive process for these atheists. There was just the dashed expectations in a Santa Claus God. I think that every person has to decide for themselves whether they have done a fair assessment of the evidence for and against God. You decide whether God exists based on whether he is nice to you, and whether he prevents

suffering for you. It is a blessing to suffer for the sake of righteousness, and even Jesus suffered for being obedient to God. Your level of happiness simply has no bearing on the arguments and evidence for God’s existence. When it comes to arguments about the origin of the universe and the fine-tuning and the moral argument, your feelings and needs are irrelevant.

Live Action sting: Planned Parenthood counsels late-term sex-selection abortion

May 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Pro-Life Blogs. (H/T J Warner Wallace)

Excerpt:

> Today, Live Action released a new undercover video showing a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic in Austin, TX encouraging a woman to obtain a late-term abortion because she was purportedly carrying a girl and wanted to have a boy. The video is first in a new series titled "Gendercide: Sex-Selection in America," exposing the practice of sex-selective abortion in the United States and how Planned Parenthood and the rest of the abortion industry facilitate the selective elimination of baby girls in the womb.
>
> Live Action writes, "Planned Parenthood claims to oppose 'gendercide.' So, why was Planned Parenthood staff so focused on aborting a baby girl, just because she was a girl? Even going so far as to coach a late term abortion, in order to confirm that the baby was the unwanted sex?"

Please see the related posts for more Planned Parenthood, and keep in mind that they are funded by the Susan G. Komen and the United Way.

UPDATE: Planned Parenthood responds:

> This spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood Federation of America also told The Huffington Post that the organization condemns seeking abortions on the basis of gender, but its policy is to provide "high quality, confidential, nonjudgmental care to all who come into" its health centers. That means that no Planned Parenthood clinic will deny a woman an abortion based on her reasons for wanting one, except in those states that explicitly prohibit sex-selective abortions (Arizona, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Illinois).

This is the way it is, folks. Murdering women because they are women – for profit. And all paid for with taxpayer dollars, thanks to Barack Obama. It's applied feminism.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Republicans ban taxpayer-funding of abortion in Arizona
- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists

- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the lawResearchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity
- Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

William Lane Craig vs. John Shelby Spong on the resurrection of Jesus

May 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig is the greatest Christian debater in the history of the church, and Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong is a very liberal non-Christian.

Part 1 of 2: (61 minutes)

Part 2 of 2: (42 minutes)

The moderator is none other than the famous journalist David Aikman! The opening speeches are only 15 minutes, and the rebuttals are 10 minutes. This debate is accessible because Craig's opponent is not really attacking him on a scholarly basis, but more as the pretty typical liberal atheist that you meet at work.

Craig spends all of his opening speech explaining historical methods, sources, dating and how he infers the resurrection as the best explanation of the minimal facts. The resurrection of Jesus is quite awesome to debate when people are given time to explain the historical methods and how the scholars use these methods to evaluate which facts are likely to be historical and which are not.

Walter Williams: where is the outrage over black-on-black crimes?

May 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams

A recent editorial by George Mason University professor of economics Walter Williams.

Excerpt:

> Each year, roughly 7,000 blacks are murdered. Ninety-four percent of the time, the murderer is another black person.
>
> According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1976 and 2011, there were 279,384 black murder victims. Using the 94-percent figure means that 262,621 were murdered by other blacks.
>
> Though blacks are 13 percent of the nation's population, they account for more than 50 percent of homicide victims. Nationally, the black homicide victimization rate is six times that of whites, and in some cities, it's 22 times that of whites.
>
> Coupled with being most of the nation's homicide victims, blacks are most of the victims of violent personal crimes, such as assault and robbery.
>
> The magnitude of this tragic mayhem can be viewed in another light. According to a Tuskegee Institute study, between 1882 and 1968, 3,446 blacks were lynched at the hands of whites. Black fatalities during the Korean War (3,075), Vietnam War (7,243) and all wars since 1980 (8,197) come to 18,515, a number that pales in comparison with black loss of life at home.
>
> It's a tragic commentary to be able to say that young black males have a greater chance of reaching maturity on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan than on the streets of Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Oakland, Newark and other cities.

You might remember that the NAACP just recently came out for gay marriage. Do they have their priorities straight?

Planned Parenthood has no problems with late-term sex selection abortions

May 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Planned Parenthood's response to the Live Action sting in which a Planned Parenthood worker was filmed counseling a customer to get a late-term, sex-selection abortion.

Excerpt:

> This spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood Federation of America also told The Huffington Post that the organization condemns seeking abortions on the basis of gender, but its policy is to provide "high quality, confidential, nonjudgmental care to all who come into" its health centers. That means that no Planned Parenthood clinic will deny a woman an abortion based on her reasons for wanting one, except in those states that explicitly prohibit sex-selective abortions (Arizona, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Illinois).
>
> Sex-selective abortions are the latest target of anti-abortion activists whose goal is to make abortions illegal across the United States. Lawmakers at the state and federal level have also latched onto the issue by introducing legislation that criminalizes doctors who perform abortions because of the race or gender of the fetus. Opponents of such laws say they force doctors into the inappropriate position of investigating a woman's personal motivations for seeking an abortion. The House of Representatives will debate Rep. Trent Franks' (R-Ariz.) Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act on Wednesday, which would ban sex-selective abortions in the United States.

Is that clear? Republicans favor banning sex-selection abortions and Democrats favor profiting from sex-selection abortions. So who hates women? Who wants to make it OK to murder women just because they are not men?

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

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20 questions that atheists need to be able to answer

May 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are some puzzling phenomena that every person should try to struggle with, and find the answers. (H/T Justin Brierley)

Here's the full list:

> 1.What caused the universe to exist?
>
> 2.What explains the fine tuning of the universe?
>
> 3.Why is the universe rational?
>
> 4.How did DNA and amino acids arise?
>
> 5.Where did the genetic code come from?
>
> 6.How do irreducibly complex enzyme chains evolve?

I'm leaving out numbers 7 and 8 because they lack specificity.

> 9.How is independent thought possible in a world ruled by chance and necessity?
>
> 10.How do we account for self-awareness?
>
> 11.How is free will possible in a material universe?
>
> 12.How do we account for conscience?
>
> 13.On what basis can we make moral judgements?
>
> 14.Why does suffering matter?
>
> 15.Why do human beings matter?
>
> 16.Why care about justice?
>
> 17.How do we account for the almost universal belief in the supernatural?
>
> 18.How do we know the supernatural does not exist?
>
> 19.How can we know if there is conscious existence after death?
>
> 20.What accounts for the empty tomb, resurrection appearances and growth of the church?

So here's the deal. It seems to me that there we can either search for and find answers to these questions, and then adjust our behavior to fit even if we will be less happy and fulfilled, or we can make our happiness and personal autonomy *in this life* the most important thing, and invent answers to these questions that are speculative. Either we live consistently with the evidence we have now, or we live how we want and hope for future evidence that will overturn the evidence we have now.

I think that this is the choice that we are facing as humans. Either we make truth the top priority, and let our lives change in order to respond to the evidence we have right now or we make our happiness the top priority and speculate that the universe is other than the way it is so that we can pursue happiness unencumbered by the obligation to know the

Creator and Designer of the universe.

Everyone always talks about “the meaning of life”. I’ll tell you what the meaning of life is. It’s to puzzle about the questions above and get into an intimate, loving, self-sacrificial relationship with the Creator and Designer of the universe – a relationship bounded by facts, not feelings. What is so objectionable with the idea that there might be a Person out there who has a claim on us? So long as his intentions are good, why are we so unwilling to be his friend and to take his character into account when we decide what we will do with our lives?

CBO: each job created by stimulus cost between $4.1 million and $540,000

May 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the latest Congressional Budget Office report. (H/T American Enterprise Institute)

> When [the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act] was being considered, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation estimated that it would increase budget deficits by $787 billion between fiscal years 2009 and 2019. **CBO now estimates that the total impact over the 2009–2019 period will amount to about $831 billion.**
>
> By CBO's estimate, close to half of that impact occurred in fiscal year 2010, and more than 90 percent of ARRA's budgetary impact was realized by the end of March 2012. CBO has estimated the law's impact on employment and economic output using evidence about the effects of previous similar policies and drawing on various mathematical models that represent the workings of the economy. …
>
> On that basis CBO estimates that ARRA's policies had the following effects in the first quarter of calendar year 2012 compared with what would have occurred otherwise:
>
> – They raised real (inflation-adjusted) gross domestic product (GDP) by between 0.1 percent and 1.0 percent,
>
> – They lowered the unemployment rate by between 0.1 percentage points and 0.8 percentage points,
>
> **– They increased the number of people employed by between 0.2 million and 1.5 million,**
>
> – They increased the number of full-time-equivalent jobs by 0.3 million to 1.9 million. (Increases in FTE jobs include shifts from part-time to full-time work or overtime and are thus generally larger than increases in the number of employed workers.)

We spend $831 billion taxpayer dollars to create between 200,000 to 1.5 million jobs. That works out to a cost-per-job number of between $4.1 million and $540,000.

Go socialism! Our children can afford to pay for our generation's irresponsible wastefulness, right? I mean the ones we don't abort, of course.

How can you convince a high school student to study something useful?

May 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You can give them this book by Captain Capitalism.

Excerpt:

> Graduation is coming up. Lots of little kinder will be graduating and off to bigger and better things. Matter of fact many of you probably have little kinder graduating or even nieces, nephews or neighborhood kids you've seen grow up over the years. Regardless, the question is what do you get them for a graduation gift? Very simple. "Worthless."
>
> My regular readers already know what Worthless is about, but for those of you unfamiliar with the book it is THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT BOOK high school and college-age kids can read. It IS the perfect graduation gift and I do not say that out of hyperbole or salesmanship. I say it because I believe it's true. "Worthless" ***is*** the perfect graduation gift.
>
> The reason why is very simple. Millions of kids make a huge and life-destroying decision every year – they major in a worthless subject. Take your emotions or feelings out of it. In today's economy, we really cannot afford the luxury of sparing their feelings and lying to them, saying,
>
> *"Hey kid, follow your heart and the money will follow. You're going to be a great French Art History major!"*
>
> as we nervously put on a fake smile hiding our concern.
>
> The amount of money they (or you) are going to spend on tuition, not to mention the sheer volume of their youth they will spend pursuing a degree, can NOT be wasted simply because nobody had the courage to tell the kids the truth about economics and the realities of the labor market.
>
> But you don't have to. The book will do it for it you.
>
> "Worthless" explains first and foremost to the reader that the reason somebody got them this book is because that person really cares about them. And while it may not be what they want to hear, they will end up appreciating it in the future. "Worthless" also goes into detail and explains in clear, understandable language the economics behind the labor market, showing the reader how and why some degrees are worthwhile and others are literally worthless.
>
> The book is $13 in paperback and only $5 on Kindle. A miniscule fraction of the tuition and time costs of earning a four year degree. Because of its potential to prevent kids from making a VERY costly mistake, the cheap price practically compels you to at least consider it.
>
> So do a graduate you care about a huge favor. Buy them "Worthless" for a

> graduation gift. And if you’re so kind, do me a favor and simply spread the word by sending people this post.

You do not want to have someone you love go off to college and study things that don’t lead to a job. You especially don’t want them to rack up tens of thousands of dollars in student loans only to be unemployed after graduating.

The seven fatal flaws of moral relativism

May 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two kinds of relativism, moral and epistemic. The first kind of relativism says that there are no objective moral rules, but only what individuals or groups decide for themselves in certain times and places – like taste in foods or fashions. The second kind says that no propositional statements about reality are objectively true.

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Australian site Faith Interface.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like "It's wrong to push your own morality on others". This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don't let them make any moral statements without asking them first to ground morality on their worldview. And that's because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can't answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people's personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It's all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be "it depends". It depends on the person who is speaking because it's a subjective claim, not an objective claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

The whole point of atheism is to pursue pleasure without the bonds of morality – there is no other reason to do anything on atheism except for the pleasure it gives you. You do fashionable things to feel good getting praise from your neighbors, and you do

unfashionable things in private to make yourself feel good and you hope that no one who is powerful enough to hold you accountable ever finds out. There’s no way you were made to be.

Gay porn actor Luka Rocco Magnotta wanted by police for murder

May 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the National Post. (WARNING: Graphic details of murder)

Excerpt:

> The hunt for Luka Rocco Magnotta has gone worldwide, with INTERPOL issuing an international warrant for the arrest of the Canadian man accused in a Montreal murder that saw a torso left in a suitcase and a hand and foot mailed to the Ottawa offices of the Liberal and Conservative parties.
>
> The global bulletin follows a Canada-wide warrant issued by Montreal police hours after officers first entered the 29-year-old suspect's apartment — the scene of one of the most gruesome killings in Montreal in recent memory.
>
> The police had finished their work inside and Apartment 208 was pretty much stripped bare, but the stomach-turning stench and darkened red stain on the mattress left little doubt that something terrible had happened there.
>
> "The smell of death is not funny," Eric Schorer, the building's superintendent, said as he opened the door Wednesday afternoon. "If you look at the bed, that's where it happened."
>
> Not only was the unidentified victim dismembered, not only were two body parts apparently mailed to political parties in Ottawa, but it has emerged that the killer filmed his crime and posted it on the Internet. The snuff film titled 1 Lunatic 1 Ice Pick, depicting the dismemberment of an Asian male body and various indignities to the remains, has provoked online debate about its veracity since it was posted last week. Police have confirmed the video depicts the actual crime.
>
> […]Mr. Magnotta, who has also been known as Eric Clinton Newman and Vladimir Romanov, has left abundant traces on the Internet. **A Toronto native, he had worked in gay porn and as a model, but more recently he attracted attention after being linked to a 2010 online video showing kittens being suffocated with the aid of a vacuum cleaner.**
>
> A blog attributed to him and titled "Necrophilia Serial Killer Luka Magnotta" included this March 2012 post:
>
> **"It's not cool to the world being a necrophiliac. It's bloody lonely. But I dont (sic) really care, I have never cared what people thought of me, most people are judgemental idiots. I'm unable to talk to anybody about it and there's always the knowledge that 99% of people would be repulsed by me if they found out about my feelings. Some people would even want to harm me."**
>
> […]The online video shows a naked male, tied to a bed frame, being attacked

> with both an ice pick and a kitchen knife, according to the description on a website called Best Gore. The victim is stabbed, has his throat slashed and is later decapitated and dismembered. The video was posted on Best Gore on May 25, but it is unclear when, or where, it was filmed.

There seems to be a lot of people who excuse their actions by saying they were "born that way" and they need to be true to their feelings – there's even a Lady Gaga song about it. Basically, the idea is that people have a right to be happy, and to act out their feelings, and they should not have to care about what anyone else (especially God) thinks about it. Anyone who tells them that what they are doing wrong is just called names, like "intolerant" or "bigot". The public schools in Quebec have a mandatory curriculum that is designed to affirm all points of view on moral questions as equally valid, and to undermine the influence of religion so that moral judgments are not grounded in any sort of objective moral hierarchy. It is even forced on homeschoolers.

Are the crimes of this gay porn actor the result of the marginalization of morality by the secular left? Is the antagonism of being judged so strong in society that people like this feel empowered to act on their feelings? I think that the lesson of this story is that we need to rethink what it means to tell young people that "anything goes" and that moral judgments and moral disagreement are essentially bigotry that offends people. That's the message of the Human Rights Commissions in Canada. The HRCs think that it's a criminal offense to make people feel bad by making moral judgments about whatever they are doing. They've prosecuted people for expressing their opinions on moral issues many times – often over many years and with huge legal costs.

I think that Canada needs to return to their free speech roots and turn away from these speech-censoring HRCs and pro-relativism education standards in Quebec schools. Canada needs to reaffirm that it's OK to say that someone is wrong on moral issues. Not everything that every person feels like doing is equally good. Sometimes, it's better to just say to someone early on in their lives "I think that what you are doing is wrong" even if they feel badly, so that a line is drawn before it turns into murder. Just expressing an opinion on moral boundaries early on might stop someone like this from carrying out the crimes that he has now committed. There are worse things in the world than hurt feelings. Some things are wrong, and people should be able to say so.

War on women: Obama and Democrats oppose ban on sex-selection abortion

May 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama appears to oppose the ban on sex-selection abortions that the House of Representatives debated yesterday and will be voting on today.
>
> ABC News White House correspondent Jake Tapper posted a new report indicating President Obama opposes the bill to prohibit performing or coercing abortions to eliminate unborn babies of an undesired sex. Tapper raised the question at Wednesday's White House press briefing, but did not receive a respond to his question about Obama's position.
>
> […]White House deputy press secretary Jamie Smith told him in a statement: "The Administration opposes gender discrimination in all forms, but the end result of this legislation would be to subject doctors to criminal prosecution if they fail to determine the motivations behind a very personal and private decision. The government should not intrude in medical decisions or private family matters in this way."
>
> National Right to Life legislative director Douglas Johnson was upset to learn Obama opposes the common-sense bill, telling LifeNews: "It is appalling, but not surprising, that President Obama now stands with the pro-abortion political committees and his Hollywood donors, rather than with the coerced women, and their unborn daughters, who are victimized in sex-selection abortions."

And Mary sent me this article from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Democrats in Congress peddled a curious reason for opposing a ban on sex-selection abortions that target girl babies with abortion because they are not boys parents may prefer. They said the ban was anti-woman and part of the so-called "War on Women" Republicans are allegedly waging.
>
> During today's debate on the Congressional bill to ban sex-selection abortions, Michigan Democrat John Conyers said the ban on sex-selection abortions "tramples the rights of women."
>
> "It limits a woman's right to choose and jeopardizes her access to safe, legal medical care," he claimed.
>
> […]Rep. Trent Franks, an Arizona Republican, said during the debate: "A minority baby is currently five times more likely to be aborted than a white baby,

> and nearly half of all black babies are aborted, with over 70 percent of abortion clinics being located in predominantly minority neighborhoods."
>
> In a letter Wednesday, Americans United for Life urged House members to "stop a real war on women — sex selection abortions" by supporting the legislation.
>
> "This is a real war on women," said AUL leader Charmaine Yoest. "And it is wrong when we turn a blind eye to women being eliminated in the womb simply for being a member of the female sex."
>
> "There is nothing pro-woman about killing a baby girl because she is female, and putting her mother's health and safety at risk in the process," she said. "Americans—whether pro-life or pro-abortion—overwhelmingly oppose this barbaric practice that undermines the dignity of the human person and agree that sex-selection abortion should be illegal. AULA calls on all Members of the House to vote for PRENDA to stop the war on women yet to be born."
>
> Congressman Chris Smith, a New Jersey Republican, drove the point home about how and why the bill is pro-woman.
>
> "For most of us, Mr. Speaker, "it's a girl" is cause for enormous joy, happiness and celebration. But in many countries—including our own—it can be a death sentence. Today, the three most dangerous words in China and India are: it's a girl. We can't let that happen here," he explained. "By now most people know that the killing of baby girls by abortion or at birth is pervasive in China due to the One Child policy and a preference for sons. China and India are "missing" tens of millions of daughters."

If you would like to see what abortion looks like, just click this link.

Should we really be celebrating this practice? It seems to me that it's worse than slavery. Losing your liberty is really really bad. Losing your life is worse. Especially when you haven't done anything wrong. Let's be more responsible with our alcohol consumption and sexual behavior so that we don't have to kill any innocent unborn children. Fun is nice, but not if it means that someone innocent has to die just so we can have fun.

Going to university? Then be aware of the secular leftist thought police

June 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a fine book I enjoyed by my friend Ari Mendelson, which talks about the dangers of political correctness on campus.

Excerpt:

> Lured by brochures promising limitless intellectual freedom, Jeff Jackson arrives at picturesque Tinsley College, eager to experience college life to the fullest. He does not know that the freedom he has been promised is in short supply at Tinsley, a college so dedicated to leftist ideals that the administration changed the name of the anthropology department to "anthrogynology" in order to make the name more "gender inclusive."
>
> Jeff makes the mistake of believing that the renowned Professor Bancroft Tarlton would be willing to debate the left wing politics that the professor advocates in his classes. Not realizing that there are just some questions one does not ask on a college campus, Jeff submits an essay outlining his provocative theories about happiness and human sexuality.
>
> Professor Tarlton is not the only one furious at Jeff for his lack of devotion to left wing norms. Calling himself a "pomosexual" and believing Jeff to be not only a homophobe, but a "pomophobe" as well, Carl Fitzgerald, Jeff's classmate, begins a feud with Jeff. The battle escalates from insults, to vandalism, to shattered love affairs and a dorm room inhabited by a fainting goat. In a college obsessed with political correctness, a clash between the writer of a "homophobic" essay and the "pomosexual" victim of a college prank can only end one way: with a showdown in a campus courtroom.

You can click the link to get an electronic copy for $0.99. You will get many times more enjoyment out of it than that. It's a nice little introduction to parents about what really goes on in the liberal arts departments of most universities.

University is a fine thing as long as you go there to learn math, science, technology or engineering. If you go there to study anything else, all you will learn is how to parrot the opinions of your professor. Any dissent will be met with bad grades, and possibly expulsion. There is no focus on producing value outside of the STEM departments. Not only is it a waste of money to be indoctrinated, but it destroys your ability to think critically and independently.

Note: I have a BS and MS in the hard sciences, and that's what I recommend to everyone going to college. Engineering, math and technology – you can't go wrong with actual marketable skills.

Obama administration advising black pastors on how to get out the vote

June 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Blaze.

Excerpt:

> Representative Emanuel Cleaver of Missouri revealed on MSNBC Tuesday that lawyers from the ACLU, IRS administrators, and even Attorney General Eric Holder will soon be speaking with hundreds of pastors in the African-American community on how they can best comport themselves throughout the 2012 election.
>
> "We will have representatives from nine denominations who actually pastor somewhere in the neighborhood of **about 10 million people**," he said, "and we're going to first of all equip them with the information they need to know about **what they can say and what they cannot say in the church** that would violate their 501c3 status with the IRS." [Emphasis added]
>
> While they won't specifically tell people whom to vote for, the respected speakers will discuss "draconian" (hint) voter identification laws, and the Congressional Black Caucus expects the move will only help the Obama's campaign.
>
> […]Reports have noted that Obama alienated members of the African American community after endorsing gay marriage and overseeing an increase of the African American unemployment rate to roughly 14% (nearly 35% for teenagers).

This is one of those curious things that confuse people about Christianity – the number of people who claim to be Christians but who are clearly not Christians in serious sense of the term. Let me be clear. There is no such thing as an authentic Christian who votes in favor of partial birth abortion, the redefinition of marriage, subsidies for those who have babies out of wedlock, and increased economic dependence on a secular leftist state which is hostile to Christian evangelism and school choice.

For the record, I am a colored Protestant, and I have darker skin than Obama. I am a real Christian, and it doesn't matter to me what Obama looks like when I'm voting. I vote based on Christian convictions, not tribalism and racism. There is no support for redistribution of wealth from families to government in the Bible. On the contrary, there is support for private property and meaningful work and *private charity*. It's up to each Christian to be informed and to vote accordingly.

New jobs report: unemployment rises and 70% chance of recession

June 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

James Pethokoukis of the American Enterprise Institute explains:

> The May jobs report was a complete and utter disaster for the economy and, perhaps, President Obama's chances for reelection.
>
> Employers created just 69,000 jobs last month, the Labor Department said on Friday. That's the fewest since May of last year. Economists had been expecting nonfarm payrolls to increase by 150,000. (In fact, the result was lower than what any economist polled by Reuters had predicted.)
>
> Moreover, companies added 49,000 fewer jobs than previously estimated in March and April. Talk about a slowdown. The average monthly gain was 226,000 in first quarter vs. an average of just 73,000 in April and May.
>
> Oh, and the U-3 unemployment rate rose to 8.2% from 8.1%. The broader U-6 gauge, which also measures underemployment, rose to 14.8% from 14.5%. The labor force participation rate did, finally, tick up to a still-low 63.8%, lending credence to the idea that the shrinking workforce reflects discouraged workers and not just demographics.

And here's the forecast: WE'RE DOOMED.

> So what is the true state of the labor market?
>
> – If the size of the U.S. labor force as a share of the total population was the same as it was when Barack Obama took office—65.7% then vs. 63.8% today—**the U-3 unemployment rate would be 10.9%.** (Now, this doesn't take into account the aging of the Baby Boomers, which should lower the participation rate due to rising retirements. But is that still a valid assumption given the drop in wealth since 2006?)
>
> – If you take into account the aging of the Baby Boomers, the participation rate should be trending lower. Indeed, it has been doing just that since 2000. Before the Great Recession, the Congressional Budget Office predicted what the participation rate would be in 2012, assuming such demographic changes. **Using that number, the real unemployment rate would be 10.5%.**
>
> – Of course, the participation rate usually falls during recessions. Yet even if you discount for that and the aging issue, **the real unemployment rate would be 9.5%**.
>
> – We continue to be stuck in the longest period of 8% unemployment or higher since the Great Depression, 40 consecutive months.
>
> – And, as the above chart shows — originally from Obama economists Christina

> Romer and Jared Bernstein in January 2009 –the current 8.2% unemployment rate is 2.5 percentage points above where Team Obama predicted it would be right now if Congress passed his trillion-dollar stimulus plan.
>
> – The median duration of unemployment rebounded to 20.1 weeks in May, and 42.8% were unemployed for longer than a half year.
>
> – Total hours worked fell 0.2% on weakness in the work week.
>
> – Average hourly earnings rose just 0.1%. Coupled with a very stable overall inflation rate, real wages were likely flat in May.
>
> The big question now: Does this report suggest the U.S economy is heading into recession, especially given the sharp slowdown in global economic activity from Europe to India to, perhaps most worrisome, China?
>
> **Consider this: Last year, the U.S. grew at just a 1.7% pace. Research from the Federal Reserve finds that that since 1947 when year-over-year real GDP growth falls below 2 percent, recession follows within a year 70 percent of the time. We are firmly within the Recession Red Zone.**

Facebook friend WGB pointed me to this story in CNS News:

> The number of American women who are unemployed was 766,000 individuals greater in May 2012 than in January 2009, when President Barack Obama took office, according to data released today by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
>
> In January 2009, there were approximately 5,005,000 unemployed women in the United States,according to BLS. In May 2012, there were 5,771,000.
>
> […]The number of women employed in the United States peaked at 68,102,000 in April 2008, according to BLS. The number of women employed in the United States today is 1,216,000 less than that.

Remember, the Democrats got control of Congress in January 2007, and had control of spending in the 2008 fiscal year. My take is that the hiring is still going on in places like Canada and Chile and Sweden, where government isn't taxing and regulating job creators into oblivion. Companies are still hiring and expanding and drilling for oil – just not here.

Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)

June 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.6/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> Four robbers hold up an armored truck, getting away with over a million dollars in cash. Joe Rolfe (John Payne), a down-on-his-luck flower delivery truck driver is accused of being involved and is roughly interrogated by local police. Released due to lack of evidence, Joe, following the clues to a Mexican resort, decides to look for the men who set him up both to clear his name and to exact revenge.

If you liked last week's film noire, you're going to love this week's film noire.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Luka Rocco Magnotta’s murder victim was his gay lover

June 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports that Luka Rocco Magnotta is now on the run in France. (WARNING: Graphic details of murder)

Excerpt:

> Yesterday, as 190 countries joined in an Interpol manhunt for Magnotta, his victim was identified as Lin Jun, a Chinese student who was studying in Montreal.
>
> Police said Mr Lin, 33, was in a relationship with Magnotta, 29.
>
> […]Police say Mr Lin had been in Montreal since July last year and was studying at Concordia University.
>
> His family lost contact with him on May 24.
>
> Days later a janitor found his limbless body in a suitcase near Magnotta’s apartment in the city. Other body parts were found in the flat. The video of the killing is called ‘1 Lunatic 1 Ice Pick’ and shows a man tied to a bed frame being hacked with a kitchen knife and the ice pick.
>
> The victim’s throat is slashed and he is stabbed before being decapitated and dismembered.
>
> The killer also appears to eat some of the flesh.

Here is my previous post on Luka Rocco Magnotta in which I explain how Canada’s war on the free exercise of religion and the free expression of moral judgments makes outcomes like this unsurprising, especially in secular leftist Quebec.

Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?

June 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A Washington Post editorial by three Republican senators highlights a persistent problem.

Excerpt:

> Espionage is a dangerous business often seen only through a Hollywood lens. Yet the real-world operations, and lives, that inspire such thrillers are highly perishable. They depend on hundreds of hours of painstaking work and the ability to get foreigners to trust our government.
>
> Sitting in a prison cell in Pakistan is one of those foreigners who trusted us. Shakil Afridi served as a key informant to the United States in the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. This brave physician put his life on the line to assist U.S. efforts to track down the most-wanted terrorist in the world, yet our government left him vulnerable to the Pakistani tribal justice system, which sentenced him to 33 years for treason. The imprisonment and possible torture of this courageous man — for aiding the United States in one of the most important intelligence operations of our time — coincides with a deeply damaging leak in another case.
>
> The world learned a few weeks ago that U.S. intelligence agencies and partners had disrupted an al-Qaeda plot to blow up a civilian aircraft using an explosive device designed by an affiliate in Yemen. This disclosure revealed sources and methods that could make future successes more difficult to achieve. The public release of information surrounding such operations also risks the lives of informants and makes it more difficult to maintain productive partnerships with other intelligence agencies. These incidents paint a disappointing picture of this administration's judgment when it comes to national security.
>
> […]The problem stems in part from the media's insatiable desire for real-world information that makes intelligence operations look like those of filmmakers' imaginations. That is understandable, but this hunger is fed by inexcusable contributions from current and former U.S. officials.
>
> For example, why did the Obama administration hold a conference call May 7 with a collection of former government officials, some of whom work as TV contributors and analysts, to discuss the foiled bomb threat? In doing so, the White House failed to safeguard sensitive intelligence information that gave us an advantage over an adversary. Broadcasting highly classified information notifies every enemy of our tactics and every current and future partner of our inability to provide them the secrecy that often is the difference between life and death.
>
> […]When they leave Capitol Hill, former members of Congress and their staff are,

> by law, prohibited from petitioning their former congressional colleagues for up to two years. Yet nothing restricts former security officials from using their government contacts and experience to provide live commentary on breaking news stories.
>
> Furthermore, nothing limits current officials from using their media contacts to control a story — or to even promote a big-budget movie. We were shocked to learn that the White House has also leaked classified details of the bin Laden raid to Hollywood filmmakers, including the confidential identities of elite U.S. military personnel.

The authors:

> *Dan Coats, Richard Burr and Marco Rubio, all Republicans, represent Indiana, North Carolina and Florida, respectively, in the U.S. Senate and are members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.*

Here's my take: Democrats want to equalize influence between our country and countries like Iran, China and North Korea. One way they can do this is by undermining our ability to defend our interests abroad. It's all part of the leftist dream of making everyone "equal" so that there are no disagreements. In a very real sense, leftists are responsible for enabling the human rights abuses and purges that go on in countries like Iran, China and North Korea. They don't really think that things like shooting pro-Democracy protestors (Iran), coerced abortion (China) and executing Christians for distributing Bibles (North Korea), etc. should be opposed with American influence.

What causes women to become single mothers by choice? Are men to blame?

June 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this revealing article from the UK Daily Mail. It answers the question "Where does fatherlessness come from?".

Excerpt:

> My marriage ended, without rancour or argument, 18 months after it had begun. There was no recrimination, just a realisation, as sharp as physical pain, that we would never — could never — agree on one fundamental point.
>
> I wanted children; my husband Anthony did not. You may think we should have resolved this crucial issue long before we bought a house and vowed to spend the rest of our lives together, but love had a way of blinding us to the depth of our disagreement.

By "love" she means three things: 1) he was physically attractive, 2) she became sexually active with him after one month of meeting him, and 3) she moved in with him before he made a commitment to marriage and parenting. (As we shall see) As far as I can tell, she spent her late 20s to mid 30s with this guy – a guy she chose of her own free will. A guy who never indicated any interest in children, but who indicated plenty of interest in recreational sex.

More:

> Today, I am 37 and a single mum to gorgeous three-month-old twin boys Charlie and William. They were conceived through IVF, using my eggs and sperm from an anonymous donor, and the love I feel for them is all-consuming.
>
> […]**Anthony, a policeman, was easy and fun**; we chatted comfortably together, and when we started dating I was impressed by his integrity. He had passionate views about fairness and loyalty. **He was attractive, too — tall, dark hair, blue eyes — and I felt we could build a loving relationship together.**

"Easy and fun" = no divisive truth claims, no moral judgments, no moral boundaries, no goals, no plans, no expectations, no obligations. Perfect! The modern feminist ideal.

More:

> **After a month or so, our physical relationship began, but we did not rush things. It was a couple of years before he moved into my flat in Crawley, West Sussex, and I expected we'd eventually marry and have kids.**
>
> **Looking back, I suppose I should have heeded the warning signals.**

> **When I broached the subject of children, he stalled. His stock reply was: 'We'll have them later.'**
>
> **So although he was non-committal, I loved him and assumed that his paternal instinct would kick in as he grew older.** But the years passed and I was not reassured.

She thinks that a man who agrees to recreational sex after a month and then agrees to cohabitation after two years is the kind of man who is capable of making a lifelong commitment to be faithful to her and to raise children. That strikes me as equivalent to saying that a man whose favorite movie is Top Gun would also make a good airline pilot.

More:

> And then I reached 30. My friends were marrying; settling into comfortable domesticity, preparing for parenthood, and Anthony and I were still in this limbo.
>
> […]Then my best friend announced she was pregnant and the joy I felt for her was tainted by Anthony's absence of commitment to the idea of having children with me. So we had another discussion — this time, it was a passionate one. 'It's a deal-breaker,' I said. 'Much as I love you, if you don't want children we can't carry on.'
>
> But, again, he assured me that it would all happen. I just had to bide my time.
>
> So I waited until Anthony was 30, an age when I felt he was old enough to settle down. We loved each other whole-heartedly; we'd bought two successive homes together and the understanding was implicit: my future was bound up in his.
>
> […]**I wanted so much to believe he would warm to the idea**, but Anthony equivocated. He still wasn't ready, he protested.
>
> […]But then Anthony demonstrated just how strong his aversion to babies was. We were visiting a friend who'd recently given birth and, when her baby cried, Anthony made his excuses and went home.
>
> 'I just can't stand the sound of that crying,' he said testily when I confronted him later. 'If we had a baby, I'd have to move out for the first six weeks.'
>
> It wasn't a propitious sign, but eventually he seemed to soften.
>
> 'If we're going to have children, we'll have to get married first,' he said the next time I raised the subject, and for once I agreed absolutely. We should get married; by making a public commitment to stay together for the rest of our lives, we would be taking the first step towards establishing a secure home for our future babies.
>
> […]After six months as man and wife, there had been no mention from Anthony of children. So one day, as we walked home from town, I broached the subject again.
>
> 'We can't afford to have children,' he responded sharply and, rather than discuss the topic further, he marched off ahead of me.

> […]**This was not the life I had planned for myself: for the first time I started to feel anger towards Anthony. I felt he had forced this situation onto me.**

Have no fear, the government was there to give her taxpayer-funded IVF and single mother welfare payments, free day care, free public schools, and free health care. After all, none of this was her fault. It was all that beastly man's fault. It's nothing that can't be solved by taking a little money from the other single men's pockets, though. After all, if they have less money, that will make them even MORE likely to marry and conceive children. Anthony couldn't afford to have children, so the solution to that is to tax all the other men so that they can't afford to have children. Fatherless children impose enormous costs on society as well, most directly through increased crime. But who cares? As long as this woman gets what she wants, right?

And it goes on and on and on, with feminists completely ignorant about how they are causing their own messes with their support for wealth redistribution and their own irresponsible choices with men. He was attractive though. Very attractive. I'm sure her friends were all impressed and envious of her on the wedding day. After all, if a man has a square jaw and enjoys recreational sex, that is a clear sign he is ready for marriage and parenting. Right?

The cosmological argument and the new BGV theorem

June 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you all read my summary of the excellent debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican? That was probably the best debate I have seen in since 2005. William Lane Craig presented the arguments for theism, including his standard Kalam cosmological argument which asserts that the universe had a beginning. The atheist, Peter Millican, raised several objections to the notion of a beginning to the universe. But Craig was able to establish the beginning of the universe by appealing to something called the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem. This theorem is new – but it is worth learning about.

First, let's review Craig's cosmological argument:

> A1) The origin of the universe
>
> 1. The universe began to exist.
> 2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
> 3. The universe has a transcendent cause.
>
> The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.
>
> There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.
>
> The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past.
>
> Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.
>
> The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

So he appealed to the Bord-Guth-Vilenkin theorem right from the start in order to guarantee a space-time boundary in the past – i.e., a beginning of the universe, which is his premise 1.

Ok, now let's take a look at some videos on this theorem.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem, explained

Part 1:

Part 2:

Millican tried to argue that there was a way to get a beginning in an eternal universe if the universe was contracting. I'm guessing he means that the new universe would begin to exist within some outside hyper-universe.

But Craig had a response:

Further study

If you would like to read a nice LONG article about Craig's cosmological argument, just check this post I wrote a while back. And it even contains a nice peer-reviewed paper that Craig wrote for an Astrophysics journal – and the abstract is *online* on Springer! Now put your Evil Hat on and think with me – think of the fun you could have by sending that paper to all your atheist friends. Send them the abstract on Springer, and send them the full text of the article. Then send them the link to my summary of the Craig-Millican debate which has the audio. If that doesn't rehabiliate God's reputation and honor in their eyes, then nothing will. At the very least, they should be ready to accept that atheism is not as well supported by science, which is exactly the way that God intended things to be.

What does the Bible say in Psalm 19:1-6:

[1] The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
[2] Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
[3] They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
[4] Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.
[5] It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
[6] It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth.

And in Romans 1:20:

[20] For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

And in Hebrews 11:3:

[3] By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Indeed. And it's our job to make his glory know to the unbeliever – using good science.

Obesity in Christian churches: what happened to the sin of gluttony?

June 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> But a potentially larger crisis is looming in the pews of churches across America. In fact, statistics suggest that the church today may indeed be in worse condition than the general population. A 2006 Purdue study found that the fundamental Christians are by far the heaviest of all religious groups led by the Baptists with a 30% obesity rate compared with Jews at 1%, Buddhists and Hindus at 0.7%.
>
> […]Similarly, a 2011 Northwestern University study tracking 3,433 men and women for 18 years found that young adults who attend church or a bible study once a week are 50% more likely to be obese.
>
> The Pawtucket Heart Health Program found that people who attended church were more likely than non-church members to be 20 percent overweight and have higher cholesterol and blood pressure numbers.
>
> Finally, a 2001 Pulpit and Pew study of 2,500 clergy found that 76% were overweight or obese compare to 61% of the general population at the time of the study.
>
> At the church level pastors and clergy are burdened by the skyrocketing number of their members with chronic diseases such as cancer and heart disease and confess that a growing and disproportionate amount their time is spent caring for their ill members and less time spent in study, discipleship, and evangelism.
>
> […]The obesity epidemic in the church appears to be undermining the primary purpose of the church and its missions work by straining church budgets, decidedly absorbing money that would be spent on missions abroad, and consuming the time and energy of pastors and church members.

I like the tone of this article for two reasons. First, it looks at the Christian mission financially and practically, noting how factors like obesity undermine the primary missions of the church. Second, it does not propose government solutions, but only advises that pastors address the top in sermons.

Speaking for myself, these practical sorts of concerns are always at the forefront of my thoughts. I always think about how I am going to achieve things and how much it will cost. Christianity should be practical, as well as spiritual. We need to emphasize the importance of being informed and being skilled at life. I think it’s a mistake to focus so much on church attendance and spiritual things that we neglect how we are going to achieve the things that we are supposed to be achieving in the world outside of the

church.

Obama lied, the economy died: comparing GDP forecasts to actual results

June 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

2011: (click for larger image)

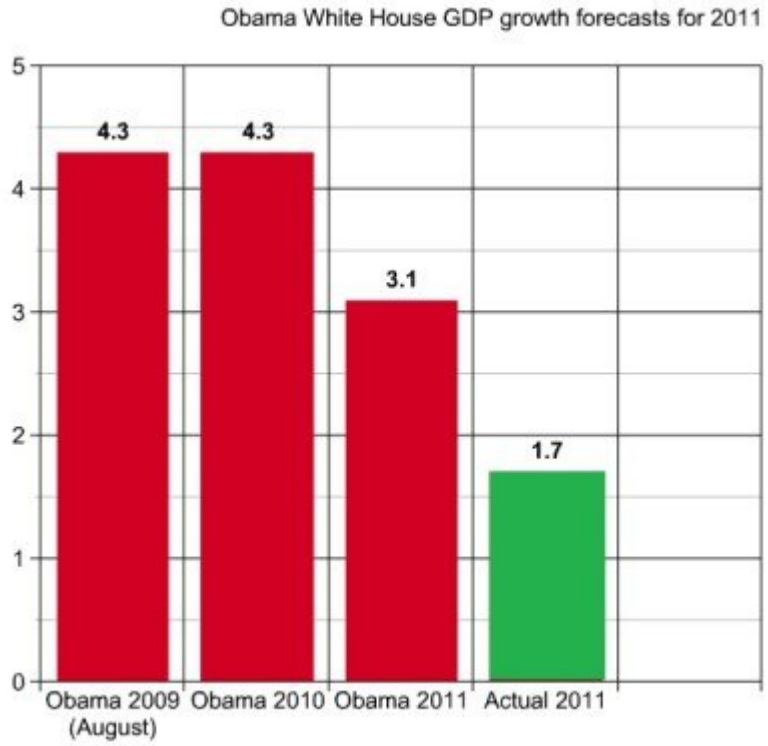

Obama's broken promises of GDP growth in 2011

2012: (click for larger image)

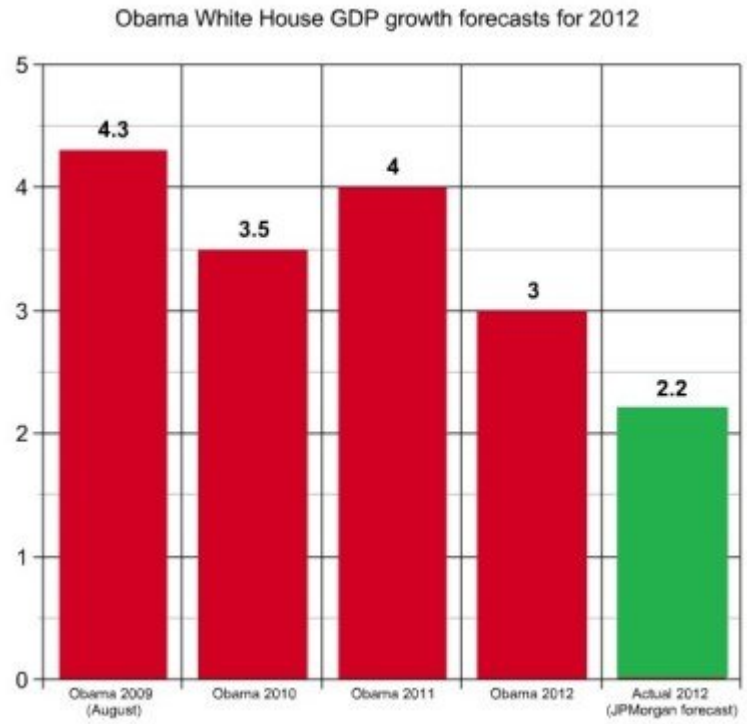

Obama's broken promises of GDP growth in 2012

Story from James Pethokoukis of the American Enterprise Institute. (H/T Arthur Brooks)

Excerpt:

> After every jobs report, I update the jobs forecast and chart Team Obama put out in January 2009 that projected the future unemployment rate if Congress passed his stimulus plan. It shows the unemployment rate far higher today than what Obama economists predicted back then, 8.2% vs. 5.7%.
>
> […][T]his White House has continually overestimated the strength of the recovery — as the charts above and below indicate (based on official White House forecasts). This says to me the problem isn't the data going into the forecast model, the problem is the forecast model built on Keynesian assumptions about the impact of government spending and temporary tax hikes. Obama simply has the wrong model for growth.

It seems to me that the Obama approach to the economy is not to encourage the private sector to create jobs in a sustainable way by lowering corporate taxes from their 35% (highest in the world!) rate and by reducing the regulatory burden. Their plan for the last 4 years was to basically borrow money from private sector job creators to give it to their campaign donors and union supporters. Does cronyism and corruption produce produce private sector job growth? I think not. And, in fact, this is what happened.

Obama was always a drug-taking, affirmative action fraud – even before the election in 2008. That's why he can't release his transcripts, and why he's never run so much as a lemonade stand in the private sector. The man is a buffoon and he has made us into a laughingstock. The only question now is whether people pay attention to charts and figures this time, instead of watch TV ads and teleprompter-assisted emotional rhetoric. It's your choice America.

Why is it so hard for a working man to provide for a family these days?

June 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's my argument which answers the question:

1. Feminism was behind no-fault divorce.
2. Making it easier to divorce means that more divorces will occur.
3. Marital instability causes women to vote for bigger government.
4. In the latest election (2008), exit polls showed that UNMARRIED women voted 3-1 for Obama.

*Please note that I am talking about unmarried women throughout this post.

Here's the evidence for each point.

1. Feminism was behind no-fault divorce, according to this feminist, pro-no-fault-divorce writer.

Excerpt:

> Households of 2010 don't look quite like they did in 1969, when no-fault divorce actually was a controversial topic and these counter-arguments held some weight. The working dad/stay-at-home mom model of the middle class has been replaced by two-parent earner households and a growing number of working mom/stay-at-home dad arrangements. In working poor and impoverished families, the one-parent provider model was never the norm. **No-fault divorce seemed scary when it had never before existed, but the truth is that its introduction was long overdue. Feminist groups at the time supported no-fault divorce, as it provided women an escape hatch from desperately unhappy marriages in a society where they were already disadvantaged on almost every level, regardless of their marital status.** Imagine an abusive marriage in 1968, when the court-savvy abuser could actually force the victim to stay in the relationship forever. Imagine that now, and you know why domestic violence attorneys are in full support of introducing no-fault divorce to New York. And the judges aren't the only problem.

Note that the author of this piece thinks that it is not women's fault that they choose men who they then want to divorce. It's not the woman's fault that she is unhappy with the man she courted with and then chose and then made vows to – women need a no-fault escape hatch, and children do fine without fathers.

2. Easier divorces means more divorces.

Abstract:

> This paper analyzes a panel of 18 European countries spanning from 1950 to

> 2003 to examine the extent to which the legal reforms leading to "easier divorce" that took place during the second half of the 20th century have contributed to the increase in divorce rates across Europe. We use a quasi-experimental set-up and exploit the different timing of the reforms in divorce laws across countries. We account for unobserved country-specific factors by introducing country fixed effects, and we include country-specific trends to control for timevarying factors at the country level that may be correlated with divorce rates and divorce laws, such as changing social norms or slow moving demographic trends. We find that the different reforms that "made divorce easier" were followed by significant increases in divorce rates. **The effect of no-fault legislation was strong and permanent, while unilateral reforms only had a temporary effect on divorce rates. Overall, we estimate that the legal reforms account for about 20 percent of the increase in divorce rates in Europe between 1960 and 2002.**

It seems obvious, but more evidence never hurts.

3. Marital instability causes women to vote for bigger government for security.

Excerpt:

> Giving women the right to vote significantly changed American politics from the very beginning. Despite claims to the contrary, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue, and these effects continued growing as more women took advantage of the franchise. Similar changes occurred at the federal level as female suffrage led to more liberal voting records for the state's U.S. House and Senate delegations. In the Senate, suffrage changed voting behavior by an amount equal to almost 20 percent of the difference between Republican and Democratic senators. Suffrage also coincided with changes in the probability that prohibition would be enacted and changes in divorce laws.
>
> […]More work remains to be done on why women vote so differently, but our initial work provides scant evidence that it is due to self-interest arising from their employment by government. **The only evidence that we found indicated that the gender gap in part arises from women's fear that they are being left to raise children on their own (Lott and Kenny 1997).** If this result is true, the continued breakdown of the family and higher divorce rates imply growing political conflicts between the sexes. 19

Bigger government must be paid for by higher taxes, of course, which makes it harder for one working man's income to provide for a family. In fact, feminists *wanted* men to be displaced as sole-providers. They would prefer that women are "equal" to men, and that means making women get out and work like men. Feminists had every reason to want bigger government and higher taxes to make traditional single-earner families unfeasible

financially. They did it for *equality*.

4. Women are in fact observed to vote for bigger government. (Original story was here, now pulled)

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, the nation made history. It made history in electing the first African American president; it made history in building a bigger margin for the first female Speaker of the House; it made history in delivering the biggest Democratic margin since 1964; it made history in sending a record number of people to the polls and the highest percentage turnout since the 1960 election. Analysts will spend the next few months sifting through the data, trying to figure out what happened and why. Historians will likely spend the next several years and decades studying this election, as well. But one thing is immediately clear. **Unmarried women played a pivotal role in making this history and in changing this nation. They delivered a stunning 70 to 29 percent margin to Barack Obama and delivered similarly strong margins in races for Congress and the U.S. Senate. Although unmarried women have voted Democratic consistently since marital status has been was tracked, this election represents the highest margin recorded and a 16-point net gain at the Presidential level from 2004.**

And since the Democrats took the House and Senate in 2006, and then the Presidency in 2008, the national debt has doubled from 8 trillion to 16 trillion.

Voting for Democrats means voting for bigger government which means voting for higher taxes to pay for it all. Higher taxes means that a married man can no longer retain enough of his earnings to support a family. And that means his wife has to work, and that means that his children will learn what the government schools decide they should learn – so that all the children will be equal and think the same (pro-government) thoughts. This should not be controversial, because it is what it is. Very often, women complain about the very problems that they themselves have caused with their own voting, and their own embrace of feminism and rejection of the traditional roles of men as protectors, providers, and moral/spiritual leaders.

So, you have women voting to defund actual providers so that they are free to make babies with good-looking non-committing, non-providers – like in the UK Daily Mail story that I recently blogged about. Feminists often don't want to share parenting duties with a man – they prefer government social programs instead of a man. And liberal feminist politicians also oppose encouraging traditional marriage with tax breaks. In the feminist UK, IVF is free – paid for by the British taxpayer (including male sole-providers!) making single motherhood by choice much more common. Here's the result of that: single mother of 10 receives 30,000 British pounds per year in benefits. A recent study showed that the cost of family breakdown to the American taxpayer is $112 billion per year and a recent UK study showed that the UK taxpayer pays 9 billion pounds per year for "problem families". This money is in addition to the growth of government caused by liberal voting

patterns, documented above.

And that’s why “a man working full time [cannot] actually support a family and buy a house, as the sole income earner”, as one philosopher recently asked.

How the presence and quality of fathers affects belief in God

June 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article by Paul Copan which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own*rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of François-Marie Arouet.
> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his

> autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence, but there is also statistical evidence. Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is

> regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an enormously difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who has integrity and who has studied moral issues like chastity, abortion and same-sex marriage in order to know how to be persuasive to others, using real-world evidence and non-religious arguments.

I think from a practical point of view, it's also important for women to think carefully about men they choose to have sex with and to marry. The relationship with the child with the man who raises them is vital to belief in God. Judging from the evidence above, one can make a case that any woman who participates in men who are not capable of life-long commitment, providing and protecting, etc. and who are not capable of leading on moral spiritual issues is basically risking her ability to present her child to God as a Christian.

A child's relationship with God begins with his/her mother's ability to control herself and choose the right man for the job of being a father. Note that superficial qualities like "deep voice", "broad shoulders", "expensive shoes", "likes dogs" and "makes me laugh"

have no bearing on a man’s ability to commit and lead on moral/spiritual issues. We don’t really do a good job of showing evidence of choices and outcomes to women in the church, which is why there are so many fatherless children being conceived by women who go to church. Christian women are following their feelings to premarital sex, missionary cohabitation, and abortions under the supervision of ignorant, man-blaming pastors who don’t want to judge the delicate women by offering them facts.

What does the word happiness mean on the Christian worldview?

June 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From happiness expert and Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland.

Excerpt:

> According to ancient thought, happiness is a life well lived, a life that manifests wisdom, kindness and goodness. For the ancients, the happy life — the life we should dream about — is a life of virtue and character. Not only did Plato, Aristotle, the Church Fathers and medieval theologians embrace this definition, but Moses, Solomon and (most importantly) Jesus did, too. Sadly their understanding is widely displaced by the contemporary understanding of happiness defined as pleasure and satisfaction, a subjective emotional state associated with fleeting, egocentric feelings.
>
> Consider the differences:

Contemporary Understanding	**Classical Understanding**
Happiness is:	Happiness is:
1. Pleasure and satisfaction	**1.** Virtue and character
2. An intense feeling	**2.** A settled tone
3. Dependent on external circumstances	**3.** Depends on internal state; springs from within
4. Transitory and fleeting	**4.** Fixed and stable
5. Addictive and enslaving	**5.** Empowering and liberating
6. Irrelevant to one's identity, doesn't color the rest of life and creates false/empty self	**6.** Integrated with one's identity, colors rest of life and creates true/fulfilled self
7. Achieved by self-absorbed narcissism; success produces a celebrity	**7.** Achieved by self-denying apprenticeship to Jesus; success produces a hero

> How can we be certain Jesus is inviting us to a classical understanding of happiness in Matthew 16:24-26? He isn't talking about going to heaven rather than hell, nor is He telling his followers how to avoid premature death. Where Matthew writes, "what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits *his soul*" (emphasis added), Luke clarifies Jesus' teaching by replacing "his soul" with the word "himself" (Luke 9:25). The issue is finding one's self vs. losing one's self. More specifically, to find one's self is to find out how life *ought* to look like and learn to live that way; it's to become like Jesus, with character that manifests the fruit of the Spirit and the radical nature of Kingdom living; it's to find out God's purposes for one's life and to fulfill those purposes in a Christ-honoring way.

In one of his lectures, he says, and I quote: “Happiness is the freedom to do what we ought to do”. Indeed. When a person is free to comply with God’s design for human flourishing, then he/she is happy.

Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?

June 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

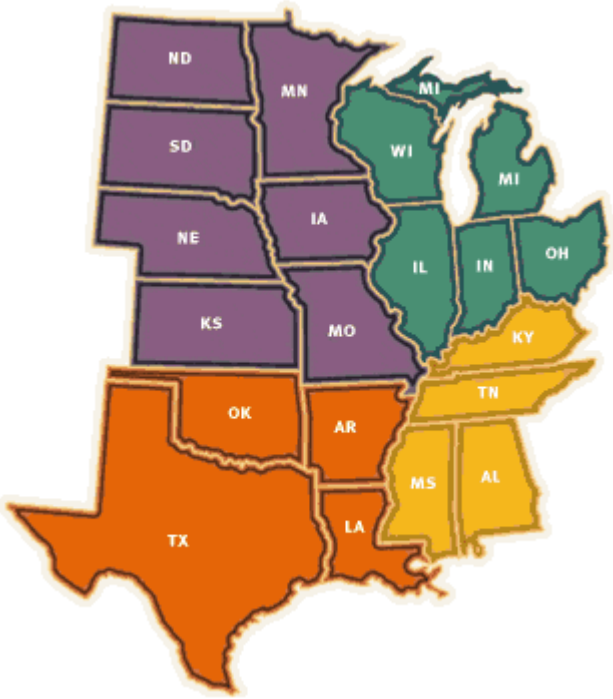

Central United States

A couple of articles to get you situated, in case you haven't been following the recall election. Basically, Republican governor Scott Walker saved a leftist-dominated state from bankruptcy, and now the labor unions want his head on a platter.

Here's George Will in the liberal Washington Post:

> On Tuesday, in this year's second-most important election, voters will judge the attempt by a populism of the privileged — white-collar labor unions whose members live comfortably above the American median — to recall Republican Gov. Scott Walker.
>
> […]Wisconsin, normally a paragon of Midwestern neighborliness, has been riven by furious attempts to punish Walker for keeping his campaign promise to change the state's unsustainable fiscal trajectory driven by the perquisites of government employees. His progressive adversaries have, however, retreated from their original pretext for attempting to overturn the election Walker won handily just 19 months ago.
>
> He defeated Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett. A recall is a gubernatorial election, and the Democrats' May primary was won by . . .Barrett.
>
> In 2010, government employees unions campaigned against Walker's "5 and 12" plan. It requires government employees to contribute 5.8 percent of their pay to their pension plans. (Most were paying less than 1 percent. Most private-sector

> workers have no pensions; those who do pay, on average, much more than 5.8 percent.) Walker's reform requires government employees to pay 12.6 percent of their health-care premiums (up from 6 percent but still less than the 21 percent private-sector average). Defeated in 2010, the unions now are demanding, as frustrated children do after losing a game, "Let's start over!"

Here's Tim Stanley in the UK Telegraph to explain whether Walker's plan worked:

> On the one hand, last year Wisconsin lost more jobs than any other state and private sector growth has been sluggish. Walker cut tax relief to low income families and the state's Medicaid program. He also forced Planned Parenthood to restrict some of its services. Anti-union, anti-women and anti-spending – no wonder Justin Beiber is so angry.
>
> On the other hand, unemployment has actually fallen in the state and the budget is balanced. That last thing was a major achievement, because Walker inherited a deficit of $3.6 billion when he took office in 2010. By reducing the cost of public services, the Governor has not only held the line on taxes but also cut them.

I don't see what's wrong with either of those hands. I like them both!

More:

> …**Walker earned his narrow lead by breaking the Democrats' inbuilt advantage in state politics – perhaps permanently. He did it with one simple reform. Before Walker, union member dues were paid straight from the employer to the union. The member never got to see the money and, likely, never thought about how much he was losing. After passage of Walker's reforms, the money now goes into the employee's pay packet first and they then get to choose whether or not to give it to the union. Unsurprisingly, workers have taken one look at the substantial contributions they have been asked to make and… said, "Hell no!" To quote the Wall Street Journal, "Wisconsin membership in the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees — the state's second-largest public-sector union after the National Education Association, which represents teachers — fell to 28,745 in February from 62,818 in March 2011 … Much of that decline came from Afscme Council 24, which represents Wisconsin state workers, whose membership plunged by two-thirds to 7,100 from 22,300 last year."**

The latest polls from PPP and Angus Reid show governor Scott Walker leading Barret by three points and six points, respectively. I urge all of my Wisconsin readers to vote FOR Scott Walker. People should have a right to work for a living without being forced to fund political organizations.

Half of all Americans live in households that get government handouts

June 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> **49.1%:** Percent of the population that lives in a household where at least one member received some type of government benefit in the first quarter of 2011.
>
> Cutting government spending is no easy task, and it's made more complicated by recent **Census Bureau** data showing that nearly half of the people in the U.S. live in a household that receives at least one government benefit, and many likely received more than one.
>
> The 49.1% of the population in a household that gets benefits is up from 30% in the early 1980s and 44.4% as recently as the third quarter of 2008.
>
> […] As of early 2011, 15% of people lived in a household that received food stamps, 26% had someone enrolled in Medicaid and 2% had a member receiving unemployment benefits. Families doubling up to save money or pool expenses also is likely leading to more multigenerational households. But even without the effects of the recession, there would be a larger reliance on government.
>
> The Census data show that 16% of the population lives in a household where at least one member receives Social Security and 15% receive or live with someone who gets Medicare. There is likely a lot of overlap, since Social Security and Medicare tend to go hand in hand, but those percentages also are likely to increase as the Baby Boom generation ages.
>
> […]The more people who receive benefits, the harder it's going to be to make cuts, and it's never popular to raise taxes. In some respects that argues for letting a combination of tax increases and spending cuts that is set to automatically hit in 2013 take effect. There's just one problem: the **Congressional Budget Office** says it would sink the economy into recession.

All of this dependence on the government is not good for us. How can we compete with the rest of the world when we just sitting around borrowing money from our kids and spending it?

Ten ways that the Obama administration could lower gas prices right now

June 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Here's the list:

1. Lift offshore and onshore exploration and drilling bans
2. Approve Keystone XL
3. Require timely environmental review
4. Permitting process
5. Issue leases on time
6. Allow development of oil shale
7. Stop the land grab
8. Implement 50/50 revenue sharing
9. Prohibit greenhouse gas and Tier 3 gas regulations
10. Repeal the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS)

Here's the detail on #3 and #6 and #9:

> 3. **Require timely environmental review:** Environmental review requirements for oil and gas projects to commence on federal lands under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) take too long. Congress should place a reasonable 270-day time limit on NEPA reviews.
>
> 6. **Allow development of oil shale:** Oil shale production in the U.S. could be a global game changer since we hold the largest known reserves in the world. However, 70 percent of those reserves lie beneath federal lands. The Obama Administration has introduced new regulations, time frames, and significantly reduced the land available for leases. Congress should make permanent the 2008 guidelines for oil shale development in order to provide regulatory certainty.
>
> 9. **Prohibit greenhouse gas and Tier 3 gas regulations:** In 2010, Interior suspended 61 leases in Montana alone because environmental groups charged that the energy production would contribute to climate change, demonstrating the need to permanently prohibit any federal agency from unilaterally regulating greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, the proposed Tier 3 gas regulations to lower the amount of sulfur in gasoline are costly with no measurable benefits. Congress should prohibit the implementation of these regulations. Unelected bureaucrats should not hold such power over the economy.

Are these steps unreasonable?

Well, Canada already streamlined their environmental review process. Canada also

doesn’t let global warming socialism block job creation in the energy sector. Canada’s government strongly opposes global warming socialism. They’ve even pulled out of the Kyoto treaty. Their energy industry is booming, and taking their economy with it. Can’t we do the same? Why is the Democrat Party’s energy policy all about giving money to green energy firms and imposing burdensome regulations on energy companies who do create jobs?

Marcia Segelstein's article on chastity in the newest issue of Salvo magazine

June 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the article that is available online on the Salvo Magazine web site.

Here's a bit about the author, Marcia Segelstein:

> ***Marcia Segelstein**, a senior editor of* Salvo, *is a part-time writer and a full-time mother. A former senior producer for CBS News, she has also written for* First Things, Touchstone, *and OneNewsNow.*

And here's a snippet from the article:

> Dr. Jenell Williams Paris is the author of *The End of Sexual Identity: Why Sex Is Too Important to Define Who We Are*. She told *Relevant* that Christians need more than rules to live chastely. What's often missing, Paris believes, is a compelling story and an understanding of the "whys" behind the rules. To explain what she means, she uses the example of parents teaching their little girl to look both ways before crossing a street:
>
> A young child may follow this rule solely because of the power of her parents' authority, which is appropriate. As she grows, the child [continues to look both ways,] but for a deeper reason that she owns for herself. She sees the broader context of traffic, understands the benefits and dangers, and makes choices accordingly. Rules are external and authority-bound: Maturity requires knowledge of *why* to do the right thing, not just *what* the right thing is.
>
> Chris Jessee is the Youth and Family Pastor at First Baptist Church in Waynesville, Ohio. Last year, he organized an event in conjunction with True Love Waits, an organization that promotes abstinence till marriage, and several area churches. Unlike other such events he's been involved with, he included parents in this one. "Every year we did True Love Waits without the parents, we were missing out on a critical aspect of it," he explained in an interview. "I believe parents are the key element when it comes to discussions of purity with teens."
>
> In his view, the church's role should be to encourage and train parents to address abstinence issues with their children. Echoing Dr. Paris's approach, Jessee believes a critical aspect of that training is providing both parents and their teens with the "whys" they need to defend their faith and its practices. Merely laying out the rules isn't enough.
>
> Statistics back up Jessee's views on the crucial role of parents. A study conducted by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, titled "With One Voice 2010," asked teens aged 12 to 19 who is most influential when it comes to decisions about sex. Almost half, 46 percent, said their parents were

> most influential, with friends coming in second at 20 percent.

That’s exactly right – we need to have reasons and evidence when talking about chastity – and call young people up to a higher standard of romance, intimacy and commitment. They need to know what they are getting by embracing chastity, and not just what they are giving up. On my blog, I often post about the research that shows the benefits of chastity, as in this previous post. I love chastity and I highly recommend it – especially to Christian men.

And yes – I really did write the sidebar for this article, and you can see it online. The sidebar is about practical tips for chastity. It’s based on some of my previous posts on how to be chaste. The older I get, the more I thank God that I still have my wits about me when it comes to women. Chastity allows you to be very circumspect about women and to make sure that they really are as good as you think they are and that they really can do the things that you need them to do in a marriage.

Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election

June 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

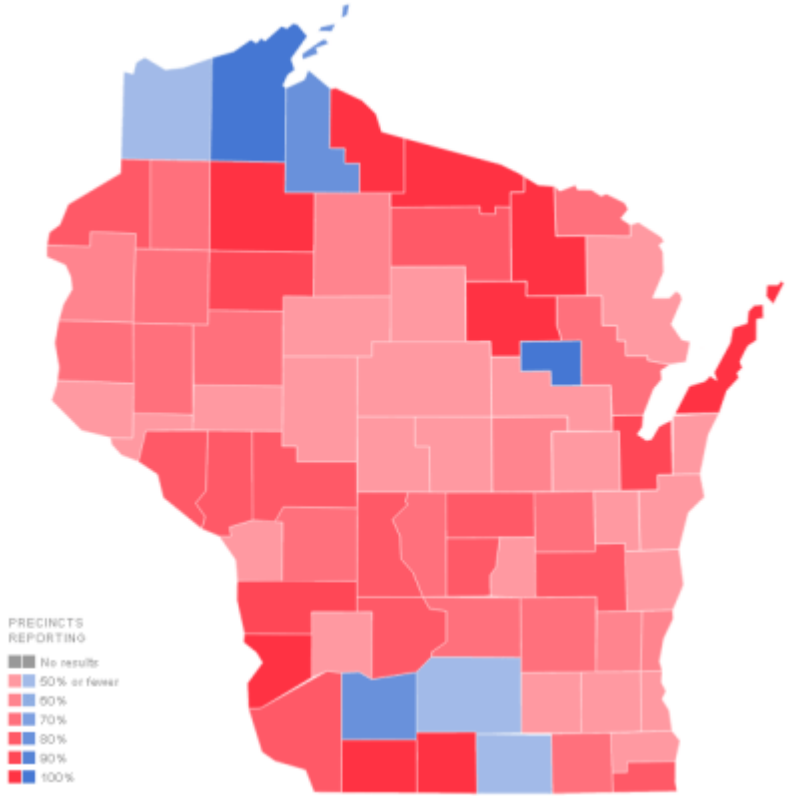

Wisconsin Recall Election Results 2012 Map

Human Events reports.

Excerpt:

> The cheers were almost deafening at the Expo Center, Gov. Scott Walker's headquarters, Tuesday night as CNN projected that the Republican governor had won Wisconsin's nationally-watched recall election.
>
> [...]Walker's fellow Republican, Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, appeared headed for an easy win. However, results in the four Republican-held state senate seats on the ballot remained uncertain and a Democratic victory in either could end the GOP's control of the now-evenly divided state senate.
>
> Most GOP activists and state political pundits who spoke to Human Events credited Walker's political team with energizing party activists throughout the Badger State and turning out his likely backers. In addition, national Republicans led by Republican National Committee Chairman (and Walker's fellow Wisconsinite) Reince Priebus, weighed in for the embattled governor. All four Republican presidential candidates voiced solidarity with Walker when they stumped in the state's presidential primary earlier this year, and GOP Govs. Chris Christie of New Jersey and Nikki Haley of South Carolina stumped for Walker in the special election.

> […]Perhaps sensing defeat, national Democrats aside from Clinton distanced themselves from Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett. Democratic National Committee Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz told reporters on May 25 "there aren't going to be any repercussions nationally" if Walker wins and, five days later, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney seconded her opinion. President Obama did nothing for Barrett until the day before the voting, when he sent out a one-sentence endorsement of him on Twitter.

The current results as of 10:30 PM show 58-41 in favor of Walker.

It's very important to understand that this victory will have national repercussions for Barack Obama and the big-spending Democrats.

Look:

> But Walker's triumph may yield other benefits for the GOP in Wisconsin and the conservative movement overall. Although Barack Obama carried the state's 10 electoral votes in 2008 and leads Mitt Romney in most statewide polls, Republicans are now expected to make a major effort to put Wisconsin in the Romney column in November. With the number of reliable campaign volunteers clearly enhanced and motivated by the Walker effort, the Romney camp's chances of wining the state are enhanced.
>
> As Steve Walters, senior producer of the Wisconsin Eye public television program, told Human Events: "I can't believe Romney won't make Wisconsin a priority after tonight."
>
> Waukesha County Executive Dan Vrakas, whose county had a turnout of more than 70 percent and supported Walker handily, agreed, predicting "Romney will be here next week. The state went from being leaning blue to leaning red overnight. Gov. Walker put fire in the belly of a lot of people."
>
> Among Republican activists we spoke to, there was also a fresh confidence in the ability of any of their four candidates this fall to pick up the open Senate this November.

What has been really encouraging for me to see is how *the majority of union workers* stopped paying dues to the unions as soon as Walker enacted the right-to-work reform which allows people to work without being forced to pay dues to wealthy, corrupt union bosses. I think it really opened my eyes to the fact that just because a person is a member of a union, it doesn't mean they like it.

Here is a map of the results county-by-county. You can also read my previous post about Scott Walker's pro-business reforms which *lowered the unemployment rate* in Wisconsin.

Obamanomics: a closer look at the economic achievements of Barack Obama

June 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Full text:

> May's weak jobs report further confirms the president's policies are failing to help the economy. This is, indeed, the worst recovery since the Depression.
>
> Negative superlatives associated with this presidency keep piling up. The toll so far:
>
> - The share of Americans who've been out of work a long time — now at 42% of the unemployed — is the highest since the Great Depression (source: Labor Department).
> - The proportion of the civilian working-age population actually working, at 58%, is the smallest since the Carter era (Labor Department).
> - Growth in nonfarm payroll jobs since the recovery began in June 2009 is the slowest of any comparable recovery since World War II (Hoover Institution).
> - The rate of new business startups — the engine of job growth — has plunged to an all-time low of 7.87% of all businesses (Census Bureau).
> - 3 in 10 young adults can't find jobs and live with their parents, highest since the 1950s (Pew Research).
> - 54% of bachelor's degree-holders under the age of 25 are jobless or underemployed, the highest share in decades (Northeastern University).
> - Black teen unemployment, now at 37%, is near Depression-era highs (Labor Department).
> - Almost 1 in 6 Americans are now poor — the highest ratio in 30 years — and the total number of poor, at 49.1 million, is the largest on record (Census).
> - The share of Hispanics in poverty has topped that of blacks for the first time, 28.2% to 25.4% (Census).
> - The number of Americans on food stamps — 45 million recipients, or 1 in 7 residents — also is the highest on record (Congressional Budget Office).
> - Total government dependency — defined as the share of Americans receiving one or more federal benefit payments — is now at 47%, highest ever (Hoover).
> - The share of Americans paying no income tax, at 49.5%, is the highest ever (Heritage Foundation, IRS).
> - The national homeownership rate, now at 65.4%, is the lowest in 15 years (Census).
> - The 30-point gap between black and white Americans who own their own

> homes is the widest in two decades and one of the widest on record (Census).
> - Federal spending, now at 23.4% of GDP, is the highest since WWII (CBO).
> - Excluding defense and interest payments, spending is the highest in American history, at 17.6% of the economy (First Trust Economics).
> - The federal debt, at 69% of GDP, is the highest since just after WWII (CBO).
> - The U.S. budget deficit, now at 9.5% of the economy, is the highest since WWII (CBO).
> - U.S. Treasury debt has been downgraded for the first time in history, meaning the U.S. government no longer ranks among risk-free borrowers (S&P).
>
> This is what Obamanomics has wrought. Fiscal promiscuity. Trickle-up poverty. Shared misery.

Here's the Obama legacy in two charts:

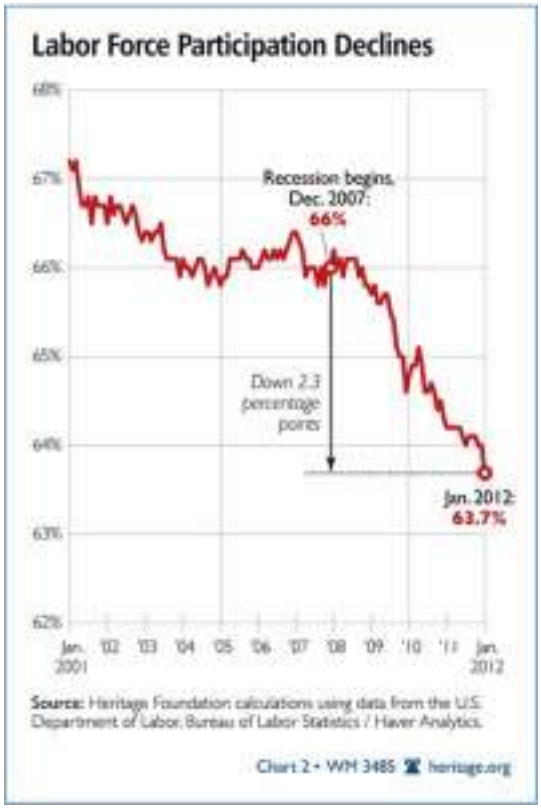

US Labor Force Participation down 4.9 million people

The updated labor force participation is actually lower now than in January.

And:

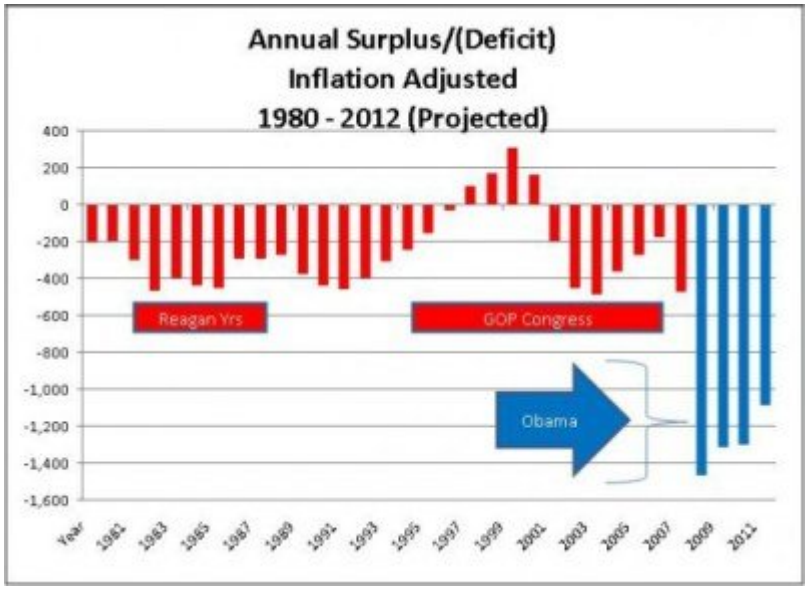

Barack Obama: Budget Deficits

What I find alarming is that Obama is still polling competitively with his Republican rival.

Is the point of religious belief just to be sincere or to also be correct?

June 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Poached Egg linked to this interesting post by Al on the Please Convince Me blog. Excerpt:

> We live in a pluralistic society and so it is fitting, generally speaking, that all beliefs are accorded equal respect. Unfortunately, this mindset seems to have convinced many people today that all beliefs have equally validity. As it relates to matters "spiritual," the modern skeptic thinks that no religion has the corner on truth (assuming that such a thing as "truth" actually exists). "What works for you is fine, but don't try imposing those values on me" is a common approach. "All religions basically say the same thing," they say, "so as long as you are sincere in your beliefs, that's all that really matters." What they mean, of course, is that religion has nothing to teach. It is, instead, some sort of placebo and as long as you really "believe in it," your particular view on eternity is as good as any other.
>
> Christianity, by contrast, does not stake out an ambiguous position. Man is in deep trouble, due to his rebellion against his Creator, and he needs a savior to get him out of the mess he's in. Without that savior, he's headed for a bad place, and he can't help himself. The "good news" is that help is out there, if we are only open to it.
>
> So, which view conforms to the way things really are? Is there one right religion, or should we remain complacent in the belief that a sincere belief will work out just fine at the end of the day?
>
> Perhaps the first place to look for an answer to this question is within nature itself. None of us constructed this universe we happen to find ourselves in, but it certainly appears to be operating under a set of rules. If there is a "rule-maker," perhaps he has left some clues for us within the structure of his creation, just as an artist might leave a distinctive message within a work of art. But looking to nature provides no support for the skeptic's view, for nowhere in nature does it appear that a sincerely held, but mistaken, belief can "save" you. I may be convinced that the ledge I am standing on is sturdy, but the force of gravity is not lessened by my belief, if it is mistaken. If I have diabetes and three vials are sitting in front of me – one with water, one with insulin and one with arsenic – the "saving" power of the liquid depends not on what I think it contains, but on what it actually contains. If I mistakenly believe that the pool I am diving into is full of water, I may still suffer permanent paralysis despite the sincerity of my belief.
>
> Take for example submarine officers from the US and Soviet navies. Both were operating nuclear power plants using the same scientific principles and both had confidence that their ships could protect them from radiation. For each officer,

> this confidence was based on trust that the ship's "saving" power – its design and safeguards – was adequate to the task. The American sub employed such safeguards while the Soviet navy cut corners. Any particular American officer may have doubted his safety, while his Soviet counterpart may have had total confidence. In the end, what mattered was not the sincerity of the beliefs, but the object in which the belief was placed. And predictably, countless Soviet sailors suffered radiation sickness while their American counterparts did not.

I think there are some places where it's fine to just belief whatever you want and every belief is valid. For example, when deciding what to eat or what to wear. But there is no reason to think that the project of developing religious beliefs is like that. Religious beliefs are about the world *out there*, but preferences about food or clothes are about the person – his or her own *internal state*.

A good lecture on truth claims and religion

Here's an audio lecture featuring one of my favorite Christian professors, Dr. Walter Bradley. The title of his lecture is "Truth in Religion". He tries to make the case that the kind of truth that religion ought to be concerned with is objective truth, not subjective truth.

The MP3 file is here. (31 minutes + Q&A)

Here's a summary:

- what is pluralism?
- what is multiculturalism?
- what is relativism?
- some propositions are true culturally – just for certain groups in certain times (cultures)
- some proposition are true trans-culturally – true independently of what anyone wants or feels
- Mathematical truth is trans-cultural – it is true regardless of cultural fashions
- Scientific truth is trans-cultural – it is true regardless of cultural fashions
- Some truths are not like this – cooking traditions, clothing traditions and greeting traditions
- These kinds of truths are NOT trans-cultural, they vary by culture
- The question is – is religion true like math and science, or true depending on the culture
- Some people think that your religion depends on where you were born or what your family believes
- Religions make conflicting claims about the way the world really is, so they can't all be true
- And these conflicts are at the core of the religions – who God is, how can we be related to him, etc.
- So if religions convey trans-cultural truth, then either one is true or none are true

- If they are not trying to convey trans-cultural truth, then they are not like math and science
- Let’s assume that religion is the same as trans-cultural truth
- How can we know which religion is true? 1) the laws of logic, 2) empirical testing against reality
- Logical consistency is needed to make the first cut – self-contradictory claims cannot be true
- To be true trans-culturally, a proposition must at least NOT break the law of non-contradiction
- According to Mortimer Adler’s book, only Christianity, Judaism and Islam are not self-contradictory
- All the others can be excluded on the basis of overt internal contradictions on fundamental questions
- The others that are self-contradictory can be true culturally, but not trans-culturally
- The way to proceed forward is to test the three non-contradictory religions against science and history
- One of these three may be true, or they could all be false
- We can test the three by evaluating their conflicting truth claims about the historical Jesus
- Famous skeptics have undertaken studies to undermine the historical Jesus presented in the Bible
- Lew Wallace, Simon Greenleaf and Frank Morrison assessed the evidence as atheists and became Christians
- There is a lot of opposition in culture to the idea that one religion might be true
- But if you take the claims of Jesus at face value, he claims to be the unique revelation of God to mankind
- Either he was telling the truth about that, or he was lying, or he was crazy
- So which is it?

You can read papers from Dr. Bradley here.

Ronald Reagan's 40th anniversary D-Day speech: the boys of Pointe du Hoc

June 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

June 6, 1944 D-Day Normandy Invasion Map

It's June 6th, today, and it's the anniversary of D-Day: the Allied invasion of northern France – the beginning of the end of World War 2. One of the most pivotal events of that day was the assault on German gun emplacements by members of the Army Rangers at a fortified position called "Pointe du Hoc".

President Ronald Reagan recognized the soldiers who attacked Pointe du Hoc back in 1984:

You can read the full transcript of that speech here.

Ronald Reagan also made the case for gratitude and vigilance:

Here's the hymn that starts to play at the end:

The Boys of Pointe du Hoc

Here's a summary of the Pointe du Hoc mission:

> [Lt. Col. James Earl] Rudder took part in the D-Day landings as Commanding Officer of the United States Army's 2nd Ranger Battalion. His U.S. Army Rangers stormed the beach at Pointe du Hoc and, under constant enemy fire, scaled 100-foot (30 meter) cliffs to reach and destroy German gun batteries. The battalion's casualty rate for this perilous mission was greater than 50 percent. Rudder himself was wounded twice during the course of the fighting. In spite of this, they dug in and fought off German counter-attacks for two days until relieved. He and his men helped to successfully establish a beachhead for the Allied forces.

You can watch a three-clip documentary on it, too: part 1, part 2, part 3.

You can read the complete story about their successful effort to destroy the 6 155mm German guns here on Military History Online. Although initially, the Rangers did not find the guns where they had expected them, they did find them further back behind the cliffs and destroyed them there, removing a threat to the forces that would be landing later.

What does D-Day mean to Christians in particular?

A female Christian friend asked me what she should be thinking about when I sent her one of the videos above, and so I wrote her this to explain why I sent her the video:

> To make you close your eyes and think in a more practical way about what it means for someone to sacrifice their lives to save you, of course. What it means to look up cliffs at machine guns, barbed wire and mortars raining death on you and to take a rope in your hands and to climb up a sheer cliff, under heavy fire, in order to save generations yet unborn and freedom itself.
>
> To think about a concrete example helps us to be able to appreciate what Christ did for us in giving his life for us so that we could be free of sin, as well.
>
> This is the insight that drives my entire interest in war and military history, in fact.
>
> What does this mean: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
>
> The more you know about D-Day, the more fearful what Jesus did appears, and the more you can be grateful.
>
> Bullets and shrapnel are scary… and so are nails and lashes. Why on Earth would anyone endure either for me? And what should my response be to it?
>
> I think it is helpful to explain Christianity to those who are not yet Christian, and for Christians to fully appreciate what Christianity is all about.
>
> We were in peril. And now we have been saved. But at a cost.

I think that it's important for Christians to look to history, art, poetry and music to help them to reflect and comprehend the sacrifice that Christ made for us in dying on the cross to protect us from peril. What must the cross have looked like to Jesus? It must have been something like what the Omaha beach looked like to the Americans landing in Normandy. Jesus saw whips, thorns and nails, and the heroes of Normandy saw 88 mm AT guns, 81 mm mortars and MG42 machine guns. How should you feel about people who face death on your behalf? Think about it.

Peter J. Williams lectures on the historicity of the resurrection

June 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture:

There are lots of interesting things in this lecture:

- non-Christian accounts of early Christianity
- textual issues with resurrection passages
- the concept of resurrection
- specific teachings of Jesus

The total is 100 minutes long, but if you give it a listen, I'm sure you will hear something new. He actually lectures only for the first hour, and then the hosting pastor speaks for 23 minutes and then there is some Q&A with the church members until the end.

Toronto man who is suspected in mall shooting was under “house arrest”

June 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How ineffective is the justice system in Canada? Well the Conservatives are trying to lock it down, but things like “house arrest” are very popular with liberal elites.

Here’s what you can do in Canada while under “house arrest” for some other crime:

> A 23-year-old man was supposed to be under house arrest when police say he opened fire this weekend inside a busy Toronto shopping mall, killing one and leading to injuries to seven others.
>
> The suspect, Christopher Husbands, is now in custody after surrendering early Monday, police said.
>
> […]He faces one count of first-degree murder and six counts of attempted murder, according to police. Husbands appeared around 3:30 p.m. in a Toronto courtroom, where he was formally charged, CNN affiliate CTV reported.
>
> […]The detective described Husbands as a “charged individual (who) was on house arrest conditions, not to be outside his residence” when he was out with people — including Ahmed Hassan, the 24-year-old man police say he shot dead — on Saturday at the Eaton Centre mall in downtown Toronto.

In Canada, as in the UK (and here), criminals are apparently less at risk of being put in jail than law-abiding people who defend themselves.

Excerpt:

> Chen owns the Lucky Moose Food Mart in Toronto. When a career thief ripped him off yet again in May 2009, he had had enough. Chen chased down the thug, tied him up with twine and stuffed him into the back of a van, then called police.
>
> **When police arrived, however, Chen was the one charged with numerous crimes including kidnapping, forcible confinement and having a concealed weapon. The last count was added because Chen keeps a box cutter in his back pocket for work.**
>
> […]The senate committee also heard from Joseph and Marilyn Singleton of Taber, Alberta.
>
> When the couple returned home to their rural acreage after a dinner in May 2010, they found a suspected thief trying to flee after he and two others had allegedly broken into their house, trashed their home and stolen their belongings.
>
> When the suspect tried to smash through their garage door with his getaway car, Joseph feared for his wife, who was standing on the other side of it, calling police. Joseph hit the 20-year-old in the head with the butt end of an axe to subdue him. **The homeowner was charged with assault with a weapon and assault**

> **causing bodily harm, offences that carry up to 10 years in prison. The charges were later dropped.**
>
> The repeat offender, who was on bail after threatening another homeowner with a crowbar, was given house arrest.
>
> “One of the hardest things I have ever had to do is answer questions from my young grandchildren, trying to explain why their grandfather was in trouble for protecting their grandmother,” Joseph told the committee.
>
> Marilyn echoed his feelings. “At the time of our home invasion, I never would have dreamed that Joe would be charged for possibly saving my life. If he did not take action, it’s possible he would have had to explain to our children and grandchildren why he did not take action to protect their mother and grandmother.”
>
> Defending themselves against the charges cost the couple $30,000, draining their retirement savings.

I guess that the jails in Canada are meant primarily for law-abiding people or legal gun owners. Criminals apparently go free, aka “house arrest”. That’s liberal jurisprudence – all very tolerant, you know. Let’s hope the Conservatives can fix the mess the Liberal Party made.

Are Darwinists right to say that the appendix has no useful functions?

June 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Evolution News points to this Washington Post article.

Excerpt:

> The appendix "acts as a good safe house for bacteria," said Duke surgery professor Bill Parker, a study co-author. Its location — just below the normal one-way flow of food and germs in the large intestine in a sort of gut cul-de-sac — helps support the theory, he said. Also, the worm-shaped organ outgrowth acts like a bacteria factory, cultivating the good germs, Parker said. That use is not needed in a modern industrialized society, Parker said. If a person's gut flora dies, it can usually be repopulated easily with germs they pick up from other people, he said. But before dense populations in modern times and during epidemics of cholera that affected a whole region, it wasn't as easy to grow back that bacteria and the appendix came in handy.

Evolution News adds:

> Additionally, Loren G. Martin, professor of physiology at Oklahoma State University, lists various likely functions for the appendix . Writing on *Scientific American*'s website, he includes these examples:
>
> - being "involved primarily in immune functions"
> - "function[ing] as a lymphoid organ, assisting with the maturation of B lymphocytes (one variety of white blood cell) and in the production of the class of antibodies known as immunoglobulin A (IgA) antibodies."
> - helping with "the production of molecules that help to direct the movement of lymphocytes to various other locations in the body"
> - "suppress[ing] potentially destructive humoral (blood- and lymph-borne) antibody responses while promoting local immunity"
> - Additionally, it is "an important 'back-up' that can be used in a variety of reconstructive surgical techniques"
>
> Likewise, a few months back David Klinghoffer reported that researchers in the journal *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology* found:
>
> > Individuals without an appendix were four times more likely to have a recurrence of *Clostridium difficile*, [a pathogen common in hospitals,] exactly as Parker's hypothesis predicted. Recurrence in individuals with their appendix intact occurred in 11% of cases. Recurrence in individuals without their appendix occurred in 48% of cases.

> In other words, the appendix performs important immune-related functions. Thus, the appendix is not there to occasionally explode. With the appendix increasingly considered to be an important organ that you wouldn't want to lose, researchers have also found that antibiotics can cure many cases of appendicitis (see Eriksson *et al.*, 2006).

It just goes to show you that it's a good idea to not decide your worldview by appealing to cartoons and funny one-liners. First of all, just because something is not perfect, it doesn't mean that it isn't designed. The Chevy Volt vehicle that Obama subsidizes with your tax dollars might burst into flames unexpectedly, but it's still designed. Secondly, no designed object can be perfect in every way – every engineered object is a tradeoff of different, conflicting design goals. It might be nice to have a laptop that can last for 16 hours on a single charge, but then it's either going to either weigh 12 pounds or cost $4000.

Junk DNA

This isn't the only time that arguments of "poor design" are made by Darwinists, either – I also hear a lot about Junk DNA.

Look at what the peer-reviewed journal Nature says:

> In 1961, French biologists François Jacob and Jacques Monod proposed the idea that 'regulator' proteins bind to DNA to control the expression of genes. Five years later, American biochemist Walter Gilbert confirmed this model by discovering the lac repressor protein, which binds to DNA to control lactose metabolism in Escherichia colibacteria[1]. For the rest of the twentieth century, scientists expanded on the details of the model, but they were confident that they understood the basics. "The crux of regulation," says the 1997 genetics textbook Genes VI (Oxford Univ. Press), "is that a regulator gene codes for a regulator protein that controls transcription by binding to particular site(s) on DNA."
>
> **Just one decade of post-genome biology has exploded that view. Biology's new glimpse at a universe of non-coding DNA — what used to be called 'junk' DNA — has been fascinating and befuddling.** Researchers from an international collaborative project called the Encyclopedia of DNA Elements (ENCODE) showed that in a selected portion of the genome containing just a few per cent of protein-coding sequence, between 74% and 93% of DNA was transcribed into RNA[2]. **Much non-coding DNA has a regulatory role; small RNAs of different varieties seem to control gene expression at the level of both DNA and RNA transcripts in ways that are still only beginning to become clear.** "Just the sheer existence of these exotic regulators suggests that our understanding about the most basic things — such as how a cell turns on and off — is incredibly naive," says Joshua Plotkin, a mathematical biologist at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

Let’s not be too hasty when making these “bad design” arguments – let’s be guided by the progress of science, and not just by cartoons and snarky terms like “junk DNA”.

Canadian conservatives pass bill to repeal Section 13 speech code

June 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

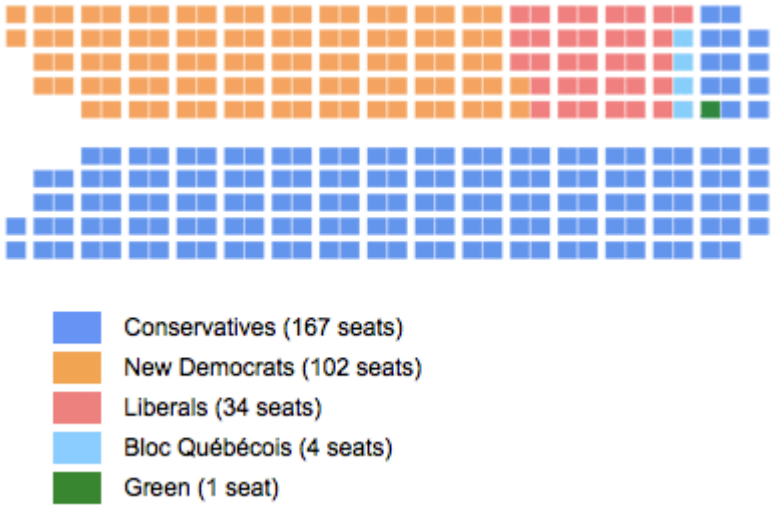

Canada 2011 Federal Election Seats

It's the end of the Canadian speech code. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> The federal Conservatives voted late Wednesday to repeal controversial sections of the Canadian Human Rights Act banning hate speech on the Internet, backing a bill they say promotes freedom of expression and would have the courts play a larger role in handling hate-crime cases.
>
> In a free vote of 153 to 136, the Tory caucus supported a private member's bill from Alberta Conservative MP Brian Storseth that would scrap Section 13 of the human rights code, which deals with complaints regarding "the communication of hate messages by telephone or on the Internet."
>
> Storseth argues the current human rights code fails to protect freedom of speech, which is guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and believes Canadians are better off if the government repeals sections 13 and 54 — the latter section dealing with associated penalties.
>
> "It's a really important step for freedom of expression in our country," Storseth said Thursday, the morning after the bill passed third and final reading in the House of Commons.
>
> "There hasn't been a tremendous pushback as you would have seen seven or eight years ago when this issue first really arose, and I think it's because there has been a fruitful debate in our country."
>
> Senior cabinet ministers supported the bill and the results generated loud applause from Conservative MPs. Prime Minister Stephen Harper is overseas and wasn't present for the vote. Most opposition politicians voted against the bill,

> although Newfoundland and Labrador Liberal MP Scott Simms supported it.
>
> Storseth, a backbencher, said the current human rights code allows too many frivolous cases to proceed against citizens, when the Criminal Code already covers hate speech that could generate harm against an individual or group.
>
> Acts of hate speech are serious crimes that should be investigated by police officers, not civil servants, he said, adding that the cases should be handled by "real judges and real lawyers," instead of a quasi-judicial body such as the human rights commission.
>
> The bill would effectively strip the human rights commission of its ability to rule on cases of hate speech over the phone and Internet, he said, and instead hand many of the powers to the courts.
>
> Storseth said he has also been speaking with colleagues in the Conservative-dominated Senate in hopes the bill will pass through the upper chamber and receive royal assent by the end of the year. The bill contains a one-year implementation period.

For those who need a refresher course on how bad these secular leftist fascism panels really were, you can read this article about the punishment received by a Christian pastor who wrote an editorial critical of gay activism in the schools. He was put on trial for 5 years and had to pay over $100,000 in legal fees, including the legal fees of his accuser. His crime? *Making his accuser feel offended.*

Related posts

- Youtube reverses decision to ban video critical of gay activism in Canada
- Alberta judge rules that it is legal to disagree with homosexuality
- Conservative MP's bill to repeal Section 13 moves to committee
- Conservative MP introduces bill to abolish Section 13 speech code
- Ezra Levant on the new Sun News television network
- What happens when same-sex marriage conflicts with religious liberty?
- Human Rights Tribunal finds Catholic school board guilty of discrimination
- Saskatchewan planning to abolish its Human Rights Tribunal
- In Canada, Blazing Cat Fur is being sued for linking to Mark Steyn
- Canadian Human Rights Commissions continue war on Christians
- Video of Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn testifying against Canadian HRCs
- Mark Steyn on a Chicago radio show, commercial-free
- Mark Steyn and Ezra Levant on a Chicago radio show
- The Conservative Party takes up free speech in British Columbia
- The Conservative Party takes up free speech in Ontario
- Video of Ezra Levant discussing free speech on the Michael Coren show
- Video interview with Ezra Levant by the libertarian Fraser Institute

Teachers helped schoolgirl, 15, have an abortion without her parents' knowledge

June 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Teachers helped a 15-year-old pupil to have an abortion that her parents knew nothing about.
>
> Her mother and father finally learned about the termination when she told them after it had happened.
>
> Last night family campaigners said the case showed how parents are increasingly being sidelined by the law.
>
> It is understood that the girl went to a hospital where it was confirmed she was pregnant. In line with her wishes, doctors did not tell her parents but notified the school in Salford, Greater Manchester, instead.
>
> Teachers discussed the termination with the girl, checking she was comfortable with her decision. They also gave her time off school and supported her when she went for the procedure.
>
> **Under the law, teachers, doctors and nurses can offer sexual advice or treatment – including an abortion – to children without telling their parents as long as the child is considered mature enough to make the decision. However, they must ensure that every effort is made to encourage a young person to involve their parents in the decision.**

It's important for Christian parents to realize that the time where they could expect teachers to confirm and support them in teaching their children values is gone. We should be voting for lower taxes and greater school choice. The only solution to problems like this is to put the money back in the hands of the parents and let them choose private schools that are accountable to parents. When teachers and school officials are paid through compulsory taxation, they are not accountable to their customers (parents). They do as they please. Even if they fail parents and children utterly, they still get paid. It needs to stop.

How Canada made dissent against same-sex marriage illegal

June 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of Canada

Dina sent me this helpful article by Michael Coren, writing in National Review.

Here's the argument:

> A considered and empathetic opposition to same-sex marriage has nothing to do with phobia or hatred, but that doesn't stop Christians, conservatives, and anybody else who doesn't take the fashionable line from being condemned as Neanderthals and bigots. This is a lesson that Canadians have learned from painful experience.
>
> Same-sex marriage became law in Canada in the summer of 2005, making the country the fourth nation to pass such legislation, and the first in the English-speaking world. In the few debates leading up to the decision, it became almost impossible to argue in defense of marriage as a child-centered institution, in defense of the procreative norm of marriage, in defense of the superiority of two-gender parenthood, without being thrown into the waste bin as a hater. What we've also discovered in Canada is that it can get even worse than mere abuse, and that once gay marriage becomes law, critics are often silenced by the force of the law.

The article is full of examples of how pro-marriage opinions were stifled and crushed by the state, once same-sex marriage was made legal.

Here's an excerpt:

> Four years ago, a Christian organization in Ontario that works with some of the most marginalized disabled people in the country was taken to court because of its disapproval of an employee who wanted to be part of a same-sex marriage. The government paid the group to do the work because, frankly, nobody else was willing to. As with so many such bodies, it had a set of policies for its employees. While homosexuality was not mentioned, the employment policies did require that employees remain chaste outside of marriage, and marriage was interpreted as the union of a man and a woman. The group was told it had to change its hiring and employment policy or be closed down; as for the disabled people being helped, they were hardly even mentioned.
>
> In small-town British Columbia, a Knights of Columbus chapter rented out its building for a wedding party. They were not aware that the marriage was to be of a lesbian couple, even though the lesbians were well aware that the hall was a Roman Catholic center — it's increasingly obvious that Christian people, leaders, and organizations are being targeted, almost certainly to create legal precedents. The managers of the hall apologized to the couple but explained that they could not proceed with the arrangement, and agreed to find an alternative venue and pay for new invitations to be printed. The couple said that this was not good enough, and the hall management was prosecuted. The human-rights commission ruled that the Knights of Columbus should not have turned the couple down, and imposed a small fine on them. The couple have been vague in their subsequent demands, but feel that the fine and reprimand are inadequate.
>
> As I write, two Canadian provinces are considering legislation that would likely prevent educators even in private denominational schools from teaching that they disapprove of same-sex marriage, and a senior government minister in Ontario recently announced that if the Roman Catholic Church did not approve of homosexuality or gay marriage, it "would have to change its teaching." What has become painfully evident is that many of those who brought same-sex marriage to Canada have no respect for freedom of conscience and no intention of tolerating contrary opinion, whether that opinion is shaped by religious or by secular belief.

Read the whole thing, and learn from the mistakes of others.

A documentary on D-Day: June 6th, 1944

June 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We’re taking a break this Friday from our regularly scheduled Friday movie to present a documentary on D-Day, since June 6th was the the anniversary of D-Day. This is my favorite D-Day documentary. I watched it when I was a young man. It features the famous World War 2 historian Stephen Ambrose.

IMDB mean rating: 8.2/10.

IMDB median rating: 8/10.

The documentary is in 3 parts.

Part 1:

Part 2: (this one covers the Pointe du Hoc operation at the beginning)

Part 3:

In case you missed it, here is my earlier post on D-Day, which was very popular.

Happy Friday!

Obama: private sector job creation is “doing fine”

June 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> “The private sector is doing fine,” Obama said at a press conference on Friday. “Where we’re seeing weaknesses in our economy, have to do with state and local government — oftentimes, cuts initiated by governors or mayors who are not getting the kind of help that they have in the past from the federal government and who don’t have the same kind of flexibility as the federal government in dealing with fewer revenues coming in.”
>
> State and local leaders were not the only ones to blame for a bad economy, as the president also blamed Republicans in Congress.

What are the facts? Is Obama right?

Here is a comparison of public and private pay in Ohio, for example:

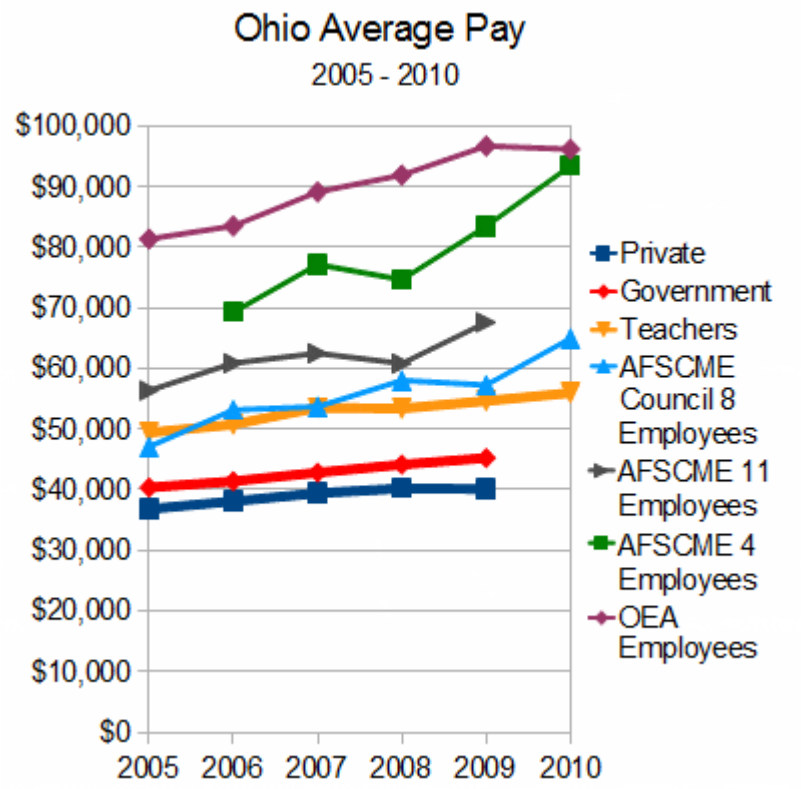

Ohio Average Pay: Public vs. Private

Does Obama know how to create jobs? Let’s compare him to Bush:

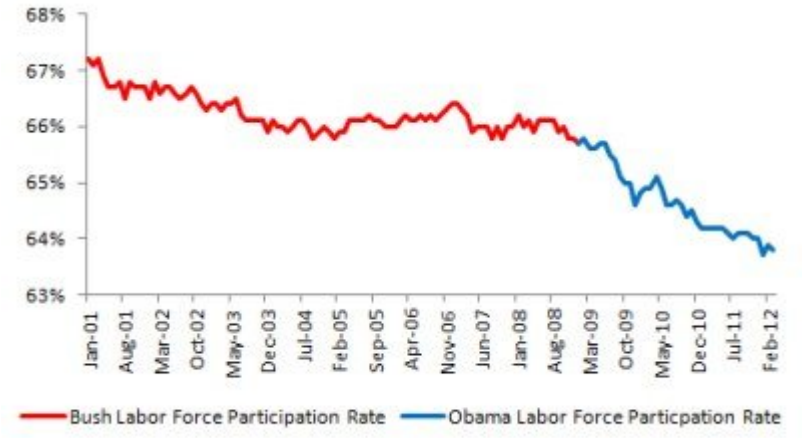

Labor Force Participation 2012 (click for larger image)

There is no recovery. We haven't created any jobs. We've actually *lost 5 million jobs* since the Democrats took over the House and Senate in January 2007.

When George W. Bush was President, we had unemployment around 4 or 5 percent for 8 years, which deficits as low as $160 billion in 2007. Barack Obama has had four budget deficits of a trillion or more in a row, and his unemployment rate has been double Bush's rate. Bush has an MBA from Harvard and had private sector job creation experience. Obama doesn't know anything about economics. He's a lawyer who benefited from affirmative action, and who has never released his grades. You can't elect an unqualified person and get performance.

Pro-abortionists angry over Australia's first pro-life student group

June 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The board of the student union at the oldest university in Australia has voted 6-5 to approve the only pro-life student society in Australia.
>
> The decision has been met with outrage by stunned pro-abortion students (one of whom described the pro-life society as "f***ed" and "bulls***"), who have begun organising events, petitions and constitutional amendments which would ban pro-life groups from ever again gaining approval at the university.
>
> Yesterday, Friday June 1, the board of the University of Sydney Union (USU) approved the registration of LifeChoice Sydney, a nonpartisan, nonsectarian pro-life advocacy group which aims to "promote the dignity of human life from conception to natural death" at Sydney University.
>
> […]Outraged students have begun composing a motion calling for the USU board to rescind the registration of LifeChoice, censure the board members who voted in favour of their registration, and amend the USU constitution to read:
>
> "The Board shall be forbidden from registering or providing any funding, resources, publicity or use of Union premises to a group discriminatory on the basis of sex, sexuality, gender diversity, class, race and ethnicity or disability, including any group which opposes a woman's right to choose to have an abortion."
>
> Meanwhile, an online petition has been created on the website of activist group GetUp!, demanding that the USU overturn its decision to approve the group. "This isn't about freedom of speech or equal opportunity," the petition reads. "This is about funding and giving legitimacy to a group whose sole target is women. This 'LifeChoice' Society is an attack on women's rights and by allowing its formation the Union is failing its students and undermining the inclusiveness it seeks to promote."
>
> […]In August 2006, roughly 15 police and security guards were needed to protect a small crowd of students at Sydney University attending a guest lecture by Mississippi pro-lifer Terri Herring, when a coalition of roughly 80 protestors attempted to disrupt the event.

What's wrong with a different point of view? Who's being intolerant now?

Younger evangelicals put happiness and popularity over morality

June 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting post by Mark Tooley in the American Spectator. (H/T Jay Richards)

Excerpt:

> A new generation of evangelical elites is imploring evangelicals to step back from the culture wars. Mostly they want to escape polarizing strong stances on same-sex marriage and abortion, and perhaps also contentious church-state issues, like the Obamacare contraceptive mandate.
>
> Purportedly the evangelical church is failing to reach young, upwardly mobile professionals because evangelicals, who now broadly comprise perhaps one third of all Americans, are seen as reactionary and hateful. On their college campuses, at their coffee shops, and in their yoga classes, among other venues, some outspoken hip young evangelicals want a new public image for their faith.
>
> […]A popular young evangelical blogger echoing Merritt's theme is Rachel Evans, who conveniently grew up in the Tennessee small town famous for the Scopes Monkey Trial. Her 2010 book was *Evolving in Monkey Town: How a Girl Who Knew All the Answers Learned to Ask the Questions.* "We are tired of the culture wars," she explained in a recent interview. "We are tired of politics." Lamenting the church's preoccupation with "shame and guilt," she urged evangelicals to reconsider their opposition to same-sex unions.

The post has a nice history of how evangelicals have always been involved in moral and political issues, and it's worth reading. But I want to make a different point below.

What's at the root of this movement to back away from moral issues? Here's what I think is the problem. When you advocate for moral causes like protecting the unborn, or school choice, or freeing the slaves, a bunch of people are not going to like you. Christians in the time of Jesus knew that being bold about their Christian convictions would make a lot of people think bad things about them – they expected it. But young evangelicals have gotten the idea that being a Christian should not involve any sort of unhappiness and unpopularity. They wouldn't have learned this from the Bible, because the Bible emphasizes suffering and unpopularity as part of the normal Christian life. It is their experience of church (and the hedonistic culture around them) that is likely to reinforce that view.

What young evangelicals learn in many churches is that religion is something that is centered on the Bible and the church building – it is not something that flows into real life. They learn that you can't find out anything about God from the Big Bang, the DNA, the fossil record, or even from the peer-reviewed research on abortion, divorce, or gay marriage. They learn from the Bible that helping the poor is good, but then they never

pick up an economic textbook to see *which economic system really helps the poor.* What you learn about in church is that religion is private and has no connection to reality whatsoever. This fits in with their view that Christianity should make them happy, because they've learned that it doesn't involve any studying to connect the Bible to the real world.

What follows from having a view that Christianity only lives in the Bible and church, and not out there in the real world of telescopes and microscopes? Well, most young evangelicals interpret what their pastor is telling them as "our flavor of ice cream" or "our cultural preference". They don't link Christianity to the real world, they don't think that it's true for everyone. They think that you just accept what the Bible says on faith, and that's all. No reasons can be given to non-Christians outside of just asking them to accept the Bible. Younger evangelicals believe that there are no facts that confirm or disprove Christianity – it's just a blind belief. Young evangelicals think that their faith doesn't have to be complemented with careful study of how things work in the real world.

What is the result of this anti-intellectual compartmentalization of faith? The result is that young evangelicals will balk at the idea of telling someone that they are going to Hell if they don't believe in Jesus. They will balk at the idea that feminism is to blame for the destruction of the family. They will balk at the idea that the best way to help the poor is to push for free market capitalism. They will balk at the idea that it is wrong to kill unborn children. They will balk at the idea that disarmament and pacifism embolden terrorists and tyrants to attack peace-loving people. They will balk at the idea that traditional marriage is better for society and children. They will balk at the idea that man-made catastrophic global warming is not supported by science. *They lack courage because they first lack knowledge*. They don't know how to make the case using hard evidence. They don't learn that hard evidence is important in church.

If the purpose of religion is to have happy feelings and be liked, then studying the real world to find out whether the Bible is true is bad religion. If religion is divorced from reality, then it's just a personal preference influenced by how a person was raised. No young evangelical is going to lift a finger to take bold moral stands if they think their worldview is just one option among many – like the flavors of ice cream in the frozen section of the grocery store. They have to know that what they are saying is true – then they will be bold. An example: there was a time when people believed that God did not create the first living cell, because it was just a simple lump of protoplasm that could easily come about by accident. Now we know better, and we can boldly make the case for intelligent design based on hard evidence – if we put in the time to study the evidence. And it is the same for everything – from theological claims, to moral claims, to social claims, to economic claims, to foreign policy claims. It doesn't matter if people call you names when you have the facts to support unpopular claims, *and that's why public, authentic Christianity is built on facts.* Non-Christians being offended by your claims doesn't change the way the world is.

We have to turn away from our own ignorance, laziness and cowardice if we hope to have the ability to stand up for our beliefs in public. Christianity is not about being happy and

feeling good and being liked by others. In a society that is increasingly secular and relativistic, studying outside the Bible necessarily precedes an authentic Christian life. There is no shortcut. We might have been able to get away with fideism 50 years ago, but not anymore. Not now.

Ohio governor John Kasich's energy policy: sustainability and job creation

June 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

All of the above makes a lot of sense in Ohio, as John Kasich explains in the Columbus Dispatch.

Excerpt:

> Ohio's agriculture and manufacturing sectors are highly productive and among our state's largest employers. They're also big energy users and part of the reason why Ohio ranks seventh nationally in energy generation.
>
> With energy being so important to major Ohio job creators, it's critical that we do everything possible to make it inexpensive, plentiful and reliable.
>
> Unfortunately, Ohio faces major headwinds on energy from Washington. The U.S. lacks the kind of comprehensive energy policy it takes to achieve energy independence and help job creators secure low prices and reliable supplies. Furthermore, coal — which supplies 86 percent of our electricity — irritates the current president, and his administration's EPA repeatedly threatens more red tape on Ohio's growing shale-oil-and-gas industry.
>
> This uncertainty from Washington isn't sustainable for Ohio. If we want to see more Ohioans working again, we need to foster low costs and greater certainty in energy, and if we can't get it with help from Washington, then Ohio must seek it ourselves.

That's his thesis – now let's see some of the details:

> [M]y administration worked with Ohio State University and Battelle to convene the Governor's 21st Century Energy & Economic Summit. Over two days, the summit brought together 50 panelists from business, government, academia and environmental groups and more than 1,000 attendees to discuss the latest, brightest thinking on energy. These conversations were the first step in helping Ohio's policymakers develop a comprehensive energy policy to support job creation. That work continued over the winter and produced a comprehensive plan covering the full range of Ohio energy issues. I'm proud to say I'm signing that plan into law on Monday.
>
> A major focus of Ohio's new energy policy is oil-and-gas production in our state's Utica shale formations. With new technologies making it possible to tap oil, natural gas and natural-gas liquids in shale rock deep beneath the surface, the potential exists to permanently lift the economy of eastern Ohio and turn Ohio into a major oil-and-gas producer. It's only smart to make sure that as this new industry comes on the scene, strong policies are in place that can help ensure its safety and success. Ohio's energy policy does that by modernizing our regulatory

> structure to protect the public, the environment and the industry's workers and to facilitate the industry's growth.
>
> Ohio's new energy policy also promotes clean-energy generation. While Ohio's manufacturers are certainly big energy users, they're also potential sources of clean energy. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that as much as 2,000 megawatts of energy could be generated by capturing and reusing the waste heat in Ohio factories. That's enough to power more than 1.4 million Ohio homes. To help encourage this, Ohio's new energy policy adds waste heat to the list of clean-energy sources, along with solar and wind, that can earn special "renewable energy credits," credits that manufacturers can then sell for extra income.
>
> Other highlights of Ohio's new energy policy include efforts to encourage the use of cars that run on natural gas, to improve state buildings' energy efficiency, to get electricity to the places where it's most needed to create jobs, to create programs that link Ohioans who need jobs with training for the new jobs in the oil-and-gas industry, and to make valuable investments in clean-coal research and technology.

If I had to pick the 3 best governors in the USA, I would pick Scott Walker in Wisconsin, John Kasich in Ohio and Bobby Jindal in Louisiana. These guys punch way above their weight, and all 3 states are swing states. You have to have better ideas to win those states. You have to win on the merits.

Gallup: Obama suffers 10% drop in support from Jewish voters

June 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From NewsMax. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> In the first significant drop in Jewish support for a Democratic Party candidate in over two decades, President Barack Obama has seen a 10-point plunge in support among Jewish voters, according to the Gallup polling agency.
>
> To put the decline in perspective, Obama is pulling in the same support among Jews as Michael Dukakis, the former Massachusetts governor who lost to George H. W. Bush in 1988.
>
> Gallup notes the 10-point drop is "five points worse than his decline among all registered voters compared with 2008."
>
> Specifically, Obama currently has the support of 64 percent of Jewish registered voters, according to Gallup. This is 10 percent less than the percentage of Jews who voted for Obama in 2008. Republican Mitt Romney enjoys 29 percent support among Jews.
>
> The move is significant because American Jews have been bedrock supporters of the Democratic Party for decades. Often regarded as instinctively liberal but hawks on support for Israel, Jews are a key voting bloc in Florida, one of a handful of high electoral vote "swing" states Obama must win to defeat Romney. Their votes also could make a difference in a close race in Ohio or Pennsylvania.
>
> The Republican Jewish Coalition notes the 29 percent of Jewish voters who support Romney, represents the "highest level of Jewish support for a Republican presidential candidate in 24 years." RJC Executive Director Matt Brooks said that if the numbers hold in November, they would spell "a disaster" for Obama and his party.
>
> Gallup noted that while Jews are only 2 percent of the general population, Jews tend to vote in higher numbers than other groups – 83 percent of Jewish registered voters said they definitely would vote in comparison to 78 percent of the general public.

Florida (3.4% Jewish), Pennsylvania (2.3%) and Ohio (1.3%) all have significant Jewish populations. If the Republicans win Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania, I don't think they can be defeated. This is a big deal.

New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

June 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

TWO MOMS VS. MOM AND DAD

A study released Sunday finds that adult children (ages 18-39) of lesbian mothers are more likely to report negative outcomes in several categories than adult children raised by married mother-father parents.

Selected outcome	Had married parents	Had lesbian mothers
Family received welfare growing up*	17%	69%
Currently cohabiting*	9%	24%
Currently on public assistance*	10%	38%
Currently employed full time*	49%	26%
Currently unemployed*	8%	28%
Recently or currently in therapy*	8%	19%
Identifies as 100 percent heterosexual*	90%	61%
Had an affair while married or cohabiting*	13%	40%
Has ever had a sexually transmitted infection*	8%	20%
Was ever touched sexually by a parent or other adult*	2%	23%
Was ever forced to have sex unwilfully*	8%	31%
Currently married	43%	36%
Thought recently about suicide	5%	12%
Is in a same-sex romantic relationship	4%	7%

*Statistically significant difference.

Source: "How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study," Social Science Research, June 10, 2012

Straight vs. lesbian parenting (click for larger image)
From the Washington Times. (H/T Jonathan)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Two studies released Sunday may act like brakes on popular social-science assertions that gay parents are the same as — or maybe better than — married, mother-father parents.
>
> "The empirical claim that no notable differences exist must go," Mark Regnerus, a sociology professor at the University of Texas at Austin, said in his study in Social Science Research.
>
> Using a new, "gold standard" data set of nearly 3,000 randomly selected American young adults, Mr. Regnerus looked at their lives on 40 measures of social, emotional and relationship outcomes.
>
> He found that, when compared with adults raised in married, mother-father families, adults raised by lesbian mothers had negative outcomes in 24 of 40 categories, while adults raised by gay fathers had negative outcomes in 19 categories.
>
> Findings such as these do not support claims that there are "no differences" between gay parenting and heterosexual, married parents, said Mr. Regnerus, who helped develop the New Family Structures Study at the university.

> Instead, “children appear most apt to succeed well as adults when they spend their entire childhood with their married mother and father, and especially when the parents remain married to the present day,” he wrote.
>
> Mr. Regnerus‘ study of 2,988 persons ages 18 to 39 — including 175 adults raised by lesbian mothers and 73 adults raised by gay fathers — marks the first research from the new dataset, which initially included some 15,000 persons.
>
> The second study, also in Social Science Research, takes a critical look at the basis of an oft-cited American Psychological Association (APA) report on gay parenting.
>
> The APA brief says, “Not a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents,” said Loren Marks, associate professor at the School of Human Ecology at Louisiana State University.
>
> However, after looking at the 59 studies that undergird this assertion, “the jury is still out,” Mr. Marks said. “The lack of high-quality data leaves the most significant questions [about gay parenting] unaddressed and unanswered.”
>
> Problems with the APA-cited studies were their tiny size; dependence on wealthy, white, well-educated lesbian mothers; and a failure to examine common outcomes for children, such as their education, employment and risks for poverty, criminality, early childbearing, substance abuse and suicide. Instead, the APA studies often looked at children’s gender-role behaviors, emotional functioning and sexual identity.

This story was also reported on Science Daily, with the predictable liberal spin.

Here is my previous post on the data that shows why same-sex unions are not good for raising children.

Why do women have abortions? Are women responsible or are men to blame?

June 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina said me this astonishing article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> **Her first abortion came when she was 17, following a bitterly regretted drunken encounter with a colleague at an office party.**
>
> […]Her bold decision to speak out about her abortions comes after it was revealed that the NHS spends more than £50 million a year on repeat terminations.
>
> One third of the 189,000 abortions carried out in England and Wales in 2010 involved women who'd had at least one before. In some cases, a staggering seven abortions had previously been carried out on the same woman.

Abortion one:

> The first one… was when she… got pregnant when she ended up in bed with a 22-year-old colleague called Brian.
>
> **'Although I knew I could get pregnant, we didn't use contraception. I just didn't think it would happen to me…**
>
> […]**Michelle visited her GP and found out she was entitled to a free NHS abortion at her local hospital.**

Abortion two:

> **[S]he met John, 35, an Irish soldier stationed at barracks near her home, and they embarked on a three-week fling. It left her with another unplanned, and unwanted, pregnancy.**
>
> […]**Michelle was once again granted an NHS abortion at nine weeks — this time at a private London clinic, in July 2000.**

Abortion three:

> Then, a year later, **she met her current partner, Paul, at a local pub.**
>
> […]Michelle says she was open about her abortions, and told Paul, 36 — who is an estates manager — that she didn't want any more children.
>
> […][I]n July, **Michelle was going through a rocky period with Paul when she discovered she was pregnant again.**
>
> She says: 'At the time we were barely speaking, as we were both so stressed out. We hadn't been intimate for months, but one night relations thawed and we had

> sex.
>
> **‘Until then, we’d been using condoms but this time we didn’t. Although I thought about getting the morning-after pill, I ended up leaving it to chance.’**
>
> […]**At nine weeks, Michelle was granted a third NHS abortion, at another London clinic.**

Three taxpayer-funded abortions for three pregnancies brought on by this woman’s own free decisions.

In the UK, abortions, IVF and single motherhood are all taxpayer-funded. If women had to pay for their own abortions, their own IVF, their own out-of-wedlock births, then maybe they would not be making decisions like this woman has. When you pay people to do something, you mustn’t be surprised when they do that thing more. Lowering the cost of anything means that more people will buy it. And making it free is the worst of all. The first step to ending abortion is that society needs to understand that virtually every woman who has one is at least partly responsible for her own decision-making. The sooner we stop feeling compassion for women like this one, and start feeling compassion for unborn children and taxpayers, the sooner abortion will end. This woman is not a victim – she made these decisions and the consequences were absolutely devastating.

And many Christian leaders are part of the problem – they seem to really like blaming men for cases like the one above. Man-blaming Christian leaders have to do their part and stop blaming men for women’s irrational belief that recreational sex will be followed by an offer of marriage if the woman becomes pregnant. Men who have recreational sex don’t want marriage, and pregnancy doesn’t turn them into marriage-minded men. Men who have recreational sex want… recreational sex. Marriage is a heavy burden, and men who fool around are not going to “do the right thing”. Men who have recreational sex before marriage are not the sort of men who can be depended on to “do the right thing”. The sooner we start holding women accountable for their own decisions – and shaming them – the sooner abortion will stop.

UPDATE: This comment from straightright is worth reading if you are annoyed by the “poor me, I’m a victim” tone of the article.

Related posts

- 5,300 UK teens who aborted a baby in 2010 had at least one prior abortion
- NHS spends £1 million a week on repeat abortions
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- British woman has sex with strangers in order to get fatherless child
- The UK has generous welfare benefits for single mothers
- Switzerland company to manufacture condoms for 12-14 year olds
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- Most children of British mothers born out of wedlock – UK Telegraph
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

- Public schools hand out condoms to 5-year olds without parental consent
- Teacher union promotes sexualizing children at United Nations conference
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the “hook-up” culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?

Married Mormon man comes out as gay on his tenth anniversary

June 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this post, and it is a must-read.

Excerpt:

> Hi guys.
>
> Lolly and I are sitting by a pool in the blazing sun, tanning our Seattle-white skin. We are having the time of our lives. Our kids are being watched by their Aunt Kati and Uncle Blake while we relax, celebrating ten incredible years of marriage.
>
> And, side by side, we are finishing the final details of this post which we have written together over the course of the last month.
>
> This is a different post than what you're used to seeing here on The Weed. If you are here to laugh and read something light-hearted and fun, you probably want to skip this one. It's long. And it's serious. And I won't be offended by anyone who decides to wait until things get light-hearted again.
>
> This is the post where I tell you that I, Josh Weed, am homosexual.
>
> […]When we do tell people about this—and we've been telling a lot of people lately, so we've gotten really practiced at it—they usually have a lot of really good, genuine questions. Here are some of the questions we're most frequently asked (there really should be an acronym for that—I know! I'll call it a FAQ!). We hope answering these questions will help you understand how we make sense of this delicate and complicated issue in our lives.

Excerpt:

> Here is the basic reality that I actually think many people could use a lesson in: sex is about more than just visual attraction and lust and it is about more than just passion and infatuation. I won't get into the boring details of the research here, but basically when sex is done right, at its deepest level it is about intimacy. It is about one human being connecting with another human being they love. It is a beautiful physical manifestation of two people being connected in a truly vulnerable, intimate manner because they love each other profoundly. It is bodies connecting and souls connecting. It is beautiful and rich and fulfilling and spiritual and amazing. Many people never get to this point in their sex lives because it requires incredible communication, trust, vulnerability, and connection. And Lolly and I have had that from day one, mostly because we weren't distracted by the powerful chemicals of infatuation and obsession that usually bring a couple together (which dwindle dramatically after the first few years of marriage anyway). So, in a weird way, the circumstances of our

> marriage allowed us to build a sexual relationship that is based on everything partners should want in their sex-life: intimacy, communication, genuine love and affection. This has resulted in us having a better sex life than most people I personally know. Most of whom are straight. Go fig.

Click through and read it. This reminds me of Ari's book "Bias Incident", where the protagonist argues that gay people can and should marry someone of the opposite sex and have children. And then the sky falls on him! I hope you all consider buying that book. It's only $0.99!

Disclaimer: I am not endorsing homosexuality, Mormonism or anything!

Europe is going socialist – what's the worst that could happen?

June 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

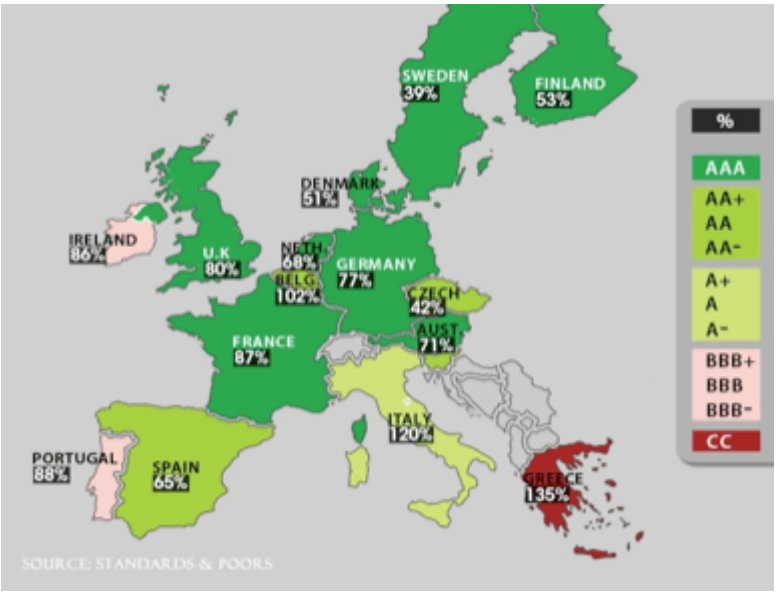

European Debt to GDP and Credit Rating
From MSN Money.

Excerpt:

> **European finance officials have discussed as a worst-case scenario limiting the size of withdrawals from ATM machines, imposing border checks and introducing capital controls in at least Greece should Athens decide to leave the euro.**
>
> EU officials have told Reuters the ideas are part of a range of contingency plans. They emphasized that the discussions were merely about being prepared for any eventuality rather than planning for something they expect to happen – no one Reuters has spoken to expects Greece to leave the single currency area.
>
> […]The discussions have taken place in conference calls over the past six weeks, as concerns have grown that a radical-left coalition, SYRIZA, may win the second election, increasing the risk that Greece could renege on its EU/IMF bailout and therefore move closer to abandoning the currency.
>
> No decisions have been taken on the calls, but members of the Eurogroup Working Group, which consists of euro zone deputy finance ministers and heads of treasury departments, have discussed the options in some detail, the sources said.
>
> **As well as limiting cash withdrawals and imposing capital controls, they have discussed the possibility of suspending the Schengen agreement, which allows for visa-free travel among 26 countries, including most of the European Union.**

> […]Another source confirmed the discussions, including that the suspension of Schengen was among the options raised.
>
> "These are not political discussions, these are discussions among finance experts who need to be prepared for any eventuality," the second source said. "It is sensible planning, that is all, planning for the worst-case scenario."

I noticed an article that came out in CNN Money that explained how American households had lost almost 40% of their net worth since 2007 – the exact year that Nancy Pelosi took control of the House and Harry Reid took control of the Senate. The Democrats have been running the European playbook since they took over in 2007. We are just a few steps behind the Europeans thanks to the borrow and spend policies of the Democrats.

In Asia, questioning Darwinism on scientific grounds is no problem

June 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> In Korea, a mainstream publisher of popular and science texts, Book 21 Publishing Group, has brought out an edition of *Explore Evolution*, a textbook presenting both sides of the evolution debate. The translation was done by a pair of Korean academics, Seung Yup Lee and Eung Bin Kim, whose scientific specialties are respectively in biomimetics and environmental microbiology. Both teach at universities, Sogang and Yonsei, ranked in Korea's top ten.
>
> Dr. Lee's research fuels his questions about macroevolution. His work on the amazing "natural design" of the South American Hercules beetle and its humidity-sensing shell was highlighted in *Nature*. In the Preface to the Korean *Explore Evolution*, Lee advocates investigating "alternative theories" to undirected Darwinian evolution.
>
> Korea also has its own Research Association for Intelligent Design, with an impressive masthead of biologists, chemists and other scientists at top research institutions. Sogang University in Seoul hosts an Annual Symposium on Intelligent Design. The event has included presentations on William Dembski and Robert Marks's Law of Conservation of Information and on protein translation as evidence of intelligent design.
>
> China, of course, is Asia's biggest market for ideas. Illustra Media has had considerable success distributing DVDs of prime ID-related titles there.
>
> […]Producer and director Lad Allen had *Unlocking the Mystery of Life* and *Privileged Planet* dubbed into Cantonese and Mandarin, moving a hundred thousand copies into China via Hong Kong. He estimates that three or four times that many DVDs were illegally pirated and copied.
>
> […]Illustra has completed a Japanese translation of *The Privileged Planet*, lip-synced by Japanese actors in Tokyo. But *Unlocking the Mystery of Life* is Illustra's most-translated film, with editions in Khmer (Cambodian), Thai, Sri Lankan, and Mongolian as well as a variety of European languages.
>
> On the book-publishing side, Center for Science & Culture senior fellow Paul Chien has been largely responsible for introducing intelligent design to China. A biologist at the University of San Francisco, Chien has translated Phil Johnston's*Darwin on Trial* and Michael Behe's *Darwin's Black Box* among other titles.
>
> He recently finished work on Denyse O'Leary's *By Design Or By Chance?*, to be

> followed by Stephen Meyer's *Signature in the Cell*.

It's good that there are still some places left where a person can ask questions about what natural causes can do and what intelligent causes can do.

Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?

June 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

TWO MOMS VS. MOM AND DAD

A study released Sunday finds that adult children (ages 18-39) of lesbian mothers are more likely to report negative outcomes in several categories than adult children raised by married mother-father parents.

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*Statistically significant difference.

Source: "How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study," Social Science Research, June 10, 2012

Straight vs. lesbian parenting (click for larger image)

ECM pointed out to me that some more information about the two studies that were just published in the mainstream science journal *Social Science Research* appeared in National Review.

Excerpt:

> The mainstream academic journal *Social Science Research* has just published two articles that expose and challenge the schlock social science on gay parenting that has been uncritically embraced and propagated by so many people eager to advance the cause of gay marriage.
>
> In "Same-sex parenting and children's outcomes: A closer examination of the American Psychological Association's brief on lesbian and gay parenting," LSU professor Loren Marks addresses a puzzle: On the one hand, studies based on "large, representative samples" have shown that "[c]hildren who grow up in a household with only one biological parent are worse off, on average, than children who grow up in a household with both of their biological parents." On the other hand, "social science research *with small convenience samples* has repeatedly reported no significant differences between children from gay/lesbian households and heterosexual households." (Pp. 735-736 (emphasis added).)
>
> Marks's essential answer to the puzzle is that the studies "with small convenience samples" are unreliable. Among other things:

> 1. “[S]ocial researchers examining same-sex parenting have repeatedly selected *small, non-representative, homogeneous samples of privileged lesbian mothers* to represent all same-sex parents.” (P. 739 (emphasis added).)
>
> 2. “[I]n *selecting heterosexual comparison groups* for their studies, many same-sex parenting researchers have not used marriage-based intact families as heterosexual representatives, but have instead *used single mothers*.” (P. 741 (emphasis added).) Despite the broad claims made on behalf of the research, “with rare exceptions, the research does not include studies comparing children raised by two-parent, same-sex couples with children raised by marriage-based, heterosexual couples. (P. 742.)
>
> 3. The American Psychological Association’s claim that “not a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged” fails to take account of the largest study that actually examined “children’s developmental outcomes.” (Pp. 742-743.)
>
> 4. The same-sex parenting studies have failed to address a range of outcomes for children that are usually the focus of national studies on children, including drug and alcohol abuse, truancy, sexual activity, and criminality. (Pp. 743-744.)

These new studies contradict the politically correct pronouncements of the APA. But evidence came out last week that they are “controlled” the gay rights movement, according to a former President of the APA, who is himself pro-same-sex-marriage.

We should not be redefining marriage if it is going to hurt vulnerable children. I made the case before from the research that same-sex unions are not the same as heterosexual married couples. And now we have direct evidence that the differences matter to children.

Obama administration sues Florida for purging non-citizens from voter rolls

June 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Breitbart. (H/T Dr. G)

Excerpt:

> The US Department of Justice announced Monday it will sue Florida to stop the state from purging ineligible voters from its voter rolls. The DOJ statement came after Florida filed suit against the Department of Homeland Security for failing to cooperate with efforts to clean up the state's voter registration records.
>
> A preliminary comparison between drivers license records and voter registration has flagged as many as 182,000 registered voters who may not be US citizens. Florida officials sought access to the DHS immigration database (SAVE) to verify their matches but DHS has refused to respond to the state's requests.
>
> At least 141 non-citizens have been found on the voter rolls and 47 on this list have cast ballots in previous elections. More than 500 on the list have been identified as citizens and lawful voters.
>
> Florida Secretary of State Ken Detzner released a statement after filing the suit in Washington DC:
>
> > For nearly a year, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has failed to meet its legal obligation to provide us the information necessary to identify and remove ineligible voters from Florida's voter rolls… We can't let the federal government delay our efforts to uphold the integrity of Florida elections any longer. We've filed a lawsuit to ensure the law is carried out and we are able to meet our obligation to keep the voter rolls accurate and current.

Let this be a lesson to conservatives. The first thing you do when you get power is pass a voter identification law. Some form of state-issued photo ID that can be checked in a database, and purple ink on the fingers after voting. Democrats love to cheat in elections, and they are quite open about their desire to do so.

White House says no special counsel needed to investigate national security leaks

June 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The White House on Monday dismissed calls for a special prosecutor to investigate the national security leaks that have prompted concern from lawmakers on both sides of the aisle.
>
> The *New York Times* recently reported that President Obama had approved "kill lists" for the U.S. drones strikes in Pakistan and Yemen. The newspaper also revealed the extent of U.S. involvement in cyber attacks on Iran. And other news outlets have leaked details of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden.
>
> Speaking on CNN's "State of the Union" Sunday, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said "it's obvious" that the leaks "came from individuals who are in the administration. The president may not have done it himself, but the president is certainly responsible as commander-in-chief."
>
> […]During a White House news conference Friday, Obama said, "The notion that my White House would purposely release classified national security information is offensive. It's wrong. And people I think need to have a better sense of how I approach this office and how the people around me here approach this office."
>
> Later that day, McCain responded in a statement, "What the President did not unequivocally say today is that none of the classified or highly sensitive information recently leaked to the media came from the White House. I continue to call on the President to immediately appoint a special counsel to fully investigate, and where necessary, prosecute these gravely serious breaches of our national security."
>
> […]On Sunday, McCain — on CNN's "State of the Union" — repeated that a special counsel should be appointed to lead the leaks investigation.
>
> "I have great respect for the two individuals (the U.S. attorneys from D.C. and Maryland) that were appointed," McCain told CNN. But he also noted that Eric Holder has no credibility with Congress.
>
> "This needs a special counsel, someone entirely independent of the Justice Department," McCain insisted – "someone with credibility like Mr. Bob Bennett."

The response of the White House to being held accountable for leaking national security secrets to benefit their election campaign has been to be *offended*. I.e. – "how dare you accuse me of leaking secrets for political gain?" But everything points to a source within the White House for the leaks, up to and including Barack Obama himself.

I wrote previously about the leak on the British agent who foiled the recent bombing attack, as well. The Democrats are simply unreliable on national security and counter terrorism. Even before that I wrote about the leak of information about the planned strike on Iran by Israel. And so on.

Entitlements programs are going bankrupt: how can we fix them?

June 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the American Enterprise Institute, a post that explains in brief how to reform each of the three largest entitlement programs so that they will not go bankrupt by the time today's younger workers need them.

Here are the programs:

1. Social Security (a social program to redistribute wealth from current workers to current retirees)
2. Medicaid (a social program to provide health care to low income/low wealth Americans)
3. Medicare (a social program to provide health care and prescription drugs to older Americans)

And here's one of the solutions (for Social Security):

> **Social Security** is the easiest entitlement program to reform and can be done without raising taxes.
>
> - The age should be gradually raised to 70 by 2065.
> - Benefits should be indexed to price inflation, not wage inflation, as the program's purpose is to keep the elderly out of poverty.
> - Benefits should gradually be reduced for earners with high incomes. The system should be a way to keep individuals out of poverty, not create a dependent upper- and middle-class.
>
> Together these three reforms would ensure Social Security stays solvent. The entire system, however, could be easily replaced with a new program designed to keep seniors out of poverty and empower them throughout their retirement. People should be given the incentive to work longer by eliminating the Social Security payroll tax for individuals over 62, and a basic income supplement should be provided to impoverished senior citizens. Workers should then be given ownership of their retirement savings by enrolling all workers 55 and younger into a retirement savings account funded by 5 percent of the worker's earnings (2.5 percent from the individual and 2.5 percent from the employer). These simple reforms would create a system that actually provides a safety net for needy citizens — all for 60 percent of what the U.S. currently spends on Social Security.

Click through for the other two problems and solutions.

Wall Street slashes GDP growth forecasts: recession on the horizon?

June 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2002	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.9	6.0
2003	5.8	5.9	5.9	6.0	6.1	6.3	6.2	6.1	6.1	6.0	5.8	5.7
2004	5.7	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.4
2005	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.0	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.9
2006	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.4
2007	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7	5.0
2008	5.0	4.9	5.1	5.0	5.4	5.6	5.8	6.1	6.1	6.5	6.8	7.3
2009	7.8	8.3	8.7	8.9	9.4	9.5	9.5	9.6	9.8	10.0	9.9	9.9
2010	9.7	9.8	9.8	9.9	9.6	9.4	9.5	9.6	9.5	9.5	9.8	9.4
2011	9.1	9.0	8.9	9.0	9.0	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.0	8.9	8.7	8.5
2012	8.3	8.3	8.2	8.1	8.2							

The Democrats took over the House and Senate in 2007
James Pethokoukis says we're doomed. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> In the seven quarters since [August 2010], the U.S. economy has grown at an average annual clip of just 2.1%, including just 1.7% last year.
>
> And right now, 2012 looks like more of the same. GDP expanded at a mere 1.9% pace in the first quarter.
>
> And after a weak retail sales number today, Wall Street economists have been slashing their second-quarter GDP forecasts:
>
> - Goldman Sachs cut its forecast to 1.6% from 1.8%.
> - Bank of America/Merrill Lynch cut its forecast to 1.9% from 2.4%.
> - Macroeconomic Advisers cut its forecast to 1.8% from 2.0%.
> - CIBC World Markets cut its forecast to 2.0% from 2.3%.
> - Barclays Capital cut its forecast to 1.8% from 2.1%
> - Action Economics cut its forecast to 1.8% from 2.0%.
>
> This analysis from JPMorgan provides a good summary:
>
> After today's retail sales report our best estimate is that second quarter real GDP is currently tracking a 2.0% annual growth rate, lower than our prior projection of 2.5%. Moreover, we see some downside risk to our new forecast. The largest reason for the downward revision is today's retail sales report, which lowers our tracking of real consumer spending growth from 2.8% to 2.2%. … In addition, first

> quarter GDP, which currently prints at 1.9%, looks to be tracking closer to 1.7%. Given the weaker momentum in first half growth, achieving our second half outlook for 2% growth will require more things to go right than wrong, which hasn't been the case recently.
>
> The current White House forecast of 3% GDP growth this year looks hopelessly out of reach. And growth this anemic is probably not fast enough to generate enough sustained job growth to bring down the unemployment rate.

At this rate, I would say that we will be back in a recession within 12 months. Obama simply isn't doing anything to stop the bleeding.

Hawaii Planned Parenthood caught counseling sex-selection abortions

June 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> Live Action released new undercover footage today showing two Planned Parenthood clinics, in Maui and Honolulu, advising undercover investigators on how to procure a sex-selective abortion of her baby girl because she wants a boy instead. Officials with the group say Planned Parenthood claims publicly to condemn sex-selective abortion but continues to provide them to women who request them.
>
> The Planned Parenthood Maui Clinic worker counsels Live Action's undercover journalist to wait for a late-term abortion to double-check that the baby is actually a girl before killing her. Then, another worker at Planned Parenthood Honolulu makes sure the woman signs up for QUEST, Hawaii's taxpayer-funded insurance, which will pay for her elective, late-term, sex-selective abortion.
>
> "If that's, you know, if that's what you wanna base your decision on–really–it's up to you," assures the Maui Planned Parenthood counselor, Leslie Watson, when a purportedly pregnant woman explains she wants an abortion because of the sex of the baby.
>
> Watson counsels the woman to be certain about the sex of her unborn child before going through with an abortion, telling her to seek an ultrasound from an OB/GYN and not to worry if they might judge a sex-selective abortion: "This is your reason and this is your situation. So they should be accommodating because this can help you determine and it's nobody's business and nobody's reason but yours."
>
> In Honolulu, the Planned Parenthood counselor "Rogue" tells the woman it is okay to have multiple abortions of girl pregnancies so long as the abortions are spaced far enough apart. The Planned Parenthood counselor suggests paying for the abortions using Hawaii's QUEST state health insurance.
>
> "So if I wanted to terminate a girl the government would pay for it?" asks the woman. "They don't care," the Planned Parenthood counselor replies.
>
> In response to false complaints from abortion advocates that the videos are edited or manipulated, Live Action released the full, unedited video footage which shows the employees at both abortion facilities ensuring that the taxpayers of Hawaii fund the purely sex-selective abortion.

Here's the previous Live Action sting, in case you missed it.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Republicans ban taxpayer-funding of abortion in Arizona
- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the lawResearchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity
- Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

New large-scale UK study confirms the importance of fathers to children

June 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A father's love is as important to a child's emotional development as a mother's, a large-scale study has confirmed.
>
> Examining the cases of more than 10,000 sons and daughters revealed how a cold or distant father can damage a child's life, sometimes for decades to come.
>
> The review of 36 studies from around the world concluded that his love is at least as important to youngsters as that of their mothers.
>
> Researcher Professor Ronald Rohner said that fatherly love is key to development and hopes his findings will motivate more men to become involved in caring for their offspring.
>
> 'In the US, Great Britain and Europe, we have assumed for the past 300 years that all children need for normal healthy development is a loving relationship with their mother,' he said.
>
> 'And that dads are there as support for the mother and to support the family financially but are not required for the healthy development of the children.
>
> 'But that belief is fundamentally wrong. We have to start getting away from that idea and realise the dad's influence is as great, and sometimes greater, than the mother's.'
>
> His conclusions came after he examined data from studies in which children and adults were asked how loving their parents were.
>
> Questions included if they were made to feel wanted or needed, if their parents went out of their way to hurt their feelings and if they felt loved.
>
> Those taking part also answered questions about their personality. These ranged from 'I think about fighting or being mean' to 'I think the world is a good, happy place'.
>
> Tallying the results showed that those rejected in childhood felt more anxious and insecure as well as hostile and aggressive.
>
> Many of the problems carried over into adulthood, reported the study published in the journal Personality and Social Psychology Review.
>
> Crucially, a father's love was often just as important as a mother's. In some cases, it was even more so. One reason for this may be that rejection is more painful when it comes from the parent the child regards as more powerful or respected.

You can read more about how fatherlessness damages children here.

I think the first question we should ask the people who want to redefine marriage is this: “which parent to do you think that a child can do without? the mother or the father?”. We must do everything we can as a society to keep both of a child’s natural parents in the home while the child grows up. If we really care about children, then we should prefer to meet their needs, even if the grown-ups have to be a bit more responsible in their decision making. if the conflict is between innocent children and selfish grown-ups, then the children should win.

We need laws and policies that promote traditional marriage, not laws and policies that break it down and destroy it. Repealing no-fault divorce, lowering subsidies for single motherhood, and making shared parenting the default position, would all help solve the problem. Policies like school choice and lower corporate tax rates helps men to be able to perform in their role as provider. We have to be practical and ask: “what makes men capable of marriage and parenting?” If we want strong fathers, then it makes sense to ask how to make fatherhood more reasonable: what do men need in order to do what we want them to do?

Christians should be especially concerned about the presence of fathers, given the evidence I blogged about before showing how the presence of quality fathers is essential for passing Christian beliefs on to children. Churches need to ask themselves tough questions: Are we teaching women how to choose men based on practical concerns and proven abilities in our churches? And are we doing a good job of attracting men to churches by promoting the masculine, practical aspects of Christianity that men like – like science, apologetics debates, economics and foreign policy?

Mike Licona debates Bart Ehrman on the Unbelievable radio show

June 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Unbelievable radio show.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is well known as a US New Testament Scholar who lost his Christian faith and now questions many core precepts of Christianity, including the Resurrection of Jesus. When Mike Licona had doubts he devoted himself to investigating the evidence and became convinced that Jesus resurrection is the only rational explanation for the facts.
>
> They debate key historical facts about the resurrection – are the letters of Paul that report the resurrection and the Gospel accounts trustworthy or theologised and changed with time? What about apparent contradictions between the Gospels? Does the consensus of scholars count as evidence, or is there a Christian bias? Can a miracle count as an explanation for historical data?

The MP3 file is here.

Snarky summary of the radio debate: (items with * are my made-up paraphrases/clarifications)

Ehrman:
– Bart's new book is about forgeries in the ancient world
– some books were falsely attributed to prominent Christian figures
– there are mistakes in the Bible
– there are mistakes in the resurrection narratives
– the defeat of inerrancy led to his conversion to liberal Christianity
– the problem of evil and suffering caused him to become a non-Christian

Licona:
– there are minimal facts that are agreed to by a broad spectrum of scholars
– the minimal facts are accepted because they pass standard historical criteria
– Fact 1: Jesus died by crucifixion
– Fact 2: Individuals and groups had visions of Jesus after his death
– Fact 3: Paul, a skeptic and an enemy, had an appearance of Jesus that converted him
– these facts are agreed to atheist scholars, liberal scholars, etc.
– virtually 100% of scholars agree with these three facts
– there is no naturalistic explanation of these three facts
– therefore, the best explanation of these three facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Ehrman:
– all historians would accept these three facts, except for maybe the group appearances

– the death of Jesus is irrelevant to the resurrection
– the second and third point can be collapsed together
– so really there is only one fact

Moderator:
– the crucifixion is relevant because Muslims don't admit that fact
– the crucifixion important because it establishes a resurrection, not a resuscitation

Ehrman:
– well, if the point is that he died, then yes, this does require a resurrection

Licona:
– the crucifixion refutes Muslims who deny that Jesus died
– the crucifixion refutes the apparent death theory (swoon theory)
– the death is required for a bodily resurrection
– it's important to know what facts most scholars, regardless of worldview, agree on
– it's important to emphasize that Licona is working from historical bedrock facts
– the resurrection is the best explanation for the historical bedrock facts

Ehrman:
– you are trying to list 3 things, but really it is just one thing – the appearances
– and not ALL scholars agree that the group visions occurred

Licona:
– name one prominent scholar who denies the group appearances

Ehrman:
– the radically leftist atheist nutcase John Dominic Crossan denies the group appearances
* Crossan is so far on the left that I look like a nutcase for even citing him
* Crossan believes in the Secret Gospel of Mark, which is a hoax – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan believes that the synoptics are LATER than gnostic forged gospels – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan presupposes atheism, so he cannot admit to miracle stories as a pre-supposition – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan pre-supposes religious pluralism, so he cannot allow any exclusive claims Christians make – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan is a good historian, it's just that he is so far to the left that no one – NO ONE – agrees with his all of crazy theories
* I think it is a good idea to cite historians who pre-suppose atheism and political correctness before they sit down to do history

Licona:
– let me explain why most scholars accept the individual and group post-mortem appearances
– the best source for the appearances is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 15:3-8
– Paul himself had an appearance of Jesus after Jesus' death
– Paul received this material from a source very soon after the appearances – within 1-3 years

– we know that Paul met with Jesus disciples multiple times prior to writing
– Paul probably received it from Peter and James, who were themselves eyewitnesses

Moderator:
– this early dating presumably rules out legend

Licona:
– well legends CAN start quickly
– it does show that Paul was an eyewitness
– it does show that Paul was in contact with reliable eyewitnesses

Ehrman:
– 1 Corinthians is written around 55 AD, twenty-five years after Jesus died
– it is not implausible that Paul got the creed from the disciples, who were eyewitnesses
– but you don't need a long time for legends to emerge, so that is a possibility

Licona:
– only about 3% of people could read and write back them
– instead, people had enormous capacity for memorization
– the Pharisees were particularly good at memorization
– Jews were very serious about passing along traditions accurately
– Paul, a prominent Pharisee, would have been capable of passing on early creeds accurately
– Paul, in 1 Cor 7, shows that he is willing to separate his opinions from authentic tradition
– Paul had an opportunity in 1 Cor 7 to put words into Jesus' mouth, but he wouldn't do it

Ehrman:
– cultural anthropologists show that things do get changed in some oral cultures
– in these oral cultures, it is assumed that the story teller will change the story
– only in written cultures are they careful to avoid changing the story
– in the New Testament, you can compare the same story in two different gospels, there are differences

Licona:
– Ehrman is right that the gospel writers pick and choose things from the oral tradition that they want to include in their gospels
– different oral tradition transmission schemes have more or less embellishment
– african tribes embellish more, rabbinic teaching embellishes less
* Jesus' followers would have viewed him as a rabbi, and been careful about adding to his teachings
– Paul, an eyewitness, probably received the creed in 1 Cor 15 from other eyewitnesses
– Paul speaks about going twice to Jerusalem in Galatians
– he is meeting with Peter and James to check his facts

Ehrman:
– when you look at Mark and John, there are lots of differences in the narrative

Licona:
– I agree that the gospels have differences, but the oral tradition is likely fixed

Ehrman:
– but Mark and John have different sayings
– why doesn't Mark have the same explicit high Christology that John has?

Licona:
– first, John is trying to weave the oral tradition into a compelling story
– and second, when you look in Mark, the high Christology is there in the Son of Man sayings
– the apocalyptic Son of Man is in Mark, and everywhere in the New Testament

Ehrman:
– the "apocalyptic Son of Man" isn't in John

Licona:
– what about in John 9 with the man who was born blind

Ehrman:
– where is the apocalyptic part?

Licona:
– the healed man worships Jesus because he is the Son of Man
– that links to the apocalypic passages in the Old Testament

Moderator:
– what about the differences between the gospels?

Ehrman:
* well, now is the time for me to set up an inerrantist straw man and then knock it down!
* who was at the empty tomb: one angel or two angels? we don't know, so the whole Bible is false!
* I used to be an inerrantist, so one minor difference is enough for me to dump the whole Bible
* I'll kill you, you stupid straw man! I hate you, Moody Bible Institute! You lied to me!

Licona:
– many of these problems can be solved by realizing that the gospel writers compress time
– the stories don't have to list ALL the characters in every scene
– you don't have to force the Bible to meet some sort of wooden chronology
– the main thing is that the events happened, not that the descriptions match word for word across sources

Ehrman:
– you can't infer a miracle from history, David Hume says so
* extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, David Hume says so
* no I don't know what begging the question is, I'm not a philosopher
* no I don't remember when Bill Craig kicked my ass on this Hume objection in our debate
– the New Testament gospels contradict each other at every point, they are not reliable at all!
* they cannot even agree what Jesus' name is! There are 1 trillion variants of Jesus'

name!
* “one angel vs two angels” proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point
* my expansive list of FOUR theologically insignificant variants proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point

Licona:
– um, the gospels agree on the central narrative and disagree on the peripherals
– and they agree on the minimal facts I presented, even if they disagree about the number of angels

Ehrman:
* they have to agree on everything and be inerrant! The Moody Straw Man Bible Institute says so!
* I really really really need to have the number of angels be the same, or Jesus didn’t die on the cross

Licona:
– but you don’t deny any of the three minimal facts I presented (crucifixion, appearances, Paul)

Ehrman:
– well, I don’t know if the group appearances occurred – maybe they did
– i think Jesus died on the cross, and I think that people said they saw him alive afterward

Licona:
– if you deny the minimal facts, then you are outside the majority of scholars

Ehrman:
– the majority of scholars who agree to the minimal facts you presented are Christians
* Gerd Ludemann is an atheist Christian
* James Crossley is an atheist Christian
* Hector Avalos is an atheist Christian
* the majority of the atheist scholars are all Christians!
– VIRTUALLY EVERYBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IS A CHRISTIAN!!! (Yes, he said that)

Licona:
– you really think so?

Ehrman
– you name one non-Christian in the SBL

Licona:
– (incredulous) um, John Dominic Crossan is an atheist

Ehrman:
– but he CLAIMS TO BE A CHRISTIAN so that means HE IS A CHRISTIAN
* all you have to do to be a Christian is claim to be one
* you can even deny the existence of God and the divinity of Christ and still be one, you bigot!

Licona:
– would Jesus or the apostles recognize a Christian as being someone who doubts God's existence

Ehrman:
– my view is that Jesus and the apostles would not recognize evangelical Christians as Christians
* a non-theist can be a Christian just by claiming to be one, but evangelical Christians are not Christians even if they claim to be Christians
– Christians can't record accurate history about the resurrection because they are biased

Licona:
– on your view, if a person is a Christian then he can't write about the evidence for the resurrection
– so then similarly, you would not allow Jews to write about the historicity of the Holocaust
– because you think that if people have an interest in what they are recording then they can't be objective
– but you have to consider the evidence we have, taking the biases of the sources into account

Ehrman:
– but the only people who believe in the resurrection are Christians!

Licona:
– well, people can consider the evidence for the resurrection as non-Christians
– and then if they accept it they can become Christians

Moderator:
– what about your bias? you don't believe in God – doesn't that pre-supposition affect how you do history?

Ehrman:
– well, I presuppose naturalism, so I can't admit to anything in history that implicates supernatural causes
* no I have never heard of the arguments for the Big Bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, limits on mutations creating information, habitability and so on – I never heard about that stuff from my atheist university professors and even if I had I would have been expelled for talking about it because that would make people feel bad about their sinning

Licona:
– so it's not bias you are concerned about, it's that you don't want history to contradict your untested religion of naturalism?
– why not just do the history without pre-suppositions to gather the minimal facts and then see what the best explanation is?

Ehrman:
* well God is out of bounds as an explanation because I could not have got my PhD if I

mentioned God
* I really needed my smart atheist professors to like me and give me good grades so God is RIGHT OUT
* ideas like a real God and moral laws and Hell makes my atheist professors uncomfortable and that means low grades for me
* I'm not really interested in butting heads with professors – it's easier to just agree with them and move on to selling books to the gullible
* My books are much more sensational than Dan Brown books, so please buy lots of them!

Licona:
– what if the historical evidence is good enough to show that Jesus rose from the dead?

Ehrman:
– well I would not call someone rising from the dead a miracle – I would call it weird
* I also think that the Big Bang is "weird" but that doesn't prove that God created the universe out of nothing
* if it's a miracle then I'm going to have to not sin, and maybe even go to Hell, and we can't have that

Licona:
– well, you accept the three minimal facts
– what if we try all the naturalistic explanations for those three facts and there are problems with all of them?
– what if the resurrection is the best explanation for the three minimal facts?

Ehrman:
– but I want to arbitrarily rule God put because I want to pre-suppose naturalism
– there is not historical reason I have to rule put supernatural explanations a priori

Licona:
– I think you are struggling with the theological implications of a historical conclusion

Ehrman:
– well when you do theology, you have to avoid grounding your theology on science or history
– theology has to be completely made up or it's not good theology

Licona:
– I think you are letting your dislike of the implications of the resurrection determine your historical conclusions
– you have to use historical methods to gather the minimal facts that every scholar accepts, regardless of worldview
– then you weigh ALL the hypotheses, natural and supernatural, that could account for these minimal facts
– then you choose the hypothesis that best explains the minimal facts

More stuff

Debates

- Craig Evans and Bart Ehrman
- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

A lecture on Bart Ehrman by William Lane Craig.

Doug Groothuis explains why conservatives should unite behind Romney

June 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Patheos, a MUST-READ post from evangelical philosopher Dr. Douglas Groothuis.

Excerpt:

> Many conservatives (Christian or otherwise), me included, are disappointed that Mitt Romney will be the Republican candidate for President. They lament that a more principled conservative (such as Michele Bachmann, or, to a lesser degree, Rick Santorum) was not selected. Perhaps they stand for the libertarian principles of Ron Paul. Whatever the case, many will be tempted to not vote at all or to cast a protest vote. This is a deep mistake, based on faulty ideas about politics and the meaning of a political vote. In this short essay, I will labor to convince fellow conservatives, whether Christians or not, to support and vote for Mitt Romney for President. I have waited to endorse Romney until all the other competitors have been eliminated. I do not expect to convert political liberals to this cause, which would require much more argumentation.

His list of points are:

- we have to be realistic about the alternatives
- protest votes are wasted votes
- the differences between Democrats and Republicans are HUGE
- Romney is far more preferable to the alternative

Click through to read the rest. I highly recommend this post.

Here's just a fragment I liked because it touches on religious liberty, which is my core concern:

> **Third**, the essential principles between the two parties, however each candidate may vary from them, are sharply divided. Democrats support a larger government and heavier taxation and regulation. They view the Constitution as a wax nose they twist any way they want (progressivism), pit corporations and "the wealthy" against "the common man" (call it class warfare, a holdover from Marxism), and support a weakened national defense (the only area of the federal government Obama is trying to cut). They do not support religious liberty, and they are pro-abortion with a vengeance. **Under ObamaCare, every American would be subsidizing the killing of innocent human beings with their own tax dollars. Ponder that, for God's sake. It denies the First Amendment (by requiring many religious people to violate their religious principles) and sets a dangerous precedent for state intrusion into matters of religious conscience. Further, the Democratic party in**

> **general, and now Obama very pointedly, do not respect heterosexual monogamy as the norm. They favor same-sex marriage, which is not marriage at all.**
>
> Republicans support smaller government, lighter taxation and regulation, a higher view of the Constitution as a body of objective truths to be applied rightly today, and the opportunities allowed by a basically free market. They advocate a strong national defense (or "Peace through strength," in Reagan's formulation) and are much more pro-life. **This means a Republican president is far more likely to appoint Supreme Court justices who honor the Constitution and oppose *Roe v. Wade*; to appoint dozens of federal judges with great influence, all of whom are likely to have a high and proper view of the Constitution; and to use executive orders (whether or not they are constitutional; they probably are not) in the pro-life cause, such as refusing to give foreign aid in support of abortions abroad and refusing to fund abortions in the military. While there are exceptions, Republicans support the historical and traditional family. While they grant all citizens the rights enumerated in the Constitution, they do not support same-sex marriage.**

Its very hard for me to post link to this endorsement, but I feel that Dr. Groothuis has earned the right to be featured here because of his longstanding support for Michele Bachmann, and then later Rick Santorum when Michele dropped out. I think his post is realistic, and explains the real alternatives facing Christians and conservatives. There are few Christians I respect more on worldview and policy matters than Doug Groothuis, and he is the author of one of the top books on Christian Apologetics.

What I really liked about this article is how many books that Doug referenced, including David Freddoso's book "The Case Against Barack Obama". That book was one of the reasons why I started blogging in January of 2009. If everyone knew the real Barack Obama, then no one would vote for him. It's a lack of knowledge that causes people to vote for him. Anyone who knows his real record and affiliations knows that he is totally unqualified to run so much as a lemonade stand.

The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting

June 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the abstract from a study published in the peer-reviewed journal "Social Science Research".

Abstract:

> In 2005, the American Psychological Association (APA) issued an official brief on lesbian and gay parenting. This brief included the assertion: "Not a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents" (p. 15). The present article closely examines this assertion and the 59 published studies cited by the APA to support it. Seven central questions address: (1) homogeneous sampling, (2) absence of comparison groups, (3) comparison group characteristics, (4) contradictory data, (5) the limited scope of children's outcomes studied, (6) paucity of long-term outcome data, and (7) lack of APA-urged statistical power. The conclusion is that strong assertions, including those made by the APA, were not empirically warranted. Recommendations for future research are offered.

And some the findings:

- 26 of 59 APA studies on same-sex parenting had no heterosexual comparison groups.
- In comparison studies, single mothers were often used as the hetero comparison group.
- No comparison study had the statistical power required to detect a small effect size.
- Definitive claims were not substantiated by the 59 published studies.

In fact, the assertions of the APA are contradicted by a recently released *large-scale* study of gay and lesbian parenting.

Here are the facts from a study released last Sunday:

TWO MOMS VS. MOM AND DAD

A study released Sunday finds that adult children (ages 18-39) of lesbian mothers are more likely to report negative outcomes in several categories than adult children raised by married mother-father parents.

Selected outcome	Had married parents	Had lesbian mothers
Family received welfare growing up*	17%	69%
Currently cohabiting*	9%	24%
Currently on public assistance*	10%	38%
Currently employed full time*	49%	26%
Currently unemployed*	8%	28%
Recently or currently in therapy*	8%	19%
Identifies as 100 percent heterosexual*	90%	61%
Had an affair while married or cohabiting*	13%	40%
Has ever had a sexually transmitted infection*	8%	20%
Was ever touched sexually by a parent or other adult*	2%	23%
Was ever forced to have sex unwilfully*	8%	31%
Currently married	43%	36%
Thought recently about suicide	5%	12%
Is in a same-sex romantic relationship	4%	7%

*Statistically significant difference.

Source: "How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study," Social Science Research, June 10, 2012

Heterosexual vs. gay parenting (click for larger image)

This data is not surprising – we know that fatherless children do far worse than children who have a father present, even when all the factors like income and wealth and education are corrected for. Children need a mother and a father.

Is the APA unbiased?

Why would the APA make pronouncements that go against the scientific facts? Well, consider what a former President of the APA says about the APA:

> A former president of the American Psychological Association (APA), who also introduced the motion to declassify homosexuality as a mental illness in 1975, says that the APA has been taken over by "ultraliberals" beholden to the "gay rights movement," who refuse to allow an open debate on reparative therapy for homosexuality.
>
> Dr. Nicholas Cummings was President of the APA from 1979 to 1980, and also served as a member of the organization's Council of Representatives. He served for years as Chief of Mental Health with the Kaiser-Permanente Health Maintenance Organization, and is the author of the book "Destructive Trends in Mental Health: The Well-Intentioned Path to Harm."
>
> In an interview with representatives of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) in late April, Cummings said that the organization's problems began with the rejection of the Leona Tyler Principle, which required that all public positions of the APA be supported by scientific evidence.
>
> The APA "started changing pretty drastically by the late 1980s," said Cummings. "By the mid 1990s, the Leona Tyler principle was absolutely forgotten, that political stances seemed to override any scientific results. Cherry-picking results

> became the mode. The gay rights movement sort of captured the APA."
>
> Cummings says that the movement for "diversity" in the APA, which he endorsed, had resulted in a lack of diversity regarding heterosexuals.
>
> "If I had to choose now, I would see a need to form an organization that would recruit straight white males, which are underrepresented today in the APA," he said.
>
> Cummings says that he personally is not in opposition to the homosexual movement, including gay "marriage," pointing out that he was the author of the motion to strike homosexuality from the APA's list of mental illnesses. However, he is distressed at the loss of scientific objectivity at the organization.

More evidence against same-sex marriage is available in this research paper from the Family Research Council think tank, compiled from mainstream statistics like the Census Bureau and the Department of Justice.

Here is my comprehensive case against gay marriage.

Computer models utterly fail to predict climate changes

June 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Financial Post, an editorial by Ross McKitrick of the University of Guelph. He is an expert reviewer for the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> [I]n 2008 and 2010, a team of hydrologists at the National Technical University of Athens published a pair of studies comparing long-term (100-year) temperature and precipitation trends in a total of 55 locations around the world to model projections. The models performed quite poorly at the annual level, which was not surprising. What was more surprising was that they also did poorly even when averaged up to the 30-year scale, which is typically assumed to be the level they work best at. They also did no better over larger and larger regional scales. The authors concluded that there is no basis for the claim that climate models are well-suited for long-term predictions over large regions.
>
> A 2011 study in the *Journal of Forecasting* took the same data set and compared model predictions against a "random walk" alternative, consisting simply of using the last period's value in each location as the forecast for the next period's value in that location. The test measures the sum of errors relative to the random walk. A perfect model gets a score of zero, meaning it made no errors. A model that does no better than a random walk gets a score of 1. A model receiving a score above 1 did worse than uninformed guesses. Simple statistical forecast models that have no climatology or physics in them typically got scores between 0.8 and 1, indicating slight improvements on the random walk, though in some cases their scores went as high as 1.8.
>
> The climate models, by contrast, got scores ranging from 2.4 to 3.7, indicating a total failure to provide valid forecast information at the regional level, even on long time scales. The authors commented: "This implies that the current [climate] models are ill-suited to localized decadal predictions, even though they are used as inputs for policymaking."
>
> Indeed. Nor is the problem confined just to a few models. In a 2010 paper, a co-author and I looked at how well an average formed from all 23 climate models used for the 2007 IPCC report did at explaining the spatial pattern of temperature trends on land after 1979, compared with a rival model that all the experts keep telling me should have no explanatory power at all: the regional pattern of socioeconomic growth. Any effects from those factors, I have been told many times, are removed from the climate data before it is published. And yet I keep finding the socioeconomic patterns do a very good job of explaining the patterns of temperature trends over land. In our 2010 paper we showed that the climate

> models, averaged together, do very poorly, while the socioeconomic data does quite well.

The computer models have to be able to predict changes in specific regions, otherwise we have no reason to trust that they are accurate. We have to be able to evaluate whether the models work by *testing them.* When we can test them to predict climate change in specific regions, they fail.

Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)

June 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.1/10]

IMDB median rating: [7/10]

Description:

> When the Pevensie family are evacuated out to the country, they are unaware of the adventure they will encounter. During a game of hide and seek, the youngest daughter, Lucy (Henley) discovers a wardrobe which transports her to the land of Narnia. Covered in snow, Narnia is full of weird and wonderful creatures, but is watched over by the evil White Witch, Jadis (Swinton). When all four Pevensie children end up through the wardrobe, they discover that it was meant to be, as two daughters of Eve and two sons of Adam must join with the mighty lion, Aslan (Neeson) to defeat the evil White Witch.

One version of this movie has over 1 million views on Youtube, so I am assuming that the movie company is OK with it being posted now.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Obama declares amnesty for 800,000 illegal immigrants

June 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> President Obama said Friday the United States will stop deporting hundreds of thousands of young illegal immigrants and give them work permits, a move praised fellow Democrats but criticized by Republicans on Capitol Hill who said the administration has side-stepped the country's legislative process.
>
> The executive order will apply to illegal immigrants who came to the U.S. before they were 16 and are younger than 30. They also must have no major criminal offenses, have been in the country for at least five continuous years, have graduated from a U.S. high school or have earned a GED, or served in the military.
>
> Individuals who have been convicted of a felony offense, a significant misdemeanor offense, or three or more other misdemeanor offenses not occurring on the same date and not arising out of the same act, omission, or scheme of misconduct are not eligible to be considered for deferred action under the new process.
>
> "These are young people who study in our schools and play on our playgrounds," the president said. "They are Americans in every single way but one – on paper."
>
> Those now eligible also can apply for a work permit that will be good for two years with no limits on how many times it can be renewed.
>
> The change is expected to impact roughly 800,000 illegal immigrants.

This is nothing but suspending the rule of law to buy votes from a special interest group. Who pays for it? You do – you have to pay for the extra school, health care and policing costs of illegal immigration.

Governor Bobby Jindal signs bill to ban abortions after 20 weeks

June 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Governor Bobby Jindal

Weekly Citizen reports:

> Governor Bobby Jindal signed two new laws. The legislation – SB 766 by Senator John Alario and HB 1086 by Representative Alan Seabaugh – are part of the Governor's 2012 legislative package.
>
> **SB 766 by Senator John Alario** prohibits abortions of an unborn child who is 20 weeks or older, and provides for license revocation and disciplinary action for any person who intentionally or knowingly performs or induces an abortion on a woman when she has a baby who is 20 weeks or older.
>
> **HB 1086 by Representative Alan Seabaugh** prohibits euthanasia for the non-terminally ill and the severely disabled. Prior to Governor Jindal signing this new law those same protections were only offered for the terminally ill.
>
> Governor Jindal said, "It is incumbent upon us to protect the weakest and most vulnerable among us, and these new laws will protect innocent human life."
>
> Earlier this year, Governor Jindal signed SB 330 by Senator Rick Ward to create a specific crime for performing an abortion in Louisiana if the abortionist is not licensed to practice medicine in Louisiana. The legislation also created the crime of aggravated criminal abortion by dismemberment when the unborn child is dismembered in the course of a criminal abortion.
>
> Governor Jindal also signed SB 708 by Senator Sharon Weston Broome to require that the fetal heartbeat be made audible and ultrasound images be displayed for optional review prior to an abortion.

Here's the breakdown of possible running mates for the Republican nominee.

Jindal is in first place:

1a. Gov. Bobby Jindal, LA — No single person better combines the ability to excite the Republican "base" with the breadth of resumé experience, the reformist record, and the proven ability ofcrisis management than does Jindal. At age 25 he rescued Louisiana's state health-care system from Medicaid-induced collapse; he helped forge a national Medicare solution (along Paul Ryan's later lines) that won over Democratic moderates like John Breaux and Bob Kerrey but fell short when Bill Clinton pulled the plug during the Lewinsky mess; he ran Louisiana's second-largest system of colleges; he served as the number two guy at the federal Department of Health and Human Services; he served three years in Congress and emerged from Hurricane Katrina as the only Louisiana politician with his stature enhanced by his highly effective responses; and he has been the most successful conservative reformer (and the only re-elected one) ever to serve as Louisiana's governor. As governor he pushed through some needed ethics reformed, pared state government, kept taxes low, handled the BP oil spill superbly, and pushed through (partly in his first term, partly in his second) a series of education reforms (expanding choice and improving accountability) that, combined, probably outstrip even those of Florida's Jeb Bush and Wisconsin's Tommy Thompson as the boldest and best school improvements in modern American history.

Some will gripe that Jindal adds no geographical advantage to the ticket — and they are right. But that consideration pales in comparison with what he will add in one particular area. It is almost certain that, regardless of how the Supreme Court rules on Obamacare, the question of "what would Republicans do to replace it" will dominate campaign coverage throughout the summer and perhaps all the way until Election Day. Romney himself, as the author of Romneycare and a once-avid advocate of an individual insurance mandate, is poorly equipped to handle this question. No high-ranking elected official in the country, however, can match Jindal for his expert knowledge on health-care policy, nor can anybody else match Jindal's ability to explain positive, conservative alternatives to the Left's state-controlled systems. In short, he takes a major Romney weakness and turns it into a strength, on an issue that really could sway the whole election.

Jindal also will be hard to attack. He has been somewhat inoculated by none other than James Carville, who said (for the dust-jacket of Jindal's excellent book) that "I don't agree with the guy on everything, but Governor Jindal has provided competent, honest, and personable leadership throughout some of Louisiana's toughest times."

Alas, nobody is perfect, and while national conservatives love Jindal, numerous Louisiana conservatives (some of them quite perspicacious, not to mention friends of mine) will bend anybody's ear about certain alleged shortcomings and apostasies. Individually, their complaints may have merit. Collectively, they still don't add up to an effective indictment of somebody who has had more success

> with conservative governance than anybody in Louisiana history.
>
> Conservatives also will complain that Jindal is sometimes too inaccessible, and that his own geniality masks a serious political ruthlessness in his administration. In truth, there *is* a certain air of LBJ-like political muscle — definitely minus the corruption, thank goodness — that comes from the administration. On the other hand, in the hardball realm of national politics in which the Left and its media allies have no compunction about smearing conservatives relentlessly, conservatives could probably use a measure of ruthless effectiveness.
>
> If Bobby Jindal and his team are deceptively tough, it also means they are tough to beat. Conservatives and Republicans of all stripes should celebrate such a quality — and Mitt Romney darn well ought to make use of it.

He is tied for first place with former senator John Kyl of Arizona.

I would prefer Wisconsin congressman Paul Ryan, Pat Toomey or Bobby Jindal. Go with ice cold competence. These are all people with stong fiscal conservative credentials but who are also thoughtful, reflective social conservatives.

Many of Obama's young supporters now unemployed, living with parents

June 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Bloomberg News.

Excerpt:

> In the hard economic times since 2008, when Foster voted for President Barack Obama's message of hope, America's young voters have been battered. They've disproportionately sustained job losses, wage declines and detours on their career paths.
>
> For many, even the normal rites of passage to adulthood have been disrupted, as they delay such life steps as leaving home, getting married and having children.
>
> […]One in six 16- to 24-year-olds last year was idle, neither working nor attending school even for just an hour a week, according to an analysis of Labor Department data by Lawrence Katz, a Harvard economics professor. Among 20- to 24-year-old men, almost one in five was idle last year.
>
> As of May, 41 percent of the nation's net decline in full- time jobs from four years earlier was among under-25-year-olds, an age group that represents just 14 percent of the workforce, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Under-35-year-olds account for 65 percent of the decline in full-time employment, though they comprise only 35 percent of the labor force.
>
> Even among young people who have full-time work, real wages have dropped, while older workers' pay has kept even or slightly improved. Median weekly earnings after inflation fell 6 percent among 18- to 24-year-olds in full-time jobs from 2007 to 2011, according to an analysis of Labor Department data by the Pew Research Center in Washington.
>
> […]The portion of 18- to 24-year-olds who say they will definitely vote dropped to 47 percent this year from 64 percent in 2008, according to polls conducted by the Institute of Politics during March and April of each election year.
>
> Support for Obama also has declined, with the president besting Republican Mitt Romney 41 percent to 29 percent in the age group compared with 53 percent to 32 percent against Republican John McCain in 2008, according to the poll.
>
> Sixty-six percent of voters under 30 cast ballots for Obama in the last election, the highest share for a presidential candidate from that age group going back to the start of modern exit polls in 1980. Turnout in the age group was the highest in 16 years, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Note that Romney's support among young people is DOWN to 29 from McCain's level of 32. DOWN.

What amazes me is that the support is still so high for Obama. But I think this just goes to show you how thoroughly indoctrinated young people are in the public schools, and how little diversity of opinion and critical thinking there is in higher education.

As Greece's private sector dies, so does government-provided health care

June 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Reuters. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Greece's rundown state hospitals are cutting off vital drugs, limiting non-urgent operations and rationing even basic medical materials for exhausted doctors as a combination of economic crisis and political stalemate strangle health funding.
>
> With Greece now in its fifth year of deep recession, trapped under Europe's biggest public debt burden and dependent on international help to keep paying its bills, the effects are starting to bite deeply into vital services.
>
> […]Greece, a member of the euro zone that groups some of the richest nations on earth, has descended so far that drugmakers are even working on emergency plans to keep medicines flowing into the country should it crash out of the currency bloc.
>
> The emergency has grown out of a tangle of unpaid bills, with pharmacists and doctors complaining of being unable to pay suppliers until competing health insurers clear a growing backlog of unfilled state payments.
>
> […]Greeks have long had to give medical staff cash "gifts" to ensure good treatment. Nevertheless the health system was considered "relatively efficient" before the crisis despite a variety of problems including a fragmented organization and excess bureaucracy, according to a 2009 report for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
>
> But it has been unable to respond to the growing crisis. The European Union and International Monetary Fund, which provided a 130 billion euro lifeline to Greece in March, have demanded big cuts to the system as part of a wider package of austerity measures.
>
> But powerful medical lobbies and unions have resisted fiercely. Caretaker Prime Minister Panagiotis Pikrammenos, in office until a new government is formed after the elections, has pleaded for a solution but been powerless to force a change.

What's the lesson here? The lesson is that government programs have no money of their own – they don't make anything or do anything that people want of their own free will. Only private companies do that because they have to compete with other sellers to please the customer. Government is a parasite on the private sector – everything they do is funded from taxes taken from workers and employers. When the economy goes bad, it's not just private sector jobs that are lost, it's public sector health care programs. That's why no one should want government to go beyond the minimal functions set out in

the Constitution.

UPDATE: On Sunday, Greece voted to reject Obamanomics and to live within their means.

Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?

June 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this post from The Public Discourse which explains a bit more about the two studies on gay parenting that were in the news last week. Some people are complaining that the study did not use enough long-term gay relationships. This quote explains why that was not feasible.

Excerpt:

> The [NFSS] study found that the children who were raised by a gay or lesbian parent as little as 15 years ago were usually conceived within a heterosexual marriage, which then underwent divorce or separation, leaving the child with a single parent. That parent then had at least one same-sex romantic relationship, sometimes outside of the child's home, sometimes within it. **To be more specific, among the respondents who said their mother had a same-sex romantic relationship, a minority, 23%, said they had spent at least three years living in the same household with both their mother and her romantic partner. Only 2 out of the 15,000 screened spent a span of 18 years with the same two mothers. Among those who said their father had had a same-sex relationship, 1.1% of children reported spending at least three years together with both men.**
>
> This strongly suggests that the parents' same-sex relationships were often short-lived, a finding consistent with the broader research on elevated levels of instability among same-sex romantic partners. For example, a recent 2012 study of same-sex couples in Great Britain finds that gay and lesbian cohabiting couples are more likely to separate than heterosexual couples.[3] A 2006 study of same sex marriages in Norway and Sweden found that "divorce risk levels are considerably higher in same-sex marriages"[4] such that Swedish lesbian couples are more than three times as likely to divorce as heterosexual couples, and Swedish gay couples are 1.35 times more likely to divorce (net of controls). Timothy Biblarz and Judith Stacey, two of the most outspoken advocates for same-sex marriage in the U.S. academy, acknowledge that there is more instability among lesbian parents.[5]
>
> **Therefore, while critics of the NFSS have faulted it for lacking comparisons between children of IBFs and the children of committed and intact gay or lesbian couples, this was attempted, but was not feasible. Despite drawing from a large, representative sample of the U.S. population, and despite using screening tactics designed to boost the number of respondents who reported having had a parent in a same-sex relationship, a very small segment reported having been**

> **parented by the same two women or two men for a minimum of three years. Although there is much speculation that today there are large numbers of same-sex couples in the U.S. who are providing a stable, long-term parenting relationship for their children, *no studies* based upon large, random samples of the U.S. population have been published that show this to be true, and the above-cited studies of different nations show that on average, same-sex couple relationships are more short-lived than those of opposite-sex couples.**
>
> Despite the lack of empirical evidence for the claim that today there are large numbers of stable, two-parent gay households, for the last ten years, contemporary gay parenting research has nevertheless claimed that there are "no significant differences" (and some benefits) to being raised by same-sex parents. Therefore, Regnerus analyzed the new NFSS data to verify this claim. In the end, he found the claim to be more plausible when comparing the grown children of parents who had a same-sex relationship to the grown children of divorced, adopted, single-parented, or step-parented arrangements. The claim is false if one compares the grown children of a parent who had a same-sex relationship to those from IBFs. While the study has been criticized for "comparing apples to oranges," Regnerus's work studies the *reality* of the population of children who were raised by parents who had same-sex relationships.

I think this is an important point to make – and it's consistent with the research from previous studies. People have been getting their opinions about what the gay lifestyle is really like for children from biased sources and popular culture. But we need to look at research to really know what is true. Any leftist Hollywood producer with money can make a TV show in which all the religious/conservative people look like devils, and all the gay couples are faithful, committed, monogamous and non-violent. But that's not research – that's television.To really make policies that protect children, we have to look at the facts.

The right way to think about gay marriage is to think about it as an extension of no-fault divorce. The same feminists and leftists who pushed for the legalization of no-fault divorce told us back then that the children would be fine, that children are resilient. No-fault divorce *was a change in the definition of marriage.* The leftists said that divorce would never become widespread, and that it would not harm children in any way. It was all a pack of lies. If the practices of the gay lifestyle become conflated with marriage, then marriage will come to denote relationships engaged in for "love" not children, such that unchastity, infidelity, increased domestic violence and frequent break-ups are incorporated back into the definition of marriage.

Some women think that fathers should not protect their children with force

June 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Women often ask me why I am cautious about getting married. I have a number of reasons for being cautious. I have general concerns about the anti-chastity, anti-marriage, anti-parenting culture. I am concerned about the financial situation that the country is in, which my future children would inherit.

But there is a quirky reason that I almost never tell anyone, and that has to do with the aversion that many women have of men using force to punish evil. The kind of woman I am thinking about is comfortable with banning self-defense, banning guns, coddling criminals, opposing just wars, blaming Israel for Middle East tensions, etc. Even non-feminist women tend to want to regulate and seize firearms, even though though they know nothing about them, except that they go "boom" and loud noises are scary, and therefore bad. These women oppose wars, even they don't want to know anything about how military history shows that weakness provokes aggression – not strength. They don't like martial arts, they won't play wargames, they don't know anyone in the military, they think that contact sports are evil.

Now how widespread is this attitude, do you think? Sure there are some Harriet Harman and Lynne Featherstone types in the UK, and some Bertha Wilson and Beverley McLachlin types in Canada, and some Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Betty Friedan types in the United States. But how widespread is this? How many women want to use laws, courts, schools and government to prevent men fulfilling their traditional roles as protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders? How many women want to control the judgmental things that men say, and the use of force by men to protect the weak and punish evildoers?

First, consider this news story sent to me by Wes:

> According to the Lavaca County Sheriff's Office, the 23-year-old father and his family were enjoying a barbecue last Saturday at their ranch on Shiner's outskirts where they keep horses and chickens.
>
> His young daughter had gone off toward the barn, to feed the chickens, the child's grandfather — who isn't being named, to protect the identity of his granddaughter — told CNN affiliates KSAT and KPRC.
>
> Then her father heard screaming and ran. He found a 47-year-old man in the act of sexually abusing his [4-year old] daughter, according to Sheriff Micah Harmon.
>
> The father stopped the alleged abuser, then pounded him repeatedly in the head.
>
> […]The father himself called 911, saying his daughter's alleged abuser was lying, beaten, on the ground. Afterward, the sheriff said that the admitted killer appeared "very remorseful" and didn't know the other man would die at the scene.

Now here are some reactions from women to this story.

Here's Jezebel:

> Like, okay, instead of a trial, let's just put a dad and a child molester in a room, and give the dad a sword and give the child molester a mild sedative and call it justice! And Judge Judy can referee! Nope. I'm not a legal wizard, but I'm going to stick with my gut here, which says that WE DO NOT JUST GO ABOUT MURDERING PEOPLE.
>
> Now, for the record, I also don't believe that the government should be allowed to murder people who murder people, so take my opinion with however much salt you want. Is it *less* upsetting when someone murders a child molester? I guess so. (Although, and I know I'm opening a can of worms here, even child molesters *are* officially human beings and entitled to the same legal recourse as any other citizen. Also, a lot of them get murdered in prison anyway, so…you guys will get your wish.) Is accidental deadly force excusable if someone walks in on a person actively molesting their child? I think yes. But that doesn't mean we should legalize murder and normalize vengeance. If that was even a real question.

Got that? Defending your family is murder, and executing a serial murderer is also murder. This is from a web site that is radical on abortion – somewhere to the left of Obama, which is loony territory.

And here's CafeMom:

> I'm a parent, for cripes sakes. I never want to see a child being hurt in any fashion. Just last night I sat in my house with my heart beating fast against my chest because I'd heard a rumor that a local teen had to be airlifted out of an accident scene (good news: it was one of those exaggerations that spreads on Facebook — she's fine). In that sense, if the allegation of abuse is true, then I would have been shaking with anger and horror both. If I were that father, I would have *wanted* to kill that man.
>
> But wanted to does not equal would have.
>
> Consider this: when you take justice into your own hands, what happens? You get in trouble. You, the person who, up until that very moment, was in the right.
>
> You may say it's "worth it" because the other person got what you thought was "coming," but you are forever marred by having sunk to the criminal level. You are what you profess to despise.

Got that? Defending your family is sinking down to the level of a criminal.

This is actually quite common, and I do ask about it when I am evaluating women for friendships and courtships. I once was courting a Christian woman who told me that soldiers should not use violence to stop terrorists, and policemen should not use firearms to stop criminals, even as a last resort. She imagined that there was always some other

feasible alternative to violence, and that war and use of deadly force was *never* justified. She even said that capital punishment was *always* wrong. (This is in spite of what the Bible says).

What some women really want is to feminize men and to dominate them – stopping them from getting into debates, from defending themselves with force, from telling the truth if it offends others, from judging immorality, from excluding others whose beliefs are false, from disciplining their children, and so on. I was once called a "bully" by a woman for saying that I would discourage my daughter from studying ballet instead of a STEM field in college, even though my motive was to make sure that she could be financially independent, so that she would be able to pick a husband for the right reasons, instead of being desperate.

Feminism – the denial of and disrespect for distinct male roles – has influenced everything in society. Feminism has influenced the tax rates, the size of government, the laws, the courts, the schools… everything. If I were to get married, I would be getting married in a world dominated by feminism – where the majority of single/younger women are fully supportive of regulating and controlling men, as evidenced by their voting patterns.

Many women just seem to have this enormous confidence about regulating and dominating other peoples lives, and these convictions are often not based on any evidence, but merely on intuitions and feelings – or even the desire to be perceived by others as "nice". I am frequently encourtering women on the right and the left who boast to me about how they do not judge others – as if having no informed, evidence-based moral convictions was a qualification for being a wife and mother. Who wants to marry a hedonistic sociopath? Not me.

I think it is very important for me to be careful about getting into a relationship where the state can intrude and regulate my entire life, in the event of a divorce or because I have children and they want to be a "co-parent" with me, as a Canadian educrat recently said. I can take care of myself, but when you have to face divorce courts, or let your children face government agencies and public schools forcing their secular left viewpoint on tiny little kids, it's a lot to ask of a man.

I am already being forced to give a third of my salary to fund a secular leftist bureaucracy which opposes my plans and my values. For me to consider marriage, I would have to be convinced that the woman would support me. And the precondition for support is having an informed view of what men care about and what we are trying to achieve. Women need to show that they are willing to recognize the differences of a man, and his distinct roles, and to give him space to make his contributions.

This understanding of the contributions of men has to be done at the micro level of defending the family, but also at the macro level of defending the nation. Women ought to make an effort to understand and affirm the use of force by Western nations against tyranny and oppression. Counter-terrorism, national security and a robust peace through strength foreign policy are not things that come easily to women, and *that's exactly why*

they should be open to studying those things, so that their minds are naturally changed as they grow in knowledge.

UPDATE: Grand jury says there will be no charges laid against the father.

Is 1 Cor 15:3-7 based on early eyewitness testimony?

June 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I recently was told by an atheist this about 1 Corinthians 15:3-7:

> What Paul reports in 1 Corinthians is not an eyewitness account – nor does he claim it to be. He says he 'received' it. A believer posted on my site that she often receives things from God – she hears his voice. I asked if it was an audible voice, and she said, yeah – sort of.
>
> If eyewitness doesn't mean witnessed with the eye, and audible doesn't mean heard with the ear – then I don't really know how to have a reasonable conversation with believers. Folks like this are ultimately going to believe whatever they want, no matter what.

I sputtered for a while at the suggestion that Paul's early creed in 1 Cor 15:3-7 was an auditory hallucination and not an early tradition received from the eyewitnesses, but then I calmed down and wrote something sensible, so here it is, without quotes. (Keep in mind that I was very angry when I wrote this because… GAAAHHHH!!!)

Note: I should be clear and say that skeptics accept that the people who report having appearances had some sort of experience where they thought they saw Jesus. Gerd Ludemann calls them "visions", for example.

—-

If you study these things, you will find that the tradition in 1 Corinthians 15 is accepted by atheistic scholars like James Crossley as going back to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus. This is an early creed that was received from the eyewitnesses Peter and John when Paul visited them several times in Jerusalem, as documented in Galatians 1 and 2, where Paul meets the eyewitnesses. And of course, Paul has his own eyewitness experience, documented in 1 Cor 15:8. This account is admitted by atheistic scholars on the far left fringe. Even the Jesus seminar colors it red in their "The Five Gospels" book. It is the only way to explain Paul's conversion. He was an eyewitness. He met with the eyewitnesses.

Here is an introduction:
http://www.reasonablefaith.org/the-witness-of-the-pre-pauline-tradition-to-the-empty-tomb

> The evidence that Paul is not writing in his own hand in I Cor. 15.3-5 is so powerful that all New Testament scholars recognize that Paul is here passing on a prior tradition. In addition to the fact that Paul explicitly says as much, the passage is replete with non-Pauline characteristics, including, in order of appearance: (i) the phrase "for our sins" using the genitive case and plural noun is unusual for Paul; (ii) the phrase "according to the Scriptures" is unparalleled in Paul, who introduces Scriptural citations by "as it is written"; (iii) the perfect passive verb "has been raised" appears only in this chapter and in a pre-Pauline

> confessional formula in II Tim. 2.8; (iv) the phrase “on the third day” with its ordinal number following the noun in Greek is non-Pauline; (v) the word “appeared” is found only here and in the confessional formula in I Tim. 3.16; and (vi) “the Twelve” is not Paul’s nomenclature, for he always speaks of the twelve disciples as “the apostles.”
>
> Now the visit during which Paul may have received this tradition is the visit you mention three years after his conversion on the road to Damascus (Gal. 1.18). This puts the tradition back to within the first five years after Jesus’ death in AD 30. So there’s not even an apparent inconsistency with Paul’s appropriating the language of the formula to encapsulate the Gospel he was already preaching during those first three years in Damascus.

I have heard atheists accept the 1 Cor 15 creed as having that early date in debates with Craig.

Here are a few of them:
http://www.garyhabermas.com/articles/dialog_rexperience/dialog_rexperiences.htm

Quote:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: “However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul’s.”[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul’s own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: “It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition.”[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]
>
> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to

Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]

Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]

Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.

(3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]

These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.

(4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed

> his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

Now, some of the people he lists there are people who I think are so far on the secular left that they are on the far left fringe to the point of being irrational – they are so biased. And yet they don't deny 1 Cor 15, or that it is based on eyewitness accounts.

That why you see people like Bart Ehrman, Gerd Ludemann, James Crossley, Michael Goulder, etc. giving Craig the appearances as a historical fact in debates. Atheist or not, people who deny the resurrection accept the appearances listed in this creed, and they think it is based on eyewitness testimony, including Paul's. That's the way it is. That's what you read in the papers. That's what you see in debates. This is a given.

That's what I mean when I say they are non-negotiable. I mean that scholars on the far left secular skeptical fringe consider them to be non-negotiable.

Washington Post columnist bashes Obamacare

June 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Washington Post is one of the most liberal newspapers, but not the worst. For example, further left there's the New Republic and National Journal, which are basically Marxist. Well the article I'm looking at today was written by a columnist who has worked for both National Journal *and* New Republic. He's even work for Newsweek which is just Democrat propaganda. Surprisingly, his WaPo article is actually fairly accurate about the problems with Obamacare, although his opinions of what to do instead are still left-wing.

He lists 5 reasons why Obamacare is bad policy:

1. *It increases uncertainty and decreases confidence when recovery from the Great Recession requires more confidence and less uncertainty.*
2. *The ACA discourages job creation by raising the price of hiring.*
3. *Uncontrolled health spending is the U.S. system's main problem — and the ACA makes it worse.*
4. *Obama's program also worsens the federal budget problem.*
5. *The ACA discriminates against the young in favor of the old.*

Here's are the details on numbers 2,4 and 5:

> *(2) The ACA discourages job creation by raising the price of hiring.* This is basic economics. If you increase the price of labor, companies will buy less of it. Requiring employers to buy health insurance for some workers makes them more expensive, at least in the short run. Particularly vulnerable are low-skilled workers, notes economist Diana Furchtgott-Roth of the Manhattan Institute. Because the employer mandate exempts firms with fewer than 50 workers, there's a huge incentive for firms to stop at 49, she says.
>
> *(4) Obama's program also worsens the federal budget problem.* Driven by Medicare and Medicaid, health care already exceeds one-fourth of the budget and is headed toward a third. It's the crux of the problem. So Obama creates *another* huge health program. The administration's retort: the program lowers the budget deficit. This is rhetorical hocus-pocus. Here's what happens. From 2012 to 2022, the ACA raises federal spending by $1.762 trillion, estimates the Congressional Budget Office. However, all of this and a bit more is offset by tax increases and assumed cuts in Medicare. But these tax increases and cuts could have been used to shrink the huge budget deficits that pre-existed Obamacare. Now they can't; moreover, the Medicare cuts might be repealed or reduced.
>
> *(5) The ACA discriminates against the young in favor of the old.* Government policy already does this through payroll taxes that have young workers subsidizing Social Security and Medicare benefits. The ACA compounds the effect

> by forcing some young Americans to buy insurance at artificially high premiums that would pay for the care of a sicker, older population.

Higher unemployment, more debt and passing the costs on to the younger generation who can't even find jobs with their worthless degrees in political correctness.

I think there are a lot of leftist nuts who are getting increasingly disengaged with Obama's plan to "help the poor". It's not working because Obama has no idea how to help the poor. The way to help the poor is to give them jobs, and the way to give them jobs is to give more incentives to the private sector job creators, and the way to give incentives to the private sector job creators is to *lower their taxes* and *decrease their regulatory burden*. That's what would actually work. Obama did the opposite, and nowhere is this more visible than in his Obamacare boondoogle.

Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?

June 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Some interesting numbers from the large-scale studies on children raised by gay fathers and lesbian mothers released last week. (H/T ECM)

Abbreviations:

- LM = lesbian mothers
- GF = gay fathers
- IBF = intact biological family (heterosexual couple)

Here are the findings:

> **Economics:**
>
> On economic outcomes, grown children of an LM were almost four times more likely to be currently on public assistance than the grown children of IBFs. As young adults, they were also 3.5 times more likely to be unemployed than the grown children of IBFs.
>
> **Crime:**
>
> On criminal outcomes, the children of GFs showed the greatest propensity to be involved in crime. They were, on average, more frequently arrested and pled guilty to more non-minor offenses than the young-adult children in any other category. The children of LMs reported the second highest frequency of involvement in crimes and arrests, and in both categories the young-adult children of intact biological families reported the lowest frequency of involvement in crimes or arrests.
>
> **Sexual abuse:**
>
> [W]hen asked if they were ever touched sexually by a parent or other adult, the children of LMs were eleven times more likely to say “yes” than the children from an IBF, and the children of GFs were three times more likely to say “yes.” The children of IBFs were the least likely of all family types to have ever been touched sexually: only 2% reported affirmatively (compared to 23% of LMs who replied “yes”). When asked if they were ever forced to have sex against their will, the children of LMs were the worst off again—four times more likely to say “yes” than the children of IBFs. The children of GFs were three times more likely to have been forced to have sex than the children of IBFs. In percentages, 31% of LMs said they had been forced to have sex, compared with 25% of GFs and 8% of IBFs. These results are generally consistent with research on heterosexual families. For instance, a recent federal report showed that children in heterosexual families are least likely to be sexually, physically, or emotionally

abused in an intact, biological, married family.[7]

Sexually transmitted diseases:

Regarding physical health, when asked if they had ever had a sexually transmitted infection (STI), the young-adult children of GFs were three times more likely to say “yes” than those of IBFs. Children of LMs were two and a half times more likely to say “yes,” followed by the children of stepfamilies, who were twice as likely to have had an STI as children of IBFs. Children of IBFs and children from “other” family types were the least likely of all to have had an STI.

Drug use:

When asked to report upon frequency of marijuana use, the young-adult children of divorced parents were the worst off, reporting that they had used marijuana on average one and a half times more frequently than children of IBFs; next came the children of LMs, followed by the children of single parents, and the children of GFs. The children adopted prior to age 2 by strangers (people unrelated to them) and the children of IBFs reported least frequent marijuana use as young adults.

Emotional health:

Respondents were asked to report their sentiment about their family experiences while growing up. The children of LMs reported the lowest levels of perceived safety in their childhood home, followed by children of GFs, with the children of IBFs reporting the highest levels of perceived safety. When asked if they were recently or currently in therapy “for a problem connected with anxiety, depression, relationships, etc.,” children adopted by strangers reported receiving such therapy the most**,** followed by the children of LMs. The children from IBFs were least likely to report receiving therapy.

On the CES-D depression index, an eight-measure survey of respondents’ happy-to-depressed thoughts over the previous seven days, the young-adult children of LMs and GFs reported statistically significantly higher levels of depression than young-adult children from IBFs. The young-adult children of GFs were twice as more likely to have thought about suicide in the previous 12 months as the children of LMs, and almost five times more likely than the children of IBFs to have thought about the same.

Relationships:

The study asked questions about the history and current status of the young adults’ relationships. When asked to rate the quality of their current relationship, the children of GFs reported the lowest, followed by children adopted by strangers, the children of stepfamilies, and then the children of LMs.

When asked about the number of times they thought that their current relationship was in trouble, the children of GFs reported the highest numbers again, followed by the children of divorced parents. The children of IBFs reported

> both the highest levels of relationship quality and the lowest frequency of thinking their relationship to be in trouble of all of the family arrangements.
>
> When asked about infidelity, children of LMs were three times more likely to report having had had an affair while married/cohabiting than children of IBFs, followed by children from stepfamilies (who were two and a half times more likely than IBFs) and children of GFs (who were twice as likely).
>
> **Sexual orientation:**
>
> The NFSS asked respondents to identify their sexual orientation and found that children of LMs were more open to same-sex romantic relationships, bisexuality, and asexuality than any other group. Daughters of LMs reported an average of just over one female sex partner and four male sex partners in their lifetimes, in contrast to daughters of IBFs who reported an average of only 0.22 female sex partners and 2.79 male sex partners in their lifetimes. Daughters of LMs were also most likely to self-report asexuality, “not sexually attracted to either males or females” (4.1% of females from lesbian mothers compared to 0.5% of females from IBFs). Children of GFs were the next least likely to identify as fully heterosexual. Children from IBFs were most likely of all family types to identify as entirely heterosexual.

I think that we need to think though the consequences of redefining marriage for all of the parties who are concerned, and one of those parties is definitely the children of gay fathers and lesbian mothers. Are they well served by redefining marriage? Should we be celebrating and affirming same-sex parenting as being equal to parenting in intact biological families?

Video: William Lane Craig and Peter Millican debate "Does God Exist?"

June 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Which debate would I consider to be the best to show an intelligent skeptic?

This one, between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican.

The debate was held at the University of Birmingham, England in 2011. I would put this debate in the top 3 Craig debates ever, along with his debates against Austin Dacey and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong.

My summary of the Craig-Millican is below. This debate is really meant for advanced students, but if you read my post "What you need to know about the BVG Theorem" before watching the debate, it should help you to follow along.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It's not just that the settings are unlikely, it's that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a "herd morality" that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved "herd morality". However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence

we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It's possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It's also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt

their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations.

But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It’s not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn’t mean that multiplication doesn’t work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it’s similar to nothing.

We don’t have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can’t be an abstract object because they don’t cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we’ve never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have “algorithmic properties” as well as physical properties, it doesn’t mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that’s not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God’s goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God’s goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can’t translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that

makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they

undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

New study finds that belief in Hell is associated with reduced crime

June 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Science Daily. (H/T Wes)

Excerpt:

> Religions are thought to serve as bulwarks against unethical behaviors. However, when it comes to predicting criminal behavior, the specific religious beliefs one holds is the determining factor, says a University of Oregon psychologist.
>
> The study, appearing in the Public Library of Science journal*PLoS ONE*, found that criminal activity is higher in societies where people's religious beliefs contain a strong punitive component than in places where religious beliefs are more benevolent. A country where many more people believe in heaven than in hell, for example, is likely to have a much higher crime rate than one where these beliefs are about equal. The finding surfaced from a comprehensive analysis of 26 years of data involving 143,197 people in 67 countries.
>
> "The key finding is that, controlling for each other, a nation's rate of belief in hell predicts lower crime rates, but the nation's rate of belief in heaven predicts higher crime rates, and these are strong effects," said Azim F. Shariff, professor of psychology and director of the Culture and Morality Lab at the UO. "I think it's an important clue about the differential effects of supernatural punishment and supernatural benevolence. The finding is consistent with controlled research we've done in the lab, but here shows a powerful 'real world' effect on something that really affects people — crime."
>
> Last year, in the International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, Shariff reported that undergraduate students were more likely to cheat when they believe in a forgiving God than a punishing God.
>
> Religious belief generally has been viewed as "a monolithic construct," Shariff said. "Once you split religion into different constructs, you begin to see different relationships. In this study, we found two differences that go in opposite directions. If you look at overall religious belief, these separate directions are washed out and you don't see anything. There's no hint of a relationship."
>
> The new findings, he added, fit into a growing body of evidence that supernatural punishment had emerged as a very effective cultural innovation to get people to act more ethically with each other. In 2003, he said, Harvard University researchers Robert J. Barro and Rachel M. McCleary had found that gross domestic product was higher in developed countries when people believed in hell more than they did in heaven.

Here's a quick re-cap on what counts as atheist morality, according to atheist scholars:

> “Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin’s views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That’s the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either. “
> – Cornell University evolutionist William Provine, in a debate with Phillip E. Johnson
> Source: http://www.arn.org/docs/orpages/or161/161ma
>
> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself,’ they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory. (Michael Ruse, “Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics,” in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).
>
> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won’t find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

I’ve often argued on this blog that it is impossible for atheists to ground morality on an atheistic worldview. Atheism not only makes it hard for them to ground self-sacrificial actions rationally, but it even excuses them from having to make moral choices – since on their view they are only doing what they are programmed to do in response to certain instincts and sensory inputs. They don’t think there are any real objective moral values and objective moral duties, nor is there any free will, nor any afterlife. What kind of rational basis for self-sacrificial morality do those beliefs create? Morality isn’t doing what makes you feel good, or doing what most people like. Morality is doing hard things because they are *right* objectively. They can know right and wrong, and they can choose to do right and wrong, but none of that is rationally grounded by what they believe.

Ultimately, I think that people’s actions are bounded by what they think is rational. It’s easy to do things right when it feels good, but what about when it feels bad?

Rising student debt will impact future housing demand

June 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bad news for homeowners from the California Association of REALTORS. (H/T Captain Capitalism)

Excerpt:

> At May's midyear legislative meetings held by the National Association of Realtors in Washington, DC, a panel of experts in a session titled "Shifting Demographics and Housing Choice: A Whole New World?" discussed future housing market demand and trends to keep in mind as we think about the future of housing in the U.S.
>
> The biggest takeaway was that baby boomers will increasingly contribute to housing supply as they age, yet echo boomers are in a difficult position to absorb the inventory. The echo boomers, also called Millennials, are those currently ages 17 to 31, and account for 62 million people. And although future housing demand highly dependents on different rates of household formation among Echo Boomers, this generation is in a precarious position.
>
> In addition to having seen the worst housing downturn, these younger buyers have been hit hard by the recession. Faced with an uncertain job market, no real income growth, tighter mortgage lending rules, and mounting student and credit card debt, it is no surprise that some of them do not put priority on homeownership.
>
> **The concern over student debt is particularly alarming. According to a number of recent research studies, college seniors who graduated with student loans each owed an average of $25,250, up significantly from an average of $12,750 in 1996. Parents have accumulated student debt as well, $34,000 on average. The aggregate amount of student loan debt in the U.S. is over $1 trillion currently. The pace at which debt is mounting adds to the concern. Between March 31, of this year and 2011, student loan debt rose by $64 billion. However, over the same period, all other forms of household debt fell by $383 billion. Put another way, since the peak in household debt in the third quarter of 2008, student loan debt has increased by $293 billion, while other forms of debt fell by $1.53 trillion.**
>
> The rise in student debt is attributable to rising cost of education. Since 1978, the cost of tuition in the U.S. has increased more than 900 percent, 650 points above inflation. Between1990 and 2010 alone, tuition rose by 116 percent while the median household incomes inched a mere 2.1 percent.

The libertarian Cato Institute knows what the problem is (see my bold below) and they know how to fix it too.

Excerpt:

> The real answer is for the federal government to get out of the higher education subsidy business altogether, as a Cato essay argues.
>
> The following are some key points from the essay:
>
> - The effect of subsidy programs, in part, is to impose taxes on blue collar workers—who have not attended college—to pay for the tuition of future white-collar professionals. Why should the government subsidize future high earners at the expense of average working people?
> - **Federal student aid programs transfer wealth from taxpayers to academic institutions. That's because the rise in student subsidies over the decades appears to have fueled inflation in education costs. Tuition and other college costs have soared as subsidies have risen. College cost inflation induced by federal aid probably hurts low-income families—the people that federal aid was supposed to target—more than others.**
> - Federal aid has probably helped increase student enrollment, but many of those additional students may not have been ready, or suited, for college. This is evidenced by the rising shares of college students who require remedial work, and the fact that institutions have lowered their standards to adapt to the rise in second-rate students.
> - Increasing top-down control and subsidization of higher education from Washington is creating a threat to the strength of the American system. As we have seen in K-12 education, the growth in federal subsidies is usually accompanied by calls for more oversight, micromanagement, and rising levels of red tape imposed by Washington.
> - Federal student loan and grant programs have been subject to waste and fraud for decades. The Pell grant program (which SAFRA would enlarge) costs taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars per year in fraud. Another ongoing problem is the high default rate on student loan programs.

Will the student debt problem be fixed through privatization? Not while Obama is in office. The universities are dominated by secular leftists – they are the ones who benefit from these rising tuition costs. Obama isn't going to do a thing to stop them from getting your money through subsidies, otherwise he would lose lots of campaign donations!

In the meantime, the best policy is to make sure that you do your degree in a STEM field (science, technology, engineering or math). Non-STEM degrees, according to Captain

Capitalism, are not recommended.

In Los Angeles schools, only 45% of students can read at grade level

June 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> There's a law in California that requires school districts to take student progress into account when they evaluate teachers. The statute goes back 40 years; language specifically prescribing the use of statewide tests was added to it in 1999.
>
> Until a court ruling last week, this idea of judging teachers by measurable results was pretty much a dead letter. Union opposition saw to that.
>
> But a group of parents and students filed suit to force the Los Angeles city schools to follow the law. School Superintendent John Deasy, though nominally a defendant, was on their side. This was all about pushing the teachers' union into the 21st Century.
>
> **On June 12, Superior Court Judge James Chalfant ruled for the plaintiffs. He noted that the current system of review gave 99.3% of the district's teachers the highest possible rating in the 2009-10 academic year, when only 45% of students performed at grade level in reading and 56% did so in math.** In a bit of judicial understatement, he said this process "provides little meaningful evaluation."
>
> The reaction of United Teachers Los Angeles to Chalfant's decision was a teachable moment about union attitudes. A statement from UTLA President Warren Fletcher praised Chalfant for declining to rule on the question of whether a new evaluation system had to be worked out in collective bargaining. In other words, the union still holds out the hope that results-based assessment of teacher performance can be stymied at the negotiating table.
>
> […]The real dividing line is between those who cling to the old ways — rewarding teachers by seniority, course work and credentials — and those who believe in making teachers accountable for how well their students learn.
>
> The latter group is a rising force. According to a 2011 report from the National Council on Teacher Quality, 24 states required teacher evaluations to have "objective evidence of student learning."
>
> California was not among those states at the time, but last week's ruling should push it in that direction. And the more that unions resist such progress, the more they will cement their public reputation as guardians of mediocrity — or worse — in the teaching ranks.

Teacher unions protect underperforming teachers from having to care about what their customers – parents – think of them. You will never get good service when you are forced to pay for public schools through taxes. The only way to *make* teachers care about children is to put the money back into the parents' pockets and then let them choose a school that works for them. Then, and only then, will schools serve parents.

Free speech hero Mark Steyn reflects on the demise of Section 13 fascism

June 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

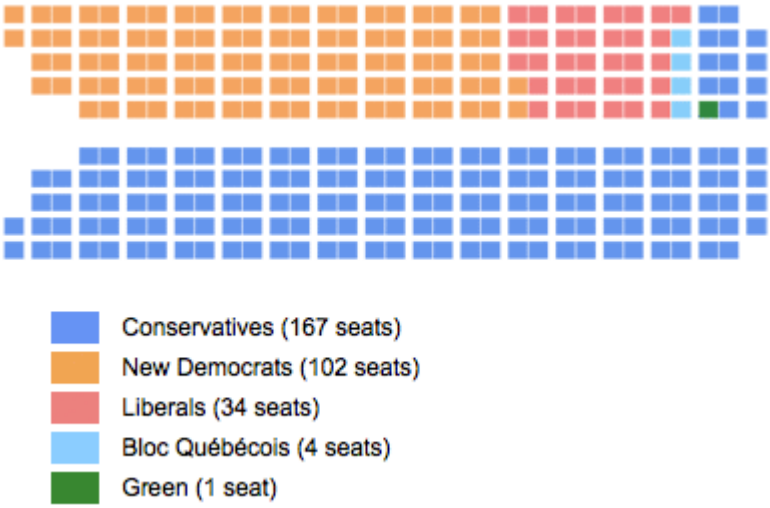

Canada 2011 Federal Election Seats

Kathy Shaidle at Five Feet of Fury linked to this editorial which explains how the battle for free speech was won up in the frozen North.

Excerpt:

> Justice Minister Rob Nicholson had voiced support for the legislation. So had the Prime Minister. The result, then, was never in doubt: at 9:35 p.m. on June 6, by a vote of 153-136, Parliament got Canada's human rights bureaucrats out of the business of policing speech on the Internet. There was a scattering of applause, and handshakes for Storseth (the bill requires the rubber stamp of Senate approval). "To be honest, it's all a blur," says the three-term MP, laughing. But if the passage of Bill C-304 represents a fundamental shift in Canadian culture, you'd never have known it that night. Members dealt with a few housekeeping matters, then waded through a supply bill. Finally, one by one, they trickled out into the cool Ottawa night.
>
> The effect of killing Section 13 will be debated for years among anti-racist groups and civil libertarians. But it is undoubtedly a turning point. Since 1999, Canadians who felt aggrieved by material transmitted online have been encouraged to seek redress under federal human rights law, which targeted material "likely to expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt" based on grounds of discrimination like race, religion or sexual orientation. Storseth's bill repeals the provision outright, leaving the Criminal Code as the primary bulwark against the dissemination of hate propaganda by electronic means.
>
> With it will go one of the most divisive disputes to grip the country since the introduction of the Charter of Rights itself—a contest of values that over the past five years has pitted Canadians' desire to protect minorities from discrimination

> against the bedrock principle of free speech. Mainstream media outlets, most notably *Maclean's,* have been hauled before commissions to answer for their published content. The commissions themselves have come under fire for allowing their processes to be used as a bludgeon against legitimate expression, tailored as they are to encourage complainants to come forward. Meantime, a Saskatchewan law similar to Section 13 has become the subject of a Supreme Court challenge that could invalidate hate-speech provisions in most provincial human rights codes. By year's end, it is conceivable that no human rights commission in the country will be in the business of adjudicating published material.

And here's a must-read cri-de-coeur from free speech hero Mark Steyn in Maclean's magazine. (H/T Binks the Web Elf)

Excerpt:

> Operationally, Section 13 was stinkingly corrupt. There are some 34 million Canadians, yet just one individual citizen had his name on almost every Section 13 prosecution of the last decade. Just as Matthew Hopkins appointed himself England's Witchfinder General in 1645 and went around the country turning in raven-tressed crones for the bounty of a pound per witch, so Richard Warman appointed himself Canada's Hatefinder General and went around turning in shaven-headed tattooed losers in their mums' basements for far more lucrative bounties of tens of thousands of dollars. He filed his complaints as a supposedly "offended" and "damaged" private citizen while an employee of Her Majesty's Government. And, in fairness to Matthew Hopkins, he didn't personally put on a pointy black hat and ride around on a broomstick. Whereas Mr. Warman joined Stormfront and other "white supremacist" websites and posted copious amounts of hate speech of his own, describing, for example, Jewish members of cabinet as "scum" and gays as a "cancer." That's how "hateful" Canada is: there's so little "hate" out there that the country's most famous Internet Nazi is a taxpayer-funded civil servant.
>
> For Warman, there was little risk: you paid his costs, and the dice were loaded. After Hosni Mubarak was "re-elected" with 97.1 per cent of the vote, he was said to be furious with his officials for stealing too much of the election and making him look like one of those crude ham-fisted dictator-for-life types like Saddam and Kim Il-Sung. So next time round his officials arranged for him to "win" with a mere 96.3 per cent of the vote. Canada's "human rights" commissars had no such squeamishness: until the tenacious Marc Lemire won his landmark victory in 2009, Section 13 prosecutions had a three-decade 100 per cent conviction rate even the Soviets might envy.
>
> That wasn't even the most basic affront. Until Maclean's intervened in 2008, Lemire's Section 13 trial was scheduled to be held in secret. I couldn't quite believe this when I chanced to happen upon the "judge's" rationale, and I

> suggested en passant that we should get Maclean's estimable QC Julian Porter to file a whatchamacallit, a brief or motion or whatever, referencing precedents and other jurisprudential-type stuff, and put a rocket up these totalitarian buggers by treating their dank outhouse of pseudo-justice as a real courtroom subject to real law. Secret trials are for Beijing and Tehran, yet in the name of "human rights" they were introduced to Ottawa.
>
> **The line that sums up my objection to the racket was formulated by the Toronto blogger Kathy Shaidle: "You're too stupid to tell me what to think." In recent days, the last lonely defenders of the Canadian thought police have all volunteered to demonstrate Miss Shaidle's proposition. The Opposition [NDP] critic for "public safety," Randall Garrison, bemoaned the demise of the commissars' "power to educate Canadians." "We do have a serious problem," said Garrison. "If you take away the power to take [websites] down, it's not clear they have any mandate to even talk to people about it and educate them about it."**

The Conservatives held up their end of the deal once they got their majority, didn't they? Everyone who said they were not going to do anything with their majority should hang their heads in shame, now. They can't do everything, but they can certainly do some things.

This is a lesson for us down here. If you love your country, then get out and vote in November! And make sure your friends vote, too – you should be convincing them to vote by giving them the facts about Obama's catastrophic failures even now.

Related posts

- Canadian conservatives pass bill to repeal Section 13 speech code
- Youtube reverses decision to ban video critical of gay activism in Canada
- Alberta judge rules that it is legal to disagree with homosexuality
- Conservative MP's bill to repeal Section 13 moves to committee
- Conservative MP introduces bill to abolish Section 13 speech code
- Ezra Levant on the new Sun News television network
- What happens when same-sex marriage conflicts with religious liberty?
- Human Rights Tribunal finds Catholic school board guilty of discrimination
- Saskatchewan planning to abolish its Human Rights Tribunal
- In Canada, Blazing Cat Fur is being sued for linking to Mark Steyn
- Canadian Human Rights Commissions continue war on Christians
- Video of Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn testifying against Canadian HRCs
- The Conservative Party takes up free speech in British Columbia
- The Conservative Party takes up free speech in Ontario
- Video of Ezra Levant discussing free speech on the Michael Coren show
- Video interview with Ezra Levant by the libertarian Fraser Institute

Obama covers-up DOJ operation that allowed gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels

June 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, a re-cap of the details of the Fast and Furious gun smuggling operation:

> Issa argues the documents will shine light on a number of revelations about just how much knowledge Holder and the the U.S. Department of Justice as well as the Obama administration had about the Fast and Furious, including:
>
> - The Justice Department switching its view from denying whistleblower allegations to admitting they were true.
> - Hiding the identity of officials who led the charge to call whistleblowers liars and retaliate against them.
> - The reactions of top officials when confronted with evidence about gunwalking in Fast and Furious, including whether they were surprised or were already aware.
> - The Justice Department's assessment of responsibility for officials who knew about reckless conduct or were negligent.
> - Whether senior officials and political appointees at fault in Operation Fast and Furious were held to the same standards as lower level career employees whom the Department has primarily blamed.
>
> Operation Fast and Furious resulted in hundreds of weapons purchased at gun shops in Arizona ending up in Mexico, many of them at crime scenes. Initially, the department denied that gun-walking had taken place.
>
> Relying on the tactic, federal agents from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives abandoned their usual practice of intercepting all weapons they believed to be illicitly purchased. Instead, the goal of gun-walking was to track such weapons to high-level arms traffickers, who had long eluded prosecution, and to dismantle their networks.

From The Hill:

> A House panel voted Wednesday to place Attorney General Eric Holder in contempt of Congress for his failure to comply with a subpoena, defying an assertion of executive privilege from President Obama.
>
> The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, led by Republican Chairman Darrell Issa (Calif.), approved a resolution along party lines to place Holder in contempt after battling him for months over access to internal agency documents about the gun-tracking operation known as "Fast and Furious."
>
> The vote came after Obama escalated the conflict by sending a letter to the committee claiming executive privilege over the documents the panel had

> sought.
>
> All 23 Republicans on the committee voted for the contempt resolution, while all 17 Democrats voted against it. Every member of the panel was present for the vote.
>
> Minutes after the panel's decision, House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) and Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) announced that the full House will vote on the contempt measure next week.
>
> "While we had hoped it would not come to this, unless the attorney general reevaluates his choice and supplies the promised documents, the House will vote to hold him in contempt next week," the Republican leaders said in a statement. "If, however, Attorney General Holder produces these documents prior to the scheduled vote, we will give the Oversight Committee an opportunity to review in hopes of resolving this issue."

How legitimate is it to use executive privilege to block a investigation of a gun-smuggling operation that makes Watergate look like patty-cake?

Here's what Obama said about it – before he did it:

> President Obama criticized former President George W. Bush for trying to "hide" behind executive privilege in 2007 after the Bush administration refused to turn over subpoenaed documents related to the controversial firings of nine U.S. attorneys.
>
> In an interview on CNN's "Larry King Live," Obama said there's been "a tendency on the part of this administration to try to hide behind exec privilege every time there's something a little shaky that's taking place."
>
> "I think the administration would be best served by coming clean on this," Obama said, after Bush claimed executive privilege on the issue.
>
> "There doesn't seem to be any national security issues involved with the U.S. attorney question. There doesn't seem to be any justification for not offering up some clear plausible rationale for why these U.S. attorneys were targeted when by all assessments they were doing an outstanding job. I think the American people deserve to know what was going on there," he said.

Who knows how many people those guns have murdered? Hundreds? Thousands? Tens of thousands? You can read a statement from the family of the slain Border Patrol agent Brian Terry here. He was one of the victims of the Obama administration's plan to allow guns to be smuggled across the border into the hands of ultra-violent Mexican drug cartels.

In a way, none of this surprises me – we knew that Obama was heavily involved in illegal drug use during his high school years, as he admits in his own books.

Did Barack Obama order the sale of American firearms to Mexican drug cartels in order to justify stricter gun control measures? Was this gun smuggling plan done in collusion with

the Mexican drug cartels who benefited from it? What did Obama know, and when did he know it? Now that Obama has blocked the release of Fas and Furious documents, will we ever get the truth about who ordered Fast and Furious?

Related posts

- Republicans prepare contempt citation for AG Eric Holder over Fast and Furious
- Eric Holder wants to brainwash people against legal gun ownership
- Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent's murder
- Eric Holder testifies on Fast and Furious gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Fast and Furious assault weapons seized from drug cartel enforcer's home
- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference

China confirms that photo of forced late-term abortion is authentic

June 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From AFP:

> Chinese authorities confirmed Thursday that a woman was forced to abort seven months into her pregnancy, several days after her plight came to light when images of her baby's corpse were posted online.
>
> Rights groups have blamed authorities in north China's Shaanxi province for forcing Feng Jianmei to abort her pregnancy because she failed to pay a hefty fine for exceeding China's strict "one-child" population control policy.
>
> The Shaanxi provincial government said in a statement that a preliminary probe had confirmed the case was "basically true", and the investigators have recommended action be taken against the perpetrators.
>
> […]Chinese web users have reacted in anger to the abortion, with one comparing it to acts perpetrated by "Japanese devils and Nazis", after photos online showed Feng lying on a hospital bed next to the blood-smeared body of her baby.
>
> A relative told AFP on Wednesday that Feng and her husband had opposed the termination.
>
> […]China has implemented its draconian family planning policy since the late 1970s in an effort to control a population that has grown to 1.3 billion people, the world's largest.
>
> Under the policy, urban families are generally allowed to have one child, while rural families can give birth to two children if the first is a girl. They have to pay a fine if they contravene the rules.
>
> Rights groups say that as a result of the policy, thousands of women have been forced by authorities to terminate their pregnancies.
>
> Blind activist Chen Guangcheng, who recently left China for the United States after fleeing house arrest, was once jailed after angering local officials for bringing to light hundreds of forced abortions.
>
> Official statistics show that since the start of the policy, the number of abortions peaked in 1983, with a total of 14.37 million terminations that year.

You can see the absolutely horrifying photo of the woman and her child here on Life Site News. China is, of course, a country whose official state religion is atheism. There is no grounding for human rights – like the right to life – on atheism. The strong can do anything thing they want to the weak if it makes them feel good – there is no objective morality, so things like this are rational on atheism.

Would the Democrats be any different than China on the issue of coerced abortions? Vice

president Joe Biden expressed support for China's one-child policy, and presumably for their methods of enforcing it. Not only is Barack Obama the most pro-abortion President ever, but he also has voted for infanticide several times and he opposed the ban on partial birth abortions. Additionally, Obama appointed John Holdren to be his "science czar", and Holdren had previously advocated for mass sterilizations and coerced abortions.

Take a good look at that picture. That's what happens when a country turns its back on God and his moral laws.

William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech (2008)

June 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can grab the MP3 file of the lecture, or read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Questions and answers: (individual Youtube clips)

- Aren't Christians motivated by fear of Hell?
- Is morality purely conditional?
- Is moral relativism livable?
- Atheism and nihilism
- How do you know objective morality is based on God?
- What good is morality in light of immortality?
- Was Hitler a Christian?

If you want to show this lecture and Q&A to your apologetics group, you can find the DVD here.

You can also read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor.

Quebec launches taxpayer-funded anonymous registry of homophobic acts

June 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of Canada
From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> In what they are touting as a "world first," a Quebec homosexual activist group has launched a "registry of homophobic acts" with support and funding from the Quebec Government's Justice Department. Standing alongside Montreal Police Chief Johanne Paquin and Commander Alain Gagnon, the leadership of the group Gai Ecoute launched the anonymous tipster registry at a press conference today.
>
> Included in the definition of actions classified as "homophobic" and deemed worthy of reporting to the registry are: "any negative word or act toward a homosexual or homosexuality in general: physical abuse, verbal abuse, intimidation, harassment, offensive graffiti, abuse, injurious mockery, inappropriate media coverage and discrimination."
>
> A press release from the group says that anyone who has experienced or witnessed an act of homophobia "must" report it to the registry of homophobic acts.
>
> Funding and support for the venture comes from the Quebec Justice Ministry's department of "The Fight Against Homophobia." The Justice Ministry was tasked with fighting homophobia in 2008 and last year pledged $7 million to 'anti-homophobia' activities.
>
> LifeSiteNews spoke briefly with Roger Noël, the coordinator of The Office of the

> Fight against Homophobia in the Department of Justice. Noël refused to answer questions about the registry and directed calls to Gai Ecoute or else to the Communications department of the Quebec Government. Calls to the Communications department were not returned by press time.
>
> Laurent McCutcheon, President of Gai Ecoute, boasted that the registry was the first of its kind in the world. “We created it to know the real situation of homophobia,” he said. “The compilation and analysis of these data will better identify the problem and will enable us to act at the level of prevention.”

I really don’t recommend that any authentic Christians live in Quebec. It’s not a good place to get married and have a family.

Gay marriage: John Piper won't endorse traditional marriage amendment

June 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Minneapolis Star Tribune, headline: "Key Minnesota pastors opt out of marriage fight."

Excerpt:

> Two key conservative evangelical leaders in Minnesota are not endorsing the marriage amendment or directing followers to vote for it, marking the first time during debate over the measure that major faith leaders have not encouraged members to take a stand on the issue.
>
> Influential preacher and theologian the Rev. John Piper came out against gay marriage during a sermon Sunday but did not explicitly urge members of his Minneapolis church to vote for the amendment.
>
> The Rev. Leith Anderson, former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty's longtime pastor, also said this week he does not plan to take a public side on the amendment, which would change the state Constitution to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman.
>
> Religious observers say the lack of formal backing from the two influential figures could signal that evangelical leaders in Minnesota are taking a less active role in supporting the amendment — a marked departure from evangelicals in dozens of other states where similar amendments have passed.
>
> "Don't press the organization of the church or her pastors into political activism," Piper said during his sermon, posted on Bethlehem Baptist Church's website.
>
> […]Piper had been under pressure from conservative groups to weigh in on the amendment, according to his spokesman David Mathis, adding that Piper did not hold back over concerns the church could lose its tax-exempt status.
>
> "Basically our position is, we're not taking one as a church," Mathis said.

John Piper has no opinion about whether the state of Minnesota legalizes gay marriage or not – he doesn't want to get involved in politics. He is famous for pushing "Christian Hedonism" in his books, and also believes in predestination.

My advice for pastors who are pro-marriage

I think that it is important for pastors who want to take conservative positions and really have an effect on the real world to base their positions on logical arguments and evidence. Many pastors seem to just read what the Bible says to people in their churches, but they don't really think about how the Bible applies to public policy. They don't really think that the Bible has any bearing outside of the church – this is called subjectivism, and in Christian circles, it is closely tied to fideism.

Pastors who pass on studying apologetics often find themselves having to back away from what the Bible says in public, because they are afraid of being labeled bigots. If your views on moral questions are just held on faith, then it's hard to tell people that public policy should be based on private faith. It's like condemning people to Hell because they don't like the same flavor of ice cream as you. It is much easier to tell someone that smoking is bad for their health though. Why? Because if you put the work in, you can use arguments and evidence, and it's easy to be bold when you have arguments and evidence. But it takes work to build your case.

Neil and other people are telling me that Piper has stated his view against gay marriage in a sermon, and he cites Bible verses. My problem with this is that Piper's sermon only applies to people who are inerrantists – who think that the Bible is authoritative. If Piper really opposed gay marriage, then he would support the marriage amendment, and he would persuade people in his state – not just his choir and congregation – using arguments and evidence that people in his state find convincing.

Here's my argument:

1) If Piper sincerely opposes gay marriage, then he doesn't want gay marriage to be legalized
2) To stop gay marriage from being legalized, the marriage amendment must pass
3) To pass the marriage amendment, the majority of Minnesotans must vote for it
4) The majority of Minnesotans are not Biblical inerrantists who are persuaded by Piper's sermon and his citing of Bible verses
5) Piper's flock cannot persuade the majority of Minnesotans with Piper's sermon and his citing of Bible verses
6) Therefore, Piper will have to have some way to persuade these non-inerrantist Minnesotans, if he sincerely opposes gay marriage

If your friend is on fire, you do not preach a sermon and quote the Bible to him. You throw a bucket of water on him – that's what works. If you really want something to happen, you do what works. Preaching sermons with Bible verses to your flock and then declining to support the marriage amendment in public with evidence and arguments that appeal to the majority of Minnesota voters is not going to stop gay marriage. There are other pastors, like Wayne Grudem and Mark Driscoll who do study the research that bears on these sorts of issues and they do use evidence to persuade others – even non-Christians. They have arguments and evidence – they are bold and they do not care about sounding nice. Grudem even writes about politics and urges Christians to be involved in specific policies and legislation.

The secular left is very happy with pastors who don't make any arguments or cite any evidence in public. They are easily marginalized and then non-Christians have NO REASON AT ALL to vote with us on social issues. It even has an effect on Jews and other religions, because they are told by the media "the only reason to oppose gay marriage is religious bigotry". It's similar to how Darwinists can marginalize opposition to evolution by pointing to fideistic pastors and then claiming that the only opposition to evolution is

religious, not scientific. The pastors who refuse to study and make public arguments and cite research papers play right into this. They make it easy for non-Christians to vote against us because this is just "our view". It's not true of the real world. It's just Bible verses. It's not Bible verses *supported by evidence.*

Many pastors also kept silent during the time of slavery and Nazism, and said that they didn't want to get involved in politics or approve specific legislation. Presumably, they expressed their personal opinions to their church choirs behind closed church doors, citing Bible verses which slave-owners and Nazis would not find convincing. But they thought that this was the best they could do since "you can't argue anyone into the Kingdom of God" and "Jesus isn't a Republican or a Democrat". Not every pastor is going to be bold like a William Wilberforce or a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and make their case in public.

The continuous refusal to engage in the public square with reasons and evidence is not good for Christianity. In fact, we may even lose our religious liberty when we only speak about Bible verses to the church choir behind closed church doors.

Look at what happened in Canada where gay marriage is legal:

> In what they are touting as a "world first," a Quebec homosexual activist group has launched a "registry of homophobic acts" with support and funding from the Quebec Government's Justice Department. Standing alongside Montreal Police Chief Johanne Paquin and Commander Alain Gagnon, the leadership of the group Gai Ecoute launched the anonymous tipster registry at a press conference today.
>
> Included in the definition of actions classified as "homophobic" and deemed worthy of reporting to the registry are: "any negative word or act toward a homosexual or homosexuality in general: physical abuse, verbal abuse, intimidation, harassment, offensive graffiti, abuse, injurious mockery, inappropriate media coverage and discrimination."
>
> A press release from the group says that anyone who has experienced or witnessed an act of homophobia "must" report it to the registry of homophobic acts.

And here's what happened in Denmark where gay marriage is legal:

> Homosexual couples in Denmark have won the right to get married in any church they choose, even though nearly one third of the country's priests have said they will refuse to carry out the ceremonies.
>
> The country's parliament voted through the new law on same-sex marriage by a large majority, making it mandatory for all churches to conduct gay marriages.

Giving sermons in church is safe. But speaking out against gay marriage in public on public policy is not completely safe. If pastors pass on making arguments and producing objective evidence and pointing to current events now – when it is still relatively safe to do so – then we mustn't shed a tear when the next piece of legislation forces pastors to

have to perform gay wedding ceremonies in their churches. Knowledge and practical wisdom are needed to be a good faithful pastor, I think. By being unable to speak out persuasively on moral issues, we leave ourselves open to the things that happen in Canada and Denmark… and around the world. We shouldn't wait too long before we make our stand – voting "present" is not a good idea.

UPDATE: People are asking me what arguments Piper should be using instead of the sermons and Bible verses, which have limited appeal to the majority of Minnesota voters.

In order to influence the culture as a whole, Piper would have to use arguments like these:

Philosophical:
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1722155

Evidential:
http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2012/06/5640

Human rights:
http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No3_Severinoonline.pdf

If Piper's goal is to DO GOOD at a practical level, then he has to use public square arguments that are convincing to people who do not accept a very very conservative view of the Bible (which I accept). He has to decide whether Christianity is something subjective and private (about him and his life, and maybe the people who hear his sermons in his church) or public and practical (about society and law). Right now, he is enjoying the liberties that exist because the foundation of the United States is Judeo-Christian, but he has to do his part in public using secular arguments and evidence to protect those foundations, or they could be taken away.

If Piper wants children to *actually* have a mother and a father, and wants Christians to *actually* retain their religious liberty and freedom of conscience, then he will have to GO PUBLIC and use PUBLIC means of persuasion. If every single person in his church agreed with him, and every fundamentalist Christian in Minnesota agreed with him, that would still not be enough to defend marriage.

Related posts

- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Obama administration objects to conscience protections for military chaplains
- Australian doctor forced off of diversity panel for opposing same-sex marriage
- UK Law Society cancels event to silence dissent on same-sex marriage
- Liberal Democrat David Blankenhorn: Protecting marriage protects children
- Obama openly supports gay marriage: 48 hours after top gay donors cut off funding
- A secular case against same-sex marriage
- Jennifer Roback Morse interviews UK lawyer on religious liberty and free speech
- Should government get out of the marriage business?

- What is Obama’s position on gay marriage?
- Democrats consider making gay marriage part of their policy platform
- Tolerant leftists threaten to murder 14-year old girl for defending marriage
- Liberal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals rules traditional marriage unconstitutional

Ratings agency Moody’s downgrades 15 banks, some by two notches

June 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Yahoo News.

Excerpt:

> Ratings agency Moody’s downgraded many of the world’s biggest banks on Thursday, lowering credit ratings of 15 companies by one to three notches.
>
> Morgan Stanley, one of the most closely watched firms, had its long-term debt rating lowered by just two notches, one level less than had been expected, and its stock rose in after-hours trading. The downgrade left Morgan Stanley more highly rated than Bank of America Corp and Citigroup but a step below Goldman Sachs Group.
>
> Credit Suisse , which last week was warned about weak capital levels by Switzerland’s central bank, was the only bank in the group to suffer a three-notch downgrade. But its new A1 deposit and senior debt ratings, however, rank higher than many of its peers.
>
> […]In addition to Morgan Stanley, downgraded by two notches were Barclays , BNP Paribas , Royal Bank of Canada , Citigroup, Goldman Sachs Group, JPMorgan Chase , Credit Agricole , Deutsche Bank , and UBS .
>
> Falling one notch were Bank of America, HSBC Holdings , Royal Bank of Scotland and Societe Generale.
>
> Nomura and Macquarie were included in an original list of global banks, but have already been downgraded.

I don’t think that the Obama administration should be so concentrated on legalizing gay marriage and subsidizing green energy right now. I also think that if you are going off to college, you would do well to study a STEM field. There’s a storm coming.

$9 billion in green energy stimulus creates 910 direct jobs: $9.8 million per job

June 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration distributed $9 billion in economic "stimulus" funds to solar and wind projects in 2009-11 that created, as the end result, 910 "direct" jobs — annual operation and maintenance positions — meaning that it cost about $9.8 million to establish each of those long-term jobs.
>
> At the same time, those green energy projects also created, in the end, about 4,600 "indirect" jobs – positions indirectly supported by the annual operation and maintenance jobs — which means they cost about $1.9 million each ($9 billion divided by 4,600).
>
> Combined (910 + 4,600 = 5,510), the direct and indirect jobs cost, on average, about $1.63 million each to produce.
>
> As explained in a report by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, which is part of the U.S. Department of Energy, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act ("economic stimulus") of 2009 included Section 1603, a grant program run through the Treasury Department.
>
> The 1603 program offered "renewable energy project developers a one-time cash payment" to reduce the need for green energy companies "to secure tax equity partners" and also help them to achieve " 'the near term goal of creating and retaining jobs' in the renewable energy sector."

The nice government gave away your taxpayer dollars to "green energy" firms in order to relieve them of the trouble of trying to justify their projects to profit-minded shareholders. Taxpayer money can be wasted without having to care what taxpayers think, you see. If these solar and wind companies are anything like Solyndra, then there is a Democrat fundraiser who is the beneficiary of this spending. That's what stimulus spending means – paying off your campaign contributors so they will give you more money for your next campaign. This "green energy" is what gullible young people are taught to support in public school classrooms – and they are the ones who will be paying the bill.

Recall that the CBO recently calculated that the cost of each job created from Obama's other stimulus spending was between $540,000 and $4.1 million.

According to the AEI, in 2015, consumers will be paying $3.2 billion more per year for electricity.

Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes

June 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jeremy Brett is the best Sherlock Holmes *ever*.

Here are 2 episodes of “The Return of Sherlock Holmes”.

The Blue Carbuncle

IMDB mean rating: 8.5 / 10.

IMDB median rating: 9 / 10.

When the Countess of Morcar’s priceless blue carbuncle is stolen, a reformed thief is charged with the crime.

Silver Blaze

IMDB mean rating: 8.1 / 10.

IMDB median rating: 8 / 10.

Holmes investigates the disappearance of a champion racehorse and the murder of its trainer on a lonely moor.

These are considered to be two of the best Sherlock Holmes short stories.

If you like these two, there are two more linked in the related posts! (Links fixed)

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Top doctor: NHS is killing off 130,000 elderly patients a year

June 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail:

> NHS doctors are prematurely ending the lives of thousands of elderly hospital patients because they are difficult to manage or to free up beds, a senior consultant claimed yesterday.
>
> Professor Patrick Pullicino said doctors had turned the use of a controversial 'death pathway' into the equivalent of euthanasia of the elderly.
>
> He claimed there was often a lack of clear evidence for initiating the Liverpool Care Pathway, a method of looking after terminally ill patients that is used in hospitals across the country.
>
> It is designed to come into force when doctors believe it is impossible for a patient to recover and death is imminent.
>
> It can include withdrawal of treatment – including the provision of water and nourishment by tube – and on average brings a patient to death in 33 hours.
>
> There are around 450,000 deaths in Britain each year of people who are in hospital or under NHS care. Around 29 per cent – 130,000 – are of patients who were on the LCP.
>
> Professor Pullicino claimed that far too often elderly patients who could live longer are placed on the LCP and it had now become an 'assisted death pathway rather than a care pathway'.
>
> He cited 'pressure on beds and difficulty with nursing confused or difficult-to-manage elderly patients' as factors.
>
> Professor Pullicino revealed he had personally intervened to take a patient off the LCP who went on to be successfully treated.
>
> […]Professor Pullicino, a consultant neurologist for East Kent Hospitals and Professor of Clinical Neurosciences at the University of Kent, was speaking to the Royal Society of Medicine in London.
>
> […]He said: 'The lack of evidence for initiating the Liverpool Care Pathway makes it an assisted death pathway rather than a care pathway.
>
> 'Very likely many elderly patients who could live substantially longer are being killed by the LCP.
>
> 'Patients are frequently put on the pathway without a proper analysis of their condition.

More from a different UK Daily Mail article:

> The health service ‘looks like a supertanker heading for an iceberg’, the head of the NHS Confederation has warned.
>
> His comment came as a survey revealed the squeeze on NHS finances is so serious that almost half of its leaders think it will reduce quality of care for patients over the next year.
>
> The research, carried out before the confederation’s annual conference in Manchester, shows that NHS leaders fear that growing financial pressures will mean treatment rationing and longer waiting times.
>
> Of the 252 chief executives and chairs of NHS organisations questioned, almost half believe the financial burden on the health service is ‘very serious’ and 47 per cent say this means quality of care will reduce over the next 12 months.
>
> Mike Farrar, chief executive of the confederation which represents organisations providing NHS services, said: ‘Despite huge efforts to maintain standards of patient care in the current financial year, healthcare leaders are deeply concerned about the storm clouds that are gathering around the NHS.
>
> ‘Our survey shows that many NHS leaders see finances getting worse and that this is already having a growing impact on their patients. In response, they are cutting costs in the short term but they know that much more radical solutions are the only answer in the long run.
>
> […]**Mr Farrar added that politicians had ‘consistently failed’ to put the long-term interests of the population’s health above their short-term electoral interests.**
>
> […]Katherine Murphy, chief executive of the Patients Association said: ‘This survey confirms what everybody inside the health and social care system is already saying – the next decade is likely to be the most challenging one in the history of the NHS.
>
> **‘Treatments are being rationed, waiting times for elective procedures are going up and patients continue to be treated poorly on our hospital wards.**

In a government-run system, whether you get treatment or not depends on a bureaucrat, whose only desire is to be re-elected. Sometimes, killing you is the best way for them to get re-elected, as seen in the euthanasia numbers. But, in a private health care system, it makes no sense to kill patients, because then the money stops coming in. Doctors actually care about you in a for profit system. They want to help you, and they want you to live.

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

June 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

The article goes on to make some very informative comments on the relationship between apologetics and belief.

14-year old boy uses parents' handgun to deter armed intruder

June 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A 14-year-old Phoenix boy shot an intruder who broke into his home while brandishing a gun as the teenager watched his three younger siblings, police said.
>
> The teen and his brothers and sisters were at home alone at their residence at 55th Avenue and Baseline when a woman rang the doorbell Friday. The teen didn't open the door because he didn't recognize her, Police Officer James Holmes said Saturday.
>
> Soon after, the teen heard a bang on the door, rushed his siblings upstairs and got a handgun from his parent's bedroom. When he got to the top of the stairs, he saw a man breaking through the front door and point a gun at him.
>
> The boy shot the 37-year-old man, who is in critical condition but expected to survive and be booked into jail.
>
> Holmes said the suspect did not get a shot off. He declined to release his name until he is booked into jail.
>
> The woman who rang the home's doorbell got away.

This is why families own firearms legally, so that they can defend themselves from armed criminals when the police will take too long to arrive.

In a previous post I noted how feminists who denigrate the traditional roles of men like provider, protector, etc. disapprove of men using force or arms to deter or defeat evildoers – not to mention the use of force in a just war. I'm sure that there are more socialists and feminists who will read a story like this and want to seize the firearms and separate the children from their parents and put them into child protective custody. There are people on the left who think that criminals are victims and that families with guns to defend themselves are the real criminals, and they need to be disarmed.

Related posts

- Do gun registries solve crimes? Learning from the Canadian experience
- Eric Holder wants to brainwash people against legal gun ownership
- Is the New York Times a reliable news source or leftist agitprop?
- Could tougher gun control laws lower the violent crime rate?
- Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home
- Crime rates in Chicago and DC drop after gun control laws are struck down

- Do gun control laws cause crime rates to go down?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple victim shootings?
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Do guns reduce crime? Watch this debate and hear both sides
- Liberal MSNBC says that more legal firearm ownership reduces crime rates
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- Formal debate on gun control featuring John Lott and Gary Kleck
- Tom Sowell on gun control and judicial activism
- Grandmother jailed for five years for owning family heirloom handgun
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple-victim public shootings in Europe?
- 61-year-old British man convicted for cutting up fruit with a Swiss Army knife
- Understanding how concealed carry laws save lives
- Why do people favor legal private ownership and concealed carry of handguns?

D.A. Carson summarizes the Bible in 221 words

June 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just got back from church today and it was a disaster, with the pastor quoting verses out of context and cutting off verses halfway through. It was horrible – he basically said that the point of being a Christian was to be nice to others so you would feel good. Completely ignored passages about turning away from immorality and about being hated by others because of your views on God's existence and authority and the identity of Jesus. Anyway, I've finished my churching and Bible reading for the day, so I thought I would clear the bad taste from church by posting this nice D.A. Carson.

Here it is:

> God is the sovereign, transcendent and personal God who has made the universe, including us, his image-bearers. Our misery lies in our rebellion, our alienation from God, which, despite his forbearance, attracts his implacable wrath.
>
> But God, precisely because love is of the very essence of his character, takes the initiative and prepared for the coming of his own Son by raising up a people who, by covenantal stipulations, temple worship, systems of sacrifice and of priesthood, by kings and by prophets, are taught something of what God is planning and what he expects.
>
> In the fullness of time his Son comes and takes on human nature. He comes not, in the first instance, to judge but to save: he dies the death of his people, rises from the grave and, in returning to his heavenly Father, bequeaths the Holy Spirit as the down payment and guarantee of the ultimate gift he has secured for them—an eternity of bliss in the presence of God himself, in a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.
>
> The only alternative is to be shut out from the presence of this God forever, in the torments of hell. What men and women must do, before it is too late, is repent and trust Christ; the alternative is to disobey the gospel (Romans 10:16;2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17).

I got this from from a tweet from Please Convince Me.

Everybody likes D.A. Carson and this nice clear restatement of the Christian worldview makes me forget what happened this morning in church. Moralistic therapeutic deism! Yuckers!

What happens to people who never hear about Jesus and the gospel?

June 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the most difficult questions for Christians to answer, especially when posed by adherents of other religions, is the question of what happens to those who have never heard of Jesus? In this post, I will explain how progress in the field of philosophy of religion has given us a possible (and Biblical) solution to this thorny question.

First, Christianity teaches that humans are in a natural state of rebellion against God. We don't want to know about him, and we don't want him to have any say in what we are doing. We just want to appropriate all the gifts he's given us, do whatever we want with them, and then have eternal bliss after we die. We want to do whatever we want and then be forgiven, later.

Along comes Jesus, who, through his sinless life and his death on the cross, heals that rift of rebellion between an all-good God and rebellious man. Now we have a real understanding of the fact that God is real, that he has power over death, and that he has very specific ideas on what we should be doing. If we accept Jesus' atoning sacrifice and follow his teachings, we can avoid the penalty of our rebellion.

The only problem is that in order to appropriate that free gift of reconciliation, people need to actually *know* about Jesus. And there are some people in the world who have not even *heard* of him. Is it fair that these other people will be sent to eternal separation from God, just because they happened to be born in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Enter William Lane Craig to save the day. His solution is that God orders the world in such a way that anyone who would freely choose to acknowledge Jesus and appropriate his teachings in their decision-making *will* be given eternal life. God knows in advance who would respond, and chooses their time and place of birth, and he supplies them with the amount of evidence they need.

And this agrees with what the Bible teaches. The apostle Paul says this in his apologetic on Mars Hill in Acts 17:22-31:

> 22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.
> 23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ' N D ' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.
> 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;
> 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;
> 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, **having determined their appointed times and the boundaries**

> **of their habitation,**
> **27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;**
> 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’
> 29 “Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.
> 30 “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,
> 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

In this research paper, Craig explains in detail how God foreknows how people will choose in every set of circumstances, and how God uses that knowledge to get everyone where they need to be *without violating their free will.* God wants the best for everybody, and has ordered to whole universe in order to give each of us our best opportunity for eternal life.

Here is a summary of the what is in his paper:

> The conviction of the New Testament writers was that there is no salvation apart from Jesus. This orthodox doctrine is widely rejected today because God’s condemnation of persons in other world religions seems incompatible with various attributes of God.
>
> Analysis reveals the real problem to involve certain counterfactuals of freedom, *e.g.*, why did not God create a world in which all people would freely believe in Christ and be saved? Such questions presuppose that God possesses middle knowledge. But it can be shown that no inconsistency exists between God’s having middle knowledge and certain persons’ being damned; on the contrary, it can be positively shown that these two notions are compatible.

Go read this paper and equip yourself to answer this common question!

Book review of “Creating Life in the Lab”

June 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Brian Auten posted this book review by Luke Nix.

Introduction:

> *Creating Life In The Lab: How New Discoveries in Synthetic Biology Make A Case For The Creator* is Dr. Fazale Rana’s latest contribution to Christian apologetic literature. The goal of the book is to provide a case for God’s existence from the controversial efforts of scientists to “play God” by creating life. He has written the book with the backdrop of Franenstein to provide some cultural connection. The book has thirteen chapters plus an appendix that includes a short refresher on biochemistry. The book, though not officially, is divided into two parts: the first examining the quest to create artificial life and the second investigates scientists research behind the origin of life.

Here are a couple of chapter summaries:

> **Chapter 6—A Scientist’s Splendor**
> In Chapter 6 Dr. Rana goes yet another level with the attempts to create artificial life in the lab. In Chapter 4 he described an approach that takes existing components and moves them around to create new organisms. In Chapter 5 he described an approach that creates the components and assembles them. In this chapter, Rana describes the efforts to create novel proteins and information-containing molecules (DNA in natural life)—both the basic components of the components used in the previous approaches. Rana goes over the attempts to create proteins from scratch and the complications involved with such an endeavor. He also explains the intricate and tedious processes that are required to produce enzymes that don’t come close to being as efficient as those found in nature. He uses both to not only show the immense intelligence required to create the building blocks of life, but to also provide a critique of the evolutionary paradigm. In the previous chapters, Rana showed that putting life together from preexisting building blocks required great intelligence and resources; in this chapter Rana adds to that by showing what is required to create the building blocks themselves. This adds yet another level of power to his argument for a Creator.
>
> **Chapter 7—The Particulars of Life’s Formation**
> Dr. Rana now switches the focus slightly. He moves from discussing the approaches to creating life in the lab to the relationship between it and those researching the origin of life. He begins with Chapter 7 describing the connections advantages that both research projects offer the other. He then goes over a short history of origin-of-life research. He describes the most popular models and where some fail but have been replaced by newer models. He

> discusses the prebiotic soup, the DNA/protien world, the RNA world, and others. He refers the reader to his earlier work “Origins of Life”, co-authored with Dr. Hugh Ross, for more details on the strengths and weaknesses of the particular models.

Luke does a chapter-by-chapter review of the book. I will definitely be getting this book to understand this stuff. It’s always good to be familiar with the details of cosmology, fine-tuning and origin of life.

Obama: 25% fewer male graduates than female graduates is a great accomplishment

June 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> In an op-ed published Saturday in Newsweek, President Barack Obama marked the 40th anniversary of the enactment of Title IX–which bars gender discrimination in education—and noted that more women in the United States are now graduating from college than men, which he characterized as "a great accomplishment" for the nation.
>
> "In fact, more women as a whole now graduate from college than men,"Obama wrote. "This is a great accomplishment—not just for one sport or one college or even just for women but for America. And this is what Title IX is all about."
>
> According to the Census Bureau, 685,000 men and 916,000 women graduated from college in 2009 (the latest year for which statistics have been published). That means 25 percent fewer men received college degrees than women.

And:

> In the nationwide collegiate class of 1975, which started college before Title IX was implemented, the males graduating from college outnumbered females, 505,000 to 418,000–meaning 17 percent fewer women graduated than men.
>
> By 1985, according to Census Bureau data, the number of women graduating from college each year was outstripping the number of men. In that year, about 497,000 women graduated from college and 483,000 men. That gave women a margin over men of almost 3 percent.
>
> In every year since 1985, according to the Census Bureau, women have outnumbered men in graduating from college, with women dramatically expanding their advantage over men in receiving college diplomas to the 25 percent advantage they achieved in 2009.
>
> In his Newsweek op-ed, President Obama said Title IX helped America ensure what he called "equal education."

It's important to understand that the widespread unwillingness of men to get married, and their inability to provide for a family if they are married, have been caused by specific policies and laws, and not by a deficiency of "manhood". From no-fault divorce to normalizing premarital sex to biased domestic violence laws to higher tax rates to false accusations to discrimination in education to discrimination in hiring, and beyond – men are being actively discouraged and prevented from taking on the traditional role of being sole provider for their families. Pastors who expect to reverse this trend have to do more

than resort to bellowing two-word slogans (“Man Up!”) at the dwindling numbers of men in their churches. This marriage strike problem is caused by policies and laws, and it requires a political and legal response.

Christians should be especially concerned about the presence of fathers in the home, given the evidence I blogged about before showing how the presence of quality fathers is essential for passing Christian beliefs on to children. Churches need to ask themselves tough questions: Are we teaching women how to choose men based on practical concerns and proven abilities in our churches? And are we doing a good job of attracting men to churches by promoting the masculine, practical aspects of Christianity that men like – like science, apologetics debates, economics and foreign policy?

Why is this weakening of men’s ability to graduate and get jobs a priority of the left? The left is dominated by feminist thought, and they do not want men having different roles than women in the home. It’s sad that many men who are ignorant of these threats to male leadership go along with it and then find out too late what the effects of their feminist sympathies are.

Which President causes more outsourcing? Obama or Bush?

June 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Hans Bader, a realistic assessment of Obama's record on outsourcing.

Excerpt:

> "79 percent" of all green-jobs funding in Obama's $800 billion stimulus package went to foreign companies, with the largest payment going to a bankrupt Australian company. For example, the Obama Administration spent $1.6 billion on Chinese and other foreign wind power. The practical effect of those subsidies was to outsource American jobs. ABC News reported on thesubsidies for Chinese wind turbines contained in the stimulus package:
> Despite all the talk of green jobs, the overwhelming majority of stimulus money spent on wind power has gone to foreign companies, according to a new report by the Investigative Reporting Workshop at the American University's School of Communication in Washington, D.C.
>
> Nearly $2 billion . . . has been spent on wind power. . .But the study found that nearly 80 percent of that money has gone to foreign manufacturers of wind turbines.
>
> "Most of the jobs are going overseas," said Russ Choma at the Investigative Reporting Workshop. He analyzed which foreign firms had accepted the most stimulus money. "According to our estimates, about 6,000 jobs have been created overseas, and maybe a couple hundred have been created in the U.S." Even with the infusion of so much stimulus money, a recent report by American Wind Energy Association showed a drop in U.S. wind manufacturing jobs last year.
>
> The stimulus package also showered money on left-wing community organizers and liberal lobbying groups.
>
> Earlier, NewsMax reported on a $2 billion subsidized loan by the U.S. government to a Brazilian oil company:
>
> Gulf Oil CEO Joe Petrowski says President Barack Obama's weekend comments in Brazil that the United States looks forward to purchasing oil drilled for offshore by that nation "is rather puzzling," and "hypocritical" as his administration has imposed a virtual moratorium on domestic drilling. The signal to purchase more foreign oil comes after the U.S. Export-Import Bank invested more than $2 billion with Brazil's state-owned oil company, Petrobras, to finance exploration.
>
> The CEO of General Electric, which has received government "green jobs" money, is a close Obama advisor. GE has been busy outsourcing American jobs, eliminating a fifth of its U.S. workforce since 2002. GE made $14.2 billion in

> profits in 2010, but paid no taxes at all, even though America's corporate tax rates are among the highest in the world. Indeed, GE actuallyreceived a tax benefit of $3.2 billion from the government in 2010, and received a preferential bailout at taxpayer expense.

Read the whole post. It just goes on and on and on and on like this. What causes outsourcing? When you have the highest corporate tax rate in the world – that causes outsourcing. When you keep piling on regulations and regulations onto businesses, from Obamacare to Dodd-Frank – that causes outsourcing. When you take money collected from taxes paid by American businesses and hand it out to foreign companies owned by Democrat-allies – that causes outsourcing. When you block energy companies from developing energy here at home – that causes outsourcing.

Quebec court orders Dunkin' Donuts to pay $16.4 million to failed franchise owners

June 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of Canada

ECM sent me this story about the most immoral and socialist province in Canada.

Excerpt:

> Former Dunkin' Donuts franchisees have been awarded a total of $16.4-million in damages from the company for losses suffered because of the "Tim Hortons phenomenon," in which the donut shop saw almost all of its Quebec stores close in less than a decade as it lost market share, according to a superior court decision released Thursday.
>
> The Quebec Superior Court ruled that Dunkin Donuts Canada Ltd. failed to protect and enhance its brand at the cost of the 21 franchisees and misled owners to get them to buy into a new strategy that ultimately failed.
>
> "In this case, you have a very large franchisor with a successful chain and it's facing a competitive threat by another large chain, i.e. Tim Hortons," said Toronto-based franchise lawyer David Sterns of Sotos LLP. "And the judge's view is that the franchisor couldn't just cede the territory to the competitor, that it was incumbent on the franchisor to hold the ground for the system."
>
> There are currently 11 Dunkin' Donuts stores left in Quebec, from a high of more than 200 in 1998.
>
> In 2003 the franchisees launched the suit against Dunkin' Brands — formerly Allied Domecq Retailing International Canada Ltd. — claiming they were induced under false pretenses to join a remodelling program that would boost sales by

> 15% in the first year and several subsequent years, which never happened.
>
> The company also failed to live up to a promise to invest $40-million, half of which would come from franchise fees.

The lesson here for business owners and job creators is clear: never, ever start a business or expand a business in Quebec. They're not just secular and anti-family, they're socialist and anti-business.

Here's an interesting post about Quebec's fiscal situation:

> Quebec's austerity measures which include the raising of tuition fees for its post-secondary students have been headline news in Canada for the past month. In light of that, I thought that it was time to do a brief posting on Quebec's financial situation.
>
> Let's start by looking at Quebec's debt. Quebec is Canada's second-most indebted province after Ontario and has the misfortune of having a bond credit rating that is in the lower middle of the pack, well below Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, Manitoba and below New Brunswick and Ontario at A+ (Standard and Poor's), the same rating as Nova Scotia. This poor rating makes it more expensive for Quebec to service its debt. Quebec's total debt in fiscal 2011 – 2012 is estimated to be $170.9 billion; this compares to Ontario's estimated debt of $237.6 billion. Quebec's debt nearly twice the size of all other provinces combined (excluding Ontario).
>
> Quebec's debt-to-GDP is estimated to be 51.2 percent in 2011 – 2012, the highest in Canada by a very wide margin with Ontario coming in second place at 37.2 percent and Nova Scotia coming in third place at 35.2 percent.
>
> […]If the Harper government follows through with its plans to wean Canada's have-not provinces from the federal teat, Quebec may find it impossible to meet its fiscal goals. As well, when interest rates return to normal levels, Quebec's expenditures on debt interest payments will become an ever-increasing portion of its overall spending. Since Quebec is already Canada's most highly taxed regime, if the province hopes to meet its targets, it has only one choice – cut spending now.

It's a worthless, backwards province that exists only by stealing money from hard-working provinces like Alberta and Saskatchewan. I hope Harper cuts them off – it's not like they vote for him anyway. Let them eat grass and leaves for a few years.

How well are American schools teaching science?

June 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stuart Schneiderman links to this post.

Excerpt:

> The results are in and America's elementary, middle and high school students are stumped by science.
>
> The National Center for Education Statistics released the findings of their National Assessment of Educational Progress science exam this week and it doesn't bode well for the state of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education. While the majority of students at the fourth, eighth and twelfth grade levels could successfully complete straightforward hands-on or computer-based tasks and arrive at the correct conclusions, once additional variables or more complex calculations were introduced, their performance declined dramatically.
>
> For example, 75% of high school seniors could successfully use test strips to test water samples for the levels of four pollutants, record the data and interpret whether the results exceeded EPA standards, but only 25% of students were able to design and conduct an investigation using a simulated calorimeter and related patterns in temperature changes in two different metals to determine which metal has the higher specific heat capacity. Results were the same at the lower grade levels, where only 24% and 35% of eighth and fourth graders respectively were able to handle the more difficult experiments. Students also had difficulty in explaining how they arrived at a correct conclusion, with only 27% of twelfth graders able to both select a correct answer and explain why they did so in one section of the test. And in another section, only 11% were able to make a final recommendation that was supported by the data they had worked with in the experiment.
>
> […]Currently, only about a third of bachelor's degrees awarded in the US are in the STEM fields – by contrast, over half of Chinese and Japanese college students are specializing in STEM subjects. The economic and career benefits of STEM education are well-documented. STEM occupations are forecasted to grow faster than non-STEM occupations through to 2020. Over the course of the recession, unemployment in STEM fields has been almost half that of non-STEM fields. And STEM professionals earn, on average, approximately 26% more than non-STEM counterparts.
>
> […]**If there's a bright spot in the NAEP report, it's the fact that female students are matching or exceeding the performance of their male peers in both hands-on and interactive tasks.**

I always encourage Christians to go into STEM fields, especially men who have a Biblical

mandate to provide for their families, if they have one. Women can be more flexible in what they study. Men are obligated to go for the bucks.

Regarding that comment in bold that I highlighted, Stuart writes:

> Schools are not teaching advanced scientific problem-solving and reasoning, but they have achieved gender parity.
>
> Is this an accidental correlation or is the connection causal?
>
> It is certainly possible that educators have chosen gender parity over scientific excellence. If so, then that would help to explain their failure.
>
> Educators may have chosen to close the gender gap at the expense of boys. They may have devalued certain types of reasoning because girls do not do as well on them. They may have changed the content of experiments to make science a more girl-friendly field?
>
> We know that when boys believe that a field is identified as more feminine, they turn off and go back to their video games.
>
> We know that teachers of the humanities and social sciences now actively discriminates against boys.
>
> Is the same thing true of science?
>
> If you read through the Department of Education report you will observe that the tests mostly involve girl-friendly and environmentally correct topics. They ask how sun-loving plants grow, how to test for pollution, and, how heat is conducted in frying pans.
>
> Do you believe that ten or twelve year old boys will crank it up to study how to cook an omelet?
>
> Sometimes the questions are directed at more boy friendly topics like electronic circuits and magnetic fields but they do not teach about cars, guns, and boats. They do not address questions about mining, agribusiness and construction.
>
> Does it matter? I suspect that it does.

I think some combination of homeschooling and private schools is required if you expect your children to make a difference in the world. Young men especially will benefit from being taken out of the feminized public schools. That's something I think about when dating and courting – picking the future teacher of my children.

Regardless, all Christians should be advocates for school choice. We shouldn't be paying for a failed, politicized public school system. Give every parent a voucher and let the public schools compete for funding by pleasing customers – like every other business has to.

Canadian gynecologists oppose discussion of when life begins

June 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this article from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) said in a position statement released last month that they are "troubled" by a private members motion that seeks to determine when human life begins.
>
> Motion 312, proposed by Conservative MP Stephen Woodworth, seeks a re-examination of section 223 of the Criminal Code, which states that a child only becomes a "human being" once he or she has fully proceeded from the womb. If passed, Parliament would set up a special committee to consider the medical evidence relating to the humanity of the unborn child.
>
> The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada represents over 3,800 health-care professionals including gynaecologists, obstetricians, family physicians, nurses, midwives, and other health professionals.
>
> The SOGC says it is concerned that if the motion passed it "would challenge and change the fundamental principle of women's autonomy."
>
> "Current law makes it clear that a woman and her foetus in utero are treated legally as one person, not two," the SOGC observes, expressing concern that if the motion passes it would "suggest that a pregnant woman serves as a mere carrier for another person with full legal rights" and that her "interests, needs, or choices" would be considered second to those of the unborn child.
>
> The SOGC also expressed concern that the motion might restrict "women's reproductive and sexual rights and decision-making."
>
> […]Woodworth has argued that his motion is simply a response to the advances of science in the past decades which prove beyond a doubt that the unborn child is human, thereby calling into question the validity of section 223 of the Criminal Code.
>
> "There might be some people who can convince themselves that a child magically transforms into a human being when their little toe pops out of the birth canal," he told reporters while announcing his motion earlier this year. "However, I've concluded that modern medical science will inform us that children are in reality human beings at some point before the moment of complete birth."

I bet a lot of these doctors, nurses and midwives are pro-life, but these big organizations always seem to take the leftist view on every issue.

Larry Brinkin: Gay activist arrested for possession of child pornography

June 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm not excerpting much of these stories because I'm not going to put the graphic details of the charges on my blog.

But here's the San Francisco Chronicle. (H/T PJ Tatler)

Excerpt:

> San Francisco police have arrested veteran gay rights advocate Larry Brinkin in connection with felony possession of child pornography.
>
> Brinkin, 66, who worked for the San Francisco Human Rights Commission before his retirement in 2010, was taken into custody Friday night. He spent the night in jail before he was released on bail, according to a spokeswoman for the sheriff's department.
>
> The district attorney's office will decide Tuesday whether to file charges. "We're still reviewing the case," district attorney's spokeswoman Stephanie Ong Stillman said Monday.

The San Francisco Weekly has more.

Excerpt:

> Police say they arrested 66-year-old Larry Brinkin, the high-profile gay activist, on possession of child pornography on Friday night.
>
> […]According to the search warrant, SFPD acted after receiving a tip from the Los Angeles Police Department, which obtained from AOL an e-mail exchange between a Los Angeles user and zack3737@aol.com. Police say they linked the AOL address to Brinkin's IP address; he is owner of the account and paid for AOL service with his credit card.

In completely unrelated news, Barack Obama is getting a lot of support from gay activists.

Should we measure inequality by comparing income or consumption?

June 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the American Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> We argue in this paper that income data are not the best measure of overall welfare. What matters for household well-being is consumption, since households are better able to smooth consumption rather than income over their lifetime. To that end, we use two alternative sources of data to assess changes in consumption inequality.
>
> Our first source, the Consumer Expenditure (CEX) Survey, shows aggregated changes in consumption expenditures for households at all levels of the income distribution. Using these data, we find that consumption inequality has increased only marginally since the 1980s. Further, consumption inequality narrows in periods of recessions, such as during the 2007–2009 recession. We also construct Gini coefficients from the CEX data and find that they have remained relatively stable over time, suggesting that the inequality has not widened significantly.
>
> The second data source we use is the Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS), which allows us to assess consumption inequality in durable goods. Consumption of durable goods is recorded less well in the CEX data but is important in thoroughly assessing consumption inequality. The RECS survey includes questions on household use of appliances such as microwaves, dishwashers, computers, and printers. Simple tabulations of these data across years suggest that a higher percentage of low-income households is able to afford and possess these items. In addition, the quality of dwelling spaces has improved and more low-income households have heating and air conditioning today than at any time in the past.
>
> To see if these differences are statistically significant, we present regression tables showing the likelihood that a household owns any of these items. The results suggest a significant narrowing of the gap between low-income and other households in certain durable-goods items, such as color televisions, microwaves, refrigerators, and air conditioners. In other items, like computers and printers, the gap was small to begin with but widened as usage of these items became more widespread and cost of these items declined. However, in recent times, even this gap has narrowed. For a third category of items, including clothes washers, clothes dryers, and dishwashers, the gap has tended to be fairly stable over time. Even in a statistical sense, there is a trend toward narrowing the consumption gap between low-income and other households.

When people measure income inequality, they usually don’t count all of the generous welfare programs, food stamps and other handouts that provide this minimum level of wealth to the poorest of the poor. That’s why the poor have many of the same amenities that the rich have. If you want to see real poverty, go to a communist nation like Cuba, North Korea, Zimbabwe or Venezuela.

Census Bureau confirms DC schools spending $29,409 per pupil

June 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Andrew J. Coulson of the Cato Institute explains how he got the Census Bureau to revise their numbers.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Four years ago, I wrote an op-ed for the *Washington Post* revealing that DC spent nearly $25,000 per pupil during the 2007-08 school year. I calculated this figure from the public budget documents of the District of Columbia, which I subsequently summarized and linked on this blog.
>
> No education reporter followed up on my findings, and much lower per pupil figures continue to be reported to this day. My $25,000 figure was even greeted with skepticism by analysts at free market think tanks. One state education policy analyst wrote to say that my figure was "out of line with credible information," and that I gave my critics "too much ammunition with this clearly questionable set of statistics."
>
> Indeed, the Census Bureau figures for DC's total K-12 expenditures were substantially lower than mine. I made a note to track down the discrepancy, but other projects intervened. When I updated my calculation to use DC budget estimates for the 2008-09 school year, I found that District spending had risen to over $28,000 / pupil. The comparable number for that year reported by the Bureau of the Census was just $18,181 (which you get by dividing the total expenditure figure in Table 1 by the enrollment figure in Table 15).
>
> So you can see why most folks were skeptical. Skeptical, but wrong.
>
> Back in March of this year I asked my then research intern to contact the Census Bureau and ask where they got their total spending data. It turns out, they got them from a DCPS official. We presented evidence to the Bureau that that DCPS official had missed a few line items when completing the Census Bureau's forms—to the tune of about $400 million. The Census Bureau agreed and is in the process of obtaining corrected data for the 2008-09 year. In the meantime, they made sure to ask DC officials to include all relevant items when filling out their forms for the 2009-10 school year. **The result: Census Bureau data now show DC spent a total of $29,409 per pupil (obtained by dividing total expenditures in Table 1 by enrollment in Table 15). This is just a bit higher than my calculation for the preceding year.**
>
> Kudos to the Census Bureau for taking the initiative and getting DC to accurately report its public school expenditures. Now that education reporters can simply open a Census Bureau .pdf file and divide one number by another, I wonder if

> any will report what DC really spends per pupil? I suspect that they still will not, continuing to mislead the general public, but I would be delighted to be proven wrong.
>
> Oh, and, BTW, this spending figure is about triple what the DC voucher program spends per pupil—and the voucher students have a much higher graduation rate and perform as well or better academically.

He's talking about the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship voucher program which Obama dismantled and defunded in order to appease the teacher unions.

According to U.S. News, D.C. students are underperforming:

> South Dakota, Nebraska, and Washington, D.C. performed the worst, with some of the worst student test scores and college readiness indexes in the nation.

Keep in mind that D.C. votes 92.5% to 6.5% for Obama in the 2008 election. This is where leftism in education comes from.

We ought to care about this, because the students in Washington D.C. are some of the poorest students in the nation – and they are often minority students. What sort of opportunity to succeed are we giving these children when we allow leftists like Obama to destroy voucher programs that are their only hope?

Conservative leader Tim Hudak to push right to work and secret ballots

June 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of Canada

Wow, the Canadians are trying to imitate Scott Walker and John Kasich.

Excerpt:

> In a move certain to upset the organized labour movement, Ontario workers would be able to opt out of collective agreements and union dues under dramatic changes to provincial workplace laws proposed by PC Leader Tim Hudak.
>
> Employers would no longer be required to collect dues on behalf of unions and secret ballots would be restored in certification votes.
>
> “The rules that are governing the workplace, they haven’t changed. And the way that many of our unions are run, particularly public sector unions, haven’t caught up with the times,” Hudak said. “No business would be caught today operating with a typewriter or a rotary phone, but our union laws and many union practices are still stuck in the 1940s.”
>
> Hudak released a white paper Tuesday, entitled Paths to Prosperity: Flexible Labour Markets, which calls for significant rewrites to the labour laws in Ontario which he says would make the province’s business environment more competitive and create jobs.
>
> […]Hudak’s real goal is to strip unions of their funding, in particular the Working Families Coalition that actively campaigns against Conservatives, he said.
>
> […]The white paper says the provincial government should lead the way by

> ending automatic paycheque deductions for dues and give private sector employers the same option.
>
> The monopoly that union shops enjoy in bidding for public contracts across Ontario's municipal and broader public sectors would also likely end under the Tories.
>
> Unions should be required to reveal how they spend the dues they collect, that workers have a right to know when their dues are spent on political causes, like anti-Israel campaigns and Quebec student protests, Hudak said.

While it's true that many (or even most) of the people who are stuck in unions are good, patriotic, hard-working people, union leaders are generally secular socialists. They support all kinds of nasty leftist groups. The best way to defund them is to allow workers to not have to have union dues automatically deducted from their pay checks. I would expect that most union workers in Ontario would elect not to pay dues to their unions – at least if they are anything like the workers in Wisconsin.

Two British conservatives to watch: Iain Duncan-Smith and Michael Gove

June 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from the UK Telegraph about Iain Duncan-Smith.

Excerpt:

> I've known Iain for many years since my days working for Lady Thatcher back when he was party leader. Few British politicians understand the Special Relationship as well as IDS, and he has made a concerted effort to cultivate ties with leaders in the United States, frequently visiting Washington over the past decade both in opposition and in government.
>
> It was refreshing to see a British official showing leadership on an issue that few Washington politicians have seriously addressed since the reforms of the 1990s. His message was a compelling one – that Britain (and for that matter the West as a whole) is facing up to the biggest cultural challenge of the early 21st Century – dealing with "entrenched and intergenerational worklessness and welfare dependency." In his speech he attacked "an obsession with inputs – with pouring money into social programmes so that governments are seen to be doing something," a sentiment that tens of millions of Americans would heartily agree with:
>
> So we are now faced with a fundamental challenge. Levels of social breakdown high and rising. Millions of people stuck out of work on benefits. Millions not saving nearly enough for their retirement. And politicians – of all hues – addicted to spending levels as a measurement of success, rather than life change as a measurement of success.
>
> These are areas ripe for reform – but how do you reform when there is no money? The answer – you change the way you reform. Not just cheese-slicing, but recalibrating whole systems so that you change behaviours, and change the culture that allowed spending to get out of control in the first place.
>
> With good reason IDS consistently ranks at the top of ConservativeHome's poll of cabinet ministers, with an approval rating in the latest survey of 84 per cent. Together with Michael Gove (who currently ranks second), he has been the most consistently impressive minister in Cameron's government. It is not hard to see why he is so popular with the grassroots. Duncan Smith is a conviction politician offering clear-cut conservative solutions to major problems, emphasising individual responsibility, a strong work ethic, and traditional values as opposed to big government meddling. His welfare reforms are a major step in the right direction, and the most radical since the system's creation in the 1940s. They deserve widespread support, on both sides of the Atlantic.

Iain Duncan-Smith stands for pro-family policies and welfare reform. What does Michael Gove stand for?

Here's an article about him in the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> One Cabinet minister is increasingly standing apart from the crowd. Yesterday, this newspaper revealed that Education Secretary Michael Gove wants to bring back O-level-style exams.
>
> Although this brave proposal is popular with parents across England, it is not uncontroversial. It takes us back to a system that separated academically gifted children from those with different aptitudes.
>
> But I would argue that the abolition of O-levels in the Eighties was actually an early sign of the culture of dishonesty in our national life.
>
> Britain fell into the grip of a dishonest kindness. We started to hand out good exam results like sweeties — regardless of whether pupils had really learnt anything at school.
>
> We told ourselves that it didn't matter whether parents spent their time working with their children or just letting them lounge in front of the TV.
>
> We allowed school-leavers to think that a life on benefits was socially acceptable when it's actually a place where they would easily rot and never fulfil their potential.
>
> The statistics that poured out of the schools system suggested that all was well, however.
>
> Like tractor production data from the old Soviet Union the latest exam grades were always better than last summer's.
>
> We were told to rejoice but employers and universities saw through the big lie. They complained that the children graduating from Britain's schools lacked basic literacy and numeracy skills. Britain started sliding down the international league tables that compared the abilities of children in China, Germany, Korea and Britain.
>
> Michael Gove is the first Education Secretary to say that enough is enough. He has said he's not afraid to preside over a drop in exam grades. They'll look less good, he concedes, but they'll be more honest.
>
> The teaching unions that have presided over the 'All Must Have Prizes' system will fight him tooth and nail. They want to protect their jobs-for-life regime where bad teachers are rarely sacked but are instead allowed to damage countless pupils' life chances, year after year.
>
> Gove is undeterred. He's ready to close down a system where children who can't manage their times tables are studying for exactly the same exams as those who are on track to study physics at Oxbridge.

> […]The compassionate politician who cares about equality of opportunity won't accept this status quo, and will point out that the current system is dishonest. It puts children with very different abilities through the same sausage machine and then pretends that those who get 'F' or 'G' grades have still passed.
>
> Michael Gove wants academically gifted children to be stretched by studying O-levels.
>
> He wants other children to have a more appropriate educational experience, albeit an equally rigorous and demanding one.
>
> This Government's investment in high-quality apprenticeships and a new generation of technical colleges is early proof that it is serious about restoring the standing of vocational education.

Michael Gove's specialty is education reform – he wants to stop the left from bashing kids into the same mold, regardless of their individual abilities and aptitudes.

Those are the two guys to watch. They're not perfect, but they are the two best in the UK, in my opinion.

Dr. Tim McGrew on alleged historical errors in the gospels

June 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I see that Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 is posting a lot of Tim McGrew material on his channel. Timothy J. McGrew (University of Scranton BA Philosophy 1988; Vanderbilt University PhD Philosophy 1992) is a Professor of Philosophy at Western Michigan University.

Here are a couple of Dr. McGrew's videos – with slides! – on alleged errors in the gospels.

Alleged errors in Mark and Matthew:

n this lecture, entitled Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels, Dr. Timothy McGrew critiques seven of the strongest objections to the historical reliability of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. This is about 55 minutes of content followed by fifteen minutes of Q&A.

More on this talk here. (including MP3)

Alleged errors in Luke and John:

In this lecture, entitled Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels, Dr. Timothy McGrew critiques the strongest objections to the historical reliability of the Gospels of Luke & John. This is about 55 minutes of content followed by thirty minutes of Q&A.

More on this talk here. (including MP3)

Bio of Tim McGrew:

> Dr. Timothy McGrew is Professor of Philosophy at Western Michigan University. He specializes in theory of knowledge, logic, probability theory, and the history and philosophy of science, and he has published in numerous journals including Mind, The Monist, Analysis, British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, and Philosophia Christi. His most recent publications include the article on "Evidence" in The Routledge Companion to Epistemology (forthcoming), a co-authored anthology in The Philosophy of Science (Blackwell, 2009), and a paper (with Lydia McGrew) on the the argument from miracles in The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology (Blackwell, 2009).

His wife Lydia also has a doctorate, and she writes about Christianity, apologetics and culture at "What's Wrong With the World" blog. She had some interesting comments about the whole John Piper cafuffle last week, that set off a small firestorm when I posted it on my Facebook page. It was a must-read!

A silver lining on today's cloudy Supreme Court decision?

June 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ok, so on first blush this seems like a bad decision for conservatives. So here are a few things that I found that say that it isn't that bad.

Here's moderate pragmatist Dick Morris.

Excerpt:

> Right now, presidential polls show Romney and Obama both in the mid-40s. The single most unpopular thing Obama has done is the health care law. Now it is going to be the lynchpin issue. It means that the election itself will increasingly be polarized around opinions of the health care law – a fifteen point loser for the Democrats.
>
> In a real sense, the Supreme Court did not let Obama off the hook by striking down the law. Now he will have to defend it during the election.
>
> Remember what this law does. It requires everyone to spend upwards of 7 percent of their income on health insurance or pay a fine of several thousand dollars. Neither is an attractive alternative for the young and the poor who are the president's political base. And, with the expansion of Medicaid rejected by the Court, the government will not be there to help them.
>
> In 2010, Democrats running for Congress (most of whom lost) did not even attempt to defend Obamacare. They put as much distance between themselves and the law as they could. But now, neither Obama nor his Senate and House candidates will have that option since the Supreme Court has kicked the football back into political play.

And here's conservative Townhall.

Excerpt:

> Over, and over, and over, President Obama assured us that this was not a tax. He was not raising taxes on the middle class (that's what the *Republicans* were doing, remember?). Nope, says the CJ: ya raised our taxes. Politically, that's going to prove troublesome for Obama this fall, and in a much more substantial way than having his "signature legislative accomplishment" overturned altogether.
>
> For one, **Roberts took away Obama's ability to campaign against the Court.** They upheld his law; he can't do as he did after Citizens United and construe the ACA ruling as a massively political attack on the little guy and his uninsured plight. He has nothing to blame on the Justices. All they did was recharacterize the "penalty" as constitutional under the taxing power. Roberts

> robbed Obama of a scapegoat, and stuck Obama with an unpopular law in an election year. *Ouch.*
>
> Second, **Roberts has literally forced Obama to acknowledged that he broke a promise, and raised taxes**. And tax increases don't resonate well with the voters. Now, it's doubtful Obama will assume responsibility for raising taxes – note that in his speech today, he didn't acknowledge the Court's reasoning for the ruling, only that they ruled in his favor. But the GOP has just added a major weapon to its arsenal: want to lower taxes? Then don't reelect Obama.
>
> This third observation is one that isn't immediately eminent, but nonetheless just as important as those prior two, if not more so. **Roberts has made it substantially easier to repeal Obamacare, and substantially harder to pass anything like it in the future**. As noted above, Americans don't like taxes. And thanks to the fact that many will opt to pay the tax rather than buy insurance (as that will cost less), the insurance problem in this country hasn't been solved. The fact that we've settled the question of the mandate's constitutionality means we can turn to the rest of the law, and address the flaws contained therein, and perhaps find a *real* solution to the healthcare crisis. As for future laws, Democrats lost the ability to hide behind "penalty" language. Roberts saw that the mandate waddled and quacked, and gave it the appropriate name. (He also forbade Congress from actually "mandating" anything, so that name isn't even correct anymore.) The ACA barely passed the first time; future iterations of this theory are destined to fail, because Congress will have to stand up and say, "We propose to enact a new tax so as to influence your behavior." If that isn't the proverbial lead balloon, I don't know what is.
>
> So there you have it: it's really not all bad. It's not what we wanted, but then – as I suspect Obama will learn in the coming months – we must remember to be careful what we wish for.

UPDATE: I have been told that if something is a tax, then it only has to get 50 votes in the Senate to repeal it, and not 60. I'm not sure if this is correct. Additionally, Romney got $3.2 million in donations the day the Supreme Court made their decision. So that is good news for sure.

That's the silver lining. It's a big cloud, but there is a small silver lining.

UPDATE: Wes sent me this full list of all the taxes contained in Obamacare. All we have to do now is win in November.

Attorney general Eric Holder faces possibility of jail after citation for contempt

June 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> The GOP-led House voted Thursday to hold Attorney General Eric Holder in contempt of Congress for failing to provide key information pertaining to Operation Fast and Furious, making Holder the first sitting Cabinet member to be held in contempt.
>
> The vote was **255-67**, with 17 Democrats breaking ranks to side with Republicans in favor of contempt.
>
> […]Congressional sources tell Fox News that House GOP leaders will now meet to decide the next steps, but the investigation is expected to go forward with more subpoenas being issued.
>
> "Today's vote is the regrettable culmination of what became a misguided and politically motivated investigation during an election year," Holder said afterward. "By advancing it over the past year and a half, Congressman Issa and others have focused on politics over public safety."
>
> The vote, which holds the attorney general in criminal contempt, was followed by a second vote that held Holder in civil contempt of Congress. The civil contempt vote allows Congress to go to court to seek additional documents.
>
> The criminal-contempt vote is supposed to direct a U.S. attorney to convene a grand jury to review the case and decide whether to indict Holder.
>
> However, considering Holder would be investigated by his own employees, some analysts have said it's unlikely that would happen. If the case proceeds, though, Holder could face a maximum one year in jail if convicted.

Now that's bipartisanship you can approve of.

Related posts

- Obama covers-up DOJ operation that allowed gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Republicans prepare contempt citation for AG Eric Holder over Fast and Furious
- Eric Holder wants to brainwash people against legal gun ownership
- Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent's murder
- Eric Holder testifies on Fast and Furious gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Fast and Furious assault weapons seized from drug cartel enforcer's home
- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?

- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference

Obamacare: higher taxes, higher debt, higher unemployment and higher premiums

June 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A few of the problems with Obamacare

Here are a few articles that I have been using lately to inform people about the problems with Obamacare

- Heritage Foundation: Obamacare Raises Taxes on 3 Million Middle-Class Americans
- Cato Institute: ObamaCare's Cost Could Top $6 Trillion in first 10 years
- Life News: Obamacare is pro-abortion and pro-government controlled rationing
- Heritage Foundation: The 3 Biggest Ways Obamacare Kills Jobs
- Investors Business Daily: Obama's Broken Health-Premium Savings Promise
- Reason: Obamacare will lead to longer wait times and crowded emergency rooms
- Doctor Patient Medical Association: 83% of doctors contemplating quitting over Obamacare

But I thought that the best defense is a good offense, and so without further ado, let me re-post something that defends American health care.

A defense of American health care

Story from the Hoover Institute at Stanford University.

The article compares American health care to health care in other places like Canada, the UK and Europe.

The full article. I almost never cite the full article, but this is a must read.

> MEDICINE AND HEALTH:
> Here's a Second Opinion
>
> By Scott W. Atlas
>
> *Ten reasons why America's health care system is in better condition than you might suppose. By **Scott W. Atlas.***
>
> Medical care in the United States is derided as miserable compared to health care systems in the rest of the developed world. Economists, government officials, insurers, and academics beat the drum for a far larger government role in health care. Much of the public assumes that their arguments are sound because the calls for change are so ubiquitous and the topic so complex. Before we turn to government as the solution, however, we should consider some unheralded facts about America's health care system.
>
> **1. Americans have better survival rates than Europeans for common cancers.**Breast cancer mortality is 52 percent higher in Germany than in the United States and 88 percent higher in the United Kingdom. Prostate cancer

mortality is 604 percent higher in the United Kingdom and 457 percent higher in Norway. The mortality rate for colorectal cancer among British men and women is about 40 percent higher.

2. Americans have lower cancer mortality rates than Canadians. Breast cancer mortality in Canada is 9 percent higher than in the United States, prostate cancer is 184 percent higher, and colon cancer among men is about 10 percent higher.

3. Americans have better access to treatment for chronic diseases than patients in other developed countries. Some 56 percent of Americans who could benefit from statin drugs, which reduce cholesterol and protect against heart disease, are taking them. By comparison, of those patients who could benefit from these drugs, only 36 percent of the Dutch, 29 percent of the Swiss, 26 percent of Germans, 23 percent of Britons, and 17 percent of Italians receive them.

4. Americans have better access to preventive cancer screening than Canadians. Take the proportion of the appropriate-age population groups who have received recommended tests for breast, cervical, prostate, and colon cancer:

- Nine out of ten middle-aged American women (89 percent) have had a mammogram, compared to fewer than three-fourths of Canadians (72 percent).
- Nearly all American women (96 percent) have had a Pap smear, compared to fewer than 90 percent of Canadians.
- More than half of American men (54 percent) have had a prostatespecific antigen (PSA) test, compared to fewer than one in six Canadians (16 percent).
- Nearly one-third of Americans (30 percent) have had a colonoscopy, compared with fewer than one in twenty Canadians (5 percent).

5. Lower-income Americans are in better health than comparable Canadians. Twice as many American seniors with below-median incomes self-report “excellent” health (11.7 percent) compared to Canadian seniors (5.8 percent). Conversely, white, young Canadian adults with below-median incomes are 20 percent more likely than lower-income Americans to describe their health as “fair or poor.”

6. Americans spend less time waiting for care than patients in Canada and the United Kingdom. Canadian and British patients wait about twice as long—sometimes more than a year—to see a specialist, have elective surgery such as hip replacements, or get radiation treatment for cancer. All told, 827,429 people are waiting for some type of procedure in Canada. In Britain, nearly 1.8 million people are waiting for a hospital admission or outpatient treatment.

7. People in countries with more government control of health care are highly dissatisfied and believe reform is needed. More than 70 percent of German, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, and British adults say their health system needs either “fundamental change” or “complete rebuilding.”

8. Americans are more satisfied with the care they receive than Canadians. When asked about their own health care instead of the “health care system,” more than half of Americans (51.3 percent) are very satisfied with their health care services, compared with only 41.5 percent of Canadians; a lower proportion of Americans are dissatisfied (6.8 percent) than Canadians (8.5 percent).

9. Americans have better access to important new technologies such as medical imaging than do patients in Canada or Britain. An overwhelming majority of leading American physicians identify computerized tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) as the most important medical innovations for improving patient care during the previous decade—even as economists and policy makers unfamiliar with actual medical practice decry these techniques as wasteful. The United States has thirty-four CT scanners per million Americans, compared to twelve in Canada and eight in Britain. The United States has almost twenty-seven MRI machines per million people compared to about six per million in Canada and Britain.

10. Americans are responsible for the vast majority of all health care innovations. The top five U.S. hospitals conduct more clinical trials than all the hospitals in any other developed country. Since the mid- 1970s, the Nobel Prize in medicine or physiology has gone to U.S. residents more often than recipients from all other countries combined. In only five of the past thirty-four years did a scientist living in the United States not win or share in the prize. Most important recent medical innovations were developed in the United States.

Despite serious challenges, such as escalating costs and care for the uninsured, the U.S. health care system compares favorably to those in other developed countries.

This essay appeared on the website of the National Center for Policy Analysis on March 24, 2009. An earlier version was published in the *Washington Times.*

Available from the Hoover Press is *Power to the Patient: Selected Health Care Issues and Policy Solutions,* edited by Scott W. Atlas. To order, call 800.935.2882 or visit www.hooverpress.org.

Scott W. Atlas is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a professor of radiology and chief of neuroradiology at Stanford University Medical School.

Note that the author is a professor of radiology and chief of neuroradiology at Stanford

University Medical School. Stanford and Harvard are generally regarded as the two best universities in the United States.

Correcting myths about American health care

Some people believe misleading myths about American health care by cherry-picking data from left-wing propaganda movies or Guardian editorials/comments, but here is the Michael Tanner, health care policy expert at the libertarian Cato Institute, to give us the facts.

Excerpt:

> **The Claim:** Though we spend more, we get less.
>
> **The Facts:** America offers the highest quality health care in the world. Most of the world's top doctors, hospitals and research facilities are located in the United States. Eighteen of the last 25 winners of the Nobel Prize in Medicine either are U.S. citizens or work here. U.S. companies have developed half of all the major new medicines introduced worldwide over the past 20 years. And Americans played a key role in 80 percent of the most important medical advances of the past 30 years.
>
> If you are diagnosed with a serious illness, the United States is the place you want to be. Tens of thousands of patients from around the world come to this country every year for treatment.
>
> Critics of American health care often point out that other countries have higher life expectancies or lower infant mortality rates, but those two indicators are bad ways to measure the quality of a nation's health-care system. In the United States, very low-birth-weight infants have a much greater chance of being brought to term with the latest medical technologies. Some of those low-birth-weight babies die soon after birth, which boosts our infant mortality rate, but in many other Western countries, those high-risk, low-birth-weight infants are not included when infant mortality is calculated.
>
> Life expectancies are also affected by other factors like violent crime, poverty, obesity, tobacco, and drug use, and other issues unrelated to health care. When you compare the outcome for specific diseases like cancer or heart disease, the United States outperforms the rest of the world.

And one more myth:

> **The Claim:** A government-run health-care system would expand access to care.
>
> **The Facts:** The one common characteristic of all national health care systems is that they ration care. Sometimes they ration it by denying certain types of treatment altogether. More often, they ration indirectly, imposing cost constraints through budgets, waiting lines, or limited technology. One million Britons are waiting for admission to National Health Service hospitals at any given time, and shortages force the NHS to cancel as many as 100,000

> operations each year. Roughly 90,000 New Zealanders are facing similar waits. In Sweden, the wait for heart surgery can be as long as 25 weeks. In Canada more than 800,000 patients are currently on waiting lists for medical procedures.

If you liked this post, please tweet it on Twitter, share it on Facebook and e-mail it to your friends. Get the discussion started now before the election. The left is counting on us to be distracted with television, movies and other nonsense. We need to be persuading people now because this could be our last chance to turn away from socialism in this country.

Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)

June 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [8.0/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> Travellers on a trans-European train are delayed for a night due to bad weather in a small fictional country called Mandrika. The passengers cram into the small village hotel where socialite Iris Henderson meets an old governess called Miss Froy. Shortly after the journey restarts, Miss Froy disappears.

This is by one of my favorite directors, Alfred Hitchock, who made many great patriotic movies.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare

June 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Melissa send me this post from The leftist Huffington Post.

Excerpt:

> Just because the Supreme Court affirmed that the Affordable Care Act is the law of the land, doesn't mean that Republican governors are rushing to follow it.
>
> "We're not going to start implementing Obamacare. We're committed to working to elect Governor Romney to repeal Obamacare," said Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal (R) Friday morning on a call with reporters hosted by the Republican National Committee.
>
> The Affordable Care Act requires states to set up health care benefits exchanges to help Americans buy insurance. If a state fails to act, the federal government will operate that state's exchange program.
>
> States have until Jan. 1, 2013, to demonstrate to the Department of Health and Human Services that it has a plan in place for the exchanges, which are required to be up and running by Jan. 1, 2014.
>
> "On the exchanges, we've continued not to implement the exchanges in Louisiana. We're going to work very hard to get Governor Romney elected so this law will be repealed long before the effective dates," Jindal added.
>
> […]On Thursday, another leading Republican governor — Wisconsin's Scott Walker — similarly said, "Wisconsin will not take any action to implement Obamacare. I am hopeful that political changes in Washington, D.C., later this year ultimately end the implementation of this law at the federal level."
>
> […]"Here in Louisiana, we've not applied for the grants, we've not accepted many of these dollars," Jindal said. "We're not implementing the exchanges. We don't think it makes any sense to implement Obamacare in Lousiana. The next opportunity we have to get rid of this law is to get Governor Romney elected, and I absolutely believe that he will be elected in November, and one of his first actions will be to repeal and replace this law."

It's good to see some Republican governors in tune with the mood of the public.

75% of the costs of Obamacare will be paid by those making $120,000 or less

June 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video shows the chief economist of the Wall Street Journal, Stephen Moore, making the claim that nearly 75% of Obamacare costs will fall on the backs of those Americans making less than $120,000 a year. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

The Heritage Foundation explains more, using the official numbers from the Congressional Budget Office. (H/T Bad Blue)

Excerpt:

> President Obama repeatedly promised not to raise taxes on middle-class families. Yesterday, the Supreme Court ruled that he already has.
>
> Chief Justice John Roberts upheld the President's health care law on the grounds that the "individual mandate" is a constitutionally permissible tax increase. This violates Obama's pledge. Middle-class families will pay the vast majority of these new taxes.
>
> Obamacare imposes a penalty—or tax increase—on Americans who do not purchase health insurance. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that most of those paying these taxes are middle-class individuals and families making less than 500 percent of the federal poverty level: $59,000 for an individual and $120,000 for a family of four. Three million lower-income and middle-class Americans will pay an estimated $2 billion in these "mandate taxes."
>
> The Supreme Court's interpretation puts the President in a peculiar situation. In 2008, he promised not to raise taxes on the middle class and accused Republican nominee John McCain of wanting to tax health benefits: "And I can make a firm pledge: under my plan, no family making less than $250,000 will see their taxes increase…not any of your taxes. My opponent can't make that pledge…. [H]e wants to tax your health benefits." Who could have predicted that Obama would raise taxes on millions of Americans who do not have health insurance?
>
> Obama grossly mischaracterized his health care plan, and now American citizens will pay the price. He has both attacked individual freedom and burdened millions in the middle class.

I thought that Obama said that he would raise taxes on the middle class? For a full list of the taxes in Obamacare, click here.

Despite record youth unemployment, young people support Obama 52-27

July 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

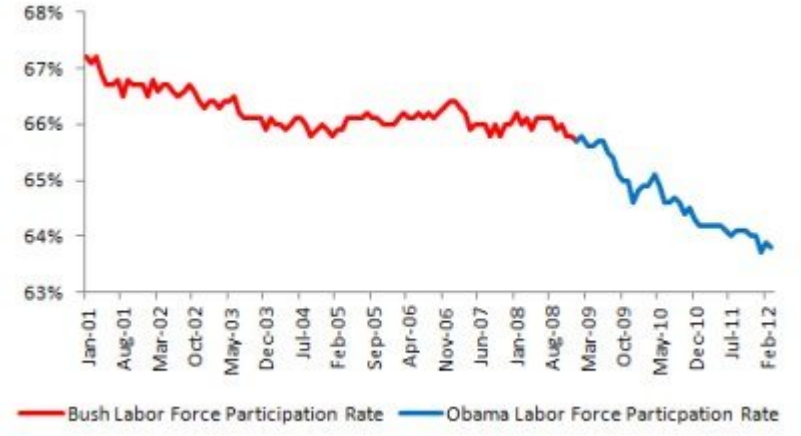

Labor Force Participation 2012 (click for larger image)
From Breitbart.

Excerpt:

> Even as unemployment among college graduates remains stuck above the national average at 9.3 percent, a Reuters/Ipsos poll of four-year college graduates finds that President Barack Obama leads his Republican challenger Mitt Romney 52 percent to 27 percent.
>
> The poll's findings are especially surprising given reports last month that, for the first time in American history, unemployment for college graduates eclipsed that of high school graduates. As Jed Graham of *Investor's Business Daily* reported, "Out of 9 million unemployed in April, 4.7 million had gone to college or graduated and 4.3 million had not, seasonally adjusted Labor Department data show."
>
> Still, some unemployed college graduates say they are sticking with Mr. Obama in 2012: "I was really excited when Obama won," said Joe Zmudczynski, a 2011 graduate of Michigan's Ferris State University who now lives at home with his parents. "He's still my favorite. It's not like you can snap your fingers and everything gets better."

Leftist PBS explains:

> Returning to the nest with mom and dad after college and even into the thirties is becoming increasingly more common, but also less stigmatized. Young adults who live with their folks are cheerful, upbeat even, about their choice.
>
> That's the finding of **a new Pew report**, released Thursday morning. Three in 10 young adults (aged 25 to 34) say they've lived at home recently during the down

> economy, and 78 percent said they were satisfied doing so. Another 77 percent said they were optimistic about their future finances.
>
> The number of young adults living in a multi-generational household — which can be any combination of grandparents, parents and adult children — saw a steep uptick during the recent recession, after being on the rise since 1980, said Kim Parker, the study's lead author and a senior researcher with Pew's Social & Demographic Trends Project. Historically, such high rates of moving back home haven't been seen since the late 1940s.

Here's an Associated Press piece on Yahoo News:

> The college class of 2012 is in for a rude welcome to the world of work.
>
> A weak labor market already has left half of young college graduates either jobless or underemployed in positions that don't fully use their skills and knowledge.
>
> Young adults with bachelor's degrees are increasingly scraping by in lower-wage jobs — waiter or waitress, bartender, retail clerk or receptionist, for example — and that's confounding their hopes a degree would pay off despite higher tuition and mounting student loans.
>
> […]Taking underemployment into consideration, the job prospects for bachelor's degree holders fell last year to the lowest level in more than a decade.
>
> […]The figures are based on an analysis of 2011 Current Population Survey data by Northeastern University researchers and supplemented with material from Paul Harrington, an economist at Drexel University, and the Economic Policy Institute, a Washington think tank. They rely on Labor Department assessments of the level of education required to do the job in 900-plus U.S. occupations, which were used to calculate the shares of young adults with bachelor's degrees who were "underemployed."
>
> About 1.5 million, or 53.6 percent, of bachelor's degree-holders under the age of 25 last year were jobless or underemployed, the highest share in at least 11 years. In 2000, the share was at a low of 41 percent, before the dot-com bust erased job gains for college graduates in the telecommunications and IT fields.
>
> Out of the 1.5 million who languished in the job market, about half were underemployed, an increase from the previous year.

The EPI is a left-wing think tank.

As if this were not bad enough, remember that the secular socialists have run the national debt up from 8 trillion to 16 trillion since taking over the House and Senate in January 2007. Labor union bailouts, green energy payoffs to Democrat fundraises, health care takeovers, and massive welfare spending, have to be paid back. Who is going to pay all of this back? Students with degrees in feminist studies and peace studies? And yet, incredibly, the government-run public school system and the universities have

brainwashed these young fools into voting for their own dependence and enslavement. That’s what secularism and leftism offers young people: the road to serfdom.

The Wintery Knight’s favorite apologetics lectures

July 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These are the lectures that made me who I am today. Each of these is awesome. If you only have time for two, listen to Dr. Bradley’s Journey to Faith and Giants in the Land.

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Ph.D. in Materials Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1968
B.S. in Engineering Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1965

- Journey to Faith (his testimony)
- Giants in the Land
- Truth in Religion
- Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer

Dr. J.P. Moreland

B.S. in Chemistry, University of Missouri
M.A. in Philosophy, University of California Riverside
Th.M. in Theology, Dallas Theological Seminary
Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Southern California

- The Importance of the Mind in Christian Living
- Atheism, Theism, and the Meaning of Life
- Love Your God with All Your Mind (for Christians)

Dr. Philip E. Johnson

A.B., Harvard University, 1961
J.D., University of Chicago, 1965

- The Grand Metaphysical Story of Science
- Can Science Know the Mind of God?
- Darwinism on Trial

Dr. Douglas Geivett

Ph.D., University of Southern California
M.A., Dallas Theological Seminary
M.A., Gonzaga University
B.S., Multnomah School of the Bible

- The Problems of Evil and Suffering (at Apologetics 315)

Dr. William Lane Craig

D.Theol., University of Munich
Ph.D., University of Birmingham (UK)

M.A., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
M.A., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
B.A., Wheaton College

- In Intellectual Neutral (at Apologetics 315)

Student who was fired for opposing homosexuality loses court case

July 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Christian Post.

Excerpt:

> A Christian student at a Georgia university who was expelled from her school's counseling program for expressing her disagreement with homosexuality has lost a court case against the school.
>
> "(Jennifer) Keeton's speech and conduct were evidently impelled by the absolutist philosophical character of her beliefs, but that character does not entitle her to university accommodation and it is irrelevant to the court's analysis," wrote Judge J. Randall Hall, of the Southern District of Georgia, siding with the university. "Neutrality as a legal standard is immutable, it does not bend to the strength or tenor of personal conviction."
>
> Keeton refused to change the way she engages with homosexual students because of her religious beliefs, and was expelled from the counseling program at Augusta State University in 2010, which stressed that the program should not discriminate against students regardless of their sexual orientation.
>
> […]Keeton was initially placed on probation, and school officials required her to follow a "remediation plan." This included attending sensitivity training, going to gay pride events and writing papers on her experiences and the lessons she had learned in tolerance. When Keeton refused to comply, she was removed from her position.
>
> "The remediation plan imposed on Keeton pursuant to those policies placed limits on her speech and burdened her religious beliefs, but, as the allegations show, the plan was motivated by a legitimate pedagogical interest in cultivating a professional demeanor and concern that she might prove unreceptive to certain issues and openly judge her clients," the judge said. "The allegations show, in sum, that while Keeton was motivated by her religious beliefs, Defendants were not."
>
> Hall added that the American School Counselor Association's Ethical Standards for School Counselors clearly states that counselors cannot impose their own values on clients, and must take on each case from a neutral viewpoint. The judge also defended Augusta State's remediation plan, stating that it did not infringe on Keeton's first amendment rights, but was an attempt to get her to comply with the school's policies.
>
> In a similar case, Julea Ward from Eastern Michigan University was also expelled from her counseling job because of her views on homosexuality. She had

> requested that a gay client be transferred to another counselor, which the school argued went against its policies, despite the fact that it allows client transfers based on non-religious reasons. A lower-court initially ruled in favor of Eastern Michigan University, but the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the decision, arguing that Ward's constitutional rights were violated.

Remember, these schools very often get public funding, which means that Christians are paying to have this done to them. That's what you get when you vote for more goverment and more grants for universities. These places are generally not our friends – across the board. Also, think of how she gave them thousands of dollars in tuition.

What's the lesson here? I think that the lesson is that the safest way to avoid losing thousands of dollars is to study STEM-related fields in a secular university or any field in a Christian university. The best schools for Christians are listed here. I agree that Wheaton College should be left off the list and I think that Grove City, Biola, Houston Baptist and Hillsdale are the best, especially Grove City. Christians have to be careful where we go to school and what we study now.

One last point. It is a good idea for Christians to learn how to talk about their convictions on moral issues using evidence, and not talking about their faith or the Bible to people who don't like us very much. The Bible informs your faith, but that is not something you share with non-Christians who are hostile to you.

A simple introduction to Obamacare

July 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a helpful article from the UK Daily Mail that Dina sent me that explains the basics for people who are wondering what all the fuss is about. The author Diana Furchtgott-Roth has a B.A. and M.A. in economics, the latter from Oxford University.

Excerpt:

> Although the Court has upheld PPACA, the law as currently structured is unworkable. This is because the penalty for not signing up for insurance, which is now termed a tax, $750 a year, is too small relative to the cost of health care coverage, about $5,500 a year.
>
> Since insurance companies are required to take all applicants, healthy people, especially the young, will pay the tax rather than buy the insurance. This makes the pool of insured individuals sicker and more costly, on average, and their premiums will be higher. With higher premiums, more people will choose to pay the tax, and a downward spiral will unfold.
>
> Unless Congress raises the tax to the level of premiums, the system will have to be replaced with a public option.
>
> […] It is clear that PPACA has severe economic costs, and is at least partially responsible for the slow economic recovery, and needs to be replaced.
>
> PPACA raises employment costs by requiring employers to offer qualifying insurance coverage or pay a penalty—now a tax. Because this requirement will apply, starting in 2014, to firms with more than 49 full time employees, it will discourage the hiring of full-time workers, especially low-wage hands whose work can more easily be divided among part-timers. Firms with over 49 workers will have to pay $2,000 a year for each employee without qualifying coverage. Expanding to 50 workers would, in 2014, cost a firm $40,000 a year (the first 30 workers are exempt).
>
> PPACA encourages employers to substitute part-time for full-time workers to avoid the tax. A firm with 60 employees would pay a tax of $60,000 a year if it did not have qualifying health coverage. But if it put 11 workers on part-time, and hired another 11 part-timers, it would not owe a tax, because it would have 49 full-timers. The full-timers who become part-timers and lose salary and benefits would be worse off.
>
> PPACA raises health insurance costs by requiring an overly-generous plan. In order to be counted as a 'qualified benefit plan' and be able to sell health insurance in the exchange, an underwriter must cover routine health care—such as check-ups, and contraceptives—without copayment. It must also cover maternity care, mental health and substance abuse.

> Unfortunately, plans that encourage shopping around, such as catastrophic plans with large deductibles combined with health savings accounts, where people can save tax-free for medical care, are prohibited by PPACA for Americans ages 30 and above.
>
> A health insurance system needs to be accessible, portable, and inexpensive, just like other forms of insurance.
>
> […]The same should be true of health insurance. Those who can't afford it should be offered refundable tax credits, or vouchers, to purchase it themselves, so they can have the same choice of doctors and services as other Americans.
>
> Just as in other forms of insurance, America can lower costs by reducing unnecessary regulation, increasing competition and patient choice. Patients should decide what type of coverage meets their needs, not be told what they must purchase by the federal government.
>
> For example, if some people want their children to be on their insurance plan until age 26, or age 28, or age 30, they should be able to purchase plans that cover their children, at a price. Others who do not have children, or who do not want their children on their plans, should not have to pay the costs.
>
> How would such a system operate?
>
> Congress could give all Americans tax credits for buying health insurance; allow plans to compete over state lines; and set up state risk pools to insure those with uninsurable conditions.

What an excellent article. Her suggestions are also good, and the Republicans have offered a plan to achieve those goals: Paul Ryan's health care plan.

Student debt forcing college graduates to put their plans on hold

July 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, from Yahoo News, some anecdotes to help everyone understand what faces young people trying to get an education and find a job. (H/T Captain Capitalism)

Excerpt:

> We asked Yahoo News readers to tell us their experiences with student loan debt. Over 600 graduates (and not-quite graduates) of all ages emailed to share their stories. We'll be sharing more of their stories in the next week over at our Tumblr.
>
> Overwhelmingly, Yahoo News readers told us they felt burdened by their debt. "We do not like debt," wrote Katelyn Fagan, who graduated from Brigham Young University in 2011. She and her husband have a combined student loan debt of just under $70,000. Fagan tried to work while in college, but wanted to focus on her academics. "Maybe I could have sought out other employment options (and I sometimes did) but school was my top priority."
>
> "Student loans have basically ruined my life," says Tanya Carter, who graduated from the University of Toledo in 2008. She went to community college for two years before transferring, and attended classes part-time so she could also work. When Carter maxed out on federal loans, she turned to private loans to finish her degree. As a result of all that debt, she writes: "I never see myself owning a home, vehicle, or maybe not even getting married."
>
> The need to delay starting a family because of financial worries was a common concern. Lauren Dollard graduated from Fordham University in 2008 with $157,000 in debt, including interest. "My boyfriend won't marry me because of my debt," she says. "He doesn't want it attached to his name (I know, this could also be an excuse)." She said she would trade her "fancy private school education" in a heartbeat to live "as an independent adult."
>
> April Flores graduated from San Diego State in 2008 with $80,000 in private loans and $30,000 in subsidized loans. "It is going to be hard to buy a house and start a family with our debt," she writes. "We joke and say that our baby is Sallie Mae, but it is true! Education is invaluable, but I was not wise in my early 20s and did not make the right decisions when it came to my private loans."
>
> Flores was far from alone in bemoaning her failure to understand the implications of those promissory notes. Salvatore Aiello graduated from the University of South Carolina in 2009 with $68,000 in debt. "I blame ignorance in my pursuit of loans; my high school did a terrible job explaining our options when it came to financial aid," he told us. "They made it seem that if I wasn't rich or beyond

> poverty I would not have been able to go to college." Aiello followed up with a second email—he and his girlfriend are now expecting their first child. They are, in his words, "very excited at the unexpected blessing but terrified."

Here's an article from the New York Times in which a professor explains what causes tuition rates to rise: (H/T Cato Institute)

> ACADEMIC economists like to make fun of businesspeople: they want competition when they enter a new market but are quick to lobby for subsidies and barriers to competitors once they get in. Yet scholars like me are no better. We work in the least competitive and most subsidized industry of all: higher education.
>
> We criticize predatory loans by mortgage brokers, when student loans can be just as abusive. To avoid the next credit bubble and debt crisis, we need to eliminate government subsidies and link tuition financing to the incomes of college graduates.
>
> Nearly eight million students received Pell grants in 2010, costing $28 billion. In addition, the federal direct loan program, which allows nonaffluent students to get government-guaranteed loans at low interest rates, cost taxpayers $13 billion in 2010-11. Total subsidies to university education amount to $43 billion a year, including around $2 billion in Congressional earmarks — and that does not even include tax subsidies (for college funds); tax breaks (for university endowments, for example); and subsidies dedicated to research.
>
> Just as subsidies for homeownership have increased the price of houses, so have education subsidies contributed to the soaring price of college. Between 1977 and 2009 the real average cost of university tuition more than doubled.
>
> These subsidies also distort the credit market. Since the government guarantees student loans, lenders have no incentive to lend wisely. All the burden of making the right decision falls on the borrowers. Unfortunately, 18-year-olds aren't particularly good at judging the profitability of an investment without expert advice, and when they do get such advice, it generally counsels taking the largest possible loan. The stock of student loans has reached $1 trillion, while the percentage of borrowers in default jumped to 8.8 percent in 2009 from 6.7 percent in 2007.
>
> Last but not least, these subsidized loans keep afloat colleges that do not add much value for their students, preventing people from accumulating useful skills.

That article also contains the solution:

> Investors could finance students' education with equity rather than debt. In exchange for their capital, the investors would receive a fraction of a student's future income — or, even better, a fraction of the increase in her income that derives from college attendance. (This increase can be easily calculated as the difference between the actual income and the average income of high school

> graduates in the same area.)

The solution is to privatize the entire student loan system, and make the loans conditional on future earnings. That way, universities will be chosen based on their ability to provide jobs to students, and students will have to justify to banks (who represent ordinary people who put money on deposit with an expectation of a return!) why they should get a loan and how they expect to pay it back.

But what has Obama actually done?

Let's see:

> The president, by way of administrative fiat, plans to continue redefining the federal student-loan industry, making taxpayers absorb the financial risks of federal direct lending and leading the country over a cliff into future funding shortfalls. On Wednesday, the president announced his executive order to reduce monthly student-loan payments, consolidate loans into direct loans, and offer loan forgiveness after 20 years, all in the name of college access.
>
> President Obama's executive action would cap monthly repayment at 10 percent of discretionary income and offer students an incentive for consolidating Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL) and direct loans into the direct-loan program, which administers loans directly to students, instead of having them issued by banks. Students will be given a 0.5 percent interest-rate reduction for switching to the direct-loan program.
>
> But why the urgency to employ executive action to shift to the direct-loan program now? The federal government is currently lending to students at an interest rate of 6.8 percent while it is borrowing at less than 1 percent, and the difference is kept by the federal government and spent on other programs, like converting the popular Pell Grant program into an entitlement. The president is lobbying for more students to move to direct loans so that the government can spend the money elsewhere. As Rep. John Kline, chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, said, "It's a pretty big slush fund." Under the Healthcare and Education Reconciliation Act, all new federal student loans are now direct loans, but there are still $400 billion outstanding loans that are not.
>
> But these "savings" are misleading, as future shortfalls are inevitable. These loans are riddled with risk. When pressed by a reporter about why students would want to pay back the loan if they will be forgiven anyway, Secretary Duncan simply said that "people want to do the right thing." However, student-loan default rates have been increasing for nearly ten years and are now at 8.8 percent. On top of these high defaults, the jobless rate for Americans with at least a bachelor's degree is now 5.1 percent, the highest since 1970.
>
> **As former CBO director Doug Holtz-Eakin wrote, "The Secretary of Education is now one of the top financial executives in the U.S., and**

> **Congress spent nearly all of the over-estimated 'savings' on the President's health care reform and unaffordable education entitlements and will add more than a trillion dollars of risky loans to the national balance sheet by 2017."**

Just like the housing bubble, the Democrats have again made it easier for a certain segment of the population whose votes they wanted to borrow money – money that they now don't have to pay back. Being a leftist means taking money away from people who earned it and giving it to others (students, universities) who don't have to pay it back.

Related posts

- Despite record youth unemployment, young people support Obama 52-27
- Rising student debt will impact future housing demand
- Is it "brilliant" to accumulate $185,000 of debt studying the humanities?
- 1 in 2 new graduates are jobless or underemployed
- Another looming debt crisis: law school students racking up $100,000+ in debt
- Unemployed college graduate ran up $90,000 of debt while studying English
- Is a college degree worth what you pay for it?

NHS horror story: neglected patient calls police for water, dies of thirst

July 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this UK Daily Mail story on my FB feed from bioethicist Wesley J. Smith.

Excerpt:

> A young patient who died of dehydration at a leading teaching hospital phoned police from his bed because he was so thirsty, an inquest heard yesterday.
>
> Officers arrived at Kane Gorny's bedside, but were told by nurses that he was in a confused state and were sent away.
>
> The keen footballer and runner, 22, died of dehydration a few hours later.
>
> A coroner had such grave concerns about the case that she referred it to police.
>
> Yesterday an inquest was told how Mr Gorny died after blunders and neglect by 'lazy and careless' medical staff at St George's Hospital in Tooting, South London.
>
> His mother Rita Cronin, a civil servant told Westminster Coroner's Court that staff tutted at her and repeatedly refused to listen to her concerns that her son hadn't been given vital medication.
>
> At one point he became so desperate and upset that staff sedated and restrained him – and on the night before his death, his mother said, he was not checked on by medical staff, despite being in a room on his own.
>
> […]When he arrived at hospital for the hip operation, nurses assured the family they would give him his medication and said: 'Don't worry, he's in good hands – we'll look after him.'
>
> But, despite the repeated reminders and insistence by both Mr Gorny and his family, staff failed to give him the tablets and he became severely dehydrated after being refused water.
>
> In an interview with the Daily Mail in 2010, Miss Cronin said of the nurses who treated him: 'They were lazy, careless and hadn't bothered to check his charts and see his medication was essential. He was totally dependent on the nurses to help him and they totally betrayed him.'
>
> Yesterday Miss Cronin told the inquest she received a distressed phone call from her son on May 27, 2009, in which he told her he'd called the police because he was so desperate for a drink.
>
> […]She then went to the hospital where she found him 'confused and angry', shouting at staff and behaving in an uncharacteristically abusive manner.
>
> Despite this, one doctor asked if he was 'coming off the booze' and another asked if he was 'always like this'. Miss Cronin said: 'He sounded really, really distressed. He said "They won't give me anything to drink". 'He also said "I've

> called the police. You better get here quickly: they're all standing around the bed getting their stories straight".'
>
> When Miss Cronin arrived, she recalled: 'They weren't doing anything. They seemed out of their depth. It felt like the two locum doctors were nervous about calling anyone more senior than them.'
>
> The inquest heard Mr Gorny was restrained by security guards and sedated with strong medication to calm him down. Later, he was put into a side room and left alone.
>
> Miss Cronin said she sat in his room for three hours the night before he died without a single nurse checking on him or giving him vital medicine.

Dr. Smith also linked to this article where doctors have to *prescribe water to patients* in order to ensure that they do not die of dehydration in the NHS. This is what you get in a secular socialist system of health care where you pay through your working life and then when you ask for health care, you get in line, because they spent *your money* buying votes from people with "free" breast implants, sex changes, abortions, contraceptives and IVF. Is that health care?

The benefit of the free enterprise system with respect to health care is that you keep your money in your pocket and you pay for quality health care at the best price. No one complains about Amazon.com, they only complain about the Department of Motor Vehicles. There is a reason for that. Amazon has to compete for your business, but government monopolies don't. You have no choice when it comes to government monopolies. They don't care. They get paid anyway.

If God has a reason for allowing evil and suffering, should we know what it is?

July 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This tiny little thing is a No-See-Um

Have you heard about the terrible noseeums? Then read on, for Steven Cowan will tell you about them.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude. Consider the recent Tsunami in the Indian Ocean that took the lives of almost 200,000 people. Consider as well the infamous Nazi Holocaust in which millions of Jews and others were mercilessly slaughtered. Moreover, we can watch the evening news on almost any day and hear of people in our neighborhoods being robbed, beaten, and murdered. How and why could God allow such things?

Excerpt:

> However, perhaps God's existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God's existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By "pointless evil," Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe's argument may be simply stated as follows:

> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the "noseeum inference." Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a "noseeum" is something that you cannot see—it is a "no-see-um." And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I "no-see-um" a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous. Humans just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a

noseeum. Just because we don't see it doesn't mean it isn't there, and the burden of proof is on the person who says there is NO morally sufficient reason. They're making the claim, they have to shoulder the burden of proof.

By the way, I HAVE the PDF of the William Alston paper. But I can't post it publicly because it's copyrighted.

However, here is a summary of his argument: (it's unnecessarily wordy – this is not Thomas Sowell or Theodore Dalrymple writing this)

> The recent outpouring of literature on the problem of evil has materially advanced the subject in several ways. In particular, a clear distinction has been made between the "logical" argument against the existence of God ("atheological argument") from evil, which attempts to show that evil is logically incompatible with the existence of God, and the "inductive" ("empirical", "probabilistic") argument, which contents itself with the claim that evil constitutes (sufficient) empirical evidence against the existence of God. It is now acknowledged on (almost) all sides that the logical argument is bankrupt, but the inductive argument is still very much alive and kicking.
>
> In this paper I will be concerned with the inductive argument. More specifically, I shall be contributing to a certain criticism of that argument, one based on a low estimate of human cognitive capacities in a certain application. To indicate the point at which this criticism engages the argument, I shall use one of the most careful and perspicuous formulations of the argument in a recent essay by William Rowe (1979).
>
> 1. There exist instances of intense suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse. ,
> 2. An omniscient, wholly good being would prevent the occurrence of any intense suffering it could, unless it could not do so without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.
> 3. There does not exist an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good being (p. 336).
>
> Let's use the term 'gratuitous suffering' for any case of intense suffering, E, that satisfies premise 1, that is, which is such that an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented it without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.'
>
> […]The criticism I shall be supporting attacks the claim that we are rationally justified in accepting 1, and it does so on the grounds that our epistemic situation is such that we are unable to make a sufficiently well grounded determination that 1 is the case. I will call this, faute de mieux, the agnostic thesis, or simply agnosticism. The criticism claims that the magnitude or complexity of the question is such that our powers, access to data, and so on are radically insufficient to provide sufficient warrant for accepting 1.And if that is so, the

> inductive argument collapses.

What the atheist has to show is that God could have prevented some instance of evil that appears to be pointless without losing any overall goodness. I.e. – suppose someone gets sick and has to stay home instead of going to a party. The person is suffering, but how do we know that God isn't justified in allowing this suffering? What if, by allowing this suffering, God protects the person from being killed by a drunk driver? If the atheist says that there cannot be ANY moral justification for allowing the suffering, he has to be able to know what would happen in the future to know that nothing good would never come out of it. That's the burden of proof on the atheist, and Alston claims that the atheist is not in a position to know that.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

But as I said before, atheist confuse the purpose of life. They think that the purpose of life is to have happy feelings, and they wonder "how could allowing me to suffer create MORE happy feelings?" And that's where the problem arises. They can't accept the idea that God has a right to form their character, to put them through certain experiences, and to place humans in times and places where he can orchestrate a world that meets his needs, not our needs.

I also found this opening speech from a debate that Steven Cowan did on the problem of evil, which may also be useful to you.

The *best* place to learn about no-see-ums is in this excellent lecture by Biola University professor Doug Geivett.

William Lane Craig vs Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God's existence

July 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has done in my opinion. (The other two are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates) This one doesn't seem to get a lot of play on the Internet: there's no video, transcript or anything. But it is a great debate, and on a problem we are all concerned about: the problem of evil and suffering. One other thing – Sinnott-Armstrong is also a very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics.

The MP3 file is here.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

- If God exists, gratuitous does not exist.
- *God exists*
- Therefore, gratuitous does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists:

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

Obama campaign contributor and gun control advocate ran Fast and Furious

July 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily:

> A campaign contributor who was an architect of the 1994 assault weapons ban was the mastermind behind the Fast and Furious operation that let guns walk into Mexico, including those that killed two U.S. agents.
>
> Shortly after the murder of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry on Dec. 15, 2010, Attorney General Eric Holder's deputy chief of staff, Monty Wilkinson, received an email from U.S. Attorney for Arizona Dennis Burke telling him just that:
>
> "The guns found in the desert near the murder(ed) BP officer connect back to the investigation we were going to talk about — they were AK-47s purchased at a Phoenix gun store."
>
> It is an email that helps demonstrate that Holder, despite his congressional testimony — as vague, contradictory and misleading as it was — could not have been ignorant about Fast and Furious and its deadly consequences.
>
> It also brings to light the name of Dennis Burke, a seldom-mentioned Obama campaign donor who oversaw Fast and Furious and helped convert it from a gun-interdiction to a gun-walking program.
>
> Burke, who resigned shortly after the scandal became public, has long been a gun-ban architect for the Democratic Party.
>
> As a lawyer for the Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee, he was behind the ineffectual 1994 "assault weapon" ban that sunset in 2004. Burke was also the chief of staff for Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano for a number of years before she became the secretary of homeland security.
>
> Former Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., had high praise for Burke's 1994 effort: "Dennis had all these pictures of these guns — the street sweepers and the AK-47s. And it passed by one vote. A lot of it was not my eloquence on the bill; it was stuff that Dennis had done."
>
> Burke also is an Obama donor, a prime consideration in the staffing of the Obama administration. Federal Election Commission records show that on Jan. 9, 2008, while working for Napolitano, Burke contributed $2,000 to Sen. Barack Obama's presidential primary campaign. Since 1997, according to FEC records, Burke has given $16,350 to Democratic candidates.
>
> Burke would leave that Gov. Napolitano post to join the Obama transition team. He was soon rewarded for his many contributions, monetary and otherwise, when on July 10, 2009, the president nominated him to be the U.S. attorney in Arizona. The Senate confirmed him that Sept. 15.

> In July 2010, Burke told the Arizona Capitol Times there had "clearly been direction provided already by President Obama and Attorney General Holder as to what they want to be doing."

Please see below for more Fast and Furious news.

Related posts

- Obama covers-up DOJ operation that allowed gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Republicans prepare contempt citation for AG Eric Holder over Fast and Furious
- Eric Holder wants to brainwash people against legal gun ownership
- Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent's murder
- Eric Holder testifies on Fast and Furious gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Fast and Furious assault weapons seized from drug cartel enforcer's home
- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference

Muslim airline hijackers beaten to death by Chinese passengers

July 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Australian News: (H/T Pat Dollard)

> TWO men who allegedly tried to hijack a plane in China were beaten to death by passengers and crew.
>
> The Global Times newspaper reported that two of the suspects died in hospital from injuries they suffered during the ensuing fight with passengers and crew on board.
>
> The men were part of a six-strong gang involved in the foiled hijack of a Tianjin Airlines flight bound for the regional capital of Urumqi last Friday.
>
> Just minutes after the flight took off from Hetian, southwest Xinjiang, the men, all aged between 20 and 36, stood up and announced their plans to terrified passengers.
>
> The gang reportedly broke a pair of aluminium crutches and used them to attack passengers while attempting to break into the cockpit, Hou Hanmin, a regional government spokeswoman said.
>
> They were tackled by police and passengers who tied them up with belts before the plane, carrying 101 people, returned to the airport safely just 22 minutes later.
>
> Hanmin added that police were still testing materials they had been carrying, thought to be explosives.
>
> The men were reported to be Uighurs, the local Muslim ethnic minority. There have been clashes between authorities and Uighurs resentful of government controls over their religion and culture.
>
> Dilxat Raxit, spokesman for the German-based World Uyghur Congress which campaigns for Uighurs' rights, said that it wasn't a hijacking attempt, rather an in-flight brawl over a seat dispute.
>
> "We warn China not to use this incident as another excuse for crackdown," he said in an emailed statement.
>
> Two more suspects are reportedly being treated in hospital after mutilating themselves.

If this happened in America, the pro-multiculturalism secular leftists would be complaining about excessive violence, criminal's rights and due process. Probably, the Chinese passengers would be sued for racial profiling, and the airline would be sued for not assisting the hijackers.

Note: I am non-white and half my family is Muslim. And my view is that we need to use

DISPROPORTIONAL VIOLENCE in order to deter terrorists. Period.

Happy Independence Day 2012!

July 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

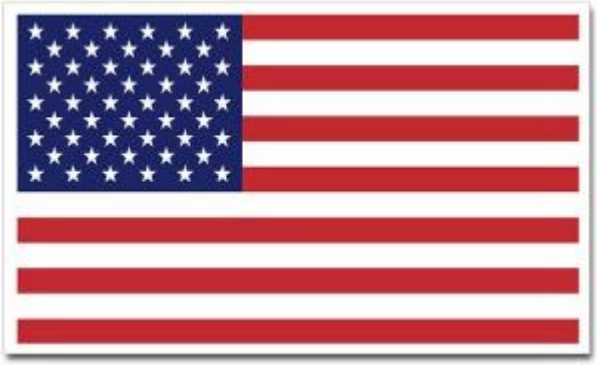

The Stars and Stripes

The Declaration of Independence

Here's the complete text of the Declaration of Independence here.

The best book to read about the Revolutionary War is David McCullough's "1776", which I highly recommend. The audio book version is awesome.

George Washington and the American Revolution

Washington Crossing the Delaware

To really understand the founding of the United States, you should read about the story of Washington crossing the Delaware. At this point in the Revolutionary War, the British commanders had achieved a stunning series of victories against the Americans. They had even sent word home to the King that the war was over, and that the Americans would be forced to surrender. But Washington did not give up. He attacked the British forces and took them by surprise – and he won the Battle of Trenton! That was the turning point of the war. There almost *never was* a United States of America – that's how close the revolution came to failing.

Ronald Reagan vision of America

Ronald Reagan

Here is a portion of Ronald Reagan's farewell speech:

Excerpt:

> I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind it was a tall proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace, a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity, and if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That's how I saw it, and see it still.
>
> And how stand the city on this winter night? More prosperous, more secure, and happier than it was eight years ago. But more than that; after two hundred years, two centuries, she still stands strong and true on the granite ridge, and her glow has held steady no matter what storm. And she's still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home.

This is no ordinary nation.

Songs of America

Whenever I drive on long trips, I always practice singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "America the Beautiful".

Even if you are not an American, you can be an honorary American, just for today, if you sing the songs below. God knows that there are other people in the world that love freedom and look to the United States as the model.

If we fall now, then you other freedom-loving people abroad must be ready to pick up the torch!

United States Air Force

The Star Spangled Banner

Lyrics:

"Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country should leave us no more!
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave

O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!”

America the Beautiful

Lyrics:

“O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare of freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife.
Who more than self their country loved
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for halcyon skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the enameled plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee

Till souls wax fair as earth and air
And music-hearted sea!

O beautiful for pilgrims feet,
Whose stem impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till paths be wrought through
wilds of thought
By pilgrim foot and knee!

O beautiful for glory-tale
Of liberating strife
When once and twice,
for man's avail
Men lavished precious life!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till selfish gain no longer stain
The banner of the free!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till nobler men keep once again
Thy whiter jubilee!"

Here is my favorite version of America the Beautiful, sung by Ray Charles. This is the same version you hear on the Mark Levin show on Friday. Perfection.

Remember to be grateful for the Founding Fathers, and other patriots, who risked everything for liberty in the Revolutionary war. Be grateful to those men and women still fighting abroad to keep those freedoms safe from evil. And most of all, be grateful to God that America is still the beacon of liberty.

Happy Independence Day!

Dinesh D’Souza: What’s so great about America?

July 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dinesh D’Souza

Here is the essay, which provides an immigrant’s perspective on America (Dinesh is the son of East Indian immigrants).

Excerpt:

> Is America worthy of a reflective patriotism that doesn’t mindlessly assert, “My country, right or wrong,” but rather examines the criticisms of America and finds them wanting? As an immigrant who has chosen to become an American citizen, I believe that it is. Having studied the criticisms of America with care, my conclusion is that the critics have a narrow and distorted understanding of America. They exaggerate American faults, and they ignore what is good and even great about America.
>
> The immigrant is in a good position to evaluate American society because he is able to apply a comparative perspective. Having grown up in a different society-in my case, Mumbai, India-I am able to identify aspects of America that are invisible to people who have always lived here. As a “person of color,” I am competent to address such questions as what it is like to be a nonwhite person in America, what this country owes its minority citizens, and whether immigrants can expect to be granted full membership in this society. While I take seriously the issues raised by the critics of America, I have also developed an understanding of what makes America great, and I have seen the greatness of America reflected in my life. Unlike many of America’s homegrown dissidents, I am also acutely conscious of the daily blessings that I enjoy in America.
>
> Here, then, is my list of what makes America great.

He focuses on the following areas:

- America’s Good Life
- Equality
- The Pursuit of Happiness
- The Ethics of Work
- Religious Liberty
- Ideals and Interests
- America’s Virtue

Read the whole thing. It’s long it’s similar to his book of the same name, but up to date.

Keith Hennessey explains one strategy for undoing Obamacare

July 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Now that the Supreme Court has ruled ObamaCare's individual mandate constitutional, the direction of American health policy is in the hands of voters. So how do we get from here to "repeal and replace"?
>
> Step one is electing Mitt Romney as president, along with Republican House and Senate majorities. Without a Republican sweep, the law will remain in place.
>
> But a President Romney does not need 60 Republican senators to repeal core elements of ObamaCare. Democrats lost their 60th senate vote in early 2010 after Scott Brown took Edward Kennedy's seat. To bypass a Senate GOP filibuster and enact portions of ObamaCare, they used a special legislative procedure called reconciliation.
>
> Reconciliation allows a bill to pass the Senate in a limited time period, with limited amendments, and with only 51 votes; filibusters are not permitted. In 2010, Democrats split their health-policy changes into two bills, one of which they enacted through this fast-track process. In 2013, a Republican majority could use the same reconciliation process to repeal those changes.
>
> The reconciliation process, however, applies only to legislative changes to taxes, spending and debt, or the change must be a "necessary term or condition" of another provision that affects taxes or spending.
>
> Crucial parts of ObamaCare meet this test. Thus, if a President Romney has cohesive and coordinated majorities in the House and Senate, a reconciliation bill could repeal the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion, insurance premium and drug subsidies, tax increases (all 21 or them), Medicare and Medicaid spending cuts, its long-term care insurance program known as the Class Act, and its Independent Payment Advisory Board, a 15-member central committee with vast powers to control health-care and health markets.
>
> Chief Justice John Roberts ruled that the financial penalty enforcing the individual mandate is within Congress's constitutional power to "lay and collect Taxes," and that the mandate and penalty are inextricably linked. This should suffice to enable repeal, through reconciliation, of both the individual and employer mandates, and their respective penalty taxes.
>
> The state exchanges and insurance rules—"guaranteed issue," which forces an insurer to sell a policy to someone who is already sick, and "community rating," which severely limits the insurer's right to charge that person a higher

> premium—are procedurally more difficult. Yet both are linked to the individual mandate, which increases taxes. Whether they can be repealed in a reconciliation bill will ultimately be decided by the Senate Parliamentarian.
>
> Once the individual mandate is repealed, these popular insurance changes cannot stand by themselves. Without the mandate, people have every incentive to save on premiums and not buy insurance until they fall ill. This will send premiums through the roof for healthy people and, if the government clamps down on increased premiums, destroy private insurance companies. Those Republicans who say they favor legislated guaranteed-issue and community-rating requirements but oppose the mandate will be forced to acknowledge that all three must go.

So, for those who are concerned about repealing Obamacare, this is the way forward. We have a tough battle to get it it done, but it is possible.

Michael Licona on ancient biography and harmonizing Bible contradictions

July 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten posted the latest lecture by Dr. Michael Licona at Apologetics 315. Brian's site has the MP3 file (48 minutes, 44.5 Mb). I can make a smaller version for anyone who wants it.

Here is the video and my point-form summary.

The topic:

- Contradictions do not affect the minimum facts case for the resurrection, although they are troubling
- Most people respond to alleged contradictions by trying to harmonize them
- Most verses that appear contradictory can be harmonized successfully
- Some verses cannot be harmonized successfully without really damaging the texts
- Christians should not gloss over these few real contradictions nor pretend that they don't exist
- How should we respond to the verses that cannot easily be harmonized?

Genre considerations:

- The genre of the gospels is "ancient biography"
- Ancient biography is not the same genre as modern biography

Insignificant differences

1. Contradictions vs. Differences:

- In ancient biography, if a source mentions one person's name, it does not mean that other people were not present
- Example: one woman versus two women at the tomb, an account may only mention one woman when there are two
- That is a difference, not a contradiction

2. Time compression:

- in ancient biography, writers are allowed to leave out events in order to compress time
- Some gospels omit details (guy version) and other gospels give more details (girl version)
- For example, the cursing of the fig tree in Mark and Matthew

3. Narrative flow:

- the ancient biographer’s style was to link together events into a narrative, even if they are slightly out of order
- This means that the ordering matters less to ancient biographers than forming a coherent narrative
- For example, the prediction by Jesus that Peter would deny him

Significant differences:

1. Biography allows for portrait painting

- When people paint portraits, they sometimes use illustrations or imagery to convey the person’s character
- For example, Shakespeare adds things to his history of Julius Caesar to make it more dramatic
- For example, the genealogies in Matthew, the portrait of Jesus in the garden in John

2. Even if there are contradictions in an account it doesn’t mean that the basic facts are undermined

- For example, even if we don’t know for sure if one thief or two thieves cursed Jesus, no one doubts that he was crucified
- The basic details of the story are not affected by apparent contradictions

Then there is a period of Questions and Answers.

How to prevent your children from losing their faith in college

July 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interview with Blake Anderson of Ratio Christi.

Excerpt:

> **(KW): What are some of the specific challenges to Christianity?**
> **(BA):** When someone with a Ph.D. behind their name suddenly confronts a student with supposed evidence that the New Testament books were forgeries and dismisses the historicity of the Christian narrative, if that student has not been well grounded in the evidence for the historical accuracy of the accounts of Jesus' life the odds are heavily in favor of that student dismissing their parents' and pastor's faith as outdated. In philosophy class when the professor appears to eloquently demonstrate how Immanuel Kant showed two hundred years ago how we can't really know anything unless it is of the physical world, what chance does a young adult have if all they have for equipping is some Sunday School Bible stories? And when the most articulate current defenders of neo-Darwinian evolution essentially mock anybody that doesn't agree with them it will take much more than a good feeling in your heart to keep you from being demoralized and eventually giving up on a supernatural Creator.
>
> The frustrating thing in all of this is that there are good answers to these assertions. The problem isn't that there aren't answers on the same academic level as those that are challenging Christianity; there are. The problem is that so few Christians are aware of where to go to get answers.

And another:

> **(KW): What can we do to better prepare Christian students for these types of confrontations?**
> **(BA):** This may sound harsh, but first, get our heads out of the sand and realize that our methods for the last thirty years have resulted in five to eight out of every ten solid Christian teens abandoning their faith in some way. It's not pretty. It's truly a massacre, and until we face into that hard reality our teens will be the unfortunate fodder. This is not a game and no one will be benefited by pretending it isn't happening.
>
> Second, encourage your children to express their doubts, hard questions, and objections. Don't suppress these and run from them. You won't know all the answers, so be prepared to dig in yourself and spend serious time in learning. Your faith will be shaken, but if you truly trust in Christ you won't use avoidance you will engage. There is nothing to fear. God isn't afraid of your children's questions so you should not be either.

> Third, remember that teens are influenced by their parents' beliefs far more than is thought. You and other adults have massive influence in their lives. They need older mature mentors who can show them how to integrate their faith and their interests in life.
>
> Fourth, teach critical thinking skills and logic to your junior high and high schoolers. In this extremely emotive culture, students need to know how to think rather than just what to think. If young people are taught how to think and process information and critically evaluate ideas that they are presented with, they will be able to stand head and shoulders above their peers (and professors for that matter). Then ground them in why Christianity is true and matches objective reality. It's not enough to know the basic tenants of Christianity. They must know how to defend those beliefs as objectively true in the face of attack. They need to be exposed to anti-Christian ideas in a controlled environment prior to being sent out on their own. Inoculate your children by allowing them to explain and defend their faith against opposing ideas, instead of hiding them from false philosophies until they go off to college.

Read the rest! There are two things that parents need to do. They need to connect Christian teachings and beliefs with objective evidence from hard data, such as from science and history. And they need to provide their children with experiences to acquaint them with the reality of the moral law – specifically, the importance of having moral boundaries in order to avoid hurting yourself and others.

CBO: 20 million Americans could lose employer-provided health coverage under Obamacare

July 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Hill:

> As many as 20 million Americans could lose their employer-provided coverage because of President Obama's healthcare reform law, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said in a new **report** Thursday.
>
> The figure represents the worst-case scenario, CBO says, and the law could just as well increase the number of people with employer-based coverage by 3 million in 2019.
>
> The best estimate, subject to a "tremendous amount of uncertainty," is that about 3 million to 5 million fewer people will obtain coverage through their employer each year from 2019 through 2022.
>
> The new report adds more detail to this week's **update** of the law's coverage provisions, which CBO released Tuesday. Compared to a year ago, the law is now anticipated to cover 2 million fewer people but cost $50 billion less over 10 years, after factoring penalties paid by individuals and businesses that don't get or provide healthcare coverage.
>
> Republicans immediately pounced after the new numbers came out because they appear to violate Obama's pledge that people who like their health plans will be able to keep them. Last year, CBO's best estimate was that only 1 million people would lose employer-sponsored coverage.
>
> "President Obama's string of empty promises is quickly becoming a disappointing trail of broken promises," House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said in a statement. "He promised Americans that his overhaul of the health care sector would not jeopardize the health coverage of those who liked what they had. As nonpartisan analysts made clear today, millions of Americans will soon learn the hard way that Washington's overreach into their health care decisions will result in sharp disruptions to their coverage and their care."

I think this is important because conservatives are constantly being portrayed as "mean" in the media because we don't embrace big government health care solutions. Everyone agrees on the problems, and everyone wants to help. The difference is that we conservatives think that health care is better when it is run profitably and is responsive to consumers and offers choice, low prices and high quality – like Amazon. We want privatized, market-driven health care with vouchers given to each citizen to purchase what they need, and to encourage them to save the rest for their old age while making healthier choices now.

The alternative is Department of Motor Vehicles health care – long lines, huge budget

overruns, one-size-fits-all, lousy service and nowhere else to go for better better service. Why think that government is better at anything than the private sector? The private sector does everything better and cheaper and with better quality. So what if people get rich providing goods and services? As long as the customers are happy, and the children of the customers don't get stuck paying for huge trillion dollar cost overruns.

Here are a few articles that I have been using lately to inform people about the problems with Obamacare:

- Heritage Foundation: Obamacare Raises Taxes on 3 Million Middle-Class Americans
- Cato Institute: ObamaCare's Cost Could Top $6 Trillion in first 10 years
- Life News: Obamacare is pro-abortion and pro-government controlled rationing
- Heritage Foundation: The 3 Biggest Ways Obamacare Kills Jobs
- Investors Business Daily: Obama's Broken Health-Premium Savings Promise
- Reason: Obamacare will lead to longer wait times and crowded emergency rooms
- Doctor Patient Medical Association: 83% of doctors contemplating quitting over Obamacare

UN finalizes plan to allow future confiscation of legally-owned guns

July 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News:

> Amid energetic lobbying from both sides, the Obama administration is taking part in month-long negotiations at United Nations headquarters aimed at finalizing a conventional arms trade treaty, which supporters say will save millions of lives but opponents fear threatens to restrict Second Amendment rights at home and U.S. arms sales policies abroad.
>
> […]In a letter to Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the eve of the conference, 130 Republican lawmakers outlined their concerns that the treaty being negotiated could negatively affect U.S. security, foreign policy and economic interests – as well as Americans' constitutional rights.
>
> "The ATT must not accept that free democracies and totalitarian regimes have the same right to conduct arms transfers: this is a dangerous piece of moral equivalence," the letter stated.
>
> "Moreover, the ATT must not impose criteria for determining the permissibility of arms transfers that are vague, easily politicized, and readily manipulated," it continued, referring in particular to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and Israel.
>
> The lawmakers warned that they would oppose the appropriation or authorization of any taxpayer money to implement a "flawed" treaty.
>
> The Bush administration in 2006 cast the lone negative vote when 153 nations passed a U.N. General Assembly resolution that began the treaty-drafting process, which is now in its final phase in New York. President Obama reversed that position in 2009, backing the initiative but making its support conditional on consensus decision-making.
>
> […]ATT proponents and the U.N. say the initiative will not affect domestic gun ownership, but Second Amendment advocacy groups are adamantly opposed to the treaty, which Gun Owners of America calls "a backdoor attempt by the Obama administration to impose radical gun control on America citizens."
>
> Addressing the Conservative Political Action Conference last February, National Rifle Association vice-president Wayne LaPierre accused Obama of working behind the scenes with the U.N. on a "treaty that could effectively ban or severely restrict civilian ownership of firearms worldwide."
>
> "I've been around long enough to know that the U.N. has little regard for our Constitution and none at all for the Second Amendment," LaPierre said. "But I never thought I'd see the day when an American White House would tolerate a proposal that would literally gut one of our most fundamental freedoms in this

> country."
>
> Last March Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) introduced legislation prohibiting any funds for negotiating an ATT that would restrict U.S. citizens' Second Amendment rights. The bill has 19 co-sponsors, all Republicans.

I think when deciding whether to believe the nice-sounding words of the Obama administration, we should look at their record on gun control and their record of keeping their word. They are gun control radicals, and what they claim will happen to us before a bill is passed often isn't any great predictor about what follows next. Remember "you can keep your current health insurance"? Not so much.

The apologetics of Jesus

July 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi. (H/T The Poached Egg via J Warner Wallace)

He lists eight ways that Jesus makes his case.

Here's one of the ways:

> **2. Jesus Appealed to Evidence**
>
> Jesus knew He could not show up on the scene and not offer any evidence for His Messiahship. In his book On Jesus, Douglas Groothuis notes that Jesus appealed to evidence to confirm His claims. John the Baptist, who was languishing in prison after challenging Herod, sent messengers to ask Jesus the question: "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Matt. 11:3). This may seem an odd question from a man the Gospels present as the prophetic forerunner of Jesus and as the one who had proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah. Jesus, however, did not rebuke John's question. He did not say, "You must have faith; suppress your doubts." Instead, Jesus recounted the distinctive features of His ministry:
>
> "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me." (Matt. 11:4-6; see also Luke 7:22).
>
> Even in the Messiah Apocalypse, which is dated between 100 and 80 B.C.E mentions a similar theme as seen in Matt.11: 4-6: "He [God] frees the captives, makes the blind see, and makes the bent over stand straight…for he will heal the sick, revive the dead, and give good news to the humble and the poor he will satisfy, the abandoned he will lead, and the hungry he will make rich."
>
> Jesus' works of healing and teaching are meant to serve as positive evidence of His messianic identity, because they fulfill the messianic predictions of the Hebrew Scriptures. What Jesus claimed is this:
>
> 1. If one does certain kinds of actions (the acts cited above), then one is the Messiah.
> 2. I am doing those kinds of actions.
> 3. Therefore, I am the Messiah.

And:

> **5. The Miracles of Jesus**
>
> In the Bible, miracles have a distinctive purpose: they are used for three reasons:
> 1. To glorify the nature of God (John 2:11; 11:40)
> 2. To accredit certain persons as the spokesmen for God (Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3–4)

> 3. To provide evidence for belief in God (John 6:2, 14; 20:30–31). (3)
>
> Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, told Jesus, "'Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him' " (Jn. 3:1–2). In Acts, Peter told the crowd that Jesus had been "accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him" (Acts 2:22).
>
> In Matthew 12:38-39, Jesus says, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet." In this Scripture, God confirmed the Messianic claim when Jesus said the sign that would confirm his Messiahship was to be the resurrection.
>
> It is important to note that not all witnesses to a miracle believe. Jesus did not do His miracles for entertainment. They were done to evoke a response. So perhaps Paul Moser is right on target in what he calls "kardiatheology" – a theology that is aimed at one's motivational heart (including one's will) rather than just at one's mind or one's emotions. In other words, God is very interested in moral transformation.
>
> We see Jesus' frustration when His miracles did not bring the correct response from his audience. "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" (John 12:37). Jesus himself said of some, "They will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31). One result, though not the purpose, of miracles is condemnation of the unbeliever (cf. John 12:31, 37). (4)

I am forever pointing this out to people. Jesus didn't get people to follow him because he was nice. And he didn't just talk to people who agreed with him. He even promised "a wicked generation" his resurrection – which he called "the sign of Jonah". This is the way we should be – using whatever evidence we can dig up from science, history, law, and even the social sciences (when arguing moral issues).

Read the rest here. Surprise! Jesus loves to convince people, and not just by quoting the Bible to people who already accept the Bible, either.

Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)

July 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.5/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> Marine sergeant John Stryker seems a martinet and a bully as he trains young Marines for combat in the Pacific war. In the end, as survival in the bloody battle of Iwo Jima depends on the lessons Stryker has drilled into them, his troops discover why he was so hard on them. Nominated for 4 Oscars, won 1 Oscar.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

The basics of education policy explained in three videos

July 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Learn about economics that matters to you in the easiest way possible

First of three.

Second of three.

Third of three.

Awesome!

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Teacher union memo reveals agenda to undermine parents
- Public schools spend $130,000 of stimulus money on diversity training books
- New Jersey per-pupil cost is $17,800
- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

Which side of the abortion debate is uncomfortable with evidence?

July 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a short, sweet post by Eric Metaxas sent to me by Mary.

Excerpt:

> It's hard not to blame the influence of technology for the seemingly inexorable spread of the culture of death. Accurate and safe prenatal testing has led to the destruction of an estimated 90 percent of unborn children diagnosed with Down syndrome. Sonograms reveal that the sex of yet-to-be-born children has led to a "small-h" holocaust against girls in places such as China and India, where boys are often preferred.
>
> But technology can also be a huge advantage in the fight to recognize and protect the sanctity of human life—*every* human life. For example, pro-lifers have worked diligently to place sonogram machines into pregnancy care clinics, and the presence of these high-tech wonders—which clearly show the humanity of the fetus—has no doubt contributed mightily to a substantial drop in the abortion rate, as well as a marked *increase* in the percentage of Americans who consider themselves to be pro-life.
>
> It seems that our technological prowess doesn't so much corrupt our hearts as reveal what's in them.
>
> You can see this principle in action in a recent article in *Slate* magazine. The writer, Allison Benedikt, recounts "the latest in baby-making fads," such as midwives and birth photographers. But what really gets her attention: "Pregnant woman are Photoshopping sonograms onto their naked stomach glamour-shots."
>
> […]For Benedikt, such uses of technology are troubling—even "bad for women." She writes, "… the more we treat fetuses like people—including them in our family photo shoots, tagging them on our Facebook walls, giving them their own Twitter accounts—the harder it will be to deny that they are people when the next, say, personhood amendment comes up, with legislators and activists arguing that 'the unborn child' inside a pregnant woman's womb should have the same rights as the living among us."
>
> **In other words, don't believe what your lying eyes tell you about fetuses, because if we start viewing them as people, those mean ol' anti-choicers might start demanding that we treat them that way.**
>
> This approach to the unborn—"nothing to see here, folks, just move along"—says so much about the pro-choice worldview. But it gets worse. Writing about the recent congressional debate over sex-selection abortion, instead of bemoaning the elimination of millions of future women, Benedikt urges pro-choicers to

> embrace sex-selection abortion.
>
> She writes: “No matter how many ultrasound pics get posted to Facebook, these are fetuses with female genitals or male genitals—not little girls and little boys. If pro-choicers object to aborting because of the sex of the fetus, aren’t we then saying that abortion is ‘murdering’ girls? . . . That is not the case to make if your goal is to protect abortion rights. Gulp for a second if you must, then get over it.” Wow!

What does this tell us about the pro-abortion crowd? Is the pro-abortion view reasonable? Does it fit with what we know about the unborn from science? Which side cares about the truth in this debate?

Should Christians normally hear the voice of God in their daily lives?

July 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two views on the topic of decision making and the will of God. The view you learn in the church is called "the traditional view". I call this view the mystical/postmodern view. The more practical view is called "the wisdom view". I call this view the battlefield/military view. I am a proponent of the wisdom view.

Let's learn about the two different views:

> [The traditional view is] that God has a plan for our lives and that we receive guidance through methods such as "open and closed doors", "feeling led" and "the still, small, voice". Once the view has been well explained, through the foil of a fictional seminar, the book continues to critique this view, explaining how it is based on a poor use and understanding of scriptures, and how some of the reasons given in support of the view do not apply.
>
> [The wisdom view] holds that God does not have an "individual will" for our lives, but rather that all of God's will can be summed up within two categories, God's sovereign will and God's moral will. Basically God's sovereign will is all the things that god decrees will happen. It is hidden (mostly) from us, and does not play an active part in our decision, although some of it is revealed in the bible. God's moral will is the part that we must concern ourselves with in making decisions. It is fully revealed in the bible and our decisions must be made within it. We may use wisdom in applying god's moral will to our lives, or we may be in an area not covered by god's moral will. We must finally submit in advance to God's sovereign will, being prepared for him to sovereignty intervene and redirect us through whatever means he wills (see James).

Here's a bit more from someone else:

> Regarding the view that God has a personal will for us individually that we have to discern and find, J.I. Packer says, "The first thing to say is that the idea of guidance is actually a novelty among orthodox evangelicals. It does not go back farther than the last century. Second, it has led people to so much foolish action on the one hand, and so much foolish inaction on the other, as well as puzzlement and heartbreak when the 'hotline' to God seems to go silent, that it has to be discredited. Third, it must be said that Scripture gives us no more warrant constantly to expect personal 'hotline,' 'voice-from-the-control-tower' guidance than to expect new authoritative revelations to come our way for the guidance of the whole church." (Hot Tub Religion, page 118).
>
> As to the point of the question, how do I make decisions, I attempt to make decisions in light of three factors: God's moral will, wisdom, and my personal

> desires. If something is opposed to God's moral will, then I should obviously flee from it. If it's not opposed, then I consider the wisdom of the choices. For example, would it be wise for me to marry a woman who loves Jesus, though we have nothing else in common? Probably not. If the options pass the criteria of wisdom, then I'm free to choose how I wish. If I'm offered two jobs, and both are honoring to God, and both would be wise to take, then I'm free to choose the job I would like more. I don't need to put out a fleece or await some other confirmation from God. If it's moral and wise, then the only question as to whether or not it will honor Him is my attitude.
>
> Some examples of this model used in the Bible (in theological circles referred to as the Wisdom Model) are in Paul's planning of a mission to Rome in Romans 1:9-15, 15:22-24, the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29), and Paul's instructions for legal disputes (1 Cor 6:3-6).

The best book on this topic is Garry Friesen's "Decision Making and the Will of God". In it, you'll find a full assessment about what the Bible teaches on this topic.

When I am trying to decide what will be effective, I look at Christian scholars, at their papers, books, and public debates. That's effectiveness because it is addressed to a non-Christian audience in public with the force of reason and evidence. It is persuasion and it is addressed to rational minds. I want to change the minds of people who have a large influence on society on the whole. I don't think that offering Christianity as life-enhancement or self-help is really "having an influence". I think that offering Christianity as truth, with support, is "having an influence".

So let me be clear about what I believe:

- I don't think that God normally talks to people directly
- I don't believe that life is an Easter egg hunt, filled with clues accessible only to emotion and intuition
- I don't believe that God expects people to discover a specific will for their lives using non-rational means
- I think that people make up their own life plan that is consistent with the Bible
- The goal of the life plan is to be effective, and there are no other considerations
- I think that there are many good things a person can do, but that some are more effective than others
- I think that with respect to the goal of serving God effectively, *my happiness is expendable*
- I don't think that the purpose of doing something for the Lord is to feel good about ourselves
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they like them
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they are good at them
- I think people should do hard things that they don't like – as long as it's more

effective
- I don't think that any course of action is as effective as any other – some plans accomplish more
- I don't think that life is totally unpredictable and irrational and subjective
- I think that we can know what is or is not effective by studying and learning about the world
- I think life is like a battlefield that must be surveyed, understood and acted upon deliberately

I think that every person is the commanding officer of his or her own life, and each person must study everything they can, make a plan that is consistent with the Bible's moral prescriptions, execute the plan and achieve whatever they can achieve for the Lord. And the goal is not comfort or happy feelings, but real achievements. Life is more like a war than a vacation resort or a buffet or a shopping center. God's will for us is not have happy feelings, but that we freely choose to sacrifice ourselves out of obedience and service to him. In my case, that means studying hard things, making money, saving money, and giving money away to good scholars, sponsoring good events and being persuasive to non-Christians. I cried when I had to learn calculus, because it was so hard. But who cares?

I think that it is very important to realize that God is not impressed by our not being smart and not being effective. If we have the ability to be smart, then we should be smart, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability to make money, then we should make money, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability have a great influence, then we should have a great influence, whether it makes us happy or not. There will be plenty of time for happiness after we're dead. With respect to God's purposes in the world, my happiness is expendable. The thought about what "I want" doesn't enter into my mind.

Whenever someone questions my plans by saying that I am asserting my will over God's will, the first question I want to ask that person is this: "how do you know what God's will is?" and "what is your basis for thinking that my plan will not be effective?". I want to know if I have misunderstood something about the way the world is, or miscalculated in some way. I want someone to look at my calculations and show where they are going to produce a less optimal result for the Lord. That's the only concern I have – effectiveness.

This article by Greg Koukl may be helpful.

And I also found this summary of the Friesen book useful:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4
- Part 5
- Part 6

- Part 7
- Part 8
- Part 9

In nine parts.

Is the accelerating universe compatible with Hinduism?

July 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, a news story – and then we'll see how the accelerating universe relates to the existence of God.

Excerpt:

> Three astrophysicists who discovered that the universe's expansion is accelerating rather than decelerating, as had been expected, win the Nobel Prize in physics.
>
> Adam Riess was sure he'd spotted a blatant error in his results. It was 1997, and the young post-doc's measurements of distant, exploding stars implied that the universe was expanding at a faster and faster rate, instead of slowing down, as he had expected.
>
> It wasn't an error at all. Instead, what was at fault were some basic assumptions about the workings of the universe.
>
> On Tuesday, the Johns Hopkins University astrophysicist received the Nobel Prize in physics for the revolutionary discovery and its implications, along with team leader Brian Schmidt of Australian National University and astrophysicist Saul Perlmutter of UC Berkeley and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, who had reached the same conclusion independently.
>
> At the time of their work, astrophysicists believed that the rate of expansion of the universe — set in motion by the Big Bang 13.7 billion years ago — would be slowing down as matter was pulled together by gravity. The goal at the time was to figure out how rapid the deceleration was.
>
> What the two teams found instead was that the expansion of the universe was accelerating — an observation that could best be explained by the existence of a mysterious "dark energy" that pushes matter farther and farther apart.
>
> Many scientists had thought that, just as the universe started with the Big Bang, it would end with a Big Crunch — with gravity pulling all the matter in the universe inward.

Does anyone remember that week that I wrote those posts about "Why I am not a… <insert some religion here>"? I explained why I was not all kinds of different religions and denominations, including Roman Catholicism, Calvinism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, etc. Everyone was offended and we fought about it. Ah, I remember it well.

Now let's apply science to the Hindu religion and see if they go together, especially this new discovery about the expansion of the universe.

Why I am not a Hindu

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

So that's one reason why I am not a Hindu. And now we have more scientific confirmation that there is no cycle of universes coming into being and going out of being.

The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with Buddhism and Mormonism and maybe other religions. They also require an eternally existing universe.

And modern cosmology disagrees with atheism, too

I think it's important for all of you to be familiar with the scientific evidence for the Big Bang. It will help you with your cosmological argument, and it will help you to refute many, many other religions that require eternal universes, including atheism.

I wrote about how the Big Bang theory falsifies atheism before.

Excerpt:

> According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* The Big Bang has been confirmed by experimental evidence such as redshift measurements, light element abundances and the cosmic microwave background radiation. This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by atheist Scriptures.

The experimental evidence that confirms the Big Bang creation out of nothing falsifies many worldviews. Those who care about evidence will have to choose some other religion that is compatible with what we know from science today.

William Lane Craig comments on the Higgs Boson "God" particle

July 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

At the beginning of the podcast, Dr. Craig continues to discuss the topic from last week, which was the gay parenting studies, but then he goes on to discuss the Higgs-Boson particle story. The gay parenting discussion goes for 6 minutes, and then there is 17 minutes on the Higgs-Boson story.

Summary:

- What is the Higgs-Boson particle?
- What did the scientists find?
- What is the significance of the discovery?
- Does the discovery challenge the Standard Model?
- What forces of nature does it help to explain?
- Is this discovery relevant to the origin of the universe?
- What is the theological relevance of this discovery?
- Why is the Higgs-Boson called the "God particle"?

Dr. Lawrence Krauss is mentioned in the podcast, so here is a link to the William Lane Craig – Lawrence Krauss debate. One of my funnier summaries, because Lawrence Krauss is a nutcase.

I was happy to see that Dr. Craig was keeping up with all the news, and he had some good careful thoughts about both topics, which is what we expect from Dr. Craig.

Google starts worldwide campaign to legalize gay marriage, Target donates to gay activists

July 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> Google yesterday reportedly launched a worldwide gay marriage campaign, officially beginning in Poland and Singapore.
>
> "Google is launching a new campaign called 'Legalize Love' with the intention of inspiring countries to legalize marriage for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people around the world," dot429.com reports. "The 'Legalize Love' campaign officially launches in Poland and Singapore on Saturday, July 7th. Google intends to eventually expand the initiative to every country where the company has an office, and will focus on places with homophobic cultures, where anti-gay laws exist."
>
> A Google spokesman, Mark Palmer-Edgecumbe, tells the website, "We want our employees who are gay or lesbian or transgender to have the same experience outside the office as they do in the office. It is obviously a very ambitious piece of work."
>
> […]As the *Huffington Post* notes, "Google has indicated its support of the issue before. In 2008, the company published a blog post opposing a California amendment that would ban same-sex marriage (the amendment passed)."

And here's Target:

> For June "Pride Month," dedicated to celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, the Target Corp. announced it would sell "gay pride" t-shirts and donate 100 percent of the proceeds to the Family Equality Council (FEC), a group that, among other issues, supports same-sex marriage and works to remove restrictions against LGBT persons adopting children.
>
> In June, Target Corp. agreed to sell t-shirts in its stores nationwide for $12.99 to help the Family Equality Council raise $120,000 towards the defeat of the Minnesota Marriage Amendment in the Great Lakes State this November, according to Minnesota Public Radio.
>
> The t-shirts, 10 varieties, promoted pro-gay themes such as the rainbow coupled with the word "Pride" or "Harmony" and "Love is Love." A typical ad for one of the t-shirts read: "PRIDE Mens Heather Grey Rainbow Colorblock Crew Graphic T-Shirt. Target will Donate 100% of PRIDE Merchandise Sales to Family Equality Council. Free shipping when you spend $50."

People say that big business is conservative, but it really isn't. Small business is

conservative. Big Business is leftist. The more that we conservatives can block political contributions by big unions and big business, the better things will be for the institution of marriage and the rights of children to a stable relationship with a mother and a father.

Are radical feminists able to court and marry successfully?

July 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stuart Scheiderman wrote a post about something I have encountered even with complementarian Christian women.

He writes:

> In England a reporter named Sarah Bridge… has just written a book about bettering her dating skills. It is unabashedly entitled: First Catch Your Husband: Adventures On The Dating Front Line.
>
> To promote her book she has offered a synopsis in the form of a long article in the London Daily Mail.
>
> In Bridge's analysis, successful thirty-something women have developed habits and routines that are perfectly suited to singlehood. Independent and autonomous, they make their own decisions,conduct their lives as they see fit and do not answer to anyone.
>
> For a single person, these are good habits. When you are unattached they will serve you well.
>
> Unfortunately, a woman who is looking for a man will find these same habits to be an obstacle.
>
> […]Normally, a woman who has earned her independence will defend it fiercely. She will refuse to compromise her habits, her rituals or her routines. An alien life form, i.e., a man, will seem to be undermining her equanimity. The closer he gets, the more she connects, the more she will feel threatened.
>
> Even if she has not undergone any dating traumas, she will, under normal circumstances have a difficult time engaging a relationship, to say nothing of a marriage.
>
> When such a woman meets a man the impulse to defend her singlehood will overpower her wish to connect.
>
> As Bridge sees it, independent women defend themselves by being critical, overbearing, and, to use her word, "snippy."

Here's one of the women interviewed by the author about her dating technique:

> She was not connecting with them but was asserting her superiority at their expense. She was playing out a scenario that she could report to her girlfriends, thus providing them with endless entertainment. It's called solidarity with the sisterhood.
>
> Seeing that the sisterhood finds it uproarious women who share these anecdotes

> cannot understand why the men in question never call them again. Often they console themselves by saying that these men are easily intimidated by strong women.
>
> Beyond showing off their ability to provide an endless stream of criticism, these women insist on being in complete control. They must be in charge.
>
> X Factor judge Kelly Rowland explains that she chooses the restaurant, opens the door for herself and pays the bill. Of course, she is asserting her independence, but she is also acting as though he is not there and is not a man.
>
> Evidently, the man is will be thinking to himself: why does she need me for? If he has been rendered superfluous, a piece of furniture, then he is not likely to stay around very long.
>
> Bridge says that her generation learned these bad habits from their mothers. One must add that their mothers were simply mouthing the feminist party line.

It seems to me that the problem that modern feminists are having is that they are treating relationships as something that is all about their fulfillment and not putting a moment's thought into marriage as an institution with certain requirements. If marriage is the goal they are trying to reach, and they want to have a husband and children, then they need to think about how to reach that goal realistically.

Here's what they should be asking about husbands:

- what is the goal of having a husband?
- why should a man be interested in marriage and fatherhood at all?
- what are the responsibilities of a husband and father?
- what should men be able to do before they are ready for marriage?
- what does a husband need from his wife?
- what should a woman be able to do meet those needs?

And about children:

- what is the goal of having children?
- what do children need from their mother?
- what do children need from their father?
- what should a woman do to prepare to raise children?
- why are marriage and biological parents important to children?

And about marriage:

- what is the purpose of marriage?
- how should men and women form their characters to be ready for marriage?
- what worldview best grounds moral values like fidelity and self-sacrifice?
- what causes a man to remain faithful and committed to a woman into her old age?

I think if I had to pick one thing for a woman to focus on, it would be the need to take

seriously the leadership role of the man in the relationship. Men (if they are good men) all have the desire to achieve certain goals through some plan. They are looking for the right woman to help them. If a woman wants to get a good man to commit, then she has to show him that she is willing to learn about his plan for marriage and to do what he expects her to do to help him to achieve those goals – or better, to come up with effective ways to achieve those goals that he did not even think of. A smart man will expect a woman to demonstrate her ability to help him and her willingness to help him before he thinks about marriage. What is needed is not the ability to take orders, but the ability to innovate in order to solve problems.

Men know how to find out if a woman has prepared for marriage and parenting and we know how to find out if she wants to understand and care for a husband. What I see quite a lot these days from women is 1) a refusal to believe that men know anything of value, and 2) a refusal to be led by men in a courtship, and 3) dismissing men's emotional needs. I think a lot of this is caused 1) their mothers did not choose a man who would be there to teach them morality and religion when they were growing up, 2) lack of trust for men caused by past promiscuity, drug abuse and partying, 3) a prior commitment to feminism and career which causes them to be dismissive and disrespectful of men's needs, goals and plans. Many women today think that men are there primarily to serve their needs, and not to lead them.

For men, the best piece of advice I have is to remain chaste. It is a capital error to allow women like the ones described in Stuart's post to manipulate you with sex. Feminists use sex to get attention from men without having to listen to them, care about them, learn from them, or follow their lead. The best thing to do to detect a bad woman is to explain your plan to her and then ask her to help or to study something that will help or to solve problems or to take on obligations or anything that she doesn't want to do herself. It is amazing how easy it is to detect women who want a selfish "fairy tale wedding" marriage if you know what to ask them.

Ten reasons why the jobs situation is much worse than reported

July 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

There are 10 reasons listed.

Here's #2:

> **2. The jobless rate actually makes the labor market look better than it actually is. The rate only counts people who want a job but don't have one. But the labor force participation rate was 63.8% in June, just above near modern-era lows. (It was 66.2% in January 2008 and 67.3% in April 2000). Otherwise, unemployment would be around 11%.**

And #4:

> 4. Chronic unemployment. The average length of unemployment rose to 39.9 weeks in June, close to recent peak. It was 17.4 weeks at the January 2008 peak and 23.9 weeks in June 2009, when the recession officially ended. Long-term joblessness is particularly bad because skills erode or become obsolete, leading to permanent losses in income.

And #9:

> 9. Entrepreneurial activity fading. The number of startup firms has crashed from pre-recession highs, still near levels previously seen in the early 1980s, when the number of establishments was far lower. Establishments less than a year old, including those belonging to the same firm, **totaled 556,553 in 2010**, according to the latest Commerce Department data. That's down 26% from the peak of 747,278 in 2006. Meanwhile, the number of employees at startups has plunged, with a greater share of new firms with no employees — one-man shops. Very small startups are less likely to invest or to grow, a bad sign for future hiring.

But it's worse than that. The number of people going onto federal disability payments is outpacing the number of new jobs being created.

How states can resist Obamacare, and the benefits of doing so

July 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the American Spectator, a look at what states can do to block the implementation of Obamacare.

Excerpt:

> Although the voters can put an end to the madness on November 6, the states don't need to wait until Election Day to take aim at a point of vulnerability that remains in place despite the Court's latest caprice. They can refuse to implement the law's insurance exchanges.
>
> […]**The law calls for the states to set up these new bureaucracies, whose ostensible purpose will be to provide "marketplaces" in which people with no employer-based health insurance can shop for coverage at competitive rates. Now that the Court has upheld the individual mandate, these insurance exchanges constitute the key to the success or failure of the law. They are also its Achilles' heel.**
>
> **How's that? Well, as the Cato Institute's Michael Cannon succinctly puts it, "Without these bureaucracies, Obamacare cannot work." And, oddly enough, the law doesn't actually require states to set up these "marketplaces." Moreover, there is no rational incentive for them to do so. If a state sets up an exchange, it then must pay for it, which won't be cheap. Cannon writes, "States that opt to create an exchange can expect to pay anywhere from $10 million to $100 million per year to run it." This is a burden that the states, most of which are already in deep financial trouble, are not likely to embrace with enthusiasm.**
>
> The federal government can set up its own exchanges, in theory, but Obamacare stipulates that Washington would then be required to pick up the tab as well. And, as Cannon goes on to point out, "The Obama administration has admitted it doesn't have the money — and good luck getting any such funding through the GOP-controlled House." And it gets worse. If the federal government is forced to set up an exchange, it faces yet another huge problem. As Sally Pipes and Hal Scherz write, "The text of the law stipulates that only state-based exchanges — not federally run ones — may distribute credits and subsidies."
>
> Thus, if a state refuses to set up an exchange, the feds have no real ability to do so either. The states have an opportunity, therefore, to shoot a poison arrow directly into Obamacare's Achilles' heel.
>
> […]"Resisting the implementation of exchanges is good for hiring and investment. The law's employer mandate assesses penalties — up to $3,000 per

> employee — only to businesses who don’t satisfy federally-approved health insurance standards and whose employees receive ‘premium assistance’ through the exchanges.”
>
> In other words, a state that declines to set up an exchange will protect the businesses of that state from avoidable and job-killing penalties. This reality has apparently begun to sink in. There has been a noticeable decline in enthusiasm for exchanges among states that had begun work on them shortly after Obamacare passed.

The article notes that a bunch of governors and legislatures in conservative states have already taken steps to resist implementing Obamacare, including Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal, who is an Oxford-educated expert in health care policy.

Scottish court orders man to pay £39,500 to woman after failed cohabitation

July 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Scotsman.

Excerpt:

> A LANDMARK Supreme Court ruling, in which a man has been ordered to pay his former partner compensation after they separated, could open the doors for thousands of claims from unmarried couples who split up, a family lawyer has claimed.
>
> In yesterday's judgment, the Supreme Court ruled that Angus Grant should pay Jessamine Gow £39,500 after the cohabiting pensioners' relationship ended.
>
> The right to compensation for unmarried couples became available under section 8 of the Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006, but had not been tested in the Supreme Court until yesterday.
>
> [The ruling] does create a precedent that could allow unmarried couples to seek financial compensation similar to that available to divorcing couples, but without the assumption of an equal division of assets.
>
> Last night, a family law expert warned that it could affect thousands of couples and lead to a rush for "cohabitation agreements" – a kind of pre-nuptial for the unmarried – from people planning to move in together.
>
> […]**Robert Wright, professor of economics at Strathclyde University, said: "It will make people rethink cohabitation, rethink marriage. It might lead to people waiting longer, so we could see less cohabitation, less marriage and less fertility."**

Are people responsible for the damage caused by their own free decisions? According to the court, they are not.

Dina sent me this UK Daily Mail article by Melanie Phillips, which comments on this story.

Excerpt:

> The relentless war against the family in Britain continues in the highest court of the land. Baroness Hale, the veteran 'lifestyle choice' radical who, as a member of the UK Supreme Court, is the country's top female judge, has called for cohabiting couples to be given more legal rights.
>
> […]For sure, cohabitation often results in hardship, very much more so indeed than marriage. Cohabitation breaks down far more frequently than marriage, and even more so after the birth of any children. Cohabitation is therefore one of the most significant factors behind Britain's catastrophic and galloping phenomenon of mass fatherlessness, the single most important cause of so much misery and

> harm for both children and adults, and the major cause in turn of unquantifiable damage to society.
>
> If people want to avoid the hardship they very understandably fear will result from the absence of legal protection under cohabitation, they can choose to get married. That's what marriage is *for*. To bestow this legal protection upon cohabitation is to turn the ratchet of family breakdown another notch. First you undermine marriage by removing the stigma of 'living together', illegitimacy and unmarried motherhood; then you turn the ratchet by hymning the sanctity of 'lifestyle choice' and the social acceptability of cohabitation as an alternative to marriage; then you turn it again by bestowing the benefits of marriage upon un-marriage, thus incentivising a socially destructive phenomenon which will create yet more misery and harm.
>
> Lady Hale's call is not for justice in family life but gross injustice. It is yet another boost to our rights-without-responsibilities, something-for-nothing, me-first culture which has already advanced the destruction of family life in Britain, created regional deserts of social and moral breakdown and made victims out of the most vulnerable.

My biggest concern about this is the message that it sends to men who are already turning away from the responsibilities of marriage. Men already have to contend with no-fault divorce, a massive repression, etc. which causes them to doubt the reasonableness of marriage at this time. This ruling will push them even further away from relationships with women, by making even cohabitation threatening financially. I don't think that the judge in this case realizes the incentives that are being created by this decision. When men see that relationships with women that go beyond just sex are becoming more costly and risky, they will stop doing that. Why take the risk of being cleaned out financially? My prediction is that this short-sighted ruling will push men and women further apart, so that sex without any structured relationship becomes the norm, and children have even less of a stable environment in which to grow up.

People are more inclined these to complain that men need to "man up" and get married, but it is important to consider what the incentives are for men. Are we doing a good job of educating men with practical skills, encouraging job creators with lower taxes and less regulation, and lowering the legal risks of marriage for men? Are we encouraging women to understand men and to respect them, which is the main thing that men are looking for in a marriage? Are we encouraging women to be chaste so that men are encouraged to perform at a higher level to earn a woman's commitment to him in marriage? If we are not giving men incentives to marry – or even to cohabitate – then we mustn't be surprised when men decide that other things are more rewarding than marriage.

Is the news media biased when reporting on gay scandals?

July 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Michael Brown explains his view by comparing the reporting of the Ted Haggard scandal with the Larry Brinkin scandal.

Excerpt:

> According to published reports, when Larry Brinkin was arrested two weeks ago, the police found… [CENSORED BY WK]. Yet the media has barely reported this terribly disturbing incident.
>
> But, you ask, who was Larry Brinkin? He was "a central figure in the gay rights movement," a man who was so influential that, "The San Francisco board of supervisors actually gave a 'Larry Brinkin Week' in February 2010 upon his retirement." It was Brinkin who first used the term "domestic partnerships" in a legal dispute, marking a watershed moment in gay activist history, yet news of his alleged crimes against infants and children, not to mention his alleged White Supremacist leanings, has received very little media attention.
>
> Is there a double standard here? Imagine what the media would be doing if Brinkin had been a conservative Christian leader.
>
> When evangelical leader Ted Haggard fell, the media was quick to pounce, suggesting that this exposed the corrupt nature of evangelical Christianity as a whole. And media leaders have done this repeatedly whenever there has been a scandal connected to an evangelical (or Catholic) leader, and the news is blared from the headlines. But where, I ask you, is the outrage or the front page news when a gay leader commits atrocities such as those allegedly committed by Larry Brinkin? And why isn't the media claiming that Brinkin's transgressions expose the corrupt nature of gay activism as a whole?
>
> The failure of a Christian leader is considered endemic and representative; the failure of a gay leader is considered an aberrant exception. Why the unequal treatment?
>
> […]The answer is that Brinkin's arrest has received relatively little media attention because he was a gay activist leader, not a conservative Christian leader, and there is no hiding the mainstream media's pro-gay, anti-conservative Christian bias. And because Brinkin's arrest has not been widely reported, the general public has not been confronted afresh with the horrors of child pornography.
>
> […]Brinkin, for his part, was no smalltime player, with the San Francisco Examiner describing him as an "iconic San Francisco gay activist who brought the nation's first domestic partnership lawsuit in 1982." And he was, after all, a

> respected, long-term leader within the Human Rights Campaign, the world's largest gay activist organization. Why hasn't the HRC been tarred and feathered the way evangelicals (or Catholics) are after one of their leaders falls? Why the inconsistency?

I reported on the Larry Brinkin scandal in a previous post.

Sean McDowell reviews Sam Harris' new book "Free Will"

July 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jay Watts of LTI tweeted this book review by Sean McDowell.

Excerpt:

> After rightly emphasizing the importance of the question of free will, Harris concludes, "Free will *is* an illusion" (p. 5). According to Harris, we are not the conscious source of our actions and we could not have behaved differently in the past than we did. He says, "I, as the conscious witness of my experience, no more initiate events in my prefrontal cortex than I cause my heart to beat" (9). "In physical terms," says Harris, "we know that every human action can be reduced to a series of impersonal events" (27).
>
> Harris rightly points out that there are three main approaches to the problem of free will and determinism: *determinism, libertarianism,* and *compatibilism*. He then says, "Today, the only philosophically respectable way to endorse free will is to be a compatibilist" (16). But if determinism were true, as Harris asserts, why would *any* position be philosophically unrespectable? After all, people are determined to hold their beliefs—whether compatibilist, libertarian, or determinist—by forces outside of their control. Why would he bother to critique other positions if the people who hold them couldn't have believed differently? In fact, his critique is just the result of chemicals moving in his brain, so why do they matter? What makes his chemicals more respectable than others?
>
> Later in the book Harris says that giving up free will (and becoming more aware of the background causes of our feelings) allows people to have greater creative control over their lives. "Getting behind our conscious thoughts and feelings," says Harris, "can allow us to steer a more intelligent course through our lives" (p. 47). Do you see the contradiction? The idea of "steering" a more intelligent course through life, of course, has no meaning in a deterministic world. On Harris' view we can't steer anything! The belief that we can steer our lives is an illusion. All of our beliefs and behavior are *entirely* the result of forces outside our control. In one breath Harris says all our beliefs are determined, but then in another breath he speaks about steering the course of our lives. Which is it?
>
> […]He says that dispensing with the idea of free will allows us to focus on things that matter most—assessing risk, protecting the innocent, and deterring crime (p. 53). He seems to be implying that we *ought* to accept his deterministic views for the betterment of mankind. Yet again, if determinism is true then we can't change any of our beliefs—we can't *freely* follow his logic since our beliefs are already set. The very fact that he argues for his position undermines his stated belief in determinism.

Sean McDowell did a debate a while back in which he argued that morality was not rationally grounded on atheism because atheism denies free will, and free will is necessary for making moral choices. And here is the atheist Lawrence Krauss denying that free will exists. It's very hard to see how there could be any freedom of the will if humans are just matter in motion, which is the view of humans that fits most naturally with atheism.

Another atheist William Provine also says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Like Provine, Krauss also denied that objective morality existed at all in his debate with William Lane Craig. His view is that morality evolves in different times and places arbitrarily, and that whatever evolves in any group is right for them in their time and place. It's important to understand what the implications of atheism are for things like rationality and morality.

I always thought that the "freethought" name that atheists sometimes apply to themselves was ironic for that reason. Not only are they not free, but they have no non-physical minds to think with, either.

How to apologize effectively: responsibility, restitution, repentance

July 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my friends recommended this book "Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Got Married" by Gary Chapman, so I got it and read it this weekend. The book re-capped one of his other books about the 5 languages of apologies or something.

Here's a re-cap of his five languages of apologies.

Here are the two that I want to emphasize:

Apology Language #3: Making Restitution

In the public arena, our emphasis upon restitution is based upon our sense of justice. The one who commits the crime should pay for the wrongdoing. In contrast, in the private sphere of family and other close relationships, our desire for restitution is almost always based upon our need for love. After being hurt deeply, we need the reassurance that the person who hurt us still loves us.

"How could they love me and do that?" is the question that lingers in our minds. The words "I'm sorry; I was wrong" may not be enough.

For some people, restitution is their primary apology language. For them the statement, "It is not right for me to have treated you that way," must be followed with "What can I do to show you that I still care about you?" Without this effort at restitution, this person will question the sincerity of the apology. They will continue to feel unloved even though you may have said, "I am sorry; I was wrong." They wait for the reassurance that you genuinely love them.

The question, then, is how do we make restitution in the most effective way? Since the heart of restitution is reassuring the spouse or family member that you genuinely love him or her, it is essential to express restitution in the love language of the other person.

[…]If restitution is the primary apology language of an individual, then this becomes the most important part of the apology. "I'm sorry; I was wrong" will never be taken as sincere if these words are not accompanied by a sincere effort at restitution. They wait for the assurance that you still genuinely love them. Without your effort to make amends, the apology will not have the desired results of forgiveness.

Apology Language #4: Genuinely Repenting

The word repentance means "to turn around" or "to change one's mind." In the context of an apology, it means that an individual realizes that his or her present behavior is destructive. The person regrets the pain he or she is causing the other person, and he chooses to change his behavior.

Without genuine repentance, the other languages of apology may fall on deaf ears. What people who've been hurt want to know is, "Do you intend to change, or will this happen again next week?"

How then do we speak the language of repentance?

> - **It begins with an expression of intent to change.** When we share our intention to change with the person we have offended, we are communicating to them what is going on inside of us. They get a glimpse of our heart—and this often is the language that convinces them we mean what we say.
> - **The second step down the road of repentance is developing a plan for implementing change.** Often apologies fail to be successful in restoring the relationship because there is no plan for making positive change.
> - **The third step down the road of repentance is implementing the plan.** Following through with the plan gives evidence to the offended party that your apology was sincere.

Most people do not expect perfection after an apology, but they do expect to see effort.

Thus, expressing your desire to change and coming up with a plan is an extremely important part of an apology to this person. Inviting the offended person to help you come up with a plan for change is perhaps the best way to effectively show repentance.

I think this is somewhat useful, but I wanted to add some of my own thoughts to make it more practical.

Here are some practical tips that I recommend to someone who has done something morally wrong and who wants to apologize.

To fix the problem you need more than talk

To me, the only thing that needs an apology is breaking a moral rule – you can't beat someone up for just making a mistake. Whenever someone breaks a moral rule with me, like disrespecting me or being selfish, then I pick out a book for them to read and ask them to read it and then write something about how what they learned in the book applies to what they did to me. I don't pick very long books! But I do this for a very important reason.

The very important reason is that I don't trust people who just agree with me. I don't trust people's words. If someone is really sorry about something, then I want them to read something that describes the moral rule that they broke, and explains what place the moral rule has in some plan for achieving some greater goal. Let me give an example.

Suppose that I am friends with a young lady who wants me to help her to get her atheist uncle, who has a degree in physics, to consider whether Christian theism might not be true. I accept her quest and begin to negotiate with Dr. Michael Strauss, a particle physicist who does research on the top quark at Fermilab, and also teaches physics at the University of Oklahoma – Norman. I contact Dr. Strauss, and contact Lawrence Krauss, the atheist physicist, and I set up a debate between them at the local university. I notify her of my plan, and she promises to bring her uncle to the debate.

The day of the debate comes and it goes off without a hitch – Strauss demolishes Krauss, and Krauss cries for his mommy. The audience laughs at Krauss and he runs away sobbing into the night, clutching his Darwin doll tightly. I beam with delight at a plan perfectly executed, and then look around for the young lady and her uncle, so that we can all go out for a late dinner with Dr. Strauss. But she and her uncle are nowhere to be found! I rush around the auditorium frantically, but to no avail. Finally, in desperation, I call her cell phone.

She answers. I say "where are you? where is your evil uncle Dawkins? The debate is over and we won!". She says "Oh, I totally forgot. The worship leader at the local mega church had a better idea anyway. She invited me over to her church with my uncle to try snake-handling instead." Me: "You did *what???!!!"* She (excited): "Yes, this is a lot more fun than a stuffy debate, and my uncle is about to play patty-cake with a harmless rattlesnake, and… uh oh". Me: "Oh no…" She: "Um, I'll call you back. I need to make a call *right now.*". Click.

Wow, that's pretty awful.

So here's what I would expect from her by way of apology.

1. Read something on science apologetics as a make-up assignment. Something like Edgar Andrews' "Who Made God?".
2. Listen to Dr. Michael Strauss' lecture on science apologetics, which he delivered at Stanford University.
3. Go back to the uncle and sit down with him and watch Dr. Michael Strauss' lecture on science apologetics from Stanford University, which is up on Youtube.
4. When the lecture is over, talk with the uncle about his remaining questions, and be available should he think of any more questions.

This would make up for all the work I put into the event because it fixes the problem, and it makes sure that it will never happen again.

The goals of this apology is not just to hear the words "I'm sorry". It's not even just about making me feel better. I think the real customer of a mistake like this is God, who is not well served by ineffective Christians. My goal is to prepare her for future evangelism, and for future nurturing of any children she might have. The only way to convince someone to take the right course of action the next time is to change their mind between the time they failed and the next time they try again. There is no way to change how a person behaves unless they convince themselves by reading about the issues, on their own time, through their own effort.

For more on how beliefs change, see this lecture by J.P. Moreland, entitled "Love Your God With All Your Mind".

Republicans introduce bill to block tax on pro-life religious institutions

July 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's look at this article from Life News, which discusses the tax that Obamacare imposes on pro-life religious institutions.

Excerpt:

> The new Obama mandate that requires religious groups to pay for birth control and drugs that may cause abortions for their employees could result in fines as much as $2,000 per employee or $100 each day if they refuse to comply.
>
> Recently, Republicans in Congress asked the Congressional Research Service to examine the new mandate and the consequences for employers that do not want to follow it because it would violate their consciences and CRS issued a document finding noncompliant employers could face federal fines of $100 per day per employee.
>
> "If a group health plan or health insurance issuer failed to provide contraceptive services pursuant to guidelines authorized by ACA, it seems possible … that a plan participant could be able to bring a claim for that benefit," the memo states.
>
> The report indicates the IRS is empowered to levy a tax penalty on noncompliant religious employers of $100 per day for each employee in their health plan.
>
> Commerce Committee Republicans, according to Politico, are not happy with the findings.
>
> "Implementing a federal mandate that violates the conscience of an individual or organization, regardless of their religious affiliation or organizational purpose, is in direct violation with the First Amendment," the committee said in a release announcing the report. "Imposing a fine on these individuals pours salt in the wound."
>
> They said, according to Politico, that a charity or hospital with 100 employees "chooses to exercise its religious rights instead of complying with the Obamacare mandate, it could be subject to a $3.65 million annual fine.

The Republicans have introduced a bill to block the tax on pro-lifers who object to being forced to dispense drugs that cause abortions.

Excerpt:

> "Sebelius's taxman is coming. Sebelius's taxman is coming."
>
> That was the rallying cry of Jim Sensenbrenner on Tuesday in the House of Representatives, where along with his chief co-sponsor Diane Black, he announced the Religious Freedom Tax Repeal Act, meant to be "a follow-on" to the recently concluded Fortnight for Freedom called for by the U.S. Catholic

> bishops, focusing on prayer and education about religious liberty.
>
> The Freedom Tax Repeal Act seeks to “shock people into how confiscatory the taxes imposed would be for those who choose not to violate their consciences are,” Representative Sensenbrenner tells me.
>
> “What has not been discussed” in most of the debate over the Department of Health and Human Services contraception, sterilization, and abortion-inducing drug mandate, Sensenbrenner says, “is the tax that is imposed upon those that fail to comply with that mandate, either through religious objections or moral grounds. Those taxes are severe; they are confiscatory.”
>
> “It is $100 per employee per day,” Sensenbrenner says, spelling out the taxing implications out. “So, a religious institution that, say, has a church and an elementary school beside it that has 50 employees total, which include the administrative and maintenance personnel, end up being taxed $36,500 per employee per year. Or the 50-employee institution would have to pay a tax of $1,825,000 per year, every year.

A lot of people who claim to be pro-life seem to think that Obamacare is a great idea, but one wonders whether they know anything about the law at all – or whether they are really as pro-life as they claim to be.

Can a Christian marry an atheist or a Jew or a Muslim or a Hindu?

July 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think that the best way to answer the question, "should I marry a non-Christian?", is to ask whether it makes any difference if your spouse is on board with your plans for your ministry and with your marriage. So let's take a look at a case where someone famous who chose a Christian wife, and we'll see how much that decision affected his ministry and his marriage.

I want to draw your attention to a talk on "Vision in Life" given by Dr. William Lane Craig. Dr. Craig is the ablest defender of the Christian faith operating today. He has done formal academic debates with all of the best known atheists on major university campuses in front of *thousands* of university students. This list of atheists and agnostics includes people like Christopher Hitchens and Victor Stenger. The Hitchens debate took place in an auditorium filled with 5000 students, and many thousands more were watching at churches all over the world. How did Dr. Craig get these opportunities to evangelize on secular university campuses?

Well, he owes a lot of his success to his amazing wife Jan, as we shall see in the summary of his talk on that topic.

The MP3 file is here. (32 minutes)

This talk was Dr. Craig's chapel address to Biola University students, and he is introduced by his son, John, a Biola University grad.

In the talk, it becomes clear that Bill's wife Jan plays an *enormous* role in his success. Indeed, you will see that if it were not for her, he never would have gotten *either* of his doctorates, or even his second Masters degree. Why was she so supportive of his plans? Because she had the same broad goal of evangelism through scholarship. Let's see how she encouraged him.

Here is a quotation that occurs about 11 minutes into the talk, as Bill describes the completion of his Bachelor's degree at Wheaton:

> And it was at Wheaton that my vision began to focus on presenting the gospel in the context of giving an intellectual defense of the faith, to appeal not only to the heart but also to the head, as well. And so I determined that I would go on to seminary for further training.
>
> But, my senior year, in chapel, we heard a speaker who challenged us, before going on to further education, to take a couple of years out, and to wring out the sponge, so to speak, that had been soaking up all that knowledge, and to work with university students while we were still about the same age.
>
> And so I joined the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for 2 years, and was assigned to Northern Illinois University. And that was where I met my wife Jan.

> She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota where she had come to faith in Christ. And she had a similar vision for her life of evangelism and discipleship.
>
> And as we worked at NIU together, she with gals and I with the guys, leading students to Christ and discipling them to walk with the Lord, we fell in love. And we decided that we would be more effective if we joined forces and became a team.

It is at this point in the talk where Bill begins to explain just how Jan molded him into the lean, mean debating machine that travels the world striking terror into the hearts of atheists.

Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

In an article on his web site, he talks about how Jan encouraged him to do his first Ph.D:

> As graduation from Trinity neared, Jan and I were sitting one evening at the supper table in our little campus apartment, talking about what to do after graduation. Neither of us had any clear leading or inclination of what we should do next.
>
> So Jan said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really like to do next?"
>
> I replied, "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to England and do a doctorate under John Hick."
>
> "Who's he?" she asked.
>
> "Oh, he's this famous British philosopher who's written extensively on arguments for the existence of God," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a cosmological argument for God's existence."

> But it hardly seemed a realistic idea.
>
> The next evening at supper Jan handed me a slip of paper with John Hick's address on it. "I went to the library today and found out that he's at the University of Birmingham in England," she said. "Why don't you write him a letter and ask him if you can do a doctoral thesis under him on the cosmological argument?"
>
> What a woman! So I did, and to our amazement and delight Professor Hick wrote back saying he'd be very pleased to supervise my doctoral work on that subject. So it was an open door!

And in the same article, he explains how Jan encouraged him to get his second Ph.D:

> As Jan and I neared the completion of my doctoral studies in Birmingham, our future path was again unclear to us. I had sent out a number of applications for teaching positions in philosophy at American universities but had received no bites. We didn't know what to do.
>
> I remember it like yesterday. We were sitting at the supper table in our little house outside Birmingham, and Jan suddenly said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really *like* to do next?"
>
> I laughed because I remembered how the Lord had used her question to guide us in the past. I had no trouble answering the question. "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to Germany and study under Wolfhart Pannenberg."
>
> "Who's he?"
>
> "Oh, he's this famous German theologian who's defended the resurrection of Christ historically," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus."
>
> Our conversation drifted to other subjects, but Jan later told me that my remark had just lit a fire under her. The next day while I was at the university, she slipped away to the library and began to research grants-in-aid for study at German universities. Most of the leads proved to be defunct or otherwise inapplicable to our situation. But there were two grants she found that were possibilities. You can imagine how surprised I was when she sprung them on me!

Both of these Ph.D experiences are also described in the talk. And the talk concludes as follows:

> I am so thankful to be married to a woman who is tremendously resourceful, tremendously talented and energetic, who could have pursued an independent career in any number of areas, but instead, she has chose to wed her aspirations to mine, and to make it her goal to make me the most effective person I can be, for Christ. And she has been like my right arm in ministry over these many years. And it is a tremendous privilege to be a team with a person like that.

> And you young men, I would encourage you, if you marry, to find a gal who shares your vision, not some independent vision, but who is interested in aligning herself with you, and pursuing together a common vision and goal that will draw you [together], so that you will avoid the growing separateness that so often creeps into marriages.

And now you know the rest of Bill's story. *The person you marry will have an enormous influence on the impact you will have for Christ and his Kingdom.* It is up to you to decide whether that influence is going to be positive or negative, by deciding if you will marry, and if you do marry, by deciding whom you will marry. If you marry a non-Christian, you cannot expect to achieve the same things for God as you can with someone who accepts your core convictions and is willing to sacrifice their happiness so that God can be made happier.

You may also be interested in this talk given by William Lane Craig, entitled "Healthy Relationships" (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008) (audio here) In that talk, he offers advice to Christians who want to have a marriage that is consistent with their Christian faith.

Can you forgive someone who refuses to confess their guilt?

July 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kevin Lewis, a professor of Theology and Law at the conservative Biola University, was asked this question:

> Recently, I was reading Dr. Kenneth Bailey's Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes (IVP press 2008). When commenting on Matthew 6:12-13, he writes,
>
> "It is a common human assumption that the violator of the rights of others must ask for forgiveness before the wronged party can be expected to accept the apology and grant forgiveness…But Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when when there is no confession of guilt… There is a voice from the cross that echoes across history to all saying 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' Neither Pilate nor the high priest nor the centurion offered any apology to Jesus, yet he prayed for divine forgiveness…(p.125)"

And here's his response in full, copied with permission from his Facebook note:

> Regarding Bailey's comments on Matthew 6:12, he errs by not considering the theological context of this statement and fails to consider any implied biblical conditions for forgiveness inherent in the statement. The text simply does not mean what he says it means. He is reading too much into the statement.
> Bailey states, "Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when there is no confession of guilt…"
>
> Bailey errs. Here, Jesus is giving a model for prayer commensurate with the way His Kingdom works. Jesus teaches them to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." This is a statement of the objective, "forgiveness," without a discussion of any express or implied conditions to accomplish the objective. It is also a statement of the proper attitude of the Christian, that is, that we must have a demeanor of being willing to forgive, just as God was willing to forgive us. Bailey's assertion that there is no "confession of guilt" or repentance is merely an unwarranted assumption.
>
> Moreover, the use of "as" (Grk. hos) in the passage introduces a comparison between the way we forgive and the way God forgives. This comparative phraseology is employed elsewhere on the subject of forgiveness. For example, Ephesians 4:32 states that we should be "forgiving each other just as God in Christ also has forgiven" us. Here, the comparative "just as" (Grk. kathos) is employed and indicates our forgiveness is to be just like God's forgiveness of us, which flows from a loving disposition. So in the same manner that God forgives, we must forgive. We are to be "imitators of God" (Eph. 5:1). See also Matthew

5:48 and Luke 6:36 for exhortations to imitate God.

To ascertain whether the Scriptures describe any conditions for forgiveness, one must search elsewhere in the Scriptures for comment. This is the nature of systematic theology. We need to examine what the entire Bible says on a given topic, such as forgiveness. And the Bible contains ample support for the notion that there are conditions for forgiveness.

First, regarding God and His forgiveness, it is undisputed in orthodox Christian theology that God does not forgive everyone. The doctrine of Hell is a sufficient proof of the lack of universal forgiveness by God.

Next, it is clear that God does not forgive without repentance. This doctrine is taught in a number of texts. For example, in Luke 13:3 Jesus says, “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” In Mark 1:15 John the Baptist commands that we must “repent and believe the Gospel.” The connection between repentance and forgiveness of sins (i.e. “salvation”) is seen throughout the Scriptures. For example, in Acts 2:38 repentance is directly connected as a condition for the remission of sins. For additional examples of this connection see Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30-31; Romans 2:4-5; II Corinthians 7:10; II Tim. 2:25-26.

So since we are to be imitators of God and forgive in the same way God forgives, we would expect the Scriptures to be consistent, stating that the condition of repentance is required to be fulfilled before believers are required to forgive each other’s sins. It does.

Jesus stated in Luke 17:3, “If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.” Here, the meaning is clear. The word “if” (Grk. ean) introduces the condition for a rebuke and for granting forgiveness. If (subjunctive) a person sins, we must (imperative) rebuke him, and if (subjunctive) he repents, we must (imperative) forgive him. This is as clear a statement as you will find on the subject. Forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance—and this is one of the same criteria that God requires before He forgives sin.

This principle of permitting believers to withhold forgiveness unless the condition of repentance is satisfied is also explicitly seen in Matthew 18:15-17. Compared with the Luke 17:3 text above, the situation is the same. If a brother sins, reprove him; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. Here, the word “reprove” is used rather than “rebuke” and the word “listen” is employed rather than “repent,” but the meaning is virtually identical to Luke 17:3. What we see in Matthew 18 is an escalation of the issue and the result if the person fails to repent (i.e. “listen”). If the person fails to repent, we are to shun him in all appropriate ways (v. 17).
These passages in Luke and Matthew give us the connection between sin, rebuke, repentance and forgiveness. Other biblical texts that merely mention “forgiveness” as a concept or an objective do not necessarily proffer every

aspect of the doctrine of forgiveness. As such, they must be read in light of the clear conditions expressed in other passages.

Finally, I would make the case that it is harmful to a person to forgive him without requiring repentance. As seen above, the Bible is clear that sin requires a rebuke. Ignoring sin teaches sinners that sin does not bring consequences. This is harmful to their souls. Continuing to have the benefit of a righteous relationship with another and yet remain in sin against that person results in fostering a habituation of sinful inclinations in their soul, which God says brings about suffering and death.
Moreover, since the ultimate purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation, it is meaningless and harmful to forgive when no reconciliation may be had with the sinner. We cannot "walk together" in a biblical manner in righteous peace when the unrepentant sinner walks in unrighteousness. Necessarily, there is a conflict and a want of shalom. Their soul is headed in a different direction than the believer's soul; they are walking away from God and we cannot have fellowship with darkness. God has no intimate fellowship with unrepentant people, and that is the model for Christians as well (See Matt. 18).

Regarding personal anger issues commonly raised by Christian psychologists, these types of psychologists unbiblically make unconditional forgiveness a part of therapy. By contrast, however, if a counselee will not forgive after the offending party has truly repented, the counselee sins, and this kind of unforgiveness may be one of the causes of his or her problems. But this is a separate issue from universal and unconditional forgiveness raised above.

Human beings in the image of God may be angry in appropriate ways (Eph.4:26, 31). There is a time to love and a time to hate (Ecclesiastes 3:8). The notion that Christians cannot ever hate, be angry, or lack forgiveness is an unbiblical concept. God Himself is eternally angry with sin, but He is certainly not a psychological basket case. He loves, hates, and is angry in appropriate ways. Our task as believers is to imitate this. Be angry with and hate sin appropriately (Rom. 12:9) and love what good appropriately. For example, righteous anger can evolve beyond the biblical limits to become malice, slander, and bitterness while, to give another example, an appropriate love of food can evolve beyond the biblical limits into gluttony.

Psychological problems arise from many issues other than lack of forgiveness. For example, a lack of trust in God that He has a particular instance of evil under His sovereign control can cause undue anxiety in one's life. Also, if a counselee's self worth is grounded in the shifting sand of how others treat him (i.e., badly) rather than being grounded in the fact that he is a divine image bearer and inherently valuable no matter how badly anyone treats him, he will likely fall into anxiety, depression, and other sorts of psychological maladies. Changing the biblical doctrine of forgiveness will not truly help a counselee. It only makes it

> worse.
>
> Soli Deo Gloria

I agree with Dr. Lewis, and I think it is a helpful tool for people to insist on seeing some sort of repentance and restitution from someone who wrongs you before you trust them again. If they are not even sorry for what they've done, and they refuse to explain why what they did is wrong, then they can't be forgiven, and you can't trust them again.

Should the government restrict men's participation in STEM fields?

July 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hans Bader from the Competitive Enterprise Institute is concerned about politics being injected into science.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Quotas limiting the number of male students in science may be imposed by the Education Department in 2013. The White House has promised that "new guidelines will also be issued to grant-receiving universities and colleges" spelling out "Title IX rules in the science, technology, engineering and math fields." These guidelines will likely echo existing Title IX guidelines that restrict men's percentage of intercollegiate athletes to their percentage in overall student bodies, thus reducing the overall number of intercollegiate athletes. (Under the three-part Title IX test created by the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights, where I used to work, colleges are allowed to **temporarily** comply by increasing the number of female athletes rather than cutting the number of male athletes, but the only viable **permanent** way to comply with its rule is to **restrict** men's participation relative to women's participation, reducing overall participation.) Thus, as Charlotte Allen notes, the Obama administration's guidelines are likely to lead to "science quotas" based on gender.
>
> […]Obama hinted that Title IX quotas would soon come to engineering and techology, saying that "Title IX isn't just about sports," but also about "inequality in math and science education" and "a much broader range of fields, including engineering and technology. I've said that women will shape the destiny of this country, and I mean it."

What causes more men to go into the STEM fields than women?

> Gender disparities in a major are not the product of sexism, but rather the differing preferences of men and women. The fact that engineering departments are filled mostly with men does not mean they discriminate against women anymore than the fact that English departments are filled mostly with women proves that English departments discriminate against men. The arts and humanities have well over 60 percent female students, yet no one seems to view that gender disparity as a sign of sexism against men. Deep down, the Obama administration knows this, since it is planning to impose its gender-proportionality rules only on the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math), not other fields that have similarly large gender disparities in the opposite direction.

> Many women are quite capable of mastering high-level math and science, but simply don't find working in such a field all that interesting. As Dr. Sommers notes, many "colleges already practice affirmative action for women in science," rather than discriminating against them. Susan Pinker, a clinical psychologist, chronicled cases of women who "abandoned successful careers in science and engineering to work in fields like architecture, law and education," because they wanted jobs that involved more interaction with people, "not because they had faced discrimination in science." Far from being discouraged by society from pursuing a career in math or science, these women had been strongly encouraged to pursue such a a career: "Once they showed aptitude for math or physical science, there was an assumption that they'd pursue it as a career even if they had other interests or aspirations. And because these women went along with the program and were perceived by parents and teachers as torch bearers, it was so much more difficult for them to come to terms with the fact that the work made them unhappy."
>
> As Susan Pinker notes, "A mountain of published research stretching back a hundred years shows that women are far more likely than men to be deeply interested in organic subjects—people, plants and animals—than they are to be interested in things and inanimate systems, such as electrical engineering, or computer systems."

Is this good for our economy? Should we be discouraging the best male students who want to study science and engineering to do their education abroad in Canada or Europe? Should women be steered into careers that may make it harder for them to have families and raise their children?

New study: Earth is currently in a 2000-year old cooling trend

July 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Report from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> How did the Romans grow grapes in northern England? Perhaps because it was warmer than we thought.
>
> A study suggests the Britain of 2,000 years ago experienced a lengthy period of hotter summers than today.
>
> German researchers used data from tree rings – a key indicator of past climate – to claim the world has been on a 'long-term cooling trend' for two millennia until the global warming of the twentieth century.
>
> This cooling was punctuated by a couple of warm spells.
>
> These are the Medieval Warm Period, which is well known, but also a period during the toga-wearing Roman times when temperatures were apparently 1 deg C warmer than now.
>
> They say the very warm period during the years 21 to 50AD has been underestimated by climate scientists.
>
> Lead author Professor Dr Jan Esper of Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz said: 'We found that previous estimates of historical temperatures during the Roman era and the Middle Ages were too low.
>
> 'This figure we calculated may not seem particularly significant, however it is not negligible when compared to global warming, which up to now has been less than 1 deg C.'
>
> In general the scientists found a slow cooling of 0.6C over 2,000 years, which they attributed to changes in the Earth's orbit which took it further away from the Sun.
>
> The study is published in Nature Climate Change.
>
> It is based on measurements stretching back to 138BC.
>
> The finding may force scientists to rethink current theories of the impact of global warming
>
> Professor Esper's group at the Institute of Geography at JGU used tree-ring density measurements from sub-fossil pine trees originating from Finnish Lapland to produce a reconstruction reaching back to 138 BC.
>
> In so doing, the researchers have been able for the first time to precisely demonstrate that the long-term trend over the past two millennia has been

> towards climatic cooling.
>
> Professor Esper said: ‘Such findings are also significant with regard to climate policy, as they will influence the way today’s climate changes are seen in context of historical warm periods.’
>
> The annual growth rings in trees are the most important witnesses over the past 1,000 to 2,000 years as they indicate how warm and cool past climate conditions were.
>
> Researchers from Germany, Finland, Scotland, and Switzerland examined tree-ring density profiles.

The study is linked here.

More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study

July 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news! See the part in bold below, too.

Excerpt:

> An influential group of social scientists … have issued a public statement defending Mark Regnerus's controversial study on same-sex parenting.
>
> Regnerus, a sociologist at the University of Texas at Austin, published a paper in the July issue of Social Science Research that examined "how different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships?" His findings, based on his New Family Structures Study, indicated that young-adult children of parents who have had same-sex relationships are more likely to experience emotional and social problems.
>
> His Slate article published in June drew more than 450 comments and set off a chorus of criticism.
>
> In response, a group of 18 professors — including Michael Emerson, Christian Smith, Rodney Stark, W. Bradford Wilcox, and Bradley Wright — posted a defense on the website of Baylor University's Institute for Studies of Religion. They argue that rather then Regnerus' study being "anti-gay," "breathtakingly sloppy," and "gets everything wrong" (as many media outlets have alleged), such public criticism is unwarranted for three reasons:
>
> 1. Media outlets have not properly critiqued the "small, nonrepresentative samples" used by previous studies that showed equal or more positive outcomes for children of same-sex parents vs. heterosexual parents. "By contrast, Regnerus relies on a large, random, and representative sample of more than 200 children raised by parents who have had same-sex relationships, comparing them to a random sample of more than 2,000 children raised in heterosexual families, to reach his conclusions," they wrote.
> 2. Those critical of Regnerus surveying children from same-sex relationships with high levels of instability "fail to appreciate … that Regnerus chose his categories on the basis of young adults' characterizations of their own families growing up, and the young adults whose parents had same-sex romantic relationships also happened to have high levels of instability in their families of origin."
> 3. **Another new study (published this month in the Journal of Marriage and Family) — also based on a large, nationally representative, and**

> **random survey — comes to conclusions that parallel those of Regnerus's study.**

So that new study something to look forward to! I blogged about the criticisms of the Regnerus study and the other study that came out of the same time, in case anyone wants to double-check the details.

When pastors undermine the relevance of Christianity to the culture

July 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eric Metaxas has posted another dynamite Breakpoint commentary. (H/T Kelli)

Excerpt:

> Here's a particularly egregious case in point: the recent campaign to remove a great movie, *The Blind Side*, from the shelves of LifeWay Christian stores. Remember, *The Blind Side* was denounced as Christian propaganda by many liberal critics. It explicitly depicts an affluent white Christian family devoting itself to helping an impoverished black kid because it's the Christian thing to do.
>
> The film's offense, according to a Florida pastor who started the campaign to have LifeWay stores pull the DVD, is that the movie contains "explicit profanity, God's name in vain, and racial slurs." It doesn't seem to matter that the objectionable language is used to depict the palpably unpleasant world from which the young black man, Michael, was rescued by his adoptive family.
>
> What seems to matter to this pastor is that if we "tolerate" the presence of this movie in Christian bookstores, our children and grandchildren will "embrace" this kind of behavior. I'm not making this up – this is the exact reason given by the pastor. And frankly, I think it's insane. I saw the movie myself. I even let my 12-year-old daughter see it. That's because it is a great film and I recommend it highly.
>
> But sadly, LifeWay caved in and removed the "offensive" discs from their shelves.
>
> For outsiders looking in, the moral of the story is that "there is no pleasing Christians. They always seem to be looking for something to be mad about."
>
> We complain about the calumnies and caricatures of Christians on the big screen; and then, when an Academy Award-winning film shows us at our very best, we complain that scenes depicting harsh, inner-city reality are too true to life!
>
> We are, in effect, making our participation contingent on all our possible objections being met beforehand. Since there are many people who would be happy if we stayed within our cultural and religious ghettos, it's difficult to imagine how we Christians can hope to be taken seriously in cultural discussions and debates with this kind of an approach.
>
> Concerns about the language in the film also miss the larger point: what made the Tuohys — the family depicted in the film — such great Christian exemplars wasn't their non-use of profanity; it was their willingness to reach out and embrace someone in need.
>
> If we Christians can't get this, then maybe we really should refrain from

> commenting on culture in the first place.

The Blind Side is on the very very exclusive Wintery Knight list of great courting movies: (not in order)

1. Rules of Engagement
2. Bella
3. The Lives of Others
4. United 93
5. Taken
6. Cinderella Man
7. The Blind Side
8. Cyrano de Bergerac
9. Amazing Grace
10. We Were Soldiers
11. Stand and Deliver
12. Blackhawk Down
13. The Pursuit of Happyness
14. High Noon

These are the movies that you show women to get them to understand what it is that men do in a marriage, so that they can recognize, understand, support and affirm men in their married roles.

If you missed his last Metaxas Breakpoint commentary that I featured, it's about how pro-abortion people are uncomfortable with the evidence for the humanity of the unborn from things like ultrasounds and sonograms.

Romney boldly urges NAACP to embrace free enterprise and reject dependence

July 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Romney knew he'd be booed when he said he'd get rid of ObamaCare, the job- and growth-killing behemoth that is the fruition of the cradle-to-grave nanny state on which many people have become increasingly dependent. He knew his accurate description of minority joblessness in this third recovery summer wouldn't bring applause. He told the truth anyway, even if it didn't get him one more black vote, and even if the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People attendees, for whom advancement has been replaced by dependence, couldn't handle the truth.
>
> "In June," said Romney, "the overall unemployment rate remained stuck at 8.2%" — but the rate for blacks "actually went up, from 13.6% to 14.4%."
>
> He noted that black students account for 17% of students nationwide, with 42% of those trapped in failing schools. He spoke of "neighborhoods filled with violence and fear (and) empty of opportunity."
>
> And on a matter that separates most black church leaders from Obama, he pledged to defend traditional marriage as the president embraces the gay version.
>
> Romney's speech didn't pander to anybody.
>
> Nor was it demeaning or insensitive to his audience. He merely pointed out that Obama's philosophy of dependence on government was not the answer to their need for jobs, education and stable communities.
>
> "The president will say he will do those things, but he will not, he cannot, and his record of the last four years proves it," Romney told the dubious crowd, adding: "If you want a president who will make things better in the African American community, you're looking at him."

Here's an excerpt from the full text:

> Finally, I will address the institutionalized inequality in our education system. And I know something about this from my time as governor.
>
> In the years before I took office our state's leaders had come together to pass bipartisan measures that were making a difference. In reading and in math, our students were already among the best in the nation — and during my term, they took over the top spot.
>
> Those results revealed what good teachers can do if the system will only let

> them. The problem was, this success wasn't shared. A significant achievement gap between students of different races remained. So we set out to close it.
>
> I urged faster interventions in failing schools, and the funding to go along with it. I promoted math and science excellence in schools, and proposed paying bonuses to our best teachers.
>
> I refused to weaken testing standards, and instead raised them. To graduate from high school, students had to pass an exam in math and English — I added a science requirement as well. And I put in place a merit scholarship for those students who excelled: the top 25 percent of students in each high school were awarded a John and Abigail Adams Scholarship — which meant four years tuition-free at any Massachusetts public institution of higher learning.
>
> When I was governor, not only did test scores improve — we also narrowed the achievement gap.
>
> The teachers unions were not happy with a number of these reforms. They especially did not like our emphasis on choice through charter schools, particularly for our inner city kids. Accordingly, the legislature passed a moratorium on any new charter schools.
>
> As you know, in Boston, in Harlem, in Los Angeles, and all across the country, charter schools are giving children a chance, children that otherwise could be locked in failing schools. I was inspired just a few weeks ago by the students in one of Kenny Gamble's charter schools in Philadelphia. Right here in Houston is another success story: the Knowledge Is Power Program, which has set the standard, thanks to the groundbreaking work of the late Harriet Ball.
>
> These charter schools are doing a lot more than closing the achievement gap. They are bringing hope and opportunity to places where for years there has been none.
>
> Charter schools are so successful that almost every politician can find something good to say about them. But, as we saw in Massachusetts, true reform requires more than talk. As Governor, I vetoed the bill blocking charter schools. But our legislature was 87 percent Democrat, and my veto could have been easily over-ridden. So I joined with the Black Legislative Caucus, and their votes helped preserve my veto, which meant that new charter schools, including some in urban neighborhoods, would be opened.
>
> When it comes to education reform, candidates cannot have it both ways — talking up education reform, while indulging the same groups that are blocking reform. You can be the voice of disadvantaged public-school students, or you can be the protector of special interests like the teachers unions, but you can't be both. I have made my choice: As president, I will be a champion of real education reform in America, and I won't let any special interest get in the way.

I think he is right to emphasize the marriage issue, because 1300 black pastors recently

expressed grave misgivings about Obama due to his support for gay marriage.

Who is responsible for building up the faith of children? Parents or pastors?

July 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is from Probe Ministries. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Excerpt:

> In 2010, we commissioned a survey to help us examine the causes and potential opportunities to change the marked shift in the thinking of young adults over the last decade. We surveyed over 800 born again, young adults across America to get an understanding for what they thought about spiritual and cultural issues *and* how they felt about their beliefs and actions. One area of questioning was, "When you think about how you developed the religious beliefs you hold today, who do you feel had the greatest influence on you? Did your beliefs come from your family, your friends, your church, your independent studies, your college professors, or others?"
>
> The answers we received to this question were not shocking but still sobering. Over sixty-five percent of the respondents reported that the source that had the greatest influence on their religious beliefs was a family member, with the vast majority of those saying it was parents or grandparents. Over twenty percent of the respondents pointed to another influential individual such as a pastor, youth leader, or college professor. Only about eleven percent stated that something less personal such as a youth group or the Bible was the greatest influencer of their religious beliefs.
>
> As Christian Smith noted, "What the best empirical evidence shows . . . is that . . . when it comes to religion, parents are in fact *hugely*important."{5}In fact, "religious commitments, practices, and investments made during childhood and the teenage years, by parents and others in families and religious communities, matter – they make a difference."{6}
>
> Of those who stated that a family member was the primary influence, over seven out of ten stated it was their mother or grandmother while less than three out of ten said it was their father or grandfather. So clearly amongst born again young adults, the female side of the family has a greater influence in passing down religious beliefs than do the males. One can postulate that this may be due to a combination of greater spiritual involvement on the female side of the family and a higher level of communication with their children. However, the rate of fatherly influence almost doubles for young adults with a biblical worldview compared to those without such a worldview. So it appears that fathers who hold a biblical worldview are much more likely to be involved in establishing the spiritual beliefs of their children.
>
> **Less than one out of ten of the respondents listed a pastor as the**

> **primary source of influence, and only three percent listed a youth group. These church-related functions may have an important role in helping to shape our religious beliefs, but our survey shows that it is at best a secondary role for the vast majority of people. We are mistaken if we are relying on the church to pass on the right type of beliefs to our children. Parents, what you communicate through your lives is picked up by your children. What are you communicating to them concerning religious beliefs?**

I have been working through a Bible study with a regular WK-reader (Tracy) and we are going through Deuteronomy right now. Today (Thursday) I read Deuteronomy 6-8. And here are a couple of verses that I think you should see related to this topic.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

[5] Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

It’s our responsibility to teach our children, and if you don’t have children, then you just pick someone else who is willing to listen to you. We must all make an effort.

Are any scientists persuaded by science alone to accept a young Earth?

July 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

John Ankerberg explains what happened when he asked the two leading proponents of young Earth creationism, John Morris and Duane Gish, whether any prominent scientists had ever been convinced by science alone to accept a young Earth. (H/T TQA)

Excerpt:

John Morris says no:

> When I was arguing for the young earth view in the early years of our television ministry, I remember when my friend Dr. John Morris, the President of the Institute for Creation Research (ICR) and one of the world's largest young earth organizations, was being interviewed on KKLA radio in Los Angeles. He was asked, "Had he or any of his associates ever met or heard of a scientist who became persuaded that the universe or earth is only thousands of years old, based on scientific evidence without a reference to a particular interpretation of the Bible?" Morris' answer was no, he had not.

Duane Gish says no:

> Later, Duane Gish, also of ICR, was asked the same question. I was interested in his answer as I had invited Dr. Gish to be my guest in the very first debate I held on science and the Bible. I had arranged for him to debate Dr. Vincent Sarich, who was the Chairman of the Department of Anthropology at Berkeley and an evolutionist. When Dr. Gish was asked if he knew of any scientist who had ever been persuaded by the scientific evidence that the universe or the earth was 6,000 years old, he also said no.

I think that this is telling. Young Earth creationism is very much an inward-focused activity.

Take a look at the locations for upcoming events for Answers in Genesis:

- First Baptist Church Kimberling City
- Macedonia Baptist Church
- Cornerstone Church
- Antioch 1611 Baptist Church
- First Baptist Church
- Grace Community Church
- Colonial Baptist Church
- Evangelical Free Church of Bay City

And the Institute for Creation Research:

- Glenview Baptist Church
- Lakeside Baptist Church
- First Baptist Church
- Ridgeview Church

Contrast that with the recent Reasonable Faith UK tour, which features public debates and lectures at the top universities in the UK, against the top scientists and philosophers in the UK.

Here are some of those events:

Monday 17th October 2011
7.30pm "*Does God Exist?*"
Public Debate with Stephen Law, lecturer in Philosophy at Heythrop College, London and Editor of the magazine of the Royal Institute of Philosophy THINK. Arranged by Premier Radio.
Westminster Central Hall, Storeys Gate, London, SW1H 9NH

Tuesday 18th October 2011
12.45pm Student Lecture *"The Evidence for God"*
Pippard Lecture Theatre (Sherfield Building), Imperial College London (South Kensington Campus), Exhibition Road, London SW7 2AZ

Wednesday 19th October 2011
7.30pm Public lecture "*The Origins of the Universe – has Hawking eliminated God?"* on Stephen Hawking's *The Grand Design* followed by a panel response
William Lane Craig will discuss the issues arising from his presentation with Revd Dr Rodney Holder, physicist with the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge.
St. Andrew the Great, Cambridge

Thursday 20th October 2011
7.30pm Debate at the Cambridge Union: *"This House Believes that God is not a Delusion"*
Proposing the motion: William Lane Craig and Peter S. Williams
Opposing the motion: Arif Ahmed and Andrew Copson
The Cambridge Union, Cambridge

Friday 21st October 2011
7.30pm "*Does God Exist?*"
Debate with Professor Peter Millican, Gilbert Ryle Fellow and Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, Oxford University
The Great Hall, Birmingham University, Edgbaston, B15 2TT

Tuesday 25th October 2011
7.30pm Lecture "*Is God a Delusion?*" A Critique of Dawkins' *The God Delusion*
[or a debate with Richard Dawkins if he should accept the invitation]
Sheldonian Theatre, Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3AZ

Wednesday 26th October 2011
7.30pm "*Does God Exist?*"

Debate with Dr Peter Atkins, former Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University
University Place Lecture Theatre, Manchester University, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

I think that Christians need to reflect on what arguments can actually be sustained in public with good science at the highest levels, and which arguments are not sustainable in public. I don't mind if someone is a young Earth person, but they should have a realistic view of how defensible that position is scientifically.

UPDATE: J.W. Wartick evaluates common arguments for young Earth creationism here.

UPDATE: An excellent debate, with summary, on the age of the Earth, featuring Jason Lisle and Hugh Ross.

Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)

July 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thanks to the jerk who pulled down the Sandbaggers videos, I must now post a new movie, and here it is:

IMDB mean rating: [7.4/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> The Shakespeare tragedy that gave us the expression "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." King Lear has not one but two ungrateful children, and it's especially galling because he turned over his entire kingdom to them. Paul Scofeld is an ancient, imposing shell of a Lear tormented by his too-long life as well as by daughters he calls "untatural hags." At one point, the king looks his eldest daughter, Goneril (Ireme Worth), straight in the eye and declares, "Thou art a boil, a plague-sore, of embossed carbuncle in my corrupted blood." These are the troubles not even the best-trained family counselor could ever hope to resolve.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)

- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

How did the Reagan tax cuts and Bush tax cuts affect unemployment?

July 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, which discusses how the Reagan tax cuts affected the unemployment rate.

Excerpt:

> In 1980, President Carter and his supporters in the Congress and news media asked, "how can we afford" presidential candidate Ronald Reagan's proposed tax cuts?
>
> Mr. Reagan's critics claimed the tax cuts would lead to more inflation and higher interest rates, while Mr. Reagan said tax cuts would lead to more economic growth and higher living standards. What happened? Inflation fell from 12.5 percent in 1980 to 3.9 percent in 1984, interest rates fell, and economic growth went from minus 0.2 percent in 1980 to plus 7.3 percent in 1984, and Mr. Reagan was re-elected in a landslide.
>
> […]Despite the fact that federal revenues have varied little (as a percentage of GDP) over the last 40 years, there has been an enormous variation in top tax rates. When Ronald Reagan took office, the top individual tax rate was 70 percent and by 1986 it was down to only 28 percent. All Americans received at least a 30 percent tax rate cut; yet federal tax revenues as a percent of GDP were almost unchanged during the Reagan presidency (from 18.9 percent in 1980 to 18.1 percent in 1988).
>
> What did change, however, was the rate of economic growth, which was more than 50 percent higher for the seven years after the Reagan tax cuts compared with the previous seven years. This increase in economic growth, plus some reductions in tax credits and deductions, almost entirely offset the effect of the rate reductions. Rapid economic growth, unlike government spending programs, proved to be the most effective way to reduce unemployment and poverty, and create opportunity for the disadvantaged.

The conservative Heritage Foundation describes the effects of the Bush tax cuts.

Excerpt:

> President Bush signed the first wave of tax cuts in 2001, cutting rates and providing tax relief for families by, for example, doubling of the child tax credit to $1,000.
>
> At Congress' insistence, the tax relief was initially phased in over many years, so the economy continued to lose jobs. In 2003, realizing its error, Congress made the earlier tax relief effective immediately. Congress also lowered tax rates on

> capital gains and dividends to encourage business investment, which had been lagging.
>
> It was the then that the economy turned around. Within months of enactment, job growth shot up, eventually creating 8.1 million jobs through 2007. Tax revenues also increased after the Bush tax cuts, due to economic growth.
>
> In 2003, capital gains tax rates were reduced. Rather than expand by 36% as the Congressional Budget Office projected before the tax cut, capital gains revenues more than doubled to $103 billion.
>
> The CBO incorrectly calculated that the post-March 2003 tax cuts would lower 2006 revenues by $75 billion. Revenues for 2006 came in $47 billion above the pre-tax cut baseline.
>
> Here's what else happened after the 2003 tax cuts lowered the rates on income, capital gains and dividend taxes:
>
> - GDP grew at an annual rate of just 1.7% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the six quarters following the tax cuts, the growth rate was 4.1%.
> - The S&P 500 dropped 18% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts but increased by 32% over the next six quarters.
> - The economy lost 267,000 jobs in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the next six quarters, it added 307,000 jobs, followed by 5 million jobs in the next seven quarters.
>
> The timing of the lower tax rates coincides almost exactly with the stark acceleration in the economy. Nor was this experience unique. The famous Clinton economic boom began when Congress passed legislation cutting spending and cutting the capital gains tax rate.

Those are the facts. That's not what you hear in the media, but they are the facts.

Crime rates in Chicago and DC drop after gun control laws are struck down

July 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News – what happens to crime rates when gun control laws are repealed? (H/T Reason To Stand)

Excerpt:

> Murder and violent crime rates were supposed to soar after the Supreme Court struck down gun control laws in Chicago and Washington, D.C.
>
> Politicians predicted disaster. "More handguns in the District of Columbia will only lead to more handgun violence," Washington's Mayor Adrian Fenty warned the day the court made its decision.
>
> Chicago's Mayor Daley predicted that we would "go back to the Old West, you have a gun and I have a gun and we'll settle it in the streets…"
>
> The New York Times even editorialized this month about the Supreme Court's "unwise" decision that there is a right for people "to keep guns in the home."
>
> But Armageddon never happened. Newly released data for Chicago shows that, as in Washington, murder and gun crime rates didn't rise after the bans were eliminated — they plummeted. They have fallen much more than the national crime rate.
>
> Not surprisingly, the national media have been completely silent about this news.
>
> One can only imagine the coverage if crime rates had risen. In the first six months of this year, there were 14% fewer murders in Chicago compared to the first six months of last year – back when owning handguns was illegal. It was the largest drop in Chicago's murder rate since the handgun ban went into effect in 1982.
>
> Meanwhile, the other four most populous cities saw a total drop at the same time of only 6 percent.
>
> Similarly, in the year after the 2008 "Heller" decision, the murder rate fell two-and-a-half times faster in Washington than in the rest of the country.
>
> It also fell more than three as fast as in other cities that are close to Washington's size. And murders in Washington have continued to fall.
>
> If you compare the first six months of this year to the first six months of 2008, the same time immediately preceding the Supreme Court's late June "Heller" decision, murders have now fallen by thirty-four percent.
>
> Gun crimes also fell more than non-gun crimes.
>
> Robberies with guns fell by 25%, while robberies without guns have fallen by eight percent. Assaults with guns fell by 37%, while assaults without guns fell by

> 12%.
>
> Just as with right-to-carry laws, when law-abiding citizens have guns some criminals stop carrying theirs.

Read the whole thing, there are more lovely facts in there. If you ever need to debate this, I recommend buying these academic studies published by the University of Chicago Press and by Harvard University Press. The former shows how crime rates dropped in the USA when Americans rescinded gun control laws, and the latter shows how crime rates rose in the UK when the British strengthened their gun control laws. Sometimes is good to have the data handy.

Let's learn about the issue from the news

ABC News explains in this short 6-minute clip:

And here is a longer 44-minute show from Fox Business: (featuring a debate between economist John Lott and the Brady Campaign spokesman)

There are other debates in the show as well.

Now watch a 3-on-3 debate on gun control

This debate is in 13 parts, featuring the two of the *best* proponents of legal firearm ownership – John Lott and Gary Kleck. The real sparks fly during the Q&A, so don't miss that. (If you can't watch the debate, then you can read this post and this post instead).

Here's part 1, which contains the introduction.

Here are the remaining speeches:

- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John R. Lott (2 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: R Gil Kerlikowske (3 **of 13**)
- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Stephen Halbrooke (4 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John J Donohue III (5 **of 13**)
- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Gary Kleck (6 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Paul Helmke (7 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 1 (8 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 2 (9 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 3: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 3 (10 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 4: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 4 (11 **of 13**)
- Conclusions Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 1 (12 **of 13**)
- Conclusions Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 2 (12 **of 13**)

This is everything you need to know about whether legal ownership of firearms reduce crime.

Related posts

- Police threatened to charge man who defended his wife with attempted murder

- Couple arrested for using legally-owned gun to defend home from burglars
- Armed bystander stops stabbing outside school
- Obama campaign contributor and gun control advocate ran Fast and Furious
- If you defend your home from armed intruders in the UK, you get arrested
- UK family arrested for defending their home from burglar
- Police warn UK woman for scaring away burglars with kitchen knife
- 61-year-old British man convicted for cutting up fruit with a Swiss Army knife
- Could tougher gun control laws lower the violent crime rate?
- Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home
- Crime rates in Chicago and DC drop after gun control laws are struck down
- Do gun control laws cause crime rates to go down?
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple victim shootings?
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Do guns reduce crime? Watch this debate and hear both sides
- Liberal MSNBC says that more legal firearm ownership reduces crime rates
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Formal debate on gun control featuring John Lott and Gary Kleck
- Tom Sowell on gun control and judicial activism
- Grandmother jailed for five years for owning family heirloom handgun
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple-victim public shootings in Europe?
- Understanding how concealed carry laws save lives
- Why do people favor legal private ownership and concealed carry of handguns?

Outsourcing billions of taxpayer dollars through stimulus spending

July 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A lot of talk about outsourcing in the news these days. CNS News explains who has the real record of outsourcing.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration allowed millions of dollars in federal stimulus funds to go to foreign companies, despite recent statements by President Barack Obama that he opposes "shipping jobs overseas."
>
> […]Obama's 2009 economic stimulus spending law–the $787 billion American Recovery and Reivnestment Act–gave millions of federal dollars to foreign companies or funded domestic companies that built factories in foreign countries or bought foreign products.
>
> For example, there is the North Carolina LED manufacturer Cree Inc. Cree was awarded $39 million through a stimulus-funded tax credit program in January 2010. However, half of the company's employees are in China and the company opened a manufacturing plant in Huizhou City, China in November 2009, according to an article in the industry publication *LEDs Magazine*.
>
> […]Another example of stimulus outsourcing is Japanese wind energy firm Eurus Energy, whose U.S. subsidiary, Eurus Energy America, received $91 million in stimulus funds to build a wind farm in Texas, according to a 2010 report from American University. That wind farm reportedly was built with wind turbines manufactured by another Japanese company – Mitsubishi.
>
> "Eurus Energy America, the U.S. subsidiary of a Japanese firm, received $91 million in stimulus money for its Bull Creek wind farm in Texas. The farm consists of 180 Mitsubishi turbines," the American University report said.
>
> Eurus told American University that the wind farm was actually built by British firm RES Americas and is now being run by EnXco, an American subsidiary of the French energy firm EDF Energies Nouvelles.
>
> […]Another example of the Obama administration funding foreign companies is a $337 million loan guarantee from the Department of Energy's green energy lending program.
>
> That loan went to California energy firm Sempra Energy for a solar power array in Arizona. However, according to a Feb. 4, 2011 *New York Times* report, Sempra Energy bought its solar panels from the Chinese firm Suntech.
>
> The project, known as Mesquite Solar 1, reportedly used 800,000 of the Chinese solar panels.
>
> Perhaps the best-known example of Obama administration funding of foreign

> companies is its $500-million loan guarantee to Finnish automaker Fisker Automotive. That loan, part of the Energy Department's electric vehicle lending program, was made to help Fisker establish a U.S. manufacturing presence.
>
> However, the company never established an American factory, choosing instead to shutter its U.S. operations and continue building cars in Finland.

But that's not all.

Consider this post from Hans Bader, which further assesses Obama's record on outsourcing.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> "79 percent" of all green-jobs funding in Obama's $800 billion stimulus package went to foreign companies, with the largest payment going to a bankrupt Australian company. For example, the Obama Administration spent $1.6 billion on Chinese and other foreign wind power. The practical effect of those subsidies was to outsource American jobs. ABC News reported on the subsidies for Chinese wind turbines contained in the stimulus package:
> Despite all the talk of green jobs, the overwhelming majority of stimulus money spent on wind power has gone to foreign companies, according to a new report by the Investigative Reporting Workshop at the American University's School of Communication in Washington, D.C.
>
> Nearly $2 billion . . . has been spent on wind power. . .But the study found that nearly 80 percent of that money has gone to foreign manufacturers of wind turbines.
>
> "Most of the jobs are going overseas," said Russ Choma at the Investigative Reporting Workshop. He analyzed which foreign firms had accepted the most stimulus money. "According to our estimates, about 6,000 jobs have been created overseas, and maybe a couple hundred have been created in the U.S." Even with the infusion of so much stimulus money, a recent report by American Wind Energy Association showed a drop in U.S. wind manufacturing jobs last year.
>
> The stimulus package also showered money on left-wing community organizers and liberal lobbying groups.
>
> Earlier, NewsMax reported on a $2 billion subsidized loan by the U.S. government to a Brazilian oil company:
>
> Gulf Oil CEO Joe Petrowski says President Barack Obama's weekend comments in Brazil that the United States looks forward to purchasing oil drilled for offshore by that nation "is rather puzzling," and "hypocritical" as his administration has imposed a virtual moratorium on domestic drilling. The signal to purchase more foreign oil comes after the U.S. Export-Import Bank invested more than $2 billion with Brazil's state-owned oil company, Petrobras, to finance exploration.
>
> The CEO of General Electric, which has received government "green jobs"

> money, is a close Obama advisor. GE has been busy outsourcing American jobs, eliminating a fifth of its U.S. workforce since 2002. GE made $14.2 billion in profits in 2010, but paid no taxes at all, even though America's corporate tax rates are among the highest in the world. Indeed, GE actually received a tax benefit of $3.2 billion from the government in 2010, and received a preferential bailout at taxpayer expense.

That post goes on and on and on and on like that. Obama likes to "spread the wealth around", remember?

What causes outsourcing? When you have the highest corporate tax rate in the world – that causes outsourcing. When you keep piling on regulations and regulations onto businesses, from Obamacare to Dodd-Frank – that causes outsourcing. When you take money collected from taxes paid by American businesses and hand it out to foreign companies owned by Democrat-allies – that causes outsourcing. When you block energy companies from developing energy here at home – that causes outsourcing.

UPDATE: I put millions in the post title, but it's actually billions. At least $29 billion.

Congressional report: abstinence education is the best form of sex education

July 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports:

> The House Energy & Commerce Health Subcommittee released a report on Friday entitled A Better Approach to Teenage Pregnancy Prevention: Sexual Risk Avoidance. The report makes it clear that abstinence education is the best approach when it comes to the different approaches for teaching sex education to teenagers.
>
> The report examined the theory and the evidence behind both Sexual Risk Avoidance Abstinence Education and Sexual Risk Reduction, or so-called Comprehensive" Sex Education and concluded that abstinence education is the superior approach and one that deserves policy priority.
>
> "America's teens need guidance to protect them from the consequences of risky sexual behavior. Unfortunately, the current course of national policy on teenage pregnancy prevention is undermining the desired health outcome," the report says. "Careful examination of research confirms that a value-neutral and risk reduction approach to sexual behavior is not consistent with teenage behavioral theory and not effective in impacting America's high rates of teenage pregnancy and STIs."
>
> The report goes on to recommend that abstinence education: "is a better approach, because it is built on sound theory and empirical evidence."
>
> Valerie Huber, executive director of the National Abstinence Education Association, applauded the report and its findings.
>
> "We applaud the leadership of Rep. Pitts to correct current sex education policy by reestablishing a priority on the SRA abstinence education approach based on the evidence of effectiveness," she said. The findings of this report reinforce the value of the Abstinence Education Reallocation Act, which will implement many of the policy changes suggested in the congressional report."
>
> The new report comes on the heels of a recently released NAEA, study that reached similar conclusions. But Huber says the Congressional Report is significant because it was released by the subcommittee which has jurisdiction over the nation's sex education policies and provides a hopeful sign that Congress will work to correct the current federal sex education policy in the next session.

Other studies have shows that abstaining from sex before marriage, and even limiting the number of partners, helps marriages to be more stable and also more intimate.

Related posts

- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste

Cornelius Van Til and presuppositional apologetics

July 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's J.W. Wartick's take from Always Have a Reason blog.

Excerpt:

> Cornelius Van Til pioneered the field of "presuppositional apologetics" primarily through his works *Christian Apologetics* and *The Defense of the Faith*. His arguments are easily misunderstood as question begging or viciously circular. Herein, I have presented a brief outline and analysis which reveals that while the presuppositional approach may indeed have some logical faults, the overall system has a certain power to it and can be integrated into a total-apologetic system.
>
> […]The key to understand here is that Van Til does not accept that there is a neutral reason "out there" by which Christians and non-Christians can arbitrate the truth of Christianity; his point is that there *is no neutral ground* and that one's presuppositions will determine one's end point. Again, he writes, "this [apologetic method] implies a refusal to grant that any area or aspect of reality, any fact or any law of nature or of history, can be correctly interpreted except it be seen in the light of the main doctrines of Christianity" (*Christian Apologetics*, 124).
>
> However, Van Til takes it even further and argues that one must presuppose the truth of Christianity in order to make sense of reality: " What is the content of this presupposition, then? It is this: "I take what the Bible says about God and his relation to the universe as unquestionably true on its own authority" (*The Defense of the Faith*, 253); again, "The Bible is thought of as authoritative on everything of which it speaks. Moreover, it speaks of everything" (*Christian Apologetics*, 19). Thus, Van Til's apologetic does not make Christianity the conclusion of an argument; rather, Christianity is *the starting presupposition*.
>
> The presuppositional approach here cannot be stressed enough. For Van Til, one simply *cannot* grant to the non-Christian any epistemic point. "We cannot avoid coming to a clear-cut decision with respect to the question as to whose knowledge, man's or God's, shall be made the standard of the other. …[O]ne must be determinative and the other subordinate" (*The Defense of the Faith* 62-63).
>
> What place is had for evidences in Van Til? At some points, he seems to be very skeptical of the use of Christian evidences. In particular, the fact that he argues there is no neutral evaluation grounds between the Christian and non-Christian seems to imply that there can be no real evaluation of such arguments apart from Christianity. One of Van Til's most famous illustrations of the use of evidences can be found in *The Defense of the Faith* pages 332 and following. He uses three persons, Mr. Black (non-Christian), Mr. Grey (Christian non-

> presuppositionalist), and Mr. White (presuppositional/reformed apologist):
>
> > Mr. Grey… says that, of course, the "rational man" has a perfect right to test the credibility of Scripture by logic… by experience… [Mr. Grey then takes Mr. Black a number of places to show him various theistic evidences. Mr. Black responds:] "you first use intellectual argument upon principles that presuppose the justice of my unbelieving position. Then when it it is pointed out to you that such is the case, you turn to witnessing [subjectively].
> >
> > …At last it dawned upon Mr. White that first to admit that the principles of Mr. Black, the unbeliever, are right and then to seek to win him to the acceptance of the existence of God the Creator… is like first admitting that the United States had historically been a province of the Soviet Union but ought at the same time to be recognized as an independent and all-controlling power… If one reasons for the existence of God and for the truth of Christianity on the assumptions that Mr. Black's principles of explanation are valid, then one must witness on the same assumption [which makes witnessing wholly subjective.] (p. 332-339)
>
> It can be seen here that even evidences for Van Til must be based within a presupposition. There is no way to look at evidences in the abstract. One can either offer them within the presuppositions of Christianity or outside of Christianity. For Van Til, once one has agreed to offer evidences outside of Christianity, one has granted the presuppositions of the non-believer, and therefore is doomed to fail.

This would include using arguments like the cosmological argument, the fine-tuning argument, arguments from miracles, etc. – including the resurrection. That seems to be Van Til's view. No evidence allowed – you have to presuppose Christianity is true in order to make sense of the world.

Now, I think we need to make a distinction between using questioning the pre-suppositions of our opponents, as with William Lane's Craig's moral argument, Plantinga's epistemological argument for reason and Menuge's ontological argument for reason. There are arguments for theism that question the pre-suppositions of an atheist. Certainly, non-theists cannot ground things like morality, free will, consciousness and rationality on atheism. But that's not what Van Til is saying. He says that an atheist cannot be swayed by evidence unless he first becomes a Christian. I.e. – he is saying that atheist Anthony Flew is lying when he says that evidence caused him to turn to believe in God. On Van Til's view, that's impossible.

My view of presuppositional apologetics is that is as a system, it is circular reasoning. It assumes Christianity in order to prove Christianity. But there is an even worse problem with it. It's not a Biblical way of doing apologetics. It's man's way of doing apologetics, not God's. I think that the best way to understand Van Til's apologetics is by saying that it

really just a sermon disguised as apologetics. The problem is that Van Til's sermon has no basis in the Bible. Wherever he is getting his view from, it's not from the Bible. When I look the Bible, I don't see any Biblical support for the view that pre-suppositional apologetics is the *only approved way* of defending the faith. Instead, the standard method seems to be evidentialism.

In Romans 1, Paul writes that people can learn about God's existence from the natural world.

Romans 1:18-23:

[18]The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

[19]since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

[20]For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

[21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[22]Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

[23]and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

And in Acts, Peter appeals to eyewitness testimony for the resurrection, and Jesus' miracles.

Acts 2:22-24, and 36:

[22]"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[23]This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

[24]But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

And finally from the same chapter:

[36]"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Professor Clay Jones of Biola University makes the case that the use of evidence when preaching the gospel was *standard operating procedure* in the early church.
(H/T Apologetics 315)

Intro:

> In 1993 I started working for Simon Greenleaf University (now Trinity Law School)

> which offered an M.A. in Christian apologetics (Craig Hazen was the director). Much of my job was to promote the school and although I had studied Christian apologetics since my sophomore year in high school, I decided I needed to see whether an apologetic witness had strong Biblical precedence.
>
> It does.
>
> As I poured through the Scripture I found that Jesus and the apostles preached the resurrection of Christ as the sign of the truth of Christianity.
>
> What follows are some of the passages which support the resurrection witness.

Here is my favorite verse from his massive list list of verses in favor of the evidential approach to Christian apologetics:

> Mat. 12:39-40: A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jesus is saying that the resurrection was deliberately given as a sign to unbelievers to convince them. ("The Sign of Jonah" = the resurrection)

So, I see that God uses nature and miracles to persuade, which can be assessed using scientific and historical methods. Can anyone find me a clear statement in the Bible that states that only pre-suppositional arguments should be used? I could be wrong, and I am willing to be proven wrong. I think we should use the Biblical method of apologetics, not the fallen man's method of apologetics.

UPDATE: Excellent apologetics blog Triablogue has responded to my post.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Obama says that small business owners didn't build their own businesses

July 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

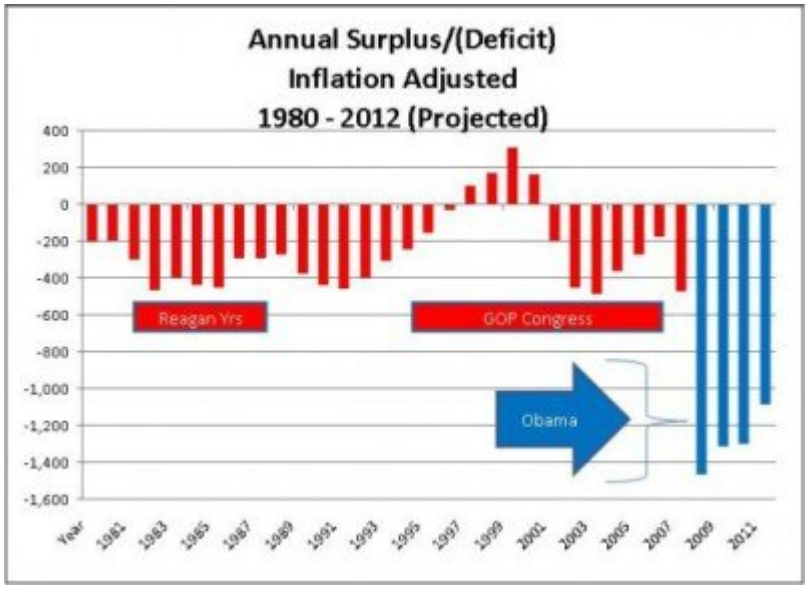

He feels comfortable spending other people's money: why?
It's right on the White House web site, cached on National Review:

> . . .There are a lot of wealthy, successful Americans who agree with me — because they want to give something back. They know they didn't — look, if you've been successful, you didn't get there on your own. You didn't get there on your own. I'm always struck by people who think, well, it must be because I was just so smart. There are a lot of smart people out there. It must be because I worked harder than everybody else. Let me tell you something — there are a whole bunch of hardworking people out there. (Applause.)
>
> If you were successful, somebody along the line gave you some help. There was a great teacher somewhere in your life. Somebody helped to create this unbelievable American system that we have that allowed you to thrive. Somebody invested in roads and bridges. **If you've got a business — you didn't build that. Somebody else made that happen.**
>
> The Internet didn't get invented on its own. Government research created the Internet so that all the companies could make money off the Internet. The point is, is that when we succeed, we succeed because of our individual initiative, but also because we do things together. There are some things, just like fighting fires, we don't do on our own. I mean, imagine if everybody had their own fire service. That would be a hard way to organize fighting fires. . .

See, that's why Obama is so confident about talking the money earned by businesses owners and their employees. You don't really run your own business, Obama does. He is the one who puts in the 70 hour weeks and takes the risks and borrows money from

family. When I was working 70 hour weeks in IT start-ups, that wasn't me working those hours, that was Obama. That's why he's entitled to tax me so much. He was actually working weekends to earn my salary. He has a right to my salary, because I didn't really earn it.

FLASHBACK: Obama says that limited government and capitalism have never worked

Can the Episcopalian church commit apostasy and still survive?

July 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting article from BeliefNet. (You have to click through all 4 pages to get it all, and it's worth it)

Excerpt:

> The headlines coming out of the Episcopal Church's annual U.S. convention are stunning — endorsement of cross-dressing clergy, blessing same-sex marriage, the sale of their headquarters since they can't afford to maintain it.
>
> The American branch of the Church of England, founded when the Vatican balked at permitting King Henry VIII to continue annulling marriages to any wife who failed to bear him sons, is in trouble.
>
> Somehow slipping out of the headlines is a harsh reality that the denomination has been deserted in droves by an angry or ambivalent membership. Six prominent bishops are ready to take their large dioceses out of the American church and align with conservative Anglican groups in Africa and South America.

Let's see some of the bad news:

> Membership has dropped so dramatically that today there are 20 times more Baptists than Episcopalians. U.S. Catholics out-number the Episcopal Church 33-to-1. There are more Jews than Episcopalians. Twice as many Mormons as Episcopalians. Even the little African Methodist Episcopal denomination — founded in in 1787 — has passed the Episcopalians.

> Among the old mainstream denominations reporting to the National Council of Churches, the Episcopal Church suffered the worst loss of membership from 1992-2002 — plunging from 3.4 million members to 2.3 million for a 32 percent loss. In the NCC's 2012 yearbook, the Episcopal Church admitted another 2.71 percent annual membership loss.

They elected Katharine Jefferts Schori as their presiding bishop. According to the article, she mocks traditional Christian doctrines like creation, incarnation and the Trinity, and she tells everyone in the audience that they are becoming God.

> "Jefferts Schori leaves a wide wake of destruction behind with this sermon: the eternal triune God has been torn down, human beings are to boldly claim our place as God, and the sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism have been turned into things our hands make. In other words, Jefferts Schori accepts that now humanity, animals and God are one undifferentiated blob.

More:

> "Yesterday," reports Angela O'Brien from the convention, "the House of Bishops of the Episcopalian Church approved a new provisional blessing for gay unions, while the full General Convention voted in favor of general acceptance for transgender clergy.
>
> "Some Episcopalian bishops spoke out against the resolution on ame-sex blessings. Bishop Bauerschmidt, of the Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee, urged the bishops to defeat the resolution.
>
> […]A few years ago, the annual national Episcopal convention overwhelmingly refused even to consider a resolution affirming that Jesus Christ is Lord.
>
> […]At this year's convention, David Virtue reported: "In all the talk about same sex this and transgender that, there is absolutely no talk about sin. A psychologist friend of mine opined that talk of 'sin' here would be considered psychologically damaging and offensive to a lot of people, especially gays, so it is off the radar screen. 'No sin, please; we're Episcopalians.'

Another interesting editorial by Ross Douthat appeared in the New York Times yesterday, discussing this same issue.

Excerpt:

> IN 1998, John Shelby Spong, then the reliably controversial Episcopal bishop of Newark, published a book entitled "Why Christianity Must Change or Die." Spong was a uniquely radical figure — during his career, he dismissed almost every element of traditional Christian faith as so much superstition — but most recent leaders of the Episcopal Church have shared his premise. Thus their church has spent the last several decades changing and then changing some more, from a sedate pillar of the WASP establishment into one of the most self-consciously progressive Christian bodies in the United States.
>
> As a result, today the Episcopal Church looks roughly how Roman Catholicism would look if Pope Benedict XVI suddenly adopted every reform ever urged on the Vatican by liberal pundits and theologians. It still has priests and bishops, altars and stained-glass windows. But it is flexible to the point of indifference on dogma, friendly to sexual liberation in almost every form, willing to blend Christianity with other faiths, and eager to downplay theology entirely in favor of secular political causes.
>
> Yet instead of attracting a younger, more open-minded demographic with these changes, the Episcopal Church's dying has proceeded apace. Last week, while the church's House of Bishops was approving a rite to bless same-sex unions, Episcopalian church attendance figures for 2000-10 circulated in the religion blogosphere. They showed something between a decline and a collapse: In the last decade, average Sunday attendance dropped 23 percent, and not a single

> Episcopal diocese in the country saw churchgoing increase.
>
> […]Practically every denomination — Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian — that has tried to adapt itself to contemporary liberal values has seen an Episcopal-style plunge in church attendance. Within the Catholic Church, too, the most progressive-minded religious orders have often failed to generate the vocations necessary to sustain themselves.
>
> Both religious and secular liberals have been loath to recognize this crisis. Leaders of liberal churches have alternated between a Monty Python-esque "it's just a flesh wound!" bravado and a weird self-righteousness about their looming extinction. (In a 2006 interview, the Episcopal Church's presiding bishop explained that her communion's members valued "the stewardship of the earth" too highly to reproduce themselves.)

I know that some Lutheran (LCMS, LCWS) and Presbyterian (PCA) are still relatively conservative, but those other denominations like United Church of Christ, ELCA Lutherans and PCUSA Presbyterians have, in my opinion, abandoned orthodoxy.

Minimum wage: doing what feels good doesn't produce good results

July 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

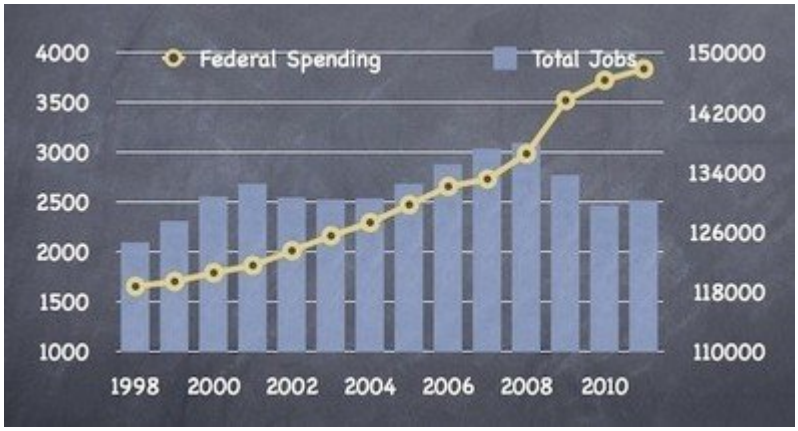

Government Spending Vs Jobs
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> How amusing to watch Democrats wring their hands over what they can do to get businesses to create jobs, when one of the biggest job killers is the minimum wage they keep hiking.
>
> Recall that it was Democrats who raised the federal wage floor a whopping $2.10 an hour in the middle of the recession. The record 41% increase has led to record unemployment among young people, especially black teens.
>
> Congress started ratcheting up the minimum wage from $5.15 an hour in mid-2007, arguing it would help abate poverty. But retailers looking to slash costs eliminated low-skilled, entry-level jobs rather than pay the mandated increases.
>
> Now 1.5 million fewer teens are working. Last year's unemployment rate for workers ages 16 to 19 shot up to 26% from 2007's 15%.
>
> As for black teens, their joblessness soared to a record 43% after the final raise to $7.25 took effect in mid-2009. It helped put more than half of young black men out of work — a first.
>
> The president proposes cranking the minimum wage even higher to $9.50. Then he wants to raise it every year thereafter as a "living wage" indexed to inflation.

Yes, this is the problem that happens when you elect someone who knows nothing whatsoever about economics. And when I say nothing, I mean he is in disagreement with virtually all economists *across the ideological spectrum*.

Moderate economist Gregory Mankiw of Harvard University lists the policies that are accepted by virtually all economists.

Here's Greg's list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:

1. A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)
2. Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)
3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

From CNBC, we get this article showing that any increase in the minimum wage will *raise* the unemployment rate for young people.

Excerpt:

> A quarter of teenagers were jobless in March, representing a surprising increase from February, even as the unemployment rate for the rest of the population decreased.
>
> This figure may only get worse if budget-strapped states raise the minimum wage, and it could also be a sign of greater structural damage underlying our economy, analysts said.
>
> The unemployment rate for 16- to 19-year olds jumped back up to 24.5 percent in March, up from 23.9 percent the prior month, according to the latest jobs data from the Labor Department.
>
> […]"Even when comprehending that teen employment is volatile in nature, the data that exists serves up some shock and awe," said Brian Sozzi, a retail research analyst with Wall Street Strategies, in a note Wednesday. "If these

> (wage) increases do go through, the prospect for teen employment will remain grim as employers search for workers with advanced skills to fill positions."
>
> Twelve states, including Illinois and Pennsylvania, are considering a hike in the minimum wage. While this has been the subject of a long-running debate, many economists and analysts say raising this pay bar may cause more teen layoffs, even as it helps teens who manage to stay employed make more.
>
> "Minimum wage increases over the past few years has definitely made it worse," said Peter Boockvar, chief equities strategist at Miller Tabak. "In fact, there should be zero minimum wage for teenagers, or at most, something much less than the current rate."
>
> Teens typically are the first to be fired and the last to be hired back in a normal economic cycle, so this rate can be considered a kind of leading indicator of employment.

A new study shows that only 25% of teens will be able to find jobs this summer. And Obama thinks that this number is apparently too high. He wants to lower it by raising the price that must be paid by employers who would like to hire younger workers.

You can find out more about how raising the minimum wage increases unemployment from this comprehensive, 50-year, government study.

Excerpt:

> Summary of Research on the Minimum Wage
>
> * The minimum wage reduces employment.
>
> Currie and Fallick (1993), Gallasch (1975), Gardner (1981), Peterson (1957), Peterson and Stewart (1969).
>
> * The minimum wage reduces employment more among teenagers than adults.
>
> Adie (1973); Brown, Gilroy and Kohen (1981a, 1981b); Fleisher (1981); Hammermesh (1982); Meyer and Wise (1981, 1983a); Minimum Wage Study Commission (1981); Neumark and Wascher (1992); Ragan (1977); Vandenbrink (1987); Welch (1974, 1978); Welch and Cunningham (1978).
>
> * The minimum wage reduces employment most among black teenage males.
>
> Al-Salam, Quester, and Welch (1981), Iden (1980), Mincer (1976), Moore (1971), Ragan (1977), Williams (1977a, 1977b).
>
> * The minimum wage helped South African whites at the expense of blacks.
>
> Bauer (1959).
>
> * The minimum wage hurts blacks generally.
>
> Behrman, Sickles and Taubman (1983); Linneman (1982).
>
> * The minimum wage hurts the unskilled.
>
> Krumm (1981).

> * The minimum wage hurts low wage workers.
>
> Brozen (1962), Cox and Oaxaca (1986), Gordon (1981).
>
> * The minimum wage hurts low wage workers particularly during cyclical downturns.
>
> Kosters and Welch (1972), Welch (1974).
>
> * The minimum wage reduces average earnings of young workers.Meyer and Wise (1983b).
>
> * The minimum wage reduces employment in low-wage industries, such as retailing.Cotterman (1981), Douty (1960), Fleisher (1981), Hammermesh (1981), Peterson (1981).
>
> * The minimum wage causes employers to cut back on training.Hashimoto (1981, 1982), Leighton and Mincer (1981), Ragan (1981).
>
> * The minimum wage encourages employers to install labor-saving devices.Trapani and Moroney (1981).
>
> * The minimum wage increases the number of people on welfare.Brandon (1995), Leffler (1978).
>
> * The minimum wage hurts the poor generally.
>
> Stigler (1946).
>
> * The minimum wage does little to reduce poverty.
>
> Bonilla (1992), Brown (1988), Johnson and Browning (1983), Kohen and Gilroy (1981), Parsons (1980), Smith and Vavrichek (1987).
>
> * The minimum wage helps unions.Linneman (1982), Cox and Oaxaca (1982).
>
> * The minimum wage increases teenage crime rates.Hashimoto (1987), Phillips (1981).
>
> * The minimum wage encourages employers to hire illegal aliens.
>
> Beranek (1982).
>
> * Few workers are permanently stuck at the minimum wage.
>
> Brozen (1969), Smith and Vavrichek (1992).
>
> * The minimum wage has reduced employment in foreign countries.Canada: Forrest (1982); Chile: Corbo (1981); Costa Rica: Gregory (1981); France: Rosa (1981).

This is why it is important for voters to understand economics. When you raise the price of labor, fewer employers will purchase labor. Supply and demand.

Why does God let people suffer? Why is there so much evil in the world?

July 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just wanted to draw your attention to this 4 page essay by Joe Manzari, which is the best darn summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen. The problem of evil is an objection to the existence of God based on the presence of evil or suffering in the world. The arguments basically infer that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then there should not *be* any evil or suffering.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An exampel of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omnipotent being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God

> can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order for the character of humans to develop through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to show* that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that premise 2 is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil that we observe more compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.

Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life. And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.

2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   We humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. Part of knowing God is knowing what he designed us to do – to love him and to love others. And so, the less we know about God, the more we stray from his design for our lives.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.
(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That’s right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again. More on this argument for God’s existence *from evil* here.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I’ve been through… but then, that’s why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

For more on the problem of evil, listen to this lecture by Douglas Geivett, professor of philosophy at Biola University. Then you *must listen* to this debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (with summary by me). Another debate transcript is here, with William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen. Here’s a book debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, published by Oxford University Press, 2004.

Obama administration sends $3.1 million more to Planned Parenthood

July 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Abortion is big business in the United States, and there's no bigger player than Planned Parenthood. Not only do they get paid for performing abortions, but they also get taxpayer money from the government.

Take a look at the latest news about those subsidies:

> After reaching an agreement to send more than $1 million over three years to a Planned Parenthood in Tennessee, the Obama administration has awarded $3.1 million in federal funds to Planned Parenthood affiliates in New Jersey.
>
> The grant announcement was made Tuesday by Sens. Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Robert Menendez, (D-NJ), two pro-abortion Democrats in the U.S. Senate who are longtime allies of Planned Parenthood. The funding comes through the Department of Health and Human Services to Planned Parenthood and other agencies.
>
> […]The new funding brings the New Jersey Family Planning League's total federal funding this year to nearly $6.3 million. The NJFPL works with Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan New Jersey, Planned Parenthood of Central and Greater Northern New Jersey, Hoboken Family Planning, and Women's Health and Counseling Center in Somerville to fund 25 locations.
>
> […]Marie Tasy, Executive Director of New Jersey Right to Life, also criticized the decision.
>
> "Last year, a Planned Parenthood affiliate in Perth Amboy, New Jersey was caught on camera showing a willingness to aid and abet sex traffickers of young women," Tasy said. "President Obama is clearly more concerned with protecting Planned Parenthood's bottom line so they can continue to support his re-election campaign at the taxpayer's expense than protecting women and girls from the violence of sex trafficking and abortion."

Planned Parenthood got $363 million dollars from the federal government in 2010.

Planned Parenthood has a very close working relationship with the Obama administration – they even boast about it:

> The Planned Parenthood abortion business has enjoyed a cozy relationship with President Barack Obama and his administration. Planned Parenthood has received millions in taxpayer funds, thanks to Obama, and its president has been a frequent visitor to the White House.
>
> Now, Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards is admitting just how close the relationship has been.

> "I've been working with this administration for the last three years on getting women better health care access in a whole host of ways," Richards says in a new interview with National Journal. Interestingly, the web site cuts off the rest of what Richards says before quoting her as saying Obamacare and its abortion funding components "is the single most important opportunity to expand women's health care access in this country that we will ever see."

What about the Republicans? Are they pro-abortion? Well, according to Dr. Michael New, 2012 had the second-highest number of pro-life laws passed at the state level.

Excerpt:

> The Guttmacher Institute recently released a report which found that states enacted 39 abortion restrictions in 2012. This means that 2012 was the second-most productive year in terms of the number of pro-life bills that were passed. The only year that was more productive was 2011, which saw the enactment of 80 pieces of pro-life legislation.
>
> […]Three states, Arizona, Georgia, and Louisiana, have passed versions of "Pain Capable Abortion Protection Act," which bans abortion after 20 weeks of gestation, when there is medical evidence that the unborn can feel pain. Utah became the first state to enact a 72-hour waiting period before having an abortion. Arizona and South Dakota strengthened their informed-consent laws by requiring counseling on the negative mental-health consequences of abortion.
>
> Mississippi's law requiring abortion providers to have admitting privileges at a local hospital has received plenty of attention due to the fact that it may result in the closure of Mississippi's lone abortion clinic. However, similar laws were signed this year in both Arizona and Tennessee. Some have speculated that the Tennessee law, which took effect July 1, may result in the closure of both abortion clinics in Knoxville.
>
> When Republicans make substantial gains in state legislatures, there typically is a short-term increase in the amount of pro-life legislation that is enacted. However, the Republican gains in 2010 have resulted in considerably more pro-life legislation than the Republican gains in 1994.

You'll remember that 2011 was the first year following the surge in elected Republicans because of the Tea Party.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Hawaii Planned Parenthood caught counseling sex-selection abortions
- Republicans ban taxpayer-funding of abortion in Arizona
- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood

- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the lawResearchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity
- Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Do Democrats pay their fair share of taxes?

July 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Funny video from American Power Blog.

That's one case, but are leftists always hypocrites like that?

Do As I Say Not As I Do

I recently listened to the audio book version of Peter Schweizer's 2004 book "Do As I Say Not As I Do". In that book, he profiles a number of leftist public figures, and he discovers that leftists don't practice what they preach, because even they know that leftist ideas *don't actually work*. I really recommend the book, so let's take a closer look at it and you'll see why you should read it, too.

Here's a 32 minute 2011 lecture about the book:

And here's an interview with the author from FrontPage magazine.

Excerpt:

> **FrontPage:** Give us some of the best examples of the gulf between some liberals' social criticisms and the ingredients of their private lives. Give us some insights, for instance, into the likes of Noam Chomsky, Michael Moore, Cornel West, Hillary Clinton, Ted Kennedy and Barbra Streisand.
>
> **Schweizer:** Looking for liberal hypocrisy is, as they say in the military, a target-rich environment. Noam Chomsky, for example, has attacked wealthy Americans who set up trusts to avoid paying inheritance taxes. But this self-professed "radical socialist" has a tax attorney and did the very same thing. (When I asked him about this hypocrisy he said it was okay because he and has family have been working on behalf of suffering people all these years.)

> Michael Moore's hypocrisy is pathological. He has said numerous times that he doesn't own a single share of stock and that capitalism is not acceptable "on any level." And yet, I found that, according to tax returns filed with the IRS, he has owned shares in Halliburton, numerous oil companies, defense contractors and other multinationals through a tax shelter. When it comes he race he's also wildly hypocritical. He says that Americans who happen to live in largely white neighbhorhoods do so because they are "racists." But he lives in Central Lake, Michigan, which according to the U.S. Census has more than 2,500 residents and not a single black person in the entire town.
>
> Cornel West has numerous times condemned middle class blacks that abandon the "chocolate cities" for the "vanilla suburbs" but guess what, his flavour of choice is vanilla, too.
>
> Ted Kennedy likes to pose as the Robin Hood of the Senate, forcing wealthy Americans to pay their taxes to help the poor. But I discovered that Kennedys record of actually paying taxes is horrible. Tax the inheritance tax. He says that

> Americans should pay 49% to the IRS when they die in the name of "social justice." But according to public records, the Kennedys have almost completely avoided contributing to "social justice" by placing their assets in trusts that are located overseas. The Kennedys, over the past thirty years, have paid less than 1% in inheritance taxes on more than $300 million. Ted Kennedy, like Hillary Clinton and George Soros, loves higher taxes. On other people.

And:

> **FrontPage:** Why do you think people are drawn to leftist ideals and what kind of people are they? Self-contempt appears to be a common ingredient, no?
>
> **Schweizer:** Yes, self-contempt is a big part of it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great German pastor who stood up to Hitler, wrote a book about "cheap grace." Liberals are guilty of cheap grace in the political sense. They feel guilty and their form of penance is embracing the destructive ideas of the progressive faith. But it's cheap grace because as I show it the book, they don't actually change the way they live. I think that the religious comparison makes sense because in many respects the modern day left represents a religious movement. They are motivated by a sense of sin, guilt, and the need for salvation and absolution in the political sense. Socialism offers salvation to them. Of course, they don't actually plan to live like socialists.

I would really recommend taking a look at this book.

Democrats and their unpaid taxes

One last parting shot: Democrats talk about how job creators and employees are greedy to not want to pay taxes on their earnings, but Democrats actually have huge amounts of unpaid taxes that they refuse to pay:

> A new report just out from the Internal Revenue Service reveals that 36 of President Obama's executive office staff owe the country $833,970 in back taxes. These people working for Mr. Fair Share apparently haven't paid any share, let alone their fair share.
>
> Previous reports have shown how well-paid Obama's White House staff is, with 457 aides pulling down more than $37 million last year. That's up seven workers and nearly $4 million from the Bush administration's last year.
>
> Nearly one-third of Obama's aides make more than $100,000 with 21 being paid the top White House salary of $172,200, each.
>
> The IRS' 2010 delinquent tax revelations come as part of a required annual agency report on federal employees' tax compliance. Turns out, an awful lot of folks being paid by taxpayers are not paying their own income taxes.
>
> The report finds that thousands of federal employees owe the country more than $3.4 billion in back taxes. That's up 3% in the past year.
>
> That scale of delinquency could annoy voters, hard-pressed by their own costs,

> fears and stubbornly high unemployment despite Joe Biden's many promises.
>
> The tax offenders include employees of the U.S. Senate who help write the laws imposed on everyone else. They owe $2.1 million. Workers in the House of Representatives owe $8.5 million, Department of Education employees owe $4.3 million and over at Homeland Security, 4,697 workers owe about $37 million. Active duty military members owe more than $100 million.
>
> The Treasury Department, where Obama nominee Tim Geithner had to pay up $42,000 in his own back taxes before being confirmed as secretary, has 1,181 other employees with delinquent taxes totaling $9.3 million.
>
> As usual, the Postal Service, with more than 600,000 workers, has the most offenders (25,640), who also owe the most — almost $270 million. Veterans Affairs has 11,659 workers owing the IRS $151 million while the Energy Department that was so quick to dish out more than $500 million to the Solyndra folks has 322 employees owing $5 million.
>
> The country's chief law enforcement agency, the Department of Justice, has 2,069 employees who are nearly $17 million behind in taxes.

Even that leftist Warren Buffett's company is in court for unpaid taxes. Leftists are hypocrites, and when we here them talk, we need to keep in mind that this isn't how they live themselves. It's just posing and preening for admiration.

Douglas Groothuis lectures on the kalam cosmological argument

July 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I watched lecture and it was excellent and comprehensive. He even talked about J.P. Moreland, Alan Padgett and other scholars. There were some things I had heard before, and some things that were new. He covered a lot of books that I had to read when I was sorting all of this stuff out, too.

Here's the description from the video:

> Doug Groothuis gives a lecture on the Kalam Cosmological Argument. What's interesting about this lecture is that Groothuis did not accept the Kalam Cosmological Argument at first but was later convinced by it.
>
> Notes:
>
> http://www.relyonchrist.com/Lecture/13.htm
> http://www.relyonchrist.com/Lecture/14.htm
>
> Kalam Cosmological Argument
>
> (Moreland, Scaling the Secular City; see also William Lane Craig, Reasonable Faith [Crossway, 1994]; Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, Creation from Nothing [Baker, 2004]; William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, God: A Debate Between a Christian and an Atheist [Oxford, 2004])
>
> Preliminary: concepts of (a) the actual infinite and (b) the potential infinite
>
> 1. The universe had a beginning
> 2. The impossibility of the actual infinite (distinguish from potential infinite)
> 3. The impossibility of traversing an actual infinite (even if it exists); forming an actual infinite through successive addition, piece by piece…
> 4. Scientific confirmation from Big Bang cosmology (absolute origination). See also John Jefferson Davis, "Genesis 1:1 and Big Bang Cosmology," in The Frontiers of Science and Faith (InterVarsity, 2002), 11 — 36; and Robert Jastrow, God and the Astronomers (revised ed., 1992).
> 5. Scientific confirmation from second law of thermodynamics.
> 6. Astronomer Fred Hoyle (who once advanced the steady state cosmology) argues against the universe being infinitely old in virtue of its hydrogen consumption. The argument can be stated as a modus tolens deduction (denying the consequent).
> 7. Can everything come from nothing without a cause? The "pop theory" (biting the metaphysical bullet)
> 8. Philosophical critique of everything from nothing…
> 9. God and time (see Greg Gansell, editor, God and Time: Four Views [InterVarsity, 2001])

> 10. Argument against an impersonal cause
> 11. Argument against God needing a cause (Bertrand Russell)
> 12. Quentin Smith's acceptance of Big Bang cosmology and denial of God's existence.
> 13. Unitary: Ockham's razor
> 14. Incorrigible, inextinguishable (having existed, God cannot fail to exist)
> 15. Personal, volitional ("personal explanation"—R. Swinburne)
> 16. Omnipotent: nothing is a greater expenditure of power than exnihilating the entire cosmos. This is rational to hold, given the argument.
> 17. Supplies the necessary conditions for impeccable and omnipotent goodness: (1) – (4). Need (5) moral argument and (6) the Incarnation for the final necessary condition, which, with (1) – (4), make for necessary and sufficient conditions.

What I liked about this lecture is that it kept my attention all the way through. It was very fun to listen to, because he considers a ton of alternative views and explains his view, which doesn't agree with Bill Craig all the way. There is a 17 minute Q&A period at the end.

The consequences of the feminization of education in the UK

July 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail. The article starts with an excellent explanation of what male teachers bring to the classroom when they are not regulated by politically correct feminists, using one Eric Sutton as an example.

Then there is this:

> Which brings me to the reason I'm taking a trip down Memory Lane today — the news that there has been a significant increase in the number of men training as primary school teachers.
>
> For the past 40-odd years, the feminisation of state education has been a disaster. There are more than 4,250 schools in Britain where not a single male teacher can be found in the staff room. The Eric Suttons of this world are as extinct as the stegosaurus.
>
> Coupled with the trendy, 'child-centred' teaching methods indoctrinated by Marxist training colleges, this has been responsible for a collapse in discipline and an alarming increase in illiteracy.
>
> Generations of boys have been utterly betrayed by the system set up to educate them — many written off as suffering from a bewildering array of fashionable 'hyperactivity disorders' and pumped full of mind-bending drugs simply because young female teachers have no idea how to control or inspire them.
>
> Mr Sutton didn't need Ritalin to bring an unruly child to order, just a well-aimed blackboard eraser.
>
> With no competitive sport to channel their physical excesses — a consequence of the pernicious 'all-must-have-prizes' culture identified by Melanie Phillips — and zero intellectual stimulation, young men are leaving school unsuited to the adult world.
>
> The rise in single motherhood and absentee fathers, coupled with a monopoly of female primary school teachers, means that countless thousands of boys reach puberty without having encountered a male role model, apart from the local 'gangstas'.
>
> Our sick society, which considers any man who wants to work with children to be a potential paedophile, has helped to turn primary schools into testosterone-free zones.
>
> A male teacher who volunteered to take young boys and girls swimming would be lucky to escape without a knock on the door from the nonce squad or a petrol bomb being lobbed through his front window.
>
> Those hardy male souls who have taken the plunge report hostility and

> ‘intimidation’ from all-female staff rooms — which tends to suggest they are probably not cut out for dealing with a class full of seven-year-old savages, either.
>
> All this combined with relatively low wages has conspired against encouraging any young family man to become a primary school teacher.
>
> The good news is that recent changes which allow teachers to earn a salary while they train in school have begun to attract more men into the profession. And the Government has launched a campaign to persuade male graduates to take up a career in primary education.
>
> The numbers applying have risen by 51 per cent, albeit from a low base.
>
> Eric Sutton would have approved.

Boys simply do not learn well from female teachers, and they especially don’t learn well when they are distracted by girls. Boys are in rapid retreat as a result of these policies. Not only that, but feminism’s emphasis on sex education and recreational premarital sex does nothing to encourage men to take on the traditional male roles and commit to a woman in order to get sex in the context of marriage. Much of the idiotic “man up” rhetoric on the right and left fails to recognize these three factors which discourage men from stepping into their roles as leaders, providers and protectors.

I think that more male teachers is a good sign for the success of boys in the UK, because boys who lack male leadership from fathers and teachers do not easily accept the roles that society needs them to play – including protecting, providing and leading on moral and spiritual issues. It’s nice to see that the UK is taking steps to come out of the long dark night of feminism, even as America dips further and further into it, with the decline of males aided by government intervention. Maybe the collapse of the traditional family needs to happen realize the harm that feminism has done to children, and especially to young men.

New Ernst and Young report: proposed tax increases will cost 710,000 jobs

July 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the news from The Hill:

> Allowing tax rates for the country's highest earners to rise, an idea endorsed by top Democrats, would have a dire effect on the economic recovery, according to a new report prepared for business groups that was released Tuesday.
>
> The study from Ernst & Young found that letting tax rates for the wealthiest Americans lapse would sap $200 billion and some 700,000 jobs out of the economy, reduce wages by 1.8 percent and lead to a decrease in investment.
>
> "These results may suggest to policy makers that allowing the top tax rates to increase comes with economic consequences," Ernst & Young's Robert Caroll and Gerald Prante wrote in the report for the Independent Community Bankers of America, the National Federation of Independent Business, the S Corporation Association and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.
>
> "Long-run output can be expected to fall, and, depending on the use of the revenues, living standards, as reflected by workers‟ real after-tax wages, may also be lower."
>
> Top Republicans, including House GOP leaders and committee chairmen, jumped on the Tuesday report, as they continue to battle with President Obama and Democrats over how to proceed on tax issues and the broader fiscal cliff.
>
> Obama reiterated last week his plan to only extend the Bush-era rates for annual family incomes up to $250,000 for another year, a proposal many congressional Democrats have coalesced behind. Republicans on the Hill want to extend all current rates for a year.

The key findings are here on the House Ways and Means Committee's web site:

> **Lower wages, fewer jobs and less investment**
>
> - Output in the long-run would fall by 1.3 percent, or $200 billion in today's economy.
> - Employment in the long-run would fall by 0.5 percent, meaning roughly 710,000 fewer jobs in today's economy.
> - Capital stock and investment in the long-run would fall by 1.4 percent and 2.4 percent, respectively.
> - Real after-tax wages would fall by 1.8 percent, reflecting a decline in workers' living standards relative to what would have occurred otherwise.
>
> **Every state in the U.S. feels the impact of tax hikes**

> - The report, which offers a state-by-state look at the impact on economic output and employment, finds that every state is affected negatively by the tax increases contemplated by the Obama Administration.

Ernst & Young is one of the top financial firms in the world. The report is entitled "Long-run macroeconomic impact of increasing tax rates on high-income taxpayers in 2013".

Even though Obama has increased our debt by nearly 6 trillion in less than four years, that money hasn't created any jobs because government is not efficient at creating jobs that last. When you take money away from people who create jobs, you lose the jobs. Wasting money on green energy firms that go bankrupt is a great plan to pay back your campaign fundraisers, but it's not a good plan to create jobs. Bailing out labor unions with billions of taxpayer dollars so that they can create electric cars that catch fire is not the right way to create jobs, either. That's what the stimulus was – $800 billion dollars taken out of the hands of businesses and sent directly to Obama's allies. We need to get the government out of our business if we want job creation.

Obama ends welfare reform and calls for $12.7 trillion of new welfare spending

July 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation explains the 1996 Welfare Reform Act and its detractors. Excerpt:

> Last Thursday, the Obama Administration quietly issued new bureaucratic rules that overturned the popular welfare reform law of 1996. This was an illegal move, and it completely undoes years of progress that helped millions of Americans.
>
> The 1996 reform replaced the old Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program with a new program called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). At the core of the TANF program were new federal work standards that required able-bodied welfare recipients to work, prepare for work, or at least look for work as a condition for receiving aid. Welfare reform turned "welfare" into "workfare."
>
> Under the old, pre-reform AFDC program, welfare was a one-way handout: Government mailed checks to recipients who did nothing in return. Reform changed that. The new TANF program was based on fairness and reciprocal responsibility: Taxpayers continued to provide aid, but beneficiaries were required, in exchange, to engage in constructive behavior to increase self-sufficiency and reduce dependence.
>
> The TANF work requirements were not onerous. Under the law, some 40 percent of adult TANF recipients in a state were required to engage in "work activities," which is defined as unsubsidized employment, subsidized employment, on-the-job training, attending high school or a GED program, vocational education, community service work, job search, or job readiness training. Participation was part-time, 20 hours per week for mothers with children under six and 30 hours for mothers with older children.
>
> […]As welfare dependence fell and employment increased, child poverty among the affected groups fell dramatically. For a quarter century before the reform, poverty among black children and single mothers had remained frozen at high levels. Immediately after the reform, poverty for both groups experienced dramatic and unprecedented drops, quickly reaching all-time lows.
>
> None of this reduced the left's antipathy for welfare reform. The left had strongly opposed work requirements in welfare in 1996. When TANF faced reauthorization in 2001, they again aggressively sought to repeal federal work standards; they repeated the attack in 2006. For the most part, they lost those battles. But they were not done.
>
> […]Having lost repeated legislative battles to abolish workfare, the left has now

> gone backdoor, using an arcane bureaucratic device called a section 1115 waiver to declare the actual work standards written in the TANF law null and void and grant federal bureaucrats carte blanche authority to devise new replacement standards.

Now that we are in an election year, I expect to see a lot of promises by the Democrats of more and more handouts, bailouts and rewards to all of their various constituencies. And all paid for by the job creators in the private sector, and their hard-working employees. After all, “the private sector is fine” and “if you’ve got a business — you didn’t build that. Somebody else made that happen”.

One third of young women admits regret for the way they lost their virginity

July 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A recent survey of teenage girls conducted by Glasgow University revealed that in Britain — which has the third highest number of sexually active 13 to 15-year-olds in the world (only Denmark and Iceland have more) — more than a third of young women regret their decision to have sex so early.
>
> A worrying 38 per cent of teenage girls regretted losing their virginity, and a fifth said they felt pressured to do so.
>
> […]…becoming sexually active at an early age can have devastating lifelong consequences, according to clinical psychologist Dr Michael Mantell. 'It's a psychological disaster waiting to happen,' he says. 'It leads to empty relationships and low self-worth.
>
> 'The experience creates worry, regret, self-recrimination, guilt, loss of self-respect, shaken trust, depression, stunted personal development, damaged relationships and relationship skills. It can also have a negative impact on marriage, should one ever take place.'
>
> […]'It has become the norm in our culture to be embarrassed if you have not had sex, as if there is something wrong with you, but, in my view, young people should be discouraged from rushing into it.'
>
> The prospects of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases loom large in underage sex. But psychological damage is just as real a threat, according to Dr Mantell.
>
> 'Having sex carries a sense of "being adult" for teenagers,' he says. 'This leads to the notion they can do other things that adults do, which is why data suggests teenagers who begin having sex at a significantly earlier time in their lives than their peers are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour.'
>
> There are other worries too, says Dr Mantell. 'Girls who become sexually active in their teens are more than three times as likely to be depressed as those who don't.
>
> 'A girl's self-worth is often damaged and she can come to rely on external evaluations of herself — "If I looked better, he would have stayed longer," or "If I gave better sex, he would have wanted more."
>
> 'She knows she's been "used", which affects her ability to express affection and appreciation, and will always leave her wondering if it's only about sex, and not

> her own particular qualities.'
>
> […]Psychologist Dr Mantell says when a girl experiences sex early in life and free of commitment, she learns an erroneous message that sex means nothing. 'Her experience is that nothing happened as a result of her having sex, which creates the belief that sex and commitment have nothing to do with each other.
>
> 'Later this can be carried into marriage, where the girl may believe that sex is not an important part of marriage when, clearly, it is.'
>
> Dr Mantell says there is a physiological issue here, too. 'Oxytocin is a chemical released into the system with sexual behaviour and is often linked to pregnancy and breast-feeding. It bonds people, one to another. When a young woman has multiple partners, some studies suggest her level of oxytocin is diminished, which can have longer-lasting effects — such as leading to bonding difficulties in marriage.'

The article has multiple frightening examples of how specific women lost their virginity and then experienced negative outcomes. I really recommend that everyone click through to the story (I linked to the printable version of the story, so no ads) and then read the cases of Kristen and Kimberley.

Related posts

- Congressional report: abstinence education is the best form of sex education
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- Why Christian men should be chaste

William Lane Craig vs. John Shelby Spong on the resurrection of Jesus

July 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig is the greatest Christian debater in the history of the church, and Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong is a very liberal non-Christian.

Part 1 of 2: (61 minutes)

Part 2 of 2: (42 minutes)

The moderator is none other than the famous journalist David Aikman! The opening speeches are only 15 minutes, and the rebuttals are 10 minutes. This debate is accessible because Craig's opponent is not really attacking him on a scholarly basis, but more as the pretty typical liberal atheist that you meet at work.

Craig spends all of his opening speech explaining historical methods, sources, dating and how he infers the resurrection as the best explanation of the minimal facts. The resurrection of Jesus is quite awesome to debate when people are given time to explain the historical methods and how the scholars use these methods to evaluate which facts are likely to be historical and which are not.

New study finds that boys benefit from bonding with Dads in first three months

July 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, an article from Dina from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Dr Paul Ramchandani, who led the Oxford University study, said behavioural problems in early childhood often lead to health and psychological problems in adulthood which can be difficult to overcome.
>
> But he said most research on how parents affect a baby's behaviour and development has focused on mothers, when fathers also play an important role. The research team recruited 192 families from maternity units and experts filmed the mothers and fathers separately as they played with their children at home in different situations – looking at how caring or engaged they were.
>
> The parents did psychological tests, while the children's behaviour was assessed examining whether they were fretful, disobedient, had tantrums or in the worst cases showed aggression by hitting and biting.
>
> 'We found that children whose fathers were more engaged in the interactions had better outcomes, with fewer subsequent behavioural problems,' said Dr Ramchandani.
>
> 'At the other end of the scale children tended to have greater behavioural problems when their fathers were more remote and lost in their own thoughts, or when their fathers interacted less with them.
>
> 'This association tended to be stronger for boys than for girls, suggesting that perhaps boys are more susceptible to the influence of their father from a very early age.'
>
> The study, which is published today in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, found the three-month-olds with less engaged fathers were more likely to be in the 10 per cent of children who displayed the beginnings of behavioural problems at one year old.

This is surprising to me, and it conflicts with my idea of avoiding the little monsters until they are ready to learn apologetics at the age of 6. Now because of this study, I would have to be involved with the children right away, if I ever have any. Well, live and learn!

Now add to that study this article on single motherhood from the leftist New York Times that Stuart Schneiderman found.

Excerpt:

> The economic storms of recent years have raised concerns about growing inequality and questions about a core national faith, that even Americans of

humble backgrounds have a good chance of getting ahead. Most of the discussion has focused on labor market forces like falling blue-collar wages and lavish Wall Street pay.

But striking changes in family structure have also broadened income gaps and posed new barriers to upward mobility. College-educated Americans like the Faulkners are increasingly likely to marry one another, compounding their growing advantages in pay. Less-educated women like Ms. Schairer, who left college without finishing her degree, are growing less likely to marry at all, raising children on pinched paychecks that come in ones, not twos.

Estimates vary widely, but scholars have said that changes in marriage patterns — as opposed to changes in individual earnings — may account for as much as 40 percent of the growth in certain measures of inequality. Long a nation of economic extremes, the United States is also becoming a society of family haves and family have-nots, with marriage and its rewards evermore confined to the fortunate classes.

[…]About 41 percent of births in the United States occur outside marriage, up sharply from 17 percent three decades ago. But equally sharp are the educational divides, according to an analysis by Child Trends, a Washington research group. Less than 10 percent of the births to college-educated women occur outside marriage, while for women with high school degrees or less the figure is nearly 60 percent.

[…]While many children of single mothers flourish (two of the last three presidents had mothers who were single during part of their childhood), a large body of research shows that they are more likely than similar children with married parents to experience childhood poverty, act up in class, become teenage parents and drop out of school.

[…]Four decades ago, families in the top income fifth spent about four times as much as those at the bottom fifth on things like sports, music and private schools, according to research byGreg J. Duncan of the University of California, Irvine, and Richard J. Murnane of Harvard. Now affluent families spend seven times as much.

Two parents also bring two parenting perspectives. Ms. Faulkner does bedtime talks. Mr. Faulkner does math. When Ms. Faulkner’s coaxing failed to persuade Jeremy to try hamburgers, Mr. Faulkner offered to jump in a pool fully clothed if he took a bite — an offer Jeremy found too tempting to refuse.

While many studies have found that children of single parents are more likely to grow up poor, less is known about their chances of advancement as adults. But there are suggestions that the absence of a father in the house makes it harder for children to climb the economic ladder.

Scott Winship of the Brookings Institution examined the class trajectories of 2,400 Americans now in their mid-20s. Among those raised in the poorest third as

> teenagers, 58 percent living with two parents moved up to a higher level as adults, compared with just 44 percent of those with an absent parent.
>
> A parallel story played out at the top: just 15 percent of teenagers living with two parents fell to the bottom third, compared with 27 percent of teenagers without both parents.
>
> “You’re more likely to rise out of the bottom if you live with two parents, and you’re less likely to fall out of the top,” Mr. Winship said.

That article has some poignant illustrations of what fatherlessness does to a child.

Still think that single motherhood by choice is a great idea? Now if you were a legislator, tell me what legislation you would introduce to make sure that the government was encouraging fatherhood and discouraging single motherhood. How would you make marriage and fathers in the home easier for men, and single motherhood harder for women? It’s a policy problem – we have to change the incentives if we want to protect the children. How would you communicate to women that they need to get married before they have children, and how would you help them to know how to evaluate a man so that they can tell if he will make a good husband and father, and perform the traditional male roles in the family?

Doug Groothuis interviewed by Michael Brown on his radio show

July 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary mentioned this radio show episode to me, and now I can share it with you, because the MP3 has been posted. You simply must listen to this inspiring interview.

Here's Dr. Groothuis' bio:

> Douglas R. Groothuis (Ph.D., Philosophy, University of Oregon) is professor of philosophy at Denver Seminary in Denver, Colorado. He has also been a visiting professor or adjunct faculty member at Fuller Theological Seminary (Colorado Springs extension), Metropolitan State College of Denver, Westminster Theological Seminary (California campus), University of Oregon, New College Berkeley and Seattle Pacific University.
>
> His articles have been published in professional journals such as*Religious Studies, Sophia, Theory and Research in Education, Philosophia Christi, Themelios, Think: A Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy, Christian Scholar's Review, Inquiry* and*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society.* He has written several books, including *Truth Decay, In Defense of Natural Theology* (coeditor),*Unmasking the New Age, Jesus in an Age of Controversy, Deceived by the Light, The Soul in Cyberspace*, and, in the Wadsworth Philosophers Series,*On Pascal* and *On Jesus*. Read more here.

The MP3 file is here. (99 minutes, 57 Mb)

Here's a summary of the topics:

- the relationship between Christianity and philosophy
- which Christian thinker inspired Dr. Groothuis to study apologetics (it's Francis Schaeffer)
- is apologetics mandatory and non-negotiable for *every* Christian, or is it optional?
- what is fideism? is fideism Biblical? should Christians avoid education? are faith are reason opposed?
- was Jesus good at making logical arguments? was Jesus an intelligent person?
- how Christianity addresses the problems of purpose and meaning for individuals
- what are the major sections of Doug's new book on Christian Apologetics?

And there are questions from callers. The first question is on faith vs. knowledge, and what the Bible says about them. And there's another point about the importance and significance of Jesus' suffering, and how it fits in to the problem of evil and suffering. He talks about how an atheist professor is using his apologetics book as a text book at the very very secular University of Colorado at Boulder (blech!), and invited him to speak to his students. He contrasts Christian theism with naturalism and the role that science

plays in apologetics. He goes over the two best scientific arguments for God's existence.

Dr. Groothuis is on Facebook and Twitter. He has nearly 2500 Facebook friends and nearly 2000 Twitter followers. He is one of my favorite Christian scholars, because he has a worldview that fully integrates every topic you can possibly imagine. He is very, very evangelical – and not ashamed of it. A very passionate, authentic and influential Christian, who just happens to be a first class scholar and teacher. I think this interview has a very clear message, especially to young men: if you learn apologetics, God will use you. You will have adventures if you only take the time to arm yourself through study.

You can get a copy of Dr. Groothuis' "Christian Apologetics" book. It won the 2012 Christianity Today Award of Merit. I really recommend the book.

I also posted a lecture that Dr. Groothuis delivered on the kalam cosmological argument earlier in the week.

I am also a big fan of the interviewer, Dr. Michael Brown, who is solid on the same-sex marriage issue, and I have featured one of his debates on same-sex marriage before on this blog.

What is intelligent design? Dr. Stephen C. Meyer explains the theory

July 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell". (H/T Chris S.)

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (30 MB)

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell

- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

UPDATE: You can see Dr. Stephen C. Meyer debate Dr. Peter Ward as well.

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

Democrat Steny Hoyer: unemployment checks and food stamps stimulate the economy

July 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why are we in a recession? Maybe it's because the people running the country believe that unemployment checks and welfare are better than earned paychecks for "stimulating" the economy.

Here's CNS News to explain what Democrats are trying to achieve:

> House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) said Tuesday that food stamps and unemployment insurance are the two "most stimulative" things you can do for the economy.
>
> During a pen and pad briefing with reporters on Capitol Hill, Hoyer was asked if any Democrats are "reconsidering the wisdom" of letting the Bush tax cuts expire at year's end for the top income earners given the still struggling U.S. economy.
>
> "I haven't talked to any who are of that mind," said Hoyer. "If you talk to economists, they will tell you there are two things that are the most stimulative that you can do — one's unemployment insurance, the other's food stamps, okay?"
>
> "Why is that?" he said. "Because those folks who receive those resources must spend them. And they'll spend them almost upon receipt. Most economists with whom I talk believe that those with significant discretionary income, that that's not the case."
>
> Unless action is taken by Congress, the Bush tax cuts will expire on Jan. 1, 2013. Originally enacted in 2001 and 2003, President Barack Obama and Congress renewed the cuts for all income-brackets for two years in 2010.
>
> […]The Congressional Budget Office (CBO has projected that if the Bush tax cuts are allowed to expire at the end of 2012, coupled with the defense cut sequester, it will lead to a 1.3 percent contraction in GDP after Jan. 1, 2013.

If the Bush tax cuts are allowed to expire, it is expected that 710,000 people will lose their jobs. This will achieve the Democrats goal of "stimulating the economy" with higher unemployment and more food stamps. This continues the Democrat plan of increasing the record number of people on welfare and food stamps. They will pay for this "stimulus" by adding more debt to the $8 trillion they have already run up since January 2007. The debt will be paid by young people and children. The real plan behind making millions of people dependent on government is, of course, to be able to buy their votes and to control them. Democrats are the anti-freedom party. You have too much freedom when you have a job. It leads to "inequality". If everyone received their daily bread from the government, and rode on mass transit to labor camps instead of driving in cars, and slept

in identical apartments with identical furniture and identical television programs to watch, then the world would be more equal. And equality is what Democrats want most.

So what is the Republican alternative plan for the economy? To let job creating businesses keep their own money and hire people to do work. Republicans want to stop taxing and regulating job creating businesses so that people can be put back to work, and have the confidence to spend money. That's how you stimulate the economy – we know this because it has worked for Reagan and Bush before. Obama's approach has *never* worked. The Democrats have been running the show since January 2007. And that's why we are down 5 million jobs since Steny Hoyer became the House Whip in January of 2007. This is not going to end until the Democrats are voted out.

Should abortion be legal? Scott Klusendorf vs Nadine Strossen

July 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Abortion can be a complicated issue, but the nice thing about Scott is that he cuts right to the core of the debate and makes sure to clarify what each side is saying. He strips away the rhetoric and gets down to the real arguments on each side and the pro-life side comes out on top.

Relevant resources

Recently, Scott taught two classes on the techniques that he uses when debating abortion.

The first talk was on Tactics. Here is the PDF. In the handout, Scott explains how to use questions to make your opponent give reasons for their views instead of just asserting them.

The second talk was on Relativism. Here is the PDF. In the handout, Scott explains what moral relativism is, and some of the problems with the view.

You can find out more about Scott's organization, the Life Training Institute, on their web page. He is the #1 pro-life debater in the United States, in my opinion. I have met Scott, and he is someone I personally admire. His book "The Case for Life" is the best introduction to pro-life apologetics that you can get. With that book, *anyone* can learn to be confident and bold when defending the right of unborn children to live.

Should gay marriage be legal? Michael Brown vs Eric Smaw

July 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must-see debate! (And you can buy Michael Brown's new book here if you like it – I bought two copies)

About the debate:

> On April 21, 2011 at 7:30pm at UCF's Health and Public Affairs Building (Room 119), Rollins College professor, Dr. Eric Smaw and author and seminary professor Dr. Michael L. Brown will debate the question "Should same sex marriage be legalized in America?" The event will be held at 4000 Central Florida Blvd and is open to the public. After the formal portion of the debate, Brown and Smaw will field questions from the audience.

About the speakers:

> **Dr. Smaw** will be responding in the affirmative. He earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Law from the University of Kentucky in 2005. His areas of expertise are philosophy of law, international law, human rights, ethics, and modern philosophy. He has published articles on human rights, terrorism, and cosmopolitanism. His most recent publication is "Swaying in the Balance: Civil Liberties, National Security, and Justice in Times of Emergency".
>
> **Dr. Brown** will be responding in the negative. He earned his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and is a nationally known evangelical lecturer and radio host. He is the author of numerous scholarly articles and twenty books, including the recently published study "A Queer Thing Happened to America", which is quickly being recognized as the definitive work on the history and effects of gay activism on American culture.

Here are the first two parts:

Part 1 of 10:

Part 2 of 10:

The rest of the segments are here.

Summaries of the opening speeches

Summary of Dr. Brown's opening speech:

There is no compelling reasons by the state should change the definition of marriage

The reason the state conveys benefits for marriage is because marriage is beneficial for the state

Traditional marriage is recognized by the state for several reasons:
– it domesticates men

– it protects women
– it provides a stable, nurturing environment for children

Marriage has three public purposes:
– to bind men and women together for RESPONSIBLE procreation
– to get the benefit
– to provide children with two parents who are bonded to them biologically
– to create the next generation of people to keep the society going

Normally, opposite sex couples create children

Homosexual couples can NEVER create children together

Men and women are differences that are complementary

Monogamy is the norm for opposite sex couples.

For gay men, open relationships / cheating is the norm.
This is because women have a tempering effect on sexuality.

There is no evidence that recognizing same-sex civil unions and marriages have changed this trend.

Same-sex marriage guarantees that children will either not have a father or a mother
So which of the sexes is dispensable when raising children?

For example, consider Dawn Stefanowicz, who grew up with a gay father and no mother
She never got a chance to see a man model love and protect a women within a marriage
That makes an enormous difference in a woman's life – in the way she relates to men

Even with scientific advancements, every baby has a mother and a father

If we change the definition of marriage so that it is based on consent, then why limit it to just two people
If marriage is not the union of male and female, then why have only TWO people
In Canada, you have civil liberties lawyers arguing for for polygamy
In the United States, Professor David Epstein was in a consensual relationship with his daughter
Should incestuous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?
Should polyamorous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?

Sexual orientation is not the same as race
Men are women are different in significant ways, but different races are not
You need separate bathrooms for men and women, but not for people of different races

Summary of Dr. Smaw's opening speech: (He ended his speech after only 10 minutes)

You can redefine marriage so that it no longer based on the public purposes he mentioned (controlling procreation, fusing complementary male and female natures, providing children with mothers and fathers who are biologically linked to them, providing children with a comparatively stable development environment that offers comparatively less instability, promiscuity and domestic violence rates compared to cohabitation, etc.), but is instead based on consent and feelings, and that redefinition of marriage won't

open marriage up to polygamy, polyamory, etc.

If you like feminism, then you should allow same-sex marriage

If you like abortion rights, then you should allow same-sex marriage

Homosexuals participate in society by working at various jobs, so they are participating in society

Homosexuals should be given the same tax breaks as married people because they work at various jobs for money

Working at a job for money achieves the same public purpose as procreating and staying together to raise children in a stable environment

You can listen to the rest for the rebuttals, and cross-examination. Oh yes – there was cross-examination! It starts two thirds of the way through Part 5, if you want to jump to it. And sparks were flying! There is also Q&A from the audience of students.

This is such a great debate – I love to hear two passionate guys disagreeing about something. I love to hear both sides of the issues. There is always something to learn by listening to the other side. It makes me more effective and more tolerant when I stand up to defend my side of the argument.

By the way, my own secular case against same-sex marriage is right here, if you want to see how I would debate this issue. Also check out the recent studies on the effects of gay parenting on children.

Related posts

- How would allowing gays to marry affect your life?
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?
- Republicans hire top lawyer to defend traditional marriage against Democrats
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Queen’s University feminist professor says that polygamy should be permitted
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- Frank Turek lists ten alleged facts about same-sex marriage
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Gay federal judge rules traditional marriage unconstitutional in California
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- Do Democrats like Chai Feldblum believe in religious liberty?

- Do Democrats like Martha Coakley believe in religious liberty?
- How Harriet Harman's Equality Bill will impact religious liberty
- Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- What happens when same-sex marriage conflicts with religious liberty?
- Can a person disagree without being hateful or inciting violence?

Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)

July 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [8.2/10]

IMDB median rating: [9/10]

Description:

> John Ford's The Quiet Man celebrates one of Hollywood's most romantic and enduring epics. The first American feature to be filmed in Ireland's picturesque countryside, Ford richly imbued this masterpiece with his love of Ireland and its people. Sean Thornton is an American who swears off boxing after accidentally killing an opponent. Returning to the Irish town of his birth, he finds happiness when he falls in love with the fiery Mary Kate. Though he is sorely tempted to pick up the gloves against her brother, the town bully, Sean is determined not to use his fists. Mary Kate and Sean wed but her brother refuses to pay the dowry. Sean would rather walk away than accept this challenge. Even when his new wife accuses him of cowardice, Sean stands firm. But when she boards a train to leave, he is finally ready to take matters into his own hands.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)

- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Do gun-free zones prevent incidents like the Colorado theater shooting?

July 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

"Dang. Now what do we do?"

Do criminals about to do a mass shooting care about signs?
(Thanks to TM for the image)

In light of the shooting at the Colorado theater, which is apparently a gun-free zone, I want to review why I think that gun-free zones should be renamed slaughterhouse zones.

Here's Dr. John R. Lott to make the case.

Excerpt:

> It wasn't supposed to happen in England, with its very strict gun-control laws. And yet last week, Derrick Bird shot twelve people to death and wounded eleven others in the northwestern county of Cumbria. A headline in the London Times read: "Toughest laws in the world could not stop Cumbria tragedy."
>
> But surely this was an aberration. Because America has the most guns, multiple-victim public shootings are an American thing, right? No, not at all. Contrary to public perception, Western Europe, most of whose countries have much tougher gun laws than the United States, has experienced many of the worst multiple-victim public shootings. Particularly telling, all the multiple-victim public shootings in Western Europe have occurred in places where civilians are not permitted to carry guns. The same is true in the United States: All the public shootings in which more than three people have been killed have occurred in

> places where civilians may not legally bring guns.
>
> Look at recent history. Where have the worst K–12 school shootings occurred? Nearly all of them in Europe. The very worst one occurred in a high school in Erfurt, Germany, in 2002, where 18 were killed. The second-worst took place in Dunblane, Scotland, in 1996, where 16 kindergartners and their teacher were killed. The third-worst, with 15 dead, happened in Winnenden, Germany. The fourth-worst was in the U.S. — Columbine High School in 1999, leaving 13 dead. The fifth-worst, with eleven murdered, occurred in Emsdetten, Germany.
>
> It may be a surprise to those who believe in gun control that Germany was home to three of the five worst attacks. Though not quite as tight as the U.K.'s regulations, Germany's gun-control laws are some of the most restrictive in Europe. German gun licenses are valid for only three years, and to obtain one, the person must demonstrate such hard-to-define characteristics as trustworthiness, and must also convince authorities that he needs a gun. This is on top of prohibitions on gun ownership for those with mental disorders, drug or alcohol addictions, violent or aggressive tendencies, or felony convictions.
>
> The phenomenon is not limited to school attacks. Multiple-victim public shootings in general appear to be at least as common in Western Europe as they are here. The following is a partial list of attacks since 2001. As mentioned, all of them occurred in gun-free zones — places where guns in the hands of civilians are outlawed.

He then lists about two dozen incidents – all occurring in gun free zones.

Related posts

- Do gun registries solve crimes? Learning from the Canadian experience
- Eric Holder wants to brainwash people against legal gun ownership
- Could tougher gun control laws lower the violent crime rate?
- Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home
- Crime rates in Chicago and DC drop after gun control laws are struck down
- Do gun control laws cause crime rates to go down?
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Do guns reduce crime? Watch this debate and hear both sides
- Liberal MSNBC says that more legal firearm ownership reduces crime rates
- Tom Sowell on gun control and judicial activism

The Elusive Wapiti updates his “Marry a Zealot” post

July 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Elusive Wapiti updates his marital advice for young Christian men.

He begins like tis:

> Ten months ago, I published the second installment in the ‘Advice to My Sons’ series, titled “Marry a Zealot“, in which I exhort them and others to become fervent Believers–and seek out other Believers as mates–to best insure them against the ravages of divorce should they marry.
>
> The point of that post was to highlight the additional protection that serious religious conviction, as indicated by active religious attendance, provides them against divorce, an important consideration for men in the post-Christian West nowadays. By way of contrast, a secondary point of that post was to show that mere self-identification or occasional participation in religious services exposed a fellow of the marrying kind to greater risk of marital disruption than if he and/or his wife had no religious affiliation at all.
>
> Since the link to the pdf that supported that post has since disappeared, I did some spadework to recover the data that supports this advice. I was able to locate it here, on page 9 of the scholarly article Bad News about the Good News–The Construction of the Christian-Failure Narrative, *Journal of Religion & Society*, volume 14. The article drew the data shown in the following tables from the General Social Survey, 1980-2009.

His main concern is how religious belief correlates with divorce.

Here shows the evidence then says this:

> When one takes one’s faith seriously enough to put it into action, as measured in this case by attending church at least once per week, this behavior appears to yield anti-divorce benefits. Yet I am thoroughly unimpressed with a 38% divorce rate for Evangelicals, a group whose noisy claims to family values are belied by their itchy dissolutive trigger fingers. Moreover, the picture for active black Protestants remains dark and grim; their marriages garner no protection whatsoever from church attendance. The data for Roman Catholics is much more encouraging, and it seems that the RCC has been more effective than Protestant denominations at countering the scourge of divorce. Perhaps the theological rigidity and hierarchical structure associated with Marianism makes it less vulnerable to socio-political contagions like feminism and divorce, while the, ahem, diversity, of Protestantism makes it more prone to worldly influences.

I think that it is a good idea in general for young men to not leave marriage at the level of feelings. I have posted before a list of questions to find out if a woman is a zealot. I think that young Christian men should read Wapiti’s post and then my post and then act

accordingly.

Be your child's parent first, and not just their friend

July 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A generation of children are growing up badly behaved because their parents are too afraid to discipline them, a leading clinical psychologist and broadcaster has warned.
>
> The rise of the so-called 'friend-parent' – who tries to be their child's equal rather than their boss – means youngsters are approaching adolescence ill-equipped for the read world, according to Professor Tanya Byron.
>
> Professor Byron, who featured on the BBC series House of Tiny Tearaways, said she is treating children at her clinic with behavioural problems as a direct result of such parenting tactics.
>
> She said: 'Children as young as six are brought to my clinics by parents who are anxious that any time they try to set a boundary, the child becomes distressed.
>
> 'In this age of the "friend-parent", such children are then swaddled, protected and essentially regressed for fear of upsetting them.'
>
> She said parents are so preoccupied with getting their children on their side that they are waiting on them hand and foot – denying them important life skills.
>
> […]**She warned that without boundaries and chores, a child's development could be impaired.**

Here's something about the importance of having a stay-at-home mother who is engaged in educating the children and forming their character:

> Psychologist Dr Aric Sigman said the 'friend-parent' phenomenon could be explained by the fact that women are choosing to start families when they are older.
>
> He said: 'There is the feeling that by saying "no" to your children or being in charge somehow damages your relationship with them.
>
> **'Parents today, in particular mothers, are much older than ever before. They are also likely to be working as well.**
>
> **'The result is children are seeing their parents for less hours a day, so if the children start displaying challenging behaviour because they haven't had the attention they need, they feel guilty and let it go, rather than disciplining them for it and risk them getting upset.'**

Definitely the permissiveness of working mothers and the marginalization of fathers in the home is a huge factor in explaining why children are so immature.

This article makes me think about the way that I am always trying to lead other Christians and get them to read more, learn more and carry out better plans so that they are more effective as Christians. I like to push them in a particular direction, give them rewards for progress, and set boundaries to keep them on the path. If they are going off the path, then I feel justified in disciplining them by removing privileges or rewards and giving them the silent treatment, etc. Some people call that bullying – but it's really just leading. And that's what parents do – they are tough about leading their children to grow stronger.

It is very important that parents have a vision for what they want their children to achieve, and then take the time to set up and explain boundaries for, using evidence so that the boundaries are not viewed as arbitrary. Parents should be leading the children using structured activities so that the right views are formed and confirmed by experience. Spending time with children is important so that they know that you care about them. That will not happen by accident, it takes study to know how to be convincing, and it takes planning to engineering activities that will give someone the experiences they need to see what the things that we want them to believe are true.

It’s worse to be raised by a single mother than a married couple, even if you’re not poor

July 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s one of my favorite sociologists W. Bradford Wilcox writing about single motherhood in the left-leaning Slate.

Excerpt:

> Take two contemporary social problems: teenage pregnancy and the incarceration of young males. Research by Sara McLanahan at Princeton University suggests that boys are significantly more likely to end up in jail or prison by the time they turn 30 if they are raised by a single mother. Specifically, McLanahan and a colleague found that boys raised in a single-parent household were more than twice as likely to be incarcerated, compared with boys raised in an intact, married home, even after controlling for differences in parental income, education, race, and ethnicity. Research on young men suggests they are less likely to engage in delinquent or illegal behavior when they have the affection, attention, and monitoring of their own mother and father.
>
> But daughters depend on dads as well. One study by Bruce Ellis of the University of Arizona found that about one-third of girls whose fathers left the home before they turned 6 ended up pregnant as teenagers, compared with just 5 percent of girls whose fathers were there throughout their childhood. This dramatic divide was narrowed a bit when Ellis controlled for parents’ socioeconomic background—but only by a few percentage points. The research on this topic suggests that girls raised by single mothers are less likely to be supervised, more likely to engage in early sex, and to end up pregnant compared with girls raised by their own married parents.
>
> **It’s true that poorer families are more likely to be headed by single mothers. But even factoring out class shows a clear difference. Research by the Economic Mobility Project at Pew suggests that children from intact families are also more likely to rise up the income ladder if they were raised in a low-income family, and less likely to fall into poverty if they were raised in a wealthy family. For instance, according to Pew’s analysis, 54 percent of today’s young adults who grew up in an intact two-parent home in the top-third of household income have remained in the top-third as adults, compared with just 37 percent of today’s young adults who grew up in a wealthy (top-third) but divorced family.**
>
> **Why is this? Single mothers, even from wealthier families, have less time. They are less likely to be able to monitor their kids. They do not have a partner who can relieve them when they are tired or frustrated**

> **or angry with their kids. This isn't just a question of taking kids to the array of pampered extracurricular activities that many affluent, two-parent families turn to; it's about the ways in which two sets of hands, ears, and eyes generally make parenting easier.**

I think that people who think that it is hatred and bigotry to say that there should be rules around marriage and sex understand the reasons for these moral boundaries. We are trying to protect the children, and so we have boundaries about who can have sex and who can get married. Children need a mother and a father, and we need to promote and celebrate that as marriage, and not anything else. We should be rewarding people for getting married and staying married.

Related posts

- New study finds that boys benefit from bonding with Dads in first three months
- New large-scale UK study confirms the importance of fathers to children
- Why is it so hard for a working man to provide for a family these days?
- What causes women to become single mothers by choice? Are men to blame?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- UK police knew about Muslim child sex gang but refused to prosecute
- Loosening of UK IVF laws causes spike in fatherless children
- New study: low family income not a major cause of low student achievement
- "Problem families" cost British taxpayers £9 billion per year
- A feminist explains why she wants to be a single mother by choice
- Pro-lifers should not condone premarital sex as a pathway to marriage
- Is it moral for a woman to conceive a child from an anonymous sperm donor?
- How do donor-conceived children cope with not knowing their biological fathers?
- Marriage researcher Brad Wilcox's lecture on marriage and society
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- Bradford Wilcox: Is cohabitation a bigger problem for society than divorce?
- New study: marriage and church attendance help kids finish high school
- New study finds that cohabitation is harmful to children
- How feminism led to increased child abuse and child neglect
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- UK Liberal Democrats oppose tax breaks for getting married and staying married
- Should Christians support social justice? Is wealth redistribution good for the poor?
- FRC releases new study on marriage and economic well-being
- New study finds that fathers and marriage reduce drug use in children

Pro-lifers should not condone premarital sex as a pathway to marriage

July 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Adams on abortion: click for larger image.

Professor Mike S. Adams is pro-life, but he posted something on Facebook that I must disagree with.

He posted this:

> Over 80% of post-abortive women said they would have had the baby if the guy had been supportive. Five guys find out their girl is pregnant: The first two pressure abortion, the third walks away or was never present, the fourth sticks around for 80 to 120 days, and the fifth steps up totally. This not a woman's problem. It is a lack-of-manhood problem.

Mike has about 5000 friends, and 44 of them liked it. I would think that most of these people would call themselves pro-life conservatives. But I don't think what he posted promotes the pro-life cause.

I replied to him with this:

> Mike I could not disagree more. It's a woman's problem unless it is rape, since the woman consents to sex with a man she is not married to. In fact, the cause of abortion is YOUR opinion – namely, the opinion that women should not be obligated to be chaste or to think rationally about who they are having sex with. There is a path to marriage that goes through courtship, and that path has a name: self-control. Stop enabling the poor choices of women, because we have to stop the murder of unborn children.

Many of Mike's friends supported him. So I wrote this:

> Wow. I had no idea that so many of Mike's friends think that the Bible is a pack of lies when it says that fornication is morally wrong. I guess you guys aren't Christians then, since you feel so free and easy about revising the Bible when you feel like it.
>
> If fornication is wrong, it's wrong for women AND men. And you don't fornicate and then expect happy outcomes from it. There is a word for a person who sins and then expects a good outcome. A FOOL.

Then Mike replied to me:

> Sorry Wintery. Where I come from the man leads and is, therefore, responsible.

I replied to that with this:

> Mike, I agree with male leading – IF the man is a Christian. But the men that these women chose are not Christians. And you can't expect men to act morally unless they have a theistic framework that grounds morality.
>
> Women should not be told, by you and others, that they can choose to have sex with immoral men and then expect the immoral men to act morally. That is just enabling abortion by justifying a lack of prudence and wisdom. Instead, we should be holding women accountable to choose men who WILL control themselves.
>
> We should not be supporting the fantasy view of love that says that recreational sex magically leads men to commit to protect, provide and lead women for life. That view is neither wise nor Biblical. On the contrary, recreational sex leads men to NOT commit. Women have to learn how to select men, to evaluate them for marriage, and to make them prove themselves. We need to tell men AND women that sex before marriage is morally wrong. And we need to be convincing by showing them how recreational sex does not lead to stable marriages, and puts children, unborn and born, in harm's way. Telling the truth about the danger of premarital sex is the best way to stop the killing of unborn children.
>
> Here's an example to make the point. We do not blame bears for mauling campers. Bears are bears, and they were bears before the campers showed up in their cave. We ought to blame the camper for choosing to wander off the trail and into the bear's den in order to PET THE BEAR. Wild bears may eat free food that is offered to them, but they are not going to let you pet them and hug them. Women, like campers, need to be responsible. They need to choose the right man for marriage. They need to exercise self control. They need to make the man prove his ability to commit and support a family BEFORE they have sex with him. No one hires an employee without understanding what job they need done and then making sure that the candidate they choose can do the job. And that's what we need to tell women.

Obviously, I was a little upset when I wrote that, but I hope it wasn't *too* bad.

So what's the point I was trying to make by being critical of Mike? I think the problem we have today is that men who are pro-life are unwilling to hold women accountable for their own poor decisions about sex and marriage. Basically, conservative and/or Christian men think that women don't need to think through what choices are most likely to avoid abortion and most likely to achieve marriage. These men give tacit approval to the popular trend of trying to achieve marriage through premarital sex (or cohabitation), when the research shows that these behaviors do not result in long-lasting stable marriages. In fact, sex out of wedlock is a good way to get into a situation where an

abortion will occur.

In my view, Mike is ainadvertently *encouraging* women to get into the situations where they will be pressured to abort by reinforcing the idea that there is nothing wrong with their plan to achieve marriage by having premarital sex (or cohabitating), and then *expecting* men to respond to their pregnancy by MARRYING them. Mike seems to be telling women that it is normal for them to expect that marriage will follow from premarital sex with men who have not been vetted for the roles of provider, protector and leader As if marriage is natural for men who don't even have jobs and who are surrounded by women willing to have sex with them on the first date. Any man who will have recreational premarital sex with a woman is exactly the kind of person who *will not* commit to lifelong providing and fidelity – he is having sex before marriage because he wants recreation, without the commitment and self-sacrifice that marriage requires. Rationally speaking, it makes no sense for men to buy the cow, and to keep buying the cow with 40 years of labor, when they can get the milk for free. And that's what we need to tell women – think with your minds, not with your emotions.

Here is an interesting statistic from Relevant Magazine:

> [A] recent study reveals that 88 percent of unmarried young adults (ages 18-29) are having sex. The same study, conducted by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, reveals the number doesn't drop much among Christians. Of those surveyed who self-identify as "evangelical," 80 percent say they have had sex.
>
> […]In addition to having premarital sex, an alarming number of unmarried Christians are getting pregnant. Among unmarried evangelical women between the ages of 18 and 29, 30 percent have experienced a pregnancy (a number that's actually 1 percent higher than among those who don't claim to be evangelical).
>
> According to the Guttmacher Institute, nearly half of all pregnancies in America are unintended. And of those, 40 percent end in abortion. More than 1 million abortions occur in the United States each year. **But perhaps the most disturbing statistic for the Church: 65 percent of the women obtaining abortions identify themselves as either Protestant or Catholic (37 percent Protestant and 28 percent Catholic). That's 650,000 abortions obtained by Christians every year.**

Christian women are not told that premarital sex is wrong by many Christians and conservatives – and out of that refusal by "Christians" and "conservatives" to take a stand, we get 650,000 abortions per year. We need to have more courage to tell women to be more self-controlled and responsible when they choose who to have sex with, and when to have sex. We need to tell women to make good decisions that lead to stable marriages. We need to tell women to study these issues and to support policies that produce strong, moral men who are willing to marry – for example, by reforming education so that our schools produce men who can find jobs, perhaps by having more

male teachers in the classroom. We need to tell women to support policies that make marriage more friendly for men, like abolishing no-fault divorce, and promoting shared parenting. Christians in particular need to counteract the views of love and romance that are prevalent in popular culture with a view of relationships built around chastity and love. Although many people today are uncomfortable with moral absolutes and moral judgments, it would be a good be a good idea for women to promote these things, so that the men they are choosing from are more moral.

In the end, I agree with Mike S. Adams in one respect. Abortion *may* be caused by a lack of manhood problem. Only the lack of manhood doesn't come from the men that women choose to have premarital sex with. The lack of manhood comes from men who refuse to hold women accountable for their own free foolish decisions that put unborn children in harm's way. In addition to the abortion problem that results from those foolish decisions, there is also the explosion in out-of-wedlock births to weigh in the balance. Again, the more people tell women that they should expect men who engage in recreational sex to commit to marriage after premarital sex (or cohabitation), the more fatherlessness we get.

Giddy up, Mike.

Related posts

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- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
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- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
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- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
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- How feminism’s war against men ends up hurting women
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Three men shot while shielding their girlfriends during Aurora, Colorado shooting

July 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the NY Daily News. (H/T Doug G. and Joe C.)

Here's one of the stories:

> Three survivors of the Colorado movie-theater massacre escaped with minor wounds, but were left with broken hearts because their heroic boyfriends died saving them.
>
> In final acts of valor, Jon Blunk, Matt McQuinn and Alex Teves used their bodies to shield their girlfriends as accused madman James Holmes turned the Aurora cineplex into a shooting gallery.
>
> Blunk's girlfriend, Jansen Young; McQuinn's girlfriend, Samantha Yowler; and Teves' gal pal Amanda Lindgren made it out of the bloodbath — but they would have been killed had it not been for the loves of their lives.
>
> "He's a hero, and he'll never be forgotten," a tearful Jansen Young told the Daily News of Blunk. "Jon took a bullet for me."
>
> […]Jansen Young, 21, said Blunk took her to see Friday's midnight premiere of "The Dark Knight Rises" to celebrate her graduation from veterinarian school. As the black-clad killer burst into the theater and unleashed tear gas and a torrent of indiscriminate gunfire, Blunk selflessly protected his girlfriend.
>
> He pushed Jansen on the ground and under her seat, then threw his body on top of her, the mother said. "He was 6-feet-2, in incredible shape, which is why he was able to push her down under the seats of the theater," the mother said. "He pushed her down on the floor and laid down on top of her and he died there."
>
> […]Equally heroic was the 24-year-old [Alex] Teves, who hurled his girlfriend to the floor as bullets whizzed through the theater.
>
> "He pushed her to the floor to save her and he ended up getting a bullet," said his aunt, Barbara Slivinske, 57. "He was gonna hit the floor himself, but he never made it."
>
> […]Samantha Yowler had a similar story of horror and heroism about her boyfriend, Matt McQuinn, whose last living act was to shield her from death. Yowler, 26, survived with a gunshot wound to the knee and is in fair condition after undergoing surgery.

This makes me sad, that self-sacrificial men should be killed by a criminal like this. It would have been better all around if the movie theater allowed the three heroes to carry their own weapons so that they could have shot back at the criminal. Not only would that have saved lives, but it would have deterred the assailant from even trying such a course

of action. This story shows what we have to pay as a society when we prevent innocent law-abiding people from defending themselves from violent crooks.

Are people who don't pay any federal taxes "paying their fair share"?

July 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

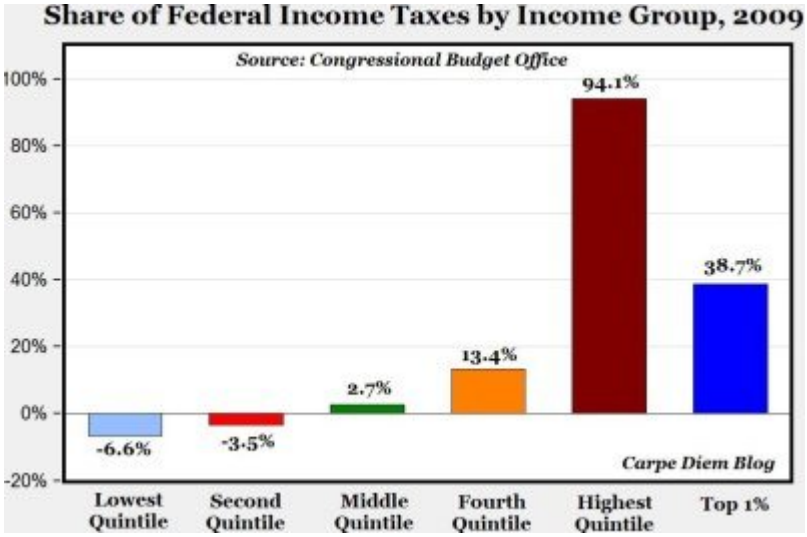

The top 20% paid 94.1% of all income taxes in 2009

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The proportion of those paying no income taxes continues to hit higher highs — a trend that will ultimately make lowering taxes and reducing government impossible.
>
> For decades, "fairness" has been liberal Democrats' outcry against demands for lower taxes. The rich, President Obama endlessly contends, don't pay "their fair share."
>
> It's about as far from the truth as you can get. As the Congressional Budget Office showed in a new report on the distribution of household income and federal taxes, the rich are getting hit by the taxman harder than ever.
>
> As CNBC reporter Robert Frank put it, the top 1% that Obama complains about "paid an average effective tax rate of 28.9% on their income — far more than any other group, and more than twice the average effective rate of the middle class, who paid 11% on average."
>
> Beyond that, however, is the fact that more Americans who are nowhere near to being rich are paying no taxes at all on the money they take in — which means they have no interest in getting our ever-expanding government leviathan under control.
>
> A new study from the Tax Foundation found the number of those filing tax returns who pay no income taxes now numbers over 58 million, amounting to a staggering 41% of all tax returns. Compare that with 1990, when only about 21% of tax returns were found to have no tax liability.

> What's more, the median income of these nonpayers has increased by 40% in just nine years. "The threshold at which a typical married couple with two children will likely be a nonpayer is now $47,000," the Tax Foundation found.

It's remarkable to me that people complain about the rich not paying taxes. The rich are the only ones who pay taxes. Half the country has no federal tax liability *at all*. The top 50% of taxpayers are paying almost ALL the federal taxes. According to the Congressional Budget Office data in the image above, the top 20% of taxpayers paid 94.1% of all taxes. That data is echoed by data from the Internal Revenue Service.

Is that fair?

How can anyone look at these numbers and honestly claim that "the rich", by which the leftists mean the most productive entrepreneurs and workers, are "not paying their fair share" of taxes? THEY ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO PAY TAXES.

Christians and social justice: is redistribution of wealth good for the poor?

July 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Discovery Institute fellow Jonathan Witt pens this article in the American Spectator on the Gospel, business and social justice.

Excerpt:

> The third term, *social justice*, is unlike the other two in its having a justifiable raison d'être. It stretches back to 19th century Catholic social thought and was used in the context of nuanced explorations of law, ethics, and justice. Unfortunately, this nuance and precision usually falls away in popular usage, and the term has been co-opted by the left to imply that ordinary justice is a mere tool of the ruling elite, with the real deal being "social justice."
>
> This impoverished meaning needs to be addressed. If a society extends justice to the rich and well-connected but allows the poor to be bullied and swindled by corrupt players inside and outside of the government, the problem isn't unsocial justice but a lack of justice. If the poor in many developing nations can't get access to credit or the courts because they can't register their businesses, and they can't register their businesses because they don't have the bribe money and connections to navigate a byzantine regulatory maze, the problem is injustice, plain and simple. Such a society doesn't need a social brand of justice any more than a poor neighborhood without stores needs a *social grocery store*. The neighborhood needs an ordinary grocery store, and the unjust society needs basic justice. Grocery stores and justice are already intrinsically social.
>
> More than accurate semantics is at stake here. Often the popular call for "social justice" boils down to an ill-conceived call for coercive wealth transfers — for instance, getting rich countries to transfer more of their tax revenues to the governments of poor countries as foreign aid. It'd be nice if this approach actually helped the poor, since we've been using it for the past 60 years. Unfortunately, the statistical and narrative testimony on this strategy hovers between mixed and scandalous.
>
> The reasons for this are complex but not so complex as to excuse the status quo. Much of the aid money gets quietly funneled into the pockets of corrupt politicians. In other cases the aid money reaches its intended target but, since the aid money is fungible, it still supports bad actors. It does so by freeing a regime of the political necessity of paying for the schools, road projects and emergency relief already covered by the foreign assistance. This, in turn, allows the regimes to spend more of their tax revenues for enhancing their own wealth and power.
>
> Worse, the small fraction of aid money that actually reaches its intended

> destination often puts indigenous producers out of business, since it's difficult to compete against free goods from abroad. Haiti's rice farmers, for instance, once exported rice, but today their livelihoods have been all but wiped out by subsidized U.S. rice dumped on the country as foreign aid.
>
> Add to all of this international "social justice" the devastating cultural effects of America's welfare state. The neighborhoods flooded with 50 years of this domestic "social justice" now face far higher levels of criminal injustice and anti-social behavior than before the justice arrived.
>
> Much of the problem stems from welfare's effect on the institution of the family. The percentage of children being raised by both of their biological parents in America's poorest neighborhoods used to be low and fairly comparable to what was found in middle and upper class neighborhoods, but the Great Society programs of the 1960s changed that.
>
> As George Gilder put it in *Wealth and Poverty*, the underclass husband and father was "cuckolded by the compassionate state," a violation which has incited "that very combination of resignation and rage, escapism and violence, short horizons and promiscuous sexuality that characterizes everywhere the life of the poor."
>
> Yale University sociologist Elijah Anderson put it almost as bluntly in a 1989 journal article: "It has become increasingly socially acceptable for a young woman to have children out of wedlock — significantly, with the help of a regular welfare check."
>
> The plain testimony of history is that the left's strategy for saving the poor has been a tragic failure. It has stifled development in poor countries, bred a fatherless underclass in the United States, and all but bankrupted the European Union. Cloaking all of this in the guise of "social justice" serves only to perpetuate the tragedy.

It turns out that the very people who cry the loudest about wanting to help the poor – by redistributing wealth from those who produce to those who don't – are the ones who incentivize people to make decisions that will make them poorer and expose them to more violence. Sure, there is a certain amount of uncertainty in life, but when you reward failure and punish success, you get more takers and fewer makers. The alternative to taxation and redistribution is to leave wealth in the hands of the individuals and businesses and trust them to make the decision about sharing. When businesses pay less in taxes, they expand – and more people start up new businesses, because they are attracted by the chance to make higher profits. Although letting individuals and business keep their own money is frowned on by the secular left, that's because they themselves project their tendency not to give to charity and create jobs onto everyone else. They don't understand charity and entrepreneurialism, that's why they take money away from people who work and who create wealth.

I do want to say one other thing. I find it troubling when Christians present themselves to me as being social conservative, and fiscally liberal. There is no such thing as a social

conservative and a fiscal liberal. If a person demands that the state provide cheese sandwiches to the children of single mothers in public schools, then it creates more of an incentive to become a single mother, and less of an incentive to marry. That redistribution *lowers* the cost of single motherhood and *raises* the cost of marriage. It has been shown that single motherhood is the leading cause of child poverty – so why would we put into place incentives that encourage people to not make good decisions about sex? Why subsidize people who refuse to exercise self-control in sexual matters? Why make it encourage people to inflict fatherlessness on their own innocent children? Marriage is correlated with increased safety for women and children. Lowering the moral standards and paying people to make mistakes *isn't good for them*. And it's *not good for their children*.

The more you tax those who produce, the fewer of them you get. And the more you subsidize those who collect, the more of them you get. When men see themselves as slaves of the state – working only to be plundered – they stop working and they stop marrying. Why would a man work to feed the children of someone who could not even bother to get married before having babies? Why would a man get married knowing that half of what he earns will go to the state? Let families keep more of their own money, so that families are empowered – and not government. Let families keep their own money so they decide how to spend it, instead of depending on government. Let single mothers have to face the cost of their decisions. Let them ask charities for help, not the government. When people have to ask their neighbors for help, they know that they have done wrong, and that the money they get came from someone who worked for it. That is not there when government taxes and writes them a no-guilt check. Then it's an entitlement, and they don't learn their lesson.

Instead, let individuals and businesses make the decision to help those who *they think* are truly willing to try to improve their lot in life. Those are the ones who need support. When you leave wealth distribution to the government, no one is there to make those moral judgments. And it's worse than that. When government takes over industries like health care, they are often supported by naive pro-lifers who think that wealth redistribution is compassion. But a secular government has no interest in women who stay home to raise their children – they want women to get out into the work force and pay income taxes. A single-payer health care system is *always* going to be pro-abortion for that reason. And any pro-lifer who votes "with their heart" for single-payer health care is a fool. They are, in effect, pro-abortion. Think before you vote.

Marriage researcher Brad Wilcox's lecture on marriage and society

July 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two parts. The lecture and then the Q&A.

Let's learn a bit about Brad first:

> W. Bradford Wilcox is Director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia, and a member of the James Madison Society at Princeton University.
>
> He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia and his Ph.D. at Princeton University. Prior to coming to the University of Virginia, he held research fellowships at Princeton University, Yale University and the Brookings Institution.
>
> Mr. Wilcox's research focuses on marriage, parenthood, and cohabitation, and on the ways that gender, religion, and children influence the quality and stability of American marriages and family life. He has published articles on marriage, cohabitation, parenting, and fatherhood in *The American Sociological Review, Social Forces, The Journal of Marriage and Family* and *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. His first book, *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands* (Chicago, 2004), examines the ways in which the religious beliefs and practices of American Protestant men influence their approach to parenting, household labor, and marriage. With Nicholas Wolfinger, Wilcox is now writing a book titled, *Soul Mates: Religion, Sex, Children, & Marriage among African Americans and Latinos*, for Oxford University Press. With Eric Kaufmann, Wilcox is finishing a book on the causes and consequences of low fertility in the West.

The MP3 file for the lecture is here.

The MP3 file for the Q&A is here.

This lecture covers marriage, cohabitation, single parenthood and divorce.

24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic

July 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from CBS News.

Excerpt:

> The family of a Chicago woman who died after an abortion at Planned Parenthood says it wants answers about her death.
>
> Tonya Reaves, 24, died late Friday night from a hemorrhage, with a cervical dilation and evacuation, as well as an intrauterine pregnancy as contributing causes, according to the medical examiner's office.
>
> She died after she'd had an abortion at Planned Parenthood at 18 S. Michigan Av, according to the medical examiner's office.
>
> Her death was ruled an accident, but the Reaves family wants to know more, especially Tonya's twin sister Toni.
>
> "We were born the same day. She was my other half," Toni said.
>
> Toni Reaves said the family is trying to get through this.
>
> "It happened so fast. She was just fine one day and then the next day she was gone. We're just trying to figure out what happened… what happened," she said.
>
> Toni Reaves said her sister was engaged to be married and had one son – Alvin – who just had his first birthday.
>
> In a written statement, Planned Parenthood of Illinois CEO Carole Brite said "We were shocked and saddened upon learning of a tragic development at a nearby hospital. Our hearts go out to the loved ones of this patient.

It's stories like this that confirm to me that sex is something that really should be reserved for marriage. It is just horribly unnatural to get pregnant and then kill your own child. That's not what people do when they get pregnant. It's remarkable to me that so many people could honestly believe that killing an innocent human being could somehow be a legitimate way to end a pregnancy.

And if the risk of dying isn't bad enough – there are other complications, too.

Abortion isn't safe for babies or mothers

Life News talks about a study from the *British Journal of Psychiatry*.

Excerpt:

> A new study published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* by leading American researcher Dr. Priscilla Coleman of Bowling Green State University finds women who have an abortion face almost double the risk of mental health problems as women who have their baby.

Consider this article in the UK Daily Mail, which talks about a study published the journal *Cancer Epidemiology*.

Excerpt:

> An abortion can triple a woman's risk of developing breast cancer in later life, researchers say. A team of scientists made the claim while carrying out research into how breastfeeding can protect women from developing the killer disease. While concluding that breastfeeding offered significant protection from cancer, they also noted that the highest reported risk factor in developing the disease was abortion. Other factors included the onset of the menopause and smoking. The findings, published in the journal Cancer Epidemiology, are the latest research to show a link between abortion and breast cancer. The research was carried out by scientists at the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka. It is the fourth epidemiological study to report such a link in the past 14 months, with research in China, Turkey and the U.S. showing similar conclusions.
>
> […]There has been an 80 per cent increase in the rate of breast cancer since 1971, when in the wake of the Abortion Act, the number of abortions rose from 18,000 to nearly 200,000 a year.

Note that there were only 300 people in the new study, so it is a small study. But it confirms the Turkey study that I blogged on before, and the China study that I blogged about before, and the American study that I blogged about before.

The right time to think about a pregnancy is before you have it. My advice is to avoid sex altogether before you are married. You'll make a better match, and you'll avoid causing grievous harm to others and to yourself. Don't put yourself in a position where a decision like that has to be made. Draw the line before you have to draw the line.

Relate posts

- Obama administration sends $3.1 million more to Planned Parenthood
- Hawaii Planned Parenthood caught counseling sex-selection abortions
- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?

- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science

July 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, written by a non-conservative professor of sociology. He writes about the recent research paper by Mark Regnerus on the effects of gay parenting on children.

Excerpt:

> Whoever said inquisitions and witch hunts were things of the past? A big one is going on now. The sociologist Mark Regnerus, at the University of Texas at Austin, is being smeared in the media and subjected to an inquiry by his university over allegations of scientific misconduct.
>
> […]Regnerus has been attacked by sociologists all around the country, including some from his own department. He has been vilified by journalists who obviously (based on what they write) understand little about social-science research. And the journal in which Regnerus published his article has been the target of a pressure campaign.
>
> The Regnerus case needs to be understood in a larger context. Sociologists tend to be political and cultural liberals, leftists, and progressives.
>
> […]Many sociologists view higher education as the perfect gig, a way to be paid to engage in "consciousness raising" through teaching, research, and publishing—at the expense of taxpayers, donors, and tuition-paying parents, many of whom thoughtfully believe that what those sociologists are pushing is wrong.
>
> **It is also easy for some sociologists to lose perspective on the minority status of their own views, to take for granted much that is still worth arguing about, and to fall into a kind of groupthink. The culture in such circles can be parochial and mean. I have seen colleagues ignore, stereotype, and belittle people and perspectives they do not like, rather than respectfully provide good arguments against those they do not agree with and for their own views.**
>
> The temptation to use academe to advance a political agenda is too often indulged in sociology, especially by activist faculty in certain fields, like marriage, family, sex, and gender. The crucial line between broadening education and indoctrinating propaganda can grow very thin, sometimes nonexistent. Research programs that advance narrow agendas compatible with particular ideologies are privileged. Survey textbooks in some fields routinely frame their arguments in a way that validates any form of intimate relationship as a family, when the larger social discussion of what a family is and should be is still continuing and worth

> having. Reviewers for peer-reviewed journals identify "problems" with papers whose findings do not comport with their own beliefs. **Job candidates and faculty up for tenure whose political and social views are not "correct" are sometimes weeded out through a subtle (or obvious), ideologically governed process of evaluation, which is publicly justified on more-legitimate grounds—"scholarly weaknesses" or "not fitting in well" with the department.**

The Weekly Standard has more on what happened to Regnerus:

> As of mid-July, a month after his paper was published, these are some of the things that have happened to Mark Regnerus. Three of his colleagues in the sociology department at UT joined with a fourth to -publish a widely distributed op-ed in the *Huffington Post* accusing him of "besmirching" the university through his "irresponsible and reckless misrepresentation of social science research." Led by Gary Gates, the UCLA demographer who had declined Regnerus's offer to help design the study, more than 200 "researchers and scholars" signed a letter to the editor of *Social Science Research*. The letter demanded that the editor "publicly disclose the reasons" why he published the paper and insisted that he hire scholars more sensitive to "LGBT parenting issues" to write a critique for the journal's next edition. UT's Director of Research Integrity sent Regnerus a letter informing him that a formal complaint of "scientific misconduct" had been lodged against him. The complaint, made by a gay blogger/activist/"investigative journalist" called Scott Rose, triggered an official inquiry into Regnerus's research methods and his relationship with the Witherspoon Foundation; he's now preparing to appear before a panel of faculty investigators. Requests have been filed with the Texas attorney general's office demanding that Regnerus, as an employee of a state-run institution, make public all email and correspondence related to his study. And he has hired a lawyer.
>
> A large number of his fellow social scientists—members in good standing of the guild of LGBT researchers—would like to destroy his career.

It seems that whenever it comes to secular progressive ideology – eternal universe, naturalistic origin of life, global warming, gay parenting – that it is ok for the secular leftist bullies to attack good science with coercive force.

I really strongly recommend that young Christians seeking to have an influence consider carefully how hostile, close-minded and bigoted that the modern secular leftist university is towards evangelicals. It doesn't matter how good your scholarship is in the non-science and soft science fields. It's just not a good place to make a career anymore. The only way for things to get better is to start starving out all non-productive areas of the university. These are the areas that are the most politicized. Stop doing degrees in non-STEM fields. Stick with things that are beyond the reach of the secular left, like math, experimental sciences, engineering and technology. If you must go into a non-STEM field – like law school – then I really recommend that you keep your religious views and

political views close to your vest until you are out of school.

By repealing section 13, Canada takes a baby step toward freedom of speech

July 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What is section 13, you ask? Section 13 is the part of Canadian law that makes it illegal for Canadians to offend people on the left. The Conservatives now have a majority, so they've voted in the House of Commons to repeal it. But it still isn't repealed.

Here it is:

> "It is a discriminatory practice for a person or a group of persons acting in concert to communicate telephonically or to cause to be so communicated, repeatedly, in whole or in part by means of the facilities of a telecommunication undertaking within the legislative authority of Parliament, any matter that is likely to expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt by reason of the fact that person or those persons are identifiable on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination."
> — Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act

Here is an example of what Canada did to people with unpopular opinions: (H/T Binks)

> Among the more high-profile targets of Canada's "human rights" zealots was journalist Ezra Levant, who spent 900 days and $100,000 defending himself against "hate speech" charges. As editor of the *Western Standard*magazine, Levant in 2006 published some examples of "Muhammad cartoons" to illustrate a news article about the worldwide firestorm touched off by the cartoons when they were originally published in a Danish magazine. A Canadian imam filed a "human rights" complaint, and Levant was dragged into the meat grinder.
>
> "Section 13 has had a brutal effect on free speech in Canada," Levant told Chalcedon. "It's not that the number of prosecutions under Section 13 was ever that large. But it made examples of people, and inspired tremendous self-censorship. But now we're free, and we can say things that are politically incorrect."
>
> But how free? The "human rights" legislation in Canada's thirteen provinces is still, so far, intact.
>
> "The provincial human rights machinery remains," Levant said, "but this, the federal repeal, has got to cast a shadow over those. [Journalist, author, and commentator] Mark Steyn, for instance, was charged in three different jurisdictions for the same 'offense.' But now we're seeing the censorship being challenged in Saskatchawan, and questioned in some other provinces."
>
> **Section 13 over the years, he said, "has attracted bullies to the 'human rights' system. Ninety percent of the defendants charged under Section 13 can't afford a lawyer. And because countersuits are not allowed,**

> **there’s no way to recover your legal expenses.”**
>
> **In Canada’s “human rights” system, the government pays all the plaintiff’s legal costs, but none of the defendant’s. Nor is there any “double jeopardy” rule to prevent a defendant from being tried multiple times for the same incident.**
>
> **“Except for me – I’m a Jew – no non-Christian has ever been prosecuted by a human rights tribunal,” Levant said. “And the federal Human Rights Commission really enjoyed Section 13! They had a one hundred percent conviction rate over thirty-two years.**

A 100% conviction rate!

This something for us to think about. When you meet a secular leftist who complains about being offended by your speech, you should ask yourself the question “how far would he go with that?”. Because in Canada, the secular went very far, indeed. And similarly in the UK and in some European countries.

We should be grateful that we have the first and second amendments, because a lot of people don’t.

Triablogue: a funeral for atheism

July 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Poached Egg linked to this striking post on Triablogue. (H/T Please Convince Me)

Excerpt:

> If there is no objective morality, then why are they arguing for anything? It's not as if you're supposed to be an atheist. Absent objective moral norms, there's nothing you're supposed believe or disbelieve.
>
> Likewise, atheists not only admit, but insist on the fact that evolution is blind. It has no prevision or purpose. Brains weren't made to think. Yet they still act as if their brains were made to think.
>
> Likewise, they admit that what we value has no intrinsic value. Evolution has programmed us to project value on certain things. But that's an illusion.
>
> We value love. We value our parents, kids, spouse, and friends. Yet there's nothing objectively right or good about loving friends and family. That's just brain chemistry. The indifferent effect of a thoughtless process conditioning us to feel that way.
>
> Pull its string and the doll cries. It doesn't cry because there's something *worth* crying about.
>
> Atheists cry when a loved one dies. Yet they can retrace the process. They can see the pull-string. They can see evolution tugging their string. They don't cry because the death of their loved one actually means anything. They cry because blind evolution pulled their string. A doll's prerecorded cry at the demise of another doll.
>
> They can see evolution take the doll apart. They can see evolution operating on themselves. They dissect themselves. Peel back the layers. Cloth. Metal. Plastic. A pile of parts. The more you look the less you find.
>
> Atheists act as though these are throwaway concessions that don't cost them anything in the long run. That having admitted that atheism has these consequences, it's time to resume the argument. Get back to the issue at hand. Having another beer.
>
> But there's nothing more to say. At that point the atheist is sitting on a pile of spent rounds.
>
> It's like a doctor telling a man he has stage 4 pancreatic cancer. He has 2 weeks to live. Having got that out of the way, let's get back to what he plans to do with the rest of his life.
>
> But there is no "rest of his life" to plan for. At most, he can make funeral arrangements. Pick a coffin. Pick a tombstone. Prepay the florist. Buy a cemetery plot. Choose an epitaph.

> Atheism ran out of road miles ago. There's nowhere left to go. That's the end of the line.

The argument that Hays makes seems to be that if there is no objective morality, then discovering the truth and persuading others of the truth and living according to the truth are no longer morally right. Therefore, we have no moral obligation to do any of these things, on atheism.

The author, Steve Hays, engages with atheists who object to this argument in the comments to the post.

Is gay marriage a threat to religious liberty and liberty of conscience?

July 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Robert P. George makes the case in the Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> Since most liberals and even some conservatives, it seems, apparently have no understanding at all of the conjugal conception of marriage as a one-flesh union—not even enough of a grasp to consciously consider and reject it—they uncritically conceive marriage as sexual-romantic domestic partnership, as if it just couldn't possibly be anything else. This is despite the fact that the conjugal conception has historically been embodied in our marriage laws, and explains their content (not just the requirement of spousal sexual complementarity, but also rules concerning consummation and annulability, norms of monogamy and sexual exclusivity, and the pledge of permanence of commitment) in ways that the sexual-romantic domestic partnership conception simply cannot. Still, having adopted the sexual-romantic domestic partnership idea, and seeing no alternative possible conception of marriage, they assume—and it is just that, an assumption, and a gratuitous one—that no actual reason exists for regarding sexual reproductive complementarity as integral to marriage. After all, two men or two women can have a romantic interest in each other, live together in a sexual partnership, care for each other, and so forth. So why can't they be married? Those who think otherwise, having no rational basis, discriminate invidiously.
>
> […]Thus, advocates of redefinition are increasingly open in saying that they do not see these disputes about sex and marriage as honest disagreements among reasonable people of goodwill. They are, rather, battles between the forces of reason, enlightenment, and equality—those who would "expand the circle of inclusion"—on one side, and those of ignorance, bigotry, and discrimination—those who would exclude people out of "animus"—on the other. The "excluders" are to be treated just as racists are treated—since they are the equivalent of racists. Of course, we (in the United States, at least) don't put racists in jail for expressing their opinions—we respect the First Amendment; but we don't hesitate to stigmatize them and impose various forms of social and even civil disability upon them and their institutions. In the name of "marriage equality" and "non-discrimination," liberty—especially religious liberty and the liberty of conscience—and genuine equality are undermined.
>
> The fundamental error made by some supporters of conjugal marriage was and is, I believe, to imagine that a grand bargain could be struck with their opponents: "We will accept the legal redefinition of marriage; you will respect our

> right to act on our consciences without penalty, discrimination, or civil disabilities of any type. Same-sex partners will get marriage licenses, but no one will be forced for any reason to recognize those marriages or suffer discrimination or disabilities for declining to recognize them." *There was never any hope of such a bargain being accepted.* Perhaps *parts* of such a bargain would be accepted by liberal forces *temporarily* for strategic or tactical reasons, as part of the political project of getting marriage redefined; but guarantees of religious liberty and non-discrimination for people who cannot in conscience accept same-sex marriage could then be eroded and eventually removed. After all, "full equality" requires that no quarter be given to the "bigots" who want to engage in "discrimination" (people with a "separate but equal" mindset) in the name of their retrograde religious beliefs. "Dignitarian" harm must be opposed as resolutely as more palpable forms of harm.
>
> […][T]here is, in my opinion, no chance—*no chance*—of persuading champions of sexual liberation (and it should be clear by now that this is the cause they serve), that they should respect, or permit the law to respect, the conscience rights of those with whom they disagree. Look at it from their point of view: Why should we permit "full equality" to be trumped by bigotry? Why should we respect religions and religious institutions that are "incubators of homophobia"? Bigotry, religiously based or not, must be smashed and eradicated. The law should certainly not give it recognition or lend it any standing or dignity.
>
> The lesson, it seems to me, for those of us who believe that the conjugal conception of marriage is true and good, and who wish to protect the rights of our faithful and of our institutions to honor that belief in carrying out their vocations and missions, is that there is no alternative to winning the battle in the public square over the legal definition of marriage. The "grand bargain" is an illusion we should dismiss from our minds.

You can read about some examples of attacks against proponents of traditional marriage in my secular case against same-sex marriage.

William Lane Craig lectures on failure in the Christian life

July 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this audio on Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 web site.

Here is the MP3 file.

Here is the video.

And here is my summary.

Intro:

- the topic of failure is not one that is often discussed by Christians
- failure #1: failure in the Christian life which is the result of sin
- failure #2: when a Christian is defeated while trying to serve God
- the consequences for failure #1 can be worse for the Christian
- the consequences for failure #2 can be worse for the world as whole
- how is it possible for a person to fail when they are obeying God? (#2)
- how can it be that God can call someone to a task then let them fail?
- failure is not persecution – persecution is normal for Christians
- failure is not trials – testing is normal for Christians to grow

Bill's failure:

- Bill had submitted all the coursework for his second doctoral degree
- but he had to pass a comprehensive oral examination
- he failed to pass the comprehensive exam
- Bill and Jan and his supporters had all prayed for him to pass
- how could God allow this to happen?

Solution to the problem:

- God's will for us may be that we fail at the things we try in life
- there are things that God may teach us through failure
- Bill learned that human relationships are more important than careers
- we need to realize that "success" in life is not worldly success
- true success is getting to know God well during your life
- and failure may be the best way to get to know God well
- it may even be possible to fail to know God while achieving a lot
- the real measure of a man is loving God and loving your fellow man

Practical:

- give thanks to God regardless of your circumstances

- try to learn from your failure
- never give up

The ending of Bill’s story:

- Bill spent an entire year preparing for a re-take of his exam
- Bill was awarded his second doctorate “magna cum laude” (with great distinction)
- Bill learned that American students are not well prepared for exams
- the year of studying remedied his inadequate American education
- in retrospect, he is thankful for the failure – he learned more

If you like this, you should pick up Craig’s book “No Easy Answers”.

Lee Strobel: why does God allow tragedy and suffering?

July 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found MP3 audio, video and a full transcript of Lee Strobel's sermon on suffering at Apologetics 315.

Strobel has 5 points in his sermon:

- God is not the creator of evil and suffering.
- Though suffering isn't good, God can use it to accomplish good.
- The day is coming when suffering will cease and God will judge evil.
- Our suffering will pale in comparison to what God has in store for his followers.
- We decide whether to turn bitter or turn to God for peace and courage.

Here's one of them:

> Though suffering isn't good, God can use it to accomplish good. He does this by fulfilling His promise inRomans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
>
> Notice that the verse doesn't say God causes evil and suffering, just that he promises to cause good to emerge. And notice that the verse doesn't say we all will see immediately or even in this life how God has caused good to emerge from a bad circumstance. Remember, we only see things dimly in this world. And notice that God doesn't make this promise to everyone. He makes the solemn pledge that he will take the bad circumstances that befall us and cause good to emerge if we're committed to following Him.
>
> The Old Testament gives us a great example in the story of Joseph, who went through terrible suffering, being sold into slavery by his brothers, unfairly accused of a crime and falsely imprisoned. Finally, after a dozen years, he was put in a role of great authority where he could save the lives of his family and many others.
> This is what he said to his brothers in Genesis 50:20: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." And if you're committed to God, He promises that He can and will take whatever pain you're experiencing and draw something good from it.
>
> You might say, "No, he can't in my circumstance. The harm was too great, the damage was too extreme, the depth of my suffering has been too much. No, in my case there's no way God can cause any good to emerge."
>
> But if you doubt God's promise, listen to what a wise man said to me when I was researching my book The Case for Faith: God took the very worst thing that has

> ever happened in the history of the universe — deicide, or the death of God on the cross — and turned it into the very best thing that has happened in history of universe: the opening up of heaven to all who follow Him. So if God can take the very worst circumstance imaginable and turn it into the very best situation possible, can he not take the negative circumstances of your life and create something good from them?
>
> He can and He will. God can use our suffering to draw us to Himself, to mold and sharpen our character, to influence others for Him – He can draw something good from our pain in a myriad of ways…if we trust and follow Him.

Click through for links to the audio and video, as well as a PDF of the full transcript.

I wrote a post on the problem of evil recently which surveys more academic responses to the problem of evil.

Department of Justice threatens to seize business from Catholics

July 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News editor-in-chief Terry Jeffrey writes about it on Townhall.

Excerpt:

> The Newland family owns and operates Hercules Industries, a Colorado-based corporation that manufactures heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment. Through their hard work and dedication, and through their willingness to reinvest their own money in building their family business, they have managed to create jobs for 265 people while exerting a positive influence on the communities they serve.
>
> […]The Newlands sued to protect their free exercise of religion in this regard because Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius issued a regulation, under the Obamacare law, that requires virtually all health care plans to cover — without cost-sharing — sterilizations, artificial contraception and abortifacients.
>
> Under Obamacare, businesses that employ more than 50 people must provide their employees with insurance or pay a penalty, and the required insurance must include the mandated cost-sharing-free coverage for sterilizations, artificial contraception and abortifacients.
>
> At Hercules Industries, the Newlands provide a generous self-insured health-care plan to their employees. It does not cover sterilization, artificial contraception or abortifacients.
>
> […]In response to the Newlands' complaint that ordering them to violate the teachings of the Catholic Church in the way they run their business is a violation of their First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion, the Obama administration told the federal court that a private business has no protection under the First Amendment's free exercise clause — especially if the business is incorporated.
>
> […]This is just as if the Justice Department were to tell a family owned newspaper that it must publish editorials calling for a confiscatory estate tax, basing its coercion of the newspaper on the supposition (which lawyers for the Alliance Defending Freedom argue DOJ is by analogy making) that as a for-profit secular and incorporated employer, the paper has no First Amendment right to freedom of speech.

I'm a Protestant, and even I could not comply with any regulation that forces me to subsidize behavior that I consider immoral – namely, dispensing drugs that cause unborn human children to die. I would like to go through my life without murdering any innocent

people, thank you very much, and it’s not the government’s place to force me to murder people. And that’s one good reason right there to oppose Obamacare, although there are others.

In UK schools, 90 children are sent home every day for attacks in class

July 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Official figures revealed that 90 children are sent home every day for attacking teachers or classmates.
>
> And the worst deterioration in behaviour is being seen in the most affluent parts of the country. Teachers blamed parents for failing to equip children with the social skills they need to cope in the classroom.
>
> Last year primary schools expelled nearly 300 pupils aged 11 and under for violence and handed out almost 17,000 suspensions. This means that on any given school day in 2010/11, 90 pupils were ordered out of school for attacking a member of staff or fellow pupil.
>
> Primaries were forced to bar pupils more than 10,000 times for persistent disruption in lessons and 6,390 times for verbal abuse.
>
> Hundreds more pupils were sent home for other serious breaches of school rules such as bullying, racist abuse, sexual misconduct, theft, drugs or alcohol offences and damage to property.
>
> Figures issued by the Department for Education shows that while the number of secondary pupils being suspended or expelled is falling, there is a worsening picture at primary level – especially in the most affluent parts of the country.
>
> The number of suspensions has increased most sharply in the country's wealthiest areas.
>
> The trend follows claims from teachers that spoilt middle-class children are just as likely to challenge authority at school.
>
> Earlier this year, Dr Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said: 'A minority of children are very aware of their rights, have a total disregard of school rules and are rather less aware of their responsibility for their own learning and how to show respect to staff and other students.
>
> 'This can apply as much to over-indulged middle class children as those from challenging families.'

Everyone seems to be puzzled about why children of wealthy families might be more likely to misbehave. But I think that children are influenced by their parents the most, and in wealthy families, both parents are probably working. Who is there to supervise and and interact with the children if both parents are working? A day care worker is not the same

as a parent. Children definitely need a lot of attention and discipline – does anyone really believe that day care workers can substitute for a parent in that task?

Walter Bradley: three scientific phenomena that point to a designed universe

July 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor.

Here's a bio:

> Walter Bradley (B.S., Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin) is Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He comes to Baylor from Texas A&M University where he helped develop a nationally recognized program in polymeric composite materials. At Texas A&M, he served as director of the Polymer Technology Center for 10 years and as Department Head of Mechanical Engineering, a department of 67 professors that was ranked as high as 12th nationally during his tenure. Bradley has authored over 150 refereed research publications including book chapters, articles in archival journals such as the Journal of Material Science, Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites, Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials, Journal of Composites Technology and Research, Composite Science and Technology, Journal of Metals, Polymer Engineering and Science, and Journal of Materials Science, and refereed conference proceedings.
>
> Dr. Bradley has secured over $5.0 million in research funding from NSF grants (15 yrs.), AFOSR (10 years), NASA grants (10 years), and DOE (3 years). He has also received research grants or contracts from many Fortune 500 companies, including Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, 3M, Shell, Exxon, Boeing, and Phillips.
>
> He co-authored The Mystery of Life Origin: Reassessing Current Theories and has written 10 book chapters dealing with various faith science issues, a topic on which he speaks widely.
>
> He has received 5 research awards at Texas A&M University and 1 national research award. He has also received two teaching awards. He is an Elected Fellow of the American Society for Materials and the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the largest organization of Christians in Science and Technology in the world. He is President elect of the ASA and will serve his term in 2008.

You can read more about his recent research in this article from Science Daily.

Below, I analyze a lecture entitled “Is There Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer?”. Dr. Bradley explains how the progress of science has made the idea of a Creator and Designer of the universe more acceptable than ever before.

The MP3 file is here.

Evidence #1: The design of the universe

1. The correspondence of natural phenomena to mathematical law

- All observations of physical phenomena in the universe, such as throwing a ball up in the air, are described by a few simple, elegant mathematical equations.

2. The fine-tuning of physical constants and rations between constants in order to provide a life-permitting universe

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants and ratios: (there are more examples in the lecture)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would be able to build up the nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.
- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living

beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – "carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can't be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

3. Fine-tuning to allow a habitable planet

- A number of factors must be fine-tuned in order to have a planet that supports life
- Initial estimates predicted abundant life in the universe, but revised estimates now predict that life is almost certainly unique in the galaxy, and probably unique in the universe.
- Even though there are lots of stars in the universe, the odds are against *any* of them supporting complex life.
- Here are just a few of the minimal requirements for habitability: must be a single star solar system, in order to support stable planetary orbits, the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to have liquid water at the surface, the planet must sufficient mass in order to retain an atmosphere, etc.

The best non-theistic response to this argument is to postulate a multiverse, but that is very speculative and there is no experimental evidence that supports it.

Evidence #2: The origin of the universe

1. The progress of science has shown that the entire physical universe came into being out of nothing (= "the big bang"). It also shows that the cause of this creation event is non-physical and non-temporal. The cause is *supernatural*.

- Atheism prefers an eternal universe, to get around the problem of a Creator having to create the universe.
- Discovery #1: Observations of galaxies moving away from one another confirms that the universe expanded from a single point.
- Discovery #2: Measurements of the cosmic background radiation confirms that the universe exploding into being.
- Discovery #3: Predictions of elemental abundances prove that the universe is not eternal.
- Discovery #4:The atheism-friendly steady-state model and oscillating model were both falsified by the evidence.

- And there were other discoveries as well, mentioned in the lecture.

The best non-theistic response to this argument is to postulate a hyper-universe outside of ours, but that is very speculative and there is no experimental evidence that supports it.

Evidence #3: The origin of life

1. The progress of science has shown that the simplest living organism contains huge amounts of biological information, similar to the Java code I write all day at work. This is a problem for atheists, because the sequence of instructions in a living system has to come together all at once, it cannot have evolved by mutation and selection – because there was no replication in place prior to the formation of that first living system!

- Living systems must support certain minimum life functions: processing energy, storing information, and replicating.
- There needs to be a certain amount of complexity in the living system that can perform these minimum functions.
- But on atheism, the living system needs to be simple enough to form by accident in a pre-biotic soup, and in a reasonable amount of time.
- The minimal functionality in a living system is a achieved by DNA, RNA and enzymes. DNA and RNA are composed of sequences of proteins, which are in turn composed of sequences of amino acids.

Consider the problems of building a chain of 100 amino acids

- The amino acids must be left-handed only, but left and right kinds are equally abundant in nature. How do you sort out the right-handed ones?
- The amino acids must be bound together using peptide bonds. How do you prevent other types of bonds?
- Each link of the amino acid chain needs to be carefully chosen such that the completed chain with fold up into a protein. How do you choose the correct amino acid for each link from the pool of 20 different kinds found in living systems?
- In every case, a human or other intelligence could solve these problems by doing what intelligent agents do best: *making choices.*
- But who is there to make the choices on atheism?

The best current non-theistic response to this is to speculate that aliens may have seeded the Earth with life at some point in the past.

The problem of the origin of life is not a problem of chemistry, it is a problem of engineering. Every part of car functionality can be understood and described using the laws of physics and chemistry. But an intelligence is still needed in order to assemble the components into a system that has the minimal requirements for a functioning vehicle.

EPA study finds that water in Dimock, PA is safe to drink despite fracking

July 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an excerpt from the EPA press release that exonerates fracking:

> The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today that it has completed its sampling of private drinking water wells in Dimock, Pa. Data previously supplied to the agency by residents, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Cabot Oil and Gas Exploration had indicated the potential for elevated levels of water contaminants in wells, and following requests by residents EPA took steps to sample water in the area to ensure there were not elevated levels of contaminants. Based on the outcome of that sampling, EPA has determined that there are not levels of contaminants present that would require additional action by the Agency.
>
> […]Overall during the sampling in Dimock, EPA found hazardous substances, specifically arsenic, barium or manganese, all of which are also naturally occurring substances, in well water at five homes at levels that could present a health concern. In all cases the residents have now or will have their own treatment systems that can reduce concentrations of those hazardous substances to acceptable levels at the tap. EPA has provided the residents with all of their sampling results and has no further plans to conduct additional drinking water sampling in Dimock.

The Washington Times explains the context of this report.

Excerpt:

> Closely watched tests by the Environmental Protection Agency have found that the drinking water in Dimock, Pa., is safe to drink, despite concerns from some residents and environmentalists that nearby fracking had contaminated supplies.
>
> For the past seven months, EPA sampled water at private wells serving 64 homes in the small northeastern Pennsylvania town, the primary setting of the anti-natural-gas documentary "Gasland."
>
> EPA found hazardous substances such as arsenic and manganese in water supplies at five of the homes in question, but said Wednesday that the residences have or will soon have treatment systems "that can reduce concentrations of those hazardous substances to acceptable levels at the tap."
>
> Agency officials also said EPA will conduct no further testing and will stop delivering fresh water to Dimock residents.
>
> "The sampling and an evaluation of the particular circumstances at each home did not indicate levels of contaminants that would give EPA reason to take further

> action," EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin said in a statement. "Throughout EPA's work in Dimock, the agency has used the best available scientific data to provide clarity to Dimock residents and address their concerns about the safety of their drinking water."
>
> […]**In its Wednesday announcement, EPA made clear that the pollutants it identified occur naturally in the area.**

Remember the EPA is one of the most politicized, anti-business agencies in the government. If I were President, the first two agencies I would eliminate are the EPA and the federal Department of Education. And yet even the EPA could not find anything wrong with fracking. That means that there is nothing wrong with fracking.

Why do people think that secular leftists are guided by reason and science? It seems to me that they are always embracing fashionable nonsense that isn't proven out by the experimental data. Let's make our policy based on what the experimental evidence shows.

Horror in China: newborn female baby left to die in trash with her throat cut

July 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this hair-raising article from the UK Daily Mail. (WARNING: Not suitable for younger readers!)

Excerpt:

> An abandoned newborn baby is recovering in hospital after having her throat cut, being put in a plastic bag and thrown into a garbage bin in China's Liaoning province.
>
> The female baby – so newborn that her placenta and umbilical cord were still attached – was discovered by a man who was searching a bin for recyclables.
>
> Local residents called police and the tiny girl was taken to hospital, where she remains in a critical condition.
>
> A resident who witnessed the girl being taken to hospital said: 'She was still breathing and had a heartbeat. Blood from the wound stained the whole body.'
>
> Doctors worked to close a two-inch wound across her neck, so deep that it went down to her windpipe.
>
> A doctor at the hospital said that had the cut been any deeper at all 'she would have died instantly'.
>
> The girl was found in Anshan city, in northeast China.
>
> She is believed to be a victim of the country's notorious one child policy – and seems to confirm the long-held belief that parents upon which this restriction is imposed prefer boys.

Remember, the Democrat party, and anyone who votes for them, is in favor of abortion through all 9 months of pregnancy. In fact, Democrat vice President Joe Biden has expressed that he has no objection to China's one-child policy. And finally, Barack Obama goes even further left than Biden, and has voted multiple times against born-alive infant protection legislation. The Democrats have also expressed support for sex-selection abortion. If you vote for a Democrat, you are voting for violence against unborn girls – just like what happens in China.

David Cameron's fixation on gay marriage cripples the UK Conservative Party

July 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> When he became Tory leader seven years ago, the youthful and telegenic David Cameron pledged to transform the blue-rinse image of his party and boost its membership by attracting thousands of young, ethnic and gay members.
>
> In doing so, he would destroy forever the Tories' reputation as the 'nasty party' as these new 'inclusive' members joined the 300,000 activists whose average age was 64
>
> 'I was elected Leader of the Conservative Party on a mandate to change and modernise the party,' he said. 'I want to increase membership. I want to see a broader base. I want to see a significant increase in the number of members from all communities.'
>
> […]But the bitter and ineluctable truth is that, far from increasing numbers, Mr Cameron has presided over the sharpest decline in membership in the Conservative party's history.
>
> **Today, I can reveal that the number of Tory party members has fallen below 130,000, a drop of around 60 per cent since he took over in 2005.**
>
> […]**The uncompromising language deployed by Mr Cameron who, in another sop to the Lib Dems, has cynically dumped his repeated promise to reward traditional marriage through the tax system, enraged Tory MPs and activists alike.**
>
> […]In a tense meeting in Downing Street last month between Mr Cameron and 20 of the party's most senior members, he was given a stark warning that membership will plunge below the psychologically crucial 100,000 mark if there were no change of heart on same-sex marriage.
>
> […]The damage done by the gay marriage proposals is not confined to within the party. Potential Tory voters don't like them.
>
> A national poll by ComRes on the likely effects of allowing gay marriage — which, incidentally, was not in any of the parties' manifestos — revealed the Conservatives could lose 1.1 million votes and 30 parliamentary seats in an election because so many supporters would stay at home or switch to UKIP.
>
> A ComRes poll also revealed that 56 per cent of Mr Cameron's constituents who voted for him at the election oppose his plans to make redefining marriage a priority.

> Andrew Hawkins, the chairman of ComRes, said: 'It's the way it has been handled that has done so much damage. The Government has a consultation, but says it is pressing ahead whether people like it or not.
>
> **'One of the scariest things for the Tories is that three in four of those people who voted for Cameron in 2010, but say they won't again, cite gay marriage as the reason.**
>
> […]**One senior party official said: 'Gay marriage is the final straw. In London, Bristol, Birmingham and other major cities, there are dozens of constituencies with no party organisation at all.**
>
> **'The voluntary party is virtually extinct in Scotland and in parts of Wales.**
>
> **We are relying on a dwindling band of volunteers, the majority of whom are in their 70s. It's the most desperate situation the party has ever faced.'**

The UK Telegraph notes that Cameron has angered American Republicans with his "unprecedented" embrace of Barack Obama – despite the Falklands betrayal, the leaking the name of a British agent to the press, and other gaffes by Obama.

In other UK news, I note that nearly two-thirds of Scots oppose the legalization of same-sex marriage, but the liberal Scottish National Party is going forward with plans to legalize it. But nothing is set in stone yet, and things could still go the other way. (H/T Dina)

Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)

July 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.8/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> Great Expectations is a 1946 British film directed by David Lean, based on the novel by Charles Dickens and stars John Mills, Bernard Miles, Finlay Currie, Jean Simmons, Martita Hunt, Alec Guinness and Valerie Hobson. It won two Academy Awards (Best Art Direction and Best Cinematography) and was nominated for three others (Best Picture, Best Director and Best Screenplay).
>
> Pip, a good-natured, gullible young orphan, lives with kind blacksmith Joe Gargery and his bossy, abusive wife 'Mrs. Joe'. When the boy finds two hidden escaped galley convicts, he obeys under -probably unnecessary- threat of a horrible death to bring the criminals food he must steal at peril of more caning from the battle-ax. Just when Pip fears to get it really good while they have guests, a soldier comes for Joe who takes Pip along as assistant to work on the chains of escaped galley-convicts, who are soon caught. The better-natured one takes the blame for the stolen food. Later Pip is invited to became the playmate of Estelle, the equally arrogant adoptive daughter of gloomy, filthy rich Miss Havisham at her estate, who actually has 'permission' to break the kind kid's heart; being the only pretty girl he ever saw, she wins his heart forever, even after a mysterious benefactor pays trough a lawyer for his education and a rich allowance.

This movie has a special significance to me. It was one of the first classics I ever read, and there is much wisdom in it, especially for young men.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)

- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Tactics for defending traditional marriage

July 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Timmy posted this guide to defending marriage on his Facebook page.

Excerpt:

I. THE MOST EFFECTIVE SINGLE SENTENCE:

Extensive and repeated polling agrees that the single most effective message is:

"Gays and Lesbians have a right to live as they choose,
they don't have the right to redefine marriage for all of us."

This allows people to express support for tolerance while opposing gay marriage. Some modify it to "People have a right to live as they choose, they don't have the right to redefine marriage for all of us."

Language to avoid at all costs: "Ban same-sex marriage." Our base loves this wording. So do supporters of SSM. They know it causes us to lose about ten percentage points in polls. Don't use it. Say we're against "redefining marriage" or in favor or "marriage as the union of husband and wife" NEVER "banning same-sex marriage."

II. MAIN MESSAGE THE 3X5 CARD.

> • Marriage is between a husband and wife. The people of [this state] do not want marriage to be anything but that. We do not want government or judges changing that definition for us today or our children tomorrow.
>
> • We need a marriage amendment to settle the gay marriage issue once and for all, so we don't have it in our face every day for the next ten years.
>
> • Marriage is about bringing together men and women so children can have mothers and fathers.
>
> • Do we want to teach the next generation that one-half of humanity—either mothers or fathers—are dispensable, unimportant? Children are confused enough right now with sexual messages. Let's not confuse them further.

> • Gays and Lesbians have a right to live as they choose; they don't have a right to redefine marriage for the rest of us.

Mary also sent me this excellent peer-reviewed paper on traditional marriage and same-sex marriage, authored by two guys from Princeton University and one guy from the University of Notredame. One of those guys is the famous Robert P. George!

I've also prepared an evidential case against same-sex marriage using arguments that will be convincing to people who don't have any religious commitment.

Alvin Plantinga's evolutionary argument against naturalism

July 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the link at First Things. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Although Darwin admits he wasn't much of an abstract thinker, he could not shake the "inward conviction" that "the Universe is not the result of chance." Unlike many who followed after him, he appears to have intuitively understood the paradox of combining naturalism with evolutionary theory: If evolution is a non-teleological process, it undercuts our ability to trust that we can form true beliefs and convictions.
>
> To have trustworthy convictions, we have to have properly functioning noetic equipment (i.e., a brain, spinal cord, sensory apparatus, etc., that recognize reality). But can a strictly materialistic, non-teleological, evolutionary process produce such reliable equipment? The philosopher Alvin Plantinga, one of the greatest thinkers of our era, thinks the answer is "no." Although his argument is too complex and tightly argued to be adequately summarized, the basic outline of his case shows his point to be all but incontrovertible.
>
> Plantinga claims, not that evolution is untrue, but that the truth of evolution is incompatible with the truth of naturalism. "As far as I can see, God certainly could have used Darwinian processes to create the living world and direct it as he wanted to go," he argues. "Hence evolution as such does not imply that there is no direction in the history of life."
>
> What does imply that life is not directed, he adds, is not evolutionary theory itself, but the theory of *unguided* evolution: the idea that "neither God nor any other person has taken a hand in guiding, directing, or orchestrating the course of evolution." For our purposes, we'll call this view "evolutionary naturalism."
>
> Evolutionary naturalism assumes that our noetic equipment developed as it did because it had some survival value or reproductive advantage. Unguided evolution does not select for belief except insofar as the belief improves the chances of survival. The truth of a belief is irrelevant, as long as it produces an evolutionary advantage.

If you want to hear Plantinga giving a lecture on this same argument live on a university campus, click here.

Summary:

> In a talk given at The Veritas Forum at Oregon State University in January 1996, Professor Alvin Plantinga presents an evolutionary argument *against* naturalism.

> In a complex, but important philosophical argument, he argues that it is not rational to accept belief in naturalism and evolution, because such beliefs provide no rational basis for trusting our cognitive faculties.

Or you can watch the videos that I posted a while back.

The argument first appeared in his book "Warrant and Proper Function", published by Oxford University Press in 1993. It should be noted that Plantinga is a Calvinist, a supporter of middle knowledge, and has lent some support to intelligent design. In his latter years, he has turned feisty, and writes snarky things to confound atheists.

Tea Party conservatives and social conservatives endorse Ted Cruz in Texas primary

July 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Senate candidate Ted Cruz

There is a Republican primary on Tuesday for Kay Bailey Hutchinson's Senate seat, and my candidate is Ted Cruz. Tea Party leader Sarah Palin recently endorsed him.

Excerpt:

> Sarah Palin told a cheering crowd late Friday that America needs to get back to its "clinging to God and guns" roots, as the tea pea party's biggest names made a series of last-minute, high-profile appearances around Texas to support insurgent conservative U.S. Senate candidate Ted Cruz.
>
> The former Alaska governor and 2008 GOP vice presidential candidate spoke to more than 1,000 boisterous and sweating Cruz supporters gathered under a mercilessly early-evening sun on a grassy knoll in The Woodlands, a well-to-do Houston suburb. She told them that "to make America great, we don't need a fundamental transformation, we need a fundamental restoration."
>
> "Fighters like Ted Cruz can lead the charge for us," Palin said.
>
> Cruz, the former Texas Solicitor General, is locked in a fierce and increasingly nasty battle with the mainstream Texas GOP choice, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, for the Republican nomination to replace retiring U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison. The pair face a runoff Tuesday because neither won a majority in a nine-Republican senatorial field during the state's May 29 primary.

The conservative Club For Growth is backing Ted Cruz:

And social conservative leader James Dobson likes Ted Cruz, too.

Excerpt:

> Today, we are excited to announce that national pro-life, family values leader Dr. James Dobson is endorsing our Senate campaign.
>
> In his endorsement announcement, Dr. Dobson said: "**I'm pleased to endorse Ted Cruz for U.S. Senate because he's exactly the kind of candidate we need to turn this country around**. Religious freedom is under assault every day. We need leaders with the courage to stand strong for conservative values in this battle. Ted Cruz is such a leader—one who will not only vote his convictions in the Senate, but will also lead the fight to defend life, traditional marriage, and religious liberty."
>
> Dr. Dobson added: "Ted Cruz stands out among conservative leaders across the country today. **He has a consistent record of standing up for faith, family, and freedom, and winning values battles on a national level**….I urge all Texans who love life, family, faith, and freedom to not only vote for Ted Cruz, but to work hard for his campaign."

Even moderate conservative George Will thinks that Republican candidate Ted Cruz is the man to replace Kay Bailey Hutchison in Texas.

Excerpt:

> For a conservative Texan seeking national office, it could hardly get better than this: In a recent 48-hour span, Ted Cruz, a candidate for next year's Republican Senate nomination for the seat being vacated by Republican Kay Bailey Hutchison, was endorsed by the Club for Growth PAC, FreedomWorks PAC, talk-radio host Mark Levin and Erick Erickson of RedState.com.
>
> For conservatives seeking reinforcements for Washington's too-limited number of limited-government constitutionalists, it can hardly get better than this: Before he earned a Harvard law degree magna cum laude (and helped found the Harvard Latino Law Review) and clerked for Chief Justice William Rehnquist, Cruz's senior thesis at Princeton — **his thesis adviser was professor Robert George**, one of contemporary conservatism's intellectual pinups — was on the Constitution's Ninth and 10th amendments. Then as now, Cruz argued that these amendments, properly construed, would buttress the principle that powers not enumerated are not possessed by the federal government.

> […]At age 14, Cruz's father fought with rebels (including Fidel Castro) against Cuba's dictator, Fulgencio Batista. Captured and tortured, at 18 he escaped to America with $100 sewn in his underwear. He graduated from the University of Texas and met his wife — like him, a mathematician — with whom he founded a small business processing seismic data for the oil industry.
>
> By the time Ted Cruz was 13, he was winning speech contests sponsored by a Houston free-enterprise group that gave contestants assigned readings by

> Frederic Bastiat, Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises. In his early teens he traveled around Texas and out of state giving speeches. At Princeton, he finished first in the 1992 U.S. National Debate Championship and North American Debate Championship.
>
> As Texas's solicitor general from 2003 to 2008, Cruz submitted 70 briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court, and he has, so far, argued nine cases there. He favors school choice and personal investment accounts for a portion of individuals' Social Security taxes. He supports the latter idea with a bow to the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who said such accounts enable the doorman to build wealth the way the people in the penthouse do.
>
> Regarding immigration, Cruz, 40, demands secure borders and opposes amnesty for illegal immigrants but echoes Ronald Reagan's praise of legal immigrants as "Americans by choice," people who are "crazy enough" to risk everything in the fundamentally entrepreneurial act of immigrating.

You can find out more about Ted Cruz on his positions page. I was interested in his stance on social issues, in particular.

Excerpt:

> **Ted Cruz has fought to protect innocent human life. He played a leading role in several important cases, including defense of the partial-birth abortion ban, parental consent laws, and prohibiting state funds from going to abortion. These cases have all been part of the ongoing effort to ensure that every child in America receives the protection and respect he or she deserves.**
>
> - Authored an amicus brief for 13 states, successfully defending the federal Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act. The ban was upheld 5-4 before the U.S. Supreme Court;
> - Authored an amicus brief for 18 states, successfully defending the New Hampshire parental notification law. The law was upheld 9-0 before the U.S. Supreme Court [note: this brief was awarded the Best Brief Award from the National Association of Attorneys General for U.S. Supreme Court briefs written in 2005-06];
> - Successfully defended Texas's Rider 8, which prohibits state funds for groups that provide abortions, winning unanimously before the Fifth Circuit court of appeals.
>
> **Ted Cruz has worked hard in defense of traditional marriage, including his intervention in a case protecting Texas marriage laws. In addition, he has fought on the federal level to defend marriage between one man and one woman as the fundamental building block of society.**
>
> - When a Beaumont state court granted a divorce to two homosexual men

> who had gotten a civil union in Vermont, Cruz, under the leadership of Attorney General Greg Abbott, intervened in defense of the marriage laws of the State of Texas, which successfully led to the court judgment being vacated;
> - Worked with Attorney General Abbott to send a letter to Congress in support of the federal Defense of Marriage Act.

He has a solid recordconservative policies on that page: energy production, voter fraud prevention, border security, legal firearm ownership – you name it, this guy has been fighting for conservative principles. Like Michele Bachmann, he has actually tried to do pro-life and pro-marriage things. We don’t just have to take his word for it, he has the actions to prove his words.

A look at homeschooling and alternatives to college

July 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I do think that college can still be a good deal as long as you are careful to choose a major that will re-coup the costs of your education in a timely fashion. That will probably mean a STEM degree in something like computer science or petroleum engineering. I myself have the BS and MS in computer science, and I think that those are excellent choices for a man to deliver on his obligation to provide for a family. But it was a much better deal back when tuition was very low, and salaries were very high. Plus, public schools used to me much better at preparing you to go to school to learn STEM subjects. These new problems: underperforming public schools, college debt, and a weak job market, it makes sense to consider alternatives to the mainstream education system.

Here's an article about homeschooling – an alternative to brick-and-mortar schools – that was posted in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Today in the U.S., some two million children are home schooled, growing at an annual rate of 7% to 15% for over a decade, according to the president of the National Home Education Research Institute. The term "home schooler" once implied "isolationist religious zealot" or "off-the-grid anarchist who makes her own yogurt." Today, it also means military parents who hate to see their kids keep changing schools; or the family with a future Olympian who ice skates five hours a day; or your cousin whose daughter is gifted but has a learning disability. The average home schooler is no longer a sideshow oddity.
>
> "I could never ever teach math," more than a few parents told me in horror at the very idea of home schooling. Or science. Or a foreign language. But mostly, it was math. Here's my secret: I can't teach math either. Once they start calling them integers instead of numbers, I recoil as from a fat, angry snake, which is why Alice takes an online math class, with great lashings of help from her father.
>
> But the biggest thing people want to talk about is socialization. Everyone is worried that I keep my child in a crate with three air holes punched in it and won't let her have friends until she gets her AARP card. There's a long answer, of course, but I'll sum it up this way: Homo sapiens have walked the Earth for at least 130,000 years and, in this time, they learned to be human from their elders, not from their peers. Mandatory education in the U.S. is less than 150 years old. Learning to be a productive adult human by spending a third of every day with other kids might be a good idea, but it's too soon to tell. I'm still unsure that the people best equipped to teach a 14-year-old boy how to be a man are other 14-year-old boys.
>
> In fact, home-schooled kids are just as socialized as other children. They certainly seem to grow up to be, and feel, fully engaged. One study, by a Canadian home-

> schooling group, found that 67% of formerly home-schooled adult respondents said they are "very happy," as opposed to the general population's 43%. Another study, published in the Journal of College Admission, found that home-schooled students perform better on their ACTs, have higher college GPAs and are more likely to graduate in four years.

So how far would you go with alternatives to mainstream education? Well, the smartest engineer I know doesn't even have a college degree in computer science – or the student loans that often go with them.

Just look at these numbers: (links removed)

> Across the nation, graduates are tossing their caps into the air and investing their hopes of success in their sheepskins. Not since the Magna Carta has so much faith been put into a piece of paper; indeed, belief in the college diploma seems these days to outpace belief in the document that binds a man and a woman. For the past couple of generations, conventional wisdom has said that a college degree is the golden ticket to a great job. For a time, because of the simple laws of supply and demand, this was true.
>
> In 1947, when just 5 percent of Americans age 25 and over held at least a bachelor's degree, the supply was low, making demand for degreed employees higher. However, with easier access to college through taxpayer-funded student loans, today's bachelor's degree has become yesterday's high-school diploma. Now that over 30 percent of Americans 25 and over have a college degree—and the President has called for that figure to grow to 60 percent—the supply is up, which might help explain why 53 percent of recent graduates are unemployed or underemployed.
>
> What's more, the burgeoning cost of college means that even for those who do land good jobs after graduation, payoff on their investment will be diminished and take more time. The graduation rates tripled between 1980 and 2010, rising 37 percent between 1999 and 2010. Two-thirds of bachelor's degree recipients graduated with debt in 2008, compared with less than half in 1993. The average debt for last year's college was $24,000, while the total outstanding national student debt has passed $1 trillion, more than the nation's credit card debt. Not surprisingly then, the national student loan default rate is on the rise, too, hitting 8.8 percent for the 2009 budget year. Even the number of Ph.D. holders on public assistance has made recent headlines.

College still works for people, but you have to choose your major more carefully – or just choose to focus on practical skills and then attend a trade school. It's probably a good idea to put more emphasis on getting *work experience* at an early age, no matter what you do after high school. Work experience is very important for getting a job, which is why the liberal fixation on higher minimum wage rates hurts younger workers. Sometimes, online degree options can be more cost effective than regular school, but

again work has to be done to see where the jobs are and what skills are required before you make a decision.

People sometimes ask me whether this is it for civilization, and I point to new discoveries and feedback mechanisms like these alternatives to government-run or government-regulated schools as an example of how we can get things turned around. What taxpaying parents need to realize is that they have to start thinking practically about laws and policies that promote freedom in education. We have to vote for more choice and competition, and lower taxes, so that we can buy what we want instead of letting an ideologue who has spent his or her entire life in a bubble decide for us.

U.S. GDP growth slows to 1.5% in second quarter

July 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

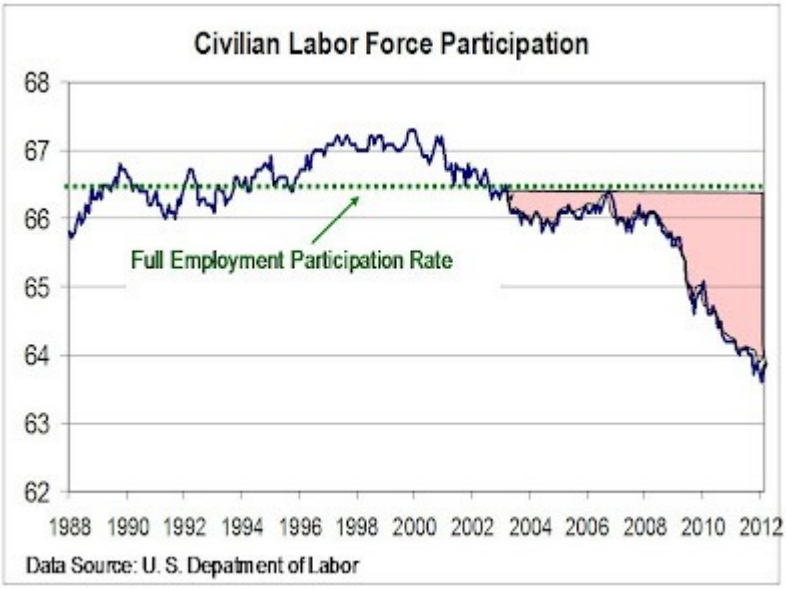

Democrats took the House and Senate in January 2007
From CBS Marketwatch.

Excerpt:

> The U.S. economy slowed sharply in the second quarter, growing just 1.5% as consumers slashed spending and businesses grew more cautious about hiring and investing, underscoring that an already wobbly recovery is losing even more steam.
>
> In the U.S., though, new government figures showed that growth in gross domestic product, the broadest measure of goods and services churned out by the economy, slowed sharply from the first quarter's 2% annual rate and the fourth quarter's 4.1%.
>
> That downward slope in growth is worrisome to economists. As the economy loses steam, a pullback can become self-reinforcing as businesses and consumers worry about the future.
>
> The slowing economy, along with government data showing the recovery has been weaker than thought, raises the specter that a sudden shock—such as an escalation of Europe's crisis, or next year's looming tax increases and spending cuts—could shove the U.S. back into recession.
>
> […]One of the biggest obstacles to recovery is a dearth of consumer spending, which accounts for two-thirds of demand in the economy.
>
> Spending rose 1.5% in the second quarter, lower than 2.4% in the first, reflecting weaker demand for cars and big-ticket items. A big reason is the stagnant labor market. Employers added fewer jobs in the second quarter than they have since the labor market began recovering in 2010.

> "The economy is kind of being strangled," said Bob Baur, chief global economist at Principal Global Investors. "We underestimated how much uncertainty may have contributed to a lack of desire to expand and hire." Mr. Baur expects 2% to 2.5% growth in the second half of the year but has "grown more cautious," he said.
>
> […]Businesses, meanwhile, appear to have grown more cautious about spending. The new GDP report showed that nonresidential fixed investment expanded 5.3% in the second quarter, less than the 7.5% in the first, though spending on equipment and software was healthy. Joseph Carson, an economist at Alliance Bernstein, said: "Uncertainty surrounding U.S. tax laws has created confusion and concern among companies, which has probably depressed investment spending."

Remember, the Obama administration thinks that higher government dependency "stimulates" the economy:

> House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) said Tuesday that food stamps and unemployment insurance are the two "most stimulative" things you can do for the economy.
>
> During a pen and pad briefing with reporters on Capitol Hill, Hoyer was asked if any Democrats are "reconsidering the wisdom" of letting the Bush tax cuts expire at year's end for the top income earners given the still struggling U.S. economy.
>
> "I haven't talked to any who are of that mind," said Hoyer. "If you talk to economists, they will tell you there are two things that are the most stimulative that you can do — one's unemployment insurance, the other's food stamps, okay?"

Of course, all that spending on unemployment and food stamps costs money, so they just borrowed that money from future generations of Americans – your children. The national debt is nearly $16 trillion, but they just keep borrowing. They don't know what else to do, because they have no idea how jobs are created in the first place.

Republicans think that the best way to stimulate the economy is to create jobs by encouraging businesses to risk their capital in business ventures. But the Republicans aren't in charge, so we are following the Democrat playbook. Many companies have responded to the Democrat plan to punish "the rich" by expanding their businesses in other countries that are less hostile to job creators. When you introduce burdensome regulations (EPA, Obamacare, Dodd-Frank, etc.) and high corporate taxes (35% – highest in the world!), that means that businesses can hire fewer people at home, and they are forced to expand elsewhere.

Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES

July 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What kind of foreign policy do you get when you put radical leftists in charge?

This kind. (H/T Richard M.)

Excerpt:

> At the urging of Valerie Jarrett, PresidentBarack Obama canceled the operation to kill Osama bin Laden on three separate occasions before finally approving the May 2, 2011 Navy SEAL mission, according to an explosive new book scheduled for release August 21. The Daily Caller has seen a portion of the chapter in which the stunning revelation appears.
>
> In ”Leading From Behind: The Reluctant President and the Advisors Who Decide for Him,“ Richard Miniter writes that Obama canceled the “kill” mission in January 2011, again in February, and a third time in March. Obama’s close adviser Valerie Jarrett persuaded him to hold off each time, according to the book.
>
> Miniter, a two-time New York Times best-selling author, cites an unnamed source with Joint Special Operations Command who had direct knowledge of the operation and its planning.
>
> Obama administration officials also said after the raid that the president had delayed giving the order to kill the arch-terrorist the day before the operation was carried out, in what turned out to be his fourth moment of indecision. At the time, the White House blamed the delay on unfavorable weather conditions near bin Laden’s compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan.
>
> But when Miniter obtained that day’s weather reports from the U.S. Air Force Combat Meteorological Center, he said, they showed ideal conditions for the SEALs to carry out their orders.
>
> “President Obama’s greatest success was actually his greatest failure,” Miniter told The Daily Caller Friday. ”Leading From Behind,“ he said, traces the arc of six key Obama administration decisions, and shows how the president made them — and, often, failed to make them.

Should we give Obama any credit for killing Bin Laden?

I’ve written before about how George W. Bush deserves credit for Bin Laden kill.

But there are a couple of other data points to add that recently emerged, as well.

First, the decision on the Bin Laden raid was made by the American Armed Forces, not by Barack Obama, as a newly released memo reveals.

Second, Obama had already drafted a memo to blame the military if the operation failed.

In fact, Obama has weakening our counter-terrorism and defense capabilities from the

day he took office.

Excerpt:

> Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, called the president's victory lap in Afghanistan on the anniversary of the death of Osama bin Laden at the hands of the Navy SEALs "an attempt to shore up his national security credentials, because he has spent the past three years gutting our military."
>
> Indeed he has. "He cut the F-22, future combat system, C-17 and our ground-based interceptor in Poland, to name a few," Inhofe noted.
>
> […]President Obama's defense policies fulfill a campaign pledge he made to the far-left group Caucus for Priorities a month before the January 2008 Iowa caucuses. Caucus for Priorities is an offshoot of a bigger group, Priorities Action Fund, created by Ben Cohen, the peace activist and co-founder of Ben & Jerry's ice cream.
>
> In a video made for the group, Obama called for a further deterioration in our military strength.
>
> "I will cut investments in unproven missile defense systems. I will not weaponize space. I will slow our development of future combat systems," he said.
>
> So far, he has kept his word.
>
> In the video, he also vowed, "I will set a goal of a world without nuclear weapons. To seek that goal, I will not develop new nuclear weapons, I will seek a global ban on the production of fissile material and I will negotiate with Russia to take our ICBMs off hair-trigger alert, and to achieve deep cuts in our nuclear arsenals."
>
> He has kept that promise as well.
>
> As the Heritage Foundation notes, since Obama took office, over 50 major weapons programs of more than $300 billion have been cut or delayed.
>
> Obama, who betrayed Poland and Czechoslovakia on missile defense and shut down key weapon systems like the F-22 Raptor, has vowed to veto any changes to the mandated cuts, including $650 billion from defense as called for by the Budget Control Act over the next decade.
>
> That comes on top of $460 billion in defense cuts already agreed to — a total of $1.1 trillion in defense cuts our commander in chief is OK with.
>
> A 14-page analysis by the Republican majority staff of the House Armed Services Committee says the cumulative cuts will result in Army and Marine Corps losing 200,000 troops.
>
> The Navy will shrink from 300 ships to 238 vessels and would lose two carrier battle groups needed to project American power and influence. Strategic bombers will fall from 153 to 101. Air Force fighters would drop by more than half, from 3,602 aircraft to 1,512 planes. These are real cuts, both in spending

> and in military capability.

In fact, the main priority of the Obama administration seems to be redirecting the U.S. military to fight global warming intervening in favor of South American socialist dictators, dismantling our nuclear arsenal, allowing Iranian Islamists to rig elections and shoot pro-democracy protesters, giving drone technology to the Iranians, setting up the the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Libya, and handing over the keys to our European missile defense system to the Russians.

This is not the full list of how this man has been a disaster for world peace and national security. And it is a list that is ignored by his supporters who think with their emotions and who have their hands out for more of their share of their neighbor's earnings.

Chick-Fil-A under fire for supporting a child's right to a mother and a father

July 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Like marriage? Support Chick-Fil-A on August 1st!

I had Chick-Fil-A for lunch every day last week. Why? Well, take a look at this Washington Times article.

Excerpt:

> Each day brings new evidence of the left's hatred for Christians and other traditionalists, but the smear campaign against Christian-owned Chick-fil-A sets a new low.
>
> The Atlanta-based, 1,600-restaurant chain, famous for its misspelling-prone cows that urge consumers to "eat mor chikin," is under a full-scale fascistic assault, complete with obscene celebrity tweets and government bullying.
>
> Acting more like Benito Mussolini than Paul Revere, Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino said he will block Chick-fil-A from opening a restaurant in his city. Chicago Alderman Proco Joe Moreno said he will stop Chick-fil-A from building its second Chicago store. In Philadelphia, Councilman James F. Kenney sent a letter to Chick-fil-A President Dan Cathy advising his company to "take a hike and take your intolerance with you." Meanwhile, the Jim Henson Co., owner of the Muppets, has canceled a deal to provide toys for Chick-fil-A kids' meals. This is just the beginning.
>
> What has the dastardly company done? Chick-fil-A's management, while not

> political, is an unapologetic defender of traditional values. Like the Boy Scouts, the company has enraged liberals who are at war with nature and nature's God.
>
> This isn't the first time Chick-fil-A has been singled out. In February 2011, homosexual activists launched an unsuccessful boycott when they found out that the company donated food to the Pennsylvania Family Institute's marriage retreat. Seriously, it doesn't take much to tick them off.
>
> The current hysteria began after Mr. Cathy, son of the chain's founder, gave an interview that ran in the Baptist Press on July 16.Mr. Cathy noted that Chick-fil-A's management is "based on biblical principles, asking God and pleading with God to give us wisdom on decisions we make about people and the programs and partnerships we have. And He has blessed us." When asked about the company's positions in support of marriage and family, Mr. Cathy went on to say, "Well, guilty as charged. We are very much supportive of the family — the biblical definition of the family unit."
>
> This was too juicy to ignore. CNN ran a July 19 religion blog post that read, "Chick-fil-A's marriage stance causing a social storm." Casually striking a match while pouring the gasoline, writer Brad Lendon wrote that "the comments of company President Dan Cathy about gay marriage to Baptist Press on Monday have ignited a social media wildfire."
>
> It doesn't matter that Mr. Cathy never brought up "gay marriage," as noted by the Weekly Standard's Mark Hemingway. All Mr. Cathy did was defend the company's stance that families are paramount and that the company supports the family unit "in its biblical definition."

So, would you like to support Chick-Fil-A? Me too!

And here is what I have when I go there:

- Deluxe Spicy Chicken Sandwich with Pepper Jack cheese
- Large Waffle Fries
- Regular Diet Lemonade with Splenda

You can see their full menu here.

There is an all-hands-on-deck effort to support Chick-Fil-A scheduled for this Wednesday, August 1, 2012. If you're going to support Chick-Fil-A, that would be a good day to do it. Maybe I'll see you there! (I'll probably be there all week for lunch again!)

For a robust defense of marriage, click here.

Advice for Christians who discuss their faith with atheists… from an atheist

July 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this post by Jeffery Jay Lowder on The Secular Outpost, and I think it's good advice.

> There are times where two people speak the same language, use the same words, and mean *very* different things by the same words. In conversations between Christians and atheists, "faith" is one such word. For many atheists, the word "faith" means, by default, belief *without* evidence or even belief *against* the evidence. In contrast, I doubt many Christians would accept that definition. For example, according to the NIV translation, Hebrews 11:1 states, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."
>
> Victor Reppert, at *Dangerous Idea,* writes this about the word "faith."
>
> Every time you use the word "faith" in a discussion with an atheist, they are going to declare victory. They will presume that you are believing for no reason, and that you are are admitting that the evidence is against you.
>
> I think he is probably right. If Christians want to dialogue with atheists, I think Christians would be well served to speak the 'language' of atheists. The word "faith" simply has too much baggage associated with it; inserting that word into the conversation is likely to become a distraction from whatever point the Christian was probably trying to make. So if you're a Christian talking with atheists, my advice is to temporarily delete the word "faith" from your vocabulary. Find some other way to make your point.

A better word to use is "trust", and here's Christian apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason to make the same point:

Christian apologist Jonathan Morrow had a similar post on Think Christianly. (Mark well the part he put in bold)

Excerpt:

> In today's post I want to share a conversation I had with some of the sharp young men during lunch. It had to do with how we talk about Christianity with our friends, family, and coworkers. Most of the time, well meaning Christians talk about Christianity in the context of religion…not reality. Is that a problem? Yes, and here's why. Religion is understood as a personal and private feeling that is not accessible by everyone else. You can't question, challenge, or investigate it; you must simply be tolerant of it (and by tolerant, I am using the modern misunderstanding of tolerance which believes that all religious views are equally valid simply because a person sincerely believes them). That's why having a

> conversation about Christianity as a religion is a dead end. It's a non-starter.
>
> That's why I encouraged these students to talk about Christianity in the context of reality where terms like truth, knowledge, reason, and evidence apply. Any claim about reality is either true or false (it can't be both). *If Christianity is not the kind of thing that can be true or false…the battle has already been lost and the Gospel cannot be seriously considered*. We need to talk about Christianity in the same way we talk about having a prescription filled at the pharmacy or receiving instruction from a Doctor.
>
> In today's society, religion is a fuzzy (i.e., socially constructed or psychologically projected) category that makes little difference in everyday life. **But if Christianity is true, then it speaks to ALL of life. It makes a comprehensive claim on reality**. Jesus didn't intend to merely address two hours of our week. As Christians we need to have more conversations about reality and less about religion.

I've even written a post about the concept of faith that is presented in the Bible and the word faith has nothing to do with blind belief in the Bible – it's always based on evidence, so that people can know for certain what the truth is. I highly recommend it for anyone who disagrees with Jeffery,Greg or Jonathan. When you're talking about Christianity, you're talking about what you know. You're talking about the way the world is, for everyone. When you talk about your belief in God, you should say "trust". You should not say "faith".

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Federal court: Obama appointees interfered with New Black Panther prosecution

July 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner.

First, recall the details of the incident that got the New Black Panthers into trouble:

> The New Black Panthers case stems from a Election Day 2008 incident where two members of the New Black Panther Party were filmed outside a polling place intimidating voters and poll watchers by brandishing a billy club. Justice Department lawyers investigated the case, filed charges, and when the Panthers failed to respond, a federal court in Philadelphia entered a "default" against all the Panthers defendants. But after Obama was sworn in, the Justice Department reversed course, dismissed charges against three of the defendants, and let the fourth off with a narrowly tailored restraining order.

Now here's the latest:

> A federal court in Washington, DC, held last week that political appointees appointed by President Obama did interfere with the Department of Justice's prosecution of the New Black Panther Party.
>
> […]Obama's DOJ had claimed Judicial Watch was not entitled to attorney's fees since "none of the records produced in this litigation evidenced any political interference whatsoever in" how the DOJ handled the New Black Panther Party case. But United States District Court Judge Reggie Walton disagreed. Citing a "series of emails" between Obama political appointees and career Justice lawyers, Walton writes:
>
> The documents reveal that political appointees within DOJ were conferring about the status and resolution of the New Black Panther Party case in the days preceding the DOJ's dismissal of claims in that case, which would appear to contradict Assistant Attorney General Perez's testimony that political leadership was not involved in that decision. Surely the public has an interest in documents that cast doubt on the accuracy of government officials' representations regarding the possible politicization of agency decision-making.
>
> …
>
> In sum, the Court concludes that three of the four fee entitlement factors weigh in favor of awarding fees to Judicial Watch. Therefore, Judicial Watch is both eligible and entitled to fees and costs, and the Court must now consider the reasonableness of Judicial Watch's requested award.

The Obama administration thought that this incident was nothing to be concerned about. Obama used to work for ACORN, an organization famous for voter fraud schemes.

Excerpt:

> The radical activist group ACORN “works” for the Democratic Party and deliberately promotes election fraud, ACORN employees told FBI investigators, according to an FBI document dump Wednesday.
>
> The documents obtained by Judicial Watch, a watchdog group, are FBI investigators’ reports related to the 2007 investigation and arrest of eight St. Louis, Mo., workers from ACORN’s Project Vote affiliate for violation of election laws. All eight employees involved in the scandal later pleaded guilty to voter registration fraud.
>
> Project Vote is ACORN’s voter registration arm. Project Vote continues to operate despite the reported dissolution of the national structure of ACORN.
>
> The handwritten reports by FBI agents show that ACORN employees reported numerous irregularities in the nonprofit group’s business practices.

Why should we be surprised that the Obama administration would turn a blind eye to this New Black Panther incident?

Related posts

- Obama administration sues Florida for purging non-citizens from voter rolls
- College student discovers election fraud in Indiana’s 2008 primary
- Is it “racial discrimination” to ask someone for a photo ID before they vote?
- Civil rights commission finds that Obama administration has racist double standard
- Homeland Security Secreary Janet Napolitano to counter global warming threat
- How many ACORN employees have been convicted of voter fraud this year?
- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training
- Is Obama’s Department of Justice enabling voter registration fraud?
- Department of Justice won’t purge dead or ineligible voters from roll
- ACORN employees, voter fraud and the Democrats
- Obama’s attorney general has his head in the sand on national security
- Obama administration investigates Wisconsin pro-lifers
- Democrats will push amnesty to give 12-20 million illegal aliens citizenship
- Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?

What is the “unforgiveable sin” in Mark 3 and Matthew 12?

July 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Take a look at these two puzzling passages from the New Testament.

Mark 3:28-29:

28 Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter,

29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

Matthew 12:30-32:

30 “Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

31 And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

What can it mean?

Well, here’s a post by Dr. Paul Gould to shed some light on it.

Excerpt:

> Taken in isolation, it is hard to make sense of this passage—how is it that all kinds of sins can be forgiven but one sin will not be forgiven? What is going on here? Well, here is a principle of sound biblical interpretation:
>
> Principle #1: I*n order to correctly understand a passage, we must always look at it within its context.*
>
> And what is the passages context? The broader context can be found in Matthew 12:22-32. In this broader context we read of Jesus performing a miracle (he performs an exorcism and heals a blind and mute man), we read of the crowd’s amazement and wonderment over the identity of Jesus (“Could this be the Son of David?”), we find the slanderous (and murderous) charge of the Pharisees, and we find Jesus’ response to the Pharisees charge (both his reasoned response to their explicit charge that he drives out demons by Satan’s power as well as his warning to the Pharisees if they continue to attribute to Satan what is in fact the work of God’s Spirit).
>
> After looking at this passage in context, we find that the “unforgivable sin” is (basically) attributing what is in fact the work of God’s Spirit to His ultimate enemy, Satan.
>
> Fair enough, you say, but there are other problems passages that talk about the unforgivable sin—Hebrews 6, 1 John 5, and Hebrews 10 come to mind. What

> about those passages? Well, here is our second principle of biblical interpretation:
>
> Principle #2: *Always interpret unclear passages in light of the clear teachings of Scripture (as a whole)*.
>
> And what is the clear teaching of Scripture related to sin and forgiveness? It is this:
>
> Forgiveness of sins is a consequence of man's repentance, and repentance is a consequence of the activity of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. So in the end, it seems that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is nothing more or less than the unrelenting rejection of His advances.

The only unforgiveable sin is the sin of deliberately rejecting God's efforts to draw you into a saving relationship with him. What does this mean for you? It means that if you are a Christian and you believe the essentials of the faith, then you aren't going to be able to lose your salvation by performing sinful actions. Sinful actions will damage you before you die, and you will lose rewards in the after-life, but you won't be separated from God when you die.

By the way, I do believe in resistible grace, and therefore, I believe that humans are responsible for their choice to refuse God's drawing them towards him. Many people think that once you are saved, you can't lose your salvation, but I think that the Bible is very clear that you can, will all the warnings about apostasy and the parable of the seeds, etc. I also think that the Bible is very clear in teaching resistible grace.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

July 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Justin Brierley, host of the Unbelievable radio show, tweeted about this lecture.

This is a long form explanation of the resurrection argument that Dr. Craig makes in all of his debates on the existence of God. The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early

dating
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthew, which Mike Licona and I doubt is intended to be historical, but is more likely to be apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

You can see this evidence used in an actual debate, against a historian who disagrees with Dr. Craig. That post contains a point by point summary of the debate that I wrote while listening to it.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

Meet the Chinese woman who saved more than 30 abandoned babies

August 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an inspiring article from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> A woman has been hailed a hero after details of her astonishing work with abandoned children has emerged.
>
> Lou Xiaoying, now 88 and suffering from kidney failure, found and raised more than 30 abandoned Chinese babies from the streets of Jinhua, in the eastern Zhejiang province where she managed to make a living by recycling rubbish.
>
> She and her late husband Li Zin, who died 17 years ago, kept four of the children and passed the others onto friends and family to start new lives.
>
> Her youngest son Zhang Qilin – now aged just seven – was found in a dustbin by Lou when she was 82.
>
> 'Even though I was already getting old I could not simply ignore the baby and leave him to die in the trash. He looked so sweet and so needy. I had to take him home with me,' she said.
>
> 'I took him back to our home, which is a very small modest house in the countryside and nursed him to health. He is now a thriving little boy, who is happy and healthy.
>
> 'My older children all help look after Zhang Qilin, he is very special to all of us. I named him after the Chinese word for rare and precious.
>
> 'The whole thing started when I found the first baby, a little girl back in 1972 when I was out collecting rubbish. She was just lying amongst the junk on the street, abandoned. She would have died had we not rescued her and taken her in.
>
> 'Watching her grow and become stronger gave us such happiness and I realised I had a real love of caring for children.
>
> 'I realised if we had strength enough to collect garbage how could we not recycle something as important as human lives,' she explained.
>
> 'These children need love and care. They are all precious human lives. I do not understand how people can leave such a vulnerable baby on the streets.

There are lots of pictures and more to read! It's a very, very touching story of self-sacrificial love.

Ted Cruz wins Texas Republican Senate primary election 56-44

August 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNBC reports on another Tea Party primary victory.

Excerpt:

> Tea Party favorite Ted Cruz scored a stunning upset over a longtime Texas state officeholder in a Republican U.S. Senate primary runoff on Tuesday, transforming Cruz into a national conservative star and marking a resurgence of the movement to shrink the size of U.S. government.
>
> Cruz, 41, a former state solicitor general who has never held elected office, became the third insurgent Republican this year to defeat an establishment Republican in a U.S. Senate primary.
>
> He scored a surprisingly comfortable victory with about 56 percent of the vote to about 44 percent for Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst, who a year ago was considered the frontrunner.
>
> […]Cruz spent a year and a half crisscrossing the state, introducing himself at Tea Party meetings and Republican women's club gatherings as a "constitutional conservative."
>
> And he drew support from conservative stars such as former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin and money from national conservative groups such as the Club for Growth. That group's political action committee spent $5.5 million to support Cruz, the organization said.
>
> Cruz, whose father came to Texas from Cuba with $100 sewn into his underwear, would become the first Hispanic U.S. senator from Texas if he wins in November.
>
> Dewhurst and Cruz had similar policy positions. Both pledged to do away with President Barack Obama's health care reform and to rein in Washington spending.
>
> Cruz, a Princeton University debate champion and a Harvard Law School graduate, stood out with sharp debate performances.

This is the third big Tea Party victory in a Republican primary. Richard Mourdock beat Richard Lugar in Indiana and Deb Fischer beat Jon Bruning in Nebraska. You can read more about Ted Cruz here.

Obamacare begins forcing states to cap and cut prescription drug benefits

August 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News. (H/T Doug Ross via BadBlue)

Excerpt:

> When Democrats in Congress pushed the Obamacare bill through, pro-life groups warned about rationing that could take place as a result. Although liberal groups and the mainstream media laughed at the projections, they are now coming to pass.
>
> A new report from Kaiser Health indicates states are now moving in the director of capping or cutting prescription drug benefits.
>
> Illinois Medicaid recipients have been limited to four prescription drugs as the state becomes the latest to cap how many medicines it will cover in the state-federal health insurance program for the poor.
>
> Sixteen states impose a monthly limit on the number of drugs Medicaid recipients can receive and seven states have either enacted such caps or tightened them in the past two years, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation (KHN is a program of the foundation). The limits vary across the country. Mississippi has a limit of two brand-name drugs. In Arkansas adults are limited to up six drugs a month.
>
> Since June, Alabama has had the nation's stingiest Medicaid drug benefit after limiting adults to one brand-name drug. HIV and psychiatric drugs were excluded. On Aug. 1 the state will relax the limit to its previous level — four brand-name drugs — after the restriction saved more money than expected and the state received money as part of a settlement with a pharmaceutical company.
>
> Other states with Medicaid drug limits are Arkansas, California, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and West Virginia.
>
> […]NRLC has said Obamacare contains "multiple provisions that will, if fully implemented, result in government-imposed rationing of lifesaving medical care."
>
> The department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will be empowered to impose so-called "quality and efficiency" measures on health care providers, based on recommendations by the Independent Payment Advisory Board, which is directed to force private health care spending below the rate of medical inflation. In many cases treatment that a doctor and patient deem needed or advisable to save that patient's life or preserve or improve the patient's health but which runs afoul of the imposed standards will be denied, even if the patient

> wants to pay for it.
>
> The law empowers HHS to prevent older Americans from making up with their own funds for the $555 billion the law cuts from Medicare by refusing to permit senior citizens the choice of private-fee-for-service plans whose premiums are sufficient to provide unrationed care but which HHS, in its unlimited discretion, disallows. The Obama health care law could thus lead to elimination of the only way that seniors will have to escape rationing — by limiting their right to spend their own money to save their own lives.

We should not be surprised by this. In the UK, patients regularly have treatments cut off by the government because they are deemed “lost causes” and because the government needs to cut costs. In Canada, patients are barred by law from using their own money to purchase or supplement their medical care. That’s why they have to leave the country and pay out of pocket for faster treatment when they are placed on waiting lists. Socialist health care means waiting lists and rationing by death panels. Get used to it, that’s what “equality” means. It means you pay based on income, and you are treated based on government decree – and after the bureaucrats take their cut, of course.

There is another way. We can use the forces of choice and competition to lower costs the same way that costs are lowered in the free market. In the private sector, the laptop that costed $3000 5 years ago was $1000 last year and is $400 today. That’s how the private sector works, and that’s what we need to do with health care. Get the government out it. The profit motive of business owners drives quality up and price down. It does in every area we care about, and health care is no different.

Douglas Groothuis' exhortation to Christians to study apologetics

August 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Groothuis' article lays out 6 "enemies" to the task of apologetics. I'll look at the first 4.

Enemy #1: We don't defend God's existence and character to other people

If we really cared about God like we say we do, then we would care enough to defend his reputation in public. If we really loved our neighbor and believed that they need to follow Jesus in order to be reconciled with God, we would tell them that. But we don't really care enough about God when his reputation is slammed in public. That's what being a good friend to God and to our neighbor requires.

Groothuis writes:

> Too many Christians don't seem to care that Christianity is routinely ridiculed as outdated, irrational, and narrow-minded in our culture. They may complain that this "offends" them (just as everyone else is complaining that one thing or another "offends" them), but they do little to counteract the charges by offering a defense of the Christian world view in a variety of settings. Yet Scripture *commands* all Christians to have a reason for the hope that is within them and to present this with gentleness and respect to unbelievers (1 Peter 3:15).
>
> Our attitude should be that of the Apostle Paul who was "greatly distressed" when he beheld the idolatry of sophisticated Athens. This zeal for the truth of God led him into a fruitful apologetic encounter with the thinkers gathered to debate new ideas (see Acts 17). It should for us as well. Just as God "so loved the world" that he sent Jesus to set us right with God (John 3:16), Jesus' disciples should so love the world that they endeavor to reach the lost by presenting the Gospel and answering objections to the Christian faith (John 17:18).

Enemy #2: We separate Christianity from the reasons and evidence that ground it

Many Christians alter their theology in order to "get along" with other religions that conflict with ours. Instead of wrestling with the competing truth claims of other religions, some Christians just change the nature of our religion so that it is just our personal preference or cultural narrative, instead of being about truth. If the Bible claims that Jesus rose from the dead, we reinterpret that historically testable claim so that it's only true *for us.* If the Bible says that the universe began to exist, we reinterpret that scientifically testable claim so that it is only true *for us*.

Groothuis says:

> For some Christians, faith means belief in the absence of evidence and argument. Worse yet, for some faith means belief *in spite of* evidence to the

> contrary. The more irrational our beliefs, the better–the more "spiritual" they are… When Christians opt for irrationalism, they become just another "religious option," and are classified along with Heaven's Gate, the Flat Earth Society, and other intellectually impaired groups.

Enemy #3: We don't take the time to study the reasons and evidence we have

We don't make time for preparing a defense for our beliefs by leveraging the resources produced by Christian scholars.

Groothuis says:

> Many Christians are not aware of the tremendous intellectual resources available to defend "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3). This is largely because many major churches and parachurch organizations virtually ignore apologetics… Few evangelical sermons ever address the evidence for the existence of God, the resurrection of Jesus, the justice of hell, the supremacy of Christ, or the logical problems with nonChristian worldviews. Christian bestsellers, with rare exceptions, indulge in groundless apocalyptic speculations, exalt Christian celebrities (whose characters often do not fit their notoriety), and revel in how-to methods.

Enemy #4: We would rather be liked by people than be a friend to God

Somehow, we have gotten the idea that the purpose of Christianity is for us to be happy. Being popular and accepted by non-Christians makes us feel happy. Moral judgments are divisive, so we avoid making those. Exclusive salvation is divisive, so we avoid exclusivity. All of this so that our lives will be easier and happier.

Groothuis says:

> In our pluralistic culture, a "live and let live" attitude is the norm, and a capitulation to social pressure haunts evangelicalism and drains its convictions. Too many evangelicals are more concerned about being "nice" and "tolerant" than being biblical or faithful to the exclusive Gospel found in their Bibles. Not enough evangelicals are willing to present and defend their faith in challenging situations, whether at school, at work, or in other public settings. The temptation is to privatize faith, to insulate and isolate it from public life entirely. Yes, we are Christians (in our hearts), but we have difficulty engaging anyone with what we believe and why we believe it. This is nothing less than cowardice and a betrayal of what we say we believe.

You can read the rest of the article here.

China takes children from their families to train as athletes

August 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> For during recent years its swimmers and coaches have been caught cheating so many times it is difficult to keep count – and it has modelled its draconian training system on precisely that which produced Schneider and other turbo-charged East Germans before the Iron Curtain fell.
>
> It began in the Eighties when, determined to end the nation's perennial humiliation at major athletics and swimming championships, China's Communist regime decreed that a generation of future champions must be harvested and honed.
>
> To that end, school teachers were ordered to scrutinise their pupils for signs of natural sporting ability and report any child with obvious potential to regional coaches who would install them in one of 3,000 new state training camps.
>
> According to her mother, Qing Dingyi, as quoted by the Chinese state media, little Ye 'expressed a wish to become a swimmer at the tender age of seven'.
>
> In truth, she was picked out because she had an unusually masculine physique with extremely large hands and long limbs: attributes at first thought best suited to a career in track and field.
>
> After being whisked away from her modest two-bedroom apartment, in Hangzhou, a city of 6.2 million, and installed into the Chen Jingluin sports school, however, it was decided she would be best suited to swimming, and by 11 she had won her first major junior championship.
>
> Her mother insists she and her husband, a manual worker, had always impressed on her that 'results are not important, but you should always enjoy the taking part'. One doubts she dares voice this opinion in the presence of her daughter's coaches.
>
> In swimming, as in most other Olympic sports, they enforce a regime so relentlessly harsh that it has been compared, by those few Western observers who have managed to penetrate the obsessive secrecy with which it is guarded, to that in some 19th-century prisons.
>
> Indeed, after being shown how China's child gymnasts are trained some years ago, in his capacity as an Olympic observer, Britain's Olympic gold-winning oarsman Sir Matthew Pinsent – a man who knows a thing or two about pushing the human body to its limits – pronounced it a 'pretty disturbing experience'.
>
> Children who our own sports authorities would deem far too young even to

> countenance focusing seriously on one sport, let alone be taken away from their parents and billeted in these boot-camps, had been driven so hard that they wept, and one claimed to have been beaten by his coach.
>
> The International Olympic Committee promised then to investigate his claims but seven years on there is no evidence that anything has remotely changed.
>
> Only last January harrowing photographs were posted on the internet showing Chinese children crying in pain as they were put to work.
>
> In case they had forgotten why they were there, a large sign on the wall reminded them. 'GOLD' it said simply.

What a tragedy. This is why I boycott the Olympics. To me there is nothing more important than having everything child welcomed into the world by his or her biological parents, and then having a stable loving environment to grow up in. I reject both the selfishness of adults and the fascist ideologies of socialist states. There is nothing more important to children than their parents. Children are more important than anti-family ideologies like feminism and socialism.

I recommend clicking through and reading the full article, and look at the pictures, too. This is what happens when the state takes precedence over individuals and families. We need to make sure that secularism and socialism do not dominate here, like they do in China.

Coalition of African American Pastors launches national pro-marriage campaign

August 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's some good news from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The Coalition of African American Pastors (CAAP) announced at the National Press Club on Tuesday that the grassroots group – comprised of the more than 3,000 members – is a launching a national campaign to support marriage between one man and one woman and to oppose the Obama administration's efforts to advance same-sex marriage.
>
> "The time has come for a broad-based assault against the power that be that wants to change our culture to one of men marrying men and women marrying women," CAAP President William Owens said at the press conference, held to announce the Marriage Mandate campaign, which includes a petition seeking 100,000 signatures pledging support for traditional marriage.
>
> "Mr. President, I'm not going to stand with you, and there are thousands of others across this country that are not going to stand with you with this foolishness," Owens said.
>
> In a press release announcing the campaign, Owens encouraged black pastors and the black community to "withdraw their support for [Obama]."
>
> "Today we will be launching a nationwide campaign rallying black pastors and African Americans to voice their opposition to the president's position on same-sex marriage, and withdraw their support from him," said Owens, who told reporters he voted for Obama in the 2008 presidential election.
>
> "We will see that the black community is informed that the president is taking them for granted while pandering to the gay community," Owens said.
>
> Bishop Janice Hollis, presiding Prelate of the Covenant of International Fellowship of Churches, called Obama's support of gay marriage a "travesty" and said it reflects the "disorder in the highest office in the land."
>
> Owens said CAAP sent a letter to Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder in May asking for a meeting to discuss the gay marriage issue.
>
> "We wrote the president and Mr. Holder May the second, requesting an audience with him to discuss this very issue," Owens said. "He has not given us the courtesy of any reply.
>
> "The Coalition of African American Pastors (CAAP) consists of 3,742 African American pastors, and he has totally ignored us," Owens said.
>
> He said Obama is ignoring the black community "because he feels that he has us

> in his pocket."
>
> "Well, we are not in his pocket," Owens said.

In the 2008 election, black Protestants voted overwhelmingly for the pro-abortion and pro-gay-marriage Obama. (He had a radical pro-abortion record and had come out for gay marriage earlier, so this was all known then).

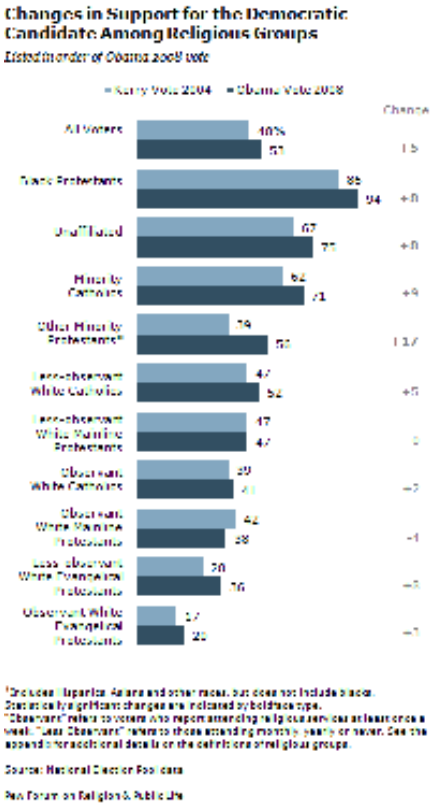

Which religions supported Obama most in 2008?
So 94% of African-American Christians voted for an abortion and gay marriage radical.
NINETY-FOUR PERCENT.

I actually believed, based on this voting data, that American black Protestant churches were *officially* pro-abortion and pro-gay-marriage. I just considered them to be apostate denominations the same way that denominations like the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church United States of America are apostate. (Note: this does not apply to non-American black churches, which are conservative).

These voting numbers confirm my experiences. For example, I remember one African American woman at work who was interested in me who could not understand why I would not join her in working on The United Way workplace partnership initiative. I took her aside in the hallway and told her that the United Way supported abortion and opposed the Boy Scouts, and she was like "*So what?*". She attended church weekly and she supported Barack Obama. So I just figured based on these voting numbers and my personal experiences that most African-American churches were pro-abortion, pro-gay-marriage, pro-socialism, etc.

This action by the 3,742 black African-American pastors shocks me as much as if those gay bishops in the Episcopal church had suddenly came out in favor of defending traditional marriage. Maybe these 3,742 pastors will be able to begin to educate their

flocks about what the Bible actually says on these issues so that these voting numbers change. I did know about the good African-American pastors like Harry Jackson and Ken Hutcherson who are pro-life and pro-marriage, but I just thought that there were only a handful of faithful black pastors. I guess I was wrong, at least on the marriage issue, and that’s a good thing. Color me surprised.

Ohio coal mine closes because of Obama administration environmental policies

August 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> A stop not scheduled during the president's third visit to the battleground state in four weeks was a coal-mining operation near Brilliant, Ohio, run by Ohio American Energy Inc., a subsidiary of Murray Energy Corp. The operation employed 239 workers at its peak but will be closing as the result of President Obama's environmental policies.
>
> Regulatory actions by President Obama and his appointees and followers were cited as the entire reason in the press release that announced the closing. "Mr. Obama has already destroyed 83,000 megawatts of coal-fired electricity generation in America," said Michael T.W. Carey, vice president of government affairs for Murray Energy. "Electric prices in the recent PJM Interconnection monthly auction were bid up 800% for 2015-16 because of this," he added.
>
> PJM Interconnection, the company that operates the electric grid for 13 states, including Ohio, recently held its 2015 capacity auction. This gave the first real indication of just how drastic the effects of Obama's war on coal will be. The market-clearing price for new 2015 capacity was $136 per megawatt.
>
> That's eight times higher than the price for 2012, which was just $16 per megawatt. In Pennsylvania, the new market price is $167 per megawatt — 10 times higher. In northern Ohio, which is suffering from more forced coal-plant retirements than the rest of the region, the 2015 price is an astounding $357 per megawatt.
>
> This is one campaign promise President Obama has kept. In 2008, candidate Obama promised a system under which "if somebody wants to build a coal-powered plant, they can; it's just that it will bankrupt them because they're going to be charged a huge sum for all that greenhouse gas that's being emitted."

I'm sure that some of the people who lost their jobs voted for Obama. Maybe they were even familiar with that quote of his. But they just didn't put two and two together to make four. Will you do that in November? I think that the one thing you want to do in life is to NOT hurt yourself with your own actions. Never vote to take away your own job.

Obamacare subsidizes the risky behaviors of sexually active women

August 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Starting August 1, the Democrats' health care law — as implemented by the Health and Human Services Administration — entitles 47 million women to eight new "prevention-related" health care services "without paying more out of their own pocket," HHS reminded Americans on Tuesday.
>
> In addition to the controversial contraceptive mandate, HHS says virtually all health plans must cover– at no charge — the following items for sexually active women.
>
> — HIV screening and counseling: "Sexually-active women will have access to annual counseling on HIV," HHS said, noting that women are at increased risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.
>
> — Counseling on sexually transmitted infections: "Sexually-active women will have access to annual counseling on sexually transmitted infections," HHS said. "These sessions have been shown to reduce risky behavior in patients, yet only 28 percent of women aged 18-44 years reported that they had discussed STIs with a doctor or nurse."
>
> — HPV (human papillomavirus): This sexually transmitted disease is linked to cervical cancer. According to HHS, "Women who are 30 or older will have access to high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV) DNA testing every three years, regardless of Pap smear results."
>
> — Interpersonal and domestic violence screening: "Screening and counseling for interpersonal and domestic violence should be provided for all adolescent and adult women," HHS says. "An estimated 25% of women in the United States report being targets of intimate partner violence during their lifetimes. Screening is effective in the early detection and effectiveness of interventions to increase the safety of abused women."
>
> — Contraceptive coverage: The HHS regulation requires nearly all health insurance plans to provide women with sterilizations and all FDA-approved contraceptives, including emergency contraception, without any fees or co-pay.

It is a major priority of the Obama administration: making it easier for women to have casual recreational sex with people outside of marriage. Sometimes, this recreational sex will result in increased sickness and disease, and sometimes this recreational sex will result in unplanned pregancies. But no matter – the taxpayers are there to pick up the tab for these activities. After all, "the private sector is fine" and business owners and workers

“didn’t build that”, so it’s no problem at all to “spread the wealth around” from job creators and workers to pay for these expenses. And it has the added benefit of buying votes. Not only that, but Planned Parenthood will make generous donations to the Democrat Party in exchange for all the new business they’ll get.

Chinese Communist Party members increasingly attending church

August 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> More Communist Party members in the Peoples Republic of China are attending church, according to the U.S. State Department's latest report on International Religious Freedom.
>
> "Although CCP members are required to be atheists and generally are discouraged from participating in religious activities, their attendance at official church services in Guangdong Province was reportedly growing, as authorities increasingly chose to turn a blind eye to their attendance," the report stated.
>
> Representative Frank Wolf (R-Va.), who authored the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, backed up claims that more Chinese Communists as well as members of the media are becoming Christians, despite continuing religious repression in China.
>
> "It is definitely taking place around the country," Wolf told CNSNews.com. "There's a large number of Chinese who have become Christian, there are a number of people in the government and even some in the media who have become Christians."
>
> […]The International Religious Freedom Report, released on July 30, also noted that in 2011, there was a "marked deterioration" of religious freedom in China.
>
> The report discussed the persecution of religious groups, including Christians, Uighur Muslims, Catholics and Tibetan Buddhists:
>
> "Some religious and spiritual groups are outlawed. Tibetan Buddhists in China are not free to venerate the Dalai Lama and encounter severe government interference in religious practice," the report said.
>
> "The government continued to severely repress Muslims living in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and other parts of China. Crackdowns on Christian house churches, such as the Shouwang church in Beijing, continued."
>
> The report also noted that Chinese authorities broke up Christmas and Easter celebrations and designated many Christian groups as "evil cults." Authorities also detained numerous Uighur Muslims without bothering to discern between peaceful worship and criminal activity.
>
> Many Catholic clergymen who remain loyal to the Vatican instead of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) also have been detained by the Communist regime.

> […]The Chinese constitution permits the citizenry to hold religious beliefs, but restricts the practicing and worship of religion to “normal religious activities”—a term that is left undefined by the constitution.
>
> Since 1999, China has been designated by the U.S. State Department as a “Country of Particular Concern” under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

What’s striking to be is how similar the views of the repressive Chinese government are to the views of many atheists in the West. In China, even religious people have to act like atheists in public. It’s an atheist paradise. It reminds me a little of what is happening here with Obamacare and religious institutions being forced to provide abortion-inducing drugs against their consciences.

Chick-Fil-A appreciation day sets sales record

August 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Chick-Fil-A Appreciation Day sets sales record
From the Los Angeles Times.

Excerpt:

> Chick-fil-A appears to have set a company record in sales on Wednesday, a day on which Americans were encouraged to show their support for the fast-food restaurant whose leadership has drawn both criticism and praise in recent weeks for its opposition to same-sex marriage.
>
> The privately held company declined to give specific sales figures but released a statement to the Los Angeles Times confirming that frenzied sales of chicken sandwiches and cross-cut waffle fries had made for a record-setting day.
>
> “We are very grateful and humbled by the incredible turnout of loyal Chick-fil-A customers on August 1 at Chick-fil-A restaurants around the country,” said Steve Robinson, executive vice president of marketing, in the statement. “While we don’t release exact sales numbers, we can confirm reports that it was a record-setting day.”
>
> […]Robinson said the Atlanta-based company was “grateful and humbled by the incredible turnout of loyal Chick-fil-A customers” who showed up at outlets in droves coast-to-coast. Customers often waited in long lines, many weathering the blistering summer sun, just to get in the front door.
>
> Such images — as well as those of crowded Chick-fil-A counters and long lines of cars snaking through the drive-thru lanes — created a social media frenzy on Wednesday as they were shared and reshared on a variety of platforms, including Twitter.
>
> The images suggested that sales were indeed going gangbusters, and confirmation of those suspicions arrived when Orange County Pastor Rick Warren

> tweeted a snippet of a conversation he'd had with Dan Cathy, president of the popular fast-food chain:
>
> @DanCathy just called me. #ChickFilA has already set a world record today, with 7 more hrs to go in the West. #OutOfChicken"
>
> The company, which proudly abides by Bible-based principles and closes its doors to sales on Sundays, stressed in its statement that Chick-fil-A did not promote Wednesday's turnout.
>
> It also stressed that its employees abide by a service tradition to "treat every person with honor, dignity and respect — regardless of their belief, race, creed, sexual orientation or gender."

But not everyone is happy about the protests. Here is an example taken from Sooper Mexican:

This sort of thing happens often, actually.

Why is it that everyone is so angry with people who express a pro-marriage point of view? I think the problem is that militant secularists are very focused on hedonism in this life. They cannot ground objective morality, including human rights such as the right to free speech. They have no notion of an after-life, so they are trying pack in as much happiness as they can. Their purpose in life is not to form their own character in this life, so they can be rightly related to God. They want to be selfish and they want to be celebrated by others for it.

Often, militant atheists know nothing at all about Christianity and why Christians hold to their positions. This makes them even more intolerant of Christians who act like Christians in public and who participate in politics, like the abolitionists or pro-life activists. These people have never sat through a formal academic debate, and they have never heard the arguments for God's existence and Christianity in particular. They don't want to listen, they just want to shame Christians and smash the windows of their businesses and put them into prisons until there is no one left to call their selfishness into question.

People who supported Chick-Fil-A were protesting this coercion and censorship by the secular left. They were saying, "you can't use the law and the government to take away my freedom to speak out in protest of things like slavery, abortion and redefining marriage". It's ironic that everyone is always accusing Christians of hypocrisy, and yet when we are authentic in public, they try to coerce us into acting like non-Christians!

I noticed that Gay Patriot, a well-known gay Republican and supporter of gay marriage, was out with his partner to Chick-Fil-A. He got some Chick-Fil-A food, and spent some time talking to the pro-marriage Chick-Fil-A customers. And everyone was nice to him. He is not a militant secularist – he thinks that everyone should be able to participate in defining policy and not be discriminated against for their views. No one who went to Chick-Fil-A was protesting Gay Patriot's freedom to do what he pleases in his own life. We were protesting the government's use of force to silence and coerce those who don't

want to have marriage redefined for the whole society. And we can defend our view using a variety of secular reasons, too, if anyone is interested.

Muslim leader of underage sex-trafficking gang gets 22-year sentence

August 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He's definitely a Muslim, according to the UK Telegraph:

> Taxi driver Shabir Ahmed, 59, was already serving a 19 year sentence from May for conspiracy, two rapes, aiding and abetting rape, sexual assault and sex trafficking. His domineering temper earned him the nickname "Daddy" by the white teenage victims.

> The ringleader, who called the judge a 'racist b——', was one of nine men jailed at Liverpool Crown Court for a total of 77 years for passing round the youngsters and plying them with drugs and drink.

> […]His victim, who cannot be named, revealed Ahmed once made her kneel on the floor in a pose called the 'chicken', with her arms threaded through her legs and touching her ears, before striking her on the back with a cricket bat.
>
> The girl, now an adult, claims she was repeatedly raped over many years. He left her never wanting to have sex again or get married.
>
> The girl said when she was first raped she was so young she needed to stand on a chair to reach a sink.
>
> She said: "I remember reading about the time the Roald Dahl book 'The BFG', and it described a person screaming and no sound came out – it was like that."
>
> She said the "shame" meant she did not tell police until March last year when she heard Ahmed was being investigated over the grooming case.
>
> The court heard during one rape attack she muttered under her breath :"sex maniac". Ahmed giggled: "Yes, that's what I am!"
>
> Rachel Smith, prosecuting, told the jury of six men and six women, two of whom were Asian: "Ahmed was violent and controlling."
>
> Ahmed told the court he was a standard-bearer for "targeted and weakened British Muslims", and claimed the police were anti-Muslim
>
> He said of the Rochdale grooming trial: "We were all innocent. My only crime was to be Muslim. Not of the majority race."
>
> In May, Ahmed and his eight co-defendants were jailed for their role in a child-sex ring.
>
> After that trial, Judge Gerald Clifton called him an "unpleasant and hypocritical bully" and told all the nine men they were driven by "lust and greed", adding: "You treated the victims as worthless and beyond respect."
>
> Takeaway worker Kabeer Hassan, 25, was given a total of 12 years for rape and

> conspiracy. Taxi driver Abdul Aziz, 41, got 18 years for conspiracy and sex trafficking; Dad-of-five Abdul Rauf, 43, was jailed 12 years for conspiracy and sex trafficking; Mohammed Sajid, 35, got 12 years for rape, conspiracy, sex trafficking and sexual activity with a child.
>
> Married Adil Khan, 42, was jailed for 18 years for conspiracy and sex trafficking. Taxi driver Mohammed Amin, 45, was caged for six years for conspiracy and sexual assault while cabbie Abdul Qayyum, 44, was jailed for five years for conspiracy. Hamid Safi, 22, was jailed for four years for conspiracy and sex trafficking.

Is this sort of child-rape compatible with Islam?

In Christianity, men aren't allowed to have sex with anyone unless they are married to them. Marriage is for life, and you only get to marry one person. So you have two choices: a self-sacrificial lifelong marriage or lifelong chastity. If you had sex with someone you aren't married to, then you're not doing Christianity right.

I have female friends who are in other religions like Hinduism and Judaism and Buddhism and atheism. And my goal for those women (and the men, too!) is to get them into a relationship with God through the person and work of Jesus Christ.That is the goal that Christians have for people outside of their religion: to get them to freely love God because they are convinced that it is rational to do so. We are trying to change the other person's mind. We use reasons and evidence to do that.

When I read the Bible, I find that there is a model and specification for dealing with non-Christians in the New Testament.

Here are some tips for dealing with non-Christians:

- listen to their their concerns
- find answers to their questions through study
- write to them
- give them books to read
- give them lectures and debates to watch
- do stuff for them to make their lives easier
- don't send mixed signals by getting romantic
- try to share in their daily triumphs and defeats
- protect them from threats and coercion
- share food, water and shelter with them if they need it
- just let them come along with me when I am doing stuff
- etc.

When I think about how to get along with peaceful non-Christians, I think of the parable of the good Samaritan. Someone cannot consider your case for Christianity if they are sick or dying. If you want someone to listen to your reasons, you have to serve them first and earn the right to be heard. The book of James makes the same point – you have to take care of a person's physical needs as a way of acting out your belief that they were made

to know God. Even if the person isn't willing to listen to you, you still have to treat them well, because this is how you imitate the love that God has for everyone.

I think that most of the women that these Muslims go after are fatherless, and that's why they are so vulnerable. I am really at a loss to understand how anyone who claims to know God could look at a fatherless woman and see her as prey. Fatherless women are *not* prey – they are children of God made to know him, and made to achieve things for him. They are like the widows and orphans that the Bible is always encouraging us to take care of, because their condition of fatherlessness was not something they chose. They are victims. And we must treat them as victims, and heal them and build them up. The first thing I think of when I think of a fatherless woman is how to build her up so that she is in a good place to consider reasons and evidence that might persuade her to become a Christian.

I believe that everyone was made to know God in Christ, and that's the basis for how I interact with people of different faiths. They all have value because God made them. They were all made to know God. They are not there for me to use and abuse. God would not be happy with me if I didn't do everything possible to point them toward him and to help them along. That's what he wants me to do with them.

Stephen C. Meyer and Keith Fox debate intelligent design and evolution

August 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable" podcast.

Details:

> Stephen Meyer is a leading proponent of Intelligent Design who directs the Centre for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. His most recent book "Signature in the Cell" claims to show that the DNA code is the product of intelligent mind, not naturalistic processes. Keith Fox is Professor of Biochemistry at Southampton University. He chairs the UK Christians in Science network but disagrees strongly with ID. They debate how life could have originated and whether design is allowed as an explanation in science.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary: (stuff in italics is my snarky paraphrase)

Meyer:

- background and how he got interested in intelligent design
- his research focus is on the origin of life – the first replicator
- summarizes the history of origin of life studies
- authored the book "Signature in the Cell"
- the DNA enigma: where did the information in DNA come from?
- naturalistic explanations of the DNA information have failed
- but intelligent agents are known to be able to produce information
- the best explanation of the information in DNA is that an intelligent agent authored it
- Meyer's book was named by atheist philosopher of science Thomas Nagel as a Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year in 2010
- why is design so controversial? Many people think that Darwin explained why nature appears design
- the Darwinian view is that nature can create the appearance of design using mutation and selection
- however, Darwinian mechanisms cannot explain the origin of the first living cell, it assumes replication, and the origin of life is about where the first replicator comes from

Fox:

- Meyer's argument is not about the evolution of life after the first cell
- Meyer's case for design is about the origin of life

- naturalists do not know a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- there are a number of naturalistic hypotheses for the origin of life, like the RNA-first hypothesis
- maybe in a few years one of them will turn out to be correct
- what intelligent design is arguing from a gap in our current naturalistic knowledge to infer that God intervened in nature

Meyer:

- that's not what intelligent design is at all
- the approach ID theorists use is the inference to best explanation
- you evaluate all explanations, non-intelligent causes and intelligent causes
- you prefer the best possible explanation
- we know that minds are capable of producing information just like the information we find in DNA

Fox:

- living cells replicate, so they have the ability to introduce mutations as they replicate and then some of those mutations can be selected
- so maybe the process of replicating that living cells do created the first living cell
- maybe the first living cell created itself, X brought X into being, self-creation, what's irrational about that?

Meyer:

- the issue is the origin of life – where did the first living cell come from?
- you cannot appeal to the operations that a living cell can perform to explain the origin of the first living cell
- there was no first living cell operating before the first living cell
- there was no replication, mutation or selection before the first living cell
- in fact, in my book I show that there is no known naturalistic mechanism that is able to produce the information needed for the first living cell
- *nothing can create itself, that is self-contradictory*

Fox:

- Well, you are just saying that because something is complex that God did it

Meyer:

- Sadly, no. What I actually said needed to be explained was the information, not complexity
- And we know from software engineering that the process of adding information to code is performed by programmers
- in the absence of any adequate naturalistic explanation for information, we are

justified in taking the explanation that we are familiar with – namely, intelligent agency – based on our uniform, universal experience of what causes information

Fox:

- well, maybe we can appeal to the mutation and selection in existing living cells to explain the origin of the first living cell
- maybe there were living cells before the first living cell, and then these other living cells created the first living cell

Meyer:

- we can't keep invoking mutation and selection when those processes are not operating prior to the origin of the first living cell

Fox:

- well maybe some bare-bones self-replication molecule was a precursor to the first living cell

Meyer:

- even to generate very limited replicator would require a large amount of information
- the argument I am making is – where does the evolution come from?

Fox:

- well, maybe we will think of an explanation for information that is naturalistic in 20 years
- we've thought of explanations to things that were NOT information before
- so maybe we will be able to think of something to explain information based on our ability to explain NOT information before

Moderator: Change topics: the Dover decision

Meyer:

- the Discovery Institute opposed the policy that causes the trial
- the wording of the statute was poor
- the judge was completely wrong in his decision
- young earth creationists used the phrase "intelligent design" to cover their agenda
- intelligent design is an inference using the normal methods of science

Fox:

- intelligent design is a science stopper because it stops looking for a naturalistic explanation
- everything in nature must have a naturalistic explanation
- everything has to be explained using matter and time and chance

- it just has to be that way!!!!

Meyer:

- well, what luck would you have explaining an effect like Mt. Rushmore?
- can you explain that using matter,time and chance?
- Mt. Rushmore was the product of intelligence, not wind and erosion
- similarly, there is information in the cell, and we know that intelligence causes information

Fox:

- So you are saying that we don't understand and therefore an intelligence is necessary?

Meyer:

- no I am saying we DO understand and we are making an inference based on that understanding
- you are the one who is insisting on a material explanation because you pre-suppose materialism
- we know that minds have causal powers, and we can infer mind as an explanation from information

Fox:

- well nature is a seamless chain of material causes and effects

Meyer:

- agents can act without violating the laws of nature
- even humans can act as intelligent agents to create information in books, and they don't violate the laws of nature
- intelligent causes are real, and they explain effects in nature

Fox:

- you're trying to impose on science something to do with meaning and purpose

Meyer:

- no that's not what we're doing, we're inferring from from the fact that we ourselves are known causes of information to the fact that an intelligence cause is the best explanation for information in the cell

Fox:

- *but I am a materialist*, I need a materialist explanation

Meyer:

- mind IS an answer to the how question
- we infer to mind in many other scientific disciplines, like cryptography, archaeology, etc.
- a materialist might accuse an archaeologist of engaging in a “scribe-of-the-gaps” argument, but the best explanation of an artifact with information is a scribe
- we are inferring that mind is the cause from the nature of the effect: information

Moderator: is it appropriate to call DNA “information”
Fox:

- well DNA is just a molecular polymer, any reference to information is just by analogy

Meyer:

- DNA is a molecular polymer, but it also exhibits the property of specified complexity
- the arrangement of bases, which function as machine instructions in a software program, for performings task in the cell
- we have observed that the property of specified complexity always comes from an intelligence

Fox:

- well, maybe there are other sequences that would work, so maybe it’s really not uncommon to develop functioning sequences by chance alone, without an intelligence

Meyer:

- you can measure how precise the functional specificity is in DNA and proteins

Moderator: is Shannon information the same as functional information
Meyer:

- Shannon information refers to the sequences of digits or symbols that do not necessarily have any function, i.e. – a four character string QSZX has as much Shannon information as WORD. However, only the latter is functional against the pattern of the English language. There are arrangements of DNA bases and amino acids that have the same number of symbols/characters as a functional sequence would have, but they have no biological function – they do not exhibit specified complexity

Fox:

- Well, maybe there are lots and lots of sequences of DNA and proteins so that it is fairly easy to get a functional one by chance

Meyer:

- DNA sequences that are functional are extremely rare, protein sequences are even more rare
- this is not my opinion, this is what the research shows – functional protein sequences are rare

Fox:

- well maybe there are other functional sequences that are occur before the first functional sequence that are precursors to the first functional sequence
- maybe there are billions of years of replication, mutation and selection before the first replication, mutation and selection

Meyer:

- you can't get to the first selectable functional sequence by appealing to precursor selectable functional sequences – there are no selectable functional sequences before the FIRST one
- you have to get the first selectable functional sequence by chance alone, because there is nothing to mutate or select before the first replicator
- the chance hypothesis has been rejected because the minimal amount of information for the simplest replicator is too high to get by chance alone, given the resources, including time, that are available

Moderator: *Keith are you confident that naturalism will be able to substantiate these naturalism-of-the-gap speculations that you offer in response to Meyer's actual science that we have today?*

Fox:

- well, it is hard to know for sure because it was just a fluke event
- but there's nothing irrational or unscientific or miraculous about it – the fluke would have a material explanation
- there is nothing that we can detect that would implicate God, my speculations about a fluke which I cannot observe or measure or test would all be compatible with an atheistic worldview that omits God as a causal entity

Meyer:

- where are those material processes that could account for this fluke then?
- the whole point of this argument is that the information in DNA transcends the material components in the sequence
- it's the arrangement of the material parts/letters/characters/symbols/instructions that needs to be explained

Fox:

- Well, I just have a different philosophy of science that rules out intelligent causation a priori

Meyer:

- Yes, that's the difference between us – you pre-suppose that all explanations of natural phenomena must exclude intelligent causes

There is a bit more where Meyer talks about how parts of the cell are implementations of various design patterns (Gang of Four design patterns) that are used by software architects who design software.

Find more posts on Stephen C. Meyer here.

Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)

August 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.6/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> John Forbes is a family man who's tired of the 9 to 5 humdrum of his job an insurance company executive. Life gets a little more exciting for him when he calls upon femme fatale Mona Stevens. Her boyfriend has robbed a store insured by Forbes' company and has showered her with gifts using the loot. Forbes comes to collect the ill-gotten gifts, but the boyfriend is in jail, and Forbes falls hard for Mona and begins an affair. The only problem is that MacDonald, a private dick who freelances for the insurance company, has had his eyes on Mona first. The obsessed MacDonald turns the soon-to-be-released boyfriend against Forbes.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)

- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Lessons from the UK on how to reduce crime

August 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Ed West, writing in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> A year after the riots, things are looking up in London. As the Economist reported last week, gun crime is down considerably, while overall crime continues to fall, and homicide is down to its lowest level since the early 1980s.
>
> In fact Britain is following the example of the United States, where crime rose sharply from the 1960s to the early 1990s, when it began to fall almost as steadily. The US crime explosion had several causes, but the most prominent was the huge drop in the average length of sentences in the mid-1960s, largely as a result of political fashion. That trend was already reversed by the 1980s, but it took a while before Americans began to see that handing out tough sentences was effective – even at the cost of incarcerating one per cent of the population.
>
> Today even Guardian writers accept that this "contentious" policy reduces crime, although for many years those advocating it were called everything under the sun. The most prominent of those advocates was the late James Q Wilson,who before he died wrote about the fall in crime he had helped to bring about:
>
> One obvious answer is that many more people are in prison than in the past. Experts differ on the size of the effect, but I think that William Spelman and Steven Levitt have it about right in believing that greater incarceration can explain about one-quarter or more of the crime decline. Yes, many thoughtful observers think that we put too many offenders in prison for too long. For some criminals, such as low-level drug dealers and former inmates returned to prison for parole violations, that may be so. But it's true nevertheless that when prisoners are kept off the street, they can attack only one another, not you or your family.
>
> As Wilson pointed out, there are many other factors, such as a more competent and technically sophisticated police force, while rehabilitation programmes also make a difference (although longer stretches also make these more effective, since prisoners serving short sentences are out on the streets before they have finished their education). But prison still works pretty effectively.
>
> So in London, and across Britain, crime is falling largely because our prison population has topped 86,000; a terrible waste for those inside, but better that their lives are wasted than those of their victims on the outside. And the benefits are considerable.

This dovetails nicely with Stephen Harper's tough-on-crime measures.

Excerpt:

> And while the overall homicide rate was up seven per cent — there were 598 homicides in Canada in 2011, 44 more than the previous year — the number in Ontario actually hit record lows.
>
> Altogether, police services reported nearly 2 million incidents last year, about 110,000 fewer than in 2010, the agency reported.
>
> The decline in the crime rate was driven mostly by decreases in property offences, mischief, break-ins and car theft. But the severity of crime index — a tool used to measure the extent of serious crime in Canada — also declined by six per cent.
>
> “Overall, this marked the eighth consecutive decrease in Canada’s crime rate,” the study said. “Since peaking in 1991, the crime rate has generally been decreasing, and is now at its lowest point since 1972.”
>
> Not surprisingly, the Conservatives took credit for the decline Tuesday, attributing falling crime rates over the last four decades to the government’s tough-on-crime agenda, which is just six years old.
>
> “These statistics show that our tough on crime measures are starting to work. Our government is stopping the revolving door of the criminal justice system,” said Julie Carmichael, a spokeswoman for Public Safety Minister Vic Toews.
>
> “The fact of the matter is that when the bad guys are kept in jail longer, they are not out committing crimes and the crime rate will decrease. However, there is still more work to do.”

The Democrats will never embrace measures like this here at home, even though they work. They are soft on crime.

New study: university professors admit they would discriminate against conservatives

August 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> It's not every day that left-leaning academics admit that they would discriminate against a minority.
>
> But that was what they did in a peer-reviewed study of political diversity in the field of social psychology, which will be published in the September edition of the journal Perspectives on Psychological Science.
>
> Psychologists Yoel Inbar and Joris Lammers, based at Tilburg University in the Netherlands, surveyed a roughly representative sample of academics and scholars in social psychology and found that "In decisions ranging from paper reviews to hiring, many social and personality psychologists admit that they would discriminate against openly conservative colleagues."
>
> […][C]onservatives represent a distinct minority on college and university campuses. A 2007 report by sociologists Neil Gross and Solon Simmons found that 80 percent of psychology professors at elite and non-elite universities are Democrats. Other studies reveal that 5 percent to 7 percent of faculty openly identify as Republicans. By contrast, about 20 percent of the general population are liberal and 40 percent are conservative.
>
> Mr. Inbar and Mr. Lammers found that conservatives fear that revealing their political identity will have negative consequences. This is why New York University-based psychologist Jonathan Haidt, a self-described centrist, has compared the experience of being a conservative graduate student to being a closeted gay student in the 1980s.
>
> In 2011, Mr. Haidt addressed this very issue at a meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology — the same group that Mr. Inbar and Mr. Lammer surveyed. Mr. Haidt's talk, "The Bright Future of Post-Partisan Social Psychology," caused a stir. The professor, whose new book "The Righteous Mind" examines the moral roots of our political positions, asked the nearly 1,000 academics and students in the room to raise their hands if they were liberals. Nearly 80 percent of the hands went up. When he asked whether there were any conservatives in the house, just three hands — 0.3 percent — went up.
>
> […]"Because of the way the confirmation bias works," Mr. Haidt says, referring to the pervasive psychological tendency to seek only supporting evidence for one's beliefs, "you need people around who don't start with the same bias. You need some non-liberals, and ideally some conservatives."

But that's not all – those findings are confirmed by other studies of campaign donations by professors:

> Professors, administrators and others employed at the eight universities of the Ivy League have given $375,932 to Obama and $60,465 to Romney, according to data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics, a Washington watchdog group that tracks campaign finance issues.
>
> […]The president's academic advantage extends behind the Northeast's ivied walls and into the Midwest.
>
> At Ohio State University in Columbus, for example, Obama has raised $18,230 from faculty and staff, compared with Romney's $3,500.

What is the cause of this massive slant towards Democrats? Is it because Democrats are smarter? Are lifelong welfare recipients and Hollywood celebrities smarter than business owners and economists? Well, consider this essay by secular libertarian professor Robert Nozick who explains why university professors are liberal.

Excerpt:

> What factor produced feelings of superior value on the part of intellectuals? I want to focus on one institution in particular: schools. As book knowledge became increasingly important, schooling–the education together in classes of young people in reading and book knowledge–spread. Schools became the major institution outside of the family to shape the attitudes of young people, and almost all those who later became intellectuals went through schools. There they were successful. They were judged against others and deemed superior. They were praised and rewarded, the teacher's favorites. How could they fail to see themselves as superior? Daily, they experienced differences in facility with ideas, in quick-wittedness. The schools told them, and showed them, they were better.
>
> The schools, too, exhibited and thereby taught the principle of reward in accordance with (intellectual) merit. To the intellectually meritorious went the praise, the teacher's smiles, and the highest grades. In the currency the schools had to offer, the smartest constituted the upper class. Though not part of the official curricula, in the schools the intellectuals learned the lessons of their own greater value in comparison with the others, and of how this greater value entitled them to greater rewards.
>
> The wider market society, however, taught a different lesson. There the greatest rewards did not go to the verbally brightest. There the intellectual skills were not *most* highly valued. Schooled in the lesson that they were most valuable, the most deserving of reward, the most entitled to reward, how could the intellectuals, by and large, fail to resent the capitalist society which deprived them of the just deserts to which their superiority "entitled" them? Is it surprising that what the schooled intellectuals felt for capitalist society was a deep and sullen animus that, although clothed with various publicly appropriate reasons,

> continued even when those particular reasons were shown to be inadequate?

Economist Thomas Sowell has written an entire book about this called "The Vision of the Anointed", and you can read some of the best quotes here. I've written before about how the mainstream news media is also dominated by leftists, too.

I think it's important to keep in mind that being able to build a profitable business is also intelligence of a kind. Someone who can repeat what their professors say isn't necessarily more intelligent than a business owner or engineer or nurse. Especially if the professor fails badly when given a task to do in the real world. For example, Democrat Christina Romer is a leftist professor of economics. She can parrot nonsense about socialism and stimulus all day to students. But when she was put in charge of real economic issues in the real world, her economic plan failed – and she admitted it.

William Lane Craig asks: should Christians embrace postmodernism?

August 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a short clip:

Dr. Craig thinks that Christianity does a lot better when it is commended to others using logic and evidence. He thinks that postmodernism undermines logic and evidence.

Sean McDowell has more on what this means for Christians:

> In Postmodern Youth Ministry, for example, Tony Jones argues that postmodernity is the most important culture shift of the past 500 years, upending our theology, philosophy, epistemology (how we know things), and church practice. It is an "earthquake that has changed the landscape of academia and is currently rocking Western culture." (p. 11). Thus, to be relevant in ministry today, according to Jones and other postmodernists, we must shed our modern tendencies and embrace the postmodern shift.
>
> For the longest time I simply accepted that we inhabit a postmodern world and that we must completely transform our approach to ministry to be effective today. But that all changed when I had the opportunity of hearing philosopher William Lane Craig speak at an apologetics conference not too long ago. "This sort of [postmodern] thinking," says Craig, "is guilty of a disastrous misdiagnosis of contemporary culture." ("God is Not Dead Yet," Christianity Today, July 2008, p. 26). He argues that the idea that we live in a postmodern world is a myth. This may strike you as awfully bold. How can he make such a claim?
>
> For one thing, says Craig, postmodernism is unlivable and contradictory: "Nobody is a postmodernist when it comes to reading the labels on a medicine bottle versus a box of rat poison. If you've got a headache, you'd better believe that texts have objective meaning!" (Reasonable Faith, 2008, p. 18) Craig speaks to tens of thousands of (mostly non-Christian) college students around the world every year and his conclusion is that we live in a cultural milieu that is deeply modernist. Reason, logic, and evidence are as important today as ever (although he's careful not to overstate their importance, too).
>
> Postmodernism and Apologetics
>
> But this is not all Craig has to say! In the introduction to Reasonable Faith, Craig provocatively claims, "Indeed, I think that getting people to believe that we live in a postmodern culture is one of the craftiest deceptions that Satan has yet devised" (p. 18). Accordingly, we ought to stop emphasizing argumentation and apologetics and just share our narrative. Craig develops this idea further:
>
> And so Satan deceives us into voluntarily laying aside our best weapons of logic and evidence, thereby ensuring unawares modernism's triumph over us. If we

> adopt this suicidal course of action, the consequences for the church in the next generation will be catastrophic. Christianity will be reduced to but another voice in a cacophony of competing voices, each sharing its own narrative and none commending itself as the objective truth about reality, while scientific naturalism shapes our culture's view of how the world really is (p. 18-19).
>
> **In a personal email, Craig relayed to me that he believes postmodernism is largely being propagated in our church by misguided youth pastors.** While he meant the comment more to elicit a smile than to be taken as a stab in the back, I can't help but wonder if he is right.
>
> If our culture were so profoundly postmodernist, why have the "New Atheists," as Wired magazine dubbed them, been so influential? Popular writers such as Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and Richard Dawkins have recently written bestselling books attacking the scientific, historic, and philosophical credibility of religion in general and Christianity in particular. Their writings have wreaked havoc on many unprepared Christians. If our culture were postmodern their challenges should have fallen on deaf ears.

This is my experience as well. When I was an undergraduate student, I attended IVCF and the woman running it (Jill) was a feminist who pushed postmodernism and feminism hard. Every week brought another testimony emphasizing love and forgiveness while minimizing or denying theology, science, history and logic. She turned down all the efforts of the men to bring in professors to speak about the cosmological argument or the resurrection, etc.. It was testimonies and prayer walks and praise hymns every week. When I questioned the people she chose to give their testimonies (mostly women), I found that none had any reasons for thinking that what they were talking about really was true. As a consequence of that, they were soft on doctrine – regularly throwing out Bible verses that did "resonate" with their "intuitions". The same thing happened to me again with Campus Crusade as a graduate student. Personal testimonies of changed lives, divorced from any search for truth, every week.

One girl in particular that I knew at that time named Kerry was fond of bashing the laws of logic and the use of evidence. When I questioned her about it, she cited the influence of a charismatic youth pastor named Drew. A little more probing revealed that she denied the reality of Hell, and was a universalist. She eventually married a friend of mine and to this day has never read a single book on apologetics all the way through. Her beliefs are very much focused on the here and now, making friends and feeling good about herself. She never shook the habit of dismissing any argument, no matter how well-supported, that contradicted her intuitions.

Why did the pollster poll 9% more Democrats than Republicans?

August 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review, a transcript of an interaction on the Hugh Hewitt show about a new poll by Democrat pollster Quinnipiac:

> HH: Do you expect Democrats, this is a different question, do you, Peter Brown, expect Democrats to have a nine point registration advantage when the polls close on November 6th in Florida?
> PB: Well, first, you don't mean registration.
> HH: I mean, yeah, turnout.
> PB: Do I think…I think it is probably unlikely.
> HH: And so what value is this poll if in fact it doesn't weight for the turnout that's going to be approximated?
> PB: Well, you'll have to judge that. I mean, you know, our record is very good. You know, we do independent polling. We use random digit dial. We use human beings to make our calls. We call cell phones as well as land lines. We follow the protocol that is the professional standard.
> HH: As we say, that might be the case, but I don't know it's responsive to my question. My question is, should we trust this as an accurate predictor of what will happen? You've already told me there…
> PB: It's an accurate predictor of what would happen is the election were today.
> HH: But that's, again, I don't believe that, because today, Democrats wouldn't turn out by a nine point advantage. I don't think anyone believes today, if you held the election today, do you think Democrats would turn out nine percentage points higher than Republicans?
> PB: If the election were today, yeah. What we found is obviously a large Democratic advantage.
> HH: I mean, you really think that's true? I mean, as a professional, you believe that Democrats have a nine point turnout advantage in Florida?
> PB: Our record has been very good. You know, Hugh, I…
> HH: That's not responsive. It's just a question. Do you personally, Peter, believe that Democrats enjoy a nine point turnout advantage right now?
> PB: What I believe is what we found.
> HH: Geez, I just, and an eight point in Ohio? I'm from Ohio. Democrats haven't had an eight point advantage in Ohio since before the Civil War. I mean, that just never happens, but Peter, I appreciate your coming on. I'm not persuaded that Quinnipiac Polls haven't hurt themselves today, but I appreciate your willingness to come on and talk about it.

I will stick with the Rasmussen Reports polls, thanks.

Doug Axe explains the chances of getting a functional protein by chance

August 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've talked about Doug Axe before when I described how to calculate the odds of getting functional proteins by chance.

Let's calculate the odds of building a protein composed of a functional chain of 100 amino acids, by chance. (Think of a meaningful English sentence built with 100 scrabble letters, held together with glue)

Sub-problems:

- BONDING: You need 99 peptide bonds between the 100 amino acids. The odds of getting a peptide bond is 50%. The probability of building a chain of one hundred amino acids in which all linkages involve peptide bonds is roughly (1/2)^99 or 1 chance in 10^30.
- CHIRALITY: You need 100 left-handed amino acids. The odds of getting a left-handed amino acid is 50%. The probability of attaining at random only L–amino acids in a hypothetical peptide chain one hundred amino acids long is (1/2)^100 or again roughly 1 chance in 10^30.
- SEQUENCE: You need to choose the correct amino acid for each of the 100 links. The odds of getting the right one are 1 in 20. Even if you allow for some variation, the odds of getting a functional sequence is (1/20)^100 or 1 in 10^65.

The final probability of getting a functional protein composed of 100 amino acids is 1 in 10^125. Even if you fill the universe with pre-biotic soup, and react amino acids at Planck time (very fast!) for 14 billion years, you are probably not going to get even 1 such protein. And you need at least 100 of them for minimal life functions, plus DNA and RNA.

Research performed by Doug Axe at Cambridge University, and published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Molecular Biology, has shown that the number of functional amino acid sequences is tiny:

> Doug Axe's research likewise studies genes that it turns out show great evidence of design. Axe studied the sensitivities of protein function to mutations. In these "mutational sensitivity" tests, Dr. Axe mutated certain amino acids in various proteins, or studied the differences between similar proteins, to see how mutations or changes affected their ability to function properly. He found that protein function was highly sensitive to mutation, and that proteins are not very tolerant to changes in their amino acid sequences. In other words, when you mutate, tweak, or change these proteins slightly, they stopped working. In one of his papers, he thus concludes that "functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences," and that functional protein folds "may be as low as 1 in 10^77."

The problem of forming DNA by sequencing nucleotides faces similar difficulties. And remember, mutation and selection cannot explain the origin of the *first* sequence, because mutation and selection require replication, which does not exist until that first living cell is *already in place*.

But you can't show that to your friends, you need to send them a video. And I have a video!

A video of Doug Axe explaining the calculation

Here's a clip from Illustra Media's new ID DVD "Darwin's Dilemma", which features Doug Axe and Stephen Meyer (both with Ph.Ds from Cambridge University).

I hope you all read Brian Auten's review of Darwin's Dilemma! It was awesome.

Related DVDs

Illustra also made two other great DVDs on intelligent design. The first two DVDs "Unlocking the Mystery of Life" and "The Privileged Planet" are must-buys, but you can watch them on youtube if you want, for free.

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

I also recommend Coldwater Media's "Icons of Evolution". All three of these are on sale from Amazon.com.

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

North Carolina Planned Parenthood will expand using federal taxpayer dollars

August 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

According to Life News, the North Carolina legislature voted to cancel funding of Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the United States. The Obama administration responded by awarding them an even BIGGER grant directly from the federal government with federal taxpayer dollars.

Life News writes:

> Following a recent announcement that the Obama administration would replace the state taxpayer funding North Carolina cut for a Planned Parenthood abortion referral business, a Durham clinic says it will be able to expand.
>
> As LifeNews reported, for the third time in July and the fifth time overall, the Obama administration has override the decision of a state to revoke taxpayer funding for the Planned Parenthood abortion business. The Obama administration usurped the will of the North Carolina legislature by awarding $426,000 in federal grants directly to Planned Parenthood affiliates in the state.

Here's the latest news:

> The Durham clinic of Planned Parenthood — recently at risk of closing its doors — will be able to serve an additional 500 patients thanks to a federal grant.

> The clinic had been threatened with closure because the state legislature this year cut Planned Parenthood's $125,000 budget allotment. Instead, the Newsom Street facility will grow its services because Planned Parenthood has received a Title X grant worth $426,000 — nearly three times as much as state lawmakers cut.
>
> Last year, the clinic overall had 2,244 patient visits. Officials expect a total volume of 2,727 this year, mainly from subsidized patients.

Obama's full pro-abortion record is available here – he is not a moderate on this issue. I hope this story shows social conservatives why they need to care about fiscal issues. If the government didn't have money from "the rich" they couldn't be paying off abortion providers. And I hope that this story shows fiscal conservatives why they need to care about social issues. If abortion were illegal, then the federal government wouldn't be handing out hundreds of thousands of dollars to subsidize it. We are all in this together.

Relate posts

- 24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic
- Obama administration sends $3.1 million more to Planned Parenthood
- Hawaii Planned Parenthood caught counseling sex-selection abortions

- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

A closer look at the Obama administration's $525 million loan to Solyndra

August 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Manhattan Institute. (H/T Tom)

Here's the first thing to note about this story:

> Both Republican and Democratic administrations have practiced a "green" industrial policy by supporting ventures that promised to pursue renewable, non-carbon-based energy production or energy conservation.
>
> The DOE's authority to issue loan guarantees for innovative, clean energy technologies, the Energy Policy Act of 2005, was passed by a Republican House and Senate and signed into law by George W. Bush. Under the law, Congress authorized the issuance of $4 billion in loan guarantees in 2007, and $47 billion in 2009 with the objective of encouraging the development of new technologies.[2] [3]
>
> **However, no DOE loan guarantees were made during the Bush administration. The DOE wanted to make a loan to Solyndra, but career officials at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) did not approve it, on the grounds that the project was not financially sound.**
>
> The Section 1705 Loan Program was created by the 2009 American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, which amended the Energy Policy Act of 2005.[4] The 2009 stimulus bill gave the DOE an additional $3.95 billion for loan guarantees.[5]

So that's where the money came from. It was "stimulus" money. And now the shocking part:

> **By November 2008, Solyndra had raised $450 million from investors and was applying for a loan guarantee from the DOE under the Energy Policy Act of 2005. But the loan was turned down in January 2009 in the waning days of the Bush administration, on the grounds that "there is presently not an independent market study addressing long term prospects for this company" and "there is concern regarding the scale-up of production assumed in the plan for Fab 2," a second factory.[7]**
>
> On January 13, 2009, Lachlan Seward, director of the loan program at the DOE, wrote, "After canvassing the Committee it was the unanimous decision not to engage in further discussions with Solyndra at this time."[8] Lachlan was referring to the DOE Credit Committee, which was composed of DOE officials.
>
> When President Obama took office days later, the DOE's tone changed. In a March 10, 2009, e-mail to an unnamed official, a senior adviser to Energy

> Secretary Steven Chu wrote, “The solar co [sic] board approved the terms of the loan guarantee last night, setting us up for the first loan guarantee conditional commitment for the president’s visit to California on the 19th.”[9] As events soon revealed, March 19, 2009, was a wildly premature target date for a presidential visit. In fact, President Obama didn’t visit Solyndra until May 2010.
>
> E-mails dated 2009 depict White House and DOE officials rushing to sign off on the project so that Vice President Joe Biden could appear at the Fremont plant in September 2009 to trumpet the administration’s support for green jobs. There was confusion about who would go and when, as well as a palpable sense of urgency. Within the OMB—historically the most fiscally conservative agency in any administration—there was anxiety about premature planning and precedent.
>
> On March 10, 2009, an OMB official whose name was blacked out by the administration before the e-mails were released to Congress wrote, “DOE is trying to deliver the first loan guarantee within 60 days from inauguration (the prior administration could not get it done in four years). This deal is NOT [sic] ready for prime time.”[10]
>
> […]On August 31, 2009, an unidentified OMB official wrote to Terrell McSweeny, domestic policy adviser to Vice President Biden, saying “We have ended up in the situation of having to do rushed approvals on a couple of occasions (and we are worried about Solyndra at the end of this week). We would prefer to have sufficient time to do our due diligence reviews and have the approval set the date for the announcement rather than the other way around.”[12] Regardless of these concerns, the loan was approved on September 3, and Biden announced it via satellite at Solyndra’s plant on September 4.
>
> […]On May 24, 2010, Valerie Jarrett, senior adviser to the president, forwarded a Cleantech Blog post by Philip Smith to Ron Klain, chief of staff to Vice President Biden. The post outlined the doubts of Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Solyndra’s auditors, about the company. It stated, “On a pure business analysis you have to agree with the auditors—they are not a going concern.”[14] Jarrett said to Klain in an e-mail, “As you know, a Going Concern letter is not good. Thoughts?”[15]
>
> Although Jarrett and Klain knew that Solyndra would go under, two days later, on May 26, 2010, the president visited the newly built Solyndra manufacturing plant in Fremont, California, and declared, “It is here that companies like Solyndra are leading the way toward a brighter, more prosperous future …. We can see the positive impacts right here at Solyndra.”

Fascinating. This is what the government does with the money that it is borrowing from your children. This is what the “stimulus” efforts of the Obama administration amounted to. Not only was the Solyndra loan an opportunity to pay back a Democrat campaign fundraiser, but we now learn that it was also rushed through to provide Obama with a publicity opportunity. Is that the main job of the President of the United States? To waste money on photo opportunities?

William Lane Craig asks: can we be good without God?

August 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A video lecture in 3 parts, and a peer-reviewed paper to go with the clips.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 3 of 3:

And here is the article that discusses the same topic, in more detail, and with footnotes.

Excerpt:

> Can we be good without God? At first the answer to this question may seem so obvious that even to pose it arouses indignation. For while those of us who are Christian theists undoubtedly find in God a source of moral strength and resolve which enables us to live lives that are better than those we should live without Him, nevertheless it would seem arrogant and ignorant to claim that those who do not share a belief in God do not often live good moral lives–indeed, embarrassingly, lives that sometimes put our own to shame.
>
> But wait. It would, indeed, be arrogant and ignorant to claim that people cannot be good without belief in God. But that was not the question. The question was: can we be good without God? When we ask that question, we are posing in a provocative way the meta-ethical question of the objectivity of moral values. Are the values we hold dear and guide our lives by mere social conventions akin to driving on the left versus right side of the road or mere expressions of personal preference akin to having a taste for certain foods or not? Or are they valid independently of our apprehension of them, and if so, what is their foundation? Moreover, if morality is just a human convention, then why should we act morally, especially when it conflicts with self-interest? Or are we in some way held accountable for our moral decisions and actions?
>
> Today I want to argue that if God exists, then the objectivity of moral values, moral duties, and moral accountability is secured, but that in the absence of God, that is, if God does not exist, then morality is just a human convention, that is to say, morality is wholly subjective and non-binding. We might act in precisely the same ways that we do in fact act, but in the absence of God, such actions would no longer count as good (or evil), since if God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist. Thus, we cannot truly be good without God. On the other hand, if we do believe that moral values and duties are objective, that provides moral grounds for believing in God.

This is the easiest argument for God's existence to discuss with non-Christians. If you would like to hear a good debate on this topic, I recommend the debate between Arif

Ahmed and Glenn Peoples.

Does legalized abortion reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies?

August 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's economist John R. Lott to explain.

First he points out what happened around the time that abortion was legalized:

- A sharp increase in pre-marital sex.
- A sharp rise in out-of-wedlock births.
- A drop in the number of children placed for adoption.
- A decline in marriages that occur after the woman is pregnant.

Then he writes this: (links removed)

> Many of these changes might seem contradictory. Why would both the number of abortions and out-of-wedlock births go up? If there were more illegitimate births, why were fewer children available for adoption?
>
> For the first puzzle, part of the answer lies in attitudes toward premarital sex. With abortion seen as a backup, women as well as men became less careful in using contraceptives as well as more likely to have premarital sex.
>
> There were more unplanned pregnancies. But legal abortion did not mean every unplanned pregnancy led to abortion. After all, just because abortion is legal does not mean that the decision is an easy one.
>
> Academic studies have found that legalized abortion, by encouraging premarital sex, increased the number of unplanned births, even outweighing the reduction in unplanned births due to abortion.
>
> In the United States from the early 1970s, when abortion was liberalized, through the late 1980s, there was a tremendous increase in the rate of out-of-wedlock births, rising from an average of 5 percent of all births from 1965 to 1969 to more than 16 percent two decades later (1985 to 1989).
>
> For blacks, the numbers soared from 35 percent to 62 percent. While not all of this rise can be attributed to liberalized abortion rules, it was a key contributing factor, nevertheless.
>
> With legalization and a woman not forced to go through with an unplanned pregnancy, a man might well expect his partner to have an abortion if a sexual encounter were to result in an unplanned pregnancy.
>
> But what happens if the woman refuses — say, she is morally opposed or, perhaps, she thought she could have an abortion but upon becoming pregnant decides she can't go through with it?
>
> Many men, feeling tricked into unwanted fatherhood, likely will wash their hands

> of the affair altogether, thinking, “I never wanted a baby. It’s her choice, so let her raise the baby herself.”
>
> What is expected of men in this position has changed dramatically in the last four decades. Evidence shows that the greater availability of abortion largely ended “shotgun” marriages, where men felt obligated to marrying the women.
>
> What has happened to these babies of reluctant fathers?
>
> The mothers often raise the children on their own. Even as abortion has led to more out-of-wedlock births it has dramatically reduced adoptions of children born in America by two-parent families.
>
> Before Roe, when abortion was much more difficult, women who would have chosen an abortion but were unable to get one turned to adoption as their backup. After Roe, women who turned down an abortion also were the type who wanted to keep the child.
>
> But all these changes — rising out-of-wedlock births, plummeting adoption rates and the end of shotgun marriages — meant one thing: more single-parent families. With work and other demands on their time, single parents, no matter how “wanted” their child may be, tend to devote less attention to their children than do married couples; after all, it’s difficult for one person to spend as much time with a child as two people can.
>
> From the beginning of the abortion debate, those favoring abortion have pointed to the social costs of “unwanted” children who simply won’t get the attention of “wanted” ones. But there is a trade-off that has long been neglected. Abortion may eliminate “unwanted” children, but it increases out-of-wedlock births and single parenthood. Unfortunately, the social consequences of illegitimacy dominated.
>
> Children born after liberalized abortion rules have suffered a series of problems from difficulties at school to more crime. The saddest fact is that it is the most vulnerable in society, poor blacks, who have suffered the most from these changes.
>
> […]Liberalized abortion undoubtedly has made life easier for many, but like sex itself sometimes, it has had many unintended consequences.

You can read more about it in Dr. Lott’s book “Freedomnomics“, which is a response to the popular leftist book Freakonomics.

Ethical adult stem cell treatment leaves two men HIV-free

August 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two kinds of stem-cell research. The first kind is called embryonic stem-cell research (ESCR). This kind is opposed by pro-lifers because it kills unborn persons by extracting their stem cells for use in medical research. The second kind is called adult stem-cell research (ASCR). This kind is supported by pro-lifers.

Which kind produces more scientific discoveries and new treatments?

Well, consider this article from Life News which describes a new treatment made possible by ethical adult stem cell research. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Adult stem cells are responsible for another incredible scientific breakthrough.
>
> On Thursday at the AIDS 2012 Conference in Washington, DC, researchers unveiled that two HIV-positive men have been found to be HIV-free following bone marrow transplants. Researchers believe giving bone marrow transplants, which by nature involve the use of adult stem cells, to patients undergoing anti-retroviral therapy could potentially cure the AIDS-causing virus.
>
> "We expected HIV to vanish from the patients' plasma, but it is surprising that we can't find any traces of HIV in their cells," said Dr. Timothy Henrich, one of the researchers studying the two men. "It suggests that under the cover of anti-retroviral therapy, the cells that repopulated the patient's immune system appear to be protected from becoming re-infected with HIV."
>
> Only time will tell if the two men have been permanently cured of the virus. "Studies over time including biopsies of lymphatic tissue would be required," said Dr. Michael Saag, an infectious disease expert from University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Pro-abortion people love to throw money at unethical embryonic stem cell research, but the real cures are all being produced by adult stem cell research.

In case you haven't been following the controversy over stem cell research and the different viewpoints of the Bush and Obama administrations, here is a good article from Public Discourse that tells the story.

Related posts

- Two more adult stem cell treatments discovered
- Adult stem cells therapy can fix a broken heart?
- New study: adult stem cells are almost identical to embryonic stem cells
- New study: adult stem cells used in breast cancer treatment
- Doctors grow new trachea from patient's own adult stem cells

- Adult stem cells used to grow a new heart
- Adult stem cells used to restore sight to patients blinded by chemical burns
- British boy becomes first in the world to have stem cell transplant
- ABC News reports on how adult stem cells produce innovative cures today
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective

August 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A man raised by two lesbians tells his story in the latest Public Discourse. (H/T Brian)

Introduction:

> The children of same-sex couples have a tough road ahead of them—I know, because I have been there. The last thing we should do is make them feel guilty if the strain gets to them and they feel strange.

> Between 1973 and 1990, when my beloved mother passed away, she and her female romantic partner raised me. They had separate houses but spent nearly all their weekends together, with me, in a trailer tucked discreetly in an RV park 50 minutes away from the town where we lived. As the youngest of my mother's biological children, I was the only child who experienced childhood without my father being around.
>
> After my mother's partner's children had left for college, she moved into our house in town. I lived with both of them for the brief time before my mother died at the age of 53. I was 19. In other words, I was the only child who experienced life under "gay parenting" as that term is understood today.
>
> Quite simply, growing up with gay parents was very difficult, and not because of prejudice from neighbors. People in our community didn't really know what was going on in the house. To most outside observers, I was a well-raised, high-achieving child, finishing high school with straight A's.
>
> Inside, however, I was confused. When your home life is so drastically different from everyone around you, in a fundamental way striking at basic physical relations, you grow up weird. I have no mental health disorders or biological conditions. I just grew up in a house so unusual that I was destined to exist as a social outcast.

A striking snippet:

> In terms of sexuality, gays who grew up in traditional households benefited from at least seeing some kind of functional courtship rituals around them. I had no clue how to make myself attractive to girls. When I stepped outside of my mothers' trailer, I was immediately tagged as an outcast because of my girlish mannerisms, funny clothes, lisp, and outlandishness. Not surprisingly, I left high school as a virgin, never having had a girlfriend, instead having gone to four proms as a wisecracking sidekick to girls who just wanted someone to chip in for a limousine.
>
> When I got to college, I set off everyone's "gaydar" and the campus LGBT group

> quickly descended upon me to tell me it was 100-percent certain I must be a homosexual. When I came out as bisexual, they told everyone I was lying and just wasn't ready to come out of the closet as gay yet. Frightened and traumatized by my mother's death, I dropped out of college in 1990 and fell in with what can only be called the gay underworld. Terrible things happened to me there.
>
> It was not until I was twenty-eight that I suddenly found myself in a relationship with a woman, through coincidences that shocked everyone who knew me and surprised even myself. I call myself bisexual because it would take several novels to explain how I ended up "straight" after almost thirty years as a gay man.

Click here for the rest. I blogged before about a study that found that gay parents are more likely to raise children who become gay.

Another good book that gives a first-person account is "Out From Under" by Dawn Stefanowicz.

Related posts

- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families
- Obama openly supports gay marriage: 48 hours after top gay donors cut off funding
- Democrat introduces bill to defund adoption agencies that favor married couples
- A secular case against same-sex marriage

William Lane Craig asks: are there objective truths about God?

August 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a lecture entitled “Are there Objective Truths About God?”, philosopher William Lane Craig responds to the nasty reactions you get from postmoderns when you claim that your religion is true, and that other religions are false. See, we think that there are objective truths about God – that there are some propositions that describe the way God is, and that people who don’t believe in them are factually mistaken. But some people want to say that every statement about God is subjective – true for each person – so that conflicting claims are fine and no one is wrong, because everyone is just describing their own preferences. Unfortunately, Christianity claims to be true for everyone – (e.g. – God is three persons and one being), so that Christians are committed to defending the idea that there are objective truths about God.

Here’s the link to a page containing the lecture audio. (H/T Be Thinking)

The MP3 file is here.

So what questions does Bill answer in the lecture?

What is a self-refuting statement?

The main concept in the lecture is self-refutation. A self-refuting sentence is a sentence that, if true, makes itself false or meaningless. For example, suppose someone said to you: “there are no sentences longer than 5 words” then that would be self-refuting since it falsifies itself. Bill argues that objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God are all self-refuting.

What is truth?

Craig holds that “truth” is a property of a proposition such that a proposition is true if it corresponds to the external world. For example, if I claim that there is a crocodile in your closet and we find a crocodile in your closet, then my statement was true. If there is no crocodile in your closet then my statement was false. The real objective world out there is what makes propositional claims true or false – these are not claims about an individual’s preferences, they are claims about the world. Bill is concerned with truth claims about God that are objective – whether there are propositions about God that are true regardless of what anyone thinks.

Are there objective truths about God?

Bill discusses 3 objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God. Each objection seeks to make religion subjective, (true for each person, like food preferences or clothing fashion).

Objection #1:The Challenge of Verificationism

The first challenge is that religious claims cannot be verified using the 5 senses, and therefore religious statements are objectively meaningless.

Consider the statement “Only propositions that can be verified with the 5 senses are meaningful”. That statement cannot be verified with the 5 senses. If the statement is true, it makes itself meaningless. It’s self-refuting.

Objection #2: The Challenge of Mystical Anti-Realism

The second challenge is that religious claims, and claims about God, are neither true nor false.

Consider the statement “Propositions about God cannot be true or false”. Craig asks – why should we accept that? Any reason given would have to assert something about God that is true or false, and those reasons would contradict the original statement. For example, “God is too great to be grasped by human categories of thought” is a proposition about God that the speaker thinks is true, which contradicts the original assertion.

Objection #3: The Challenge of Radical Pluralism

The third challenge is that each person invents an entire reality of their own, and that there is no mind-independent objective world shared by individuals.

Consider the statement “There is no objective reality shared by all individuals”. That statement is a statement that applies to all individuals, regardless of what they think. It’s self-refuting.

Conclusion

Craig ends the lecture by arguing that it is OK for Christians to think that other people’s views are false. It does not follow that just because someone thinks other people’s views are wrong that they am going to mistreat other people. In fact, in Christianity it is objectively true that it is good for Christians to love their enemies. It is objectively true that all human beings have value, because human beings are made by God. So even if Christians disagree with others, they still treat them well, because they think that there are moral truths that they have to conform to.

My thoughts

Sometimes, non-Christians think that it is dangerous to hold beliefs too strongly. But I think what really matters is the content of the belief – some beliefs are false and some are true – you want to believe the true beliefs as strongly as you can, as long as the evidence warrants it. In Christianity, I am absolutely obligated to treat people with whom I disagree with respect and gentleness (1 Pet 3:15-16). The more convinced I am about *that* belief, the *better* my opponents will be treated. A *stronger* belief in Christianity means *more* tolerance for those who disagree.

Why do non-Christians get so offended when Christians claim to be right about there being only one way to be rightly related to God? Well, for many it’s because their worldview is a personal preference, and they feel uncomfortable having to defend it rationally and evidentially – which is what Christians do that makes us so different from everyone else. For most people, religion is just their cultural preference – like cooking style, or favorite sport, or clothing style. That’s why they respond to your truth claims

with name-calling like “you’re intolerant” and “you’re judgemental” and “you’re arrogant”. These are just shorthand ways of saying, “I’m offended that you’ve thought things through more than I have, and that your careful arguments and evidence make the blind faith that I was raised in look bad – so I’ll just call you a name rather than do any thinking about what you’re saying”.

This happens a lot with insecure people who are raised to think that their religion is a racial, national or cultural identity. They haven’t thought anything through, or considered any alternatives, and they think that if you tell them they are wrong *on matters of fact* that somehow this amounts to some sort of racism or prejudice. You make factual claims, and they hear discrimination. But that’s not how Christians think of religion – we only care if it’s true or not – just like we care whether the claims of history or science are true or not. For many non-Christians, religion is not about truth at all but about personal preferences – and they cannot understand why Christians say that they have to go to Hell for having the wrong personal preferences. You have to *tell them* that religion is about truth. Then they understand why you are disagreeing with them and you can have a conversation about what is true.

For further study

A debate between a Christian and a postmodern, featuring Christian scholar Peter Williams and a very strange liberal person. This audio really makes it clear why people are opposed to objective truth claims about religion. Williams’ opponent is the epitome of postmodern relativist irrational universalism.

Who really gets rich from gasoline? Big oil companies or big government?

August 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a great article that will blow your mind from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Tom)

Excerpt:

> With the average price of gas in America hovering around $3.50 per gallon for regular unleaded, it costs more than $50 to fill a typical car's 15-gallon tank this summer. Why does gas cost so much?
>
> You may blame high gas prices on rich oil company executives or greedy gas station owners. The truth is that governments rake in a larger profit at the pump than anyone—and with gas taxes on the rise in many parts of the country, there's no relief in sight.
>
> The price of a gallon of gas is based on the combination of four costs: that of crude oil, of refining gas, of distribution and marketing, and of taxes.
>
> Crude oil costs make up about 76% of the cost of gasoline, according to U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). Thus $2.66 of a $3.50 gallon of gasoline is set before the oil is even refined. Global markets, reacting to supply and demand, determine the cost of crude oil. Just like any commodity, from gold to corn, a shortage in supply or an increase in demand leads to a rise in prices.
>
> Refining oil is the next step in the process—and the next expense for drivers. Gasoline is extracted from crude oil and additives, including lubricants and detergents to reduce engine deposits, are added. As of January 2012, the EIA found that refining was responsible for 6% of the cost of gasoline.
>
> Distribution and marketing—the part of the process most apparent to consumers—constitutes another 6% of gas prices. That portion of the cost includes the shipping and transportation of the gasoline, a markup to cover retailers' expenses, and any advertising created to appeal to customers.
>
> The remaining 12%—or almost 50 cents per gallon today—goes directly to federal, state and local governments in an array of sales and excise taxes. The federal gas tax is 18.4 cents on every gallon of gasoline sold in America. State gas-tax rates vary from a low of eight cents per gallon in Alaska to a jarring 49 cents per gallon in New York. Other states where it's steep to fill up include California and Connecticut—each with 48.6-cent-per-gallon gas taxes—and Hawaii, at 47.1 cents per gallon.
>
> Some local governments have gotten in on the act, too. In California, local sales and excise taxes on gasoline average 3.1%, according to the Los Angeles Times. That works out to about 12 cents in local taxes for each gallon of gas, based on the state's current average of $3.80 per gallon.

> […]**Exxon, for example, made only seven cents per gallon of gasoline in 2011. That's a drop in the bucket compared to the nearly 50 cents per gallon that federal, state and local governments rake in on an average gallon of gas pumped in the U.S.**

That's not going to stop the unproductive socialists in government for accusing oil companies of being greedy. Who's really greedy? Government is greedy. They take more of your money in gas taxes than the oil companies do.

Focus on the Family and National Right to Life to register 5 million new voters

August 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is some good news from Life News.

Excerpt:

> In one of the largest voter registration campaigns of its kind, two leading prolife organizations are working to try to register as many as five million new pro-life voters and to get them to the polls this November.
>
> With some pro-life groups saying the upcoming presidential election could decide the fate of legalized abortion, registering pro-lifer voters to take part in the upcoming election is crucial.
>
> "The upcoming general election is less than 100 days away, and the Gallup polling firm (whose numbers at this point have predicted the winner in every race since 1964 except one) has Barack Obama and Mitt Romney at a tie," says the National Right to Life Committee, one of the two groups.
>
> "Every vote matters, and National Right to Life is excited to be participating in one of the largest voter registration projects in American history," NRLC adds. "National Right to Life Educational Trust Fund has partnered with Focus on the Family in a project called Commit 2 Vote 2012. This project sends mailings directly to our supporters who are not yet registered to vote but whose participation in this year's election is crucial."

Here are the top 20 pro-life states: (the link has a full list of 50)

1. Louisiana
2. Oklahoma
3. **Pennsylvania**
4. Nebraska
5. Arkansas
6. **Missouri**
7. Texas
8. South Dakota
9. North Dakota
10. **Indiana**
11. Kansas
12. Kentucky
13. Georgia
14. Arizona
15. Mississippi

16. **Virginia**
17. **Ohio**
18. **Michigan**
19. Idaho
20. South Carolina

The states I listed in BOLD went *either* for Obama in 2008 *or* they were decided by less than 2% of the vote. Pennsylvania is surprising – it went 55-44 for Obama and yet it is "pro-life".

Barack Obama's religion: a closer look at his religious beliefs

August 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama claims to be a Christian in public. But is he really a Christian? Well there are at least two ways to look at this question. One way is to look at what Obama does, and see if it matches up with what Christians are supposed to do, and what they have done. Another way is to look at what Obama says, and see if it matches up with what the Bible says, and what the early Church believed.

What are Christians supposed to do?

There are a lot of places I could look to see whether or not Obama's actions are the actions of a Christian, but I will just choose one: abortion. If you want to know what Christians believe about abortion, you need to go back to the very earliest followers of Jesus. At that time, the Roman authorities believed not only in abortion but also infanticide. The earliest Christians opposed not only infanticide, but also abortion.

Let's see:

> Extrabiblical Jewish Literature
>
> The noncanonical Jewish wisdom literature further clarifies first-century Judaism's view of abortion. For example, the *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* 184–186 (c. 50 B.C.–A.D. 50) says that "a woman should not destroy the unborn in her belly, nor after its birth throw it before the dogs and vultures as a prey." Included among those who do evil in the apocalyptic *Sibylline Oracles* were women who "aborted what they carried in the womb" (2.281–282). Similarly, the apocryphal book *1 Enoch* (2nd or 1st century B.C.) declares that an evil angel taught humans how to "smash the embryo in the womb" (69.12). Finally, the first-century Jewish historian Josephus wrote that "*the law* orders all the offspring to be brought up, and forbids women either to cause abortion or to make away with the fetus" (*Against Apion* 2.202).
>
> Contrast these injunctions with the barbarism of Roman culture. Cicero (106–43 B.C.) records that according to the Twelve Tables of Roman Law, "deformed infants shall be killed" (*De Legibus* 3.8). Plutarch (c. a.d. 46–120) spoke of those who he said "offered up their own children, and those who had no children would buy little ones from poor people and cut their throats as if they were so many lambs or young birds; meanwhile the mother stood by without a tear or moan" (*Moralia* 2.171D).
>
> Early Christian Literature
>
> Against the bleak backdrop of Roman culture, the Hebrew "sanctity of human life" ethic provided the moral framework for early Christian condemnation of abortion and infanticide. For instance, the *Didache* 2.2 (c. A.D. 85–110)

> commands, “thou shalt not murder a child by abortion nor kill them when born.” Another noncanonical early Christian text, the *Letter of Barnabas* 19.5 (c. A.D. 130), said: “You shall not abort a child nor, again, commit infanticide.” There are numerous other examples of Christian condemnation of both infanticide and abortion. In fact, some biblical scholars have argued that the silence of the NT on abortion per se is due to the fact that it was simply assumed to be beyond the pale of early Christian practice. Nevertheless, Luke (a physician) points to fetal personhood when he observes that the unborn John the Baptist “leaped for joy” in his mother’s womb when Elizabeth came into the presence of Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus at the time (Luke 1:44).
>
> More than merely condemning abortion and infanticide, however, early Christians provided alternatives by rescuing and adopting children who were abandoned. For instance, Callistus (d. c. A.D. 223) provided refuge to abandoned children by placing them in Christian homes, and Benignus of Dijon (3rd century) offered nourishment and protection to abandoned children, including some with disabilities caused by unsuccessful abortions.

What does Obama believe? Not only is Barack Obama the most pro-abortion President ever, but he also has voted for infanticide several times and he opposed the ban on partial birth abortions.

Excerpt:

> BAIPA [The Born Alive Infant Protection Act] (both the federal and Illinois state versions) on the other hand, was introduced to insure that babies who survive attempted abortions are provided the same medical care and sustenance as any other infant born alive. BAIPA was introduced after evidence was presented that babies born alive after unsuccessful abortions were simply discarded in utility closets without food, care, or medical treatment until they died.
>
> As both Andy and I pointed out last night (and numerous times before), state senator Obama fought against the Illinois version of BAIPA that was identical in all material respects to the federal version. During the 2008 presidential campaign, Obama claimed that he voted against the Illinois BAIPA because it failed to contain a “neutrality clause” making it clear that the bill did not affect the right to an *abortion*. This is false. Documents obtained by National Right to Life show that the Illinois BAIPA did, in fact, contain a neutrality clause identical to the federal version.
>
> As noted yesterday, not one U.S. senator voted against BAIPA. Even NARAL didn’t oppose it. At the time of the vote, CNN reported that NARAL’s spokesman said the following:
>
> We, in fact, did not oppose the bill. There is a clear legal difference between a fetus *in utero* versus a child that’s born. ***And when a child is born, they deserve every protection that the country can provide.*** (Emphasis added).

> The logical import of Obama's vote against BAIPA is that he disagrees, i.e., once a baby has been targeted for abortion it thereafter has no inherent right to the food, comfort, and medical care provided to other babies born alive. Indeed, during Illinois state senate deliberations on BAIPA, Obama stated that one of his objections was that the bill was "designed to ***burden the original decision*** of the woman and the physician to induce labor and perform an abortion." Apparently, once the decision to abort has been made, a child is doomed even if born alive.

And of course we now know that Barack Obama supports redefining marriage so that marriage will mean two men or two women. He opposes the traditional view of marriage: one man and one woman, having children and then raising them. Barack Obama's view directly contradicts the Bible's teaching on marriage not to mention the words of Jesus himself. It seems to me that Obama's actions on these issues don't line up with what Christians have always believed on crucial issues like protecting children and defending marriage.

What are Christians supposed to say?

In order to be a Christian, you must accept that all people everywhere are in rebellion against God, and that Jesus is God stepping into history, and that there is no reconciliation with God apart from an explicit belief in Jesus' deity, and the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection. Namely, that his death was a payment for each person's rebellion against God. Christians also believe that a person must accept that those who do not know Jesus and believe in what he did will not go to Heaven, but will be separated from God for eternity in a place called Hell.

Let's look at what the Bible says.

Acts 4:8-12:

[8] Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!

[9] If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed,

[10] then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

[11]Jesus is

"'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.'

[12] Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

John 14:1-6:(Jesus speaking)

[1] "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.

[2] My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?

[3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

[4]You know the way to the place where I am going."

[5]Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

[6] Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Philippians 2:5-11:

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Romans 10:1-4:

[1] Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

[2] For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.

[3] Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

[4] Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

And in Romans 10:9, "If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." I could go on, but that should be enough. Christians do not think that these teachings are mere opinions – we think they are facts. We think they are true and binding and knowable.

To be believe in Jesus means to believe that he is who he says he is – God stepping in history, giving his own life up in order to take the punishment that each person deserves who rebels against God. And we *all* rebel against God, according to the Bible.

Now let's take a look at what Obama says. Pay attention to whether he thinks that what he is saying are his own opinions or whether they are facts.

Excerpt:

> **Falsani:** What do you believe?
>
> **OBAMA:** […]I believe that there are many paths to the same place, and that is a belief that there is a higher power, a belief that we are connected as a people. That there are values that transcend race or culture, that move us forward, and there's an obligation for all of us individually as well as collectively to take responsibility to make those values lived.

And:

> **Falsani:** Do you believe in heaven?
>
> **OBAMA**: Do I believe in the harps and clouds and wings?
>
> **Falsani:** A place spiritually you go to after you die?
>
> **OBAMA**: What I believe in is that if I live my life as well as I can, that I will be rewarded. I don't presume to have knowledge of what happens after I die. But I feel very strongly that whether the reward is in the here and now or in the hereafter, the aligning myself to my faith and my values is a good thing.
>
> When I tuck in my daughters at night and I feel like I've been a good father to them, and I see in them that I am transferring values that I got from my mother and that they're kind people and that they're honest people, and they're curious people, that's a little piece of heaven.
>
> **Falsani:** What is sin?
>
> **OBAMA**: Being out of alignment with my values.
>
> **Falsani:** What happens if you have sin in your life?
>
> **OBAMA**: I think it's the same thing as the question about heaven. In the same way that if I'm true to myself and my faith that that is its own reward, when I'm not true to it, it's its own punishment.

And:

> **OBAMA**: […]This is something that I'm sure I'd have serious debates with my fellow Christians about. I think that the difficult thing about any religion, including Christianity, is that at some level there is a call to evangelize and proselytize. There's the belief, certainly in some quarters, that people haven't embraced Jesus Christ as their personal savior that they're going to hell.
>
> **Falsani:** You don't believe that?
>
> **OBAMA**: I find it hard to believe that my God would consign four-fifths of the world to hell.

Again, not only did Jesus mention Hell constantly, but the earliest Christians believed in a literal, eternal Hell. Obama doesn't get to override Jesus, the Bible and the early church and substitute his own religion, and his own standard of sin and salvation. What I find

annoying is that he apparently cannot reconcile God's goodness with the existence of Hell. That's like Apologetics 101. You would have to know nothing at all about Christianity to say what he said. You would have had to avoided reading anything that answers any questions about Christianity – because that question is easy.

To me what Obama expressed there in his answers was religious pluralism, radical subjectivism, postmodern relativism, and universalism. In no way shape or form are those beliefs consistent with what the Bible teaches. Not even close – this is not even disputable. To be a Christian, you have to believe that there are objective truths about God, independent of different people's opinions. And that these truths are knowable, through reason, science, history and revelation in the Bible. Only atheists think that religion is non-cognitive subjective wish-fulfillment meant to make people feel good and have community, etc. If you think religion is like picking a flavor of ice cream instead of picking a prescription drug for an illness, then you're not a Christian. Period.

So in both cases, when you look at what Obama says and what Obama does, it's very clear that he is not a Christian by any stretch of the imagination. There is a lot more to being a Christian than just calling yourself one. You have to act the way that Christians are supposed to act – the way they always acted since the beginning of Christianity. And you have to believe the basic things that Christians are supposed to believe. Things that are *clearly taught* in multiple books of the new Testament and things that were believed by the earliest followers of Jesus, right up to the present day. If I had to guess what Obama really believes, I would speculate that he inclines toward atheism, or agnosticism at best.

UPDATE: Barack Obama denies that Jesus is the unique son of God at the 2012 Easter Prayer Breakfast.

CNN fact-checks latest pro-Obama ad: it's full of lies

August 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Radical leftist Wolf Blitzer fact checking a pro-Obama ad?

Let's see:

Bridget posted this blurb which summarizes the situation for those who can't see the video above:

> The ad centers around the story of Joe and Ranae Soptic of Kansas City, Missouri. Joe lost his job when GST Steel went under in 2001, after 8 years of Bain Capital attempting to save the dying steel plant. Romney's site addresses the claims regarding GST:
>
> > In 1993, GS Technologies, a company Bain Capital had invested in, purchased a struggling Kansas City steel plant from Armco. Prior to this investment, Armco announced plans to close the Kansas City plant if a buyer could not be found.
> >
> > This investment – and $170 million in upgrades – kept the Kansas City plant competitive in a tough international market and saved the steel workers' jobs for eight years.
>
> In addition, the plant finally went under 2 years after Romney *left* Bain Capital to head up the Salt Lake City Olympics. Even if you believe the Obama campaign's fact-checked and disproven claim that Romney left Bain in 2002, it would be obscene to blame Romney and Bain when the investment was designed to save GST Steel.
>
> Now, the kicker that makes this the most offensive ad I have seen in a long time (although not in history, as a 2010 ad compared one GOP candidate to the Taliban). Soptic's wife died *in 2006*, five years after he lost his job and health insurance with GST's closing. When she went in for pneumonia, her cancer was so far evolved that it was untreatable, making health care irrelevent. The argument is basically that "some guy, who once worked for a company managed by the company Romney managed, lost his wife to cancer, so Mitt Romney killed her." This is ridiculous. President Obama should immediately disown this ad, but I doubt that's going to happen.

I'm actually surprised at CNN. I consider them less objective than Doonesbury cartoons. I guess even a stopped clock is right twice a day.

Obama campaign denies knowledge… yet they knew about it in May!

Although the Obama campaign is denying any knowledge of this story, Yahoo News says that the Obama campaign actually knew it was a fraud back in May.

Excerpt:

> As Politico first reported, Soptic told essentially the same story in a May 14, 2012, conference call hosted by the Obama campaign. Here's what he said then, according to a partial recording of the call passed along by a Republican official:
>
> After we lost our jobs, we found out that we were going to lose our health insurance, and that our pensions hadn't been funded like Bain promised they would be. I was lucky to find another job as a custodian in a local school district. They gave me some health insurance, but I couldn't afford to buy it for my wife. A little while later she was diagnosed with lung cancer. I had to put her in a county hospital because she didn't have health care, and when the cancer took her away, all I got was an enormous bill. That put a lot of stress on me: I thought I'd be paying it off until I died myself. That probably wouldn't have happened if Bain kept its promise and I was allowed to keep our health insurance.
>
> "It's upsetting what Mitt Romney and his partners did to us," he added.
>
> The revelation drew an immediate rebuke from Romney campaign spokesman Ryan Williams, who said Obama and his campaign "are willing to say and do anything to hide the president's disappointing record."
>
> "But they're not entitled to repeatedly mislead voters," he said.
>
> The Obama campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Even if Obama disowned the ad, it's not going to make a difference to his rank and file – they get most of their news from the Comedy Channel anyway.

Pro-abortion Claire McCaskill to face pro-life challenger Todd Akin

August 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> A marquee prolife versus pro-abortion matchup will take place in Missouri in a Senate race that pro-life advocates believe they can win on their way to getting a pro-life majority in the U.S. Senate.
>
> Senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri is one of the Democrats' most vulnerable senators heading into the 2012 elections and, following the Missouri Republican primary last night, she will now face pro-life Rep. Todd Akin.
>
> […]EMILY's List, the political action committee that works to elect pro-abortion women, is recommending McCaskill to their supporters, encouraging contributions on her behalf. In order to receive the blessing of EMILY's List, candidates must support even the most extreme elements of the pro-abortion movement including partial-birth abortion and taxpayer funding of abortion.
>
> Since taking office in January 2007, McCaskill has not cast one pro-life vote. According to her votes, McCaskill supports abortion funding under healthcare reform, taxpayer funding of Planned Parenthood and taxpayer funding of embryonic stem cell research. McCaskill also voted to use American tax dollars to fund the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which participates in carrying out China's oppressive One Child Policy. The One Child Policy has resulted in millions of forced abortions and made millions of baby girls into victims of sex-selection abortion.

I'm not about to endorse someone *just because* he is a social conservative, running against a radical pro-abortion leftist. I want to see foreign policy credentials, and fiscal conservatism, too!

Here are his awards for the most recent session of Congress:

Group	Award	Rating	Date
Center for Security Policy	Champion of National Security	100%	2010
National Tax Limitation Committee	Tax Fighter Award	A	2010
National Federation of Independent Businesses	National Guardian of Small Business Award		2010

Family Research Council	Friend of the Family	100%	2010
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	Spirit of Enterprise		2009
American Conservative Union	Defender of Liberty	100%	2009

Ok, I'm good with him. And Claire McCaskill's rating from the American Conservative Union is 0 in 2011, 17 in 2010, and an average of 14.6 over her 5 years of service.

Defense cuts to an already weakened military exposes us to aggression

August 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mackenzie Eaglen is a defense policy analyst for the American Enterprise Institute.

Here's a recent article that she wrote from the Wall Street Journal. (Full text also here on the AEI web site)

Excerpt:

> Washington is battling these days over "sequestration," the $500 billion additional cut to the defense budget looming in January.
>
> […]In April 2011—long before the near shutdown of the government and the last-minute debt-ceiling deal, which paved the way for sequestration—the president outlined $400 billion in defense cuts he had already approved. He also said that he wanted to "do that again" and find another $400 billion in military spending reductions. All this without any talk of threats, strategy or requirements—just arbitrary budget targets imposed on the military.
>
> Even before sequestration and the possible loss of a half-trillion dollars, the U.S. military has seen three years of budget cuts. The consequences are already here. We have to look all the way back to 1916 to find a year when the Air Force purchased fewer aircraft than are included in Mr. Obama's 2013 budget request.
>
> Many of the Air Force's aerial refueling tankers predate human space flight. Training aircraft are twice as old as the students flying them. The F-15 fighter first flew 40 years ago. A-10 ground-attack planes were developed in the Carter years. And all of our B-52 bombers predate the Cuban missile crisis.
>
> Then there's the Navy, which is the smallest it has been since 1916. At 286 combat and combat-support ships, the Navy today is less than half the size it reached during the Reagan administration. And what about those men and women who have been fighting America's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001? They're losing 100,000 in active duty personnel. Surely some will go from the front lines to unemployment lines as a result.
>
> […]Military leaders have suggested that taking on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his Third World army would be an operation of "many, many months." The so-called "pivot" to Asia is being mimed with fewer ships on longer deployments and a shrinking, aging air force. We're ignoring a wholesale Chinese power grab in the South China Sea and watching the nuclearization of Iran.

In another article on AOL Defense, she focuses in on the cuts to the U.S. Air Force. (Full text also here on the AEI web site)

Excerpt:

> Between the existing reduction of $487 billion and sequestration's additional half-trillion dollar cut, the Pentagon faces a very profound strategic turning point — one entirely different than that articulated by Secretary Panetta. Instead of prudently posturing for future successes, America's armed forces are headed for a crash.
>
> These pressures are perhaps best illustrated within the Air Force. The service absorbed 90 percent of the cuts levied on the Department of Defense in the 2013 budget — $4.8 billion of $5.2 billion. The effects have been immediate and pronounced: nearly 10,000 airmen are being cut; 227 aircraft are being prematurely retired; and critical capability shortfalls are on the rise.
>
> […]These budget cuts would not present such dire effects if the Air Force had been able to use the past decade to recapitalize its fleet and overarching infrastructure. At the end of World War Two, the Korean War, Vietnam, and the Cold War, the service was able to weather post-war budget downturns precisely because it had reset the majority of its capabilities during wartime.
>
> Circumstances were different this past decade. The Air Force, already stretched thin by the 1990s procurement holiday, actually saw its percentage of the defense budget decline by one-third during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The service canceled or delayed the vast majority of its modernization portfolio to sustain wartime operational demands.
>
> So 20 years of underfunding has given us an Air Force on the brink. Its aircraft average a quarter of a century in age-with many dating back to the Eisenhower Administration. The wings of Carter-era A-10 ground attack airplanes are riddled with structural cracks. Airmen learning to fly are strapping into T-38s over twice their age. B-52s, all of which pre-date the Cuban missile crisis, are spending up to a year in depot-level maintenance. In light of the F-22 shortage, the Air Force is now extending the lifespan of its 28 year-old F-15s to 18,000 hours — more than three times their original design life.
>
> The Air Force also spent the last decade retiring nearly a quarter of its bombers, fighters, and cargo aircraft in an attempt to free up money for immediate priorities. While helpful on a budget spreadsheet in the near-term, this has stretched the remaining tails even thinner. Shrinking the fleet makes little sense when the mission demand is constant. Aircraft availability rates and maintenance statistics clearly illustrate the rising costs associated with this decision.

Obama is also in favor of the complete disarmament of the United States with respect to nuclear weapons.

The Wall Street Journal explains:

> The White House and Pentagon are considering several proposals that would deeply cut the nation's stockpile of nuclear weapons, potentially to as low as 300 warheads under one such plan, according to a U.S. official.

> The proposals haven't been presented to President Barack Obama but are being debated by lower-level officials on the national-security staff and in the Pentagon.
>
> The U.S. official said the government isn't considering a unilateral cut to the nation's nuclear arsenal. Instead, the different proposals represent arsenal levels that could be negotiated with Russia in a future round of arms-control talks.
>
> Nonetheless, the prospect of nuclear-arsenal cuts during a hard-fought presidential campaign is certain to stoke political controversy.
>
> Under current treaty obligations, the U.S. must reduce its nuclear arsenal to 1,550 warheads by 2018 from just below 1,800 now. One of the new proposals would cut the arsenal to between 1,000 and 1,100; another proposes an arsenal of between 700 to 800; and the most drastic proposal would cut the arsenal to between 300 and 400, according to the official.

The fact of the matter is that there are hot spots and threats all over the world. If we want to work towards peace and protect the weak, then we need a large, capable military force. This is the doctrine of peace through strength. Talk is cheap, and disarmament only emboldens evildoers to be aggressive. If we want to stop war, we have to make it costly for aggressors and tyrants. They have to know that there is a cost.

N.T. Wright lectures on the resurrection of Jesus: did Jesus rise from the dead?

August 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's the video:

For those who cannot see the video, here is a written version of the lecture that Wright gave on the resurrection. And please note that I do not endorse anything that N.T. Wright says on any topic outside of history. History is his field of expertise, and I think he has no authority outside of the field of history.

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable*apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the

> future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an invented exaltation was already available to do the job.
3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.

5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

Democrats join Republicans in demanding probe into Delphi pension scandal

August 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> Twelve lawmakers wrote to House oversight committee Chairman Rep. Darrell Issa and Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Sen. Joe Lieberman asking that they expand current probes into a Department of Treasury scandal that left 20,000 non-union Delphi retirees without their pensions after the 2009 General Motors bailout.
>
> The members — Sens. Rob Portman of Ohio, Thad Cochran of Mississippi and Roger Wicker of Mississippi, and Reps. Pat Tiberi of Ohio, Steve Stivers of Ohio, Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania, Dan Burton of Indiana, Bill Johnson of Ohio, Paul Gosar of Arizona, Marcy Kaptur of Ohio and Gregg Harper of Mississippi — are led by Ohio Republican Rep. Mike Turner.
>
> "We are writing to request that the committees which you chair submit additional requests for documents from the Department of the Treasury and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) on matters pertaining to the unjust termination of Delphi salaried retiree pensions in the federal government's bailout of General Motors," the lawmakers wrote. "As you may know, the pensions of Delphi salaried retirees were significantly reduced in the aftermath of the bailout, while their union counterparts were made whole. These retirees, regardless of labor affiliation or not, spent their careers working alongside one another and should not be treated differently in their retirement. This decision of the Auto Task Force, Treasury, and the PBGC continues to affect roughly 20,000 current and future retirees across the nation."
>
> The bipartisan support for this renewed investigation call — Kaptur is a Democrat — undercuts the Obama campaign's accusations that his GOP rival, Mitt Romney, and Turner are trying to "politicize" this scandal.
>
> Portman, who's widely considered to be on Romney's short list of potential vice presidential candidates, said in a statement that he has "met with these hard-working Ohioans who lost a significant portion of their pension benefits while other retirees from the same company received far better treatment."
>
> "The idea that the administration played politics with their pensions is beyond disappointing, and it deserves answers," Portman said. "The administration's decisions have caused pain and loss to thousands of workers and their families as a result of their reduced benefits. This matter deserves continued scrutiny from Congress, and the administration must be called upon to account for its

> decisions.”

Remember way back in 2009 about how the auto bailouts favored the unions over the private sector creditors who would normally be paid more of whatever could be saved? This isn’t the first time that the private sector – which funds the government – was screwed by the government. But “the private sector is fine”.

Hawaii federal judge strikes down bid to redefine marriage

August 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> A federal court Wednesday upheld Hawaii's definition of marriage as one man and one woman, rejecting a lawsuit to tear down both the definition as well as Hawaii's constitutional amendment giving the legislature the power to maintain it.
>
> Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys defended the law and the amendment on behalf of Hawaii Family Forum, which the court allowed to intervene in the case in April.
>
> "This ruling affirms that protecting and strengthening marriage as the union of one man and one woman is legitimate, reasonable, and good for society," said Legal Counsel Dale Schowengerdt. "The people of Hawaii adopted a constitutional amendment to uphold marriage, and the court rightly concluded that the democratic process shouldn't be short-circuited by judicial decree."
>
> **The three individuals who filed the suit asked the court to declare the state's constitutional amendment on marriage and the state's law defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman unconstitutional. The lawsuit also assailed Hawaii's "civil unions" law, which became effective Jan 1, saying that equal rights would only be fulfilled by redefining marriage itself.**
>
> But in its order, the U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii concluded, "Throughout history and societies, marriage has been connected with procreation and childrearing…. It follows that it is not beyond rational speculation to conclude that fundamentally altering the definition of marriage to include same-sex unions might result in undermining the societal understanding of the link between marriage, procreation, and family structure."
>
> "In this situation," the court continued, "to suddenly constitutionalize the issue of same-sex marriage 'would short-circuit' the legislative actions that have been taking place in Hawaii…. Accordingly, because Hawaii's marriage laws are rationally related to legitimate government interests, they do not violate the federal Constitution."
>
> [Democrat] **Gov. Neil Abercrombie stated both publicly and in the lawsuit that he would not defend the state's marriage law.** His attacks on the law's constitutionality prompted Hawaii Family Forum to ask the court to allow it to intervene in defense of marriage in the state.

See, that’s interesting. Hawaii legalized same-sex civil unions, but that wasn’t enough. Even with legalized same-sex unions, the gay activists pushed for gay marriage. An even their constitutional amendment wasn’t safe – imagine if they had a different judge who went the other way.

On wargames, history and heroes: “this story shall the good man teach his son”

August 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Memoir ’44: Pegasus Bridge setup

Last night, I played through the Pegasus Bridge scenario from the Memoir ’44 wargame with Dina a few times. We actually played the online version of the game, using Steam. She was very gracious to play a wargame with me, which I don’t think is necessarily the first thing on most women’s lists of things to do on a Thursday night! I appreciated her agreeing to learn how to play and then playing with me several times. I think that Christians need to plan and execute more “together” activities like that – activities that involve interaction, co-operation, communication and engagement. We try to avoid doing things where we are both spectators. Playing wargames is not the only thing we do – we also do Bible study and cooking lessons (for me), for example.

Anyway, the point of this post is to express the deeper meaning behind playing wargames. I think that it is important to recognize and celebrate those who have demonstrated good character, whether it be now, or in the past. I think that it is important for us to search out the best role models ourselves, so that they will influence the way we act in our own lives. The second world war was a clear example of good versus evil. Anyone on the Allied side who demonstrated bravery and courage should be celebrated for safeguarding the security, liberty and prosperity that we enjoy today. In the case of Pegasus bridge, the hero is Major John Howard of the British paratroops.

Here is a quick re-cap of his exploits that day from the New York Times:

> Maj. John Howard, the commander of glider-borne British infantrymen who seized the strategically vital Pegasus Bridge in the first battle of the D-Day invasion of Normandy, died Wednesday in a hospital in Surrey, England. He was 86 and had lived in Burford, near Oxford.
>
> Under cover of night on June 6, 1944, six gliders carrying 181 officers and men of the Second Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry landed on the

> eastern flank of a 60-mile invasion front on the northern coast of France. The regiment had a heritage going back to the battles of Bunker Hill and New Orleans, to Waterloo and to World War I. Now its soldiers were in the vanguard of the invasion of Hitler's Europe.
>
> Major Howard's D Company was ordered to seize two bridges, one over the Caen Canal and the other spanning the parallel Orne River. If the Germans held on to those bridges, panzer units could move across them in a counterattack isolating 10,000 British paratroopers jumping behind the British invasion beach known as Sword, where infantry forces would arrive at daybreak. And Major Howard's men sought to strike swiftly to prevent the Germans from blowing up the bridges if they were overwhelmed; the British needed those bridges to resupply their airborne units.
>
> [image]British Halifax bombers towed the gliders over the English Channel, then cut them loose.

> Major Howard's lead glider landed at 12:16 A.M., only 50 yards from the Caen Canal bridge, but the glider's nose collapsed on impact, knocking everybody aboard unconscious for a few seconds. The soldiers quickly emerged, and over the next five minutes the men directly under Major Howard killed the surprised German defenders.
>
> The nearby Orne River bridge was captured by other troops in Major Howard's unit, and soon the words "Ham and Jam," signifying mission accomplished, were radioed to the airborne.
>
> Two British soldiers were killed and 14 wounded in the operation.
>
> Over the next 12 hours, British paratroopers and commandos reinforced Major Howard's men, and British forces were able to move toward the city of Caen, their flank having been protected by the capture of the bridges.
>
> On July 16, Major Howard received the Distinguished Service Order, Britain's second-highest award for valor. On the 10th anniversary of D-Day, he received the Croix de Guerre Avec Palme from the French Government, which had renamed the Caen Canal span Pegasus Bridge, for the flying horse symbolizing the British airborne. The road crossing the bridge was later renamed Esplanade Major John Howard.

Why is this important? Well, it's important to think on the things that are excellent. There are so many things in the culture that are not excellent that we are confronted with every day. We have to make it our business to do things together where goodness is celebrated. Especially when manly virtues like courage are celebrated. We don't do that much anymore. And I think there's a connection between wargames and Christian apologetics that we need to *deliberately* encourage.

Here's an excellent passage from Shakespeare's "Henry V" that makes the point:

> This day is called the feast of Crispian:
> He that outlives this day and comes safe home,
> Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,
> And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
> He that shall live this day, and see old age,
> Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
> And say, 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'
> Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
> And say, 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
> Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
> But he'll remember with advantages
> What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
> Familiar in his mouth as household words,
> Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
> Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
> Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.
> **This story shall the good man teach his son;**
> And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
> From this day to the ending of the world,
> But we in it shall be rememberèd;
> We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
> For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
> Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile
> This day shall gentle his condition:
> And gentlemen in England, now a-bed
> Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
> And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
> That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day. (4.3.43)

This is from the famous speech in which King Henry charges his men to fight well before the famous Battle of Agincourt.

You can read more about the history of the British Airborne division and Pegasus bridge. The famous historian of the second world war Stephen E. Ambrose also wrote a history of the Pegasus bridge battle, called "Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944". You won't find many military historians better than Stephen E. Ambrose!

You might be surprised how many men are interested in military history and wargames, precisely because men instinctively look up to men like John Howard who embody qualities like bravery and courage. We have a dearth of moral character in this society. And we don't do much to teach young men about manly virtues, even in the church. I think that it is important for us to think of creative ways for us to present good character to our young men. Young women should also learn about good character, because they must separate out the good men from the bad when they are courting.

Thanks to Dina for helping me to edit this post!

Friday night movie: The Great Escape (1963)

August 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [8.3/10]

IMDB median rating: [9/10]

Description:

> Based on a true story, a group of allied escape artist type prisoners of war are all put in an 'escape proof' camp. Their leader decides to try to take out several hundred all at once. The first half of the film is played for comedy as the prisoners mostly outwit their jailers to dig the escape tunnel. The second half is high adventure as they use boats and trains and planes to get out of occupied Europe.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)
- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)

- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

A summary of Dr. Laura's Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands

August 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sue Bohlin of Probe Ministries read "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands", and her assessment is here.

Excerpt:

> Talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written a book that is improving thousands of marriages: *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands.*{1} We need this book because millions of wives either don't know how to love their husbands wisely and well, or they're too self-centered to see it as important. Dr. Laura credits this dismal condition to forty years of feminist philosophy, "with its condemnation of just about everything male as evil, stupid, and oppressive, and the denigration of female and male roles in families."{2} While the women's movement certainly had a hand to play in the disintegration of relationships and the family, I believe the core cause is our sinful self-centeredness, just as the Bible says.{3}
>
> Which is why we need help, and God instructs older women to train younger women to love their husband and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.{4} *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* is a great resource for learning these important values and skills.

She talks about men's needs for direct communication, respect, appreciation, support, and sex.

And ends with this:

> I can't recommend *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* highly enough. In fact, I gave a copy to my new daughter-in-law! Let me close with one more piece of wisdom from Dr. Laura: "[M]en are simple creatures who come from a woman, are nurtured and brought up by a woman, and yearn for the continued love, admiration and approval of a woman. . . Women need to better appreciate the magnitude of their power and influence over men, and not misuse or abuse it."{25} Amen!

And here's another summary of the book that I found.

Full text:

> Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written another book that deserves a place on the best seller list with six of her other books, such as Ten Stupid Things Women Do to Mess Up Their Lives and Ten Stupid Things Men Do to Mess Up Their Lives. The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands, from this unmarried man's perspective, is

an excellent manual for women on how to get want they want from men and marriage and, generally, how to be happy. Dr. Laura makes a number of important, practical points, based on her experience in private practice, from advising her radio callers, and from literally hundreds of letters and emails she received from men and women while she was writing the book. Here are the points that struck this writer, together with commentary:

1. **Men Need Women, and This Need Gives Women Huge Influence**. Dr. Laura states the point as follows: "[M]en are simple creatures who come from a woman, are nurtured and brought up by a woman, and yearn for the continued love, admiration, and approval from a woman." Women have great power and influence over men, and wives in particular have tremendous power over their husbands. How they use this power essentially controls the relationship, because women are the masters of most relationships and marriages. That's why Dr. Laura says that she probably won't write The Proper Care and Feeding of Wives: wives already have most of the power and their marriages depend, for the most part, on them.

2. **Women Err in Favoring Children Over Husband**. A friend once told this writer that once a woman has children, her husband is relegated to the moral equivalence of a piece of furniture. How sad if this is true in many marriages. Here's how Dr. Laura puts it: "Once wives became mothers, they had no time to be wives. The men would even compliment their wives on being great mothers, but expressed considerable pain over not being shown love, affection, or sexual interest. The typical reply from a wife challenged with this was 'I only have time to take care of one person, and our child is that person. I'm just too tired for you.' This puts fathers in the ugly and uncomfortable position of feeling competitive with and resentful of their children, whom they love so much."

3. **Men and Women Are Different**. That men and women are deeply different ought not to be notable, but for the fact that it is so often challenged today. Dr. Laura says that society tries to make both men and women "unisex." But men are happiest being men, and women are happiest being women, with few exceptions. The differences start to manifest themselves very early. In one study Dr. Laura mentions, a barrier was placed between 1 year-old babies and their mothers. What did the little boys do? They attempted to get around the barrier or knock it down. The little girls? They cried until their mothers' picked them up. Men tend to respond to things physically, women verbally. In fact, the two sexes are just right for each other.

4. **Not Every Thought and Feeling Needs to be Said**. Women tend to be so verbal, so expressive, that they can tire out men easily unless they exercise some restraint. Dr. Laura reports that wives generally overwhelm their husbands with communication. "Husbands imagine (so foolishly) that their wives are telling

them something they actually need to know because they're supposed to do something about it. Otherwise, men can't imagine why the 'communication' is happening at all. It confuses them, frustrates them, and their response is to turn off. That's when they unfairly become labeled insensitive." Husbands and fiances are not girlfriends or psychologists, and women who want attention should adjust their communication style accordingly when speaking with them.

5. **Men Are Not Mind-Readers**. Most men are not very intuitive compared to most women. Many women "get caught up in the absurdly romanticized notion that 'if he loved me, he'd just know what I'm thinking, what I'd like, what he should say.'" If a woman wants her man to do something, she should just ask him plainly, without nagging, and show appreciation when he does it. To act otherwise, as many women do, shows arrogance and lack of respect for the husband's difference, and it leads to unhappiness in the marriage and in the family.

6. **Man Is an Embodied Soul**. No, Dr. Laura didn't put it that way; "embodied soul" is a Catholic concept. But that concept is what underlies her discussion of how important it is to a man that his wife try to keep up her appearance. What does it mean that we are embodied souls? It means that our bodies are integral parts of who we are. We are not just souls. Our bodies are not like clothing that we can take on or off. There was no time during which we had only souls and not bodies, and in eternity as well we will have bodies. It is through our bodies, in fact, that we communicate to our loved ones and to the rest of the world. One thinks of the beautiful line from the old Anglican marriage rite: bride and groom pledge to each other "with my body I thee worship." It is ironic, but in many cases men–sex-crazed pigs in the minds of many women–actually have a truer understanding of the beauty of the body and the meaning of the marital embrace than their wives do. "Objectification" may come as much or more from the woman's side as from the husband's if the woman sees her own body as being separate from rather than an integral part of herself. Dr. Laura writes: "In reading all the letters from men, I was struck by their depth of senstivity about the issue of women's appearance. It wasn't an impersonal, animal reaction (as it is with women the men don't personally know), it was a deeply personal one. The wife's comfort with and appreciation of her own body and femininity, and her willingness to share that with her husband, actually fed his sense of well-being, his feeling of being loved as a husband and valued as a 'man.'"

7. **Infidelity by Omission**. Brides and grooms make a number of vows, not only of sexual fidelity. Marital vows include and imply words like love, honor, protect, and care for. "[W]hen one breaches those vows by neglect, is that also not a form of infidelity? Perhaps we should start looking at the act of intentionally depriving a spouse of legitimate needs as infidelity, too, because it stems from being unfaithful to the intent of the vows."

> 8. **In the Bedroom**. To her credit, Dr. Laura gives due place to the importance for marriage of the marital act: “The bedroom is the foundation of marriage and family.” St. Josemaria Escriva, founder of Opus Dei, that supposedly conservative institution within the Church, put it this way: “The marriage bed is an altar.” Enough said?

> 9. **Women Should Appreciate Men’s Masculinity**. Dr. Laura relates a trip she made recently to a swimming pool. A mom and a dad were wading with their infant child. Mom held the child against her chest, cooed to him, and swooped him up and down. She passed the baby to dad. He turned the baby’s face outward and swooshed him forward and up into the air. “Mom equals protection and nurturance. Dad equals autonomy and adventure. It is the perfect balance that helps produce a functional, secure human being.” Too many women, though, act like Alice Kramdens, constantly belitting their husbands, shooting down their aspirations, treating them like children. Dr. Laura writes: “When a wife treats her man like he’s one of her children, when she puts him down or thwarts his need for autonomy, adventure, risk, competition, challenge, and conquest, she ends up with a sullen, unooperative, unloving, hostile lump.”

> 10. **Thou Shalt Not Covet**. Dr. Laura contributes a novel (to this writer) and insightful contemporary application of the commandment, “thou shal not covet.” Specifically, she understands it as a rebuke to people who want it all, especially feminists. “Perhaps the feminist notions about women having power if they do it all has obstructed too many women’s ability to realize that in real life we all make choices, and that the true joy and meaning of life is not in how many things we have or do, but in the sacrifice and commitment we make to others within the context of the choices we’ve made. The Tenth Commandment, about coveting, reminds us that none of us can have everything there is nor everything we want. Without enjoying and appreciating our gifts and blessings, we create a hell on earth for ourselves and for those who love us.”

PCF Husbands is the best basic book on marriage. Easy to read, tons of wisdom.

Who is Paul Ryan? What are his political views and positions?

August 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's see whether Paul Ryan has what it takes to push the Tea Party agenda in a debate situation.

Paul Ryan vs Barack Obama:

Paul Ryan vs Debbie Wasserman-Schultz:

Paul Ryan vs Tim Geithner:

Paul Ryan against MSNBC leftist Chris Matthews:

Paul Ryan can really debate economic issues – he is the Chair of House Budge Committee, after all. The focus of this election will now be on the economy, where it belongs, and the Democrats will be forced to discuss specifics.

Not only can he debate, but he explains our economic situation well:

He can explain this stuff *to you and I.* He can explain this stuff *to Democrats and Independents.*

By the way, Paul Ryan has a perfect score on the pro-life issue, and he has even written about his pro-life views on his Congressional web site.

Here is an excerpt in which he contrasts the Supreme Court decision on abortion with the Supreme Court decision with racial discrimination:

> Twice in the past the U.S. Supreme Court—charged with being the guardian of rights—has failed so drastically in making this crucial determination that it "disqualified" a whole category of human beings, with profoundly tragic results.
>
> The first time was in the 1857 case, Dred Scott v. Sandford. The Court held, absurdly, that Africans and their American descendants, whether slave or free, could not be citizens with a right to go to court to enforce contracts or rights or for any other reason. Why? Because "among the whole human race," the Court declared, "the enslaved African race were not intended to be included…[T]hey had no rights which the white man was bound to respect." In other words, persons of African origin did not "qualify" as human beings for purposes of protecting their natural rights. It was held that, since the white man did not recognize them as having such rights, they didn't have them. The implication was that Africans were property—things that white persons could choose to buy and sell. In contrast, whites did "qualify," so government protected their natural rights.
>
> Every person in this country was wounded the day this dreadful opinion was handed down by this nation's highest tribunal. It made a mockery of the American idea that human equality and rights were given by God and recognized

> by government, not constructed by governments or ethnic groups by consensus vote. The abhorrent decision directly led to terrible bloodshed and opened up a racial gap that has never been completely overcome. The second time the Court failed in a case regarding the definition of "human" was in Roe v. Wade in 1973, when the Supreme Court made virtually the identical mistake. At what point in time does a human being exist, the state of Texas asked. The Court refused to answer: "We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer." In other words, the Court would not "qualify" unborn children as living persons whose human rights must be guaranteed.

Who wrote that? Scott Klusendorf? No – Paul Ryan!

He actually opposes focusing only on fiscal issues at the expense of social issues – this man is a man who social conservatives can get behind.

He is also solid on national defense.

Excerpt:

> Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) gave a speech Thursday to the Alexander Hamilton Society in Washington. If one is looking for clues as to Ryan's interests beyond chairing the House Budget Committee, a speech, as he put it, to "a room full of national security experts about American foreign policy" would merit attention.
>
> …Ryan delivered an above-the-fray talk on the subject of American uniqueness (a less loaded term) and the myth that American decline in inevitable. He posited, "Our fiscal policy and our foreign policy are on a collision course; and if we fail to put our budget on a sustainable path, then we are choosing decline as a world power."
>
> Ryan contends that the debt crisis is not a bookkeeping problem or even simply a domestic problem; it is about maintaining our status as a superpower and about American values.
>
> […]He plainly is not with the cut-and-run set on Afghanistan. "Although the war has been long and the human costs high, failure would be a blow to American prestige and would reinvigorate al-Qaeda, which is reeling from the death of its leader. Now is the time to lock in the success that is within reach." Nor can he be accused of wanting to "go it alone." "The Obama administration has taken our allies for granted and accepted too willingly the decline of their capacity for international action. Our alliances were vital to our victory in the Cold War, and they need to be revitalized to see us through the 21st century."
>
> As for China, he bats down the idea that we should go along to get along… He's clear that China has "very different values and interests from our own."
>
> And finally on defense spending, he rejects the sort of penny-pinching

> isolationism of Jon Huntsman or Rep. Ron Paul (R-Tex.).

I have blogged about Paul Ryan continuously over the life of this blog – probably second only to Michele Bachmann. Definitely more than my other favorites Marco Rubio and Bobby Jindal. I think it's telling that Romney chose one of my 4 favorites.

So we are basically getting a full spectrum conservative (social, fiscal, defense) who can debate calmly and confidently, and with the support of evidence. Ryan also has a solidly middle-class background. I now predict a Romney-Ryan victory in November.

Related posts

- Paul Ryan's Path to Prosperity plan balances the budget without raising taxes
- Paul Ryan questions Chief Actuaries of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security
- Paul Ryan fact checks Obama's budget: is there really $4 trillion in deficit reduction?
- Paul Ryan takes Obama's State of the Union speech apart
- Paul Ryan teams up with Democrat Ron Wyden to push Medicare reform plan
- Budget guru Paul Ryan discusses the economy at the Heritage Foundation
- Paul Ryan explains how raising taxes hurts job creation
- Paul Ryan explains why the millionaire tax causes unemployment to rise
- Paul Ryan: cut current spending, cap future spending and balance the budget
- Paul Ryan talks about the looming American debt crisis
- Where does Paul Ryan stand on foreign policy and social issues?
- Paul Ryan responds to his critics on Medicare reform
- What's wrong with the American economy and how Paul Ryan would fix it
- Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann will respond to State of the Union address
- Republican Paul Ryan proposes over 6 trillion in spending cuts
- Paul Ryan discusses economics at the liberal Brookings Institute
- Paul Ryan explains taxes and spending to Chris Matthews
- Paul Ryan takes on Democrat Brad Sherman on the worsening economy
- Paul Ryan debates Democrat Robert Reich on Larry Kudlow show
- Paul Ryan debates on the relationship between tax rates and job creation
- Paul Ryan talks about health care with Chris Matthews and Chris Wallace
- Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander
- Paul Ryan discusses Obamacare and the federal budget
- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan's plan for economic recovery
- Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama's 1.56 trillion budget deficit
- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama's record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig about God's existence

August 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the full debate on video. Hugh Hewitt is the moderator.

Now I think most people are familiar with Christopher Hitchens and his arguments – he was widely regarded as the top atheist debater in the world, and has written bestselling books on atheism. So below is a little more about the Christian debater William Lane Craig. Craig is regarded as the top defender of Christianity in the world, although many people are unfamiliar with his arguments. Here is a written explanation of the five arguments he uses in the debate with Hitchens, if you want to follow along. This is a good debate for any of you who have never seen a debate on God's existence before.

About William Lane Craig

Let's review William Lane Craig's qualifications:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

Here is a partial list of his past debates against the top atheist scholars. Many of those have audio and video. His best recent debate was against the British philosopher Peter Millican. Recommended for advanced students only. For a more basic debate against a very poorly prepared opponent, you can watch the Craig-Atkins debate. Atkins is a retired professor of chemistry from Oxford.

Peter Robinson interviews Paul Ryan on fixing Washington

August 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a 47-minute interview with the Republican candidate for Vice President.

Topics:

- health care reform
- patient-centered health care
- patient choice
- price and quality competition
- reducing costs
- empowering states
- education reform
- separate health care from the employer and attach it to the worker
- the root cause of rising health costs
- the moral hazard caused by government spending "makers vs. takers"
- fixing dependency on the government by changing incentives
- how Republicans can get votes from Democrats and Independents
- how far is America from becoming Greece?
- is the debt crisis avoidable?
- the importance of the 2012 election
- reforming Social Security

Best quote: "we need to kick this thing upstairs to the American people" (on letting the people decide instead of government).

H/T Rocking With Hawking.

Paul Ryan teams up with Democrat Ron Wyden to push Medicare reform plan

August 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Pity the poor Democrats. Here they were counting on scaring seniors about GOP plans to "destroy" Medicare when Rep. Paul Ryan teams up with a prominent Senate Democrat to offer a compromise reform.
>
> From the White House on down, Democrats were wringing their hands this week about the bi-partisan Medicare reform plan offered up by Ryan and Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore.
>
> Their plan would shift Medicare from an open-ended health benefit to one in which the government provides a set amount of money for insurance. Seniors could choose from a variety of private, approved plans, as well as the traditional government-run Medicare.
>
> The subsidy would be based on the second cheapest plan in an area, and if seniors wanted more expansive coverage, they'd have to pay the difference out of their own pockets. The reform would also cap the growth in Medicare.
>
> […]As one Democratic congressional aide told the New York Times, "this plan gives bipartisan political cover to Ryan and other Republicans against whom we have been waging a very successful political offensive."
>
> […]While we prefer Ryan's original proposal to his current one, it's to his credit

> that he realized the political need to produce a bi-partisan compromise. Wyden, too, deserves credit for his willingness to buck his party and sacrifice short-term political gain for much needed long-term reforms.

I took a look at Wyden's ACU ratings, and he has a 9.23 out 100. I have no idea how Ryan got this guy on board. It's magic.

Analyzing Romney's choice of Paul Ryan for VP

August 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal says that Romney wanted to pair up criticism of the Obama economy with Paul Ryan's reform plan.

Excerpt:

> Mr. Romney is signaling that he realizes he needs a mandate if he is elected, which means putting his reform ideas before the American people for a clear endorsement. He is treating the public like grown-ups, in contrast to President Obama's focus on divisive and personal character attacks.
>
> The Ryan choice also suggests that Mr. Romney understands that to defeat Mr. Obama he'll have to do more than highlight the President's economic failures. He must also show Americans that he has a tangible, specific reform agenda that will produce faster growth and rising incomes.
>
> Mr. Ryan is well equipped to help him promote such an agenda. The seven-term Congressman grew up in the GOP's growth wing and supply-side ranks as a protege of Jack Kemp. Far from being a typical House Republican, he was a dissenter from the Tom DeLay do-little Congress in the last decade. He began talking about his reform blueprint in the George W. Bush years when everyone said he was committing political suicide.
>
> […]**In Mr. Ryan, [Democrats] face a conservative advocate who knows the facts and philosophy of his arguments.** He is well-liked and makes his case with a cheerful sincerity that can't easily be caricatured as extreme. He carries his swing Wisconsin district easily though it often supports Democrats for President.
>
> This may be why, in his meetings with House Republicans, Mr. Obama has always shied away from directly debating Mr. Ryan on health care and spending. He changed the subject or moved on to someone else. **The President knows that Mr. Ryan knows more about the budget and taxes than he does, and that the young Republican can argue the issues in equally moral terms.**

In moral terms, just like Arthur Brooks of the AEI urges conservatives to do.

The conclusion of the article explains Romney's strategy:

> In his remarks on Saturday in Norfolk, Mr. Ryan also hit on what is likely to be an emerging Romney theme: leadership that tells Americans the truth. "We will honor you, our fellow citizens, by giving you the right and opportunity to make the choice," he said. "What kind of country do we want to have? What kind of people do we want to be?"
>
> **The underlying assumption is that at this moment of declining real incomes and national self-doubt, Americans won't fall for the same old**

> **easy demagoguery. They want to hear serious ideas debated seriously. The contrast couldn't be greater with a President who won't run on his record and has offered not a single idea for a second term.**
>
> In choosing Mr. Ryan, Mr. Romney is betting that Americans know how much trouble their country is in, and that they will reward the candidate who pays them the compliment of offering solutions that match the magnitude of the problems.

Another editorial in the WSJ agrees that Ryan is there to provide a positive agenda.

Excerpt:

> Mr. Ryan provides the crucial shift in emphasis, the opportunity to go on offense. We will now have a focus on, and explanation of, the choice between stagnation and renewal. This is what Mr. Ryan excels at—not just crafting ideas, but explaining them in a positive and serious way. This ability is why the congressman—despite his supposedly extremist reform blueprint and budget (says the left)—has continued to win a district that in 2010 went for Mr. Obama.
>
> […]The first pitch to… voters came with Mr. Romney's introduction of Mr. Ryan on Saturday, in which the campaign made clear it intends to use this pick as a way of underlining the intellectual poverty of the Obama campaign. Mr. Romney spoke of Mr. Ryan's "integrity," his "seriousness," his "intellectual leadership," and his refusal to "demonize his opponents"—traits for which Mr. Ryan is well-known.
>
> The introduction was designed to highlight the Obama campaign's own relentless smear attacks, and its focus on the trivial. This is the first sign of Mr. Ryan's influence, since the strategy is clearly modeled on the congressman's own history of winning on ideas against opponents who resort to cheap attack.

My own view of this pick of Ryan is that he is exactly what the country needs. When you contrast Paul Ryan with a typical Democrat like that Georgetown feminist student who demanded that the taxpayers provide her with free contraceptives, then we win.

My previous post on Paul Ryan has some clips of him engaging with Democrats. He's very, very good at it.

Free “Indivisible” booklet explains fiscal and social conservatism

August 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you a fusionist? I am. A fusionist is someone who thinks that social conservatism and fiscal conservatism go together hand in hand. You can’t be just one or the other – you have to be both. Because if you want to achieve one goal, you’ll achieve it better by also working on the other goal in parallel.

Here’s how the new VP Paul Ryan explains it during a June 2009 the Hudson Institute conference speech:

> A “libertarian” who wants limited government should embrace the means to his freedom: thriving mediating institutions that create the moral preconditions for economic markets and choice. A “social issues” conservative with a zeal for righteousness should insist on a free market economy to supply the material needs for families, schools, and churches that inspire moral and spiritual life. In a nutshell, the notion of separating the social from the economic issues is a false choice. They stem from the same root.

Now here is a nice booklet about fusionism put out by the Heritage Foundation, my favorite think tank. The booklet is called “Indivisible” and the book chapters are all available as individual PDFs.

Here’s the booklet description:

> What do marriage, family, and religion have to do with property, free exchange, and profit? Washington policy circles may separate these into so-called “social” and “economic” issue sets, but for millions of Americans the dividing lines fade away in the reality of everyday life. Together these core social and economic ideas form the foundation of American liberty. Indivisible is a unique set of essays by well-known social and economic conservatives—each writing from the other’s perspective—to show the interdependence of these principles in advancing freedom and human dignity.

So the social conservatives are writing about fiscal issues, and the fiscal conservatives are writing about social issues.

Here’s the list of people and topics:

Civil Society	**Wages**
Moral Arguments for Limiting Government Joseph G. Lehman Download PDF	The Value of Wages Bishop Harry R. Jackson, Jr. Download PDF

Rule of Law
Economic Prosperity Requires the Rule of Law
J. Kenneth Blackwell
Download PDF

Life
The Cause of Life Can't be Severed from the Cause of Freedom
Representative Paul Ryan
Download PDF

Free Exchange
Morality and Economic Freedom
Jim Daly with Glenn T. Stanton
Download PDF

Marriage
The Limited-Government Case for Marriage
Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D.
Download PDF

Profit
Prophets and Profit
Marvin Olasky, Ph.D.
Download PDF

Family
Washington's War on the Family and Free Enterprise
Stephen Moore
Download PDF

Religion
Why Faith Is a Good Investment
Arthur Brooks, Ph.D., and Robin Currie
Download PDF

International Trade
Why Trade Works for Family, Community, and Sovereignty
Ramesh Ponnuru
Download PDF

Culture
A Culture of Responsibility
Edwin J. Feulner, Ph.D.
Download PDF

Property
Property and the Pursuit of Happiness
Representative Michele Bachmann
Download PDF

Environment
Conserving Creation
Tony Perkins
Download PDF

Education
A Unified Vision for Education Choice
Randy Hicks
Download PDF

And Jay Richards gave the introduction.

My two favorite chapters are Jennifer Roback Morse and Michele Bachmann, of course. I have the actual printed booklet, and it's all wrinkled on the edges because I read it while doing post-workout cardio. The essays are just 4-6 pages long.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

August 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing

- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don’t have any earlier sources, so we just don’t know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn’t check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

New CBO study: lifting drilling restrictions would increase U.S. energy reserves by 30%

August 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> A report from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that lifting the ban on federal oil drilling in certain areas could increase U.S. petroleum reserves by 30 percent, including an estimated 8 billion barrels of oil in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).
>
> Using estimates from the Department of the Interior (DOI), CBO said that lifting federal drilling restrictions could bring billions more barrels of oil and gas to market.
>
> "CBO estimates that about 175 billion barrels of oil equivalent (BOE) exists in undiscovered oil and gas reserves on federal lands (excluding most of the natural gas reserves in Alaska)—nearly half of it in the central and western parts of the Gulf of Mexico," CBO said.
>
> "About 70 percent of the undiscovered oil and gas is under federal control on lands that are currently open to leasing; thus, additional receipts would come from opening the other 30 percent to leasing and production."
>
> Thus, by lifting federal drilling bans in place in areas like ANWR and areas of the Outer Continental Shelf, oil-producing companies could gain access to an additional 30 percent of U.S. reserves – 52.5 billion barrels.
>
> While the reserves are technically recoverable – meaning oil companies could extract the oil and gas — legal restrictions and current administration policies prohibit oil companies from doing so.
>
> CBO excluded most of Alaska's gas reserves because there is no infrastructure in place to transport the gas to market, a fact CBO said made them unlikely to be tapped.
>
> The figures come from an August 9 CBO report examining the benefits the federal government would receive if it lifted all current drilling bans on federal lands, including ANWAR.

All that oil would create a lot of jobs, too. But we know from the last four years that the Obama administration has no interest in either producing more energy or creating jobs. Otherwise, they would have built the Keystone XL pipeline and lifted these restrictions on drilling.

Middle class tax rate set to rise to nearly 50% in January 2013

August 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation's Foundry blog.

Excerpt:

> A middle-class taxpayer's income is subject to a 25 percent federal income tax. Then there is the federal Social Security and Medicare payroll tax of 13.3 percent in 2012—5.65 percent of that is removed from the employee's paycheck, and the remaining 7.65 percent is paid by the employer. (In reality, the employee pays the entire 13.3 percent, because the employer's portion of the tax does not affect the cost of labor: The employer would pay the employee 7.65 percent more if there were no employer's portion of the payroll tax.)
>
> So the 25 percent federal income tax plus 13.3 Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes equals 38.3 percent going to federal taxes in 2012.
>
> And then there are state taxes. According to the Tax Foundation, the average state's income tax rate for the middle-class taxpayer is 4.82 percent, which brings the total to 43.12 percent in federal and state taxes. And it's going higher, thanks to the nearly $500 billion in tax increases for 2013 that some have called Taxmageddon. In January of next year, the federal income tax rate for middle-class taxpayers is scheduled to rise from 25 percent to 28 percent, and the payroll tax is scheduled to rise from 13.3 percent to 15.3 percent. This drives the marginal tax rate based on the aforementioned three taxes to 48.12 percent. Add in state and local property, corporate, excise, and other state and local taxes, and the percentage of each additional dollar that is taxed hovers around 50 percent.
>
> When half of each additional dollar earned is taxed away, taxpayers experience a disincentive to start businesses or expand existing ones. This leads to fewer jobs being created.
>
> It is outrageous that any dollar earned by a middle-class taxpayer would go as much to taxes as to supporting the taxpayer's family. The government didn't earn the taxpayer's paycheck and shouldn't be entitled to it.

People like me really do think about things like this – about getting up and going to work every day to earn half of what I am worth. Of giving up half my salary so that the Georgetown University student can have free contraception paid for by me. I am one of those people who pays about 45% of my income (federal, state and local) in taxes. If I had more of my own money, I could be following my own dreams – maybe to do a Ph.D and teach, or start a business, or become a minister. But those things can't happen, because people keep voting for more and more benefits for themselves on my back – so

that they don’t have to be burdened to make the decisions that it takes to take care of themselves and their families.

That’s what being a Democrat means – it means persisting in perpetual adolescence at the expense of people like me. It means taking away my dreams so that they can have my standard of living without having to work or play by the rules. Being a Democrat means piling up trillions of dollars of debt onto people who haven’t even been born – so that feminists can have free contraceptives. That’s what a Democrat is.

Shandon Guthrie lectures on the hiddenness of God

August 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker:

> Guthrie is currently pursuing his doctoral work in philosophy at the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David. He is currently visiting lecturer of philosophy at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and an affiliate faculty professor of philosophy at Regis University and co-leader and teacher for the local college ministry Converge (housed at Living Grace Church). He is a member of the Society of Christian Philosophers, the Evangelical Philosophical Society, and the Golden Key International Honour Society in recognition of his academic achievements.

The lecture:

This guy is a very good speaker. The talk contains philosophical reasoning as well as references to the teachings of the Bible on the problem of divine hiddenness. What I like about this lecture is that it helps you to see the goals and alternatives that God has in trying to get people to freely respond to him out of love. It’s an interesting problem.

Paul Ryan speaks at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation in May 2012

August 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Since he's the VP, I thought I'd post a recent long form video of Paul Ryan discussing economic policy. The introductions end at 6:30.

I recent blogged a few clips of Paul Ryan engaging with Democrats, in case you want to see him in action, as well

Redistribution of wealth: 2362 millionaires collecting unemployment

August 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How well does government redistribute the money that they take from job creators and workers?

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> There were 2,362 people who earned a million dollars or more in taxable income in 2009 and who also received federal unemployment benefits that year, according to a report by the Congressional Research Service.
>
> In fact, these millionaires collectively raked in more than $20 million in unemployment benefits.
>
> The Congressional Research Service report–*Receipt of Unemployment Insurance by Higher-Income Unemployed Workers ("Millionaires")*–was published on Aug. 2 and was based on the most recent data available from the Internal Revenue Service.
>
> **"Among tax filers with AGI [Adjusted Gross Income] of $1 million or more, 2,840 reported receipt of unemployment benefit income in 2008 and 2,362 tax filers reported receipt of unemployment benefit income in 2009," the CRS reported.**
>
> **The CRS reported that millionaires received $20.8 million in federal unemployment benefits in 2009, up from $18.6 million in 2008. That averages out to $8,806 in unemployment benefits per millionaire.**
>
> Unemployment insurance is a joint federal-state program and is funded by a payroll tax assessed against all workers. In the four years preceding 2012,according to the Tax Foundation, the unemployment insurance system was in the red. "Between 2008 and 2011, $174 billion was paid in unemployment taxes while $450 billion was paid out in benefits, a gap of $276 billion," the Tax Foundation said.
>
> […]In addition to the 2,362 people with adjusted gross incomes of $1 million or more who got unemployment benefits in 2009, there were also 8,335 people with incomes between $500,000 and $1 million who received benefits and 120,227 with incomes between $200,000 and $500,000 who received benefits.

The money that is paid out for unemployed people is taxed from all workers. That means that my unemployed insurance payments are funding unemployed millionaires. I've also had to pay Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare, and I've never taken a dollar back from that.

According to this Senate report, millionaires collected $9 billion in Social Security payments from the government from 2004-2009. I'll never collect a dime of Social Security, but I'm paying for theirs. There is no reason for me to be paying into Social Security – it's not a good deal for younger workers.

Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month

August 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Free Beacon.

Excerpt:

> A Russian nuclear-powered attack submarine armed with long-range cruise missiles operated undetected in the Gulf of Mexico for several weeks and its travel in strategic U.S. waters was only confirmed after it left the region, the *Washington Free Beacon* has learned.
>
> It is only the second time since 2009 that a Russian attack submarine has patrolled so close to U.S. shores.
>
> The stealth underwater incursion in the Gulf took place at the same time Russian strategic bombers made incursions into restricted U.S. airspace near Alaska and California in June and July, and highlights a growing military assertiveness by Moscow.
>
> The submarine patrol also exposed what U.S. officials said were deficiencies in U.S. anti-submarine warfare capabilities—forces that are facing cuts under the Obama administration's plan to reduce defense spending by $487 billion over the next 10 years.
>
> The Navy is in charge of detecting submarines, especially those that sail near U.S. nuclear missile submarines, and uses undersea sensors and satellites to locate and track them.
>
> The fact that the Akula was not detected in the Gulf is cause for concern, U.S. officials said.
>
> The officials who are familiar with reports of the submarine patrol in the Gulf of Mexico said the vessel was a nuclear-powered Akula-class attack submarine, one of Russia's quietest submarines.
>
> […]Submarine warfare specialists say the Akula remains the core of the Russian attack submarine force.
>
> The submarines can fire both cruise missiles and torpedoes, and are equipped with the SSN-21 and SSN-27 submarine-launched cruise missiles, as well as SSN-15 anti-submarine-warfare missiles. The submarines also can lay mines.
>
> The SSN-21 has a range of up to 1,860 miles.

Why is this happening? Well, it might be because of Obama's policy of unilateral disarmament, appeasement and retreat.

> The Navy is facing sharp cuts in forces needed to detect and counter such

> submarine activity.
>
> The Obama administration's defense budget proposal in February cut $1.3 billion from Navy shipbuilding projects, which will result in scrapping plans to build 16 new warships through 2017.
>
> The budget also called for cutting plans to buy 10 advanced P-8 anti-submarine warfare jets needed for submarine detection.
>
> In June, Russian strategic nuclear bombers and support aircraft conducted a large-scale nuclear bomber exercise in the arctic. The exercise included simulated strikes on "enemy" strategic sites that defense officials say likely included notional attacks on U.S. missile defenses in Alaska.
>
> Under the terms of the 2010 New START arms accord, such exercises require 14-day advanced notice of strategic bomber drills, and notification after the drills end. No such notification was given.
>
> A second, alarming air incursion took place July 4 on the West Coast when a Bear H strategic bomber flew into U.S. airspace near California and was met by U.S. interceptor jets.
>
> That incursion was said to have been a bomber incursion that has not been seen since before the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

Is Obama really cutting defense? Consider this article from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The administration announces a leaner version of our military involving the cutting of tens of thousands of ground troops as a leading defense contractor closes a major plant due to budget cuts.
>
> In an unusual appearance at the Pentagon on Thursday, President Obama laid out his plans for a "leaner" military based on the need "to renew our economic strength here at home, which is the foundation of our strength in the world."
>
> In other words, failed domestic policies require us to cut our military in a dangerous world.
>
> […]**Defense cuts are already having a domestic effect. Boeing Co. announced Wednesday it will close its defense plant in Wichita, Kan., by the end of 2013, moving future aircraft maintenance, modification and support to other facilities.**
>
> **The closure, prompted by defense cuts, will cost 2,160 workers their jobs.**
>
> […]**A 14-page analysis by the Republican majority staff of the House Armed Services Committee says the cumulative cuts will result in the Army and Marines losing 200,000 troops.**
>
> **The Navy will shrink to 238 vessels from today's 300 and would lose two carrier battle groups needed to project American power and influence.**

> **Strategic bombers will fall from 153 to 101. Air Force fighters would drop by more than half, from 3,602 aircraft to 1,512 planes.**

I blogged more about the Obama administration's cuts to defense last week.

Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism

August 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One report says that the shooter was carrying 30 rounds of ammunition and multiple firearms. (UPDATE: He had two 15 round magazines and a 50 round box of ammunition. This was an attempted mass murder)

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A security guard at the Family Research Council's headquarters in Washington, D.C. is being hailed as a hero after he stopped a gunman posing as an intern, taking a bullet in the arm before wrestling the suspect to the ground.
>
> The gunman, identified as Floyd Lee Corkins II, 28, entered the lobby of the organization's Chinatown headquarters around 10:45 and expressed disagreement with the conservative group's policy positions, Fox News has learned. When the guard, who was not identified, asked him where he was going, he opened fire, according to police.
>
> "The security guard here is a hero, as far as I'm concerned," D.C. Police Chief Cathy Lanier said. "He did his job. The person never made it past the front."
>
> The guard, who was not identified, was shot in the arm and was conscious after the shooting and was in stable condition. Corkins was being questioned by the FBI, sources said. Sources said he lives in Herndon, Va.
>
> The suspect "made statements regarding their policies, and then opened fire with a gun striking a security guard," a source told Fox News. WJLA-TV7 reported the suspect was also shot.
>
> Sources also said the gunman may have been carrying a bag from Chick-fil-A, the embattled fast-food restaurant whose president came under fire from gay activists after he said he did not agree with same-sex marriage.
>
> Sources told Fox News that after guard took away his gun, the suspect said, "Don't shoot me, it was not about you, it was what this place stands for."
>
> Authorities were treating the attack as a case of domestic terrorism, although James McJunkin, the head of the FBI's Washington Field Office, said authorities do not yet know the gunman's motive.

The Washington Post has more on what the shooter said before opening fire.

Excerpt:

> A law enforcement official says a suspected gunman made a negative reference about the work of a conservative Christian lobbying group before shooting a

> security guard.
>
> The reference was made in a confrontation in the lobby of the Family Research Council in Washington Wednesday morning. The official said the suspect was not specific. The official would only speak on condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing.
>
> […]The Family Research Council strongly opposes gay marriage and abortion and says it advocates "faith, family and freedom in public policy and public opinion."

Let's re-cap a few recent incidents of violence and vandalism from the gay left, shall we?

Examples of violence committed by gay activists

From the liberal Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> A satellite church affiliated with controversial Seattle pastor Mark Driscoll was vandalized early Tuesday (April 24) and a group calling itself the "Angry Queers" has reportedly taken responsibility.
>
> Stained glass and other windows were broken at the Mars Hill Church, according to a post on the Facebook page of Pastor Tim Smith.
>
> "Neighbors of the church reported seeing several young adults in black masks throwing large rocks into the windows," a church news release said. "Police stated that a bank in the area was also vandalized in the same way and that they believe the vandalism was planned ahead of time, most likely by an activist group."
>
> On Tuesday, KPTV FOX 12 reported it had received an email from someone using the name "Angry Queers" and claiming responsibility.
>
> Mars Hill Portland opened last October. During the first service, protesters gathered in front of the church and yelled obscenities at worshipers to speak out against the church's stance on homosexuality.

Here are some things from the e-mails sent by the gay activist group that performed the attack:

> The group that allegedly smashed up a Portland church hopes its "small act of vengeance will strike fear into the hearts of" Christian leaders who teach traditional sexual morality, according to an e-mail message the group released to the public.
>
> A group calling itself "Angry Queers" has claimed responsibility for throwing baseball-sized rocks through nine church windows in Portland's Mars Hill Church, including two 100-year-old stained glass panes.
>
> Two versions of the e-mail have been sent to the media, one longer and slightly more incendiary than the other, but both apparently originating from the same group. In the longer version, the LGBT activists state they destroyed church

> property in the names of several local transgender people who have died, and "all other trans women" whose deaths they blame on "this cissexist, femmephobic, racist, andtransmisogynistic society."
>
> "Churches are a major contributor to the culture that deems trans women of color to be disposable, as not worth keeping alive," the statement read.
>
> The "brand of Christianity" taught by Mark Driscoll, pastor of the largest Mars Hill Church in Seattle, "crusades against the 'feminization' of Jesus," the e-mail stated. "We angry queers are not fans of Jesus, but we have a problem with anyone who has a problem with femmes."
>
> The e-mail, which is peppered with foul language, berates the Q Center, a local LGBT activist organization, for engaging in a dialogue with the Mars Hill's leadership. "What we have to say to the Q Center is this: F—K YOU, you don't represent us. You are disgusting traitors who prioritize social peace and the bourgeois aspirations of rich white cis gay people over the more pressing survival needs of more marginalized queers."
>
> "F—k dialog with people who want us dead," the e-mail read. "The only dialog we need with scum like Mars Hill is hammers through their windows."
>
> "We hope this small act of vengeance will strike some fear into the hearts of all of Mars Hill's pastors, and warm the hearts of our friends and comrades (known or unknown). It may not get better, but we can certainly get even," it concludes.
>
> […][A] commenter calling himself "Angry Queer" on a local homosexual website incited further vandalism, writing: "I hope some sexy, angry queers (like myself) smashed this s**t up and will continue to until Mars Hill cannot exist peacefully in Portland. There is no peace for queers — we are murdered, bashed and ridiculed every f**king day. To have some windows of a huge INSTITUTION THAT PERPETUATES AND BREEDS THE HELL WE LIVE IN EVERY DAY smashed is a small victory and a boost in morale."

This sort of thing also happened recently in Australia, as well.

From the Newcastle Herald (Australia).

Excerpt:

> Vandals attacked Wallsend Presbyterian Church last night in response to a message criticising same-sex marriage displayed on the building's outside notice board.
>
> The church on Nelson Street had updated its message board last week to read "Even tradies know you need both male and female joints to make a marriage".
>
> The front of the 1867 building, which recently received a $12,000 makeover, was defaced with messages such as ''sexuality is not a choice'' and ''love thy neighbour not hate gays''.
>
> Reverend Dr Ian Copland said the sign was a play on words and he wanted

> people to talk about the issue being raised in federal parliament.
>
> He said he has no regrets despite the outcome.
>
> ‘‘This is not going to stop me,’’ he said.
>
> Two bills to legalise same-sex marriage were introduced in Federal Parliament this week.
>
> ‘‘It’s obviously a reaction to the sign but I have no malice towards the vandals,’’ Rev Copland said.
>
> ‘‘It only takes one or two cowards you can’t blame the whole homosexual community. That would be wrong.’’
>
> This is not the first time the church has been attacked regarding its stance on same-sex marriage.
>
> The signboard was vandalised about six months ago when the reverend posted a similar message.

How often does it happen? Is it common?

Here’s what happened to pro-marriage donors in California.

Excerpt:

> Gay rights supporters, dressed in pink and black, stormed a Lansing, Mich., church during its services Nov. 9 throwing condoms, pulling the fire alarm and yelling such things as “It’s okay to be gay” and “Jesus was a homo.”
>
> One media account said two lesbians then went to the pulpit at Mount Hope Church where they began making out in front of the congregants, which included children.
>
> Police were called and the demonstration, sponsored by a group called Bash Back, ceased. The group is described as pro-homosexual and pro-anarchist. The group’s blog promoted its actions saying it was “targeting a well known anti-queer, anti-choice, radical right-wing establishment.”
>
> […]The incident is one of dozens reported in California and across the country in the aftermath of the passage of Proposition 8, which has prompted passionate protests nationwide. In California, cases of violence were reported even before the election. Post-election, the Mormon church has been a major target because its members donated millions to the cause.
>
> Catholics, including the Knights of Columbus, have also been targeted for their support.
>
> […]Mormon temples in Los Angeles and Salt Lake City, as well as the Knights of Columbus headquarters in New Haven, Conn., were sent suspicious looking white powder, reminiscent of the 2001 anthrax attacks and scares.
>
> At least eight Mormon buildings in Salt Lake have been vandalized with spray-painted epithets criticizing the church’s support of Proposition 8.

A group of young Christians with the Justice House of Prayer— meeting on a sidewalk for their weekly prayer session in San Francisco's Castro district—had to be escorted out of the area by police, some in riot gear, as an angry mob turned on them shouting, "Shame on You," blowing whistles and screaming profanities.

Marjorie Christoffersen, daughter of the owners of the Los Angeles restaurant El Coyote, left town after hundreds of protesters targeted her parent's eatery because she made a personal $100 contribution to the Yes on 8 fund. Police in riot gear were called to restore order. Gay rights activists also began a campaign to post negative restaurant reviews online. The restaurant employs several gays and lesbians who said they were taken aback by the protests.

A Palm Springs news crew captured an unruly protest group ripping an oversized cross from a woman's hands and then stomping on it. A reporter trying to interview the woman, Phyllis Burgess, about the incident had to move the woman to safety as the crowd encircled them while shouting.

Numerous blog sites reported that gay African-American men were the subject of racial slurs while trying to join the crowd in an anti-Proposition 8 protest. The men were targeted because exit polls showed a large amount of African-Americans supported Proposition 8. In one case a black man was warned to stay out of West Hollywood "if they knew what was best for them."

The artistic director of a Sacramento theater was forced to resign his post after donors, ticket holders and others protested outside the theater because the man, Scott Eckern, a 25-year employee of the venue donated $1,000 in his personal money to the Yes on 8 campaign. In a separate case reported at press time, the director for the Los Angeles Film Festival resigned under pressure from gay activists for donating $1,500 to Yes on 8. Richard Raddon, who tried unsuccessfully to resign several days earlier but was blocked by his supportive festival board, resubmitted his resignation when the berating calls and e-mails failed to cease.

[…]A Carlsbad man was arrested Nov. 3 for punching two elderly neighbors in the face after they confronted him about trespassing on their property to place a No on 8 sign in front of their Yes on 8 sign.

On election morning, a Carlsbad jogger was also attacked and bitten by a dog when he tried to stop two men from stealing a Yes on 8 sign. Several weeks ago police in that same city arrested at least two people for stealing Yes on 8 signs.

In Fresno, a prominent pastor, who had campaigned publicly for Proposition 8, received credible death threats that also targeted the mayor, another traditional marriage supporter. The threats were deemed credible enough for the police department to assign officers to protect the men. The church was also targeted for vandalism.

In Modesto, a Protect Marriage volunteer received 16 stitches under his eye after a man tried to steal his Yes on 8 signs outside a local church where he was

> waiting to distribute them after Mass.
>
> A week before the election, a San Jose couple, who posted a Yes on 8 sign in their front lawn, discovered that someone spray-painted “No on 8” on their car, their garage and the garage of their neighbor.
>
> Also in San Jose, vandals painted the back window of an SUV with the words “Bigot Live Here,” with an arrow pointing to a house boasting a Yes on 8 sign.
>
> In other areas of the state, cars were keyed, signs defaced and a block was thrown through the window of an elderly couple who displayed a Yes on 8 sign in their yard.

I have previously written about how the Human Rights Campaign gay rights group leaked the names and addresses of pro-marriage donors to the Huffington Post. In that post, I also list the corporations that support the Human Rights Campaign.

My secular case against same-sex marriage offered three reasons why people should oppose gay marriage apart from any religion. One of those reasons was the danger that gay activism poses to religious liberty and freedom of speech. I never in my life thought that it would go as far as what happened at the Family Research Council.

Related posts

- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue “hate” rhetoric
- The mainstream media’s biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism

Which companies might think that the Family Research Council is a “hate group”?

August 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council a “hate group”.

I found a list of companies on the Human Rights Campaign web site that are also strongly oppose traditional marriage, such as advocated by the Family Research Council, which was recently shot up by a man who volunteers at a gay community center.

Platinum Partners:

- American Airlines
- Citi
- Microsoft
- Nationwide Insurance
- VPI Pet Insurance

Gold Partners:

- Bank of America
- Deloitte
- Ernst & Young LLP
- Lexus
- Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams
- Prudential

Silver Partners:

- Beaulieu Vineyard
- BP
- Caesars Entertainment
- Chevron
- Google
- MGM Mirage
- Nike

Bronze Partners:

- Chase
- Cox Enterprises
- Cunard
- Dell
- Goldman Sachs
- IBM

- Macy’s Inc.
- MetLife
- Morgan Stanley
- Orbitz
- Paul Hastings
- PwC
- Replacements, Ltd.
- Shell
- Starbucks
- TD Bank
- Tylenol PM

And you can find the full listing of companies that promote discrimination against traditional marriage on the Human Rights Campaign web site. I notice that they have about 1 million people who like them on Facebook and 85 thousand Twitter followers.

Related posts

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- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council “hate group”
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Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"

August 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Red State, an e-mail from the Human Rights Campaign, the leading gay activist group in the nation. This e-mail is from after the shooting.

The e-mail says: (in full)

> I have a great deal of admiration for you and like watching you on CNN. These Tweets are beneath you.
>
> It's really unseemly to insinuate — in any way — that HRC had anything to do with the violence that occurred today at FRC.
>
> **FRC IS a hate group.** It's not HRC that calls them that; it's the Southern Poverty Law Center that has classified them as such – years ago. Have you seen the things that FRC says about gay people? I think if you did you wouldn't be so quick to associate yourself with them:
>
> http://www.glaad.org/cap/tony-perkins
>
> http://www.glaad.org/cap/peter-sprigg
>
> I'm more than happy to have a dialogue with you on the issue but would ask that you not make irresponsible connections that are completely illogical.

And now we have a shooting by a far-left activist at the Family Research Council.

Should the Human Rights Campaign be charged, under the Obama administrations new hate speech laws, with inciting violence against the Family Research Council? Would the Obama administration make such a charge? What exactly does the rhetoric of the Human Rights Campaign about tolerance amount to, anyway?

My secular case against same-sex marriage offered three reasons why people should oppose gay marriage apart from any religion. One of those reasons was the danger that gay activism poses to religious liberty and freedom of speech. I never in my life thought that it would go as far as what happened at the Family Research Council.

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Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council “hate group”

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From CBN News.

Excerpt:

> Wednesday’s shooting at the headquarters of the Family Research Council, a group known for standing for conservative and Christian values, is raising debate about the rhetoric surrounding hot topic issues like gay marriage.
>
> In 2010, the Southern Poverty Law Center labeled the Family Research Council a ‘hate group,’ alongside neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan members, black separatists, and others.
>
> The SPLC said it put the conservative group on the list not because the FRC believes homosexuality is wrong, but for “the propagation of known falsehoods in an effort to defame gay people.”
>
> “I don’t expect everyone to agree with some of the things that we assert about the homosexual lifestyle, but we do present evidence in support of those assertions, and they are certainly not falsehoods or fabrications,” FRC Senior Fellow for Policy Studies Peter Sprigg said in defense.
>
> “If somebody is labeled a hate group, it means that you not only are saying that what they argue is wrong, but you are claiming to know their motives,” he continued.

And now we have a shooting by a far-left activist at the Family Research Council.

Should the Southern Poverty Law Center be charged, under the Obama administrations new hate speech laws, with inciting violence against the Family Research Council? Would the Obama administration make such a charge? What exactly does the rhetoric of the Southern Poverty Law Center about tolerance amount to, anyway?

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White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting

August 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News. (H/T Wes)

Excerpt:

> The White House is coming under criticism from pro-life advocates for not issuing a condemnation of the shooting of a security guard at the offices of the Family Research Council, a pro-life group.
>
> UPDATE: Not until after 6:30 p.m. ET did the White House respond. Obama finally commented, saying "this type of violence has no place in our society."
>
> Meanwhile, CNN took hours to finally issue a report on the shooting and it provided no live coverage of it as other television networks did. Hours later, CNN tweeted, "Shooting wounds guard at Family Research Council. on.cnn.com/OYEXq9."
>
> Several conservatives bemoaned the late coverage, as Twitchy noted: "Disgusting…FYI It's not breaking news two hours later" and "Oh? Look who decided to "break" some news."
>
> Conservative writer Mary Katherine Ham writes: "There is no mention of the shooting on either CNN's Twitter feed or its website as of 1:52 p.m. EST. The bullpen at Townhall.com has been watching CNN coverage since the time of the shooting and has seen no mention of it. The shooting news is on MSNBC's website."

Wes also sent me this comparison of the FRC shooting coverage by Fox News with the coverage of MSNBC.

This isn't the first time that the left-wing news media has done this.

Excerpt:

> According to published reports, when Larry Brinkin was arrested two weeks ago, the police found… [CENSORED BY WK]. Yet the media has barely reported this terribly disturbing incident.
>
> But, you ask, who was Larry Brinkin? He was "a central figure in the gay rights movement," a man who was so influential that, "The San Francisco board of supervisors actually gave a 'Larry Brinkin Week' in February 2010 upon his retirement." It was Brinkin who first used the term "domestic partnerships" in a legal dispute, marking a watershed moment in gay activist history, yet news of his alleged crimes against infants and children, not to mention his alleged White Supremacist leanings, has received very little media attention.
>
> Is there a double standard here? Imagine what the media would be doing if

> Brinkin had been a conservative Christian leader.
>
> When evangelical leader Ted Haggard fell, the media was quick to pounce, suggesting that this exposed the corrupt nature of evangelical Christianity as a whole. And media leaders have done this repeatedly whenever there has been a scandal connected to an evangelical (or Catholic) leader, and the news is blared from the headlines. But where, I ask you, is the outrage or the front page news when a gay leader commits atrocities such as those allegedly committed by Larry Brinkin? And why isn't the media claiming that Brinkin's transgressions expose the corrupt nature of gay activism as a whole?
>
> The failure of a Christian leader is considered endemic and representative; the failure of a gay leader is considered an aberrant exception. Why the unequal treatment?
>
> […]The answer is that Brinkin's arrest has received relatively little media attention because he was a gay activist leader, not a conservative Christian leader, and there is no hiding the mainstream media's pro-gay, anti-conservative Christian bias. And because Brinkin's arrest has not been widely reported, the general public has not been confronted afresh with the horrors of child pornography.
>
> […]Brinkin, for his part, was no smalltime player, with the San Francisco Examiner describing him as an "iconic San Francisco gay activist who brought the nation's first domestic partnership lawsuit in 1982." And he was, after all, a respected, long-term leader within the Human Rights Campaign, the world's largest gay activist organization. Why hasn't the HRC been tarred and feathered the way evangelicals (or Catholics) are after one of their leaders falls? Why the inconsistency?

I reported on the Larry Brinkin scandal in a previous post.

We expect the left-wing media to be biased. Studies and surveys have shown that they cannot be trusted to tell the truth about the news. But the Obama administration? Aren't they supposed to represent all the people.

Consider this article from Hans Bader, at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> Discrimination and politically-correct blinders can be deadly. It was obvious in the aftermath of the Fort Hood shootings that the killer was inspired by Islamic extremism. Obvious, that is, to anyone but officials in the Obama administration, who continue to cling tightly to a culture of political correctness and preferential treatment that helped make the shootings possible.
>
> Nidal Hasan shot dead 12 soldiers and a civilian at Fort Hood, while shouting "Allahu Akbar." But the Obama administration's inquiry into the shootings falsely suggested Islamic extremism was not a factor in the shootings. Its report on the Fort Hood massacre did not even "mention the words 'Islam' or 'Muslim' once,"

> referring to the killer simply as the "alleged perpetrator." Instead, it claimed the tragedy resulted from "bureaucratic shortcomings" in the "sharing of information."
>
> […]The shooter's Islamic extremism was obvious. Prior to the shooting, he had said that Muslims should rise up against the military, "repeatedly expressed sympathy for suicide bombers," was pleased by the terrorist murder of an army recruiter, and engaged in hate-speech against non-Muslims, publicly calling for the beheading or burning of non-Muslims, and talking "about how if you're a nonbeliever the Koran says you should have your head cut off, you should have oil poured down your throat, you should be set on fire." "In addition, Hasan openly had suggested revenge as a defense for the 9/11 attacks, defended Osama bin Laden, and said his allegiance to his religion was greater than his allegiance to the constitution."
>
> But the military did nothing to remove him from a position where he could harm others. Although his views were common knowledge, "a fear of appearing discriminatory . . . kept officers from filing a formal written complaint," the Associated Press noted. Moreover, "a key official on a review committee reportedly asked how it might look to terminate a key resident who happened to be a Muslim," as NPR noted. Instead, the military effectively exempted Hasan from rules of conduct that apply to everyone else, in order to promote its conception of "diversity."
>
> As military attorney Thomas Kenniff notes, there was a climate of "obsessive political correctness" in the military. As Major Shawn Keller pointed out, in a column entitled "An Officer's Outrage Over Fort Hood." "There was no shortage of warning signs that Hasan identified more with Islamic Jihadists than he did with the US Army. . .But just like September 11, those agencies and individuals charged with keeping America and Americans safe failed to connect the dots that would have saved lives. Jihadist rhetoric espoused by Hasan was categorically dismissed out of submissiveness to the concepts of tolerance and diversity. . . . the leaders in Hasan's chain-of-command failed to act . . . out of fear of being labeled anti-Muslim and receiving a negative evaluation report."
>
> Indeed, even after the shootings, government officials worried more about the fate of "diversity" than about the lives of their troops: "Our diversity, not only in our Army, but in our country, is a strength," Army Chief of Staff George Casey told NBC's Meet the Press. "And as horrific as this tragedy was, if our diversity becomes a casualty, I think that's worse," Casey said.

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Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center

August 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Associated Press. (H/T Legal Insurrection)

Excerpt:

> A man suspected of shooting and wounding a security guard at the headquarters of a Christian lobbying group on Wednesday made a negative reference about the organization's work before opening fire, a law enforcement official said.
>
> Police said the man entered the front lobby of the Family Research Council in Washington around 10:45 a.m. Wednesday, began arguing with a security guard and then shot him in the arm. The gunman was subdued by the guard and others and taken into custody but had not been charged as of Wednesday evening.
>
> Another law enforcement official identified the suspect as Floyd Corkins II, and authorities were interviewing Corkins' neighbors in Herndon, Va., near Washington. Both officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation.
>
> Corkins, 28, had been volunteering recently at a community center for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.
>
> The Family Research Council strongly opposes gay marriage and abortion and says it advocates "faith, family and freedom in public policy and public opinion."
>
> Corkins made a negative comment about the organization before the shooting, but the reference was not specific, one of the law enforcement officials said.
>
> […]Corkins had been volunteering for about the past 6 months at The DC Center for the LGBT Community, said David Mariner, executive director of the community center, which is in Northwest Washington. He usually staffed the center's front desk on Saturdays, and his most recent shift was about two weeks ago.
>
> […]"Today's attack is the clearest sign we've seen that labeling pro-marriage groups as 'hateful' must end," Brian Brown, the president of the National Organization for Marriage, said in a statement.

In my previous post on the shooting, I listed some examples of the violence and vandalism committed by gay activists against those who believe that every child should have a mother and a father to take care of them as they grow up. (That's "hate speech", according to many gay activists) I also pointed out in that post that the Human Rights Campaign leaked the names of pro-family donors to the Huffington Post. Incidentally, the Human Rights Campaign labels the Family Research Council as a "hate group". The Southern Poverty Law Center says that the Family Research Council is a "hate group". I

wonder if Floyd Corkins II also agrees with them that the Family Research Council is a "hate group"?

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The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting

August 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Newsbusters.

Excerpt:

> ABC was the only broadcast network that offered a full story on the FRC office shooting on Wednesday night. They led with the story and gave it two and a half minutes. None of the network newscasts reported the breaking detail that shooter Floyd Corkins volunteered for six months at the D.C. Center for the LGBT Community, adding depth to his political motivation.
>
> On NBC Nightly News, Brian Williams gave the story just 17 seconds: "In Washington today, police say a man with a gun walked into the offices of the conservative lobbying group the Family Research Council, and opened fire. He never made it past the lobby. He shot a security guard in the arm before the guard was able to subdue him."
>
> On CBS Evening News, substitute anchor Bob Schieffer offered 20 seconds: "A gunman opened fire today at the Washington headquarters of the Family Research Council, a conservative Christian lobbying group. The man shot a security guard in the arm before that guard and others tackled him, and he was arrested. Police say that the suspect made negative comment about the council's work just before the shooting."
>
> […]On both NBC and CBS, the FRC brief was followed by a full story promoting President Obama's new deferral program for illegal alien "Dream Act" students. NBC gave that two minutes, CBS two minutes and fifty seconds.

I think the lesson here is that you shouldn't let the mainstream media be your only source of news. It would be interesting to compare their views of the Family Research Council to the views of the shooter, to see how much difference there really is between them.

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Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue “hate” rhetoric

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Here’s an excellent post from Sooper Mexican, one of my new favorite blogs – he looks at what the Daily Kos and leftists on Twitter are saying about social conservatives in the wake of the shooting. (H/T Bad Blue)

Excerpt:

> If we applied the same principle they apply to shootings to the left, we’d no doubt find plenty to blame, including the headline above at Daily Kos, the leftwing hate group that calls the Tea Party the **“American Taliban”** on a regular basis, even though, they probably believe Christians and Tea Partiers are **much worse** than the Taliban.
>
> Here are some inflammatory sections from the article [emphasis added]:
>
> Well, it’s a radical country where a guy can put his head on another guy’s shoulder on a trolley for two seconds and **not face public execution for it,** which sounds pretty good to me. I understand some people are working to change that, though.
>
> Accusing the FRC of wanting gays to be **publicly executed.**
>
> All of those people, though, are people whose mere presence pisses Tony Perkins off. His branding would be more like “America: We won’t **stone you for having different beliefs,**but trust me, we’re working on it.” And trust me, they’re working on it.
>
> They refer to Muslims and Hindus, so they accuse the FRC of wanting Muslims and Hindus to be stoned. Amazingly, they don’t have much anger over people in the Middle East who are actually doing such things. Only those they imagine to be advocating such when they’re not.
>
> […]Doesn’t take much to think someone could read this kind of rhetoric and believe the FRC so evil that they need to be **taught a lesson.** But that would be jumping to conclusions, and that only works when it’s against Christians and the Tea Party.
>
> Don’t believe me? Newsbusters documents how Huffington Post continued to smear the Family Research Council by calling it a hate group **3 hours after the shooting.**

If you can stomach it, click on through and read some of the tweets on Twitter from people on the left.

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More details of the Family Research Council shooting from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The suspect, a 28-year-old male from Virginia named Floyd Lee Corkins II, said, "Don't shoot me, it was not about you, it was what this place stands for." AP later confirmed that Corkins is a liberal activist who volunteers with a left-wing group in the D.C. area.
>
> Now, Corkins has been charged with assault with intent to kill and with bringing a firearm across state lines. According to an FBI affidavit, Corkins allegedly said words to the effect of "I don't like your politics" when he encountered Johnson.
>
> "The FBI said Corkins had 15 Chick-fil-A sandwiches, a Sig Sauer 9mm pistol, two additional magazines loaded with ammunition and an additional box of 50 rounds of ammunition when he came into the building," according to a report on the FBI intel. "His parents told the FBI that Corkins "has strong opinions with respect to those he believes do not treat homosexuals in a fair manner."
>
> Corkins definitely comes from the left side of the political spectrum.
>
> According to the Washington Post: "Allan P. Chan, 28, a former George Mason student, said he met Corkins at a campus gym about six years ago. They worked out together, lifting weights, and began to socialize and watch television together. Chan described Corkins as secretive and somewhat odd. Corkins's Facebook page included no photos, not even his own, and he displayed an intense interest in the 19th-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche."

Militant atheism may also be a factor in the shooter's motives. Nietzsche is the well-known atheist philosopher who decried the "slave morality" of Christianity and proclaimed "God is dead". The shooter in the Garielle Giffords case (Jared Lee Loughner) was a militant atheist. Militant atheists like Richard Dawkins and the American Atheists group have even called for the eradication of Christianity. But the vast majority of atheists are not violent.

On the other hand, aggressive violence is forbidden to authentic Bible-believing Christians because Jesus did not shed anyone's blood. Authentic Christians debate and persuade using evidence, because that's what Jesus did. The most we could do is participate in a just war like the Korean War or the Gulf War. Christians stopped slavery. Christians save unborn babies. We're for strict non-violence.

American Power Blog has more on the left's continued smearing of the Family Research Council as a "hate group":

> More from Kerry Picket, "Human Rights Campaign posted Ryan would speak at 'hate group's annual conference' day before shooting at FRC." And At Twitchy, "Dangerous: Left screeched about Ryan speaking at 'hate group' FRC; HuffPo labels FRC hate group again." And, "Shooting at Family Research Council, suspect in custody; Update: Bomb squad enters building; Update: Mitt Romney issues statement; Update: Shooter ID'd."
>
> More at Legal Insurrection, "HuffPo attacks Family Research Council just hours after shooting."

At this point, I think that anyone who uses the word "hate" to describe supporters of traditional marriage should be careful that they are not inciting anyone to violence. We have to do more to promote tolerance and oppose anti-Christian / anti-conservative bigotry on the extreme left. Almost no one on the right calls people who disagree with them names like "hater". We need to stop with the name-calling and just discuss things civilly and agree to disagree. Every person deserves respect no matter what they think.

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Liberal media bias: what the studies and surveys tell us

August 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the wake of the Family Research Council shooting, I thought it was important to review the evidence we have about media bias in the mainstream media.

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44%

> positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the

> left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

And here's a bit from that same article about The New Yorker:

> The last bulwark against bias's slipping into The New Yorker is the copy department, whose chief editor, Ann Goldstein, gave $500 in October to MoveOn.org, which campaigns for Democrats and against President Bush. "That's just me as a private citizen," she said. As for whether donations are allowed, Goldstein said she hadn't considered it. "I've never thought of myself as working for a news organization."

Those are the facts.

So what?

Now consider this column from Brent Bozell, which explains the difference media bias makes to political intelligence.

Excerpt:

> The Republican presidential contest is picking up steam. Obama is consistently polling under 50 percent. This one's a toss-up, and in the thick of it is the Fox News Channel. It's not just their role in hosting and vetting the candidates. It's their role as the chief villain in the eyes of liberal Democrats struggling to push their version of the "truth" about Obama.
>
> Jon Stewart rhetorically asked Chris Wallace about Fox on "Fox News Sunday, because he thought he knew the answer: "Who are the most consistently misinformed media viewers? The most consistently misinformed? Fox, Fox viewers, consistently, every poll."
>
> In the real world – outside Stewart's smug bubble – this is garbage. A 2008 survey by the Pew Research Center asked media consumers three questions: which party was in control of Congress (Democrats), who was the secretary of state (Condi Rice) and who was the prime minister of Britain (Gordon Brown).
>
> Let's document how the viewers of "Hannity &Colmes" were better informed than Stewart's "Daily Show" gigglers on basic political facts. Hannity viewers beat Stewart's on the Democratic majority (84 percent to 65 percent correct answers), Condi Rice (a dramatic 73 percent to 48 percent gap) and Gordon Brown (49 percent to 36). Overall, as a percentage getting all three questions

> right, Hannity won 42-30.

Just keep that in mind when you are watching the mainstream media news shows. A very good site to bookmark and read is Newsbusters, which documents mainstream media bias daily. I even have an RSS feed of their latest stories on the front page on this blog.

UPDATE: New York Times cites abortion advocates as neutral sources.

William Lane Craig debates Peter Atkins: Does God Exist?

August 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that Apologetics 315 posted the video of a debate from the Reasonable Faith speaking tour in the UK:

This is a must-see debate. You will love this debate. LOVE IT. I LOVED THIS DEBATE.

Details:

> On Wednesday 26th October 2011 William Lane Craig debated Peter Atkins on the topic: *Does God Exist?* This debate took place at the University of Manchester as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig. The debate was chaired by Christopher Whitehead, Head of Chemistry School at the University. Post-debate discussion was moderated by Peter S Williams, Philosopher in Residence at the Damaris Trust, UK.

Dr. William Lane Craig:

> **William Lane Craig** (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich in 1984.

Dr. Peter Atkins:

> **Peter William Atkins** (born 10 August 1940) is a British chemist and former Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Lincoln College. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.
>
> Atkins studied chemistry at the University of Leicester, obtaining a bachelor's

> degree in chemistry, and – in 1964 – a PhD for research into electron spin resonance spectroscopy, and other aspects of theoretical chemistry. Atkins then took a postdoctoral position at the UCLA as aHarkness Fellow of the Commonwealth fund. He returned to Oxford in 1965 as fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, and lecturer in physical chemistry (later, professor of physical chemistry).

You can get the audio of the debate here, along with links to their previous debate from 1998. This debate is accessible and understandable to novice-level Christians.

I am happy when debates like this come out. I have friends who are Christians who doubt the importance of apologetics in evangelism, because they don't think that apologists can prove anything or win arguments. I have friends who are skeptical of using arguments that assume a 14-billion year old universe, because they think that the Big Bang is compatible with atheism (!). I have friends who think that philosophical arguments have no persuasive force. I have friends who think that nothing can be proven from history, beyond a reasonable doubt. I have co-workers who ask me whether anyone wins these debates. I think that this debate answers all of those questions.

This debate clearly shows why Christians should not shy away from studying science, philosophy and history. We will not discover anything that harms Christian theism by thinking logically and by looking at the evidence. To the contrary, it is the atheist who makes war on the progress of science, and who is forced to resist the clear experimental evidence, and to resort to baseless speculations and blind faith. If you want to see a good debate with an intelligent atheist, I recommend watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican instead. But if you want to see a really, really overwhelming defeat for atheism, watch this debate. It is very clear at the end of this debate why Richard Dawkins refused to debate William Lane Craig at Oxford.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING SPEECHES

I only had time to summarize the first two speeches. Keep in mind that Dr. Craig always shines in his rebuttals, and this debate is no different. So you'll want to watch those rebuttals. Dr. Atkins *literally* says in this debate in his first rebuttal "There was nothing here originally. There is nothing here now. But it is an interesting form of nothing which seems to be something." And the audience laughs nervously. This debate is like that. You will see a clear winner and clear loser in this debate. This fight is decided by knockout.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

1. the origin of the universe
2. the moral argument
3. the resurrection of Jesus

Peter Atkins opening speech:

1. Dr. Craig is stupid, lazy and evil:
– Dr. Craig's arguments are old: from the 11th century! Old arguments can't be true
– Dr. Craig is just asserting that "God did it" because he is lazy

– Dr. Craig feels pressured to agree with the theistic majority
– Dr. Craig needs a psychological crutch to comfort him
– Dr. Craig is fearful of death
– Dr. Craig is just wishing for an eternal life of bliss
– Dr. Craig is driven by his heart, and not by his head

2. Origin of the universe:
– Maybe the universe is eternal and has no beginning – we don't know
– Maybe mommy universes can give birth to daughter universes
– It is naive to think that a cause is needed to cause the creation of the universe from nothing
– Science is just about to show how it is possible that something appears out of nothing without cause
– Some scientists have already begun to speculate about about how something can come into being out of nothing
– Maybe nothing is not really nothing, but it is actually something
– It would be admitting defeat to say that God created the universe out of nothing

3. Fine-Tuning:
– It could be the case that the fundamental constants are not variable
– It could be the case that the fine-tuning of the cosmic constants is a happy accident
– It could be the case that there are billions of billions of unobservable universes that are not fine tuned
– It could be the case that the cosmic constants in these billions and billions of unobservable universes are all random so that some are fine-tuned
– Anyone who infers that an intelligence is the best explanation of a finely-tuned set of life-permitting cosmic constants is lazy

4. Purpose:
– Philosophers and theologians are stupid
– I don't think that there is purpose in the universe
– I think that the universe is more grand if there is no purpose, so there is no purpose

5. Miracles:
– I don't think that miracles happen
– The resurrection is a fabrication
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't exist
– It could be the case that Jesus wasn't really crucified
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't really die after being crucified
– It could be the case that the disciples stole his body
– It could be the case that the women went to the wrong hole in the ground
– the gospels are political propaganda written long after the events they are reporting on

6. Theodicy:
– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing humans to perform actions that result in suffering

– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing nature to cause suffering

7. Morality:

– customs and conventions emerges arbitrarily in different times and places based on an awareness of the consequences of actions, as well as various anecdotes and experiences

– these customs and conventions are decided based on the goal for survival, in much the same way as politeness and manners emerge for decorum and to avoid offense

– it is childish to presume that there is an umpire God who decides moral values and duties

8. Religious believers are stupid, lazy and evil:

– the notion of God has arisen because people are stupid and want to be comforted

– there are no arguments or evidences for belief in God

– people who believe in God do not think, but instead take refuge in incomprehensible nonsense

Arizona governor Jan Brewer blocks welfare payments for illegal immigrants

August 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Blaze.

Excerpt:

> Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer on Wednesday ordered state agencies to deny driver's licenses and other public benefits to young illegal immigrants who obtain work authorizations under a new Obama administration policy.
>
> In an executive order, Brewer said she was reaffirming the intent of current Arizona law denying taxpayer-funded public benefits and state identification to illegal immigrants.
>
> Young illegal immigrants around the nation on Wednesday began the process of applying for federal work permits under the Obama administration's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.
>
> The federal policy defers deportations for that group if they meet certain criteria, including arrival in the United States before they turned 16 and no convictions for certain crimes.
>
> After President Barack Obama announced the policy change in June, Brewer labeled it "backdoor amnesty" and political pandering by the Democratic president.

The governor's action is a response to the Obama administration declaration of amnesty for 1.8 million illegal immigrants under the so called "DREAM Act". The declaration of amnesty is a transparent attempt to buy votes from Hispanic voters while passing the costs on to the law-abiding taxpayers.

I favor more green cards for skilled legal immigrants with marketable skills who are able to avoid crime for a period of a few years.

Guillermo Gonzalez lectures at UC Davis on the requirements for life

August 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The 5 video clips that make up the full lecture.

The playlist for all 5 clips is here.

About the speaker

> Guillermo Gonzalez is an Associate Professor of Physics at Grove City College. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington and has received fellowships, grants and awards from such institutions as NASA, the University of Washington, the Templeton Foundation, Sigma Xi (scientific research society) and the National Science Foundation.

Learn more about the speaker here.

The lecture

Here's part 1 of 5:

Habitability topics:

- What is the Copernican Principle?
- Is the Earth's suitability for hosting life rare in the universe?
- Does the Earth have to be the center of the universe to be special?
- How similar to the Earth does a planet have to be to support life?
- What is the definition of life?
- What are the three minimal requirements for life of any kind?
- Requirement 1: A molecule that can store information (carbon)
- Requirement 2: A medium in which chemicals can interact (liquid water)
- Requirement 3: A diverse set of chemical elements
- What is the best environment for life to exist?
- Our place in the solar system: the circumstellar habitable zone
- Our place in the galaxy: the galactic habitable zones
- Our time in the universe's history: the cosmic habitable age
- Other habitability requirements (e.g. – metal-rich star, massive moon, etc.)
- The orchestration needed to create a habitable planet
- How different factors depend on one another through time
- How tweaking one factor can adversely affect other factors
- How many possible places are there in the universe where life could emerge?
- Given these probabilistic resources, should we expect that there is life elsewhere?
- How to calculate probabilities using the "Product Rule"

- Can we infer that there is a Designer just because life is rare? Or do we need more?

The corelation between habitability and measurability.

- Are the habitable places in the universe also the best places to do science?
- Do the factors that make Earth habitable also make it good for doing science?
- Some places and times in the history of the universe are more habitable than others
- Those exact places and times also allow us to make scientific discoveries
- Observing solar eclipses and structure of our star, the Sun
- Observing stars and galaxies
- Observing the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Observing the acceleration of the universe caused by dark matter and energy
- Observing the abundances of light elements like helium of hydrogen
- These observations support the big bang and fine-tuning arguments for God's existence
- It is exactly like placing observatories on the tops of mountains
- There are observers existing in the best places to observe things
- This is EXACTLY how the universe has been *designed for making scientific discoveries*

This lecture was delivered by Guillermo Gonzalez in 2007 at the University of California at Davis.

What is intelligent design?

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer explains the concept of intelligent design in a lecture, with lots of visual aids.

He is also the author of "Signature in the Cell", the best book on intelligent design. (A Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year selection)

Related DVDs

Illustra also made two other great DVDs on intelligent design. The first two DVDs "Unlocking the Mystery of Life" and "The Privileged Planet" are must-buys, but you can watch them on youtube if you want, for free.

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

I also recommend "Darwin's Dilemma". All three of these are on sale from Amazon.com.

Friday night movie: The Crossing (2000)

August 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.7/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> The drama is about George Washington crossing the Delaware River and the Battle of Trenton during the American Revolutionary War. The film opens with the retreat of the Continental Army across New Jersey after repeated losses and defeats during the campaign of 1776.
>
> After the army narrowly escapes across the river to the Pennsylvania shore, Washington, realizing that something must be done or the Revolution will collapse, conceives a plan to cross the river and conduct a surprise attack on the Hessian garrison at Trenton.
>
> Despite their own fatigue and the winter weather, Washington manages to lift his weary soldiers' spirits, allowing the army to cross the river on Christmas night. The crossing is done in one night, allowing the troops to attack Trenton at eight o' clock on December 26, 1776.

I own the DVD of this movie.

If anyone reading this blog wants to understand the true character of America, a very good thing to do is to read the book "1776" by David McCullough. It covers all of the events leading up to the crucial turning point of the American Revolution: the Battle of Trenton on December 26, 1776. I really recommend the audio version of the book. David McCullough also wrote the famous biography of John Adams which was shown on HBO, then turned into a DVD series.

Here's a quick history of the American Revolution preceding the Battle of Trenton:

> **September 1774**: Delegates from each colony met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in order to form the First Continental Congress. It was designed to discuss colonial grievances.
>
> **April 1775**: Battles of Lexington and Concord: An organized Massachusetts militia ("Minutemen") defended colonial munitions and forced British regulars to retreat back to Boston. Mother England was stunned.
>
> **May 1775**: The Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
>
> **June 1775**: The Continental Congress appointed George Washington as commander-in-chief of its newly established Continental Army. Soon after, British troops achieved victory at the Battle of Bunker (Breed's) Hill but suffered severe

casualties during three assaults against the determined colonial troops.

March 1776: Washington commanded the American siege that eventually forced the British to evacuate Boston. The British departed by sea for Halifax.

April 1776: The Continental Army left Boston and moved south to take a defensive position in New York anticipating a British landing. Washington had hoped to keep the British from occupying this locale. New York was a familiar base of operations from the French and Indian War. The colony of New York also had a strong Loyalist population. Additionally, the force which occupied New York would be centrally located and therefore able to keep New England cut off from the south.

July 1776: The Declaration of Independence, adopted by the Second Continental Congress, officially severed American ties to Great Britain.

Summer of 1776: Though the American were successful at making a worthy stand at Lexington and Concord as well as in Boston, they soon discovered that this was only the beginning as 30,000 British troops (including their Hessians allies) arrived in New York harbor. The next few months were filled with disastrous defeats and demoralizing retreats.

August 27-30 1776: The British win the Battle of Long Island (Battle of Brooklyn)

September 15, 1776: The British occupy New York City

September 16, 1776: The British win the Battle of Harlem Heights

October 28, 1776: The American army retreats at the Battle of White Plains

November 16, 1776: The British capture Fort Washington, NY

November 20, 1776: Fort Lee, NJ falls to the British

December 1, 1776: Washington's troops retreated past New Brunswick, New Jersey and headed toward Princeton with the British following closely behind.

December 7-8, 1776: Washington's army crossed into Pennsylvania from Trenton. They were deployed to guard the River for a 25 miles stretch. All boats remained with Washington's army, making it impossible for the British to follow.

December 9, 1776: "All shops ordered to be shut; the militia to march into the Jerseys; all in hurry and confusion; news that General Howe is on his march…." Washington ordered, "Spare no pains or expense to get intelligence about the enemy's motions and intentions."

December 12, 1776: The Continental Congress abandons Philadelphia as they fear the British approaching.

December 13, 1776: Washington received the news that General Charles Lee was taken prisoner by the British at White's Tavern in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. Lee's troops were slowly marching to meet Washington when Lee made a personal side trip which caused his capture. With the loss of Lee, some assumed

> that America would be forced into complete surrender as he was considered a highly valuable soldier.
>
> [British commander] Howe announced that his campaigning season was over and he intended to winter in New York. Cornwallis intended to return to England for the winter, and, like Howe, he departed from the troops.
>
> **December 14, 1776**: Col. Johann Rall's (known as the Hessian Lion) regiment was left in Trenton as one of a loosely connected string of outposts which was to guard the king's subjects in New Jersey and keep watch against an American raid. 1500 troops were stationed at this location while the bulk of the British army wintered in New York.
>
> **December 19, 1776**: "The American Crisis" was published in Philadelphia. Thomas Paine wrote… *These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it NOW deserves the love and thanks of man and woman*.
>
> This essay rekindled the American people's desire for independence and renewed the spirit of the troops.
>
> **December 20-22, 1776**: Taking Lee's place as commander, General John Sullivan delivered Lee's remaining troops to Washington in Pennsylvania.
>
> **December 21, 1776**: The Hessians thought little of the Americans, but they thought even less of their strategic position in Trenton. Thought criticized for not constructing defensive works, Rall felt Trenton was next to impossible to defend. He stated his concerns about his position as well as his troops fatigue to his British Commanders.
>
> Rall's regiment remained alert and concerned as to their tenuous position. They intended not to remain in Trenton but rather wait for the Delaware River to freeze allowing the Hessian troops to march across the frozen river and directly toward Philadelphia.

As you can see from the timeline, Washington has been losing battle after battle leading up to Christmas of 1776. His troops are tired, ill-equipped, sick and they must be released at the beginning of 1777 when their contract is up. Many have deserted already. What will George Washington do? Is this the end of the American Revolution? Watch the movie, and find out. Then read David McCullough's book!

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: The Great Escape (1963)
- Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)
- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)

- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Iran’s dictator Ahmadinejad: Israel’s existence is an “insult to all humanity”

August 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East
From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said confronting Israel is an effort to “protect the dignity of all human beings”.

> “The existence of the Zionist regime is an insult to all humanity,” Ahmadinejad said. He was addressing worshippers at Tehran University after nationwide pro-Palestinian rallies, an annual event marking Quds (Jerusalem) Day on the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan.

> Israel considers Iran an existential threat because of its nuclear and missile programs, support for radical anti-Israel groups on its borders and repeated references by Iranian leaders to Israel’s destruction. Ahmadinejad himself has repeatedly made such calls, as has Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.
>
> […]Ahmadinejad called Israel “a corrupt, anti-human organized minority group standing up to all divine values”.
>
> “Today, confronting the existence of the fabricated Zionist regime is in fact protecting the rights and dignity of all human beings,” said Ahmadinejad, with a black and white scarf many Palestinians wear around his neck.
>
> Demonstrators in Tehran set U.S. and Israeli flags on fire and chanted “Death to the US” and “Death to Israel” during their pro-Palestinian rally.

> Iran and Israel have been bitter enemies for decades. Khamenei has called Israel a “cancerous tumor” that must be wiped out.
>
> Tensions between Iran and Israel have intensified since 2005, when Ahmadinejad said in a speech that Israel will one day be “wiped off the map.” The Iranian president has also described the Holocaust, when 6 million Jews were killed by German Nazis and their collaborators during World War II, as a “myth”.

Do you think that Barack Obama is going to do anything about this? He has done nothing whatsoever to protect Israel in four years. And more, he’s actually acted to embolden Iran. When he had the chance to speak out in favor of pro-democracy movements in Iran, he chose the Iranian theocrats instead. Defense analysts have speculated that the Obama administration leaked Israel’s plan to strike the Iranian nuclear facilities.

Mark Levin interviewed a former Marine strike planner who had this to say about the leak:

> I just want to comment on this revelation by the State Department regarding this Israel-Azerbaijan connection. A few years ago, I was writing an article and studying how Israel might go about attacking Iran with the assets we knew they had…
>
> I’ve got experience as a Marine F-4 Phantom Radar Interceptor Officer. I’ve planned strike missions. I’ve got a thousand hours in the Phantom. So I’m familiar with the problems strike planners have in attacking a target or multiple targets like Iran. And as I looked at the map, I thought: ‘Boy, oh, boy, if the Israelis had an alliance with Azerbaijan, that would be the perfect place to launch a strike.
>
> They’ve got this beautiful, 10,000-foot concrete runway in Baku. You take off, you come right out over the Caspian Sea. The pilots flip on their radar altimeters, drop down 25-feet off the deck, and they just race in a straight line.
>
> They pop up over some hills, and they’re in Tehran before the Iranians even know what hit them. They could then go hit the other targets. It reduces the distance for this strike by, oh, six, seven hundred miles. It might alleviate the need for tankers. Or, if they do need tanker support, you could put them over the Caspian Sea…
>
> …The beauty of Baku is that the Caspian Sea is right at the end of the runway. It’s a straight shot, maybe 300 miles, from that base to Tehran. A good radar altimeter will get an F-4, F-16, F-15 strike fighter maybe 25 feet off the water. Going in at that altitude, you’re not going to be picked up by radar.
>
> But there’s something even more important here. **The Iranians are not expecting an attack from the north**. Now, with the revelation of this relationship, *they are*. And that has a lot of implications beyond the tactical.
>
> Think of it this way. Prior to this revelation, the Iranians — although they noticed some connections between Israel and Azerbaijan — didn’t know how deep that connection was.
>
> **Now the Iranians can start bullying the Azerbaijanis**. They can send a

> diplomat up to Baku and say, basically, 'if any Israeli plane hits us from the north, *when* we get our nuke, we are going to test it on Baku. Of course that will all happen behind the scenes, but the threat will be made.
>
> Now, I want you to consider this: there are many ways to attack Iran. You can go for the nuke sites. **Or you can go for a decapitation strike**. A decapitation strike is a much easier operation if you're coming from Azerbaijan.
>
> Think of it this way: every once in a while, the Iranians have a little get-together. **They bring all of the Mullahs together in one place**… Why not? They'd be doing us and the world a tremendous favor if they did that.
>
> And it's not going to happen now.
>
> I can guarantee that all of those new Soviet anti-aircraft missiles that the Iranians bought are all going up north now, pointed and waiting for something there. In fact, they'll probably put radars on the Caspian from the mountaintops there, just to see if there's anything come up off the water.
>
> **Strategic, tactical surprise: gone**.
>
> You have to ask for the motivation behind the leak. I mean, if the Israelis can do this operation, it's to our benefit! From a diplomatic standpoint, if you wanted to tell the Iranians that the Israelis did this, it's without our permission. And then try to butter up the Iranians after the strike, so they don't close the Strait of Hormuz, that's one thing.
>
> **But giving away all of the secrets of an ally? When you're doing that, you have to ask whether we still have Israel as an ally. We are not acting like an ally. In fact, if you ask me, based on the amount of time I expect the Israelis put in this relationship with Azerbaijan, I would start viewing this administration as an existential threat to Israel**.

Recall that there have been accusations that the Obama administration has been infiltrated by the Muslim Brotherhood – the same Muslim Brotherhood that is reported to be crucifying their political opponents following the Egyptian elections. The Muslim Brotherhood that took power after Obama helped them to overthrow the Egyptian government. The Muslim Brotherhood that got $1.5 billion dollars from Obama, who bypassed Congress in order to do it. The Muslim Brotherhood whose leader was invited to the White House by Obama. Not only that, but the Obama administration has done nothing about the sale of weapons to Iran from China – weapons that are then transferred to Hezbollah to be used to sink Israeli ships.

On the other hand, Mitt Romney has come out in favor of defending Israel.

Sarah Geis provides pointers for constructive debate and disagreement

August 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Sarah's Think on These Things blog, a post about how to NOT argue contructively. If you don't do any of the bad things on her list, you'll be an excellent person to debate with. Consider this post your Saturday fun!

Excerpt:

> **1. Foster the conviction that all with whom you disagree are personally attacking you.**
> Even if the individual doesn't know you, your ideas are your identity. Never mind the fact that this introduces all sorts of strange problems for understanding personal identity. That stuff is not important. What *is* important is that your very person, and all you hold dear, are being assaulted.
>
> **2. Don't accept the author or speaker's own definitions of his terms.**
> For instance, if someone is using the term "idealist" to mean a person who has lofty goals, you could show off your philosophical prowess and point out that he has gotten philosophical idealism (something else entirely) all wrong. It would also be fun to attack a Lutheran who believes in Christian orthodoxy (small "o") for being a closet Orthodox Christian!
>
> **3. Embrace category confusion.**
> Here is a time-tested example: If the argument is about economics, you may wish to respond by claiming that the author is just racist. You get bonus points here, as this tactic also functions as an ad hominem and as a red herring fallacy (look them up if you are curious).
>
> **4. Ignore all qualifiers.**
> This most often takes the form of responding with a counterexample to an admitted generalization. Example: Your interlocutor is evaluating the drawbacks to social media, and then says "interactions on social media tend to encourage more rudeness than would be likely in person." You can fire back a response like this: "I'm always nice on Facebook! See? You're wrong." Or, "Uncle Joe uses Facebook to encourage invalids connecting to the world via laptop," etc. You don't want your counterexample to actually work. So, avoid using the skill in situations where the author has clearly made a universal statement such as, "There are no black swans." Then, those who are still slaves to logic could refute the universal statement by saying– truthfully– that "Uncle Joe has a black swan."

These are the things that happen to me daily in dealing with commenters like Sarah stone on this blog. If only Sarah had read this nice list!

I think #2 is the funniest.

The list contains 17 items. If you know someone who would benefit from it, please forward it along!

Can a materialist question Darwinism without having his career ruined?

August 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Uncommon Descent, the abstract of a paper by Alex Rosenberg, warning *even materialists* not to question Darwinism.

Excerpt:

> Abstract
>
> There is only one physically possible process that builds and operates purposive systems in nature: natural selection. What it does is build and operate systems that look to us purposive, goal directed, teleological. There really are not any purposes in nature and no purposive processes ether. It is just one vast network of linked causal chains. Darwinian natural selection is the only process that could produce the appearance of purpose. That is why natural selection must have built and must continually shape the intentional causes of purposive behavior. Fodor's argument against Darwinian theory involves a biologist's modus tollens which is a cognitive scientist's modus ponens. Assuming his argument is valid, the right conclusion is not that Darwin's theory is mistaken but that Fodor's and any other non-Darwinian approaches to the mind are wrong. It shows how getting things wrong in the philosophy of biology leads to mistaken conclusions with the potential to damage the acceptance of a theory with harmful consequences for human well-being. Fodor has shown that the real consequence of rejecting a Darwinian approach to the mind is to reject a Darwinian theory of phylogenetic evolution. This forces us to take seriously a notion that otherwise would not have much of a chance: that when it comes to the nature of mental states, indeterminacy rules. This is an insight that should have the most beneficial impact on freeing cognitive neuroscience from demands on the adequacy of its theories that it could never meet.

This might have been written by a Catholic Inquisitor at the height of the Spanish Inquisition. "Don't demand that our theory be empirically adequate, or you'll be sorry". We have only to look at the stories documented in the movie "Expelled" to see how sorry. You can watch it on Youtube here, in full.

And more from a later post by Casey Luskin, on Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> the true purpose of Rosenberg's piece is to warn people not to challenge Darwin or they'll suffer the same castigation as Darwin-critic (and atheist) Jerry Fodor. Rosenberg writes: "When a philosopher advances a purely a priori argument to show that a well-established scientific theory is fatally defective, it is usually safe to assume that the problem is the philosopher's and not the theory's."

> Translation: If you question Darwin, expect trouble–and the trouble will come from me and other defenders of Darwinism. Given the logic we see being used to defend Darwinian theory, perhaps the philosopher isn't the problem after all.

> And of course, a major part of Rosenberg's warning is to claim that Fodor's arguments against Darwinism lead to "damage with harmful consequences for human well being." And just what is that damage? Well, as Rosenberg puts it, it is lending support for religion (though he can't bring himself to put it that nicely).
>
> […]In any case, this tarring and feathering of Fodor is just the latest frustrated attempt by hardline Darwinians to discourage people from using design terminology. It's a hopeless effort, because try as they might to impose speech codes on each another, they can't change the fact that nature is infused with purpose, which readily lends itself to, as Rosenberg calls it "teleosemantics."

And finally, a word from the master of Darwinish debate-avoidance, Richard Dawkins:

> "My argument will be that Darwinism is the only known theory that is in principle capable of explaining certain aspects of life. If I am right it means that, even if there were no actual evidence in favour of the Darwinian theory (there is, of course) we should still be justified in preferring it over all rival theories." — p. 287, Blind Watchmaker" (1986)

Again, these are the words of a fundamentalist. You better agree with his theory, whether the evidence is for it or not.

Here is Richard Dawkins in a video clip explaining that even if life were designed, then he knows without any evidence that aliens *who evolved by Darwinian processes* are the ones who did the designing:

How does he know that the aliens evolved without being able to see their fossil record and run experiments on their genetic coding? Because when it comes to Darwinism, no evidence is needed. And if you don't buy into his little religion, then he'll "destroy" you. And he doesn't mean destroy you by debating, because we know that the coward refuses to debate his religion in public.

And what about Darwinist Richard Lewontin: (and by "science" he means "naturalistic science")

> "Our willingness to accept [naturalistic] scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science *in spite of* the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite of* its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite of* the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our own a

> priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, not matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door." (Richard Lewontin in *New York Review of Books*, January 9, 1997, p. 28)

This is what Darwinism really amounts to: a faith commitment. A fundamentalist faith commitment, that allows no dissent. It is absolute.

Darwinism beyond the level of simple micro-evolution has never been observed or tested experimentally. And what's more – the proponents of Darwinism do not want their theory to be subjected to criticism or testing. It fulfills a religious purpose, and therefore they are very concerned that it not be taken away from them. They are fighting against having to care what God thinks, and they will strangle any good experimental science that shows that their religion is wrong. You can see the same fundamentalism at work in the atheistic war against the experimental science that confirms the Big Bang theory, which describes the origin of the universe out of nothing.

Paul Ryan and his mother explain their commitment to Medicare

August 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> Paul Ryan, making his first campaign appearance in Florida since becoming Mitt Romney's running mate a week ago, told a supportive crowd of senior citizens Saturday that President Obama is raidingMedicare to fund his health care reforms.
>
> "One out of six of our hospitals and our nursing homes will go out of business," as a result of the changes to Medicare under the president's signature legislative accomplishment, the Affordable Care Act, Mr. Ryansaid in an event at The Villages, the sprawling retirement community near Orlando.
>
> Appearing on stage with his mother, 78-year-old Betty Ryan Douglas, the Republican vice-presidential candidate said he and Mr. Romneywould protect Medicare benefits for the current generation of retirees and save the entitlement program for the future.
>
> "She is why I am here. She and her grandchildren — that's why I'm here," he said. "It's what my mom relies on.
>
> "Medicare will not be used as a piggy bank for Obamacare," Mr. Ryan said.
>
> The 42-year-old Wisconsin congressman talked about his mom starting her own business after her husband died when Mr. Ryan was a teen.
>
> "And mom — you did build that," he said, taking a dig at the president's earlier remarks on small businesses and drawing cheers from the crowd and a fist pump from his mother, a part-time resident of Florida.

The bottom line is that there will be no changes to Medicare to the coverage of seniors over 55. The program will not be solvent for younger people and that's why it needs to be reformed for Americans under 55.

U.S. unemployment rate lower in only 2 of 50 states

August 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Bloomberg News.

Excerpt:

> The jobless rate climbed in 44 U.S. states in July, showing last month's increase in unemployment was broad based.
>
> Alabama and Alaska registered the worst performance, with joblessness advancing by 0.5 percentage point in each, figures from the Labor Department showed today in Washington. Payrolls grew in 31 states last month, led by California and Michigan.
>
> […]North Dakota had the lowest unemployment rate in the nation, even as it rose to 3 percent from 2.9 percent the prior month.
>
> Two states, Idaho and Rhode Island, showed a drop in their unemployment rates. Joblessness was unchanged in four states.
>
> New Jersey's jobless rate jumped to a 35-year high of 9.8 percent in July from 9.6 percent in June. The state lost 12,000 positions, including cuts in manufacturing, construction, and professional and business services, according to figures released by New Jersey officials yesterday.
>
> Unemployment in New York rose to 9.1 percent, the highest since 1983, and payrolls dropped by 3,700 workers.
>
> The figures reflect the cutbacks at financial firms, which are trimming jobs as revenue softens. Morgan Stanley has said its headcount will drop by about 700 in the second half, bringing total 2012 reductions to 4,000. Credit Suisse Group AG planned to eliminate 138 positions in New York starting this month. Deutsche Bank AG will cut about 1,900 jobs by year-end, mostly outside Germany.

Not only is unemployment rising, but the real unemployment rate is being masked because more and more people are going onto to federal disability.

Left-wing Newsweek's cover story recommends dumping Barack Obama

August 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

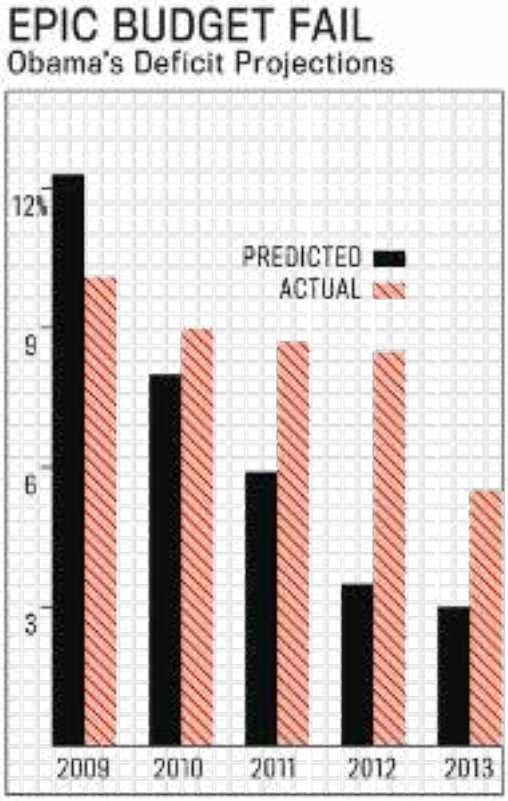

Epic Budget Fail

From the radically left-wing Newsweek, of all places. (H/T Defeating Obama)

Excerpt:

> [T]he total number of private-sector jobs is still 4.3 million below the January 2008 peak. Meanwhile, since 2008, a staggering 3.6 million Americans have been added to Social Security's disability insurance program. This is one of many ways unemployment is being concealed.
>
> In his fiscal year 2010 budget—the first he presented—the president envisaged growth of 3.2 percent in 2010, 4.0 percent in 2011, 4.6 percent in 2012. The actual numbers were 2.4 percent in 2010 and 1.8 percent in 2011; few forecasters now expect it to be much above 2.3 percent this year.
>
> Unemployment was supposed to be 6 percent by now. It has averaged 8.2 percent this year so far. Meanwhile real median annual household income has dropped more than 5 percent since June 2009. Nearly 110 million individuals received a welfare benefit in 2011, mostly Medicaid or food stamps.
>
> Welcome to Obama's America: nearly half the population is not represented on a taxable return—almost exactly the same proportion that lives in a household where at least one member receives some type of government benefit. We are becoming the 50–50 nation—half of us paying the taxes, the other half receiving

the benefits.

And all this despite a far bigger hike in the federal debt than we were promised. According to the 2010 budget, the debt in public hands was supposed to fall in relation to GDP from 67 percent in 2010 to less than 66 percent this year. If only. By the end of this year, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), it will reach 70 percent of GDP. These figures significantly understate the debt problem, however. The ratio that matters is debt to revenue. That number has leapt upward from 165 percent in 2008 to 262 percent this year, according to figures from the International Monetary Fund. Among developed economies, only Ireland and Spain have seen a bigger deterioration.

Not only did the initial fiscal stimulus fade after the sugar rush of 2009, but the president has done absolutely nothing to close the long-term gap between spending and revenue.

His much-vaunted health-care reform will not prevent spending on health programs growing from more than 5 percent of GDP today to almost 10 percent in 2037. Add the projected increase in the costs of Social Security and you are looking at a total bill of 16 percent of GDP 25 years from now. That is only slightly less than the average cost of all federal programs and activities, apart from net interest payments, over the past 40 years. Under this president's policies, the debt is on course to approach 200 percent of GDP in 2037—a mountain of debt that is bound to reduce growth even further.

And even that figure understates the real debt burden. The most recent estimate for the difference between the net present value of federal government liabilities and the net present value of future federal revenues—what economist Larry Kotlikoff calls the true "fiscal gap"—is $222 trillion.

[…][T]he Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010 did nothing to address the core defects of the system: the long-run explosion of Medicare costs as the baby boomers retire, the "fee for service" model that drives health-care inflation, the link from employment to insurance that explains why so many Americans lack coverage, and the excessive costs of the liability insurance that our doctors need to protect them from our lawyers.

[…]The president pledged that health-care reform would not add a cent to the deficit. But the CBO and the Joint Committee on Taxation now estimate that the insurance-coverage provisions of the ACA will have a net cost of close to $1.2 trillion over the 2012–22 period.

The president just kept ducking the fiscal issue. Having set up a bipartisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, headed by retired Wyoming Republican senator Alan Simpson and former Clinton chief of staff Erskine Bowles, Obama effectively sidelined its recommendations of approximately $3 trillion in cuts and $1 trillion in added revenues over the coming decade. As a result there was no "grand bargain" with the House

> Republicans—which means that, barring some miracle, the country will hit a fiscal cliff on Jan. 1 as the Bush tax cuts expire and the first of $1.2 trillion of automatic, across-the-board spending cuts are imposed. The CBO estimates the net effect could be a 4 percent reduction in output.
>
> The failures of leadership on economic and fiscal policy over the past four years have had geopolitical consequences. The World Bank expects the U.S. to grow by just 2 percent in 2012. China will grow four times faster than that; India three times faster. By 2017, the International Monetary Fund predicts, the GDP of China will overtake that of the United States.

This is a must-read article, and please share it with your friends, as well. It does cover Obama's disastrous foreign policy as well, but the focus is on fiscal policy. The article ends with an assessment of Paul Ryan's ability to fix the economic crisis that Obama created.

UPDATE: Niall Ferguson responds to a critique of this piece by Paul Krugman.

UPDATE: Niall Ferguson responds to critiques by shrill-shrieking left-wing bloggers.

New study finds that less religious states are less charitable than more religious states

August 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Boston Globe. (H/T J Warner Wallace on Twitter)

Excerpt:

> States with the least religious residents are also the stingiest about giving money to charity, a new study on the generosity of Americans suggests.
>
> The study, released Monday by the Chronicle of Philanthropy, found that residents in states where religious participation is higher than the rest of the nation, particularly in the South, gave the greatest percentage of their discretionary income to charity.
>
> The Northeast, with lower religious participation, was the least generous to charities, with the six New England states filling the last six slots among the 50 states.
>
> […]The most generous state was Utah, where residents gave 10.6 percent of their discretionary income to charity. Next were Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee and South Carolina. The least generous was New Hampshire, at 2.5 percent, followed by Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.
>
> […]The study found that in the Northeast region, including New England, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York, people gave 4.1 percent of their discretionary income to charity. The percentage was 5.2 percent in the Southern states, a region from Texas east to Delaware and Florida, and including most of the so-called Bible Belt.

> […]The study was based on Internal Revenue Service records of people who itemized deductions in 2008, the most recent year statistics were available. The data allowed researchers to detail charitable giving down to the ZIP code.
>
> To ensure that states with differing costs of living were judged by the same standard, researchers calculated each state's median discretionary income — the money remaining per household after variable but essential costs such as housing, child care and food are paid for. They then looked at the percentage of discretionary income that the typical household in each state gave to charity.
>
> […]Of the 10 least generous states, nine voted for Democrat Barack Obama for president in the last election. By contrast, of the 10 most generous states, eight voted for Republican John McCain.

This is interesting because it shows how disconnected atheistic rhetoric is from their actions. Atheists want to deny God. This is means that they deny that there is any Designer of the universe who defines how humans ought to be, and to whom they are

accountable. Here is what atheists believe about morality, as a consequence of jettisoning the moral Lawgiver:

> The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. As that unhappy poet A.E. Housman put it: 'For Nature, heartless, witless Nature Will neither care nor know.' DNA neither cares nor knows. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.
> — Richard Dawkins, "River out of Eden" (1995), p.133.

Now, do people who think that they are machines made out of meat accountable to no external standard have a rational basis for self-sacrificial moral actions? Hell, no. And that's why what we see in this study. When you don't have a reason to put yourself second, and someone else first, then you only do it when you feel good. But people who really are good do good when it doesn't feel good. They do it as a way of honoring the will of the Person who made them – it's working on the relationship, putting God's values above our own. I do think that atheists can act morally in a universe made by God – by complying with the objective moral duties that God has designed them for. But I think it is harder to do that when they cannot rationally ground being good on their atheism.

How do prostitutes stay in business in an era of hook-up sex?

August 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

WARNING: This is one of those posts that feminists and egalitarians should just not read. Stay away from this post, it will offend you. Also, if you read it, then know that when I talk about "women", it is a shorthand way of saying "women who accept the tenets of third-wave gender feminism". I don't mean all women, I mean third-wave gender feminists. If you are a married woman, or if you are a chaste single woman who is prepared to care for and support her future husband, then I don't mean you.

From Stuart Schneiderman, a reversal of expectations.

The sexual revolution pushed by feminists encouraged women to abandon traditional female goals (marriage and children) and traditional men (provider, protector, moral and spiritual leader) and to instead prefer anonymous hook-up sex fueled by binge-drinking – so that they can pursue careers.

He writes:

> Here's a question for the behavioral economists: How do prostitutes stay in business?
>
> With the sexual revolution and the hookup culture and young women making love like porn stars, how can a hooker make a living?
>
> If you are charging money for something that people can get for free, eventually it will impact your business.
>
> In the old days nice girls didn't. Without specifying what nice girls wouldn't do, men who wanted "it" sought out prostitutes.
>
> Nowadays, there is precious little that nice girls don't do. Thanks to a certain social movement nice girls are liberated. They will do just about anything, and will refuse to allow a man to pay for them.
>
> Many of them won't even want to see him in the morning.
>
> Free love has come to mean giving it away for free. No one knows how prevalent the practice is, but nice girls are marrying later and are avoiding encumbering alliances. If we assume that they are sexually active during their twenties, then clearly they have crowded the market in non-committal sex.
>
> Young women who are out making their way in the world today will avoid relationships, but they will happily engage in all kinds of sexual gymnastics… They do not want to be tied down, just yet. (At least not in the metaphorical sense.) No man's man's emotional demands will get in the way of their career advancement.
>
> […]**The marketplace being what it is, prostitutes have now adapted.**

> **They continue to offer something that nice girls no longer offer, but it isn't kinky sex. It is emotional attachment: love, romance and a maybe even a relationship, with a little sex on the side.**
>
> **Nowadays it's called the girlfriend experience. It's the ultimate in sex work, considerably more difficult and better paid than common fellatio.**
>
> **Strange as it seems, if you are a young man today you often have to pay a woman to act like she's your girlfriend.**
>
> **Even the term "escort" which is commonly taken to be a euphemism for prostitute, has traditionally referred to a woman who would accompany a man to a social or cultural event. She was a stand-in girlfriend.**
>
> **In the old days prostitutes used to know how to do things that nice girls had never even heard of. Today, prostitutes know how to do things that nice girls do not know how to do: that is to conduct relationships.**
>
> **Young women today are proficient at being sex kittens. Many of them become expert in the art of dating. Fewer know how to conduct a relationship with a man.**

I grew up with a non-Christian mother who was very distant and focused on her career, wealth and health. So, I always expected a lot more from women in terms of affection, attention and approval. I knew perfectly well that what I wanted in a woman was someone to be involved with my education, career and hobbies, and most important of all, with my Christian faith. That is what I missed growing up as a visible minority in a predominantly white city. That's probably one of several reasons why I am chaste. Sex is not the primary thing that I am looking for from a woman. Instead, I want to be the traditional man who is needed as a provider, protector and moral/spiritual leader, and who gets affection, attention and approval for fulfilling those roles (and only those roles).

There were a lot of times when I was growing up when it would have been easy for me, having hit six figures of net worth at age 26, to focus on getting sex in the quickest way possible. All I would have had to do was to stop being an open and authentic Christian. If I had stopped talking about objective morality and exclusive theological claims, and just made no demands on any women to grow into the roles of wife and mother, it would have been easy. But that would not scratch the itch that I have. I get a lot of joy from seeing a woman learn about my plan and my goals. I enjoy *providing* her with books, debates and lectures to learn about the things that I care about. I enjoy *protecting* her from lies and labor by building up her knowledge and character and performing acts of service for her. I enjoy *leading* her – through study and persuasion – to grow in her understanding of moral, theological and apologetic issues. And I enjoy when a woman makes an effort to be a supportive helper and a companion. Nothing is better than seeing a woman accept your goals as her own, preparing to achieve those goals and then achieving them. I would rather be a leader – that's what men really want.

Women today use sex as a way of pacifying men who want them to grow into the roles of wife and mother. They want to focus on their careers, on playing the field and on having a

good time. Marriage is something they fall back on much later, when they are in their 30s. In order to get marriage-minded men to pay attention to them during their 20s without having to commit, women offer men sex. Men take the sex, and they stop trying to perform the traditional male roles, especially the role of being the moral and spiritual leader. And it's a very easy thing to see. Just take a typical woman and ask her to read "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands" and "Stupid Things Parents Do To Mess Up Their Kids", or similar books. They won't do it, because they have been taught by third-wave feminism to be selfish and to avoid caring about others in relationships. But you can have all the recreational sex with them that you want (especially after they get drunk, so that they don't feel responsible) as long as you are good-looking and fun. They have been told that they must always be having a good time, and to not prepare to care for men or children. They think that they can live happily ever after by pursuing their own happiness at every moment.

Everyone complains that men are no longer interested in marriage, but the truth is that there are very few marriage-capable women left to marry. Most women today are just not ready for marriage, because they are often neither chaste nor supportive. Men and women have to be chaste, because it is a guarantee that you offer to your spouse that you can be faithful. So, marriage-minded men are being forced to choose between selfish, promiscuous feminists and prostitutes. That's no choice at all. And that's why men who start out with noble aims of life-long married love and self-sacrificial commitment quickly learn to settle for recreational sex from a series of temporary partners – and sometimes very temporary partners in the case of hook-ups on college campuses. Marriage is just not there for us to achieve anymore, because most women haven't made the right decisions that will allow them to be supportive and faithful to their husbands. They aren't ready to step into the roles of wife and mother.

Are claims about religion and morality objective or subjective?

August 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from J. Warner Wallace, the host of the Please Convince Me podcast. He starts the article by explaining the difference between objective truth claims and subjective truth claims.

He writes:

> As an example, we offer the proposition, "Jim's car is a Hyundai". Is this an objective claim or a subjective claim? It is clearly objective. My car is either a Hyundai or it is not, and my personal opinion will not change this fact. The truth is rooted in the nature of the object, the Hyundai automobile, and it is not dependent upon my subjective opinion. Now let's examine another claim: "Hyundai's are the coolest (hippest) cars". This second claim is highly personal depending on what each of us considers "hip" or "cool". Our opinion about this is rooted in each of us as subjects who hold varying opinions about "hipness" or "coolness". See the difference? "1+1=2" is an objective truth statement; "Math is fun" is a subjective claim.

Then he asks the question: are claims about God's existence and character objective truth claims or subjective truth claims? What about moral claims? You might be surprised what answers you get from Christians who have attended church all their lives.

He writes:

> But it seems to get trickier for people when they begin to move away from physical realities or math facts. Consider the following claim: "God exists". Surprisingly, many Christian groups I work with struggle to define this statement as objective. But the existence of God is either a true reality or it is not, and our personal opinion is not going to change this reality. It is something we can either acknowledge or reject, but doing so does not change the reality of God's existence. Does that make sense? Spiritual truth claims about the existence of God are objective, they are rooted in the object under consideration: God. He either exists or He does not; my opinion won't change that fact.
>
> At some point toward the end of our "Truth Test," Brett and I will begin to post moral claims such as, "Premarital sex is morally wrong." Now things usually get interesting as the Christians in our groups struggle to decide if there are such things as objective moral claims. Some are very uncomfortable identifying this statement as an objective truth claim. It's one thing to say that we, as Christians, might believe this statement to be true, but some Christians hesitate to say this is a truth claim that transcends those who don't accept our Christian values. The culture has effectively eroded our confidence in objective moral truth claims. The

> new cultural definition of “tolerance” obliges us to embrace all truth claims as equally valid or true. This is an important re-definition, because classic “tolerance” acknowledges disagreement and allows each person to hold an opposing view without having to embrace the other view as equally true. Classic tolerance requires us to endure and respect the people who hold opposing views, even as we resist these views themselves.

If you’d like to listen to Jim talk about this essay, I noticed that it was the topic of his opening monologue in his most recent Please Convince Me podcast. I think this post is interesting, because we just had a commenter who didn’t think that statements about God and morality were objective, but that these statements were true *for the person making them*. That would mean that if a person said “I believe that the Earth is flat”, then that statement would be true for that person. Or, if a person said “It’s wrong to murder people just for the fun of it”, then that statement would be true for them. I think it’s pretty clear that as Christians, we defend statements about God and statements about morality as objective statements. These statements are not just true for us, they are true, period.

Richard Dawkins defends the moral goodness of infanticide and adultery

August 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the latest moral wisdom from atheist Richard Dawkins, courtesy of Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> I want to raise another question that interests me. Why are we so obsessed with monogamous fidelity in the first place?
>
> […]The underlying presumption — that a human being has some kind of property rights over another human being's body — is unspoken because it is assumed to be obvious. But with what justification?
>
> In one of the most disgusting stories to hit the British newspapers last year, the wife of a well-known television personality, Chris Tarrant, hired a private detective to spy on him. The detective reported evidence of adultery and Tarrant's wife divorced him, in unusually vicious style. But what shocked me was the way public opinion sided with Tarrant's horrible wife. Far from despising, as I do, anybody who would stoop so low as to hire a detective for such a purpose, large numbers of people, including even Mr. Tarrant himself, seemed to think she was fully justified. Far from concluding, as I would, that he was well rid of her, he was covered with contrition and his unfortunate mistress was ejected, covered with odium. The explanation of all these anomalous behavior patterns is the ingrained assumption of the deep rightness and appropriateness of sexual jealousy. It is manifest all the way from Othello to the French "crime passionnel" law, down to the "love rat" language of tabloid newspapers.
>
> […]Why should you deny your loved one the pleasure of sexual encounters with others, if he or she is that way inclined?
>
> I, for one, feel drawn to the idea that there is something noble and virtuous in rising above nature in this way.
>
> […]And why don't we all admire — as I increasingly do — those rare free spirits confident enough to rise above jealousy, stop fretting about who is "cheating on" whom,

Here's a little snippet about Richard Dawkins' ability to stay married:

> In 1984, Dawkins divorced his wife of 17 years, Marian Stamp; later that same year, he married Eve Barham. Dawkins also divorced Barham, though the precise circumstances of this divorce are unclear. He married science fiction actress Lalla Ward in 1992; at present, the two are still married.

I have been advised that the full article featuring Dawkins' views is far, far worse that

what was excerpted by UD.

What does atheist morality amount to, in practice? It amounts to the strong acting selfishly and allowing the weak to suffer for it. That's why atheists are almost entirely for abortion and sexual permissiveness – the children are the first to be screwed by the moral relativism of the adults. That's where abortion, no-fault divorce, fatherlessness, etc. come from – they are crimes committed by selfish adults against vulnerable children – because they can. It's the strong abusing the weak, exactly as Darwinism would have them do. There are no human rights on atheism, and there is no reason for self-sacrificial moral behavior, either. Do what you want, and don't get caught. Get them, before they can get you. Don't let anyone diminish your happiness with their moral rules. That's "atheist morality".

This isn't the first time that we've caught a glimpse of Dawkins' atheist perspective on morality, either.

Morality according to atheist Richard Dawkins

Rev. George Pitcher writes about an interview of Christopher Hitchens conducted by Richard Dawkins. (H/T Thinking Christian)

Excerpt:

> But the centrepiece of this Christmas edition is the main coup for the New Statesman – an interview by Prof. Dawkins with Christopher Hitchens, the great polymath who today lost his fight against cancer. It's a fascinating read over three double-page spreads. Not least because Prof. Dawkins reveals a charming humility, allowing Hitchens to show his intellectual superiority at his own expense. Hitchens is thoughtful about CS Lewis and Christianity and rather leaves Prof. Dawkins floundering in his wake, occasionally interjecting little assents to show that he's still there, as he struggles to keep up.
>
> But one of these interjections is most revealing. About half-way through, the Prof gets this in edgeways: 'Do you ever worry that if we win and, so to speak, destroy Christianity, that vacuum would be filled by Islam?'
>
> So, 'if we win…and destroy Christianity'. True, there's a 'so to speak' in there, but it doesn't do much. Try 'If we win and, so to speak, kill all the Jews' as an alternative. Doesn't really work, does it? And Prof Dawkins can hardly claim that he was misquoted or taken out of context. He was editing the magazine, after all – there's even a picture of him doing so, pen poised masterfully over page proofs.

Now you might think that Dawkins intends to destroy Christianity in debates, and not in the wars and purges of atheism that occurred last century in North Korea, Cambodia, China, the Soviet Union, and so on. Those atheist regimes caused the deaths of 100 million people, according to Harvard University Press. But Dawkins has refused to debate William Lane Craig on more than one occasion. So whatever he means by "destroy Christianity", he doesn't mean "defeat them in rational debate, using superior arguments and evidence". He had his chance to do that, and he passed on it. So, he must mean

something else by “destroying Christianity” other than persuasion.

Let’s find out what Richard Dawkins thinks about morality. Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won’t find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> (“God’s Utility Function,” *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

Dawkins’ view is that nothing is really good or bad objectively. Cultures just evolve certain conventions, and those conventions vary arbitrarily by time and place. I think we need to interpret his goal of destroying Christianity against the backdrop of his nihilism. 50 million unborn children have been killed in the United States since 1973 alone. That’s 50 million people with distinct genetic codes different from their mothers or their fathers, who will never grow up to achieve their potential.

Dawkins himself is in favor of infanticide:

So what might destroying Christianity look like to an atheist?

Here it what destroying Christianity means in North Korea, the most atheistic country on the planet.

Excerpt:

> A Christian woman accused of distributing the Bible, a book banned in communist North Korea, was publicly executed last month for the crime, South Korean activists said Friday.
>
> The 33-year-old mother of three, Ri Hyon Ok, also was accused of spying for South Korea and the United States, and of organizing dissidents, a rights group said in Seoul, citing documents obtained from the North.
>
> The Investigative Commission on Crime Against Humanity report included a copy of Ri’s government-issued photo ID and said her husband, children and parents were sent to a political prison the day after her June 16 execution.

That’s what Kim Jong Il means by “destroy Christianity”. What does Dawkins mean by it?

FLASHBACK: American Atheists calls for the eradication of Christianity.

New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less

August 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: This post is to contrast with Richard Dawkins' atheist view of marriage posted earlier today.

From Citizen Link. (H/T Andrew)

Excerpt:

> It's a number that is trumpeted from the rooftops — and the pulpit: Half of marriages among Christians and non-Christians alike end in divorce.
>
> But the reality is that Christians who attend church regularly get divorced at a much lower rate.
>
> Professor Bradley Wright, a sociologist at the University of Connecticut, found that among people who identify as Christians but rarely attend church, 60 percent have been divorced. Of those who attend church regularly, 38 percent have been divorced.
>
> W. Bradford Wilcox, a leading sociologist at the University of Virginia and director of the National Marriage Project, found a nearly identical spread between "active conservative Protestants" who regularly attend church and people with no religious affiliation.
>
> Professor Scott Stanley from the University of Denver, who is working on the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative, said couples with a vibrant religious faith have more and higher levels of the qualities that marriages need to avoid divorce.
>
> "Whether young or old, male or female, low-income or not, those who said that they were more religious reported higher average levels of commitment to their partners, higher levels of marital satisfaction, less thinking and talking about divorce and lower levels of negative interaction," he said. "These patterns held true when controlling for such important variables as income, education and age at first marriage."

I think this is another good example of means-end reasoning in marriage. I often criticize women for choosing the wrong men to marry because they don't define typical marriage scenarios and then select men who have prepared for those scenarios. Going to church is an antidote for the moral relativism that ails us, and it transports us outside of our hedonism to a place where we can think about bigger and better things. Women need to choose men who have a habit of attending church. Basically, young people need to study research to find out what works (chastity, pre-marital counseling, church attendance, etc.) and then demand that prospective mates demonstrate those skills – if they expect the marriage to last.

I say this as someone who struggles enormously with the feminized church, but you can't argue with the data. I personally think that church attendance is less important than a good knowledge of philosophical theology and apologetics, and the habit of debating about those things. (Especially science apologetics) I've been to my friend Andrew's church, and if I lived near him, I would attend regularly. They have excellent apologetics events, world-reknown apologetics speakers and classes on apologetics. They have shown William Lane Craig debates, taught Greg Koukl and Lee Strobel books, and they even did "The Truth Project", which features Stephen C. Meyer. They actually believe what they claim to believe, and they have actually studied why they ought to believe it. I would attend a church like that regularly.

Related posts

- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why men should refuse a woman's offer of casual sex
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- Does a man's decision to marry negatively impact his service to God?
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

August 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to MP3 file)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> His new book "The Edge of Evolution" takes his conclusions further, arguing that the Darwinian processes of random mutation and natural selection are incapable of producing the variation and complexity we see in most of life.
>
> So can we conclude that life was intelligently designed by a creator?
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

I get the impression that Fox learned everything he knows about ID by reading Darwinists.

The MP3 file is here.

The summary below is rated VERY SNARKY.

Summary

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism
- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program
- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent
- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true
- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's

experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah

- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet X!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren't going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

Douglas Groothuis' 752-page Christian apologetics book is now under $22

August 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

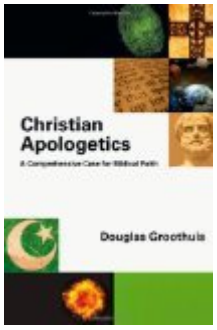

Christian Apologetics

Looking for a good textbook on apologetics that covers everything you need to know? Check out Dr. Groothuis' book. It's now under $22 on Amazon.

Here are the chapters:

> Part I: Apologetic Preliminaries
> 1 Introduction: Hope, Despair and Knowing Reality
> 2 The Biblical Basis for Apologetics
> 3 Apologetic Method: Evaluating Worldviews
> 4 The Christian Worldview
> 5 Distortions of the Christian Worldview–or the God I Don't Believe In
> 6 Truth Defined and Defended
> 7 Why Truth Matters Most: Searching for Truth in Postmodern Times
> 8 Faith, Risk and Rationality: The Prudential Incentives to Christian Faith
>
> Part II: The Case for Christian Theism
> 9 In Defense of Theistic Arguments
> 10 The Ontological Argument
> 11 Cosmological Arguments: A Cause for the Cosmos
> 12 The Design Argument: Cosmic Fine-Tuning
> 13 Origins, Design and Darwinism
> 14 Evidence for Intelligent Design
> 15 The Moral Argument for God
> 16 The Argument from Religious Experience
> 17 The Uniqueness of Humanity: Consciousness and Cognition
> 18 Deposed Royalty: Pascal's Anthropological Argument
> 19 Jesus of Nazareth: How Historians Can Know Him and Why It Matters by Craig L. Bloomberg
> 20 The Claims, Credentials and Achievements of Jesus Christ
> 21 Defending the Incarnation
> 22 The Resurrection of Jesus

> Part III: Objections to Christian Theism
> 23 Religious Pluralism: Many Religions, One Truth
> 24 Apologetics and the Challenge of Islam
> 25 The Problem of Evil: Dead Ends and the Christian Answer
> 26 Conclusion: Take It to the Streets
>
> Appendix 1 Hell on Trial
> Appendix 2 Apologetic Issues in the Old Testament by Richard S. Hess

Here's a review of the book by Michael D. Stark.

Introduction:

> Contemporary Christians interested in apologetics can now turn to another text that is bound to become one of the most-used textbooks in apologetics. Douglas Groothuis' Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for the Biblical Faith (InterVarsity, 2011) may have more breadth both in content and wisdom than any apologetics text to date. The subtitle is justified as the book, over 700 pages and 26 chapters long (not including two appendixes), presents the need for apologetics and explores the main philosophical arguments for the existence of God. Unlike other apologetics texts, Groothuis includes chapters examining truth in postmodern society, religious pluralism, and a tactful approach to dealing with Islam. Furthermore, biblical scholars (and Denver Seminary colleagues) Richard Hess and Craig Blomberg build on an already strong text by writing chapters on apologetics in the Old Testament (Appendix 2) and a historical approach to the person of Christ and the gospels, respectively.

Here's a snip from the review:

> The chapter on cosmological arguments is superb and only further qualifies Groothuis as a proficient thinker. This chapter without question is the chapter I learned the most from. Groothuis engages very difficult scientific and philosophical concepts and communicates them in a way that even the beginner will be able to grasp. Though there are many different versions of the cosmological argument, the chapter hones in on the kalam cosmological argument as put forth by William Lane Craig. The kalam argument is superior to other cosmological arguments in that it supposedly secures the theistic doctrine of ex nihilo if the arguments proves successful (note: a minor quibble of this chapter is that Groothuis purports that the Thomistic cosmological argument does not endorse ex nihilo. I believe this to be false). This specific chapter was sensational – however I was left disappointed that no time was given to addressing the cosmological argument posited by Aquinas. In some respects, the Thomistic cosmological argument is the simplest form for people new to apologetics. The Thomistic version does not get into the technical issues of the metaphysics of time and Big Bang cosmology that the kalam version uses, nor does it require knowledge of the principle of sufficient reason that the Leibnizian

> version necessitates. While the kalam and Leibnizian versions are logical and sound arguments, they may confusing to people new to apologetics. Because of this, beginners ought to take the time to read this chapter slowly and more than once because of the finer technical details.
>
> Chapters 12-14 are devoted to the design argument and issues relating to it. Groothuis opposes macroevolution and thus goes to great extent to battle Darwinism. Those interested in the philosophy of science will be drawn to these chapters. The chapter focused on intelligent design relies heavily on the work of William Dembski and Michael Behe. These chapters serve as a valuable introduction for those new to discussion between Christian and naturalistic sciences.
>
> Chapter 15 is perhaps the most successful chapter of the entire book as it deals with the moral argument. It is my belief that the moral argument is the most successful argument for the existence of God as it appeals to everyone, Christian, atheist, and non-Christian religious persons. Ethical theory may perhaps be the most widely debated philosophical topic throughout history and thus Groothuis could have taken many approaches when discussing the moral argument. The way he structured his chapter, however, is nearly flawless. Building off his chapter examining truth in the postmodern culture (chapter 7), Groothuis correlates the denial of objective truth to the ridding of objective moral value. He unmercifully attacks moral relativism and brilliantly shows its dangers. He states that cultural relativism reduces to individual relativism, which, in turn, ultimately rests on nihilism. The setup of this reductio ad absurdum points the reader to a moral system that does not reduce to nihilism. Thus, a worldview that embraces objective moral truths must be embraced. Groothuis makes the claim that the source of objective moral truths is found in the absolute Being – God. Groothuis puts for the notion that God is the source of all perfect moral code because he himself is incapable of an evil act as it would be a contradiction of God's Being.

I think that the big advantage you get from Doug Groothuis is his worldview. He has the most fully-integrated worldview of any Christian scholar I know.

I bought one copy of Dr. Groothuis' book, but I gave it away. So I got myself another one. It's a must have. My favorite four apologetics books are this one, "Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview" by William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland, Michael Licona's "The Resurrection of Jesus" and Stephen C. Meyer's "Signature in the Cell". I think that if you add Wayne Grudem's "Politics According to the Bible" to that list, then that's a very practical set of tools.

526 economists, including 5 Nobel prize winners, grade Romney and Obama plans

August 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Labor Force Participation Rate

From the Daily Caller:

> The 526 economists — including Nobel laureates Gary Becker, Robert Lucas, Robert Mundell, Edward Prescott, and Myron Scholes — point to six facets of Romney's economic approach that they see as beneficial to future economic success.
>
> - *Reduce marginal tax rates on business and wage incomes and broaden the tax base to increase investment, jobs, and living standards.*
> - *End the exploding federal debt by controlling the growth of spending so federal spending does not exceed 20 percent of the economy.*
> - *Restructure regulation to end "too big to fail," improve credit availability to entrepreneurs and small businesses, and increase regulatory accountability, and ensure that all regulations pass rigorous benefit-cost tests.*
> - *Improve our Social Security and Medicare programs by reducing their growth to sustainable levels, ensuring their viability over the long term, and protecting those in or near retirement.*
> - *Reform our healthcare system to harness market forces and thereby reduce costs and increase quality, empowering patients and doctors, rather than the federal bureaucracy.*
> - *Promote energy policies that increase domestic production, enlarge the use of all western hemisphere resources, encourage the use of new technologies, end wasteful subsidies, and rely more on market forces and less on government planners.*

> Seven of the signatories are from Harvard University and five from Columbia University — two of President Barack Obama's alma maters.
>
> The economists' statement of support pillories Obama's economic record, claiming that his expansion of the federal government has resulted in "anemic economic recovery and high unemployment," which will continue if his future plans are implemented.
>
> Among the Obama policies with which the 526 economists take issue include:
>
> - *Relied on short-term "stimulus" programs, which provided little sustainable lift to the economy, and enacted and proposed significant tax increases for all Americans.*
> - *Offered no plan to reduce federal spending and stop the growth of the debt-to-GDP ratio.*
> - *Failed to propose Social Security reform and offered a Medicare proposal that relies on a panel of bureaucrats to set prices, quantities, and qualities of healthcare services.*
> - *Favored a large expansion of economic regulation across many sectors, with little regard for proper cost-benefit analysis and with a disturbing degree of favoritism toward special interests.*
> - *Enacted health care legislation that centralizes health care decisions and increases the power of the federal bureaucracy to impose one-size-fits-all solutions on patients and doctors, and creates greater incentives for waste.*
> - *Favored expansion of one-size-fits-all federal rulemaking, with an erosion of the ability of state and local governments to make decisions appropriate for their particular circumstances.*

We can't afford four more years of incompetence and failure. We need to ask ourselves what economists like Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams would do. And they wouldn't give Obama four more years. We need a change.

Coward Richard Dawkins flees from yet another debate, this time in Scotland

August 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

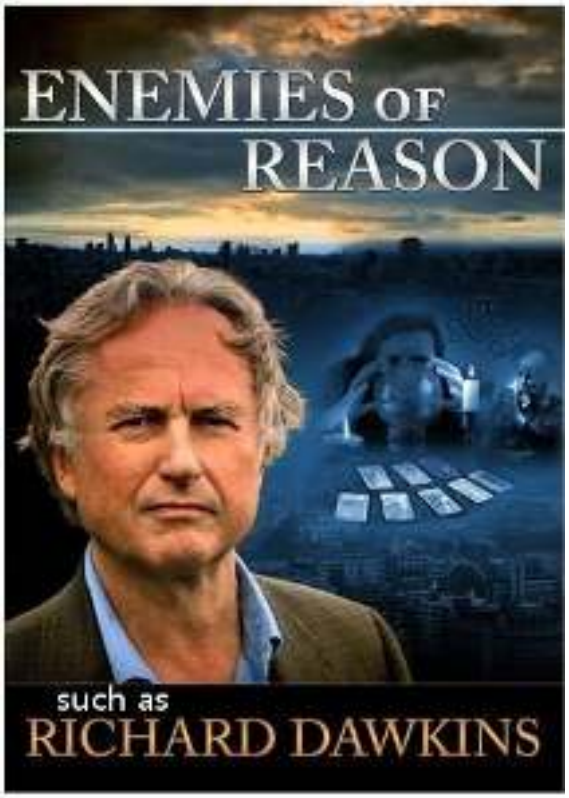

Will this fundamentalist charlatan ever debate?
(Image from Glenn Peoples)

Richard Dawkins has decided to visit Scotland, and the Free Church of Scotland (the so-called "Wee Frees") decided to challenge him to a debate. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> The Free Church of Scotland has challenged Richard Dawkins, the world-famous atheist, to a debate on his next visit to the Outer Hebrides.
>
> Professor Dawkins is headlining Faclan, the Hebridean Book Festival, on the Isle of Lewis where he is scheduled to promote his book the God Delusion on Friday 2 November.
>
> Despite calls of a boycott from a member of the Lord's Day Observance Society, Stornoway Free Church minister Reverend Iver Martin *(pictured below)*, who is minister of one of the biggest congregations on the island, said he welcomed the visit as an opportunity for debate.
>
> […]"The Free Church of Scotland endorses freedom of discussion and the exchange of argument.
>
> "However, with Richard Dawkins presenting a particularly one-sided narrative, I would hope that there would be opportunity for fair, even handed, reasoned

> debate at which both sides of the theistic argument can be heard."

Would Richard Dawkins, champion of militant fundamentalist atheism, rise to the challenge of debating his views in a public forum?

Of course not: (H/T Dina)

> A Scottish Church leader has labeled evolutionary biologist and famed atheist Richard Dawkins a "snob" over his decision to turn down a debate on religion. Dawkins has refused a debate invitation for the faith-themed Faclan Hebridean Book Festival in Scotland in November.
>
> The Rev David Robertson, a Free Church minister in Dundee, responded to Dawkins' decision to avoid debate by saying that he does not believe the atheist to be a "coward," but sees him as a "elitist snob, who once told me he would consider debating with me if I was the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Pope or Chief Rabbi."
>
> Robertson added: "Dawkins considers, like so many of his fellow new atheists, that there is no debate and they, and they alone, have the truth. Ironically, such arrogance and intolerance of others is the very definition of the fundamentalism that Dawkins professes to hate. I suspect that Richard Dawkins' problem is that he is not a good debater."

Yes, that's it exactly. He cannot bear to hear other viewpoints other than his own. He is not intelligent enough to prove what he asserts in private to a skeptical audience in public. That's why he doesn't debate in public. He would prefer to preach in private to those who accept his dogma, and to receive their praise and adulation – and their money!

If Dawkins did agree to have his ideas tested in a debate, it would be a good thing if whoever was doing the testing asked him why he affirms the moral goodness of adultery and infanticide, as well as asking him what he means by his desire to "destroy Christianity", especially given that he refuses to debate with Christians like William Lane Craig. Does he mean something similar to what his fellow atheists like Stalin and Mao meant, i.e. – mass murder? Or does he mean something else? It would be a good question to ask, anyway.

I don't want anyone to think that atheism is some sort of immature, non-cognitive tantrum that consists largely of insulting Christians and giggling like children who have discovered a new curse word. There are serious atheistic scholars, and they do debate. Richard Dawkins is not a serious scholar, and he does not debate his views. He is therefore very much like those sweating, foam-flecked televangelists you see bloviating on the telly on Sunday mornings. All bluster, no substance.

Is Medicare in a debt crisis? Does Medicare need to be reformed?

August 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Medicare is a social program that pays for the health care and prescription drugs of seniors. Forbes magazine explains the basic facts of the Medicare funding situation.

First, the facts:

> Often lost in the campaign rhetoric and obscured by the opinionated news dominating the television and print media are the following background facts about Medicare, America's most burdensome entitlement program given both the demographics and the growth expected in health care costs:
>
> • **Medicare is a taxpayer funded, government-run insurance program that is financially unsustainable in its current form**. By all estimates, Medicare is spiraling into bankruptcy, with an unfunded liability of almost $38 trillion and a hospital insurance trust fund that will become insolvent in 2024, according to the 2012 Medicare Trustees Report.
>
> • **Medicare was *already* the single insurance program most likely to reject a claim, compared to all of the eight comparable *private* insurance plans studied** in the AMA 2008 National Health Insurance Report Card. This rejection rate was double that of the private insurers' average – those very same insurance companies vilified by President Obama as denying coverage to Americans.
>
> • **An increasing proportion of doctors are *already* not accepting Medicare patients.** A 2008 report by the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, an independent federal panel, said that 29 percent of its beneficiaries who were looking for a primary care doctor had a problem finding one. A 2008 survey by the Texas Medical Association that found that only 58 percent of the state's doctors accepted new Medicare patients, and only 38 percent of primary care doctors did, a number shrinking due to government-decreed payment that is lower than cost. In the 2008 HSC national tracking survey, more than 20 percent of primary care doctors accepted no new Medicare patients (only 4.5 percent accepted no new privately insured patients) and about 40 percent of primary care doctors and 20 percent of specialists refused most new Medicare patients.

The rest of the article compares the Obama and Ryan plans for reforming Medicare.

Here's a snippet:

> President Obama's plan for Medicare will not simply reduce access to doctors. According to the Medicare Trustees, Medicare payment reductions under the new law will cause hospitals, nursing facilities, and home health agencies to

> operate *at a loss* – 15 percent lose money by 2019, 25 percent by 2030, and 40 percent by 2050. The Trustees Report concluded the obvious – health care providers "would have to withdraw from serving Medicare beneficiaries, or shift substantial portions of Medicare costs to their non-Medicare, non-Medicaid payers." Can American families with private insurance who already pay almost $1,800 per year – extra – for the underpayment by Medicare and Medicaid, subsidizing public insurance by more than $88 billion dollars per year, afford to add even more because of the president's law?
>
> Signed into law by President Obama is another nefarious method of reducing Medicare payments. A wholly unaccountable, government appointed 15-member Independent Payment Advisory Board, the IPAB, does not just "recommend" changes to reimbursements. It has unprecedented power to reduce (but not to increase) payments to doctors that the Secretary of Health and Human Services is *required* to implement. To be sure, the IPAB acts independently of the people, immune from Congressional oversight, and even beyond control of the judiciary – ensured in language within the law that isolates it from repeal.

The Paul Ryan plan changes nothing about Medicare for Americans 55 and older. Those who are younger than 55 will be given the option of choosing a private plan and then paying for it with a voucher provided by the government.

GAO study: EPA regulations will kill coal plant jobs and raise energy prices

August 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> New regulations issued by the Environmental Protection Agency will lead to the closure of older, coal-fired power plants and boost electricity prices in some parts of the country, according to a new report from the Government Accountability Office.
>
> The GAO, at the behest of Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), reviewed a host of information from government sources such as the EPA and Energy Information Agency (EIA) as well as private energy-sector forecasters to determine the likely impact of four new EPA regulations aimed at coal-fired power plants.
>
> […]GAO found that as many as 12 percent of coal-fired power plants may be closed because the EPA regulations make it too expensive for power companies to operate them, despite coal being one of world's cheapest fuels.
>
> "It is uncertain how power companies may respond to four key Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations, but available information suggests companies may retrofit most coal-fueled generating units with controls to reduce pollution, and that 2 to 12 percent of coal-fueled capacity may be retired," GAO said.
>
> These changes – either installing expensive retrofits or closing power plants – will drive up electricity prices by as much as 13.5 percent in some areas of the country.
>
> "Available information suggests these actions would likely increase electricity prices in some regions," GAO said. "Regarding prices, the studies GAO reviewed estimated that increases could vary across the country, with one study projecting a range of increases from 0.1 percent in the Northwest to an increase of 13.5 percent in parts of the South more dependent on electricity generated from coal."
>
> Coal is the country's single-largest source of electricity, accounting for 42 percent of power generation in 2011, GAO reported.
>
> […]The regulations at issue were all put in place by President Obama's EPA to deal with power plant emissions and industrial waste called coal ash, the byproduct of burning coal.

This is another issue to communicate to everyone who will be voting in November. We already have price inflation from rising gas prices due to insufficient energy production at

home, as well as currency inflation from several rounds of money printing and debt monetization. If we have to add to that higher electricity costs, then we really will be in trouble.

CBO: If Bush tax cuts are not renewed, America is headed for another recession

August 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> About 1.6 million American jobs hang in the balance. That is the clear implication of analysis contained in the annual budget update by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).
>
> Along with all manner of dire and dreary budget data reflecting President Obama's budget and economic policies to date, CBO provides its assessment of what would happen if the President and Congress sit on their respective hands and fail to defuse the threats of Taxmageddon and the fiscal cliff. The answer is fairly simple: recession.
>
> As CBO so diplomatically put it, "such fiscal tightening will lead to economic conditions in 2013 that will probably be considered a recession."
>
> Taxmageddon is the $500 billion tax hike slated to take effect on January 1, while the fiscal cliff consists of Taxmageddon plus various spending reductions—among them the sequestration left over from the disastrous negotiations that led to the Budget Control Act in 2011.
>
> According to CBO's analysis, if Congress defuses Taxmageddon and the fiscal cliff, then the economy will grow at a tepid 1.7 percent in 2013 and the unemployment rate will remain stuck around 8 percent. But if President Obama and Congress play chicken with Taxmageddon and fail to act, then the economy will contract by about 0.5 percent and the unemployment rate will shoot up to 9.1 percent, about halfway back to the peak from the past recession.
>
> Forget percentages—what does this mean in actual jobs lost if President Obama and Congress fail to act? It means roughly 1.6 million more Americans will be out of work—on top of the 12.8 million who already want to work but can't find jobs.
>
> Just about every relevant school of economics, from the President's pure Keynesianism to supply-side and neoclassical persuasions, tells much the same tale on net: Raising tax rates on a weak economy produces a weaker economy. It's not terribly complicated.

Here's my advice: This time, let's elect someone with someone with experience in business administration and economics.

Atheist Thomas Nagel defends the scientific value of intelligent design

August 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> In September, Oxford University Press officially releases the hardcover version of a new book by renowned philosopher Thomas Nagel at New York University. It's a bombshell.
>
> Already available on Kindle, Nagel's book carries the provocative title *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False*. You read that right: The book's subtitle declares that "the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is **Almost Certainly False**." Nagel is an atheist who is not convinced by the positive case for intelligent design. But he clearly finds the evidence for modern Darwinian theory wanting.

Nagel writes:

> In thinking about these questions I have been stimulated by criticisms of the prevailing scientific world picture… by the defenders of intelligent design. Even though writers like Michael Behe and Stephen Meyer are motivated at least in part by their religious beliefs, the empirical arguments they offer against the likelihood that the origin of life and its evolutionary history can be fully explained by physics and chemistry are of great interest in themselves. Another skeptic, David Berlinski, has brought out these problems vividly without reference to the design inference. Even if one is not drawn to the alternative of an explanation by the actions of a designer, the problems that these iconoclasts pose for the orthodox scientific consensus should be taken seriously. They do not deserve the scorn with which they are commonly met. It is manifestly unfair.

Read the rest here. Thomas Nagel previously named Stephen C. Meyer's "Signature in the Cell" a Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year. He is a very independent thinker, and very honest about his motivations and the evidence.

Eight tips for talking to non-Christians about Christianity

August 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Stand to Reason – some excellent tactical advice from a master apologist.

Here's the setup:

> I overheard a conversation on the airplane coming back from my vacation in Wisconsin. A Christian gentleman was vigorously sharing his faith with a gentleman in the seat directly behind me. There are some things we can learn, both good and bad, from what I overheard and take his effort—which was a good one—and channel it in a little bit more constructive direction.
>
> So I am going to give you eight points of application.

And here are my favorites from his list:

> **3. Try to stay away from religious language, terminology, and religious affect.** This person was very religious in his whole approach. I think this is hard for us as Christians because we are brought up in a Christian environment and it's natural for us to talk this way, but it sounds weird to people outside of that environment. I think there are a lot of people who may be, in principle, interested in a bona fide, genuine relationship with God through Jesus Christ but who are not interested in the Christian religion as they perceive it. This is where I think a lot of the emergent guys have a legitimate bone to pick with Evangelicalism. Let's try not to sound like Bible-thumping fundamentalists if we can avoid it, even if that's what we are, because there's no need to sound that way if it puts people off. Find another way to communicate the message. Just talk in a straightforward manner. Be conscious of using religious language the other person may not understand or may think is strange. Avoid all of that so they can hear the message you're trying to communicate.
>
> **4. Focus on the truth, not personal benefits of Christianity.** I appreciated the gentleman's approach in that he kept talking about truth. One person he was talking to said he liked reincarnation. The Christian man said that even if he liked reincarnation that that didn't make it true if it's not true. Liking something is not going to change reality. That's a great point. He was focusing on the truth claims of Jesus. He wasn't giving a bunch of promises. He wasn't saying, "Jesus is my ice cream. He's a great flavor. Try him to see if you like him, too." Or, "Try Jesus because he'll make your life so wonderful." Focus on truth and not personal benefits.
>
> **5. Give evidence.** This gentleman was giving all kinds of evidence for his seatmates to consider. Good for him! You should too. You know why? Because people in the Bible did, too. Jesus, Paul, Peter, all the Apostles. If you look at the

> details of how they communicated their faith they gave evidence for the truth of what they were saying about Jesus. In fact, if you want to get the content of the Gospel, one of the most famous passages for the articulation of the Gospel is the beginning of 1 Corinthian 15. Paul gives all kinds of evidence. It's all right there as he is explaining the Gospel. We see that all through the New Testament. So give evidences. It's appropriate. People do respond to that even in a postmodern age.

I remember that I was once working in Chicago, and after a particular good apologetics discussion with a team of engineers, I apologized to them all for being so exclusive and a fundamentalist. These guys all had MS and PhD degrees in computer science from top schools like Stanford, Purdue, U of I, NIU and Northwestern. They said "you're not a fundamentalist". And I said, "but I am ultra-conservative in my theology!". And they said "That's ok – as long as you have considered different points of view and you have objective evidence, then somehow it doesn't sound fundamentalist".

I think that's something that we need to work on. When Christianity is about truth, it's open to investigation using public evidence. At work, I have explained the structure of DNA molecules in the office and had people rolling their chairs out of their cubicles to come and see me draw amino acid chains on a white board, and calculate the probabilities with a calculator. You can be a fundamentalist, without sounding like a fundamentalist. You just have to focus on public, testable evidence.

Look here:

Make religion about truth – not personal preferences. They respect that way of talking – as long as you bring the science and the history.

Mitt Romney unveils detailed energy plan to create jobs and lower gas prices

August 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Yahoo News.

Excerpt:

> Mitt Romney unveiled an energy plan Thursday that would give states the power to determine whether drilling and mining should occur on federal lands within their borders as part of a larger effort to increase domestic oil, coal and natural gas production and achieve energy independence by 2020.
>
> […]**Under current law, the federal government controls oil, coal and gas permits for federal lands. But Romney argued determination should be up to state officials, insisting individual states are in a better position to "develop, adopt and enforce regulations" on local basis than the federal government–which his campaign says has been unduly influenced by Washington politics.**

This is going to get him some votes in North Dakota, Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Alaska, etc. We have a lot of energy just waiting to be extracted from the Bakken an Shale and the Marcellus Shale, for example. Just keep the federal government out it and get on with getting the price of gas back under $2. Put people back to work, too.

> A policy paper released ahead of the candidate's speech by the Romney campaign argues President Barack Obama "has intentionally sought to shut down oil, gas and coal production in pursuit of his own alternative energy agenda."
>
> Romney said that loosening regulations on the energy industry will benefit taxpayers by lowering gas costs and reducing the cost of consumer goods, which have increased as companies pay higher energy prices. He'll argue that allowing more federal drilling would not only bring money back into the nation's budget but would result in lower energy prices that could create jobs, lower the trade deficit and increase the nation's security.
>
> "Three million jobs come back to this country by taking advantage of something we have right underneath our feet. That's oil, and gas, and coal. We're going to make it happen. We're going to create those jobs," Romney said Thursday. "Let me tell you what else it does. It adds $500 billion to the size of our economy. That is more good wages. That's an opportunity for more Americans to have a bright and prosperous future."
>
> The push is part of what Romney touted as an effort to achieve energy independence by 2020, a plan that also includes expanding offshore energy development along the coast of Virginia and North and South Carolina as well as

> approval of the Keystone energy pipeline linking Canada to the United States.

I think that Romney is doing a good job now of articulating specific policies that will fix the economy.

Graduate students with non-STEM degrees increasingly dependent on welfare programs

August 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Excerpt:

> Melissa Bruninga-Matteau, a medieval-history Ph.D. and adjunct professor who gets food stamps: "I've been able to make enough to live on. Until now."
>
> "I am not a welfare queen," says Melissa Bruninga-Matteau.
>
> That's how she feels compelled to start a conversation about how she, a white woman with a Ph.D. in medieval history and an adjunct professor, came to rely on food stamps and Medicaid. **Ms. Bruninga-Matteau, a 43-year-old single mother** who teaches two humanities courses at Yavapai College, in Prescott, Ariz., says the stereotype of the people receiving such aid does not reflect reality. Recipients include growing numbers of people like her, the highly educated, whose advanced degrees have not insulated them from financial hardship.
>
> "I find it horrifying that someone who stands in front of college classes and teaches is on welfare," she says.
>
> Ms. Bruninga-Matteau grew up in an upper-middle class family in Montana that valued hard work and saw educational achievement as the pathway to a successful career and a prosperous life. She entered graduate school at the University of California at Irvine in 2002, idealistic about landing a tenure-track job in her field. She never imagined that she'd end up trying to eke out a living, teaching college for poverty wages, with no benefits or job security.
>
> Ms. Bruninga-Matteau always wanted to teach. She started working as an adjunct in graduate school. This semester she is working 20 hours each week, prepping, teaching, advising, and grading papers for two courses at Yavapai, a community college with campuses in Chino Valley, Clarkdale, Prescott, Prescott Valley, and Sedona. Her take-home pay is $900 a month, of which $750 goes to rent. Each week, she spends $40 on gas to get her to the campus; she lives 43 miles away, where housing is cheaper.
>
> **Ms. Bruninga-Matteau does not blame Yavapai College for her situation but rather the "systematic defunding of higher education."** In Arizona last year, Gov. Jan Brewer, a Republican, signed a budget that cut the state's allocation to Yavapai's operating budget from $4.3-million to $900,000, which represented a 7.6 percent reduction in the college's operating budget. The cut led to an 18,000-hour reduction in the use of part-time faculty like Ms. Bruninga-Matteau.
>
> "The media gives us this image that people who are on public assistance are

> dropouts, on drugs or alcohol, and are irresponsible," she says. **"I'm not irresponsible. I'm highly educated.** I have a whole lot of skills besides knowing about medieval history, and I've had other jobs. I've never made a lot of money, but I've been able to make enough to live on. Until now."

She's irresponsible, because she expects the people who choose to study rather difficult and unpleasant subjects like nursing and computer science and economics to pay for her lifestyle through taxation and "higher education funding". I do think it's important to point out that the main driver of higher tuition is increasing government funding of education, and that this increasing funding of higher education is nothing but corporate welfare.

Excerpt:

> The most obvious way that colleges might capture federal student aid is by raising tuition. Research to date has been inconclusive, but Stephanie Riegg Cellini of George Washington University and Claudia Goldin of Harvard have provided compelling new analysis. Cellini and Goldin looked at for-profit colleges, utilizing the key distinction that only some for-profit schools are eligible for federal aid. Riegg and Goldin find that that aid-eligible institutions "charge much higher tuition … across all states, samples, and specifications," even when controlling for the content and quality of courses. The 75 percent difference in tuition between aid-eligible and ineligible for-profit colleges — an amount comparable to average per-student federal assistance — suggests that "institutions may indeed raise tuition to capture the maximum grant aid available."

Here are some of the comments that I posted in a Facebook discussion about the CHE story:

> I know that some may disagree with me, but this is why people need to focus on STEM fields and stay away from artsy stuff and Ph.Ds in general. We are in a recession. Trade school and STEM degrees only until things improve.
>
> Also, no single motherhood by choice. Get married before you have children, and make sure you vet the husband carefully for his ability to protect, provide, commit and lead on moral and spiritual issues. This woman is not a victim. She chose her life, and the rest of us are paying for it. Nice tattoos by the way – that will really help when she's looking for a job.
>
> I am actually better at English than computer science, but I find myself with a BS and MS in computer science. We don't get to do what we like. We do what we have to in order to be effective as Christians. According to the Bible, men have an obligation to not engage in premarital sex, and to marry before having children, and to provide for their families, or they have denied the faith. I would like to have studied English, but the Bible says no way.
>
> I have no problem with people who can make a career out of the arts, like a

> Robert George or a William Lane Craig. But you can't just go crazy. And I think men have a lot less freedom than women to choose their major, we have the obligation to be providers and we have to be selected by women based on whether we can fulfill that role (among other roles).
>
> Women have more freedom because they are not saddled with the provider role like men are. However, I think that the times now are different than before. There is more discrimination against conservatives on campus in non-STEM fields and fewer non-STEM jobs in a competitive global economy. The safest fields are things like petroleum engineering, software engineering, etc.
>
> If [people who major in the humanities] can make a living and support a family without relying on government-controlled redistribution of wealth, then I salute and encourage you. If you rely on the government, know that this money is being taken away from those who are doing things they don't like at all in order to be independent and self-reliant. It is never good to be dependent on government. That money comes from people like me.

In response to an artsy challenger:

> I am happy to be scorned by those who make poor choices so long as I can have my money back from them so that I can pursue my dreams. I didn't see any of these artsy people in the lab at 4 AM completing their operating system class assignments, nor do I see them here working overtime on the weekend in the office. They can say anything and feel anything they want, and write plays and poetry all about their feelings, too. Just give me the money I earned back first. It's not their money. They have no right to it.

One person asked why I was "always winter, never Christmas, and I replied:

> It is Christmas for the Christians who I send books and DVDs to, as well as for the Christian scholars I support, and the Christian conferences, debates and lectures I underwrite across the world. Unfortunately, every dollar taken from me is a dollar less for that Ph.D tuition of a Christian debater, a dollar less for the flight of that Christian apologetics speaker, a dollar less for that textbook for that Christian biology student, and a dollar less for the flowers being sent to that post-abortive woman who I counseled who is now in law school. I have a need for the money I earn, and when it's sent to Planned Parenthood to pay for abortions by the government, my plan to serve God suffers. And finally, should I ever get married, I would like my wife to have the option of staying home with the children and even homeschooling them. That costs money. Somehow, I feel that given the choice between my homeschooling wife and the public school unions, the government will choose to give my money to the unions. Just a hunch.

I think that people should go into the humanities when they are serious about making a career of it and can get the highest grades. But if they are coasting and only getting Bs and Cs and not paying attention in class, then drop out and go to trade school. Don't

complain later when you can’t find a job. STEM careers pay the most.

15 top-earning degrees

1	Petroleum engineering	$83,121
2	Chemical engineering	$64,902
3	Mining engineering	$64,404
4	Computer engineering	$61,738
5	Computer science	$61,407
6	Electrical engineering	$60,125
7	Mechanical engineering	$58,766
8	Industrial engineering	$58,358
9	Systems engineering	$57,438
10	Engineering technology	$56,447
11	Actuarial science	$56,320
12	Aeronautical engineering	$56,311
13	Agricultural engineering	$54,352
14	Biomedical engineering	$54,158
15	Construction management	$53,199

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND EMPLOYERS

Top-earning degrees / college majors

Here’s my previous post on the woman who accumulated $185,000 of student debt studying the humanities and is likewise demanding handouts and claiming not to be responsible.

Looking for a good movie this weekend? Try Dinesh D'Souza's "2016"

August 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A review of the movie"2016: Obama's America" – a project of Indian-American Christian apologist Dinesh D'Souza.

Excerpt:

> My wife and I went to see a showing of the film at the Regal theater in Winter Park Village. It was about three-quarters full. We didn't go with a group but noticed that many in the audience came in groups of more than just a single couple. There were also examples of grandparents, parents and children. At the end of the film, the audience broke into loud and spontaneous applause. Was this only due to the film "playing to the choir"?
>
> In part perhaps, but in the next few weeks I predict it will reach the audience we most need to reach -young voters -and are the most avid movie goers and the least likely to be reached by more traditional methods.
>
> […]Dinesh D'Souza is an engaging, attractive dark skinned immigrant from India whose life and career follows in parallel with Obama's – born and married in the same years and able to judge American institutions and values from a third world perspective.
>
> The film does not accept any of the more controversial attacks on Obama's biography but seeks to explain how his own words and thoughts cited continually throughout the film from the President's autobiography 'Dreams From My Father' are a thread running through his policies and are at the core of what motivates him and makes him intent on downsizing, disarming, and apologizing for America, abandoning out allies such as Great Britain, Israel and Poland, fawning and bowing before Muslim despots, and seeking to create a society where individual initiative, ambition and self-reliance are replaced by the collectivist goals that have failed all over the world.
>
> […]*2016* examines Barack Obama's relationship with his absent father who was an activist in the anti-colonial struggle against the British, and following independence became part of that elite clique who fostered a one party bureaucratic, socialist state in Kenya that crushed all local government and free initiative resulting in a downward spiral of economic stagnation and poverty shared by Obama's half-brother in the slums of Nairobi.
>
> […]We follow the President's life in where his mother remarries a local Indonesian man (also a Muslim, Lolo Soteiro), who eventually becomes a successful businessman and in so doing, alienates Obama and his mother who believe they are betraying the socialist and collectivist legacy of Barack Obama

> Senior.
>
> This psychological portrait is one that makes sense and can be understood and appreciated by many young people who are themselves the product of homes in which there is divorce and remarriage.
>
> The President's endorsement of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement extends to the world stage in which the antagonists are portrayed as the 99% – the occupied and the exploitative 1 % – the occupiers.
>
> Obama emotionally sympathizes with all those he places in the category of the victims of the colonialist white European nations (the one-percenters), returning the bust of Churchill, the gift of the British government, praising Islam as a progressive force while denying its oppression of women, children, non-Muslim minorities, his policies towards third world nations such as Mexico and Brazil whom his policies have encouraged to develop their oil industries while retarding our own, secretly supporting Argentina in its attempt to seize the Falkland Islands from Britain by force, pressuring Israel (regarded too as "occupiers") to retreat from defensible borders, total passivity in failing to support the millions of demonstrators in the street against the tyrannical regime of the mullahs in Iran, etc.
>
> Most damning of all are the close associations of the President and his most important mentors ignored by the media and Senator John McCain's campaign in 2004 – convicted terrorist Bill Ayers, the "Reverend Wright (God Damn America and its "Liberation Theology" church in Chicago) and long-time Communist party member Frank Marshall Davis.
>
> This is a powerful film that will exert a profound influence. As the billboards and advertisements on television proclaim… Love Him or Hate Him, you need to see this film.

Does that sound good or what? There's a lot of talk about how this election needs to be about grown up ideas. I think that these long form arguments elevate, rather than lower, the debate. We need to have adult conversations about who Obama is and what his policies are intended to achieve – what is his end game?

Trailer 1 of 3:

Trailer 2 of 3:

Trailer 3 of 3:

Here's Dinesh explaining what his movie is about at CPAC 2012:

Keep in mind that Dinesh is a Christian apologist and has debated people like Christopher Hitchens. This is his newest project.

Go see it!

Friday night movie: Sink the Bismarck! (1960)

August 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.4/10]

IMDB median rating: [7/10]

Description:

> In 1939, the Nazi Germany's largest and most powerful battleship, *Bismarck*, is launched in a ceremony at Hamburg with Adolf Hitler attending. The launching of the hull is seen as the beginning of an era of German sea power. Two years later, in 1941,British convoys are being ravaged by U-boats and surface raider attacks which cut off supplies which Britain needs to continue the war. In May, British intelligence discovers the *Bismarck* and the heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen* are about to break into theNorth Atlantic to attack convoys.
>
> The man assigned to coordinate the hunt is the Admiralty's chief of operations, Captain Jonathan Shepard (Kenneth More), who has been distraught over the death of his wife in an air raid and the sinking of his ship by German ships commanded by Admiral Günther Lütjens (Karel Štěpánek). Upon receiving his new post, Shepard discovers Lütjens is the fleet commander on the *Bismarck*. Shepard's experience of conflict with the German Navy and his understanding of Lütjens allow him to predict the*Bismarck*'s movements. Shepard is aggressive to his staff but comes increasingly to rely on the coolness and skill of his assistant, WREN Second Officer Anne Davis (Dana Wynter).

Below are the combatants.

The German battleship Bismarck:

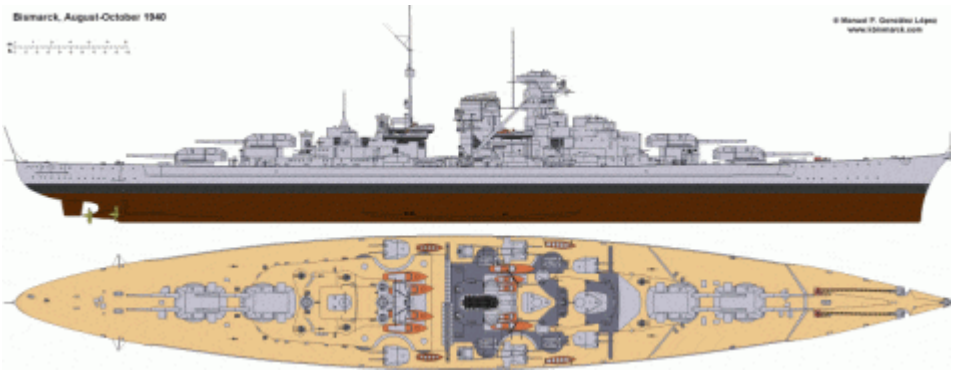

The Bismarck (click for larger image)

The aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal:

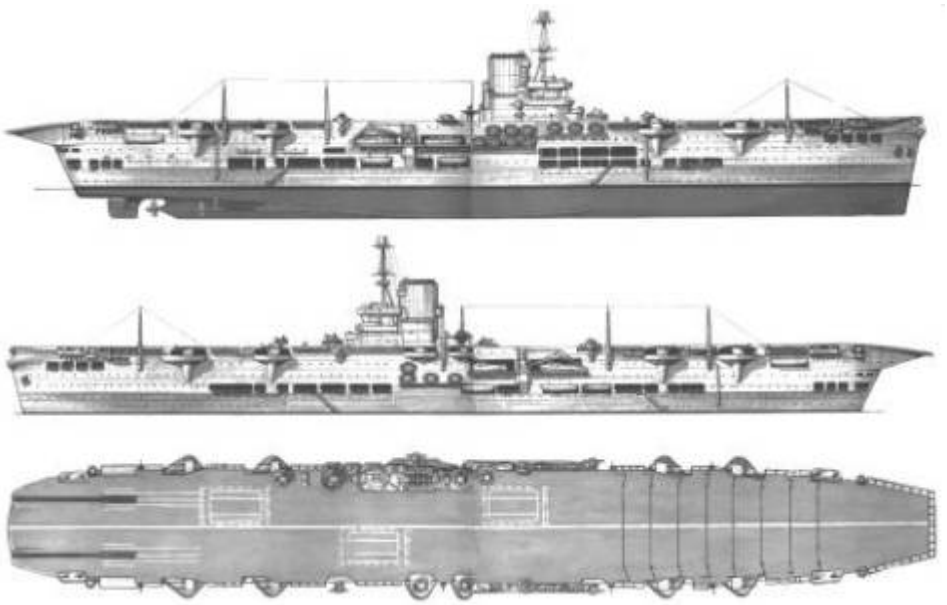

HMS Ark Royal (click for larger image)

I had some fun on Thursday night watching military documentaries, which is one of my favorite things to do. In addition to watching a documentary about my beloved Challenger 2 tank and a clip on reactive armor, I found this documentary on battleship evolution from World War 1 to World War 2, and this documentary on the sinking of the German battleship Bismarck and this documentary on the German battleship Tirpitz. The documentary on battleship evolution even mentioned Army Air Service Brig. Gen. Billy Mitchell, the air force pioneer who warned American military planners that battleships were being eclipsed by aircraft carriers. And he was right about that, though no one listened to him. No one, that is, except one Douglas MacArthur! If you watch nothing else, click through and read the story of Billy Mitchell and how he bravely spoke out in favor of air power, and took his lumps for it.

So why did battleships become extinct? Well, you can get a lot more range and striking power out of several squadrons of bombers and torpedo bombers than you can out of 16 or even 18 inch guns. In fact, you'll see the torpedo bombers of the HMS Ark Royal face off against the Bismarck in the movie. Today, naval warfare is conducted with surface-to-surface missiles like the Tomahawk and the SS-N-27 Sizzler, etc. as well as air-to-surface missiles fired from land and carrier based strike aircraft. The range of these missiles is far greater than the range of the deck guns on any battleship. However, there is work being done on rail guns which may force a return to conventional deck guns, especially for operations like shore bombardments where you want to use cheaper munitions!

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: The Crossing (2000)
- Friday night movie: The Great Escape (1963)
- Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)
- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)

- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

John Hawkins: 40 reasons to not re-elect Barack Obama

August 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On Townhall.com. Don't worry, I linked to the printable version.

Excerpt:

> 2) Barack Obama's stimulus plan cost more than the **Marshall Plan, the Louisiana Purchase, and putting a man on the moon — combined** and it was a complete and utter failure — more than 800 billion dollars that accomplished nothing of significance.
>
> 3) If Barack Obama is re-elected, Obamacare will go into effect in 2014. This will lead to huge doctor shortages, exploding health care costs, companies dropping insurance, death panels, much longer waits to see a doctor, and a dramatic deterioration in the quality of American medical care.
>
> 4) Do you believe that your taxes should go up in the next four years? Well, Barack Obama does,
>
> "Nobody's looking to raise taxes right now. We're talking about potentially 2013 and the out years." — **Barack Obama**
>
> 5) Even the left-wingers at *Politifact* admit that Obama broke his **promise to cut the deficit in half by the end of his first term**.
>
> 6) America lost its **AAA credit rating** for the first time since 1917 on Obama's watch.
>
> 8) Barack Obama called George Bush *"unpatriotic"* for adding so much to the debt. Yet, Obama added more debt in **3 years and 2 months** than Bush did in both terms.

I was going to write a post like this myself! But this one will do.

Explosion at government-run Amuay refinery, nationalized by Venezuela in 1976

August 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez very different?

In the United States, we've been seeing some efforts by the Marxist Obama administration to nationalize the auto industry and health care, too. This is what communists favor as the alternative to the free-market system. It makes sense, then, to look at how well the nationalization of assets, especially those owned by foreign-owned private companies, works out in the real world.

Let's see:

> The **Creole Petroleum Corporation** was an American oil company, formed in 1920 to produce fields on Lake Maracaibo, Venezuela.[1] The company was acquired by Standard Oil of New Jerseyin 1928. Until 1951 Creole Petroleum was the world's number one oil producer.[2]
>
> In 1950, Creole opened its refinery at Amuay.[3] This is now a part of the Paraguaná Refinery Complex.
>
> The Venezuelan assets of Creole Petroleum Corporation were nationalized along with those of other foreign oil firms on January 1, 1976, becoming part of Lagoven, a Venezuelan government-owned operating company.[4]

And here is the latest triumph of Marxist economics in Venezuela:

> A huge explosion rocked Venezuela's biggest oil refinery early Saturday, killing at least 24 people and injuring more than 80 others in the deadliest disaster in memory for the country's key oil industry.
>
> Balls of fire rose over the Amuay refinery, one of the largest in the world, in video posted on the Internet by people who were nearby at the time.

> At least 86 people were injured, nine of them seriously, Health Minister Eugenia Sader said at a hospital where the wounded were taken. She said 77 people suffered light injuries and were released from the hospital.
>
> Officials said those killed included a 10-year-old boy, but that most of the victims were National Guard troops stationed at the refinery.

Filthy capitalist dogs! Making money on the backs of the poor workers! Making them work in filthy, unsafe – oh, wait. When workers are left free to take their skills to a number of private employers, then those employers are pressured to provide them with better working conditions, wages and benefits. Otherwise the employees leave for better companies. The only problem is that it doesn't work if all the industries are state-run monopolies. Then, you just get KA-BOOM!

All you have to do to understand economic systems is to compare capitalist Chile with communist Venezuela. The people are the same, and both started out poor. One embraced free trade and privatization, and now that one is rich. The other one gets Chernobyl explosions because they elected a Marxist.

Venezuela's economic policy is the same economic policy that Barack Obama wants to force on us with his takeover of General Motors, his frequent bailouts, his give-aways to campaign fundraisers, his blocking of free trade deals, his heavy-handed anti-business regulations, and his other intrusions into the private sector. Our entire economy is going KA-BOOM right now because of Marxism.

Related posts

- Socialist Hugo Chavez begins to use his new dictatorial powers
- Obama's buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
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- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
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- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
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U.S. government persecutes pastor for helping bio-mom escape with daughter

August 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Lydia McGrew writes about it on What's Wrong With The World blog.

Excerpt:

> Several years ago I blogged here about the case of Lisa Miller. Brief background summary: Lisa Miller entered into a lesbian civil union in Vermont with Janet Jenkins. During this civil union, Miller conceived and bore a child by using a sperm donor. The little girl, Isabella, was only eighteen months old when Miller left the relationship and formally broke it up legally. Miller converted to Christianity, left the homosexual lifestyle behind her, and fled to Virginia to keep her child away from Jenkins, who represented all that she had repented of and was now leaving behind. Jenkins, let us bear in mind, is not in any way related to Isabella and has not lived with her since she was eighteen months old.
>
> Vermont courts, to whom the custody decision was ultimately given, treated the unrelated lesbian Jenkins as Isabella's "other mother" and insisted on unsupervised visitation, even though Jenkins was, from Isabella's perspective, a stranger. Isabella made some of these visits but was so upset by them (and alleged that Jenkins had bathed with her naked) that Miller refused to allow any more such visits with Jenkins, who had neither any natural claim on Isabella whatsoever nor any relationship with her. Eventually the custody judge decided to punish Miller for her intransigence concerning the unsupervised visits and ordered that Miller *give Isabella over* entirely, full custody, to live in Vermont with Jenkins. Late in 2009, Miller fled with her daughter, then age seven.

So, the courts gave full custody of the daughter to the *partner of the biological mother*. A woman who has no biological connection to the child, over the wishes of the child's biological mother. This is the stuff that Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse is always warning us about. She wasn't kidding.

And now, here's the latest news about that story, from that same post:

> Lisa Miller and Isabella got away successfully to Nicaragua, which does not have an extradition agreement with the United States for cases of kidnapping, or as in this case, "kidnapping." Here, the "kidnapping" involves a mother trying to save her own child from being turned over to an entirely unrelated female sodomite to be raised.
>
> As it turns out, though, the federal government joined in the fray. They have now caught and convicted Mennonite Pastor Kenneth Miller (no relation) of helping Lisa Miller in her escape. It sounds to my ears like there could be more trials and convictions on the horizon as well. Meanwhile, Jenkins has filed civil suit against

> the pastor and at least one other person who helped Lisa Miller to escape. Even if Jenkins never gets her trophy-child, her quest for revenge will not cease until she has destroyed the lives of all those who helped to thwart her pursuit of Lisa Miller and Isabella.

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse has argued that far from getting the government out of marriage, government's decision to equate same-sex unions with opposite sex unions would open all kinds of government intervention into families.

Contrasting two approaches to religion: truth vs crutch

August 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I went to church today and we got a sermon from a guest speaker who espouses the standard felt needs / mysticism / Bible-verses-as-incantation-with-magical-powers view of evangelism.

I just thought that I would write it down while it was fresh in my mind. So below I'll contrast my view of evangelism with what I will call the felt needs view of evangelism.

1) Who is to be evangelized?

> My view: anyone, with an emphasis on people who are willing to listen to your evidence and change their mind on that basis
>
> Felt needs view: People who are poor, ignorant, sick or who are grieving a recent death in the family, people who do not make decisions based on truth and evidence, but on emotions and superstition

2) What is the central issue in evangelism?

> My view: the truth of the propositions, e.g. – does God exist, did Jesus rise from the dead
>
> Felt needs view: making people feel good by telling them pleasing things that they have no basis for believing

3) How is the gospel preached?

> My view: you explain the truth claims of the Christian faith then appeal to objective evidence, especially from science and history
>
> Felt needs view: you knock on stranger's doors and tell them how you used to be bad and unhappy and now you're good and happy and you achieved this by reading the Bible, singing songs, attending church and believing things that you are not able to give an answer for

4) Why should we adopt your view of evangelism?

> My view: Because this is the same view of decision-making that is used in the business world, the scientific world, or any other human endeavor where we must make careful decisions about things that matter. And what's more, this method is Biblical – preparing a defense and presenting evidence IS the Biblical method of evangelism.
>
> Felt needs view: once upon a time some Muslims had a death in their family and I baked them a cake and then they were all in my church 2 weeks later – all 13 of them! That really happened! Oh oh, and there was an old woman on a bus and

> she converted the bus driver when he annoyed at a red light by telling him that Jesus would turn the light green if he believed in Jesus, and then the whole busload of people converted, too! That really happened! You just have to "share" your faith with people who have an emotional need and tell children Bible stories when they are 6 and 7!

I work with a lot of people that I meet through my blog on their skills and evangelism. One of them had a message waiting for me in my inbox when I got home talking about how she had had a discussion with an annoying atheist who disapproved of her spiritual life. She used the following arguments on him: kalam, fine-tuning, moral, intelligent design, resurrection. He responded with no arguments. She was very excited about it and very comfortable in her faith, and he went away without an excuse. Whether he has a need or not, he knows that ought to adopt Christianity because it is true. She presented it as true and his emotional state was irrelevant to the discussion.

In contrast, consider where the felt needs approach to evangelism leads:

> **Schuller:** Tell me, what do you think is the future of Christianity?
>
> **Graham:** Well, Christianity and being a true believer–you know, I think there's the Body of Christ. This comes from all the Christian groups around the world, outside the Christian groups. I think everybody that loves Christ, or knows Christ, **whether they're conscious of it or not**, they're members of the Body of Christ. And I don't think that we're going to see a great sweeping revival, that will turn the whole world to Christ at any time. I think James answered that, the Apostle James in the first council in Jerusalem, when he said that God's purpose for this age is to call out a people for His name.
>
> And that's what God is doing today, He's calling people out of the world for His name, whether they come from the Muslim world, or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world or the non-believing world, they are members of the Body of Christ because they've been called by God. **They may not even know the name of Jesus but they know in their hearts that they need something that they don't have**, and they turn to the only light that they have, and I think that they are saved, and that they're going to be with us in heaven.
>
> **Schuller:** What, what I hear you saying that it's possible for Jesus Christ to come into human hearts and soul and life, even if they've been born in darkness **and have never had exposure to the Bible**. Is that a correct interpretation of what you're saying?
>
> **Graham: Yes**, it is, because I believe that. I've met people in various parts of the world in tribal situations, that they have never seen a Bible or heard about a Bible, and never heard of Jesus, but they've believed in their hearts that there was a God, and they've tried to live a life that was quite apart from the surrounding community in which they lived.
>
> **Schuller:** I'm so thrilled to hear you say this. There's a wideness in God's mercy.

> **Graham:** There is. There definitely is.

If you don't think that the gospel is about sin, and a man dying on a cross for those sins and then rising from the dead, then you think it's about people's feelings, and all that's needed is for them to "believe" things that they have no reasons to believe, so that they will feel better about their need. Or, maybe they just have an emotional experience without believing anything about Christianity and that emotional experience helps their need. Being saved means having your needs met through belief in things you haven't investigated. This is the approach of evangelism used by many today – even by some guest speakers in my church. Read comforting words, tell comforting stories, believe in things you can't test or prove. Feel better. Avoid discussions and debates with people who have no needs and sufferings for you to exploit. If someone doesn't have a need to believe things that are true, then you have nothing to say to them. Do you know where atheists get the idea that Christians believe nonsense because they need a crutch in order to feel better about their weaknesses? They get it from us. We tell them that. We do.

One thing this annoying sermon did do was to cause me to pray about legitimate obstacles to evangelism. For example, I prayed that the laws that encourage people to silence and coerced Christians would be repealed. I prayed that people would be less insular about their own religions and be willing to listen to others from outside their faith. I prayed that people would choose their religion on the basis of truth and evidence, and not because of where they are born and what their families and communities require. I prayed that people stopped identifying religion with nationalism, race and culture. I prayed that people would dedicate more of their time to investigating what is really true using logic, science and history. I prayed that people would investigate whether anyone made the universe for a purpose, what happens when they die, and what Jesus claimed about such things when he was here among us. I prayed that the schools and the culture would not spread lies about behaviors and speculative theories that encourage people to get into sinful lifestyles before they have had the opportunity to investigate religion on the merits. And I prayed that the New Atheist caricature of faith as blind belief in order to address felt needs would not be adopted by Christians, and even by charismatic visiting Christian speakers speaking in my church.

Mark Steyn: the Democrat debt war on children

August 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review.

Excerpt:

> China becoming the world's biggest economy, another American downgrade, total U.S. liabilities equivalent to about three times the entire planet's GDP. A "non-partisan" Pew Research study says the American middle class faces its "worst decade in modern history" — and the first bump down starts on January 1: The equally "non-partisan" Congressional Budget Office now says that the tax and budget changes due to take effect at the beginning of 2013 will put the country back in recession and increase unemployment. This is a revision of their prediction earlier this year that in 2013 the economy would contract by 1.3 percent. Now they say 2.9 percent. These days, CBO revisions only go one way — down. They're gonna need steeper graph paper. In a global economy, atrophy goes around like syphilis in the Gay Nineties: A moribund U.S. economy further mires Europe, and both slow growth in China, which means fewer orders for resource-rich nations. . . . Four wheels spinning in the mud, and none with a firm-enough grip to pull the vehicle back on to solid ground.
>
> […]But don't worry, Obamacare will "lower costs." Since passage of the bill in 2010, the CBO has revised its estimate of Obamacare's gross costs over ten years. Can you guess in which direction, boys and girls? Yes, up from $944 billion to $1.856 trillion. That's some "revision." I wonder where it'll be in another two years.
>
> Well, I'm not the CBO, but I'll take a wild guess: Obamacare is going to be expensive on a scale unknown to European health systems. Look around you. Americans are not Swedes. Obesity rate in the United States: 36 percent; Sweden: 9.7 percent; Japan: 3.2 percent; China: 2.9 percent; India: 0.7 percent. Ours is a country where 78 million people (or about the entire population of Germany) are classified by the Centers for Disease Control as "obese" — including over 40 million women. If 40 million women have it, isn't that a "women's health" issue? Perhaps even a bigger "women's health" issue than the right of thirtysomething students to free contraception? It's the first thing the average American of, say, 1950 would notice if you catapulted him forward from his mid-century Main Street to today: not how amazing all these computer gizmos are, but how large and sick today's Americans look.
>
> […]So we can't fight a war in Afghanistan, but we can fight a "war on women" that only exists in upscale liberal feminists' heads. We can't do anything about exploding rates of childhood obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, but, if you define "health care" as forcing a Catholic institution to buy $8 contraception for

> the scions of wealth and privilege, we're right on top of it. And above all, we're doing it for the children, if by "doing it" you mean leaving them with a transgenerational bill unknown to human history — or engaging in what Boston University's Larry Kotlikoff, speaking at the International Institute of Public Finance in Dresden last week, called "child fiscal abuse."
>
> If that sounds a trifle overheated, how about . . . hmm, "legitimate fiscal rape"? No? Then let's call it a "war on children." Unlike the "war on women," it's real.

Are you a young person living with your parents with student loans and no job? Are you worried about how you will have to pay for ballooning entitlements for the elderly out of your future earnings? Then stop voting for Democrats.

Stuart Schneiderman: what do radical feminists want women to want?

August 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stuart Schneiderman on the message sent to young women by radical third-wave feminists.

Excerpt:

> If you yourself are wondering what women want, feminist author Hanna Rosin has the answer: women want to hook up.
>
> Rosin believes that hookups advance the cause of feminism. Women who hook up are more likely to be immune to the siren song of husband, home and family.
>
> If we ask what feminists want women to want, the answer is clear: feminists want women to repress their feminine mystique, the better to be good feminists.
>
> They do not just want women to adhere to feminist ideology, but they want women to live their lives as feminists want them to live their lives.
>
> Women's liberation seems merely to be a way for feminists to run women's lives. Having thrown off the shackles of the feminine mystique women are supposed to do what their feminist masters tell them to do.
>
> Young women are more willing to submit to random sexual encounters with men they barely know because feminism told them to do so.
>
> If these women are exposing themselves to repeated sexual traumas, then clearly the hookup culture is throwing women off of the family track and putting them squarely on the career track.
>
> Rosin states it clearly:
>
> To put it crudely, feminist progress right now largely depends on the existence of the hookup culture. And to a surprising degree, it is women—not men—who are perpetuating the culture, especially in school, cannily manipulating it to make space for their success, always keeping their own ends in mind. For college girls these days, an overly serious suitor fills the same role an accidental pregnancy did in the 19th century: a danger to be avoided at all costs, lest it get in the way of a promising future.
>
> Rosin would have been more accurate if she said that it is feminists like her who are perpetuating this culture.
>
> By warning women against serious suitors feminism is telling them to choose between hooking up or dating bad boys who will never cut it as husband material.
>
> Like most of the Pied Pipers of feminism Rosin sees a "promising future" only in career. She is not against eventual marriage but she is fantasizing when she

> claims that women who have spent their twenties in a relationship daze will wake up one day and jump right into a wonderful relationship with a wonderful man.
>
> In so saying, she is lying to young women.
>
> If a woman has developed the skills necessary to navigate the hook up culture she will not be developing the skills necessary to conduct a relationship, no less a marriage. Better yet, if she had learned that suitable suitors are toxic she will not suddenly decide that she wants one of them to ravish her.
>
> The psychic malformation she has suffered by living the feminist nightmare will preclude that kind of happy ending.

Read the second half of the post to see how young women who are taking this advice feel about it. They are doing it, but is it satisfying them?

Here is an article written by an academic feminist in the New York Times. (H/T Stuart Schneiderman)

Stuart exegetes the article:

> In Bauer's words: "If there's anything that feminism has bequeathed to young women of means, it's that power is their birthright. Visit an American college campus on a Monday morning and you'll find any number of amazingly ambitious and talented young women wielding their brain power, determined not to let anything– including a relationship with some needy, dependent man– get in their way. Come back on party night, and you'll find many of these same girls… wielding their sexual power, dressed as provocatively as they dare, matching guys drink for drink– and then hook up for hook up."
>
> Given the relatively lesser body mass of women compared with that of men, matching men drink for drink is a fool's errand. Anyone who glorifies such behavior has completely lost touch with reality.
>
> And why should Bauer be in awe of the fact that these girls can match men, hook up for hook up? If these women are so desirous of becoming unique individual self-creations, why should they be trying to emulate male behavior?
>
> And let's not overlook the piece of undisguised contempt for "some needy, dependent man" with whom these women might have relationships. The latest wave of feminism prefers hooking up to relationships.
>
> According to Bauer, the party ends with said liberated empowered inebriated woman down on her knees. As Bauer so nicely expresses it: "When they're on their knees in front of a worked-up guy they just met at a party, they genuinely feel powerful– sadistic even."

Sometimes we get commenters who question whether feminism has anything to do with the behavior of women that we see today in college campuses. And to find out the truth, you have to read the elite feminists at the modern universities who have been grading the papers of women for the last 40 years. Was this alcohol-drenched hook-up culture

unexpected by these elite academic feminists? On the contrary. It was their goal.

Feminists wanted to abolish the distinctions between men and women. They decided to achieve this by encouraging women to act like men. And the men they chose to emulate were alpha-male bad boys, since these are the men that women who don't like marriage seem to really admire. Academic feminists like Bauer believe that women are happier now than they ever have been, with all this hooking up and being raised without fathers. They think they've won.

I think that women should go to college and work a couple of years before marrying and having children. I think that mothers should stay home with children younger than 6, at least, and maybe even stay home until the children are working. I am curious to know if any of my female readers were ever told by older women not to focus on finding a man in their 20s. Are young women really being told by older women to play the field and to have a good time and to not marry too soon? Because that's bad advice. Men are most interested in marriage in their 20s once they get a marketable degree and a good-paying job that they've been in a few years straight.

Atheist Massimo Pigliucci gives helpful advice on how to be a skeptic

August 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Rationally Speaking blog, some good tips from a skeptic named Massimo Pigliucci on how to be skeptical. (H/T Ratio Christi Ohio State University via J Warner Wallace)

Excerpt:

> I have been an active member of the self-described Community of Reason since about 1997. By that term I mean the broad set encompassing skeptics, atheists and secular humanists (and all the assorted synonyms thereof: freethinkers, rationalists, and even brights). The date is easily explainable: in 1996 I had moved from Brown University — where I did my postdoc — to the University of Tennessee, were I was appointed assistant professor in the Departments of Botany and of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology. A few months after my arrival in Knoxville, the extremely (to this day) unenlightened TN legislature began discussing a billthat would have allowed school boards to fire teachers who presented evolution as a fact rather than a theory (it is both, of course). The bill died in committee (though a more recent one did pass, go Volunteers!), in part because of the efforts of colleagues and graduate students throughout the State.
>
> It was because of my local visibility during that episode (and then shortly thereafter because I began organizing Darwin Day events on campus, which are still going strong) that I was approached by some members of a group called "The Fellowship of Reason" (now the Rationalists of East Tennessee). They told me that we had much in common, and wouldn't I want to join them in their efforts? My first thought was that an outlet with that name must be run by cuckoos, and at any rate I had a lab to take care of and tenure to think about, thank you very much.
>
> But in fact it took only a couple more polite attempts on their part before I joined the group and, by proxy, the broader Community of Reason (henceforth, CoR). It has been one of the most meaningful and exhilarating decisions of my life, some consequences of which include four books on science and philosophy for the general public (counting the one coming out in September); columns and articles for Skeptic, Skeptical Inquirer, Free Inquiry, The Philosopher's Magazine and Philosophy Now, among others; and of course this blog and its associated podcast. I made many friends within the CoR, beginning with Carl Ledendecker of Knoxville, TN (the guy who originally approached me about the Fellowship of Reason), and of course including the editor and writers of Rationally Speaking.
>
> But… yes, there is a "but," and it's beginning to loom large in my consciousness, so I need to get it out there and discuss it (this blog is just as much a way for me

> to clarify my own ideas through writing and the feedback of others as it is a channel for outreach as an academic interested in making some difference in the world). The problem is that my experience (anecdotal, yes, but ample and varied) has been that there is quite a bit of un-reason within the CoR.

He's got a little list, he's got a little list:

> The list, incidentally, features topics in no particular order, and it would surely be nice if a sociology student were to conduct a systematic research on this for a thesis…

Click this link and read the full list. You will find yourself in agreement with *much* of what he says. In fact, this observation that skeptics can believe weird things was even highlighted in the Wall Street Journal a while back, and I wrote about it.

Just look at some of the items:

> Philosophy is useless armchair speculation. So is math. And logic. And all theoretical science.
>
> The notion of anthropogenic global warming has not been scientifically established, something loudly proclaimed by people who — to the best of my knowledge — are not atmospheric physicists and do not understand anything about the complex data analysis and modeling that goes into climate change research.
>
> Science can answer moral questions. No, science can *inform* moral questions, but moral reasoning is a form of philosophical reasoning. The is/ought divide may not be absolute, but it is there nonetheless.
>
> Science has established that there is no consciousness or free will (and therefore no moral responsibility). No, it hasn't, as serious cognitive scientists freely admit.
>
> Feminism is a form of unnecessary and oppressive liberal political correctness. Oh please, and yet, rather shockingly, I have heard this "opinion" from several fellow CoRers.
>
> Feminists are right by default and every attempt to question them is the result of oppressive male chauvinism (even when done by women). These are people who clearly are not up on readings in actual feminism (did you know that there have been several waves of it? With which do you best connect?).
>
> All religious education is child abuse, period. This is a really bizarre notion, I think. Not only does it turn 90% of the planet into child abusers, but people "thinking" (I use the term loosely) along these lines don't seem to have considered exactly what religious education might mean (there is a huge variety of it), or — for that matter — why a secular education wouldn't be open to the same charge, if done as indoctrination (and if it isn't, are you really positive that there are no religious families out there who teach doubt? You'd be surprised!).

About the author:

> **Massimo Pigliucci** (born January 16, 1964) is the chair of the Department of Philosophy at CUNY-Lehman College.[1] He is also the editor in chief for the journal Philosophy & Theory in Biology. Pigliucci was born in Monrovia, Liberia, although he was raised in Rome, Italy. He has a doctorate in genetics from the University of Ferrara, Italy, a Ph.D. in botany from the University of Connecticut, and a Ph.D. in philosophy of science from the University of Tennessee. He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and of the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry.

Massimo Pigliucci even debated William Lane Craig in 2001 at the University of Georgia:

Here's the review of their previous 1998 debate from Common Sense Atheism:

> **Craig vs. Pigliucci**
> Another typical debate in which Craig's skills totally smash his opponent. Atheists seem to think they need not prepare for a debate with Craig because he is just another wacko with an invisible friend who grants him magical wishes. I think they are all surprised by how plausible Craig can make such an absurd idea sound.

If you can't see the video, read the debate transcript at Leadership University or download the MP3 from Apologetics 315 (where else?). I would *love* to have such an intelligent skeptic as my friend, and you will too after you read his post. This is a must-read. You MUST READ IT. It is a great joy to have skeptics like Dr. Pigliucci out there, and I think that we should respect them and pray for them. These are the ones like Anthony Flew who interact with us in debates, and they can be persuaded if we have the right evidence and arguments to convince them.

New study: Children exposed to sex in films have sex earlier and have more partners

August 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this story from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Children who watch films with a high sexual content tend to lose their virginity earlier and have more partners, a study has found.
>
> Not only are they more promiscuous, they are also more likely to engage in risky sex by not using condoms.
>
> The six-year study of more than 1,200 teens refers to sexual content in films.
>
> […]The study on the effect on younger teenagers of sex in films was published in Psychological Science, the peer-reviewed journal of the Association for Psychological Science.
>
> Researchers from Dartmouth College, an Ivy League university in the US, surveyed 684 top-grossing movies from 1998 to 2004, and then coded them for sexual content.
>
> A film such as Eyes Wide Shut would be coded highly, while Lord Of The Rings: The Return Of The King would get a low coding. Although some of the films had 18-ratings, they could have been seen by younger children on DVDs at home.
>
> The researchers then recruited 1,228 youngsters aged between 12 and 14, and each was asked which films on the list they had seen from a number of different collections of 50 that were randomly selected.
>
> Six years later the same participants were surveyed to find out how old they were when they became sexually active and how risky their sexual behaviour might have been.
>
> The results indicated that exposure to sexual content in movies at an early age is likely to influence adolescents' sexual behaviour.

Previously, I have argued that early premarital sex and a high number of premarital sex partners are independent risk factors for marital instability. Parents should therefore be careful about what their children are exposed to in films, if they want their children to have a happy marriage.

Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument

August 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a must-listen interview from Apologetics 315.

Details:

> Today's interview is with Robin Collins, professor of philosophy at Messiah College. His training is in physics and in philosophy and he is a leading advocate for using the fine-tuning of the universe as a design argument for theism. He talks about his background and training, the fine-tuning argument, the different types of fine-tuning with examples and illustrations (laws, constants and initial conditions), two different ways of presenting the fine-tuning argument, answering common objections to the argument, the uniqueness of life, variations of the multiverse hypothesis, the failure of multiverse theory to explain away fine-tuning, objections to Victor Stenger, upcoming books, simplifying the fine-tuning argument for practical use, common mistakes when presenting the argument, the most common objection (*who designed God?*), and more.

Get the MP3 file from Apologetics 315.

Dr. Collins is extremely cautious and circumspect in his assessment of the fine-tuning argument. He takes the objections to the argument, like the multiverse, seriously and that comes across in the interview. He is familiar with criticisms of the argument and he has engaged with skeptics like Victor Stenger in his published work. I highly recommend it. It is a little more suited to intermediate-level Christians, but not so advanced that it's impossible for non-math beginners to follow the broad thrust of what's being said.

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered

> Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

You can read Robin Collins' testimony here.

The fine-tuning argument

Here's a short article where Collins gives TWO examples of the fine-tuning. He is very modest in his argument, merely asserting that the fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than it is with atheism.

Excerpt:

> Science is commonly thought to have undercut belief in God. As Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg famously remarked, "the more we find out about the universe, the more meaningless it all seems." Yet, the discoveries of modern physics and cosmology in the last 50 years have shown that the structure of the universe is set in an extraordinarily precise way for the existence of life; if its structure were slightly different, even by an extraordinarily small degree, life would not be possible. In many people's minds, the most straightforward explanation of this remarkable fine-tuning is some sort of divine purpose behind our universe.

> This fine-tuning falls into three categories: the fine-tuning of the laws of nature, the fine-tuning of the constants of physics, and the fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe. "Fine-tuning of the laws of nature" refers to the fact that if the universe did not have precisely the right combination of laws, complex intelligent life would be impossible. If there were no universal attractive force (law of gravity), for example, matter would be dispersed throughout the universe and the energy sources (such as stars) needed for life would not exist. Without the strong nuclear force that binds protons and neutrons together in the nucleus, there would not be any atoms with an atomic number greater than hydrogen, and hence no complex molecules needed for life. And without the Pauli-exclusion principle, all electrons would fall to the lowest orbital of an atom, undercutting the kind of complex chemistry that life requires.

> Some fundamental physical numbers governing the structure of the universe—called the constants of physics—also must fall into an exceedingly narrow range for life to exist. For example, many have estimated that the cosmological constant—a fundamental number that governs the expansion rate of empty space—must be precisely set to one part in 10^{120} in order for life to occur; if it were too large, the universe would have expanded too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form, and if it were too small, the universe would have collapsed back on itself. As Stephen Hawking wrote in his book A Brief History of Time, "The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life." Finally, the initial distribution of mass energy at the time of the big bang must have an enormously special configuration for life to

> occur, which Cambridge University mathematical physicist Roger Penrose has calculated to be on the order of one part in $10^{10^{123}}$. This is an unimaginably small number.

I know what you're thinking: How do we know that non-Christian scientists acknowledge the fine-tuning of gravity in the way that Collins describes?

Well, the New Scientist actually talks about the fine-tuning of the force of gravity. And they're not Christians.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe's birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15}at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Here's a very long paper by Collins on the fine-tuning argument, where he answers several objections to the argument, including the multiverse/many-universe hypothesis.

If you want a longer response to the multiverse argument, but you don't want to shell out big bucks for Collins' chapter in the "Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology", then you can just get James Sinclair's essay in "Contending With Christianity's Critics".

William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?

August 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the details of the debate that I got from Cloud of Witnesses:

> The OSU [Oregon State University] Socratic Club will sponsor a public dialogue entitled, "Two Philosophers Debate the Existence of God," on Monday, March 1, at 7 p.m. in the LaSells Stewart Center on the OSU campus. William Lane Craig will argue for the Christian view that a personal God exists and Victor J. Stenger the atheist position that there is no God.

In this debate, Victor Stenger does affirm his belief that the universe could be eternal in his second rebuttal (1:02:30), thus denying the standard Big Bang cosmology. He also denies the law of conservation of energy and asserts that something can come from nothing in his concluding speech (1:33:50). He also caused the audience to start laughing when he said that Jesus was not moral and supported slavery. There is almost no snark in this summary. Instead, I quoted Dr. Stenger *verbatim* in many places. I still think that it is very entertaining even without the snarky paraphrasing.

The debate includes 30 minutes of Q&A with the students.

Here is the MP3 file for the audio.

Here's the video of the debate:

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

- The ontological argument
- The contingency argument
- The cosmological argument
- The moral argument
- The resurrection of Jesus (3-fact version)
- Religious experience

Dr. Stenger's opening speech:

- There is no scientific evidence for God's existence in the textbooks
- There is no scientific evidence for God acting in the universe
- God doesn't talk to people and tell them things they couldn't possibly know
- The Bible says that the Earth is flat, etc.
- There is no scientific evidence that God answers prayers
- God doesn't exist because people who believe in him are ignorant
- Human life is not optimally designed and appears to be the result of a blind, ad hoc evolutionary process
- The beginning of the universe is not ordered (low entropy) but random and chaotic

- It’s theoretically possible that quantum tunneling explains the origin of the universe
- The laws of physics are not objectively real, they are “our inventions”
- Regarding the beginning of the universe, the explanation is that something came from nothing*
- Nothing* isn’t really nothing, it is “the total chaos that we project existed just before the big bang”
- If something has no structure, then “it is as much nothing as nothing can be”
- Consciousness is explainable solely on the basis of material processes
- There are well-informed, rational non-believers in the world and God would not allow that

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

Stenger’s argument that there is no objective evidence for God’s existence:

- First, it is not required that God rely only on objective evidence in order to draw people to himself (Alvin Plantinga)
- Second, God is not required to provide evidence to everyone, only to the people who he knows would respond to him
- Third, Craig gave lots of objective evidence, from science, history and philosophy
- Stenger asks for certain evidence (answered prayers, prophecy, etc.), but Craig presented the evidence we have

Stenger’s argument that the balance of energy is zero so “nothing” exists:

- if you have the same amount of assets and liabilities, it doesn’t mean that nothing exists – your assets and liabilities exist
- Christopher Isham says that there needs to be a cause to create the positive and negative energy even if they balance
- the quantum gravity model contradicts observations
- the vacuum is not the same as nothing, it contains energy and matter
- the BVG theorem proves that *any* universe that is expanding must have a beginning

Stenger’s argument that mental operations can be reduced to physical operations:

- mental properties are not reducible to physical properties
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with self-identity over time
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with thoughts about other things
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with free will
- substance dualism (mind/body dualism) is a better explanation for our mental experience
- God is a soul without a body

Dr. Stenger’s first rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- Craig’s premise is “everything has a cause”, but quantum mechanics has causeless events
- There are speculative theories about how something could have come into being uncaused out of nothing
- “I don’t know of a single working cosmologist today who believes there was a singularity prior to the Big Bang”
- “If there wasn’t a singularity then there’s no basis for arguing that time began at that point”
- “There’s no reason from cosmology that we know of that the universe can’t be eternal”
- “When I talk about an eternal universe, I mean a universe that has no beginning or end”
- The Hartle-Hawking model doesn’t have a beginning
- “There was no violation of energy conservation by having a universe coming from nothing”
- “The universe *could have* come from a previous universe for example or even just from a region of chaos”
- The paper by Vilenkin is counteracted by other papers (he doesn’t specify which ones)

Craig’s moral argument:

- Dr. Craig is arguing from ignorance
- But morality can be decided by humanity just like governments pass laws, and that’s objective
- Dr. Craig has too little respect for the human intellect
- I don’t need to tell me that slavery is wrong
- The Bible supports slavery
- Atheists can behave as good as theists
- Morality just evolved naturally as an aid to survival

Craig’s resurrection argument:

- No Roman historians wrote about the execution of Jesus but none of them did
- The empty tomb is doubtful because it is only mentioned in the gospels, not by Paul
- John Dominic Crossan says there was no empty tomb
- Christianity only survived because the Roman empire thought that they were useful

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- There is no reason to prefer an indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics
- Dr. Stenger himself wrote that deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics are possible

- The vacuum in quantum mechanics is not nothing
- The quantum vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal
- The cosmological argument does not require a singularity
- The Hartle-Hawking model is from 1983
- Hawking says that there is a beginning of space and time *after* that model
- The Hartle-Hawking model *does still have a beginning of time* – the model is not eternal
- The BVG theorem that requires a beginning for expanding universes is widely accepted among cosmologists

Craig's moral argument:

- Stenger redefined objective to mean that most people agree with it – but that's not what objective means
- Objective means right and wrong whether anyone accepts it or not
- Richard Dawkins himself says that on atheism there is "no evil and no good" – why is he wrong?
- Even Dr. Stenger says that morality is the same as passing laws – it's arbitrary and varies by time and place
- But on his view, right and wrong are the same as deciding which side of the road to drive on
- But somethings really are right and some things are really wrong

Craig's resurrection argument:

- Josephus is a Roman historian and he wrote about Jesus, for example
- There were four biographies of Jesus are the best sources for his life
- The scholars that Stenger mentioned are on the radical fringe

Dr. Stenger's second rebuttal:

Knowledge and the burden of proof:

- Dr. Craig has to bear the burden of proof, not me – because his claim is more "extravagant"
- "I don't have to prove that a God was not necessary to create the universe"
- "I don't have to prove that a God did not design the universe and life"
- "I don't have to prove that the universe did not have a beginning"
- "I don't have to prove that God did not provide us with our moral sense"
- There are a lot of books written about how morality evolved naturally
- "I don't have to prove that the events surrounding the supposed resurrection of Jesus did not take place"
- Bart Ehrman says that the gospels are generally unreliable (Note: Ehrman accepts all 3 of Craig's minimal facts)
- Just because people are willing to die for a cause, does not make their leader God,

e.g. – the Emperor of Japan

Aesthetic concerns about the universe:

- I don't like dark matter and I wouldn't have made the universe with dark matter
- I don't like the doctrine of penal substitution
- I don't like the doctrine of original sin
- I don't like the heat death of the universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion:

The case for atheism:

- Dr. Stenger had two arguments and he has to support his premises
- Dr. Craig addressed his two arguments and each premise and Dr. Stenger never came back on it

The contingency argument:

- Dr. Stenger has dropped the refutation of this argument

The cosmological argument:

- The theoretical vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal

The moral argument:

- He asserts that things are wrong, but there is no grounding for that to be objective on atheism

The resurrection of Jesus:

- There are surveys of scholars on the empty tomb and 75% of them agree with it
- Bart Ehrman agrees with all 3 of the minimal facts that Dr. Craig presented
- Ehrman's objection to the resurrection is not historical: he's an atheist – he thinks miracles are impossible

Religious experience:

- No response from Dr. Stenger

Dr. Stenger's conclusion

The cosmological argument:

- "I argued that we have very good physical reasons to understand how something can come from nothing"
- "There is a natural tendency in the universe… to go from.. simpler thing to the more complicated thing"

- The transition from a vapor to a liquid to ice shows how something could come from nothing
- “It cannot be proven that the universe had a beginning”

The moral argument:

- Objective morality, which is independent of what people think, could be developed based on what people think
- “Jesus himself was not a tremendously moral person… he had no particular regard for the poor… he certainly supported slavery… he was for the subjugation of women” (audience laughter)

The resurrection argument:

- Bart Ehrman says that the majority of the gospels are unreliable

Religious experience:

- I don’t see any evidence that there is anything more to religious experience than just stuff in their heads

God’s purpose of the world should be to make people feel happy:

- God could have made people feel happier
- God could have made people not die
- God could could have made the universe smaller: it’s too big
- God could have made it possible for humans to live anywhere “even in space”

New study: time spent with father increases teen's self-esteem

August 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Surprisingly, this story is from the radically left-wing, anti-marriage CNN.

Excerpt:

> The time teens spend specifically with their dads may have critical benefits, the study from Pennsylvania State University found. The more time spent alone with their fathers, the higher their self-esteem; the more time with their dads in a group setting, the better their social skills.
>
> "The stereotype that teenagers spend all their time holed up in their rooms or hanging out with friends is, indeed, just a stereotype," said Susan McHale, director of the Social Science Research Institute at Penn State. "Our research shows that, well into the adolescent years, teens continue to spend time with their parents and that this shared time, especially shared time with fathers, has important implications for adolescents' psychological and social adjustment."
>
> Researchers studied families with at least two children over a period of seven years.
>
> […]The study, published in the journal Child Development, found that kids spend less and less time with their parents in group settings as they go through their preteen and teenage years. But one-on-one time increases up until about age 12 and then stays relatively flat before starting to decline a bit around age 15, says Crouter.
>
> Parents spend roughly seven to eight hours a week in group settings with their kids ages 8 to 15, the study found. Mothers get in about an hour and 15 minutes alone with their firstborn kids and more than an hour and a half with second-born kids each week. Dads get in just over an hour of one-on-one time with first- and second-born kids each week.
>
> Numerous other studies have found benefits for kids who spend more time with their families, such as fewer delinquent behaviors and less likelihood to give in to peer pressure, the study notes.
>
> In this study, the findings about fathers proved to be very interesting, Crouter said.
>
> While increased time with Dad showed key benefits for self-esteem and "social competence," time with Mom did not show the same correlations.

Surprisingly, people today seem to be very much in favor of relaxing all rules around sex and marriage, so that it becomes less and less likely that children will grow up with a father. Make no mistake – the more people push for "non-judgementalism" about sexual

boundaries and marital roles, the more children will grow up fatherless. If we really cared about children, we would encourage people to do what works: chastity and fidelity.

New study: smoking marijuana/cannabis permanently lowers IQ

August 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Teenagers who regularly smoke cannabis are putting themselves at risk of permanently damaging their intelligence, according to a landmark study.
>
> Researchers found persistent users of the drug, who started smoking it at school, had lower IQ scores as adults.
>
> They were also significantly more likely to have attention and memory problems in later life, than their peers who abstained.
>
> Furthermore, those who started as teenagers and used it heavily, but quit as adults, did not regain their full mental powers, found academics at King's College London and Duke University in the US.
>
> They looked at data from over 1,000 people from Dunedin in New Zealand, who have been followed through their lives since being born in 1972 or 1973.
>
> Participants were asked about cannabis usage when they were 18, 21, 26, 32 and 38. Their IQ was tested at 13 and 38. In addition, each nominated a close friend or family member, who was asked about attention and memory problems.
>
> About one in 20 admitted to starting cannabis use before the age of 18, while a further one in 10 took up the habit in the early or mid 20s.
>
> Professor Terrie Moffitt, of KCL's Institute of Psychiatry, who contributed to the study, published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, said "persistent users" who started as teenagers suffered a drop of eight IQ points at the age of 38, compared to when they were 13.

The truth is that permissive drug policies have been tried and they have *failed*.

Excerpt:

> Amsterdam authorities say they are to halve the number of brothels and marijuana shops in the city's "red light" district and surrounding area

> The city announced plans to clean up the area a year ago and since then 109 sex "windows", from which prostitutes attract customers, have been closed. The new measures aim to reduce the number of windows to 243 from 482 last year, a city spokesman said.
>
> Amsterdam also wants to close half of the 76 cannabis shops in the city centre.
>
> "Money laundering, extortion and human trafficking are things you do not see on the surface but they are hurting people and the city. We want to fight this,"

> deputy mayor of Amsterdam Lodewijk Asscher told Reuters.
>
> “We can still have sex and drugs but in a way that shows the city is in control.”
>
> Prostitution was legalised in the Netherlands in 2000 and its soft drug policy, one of the most liberal in Europe, allows the sale of marijuana and possession of less than 5 grams (0.18 oz).

> But Amsterdam’s toughening line is part of a wider trend in Holland.
>
> Two Dutch cities near the Belgian border want to close all their cannabis shops to combat drug tourism and crime.
>
> The 800-year-old red light district needs to diversify and showcase the city’s history, Mr Asscher said.
>
> “This is a nice, old part of town. We can attract different groups of tourists. You should be able to have a beer at the old church square, watch fashion, and visit Chinatown,” he added.

The Family Research Council explains how permissive drug policies don’t actually work as advertised anywhere they’ve been tried.

Excerpt:

> Legalizers believe most black market and organized syndicate involvement in the drug business would die and that drug-induced crime would decrease with drug legalization. But these assertions are not supported by the facts. The United States experimented with legalization and it failed. From 1919 to 1922, government-sponsored clinics handed out free drugs to addicts in hopes of controlling their behavior. The effort failed. Society’s revulsion against drugs, combined with enforcement, successfully eradicated the menace at that time.[32]
>
> California decriminalized marijuana in 1976, and, within the first six months, arrests for driving under the influence of drugs rose 46 percent for adults and 71.4 percent for juveniles.[33] Decriminalizing marijuana in Alaska and Oregon in the 1970s resulted in the doubling of use.[34] Patrick Murphy, a court-appointed lawyer for 31,000 abused and neglected children in Chicago, says that more than 80 percent of the cases of physical and sexual abuse of children now involve drugs. There is no evidence that legalizing drugs will reduce these crimes, and there is evidence that suggests it would worsen the problem.[35]
>
> Legalization would decrease drug distribution crime because most of those activities would become lawful. But would legalization necessarily reduce other drug-related crime like robbery, rape, and assault? Presumably legalization would reduce the cost of drugs and thus addicts might commit fewer crimes to pay for their habits. But less expensive drugs might also feed their habit better, and more drugs means more side effects like paranoia, irritability and violence. Suggestions that crime can somehow be eliminated by redefining it are spurious.

> Free drugs or legalizing bad drugs would not make criminal addicts into productive citizens. Dr. Mitchell S. Rosenthal, expert on drugs and adolescents and president of Phoenix House, a resident treatment center in New York, said, “If you give somebody free drugs you don’t turn him into a responsible employee, husband, or father.”[36] The Justice Department reports that most inmates (77.4 percent male and 83.6 percent female) have a drug history and the majority were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of their current offense. And a surprisingly large number of convicted felons admit their crime motive was to get money for drugs. For example, 12 percent of all violent offenses and 24.4 percent of all property offenses were drug-money motivated.[37]
>
> […]The extent to which individuals commit “drug-related crimes only” is overstated. Most incarcerated “drug”offenders violated other laws as well. Princeton University professor John Dilulio found that only 2 percent — i.e., 700 — of those in federal prisons were convicted of pure drug possession. They generally committed other and violent crimes to earn a sentence.[40]
>
> However, 70 percent of current inmates were on illegal drugs when arrested and, if drugs become cheaper, violent crime could reasonably be expected to increase.[41]

How well did permissive drug laws work in other countries?

> History provides evidence that legalization of drugs in foreign nations has not been successful. For example, opium was legalized in China earlier this century. That decision resulted in 90 million addicts and it took a half-century to repair the damage.[59]
>
> Egypt allowed unrestricted trade of cocaine and heroin in the 1920s. An epidemic of addiction resulted. Even in Iran and Thailand, countries where drugs are readily available, the prevalence of addiction continues to soar.[60]
>
> Modern-day Netherlands is often cited as a country which has successfully legalized drugs. Marijuana is sold over the counter and police seldom arrest cocaine and heroin users. But official tolerance has led to significant increases in addiction. Amsterdam’s officials blame the significant rise in crime on the liberal drug policy. The city’s 7,000 addicts are blamed for 80 percent of all property crime and Amsterdam’s rate of burglary is now twice that of Newark, New Jersey.[61] Drug problems have forced the city to increase the size of the police force and the city fathers are now rethinking the drug policy.[62]
>
> Dr. K. F. Gunning, president of the Dutch National Committee on Drug Prevention, cites some revealing statistics about drug abuse and crime. Cannabis use among students increased 250 percent from 1984 to 1992. During the same period, shootings rose 40 percent, car thefts increased 62 percent, and hold-ups rose 69 percent.[63]

> Sweden legalized doctor prescriptions of amphetamines in 1965. During the first year of legalization, the number of intravenous"speed" addicts rose 88.5 percent. A study of men arrested during the legalization period showed a high correlation between intravenous use and a variety of crimes.[64]
>
> Dr. Nils Bejorot, director of the Swedish Carnegie Institute and professor of social medicine at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, believes the solution to the growing drug problem is consistent social and legal harassment of both users and dealers.[65]
>
> Great Britain experimented with controlled distribution of heroin between 1959 and 1968. According to the British Medical Journal, the number of heroin addicts doubled every sixteen months and the increase in addicts was accompanied by an increase in criminal activity as well.[66] And British authorities found that heroin addicts have a very good chance of dying prematurely. On the crime front, Scotland Yard had to increase its narcotics squad 100 percent to combat the crime caused by the "legal" addicts.[67]
>
> The Swiss opened a "legalized drug" area in Zurich seven years ago and local addicts were given drugs, clean needles, and emergency medical care. Unfortunately, the liberal policy backfired and the number of addicts surged to 3,500; violence surged, too. "Needle Park," as it came to be known, was a place of open warfare among rival gangs, and even police faced gunfire. Their cars were attacked and overturned. In February 1995, officials ended the experiment, conceding that it had evolved into a grotesque spectacle.[68]

Why does legalizing drugs increase crime? Because drugs are addictive and they cost money to obtain. Addiction reduces the ability to hold down a job, which is a legal way of getting money. Therefore, addicts will resort to crime in order to get the money to buy their drugs, since their addiction impairs their ability to hold down a job.

Richard Bauckham and James Crossley debate the reliability of the gospels

August 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A leading New Testament scholar from Cambridge, Dr. Richard Bauckham, was recently on the radio program 'Unbelievable?' which is on the Premier Christian Radio network.

Bauckham was arguing that the Gospels are based on eyewitness accounts and therefore should be regarded as fundamentally trustworthy.

Joining him was New Testament historian Dr. James Crossley, discussing the implications of Bauckham's work and whether the Gospel of John was written by the disciple John himself, as Bauckham claims. Dr. Crossley is one of my favorite atheist debaters. He is a professor at the University of Sheffield.

It is well worth the listen.

Part 1 – (1 hr 20 mins)
Part 2 – (1 hr 20 mins)

Crossley debated against William Lane Craig before here and he debated against Michael Bird as well (part 1, part 2).

NDP scandal: New Democrat Party forced to return $344,000 of illegal donations

August 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of Canada

Ezra Levant writing on Brian Lilley's Lilley Pad blog.

Excerpt:

> The largest case of illegal elections financing in Canadian history was revealed this week — $344,000 illegally funnelled to the NDP by big Canadian labour unions.
>
> In Canada it is against the law for corporations or unions to give any money to political parties. Only individuals are allowed to, and that amount is capped at about $1,100 a person.
>
> But the NDP set up a scheme to dodge the law. They sold extremely expensive "sponsorships" at their big convention to labour unions, $344,000 worth.
>
> […]Here's the thing, it's all illegal. You can be fined $5,000 or even sentenced to five years in jail. But that didn't happen. Elections Canada didn't prosecute under the law. It didn't take the NDP or the unions to court. It didn't demand penalties or convictions. It just let the NDP and the unions go — a freebie.
>
> And the media? Crickets. Where are the calls for prosecution — not just of the NDP, but of the unions? Where are the screaming headlines, the in-depth mini-documentaries, the front-page stories? The biggest case of election financing fraud in Canadian history — and not a single front page?

I think that if the Republicans ever get into power down here again, the first thing they

should do is ban all campaign contributions by large corporations and unions. Large corporations and most unions give almost exclusively to the political left. We should shut them down here.

Video and transcript of the Paul Ryan speech at the GOP 2012 convention

August 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remarks by Vice Presidential candidate Paul Ryan at the 2012 GOP Convention in Tampa, Florida.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 3 of 3:

Full text is here.

First excerpt on Obama's stimulus waste:

> Right now, 23 million men and women are struggling to find work. Twenty-three million people, unemployed or underemployed. Nearly one in six Americans is living in poverty. Millions of young Americans have graduated from college during the Obama presidency, ready to use their gifts and get moving in life. Half of them can't find the work they studied for, or any work at all.
>
> So here's the question: Without a change in leadership, why would the next four years be any different from the last four years?
>
> The first troubling sign came with the stimulus. It was President Obama's first and best shot at fixing the economy, at a time when he got everything he wanted under one-party rule. It cost $831 billion – the largest one-time expenditure ever by our federal government.
>
> It went to companies like Solyndra, with their gold-plated connections, subsidized jobs, and make-believe markets. The stimulus was a case of political patronage, corporate welfare, and cronyism at their worst. You, the working men and women of this country, were cut out of the deal.
>
> What did the taxpayers get out of the Obama stimulus? More debt. That money wasn't just spent and wasted – it was *borrowed*, spent, and wasted.
>
> Maybe the greatest waste of all was time. Here we were, faced with a massive job crisis – so deep that if everyone out of work stood in single file, that unemployment line would stretch the length of the entire American continent. You would think that any president, whatever his party, would make job creation, and nothing else, his first order of economic business.
>
> But this president didn't do that. Instead, we got a long, divisive, all-or-nothing attempt to put the federal government in charge of health care.
>
> Obamacare comes to more than two thousand pages of rules, mandates, taxes, fees, and fines that have no place in a free country.
>
> The president has declared that the debate over government-controlled health

> care is over. That will come as news to the millions of Americans who will elect Mitt Romney so we can repeal Obamacare.
>
> And the biggest, coldest power play of all in Obamacare came at the expense of the elderly.
>
> You see, even with all the hidden taxes to pay for the health care takeover, even with new taxes on nearly a million small businesses, the planners in Washington still didn't have enough money. They needed more. They needed hundreds of billions more. So, they just took it all away from Medicare. Seven hundred and sixteen billion dollars, funneled out of Medicare by President Obama. An obligation we have to our parents and grandparents is being sacrificed, all to pay for a new entitlement we didn't even ask for. The greatest threat to Medicare is Obamacare, and we're going to stop it.

And another on Obama's spending and debt:

> Obamacare, as much as anything else, explains why a presidency that began with such anticipation now comes to such a disappointing close.
>
> It began with a financial crisis; it ends with a job crisis.
>
> It began with a housing crisis they alone didn't cause; it ends with a housing crisis they didn't correct.
>
> It began with a perfect Triple-A credit rating for the United States; it ends with a downgraded America.
>
> It all started off with stirring speeches, Greek columns, the thrill of something new. Now all that's left is a presidency adrift, surviving on slogans that already seem tired, grasping at a moment that has already passed, like a ship trying to sail on yesterday's wind.
>
> President Obama was asked not long ago to reflect on any mistakes he might have made. He said, well, "I haven't communicated enough." He said his job is to "tell a story to the American people" – as if *that's* the whole problem here? He needs to talk more, and *we*need to be better listeners?
>
> Ladies and gentlemen, these past four years we have suffered no shortage of words in the White House. What's missing is leadership in the White House. And the story that Barack Obama does tell, forever shifting blame to the last administration, is getting old. The man assumed office almost four years ago – isn't it about time he assumed responsibility?
>
> In this generation, a defining responsibility of government is to steer our nation clear of a debt crisis while there is still time. Back in 2008, candidate Obama called a $10 trillion national debt "unpatriotic" – serious talk from what looked to be a serious reformer.
>
> Yet by his own decisions, President Obama has added more debt than any other president before him, and more than all the troubled governments of Europe

> combined. One president, one term, $5 trillion in new debt.
>
> He created a bipartisan debt commission. They came back with an urgent report. He thanked them, sent them on their way, and then did exactly nothing.
>
> Republicans stepped up with good-faith reforms and solutions equal to the problems. How did the president respond? By doing nothing – nothing except to dodge and demagogue the issue.
>
> So here we are, $16 trillion in debt and still he does nothing. In Europe, massive debts have put entire governments at risk of collapse, and still he does nothing. And all we have heard from this president and his team are attacks on anyone who dares to point out the obvious.
>
> They have no answer to this simple reality: We need to stop spending money we don't have.

And one more on Obama's assault on job creators:

> After four years of government trying to divide up the wealth, we will get America creating wealth again. With tax fairness and regulatory reform, we'll put government back on the side of the men and women who create jobs, and the men and women who need jobs.
>
> My Mom started a small business, and I've seen what it takes. Mom was 50 when my Dad died. She got on a bus every weekday for years, and rode 40 miles each morning to Madison. She earned a new degree and learned new skills to start her small business. It wasn't just a new livelihood. It was a new life. And it transformed my Mom from a widow in grief to a small businesswoman whose happiness wasn't just in the past. Her work gave her hope. It made our family proud. And to this day, my Mom is my role model.
>
> **Behind every small business, there's a story worth knowing. All the corner shops in our towns and cities, the restaurants, cleaners, gyms, hair salons, hardware stores – these didn't come out of nowhere. A lot of heart goes into each one. And if small businesspeople say they made it on their own, all they are saying is that nobody else worked seven days a week in their place. Nobody showed up in their place to open the door at five in the morning. Nobody did their thinking, and worrying, and sweating for them. After all that work, and in a bad economy, it sure doesn't help to hear from their president that government gets the credit. What they deserve to hear is the truth: Yes, you did build that.**
>
> We have a plan for a stronger middle class, with the goal of generating 12 million new jobs over the next four years.
>
> In a clean break from the Obama years, and frankly from the years before this president, we will keep federal spending at 20 percent of GDP, or less. That is enough. The choice is whether to put hard limits on economic growth, or hard

> limits on the size of government, and we choose to limit government.

And one more on liberty and personal responsibility:

> College graduates should not have to live out their 20s in their childhood bedrooms, staring up at fading Obama posters and wondering when they can move out and get going with life. Everyone who feels stuck in the Obama economy is right to focus on the here and now. And I hope you understand this too, if you're feeling left out or passed by: You have not failed, your leaders have failed you.
>
> **None of us have to settle for the best this administration offers – a dull, adventureless journey from one entitlement to the next, a government-planned life, a country where everything is free but us.**
>
> **Listen to the way we're spoken to already, as if everyone is stuck in some class or station in life, victims of circumstances beyond our control, with government there to help us cope with our fate.**
>
> **It's the exact opposite of everything I learned growing up in Wisconsin, or at college in Ohio. When I was waiting tables, washing dishes, or mowing lawns for money, I never thought of myself as stuck in some station in life. I was on my own path, my own journey, an American journey where I could think for myself, decide for myself, define happiness for myself. That's what we do in this country. That's the American Dream. That's freedom, and I'll take it any day over the supervision and sanctimony of the central planners.**

This was the speech of the convention, which is why I am blogging on it. Don't miss it.

Related posts

- Paul Ryan and his mother explain their commitment to Medicare
- Paul Ryan speaks at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation in May 2012
- Analyzing Romney's choice of Paul Ryan for VP
- Paul Ryan's Path to Prosperity plan balances the budget without raising taxes
- Paul Ryan questions Chief Actuaries of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security
- Paul Ryan fact checks Obama's budget: is there really $4 trillion in deficit reduction?
- Paul Ryan takes Obama's State of the Union speech apart
- Paul Ryan teams up with Democrat Ron Wyden to push Medicare reform plan
- Budget guru Paul Ryan discusses the economy at the Heritage Foundation
- Paul Ryan explains how raising taxes hurts job creation
- Paul Ryan explains why the millionaire tax causes unemployment to rise
- Paul Ryan: cut current spending, cap future spending and balance the budget
- Paul Ryan talks about the looming American debt crisis
- Where does Paul Ryan stand on foreign policy and social issues?
- Paul Ryan responds to his critics on Medicare reform

- What’s wrong with the American economy and how Paul Ryan would fix it
- Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann will respond to State of the Union address
- Republican Paul Ryan proposes over 6 trillion in spending cuts
- Paul Ryan discusses economics at the liberal Brookings Institute
- Paul Ryan explains taxes and spending to Chris Matthews
- Paul Ryan takes on Democrat Brad Sherman on the worsening economy
- Paul Ryan debates Democrat Robert Reich on Larry Kudlow show
- Paul Ryan debates on the relationship between tax rates and job creation
- Paul Ryan talks about health care with Chris Matthews and Chris Wallace
- Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander
- Paul Ryan discusses Obamacare and the federal budget
- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan’s plan for economic recovery
- Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama’s 1.56 trillion budget deficit
- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama’s record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism

New study: Obama’s new automobile regulations will raise car prices by $4,800

August 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> Obama’s astonishing takeover of the automobile industry, unlike his health care takeover, occurred without even a vote of Congress. Yesterday, to much fanfare, the administration announced its astonishing ratcheting up of vehicle fuel economy standards to 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025. These regulations — I call them “ObamaCar” — were accomplished not through open debate in Congress, but through corrupt backroom deals in which our elected officials had no voice.
>
> ObamaCar will, according to the administration’s own estimates, add over $2,900 to the price of a new car. This low-ball estimate was created by using a brand-new cost-estimating methodology that uses arbitrary factors to produce a cost estimate for a vehicle considerably lower than the total cost of its individual parts.
>
> An analysis by the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA), which followed the government’s usual methodology, found the cost impact would be $4,800 per vehicle. But NADA also found that even the usual methodology has historically underestimated the actual cost impact by an enormous factor. NADA suggests a worst-case scenario of a $12,349-per-vehicle price jump.
>
> Even using the EPA’s official low-ball estimate, NADA’s analysis found that “6.8 million licensed drivers will no longer qualify for a loan on that least expensive new vehicle.” So people will buy used cars, or drive their old cars longer. There will be less efficient, dirtier vehicles on the road, and reliable, affordable transportation will be much less accessible.
>
> And if you can afford a car under ObamaCar, will it actually be a car you want to drive? Even the vaunted hybrids only get around 35 to 40 miles per gallon — if you’re light on the gas. Cato scholar Pat Michaels has observed that the third-generation Prius maxes out at 50 miles per gallon, but its vehicle weight is too heavy to get much more than that. At 54.5 miles per gallon, cars will be smaller, lighter, less crash-worthy, less powerful, and less comfortable than you can even imagine. A nice-sized family vehicle? Good luck.

Obama is trying to save the environment. So what if your cars cost more? So what if lighter cars don’t protect you as well as a heavier car? You peasants shouldn’t be driving a car at all – cars are only for your betters in government! It’s Obamanomics.

Paul Ryan fact check: Was the GM plant in Janesville closed in 2008 or 2009?

August 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News sets the record straight.

Excerpt:

> In his speech accepting the Republican nomination for vice president, Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.) told the story of a General Motors factory in his hometown of Janesville, Wisconsin, accusing President Obama of failing to keep a campaign promise to keep the plant open.
>
> "My home state voted for President Obama. When he talked about change, many people liked the sound of it, especially in Janesville, where we were about to lose a major factory," Ryan said Wednesday.
>
> "Right there at that plant, candidate Obama said: 'I believe that if our government is there to support you … this plant will be here for another hundred years.' That's what he said in 2008. Well, as it turned out, that plant didn't last another year. It is locked up and empty to this day. And that's how it is in so many towns today, where the recovery that was promised is nowhere in sight."
>
> Ryan's claims received widespread criticism from the Obama campaign and many liberal media outlets.
>
> "He even dishonestly attacked Barack Obama for the closing of a GM plant in his hometown of Janesville, Wisconsin — a plant that closed in December 2008 under George W. Bush," Obama campaign manager Jim Messina said in an email to supporters Thursday.
>
> The Washington Post official 'fact-checker' also attacked Ryan's claims as false, using the same line about the plant closing in 2008:
>
> "That's not true. The plant was closed in December 2008, before Obama was sworn in," Post fact-checker Glenn Kessler wrote Wednesday. "Obama gave his speech in February 2008, and he did say those words. But Ryan's phrasing, referring to the fact the plant did not last another year, certainly suggests it closed in 2009, when Obama was president."
>
> But Ryan is in fact correct. The Janesville GM factory stopped production of SUVs in December 2008 and closed its doors for good in 2009 – less than one year after Obama promised to keep it open for another hundred years.
>
> In his speech in Janesville, then-Sen. Obama said that if elected, he would support retooling the Janesville plant to make energy efficient vehicles. Despite his administration's carefully shepherding of GM through bankruptcy, the Janesville plant has not been retooled to make anything.
>
> […]"Full-size sport utility vehicle production has ended at the local General

> Motors plant, but medium-duty truck production is continuing—not starting—in Janesville. And it likely will continue into May, when the lights finally go off in the facility that has been producing vehicles since 1923" the paper reported February 2, 2009.
>
> In fact, a GM press release confirms that the automaker had placed the Janesville plant on "standby capacity" – an auto industry term for a factory no longer producing vehicles – in May of 2009.
>
> "Janesville was placed on standby capacity in May 2009 and will remain in that status," GM said in a June 26, 2009 press release.
>
> In sum, the Janesville plant shut down the majority of its production in December 2008, laying off all but 50 of its approximately 1,200 employees. Those 50 employees remained at the plant making Isuzu trucks for several more months as the plant's operations wound down.
>
> As a candidate, President Obama promised to support re-tooling the factory to make more fuel-efficient vehicles and keep the plant open for a century. The plant, however, remains closed.

It's amazing how the left-wing media just flat out lies in order to protect the incompetence of this community organizer President. Recall also that the economy started to decline when the massive spending started under the new Pelosi-Reid plan in January of 2007. Deficits went from $160 billion to about $600 billion as soon as the Democrats took over, and then well over a trillion in 2009 when Democrats controlled the House, Senate and Presidency.

More responses to criticisms of the speech at the liberal Washington Post.

How to respond to postmodernism, relativism, subjectivism, pluralism and skepticism

August 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Four articles from Paul Copan over at the UK site "BeThinking". Each article responds to a different slogan that you might hear if you're dealing with non-Christians on the street.

"That's just your interpretation!"

Some of his possible responses:

- Gently ask, 'Do you mean that your interpretation should be preferred over mine? If so, I'd like to know why you have chosen your interpretation over mine. You must have a good reason.'
- Remind your friend that you are willing to give reasons for your position and that you are not simply taking a particular viewpoint arbitrarily.
- Try to discern if people toss out this slogan because they don't like your interpretation. Remind them that there are many truths we have to accept even if we don't like them.
- 'There are no facts, only interpretations' is a statement that is presented as a fact. If it is just an interpretation, then there is no reason to take it seriously.

More responses are here.

"You Christians are intolerant!"

Some of his possible responses:

- If you say that the Christian view is bad because it is exclusive, then you are also at that exact moment doing the very thing that you are saying is bad. You have to be exclusive to say that something is bad, since you exclude it from being good by calling it bad.
- There is a difference, a clear difference between tolerance and truth. They are often confused. We should hold to what we believe with integrity but also support the rights of others to disagree with our viewpoint.
- Sincerely believing something doesn't make it true. You can be sincere, but sincerely wrong. If I get onto a plane and sincerely believe that it won't crash then it does, then my sincerity is quite hopeless. It won't change the facts. Our beliefs, regardless of how deeply they are held, have no effect on reality.

More responses are here.

"That's true for you, but not for me!"

Some of his possible responses:

- If my belief is only true for *me*, then why isn't your belief only true for you? Aren't

you saying you want me to believe the same thing you do?
- You say that no belief is true for everyone, but you want everyone to believe what you do.
- You're making universal claims that relativism is *true* and absolutism is *false*. You can't in the same breath say, 'Nothing is universally true' *and* 'My view is universally true.' Relativism falsifies itself. It claims there is *one* position that is true – *relativism!*

More responses are here.

"If you were born in India, you'd be a Hindu!"

Some of his possible responses:

- Just because there are many different religious answers and systems doesn't automatically mean pluralism is correct.
- If we are culturally conditioned regarding our religious beliefs, then why should the religious pluralist think his view is *less* arbitrary or conditioned than the exclusivist's?
- If the Christian needs to justify Christianity's claims, the pluralist's views need just as much substantiation.

More responses are here.

And a bonus: "How do you know you're not wrong?".

Being a Christian is fun because you get to think about things at the same deep level that you think about anything else in life. Christianity isn't about rituals, community and feelings. It's about truth.

In case you want to see this in action with yours truly, check this out.

When a feminist says she wants to get married, does she really want marriage?

August 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting article about marriage from the Sydney Morning Herald.

Excerpt:

> Where different promises are made, the man undertakes great responsibility and this is also the wording of the book, as it has always been. The biblical teaching is that the promise made voluntarily by the bride to submit to her husband is matched by the even more onerous obligation which the husband must undertake to act towards his wife as Christ has loved the church. The Bible says that this obligation is ultimately measured by the self-sacrifice of Christ in dying on the cross.
>
> This is not an invitation to bossiness, let alone abuse. A husband who uses the wife's promise in this way stands condemned for betraying his own sworn obligations. The husband is to take responsibility for his wife and family in a Christ-like way. Her "submission" is her voluntary acceptance of this pattern of living together, her glad recognition that this is what he intends to bring to the marriage and that it is for her good, his good and the good of children born to them. She is going to accept him as a man who has chosen the self-discipline and commitment of marriage for her sake and for their children. At a time when women rightly complain that they cannot get men to commit, here is a pattern which demands real commitment all the way.
>
> Secular views of marriage are driven by a destructive individualism and libertarianism. This philosophy is inconsistent with the reality of long-term relationships such as marriage and family life.
>
> Referring to "partners" rather than husband or wife gives no special challenge to the man to demonstrate the masculine qualities which he brings to a marriage.
>
> Men have to accept the limitations imposed by a commitment to marry. Both husband and wife must exercise self-control and the acceptance of boundaries, although in ways which are somewhat distinctive. My greatest interest in the draft service the diocese has prepared is the high standard being proposed for men.
>
> When a husband promises to love his wife as Christ loved the church and give himself up for her, he is declaring his intention to be a man of strength and self-control for her benefit and for the benefit of any children born to them. Such qualities, properly exercised in the spirit of self-sacrifice, enhance the feminine and personal qualities of his wife.
>
> Each marriage and each era will work this out differently. It is in this context and

> this alone that the revised marriage service enables a woman to promise submission.
>
> Her submission rises out of his submission to Christ.
>
> It is a pity that the present discussion has been so overtly political. Instead of mocking or acting horrified, we should engage in a serious and respectful debate about marriage and about the responsibilities of the men and women who become husbands and wives. The Bible contains great wisdom on this fundamental relationship.
>
> The rush to embrace libertarian and individualistic philosophy means that we miss some of the key relational elements of being human, elements which make for our wellbeing and happiness. It's time to rethink marriage from first principles. It really matters.

I'm happy with only having to do my male roles and not having to worry too much about being fun, non-judgmental and passive. I am a male, and that means setting out a plan, protecting, providing and building people up on moral and spiritual things. I want a woman who takes seriously her obligations to me as a woman, too. To nurture, affirm and support me by doing the things that she is better at. I want her to listen to me and be willing to do the things I ask her to do, because I need her to help me. I wouldn't want a marriage between "partners". I want a husband-and-wife marriage.

I wonder if young men realize how small and insignificant physical beauty and premarital sex are compared to seeing a woman listening to you and then achieving your goals using tactics you had never imagined. What men should value is intelligence and submissiveness. *Men are alone in the world, and sex with a girl who refuses to follow your lead and support you emotionally isn't going to fix that loneliness.* Men need to feel like leaders, and the more talented and intelligent the woman is in following her man, the happier that man will be. A man comes with very specific needs from a woman and marriage is set up in a way that those needs are met so that he can fulfill his roles and take responsibility for his family.

The real happiness from women comes from when they take you seriously as a man and care about the things that you care about enough to do something about it, even if it means having to study hard things and working to achieve your goals. That's what really makes a woman good. A man needs a partner he can depend on to support him.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are feminized churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?

- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Armed bystander stops stabbing outside school

August 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From ABC News. (H/T All American Blogger)

> A woman is in critical condition after she was stabbed outside her child's school Tuesday morning.
>
> The attack happened around 10:00 a.m. Tuesday outside the Bonham Academy on St. Mary's Street. Teresa Barron, 38, had just dropped off her child at the school when the child's father showed up, and the two got into an argument. The child's father, 38-year-old Roberto Barron allegedly then stabbed the woman several times in the upper body and neck area.
>
> Police say a bystander who happened to be a concealed handgun license holder pulled his weapon and ordered Barron to drop the knife. Barron surrendered and was taken into custody by the bystander and a school district officer.
>
> The woman was taken to San Antonio Military Medical Center.
>
> Barron was arrested for aggravated assault, and is in jail on a $150,000 bond.

It's a good thing it was outside the school, because I would think that defensive handgun use is prohibited inside the school, and the stabbing would not have been prevented there.

2016 is the top conservative political documentary of all time

August 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From liberal web site The Blaze.

Excerpt:

> The Dinesh D'Souza Obama documentary exploring the president's alleged anti-colonialist roots has become a top 10 movie in America.
>
> Movie theaters across the country reported their box office numbers on Monday. Those numbers spelled good news for "2016: Obama's America." How good? The movie is now the #7 film in the country, in front of highly-rated "Premium Rush" and "Hope Springs," starring Meryl Streep.
>
> But the news gets even better. According to Filmfans.com, the documentary is now "the highest-earning conservative political documentary ever."
>
> But wait, there's more. According to the Washington Post, the film is also the sixth-most popular documentary of any kind:
>
> This *was* the second-lowest-grossing weekend of the year, but the film's $9.3 million seven-week haul is still enough to make it the most successful conservative political documentary of all time, as defined and ranked by Box Office Mojo. It's also the sixth-highest-grossing all-around political documentary, ranking behind four Michael Moore films and "An Inconvenient Truth," which starred Al Gore and glaciers.

A review of the movie"2016: Obama's America" – a project of Indian-American Christian apologist Dinesh D'Souza.

Excerpt:

> My wife and I went to see a showing of the film at the Regal theater in Winter Park Village. It was about three-quarters full. We didn't go with a group but noticed that many in the audience came in groups of more than just a single couple. There were also examples of grandparents, parents and children. At the end of the film, the audience broke into loud and spontaneous applause. Was this only due to the film "playing to the choir"?
>
> In part perhaps, but in the next few weeks I predict it will reach the audience we most need to reach -young voters -and are the most avid movie goers and the least likely to be reached by more traditional methods.
>
> […]Dinesh D'Souza is an engaging, attractive dark skinned immigrant from India whose life and career follows in parallel with Obama's – born and married in the same years and able to judge American institutions and values from a third world perspective.

The film does not accept any of the more controversial attacks on Obama's biography but seeks to explain how his own words and thoughts cited continually throughout the film from the President's autobiography 'Dreams From My Father' are a thread running through his policies and are at the core of what motivates him and makes him intent on downsizing, disarming, and apologizing for America, abandoning out allies such as Great Britain, Israel and Poland, fawning and bowing before Muslim despots, and seeking to create a society where individual initiative, ambition and self-reliance are replaced by the collectivist goals that have failed all over the world.

[…]*2016* examines Barack Obama's relationship with his absent father who was an activist in the anti-colonial struggle against the British, and following independence became part of that elite clique who fostered a one party bureaucratic, socialist state in Kenya that crushed all local government and free initiative resulting in a downward spiral of economic stagnation and poverty shared by Obama's half-brother in the slums of Nairobi.

[…]We follow the President's life in where his mother remarries a local Indonesian man (also a Muslim, Lolo Soteiro), who eventually becomes a successful businessman and in so doing, alienates Obama and his mother who believe they are betraying the socialist and collectivist legacy of Barack Obama Senior.

This psychological portrait is one that makes sense and can be understood and appreciated by many young people who are themselves the product of homes in which there is divorce and remarriage.

The President's endorsement of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement extends to the world stage in which the antagonists are portrayed as the 99% – the occupied and the exploitative 1 % – the occupiers.

Obama emotionally sympathizes with all those he places in the category of the victims of the colonialist white European nations (the one-percenters), returning the bust of Churchill, the gift of the British government, praising Islam as a progressive force while denying its oppression of women, children, non-Muslim minorities, his policies towards third world nations such as Mexico and Brazil whom his policies have encouraged to develop their oil industries while retarding our own, secretly supporting Argentina in its attempt to seize the Falkland Islands from Britain by force, pressuring Israel (regarded too as "occupiers") to retreat from defensible borders, total passivity in failing to support the millions of demonstrators in the street against the tyrannical regime of the mullahs in Iran, etc.

Most damning of all are the close associations of the President and his most important mentors ignored by the media and Senator John McCain's campaign in 2004 – convicted terrorist Bill Ayers, the "Reverend Wright (God Damn America and its "Liberation Theology" church in Chicago) and long-time Communist party

> member Frank Marshall Davis.
>
> This is a powerful film that will exert a profound influence. As the billboards and advertisements on television proclaim… Love Him or Hate Him, you need to see this film.

Does that sound good or what? There's a lot of talk about how this election needs to be about grown up ideas. I think that these long form arguments elevate, rather than lower, the debate. We need to have adult conversations about who Obama is and what his policies are intended to achieve – what is his end game?

Trailer 1 of 3:

Trailer 2 of 3:

Trailer 3 of 3:

Here's Dinesh explaining what his movie is about at CPAC 2012:

Keep in mind that Dinesh is a Christian apologist and has debated people like Christopher Hitchens. This is his newest project.

Go see it!

Friday night movie: The Dam Busters (1955)

August 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.6/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> The Dam Busters is a 1955 British Second World War war film starring Michael Redgrave and Richard Todd and directed by Michael Anderson. The film recreates the true story of Operation Chastise when in 1943 the RAF's 617 Squadron attacked the Möhne, Eder and Sorpe dams in Germany with Wallis's "bouncing bomb". The film was based on the books The Dam Busters (1951) by Paul Brickhill and Enemy Coast Ahead (1946) by Guy Gibson.
>
> The film falls into two parts. The first part involves Wallis struggling to develop a means of attacking Germany's dams in the hope of crippling German heavy industry. Working for the Ministry of Aircraft Production, as well as doing his own job at Vickers, he works feverishly to make practical his theory of a bouncing bomb which would skip over the water to avoid protective torpedo nets. When it came into contact with the dam, it would sink before exploding, making it much more destructive.

WARNING: the Lancaster pilots have a dog for their mascot and the dog has a name that may be offensive to some viewers. (It's the n-word). So, don't watch the movie if you can't handle that. But this is a World War 2 classic.

Map:

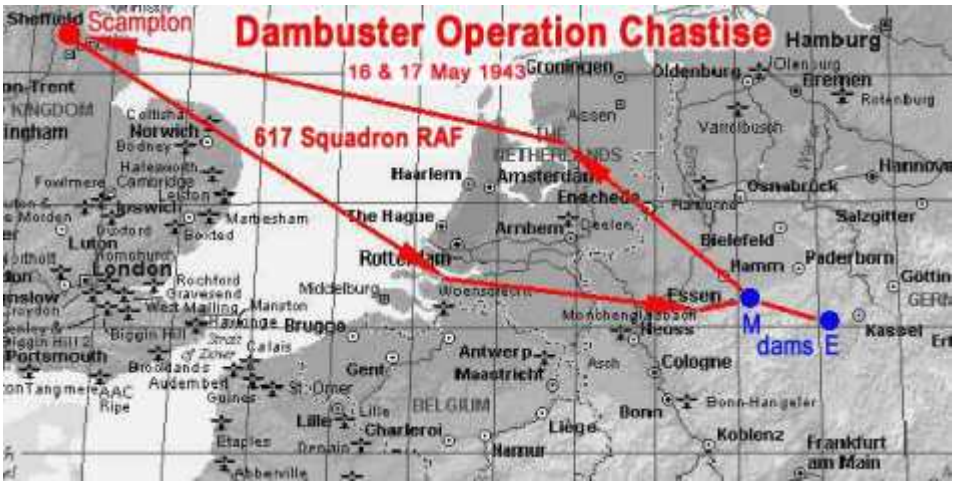

Ruhr dam raid map: click for larger image

The Lancaster bomber:

AVRO Lancaster Heavy Bomber
AVRO Lancaster specifications:

> General
>
> - Length: 69 ft. 5 in.
> - Wingspan: 102 ft.
> - Height: 19 ft. 7 in.
> - Wing Area: 1,300 sq. ft.
> - Empty Weight: 36,828 lbs.
> - Loaded Weight: 63,000 lbs.
> - Crew: 7
>
> Performance
>
> - 4 × Rolls-Royce Merlin XX V12 engines, 1,280 hp each
> - Range: 3,000 miles
> - Max Speed: 280 mph
> - Ceiling: 23,500 ft.
>
> Armament
>
> - Guns: 8 × .30 in (7.7 mm) machine guns
> - Bombs: 14,000 lbs. depending on range, 1 x 22,000-lb. Grand Slam bomb

It's one of my favorite war movies about the best-regarded heavy bomber of the war, on either side. (The B-17 is a close second)

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: Sink the Bismarck! (1960)
- Friday night movie: The Crossing (2000)
- Friday night movie: The Great Escape (1963)

- Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)
- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Mark Regnerus's research vindicated by University of Texas at Austin

September 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Focus on the Family.

Excerpt:

> The University of Texas at Austin announced Wednesday that a sociologist who has been excoriated by some in the media over a study showing that parents' homosexual relationships can have negative effects on children is innocent of academic misconduct
>
> Dr. Mark Regnerus made headlines in June, when his study was published in the widely respected journal Social Science Research. According to his findings, children raised by homosexual parents are more likely than those raised by married heterosexual parents to suffer from poor impulse control, depression and suicidal thoughts, require mental health therapy; identify themselves as homosexual; choose cohabitation; be unfaithful to partners; contract sexually transmitted diseases; be sexually molested; have lower income levels; drink to get drunk; and smoke tobacco and marijuana.
>
> As a result, a gay-activist blogger accused Regnerus of academic fraud, demanding in July that the university release all his research material and emails with fellow sociologists.
>
> Administrators conducted an exhaustive pre-investigation to determine whether a more comprehensive one would be necessary — including hiring a consultant who formerly ran the Office of Research Integrity at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to oversee the process.
>
> After sequestering all of Regnerus's correspondence and conducting both written and oral interviews with him and his accuser, Scott Rosensweig, Research Integrity Officer Robert Peterson wrote in an Aug. 24 memorandum to administrators, "None of the allegations of scientific misconduct put forth … were substantiated either by physical data, written materials, or by information provided during the interviews.
>
> "Since no evidence was provided to indicate that the behavior at issue rose to a level of scientific misconduct, no formal investigation is warranted."

There was not even enough evidence of misconduct for an investigation. Regnerus was very thorough and conscientious in the conduct of research – it was original, quality work. And this is in liberal Austin, no less! But will this be reported in the media as much as the accusations were? Not bloody likely.

Related posts

- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child’s perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families
- Obama openly supports gay marriage: 48 hours after top gay donors cut off funding
- Democrat introduces bill to defund adoption agencies that favor married couples
- A secular case against same-sex marriage

Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged

September 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically left-wing Los Angeles Times.

Excerpt:

> A West Hollywood artist who allegedly painted the words "Tastes like hate" on the side of a Chick-fil-A restaurant because of the company president's stand against gay marraige won't be criminally charged by the L.A. County district attorney's office.
>
> Prosecutors announced Wednesday they were declining to press charges after Torrance police submitted a case.
>
> […]The graffiti — accompanied by a representation of a cow holding a paint brush — appeared during a week of demonstrations at Chick-fil-A restaurants nationwide sparked by company President Dan Cathy's public denunciation of same-sex marriage.
>
> Discovered about 6:40 a.m. Friday at the Hawthorne Boulevard restaurant, the vandalism coincided with "National Same-Sex Kiss Day," when gay rights supporters asked couples to take photos of themselves kissing at Chick-fil-A locations.
>
> Castro took credit for the graffiti in an interview with the Huffington Post.
>
> "Everybody is entitled to free speech, but it seems like for the gay tribe, this is more of an issue of equal rights — human rights," he said. "I'm against what these people stand for, what this company stands for. They're trying to take away what little rights we already have."
>
> A day before he was taken into custody, Castro made another statement to the Huffington Post, telling his critics the act was "meant to further a discussion about tolerance and acceptance."

> "I didn't use violence. I used paint. Artists for centuries have expressed their opinions through this medium and I am no different," he said. "I am happy to pay for the costs of repainting the wall, but I am not — nor will I ever be — happy to sit quietly at the back of the bus."

The left-wing media thinks that a crime can only be a hate crime when the right kind of people are victimized. Oh, oh, and Christians aren't being persecuted for their faith in places like the Sudan, China or North Korea, either. Only secular leftist people can be victims, don't you know? And if you disagree with this double standard then you're a racist bigot, so there.

Related posts

- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue “hate” rhetoric
- The mainstream media’s biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Obama administration linked to gay activist Dan Savage
- Gay activist Dan Savage bullies Christian teens and bashes Christianity
- Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll’s Mars Hill Church
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Pro-abortion vandals: destroying pro-life display was “free speech”
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Queen’s University feminist professor says that polygamy should be permitted
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- Do Democrats like Chai Feldblum believe in religious liberty?

Republican platform adds resolution to audit the Federal Reserve

September 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From San Francisco Chronicle.

Excerpt:

> The Republican Party platform promises to replace what it criticizes as President Barack Obama's debt-swollen entitlement society with "a roaring job market to match a roaring economy."
>
> The platform reflects the influence of presidential candidate Mitt Romney, offering as the remedy for the nation's economic ills a familiar recipe of low taxes, light regulation, expanded oil drilling and free enterprise. It vows to reduce personal and corporate taxes, repeal Obama's health-care law, promote small businesses and avoid taxpayer bailouts of troubled financial institutions.
>
> The 62-page roadmap, approved by a voice vote of the delegates yesterday at the party's national convention in Tampa, Florida, promotes expanded trade and accuses the Obama administration of "a virtual surrender" to commercial rival China. The Asian country is stealing American trade secrets, manipulating its currency to make its exports cheaper, and hampering U.S. firms trying to sell to Chinese customers, the Republicans say.
>
> Republicans call for banks to be "well-capitalized" and pledge to repeal the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial-regulation law.
>
> Along with major economic policy shifts, the Republicans vow to transform the size and scope of government. Trillion- dollar annual budget deficits and mounting debt are harming job growth, they say. "The massive federal government is structurally and financially broken," the platform says.
>
> […]**Echoing a longtime demand of libertarian Representative Ron Paul of Texas, the platform calls for an annual audit of the Federal Reserve. And it proposes a commission to investigate "possible ways to set a fixed value for the dollar," a reference to a potential revival of the gold standard.**
>
> **The campaign document labels Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, government-sponsored mortgage financiers, as "a primary cause of the housing crisis because their implicit government guarantee allowed them to avoid market discipline and make risky investments."**
>
> **That view, though widely held among conservatives, has been rejected by the Federal Reserve and three of the four Republicans on the government commission that investigated the 2008 financial meltdown.**

Note that both Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan support auditing the Federal Reserve.

> Presumptive Republican nominee Mitt Romney called for increased transparency at the Federal Reserve Monday, voicing his strongest support yet for an audit of the country's central banking system.
>
> **"The answer is yes to that, very plain and simple," Romney responded, when asked by a supporter at a New Hampshire town hall whether it was time to audit the Fed. "The Federal Reserve should be accountable. We should see what they're doing."**
>
> The mark aligns Romney with a growing cadre of conservatives championing an audit of the Federal Reserve, a group led by Romney's primary opponent Ron Paul and his acolytes. Earlier this month,Paul's "Audit The Fed" bill passed the House of Representatives with overwhelming bipartisan support.
>
> **After taking a more measured stance on the issue during the Republican primaries, Romney has slowly moved to embrace a Federal Reserve audit as support for the issue grows with voters across the political spectrum. Romney's new running mate, Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan, has been a vocal critic of the central banking system, and is listed as one of 268 co-sponsors of Paul's bill.**

Romney has also said that he will not reappoint Ben Bernanke if he is elected. I think that Ron Paul supporters should be able to decide who to support in the general election based on this information.

Who pays the bill for handing out $2.2 trillion of entitlements per year?

September 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article by Nicholas Eberstadt is the most popular article on the Wall Street Journal right now. I found it through Doug Ross' links.

First, a quick review of the entitlement situation:

> What is monumentally new about the American state today is the vast empire of entitlement payments that it protects, manages and finances. Within living memory, the federal government has become an entitlements machine. As a day-to-day operation, it devotes more attention and resources to the public transfer of money, goods and services to individual citizens than to any other objective, spending more than for all other ends combined.
>
> The growth of entitlement payments over the past half-century has been breathtaking. In 1960, U.S. government transfers to individuals totaled about $24 billion in current dollars, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. By 2010 that total was almost 100 times as large. Even after adjusting for inflation and population growth, entitlement transfers to individuals have grown 727% over the past half-century, rising at an average rate of about 4% a year.
>
> **In 2010 alone, government at all levels oversaw a transfer of over $2.2 trillion in money, goods and services. The burden of these entitlements came to slightly more than $7,200 for every person in America. Scaled against a notional family of four, the average entitlements burden for that year alone approached $29,000.**

Government's job used to be to handle responsibilities like roads and bridges or like defending us at home and to defending our national interests abroad. But now government seems to be more interested in redistributing money taken from job creating businesses and their workers to those don't create jobs and those who don't work. What happens when you punish people for trying to succeed and reward people who don't even try?

This is the result of wealth redistribution:

> **The proud self-reliance that struck Alexis de Tocqueville in his visit to the U.S. in the early 1830s extended to personal finances. The American "individualism" about which he wrote did not exclude social cooperation—the young nation was a hotbed of civic associations and voluntary organizations. But in an environment bursting with opportunity, American men and women viewed themselves as accountable for their own situation through their own achievements—a novel outlook at that time, markedly different from the prevailing**

> **attitudes of the Old World (or at least the Continent).**
>
> **The corollaries of this American ethos were, on the one hand, an affinity for personal enterprise and industry and, on the other, a horror of dependency and contempt for anything that smacked of a mendicant mentality. Although many Americans in earlier times were poor, even people in fairly desperate circumstances were known to refuse help or handouts as an affront to their dignity and independence. People who subsisted on public resources were known as "paupers," and provision for them was a local undertaking. Neither beneficiaries nor recipients held the condition of pauperism in high regard.**
>
> Overcoming America's historic cultural resistance to government entitlements has been a long and formidable endeavor. But as we know today, this resistance did not ultimately prove an insurmountable obstacle to establishing mass public entitlements and normalizing the entitlement lifestyle. The U.S. is now on the verge of a symbolic threshold: the point at which more than half of all American households receive and accept transfer benefits from the government. From cradle to grave, a treasure chest of government-supplied benefits is there for the taking for every American citizen—and exercising one's legal rights to these many blandishments is now part of the American way of life.
>
> **As Americans opt to reward themselves ever more lavishly with entitlement benefits, the question of how to pay for these government transfers inescapably comes to the fore. Citizens have become ever more broad-minded about the propriety of tapping new sources of finance for supporting their appetite for more entitlements. The taker mentality has thus ineluctably gravitated toward taking from a pool of citizens who can offer no resistance to such schemes: the unborn descendants of today's entitlement-seeking population.**

We used to want to earn our own success. Now we want to live on the backs of children not yet born. Slavery is a horrible crime, no matter where it is practiced. Isn't it a kind of slavery to live it up now and then pass the bill for it on to generations not even born yet? It strikes me as a kind of slavery – taking an unfair portion of the income of others so that we can live at a higher standard than what we can afford through our own choices and labor.

Couple arrested for using legally-owned gun to defend home from burglars

September 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail, which I found very disturbing.

Excerpt:

> - Police received 999 call from a man who said he had opened fire on four intruders
> - Man, 35, fired shotgun at gang who broke into his isolated cottage in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire
> - He and his wife, 43, called police immediately after shooting
> - Couple arrested on suspicion of GBH and four men detained on suspicion of aggravated burglary
>
> The couple arrested after two suspected burglars were shot during a midnight break-in at their remote rural home had been robbed three or four times already, it has been reported.
>
> Police descended on the farm cottage in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire after receiving a 999 call from a man who said he had opened fire on four intruders.
>
> The homeowners, who have been named as 35-year-old Andy Ferrie and his wife Tracey, 43, were understood to have called police immediately after the shooting, at 12.26am yesterday morning.
>
> Mr Ferrie's mother Susan Spilner told the Sun newspaper: 'This is not the first time they have been broken into. They have been robbed three or four times. One of them was quite nasty."
>
> […]The man who dialed 999 told officers he had fired his shotgun, which is licensed and legally held, and the intruders fled.
>
> Minutes later, ambulance paramedics were called to treat a man with shotgun injuries. The 999 call was understood to have been made by one of the suspected burglars.
>
> A second man was treated for shotgun injuries after he walked into Leicester Royal Infirmary, around ten miles from the cottage.
>
> Neither of the men's injuries were said to be serious.
>
> **The householder and his wife were arrested on suspicion of causing grievous bodily harm.**
>
> **He is thought to be a farm worker who kept the shotgun legally as part of his job. Four men in their 20s and 30s were also arrested on suspicion of aggravated burglary.**

I checked the population of their city and it's 25,000 people. That is just scary to me.

The UK took a hard turn to the left over the last couple of decades under the Labor Party. They believed that disarming law-abiding citizens in order to protect criminals would reduce crime. In addition to arresting law-abiding citizens, the UK also has strict gun control that prevents law-abiding citizens from defending themselves from criminals. For example, in 1997, the UK banned handguns. The result of that policy was that violent crime more than doubled in the four years following the ban. So not only is there this initiative on the secular left to coddle criminals with lighter sentences, but there is also the effort by the secular left to disarm law-abiding citizens.

Men in particular are meant to use force against criminals. But that distinctive male role is not OK with the UK Labor Party, who do not like distinctions of good and evil in any case. This inability to protect their families is stressful for men. Many men are not interested in getting married because of this stress. The whole point of marriage for a man is that there will be respect for his male roles from his family as well as from the state. The refusal of the government to punish criminals is not reassuring to men. And the government's tendency to not let men do what needs to be done and use their judgment in cases like this just makes marriage seem less attractive to us.

Related posts

- If you defend your home from armed intruders in the UK, you get arrested
- UK family arrested for defending their home from burglar
- Police warn UK woman for scaring away burglars with kitchen knife
- 61-year-old British man convicted for cutting up fruit with a Swiss Army knife
- Could tougher gun control laws lower the violent crime rate?
- Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home
- Crime rates in Chicago and DC drop after gun control laws are struck down
- Do gun control laws cause crime rates to go down?
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple victim shootings?
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Do guns reduce crime? Watch this debate and hear both sides
- Liberal MSNBC says that more legal firearm ownership reduces crime rates
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Formal debate on gun control featuring John Lott and Gary Kleck
- Tom Sowell on gun control and judicial activism
- Grandmother jailed for five years for owning family heirloom handgun
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple-victim public shootings in Europe?
- Understanding how concealed carry laws save lives
- Why do people favor legal private ownership and concealed carry of handguns?

Democrats resort to busing in people to fill up DNC convention

September 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

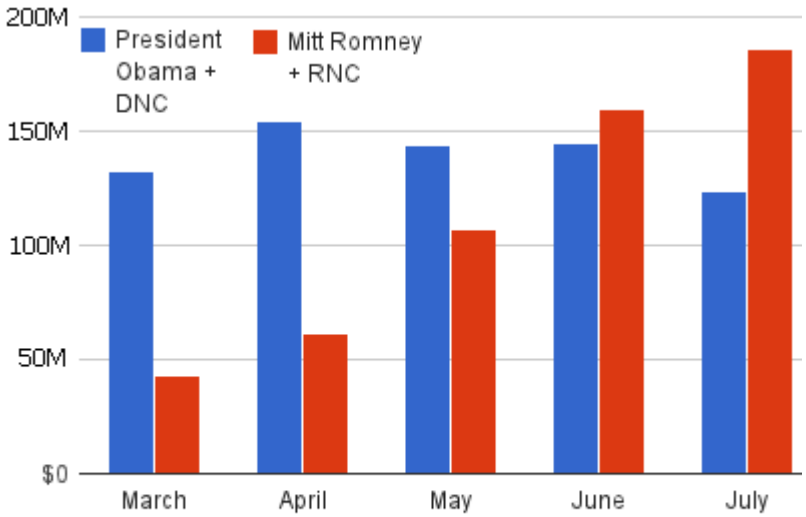

Note: Romney's March total includes RNC money, even though he hadn't joined forces with the committee yet due to the GOP primary.

Romney vs. Obama: campaign fundraising
Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> College students from across North Carolina will arrive in Charlotte by the busload. Same with members of predominantly black churches in neighboring South Carolina.
>
> Their goal: help fill a 74,000-seat outdoor stadium to capacity when President Obama accepts the Democratic nomination Thursday night.
>
> […]Democrats have been fretting for months over whether the president can draw a capacity crowd at Bank of America Stadium. Polls show voter enthusiasm is down, as are Obama's crowds for his battleground state campaign rallies.
>
> […]Thursday's event is certain to draw comparisons to 2008, when Obama accepted the Democratic nomination before a capacity crowd at an 84,000-seat stadium in Denver. There was little concern back then over whether Obama would fill the stadium, in part because he was easily attracting tens of thousands of people to his campaign rallies across the country.
>
> This time around, Obama's crowds are far smaller. He drew his biggest audience at his campaign kick-off rally in May, a 14,000-person crowd at Ohio State University. About 13,000 people attended Obama's rally at the University of Colorado in Boulder Sunday.

Not surprising, given that Obama kicked-off his re-election campaign in a half-empty stadium. The only people who are going to vote for this guy are the people who are

dependent on federal government welfare and spending.

And look, Obama is losing badly in the fundraising, too: (links removed)

> Mitt Romney has extended his lead over President Obama in this election cycle's race for campaign cash.
>
> The Republican had almost $186 million in cash on hand at the end of July, compared to $124 million for Obama — figures that include donations made to the campaigns, party committees and joint fundraising efforts.
>
> […]In 2008, Obama shattered all previous fundraising records by bringing in an excess of $750 million — far more than John McCain.
>
> But Romney has dashed any hopes Obama might have harbored for continued dominance in 2012. The past two months have been particularly fruitful for the Republican challenger, as Romney's team produced a haul of more than $200 million in June and July.
>
> Over the same time period, Obama's campaign mustered a comparatively modest $147 million.
>
> And the gap between the candidates may be widening. The Romney campaign has said its fundraising totals have increased in recent days after the addition of Rep. Paul Ryan to the ticket.
>
> Republicans have an even bigger money advantage when spending by super PACs and other outside groups is included.
>
> According to the latest data from the Center for Responsive Politics, outside conservative groups have spent $221.5 million this cycle, while liberal groups have spent $55.6 million.

Romney wasn't my first, second, or third choice for the Republican nomination, but he sure knows how to raise money. We'll see whether he is able to hold his own in debates with Obama. I think that given the choice between four years of disastrous economic failures and four years of flip-flops, America will take the flip-flops.

UPDATE: Looks like the busing in wasn't enough: Obama is moving his speech from the 74,000 capacity venue to a 20,000 capacity venue. Well, that's one way to get a packed house.

What does the Bible say about the death penalty?

September 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: This post has a twin post which talks about the evidence against capital punishment from science.

First, let's take a look at what the Bible says in general about capital punishment, using this lecture featuring eminent theologian Wayne Grudem.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

A PDF sermon outline is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?
- what did God say to Noah about CP?
- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?
- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?

- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?
- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?
- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the "whole life ethic" and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

You can find more talks by Wayne Grudem here.

What about the woman caught in adultery?

Some people like to bring up the woman caught in adultery as proof that Jesus opposed capital punishment. But that passage of the Bible was added much later after the canon was decided.

Daniel B. Wallace is an eminent New Testament scholar who also teaches at Dallas Theological Seminary, an extremely conservative seminary.

About Dr. Wallace:

> Dr. Daniel B. Wallace
>
> - Professor of New Testament Studies
> - B.A., Biola University, 1975; Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; Ph.D., 1995.

> Dr. Wallace influences students across the country through his textbook on intermediate Greek grammar. It is used in more than two-thirds of the nation's schools that teach that subject. He is the senior New Testament editor of the *NET Bible* and coeditor of the *NET-Nestle Greek-English diglot*. Recently his scholarship has shifted from syntactical and text-critical issues to more specific work in John, Mark, and nascent Christology. However he still works extensively in textual criticism, and has founded The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, an institute with an initial purpose to preserve Scripture by taking digital photographs of all known Greek New Testament manuscripts. His postdoctoral work includes work on Greek grammar at Tyndale House in Cambridge and textual criticism studies at the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster.

And Dr. Wallace writes about the passage in John on Bible.org.

Excerpt:

> One hundred and forty years ago, conservative biblical scholar and Dean of

Canterbury, Henry Alford, advocated a new translation to replace the King James Bible. One of his reasons was the inferior textual basis of the KJV. Alford argued that “a translator of Holy Scripture must be…ready to sacrifice the choicest text, and the plainest proof of doctrine, if the words are not those of what he is constrained in his conscience to receive as God’s testimony.” He was speaking about the Trinitarian formula found in the KJV rendering of 1 John 5:7–8. Twenty years later, two Cambridge scholars came to the firm conclusion that John 7:53–8:11 also was not part of the original text of scripture. But Westcott and Hort’s view has not had nearly the impact that Alford’s did.

For a long time, biblical scholars have recognized the poor textual credentials of the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11). The evidence against its authenticity is overwhelming: The earliest manuscripts with substantial portions of John’s Gospel (P66 and P75) lack these verses. They skip from John 7:52 to 8:12. The oldest large codices of the Bible also lack these verses: codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both from the fourth century, are normally considered to be the most important biblical manuscripts of the NT extant today. Neither of them has these verses. Codex Alexandrinus, from the fifth century, lacks several leaves in the middle of John. But because of the consistency of the letter size, width of lines, and lines per page, the evidence is conclusive that this manuscript also lacked the *pericope adulterae*. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, also from the fifth century, apparently lacked these verses as well (it is similar to Alexandrinus in that some leaves are missing).The earliest extant manuscript to have these verses is codex Bezae, an eccentric text once in the possession of Theodore Beza. He gave this manuscript to the University of Cambridge in 1581 as a gift, telling the school that he was confident that the scholars there would be able to figure out its significance. He washed his hands of the document. Bezae is indeed the most eccentric NT manuscript extant today, yet it is the chief representative of the Western text-type (the text-form that became dominant in Rome and the Latin West).

When P66, P75, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus agree, their combined testimony is overwhelmingly strong that a particular reading is not authentic. But it is not only the early Greek manuscripts that lack this text. The great majority of Greek manuscripts through the first eight centuries lack this pericope. And except for Bezae (or codex D), virtually all of the most important Greek witnesses through the first eight centuries do not have the verses. Of the three most important early versions of the New Testament (Coptic, Latin, Syriac), two of them lack the story in their earliest and best witnesses. The Latin alone has the story in its best early witnesses.

[…]It is an important point to note that although the story of the woman caught in adultery is found in most of our printed Bibles today, the evidence suggests that the majority of Bibles during the first eight centuries of the Christian faith did not contain the story. Externally, most scholars would say that the evidence for it

> not being an authentic part of John's Gospel is rock solid.But textual criticism is not based on external evidence alone; there is also the internal evidence to consider. This is comprised of two parts: *intrinsic evidence* has to do with what an author is likely to have written; *transcriptional evidence* has to do with how and why a scribe would have changed the text.
>
> Intrinsically, the vocabulary, syntax, and style look far more like Luke than they do John. There is almost nothing in these twelve verses that has a Johannine flavor. And transcriptionally, scribes were almost always prone to add material rather than omit it—especially a big block of text such as this, rich in its description of Jesus' mercy. One of the remarkable things about this passage, in fact, is that it is found in multiple locations. Most manuscripts that have it place it in its now traditional location: between John 7:52 and 8:12. But an entire family of manuscripts has the passage at the end of Luke 21, while another family places it at the end of John's Gospel. Other manuscripts place it at the end of Luke or in various places in John 7.
>
> The *pericope adulterae* has all the earmarks of a pericope that was looking for a home. It took up permanent residence, in the ninth century, in the middle of the fourth gospel.

As this debate between Peter Williams and Bart Ehrman shows, there are only TWO disputed passages in the entire NT that are theologically significant. The long ending of Mark and this adultery passage. A good case can be made for the long ending of Mark, but it's best not to assume it in a debate. The adultery passage is practically impossible to defend as authentic. Dr. Wallace talks about both passages in this Parchment & Pen article. Wallace has also debated Bart Ehrman in the Greer-Heard Forum. What that debate showed is that the New Testament text is actually quite reliable except for those two passages, but it's important to be honest about the two places that are not well supported.

Thomas Sowell and the New York Times agree on why Obama fails

September 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell

An editorial by famous economist Thomas Sowell at Right Wing News. (H/T Doug Ross' links)

Excerpt:

> After reading Barack Obama's book "Dreams from My Father," it became painfully clear that he has not been searching for the truth, because he assumed from an early age that he had already found the truth — and now it was just a question of filling in the details and deciding how to change things.
>
> Obama did not simply happen to encounter a lot of people on the far left fringe during his life. As he spells out in his book, he actively sought out such people. There is no hint of the slightest curiosity on his part about other visions of the world that might be weighed against the vision he had seized upon.
>
> As Professor Richard Epstein of the University of Chicago Law School has pointed out, Obama made no effort to take part in the marketplace of ideas with other faculty members when he was teaching a law course there. What would be the point, if he already knew the truth and knew that they were wrong?
>
> This would be a remarkable position to take, even for a learned scholar who had already spent decades canvassing a vast amount of information and views on many subjects. But Obama was already doctrinaire at a very early age — and ill-informed or misinformed on both history and economics.
>
> […]Barack Obama is one of those people who are often wrong but never in doubt. When he burst upon the national political scene as a presidential candidate in 2008, even some conservatives were impressed by his confidence.
>
> But confident ignorance is one of the most dangerous qualities in a leader of a nation. If he has the rhetorical skills to inspire the same confidence in himself by

> others, then you have the ingredients for national disaster.

He gives a few examples, but he's not the only person to have noticed this. Consider the following article from the radically left-wing New York Times, of all places. (H/T Forbes)

Excerpt:

> But even those loyal to Mr. Obama say that his quest for excellence can bleed into cockiness and that he tends to overestimate his capabilities. The cloistered nature of the White House amplifies those tendencies, said Matthew Dowd, a former adviser to President George W. Bush, adding that the same thing happened to his former boss. "There's a reinforcing quality," he said, a tendency for presidents to think, I'm the best at this.
>
> […]He may not always be as good at everything as he thinks, including politics. While Mr. Obama has given himself high grades for his tenure in the White House — including a "solid B-plus" for his first year — many voters don't agree, citing everything from his handling of the economy to his unfulfilled pledge that he would be able to unite Washington to his claim that he would achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace.
>
> Those were not the only times Mr. Obama may have overestimated himself: he has also had a habit of warning new hires that he would be able to do their jobs better than they could.
>
> "I think that I'm a better speechwriter than my speechwriters," Mr. Obama told Patrick Gaspard, his political director, at the start of the 2008 campaign, according to The New Yorker. "I know more about policies on any particular issue than my policy directors. And I'll tell you right now that I'm going to think I'm a better political director than my political director."
>
> Though he never ran a large organization before becoming president, he initially dismissed internal concerns about management and ended up with a factionalized White House and a fuzzier decision-making process than many top aides wanted.

What you have in Barack Obama is a man who governs based on his own intuitions and sense of superiority. He's not grounded in facts, and he's not willing to listen to anyone else's view if it disagrees with those intuitions. He wants to be praised without having achieved anything praiseworthy. Where did this attitude of ignorance coupled with arrogance come from? Would you hire a person like that to work with you?

UPDATE: Stuart Schneiderman answers the question I asked about where this attitude comes from:

> Obsessed with perfection and fixated on his own prowess Obama is suffering from vainglorious self-puffery, self-esteem to the nth power.
>
> **He is the reductio ad absurdum of a culture of self-esteem that does not reward achievement but that teaches people to keep telling themselves**

> **that they are the best, regardless.**
>
> When the most powerful leader of the free world needs to compete and win at making chili or playing pool he is trying to find a sliver of evidence that would protect him against the encroaching suspicion that his greatness is just a bunch of media-drive hype.

Angus Menuge’s ontological argument against naturalism

September 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Angus Menuge

Here’s some information about Dr. Menuge:

> Dr. Angus Menuge joined Concordia University Wisconsin in 1991. He earned his BA from the University of Warwick, England, and his MA and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he studied philosophy, computer science and psychology. Menuge’s dissertation was on the philosophy of action explanation, and his current research interests include philosophy of mind, philosophy of science and Christian apologetics.
>
> In 2003, Menuge earned a Diploma in Christian Apologetics from the International Academy of Apologetics, Evangelism and Human Rights, which meets each July in Strasbourg, France. His thesis, a critique of scientific materialism, went on to become the book *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).
>
> Menuge has also edited volumes on C. S. Lewis, Christ and culture and the vocation of scientist, and has written several Bible studies. He is currently working with Joel Heck (Concordia Texas) on a collection of essays defining Lutheran education for the 21st century, entitled *Learning at the Foot of the Cross* (Concordia University Press, forthcoming).
>
> A frequent speaker, Menuge has given presentations on Christianity and culture, science and vocation, philosophy of mind, C. S. Lewis, Intelligent Design and the case against scientific materialism. He is a member of the Evangelical Philosophical Society.

Dr. Menuge presented a paper at the real Evangelical Philosophical Society conference for students and professors of philosophy, and you can download the paper here in Word

format. (here's a PDF version I made)

Here is the introduction to the paper that Dr. Menuge read at the EPS conference:

> The argument from reason is really a family of arguments to show that reasoning is incompatible with naturalism. Here, naturalism is understood as the idea that foundationally, there are only physical objects, properties and relations, and anything else reduces to, supervenes on, or emerges from that. For our purposes, one of the most important claims of naturalism is that all causation is passive, automatic, event causation (an earthquake automatically causes a tidal wave; the tidal wave responds passively): there are no agent causes, where something does not happen automatically but only because the agent exerts his active power by choosing to do it. The most famous version of the argument from reason is *epistemological*: if naturalism were true, we could not be justified in believing it. Today, I want to focus on the *ontological* argument from reason, which asserts that there cannot be reasoning in a naturalistic world, because reasoning requires libertarian free will, and this in turn requires a unified, enduring self with active power.
>
> The two most promising ways out of this argument are: (1) Compatibilism—even in a deterministic, naturalistic world, humans are capable of free acts of reason if their minds are responsive to rational causes; (2) Libertarian Naturalism—a self with libertarian free will emerges from the brain. I argue that neither of these moves works, and so, unless someone has a better idea, the ontological argument from reason stands.

The paper is 11 pages long, and it is awesome for those of you looking for some good discussion of one of the issues in the area of philosophy of mind. The thing you need to know about Dr. Menuge is that he is quite strong and forceful in his writing and presentation, and to me, that is an excellent thing for a scholar to be. He reminds me of Doug Geivett, Paul Copan and William Lane Craig. Very direct, and very confrontational. You can even read an account of his debate with that radical atheist nutcase P.Z. Myers in 2008 here.

By the way, the epistemological argument from reason (P(R) on N & E is low) is the argument made by the famous Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga. I blogged about that argument before here. You need to know BOTH of these arguments. Plantinga also spoke at the EPS apologetics conference, explaining exactly this argument.

Powerpoint slideshow

But there is more than just the paper! At the EPS apologetics conference, which is meant for lay people as well as scholars, he presented this Powerpoint slideshow, (here's a PDF version I made) . The slides are easier to understand than the paper, but the paper is not too bad.

And here is another article by Dr. Menuge on intelligent design.

Federal judge approves sex change for convicted murderer

September 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wes from Reason to Stand send me this disturbing story from ABC News.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> A federal judge ordered Massachusetts prison officials today to providesexual reassignment surgery for a convicted murderer, calling it the only way to correct the "prolonged violation" of the inmate's Constitutional right against cruel and unusual punishment.
>
> Michelle Kosilek, who was born Robert, had filed a lawsuit against the Massachusetts Department of Corrections, seeking an injunction that would require prison officials to grant her the sexual reassignment surgery that was recommended by prison doctors as treatment for her gender identity disorder. Robert Kosilek was convicted in the 1990 strangulation death of his wife, Cheryl.
>
> U.S. District Judge Mark Wolf ruled that Michelle Kosilek, who lives as a woman in a male prison facility, had experienced "intense mental anguish," and said there was a "serious medical need" for her to have the procedure.
>
> "It has long been well-established that it is cruel for prison officials to permit an inmate to suffer unnecessarily from a serious medical need," the judge wrote in his 128-page decision.
>
> He called it "unusual" to treat a prisoner with gender identity disorder differently "than the numerous inmates suffering from more familiar forms of mental illness."
>
> […]**Kosilek first sued the Department of Corrections in 2000. Two years later, Wolf ruled she should receive treatment for gender identity disorder, which included hormones. Kosilek sued again in 2005, again asking for gender reassignment surgery.**
>
> Frances Cohen, an attorney for Kosilek, told the Associated Press the judge made a courageous and thoughtful ruling.

I wonder if Frances Cohen and the judge are going to be paying for the surgery? No – that's for the taxpayers to handle, I guess.

This tomfoolery is actually not unprecedented. Sex changes are taxpayer-funded in Ontario, Canada – where they have single-payer health care. And criminals are all eligible for sex changes in the UK under their NHS socialized medicine system. Here's a recent case from last year, where a convicted killer is getting a sex change, courtesy of the NHS. (Which means the UK taxpayer)

Democrat platform supports subsidizing abortions with taxpayer dollars

September 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> **The 2012 Democratic party will officially adopt an extreme position on the issue of abortion on Tuesday. According to a copy of the party platform, which was released online just before midnight on Monday, "The Democratic Party strongly and unequivocally supports *Roe* v. *Wade* and a woman's right to make decisions regarding her pregnancy, including a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay."**
>
> **That last part–"regardless of ability to pay"–is an endorsement of taxpayer-funded abortions, a policy that President Obama has personally endorsed. Obama wants Medicaid to pay directly for elective abortions, and Obamacare will allow beneficiaries to use federal subsidies to purchase health care plans that cover elective abortions.**
>
> […]The 2012 Democratic party also endorses an unrestricted right to abortion-on-demand. According to the platform, on the issue of abortion "there is no place for politicians or government to get in the way." In 2003, Obama was asked if he was pro-choice on abortion "in all situations including the late-term thing." Obama replied: "I'm pro-choice."
>
> In 1992, then-Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton tried to soften the party's image on abortion by expressing his desire to make abortion "safe, legal, and rare." Although the Democratic party platforms in 2000 and 2004 stated the party's goal is to make abortion "rare," the 2012 platform makes no such claim. "In 2000, the Democratic platform said the party's goal was 'to make abortion less necessary and more rare,'" Jeff Jacoby wrote in the *Boston Globe* last week. "The 2004 platform declared, 'Abortion should be safe, legal, and rare.' But even calling for abortion to be 'rare' is now too much for the Democrats' platform committee, which deleted the word in 2008." The word "rare" did not make a comeback in 2012.

Surprise! The Democrats want pro-life taxpayers to subsidize abortions. And what happens to the frequency of an action when people are paid to do it? You get more of it. The Democrats aren't "pro-choice", they're pro-abortion. They want more abortion. And why not? The largest provider of abortions in America, Planned Parenthood, will be getting these taxpayer subsidies, and they'll just turn around and give political contributions back to the Democrats. Everybody wins! Well, everybody except the babies

and the taxpayers.

We are in a recession. Is this really the time to be sending women a message that if they are irresponsible with sex, that they will get a bailout from taxpayers who are already struggling to pay their own bills? How is that fair? People have to stop taking risks that are likely to incur costs – costs that may be passed on to their more responsible neighbors. We need to encourage people to take responsibility for their own actions and to make wise choices.

Does the death penalty deter crime?

September 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post has a twin post which talks about the evidence against capital punishment from the Bible.

Why do people support the death penalty? Because research conducted by multiple teams of scholars at multiple universities have shown that capital punishment deters crime.

Excerpt:

> "Science does really draw a conclusion. It did. There is no question about it," said Naci Mocan, an economics professor at the University of Colorado at Denver. "The conclusion is there is a deterrent effect."
>
> A 2003 study he co-authored, and a 2006 study that re-examined the data, found that each execution results in five fewer homicides, and commuting a death sentence means five more homicides. "The results are robust, they don't really go away," he said. "I oppose the death penalty. But my results show that the death penalty (deters) — what am I going to do, hide them?"
>
> Statistical studies like his are among a dozen papers since 2001 that capital punishment has deterrent effects. They all explore the same basic theory — if the cost of something (be it the purchase of an apple or the act of killing someone) becomes too high, people will change their behavior (forego apples or shy from murder).

And specifically:

> • Each execution deters an average of 18 murders, according to a 2003 nationwide study by professors at Emory University. (Other studies have estimated the deterred murders per execution at three, five and 14).
>
> • The Illinois moratorium on executions in 2000 led to 150 additional homicides over four years following, according to a 2006 study by professors at the University of Houston.
>
> • Speeding up executions would strengthen the deterrent effect. For every 2.75 years cut from time spent on death row, one murder would be prevented, according to a 2004 study by an Emory University professor.

In case anyone is wondering what sort of crimes are deterred by the death penalty, you can read this graphic description of a recent death-penalty crime.

What sort of crimes are eligible for the death penalty?

Here's an example of a dealth-penalty eligible crime from the Hartford Courant. (WARNING: graphic!)

Excerpt:

> A Superior Court jury today sentenced Steven Hayes to death for the murders of Jennifer Hawke-Petit and her daughters, Hayley and Michaela, during a seven-hour home invasion, robbery and arson at their Cheshire home in July 2007.
>
> Outside the courthouse after the verdicts, Hawke-Petit's father, the Rev. Richard Hawke, said "There are some people who do not deserve to live in God's world."
>
> Asked what he had in his heart, Dr. William Petit Jr. struggled with his answer. "….Probably many of you have kids," he said, pausing to choke back tears. "Michaela was an 11-year-old little girl…tortured and killed in her own bedroom, surrounded by her stuffed animals…."
>
> Petit then talked about his daughter Hayley's bright future and her strength and the children that his wife, Jennifer, helped.
>
> "So, I was really thinking of the tremendous loss" during the verdict, Petit said, adding that he was pleased with it, but "mostly I was sad for the loss we have all suffered."
>
> Asked if he thought there'd be closure now, Petit said, "There's never closure. There's a hole…. with jagged edges…that may smooth out with time, but the hole in your heart and the hole in your soul" remains.
>
> "This isn't about revenge," Petit said. "Vengeance belongs to the Lord. This is about justice."
>
> […]The jury sentenced Hayes to death on six counts: killing Hawke-Petit and Michaela and Hayley in the course of a single action; killing a child under the age of 16; killing Hawke-Petit in the course of a kidnapping; killing Hayley in the course of a kidnapping; killing Michaela in the course of a kidnapping; and killing Hawke-Petit in the course of a sexual assault.
>
> […]Hayes, 47, of Winsted, was convicted Oct. 5 of breaking into the Petit home, beating Petit, tying up and torturing the family as Hayes and another man ransacked the home for cash and valuables and tortured the family for seven hours. Testimony during Hayes' trial showed that at one point in the break-in, Hayes forced Hawke-Petit to go to the bank to withdraw money. During that time, according to testimony, Komisarjevsky sexually assaulted Michaela Petit, 11.
>
> When Hawke-Petit and Hayes returned from the bank, Hayes raped and strangled Hawke-Petit. The house was doused with gasoline and set on fire as the intruders fled, testimony showed. Hayley, 17, and Michaela died of smoke inhalation.
>
> […]Prosecutors used the words of Hayes' younger brother Matthew to counter testimony that home-invasion crime was an aberration in Hayes otherwise troubled but basically nonviolent life.
>
> Matthew Hayes portrayed his brother as a conniving, sadistic, violent thief who saw Matthew take countless beatings from his brutal father for Steven Hayes' misdeeds. At one point, Steven Hayes held a gun to Matthew's head, according

> to the statement, which was given to state police after the home invasion.
>
> Examples of Hayes' sadistic behavior toward his brother included hooking Matthew to the garage door by his belt and raising the door up and down, and holding Matthew's hand to a red-hot burner. Matthew said his brother's life of crime was not a result of bad parenting or poor childhood. He said Hayes never learned to take responsibility for his actions.

Sometimes, I think that we have stopped judging others *because* we do not want to be judged *ourselves*. We hope that by not judging anyone, that we will somehow escape being judged by anyone – especially by God himself. The opposition to punishing the guilty is, I think, really just a way of expressing our desire to do away with punishment entirely. We would rather have the freedom to sin with impunity than to protect the victims of sinfulness from harm. We want to escape responsibility for anything we do that harms others.

Dennis Prager has a neat expression from Rabbinical literature that describes the problem with people who are anti-death-penalty: "those who are kind to the cruel, will be cruel to the kind".

I actually consider the death penalty to be an important test of whether a person is a Christian or not, because it shows what they think about the serious of moral crimes, and whether they accept what research says, and what the Bible says, instead of valuing peer approval more than justice. It tells you how seriously a person feels about their own sinfulness. Death penalty supporters don't view sinners as victims – they view victims as victims, and they believe that evil people need to be punished. It's hard for me to see how someone can claim to be a Christian and oppose justice.

Alvin Plantinga’s evolutionary argument against naturalism

September 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s the link at First Things. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Although Darwin admits he wasn’t much of an abstract thinker, he could not shake the “inward conviction” that “the Universe is not the result of chance.” Unlike many who followed after him, he appears to have intuitively understood the paradox of combining naturalism with evolutionary theory: If evolution is a non-teleological process, it undercuts our ability to trust that we can form true beliefs and convictions.
>
> To have trustworthy convictions, we have to have properly functioning noetic equipment (i.e., a brain, spinal cord, sensory apparatus, etc., that recognize reality). But can a strictly materialistic, non-teleological, evolutionary process produce such reliable equipment? The philosopher Alvin Plantinga, one of the greatest thinkers of our era, thinks the answer is “no.” Although his argument is too complex and tightly argued to be adequately summarized, the basic outline of his case shows his point to be all but incontrovertible.
>
> Plantinga claims, not that evolution is untrue, but that the truth of evolution is incompatible with the truth of naturalism. “As far as I can see, God certainly could have used Darwinian processes to create the living world and direct it as he wanted to go,” he argues. “Hence evolution as such does not imply that there is no direction in the history of life.”
>
> What does imply that life is not directed, he adds, is not evolutionary theory itself, but the theory of *unguided* evolution: the idea that “neither God nor any other person has taken a hand in guiding, directing, or orchestrating the course of evolution.” For our purposes, we’ll call this view “evolutionary naturalism.”
>
> Evolutionary naturalism assumes that our noetic equipment developed as it did because it had some survival value or reproductive advantage. Unguided evolution does not select for belief except insofar as the belief improves the chances of survival. The truth of a belief is irrelevant, as long as it produces an evolutionary advantage.

If you want to hear Plantinga giving a lecture on this same argument live on a university campus, click here.

Summary:

> In a talk given at The Veritas Forum at Oregon State University in January 1996, Professor Alvin Plantinga presents an evolutionary argument *against* naturalism.

> In a complex, but important philosophical argument, he argues that it is not rational to accept belief in naturalism and evolution, because such beliefs provide no rational basis for trusting our cognitive faculties.

Or you can watch the videos that I posted a while back.

The argument first appeared in his book "Warrant and Proper Function", published by Oxford University Press in 1993. It should be noted that Plantinga is a Calvinist, a supporter of middle knowledge, and has lent some support to intelligent design. In his latter years, he has turned feisty, and writes snarky things to confound atheists.

Edmonton man drives in front of a speeding car to protect four children

September 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada with cities
From Sun News, Canada's conservative news source.

Excerpt:

> Darrell Krushelnicki didn't think twice when he pulled his Hummer in front of a speeding car in order to prevent four children crossing the street from being mowed down.
>
> The 46-year-old from Taber, AB, was in Edmonton on Friday visiting his parents and had just dropped off his girlfriend at Bonnie Doon Mall. He was stopped at an intersection around 4:30 p.m. when he noticed four kids, ranging in age from three to 16, crossing the street at a marked crosswalk with overhead amber lights.
>
> All the vehicles on the road had stopped, except for a car whizzing up in the far lane. Krushelnicki noticed the car travelling at high speed so he crept into the intersection with his 2006 Hummer.
>
> "I could just tell it was a bad scenario that was going to take place," said Krushelnicki, who works in the oilpatch in northern BC "The driver did not see the crosswalk, the amber light flashing, nor the posted speed limit and he appeared to be on a hand-held device of some sort
> talking."
>
> In order to prevent a disaster, Krushelnicki drove his vehicle in front of the speeding car, which hit the front end of his passenger side, pushing in the

> bumper and grill.
>
> Aside from a loose tooth, Krushelnicki wasn’t injured in the collision. He immediately jumped out of his vehicle to make sure the shaken kids — who watched the crash occur within about 15 or 20 feet of them — were okay.
>
> “They were all shaken up. I couldn’t see any visual injuries. I asked them to go sit on the lawn of the church on the corner,” said Krushelnicki, noting some of the kids were crying.

The driver of the speeding car has been charged with dangerous driving.

Democrats boo as God and Jerusalem are put back in their party platform

September 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The leftist Washington post explains.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama personally intervened to order Democrats to change language in their party platform to add a mention of God and declare that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, campaign officials said Wednesday.
>
> Scrambling to end the furor, Democrats abruptly changed the platform early Wednesday evening to reinstate language from the 2008 platform that said "we need a government that stands up for the hopes, values and interests of working people and gives everyone willing to work hard the chance to make the most of their God-given potential." Mitt Romney and other Republicans had seized on the omission to criticize the Democrats.
>
> Democrats also restored 2008 language on Jerusalem, declaring the city "is and will remain the capital of Israel. The parties have agreed that Jerusalem is a matter for final status negotiations. It should remain an undivided city accessible to people of all faiths."
>
> […]The platform changes did not sit well with some Democratic delegates gathered in Charlotte, N.C., for the party's three-day convention. Many in the audience booed after the convention chairman, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, ruled that the amendments had been approved despite the fact that a large group of delegates had objected. He called for a vote three times before ruling.
>
> The revisions came as Obama struggles to win support from white working-class voters, many of whom have strong religious beliefs, and as Republicans try to woo Jewish voters and contributors away from the Democratic Party. Republicans claimed the platform omissions suggested Obama was weak in his defense of Israel and out of touch with mainstream Americans.

Democrats support abortion and gay marriage. And they haven't done enough to protect Israel from Iran. But they have to pretend that they are moral people and good allies of Israel in order to get elected, even if their hearts are elsewhere. I understand that.

New peer-reviewed paper in Nature falsifies Darwinian junk DNA prediction

September 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's see what Darwinian evolutionists say about junk DNA, before we look at what the experiments show.

Here's biologist John Timmer to explain the orthodox Darwinian view of DNA from 2007:

> Personally, I fall into the "it's all junk" end of the spectrum. If almost all of these sequences are not conserved by evolution, and we haven't found a function for any of them yet, it's hard to see how the "none of it's junk" view can be maintained. There's also an absence of support for the intervening view, again because of a lack of evidence for actual utility. The genomes of closely related species have revealed very few genes added from non-coding DNA, and all of the structural RNA we've found has very specific sequence requirements. The all-junk view, in contrast, is consistent with current data.

Got that? According to Darwinists, DNA is almost entirely junk – this is what is consistent with the view that creatures have evolved through a process of random mutation and selection. The estimates that I've seen from evolutionary biologists range from 95% to 99% junk. Now let's compare the religion with the lab experiments and separate myth from fact.

Now let's compare that with intelligent design theorist William Dembski's view of "junk" DNA, from 1998:

> Even if we have a reliable criterion for detecting design, and even if that criterion tells us that biological systems are designed, it seems that determining a biological system to be designed is akin to shrugging our shoulders and saying God did it. The fear is that admitting design as an explanation will stifle scientific inquiry, that scientists will stop investigating difficult problems because they have a sufficient explanation already.
>
> But design is not a science stopper. Indeed, design can foster inquiry where traditional evolutionary approaches obstruct it. Consider the term "junk DNA." Implicit in this term is the view that because the genome of an organism has been cobbled together through a long, undirected evolutionary process, the genome is a patchwork of which only limited portions are essential to the organism. **Thus on an evolutionary view we expect a lot of useless DNA. If, on the other hand, organisms are designed, we expect DNA, as much as possible, to exhibit function. And indeed, the most recent findings suggest that designating DNA as "junk" merely cloaks our current lack of knowledge about function… Design encourages scientists to look for function where evolution discourages it.**

Now let's look at the experimental evidence and see whose prediction was right.

Evolution News reports on a new peer-reviewed paper published in Nature, the top peer-reviewed science journal. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A groundbreaking paper in *Nature* reports the results of the Encyclopedia of DNA Elements (ENCODE) project, which has detected evidence of function for the "vast majority" of the human genome. Titled "An integrated encyclopedia of DNA elements in the human genome," the paper finds an "unprecedented number of functional elements," where "a surprisingly large amount of the human genome" appears functional. Based upon current knowledge, the paper concludes that at least 80% of the human genome is now known to be functional:
>
> The Encyclopedia of DNA Elements (ENCODE) project has systematically mapped regions of transcription, transcription factor association, chromatin structure and histone modification. **These data enabled us to assign biochemical functions for 80% of the genome**, in particular outside of the well-studied protein-coding regions. Many discovered candidate regulatory elements are physically associated with one another and with expressed genes, providing new insights into the mechanisms of gene regulation.
>
> (The ENCODE Project Consortium, "An integrated encyclopedia of DNA elements in the human genome," *Nature*, Vol. 489:57-74 (September 6, 2012) (emphasis added))

If you doubt Evolution News, we can always turn the ultra-leftist Los Angeles Times, reporting on the same study. (H/T Wes from Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> The $123-million effort involved more than 400 scientists and more than 1,600 experiments during five years of work. If presented graphically, the data generated so far would cover a poster 30 kilometers wide and 16 meters high, Birney has estimated.
>
> This is still just a start — akin to "grainy images beamed back to Earth by the first satellite," said Dr. Eric Green, director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, which funded ENCODE. But already, it's throwing up surprises.
>
> **Strikingly, the data overturn old ideas that the bulk of DNA in our cells is useless — albeit inoffensive — junk just carried along for the evolutionary ride. Back in 2003 when the human genome was published, scientists estimated that less than 2% of it carries instructions for making proteins, and many of them thought the rest didn't do very much.**
>
> **But the new analysis shows that more than 80% of the human genome is active in at least one biological process that the ENCODE team**

> **measured. Nearly every part of it could end up being active when the data are more complete.**

Here's the ultra-left-wing New York Times, confirming the statement I made earlier about the dogma of the Darwinians:

> The discoveries were published on Wednesday in six papers in the journal Nature and in 24 papers in Genome Research and Genome Biology. In addition, The Journal of Biological Chemistry is publishing six review articles, and Science is publishing yet another article.
>
> […]**The thought before the start of the project, said Thomas Gingeras, an Encode researcher from Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, was that only 5 to 10 percent of the DNA in a human being was actually being used.**
>
> **The big surprise was not only that almost all of the DNA is used but also that a large proportion of it is gene switches. Before Encode, said Dr. John Stamatoyannopoulos, a University of Washington scientist who was part of the project, "if you had said half of the genome and probably more has instructions for turning genes on and off, I don't think people would have believed you."**

It's just another prediction of Darwinian orthodoxy falsified by experimental evidence published in the top scientific peer-reviewed journal. Will this cause Darwinians to revise their theory to fit the evidence? Not likely. Their motivations for clinging to naturalism, the religion that undergirds Darwinism, are entirely beyond correction by evidence.

I wonder what people like P.Z. Myers and Larry Moran do when their religion comes into conflict with scientific evidence from lab experiments? Do they bitterly cling to their mythology from the 19th century? Or do they adjust their worldview to be in line with the progress of science?

Let Richard Dawkins explain evolution and the role of evidence:

> "My argument will be that Darwinism is the only known theory that is in principle capable of explaining certain aspects of life. If I am right it means that, even if there were no actual evidence in favour of the Darwinian theory (there is, of course) we should still be justified in preferring it over all rival theories." — p. 287, Blind Watchmaker" (1986)

Or Richard Lewontin:

> "Our willingness to accept [naturalistic] scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science *in spite of* the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite of* its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite of* the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior

> commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our own a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, not matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door." (Richard Lewontin in *New York Review of Books*, January 9, 1997, p. 28)

Junk DNA isn't the only battle in the long war between atheism and scientific evidence. Naturalists fought the Big Bang tooth and nail, trying to save their eternal universe from the progress of science. Naturalists invented the now discredited oscillating model of the universe in order to "explain" the evidence for a cosmic beginning. Naturalists invented the unobservable, untestable multiverse to "explain" the cosmic fine-tuning. Aliens are posited in order to "explain" the origin of life. Precursor fossils are invented without evidence in order to "explain" the Cambrian era explosion in complexity. And so on.

Evidence doesn't matter to people who are motivated by naturalistic faith. Like belief in a flat-Earth, the delusion of naturalism is not accountable to scientific evidence. They believe what they want to believe. It's not up for debate. For some people like Richard Dawkins, a prior lifestyle commitment makes theism (and the moral law!) an impossibility *a priori*. But rational people know that believing something just so that your actions are "justified" doesn't make what you believe *true*.

For the intelligent design take on junk DNA, check out this article. To see who was right about predicting whether "vestigial organs" like the appendix have function, check out this post. You can find more predictions that follow from intelligent design right here.

New study: marriage drops probability of child poverty by 82%

September 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> The collapse of marriage, along with a dramatic rise in births to single women, is the most important cause of childhood poverty—but government policy doesn't reflect that reality, according to a special report released today by The Heritage Foundation.
>
> Nearly three out of four poor families with children in America are headed by single parents. When a child's father is married to his mother, however, the probability of the child's living in poverty drops by 82 percent.
>
> Robert Rector, Heritage's senior research fellow in domestic policy, provides a brief overview of each state with unique data and 14 charts per state, while also updating his years of related research in the special report titled "Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty." Heritage's study, including a national charts slideshow, arrives a week before the Census Bureau's annual report on poverty, which is expected to show another increase.
>
> "Policymakers on the state and national levels recognize that education reduces poverty, but they're largely unaware that marriage is an equally strong anti-poverty weapon," says Rector, a nationally recognized authority on the U.S. welfare system.
>
> In Florida, for example, white families headed by single parents are five times more likely to be poor than those headed by married couples. In Illinois, the poverty rate for a single mother with only a high school diploma is 39.5 percent, compared with 8 percent for a married couple with the same education.
>
> The rate of births to unmarried women—now four out of every 10 babies overall, five out of 10 for Hispanics, and seven out of 10 for blacks—has soared since the mid-1960s, when President Lyndon Johnson launched the War on Poverty. Births outside marriage are mostly to less-educated women—sadly, those with the least ability to support children.
>
> While more Americans grow dependent on welfare, government fails to communicate the benefits of marriage even as it warns young people not to smoke, do drugs, have "unsafe" sex, or drop out of school. Rector calls this "tragic."

If we as a society were really serious about solving poverty, we would stop focusing on redistributing wealth and employing unionized drones, and start focusing on promoting marriage. But that's not politically correct, since feminists don't like marriage. And that's

why it doesn’t happen. If women have to work to be like men, then they need free contraceptives and abortion, and they have to be taught to have sex early, so that they don’t aspire to marriage and parenting. So what if this causes a lot of premarital sex and the occasional baby? Children don’t matter – *feminism* matters.

CBO: Unemployment rises to 9.1% in 2013, health care spending doubles by 2022

September 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the raw numbers from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, as reported by CNS News:

> The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is projecting that if changes in federal taxing-and-spending policies already enacted and set to take effect at the beginning of next year do in fact take place, the unemployment rate will climb to 9.1 percent.
>
> In a report released on Aug. 22, An Update to the Budget and Economic Outlook: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2022, CBO's baseline projections show that by the fourth quarter of 2013 the national unemployment rate will be 9.1 percent.
>
> […]Widely referred to as the "fiscal cliff," the expiration of the Bush tax cuts and over $1 trillion in automatic defense and discretionary cuts as a result of last year's failed budget deal are set to take effect in January 2013.
>
> […]If no action is taken by Congress, current CBO projections show that unemployment will not return to pre-recession levels until 2017.

And more CBO: federal health care spending will exceed all discretionary spending by 2016:

> Under current law, federal health care spending is on pace to exceed all discretionary spending by 2016, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).
>
> The change is due to large increases in Medicare and Medicaid spending and added spending under the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) over the next decade, a feat the Tax Foundation calls a "truly unprecedented and scary" scenario.
>
> The nonpartisan tax research group analyzed recent CBO projections of the budget for 2012 to 2022, finding that over the next decade Medicare spending will increase from $550 billion to $1.064 trillion, while Medicaid would more than double from $253 billion to $592 billion.
>
> In addition, new exchanges and subsidies under Obamacare will force mandatory healthcare expenditures to grow from $25 billion to $181 billion in 2022.
>
> "In total, healthcare entitlement spending is due to more than double, from $828 billion this year to $1.837 trillion in 2022," according to the Tax Foundation.
>
> "This means healthcare spending will overtake all discretionary spending in 2016 – Obama's last year in office if reelected," the group said.

And more CBO: taxes will shoot up by more than 30% between 2012 and 2014:

> The amount of money the federal government takes out of the U.S. economy in taxes will increase by more than 30 percent between 2012 and 2014, according to the Budget and Economic Outlook published today by the CBO.
>
> At the same time, according to CBO, the economy will remain sluggish, partly because of higher taxes.
>
> "In particular, between 2012 and 2014, revenues in CBO's baseline shoot up by more than 30 percent," said CBO, "mostly because of the recent or scheduled expirations of tax provisions, such as those that lower income tax rates and limit the reach of the alternative minimum tax (AMT), and the imposition of new taxes, fees, and penalties that are scheduled to go into effect."
>
> The U.S. economy, CBO projects, will perform "below its potential" for another six years and unemployment will remain above 7 percent for another three.

And the GAO reports that the Obama administration has waived work requirements for welfare programs, which reduces revenues from employee income taxes and increases spending on welfare programs.

Now you might expect that the Democrats would have some bold plan to tackle unemployment, spending and high taxes. And they do!

Bold policy ideas at the Democrat National Convention

Take a look at this video on bold, innovative tax policy from the DNC convention:

That will fix unemployment for sure.

And they want to augment that tax policy with some reasonable pro-growth regulations:

If you don't think that this is a good plan to solve our economic problems, then Democrats will say that you're a racist homophobic Islamophobic sexist bigot.

UK government lawyers want Christians to behave like atheists in public

September 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Landmark cases, brought by four British Christians, including two workers forced out of their jobs after visibly wearing crosses, were heard on Tuesday at the European Court of Human Rights, a judgement will follow at a later.
>
> Despite previous pledges by David Cameron, the Prime Minister, that he would change the law to protect religious expression at work, government lawyers insisted that there was a "difference between the professional and private sphere".
>
> James Eadie QC, acting for the government, told the European court that the refusal to allow an NHS nurse and a British Airways worker to visibly wear a crucifix at work "did not prevent either of them practicing religion in private", which would be protected by human rights law.
>
> […]The QC also told the court that, unlike the Muslim headscarf for women, wearing a cross is not a "generally recognised" act of Christian worship and is not required by scripture. "A great many Christians do not insist on wearing crosses at all, still less visibly," he said.
>
> […]Shirley Chaplin, from Exeter, was moved away from nursing to a clerical role by the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust in Devon after refusing to remove a necklace bearing a crucifix. She has since lost her job after 30 years of nursing.
>
> Mrs Chaplin told The Daily Telegraph that she felt "insulted" by the argument that Christians who are told by their employer that they cannot wear a cross at work can always find another job.
>
> "It is insulting, humiliating and degrading.My Christian faith isn't something that you put on and then take off to go to work," she said.
>
> "We are treated differently. Britain is a very tolerant country but we seem to be more tolerant to some groups than others and at the moment we're not at all tolerant to Christians. You can have faith but not demonstrate it."
>
> James Dingemans QC, acting for Mrs Eweida, questioned the value of having a right to religious belief if it could not be applied at work, where people spend 80 per cent of their adult lives.
>
> "What value is a right that stops when cross the threshold of work," he said.

I guess that these secularist lawyers simply don't understand that there is a requirement for Christians to be public and evangelistic about their faith, and to ask them to act like

atheists is to ask them *not to be authentic Christians.* It's the most intolerant thing to do to a Christian – to issue a Christian with orders that override their obligations to Jesus Christ. This is not an undue burden on employers and clients – it's just being allowed to (quietly) be who you are and to signal to others who you are.

Let me illustrate from the Bible exactly what is expected of Christians.

Matthew 10:32-33:

32 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.

33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2:

1 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.

2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

That's what's at stake here. These are just a couple of examples, there are many more. What gives these left-wing atheists the chutzpah to run around telling other people how to practice their religion? Let each person practice what they believe, and let's all tolerate the differences. There is a right to practice what you believe, there is *no right* to control what others believe and to take away their basic human rights just because you are offended. Only people on the left are fascistic like that, and it's got to stop.

People on the left should reflect and understand what it is exactly that they are doing by marginalizing Christianity and trying to stop people from believing it by shaming and intimidating Christians, and leading people into sin. If Christianity is true, then actions like that are probably *the absolute worst thing you can do.* It's particularly nasty when you realize that the reason that secular leftists try to suppress Christians from being authentic Christians is because of *their feelings.* Secular leftists feel that they have a right to suppress the freedoms of others by force of law, on the grounds that *they feel offended by someone else's religious beliefs and practice.*

Let's double-check that with the Bible and make sure.

Matthew 18:6-14:

[6] “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

[7] Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!

[8] If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.

[9] And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

[10] “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

[12] “What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?

[13] And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off.

[14] In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

Trying to persuade a Christian that they are wrong is fine, but using the power of the state to take away a faithful Christian’s job, which discourages them from being Christian, is something else. In my view, it’s worse than murder. I think that this sort of heavy-handed, intimidating secular fascism masquerading as “tolerance” is *worse than murder*. You do not intimidate someone away from an authentic relationship with God as he really is, *just because of your feelings of discomfort at public expressions of religious faith.* The right of each person to express their religion in public is a basic right, but there is no right not to be offended by someone else’s use of liberty to just be themselves. No one is asking for non-Christians to be forced to convert to Christianity or to be forced to celebrate and affirm Christianity by the power of the state. We’re just asking to be who we are without losing our jobs.

2016 movie reveals some of the radical influences on Barack Obama

September 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the most popular editorial at Investors Business Daily right now. It goes over what we know about Barack Obama influences and background.

Excerpt:

> Obama's father was so anti-West that British intelligence warned the U.S. not to grant him and a group of Kenyan students visas to study in the U.S. They were flagged in a 1959 diplomatic cable as radicals with an "anti-American and anti-white" political agenda.
>
> When Obama Sr. returned to Kenya with a Harvard economics degree, he joined the newly independent Kenyan government as a Marxian economist. AP never mentions the July 1965 policy paper he wrote advising Nairobi to wring all vestiges of Western "neocolonialism" out of the Kenyan economy and replace them with Soviet-style communism, including industrial nationalization.
>
> In the eight-page tract, he proposed economic tonics strikingly similar to ones now being pushed by his son, including: taxing the "rich" to "redistribute economic gains" and "economic power," funding public works projects and other government "investments," and forcing "people to do things they would not do otherwise," such as joining government-run cooperatives to discourage "individual" choices not in the "public interest." He railed against "free enterprise," arguing it creates wealth "disparities" and benefits "only a few individuals."

And more:

> It's plain from Obama's memoir that he worshipped his father. Obama devotes more than 130 pages, or roughly a third, of "Dreams" to covering his father's life and his colonized ancestry in Kenya. This is purposeful. Obama sympathizes with the idea that "neocolonial wealth," held even by Asian business owners in Nairobi, should be "redistributed to the people." (Neocolonialism is the alleged economic exploitation that remains even after political independence.)
>
> Obama says he realized who he is and what he really cares about when he visited his father's grave. He describes breaking down and weeping, whereupon he reflects: "The pain that I felt was my father's pain."
>
> D'Souza says Obama sought out paternal surrogates who shared his father's anti-colonial, anti-capitalist beliefs, including:
>
> Frank Marshall Davis, a Communist Party member investigated by the FBI for un-American activities. As a teenager, Obama sat at Davis' knee in his Waikiki

> bungalow, where he was brainwashed into hating America while romanticizing Soviet Russia. Interestingly, Davis put Churchill at the center of Anglo-American "imperialism."
>
> Rev. Jeremiah Wright, moreover, baptized Obama into "liberation theology," which emerged from the communist movement in Central America. Wright's church "stood in solidarity" with the Sandinista dictators of Nicaragua while Obama attended there.
>
> Not surprisingly, Obama protested U.S. support for the Contra rebels. Wright also lionized Hamas and called for divestment in Israel, which he accused of having "illegally occupied Palestinian territories" for decades.
>
> Derrick Bell, the late Harvard law professor, taught Obama "critical race theory" and "postcolonial theory," which argues that Western imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. Obama remained close to Bell until his death last year.
>
> All three of these surrogate fathers of Obama, along with Obama Sr. himself, were heavily influenced by Frantz Fanon, a Marxist revolutionary who didn't look or sound like one. Rarely seen without a suit and tie, the handsome and cerebral Fanon nonetheless described capitalists as "wretched" and the United States as "a monster."
>
> He called for "a planned economy, for outlawing profiteers," and for wringing neocolonialism and capitalism out of every institution of society. In "The Wretched of the Earth," the late Fanon wrote, "What matters today is the need for a redistribution of wealth," adding "humanity will have to address this question, no matter how devastating the consequences may be."

If you've never heard about any of the facts from Obama's background, then I really recommend you go and check out "2016: Obama's America" in theaters now.

Friday night movie: Animal Farm (1954)

September 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.3/10]

IMDB median rating: [7/10]

Description:

> Britain's first animated feature, which, despite the title and Disney-esque animal animation, is in fact a no-holds-barred adaptation of George Orwell's classic satire on Stalinism, with the animals taking over their farm by means of a revolutionary coup, but then discovering that although all animals are supposed to be equal, some are more equal than others.

I chose this movie because of the DNC convention and Barack Obama's new campaign slogan "Forward", which appears in this movie.

Here's the background on that slogan from Washington Times:

> The Obama campaign apparently didn't look backwards into history when selecting its new campaign slogan, "Forward" — a word with a long and rich association with European Marxism.
>
> Many Communist and radical publications and entities throughout the 19th and 20th centuries had the name "Forward!" or its foreign cognates. Wikipedia has an entire section called "Forward (generic name of socialist publications)."
>
> "The name Forward carries a special meaning in socialist political terminology. It has been frequently used as a name for socialist, communist and other left-wing newspapers and publications," the online encyclopedia explains.
>
> The slogan "Forward!" reflected the conviction of European Marxists and radicals that their movements reflected the march of history, which would move forward past capitalism and into socialism and communism.
>
> […]There have been at least two radical-left publications named "Vorwaerts" (the German word for "Forward"). One was the daily newspaper of the Social Democratic Party of Germany whose writers included Friedrich Engels and Leon Trotsky. It still publishes as the organ of Germany's SDP, though that party has changed considerably since World War II. Another was the 1844 biweekly reader of the Communist League. Karl Marx, Engels and Mikhail Bakunin are among the names associated with that publication.
>
> East Germany named its Army soccer club ASK Vorwaerts Berlin (later FC Vorwaerts Frankfort).
>
> Vladimir Lenin founded the publication "Vpered" (the Russian word for "forward") in 1905. Soviet propaganda film-maker Dziga Vertov made a documentary whose

> title is sometimes translated as “Forward, Soviet” (though also and more literally as “Stride, Soviet”).
>
> Conservative critics of the Obama administration have noted numerous ties to radicalism and socialists throughout Mr. Obama’s history, from his first political campaign being launched from the living room of two former Weather Underground members, to appointing as green jobs czar Van Jones, a self-described communist.

When you watch the movie, pay close attention to the communist pig Napoleon, whose slogan is also “forward”. What does the communist pig mean by “forward”?

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: The Dam Busters (1955)
- Friday night movie: Sink the Bismarck! (1960)
- Friday night movie: The Crossing (2000)
- Friday night movie: The Great Escape (1963)
- Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)
- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Labor force participation at 31-year low: record number of Americans out of work

September 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Full text:

> The number of Americans whom the U.S. Department of Labor counted as "not in the civilian labor force" in August hit a record high of 88,921,000.
>
> The Labor Department counts a person as not in the civilian labor force if they are at least 16 years old, are not in the military or an institution such as a prison, mental hospital or nursing home, and have not actively looked for a job in the last four weeks. The department counts a person as in "the civilian labor force" if they are at least 16, are not in the military or an institution such as a prison, mental hospital or nursing home, and either do have a job or have actively looked for one in the last four weeks.
>
> In July, there were 155,013,000 in the U.S. civilian labor force. In August that dropped to 154,645,000—meaning that on net 368,000 people simply dropped out of the labor force last month and did not even look for a job.
>
> There were also 119,000 fewer Americans employed in August than there were in July. In July, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 142,220,000 Americans working. But, in August, there were only 142,101,000 Americans working.
>
> Despite the fact that fewer Americans were employed in August than July, the unemployment rate ticked down from 8.3 in July to 8.1. That is because so many people dropped out of the labor force and stopped looking for work. The unemployment rate is the percentage of people in the labor force (meaning they had a job or were actively looking for one) who did not have a job.
>
> The Bureau of Labor Statistic also reported that in August the labor force participation rate (the percentage of the people in the civilian non-institutionalized population who either had a job or were actively looking for one) dropped to a 30-year low of 63.5 percent, down from 63.7 percent in July. The last time the labor force participation rate was as low as 63.5 percent was in September 1981.

Let's see how things are going for Obama's biggest supporters – the young people who have been brainwashed by public schools to hate corporations , entrepreneurship and free market capitalism.

CNN Money reports:

> The drop in the unemployment rate in August isn't particularly good news for the

> economy — it's driven mostly by nearly 400,000 people dropping out of the labor force, rather than more people finding jobs.
>
> But those dropping out aren't so much the discouraged 30-, 40- or 50-year olds. In fact, the Labor Department said there was a modest decline in the overall number of discouraged job seekers.
>
> The drop is because so many young adults, aged 16 to 24, are no longer looking for work.
>
> **There were 453,000 fewer young adults with jobs in August than in July. But despite that plunge, only 27,000 more young people were looking for new jobs. Most apparently stopped looking and left the labor force. And those numbers take into account seasonal factors such as younger workers returning to school.**
>
> **As a result, the percentage of young people who are counted in the labor force fell to its lowest level since 1955.**

But there is one sector of the economy that is still doing fine – the parasitic public sector is doing fine.

CNS News reports:

> There was good news for American workers in August—if government was their employer.
>
> The unemployment rate for government wage and salaries workers dropped from 5.7 percent in July to 5.1 percent in August. At the same time, the number of government wage and salary workers counted as unemployed dropped by 123,000 people from 1,182,000 in July to 1,059,000 in August.
>
> […]Answering questions from reporters on June 8, President Obama said that the private sector was "doing fine" and that the "weaknesses" in the economy were in government.
>
> **"The private sector is doing fine," said Obama. "Where we're seeing weaknesses in our economy have to do with state and local government, oftentimes cuts initiated by, you know, governors or mayors who are not getting the kind of help that they have in the past from the federal government and who don't have the same kind of flexibility as the federal government in dealing with fewer revenues coming in."**

Government workers live off of the money confiscated from businesses, who have to please customers by trading them valuable goods and services in order to make money.

This is not unexpected. Socialism is the destroyer of prosperity. In 2008, we elected an unqualified Marxist ideologue as President. He wrecked the economy because he doesn't understand economics. He's put us on the path to becoming Greece. In November, I hope that we'll get it right for a change.

Does the Bible mention unicorns?

September 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Shermer, who appears in the video, asks Christians to explain why there are unicorns in the Bible. (H/T Letitia) The Bible certainly mentions the word unicorn. But does it refer to the mythical horse-like creature, like Shermer seems to think?

Once you go back to the original language, it turns out that the *unicorn* that is mentioned is really a *rhinoceros*.

You can read a debate between Greg Koukl and Michael Shermer here. This debate was moderated by radio show host Hugh Hewitt, and presumably transcribed by his much-maligned producer Duane Patterson. Hewitt also moderated the famous debate at Biola University, featuring William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens.

Does the Bible teach a flat Earth?

September 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from Jeffrey Burton Russell.

Excerpt:

> It must first be reiterated that with extraordinary few exceptions **no** educated person in the history of Western Civilization from the third century B.C. onward believed that the earth was flat.
>
> A round earth appears at least as early as the sixth century BC with Pythagoras, who was followed by Aristotle, Euclid, and Aristarchus, among others in observing that the earth was a sphere. Although there were a few dissenters–Leukippos and Demokritos for example–by the time of Eratosthenes (3 c. BC), followed by Crates(2 c. BC), Strabo (3 c. BC), and Ptolemy (first c. AD), the sphericity of the earth was accepted by all educated Greeks and Romans.
>
> Nor did this situation change with the advent of Christianity. A few–at least two and at most five–early Christian fathers denied the sphericity of earth by mistakenly taking passages such as Ps. 104:2-3 as geographical rather than metaphorical statements. On the other side tens of thousands of Christian theologians, poets, artists, and scientists took the spherical view throughout the early, medieval, and modern church. The point is that no educated person believed otherwise.
>
> Historians of science have been proving this point for at least 70 years (most recently Edward Grant, David Lindberg, Daniel Woodward, and Robert S. Westman), without making notable headway against the error. Schoolchildren in the US, Europe, and Japan are for the most part being taught the same old nonsense. How and why did this nonsense emerge?
>
> In my research, I looked to see how old the idea was that medieval Christians believed the earth was flat. I obviously did not find it among medieval Christians. Nor among anti-Catholic Protestant reformers. Nor in Copernicus or Galileo or their followers, who had to demonstrate the superiority of a heliocentric system, but not of a spherical earth. I was sure I would find it among the eighteenth-century philosophes, among all their vitriolic sneers at Christianity, but not a word. I am still amazed at where it first appears.
>
> No one before the 1830s believed that medieval people thought that the earth was flat.
>
> The idea was established, almost contemporaneously, by a Frenchman and an American, between whom I have not been able to establish a connection, though they were both in Paris at the same time. One was Antoine-Jean Letronne (1787-1848), an academic of strong antireligious prejudices who had studied both geography and patristics and who cleverly drew upon both to misrepresent

> the church fathers and their medieval successors as believing in a flat earth, in his *On the Cosmographical Ideas of the Church Fathers* (1834). The American was no other than our beloved storyteller Washington Irving (1783-1859), who loved to write historical fiction under the guise of history. His misrepresentations of the history of early New York City and of the life of Washington were topped by his history of Christopher Columbus (1828). It was he who invented the indelible picture of the young Columbus, a "simple mariner," appearing before a dark crowd of benighted inquisitors and hooded theologians at a council of Salamanca, all of whom believed, according to Irving, that the earth was flat like a plate. Well, yes, there was a meeting at Salamanca in 1491, but Irving's version of it, to quote a distinguished modern historian of Columbus, was "pure moonshine. Washington Irving, scenting his opportunity for a picturesque and moving scene," created a fictitious account of this "nonexistent university council" and "let his imagination go completely…the whole story is misleading and mischievous nonsense."
>
> But now, why did the false accounts of Letronne and Irving become melded and then, as early as the 1860s, begin to be served up in schools and in schoolbooks as the solemn truth?
>
> The answer is that the falsehood about the spherical earth became a colorful and unforgettable part of a larger falsehood: the falsehood of the eternal war between science (good) and religion (bad) throughout Western history. This vast web of falsehood was invented and propagated by the influential historian John Draper (1811-1882) and many prestigious followers, such as Andrew Dickson White (1832-1918), the president of Cornell University, who made sure that the false account was perpetrated in texts, encyclopedias, and even allegedly serious scholarship, down to the present day. A lively current version of the lie can be found in Daniel Boorstin's *The Discoverers,* found in any bookshop or library.
>
> The reason for promoting both the specific lie about the sphericity of the earth and the general lie that religion and science are in natural and eternal conflict in Western society, is to defend Darwinism. The answer is really only slightly more complicated than that bald statement. The flat-earth lie was ammunition against the creationists. The argument was simple and powerful, if not elegant: "Look how stupid these Christians are. They are always getting in the way of science and progress. These people who deny evolution today are exactly the same sort of people as those idiots who for at least a thousand years denied that the earth was round. How stupid can you get?"
>
> But that is not the truth.

What's scary about this is that I have actually debated with atheists who have cited Bugs Bunny cartoons showing the Columbus flat-Earth scene as an authority for this persistent myth. I think it's safer to stick with a historian. Dr. Russell has written a book about "The Myth of the Flat Earth" and he has also been published by Oxford University Press and

Cornell University Press and Princeton University Press – unlike the Bugs Bunny cartoon artists.

Studies show HIV infection rates still rising among gay men (MSM)

September 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From left-leaning Time magazine.

Excerpt:

> As the world's leading AIDS researchers gather for the International AIDS Conference in Washington, D.C., scientists report that despite gains in controlling the spread of HIV, the disease has continued to spread at an alarming rate in the very population in which it first appeared — gay men.
>
> In a series of papers in the *Lancet* dedicated to the dynamics of HIV among gay men — a group epidemiologists define as men who have sex with men (MSM) — scientists say that the continued burden of AIDS in this group is due to a combination of lifestyle and biological factors that put these men at higher risk. Rates are rising in all countries around the world.
>
> In one study, led by Chris Beyrer, of the Center for Public Health and Human Rights at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, researchers analyzed surveillance reports and studies of HIV among MSM, including data that were part of routine United Nations reporting from member nations. Rates of HIV among gay men ranged from 3% in the Middle East to 25% in the Caribbean. In all reporting nations, rates were on the rise, even in developed nations like the U.S., Australia and the U.K. where HIV is declining overall.
>
> In fact, says Beyrer, income does not seem to matter when it comes to HIV trends among MSM. In the U.S., for example, infection rates among gay men have been increasing by 8% each year since 2001, contributing to a 15% prevalence rate and putting the U.S. on par with countries like Thailand, Malaysia and some African and Caribbean nations where neither awareness of HIV/AIDS nor drug treatments are as widespread. HIV prevalence rates among MSM in Brazil, Canada, Italy and India range between 11% and 15%, while many western European countries have lower rates of around 6%.
>
> […]HIV has always been more common among gay men, but Beyrer and his colleagues say the traditional risk factors may not entirely explain the surge in many cases. Traditionally, HIV experts have pointed to high-risk behaviors such as unprotected sex, having multiple partners, injection drug use and drug use in general for making gay men more vulnerable to infection. But there may be biological reasons for the enhanced risk as well. For example, there is an 18 times greater risk of HIV transmission through anal sex than through vaginal sex, which may explain why the virus continues to thrive in gay men, despite the fact that they still receive the bulk of HIV awareness and treatment public-health

> messages.

I took a look at one of the research papers mentioned on PLOS Medicine and it looks pretty solid. That's peer-reviewed literature, and Johns Hopkins is a good school for medicine. My impression of this research is that we should not be encouraging anyone to get into this lifestyle. We should not be subsidizing it. We should not be celebrating it. It's not good for the gay men themselves that we continue to push this lifestyle onto them as normal. We wouldn't push cigarette smoking onto people, whether there are biological factors that predispose them to it or not. I would not want to be responsible for encouraging anyone to prefer harmful behaviors. The article makes it clear that the problem isn't "acceptance of gays" or reducing "bullying". The problem is the promiscuity of the lifestyle itself, as well as the mechanics of anal sex. This problem cannot be solved by persuading everyone that the gay lifestyle is normal and praiseworthy. It's a problem rooted in reality, not in people's opinions. And we are all paying for this HIV research and HIV treatment at a time when we as a society cannot afford to be voluntarily incurring the costs of one group's risky choices.

Police threatened to charge man who defended his wife with attempted murder

September 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the UK Daily Mail, the latest on the story about the couple who was arrested for wounding four burglars who invaded their home with a legally-owned shotgun. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> The couple held by police over the shooting of two intruders at their isolated cottage spoke yesterday of their 'living nightmare'.
>
> Andy Ferrie said he 'plumbed the depths of despair' when police told him he could face a charge of attempted murder.
>
> Tracey Ferrie said being kept in a police cell away from her husband had 'petrified' her and she was haunted by the 'stomach-churning' experience.
>
> Mr Ferrie, 35, and his 43-year-old wife were arrested on suspicion of causing grievous bodily harm after he called police to report that he had discharged a shotgun, hitting two of four men who had broken into their home.
>
> They were held in separate cells and handcuffed for a court appearance where detectives sought more time to hold them for questioning.
>
> Mrs Ferrie, a saleswoman, said: 'I was completely petrified. Being locked up in a police cell just yards from my husband, but banned from talking to him, was agony.
>
> 'When I can get some sleep now I wake up with a start and think I'm back in the cell. It's mortifying and stomach churning.'
>
> She said their cottage at Welby, near Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, looked like 'something out of CSI' as police swarmed around the hamlet following the incident early last Sunday.
>
> Mr Ferrie, who runs a mobile home repair business, said being told he could ultimately face an attempted murder charge had left him too anxious to eat during almost three days and nights in custody.
>
> […]**'I was petrified, scared stiff,' Mr Ferrie told The Sun. 'I only did what any other bloke would have done given the situation. I'm no hero or hard man. I did what I did to protect my precious, lovely wife.**
>
> **'I was only a few feet away, I could have shot to kill but I didn't. I was relieved later when I was told the injuries I had caused were not life-threatening. The events of the last few days have scarred us for life.'**
>
> **Mr Ferrie, who plans to emigrate to Australia with his wife next year, said that during his time in custody he was 'told my case had been upgraded to attempted murder'.**

> **He added: ‘I just crumpled. I saw myself being sent to prison for a long, long time. I was offered food but didn’t eat for the whole 66 hours we were held.’**
>
> **Last week, a court heard how the couple were woken by the sound of banging and breaking glass as the intruders forced their way inside just after midnight. Mr Ferrie confronted one of the alleged raiders in their bedroom.**

If there were any justice in the world, the police and Crown lawyers responsible for this tragedy would all be sacked, right up to the top of the police force. A civil suit by the victims of the crime would make a nice end to it. Too bad the liberal pro-criminal politicians who criminalized self-defense in the UK won’t be forced to spend a few years in jail. That wouldn’t even be enough to punish them for what they did to those law-abiding citizens right after they were traumatized by a home break-in.

We have to be very careful in this country about politicians on the left who oppose property rights, gun ownership and self-defense. Politicians on the left are always moaning about the rights of criminals and the need to ban guns and prohibit self-defense. This story from the UK shows what their plan does to ordinary people. Why would any man get married and start a family in a country run by feminist leftists who put a man in jail for taking up the role of protector of his family and his home?

William Lane Craig answers questions from Reasonable Faith readers

September 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A pot-pourri of questions for Dr. Craig from visitors his Reasonable Faith web site.

The MP3 file is here. (30 minutes)

Questions:

1. Is the view that God doesn't know the future compatible with the Bible?
2. What is natural evil, (as opposed to human-caused evil)?
3. What is postmodernism? Is it compatible with Christianity?
4. What is the static, B-theory view of time? Is it compatible with the concept of now?
5. Dating advice for a Christian man who is dating a woman who is New Age?
6. How is philosophy related to theology and the Bible?
7. Why isn't the Bible more detailed about science and other areas of knowledge?

More questions and answers on the Reasonable Faith web site.

The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration

September 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This well-footnoted list of Obama's top 10 foreign policy blunders is from the Romney/Ryan campaign.

The list:

1. No Results In Slowing Or Stopping Iran's Nuclear Weapons Program
2. Endangering Our Mission In Afghanistan And Weakening Our Relationship With Pakistan
3. "Unconscionable" Leaks Of Classified Counterterror Information From The White House That Have Been "Devastating"
4. "Devastating" Defense Cuts That Will Cede Our Status As A "Global Power"
5. A Damaged Relationship With Israel And A Moribund Peace Process
6. No Coherent Policy To Stem The Humanitarian And Strategic Disaster In Syria
7. A "Reset" With Russia That Has Compromised U.S. Interests & Values
8. Emboldening The Castros, Chávez & Their Cohorts In Latin America
9. Getting Beaten Badly By Competitors On Trade
10. Putting Our Interests At Risk By Mismanaging The Transition In Iraq

Each of these would devastating to Obama's re-election effort on their own. Taken together, you have to wonder whose side he is really on.

Here's my favorite:

> ### Failure #1: No Results In Slowing Or Stopping Iran's Nuclear Weapons Program
>
> Today, Iran is on the cusp of nuclear weapons capability. Such a capability in the hands of the world's top terrorist sponsoring state poses the greatest threat facing the United States and our friends and allies, and it risks sparking a nuclear arms race across the Middle East.
>
> Despite promising to "do everything in his power" to stop Iran, four years of President Obama's irresolute policies have failed to slow the progress of Iran's program. In fact, that progress has sped up:
>
> - Fastest Rate Of Enrichment Ever. In 2009, Iran's enrichment rate of low-enriched uranium was 56 kilograms per month. That jumped to 116 kilograms per month from November 2011 to February 2012. The enrichment rate now stands at 158 kilograms per month, the fastest rate ever.[1]
> - More Spinning Centrifuges. The total number of spinning centrifuges has

gone from 3,936 to 10,477 during Obama's term. The growth rate of spinning centrifuges went from 112 centrifuges per month before Obama came into office to 152 centrifuges per month during his term.[2]
- Fordow Underground Enrichment Facility Nearing Completion. The fortified underground facility is 70 percent complete. The number of centrifuges installed has gone from 1,064 in May to 2,140 today. The facility's limit is 3,000 centrifuges.[3]

The Iranian program has gotten to this point because President Obama has squandered all credibility with the ayatollahs:

- A Failed Engagement Policy. President Obama offered the ayatollahs "no preconditions" talks, which were rebuffed. The latest round of multilateral talks has produced no results.
- Refrained From Supporting The Green Movement. When asked during a press conference, President Obama shamefully refused to voice support for Iranian dissidents in 2009 as they were being killed in the streets, saying he did not want to "meddle" in Iran's affairs.
- A Weak Sanctions Policy. President Obama opposed and sought to water down crippling sanctions on Iran's Central Bank until he was forced into them by Congress and our European partners.[4] He then undermined those sanctions by issuing waivers to 20 of the top importers of Iranian oil, including China.[5]
- Abandoned Missile Defense. He abandoned a European missile defense system meant to protect against Iranian missiles.
- Undermined The Credibility Of The Military Option. His administration has given the Iranians no reason to believe it is serious about a military option. The administration has repeatedly talked down the effectiveness and advisability of the military option, and seems to have devoted more energy toward preventing an Israeli strike on Iran than toward preventing an Iranian nuclear weapons capability. Obama officials leaked that the administration has focused its efforts on explaining to Israel "the dangers of an Israeli attack" on Iran and has attempted to "make the decision to attack as hard as possible for Israel."[6] And the President himself, after boldly stating to AIPAC that the United States "has Israel's back," changed his tune two days later by saying his statement was "not a military doctrine."

In the face of such irresolution, the ayatollahs are pressing forward toward nuclear weapons capability without fear of repercussion because they do not believe we are serious.

And another:

Failure #3: “Unconscionable” Leaks Of Classified Counterterror Information From The White House That Have Been “Devastating”

The Obama White House has released a torrent of leaks of classified counterterror information that has compromised our national security by revealing covert sources and methods. The pace of the leaks quickened as the November election drew nearer, raising the question of whether they were politically motivated. But whether the leaks were politically motivated and intentional or the result of bad management and sloppiness in neither here nor there. Either case is unacceptable and injurious to the intelligence operatives and uniformed men and women in the field.

Criticism of the leaks has been bipartisan:

- John Brennan, President Obama’s own counterterror chief and Deputy National Security Adviser, has called the leaks “unconscionable,” “damaging,” and “devastating.”[10]
- Senator Dianne Feinstein, the Democratic Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, has criticized the leaks and stated that they are coming from the White House. She said, “Each disclosure puts American lives at risk, makes it more difficult to recruit assets, strains the trust of our partners, and threatens imminent and irreparable damage to our national security in the face of urgent and rapidly adapting threats worldwide.”[11]

Despite the damage done, President Obama has refused to support the appointment of a special counsel to investigate these leaks and hold those responsible accountable. The special counsel mechanism is designed for just such circumstances where the impartiality of normal prosecutors may be compromised because someone in the high chain of command in the White House may be implicated.

The damaging leaks include:

- Operational details about the Osama Bin Laden raid.
- Existence of a Pakistani doctor who assisted the United States in finding Bin Laden and who was later arrested and jailed in Pakistan.
- Revelation of a covert joint U.S.-Israeli cyber operation to undermine Iran’s nuclear weapons program.
- The existence of a double-agent who was key to unraveling the second underwear bomb.
- The White House’s process for determining the targets of drone strikes.

And one last one:

Failure #7: A “Reset” With Russia That Has Compromised U.S. Interests & Values

Mere months after Russia invaded its neighbor Georgia, the Obama Administration came into office vowing to “reset” relations with Russia, saying it would lead to more cooperation on Iran, North Korea, and Afghanistan. That reset has garnered little improvement in our relationship with Russia and no new meaningful cooperation.

Among President Obama’s concessions to Russia were:

- Abandoning A European Missile Defense System. The unilateral abandonment of a missile defense system to be based in Poland and the Czech Republic and completed by 2013 was a sop to Russia, which had sought to intimidate our allies and discourage them from agreeing to the system in the first place. They agreed to it despite the pressure. To add insult to injury, he announced his decision on September 17, 2009—the 70th anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Poland.
- New START. President Obama’s signing of the New START treaty compromised U.S. interests in two respects. First, it linked U.S. missile defense systems to reductions in our nations’ respective nuclear arsenals. This linkage jeopardizes our ability to deploy missile defense systems. Second, the limits it sets on the number of Russian launchers and warheads *were above what Russia possessed in its nuclear arsenal at the time*.[22] In other words, New START gave Russia room to expand its arsenal while requiring the United States to reduce its arsenal.
- “Flexibility” After The Election. In a hot mic moment, President Obama promised Russia’s leaders even more “flexibility” on missile defense and other issues in exchange for more “space” prior to the November election. It was a telling moment of weakness, one that has shaken our allies and raised the persistent question of what President Obama is planning to do post-election that he can’t tell the American people now.
- Kid Gloves For Russia’s Human Rights and Democracy Problems. President Obama has soft-pedaled Russia’s backsliding on democracy and human rights. The Obama Administration has opposed the Magnitsky Bill that would sanction human rights abusers in Russia, preferring to grant Russia permanent normal trade relations free from any new human rights measures. President Obama even congratulated Vladimir Putin in a phone call from Air Force One on winning a corrupt election.

In return for these concessions, Russia has given little save for obstruction at the U.N., support for rogue regimes, and bellicose behavior.

- Obstruction On Syria. Three times, Russia has wielded its veto power along with China to block U.N. Security Council Resolutions aimed at stopping the

> violence in Syria and sanctioning the Assad regime.
> - Arms To Syrian Regime. Russia has supplied arms to the Syrian Army during its brutal crackdown on Syrian civilians.
> - Obstruction On Iran. Russia succeeded in watering down a 2010 set of U.N. sanctions on Iran, preventing the inclusion of sanctions on Iran's Central Bank. Since that time, Russia has successful blocked binding U.N. sanctions on the Central Bank and has criticized individual nations' sanctions on the Central Bank, calling such efforts "unacceptable."
> - Push To Close U.S. Airbase Vital To Mission In Afghanistan. Instead of helping American efforts in Afghanistan, Russia urged Kyrgyzstan to close down a U.S. military base that is a vital transit point for troops and supplies moving in and out of Afghanistan. It is the only such transit base the United States has in Central Asia.[23]
> - Cozying To Chávez. Closer relations between Moscow and Hugo Chávez's Venezuela, including new deals on nuclear power cooperation, increased arms sales, and a $4 billion loan agreement.
> - Continued Abuses Of Political And Human Rights. Putin's re-election as President came on the wings of a corrupt election. And he has continued to consolidate power, sending dissidents and even punk rockers who dare criticize him to jail on trumped up charges.
> - Return Of Cold War Rhetoric. Since announcing plans to resume his former office, Putin has employed the harshest anti-American rhetoric seen since the Cold War and has stepped up harassment of U.S. officials on Russia soil.

I really recommend reviewing these and please send them along to your friends who can vote. These are not things you see reported in the mainstream media, who seem to be more concerned about whether a 30-year-old law student gets taxpayers to pay $3000 per student for contraceptives.

Chicago teacher strike: average pay $71K, 80% of 8th graders not proficient at math

September 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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CBS News reports:

> Thousands of teachers, parents and supporters marched through downtown Chicago on the first day of a school strike.
>
> The crowd Monday afternoon stretched for several blocks and was expected to swell through the early evening and into the city's rush hour. Some protesters carried signs that said "Chicago Teachers United" and "Fair Contract Now." Others waved red pom-poms and chanted. Earlier in the day, thousands of teachers picketed around neighborhood schools.
>
> […]**The city's public school teachers make an average of $71,000 a year. Both sides said they were close to an agreement on wages. What apparently remains are issues involving teacher performance and accountability, which the union saw as a threat to job security.**

They don't want to be held accountable for failing to provide outcomes for their customers, the children.

Why do you think they might fear being held accountable? Are they doing a poor job of teaching? Is that why they fear being accountable? Let's see.

CNS News explains:

> Chicago public school teachers went on strike on Monday and one of the major issues behind the strike is a new system Chicago plans to use for evaluating public school teachers in which student improvement on standardized tests will count for 40 percent of a teacher's evaluation. Until now, the evaluations of Chicago public school teachers have been based on what a Chicago Sun Times editorial called a "meaningless checklist."
>
> […]In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education administered National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests in reading and math to students around the country, including in the Chicago Public Schools. The tests were scored on a scale of 0 to 500, with 500 being the best possible score. Based on their scores, the U.S. Department of Education rated students' skills in reading and math as either "below basic," "basic," "proficient" or "advanced."
>
> […]**79 percent of Chicago public school 8th graders were not grade-level proficient in reading**. According to the U.S. Department of Education, this included 43 percent who rated "basic" and 36 percent who rated "below basic."
>
> […]**80 percent of Chicago public school 8th graders were not grade-level proficient in math.** According to the U.S. Department of Education, this

> included 40 percent who rated “basic” in math and 40 percent who rated “below basic.”

Fire them all. Abolish the federal Department of Education. Make teacher unions illegal.

Education policy tutorial videos:

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel’s documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Graduate students with non-STEM degrees increasingly dependent on welfare programs
- A look at homeschooling and alternatives to college
- The consequences of the feminization of education in the UK
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- Is it “brilliant” to accumulate $185,000 of debt studying the humanities?
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- Another looming debt crisis: law school students racking up $100,000+ in debt
- Unemployed college graduate ran up $90,000 of debt while studying English
- Is a college degree worth what you pay for it?
- Census Bureau confirms DC schools spending $29,409 per pupil
- Obama: 25% fewer male graduates than female graduates is a great accomplishment
- In Los Angeles schools, only 45% of students can read at grade level
- Many of Obama’s young supporters now unemployed, living with parents
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Public school teacher threatens student with arrest for criticizing Obama
- New study: low family income not a major cause of low student achievement
- Teacher union memo reveals agenda to undermine parents
- Public schools spend $130,000 of stimulus money on diversity training books
- New Jersey per-pupil cost is $17,800
- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama’s new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students

- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher’s unions make war on charter schools

Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)

September 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the liberal Washington Post:

> President Obama is touting his foreign policy experience on the campaign trail, but startling new statistics suggest that national security has not necessarily been the personal priority the president makes it out to be. It turns out that more than half the time, the commander in chief does not attend his daily intelligence meeting.
>
> The Government Accountability Institute, a new conservative investigative research organization, examined President Obama's schedule from the day he took office until mid-June 2012, to see how often he attended his Presidential Daily Brief (PDB) — the meeting at which he is briefed on the most critical intelligence threats to the country. During his first 1,225 days in office, Obama attended his PDB just 536 times — or 43.8 percent of the time. During 2011 and the first half of 2012, his attendance became even less frequent — falling to just over 38 percent. By contrast, Obama's predecessor, George W. Bush almost never missed his daily intelligence meeting.
>
> I asked National Security Council spokesman Tommy Vietor about the findings, and whether there were any instances where the president attended the intelligence meeting that were not on his public schedule. Vietor did not dispute the numbers, but said the fact that the president, during a time of war, does not attend his daily intelligence meeting on a daily basis is "not particularly interesting or useful."

Please see my previous post on Obama's top 10 foreign policy failures.

Let's review the most important one:

> **Failure #1: No Results In Slowing Or Stopping Iran's Nuclear Weapons Program**
>
> Today, Iran is on the cusp of nuclear weapons capability. Such a capability in the hands of the world's top terrorist sponsoring state poses the greatest threat facing the United States and our friends and allies, and it risks sparking a nuclear arms race across the Middle East.
>
> Despite promising to "do everything in his power" to stop Iran, four years of President Obama's irresolute policies have failed to slow the progress of Iran's program. In fact, that progress has sped up:
>
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kilograms per month from November 2011 to February 2012. The enrichment rate now stands at 158 kilograms per month, the fastest rate ever.[1]
- More Spinning Centrifuges. The total number of spinning centrifuges has gone from 3,936 to 10,477 during Obama's term. The growth rate of spinning centrifuges went from 112 centrifuges per month before Obama came into office to 152 centrifuges per month during his term.[2]
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In the face of such irresolution, the ayatollahs are pressing forward toward nuclear weapons capability without fear of repercussion because they do not

> believe we are serious.

And now we know why. He’s played golf over a 100 times. He’s in over his head.

New studies shed light on the expected outcomes of sexual behavior

September 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This is a guest post by Mathetes entitled "Reasonable expectations of risky sexual behavior".

One of the enlightening, and sobering, aspects of being an informed Christian is knowing how the world works, and then seeing a world that behaves oppositely. It is like watching an accident as it occurs, knowing how it happened, what objects collided, who was at fault, and yet being unable to stop the carnage.

In our country the social carnage is most often carnal. We see the lives of others being disordered because of stupid sexual choices. And the consequences of these choices can be known by those who are willing to step back and examine the evidence.

Case in point. Risky sexual behavior is present in most places where feminism and the sexual revolution has taken a firm footing. A study in New Zealand highlighted the sexual behavior of students.

The study found that students aged 17 to 24 displayed "low condom use, multiple sexual partners and unintended pregnancies."

Our intrepid researcher is Rebecca Psutka, and she informs us that: "Sexual health is an integral, but often neglected component of overall wellbeing, but if there is very little information it is difficult to set priorities for improvement and to monitor progress."

Oh Rebecca, if only you knew. She operates out of a mindset where more information will supposedly change behavior. But this behavior that she decries is not a result of too little information. If there's one thing the students know, it's how to know one another.

> Of the 2922 students who responded, 69 per cent said they were sexually active. The average age they lost their virginity was 17.
>
> One in five said they had three or more sexual partners in the past year and almost one-third said they had been drinking the last time they had sex.

And what message does the student welfare vice-president, Rory McCourt, have to say to this eminently useless waste of a college education. Not much, besides the normal platitudes that one would expect from a college administrator. Rory's solution is one that would make every educator proud. He and his ilk have tried their best to make sure that "messages on safe sex and drinking responsibly were circulated around campus."

So yeah, the adults are particularly clueless about the whole sexual education business. Rory tells us that "There's literally thousands of stories out there about it. It's something that we have to tackle."

So, they have to tackle the problem of unsafe sex by making sure the thousands of stories that are already out there will somehow become more noticeable. What's that

definition of insanity again? Oh, yeah, doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different outcome.

I know what you're thinking. The solution is easy. Say it with me: more condoms!

> Ms Edmond said there had not been a major public campaign on condoms or contraception for many years. 'We obviously have some sexual education happening in schools, though that's a bit haphazard and inconsistent. As a country, New Zealand doesn't have an up-to-date sexual and reproductive health strategy, and that's something we'd like to see.'

Yeah, that's the reason. Students don't know enough about sex and how to stop pregnancies. Sure. Unfortunately there's that annoying fact that the students do indeed know how to stop unplanned pregnancies:

> The study found one in 20 students had, or had contributed to, at least one unintended pregnancy.
>
> Of those pregnancies, 74 per cent of women and 72 per cent of men reported that it was aborted, while a further 19 per cent of men did not know the outcome.

What about that mysterious 19 per cent? Well, unless the girl moved away, or she was placed in an underground dungeon, and the guy never saw her again, we can guess the outcome … adoption, right?

So actually, the students know all about birth control, and how to get rid of a pregnancy.

Now, given that this might be classified as bad behavior, perhaps the students realize what's happening and will try to end these coital escapades. Not likely.

> "No-one has sex unless they're drunk," said Stella Blake-Kelly, 21.
>
> "The university can ply them with as many brochures about sexual health as they want – drinking the way that young people do, a lot of your common sense just goes out the window," Ms Blake-Kelly said.
>
> Harry Evans, 20, agreed. "I know very few people who haven't had a dumb, alcohol-fuelled sexual experience."
>
> Molly McCarthy, 21, said students were more likely to have unprotected sex when they were "wasted".
>
> "When else do you think it's appropriate to go home with someone you've just met?"
>
> First-year students living in halls of residence were particularly likely to take risks, she said.
>
> "You're in such close confines. You've gone out drinking together, you come home together – all the ingredients are there."

And there we are. The students know what's going. We see what's going. Our educators are dim-witted enablers. And the behavior goes on.

Seeing that these casual encounters are taking place, what effect are they likely to have on adult relationships? Or put another way, what's going to happen to all these students as they search and try to maintain adult relationships?

A US study "found those who waited to have sex were happier in the long-run."

"Women particularly benefited from not leaping into bed at the first opportunity. Marriage also seemed to make them happier than co-habiting."

The researchers note that:

> "Courtship is a time for exploration and decision-making about the relationship, when partners assess compatibility, make commitments and build on emotional and physical intimacy."
>
> "The rapid entry into sexual relationships may, however, cut short this process, setting the stage for "sliding" rather than "deciding" to enter co-habiting unions."
>
> "Around a third of the men and women said they'd had sex within the first month of dating, while about 28 per cent waited at least six months, the Journal of Marriage and Family reported."
>
> "Analysis of the data clearly showed the women who had waited to have sex to be happier. And those who waited at least six months scored more highly in every category measured than those who got intimate within the first month. Even their sex lives were better."
>
> "The link was weaker for men. However, those who waited to get physically involved had fewer rows.

The researchers said couples may benefit from taking things slowly.

> 'A strong sexual desire may thwart the development of other key ingredients of a healthy relationship such as commitment, mutual understanding or shared values,' the report said. 'Good sex is sometimes confused with love; some couples overlook problematic aspects of their relationship that ultimately matter more in the long run.'"

So we see the end result of the risky student behavior. The students are setting themselves up for long term relationship pain and failure. And this goes along with what we know about biological bonding – the more sexual partners you have, the more difficult it is for you (especially the woman) to bond with your mate. In practical terms, studies have shown that the more sexual partners you have the more likely you are to divorce.

So our bright students are doing the exact things that will set themselves up for future relationship failures.

I work with my church's youth group quite often, and I've always dreamed of giving a Sunday school lesson titled: "Your worst life now and forever: how to fail at life". Joel Osteen might not preach it, since it wouldn't sell well, but it would make for a good talk.

First step: sleep with random people, when you're young, while you are drunk, so that

your conscience and biology will be dulled and you'll be more likely to have casual encounters as you get older.

Further steps would include: don't use birth control, abort your pregnancies (to ensure an increased risk of breast cancer and moral guilt and anguish), have children out of wedlock, and divorce your mate.

It's a perfect plan – for disaster. And it's one that students have already mastered.

CBO: Obama administration's budget deficit is $1.17 trillion so far this fiscal year

September 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

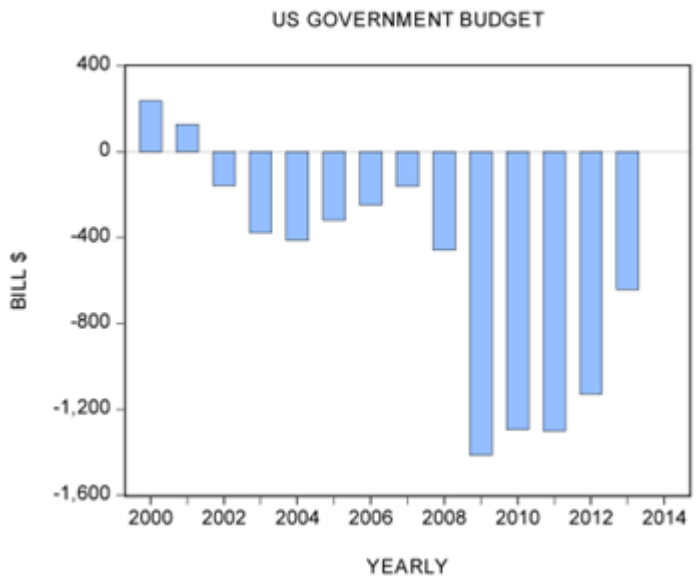

Democrats control the House and Senate in 2007
From CNS News:

> The federal deficit topped $1 trillion in the first 11 months of fiscal year 2012, according to the Congressional Budget Office, reaching $1.17 trillion, exceeding CBO's August projections.
>
> "CBO estimates that the Treasury Department will report a deficit of $1.17 trillion for the first 11 months of fiscal year 2012," CBO said Monday.
>
> CBO estimated that the government ran a $192 billion deficit during the month of August, up from the $70 billion deficit it ran in July.
>
> In its updated projections, CBO estimated that the government will run a $1.13 trillion deficit in fiscal year 2012, which ends on Sept. 30 of this year. In order to hit that target, the government will actually have to run a surplus during September of $40 billion.
>
> The government ran a $1.3 trillion deficit in fiscal year 2011, a figure the government could once again reach if its September deficit is as large as its August deficit.

I think it's a safe bet that we'll hit $1.3 trillion again for fiscal year 2012.

Recall that the last Republic budget, when Republicans still held the House and Senate, was $160 billion. Then Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid came to power, and we are now in debt nearly $8 trillion more since the Democrats took over the budget in January of 2007. They have not submitted a new budget in almost 3 years – we are locked in to the high spending from their last massive budget.

New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially for women

September 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Regarding the studies on the consequences of sexual activity that Mathetes wrote about before on this blog, I had something to add.

I thought these comments from Stuart Schneiderman about those studies were interesting. He writes about the response of feminists to the paper's finding that women are more affected by early sexual activity, (the paper calls it "relationship tempo"), than men.

Excerpt:

> As you might have guessed, feminists are torqued by this study. Witness the bilge offered by Amanda Hessat the DoubleX blog.
>
> To her confused mind, a woman who has a happy marriage might, in her heart of hearts be unhappy. Because it does not satisfy her personhood!
>
> In her words:
>
> *What the Daily Mail doesn't say is that half-year stretches of celibacy may make a woman more satisfied in a long-term relationship, but they don't necessarily make her a more satisfied person.*
> In the feminist life plan women are supposed to find happiness on their jobs, not in their relationships. This is convenient for feminists since an ideological commitment to their cause tends to be a relationship killer.
>
> Hess points out, correctly, that not all women want long term relationships. Some don't even want to get married.
>
> If she is suggesting that women who sleep around are perfectly contented with their love lives, she is, as I see it, deluded.
>
> Besides, if women are being pressured into having sex before they want to—which is a main reason why women have sex too early—then one reason is that a sufficient number of their sisters have been giving it away for free, thus skewing the marketplace.
>
> Why don't writers like Amanda Hess recommend that the women who are giving it away for free change their ways? Why do they always assume that women who want to get married need to act in a way that is not going to help them achieve their goals?

Feminism is the denial of gender differences. What follows from women thinking that they are no different from men when it comes to sex? Pain. Just so everyone knows, I was appalled that everyone was having sex so early according to that study. I'm in my mid-thirties and have not so much as kissed a girl on the lips. The research just doesn't

support rushed physical intimacy as a legitimate pathway to marital stability and a high quality relationship. That's my goal, so I don't rush physical intimacy. We should all make an effort to make relationships more about communication and co-operation. If we care about the next generation, then we will do what it takes to provide them with a stable environment in which to grow up.

Related posts

- New study: marriage drops probability of child poverty by 82%
- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less
- How do prostitutes stay in business in an era of hook-up sex?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- Should Christian men marry? What's the worst that could happen?
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?

- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- How feminism’s war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

9 reasons why the economy is not moving “forward” under Barack Obama

September 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the American Enterprise Institute.

Here’s the summary of the list of 9 items:

1. Unemployment rate
2. Declining U.S. labor force (structural unemployment/government dependency)
3. Labor force participation rate
4. Unemployment/population ratio
5. Average hourly earnings of workers
6. GDP growth
7. Economic competitiveness
8. Federal debt crisis
9. Risk of renewed recession

And here’s the detail of one that I haven’t mentioned much before on this blog:

> 5. Average hourly earnings were unchanged in the August jobs report, and are up just 1.7% over the past year. **Not only does that match the slowest pace on record, but one you account for inflation, wages are flat to down.**

The graph:

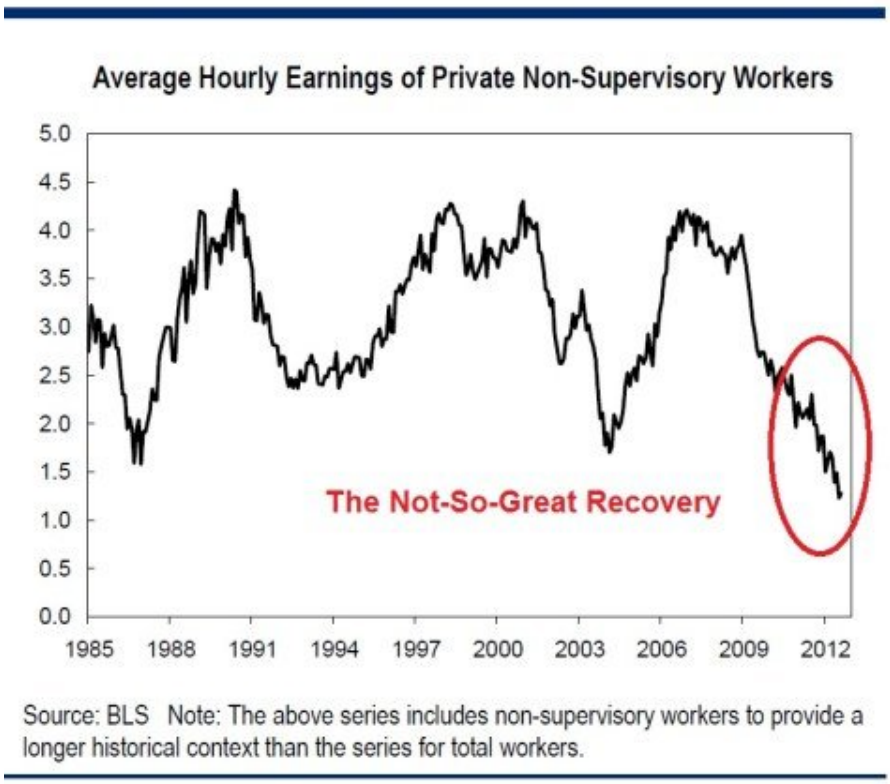

Average hourly earnings for workers way down under Obama

According to Forbes magazine: (H/T Gateway Pundit)

> New income data from the Census Bureau reveal what a great job Barack Obama has done for the middle class as President. During his entire tenure in the oval office, median household income has declined by 7.3%.
>
> In January, 2009, the month he entered office, median household income was $54,983. By June, 2012, it had spiraled down to $50,964. That's a loss of $4,019 per family, the equivalent of losing a little less than one month's income a year, every year. And on our current course that is only going to get worse not better…
>
> […]Three years into the Obama recovery, median family income had declined nearly 5% by June, 2012 as compared to June, 2009. That is nearly twice the decline of 2.6% that occurred during the recession from December, 2007 until June, 2009. As the Wall Street Journal summarized in its August 25-26 weekend edition, "For household income, in other words, the Obama recovery has been worse than the Bush recession."
>
> […]Obama has failed the poor as well as the middle class. Last year, the Census Bureau reported more Americans in poverty than ever before in the more than 50 years that Census has been tracking poverty. Now The Huffington Post reports that the poverty rate is on track to rise to the highest level since 1965, before the War on Poverty began. A July 22 story by Hope Yen reports that when the new poverty rates are released in September, "even a 0.1 percentage point increase would put poverty at the highest level since 1965."

Gateway Pundit adds:

> Barack Obama is not just the food stamp president.
> A record **one in seven Americans** is on food stamps today thanks to Barack Obama.
>
> **Barack Obama is also the poverty and pain president.**
> Under Obama, 6.4 million Americans are living below the poverty line and there is a record number of Americans living in deep poverty.

Meanwhile, Moody's is threatening a credit downgrade:

> Moody's Investors Service said Tuesday that it would probably cut its triple-A rating on U.S. government debt by a notch unless congressional leaders can strike a budget deal in the coming months to bring down the deficit.
>
> "If those negotiations lead to specific policies that produce a stabilization and then downward trend in the ratio of federal debt to GDP over the medium term, the rating will likely be affirmed," Moody's said in a press release Tuesday. "If those negotiations fail to produce such policies, however, Moody's would expect to lower the rating, probably to Aa1."
>
> The threat comes after one of the other big three ratings firms, Standard & Poor's, downgraded the U.S. last year following the brawl in Washington over the

> debt ceiling.

This would be the second credit downgrade – both occurred because of Obama's Marxist policies of "spreading the wealth around" to punish job creators and their employees.

Are you better off now than you were four years ago?

Some supporters of gay marriage favor normalizing pedophilia and incest

September 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Three data points. The first two from John Hawkins of Right Wing News.

Excerpt:

> The first was an article **talking up pedophilia in Gawker**.
>
> Van Gjiseghem says what he and his colleagues mean by sexual orientation is a person's inborn and unalterable sexual preference, irrespective of whether that preference is harmful to others or not.
>
> …Imagine a world in which admitting your attraction to busty women or tall men led to alienation, jail time, or your murder.
>
> …The old adage is that the true mark of a society is how it treats the weakest in its ranks. Blacks, women, Latinos, gays and lesbians, and others are still in no way on wholly equal footing in America. But they're also not nearly as lowly and cursed as men attracted to children. One imagines that if Jesus ever came to Earth, he'd embrace the poor, the blind, the lepers, and, yes, the pedophile.
>
> Then, there are **these comments in favor of incest** from the director of *The Notebook*.
>
> "I have no experience with incest…You know what? This whole movie is about judgment, and lack of it, and doing what you want," he said.
>
> "Who gives a sh-t if people judge you? I'm not saying this is an absolute but in a way, if you're not having kids – who gives a damn? Love who you want. Isn't that what we say? Gay marriage – love who you want? If it's your brother or sister it's super-weird, but if you look at it, you're not hurting anybody except every single person who freaks out because you're in love with one another."

And the third from Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse at the Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> Can a child have three parents? If California State Senator Mark Leno has his way, children in California will be able to have three legal parents. Before we dismiss SB 1476 as another example of California Weird, we had best look into it more closely. After all, the bill has passed both houses of the California Assembly and is awaiting Governor Brown's signature or veto.
>
> I believe this development was inevitable, more inevitable in fact than the much-vaunted inevitability of gay marriage. Once we started trying to normalize parenting by same-sex couples and redefine marriage to remove the dual-gender requirement, we had to end up with triple-parenting.

> […]It all sounds very nice and agreeable to allow people to make any parenting agreements they want on the front end of their relationships. But when a relationship breaks down, the long arm of the law will end up involved in the life of the family, on the back end, to resolve disputes. We are replacing the natural pre-political concept of biological parenthood with an artificial, government-created concept of parenthood that is entirely socially constructed. Instead of the government simply recognizing and recording the pre-political reality of biological parenthood, we are giving agents of the state the authority to construct parenthood, all in the best interests of the child, of course.

Gay marriage advocates can't object to any of these practices. Their view is that people should be able to "marry" whoever they "love". And that means pedophilia, incest and polygamy. It's not broadening the definition of marriage – it's destroying marriage. Marriage used to be the union of a man and a woman in order to have a stable environment to contain sexual attraction and to raise children to whom both parents are biologically related. Marriage put moral boundaries on the sexual act for the benefit of children, and consequently, for the benefit of society.

Related posts

- Law professor uses same-sex marriage law to argue for legalizing polygamy
- Queen's University feminist says that polygamy should be permitted
- British Columbia Supreme Court considers striking down ban on polygamy
- Will Canada add polgygamy and polyamory on top of same-sex marriage?
- Taxpayer-funded polygamy in the UK, France and Canada
- Mark Regnerus's research vindicated by University of Texas at Austin
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families
- Obama openly supports gay marriage: 48 hours after top gay donors cut off funding
- Democrat introduces bill to defund adoption agencies that favor married couples
- A secular case against same-sex marriage

A parent’s guide to intelligent design and science education

September 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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An excellent PDF report prepared by the Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture.

Here are the contents:

Introduction

- Part 1: What Is Intelligent Design?
- Part 2: What Is Evolution?
- Part 3: What are the Scientific Problems with Neo-Darwinian Evolution?
- Part 4: How Can Parents Influence Evolution-Education in Local Schools?
- Part 5: What is Theistic Evolution?
- Part 6: What Can Parents do to Support Intelligent Design?
- Part 7: Basic Tips for Parents and Students
- Part 8: Recommended Resources

First, there’s a definition of intelligent design: (the thing that people in the news media never define correctly!)

> Intelligent design (“ID”) is a scientific theory which holds that some features of the universe and living things are best explained by an intelligent cause rather than an undirected process such as natural selection. ID theorists argue that design can be inferred by studying the informational properties of natural objects to determine if they bear the type of information that, in our experience, arises from an intelligent cause.
>
> Proponents of neo-Darwinian evolution contend that the information in life arose via purposeless, blind, and unguided processes. ID proponents contend that the information in life arose via purposeful, intelligently guided processes. Both claims are scientifically testable using scientific methods employed by standard historical sciences. ID is based upon the claim that there are “telltale features of living systems and the universe which are best explained by an intelligent cause.”
>
> Scientists investigating ID compare observations of how intelligent agents design things to observations of phenomena whose origin is unknown. Human intelligent agents provide a large dataset for studying the products of the action of intelligent agents. Mathematician and philosopher William Dembski observes that “[t]he principal characteristic of intelligent agency is directed contingency, or what we call choice.” When “an intelligent agent acts, it chooses from a range of competing possibilities” to create some complex and specified event. Dembski

> calls ID “a theory of information” where “information becomes a reliable indicator of design as well as as a proper object for scientific investigation.” ID seeks to find in nature the types of information which are known to be produced by intelligent agents, thus inferring a prior action of intelligence.
>
> The type of information which indicates design is generally called “specified complexity” or “complex and specified information” (CSI). Dembski suggests that design can be detected when one finds a rare or highly unlikely event (making it complex) that conforms to an independently derived pattern (making it specified).

Intelligent design looks at features of nature, like cosmic fine-tuning and DNA, and infers an intelligent cause because of the nature of the effect. Information is best explained by an intelligence. Computer programs are best explained by an intelligence. Blog posts are best explained by an intelligence. Cross stitched art is best explained by an intelligence. Intelligence can create complex things that are composed of simple parts that are sequenced together in such a way that they have meaning and purpose that is independent of the properties of the components themselves.

Here’s a good video explaining intelligent design applied to biological information in proteins and DNA: (suitable for complete beginners)

For anyone who is looking for a good basic book on intelligent design, I recommend “The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design” by Johnathan Wells. He holds a Ph.D in biology from the University of California at Berkeley. The best intermediate book on intelligent design is Stephen Meyer’s “Signature in the Cell“. He has a Ph.D in the philosophy of science from Cambridge University. The best advanced book is Michael Behe’s “The Edge of Evolution“. He has a Ph.D in biochemistry from the University of Pennsylvania. For Christians looking to understand the relationship between science, evolution and monotheism, I recommend “God and Evolution” edited by Jay Richards. He has a Ph.D in philosophy and theology from Princeton University.

Self-refuting statements defined and some common examples

September 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A fine article by Aaron, who writes at Please Convince Me.

Excerpt:

> A self-defeating (or self-refuting) statement is one that fails to meet its own standard. In other words, it is a statement that cannot live up to its own criteria. Imagine if I were to say,
>
> I cannot speak a word in English.
>
> You intuitively see a problem here. I told you in English that I cannot speak a word in English. This statement is self-refuting. It does not meet its own standard or criteria. It self-destructs.
>
> The important thing to remember with self-defeating statements is that they are necessarily false. In other words, there is no possible way for them to be true. This is because they violate a very fundamental law of logic, the law of non-contradiction. This law states that A and non-A cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense. For example, it is not possible for God to exist and not exist at the same time and in the same sense. This would violate the law of non-contradiction. So if I were to say, "God told me He doesn't exist" you would see intuitively the obvious self-refuting nature of this statement.

Aaron goes on to explain how to deal with self-refuting statements in the article.

Here are 20 examples of self-refutation, just to encourage you to click through and read it:

> 1. There is no truth.
> 2. You can't know truth.
> 3. No one has the truth.
> 4. All truth is relative.
> 5. It's true for you but not for me.
> 6. There are no absolutes.
> 7. No one can know any truth about religion.
> 8. You can't know anything for sure.
> 9. You should doubt everything.
> 10. Only science can give us truth.
> 11. You can only know truth through experience.
> 12. All truth depends on your perspective.

> 13. You shouldn’t judge.
> 14. You shouldn’t force your morality on people.
> 15. You should live and let live.
> 16. God doesn’t take sides.
> 17. You shouldn’t try to convert people.
> 18. That’s just your view.
> 19. You should be tolerant of all views.
> 20. It is arrogant to claim to have the truth.

Aaron explains how to respond to each of those! Read them all – it’s important to know, because you hear these all the time. Like from that Susan Stone person who comments here.

By the way, anyone with a Twitter account, the best person to follow on Twitter is J Warner Wallace (@plsconvinceme). He tweets about 10-15 apologetics items *per day*.

Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser

September 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From CNN. (H/T Bad Blue)

Excerpt:

> A pro-al Qaeda group responsible for a previous armed assault on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi is the chief suspect in Tuesday's attack that killed the U.S. ambassador to Libya, sources tracking militant Islamist groups in eastern Libya say.
>
> They also note that the attack immediately followed a call from al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri for revenge for the death in June of a senior Libyan member of the terror group Abu Yahya al-Libi.
>
> The group suspected to be behind the assault — the Imprisoned Omar Abdul Rahman Brigades — first surfaced in May when it claimed responsibility for an attack on the International Red Cross office in Benghazi. The following month the group claimed responsibility for detonating an explosive device outside the U.S. Consulate and later released a video of that attack.
>
> Noman Benotman, once a leading member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and now based at the Quilliam Foundation in London told CNN, "An attack like this would likely have required preparation. This would not seem to be merely a protest which escalated."
>
> "According to our sources, the attack was the work of roughly 20 militants, prepared for a military assault; it is rare that an RPG7 is present at a peaceful protest," Benotman said.
>
> "According to our sources, the attack against the consulate had two waves. The first attack led to U.S. officials being evacuated from the consulate by Libyan security forces, only for the second wave to be launched against U.S. officials after they were kept in a secure location."
>
> That analysis is supported by U.S. sources who say the attack on the consulate is believed to have been pre-planned. The sources say the attackers used the protest as a diversion to launch the attack, although the sources could not say if the attackers instigated the protest or merely took advantage of it.

I wrote before about he's been skipping more than half his daily intelligence briefings. Well guess what? He skipped every intelligence briefing this week. That Obama would bungle our national security doesn't surprise me one bit. He's a Democrat. He's like Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. They don't do anything about terrorism – they are afraid to offend terrorists.

Back to Obama: where is our master of foreign policy and national security now?

He has flown to Las Vegas to do some campaign fundraising:

> On the day after the U.S. Ambassador to Libya and three other Americans were killed in Benghazi, the White House on Wednesday morning released a schedule showing that President Obama would continue with his planned campaign trip to Las Vegas.

You can read the full list of Obama's ten worst foreign policy blunders. Obama's weak foreign policy (bowing to tyrants and hugging dictators) caused this attack. He's too busy playing golf to think about national security and counter-terrorism.

New study: multiple abortions increase risk of maternal death

September 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The study was published in Oxford University's European Journal of Public Health, and the abstract is posted on the US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health (aka PubMed).

Here's the abstract:

> **BACKGROUND:**
>
> Inconsistent definitions and incomplete data have left society largely in the dark regarding mortality risks generally associated with pregnancy and with particular outcomes, immediately after resolution and over the long-term. Population-based record-linkage studies provide an accurate means for deriving maternal mortality rate data.
>
> **METHOD:**
>
> In this Danish population-based study, records of women born between 1962 and 1993 (n = 1 001 266) were examined to identify associations between patterns of pregnancy resolution and mortality rates across 25 years.
>
> **RESULTS:**
>
> With statistical controls for number of pregnancies, birth year and age at last pregnancy, the combination of induced abortion(s) and natural loss(es) was associated with more than three times higher mortality rate than only birth(s). Moderate risks were identified with only induced abortion, only natural loss and having experienced all outcomes compared with only birth(s). Risk of death was more than six times greater among women who had never been pregnant compared with those who only had birth(s). Increased risks of death were 45%, 114% and 191% for 1, 2 and 3 abortions, respectively, compared with no abortions after controlling for other reproductive outcomes and last pregnancy age. Increased risks of death were equal to 44%, 86% and 150% for 1, 2 and 3 natural losses, respectively, compared with none after including statistical controls. Finally, decreased mortality risks were observed for women who had experienced two and three or more births compared with no births.

Life Site News adds more:

> A single induced abortion increases the risk of maternal death by 45 percent compared to women with no history of abortion, according to a new study of all women of reproductive age in Denmark over a 25 year period.
>
> The study found that each additional abortion is associated with an even higher death rate. Women who had two abortions were 114 percent more likely to die

> during the period examined, and women had three or more abortions had a 192 percent increased risk of death.
>
> Elevated rates of death were also observed among women who experienced miscarriages, ectopic pregnancies or other natural losses. Among women with a history of multiple pregnancies, women with a history of both abortions and natural losses, but no live births, had the highest mortality rate.
>
> Women who had never been pregnant had the highest mortality rate overall.
>
> However, women with a history of successful deliveries were the least likely to die during the 25 years examined.
>
> The study is the second record linkage analysis of Danish mortality data to be published this month.
>
> The earlier study was limited to comparing mortality rates following only the first pregnancy outcome. It found that abortion of a first pregnancy was associated with a higher rate of death compared to death rates among women who delivered a first pregnancy. The higher death rate among women who had abortions persisted for each of the first ten years following the first pregnancy outcome.
>
> […]Dr. Reardon is the director of the Elliot Institute, which funds research related to abortion. He believes further research is needed to explore how the outcomes observed in this latest study may be influenced by abortion's impact on natural pregnancy losses. A new population study from Finland, for example, has found that abortion is associated with higher rates of preterm delivery, low birth weight delivery, and perinatal deaths in subsequent pregnancies.
>
> "We knew from our previous studies of low income women in California that women who have multiple pregnancy outcomes, such as having a history of both abortion and miscarriage, have significantly different mortality rates," Reardon said.
>
> "But this new study is the first to examine how each experience with abortion or miscarriage contributes to higher mortality rates," Reardon observed.
>
> "This is called a 'dose effect' because each exposure, or 'dose,' is seen to produce more of the same effect, which is what one would expect if there is a cause-effect relationship," he said.
>
> Reardon believes that a truer picture of the benefits of childbirth and the risks of abortion and pregnancy loss is now emerging because of a shift to more reliable record linkage studies. Such studies have been conducted in Finland, Denmark and the United States.

Is this the only bad effect of abortion on women's health?

Let's see the studies and then we'll decide.

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> A new study published in the *Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention* in February reported a very statistically significant increased risk of breast cancer for women with previous abortions as opposed to women who have never had one.
>
> The study, consisting of 1,351 women and led by researcher Ai-Ren Jiang, reported a statistically significant 1.52-fold elevation in risk for women with induced abortions and a "significant dose-response relationship between (the risk) for breast cancer and number of induced abortions," meaning the risk climbed with a higher number of previous abortions.
>
> For premenopausal women who have had abortions, the numbers were relatively small, and the observed 16% risk elevation was not statistically significant. However, for those with three or more abortions, the risk climbed to a statistically significant 1.55-fold elevation.
>
> "The results have revealed that induced abortion was related to increased risk of breast caner. Premenopausal women who had ≥3 times of induced abortion were at increased crude odds ratio (OR) (2.41, 95%CI: 1.09-5.42) and adjusted-OR (1.55, 95%CI: 1.15-5.68)," they wrote. "Postmenopausal women with a previous induced abortion were at increased crude OR (2.04, 95%CI: 1.48-2.81) and adjusted-OR (1.82, 95%CI: 1.30-2.54), and there was a significant increase trend in OR with number of induced abortions (p for trend: 0.0001)."
>
> […][A] Chinese study in 1995 by L. Bu and colleagues, including Janet Daling of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, reported a statistically significant 4.5-fold elevated risk among women with previous induced abortions who developed breast cancer at or before age 35, compared to older women (who experienced a statistically significant 2.5-fold elevated risk)

Here's the latest study from the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), showing that excessive consumption of alcohol is a rish factor for breast cancer.

Excerpt:

> Consumption of 3 to 6 alcoholic drinks per week is associated with a small increase in the risk of breast cancer, and consumption in both earlier and later adult life is also associated with an increased risk, according to a study in the November 2 issue of JAMA.
>
> "In many studies, higher consumption of alcohol has been associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. However, the effect of low levels of drinking as is common in the United States has not been well quantified," according to background information in the article. "In addition, the role of drinking patterns (i.e., frequency of drinking and 'binge' drinking) and consumption at different times of adult life are not well understood."

> Wendy Y. Chen, M.D., M.P.H., of Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, and colleagues examined the association of breast cancer with alcohol consumption during adult life, including quantity, frequency, and age at consumption. The study included 105,986 women enrolled in the Nurses' Health Study who were followed up from 1980 until 2008 with an early adult alcohol assessment and 8 updated alcohol assessments. The primary outcome the researchers measured was the risk of developing invasive breast cancer.
>
> During the follow-up period, there were 7,690 cases of invasive breast cancer diagnosed among the study participants. Analyses of data indicated that a low level of alcohol consumption (5.0 to 9.9 grams per day, equivalent to 3-6 glasses of wine per week) was modestly but statistically significantly associated with a 15 percent increased risk of breast cancer. In addition, women who consumed at least 30 grams of alcohol daily on average (at least 2 drinks per day) had a 51 percent increased risk of breast cancer compared with women who never consumed alcohol.
>
> The researchers also found that when examined separately, alcohol consumption levels at ages 18 to 40 years and after age 40 years were both strongly associated with breast cancer risk. The association with drinking in early adult life still persisted even after controlling for alcohol intake after age 40 years.
>
> Binge drinking, but not frequency of drinking, was also associated with breast cancer risk after controlling for cumulative alcohol intake.

Now let's take a look at some other factors that raise the risk of breast cancer.

Abortion and breast cancer

Many studies show a link between abortion and breast cancer.

Study 1: (September 2010)

> Based on the expression of estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2/neu (HER2), breast cancer is classified into several subtypes: luminal A (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2-), luminal B (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2+), HER2-overexpressing (ER-, PR-, and HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-, PR-, and HER2-). The aim of this case-control study is to determine reproductive factors associated with breast cancer subtypes in Chinese women. A total of 1,417 patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the First Affiliated Hospital, China Medical University, Shenyang, China between 2001 and 2009 and 1,587 matched controls without a prior breast cancer were enrolled.
>
> […]Postmenopause and spontaneous abortion were inversely associated with the risk of luminal tumors. By contrast, multiparity, family history of breast cancer and **induced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer**.

Study 2: (March 2010)

> OBJECTIVE: To explore the risk factors of breast cancer for better control and prevention of the malignancy.
>
> METHODS: The clinical data of 232 patients with pathologically established breast cancer were investigated in this 1:1 case-control study to identify the risk factors of breast cancer.
>
> RESULTS: The history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and**multiple abortions were the statistically significant risk factors of breast cancer**, while breast feeding was the protective factor.
>
> CONCLUSION: A history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and multiple abortions are all risk factors of breast cancer.

But wait, there's more.

Birth control pills

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9) and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed childbearing was a risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

Where did all of this birth control pill usage and aborting unborn children coming from? Why are women doing it so often?

Why are these risk factors so prevalent today?

Look at this New York Times article by feminist professor Nancy Bauer.

Excerpt:

> If there's anything that feminism has bequeathed to young women of means, it's that power is their birthright. Visit an American college campus on a Monday morning and you'll find any number of amazingly ambitious and talented young women wielding their brain power, determined not to let anything — including a relationship with some needy, dependent man — get in their way. **Come back on a party night, and you'll find many of these same girls (they stopped calling themselves "women" years ago) wielding their sexual power, dressed as provocatively as they dare, matching the guys drink for drink — and then hook-up for hook-up.**

The article was written by:

> *Nancy Bauer is associate professor and chair of philosophy at Tufts University. She is the author of "Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism," and is currently completing a new book, "How to Do Things With Pornography."*

Do you think that her attitude to sex would cause women to have more abortions, or less abortions, when compared to chastity before marriage, followed by lifelong married love? I think her plan results in *more* abortions. And now we know what harm that causes to women.

The total cost for breast cancer treatment, which raises medical insurance premiums (private health care) or taxes (single-payer health care), has been estimated to be between $1.8 billion and $3.8 billion dollars. In addition, the government spends billions of dollars each year on breast cancer research. All of this spending is costing taxpayers a lot of money, as people demand more and more government funding of breast cancer research and breast cancer treatment (with either private or single-payer health care). Furthermore, a recent study found that the annual cost of the breakdown of marriage and family was $112 billion a year. Don't tell me that feminism was good for society. It's a disaster. And we are all paying for it.

Do naturalistic theories account for the minimal facts about Jesus' resurrection?

September 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's a neat post from Ichtus77 on her blog of the same name. She lists 12 facts that are admitted by the majority of New Testament scholars across the broad spectrum of worldviews, including atheistic scholars.

Excerpt:

> I am studying "the twelve facts" and want to get down what I've got so far. After the facts are displayed, we're going to turn the whole thing into a logic puzzle.
>
> Here are the 12 Facts:
>
> 1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion.
> 2. He was buried, most likely in a private tomb.
> 3. Soon afterwards the disciples were discouraged, bereaved and despondent, having lost hope.
> 4. Jesus' tomb was found empty very soon after his interment.
> 5. The disciples had experiences that they believed were the actual appearances of the risen Christ.
> 6. Due to these experiences, the disciples lives were thoroughly transformed. They were even willing to die for their belief.
> 7. The proclamation of the Resurrection took place very early, from the beginning of church history.
> 8. The disciple's public testimony and preaching of the Resurrection took place in the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus had been crucified and buried shortly before.
> 9. The gospel message centered on the preaching of the death and resurrection of Jesus.
> 10. Sunday was the primary day of worshiping and gathering.
> 11. James, the brother of Jesus and a skeptic before this time, became a follower of Jesus when he believed he also saw the risen Jesus.
> 12. Just a few years later, Paul became a believer, due to an experience that he also believed was an appearance of the risen Jesus.

These are the facts that you see admitted in debates by atheistic historians, like in the debate between James Crossley and William Lane Craig. These facts are admitted even by most atheist historians because they pass standard historical criteria, like early dating, embarrassing to the author, appears in multiple sources, and so on. Secular historians don't accept everything that the Bible says as historical, but they will give you a minimum list of facts that pass their historical tests.

The resurrection puzzle is like a Sherlock Holmes mystery. People deduce what happened from the evidence that is considered to be unimpeachable. The “minimal facts” that EVERYONE accepts. You can even see secular historians assenting to these facts in academic debates like the one I linked above.

So the approach is like this:

1) Use historical tests to get a small number of undeniable historical facts
2) Try to explain the undeniable historical facts with a hypothesis that accounts for all of them

Like Sherlock Holmes says: “…when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.”

It’s the Sherlock Holmes method of doing history.

So, Ichtus77 lists the minimal facts, and in the rest of the post she surveys the following naturalistic hypotheses to see how well they can account for the minimal facts listed above.

Here are the naturalistic theories:

- The Unknown Tomb theory
- The Wrong Tomb theory
- The Twin theory
- The Hallucination theory
- The Existential Resurrection and the Spiritual Resurrection theories
- The Disciples Stole Body theory
- The Authorities Hid Body theory
- The Swoon theory
- The Passover Plot theory

The main way that scholars argue for the resurrection is to list the minimal facts, and defend them on historical grounds, then show that there is no naturalistic hypothesis that explains them all. The naturalistic theories are impossible. Once you have eliminated them because they don’t account for the minimal facts, you are left with the resurrection hypothesis. Elementary, Watson, elementary.

Greg Koukl debates Michael Shermer on God, atheism, meaning and morality

September 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The full transcript of a debate between Michael Shermer, editor of Skeptic magazine, and Greg Koukl, president of Stand to Reason. This debate occurred on Hugh Hewitt's radio show, and was moderated by Hugh Hewitt.

HH = Hugh Hewitt
GK = Greg Koukl
MS = Michael Shermer

Here is a 32-page PDF with the full debate transcript.

And here's an excerpt:

GK: Right. Actually, the big question here, Hugh, is whether it's possible to be good without God. Now I'm not talking about whether it's possible to be good without a belief in God. I certainly think that's possible, but be good without God. And the answer to that question hinges entirely on precisely what you mean by good. And so I was going to give an illustration. So a man drags a young girl into the alley, he sexually abuses her, strangles here, and tosses her into the dustbin. Is that act wrong? Now I think everybody listening is going to admit it is wrong. But here is the real question. What do we mean when we say that that act of rape and abuse and murder is wrong? Are we describing the action itself, the object? Are we saying that the object, the rape, the murder, has a quality of being wrong, and therefore, wherever that rape goes, the wrongness follows it, just like your height, 6' 2", or whatever it is, is an objective quality of you. Wherever you go, your height follows you in the same way. Does the wrongness follow the rape? Well, if it's a quality of the rape, if it's an objective quality of the rape, then it does. And it doesn't matter what people think about it, or what cultures decides, or what your evolutionary conditioning is. The rape is still wrong. The other alternative is that you're not talking about the rape. You're talking about yourself. You're talking about your genetic conditioning. You're talking about your culture's decision about that kind of thing. And if that's the case, then the truth of the wrongness of the rape is simply in the individual or the subject. And this is why philosophers distinguish between ethical objectivism and ethical subjectivism. Now there's lots of different subjectivisms in ethics. But simply put, if you're an ethical subjectivist, you're a relativist. And actual ethics don't exist. Ethics are an illusion. If you conclude that ethics are an illusion, there's lots of different ways to explain it. Michael's written a really great book, I think, called The Science Of Good And Evil. I've read most of it, and it's well written, and it's very compelling. But it's a description about how the illusion of ethics has taken place. If you want to go that route, you're welcome to go that route. But what you can't do is you can't then talk about morality as if it's objective when your explanations are subjective. So this is a problem that I think all atheists, including Michael, have to solve. Are ethics objective or relative?

And if they're relative, then how can we make moral judgments that are meaningful on other people?

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Wow, let's just get right into it. Well, I don't think it's quite so black and white. That is to say I think there are provisional moral truths that exist whether there's a God or not. In other words, it's wrong, morally, absolutely morally wrong to rape and murder. And that would be true whether there was a God or not. In other words, if…is God saying that it's wrong because it's really wrong, and He's instructing us in his Holy Scripture that it's wrong? Or is it only wrong because He said so? And if it turned out there wasn't a God, would that make it okay? And my answer is no, it really is wrong, whether God says it's wrong or not. That is to say I think it really exists, a real, moral standard like that. Why? Well, because first, you could ask the person who is being affected, we should always ask the moral recipient of the act, how do you feel about being raped or murdered or stolen from or lied to. And the moral actor will tell you, it doesn't matter whether, if I could use a current example, I haven't any idea if Tiger Woods and his wife are religious or not. But you can just ask his wife whether it was morally right or wrong, and she'll tell you. It doesn't matter whether there's a God or not. It's wrong. And so that's the first principle. Just ask. Ask the moral recipient of whether it's right or wrong. But I think Greg's after something deeper, that is to say is there something even deeper still behind the moral actor's feelings about how they're treated. And the answer is yes, I think so. We're a social species. We don't live in isolation. We live as members of a group. And as such, there's no possible way our group could survive, be cohesive, be a unit of any kind of solidarity against other groups, or against a harsh environment. If there were too much violations of social norms, that is if there were constant lying and cheating and raping and murdering, there's no way a social group could hang together. And as such, as we all know, we're very tribal. We're tribal against other groups, but within our groups, we're very pro-social, altruistic, cooperative. We have a good and evil in our nature. So to this extent, I find myself interesting often in agreement with my conservative friends on most of the things they consider morally, moral truths. That is, we share the same moral values, even though I come at it from a different perspective.

HH: Greg?

GK: Yeah, I'm actually not after something deeper here, Michael. At least to start out the discussion, I'm trying to be as simple and clear and precise as possible, because it's very easy to weave together a bunch of things that sound persuasive, but turn out to be different things. Like for example, Darwinian evolution, which is a materialistic process, and here I mean the blind watchmaker thesis, the neo-Darwinian synthesis, natural selection working on mutations, and a kind of a cultural evolution that Michael has just referred to as we work together as a group to survive as a group. Those are two entirely different things. One is materialistic, Darwinian, the other one is intelligent design, quite frankly, where the group gets together and makes some determinations to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What I'm trying to do is to be able to answer the question that came up initially, is God necessary for morality, which Michael denies. It's

to say well, what is it that morality, that we're trying to describe? It is either objective, and therefore an immaterial obligation that applies to certain behaviors, or it is subjective. The things that Michael described were variously subjective, evolutionary elements, subjective cultural elements, but then he affirmed that we all have good and evil in our nature, or an awareness of that. I agree with that entirely. We all are aware of those things. That's why even if we don't believe in God, we can still know morality and follow it. The question is what accounts for real, genuine objective morality?

HH: One minute to the break, Michael Shermer.

MS: I'm not arguing for cultural evolution. I'm actually arguing as part of our, what you described as materialistic, natural selection, Darwinian evolution, that it's not enough to just pretend or fake being a good group member. You actually have to believe it, feel it, and live it. So what I'm arguing is that natural selected certain moral sentiments, as Adam Smith called them, moral feelings, an actual empathy, Adam Smith talked about, we actually empathize with somebody else, we can put ourselves into their shoes and feel their pain, I'm arguing that's very real. It's every bit as real a part of our evolutionary heritage as our eyes and our hands.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, you were saying that evolutionary biology has produced a real morality.

MS: Yeah, I think really, Adam Smith had it right in his very first book, The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, long before Darwin, that we actually have in our biological nature, our human nature, the capacity to feel other people's pain. He called it empathy, we think of it often either as empathy or sympathy. That is, we really do connect to other people. A lot of good research on this now, brain scans, you can show somebody a little video of somebody they know, or have feelings for, getting pricked with a pin, and the same areas of their brain light up, the pain receptors, as in the person getting the pin prick. In other words, we have an evolved tendency to really be deeply, emotionally connected to our fellow group members. And that's why I say groups like World Vision, where you want to adopt a child, it doesn't help to show a picture of 10,000 starving African kids. What does affect us is one child, a picture of one child with a little biography. That's how you get people to adopt a child to donate. The reason for that is because essentially they're tricking the brain, our brains into making that stranger an honorary family member, an honorary within group member, which is why I argue that free trade is one of the best ways of defusing normal tribal tensions between people. It makes them honorary friends, honorary members. Well, what's going on there is we're tricking the brain into sort of this evolutionary rule of thumb – be nice to people that are like you and that are related to you, and that you know, and that are fellow group members, and don't do what our natural tendency is, is to be tribal and xenophobic against those other guys. And free trade is one of the best things you can do for that. So I'm arguing that's actually tapping something deep within us.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, basically, I agree with Mike completely here. We do have this tendency, and it seems to be universal among humankind. The question is, what is that tendency, actually? And what is the best way to explain it? And I see like a handful of significant problems with using evolution to explain morality. The first one is that evolution is a materialistic process. And here, I'm going back to an original point, and I don't want people to lose it. There is no way that you can take molecules, and reorganize them in any fashion, over any length of time, and have pop out of the mixture an objective moral principle that's immaterial, and that applies to human beings. All you're going to get is a reorganization of the molecules. And what they can produce, and this is what Mike has done in his book, and he mentioned just s few moments ago, they can produce sentiments. They can produce feelings. They can produce behavior. But this leads us to the second problem of using evolution to explain morality, is that morality is more than sentiments, feelings and behavior. Morality entails things like motive and intention. I mean, you could have a guy walk into a garage, walk out with a hose, and is that wrong? Well, it depends. Is it his hose or somebody else's hose? Did he intend to take the other person's hose? Is he borrowing the hose? So we can see here are elements that are part of the moral thing that needs to be explained, that are immaterial, and therefore the Darwinian explanation can't even in principle go there. It can't do that job. But here's the worst problem. Regardless of what our sentiments happen to be regarding moral actions, we can feel good or feel bad or whatever, the problem is that morality is prescriptive, not merely descriptive. That is it tells us not just what we did, but what we ought to have done in the past, and what we ought to do in the future. That is not something that any Darwinian mechanism can describe, because nothing about my biology can inveigh upon me to act a certain way for moral reasons in the future. It doesn't tell me why I should be good tomorrow. This is a huge difference between these two views, the descriptive and the prescriptive. Prescriptive is part of morality, and can't even, in principle, be explained by an evolutionary materialistic system.

HH: Michael Shermer, I'll give you a start on that. We have about 45 seconds to the break, so you may want to…we'll come back after the break and pick up. But what's your start to that?

MS: Well, the start would be that again, let's not think of evolution just as nature red and tooth and claw, and it's nasty, brutish and short, but that in fact, we have this whole other social evolution. And I'm not talking about cultural evolution where we consciously make decisions, but subconsciously, because it's in part of our nature to actually, seriously, deeply feel for other people and their actions, and the consequences of our actions, so that we actually have a sense of right and wrong that we're born with, but then culture taps into and tweaks, one way or the other.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, Greg had made the argument that the Darwinian model simply cannot explain immaterial concepts like morality, that there's just no way you can rearrange the molecules to get there. You're saying well, yes you

can.

MS: Yeah, I think so, because if we think of morality as another suite of emotions that are involved with other people's behaviors, the consequences of our actions, how we feel about them, how people feel about us when we do these things, that's as every bit as important a biological part of our nature as anything else we talk about. So let's take a real simple emotion. When you're hungry, nobody does any calculations about the caloric input/output ratios of eating an apple versus an ice cream, although now it's posted on the walls for us to see. But we just feel hungry, and we feel hungry for certain kinds of foods. The feeling of hunger is a proxy for something else. Evolution's done the calculating for us. You need food, so we're going to, your hypothalamus is going to secrete these certain chemicals that causes your stomach to rumble and so on. When you're attracted to somebody else, a member of the opposite sex, nobody does the calculation by, let's say, a man finds a woman attractive who has a .67 hip to waist ratio, and an hourglass figure, although that is pretty much universal. Nobody walks about with calipers taking measurements of who they're going to want to date or ask out. You just look around, and you just go wow, I really find this woman attractive. It's a feeling you have, okay? So those are kind of simple emotions, but sliding up the scale, the moral emotions are really no different. When I lie to somebody, I've violated a social norm, and they respond in a very angry, hostile way. So those emotions that we both share, guilt, shame, anger, disgust, involved a social relationship that whether it was a norm violation, those are the kinds of emotions that are just like hunger and sexual attraction that are built into us by nature, by evolution. Or, if you wish, this is how God created the moral sentiments, just like He created everything else in the universe, through a process of nature. I think that's equally reasonable to argue. So I don't see that it has to be an atheistic viewpoint versus a theistic viewpoint to get to our moral sentiments. Why couldn't God have used evolution to create the moral sentiments as I've described them?

GK: Yeah, well, you don't actually believe that, I know, Mike, so this is kind of like adding God to the soup, you know, if it makes people feel better. But the basic argument is that evolution all by itself can do the trick. And I think if your listeners are listening carefully, what they're going to hear is Mike has just described, and if I'm being unfair to your assessment here, let me know, Mike, that moral feelings are simply that. They are sophisticated emotions that do some work for us for survival, and even on a group level. Now there's a name for this. It's called emotivism. A.J. Ayer, the famous atheist, offered this description of morality. It's a relativistic scheme of morality. Morality doesn't actually exist, Ayer argued. There is no objective right or wrong. Rape isn't wrong itself. What happens is, we have feelings about it, and we express it in moral language, but rape isn't really wrong. So your listeners are going to have to ask themselves the questions. When they just survey their own moral senses, and we all have access to this, do we want to believe that scientists have figured out that really what we're doing is feeling sophisticated, complicated emotions, and that the emotions are in us, and we are not seeing anything about the action? Or does it seem like rape is wrong? Look, when I say rape is wrong, I'm talking about the rape. When I say liver is awful, I'm talking about me.

I'm talking about my own tastes and preferences. It's interesting, as Michael has given his explanation, though, that he's doing, and I don't know if you are aware of this, Michael, but you're doing the very thing that I kind of warned against. You give a description of the foundations of morality that turn out to be relativistic, but then there's a smuggling of a more objectivistic morality in the back door, like when Michael says you don't have to do what your nature tells you to do, in other words, what you've been programmed by evolution to do. You can kind of rise above that. Well, now we're talking about a morality that isn't dictated by evolution, but a morality that we can employ through our acts of will, to rise above this kind of brutish evolutionary morality. And that sounds suspiciously like the very thing that I'm talking about here.

MS: But I don't mean, there's nothing to rise above by itself. Yes, we have to say rise above our tribal instincts to be xenophobic when we meet somebody who's a stranger, who's different from us. We all struggle against that, particularly in a black and white America, where there's always been this underlying tension. Indeed, so culture helps us do that – education, travel, diversity of exposure to different people. That makes you a little more tolerant. Okay, but I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about is tapping into the good part of our nature, the fact that in addition to that xenophobic tribalism we have, we also have this other side that almost never gets discussed in evolutionary…even in evolutionary circles, you'll still hear evolutionary biologists talking about, in a way that Huxley did, and Herbert Spencer did in Darwin's own time, that we have to somehow struggle mightily against our genes to overcome that nasty tendency we have to want to rape, kill, pillage and destroy. Well no, actually, we have this whole other side that's just as genetically programmed into our nature. And the point of culture – education, politics, economics and so on, is to tap into the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said.

GK: Okay, here's the question I have for you, Michael, then. You've identified that really, we have good and we have bad. That's part of, under your terms, that's part of our genetic nature, and we can choose to tap into what you call the good side. Why ever should we do such a thing if there is not a higher standard that directs our action to the better side, your words, than the bad side, your words, if really, ultimately, they are both the result of a genetic evolution, and from outside terms, neither is better than the other. Why should we do that, Michael?

MS: Yeah, well I don't see how entering God into the equation changes that problem at all.

GK: Well, that's the next step. What I'm trying to show is that the should comes from the outside, and if we can demonstrate that, then we can ask…

Read the rest by click here to get the PDF.

QE3: Obama ushers in hyperinflation with more "quantitative easing"

September 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Investors Business Daily explains Obama's latest desperate ploy to cover up his economic failures.

Excerpt:

> The Federal Reserve announced a third round of quantitative easing Thursday afternoon, and it is big: A net $40 billion a month in additional purchases of mortgage-backed securities. And policymakers said additional accommodation will continue "for a considerable time after the economic recovery strengthens."
>
> […]Ordinary Americans can expect to see higher gasoline prices. Quantitative easing also pushes up commodity prices — both by boosting demand for financial assets and by weakening the dollar.
>
> Crude oil prices have been trending higher, and were up $1 to nearly $98 a barrel in mid-afternoon trade.
>
> That will quickly filter down to gasoline prices at the pump. Gas prices moved back to $3.847 a gallon last week, the highest since April. They've risen for 10 straight weeks in part on anticipation that QE3 was coming. Gas prices could once again threaten the $4 level — it's already well over that mark in California. And that's with no major supply issues or feared disruptions around the world.
>
> Higher oil and gas prices also could push food prices higher, by encouraging more corn burning to produce ethanol, as IBD's Jed Graham recently noted. Corn prices are near record highs due to this summer's historic drought.
>
> The producer price index shot up 1.7% in August — the biggest jump in three years — on higher food and energy costs. Gasoline prices at the wholesale level exploded 13.6%. Food costs rose 0.9%, the most in nine months.
>
> With job growth and wage gains so weak, higher food and gas prices will cut into consumers' buying power on everything else. That will offset much of the modest QE3 benefits.

First and second round of quantitative easing:

Third round of quantitative easing:

It means they are going to print the money. There really is no difference between Barack Obama and Robert Mugabe when it comes to economic policy. The only thing stopping him is the Republican House and the conservative alternative media.

Missouri Republicans override governor’s veto to protect conscience rights and religious liberty

September 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Missouri Republicans override governor’s veto to protect conscience rights and religious liberty
>
> Individuals, employees and employers in the state of Missouri, by the passage of this law, will not be required to participate in, provide, pay for, or provide referrals for any health plans or services or services that cover those services, nor will it be lawful for such persons to be discriminated against or penalized by any government agency.
>
> The bill was vetoed by Governor Nixon on July 12, which surprised some in light of his record of allowing previous pro-life bills to pass without his signature by allowing the 45-day veto period to elapse. It was in this way that Missouri’s late term abortion ban became law just last year.
>
> In yesterday’s special veto session, the Senate voted 26-6 and the House 109-45 in defense of the bill, which was written in response to the federal HHS mandate issued by Secretary Kathleen Sebelius that took effect in August. The narrow religious exemptions in the mandate left individuals and non-religiously-affiliated employers outside its purview and subject to complying with its controversial requirements. Individual conscientious objectors, whether employer or employee in the state of Missouri, are now protected from the mandate unless possible federal court decisions rule otherwise.

Missouri governor Jay Nixon is, of course, a Democrat, and therefore opposes doctors and nurses having conscience rights. He also wants to force Christian businesses to subsidize abortion-causing drugs. He lost this time because the Republicans were there in force to stop his secular leftist fascism.

Dinesh D'Souza draws inept response from Obama for his 2016 documentary

September 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Dinesh responds to some ineffectual bleating from President Airhead. (H/T Reformed Seth)

Excerpt:

> For weeks the President tried to ignore the film, no doubt hoping that it would go away. Unfortunately for Obama, the film has continued to gain momentum. It has been seen by more than 2 million people, earned more than $27 million, and become the second biggest political documentary of all time. So now he has decided to come out with guns blazing.
>
> Yet what a clumsy, ill-aimed and misleading blast this is. It begins with a quotation deploring "smear journalism". We read that this quotation is from the "*Columbia Journalism Review* on*2016: Obama's America*." Yet the *Columbia Journalism Review* article was published in September 2010, nearly two years before the film came out! It turns out that the magazine was critiquing one of my earlier books *The Roots of Obama's Rage*.
>
> Apparently relying on a range of left-wing discredited sources, Obama lists what it takes to be four "flat-out falsehoods". Let me list and address them in turn.
>
> - First, "D'Souza falsely claimed that President Obama said he didn't believe in American exceptionalism."
>
> Oh really? Obama was asked in 2009 whether he believed in American exceptionalism. He replied that he did, just as the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks in Greek exceptionalism. The clear implication of Obama's remarks is that if everyone thinks they are exceptional, no one really is.
>
> Read President Obama's remarks about US, British and Greek exceptionalism here.
>
> - Second, "D'Souza falsely asserted that President Obama funded $2 billion in Brazilian oil exploration." The Obama team claims that Obama had "nothing to do with the loan."
>
> Well, the undisputed fact is that the Export-Import Bank awarded more than $2 billion in loans and loan guarantees to Brazil. The Export-Import Bank is a U.S. government agency and policy for the agency is set by the Obama administration. So how can the Obama administration escape responsibility for its own policies?
>
> Moreover, we know that Obama himself approves of the policy. In 2011, Obama

> went to Brazil, a country where, as he put it, "the legacy of colonialism is still fresh." There, on March 19, 2011, he reminded the Brazilians of American support for Brazilian oil exploration and added, "We want to help with technology and support to develop these oil reserves safely, and when you're ready to start selling, we want to be one of your best customers."
>
> Moreover, Obama's Brazil subsidy is not an isolated case; the Obama administration has—again through the Export-Import Bank—awarded billions to Mexico and Colombia for oil drilling and refining in those countries.
>
> Read President Obama's remarks in Brazil here.

A review of the movie"2016: Obama's America" – a project of Indian-American Christian apologist Dinesh D'Souza.

Excerpt:

> My wife and I went to see a showing of the film at the Regal theater in Winter Park Village. It was about three-quarters full. We didn't go with a group but noticed that many in the audience came in groups of more than just a single couple. There were also examples of grandparents, parents and children. At the end of the film, the audience broke into loud and spontaneous applause. Was this only due to the film "playing to the choir"?
>
> In part perhaps, but in the next few weeks I predict it will reach the audience we most need to reach -young voters -and are the most avid movie goers and the least likely to be reached by more traditional methods.
>
> […]Dinesh D'Souza is an engaging, attractive dark skinned immigrant from India whose life and career follows in parallel with Obama's – born and married in the same years and able to judge American institutions and values from a third world perspective.
>
> The film does not accept any of the more controversial attacks on Obama's biography but seeks to explain how his own words and thoughts cited continually throughout the film from the President's autobiography 'Dreams From My Father' are a thread running through his policies and are at the core of what motivates him and makes him intent on downsizing, disarming, and apologizing for America, abandoning out allies such as Great Britain, Israel and Poland, fawning and bowing before Muslim despots, and seeking to create a society where individual initiative, ambition and self-reliance are replaced by the collectivist goals that have failed all over the world.
>
> […]*2016* examines Barack Obama's relationship with his absent father who was an activist in the anti-colonial struggle against the British, and following independence became part of that elite clique who fostered a one party bureaucratic, socialist state in Kenya that crushed all local government and free initiative resulting in a downward spiral of economic stagnation and poverty shared by Obama's half-brother in the slums of Nairobi.

> […]We follow the President's life in where his mother remarries a local Indonesian man (also a Muslim, Lolo Soteiro), who eventually becomes a successful businessman and in so doing, alienates Obama and his mother who believe they are betraying the socialist and collectivist legacy of Barack Obama Senior.
>
> This psychological portrait is one that makes sense and can be understood and appreciated by many young people who are themselves the product of homes in which there is divorce and remarriage.
>
> The President's endorsement of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement extends to the world stage in which the antagonists are portrayed as the 99% – the occupied and the exploitative 1 % – the occupiers.
>
> Obama emotionally sympathizes with all those he places in the category of the victims of the colonialist white European nations (the one-percenters), returning the bust of Churchill, the gift of the British government, praising Islam as a progressive force while denying its oppression of women, children, non-Muslim minorities, his policies towards third world nations such as Mexico and Brazil whom his policies have encouraged to develop their oil industries while retarding our own, secretly supporting Argentina in its attempt to seize the Falkland Islands from Britain by force, pressuring Israel (regarded too as "occupiers") to retreat from defensible borders, total passivity in failing to support the millions of demonstrators in the street against the tyrannical regime of the mullahs in Iran, etc.
>
> Most damning of all are the close associations of the President and his most important mentors ignored by the media and Senator John McCain's campaign in 2004 – convicted terrorist Bill Ayers, the "Reverend Wright (God Damn America and its "Liberation Theology" church in Chicago) and long-time Communist party member Frank Marshall Davis.
>
> This is a powerful film that will exert a profound influence. As the billboards and advertisements on television proclaim… Love Him or Hate Him, you need to see this film.

Does that sound good or what? There's a lot of talk about how this election needs to be about grown up ideas. I think that these long form arguments elevate, rather than lower, the debate. We need to have adult conversations about who Obama is and what his policies are intended to achieve – what is his end game?

Trailer 1 of 3:

Trailer 2 of 3:

Trailer 3 of 3:

Here's Dinesh explaining what his movie is about at CPAC 2012:

Keep in mind that Dinesh is a Christian apologist and has debated people like Christopher Hitchens. This is his newest project.

Go see it!

UPDATE: Reformed Seth sent me this interview with Dinesh D'Souza. He's being interviewed by Stanley Fish.

Friday night soldiers: two episodes of Combat!

September 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Tonight we have two episodes of the hit TV show Combat! from the 1960s.

Episode 1: Finest Hour

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 3 of 3:

IMDB mean rating: [9.1/10]

IMDB median rating: [9.5/10]

Description:

> While on a scouting mission, Lt. Hanley, Caje, and another GI run into a German machine gun nest. Lt. Hanley is wounded. A local Frenchman takes them to the château of Count and Countess De Roy. The good news is the Countess had medical experience treating wounded in WW1; the bad news is the Chateau is occupied by the Germans. The Countess can treat the wounded Hanley, but it has to be done without the Germans knowing.

Episode 1 features more dialog and suspense.

Episode 2: The Leader

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 3 of 3:

IMDB mean rating: [8.8/10]

IMDB median rating: [9/10]

Description:

> Kirby, who is given command of the squad in Saunders's absence, learns a lesson in leadership.

Episode 2 has more fighting and action.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: Animal Farm (1954)
- Friday night movie: The Dam Busters (1955)
- Friday night movie: Sink the Bismarck! (1960)
- Friday night movie: The Crossing (2000)
- Friday night movie: The Great Escape (1963)

- Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)
- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! four episodes of Danger Man

UK Independent: “America ‘was warned of embassy attack but did nothing'”

September 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the left-leaning UK Independent.

Excerpt:

> The killings of the US ambassador to Libya and three of his staff were likely to have been the result of a serious and continuing security breach, *The Independent* can reveal.

> American officials believe **the attack** was planned, but Chris Stevens had been back in the country only a short while and the details of his visit to Benghazi, where he and his staff died, were meant to be confidential.
>
> **The US administration** is now facing a crisis in Libya. Sensitive documents have gone missing from the consulate in Benghazi and the supposedly secret location of the “safe house” in the city, where the staff had retreated, came under sustained mortar attack. Other such refuges across the country are no longer deemed “safe”.
>
> Some of the missing papers from the consulate are said to list names of Libyans who are working with Americans, putting them potentially at risk from extremist groups, while some of the other documents are said to relate to oil contracts.
>
> **According to senior diplomatic sources, the US State Department had credible information 48 hours before mobs charged the consulate in Benghazi, and the embassy in Cairo, that American missions may be targeted, but no warnings were given for diplomats to go on high alert and “lockdown”, under which movement is severely restricted.**
>
> **Mr Stevens had been on a visit to Germany, Austria and Sweden and had just returned to Libya when the Benghazi trip took place with the US embassy’s security staff deciding that the trip could be undertaken safely.**

Recall that foreign policy and counter-terrorism are not as important to Obama as campaign fundraising and playing golf. And why not be a slacker? The American news media is there to cover for him. The only thing you’ve heard about the embassy attack in the news is that Romney “committed a gaffe”. That’s all you need to know, according to the mainstream media.

Read the full list of Obama’s top 10 foreign policy disasters.

Egan Jones cuts U.S. credit rating again, this time from AA to AA-

September 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Story from CNBC.

Excerpt:

> Ratings firm **Egan-Jones** cut its credit rating on the U.S. government to "AA-" from "AA," citing its opinion that quantitative easing from the Federal Reserve would hurt the U.S. economy and the country's credit quality.
>
> The Fed on Thursday said it would pump $40 billion into the U.S. economy each month until it saw a sustained upturn in the weak jobs market.
>
> In its downgrade, the firm said that issuing more currency and depressing interest rates through purchasing mortgage-backed securities does little to raise the U.S.'s real gross domestic product, but reduces the value of the dollar.
>
> In turn, this increases the cost of commodities, which will pressure the profitability of businesses and increase the costs of consumers thereby reducing consumer purchasing power, the firm said.
>
> In April, Egan-Jones cuts the U.S. credit rating to "AA" from "AA+" with a negative watch, citing a lack of progress in cutting the mounting federal debt.
>
> **Moody's Investors Service** currently rates the United States Aaa, Fitch rates the country AAA, and Standard & Poor's rates the country AA-plus. All three of those ratings have a negative outlook.

Could this have anything to do with the decision to print $40 billion a month to "stimulate" the economy? Once you've given up on letting businesses create jobs by lowering their taxes and removing burdensome regulations, then printing money is all you have left. But no one mistakes that for economic growth, least of all credit rating agencies.

Does atheism mean “a lack of belief in God”?

September 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Excerpt:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.
>
> But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.
>
> There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position,

and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.

One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.

So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of

> atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, “So is there a God or not?”

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these “subjective atheists”?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says “I lack a belief in the gravitational force!”. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God’s existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don’t care about a person’s psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over “I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God”? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: “I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!” What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: “Wintery Knight won’t listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!”. I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that’s why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don’t *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I’m not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information

- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument

Teacher fired for giving 0 to student for missed assignment

September 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From CANOE.

Excerpt:

> An Edmonton high school teacher suspended for giving zeros was officially given the axe Friday in a letter from the Edmonton Public School Board.
>
> […]The Ross Sheppard physics teacher — suspended last spring after he gave a student a zero for not handing in an assignment — now plans to seek legal council and file an appeal.
>
> […]Despite the months of uncertainty and scrutiny over his controversial teaching decisions, Dorval says he doesn't regret his actions.
>
> "I keep saying I will never regret it," he said. "If students don't do the work, they don't deserve the mark and I stand by that."
>
> It's important for children to learn when they are young and the stakes are low that there are consequences for choices. Punishing teachers who try to teach this to children early does no favors to the children. The world is a tough place, and it's better to learn that when it's relatively easy.

The public school board made a mistake by firing this teacher. It says a lot that teachers can do almost anything wrong and not be fired, but that they can be fired for doing the right thing. That's another reason why the public school monopoly needs to be broken up.

Jim Wallace and the case-making Christian

September 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

To make a good case, you need to be prepared

I found an interesting post by Jim Wallace of Please Convince Me. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Wallace responds to the alarming statistics of Christians abandoning their faith as soon as they get to university, often because of intellectual doubts. He also notes that many young Christians who don't fall away don't really have a Biblical worldview at all.

Here's the problem:

> Many students are walking away from Christianity because they no longer believe it is true. In a survey conducted by sociologists Christian Smith and Melinda Denton and recorded in their book, "Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers" (Oxford University Press, 2005), 32% of former believers said they left because of intellectual skepticism…
>
> The young Christians who were surveyed said that they believed in the existence of a God who created and ordered the world and watches over human life here on earth. They also believe that this God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, (as they claimed the Bible teaches, and as most other world religions also teach). They said that the central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself. They did not believe that God needed to be involved in one's life except when He is required to solve a problem, and they said that good people go to heaven when they die. Not much of this version of "Christianity" resonates with the classic, orthodox truth of the Christian Worldview, does it?

And here's his solution, passionately argued:

> When asked what it means to be a Christian, few of us would respond that being a Christian means becoming a 'defender of the faith'. Most of us shy away from challengers and those who hold opposing beliefs; many of us are uncomfortable

> with the potential confrontation. But being a Christian demands that we become proficient "case makers". Think about it for a minute. We would all agree that our salvation does not depend on our ability to defend what we believe. After all, we are saved when we trust Jesus for our salvation and recognize that we are fallen, sinful creatures in need of a Savior. When we recognize that Jesus is God incarnate and paid the penalty that we deserve, we begin to embrace the promise of God to rescue us from ourselves! This trust in Christ as Lord and Savior is what saves us.
>
> But we need to recognize that our Christian life is more than one of trust. It is also a life of knowledge and expression. God has called us to think about what we believe and defend it to those who might challenge us or simply ask questions (more on that HERE). Christian "case makers" who have accepted this challenge are often called "apologists". The word "apologist" comes from the Greek word "apologia" which simply means "speaking a defense". The term does have some liability, however, for a couple of reasons. First, the related term, "apology" leaves many with the impression that Christians think they have something to apologize for when they engage in "apologetics". Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. Secondly, our present culture has a tendency to view apologists as professional speakers of one kind or another. Even Christians tend to think of apologetics as something to be done by professionals, rather than an important responsibility to be embraced by each and every Christian. It's time to recognize the fact that all Christians are called to be a Christian "case makers"; the situation couldn't be more urgent.
>
> […]There's a reason why God calls us to worship Him with our minds, understand the value of evidence, examine our beliefs until we are convinced, and then become Christian "case makers" (more on that HERE)! While it is our faith and trust in Christ that saves us, it is our ability to make the case for Christ that protects us and transforms our world. We need to become "case makers" just as Paul was a "tent maker". "Case making" needs to be a part of our Christian identity, and all of us need to be apologists for the Christian Worldview. We cannot continue to delegate this responsibility to well known apologists and Christian authors. We don't need one 'million dollar apologist'; we need a million 'one dollar apologists'. All of us can be equipped to defend our faith; it doesn't require a master's degree in apologetics; it doesn't require a library full of books, or a radio show, or a podcast. It simply requires the personal commitment to learn the truth and defend it to others.

This article is pretty long, but it has a lot of information based on his experience as a cold case police detective.

Here's a snippet that should get you to read the whole thing:

> Call Witnesses Selectively
>
> Once the Opening Statements have been made, it's time to begin presenting the

> evidence to the jury. Much of this evidence will simply be the testimony of important expert witnesses. The attorneys have to select these witnesses carefully and judiciously. Each case is different and will require specific types of experts. Some cases require DNA experts, others require experts in material evidence; some cases require coroners or doctors, others require weapons specialists. The attorneys have the burden of deciding which types of experts will be needed to best make the case.
>
> As a Christian…
>
> I've got to do something very similar if I want to be a "Case Making" Christian. While I may be very familiar with the scientific or philosophical work that has been done on a particular topic, I have to be careful not to overload the conversation with the opinions of too many "expert witnesses". I have to be specific and targeted in the way that I bring experts into the conversation. I also need to be well versed in the work that these experts have done so that I can accurately quote them.
>
> A "Case Making" Tip:
>
> Become a specialist. It's important to have a broad understanding of a number of apologetic issues, but I know there are some places where I am weak, and some places where I am stronger. I try to focus on those areas that are off special interest to me and it's in these areas that I am most familiar with the experts in the field. See yourself as the foreman on a jury. You and I don't have to BE expert witnesses; we simply need to be able to reiterate what the expert witnesses have said once we get back in the jury room with the other jurors.

This is point #3 in his list of 7 points. He's basically saying that you have to be able to represent the work of the experts intelligently, instead of just reading what they've written out loud, which could take forever. You need to read the experts, and then support your case with relevant quotes from the experts, showing how they support arguments that you understand – because you made them. And this preparation and specialization is not based on what is easy for you, or based on what you like, but is instead based on what is effective for your audience. If your audience finds science appealing, then to science you will go. Hint: most men like science, math and computers. Whatever you choose, logic, science, history – it has to be focused on demonstrating the truth of Christianity – NOT Christianity as life-enhancement.

[image]Call Witnesses Selectively

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A "Case Making" Tip:

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Congressman Allen West gives the Republican weekly radio address

September 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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It's about time that Allen West be allowed to give the official GOP weekly radio address. His topic is the automatic spending cuts to the defense budget that are scheduled to occur soon.

Description:

> In this week's address, Congressman Allen West, a Retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel, discusses the deadline for the sequester, and the White House's devastating inaction on what was originally their idea. The Republican-led House has proposed responsible replacements to the sequester's historically crippling across-the-board cuts to our nation's military. The recent vicious attacks on embassies in the Middle East underscore the need to preserve our military strength. The president and Senate Democrats must put aside partisan politics to work with us to preserve our military and replace the sequester.

For those who can't see the video, here is a report from the radically leftist CNN:

> Rep. Allen West of Florida cited his military experience on Saturday in the Republican weekly address, where he called for action from the Senate and White House on the sequester set to begin in January.
>
> "I spent 22 years in active duty in the United States Army and served in several combat zones," the retired lieutenant colonel said. "I can not understate the amount of damage these cuts would do to our military. They would essentially hollow out our armed forces."
>
> "Mr. President, for you, the Commander in Chief of our armed forces, to sit idle and do nothing while this dark cloud hangs over our military – it is shameful, it is irresponsible, and it is wrong," he said.
>
> Included in the cuts – which would reduce the federal deficit by approximately $1 trillion over the next decade – are reductions in defense spending, as well as nearly every other area. On Friday, a White House report found the cuts "would have a devastating impact on important defense and nondefense programs."
>
> While House Republicans have acted to find alternatives to these cuts, the Democrat-controlled Senate and White House have not, he said.
>
> "The president himself has opposed or disregarded every attempt we've made to work with him on a solution," West said. "Dodging his responsibility is how the 'sequester' came about, so it is no surprise the president is doing the exact same thing now."
>
> West called to mind violence in the Arab world this week – including that which

> led to the death of four Americans at a U.S. consulate in Libya – as a sign of "how critical it is that the United States projects strength," including military strength.
>
> "It is because of these threats that America must continue to fund its military and support its armed forces to the fullest extent," West said. "The lives of all Americans depend on it, as do the memories of Ambassador Chris Stevens and the public servants who perished with him."

West says this in his address: "Mr. President: for you — the Commander-in-Chief of our Armed Forces — to sit idle and do nothing while this dark cloud hangs over our military, it is shameful, it is irresponsible, and it is wrong. It is dead wrong."

Recent polls by the mainstream skew sample towards Democrat voters

September 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's an excellent analysis from Da Tech Guy.

Excerpt:

> For the last two weeks we have been treated to the narrative that Barack Obama is surging at the polls, Mitt Romney is in trouble and unless there is a massive change in direction it is all over.
>
> Simply put **this is a lie**.
>
> Of all the polls you have seen, there is one poll that has gotten no attention, it is a poll that has been taken monthly, it is a poll that Doug Ross spotted and promoted on his site. It is the Rasmussen Poll of party identification.
>
> They have party identification results online dating back to 2004.

Here are the recent numbers:

	August 31, 2012				
	Republican	Democrat	Other	R - D	Quarterly
2012					
Aug	37.6%	33.3%	29.2%	4.3%	
Jul	34.9%	34.0%	31.1%	0.9%	
Jun	35.4%	34.0%	30.5%	1.4%	1.8%
May	35.7%	33.8%	30.5%	1.9%	
Apr	35.1%	33.1%	31.8%	2.0%	
Mar	36.4%	33.4%	30.2%	3.0%	3.3%
Feb	36.0%	32.4%	31.6%	3.6%	
Jan	35.9%	32.5%	31.6%	3.4%	

Voter identification by party
It's a 3-4 point advantage for Republicans.

Da Tech Guy continues:

> At no time during the year do the Democrats have a registration advantage vs republicans, the gap closes in July & re-separates in August. The low point for the GOP was July for 34.9 and the high August at 37.6 For democrats the high was 34.0 in June & July the low was 32.4 in Feb
>
> What does this mean for November? **It means a lot.**
>
> The Democrats won 2 election in this period 2006 & 2008 with a 6.9 advantage in 2006 & a 7.6 advantage in 2008.
>
> There is no example of the Democrats winning since 2004 with an advantage less that 6.9.
>
> The GOP won two elections in this period 2004 with a -1.6 disadvantage & 2010

> with a 1.3 advantage. This means the GOP has proven it can win with not only a small lead but with an *actual disadvantage*. Additionally with an advantage of only 1.3 they pulled off the biggest house swing in my lifetime.
>
> Can these number change? Well the biggest 1 month swing I've seen is 4.2 Oct-Nov in 2010 the biggest 3 month swing was Dec 2007-Feb 2008 6.9 in favor of Democrats at the rise of Obama.
>
> Tell me with the economy in the tank, and the new trouble in the Middle East, what is the prospect of a swing of that size to the Democrats happening again right now? *Moreover even if that record registration swing repeated itself right now this would give democrats an advantage of only 2.6 points.*
>
> I've covered a lot of national polls on this site over the last year and all those polls ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX have one thing in common.
>
> Not a single one of those polls had a sample with a GOP advantage.

And here's what the mainstream media have been doing with their polls:

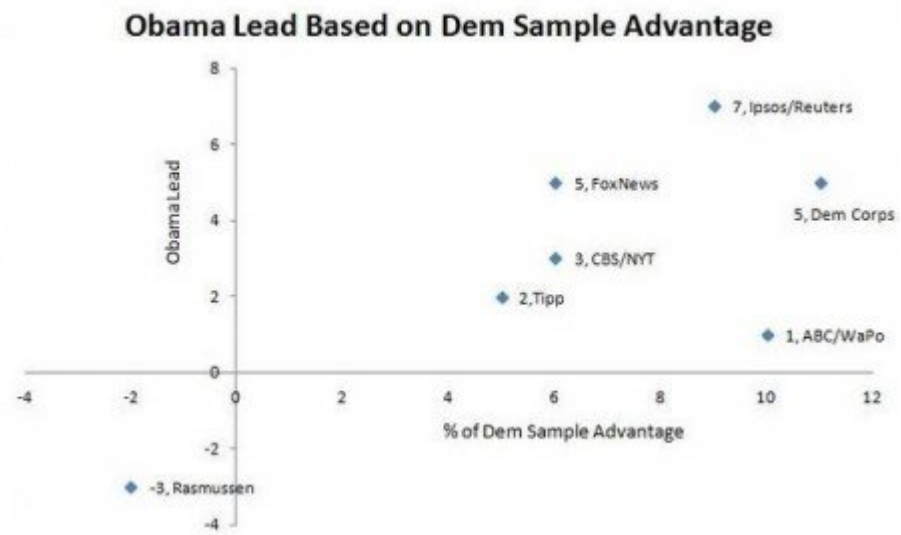

Mainstream media oversampling Democrat voters
Only the Rasmussen Reports poll is accurately sampling voters based on party identification.

That's why Obama looks like he's winning. He's not.

Read the full analysis here.

UPDATE: CBS/NYT Poll Weights Registered Voters Dems 35%, Republicans 22%.

Does God pose an authority problem for you?

September 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm going to steal this entire post from Tough Questions Answered to get a conversation started:

> Many of the people I know who reject God or who have crafted a God that makes no demands on them have a fundamental problem with authority. They don't want anybody telling them what to do.
>
> For a person who wants complete autonomy, who chafes at the thought of anyone having authority over them, a creator God who makes demands is way inconvenient.
>
> Many people who believe in God, but also have this authority hang-up, create their own version of God. This God gives them what they want when they want it. He approves of everything they do, as long as they are just trying to be happy. He encourages them to follow their desires, wherever they lead. C. S. Lewis compared this God to a senile, old grandfather who never says "no" to his grandchildren. You want chocolate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? No problem!
>
> Is this the Christian God? Philosopher Paul Moser answers the question:
>
> It would be a strange, defective God who didn't pose a serious cosmic authority problem for humans. Part of the status of being God, after all, is that God has a unique authority, or lordship, over humans. Since we humans aren't God, the true God would have authority over us and would seek to correct our profoundly selfish ways.
>
> If you are "worshiping" a God who makes no demands on you, you're worshiping no God at all. You're just trying to find a deity to make you feel good about your selfish choices. What's the point?

I'm posting this because I'm looking for comments. Do you know anyone like this? I'll help by getting you started with some sample atheists.

Famous atheists agree: God is not the boss of them

Consider the words of Thomas Nagel, a famous atheist philosopher:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-

> informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)"

He is a widely respected atheist. He once named Stephen C. Meyer's Signature in the Cell as one of the Times Literary Supplement's best books of the year.

And what about atheist Richard Lewontin: (and by "science" he means "naturalistic science")

> "Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science *in spite of* the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite of* its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite of* the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our own a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, not matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door." (Richard Lewontin in *New York Review of Books*, January 9, 1997, p. 28)

Interesting. He's willing to tell people lies to keep the Divine Foot outside the door.

And one last one from Aldous Huxley:

> "I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way that they find most advantegous to themselves… For myself, the philosophy of meaningless was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political." — Aldous Huxley in Ends and Means, 1937

So this is pretty widespread among famous atheists. How about among ordinary atheists?

Survey says

Additionally, atheists are not as charitable as religious people:

Arthur Brooks' survey showed that atheists certainly give less in charity and do less community service as religious people on the right and left.

Quote:

> Drawing on some ten data sets, Brooks finds that religiosity is among the best predictors of charitable giving. Religious Americans are not only much more likely to give money and volunteer their time to religious and secular institutions, they are also more likely to provide aid to family members, return incorrect change, help a homeless person, and donate blood. In fact, despite expecting to find just the opposite, Brooks concluded: "I have never found a measurable way in which secularists are more charitable than religious people."
>
> Consider some examples. Religious citizens who make $49,000 gave away about 3.5 times as much money as secular citizens with the same income. They also volunteered twice as often, are 57 percent more likely to help homeless persons, and two-thirds more likely to give blood at their workplace. Meanwhile, those who insist that "beliefs don't matter as long as you're a good person" are not as good as those who do think beliefs matter. The former group gave and volunteered at much lower rates.
>
> Yet even these findings tend to obscure the impact of religion on charity. This is because some of the survey respondents that Brooks classified as secular are indirectly affected by religion if they were raised in a religious household.

Atheists also divorce more than committed Christians:

Quote:

> It's a number that is trumpeted from the rooftops — and the pulpit: Half of marriages among Christians and non-Christians alike end in divorce.
>
> But the reality is that Christians who attend church regularly get divorced at a much lower rate.
>
> Professor Bradley Wright, a sociologist at the University of Connecticut, found that among people who identify as Christians but rarely attend church, 60 percent have been divorced. Of those who attend church regularly, 38 percent have been divorced.
>
> W. Bradford Wilcox, a leading sociologist at the University of Virginia and director of the National Marriage Project, found a nearly identical spread between "active conservative Protestants" who regularly attend church and people with no religious affiliation.
>
> Professor Scott Stanley from the University of Denver, who is working on the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative, said couples with a vibrant religious faith have more and higher levels of the qualities that marriages need to avoid divorce.
>
> "Whether young or old, male or female, low-income or not, those who said that they were more religious reported higher average levels of commitment to their

> partners, higher levels of marital satisfaction, less thinking and talking about divorce and lower levels of negative interaction," he said. "These patterns held true when controlling for such important variables as income, education and age at first marriage."

My survey of atheists

I like to find out what atheists are really thinking. So a while back, I did this massive survey of the atheists in my life, and this fear of authority (and morality) seemed to be *the* central belief animating atheism.

Here's Question 11:

> What is your purpose in life, and why did you choose that purpose? Is it just yours, or for everyone else too?

And these were the responses:

- Mine is to feel good about myself and to feel respected by others.
- Mine is to enjoy it. I'd hope that I go about it in a way that doesn't interfere with others enjoyment and that when it does we can compromise.
- Mine is to relieve inordinate suffering, while leaving room for constructive suffering that lead to creativity and progress. Based on empathy.
- Mine is to help the species survive by having lots of children, because that lasts after you die
- Each person decides for themselves. My purpose is to have happy feelings
- My purpose is to have happy feelings by doing what most of the other people are doing and avoiding social disapproval
- I have no "objective" purpose. I do what I can to be happy, all things considered.
- To live as contented as possible. To find answers to big questions. To prepare my children for adulthood. I chose these things because that's what I like. I don't care what another's purpose is as long as they don't harm anyone.
- My purpose is to seek happiness while doing no harm (or as little harm as is it may be possible to do) for as long as I'm alive. Of course it's just my own purpose – I can't presume to choose another's purpose. That being said, I do presume everyone has more or less the same goal of happiness and fulfillment, but the precise methods of going about it are always going to vary from person to person.
- I want to be happy. I generally like other people, and I want them to be happy too.

Here's Question 12:

> Suppose Jesus appeared to us right now and addressed you directly with the following words: "I'm really here and you need to *follow me* in order to flourish and achieve the goal for which I created you". He then glares suspiciously at me, snatches a few fries from *my* plate, eats them, and then disappears. Later on, the Ghostbusters show up and confirm that Jesus was no ghost, but really God stepping into history. And everyone in the restaurant saw and heard exactly what

> you and I saw and heard. How would you proceed? How would you find out what to do? (i.e. – the atheist now knows Christianity is true, and I want to see what they think they should do in order to act like a Christian)

And these were the responses:

- I have no idea
- I would not follow. My own goals are all that I have, and all that I would continue to have in that unlikely situation. I would not yield my autonomy to anyone no matter what their authority to command me
- I would not follow, because God doesn't want humans to act any particular way, and he doesn't care what we do
- I would not follow. Head is spinning. Would go to physician to find out if hallucinating.
- If I found there was no trickery? I'd have to change my mind wouldn't I! Not really likely though is it?
- I would keep doing what I am doing now, acting morally. That's what all religions want anyway. (In response to my triumphant scribbling, he realized he had fallen into a trap and changed his answer to the right answer) Oh, wait. I would try to try to find out what Jesus wanted and then try to do that.
- I hope I would be courageous enough to dedicate my life to rebellion against God.
- I would not have to change anything unless forced to and all that would change is my actions not my values. I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran.
- He would have to convince me that what he wants for me is what I want for me.

Here's Question 13:

> What would be the most difficult thing about becoming a Christian for you? Would it be the moral demands? The demands on your time? The unpopularity, humiliation and persecution that you would face? How would you feel about publicly declaring your allegiance for Christ and facing the consequences? (i.e. – they have become a Christian, what is the most difficult adjustment from your current life?)

And these were the responses:

- I don't know
- It would not be that big of a change for me. I already act morally, I'm already public about my beliefs, and I don't care what people think about what I believe. I don't mind disagreeing with people and being unpopular for it. I think the 10 commandments are good. I could find out what to do and start doing those things.
- I would not be able to believe in miracles, so there would be cognitive dissonance
- Sacrificing my personal moral standards to take up a standard from a book that is

very old and outdated
- The most difficult would be the fact that I believe something without good evidence.
- I work many hours a week for institutions and organizations that are charitable. I'm certainly not going to swap those for hours for "prayer time" and waste them.
- I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran. Obviously, it is possible that if I became a Christian, then I would have different values then I have now.
- The most difficult thing would be trying to believe the ridiculous claims of Christianity. As for what a Christian finds difficult, how would I know?
- I could never obey God from gratitude and love, only from servility inspired by fear and cowardice. I do not see myself as servile, fearful or cowardly, and to behave in such a manner would injure my self-esteem and self-image.

So you might be surprised to know that even if Christianity were true, atheists have no intention of changing the way they live. That's the real issue – and that should be scary for any atheist to realize. If they just cracked open a Bible and read Romans 1, that should be enough to scare the crap out of them – because it's pretty obvious what is going on with humans – all of us have an authority problem. And a lot of the learning and striving that atheists do is just an effort to get people to think that they are so great and successful after they've dumped their relationship with God.

I hope that more atheists look in the mirror and are honest with themselves about what's really going on. Is it really such a terrible thing to have a relationship with the person who cares the most about you and wants the best for you? Is fun really that important that people have to push away a real, significant, eternal relationship just because it requires self-denial? If I didn't embrace chastity, as God wishes, where would I get to time to do the really heroic things I do – and how could I concern myself with a woman's real moral and spiritual needs if I got into the habit of using them selfishly? You can't experience imitating God when you shut him out. And that's what we are all here to do – to know him, to be his friend, to act in a way that allows us to feel what he feels, and to have sympathy with him.

Is Christianity false or is it just mean and judgmental?

September 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Have you noticed lately that there is a decided lack of atheists who argue against Christianity on factual grounds? Instead of constructing arguments against Christian theism, what I am seeing more and more of is that people try to say that Christianity makes some group feel bad, and therefore Christianity is not worthy of pursuit and engagement.

Here's how it works. You have a person who has some sinful habit or other that they don't want to give up, and they notice that people are judging them and saying that what they are doing is wrong. And they feel bad. And they decide to attack Christianity to make the Christians stop judging them. So how do they do it? Do they argue that the concept of God is logically incoherent? No… Do they argue that some instances of evil and suffering are gratuitous? No… Do they argue that the universe is eternal so that it had no Creator? No…

What do they do?

What they do is pick on some statement by a conservative Christian that makes them feel bad, and then claim that they are victims of meanness. And apparently, making someone feel bad is some sort of disproof of Christian theism. Why is that? It's because we have decided as a culture that the purpose of religion is to make people feel good about themselves and to be "nice" to other people. And by "nice", we mean not making other people feel bad about the sinfulness of their behavior. So people are making Christianity irrelevant just by *assuming* that the purpose of life is happiness, and that any religion that makes people unhappy can be dismissed.

Before, people thought about Christianity as something that you investigated, and that was either true or false. People understood that Christianity made claims about the external world that were either true or false. For example, Christianity claims that the universe had a beginning in the finite past. And the people who disagreed with Christianity would try to produce arguments and evidence that the universe was eternal, as with the steady-state theory or the oscillating model of the universe. And people were willing to change their behavior to match what was true, even when it made them feel less happy. But not any more.

I think somehow, as a society, we have internalized the following beliefs:

- God wants me to have happy feelings
- the purpose of religion is to give me happy feelings
- God's moral will for me is that I be "nice" to others
- being nice to others means accepting whatever they want to do as "good"
- accepting whatever anyone does makes them like me

- when people like me, I feel happy, which is what God wants
- there is no need for me to study God's existence
- God exists when I want to be comforted, and doesn't exist when I want to sin
- there is no need for me to study God's character
- God's character is pretty much like my character, whatever I want is fine with God
- there are no moral rules or obligations from God that apply to me
- religions are all the same, I choose the one that makes me feel happy

So you can see that someone who believes things like this can claim to be a Christian, but would actually attack real Christians who hold to the old view of exclusive factual claims and moral judgments. The real Christians are people who have studied these questions, who know that God exists, and what he is like, and accept the Bible's moral teachings as authoritative. So you could have a famous pastor who defends the Bible's prohibition on sex before marriage, and have someone *feel bad about being judged*, and then a bunch of these "the purpose of life is happiness" people will appear and chastise that pastor for making people feel bad. And many of them will claim to be Christians, and attend church, too.

Now notice that this mob of happy-feelings people are not going argue against the pastor using the Bible, because the Bible is pretty clearly against fornication. What they'll do instead is they'll pick out some piece of the Bible that seems unfair, like the slaughter of some group of child-sacrificing pagans, and they'll rail against that Bible passage in order to discredit the Bible's authority on moral questions. And then the good conservative pastor is made to feel bad because he has broken those unwritten laws – he made someone feel bad using this evil book.

No factual claims about God's existence were made. No historical arguments were made. No evidence was presented. The mere fact that the Bible is mean to talk about killing the poor Canaanites is used to prove that the Bible has no moral authority at all, on any issue. "It's mean" entails that *it's false*. And you can have people who read the Bible for devotions, who sing in church, and who lead worship, who think that the Bible is false because it's mean, and it's mean because it can be used to judge people and make them feel bad.

An example

Now consider single motherhood, as in this case.

Excerpt:

> She tells her children to do as she says and not as she does.
>
> But the words of mother of 14 Joanne Watson – who receives more than £2,000 a month in state handouts – have fallen on deaf ears.
>
> Her 15-year-old daughter Mariah is pregnant, the father has 'left the scene', and the youngster is about to start living off benefits.
>
> Mrs Watson, 40, is raising her giant brood alone after parting from her husband John, 46, three years ago, and breaking up with subsequent partner Craig le

> Sauvage, 35, last year.
>
> Despite this, she has still managed to squirrel away enough cash for a £1,600 breast enhancement and a sunbed. She claims she has always encouraged her daughters to use contraception – but, inevitably, it seems they would rather follow the family tradition.
>
> Mariah's pregnancy comes after Mrs Watson's oldest daughter Natasha, 22, got pregnant with her son Branford, now six, when she was 16. Her second eldest daughter Shanice, 19, also got pregnant at 16 with her 22-month-old son Marley.
>
> Mariah says she has no concerns about becoming a teenage mother, as it seems the most natural thing in the world. Initially, she and her child will be supported by the taxpayer.
>
> She is expected to move into a housing complex for single mothers and will receive supplementary benefit and child allowance for her baby.
>
> The youngster, who is due to have a boy, said: 'I'm not nervous. I've been around babies my whole life so I know what to expect and that I can handle it. The father isn't involved and I don't want him to be either. I'm really excited and think I will be a great mum.'

Now there are two responses to this from people who profess to be Christians. The first response, my response, is to make a general argument against having sex before marriage, using the latest statistics to show the harm that fatherlessness causes to children, and more evidence besides. My response is not to pick on any one person, but to set moral boundaries, to make moral judgments against the selfishness of parents, and to not celebrate and subsidize anything that will harm innocent children. I don't want to make anyone person feel bad, I just want to say what the evidence is. However, even a general argument using evidence does make some people feel bad, so I am judged as "mean" for giving my opinion and backing it up with evidence.

But there is another response. This response comes from someone who professes to be a Christian, but they are actually a "God wants me to be happy and to be nice to people so they will like me and then we'll all be happy" person. They would never dream of judging anyone for anything they do. And they are very angry with me for getting my moral rules out of that horrible Bible, and for using facts and evidence to make people feel bad. They believe in *compassion*, which is the idea that says that the moral boundaries of the Bible are false, and that we have to celebrate and subsidize any and every variation on the traditional family, regardless of the harm caused, so that the selfish adults don't feel bad about their destructive choices.

And what do we make of a person who feels that saying "it's wrong" is mean, because it makes a guilty person feel bad? Well, here is the truth. A person who argues against the Bible based on the happy-feelings model is no friend of God, and no friend of the victims of selfish actions. They may think that they are being a good person by affirming people who make bad decisions, but really it just encourages people to get into trouble.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Hard and soft transitional forms in the fossil record

September 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Casey Luskin writes about it at Evolution News. (I removed all his links from the excerpts)

Excerpt:

> Another good example is what the principal blogger covering human origins at BioLogos, Dr. James Kidder, did last year did in a series on human origins. His series is a good read and quite a competent presentation of the standard Darwinian evolutionary view of human origins — which no doubt reflects Dr. Kidder's extensive training and experience with this issue. But it accedes 100% to the standard Darwinian story of human origins with essentially no critical analysis whatsoever. But how solid is the evidence behind Dr. Kidder's view, and are there credible paleoanthropologists who doubt key parts of the orthodox story?

Here's ONE of the problems that Luskin writes about:

> Dr. Kidder's BioLogos post tried to argue that I misunderstand the meaning of "transitional fossil." This is a common and characteristically unfounded charge from Darwinian evolutionary biologists. They make the accusation because it takes the focus off the problems the fossil evidence poses for Darwinian evolution, and puts it on Darwin-critics. Advocates of Darwinian evolution also redefine what counts as "transitional," so that the term becomes nearly meaningless. Here's what's going on:
>
> We see that the phrase "transitional form" is used in two different ways. The "soft" definition of "transitional" implies that an organism merely needs to bear features that are representative of a potential intermediate — even if the fossil itself was not a direct transitional form. Under the hard definition of "transitional form," a stronger claim is made that this organism actually was a real-life lineal intermediate between two taxa, a direct transitional form.
>
> As evidence that this soft/hard distinction is used, for example, when some early tetrapod tracks were first reported in early 2010, *Nature*'s Editor's Summary said: "The finds suggests that the elpistostegids that we know were late-surviving relics rather than *direct transitional forms*, and they highlight just how little we know of the earliest history of land vertebrates" (emphasis added). The qualified term "direct transitional form" is a nod to the writer's understanding that there is in fact a "hard" definition of a transitional form, and a "soft" definition, and that some fossils don't meet the hard definition. What some people call a "transitional form" isn't necessarily a "direct transitional form."

So are there *direct* transitional forms in the hominid fossil record?

If you define “transitional form” in a soft enough way, so that neither temporal placement nor phylogenetic relationship matters any more, then it becomes very difficult to disprove claims that a fossil was “transitional.” It’s a wily rhetorical tactic, designed to make Darwin-skeptics look ignorant while simultaneously taking the focus off the lack of *actual* (e.g. hard) transitional forms in the fossil record. Dr. Kidder complains that ID proponents define such forms “in such a way that none could ever be found,” when in reality it’s Darwinian evolutionists who define transitional fossils so that they must, by definition, be found in abundance–even if they weren’t necessarily part of an evolutionary transition. Thus we see the *Nature* blogger quoted above saying absurd things like “every newly discovered fossil of a creature we didn’t know of before IS a missing link.” Or, we see Dr. Kidder making the less-absurd (though similarly inspired) claim that “[t]he human fossil record, in fact, is replete with transitional forms” as well as:

Transitional fossils in the human fossil record are distinguished at both the genus and species level. This group includes the extinct genera *Ardipithecus* and*Australopithecus* and the current genus Homo.

Kidder would have no troubling finding some authorities who agree with him. But there are also credible authorities who disagree — especially with regard to those specific fossils. For example, in my series we’ve seen there are credible authorities who believe that “one of the most critical” areas of the human fossil record lacks transitional forms–specifically, “the transition from*Australopithecus* to *Homo*.”

Likewise, my series has also cited authorities who would disagree with Dr. Kidder’s claim that Ardi “was advanced in the human direction,” in the sense of developing bipedal locomotion, and who would sharply dispute his assertion that Ardi represents “a phenomenal example of a transitional form in the human fossil record.” Other experts would dispute the claim advanced by Kidder that the australopithecines show clearly “transitional characteristics.” In particular, many doubt theclaim that Lucy’s morphology was “perfectly intermediate between the ape position and the human position.”

Indeed, even Kidder admits: “Unfortunately, the path from *Australopithecus* to early *Homo* is shrouded in mystery, with no clear hominin form considered decisively to be the progenitor.” True! But then why does Kidder feel the need to so completely capitulate to the view that humans evolved from *Australopithecus*? He claims that ID proponents take it as an “article of faith” that transitional forms don’t exist, but it seems that some Darwinian evolutionary scientists take it as an “article of faith” that they do exist, and that the standard Darwinian story of human origins is true.

My point is not that Dr. Kidder is unequivocally wrong or that he’s uninformed. Hardly. He’s welcome to hold and express his opinion, and his series is a highly

> competent presentation of the standard Darwinian evolutionary account of human origins. Rather, I want to note that the standard story of human evolution — to which BioLogos's principle blogger on this topic fully capitulates — is not the only scientifically credible position out there. When you dig into the technical literature, many parts of the standard story turn out to be based upon very weak evidence. In short, there are strong scientific reasons to dispute the claim that humans evolved from ape-like precursors. Is it acceptable to point this out?

It seems to me that whoever makes a claim about how we got here has the burden of proof. Both sides are making claims, so both sides have to shoulder the burden of proof. Our side had made claims about what would be found in the human genome for years, and we were vindicated recently with research published in *Nature*. Can the other side do that?

I recommend reading the whole article. There are good links in there to other things that Luskin has written on this topic, and links to the research he uses in his arguments as well. There's also a new book out now on human origins that presents more evidence on both sides of this debate.

Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist

September 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Dina sent me news of Saturday’s episode of Unbelievable, which features Lawrence Krauss, who debated William Lane Craig. Krauss’ book was also reviewed in the New York Times.

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

> Lawrence Krauss is a Cosmologist at Arizona State University who describes himself as an “anti-theist”. His latest book “A Universe From Nothing” has received both acclaim and criticism for its attempt to answer the question “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Debating the issue with Krauss is Rodney Holder, Course director at the Faraday Institute, Cambridge. An astrophysicist and priest by background. In a lively exchange they debate whether Krauss’ “nothing” is “nothing”, fine tuning and multiverses, scientific knowledge, miracles and the usefulness of theology and philosophy.

This debate is quite entertaining, and do not be intimidated if your don’t understand science. You can understand pretty easily who is arguing based on facts and who is speculating about unobservable, untestable entities. At one point, Krauss actually denies that there is any fine-tuning in the universe, so please see this link to refute that claim as well as this podcast which explains some examples of fine-tuning. Krauss gets a bit angry at the beginning, but calms down.

Quotation marks are for direct quotes, italics is for made-up snark. See below the summary for more posts that are related to this one.

Summary of the discussion: (picked up at 9:30 when they start talking about the book)

Brierley:

- explain your theory of how the universe can come into being from nothing

Krauss:

- the nothing that preceded the universe is “no space, no time, no universe”
- theists say that God is responsible for creating the universe out of this nothing
- but the laws of nature can create the universe uncaused out of nothing

Holder:

- Krauss sometimes writes that the nothing is really a quantum vacuum, but that is

not nothing
- He even acknowledges in his book that a quantum vacuum is not nothing
- He thinks that the nothing has properties, even though it has no being
- It has the property of being unstable
- It has the property of being acted on by quantum fields
- It has the property of being acted on by gravity

Krauss:

- But nothing can have the potential to do things inside it
- For example suppose you have an electron, *which is not nothing*
- If it jumps from one level to another, it emits light
- There was no potential for the light in the electron, but it was there as part of atomic structure

Holder:

- But in cases like that, there is something physical that has the potential

Krauss:

- Well, how did God makes the universe then if it had no potential?

Holder:

- God existed, and the potential for creating the universe in himself

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times

Krauss:

- It was written by a philosopher, so I dismissed it

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the Scientific American

Krauss:

- These book reviewers have not even read my book!

Krauss:

- Science will be able to figure out how to make something from nothing in the future
- We are even now speculating about interesting questions, like is there a multiverse?

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times
- The author of the review claims that you equivocate on the term “nothing”
- In order to get things to pop into being, you have to make “nothing” mean “something”
- Reviewer: none of Krauss’ theories explain how something can come from actual nothingness

Krauss:

- In physics, something and nothing are not that different
- The reviewer doesn’t understand the physics
- He doesn’t understand quantum field theory
- You could call a quantum vacuum “nothing”, *(this is the vacuum fluctuation model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*
- Maybe there is an eternally existing multiverse that we can’t observe or test scientifically
- Maybe it has laws that we don’t know about which allow our universe to pop into being
- Maybe this popping into being is uncaused
- (alarmed) Who made God? Who made God?

Holder:

- God is eternal and necessary

Krauss:

- (interrupting, angry) What does it mean for something to be necessary?

Holder:

- Basically, you have to decide whether there is more evidence that the necessary being God or a multiverse

Brierley:

- So Dr. Krauss are you willing to say that the universe is a brute fact, in some sense, and requires no explanation

Krauss:

- (angry) Religious people are stupid because they just assume brute facts, *not like me and my unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry) Religious people are against the progress of science, they don’t want to figure out how things work

Brierley:

- But isn't it possible that naturalists can be opposed to the progress of science?
- What about the way the Fred Hoyle opposed the Big Bang because he wanted an eternal universe

Krauss:

- (angry) But naturalists like me let the facts determine our beliefs, *like the facts about the eternal unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry, shouting) Philosophers are stupid, they know nothing!

=== Break ===

Brierley:

- Do you see any evidence of purpose in the universe?

Krauss:

- Well maybe I would believe if the stars lined up to spell out a message from God

Brierley:

- Actually no, that wouldn't be evidence for God on your multiverse view
- if there an infinite number of universes existing for an infinite amount of time, then anything can happen no matter how unlikely it is
- therefore, no evidence could convince you that God exists, since the unobservable, untestable, eternal multiverse can make anything it wants

Krauss:

- That's a true statement, *and very convenient for atheists who don't want to be accountable to God, don't you think?*

Brierley:

- Back to the multiverse, how does it solve the fine-tuning?

Krauss:

- "We have no idea if the universe is fine-tuned for life", *even though the atheist Martin Rees who endorsed Krauss' book wrote his own book about the fine-tuning of the universe called "Just Six Numbers"*
- Inflationary theory does suggest a way to create multiple universes, *(this is the chaotic inflationary model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*

Brierley:

- But this theory is still very much a hypothesis, isn't it? We can't observe *or test* this hypothesis can we?

Krauss:

- "No, and that is really important to state"
- "I'm an empiricist, so if you can't falsify it and if you can't test it then it's not science"
- In my book, I speculate about a way that we could test the multiverse theory

Holder:

- Yes, in principle, the multiverse would be scientific if you could test it through other theories like inflationary theory
- There are a lot of speculations about multiverse theory, but no evidence from predictions that were validated in the lab

Krauss:

- "I agree completely with everything you just said"

Brierley:

- Roger Penrose agrees with Holder that the multiverse theory is too speculative
- (To Holder) Isn't the multiverse theory better than positing a completely different kind of being, which is God?

Holder:

- The multiverse theory is extremely speculative
- Even if the multiverse were true, you would still need to explain the multiverse

Krauss:

- People don't oppose my book because it's full of self-contradictory speculations
- People oppose my book because they are stupid and ignorant

Holder:

- There are things that exist that science cannot measure, like objective morality
- It's possible to give explanations for moral behavior by appealing to evolution
- But that does not ground self-sacrificial morality, such as what occurs in the Christian life

Brierley:

- Dawkins says there is no purpose or morality in in the universe, do you agree?

Krauss:

- “There is certainly no evidence of any of that”

Brierley:

- In the book, you talk about how we live in a special time in the universe’s history to be able to do science, *(i.e. – The Privileged Planet hypothesis)*
- You also write about how all the discoveries were are making will not be communicated to anyone in other places in the universe
- So what is the meaning of doing science on your view? And why are you sad at the knowledge that will not be available to people in the future?
- Are you longing for some kind of purpose?

Krauss:

- No, I just get enjoyment from studying the universe with science to gain understanding

Holder:

- What do you make of Einstein’s statement about the unexpected comprehensibility of the universe
- Theists would say that this is because God wanted us to study and understand and gain knowledge

Krauss:

- “It is remarkable that the universe is comprehensible”

Brierley:

- Why is the universe comprehensible?

Krauss:

- Well, maybe the universe just has to be that way

Brierley:

- What do you make of the heat death of the universe, when all life in the universe will die out?

Krauss:

- That’s the way the universe is

=== BREAK ===
Krauss:

- I wouldn't want to live in a universe where there was a God
- God is a cosmic Saddam Hussein
- "Religious people turn their minds off" and believe in God for consolation

Holder:

- First, Jesus is the revelation of God and he is no Saddam Hussein
- Second, the Christian life is anything but easy, we are facing some persecution already in the UK
- Third, there is also the problem of being accountable to God when we die
- It's very much like science – Christianity is the way it is, not the way we want it to be

Krauss:

- "If you don't believe in him, you don't get any of the benefits, so you have to believe"
- "And then if you've done something wrong, you're going to be judged for it"
- "So I don't want to be judged by God, I want to be… that's the bottom line"

Holder:

- Well, Jesus has died to pay the price for those things we've done wrong
- Although we will have to face the charges for what we've done, believers will ultimately be forgiven

UPDATE: Peter Sean Bradley note that Krauss is now walking back his rhetoric in response to criticisms from people like atheist John Horgan.

Related posts

- Ed Feser takes on Lawrence Krauss and Victor Stenger
- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?
- Lawrence Krauss debates "A Universe From Nothing" with an astrophysicist
- William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?
- Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument
- Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger's critique of cosmic fine-tuning
- A review of Lawrence Krauss' book "A Universe From Nothing"

William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?

September 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Audio of the William Lane Craig vs. Lawrence Krauss debate at North Carolina State University has now been posted at Apologetics 315.

And I also posted some background information on Craig's arguments.

William Lane Craig's case

William Lane Craig made 5 arguments for the existence of God:

- the contingency argument
- theargument from the origin of the universe (kalam)
- the argument from cosmic fine-tuning
- the moral argument
- the argument from the miracle of the resurrection

These arguments went unrefuted during the debate.

Lawrence Krauss's case

Lawrence Krauss made the following arguments in his first speech:

- Dr. Craig is a professional debater
- Dr. Craig is not a scientist
- Dr. Craig is a philosopher
- Disproving God's is a waste of my valuable time
- Dr. Craig has the burden of proof to show evidence
- My job is not to present any evidence
- I think that "extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence" is a nice slogan, but I have no evidence for it
- I don't like that God doesn't appear on Youtube, therefore he doesn't exist
- I don't like that God didn't appear to humans until recently, therefore he doesn't exist
- I don't like that the stars didn't come together to spell "I am here", therefore God doesn't exist
- Dr. Craig has to supply extraordinary evidence, because my favorite slogan says he has to
- Dr. Craig talks about logic, but the universe is not logical
- Dr. Craig doesn't have any arguments, just things he doesn't like
- Dr. Craig doesn't like infinity, and that's why he believes in the Big Bang cosmology
- Dr. Craig doesn't like chance, and that's why he believes in cosmic fine-tuning
- Dr. Craig doesn't like rape, and that's why he believes in the ontological foundations of morality

- If people believe in logic, then they can't do science
- The things that science discovers contradict the laws of logic
- For example, Dr. Craig doesn't like infinity, so he believes in the experimental measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation
- For example, Dr. Craig doesn't like chance, so he believes in the fine-tuning of the gravitational constant for the formation of stable stars
- Quantum mechanics shows that the universe is stranger than you think, therefore all of Craig's arguments are false
- My t-shirt says 2 + 2 = 5, therefore all of Craig's arguments are false
- Atheism may look ridiculous, but it's true, and if you don't like it, too bad – because the universe is very strange
- Accidents happen all the time, so that explains the cosmic fine-tuning
- We all have to convince ourselves of 10 impossible things before breakfast, and atheism is impossible, so you need to convince yourself of it
- I don't know about the Big Bang, so Dr. Craig cannot use the Big Bang to to prove the universe began to exist
- I don't know about the cosmic fine-tuning, so Dr. Craig cannot use the fine-tuning of cosmological constants to prove the fine-tuning
- I don't know anything about science, so Dr. Craig cannot use science in his arguments
- Dr. Craig says that the universe is contingent because it began to exist 13.7 billion years ago based on the state-of-the-art scientific evidence for the Big Bang creation out of nothing from 1) red-shift of light from distant galaxies, 2) cosmic microwave background radiation, 3) helium-hydrogen abundances, 4) experimental confirmation of general relativity, 5) the second law of thermodynamics, 6) radioactive element abundances, etc., but how does he know that? I don't know that
- It's fine not to know the answer to scientific questions like whether the universe began to exist, it's more exciting
- Thinking that the universe began to exist based on 6 pieces of scientific evidence is the "God-of-the-Gaps" fallacy, it's intellectual laziness
- But all kidding aside, the universe actually did begin to exist 13.72 billion years ago, exactly like Craig says in his argument
- I could argue that God created the universe 4.5 seconds ago with all of us sitting believing that we heard Dr. Craig, and how could you prove me wrong? It's not falsifiable
- Universes can spontaneously appear out of nothing, and in fact they have to appear out of nothing
- *Nothing is unstable*, and space and time can come into existence out of nothing, so that's not a problem
- Our universe could have appeared out of a multiverse, an unobservable, untestable multiverse that I have no way of observing or testing
- The universe is not fine-tuned for life, and no scientist says so, especially not Martin Rees, the atheist Astronomer Royal, and every other scientist

- What if God decided that rape was OK, would it be OK? God can change his moral nature arbitrarily, can't he?

Here are the arguments in Krauss' second speech:

- We don't understand the beginning of the universe
- We don't understand whether the universe had a cause
- Steven Weinberg says that science makes it possible to be an atheist, so therefore the universe didn't begin and didn't have a cause
- It's just intellectual laziness to say that the universe came into being 13.7 billion years ago, and that things that come into being of nothing have a cause
- Dr. Craig is an expert on nothing, ha ha ha!
- There are multiple versions of nothing, there's nothing, and then there is something, which is also nothing if I want it to be
- There was no space, there was no time, and then the space create the empty space
- I'm going to give Dr. Craig a break
- At least in the nothing there were laws like *F=ma*, and those laws created the empty space, because *descriptions of matter that does not even exist yet* can create space out of nothing
- Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin are good friends of mine and I talk to them all the time, unlike Dr. Craig
- Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin don't mention God in their scientific papers, therefore the universe didn't begin and didn't have a cause
- Maybe there is a multiverse that cannot be observed or tested? And my unscientific speculations are a refutation of Craig's scientific evidence for the fine-tuning
- Dr. Craig just doesn't like my speculations about the unobservable, untestable multiverse, and that's why he believes in the Big Bang cosmology
- And if you let me speculate about an unobservable, untestable multiverse, then maybe the inanimate invisible universes reproduce and compete for food and mutate like animals and then there is natural selection so that the finely-tuned universes survive and now we're in one!
- My cool animation of blue goo mutating proves that the multiverse is real! Empty space is not empty!
- Darwinism, which is a theory about the origin of species, explains the cosmic fine-tuning that occurred at the moment of creation
- The unobservable, untestable multiverse universes all have different laws, I believe
- We don't know what the right answer is, but we are willing to look at any possibility, as long as the possibilities we look at are not supernatural possibilities
- The discovery of the origin of the universe could be an accident, I don't know if the universe began to exist or not, maybe all the six scientific evidences are wrong because if I don't like the evidence we have, so I'll just wait for new evidence to overturn the evidence we have which I don't like
- Maybe there are other forms of life that are unobservable and untestable that are

compatible with a universe that has no stable stars, no planets, no elements heavier than hydrogen, no hydrogen, no carbon, etc.

Here are the arguments in Krauss' third speech:

- Dr. Craig is stupid
- Why should we even care about Dr. Craig's arguments and evidence, we can just count the number of scientists who are atheists and decide whether God exists that way – I decided everything based on what my teachers told me to believe
- I actually know general relativity, not like Dr. Craig who co-wrote a book on general relativity published by Oxford University Press
- What quantum mechanics shows is that virtual particles come into being in a quantum vacuum, and then go out of existence almost immediately – and that is exactly like how a 13.7 billion year old universe came into being in a quantum vacuum, and we're going to disappear *very soon*
- Space and the laws of physics can be created, possibly, if you accept my speculations about an unobservable, untestable multiverse
- I don't like the God of the Old Testament, therefore he doesn't exist
- Groups of people can decide what they think is good and evil, like the Nazis and slave-owners did, and then that becomes good for them in that time and place, and that's what I mean by morality
- Here's something I studied that wasn't fine-tuned, therefore there is no fine-tuning of the universe
- Not knowing things is really exciting! Dr. Craig is not really exciting because he knows things – phooey!

Here are the arguments in Krauss' fourth speech:

- If you will just grant me an observable, untestable multiverse, then there must be some universe where intelligent life exists
- Infinite numbers of things exist everywhere in nature, you can see lots of infinite collections of things, like jelly beans and bumblebees and invisible pink unicorns
- I don't like the fine-tuning, but if my speculations about the multiverse are proven true, then I won't have to learn to live with the fine-tuning
- Inflation, the rapid expansion of the universe which occurs at some time after the the origin of the universe ($t = 0$), explains the absolute origin of time, space, matter and energy out of nothing that occurred at $t = 0$
- Physical processes that develop subsequent to the creation of the universe at $t > 0$ can explain the fine-tuning of quantities that are set at $t = 0$
- Morality is just a bunch of arbitrary conventions decided by groups of people in different times and places by an accidental process of biological and social evolution, but *that* practice over there by *those* people is *objectively* wrong!
- 1 Cor 15:3-7, which most scholars, even atheists like James Crossley, admit is dated to within 3 years of the death of Jesus, is actually dated to 50 years after the death

of Jesus
- The historical case for the resurrection made by people like N.T. Wright in their multi-volume academic works is on par with the story of Mohammed ascending to Heaven on a horse

If you liked this, please check out my snarky summary of Christopher Hitchens' speeches in the Craig-Hitchens debate.

Natalie Wolchover: Will science one day rule out the possibility of atheism?

September 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's an article by Natalie Wolchover on Live Science. (And note that I engaged with people in the comments to that article)

She writes:

> Over the past few centuries, science can be said to have gradually chipped away at the traditional grounds for believing in God. Much of what once seemed mysterious — the existence of humanity, the life-bearing perfection of Earth, the workings of the universe — can now be explained by biology, astronomy, physics and other domains of science.

I find this statement odd. We theists think about evidence that has emerged relatively recently that supports theism and we are wondering why anyone is still an atheist in view of the progress of science.

Here is some of the evidence we theists are looking at:

- the cosmic microwave background radiation
- the helium/hydrogen abundance predictions
- the redshift of light from distant galaxies
- the cosmic fine tuning (constants)
- the cosmic fine tuning (quantities)
- the construction of amino acids on the early earth
- biological information in proteins and DNA
- sudden origin of phyla Cambrian explosion
- biological convergence
- galactic fine-tuning (e.g. – GHZ)
- circumstellar fine-tuning (e.g. – CHZ)
- irreducible complexity of molecular machines like the cilium
- natural limits to biological change (i.e. – the Lenski experiments)
- genome functionality now rated at 80% or more

We use that evidence to support premises in our arguments. We think that science is moving towards belief in a Creator and Designer. But not our staff writer Natalie Wolchover. She has found a way to save atheism from the progress of science.

The evidence for a beginning of the universe

Let's take a closer look at what atheists say about the universe:

> Gobs of evidence have been collected in favor of the Big Bang model of cosmology, or the notion that the universe expanded from a hot, infinitely dense

> state to its current cooler, more expansive state over the course of 13.7 billion years. Cosmologists can model what happened from 10^-43 seconds after the Big Bang until now, but the split-second before that remains murky. Some theologians have tried to equate the moment of the Big Bang with the description of the creation of the world found in the Bible and other religious texts; they argue that something — i.e., God — must have initiated the explosive event.
>
> However, in Carroll's opinion, progress in cosmology will eventually eliminate any perceived need for a Big Bang trigger-puller.
>
> As he explained in a recent article in the "Blackwell Companion to Science and Christianity" (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), a foremost goal of modern physics is to formulate a working theory that describes the entire universe, from subatomic to astronomical scales, within a single framework. Such a theory, called "quantum gravity," will necessarily account for what happened at the moment of the Big Bang. Some versions of quantum gravity theory that have been proposed by cosmologists predict that the Big Bang, rather than being the starting point of time, was just "a transitional stage in an eternal universe," in Carroll's words. For example, one model holds that the universe acts like a balloon that inflates and deflates over and over under its own steam. If, in fact, time had no beginning, this shuts the book on Genesis.

A speculative quantum gravity model?

Let's see what the peer-reviewed research says:

> At the close of their analysis of Linde's Chaotic Inflationary Model, Borde and Vilenkin say with respect to Linde's metaphysical question, "The most promising way to deal with this problem is probably to treat the Universe quantum mechanically and describe it by a wave function rather than by a classical spacetime."{37} They thereby allude to the last class of models attempting to avoid the initial cosmological singularity which we shall consider, namely, Quantum Gravity Models. Vilenkin and, more famously, James Hartle and Stephen Hawking have proposed models of the universe which Vilenkin candidly calls exercises in "metaphysical cosmology."{38}In his best-selling popularization of his theory, Hawking even reveals an explicitly theological orientation. He concedes that on the Standard Model one could legitimately identify the Big Bang singularity as the instant at which God created the universe.{39} Indeed, he thinks that a number of attempts to avoid the Big Bang were probably motivated by the feeling that a beginning of time "smacks of divine intervention."{40} He sees his own model as preferable to the Standard Model because there would be no edge of space-time at which one "would have to appeal to God or some new law."{41}
>
> […]The question which arises for this construal of the model is whether such an interpretation is meant to be taken realistically or instrumentally. On this score,

> there can be little doubt that the use of imaginary quantities for time is a mere mathematical device without ontological significance. Barrow observes, "physicists have often carried out this 'change time into space' procedure as a useful trick for doing certain problems in ordinary quantum mechanics, although they did not imagine that time was *really* like space. At the end of the calculation, they just swop [*sic*] back into the usual interpretation of there being one dimension of time and three . . . dimensions of . . . space."{48} In his model, Hawking simply declines to re-convert to real numbers. If we do, then the singularity re-appears. Hawking admits, "Only if we could picture the universe in terms of imaginary time would there be no singularities . . . . When one goes back to the real time in which we live, however, there will still appear to be singularities."{49} Hawking's model is thus a way of re-describing a universe with a singular beginning point in such a way that that singularity is transformed away; but such a re-description is not realist in character.

Quantum gravity is a theoretical model that uses imaginary time. When translated back into the real world, the singularity re-appears, and the need for a cause of the universe coming into being is re-asserted.

Natalie explains how strong her speculation really is:

> Another way to put it is that contemporary physics theories, though still under development and awaiting future experimental testing, are turning out to be capable of explaining why Big Bangs occur, without the need for a supernatural jumpstart. As Alex Filippenko, an astrophysicist at the University of California, Berkeley, said in a conference talk earlier this year, "The Big Bang could've occurred as a result of just the laws of physics being there. With the laws of physics, you can get universes."

See? Their view is "just because theists have all the experimental data for a creation out of nothing *today*, that doesn't mean that these speculative theories won't replace that hard evidence tomorrow". But physical laws are descriptions of how matter behaves – they don't bring matter into being out of nothing. Physical laws can't explain the origin of the universe because they don't even exist until there is matter created for them to describe. Even the New York Times knows that. But that what atheists are reduced to – they deny what you can test in a lab, and hope for things to emerge that have never been tested in a lab. That's atheism.

The evidence for a finely-tuned universe

What does she make of the fine-tuning evidence? Well, she has a speculation to answer the experimental evidence there as well.

She writes:

> But there are other potential grounds for God. Physicists have observed that many of the physical constants that define our universe, from the mass of the electron to the density of dark energy, are eerily perfect for supporting life. Alter

> one of these constants by a hair, and the universe becomes unrecognizable. "For example, if the mass of the neutron were a bit larger (in comparison to the mass of the proton) than its actual value, hydrogen would not fuse into deuterium and conventional stars would be impossible," Carroll said. And thus, so would life as we know it.
>
> Theologians often seize upon the so-called "fine-tuning" of the physical constants as evidence that God must have had a hand in them; it seems he chose the constants just for us. But contemporary physics explains our seemingly supernatural good luck in a different way.
>
> Some versions of quantum gravity theory, including string theory, predict that our life-giving universe is but one of an infinite number of universes that altogether make up the multiverse. Among these infinite universes, the full range of values of all the physical constants are represented, and only some of the universes have values for the constants that enable the formation of stars, planets and life as we know it. We find ourselves in one of the lucky universes (because where else?).

A speculative multiverse? Why should we take a speculative multiverse over one observable, knowable experimentally-testable universe?

Let's see what the peer-reviewed science says:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe's birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

That's what the science says. That's what we know from experiments.

An MIT physicist Alan Lightman explains how much evidence there is for the multiverse:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are

> adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.
>
> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

This is a non-theistic scientist telling us this. There is no evidence for the multiverse, just like there is no evidence for Santa Claus, just like there is no evidence for the Tooth Fairy. Yet atheists are driven to speculate about whether Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy might be real, in order to escape the fine-tuning. And atheism just goes on and on and on like this – from the origin of life's building blocks, to junk DNA, to the Cambrian explosion, to protein synthesis, to galactic habitability, to DNA sequences, and so on – it's madness stacked on top of delusion stacked on top of insanity. It's just speculative nonsense and the denial of today's cutting-edge peer-reviewed experimental evidence.

What is causing them to do this? What is their motivation for wanting atheism to be true?

UPDATE: A response from Uncommon Descent.

Do non-coding segments of the genome provide evidence for common ancestry?

September 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Darwin's tree of life might be visible in DNA, if DNA didn't conspire to scramble the signal.

> Now that quite a few genomes have been published, a team from Australia and France went on a Darwin fishing trip in the gene pool. In the largest study of its kind to date, they examined microsatellite markers (tandem-repeated DNA motifs of 1-6 base pairs) that are widespread in eukaryotic genomes. If neo-Darwinism is correct, these non-coding stretches of DNA should reflect the tree of common ancestry by showing similar mutational patterns in related groups.
>
> Well, they don't. The paper by Meglecz, Neve, Biffin and Gardner in *PLoS ONE* is titled, "Breakdown of Phylogenetic Signal: A Survey of Microsatellite Densities in 454 Shotgun Sequences from 154 Non Model Eukaryote Species." What went wrong?
>
> As the title implies, the team checked 154 "non-model" species. Darwinian evolutionists tend to focus on the model species, like a particular roundworm, the fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster*, and a species of watercress, because their genomes are complete and most researchers use them in experiments. Problem: they may or may not be representative:

> Although information for model species is accumulating rapidly, it is insufficient due to a lack of species depth, thus intragroup variation is necessarily ignored. As such, apparent differences between groups may be overinflated and generalizations cannot be inferred until an analysis of the variation that exists within groupshas been conducted. In this study, we examined microsatellite coverage and motif patterns from 454 shotgun sequences of 154 Eukaryote species from eight distantly related phyla (Cnidaria, Arthropoda, Onychophora, Bryozoa, Mollusca, Echinodermata, Chordata and Streptophyta) to test if a consistent phylogenetic pattern emerges from the microsatellite composition of these species.

> Sounds like a good test. After all, scientists shouldn't generalize on overinflated signals, right? The team expected to find nicely behaved data interpolated between the model species. It wasn't to be:

> It is clear from our results that data from model species provide incomplete information regarding the existing microsatellite variability within the

> Eukaryotes. A very strong heterogeneity of microsatellite composition was found within most phyla, classes and even orders. Autocorrelation analyses indicated that while microsatellite contents of species within clades more recent than 200 Mya tend to be similar, the autocorrelation breaks down and becomes negative or non-significant with increasing divergence time. Therefore, the age of the taxon seems to be a primary factor in degrading the phylogenetic pattern present among related groups. The most recent classes or orders of Chordates still retain the pattern of their common ancestor. However, within older groups, such as classes of Arthropods, the phylogenetic pattern has been scrambled by the long independent evolution of the lineages.

> There are two ways to interpret this anomaly. One is that microsatellites mutate too fast to maintain the phylogenetic signal. (This is known as a “post hoc rationalization.”)

> The other is that Darwin was wrong. Data do not show a phylogenetic pattern; they show common design with some variation.

Read the rest here. I’m a skeptic on common ancestry, but not for religious reasons. I just don’t think that it’s compatible with the progress of science.

Rejecting Christian theism because it’s just too much work

September 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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On J Warner Wallace’s Please Convince Me site, I saw that Al Serrato was discussing the possibility of eternal life with an atheist, and I thought some of her response were very helpful to understand why some people are atheists.

Al asks whether it is worth her time to investigate the God question.

She replies:

> “**No, I don’t think it’s worth my investigation. I also don’t think I should spend my time investigating UFO’s, zombies, or Big Foot. I hate things that require lots of time and thought where you are virtually guaranteed not to accomplish anything or get a definitive answer.**“

Al asks her why she is coming to conclusions before examining the evidence.

She replies:

> “Well,” she said, “you are assuming people meet god; that’s a pretty big leap too. Who do you know who has met him? **And I think most believers do so blindly; I don’t believe most of those people do any scholarly inquiry and draw conclusions based on evidence. They believe what they raised on, like me, or what they want to believe.**“

That’s the genetic fallacy, discredit a belief because of the origin of that belief, instead of whether the belief is true or false.

Al then writes this:

> “The fact that people believe what they were raised to believe,” I countered, “does not amount to a real argument. It’s a variant of the genetic fallacy. You’re trying to prove why believers might be wrong – they just were raised that way – without first proving that they are wrong. So, if I told you that I believed the earth was flat, and I was raised that way, you wouldn’t just shrug your shoulders and say I’m entitled to that belief. You would show me evidence that the earth is round and expect me to use reason to conform my view to the evidence. If I told you that you were entitled to that belief but you just believed it because you were raised by some round earthers and you never saw the whole earth so you couldn’t really know, then… you’d start to see how I feel.”
>
> “One last analogy. Let’s say this was 50 years ago, and when I saw you, you were chain smoking cigarettes with your kids always nearby. I know where medical science is headed, so I tell you that you are hurting yourself, and your kids. You respond that no one can really know those things; after all, you can point to doctors who advertise cigarettes and smoke them themselves, and you feel fine

> when you smoke. I point to other doctors who think that its really bad for you. You respond, 'see, it's a tie, so stop bothering me. Each believes what they were raised to believe. Plus, other things can kill me too, so why should I worry about cigarettes? Or, maybe you say that even if I am right, you'll be one of the lucky ones who won't be hurt by it.
>
> Do you see that the conflict between the doctors should not lead you to conclude that neither is right, or that the answer is not knowable? As a friend, should I keep trying to bring you back to the truth about cigarettes, or should I let you persist in believing something that is, in the end, hurting you and your loved ones?"

And here is her response:

> "**Have you ever noticed how so many things are bad/wrong only at certain points in a cycle?** Eat eggs, don't eat eggs; give your kids soy, soy is bad; babies should sleep on their backs, no their stomachs, no their sides, no their backs etc., etc. When my daughter was born I would put her on her back to sleep and when I left the room my mother would put her on her side and when my mother left the room my grandmother would put her on her stomach. **Over time the answer comes full circle**. **Why go around and around with it? What I am saying is not just throw up your hands and quit; what I am saying is that I do what feels right to me and that is the best I can do**. Sometimes I listen to friends (and doctors) and sometimes I don't. **I think the 'answer' to many of these things is unknowable**. At one time it would have been totally unacceptable to all of society for a mother to work and put a child in daycare 10 hours a day. Now, 10 hours of daycare is the norm. I get that most people think that daycare schedule is fine, but I don't. **I make up my own mind by doing what feels right**. **Have you ever considered that the answer doesn't matter? Maybe the search is the whole point and maybe I am done already and you're just slow**.
>
> **I don't think you can prove God like you can prove that the world is round**. To prove the world was really round and have everyone believe, we needed real-time pictures from space. Bring me a picture of god and we'll talk."

Al then replies to her.

So what do we get from this? Well, here are the five reasons she gave. 1) she knows in advance, before investigating, that there is no definitive answer to the question of whether God exists, 2) people believe what they are raised to believe and want to believe, including her, so your beliefs aren't under the control of evidence anyway, 3) facts change all the time so it's pointless to try reasoning about what is true on the basis of what the facts are today – so I don't really care what anyone in authority says since they all change their minds the next day anyway, 4) I don't think anyone can construct an argument for God's existence based on evidence, 5) the burden of proof is on others to

show me the evidence for God, I don't have to look into myself, my job is to do what feels right to me, and I don't conduct any inquiries into the evidence that might override what feels right to me.

How can you know in advance of inquiry that there is no definitive answer? You can only *assume* that there is no definitive answer, since you admit that you haven't looked into it yourself. And this person seems to have made the decision without evidence that there is no definite answer, and that looking into it is not worth her time and effort. What I am trying to emphasize is that those are decisions. And you can be held responsible for making decisions. Notice how she is able to get around the authority of someone who talks about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, just by saying that expert opinions change all the time, so no expert *has to be listened to,* (unless it feels right to her). In fact, she is not even aware of these arguments, but she has already pre-judged them as less authoritative than her feelings.

So often, we Christians get caught in the trap of judging atheists based on whether they do good deeds, by which we mean, they make other people feel good – they are nice. We neglect to ask whether they are *being good to God* – by puzzling about his existence and character, and by regularly dialoging with believers to see if they might not be mistaken. Heaven is for people who desire God, and who spend time studying the evidence so that they can make an informed decision about his existence and character. Heaven is not for people who are content doing what feels right to them without any desire to know what God thinks about it, because they just don't think his existence and character is important at all. To me this is just another way of saying, I want to do what feels good and learning that there is another person there might override my right to do what feels good, so I don't want to know whether there is another person there.

When you see atheists like Lawrence Krauss, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens get that deer in the headlights look the first time they hear William Lane Craig's arguments in a debate, and his citing of peer-reviewed scientific evidence to support his premises, it becomes immediately clear that these people are not atheists because they know God doesn't exist, but because they *don't want God to exist.* And avoiding the arguments for Christian theism is an important part of keeping God, and his moral demands on us, at a safe distance.

What does the Bible say? Look at the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:36-40:

36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

I think that the first part of loving God if you are not sure he is there is to have an open mind about his existence and character, and a willingness to re-prioritize your life in case

he is there and has a personality different from yours. People have a rational obligation to conduct an inquiry without pre-judging what the outcome will be. If God exists and Jesus rose from the dead, then people ought to care what Jesus thought about things.

I think that non-Christians understand what Christianity would require of them if it were true – radical abandonment to God's calling on their lives. And they turn away from investigating the existence of God and the resurrection of Jesus precisely in order to keep their freedom to do what they feel is right, without having to care about conforming their will to an objective state of affairs where there is another person there that they have to care about. Whatever guilty feelings they have for doing this can be dealt with by adopting a new moral standard, maybe involving recycling, vegetarianism, animal rights activism and yoga. Whatever it takes to make the people around them call them "good", so that they feel good. Do what feels right, don't worry about what is true – that's too much work and we don't want to find out anything that's going to take away our ability to do what feels right – *to us*.

Read Theodore Dalrymple's "Life at the Bottom" online for free

September 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I want to recommend that you read a book that is available online for free.

The author is a psychiatrist in a British hospital that deals with a lot of criminals and victims of crime. So he gets to see the worldview of the "underclass" up close, and to understand how the policies of the compassionate secular left are really working at the street level. The theme of the book is that the left advances policies in order to feel good about themselves, even though the policies actually hurt the poor and vulnerable far more than they help them. And the solution of the elites is more of the same.

The whole book is available ONLINE for free! From City Journal!

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Lots more essays are here, all from City Journal.

My favorite passage

The only bad thing about reading it online is that you miss one of the best quotes from the introduction. But I'll type it out for you.

> The disastrous pattern of human relationships that exists in the underclass is also becoming common higher up the social scale. With increasing frequency I am consulted by nurses, who for the most part come from and were themselves traditionally members of (at least after Florence Nightingale) the respectable lower middle class, who have illegitimate children by men who first abuse and then abandon them. This abuse and later abandonment is usually all too predictable from the man's previous history and character; but the nurses who have been treated in this way say they refrained from making a judgment about him because it is wrong to make judgments. But if they do not make a judgment about the man with whom they are going to live and by whom they are going to have a child, about what are they ever going to make a judgment?
>
> "It just didn't work out," they say, the "it" in question being the relationship that they conceive of having an existence independent of the two people who form it, and that exerts an influence on their on their lives rather like an astral projection. Life is fate.

This is something I run into myself. I think that young people today prefer moral relativists as mates, because they are afraid of being judged and rejected by people who are too serious about religion and morality. The problem is that if you choose someone who doesn't take religion and morality seriously, then you can't rely on them to behave morally and exercise spiritual leadership when raising children. And being sexually involved with someone who doesn't take morality seriously causes a lot of damage.

An excerpt

Here's one of my favorite passages from "Tough Love", in which he describes how easily he can detect whether a particular man has violent tendencies on sight, whereas female victims of domestic violence – and even the hospital nurses – *will not* recognize the same signs.

> All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.
>
> This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious

> young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.
>
> Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.
>
> This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.
>
> Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.
>
> At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how* they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

Go read the rest!

Book reviews

- The Age of Bad Ideas
- Review of Life at the Bottom

Report: Iran shipping arms and personnel to Syria through Iraq

September 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From left-leaning Reuters.

Excerpt:

> Iran has been using civilian aircraft to fly military personnel and large quantities of weapons across Iraqi airspace to Syria to aid President Bashar al-Assad in his attempt to crush an 18-month uprising against his government, according to a Western intelligence report seen by Reuters.
>
> Earlier this month, U.S. officials said they were questioning Iraq about Iranian flights in Iraqi airspace suspected of ferrying arms to Assad, a staunch Iranian ally. On Wednesday, U.S. Senator John Kerry threatened to review U.S. aid to Baghdad if it does not halt such overflights.
>
> Iraq says it does not allow the passage of any weapons through its airspace. But the intelligence report obtained by Reuters says Iranian weapons have been flowing into Syria via Iraq in large quantities. Such transfers, the report says, are organized by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.
>
> "This is part of a revised Iranian modus operandi that U.S. officials have only recently addressed publicly, following previous statements to the contrary," said the report, a copy of which was provided by a U.N. diplomatic source.
>
> "It also flies in the face of declarations by Iraqi officials," it said. "Planes are flying from Iran to Syria via Iraq on an almost daily basis, carrying IRGC (Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps) personnel and tens of tons of weapons to arm the Syrian security forces and militias fighting against the rebels."
>
> It added that Iran was also "continuing to assist the regime in Damascus by sending trucks overland via Iraq" to Syria.

I was recently having a conversation with someone who was all in favor of regime change in the Middle East, but thought that the best way to achieve that was by abandoning our military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq. I didn't say anything to him about it, but I do think it's important to understand that any kind of intelligence gathering, covert operations, interdiction, espionage, etc. depends on having military bases nearby to support such operations. In particular, covert operations often require military support. You can't wish the Middle East well, and then pull out of Afghanistan and Iraq. We need to be there to stabilize the region, just like we did in Japan, South Korea, etc. after other wars.

Related posts

- Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)

- The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration
- Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month
- Defense cuts to an already weakened military exposes us to aggression
- Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES
- Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?
- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority
- Obama's neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Obama's Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors
- Former DEA chief warns of cooperation between Hezbollah and drug cartels
- Iran launches Spanish-language TV channel in Venezuela
- Obama's defense cuts undermine our national security
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them
- Iraq plunges into chaos as U.S. troops withdraw
- Iran laughs as Obama pleads for return of unmanned drone

Female superintendent and ACLU fascists ban father-daughter school dances

September 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the radically left-wing Los Angeles Times. (H/T Captain Capitalism via The Elusive Wapiti)

Excerpt:

> Father-daughter dances and mother-son ballgames — those cherished hallmarks of Americana — have been banned in a Rhode Island school district after they were targeted by the American Civil Liberties Union.
>
> The ACLU, the self-proclaimed guardian of the nation's liberty, says such events violate the state's gender-discrimination law. The organization challenged their existence following a complaint from a single mom who said her daughter was prevented from attending a father-daughter dance in the Cranston Public Schools district.
>
> […]For its part, the ACLU scoffed at the uproar, calling the change "old news" and defending its legal position in a statement laced with a touch of snark. Here it is, in part:
>
> "The controversy that has suddenly arisen in a political campaign over father-daughter dances in Cranston is old news — the matter was amicably resolved with school officials over four months ago. And it was resolved for a simple reason: the school district recognized that in the 21st Century, public schools have no business fostering the notion that girls prefer to go to formal dances while boys prefer baseball games.
>
> "This type of gender stereotyping only perpetuates outdated notions of 'girl' and 'boy' activities and is contrary to federal law.
>
> "[Parent-teacher organizations] remain free to hold family dances and other events, but the time has long since passed for public school resources to encourage stereotyping from the days of Ozzie and Harriet. Not every girl today is interested in growing up to be Cinderella — not even in Cranston. In fact, one of them might make a great major league baseball player someday.
>
> "We commend the school district for its resolution of the matter, and are sorry to see some people turning it into a political football — a game that they may think only boys should be interested in."

It's a well-known fact that daughters growing up without fathers are far more prone to a whole host of behavioral disorders and tragedies. It's also well-known, among men, that one the major reasons for a man to get married is because of the social respect of being a provider, protector and moral/spiritual leader. When society, under the influence of moral relativism and feminist ideology, decides to denigrate and marginalize fatherhood,

we should expect to see the next generation of girls suffering from it. Girls need their fathers. The more we allow our policy to be made by leftists, the more we cheat young women out of their fathers, and the more we leave them open to tragedy.

Related posts

- New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially for women
- New study: marriage drops probability of child poverty by 82%
- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less
- How do prostitutes stay in business in an era of hook-up sex?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- Should Christian men marry? What's the worst that could happen?
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?

- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- How feminism’s war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

UK socialism in action: patients waiting on trolleys for over 50 hours

September 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Being rushed to hospital or taking your loved one to A&E can be a frightening experience. However, experts have recently highlighted a disturbing trend that will only make it worse.
>
> They say hospitals are bursting at the seams, and a combination of poor out-of-hours GP services, budget cuts and a shortage of beds mean many patients are being parked on trolleys in A&E corridors and side rooms like left luggage.
>
> Indeed, Department of Health figures, revealed last month by the Nursing Times, suggest nearly 67,000 patients waited up to 12 hours on a trolley in the first half of this year.
>
> And this may simply be the tip of the iceberg, as NHS analysts say clever number-crunching by hospitals may be hiding the true extent of the problem.
>
> As this Good Health investigation reveals, more than a quarter of hospitals have reported cases where patients have been left on trolleys for 12 hours or more — up to 50 hours in one case. In most NHS hospital trusts, patients waited less than three hours for a bed on a ward (the average was one hour 36 minutes). However, in six (7 per cent) of hospitals the average wait on a trolley was three hours or more.

Think that's an anomaly? Consider this.

From the UK Daily Mail:

> NHS doctors are prematurely ending the lives of thousands of elderly hospital patients because they are difficult to manage or to free up beds, a senior consultant claimed yesterday.
>
> Professor Patrick Pullicino said doctors had turned the use of a controversial 'death pathway' into the equivalent of euthanasia of the elderly.
>
> He claimed there was often a lack of clear evidence for initiating the Liverpool Care Pathway, a method of looking after terminally ill patients that is used in hospitals across the country.
>
> It is designed to come into force when doctors believe it is impossible for a patient to recover and death is imminent.
>
> It can include withdrawal of treatment – including the provision of water and nourishment by tube – and on average brings a patient to death in 33 hours.

> There are around 450,000 deaths in Britain each year of people who are in hospital or under NHS care. Around 29 per cent – 130,000 – are of patients who were on the LCP.

More from a different UK Daily Mail article:

> The health service 'looks like a supertanker heading for an iceberg', the head of the NHS Confederation has warned.
>
> His comment came as a survey revealed the squeeze on NHS finances is so serious that almost half of its leaders think it will reduce quality of care for patients over the next year.
>
> The research, carried out before the confederation's annual conference in Manchester, shows that NHS leaders fear that growing financial pressures will mean treatment rationing and longer waiting times.
>
> Of the 252 chief executives and chairs of NHS organisations questioned, almost half believe the financial burden on the health service is 'very serious' and 47 per cent say this means quality of care will reduce over the next 12 months.
>
> Mike Farrar, chief executive of the confederation which represents organisations providing NHS services, said: 'Despite huge efforts to maintain standards of patient care in the current financial year, healthcare leaders are deeply concerned about the storm clouds that are gathering around the NHS.
>
> 'Our survey shows that many NHS leaders see finances getting worse and that this is already having a growing impact on their patients. In response, they are cutting costs in the short term but they know that much more radical solutions are the only answer in the long run.
>
> […]**Mr Farrar added that politicians had 'consistently failed' to put the long-term interests of the population's health above their short-term electoral interests.**
>
> […]Katherine Murphy, chief executive of the Patients Association said: 'This survey confirms what everybody inside the health and social care system is already saying – the next decade is likely to be the most challenging one in the history of the NHS.
>
> **'Treatments are being rationed, waiting times for elective procedures are going up and patients continue to be treated poorly on our hospital wards.**

Where does the money go in a socialist system? Well, the NHS spends £1 million a week on repeat abortions. So if you like having abortions, those are free – and you can have as many as you want. It's "health care". You can also have free taxpayer-funded IVF, which is especially valuable for men. Or you can have treatment for AIDS, which is especially useful for married people and chaste people. Or you can have free breast enlargements and free sex changes – even if you are a convicted murderer. That's government-run

health care in a socialist feminist welfare state. Pay up, sucka.

Of course, if you need a drink of water, you're out of luck.

In a government-run system, whether you get treatment or not depends on a bureaucrat, whose only desire is to be re-elected. Sometimes, killing you is the best way for them to get re-elected, as seen in the euthanasia numbers. But, in a private health care system, it makes no sense to kill patients, because then the money stops coming in. Doctors actually care about you in a for profit system. They want to help you, and they want you to live.

Related posts

- NHS makes patients wait unnecessarily in order to avoid "raising expectations"
- NHS refuses to treat woman who is starving to death
- Former NHS hospital director dies on surgery waiting list
- Women gives birth after NHS nurses send her home from hospital
- UK patients denied treatment as "public option" system makes cutbacks
- How do governments control costs in a single-payer health care systems?
- NHS patients giving birth in waiting rooms
- What does universal health care really mean?
- How well is government-run health care working out in the UK?
- British national health care system prepares to cut 20 billion dollars
- NHS kills a man's wife by delaying cancer treatment for 7 months
- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
- Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water
- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care
- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care
- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- NHS refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

Antarctic sea ice now at the highest level ever recorded

September 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Forbes magazine.

Excerpt:

> Antarctic sea ice set another record this past week, with the most amount of ice ever recorded on day 256 of the calendar year (September 12 of this leap year). Please, nobody tell the mainstream media or they might have to retract some stories and admit they are misrepresenting scientific data.

Here's the raw data from UIUC.

Now back to the Forbes article:

> National Public Radio (NPR) published an article on its website last month claiming, "Ten years ago, a piece of ice the size of Rhode Island disintegrated and melted in the waters off Antarctica. Two other massive ice shelves along the Antarctic Peninsula had suffered similar fates a few years before. The events became poster children for the effects of global warming. … There's no question that unusually warm air triggered the final demise of these huge chunks of ice."
>
> NPR failed to mention anywhere in its article that Antarctic sea ice has been growing since satellites first began measuring the ice 33 years ago and the sea ice has been above the 33-year average throughout 2012.
>
> Indeed, none of the mainstream media are covering this important story.
> A Google News search of the terms Antarctic, sea ice and record turns up not a single article on the Antarctic sea ice record. Amusingly, page after page of Google News results for Antarctic sea ice record show links to news articles breathlessly spreading fear and warning of calamity because Arctic sea ice recently set a 33-year low.
>
> Sea ice around one pole is shrinking while sea ice around another pole is growing. This sure sounds like a global warming crisis to me.

But that only accounts for "melting" polar ice caps – what about those cute little polar bears who have no ice to stand on and who are in danger of falling into the water and going extinct, because polar bears can't swim???!!1?!1!ELEVENTY-ONE!?

From the Globe and Mail. (H/T Neil)

Excerpt:

> The debate about climate change and its impact on polar bears has intensified with the release of a survey that shows the bear population in a key part of northern Canada is far larger than many scientists thought, and might be

> growing.
>
> The number of bears along the western shore of Hudson Bay, believed to be among the most threatened bear subpopulations, stands at 1,013 and could be even higher, according to the results of an aerial survey released Wednesday by the Government of Nunavut. That's 66 per cent higher than estimates by other researchers who forecasted the numbers would fall to as low as 610 because of warming temperatures that melt ice faster and ruin bears' ability to hunt. The Hudson Bay region, which straddles Nunavut and Manitoba, is critical because it's considered a bellwether for how polar bears are doing elsewhere in the Arctic.
>
> The study shows that "the bear population is not in crisis as people believed," said Drikus Gissing, Nunavut's director of wildlife management. "There is no doom and gloom."
>
> […]The debate over the polar-bear population has been raging for years, frequently pitting scientists against Inuit. In 2004, Environment Canada researchers concluded that the numbers in the region had dropped by 22 per cent since 1984, to 935. They also estimated that by 2011, the population would decrease to about 610. That sparked worldwide concern about the future of the bears and prompted the Canadian and American governments to introduce legislation to protect them.
>
> But many Inuit communities said the researchers were wrong. They said the bear population was increasing and they cited reports from hunters who kept seeing more bears.

So the ice isn't melting on one of the poles, and the polar bears aren't going extinct from drowning. Hmmmn.

Actually, if this data can be spun as a *global cooling* crisis, and then the socialists can continue pushing for more government regulation of the free market, more abortions and higher gas prices. All that has to be done is for the media to explain that it was *always* global cooling that we needed to fear. Like in that George Orwell novel "1984", with the continuous war in Eastasia or Eurasia. Only this time, it could be real.

Related posts

- New study: Obama's new automobile regulations will raise car prices by $4,800
- GAO study: EPA regulations will kill coal plant jobs and raise energy prices
- A closer look at the Obama administration's $525 million loan to Solyndra
- Ohio coal mine closes because of Obama administration environmental policies
- EPA study finds that water in Dimock, PA is safe to drink despite fracking
- New study: Earth is currently in a 2000-year old cooling trend
- Computer models utterly fail to predict climate changes
- New study: global warming skeptics know more about science than alarmists
- EPA administrator boasts about crucifying oil and gas firms
- Canadian government to limit environmentalist obstruction of energy development

- The ten worst energy policies of the Obama administration
- Obama to hand out millions of taxpayer dollars in green energy firm bailouts
- New study shows that the medieval warming extended far and wide
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- A third Obama-subsidized green energy firm is bankrupt after $118.5 million loan
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- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
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- How well did Obama's green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?

Economist Thomas Sowell explains why wealth redistribution doesn't work

September 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell, an economist for the people

A whole slew of people are linking to this article by famous economist Thomas Sowell.

Excerpt:

> The history of the 20th century is full of examples of countries that set out to redistribute wealth and ended up redistributing poverty. The communist nations were a classic example, but by no means the only example.
>
> In theory, confiscating the wealth of the more successful people ought to make the rest of the society more prosperous. But when the Soviet Union confiscated the wealth of successful farmers, food became scarce. As many people died of starvation under Stalin in the 1930s as died in Hitler's Holocaust in the 1940s. [Professor Sowell is referring to the forced collectivization of the Ukraine. If you want to inform yourself of the horrors thereof, I recommend Robert Conquest, The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine, Oxford UP, 1986.]
>
> How can that be? It is not complicated. You can only confiscate the wealth that exists at a given moment. You cannot confiscate future wealth — and that future wealth is less likely to be produced when people see that it is going to be confiscated. Farmers in the Soviet Union cut back on how much time and effort they invested in growing their crops, when they realized that the government was going to take a big part of the harvest. They slaughtered and ate young farm animals that they would normally keep tending and feeding while raising them to

> maturity.
>
> […]Among the most valuable assets in any nation are the knowledge, skills, and productive experience that economists call "human capital." When successful people with much human capital leave the country, either voluntarily or because of hostile governments or hostile mobs whipped up by demagogues exploiting envy, lasting damage can be done to the economy they leave behind.
>
> Fidel Castro's confiscatory policies drove successful Cubans to flee to Florida, often leaving much of their physical wealth behind. But poverty-stricken refugees rose to prosperity again in Florida, while the wealth they left behind in Cuba did not prevent the people there from being poverty-stricken under Castro. The lasting wealth the refugees took with them was their human capital.

Stuart Schneiderman had this to say about the piece:

> If the productive members of society are no longer working for themselves and their progeny they are going to be less productive. They have less incentive to produce when more of what they produce, or more of the profit, is going to be taxed or confiscated.
>
> Besides, when you confiscate wealth people will resist and will spend more of their time and energy trying to keep what they have earned. This time and energy could be used for more productive activities.
>
> Since wealth exists in assets whose value is determined in a market, a regime that confiscates assets will force the wealthy to liquidate their assets, thus lowering the value of everyone's assets and making it far more difficult to attract investment capital.

I was happy to receive the 4th edition of Thomas Sowell's "Basic Economics" textbook from one of our readers in New York city. (Thanks Tom!) If you are a Christian who is interested in economics, I really recommend that you pick up "Intellectuals and Society", which is a great introduction to his thought.

I once was courting a young homeschooled lady who was skeptical of university degrees. She read one Thomas Sowell book, then read 5 more – all within a 6 week period. She then went on to do a B.A. in economics. If you are a Christian looking to branch out into economics, Thomas Sowell is your man. You can't read just one of his books. It's absolutely impossible.

Canada's "free" single-payer health care system costs each family $11,000 per year

September 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Vancouver Sun.

Excerpt:

> The true cost of Canada's health care system is more than $11,000 in taxes each year for an average family, according to Vancouver-based think tank The Fraser Institute.
>
> The institute's report calculates the amount of taxes the average family pays to all levels of government in a year and the percentage of the total tax bill that goes towards public health care insurance.
>
> A family of two parents with an average income of $113,226 and two children will pay $11,401 for public health care insurance, the report says.
>
> […]Institute senior fellow Nadeem Esmail said in a news release sent out this morning: "There's a widespread belief that health care is free in Canada. It's not; our tax dollars cover the cost of it. But the way we pay for health care disguises exactly how much public health care insurance costs Canadian families and how that cost is increasing over time."
>
> The release noted that since 2002, the cost of health care insurance for the average Canadian family increased by 59.8 per cent before inflation.
>
> "By way of comparison, the cost of public health care increased more than twice as fast as the cost of shelter, roughly four times as fast as the cost of food, and more than five times as fast as the cost of clothing," the release said.

This is the system that Obamacare is trying to force onto us by eliminating private sector health care. But proponents of single payer health care tell us that it's better for patients than the American free enterprise system. Is it? Let's take a look at the numbers.

A defense of American health care

Story from the Hoover Institute at Stanford University.

The article compares American health care to health care in other places like Canada, the UK and Europe.

The full article. I almost never cite the full article, but this is a must read.

> MEDICINE AND HEALTH:
> Here's a Second Opinion
>
> By Scott W. Atlas
>
> *Ten reasons why America's health care system is in better condition than you might suppose. By**Scott W. Atlas.***

Medical care in the United States is derided as miserable compared to health care systems in the rest of the developed world. Economists, government officials, insurers, and academics beat the drum for a far larger government role in health care. Much of the public assumes that their arguments are sound because the calls for change are so ubiquitous and the topic so complex. Before we turn to government as the solution, however, we should consider some unheralded facts about America's health care system.

1. Americans have better survival rates than Europeans for common cancers. Breast cancer mortality is 52 percent higher in Germany than in the United States and 88 percent higher in the United Kingdom. Prostate cancer mortality is 604 percent higher in the United Kingdom and 457 percent higher in Norway. The mortality rate for colorectal cancer among British men and women is about 40 percent higher.

2. Americans have lower cancer mortality rates than Canadians. Breast cancer mortality in Canada is 9 percent higher than in the United States, prostate cancer is 184 percent higher, and colon cancer among men is about 10 percent higher.

3. Americans have better access to treatment for chronic diseases than patients in other developed countries. Some 56 percent of Americans who could benefit from statin drugs, which reduce cholesterol and protect against heart disease, are taking them. By comparison, of those patients who could benefit from these drugs, only 36 percent of the Dutch, 29 percent of the Swiss, 26 percent of Germans, 23 percent of Britons, and 17 percent of Italians receive them.

4. Americans have better access to preventive cancer screening than Canadians. Take the proportion of the appropriate-age population groups who have received recommended tests for breast, cervical, prostate, and colon cancer:

- Nine out of ten middle-aged American women (89 percent) have had a mammogram, compared to fewer than three-fourths of Canadians (72 percent).
- Nearly all American women (96 percent) have had a Pap smear, compared to fewer than 90 percent of Canadians.
- More than half of American men (54 percent) have had a prostatespecific antigen (PSA) test, compared to fewer than one in six Canadians (16 percent).
- Nearly one-third of Americans (30 percent) have had a colonoscopy, compared with fewer than one in twenty Canadians (5 percent).

5. Lower-income Americans are in better health than comparable Canadians. Twice as many American seniors with below-median incomes self-

report “excellent” health (11.7 percent) compared to Canadian seniors (5.8 percent). Conversely, white, young Canadian adults with below-median incomes are 20 percent more likely than lower-income Americans to describe their health as “fair or poor.”

6. Americans spend less time waiting for care than patients in Canada and the United Kingdom. Canadian and British patients wait about twice as long—sometimes more than a year—to see a specialist, have elective surgery such as hip replacements, or get radiation treatment for cancer. All told, 827,429 people are waiting for some type of procedure in Canada. In Britain, nearly 1.8 million people are waiting for a hospital admission or outpatient treatment.

7. People in countries with more government control of health care are highly dissatisfied and believe reform is needed. More than 70 percent of German, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, and British adults say their health system needs either “fundamental change” or “complete rebuilding.”

8. Americans are more satisfied with the care they receive than Canadians. When asked about their own health care instead of the “health care system,” more than half of Americans (51.3 percent) are very satisfied with their health care services, compared with only 41.5 percent of Canadians; a lower proportion of Americans are dissatisfied (6.8 percent) than Canadians (8.5 percent).

9. Americans have better access to important new technologies such as medical imaging than do patients in Canada or Britain. An overwhelming majority of leading American physicians identify computerized tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) as the most important medical innovations for improving patient care during the previous decade—even as economists and policy makers unfamiliar with actual medical practice decry these techniques as wasteful. The United States has thirty-four CT scanners per million Americans, compared to twelve in Canada and eight in Britain. The United States has almost twenty-seven MRI machines per million people compared to about six per million in Canada and Britain.

10. Americans are responsible for the vast majority of all health care innovations. The top five U.S. hospitals conduct more clinical trials than all the hospitals in any other developed country. Since the mid- 1970s, the Nobel Prize in medicine or physiology has gone to U.S. residents more often than recipients from all other countries combined. In only five of the past thirty-four years did a scientist living in the United States not win or share in the prize. Most important recent medical innovations were developed in the United States.

Despite serious challenges, such as escalating costs and care for the uninsured, the U.S. health care system compares favorably to those in other developed countries.

> This essay appeared on the website of the National Center for Policy Analysis on March 24, 2009. An earlier version was published in the*Washington Times.*
>
> Available from the Hoover Press is *Power to the Patient: Selected Health Care Issues and Policy Solutions,* edited by Scott W. Atlas. To order, call 800.935.2882 or visitwww.hooverpress.org.
>
> Scott W. Atlas is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a professor of radiology and chief of neuroradiology at Stanford University Medical School.

Note that the author is a professor of radiology and chief of neuroradiology at Stanford University Medical School. Stanford and Harvard are generally regarded as the two best universities in the United States.

Study explains why college women abandon courtship for hook-ups

September 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This study is from the Institute for American Values. It was done by Elizabeth Marquardt.

The PDF of study is here.

If you download the 88 page PDF, the first few pages are an executive summary.

I'd been exposed to this research before when I read Dr. Miriam Grossmann's book "Unprotected". (Boundless review here) I just got Dr. Miriam Grossmann's new book "You're Teaching My Child What?" and I also got Elizabeth Marquardt's new book "Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce". I don't think either of them is conservative, but I like their research anyway.

There are a couple of things that really struck me about this IAV study on hooking-up.

First, this one from p. 15:

> A notable feature of hook ups is that they almost always occur when both participants are drinking or drunk.
>
> A Rutgers University student observed, "You always hear people say, oh my gosh, I was so drunk, I hooked up with so and so…" Perhaps not surprisingly, many noted that being drunk helped to loosen one's inhibitions and make it easier to hook up. A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up. A Yale University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up." A New York University student observed, "[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking."
>
> A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."
>
> Other women observed that being drunk gives a woman license to act sexually interested in public in ways that would not be tolerated if she were sober. For instance, a University of Michigan student said, "Girls are actually allowed to be a lot more sexual when they are drunk…"
>
> A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."
>
> Some reported that drinking had led them to do things they later regretted. A University of Virginia student said, "My last random hook up was last October and it was bad. I was drunk and I just regretted it very much."

And this one from p. 30 on the effects of hooking-up on their future commitments:

> A few women did see an unambiguous connection between present relationships and future marriage.
>
> […]Many women either saw little or no connection between present and future relationships, or their understanding of this connection was curiously flat. A student at New York University said, "[The present and the future are] connected because I will still have the same values and principles that I have now, but I just won't be single anymore."A number of women said that the present and the future are connected because whatever heartache or confusion they experience now gives them lessons for the future.
>
> A University of Michigan student said, "Early relationships prepare you for marriage because it's like, oh, what type of person do I want to be with? Oh, I've had these bad experiences. Or, I've learned from this relationship that I should do this and I shouldn't do this."
>
> A sophomore at Howard University said that "I am kind of learning from a lot of the mistakes that I have made." At a further extreme, some women saw their future marriage as the reason to experiment widely in the present. A Rutgers University student said,"I think hooking up with different people and seeing what you like and don't like is a good idea. Because eventually you're going to have to… marry someone and I'd just like to know that I experienced everything."
>
> Although it is admirable to take risks and learn from one's mistakes, these women would probably find it difficult to explain how having your heart broken a few or even many times in your early years — or trying to separate sex from feeling, as in hooking up — is good preparation for a trusting and happy marriage later on.

And on p. 42, we learn what women think marriage is and isn't for:

> For instance, in the on-campus interviews one student complained, "[With] marriage…you have to debate everything… Why do you need a piece of paper to bond a person to you? …But I know if I don't get married I'll probably feel like… [a] lonely old woman… If anything, I'd get married [because of] that."
>
> This student went on to say that she would be satisfied to live with a man, but added that, if the man was committed to her, he would offer to marry her, and that this was the kind of commitment that she wanted. A student at the University of Washington said,"I don't want to get married right after I graduate from college. I just think that would stunt my growth in every way that there is. I would like to be in a very steady, committed relationship with a guy."

And on p. 44, we learn that they like co-habitation, which increases the risk of divorce by about 50% (but they don't know *that*):

> In the national survey, 58 percent of the respondents agreed that "It is a good

> idea to live with someone before deciding to marry him." This belief often coexists with a strong desire to marry, because it was embraced by 49 percent of the respondents who strongly agreed that marriage was a very important goal for them.
>
> […]Women we interviewed on campus reflected a similar range of attitudes about cohabitation. Some women thought that cohabitation was a good way to test whether one could spend a lifetime with a potential partner. In such cases, women often cited fears of divorce as the reason for trying cohabitation first. A senior at the University of Washington said, "I kind of don't really see marriages work ever, so I want to make sure that everything's all right before [we get married]. I don't see how people can get married without living together because I know like I have a best friend and I live with her and we want to kill each other, like, every few months."
>
> Other women felt that, in an age of divorce, cohabitation was a preferable alternative to marriage. A student at New York University said, "You see so [many] people getting divorces… I just don't see the necessity [of marriage]." She went on to say, "I think that I don't have to be married to [the] person that I'm with…. You know like… Goldie Hawn [and Kurt Russell]? They're not married."

But let's get back to the drinking and the hook-up sex…

Once a woman abandons femininity for feminism, then sex is all that she can use to get noticed by a man. Men are like hiring managers, and courting is like a job interview for the job of marriage and mothering. If a woman tries to get the job by having sex with the interviewer, he isn't going to hire her since sex has nothing to do with the job. There are children involved, you know – he has to think of them when he makes the hiring decision. But women have been taught to think bad things about men (they're rapists) and marriage (it's slavery) by feminists – so they don't even try to understand men, or to respect men, or prepare their character for being a wife and mother. Feminists just don't understand that hard work is needed to understand men and prepare for marriage.

In a previous post, I explained how feminists wanted to get women to drink like men, have sex like men, and to abolish courtship and marriage. Under the influence of feminism and Hollywood celebrities, women began to choose men to have sex with without any consideration of morality, religion, marriage, etc. They thought that sex was an easy way to trick a man into committing to them without having to treat him like a real person, or to take the demands of marriage and parenting seriously. (They have been taught to value education and careers over husbands and children, you understand). This results in a cycle of binge-drinking, one-night-stands, cheating, co-habitating, breaking-up, stalking, aborting, etc., until the woman's ability to trust and love anyone but herself is completely destroyed. And yet these college women somehow believe this is "adventurous", that it makes them feel "sexy", and that the experience of being selfish and seeing the worst kind of men acting in the worst possible ways, point blank, somehow prepares them for marriage and motherhood.

Often, a young unmarried woman’s biological father was NOT selected by her mother based on his ability to make commitments and moral judgments. Many feminists prefer men who do not judge women morally, nor impose his religion on her. But those very things that young unmarried women today seem to dislike most about men, because they fear rejection on moral and religious grounds, are exactly the things that make men good husbands and fathers. They don’t want to be judged or led spiritually, so they choose immoral, non-religious men. Men who are not firm on morality and religion do cannot be counted on to act morally and self-sacrificially. And when they fail, and the marriages break up, the children grow up fatherless and may develop negative views of men.

Every young unmarried woman who chooses a bad man, and then has a bad experience with him is pushing away marriage with both hands. The more she destroys her ability to trust, love and care for others, the less she is able to be happy and effective in a marriage.

Friday night detectives: one episode of Hercule Poirot

September 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Tonight, I've found us "The ABC Murders" – an Agatha Christie mystery with detective Hercule Poirot.

IMDB mean rating: [8.6/10]

IMDB median rating: [9/10]

Description:

> Hastings returns to Britain after a long absence to find Poirot anxious for a new case which will challenge his gray cells. Poirot quickly gets his wish in the form of taunting letters from a serial killer who has dubbed himself ABC and who leaves an ABC railroad schedule at the scene of each crime. The victims as well as the crime scenes appear to be chosen randomly, but maintain an obsessive adherence to alphabetical order.

This is the highest-rated Hercule Poirot episode – the series ran for about 10 years. Don't miss it!

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night soldiers: two episodes of Combat!
- Friday night movie: Animal Farm (1954)
- Friday night movie: The Dam Busters (1955)
- Friday night movie: Sink the Bismarck! (1960)
- Friday night movie: The Crossing (2000)
- Friday night movie: The Great Escape (1963)
- Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)
- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)

- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! four episodes of Danger Man

What conditions support the minimum requirements for complex life?

September 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Circumstellar Habitable Zone (CHZ)

What do you need in order to have a planet that supports complex life? First, you need liquid water at the surface of the planet. But there is only a narrow range of temperatures that can support liquid water. It turns out that the size of the star that your planet orbits around has a lot to do with whether you get liquid water or not. A heavy, metal-rich star allows you to have a habitable planet far enough from the star so the planet can support liquid water on the planet's surface while still being able to spin on its axis. The zone where a planet can have liquid water at the surface is called the circumstellar habitable zone (CHZ). A metal-rich star like our Sun is very massive, which moves the habitable zone out further away from the star. If our star were smaller, we would have to orbit much closer to the star in order to have liquid water at the surface. Unfortunately, if you go too close to the star, then your planet becomes tidally locked, like the moon is tidally locked to Earth. Tidally locked planets are inhospitable to life.

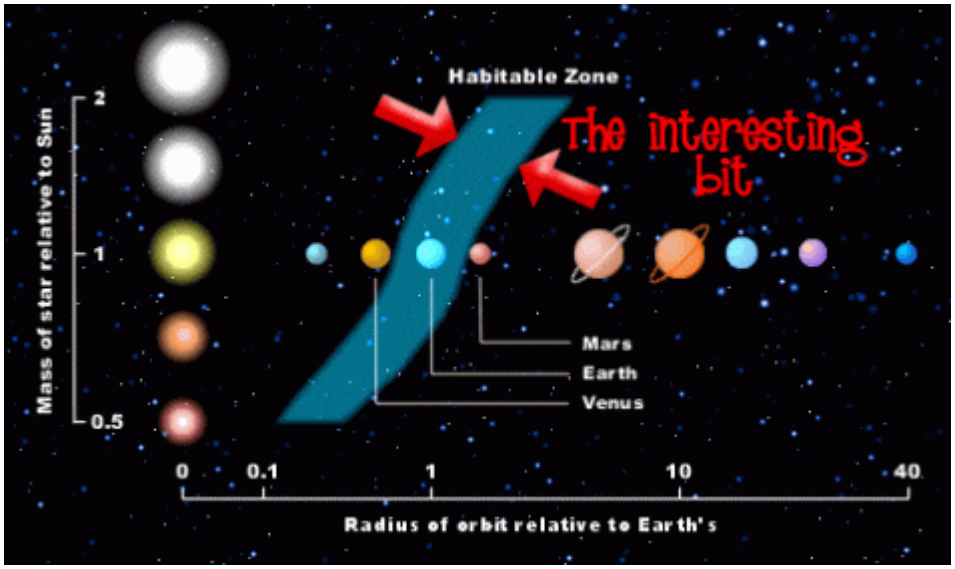

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

Here, watch a clip from The Privileged Planet: (Clip 4 of 12, full playlist here)

But there's more.

The Galactic Habitable Zone (GHZ)

So, where do you get the heavy elements you need for your heavy metal-rich star?

You have to get the heavy elements for your star from supernova explosions – explosions that occur when certain types of stars die. That's where heavy elements come from. But you can't be TOO CLOSE to the dying stars, because you will get hit by nasty radiation and explosions. So to get the heavy elements from the dying stars, your solar system needs to be in the galactic habitable zone (GHZ) – the zone where you can pickup the heavy elements you need but not get hit by radiation and explosions. The GHZ lies

between the spiral arms of a spiral galaxy. Not only do you have to be in between the arms of the spiral galaxy, but you also cannot be too close to the center of the galaxy. The center of the galaxy is too dense and you will get hit with massive radiation that will break down your life chemistry. But you also can't be too far from the center, because you won't get enough heavy elements because there are fewer dying stars the further out you go. You need to be in between the spiral arms, a medium distance from the center of the galaxy.

Like this:

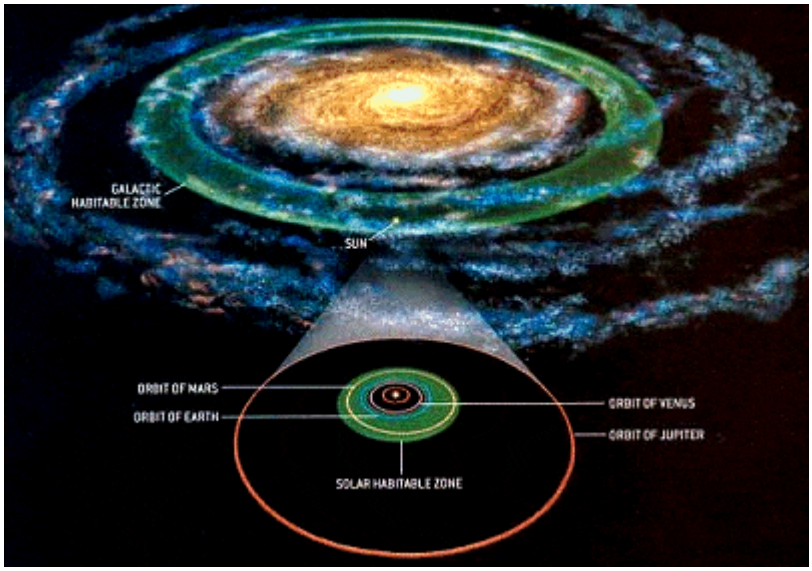

Galactic Habitable Zone and Solar Habitable Zone

Here, watch a clip from The Privileged Planet: (Clip 10 of 12, full playlist here)

The GHZ is based on a discovery made by astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez, which made the front cover of Scientific American in 2001. That's right, the cover of Scientific American. I actually stole the image above of the GHZ and CHZ (aka solar habitable zone) from his Scientific American article (linked above).

These are just a few of the things you need in order to get a planet that supports life.

Here are a few of the more well-known ones:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.

- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

By the way, you can watch a lecture with Guillermo Gonzalez explaining his ideas further. This lecture was delivered at UC Davis in 2007. That link has a link to the playlist of the lecture, a bio of the speaker, and a summary of all the topics he discussed in the lecture. An excellent place to learn the requirements for a suitable habitat for life.

Does it makes sense to be good on atheism? Scholars debate atheism and morality

September 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This was the question debated by two scholars Sean McDowell and James Corbett. The audio was posted on Apologetics 315.

The debaters

Sean McDowell: Head of the Bible Department at *Capistrano Valley Christian Schools*, where he teaches the courses on Philosophy, Theology, and Apologetics. He graduated summa cum laude from Talbot Theological Seminary with a double Master's degree in Theology and Philosophy. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in Apologetics and Worldview Studies from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Sean received the "Educator of the Year" for San Juan Capistrano, California in 2008.

Dr. James Corbett: Dr. James Corbett is a popular history teach in Capistrano Valley High School. On April 30, 2010 US District Court Judge James Selna ruled that he had violated the First Amendment by disparaging Christians during a classroom lecture. His reference to religion as "superstitious nonsense" was recorded by a student, Chris Farnan, who subsequently filed the lawsuit. He has a Ph.D. in communication-journalism from Ohio State University; master's from San Diego State University; bachelor's from Syracuse University.

Here is the MP3 file of the debate.

Sean's case is similar to the one I make, but he only has 3 minimal requirements for morality.

First, he explains the difference between objective and subjective truth claims, and points out that statements of a moral nature are meaningless unless morality is objective. Then he states 3 things that are needed in order to ground objective morality.

1. an objective moral standard
2. free will
3. objective moral value of humans

The question of the foundations of morality is without a doubt the easiest issue for beginning apologists to discuss with their neighbor. If you're new, then you need to *at least* listen to his opening speech. He's an excellent speaker, and his rebuttals are very, very smooth. The citations of atheist philosophers like Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, e.g. – to show that "religious" wars had *nothing* to do with religion, really hurt his opponent. He seems to cite prominent atheists like Thomas Nagel, Richard Taylor, Michael Shermer, etc., constantly in order to get support for his assertions. That took preparation. I can't believe that McDowell is this calm in a debate situation.

When I listen to Frank Turek, he seems to struggle in his rebuttals. McDowell sounds like

he foreknew exactly what his opponent would say and pre-wrote responses. He even had powerpoint slides made *in advance* for his rebuttals! I am not making this up – Corbett even remarked on it.

For those of you who want to understand how these things work, listen to the debate. There is a period of cross-examination if you like that sort of thing. I do!

Daniel B. Wallace responds to the “Jesus had a wife” media sensationalism

September 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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On his blog.

Excerpt:

> **The Possibilities**:
>
> 1. This manuscript is a fake. Dr. Christian Askeland, in attendance at the International Association of Coptic Studies conference in Rome, noted that about two thirds of those in attendance were very skeptical of its authenticity, while one third were “essentially convinced that the fragment is a fake.” Askeland said he did not meet anyone at the conference who thought it was authentic (posted at the evangelical textual criticism website on Wednesday, 19 September 2012). This presumably does not include Professor King. A number of noted coptologists have pronounced it a fake or have expressed strong reservations, including Alin Suciu of the University of Hamburg, Stephen Emmel of the University of Münster, Wolf-Peter Funk of l’Université Laval in Quebec, Hany Sadak the director general of the Coptic Museum in Cairo, Scott Carroll, Senior Scholar at the Oxford Manuscript Research Group, and David Gill of the University of Suffolk.
>
> 2. If genuine, the text is either (a) not Gnostic (since it contradicts the basic Gnostic view of the material world); (b) Gnostic though with an interpretation of marriage as other than the physical bond between a man and a woman (in the *Gospel of Philip* “the relationship between Jesus and Mary [Magdalene] is an allegory of the soul’s meeting with God in the bridal chamber, i.e. salvation” ; similarly, the *Gospel of Mary* [Simon Gathercole of Cambridge University, interviewed on the Tyndale House [Cambridge] website, on Wednesday, 19 September 2012]); (c) orthodox but metaphorically referring to the church as the wife of Jesus (a view already attested in the New Testament—implicit in Eph 5.23–27 and explicit in Rev 19.7); (d) a derivative Christian group that gave some push-back against the growing asceticism of the orthodox in the late second century, when marriage was somewhat frowned upon; or (e) parabolic or metaphorical with some other referent in mind.
>
> 3. Even Professor King did not suggest that this fragment means that Jesus had a wife (and she is not known for her conservative views!): “its possible date of composition in the second half of the second century argues against its value as evidence for the life of the historical Jesus.” If it goes back to a second-century tradition, we must keep in mind that there is a world of difference between first-century, apostolic Christianity and the various spin-off groups that rose after that early period.

Also, I wonder if any people in the news media are familiar with the church being the Bride of Christ metaphor? It's in the real 1st century New Testament. Maybe we should be looking for information about Jesus in the earliest sources instead of 4th century sources that were written hundreds of miles away, and not by eyewitnesses.

UPDATE: J. W. Wartick has linked to a whole bunch of responses on his blog. He's got J. Warner Wallace, Darrell Bock, Glenn Peoples, and others.

UPDATE: Professor Francis Watson at the University of Durham in England is calling the fragment a forgery and Harvard is holding on on publishing it.

American job creators struggling to find qualified applicants for basic jobs

September 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> More than 600,000 jobs in manufacturing went unfilled in 2011 due to a skills shortage, according to a survey conducted by the consultancy Deloitte.
>
> The problem seems soluble: Equip workers with the skills they need to match them with employers who are hiring. That explains the emphasis that policy makers of both parties place on science, technology, engineering and math degrees—it is such a mantra that they're known by shorthand as STEM degrees.
>
> American manufacturing has become more advanced, we're told, and requires computer aptitude, intricate problem solving, and greater dexterity with complex tasks. Surely if Americans were getting STEM education, they would have the skills they need to get jobs in our modern, high-tech economy.
>
> But considerable evidence suggests that many employers would be happy just to find job applicants who have the sort of "soft" skills that used to be almost taken for granted. In the Manpower Group's 2012 Talent Shortage Survey, nearly 20% of employers cited a lack of soft skills as a key reason they couldn't hire needed employees. "Interpersonal skills and enthusiasm/motivation" were among the most commonly identified soft skills that employers found lacking.
>
> Employers also mention a lack of elementary command of the English language. A survey in April of human-resources professionals conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management and the AARP compared the skills gap between older workers who were nearing retirement and younger workers coming into the labor pool. More than half of the organizations surveyed reported that simple grammar and spelling were the top "basic" skills among older workers that are not readily present among younger workers.
>
> The SHRM/AARP survey also found that "professionalism" or "work ethic" is the top "applied" skill that younger workers lack. This finding is bolstered by the Empire Manufacturing Survey for April, published by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. It said that manufacturers were finding it harder to find punctual, reliable workers today than in 2007, "an interesting result given that New York State's unemployment rate was more than 4 percentage points lower in early 2007 than in early 2012."

Stuart Schneiderman blames the focus on equality and self-esteem over competition and achievement:

> The American school system has failed America's students. It has especially failed to teach the skills required to do the kinds of high tech jobs that are increasingly available.
> American children are deficient in science, technology, engineering and math, in what are now known as the STEM subjects.
> It should surprise no one. A pedagogical policy promoting self-esteem over achievement must diminish the best students in order to make the worst students feel good about themselves. The result: a large cohort of undereducated underachievers who are proud of their incompetence.
> In STEM subjects there are right and wrong answers. When these subjects are taught correctly, you will find that some children are markedly better than others.
> Children improve because they emulate their betters. They strive to get better because they want to be as good as someone else.
> If the best students are rewarded other children will want to emulate them. If the best students are demeaned no one will want to emulate them.
> If you refuse to call on them in class, if you refuse to hold them up as exemplary, if you turn math exercises into storytelling and feeling sharing you are going to drag everyone down.
> If you say that no one is better than anyone else, you are saying that no child should strive for greater achievements.

Stuart didn't say it, so I will. It's important to be careful about handing your children off to any school, especially the feminized public school system. The public school system from administration to the classroom is not welcoming to values like competition and individual achievement – which are more often (but not exclusively) associated with men. Unfortunately, there just aren't many men in public school classrooms. Public schools favor security and equality of outcomes. These goals are best achieved by growing government to minimize individual achievement and to maximize the "safety net", so that individual striving doesn't matter. Another goal of the public school system is to increase the amount of money they are paid. They want higher taxes and more government spending, so that they are paid more. Their job is not to get your children skills so they can be independent of government. They want more government. They want more security. They want less personal responsibility. They want less individual achievement.

I think that teachers should have to work in a field related to what they want to teach in for at least 5 years before being admitted to teacher's college. That requirement alone would improve education drastically.

Report: Obamacare regulations will cost taxpayers and businesses $1.8 trillion

September 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Washington Examiner explains.

Excerpt:

> Current federal regulations plus those coming under Obamacare will cost American taxpayers and businesses $1.8 trillion annually, more than twenty times the $88 billion the administration estimates, according to a new roundup provided to Secrets from the libertarian Competitive Enterprise Institute.
>
> And it could grow, warned the author of the report, Clyde Wayne Crews, a CEI vice president.
>
> […]"While OMB officially reports amounts of only up to $88.6 billion in 2010 dollars," said Crews, "the non-tax cost of government intervention in the economy, without performing a sweeping survey, appears to total up to $1.806 trillion annually."
>
> But, he added, "according to back of the envelope surveys and roundups, with gaps big enough to fit the beltway through, that up to $1.806 trillion annually and in many categories perhaps even considerably more, is a defensible assessment of the annual impact on the economy."
>
> His estimate is close to the $1.7 trillion estimate from the Small Business Administration which the White House distanced itself from. For comparison, the total U.S. GDP is $15 trillion.

How might higher taxes and heavier regulations affect those who want to start businesses or expand them?

Breitbart reports on a new report from the Hudson Institute:

> Startup businesses represent the heart of the American economy, but a new report by the Hudson Institute shows the rate of startup jobs during the last two years has been at a record low.
>
> According to the report, Under President George H.W. Bush, who essentially won Ronald Reagan's third term, there were 11.3 startup jobs per 1000 Americans. Under President Bill Clinton, there were 11.2. Under George W. Bush, there were 10.8. But under President Barack Obama, there have been 7.8 startup jobs per 1000 Americans.
>
> The study "documents a disturbing weakness in startup job creation," but "does not explain the cause of decline," even though "there is anecdotal evidence that the U.S. policy environment has become inadvertently hostile to entrepreneurial employment."

> The American Enterprise Institute highlighted four key findings of the report.
>
> First, the report found that “at the federal level, high taxes and higher uncertainty about taxes are undoubtedly inhibiting entrepreneurship, but to what degree is unknown.”
>
> Second, Obamacare created a “sweeping alteration of the regulatory environment that directly changes how employers engage their workforces.” The report notes it will take time until employers and scholars understand those changes.
>
> Third, since 2009, the Internal Revenue Service has engaged in more vigorous crackdowns on “U.S. employers that hire U.S. workers as independent contractors rather than employees, raising the question of mandatory benefits.” This directly impacts startup businesses and potentially has a chilling effect on those thinking about beginning new business ventures.
>
> Fourth, the report cites barriers to entry at the local levels, including “the rise of occupational licensing” that “is destroying startup opportunities for poor and middle class Americans.”
>
> “The state of entrepreneurship in the United States is, sadly, weaker than ever,” the report concludes.

What happens when we burden our employers with huge tax increases and costly regulations? They stop hiring us and they ship their businesses out of the United States. Obama is doing everything he can to discourage businesses from starting up, hiring and expanding here at home.

Durham University professor calls the “Jesus had a wife” manuscript fragment a forgery

September 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The radically left-wing UK Guardian has the story.

Excerpt:

> A New Testament scholar claims to have found evidence suggesting that the Gospel of Jesus’s Wife is a modern forgery.
>
> Professor Francis Watson, of Durham University, says the papyrus fragment, which caused a worldwide sensation when it appeared earlier this week because it appeared to refer to Jesus’s wife, is a patchwork of texts from the genuine Coptic-language Gospel of Thomas, which have been copied and reassembled out of order to make a suggestive new whole.
>
> In a paper published online, Watson argues that all of the sentence fragments found on the papyrus fragment have been copied, sometimes with small alterations, from printed editions of the Gospel of Thomas.
>
> The discovery has already sparked fierce debate among academics, but Watson believes his new research may prove conclusive.
>
> “I think it is more or less indisputable that I have shown how the thing was composed,” he said. “I would be very surprised if it were not a modern forgery, although it is possible that it was composed in this way in the fourth century.”
>
> His paper claims the work was assembled by someone who was not a native speaker of Coptic, which is a polite way of saying that it is modern.
>
> He does not directly criticise Professor Karen King, of Harvard, who presented the fragment at a conference in Rome this week. He says she has done a very good job of presenting the evidence and images of the disputed fragment. He believes the papyrus itself may well date from the fourth century, but the words, he says, clearly show the influence of modern printed books.
>
> In particular, there is a line break in the middle of one word that appears to have been lifted directly from modern editions of the Gospel of Thomas, a genuine Gnostic or early Christian text.
>
> It is common for words to be broken in the middle in ancient scripts, like Coptic, which were written without hyphens, he says. But it is most uncommon for the same break to appear in the same work in two different manuscripts.

You can read an introduction to the find by Dr. Watson on Mark Goodacre’s web site.

Excerpt:

> On 18 September, Dr Karen King of Harvard University announced the discovery

> of a controversial new gospel-fragment at a Vatican-sponsored conference in Rome. Dr King believes that the papyrus fragment comes from a 4th century copy of an unknown gospel that may itself go back to the 2nd century. While only a few incomplete lines have survived, the fragment has become instantly famous on account of line 4, where we read: And Jesus said to them, "My wife…" This gives the text its proposed title: The Gospel of Jesus' Wife (GJW). According to Dr King, the reference to Jesus' marital status is probably not an item of genuine historical information; rather, it takes us into the world of his later followers and their debates about issues of sexuality and gender.
>
> The GJW fragment is written in Coptic, a later form of the language of ancient Egypt. In translation it runs as follows:
>
> 1 "… [can]not be my [disciple]. My mother gave me life…"
> 2 … The disciples said to Jesus, "…
> 3 … deny. Mary is not worthy of it…
> 4 …" Jesus said to them, "My wife…
> 5 … she can be my disciple…
> 6 … Let the evil man swell up…
> 7 … I am with her, so as to…
> 8 … an image…"
>
> On the reverse side of the papyrus fragment, only a few individual words and letters have been preserved.
>
> The papyrus fragment itself may well be very old. The question is whether the ink is also old. If chemical tests are carried out to establish the composition of the ink, these might show that a modern ink has been used and so prove the text to be a modern forgery. Whether tests could reliably show that an ink compatible with ancient origin is actually ancient is less certain. Meanwhile, it's important to look very closely at the text itself – and especially to investigate how it was put together.
>
> In my article, I argue that the GJW fragment may be a modern fake. Most of its individual phrases are taken directly from the Coptic version of the Gospel of Thomas – the best-known and most complete of the ancient gospel texts that have come to light over the past century or so. The author has used a kind of "collage" technique to assemble the items selected from Thomas into a new composition. While this seems an unlikely way for an ancient author to compose a text, it's what might be expected of a modern forger with limited facility in the Coptic language.

Basically, Dr. Francis Watson is looking at which works the fragment seems to quote from in order to date it and judge its historical reliability. If it quotes from the late Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, then it's not early, and not reliable. But if it includes line breaking from the modern translations of the Gospel of Thomas, then it's a fraud. I would say that right now, it looks like a fraud, and we will just have to wait for the dating on the materials (ink

and papyrus) to be sure.

In fact, Harvard University is making the publication of the find conditional on this sort of scientific testing.

Excerpt:

> Harvard University says it hasn't committed to publishing research that purportedly shows some early Christians believed Jesus had a wife even though its divinity school touted the research during a publicity blitz this week.
>
> The research centers on a fourth-century papyrus fragment containing Coptic text in which Jesus uses the words "my wife." On Tuesday, Harvard Divinity School professor Karen King announced at an international conference that the fragment was the only existing ancient text in which Jesus explicitly talks of having a wife.
>
> Harvard also said King's research was scheduled to be published in the Harvard Theological Review in January and noted the journal was peer-reviewed, which implied the research had been fully vetted.
>
> But on Friday, the review's co-editor Kevin Madigan said he and his co-editor had only "provisionally" committed to a January publication, pending the results of the ongoing studies. In an email, Madigan said the added studies include "scientific dating and further reports from Coptic papyrologists and grammarians."
>
> After Tuesday's announcement, The Associated Press raised questions about the fragment's authenticity and provenance, quoting scholars at the international congress on Coptic studies in Rome, where King delivered the paper. The scholars said the fragment's grammar, form and content raised several red flags. Alin Suciu, a papyrologist at the University of Hamburg, flatly called it a "forgery."
>
> Boston University archaeologist Ricardo Elia said Friday that the Harvard Theological Review should delay publication until the fragment's owner and origins are more clearly documented.

You can also check out this 6-page report by Dr. Watson, featuring a line-by-line analysis of the Coptic phrases. Mark Goodacre is a tenured professor of New Testament at Duke University, which has one of the best New Testament programs, in my opinion. So don't be put off by the site that is hosting it.

Hoaxes and political agendas

Dr. Watson notes in the 6-page report that this is not the first time that fake manuscripts have surfaced that promote left-wing politics. Morton Smith, a homosexual, passed of a forged gospel called the "Secret Gospel of Mark" which promoted a homosexual view of Jesus. This 20th century hoax was accepted by the gullible mainstream media, until it was disproved as a forgery in the peer-reviewed literature, and in academic books. The debunking of Secret Gospel of Mark is so thorough that it is even accept by Robert M.

Price, who is on the far left fringe of New Testament scholarship. It should be noted that Karen King is a member of the liberal naturalistic Jesus Seminar. They presuppose atheism and their politics are hard left – that's what they assume before they begin doing scholarship. Karen King specializes in "women's roles in the church" and Gnosticism. I expect that she would be very happy if this Jesus-had-a-wife fragment were used to bash traditional notions of women's roles in the church.

The mainstream media

Now why isn't the mainstream media taking a cautious approach to this find? Here's my answer – they want as many people as possible to avoid Christianity. The more they can get people to avoid acting like Christians and voting like Christians, the fewer moral restrictions there will be on their desires. For example, people on the secular left are particularly fascinated with recreational sex followed by abortion, as well as the undermining of chastity and traditional marriage, and even fiscal policies like the free market and private property. All of this is offensive to them. So whenever they get the chance to bash Christianity with hoaxes, they will do it. Media bias has been well-documented by a number of published studies from top universities. It's a bad thing to let personal immorality cause you to lie to others so that they miss their chance of knowing God and entering into fellowship with him. But that's what the mainstream news media does every day.

Further study

J. W. Wartick has linked to a whole bunch of responses on his blog. He's got Daniel Wallace, Darrell Bock and other well-known New Testament scholars. But I think that the response by Dr. Watson is decisive, and should be your first stop.

New study: more Americans dying from suicide than from car crashes

September 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Suicide is the cause of more deaths than car crashes, according to an alarming new study.
>
> The number of people who commit suicide in the U.S. has drastically increased while deaths from car accidents have dropped, making suicide the leading cause of injury death.
>
> Suicides via falls or poisoning have risen significantly and experts fear that there could be many more unaccounted for, particularly in cases of overdose.
>
> The results were compiled using National Center for Health Statistics data gathered from 2000 to 2009.
>
> Researchers noted a 25 per cent decrease in fatal car accidents, medicalxpress.com reported, while deaths from falls rose 71 per cent, poisoning 128 per cent and from suicide 15 per cent. […]Previous research has suggested that suicide rates go up during recessions and times of economic crisis.'Economic problems can impact how people feel about themselves and their futures as well as their relationships with family and friends,' Feijun Luo of CDC's Division of Violence Prevention told Bloomberg.
>
> 'Prevention strategies can focus on individuals, families, neighborhoods or entire communities to reduce risk factors.'
>
> Suicide is now the most frequent cause of injury deaths, followed by car crashes, poisoning, falls and murder.
>
> The study also looked at gender and race, concluding that fewer women died from the four main causes than men.

Men especially are the hardest hit, because in a recession, they have a lot of anxiety about their provider role.

NBC News explains:

> Middle-aged men from disadvantaged backgrounds are 10 times more likely to commit suicide, often because they have lost a sense of identity and masculine pride, researchers said on Thursday.
>
> In a report commissioned by the British helpline charity the Samaritans, health experts explored why men in their 30s, 40s and 50s are at such a substantially higher risk of ending their own lives.

> The findings suggest suicide is not simply a mental health problem, the researchers said, but also one of men's place in societies and of societies' inability to adapt to men's needs when trying to deal with depression, anxiety and other problems.
>
> […]"The changing nature of the labour market over the last 60 years has affected working class men," it said. "With the decline of traditional male industries, they have lost not only their jobs but also a source of masculine pride and identity."
>
> The World Health Organisation estimates that every year, almost a million people commit suicide – a rate of 16 per 100,000, or one every 40 seconds. It also estimates that for every suicide, there are up to 20 attempted ones.
>
> Men are more likely to commit suicide than women in almost every country in the world, and the WHO says the main risk factors are mental illness – primarily depression – and alcohol abuse, as well as violence, loss, abuse and pressures from cultural and social backgrounds.
>
> The Samaritans study found that in Britain on average about 3,000 middle-aged men from disadvantaged backgrounds kill themselves each year.

I can't speak for everyone, but it seems obvious to me that a lot of people, especially young people who have college debt and can't find jobs, need to be asking themselves an important question: are you better off now than you were four years ago?

To marry and have children, it's important to make a realistic plan

September 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This is a guest post by Mathetes entitled "The Road That Was Taken". You can find his last post here.

The Daily Mail is the gift that keeps on giving. And usually the gifts are a witness to the outcomes of bad choices. Previously, we discussed how to live your worst life. Unfortunately, some people serve as stark examples. Enter Megan, and her story that is told in "It's NOT my fault that I missed the chance to become a mother".

The story is familiar: a gal lamenting that she has no man or children. But in a world where women have the ability to define and achieve any of their goals, where does this lament come from?

Playing with her nieces one day, Megan burst into tears because "I couldn't bring myself to articulate the truth — that, at the age of 38, I realised I'd probably never watch my own child doing somersaults on a summer's day."

But how did this come about for someone with children as a goal?

"I wasn't childless for medical reasons, or out of choice. The right man had just never come along.

As a writer living in London, with a fulfilling career and a great social life, I was a doting aunt to Harry, Jack, Emily and Freya."

This sounds so strange. In a world where women are go-getters, here we have a lady who just sat around waiting for a man to mysteriously "come along". I don't believe the incongruence struck her – she has a career in which she is fulfilled, but she probably didn't devote as much time to finding her man as she did to getting her career in order.

We come to the problem a little later on:

"I'd just assumed I'd address the subject of having children when I met the right partner with whom to confront it later in life. But I never did."

Wintery often states that it's important to have a plan for your life. This unfortunate lass didn't have one, and the result is typical.

Or maybe she did have a plan. Because a plan is a restricted range of choices that is meant to lead you to a particular goal. So how did Megan's choices influence her life? We read:

"I lived with a long-term boyfriend throughout my 20s, but we were young, and parenthood seemed a long way away. In my early 30s, I entered into a relationship that was so unstable, I knew we would never have children. He was a commitment-phobic poet, and while my friends urged me to finish the relationship and find one in which children might be an option, I didn't long for a family enough to give him up. At 35, I finally accepted that we were never going to work out. Other relationships came and

went, but none turned into something more permanent."

So here was Megan's plan:

- Step 1: Live with boyfriend throughout her 20's
- Step 2: Enter an unstable relationship in her early 30's, where she knew she'd never have children
- Step 3: After a few year break up with a man who was unsuitable material for a husband

So Megan's goal was to find a mate and have kids. And her plan was constructed to achieve the exact opposite result.

Maybe after her mid-30's Megan figured this out. With age comes wisdom, so they say. So what did Megan set about to do:

"I began to think more about having children when I was in my late 30s, but didn't start sizing up potential fathers on first dates because I didn't want to rush into having children with someone I wasn't certain about. "

So let's add another step.

- Step 4: Date men but don't evaluate them for spousal quality

Though Megan made some bad choices, she does see what's necessary for a child, and she should be commended for this:

"Nor did I want to become a single parent by choice. I'd seen how hard it was to bring up children even with a partner, thanks to my sisters, and I'd witnessed at first hand the struggles of a close friend who had unexpectedly become a single parent.

I just didn't think I could tough it out by myself. I wanted to share parenting, and never dreamed of becoming 'accidentally' pregnant. I wasn't going to trick anyone, or short-change myself."

This is to be commended, and I mean this in all seriousness.

But getting back to her choices, Megan was warned:

"A friend who had been ambivalent about children until she was 39, and became a mother at 41, warned me that I would go through a grieving process if I didn't become a mother. I laughed it off, but my friend was right."

And here we read the unfortunate result when dreams and aspirations collide with the harsh wall of reality.

"… it dawned on me that I was fast approaching 40 — the age at which it seemed that if I hadn't had my own child, I probably never would. My feelings of panic grew."

"Feelings of resentment began to build inside me when, in the space of a year, five of my closest girlfriends told me they were pregnant. I felt happy for them, and increasingly sad for myself."

"I tried to hide my feelings. I bought baby gifts and picked up newborns with a smile fixed

on my face, even as my heart sank when I thought of the children I might never have."

"Panic flooded over me every time I read a celebrity talking about how their little Petula/Tommy/Isabella was the best thing that had ever happened to them."

"More and more, I felt weighed down by all the judgments — some proffered, some unspoken — about single and childless women. From being too picky to be satisfied by a partner, to just too career-orientated and selfish, the judgments are endless. In my experience, they're generally inaccurate, too."

This is an object lesson in the internal psychic dissonance that takes place when one's goals collide with their choices.

Perhaps enlightenment at this stage is the best that can be hoped for. Mature adults come to accept that the choices they've made have resulted in the position they are in. Thus, we are able reflect and see where we went wrong and how to grow from this. Perhaps Megan will take responsibility for her choices and her current situation.

Not entirely.

"When I analysed the reasons why they and I were in this position, I came to one conclusion: bad luck, bad choices or bad timing. Not selfishness."

Her choices she can control. But luck and timing? Perhaps, but not as likely, given her focus on career and relationships. And her choices? Doesn't that imply that she is choosing?

And why blame luck or timing at all?

The reason for this is simple: it's very hard to realize that you are responsible for your position. This isn't a hard rule, but you usually got where you're at because you followed your own path.

And she's not alone. Other women share her plight:

"'One of them is that more and more women are childless through circumstance. They are grieving for something few people acknowledge they have the right to grieve for, and many of them don't even realise that's what's happening to them.

'Some of them are losing some of the most powerful and productive years of their lives as they get stuck in their grief.'

I know what you're thinking. Now, at last, maybe Megan realizes the way out. She can decide to make sure she dates in the right way. That she won't waste time on things that take away from her goal. Even if she can't have kids, she should still be able to find a mate and adopt. So there are possibilities for her.

The question is: where does she go from here?

And the answer is:

Morocco!

"I was determined not to lose some of the best years of my life in this way. I'd written eight books, had a life full of friends and family, and yet I felt like a failure. I had to do something.

So I did. I bought a plane ticket to Marrakesh in Morocco — a place I'd visited just once for a long weekend."

"If I wasn't going to have the rhythms and responsibilities of parenthood, I could make the most of my freedom."

Megan is educated and has a successful career. She's enjoying her freedom. But there's still her life-long goal of having children. How do these diverging paths reconcile with each other?

And here we come to the end. The need to rationalize, and downplay what others have, so that one's situation is more palatable.

"I'd spent months thinking that motherhood was the answer, but I now began to realise that it wasn't an instant passport to growth. Just look at the one-track minds some mothers have about their children."

"You have to be open to change, and that's possible with or without being a mother. Each side of the coin loses and gains."

"For all I'd envied about the lives of mothers I knew, they'd envied what I had — freedom, time and the ability to nurture other relationships in a way I never would if I was a parent."

"More importantly, I realised I wasn't childless. I had my sisters' children, my godchildren and a gaggle of girlfriends who were all generous with theirs."

"For now I am splitting my time between England and Morocco, enjoying the best of both worlds. I no longer feel weighed down in England, just happy to visit.

"And while our lives might be different to the ones we envisaged when we were young, they are just as complete."

And so Megan's rationalization takes us full circle. Megan actually is a mother. She is completely free. She can do what she wants with her life. Her friends with children envy her. She is more open than her friends, who have one-track minds. And she, of course, realizes that motherhood was never the answer. It wasn't a passport to growth. Her life is complete.

As I walked the halls of my work a few months ago I found a notice on a door that showed someone in an uncomfortable situation. The caption said: Sometimes the purpose of someone's life is to be a lesson to others.

Megan, of course, may never be able to grapple with the repercussions of the feminist lies she bought into. She followed them, despite consciously knowing her choices were not leading her to the life she wanted.

But we can observe and know how to act. Let her story be a lesson to you if you are contemplating her path. Find out what you want, and live with this in mind.

Stephen C. Meyer: does the Big Bang cosmology support God or atheism?

September 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's the 66-minute video featuring Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, who holds the Ph.D in philosophy of science from Cambridge University, and other degrees in the hard sciences. (H/T UK Apologetics)

The lecture starts really, really slowly. You can just fast-forward to the 12 minute mark, or you might die of boredom.

Topics:

- Up until the the last 100 years or so, everyone agreed that the universe was eternal
- This is at odds with the traditional Christian view that God created the universe
- Materialism, the view that matter is all there is, requires eternally existing matter
- Discovery #1: Hubble discovers that the universe is expanding (redshift observation)
- The expanding universe was resisted by proponents of the eternal universe, like Einstein
- Some naturalists even proposed speculative static models like the steady-state model
- However, not of the speculative models fit with observations and experimental results
- Discovery #2: Penzias and Wilson discover the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Measurements of this background radiation confirmed a prediction of the Big Bang theory
- The steady-state theory was falsified of by the discovery of this background radiation
- The oscillating model was proposed to prevent the need for an absolute beginning
- But the oscillating model is not eternal, it loses energy on each "bounce"
- A paper by Alan Guth and Marc Sher from 1982 proved that our universe will not bounce
- In addition, experiments reveal that the universe will expand forever, and not contract
- The beginning of the universe is more at home in a theistic worldview than an atheistic one
- The beginning of the universe fits in well with the Bible, e.g. – Genesis 1, Titus 1, etc.

In case you are wondering about what the evidence is for the Big Bang, here are 3 of the evidences that are most commonly offered:

> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

This is a good article to send to atheists who are not comfortable with what the progress of science has revealed about the beginning of the universe, and of time itself. If you look in agnostic astronomer Robert Jastrow's book "God and the Astronomers" (2nd edition), you'll find 6 evidences.

By the way, Dr. Meyer also does a great job of explaining the problem of proteins, DNA and the origin of life in this lecture. And you can hear him defend his views in this debate podcast with Keith Fox and in this debate podcast with Peter Atkins. He does a great job in these debates.

NYC Department of Education to hand out Plan B to high school students

September 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the New York Post. (H/T Strange Herring)

Excerpt:

> The Department of Education is giving morning-after pills and other birth-control drugs to students at 13 high schools, The Post has learned.
>
> School nurse offices stocked with the contraceptives can dispense "Plan B" emergency contraception and other oral or injectable birth control to girls without telling their parents — unless parents opt out after getting a school informational letter about the new program.
>
> CATCH — Connecting Adolescents To Comprehensive Health — is part of a citywide attack against the epidemic of teen pregnancy, which spurs many girls — most of them poor — to drop out of school.
>
> While Big Apple high schools have long supplied free condoms to sexually active teens, this is the first time city schools have dispensed hormonal birth control and Plan B, which can prevent pregnancy if taken up to 72 hours after unprotected sex.
>
> […]Parents at the 14 schools were sent letters informing them about CATCH. Parents may bar their kids from getting pregnancy tests or contraceptives if they sign and return an opt-out statement.
>
> If they do not, schools can confidentially give the contraception without permission.

Does handing children contraceptives make them less likely to get pregnant?

Here's the article from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Abortion advocates often promote contraception by claiming that as contraception use increases, the number of "unwanted" pregnancies and therefore abortions will decrease. But a new study out of Spain has found the exact opposite, suggesting that contraception actually increases abortion rates.
>
> The authors, who published their findings in the January 2011 issue of the journal *Contraception*, conducted surveys of about 2,000 Spanish women aged 15 to 49 every two years from 1997 to 2007. They found that over this period the number of women using contraceptives increased from 49.1% to 79.9%.
>
> Yet they noted that in the same time frame the country's abortion rate more than doubled from 5.52 per 1,000 women to 11.49.

Does this Plan B cause an abortion?

Consider this story from Life Site News about the morning after pill.

Excerpt:

> A poll has shown that as many as one fifth of all young women in the UK have used the morning after pill (MAP) in the past year after "unprotected sex."
>
> A Co-Operative Pharmacy survey of 3000 people found that 20 percent of women aged 18 to 35 took the "emergency contraceptive" pill last year. The same group said they had typically used the drug, which only acts as a genuine contraceptive in some cases, when they had had sex after using drugs and/or alcohol.
>
> The poll further found that up to 250,000 women had used the drug two or more times during the year. One in fifty 18-21 year-olds said they used the MAP as their normal form of contraception. One sixth of the women surveyed said they had contracted a sexually transmitted disease.
>
> While a National Health Service spokesman warned that the MAP fails to protect women from sexually transmitted diseases, the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) has long warned that the medical community is simply not telling women what MAP really is, or what it does.
>
> The morning after pill, a large dose of the same hormones used in contraceptive pills, can either prevent ovulation or prevent the implantation of an existing embryo in the uterine lining.
>
> "Very few women will know precisely when they ovulate," SPUC said, "so, if they take the morning-after pill, they will not know whether it has prevented conception or caused an abortion."

This is what happens when you are forced to fund public schools. They don't get paid more for pleasing you and they don't get paid less for not pleasing you. They get paid regardless of performance. They get paid by lobbying politicians and influencing elections. They go to work every day and their main goal is getting more money by influencing elections. They don't get paid more to teach your children better. What they would really like to do is turn your children into little leftists who will vote them higher salaries and better benefits. That's what they really do all day.

Related posts

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Atlanta public schools caught helping students to cheat on standardized tests
- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice

- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

Unemployment rate is 10.5%, counting those who have stopped job-hunting

September 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Reuters.

> Economists, analyzing government data, estimate about 4 million fewer people are in the labor force than in December 2007, primarily due to a lack of jobs rather than the normal aging of America's population. The size of the shift underscores the severity of the jobs crisis.
>
> If all those so-called discouraged jobseekers had remained in the labor force, August's jobless rate of 8.1 percent would have been 10.5 percent.
>
> […]The labor force participation rate, or the proportion of working-age Americans who have a job or are looking for one has fallen by an unprecedented 2.5 percentage points since December 2007, slumping to a 31-year low of 63.5 percent.
>
> "We never had a drop like that before in other recessions. The economy is worse off than people realize when people just look at the unemployment rate," said Keith Hall, senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia.
>
> […]The economy lost 8.7 million jobs in the 2007-09 recession and has so far recouped a little more than half of them.
>
> […]Americans of all ages are leaving the workforce, but the problem is most acute in the 20-24 age group, where the participation rate has plunged by 4.4 percentage points since December 2007.
>
> […]"Because of delays to their career, the skills set accumulation that normally happens in the first or third job is not happening," said Paul Conway, president of Generation Opportunity in Washington, a non-profit, non-partisan organization that works with 18- to 29-year-olds on economic issues.
>
> Last month, the proportion of 20- to 24-year-olds in the labor force was its lowest since 1972. Other age categories are faring little better. The 25-54 age group has seen a decline of 1.8 percentage points since December 2007.

Meanwhile, from the radically left-wing Newsweek, of all places. (H/T Defeating Obama)

Excerpt:

> [T]he total number of private-sector jobs is still 4.3 million below the January 2008 peak. Meanwhile, since 2008, a staggering 3.6 million Americans have been added to Social Security's disability insurance program. This is one of many ways unemployment is being concealed.

Can anyone look at numbers like this and explain to me why anyone – especially young people – would vote for this man?

After legalizing gay marriage, France set to ban ‘mother’ and ‘father’ from official documents

September 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> France is set to ban the words “mother” and “father” from all official documents under controversial plans to legalise gay marriage.
>
> The move… means only the word “parents” would be used in identical marriage ceremonies for all heterosexual and same-sex couples.
>
> The draft law states that “marriage is a union of two people, of different or the same gender”.
>
> It says all references to “mothers and fathers” in the civil code – which enshrines French law – will be swapped for simply “parents”.
>
> The law would also give equal adoption rights to homosexual and heterosexual couples.

> […]President Francois Hollande pledged in his manifesto to legalise gay marriage. The draft law will be presented to his cabinet for approval on October 31.

Hollande is a socialist, just like Barack Obama, who also favors gay marriage, and infanticide, too. Not just abortion, *infanticide*.

This is not surprising – the same thing has been done in other countries, like Spain:

> Ironically, the Socialist government claims that although it pushed through legislation to benefit a small minority of the population – and in the process changed the definition of marriage – that this could in no way be construed as an attack on the traditional family. Indeed, the government claims that it is in truth pro-family.
>
> So now, jump fast forward to last Friday.
>
> That’s when the Spanish government announced a ministerial order that new births would have to be registered at the State Civil Registries in the Family Book under the headings of Parent (progenitor) A, and Parent (progenitor) B.
>
> In other words, the terms “Father” and “Mother” were to be no longer used.
>
> In Spain, marriages, births and deaths are all recorded at Civil Registries, with most of those actions being noted in a Family Book (Libro de Familia). While the example isn’t perfect, think of the Family Book as an extended birth certificate.
>
> Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Spanish Minister of Justice, excused the ministerial order by claiming since the government modified “the status of civil marriages,

> to allow the union of same-sex couples, it was necessary for a new format for the Family Book (Libro de Familia) and one that used terms such as "Parent A" and "Parent B" instead of "Father" and "Mother."
>
> That's right. To match up it's same-sex marriage legislation to the Civil Registry, the government deemed that Spaniards could no longer qualify themselves as either "Fathers" or "Mothers" of their children.

Canada does the same thing:

> In Canada, they've already done this. Following the passing of the Civil Marriage Act, all official documentation and legislation was amended, erasing "husbands" and "wives". And because same-sex couples primarily use reproductive technology to procreate, some Canadian legislation has been amended to replace the term "natural parent" with "legal parent". As one report describes it: "In short, the adoption exception – that who is a child's parent is established by legal fiat, not biological connection – becomes the norm for all children." Most strikingly, on birth certificates some Canadian provinces have replaced the term "father" and "mother" with "Parent 1" and "Parent 2".

That policy was put in place by the Liberal party, which is the socialist party in Canada, and with the full support of the communist party of Canada, the New Democrat Party.

It's important to understand what effects these leftist, anti-family, anti-marriage policies have, especially on children. This is what Barack Obama and his socialist friends in other countries want. Leftists are anti-marriage and anti-family. They don't like mothers and fathers raising children. They want the children to be alone in the world, and shuffled around to various people, and eventually raised by the state and brainwashed to serve the state. Feminism has so poisoned people against the traditional family – and especially the traditional male roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader – that no one is willing to resist the push by socialists to destroy marriage and family.

Imagine being a child and growing up with no access to your biological mother or your biological father, or *both of them.* This is the horror that the left unleashes on little children, assuming they don't murder you in the womb. As if it isn't bad enough to push feminist policies like no-fault divorce and subsidized single motherhood, now they have to go even further. Let me be clear. We should be putting into place policies that promote the nuclear family – a mother and a father being chaste, marrying once for life, and having children who grow up in a loving, stable environment. We should not be promoting recreational sex and promiscuity as equivalent to marriage. Children deserve better.

Related posts

- Some supporters of gay marriage favor normalizing pedophilia and incest
- Law professor uses same-sex marriage law to argue for legalizing polygamy
- Queen's University feminist says that polygamy should be permitted
- British Columbia Supreme Court considers striking down ban on polygamy

- Will Canada add polgygamy and polyamory on top of same-sex marriage?
- Taxpayer-funded polygamy in the UK, France and Canada
- Mark Regnerus's research vindicated by University of Texas at Austin
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families
- Obama openly supports gay marriage: 48 hours after top gay donors cut off funding
- Democrat introduces bill to defund adoption agencies that favor married couples
- A secular case against same-sex marriage

How to apologize effectively: responsibility, restitution, repentance

September 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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One of my friends recommended this book "Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Got Married" by Gary Chapman, so I got it and read it this weekend. The book re-capped one of his other books about the 5 languages of apologies or something.

Here's a re-cap of his five languages of apologies.

Here are the two that I want to emphasize:

Apology Language #3: Making Restitution

In the public arena, our emphasis upon restitution is based upon our sense of justice. The one who commits the crime should pay for the wrongdoing. In contrast, in the private sphere of family and other close relationships, our desire for restitution is almost always based upon our need for love. After being hurt deeply, we need the reassurance that the person who hurt us still loves us.

"How could they love me and do that?" is the question that lingers in our minds. The words "I'm sorry; I was wrong" may not be enough.

For some people, restitution is their primary apology language. For them the statement, "It is not right for me to have treated you that way," must be followed with "What can I do to show you that I still care about you?" Without this effort at restitution, this person will question the sincerity of the apology. They will continue to feel unloved even though you may have said, "I am sorry; I was wrong." They wait for the reassurance that you genuinely love them.

The question, then, is how do we make restitution in the most effective way? Since the heart of restitution is reassuring the spouse or family member that you genuinely love him or her, it is essential to express restitution in the love language of the other person.

[…]If restitution is the primary apology language of an individual, then this becomes the most important part of the apology. "I'm sorry; I was wrong" will never be taken as sincere if these words are not accompanied by a sincere effort at restitution. They wait for the assurance that you still genuinely love them. Without your effort to make amends, the apology will not have the desired results of forgiveness.

Apology Language #4: Genuinely Repenting

The word repentance means "to turn around" or "to change one's mind." In the context of an apology, it means that an individual realizes that his or her present behavior is destructive. The person regrets the pain he or she is causing the other person, and he chooses to change his behavior.

Without genuine repentance, the other languages of apology may fall on deaf ears. What people who've been hurt want to know is, "Do you intend to change, or will this happen again next week?"

How then do we speak the language of repentance?

> - **It begins with an expression of intent to change.** When we share our intention to change with the person we have offended, we are communicating to them what is going on inside of us. They get a glimpse of our heart—and this often is the language that convinces them we mean what we say.
> - **The second step down the road of repentance is developing a plan for implementing change.**Often apologies fail to be successful in restoring the relationship because there is no plan for making positive change.
> - **The third step down the road of repentance is implementing the plan.** Following through with the plan gives evidence to the offended party that your apology was sincere.

Most people do not expect perfection after an apology, but they do expect to see effort.

Thus, expressing your desire to change and coming up with a plan is an extremely important part of an apology to this person. Inviting the offended person to help you come up with a plan for change is perhaps the best way to effectively show repentance.

I think this is somewhat useful, but I wanted to add some of my own thoughts to make it more practical.

Here are some practical tips that I recommend to someone who has done something morally wrong and who wants to apologize.

To fix the problem you need more than talk

To me, the only thing that needs an apology is breaking a moral rule – you can't beat someone up for just making a mistake. Whenever someone breaks a moral rule with me, like disrespecting me or being selfish, then I pick out a book for them to read and ask them to read it and then write something about how what they learned in the book applies to what they did to me. I don't pick very long books! But I do this for a very important reason.

The very important reason is that I don't trust people who just agree with me. I don't trust people's words. If someone is really sorry about something, then I want them to read something that describes the moral rule that they broke, and explains what place the moral rule has in some plan for achieving some greater goal. Let me give an example.

Suppose that I am friends with a young lady who wants me to help her to get her atheist uncle, who has a degree in physics, to consider whether Christian theism might not be true. I accept her quest and begin to negotiate with Dr. Michael Strauss, a particle physicist who does research on the top quark at Fermilab, and also teaches physics at the University of Oklahoma – Norman. I contact Dr. Strauss, and contact Lawrence Krauss, the atheist physicist, and I set up a debate between them at the local university. I notify her of my plan, and she promises to bring her uncle to the debate.

The day of the debate comes and it goes off without a hitch – Strauss demolishes Krauss, and Krauss cries for his mommy. The audience laughs at Krauss and he runs away sobbing into the night, clutching his Darwin doll tightly. I beam with delight at a plan perfectly executed, and then look around for the young lady and her uncle, so that we can all go out for a late dinner with Dr. Strauss. But she and her uncle are nowhere to be found! I rush around the auditorium frantically, but to no avail. Finally, in desperation, I call her cell phone.

She answers. I say "where are you? where is your evil uncle Dawkins? The debate is over and we won!". She says "Oh, I totally forgot. The worship leader at the local mega church had a better idea anyway. She invited me over to her church with my uncle to try snake-handling instead." Me: "You did *what???!!!"* She (excited): "Yes, this is a lot more fun than a stuffy debate, and my uncle is about to play patty-cake with a harmless rattlesnake, and… uh oh". Me: "Oh no…" She: "Um, I'll call you back. I need to make a call *right now.*". Click.

Wow, that's pretty awful.

So here's what I would expect from her by way of apology.

1. Read something on science apologetics as a make-up assignment. Something like Edgar Andrews' "Who Made God?".
2. Listen to Dr. Michael Strauss' lecture on science apologetics, which he delivered at Stanford University.
3. Go back to the uncle and sit down with him and watch Dr. Michael Strauss' lecture on science apologetics from Stanford University, which is up on Youtube.
4. When the lecture is over, talk with the uncle about his remaining questions, and be available should he think of any more questions.

This would make up for all the work I put into the event because it fixes the problem, and it makes sure that it will never happen again.

The goals of this apology is not just to hear the words "I'm sorry". It's not even just about making me feel better. I think the real customer of a mistake like this is God, who is not well served by ineffective Christians. My goal is to prepare her for future evangelism, and for future nurturing of any children she might have. The only way to convince someone to take the right course of action the next time is to change their mind between the time they failed and the next time they try again. There is no way to change how a person behaves unless they convince themselves by reading about the issues, on their own time, through their own effort.

For more on how beliefs change, see this lecture by J.P. Moreland, entitled "Love Your God With All Your Mind".

Health insurance premiums up $3,000 since Obama was elected

September 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> During his first run for president, Barack Obama made one very specific promise to voters: He would cut health insurance premiums for families by $2,500, and do so in his first term.
>
> But it turns out that family premiums have increased by more than $3,000 since Obama's vow, according to the latest annual Kaiser Family Foundation employee health benefits survey.
>
> Premiums for employer-provided family coverage rose $3,065 — 24% — from 2008 to 2012, the Kaiser survey found. Even if you start counting in 2009, premiums have climbed $2,370.
>
> What's more, premiums climbed faster in Obama's four years than they did in the previous four under President Bush, the survey data show.
>
> There's no question about what Obama was promising the country, since he repeated it constantly during his 2008 campaign.
>
> In a debate with Sen. John McCain, for example, Obama said "the only thing we're going to try to do is lower costs so that those cost savings are passed onto you. And we estimate we can cut the average family's premium by about $2,500 per year."
>
> At a campaign stop in Columbus, Ohio, in February 2008, Obama promised that "We are going to work with you to lower your premiums by $2,500. We will not wait 20 years from now to do it, or 10 years from now to do it. We will do it by the end of my first term as president."

But are Obama's policies *responsible* for the increase?

> the health reform law Obama signed in March 2010 has pushed up insurance costs.
>
> In 2011, premiums spiked 9.5%, and many in the industry blame ObamaCare for at least part of it. Premiums climbed another 4.5% in 2012, Kaiser found.
>
> And ObamaCare will continue to fuel health premium inflation.
>
> First, the law piles on new coverage mandates. It requires insurance companies to provide 100% coverage for various types of preventive care, bans lifetime coverage limits, extends parents' coverage to offspring up to 26 years old, and requires plans to meet certain "medical loss ratios." Coming up are rules on

> "essential standard benefits," limits on deductibles, bans on annual spending caps, and much more.
>
> The experience with state mandates show that they only tend to grow over time, and get more expensive. The Council for Affordable Health Insurance found more than 2,200 state benefit mandates, which add from 10% to 50% to the cost of coverage.
>
> "One of the biggest cost drivers in our health care system is the steady proliferation of federal and state-based coverage mandates," noted CAHI's Victoria Craig Bunce.
>
> Meanwhile, ObamaCare's insurance reforms — guaranteed issue and community rating — will likely raise premiums, too.

More regulation of health care companies means higher premiums. The more coverages that are mandatory, the higher premiums will go. If abortions have to be covered, then premiums go up.

Here are a few articles that I have been using lately to inform people about the problems with Obamacare:

- Heritage Foundation: Obamacare Raises Taxes on 3 Million Middle-Class Americans
- Cato Institute: ObamaCare's Cost Could Top $6 Trillion in first 10 years
- Life News: Obamacare is pro-abortion and pro-government controlled rationing
- Heritage Foundation: The 3 Biggest Ways Obamacare Kills Jobs
- Investors Business Daily: Obama's Broken Health-Premium Savings Promise
- Reason: Obamacare will lead to longer wait times and crowded emergency rooms
- Doctor Patient Medical Association: 83% of doctors contemplating quitting over Obamacare

It's important to understand that people who oppose this law don't oppose because we are just being contrary. Obama's health care plan has the goal of destroying private medicine and putting everyone into a single-payer system like Canada's. It's not good for us to be waiting in line for MRIs for months and months, or even years and years. NO.

Romney gave 1,000 times as much to charity in one year as Biden gave in a decade

September 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Weekly Standard:

> The release of Mitt Romney's 2011 tax returns shows that he freely gave away more than $4 million to charity last year (about 30 percent of his income). In comparison, when Joe Biden was first running for vice president, his tax returns showed that he had given away just $3,690 to charity over the previous ten years (about 0.2 percent of his income). In other words, Romney gave away a thousand times as much to charity in one year as Biden gave in a decade.
>
> That's despite the fact that the Bidens earned well over $2 million over that decade. In fact, their income was $320,000 in 2008, thereby putting them comfortably over the $250,000-a-year line that marks the entry point for "millionaires and billionaires" in Obama-speak.
>
> Last year, Romney freely gave away more than $10,000 a day to charity — an impressive sum by nearly any standard. Of course, it's not too hard to beat Biden's tally. Over the span of that decade, or 3,650 days, he gave away $3,690 — an average of $1.01 a day.

Should we be surprised by this lack of charity from leftists? Well, Democrats are typically non-religious, as you might expect of people who support killing unborn children. In fact, Obama leads Romney 69% to 23% among non-religious people. So do people of no religion typically give a lot to charity, like the religious Romney, or are they mostly opposed to giving charity, like the pro-abortion secularist Joe Biden?

Consider this article from the Boston Globe.

Excerpt:

> States with the least religious residents are also the stingiest about giving money to charity, a new study on the generosity of Americans suggests.
>
> The study, released Monday by the Chronicle of Philanthropy, found that residents in states where religious participation is higher than the rest of the nation, particularly in the South, gave the greatest percentage of their discretionary income to charity.
>
> The Northeast, with lower religious participation, was the least generous to charities, with the six New England states filling the last six slots among the 50 states.
>
> […]The most generous state was Utah, where residents gave 10.6 percent of their discretionary income to charity. Next were Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee and South Carolina. The least generous was New Hampshire, at 2.5 percent,

> followed by Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.
>
> […]The study found that in the Northeast region, including New England, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York, people gave 4.1 percent of their discretionary income to charity. The percentage was 5.2 percent in the Southern states, a region from Texas east to Delaware and Florida, and including most of the so-called Bible Belt.

> […]The study was based on Internal Revenue Service records of people who itemized deductions in 2008, the most recent year statistics were available. The data allowed researchers to detail charitable giving down to the ZIP code.
>
> To ensure that states with differing costs of living were judged by the same standard, researchers calculated each state's median discretionary income — the money remaining per household after variable but essential costs such as housing, child care and food are paid for. They then looked at the percentage of discretionary income that the typical household in each state gave to charity.
>
> […]Of the 10 least generous states, nine voted for Democrat Barack Obama for president in the last election. By contrast, of the 10 most generous states, eight voted for Republican John McCain.

If you think that this is the only life you have, and there is no one out there to hold you accountable, then it's easy to be self-centered. Unless charity makes you feel good, there is no reason to do it on atheism. And when you don't have a reason to be moral, then you often won't be.

Can you forgive someone who refuses to confess their guilt?

September 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Kevin Lewis, a professor of Theology and Law at the conservative Biola University, was asked this question:

> Recently, I was reading Dr. Kenneth Bailey's Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes (IVP press 2008). When commenting on Matthew 6:12-13, he writes,
>
> "It is a common human assumption that the violator of the rights of others must ask for forgiveness before the wronged party can be expected to accept the apology and grant forgiveness…But Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when when there is no confession of guilt… There is a voice from the cross that echoes across history to all saying 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' Neither Pilate nor the high priest nor the centurion offered any apology to Jesus, yet he prayed for divine forgiveness…(p.125)"

And here's his response in full, copied with permission from his Facebook note:

> Regarding Bailey's comments on Matthew 6:12, he errs by not considering the theological context of this statement and fails to consider any implied biblical conditions for forgiveness inherent in the statement. The text simply does not mean what he says it means. He is reading too much into the statement.
> Bailey states, "Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when there is no confession of guilt…"
>
> Bailey errs. Here, Jesus is giving a model for prayer commensurate with the way His Kingdom works. Jesus teaches them to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." This is a statement of the objective, "forgiveness," without a discussion of any express or implied conditions to accomplish the objective. It is also a statement of the proper attitude of the Christian, that is, that we must have a demeanor of being willing to forgive, just as God was willing to forgive us. Bailey's assertion that there is no "confession of guilt" or repentance is merely an unwarranted assumption.
>
> Moreover, the use of "as" (Grk. hos) in the passage introduces a comparison between the way we forgive and the way God forgives. This comparative phraseology is employed elsewhere on the subject of forgiveness. For example, Ephesians 4:32 states that we should be "forgiving each other just as God in Christ also has forgiven" us. Here, the comparative "just as" (Grk. kathos) is employed and indicates our forgiveness is to be just like God's forgiveness of us, which flows from a loving disposition. So in the same manner that God forgives, we must forgive. We are to be "imitators of God" (Eph. 5:1). See also Matthew

5:48 and Luke 6:36 for exhortations to imitate God.

To ascertain whether the Scriptures describe any conditions for forgiveness, one must search elsewhere in the Scriptures for comment. This is the nature of systematic theology. We need to examine what the entire Bible says on a given topic, such as forgiveness. And the Bible contains ample support for the notion that there are conditions for forgiveness.

First, regarding God and His forgiveness, it is undisputed in orthodox Christian theology that God does not forgive everyone. The doctrine of Hell is a sufficient proof of the lack of universal forgiveness by God.

Next, it is clear that God does not forgive without repentance. This doctrine is taught in a number of texts. For example, in Luke 13:3 Jesus says, “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” In Mark 1:15 John the Baptist commands that we must “repent and believe the Gospel.” The connection between repentance and forgiveness of sins (i.e. “salvation”) is seen throughout the Scriptures. For example, in Acts 2:38 repentance is directly connected as a condition for the remission of sins. For additional examples of this connection see Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30-31; Romans 2:4-5; II Corinthians 7:10; II Tim. 2:25-26.

So since we are to be imitators of God and forgive in the same way God forgives, we would expect the Scriptures to be consistent, stating that the condition of repentance is required to be fulfilled before believers are required to forgive each other’s sins. It does.

Jesus stated in Luke 17:3, “If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.” Here, the meaning is clear. The word “if” (Grk. ean) introduces the condition for a rebuke and for granting forgiveness. If (subjunctive) a person sins, we must (imperative) rebuke him, and if (subjunctive) he repents, we must (imperative) forgive him. This is as clear a statement as you will find on the subject. Forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance—and this is one of the same criteria that God requires before He forgives sin.

This principle of permitting believers to withhold forgiveness unless the condition of repentance is satisfied is also explicitly seen in Matthew 18:15-17. Compared with the Luke 17:3 text above, the situation is the same. If a brother sins, reprove him; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. Here, the word “reprove” is used rather than “rebuke” and the word “listen” is employed rather than “repent,” but the meaning is virtually identical to Luke 17:3. What we see in Matthew 18 is an escalation of the issue and the result if the person fails to repent (i.e. “listen”). If the person fails to repent, we are to shun him in all appropriate ways (v. 17).
These passages in Luke and Matthew give us the connection between sin, rebuke, repentance and forgiveness. Other biblical texts that merely mention “forgiveness” as a concept or an objective do not necessarily proffer every

aspect of the doctrine of forgiveness. As such, they must be read in light of the clear conditions expressed in other passages.

Finally, I would make the case that it is harmful to a person to forgive him without requiring repentance. As seen above, the Bible is clear that sin requires a rebuke. Ignoring sin teaches sinners that sin does not bring consequences. This is harmful to their souls. Continuing to have the benefit of a righteous relationship with another and yet remain in sin against that person results in fostering a habituation of sinful inclinations in their soul, which God says brings about suffering and death.
Moreover, since the ultimate purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation, it is meaningless and harmful to forgive when no reconciliation may be had with the sinner. We cannot "walk together" in a biblical manner in righteous peace when the unrepentant sinner walks in unrighteousness. Necessarily, there is a conflict and a want of shalom. Their soul is headed in a different direction than the believer's soul; they are walking away from God and we cannot have fellowship with darkness. God has no intimate fellowship with unrepentant people, and that is the model for Christians as well (See Matt. 18).

Regarding personal anger issues commonly raised by Christian psychologists, these types of psychologists unbiblically make unconditional forgiveness a part of therapy. By contrast, however, if a counselee will not forgive after the offending party has truly repented, the counselee sins, and this kind of unforgiveness may be one of the causes of his or her problems. But this is a separate issue from universal and unconditional forgiveness raised above.

Human beings in the image of God may be angry in appropriate ways (Eph.4:26, 31). There is a time to love and a time to hate (Ecclesiastes 3:8). The notion that Christians cannot ever hate, be angry, or lack forgiveness is an unbiblical concept. God Himself is eternally angry with sin, but He is certainly not a psychological basket case. He loves, hates, and is angry in appropriate ways. Our task as believers is to imitate this. Be angry with and hate sin appropriately (Rom. 12:9) and love what good appropriately. For example, righteous anger can evolve beyond the biblical limits to become malice, slander, and bitterness while, to give another example, an appropriate love of food can evolve beyond the biblical limits into gluttony.

Psychological problems arise from many issues other than lack of forgiveness. For example, a lack of trust in God that He has a particular instance of evil under His sovereign control can cause undue anxiety in one's life. Also, if a counselee's self worth is grounded in the shifting sand of how others treat him (i.e., badly) rather than being grounded in the fact that he is a divine image bearer and inherently valuable no matter how badly anyone treats him, he will likely fall into anxiety, depression, and other sorts of psychological maladies. Changing the biblical doctrine of forgiveness will not truly help a counselee. It only makes it

> worse.
>
> Soli Deo Gloria

I agree with Dr. Lewis, and I think it is a helpful tool for people to insist on seeing some sort of repentance and restitution from someone who wrongs you before you trust them again. If they are not even sorry for what they've done, and they refuse to explain why what they did is wrong, then they can't be forgiven, and you can't trust them again.

William Lane Craig assesses Sam Harris' attempt to ground morality on atheism

September 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This Reasonable Faith article is worth a read.

First, objective moral values:

> So how does Sam Harris propose to solve the "value problem"? The trick he proposes is simply to*redefine* what he means by "good" and "evil" in *non*moral terms.9 He says we should "define 'good' as that which supports [the] well-being" of conscious creatures."10 He states, "Good and evil need only consist in this: misery versus well-being."11 Or again: "In speaking of 'moral truth,' I am saying that there must be facts regarding human and animal well-being."12
>
> So, he says, "Questions about values … are really questions about the well-being of conscious creatures."13 Therefore, he concludes, "It makes no sense … to ask whether maximizing well-being is 'good'."14 Why not? Because he's redefined the word "good" to *mean* the well-being of conscious creatures. So to ask, "Why is maximizing creatures' well-being good?" is on his definition the same as asking, "Why does maximizing creatures' well-being maximize creatures' well-being?" It is simply a tautology — talking in a circle. Thus, Harris has "solved" his problem simply by redefining his terms. It is mere word play.

Second, objective moral duties:

> Does atheism provide a sound foundation for objective moral duties? Duty has to do with moral obligation and prohibition, what I ought or ought not to do. Here reviewers of *The Moral Landscape* have been merciless in pounding Harris' attempt to provide a naturalistic account of moral obligation. Two problems stand out.
>
> Natural science tells us only what *is*, not what *ought* to be, the case. As philosopher Jerry Fodor has written, "Science is about facts, not norms; it might tell us how we are, but it wouldn't tell us what is wrong with how we are."17 In particular it cannot tell us that we have a moral obligation to take actions that are conducive to human flourishing.
>
> […]Second, "ought" implies "can." A person is not morally responsible for an action he is unable to avoid. For example, if somebody shoves you into another person, you are not to blame for bumping into this person. You had no choice. But Harris believes that *all* of our actions are causally determined and that there is no free will.20 Harris rejects not only libertarian accounts of freedom but also compatibilistic accounts of freedom. But if there is no free will, no one is morally responsible for anything. In the end, Harris admits this, though it's tucked away in his endnotes. Moral responsibility, he says, "is a social construct," not an

> objective reality: “in neuroscientific terms no person is more or less responsible than any other” for the actions they perform.21 His thoroughgoing determinism spells the end of any hope or possibility of objective moral duties on his worldview because we have no control over what we do.

If you missed the debate between William Lane and Sam Harris, here is the video:

And you can read a summary of the debate, written by me. There’s audio in that post, as well.

Survey of small businesses: Obamacare is the biggest challenge to new hiring

September 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From CNS News:

> More than one in five businesses (21%) are considering dropping employee health insurance due to Obamacare, and 59% are considering changing the coverage they offer, a new industry survey shows.
>
> Two-thirds (67%) of small businesses and manufacturers say Obamacare will increase their health care costs, the survey of owners and top decision-makers by the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) and National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) shows.
>
> Of those providing health insurance to their employees, 38% fear Obamacare will cause them increase the amount employees have to pay for coverage.
>
> Small business owners and manufacturers see Obamacare as one of the most daunting problems facing their businesses today. Fully 56% rate Obamacare a major challenge, well above other issues like regulatory costs (36%), energy costs (39%) – and more than twice the threat of foreign competition (25%).
>
> The cost of health care is the top problem facing small businesses today, a separate 2012 NFIB survey of small business concerns shows, with 52.3% of small businesses rating rising health care costs the most “critical” problem today.
>
> NFIB analysis also shows that Obamacare’s health insurance tax (HIT) could cost up to a quarter million (249,000) private sector jobs.

There is a reason why we have a 10.5% unemployment rate if we count people who have given up on looking for a job as unemployed. Businesses don’t like the policies of this President, and they are going to wait him out.

Are young people really leaving Christianity?

September 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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J Warner Wallace of Please Convince Me summarizes the research by citing a number of sources.

Here's one:

> **Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers**
> Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, Oxford University Press, 2005
> **Book Findings**: The majority of teenagers are incredibly inarticulate about their faith, religious beliefs and practices, and its place in their lives. The de facto dominant religion among contemporary U.S. teenagers is what they call 'Moralistic Therapeutic Deism': A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth; God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions; the central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself; God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem; and good people go to heaven when they die.

And another:

> **Southern Baptist Convention Data**
> Pinkney, T.C., Remarks to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, Nashville, Tennessee (2001)
> **Study Findings**: Data from the Southern Baptist Convention indicates that they are currently losing 70-88% of their youth after their freshman year in college. 70% of teenagers involved in church youth groups stop attending church within two years of their high school graduation.

And another:

> **Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers**
> Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, Oxford University Press (2005)
> **Book Findings**: Students leave faith behind primarily because of intellectual doubt and skepticism (page 89). "Why did they fall away from the faith in which they were raised?" This was an open-ended question there were no multiple-choice answers. 32% said they left faith behind because of intellectual skepticism or doubt. ("It didn't make any sense anymore." "Some stuff is too far-fetched for me to believe." "I think scientifically and there is no real proof." "Too many questions that can't be answered.")

And one more:

> **Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood**
> Christian Smith with Kari Christoffersen, Hilary Davidson and Patricia Snell Herzog

> Oxford University Press (2011)
> **Book Findings**: Young adults are unable to think coherently about moral beliefs and problems. Young adults have an excessive focus on consumption and materialism as the good life. The prevalent lifestyle of young adults includes routine intoxication and drug usage. The sexual encounters of young adults are not practiced in an environment of physical, mental, or emotional health. Young adults appear to have an inability to care about, invest in, and hope for the larger world through civic and political participation.

He concludes:

> There you have it; a short summary of some of the research being done on the exodus of young people from the Church and some of the reasons they give for their departure. Can a case be made that young Christians are leaving the Church in record numbers? Yes. Can a case be made that many of these young people are leaving because the culture around them has impacted them deeply and caused them to question the truth claims of Christianity? Yes, again.

He finishes the post with a cliff-hanger ending, in which he promises to give us a plan for dealing with this problem. Stay tuned!

Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?

September 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is

stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

4So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

5For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

6yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

5Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

6Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

7but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this

passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The "Q" source for Matthew and Luke

Here's Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier "Q" source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Learn more

You can learn more about the early belief in the divinity of Jesus by listening to a lecture by William Lane Craig and reading the related paper, and by listening to the debate between Richard Bauckham and James Crossley on that topic. The first link contains other scholarly debates on Jesus.

Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

September 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Hans Bader of the Competitive Enterprise Institute. (links removed)

Excerpt:

> In the aftermath of a terrorist attack in Libya that killed our ambassador and three other Americans, the Obama administration was quick to scapegoat a film called "The Innocence of Muslims" for the attack, claiming that the film caused the attack. But in reality, the attack was pre-planned, and within 24 hours, the administration knew it was a terrorist attack, not a "spontaneous" eruption of outrage over the film, as it later repeatedly claimed on TV:
>
> U.S. intelligence officials knew within 24 hours of the assault on the U.S. Consulate in Libya that it was a terrorist attack and suspected Al Qaeda-tied elements were involved, sources told Fox News — though it took the administration a week to acknowledge it.
>
> The account conflicts with claims on the Sunday after the attack by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice that the administration believed the strike was a "spontaneous" event triggered by protests in Egypt over an anti-Islam film.
>
> Two senior U.S. officials said the Obama administration internally labeled the attack terrorism from the first day in order to unlock and mobilize certain resources to respond, and that officials were looking for one specific suspect.
>
> Yet, "four days later, the White House sent U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice to five different Sunday talk shows to claim that the sacking and assassination sprang from a 'spontaneous' demonstration. That no longer can be explained as initial confusion over conflicting reports; it is now clearly a lie told by the White House." (The fact that terrorists, rather than demonstrators, overran the "poorly-secured" American consulate may have helped make it a "catastrophic intelligence loss.")
>
> This false claim resulted in a vast number of people calling for censorship or prosecution of the filmmaker.

Did you all hear about what Obama said about speech critical of Islam at the United Nations?

Look:

> Banning speech because someone reacts violently to it sets a terrible precedent. It gives the most violent or angry members of society a veto over free speech and what issues are discussed. It is always possible to blame the victim of violence for inciting aggression by an angry person through expression of views

> that offended that person. (For example, when a security guard working for a conservative group was shot by a critic of the group, some people blamed the group's rhetoric for supposedly creating a "climate of hate" that led the outraged shooter to react by attacking it, and said it must "share" the "blame" for the "growth of" such "violent acts.")
>
> The Obama administration has not advocated criminalizing speech against Islam. But at the United Nations, it has argued in favor of civil liability for speech that incites "discrimination" or "hostility" to Islam, based on the false assumption that civil liability is less subject to First Amendment limits. (The Supreme Court's *Hess* and *Brandenburg* decisions protect even speech that incites violence or legal violations unless the speech *intends and is likely* to cause *imminent* lawless action. The Administration is apparently unaware of, or does not agree with, federal appeals court rulings that apply those decisions to bar civil liability for speech that incites "discrimination.") As the National Review notes, the much-criticized statement by the U.S. Embassy in Egypt deploring the "abuse" of free speech in America…
>
> perfectly reflects the views of the United States government under Obama's stewardship. . . In 2009, the Obama State Department ceremoniously joined with Muslim governments to propose a United Nations resolution that, as legal commentator Stuart Taylor observed, was "all-too-friendly to censoring speech that some religions and races find offensive." . . .The sharia countries were happy with the compromise, though, because it also would have made unlawful speech that incites mere "discrimination" and "hostility" toward religion. Secretary Clinton's feint was that this passed constitutional muster because such speech would not be made *criminally* unlawful. Yet the First Amendment says "make no law," not "make no *criminal* law," restricting speech. The First Amendment permits us to criticize in a way that may provoke hostility — it would be unconstitutional to suppress that regardless of whether the law purporting to do so was civil, as opposed to criminal.

What does it mean that the President of the United States would lie to the American people in order to justify cracking down on free speech? We know he doesn't like religious liberty or private property or firearm ownership or the free market – must he also go against free speech now?

Related posts

- UK Independent: "America 'was warned of embassy attack but did nothing'"
- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser
- Obama's ten worst foreign policy blunders

We must make the moral argument against dependence on government

September 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article by Jackie Gingrich Cushman.

Full text:

> The Obama administration's policies are bad. Bad in the sense that the policies are morally corrupting. They take money and control away from people and give them to government bureaucrats, who then decide what should be done. The policies encourage people to be less responsible personally and to rely more on the government.
>
> Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher argued that "socialism itself — in all its incarnations, wherever and however it was applied — was morally corrupting," Claire Berlinski wrote in "There Is No Alternative: Why Margaret Thatcher Matters" (Basic Books, 2008). "Socialism turned good citizens into bad ones; it turned strong nations into weak ones; it promoted vice and discouraged virtue … transformed formerly hardworking and self-reliant men and women into whining, weak and flabby loafers."
>
> Sound familiar?
>
> Republicans are currently debating the surface arguments about the Obama administration's programs — they cost too much, they are not paid for and there is too much government intervention.
>
> The core of the matter is the same today as it was in Great Britain in the 1970s.
>
> The system President Obama is championing is morally wrong.
>
> In order to win in November, Republican nominee Mitt Romney must win the argument, and thereby win the vote.
>
> The argument is that the system Obama is promoting is bad and that it creates a weak society. Romney needs to articulate what it is to be an American; why we must defend America's core values; why they are good values.
>
> Romney's speech this week at the Clinton Global Initiative reverberated with these themes.
>
> He talked about "the incomparable dignity of work."
>
> "Free enterprise," he said, "has done more to bless humanity than any other economic system not only because it is the only system that creates a prosperous middle class, but also because it is the only system where the individual enjoys the freedom to guide and build his or her own life. Free enterprise cannot only make us better off financially, it can make us better people."

> Romney recounted the story of Muhammed Bouazizi of Tunisia. “He was just 26 years old. He had provided for his family since he was a young boy. He worked a small fruit stand, selling to passers-by. The regular harassment by corrupt bureaucrats was elevated one day when they took crates of his fruit and his weighing scales away from him.
>
> “On the day of his protest, witnesses say that an officer slapped Bouazizi and he cried out: ‘Why are you doing this to me? I’m a simple person, and I just want to work.'”
>
> “I just want to work,” Romney repeated.
>
> “Work. That must be at the heart of our effort to help people build economies that can create jobs for people, young and old alike. Work builds self-esteem,” he continued. “It transforms minds from fantasy and fanaticism to reality and grounding. Work will not long tolerate corruption nor quietly endure the brazen theft by government of the product of hardworking men and women.”
>
> He linked free enterprise to freedom. “The most successful countries shared something in common,” he said. “They were the freest. They protected the rights of the individual. They enforced the rule of law. And they encouraged free enterprise. They understood that economic freedom is the only force in history that has consistently lifted people out of poverty — and kept people out of poverty.”
>
> The next step is for Romney to lay out this argument not only for other countries, but for our own. It works here as well as abroad. There are 12.5 million unemployed Americans; 8 million more are working part-time when they want to work full time; 2.6 million people are so discouraged that they have given up looking for work and are no longer counted as unemployed.
>
> More than 23 million Americans understand the statement, “I just want to work.”
>
> These people and those around them understand that there is great dignity in work, and want to work — but cannot find a job.
>
> In order to win the vote in November, we must first win the argument. America works best when Americans are working. The way to get more Americans to work is to promote freedom, ingenuity and free enterprise. While government programs and subsidies might provide temporary relief, the only proven way to long-term prosperity is to create more jobs, thereby allowing people to lift themselves up, providing not only their monetary needs, but also dignity of purpose.

My biggest concern about socialism is how it makes it harder for men to be providers, and easier for women to do without a man – *even having children without a man*. I really oppose that – fatherlessness is not good for children.

Voting for Democrats means voting for bigger government which means voting for higher taxes to pay for it all. Higher taxes means that there is less money in the pockets of job

creators, and that means fewer jobs. But it also that a married man can no longer retain enough of his earnings to support a family. And that means his wife has to work and won’t be able to take care of young children or her husband. Instead of learning the values of the parents, children will learn what the government schools decide they should learn. It’s a disaster. And it’s immoral. It’s immoral to take the provider role away from men and give it to a parasitical secular government. It destroys marriage and it destroys family.

Seven stories about Mitt Romney that you won't hear from the liberal media

September 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Mr. Hawkins wrote a column entitled "7 Incredible Personal Stories About Mitt Romney That You May Not Know".

Here's my favorite:

> **2) Mitt Romney gave milk to a V.A. hospital:** This is the kind of thing **Mitt Romney has done for people in need who cross his path**.
>
> He shared a story of a V.A. hospital in Boston that Mitt Romney stopped at while on the campaign trail running against Ted Kennedy. Ted Kennedy had made a thirty minute stop at the same location a couple of weeks prior.After touring the V.A. hospital, Mitt asked to look at their books. After he spent forty minutes going through their books, he told them, "You run a very good place, very tight. Very good." Romney asked to go on another tour of the hospital, and after spending an hour and forty minutes there, the last question he asked was, "So what… what do you — what are you lacking? What do you need help with?"
>
> The response? "Milk."
>
> Since the press was around, snapping photos and asking questions, Glenn explained that Romney did a really awkward joke where he said, "maybe we should teach everyone here how to milk a cow."
>
> Of course, that's all the press cared to hear and ran with a story that claims "Mitt Romney says veterans should have to milk cows."
>
> "This is where it gets good," Glenn started. "Romney calls him up the next morning."
>
> Romney first apologizes to the man who runs the hospital for any problems the attention from the press jumping on his words brought to the hospital. He next offers to help with the milk situation.
>
> "Friday comes, and the milkman comes," Glenn continues. "This is what the vets needed – they needed 7,000 pints of milk a week. Milkman shows up, 7,000 pints. The head of the V.A. hospital asks, 'Where did all this come from?' He [the milkman] said 'an anonymous donor.' Now, the guy didn't put it together."
>
> Glenn explains that when the next week rolled around, the milkman shows up again, and continued to show up every week for two years. After two years of delivering 7,000 pints of milk a week to the hospital, as the milkman is retiring, the man finally gets him to reveal the anonymous donor.
>
> It's Mitt Romney.
>
> "Mitt Romney was writing a personal check and didn't want anybody to know for

> two years and provided the vets with all of their milk in Boston," Glenn explained to listeners this morning.
>
> When Romney became governor, he sent a bill through to help the V.A. hospital – it was down to the dollar.

Read the other six.

Meanwhile, taxpayers spent $1.4 billion on Barack Obama and his family.

Mr. Hawkins and I share the view that Romney was not the most conservative candidate in the Republican primary. I wanted Michele Bachmann first, then Rick Santorum when she dropped out. John wanted Newt Gingrich. But we would both rather have Romney, than Obama. At least now we know that there are some good things about Mitt Romney as a man, even if I don't agree with him on policy.

Friday night movie: The Mark of Zorro (1940)

September 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.7/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> The film is based on the story *The Curse of Capistrano* written by Johnston McCulley, originally published in 1919, which introduced the masked hero Zorro. The story is set in Southern California during the early 19th century. The plot deals with Don Diego Vega (Tyrone Power), the apparently foppish son of wealthy ranchero Don Alejandro Vega (Montagu Love), who returns to California after his education in Spain. He is horrified at the way the common people are mistreated by alcalde Luis Quintero (J. Edward Bromberg). Don Diego adopts the guise of El Zorro ("the fox"), a masked outlaw who becomes the defender of the common people.

Now I don't want to give anything away, but the phrase "the finest swordfight in cinema" is often applied to this movie. Don't miss it!

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night detectives: one episode of Hercule Poirot
- Friday night soldiers: two episodes of Combat!
- Friday night movie: The Dam Busters (1955)
- Friday night movie: Sink the Bismarck! (1960)
- Friday night movie: The Crossing (2000)
- Friday night movie: The Great Escape (1963)
- Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)
- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)

- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Obama wants to send $1 billion of aid to Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

September 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the radically left-wing New York Times.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration notified Congress on Friday that it would provide Egypt's new government an emergency cash infusion of $450 million, but the aid immediately encountered resistance from a prominent lawmaker wary of foreign aid and Egypt's new course under the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood.
>
> […]The aid is part of the $1 billion in assistance that the Obama administration has pledged to Egypt to bolster its transition to democracy after the overthrow last year of the former president, Hosni Mubarak. Its fate, however, was clouded by concerns over the new government's policies and, more recently, the protests that damaged the American Embassy in Cairo.
>
> […]Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, speaking at a meeting of the Group of 8 nations in New York, said on Friday that the world needed to do more to support the governments that have emerged from the Arab Spring uprisings, including those in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.
>
> "The recent riots and protests throughout the region have brought the challenge of transition into sharp relief," Mrs. Clinton said, without mentioning the assistance to Egypt specifically. "Extremists are clearly determined to hijack these wars and revolutions to further their agendas and ideology, so our partnership must empower those who would see their nations emerge as true democracies."
>
> The debate comes as the issue of foreign aid in general made an unexpected appearance in the presidential campaign.
>
> In a speech in New York on Tuesday, Mr. Obama's Republican challenger, Mitt Romney, called for revamping assistance to focus more on investments in the private sector than on direct aid… While Mr. Romney did not address aid to Egypt directly, he cited Mr. Morsi's membership in the Muslim Brotherhood as one of the alarming developments in the Middle East, along with the war in Syria, Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons and the killing of the American ambassador to Libya.
>
> […]The assistance outlined in letters to Congress on Friday would be contingent on Egypt's setting in motion economic and budgetary changes that the International Monetary Fund is now negotiating as part of a $4.8 billion loan.
>
> The administration has also thrown its support behind that loan, and officials said they hoped it would be completed before the end of the year.

Is the economy doing so well than we have money to spare to send to foreign governments that don’t like us very much? Whatever need we have to strengthen diplomatic ties with nations like Egypt would best be met by foreign investment, where we get something back, rather than foreign aid, where we get nothing back.

J. Warner Wallace's surprising advice to stop apostasy among young Christians

September 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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J. Warner Wallace has posted his recommended plan to halt the exodus of young Christians from Christianity during college. It's all up at Please Convince Me.

Excerpt:

> In my last post, I summarized the studies and publications that describe the flight of young people from the Church. A compelling cumulative circumstantial case can be made to support the fact that young college aged Christians are walking away from Christianity in record numbers. What can we do about it? What *can* be done? Whenever people ask me this question, I always say the same thing. STOP TEACHING YOUNG CHRISTIANS. Just stop it. Whatever Christendom is doing in its effort to teach it's young, the effort appears to largely be a failure. In fact, Ken Ham (in his book, *Already Gone:Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do To Stop It*) found that young Christians who faithfully attended Bible classes were actually more likely to question the authority of Scripture, more likely to defend the legality of abortion, same-sex marriage, and premarital sex, and more likely to leave the church! What's going on here? I think I know. It's time to stop teaching our young people; it's time to start training them.
>
> There's a difference between teaching and training. Training is teaching in preparation for a battle. Boxers train for upcoming fights. In fact, boxers are sometimes known to get fat and lazy until the next fight is scheduled. Once the date has been signed, fighters begin to train in earnest. Why? Because they know that they are going to eventually get in the ring and face an aggressive opponent. We train when we know we are about to encounter a battle. Imagine for a moment that you are enrolled in an algebra class. If the teacher assured you that you would never, ever be required to take a test, and that you would pass the class regardless of your level of understanding, how hard do you think you would study? How deeply do you think you would come to understand the material? How committed do you think you would be to the material?
>
> […]Years ago, as a youth pastor, I started taking annual trips to Salt Lake City and Berkeley. Why? I was scheduling theological and philosophical battles to help prepare my young Christians for the larger looming battle they would someday face on their own. If you want to teach your young people theology, there is no better method than to put them in direct contact with people who believe in a very sophisticated heresy. Mormons use the same terminology as Christians but deny the basic tenants of our faith. In order to dialogue with Mormons effectively, we first have to understand what *we* believe. When we train young people in preparation for an evangelism trip to Salt Lake City, we give meaning and

> purpose to the content of our teaching. In a similar way, our evangelistic trips to Berkeley (where we contact notable atheist speakers and atheist groups on campus) require us to prepare ourselves to answer the myriad of atheistic objections we will inevitably encounter. Once again, the content of our teaching in preparation for this trip takes on purpose and meaning when we know the level of our understanding will eventually be tested.

Read the whole thing. Mr. Wallace has experience working with young people, and lecturing on apologetics here at home and abroad. He understands young people because he has had to deal with them. Even if you don't agree with them, it's an interesting view. Would the church really turn away from being inward-focused and rooted in blind faith and emotional singing, and re-invent their approach so that it takes the other side seriously?

By the way, this is something I like to use in my mentoring of young people and in courting women as well. If I am trying to choose someone to work on, my first questions are always about what they do for a living, what they've studied, who in their lives is a non-Christian. I am always looking for people who have some opposition to Christianity in their lives, because it's those people who have a motivation to learn. I am always surprised how naive pastors and worship leaders and youth pastors are about the opposition to Christianity in the world. They seem to be in their own little happy bubbles, never coming out to deal with people who disagree with them. I think the problem is that they often think that Christianity is not about truth but about feelings, and so no work needs to be done to defend any truth claims.

I was having a conversation last night with a friend who is curious about Christianity and he told me about his encounter with a "Christian" girl from the Deep South who told him about her eating disorder and how God saved her from it. He asked her if she knew who William Lane Craig was and she said no. He asked her if she knew how to defend the existence of God or the resurrection, and she said no. She had been taught but not trained. Her education was in dancing and the performing arts, as well. All of the the fields that are of interest to Christians who want to make truth claims – physics, philosophy, biochemistry, history, etc. – were foreign to her. So you are left with the odd situation of people being raised in a Christian culture who have "experiences" with God making them happy. Their faith is all about *them* and nothing to do with anything in the real world out there.

I think that this woman is a very good example of what the church produces, by focusing on teaching, preaching, singing and never, ever taking seriously doubts and questions. What the church approach produces is faith as a personal preference – faith for the benefit of my feelings. But Christianity isn't a subjective experience, it's a set of objective claims that its adherents believe and have reasons and evidence to support that belief. And with that knowledge of those truth claims, we then proceed to have experiences in the world informed by a relationship with God. It is very confusing to jump right into having experiences, many of which are just subjective experiences, and having nothing to

say to an honest questioner who wants to see the evidence. But I would suspect that most pastors and church leaders are like the eating-disorder girl, and they just aren’t trained.

Obama administration warns contractors to delay layoffs to after election

September 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This is currently the top story at Fox News.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has doubled down on its plea to defense contractors not to warn employees about possible layoffs due to looming budget cuts — going so far as to offer to cover legal fees in compensation challenges.
>
> The move drew a stern rebuke Friday from South Dakota Republican Sen. John Thune, since federal law requires employers to give notice if mass layoffs are likely.
>
> "For the second time, the Obama administration has now encouraged government contractors to ignore the WARN Act and hold off on warning employees about possible layoffs due to the looming sequestration cuts," Thune, lead author of the Sequestration Transparency Act, said Friday.
>
> The offer to pay the legal fees was included in a memorandum issued by the administration Friday that also restated the Labor Department's position from July that contractors should not issue written notices to employees because of the "uncertainty" over the across-the-board cuts to the defense budget and other federal spending that will occur Jan. 2 unless Congress reaches a new deal.
>
> The notices are required under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act and generally require employers with more than 100 employees to provide 60-day notices of "mass layoffs if they are reasonably foreseeable."
>
> […]Rep. John Kline, chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, suggested last week that the Labor Department is trying to conceal the full impact of the cuts.
>
> "The Labor Department is trying to hide the consequences of sequestration from workers," Kline, R-Minn., said in a letter to Labor Secretary Hilda Solis.

So the administration is more concerned about being re-elected than with the cuts to an already weakened defense industry. The focus is always on rhetoric and perception with these Democrats, never on substance and doing what's right.

New study: huge decline in Democrat voter registration in key swing states

September 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Fox News, some very bad news for the Democrats.

Excerpt:

> Voter registration in the Buckeye State is down by 490,000 people from four years ago. Of that reduction, 44 percent is in Cleveland and surrounding Cuyahoga County, where Democrats outnumber Republicans more than two to one.
>
> "I think what we're seeing is a lot of spin and hype on the part of the Obama campaign to try to make it appear that they're going to cruise to victory in Ohio," Cuyahoga County Republican Chairman Rob Frost said. "It's not just Cuyahoga County. Nearly 350,000 of those voters are the decrease in the rolls in the three largest counties, Cuyahoga, Hamilton and Franklin."
>
> Frost points out that those three counties all contain urban centers, where the largest Democrat vote traditionally has been.
>
> Ohio is not alone. An August study by the left-leaning think tank Third Way showed that the Democratic voter registration decline in eight key swing states outnumbered the Republican decline by a 10-to-one ratio. In Florida, Democratic registration is down 4.9 percent, in Iowa down 9.5 percent. And in New Hampshire, it's down down 19.7 percent.
>
> […]The Third Way study, which was conducted in August, indicates the Democrats' drop in registered voters coincides with a gain in independent voters.
>
> "There are about half a million more independents now than there were just for years ago," Diggles said.

Meanwhile, the mainstream media continues to trumpet polls that oversample Democrats, even though Democrat registration continues to plunge.

How apologetics relies on a sound understanding of the gospel

September 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Eric posted an article linking theology and apologetics at the Ratio Christi Ohio State University blog.

Excerpt:

> Many of us in the apologetic endeavor have lamented over the fact that there is still a lot of apathy among churches about the need to defend the faith in the public square. I am convinced that one of the problems is that we are preaching a very weak Gospel. And if anything, it is a pragmatic Gospel. In other words, the Gospel is more about what Jesus can do for me. This can lead to a very self-centered Christian life rather than a mission centered Christian life. Don't get me wrong: I know churches send their people on short- term mission trips. This is done to try to get people to break Christians out of their narcissistic attitudes.
>
> […]To make Jesus as Lord of one's life is a lifelong process. It is a call to daily surrender. It certainly means we are under NEW MANAGEMENT. We are called to yield our time, bodies, goals and gifts to His Lordship. Is it easy? No, not at all. I struggle with this quite a bit. But we do have a Helper to give us the grace to do it (hint: study the ministry of the Holy Spirit). So in other words, we say '"Lord Jesus, have your way with me. I am relying on the work of the Holy Spirit to yield myself to you on a daily basis."
>
> There is no doubt that in a world that wants instant results, self- sacrifice is tough sell. As I said, part of the problem is that churches preach a Gospel that promises that Jesus will fix all our problems. And when things get tough, many people bail out. A long-term commitment to our Lord which involves self-denial (Luke 9:23) is hard to swallow for those that have been told The American Dream is the way of happiness.

I remember when I was growing up in youth group, my interest in apologetics was always looked at with suspicion by the other Christians and the church leaders. They all assumed nasty motives for me, like "pride" and having doubts about my faith. I think that churches need to get their act together and realize that apologetics is simply what Christians do when they 1) understand the gospel, and the importance of self-sacrifice and self-denial, and 2) understand that in today's world, people have intellectual objections to faith that require careful reasoning and objective evidence. Apologetics is not second-class Christianity, it's first-class Christianity. A person who does apologetics has clearly understood the what it means to take up his cross and follow Jesus.

Details of another Fast and Furious massacre to be revealed by Univision

October 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller, more news about the Obama administration's plan to facilitate the sale of assault weapons to Mexican drug cartels.

Excerpt:

> Spanish-language television network Univision plans to air a television special that it said reveals more violence than previously known, as well as the stories of how many more Operation Fast and Furious victims were killed, the network announced in a Friday release.
>
> "The consequences of the controversial 'Fast and Furious' undercover operation put in place by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) in 2009 have been deadlier than what has been made public to date," the network said. "The exclusive, in-depth investigation by Univision News' award-winning Investigative Unit — Univision Investiga — has found that the guns that crossed the border as part of Operation Fast and Furious caused dozens of deaths inside Mexico."
>
> Among other groups of Fast and Furious victim stories Univision says it will tell in the special to air Sunday evening at 7 p.m., is one about how "16 young people attending a party in a residential area of Ciudad Juárez in January of 2010″ were gunned down with weapons the Obama administration gave to drug cartel criminals through Fast and Furious.
>
> "Univision News' Investigative Unit was also able to identify additional guns that escaped the control of ATF agents and were used in different types of crimes throughout Mexico," the network added. "Furthermore, some of these guns — none of which were reported by congressional investigators — were put in the hands of drug traffickers in Honduras, Puerto Rico, and Colombia. A person familiar with the recent congressional hearings called Univision's findings 'the holy grail' that Congress had been searching for."
>
> A video preview published on Friday shows a number of the bodies of people killed with Fast and Furious weapons, as well as victims' family members pleading with outgoing Mexican President Felipe Calderon for justice.

Vice Presidential candidate Paul Ryan has now become the 131st Congressman to call for the resignation of Attorney General Eric Holder.

Excerpt:

> Republican vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan agrees with presidential candidate Mitt Romney's call for Attorney General Eric Holder to resign, or for

> President Barack Obama to fire him, over Operation Fast and Furious, a Ryan spokesman told The Daily Caller.
>
> "The congressman agrees with the governor," Ryan spokesman Brendan Buck told TheDC on Sunday, referring to Mitt Romney's call for Holder's resignation or termination over the gunwalking scandal last December.
>
> "Either Mr. Holder himself should resign, or the president should ask for his resignation or remove him," Romney said in December 2011. "It's unacceptable for him to continue in that position now given the fact that he has misled Congress and entirely botched the investigation of the Fast and Furious program."
>
> Ryan's call for Holder's ouster over Fast and Furious comes a day after he told a sportsmen's group that gun owners should be worried about Obama trying to infringe on their Second Amendment rights if he is re-elected. Speaking about Fast and Furious specifically, Ryan said at the Saturday event that such an operation "would never occur under a Romney-Ryan administration," according to CBS News.
>
> […]Fast and Furious was a program of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, overseen by Holder's Department of Justice. It sent thousands of weapons to Mexican drug cartels via straw purchasers — people who purchased guns in the United States with the known intention of illegally trafficking them somewhere else.
>
> Fast and Furious guns were used to kill U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry on Dec. 14, 2010, in Peck Canyon, Ariz.

Wouldn't it be neat if this were to come up in an election debate?

Related posts

- Obama campaign contributor and gun control advocate ran Fast and Furious
- Obama covers-up DOJ operation that allowed gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Republicans prepare contempt citation for AG Eric Holder over Fast and Furious
- Eric Holder wants to brainwash people against legal gun ownership
- Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent's murder
- Eric Holder testifies on Fast and Furious gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Fast and Furious assault weapons seized from drug cartel enforcer's home
- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels

- Slain border agent’s family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano’s indifference

Eric Holder participated in takeover of ROTC office at Columbia University

October 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bombshell story in the Daily Caller.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> **As a freshman at Columbia University in 1970, future Attorney General Eric Holder participated in a five-day occupation of an abandoned Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) headquarters with a group of black students later described by the university's Black Students' Organization as "armed," The Daily Caller has learned.**
>
> Department of Justice spokeswoman Tracy Schmaler has not responded to questions from The Daily Caller about whether Holder himself was armed — and if so, with what sort of weapon.
>
> Holder was then among the leaders of the Student Afro-American Society (SAAS), which demanded that the former ROTC office be renamed the "Malcolm X Lounge." The change, the group insisted, was to be made "in honor of a man who recognized the importance of territory as a basis for nationhood."
>
> Black radicals from the same group also occupied the office of Dean of Freshman Henry Coleman until their demands were met. Holder has publicly acknowledged being a part of that action.
>
> The details of the student-led occupation, including the claim that the raiders were "armed," come from a deleted Web page of the Black Students' Organization (BSO) at Columbia, a successor group to the SAAS. Contemporary newspaper accounts in The Columbia Daily Spectator, a student newspaper, did not mention weapons.
>
> Holder, now the United States' highest-ranking law enforcement official, has given conflicting accounts of this episode during college commencement addresses at Columbia, but both the BSO's website and the Daily Spectator have published facts that conflict with his version of events.
>
> Holder has bragged about his involvement in the "rise of black consciousness" protests at Columbia.
>
> "I was among a large group of students who felt strongly about the way we thought the world should be, and we weren't afraid to make our opinions heard," he said during Columbia's 2009 commencement exercises. "I did not take a final exam until my junior year at Columbia — we were on strike every time finals seemed to roll around — but we ran out of issues by that third year."
>
> Though then-Dean Carl Hovde declared the occupation of the Naval ROTC office illegal and said it violated university policy, the college declined to prosecute any

> of the students involved. This decision may have been made to avoid a repeat of violent Columbia campus confrontations between police and members of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in 1968.
>
> The ROTC headquarters was ultimately renamed the Malcolm X lounge as the SAAS organization demanded. It later became a hang-out spot for another future U.S. leader, Barack Obama, according to David Maraniss' best-selling "Barack Obama: The Story."

"Armed"? Is this why Attorney General Eric Holder involved in scandals like Fast and Furious? Maybe he thinks that it is a good idea for dug cartels to have assault weapons? Maybe because he has never had any respect for law and order at all.

Philip E. Johnson lectures on science, evolution and religion

October 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this fun lecture by the grandfather of the big-tent intelligent design movement, Berkeley law professor Philip E. Johnson.

I'll bet you guys have all heard of him, but you've never heard him speak, right? Well, I was a young man, I used to listen to Phil's lectures and his debates with Eugenie Scott quite a bit. This is one of my favorite lectures. Very easy to understand, and boilerplate for anything else in the origins debate. This is a great lecture – funny, engaging and useful. You will definitely listen to this lecture several times if you listen to it once.

The MP3 is here. (91 minutes, 62 megabytes)

The Inherit the Wind stereotype

- Many people get their understanding of origins by watching movies like "Inherit the Wind" (or reading science fiction)
- The actual events of the Scopes trial are nothing like what the movie portrays
- The law forbidding the teaching of evolution was symbolic, not meant to be enforced
- The actual Scopes trial was a publicity stunt to attract attention to Dayton, TN to bring business to the town
- The ACLU advertised for a teacher who would be willing to be sued
- They found a substitute physical education teacher who would be willing to "break" the law
- The movie is nothing like the actual events the movie is a morality play
- The religious people are evil and stupid and ignorant and bigoted
- The scientists and lawyers are all intelligent, romantic, and honest seekers of the truth
- The religious people think that the Bible trumps science and science is not as reliable as the Bible
- The movie argues that the reason why there is ANY dissent to evolution is because of Biblical fundamentalism
- The movie presents the idea that there are no scientific problems with evolution
- The movie says that ONLY Biblical fundamentalists who believe in 6 day, 24-hour creation doubt evolution
- The movie says that Biblical fundamentalism are close-minded, and not open to scientific truth
- The movie says that people who read the Bible as making factual claims are misinterpreting the Bible
- The movie says that smart people read the Bible for comfort and feelings and arbitrary values, not for truth

Guided evolution and methodological naturalism

- What scientists mean by evolution is that fully naturalistic, unguided, materialistic mechanisms caused the diversity of life
- Scientists do not allow that God had any real objective effect on how life was created
- Scientists think that nature did all the creating, and any mention of God is unnecessary opinion – God didn't DO ANYTHING
- Scientists operate with one overriding rule – you can only explain the physical world with physical and material causes
- Scientists DO NOT allow that God could have done anything detectable by the sciences
- Scientists WILL NOT consider the idea that natural, material processes might be INSUFFICIENT for explaining everything in nature
- You cannot even ask the question about whether natural laws, matter and chance can explain something in nature
- Intelligent causes can NEVER be the explanation for anything in nature, and you can't even test experimentally to check that
- Scientists ASSUME that everything can be explained with natural laws, matter and chance – no questioning of natural causes is allowed
- Where no natural explanation of a natural phenomenon is available, scientists SPECULATE about undiscovered natural explanations
- The assumption of naturalistic sufficiency is called "methodological naturalism"
- To question the assumptions that natural is all there is, and that nature has to do its own creating, makes you an "enemy of science"
- But Johnson says that *naturalists* are the enemies of science, because they are like the Biblical fundamentalists
- Naturalists have a presumption that prevents them from being willing to follow the evidence where it is leading
- Experiments are not even needed, because the presumption of naturalism overrides any experimental finding that falsifies the sufficiency of natural causes to explain some natural phenomenon

What can natural selection and mutation actually do?

- what evolution has actually been observed to do is explain changing populations of moths and finches
- finches with smaller or larger beaks are observed to have differential survival rates when there are droughts or floods
- no new body plan or new organ type has been observed to emerge from these environmental pressures
- the only kind of evolution that has been observed is evolution *within types* – no new genetic instructions are created

- in textbooks, only confirming examples are presented – but what is required is a broad pattern of gradual development of species
- if you look at the fossil record, what you see in most cases is variation within types based on changing environments
- the real question is: can natural law and chance *be observed* to be doing any creating of body plans and organ types?

What kind of effect requires an intelligent cause?

- the thing to be explained in the history of life is the functional information sequences
- you need to have a sequence of symbols or characters that is sufficiently long
- your long sequence of characters has to be sequenced in the right order to have biological function
- the only thing that can create long sequences of functional information is an intelligent cause
- intelligent design people accept micro-evolution – changes within types – because that's been observed
- the real thing to be explained is the first living cell's functional information, and the creation of new function information

Critical response

The next 15 minutes of the lecture contain a critical response from a philosophy professor who thinks that there have been no developments in design arguments since Aquinas and Paley. He basically confirms the stereotypes that Johnson outlined in the first part of the lecture. I recommend listening to this, because it shows how weak the counter arguments are, and how these pseudo-intellectuals mislead unprepared students to question their Christian faith – especially dangerous since they have the power of the grading pen. Notice especially how he never mentions any arguments that Christians actually use, nor does he mention any actual science. Everything is "words, words, words" as Hamlet might say – no talking about experiments.

Here's what he says:

1) Don't take the Bible literally, even if the genre is literal.

- all opposition to evolution is based on an ignorant, fundamentalist, literal reading of the Bible
- Christians need to reinterpret the Bible so that it is basically relaying personal preferences, and not factual information, regardless of the genre intended
- the Bible really doesn't communicate anything about the way the world really is
- the Bible is just meant to suggest certain opinions and experiences which you may find fetching, or not, depending on your feelings and community
- if Christians would just interpret the Bible as myths and opinions on par with other personal preferences, then evolution is no threat to religious belief

2) As long as you treat the design argument as divorced from evidence, it's not very effective

- the latest and best version of the design argument is Paley's argument which involves no experimental data, so I'll critique that
- this 200-year old argument which doesn't rely on science has serious problems, and unnamed Christians agree with me!
- Christians should NOT try to prove God's existence using evidence from the natural world (as Romans 1 says), and in fact it's "Pelagianism" to even try
- Christians should divorce their faith from logic and evidence even though the Bible says that Jesus performed miracles to supply evidence for his claims
- Christians should not tie their faith to the best science available today, because science is always changing – what happens if we discover that the universe is eternal tomorrow?
- What if! What if! Just because you guys have the facts on your side today, tomorrow science might prove that the universe is eternal! What would you do then?
- It's a good idea for me to critique the arguments of 1000-year old people who did not know anything about the cosmic fine-tuning argument – that's fair!
- I find it very useful to tell people that the argument from design is false without mentioning any scientific evidence of design from things like DNA and fine-tuning
- We need to assume that the natural world is explainable using only natural causes
- We should assume that natural causes create all life, and then rule out all experimental evidence for intelligent causes that we have today
- As long as you accept that God is a personal opinion that has nothing to do with reality, then you can do science
- The non-Christian process theologian Teilhard de Chardin is actually a Christian, and he accepts evolution, so quit complaining you ignorant fundies!
- Remember when theists said God caused thunder because he was bowling in the clouds and then we found out he didn't? Yeah well – maybe tomorrow we'll find out that functional sequences of amino acids and proteins have natural causes! What would you do then?

3) What the Bible really says is that you should be a political liberal

Q&A time

The lecture concludes with 13 minutes of questions.

Presidential debate schedule kicks off this Wednesday: live streaming available

October 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the debate schedule:

> **First presidential candidates' debate between President Barack Obama, former Mass. Gov. Mitt Romney**
>
> - Topic: Domestic policy
> - Date: Wednesday, Oct. 3
> - Time: 9 – 10:30 p.m. EDT
> - Location: University of Denver, Denver, Colo.
> - Moderator: Jim Lehrer, executive editor of PBS's "NewsHour"
> - Format: "The debate will focus on domestic policy and be divided into six time segments of approximately 15 minutes each on topics to be selected by the moderator and announced several weeks before the debate," according to the Commission on Presidential Debates. "The moderator will open each segment with a question, after which each candidate will have two minutes to respond. The moderator will use the balance of the time in the segment for a discussion of the topic."
>
> **Vice presidential candidates' debate between Vice President Joe Biden, Wis. Rep. Paul Ryan**
>
> - Topic: Foreign and domestic topics
> - Date: Thursday, Oct. 11
> - Time: 9 – 10:30 p.m. EDT
> - Location: Centre College, Danville, Ky.
> - Moderator: Martha Raddatz, senior foreign affairs correspondent, ABC News
> - Format: "The debate will cover both foreign and domestic topics and be divided into nine time segments of approximately 10 minutes each. The moderator will ask an opening question, after which each candidate will have two minutes to respond. The moderator will use the balance of the time in the segment for a discussion of the question."
>
> **Second presidential candidates' debate between Obama, Romney**
>
> - Topic: Foreign and domestic issues
> - Date: Tuesday, Oct. 16
> - Time: 9 – 10:30 p.m. EDT
> - Location: Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y.
> - Moderator: Candy Crowley, chief political correspondent, CNN, and anchor,

> CNN's "State of the Union"
> - Format: "The second presidential debate will take the form of a town meeting, in which citizens will ask questions of the candidates on foreign and domestic issues. Candidates each will have two minutes to respond, and an additional minute for the moderator to facilitate a discussion. The town meeting participants will be undecided voters selected by the Gallup Organization."
>
> **Third presidential candidates' debate between Obama, Romney**
>
> - Topic: Foreign policy
> - Date: Monday, Oct. 22
> - Time: 9 – 10:30 p.m. EDT
> - Location: Lynn University, Boca Raton, Fla.
> - Moderator: Bob Schieffer, chief Washington correspondent, CBS News, and moderator, "Face the Nation"
> - Format: "The format for the debate will be identical to the first presidential debate and will focus on foreign policy."

My take: This debate schedule really worries me. It's only 4 debates, and they are really late in the game. Voting has already started. None of the debates are with Fox News, so they will all feature biased questions about banning contraception and prayer in schools. Academic studies have all shown that the mainstream news media is largely biased to the left, so I just don't expect that these debates will be fair. Why do Republicans agree to debates moderated by leftists, with topics chosen by leftists? I will never understand. We need more debates, and we need them to have longer speeches and fair and balanced moderators.

I'm expecting that Fox News Live will offer streaming of the debates as they occur, otherwise I will be watching the biased coverage of ABC News via Youtube.

New study: higher risk of divorce when men do housework

October 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Atheist commenter Jerry sent me this story about a Norwegian study that affirms traditional roles within the marriage.

Excerpt:

> Couples who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a Norwegian study sure to get tongues wagging has shown.
>
> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled Equality in the Home, said.
>
> Researchers found no, or very little, cause-and-effect. Rather, they saw in the correlation a sign of "modern" attitudes.
>
> "Modern couples are just that, both in the way they divide up the chores and in their perception of marriage" as being less sacred, Mr Hansen said, stressing it was all about values.
>
> "In these modern couples, women also have a high level of education and a well-paid job, which makes them less dependent on their spouse financially. They can manage much easier if they divorce," he said.
>
> There were only some marginal aspects where researchers said there may be cause-and-effect.
>
> "Maybe it's sometimes seen as a good thing to have very clear roles with lots of clarity … where one person is not stepping on the other's toes," Mr Hansen suggested.
>
> "There could be less quarrels, since you can easily get into squabbles if both have the same roles and one has the feeling that the other is not pulling his or her own weight," he added.

I think that this article is basically correct – men like having clearly defined roles. A man has the traditional roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. He has the responsibility to lead in those areas. He doesn't want to have the woman's role, he doesn't want to be forced to perform it. Men don't like to be nagged. He doesn't want to be micromanaged. He doesn't want the government telling him how to do his roles, either. I think that one of the reasons why men are so unwilling to marry is because they sense that they could be dominated by their wives and by the state – a state that is not very interested in promoting the interests of men.

In my case, I am a bachelor, so I have to do all my own cleaning, cooking and nurturing. I like learning more about cooking and cleaning and anything else practical. But I hope that if I did get married, then my wife would take the lead in those areas, and push me to be better at my special male roles. I would also hope that she would vote to protect my ability to perform my roles. For example, lower taxes and less regulation, so that I can easily find a job to provide for the family. And concealed carry, so that I can always protect my family. And school choice, so that the schools do not undermine our values and teaching. I think that women should be focused on supporting their husbands, and raising effective, influential children. Once the children are old enough, she can focus having an influence outside the home through engagement in the church, the university and in the political sphere. I think someone like Michele Bachmann has done everything right at the right times, for example.

Related posts

- Female superintendent and ACLU fascists ban father-daughter school dances
- New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially for women
- New study: marriage drops probability of child poverty by 82%
- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less
- How do prostitutes stay in business in an era of hook-up sex?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- Should Christian men marry? What's the worst that could happen?
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage

- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the “hook-up” culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- How feminism’s war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy

October 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Doug Groothuis tweeted this article from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> In his United Nations speech on Tuesday, President Obama talked about the September 11 attack on the U.S. consulate in Libya and declared that "there should be no doubt that we will be relentless in tracking down the killers and bringing them to justice." What he didn't say is how relentless he'll be in tracking down the security lapses and intelligence failures that contributed to the murders. Let's say there's some doubt about that.
>
> None of the initial explanations offered by the White House and State Department since the assault on the Benghazi consulate has held up. First the Administration blamed protests provoked by an amateurish anti-Islam clip posted on YouTube. Cue Susan Rice, the U.N. Ambassador and leading candidate for Secretary of State in a second Obama term: "What happened initially was that it was a spontaneous reaction . . . as a consequence of the video, that people gathered outside the embassy and then it grew very violent."
>
> Administration officials also maintained that the diplomatic missions in Libya and Egypt, the site of the first attacks this September 11, were properly defended and that the U.S. had no reason to prepare for any attack. "The office of the director of National Intelligence has said we have no actionable intelligence that an attack on our post in Benghazi was planned or imminent," Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said last week, calling the security measures in place there "robust."
>
> Cell phone video footage and witness testimony from Benghazi soon undercut the Administration trope of an angry march "hijacked" by a few bad people. As it turned out, the assault was well-coordinated, with fighters armed with guns, RPGs and diesel canisters, which were used to set the buildings on fire. Ambassador Chris Stevens died of smoke inhalation. Briefing Congress, the Administration changed its story and said the attacks were pre-planned and linked to al Qaeda.
>
> You'd think this admission would focus attention on why the compound was so vulnerable to begin with. But the Administration wants to avoid this conversation. The removal of all staff from Benghazi, including a large component of intelligence officers, would also seem to hinder their ability to investigate the attacks and bring the killers to justice.
>
> […]On April 10, for example, an explosive device was thrown at a convoy

> carrying U.N. envoy Ian Martin. On June 6, an improvised explosive device exploded outside the U.S. consulate. In late August, State warned American citizens who were planning to travel to Libya about the threat of assassinations and car bombings.
>
> Despite all this, U.S. diplomatic missions had minimal security. Officials told the Journal that the Administration put too much faith in weak Libyan police and military forces. The night of the Benghazi attack, four lightly armed Libyans and five American security officers were on duty. The complex lacked smoke-protection masks and fire extinguishers. Neither the consulate in Benghazi nor the embassy in Tripoli were guarded by U.S. Marines, whose deployment to Libya wasn't a priority.
>
> Rummaging through the Benghazi compound, a CNN reporter found a seven-page notebook belonging to Ambassador Stevens. According to the network, the diary said he was concerned about the "never-ending" security threats in Benghazi and wrote that he was on an al Qaeda hit list. In deference to the family's wishes, CNN didn't quote directly from the diary and didn't divulge any private information in it.
>
> His worries are newsworthy, however, and can inform America's response. But Mrs. Clinton's long-time and closest media adviser chose to attack CNN. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Philippe Reines called the network's conduct "disgusting." He then deployed words not fit for a family newspaper in an exchange with a reporter for the Web site BuzzFeed. Mr. Reines may wish to protect his boss's legacy for her 2016 Presidential run, but that won't be enhanced by the appearance of a cover-up.

Lack of preparation, lack of seriousness, blame-shifting and finger-pointing.

Bret Stephens has an article in the Wall Street Journal that added to that list of failures.

Excerpt:

> The hour is 5 p.m., Sept. 11, Washington time, and the scene is an Oval Office meeting among President Obama, the secretary of defense, the national security adviser and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi has been under assault for roughly 90 minutes. Some 30 U.S. citizens are at mortal risk. The whereabouts of Ambassador Stevens are unknown.
>
> What is uppermost on the minds of the president and his advisers? The safety of Americans, no doubt. So what are they prepared to do about it? Here is The Wall Street Journal's account of the meeting:
>
> "There was no serious consideration at that hour of intervention with military force, officials said. Doing so without Libya's permission could represent a violation of sovereignty and inflame the situation, they said. Instead, the State Department reached out to the Libyan government to get reinforcements to the scene."

> So it did. Yet the attack was far from over. After leaving the principal U.S. compound, the Americans retreated to a second, supposedly secret facility, which soon came under deadly mortar fire. Time to call in the troops?
>
> "Some officials said the U.S. could also have sent aircraft to the scene as a 'show of force' to scare off the attackers," the Journal reported, noting that there's a U.S. air base just 450 miles away in Sicily. "State Department officials dismissed the suggestions as unrealistic. 'They would not have gotten there in two hours, four hours or six hours.'"
>
> The U.S. security detail only left Washington at 8 a.m. on Sept. 12, more than 10 hours after the attacks began. A commercial jet liner can fly from D.C. to Benghazi in about the same time.

450 miles? An F-15 Eagle can reach speeds of up to 1,600 miles an hour at high altitude. What is this two hour garbage?

I have said it before and I'll say it again. You cannot entrust national security and foreign policy to Democrats. They just aren't serious about these issues. All they can do is pull out of wars, cut defense budgets, hamstring the CIA, set up the Muslim Brotherhood in power, undercut our allies, and praise our enemies. They only care about winning the election, and after their failures are exposed, they play the blame game.

Related posts

- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack
- UK Independent: "America 'was warned of embassy attack but did nothing'"
- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser
- Obama administration warns contractors to delay layoffs to after election
- Obama wants to send $1 billion of aid to Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
- Report: Iran shipping arms and personnel to Syria through Iraq
- Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)
- The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration
- Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month
- Defense cuts to an already weakened military exposes us to aggression
- Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES
- Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?
- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority
- Obama's neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Obama's Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors
- Former DEA chief warns of cooperation between Hezbollah and drug cartels
- Iran launches Spanish-language TV channel in Venezuela
- Obama's defense cuts undermine our national security

- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them
- Iraq plunges into chaos as U.S. troops withdraw
- Iran laughs as Obama pleads for return of unmanned drone

New study: women economists more likely to support higher taxes and bigger government

October 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From liberal USA Today.

Excerpt:

> A lot depends on whether the economist is a man or a woman. A new study shows a large gender gap on economic policy among the nation's professional economists, a divide similar — and in some cases bigger — than the gender divide found in the general public.
>
> […]Female economists tend to favor a bigger role for government while male economists have greater faith in business and the marketplace. Is the U.S. economy excessively regulated? Sixty-five percent of female economists said "no" — 24 percentage points higher than male economists.
>
> […]The genders are most divorced from each other on the question of equality for women. Male economists overwhelmingly think the wage gap between men and women is largely the result of individuals' skills, experience and voluntary choices. Female economists overwhelmingly disagree by a margin of 4-to-1.

More findings:

- Health insurance. Female economists thought employers should be required to provide health insurance for full-time workers: 40% in favor to 37% against, with the rest offering no opinion. By contrast, men were strongly against the idea: 21% in favor and 52% against.
- Education. Females narrowly opposed taxpayer-funded vouchers that parents could use for tuition at a public or private school of their choice. Male economists love the idea: 61% to 14%.
- Labor standards. Females believe 48% to 33% that trade policy should be linked to labor standards in foreign counties. Males disagreed: 60% to 23%.

According to a recent research paper, single women tend to vote for bigger government in order to have security.

Excerpt:

> Giving women the right to vote significantly changed American politics from the very beginning. Despite claims to the contrary, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue, and these effects continued growing as more women took advantage of the franchise. Similar changes occurred at the federal level as female suffrage led to more liberal voting records

> for the state's U.S. House and Senate delegations. In the Senate, suffrage changed voting behavior by an amount equal to almost 20 percent of the difference between Republican and Democratic senators. Suffrage also coincided with changes in the probability that prohibition would be enacted and changes in divorce laws.
>
> […]More work remains to be done on why women vote so differently, but our initial work provides scant evidence that it is due to self-interest arising from their employment by government.**The only evidence that we found indicated that the gender gap in part arises from women's fear that they are being left to raise children on their own (Lott and Kenny 1997).** If this result is true, the continued breakdown of the family and higher divorce rates imply growing political conflicts between the sexes. 19

A recent New York Times poll found that Obama led Romney by 29 points among single women, whereas Romney has a slight edge with married women.

I think one of the reasons why single women are so willing to look to big government as a substitute for a husband is because lately they seem to be struggling with 1) the ability to choose a good man by evaluating him rationally and objectively, and 2) the willingness to sacrifice and compromise in order to keep a good man. In my experience, single women today seem to be concerned that men might somehow place obligations on them that might limit their automomy with respect to the pursuit of happiness. That is why they often (but not always!) delay marriage and focus on their careers, and often vote for bigger government to provide them with a safety net. I think that women spend their 20s trying to drift into marriage by working on their careers and by having a good time with the wrong sort of men – men who don't perform the traditional male roles. Single women vote for bigger government because deep down they know that the binge drinking and the hook-up sex are not likely to find a good man and produce a lasting marriage. But they just can't stop themselves from having "fun" – big government is their safety net for their own choices with men.

I was having a conversation with a Christian woman on the weekend about Christian women and the men they choose to pursue. She said that divorce was not something that she was worried about because she had undertaken a careful study of men and marriage and she knew how to choose the right man for the job. She said that she was very clear on what men are supposed to do in a marriage, and that she had confidence in her ability to assess men for those duties. Secondly, she said that she knew what her responsibilities were as a woman in a marriage towards a man, and that she had complete confidence in her ability to perform those duties, based on careful, study, planning and training. I was impressed because she was taking responsibility to make good decisions and to perform her duties, and she had confidence that this would reduce and even eliminate the risk of divorce. But I doubt that she would say that she learned these things from the secular culture, and probably not even in the church.

Atheist professor strips naked in classroom, shouts "There Is No F–king God"

October 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Michigan Live. (H/T Newsbusters)

Excerpt:

> Professor John McCarthy has always seemed a bit odd to Kyle Hillman, but nothing could have prepared the Michigan State University freshman for what happened Monday afternoon.
>
> McCarthy was walking his Calculus I class through a practice problem about 1 p.m., finding a particular derivative, when he asked his students whether a potential solution he found was correct.
>
> "Someone said it looked right, so (McCarthy) said, 'Thanks, I need some reassurance sometimes,'" Hillman recounted. "'Math is all about questions and answers. And Steve Jobs invented the computer, but what do computers do? They ask questions and we answer them.'"
>
> McCarthy pronounced Jobs' surname as if it rhymed with robes, Hillman said. That kind of deviation from the subject matter was not out of the ordinary.
>
> "He always goes on tangents like this that don't really make sense to the math that we're learning," Hillman said. "He said this four times in a row. That's what he does."
>
> But what happened next was out of the ordinary.
>
> "He started talking about his colleagues and how they're all actors," Hillman said. "He said, 'It's all an act and none of it's real.' Then he ran out of the classroom."
>
> Hillman, 17, said McCarthy pressed his face against the window to the classroom from the hallway, saying, "I'm not yelling. See, I'm not yelling." Then he ran back into the classroom, put his head in his hands and began crying.
>
> "He said, 'It's all just an act, we're all acting,'" Hillman recollected.
>
> McCarthy then began shouting and swearing about God and religion, Hillman said. The professor pulled out his wallet and removed a $1 bill, waving it around. After that, he ran out of the classroom again.
>
> Hillman said he and about half of his 30 classmates left after that.
>
> "He ran out of the classroom and some people walked by — they didn't seem to be part of anything — and said, 'Class is dismissed, you can leave,'" Hillman said, noting he had never seen the group before.
>
> "I left at that point, because it was pretty terrifying."
>
> Hillman said McCarthy remained clothed as half of the class exited. Within minutes, however, the professor had stripped down and continued his rant down

> the halls of MSU's Engineering Building, according to multiple witness accounts.

I'm not sure if this person is a good representative of atheism, but… HA HA HA! See the related posts below for some more atheists behaving badly.

Related posts

- Richard Dawkins defends the moral goodness of infanticide and adultery
- Family Research Council shooter is a leftist, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Science czar advocated forced abortions, mass sterilizations and totalitarianism
- Science czar says trees should be able to sue and born babies are not human beings
- Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning
- Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist
- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Psychology Today features atheists who think that they are moral
- Does prominent atheist Michael Ruse think that morality is real or illusory?
- How do leading atheists understand morality on atheism?
- Is prescriptive morality rationally grounded on atheism?
- Can atheists be moral? (A series explaining the grounding of morality)

October surprise: video from 2007 shows Obama engaging in racism

October 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Click here to watch the video from the Daily Caller. (H/T ECM)

Here's an excerpt from the accompanying article:

> In a video obtained exclusively by The Daily Caller, then-presidential candidate Barack Obama tells an audience of black ministers, including the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, that the U.S. government shortchanged Hurricane Katrina victims because of racism.
>
> […]The racially charged and at times angry speech undermines Obama's carefully-crafted image as a leader eager to build bridges between ethnic groups. For nearly 40 minutes, using an accent he almost never adopts in public, Obama describes a racist, zero-sum society, in which the white majority profits by exploiting black America. The mostly black audience shouts in agreement. The effect is closer to an Al Sharpton rally than a conventional campaign event.
>
> […]Obama begins his address with "a special shout out" to Jeremiah Wright, the Chicago pastor who nearly derailed Obama's campaign months later when his sermons attacking Israel and America and accusing the U.S. government of "inventing the HIV virus as a means of genocide against people of color" became public. To the audience at Hampton, Obama describes Wright as, "my pastor, the guy who puts up with me, counsels me, listens to my wife complain about me. He's a friend and a great leader. Not just in Chicago, but all across the country."
>
> […]As the speech continues, Obama makes repeated and all-but-explicit appeals to racial solidarity, referring to "our" people and "our neighborhoods," as distinct from the white majority. At one point, he suggests that black people were excluded from rebuilding contracts after the storm: "We should have had our young people trained to rebuild the homes down in the Gulf. We don't need Halliburton doing it. We can have the people who were displaced doing that work. Our God is big enough to do that."
>
> This theme — that black Americans suffer while others profit — is a national problem, Obama continues: "We need additional federal public transportation dollars flowing to the highest need communities. We don't need to build more highways out in the suburbs," where, the implication is, the rich white people live. Instead, Obama says, federal money should flow to "our neighborhoods": "We should be investing in minority-owned businesses, in our neighborhoods, so people don't have to travel from miles away."
>
> […]In the prepared version distributed to reporters, Obama's speech ends this way:

> “America is going to survive. We won’t forget where we came from. We won’t forget what happened 19 months ago, 15 years ago, thousands of years ago.”
>
> That’s not what he actually said. Before the audience at Hampton, Obama ends his speech this way:
>
> “America will survive. Just like black folks will survive. We won’t forget where we came from. We won’t forget what happened 19 months ago, or 15 years ago, or 300 years ago.”
>
> Three hundred years ago. It’s a reference the audience understood.

I’m a person of color myself. I actually have darker skin than Obama. On the way home from work today, before I knew about this video, I found myself reflecting on what advice I would give to people like me who want to advance in the world – to be successful. My advice would be this – don’t make anything out of your skin color. Don’t define yourself by it. Don’t associate with people just because they have the same skin color as you. Don’t blame people of a different skin color for your problems. Don’t let the past hold you back from making the right choices today.

Obama isn’t doing people like me any favors by encouraging us to hate people of a different skin color and blame people of a different skin color. That just holds us back. I personally find it shocking that people of color would vote for someone who attacks their employers, who forces them into failing public schools, who gives money to abortion providers who perform abortions against people of color more than on whites, who forces them into dependence on government handouts, and so on. It’s wrong.

Survey: doctors prefer Romney over Obama

October 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> A new survey shows Mitt Romney with a commanding lead over President Barack Obama among doctors, with Obamacare helping to sway their votes.
>
> If the election were held today, 55 percent of physicians reported they would vote for Romney while just 36 percent support Obama, according to a survey released by Jackson & Coker, a division of Jackson Healthcare, the third largest health care staffing company in the United States
>
> Fifteen percent of respondents said they were switching their vote from Obama in 2008 to Romney in 2012. The top reasons cited for this change was the Affordable Care Act and the failure to address tort reform.
>
> Leadership style, failure to follow through on campaign promises, unemployment and the general state of the economy were also factors.
>
> […]**The survey found that physicians that support Romney were more likely to own their own practice or "who had a stake in their own practice". Obama supporting physicians were more likely to be women, or employed by hospitals or health systems.**

Here are a few articles that I have been using lately to inform people about the problems with Obamacare:

- Heritage Foundation: Obamacare Raises Taxes on 3 Million Middle-Class Americans
- Cato Institute: ObamaCare's Cost Could Top $6 Trillion in first 10 years
- Life News: Obamacare is pro-abortion and pro-government controlled rationing
- Heritage Foundation: The 3 Biggest Ways Obamacare Kills Jobs
- Investors Business Daily: Obama's Broken Health-Premium Savings Promise
- Reason: Obamacare will lead to longer wait times and crowded emergency rooms
- Doctor Patient Medical Association: 83% of doctors contemplating quitting over Obamacare

It's important to understand that just because Obama can dress a few people in white coats for a pro-Obamacare photo-op, that *doesn't* mean that doctors support a government takeover of health care.

Related posts

- Health insurance premiums up $3,000 since Obama was elected
- Report: Obamacare regulations will cost taxpayers and businesses $1.8 trillion
- Obamacare subsidizes the risky behaviors of sexually active women

- Obamacare begins forcing states to cap and cut prescription drug benefits
- Department of Justice threatens to seize business from Catholics
- CBO: 20 million Americans could lose employer-provided health coverage under Obamacare
- A simple introduction to Obamacare
- 75% of the costs of Obamacare will be paid by those making $120,000 or less
- Washington Post columnist bashes Obamacare
- CBO: Obamacare cost is $1760 billion, not $940 billion that Obama claimed
- CBO report: four million will lose employer health care due to Obamacare
- Democrat Jim Cramer explains how Obamacare forces businesses to outsource

Obama increased foreign aid spending by 80%

October 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> From fiscal 2008 to fiscal 2011, according to the U.S. Treasury, the federal government increased spending on foreign aid by 80 percent and, in fiscal 2011, spent 76 percent more on foreign aid than it did securing the borders of the United States.
>
> **In fiscal 2008, the government spent a total of $11.427 billion in international assistance programs, according to the Monthly Treasury Statement. In fiscal 2011, according to the statement, it spent $20.599 billion—an increase of $9.172 billion, or 80 percent, from 2008.**
>
> Prior to President Obama taking office, international assistance spending had been trending down for three years, according to the Treasury. In fiscal 2005, it was $14.787 billion. In fiscal 2006, it dropped to $13.914 billion. In fiscal 2007, it dropped again to $12.764 billion. And, in fiscal 2008, it dropped yet again to $11.427 billion.
>
> Since 2008, international assistance spending has increased each year. In fiscal 2009, it climbed to $14.827 billion. In fiscal 2010, it jumped to $20.038 billion. And, in fiscal 2011, it climbed again to $20.599 billion.
>
> By the end of August, after the first eleven months of fiscal 2012, the federal government had already spent $20.058 on foreign aid in that fiscal year. That was well ahead of the $18.439 billion the federal government had spent on foreign aid through August of last year. The Treasury has not yet published the final amount that was spent on foreign aid in fiscal 2012, which ended on Sunday.

That money comes out of the pockets and taxpayers and job creators. Why is he doing this during a recession? Could it be that he really means it when he says “you didn’t build that”?

Mike Licona debates Bart Ehrman on the Unbelievable radio show

October 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: Don't forget that tonight is the first Republican presidential debate between Mitt Romney and Barack Obama! It runs from 9:00 PM to 10:30 PM Eastern time. I'm expecting that Fox News Live will offer streaming of the debates as they occur, otherwise I will be watching the biased coverage of ABC News via Youtube. But here is another debate to listen to before it starts!

From the Unbelievable radio show.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is well known as a US New Testament Scholar who lost his Christian faith and now questions many core precepts of Christianity, including the Resurrection of Jesus. When Mike Licona had doubts he devoted himself to investigating the evidence and became convinced that Jesus resurrection is the only rational explanation for the facts.
>
> They debate key historical facts about the resurrection – are the letters of Paul that report the resurrection and the Gospel accounts trustworthy or theologised and changed with time? What about apparent contradictions between the Gospels? Does the consensus of scholars count as evidence, or is there a Christian bias? Can a miracle count as an explanation for historical data?

The MP3 file is here.

Snarky summary of the radio debate: (items with * are my made-up paraphrases/clarifications)

Ehrman:
– Bart's new book is about forgeries in the ancient world
– some books were falsely attributed to prominent Christian figures
– there are mistakes in the Bible
– there are mistakes in the resurrection narratives
– the defeat of inerrancy led to his conversion to liberal Christianity
– the problem of evil and suffering caused him to become a non-Christian

Licona:
– there are minimal facts that are agreed to by a broad spectrum of scholars
– the minimal facts are accepted because they pass standard historical criteria
– Fact 1: Jesus died by crucifixion
– Fact 2: Individuals and groups had visions of Jesus after his death
– Fact 3: Paul, a skeptic and an enemy, had an appearance of Jesus that converted him
– these facts are agreed to atheist scholars, liberal scholars, etc.
– virtually 100% of scholars agree with these three facts

– there is no naturalistic explanation of these three facts
– therefore, the best explanation of these three facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Ehrman:
– all historians would accept these three facts, except for maybe the group appearances
– the death of Jesus is irrelevant to the resurrection
– the second and third point can be collapsed together
– so really there is only one fact

Moderator:
– the crucifixion is relevant because Muslims don't admit that fact
– the crucifixion important because it establishes a resurrection, not a resuscitation

Ehrman:
– well, if the point is that he died, then yes, this does require a resurrection

Licona:
– the crucifixion refutes Muslims who deny that Jesus died
– the crucifixion refutes the apparent death theory (swoon theory)
– the death is required for a bodily resurrection
– it's important to know what facts most scholars, regardless of worldview, agree on
– it's important to emphasize that Licona is working from historical bedrock facts
– the resurrection is the best explanation for the historical bedrock facts

Ehrman:
– you are trying to list 3 things, but really it is just one thing – the appearances
– and not ALL scholars agree that the group visions occurred

Licona:
– name one prominent scholar who denies the group appearances

Ehrman:
– the radically leftist atheist nutcase John Dominic Crossan denies the group appearances
* Crossan is so far on the left that I look like a nutcase for even citing him
* Crossan believes in the Secret Gospel of Mark, which is a hoax – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan believes that the synoptics are LATER than gnostic forged gospels – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan presupposes atheism, so he cannot admit to miracle stories as a pre-supposition – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan pre-supposes religious pluralism, so he cannot allow any exclusive claims Christians make – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan is a good historian, it's just that he is so far to the left that no one – NO ONE – agrees with his all of crazy theories
* I think it is a good idea to cite historians who pre-suppose atheism and political correctness before they sit down to do history

Licona:
– let me explain why most scholars accept the individual and group post-mortem

appearances
– the best source for the appearances is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 15:3-8
– Paul himself had an appearance of Jesus after Jesus' death
– Paul received this material from a source very soon after the appearances – within 1-3 years
– we know that Paul met with Jesus disciples multiple times prior to writing
– Paul probably received it from Peter and James, who were themselves eyewitnesses

Moderator:
– this early dating presumably rules out legend

Licona:
– well legends CAN start quickly
– it does show that Paul was an eyewitness
– it does show that Paul was in contact with reliable eyewitnesses

Ehrman:
– 1 Corinthians is written around 55 AD, twenty-five years after Jesus died
– it is not implausible that Paul got the creed from the disciples, who were eyewitnesses
– but you don't need a long time for legends to emerge, so that is a possibility

Licona:
– only about 3% of people could read and write back them
– instead, people had enormous capacity for memorization
– the Pharisees were particularly good at memorization
– Jews were very serious about passing along traditions accurately
– Paul, a prominent Pharisee, would have been capable of passing on early creeds accurately
– Paul, in 1 Cor 7, shows that he is willing to separate his opinions from authentic tradition
– Paul had an opportunity in 1 Cor 7 to put words into Jesus' mouth, but he wouldn't do it

Ehrman:
– cultural anthropologists show that things do get changed in some oral cultures
– in these oral cultures, it is assumed that the story teller will change the story
– only in written cultures are they careful to avoid changing the story
– in the New Testament, you can compare the same story in two different gospels, there are differences

Licona:
– Ehrman is right that the gospel writers pick and choose things from the oral tradition that they want to include in their gospels
– different oral tradition transmission schemes have more or less embellishment
– african tribes embellish more, rabbinic teaching embellishes less
* Jesus' followers would have viewed him as a rabbi, and been careful about adding to his teachings
– Paul, an eyewitness, probably received the creed in 1 Cor 15 from other eyewitnesses
– Paul speaks about going twice to Jerusalem in Galatians

– he is meeting with Peter and James to check his facts

Ehrman:
– when you look at Mark and John, there are lots of differences in the narrative

Licona:
– I agree that the gospels have differences, but the oral tradition is likely fixed

Ehrman:
– but Mark and John have different sayings
– why doesn't Mark have the same explicit high Christology that John has?

Licona:
– first, John is trying to weave the oral tradition into a compelling story
– and second, when you look in Mark, the high Christology is there in the Son of Man sayings
– the apocalyptic Son of Man is in Mark, and everywhere in the New Testament

Ehrman:
– the "apocalyptic Son of Man" isn't in John

Licona:
– what about in John 9 with the man who was born blind

Ehrman:
– where is the apocalyptic part?

Licona:
– the healed man worships Jesus because he is the Son of Man
– that links to the apocalypic passages in the Old Testament

Moderator:
– what about the differences between the gospels?

Ehrman:
* well, now is the time for me to set up an inerrantist straw man and then knock it down!
* who was at the empty tomb: one angel or two angels? we don't know, so the whole Bible is false!
* I used to be an inerrantist, so one minor difference is enough for me to dump the whole Bible
* I'll kill you, you stupid straw man! I hate you, Moody Bible Institute! You lied to me!

Licona:
– many of these problems can be solved by realizing that the gospel writers compress time
– the stories don't have to list ALL the characters in every scene
– you don't have to force the Bible to meet some sort of wooden chronology
– the main thing is that the events happened, not that the descriptions match word for word across sources

Ehrman:
– you can't infer a miracle from history, David Hume says so

* extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, David Hume says so
* no I don't know what begging the question is, I'm not a philosopher
* no I don't remember when Bill Craig kicked my ass on this Hume objection in our debate
– the New Testament gospels contradict each other at every point, they are not reliable at all!
* they cannot even agree what Jesus' name is! There are 1 trillion variants of Jesus' name!
* "one angel vs two angels" proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point
* my expansive list of FOUR theologically insignificant variants proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point

Licona:
– um, the gospels agree on the central narrative and disagree on the peripherals
– and they agree on the minimal facts I presented, even if they disagree about the number of angels

Ehrman:
* they have to agree on everything and be inerrant! The Moody Straw Man Bible Institute says so!
* I really really really need to have the number of angels be the same, or Jesus didn't die on the cross

Licona:
– but you don't deny any of the three minimal facts I presented (crucifixion, appearances, Paul)

Ehrman:
– well, I don't know if the group appearances occurred – maybe they did
– i think Jesus died on the cross, and I think that people said they saw him alive afterward

Licona:
– if you deny the minimal facts, then you are outside the majority of scholars

Ehrman:
– the majority of scholars who agree to the minimal facts you presented are Christians
* Gerd Ludemann is an atheist Christian
* James Crossley is an atheist Christian
* Hector Avalos is an atheist Christian
* the majority of the atheist scholars are all Christians!
– VIRTUALLY EVERYBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IS A CHRISTIAN!!! (Yes, he said that)

Licona:
– you really think so?

Ehrman
– you name one non-Christian in the SBL

Licona:

– (incredulous) um, John Dominic Crossan is an atheist

Ehrman:
– but he CLAIMS TO BE A CHRISTIAN so that means HE IS A CHRISTIAN
* all you have to do to be a Christian is claim to be one
* you can even deny the existence of God and the divinity of Christ and still be one, you bigot!

Licona:
– would Jesus or the apostles recognize a Christian as being someone who doubts God's existence

Ehrman:
– my view is that Jesus and the apostles would not recognize evangelical Christians as Christians
* a non-theist can be a Christian just by claiming to be one, but evangelical Christians are not Christians even if they claim to be Christians
– Christians can't record accurate history about the resurrection because they are biased

Licona:
– on your view, if a person is a Christian then he can't write about the evidence for the resurrection
– so then similarly, you would not allow Jews to write about the historicity of the Holocaust
– because you think that if people have an interest in what they are recording then they can't be objective
– but you have to consider the evidence we have, taking the biases of the sources into account

Ehrman:
– but the only people who believe in the resurrection are Christians!

Licona:
– well, people can consider the evidence for the resurrection as non-Christians
– and then if they accept it they can become Christians

Moderator:
– what about your bias? you don't believe in God – doesn't that pre-supposition affect how you do history?

Ehrman:
– well, I presuppose naturalism, so I can't admit to anything in history that implicates supernatural causes
* no I have never heard of the arguments for the Big Bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, limits on mutations creating information, habitability and so on – I never heard about that stuff from my atheist university professors and even if I had I would have been expelled for talking about it because that would make people feel bad about their sinning

Licona:

– so it’s not bias you are concerned about, it’s that you don’t want history to contradict your untested religion of naturalism?
– why not just do the history without pre-suppositions to gather the minimal facts and then see what the best explanation is?

Ehrman:
* well God is out of bounds as an explanation because I could not have got my PhD if I mentioned God
* I really needed my smart atheist professors to like me and give me good grades so God is RIGHT OUT
* ideas like a real God and moral laws and Hell makes my atheist professors uncomfortable and that means low grades for me
* I’m not really interested in butting heads with professors – it’s easier to just agree with them and move on to selling books to the gullible
* My books are much more sensational than Dan Brown books, so please buy lots of them!

Licona:
– what if the historical evidence is good enough to show that Jesus rose from the dead?

Ehrman:
– well I would not call someone rising from the dead a miracle – I would call it weird
* I also think that the Big Bang is “weird” but that doesn’t prove that God created the universe out of nothing
* if it’s a miracle then I’m going to have to not sin, and maybe even go to Hell, and we can’t have that

Licona:
– well, you accept the three minimal facts
– what if we try all the naturalistic explanations for those three facts and there are problems with all of them?
– what if the resurrection is the best explanation for the three minimal facts?

Ehrman:
– but I want to arbitrarily rule God put because I want to pre-suppose naturalism
– there is not historical reason I have to rule put supernatural explanations a priori

Licona:
– I think you are struggling with the theological implications of a historical conclusion

Ehrman:
– well when you do theology, you have to avoid grounding your theology on science or history
– theology has to be completely made up or it’s not good theology

Licona:
– I think you are letting your dislike of the implications of the resurrection determine your historical conclusions
– you have to use historical methods to gather the minimal facts that every scholar

accepts, regardless of worldview
– then you weigh ALL the hypotheses, natural and supernatural, that could account for these minimal facts
– then you choose the hypothesis that best explains the minimal facts

More stuff

Debates

- Craig Evans and Bart Ehrman
- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

A lecture on Bart Ehrman by William Lane Craig.

Romney wins first debate: spanks dazed and confused Obama like a foolish child

October 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The debate was the worst ass-kicking in a Presidential debate that I have ever seen.

The transcript is here. And here's the story on what went down.

Excerpt:

> GOP presidential challenger Mitt Romney tonight charged that President Barack Obama's jobs plan is a failure, with millions out of work and looking for help.
>
> "My plan is to put people back to work in America," Romney said tonight at the first of three presidential debates scheduled for the 2012 presidential election season.
>
> "Look at the history of the past four years. We have 23 million people unemployed. Keeping with the status quo is not going to work for the American people."
>
> Obama returned to his oft-repeated theme of blaming George W. Bush, asserting the taxation approach Romney was proposing was nothing more than a return to the "trickle-down" economy of the Republican plan.
>
> Obama began the debate by reciting familiar campaign themes, suggesting once again that his administration inherited from Bush one of the worst economies in the history of the United States.
>
> But Romney struck a theme of energy independence and advancing small business as keys to getting the U.S. economy growing again. He accused Obama of proposing "trickle-down government," represented by more government regulation and more taxation.
>
> Romney disputed Obama's assertion he was locked into a tax cut, charging that under the Obama administration the middle class has been pressed by reduced income, diminished job opportunities and increased food and energy costs.
>
> From the first moments of the debate, Romney looked Obama directly in the eye, took exception to president's assertions about Romney's policies, and gave more precise answers.
>
> Obama pressed that Romney's economic plan called for $5 trillion in tax cuts and $2 trillion in military budget increases, a program Obama asserted would demand tax increases on middle-income earners.
>
> "Look, I've got five boys and I'm used to somebody saying something that's not true and hoping that by repeating it I'm going to believe it," Romney countered, asserting that everything Obama said about his tax program was inaccurate.
>
> Obama insisted Romney's tax-reduction plan of necessity would either increase

> the deficit or demand tax increases for the middle class, charging that under Romney's definition Donald Trump would be a small business.
>
> Objecting to Jim Lehrer's interruption that the first segment was exceeding the 15-minute limit, Romney charged that Obama would increase taxes on small businesses at the cost of 700,000 jobs.
>
> As the discussion advanced to the nation's deficit, Obama reiterated his statement that he inherited a massive deficit, and appeared on the defensive.
>
> "You have been president for four years, you said you would cut the deficit in half and you have run $1 trillion in deficits each of the four years," Romney attacked. "That does not get the job done."
>
> Romney pointed out that when the economy was growing as slowly as it is now, more slowly than when Obama took office, this is no time to increase taxes.
>
> "You never balance the budget by increasing taxes," Romney insisted. "I don't want to go down the path of Spain."

And:

> Romney said "ignoring the 10th Amendment is not the way to have a vibrant economy."
>
> Romney said the key to education is great teachers, and he raised a reference to the U.S. Constitution regarding citizen rights.
>
> "I interpret our founding documents as providing a responsibility for religious freedom – to pursue happiness by taking care of the less fortunate – but massive government involvement limits freedom – the path we are taking is not working with 23 million Americans unemployed and 50 million on food stamps."
>
> Obama said the responsibility of the federal government was important in improving the educational system in America.
>
> "Budgets reflect choices. If we cut taxes to benefit people like Gov. Romney and me, it makes a difference," Obama. He again demanded specifics of the GOP plans.
>
> "When it comes to making college affordable, whether it be two years or four years, we cut out the middleman and eliminated banks from making a profit in student loans. Gov. Romney believes in education but he tells kids to borrow from their parents to go to college."
>
> Romney responded, "Mr. President, you are entitled to your own airplane and your own house – but not to your own facts."
>
> Romney said Obama put $90 billion into green jobs, but half of the recipients went bankrupt and others were owned by contributors to your campaign, and questioned the number of teachers that would have hired.
>
> Romney proposed grading schools to know which were succeeding and which

> were failing.
>
> "Massachusetts schools are ranked No. 1 in education because I care for education for all our children," Romney said.

It was so bad that even gay activist and radical leftist Andrew Sullivan called it for Romney: (H/T Hot Air)

> Look: you know how much I love the guy, and you know how much of a high information viewer I am, and I can see the logic of some of Obama's meandering, weak, professorial arguments. But this was a disaster for the president for the key people he needs to reach, and his effete, wonkish lectures may have jolted a lot of independents into giving Romney a second look…
>
> The person with authority on that stage was Romney – offered it by one of the lamest moderators ever, and seized with relish. This was Romney the salesman. And my gut tells me he sold a few voters on a change tonight. It's beyond depressing. But it's true.

A post-debate poll from left-wing CNN found that an astonishing 67% of registered voters thought that Romney won the debate.

Even the radically left-wing National Journal says:

> Call it the curse of incumbency. Like many of his predecessors, President Obama fell victim Wednesday night to high expectations, a short fuse, and a hungry challenger.
>
> If Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney didn't win the first of three presidential debates outright, he more than covered the spread. He was personable, funny, and relentlessly on the attack against a heavily favored Obama.
>
> The president looked peeved and flat as he carried a conversation, for the first time in four years, with somebody telling him he's wrong.

This debate was a blowout – and that's just the reaction of the left.

Left-wing reactions on Twitter

Bill Maher: (HBO)

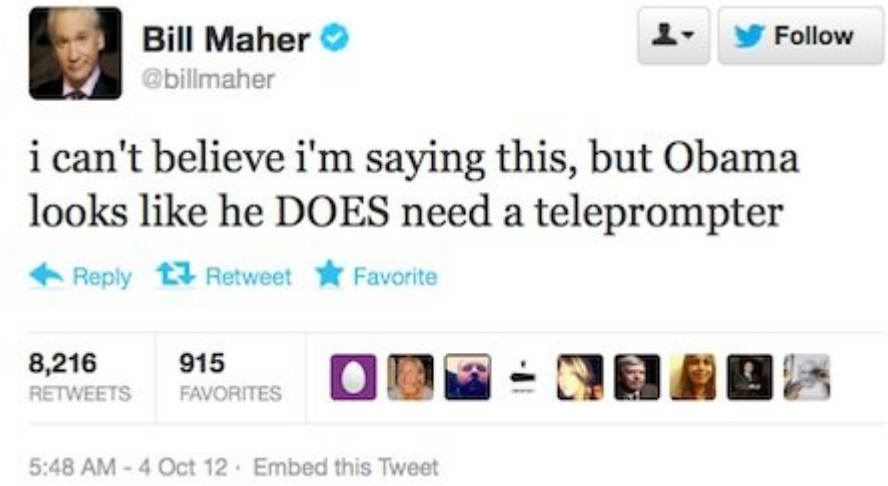

Bill Maher says Romney defeated Obama
Peter Beinart (The New Republic)

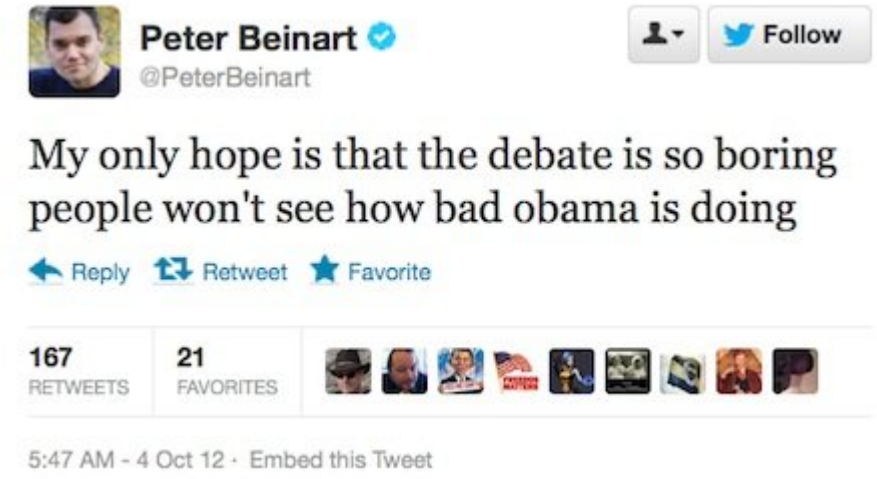

Peter Beinart says Romney defeated Obama
Piers Morgan: (CNN)

Piers Morgan says Romney defeated Obama
And CHRIS MATTHEWS too:

Something else ran down his leg tonight, and it wasn’t a tingle, it was a tinkle.

Romney leading by 4 points in swing states

The latest poll of swings states from the left-wing Politico shows Romney leading Obama by 4 points, *even with a 2 point oversampling of Democrats.*

Breitbart explains: (links removed)

> This week, *Politico* released its latest Battleground pollof the presidential race. Despite coming from the left-wing news site, the poll is one of my favorites. Its put together by respected pollsters from both parties, makes available its full cross-tabs and uses a very modest and reasonable turnout model for its sample. Including leaners, the sample in the poll is D+2. Nationally, Obama leads by 2-3 points, but, in the critical swing states, Romney now has the edge.
>
> Each candidate leads in states considered "safe" for their party. In safe GOP states, Romney leads by 8. In safe Democrat states, Obama leads by a massive 22 points. But, in the more numerous and more important "toss up" states, Romney leads by 4, hitting the critical 50% threshold.
>
> In the slightly different category of "battleground" states identified by Politico, Romney leads by 2, 49-47. Romney's lead over Obama is powered primarily by his edge with independents. Romney leads Obama by 4 among the important swing voters. By 11 points, these voters think Romney would do better on the economy than Obama, 51-40.
>
> Romney also has a big edge with middle class families, who prefer him over Obama by 15 points, 56-41.

My prediction for this election remains Romney 52, Obama 47.

Related posts

- Survey: doctors prefer Romney over Obama
- Health insurance premiums up $3,000 since Obama was elected
- Report: Obamacare regulations will cost taxpayers and businesses $1.8 trillion
- Obamacare subsidizes the risky behaviors of sexually active women
- Obamacare begins forcing states to cap and cut prescription drug benefits
- Department of Justice threatens to seize business from Catholics
- CBO: 20 million Americans could lose employer-provided health coverage under Obamacare
- A simple introduction to Obamacare
- 75% of the costs of Obamacare will be paid by those making $120,000 or less
- Washington Post columnist bashes Obamacare
- CBO: Obamacare cost is $1760 billion, not $940 billion that Obama claimed
- CBO report: four million will lose employer health care due to Obamacare
- Democrat Jim Cramer explains how Obamacare forces businesses to outsource

Romney won the presidential debate – according to left-wing MSNBC hosts

October 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-wing Politico, no less.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Left-leaning commentators hit President Barack Obama hard on TV and the Internet after the first presidential debate in Denver on Wednesday night, saying GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney handily defeated his more experienced opponent.
>
> MSNBC hosts were "stunned" by Obama's performance, suggesting the president was rusty for not having debated in four years.
>
> "I don't think he explained himself very well on the economy. I think he was off his game. I was absolutely stunned tonight," Ed Schultz said.
>
> "Where was Obama tonight?" Chris Matthews asked.
>
> Matthews said Romney addressed Obama "like the prey. He did it just right. I'm coming at an incumbent. I've got to beat him. You gotta beat the champ, and I'm gonna beat him tonight. And I don't care what this guy moderator, whatever he thinks he is, because I'm going to ignore him. What was Romney doing? He was winning."
>
> "It does remind you that the last debate Mitt Romney had was seven months ago and the last debate that Barack Obama had was four years ago," said Maddow.
>
> The Daily Beast's Andrew Sullivan called Obama "tired," "bored" and wrote that he might have even lost the election.
>
> "He choked. He lost. He may even have lost the election tonight," Sullivan wrote, later adding, "Obama looked tired, even bored; he kept looking down; he had no crisp statements of passion or argument; he wasn't *there*. He was entirely defensive, which may have been the strategy. But it was the wrong strategy. At the wrong moment."
>
> Sullivan, an Obama supporter, was even more vicious on Twitter, calling Obama's performance "terrible" and "political malpractice."
>
> "This is a rolling calamity for Obama. He's boring, abstract, and less human-seeming than Romney!" he wrote. "He's throwing the debate away."
>
> Another Obama supporter, liberal comedian Bill Maher, went on a similar Twitter rant, firing off such comments as, "Obama made a lot of great points tonight. Unfortunately, most of them were for Romney."

A post-debate CNN poll found that:

> According to a CNN/ORC International survey conducted right after the debate, 67% of debate watchers questioned said that the Republican nominee won the faceoff, with one in four saying that President Barack Obama was victorious.
>
> “No presidential candidate has topped 60% in that question since it was first asked in 1984,” says CNN Polling Director Keating Holland.
>
> While nearly half of debate watchers said the showdown didn’t make them more likely to vote for either candidate, 35% said the debate made them more likely to vote for Romney while only 18% said the faceoff made them more likely to vote to re-elect the president.
>
> More than six in ten said that president did worse than expected, with one in five saying that Obama performed better than expected. Compare that to the 82% who said that Romney performed better than expected. Only one in ten felt that the former Massachusetts governor performed worse than expected.
>
> […]The sample of debate-watchers in the poll was 37% Democratic and 33% Republican.
>
> […]Debate watchers thought Romney was more aggressive. Fifty-three percent said Romney spent more time attacking his opponent. Only three in ten thought Obama spent more time taking it to Romney. By a 58%-37% margin, debate watchers thought Romney appeared to be the stronger leader.

The problem with Obama is that he had four years to run the economy, and he ran it into the ground. You can’t defend failure like that by shifting blame and pointing fingers. He failed because his ideas are wrong. We need new ideas – a different approach. But that doesn’t explain why Obama performed so poorly. Obama performed poorly because he has been totally isolated from any disagreement or critical evaluation for the last 4 years. In his mind, it’s not just the private sector that’s fine. The unemployment rate is fine, the national debt is fine, the budget deficit is fine, the terrorist attack in Libya is fine, socialized health care is fine, poor education outcomes is fine, taxpayer-funded abortion is fine, Iran having nuclear weapons is fine, and gay marriage is fine. He just has complete and utter contempt for anyone who disagrees with him – he has been indoctrinated to think that anyone who disagrees with him is not just wrong, but evil. And maybe even that all disagreement with him is motivated by racism. He came across as a whiny, petulant child, because of his ideological rigidity and lack of humility.

The mask came off Wednesday night, and it was all Jeremiah Wright and Bill Ayers underneath. The media and the teleprompter could not protect him from his real self.

Do conservative policies or liberal policies cause outsourcing? The case of California

October 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting article about a new paper published by the centrist Manhattan Institute about California, a state that is controlled from top to bottom by Democrats. Have the liberal economic policies of the Democrats caused a decrease or an increase in outsourcing?

Let's see:

> For decades after World War II, California was a destination for Americans in search of a better life. In many people's minds, it was the state with more jobs, more space, more sunlight, and more opportunity. They voted with their feet, and California grew spectacularly (its population increased by 137 percent between 1960 and 2010). However, this golden age of migration into the state is over. For the past two decades, California has been sending more people to other American states than it receives from them. Since 1990, the state has lost nearly 3.4 million residents through this migration.
>
> This study describes the great ongoing California exodus, using data from the Census, the Internal Revenue Service, the state's Department of Finance, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Federal Housing Finance Agency, and other sources. We map in detail where in California the migrants come from, and where they go when they leave the state. We then analyze the data to determine the likely causes of California's decline and the lessons that its decline holds for other states.
>
> The data show a pattern of movement over the past decade from California mainly to states in the western and southern U.S.: Texas, Nevada, and Arizona, in that order, are the top magnet states. Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Idaho, and Utah follow. Rounding out the top ten are two southern states: Georgia and South Carolina.
>
> A finer-grained regional analysis reveals that the main current of migration out of California in the past decade has flowed eastward across the Colorado River, reversing the storied passages of the Dust Bowl era. Southern California had about 55 percent of the state's population in 2000 but accounted for about 65 percent of the net out-migration in the decade that followed. More than 70 percent of the state's net migration to Texas came from California's south.
>
> **What has caused California's transformation from a "pull in" to a "push out" state? The data have revealed several crucial drivers. One is chronic economic adversity (in most years, California unemployment is above the national average). Another is density: the Los Angeles and Orange County region now has a population density of 6,999.3 per**

> **square mile—well ahead of New York or Chicago. Dense coastal areas are a source of internal migration, as people seek more space in California's interior, as well as migration to other states. A third factor is state and local governments' constant fiscal instability, which sends at least two discouraging messages to businesses and individuals. One is that they cannot count on state and local governments to provide essential services—much less, tax breaks or other incentives. Second, chronically out-of-balance budgets can be seen as tax hikes waiting to happen.**
>
> **The data also reveal the motives that drive individuals and businesses to leave California. One of these, of course, is work. States with low unemployment rates, such as Texas, are drawing people from California, whose rate is above the national average. Taxation also appears to be a factor, especially as it contributes to the business climate and, in turn, jobs. Most of the destination states favored by Californians have lower taxes. States that have gained the most at California's expense are rated as having better business climates. The data suggest that many cost drivers—taxes, regulations, the high price of housing and commercial real estate, costly electricity, union power, and high labor costs—are prompting businesses to locate outside California, thus helping to drive the exodus.**
>
> Population change, along with the migration patterns that shape it, are important indicators of fiscal and political health. Migration choices reveal an important truth: some states understand how to get richer, while others seem to have lost the touch. California is a state in the latter group, but it can be put back on track. All it takes is the political will.

Also, California is absolutely *dominated* by corrupt public sector labor unions and teacher unions, who regularly interfere in elections to make sure that economic policy is very, very liberal.

What's true of California is becoming true of the United States as a whole, under our socialist President Barack Obama. The more that Obama enacts left-wing economic policies that threaten job creators and investors with higher taxes and more burdensome regulations and wasteful spending and massive deficits, the more they will leave for other countries or expand to other countries. It turns out that the "greedy" businessmen and investors who advocate for lower taxes and less burdensome regulation are the real champions of low unemployment, economic growth and prosperity.

Two great podcasts from J. Warner Wallace of Please Convince Me

October 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J Warner Wallace and Please Convince Me

Please Convince Me is my absolute favorite podcast. The host, J. Warner Wallace, is a cold case homicide detective. He has a real job! And he talks about Christian things like you might expect a detective to talk – everything is logic, case-making and evidence. Very cool.

Why Being Respected Is Better Than Being Liked

The MP3 file is here.

The most interesting segment starts at 8 minutes and ends at 21 minutes in.

Topics

- humans have an innate desire to be liked and to fit in with their peers
- there are times when our desire to do what is right will conflict with the desire to be liked and to fit in
- 1 Peter talks about how Christian living in the world will often have these conflicts
- Christians have a different standard and that creates conflicts with the surrounding culture
- at times like this, it is important for us to be RESPECTED rather than LIKED
- being a Christian conflicts with the goal of being popular
- two ways for us to proceed: 1) agree with others, 2) be who you are and let others agree with you
- James also says that there is a conflict between being friends with the world and

friends with God
- you cannot have both friendship with the world and friendship with God
- even non-believers understand that there is a conflict between morality and the hedonistic culture\
- courage is needed in order to resist the pressure to embrace the beliefs of others in order to be liked
- courage is needed in order to point others to the truth so that they change to match what is true
- politicians often change their positions in order to appeal to the culture
- politicians seem to shy away from trying to argue through why others should accept their positions
- we should seek to influence others by explaining why others should accept what we believe
- we should have the courage to make the case for what we believe
- even if people do not accept our beliefs, they will still respect the way we can make the case
- they will respect our courage in being willing to prepare a case and make the case in public
- they will respect that we have not formed our beliefs based on feelings
- we need to get better at knowing more stuff and communicating that knowledge better
- wanting to be popular is too easy
- we should take the harder path and desire to be respected instead of liked

Other topics from listeners:

- the interpretation of "thou shalt not kill" in the Bible
- can a person still be a Christian if they are not doing works, like tithing or serving in the church?
- theistic evolution and the presumption of naturalism in science

And here's another good podcast – it's on the same topic as the PCM post I linked before.

Stop Teaching Young Christians About Their Faith

The MP3 is here.

Topics:

- our nation is becoming more and more secular
- secularism makes it harder for us to defend our faith and values in public and influence the culture
- why is secularism happening? it's because young people are walking away from the faith
- young Christians are leaving the faith in high school and college
- this is where the real battleground is – and that's where apologists need to focus

- we need to be focused especially on junior high school and high school, and to a lesser degree college
- it’s good that we have lots scholars working physics, philosophy and biology
- but what we really need is ordinary Christians to get serious about apologetics and work on young people
- some people believe that there is no great youth exodus problem: are they right to doubt the statistics
- it’s undeniable that young people are inarticulate about their faith – that much is certain
- what young people in church actually believ is not Christianity, but moralistic therapeutic deism
- young people: life is about feeling good, being liked, and nice people of all religions are saved
- young people think that there is so little substance to Christianity that it can’t even be discussed
- the focus among young people today is not on true beliefs, but on being kinds to others
- even in churches, there is higher respect for helping others than on having knowledge and evidence
- instead of focusing on the worldview that grounds good works, the focus is on good works
- young people have learned to minimize discussions about specifics of theology
- teachers and college professors are hostile to public expressions of evangelical Christianity
- television is also hostile and much less Christian than it used to be
- even if young people come back to the church, they come back for the wrong reasons
- the adults come back for tradition and comfort but they don’t really believe Christianity is true
- they want to pick and choose what they believe based on what they like, like going to a buffet
- they return to church when they have kids so that their kids will absorb values – but not truth
- that’s what we have sitting in the pews: people who think Christianity is false, but “useful”
- and that’s why so many christians are so liberal on social values (abortion, same-sex marriage)
- they don’t really accept the Bible as authoritative, they pick and choose what they like and don’t like
- if Christianity is taught as “useful” then they will dump it when they find something more “useful”
- people who leave the church are exposed to Christianity, but it doesn’t stick
- young people lose their faith before college, and then when they escape the nest,

they act it out
- the disconnecting from the faith occurs in high school, but it only becomes public after they leave home
- young people are becoming more focused on redefining “the good life” with consumption and materialism
- the typical experience of young adults involves alcohol use, drug use, and recreational sex
- young people actually want more than niceness – they want real answers to serious questions
- young people have doubts and questions, but no one in the church or home is equipped to answer them
- adults have to be involved in the education of young people
- parents who are engaged in teaching their children Christian truths see much better retention rates
- we need to stop teaching people (one-way preaching) and start training them (two-way interactive)
- when you give a young person a definite goal – a fight with a date certain – then they will be engaged
- when people know that they will fail unless they can perform, then they will be more engaged in learning
- church needs to be in the business of scheduling battles, and then training young people for the battles
- there is no sense of urgency, risk and purpose in young people, so the teaching is not effective

I’m absolutely sure you will love these podcasts. Give them a listen! I’m pretty sure that he will put me in jail if you don’t listen to them. So, um… please do!

Henry F. Schaefer: Stephen Hawking, the Big Bang and God

October 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This lecture was delivered to an audience of students and faculty at Western Kentucky University in 2009.

Here's part of a biography of Henry F. Schaefer III:

> Henry F. Schaefer III was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1944. He attended public schools in Syracuse (New York), Menlo Park (California), and Grand Rapids (Michigan), graduating from East Grand Rapids High School in 1962. He received his B.S. degree in chemical physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1966) and Ph.D. degree in chemical physics from Stanford University (1969). For 18 years (1969-1987) he served as a professor of chemistry at the University of California, Berkeley. During the 1979-1980 academic year he was also Wilfred T. Doherty Professor of Chemistry and inaugural Director of the Institute for Theoretical Chemistry at the University of Texas, Austin.
>
> Since 1987 Dr. Schaefer has been Graham Perdue Professor of Chemistry and Director of the Center for Computational Chemistry at the University of Georgia. In 2004 he became Professor of Chemistry, Emeritus, at the University of California at Berkeley. His other academic appointments include Professeur d'Echange at the University of Paris (1977), Gastprofessur at the Eidgenossische Technische Hochshule (ETH), Zurich (1994, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006), and David P. Craig Visiting Professor at the Australian National University (1999). He is the author of more than 1150 scientific publications, the majority appearing in the *Journal of Chemical Physics* or the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*.
>
> In February 2004, a total of 300 scientists from 35 countries gathered in Gyeongju, Korea for a six-day conference. The conference was titled "Theory and Applications of Computational Chemistry: A Celebration of 1000 Papers of Professor Henry F. Schaefer III".

And here are some versions of the MP3:

- Lecture and QA (52 MB)
- Lecture only (37 MB)

And here's a written version of the lecture.

Excerpt:

> Stephen Hawking's bestseller *A Brief History of Time* is the most popular book about cosmology ever written. The questions cosmology addresses are

> scientifically and theologically profound. Hawking's book covers both of these implications.
>
> Cosmology is the study of the universe as a whole–it's structure, origin and development. I won't answer all the questions Hawking raises concerning cosmology, but I will try to make comments on many of them. I caution here that you should not confuse cosmology with cosmetology, the art of beautifying the hair, skin, and nails!
>
> Here are some of the questions cosmology seeks to answer (As elsewhere in this lecture, I borrow heavily from astrophysicist Hugh Ross' excellent books *The Fingerprint of God* and *The Creator and the Cosmos*.):
>
> 1. Is the universe finite or infinite in extent and content?
> 2. Is it eternal or does it have a beginning?
> 3. Was it created? If not, how did it get here? If so, how was this creation accomplished and what can we learn about the agent and events of creation?
> 4. Who or what governs the laws and constants of physics? Are such laws the product of chance or have they been designed? How do they relate to the support and development of life?
> 5. Is there any knowable existence beyond the known dimensions of the universe?
> 6. Is the universe running down irreversibly or will it bounce back?

It's nice to see that lots of the most famous scientists may not be as antagonistic to theism – and even Christianity! – as we have been led to believe by our know-nothing unionized public school teachers. Yes, *real* scientists are aware of the implications of the Big Bang and the fine-tuning, and yes, *real* scientists do adjust their worldviews to account for what science is telling them.

Related posts

- Stephen C. Meyer: does the Big Bang cosmology support God or atheism?
- Stephen C. Meyer explains the evidence for the Big Bang on John Ankerberg show
- Peter Atkins explains how to easily reconcile the Big Bang and atheism
- What conditions support the minimum requirements for complex life?
- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?
- Lawrence Krauss debates "A Universe From Nothing" with an astrophysicist
- New peer-reviewed paper in Nature falsifies Darwinian junk DNA prediction
- William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?
- Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument
- Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design
- Guillermo Gonzalez lectures at UC Davis on the requirements for life
- William Lane Craig debates Peter Atkins: Does God Exist?

- Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig about God's existence
- Walter Bradley: three scientific phenomena that point to a designed universe
- What is intelligent design? Dr. Stephen C. Meyer explains the theory
- Is the accelerating universe compatible with Hinduism?
- William Lane Craig and Peter Millican debate "Does God Exist?"
- Two astrophysicists dialog: Hugh Ross and Paul Davies on Unbelievable
- Did the universe have a beginning or has it always existed?
- The cosmological argument and the new BGV theorem

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

A critical evaluation of Obama's economic narrative, using evidence

October 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is currently the most popular one on Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> In making his case for re-election in the face of historically high unemployment and sluggish growth, President Obama has a simple and straightforward argument.
>
> Things were terrible when I arrived, he says, thanks to Bush-era policies of tax cuts and deregulation. We stopped the decline, but the ditch was so deep that it will take time to get out. Still, we are making progress, even if it isn't as fast as everyone would like.
>
> So the last thing we want to do is return to the failed Bush policies that, he says, drove us into the ditch.
>
> That argument appears to be working. More people continue to blame Bush than Obama for the current poor state of affairs, and some surveys show that consumer confidence has recently increased.
>
> But each part of Obama's argument is based on claims that are not accurate…

The article lists 5 claims made by Obama, and assesses each claim against the evidence.

Here are the 5 claims:

1. Bush tax cuts and deregulation caused the recession.
2. I stopped a second Great Depression.
3. My policies are working.
4. A slow recovery was inevitable.
5. Nobody could have done any better.

And here's the critique of point number one: (links removed)

> At a campaign rally, Obama said Romney is "just churning out the same ideas that we saw in the decade before I took office . . . the same tax cuts and deregulation agenda that helped get us into this mess in the first place."
>
> It's a standard Obama talking point. But it's not true. Bush's tax cuts did not cause the last recession.
>
> In fact, once they were fully in effect in 2003, they sparked stronger growth — generating more than 8 million new jobs over the next four years, and GDP growth averaging close to 3%.
>
> Those tax cuts didn't explode the deficit, either, as Obama frequently claims.

> Deficits steadily declined after 2003, until the recession hit.
>
> Nor was Bush a deregulator. Conservative Heritage Foundation's regulation expert James Gattuso concluded, after reviewing Bush's record, that "regulation grew substantially during the Bush years."
>
> Even the Washington Post's fact-checker, Glenn Kessler, gave Obama's claim three out of four "Pinocchios," saying "it is time for the Obama campaign to retire this talking point, no matter how much it seems to resonate with voters."
>
> What did cause the economic crisis? The housing bubble. And that, in turn, was the result of a determined federal effort to boost homeownership by, among other things, pressuring banks to lower lending standards.

Now I know that some people (like Jerry) who get their policy news from the Comedy Channel think that the Bush tax cuts made the deficits explode, but of course, deficits were shrinking until the two spendthrifts Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid got hold of the purse strings after taking the House and Senate in 2007.

Look:

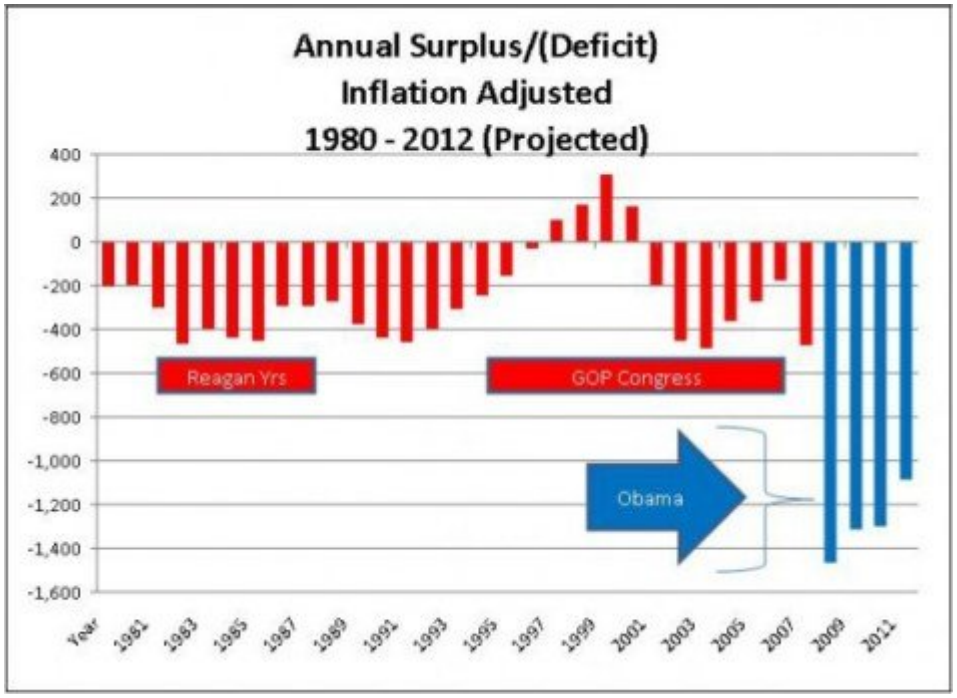

Barack Obama: Budget Deficits – last GOP budget was 2007

Similarly, Obama clowns on the Comedy Channel and MSNBC also think that the Bush tax cuts made revenues go *down.*

Ooops:

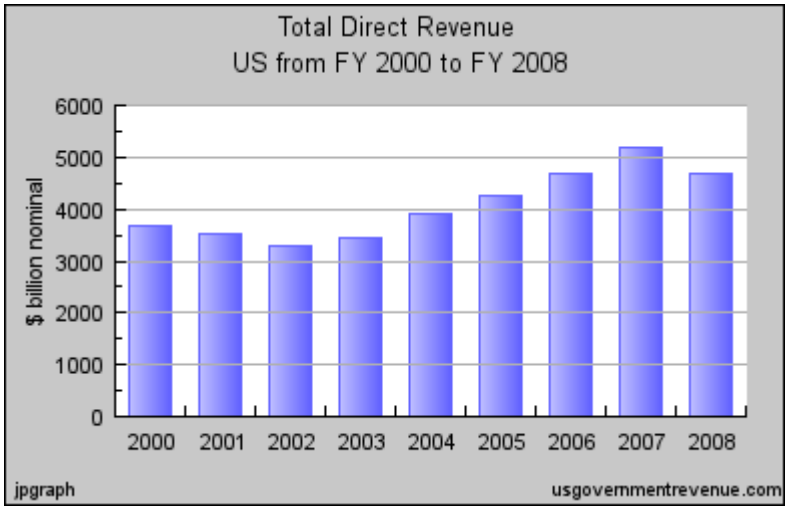

Did the Bush tax cuts make revenues decrease? No!

You can tune into MSNBC and the Comedy Channel on any given night and see the clowns there claiming that Bush's $160 billion deficit in 2007 is actually higher than the $450 billion deficit in 2004, *after* the 2.2 trillion of tax cuts were passed.

Read the whole thing, it will help you to be persuasive when discussing Obama's rhetoric. People aren't saying that Romney won the debate because he had "zingers". People are saying that Romney won the debate because he had *facts and evidence.*

My prescription for voters in this election is more economics, and cut back on the Comedy Channel. Democrats must all buy Thomas Sowell's "Basic Economics" and read that all the way through. I know that graphs aren't as entertaining as Rachel Madclown, but we all must make an effort for the sake of the prosperity of our children, and our children's children.

Teen mother charged with dumping her 3-week-old daughter in remote area

October 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest news in the glorious march of feminism to *full equality*.

Excerpt:

> Illinois authorities arrested a 19-year-old woman after she allegedly admitted to dumping her 3-week-old daughter in a remote area.
>
> Kendra Meaker, of Toulon, a city located about 30 miles northwest of Peoria, was charged in Stark County Circuit Court on Friday, with obstruction of justice and endangering the life or health of a child. Meaker, who also has an 11-month-old daughter, is being held on a $10,000 bond.
>
> Meaker came to the attention of police on Sept. 27, when she reported someone had abducted her baby from the back seat of her car while she was mailing a package at a local post office. Illinois State Police immediately issued an Amber Alert for the missing toddler.
>
> According to Stark County Sheriff Jimmie Dison, investigators were suspicious of Meaker's story.
>
> "I didn't believe her," Dison said in Stark County Circuit Court Friday.
>
> When the FBI joined the search they questioned Meaker and she allegedly admitted she had abandoned her infant daughter along a rural roadside outside of town.
>
> At 8 p.m., nearly 12 hours after the infant was placed alongside the road, a pair of search volunteers found the baby. She was alive and crying when they located her. The infant was transported to a local hospital for medical attention and is reportedly doing well.

Do you know who would agree with her?

Barack Obama voted for infanticide several times.

There really is no difference between abortion and what this woman tried to do to her baby. It's the exact same thing. In both cases, it's a strong person killing a weak person in order to avoid having their pursuit of happiness impacted by that other person's needs. Babies don't suddenly gain moral value because they change locations, or change size, or change how developed they are or change how dependent they are. A person is a person no matter how small. And abortion takes the life of an innocent human person.

Relate posts

- North Carolina Planned Parenthood will expand using federal taxpayer dollars
- 24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic

- Obama administration sends $3.1 million more to Planned Parenthood
- Hawaii Planned Parenthood caught counseling sex-selection abortions
- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law

Friday night spies: two episodes of Secret Agent

October 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite espionage TV show is “Danger Man” with Patrick McGoohan, which later morphed into “Secret Agent”. The show takes place during the 1960s, right at the height of the Cold War.

The actor, Patrick McGoohan, refused to perform romantic scenes on camera because of his religious beliefs. He turned down the roles of James Bond and Simon Templar because of these moral concerns (see below). And that dedication to moral excellence shines through in every frame of “Danger Man” and “Secret Agent”.

Here’s a description of Patrick McGoohan.

Excerpt:

> Main character John Drake worked for NATO as a special security agent and was free to travel the world working on special problems for free world governments. The story lines set an early precedent for non-violence, preferring to have Drake use his wits and his fists rather than a gun. McGoohan influenced the program from the start.
>
> The themes of morality and individuality fit in with his personal philosophy as well as his vision of what the character John Drake was supposed to be.
>
> As both a moral and opinionated man, McGoohan held strong views and was forceful about seeing that they were carried out. He had insisted at the very first meeting on the script for the first episode that the bedroom scene be cut out. In fact, he stipulated that romantic involvements would have to be eliminated if he were to play the role, and consequently none appeared in either this series or the ‘Secret Agent’ series that followed.

> […]It should come as no surprise that when McGoohan was offered the role as the first James Bond, he turned it down – several times – as being incompatible with the type of role he wanted to play. He says it was a decision he has never regretted.

> […]As an actor, McGoohan had now carved out a voice all his own…. John Drake was a loner, an individual, and a moral character.

From the UK Telegraph:

> [H]e was offered the roles of James Bond and Simon Templar (The Saint). He turned both down.
>
> He once recalled: “When we started Danger Man the producer wanted me to carry a gun and to have an affair with a different girl each week. I refused. I am not against romance on television, but sex is the antithesis of romance. Television is a gargantuan master that all sorts of people watch at all sorts of

> time, and it has a moral obligation towards its audience."

Here's tonight's first episode: **Colony Three**

Description:

> Behind the Iron Curtain, the Soviets have established a top-secret spy school set up to resemble a British village. Drake goes undercover to infiltrate the facility and discover its secrets.

IMDB mean rating: [8.9/10]

IMDB median rating: [9/10]

TV Guide rating: [9.4/10]

Here's tonight's second episode: **Fish on the Hook**

Description:

> Drake travels undercover to the Middle East where he must locate and extract a brilliant spymaster code-named "The Fish", whose network of spies has been discovered by the authorities.

IMDB mean rating: [8.4/10]

IMDB median rating: [8.5/10]

TV Guide rating: [8.8/10]

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: The Mark of Zorro (1940)
- Friday night detectives: one episode of Hercule Poirot
- Friday night soldiers: two episodes of Combat!
- Friday night movie: The Dam Busters (1955)
- Friday night movie: Sink the Bismarck! (1960)
- Friday night movie: The Crossing (2000)
- Friday night movie: The Great Escape (1963)
- Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)
- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)

- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Three ways that the progress of science conflicts with naturalistic speculations

October 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just got into a debate with some atheists recently on whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism. (People who have friended me on Facebook got to see me in action)

I offered the Facebook atheists 3 arguments:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the argument from information in the first replicator (origin of life)

These arguments are all supported by scientific evidence:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (From an article from Caltech)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning (there at least 40 examples of cosmic fine-tuning), (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)

They replied to my 3 arguments with 3 points of their own:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause
2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes

Ever heard any of these?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the 3 points from the Facebook atheists.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA

> †Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, USA
>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its

expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists. Leave no doubt.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.
>
> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities."
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. Leave no doubt.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can't make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can't make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth's interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them. Leave no doubt.

I do think it's important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see too much G. K. Chesterton and other postmodern stuff. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it's too hard. It's not too hard. Everyone can understand "Who Made God?" by Edgar Andrews – start with that! Then get Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". That's more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works.

You don’t want to be anti-science like atheists are.

Bill Maher: Obama looked like he spent all of my million-dollar donation on weed

October 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Was Obama resuming his childhood habits this week?
Here's the story from Newsbusters:

> BILL MAHER: I'm sorry, but if you missed it, I don't know if you heard what happened this week, but his wedding anniversary was Wednesday, and that was the same day as the debate. He apparently had the sex first and was completely spent, had nothing left, and it wound up Romney looked like the big winner and he looked like the Big Lebowski. What the f–k happened there? No, I was fascinated to watch these two men, I mean the contrast in their demeanor. Now we know what Romney looks like when he's all charged up, and now we know what Michael Jackson looked like when he was on the diprivan.
>
> [Laughter, applause, boos]
>
> You f–king liberals, let me tell you something, you got to get on the reality page! I'm sorry. He sucked. He looked tired. He had trouble getting his answers out. It looks like he took my million and spent it all on weed.

Actually, Obama used much harder drugs earlier in his life, like cocaine. He admits it in his book. I assume he kept it up through university, as well, and the professors just kept passing him because of affirmative action.

What's shocking about this line from Maher is that he gave Obama a one million dollar donation for his campaign. That's a lot of money. It shows a lot of support for Obama. If Maher is disappointed with Obama, that's a bad thing. It means that Obama REALLY messed up in that debate. Bill Maher is a fairly famous person here in America – he has a show on HBO. A lot of people were watching him say that.

Video here. WARNING: Contains very bad language. The F-word is used multiple times.

Let's take a look at the latest poll: (some links removed)

> Republican challenger Mitt Romney has shot ahead of President Barack Obama in polls taken since Wednesday night's debate. In the debate, Mr. Romney won handily over Mr. Obama, who looked irritated and confused at times.
>
> Not only have new polls shown Mr. Romney now leading President Obama nationally, but the Republican has also taken the lead in key swing states. This comes after Mr. Obama was leading in all polls prior to the debate.
>
> In Colorado, both Gravis Marketing and McLaughlin & Associates, Mr. Romney now leads. Gravis's poll shows the GOP candidate with a 49.4-45.9% lead. McLaughlin shows a 50-46% lead for Mr. Romney.
>
> In Florida, WeAskAmerica and Rasmussen Reports show Mr. Romney with a multiple-point lead. According to Rasmussen, Romney leads 49-47%. WeAskAmerica has the numbers at 49-46%.
>
> In Virginia, again, WeAskAmerica and Rasmussen Reports show Mr. Romney in the lead. Rasmussen has Romney leading 49-48% over President Obama. WeAskAmerica shows Mr. Romney with a 48-45% lead.
>
> Finally, WeAskAmerica has Mr. Romney leading Mr. Obama by one point in Ohio. Their poll shows a 47-46% lead for the challenger; and this percent comes even though WeAskAmerica polled 4% more Democrats than Republicans in Ohio.
>
> Both Rasmussen and National Journal polls have Mr. Romney now leading nationally.

I posted the video and transcript of the debate previously here.

Younger evangelicals put happiness and popularity over morality

October 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting post by Mark Tooley in the American Spectator.

Excerpt:

> A new generation of evangelical elites is imploring evangelicals to step back from the culture wars. Mostly they want to escape polarizing strong stances on same-sex marriage and abortion, and perhaps also contentious church-state issues, like the Obamacare contraceptive mandate.
>
> Purportedly the evangelical church is failing to reach young, upwardly mobile professionals because evangelicals, who now broadly comprise perhaps one third of all Americans, are seen as reactionary and hateful. On their college campuses, at their coffee shops, and in their yoga classes, among other venues, some outspoken hip young evangelicals want a new public image for their faith.
>
> […]A popular young evangelical blogger echoing Merritt's theme is Rachel Evans, who conveniently grew up in the Tennessee small town famous for the Scopes Monkey Trial. Her 2010 book was *Evolving in Monkey Town: How a Girl Who Knew All the Answers Learned to Ask the Questions.* "We are tired of the culture wars," she explained in a recent interview. "We are tired of politics." Lamenting the church's preoccupation with "shame and guilt," she urged evangelicals to reconsider their opposition to same-sex unions.

The post has a nice history of how evangelicals have always been involved in moral and political issues, and it's worth reading. But I want to make a different point below.

What's at the root of this movement to back away from moral issues? Here's what I think is the problem. When you advocate for moral causes like protecting the unborn, or school choice, or freeing the slaves, a bunch of people are not going to like you. Christians in the time of Jesus knew that being bold about their Christian convictions would make a lot of people think bad things about them – they expected it. But young evangelicals have gotten the idea that being a Christian should not involve any sort of unhappiness and unpopularity. They wouldn't have learned this from the Bible, because the Bible emphasizes suffering and unpopularity as part of the normal Christian life. It is their experience of church (and the hedonistic culture around them) that is likely to reinforce that view.

What young evangelicals learn in many churches is that religion is something that is centered on the Bible and the church building – it is not something that flows into real life. They learn that you can't find out anything about God from the Big Bang, the DNA, the fossil record, or even from the peer-reviewed research on abortion, divorce, or gay marriage. They learn from the Bible that helping the poor is good, but then they never

pick up an economic textbook to see *which economic system really helps the poor.* What you learn about in church is that religion is private and has no connection to reality whatsoever. This fits in with their view that Christianity should make them happy, because they've learned that it doesn't involve any studying to connect the Bible to the real world.

What follows from having a view that Christianity only lives in the Bible and church, and not out there in the real world of telescopes and microscopes? Well, most young evangelicals interpret what their pastor is telling them as "our flavor of ice cream" or "our cultural preference". They don't link Christianity to the real world, they don't think that it's true for everyone. They think that you just accept what the Bible says on faith, and that's all. No reasons can be given to non-Christians outside of just asking them to accept the Bible. Younger evangelicals believe that there are no facts that confirm or disprove Christianity – it's just a blind belief. Young evangelicals think that their faith doesn't have to be complemented with careful study of how things work in the real world.

What is the result of this anti-intellectual compartmentalization of faith? The result is that young evangelicals will balk at the idea of telling someone that they are going to Hell if they don't believe in Jesus. They will balk at the idea that feminism is to blame for the destruction of the family. They will balk at the idea that the best way to help the poor is to push for free market capitalism. They will balk at the idea that it is wrong to kill unborn children. They will balk at the idea that disarmament and pacifism embolden terrorists and tyrants to attack peace-loving people. They will balk at the idea that traditional marriage is better for society and children. They will balk at the idea that man-made catastrophic global warming is not supported by science. *They lack courage because they first lack knowledge*. They don't know how to make the case using hard evidence. They don't learn that hard evidence is important in church.

If the purpose of religion is to have happy feelings and be liked, then studying the real world to find out whether the Bible is true is bad religion. If religion is divorced from reality, then it's just a personal preference influenced by how a person was raised. No young evangelical is going to lift a finger to take bold moral stands if they think their worldview is just one option among many – like the flavors of ice cream in the frozen section of the grocery store. They have to know that what they are saying is true – then they will be bold. An example: there was a time when people believed that God did not create the first living cell, because it was just a simple lump of protoplasm that could easily come about by accident. Now we know better, and we can boldly make the case for intelligent design based on hard evidence – if we put in the time to study the evidence. And it is the same for everything – from theological claims, to moral claims, to social claims, to economic claims, to foreign policy claims. It doesn't matter if people call you names when you have the facts to support unpopular claims, *and that's why public, authentic Christianity is built on facts.* Non-Christians being offended by your claims doesn't change the way the world is.

We have to turn away from our own ignorance, laziness and cowardice if we hope to have the ability to stand up for our beliefs in public. Christianity is not about being happy and

feeling good and being liked by others. In a society that is increasingly secular and relativistic, studying outside the Bible necessarily precedes an authentic Christian life. There is no shortcut. We might have been able to get away with fideism 50 years ago, but not anymore. Not now.

Polls show voters swinging to Romney after decisive debate victory

October 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Robert Stacy McCain reports on the latest post-debate polls, but urges us to be cautious about believing them now, just because they are in our favor.

He writes: (links removed)

> Nevertheless, for several months, I had been saying that I thought the outcome of the election would hinge on the debates, and the one-sided ass-whupping Romney put on Obama may have triggered a decisive shift that the polls are already beginning to detect.
>
> If you check the Real Clear Politics national average, you see that Sept. 26/Oct. 1, Obama held a lead of four or more points after having been tied with Romney just a month earlier. According to Gallup's tracking poll, Obama had led by 6 points most of the way from Sept. 19/Oct. 2. Both of these key indicators now show a trend toward Romney, who has closed the gap to 3 points in Gallup and 1.6 points in the RCP, which is mirrored in recent state-by-state results for Florida, Ohio, Colorado andWisconsin.
>
> However, to emphasize again, polls are a lagging indicator. What is important in studying election polls is to follow the trendline, and we don't yet have enough results from different firms to be able to say (on Oct. 7) that Romney's looking like a definite winner for Nov. 6.

And McCain also links to this story about one of the bluest counties in the United States: (links removed)

> You'd have to reckon that our president's handlers thought that he would be safe visiting Cleveland, Ohio, a place that helped him win Ohio four years ago. Cuyahoga County yields the majority of Democratic votes from our state. But there's trouble for Team Obama there today, in a dearth of Democrat registrations.
>
> Here was how Mr. Obama was greeted at a local market:
>
> An Ohio market vendor told President Barack Obama on Friday that his business has been going "terrible" since the president's arrival, according to media reports.
>
> Obama was greeting different vendors at Cleveland's West Side Market when he came upon the proprietor of Rolston Poultry.
>
> According to the White House pool report, Obama asked the man how business was going.
>
> **"Terrible since you got here," he replied.**

> […]That small business owner summed up the sentiments of many Ohioans, reflected in the new Rasmussen poll, also cited in the PJ Media piece on Obama's Buckeye state woes.
>
> So, there's a problem with registering Dems in Cuyahoga County? That's according to analysis by Clinton Cooper of Election Insights, who has been involved in local and regional government and politics for the last 10 years, including at The Ohio State University and in a policy advisory role for several government agencies and consulting firms in Ohio. Mr. Cooper claims that his data shows that the changes in voter registration in Cuyahoga County have made it extremely difficult for Obama to win Ohio.

Remember, the Paul Ryan vs Joe Biden VP debate is on Thursday night this week.

When pastors get it right: Pulpit Freedom Sunday 2012

October 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite pastor Wayne Grudem, the best pastor on the face of the planet, explains why he participated in Pulpit Freedom Sunday 2012. (H/T Jeremy)

Excerpt:

> This Sunday I have agreed to join nearly 1,500 pastors nationwide and participate in Pulpit Freedom Sunday, sponsored by Alliance Defending Freedom. In my sermon, I plan to recommend that people vote for one presidential candidate and one political party that I will name. We will then all send our sermons to the IRS.
>
> This action is in violation of the 1954 "Johnson Amendment" to the Internal Revenue Code, which prohibits tax-exempt organizations like churches from endorsing any candidate by name. But in our nation, a higher law than the IRS code is the Constitution, which forbids laws "abridging freedom of speech" or "prohibiting the free exercise" of religion (First Amendment).
>
> I fully understand that many pastors might never want to endorse a candidate from the pulpit (I have never done so before and I might never do so again). But that should be the decision of the pastors and their churches, just as it was in 1860 when many pastors (rightly) decided they had to tell citizens to vote for Abraham Lincoln in order to end the horrible evil of slavery. When the government censors what pastors can preach, I think it is an unconstitutional violation of freedom of religion and freedom of speech.
>
> […]I have compiled a list of 24 differences between the two parties on issues with a moral component. Here are some of them where the parties differ:
>
> The rule of law (vs. judges who change the original meaning of the Constitution), freedom of religion in public expression (vs. freedom of worship in private), protection of life (vs. glorying in unrestricted abortion rights), the preservation of marriage (vs. promoting same-sex relationships as "marriage"), the limitation of federal power (vs. an unconstrained federal government), parental choice in education for children of all income levels and all races (vs. protecting a government-regulated monopoly on schools), turning back government overspending and avoiding debt that we cannot repay (vs. reckless spending that threatens to bankrupt our children and our nation), caring for the poor by reducing taxes to leave more money in the job-creating private sector (vs. ever-increasing taxes that drain money from job-creating businesses), a strong military to protect us and the many small democracies that look to us for protection (vs. damaging defense cutbacks that leave smaller nations, the world's sea lanes, and our own nation increasingly vulnerable), and a

> commitment to stand by Israel (vs. snubbing its leaders and demanding that it make ever-greater concessions).

You can read 5 reasons why pastors ought to have participated in Pulpit Freedom Sunday 2012 here.

Here's one of their reasons:

> **1. The issues the country is facing are biblical issues**. Pastors, more than many others, are uniquely suited to speak to the issues confronting the country in this election season. Issues such as life, marriage, the family, the economy, the poor, and many others are addressed specifically in scripture. The effect of the Johnson Amendment has been to make these biblical issues "political," as if slapping a "political" label on an issue somehow removes it from the purview of scripture. For example, a pastor preaching a sermon thirty years ago that abortion is wrong was just being biblical. But that same sermon today is labeled as political and, as a result, the pastor is sidelined into silence. It's not that the church is somehow becoming "political." It's that politics is invading the realm of the church.

We need more pastors to connect what the Bible says to policy and events in the real world. We need to take positions that are in accord with what God's Word says, and we need to be ready to defend our positions in public using public arguments and public evidence – especially scientific research – that will be persuasive to non-Christians who do not accept the Bible. That's the only way to stop the cultural decline caused by the secular left.

The best introductory book on the interface between Christianity and politics is "Indivisible: Restoring Faith, Family, and Freedom Before It's Too Late", co-authored by Jay Wesley Richards. The Kindle edition is $9.99. Richards' Ph.D is from Princeton University.

The best comprehensive book is "Politics – According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture" by Wayne Grudem. The Kindle edition of that one is $4.99. Grudem's is from Cambridge University. First-rate Christian scholarship on practical Christianity.

And you can listen to Grudem delivering Sunday school training at his church on every single chapter of that book right here. All free, and no ads. Be sure and scroll through all the previous years to get all the topics! Ethics, social policy, fiscal policy, foreign policy and more!

NYC's largest abortion clinic stops operations due to pro-life protests

October 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news in the New York Daily News, although the article is hopelessly biased against pro-lifers.

Excerpt:

> A Sunset Park abortion clinic has shut down after Catholic protesters drove away doctors and patients, according to the owner of the clinic.
>
> The Ambulatory Specialty Surgery Center of Brooklyn on 43rd St., closed earlier this month and will reopen in October as a new medical center providing outpatient surgeries, but not abortion.
>
> Catholic leaders claimed the clinic's closure after 22 years as a victory for their anti-abortion effort. Abortion advocates said they had never heard of a clinic in the city closing under pressure from protesters.
>
> […]Julie Kirshner, president of the Brooklyn and Queens chapter of the National Organization for Women, said she was shocked abortions were no longer offered at the medical center.
>
> "It's really a shame. I feel very badly and I'm disappointed about it," said Kirshner. "This means that women will have to be inconvenienced to get their health care. If [the clinic on 43rd St.] closed down, this could mean future closings and that's very disappointing."

Life Site News adds:

> This clinic was apparently a very big, deadly fish. According to The Tablet:
>
> "This was the oldest and largest abortion clinic in New York City and for many years, in the United States," said Msgr. Reilly. "I believe more than a quarter of a million unborn children lost their lives there."

A quarter of a million dead. Those numbers remind me of the tens of millions killed by atheists like Stalin, Mao and others like them.

Now contrast that peaceful pro-life approach to change with the approach used by pro-abortion advocates:

> An elderly pro-life activist was shot multiple times and killed this morning in front of Owosso High School in Michigan while he was peacefully protesting abortion with a sign depicting a baby and the word "Life," according to local police cited in the Flint Journal newspaper.
>
> Locals say that the victim, James Pouillon of Owosso, was well-known in the area for his pro-life activities.

> […]Reports indicate that a second individual was shot and killed in a different area of the city earlier in the day, and the two shootings are believed to be related, according to Shiawassee County sheriff George Braidwood. According to M-live.com, the second victim has now been identified as Mike Fuoss, 61, the owner of a local gravel pit. Fuoss was found dead in his office.
>
> Police have confirmed that a suspect – a 33-year-old Owosso man – was taken into custody at the suspect's home shortly after the 7:30 a.m. shooting. After being taken into custody he confessed to the second killing as well.

The pro-abortion side had nothing to say about that violence in the days after the tragedy, too. But are all pro-abortion advocates really so ghoulish?

Remember this case:

> A doctor who gave abortions to minorities, immigrants and poor women in a "house of horrors" clinic was charged with eight counts of murder in the deaths of a patient and seven babies who were born alive and then killed with scissors, prosecutors said Wednesday.
>
> Dr. Kermit Gosnell, 69, made millions of dollars over 30 years, performing as many illegal, late-term abortions as he could, prosecutors said. State regulators ignored complaints about him and failed to inspect his clinic since 1993, but no charges were warranted against them given time limits and existing law, District Attorney Seth Williams said. Nine of Gosnell's employees also were charged.
>
> Gosnell "induced labor, forced the live birth of viable babies in the sixth, seventh, eighth month of pregnancy and then killed those babies by cutting into the back of the neck with scissors and severing their spinal cord," Williams said.
>
> […]Bags and bottles holding aborted fetuses "were scattered throughout the building," Williams said. "There were jars, lining shelves, with severed feet that he kept for no medical purpose."
>
> […]Gosnell has been named in at least 46 malpractice suits, including one over the death of a 22-year-old mother who died of sepsis and a perforated uterus in 2000. Many others also involve perforated uteruses. Gosnell sometimes sewed up the injury without telling women their uteruses had been perforated, prosecutors said.
>
> Gosnell charged $325 for first-trimester abortions and $1,600 to $3,000 for abortions up to 30 weeks.

When a person supports the murder of innocent little babies for profit, then anything is possible – even forcing pro-lifers to subsidize the massacre. That's exactly what the Obama administration is always pushing for. Recall that Obama not only supports the murder of unborn babies, but also of born babies. He voted in favor of infanticide several times.

This is election in November is a chance for pro-lifers to roll back some of the pro-abortion

measures introduced by the Obama administration. We all need to do what we can before election day.

Sherrod Brown delinquent at paying his own taxes

October 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

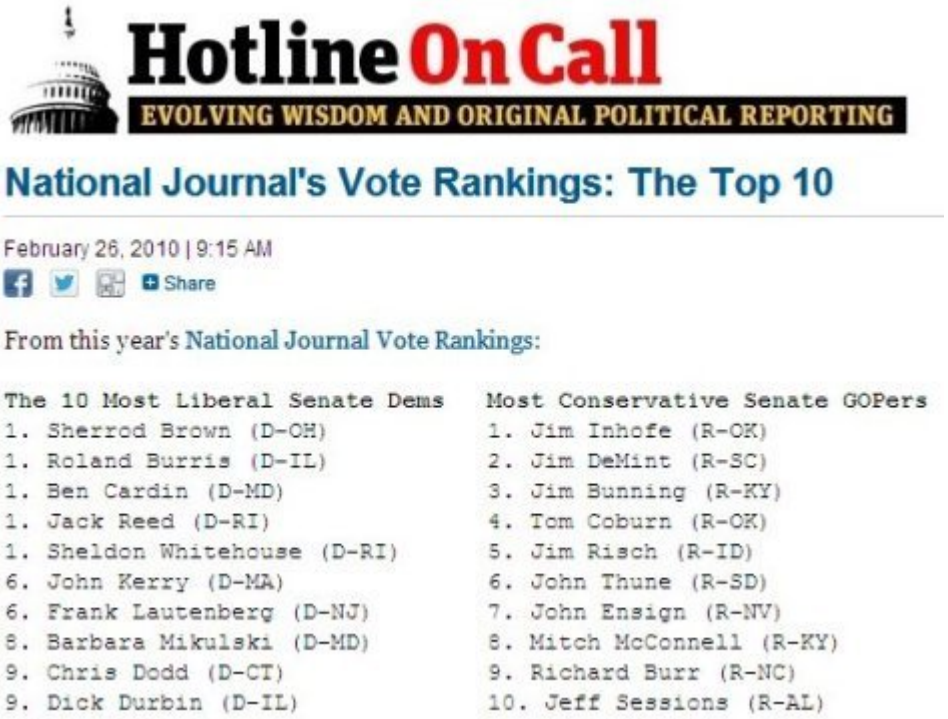

Hotline On Call

EVOLVING WISDOM AND ORIGINAL POLITICAL REPORTING

National Journal's Vote Rankings: The Top 10

February 26, 2010 | 9:15 AM

Share

From this year's National Journal Vote Rankings:

The 10 Most Liberal Senate Dems	Most Conservative Senate GOPers
1. Sherrod Brown (D-OH)	1. Jim Inhofe (R-OK)
1. Roland Burris (D-IL)	2. Jim DeMint (R-SC)
1. Ben Cardin (D-MD)	3. Jim Bunning (R-KY)
1. Jack Reed (D-RI)	4. Tom Coburn (R-OK)
1. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)	5. Jim Risch (R-ID)
6. John Kerry (D-MA)	6. John Thune (R-SD)
6. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ)	7. John Ensign (R-NV)
8. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)	8. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)
9. Chris Dodd (D-CT)	9. Richard Burr (R-NC)
9. Dick Durbin (D-IL)	10. Jeff Sessions (R-AL)

Sherrod Brown: the most liberal senator in the U.S. Senate

From Cleveland.com, a horrifying tale of liberal hypocrisy in one of the bluest cities in the country. (H/T Doug Ross @ Journal)

Excerpt:

> Ohio Democratic U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown was more than four months delinquent in paying taxes on his Washington, D.C., apartment and had to pay a penalty and interest last week.
>
> This was not the first time, records show.
>
> Brown also was delinquent in 2006 and 2007 and paid penalties and interest, according to tax records from the District of Columbia.
>
> "I was late," he said on a conference call with reporters when asked about the recent delinquency. "I misplaced the bill and I paid it as soon as I found out. I paid a penalty for being late, and it won't happen again."
>
> When a reporter noted that it also happened five and six years ago, Brown said: "I misplaced it then. This is a small apartment. I'm not in D.C. nearly every week, I'm here when the Senate's in session, I'm here three or four nights a week.

Actually, a lot of Democrats get into trouble for not paying their taxes:

> A new report just out from the Internal Revenue Service reveals that 36 of President Obama's executive office staff owe the country $833,970 in back taxes. These people working for Mr. Fair Share apparently haven't paid any share, let

> alone their fair share.
>
> Previous reports have shown how well-paid Obama's White House staff is, with 457 aides pulling down more than $37 million last year. That's up seven workers and nearly $4 million from the Bush administration's last year.
>
> Nearly one-third of Obama's aides make more than $100,000 with 21 being paid the top White House salary of $172,200, each.
>
> The IRS' 2010 delinquent tax revelations come as part of a required annual agency report on federal employees' tax compliance. Turns out, an awful lot of folks being paid by taxpayers are not paying their own income taxes.
>
> The report finds that thousands of federal employees owe the country more than $3.4 billion in back taxes. That's up 3% in the past year.
>
> That scale of delinquency could annoy voters, hard-pressed by their own costs, fears and stubbornly high unemployment despite Joe Biden's many promises.
>
> The tax offenders include employees of the U.S. Senate who help write the laws imposed on everyone else. They owe $2.1 million. Workers in the House of Representatives owe $8.5 million, Department of Education employees owe $4.3 million and over at Homeland Security, 4,697 workers owe about $37 million. Active duty military members owe more than $100 million.
>
> The Treasury Department, where Obama nominee Tim Geithner had to pay up $42,000 in his own back taxes before being confirmed as secretary, has 1,181 other employees with delinquent taxes totaling $9.3 million.
>
> As usual, the Postal Service, with more than 600,000 workers, has the most offenders (25,640), who also owe the most — almost $270 million. Veterans Affairs has 11,659 workers owing the IRS $151 million while the Energy Department that was so quick to dish out more than $500 million to the Solyndra folks has 322 employees owing $5 million.
>
> The country's chief law enforcement agency, the Department of Justice, has 2,069 employees who are nearly $17 million behind in taxes.

Even Warren Buffet's company is in a dispute with the IRS over unpaid taxes:

> Two weeks ago, when billionaire Warren Buffett called for higher taxes on rich people like him, the liberal media predictably gushed and fawned.
>
> Yet when Americans for Limited Government revealed last week that Buffett's company Berkshire Hathaway has been in an almost decade-long dispute with the IRS over how much taxes it owes, these same press members couldn't care less:
>
> According to Berkshire Hathaway's own annual report — see Note 15 on pp. 54-56 — the company has been in a years-long dispute over its federal tax bills.
>
> According to the report, "We anticipate that we will resolve all adjustments proposed by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service ('IRS') for the 2002 through 2004

> tax years at the IRS Appeals Division within the next 12 months. The IRS has completed its examination of our consolidated U.S. federal income tax returns for the 2005 and 2006 tax years and the proposed adjustments are currently being reviewed by the IRS Appeals Division process. The IRS is currently auditing our consolidated U.S. federal income tax returns for the 2007 through 2009 tax years."
>
> Americans for Limited Government researcher Richard McCarty, who was alerted to the controversy by a federal government lawyer, said, "The company has been short-changing the tax collection agency for much of the past decade. Mr. Buffett's company has not fully settled its tax bills from 2002-2009. Yet he says he'd happily pay more. Except the IRS has apparently been asking him to pay more going on nine years."

I wrote an entire post about hypocrisy on the left. It's worth a read so that you know what to make about the "compassion" rhetoric of the left.

Joe Biden takes 6 days off from campaigning to cram for debate with Paul Ryan

October 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Weekly Standard. (H/T Bad Blue – the best conservative news aggregator on the Internet!)

Excerpt:

> With just about a month until Election Day, Vice President Joe Biden is in the middle of taking nearly a week off the campaign trail. He will return to doing campaign events on Thursday, when he will debate Rep. Paul Ryan in the vice presidential debate.
>
> On Friday, October 5, according to the White House, Biden spent the day working. In the morning, he was scheduled to attend the presidential daily briefing in the Oval Office, with President Obama. That afternoon Biden was to "meet with senior advisors," according to the White House.
>
> For this weekend, the White House provided the following guidance: "The Vice President will be in Wilmington, Delaware. There are no public events scheduled."
>
> As for the next three days, Biden will remain in Delaware. "On Monday through Wednesday, the Vice President will be in Wilmington, Delaware. There are no public events scheduled."
>
> Meanwhile, Thursday, October 11, is a big day for Biden. "On Thursday, the Vice President and Dr. Jill Biden will travel to Danville, Kentucky. In the evening, the Vice President will participate in the Vice Presidential Debate at Centre College. Dr. Biden will also attend. This event is open to pre-credentialed media."
>
> So while Biden is taking 6 days off the campaign trail at a crucial time in the presidential campaign, it's likely that he isn't completely off. He is said to be spending time with David Axelrod and other campaign advisers preparing for Thursday's debate.

Mark these future debates on your calendar: (live streaming via Fox News should be available)

> **Vice presidential candidates' debate between Vice President Joe Biden, Wis. Rep. Paul Ryan**
>
> - Topic: Foreign and domestic topics
> - Date: Thursday, Oct. 11
> - Time: 9 – 10:30 p.m. EDT
> - Location: Centre College, Danville, Ky.
> - Moderator: Martha Raddatz, senior foreign affairs correspondent, ABC News

- Format: “The debate will cover both foreign and domestic topics and be divided into nine time segments of approximately 10 minutes each. The moderator will ask an opening question, after which each candidate will have two minutes to respond. The moderator will use the balance of the time in the segment for a discussion of the question.”

Second presidential candidates’ debate between Obama, Romney

- Topic: Foreign and domestic issues
- Date: Tuesday, Oct. 16
- Time: 9 – 10:30 p.m. EDT
- Location: Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y.
- Moderator: Candy Crowley, chief political correspondent, CNN, and anchor, CNN’s “State of the Union”
- Format: “The second presidential debate will take the form of a town meeting, in which citizens will ask questions of the candidates on foreign and domestic issues. Candidates each will have two minutes to respond, and an additional minute for the moderator to facilitate a discussion. The town meeting participants will be undecided voters selected by the Gallup Organization.”

Third presidential candidates’ debate between Obama, Romney

- Topic: Foreign policy
- Date: Monday, Oct. 22
- Time: 9 – 10:30 p.m. EDT
- Location: Lynn University, Boca Raton, Fla.
- Moderator: Bob Schieffer, chief Washington correspondent, CBS News, and moderator, “Face the Nation”
- Format: “The format for the debate will be identical to the first presidential debate and will focus on foreign policy.”

If you missed the first debate, then you really to watch it or read the transcript.

Gas prices hit all-time high – again – in Obama-supporting California

October 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From liberal USA Today.

Excerpt:

> Gasoline prices in California rose to another all-time high on Sunday after passing a four-year high a day earlier, according to AAA.
>
> The four-cent-per-gallon jump Sunday was even bigger than Saturday's jump, which was just a fraction of a penny.
>
> AAA reported in its latest update on Sunday that the statewide average price for a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline is $4.655. Saturday's average of $4.6140 was the highest since June 19, 2008, when it was $4.6096.
>
> Sunday's price, like Saturday's, was the highest in the nation, with the Golden State leapfrogging Hawaii this week as the state with the most expensive fuel due to a temporary reduction in supply.
>
> Californians are paying 24 cents per gallon more than motorists in Hawaii, according to the AAA report. In some locations, fuming motorists paid $5 or more per gallon while station owners had to shut down pumps in others.
>
> […]A web of refinery and transmission problems is to blame, analysts said. **The situation is compounded by a California pollution law that requires a special blend of cleaner-burning gasoline from April to October, said Denton Cinquegrana, executive editor of the Oil Price Information Service, which helps AAA compile its price survey.**

The radically leftist New York Times explains why this is happening:

Excerpt:

> **California typically has substantially higher gasoline prices than most of the country because of its tough environmental regulations and high taxes. Gasoline supplies are traditionally tight this time of year as refiners do maintenance work to switch from summer to fall gasoline blends mandated by the California pollution-reduction regulations. But this year, energy experts say, the local gasoline market is particularly chaotic because of the refinery shutdowns.**
>
> […]**"California requires a specific blend of gasoline that only the refineries on the West Coast make," said Bill Day, a spokesman for Valero. "So when there is a shortage of that blend, you can't just send supplies from somewhere else."**

Wow, even a stopped clock is right twice a day.

Here's a more full explanation from Ken Green of the American Enterprise Institute. (links removed)

First reason is limited supply with higher demand, which has been made worse by Obama:

> The primary reason for high gasoline prices, as any economist will tell you, is very simple: world demand for oil is strong, and the supply is limited. The cost of crude oil dominates the price of gas: in January 2012, it represented 76 percent of the price.

Second reason is Middle East tensions, which has been made worse by Obama:

> Risk also influences the world price of oil. Unrest in the Middle East is a perennial cause of worry over world oil supplies, and explicit threats by Iran to close the Straits of Hormuz can't be promoting confidence in oil consumer markets.

Third reason is blocking domestic energy production, which has been made worse by Obama:

> Another source of supply uncertainty is the moratorium that the Obama administration has slapped on U.S. development of domestic oil production in the last two years. Since the *Deepwater Horizon*oil rig disaster in 2010, U.S. domestic oil production has slowed significantly, especially in the Gulf of Mexico.
> The permitting slowdown as a result of the spill is estimated to have cost the United States $4.4 billion in output costs, 19,000 jobs, $1.1 billion in wages, and over $500 million in federal, state, and local government lost tax revenues.

Fourth reason is higher taxes on gasoline, which has been made worse by lots of Democrats:

> The tax bite in a gallon of gasoline is nearly equal to the costs of refining, distribution, and marketing combined. That fluctuates, of course, because most gas taxes are percentage based. At $3.79/gallon, taxes account for about 53 cents.

Fifth reason is global warming hysteria, which is the Democrat religion:

> In order to fulfill air pollution reduction plans in states and localities across the country, gasoline sold in the United States has been fractionated into about 17 different boutique fuels sold in dozens of discrete markets. With three grades of gasoline per fuel, refiners are producing over 50 separate blends. Such boutique fuel requirements both increase price volatility and the height of price spikes as a function of the distance-to-market of boutique fuel producers and consumers, according to the Energy Information Administration. Boutique fuel requirements also increase the absolute price of gasoline sold in boutique

> markets, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

Sixth reason is denial of refinery permits, which has been made worse by Obama:

> Another factor contributing to the increased price of gasoline is the reduction in the number of operating refineries in the United States over the last 30 years. The number and capacity of U.S. refineries peaked in 1981, and, since then, 171 plants have closed, although the remaining plants have increased output to offset a loss of production. Though most of this reduction has been caused by the low profit potential of refineries, but others see a significant cause in "extremely tight environmental restrictions, not-in-my-back-yard community opposition, and the high cost of new construction." Refinery profit margins have played a role in recent gasoline price hikes. TheEIA suggests that "The sizable jump in retail prices this year reflects not only the higher average cost of crude oil compared to previous years, but also an increase in U.S. refining margins on gasoline (the difference between refinery wholesale gasoline prices and the average cost of crude oil) from an average of $0.34 per gallon in 2010 to $0.45 per gallon in 2011 and $0.42 per gallon in 2012."

Seventh reason is three rounds of quantitative easing, which causes inflation and a weak dollar, which has been made worse by Obama:

> In recent congressional testimony, Robert Murphy, of the Institute for Energy Research observed: that: "From its peak in March 2009, the dollar has fallen 17 percent against other major currencies. Therefore, holding everything else constant, the dollar depreciation alone from early 2009 can explain a 20.5 percent increase in oil prices (quoted in dollars)….It is on the basis of such calculations that a recent Joint Economic Committee report estimated that Federal Reserve policies have added almost 57 cents to the price of a gallon of gasoline for American motorists.

The article also debunks the leftist myth that "speculators" are the cause of high gas prices.

It's election time – make sure you have the facts so you can make the case.

UPDATE: Stuart Schneiderman links to a Wall Street Journal article that discusses California's cap-and-trade (carbon tax) policy, and their restrictions on pipeline construction – both of which raise gas prices for consumers.

Gay marriage debate: a secular case against same-sex marriage

October 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: this post has a twin! Its companion post on a secular case against abortion rights is here.

I can't possible cover everything, but I will make three arguments.

1. Same-sex marriage is bad for children
2. Same-sex marriage is bad for civil society and business
3. Same-sex marriage is bad for public health

Let's look at these in order.

1. SSM is bad for children

Traditional marriage is beneficial for children for 4 reasons:

- traditional marriages last longer than same-sex unions
- traditional marriages are more peaceful than same-sex unions
- traditional marriages offer children male and female influences
- traditional marriages model life-long love between men and women

Space permits me to only discuss the first two, using this paper from the Family Research Council, which cites data from mainstream sources like the Department of Justice, peer-reviewed studies, etc.

That research paper compares same-sex couples and heterosexual married couples, in the following ways:

- relationship duration
- monogamy vs. promiscuity
- relationship commitment

- number of children being raised
- health risks
- rates of intimate partner violence

It turns out that same-sex unions are not as good for children as traditional marriage, on those measures.

Relationship duration

Claim: about 58% of traditional marriages last longer than 20 years.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2001)

Claim: about 5% of same-sex unions last longer than 20 years.

Source: 2003-2004 Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census

Monogamy vs Promiscuity

Claim: 85% of married women and 75.5% of married men report being faithful to their spouses. For homosexual males, the number is 4.5%

Sources: Laumann, The Social Organization of Sexuality, 216; McWhirter and Mattison, The Male Couple: How Relationships Develop (1984): 252-253; Wiederman, "Extramarital Sex," 170.

Rates of intimate partner violence

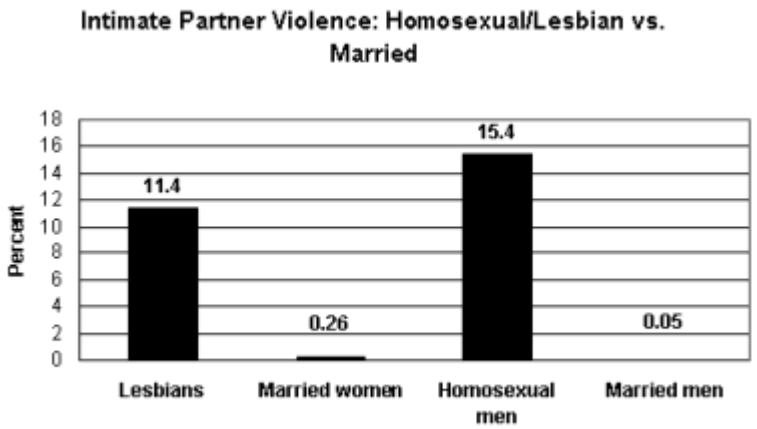

Married men and women experience significantly less intimate partner violence than do homosexual men and women.

Sources: "Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence," U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs: 30; "Intimate Partner Violence," Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report:11.

There is a lot more evidence cited in the research paper. Read the whole thing.

Consider this article by Dr. Trayce Hansen about which family configuration is best for children. The title is "Same-Sex Marriage: Not in the Best Interest of Children".

Excerpt:

> Only mother-father families afford children the opportunity to develop

> relationships with a parent of the same, as well as the opposite sex. Relationships with both sexes early in life make it easier and more comfortable for a child to relate to both sexes later in life. Overall, having a relationship with both a male and female parent increases the likelihood that a child will have successful social and romantic relationships during his or her life.[5]
>
> Moreover, existing research on children reared by homosexuals is not only scientifically flawed and extremely limited [6,7,8] but some of it actually indicates that those children are at increased risk for a variety of negative outcomes.[6] Other studies find that homosexually parented children are more likely to experiment sexually, experience sexual confusion, and engage in homosexual and bisexual behavior themselves.[5,6,9] And for those children who later engage in non-heterosexual behavior, extensive research reveals they are more likely to suffer from psychiatric disorders, abuse alcohol and drugs, [10] attempt suicide, [11] experience domestic violence and sexual assault, [12] and are at increased risk for chronic diseases, AIDS, and shortened life spans.[13,14,15]
>
> It shouldn't be surprising that studies find children reared by homosexuals are more likely to engage in homosexual behavior themselves [16,9,17] since extensive worldwide research reveals homosexuality is primarily environmentally induced. Specifically, social and/or family factors, as well as permissive environments which affirm homosexuality, play major environmental roles in the development of homosexual behavior.[18,19,20,21]

The rest of the article, with references, is here.

Research from the Heritage Foundation shows that traditional marriage is the safest place for women and children – women and children are much less likely to be the victims of domestic violence or violent crime when they are in a married home. Another Heritage Foundation research paper shows that child poverty is greatly reduced when children grow up in a married home.

So what do we learn from this? The evidence is clear: traditional marriage is better for children than same-sex marriage.

2. SSM is bad for civil society and business

SSM will *increase* the power of the state to regulate civil society and business. Let me quickly summarize the evidence for this to give you an idea how it would work, using Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse's testimony to the Rhode Island legislature.

Excerpt:

> Far from limiting the power of the state, your version of equality has become a tool for the hostile takeover of civil society by the state. Churches are already under attack for daring to dissent from the new state-imposed Orthodoxy that marriage is whatever the government says it is.7

> Parents are losing the right to direct the education of their own children.8 Foster parents in the UK must submit to the state's views about marriage.9 Reputable adoption agencies have been put out of business.
>
> And the pettiness of some of the complaints brought by same sex couples is simply staggering. Christian bed and breakfast owners have been sued for not allowing unmarried couples to stay in double rooms. They would have gladly rented them separate rooms, but that was not good enough for the thought police.10 Same sex couples have brought legal complaints against wedding photographers, as if there were a constitutional right to have your picture taken by the person of your choice.11

The details of the events she is describing can be found in the references for her speech.

Here are a few more examples of this infringement on civil society and business:

- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired
- Law firm that agreed to defend marriage pressured by gay groups
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Queen's University feminist professor says that polygamy should be permitted
- Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec
- Christians forced to perform same-sex marriages
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)

Notice how same-sex marriage impacts businesses, clergy, non-profits, etc. and even leads to polygamy. Once you decide that marriage is not about putting guidelines around sex and producing and nurturing the next generation, but about letting consenting adults do whatever they want, then there are no rules.

Now consider this article about how the breakdown of marriage changes society and government, written by Dr. Frank Turek.

Excerpt:

> The law is a great teacher, and same sex marriage will teach future generations that marriage is not about children but about coupling. When marriage becomes

> nothing more than coupling, fewer people will get married to have children.
>
> So what? People will still have children, of course, but many more of them out-of wedlock. That's a disaster for everyone. Children will be hurt because illegitimate *parents* (there are no illegitimate children) often never form a family, and those that "shack up" break up at a rate two to three times that of married parents. Society will be hurt because illegitimacy starts a chain of negative effects that fall like dominoes—illegitimacy leads to poverty, crime, and higher welfare costs which lead to bigger government, higher taxes, and a slower economy.
>
> Are these just the hysterical cries of an alarmist? No. We can see the connection between same-sex marriage and illegitimacy in Scandinavian countries. Norway, for example, has had de-facto same-sex marriage since the early nineties. In Nordland,the most liberal county of Norway, where they fly "gay" rainbow flags over their churches, out-of-wedlock births have soared—more than 80percent of women giving birth for the first time, and nearly 70 percent of *all* children, are born out of wedlock! Across all of Norway, illegitimacy rose from 39 percent to 50 percent in the first decade of same-sex marriage.
>
> Anthropologist Stanley Kurtz writes,"When we look at Nordland and Nord-Troendelag — the Vermont and Massachusetts of Norway — we are peering as far as we can into the future of marriage in a world where gay marriage is almost totally accepted. What we see is a place where marriage itself has almost totally disappeared." He asserts that "Scandinavian gay marriage has driven home the message that marriage itself is outdated, and that virtually any family form, including out-of-wedlock parenthood, is acceptable." But it's not just Norway. Blankenhorn reports this same trend in other countries. International surveys show that same-sex marriage and the erosion of traditional marriage tend to go together. *Traditional marriage is weakest and illegitimacy strongest wherever same-sex marriage is legal.*
>
> You might say, "Correlation doesn't always indicate causation!" Yes, but often it does. Is there any doubt that liberalizing marriage laws impacts society for the worse? You need look no further than the last 40 years of no-fault divorce laws in the United States (family disintegration destroys lives and now costs taxpayers $112 billion per year!).
>
> No-fault divorce laws began in one state, California, and then spread to rest of the country. Those liberalized divorce laws helped change our attitudes and behaviors about the *permanence* of marriage. There's no question that liberalized marriage laws will help change our attitudes and behaviors about the *purpose* of marriage. The law is a great teacher, and if same-sex marriage advocates have their way, children will be expelled from the lesson on marriage.

So there are financial and social costs to the breakdown of marriage. The more government has to spend to deal with the problems SSM creates, the higher taxes will go,

and the less money is left in the hands of working families to accomplish their own plans.

To be fair, I think that sex education and no-fault divorce are worse threats to marriage than same-sex marriage. I would like to see more research to persuade people that chastity before marriage is important, like this research , so that we could see our way clear to push for policies that encourage young people to wait longer before having sex. And I would like to see other measures taken to strengthen marriage from no-fault divorce, such as a shared parenting laws. But SSM is the current topic, so I'll stick with that here.

3. SSM is bad for public health

Now we come to the sensitive part. We should not be encouraging SSM because it normalizes homosexuality and the homosexual lifestyle is associated with harmful behaviors.

Consider this recent Centers for Disease Control study. Life Site News discusses the findings in this article.

Excerpt:

> Students who report being gay or bisexual are more likely than heterosexual students to engage in unhealthy risk behaviors such as tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual risk behaviors, suicidal behaviors, and violence, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
>
> The study reported: "the prevalence among gay or lesbian students was higher than the prevalence among heterosexual students for a median of 63.8% of all the risk behaviors measured, and the prevalence among bisexual students was higher than the prevalence among heterosexual students for a median of 76.0% of all the risk behaviors measured."
>
> Specifically, gay or lesbian students had higher rates for seven of the 10 health risk categories (behaviors that contribute to violence, behaviors related to attempted suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, other drug use, sexual behaviors, and weight management).
>
> The study also found that only 1.3% of students self-identified as gay or lesbian at the eight sites where they were asked their "sexual identity." A median of 3.7% said they were bisexual.
>
> Researchers analyzed data from Youth Risk Behavior Surveys conducted during 2001–2009 in seven states and six large urban school districts. These sites collected data on high school students' sexual identity (heterosexual, gay or lesbian, bisexual, or unsure), sex of sexual contacts (sexual contact with the opposite sex only, with the same sex only, or with both sexes), or both.
>
> The study, "Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health Risk Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9–12 in Selected Sites—Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, United States, 2001–2009," was published as a Morbidity and

> Mortality Weekly Report Surveillance Summary.

Dr. Trayce Hansen summarizes some of the previously published research on the health care effects of the gay lifestyle.

Excerpt:

> Non-heterosexual behavior leads to increased risk of psychological and physical disorders
>
> Sadly, the research is also clear that individuals who adopt non-heterosexual lifestyles are more likely to suffer from a host of negative outcomes including psychiatric disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide attempts, domestic violence and sexual assault, and increased risk for chronic diseases, AIDS, and shortened lifespan. Schools should not affirm and thereby encourage young people to adopt lifestyles more likely to lead to such devastation. (To review these specific studies see references 5-10 below).

The footnotes she mentions are in the original article. That article also debunks the "gay gene" myth using identical twin studies, which show that only 10-11% of identical twins have the same sexual orientation.

Consider how society treats the practice of cigarette smoking. Certainly, we don't want to coerce people into not smoking – we want them to have the choice. But we should definitely not lie to people about the health effects of smoking. It does no good to tell people that dangerous things are not really dangerous. I would rather hurt someone's feelings gently by telling them the truth than see them suffer real harm after telling them lies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have seen three reasons why we should not legalize same-sex marriage:

1. Same-sex marriage is bad for children
2. Same-sex marriage is bad for civil society and business
3. Same-sex marriage is bad for public health

Notice that there are no arguments in this post that require a religious worldview or belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Further study

For a more academic case against SSM, see this peer-reviewed paper on traditional marriage and same-sex marriage, authored by two guys from Princeton University and one guy from the University of Notredame. One of those guys is the famous Robert P. George. For some simple, practical tips on defending traditional marriage, check out this

tip sheet from the National Organization for Marriage. Here's another good peer-reviewed paper in the Harvard University Journal of Law and Public Policy. And of course there are the two recent large-scale studies on gay parenting outcomes, and responses to the criticisms of those studies.

You can also watch the videos from a formal academic debate on same-sex marriage held at the University of Central Florida, featuring Dr. Michael Brown. Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse also debated same-sex marriage at Columbia University in a formal academic debate. You can see her give a lecture on same-sex marriage at Houston Baptist University here, as well.

Security personnel removed from Libya before terrorist attack, despite victim's objections

October 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Guy Benson at Townhall. (I linked to the printable version)

He first mentions the last shocking development on the Benghazi attack:

> House investigators warned Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to expect a hearing into their finding that that American staff at the U.S. Embassy in Libya had their request for additional security denied by Washington officials.
>
> "Based on information provided to the Committee by individuals with direct knowledge of events in Libya, the attack that claimed the ambassador's life was the latest in a long line of attacks on Western diplomats and officials in Libya in the months leading up to September 11, 2012," House Oversight and Government Reform Committee chairman Darrell Issa, R-Calif., and subcommittee chairman Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, wrote Clinton today. They dismissed out-of-hand the suggestion that the attack ever could have been regarded as a spontaneous protest gone awry.
>
> **"In addition, multiple U.S. federal government officials have confirmed to the Committee that, prior to the September 11 attack, the U.S. mission in Libya made repeated requests for increased security in Benghazi," Issa and Chaffetz added (my emphasis). "The mission in Libya, however, was denied these resources by officials in Washington."**
>
> **The committee noted 13 "security threats" in Benghazi, including an attempt to assassinate the British ambassador to Libya.**

And now here's the latest development from CBS News:

> **The former head of a Special Forces "Site Security Team" in Libya tells CBS News that in spite of multiple pleas from himself and other U.S. security officials on the ground for "more, not less" security personnel, the State Department removed as many as 34 people from the country in the six months before the terrorist attack in Benghazi that killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and three others.**
>
> Lt. Col. Andy Wood will appear this week at a House Oversight Committee hearing that will examine security decisions leading up to the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the U.S. compound in Benghazi.
>
> Speaking to CBS News correspondent Sharyl Attkisson, Wood said when he found out that his own 16-member team and a six-member State Department elite force were being pulled from Tripoli in August – about a month before the assault in Benghazi – he felt, "like we were being asked to play the piano with two

> fingers. There was concern amongst the entire embassy staff."

According to ABC News, Stevens actually wanted the security teams to remain in Libya:

> U.S. Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens wanted a Security Support Team, made up of 16 special operations soldiers, to stay with him in Libya after their deployment was scheduled to end in August, the commander of that security team told ABC News. The embassy staff's "first choice was for us to stay," Lt. Col. Andrew Wood, 55, told ABC News in an interview. "That would have been the choice of the embassy people in Tripoli." **But a senior State Department official told ABC News that the embassy's Regional Security Officer never specifically requested that the SST's tour be extended past August, and the official maintained there was no net loss of security personnel**…

You'll recall that the Obama administration spread false information about the terrorist attack, saying that it was a spontaneous eruption caused by a Youtube video, and not a planned terrorist attack. This is how incompetent and deceptive they are, and yet the media is only now correcting the initial reports. This scandal should be enough to sink Obama, but as Neil Simpson points out, Democrats are not the best at following the news.

How are voters responding to Obama's weakness on foreign policy? The new Pew Research has Romney ahead by 4 points with likely voters, 49 – 45.

Related posts

- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack
- UK Independent: "America 'was warned of embassy attack but did nothing'"
- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser
- Obama administration warns contractors to delay layoffs to after election
- Obama wants to send $1 billion of aid to Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
- Report: Iran shipping arms and personnel to Syria through Iraq
- Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)
- The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration
- Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month
- Defense cuts to an already weakened military exposes us to aggression
- Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES
- Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?
- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority
- Obama's neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Obama's Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors
- Former DEA chief warns of cooperation between Hezbollah and drug cartels

- Iran launches Spanish-language TV channel in Venezuela
- Obama’s defense cuts undermine our national security
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them
- Iraq plunges into chaos as U.S. troops withdraw
- Iran laughs as Obama pleads for return of unmanned drone

Nobel prize awarded for treatments developed with ethical adult stem cells

October 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wes from Reason to Stand sent me this exciting news from Reuters.

Excerpt:

> Scientists from Britain and Japan shared a Nobel Prize on Monday for the discovery that adult cells can be transformed back into embryo-like stem cells that may one day regrow tissue in damaged brains, hearts or other organs.
>
> John Gurdon, 79, of the Gurdon Institute in Cambridge, Britain and Shinya Yamanaka, 50, of Kyoto University in Japan, discovered ways to create tissue that would act like embryonic cells, without the need to collect the cells from embryos.
>
> They share the $1.2 million Nobel Prize for Medicine, for work Gurdon began 50 years ago and Yamanaka capped with a 2006 experiment that transformed the field of "regenerative medicine" – the search for ways to cure disease by growing healthy tissue.
>
> "These groundbreaking discoveries have completely changed our view of the development and specialization of cells," the Nobel Assembly at Stockholm's Karolinska Institute said.
>
> All of the body starts as stem cells, before developing into tissue like skin, blood, nerves, muscle and bone. The big hope is that stem cells can grow to replace damaged tissue in cases from spinal cord injuries to Parkinson's disease.
>
> **Scientists once thought it was impossible to turn adult tissue back into stem cells. That meant new stem cells could only be created by taking them from embryos, which raised ethical objections that led to research bans in some countries.**
>
> As far back as 1962 Gurdon became the first scientist to clone an animal, making a healthy tadpole from the egg of a frog with DNA from another tadpole's intestinal cell. That showed that developed cells carry the information to make every cell in the body – decades before other scientists made world headlines by cloning the first mammal from adult DNA, Dolly the sheep.
>
> **More than 40 years later, Yamanaka produced mouse stem cells from adult mouse skin cells by inserting a small number of genes. His breakthrough effectively showed that the development that takes place in adult tissue could be reversed, turning adult tissue back into cells that behave like embryos.**
>
> **Stem cells created from adult tissue are known as "induced pluripotency stem cells", or iPS cells. Because patients may one day be**

> **treated with stem cells from their own tissue, their bodies might be less likely to reject them.**

Adult stem cells are not popular with the pro-abortion secular leftist crowd, but they do get you a Nobel prize.

Related posts

- Ethical adult stem cell treatment leaves two men HIV-free
- Two more adult stem cell treatments discovered
- Adult stem cells therapy can fix a broken heart?
- New study: adult stem cells are almost identical to embryonic stem cells
- New study: adult stem cells used in breast cancer treatment
- Doctors grow new trachea from patient's own adult stem cells
- Adult stem cells used to grow a new heart
- Adult stem cells used to restore sight to patients blinded by chemical burns
- British boy becomes first in the world to have stem cell transplant
- ABC News reports on how adult stem cells produce innovative cures today
- Ethically-sound adult stem cell research cures paralysis in human patients
- Chinese scientists announce stem-cell research breakthrough
- Major breakthrough in adult stem-cell research

CBS reporter blasts Obama administration: victory in Afghanistan is a “major lie”

October 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

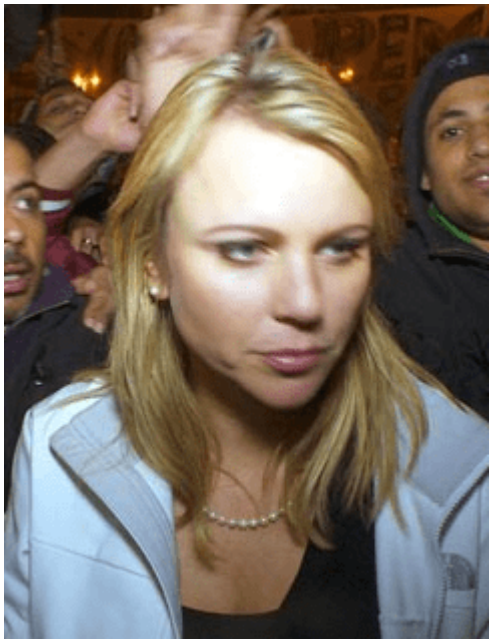

CBS News correspondent Lara Logan

This must-read article appears in the Chicago Sun-Times.

Excerpt:

> Lara Logan, a correspondent for CBS’ “60 Minutes,” delivered a provocative speech to about 1,100 influentials from government, politics, media, and the legal and corporate arenas.
>
> […]Her ominous and frightening message was gleaned from years of covering our wars in the Middle East. She arrived in Chicago on the heels of her Sept. 30 report, “The Longest War.” It examined the Afghanistan conflict and exposed the perils that still confront America, 11 years after 9/11.
>
> Eleven years later, “they” still hate us, now more than ever, Logan told the crowd. The Taliban and al-Qaida have not been vanquished, she added. They’re coming back.
>
> “I chose this subject because, one, I can’t stand, that there is a major lie being propagated . . .”
>
> […]The lie is that America’s military might has tamed the Taliban.
>
> “There is this narrative coming out of Washington for the last two years,” Logan said. It is driven in part by “Taliban apologists,” who claim “they are just the poor moderate, gentler, kinder Taliban,” she added sarcastically. “It’s such nonsense!”
>
> Logan stepped way out of the “objective,” journalistic role. The audience was riveted as she told of plowing through reams of documents, and interviewing John Allen, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan; Afghan President Hamid

> Karzai, and a Taliban commander trained by al-Qaida. The Taliban and al-Qaida are teaming up and recruiting new terrorists to do us deadly harm, she reports.
>
> She made a passionate case that our government is downplaying the strength of our enemies in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as a rationale of getting us out of the longest war. We have been lulled into believing that the perils are in the past: "You're not listening to what the people who are fighting you say about this fight. In your arrogance, you think you write the script."
>
> Our enemies are writing the story, she suggests, and there's no happy ending for us.
>
> […]Logan even called for retribution for the recent terrorist killings of Christopher Stevens, the U.S. ambassador to Libya, and three other officials. The event is a harbinger of our vulnerability, she said. Logan hopes that America will "exact revenge and let the world know that the United States will not be attacked on its own soil. That its ambassadors will not be murdered, and that the United States will not stand by and do nothing about it."

Although social issues are very important, and fiscal issues are very important, I do think that it's about time that Christians also start to think seriously about foreign policy and national security as well. We need to realize that it is not good for anyone when evil is allowed to grow and flourish anywhere in the world. Hitler could easily have been defeated in the mid-to-late 1930s, but instead the Western nations turned a blind eye to his increasing military strength, and it cost us much more to fight him when we finally faced reality. Similarly, we have a major problem with radical Islam today in the Middle East. When we decide policy we have to know what is really going on in the Middle East.

Abortion debate: a secular case against legalized abortion

October 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about being only two months old

Note: this post has a twin! Its companion post on a secular case against gay marriage is here.

Now, you may think that the view that the unborn deserve protection during pregnancy is something that you either take on faith or not. But I want to explain how you can make a case for the right to life of the unborn, just by using reason and evidence.

To defend the pro-life position, I think you need to sustain 3 arguments:

1. The unborn is a living being with human DNA, and is therefore human.
2. There is no morally-relevant difference between an unborn baby, and one already born.
3. None of the justifications given for terminating an unborn baby are morally adequate.

Now, the pro-abortion debater may object to point 1, perhaps by claiming that the unborn baby is either not living, or not human, or not distinct from the mother.

Defending point 1: Well, it is pretty obvious that the unborn child is not inanimate matter. It is definitely living and growing through all 9 months of pregnancy. (Click here for a video that shows what a baby looks like through all 9 months of pregnancy). Since it has human DNA, that makes it a human. And its DNA is different from either its mother or

father, so it clearly not just a tissue growth of the father or the mother. More on this point at Christian Cadre, here. An unborn child cannot be the woman's own body, because then the woman would have four arms, four legs, two heads, four eyes and two different DNA signatures. When you have two different human DNA signatures, you have two different humans.

Secondly, the pro-abortion debater may try to identify a characteristic of the unborn that is not yet present or developed while it is still in the womb, and then argue that because the unborn does not have that characteristic, it does not deserve the protection of the law.

Defending point 2: You need to show that the unborn are not different from the already-born in any meaningful way. The main differences between them are: *size, level of development, environment* and *degree of dependence*. Once these characteristics are identified, you can explain that none of these differences provide moral justification for terminating a life. For example, babies inside and outside the womb have the same value, because location does not change a human's intrinsic value. More at Stand to Reason, here.

Additionally, the pro-abortion debater may try to identify a characteristic of the already-born that is not yet present or developed in the unborn, and then argue that because the unborn does not have that characteristic, that it does not deserve protection, (e.g. – sentience). Most of the these objections that you may encounter are refuted in this essay by Francis Beckwith. Usually these objections fall apart because they assume the thing they are trying to prove, namely, that the unborn deserves less protection than the already born.

Finally, the pro-abortion debater may conceded your points 1 and 2, and admit that the unborn is fully human. But they may then try to provide a moral justification for terminating the life of the unborn, regardless.

Defending point 3: I fully grant that it is sometimes justifiable to terminate an innocent human life, if there is a moral justification. Is there such a justification for abortion? One of the best known attempts to justify abortion is Judith Jarvis Thomson's "violinist" argument. This argument is summarized by Paul Manata, one of the experts over at Triablogue:

> Briefly, this argument goes like this: Say a world-famous violinist developed a fatal kidney ailment and the Society of Music Lovers found that only you had the right blood-type to help. So, they therefore have you kidnapped and then attach you to the violinist's circulatory system so that your kidneys can be used to extract the poison from his. To unplug yourself from the violinist would be to kill him; therefore, pro-lifers would say a person has to stay attached against her will to the violinist for 9 months. Thompson says that it would be morally virtuous to stay plugged-in. But she asks, "Do you have to?" She appeals to our intuitions and answers, "No."

Manata then goes on to defeat Thomson's proposal here, with a short, memorable illustration, which I highly recommend that you check out. More info on how to respond to similar arguments is here.

The best book for beginners on the pro-life view is this book:

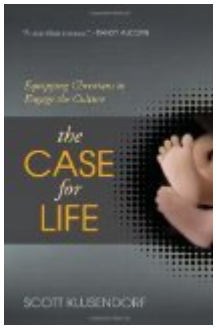

For those looking for advanced resources, Francis Beckwith, a professor at Baylor University, published the book Defending Life, with Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Video:10-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Objective truth in the abortion debate – a pro-life training video
- Alan Shlemon explains a classification system for pro-abortion arguments
- What is the best single book on the pro-life position?

And some posts motivating Christians and conservatives to take abortion seriously:

- Why Christians should focus on cultural issues as well as evangelism
- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion
- Are Christians too involved in politics?
- What did the early church fathers think about abortion?
- Scott Klusendorf confronts a "pro-life" nun who voted for Obama

Patients starving and dying of thirst in socialized NHS health care system

October 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph, a story about government-run health care in the UK.

Excerpt:

> Forty-three hospital patients starved to death last year and 111 died of thirst while being treated on wards, new figures disclose today.
>
> The death toll was disclosed by the Government amid mounting concern over the dignity of patients on NHS wards.
>
> They will also fuel concerns about care homes, as it was disclosed that eight people starved to death and 21 people died of thirst while in care.
>
> Last night there were warnings that they must prompt action by the NHS and care home regulators to prevent further deaths among patients.
>
> The Office for National Statistics figures also showed that:
>
> - as well as 43 people who starved to death, 287 people were recorded by doctors as being malnourished when they died in hospitals;
> - there were 558 cases where doctors recorded that a patient had died in a state of severe dehydration in hospitals;
> - 78 hospital and 39 care home patients were killed by bedsores, while a further 650 people who died had their presence noted on their death certificates;
> - 21,696 were recorded as suffering from septicemia when they died, a condition which experts say is most often associated with infected wounds.
>
> The records, from the Office for National Statistics, follow a series of scandals of care of the elderly, with doctors forced to prescribe patients with drinking water or put them on drips to make sure they do not become severely dehydrated .

This is the problem with socialized medicine. You pay your money *up front* and then later on the government decides how much treatment you get. They have no reason to be nice to you – you already paid them. They don't get paid more or less based on the quality of care they give you. You can't get a refund on taxes paid. And where else can you go? It's a single payer system.

Related posts

- UK socialism in action: patients waiting on trolleys for over 50 hours
- NHS makes patients wait unnecessarily in order to avoid "raising expectations"
- NHS refuses to treat woman who is starving to death
- Former NHS hospital director dies on surgery waiting list

- Women gives birth after NHS nurses send her home from hospital
- UK patients denied treatment as “public option” system makes cutbacks
- How do governments control costs in a single-payer health care systems?
- NHS patients giving birth in waiting rooms
- What does universal health care really mean?
- How well is government-run health care working out in the UK?
- British national health care system prepares to cut 20 billion dollars
- NHS kills a man’s wife by delaying cancer treatment for 7 months
- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
- Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water
- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care
- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care
- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- NHS refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

One-third of adults under 30 have no religious affiliation

October 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBS News.

Excerpt:

> One-fifth of American adults have no religious affiliation, and this number is increasing rapidly.
>
> The number of Americans who do not identify with any religion continues to grow at a fast pace. One-fifth of the U.S. public – and a third of adults under 30 – are religiously unaffiliated today, the highest percentages ever in Pew Research Center polling.
>
> In the last five years alone, the unaffiliated have increased from just over 15 percent to just under 20 percent of all U.S. adults. Their ranks now include more than 13 million self-described atheists and agnostics (nearly 6 percent of the U.S. public), as well as nearly 33 million people who say they have no particular religious affiliation (14 percent).
>
> This large and growing group of Americans is less religious than the public at large on many conventional measures, including frequency of attendance at religious services and the degree of importance they attach to religion in their lives.

The article notes that "unaffiliated" doesn't necessarily mean atheist or even agnostic:

> Two-thirds of them say they believe in God (68 percent). More than half say they often feel a deep connection with nature and the earth (58 percent), while more than a third classify themselves as "spiritual" but not "religious" (37 percent), and one-in-five (21 percent) say they pray every day.
>
> With few exceptions, though, the unaffiliated say they are not looking for a religion that would be right for them. Overwhelmingly, they think that religious organizations are too concerned with money and power, too focused on rules and too involved in politics.
>
> The lower the age group, the less likely people are to be affiliated.
>
> The growth in the number of religiously unaffiliated Americans – sometimes called the rise of the "nones" – is largely driven by generational replacement, the gradual supplanting of older generations by newer ones.

My personal theory about this is that young people are being neglected by their parents and to a lesser degree by their church leaders. Parents are just too busy with their careers and other diversions, and churches are not presenting Christianity seriously using arguments and evidence. Neither parents nor churches are taking opposition to

Christianity seriously from an intellectual point of view. When parents and church leaders step aside, the influence gap is filled by know-nothing peers and by the culture. Peers and the culture are pushing for hedonism, not for a serious search for the truth about religion. And that's why young people are rejecting the church. If religion is anything to them, it's about self-fulfillment. It certainly is *not* about truth. No one has ever presented it to them as true, only as useful for their own happiness and well-being.

Gay marriage debate: Michael Brown debates Eric Smaw on same-sex marriage

October 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must-see debate! (And you can buy Michael Brown's new book here if you like it – I bought two copies)

About the debate:

> On April 21, 2011 at 7:30pm at UCF's Health and Public Affairs Building (Room 119), Rollins College professor, Dr. Eric Smaw and author and seminary professor Dr. Michael L. Brown will debate the question "Should same sex marriage be legalized in America?" The event will be held at 4000 Central Florida Blvd and is open to the public. After the formal portion of the debate, Brown and Smaw will field questions from the audience.

About the speakers:

> **Dr. Smaw** will be responding in the affirmative. He earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Law from the University of Kentucky in 2005. His areas of expertise are philosophy of law, international law, human rights, ethics, and modern philosophy. He has published articles on human rights, terrorism, and cosmopolitanism. His most recent publication is "Swaying in the Balance: Civil Liberties, National Security, and Justice in Times of Emergency".
>
> **Dr. Brown** will be responding in the negative. He earned his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and is a nationally known evangelical lecturer and radio host. He is the author of numerous scholarly articles and twenty books, including the recently published study "A Queer Thing Happened to America", which is quickly being recognized as the definitive work on the history and effects of gay activism on American culture.

Here are the first two parts:

Part 1 of 10:

Part 2 of 10:

The rest of the segments are here.

Summaries of the opening speeches

Summary of Dr. Brown's opening speech:

There is no compelling reasons by the state should change the definition of marriage

The reason the state conveys benefits for marriage is because marriage is beneficial for the state

Traditional marriage is recognized by the state for several reasons:
– it domesticates men

– it protects women
– it provides a stable, nurturing environment for children

Marriage has three public purposes:
– to bind men and women together for RESPONSIBLE procreation
– to get the benefit
– to provide children with two parents who are bonded to them biologically
– to create the next generation of people to keep the society going

Normally, opposite sex couples create children

Homosexual couples can NEVER create children together

Men and women are differences that are complementary

Monogamy is the norm for opposite sex couples.

For gay men, open relationships / cheating is the norm.
This is because women have a tempering effect on sexuality.

There is no evidence that recognizing same-sex civil unions and marriages have changed this trend.

Same-sex marriage guarantees that children will either not have a father or a mother
So which of the sexes is dispensable when raising children?

For example, consider Dawn Stefanowicz, who grew up with a gay father and no mother
She never got a chance to see a man model love and protect a women within a marriage
That makes an enormous difference in a woman's life – in the way she relates to men

Even with scientific advancements, every baby has a mother and a father

If we change the definition of marriage so that it is based on consent, then why limit it to just two people
If marriage is not the union of male and female, then why have only TWO people
In Canada, you have civil liberties lawyers arguing for for polygamy
In the United States, Professor David Epstein was in a consensual relationship with his daughter
Should incestuous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?
Should polyamorous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?

Sexual orientation is not the same as race
Men are women are different in significant ways, but different races are not
You need separate bathrooms for men and women, but not for people of different races

Summary of Dr. Smaw's opening speech: (He ended his speech after only 10 minutes)

You can redefine marriage so that it no longer based on the public purposes he mentioned (controlling procreation, fusing complementary male and female natures, providing children with mothers and fathers who are biologically linked to them, providing children with a comparatively stable development environment that offers comparatively less instability, promiscuity and domestic violence rates compared to cohabitation, etc.), but is instead based on consent and feelings, and that redefinition of marriage won't

open marriage up to polygamy, polyamory, etc.

If you like feminism, then you should allow same-sex marriage

If you like abortion rights, then you should allow same-sex marriage

Homosexuals participate in society by working at various jobs, so they are participating in society

Homosexuals should be given the same tax breaks as married people because they work at various jobs for money

Working at a job for money achieves the same public purpose as procreating and staying together to raise children in a stable environment

You can listen to the rest for the rebuttals, and cross-examination. Oh yes – there was cross-examination! It starts two thirds of the way through Part 5, if you want to jump to it. And sparks were flying! There is also Q&A from the audience of students.

This is such a great debate – I love to hear two passionate guys disagreeing about something. I love to hear both sides of the issues. There is always something to learn by listening to the other side. It makes me more effective and more tolerant when I stand up to defend my side of the argument.

By the way, my own secular case against same-sex marriage is right here, if you want to see how I would debate this issue. Also check out the recent studies on the effects of gay parenting on children.

Related posts

- How would allowing gays to marry affect your life?
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- What causes homosexuality? Is there a gay gene?
- Republicans hire top lawyer to defend traditional marriage against Democrats
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Queen’s University feminist professor says that polygamy should be permitted
- Obama administration believes that traditional marriage is unconstitutional
- Frank Turek lists ten alleged facts about same-sex marriage
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Gay federal judge rules traditional marriage unconstitutional in California
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- Do Democrats like Chai Feldblum believe in religious liberty?

- Do Democrats like Martha Coakley believe in religious liberty?
- How Harriet Harman's Equality Bill will impact religious liberty
- Christianity under fire from secular governments in San Francisco and Quebec
- The persecution of a Catholic Bishop (at Blazing Cat Fur)
- The persecution of Rev. Stephen Boissoin (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Catholic Insight magazine (at Ezra Levant)
- The persecution of Christian businessman Scott Brockie (at The Interim)
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- What happens when same-sex marriage conflicts with religious liberty?
- Can a person disagree without being hateful or inciting violence?

Nature publishes discovery of fossil with complex brain dated just after the Cambrian explosion

October 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

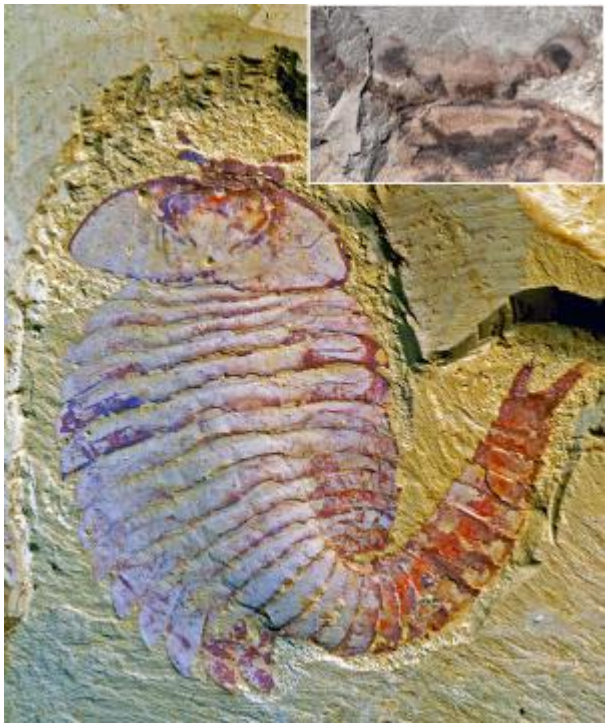

New fossil discovery shows advanced brain structures
Casey Luskin writes about it at Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Over at PhysOrg.com, there's a study being reported highlighting a 520 million year old fossil arthropod with a highly-developed brain. So soon in evolutionary time, and an already developed brain??? (To go beside the very complex eye of the Trilobites)
>
> Here's what one scientist said:
>
> *"No one expected such an advanced brain would have evolved so early in the history of multicellular animals,"* said Strausfeld, a Regents Professor in the UA department of neuroscience.
>
> Sorry, Darwinists, but IDers would expect it.

Let's keep track of the problems that this good scientific discovery creates for naturalists.

Problem #1: Darwinism does not support rapid change from single-celled organisms just before the Cambrian explosion to complex brains just after the Cambrian explosion. Darwinian evolution has to go gradually from simple to complex.

Now for some more:

> And, to add insult to injury for our Darwinist brethren, here's this confirmation of

> "genetic entropy" and Behe's QRB "rule":
>
> *"The shape [of the fossilized brain] matches that of a comparable sized modern malacostracan*," the authors write in Nature. They argue the fossil **supports the hypothesis that branchiopod brains evolved from a previously complex to a more simple architecture instead of the other way around**.

So, that's another problem.

Problem #2: Darwinism does not support going from more complex to less complex organisms, in general. This is especially true for complex biological systems like brains. Darwnists must explain how complex brains can be built from simpler parts through a long sequence of likely mutations.

And more:

> Here's how the article ends:
>
> The fossil supports the idea that **once a basic brain design had evolved, it changed little over time**[Translation: ID is completely correct!!!], he explained. Instead, peripheral components such as the eyes, the antennae and other appendages, sensory organs, etc., underwent great diversification and specialized in different tasks but all plugged into the **same basic circuitry**. "It is remarkable how constant the ground pattern of the nervous system has remained for probably more than 550 million years," Strausfeld added. "The basic organization of the computational circuitry that deals, say, with smelling, appears to be the same as the one that deals with vision, or mechanical sensation."

Yet another problem.

Problem #3: Darwinism does not work if organisms are observed to remain changeless and static over time. Darwinism requires change over time from simple to complex. Backwards change or no change falsifies Darwinism.

Read the whole post.

It's just another prediction of Darwinian orthodoxy falsified by experimental evidence published in the top scientific peer-reviewed journal. Will this cause Darwinians to revise their theory to fit the evidence? Not likely. Their motivations for clinging to naturalism, the religion that undergirds Darwinism, are entirely beyond correction by evidence.

I wonder what people like P.Z. Myers and Larry Moran do when their religion comes into conflict with scientific evidence? Do they bitterly cling to their mythology from the 19th century? Or do they adjust their worldview to be in line with the progress of science?

Let Richard Dawkins explain evolution and the role of evidence:

> "My argument will be that Darwinism is the only known theory that is in principle capable of explaining certain aspects of life. If I am right it means that, even if there were no actual evidence in favour of the Darwinian theory (there is, of course) we should still be justified in preferring it over all rival theories." — p.

> 287, Blind Watchmaker" (1986)

Or Richard Lewontin:

> "Our willingness to accept [naturalistic] scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science *in spite of* the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite of* its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite of* the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our own a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, not matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door." (Richard Lewontin in *New York Review of Books*, January 9, 1997, p. 28)

Last month, we saw a peer-reviewed published paper that falsified the Darwinian predictions about junk DNA. Recently, the Darwnists were proven wrong again about vestigial organs. Before that, we had another discovery of oxygen on the early Earth's atmosphere, which blocks naturalistic origin of life scenarios. Did these scientific discoveries stop the worship of the Flying Spaghetti Monster by the Darwinian faithful? Of course not. And they don't want to debate it with you, either.

Naturalists don't want to have to explain why they are always believing things that are falsified by the progress of science. Naturalists fought the Big Bang tooth and nail, trying to save their eternal universe from the progress of science. Naturalists invented the now discredited oscillating model of the universe in order to "explain" the evidence for a cosmic beginning. Naturalists invented the unobservable, untestable multiverse to "explain" the cosmic fine-tuning. Unobservable aliens were posited in order to "explain" the origin of life so soon after the cooling of the Earth. Precursor fossils are invented without evidence in order to "explain" the Cambrian era explosion in biological complexity. And so on.

Evidence doesn't matter to people who are motivated by naturalistic faith. Like belief in a flat-Earth, the delusion of naturalism is not accountable to scientific evidence. They believe what they want to believe. It's not up for debate. For some people like Richard Dawkins, a prior lifestyle commitment makes theism (and the moral law!) an impossibility *a priori*. But rational people know that believing something just so that your actions are "justified" doesn't make what you believe *true*.

Speaking of Richard Dawkins, if you haven't seen the video of that coward being "Eastwooded" by William Lane Craig, here's the link. Dr. Craig has obviously seen a lot of Clint Eastwood movies, and he manages to work in about a half-dozen Clint Eastwood

lines into a careful philosophical and scientific refutation of Dawkins' faith-based atheist delusions. I don't mind if Dawkins wants to have his religious beliefs for comfort in the privacy of his home or church, but I don't think that we should be making policy off of his subjective preferences. In the public square we need to be guided by public evidence – like the evidence from science.

How prepared is Paul Ryan for tonight's debate with Joe Biden?

October 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from National Review outlines Paul Ryan's debate experience and his current preparations for today's debate.

Excerpt:

> For much of last week, Ryan was at Wintergreen, a sprawling resort in central Virginia. Under the shadow of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Ryan and his advisers quietly reviewed policy papers, held several mock debates, and kept distractions to a minimum. BlackBerries and iPhones were switched off, and Ryan avoided the traveling press.
>
> Yet the Virginia sessions were not the beginning of Ryan's prep for Thursday's debate. Soon after the Tampa convention, Ryan convened his inner circle, which includes longtime aides such as Andy Speth and Romney hands such as Dan Senor, and asked them to compile briefing books, much like the binders he used to organize for Kemp. On the campaign plane and at his home in Janesville, Wis., Ryan has been constantly reading the policy books, using his favorite disposable blue pen to make changes.
>
> By mid-September, Ryan had two large books with him at all times. One was for domestic policy and the other for foreign policy. Romney's policy staff in Boston was helpful in providing information about Romney's positions, but Ryan took it upon himself to write much of the analysis and talking points. By late September, Ryan, who often vacations in the Rocky Mountains, asked his staff to book him a few rooms at a mountain resort so he could prepare in relative silence and anonymity. The Romney campaign settled on a place in rural Virginia because Virginia is a swing state and its mountains are fairly accessible.
>
> […]"I've watched [Biden's] tapes, I've watched his speeches, like the one he gave today, and just looked at a lot of their issues, their positions," Ryan told *TheWeekly Standard* last week. "I expect the vice president to come at me like a cannonball. He'll be in full attack mode, and I don't think he'll let any inconvenient facts get in his way."

> The mock debates — excluding the laid-back sessions in jeans in Ryan's hometown — have purposefully been more formal. From the first mock debates in a Washington, D.C., hotel to the run-throughs at Wintergreen, Ryan and Olson have been seated at a conference-room table, just as they will be in Danville, Ky., under the bright lights. Ryan's aides are hushed as Flaherty or Healey open the sessions, and the atmosphere, according to a Romney official, is "charged." Olson has mastered Biden's mannerisms, down to his long-windedness and hand

gestures. Olson's tactics echo those of Senator Rob Portman, who played the role of President Obama during Mitt Romney's debate prep and pestered the former governor about his responses.

Ryan has kept his cool. "He's been in Congress for a long time, so he knows how to deal with weird people," says Vin Weber, a Romney adviser. There have been bouts of nervousness about various topics and issues, his confidants say. But those moments, they argue, reflect his commitment to preparation and reveal his tendency toward perfectionism. Ryan doesn't want simply to push back against Biden; he wants to win the argument. His preferred method of communicating with voters is the town hall, and since he won't have his PowerPoint slides with him in Kentucky, he plans to tinker slightly with his usual presentation because many voters aren't familiar with his wonky style.

Working with Speth and former House aides Michael Steel, Joyce Meyer, and Conor Sweeney, Ryan has carefully reviewed his House record, ensuring that he is up to speed on all the details of his budget and the Romney economic plan. But according to many of his advisers, the most important sessions have been those with Senor, a former Bush administration official who is an expert on foreign policy. Ryan has traveled to the Middle East and knows more about foreign policy than he's given credit for, but he acknowledges that it's the one area that he needs to sharpen. Biden may be gaffe-prone, but he is a former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

[…]In the final days, Ryan will do some brief mock debates, but he'll spend much of his time talking through various debate scenarios. Ryan likes to "game out" things, a Republican operative says, and he enjoys discussing how Biden may react in certain situations. His mood about the entire debate has noticeably changed in recent days, an adviser adds, since Romney's debate. To Ryan, Romney's assertiveness signals the campaign's energy, and it will shape his own attitude and style when he faces Biden at Centre College. "He doesn't want to be the guy talking about CBO baselines, but he wants to fight," a Ryan adviser says. "He's learned a lot on the trail about how to better make his case."

Ryan hasn't had a serious debate since 1998, when he first ran for Congress. At the time, he was 28 years old. Running against Democrat Lydia Spottswood, he was tagged as impressive, but too young — much as he is now by his critics. In those debates, Ryan took care to avoid sounding too much like a former congressional staffer. "You just can't come across as an arrogant young know-it-all," Ryan reflected a few years ago, in an interview with Christian Schneider, a fellow at the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute.

"He was really very serious, almost dour in those debates," Schneider chuckles, recalling Ryan's first run. "Given his youth as a vice-presidential candidate, he may take that same tack, and I don't expect him to try to be too funny. He'll let Biden do that. But he's still the same guy he was back then. He loves talking

> about the budget and spending. So we'll probably see that side of him in the debate, regardless of what's happened in the prep."

Here are the details for tonight's debate:

> **Vice presidential candidates' debate between Vice President Joe Biden, Wis. Rep. Paul Ryan**
>
> - Topic: Foreign and domestic topics
> - Date: Thursday, Oct. 11
> - Time: 9 – 10:30 p.m. EDT
> - Location: Centre College, Danville, Ky.
> - Moderator: Martha Raddatz, senior foreign affairs correspondent, ABC News
> - Format: "The debate will cover both foreign and domestic topics and be divided into nine time segments of approximately 10 minutes each. The moderator will ask an opening question, after which each candidate will have two minutes to respond. The moderator will use the balance of the time in the segment for a discussion of the question."

I'll be watching it via streaming on Fox News Live. Won't you join me at 6 PM Pacific/9 PM Eastern?

If you do tune in, beware of the the left-wing bias of the moderator, because Obama attended her wedding. Paul Ryan did not. More than that, she has a pretty strong record of being biased to the left on social, fiscal and foreign policy issues.

By the way, if you missed the highly praised first debate between Romney and Obama, which Romney won in a landslide and which moved the polls so decisively in the last week, you can still watch that first presidential debate. Highly recommended.

Related posts

- Video and transcript of the Paul Ryan speech at the GOP 2012 convention
- Paul Ryan and his mother explain their commitment to Medicare
- Paul Ryan speaks at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation in May 2012
- Analyzing Romney's choice of Paul Ryan for VP
- Paul Ryan's Path to Prosperity plan balances the budget without raising taxes
- Paul Ryan questions Chief Actuaries of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security
- Paul Ryan fact checks Obama's budget: is there really $4 trillion in deficit reduction?
- Paul Ryan takes Obama's State of the Union speech apart
- Paul Ryan teams up with Democrat Ron Wyden to push Medicare reform plan
- Budget guru Paul Ryan discusses the economy at the Heritage Foundation
- Paul Ryan explains how raising taxes hurts job creation
- Paul Ryan explains why the millionaire tax causes unemployment to rise
- Paul Ryan: cut current spending, cap future spending and balance the budget
- Paul Ryan talks about the looming American debt crisis

- Where does Paul Ryan stand on foreign policy and social issues?
- Paul Ryan responds to his critics on Medicare reform
- What’s wrong with the American economy and how Paul Ryan would fix it
- Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann will respond to State of the Union address
- Republican Paul Ryan proposes over 6 trillion in spending cuts
- Paul Ryan discusses economics at the liberal Brookings Institute
- Paul Ryan explains taxes and spending to Chris Matthews
- Paul Ryan takes on Democrat Brad Sherman on the worsening economy
- Paul Ryan debates Democrat Robert Reich on Larry Kudlow show
- Paul Ryan debates on the relationship between tax rates and job creation
- Paul Ryan talks about health care with Chris Matthews and Chris Wallace
- Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander
- Paul Ryan discusses Obamacare and the federal budget
- Moderate George Will loves Paul Ryan’s plan for economic recovery
- Paul Ryan confronts Tim Geithner on Obama’s 1.56 trillion budget deficit
- Paul Ryan declares war on Obama’s record 1.56 trillion dollar budget deficit
- Paul Ryan explains the vision of conservativism

Department of Homeland Security: lowest level of illegal immigrant arrests since 1972

October 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Homeland Security's 2011 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics was released last month, including figures that show that the number of illegal aliens apprehended in the United States was the lowest in 40 years.
>
> The report shows (page 91, table 33) that in fiscal year 2011, the number of illegal aliens apprehended was 641,633 – at that time the lowest total apprehensions since 1972 when the number of illegal aliens apprehended was 505,949.
>
> The report shows **t**hat the number of illegal aliens apprehended has steadily decreased over the course of the Obama administration, from 869,857 in fiscal year 2009 to 641,633 in fiscal year 2011.
>
> The table includes the following totals for fiscal years 2008-2011:
>
> - 2008: 1,043.863
> - 2009: 869,857
> - 2010: 752,329
> - 2011: 641,633
>
> The table also shows that from 1976 to 2008, the number of apprehensions ranged from 910,361 in 1980 to 1,814,729 in 2000.

We know that we can't trust the Democrats on national security and foreign policy, but it turns out that we can't even trust them to secure the border. And if Obama gets a second term, we should expect amnesty for 20 million illegal immigrants. That's my prediction if we vote him in for a second term.

Related posts

- Arizona governor Jan Brewer blocks welfare payments for illegal immigrants
- Obama declares amnesty for 800,000 illegal immigrants
- IRS refunding billions to illegal immigrants for children in Mexico
- Democrats oppose checking immigration status during traffic stops
- Haitian man who could not be deported kills three people in Florida
- Obama appoints amnesty advocate to head his Domestic Policy Council
- Obama tries to block execution of convicted Mexican rapist and murderer
- Why border security is a national security issue
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference

- Does enforcing immigration law really reduce violent crime rates?
- Why do conservatives oppose illegal immigration?
- The connection between terrorism and illegal immigration
- Why won't Obama sue "sanctuary cities" for breaking immigration laws?
- Obama enlists radical groups and labor unions to push for amnesty
- Obama picks opponent of immigration enforcement for key role at ICE
- Obama administration will sue Arizona for enforcing immigration law
- Environmental regulations restrict law enforcement by Border Patrol
- Illegal immigrant from Iran caught while smuggling in weapons from Canada
- LA students to be taught that AZ immigration law is un-American
- Obama administration complains about Arizona immigration law to China
- How much does it cost to enforce immigration law?
- ACORN's CEO Bertha Wilson explains why she favors amnesty
- Obama backs plan to put illegal immigrants on path to citizenship
- Are Democrats seeking to register criminals and illegal aliens to vote?
- Democrat health care bill provides health care for illegal immigrants with taxpayer money

Abortion debate: Scott Klusendorf debates Nadine Strossen on abortion

October 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Abortion can be a complicated issue, but the nice thing about Scott is that he cuts right to the core of the debate and makes sure to clarify what each side is saying. He strips away the rhetoric and gets down to the real arguments on each side and the pro-life side comes out on top.

Relevant resources

Recently, Scott taught two classes on the techniques that he uses when debating abortion.

The first talk was on Tactics. Here is the PDF. In the handout, Scott explains how to use questions to make your opponent give reasons for their views instead of just asserting them.

The second talk was on Relativism. Here is the PDF. In the handout, Scott explains what moral relativism is, and some of the problems with the view.

You can find out more about Scott's organization, the Life Training Institute, on their web page. He is the #1 pro-life debater in the United States, in my opinion. I have met Scott, and he is someone I personally admire. His book "The Case for Life" is the best introduction to pro-life apologetics that you can get. With that book, *anyone* can learn to be confident and bold when defending the right of unborn children to live.

Biased debate moderator joins unhinged VP Joe Biden in interrupting and bullying Paul Ryan

October 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The full video is above, and the full transcript is here.

Results:

- CNN scores it 48-44 for Ryan

One undecided woman on CNN called Biden a "buffoon", but why? Let's see:

Here's a debate re-cap from The Blaze.

Excerpt:

> Ryan argued the current administration had provided insufficient security to Ambassador Chris Stevens, who was killed, along with three other Americans, in a terrorist attack at the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi on Sept. 11
>
> However, Biden sought to blame Republicans, saying the budget that Ryan authored as chairman of the House Budget Committee cut the Obama administration's funding request for diplomatic security by $300 million.
>
> Despite multiple reports that indicate there were requests for additional security at the U.S. Consulate in Libya, Biden claimed the Obama administration wasn't "told they wanted more security." The statement appears to be at odds with the official record.
>
> Many times throughout the debate, Biden could be seen smiling sarcastically and shaking his head as Ryan spoke. Both men also interrupted each other a number of times, though Biden was a more frequent offender.
>
> "I know you're under a lot of duress to make up for lost ground, but I think people would be better served if we don't interrupt each other," Ryan said. But he didn't exactly stick to his word.

Actually, Ryan didn't initiate any interruptions of Biden the entire night. It was Biden who kept breaking into Ryan's speeches, with the full support of the moderator, and Ryan had to interrupt Biden then to get back the use of the time which he had been allocated to respond. Joe Biden could not control himself. He looked like some sort of Gollum flipping back and forth between laughing psychopath and somber sycophant. And always the leftist ABC News moderator was there to give him extra rebuttals, while denying Ryan any similar rebuttals. And if things started to go Ryan's way, she immediately shut him up and moved on to another question.

Here's a review with some specifics:

- The first question that I heard was the moderator passing judgement on Paul Ryan

and Mitt Romney as to their timing of their response to the murder of our Ambassador. Then she allowed Uncle Joe to cut off Representative Ryan, and asked him to elaborate further and in detail about all the reasons why Paul Ryan was a liar. Why do Republicans put up with this sort of third-world dictatorship facade of a debate? She asks Paul Ryan why he was wrong and then asks Biden to tell her why his policies were so good- and this passes as unbiased and fair?

- Next question- "Romney has book on No Apologies- tell me why this book is wrong and sucks and you are wrong for being part of this book", then she interrupts Ryan to be critical of his answer. Look, I know that Obama appointed her baby's daddy to a major office and Obama was at her wedding, but I can't believe that she just interrupted Ryan about 30 seconds into his answer, especially after she let Uncle Joe ramble on and on for a full answer. He should have just stood up and walked out on her- I've been watching it for 7 minutes now and it's clearly a joke of a 'debate'.
- This set-up- sit down in silence and no responding to each other and a moderator who wants to prove that she is something important- is boring.
- So Biden's strategy must be to question and ridicule everything that Romney and Ryan say- "this is incredible," "that was malarkey," "facts matter,", etc.
- Biden- "Iran has no weapon to put an atomic bomb in"- but yet Iran has Shahab missiles and Sajjil missiles- the Sajjil-2 is a medium-range missile of about 2,200 km or 1,375 miles when carrying a 750-kg warhead, capable of hitting our assets in the Middle East or any of our allies in the regime (although admittedly it's rather inaccurate). So he's wrong, flat wrong, and totally wrong.
- This moderator continues to judge Ryan, have a conversation with Biden, throw tough questions at Ryan, softball questions to Biden, cut off Ryan, and let Joe ramble. This debate is a joke- the format, moderator, and set-up are all BAD. Ask a question and get the heck out of the way.
- At 9:52, Paul Ryan is asked a question, and is interrupted and attacked by both the moderator and Joe Biden, he turns right, he turns left, he is being interrupted, and he keeps trying to push through, even over the moderator, who at 9:55 began to summarize Ryan's plans in a typical-liberal manner, and now that she is done hearing his views and hearing him defend himself, she says "I want to move on now and ask another biased and slanted question of you." Get out of the debate, moderator, and let Biden and Ryan talk.

Read the whole thing.

Here's the moderate Chris Wallace of Fox News to make it clear:

I don't think that the debate is worth watching. The moderator ruined the debate because she has connections to Barack Obama, as I pointed out before, and it showed. I didn't expect her to basically be a mouthpiece for the Obama campaign, but that's what she did. This was a 2 on 1 debate from the first instant. It's not worth watching. I don't think that independents were impressed with 90 minutes of arrogant bullying by Biden and Raddatz.

You can read some tweets here which agree with this analysis. But it’s not just ordinary people who thought that Biden lost. Left-wing media people like Piers Morgan and Kirsten Powers tweeted their disapproval, too.

Ryan asks Biden: if you're protecting Catholics, why are they suing you?

October 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you missed the debate last night, Life News can fill you in on the best question of the night.

Excerpt:

> Paul Ryan had perhaps the question of the night when he challenged pro-abortion Vice President Joe Biden on the issue of the HHS mandate that compels them to pay for abortion-causing drugs.
>
> During the debate, Ryan brought up the controversial mandate that pro-life groups oppose.
>
> "What troubles me more is how this administration has handled all of these issues. Look at what they're doing through Obamacare with respect to assaulting the religious liberties of this country. They're infringing upon our first freedom, the freedom of religion, by infringing on Catholic charities, Catholic churches, Catholic hospitals," he explained. "Our church should not have to sue our federal government to maintain their religious liberties."
>
> Biden try to explain away the Obama administration's pro-abortion assault on Catholics, evangelicals and other religious groups and businesses.
>
> "With regard to the assault on the Catholic church, let me make it absolutely clear, no religious institution, Catholic or otherwise, including Catholic Social Services, Georgetown Hospital, Mercy Hospital, any hospital, none has to either refer contraception, none has to pay for contraception, none has to be a vehicle to get contraception in any insurance policy they provide. That is a fact," Biden falsely claimed.
>
> **"Now, I've got to take issue with the Catholic church and religious liberty," Ryan retorted. "Why would they keep — why would they keep suing you? It's a distinction without a difference."**
>
> The mandate compels religious employers to pay for and refer women for abortion-causing drugs, birth control, contraception and sterilizations.
>
> The mandate has drawn significant opposition from Catholic, Protestant and evangelical groups, pro-life organizations and others concerned that it includes no conscience protections for employers that don't want to be required to pay for or refer women for drugs that end life and violate their faith.
>
> Americans United for Life called the mandate a "payout for the abortion industry."

So how does a person who claims to be Catholic explain why he supports the murder of

unborn children?

CNS News explains what Biden said:

> "With regard to abortion," he said, "I accept my church's position on abortion as a, what we call de fide doctrine. Life begins at conception. That's the church's judgment. I accept it in my personal life. But I refuse to impose it on equally devote Christian and Muslims and Jews, and I just refuse to impose that on others, unlike my friend here, the congressman.
>
> "I do not believe that we have a right to tell other people that, women, that they can't control their body," said Biden. "It is a decision between them and their doctor, in my view, and the Supreme Court. I am not going to interfere with that."
>
> The actual position of the Catholic Church is that any law legalizing the killing of an unborn child is an unjust law that violates the natural law and is, therefore, no law at all. Vice President Biden's church teaches that it is not acceptable even to obey such laws let alone support them as part of a political campaign.

The abortion issue can best be understood by comparing it to slavery, although abortion is worse than slavery. Slavery involves the mistreatment of an individual for your own benefit. Abortion goes further – you actually murder an individual for your benefit. What Biden is really saying is "don't like abortion, don't have one". He certainly won't have one, but he doesn't mind if you do. Now apply that to slavery. Biden might say that he personally would never own slaves, but he doesn't mind if you own slaves. But is that a moral view? No – the moral view is not only to not own slaves yourself, but to help people escape slavery and to make the practice illegal. The moral thing to do is to save the victims of slavery as much as possible, and that goes the same for abortion.

Recall that Biden had previously defended China's one-child policy, which is enforced through forced abortions and mass sterilizations. That's his view. And he calls that Catholicism.

Joe Biden contradicts official State Department documents during debate

October 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Foreign Policy magazine.

Excerpt:

> Vice President Joe Biden claimed that the administration wasn't aware of requests for more security in Libya before the Sept. 11 attacks on the U.S. mission in Benghazi during Thursday night's debate, contradicting two State Department officials and the former head of diplomatic security in Libya.
>
> "We weren't told they wanted more security. We did not know they wanted more security there," Biden said.
>
> In fact, two security officials who worked for the State Department in Libya at the time testified Thursday that they repeatedly requested more security and two State Department officials admitted they had denied those requests.
>
> "All of us at post were in sync that we wanted these resources," the top regional security officer in Libya over the summer, Eric Nordstrom, testified. "In those conversations, I was specifically told [by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Charlene Lamb] 'You cannot request an SST extension.' I determined I was told that because there would be too much political cost. We went ahead and requested it anyway."
>
> Nordstrom was so critical of the State Department's reluctance to respond to his calls for more security that he said, "For me, the Taliban is on the inside of the building."
>
> "We felt great frustration that those requests were ignored or just never met," testified Lt. Col.Andrew Wood, a Utah National Guardsman who was leading a security team in Libya until August.
>
> House Oversight Committee Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA) released the unclassified cablescontaining those requests.

Who is right? My money is on the State Department, and that would mean that Joe Biden is a liar.

Friday night movie: The Scarlet Pimpernel (1934)

October 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.9/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> "The Scarlet Pimpernel" is the alias of an 18th century English aristocrat, who leads a double life. He appears to be merely the effete aristocrat, but in reality is part of an underground effort to free French nobles from Robespierre's Reign of Terror. Based on the novel by Baroness Orczy.

Sink me, this one of my favorite movies, and full of high adventure!

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night spies: two episodes of Secret Agent
- Friday night movie: The Mark of Zorro (1940)
- Friday night detectives: one episode of Hercule Poirot
- Friday night soldiers: two episodes of Combat!
- Friday night movie: The Dam Busters (1955)
- Friday night movie: Sink the Bismarck! (1960)
- Friday night movie: The Crossing (2000)
- Friday night movie: The Great Escape (1963)
- Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)
- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)

- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Do Democrats pay their fair share of taxes?

October 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Funny video from American Power Blog.

That's one case, but are leftists always hypocrites like that?

Do As I Say Not As I Do

I recently listened to the audio book version of Peter Schweizer's 2004 book "Do As I Say Not As I Do". In that book, he profiles a number of leftist public figures, and he discovers that leftists don't practice what they preach, because even they know that leftist ideas *don't actually work*. I really recommend the book, so let's take a closer look at it and you'll see why you should read it, too.

Here's a 32 minute 2011 lecture about the book:

And here's an interview with the author from FrontPage magazine.

Excerpt:

> **FrontPage:** Give us some of the best examples of the gulf between some liberals' social criticisms and the ingredients of their private lives. Give us some insights, for instance, into the likes of Noam Chomsky, Michael Moore, Cornel West, Hillary Clinton, Ted Kennedy and Barbra Streisand.
>
> **Schweizer:** Looking for liberal hypocrisy is, as they say in the military, a target-rich environment. Noam Chomsky, for example, has attacked wealthy Americans who set up trusts to avoid paying inheritance taxes. But this self-professed "radical socialist" has a tax attorney and did the very same thing. (When I asked him about this hypocrisy he said it was okay because he and has family have been working on behalf of suffering people all these years.)

> Michael Moore's hypocrisy is pathological. He has said numerous times that he doesn't own a single share of stock and that capitalism is not acceptable "on any level." And yet, I found that, according to tax returns filed with the IRS, he has owned shares in Halliburton, numerous oil companies, defense contractors and other multinationals through a tax shelter. When it comes he race he's also wildly hypocritical. He says that Americans who happen to live in largely white neighbhorhoods do so because they are "racists." But he lives in Central Lake, Michigan, which according to the U.S. Census has more than 2,500 residents and not a single black person in the entire town.
>
> Cornel West has numerous times condemned middle class blacks that abandon the "chocolate cities" for the "vanilla suburbs" but guess what, his flavour of choice is vanilla, too.
>
> Ted Kennedy likes to pose as the Robin Hood of the Senate, forcing wealthy Americans to pay their taxes to help the poor. But I discovered that Kennedys record of actually paying taxes is horrible. Tax the inheritance tax. He says that

> Americans should pay 49% to the IRS when they die in the name of "social justice." But according to public records, the Kennedys have almost completely avoided contributing to "social justice" by placing their assets in trusts that are located overseas. The Kennedys, over the past thirty years, have paid less than 1% in inheritance taxes on more than $300 million. Ted Kennedy, like Hillary Clinton and George Soros, loves higher taxes. On other people.

And:

> **FrontPage:** Why do you think people are drawn to leftist ideals and what kind of people are they? Self-contempt appears to be a common ingredient, no?
>
> **Schweizer:** Yes, self-contempt is a big part of it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great German pastor who stood up to Hitler, wrote a book about "cheap grace." Liberals are guilty of cheap grace in the political sense. They feel guilty and their form of penance is embracing the destructive ideas of the progressive faith. But it's cheap grace because as I show it the book, they don't actually change the way they live. I think that the religious comparison makes sense because in many respects the modern day left represents a religious movement. They are motivated by a sense of sin, guilt, and the need for salvation and absolution in the political sense. Socialism offers salvation to them. Of course, they don't actually plan to live like socialists.

I would really recommend taking a look at this book.

Democrats and their unpaid taxes

One last parting shot: Democrats talk about how job creators and employees are greedy to not want to pay taxes on their earnings, but Democrats actually have huge amounts of unpaid taxes that they refuse to pay:

> A new report just out from the Internal Revenue Service reveals that 36 of President Obama's executive office staff owe the country $833,970 in back taxes. These people working for Mr. Fair Share apparently haven't paid any share, let alone their fair share.
>
> Previous reports have shown how well-paid Obama's White House staff is, with 457 aides pulling down more than $37 million last year. That's up seven workers and nearly $4 million from the Bush administration's last year.
>
> Nearly one-third of Obama's aides make more than $100,000 with 21 being paid the top White House salary of $172,200, each.
>
> The IRS' 2010 delinquent tax revelations come as part of a required annual agency report on federal employees' tax compliance. Turns out, an awful lot of folks being paid by taxpayers are not paying their own income taxes.
>
> The report finds that thousands of federal employees owe the country more than $3.4 billion in back taxes. That's up 3% in the past year.
>
> That scale of delinquency could annoy voters, hard-pressed by their own costs,

> fears and stubbornly high unemployment despite Joe Biden's many promises.
>
> The tax offenders include employees of the U.S. Senate who help write the laws imposed on everyone else. They owe $2.1 million. Workers in the House of Representatives owe $8.5 million, Department of Education employees owe $4.3 million and over at Homeland Security, 4,697 workers owe about $37 million. Active duty military members owe more than $100 million.
>
> The Treasury Department, where Obama nominee Tim Geithner had to pay up $42,000 in his own back taxes before being confirmed as secretary, has 1,181 other employees with delinquent taxes totaling $9.3 million.
>
> As usual, the Postal Service, with more than 600,000 workers, has the most offenders (25,640), who also owe the most — almost $270 million. Veterans Affairs has 11,659 workers owing the IRS $151 million while the Energy Department that was so quick to dish out more than $500 million to the Solyndra folks has 322 employees owing $5 million.
>
> The country's chief law enforcement agency, the Department of Justice, has 2,069 employees who are nearly $17 million behind in taxes.

Even that leftist Warren Buffett's company is in court for unpaid taxes. Leftists are hypocrites, and when we hear them talk, we need to keep in mind that this isn't how they live themselves. It's just posing and preening for admiration.

Who really gets rich from gasoline? Big oil companies or big government?

October 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a great article that will blow your mind from the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Tom)

Excerpt:

> With the average price of gas in America hovering around $3.50 per gallon for regular unleaded, it costs more than $50 to fill a typical car's 15-gallon tank this summer. Why does gas cost so much?
>
> You may blame high gas prices on rich oil company executives or greedy gas station owners. The truth is that governments rake in a larger profit at the pump than anyone—and with gas taxes on the rise in many parts of the country, there's no relief in sight.
>
> The price of a gallon of gas is based on the combination of four costs: that of crude oil, of refining gas, of distribution and marketing, and of taxes.
>
> Crude oil costs make up about 76% of the cost of gasoline, according to U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). Thus $2.66 of a $3.50 gallon of gasoline is set before the oil is even refined. Global markets, reacting to supply and demand, determine the cost of crude oil. Just like any commodity, from gold to corn, a shortage in supply or an increase in demand leads to a rise in prices.
>
> Refining oil is the next step in the process—and the next expense for drivers. Gasoline is extracted from crude oil and additives, including lubricants and detergents to reduce engine deposits, are added. As of January 2012, the EIA found that refining was responsible for 6% of the cost of gasoline.
>
> Distribution and marketing—the part of the process most apparent to consumers—constitutes another 6% of gas prices. That portion of the cost includes the shipping and transportation of the gasoline, a markup to cover retailers' expenses, and any advertising created to appeal to customers.
>
> The remaining 12%—or almost 50 cents per gallon today—goes directly to federal, state and local governments in an array of sales and excise taxes. The federal gas tax is 18.4 cents on every gallon of gasoline sold in America. State gas-tax rates vary from a low of eight cents per gallon in Alaska to a jarring 49 cents per gallon in New York. Other states where it's steep to fill up include California and Connecticut—each with 48.6-cent-per-gallon gas taxes—and Hawaii, at 47.1 cents per gallon.
>
> Some local governments have gotten in on the act, too. In California, local sales and excise taxes on gasoline average 3.1%, according to the Los Angeles Times. That works out to about 12 cents in local taxes for each gallon of gas, based on the state's current average of $3.80 per gallon.

> […]**Exxon, for example, made only seven cents per gallon of gasoline in 2011. That's a drop in the bucket compared to the nearly 50 cents per gallon that federal, state and local governments rake in on an average gallon of gas pumped in the U.S.**

That's not going to stop the unproductive socialists in government for accusing oil companies of being greedy. Who's really greedy? Government is greedy. They take more of your money in gas taxes than the oil companies do.

Fascism: Ontario education minister wants to stop Catholic schools from teaching pro-life view

October 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of Canada
From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> In what pro-life leaders are calling a stunning and unprecedented attack on religious freedom, Ontario's Education Minister has apparently declared that Catholic schools can no longer teach that abortion is wrong.
>
> Laurel Broten, who serves under Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty, said Wednesday that Catholic schools are barred from teaching this core moral belief because Bill 13, the government's controversial "anti-bullying" law, prohibits "misogyny."
>
> "Taking away a woman's right to choose could arguably be considered one of the most misogynistic actions that one could take," she told the Canadian Press. "I don't think there is a conflict between choosing Catholic education for your children and supporting a woman's right to choose."
>
> Bill 13 had already been slammed by Ontario's bishops as an attack on religious freedom because it forces Catholic schools to allow "gay-straight alliance" clubs.

And confirmation:

> An official transcript sent to LifeSiteNews by the Ontario government confirms that Dalton McGuinty's Education Minister told media on Wednesday that Catholic schools should not be teaching that abortion is wrong because it is a

> violation of the government's newly-enacted anti-bullying bill.
>
> […]In her press conference, Minister Broten went beyond saying that Catholic schools cannot teach their pro-life beliefs, insinuating that they must actually adopt a "pro-choice" position. "We must ensure that women, young girls in our schools, especially highlighted during the week of the first ever Day of the Girl tomorrow, that young girls can make the choices that they make. This is not about being pro-abortion, it is about being pro-choice," she stated.
>
> A reporter pointed out that in the debates around Bill 13 there was no mention of abortion, and so asked why she had brought up the controversial bill.
>
> "Bill 13 has in it a clear indication of ensuring that our schools are safe, accepting places for all our students," she explained. "That includes of LGBTQ students. That includes young girls in our school. Bill 13 is about tackling misogyny, taking away a woman's right to choose could arguably be one of the most misogynistic actions that one could take."
>
> "There are many, many families that send their children to Catholic school and choose that education for their children that also support a woman's right to choose," she continued. "And as I said, I don't think that there is a contrast or a conflict between choosing a Catholic education for your children and supporting a woman's right to choose."

And reactions from pro-lifers:

> Since LifeSiteNews first published the shocking comments Wednesday, they have ignited a firestorm of criticism from pro-life and faith leaders in both Canada and the U.S. and across denominational lines.
>
> Dr. Margaret Somerville, the founding director of McGill University's Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law, called it an "appalling" violation of religious freedom. "If Bill 13 were interpreted in the way the Minister suggests, in my opinion, it would be unconstitutional as offending freedom of religion, freedom of conscience and free speech, as well as contrary to parents' obligations and rights with respect to their children, and so on," she told LifeSiteNews.
>
> […]Steve Phelan, communications director for the Virginia-based Human Life International, called it "a case of radical, secular leftists trying to take away the most basic rights of those with whom they disagree."
>
> William Saunders, Senior Vice-President of Legal Affairs for Americans United for Life, said the comments show the "totalitarian instincts" of pro-abortion politicians, but also stressed that "it can't be misogynistic to oppose something that is so harmful to women, as many recent studies show."
>
> "That's the dirty secret about abortion – how harmful it is to women; and so to suggest it's misogynist is to completely miss the point," he explained.
>
> […]Somerville said the Minister's comments are a sign of abortion advocates'

> desperation, which she sees as hopeful.
>
> "The fact that they can't discuss abortion shows how frightened they are that they cannot support their case in an open public square and get others to support it," she said. "And now, if we take the Minister's comments as an indicator, that fear seems to have increased: They don't want to let anyone even disagree with them, indeed, they want to go further and have everyone 'preach what they preach' about abortion. So much for their stance of adopting so-called "progressive" values which is supposed to include their ideology of tolerance for diversity and manifest this in practice."

Now, I am not a Roman Catholic. I am an evangelical Protestant Christian, and proud of it. But I do defend religious liberty for all. There is nothing that I hold to more strongly than religious liberty, the first and most precious of our American liberties. I think it is important for us here to look around the world and to see which groups are opposed to religious liberty and freedom of conscience. It's not the conservatives. It's the progressives. And that's why we must never vote for them, for any reason. We have to defend that right, as a matter of the first importance – not just for us, but for everyone else, too.

It's important for social conservatives to understand never to make common cause with those who support big government and the restriction of basic liberties. We need to embrace small government and fiscal conservatism so that government never gets powerful enough to take away our freedoms. For a start, government should not be in control of education at the federal level. As social conservatives, we should be promoting state and local control of education, right to work laws and school vouchers. There is a connection between fiscal policy and social policy that both sides need to understand.

Must-see videos on education policy

- MUST-SEE: John Stossel's documentary about public schools and school choice
- MUST-SEE: Cato Institute lady explains why competition is better than monopoly

Related posts

- Teacher union memo reveals agenda to undermine parents
- Public schools spend $130,000 of stimulus money on diversity training books
- New Jersey per-pupil cost is $17,800
- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students

- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

Global warming: 2000 new record low temperatures in October

October 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

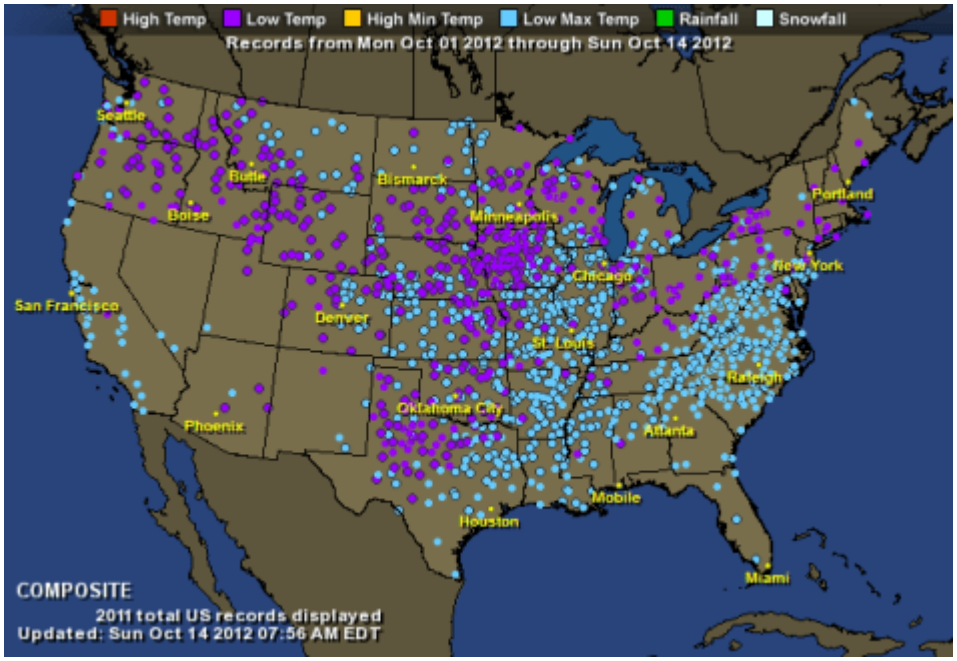

October 2012 temperature records: (click for larger image)
From Watt's Up With That ? blog. (H/T Bad Blue)

Excerpt:

> In the continental USA, there were 137 high temperature type records versus 857 low temperature type records this past week , a 6-1 difference. Last week there were 1154 low temperature type records putting the two week total for October at 2011. There were also 24 new snowfall records set this week in the upper plains.
>
> Remember, the whole reason Obama was so keen to reward his campaign fundraisers who own green energy companies that are now bankrupt was because of the fear of global warming.

Remember Solyndra, the solar panel maker?

Look:

> Eight months before solar panel maker Solyndra filed for bankruptcy, the company's politically connected backer sought to hold on to lucrative tax breaks in the event the company went out of business, according to court documents.
>
> The new information was revealed on Wednesday by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, which filed an official objection to Solyndra's bankruptcy reorganization plan.
>
> The failure of Solyndra, the company President Obama held up as an example of government backing for renewable energy jobs, is a political weapon for

> Republicans ahead of the November elections as they highlight energy policies more favorable to fossil fuels.
>
> […]Solyndra's bankruptcy plan could prove a further embarrassment to the administration if it is seen rewarding risk-driven venture capitalists ahead of unsecured creditors such as suppliers and laid-off staff.
>
> In its court filing on Wednesday, the IRS opposed Solyndra's plan. If approved by creditors, a holding company would emerge from bankruptcy with no employees or business operations – but as much as $350 million in tax breaks that could be used by Solyndra's investors, including Argonaut Ventures.
>
> Argonaut is the investment arm of a foundation tied to the Democratic fundraiser, Oklahoma billionaire George Kaiser. Most of the tax breaks would come in the form of Net Operating Losses (NOLs) which could be used to offset future taxable income.
>
> Meanwhile, under the bankruptcy plan Solyndra's creditors would receive pennies on the dollar, the IRS said, adding that the principal purpose of the plan is "tax avoidance."
>
> […]The IRS cited emails from Kaiser to one of the venture firm's managing directors.
>
> […]Solyndra has said in recent court filings it may not be able to repay any of the $528 million that the U.S. government had lent in 2009 to promote clean energy businesses.
>
> Republicans have seized on Solyndra's failure to accuse the White House of rushing the $528 million loan in part to help the venture capital backers. The Obama administration has said the loan was based on the merits of Solyndra's business prospects.

Global warming fraud, cronyism and corruption. And they did everything they could to block domestic energy production, like blocking the Keystone XL pipeline and all the thousands of jobs that would have created. Do we really need four more years of this?

Doug Groothuis explains why conservatives should unite behind Romney

October 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Patheos, a MUST-READ post from evangelical philosopher Dr. Douglas Groothuis.

Excerpt:

> Many conservatives (Christian or otherwise), me included, are disappointed that Mitt Romney will be the Republican candidate for President. They lament that a more principled conservative (such as Michele Bachmann, or, to a lesser degree, Rick Santorum) was not selected. Perhaps they stand for the libertarian principles of Ron Paul. Whatever the case, many will be tempted to not vote at all or to cast a protest vote. This is a deep mistake, based on faulty ideas about politics and the meaning of a political vote. In this short essay, I will labor to convince fellow conservatives, whether Christians or not, to support and vote for Mitt Romney for President. I have waited to endorse Romney until all the other competitors have been eliminated. I do not expect to convert political liberals to this cause, which would require much more argumentation.

His list of points are:

- we have to be realistic about the alternatives
- protest votes are wasted votes
- the differences between Democrats and Republicans are HUGE
- Romney is far more preferable to the alternative

I highly recommend this post.

Here's just a fragment I liked because it touches on religious liberty, which is my core concern:

> **Third**, the essential principles between the two parties, however each candidate may vary from them, are sharply divided. Democrats support a larger government and heavier taxation and regulation. They view the Constitution as a wax nose they twist any way they want (progressivism), pit corporations and "the wealthy" against "the common man" (call it class warfare, a holdover from Marxism), and support a weakened national defense (the only area of the federal government Obama is trying to cut). They do not support religious liberty, and they are pro-abortion with a vengeance. **Under ObamaCare, every American would be subsidizing the killing of innocent human beings with their own tax dollars. Ponder that, for God's sake. It denies the First Amendment (by requiring many religious people to violate their religious principles) and sets a dangerous precedent for state intrusion into matters of religious conscience. Further, the Democratic party in**

> **general, and now Obama very pointedly, do not respect heterosexual monogamy as the norm. They favor same-sex marriage, which is not marriage at all.**
>
> Republicans support smaller government, lighter taxation and regulation, a higher view of the Constitution as a body of objective truths to be applied rightly today, and the opportunities allowed by a basically free market. They advocate a strong national defense (or "Peace through strength," in Reagan's formulation) and are much more pro-life. **This means a Republican president is far more likely to appoint Supreme Court justices who honor the Constitution and oppose *Roe v. Wade*; to appoint dozens of federal judges with great influence, all of whom are likely to have a high and proper view of the Constitution; and to use executive orders (whether or not they are constitutional; they probably are not) in the pro-life cause, such as refusing to give foreign aid in support of abortions abroad and refusing to fund abortions in the military. While there are exceptions, Republicans support the historical and traditional family. While they grant all citizens the rights enumerated in the Constitution, they do not support same-sex marriage.**

I feel that Dr. Groothuis has earned the right to be featured here because of his longstanding support for Michele Bachmann, and then later Rick Santorum when Michele dropped out. I think his post is realistic, and explains the real alternatives facing Christians and conservatives. There are few Christians I respect more on worldview and policy matters than Doug Groothuis, and he is the author of one of the top books on Christian Apologetics.

What I really liked about this article is how many books that Doug referenced, including David Freddoso's book "The Case Against Barack Obama". That book was one of the reasons why I started blogging in January of 2009. If everyone knew the real Barack Obama, then no one would vote for him. It's a lack of knowledge that causes people to vote for him. Anyone who knows his real record and affiliations knows that he is totally unqualified to run so much as a lemonade stand.

If a good God exists, then why is there so much evil in the world?

October 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just wanted to draw your attention to this 4 page essay by Joe Manzari, which is the best darn summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen. The problem of evil is an objection to the existence of God based on the presence of evil or suffering in the world. The arguments basically infer that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then there should not *be* any evil or suffering.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An exampel of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omnipotent being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God

> can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order for the character of humans to develop through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to show* that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that premise 2 is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil that we observe more compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.

Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life. And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.

2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   We humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. Part of knowing God is knowing what he designed us to do – to love him and to love others. And so, the less we know about God, the more we stray from his design for our lives.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.
(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That’s right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again. More on this argument for God’s existence *from evil* here.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I’ve been through… but then, that’s why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

For more on the problem of evil, listen to this lecture by Douglas Geivett, professor of philosophy at Biola University. Then you *must listen* to this debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (with summary by me). Another debate transcript is here, with William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen. Here’s a book debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, published by Oxford University Press, 2004.

Obama’s Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama’s Benghazi cover-up

October 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> [Secretary of State] Hillary Clinton reveals what REALLY led to Benghazi massacre – and demolishes White House claim it was triggered by anti-Islam film
>
> - Obama administration originally said assault stemmed from protests against anti-Islam video but then backtracked saying terrorists responsible
> - Officials tell how ambassador Chris Stevens was trapped in safe-room as assailants burnt the compound down
> - AK-47s, grenade attacks, and a smoke-filled safe-room – chilling account of the death of U.S. ambassador Chris Stevens revealed
> - Ambassador’s whereabouts after attack not known until officials rang his cell phone – and found doctors trying unsuccessfully to save his life in hospital
> - Most serious attack on U.S. diplomatic compound since al-Qaeda bombed the embassies in Kenya and Tanzania 14 years ago
>
> The State Department has said that it never believed the September 11th attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi was the result of a protest over an anti-Islam movie – directly contradicting the rest of the Obama administration.
>
> […]A dramatic new account by the State Department reveals that Stevens was locked inside a ‘safe room’ choking to death from diesel-heavy smoke as the building around him burned to the ground.
>
> […]The surviving members of the compound have now described the overnight attack, which saw agents trapped in the burning compound before finally speeding away.
>
> As they drove through the crowd, attackers threw grenades and sprayed their armoured vehicle with gunfire from AK-47 assault rifles from a distance of two feet.

A full timeline of the actual events and the statements by the Obama administration is now available.

So, according to the Obama administration, AK-47s, mortars and rocket propelled grenades are all part of a peaceful protest by peace-loving Muslims against a very offensive (but seldom watched) Youtube video put out by the evil capitalist West, with their evil free speech. America is to blame for the attack. It’s not intentionally targeting civilians with violence that’s wrong, it’s Westerners using free speech to offend peace-

loving Muslims. I wouldn't be surprised to see anti-blasphemy laws come out of this cover-up. This administration is a disgrace.

Here's the truth about Democrats and national security:

Obama lied, Americans died. And then the mainstream media helped him to cover it up with more lies. We need to get this naive amateur away from national security and foreign policy. The Obama administration is covering up for Muslim terrorists like they have been doing for the last 4 years, and over the dead body of our ambassador. Just like they covered up for the Mexican drug cartels who killed our border agents as part of the Obama administration's Fast and Furious gun-running operation. It's lies piled on top of lies piled on top of lies. Blaming the United States and exonerating our enemies. That's Obama's worldview.

Related posts

- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack
- UK Independent: "America 'was warned of embassy attack but did nothing'"
- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser
- Obama administration warns contractors to delay layoffs to after election
- Obama wants to send $1 billion of aid to Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
- Report: Iran shipping arms and personnel to Syria through Iraq
- Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)
- The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration
- Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month
- Defense cuts to an already weakened military exposes us to aggression
- Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES
- Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?
- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority
- Obama's neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Obama's Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors
- Former DEA chief warns of cooperation between Hezbollah and drug cartels
- Iran launches Spanish-language TV channel in Venezuela
- Obama's defense cuts undermine our national security
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them
- Iraq plunges into chaos as U.S. troops withdraw
- Iran laughs as Obama pleads for return of unmanned drone

New study: there has been no global warming since 1997

October 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

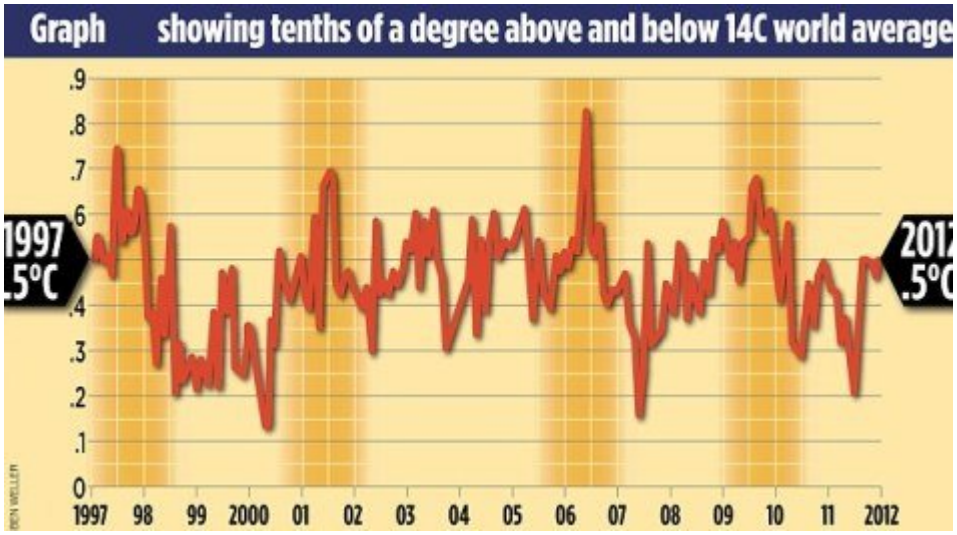

Newest climate data: no change in temperatures since 1997
Reported in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> The world stopped getting warmer almost 16 years ago, according to new data released last week.
>
> The figures, which have triggered debate among climate scientists, reveal that from the beginning of 1997 until August 2012, there was no discernible rise in aggregate global temperatures.
>
> This means that the ‘plateau’ or ‘pause’ in global warming has now lasted for about the same time as the previous period when temperatures rose, 1980 to 1996. Before that, temperatures had been stable or declining for about 40 years.
>
> The new data, compiled from more than 3,000 measuring points on land and sea, was issued quietly on the internet, without any media fanfare, and, until today, it has not been reported.
>
> This stands in sharp contrast to the release of the previous figures six months ago, which went only to the end of 2010 – a very warm year.
>
> Ending the data then means it is possible to show a slight warming trend since 1997, but 2011 and the first eight months of 2012 were much cooler, and thus this trend is erased.
>
> […]The regular data collected on global temperature is called Hadcrut 4, as it is jointly issued by the Met Office’s Hadley Centre and Prof Jones’s Climatic Research Unit.

How much has all the hype about global warming cost the British taxpayer?

> Your bills are going up, at least in part, because of the array of 'green' subsidies being provided to the renewable energy industry, chiefly wind.
>
> They will cost the average household about £100 this year. This is set to rise steadily higher – yet it is being imposed for only one reason: the widespread conviction, which is shared by politicians of all stripes and drilled into children at primary schools, that, without drastic action to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions, global warming is certain soon to accelerate, with truly catastrophic consequences by the end of the century – when temperatures could be up to five degrees higher.
>
> Hence the significance of those first two answers. Global industrialisation over the past 130 years has made relatively little difference.
>
> And with the country committed by Act of Parliament to reducing CO2 by 80 per cent by 2050, a project that will cost hundreds of billions, the news that the world has got no warmer for the past 16 years comes as something of a shock.

Across the pond in the United States, we are not only paying more for electricity because of energy taxes and energy regulations, but we are also losing blue collar jobs, as the Daily Caller explains:

> Coal company Alpha Natural Resources announced Tuesday it would be laying off 1,200 workers and closing eight coal mines to face two new challenges: cheap natural gas and "a regulatory environment that's aggressively aimed at constraining the use of coal."
>
> The Associated Press reports that the company is cutting production by 16 million tons and 1,200 jobs nationwide, with 400 layoffs occurring immediately by closing coal mines in Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania.
>
> Four mines will be closed in West Virginia, another three will be closed in Virginia and one in Pennsylvania. All the mines are non-union operations, according to the AP.

Not only that, but the Wall Street Journal just reported that Obama banned oil drilling on 11.5 million acres of federal land:

> President Obama is campaigning as a champion of the oil and gas boom he's had nothing to do with, and even as his regulators try to stifle it. The latest example is the Interior Department's little-noticed August decision to close off from drilling nearly half of the 23.5 million acre National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.
>
> The area is called the National Petroleum Reserve because in 1976 Congress designated it as a strategic oil and natural gas stockpile to meet the "energy needs of the nation." Alaska favors exploration in nearly the entire reserve. The feds had been reviewing four potential development plans, and the state of Alaska had strongly objected to the most restrictive of the four. Sure enough, that was the plan Interior chose.

That kind of thing, along with blocking the Keystone XL pipeline, explains why gas prices are so high, and why we have no energy jobs being created. They are being created in Brazil, China and elsewhere, but not here. Why would anyone create jobs here when corporate taxes and regulations eat up profits? If the USA is worried so much about global warming, then they don't want jobs and they don't want lower electricity prices. You can't have everything at once.

This is all according to plan, as Obama explained:

Higher energy prices and bankrupting coal plants is how Obama planned to deal with "global warming". That was one of his top priorities as President. Only there was no global warming. That was just an excuse by left-wing academic charlatans to get more grant money for their universities by extracting it from the private sector businesses and workers. The government went along with it because they wanted control of business, and a legitimate looking way of paying off their campaign fundraisers, as with Solyndra. That's all global warming was. It was a hoax designed to achieve a more socialist economy why rewarding Democrat donors.

Related posts

- Who really gets rich from gasoline? Big oil companies or big government?
- Gas prices hit all-time high – again – in Obama-supporting California
- GAO study: EPA regulations will kill coal plant jobs and raise energy prices
- New CBO study: lifting drilling restrictions would increase U.S. energy reserves by 30%
- EPA study finds that water in Dimock, PA is safe to drink despite fracking
- Green firm that got $1.46 billion in bailouts announces 2000 layoffs
- The ten worst energy policies of the Obama administration
- Did Obama cause gas prices to go up?
- Higher gas prices were caused by Obama's green energy policies
- A third Obama-subsidized green energy firm is bankrupt after $118.5 million loan
- How Barack Obama used taxpayer dollars to outsource green energy jobs
- Did Obama really create jobs with his green energy and stimulus programs?
- In Canada, a revolt against global warming socialism creates an economic boom
- E-mails reveal that Obama fundraiser discussed Solyndra loan with White House
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra
- Report finds Labor Department's green jobs program failing
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- How well did Obama's green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors

- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing
- Marsha Blackburn beats up Al Gore on cap and trade corruption

New study of tar pits shows absence of evolutionary change

October 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Doug Axe has a new post up about a new paper that challenges the Darwinian narrative. (H/T J Warner Wallace)

Full text:

> The textbooks say that evolution happens most rapidly in response to environmental changes. You would think, then, that the cycling from glacial periods to warmer interglacial periods would be accompanied by significant changes in the species that survive the change.
>
> Not so, according to a new paper by Donald Prothero and colleagues. After examining all the comon bird and mammal species preserved in the Rancho La Brea tar pits in California, the authors conclude:
>
> the data show that birds and mammals at Rancho La Brea show complete stasis and were unresponsive to the major climate change that occurred at 20 ka, consistent with other studies of Pleistocene animals and plants. Most explanations for such stasis (stabilizing selection, canalization) fail in this setting where climate is changing. One possible explanation is that most large birds and mammals are very broadly adapted and relatively insensitive to changes in their environments, although even the small mammals of the Pleistocene show stasis during climate change, too.
>
> I work at the other end of the size spectrum, on protein molecules rather than whole animals. It's interesting that attempts to catch evolution in the act of doing the amazing things that the textbooks attribute to it seem to fail at both ends of the spectrum.

Interesting because Prothero has debated against ID – this man is not friendly to our view.

Six reasons why people reject Christianity

October 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post on practical evangelism by Christian scholar Don Johnson.

His list of reasons why people often reject Christianity:

1. Christians behaving badly
2. Disappointment with God
3. Weak or absent father
4. Social pressure
5. Cost of discipleship
6. Immorality (especially sexual immorality)

And here's the detail on #6:

> Of all the motivations and reasons for skepticism that I encounter, immorality is easily the most common. In particular, sexual sin seems to be the largest single factor driving disbelief in our culture. Brant Hanson calls sex "The Big But" because he so often hears this from unbelievers: "'I like Jesus, BUT…' and the 'but' is usually followed, one way or the other, with an objection about the Bible and… sex. People think something's deeply messed-up with a belief system that says two consenting, unmarried adults should refrain from sex." In other words, people simply do not want to follow the Christian teaching that sexual intercourse should take place only between and man and woman who are married, so they throw the whole religion out.
>
> The easiest way to justify sin is to deny that there is a creator to provide reality with a nature, thereby denying that there is any inherent order and purpose in the universe.
>
> Aldous Huxley admitted that this is a common reason for skepticism:
>
> I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently I assumed that it had none and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption…. Those who detect no meaning in the world generally do so because, for one reason or another, it suits their books that the world should be meaningless. …
>
> For myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was …liberation from … a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom…. There was one admirably simple method in our political and erotic revolt: We could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever. Similar tactics had been adopted during the eighteenth century and for the same reasons. (Ends and Means, 270-273)

Indeed, similar tactics have been used extensively up to the present day. If you are looking for two great resources that document the extent to which the work of the world's "great" atheistic thinkers has been "calculated to justify or minimize the shame of their own debauchery," (Spiegel, 72) I recommend *Intellectuals* by Paul Johnson and *Degenerate Moderns: Modernity as Rationalized Sexual Misbehavior* by E. Michael Jones. The bottom line is that these skeptical scholars didn't reach their conclusions by following the evidence where it led. They didn't "discover" that the world was meaningless and then proceed to live accordingly. They lived sinful lives (usually involving some type of sexual deviancy) and then produced theories that justified their actions.

This connection between immorality and unsound thought is clearly scriptural. Paul tells the Ephesians that they "must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more" (Eph. 4:17-19) Paul blames futile thinking and a lack of understanding on hard hearts. When we compare this passage with Romans 1, it seems that immorality and bad ideas work together in a vicious cycle that spirals downward. Sin leads to false philosophies which then lead to more sin.

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised (Rom. 1:18-25)

So Paul argues that the nature of reality is clear to everyone but people *suppress the truth by their wickedness*. Rebellious people become fools as they deny the obvious meaning of creation because of their sin. Their foolishness leads them to indulge in more immorality. Thus immorality is very closely linked to skepticism and we need to be aware that sin will almost always be at least an underlying issue in our conversations.

This post is of such high quality and has such practical wisdom in it that I really want everyone reading to click through and read it. I'm sure you'll really like it. I recognize every one of these types of people in non-Christians that I have known.

Mr. Johnson's bio seems to suggest that he has a lot of experience as a pastor, but he's not like many pastors that I've known. If all pastors could interact with so many different sources like and weave together an argument like this, we wouldn't be in the mess we're in.

CNN debate: a liberal moderator and Democrat activists posing as undecided voters

October 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should you watch tonight's debate, moderated by Candy Crowley of CNN?

> **Second presidential candidates' debate between Obama, Romney**
>
> - Topic: Foreign and domestic issues
> - Date: Tuesday, Oct. 16
> - Time: 9 – 10:30 p.m. EDT
> - Location: Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y.
> - Moderator: Candy Crowley, chief political correspondent, CNN, and anchor, CNN's "State of the Union"
> - Format: "The second presidential debate will take the form of a town meeting, in which citizens will ask questions of the candidates on foreign and domestic issues. Candidates each will have two minutes to respond, and an additional minute for the moderator to facilitate a discussion. The town meeting participants will be undecided voters selected by the Gallup Organization."

Here are three reasons why you should be cautious about it.

First, Candy Crowley is a leftist who has made comments critical of the Romney-Ryan ticket. Second, the format allows Candy Crowley to select all the questions for the two candidates. Third, the last time CNN did a townhall debate, they featured questions from well-known Democrat activists and lied to the audience saying that they were "undecided voters". Let's take a look at the evidence for each of these statements.

First, Candy Crowley. Is she a centrist?

Newsbusters explains:

> As NewsBusters has been noting all Saturday morning, now that Paul Ryan has been chosen as Mitt Romney's running mate, the goal of the Obama-loving media is to rip him to shreds.
>
> Doing her part Saturday was CNN's Candy Crowley who claimed some Republicans (unnamed, of course) think this "looks a little bit like some sort of ticket death wish."
>
> […]Transcript of Crowley's remarks is below:
>
> CANDY CROWLEY, CNN: We've already had this debate. All they have to do at Obama Reelect is open up the files because this debate has already happened. They just bring it back, it goes, it is, you know, what they talk about. But I think the other thing that's worth pointing out is not every Republican has signed on to

> this kind of, I mean, they will publicly. But there is some trepidation…
>
> GLORIA BORGER, CNN: They're afraid.
>
> CROWLEY: …that this might be, looks a little bit like some sort of ticket death wish. That, oh, my gosh, do we really want to talk about these thing? Is this where we want to go when the economy is so bad? We could have stayed on that.

Second, what about the format of the debate. Who is choosing the questions?

Associated Press explains:

> Town halls have lost some of their spontaneity. The 80 or so undecided voters chosen for Tuesday's event must submit their questions in advance and moderator Candy Crowley of CNN will decide which people to call on. She can pose her own follow-up questions.

Third, there is the disturbing pattern of CNN stacking the town hall audience with well-known liberal activists and passing them off as "undecided voters". That's what CNN did in a previous debate they moderated, as Michelle Malkin explains.

Excerpt:

> Flashback: CNN/YouTube/plant debacle.
>
> Refresher:
>
> - *Concerned Young Undecided Person "Journey" = John Edwards supporter "Journey"*
> - *Concerned Undecided Log Cabin Republican supporter David Cercone = Obama supporter David Cercone*
> - *Concerned Undecided Mom LeeAnn Anderson = Activist for the John Edwards-endorsing United Steelworkers union LeeAnn Anderson*
> - *Concerned Undecided Gay Military Retiree Brig. Gen. Keith H. Kerr = Hillary/Kerry supporter and anti-"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" activist Keith H. Kerr*
>
> […]If any more political plants turn up at CNN's presidential debates, the cable-news network will have to merge with the Home and Garden channel.
>
> At CNN's Democratic debate in Las Vegas two weeks back, moderator Wolf Blitzer introduced several citizen questioners as "ordinary people, undecided voters." But they later turned out to include a former Arkansas Democratic director of political affairs, the president of the Islamic Society of Nevada and a far left anti-war activist who'd been quoted in newspapers lambasting Harry Reid for his failure to pull out of Iraq.
>
> Yet CNN failed to disclose those affiliations and activism during the broadcast.
>
> Behold – the phony political foliage bloomed again at Wednesday night's much hyped CNN/YouTube GOP debate.

> Oh, CNN did make careful note that Grover Norquist (who asked about his anti-tax pledge) is a Republican activist with Americans for Tax Reform. But somehow the network's layers and layers of fact-checkers missed several easily identified Democratic activists posing as ordinary, undecided citizens.
>
> The tallest plant was a retired gay vet, one "Brig. Gen. Keith Kerr," who questioned – or rather, lectured – the candidates on video and in person about the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy that bans open gays from the military.
>
> Funny. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was exactly the policy CNN adopted in not telling viewers that Kerr is a member of Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual- Transgender Americans for Hillary.
>
> Sen. Clinton's campaign Web site features a press release announcing Kerr and other members of the committee in June. And a basic Web search turns up Kerr's past support as a member of a veterans' steering committee for the John Kerry for President campaign – and his prior appearance on CNN in December '03.
>
> CNN's moderator, Anderson Cooper, singled out Kerr (who'd been flown in for the event) in the vast audience, giving him a chance for his own filibustering moment. Marvel at it: Not one CNN journalist uncovered the connection or thought it pertinent to disclose that Kerr's heart belonged to Hillary.
>
> When righty commentator Bill Bennett pointed out the facts to Cooper after the debate, a red-faced Cooper feebly blubbered: "That was something certainly unknown to us, and had we known that, would have been disclosed by us. It turns out we have just looked at it."
>
> Cluelessness doesn't absolve CNN of journalistic malpractice. Neither does editing out Kerr's question (as the network did on rebroadcast, to camouflage the potted plant).

The article is quite old, and it predates the revelation that Anderson Cooper is gay. Might that explain why so many gay activists were selected to ask questions at a townhall debate?

So should you watch the debate? I think not. But if you do, be aware that CNN is a leftist organization and they are not likely to do a good job of being impartial. They want Obama to win. The best debate so far was the first debate moderated by Jim Lehrer of PBS.

By the way, in a recent Gallup/USA Today poll in swing (toss-up) states, Romney now leads Obama 51-46 among all voters, and is tied 48-48 among women voters. That's what the madness of Joe Biden in his debate got Obama. Women hate a violent, disrespectful madman.

I'll probably watch the debate, but I'll watch it on Fox News Live, not CNN.

Government-run health care: NHS handing out morning-after pill to 13-year-olds

October 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the Scottish Sun.

Excerpt:

> Nurses dish out emergency contraception to teens at lunchtime 'drop-in' clinics.
>
> And it has emerged the meds are being prescribed to young girls WITHOUT their parents' knowledge at seven high schools across Dumfries and Galloway.
>
> The controversial move was last night blasted by religious and political leaders who say it promotes underage sex.
>
> Scottish Tory health spokesman Jackson Carlaw said: "There is a real danger this will breed complacency about safe sex.
>
> "Making the morning-after pill available in this way sends out the message that there is nothing wrong with sex at any age."
>
> And a Catholic Church spokesman added: "It is utterly immoral and like throwing petrol on a fire.
>
> "It gives the green light to promiscuity."
>
> […]Scotland has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in Europe.

Does handing out contraception normalize premarital sex, resulting in higher rates of abortion and teenage pregnancy?

Let's see.

This article from the liberal New York Times answers that part of that question. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> To begin with, a lack of contraceptive access simply doesn't seem to be a significant factor in unplanned pregnancy in the United States. When the Alan Guttmacher Institute surveyed more than 10,000 women who had procured abortions in 2000 and 2001, it found that only 12 percent cited problems obtaining birth control as a reason for their pregnancies. A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study of teenage mothers found similar results: Only 13 percent of the teens reported having had trouble getting contraception.
>
> At the same time, if liberal social policies really led inexorably to fewer unplanned pregnancies and thus fewer abortions, you would expect "blue" regions of the country to have lower teen pregnancy rates and fewer abortions per capita than demographically similar "red" regions.
>
> But that isn't what the data show. Instead, abortion rates are frequently higher in more liberal states, where access is often largely unrestricted, than in more

> conservative states, which are more likely to have parental consent laws, waiting periods, and so on. “Safe, legal and rare” is a nice slogan, but liberal policies don’t always seem to deliver the “rare” part.
>
> What’s more, another Guttmacher Institute study suggests that liberal states don’t necessarily do better than conservative ones at preventing teenagers from getting pregnant in the first place. Instead, the lower teenage birth rates in many blue states are mostly just a consequence of (again) their higher abortion rates. Liberal California, for instance, has a higher teen pregnancy rate than socially conservative Alabama; the Californian teenage birth rate is only lower because the Californian abortion rate is more than twice as high.

This is similar to what we know from other countries like Spain, where promoting contraception actually led to *higher* rates of abortion.

Here’s the article from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Abortion advocates often promote contraception by claiming that as contraception use increases, the number of “unwanted” pregnancies and therefore abortions will decrease. But a new study out of Spain has found the exact opposite, suggesting that contraception actually increases abortion rates.
>
> The authors, who published their findings in the January 2011 issue of the journal *Contraception*, conducted surveys of about 2,000 Spanish women aged 15 to 49 every two years from 1997 to 2007. They found that over this period the number of women using contraceptives increased from 49.1% to 79.9%.
>
> Yet they noted that in the same time frame the country’s abortion rate more than doubled from 5.52 per 1,000 women to 11.49.

This UK Daily Mail story explains how more contraception means more abortion and more teen pregnancy in the UK.

Excerpt:

> Most pregnancies among girls under 18 ended in abortion last year.
>
> Out of around 40,000 pregnancies more than 20,000 were terminated – the first time more had chosen this option than become mothers.
>
> The figure is higher than 2007, when it just hit 50 per cent, and consistent with a steady upwards trend since the Government started its controversial Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in 1999.
>
> Figures out on May 21 will also show that for the first time the number of abortions performed on women living in England and Wales topped 200,000.
>
> **The teenage pregnancy strategy, which has cost taxpayers more than £300million, was meant to halve the number of conceptions among girls under 18 in England between 1998 and 2010.**

> **Ministers have tried to slash teenage pregnancies by freely handing out contraceptives and expanding sex education.**
>
> **But the fall in pregnancy rates has not met Government targets, and in 2007 the rate actually rose.**
>
> **Teenage pregnancy rates are now higher than they were in 1995. Pregnancies among girls under 16 – below the age of consent – are also at the highest level since 1998.**

It is like throwing petrol / gasoline on a fire. The more sex you have, the more abortions and/or teen pregnancy you get.

Should Christians support single-payer health care systems run by a secular leftist government? Of course not. What government-run health care means, in practice, is that businesses and workers will be subsidizing things like abortion, teen pregnancy, sex changes, IVF, single motherhood by choice, no-fault divorce, and other irresponsible choices. Whatever you subsidize, you get more of. Whatever you tax, you get less of. Should we be wanting more abortion and teen pregnancy?

My Dad and I were discussing this article last night and we were thinking about whether sexual activity at age 13 really prepares a woman for life-long married love. This blog has highlighted studies showing that marital stability is increased by pre-marital chastity, and other studies showing that an increased number of premarital sex partners increases the odds of divorce and most recently about how delaying sexual activity in a relationship increases relationship quality. Marital instability is especially bad for children who will grow up fatherless. Children who grow in non-married homes are far more likely to be poor, for example, but also more likely to be exposed to violence. Should we be promoting and subsidizing behaviors that cause these problems? Permitting the behaviors is one thing, but subsidizing them is something else entirely.

This is an issue that libertarians and fiscal conservatives should also care about. Family breakdown will only result in an increase in the size of government to deal with the messes. Not just more police, but more divorce courts, more child protection, more welfare, and so on.

A123: another green energy company goes bankrupt after getting stimulus money

October 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: Don't forget about the debate tonight at 9 Eastern/6 Pacific. Watch out for CNN moderator bias and planted questions though!

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Mitt Romney just got more fodder to attack Barack Obama's green energy programs ahead of Tuesday night's presidential debate.
>
> A123 Systems Inc., which was awarded a federal grant of $249 million funded by the 2009 economic-stimulus law, filed for bankruptcy protection Tuesday morning.
>
> **The company, a maker of electric vehicle batteries, received accolades from the president in September 2010. "This is important not just because of what you guys are doing at your plant, but all across America," Mr. Obama said in a phone call timed to the opening of a battery manufacturing facility. "Because this is about the birth of an entire new industry in America — an industry that's going to be central to the next generation of cars."**
>
> **Energy Secretary Steven Chu in 2009 said the company was "one of the success stories of a high-technology company that was funded with government funds" and "the model of what we want to happen in the future on a bigger scale."**
>
> The Romney campaign has attacked Mr. Obama for what it says is ill-advised government spending on risky clean-energy start-ups. In last week's vice presidential debate, Paul Ryan called the stimulus program "green pork."

Newsbusters adds this update:

> From Bloomberg's report today:
>
> President Barack Obama called A123 Chief Executive Officer David Vieau and then-Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm during a September 2010 event celebrating the opening of the plant in Livonia, Michigan, that the company received the U.S. grant to help build.
>
> "This is about the birth of an entire new industry in America — an industry that's going to be central to the next generation of cars," Obama said in the phone call, according to a transcript provided by the White House. "When folks lift up their hoods on the cars of the future, I want them to see engines and batteries that are stamped: Made in America."

I'm hoping that in tonight's debate Romney reasserts that line about the $90 billion wasted on green projects and a lot of it linked to Obama campaign fundraisers.

Related posts

- New study: there has been no global warming since 1997
- Who really gets rich from gasoline? Big oil companies or big government?
- Gas prices hit all-time high – again – in Obama-supporting California
- GAO study: EPA regulations will kill coal plant jobs and raise energy prices
- New CBO study: lifting drilling restrictions would increase U.S. energy reserves by 30%
- EPA study finds that water in Dimock, PA is safe to drink despite fracking
- Green firm that got $1.46 billion in bailouts announces 2000 layoffs
- The ten worst energy policies of the Obama administration
- Did Obama cause gas prices to go up?
- Higher gas prices were caused by Obama's green energy policies
- A third Obama-subsidized green energy firm is bankrupt after $118.5 million loan
- How Barack Obama used taxpayer dollars to outsource green energy jobs
- Did Obama really create jobs with his green energy and stimulus programs?
- In Canada, a revolt against global warming socialism creates an economic boom
- E-mails reveal that Obama fundraiser discussed Solyndra loan with White House
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra
- Report finds Labor Department's green jobs program failing
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- How well did Obama's green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors
- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing

Romney wins CNN debate against Obama and biased moderator Candy Crowley

October 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Romney brought up the Obama administrations lies about Benghazi as well as the Fast and Furious gun-running to Mexican drug cartels to seal the victory. Although the Democrat moderator lied about Obama calling Benghazi an act of terror, it wasn't enough to save Obama from Mitt's constant repetition of the horrible performance of the economy under the socialist Barack Obama.

Romney narrowly won, but it could have been better if he had pressed the attack on the security failures in Benghazi with more facts. He pulled his punches there, and he had no reason to.

There are two stories to this debate. First, the CNN moderator lied to protect Obama about his Benghazi security failure:

> CNN correspondent and second presidential debate moderator Candy Crowley disgraced herself tonight, repeatedly intervening to save a floundering President Obama and showing why many Americans were rightfully suspicious of her ability to moderate a presidential debate fairly.
>
> Her most outrageous act tonight was her incorrect seconding of Obama's statement that he declared the Libya terrorist attacks to be "terror." While Obama did indeed use the word, this is not what he meant by it. Instead, he was simply referring to "acts of terror." There was no mention of Al Qaeda or any of its affiliates with respect to the actual attack on the U.S. embassy in Benghazi.
>
> Here is the full Obama statement in reference to "terror" in Libya.
>
> "No acts of terror will ever shake the resolve of this great nation, alter that character, or eclipse the light of the values that we stand for. Today we mourn four more Americans who represent the very best of the United States of America. We will not waver in our commitment to see that justice is done for this terrible act. And make no mistake, justice will be done."
>
> Perusing the full Obama speech reveals that the president and Crowley misstated the facts…

She has now admitted that Romney was correct about Benghazi.

Second, the CNN moderator cut off all discussion of Obama's Fast and Furious gun-smuggling to drug cartels, after asking a planted question about "assault weapons":

> As I reported earlier, the topic of Operation Fast and Furious came up at tonight's presidential debate in New York. During Mitt Romney's remarks on the deadly subject, President Obama sat in the background where he smirked and at one point, laughed.

> [The] debate moderator Candy Crowley quickly changed the subject away from Operation Fast and Furious and when she was done speaking, President Obama failed to address the issue. After the debate in the media spin room, the Obama campaign wasn't interested in discussing the details either.
>
> […]Fast and Furious has damaged the relationship between Mexico and the United States, not to mention, it's laughable to hear President Obama talk about gun control when his own Justice Department armed Mexican cartels with thousands of AK-47 style weapons.
>
> "It's a vital issue. The President promised to run one of the most transparent and open administration in history. That's not the case in fact literally today the Justice Department filed suit trying to get out access to records thrown out of court. The President is so upside down on Fast and Furious. He's never directly addressed the question. He was asked specifically by Univision and he said he would get to the bottom of it but nobody has been held accountable and they haven't provided the documents to Congress," Rep. Jason Chaffetz, who sits on the House Oversight Committee, told Townhall. "I'm glad to see Mitt Romney mentioned it and actually talked about it in a proactive way as something that was wrong on every facet."

Here are some of the other key points about tonight's debate:

- Obama's energy record: oil production on federal lands is down 14%
- Nearly half of Americans are poor or low-income after 4 years of Obama
- 1 in 7 Americans relying on food stamps after 4 years of Obama
- Obama administration said that China was not manipulating their currency
- Romney explained what causes men and women to be paid differently
- Obama created the largest tax increase on the middle class ever (Obamacare)
- Middle class incomes down $4300 after 4 years of Obama
- Mitt Romney would end taxpayer funding of abortion, Obama would not

Biased CNN liberal moderator Candy Crowley admits Romney correct about Benghazi

October 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

That didn't take long: (H/T ECM)

Transcript:

> CANDY CROWLEY, debate moderator, after the debate: You know, again, I heard the president's speech at the time. I sort of reread a lot of stuff about Libya because I knew we'd probably get a Libya question, so I kind of wanted to be up on it. So we knew that the president had said, you know, 'these acts of terror won't stand,' or whatever the whole quote was.
>
> I think actually, you know, because right after that, I did turn to Romney and said you were totally correct but they spent two weeks telling us that this was about a tape and that there was this riot outside of the Benghazi consulate, which there wasn't. So he was right in the main, I just think that he picked the wrong word.

Unfortunately, this was not her only mistake. She also cut Romney off about Fast and Furious to protect her best buddy Obama from looking bad on gun control. It's too late to apologize now, and she should be fired. Just like all the other left-wing activists in the mainstream media.

Breitbart has the full list of Crowley's attempts to help Obama win the debate.

Here are a few:

> 1. She wouldn't let him respond when Obama lied about the auto industry. First she called him Mr. Romney instead of governor, then protested, "there'll be plenty of chances here to go on, but I want to… We have all these folks. I will let you absolutely… OK. Will – will – you certainly will have lots of time here coming up." Romney never did get the chance to respond.
>
> 2. After the question asking whether gas prices as they stand now are the new normal, Obama got 2 chances to respond. When Romney asked for his second chance, Crowley shut him off by saying, " … in the follow up, it doesn't quite work like that. But I'm going to give you a chance here. I promise you, I'm going to." She didn't.
>
> 3. When discussing how he would deal with deductions, just as Romney was about to destroy Obama with statistics, Crowley jumped in to save her man not only by denying the value of statistics, but changing the narrative to say Romney's numbers couldn't possibly add up:
>
> "And Governor, let's – before we get into a vast array of who says – what study says what, if it shouldn't add up. If somehow when you get in there, there isn't enough tax revenue coming in. If somehow the numbers don't add up, would you

> be willing to look again …"
>
> 4. When Romney was trying to make a point of Obama's pension investing in China, Crowley cut him off by insinuating people were tired of him talking:
>
> "Governor Romney, you can make it short. See all these people? They've been waiting for you. Make it short."
>
> Then she really tried to humiliate him with this: "If I could have you sit down, Governor Romney. Thank you." She never asked Obama to sit down.

Read the whole list.

Related posts

- Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack
- UK Independent: "America 'was warned of embassy attack but did nothing'"
- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser
- Obama administration warns contractors to delay layoffs to after election
- Obama wants to send $1 billion of aid to Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
- Report: Iran shipping arms and personnel to Syria through Iraq
- Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)
- The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration
- Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month
- Democrat defense cuts to an already weakened military expose us to aggression
- Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES
- Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?
- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority
- Obama's neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Obama's Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors
- Former DEA chief warns of cooperation between Hezbollah and drug cartels
- Iran launches Spanish-language TV channel in Venezuela
- Obama's defense cuts undermine our national security
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them
- Iraq plunges into chaos as U.S. troops withdraw
- Iran laughs as Obama pleads for return of unmanned drone

Obama attacks religious liberty and supports taxpayer-funding of abortions in debate

October 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama promoted the pro-abortion HHS mandate during the debate Tuesday night in New York, defending what Catholic and evangelical groups strongly oppose.
>
> The mandate forces religious employers such as small businesses, colleges, and organizations to pay for abortion-causing drugs and birth control for their employees — even though it violates their religious and moral views.

Obama said this:

> Now, there are some other issues that have a bearing on how women succeed in the workplace. For example, their healthcare. You know a major difference in this campaign is that Governor Romney feels comfortable having politicians in Washington decide the health care choices that women are making.
>
> I think that's a mistake. In my health care bill, I said insurance companies need to provide contraceptive coverage to everybody who is insured. Because this is not just a – a health issue, it's an economic issue for women. It makes a difference. This is money out of that family's pocket. Governor Romney not only opposed it, he suggested that in fact employers should be able to make the decision as to whether or not a woman gets contraception through her insurance coverage.

Obama promoted taxpayer-funding of abortions several times in the debate.

The biased CNN moderator tried to prevent Romney from replying, but he finally did respond:

> I'd just note that I don't believe that bureaucrats in Washington should tell someone whether they can use contraceptives or not. And I don't believe employers should tell someone whether they could have contraceptive care of not. Every woman in America should have access to contraceptives. And – and the – and the president's statement of my policy is completely and totally wrong.

I'm with Romney on this one. I don't want to subsidize the birth control pills and abortions of people who choose to have sex of their own free will. Obama also attacked Romney for wanting to defund Planned Parenthood, an organization that makes tens of millions of dollars of profits by performing abortions. Do we really have the money to pay for abortions at a time like this? Is that a mainstream view of abortion?

Does Planned Parenthood use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?

October 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama said in last night's debate that Planned Parenthood provides mammograms. Is he telling the truth? Let's see.

From Live Action. (H/T Neil Simpson via Mary)

Excerpt:

> A series of new undercover phone calls reveals that contrary to the claims of Planned Parenthood CEO Cecile Richards and other supporters of the nation's largest abortion chain, the organization does not provide mammograms for women.
>
> In the tapes, a Live Action actor calls 30 Planned Parenthood clinics in 27 different states, inquiring about mammograms at Planned Parenthood. Every Planned Parenthood, without exception, tells her she will have to go elsewhere for a mammogram, and many clinics admit that no Planned Parenthood clinics provide this breast cancer screening procedure. "We don't provide those services whatsoever," admits a staffer at Planned Parenthood of Arizona. Planned Parenthood's Comprehensive Health Center clinic in Overland Park, KS explains to the caller, "We actually don't have a, um, mammogram machine, at our clinics."
>
> Opponents of defunding Planned Parenthood have argued in Congress and elsewhere that the organization provides many vital health care services other than abortion, such as mammograms. Most prominently, Planned Parenthood CEO Cecile Richards recently appeared on The Joy Behar Show to oppose the Pence Amendment to end Planned Parenthood's taxpayer subsidies, claiming, "If this bill ever becomes law, millions of women in this country are gonna lose their healthcare access–not to abortion services–to basic family planning, you know, mammograms."

Just today I read a comment on Facebook asserting that Planned Parenthood provides mammograms. This is what you often hear in the mainstream media, because they are pro-abortion. But the fact of the matter is that Planned Parenthood does not do mammograms – says the Washington Post.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Hawaii Planned Parenthood caught counseling sex-selection abortions
- War on women: Obama and Democrats oppose ban on sex-selection abortion
- Live Action sting: Planned Parenthood counsels late-term sex-selection abortion
- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?

- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Feminists push liberal sexual agenda at United Nations
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Researchers link rise in some cancers to increased sexual activity
- Should birth control pills be dispensed over the counter?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Equal pay and women: does Obama give his female employees pay equity?

October 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama talks a lot about equal pay for women and pay equity, but what is his record?

The Daily Caller explains:

> Government records show that despite the Democratic National Convention's early focus on salary equality for women, President Barack Obama has consistently paid his own female staffers less than men who perform similar or identical duties.
>
> The convention is Obama's show, but Tuesday night in Charlotte belonged to Lilly Ledbetter. The failed lawsuit plaintiff whose name was ultimately attached to a wage parity law Obama signed in 2009 — the first bill to win his signature — addressed the convention, and at least five other speakers raised her signature issue. One was the president himself.
>
> A video of Obama played in the convention hall at around 9:35 p.m. Tuesday, in which he observed that women in the U.S. workforce are "still earning just 77 cents for every dollar a man does."
>
> "Overall," he said, "a woman with a college degree doing the same work as a man will earn hundreds of thousands of dollars less over the course of her career."
>
> Such a gender pay gap, he claimed, "weakens families; it weakens communities; it's tough on our kids; it weakens our entire economy."
>
> But data from the Obama White House's 2011 annual report show that female staffers there earn a median salary 18 percent lower than that of men.
>
> And nearly four years ago, at the height of the 2008 election season, Scripps Howard syndicated columnist Deroy Murdock wrote that female staffers in Obama's U.S. Senate office, too, were shortchanged.
>
> "Obama's average male employee earned $54,397," Murdock determined from online Senate salary records. But the future president's "30 female employees … [earned] $45,152, on average."

But there is a broader question that needs to be answered. Are the differences in the salaries between men and women due to discrimination, or are they due to the different choices that men and women make?

Here's a popular article by Carrie Lukas, writing in the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> The unemployment rate is consistently higher among men than among women.

> The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 9.3% of men over the age of 16 are currently out of work. The figure for women is 8.3%. Unemployment fell for both sexes over the past year, but labor force participation (the percentage of working age people employed) also dropped. The participation rate fell more among men (to 70.4% today from 71.4% in March 2010) than women (to 58.3% from 58.8%). That means much of the improvement in unemployment numbers comes from discouraged workers—particularly male ones—giving up their job searches entirely.
>
> Men have been hit harder by this recession because they tend to work in fields like construction, manufacturing and trucking, which are disproportionately affected by bad economic conditions. Women cluster in more insulated occupations, such as teaching, health care and service industries.
>
> […]The Department of Labor's Time Use survey shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. One would expect that someone who works 9% more would also earn more. This one fact alone accounts for more than a third of the wage gap.
>
> Choice of occupation also plays an important role in earnings. While feminists suggest that women are coerced into lower-paying job sectors, most women know that something else is often at work. Women gravitate toward jobs with fewer risks, more comfortable conditions, regular hours, more personal fulfillment and greater flexibility. Simply put, many women—not all, but enough to have a big impact on the statistics—are willing to trade higher pay for other desirable job characteristics.
>
> Men, by contrast, often take on jobs that involve physical labor, outdoor work, overnight shifts and dangerous conditions (which is also why men suffer the overwhelming majority of injuries and deaths at the workplace). They put up with these unpleasant factors so that they can earn more.
>
> Recent studies have shown that the wage gap shrinks—or even reverses—when relevant factors are taken into account and comparisons are made between men and women in similar circumstances. In a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30, the research firm Reach Advisors found that women earned an average of 8% more than their male counterparts. Given that women are outpacing men in educational attainment, and that our economy is increasingly geared toward knowledge-based jobs, it makes sense that women's earnings are going up compared to men's.

That makes sense. For example, I think that most women find careers like teaching and nursing more fulfilling than careers in automobile repair or computer programming. And some fields just pay more than others because of supply and demand. But if you look at what people of both sexes earn for the same degrees, the same years of experience, in the same jobs, and correct for time off for child care, and so on, then there is no pay gap.

It's a made-up crisis designed to trick women into thinking that they are victims, and that they need government to save them from the bad, bad men. And most single women do fall for this rhetoric, as a recent poll showed. I think it's especially true for fatherless women and women who make poor choices in relationships, which is why fiscal conservatives and libertarians need to promote marriage, family and fatherhood more. These things are all related.

There is a gender pay gap – but not the one you might expect

However, there actually is a gender pay gap in the largest cities in the country – but it's not a pay gap that favors men.

Well, first of all, it's important to note for those who didn't know that salary differences are purely the result of individual lifestyle choices, not the result of sexist discrimination. Who says? The US Labor Department, that's who.

Here are the details.

Excerpt:

> Economists who have studied the pay gap have observed that numerous factors other than discrimination contribute to the wage gap, such as hours worked, experience, and education. For example, Professor June O'Neil has written extensively about how time out of the workforce, or years spent working part-time, can reduce future pay. Likewise, economist Diana Furchtgott-Roth, in her book *Women's Figures*, has written about the decisions that women are more likely to make to choose flexibility, a friendly workplace environment, and other nonmonetary factors as compared to men.
>
> Recognizing the importance of unbiased research on the pay gap, the Labor Department recently contracted with CONSAD Research Corporation for a review of more than 50 existing studies as well as a new economic and statistical analysis of the pay gap. CONSAD's Report, which was finalized on January 12, 2009, found that the vast majority of the pay gap is due to several identifiable factors and that the remainder may be due to other specific factors they were not able to measure.
>
> CONSAD found that controlling for career interruption and other factors reduced the pay gap from about 20 percent to about 5 percent. Data limitations prevented it from considering many other factors. For example, the data did not permit an examination of total compensation, which would examine health insurance and other benefits, and instead focused solely on wages paid. The data were also limited with respect to work experience, job tenure, and other factors.
>
> The Labor Department's conclusion was that the gender pay gap was the result of a multitude of factors and that the "raw wage gap should not be used as the basis for [legislative] correction. Indeed, there may be nothing to correct. The differences in raw wages may be almost entirely the result of individual choices being made by both male and female workers."

It turns out that the pay gap, which was *always* entirely due to lifestyle choices, is now *working against men*. Here is Carrie Lukas again, writing in National Review this time, explaining the latest research on the pay gap.

She cites the radically left-wing Time magazine:

> …according to a new analysis of 2,000 communities by a market research company, in 147 out of 150 of the biggest cities in the U.S., the median full-time salaries of young women are 8% higher than those of the guys in their peer group. In two cities, Atlanta and Memphis, those women are making about 20% more. This squares with earlier research from Queens College, New York, that had suggested that this was happening in major metropolises. But the new study suggests that the gap is bigger than previously thought, with young women in New York City, Los Angeles and San Diego making 17%, 12% and 15% more than their male peers, respectively. And it also holds true even in reasonably small areas like the Raleigh-Durham region and Charlotte in North Carolina (both 14% more), and Jacksonville, Fla. (6%).

It would have been nice if Romney could have explained all of this during the debate, but there are some things that are dangerous to explain when you are running for President.

Obama’s economic plan: record high 47 million Americans on food stamps

October 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard explains how Obama made 47 million people dependent on government.

Excerpt:

> Food stamps enrollment has hit a new record high. 46,681,833 million are now enrolled in the social welfare program, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, the federal department that runs the program.
>
> As the chart shows, when President Obama took office, enrollment in the food stamps program was 31.98 million. Now, not even four years later, it’s a whopping 46.48 million. (In 2002, as the chart states, “19.1 million Americans received food stamps.”)
>
> In fact, the newly released data represents enrollment in July (the last month for which data is available). Assuming the program remained on its projected path, the number of those enrolled in food stamps is likely now larger by several hundreds of thousands.
>
> “USDA has engaged in an aggressive outreach and promotional campaign to boost food stamp enrollment. Among these efforts are an ongoing partnership with the Mexican government to advertise food stamps to Mexican nationals, migrant workers, and non-citizen immigrants. Partly as a result of these efforts, the number of non-citizens on food stamps has quadrupled since 2001,” explains the Republican side of the Senate Budget Committee.
>
> And the cost, the committee explains, is astronomical. “Total spending on food stamps is projected to reach nearly $800 billion over the next 10 years, with no fewer than 1 in 9 people on the program at any given time. Neither food stamp participation nor spending on the program are ever projected to return to pre-recession levels at any point in the next 10 years.”

Why might some people on the left celebrate more government dependency? Well, if everyone is on food stamps, then everyone will be equal, and that’s what the left wants more than anything. Equal dependence on government was his plan, and he achieved it. If being on food stamps is not your goal for your life or for your children’s lives, then you might want to consider picking a new President in November.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

October 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of my favorite lectures, by one of the people I admire the most for his scientific work and robust, evangelical Christian faith.

About Michael Strauss:

His full biography is here. (I removed his links from my excerpt text below)

Excerpt:

> I had an interest in science and theology, so in 1977 I chose to go to Biola University where I could study both subjects in detail. I thoroughly enjoyed college and participated in intramural sports, was elected to student government, served as a resident assistant, competed in forensics, and studied a lot. As I neared college graduation my dual interest continued so I applied to seminary and to graduate school. After graduating *summa cum laude* from Biola, I decided to pursue a graduate degree in physics at UCLA.
>
> During my first few years of graduate school, I developed an increased interest in quantum mechanics and subatomic physics and decided to do research in a field that dealt with these subjects. I joined a High Energy Physics experimental group doing research at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to actively participate in research at SLAC. I graduated in 1988 with my Ph.D in High Energy Physics (a.k.a. Elementary Particle Physics). If you would like to know more about High Energy Physics, the Particle Data Group at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory has a very nice interactive adventure that teaches you all about the subject. My research advisor was professor Charles Buchanan and my disertation was titled "A Study of Lambda Polarization and Phi Spin Alignment in Electron-Positron Annihilation at 29 GeV as a Probe of Color Field Behavior."
>
> After graduation, I accepted a post-doctoral research position with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I continued to do research at SLAC where I joined the SLD experiment. My research interests centered on the SLD silicon pixel vertex detector. I wrote most of the offline software for this device, and did physics analysis which used the vertex detector, including tagging *b* quark events for flavor specific QCD (Quantum Chromodynamics) analysis. In the seven years I was employed by UMASS, I only spent 3 days on the Amherst campus. The rest of the time was spent in California.
>
> […]In August 1995, I accepted a job as an Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of Oklahoma (OU) in Norman, Oklahoma. The University of Oklahoma has a vibrant high energy physics research group involved in experiments at the

> Fermi National Accelerator Center (Fermilab), and CERN. I joined the DØ experiment at Fermilab where I continue to do research in elementary particle physics. As a member of the DØ collaboration I have made contributions to the testing of silicon sensors for the upgraded vertex detector, to the track finding algorithms, to a measurement of the photon production cross section which probes the gluon content of protons, and to other QCD measurements. I am currently studying properties of *B* mesons that contain a *b*-quark, the production cross section of jets coming from quarks and gluons, and other QCD analyses. At CERN, I am a collaborator on the ATLAS detector.
>
> I received tenure in 2001 and was promoted to the rank of Professor in the summer of 2010. Most of the time at OU I have taught introductory physics classes to physics majors, engineers, and life science majors. In these classes I have used a number of interactive techniques to facilitate student participation and learning. I have been privileged to win a few awards for my teaching. In 1999, the Associated Students selected me as the Outstanding Professor in the College of Arts and Science, and in 2000 I was awarded the BP AMOCO Foundation Good Teaching Award. In 2002, I was given the Regents Award for Superior Teaching. I received the Carlisle Mabrey and Lurine Mabrey Presidential Professorship in 2006 which is given to "faculty members who excel in all their professional activities and who relate those activities to the students they teach and mentor."

He seems to have done a fine job of integrating his faith with a solid career in physics research. It would be nice if we were churning out more like him, but that would require the church to get serious about the integration between science and faith.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips, one of which I was able to try out recently at IHOP, and it worked.

UPDATE: I pulled the MP3 audio from the lecture in case anyone wants just the audio.

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been

tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Christian philosopher William Lane Craig offers marriage advice

October 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post is a 3 in one: one lecture, one question and answer, and another lecture – all on different topics. My friend Neil S. requested this so I'm posting it.

I got this lecture from the Reasonable Faith web site.

Dr. William Lane Craig is the top living Christian apologist and debater in the world today, and has 2 Masters degrees and 2 Ph.Ds. He also has scores of academic publications including books from Oxford University Press, etc.

The MP3 file is here. (14.5 Mb, about 41 minutes)

Topics:

- the stresses of ministry on marriages
- the Christian position on divorce
- balancing marriage with academic pursuits
- the importance of marrying the right person
- Dr. Craig's politically incorrect advice for choosing a spouse
- Advice for men: Marry someone who believes in you and who supports you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be the kind of person who can commit to being a helper and supporter
- Advice for men: Beware of the career woman who will put their career over supporting you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be careful about marrying if you think that your goals are more important than your husband's goals
- Advice: Don't try to find the right person *for you* but instead focus on learning about marriage and preparing for marriage
- Advice: Flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, love and peace
- Advice: God intends for sex to be within the bounds of marriage, so you need to guard yourself against unchastity
- Advice for men: be careful what images and movies you see with the goal of keeping your chastity
- Advice: your highest responsibility after your relationship with God is your spouse, and your studies are third
- Advice: it's better to drop classes or give up your graduate studies entirely rather than destroy your marriage
- Advice for women: understand that you have to work at the marriage in order to help your man finish his studies
- Advice: set aside a period of the day for communicating and bonding with your

spouse
- Advice: cultivate the ability to talk with your spouse on a personal level, and maintain eye contact
- Advice for men: do not break eye contact with your wife, and also hold her hand when communicating
- Advice: do not be embarrassed to seek out a marriage counselor, but make it a good counselor
- Advice: don't just be doing stuff for your mate, but also be vulnerable and transparent with your mate
- How your relationship with your wife helps you with your relationship with God
- How do you handle the rebellion of children without being overbearing and authoritarian?

There is a period of Q&A at the end. There is another piece of advice that comes out in the Q&A for women: take an interest in your spouse's work even if you don't care about it, and ask him about it every day and try to understand it. Go to the man's workplace and see what he does. Go to his presentations. Get involved in the man's ministry and help him in practical ways. Another piece of advice is to not paper over the differences – it's good to argue, because it means that problems are being confronted and worked through. Husbands should have a good male friend to talk to, and wives should have a good female friend to talk to.

I like how Dr. Craig has thought about how to have a successful marriage, how to choose the right woman, and how to love his wife. I like how he calls out men on the chastity thing. I think that chastity is more important for men than for women, because it's the men who take the lead in choosing and pursuing the right woman for their plan.

Secondly, here is my previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for married couples, where he gives 5 points of advice for married couples.

Here are the main pieces of advice Dr. Craig gives:

1. *Resolve that there will be no divorce*
2. *Delay having children*
3. *Confront problems honestly*
4. *Seek marital counseling*
5. *Take steps to build intimacy in your relationship*

And here's the controversial one (#2):

> 2. *Delay having children.* The first years of marriage are difficult enough on their own without introducing the complication of children. Once children come, the wife's attention is necessarily diverted, and huge stresses come upon you both. Spend the first several years of marriage getting to know each other, working through your issues, having fun together, and enjoying that intimate love relationship between just the two of you. Jan and I waited ten years before having

> our first child Charity, which allowed me the finish graduate school, get our feet on the ground financially, establish some roots, and enjoy and build our love relationship until we were really ready to take on the responsibilities of parenthood. The qualifier here is that if the wife desperately wants children now, then the husband should accede to her wish to become a mother, rather than withhold that from her. Her verdict should be decisive. But if you both can agree to wait, things will probably be much easier.

Third and finally, here is a previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for choosing a good spouse, with illustrations from his own marriage.

For example, Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

If you want to hear another Christian husband talk about how his wife supports him, listen to this lecture called "Giants in the Land" with Dr. Walter Bradley. It's actually my favorite lecture. I also really like his testimony lecture. If you're looking for guidance, these are some of the people I would recommend.

New report: welfare spending hits record $1 trillion, up 32% in Obama's first term

October 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

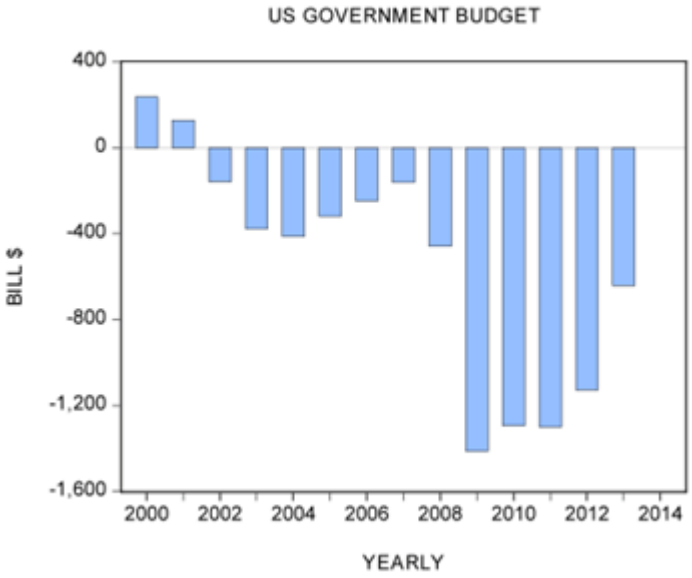

Democrats control the House and Senate in 2007
Dad sent me this excellent article from the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> The government spent approximately $1.03 trillion on 83 means-tested federal welfare programs in fiscal year 2011 alone — a price tag that makes welfare that year the government's largest expenditure, according to new data released by the Republican side of the Senate Budget Committee.
>
> The total sum taxpayers spent on federal welfare programs was derived from a new Congressional Research Service (CRS) report on federal welfare spending — which topped out at $745.84 billion for fiscal year 2011 — combined with an analysis from the Republican Senate Budget Committee staff of state spending on federal welfare programs (based on "The Oxford Handbook of State and Local Government Finance"), which reached $282.7 billion in fiscal year 2011.
>
> […]According to the CRS report, which focused solely on federal spending for federal welfare programs, spending on federal welfare programs increased $563.413 billion in fiscal year 2008 to $745.84 billion in fiscal year 2011 — a 32 percent increase.
>
> […]**The total federal spending on federal welfare programs vastly outpaced fiscal year 2011 spending on such federal expenditures as non-war defense ($540 billion), Social Security ($725 billion), Medicare ($480 billion), and departments such as Justice ($30.5 billion), Transportation ($77.3 billion) and Education ($65.486 billion) — a fact that alarmed the ranking member of the Senate Budget Committee,**

> **Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, who requested the report from CRS.**
>
> "These astounding figures demonstrate that the United States spends more on federal welfare than any other program in the federal budget," Sessions wrote The Daily Caller in an email. "It is time to restore — not retreat from — the moral principles of the 1996 welfare reform. Such reforms, combined with measures to promote growth, will help both the recipient and the Treasury."
>
> When state spending on federal welfare programs — specifically Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program — was thrown into the mix, the amount spent on federal welfare increased 28 percent, from $798.813 billion in fiscal year 2008 to $1.028.54 trillion in fiscal year 2011.
>
> "No longer should we measure compassion by how much money the government spends, but by how many people we help to rise out of poverty," Sessions continued. "Welfare assistance should be seen as temporary whenever possible, and the goal must be to help more of our fellow citizens attain gainful employment and financial independence. This is about more than rescuing our finances. It's about creating a more optimistic future for millions of struggling Americans."
>
> With food assistance spending increasing the most out of every category, Sessions, who has been sounding the alarm on the expanding food stamp rolls, noted that the Obama administration has allowed for the food stamp increase through misleading promotion and a disregard for self-reliance.
>
> "The administration ludicrously argues that every five dollars in food stamp spending results in nearly 10 dollars in economic benefit. They insist that communities 'lose out' when more people don't sign up for benefits," Sessions noted. "[The United States Department of Agriculture] even awarded a recruitment worker for overcoming people's 'mountain pride.' Is this a hopeful vision for the future? Do these priorities make our country stronger and our economy more secure?"

Do these numbers surprise you, because of what you hear from Obama and his allies in the media? Well, Democrats are always lying about how the Bush tax cuts caused the deficits. The truth is that revenues went up after the tax cuts because more wealthy invested their savings since they stood to keep more of the gains if their risks panned out. People invest more when they are allowed to keep more of the profit, if they get a profit. That's how investing works – when you stand to gain more for the same risk, you risk more. And risking money in a business venture means MORE JOBS, since people get hired to take the risk, and do the work.

Bush's tax cuts were passed in 2001 and 2003, and look what happened to revenues:

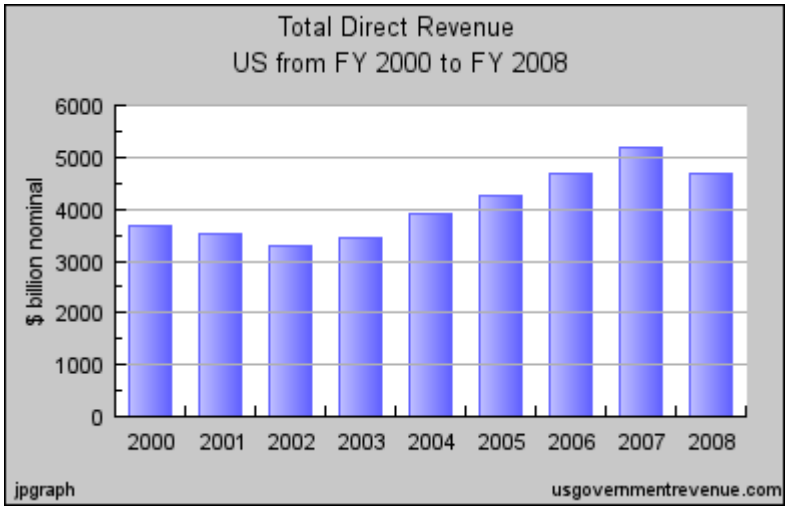

Did the Bush tax cuts make revenues decrease? No!

Not only that, but the unemployment rate went down to just over 4% after the tax cuts. The two wars cost about $550 billion, and we actually got national security out of it. What do we get for paying people not to work? Is it government's job to pay people not to work? I think that charity is best done by individuals, businesses and especially churches, where we can expect some moral accountability from the recipient – some improved decision-making and personal responsibility. That's simply lacking when government mails out checks paid for by working families and their employers.

Not every Republican is good on cutting spending, but Jeff Sessions is one of the Republican majority who opposes spending. We just just need to keep getting rid of the RINOs and Democrats, and this problem will get solved. We are never going to turn this economy around when people who think that more dependency and fewer jobs cause economic growth. They are wrong about the facts and they need to go in November.

New study: staying a virgin longer enables more satisfying relationships

October 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina and Stuart both sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail about study showing the benefits of abstinence for relationship quality.

Excerpt:

> People who lose their virginity later than their teenage years are more likely to enjoy satisfying relationships later in life, according to a new study.
>
> Researchers found that people who didn't have sex until they turned 20 or even later are more likely to end up in a happy relationship.
>
> […]Previous research suggests that there may be cause for concern, as timing of sexual development can have significant immediate consequences for adolescents' physical and mental health.
>
> However, until now little had been done to study long-term outcomes, and how early sexual initiation might affect romantic relationships in adulthood.
>
> Psychological scientist Paige Harden, of the University of Texas in the United States, set about changing this.
>
> She wanted to investigate whether the timing of sexual initiation in adolescence might predict romantic outcomes – such as whether people get married or live with their partners, how many romantic partners they've had, and whether they're satisfied with their relationship – later in adulthood.
>
> Doctor Harden used data from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health to look at 1,659 same-sex sibling pairs who were followed from around the age of 16 to about the age of 29.
>
> Each sibling was classified as having an 'early' (younger than 15), 'on-time' (age 15 to 19), or 'late' (older than 19) first experience with sexual intercourse.
>
> Those who lost their virginity later on in life were more likely to have a well-paid job.
>
> They found, as expected, later timing of first sexual experience was associated with higher educational attainment and higher household income in adulthood when compared with the early and on-time groups.
>
> People who had a later first sexual experience were also less likely to be married and they had fewer romantic partners in adulthood.
>
> Among the participants who were married or living with a partner, later sexual initiation was linked with significantly lower levels of relationship dissatisfaction in adulthood.

This sounds a lot like the results from the previous studies that were featured in the guest

post by Mathetes. He linked to this UK Daily Mail article about one of the studies. Excerpt:

> "Courtship is a time for exploration and decision-making about the relationship, when partners assess compatibility, make commitments and build on emotional and physical intimacy."
>
> "The rapid entry into sexual relationships may, however, cut short this process, setting the stage for "sliding" rather than "deciding" to enter co-habiting unions."
>
> "Around a third of the men and women said they'd had sex within the first month of dating, while about 28 per cent waited at least six months, the Journal of Marriage and Family reported."
>
> "Analysis of the data clearly showed the women who had waited to have sex to be happier. And those who waited at least six months scored more highly in every category measured than those who got intimate within the first month. Even their sex lives were better."
>
> "The link was weaker for men. However, those who waited to get physically involved had fewer rows.

> […]'A strong sexual desire may thwart the development of other key ingredients of a healthy relationship such as commitment, mutual understanding or shared values,' the report said. 'Good sex is sometimes confused with love; some couples overlook problematic aspects of their relationship that ultimately matter more in the long run.'"

This is the kind of research that has informed my own decision to be chaste well into my 30s. I have a plan for my marriage and for my children. I know that they will need a stable environment to grow up in and guidance from a woman who knows how to be a good mother and wife. Not only will they need mentoring and nurturing, but a good example of how to love a man. So I need to choose carefully and not rushing into sex helps me to do that. It's not good for me to get involved in anything that will wreck my ability to give my wife and children the best me that I can give them. I think a lot of this self-control comes from having a definite plan for my life and marriage, and being careful to do what it takes to a achieve it. A lot of selfishness now would remove my ability to achieve my goals.

Related posts

- Study explains why college women abandon courtship for hook-ups
- New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially for women
- New study: marriage drops probability of child poverty by 82%
- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less
- How do prostitutes stay in business in an era of hook-up sex?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-

minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

William Lane Craig lectures on failure in the Christian life

October 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this audio on Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 web site.

Here is the MP3 file.

And here is my summary.

Intro:

- the topic of failure is not one that is often discussed by Christians
- failure #1: failure in the Christian life which is the result of sin
- failure #2: when a Christian is defeated while trying to serve God
- the consequences for failure #1 can be worse for the Christian
- the consequences for failure #2 can be worse for the world as whole
- how is it possible for a person to fail when they are obeying God? (#2)
- how can it be that God can call someone to a task then let them fail?
- failure is not persecution – persecution is normal for Christians
- failure is not trials – testing is normal for Christians to grow

Bill's failure:

- Bill had submitted all the coursework for his second doctoral degree
- but he had to pass a comprehensive oral examination
- he failed to pass the comprehensive exam
- Bill and Jan and his supporters had all prayed for him to pass
- how could God allow this to happen?

Solution to the problem:

- God's will for us may be that we fail at the things we try in life
- there are things that God may teach us through failure
- Bill learned that human relationships are more important than careers
- we need to realize that "success" in life is not worldly success
- true success is getting to know God well during your life
- and failure may be the best way to get to know God well
- it may even be possible to fail to know God while achieving a lot
- the real measure of a man is loving God and loving your fellow man

Practical:

- give thanks to God regardless of your circumstances
- try to learn from your failure
- never give up

The ending of Bill's story:

- Bill spent an entire year preparing for a re-take of his exam
- Bill was awarded his second doctorate "magna cum laude" (with great distinction)
- Bill learned that American students are not well prepared for exams
- the year of studying remedied his inadequate American education
- in retrospect, he is thankful for the failure – he learned more

If you like this, you should pick up Craig's book "Hard Questions, Real Answers", which has a chapter on this problem.

Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms

October 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life Site News explains the myth and the reality.

Excerpt:

> The day before hundreds of pro-life activists prepared to flood Planned Parenthood's offices with requests to schedule a mammogram, the organization issued a statement admitting that they do not offer the cancer screening procedure at any of their facilities.
>
> The calls were placed today as part of "Call Planned Parenthood to Schedule Your Imaginary Mammogram Day" – an event organized by pro-life activists in response to President Obama's statement during the presidential debate Tuesday that the abortion organization offers mammograms.
>
> "There are millions of women all across the country, who rely on Planned Parenthood for, not just contraceptive care, they rely on it for mammograms, for cervical cancer screenings," the president had said, repeating a claim he had made earlier this summer in an interview with *Glamour* magazine.
>
> But Obama isn't the only one.
>
> The notion that Planned Parenthood offers mammograms is one of the most enduring myths about the abortion giant. The claim is regularly trotted out by pro-abortion politicians eager to defend taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood, but wary of invoking its controversial status as the country's leading provider of abortions.

Not only does Planned Parenthood not provide mammograms, but the abortions they perform have been linked to the epidemic of breast cancer that is afflicting women today. Take a look at the following studies and see for yourself.

Life News reports on a recent study on repeat abortions and breast cancer.

Excerpt:

> A new study published in the *Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention* in February reported a very statistically significant increased risk of breast cancer for women with previous abortions as opposed to women who have never had one.
>
> The study, consisting of 1,351 women and led by researcher Ai-Ren Jiang, reported a statistically significant 1.52-fold elevation in risk for women with induced abortions and a "significant dose-response relationship between (the risk) for breast cancer and number of induced abortions," meaning the risk climbed with a higher number of previous abortions.

> For premenopausal women who have had abortions, the numbers were relatively small, and the observed 16% risk elevation was not statistically significant. However, for those with three or more abortions, the risk climbed to a statistically significant 1.55-fold elevation.
>
> "The results have revealed that induced abortion was related to increased risk of breast cancer. Premenopausal women who had ≥3 times of induced abortion were at increased crude odds ratio (OR) (2.41, 95%CI: 1.09-5.42) and adjusted-OR (1.55, 95%CI: 1.15-5.68)," they wrote. "Postmenopausal women with a previous induced abortion were at increased crude OR (2.04, 95%CI: 1.48-2.81) and adjusted-OR (1.82, 95%CI: 1.30-2.54), and there was a significant increase trend in OR with number of induced abortions (p for trend: 0.0001)."
>
> […][A] Chinese study in 1995 by L. Bu and colleagues, including Janet Daling of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, reported a statistically significant 4.5-fold elevated risk among women with previous induced abortions who developed breast cancer at or before age 35, compared to older women (who experienced a statistically significant 2.5-fold elevated risk).

But wait, that's just the most recent study, there are others, too.

Study 1: (September 2010)

> Based on the expression of estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2/neu (HER2), breast cancer is classified into several subtypes: luminal A (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2-), luminal B (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2+), HER2-overexpressing (ER-, PR-, and HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-, PR-, and HER2-). The aim of this case-control study is to determine reproductive factors associated with breast cancer subtypes in Chinese women. A total of 1,417 patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the First Affiliated Hospital, China Medical University, Shenyang, China between 2001 and 2009 and 1,587 matched controls without a prior breast cancer were enrolled.
>
> […]Postmenopause and spontaneous abortion were inversely associated with the risk of luminal tumors. By contrast, multiparity, family history of breast cancer and **induced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer**.

Study 2: (March 2010)

> OBJECTIVE: To explore the risk factors of breast cancer for better control and prevention of the malignancy.
>
> METHODS: The clinical data of 232 patients with pathologically established breast cancer were investigated in this 1:1 case-control study to identify the risk factors of breast cancer.
>
> RESULTS: The history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and **multiple abortions were the statistically significant risk factors of breast cancer**, while breast feeding was the protective factor.

> CONCLUSION: A history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and multiple abortions are all risk factors of breast cancer.

But wait, there's more.

Birth control pills

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9) and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed childbearing was a risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

So it turns out that Planned Parenthood does concern itself with breast cancer, just not in the way that Barack Obama seems to think. And the truth is that it is *pro-lifers* who are doing the most to protect women. Not just from the emotional pain of abortion, but from the increased threat of breast cancer. It's important to note that pro-lifers think that it is wrong to abort an unborn child just because it is is female, but Obama, the Democrats, and Planned Parenthood all disagree (see the links below). That's the real war on women.

Related posts on Planned Parenthood

- Hawaii Planned Parenthood caught counseling sex-selection abortions
- War on women: Obama and Democrats oppose ban on sex-selection abortion
- Live Action sting: Planned Parenthood counsels late-term sex-selection abortion
- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance

- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Funny: Mitt Romney jokes at charity fund-raising speech

October 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Everyone on Facebook insisted that I post this video, so here it is:

It’s laugh out loud funny, especially if you watched the debate earlier this week.

Israel reports first use of shoulder-fired surface-air-missiles by Gaza terrorists

October 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

SA-7 Grail with Russian Strela-2 missile
From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> In a new sign of the growing dangers facing Israel, security officials have confirmed that terrorists in the Gaza Strip for the first time have fired an anti-aircraft missile at an Israeli aircraft.
>
> Officials told the *Yedioth Ahronoth*daily that the weapon, apparently a Strela shoulder-launched surface-to-air missile, targeted an Israeli military helicopter over the Hamas-ruled territory last week but missed.
>
> Israel has long suspected Hamas and other terror groups in Gaza of having such weapons, and amid the chaos accompanying the downfall of the Gaddafi regime in Libya many went missing, and more are believed to have been smuggled into the Strip, via tunnels from the Sinai peninsula.
>
> Soviet-designed Strela-2 missiles (known by NATO as SA-7 Grail) have been used in various insurgencies around the world, including the mujahedeen's fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan, and the anti-coalition insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past decade.
>
> The threat posed by such missiles – also known as "man-portable air defense systems" (MANPADS) – has been cited for years by Israeli security officials in expressing concerns about the risks of Palestinian militants using them against passenger aircraft approaching of leaving Israel's main international airport. Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv is located less than five miles from the nearest

> territory the Palestinians want included in a future state.
>
> […]MANPAD' ease of operation, portability and relatively low cost make them a weapon of choice for terrorists wanting to target civilian or military aircraft.
>
> According to U.S. government data, more than 40 civilian aircraft have been hit by such weapons over the past four decades, resulting in some 800 deaths. Rebels used the weapons to shoot down a plane carrying the presidents of Burundi and Rwanda in 1994, an act that helped to trigger the genocide that claimed more than 800,000 lives.
>
> In one known al-Qaeda use, terrorists tried unsuccessfully to down an Israeli airliner shortly after it took off from an airport in Kenya in 2002.
>
> The reported use of a MANPAD by Gaza-based terrorists came during the same week as Hezbollah, the Shi'ite Iranian proxy in Lebanon, deployed a drone aircraft over Israel. The unmanned plane was shot down over an uninhabited area in southern Israel, and Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in a speech said it had been designed in Iran and assembled by his group in Lebanon.

The Strela-2 has a maximum range of about 5 KM. You can read more about them here. Keep in mind that Hezbollah has used Chinese missiles to sink Israeli surface vessels. The missiles were provided to the Syria-based terrorists by Iran.

Friday night spies: two more episodes of Secret Agent

October 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite espionage TV show is "Danger Man" with Patrick McGoohan, which later morphed into "Secret Agent". The show takes place during the 1960s, right at the height of the Cold War.

The actor, Patrick McGoohan, refused to perform romantic scenes on camera because of his religious beliefs. He turned down the roles of James Bond and Simon Templar because of these moral concerns (see below). And that dedication to moral excellence shines through in every frame of "Danger Man" and "Secret Agent".

Here's a description of Patrick McGoohan.

Excerpt:

> Main character John Drake worked for NATO as a special security agent and was free to travel the world working on special problems for free world governments. The story lines set an early precedent for non-violence, preferring to have Drake use his wits and his fists rather than a gun. McGoohan influenced the program from the start.
>
> The themes of morality and individuality fit in with his personal philosophy as well as his vision of what the character John Drake was supposed to be.
>
> As both a moral and opinionated man, McGoohan held strong views and was forceful about seeing that they were carried out. He had insisted at the very first meeting on the script for the first episode that the bedroom scene be cut out. In fact, he stipulated that romantic involvements would have to be eliminated if he were to play the role, and consequently none appeared in either this series or the 'Secret Agent' series that followed.

> […]It should come as no surprise that when McGoohan was offered the role as the first James Bond, he turned it down – several times – as being incompatible with the type of role he wanted to play. He says it was a decision he has never regretted.

> […]As an actor, McGoohan had now carved out a voice all his own…. John Drake was a loner, an individual, and a moral character.

From the UK Telegraph:

> [H]e was offered the roles of James Bond and Simon Templar (The Saint). He turned both down.
>
> He once recalled: "When we started Danger Man the producer wanted me to carry a gun and to have an affair with a different girl each week. I refused. I am

> not against romance on television, but sex is the antithesis of romance. Television is a gargantuan master that all sorts of people watch at all sorts of time, and it has a moral obligation towards its audience."

Here's tonight's first episode: **The Mirror's New**

Description:

> A British diplomat in Paris takes home a top secret file and then goes missing for a day, missing an important meeting. He can't seem to remember what happened during that missing day. Drake is sent to France to investigate.

IMDB mean rating: [8.9/10]

IMDB median rating: [9/10]

TV Guide rating: [9.1/10]

Here's tonight's second episode: **Parallel Lines Sometimes Meet**

Description:

> When two nuclear scientists – one Western and one Soviet – go missing, it is assumed they have defected. Drake is sent to the West Indies to investigate.

IMDB mean rating: [9.0/10]

IMDB median rating: [9/10]

TV Guide rating: [9.2/10]

Happy Friday!

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- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
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- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
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- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
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- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
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- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours

October 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> **Within 24 hours of the deadly attack, the CIA station chief in Libya reported to Washington that there were eyewitness reports that the attack was carried out by militants, officials told The Associated Press. But for days, the Obama administration blamed it on an out-of-control demonstration over an American-made video ridiculing Islam's Prophet Muhammad.**
>
> […][T]he issue has given Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney an opportunity to question Obama on foreign policy and national security, two areas that have received little attention in an election dominated by the U.S. economy. Obama's signature national security accomplishment is the military's killing of terrorist leader Osama bin Laden.
>
> Ryan was teeing up the issue for Monday's presidential debate on foreign policy.
>
> "I'm excited we're going to have a chance to talk about that on Monday," Ryan said.
>
> **Obama, speaking Thursday on Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," insisted that information was shared with the American people as it came in.**

I am looking forward to that debate on foreign policy, this Monday night.

Previously, I blogged about how the State Department account of the events also contradicted the Obama administration's account, which made Muslims look like innocent victims of offensive free speech by Americans. The Obama campaign is not doing too well in its fundraising, so they can ill afford to offend one of their most-favored constituencies by making them look like the bad guys.

Related posts

- Israel reports first use of shoulder-fired surface-air-missiles by Gaza terrorists
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- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack
- UK Independent: "America 'was warned of embassy attack but did nothing'"
- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser

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- Iraq plunges into chaos as U.S. troops withdraw
- Iran laughs as Obama pleads for return of unmanned drone

Conservative government reforms public sector pensions in Canada

October 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper (evil!)
From the National Post.

Excerpt:

> Finance Minister Jim Flaherty says planned changes to the pension plan for members of Parliament won't take effect until after the next election, noting it would not be fair to change the rules during the current term.
>
> […]The object, the finance minister says, is for members of parliament and public servants to contribute 50% of the cost of their pensions.
>
> Treasury Board President Tony Clement says changes to the MP pension plan will see them paying almost four times more in contributions.
>
> He says MP contributions will jump to about $39,000 from the present level of about $11,000 and the bill would delay retirement age for a full pension to 65 from the present 55.
>
> The changes, for a while at least, will create a two-tier system — with some existing MPs still being able to collect pension benefits at age 55. After the next election, all new MPs who qualify for the plan will have to wait until they are 65 before getting full pension benefits.
>
> It was also expected that the bill would include cost-saving measures to change the federal employee pension plan so that new workers who join the public

> service starting in 2013 will see the normal age of their retirement raised to 65 from 60.
>
> Clement says the changes will move public service and MP pension contributions to a 50-50 split, similar to private sector plans.
>
> He says the changes will save taxpayers $2.6-billion over five years.

The bill passed the House of Commons today, and is on its way to the Conservative-controlled Senate. Harper will sign it, and then drink a chalice brim-full with the tears of his pathetic socialist enemies, as is his custom since gaining the majority in 2011.

Also, Conservative Party MP Pierre Poilievre (Nepean-Carleton = evil!) has been pushing the right of workers not to have to join a union, nor to have to pay union dues against their will:

> While chieftains at the government's largest union celebrated a separatist victory in Quebec on Wednesday, a Conservative MP said he will push for legislation to allow workers to opt out of paying dues.
>
> Ottawa MP Pierre Poilievre says by supporting the Parti Quebecois and Quebec Solidaire and other activities, the NDP-friendly Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) is not acting in the interests of the majority of its 172,000 members.
>
> Poilievre's riding is home to thousands of government workers – some of whom have expressed their disbelief to him over the use of dues to fund political and militant activity, including supporting student protesters in Montreal.
>
> He says he will advocate for passage of a private member's bill in Parliament that would force unions to open their books to learn how dues are spent.
>
> And while he is a parliamentary secretary and can't introduce private bills, he will encourage and help others draft legislation that would allow union members the choice of paying dues.
>
> "It stands to reason that the law should not force workers against their will to pay union dues to radical causes of PSAC union bosses," he said.
>
> "Workers should have the right to know how their union dues are spent and if they don't like what they see, the freedom to opt out of paying them."

Previously, the evil Harper banned per-vote subsidies for political parties:

> The Conservatives' budget bill tabled Tuesday will end taxpayer-funded subsidies for federal political parties, a proposal that helped spark the 2008 coalition crisis but was promised again by the Tories in the spring election campaign.
>
> […]The 2011 Tory election platform cited $27.4 million as the cost to the taxpayer last year of the current $2 per vote subsidy.
>
> […]The other parties generally, but the Bloc Québécois in particular, do not match the Conservatives' ability to fundraise from grassroots party members. An end to the party subsidies puts parties that are not effective at grassroots

> fundraising at a major financial disadvantage.
>
> Returns filed with Elections Canada for 2010 show the Conservative party raising $17.4 million from some 95,000 donors. Other parties were far behind: the Liberals raised approximately $6.4 million from over 32,000 donors, while the NDP raised $4.3 million from just under 23,000 donors. The Bloc Québécois, then the third-largest party in the House of Commons, raised only $640,000 on its own from fewer than 6,000 donors.

And the evil Harper planned to banning loans to political parties from unions:

> The Harper government's plan to ban corporate and union loans to political parties will further tighten a revenue-raising vise on the opposition parties. The Liberal Party will be especially squeezed, as it prepares for a leadership race in 2013.
>
> The goal of the legislation, which was introduced into the House Wednesday by Democratic Reform Minister Tim Uppal, is "to reduce the potential for undue influence of wealthy interests in the political process," according a government release.
>
> But the effect could be to further widen the gap between the Tories' revenue-raising efforts and those of other parties, who badly trail in total campaign contributions from individual donors.
>
> […]Individuals will still be allowed to lend money, but their combined loans and donations will not be allowed to exceed the $1,100 annual contribution limit.
>
> Banks and other accredited financial institutions will be able to lend money to parties and candidates, and political parties can lend money to constituency associations or candidates. But the terms must be publicly disclosed, including the amount, interest rate and the names of the lenders and guarantors, allowing other parties and the media to know who is in hock to whom and for how much.

Political contributions from unions are already banned.

We don't see that level of aggression down here, do we? Canada even requires photo ID for voting, so there is no voter fraud. And they are reforming their immigration and welfare programs to eliminate fraud there, too. Unreal. It's like they actually think that being conservative means… being conservative. Instead of kow-towing to the leftist media at cocktail parties.

It seems like Canada is embracing the free enterprise system at a time when we are turning our backs on it. And they've been reaping the benefits: smaller deficits, less spending and lower unemployment. We will get our chance in November to try and catch up to their financial success if we can kick our socialist President out.

Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours

October 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBS News. (H/T Bad Blue)

Excerpt:

> The closer we get to the election, the harder Republicans in Congress are pushing for answers to a big question: What really happened in the attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya last month that killed the U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans?
>
> **Some lawmakers are asking why U.S. military help from outside Libya didn't arrive as terrorists battered more than 30 Americans over the course of more than seven hours. The assault was launched by an armed mob of dozens that torched buildings and used rocket propelled grenades, mortars and AK-47 rifles.**
>
> **CBS News has been told that, hours after the attack began, an unmanned Predator drone was sent over the U.S. mission in Benghazi, and that the drone and other reconnaissance aircraft apparently observed the final hours of the protracted battle.**
>
> The State Department, White House and Pentagon declined to say what military options were available. A White House official told CBS News that, at the start of the attack, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Martin Dempsey and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta "looked at available options, and the ones we exercised had our military forces arrive in less than 24 hours, well ahead of timelines laid out in established policies."
>
> But it was too late to help the Americans in Benghazi. The ambassador and three others were dead.

According to the CI operatives in the video above, including a former station chief, the Situation Room in the White House would have been immediately informed of the attack. They could have ordered an air strike to push the attack back. They could have ordered the drone to open fire. But they did nothing. This is not surprising given the other actions of the administration to undermine our national security.

But why did they do nothing? Could it be that the Obama administration was afraid of the backlash from the terrorists? Could it be that they were afraid of the perception that killing Bin Laden did nothing to stop Al Qaida? Could it be that they knew immediately that it was weakness and disarmament in Benghazi that had provoked the evil terrorists to attack? Could it be that this terrorist attack undermined their "Arab Spring"?

It will be interesting to see much of this comes up in the foreign policy debate tomorrow

(Monday) night.

Related posts

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Pseudogenes: how Darwinian mythology negatively impacts the progress of science

October 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest discovery that falsifies Darwinian religion wasn't without cost. Our search for cures for cancer was negatively impacted by more of their prejudices about pseudogenes.

Uncommon Descent explains the new discovery and why Darwinians opposed it. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Because they are generally noncoding and thus considered nonfunctional and unimportant, pseudogenes have long been neglected. Recent advances have established that the DNA of a pseudogene, the RNA transcribed from a pseudogene, or the protein translated from a pseudogene can have multiple, diverse functions and that these functions can affect not only their parental genes but also unrelated genes. Therefore, pseudogenes have emerged as a previously unappreciated class of sophisticated modulators of gene expression, with a multifaceted involvement in the pathogenesis of human cancer.

And the paper concludes:

> The function of the great fraction of the human genome (98%) composed of sequences that do not encode proteins remains a mystery. Pseudogenes are technically part of this fraction, and the examples described here clearly demonstrate that they perform a broad and multifaceted spectrum of activities in human cancer. Therefore, the name pseudogenes, which underlies their close sequence similarity with parental counter-parts, should not imply a negative connotation. They might be "pseudo" genes because they do not encode a protein or because they encode a protein that does not function in the same way as that encoded by their cognate genes. Nonetheless, they are functionally disabled but can perform different functions than their parental gene counterparts.

Here are a few of the more recent errors made by religious Darwinians:

- Nature publishes discovery of fossil with complex brain dated just after the Cambrian explosion
- New peer-reviewed paper in Nature falsifies Darwinian junk DNA prediction
- Are Darwinists right to say that the appendix has no useful functions?
- New study: the early Earth's atmosphere contained oxygen

Why do these people believe weird things in the absence of evidence, only to have their speculations falsified when the gaps in our knowledge are closed by scientific progress?

Well, evidence doesn't matter to people who are motivated by naturalistic faith. Like belief in a flat-Earth, the delusion of naturalism is not accountable to scientific evidence. They believe what they want to believe. It's not up for debate. For some people like Richard Dawkins, a prior lifestyle commitment makes theism (and the moral law!) an impossibility *a priori*. So there is at the root of atheism a fundamentalist close-mindedness that leads to intellectual dishonesty – not just deceiving others but deceiving themselves. They cannot admit to what reason and evidence is telling them. And it really does affect our progress in many areas, such as cancer research.

The war between atheism (anti-rational hedonism) and science is everywhere, across many scientific disciplines. Science makes discoveries about the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the usefulness of non-coding DNA, pseudogenes, etc. Instead of accepting what science says and living consistently with science, the naturalist turns to speculations about something coming from nothing, multiverses, aliens, "junk" DNA and other irrational nonsense. The truth of the matter is that atheists will literally believe *anything* no matter how irrational it is.

Traditional marriage is a threat to the values of single women

October 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stuart Schneiderman takes a closer look at view of marriage among single women today.

Excerpt:

> You probably haven't heard of Nicole Rodgers, editor a gender-bending feminist website called Role/Reboot.
>
> […]While Democratic politicos and pundits are happy to pay lip service to Mitt Romney's sterling personal character and exemplary private life, behind the scenes many of them are surely thinking what Nicole Rodgers is thinking, namely that Romney's life represents a counterrevolutionary, even a reactionary force in American cultural politics.
>
> Rodgers got herself totally lathered up because Romney dared to suggest, at the last presidential debate, that there would be less gun violence if there were fewer illegitimate births.
>
> In truth, the point is not even controversial. Everyone but Nicole Rodgers knows that children who are brought up in families that look like the Romney family do much, much better in life than children who are brought up in any other family configuration.

Here's the research to back up his assertion about single motherhood vs marriage, but that's not what I am interested in. I am interested in why feminists are opposed to traditional marriage and why they fear Romney's positive example of marriage with 5 children. Do feminists really want traditional marriage at all? It depends on what you mean by marriage.

This reminds me of a fascinating article on Dalrock's blog in which he looks at the changing definition of marriage, which he calls the "debasement" of marriage. This is a must-read post.

Excerpt:

> Feminists and their enablers have slowly shaved off the value of marriage for men. Marriage for men no longer means:
>
> - Being the legally and socially recognized head of the household.
> - An expectation of regular sex.
> - Legal rights to children.
> - Lifetime commitment.

He also adds the elimination of the preservation chastity and the embrace of the hook-up culture on campus to the list, so that there are 5 debasements to marriage in total. Men

liked the original version of marriage without the debasements. Do they like the new debased version as much?

It's very important, especially for Christians, to understand that many women who say that they want marriage do not really want what marriage has always been. They want to live happily ever after. What this means is not what traditional marriage means. Traditional marriage means preparing for marriage by making good decisions – like premarital chastity. It means a separation of roles where each side performs roles that are of value to the other. Today, the majority of single women today have been influenced by feminism and they reject that view of marriage. They have been taught that marriage means happiness and full autonomy for the woman at the expense of men and children. They have been taught that there is no need to prepare for marriage with good decisions like chastity, and no need to prefer men who are good leaders, providers and protectors in the home. The moral dimension of marriage – the obligations and virtues – have been obliterated.

The majority of single women also vote for policies that will enable this new definition of marriage: social programs that make husbands dispensable, welfare subsidies for single mothers, early sex education to turn young men away from chastity and fidelity, co-ed education, recognition of cohabitation as marriage, no-fault divorce, punitive anti-male divorce courts, taxpayer-funding of contraceptives, taxpayer-funding of abortions, taxpayer-funding of day care, affirmative action in education, affirmative action in employment decisions, discrimination against male teachers in schools, and so on. The goal of all of this is to eliminate male leadership, men as main providers, and men as protectors. Many single women who choose poorly do not even want other women who prefer traditional men and traditional marriage to succeed, which is why they vote Democrat in order to tax, regulate and undermine the marriages of these more responsible married women.

Men start off chaste. We start off wanting romantic love and life-long traditional marriage. But it is drummed out of us because of a society in which feminist notions of recreational sex without consequences are on us through taxes, policies, schools and culture. Men learn that recreational sex is "normal" at very young ages, in schools that are dominated by female teachers and female administrators. The majority of these women are feminists who value careers first, and who seek to undermine traditional marriage and chastity. More and more men are being raised fatherless so there is no resistance from husband-fathers (who know better!) in the home. The result is a generation of men who trained to expect the sexual ethics of Sandra Fluke: government-funded promiscuity, irresponsibility, big government socialism and selfishness. Sandra Fluke doesn't want marriage, and neither do single women like her who mostly vote Democrat.

Related posts

- New study: staying a virgin longer enables more satisfying relationships
- Study explains why college women abandon courtship for hook-ups
- New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially

for women
- New study: marriage drops probability of child poverty by 82%
- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less
- How do prostitutes stay in business in an era of hook-up sex?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

New study: Earth was warmer 1000 years ago, during Medieval Warming Period

October 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

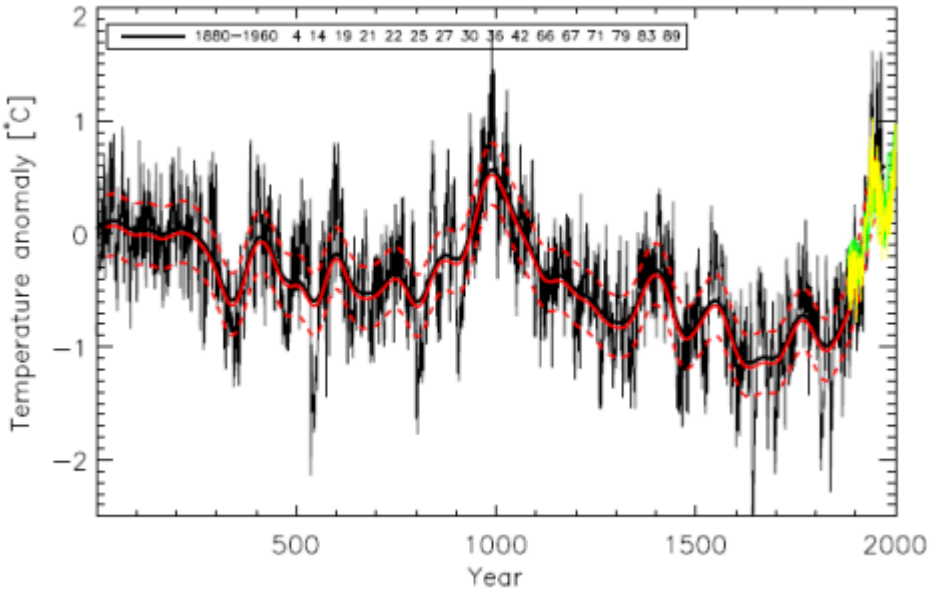

Temperatures were higher 1000 years ago

Watts Up With That? reports on another new paper that falsifies global warming. (H/T Doug Ross Journal)

Excerpt:

> A new paper, looking back at the climate of the past two thousand years, published in the journal "Climate of the Past," will either cause something of a stir, or provide confirmation of what some regard as having already emerged from the peer-reviewed scientific literature. The title of the paper is, "The extra-tropical Northern Hemisphere temperature in the last two millennia: reconstructions of low-frequency variability," by B Christiansen of the Danish Meteorological Institute and F C Ljungqvist of Stockholm University.
>
> […]This new analysis shows that the warming we have seen in the late-20th century is not unprecedented, as can be seen in figure 5 (from the paper). Seen in the reconstruction is a well-defined peak of temperature between 950–1050 AD. They also find that the first millennium is warmer than the second.

The graph above is from the paper (Fig. 5). You can get the full PDF of the paper.

Related posts

- New study: there has been no global warming since 1997
- Global warming: 2000 new record low temperatures in October
- New study: global warming skeptics know more about science than alarmists
- New study finds that cosmic rays and the sun cause global warming

- Drowning polar bears scientist being investigated for misconduct
- NASA data shows that atmosphere will trap far less heat than UN predicted
- Global warmist Phil Jones admits there’s been no global warming since 1995
- Chairman of UN’s IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now

In tonight’s debate, Romney must go after Obama about the Benghazi cover-up

October 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mitt Romney must go after Obama on the Benghazi cover-up in tonight’s foreign policy debate.

To prep you for the debate, here’s a review of what we know about the Benghazi cover-up from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> America’s slain ambassador in Libya repeatedly sought security which went unheeded, new documents show. The CIA, meanwhile, told Washington within 24 hours that the Benghazi attack was terrorism. So where was our president?
>
> The sorry answer is that it’s starting to look as though he and his team knew all along that the attack in Libya was a terrorism from the start.
>
> That hasn’t been what he’s presented to the public. But instead of owning up to it, the White House has perpetrated the red herring that a old YouTube video depicting Islam in a bad light was the real reason, because calling terrorism terrorism would reveal their their Middle East policy failure.
>
> Friday, the evidence piled up. The New York Times reported that 166 pages of internal State Department documents released by GOP congressmen showed that now-murdered Ambassador Christopher Stevens and other U.S. officials had repeatedly warned that security was deteriorating in Benghazi and they pleaded for additional protection. The Libyan government, he wrote on Sept. 11, was “too weak to keep the country secured.” Stevens’ alarms went ignored.

The Benghazi consulate was actually attacked a couple of times before the Sept. 11 attack. Security was not improved after the first two attacks.

More:

> After Stevens’s brutal death that night, the CIA station chief in Libya reported to Washington within 24 hours that the attack was carried out by terrorists, not spontaneous protestors, according to U.S. officials who told the Associated Press.
>
> That isn’t what the Obama administration spent five weeks telling the American people.
>
> The White House attempted ferociously to convince U.S. voters that the lethal Sept. 11 attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi was nothing more than a spontaneous demonstration that got out of hand and as such, something the government could not control.

More details in this Wall Street Journal article, which discusses the conflicting timelines

and the open questions.

It concludes with this:

> In Tuesday night's debate with Mitt Romney, President Obama claimed to have "told" the American people that Benghazi was a terror attack the very next day, Sept. 12, when speaking from the Rose Garden. The assertion was untrue, despite moderator Candy Crowley's ruling to the contrary. The president had only spoken generally of terror attacks, and Benghazi would have been understood to fall under that umbrella only if it had been acknowledged as a terror attack.
>
> On Sept. 12, that was not the administration's line. Not until his afternoon appearance on "The View" on Sept. 25—the "two weeks" of delay that Mr. Romney alluded to in the debate—did the president offer Americans an explanation of Benghazi that made no reference to a protest over a video. The YouTube connection had figured prominently in his Benghazi pronouncements as late as Mr. Obama's Sept. 20 appearance on Univision, and even in his address to the United Nations General Assembly on the morning of Sept. 25.

You can watch the video above, which features clips of Obama and his administration claiming that the the attack was caused by a protest over a Youtube video, despite the reports from the CIA and the State Department to the contrary. Perhaps Obama was not aware of the threat because he was not attending his Presidential Daily Briefings, but was instead out campaigning in Las Vegas?

It would be nice if Romney brought up questions about why America was involved in Egypt and Libya in tonight's debate. I am more hawkish than most, and I would not have gone into Egypt and Libya at all. If we are going in anywhere, it should be Syria. Interfering in Egypt and Libya could only help our enemies in Al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood. I would also like to see Romney attack Obama about his decisions to increase foreign aid to countries run by people who support us, as well as his weak response to previous terrorist attacks. I would just like Obama to explain what his foreign policy is, and explain his plan for dealing with Iran and China, in particular.

Unfortunately, it looks as though we will have an even more biased moderator than Martha Raddatz and Candy Crowley put together.

Here are the details of the debate tonight:

> **Third presidential candidates' debate between Obama, Romney**
>
> - Topic: Foreign policy
> - Date: Monday, Oct. 22
> - Time: 9 – 10:30 p.m. EDT
> - Location: Lynn University, Boca Raton, Fla.
> - Moderator: Bob Schieffer, chief Washington correspondent, CBS News, and moderator, "Face the Nation"
> - Format: "The format for the debate will be identical to the first presidential

> debate and will focus on foreign policy."

Be sure and tune in, or watch it via streaming at Fox News Live.

Related posts

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New study finds that egalitarian marriage doesn't make women happier

October 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Elusive Wapiti writes about in this blog post.

Excerpt:

> Norwegian researchers confirm and extend Brad Wilcox and Steven Nock's research suggesting that egalitarianism sets couples up to fail:
>
> "What we've seen is that sharing equal responsibility for work in the home doesn't necessarily contribute to contentment," said Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled "Equality in the Home".
>
> The lack of correlation between equality at home and quality of life was surprising, the researcher said. "One would think that break-ups would occur more often in families with less equality at home, but our statistics show the opposite," he said.
>
> The figures clearly show that "the more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," he went on. The reasons, Mr Hansen said, lay only partially with the chores themselves. "Maybe it's sometimes seen as a good thing to have very clear roles with lots of clarity … where one person is not stepping on the other's toes," he suggested. "There could be less quarrels, since you can easily get into squabbles if both have the same roles and one has the feeling that the other is not pulling his or her own weight."

See, Wilcox's view is this:

> The companionate theory of marriage suggests that egalitarianism in practice and belief leads to higher marital quality for wives and higher levels of positive emotion work on the part of husbands. Our analysis of women's marital quality and men's marital emotion work provides little evidence in support of this theory. Rather, in examining women's marital quality and men's emotional investments in marriage, we find that dyadic commitment to institutional ideals about marriage and women's contentment with the division of household tasks are more critical. We also show that men's marital emotion work is a very important determinant of women's marital quality. We conclude by noting that her marriage is happiest when it combines elements of the new and old: that is, gender equity and normative commitment to the institution of marriage.

His full study from 2006 is here.

And more again from Elusive Wapiti's post about the new Norwegian study:

> Men's emotion work (and women's assessments of that work) is the most crucial determinant of women's marital quality. It is more important than patterns of

> household labor, perceptions of housework equity, female labor force participation, childbearing, education and a host of other traditional predictors of global marital quality. This finding suggests that the functions, character, and stability of contemporary marriages are intimately tied to [women's] emotional well-being.

> …our findings suggest that increased departures from a male-breadwinning/female-homemaking model may also account for declines in marital quality, insofar as men and women continue to tacitly value gendered patterns of behavior in marriage. Specifically, we find that the gendered character of marriage seems to remain sufficiently powerful as a tacit ideal among women to impact women's marital quality, even apart from the effects of the continuing mismatch between female gender role attitudes and male practices.

> [W]omen are not happier in marriages marked by egalitarian practices and beliefs…For the most part, marriages that are more egalitarian in belief and practice are not marked by higher levels of men's positive emotion work [EW: love, affection, and understanding] or by women's happiness with such emotion work…women who are more egalitarian-minded and more upset with the division of household labor receive lower levels of positive emotion work from their husbands, perhaps because they are more likely to initiate conflict with their husbands. Thus, rising expectations among women for marital equality may also have the unintended effect of lowering investments in marital emotion work on the part of men. [N]o measure of egalitarianism in practice or belief is associated with higher levels of men spending quality time with their wives. Indeed, in keeping with the gender model of marriage, wives' gender egalitarianism and work outside of the home leads to less positive emotion work on the part of husbands.

> Instead, we find modest evidence that wives' gender traditionalism is independently related to higher levels of men's positive emotion work in marriage. We also find evidence that homemaking wives report greater happiness with their husband's emotion work, and may be more likely to receive such work from their husbands. In other words, adherence to traditional beliefs and practices regarding gender seems to be tied not only to global marital happiness but also – surprisingly enough – to expressive patterns of marriage.

> [S]hared church attendance and normative support for the institution of marriage are associated with higher levels of women's marital happiness. Thus, declines in religious attendance over the past four decades (Steensland, Park, Regnerus, Robinson, Wilcox and Woodberry 2000), along with the liberalization of attitudes to divorce and extramarital sex (Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001), may also account for recent shifts in marital quality insofar as they reduce the social and

> normative supports that foster higher investments in marriage.

> Wives who share high levels of church attendance are more likely to report happiness with their husband's emotion work in marriage. Moreover, wives who share a normative commitment to marriage with their husbands are more likely to report happiness with the emotion work done by their husbands…socially conservative practices and (possibly) beliefs appear to be linked to lower expectations of marital emotion work on the part of women. But it is also possible that they are associated with more expressive marriages. In any case, women who share a commitment to the institution of marriage with their husbands express greater happiness. [2]

He has an interesting graph there of what women want from marriage, and what men want. Who knew that women wanted gardening?

In any case, I really do think that this is important to understand, because I see a lot of pastors and evangelical leaders embracing egalitarianism, because they can't make the case for complementarianism using anything except the Bible. Well, the Bible does support complementarianism. But when you are debating it with an egalitarian, it helps to have the evidence.

Related posts

- New study: higher risk of divorce when men do housework
- New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially for women
- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?

Romney narrowly wins, but refuses to attack Obama on Benghazi cover-up

October 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Re-cap from the Palm Beach Post.

Excerpt:

> Romney also repeated his claim that Obama had gone on an "apology tour" to the Arab world when he took office, saying foreign leaders saw it as an act of weakness.
>
> "Nothing Gov. Romney just said is true, starting with this notion of me apologizing," Obama said, calling Romney's claim "the biggest whopper of the campaign."
>
> Romney stood by his assertion.
>
> "Mr. President, the reason I call it an apology tour is because you went to the Middle East and you flew to Egypt and to Saudi Arabia and to Turkey and Iraq. And by the way, you skipped Israel, our closest friend in the region but you went to the other nations," Romney said.
>
> "And by the way, they noticed that you skipped Israel. And then in those nations, and on Arabic TV, you said that America had been dismissive and derisive. You said that on occasion America had dictated to other nations. Mr. President, America has not dictated to other nations. We have freed other nations from dictators."

Here's a clip of that speech:

Now here's an example of Obama from NBC News:

> **Romney:** "Our Navy is smaller now than at any time since 1917. The Navy said they needed 313 ships to carry out their mission. We're now at under 285…We're headed down to the low 200s if we go through a sequestration. That's unacceptable to me."
>
> **Obama:** "I think Governor Romney maybe hasn't spent enough time looking at how our military works.
>
> "You mentioned the Navy, for example, and that we have fewer ships than we did in 1916. Well, Governor, we also have fewer horses and bayonets, because the nature of our military's changed. We have these things called aircraft carriers, where planes land on them. We have these ships that go underwater, nuclear submarines."

Here's the clip of that speech:

I don't think that this arrogant tone he adopted is going to work on women and

independents.

Moderate Chris Wallace's opinion of the debate:

I don't have much to say about this debate. To me, if Romney wanted to win, he would have gone after Obama on Benghazi, hammer and tongs. I'm disappointed with Romney's weakness, but I think that there was enough there for Romney to eke out a narrow victory. I think that Romney thinks that he has it in the bag, and just doesn't want to come off as patronizing like Obama did.

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12-year-old girl shoots home intruder in the shoulder with legally owned firearm

October 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Left-wing ABC News reports.

Full text:

> Kendra St. Clair, 12, was at home alone in Oklahoma, when loud banging began on the door to her family's home. Soon, the glass shattered and an intruder had entered.
>
> "I was scared and I didn't know what to do next," Kendra told ABC News.
>
> Petrified, she called her mom Debra.
>
> "I said Kendra get the gun and go get in my closet now. And call 911."
>
> The young 6th grader followed her mom's orders to the tee.
>
> The 911 tapes tell the story as it unfolded.
>
> Kendra: "I'm at my house. I'm in my closet. And I ran away from (inaudible) someone's trying to get into my house and I do not know who they are." Dispatcher: "Ok I have a deputy en route, I want you to stay on the phone with me. Ok?" Kendra: "Ok. Please. I think they are in the house."
>
> Kendra had taken shelter in a closet, clutching her mother's .40 caliber glock gun while she listened to the intruder make his way around her home.
>
> Kendra: "Please help me. Please." Dispatcher: "Alright, alright. I understand. Do you still have your mom's gun there?" Kendra: "Yes I do. I have it in my hand."
>
> Her fear intensified to sheer terror, when she saw the knob of the closet door beginning to turn.
>
> At that point, that for the first time in her life, Kendra fired a gun.
>
> Police said the bullet traveled straight through the closet door and struck 32-year-old Stacey Jones in the shoulder, scaring him out of the house.
>
> They arrested him a few blocks away and charged Jones with first degree burglary.
>
> "When I had the gun, I didn't think I was actually going to have to shoot somebody," the 6th grader recalled. "I think it's going to change me a whole lot, knowing that I can hold my head up high and nothing can hurt me anymore."
>
> Her mother Debra agrees.
>
> "I think that she did something that most grown-ups wouldn't be able to do in a frightening situation. I think she handled herself amazingly."
>
> Jones was treated at the hospital and released into the custody of authorities. Police said he has not yet entered a plea but that bond has been set for

> $250,000.

My fear about Barack Obama is that if he gets a second term, then he will ban private ownership of handguns. And then stories like this will end in tragedy for the law-abiding people. Banning guns is an inherently pro-criminal policy. And when you read stories like this, it's easy to see why.

Related posts

- Police threatened to charge man who defended his wife with attempted murder
- Couple arrested for using legally-owned gun to defend home from burglars
- Armed bystander stops stabbing outside school
- Obama campaign contributor and gun control advocate ran Fast and Furious
- If you defend your home from armed intruders in the UK, you get arrested
- UK family arrested for defending their home from burglar
- Police warn UK woman for scaring away burglars with kitchen knife
- 61-year-old British man convicted for cutting up fruit with a Swiss Army knife
- Could tougher gun control laws lower the violent crime rate?
- Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home
- Crime rates in Chicago and DC drop after gun control laws are struck down
- Do gun control laws cause crime rates to go down?
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple victim shootings?
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Do guns reduce crime? Watch this debate and hear both sides
- Liberal MSNBC says that more legal firearm ownership reduces crime rates
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Formal debate on gun control featuring John Lott and Gary Kleck
- Tom Sowell on gun control and judicial activism
- Grandmother jailed for five years for owning family heirloom handgun
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple-victim public shootings in Europe?
- Understanding how concealed carry laws save lives
- Why do people favor legal private ownership and concealed carry of handguns?

Tufts University joins Vanderbilt in banning Christian clubs on campus

October 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports.

Excerpt:

> Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts has banned a Christian group from campus because the group requires student leaders to adhere to "basic biblical truths of Christianity." The decision to ban the group, called the Tufts Christian Fellowship, was made by officials from the university's student government, specifically the Tufts Community Union Judiciary.
>
> The ban means the group "will lose the right to use the Tufts name in its title or at any activities, schedule events or reserve university space through the Office for Campus Life," according to the *Tufts Daily*. Additionally, Tufts Christian Fellowship will be unable to receive money from a pool that students are required to pay into and that is specifically set aside for student groups.
>
> […]"The group had been operating in a state of suspended recognition after the Judiciary found that the group's constitution excluded students from applying to leadership positions based on their beliefs. The clauses in question require that anyTCF member who wishes to apply for a leadership role must adhere to a series of tenets called a Basis of Faith, or eight 'basic Biblical truths of Christianity.'

Here's the previous story on Vanderbilt University. Vanderbilt has a Muslim student group, and I assume that Tufts will as well. These rules are never applied to anyone but Christians, Jews, and conservatives of all stripes.

Obama supports late-term abortions, born-alive abortions and sex-selection abortions

October 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about exposing Obama's abortion record

First, late-term abortions, as reported by the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> The Washington Post reports that President Obama is running his reelection campaign as a "culture warrior," trying to cast his opponents as extremists on such issues as abortion in the case of rape and requiring religious institutions to pay for contraception. But could Obama's own extremism on abortion come back to bite him?
>
> During a 2003 press conference, Barack Obama indicated that he thought abortion should be legal in all situations, even late in pregnancy:
>
> OBAMA: "I am pro-choice."
>
> REPORTER: "In all situations including the late term thing?"
>
> OBAMA: "I am pro-choice. I believe that women make responsible choices and they know better than anybody the tragedy of a difficult pregnancy and I don't think that it's the government's role to meddle in that choice."
>
> In another interview, Obama said: "I voted no on the late-term abortion ban, not because I don't recognize that these are painful issues but because I trust women to make these decisions."

And second, on abortions where the baby is born alive (infanticide):

> When Obama opposed a bill to stop infanticide as a member of the Illinois legislature, he said he did so because it reportedly contained language that would have contravened the Roe v. Wade decision. However, documents uncovered during the 2008 election show Obama has misrepresented his position.
>
> Obama, as a member of the Illinois Senate, opposed a state version of the federal Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, a measure that would make sure babies who survive abortions are given proper medical care.
>
> It also protected babies who were "aborted" through a purposeful premature birth and left to die afterwards.
>
> On the federal level, pro-abortion groups withdrew their opposition to the bill after a section was added making sure it did not affect the status of legal abortions in the United States. Ultimately, the bill was approved on a unanimous voice vote with even leading pro-abortion lawmakers like Hillary Clinton and John Kerry backing it.

And finally, Obama very likely supports sex-selection abortions.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama appears to oppose the ban on sex-selection abortions that the House of Representatives debated yesterday and will be voting on today.
>
> ABC News White House correspondent Jake Tapper posted a new report indicating President Obama opposes the bill to prohibit performing or coercing abortions to eliminate unborn babies of an undesired sex. Tapper raised the question at Wednesday's White House press briefing, but did not receive a respond to his question about Obama's position.
>
> […]White House deputy press secretary Jamie Smith told him in a statement: "The Administration opposes gender discrimination in all forms, but the end result of this legislation would be to subject doctors to criminal prosecution if they fail to determine the motivations behind a very personal and private decision. The government should not intrude in medical decisions or private family matters in this way."
>
> National Right to Life legislative director Douglas Johnson was upset to learn Obama opposes the common-sense bill, telling LifeNews: "It is appalling, but not surprising, that President Obama now stands with the pro-abortion political committees and his Hollywood donors, rather than with the coerced women, and their unborn daughters, who are victimized in sex-selection abortions."

The Democrat Party also supports sex-selection abortions. Their view is that the mere fact that an unborn child is female is sufficient reason to kill that child. Is that pro-

women? What could be more discriminatory and anti-women than that?

If God wanted us to believe in him, why doesn't he give us more evidence?

October 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard someone say that if God existed, he would give us more evidence? This is called the "hiddenness of God" argument. It's also known as the argument from "rational non-belief".

Basically the argument is something like this:

1. God is all powerful
2. God is all loving
3. God wants all people to know about him
4. Some people don't know about him
5. Therefore, there is no God.

You may hear have heard this argument before, when talking to atheists, as in William Lane Craig's debate with Theodore Drange, (audio, video).

Basically, the atheist is saying that he's looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that's logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden when our eternal destination depends on our knowledge of his existence.

What reason could God have for remaining hidden?

Dr. Michael Murray, a brilliant professor of philosophy at Franklin & Marshall College, has found a reason for God to remain hidden.

His paper on divine hiddenness is here:
"Coercion and the Hiddenness of God", American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us. Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him. God places a higher value on people having the free will to respond to him, and if he shows too much of himself he takes away their free choice to respond to him, because once he is too overt about his existence, people will just feel obligated to belief in him in order to avoid being punished.

But believing in God just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants for us. If it is too obvious to us that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and behave morally out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out of interest *in him*, just like we might try to get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is

actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God's veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don't seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to reach out to us and draw us to him. But I do think that we are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist's argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. In order to derive a contradiction, God MUST NOT have any possible reason to remain hidden. If he has a reason for remaining hidden that is consistent with his goodness, then the argument will not go through.

When Murray offers a possible reason for God to remain hidden in order to allow people to freely respond to him, then the argument is defeated. God wants people to respond to him freely so that there is a genuine love relationship – not coercion by overt threat of damnation. To rescue the argument, the atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free choice of his creatures to reject him.

More of Michael Murray's work

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007). The book chapter from the Cambridge book is here. The book chapter from the Routledge book is here.

Michael Murray's papers are really fun to read, because he uses hilarious examples. I should mention that I disagree with his view that God's work of introducing biological information in living creatures has to be front-loaded.

Here's more terrific stuff from Dr. Murray:

- "Who's Afraid of Religion?", Inaugural Lecture delivered March 30, 2006. Franklin and Marshall College.
- "Seek and You Will Find", in God and the Philosophers. Thomas Morris, editor. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1994.

Is there any evidence of God's existence?

Yes, just watch this lecture by Dr. William Lane Craig. It contains 5 reasons why God exists and 3 reasons why it matters.

When government runs health care: NHS offers sex tips to children as young as 13

October 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this disturbing article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Teenagers as young as 13 are being given explicit sexual advice and tips on how to lose their virginity from a taxpayer-funded website and iPhone app.
>
> The respectyourself.info website contains graphic detail about various sexual acts – including those that involve a man physically abusing his partner during sex.
>
> On the website, which is targeted at those as young as 13, teens can take an 'Are you ready quiz' and answer a series of multiple-choice questions to assess whether they are prepared to lose their virginity.
>
> […]A variety of degrading sexual acts are listed within it, with many too graphic to reproduce.
>
> […]The website and app, designed to cut teenage pregnancies, have been branded 'grossly irresponsible' by family charities.
>
> The project, part-funded by the EU and Warwickshire County Council and designed by the NHS, is the first of its kind in the UK.
>
> […]The respectyourself.info website features sex tips for children as young as 13 and naked pictures of a man and a woman with their erogenous zones highlighted. There is also a 'sextionary' to describe slang terms for genitalia.
>
> One section of the website – which is free to download and has been targeted at children as young as 13 – gives tips on anal and oral sex as well as losing your virginity.

This story reminds me of a line from Charles Dickens' "Bleak House". He wrote: "The one great principle of the English law is, to make business for itself. " Sometimes I wonder whether all of this effort by the government to encourage things like sex education, no-fault divorce, recreational premarital sex, discouraging chivalry and traditional male roles, etc. is all just an effort to break up the relatively self-sufficient nuclear family unit. People who have a ton of sexual experience before marrying don't have stable marriages nor do they have high quality marriages (see studies below). Breaking up future families is what creates the need for bigger government: more social programs, more welfare, more divorce courts, more public schools, more day care, more police, more regulation, etc. Less freedom. Less love. Less intimacy.

This sort of story is particularly disturbing for me, because I have paid *a lot of money* in taxes during career. I have kept myself chaste all this time so that I would be able to

bond tightly to whichever woman I marry. Now I see that if I were in the UK, my tax money would be going to indoctrinate the women I could be married into a lifestyle that would make them unable to perform the roles of wife and mother – shrinking the pool of candidates that I can choose from. My earnings would be used by people who don't agree with my goals and my values to wreck my plan for lifelong married love and a house filled with children. We shouldn't be voting for the government to control things like health care or schools or helping the poor or anything. They just wreck it all with their own immoral agenda.

Related posts

- New study: staying a virgin longer enables more satisfying relationships
- New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially for women
- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours

October 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

According to Yahoo News, the first e-mail arrived 20-30 minutes after the attack started. (H/T Jared)

Excerpt:

> The records obtained by Reuters consist of three emails dispatched by the State Department's Operations Center to multiple government offices, including addresses at the White House, Pentagon, intelligence community and FBI, on the afternoon of September 11.
>
> The first email, timed at 4:05 p.m. Washington time – or 10:05 p.m. Benghazi time, 20-30 minutes after the attack on the U.S. diplomatic mission allegedly began – carried the subject line "U.S. Diplomatic Mission in Benghazi Under Attack" and the notation "SBU", meaning "Sensitive But Unclassified."
>
> The text said the State Department's regional security office had reported that the diplomatic mission in Benghazi was "under attack. Embassy in Tripoli reports approximately 20 armed people fired shots; explosions have been heard as well."
>
> The message continued: "Ambassador Stevens, who is currently in Benghazi, and four … personnel are in the compound safe haven. The 17th of February militia is providing security support."
>
> A second email, headed "Update 1: U.S. Diplomatic Mission in Benghazi" and timed 4:54 p.m. Washington time, said that the Embassy in Tripoli had reported that "the firing at the U.S. Diplomatic Mission in Benghazi had stopped and the compound had been cleared." It said a "response team" was at the site attempting to locate missing personnel.
>
> A third email, also marked SBU and sent at 6:07 p.m. Washington time, carried the subject line: "Update 2: Ansar al-Sharia Claims Responsibility for Benghazi Attack."
>
> The message reported: "Embassy Tripoli reports the group claimed responsibility on Facebook and Twitter and has called for an attack on Embassy Tripoli."
>
> While some information identifying recipients of this message was redacted from copies of the messages obtained by Reuters, a government source said that one of the addresses to which the message was sent was the White House Situation Room, the president's secure command post.
>
> Other addressees included intelligence and military units as well as one used by the FBI command center, the source said.

The American Enterprise Institute has the Benghazi attack timeline:

Rather, the story of Benghazi is that while the White House's initial response may have been confusion (because other attacks were taking place at the same time), very soon thereafter, the outright lying began. And now that we have seen the emails that went to the White House within *two hours* of the attack naming the perpetrators — a known terrorist group operating in eastern Libya — the fact that officials from the president on down were intentionally and falsely insisting the 9/11/12 attack was not an act of terrorism is screamingly obvious.

Let's review the timeline (h/t to the Washington Post) once again:

Here's what the president said on September 12:

"Since our founding, the United States has been a nation that respects all faiths. We reject all efforts to denigrate the religious beliefs of others. But there is absolutely no justification to this type of senseless violence. None. The world must stand together to unequivocally reject these brutal acts… No acts of terror will ever shake the resolve of this great nation, alter that character, or eclipse the light of the values that we stand for."

Note the reference to the YouTube video in the "reject all efforts to denigrate" line, and the generic references to "acts of terror" which the president falsely insisted (with assistance from CNN's Candy Crowley) was an assertion that Benghazi was in fact an act of terror.

Here's Jay Carney, White House spox, the following day:

"I think it's important to note with regards to that protest that there are protests taking place in different countries across the world that are responding to the movie that has circulated on the Internet."

Again, the movie.

Here's Hillary Clinton on September 14:

"We've seen the heavy assault on our post in Benghazi that took the lives of those brave men. We've seen rage and violence directed at American embassies over an awful Internet video that we had nothing to do with. It is hard for the American people to make sense of that because it is senseless, and it is totally unacceptable."

And Carney the same day:

"We were not aware of any actionable intelligence indicating that an attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi was planned or imminent. That report is false."

And then Obama's U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice hit every Sunday show with this message on September 16:

"Based on the best information we have to date … it began spontaneously in Benghazi as a reaction to what had transpired some hours earlier in Cairo, where, of course, as you know, there was a violent protest outside of our embassy sparked by this hateful video. "

[…] Obama doubled down on the lie that it was all about the video in his address

> to the United Nations General Assembly. On September 25, he said:
>
> *"That is what we saw play out in the last two weeks, as a crude and disgusting video sparked outrage throughout the Muslim world."*
>
> […]Bottom line? Barack Obama was willfully and knowingly lying to the American people. Why? To protect the meme that he had al Qaeda and affiliates/sympathizers like Libya's Ansar al Sharia on the run.

This is an impeachable offense. Obama should face impeachment for lying to the American people. This scandal is on the same level as Watergate. It's an abuse of power designed to exonerate militant Islam while making the Obama administration look innocent for their national security blunders and their policies of apologizing to our enemies and unlilateral disarmament.

UPDATE: My favorite defense policy analyst Frank Gaffney has a more sinister view of why Obama lied about Benghazi: the Obama administration was involved in arming Islamic groups that included terrorists.

Check it out:

> The evidence suggests that the Obama administration has not simply been engaging, legitimating, enriching and emboldening Islamists who have taken over or are ascendant in much of the Middle East. Starting in March 2011, when American diplomat J. Christopher Stevens was designated the liaison to the "opposition" in Libya, the Obama administration has been arming them, including jihadists like Abdelhakim Belhadj, leader of the al Qaeda franchise known as the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group.
>
> Once Moammar Gadhafi was overthrown, Stevens was appointed ambassador to the new Libya run by Mr. Belhadj and his friends. Not surprisingly, one of the most important priorities for someone in that position would be to try to find and secure the immense amount of armaments that had been cached by the dictator around the country and systematically looted during and after the revolution.
>
> One of the places in Libya most awash with such weapons in the most dangerous of hands is Benghazi. It now appears that Stevens was there — on a particularly risky day, with no security to speak of and despite now copiously documented concerns about his own safety and that of his subordinates — for another priority mission: sending arms recovered from the former regime's stocks to the "opposition" in Syria. As in Libya, the insurgents are known to include al Qaeda and other Shariah-supremacist groups, including none other than Abdelhakim Belhadj.
>
> Fox News has chronicled how the Al Entisar, a Libyan-flagged vessel carrying 400 tons of cargo, docked on Sept. 6 in the Turkish port of Iskenderun. It reportedly supplied both humanitarian assistance and arms — including deadly SA-7 man-portable surface-to-air missiles — apparently destined for Islamists, again including al Qaeda elements, in Syria.

> What cries out for further investigation — and debate in the remaining days of this presidential election — is whether this shipment was part of a larger covert Obama effort to transfer weapons to our enemies that could make the Iran-Contra scandal, to say nothing of Operation Fast and Furious, pale by comparison.

SA-7 man-portable surface-to-air missiles can be used to attack civilian and military aircraft.

UPDATE: Obama refused to call in troops to defend the embassy – they were only 1 hour away.

Related posts

- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Israel reports first use of shoulder-fired surface-air-missiles by Gaza terrorists
- Biased CNN liberal moderator Candy Crowley admits Romney correct about Benghazi
- Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack
- UK Independent: "America 'was warned of embassy attack but did nothing'"
- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser
- Obama administration warns contractors to delay layoffs to after election
- Obama wants to send $1 billion of aid to Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
- Report: Iran shipping arms and personnel to Syria through Iraq
- Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)
- The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration
- Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month
- Democrat defense cuts to an already weakened military expose us to aggression
- Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES
- Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?
- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority
- Obama's neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Obama's Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors
- Former DEA chief warns of cooperation between Hezbollah and drug cartels
- Iran launches Spanish-language TV channel in Venezuela
- Obama's defense cuts undermine our national security
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them
- Iraq plunges into chaos as U.S. troops withdraw
- Iran laughs as Obama pleads for return of unmanned drone

What North Korea teaches Christians about the importance of politics and economics

October 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christian apologist Frank Turek writes about it at Townhall.

Excerpt:

> When I hear Christians saying we ought not get involved in politics but just "preach the Gospel," I show them this satellite picture of the Korean peninsula. Here we see a homogenous population of mostly Koreans separated by a well-fortified border. South Korea is full of freedom, food and productivity—it's one of the most Christianized countries in the world. North Korea is a concentration camp. They have no freedom, no food, and very little Christianity.
>
> What's the primary reason for the stark difference between these two countries? Politics. The South politically allows freedom, while the North does not.
>
> Ironically, Christians who shun politics to supposedly advance the Gospel are actually allowing others to *stop* the Gospel. How so? Because *politics and law affects one's ability to preach the Gospel!* If you think otherwise, visit some of the countries I have visited—Iran, Saudi Arabia and China. You cannot legally "preach the Gospel" in those countries—or practice other aspects of your religion freely—because politically they've ruled it out as they have in North Korea.
>
> In fact, politics affects virtually every area of your life through the laws made by government. So if you care about your family, business, church, school, children, money, property, home, security, healthcare, safety, freedom, and your ability to "preach the Gospel," then you should care about politics.
>
> Politics affects everything, which is why leaders throughout the Bible—including Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Nehemiah, Mordecai, Esther, John the Baptist, and Paul—"went political" to influence civil governments to govern morally. Even Jesus himself got involved in politics when he publically chastised the Pharisees—the religious and *political* leaders of Israel—for neglecting "the more important matters of the law."
>
> […]But what can Christians do? After all, we can't legislate morality, can we? News flash: *All laws legislate morality!* Morality is about right and wrong and all laws declare one behavior right and the opposite behavior wrong. So the question is not whether we can legislate morality, but "Whose morality will we legislate?"
>
> […]When we fail to legislate morally, others impose immorality. For example, totalitarian political correctness is already imposed in states such as Massachusetts where the implications of same-sex marriage override the religious liberties of businesses, charities and even parents. As

> documented here and illustrated here, same sex marriage prevents you from running your business, educating your children, or practicing your religion in accord with your Conscience. And soon, as is the case in Canada, you may not be able to merely speak Biblically about homosexual behavior. That is because those who say they are fighting for "tolerance" are often the most intolerant.
>
> Unless Christians begin to influence politics and the culture more significantly, we will continue to lose the very freedoms that enable us to live according to our beliefs and spread the Gospel all over the world. That's why you should not vote for candidates because of their race or religion, but because they will govern morally on the more important matters of the law—life, marriage and religious freedom.

Dr. Turek says that some societies make it easier for us to carry out our responsibilities as Christians, such as evangelism. That's true. But I want to make a different point from Dr. Turek related to the point that he made.

I get a lot of e-mails from people complaining that I spend too much time on fiscal issues, and especially on foreign policy. But I really think that Christians need to branch out and read widely about these issues, too. The more we know about everything, the better we will be able to connect what the Bible says to every area, and the smarter we will be at laying out plans for our lives and achieving the good goals we set for ourselves as part of our relationship with God.

It's always better to know how things work. What good is it to say that you want to achieve some aim like helping the poor or making the world more peaceful unless you first study economics and foreign policy so that you will know how to achieve it? Many people try to achieve these goals by embracing policies that sound good, but they actually achieve the exact opposite ends that you set out to achieve. If you want to drive a car to get somewhere, you must first learn how to drive a car. Why should faith be any different than anything else? Don't take positions based on feelings or peer pressure, get informed and make a right judgment.

William Lane Craig debates Arif Ahmed: Does God Exist?

October 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that I would summarize a debate that occurred at Cambridge University between Dr. William Lane Craig and Dr. Arif Ahmed. Everyone knows Dr. Craig, but I should say that Arif Ahmed is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Philosophy at Cambridge University.

The full MP3 is available here.

Below, I've summarized the two opening speeches from each debater.

Here is Dr. Craig's opening speech: (1:24)

Craig's case for God.

1) The origin of the universe (3:10)
– an eternal universe is not compatible with mathematics
– the impossibility of an actual infinite in nature (cites David Hilbert)
– an eternal universe is not compatible with science
– the big bang theory requires space and time to come into being out of nothing (cites PCW Davies)
– even radical alternative theories require an absolute beginning (cites Stephen Hawking)
– atheists must believe that the origin of space and time came from nothing and by nothing (cites Anthony Kenny)

Argument:
P1.1) Whatever begins to exist requires a cause
P1.2) The universe begin to exist
C1.3) Therefore, the universe requires a cause

What can the cause be:
– it must be eternal, because it caused time to exist
– it must be non-physical, because it caused space to begin to exist

Why must the cause of the universe be a person instead of a force?
Only minds can exist non-physically
– the only non-physical entities we know of are abstract objects and minds
– but abstract objects can't cause physical effects
– therefore, the cause universe is a personal mind

Only minds can cause effects in time without antecedent conditions
– causally prior to the universe's beginning, there were no antecedent conditions
– the only entity capable of acting freely, not based on antecedent conditions, are free agents
– therefore, the cause of the universe is a free agent

2) The fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe (9:15)

– the fine-tuning of the universe is supported by science
– the constants and quantities given in the big bang can take any of a range of values
– the actual values are within a extremely narrow range that supports the requirements of life
– he gives the example of the fine-tuning of the gravitational constant
– he gives the example of the fine-tuning of the weak force

Argument:
P2.1) The fine-tuning is either due to law, chance or design
P2.2) It is not due to law, because the numbers are independent of the law
P2.3) It cannot be due to chance, the life-permitting band is tiny compared to the possible values
C2.4) Therefore, the fine-tuning is due to design

3) Objective moral values are plausibly grounded in God (12:41)
– objective moral values are values that exist and are binding regardless of what individuals think
– objective moral values cannot be rationally grounded on an atheistic worldview (cites Michael Ruse)
– atheists can recognize moral values and act on them, but they cannot explain their origin and existence
– atheists can only appeal to personal or cultural preferences to say what is right and wrong
– the existence of objective moral is undeniable

Argument:
P3.1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist
P3.2) Objective moral values do exist
C3.3) Therefore, God exists

4) The resurrection of Jesus implies that God exists (16:04)
– if the resurrection of Jesus happened, then it would be a miracle, implying that God exists
– three facts are recognized by the majority of scholars
– the tomb was found empty after his death (cites Jacob Kramer)
– individuals and groups saw Jesus after his death (cites Gerd Ludemann)
– the belief in the resurrection of Jesus was totally unexpected (cites N.T. Wright)
– naturalistic explanations of these facts have been rejected by the consensus of scholars

Argument:
P4.1) The 3 minimal facts are established
P4.2) The hypothesis that God raised Jesus from the dead is the best explanation for these facts
P4.3) The hypothesis that God raised Jesus from the dead entails that God exists
C4.4) Therefore, God exists

5) God can be known directly by personal experience (20:02)

– God can be experienced just like you experience a relationship with human persons

Dr. Ahmed's first opening speech: (22:10)

Rebuttal to Craig's case for God.

0) Craig is wrong about faith and reason (25:20)
– Craig's book Reasonable Faith, he makes a number of statements about faith and reason
– He writes that Christianity is not accountable to reason if reason goes against Christianity
– He writes that the truth of Christianity is knowable without rational arguments
– He writes that even if there are no reasons to believe, and many reasons to disbelieve, humans are still obligated to believe
– Question for Craig: is Christianity reasonable or isn't it? Do reasons matter or don't they?

1) Response to Craig's first argument: the origin of the universe (28:27)
– what mathematicians say about the contradictory nature of subtraction and division for actual infinities is wrong
– what cosmologists and physicists say about the beginning of time is wrong, every event follows another one, there is no first event
– even if the universe is 15 billion years old, the act of Creation requires time and there was no time prior to the supposed beginning of the universe for God to act in
– the cause of the universe need not be a personal agent
– all minds are made of matter so a mind cannot be the cause of the universe, *because all the people who pre-suppose materialism like me think that minds must be made of matter*
– it is impossible for a person to act outside of time,*because all the persons I know act in time*
– why did God wait 15 billion years before creating humans and relating to them? – *i wouldn't have done it that way*

2) Response to Craig's second argument: the fine-tuning of the creation (32:38)
– where do these probabilities that Craig is using come from?

3) Response to Craig's third argument: the moral argument (34:07)
– I have personal preferences about what counts as right and wrong, and they are superior to God's preferences
– moral intuitions are not a good way of discovering objective moral values, so therefore objective moral values don't exist

4) Response to Craig's fourth argument: the resurrection (36:00)
– the number of eyewitnesses is not enough, because groups number of eyewitnesses can be fooled by illusions, as in David Copperfield illusions
– the Gospels contradict themselves, e.g. – the story of Matthew's earthquake and walking dead isn't in Mark – so that's a contradiction, so the Gospels are not reliable sources for Craig's 3 minimal facts

5) Response to Craig's fourth argument: personal experience (37:30)
– there are many different religious experiences because there are many different religions
– *if lots of people disagree about something, then no one can be right*

Ahmed's case against God.

1) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence (39:00)
– if there is are no reasons to believe in God, then this alters reality to make it true that he doesn't exist

2) The inductive argument from evil (40:04)
– some evil is gratuitous – events cause people to suffer, and has no benefit that I can see, *based on my limited knowledge in time and space and my personal preference of what counts as a benefit and what doesn't*
– God would not have allowed people to suffer, *because God's job is to make us feel happy in this life*

3) Belief in God makes people evil (41:52)
– all genuinely religious people are very immoral, *according to my personal preferences about what counts as right and wrong*

Further study

In case you are wondering about his inductive argument from evil, please read this summary on the problems of evil and suffering, which is taken from my list of arguments for and against Christian theism. Keep in my mind that I am a software engineer with two degrees in computer science… not philosophy!

Craig mentions a paper by the late William P. Alston of Syracuse University in his rebuttal to the inductive problem of evil. The paper lists six limitations on human cognitive capacities that make it difficult for humans to *know* that some instance of apparently gratuitous evil really is gratuitious – that God has no morally sufficient reason for permitting this specific instance of evil. Since Ahmed is making the claim that some evil is gratuitous, he bears the burden of proof.

Darren Lund loses second attempt to punish Canadian pastor for exercising free speech

October 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Darren Lund, Professor of Education at the University of Calgary
From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Pastor Stephen Boissoin, who was found guilty in 2007 by a provincial human rights tribunal of "hate speech" for writing a letter to the editor expressing his views on homosexuality, has been strongly vindicated after the Alberta Appeals Court dismissed an appeal of a lower court decision in Boissoin's favor.
>
> The court also ordered Boissoin's accuser, homosexual activist Dr. Darren Lund, an assistant professor at the University of Calgary, to pay Boissoin's attorney fees.
>
> Appeals Court Justice Clifton O'Brien concurred with the lower court that Boissoin's letter "was not likely to expose homosexuals to hatred or contempt within the meaning of the Alberta statute."
>
> In 2009, Court of Queen's Bench Justice Earl C. Wilson overturned the 2007 ruling by the Alberta Human Rights Commission (AHRC), which ordered Boissoin to desist from expressing his views on homosexuality in any sort of public forum, ordered him to pay damages equivalent to $7,000 to Lund and called for Boissoin to personally apologize to Lund via a public statement in the local newspaper.

> […]"Matters of morality, including the perceived morality of certain types of sexual behavior, are topics for discussion in the public forum," concluded Justice O'Brien. "Freedom of speech does not just protect polite speech."
>
> Boissoin's lawyer, Gerald Chipeur, Q.C., who is an allied attorney with Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), pointed out that not only did Justice O'Brien throw out the AHRC's decision, but ruled that a human rights panel had no constitutional authority to preside in such circumstances.
>
> "This was a watershed case," Chipeur said. "Very important, in terms of freedom of expression and religious liberty. Going forward, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for religious or political debate to be found in breach of Alberta's current human rights laws."
>
> "Christians and other people of faith should not be fined or jailed for expressing their political or religious beliefs. There is no place for thought control in a free and democratic society," Chipeur remarked. "The tools of censorship should not be available to prohibit freedom of religious expression in Canada. The court rightly found that this type of religious speech is not 'hate' speech."

Gay activists can sometimes go too far and end up suppressing basic human rights like free speech and freedom of association.

Consider the case of the gay activist Floyd Lee Corkins II and the recent shooting at the Family Research Council that he was involved with. We need to be careful in the United States about encouraging gay activists like Floyd Lee Corkins II, who are hostile to basic human rights like free speech and freedom of association. The fascistic tendencies of the secular left have resulted in much violence in the past century, and you can even see it today in places like North Korea, where free speech and freedom of religion are not allowed. I'm sure that Stalin thought that what he was doing to the millions of people who disagreed with his agenda was "social justice", too.

Related posts

- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism

Barack Obama’s real record on Israel

October 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East

Fox News reports. (H/T Stuart Schneiderman)

Excerpt:

> President Obama has never visited Israel during his time in office, despite having been as close as thirty minutes away in Egypt, and managing to go to Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iraq.
>
> President Obama told Jewish leaders in July 2009 that he was deliberately adopting a policy of putting daylight between America and Israel.
>
> President Obama has legitimized the UN body most responsible for demonizing Israel as the world’s worst human rights violator. The president joined the UN Human Rights Council in 2009 and is now seeking a second 3-year term, despite Israel’s requests that he do the opposite.
>
> President Obama made Israeli settlements the key stumbling block in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Starting in 2009 he chose to castigate Israel publicly, often, and in extreme terms at the General Assembly and the Security Council. The Palestinians took the president’s cue and ended direct negotiations until such time as Israel capitulates, even though the subject is supposed to be a final status issue.
>
> President Obama treated Israel’s Prime Minister to a series of insulting snubs during his visit to the White House in March 2010.
>
> President Obama cut a deal with Islamic states at a May 2010 meeting of parties to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, contrary to assurances given to Israel. He agreed to help convene a 2012 international conference intended to pivot attention towards disarming Israel and is currently negotiating the details of this

> diplomatic onslaught.
>
> President Obama introduced in his September 2010 address to the General Assembly, a September 2011 timeline for full Palestinian statehood and membership in the UN, thus encouraging Palestinians to push the same unilateral move.
>
> President Obama suggested in May 2011 that Israel use the 1967 borders as a starting point for negotiations – knowing full well that Israel considers those borders to be indefensible, and that agreements require the border issue to be determined by the parties themselves.
>
> President Obama created a "global counter-terrorism forum" in September 2011 and invited eleven Muslim states to join – on the grounds that they were "on the front lines in the struggle against terrorism." At the insistence of Turkey, he then denied entry to Israel.
>
> President Obama told French President Nicolas Sarkozy in November 2011 – when he thought he was off-mike – that he regretted having to deal with Israel's Prime Minister.
>
> President Obama asked Congress in February 2012 to waive a ban on American funding of UNESCO. The ban had been imposed following UNESCO's recognition of Palestinian statehood and was consistent with U.S. law denying funding for any international organization that recognized Palestinian statehood in the absence of a peace agreement with Israel.
>
> President Obama has indeed put daylight between American and Israeli policy on Iran. In August, Joint Chiefs Chairman General Dempsey said: "our clocks are ticking at different paces" and he wouldn't be "complicit" in an Israeli effort to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities.
>
> In September Secretary Clinton explained this divergence. In her words, the Iranian threat is "existential" only for Israel; only Israel is "right in the bull's eye." President Obama's "pro-Israel" policy, therefore, is to wait past the point that the intended victim of the planned genocide believes is safe.
>
> President Obama denied Prime Minister Netanyahu's request to meet with him in September, despite the Iranian peril.
>
> President Obama's UN ambassador, Susan Rice, didn't even attend the Israeli Prime Minister's speech to the UN General Assembly in September – during which he made a plea for global attention to the Iranian threat.

Is that a pro-Israel record? I don't think so. But those are the facts.

Obama got 78% of the Jewish vote in 2008. But the current numbers are lower:

> Given the tenuous state of relations between Israel and the United States, it's surprising that, according to a recent American Jewish Committee survey of Jewish opinion, 61 percent approve of Obama's handling of U.S.-Israeli relations,

> while 39 percent disapprove. Those are numbers Romney needs to change Monday night.
>
> He is not going to win the Jewish vote. Obama overpowered Senator John McCain in 2008 by 78 percent to 22 percent among Jews, and the most recent Gallup poll puts Obama ahead this year by 70 percent to 25 percent. But if Romney can narrow that 45 percent margin between him and Obama, he will increase his chance of becoming president.
>
> While Jews are a small minority in the United States, they generally get to the polls in big numbers. Several swing states are home to relatively large populations of Jews, particularly Florida, Nevada and Pennsylvania, but also Virginia, Ohio and Colorado.

It might be worth forwarding that Fox News article to any Jewish friends you have, then you can discuss the items in the list with them. I don’t see how they could vote for Obama with a record like that.

Five myths about intelligent design that many Christians believe

October 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article by Melissa at Hard Core Christianity. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Here's her list of 5 myths about intelligent design:

1. **Intelligent Design (ID) is just a fancy name for Creationism.**
2. **ID has been dis-proven by the fossil record, which supports common descent.**
3. **ID claims that the "intelligent agent" had to supernaturally intervene in natural history over and over again.**
4. **ID uses a disguised form of the "God of the gaps" fallacy.**
5. **ID research has not produced peer-reviewed literature.**

All five of these myths are also believed by most opponents of ID in the media, and even in academia. So it's not just Christians.

And here is the detail on myth #4:

> **MYTH #4: ID uses a disguised form of the "God of the gaps" fallacy.**
>
> **The true story:** ID does *not* say "We don't yet know how life emerged from non-life, therefore an intelligence must have done it." Rather, it makes a two-fold argument: 1) Neo-Darwinian explanations for the emergence and divergence of life are sorely insufficient in their explanatory power and 2) there are features of nature, such as the specified complexity of the digital information in DNA, that are best explained by intelligent agency. We already know from direct experience how to detect intelligence in other branches of science, so inferring intelligence based on the same type of observed effects is completely reasonable. In scientific practice, we infer the existing cause that is KNOWN to produce the effect in question. Since biochemistry contains information, ID theorists infer that there must be an informer, because there are no other sources of information. Ironically, whenever a materialist says, "We don't yet know how life emerged from non-life, but one day science will explain it," they are actually using the Science of the Gaps fallacy.

When discussing ID, it's important to do two things. First, define ID. Second, block any attempt to bring God, the Bible, religion, church, feelings, personal experiences, personal faith, philosophers, or philosophy into the discussion.

To define ID, point the person to this book from Cambridge University Press.

If anyone is debating ID with you and brings up God, the Bible, religion, evil and suffering, sub-optimal designs or philosophy, then immediately tell them that you will not debate natural theology or the problem of evil with them. Anyone who thinks that ID requires the

best of all possible words, optimal design, etc. doesn't understand ID. The ID argument concludes design, if successful. It has nothing to say about goodness and badness and feelings and religion. Intelligent design asserts that an intelligent cause is the best explanation for some specific effect in nature. We can't say from the data if the cause is good or evil, only that it is intelligent. ID is not natural theology, it is mathematics.

After we infer design based on the science alone, THEN we can talk about who the designer is, and whether he is a nice designer or a mean designer. Those are two separate questions.

If you want to debate intelligent design, then watch this lecture by Stephen C. Meyer, and read Melissa's article. That's all you need to get started. If you want to understand even more about it, listen to this debate with Stephen C. Meyer and Keith Fox.

Is Obama telling the truth about creating 5.2 million new jobs?

October 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Yahoo News, of all places.

Excerpt:

> In a new TV ad, President Obama makes an inflated claim to have added 5.2 million new jobs. The total added during his time in office is actually about 325,000.
>
> In the ad, the president says "over 5 million new jobs" while the figure "5.2 million" appears on screen. But that's a doubly misleading figure.
>
> - Viewers would need to pay close attention to the on-screen graphic to know that the ad refers only to employment gains starting in March 2010, omitting the 4.3 million jobs that were lost in the first year of Obama's term.
> - And there's no way a viewer would know that the total counts only private-sector jobs, omitting continuing losses in government employment.
>
> According to the most recent employment figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the economy has eked out a net gain of 325,000 jobs since January 2009, when Obama took office. And that's giving credit for roughly 386,000 jobs that the BLS has announced, on a preliminary basis, that it will be adding to this year's employment totals next year, as a result of its routine annual "benchmarking" analysis.
>
> **Looking only at private-sector jobs, it's true that the total has risen just under 5.2 million since February 2010 — provided that credit is given for roughly 453,000 private-sector jobs to be added next year through the BLS benchmarking process. But over Obama's entire term, those private-sector jobs have gone up only 967,000, even counting benchmarking additions.**

The Heritage Foundation puts the number even lower, at 316,000 jobs created in the last 30 months.

Video: William Lane Craig debates Peter Millican on the existence of God

October 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Which debate would I consider to be the best to show an intelligent skeptic?

This one, between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican.

The debate was held at the University of Birmingham, England in 2011. I would put this debate in the top 3 Craig debates ever, along with his debates against Austin Dacey and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong.

My summary of the Craig-Millican is below. This debate is really meant for advanced students, but if you read my post "What you need to know about the BVG Theorem" before watching the debate, it should help you to follow along.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It's not just that the settings are unlikely, it's that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a "herd morality" that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved "herd morality". However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence

we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It's possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It's also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt

their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations.

But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that

makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they

undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn’t shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don’t come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can’t explain what God’s specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Conservative MP Iain Duncan Smith proposes reforms to the UK welfare state

October 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this exciting article from the UK Daily Mail about our favorite conservative MP.

Excerpt:

> Jobless couples with more than two children should have benefit payments limited, Iain Duncan Smith suggested yesterday.
>
> The Work and Pensions Secretary said there were 'large numbers' of couples on welfare having big families – unlike middle-income parents who had to weigh up if they could afford to have another child.
>
> Mr Duncan Smith condemned the 'madness' of the state subsidising large workless families – saying it would be fairer to the 'vast majority' of responsible taxpayers if benefits were limited to the first two children in future.
>
> He has agreed to find another £10billion in welfare savings by 2016, having already slashed £18billion from a vast budget that grew by 60 per cent under Labour.
>
> As well as cuts to child benefit and tax credits for large workless families, he suggested housing benefit could be stripped for those who expected to go straight from school on to welfare and a state-subsidised house.
>
> […]He [insisted] the real cruelty was leaving people languishing on welfare for years. 'We have accepted for far too long in this country that it is possible for people to just stay on benefits,' he said. 'It is all about saying, we will give you massive support to find work… But also, we have an expectation, as the taxpayer pays for these bills, that you try your hardest to find work.'
>
> Most controversially, Mr Duncan Smith suggested the present system encouraged poorer families to have large numbers of children without worrying about the cost.
>
> 'When you look at families across the board, at all incomes, you find the vast, vast majority make decisions about the kind of numbers of children they have, the families they want, based on what they think they can afford,' he said.
>
> 'Where you see the clustering of the large families is really down at the very lowest incomes, those on significant levels of welfare, and those on the very top incomes. In other words, the problem for those who are paying the taxes, paying the bills – they make the decisions about their lives, even if they sometimes would like to maybe have extra children, they make decisions.
>
> 'People who are having support through welfare are often free from that decision. We want to support people if they have children when they are out of work, of

> course.
>
> ‘But can there not be a limit to the fact that really you need to remember you need to cut your cloth in accordance with what capabilities and what finances you have?’

The UK Telegraph added:

> Official figures show that 120,000 of the most troubled and difficult families cost the taxpayer about £9 billion a year. Every household is now spending the equivalent of £3,000 a year in tax for welfare payments.
>
> There are about one in five households where no one works and 1.5 million children are growing up with a parent addicted to drugs or alcohol.
>
> […]Mr Duncan Smith will say that the poor use of government money in recent times has led to people being “written off”.
>
> “Our failure to make each pound count has cost us again and again over the years, Not only in terms of a financial cost – higher taxes, inflated welfare bills and lower productivity, as people sit on benefits long term. But also the social cost of a fundamentally divided Britain – one in which a section of society has been left behind. We must no longer allow ourselves to accept that some people are written off.”
>
> […]The Liberal Democrats are threatening to block further cuts in benefits unless the Coalition also introduces new taxes on the rich.

The article notes that members of the British socialist party (the Labor Party) British communist party (the Liberal Democrats) oppose the cuts to welfare. Of course! That’s how they get their votes – by redistributing money from working people to many more people who don’t work.

New survey finds that university professors are moving further to the left

October 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Inside Higher Ed.

Excerpt:

> Academics, on average, lean to the left. A survey being released today suggests that they are moving even more in that direction.
>
> Among full-time faculty members at four-year colleges and universities, the percentage identifying as "far left" or liberal has increased notably in the last three years, while the percentage identifying in three other political categories has declined. The data come from the University of California at Los Angeles Higher Education Research Institute, which surveys faculty members nationwide every three years on a range of attitudes.
>
> **Here are the data for the new survey and the prior survey:**

	2010-11	**2007-8**
Far left	12.4%	8.8%
Liberal	50.3%	47.0%
Middle of the road	25.4%	28.4%
Conservative	11.5%	15.2%
Far right	0.4%	0.7%

> Gauging how gradual or abrupt this shift is is complicated because of changes in the UCLA survey's methodology; before 2007-8, the survey included community college faculty members, who have been excluded since. But for those years, examining only four-year college and university faculty members, the numbers are similar to those of 2007-8. Going back further, one can see an evolution away from the center.
>
> In the 1998-9 survey, more than 35 percent of faculty members identified themselves as middle of the road, and less than half (47.5 percent) identified as liberal or far left. In the new data, 62.7 percent identify as liberal or far left. (Most surveys that have included community college faculty members have found them to inhabit political space to the right of faculty members at four-year institutions.)

Professors are extremely liberal, especially in non-quantitative, non-scientific departments like English. It's much harder to be liberal in academic areas where there is some connection to the real world that can be tested, like economics, business and computer science. Liberal bias is something to look out for if you go on to higher education. What you'll find there is that there is often a lack of critical thinking on many topics. The left isn't welcoming of other points of view. Their side doesn't read our stuff,

but we read their stuff. They think we're evil, and we just think they're wrong.

Here's my previous post surveying several academic studies of liberal bias in the mainstream media.

New study: grieving husbands are 30% more likely to have an early death

October 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Dina tweeted this UK Daily Mail article which I think is important because it shows how sensitive married men really are about their wives.

Excerpt:

> Male widows are more likely to die shortly after losing their wife than vice versa, new research suggests
>
> Researchers from the Rochester Institute of Technology in America found that grieving husbands were 30 per cent more likely to die after being recently widowed, compared with their normal risk of mortality.
>
> Women, however, did not have any increased risk of dying – perhaps due to them being more independent and prepared, the researchers suggested.
>
> Professor Javier Espinosa, who led the study said: 'When a wife dies, men are often unprepared.
>
> 'They have often lost their caregiver, someone who cares for them physically and emotionally, and the loss directly impacts the husband's health.
>
> […]Prof Espinosa's study, co-written by William Evans from the University of Notre Dame, was published in the Economics and Human Biology journal.

I think that it's important not to be deceived into thinking that all men are brutes and have no feelings. Men do have feelings, and they bond to their spouses quite tightly. Women provide men with many things that they need in marriage. Not just sex and submission to leadership, but care, nurturing, attention and approval.

Are people who vote Democrat smarter than people who vote Republican?

October 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video from Neil Simpson's round-up.

The Pew Research Center, a liberal organization, actually did a study on this uninformed voter problem.

Excerpt:

> So Republicans are more knowledgeable than Democrats, contrary to what many would like to believe.
>
> According to whom? None other than the Pew Research Center, a left-of-center organization. Moreover, Pew's latest survey only reaffirms previous surveys demonstrating the same result.
>
> In fact, the results weren't even close.
>
> In a scientific survey of 1,168 adults conducted during September and October of last year, respondents were asked not only multiple-choice questions, but also queries using maps, photographs and symbols. Among other subjects, participants identified international leaders, cabinet members, Supreme Court justices, nations on a world map, the current unemployment and poverty rates and war casualty totals.
>
> In a 2010 Pew survey, Republicans outperformed Democrats on 10 of 12 questions, with one tie and Democrats outperforming Republicans on just 1 of the 12. In the latest survey, however, Republicans outperformed Democrats on every single one of 19 questions.
>
> […]Those Pew results are confirmed by some surprising other sources. According to a *New York Times* headline dated April 14, 2010, "Poll Finds Tea Party Backers Wealthier and More Educated." Shattering widespread myths, that survey revealed that Tea Party supporters were more likely to possess a college degree than their counterparts (23% to 15%), and also more likely to have completed post-graduate studies (14% to 10%). Tea Partiers were also more likely to have completed "some college" by a 33% to 28% margin, and substantially less likely to have not completed high school than non-supporters (3% versus 12%), or to possess only a high school degree (26% versus 35%).

Previously, I posted about how Democrat voters understand very little about economics, whereas Republicans understand more.

Excerpt:

> Who is better informed about the policy choices facing the country—liberals, conservatives or libertarians? According to a Zogby International survey that I

> write about in the May issue of Econ Journal Watch, the answer is unequivocal: The left flunks Econ 101.
>
> Zogby researcher Zeljka Buturovic and I considered the 4,835 respondents' (all American adults) answers to eight survey questions about basic economics.

The first question was "Restrictions on housing development make housing less affordable." The unenlighted answer for that one is "disagree", since restrictions on development reduce the supply of available housing. Demand stays the same and so there is a shortage, and prices rise. D'uh!

Here are the others:

> The other questions were: 1) Mandatory licensing of professional services increases the prices of those services (unenlightened answer: disagree). 2) Overall, the standard of living is higher today than it was 30 years ago (unenlightened answer: disagree). 3) Rent control leads to housing shortages (unenlightened answer: disagree). 4) A company with the largest market share is a monopoly (unenlightened answer: agree). 5) Third World workers working for American companies overseas are being exploited (unenlightened answer: agree). 6) Free trade leads to unemployment (unenlightened answer: agree). 7) Minimum wage laws raise unemployment (unenlightened answer: disagree).

And the results:

> How did the six ideological groups do overall? Here they are, best to worst, with an average number of incorrect responses from 0 to 8: Very conservative, 1.30; Libertarian, 1.38; Conservative, 1.67; Moderate, 3.67; Liberal, 4.69; Progressive/very liberal, 5.26.

It's true, the majority of Democrat voters are people who don't work at all, or they "work" for government, or they "work" in education, or they hold picket signs while on strike, or they are in prison, or they are chasing ambulances, or they are Hollywood celebrities. No economics knowledge is required for any of that. Republicans work in private industry, and many of us own small businesses. So we actually have to work to earn money, because we have competitors to watch out for and consumers to please. Many of us are married and many of us have to get along with our spouses and raise children. Republicans don't need the government, we do fine making our own decisions, and making our own way without help from the government.

UPDATE: I think this ad says a lot about who votes Democrat:

Their great plan is to borrow money from our children in order to provide contraceptives to unmarried college students. Is that something to vote for? Remember the Life of Julia? Their vision is cradle-to-grave government dependency, with husbands and fathers made completely unnecessary.

Friday night movie: The 39 Steps (1935)

October 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.9/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> Richard Hannay is a Canadian visitor to London. At the end of a show in a music hall, he meets Annabella Smith who tells him about a plot by foreign agents to transfer secrets out of the UK. This is the beginning of a thrilling adventure for Hannay. Based on the novel by John Buchan.

Very adventurous movie.

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night spies: two more episodes of Secret Agent
- Friday night movie: The Scarlet Pimpernel (1934)
- Friday night spies: two episodes of Secret Agent
- Friday night movie: The Mark of Zorro (1940)
- Friday night detectives: one episode of Hercule Poirot
- Friday night soldiers: two episodes of Combat!
- Friday night movie: The Dam Busters (1955)
- Friday night movie: Sink the Bismarck! (1960)
- Friday night movie: The Crossing (2000)
- Friday night movie: The Great Escape (1963)
- Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)
- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)
- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)

- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration

October 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

AC-130H Spectre gunship

Exclusive story from Fox News. This one is a must-read. (H/T Weasel Zippers via ECM)

Excerpt:

> Fox News has learned from sources who were on the ground in Benghazi that an urgent request from the CIA annex for military back-up during the attack on the U.S. consulate and subsequent attack several hours later on the annex itself was denied by the CIA chain of command — who also told the CIA operators twice to "stand down" rather than help the ambassador's team when shots were heard at approximately 9:40 p.m. in Benghazi on Sept. 11.
>
> Former Navy SEAL Tyrone Woods was part of a small team who was at the CIA annex about a mile from the U.S. consulate where Ambassador Chris Stevens and his team came under attack. When he and others heard the shots fired, they informed their higher-ups at the annex to tell them what they were hearing and requested permission to go to the consulate and help out. They were told to "stand down," according to sources familiar with the exchange. Soon after, they were again told to "stand down."
>
> Woods and at least two others ignored those orders and made their way to the consulate which at that point was on fire. Shots were exchanged. The rescue team from the CIA annex evacuated those who remained at the consulate and Sean Smith, who had been killed in the initial attack. They could not find the ambassador and returned to the CIA annex at about midnight.
>
> At that point, they called again for military support and help because they were taking fire at the CIA safe house, or annex. The request was denied. There were no communications problems at the annex, according those present at the compound. The team was in constant radio contact with their headquarters. In

> fact, at least one member of the team was on the roof of the annex manning a heavy machine gun when mortars were fired at the CIA compound. The security officer had a laser on the target that was firing and repeatedly requested back-up support from a [AC-130] Spectre gunship, which is commonly used by U.S. Special Operations forces to provide support to Special Operations teams on the ground involved in intense firefights.

Read the rest.

Respected military blogger and former paratrooper BlackFive has more details here (H/T ECM) from a Delta Force operator who thinks that the AC-130 was "on station", i.e. – in flight:

> Having spent a good bit of time nursing a GLD (ground Laser Designator) in several garden spots around the world, something from the report jumped out at me.
> One of the former SEALs was actively painting the target. That means that Specter WAS ON STATION! Probably an AC130U. A ground laser designator is not a briefing pointer laser. You do not "paint" a target until the weapons system/designator is synched; which means that the AC130 was on station.
> Only two places could have called off the attack at that point; the WH situation command (based on POTUS direction) or AFRICOM commander based on information directly from the target area.
> If the AC130 never left Sigonella (as Penetta says) that means that the Predator that was filming the whole thing was armed.
> If that SEAL was actively "painting" a target; something was on station to engage! And the decision to stand down goes directly to POTUS!

And BlackFive himself writes:

> Even with two Predators on station, one unarmed and filming and one armed, the call to stand down comes from the same sources. Earlier today, Bob Owens at PJ Media posts about the responsibility of the order to call off the mission as well as some good info about the AC130s on station.

Here's the Predator:

Predator UAV drone firing missile

AC-130 gunships and Predator drones are incredibly accurate when the target is being "lit" by a laser target designator (LTID) on the ground. There was no reason not to engage, and lives could have been saved. Instead, the Obama administration did nothing. This is worse than Watergate. Nobody was murdered by our enemies in Watergate. Nobody died because Nixon lied.

Gateway Pundit has already pointed out that the Obama administration refused to call for support that was an hour away in Italy.

The father of the ex-Navy SEAL killed at the consulate is calling for accountability from "the murderers of my son". Will Obama respond? Or should we expect the same response as he gave to the death of the Border Patrol agent killed because his administration's "Fast and Furious" gun-running operation?

UPDATE: CIA director David Petraeus confirms that "No one at any level in the CIA told anybody not to help those in need; claims to the contrary are simply inaccurate" . The Weekly Standard agrees that it was likely a decision made by the President himself.

Related posts

- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
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- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors

- Former DEA chief warns of cooperation between Hezbollah and drug cartels
- Iran launches Spanish-language TV channel in Venezuela
- Obama’s defense cuts undermine our national security
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them
- Iraq plunges into chaos as U.S. troops withdraw
- Iran laughs as Obama pleads for return of unmanned drone

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

October 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Justin Brierley, host of the Unbelievable radio show, tweeted about this lecture.

This is a long form explanation of the resurrection argument that Dr. Craig makes in all of his debates on the existence of God. The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early

dating
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthew, which Mike Licona and I doubt is intended to be historical, but is more likely to be apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

You can see this evidence used in an actual debate, against a historian who disagrees with Dr. Craig. That post contains a point by point summary of the debate that I wrote while listening to it.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

Paul Ryan’s views on foreign policy and social issues

October 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Paul Ryan

We all know that Paul Ryan is conservative on fiscal issues. He’s the man with a plan to stop overspending and solve the debt problem. But where does he stand on other issues?

Here’s an article from the liberal Washington Post about Ryan’s foreign policy views.

Excerpt:

> Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) gave a speech Thursday to the Alexander Hamilton Society in Washington. If one is looking for clues as to Ryan’s interests beyond chairing the House Budget Committee, a speech, as he put it, to “a room full of national security experts about American foreign policy” would merit attention.
>
> …Ryan delivered an above-the-fray talk on the subject of American uniqueness (a less loaded term) and the myth that American decline in inevitable. He posited, “Our fiscal policy and our foreign policy are on a collision course; and if we fail to put our budget on a sustainable path, then we are choosing decline as a world power.”
>
> Ryan contends that the debt crisis is not a bookkeeping problem or even simply a domestic problem; it is about maintaining our status as a superpower and about American values.
>
> […]He plainly is not with the cut-and-run set on Afghanistan. “Although the war has been long and the human costs high, failure would be a blow to American prestige and would reinvigorate al-Qaeda, which is reeling from the death of its leader. Now is the time to lock in the success that is within reach.” Nor can he be accused of wanting to “go it alone.” “The Obama administration has taken our

> allies for granted and accepted too willingly the decline of their capacity for international action. Our alliances were vital to our victory in the Cold War, and they need to be revitalized to see us through the 21st century."
>
> As for China, he bats down the idea that we should go along to get along… He's clear that China has "very different values and interests from our own."
>
> And finally on defense spending, he rejects the sort of penny-pinching isolationism of Jon Huntsman or Rep. Ron Paul (R-Tex.).

According to On The Issues, he's solid on military spending:

- Rated 22% by SANE, indicating a pro-military voting record
- YES on $266 billion Defense Appropriations bill
- YES on deploying SDI
- YES on emergency $78B for war in Iraq & Afghanistan
- YES on continuing military recruitment on college campuses
- YES on restricting no-bid defense contracts

He's solid on counter-terrorism:

- NO on Veto override: Congressional oversight of CIA interrogations
- NO on requiring FISA warrants for wiretaps in US, but not abroad
- YES on making the PATRIOT Act permanent
- YES on continuing intelligence gathering without civil oversight
- YES on allowing electronic surveillance without a warrant
- YES on removing need for FISA warrant for wiretapping abroad
- YES on retroactive immunity for telecoms' warrantless surveillance

And supports military intervention against Islamic terrorists:

- Strengthen sanctions on Syria & assist democratic transition
- Sanctions on Iran to end nuclear program
- YES on authorizing military force in Iraq
- YES on declaring Iraq part of War on Terror with no exit date
- NO on redeploying US troops out of Iraq starting in 90 days
- NO on investigating Bush impeachment for lying about Iraq

I agree with him on all of that. But how is he on social issues?

Excerpt:

> Ryan, the top Republican on the Budget Committee who has a strongly pro-life record, talked about the place social issues have in the election in an interview with CNBC last week.
>
> "We will agree to disagree on those issues," Ryan said last Monday on CNBC. "But let's rally around the tallest pole in our tent

> Ryan also released a statement today that LifeNews.com received saying pro-life issues are not on a list of menu items that have to be given up during the election season.
>
> “Healthy debate should take place within the Republican Party on specific policies, but it is a false choice to ask which natural right we should discard
>
> “All planks – economic liberty and limited government; keeping our nation secure; championing America’s founding truths and the dignity of every human person – are rooted in same timeless principles, enshrined in our Founding and the cause of our exceptionalism,” Ryan added. “The American family must remain at the core of our free society, and I will remain ever-vigilant in its defense.”
>
> Conor Sweeney, a top Ryan spokesman, told LifeNews.com today that Ryan doesn’t agree with the “truce” on social issues Barbour and Daniels have advocated.
>
> “Paul Ryan rejects the false choice that our natural rights to ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness’ are a menu of options,” he said, adding that Ryan has been “calling upon his colleagues to defend the sanctity of life.”
>
> He also pointed to comments Ryan made in a Weekly Standard interview rejecting the “truce” language and putting him outside the Daniels-Barbour circle.
>
> “I don’t see it quite the same way [as Daniels],” Ryan said in June, “we don’t need to ask anybody to unilaterally disarm.”
>
> “I’m as pro-life as a person gets,” Ryan continued. “You’re not going to have a truce. Judges are going to come up. Issues come up, they’re unavoidable, and I’m never going to not vote pro-life.”

Here’s his voting record on pro-life issues:

- Rated 0% by NARAL, indicating a pro-life voting record
- Rated 100% by the NRLC, indicating a pro-life stance
- Prohibit transporting minors across state lines for abortion
- Bar funding for abortion under federal Obamacare plans
- Congress shall protect life beginning with fertilization
- Prohibit federal funding to groups like Planned Parenthood
- Grant the pre-born equal protection under 14th Amendment
- YES on barring transporting minors to get an abortion
- YES on banning partial-birth abortions
- YES on banning Family Planning funding in US aid abroad
- YES on federal crime to harm fetus while committing other crimes
- YES on funding for health providers who don’t provide abortion info
- YES on banning partial-birth abortion except to save mother’s life
- YES on making it a crime to harm a fetus during another crime

- YES on restricting interstate transport of minors to get abortions
- NO on allowing human embryonic stem cell research
- NO on expanding research to more embryonic stem cell lines

And he is also a strong defender of traditional marriage:

- Rated 0% by the HRC, indicating an anti-gay-rights stance
- YES on banning gay adoptions in DC.
- YES on Constitutional Amendment banning same-sex marriage
- YES on Constitutionally defining marriage as one-man-one-woman
- YES on prohibiting job discrimination based on sexual orientation
- NO on enforcing against anti-gay hate crimes

Tough on crime:

- Rated 30% by CURE, indicating anti-rehabilitation crime votes
- YES on more prosecution and sentencing for juvenile crime
- NO on funding for alternative sentencing instead of more prisons.
- NO on expanding services for offendors' re-entry into society

Favors school choice:

- Rated 8% by the NEA, indicating anti-public education votes
- NO on environmental education grants for outdoor experiences
- NO on $40B for green public schools

And an increased role for families and churches:

- YES on responsible fatherhood via faith-based organizations
- YES on treating religious organizations equally for tax breaks
- NO on instituting National Service as a new social invention

So definitely not *just* a fiscal conservative. He's conservative across the board. And STRONGLY so.

Female readers of the Wintery Knight blog may now swoon.

Paul Nelson: the most interesting and significant paper we've read in years

October 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow, check out this post by Paul Nelson over at Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Now, the paper I retrieved for my co-worker, entitled "The Levinthal paradox of the interactome," *Protein Science* 20 (2011):2074-79, explains why the space of "being alive" is so much vastly smaller, and harder to find, than the space of being "not alive." The paper is short (only six pages) and was written by two structural biologists, Peter Tompa of Vrije Universiteit in Brussels and George Rose of Johns Hopkins University, neither of whom is an intelligent-design advocate. But the paper's arguments bear so strongly on the design debate, and represent so remarkable a challenge to widely held assumptions about (for instance) the origin of cells, that its effect promises to be far-reaching. As in, revolutionary.
>
> […]Tompa and Rose draw a number of lessons from their calculations. They argue, first, that any increase in biological realism will only make the Levinthal interactome paradox worse:
>
> Of course, there are additional complicating factors such as alternative splicing, post-translational modifications, non-pairwise macromolecular interactions, incorrect complex formation that is adventitiously stable, and so forth. However, even neglecting such complications, the numbers preclude formation of a functional interactome by trial and error complex formation within any meaningful span of time. This numerical exercise…is tantamount to a proof that the cell does not organize by random collisions of its interacting constituents.But secondly, what they call "the most profound conclusion" from their analysis bears directly on widely held assumptions about the origin of life.
>
> A highly enriched soup of proteins and nucleic acids will never form a functional cell, even if lipid bilayer membranes were provided to help these materials become organized. Indeed, the fully functional contents of a living cell, once the wall or membrane enclosing them has been breached (thus, killing the cell), move irreversibly in the direction of non-living chemistry. Humpty Dumpty, once he cracks, does not reconstitute, but enters what Tompa and Rose call the "zone of chaos," never to return.
>
> Tompa and Rose have sketched the theoretical basis for *why* this happens:

> [O]ur calculations of combinatorial complexity [show] that the emergent interactome could not have self-organized spontaneously from its isolated protein components. Rather, it attains its functional state by templating the

> interactome of a mother cell and maintains that state by a continuous expenditure of energy. In the absence of a prior framework of existing interactions, it is far more likely that combined cellular constituents would end up in a non-functional, aggregated state, one incompatible with life…The spontaneous origination of a *de novo* cell has yet to be observed; all extant cells are generated by the division of pre-existing cells that provide the necessary template for perpetuation of the interactome.

> Tompa and Rose spell out other implications of their analysis (e.g., for medicine and synthetic biology), but maybe we've piqued your curiosity enough already. This paper deserves your attention. As noted, for a close circle of us at Discovery and Biologic, it's the most interesting and significant paper we've read in years.

Dr. Nelson's post explains a bit more with pictures.

Kyle Clarke of 9NEWS grills Obama on Benghazi and green energy corruption

October 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Watch the raw video (7 minutes) here before it disappears. (H/T ABC News via ECM)

Excerpt:

> KUSA – President Barack Obama would not directly address questions from 9NEWS on whether Americans under attack in Libya were denied requests for assistance during the September 11th terror attack.
>
> Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Friday that the military did not send immediate help to the consulate in Benghazi because commanders lacked enough information about the ongoing attack to put troops in harm's way.
>
> President Obama discussed the situation in Libya during a satellite interview Friday afternoon with 9NEWS reporter Kyle Clark, who also asked if it's fair for Americans to be told to wait until after the election to learn what truly happened in Libya.
>
> "The election has nothing to do with four brave Americans getting killed and us wanting to find out exactly what happened," President Obama said. "Nobody wants to find out more what happened than I do."
>
> President Obama was directly asked twice whether pleas for help on the ground in Libya were denied during the attack. Both times, he repeated his standard call for a thorough investigation.
>
> The President was also asked about the loss of tens of millions of taxpayer dollars in the failure of Abound Solar, a Fort Collins company connected to one of the President's billionaire fundraisers.
>
> "These loans that are given out by the Department of Energy for clean energy have created jobs all across the country," President Obama said. "Some of them have failed but the vast majority of them are pushing us forward into a clean energy direction."
>
> "These are decisions, by the way, that are made by the Department of Energy, they have nothing to do with politics," President Obama said.
>
> President Obama was asked, in light of his calls for increased civility in politics, why he recently called Governor Mitt Romney a "bullsh—–" in an interview appearing in Rolling Stone magazine.

That article has excerpts from the transcripts for those who cannot watch the video.

This interview is *amazing*. Actual journalism. This is a must-see. Click the link and watch it NOW. Watch Obama squirm to defend his record without a teleprompter to save him. Oh my God. I have never, ever seen a reporter actually challenge this President in four years.

This is amazing. CLICK THE LINK AND WATCH IT.

The mainstream media, tilted to the left as it is, has given Barack Obama a pass for the last four years. No one wanted to ask him any hard questions. Until this interview.

Also, please check the links below to make sure you keep up to date on this story, and Obama's other foreign policy blunders. This is our generation's Watergate – only it's worse. Obama lied, Americans died. His weak foreign policy emboldened our enemies. Rather than hold the terrorists accountable, he blamed some unknown film maker who had nothing to do with causing the attack.

Related posts

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- Iran laughs as Obama pleads for return of unmanned drone

Obama administration will pay companies to violate law governing layoff notices

October 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> The Obama Administration's disregard for the law has struck again—and this time, *it's encouraging others to violate the law at taxpayer expense.*
>
> That's worth saying again: The Obama Administration is encouraging people to violate a law, and promising that it will use taxpayer money to cover fines incurred from this action.
>
> **The law:** The law in question is called the WARN Act, and it requires that federal contractors send employees layoff notices 60 days before a plant closing or mass layoff.
>
> **The inconvenience:** Massive defense spending cuts under sequestration are scheduled to hit on January 2, 2013. Defense contractors affected by the budget cuts would have to issue notice letters to employees by November 2 (four days before the election) to meet the January 2 start date for the spending cuts.
>
> **The penalty taxpayers would pay:** Employers who violate the WARN Act are liable to their former employees for "back pay for each day of a violation" and "benefits under an employee benefit plan," as well as a penalty of $500 for each day that notice has not been sent to the local government where the layoffs will occur.
>
> As an example, Lockheed CEO Bob Stevens has said that 123,000 of his employees would receive layoff notices. If companies fail to meet the WARN Act's deadline, lawsuits from employees could result—but the White House has provided a taxpayer-funded guarantee as a way to counter their fears of enormous litigation costs. This guarantee is not only unprecedented but also potentially unlawful.

This President is only interested in one thing – misleading the American people on the issues so he can get re-elected. We have about a week to get this out there, or he's going to do it. Make sure you keep sharing all of these articles with people who haven't voted. We need to get everyone informed and into the ballot box on election day.

Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama

October 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Hey, America, do you know what you're funding when your taxes go to "women's health" via Planned Parenthood? You think I'm going to say abortion, don't you? I don't actually need to say that since you'd have to be brain dead not to know that part. But how about to Barack Obama's re-election? Wait, you say! Not us! We give my money to Planned Parenthood because women's health is important. Our tax dollars should support this crucial organization.
>
> Government grants and funding to Planned Parenthood in the last reported year, 2009-2010, was $487.4 million — and so far $12 million from the non-profit has been given to re-elect President Obama. That's right. This organization that says it cares so much about your cervix cares more about it's proverbial booty.
>
> Never before has the abortion provider spent so much money in an election, reports say. Neither has there been a precedent for the mother hen to leave her roost and go full time on the campaign trail, as Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards announced she'd be doing for Obama earlier this month. The woman who makes over $400K a year as the leader of the abortion provider has taken a break from her "day job" running the national death squad to campaign for the president. It's clear who's actually ruling the hen house.
>
> As Planned Parenthood reports on its 2010 IRS Form 990, Richards made $420,153. After she announced on October 19th she'd be working full time as a volunteer for Obama, the first thought you might have had is to demand she not take her salary for those few weeks. After all she isn't working.
>
> Oh wait.
>
> If you recall, we pointed out recently that the real goal of the Planned Parenthood Action Fund is to raise money for political lobbying. So actually, spending $12 million in the election of the most pro-abortion candidate ever and going on the road to help win swing states actually is very much a part of Richards' job.

It's very simple, really. The Democrats subsidize Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood performs abortions for money. Planned Parenthood donates a portion of their profits back to the Democrats. Democrats encourage children to have sex earlier and earlier. The number of abortions increases as more people have sex and get pregnant. And it goes around and around, with the Democrats and Planned Parenthood laughing all the way to the bank.

Abortions will stop when we stop the flow of taxpayer money. It’s all about the money.

Related posts

- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- Hawaii Planned Parenthood caught counseling sex-selection abortions
- War on women: Obama and Democrats oppose ban on sex-selection abortion
- Live Action sting: Planned Parenthood counsels late-term sex-selection abortion
- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Government spends $61,194 on welfare for each household below the poverty line

October 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Weekly Standard. (With a rant from me below)

Excerpt:

> New data compiled by the Republican side of the Senate Budget Committee shows that, last year, the United States spent over $60,000 to support welfare programs per each household that is in poverty. The calculations are based on data from the Census, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Congressional Research Services.
>
> "According to the Census's American Community Survey, the number of households with incomes below the poverty line in 2011 was 16,807,795," the Senate Budget Committee notes. "If you divide total federal and state spending by the number of households with incomes below the poverty line, the average spending per household in poverty was $61,194 in 2011."
>
> This dollar figure is almost three times the amount the average household on poverty lives on per year. "If the spending on these programs were converted into cash, and distributed exclusively to the nation's households below the poverty line, this cash amount would be over 2.5 times the federal poverty threshold for a family of four, which in 2011 was $22,350 (see table in this link)," the Republicans on the Senate Budget Committee note.
>
> To be clear, not all households living below the poverty line receive $61,194 worth of assistance per year. After all, many above the poverty line also receive benefits from social welfare programs (e.g. pell grants).

How do people become poor anyway, in a rich country like America? Is it someone else's fault, or is it a result of their own poor decision-making? Let famous black economist Walter Williams – chair of the Department of Economics at the prestigious George Mason University –explain it for us:

> Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. **First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And, finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior.**
>
> If you graduate from high school today with a B or C average, in most places in our country there's a low-cost or financially assisted post-high-school education program available to increase your skills.
>
> Most jobs start with wages higher than the minimum wage, which is currently $5.15. A man and his wife, even earning the minimum wage, would earn $21,000

> annually. According to the Bureau of Census, in 2003, the poverty threshold for one person was $9,393, for a two-person household it was $12,015, and for a family of four it was $18,810. Taking a minimum-wage job is no great shakes, but it produces an income higher than the Bureau of Census' poverty threshold. Plus, having a job in the first place increases one's prospects for a better job.

To augment what Dr. Williams said with a study:

> Nearly three out of four poor families with children in America are headed by single parents. When a child's father is married to his mother, however, the probability of the child's living in poverty drops by 82 percent.
>
> The collapse of marriage, along with a dramatic rise in births to single women, is the most important cause of childhood poverty but government policy doesn't reflect that reality, according to a special report released today by The Heritage Foundation.

I had to spend all day Saturday and all day Sunday this weekend working to fix a defect so that I could get back on track on my next project. I am still 4 days behind schedule on that new project. If I can't catch up, I'll probably have to cancel my November vacation, and maybe even my December vacation. The massive expenditures on welfare for "the poor" is the reason why I have to come in on Saturday and Sunday to work. I have to to work to pay for these people, and their enablers in the Democrat party.

Don't I have a right to pursue my dreams and my marriage plans and my plans to be a public, effective Christian, with the money that I earn through my work? For example, on Saturday, I sent $125 to a young Christian scholar so that he could attend a conference and present a paper on a moral issue that we both care about. The government would never give him money, but they will tax me to pay for contraceptives for everyone else. I am a virgin – I don't even buy contraceptives for myself! I really have better things to do with my earned income than buying "Obamaphones" for people who spend *their entire lives* collecting welfare. Don't I have a right to spend what I earn on my own goals and priorities?

UPDATE: The Manhattan Institute explains how welfare waivers water down the work incentives for welfare.

Related posts

- Conservative MP Iain Duncan Smith proposes reforms to the UK welfare state
- New report: welfare spending hits record $1 trillion, up 32% in Obama's first term
- Who pays the bill for handing out $2.2 trillion of entitlements per year?
- Graduate students with non-STEM degrees increasingly dependent on welfare programs
- Arizona governor Jan Brewer blocks welfare payments for illegal immigrants
- Redistribution of wealth: 2362 millionaires collecting unemployment
- Christians and social justice: is redistribution of wealth good for the poor?

- Democrat Steny Hoyer: unemployment checks and food stamps stimulate the economy
- Obama ends welfare reform and calls for $12.7 trillion of new welfare spending
- Why do women have abortions? Are women responsible or are men to blame?
- Half of all Americans live in households that get government handouts
- Why is it so hard for a working man to provide for a family these days?
- What causes women to become single mothers by choice? Are men to blame?
- Why are people on food assistance programs allowed to buy luxuries?
- “Problem families” cost British taxpayers £9 billion per year
- Melanie Phillips: the UK should reform the Child Benefit to favor marriage
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- Dependency on government surges 23% under Barack Obama
- Assessing Obama’s claims about income inequality in America
- How the Labor Party killed marriage in the UK
- UK Liberal Democrats oppose tax breaks for getting married and staying married

Why do about 70% of single / divorced / unmarried women vote Democrat?

October 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sandra Fluke, Democrat party spokeswoman

Note: This is one of those snarky anti-feminist posts that you should avoid if you like feminism. Lydia and Mary, I mean you. No peeking!

According to to the Women's Voices Women's Vote Action Fund:

> Romney, for example, has the narrow backing of men, 48% to 44%, while Obama has a somewhat larger lead among women, 51% to 43%. **That gender gap exists largely because Obama has overwhelming support, 71% to 19%, among single women.**
>
> **Democratic strategists have said for many years that abortion, contraception and related issues have particular importance for how single women vote.**

Unmarried women voted for Obama by a margin of 70-29 in the 2008 election. Now keep in mind that the Democrat party is for abortion, same-sex marriage, taxing and regulating job creators, massive deficits and spiraling debt. And the Democrats also support anti-family policies like pushing premarital sex onto young people at early ages, mandatory funding of failing public schools, no-fault divorce, and subsidizing welfare programs which make it easier for women to have fatherless children.

In fact, since women were given the right to vote, they have voted for the government to tax more, spend more and intrude more into the family. That's not my opinion, it is based on research papers like this one. Now my question is this – why are so many single women voting for higher taxes, more government and less freedom?

Why single women vote the way they do

Single women vote the way they do, I contend, because they have been influenced by feminism on a very specific question. Before, women aspired to marriage and children and having a home of their own. But today, they seem to be more interested in making government take over the things that men used to take care of, so that men become optional. This frees up the woman to choose a man based on her feelings, rather than choosing one who is a good provider, protector and moral/spiritual leader. In fact, it is this resentment of male leadership – especially their moral judgments and exclusive truth claims – which women are rebelling against.

This explains why single women overwhelmingly vote for bigger government. The government is currently distributing tens of thousands of dollars from working men to single women to achieve this goal of releasing women from responsibility to men and the leadership of men. Single women are then left free to prefer less-demanding, less moral, less religious men based on superficial, emotional, selfish criteria. Entertainment, appearance, postmodernism, relativism, and universalism are the new male abilities in demand. Providing, protecting, chastity, fidelity and leading on moral and spiritual issues were the old male abilities, and are no longer in demand.

Here is my message to single women who vote Democrat: you can either marry the government and collect welfare or you can marry a real man. Marriage costs money for a man – and he earns that money by working. He can either work for the government and those who are dependent on the government, or he can work for you and the family and the private schools and the church and so on. You can't have both. A dollar can either be spent by a man or spent by the government. Choose one. Bigger government means smaller men, and smaller government means bigger men.

More on this topic in my previous post, which listed 5 ways that traditional marriage has been debased by feminism.

Related posts

- Traditional marriage is a threat to the values of single women
- New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially for women
- New study: marriage drops probability of child poverty by 82%
- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less
- How do prostitutes stay in business in an era of hook-up sex?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives

- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- Should Christian men marry? What's the worst that could happen?
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

Michael Licona debates Dale Martin on the divinity of Jesus

October 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Michael Licona and Dr. Dale Martin discuss the question "Did Jesus Believe He Was Divine?" The second evening of the 2012 Religion Soup discussion took place Oct 19, 2012 at Acadia University.

Michael R. Licona (PhD University of Pretoria): is Associate Professor in Theology at Houston Baptist University. He was interviewed by Lee Strobel in his book The Case for the Real Jesus and appeared in Strobel's The Case for Christ. He is the author of numerous books including The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach.

Dale B. Martin (PhD Yale University): is the Woolsey Professor of Religious Studies at Yale University. He specializes in the New Testament and Christian Origins. His books include: Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity; The Corinthian Body; Inventing Superstition; and Sex and the Single Savior: Gender and Sexuality in Biblical Interpretation.

The video is here:

Here is the MP3 file. (79 Mb)

I did not summarize this, but I watched Licona's opening speech. It was awesome! Both speakers are easy to listen to.

Dale Martin is openly gay, so he's not conservative on what the Bible teaches, for sure, and strikes me as one of these postmodern Jesus Seminar people who uses religious words, but is a naturalist who believes in a liberal Jesus as a nice idea, but doesn't believe in the conservative historical Jesus at all. He seems to be more like these John Dominic Crossan / Marcus Borg types. I looked at some of his publications, and I think it's a situation where the liberal sexual practices he advocates constrain his theological and historical views. Sort of like John Dominic Crossan's atheism and pluralism and political liberalism constrain his historical work. Still though, smart guy and in a debate he addresses the evidence, so it's good to hear another voice.

The one annoying thing about this is that you should skip ahead about 7.5 minutes to get to the start of the debate. I would like to see churches get involved in doing these sorts of events. We need to get used to discussing these things with evidence.

Four out of five Sunday news shows fail to mention the Benghazi cover-up

October 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Can you guess which news channel mentioned it? Let's see.

Excerpt:

> Here is how the Sunday shows covered the issue:
>
> NBC: *Meet the Press* with David Gregory
>
> The Benghazi issue was not raised at all, save by panelist Carly Fiorina, who was interrupted by Gregory. He promised, "We'll get to that a little bit later," but did not return to the issue before the show's end. (The show was interrupted in some markets, in the final minute, with breaking news about Hurricane Sandy.)
>
> ABC: *This Week* with George Stephanopoulos
>
> The Benghazi issue was raised by Newt Gingrich, in response to a question about the Romney campaign's prospects in Ohio. Stephanopoulos failed to ask a follow-up and steered the conversation back to polls.
>
> CNN: *State of the Union* with Candy Crowley
>
> The Benghazi issue was raised twice, once by Republican National Committee chair Reince Priebus in response to a question about U.S. Senate candidate Richard Mourdock's views on abortion, and once by Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell in response to a question about whether Romney would win the state in November. Crowley did not raise the issue independently in a show largely focused on polls and voting.
>
> CBS: *Face the Nation* with Bob Schieffer
>
> The Benghazi issue was raised in an exchange between Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) and Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel, Obama's former chief of staff. After McCain brought up the issue, Schieffer asked a follow-up question about whether the administration had engaged in a "deliberate cover-up." McCain said it had either been a cover-up or "the worst kind of incompetence." Schieffer responded with another question about whether drones had produced images of the attacks. Emanuel responded with the Obama campaign's standard talking points, and Schieffer followed up with a question about what he would have done in the White House. Emanuel ducked the question, instead praising Obama's foreign policy record in general.
>
> FOX: *Fox News Sunday* with Chris Wallace
>
> The Benghazi issue was first raised by Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) in describing issues of concern to Wisconsin voters. Wallace replied that he had planned to address the issue later, which he did, addressing questions to Sen. Mark Udall (D-

> CO) about recent revelations. Warner responded by expressing sympathy with the families of the dead and wounded and promised: "We're going to get to the bottom of this. The intelligence is going to hold hearings when we return, right after the election." He added that the situation had "been politicized," criticizing Romney in particular. Wallace countered that the issue was a legitimate topic of political discussion. He followed up with questions about whether drones flying over Benghazi were armed, and Sen. Udall repeatedly refused to answer directly, saying that he could not comment further. Wallace also later made the issue the primary focus of the show's subsequent panel discussion.

When conservatives say that they prefer to watch Fox News, it's not because Fox News is conservative. It's because Fox News is news. They actually act like journalists and report the news, and they always have multiple viewpoints – conservative and liberal. Liberals want to see a debate between Rachel Maddow and Chris Matthews to see which one is more of a radical leftist. Conservatives want to see a debate between Brit Hume and Juan Williams. We want both sides, because the adversarial system is the best way of getting at the truth. People tune into to non-Fox news channels to hear what they believe echoed back to them, and to avoid hearing anything that makes them feel stupid or wrong or different. It's like church for lazy brained leftists.

Understanding media bias

Every once in a while, I like to post the academic studies of media bias, so that everyone is clear about who is biased. It's always important to look at the evidence when trying to decide what is the truth about something. So let's look at the evidence of media bias.

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing

> outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or

> subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

And here's a bit from that same article about The New Yorker:

> The last bulwark against bias's slipping into The New Yorker is the copy department, whose chief editor, Ann Goldstein, gave $500 in October to MoveOn.org, which campaigns for Democrats and against President Bush. "That's just me as a private citizen," she said. As for whether donations are allowed, Goldstein said she hadn't considered it. "I've never thought of myself as working for a news organization."

Those are the facts.

So what?

Now consider this column from Brent Bozell, which explains the difference media bias makes to political intelligence.

Excerpt:

> The Republican presidential contest is picking up steam. Obama is consistently polling under 50 percent. This one's a toss-up, and in the thick of it is the Fox News Channel. It's not just their role in hosting and vetting the candidates. It's

> their role as the chief villain in the eyes of liberal Democrats struggling to push their version of the "truth" about Obama.
>
> Jon Stewart rhetorically asked Chris Wallace about Fox on "Fox News Sunday, because he thought he knew the answer: "Who are the most consistently misinformed media viewers? The most consistently misinformed? Fox, Fox viewers, consistently, every poll."
>
> In the real world – outside Stewart's smug bubble – this is garbage. A 2008 survey by the Pew Research Center asked media consumers three questions: which party was in control of Congress (Democrats), who was the secretary of state (Condi Rice) and who was the prime minister of Britain (Gordon Brown).
>
> Let's document how the viewers of "Hannity &Colmes" were better informed than Stewart's "Daily Show" gigglers on basic political facts. Hannity viewers beat Stewart's on the Democratic majority (84 percent to 65 percent correct answers), Condi Rice (a dramatic 73 percent to 48 percent gap) and Gordon Brown (49 percent to 36). Overall, as a percentage getting all three questions right, Hannity won 42-30.

Just keep that in mind when you are watching the mainstream media news shows. A very good site to bookmark and read is Newsbusters, which documents mainstream media bias daily. I even have an RSS feed of their latest stories on the front page on this blog.

New study: brain of child neglected by mother is smaller and underdeveloped

October 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Here is the scan:

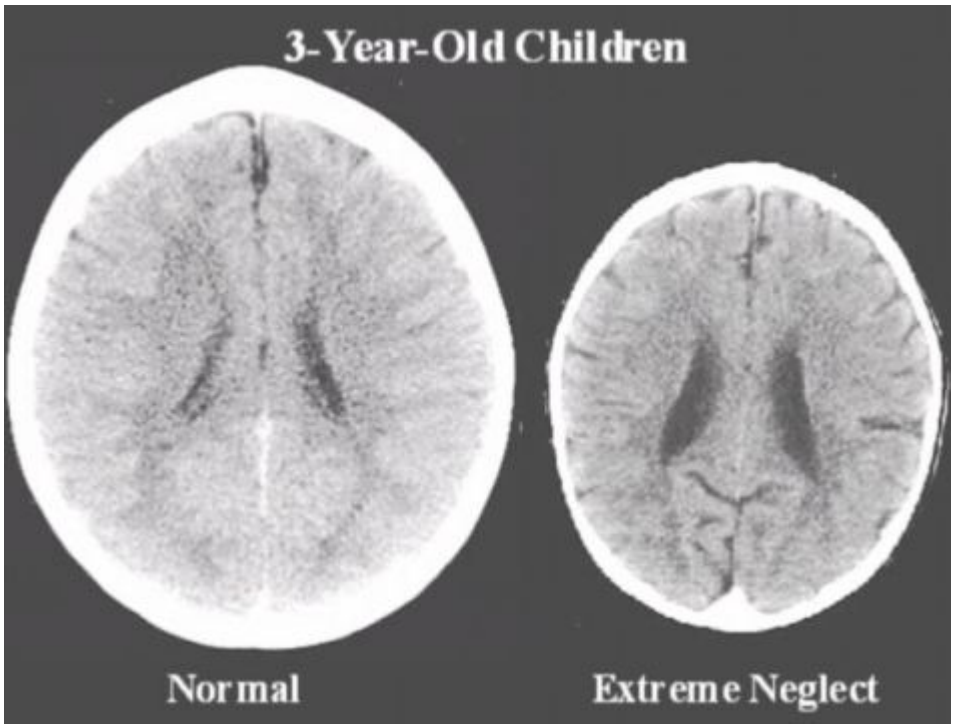

Brain scans of 3-year old children: normal vs neglected

Excerpt:

> Both of these images are brain scans of a two three-year-old children, but the brain on the left is considerably larger, has fewer spots and less dark areas, compared to the one on the right.
>
> According to neurologists this sizeable difference has one primary cause – the way each child was treated by their mothers.
>
> The child with the larger and more fully developed brain was looked after by its mother – she was constantly responsive to her baby, reported The Sunday Telegraph.
>
> But the child with the shrunken brain was the victim of severe neglect and abuse.
>
> According to research reported by the newspaper, the brain on the right worryingly lacks some of the most fundamental areas present in the image on the left.
>
> The consequences of these deficits are pronounced – the child on the left with the larger brain will be more intelligent and more likely to develop the social ability to empathise with others.
>
> But in contrast, the child with the shrunken brain will be more likely to become

> addicted to drugs and involved in violent crimes, much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on state benefits.
>
> The child is also more likely to develop mental and other serious health problems.
>
> Professor Allan Schore, of UCLA, told The Sunday Telegraph that if a baby is not treated properly in the first two years of life, it can have a fundamental impact on development.
>
> He pointed out that the genes for several aspects of brain function, including intelligence, cannot function.
>
> […]The study correlates with research released earlier this year that found that children who are given love and affection from their mothers early in life are smarter with a better ability to learn.
>
> The study by child psychiatrists and neuroscientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, found school-aged children whose mothers nurtured them early in life have brains with a larger hippocampus, a key structure important to learning, memory and response to stress.
>
> The research was the first to show that changes in this critical region of children's brain anatomy are linked to a mother's nurturing, Neurosciencenews.com reports.
>
> The research is published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Early Edition.
>
> Lead author Joan L. Luby, MD, professor of child psychiatry, said the study reinforces how important nurturing parents are to a child's development.

I have a very good feminist non-Christian friend who sometimes comments here. I once asked her about marriage and she said that her skills would be wasting on raising children. I explained to her my view that a mother needs to stay at home with the children, and that is more important work. I expect my future wife to read all kinds of books on child care and to give the child attention, nutrition, exercise and play so that the child will grow up to be an effective Christian. Maybe I need to be clear. I am not going to spend hundreds of thousands per child with just any woman. I need a woman who can produce influential and effective Christians who will engage in the public square. And we do not entrust that job to just anyone – we want a Michele Bachmann or a Jennifer Roback Morse. Professional women who are willing to be stay-at-home moms when it's necessary to do that.

I expect the woman I marry (if I marry) to have a college degree, and preferably a graduate degree, and a couple of years of employment. Then she has to stay home and invest in those children through the first five years at least. After that she can stay home or work as much as she thinks is beneficial to the family goals of impacting the university, the church and the public square – as well as continuing to raise those children. It's not a waste of her talent to make the next William Lane Craig, the next Marsha Blackburn, the

next Doug Axe, or the next Edith Jones.

Does abortion really reduce crime? A look at the evidence from published studies

October 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Law professors John R. Lott, Jr. of Yale Law School and John E. Whitley of the University of Adelaide found that legalizing abortion increased murder rates by up to seven percent. They concluded that legalizing abortion is a contributing factor to the great increase in out-of-wedlock births and single parent families, which in turn contribute to increased crime rates. Since 1970, the percentage of single-parent households in the United States has nearly tripled, from 11 percent to 32 percent, and the percentage of out-of-wedlock births has nearly quadrupled, from 11 percent to 43 percent of all children.7 Children born out-of-wedlock and raised by only one parent have a significantly higher incidence of crime.
>
> There are many other fundamental problems with the conclusion that legalized abortion leads to a decrease in crime.
>
> Statistician David Murray confirmed that young males between the ages of 17 and 25 commit the majority of crimes. However, if abortion had reduced crime, the crime rates in the United States would have dropped first among young people. They did not. Instead, the number of crimes committed by older people dropped first. Nearly 60% of the decline in murder since 1990 involved killers aged 25 and older — who were born before Roe v. Wade.8
>
> Murray also found that other nations with high abortion rates showed a large increase in crime about eighteen years after they legalized abortion. For example, in Great Britain, which legalized abortion in 1968, violent crime has been rising steeply since about 1985 — exactly when it should have been declining, according to the Donohue-Levitt thesis. Additionally, Russia, with the highest abortion rate on earth, has experienced a tidal wave of every kind of violent crime following the breakup of the Soviet Union.9
>
> FBI statistics showed that the murder rate in 1993 for 14- to 17-year-olds in the USA (born in the years 1975-1979, which had very high abortion rates) was 3.6 times higher than that of kids who were the same age in 1984 (who were born in the pre-legalization years of 1966-1970). Additionally, since Black women were having abortions at a much higher rate than White women, we should have expected the murder rate among Black youth to have declined beginning in about 1991. Instead, it increased more than five hundred percent from 1984 to 1993.10

> Finally, the huge increase in violent crime that peaked in 1991 and then began to decline is more closely related to the crack epidemic, not abortion. The Donohue-Levitt study confirms that the crime rate rose and fell exactly where crack cocaine was most easily available — in the large cities and among young Black males.11 This is also confirmed by the rise in crime during the time period 1984 to 1991, after a decline from 1980 to 1984. If abortion were the primary cause of a decline in violent crime, the crime rate would have been relatively stable during the time period 1980 to 1991.

This might be a good post to store away, because I get the abortion reduces crime argument thrown at me about once a month. It has to be responded to with evidence. A good to buy on this is John Lott's "Freedomnomics: Why the Free Market Works and Other Half-Baked Theories Don't". One third of the book covers this topic.

Is Darwinian evolution compatible with belief in God and robust religion?

October 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Casey Luskin to explain the facts about God and evolution: (21 minutes)

About Casey Luskin: (just a snippet)

> Casey Luskin is an attorney with graduate degrees in both science and law. He earned his B.S. and M.S. in Earth Sciences from the University of California, San Diego. His Law Degree is from the University of San Diego. In his role at Discovery Institute, Mr. Luskin works as Research Coordinator for the Center for Science and Culture. He formerly conducted geological research at Scripps Institution for Oceanography (1997-2002).
>
> Luskin is also co-founder of the Intelligent Design and Evolution Awareness (IDEA) Center, a non-profit helping students to investigate evolution by starting "IDEA Clubs" on college and high school campuses across the country. For his work with IDEA, the Intelligent Design and Undergraduate Research Center named an award honoring college graduates for excellence in student advocacy of intelligent design (ID) the "Casey Luskin Graduate Award."

If you can't see the video, then you can check out this article by Casey from Salvo magazine.

Excerpt:

> Whenever someone avers belief in "God-guided evolution," it's important to clarify what is meant by "evolution." It can mean something as benign as (1) "Life has changed over time," or it can entail more controversial ideas, like (2) "All living things have a universal common ancestry," or (3) "Natural selection acting upon random mutations produced the complexity of life."
>
> When the average theistic evolutionist says he believes that "God used evolution," what he often *actually* means is that God supernaturally intervened at various points in Earth's history to direct the course of life. He accepts evolution in sense 1 above, and maybe sense 2 as well, but has doubts about sense 3. This viewpoint differs dramatically from the standard neo-Darwinian paradigm that currently reigns in biology.
>
> As defined by its proponents, neo-Darwinism is a blind process of natural selection acting upon random mutations without any guidance by an external agent. According to the architects of this theory, the evolutionary process has no goals or predetermined outcome, and is by definition unguided. Under this view of life, human beings are accidents of history—and not just their bodies, but their brains and behaviors as well, including their moral and religious impulses. Thus, true neo-Darwinian theistic evolutionists (and they are out there) claim that,

> somehow, God guided an unguided process.
>
> But many of those who adopt the "theistic evolutionist" moniker actually reject neo-Darwinism and hold a view that's much closer to intelligent design, that is, to the belief that an intelligent agent has actively intervened—in a meaningful and detectable manner—to guide the development of life. The Evolution Lobby, however, will never be satisfied until such people fully capitulate to the Darwinian view.

And a bit later in that same paper:

> Evolutionary biologist Francisco Ayala makes this argument, stating, "Mutations are random or chance events because . . . [they] are unoriented with respect to adaptation."
>
> […]Ayala continues:
>
> The scientific account of these events does not necessitate recourse to a preordained plan, whether imprinted from the beginning or through successive interventions by an omniscient and almighty Designer. Biological evolution differs from a painting or an artifact in that it is not the outcome of preconceived design.
>
> Ayala concludes that, "in evolution, there is no entity or person who is selecting adaptive combinations."[12] Again, that doesn't sound like a religiously neutral model of biological origins.
>
> Indeed, in surveying how mainstream biology textbooks define Darwinian evolution, we learn it is a "random," "blind," "uncaring," "heartless," "undirected," "purposeless," and "chance" process that acts "without plan" or "any goals"; that we are "not created for any special purpose or as part of any universal design," and that "a god of design and purpose is not necessary."[13] If those don't entail claims that cut against theism, what would?
>
> Moreover, if Darwinian evolution is irrelevant to faith, why do so many atheists cite it as a reason for abandoning religion? A 2007 poll of 149 evolutionary biologists found that only two "described themselves as full theists."[14] Likewise, a survey of biologist members of the NAS found that over 94 percent were atheists or agnostics.[15] It's no coincidence that Eugenie Scott—the *de facto* head of the Evolution Lobby—signed the Third Humanist Manifesto, or that the world's most famous evolutionary biologist, Richard Dawkins, is also the world's most famous atheist. In Dawkins's own words, "Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist."[16]

He is one of my favorite people to listen to, because he is very very direct and definitely is not clouding the issues, the combatants and what each side is really trying to achieve. There is a lot of noise and obfuscation in this debate. But if you watch Casey's video, you will get everything as it really is.

Dennis Prager: Why a good person can vote against same-sex marriage

October 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager mentioned this article on his show today, and I thought I would link to it, since it is somewhat complementary to my own secular case against gay marriage.

Excerpt:

> So, the question is whether redefining marriage in the most radical way ever conceived — indeed completely changing its intended meaning — is good for society.
>
> It isn't.
>
> The major reason is this: Gender increasingly no longer matters. There is a fierce battle taking place to render meaningless the man-woman distinction, the most important distinction regarding human beings' personal identity. Nothing would accomplish this as much as same-sex marriage.
>
> The whole premise of same-sex marriage is that gender is insignificant: It doesn't matter whether you marry a man or a woman. Love, not gender, matters.
>
> Some examples of this war on gender:
>
> - This year Harvard University appointed its first permanent director of bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender, and queer student life. The individual, Vanidy Bailey, has asked that he/she never be referred to as he or she, male or female. Harvard has agreed.
> - In 2010 eHarmony, for years the country's largest online dating service, was sued for only matching men and women. Its lack of same-sex matchmaking meant that it violated anti-discrimination laws in some states. As a result, eHarmony was forced to begin a same-sex online service.
> - Each year more and more American high schools elect girls as homecoming kings and boys as homecoming queens. Students have been taught to regard restricting kings to males or queens to females as (gender-based) discrimination.
> - When you sign up for the new social-networking site, Google Plus, you are asked to identify your gender. Three choices are offered: Male, Female, Other.
> - Catholic Charities, which operates the oldest ongoing adoption services in America, has had to end its adoption work in Illinois, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C., because the governments there regard placing children with married man-woman couples before same-sex couples as discriminatory.

> Increasingly, even the mother-father ideal is being shattered in this battle to render the male-female distinction insignificant.
>
> - The socialist French government has just announced that in the future no government-issued document will be allowed to use the words “mother” or “father.” Only the gender-neutral term “parent” will be acceptable in France.
> - And in Rhode Island this year, one school district cancelled its father-daughter dance after the ACLU threatened to sue the district for gender discrimination. Only parent-child events, not father-daughter dances or mother-son ballgames, will be allowed.
>
> And all this is happening before same-sex marriage is allowed. Imagine what will happen should same-sex marriage become the law of the land.
>
> It will hasten the end of the male-female distinction and of any significance to mothers or fathers as distinctive entities.
>
> It will mean that those who, for religious or other reasons, wish to retain the man-woman definition of marriage will be legally and morally as isolated as racists are today.
>
> And it will mean that teachers and other adults who ask little boys and girls who they would like to marry, will, in order to be in sync with the morality of our times, have to make it clear that it might be someone of the same sex. “Will you marry a boy or a girl?” will be the only non-bigoted way to ask young people about their marital plans.

Dennis Prager is a Jewish scholar – he’s not coming from a Christian perspective. And in this article, he doesn’t mention God or the Bible at all.

When it comes to any issue, my approach is to look at what the Bible says to get my basic position, to clarify it with good history and good theology, and then to find evidence from outside the Bible to confirm it and to make it practical and effective. The evidence from outside the Bible is also useful to speak about what the Bible says with people who don’t accept the Bible – and even the existence of God. If you want to influence the culture, you have to ready to speak to anyone – even people outside of church!

Gallup poll: Romney leads Obama 52-45 among early voters

October 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Final 2008 U.S. Presidential Election Map

From the latest Gallup poll:

> Romney currently leads Obama 52% to 45% among voters who say they have already cast their ballots. However, that is comparable to Romney's 51% to 46% lead among all likely voters in Gallup's Oct. 22-28 tracking polling. At the same time, the race is tied at 49% among those who have not yet voted but still intend to vote early, suggesting these voters could cause the race to tighten. However, Romney leads 51% to 45% among the much larger group of voters who plan to vote on Election Day, Nov. 6.

The Ohio Republicans have been busy purging dead voters and duplicate registrations:

> [American Majority Action President Ned] Ryun, whose group has opened voter registration efforts in Ohio and other swing states, said that the Buckeye State's efforts to clean up voter rolls has also played a part in tightening the gap. He said that 450,000 dead voters and duplicate registrations have been nixed, and the majority were Democrats.
>
> "Considering Obama won the state by 263,000 votes, Ohio's cleaner rolls could make a big impact," Ryun said. He added, "The five largest counties in Ohio have all shifted at least 6 percent and as much as 27 percent to the Republicans since

> 2008. While the polls show an Obama lead, these real votes–assuming registered voters vote for their candidate–demonstrate a Republican shift since 2008."
>
> Ryun sent this to Secrets from his analysis of Ohio early voting:
>
> In 2008, there were 1,158,301 total absentee ballots requested, 33 percent registered Democrat and 19 percent registered Republican–a 14 point gap. So far in 2012, 638,997 ballots have been requested, 29 percent Democrat and 24 percent Republican–only a five point gap.

Romney is confident enough about Ohio and Florida to be heading into deep blue states like Michigan, Pennsylvania and Minnesota.

Excerpt:

> Clinton's Minnesota visit came just days after Romney and his allies started airing TV ads in the state. GOP-leaning groups including Americans for Job Security and American Future Fund were spending $615,000 this week. Romney spent a much lighter $29,000 last week, and it was unclear how much his campaign was spending this week. All together, the efforts led Obama to follow suit to prevent the state from slipping out of his grasp. His campaign was spending $210,000 on ads in Minnesota this week.
>
> Polls show Romney having gained ground in Minnesota though still trailing Obama. And Obama has a much larger campaign footprint of paid staff and volunteers, including more than 30 full-time workers and 12 offices. Romney never has established much of campaign organization in Minnesota.
>
> In Pennsylvania, Romney's campaign started pouring money into TV ads Monday for the first time, though Republican-leaning groups have been on the air in recent days trying to narrow the Obama advantage indicated by surveys. Republican groups – American Crossroads, Restore Our Future and Americans for Job Security – are spending at least $3.9 million this week. That does not include spending by Romney's campaign. Obama aides said the president's campaign is spending $625,000.
>
> Romney has sent most of his Pennsylvania team to other states in recent weeks, and he has had no plan to visit, raising questions about whether he is actually playing to win the state that offers 20 electoral votes and last went Republican in the 1988 presidential election.
>
> GOP allies also were running TV ads in Democratic-tilting Michigan in hopes of softening the ground for Romney in the final days, but there was no indication yet that the Republican himself would make a strong 11th-hour play for the state where he was born and raised.

Romney is leading by 2 in Ohio, according to the latest Rasmussen poll, and trails Obama by single digits in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Minnesota. Obama has to win all 3 of those blue states to have a chance. Romney can win without Ohio.

Obama’s policies ignore the needs and concerns of men

October 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christina Hoff Sommers

Christina Hoff Sommers re-caps Obama’s history of introducing anti-male policies at the American Enterprise Institute blog.

Excerpt:

> The Affordable Care Act mentions “breast” 44 times, “prostate” not once. It also establishes an elaborate and expensive network of special programs to promote women’s health. Programs for men are nowhere to be found. What explains the imbalance?
>
> When President Obama took office, he promised to insulate his administration from organized lobbyists. Yet, from day one, he granted the women’s lobby unprecedented influence. The results should trouble fair-minded feminists.
>
> The 2009 stimulus program set the pattern. The president had originally called for a two-year “shovel-ready” plan to modernize roads, bridges, electrical grids, and dams. Women’s activists were appalled. Op-eds appeared with titles like “Where Are the New Jobs for Women?” and “The Macho Stimulus Plan.” More than 1,000 feminist historians signed an open letter urging Mr. Obama not to favor a “heavily male-dominated field” like construction: “We need to rebuild not only concrete and steel bridges but also human bridges.” Kim Gandy, president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), attacked the “testosterone-laden ‘shovel-ready’ terminology.” Christina Romer, who chaired the President’s Council of Economic Advisers, would later say, “The very first e-mail I got . . . was from a women’s group saying, ‘We don’t want this stimulus package to just

create jobs for burly men.'"

The president's original plan was designed to stop the hemorrhaging in construction and manufacturing while investing in physical infrastructure. It was not a grab bag of gender-correct transfer programs. The whole idea was to get Americans back to work, and it was "burly men" who had lost most of the jobs following the financial collapse of 2008. But as protests mounted, the president's team reconfigured the bill according to NOW's specifications. In a column entitled "Economic Recovery: What's NOW Got to Do with It?" Gandy could hardly contain her elation: "As we looked through the act, over and over we saw reflections of the very specific proposals that we had made, and with big numbers next to them. Numbers that started with a 'B' (as in billion)." To read Gandy's column is to understand why shovels are still standing idle and the stimulus was such a disappointment

A year later, the 2010 Affordable Care Act created an Office of Women's Health, a National Women's Health Information Center, a Coordinating Committee on Women's Health, and more — right down to the mandate that universities pay for students' birth-control pills.

The average lifespan of American men is five years shorter than women's, and men contract the big diseases several years earlier. According to the American Cancer Society, men's lifetime risk of developing cancer is approximately 1 in 2; for women, it is 1 in 3. But the Act is informed by the spirit of NOW and other women's organizations such as the American Association of University Women. It would never occur to these groups that the health and longevity of men are matters of interest to women. To them, relations between the sexes are a zero-sum game — and their role is to fight for women and against men.

Most striking of all is the Obama administration's blindness to the growing problem of male academic underachievement. Girls outshine boys by nearly every measure of classroom success. They earn better grades, take more advanced-placement and honors courses in high school, and are far more likely to go to college. Women earn 57 percent of bachelor's degrees, 63 percent of master's degrees, and 53 percent of doctoral degrees. According to a recent Harvard study ("Pathways to Prosperity"), the new passport to the American Dream "is education beyond high school." Today, far more women than men have that passport.

Yet the president persists in acting as if our schools are a hostile learning environment for girls, one that warrants aggressive federal intervention. Pressured by groups like the AAUW and the National Women's Law Center (NWLC), the White House recently announced that the Department of Education would be adopting a more rigorous application of Title IX to career, technology, and engineering programs in high school and college — to stop the alleged boy-favoritism that is shortchanging girls. To avoid federal investigations that

> threaten withdrawal of financial support, programs will simply enroll fewer males.

Male readers, did you know about these issues, and the others that Christina brings up in her article? Probably not. It’s a funny thing but sometimes I think that men do need to be a little more vocal about how laws and policies discriminate against us. After all, if we are poor and sick and unemployed, as Obama seems to want, then we cannot do much good for anyone. We need to take care of ourselves even if our ultimate goal is to serve others.

Reformation Day celebrates the supremacy of Scripture and reason in theology

October 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Ligonier Ministries web site has a summary of the event that kicked off the Reformation.

Excerpt:

> On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther tacked up 95 theses on the church door at Wittenberg. With this act, he hoped to provoke a discussion among the scholars about the abuses of the indulgences by the Roman Catholic Church. He was not trying to create a public furor by any means, but within a fortnight, these theses had spread through the country like wildfire. The last thing Luther had in mind was to start some kind of major controversy, but nevertheless major controversy did begin.
>
> From the discussions at Wittenberg, the disputations began to accelerate and escalate. Copies of the theses reached Rome and critical meetings were scheduled with the young monk. In these debates, Luther was maneuvered into proclaiming publicly that he had questions about the infallibility of church councils and also that he thought that it was possible that the pope could err. In 1520 a papal encyclical was issued which condemned Martin Luther as a heretic. Luther burned the document in a public bonfire and his defiance before the church was now a matter of record.
>
> In response, Martin Luther picked up his pen to challenge the entire penitential system of the Roman Catholic Church, which undermined in principle the free remission of sins that is ours in the gospel. By doing so, he was unswervingly advocating his commitment to *sola fide*, the doctrine of justification by faith alone.
>
> In 1521, Luther was summoned to the Imperial Diet, an authoritative meeting that involved the princes of the church, called by the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire to be held in the city of Worms in Germany. Luther was an outlaw. For him to appear at the Diet was to risk his very life; therefore, he was given safe conduct by the Emperor to attend. With a few friends, Luther traveled from Wittenberg to Worms. The eyewitnesses of that episode tell us that when Luther's little covered wagon appeared around the corner of the bend, there were lookouts posted in the church tower at Worms. All the people were agog waiting for the arrival of this notorious person. When Luther's caravan was sighted, people were throwing their hats in the air, blowing trumpets, and creating all the fanfare of the arrival of the hero. It was the 16th century answer to a ticker-tape parade.
>
> Things, however, became very solemn in a hurry because the next day he

> appeared before the Diet. His books were stacked on a table in the room, and he was asked and ordered to recant of his writings. This surprised Luther because he thought he was going to have an opportunity to defend his writings; but the only question really of any importance that was asked of him was this: "Are these your writings?" And when he said yes, they said, "Are you ready to recant of them?"
>
> Hollywood has their version of Luther standing there boldly with his fist in the air saying, "Here I stand!" and so on. But instead he dropped his chin on his chest and muttered something that nobody could understand, so they asked him to speak up. "What did you say?" He said, "May I have 24 hours to think about it." And so Luther was granted a reprieve of 24 hours to return to his room to contemplate the seriousness of this occasion.
>
> The prayer that Luther wrote in that ensuing 24-hour period was one of the most moving prayers I have ever read in my life. In that prayer, Luther cried out for God in his sense of total loneliness fearing that God had abandoned him, and proclaimed, "O Lord, I am Thine, and the cause is Thine, give me the courage to stand."
>
> And on the morrow, Luther was called once again back to the court and was told to reply to the question. He said to the Diet, "Unless I am convinced by sacred Scripture or by evident reason, I cannot recant, for my conscience is held captive by the Word of God, and to act against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me." And with that there was an instant uproar.

The Protestant Reformation emphasizes the responsibility of each person to become familiar with what the Bible teaches for themselves and to make sense of it using the laws of logic for themselves. There is an enormous focus on the individual and individual's responsibility to puzzle theology out for himself, using the tools available to him: reason, science, Scripture, history. The Reformation put forward the famous five Solas: "Sola Scriptura" (Scripture Alone); "Sola Gratia" (Grace Alone); "Sola Fide" (Faith Alone); "Solus Christus" (Christ Alone); and "Soli Deo Gloria" (To God Alone Be Glory).

My friend J.W. Wartick has a post about the effects of the Reformation on society as a whole.

Here's one of the effects: (links removed)

> Capitalism had already begun before the European Reformations, having its renewal start in Italian city states in the 12th Century (for a detailed and extremely interesting discussion of this, see Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason,* 71ff). The Reformation, however, provided a place for capitalism to flourish. John Calvin's thought touched upon nearly every contemporary problem, and one of these was usury (money lending at interest). Focusing upon the cultural context of the prohibition of usury in the Hebrew Scriptures, Calvin

> argued that his contemporary cultural context provided a way for usury to work without being necessarily wrong. Lending money in such a fashion was essential for the later development of capitalism (Alister McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 259-260).
>
> The Reformation also paved the way for a "Protestant Work Ethic." Martin Luther's notion of the "priesthood of all believers" demolished the hard distinction between the "temporal" and "spiritual" realm which dominated the thought of the church at the time. By breaking down this barrier, hard labor was elevated. It was no longer seen as an inferior life to that of monastic withdrawal; rather, any type of work could be pleasing to God (McGrath, 256-258). In contemporary churches, one can often hear about how the engineer, the retail worker, the auto worker, and the like should all utilize their skills to the glory of God. Such thinking came directly from the Reformation.

The Reformation also kick-started science, because nature held secrets about God's existence and character.

Excerpt:

> Without the Reformation, modern science would probably have developed in any event because of the ethos of rationality and the doctrine of creation conducive to it. The Reformation, however, hastened the development by criticizing scholasticism and by putting emphasis on the direct observation of nature. Luther has been called the Copernicus of theology while, on the other hand, Copernicus has been called the Luther of astronomy. Indeed, Thomas Sprat, an Anglican clergyman and an early member of the Royal Society, emphasized that there was a reformation, some would say revolution, in both philosophy and theology [3]. In natural philosophy or science, questions about nature were no longer answered primarily by quoting Aristotle and the Scholastics, but by turning to observation of and experimentation on nature itself. Similarly, after the Reformation, Protestants no longer answered questions in theology primarily by quoting scholastic philosophers and theologians, but by turning directly to the Bible. Luther interpreted Scripture by asking: what is the clear and straightforward meaning of the text? Scientists interpret nature in the simplest way using the minimum number of hypotheses.
>
> Luther believed that the world was beginning a new age, which would bring not only a reform of religion but a new appreciation of nature. In his informal "Table Talk" he said,
>
> We are at the dawn of a new era, for we are beginning to recover the knowledge of the external world that was lost through the fall of Adam. We now observe creatures properly …. But by the grace of God we already recognize in the most delicate flower the wonders of divine goodness and omnipotence [4].
>
> In the last part of this statement, Luther paraphrased the words of the Apostle

> Paul in his letter to the Romans (Rom. 1:20).
>
> Luther was open to the authentic scientific advances of his age [5]. He appreciated the mechanical inventions of his day.
>
> He accepted the use of medicine in treating disease and is quoted as having said [6],
>
> It's our Lord God who created all things and they are good. Wherefore it's permissible to use medicine, for it is a creature of God.
>
> To someone who said that it is not permissible for a Christian to use medicine, Luther replied rhetorically, "Do you eat when you are hungry?" According to Andrew White [7], this attitude of Luther made the Protestant cities of Germany more ready than others to admit anatomical investigation and dissection.
>
> Luther accepted astronomy as a science, but rejected astrology as a superstition because it cannot be confirmed by demonstration. Astrology, according to Luther, is idolatry and violates the first commandment. He was both amused and distressed by Melanchthon's interest in astrology, a belief system that was widely accepted at the time [8].

The Reformation means good economics and good science, as well as good theology.

But theology still had some growing to do.

The challenges of the Reformers led to the development of the doctrine of middle knowledge, which reconciles divine sovereignty with human freedom and responsibility, solving a major problem with Reformed theology.

A very good book on middle knowledge is "Salvation and Sovereignty" by Kenneth Heathley. Highly recommended by Paul Gould.

The scariest old time radio shows for Hallowe’en

October 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Arrrr! Lobster Pirate is pleased that it is Hallowe’en!
Here are some of the scariest old time radio shows EVER! These are MP3 files. Be careful, they are SCARY!

- The House in Cypress Canyon (Suspense)
- The Thing on the Fourble Board (Quiet, Please)
- Three Skeleton Key (Escape)
- Donovan’s Brain – part1, part 2 (Suspense)
- Sorry, Wrong Number (Suspense)
- The Country of the Blind (Escape)
- Ghost Hunt (Suspense)

The House in Cypress Canyon is the scariest one, in my opinion. If you can’t download MP3s, then you can read the transcript here.

Video: children complain about Obama-style redistribution of their Hallowe’en candy

November 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian conservative Steven Crowder took this hidden camera video:

Story from Red Alert Politics: (H/T Bad Blue)

> Fox News contributor Steven Crowder decided he would see how well children would take President Barack Obama’s redistribution of wealth idea when it was applied to their Halloween candy.
>
> He went to a trick-or-treat tailgate and had children line up after they had collected their candy and Crowder redistributed it so that every child would have an equal amount.
>
> Sure enough, they weren’t too thrilled.
>
> “Dude that’s not cool,” said one upset child dressed as a baseball player. “It’s not fun to take people’s candy. This is my candy, I worked hard for it.”
>
> Another little girl in a princess costume’s jaw dropped as Crowder dropped a handful of her candy in another child’s bag. She looked up to her parents in disbelief and near-tears as if to demand that they protest this injustice.
>
> The video is an attempt to show the real effects of a popular Obama campaign point which is to, “make the rich pay their fair share,” or, in other words, redistribute the wealth of the rich to the poor, regardless of who earned the money in the first place.
>
> “You just stole my candy,” yelled one kid dressed all in white who looked like he was ready for a fist-fight.
>
> “Is that your costume? You didn’t make that shirt, you didn’t build that,” replied Crowder, referring to Obama’s famous quote where he told business owners that they owed something to the government because they didn’t build their own businesses.
>
> “I’m gonna call the police!,” yelled another child who swarmed Crowder with a group of his friends who appeared to be getting aggressive. Some even tried to swat Crowder in the face.
>
> To say the least, Crowder was far from popular that night, but his prank served its purpose. Redistribution, in the words of one angry trick-or-treater, “is just not fair.”

Hilarious! But the public schools will brainwash them to become little socialist zombies in due time. What else can we expect from unionized public school teachers but big government indoctrination?

Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate

November 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports on how the Obama administration ignored all the warning signs.

Excerpt:

> The U.S. Mission in Benghazi convened an "emergency meeting" less than a month before the assault that killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans, because Al Qaeda had training camps in Benghazi and the consulate could not defend against a "coordinated attack," according to a classified cable reviewed by Fox News.
>
> Summarizing an Aug. 15 emergency meeting convened by the U.S. Mission in Benghazi, the Aug. 16 cable marked "SECRET" said that the State Department's senior security officer, also known as the RSO, did not believe the consulate could be protected.
>
> "RSO (Regional Security Officer) expressed concerns with the ability to defend Post in the event of a coordinated attack due to limited manpower, security measures, weapons capabilities, host nation support, and the overall size of the compound," the cable said.
>
> According to a review of the cable addressed to the Office of the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the Emergency Action Committee was also briefed "on the location of approximately ten Islamist militias and AQ training camps within Benghazi … these groups ran the spectrum from Islamist militias, such as the QRF Brigade and Ansar al-Sharia, to 'Takfirist thugs.'" Each U.S. mission has a so-called Emergency Action Committee that is responsible for security measures and emergency planning.
>
> The details in the cable seemed to foreshadow the deadly Sept. 11 attack on the U.S. compound, which was a coordinated, commando-style assault using direct and indirect fire. Al Qaeda in North Africa and Ansar al-Sharia, both mentioned in the cable, have since been implicated in the consulate attack.

So the attack was foreshadowed by a cable sent a month before the attack. How has the administration responded to these revelations?

They haven't:

> Fox News asked the State Department to respond to a series of questions about the Aug. 16 cable, including who was specifically charged with reviewing it and whether action was taken by Washington or Tripoli. Fox News also asked, given the specific warnings and the detailed intelligence laid out in the cable, whether the State Department considered extra measures for the consulate in light of the

> anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks – and if no action was taken, who made that call.
>
> The State Department press office declined to answer specific questions, citing the classified nature of the cable.

The bottom line is that we can't trust the Democrats on national security. They are too weak. They side with our enemies too much.

Related posts

- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack
- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser
- Obama administration warns contractors to delay layoffs to after election
- Obama wants to send $1 billion of aid to Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
- Report: Iran shipping arms and personnel to Syria through Iraq
- Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)
- The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration
- Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month
- Democrat defense cuts to an already weakened military expose us to aggression
- Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES
- Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?
- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority
- Obama's neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Obama's Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors
- Obama's defense cuts undermine our national security
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them

California: Obamacare exchanges will raise health insurance premiums up to 25%

November 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The radically leftist Los Angeles Times reports on it. (H/T The Cato Institute)

Excerpt:

> California's health insurance exchange said more than 30 plans are expected to vie with one another for spots in the state-run marketplace opening next fall.
>
> State officials, and those in other states, are eager to flex their purchasing power under the federal healthcare law by selecting only certain individual and small-business health plans for 19 different regions across California.
>
> The exchange, branded Tuesday as Covered California, will negotiate with insurers for the best rates and will assist consumers and small businesses in choosing a plan by separating them into five categories based on cost and level of benefits.
>
> […]The ability of the exchange to lower healthcare costs remains unclear. Experts said average premiums could rise in the exchange because the Affordable Care Act requires improved benefits, but consumers' out-of-pocket medical costs could decrease under those same changes.
>
> California insurance officials have expressed concern about substantial rate hikes for some existing policyholders going into the exchange.
>
> Under a new rating map approved by state lawmakers, the Department of Insurance estimated that premiums for similar coverage could increase as much as 25% in West Los Angeles, 22% in the Sacramento area and nearly 13% in Orange County.

Do you want to pay higher medical insurance premiums? Can you afford it? We've already seen massive drops in average household incomes under this President.

According to Forbes magazine:

> New income data from the Census Bureau reveal what a great job Barack Obama has done for the middle class as President. During his entire tenure in the oval office, median household income has declined by 7.3%.
>
> In January, 2009, the month he entered office, median household income was $54,983. By June, 2012, it had spiraled down to $50,964. That's a loss of $4,019 per family, the equivalent of losing a little less than one month's income a year, every year. And on our current course that is only going to get worse not better…
>
> […]Three years into the Obama recovery, median family income had declined nearly 5% by June, 2012 as compared to June, 2009. That is nearly twice the decline of 2.6% that occurred during the recession from December, 2007 until

> June, 2009. As the Wall Street Journal summarized in its August 25-26 weekend edition, "For household income, in other words, the Obama recovery has been worse than the Bush recession."
>
> […]Obama has failed the poor as well as the middle class. Last year, the Census Bureau reported more Americans in poverty than ever before in the more than 50 years that Census has been tracking poverty. Now The Huffington Post reports that the poverty rate is on track to rise to the highest level since 1965, before the War on Poverty began. A July 22 story by Hope Yen reports that when the new poverty rates are released in September, "even a 0.1 percentage point increase would put poverty at the highest level since 1965."

Additionally, medical insurance premiums, which Obama promised to lower, are actually up.

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> During his first run for president, Barack Obama made one very specific promise to voters: He would cut health insurance premiums for families by $2,500, and do so in his first term.
>
> But it turns out that family premiums have increased by more than $3,000 since Obama's vow, according to the latest annual Kaiser Family Foundation employee health benefits survey.
>
> Premiums for employer-provided family coverage rose $3,065 — 24% — from 2008 to 2012, the Kaiser survey found. Even if you start counting in 2009, premiums have climbed $2,370.

Why should we go forward with Obamacare, which requires the construction of these exchanges? Obama already broke his promise to cut health insurance premiums, and the full implementation of these exchanges would raise the premiums even higher. This is nothing but a ploy to justify the imposition of price controls on private health insurers so that they go out of business, and we are left with a fully government-controlled system. Then there will be no choice, no competition, waiting lists, a shortage of doctors and rationing of health care by un-elected bureaucrats. Do not give this man a second term.

Here are a few articles that I have been using lately to inform people about the problems with Obamacare:

- Heritage Foundation: Obamacare Raises Taxes on 3 Million Middle-Class Americans
- Cato Institute: ObamaCare's Cost Could Top $6 Trillion in first 10 years
- Life News: Obamacare is pro-abortion and pro-government controlled rationing
- Heritage Foundation: The 3 Biggest Ways Obamacare Kills Jobs
- Investors Business Daily: Obama's Broken Health-Premium Savings Promise
- Reason: Obamacare will lead to longer wait times and crowded emergency rooms
- Doctor Patient Medical Association: 83% of doctors contemplating quitting over

Obamacare

It’s important to understand that people who oppose this law don’t oppose because we are just being contrary. We have reasons.

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalistic alternatives to the Big Bang

November 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture, which was given in 2004 at the University of Colorado, Boulder. A very liberal university!

This lecture is suitable for intermediate and advanced Christian apologists.

The description of the video states:

> This is quite simply one of the best lectures William Lane Craig (a philosopher of science) has given. Craig explores the origins of the universe. He argues for a beginning of the universe, while refuting scientific models like the Steady State Theory, the Oscillating Theory, Quantum Vacuum Fluctuation Model, Chaotic Inflationary Theory, Quantum Gravity Theory, String Theory, M-Theory and Cyclic Ekpyrotic Theory.

And here is the description of the lecture from Reasonable Faith:

> A Templeton Foundation lecture at the University of Colorado, Boulder, laying out the case from contemporary cosmology for the beginning of the universe and its theological implications. Includes a lengthy Q & A period which features previous critics and debate opponents of Dr. Craig who were in attendance, including Michael Tooley, Victor Stenger, and Arnold Guminski.

Craig has previously debated Stenger and Tooley previously. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A time of this lecture. Imagine – having laid out your entire case to two people who have debated you before and who know your arguments well. What did they ask Craig, and how did he respond?

This lecture is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The whole research paper that the lecture is based on is posted online.

U.S. birth rate hits all time low, 41% of babies born to unmarried women

November 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports on a very disturbing story. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The birth rate in the United States hit an all-time low in 2011, according to a report released this month by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
>
> "The 2011 preliminary number of U.S. births was 3,953,593, 1 percent less (or 45,793 fewer) births than in 2010; the general fertility rate (63.3 per 1,000 women age 15-44 years) declined to the lowest rate ever reported for the United States," said the report.
>
> More than 40 percent of all babies born in the country last year, the report said, were born to unmarried women.
>
> […]Although the percentage of babies born to unmarried women was highest among teens, the percentage of babies delivered by unmarried women of older ages increased from 2010 to 2011.

This is disturbing for many reasons, but one of those reasons is surely that Social Security will go bankrupt faster if there are not enough replacement workers paying into the system. People like me who are paying for Social Security today will never get back what we paid into it. There just aren't enough people being born to pay out those benefits. I don't think that fatherless children will do as well at earning income, either, which is just going to make the system go bankrupt faster.

Part of the problem, I think, is that when the economy goes south, fewer men will marry and take on the burden of having and raising children. In order to enter into the roles of husband and father, a man has to be earning a decent income and keeping what he earns. When the deficits are over a trillion dollars a year, and the job market stinks, men look at the responsibilities of marriage and parenting and they say no. This is another reason why women should not be voting for Obama.

NHS paying millions to hospitals to deny food and fluids to end-of-life patients

November 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Almost two thirds of NHS trusts using the Liverpool Care Pathway have received payouts totalling millions of pounds for hitting targets related to its use, research for*The Daily Telegraph* shows.

> The figures, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, reveal the full scale of financial inducements for the first time.
>
> They suggest that about 85 per cent of trusts have now adopted the regime, which can involve the removal of hydration and nutrition from dying patients.
>
> More than six out of 10 of those trusts – just over half of the total – have received or are due to receive financial rewards for doing so amounting to at least £12million.
>
> […]At many hospitals more than 50 per cent of all patients who died had been placed on the pathway and in one case the proportion of forseeable deaths on the pathway was almost nine out of 10.
>
> […]The LCP was originally developed at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital and the city's Marie Curie hospice to ease suffering in dying patients, setting out principles for how they to be treated.
>
> It involves the withdrawal of treatments or tests from patients which doctors believe could cause distress and do more harm than good.
>
> […]A series of cases have also come to light in which family members said they were not consulted or even informed when food and fluids were withheld from their loved-ones.

What would happen if we had government-run health care? When you make something "free", more people want to use it, but fewer people want to provide it – because there is no money in it. So what does the government do to control costs? They ration care to people who can no longer vote to keep them in power. The weak, the elderly – just put them on a pathway to death. Is that what we want here in the United States?

Related posts

- UK socialism in action: patients waiting on trolleys for over 50 hours
- NHS makes patients wait unnecessarily in order to avoid "raising expectations"
- NHS refuses to treat woman who is starving to death
- Former NHS hospital director dies on surgery waiting list

- Women gives birth after NHS nurses send her home from hospital
- UK patients denied treatment as “public option” system makes cutbacks
- How do governments control costs in a single-payer health care systems?
- NHS patients giving birth in waiting rooms
- What does universal health care really mean?
- How well is government-run health care working out in the UK?
- British national health care system prepares to cut 20 billion dollars
- NHS kills a man’s wife by delaying cancer treatment for 7 months
- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
- Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water
- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care
- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care
- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- NHS refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi

November 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guy Benson has a list of 5 revelations about the Benghazi massacre that came out in the last 48 hours. I've reported on a couple of them, but here are the last two on his list:

> **(4)** The president keeps telling interviewers that he's keenly interested in the results of this very, very important investigation. But then White House Press Secretary Jay Carney made an accidental admission yesterday:
>
> Today, the White House press secretary let it slip during a press gaggle aboard Air Force One that President Obama's inaction on the Benghazi situation now extends to inaction on the supposed investigation taking place. The administration has still not made clear what exactly is being investigated, or the extent of the investigation. And President Obama doesn't much care. Said Carney: "**He has not participated in the investigation. He is anticipating results that show us exactly what happened** and who is responsible and what lessons we can learn from it and ensure it never happens again. He expects the investigation to be rigorous."
>
> The president is taking a hands-off approach to this sham of an investigation. What a surprise. I guess he's got his hands full with more important things these days, just as he evidently did before and during the 9/11 terrorist attack that killed four Americans, including a sitting Ambassador.
>
> **(5)** The motherload, from CBS News:
>
> CBS News has learned that during the Sept. 11 attack on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi, **the Obama Administration did not convene its top interagency counterterrorism resource: the Counterterrorism Security Group, (CSG). "The CSG is the one group that's supposed to know what resources every agency has**. They know of multiple options and have the ability to coordinate counterterrorism assets across all the agencies," a high-ranking government official told CBS News. "**They were not allowed to do their job. They were not called upon.**" Information shared with CBS News from top counterterrorism sources in the government and military reveal keen frustration over the U.S. response on Sept. 11, the night ambassador Chris Stevens and 3 other Americans were killed in a coordinated attack on the U.S. consulate in Libya.
>
> Counterterrorism sources and internal emails reviewed by CBS News express frustration that **key responders were ready to deploy, but were not called upon to help in the attack …** Another senior counter terrorism official says a hostage rescue team was alternately asked to get ready and then stand down throughout the night, as officials seemed unable to make up their minds. **"The**

> **response process was isolated at the most senior level," says an official referring to top officials in the executive branch. "My fellow counterterrorism professionals and I (were) not consulted."**

I think that #4 is particularly interesting, given that Obama missed tons of Presidential Daily Briefings just before the attack.

Read the whole list, then share it or tweet it. National security is one of the main responsibilities of the President. If this President can't do the job he was elected to do, then we need to get one who can.

Related posts

- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Four out of five Sunday news shows fail to mention the Benghazi cover-up
- Kyle Clarke of 9NEWS grills Obama on Benghazi and green energy corruption
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack
- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser
- Obama administration warns contractors to delay layoffs to after election
- Obama wants to send $1 billion of aid to Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
- Report: Iran shipping arms and personnel to Syria through Iraq
- Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)
- The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration
- Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month
- Democrat defense cuts to an already weakened military expose us to aggression
- Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES
- Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?
- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority
- Obama's neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Obama's Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors
- Obama's defense cuts undermine our national security
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them

Responding to pro-choice rhetoric: “don’t like abortion? don’t have one!”

November 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Top pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf reports on his recent lecture at Colgate University. Excerpt:

> During the extended question and answer, a polite female student replied (paraphrase), “I’m against abortion and will never have one. If one of my friends gets pregnant and wants an abortion, I will do everything I can to talk her out of it. But I don’t want the government involved in taking away a woman’s choice. I guess that’s why I’m against abortion and am pro-choice.”
>
> The student was hardly alone. She was echoing the sentiments of millions of Americans who personally dislike abortion but do not identify as pro-life. Their beliefs are perfectly summed up in this popular bumper sticker: “Don’t like abortion? Don’t have one.”
>
> Notice the bumper sticker completely transforms the nature of the abortion debate with a single word—“like.”
>
> When pro-life advocates claim that elective abortion unjustly takes the life of a defenseless human being, they aren’t saying they dislike abortion. They are saying it’s objectively wrong, regardless of how one feels about it. Notice what’s going on here. The pro-life advocate makes a moral claim that he believes is objectively true—namely, that elective abortion unjustly takes the life of a defenseless human being. The abortion-choice advocate responds by changing that objective truth claim into a subjective one about likes and dislikes, as if the pro-lifer were talking about a mere preference. But this misses the point entirely. As Francis J. Beckwith points out, pro-life advocates don’t oppose abortion because they find it distasteful; they oppose it because it violates rational moral principles.
>
> Imagine if I said, “Don’t like slavery? Then don’t own a slave.” Or, “Don’t like spousal abuse? Then don’t beat your wife!” If I said such things, you would immediately realize I don’t grasp why slavery and spousal abuse are wrong. They are not wrong because I personally dislike them. They are wrong because slaves and spouses are intrinsically valuable human beings who have a natural right not to be treated as property. Whether I personally like slavery or spousal abuse is completely beside the point. If I liked spousal abuse, you would rightly say I was sick! You wouldn’t resign yourself to, “I guess abuse is right for you but not for me.”
>
> And yet this is precisely what the pro-choicer does. He reduces abortion to a mere preference and then declares, “Hands off! Keep the government out of the

> abortion business!”

Some choices are *wrong*. We can do better than abortion.

Learn about the pro-life case:

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf’s 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Video:10-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Objective truth in the abortion debate – a pro-life training video
- Alan Shlemon explains a classification system for pro-abortion arguments
- What is the best single book on the pro-life position?

And some posts motivating Christians and conservatives to take abortion seriously:

- Why Christians should focus on cultural issues as well as evangelism
- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion
- Are Christians too involved in politics?
- What did the early church fathers think about abortion?
- Scott Klusendorf confronts a “pro-life” nun who voted for Obama

Friday night spies: another two episodes of Secret Agent

November 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite espionage TV show is "Danger Man" with Patrick McGoohan, which later morphed into "Secret Agent". The show takes place during the 1960s, right at the height of the Cold War.

The actor, Patrick McGoohan, refused to perform romantic scenes on camera because of his religious beliefs. He turned down the roles of James Bond and Simon Templar because of these moral concerns (see below). And that dedication to moral excellence shines through in every frame of "Danger Man" and "Secret Agent".

Here's a description of Patrick McGoohan.

Excerpt:

> Main character John Drake worked for NATO as a special security agent and was free to travel the world working on special problems for free world governments. The story lines set an early precedent for non-violence, preferring to have Drake use his wits and his fists rather than a gun. McGoohan influenced the program from the start.
>
> The themes of morality and individuality fit in with his personal philosophy as well as his vision of what the character John Drake was supposed to be.
>
> As both a moral and opinionated man, McGoohan held strong views and was forceful about seeing that they were carried out. He had insisted at the very first meeting on the script for the first episode that the bedroom scene be cut out. In fact, he stipulated that romantic involvements would have to be eliminated if he were to play the role, and consequently none appeared in either this series or the 'Secret Agent' series that followed.

> […]It should come as no surprise that when McGoohan was offered the role as the first James Bond, he turned it down – several times – as being incompatible with the type of role he wanted to play. He says it was a decision he has never regretted.

> […]As an actor, McGoohan had now carved out a voice all his own…. John Drake was a loner, an individual, and a moral character.

From the UK Telegraph:

> [H]e was offered the roles of James Bond and Simon Templar (The Saint). He turned both down.
>
> He once recalled: "When we started Danger Man the producer wanted me to carry a gun and to have an affair with a different girl each week. I refused. I am

> not against romance on television, but sex is the antithesis of romance. Television is a gargantuan master that all sorts of people watch at all sorts of time, and it has a moral obligation towards its audience."

Here's tonight's first episode: **Sting in the Tail**

Description:

> Drake travels to Lebanon to lure an assassin to France, where he can be arrested and tried for murder. Drake realizes that the best way to reach the assassin is by approaching his woman, but how will he gain her confidence?

IMDB mean rating: [8.6/10]

IMDB median rating: [9/10]

TV Guide rating: [9.0/10]

Here's tonight's second episode: **Are You Going to be More Permanent?**

Description:

> In Geneva, two senior British spies have gone missing. Drake is dispatched to find the cause. Drake replaces the station chief and investigates each of the three M9 agents in order to discover which one is working for the other side.

IMDB mean rating: [8.5/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

TV Guide rating: [9.1/10]

Happy Friday!

Related posts

- Friday night movie: The 39 Steps (1935)
- Friday night spies: two more episodes of Secret Agent
- Friday night movie: The Scarlet Pimpernel (1934)
- Friday night spies: two episodes of Secret Agent
- Friday night movie: The Mark of Zorro (1940)
- Friday night detectives: one episode of Hercule Poirot
- Friday night soldiers: two episodes of Combat!
- Friday night movie: The Dam Busters (1955)
- Friday night movie: Sink the Bismarck! (1960)
- Friday night movie: The Crossing (2000)
- Friday night movie: The Great Escape (1963)
- Friday night movie: Pitfall (1948)
- Friday night movie: Great Expectations (1946)
- Friday night movie: The Quiet Man (1952)
- Friday night movie: King Lear (1971)
- Friday night movie: Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)

- Friday night movie: The Lady Vanishes (1938)
- Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)
- Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)
- Friday night movie: Double Indemnity (1944)
- Friday night movie: Moby Dick (1956)
- Friday night movie: The Guns of Navarone (1961)
- Friday night movie: Went the Day Well? (1942)
- Friday night movie: The Cruel Sea (1953)
- Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)
- Friday night movie: Horatio Hornblower (1951)
- Friday night movie: The Robe (1953)
- Friday night spies: Four more episodes of Danger Man
- Friday night movie: Run Silent, Run Deep (1958)
- Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes
- Friday night movie: The Silver Fleet (1943)
- Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)
- Friday night spies: Decision Before Dawn (1951)
- Friday night movie: The First of the Few (1942)
- Friday is Spy-Day! Watch four episodes of Danger Man

New e-mails reveal that White House pressured Department of Energy to make loans

November 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Previously undisclosed emails made public today by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee describe multiple instances of White House pressure on career Department of Energy officials to speed up approval of government loans to clean energy firms like Solyndra and Abound Solar.
>
> President Obama is described in one of the emails as having personally approved "moving it ahead," thus reversing a prior decision by DOE career officials not to extend $2 billion in tax-funded help to AREVA, a French nuclear power company, on an Idaho project.
>
> Vice-President Joe Biden is described in other emails as exerting heavy pressure to gain approval of a $1.3 billion wind farm project at Shepherd's Flat, Oregon.
>
> The new emails contradict claims by Obama and others in his administration that all decisions on the $20 billion DOE clean energy loans were made by career executives in the department.
>
> […][A]n Oct. 30, 2010, email from Jim McCrea, a credit advisor to the energy loan program, to Jonathan Silver, the program's executive director, described his worries about pressure from the White House to use a "fast-track process" to approve loans.
>
> "I am growing increasingly worried about a fast track process imposed on us at the POTUS [President of the United States] level based on this chaotic process that we are undergoing … by designing the fast track process and having it approved at the POTUS level (which is an absolute waste of his time!) it legitimizes every element and it becomes embedded like the 55% recovery rate which also was imposed by POTUS," McCrea said.
>
> In another email made public today by the House panel, Silver instructed McCrea to tell a Treasury Department official of White House support for DOE help to Abound Solar.
>
> "You better let him know that WH wants to move Abound forward. Policy will have to wait unless they have a specific policy problem with abound," Silver said in the June 25, 2010, email.
>
> Abound Solar is a Colorado-based solar panel manufacturer that had used $68 million of a $400 million DOE loan guarantee before filing for bankruptcy earlier this year.

You can a list of most of the green energy failures and the details of their Department of Energy loans here from Heritage Action.

Here's a snip:

> Thanks to analysts at The Heritage Foundation, a list has been compiled of 12 "green" energy companies which received Department of Energy (DOE) loan guarantees but are now bankrupt:
>
> 1. "Abound Solar (Loveland, Colorado), manufacturer of thin film photovoltaic modules.
> 2. Beacon Power (Tyngsborough, Massachusetts), designed and developed advanced products and services to support stable, reliable and efficient electricity grid operation.
> 3. Ener1 (Indianapolis, Indiana), built compact lithium-ion-powered battery solutions for hybrid and electric cars.
> 4. Energy Conversion Devices (Rochester Hills, Michigan/Auburn Hills, Michigan), manufacturer of flexible thin film photovoltaic (PV) technology and a producer of batteries and other renewable energy-related products.
> 5. Evergreen Solar, Inc. (Marlborough, Massachusetts), manufactured and installed solar panels.
> 6. Mountain Plaza, Inc. (Dandridge, Tennessee), designed and implemented "truck-stop electrification" technology.
> 7. Olsen's Crop Service and Olsens Mills Acquisition Co. (Berlin, Wisconsin), a private company producing ethanol.
> 8. Range Fuels (Soperton, Georgia), tried to develop a technology that converted biomass into ethanol without the use of enzymes.
> 9. Raser Technologies (Provo, Utah), geothermal power plants and technology licensing.
> 10. Solyndra (Fremont, California), manufacturer of cylindrical panels of thin-film solar cells.
> 11. Spectrawatt (Hopewell, New York), solar cell manufacturer.
> 12. Thompson River Power LLC (Wayzata, Minnesota), designed and developed advanced products and services to support stable, reliable and efficient electricity grid operation."

This is what the Obama adminstration means by "stimulus" and "shovel-ready" projects. This was their strategy to create jobs by spending taxpayer money and borrowing money from your children.

Pew Research study reveals which news network is more biased: Fox News or MSNBC?

November 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Baltimore Sun reports on a new Pew Research study. (H/T WGB)

Excerpt:

> In writing about the Pew study released today, I was struck by the big story of how negative coverage on several levels of presidential politics had become.
>
> […]**On MSNBC, the ratio of negative to positive stories on GOP candidate Mitt Romney was 71 to 3.**
>
> […]**The ratio of negative to positive stories in Fox's coverage of President Obama was 46 to 6.**
>
> Check out the full Pew study here. It's a good one, and there is much food for thought in its findings as we approach the end of an election cycle marked by poor media performance.

Pew Research is a left-of-center organization, so the finding is even more striking.

Peer-reviewed academic studies of media bias

Let's take a look at peer-reviewed academic studies of media bias, and see if they confirm or falsify what Pew Research found.

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing

> outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or

> subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

Those are the facts.

So what?

Now consider this column from Brent Bozell, which explains the difference media bias makes to political intelligence.

Excerpt:

> **A 2008 survey by the Pew Research Center asked media consumers three questions: which party was in control of Congress (Democrats), who was the secretary of state (Condi Rice) and who was the prime minister of Britain (Gordon Brown).**
>
> **Let's document how the viewers of "Hannity &Colmes" were better informed than Stewart's "Daily Show" gigglers on basic political facts. Hannity viewers beat Stewart's on the Democratic majority (84 percent to 65 percent correct answers), Condi Rice (a dramatic 73 percent to 48 percent gap) and Gordon Brown (49 percent to 36). Overall, as a percentage getting all three questions right, Hannity won 42-30.**

Just keep that in mind when you are watching the mainstream media news shows. A very good site to bookmark and read is Newsbusters, which documents mainstream media bias daily. I even have an RSS feed of their latest stories on the front page on this blog.

Occupy Wall Street mom divorces husband for $85K, abandons her kids

November 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tom sent me this article from the New York Post. Read the article and decide who you think is to blame.

Excerpt:

> She's protesting banks — but still getting a bailout.
>
> The Florida housewife who abandoned her family to join Occupy Wall Street is divorcing, giving up custody of her four kids and taking a big payout from her husband.
>
> Professional protester Stacey Hessler is legally splitting from her hubby, Curtiss, but not before waltzing off with a portfolio that includes cash and his 401(k) retirement fund, filled with stocks and other instruments of American capitalism.
>
> The divorce settlement, filed Oct. 16, awards Occu-Mom the $79,585 fund and a $5,800 bank account. Her total take: $85,385.
>
> The filing lists Curtiss' occupation as banker and says he earns $65,000 a year. Her job is listed in court papers as "protester" and her employer as "Occupy Wall Street." Annual salary: $0.
>
> Divorce papers cite "irreconcilable differences" for the split, saying the 19-year marriage "is irretrievably broken."
>
> One OWS protester who knows her says that Stacey's devotion to the movement caused the divorce but that she was unfazed by the breakup.
>
> "She didn't seem sad about any of it," the source said. "It was just so matter-of-fact."
>
> […]But she did respond when a Post reporter asked about a YouTube video showing her making out with another protester during an Occupy "Kiss In" on Valentine's Day.
>
> "I actually made out with four guys," she said, laughing wildly.
>
> Curtiss, 43, initiated the divorce in Volusia County, Fla., where the couple raised their family about 25 miles west of Daytona Beach.

So who is to blame? The bad woman who did bad things? Let's take a look at it.

Who is to blame when things go wrong in a relationship?

My view is that the man in the story is to blame, because I think that whenever something goes wrong in a relationship, then the person whose expectations are dashed is to blame. The reason why I think this is because you have to take people as you find them and then vet them as if they were job applicants applying for the job of marriage.

The job of marriage has very specific requirements, and these requirements are objective. Someone is going to have to raise the kids, someone is going to have to cook the meals, someone is going to have to earn the bulk of the money, someone is going to have to deal with the beasties that invade the home. The goal of the relationship is not to test the person to see if they are "fun" or whether your friends are envious. The goal of the relationship is to test the person for the role they will play in the marriage.

Does it work in reverse – are women responsible for their bad choices?

What I've found is that although many people see that the man is responsible when he makes a bad choice, they don't see the reverse situation. So consider the case where a man has sex with and then dumps a woman, who expected him to marry her and have children. Who is to blame? On my view, it's the woman who is to blame. The man was bad before she got there, and you cannot expect a bad man to act good, just because you imagine that he will. And giving him recreational sex won't make him act good – even if you imagine it will. Imagination is not the equivalent of passing an interview with the woman's father, and getting the father's approval. Imagination is not a 12-year resume with no gaps. Imagination is not a $500,000 investment portfolio. Imagination is not a paid-off home. Imagination is not a handful of reference letters from his former girlfriends. If the woman relied on her imagination when choosing a bad man, then the woman is to blame for the bad man's bad conduct. She needs to take responsibility.

Sometimes, what I've noticed is that women tend to focus on the bad thing that the men do that is counter to their expectations, because they project a standard of morality onto the man that the man expressly repudiates. In fact, I have actually met atheistic women who think that atheistic men should act based on some standard of morality. But the problem is that neither the atheist woman nor the atheist man accepts any objective standard of morality. If there is no designer to the universe, then the universe is an accident, and there is no way that we OUGHT to be. If there is no way we OUGHT to be, then there is no point in expecting anyone to be any way – it's just your opinion against their opinion. So you have a woman expecting a man to act according to some standard that she doesn't think is real by her own worldview!And meanwhile, the good men are passed by because we are "too strict", "too religious", "too moral", "too chaste", "too sober", "too predictable" and "there is no chemistry". (Chemistry = emotional craziness)

My conversation with a Christian woman

I had a conversation with a Christian woman a while back about this, and she could not see how a woman could be responsible for her choices in the same way that the man in the news story was responsible for his choices. So I invented a new example to show how men could be to blame, unlikely though that may be, since men are perfect in every way. This time, I imagined what would happen if a stripper-gram woman showed up at my door. I actually told the woman I was chatting with that I had to go because a stripper-gram HAD shown up. I told the woman how attractive the stripper was, and how I was in love with her, and wanted to marry her. How she undoubtedly was very wealthy, and well educated, and how she would help me to raise little Michele Bachmanns and William Lane

Craigs. I waxed eloquently on her B.S. in integrated science with a minor in philosophy, her M.A. in economics and her Ph.D in International Studies. All of which I had no evidence for, except for the feelings aroused by the sight of her naked cleavage. Besides, I explained, it would be easier for me to change her to match my vision of her after we were married.

At this point, my debating partner began to see the point. She could see that this imaginary stripper was going to dash my expectations, and probably cheat on me, and spend all my savings on shoes, handbags, dresses, jewelry and breast implants. And who would be to blame? ME! Because I am the one who was refusing to court her properly, and instead inventing an entire future life together that the imaginary stripper and I had never discussed. The stripper had never demonstrated that she capable of meeting those requirements – or even willing to try. I never asked her to try – and that's *my fault.*

Why some women make bad decisions about men

I actually know a Christian-raised atheist woman who co-habitated with a left-wing, global-warming atheist and then got pregnant and had an abortion, and she blamed the man for this. As if an atheist should be expected to believe in objective moral values and marriage! As if the man had been able to get her to co-habitate and get pregnant without her consent! She accepted no responsibility for her choice of this man whatsoever. And when I told her about the dangers of pre-marital sex and the importance of courting rules, she dismissed them as being too strict, claiming that a good job, chastity, virginity, apologetics, a firmly-grounded Christian faith, a rational basis for morality, sobriety, and so on, were all totally unnecessary for a sensible successful marriage. Still! After all that! Her criteria for a man? First, "chemistry", which is another word for physical attraction. And second, the approval of her very impractical, immature peer group. After all that, she still rejected the idea that standards for choosing the right man were important and should override her emotions.

Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA's account

November 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News, where else?

Excerpt:

> Despite a carefully narrated version of events rolled out late this week by the CIA claiming agents jumped into action as soon as they were notified of calls for help in Benghazi, security officials on the ground say calls for help went out considerably earlier — and signs of an attack were mounting even before that.
>
> The accounts, from foreign and American security officials in and around Benghazi at the time of the attack, indicate there was in fact a significant lag between when the threat started to show itself and help started to arrive.
>
> According to the CIA, the first calls for assistance came at 9:40 p.m. local time from a senior State Department official at the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, to the CIA annex about a mile away.
>
> But according to multiple people on the ground that night, the Blue Mountain Security manager, who was in charge of the local force hired to guard the consulate perimeter, made calls on both two-way radios and cell phones to colleagues in Benghazi warning of problems at least an hour earlier. Those calls allegedly went to local security contractors who say that the CIA annex was also notified much earlier than 9:40 p.m. U.S. military intelligence also told Fox News that armed militia was gathering up to three hours before the attack began.
>
> […]As details emerge of serious security issues before the attack on Sept. 11, Fox News is also beginning to hear more frustration from sources both on the ground in Benghazi and in the U.S. Multiple British and American sources insist there were other capabilities in the region and are mystified why none were used. Fox News was told there were not only armed drones that monitor Libyan chemical weapon sites in the area, but also F-18's, AC-130 aircraft and even helicopters that could have been dispatched in a timely fashion.
>
> […]British intelligence sources said that unarmed drones routinely flew over Benghazi every night in flight patterns and that armed drones which fly over chemical sites, some a short flight from Benghazi, "were always said to be on call." American sources confirmed this and questioned "why was a drone armed only with a camera dispatched?"

This is Jennifer Griffin reporting again. So it looks like she and Cheryl Atkisson are the best two journalists this year. Jennifer covering Benghazi, and Cheryl covering Fast and Furious.

Related posts

- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Four out of five Sunday news shows fail to mention the Benghazi cover-up
- Kyle Clarke of 9NEWS grills Obama on Benghazi and green energy corruption
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack
- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser
- Obama administration warns contractors to delay layoffs to after election
- Obama wants to send $1 billion of aid to Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
- Report: Iran shipping arms and personnel to Syria through Iraq
- Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)
- The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration
- Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month
- Democrat defense cuts to an already weakened military expose us to aggression
- Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES
- Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?
- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority
- Obama's neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Obama's Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors
- Obama's defense cuts undermine our national security
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them

An economist explains her ideas for teaching kids how to be responsible

November 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Look at this great editorial from Fox News.

There are 7 rules in the article.

This one is obvious:

> **Rule 2: Economic Incentives — Offer Plenty of Jobs**
>
> Teach kids chores at an early age and pay them reasonable rates. For us, the seemingly endless loads of dishes — about three every day — became the main chore. Even small children can handle dishwasher take-out loads, at least if you first remove the sharp knives and use plastic glasses. And to them, it is a new learning experience.
>
> Not tall enough? Just have a sturdy stepping stool and allow them to climb up on the counter to reach most shelves. If they still cannot reach safely, let them stack dishes neatly on the counter.
>
> Seasonal outdoor job have included weeding (a great chore for anyone old enough to enjoy digging with a plastic shovel.) Explain why the root of the dandelion and plantain weed has to be dug up. Ten cents can be reasonable per weed, with extra bonus for big roots. Soon enough they learn not just biology but counting, too, as they see how much more they need in order to afford that toy at the store.
>
> If you live near a town center, older children can be offered work running errands — buying a few items at the corner grocery store, picking up the Chinese food or taking a package to the post office.

But some are controversial:

> **Rule 5: Respect for Property Rights**
>
> The family provides basic family games that anybody can use — chess, Monopoly etc. Beyond that, games and toys are viewed as a luxury and can be accumulated by saving up and buying them or maybe receiving them as gifts one day. However, there naturally arises an asymmetry where the older ones possess much more than the younger ones.
>
> Should the oldest be obligated to share with multiple little siblings, or should the younger ones have to wait until they have saved up to buy their own? Some people might argue that, out of fairness, the older child should share his ample possessions. But if he had to work hard, doing dishwasher loads etc. to buy himself the games, is it really so fair that his siblings would share in the fruits of his labor?

> The solution? The budding entrepreneurs figured this one out by themselves: a fee for rental.
>
> Parental monitoring might needed if siblings are a bit too young to understand exactly how much they are charged. The fee can be translated into something easy to comprehend, such as the equivalent of dishwasher loads or weeds pulled.
>
> Actually, there are even more benefits to allowing the pay-to-play setup. Expecting a possible rental market with younger siblings, older ones figured they could recoup some of the purchase price for a new game, possibly even making a profit. That made them consider the tastes of their siblings — i.e. potential customers — when considering investing in new games.
>
> And it went even beyond than that in creativity. Our oldest son even conjured up elaborate board games of his very own, with his younger siblings liking them enough to pay to play.
>
> Property rights also mean you are free to sell off a game or toy to a sibling, as long as the buyer fully understands the consequences of the deal.

It made me feel a lot better about all my weird ideas about parenting. I can see how these rules would work to make children more responsible, but are they just too strict? It reminds me of the tiger mother article – about how Amy Chua parents her kids. I agreed with tiger mother, but I was in the minority of readers of this blog, if I recall correctly. Of course, her kids are all great successes now. Hmmmn.

George Will and Michael Barone predict landslide victory for Romney/Ryan

November 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, George Will: (Headline: George Will predicts 321-217 Romney landslide)

> Add Washington Post George Will to the landslide column along with Fox News Channel's Dick Morris and the Washington Examiner's Michael Barone.
>
> On this weekend's broadcast of "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" on ABC, Will revealed his prediction and added a bonus surprise by saying traditional Democratic state Minnesota would go for Romney as well.
>
> "I'm projecting Minnesota to go for Romney," Will said. "It's the only state that's voted democratic in nine consecutive elections, but this year, there's marriage amendment on the ballot that will bring out the evangelicals and I think could make the difference."

Second, Michael Barone:

> [M]ost voters oppose Obama's major policies and consider unsatisfactory the very sluggish economic recovery — Friday's jobs report showed an unemployment uptick.
>
> Also, both national and target state polls show that independents, voters who don't identify themselves as Democrats or Republicans, break for Romney.
>
> That might not matter if Democrats outnumbered Republicans by 39 to 32 percent, as they did in the 2008 exit poll. But just about every indicator suggests that Republicans are more enthusiastic about voting — and about their candidate — than they were in 2008, and Democrats are less so.
>
> That's been apparent in early or absentee voting, in which Democrats trail their 2008 numbers in target states Virginia, Ohio, Iowa and Nevada.
>
> […]Ohio (18). The anti-Romney auto bailout ads have Obama running well enough among blue-collar voters for him to lead most polls. But many polls anticipate a more Democratic electorate than in 2008. Early voting tells another story, and so does the registration decline in Cleveland's Cuyahoga County. In 2004, intensity among rural, small -town and evangelical voters, undetected by political reporters who don't mix in such circles, produced a narrow Bush victory. I see that happening again. Romney.
>
> […]**Bottom line: Romney 315, Obama 223.** That sounds high for Romney. But he could drop Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and still win the election. Fundamentals.

Barone's article breaks it down by state, which is good reading. He gives Romney Ohio

and Pennsylvania.

Both Barone and Will are moderates who are not known for making wild speculative predictions.

I do think that if you are in a swing state like Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Minnesota, Virginia, Florida, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Iowa, Wisconsin, Nevada or Colorado that you should definitely get out there and vote for Romney/Ryan. The latest poll in Pennsylvania shows a tie (Obama won that by 11 points in 2008). The latest poll in Michigan shows Romney ahead by 1 point (Obama won that by 16 points in 2008).

At this point, I am reiterating my 52-47 popular vote prediction for Romney. My electoral college prediction is 295-243 for Romney (similar to Barone's but Obama wins Pennsylvania (20)).

The more of a landslide this is, the more of a mandate that Ryan will have for his economic plan. I want to get back to the place where I don't have to worry about my job and my portfolio as soon as possible. Please get out there and vote for Romney/Ryan, and tell everyone you know to do the same. I am sick and tired of this feeling of doom that has been hanging over me and my aspirations for my life over the last four years.

UPDATE: Jimmy Pethokoukis says 301-237.

A special message for people who intend to vote libertarian in Tuesday's election

November 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Please watch this video:

Former Libertarian VP candidate Wayne Allyn Root agrees that Libertarians should unite behind Romney this election.

Excerpt:

> As a former Libertarian presidential contender, the 2008 Libertarian vice presidential nominee, the former chairman of the Libertarian National Campaign Committee, and the man called "Mr. Libertarian" by media across this country, you might be surprised to find I'm supporting Republican Mitt Romney for president. Yes, this Las Vegan has gone "all in" for Mitt. Why? Because Mitt Romney is the only sane choice for Libertarians.
>
> It's simple. Libertarians believe in less government; lower taxes; cutting rules, regulations and mandates to get government out of the way of small business; reining in out-of-control government agencies like the EPA; auditing the Fed; and balancing the budget. Sound familiar?
>
> So do Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan. Certainly a little less than Libertarians, including me, would like. But, I'll take incremental progress over no progress. Mitt Romney is a step in the right direction.
>
> Barack Obama is a thousand miles in the wrong direction — a direction that leads to the bankruptcy of our children and grandchildren and the destruction of the American Dream. A vote for anyone but Romney is a vote for Obama and his disastrous road that leads to the end of America (as we know it).
>
> The Obama you've seen for the last four years is nothing like the radical man who will be unleashed for the next four. The first Obama term was just a small taste of things to come. Without having to answer to voters again, Obama will be his REAL radical self. Without restraint, Obama will ignore Congress, and govern by Executive Order. These radical Executive Orders from "Obama unleashed" will change America forever.
>
> Don't believe me? Are you aware Obama issued almost 1,000 executive orders in his first term? That's more than all other presidents in history combined (and still counting). In a second term Obama will render Congress meaningless.
>
> […]This election is NOT about Libertarian versus non-Libertarian. This election is about capitalism versus Big Brother socialism. Mitt Romney is far from perfect, but at least he believes in capitalism. At least he won't denigrate and discourage business owners. Be thankful for little things.
>
> I'm not just a Libertarian. First and foremost, I'm a capitalist evangelist. I'm proud

> to be a small businessman.
>
> Economic issues are the whole ballgame at this point. We need to get our fiscal house in order first. Without an economy, without jobs, it's impossible to deal with all our other problems. Mitt understands, as President Calvin Coolidge once said, "The business of America is business." That's why electing Mitt Romney is so important.
>
> This election is our LAST STAND to save America. Mitt understands that Obama's rhetoric, constant threats against business, union favoritism, IRS intimidation, 60,000 new rules and regulations, stimulus to nowhere, never-ending unemployment and food stamps, the added taxes and regulations of ObamaCare, and the attempt to ban oil drilling and regulate the coal industry out of existence, have collectively ground the U.S. economy to a halt. We will not survive four more years of Obama as CEO of this economy.

The time to vote libertarian was in the primary. But this is the general election, and it's all hands on deck to stop the socialist from winning a second term, where he will have no accountability to the voters whatsoever.

New paper finds that mass of asteroid belts affect habitability of planets

November 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Science Daily reports. (H/T Evolution News via ECM)

Excerpt:

> They suggest that the size and location of an asteroid belt, shaped by the evolution of the Sun's protoplanetary disk and by the gravitational influence of a nearby giant Jupiter-like planet, may determine whether complex life will evolve on an Earth-like planet.
>
> This might sound surprising because asteroids are considered a nuisance due to their potential to impact Earth and trigger mass extinctions. But an emerging view proposes that asteroid collisions with planets may provide a boost to the birth and evolution of complex life.
>
> Asteroids may have delivered water and organic compounds to the early Earth. According to the theory of punctuated equilibrium, occasional asteroid impacts might accelerate the rate of biological evolution by disrupting a planet's environment to the point where species must try new adaptation strategies.
>
> The astronomers based their conclusion on an analysis of theoretical models and archival observations of extrasolar Jupiter-sized planets and debris disks around young stars. "Our study shows that only a tiny fraction of planetary systems observed to date seem to have giant planets in the right location to produce an asteroid belt of the appropriate size, offering the potential for life on a nearby rocky planet," said Martin, the study's lead author. "Our study suggests that our solar system may be rather special."

There's a long list of factors that have to be present for a planet to support life – and more keep appearing every day. Here's another recent one from the journal *Nature.*

Related posts

- Three ways that the progress of science conflicts with naturalistic speculations
- What conditions support the minimum requirements for complex life?
- Guillermo Gonzalez lectures at UC Davis on the requirements for life
- Does the progress of science lead to theism or atheism?
- Walter Bradley explains three scientific arguments for God's existence
- Brian Auten interviews Jay Richards about Christian apologetics
- Harvard astrophysicist backs the Rare Earth hypothesis

General Tommy Franks and 500 other military officers endorse Mitt Romney

November 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a full page ad in the Washington Times.

PJ Media reports:

> A star-studded list of retired high ranking US military officers is set to shake up the presidential race as the nation heads into Election Day, November 6. GEN Hugh Shelton (USA-ret) and GEN Tommy Franks (USA-ret) are among the military heavyweights who are taking out a full page ad in Monday's *Washington Times*, the Tatler has learned.
>
> GEN Franks is probably best known as the commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM) from 2000 to 2003, during the war that ended the reign of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. He was appointed to head up the Middle East-centric command by President Bill Clinton and assumed command of CENTCOM on July 6, 2000. Franks served in the United States Army from 1967 to his retirement in 2003.
>
> GEN Henry Shelton served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President Clinton from October 1, 1997 to October 1, 2001. Shelton's military honors include the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star with valor device and three oak leaf cluster. He also commanded the United States Special Operations Command.
>
> The full-page ad says "We, the undersigned, proudly support Governor Mitt Romney as our next President and Commander-in-Chief." A note at the bottom of the ad says that the officers all paid for the ad themselves. The list includes officers who served in the United States Army, the United States Navy, the United States Marine Corps, and the United States Air Force.
>
> Besides Franks and Shelton, many of the names on the list, which had been making the rounds on the Internet, will be familiar as respected leaders of the US military, in all capacities. They include LTG Thomas McInerney (USA-ret), retired Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Ronald Fogleman, retired Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Frank Kelso, and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen Richard B. Meyers (USAF-ret).

Click here to see the full page ad.

An overlooked issue in the 2012 election: conscience rights

November 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this post on Well Spent Journey. The author is a future physician.

He writes:

> This issue is sometimes overlooked, but it goes hand-in-hand with abortion. As a future physician, it affects me personally.
>
> […]Only a month after taking office, President Obama announced that he would be rescinding HHS regulations protecting the conscience rights of healthcare workers:
>
> *"[Specific publicly-funded entities may not] discriminate in the employment, promotion, or termination of employment of any physician or other health care personnel because he performed or assisted in the performance of a lawful sterilization procedure or abortion, because he refused to perform or assist in the performance of such a procedure or abortion on the grounds that his performance or assistance in the performance of the procedure or abortion would be contrary to his religious beliefs or moral convictions, or because of his religious beliefs or moral convictions respecting sterilization procedures or abortions…"*
>
> In April 2009, these rules were officially eliminated. Then, in 2011, the administration approved the now-infamous HHS contraception mandate, requiring employer-provided insurance plans to cover birth control and early-term abortion drugs…regardless of the provider's religious objections. (As an aside, I highly recommend R.J. Snell's article,"The Contraception Mandate and Secular Discourse".)
>
> Other recent attacks have centered around the Weldon Amendment (2004), which prohibits federally funded agencies from discriminating against health care providers who refuse to provide, pay for, provide coverage for, or refer for abortions.
>
> Additionally, a 2009 online survey of 2,865 faith-based healthcare professionals found that:
>
> - 39% of faith-based healthcare professionals have "experienced pressure from or discrimination by faculty or administrators based on [their] moral, ethical, or religious beliefs."
> - 20% of faith-based medical students say they are "not pursuing a career in Obstetrics or Gynecology" because of perceived discrimination and coercion in that field.
> - 12% of faith-based healthcare professionals have "been pressured to

> perform a procedure to which [they] had moral, ethical, or religious objections."
> - 91% of faith-based physicians agreed with the statement, "I would rather stop practicing medicine altogether than be forced to violate my conscience."
>
> So aside from the clear injustice of legalized abortion, my interest in this election is based on a desire to learn and practice medicine without being pressured to violate my moral convictions. Not to belittle the importance of other social, economic, and foreign policy issues, but these will be my overriding concerns in the ballot box.

Religious liberty is one the things that I care about the most, and I'm particularly concerned about Obama's attacks on conscience rights for medical professionals. He's shown that he has no respect for Christians with his HHS mandate. If he gets re-elected he will no reason to spare us worse things.

I found this post from Well Spent Journey on J.W. Wartick's round-up of pre-election posts for Christian voters. Lots of great stuff in that round-up.

Pew Research poll oversamples Democrats by 6%, CNN poll oversamples Democrats by 11%

November 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

DaTechGuy explains:

> The folks at PEW have released their last poll of the year and their headline seems to be good news for President Obama and bad news for me who has predicted his defeat:
>
> Barack Obama has edged ahead of Mitt Romney in the final days of the presidential campaign. In the Pew Research Center's election weekend survey, Obama holds a 48% to 45% lead over Romney among likely voters.

He goes through the poll sampling and finds 4 problems. Here are the first 3:

> #1 We are going to have a D+6 electorate even though all signs indicate the Democrats are not all that thrilled with president Obama but in 2010 the republicans managed historic wins in the states, and the house and big senate wins too.
>
> #2 Even though independents favor Mitt Romney by 3 points in this poll and Republicans are voting 91-7 for Mitt according to their own number the electorate in 2012 is SO democratic that Obama is still up by 3 points.
>
> #3 The female electorate on election day is going to outnumber the male electorate by a full 13 points thus negating any advantage that Mitt Romney might have with men.

Meanwhile, a CNN poll from today showing a tie oversamples Dems by 11%, and shows Romney winning independents 59% to 37%.

Excerpt:

> CNN's last national poll before Judgment Day shows the race tied at 49, **with a *D+11* partisan sample**. This assumes Democrats will improve upon their extraordinary 2008 turnout by four percentage points. There's a word for this. It's "ludicrous." CNN's previous national poll gave Obama a three-point lead, so it suggests the GOP nominee is gaining steam. In light of the mind-blowing sample, how is the race even close, let alone tied?
>
> > (1) Independent voters are siding with Romney by 22 points, 59/37.
> >
> > (2) Romney leads by nine on the economy — which is the top issue for voters, followed closely by the deficit, another Romney strong suit.
> >
> > (3) Romney matches Obama on favorability and leadership qualities.
>
> So there's that. In case you're curious, the poll was conducted Friday through

> Sunday, so any potential Sandy “bump” for Obama should be reflected in the numbers.

The most reputable poll in 2008 was Rasmussen Reports. Their latest national poll is showing Romney with a +1 lead.

Check my previous post about why I think this election will result in a strong Romney/Ryan victory.

Doug Groothuis' message for all Christians who are able to vote on Tuesday

November 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Doug Groothuis, well-known Christian apologist, wrote this on his Facebook wall and asked everyone to share it:

> To my Christian readers.
>
> You are a child of heaven but also a citizen of earth. You are to seek the welfare of the city to which you have been exiled (Jer. 29:7) and be "salt and light" in this broken world (Matthew 5:1-18) We are to render to state what is the state's (which is not everything) and to God what is God's (Matthew 22:15-23). We are to see the welfare of "the least of these" (Matthew 25:31-46).
>
> 1. Being apolitical is being apathetic about how God's world is governed in the civil sphere. Not everything is politics, but politics is crucial to our life together on God's earth. Some political views are closer to a biblical ethic than others. Therefore:
>
> 2. Seek the good of the city, the least the last the lost, by voting for candidates that deny statism (see Ezek 28:1-10). This idolatry and bad news for any society.
>
> 3. The state does not create wealth; people and other institutions do that. Let the people and voluntary assembles thrive (under the rule of Law, not the rule of men).
>
> 4. Putting more and more souls on welfare and food stamps does not dignify them or help solves their problems. Happiness is earned, it is not derived from state handouts. That fosters a parasite mentality.
>
> 5. Allowing over one million unborn human beings made in God's image to be killed each year through abortion is morally wrong. Fifty-four million (54,000,000) have been so killed since Roe v. Wade in 1973. We have blood on our hands and are tracking it into our churches, homes, and schools. We need to be watchman, prophets who call out sin for those who cannot: the unborn. You cannot make your cheap peace with a President that would expand "reproductive rights" (abortion on demand) and insure that abortions are paid for with tax money, that would make religious organizations insure for abortion.
>
> 6. The Bible teaches that debt is unhealthy. It should be limited not protracted. We must get our debt under control, or it will control us, and crush the life out of our economy and our spirits.
>
> 7. The state has "the power of the sword" (Romans 13:-17) and has the right to protect its people by force. This is a hostile and dangerous world. Cutty back on the military and not protecting our citizens abroad (Libya) is a dereliction of duty and a disgrace.

> 8. Be not deceived, but judge properly (see John 7:24). The political language of compassion, it not the same thing as real policies that give the poor a chance. Moreover, since the state is an impersonal agency based on coercion, it cannot be compassionate, but it can be just. Individuals, churches, private groups can be compassionate, and should be. When they are taxes up to their eyeballs, they have less to give.
>
> In light of (1)-(8), please vote knowledgeably, wisely, and prayerfully.

And maybe this is a good time to point to this essay that Doug wrote about why he is voting for Mitt Romney on Tuesday. (I featured it about 3 weeks ago)

Excerpt:

> Many conservatives (Christian or otherwise), me included, are disappointed that Mitt Romney will be the Republican candidate for President. They lament that a more principled conservative (such as Michele Bachmann, or, to a lesser degree, Rick Santorum) was not selected. Perhaps they stand for the libertarian principles of Ron Paul. Whatever the case, many will be tempted to not vote at all or to cast a protest vote. This is a deep mistake, based on faulty ideas about politics and the meaning of a political vote. In this short essay, I will labor to convince fellow conservatives, whether Christians or not, to support and vote for Mitt Romney for President. I have waited to endorse Romney until all the other competitors have been eliminated. I do not expect to convert political liberals to this cause, which would require much more argumentation.

Please send this to any Christians who are not planning to vote for Romney!

U.S. per person debt now $53,378 – 35% higher than in Greece

November 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

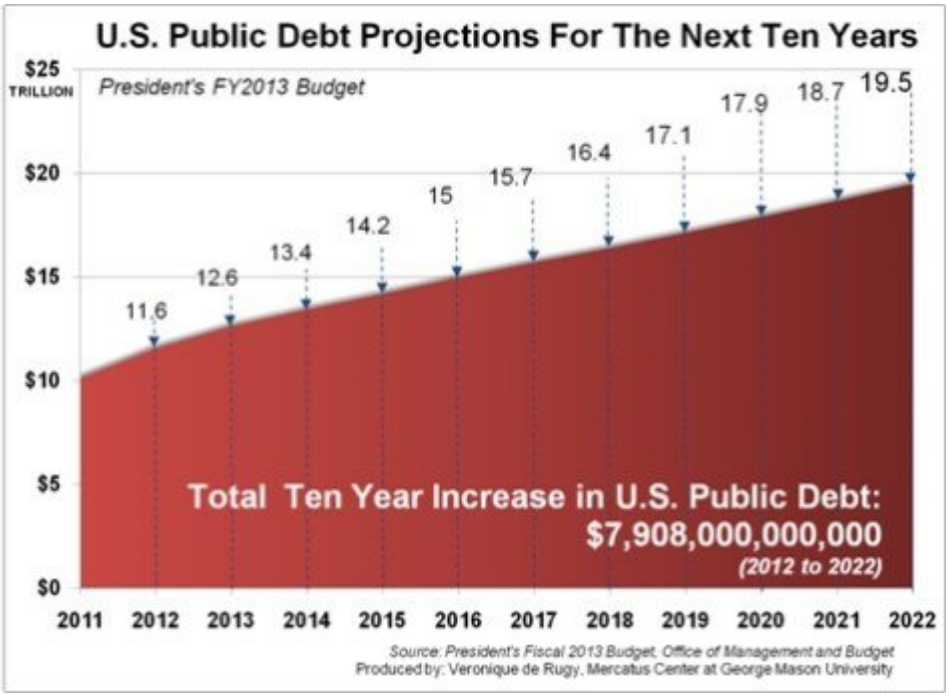

Obama 2013 Budget Debt Projection
From the Weekly Standard. (H/T WGB)

Excerpt:

> "According to estimates from the International Monetary Fund, America's total government debt will be $16.8 trillion by the end of the calendar year, compared to $441 billion for Greece," the Republican side of the Senate Budget Committee explains.
>
> "On a per person basis, that means U.S. debt is $53,400 for every man, woman, and child, compared to $39,400 for every man, woman, and child in Greece. The disparity between per capita debt in the U.S. and Greece has grown 40 percent (roughly $8,400) since 2011. Now, U.S. per person debt is 35 percent higher than that of Greece, and is also higher than per capita debt in Portugal, Italy, or Spain (which together with Greece make up the so-called PIGS countries)."

That's based on total government debt.

And from CNS News, this for Americans under the age of 18:

> If Americans under the age of 18 were required as a group to pay off the entirety of the federal government's debt in equal shares, each would now need to pay about $218,676.
>
> That is more than the $130,468 average price tag for four years at a private college or the $173,100 median price for an existing one-family home in the

> United States.
>
> During the time Barack Obama has been president, the U.S. government debt has increased from approximately $143,255 per American under 18 to approximately $218,676 per American under 18–a climb of $75,421 or about 53 percent.

If you know anyone under the age of 18, it might worth explaining this to them.

UPDATE:

H/T The Elusive Wapiti.

President Food Stamp: growth in food stamp rolls is 75 times number of jobs created

November 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard explains.

Excerpt:

> With the latest jobs report, it is now the case that "Under Obama, Food Stamp Growth [Is] 75 Times Greater Than Job Creation," according to statistics compiled by the Republican side of the Senate Budget Committee. "For Every Person Added to Jobs Rolls Since January 2009, 75 People Added To Food Stamp Rolls."
>
> Since January 2009, as the chart shows, a net of 194,000 new jobs have been created. During that same time, 14.7 million have been added to the food stamp rolls.
>
> "Simply put, the President's policies have not produced jobs. During his time in office, 14.7 million people were added to the food stamp rolls. Over that same time, only 194,000 jobs were created—thus 76 people went on food stamps for every one that found a job," says Senator Jeff Sessions, ranking member of the Senate Budget Committee. "This is a product of low growth. Post-recession economic growth in 2010 was 2.4%, and dropped in 2011 to 1.8%. This year it has dropped again to 1.77%. Few, if any, net jobs will be created with growth of less than 2%."

This is unacceptable, and we need a change.

The full list of Obamacare tax hikes in order from largest to smallest

November 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Americans for Tax Reform.

Here are two on the list that would affect me personally:

> **$65 Billion: Individual Mandate Excise Tax and Employer Mandate Tax** (Both taxes take effect Jan. 2014):
>
> Individual: Anyone not buying "qualifying" health insurance as defined by Obama-appointed HHS bureaucrats must pay an income surtax according to the higher of the following
>
> | 1 Adult | 2 Adults | 3+ Adults | |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | 2014 | 1% AGI/$95 | 1% AGI/$190 | 1% AGI/$285 |
> | 2015 | 2% AGI/$325 | 2% AGI/$650 | 2% AGI/$975 |
> | 2016 + | 2.5% AGI/$695 | 2.5% AGI/$1390 | 2.5% AGI/$2085 |
>
> *Exemptions for religious objectors, undocumented immigrants, prisoners, those earning less than the poverty line, members of Indian tribes, and hardship cases (determined by HHS). Bill: PPACA; Page: 317-337*
> Employer: If an employer does not offer health coverage, and at least one employee qualifies for a health tax credit, the employer must pay an additional non-deductible tax of $2000 for all full-time employees. Applies to all employers with 50 or more employees. If any employee actually receives coverage through the exchange, the penalty on the employer for that employee rises to $3000. If the employer requires a waiting period to enroll in coverage of 30-60 days, there is a $400 tax per employee ($600 if the period is 60 days or longer). *Bill: PPACA; Page: 345-346*
>
> *(Combined score of individual and employer mandate tax penalty: $65 billion)*
>
> **$60.1 Billion: Tax on Health Insurers** (Takes effect Jan. 2014): Annual tax on the industry imposed relative to health insurance premiums collected that year. Phases in gradually until 2018. Fully-imposed on firms with $50 million in profits. *Bill: PPACA; Page: 1,986-1,993*

I just got the note from my employer today that all our health care plans are more expensive next year. Because of Obamacare.

When you tax employers and health insurers, the cost of health insurance goes UP. That's why health insurance premiums are up $3000 since Obama took office. We know this, people. Don't re-elect someone who lowers your take home pay, puts your job in jeopardy, raises the costs of health care and decreases the quality of health care.

Here are a few articles that I have been using lately to inform people about the problems

with Obamacare:

- Heritage Foundation: Obamacare Raises Taxes on 3 Million Middle-Class Americans
- Cato Institute: ObamaCare's Cost Could Top $6 Trillion in first 10 years
- Life News: Obamacare is pro-abortion and pro-government controlled rationing
- Heritage Foundation: The 3 Biggest Ways Obamacare Kills Jobs
- Investors Business Daily: Obama's Broken Health-Premium Savings Promise
- Reason: Obamacare will lead to longer wait times and crowded emergency rooms
- Doctor Patient Medical Association: 83% of doctors contemplating quitting over Obamacare

It's important to understand that people who oppose this law don't oppose because we are just being contrary. Obama's health care plan has the goal of destroying private medicine and putting everyone into a single-payer system like Canada's. It's not good for us to be waiting in line for MRIs for months and months, or even years and years. NO.

What if Obama is re-elected and he legalizes gay marriage in his second term?

November 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada has already legalized same-sex marriage, so let's see what things are like up there. (H/T Commenter Scott)

Excerpt:

> The formal effect of the judicial decisions (and subsequent legislation) establishing same-sex civil marriage in Canada was simply that persons of the same-sex could now have the government recognize their relationships as marriages. But the legal and cultural effect was much broader. What transpired was the adoption of a new orthodoxy: that same-sex relationships are, in every way, the equivalent of traditional marriage, and that same-sex marriage must therefore be treated identically to traditional marriage in law and public life.
>
> A corollary is that anyone who rejects the new orthodoxy must be acting on the basis of bigotry and animus toward gays and lesbians. Any statement of disagreement with same-sex civil marriage is thus considered a straightforward manifestation of hatred toward a minority sexual group. Any reasoned explanation (for example, those that were offered in legal arguments that same-sex marriage is incompatible with a conception of marriage that responds to the needs of the children of the marriage for stability, fidelity, and permanence—what is sometimes called the conjugal conception of marriage), is dismissed right away as mere pretext.
>
> When one understands opposition to same-sex marriage as a manifestation of sheer bigotry and hatred, it becomes very hard to tolerate continued dissent. Thus it was in Canada that the terms of participation in public life changed very quickly. Civil marriage commissioners were the first to feel the hard edge of the new orthodoxy; several provinces refused to allow commissioners a right of conscience to refuse to preside over same-sex weddings, and demanded their resignations. At the same time, religious organizations, such as the Knights of Columbus, were fined for refusing to rent their facilities for post-wedding celebrations.
>
> […]The new orthodoxy's impact has not been limited to the relatively small number of persons at risk of being coerced into supporting or celebrating a same-sex marriage. The change has widely affected persons—including clergy—who wish to make public arguments about human sexuality.
>
> Much speech that was permitted before same-sex marriage now carries risks. Many of those who have persisted in voicing their dissent have been subjected to investigations by human rights commissions and (in some cases) proceedings before human rights tribunals. Those who are poor, poorly educated, and without

> institutional affiliation have been particularly easy targets—anti-discrimination laws are not always applied evenly. Some have been ordered to pay fines, make apologies, and undertake never to speak publicly on such matters again. Targets have included individuals writing letters to the editors of local newspapers, and ministers of small congregations of Christians. A Catholic bishop faced two complaints—both eventually withdrawn—prompted by comments he made in a pastoral letter about marriage.
>
> […][[T]he financial cost of fighting the human rights machine remains enormous… hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees, none of which is recoverable from the commissions, tribunals, or complainants. And these cases can take up to a decade to resolve. An ordinary person with few resources who has drawn the attention of a human rights commission has no hope of appealing to the courts for relief; such a person can only accept the admonition of the commission, pay a (comparatively) small fine, and then observe the directive to remain forever silent. As long as these tools remain at the disposal of the commissions—for whom the new orthodoxy gives no theoretical basis to tolerate dissent—to engage in public discussion about same-sex marriage is to court ruin.
>
> […]Institutionalizing same-sex marriage has subtly but pervasively changed parental rights in public education. The debate over how to cast same-sex marriage in the classroom is much like the debate over the place of sex education in schools, and of governmental pretensions to exercise primary authority over children. But sex education has always been a discrete matter, in the sense that by its nature it cannot permeate the entirety of the curriculum. Same-sex marriage is on a different footing.
>
> Since one of the tenets of the new orthodoxy is that same-sex relationships deserve the same respect that we give marriage, its proponents have been remarkably successful in demanding that same-sex marriage be depicted positively in the classroom. Curriculum reforms in jurisdictions such as British Columbia now prevent parents from exercising their long-held veto power over contentious educational practices.
>
> The new curricula are permeated by positive references to same-sex marriage, not just in one discipline but in all. Faced with this strategy of diffusion, the only parental defense is to remove one's children from the public school system entirely. Courts have been unsympathetic to parental objections: if parents are clinging to outdated bigotries, then children must bear the burden of "cognitive dissonance"—they must absorb conflicting things from home and school while school tries to win out.

Note that all of these enemies, the court system, the human rights commissions and the public school system – are all taxpayer-funded. Christians and other social conservatives are literally paying the socialist welfare state to persecute them and to indoctrinate their children. I should note that abortions, sex changes and IVF are also taxpayer-funded in

parts of Canada, because health care is run by the government. We really need to keep the government out of as much of our lives as possible if we expect to keep our freedoms. Let’s not imitate the Canadians by legalizing same-sex marriage.

The long-term impacts of the Romney and Obama economic plans

November 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Tax Foundation. (H/T Tom)

Excerpt:

> Over the past several weeks, Tax Foundation economists have published a series of studies that analyze the long-term economic and distributional effects of the tax plans outlined by President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney. These comprehensive assessments were done using the Tax Foundation's Tax Simulation and Macroeconomic Model, which measures how changes in tax policies affect the economic levers that determine economic growth, workers' incomes and the distribution of the tax burden, says the Tax Foundation.
>
> The candidates' tax plans would have a starkly different impact on the economy.
>
> - **The Romney plan, which would reduce tax rates on individuals and corporations, would increase gross domestic product (GDP) 7.4 percent over the long run.**
> - **The Obama plan, which would raise tax rates on individuals, would reduce GDP 2.9 percent over the long run.**
>
> These very different futures are the direct consequence of the candidates' very different approaches to taxing the inputs of production, i.e., capital and labor.
>
> - **Obama would raise taxes on investors, which would reduce the capital stock by 7.5 percent.**
> - **Romney would reduce taxes on investors, which would increase the capital stock by 18.6 percent.**
> - **Obama would raise taxes on labor, which would reduce the wage rate by 2.3 percent and hours worked by 0.7 percent.**
> - **Romney would reduce taxes on labor, which would increase the wage rate by 4.7 percent and hours worked by 2.9 percent.**
>
> […]Tax Foundation's analysis indicates that for every dollar of tax revenue raised under the Obama plan, the economy loses $10. Under Romney's plan, for every dollar of tax revenue lost, the economy gains $8.

And more from the Tax Foundation. (H/T Tom)

> As a follow-up to the Tax Foundation's recent assessment of the macroeconomic effects of Governor Mitt Romney's tax plan, Tax Foundation Senior Fellow Stephen Entin now turns his attention to measuring the macroeconomic effects of

> President Barack Obama's tax proposals.
>
> […]The model results:
>
> - President Obama's tax plan would gradually reduce the level of gross domestic product (GDP) by nearly 3 percent, relative to the baseline projection, over five to 10 years.
> - Labor income would be lower by a similar amount, driven down by fewer hours worked and lower wages per hour.
> - The reduction in hours worked, about 0.75 percent, would be the equivalent of about a million jobs lost in today's economy, with those still employed earning roughly 2.28 percent lower wages.
> - Alternatively, one could view the result as losing four million jobs at unchanged pay levels.
> - The plan would also trim the capital stock by about 7.5 percent (or over $2 trillion in lost investment in plant, equipment and buildings, things that drive productivity, wages and hiring).
>
> **The study also measured the economic and distributional effects of President Obama's corporate tax plan and the tax changes contained in the Affordable Care Act beginning in 2013. The results found that these proposals would lower economic growth while substantially lowering workers' wages and incomes.** Ultimately, President Obama's tax plans would be very harmful for the nation's long-term economic outlook.

Do you like prosperity? Would you like to have a job? Would you like to be able to buy things for your friends and family? Would like to be able to give to charities? Then vote for Mitt Romney!

Life News: The top 10 reasons for pro-lifers to vote for Mitt Romney

November 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Here's the list:

1. Roe v. Wade
2. Supreme Court
3. Obamacare
4. Obama's HHS-Abortion Mandate
5. Vice President
6. Planned Parenthood
7. Mexico City Policy
8. Pro-Life Bills
9. UNFPA, Forced Abortion
10. Abstinence, Stem Cell Research, International Abortion Promotion, Etc

Here's the one that was on my mind today (Monday):

> 7. **Mexico City Policy**: The Mexico City Policy is a less-well-known method of revoking taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood. During his first week in office, Obama overturned the policy and sent tens of millions in tax money to the International Planned Parenthood organization to promote and perform abortions in other nations. One of the life-saving actions Mitt Romney will take immediately if he becomes president is to reinstate what is called the Mexico City Policy.

And related to that:

> 9. **UNFPA, Forced Abortion**: In 2009, the Obama administration sent a $50 million check to the United Nations Population Fund. That's the pro-abortion group that has been accused of supporting and working in concert with Chinese family planning officials pushing women into forced abortions. That will change if Romney is elected. Romney has said he would undo that funding, saying, "I will reinstate the Mexico City Policy to ensure that nongovernmental organizations that receive
> funding from America refrain from performing or promoting abortion services, as a method of family planning, in other countries. This includes ending American funding for any United Nations or other foreign assistance program that promotes or performs abortions on women around the world."

If Romney is elected president, this one will be done on day one. He will do it.

Obama’s full record on abortion is compiled up at Life News. You can read it, but be prepared to scroll through pages and pages of evil. He is a pro-abortion, pro-infanticide, pro-sex-selection-abortion radical.

Why do so many people vote for the Democrat party?

November 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this article from National Review that explains why so many people vote Democrat.

Excerpt:

> First, we should recognize that the War on Poverty is now a huge budget item. According to calculations by the Congressional Research Service and the Senate Budget Committee, taxpayers coughed up over $1 trillion in federal and state-provided benefits in 2011. These benefits flow to tens of millions of voters and cover the waterfront, offering low-income Americans everything from cash assistance to food, housing, and medical care, not to mention help with education, transportation, home-heating costs, and child care. Spending on these programs has soared more than 40 percent since 2007. That's an unsustainable trajectory.

Then we get some facts from a Wall Street Journal article on the topic:

> - The percentage of the American labor force drawing disability benefits from the government has doubled since 1992, from 3 percent to 6 percent. They further note: "The number of workers qualifying for disability since the recession ended in 2009 has grown twice as fast as private employment."
> - During the last four years, the Obama administration's aggressive promotion of the food-stamp program has increased the number of recipients by 18.5 million.
> - Unemployment insurance that lasted no longer than 55 weeks in 1980 and 72 weeks in 1992 now can last 99 weeks. Some 40 percent of unemployed workers have been out of work for more than half a year.

And how does it affect voting?:

> The Battleground Polls conducted by the Tarrance Group on behalf of George Washington University and *Politico* make this level of detail readily available. The poll helpfully divides its sample of likely voters into, among other things, those who self-identify as either "low income" or "middle class."
>
> So, what do we know about these voters?
>
> - Those who self-identify as "low income" are more likely to be unemployed, frustrated over the state of the economy, and pessimistic over the general direction of our country than are those with higher incomes. Yet the Battleground Poll indicates they are *more Why do people* likely than those who identify as middle class to believe the country is heading in the right

> direction (42 percent vs. 35 percent).
> - Do welfare benefits insulate these voters from the sort of economic concerns that plague middle-class voters? Apparently so. Compared with their middle-class counterparts, far fewer low-income voters cite pocketbook issues as their number-one concern (53 percent vs.74 percent). Middle-class voters are, almost by definition, far more likely to pay taxes than low-income voters. Unsurprisingly, they are much more likely to list the economy and the level of spending and deficits as their most important concern (28 percent and 17 percent, respectively) than low-income Americans. Among the latter group, only 20 percent say the economy is most important, and a mere 7 percent worry about spending and deficits. Again, this is not surprising, considering that, for most low-income Americans, government benefits come with no strings attached, and at little or no cost in taxes.
> - In contrast, low-income Americans cite Medicare, Social Security, and education benefits as their number-one issue (29 percent in all) more than twice as frequently as do middle-class voters (only 13 percent).
> - If the receipt of welfare benefits affects voters' views of the economy and alters the equation they use to judge candidates, one would expect them to give the president high marks for how he has handled the most stagnant and underperforming economy in over half a century. And, indeed, that is the case. By a margin of 51 percent to 37 percent low-income voters prefer Obama over Romney on this measure. They prefer Obama by an even more lopsided margin, 55 percent to 37 percent, on the issue of jobs. In contrast, Romney wins big among middle-class voters on these concerns (56 percent to 41 percent on handling the economy, and 54 percent to 43 percent on jobs).

These people aren't voting for any high and noble reason. They want money. It's just greed. Greed is why people vote Democrat.

Elusive Wapiti adds:

> It makes sense, really. The 47% vote their pocketbook too… the issue comes from the pocketbook being oriented in the opposite direction. Government largesse fills their wallet, whilst draining the bankbooks of the 53%. They are the "zero liability" voter; they are insulated from the costs of the programs and candidates they vote for… but they are understandably quite concerned with ensuring the payouts continue.

You need to get out there *today* and vote for Mitt Romney to stop the downward spiral into dependency and bankruptcy that we can see in countries like Greece, Spain and Italy. We can see it happening over there, don't let it happen here.

Frank Turek and Wayne Grudem think you should go vote today!

November 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

EVERYONE PLEASE GO VOTE TODAY! (NOVEMBER 6th, 2012)

Here's Frank Turek's post on Jesus, Christians and politics on the Cross Examined blog. Excerpt:

> I often hear Christians claiming that we ought to just "preach the Gospel" and not get involved in politics. This is not only a false dilemma; it's stupid (how's that for direct?). If you think "preaching the Gospel" is important like I do, then you ought to think that politics is important too. Why? Because *politics and law affects your ability to preach the Gospel!* If you don't think so, go to some of the countries I've visited—Iran, Saudi Arabia, China. You can't legally "preach the Gospel" in those countries—or practice other aspects of your religion freely—because politically they've ruled it out.
>
> It's already happening here. There are several examples where religious freedoms are being usurped by homosexual orthodoxy. This summer a Christian student was removed from Eastern Michigan University's (a public school) counseling program because, due to her religious convictions, she would not affirm homosexuality to potential clients. A judge agreed (a similar case is pending in Georgia). In Massachusetts, Catholic charities closed their adoption agency rather than give children to homosexual couples as the state mandated. In Ohio, University of Toledo HR Director Crystal Dixon was fired for writing a letter to the editor in her local newspaper that disagreed with homosexual practice.
>
> More violations of religious liberty are on the way from the people currently in charge. Lesbian activist Chai Feldbaum, who is a recess appointment by President Obama to the EEOC, recently said regarding the inevitable conflict between homosexuality and religious liberty, "I'm having a hard time coming up with any case in which religious liberty should win." So much for tolerance. The people who say they're fighting for tolerance are the most intolerant, totalitarian people in politics.
>
> Getting involved in politics is necessary if for no other reason to protect your religious liberty, and the liberties of us all. So if you're a Christian, follow the example of Christ—call out hypocrites and fools, and vote them out on Tuesday!

Religious liberty is my top priority and my core value. You can't preach the gospel without

religious liberty – so don't just stand there and watch it slip away! Get out there and vote! The right to evangelize and discuss Christianity in public is already under attack in places like Canada and the UK! Don't think that it can't happen here – it can! Today is the day that you defend the gospel by defending your right to even talk about the gospel in public without having to worry that someone will censor or sue you for offending them. Get out there and vote for your liberty!

Wayne Grudem also encourages you to vote

Should Christian beliefs impact politics?

Do pastors have the right to speak from the pulpit about political, social or cultural issues?

What about the so-called "separation of church and state"?

You can find out more about Grudem's new book here – it's a 50+ page excerpt from the book! I've got my copy! And you can listen to podcasts from his Sunday School class here.

Frank Pastore thinks that politics flows from theological convictions

Frank Pastore has a Christian radio show on KKLA in Los Angeles.

Here is his post on Crosswalk.com about Christians and politics – specifically, he is responding to critics who say that he should not talk so much about politics on his Christian radio show, and that he should especially not argue about politics.

Excerpt:

> Perhaps many Christians believe these things because they don't understand politics is really an exercise of theology applied—one way we love our neighbors as ourselves. Our political and social policies should grow out of our theology, not vice versa. We are not to reverse engineer our theology based upon our political and social agendas. Our faith is foundational to everything else. For Christians, theology creates and shapes our approach to politics; for non-Christians, politics creates and shapes their approach to theology—or at least their worldview.
>
> A Christian becomes too political when their politics is no longer rooted in their theology, when their faith becomes merely peripheral and unnecessary to their political agenda, rather than the one thing that is fundamental and essential.
>
> How we vote to spend our tax dollars, what economic and social policies we hope to advance through votes for particular candidates, and what domestic and foreign policies we hope our government advances—these things are the applications of the values rooted in our Christian worldview.
>
> Just as how I choose to invest my time and treasure is the best expression of whether I'm living out my Christian values, so too what the government spends money on and what policy preferences it pursues is the best expression of our true American values.
>
> The best way for me to love my neighbor is through those things I choose to do

> personally. The second best way is through votes for candidates who support policies that I believe will promote the common good. Thus, I am political because I am loving, and I am loving because I am Christian. Therefore, I should argue—albeit in a God-glorifying manner—about politics.

Get out there and vote, people! And make all your friends and family vote, too!

Related posts

- Book review of Wayne Grudem's new book by Justin Taylor
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment
- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible
- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

Why do some people oppose Obamacare? What does Obamacare do?

November 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily explains what you should know about Obamacare.

Excerpt:

> Despite repeated promises that the more we knew about ObamaCare, the more we'd like it, the law has never been less popular. Just 38% now approve of it, down from 46% when it passed in March 2010, according to the latest Kaiser Family Foundation survey.
>
> But unless voters defeat Obama on Tuesday, they'll never get rid of his disastrous "reform." Even before ObamaCare takes full effect, its damage is evident.
>
> Insurance premiums, which Obama promised to slash $2,500 by the end of his first term, have climbed 14% since the law went into effect. Nearly six in 10 doctors say ObamaCare has made them less positive about the future of health care in America, and almost two-thirds say they'd retire today if they could, according to a Physicians Foundation survey.
>
> Businesses are holding back on hiring, or are shifting workers to part time because of ObamaCare's looming coverage mandate. Darden Restaurants, for example, has stopped offering full-time schedules at several of its popular eateries "to help us address the cost implications of health care reform."
>
> This is only one of the horrors ObamaCare will unleash if fully implemented in 2014. Among others:
>
> - ObamaCare will force as many as 20 million workers into government-run insurance exchanges after their employers drop coverage, according to the Congressional Budget Office.
> - More companies will follow Darden's example, refusing to schedule workers more than 30 hours wherever they can to avoid the coverage mandate.
> - Insurance costs will explode. Even ObamaCare's fans admit that its benefit mandates, marketplace rules and bans on coverage caps will force premiums to skyrocket. Jonathan Gruber, who helped design ObamaCare, says the law will add 30% to premiums in the individual market in the states he's studied.
> - Doctor shortages will reach 90,000 in about a decade, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges.
> - Seniors will find it increasingly difficult to get treatments, as ObamaCare's deep Medicare payment cuts cause one in six hospitals to become unprofitable and still more doctors to refuse to see Medicare patients.

> - Even when a patient does get to see a doctor, ObamaCare will intrude, using the law's "Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute" to create top-down rules for what doctors can prescribe for any given ailment.
> - ObamaCare's vast new taxes — including a crippling $20 billion surtax on the medical device industry and a $123 billion surtax on investors — will slow down medical innovation.
> - And when these and dozens of other new taxes fail to cover ObamaCare's massive 10-year $1.76 trillion price tag, everyone will suffer a bigger tax bite.
>
> Not to mention the fact that ObamaCare will, for the first time in our nation's history, force people to buy a government-approved product, setting a frightening new precedent for federal intrusiveness.

Here are a few articles that I have been using lately to inform people about the problems with Obamacare:

- Heritage Foundation: Obamacare Raises Taxes on 3 Million Middle-Class Americans
- Cato Institute: ObamaCare's Cost Could Top $6 Trillion in first 10 years
- Life News: Obamacare is pro-abortion and pro-government controlled rationing
- Heritage Foundation: The 3 Biggest Ways Obamacare Kills Jobs
- Investors Business Daily: Obama's Broken Health-Premium Savings Promise
- Reason: Obamacare will lead to longer wait times and crowded emergency rooms
- Doctor Patient Medical Association: 83% of doctors contemplating quitting over Obamacare

It's important to understand that people who oppose this law don't oppose because we are just being contrary. Obama's health care plan has the goal of destroying private medicine and putting everyone into a single-payer system like Canada's. It's not good for us to be waiting in line for MRIs for months and months, or even years and years. NO.

Today is our last chance to vote against this heinous law that will reduce the supply of doctors, drugs, medical devices and health care, while raising the costs of health care. I beg you to get out there and vote against Obama's health care monstrosity. And if you have already voted, then get on your knees and pray that Obama loses this election.

53 college newspapers that endorsed Obama in 2008 decline to endorse him in 2012

November 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you haven't voted yet, please go vote! There is still time, especially in central, mountain and western time zones. If you have voted already, here's a nice article to reward you while we wait for the election results. And thank you for voting!

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> Many college newspapers that endorsed Barack Obama for president in 2008 are not supporting his election again this year, another indication that the Obama enthusiasm that swept across campuses four years ago has faded.
>
> A review conducted by The Daily Caller of campus publications indicates that at least 53 papers newspapers that endorsed Obama in 2008 have yet to endorse his candidacy again as Election Day approaches. TheDC arrived at this number by looking at 89 known papers that supported Obama four years ago.
>
> […]Obama — who won nearly every endorsement made by college newspapers in 2008 — is not as popular on campus as he was four years ago.
>
> Forty-three school papers that endorsed Obama in 2008 tell TheDC that they have decided against endorsing any candidate in the 2012 presidential race.

In addition, 46 newspapers who endorsed Obama in 2008 have not only declined to endorse him again – they have actually endorsed Romney.

Excerpt:

> Forty-six newspaper editorial boards that endorsed then-Senator Barack Obama in 2008 have decided instead to endorse Republican nominee Mitt Romney this year, according to a tally from the Republican National Committee.
>
> The list of 46 includes The Des Moines Register, the Orlando Sentinel, Florida's Sun Sentinel, the Wisconsin State Journal, the Houston Chronicle, The Tennessean, the Los Angeles Daily News, Newsday and the New York Daily News.

The American people still care about whether a President succeeds or fails. It is not just a popularity contest. Obama has failed to do what he promised to do. Now get out there and vote to have him sent home.

More Republicans and fewer Democrats voted early in Cleveland's Cuyahoga county

November 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you haven't voted yet, please go vote! There is still time, especially in central, mountain and western time zones. If you have voted already, here's a nice article to reward you while we wait for the election results. And thank you for voting!

The Washington Times reports.

Excerpt:

> Early voting in Cuyahoga County ended as of 2pm on Monday and turnout numbers have already been sent to county parties throughout the state. Although Cuyahoga County will go the president's way, just by pure party registrations, early and absentee voting numbers coming from the Cuyahoga County Republican Party should cause Democrats state wide and nationally to be concerned in terms of GOP enthusiasm in Democratic strongholds.
>
> **"What we have seen, as of this morning, early voting [in Cuyahoga County] shows an additional 17,000 Republicans over what we saw in 2008 and the number of Democrats voting provisionally is less than what it was in 2008, so the net is about a 30,000 vote swing," said Doug Magill, Cuyahoga County Republican Party spokesman, on Monday evening.**
>
> **Essentially, according to Mr. Magill, Republicans were outnumbered in Cuyahoga in early voting in 2008 4.1 to 1. In 2012 Republicans are only outnumbered 2.7 to 1 in early and absentee voting in the heavy Democratic County. "In Cuyahoga County that's significant," he said.**
>
> Here are some numbers Mr. Magill cited to think about:
>
> In 2008 Obama received 72 percent of the absentee and early voting in Cuyahoga County for a total of 187,000 votes. McCain received 28 percent of the 2008 Cuyahoga County absentee and early voting. **In 2012, absentee and early voting now is 128,000 Democrats versus 145,000 from 2008.**
>
> **However, 47,000 Republicans turned out to vote early or absentee this year in Cuyahoga as opposed to the 2008 GOP turnout in the county, which was 34,000.** "So that's the swing–17,000 plus about 13,000. Actually, it's about 30,000 and independents are down from 2008," Magill said.
>
> **What the total means is that Democrats are at 55% of their absentee and early voting in Cuyahoga County than what they were in 2008.**

Much of the world is going to be as surprised as the Democrats that Romney has won this election in a landslide, but this is what all of the preliminary numbers show. There is

a *huge* advantage in voter enthusiasm for the Republicans this year. If you haven’t yet voted, go now and vote!

James Pethokoukis projects 301-237 for Romney, Steve Ertelt projects 285-253 for Romney

November 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you haven't voted yet, please go vote! There is still time, especially in central, mountain and western time zones. If you have voted already, here's a nice article to reward you while we wait for the election results. And thank you for voting!

From Jimmy Pethokoukis of the American Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> Based on both polls and reporting, my best guess is that Mitt Romney will be elected the 45th President of the United States, winning the two-party popular vote 51% to 49% and the electoral vote by 301 to 237 for President Obama.
>
> There is some upside potential here for Romney, especially in Pennsylvania and New Hampshire. The bounce from superstorm Sandy is fading, though it may be enough to get Obama N.H in the Northeast where the president has surged, distorting the top-line numbers in some recent national polls.
>
> Many pollsters are not catching the stratospheric GOP enthusiasm, *particularly*among voters of faith, in voting for Romney and Paul Ryan — not just against Obama and Joe Biden. In this way, the Bush-Kerry parallel from 2004 does not hold up. (Oh, and think twice before betting against Michael Barone when elections are on the line.) So there you go.

And Steve Ertelt of Life News.

Excerpt:

> LifeNews is projecting that pro-life Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney will win tomorrow's presidential election and defeat President Barack Obama 285-253 in the Electoral College vote.
>
> […]The election map will look more like the close contests of 2000 and 2004, where I correctly predicted the outcome in all 50 states, but turnout and enthusiasm appears to be on the side of Romney and the Republicans. Poll after poll shows GOP voters and independents, who favor Romney over Obama by wide margins, are much more enthused about voting than Obama's base Democrats. The youth vote will not be as significant as it was in 2008 for Obama but the evangelical turnout will be stronger this time.
>
> Ultimately, elections turn on the economy. The economy has been stagnant and voters will choose Mitt Romney to see if he can turn it around.

At this point, I am reiterating my 52-47 popular vote prediction for Romney. My electoral college prediction is 295-243 for Romney. Steve agrees with me in every state except Wisconsin, which is the one state that I have doubts about. Michael Barone agrees with

me in every state except Pennsylvania, which I give to Obama. Pethokoukis and Ertelt join Michael Barone and George Will in predicting a Romney victory.

So, there is no doubt that Romney will win, but *get out there and vote anyway* if you are in a swing state like Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Minnesota, Virginia, Florida, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Iowa, Wisconsin, Nevada or Colorado.

Advice for single women struggling to get a man to commit

November 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Cassy writing about it at PJ Media.

Excerpt:

> So every single guy you start dating ends up being a jerk, huh? They cheat on you, they cut and run after just a few weeks, or after a few promising months they announce that they're not ready for a relationship. So you sit there and bemoan your poor, pitiful dating life and wonder why – *why?* – you can't meet any good guys.
>
> Well, here's the thing: you *do* meet good guys. And then you go on to ignore them in favor of the bad boy who has a reputation, because you just *know* that the magic of your love will change him. Or you refuse to take a look in the mirror to figure out why every guy you date runs away as fast as his feet can take him. You come on too strong, you're too clingy, you're too needy. Heck, maybe it's all of the above.
>
> If every single guy that you date ends up being someone that you label as a jerk and a heartbreaker, well, the problem isn't everybody else. You can lie to yourself and say that you just can't meet any good guys, but they're out there all right. You just ignore them, put them in the "friend zone," or scare them away with your psychotic, desperate behavior.

And more:

> Guy and girl meet. They exchange numbers, go on a date or two, and really hit it off. Sparks are flying, guy says all the right things, and girl thinks he might be the one. So what does she do? She hops into bed with him, thinking that sex will seal the deal… and their budding romance will turn into a full-blown exclusive relationship. Unfortunately for girl, guy is just happy to score, and that magical night of passion will do absolutely nothing to convince guy to stick around. Now he's even more likely to bolt, having already gotten what he wants out of her. Meanwhile, she's telling herself that having sex with him after two dates was totally a good idea, because he liked her *so much*.
>
> In reality, having sex with a guy right away is never a good idea. You don't need to sleep with someone in order to make your bond stronger. If you do have this amazing connection, then you don't need sex to solidify it. And if he's any kind of decent man who is *actually* interested in you, then he'll wait anyway.

Stuart Schneiderman adds this:

> Fiano's advice might seem redundant, but as long as so many women get hurt in

> bad relationships, it's worth examining her observations.
>
> Given the anguish that attends a failed relationship, it makes sense that women have devised a series of face-saving explanations.
>
> All begin with the staple: all men are jerks.
>
> Fiano responds that perhaps all the men you are choosing are jerks, but if that is the case, then you are choosing the wrong men.
>
> There are good men out there. Unfortunately, women who have followed the modern dating plan are more likely to go with their hearts and guts than with their heads.
>
> If they have involved themselves in hookups or friends with benefits relationships they have been traumatized to the point where they continue to be attracted to the same kind of man, over and over again.
>
> Women who have suffered a series of relationship failures have learned how to deal with relationship failure. They have not, however, learned how to conduct a successful relationship.
>
> Women rationalize their bad decision by saying, Fiano suggests, that their love can transform a man from a frog into a prince.
>
> It cannot.
>
> Get over yourself.

I've blogged before about how many single women choose men based on shallow criteria, especially appearance – and also about how many single women rely too much on their emotions instead of studying male roles and choosing the right man for the job. Single women often believe that they can change a bad, but attractive, man into a good man by giving him recreational premarital sex. They actually think that it is easier to convert a bad man with sex than to pick a good man and give him respect – but it doesn't work, as I explained before. They are looking to control a man without having to respect him or serve him. This early sex practice does not work: early sex ruins the quality of the relationship.

Stuart ends his post with this:

> **Women should ask themselves how they could have believed that men would find them more attractive if they were strong, independent feminists.**
> **Women should ask themselves who told them.**
> **It wasn't men. In fact, today's modern woman has been trained not to listen to men or to respect men.**
> **They reaping what they and their feminist handlers sowed.**

Men love to have someone intelligent and experienced as a companion, but that woman has to be willing to help them achieve their goals by following the man's lead. Men have a need to lead. They absolutely need to be respected as leaders. What I have found is that

you cannot even get most single women today to read anything harder than C.S. Lewis these days – they are not willing to follow you even when you are grooming them to be effective wives and mothers – to raise quality children and to impact the university, the church and the public square.

Most single women want happiness – they don't want a man to lead them – not even to lead them into effective influence for the Lord Jesus' sake. It's amazing. 20 years of church, and few Christian women (in my experience) have the desire to let a man lead them to serve God more effectively. They just don't care. They just read Harry Potter. They just want to travel. They just want to have a good time. The pastors never tell single women anything to counteract the feminism.

Send Cassy's article far and wide! Maybe we'll save the culture from the ravages of radical feminism. Maybe more children will grow up with a mother *and a father.*

Where are all the Christian women? Are Christian women ready for marriage?

November 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have noticed some very alarming things about single Christian women lately, and I want to write about some of them.

I think that the main thrust of courting from the man's perspective is that you want to 1) communicate your plan to make the marriage and the children have a positive impact for Christ and his kingdom, 2) you want to demonstrate that you understand the needs of women and that you are capable of meeting those needs, especially the needs for love and companionship, 3) that you understand the roles of a man and you have made preparations and decisions to be ready to fulfill those roles, and 4) you want to ask the kinds of questions that will allow you to ensure that the woman you are courting is ready to fulfill her roles – because she has also made preparations and good decisions.

Well, the problem I wanted to talk about has to do with objective 1). I have communicated my plan to many women and I find that there are particular parts where they resist. The main thing I would like to do is to have four children who all go into different interesting fields and make an impact for Christ. Here are some of the areas I think would be most useful:

- cosmologist or astrophysicist
- biochemist/bioinformatics
- economist to research marriage and parenting
- lawyer to join the Alliance Defense Fund

The goal here is that the children will be able to pursue their field of study without being persecuted by secular leftists, and be able to earn a living, and be able to make a contribution in an area that matters.

So what I normally do is lay out this plan to the woman and then see if she is supportive and helpful and starts to take action to help with that. But I have had some alarming reactions and I want to talk about some of those below.

1) Several women have told me that children can have as much impact for Christ as a ballet dancer or poet as they could as a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or as a President. The part of this objection that I find most alarming is not that it is obviously false, but that my authority to lead, which is secured by my role as provider and saver of money, is being denied. I am still expected to bring savings and income into the family, but without any of the decision making authority about how hard the children should study and what fields they should be steered towards.

For me, the whole point of getting married is to serve the Lord – and if my plans to serve are threatened by marriage, then I will not do it. I would rather use the fortune I have to make donations to individual events than to be married and have those resources wasted

on ballet dancers and poets. Further on this point about education and careers, I feel that one of the things that a man struggles with is the fear that his children will not be able to grow up and be prosperous and independent in the world. I especially worry that they will feel pressure to compromise their faith because of financial concerns.

Many people think that there is this Santa Claus in the sky who will magically provide money no matter how reckless they are – but I don't think God is like that. I think he values stewardship, wisdom and prudence – and that's what I intend to teach my children. I want my children to have enough money so that they can be independent of the state, and resilient against peer pressure. I see many many people who get degrees in fields where they fall under pressure to adopt viewpoints that are non-Christian simply because of financial concerns. Money matters a lot to keeping your convictions, especially when you get married and have children – it's something that needs to be planned for.

I am afraid of getting overruled by someone who thinks that the world is a safe place for Christians, or that any field is as good as any other for serving Christ. There is a reason why people know who William Lane Craig and Michele Bachmann are – they have the skills. But what I am seeing from Christian women is that Christianity can be reduced to just reading the Bible, singing in church and praying to hear the voice of their emotions. (Which they call the voice of God) There is no thought being put into how to make children achieve at a high level by setting goals and funneling them into areas that matter.

It's like Christian women think that the children's happiness is more authoritative in the family than my knowledge and experience about how to build up children who will retain their faith, maintain their financial independence and have an influence in the world. Often, the women who tell me that the choice of career doesn't matter are themselves riddled with credit card debt. And the ones who tell me that science apologetics doesn't matter are the ones whose parents and siblings are becoming apostates after reading Richard Dawkins books. If I am the one who is earning the money and providing the savings up front, then I am the one who should be leading on things like education, careers, jobs and so forth. If I was smart enough to study the right things, to work and to save before I got married, then I shouldn't be overloaded after the marriage by someone else's feelings, emotions and desire to be her children's "friend".

2) Another concern I have is about how these Christian women are moved by liberal sob stories so that they vote against a strong foreign policy, self-defense, deterrence, capital punishment, and men using force to punish evildoers in general. On the foreign policy front, one woman complained to me that American helicopter gunships had used excessive force by attacking Islamic terrorist infantry with the gunship's machine gun. Now some of you will have caught on that military issues and platforms are an interest of mine because I am a war gamer. I play military simulations ranging from squad-level infantry combat right up to full-scale carrier strike groups. So I am informed about tactics, strategy, weapons, vehicles and so on.

Anyway, I took a look at the full guncam footage she linked me and read the AARs and

noticed that there was a convoy of BLUFOR Humvees coming into range of the OPFOR infantry, and that the OPFOR infantry was armed with RPGs. I asked her to tell me what she thought an RPG could do to a Humvee. She had no idea what an RPG was or what it could do to a Humvee. I explained that RPGs are ROCKETS that explode and it would kill all the occupants of Humvees. It seemed to me that her only reason for complaining about it was that her friends had sent it to her, and she felt pressured to agree with them. She had no understanding of the capabilities of the arms and vehicles at all, yet she felt qualified to make judgments about unnecessary violence. In fact, it became clear that she was taking this position because she thought that it made her look morally superior. She felt "compassion" for the poor Islamic terrorists. It's so easy to second guess American military forces when you know nothing at all about war in general, or Islamic extremism in the Middle East in particular.

This terrifies me. I do not want to be overruled by someone who makes decisions based on ignorance, emotions, intuitions and peer pressure. This person went on to assure me that shooting terrorists was the same as blowing up busloads of children, and that killing convicted serial killers was the same as killing unborn babies. Because killing is killing, right? That scares me. Who would want to be a passenger in a car with someone who was drunk and color-blind? Not me. It's hard to consider someone for marriage who can't see the difference between good and evil or guilt and innocence, but instead tries to lift up evil and bash down good. (Not only was she anti-capital punishment but also anti-self-defense – all without having done a moment's worth of research on the peer-reviewed studies showing how capital punishment deters crime, and how concealed-carry laws reduce rates of violent crime).

Should I marry someone who is uncomfortable with the male role of making moral judgments and exercising force against evil? Someone who takes positions without knowing anything about the details of what she is talking about? Of course not. No one can be happy married to someone who takes positions on moral issues based on ignorance, emotions, vanity and peer pressure. And some Christian women are unwilling to learn anything about war, or even to come to the firing range to fire a handgun. They have opinions, they make pronouncements about how they will overrule you if you get married to them, they vote to undermine national security and world peace by emboldening aggressors and then they refuse to learn anything about the issues. All they need to know are their feelings. And they vote based on those feelings, not based on studies or history or anything factual.

3) A final example has to do with Christian women embracing socialism because it is "compassionate". Believe it or not, some women do not really understand the effect of having the government spend more and more money equalizing life outcomes. Most of the Christian women I spoke to had enormous difficulty understanding how single motherhood by choice creates child poverty. They wanted to believe that child poverty was just spilled milk – it just happened, and wasn't anyone's fault, and that subsidizing it wouldn't create more of it.

One Christian pro-life activist wrote to me that she was "great with kids" and was going

to have one out of wedlock and raise it with money from the government. This woman never finished college and had not held any sort of serious job. She complained that no men were marrying her (note: this woman was completely irresponsible and penniless and unsuitable for marriage) and blamed the men. I told her that the reason why men were not marrying her was because they were paying a third of their income in taxes and looking at the 1.65 trillion deficits and 14.5 trillion national debt. She said that men didn't really care about money and numbers and that if they loved her, they would marry her anyway, but they were just selfish lazy cowards. She was willing to inflict fatherlessness and day care on a child, but she was "great with kids".

Another Christian woman told me that the government should provide free meals to children so that they were all equal regardless of whether their mothers had married or not. I explained that every time that government takes a responsibility away from men, that our household income would go down because of higher taxes, and my job would be put in jeopardy because of government debt. I also explained that the more government does, the less control there is inside the family – like when Christians have to pay for public schools so that all the children will be equal. Equally illiterate and innumerate. Instead of proposing free market solutions to poverty that retain family integrity – like school voucher programs – they always seem to leap to the big government solutions first.

But you can see how this idea of economic equality captures the emotions of some Christian women and they don't even realize how they are undermining men's desire and ability to achieve their goals for the marriage. They don't read economics and they don't realize that Christian marriage plans cost money. Men need money in order to put their own children through college. Men need money for homeschooling, stay-at-home moms and private schools. And men need money for apologetics books and to take children to apologetics conferences. It's amazing because this woman expected me to keep her at home as a stay-at-home mom, but she wanted my salary to go to subsidize the single mothers by choice in the next neighborhood over.

That is the level of self-destructive economic ignorance I am seeing from some Christian women. They look at social problems like child poverty, and the only solution they can come up with to these problems is government-controlled redistribution of wealth by a secular government. (Together with all the high unemployment that this deficit spending creates). Why are they so opposed to men and marriage and family? Because they have never taken the time to read even a basic book on economics. Newsflash: free market capitalism is better for the poor than socialism – that's why the poor are wealthier in the United States than in any other country, and their standard of living has gone up over time.

For example, take health care. I know another Christian woman who complained to me about some poor child of a single mother who could not get treatment for some condition or other. Notice how there was no emphasis on what this single mother chose to study, whether she chose to work, whether she chose to save, or whether she married a good provider. No. The problem is taken as is – as a case of spilled milk and all questions of

responsibility and accountability are dismissed. I was asked how capitalism can solve the problem.

Well the first thing to point out is that her solution is to defund the family, grow government, reward irresponsibility, undermine my plan by diminishing the earnings I save that fund my plan. And why? So that she could feel better and see God's aim of making us all happy achieved. It is very important to understand this point. Women who claim to be Christians may not actually be Christians. If a woman thinks that God's job is to make his human pets happy, then she is not a Christian at all, but a socialist-to-be, with an unnecessary Santa Claus riding on top of her emotional delusions. These are the people who claim to be opposed to abortion and then vote for single-payer health care which provides… taxpayer-funded abortion. Don't believe a word of it. No one can be a Christian who is a socialist, and if they don't know anything about economics, that's what they are. No matter what a woman says, if her solution to poverty is the secular government taxing your family and your employer, and reducing the family's earnings and destabilizing the family's revenue stream, then she does not have a Christian view of family, government and charity. She will undermine your role as provider because she values socialism MORE than she values marriage and family.

Secondly, there are solutions to poverty that are compatible with the Bible and capitalism that she ought to know about, if she had actually done any reading about it. The first thing that should have come into her mind is private charity. If the government has any role at all, it should be to provide tax credits for private charity. It is important for government not to crowd out the virtuous character of the people by taking over the job of helping neighbors. But even more than that, every Christian woman should be familiar with the horrors of socialized medicine in countries like Canada and the UK, and the alternative to socialized medicine – consumer-driven health care. If a woman is not well-read on consumer-driven health care policy, then she is at risk for being taken in by this socialist undermining of the family. Real Christian women choose policy based on economics, not based on their emotions and their ridiculous theology of God making his human pets happy regardless of what they believe about him. Our job as Christians is not primarily to make people have equal net worths regardless of their personal decisions. Our job is to make them know about God's existence and character, and we can do that better with private charity – certainly better than any secular government can. Your money is your voice. Don't give it to a SECULAR government that will turn around and enact taxpayer-funded abortion, taxpayer-funded IVF, taxpayer-funded day care, taxpayer-funded fatherlessness welfare, and so on.

And more

I'm going to stop now, but I could go on and on about how some Christian women neglect to study Christian apologetics or theology, but instead learn about trendy secular practices like yoga, vegetarianism, recycling, etc. Or how they think there is no Hell. Or how they think that the Bible was written by men and that they can just pick the verses they like. Or how they think that science is not worth studying to confirm the Bible. Or how they know nothing at all about how premarital sex and cohabitation decrease the

stability of marriage. Or how they think that same-sex unions are no different than married couples when comparing stability, domestic violence, promiscuity, and so on. Or how they want to subsidize single motherhood by choice because fathers are not really important to children and can easily be replaced by taxpayer-funded welfare and taxpayer-funded IVF. Or how they think that single-payer payer health care is good, even though it means taxpayer-funded abortion, in practice. Or how they think that taxpayer-funded day care is good for children. Or how they think that public schools need to be funded with more family money, so that all children will be "equal".

I could go on forever with examples of how woefully unprepared some single Christian women are for marriage. But I'm going to end by explaining what the underlying problem for all of these symptoms is, and then you can leave your comments.

Conclusion

Basically the underlying problem is this: when some Christian women say they want marriage, they actually don't want marriage at all – not a marriage to a man who is going to take on the traditional male roles anyway. The reason why men work is so that they are the sole or primary breadwinners – so that they have the authority to make decisions and lead in the home. Men want to have children who are self-sufficient and morally upright, and who can have an influence for Christ and his Kingdom. And they know that although the compassion of their wives is useful in the early years of a child's development, that moral responsibility and accountability are needed later on to change children into adults.

Men need to be providers SO THAT they can be respected as protectors, when they set out moral boundaries and push their children to know truth from lie, right from wrong, and practical from impractical. Men also need to be able to make arguments about theology and apologetics using evidence, and not to be overruled by emotions, intuitions, and even e-mails that are debunked on snopes.com (yes, one woman told me that Splenda was not safe – I sent her 100 peer-reviewed studies from the NCI web site and she responded with a CONSPIRACY E-MAIL that was debunked on snopes.com).

So the real problem is that some Christian women say they want marriage, but what they actually want is a Stepford husband who will perform none of the traditional roles of a man, which they find icky and mean. They want the money to be brought into the home and the wedding to be photographed and the babies to play with, but they don't want the men to act in the traditional male role of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. It is very important for men to get this out there and in the clear during the courting process. And I also really recommend that men avoid sex before marriage, because sex makes you stop caring about male roles and serving God. If you want to serve God by executing a plan, then stay away from premarital sex. I have had to play defense against women trying to push me too far physically when I was not satisfied with them from a Christian point of view. Just say NO.

Please see this post for questions you can ask a woman to verify whether a woman is an authentic Christian. And the most important thing to do is to give her books to read and

tasks to perform to see if she is willing to follow your lead. Science apologetics and fiscal conservativism are key. If the person is not talking about the Big Bang, the fine-tuning and biological information, you cannot even be sure she is a Christian – it could all just be emotions and youth. Some women I know just give the name "Christianity" to their feelings of happiness and goodness and pacifism and postmodernism and relativism and socialism and universalism. They do not actually KNOW that there is a Creator and Designer of the universe who raised Jesus from the dead independent of their feelings of happiness and goodness and pacifism and postmodernism and relativism and socialism and universalism. They just think that the world is a place where people feel good and only good things ever happen and they agree with everyone else's religion so that more people will like them. The thing about Christian women that you need to fear most is this emotional happy-clappy intuition they have that the world is a happy, safe place and that people can do whatever they want and that God's job, (and later government, as they drift into atheism), is to make everyone happy and prosperous. That is completely incompatible with a marriage designed to serve God.

Note: for those who think I am too critical of Christian women, Michele Bachmann has none of these flaws and I am backing her to be President. So there are Christian women who do know what they are doing, and I would like them to run for President and win. There is nothing in what I wrote that opposes smart, strong women being in control at the very top.

Related posts

- Questions to ask to find out if a woman is a solid Christian
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting

- Why Christian men should be chaste

Melanie Phillips: the Left's war on the family has left us with millions of lonely people

November 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina has been really wonderful lately, calming me down after Tuesday's election loss. I'm trying not to write about politics for a little while. For me the biggest impact of the election will be on the children. The children who will be aborted by their mothers, the children who will be raised without their fathers, the children who will be raised with no mother or no father in same-sex "marriages" and the children who will be saddled with over $200,000 of public debt the day they are born. Truly, leftism is a philosophy that makes war on children.

Dina sent me this related article from Melanie Phillips, a well-known Jewish conservative based in the UK. It's a really good article.

Excerpt:

> Britain appears to be turning into a disunited kingdom of solitary and lonely people.
>
> Recent figures have shown that ever-increasing numbers of middle-aged men and women are living alone.
>
> According to the Office of National Statistics, almost 2.5 million people aged between 45 and 64 have their own home but no spouse, partner or children to live with them. Since the mid-Nineties, their number has grown by more than 50 per cent.
>
> […]A devastating study published last week revealed that, by the time they are 15, little more than half of British children are still living with both their natural parents. That means nearly half of 15-year-olds are not.

First the broken links between parents and children:

> [I]f a parent disappears from his or her children's lives, those children are far less likely to want to look after that parent when he or she becomes old and frail.
>
> Nor will children want to look after a step-parent who, even if not actively resented, will not command the same bonds of love and duty as someone's natural father or mother.

And the broken links in romantic relationships:

> [O]ur post-religious, post-modern, post-moral society prizes above all else independence, which is seen as essential to fulfilling one's potential without any constraints or interference by anyone else.
>
> This fact more than anything else helps explain the rise and rise of cohabitation, and the reason why so many now prefer it to marriage.

> The key point about marriage is that it is not a partnership or a relationship but a union in which two people bind themselves to each other for ever in solemn obligation.
>
> By contrast, those who choose to cohabit regard their relationship as a partnership of independent individuals — in which they reserve for themselves the right to opt out, with no binding obligation on either side.
>
> […]Nor is it surprising that a principal reason why cohabitations collapse is the arrival of a baby. For a child demands unconditional obligation to another human being. And that's what cohabitants don't want.

And children who grow up without both of their biological parents:

> Of course, there are lone parents who do a heroic job in bringing up their children against all the odds, but in general children in fragmented families suffer in every aspect of their lives.
>
> They do worse at school and are less likely to get a job, are more prone to drugs, teenage pregnancy and crime, suffer more from depression and other mental disorders and are more vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse.
>
> Worse still, they go on disproportionately to replicate in their adult lives the very same disordered or broken family patterns that did them so much damage.
>
> For in fractured families, where one spouse has betrayed or abandoned another and where partners may come and go, the children grow up without any understanding of what it takes to overcome difficulties in a relationship, or what things such as trust, loyalty — and yes, real love — actually mean.
>
> […]**From easier divorce to the abolition of laws covering illegitimacy; from the promotion of unmarried motherhood to the feminist demonisation of men; from the doctrine of non-judgmentalism, which gave a free pass to the abandonment of children, to the loading of the tax and welfare dice against marriage and in favour of lone parenthood — the wrecking ball of the Left has succeeded in smashing the traditional family to bits.**

I love Melanie Phillips! And, like Dina and I, she also likes Conservative MP Iain Duncan Smith – the best MP in the UK.

Now everybody click here and go read the whole thing.

67% of single / unmarried / divorced women vote for pro-abortion, pro-gay-marriage Obama

November 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you know that most single / unmarried / divorced women are pro-abortion and pro-gay-marriage?

Excerpt:

> Two-thirds of single women voted for President Barack Obama on Tuesday – showing that unattached women are a powerful Democratic voting bloc.
>
> These women were galvanized not only by traditional "women's" issues such as birth control and abortion rights, but also by Obama's jobs message and health reform, analysts say.
>
> **NBC News national exit polling shows that 67 percent of unmarried women said they voted for Obama. That's in line with the 2008 election, when 70 percent of single women helped usher the president into office. This proves it wasn't a single-election phenomenon: unmarried women have solidified into a powerful voting force, experts say.**
>
> "One of the reasons for that is the birth control issue," says American Association of University Women Policy Director Lisa Maatz. "Abortion — reasonable people can disagree on that and do. But the whole issue of access to birth control…is something that most women thought was a settled issue."
>
> By the way — this isn't just young women, Maatz pointed out. Many of the single women voters were over 50 — divorced, widowed or never married.

In the rest of this post, when I say "women", I mean "67% of single / unmarried / divorced women who voted for abortion and gay marriage". Please keep that in mind.

So what is it that these single / unmarried / divorced women really want these days?

Here's what they want:

- they want taxpayer-funded contraceptives, paid for by Christians and provided by Christians
- they want taxpayer-funded abortions, paid for by Christians and provided by Christians (no conscience protections)
- they want children to be raised by single mothers, supported with taxpayer money
- they want children to be raised by same-sex couples, and harsh laws preventing anyone from disagreeing with gay marriage
- they want no-fault divorce laws, so that they can easily get out of any marriages that don't make them happy
- they want taxpayer-funded day care, so that they can get back to their careers as quickly as possible

In the UK, you can also get taxpayer-funded breast enlargements. And in some parts of Canada, you can get taxpayer-funded in-vitro fertilization. Both countries have single-payer health care, which is very popular with single women because women typically need more health care and men need less – but you pay into these systems based on income, so it is a redistributive system that punishes work and rewards those people who require more health care – sometimes as a result of their own poor choices.

So women basically want to be unchaste, to depend on government handouts, to dismiss the traditional roles of men in marriage (protector, provider, moral/spiritual leader) and to dismiss the needs of children for their mother and father (either through day care, single motherhood or divorce). If their plan to have a ton of recreational sex results in a baby, then they want to kill that baby, so they won't be burdened by the consequences of their own choices. Women don't want to stay home with very young children. They don't want to care for their husbands' needs. In fact, most of them would prefer to have money extracted from working men through taxation, and then distributed back to to women through government programs and handouts. What they really mean is that they want to marry the government, and escape from the authority of husbands and fathers, and the obligation to respect them, too.

Now, speaking as a chaste Christian man, marriage is my goal and so I read a lot of research about how marriage succeeds or fails, as well as research on what children need in order to succeed. The evidence that I've written about before shows that marriages are more stable and better quality if both the man and the woman have no previous sexual experience. The evidence also shows that children need a mother for at least the first two years of life, and preferably the first five years of life. The evidence shows that fatherlessness is tantamount to child abuse. And the evidence shows that divorce scars children for life. And the evidence shows that men feel better about themselves when they are recognized and respected by their family as the protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader of the home.

Therefore, we should be encouraging men and women to be chaste prior to marriage. Not only is this good for marital stability and quality, but fewer unborn children will be murdered by women. We should encourage women to stay home at least two years with new children, and five would be better. We should be encouraging people to be more careful about choosing the right man for the roles of husband and father, and not telling them to choose a man based on superficialities like appearance, emotions and cultural approval. We should be making it harder for women to divorce men by removing the financial incentives to divorce and requiring a demonstration of fault.

That's what we would do if we wanted a marriage that is good for God, good for society, good for men and good for children. But let me be clear: that is not what women want. They say they want "marriage", but they don't want what marriage actually is: husbands caring for wives, wives submitting to husbands, and protecting and nurturing children. Marriage, to a woman, means that government will make sure that no one can obligate her to do anything that doesn't make her feel happy. Not husbands. Not children. No one.

I think that Christian men like me need to be very careful about knitting our souls to a single woman today. Lots of women label themselves as “Christian” and even attend church. But if they haven’t taken the time to get informed about men and marriage, you shouldn’t be fooled by them. They are opposed to God, men, morality, marriage and children. They are pro-abortion. They will kill to make recreational sex consequence free. They are pro-gay-marriage. They don’t believe that children have a right to a mother and a father to whom they belong, and who are obligated to care for them.

Single men: be careful about marrying single women today – the odds are that you are going to get hurt. You can see the danger they pose to you and your children by looking at what they vote for. You might as well go to the zoo and marry an alligator and hope for love for you and your children from that. Don’t be stupid. Look how they vote and think about what it tells you about their priorities and sense of obligation. Marriage made sense when women were self-controlled and cared about the needs of men and children and their obligations to men and children. Now they don’t. If you want a traditional marriage, and the happiness of being a real man to a woman, and the joy of seeing your children cared for by someone you love and trust, then think carefully before you get married. Because that old definition of marriage is dead. The word remains, but the meaning is lost.

Please also check out my previous post on why single women vote for higher taxes and bigger government, and my previous post about how single women view traditional marriage with traditional roles as a threat to their personal autonomy.

Related posts

- New study: staying a virgin longer enables more satisfying relationships
- Study explains why college women abandon courtship for hook-ups
- New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially for women
- New study: marriage drops probability of child poverty by 82%
- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less
- How do prostitutes stay in business in an era of hook-up sex?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
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- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

Sally Pipes: how Obamacare causes doctors to quit practicing medicine

November 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sally C. Pipes is one of my favorite health care policy analysts. She has written several books on topics like the Canadian health care system, the American health care system, and the Obamacare health care law. She has debated health care with that damnable leftist Paul Krugman, among others. She heads up a think tank based in San Francisco, CA called the Pacific Research Institute.

Here is her latest column in the Orange County Register.

Excerpt:

> Thanks to Obamacare, America's corps of doctors appears to have a case of the blues.
>
> The Physicians Foundation recently asked more than 13,000 doctors about their morale, their career plans, their practices and their views of the Affordable Care Act. The results were grim.
>
> Nearly six in 10 doctors said that they are less positive about the future of health care in America under Obamacare. Almost two-thirds have a negative attitude toward their jobs – nearly twice as many as before the health law was passed in 2010.
>
> As a result, many doctors are cutting back on their workload or shuttering their practices. Worse, their collective frustration is exacerbating our nation's troubling doctor shortage.
>
> More than three-fifths of doctors say they would retire today if they could, compared with 45 percent before Obamacare. Eighty-four percent say the medical profession is in decline. Fewer doctors say they would enter the profession today if they had it to do over again, and fewer would recommend it to their children.
>
> This decline in doctors' morale is taking a toll on Americans' ability to access care. Physicians report working almost 6 percent fewer hours than they did four years ago. That's about two and a half hours less per week per doctor. Add up all the hours, and it's the equivalent of losing more than 44,000 full-time physicians.
>
> Doctors also report seeing some 16 percent fewer patients than they did in 2008. That represents tens of millions fewer doctor-patient encounters each year.
>
> More than half those surveyed say they plan to cut back further on the time they devote to patient care, to work part time, to retire or to switch to direct-pay "concierge"-type medical practices, which are beyond the reach of many of Obamacare's rules and regulations.
>
> Even before the law, America faced a chronic doctor shortage, with a gap of

> 14,000 physicians in 2010. And the problem will only grow worse.
>
> According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, Obamacare will push the doctor shortage up to 63,000 by 2015 – and more than 91,000 by 2020. That's in addition to the full-time-equivalent losses from doctors working fewer hours.

I have been talking to people in my office who voted for Obama all week to see why they did what they did. Surprisingly, not many people I talked to voted for him. But for those that did, a popular reason is that they wanted to tax the rich more. I asked them what would happen if you taxed the rich more. They told me that Obama can tax people who are "rich" more and more and that the "rich" will just keep paying those higher taxes while still continuing to work and work to provide the goods and services that we all use. I asked them about regulations, and they said that Obama can just keep heaping burdensome regulations on these "rich" people more and more, and they won't mind at all. They'll just keep working and hiring people and providing goods and services even if they make less money and have to work more to comply with regulations.

One of the Indian contractors who voted for Obama told me that rich people do what they do because they *like* it, and they will keep doing it no matter how much we tax and regulate them. "They will do it for love of fairness, and because Obama is such a good man – they will be inspired by him to pay the higher taxes and to fill in the extra paperwork", he told me. For him, people just do whatever they like. The reason why some people work is because they *like* working, and the reason why some people don't work is because they *like* not working. Another Obama-voter told me that people should be able to do whatever they like and everyone should end up equal in the end. Some people will work because they like to, and others won't. Taxes don't affect what a person does. Nor does the difficulty of the work. Nor does the exposure to malpractice lawsuits. Nor does the higher medical insurance premiums. Doctors do what they do because they *like* it, and the conditions and profit margins don't matter. Rich people like doctors will keep working at whatever they do even if they are taxed so much that they earn the same amount of money as people who work at McDonald's.

That's the worldview of the people who voted for Obama. They don't understand incentives at all. They don't understand the profit motive. They think that people who go to medical school until they are 35, racking up tens of thousands of dollars in debt in the process, will be happy to work 80 hour weeks and to pay 50% of their income in taxes so that other people can have free contraceptives. That is the worldview of the left – they have no idea what the consequences are of raising taxes on "the rich". They don't think that there are any consequences.

If you would like to see Sally Pipes talk a bit more about Obamacare, you can watch her explain it here:

Eight minutes long.

Sex-trafficking on campus: the logical outworking of feminist rhetoric

November 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's quickly review what feminists think about young women hooking up with men on campus.

Here's feminist Hanna Rosin writing in the Atlantic:

> The hookup culture that has largely replaced dating on college campuses has been viewed, in many quarters, as socially corrosive and ultimately toxic to women, who seemingly have little choice but to participate. Actually, it is an engine of female progress—one being harnessed and driven by women themselves.
>
> […]To put it crudely, feminist progress right now largely depends on the existence of the hookup culture. And to a surprising degree, it is women—not men—who are perpetuating the culture, especially in school, cannily manipulating it to make space for their success, always keeping their own ends in mind. For college girls these days, an overly serious suitor fills the same role an accidental pregnancy did in the 19th century: a danger to be avoided at all costs, lest it get in the way of a promising future.

The Weekly Standard talks about feminist Naomi Wolf:

> On top of it all is the feminist-driven academic and journalistic culture celebrating that yesterday's "loose" women are today's "liberated" women, able to proudly "explore their sexuality" without "getting punished for their lust," as the feminist writer Naomi Wolf put it in the *Guardian* in December.
>
> Wolf devoted her 1997 book *Promiscuities* to trying to remove the stigma from . . . promiscuity. On the one hand, she decried the double-standard unfairness of labeling a girl who fools around with too many boys a "slut," and, on the other, she lionized "the Slut" (her capitalization) as the enviable epitome of feminist freedom and feminist transgression against puritanical social norms.

And here's feminist Nancy Bauer in the New York Times:

> If there's anything that feminism has bequeathed to young women of means, it's that power is their birthright. Visit an American college campus on a Monday morning and you'll find any number of amazingly ambitious and talented young women wielding their brain power, determined not to let anything — including a relationship with some needy, dependent man — get in their way. Come back on a party night, and you'll find many of these same girls (they stopped calling themselves "women" years ago) wielding their sexual power, dressed as provocatively as they dare, matching the guys drink for drink — and then hook-

> up for hook-up.

Feminists aren't concerned about the hook-up culture. On the contrary – they think of it as a natural and good application of their feminist doctrines.

Now with that out of the way, let's look at what Stuart Schneiderman has found in the Atlantic about the college hook-up culture.

Excerpt:

> Not long after she arrived on campus in September, Nicole had started hooking up with a guy who belonged to one of the more popular fraternities on campus. As she explained to me over coffee that day, one night in the fall, she got drunk and ended up having sex with this guy in his dingy frat room, which was littered with empty cans of Keystone Light and pizza boxes. She woke up the next morning to find a used condom tangled up in the sheets. She couldn't remember exactly what had happened that night, but she put the pieces together. She smiled, looked at the frat brother, and lay back down. Eventually, she put her clothes on and walked back to her dorm. Mission accomplished: She was no longer a virgin.
>
> This was a routine she repeated for months. Every weekend night, and on some weekday nights, she would drink so heavily that she could remember only patches of what happened the night before and then would have sex with the same fraternity brother. One night, she was talking with someone else at the frat when the brother interrupted her and led her upstairs to have sex. On another occasion, they had sex at the frat, but Nicole was too drunk to find her clothes afterward, so she started walking around the house naked, to the amusement of all of the other brothers. She was too drunk to care. Eventually, everything went dark. Next weekend, she returned to the frat.
>
> On that spring day, as Nicole told me these stories, she didn't make eye contact with me.
>
> When I asked Nicole if she was still hooking up with the same frat boy, she shook her head. She explained that the entire time she was having sex with him he never once spoke to her or acknowledged her outside of his fraternity's basement. Not in the library, not in the dining hall, not at the bookstore.
>
> "One time, I waved at him in front of the food court and said hi, but he just ignored me."
>
> "Was he with anyone?" I asked—as though that would make a difference.
>
> "A bunch of his friends."

And later:

> She talked less. She stopped exercising. And she started walking around with her eyes to the ground. The lively girl I had known in the fall, who reminded me of so many freshman girls I had met as editor of a campus publication and vice

> president of my sorority, had recently been placed on suicide watch by the university health clinic.

This reminds me about one of the chapters in "Unprotected", by Dr. Miriam Grossmann, in which she explains how women respond to the pressure to take part in the hook-up culture.

Stuart explains why women are doing this:

> College administrators who counsel young women are permissive about hooking up. They believe that women like sex just as much as men and therefore that if a man likes hooking up a woman must like it too. They are comfortable with the idea that abuse is not abuse if it is consensual.
>
> Thus they encourage hooking up and pretend that it is normal behavior.
>
> Young women have learned from the ambient culture that the alternatives to hooking up, dating and courtship are oppressive. They have learned that abstinence is unnatural and repressive.
>
> As I have often mentioned on this blog, feminism deserves considerable responsibility for this state of affairs.
>
> Feminists encourage hooking up. They are pimping out young women for the cause. They must count among the sex traffickers.
>
> […][O]ur culture has imposed mental constraints that are every bit as powerful as physical coercion, but far less difficult to identify.
>
> It has taught young women that when they hook up they are making free choices and are doing something that Hanna Rosin and the sisterhood approve of. Forcing young women to hook up by persuading that they have no real choice in the matter is utterly contemptible.

One of the reasons why I remain a virgin is because I think that sex is something that should not be done merely for recreation. It's a way of bonding, and it's not fair to women to make them do bonding activities before you have bonded to them through marriage. Sex is not something that should be done before a lifelong commitment. We shouldn't be passing any laws or creating any policies that encourage women to get involved with recreational premarital sex. It's not good for them.

Companies announce layoffs in the wake of Obama's re-election

November 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Washington Times links to this article by Freedom Works.

Excerpt:

> With 20 or so new or higher taxes set to be implemented, ranging from a $123 billion surtax on investment income, through the $20 billion medical device tax, all the way down to the $600 million executive compensation limit, Obamacare will be a nearly unbearable tax burden on the economy.
>
> Who will pay? The middle-class workforce, of course.
>
> So with another four years for President Obama to look forward to, and the obvious inevitability of Obamacare that this entails, let's examine the very real jobs that will be lost, and the very real lives that will be affected.
>
> Here are some of the companies impacted by Obamacare:
>
> **Welch Allyn**
>
> Welch Allyn, a company that manufactures medical diagnostic equipment in central New York, announced in September that they would be laying off 275 employees, or roughly 10% of their workforce over the next three years. One of the major reasons discussed for the layoffs was a proactive response to the Medical Device Tax mandated by the new healthcare law.
>
> **Dana Holding Corp.**
>
> As recently as a week ago, a global auto parts manufacturing company in Ohio known as Dana Holding Corp., warned their employees of potential layoffs, citing "$24 million over the next six years in additional U.S. health care expenses". After laying off several white collar staffers, company insiders have hinted at more to come. The company will have to cover the additional $24 million cost somehow, which will likely equate to numerous cuts in their current workforce of 25,500 worldwide.
>
> **Stryker**
>
> One of the biggest medical device manufacturers in the world, Stryker will close their facility in Orchard Park, New York, eliminating 96 jobs in December. Worse, they plan on countering the medical device tax in Obamacare by slashing 5% of their global workforce – an estimated 1,170 positions.
>
> **Boston Scientific**
>
> In October of 2009, Boston Scientific CEO Ray Elliott, warned that proposed taxes in the health care reform bill could "lead to significant job losses" for his company. Nearly two years later, Elliott announced that the company would be

> cutting anywhere between 1,200 and 1,400 jobs, while simultaneously shifting investments and workers overseas – to China.
>
> **Medtronic**
>
> In March of 2010, medical device maker Medtronic warned that Obamacare taxes could result in a reduction of precisely 1,000 jobs. That plan became reality when the company cut 500 positions over the summer, with another 500 set for the end of 2013.

Obamacare encourages companies to limit their number of full-time employees by switching to part-time employees. Some companies are doing that to avoid having to pay Obamacare fines.

Look:

> **Darden Restaurants**
>
> According to the Orlando Sentinel, Darden Restaurants, a casual dining chain best known for their Red Lobster, Olive Garden and LongHorn Steakhouse restaurants, is "experimenting with limiting the hours of some of its workers to avoid health care requirements under the Affordable Care Act when they take effect in 2014".
>
> **JANCOA Janitorial Services**
>
> The CEO of JANCOA, Mary Miller, testified to Congress that Obamacare was a "dream killer", adding that one option she had to consider "is reducing the majority of my team members to part-time employment in order to reduce the amount that I will be penalized."
>
> **Kroger**
>
> The American retailer in Cincinnati, Ohio recently was reported to be planning a significant slashing of their hourly workers. Doug Ross writes:
>
> Operative *Faith* (a mid-level manager with the company) reveals that Kroger will soon join the ranks **of Darden Restaurants** and slash the hours of its non-exempt (hourly) workers to avoid millions in Obamacare penalties.
>
> According to the source, Obamacare could result in tens of thousands of Kroger employees being limited to working 28 hours per week.

And of course there are the layoffs by defense companies like Boeing, because of Obama's defense cuts. The one thing that the government is actually supposed to do – that's the thing he cuts.

The effects of Obamacare were well-known *before* the 2012 election took place. But the Democrat voters were just not paying attention when the voted to re-elect Obama.

Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?

November 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture by New York University professor Paul Vitz to explain a connection between atheism and fatherlessness:

Here's an article by Paul Copan (related to the lecture) which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own*rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all*.[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of Francois-Marie Arouet.
> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.

> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence of a psychological explanation for atheism, but there is also statistical evidence.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will

> become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an enormously difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary.

By the way, isn't it interesting to note that Barack Obama also grew up fatherless and has issues with God and morality.

UPDATE: Ed Babinski has some corrections for my list. He writes in a comment:

> 1) Voltaire was not an atheist but a deist who rejected claims of the Bible's inspiration, like Paine. Voltaire's aphorism, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him," far from being the cynical remark it is often taken for, it was meant as a retort to the atheistic clique of d'Holbach, Grimm, and others.
>
> 2) David Hume's religious views remain uncertain. He never said he was an atheist. A gentle skeptic suits him more.

> 3) Bertrand Russell was an agnostic.

Obama administration blocks energy development on 1.6 million acres of federal land

November 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Hill. (H/T Doug Ross @ Journal)

Excerpt:

> The Interior Department on Friday issued a final plan to close 1.6 million acres of federal land in the West originally slated for oil shale development.
>
> The proposed plan would fence off a majority of the initial blueprint laid out in the final days of the George W. Bush administration. It faces a 30-day protest period and a 60-day process to ensure it is consistent with local and state policies. After that, the department would render a decision for implementation.
>
> The move is sure to rankle Republicans, who say President Obama's grip on fossil fuel drilling in federal lands is too tight.
>
> Interior's Bureau of Land Management cited environmental concerns for the proposed changes. Among other things, it excised lands with "wilderness characteristics" and areas that conflicted with sage grouse habitats.

Remember when Obama that Obama's goal is *not* to lower energy prices – it's to raise the price of energy in order to save the planet from global warming:

Investors Business Daily will help you remember Obama's record of blocking domestic energy development.

Excerpt:

> Shell has fought the administration to begin drilling in the Chukchi Sea off Alaska.
>
> The federal government estimates there are 26.6 billion barrels of recoverable oil and 130 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the Arctic Ocean's Outer Continental Shelf but repeated safety reviews and designation of much of the region as critical polar bear habitat has slowed development to a crawl.
>
> Only 2.2% of federal offshore land is currently being leased for production.
>
> Then there are the 10 billion barrels locked up in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve, which would require drilling in just 2,000 acres out of 19 million.
>
> The Obama administration recently rescinded 77 oil and gas leases in Utah and stalled oil shale research and development in Utah, Colorado and Wyoming, where the federal government owns most of the world's oil shale reserves.
>
> Out West, we may have a "Persia on the Plains." A Rand Corp. study says the Green River Formation, which covers parts of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming, has the largest known oil shale deposits in the world, holding from 1.5 trillion to 1.8 trillion barrels of crude — most of it locked up by federal edict.

> Under President Obama, the American Petroleum Institute notes, leases on federal lands in the West are down 44%, while permits and new well drilling are both down 39% compared to 2007 levels.
>
> After the BP oil spill, President Obama shut down most Gulf of Mexico drilling and there's been a 57% drop in monthly deepwater permits since 2008, according to the Greater New Orleans Gulf Permit Index.

Who needs jobs? We have to "save the planet" from the global warming monster – and raise the price of electricity! Only "the rich" put gas in the their cars and use electricity, right? So only the rich will be affected when electricity prices skyrocket. That's Obama's goal. That's what his supporters elected him to do in the last election.

Related posts

- A third Obama-subsidized green energy firm is bankrupt after $118.5 million loan
- How Barack Obama used taxpayer dollars to outsource green energy jobs
- Did Obama really create jobs with his green energy and stimulus programs?
- In Canada, a revolt against global warming socialism creates an economic boom
- E-mails reveal that Obama fundraiser discussed Solyndra loan with White House
- Another green energy firm goes bankrupt after getting $43 million loan from taxpayers
- E-mails show that Democrats were about to approve a second loan to Solyndra
- Report finds Labor Department's green jobs program failing
- $737 million green jobs loan given to Nancy Pelosi's brother-in-law
- This one graph should end the debate on wind and solar energy
- Obama to conduct campaign fundraiser with wind power stimulus recipient
- How well did Obama's green jobs spending work out for taxpayers?
- Obama administration knew $535 million Solyndra loan was too risky
- Obama administration reworked Solyndra loan to favor private donors
- Solyndra CEO and CFO will refuse to answer questions in Congressional hearing
- Marsha Blackburn beats up Al Gore on cap and trade corruption

Exit polls reveal which religious groups support abortion and gay marriage

November 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Take a look at this data from Pew Research.

Excerpt:

> Religiously unaffiliated voters and Jewish voters were firmly in Obama's corner in 2012 (70% and 69%, respectively). Compared with 2008, support for Obama ticked downward among both Jews and religiously unaffiliated voters in the exit polls, though these declines appear not to be statistically significant. Both of these groups have long been strongly supportive of Democratic candidates in presidential elections. Black Protestants also voted overwhelmingly for Obama (95%).
>
> […]At the other end of the political spectrum, nearly eight-in-ten white evangelical Protestants voted for Romney (79%), compared with 20% who backed Obama. Romney received as much support from evangelical voters as George W. Bush did in 2004 (79%) and more support from evangelicals than McCain did in 2008 (73%). Mormon voters were also firmly in Romney's corner; nearly eight-in-ten Mormons (78%) voted for Romney, while 21% voted for Obama. Romney received about the same amount of support from Mormons that Bush received in 2004. (Exit poll data on Mormons was unavailable for 2000 and 2008.)
>
> Compared with religiously unaffiliated and Jewish voters on the left and white evangelicals and Mormons on the right, Catholics and white mainline Protestants were more evenly divided. Among white mainline Protestants in the exit poll, 54% voted for Romney, while 44% supported Obama. This is virtually identical to the 2008 election, when 55% of white mainline Protestants voted for McCain and 44% backed Obama.
>
> White Catholics, by contrast, swung strongly in the Republican direction relative to 2008. Nearly six-in-ten white Catholics (59%) voted for Romney, up from 52% who voted for McCain in 2008. Three-quarters of Hispanic Catholics voted for Obama, and Catholics as a whole were evenly divided in 2012 (50% voted for Obama, while 48% backed Romney).

I am actually one of those rare non-white evangelical Protestants who is strongly pro-life and pro-marriage. I believe that the Bible is the Word of God, and that it prescribes true moral values and moral obligations. There are not too many of us in America, according to these exit polls. I am very proud of my fellow evangelical Christians. We take the Bible seriously as a moral guide, and it affects everything in our lives – including how we vote.

How would raising taxes on the rich affect middle class working families?

November 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily explains.

Excerpt:

> Raising taxes on all those above $250,000 as Obama proposes would raise just $34 billion. That's a whopping 3% of our $1.1 trillion deficit. Even if you seized all their income, it would only run the government for three months.
>
> So the idea that taxing the wealthy will reduce the deficit is false. This is just class warfare, pure and simple.
>
> Even so, Obama compounds the fib by going on to say his tax hike will have virtually no impact on small businesses. He notes, for example, that 97% of all small businesses would be untouched by his tax hike.
>
> True, but irrelevant, as Treasury Department data show. For while there are 34.8 million small businesses in America, 30 million of those employ no workers.
>
> Just 4.8 million, or 12%, employ workers. But an even smaller number — just 1.2 million — earn 91% of all the small business income. These are Obama's "rich."
>
> But while they make up just 3% of all small businesses, they employ a stunning 54% of the total private U.S. workforce.
>
> They are, in short, the nation's job creators. And their owners, who report their small-business income on their personal income tax return, will be taxed at a higher rate by Obama.
>
> So don't be fooled. It's not really the "wealthy," as Obama says, who'll get taxed. It's small businesses. And it will have a devastating impact on jobs.
>
> How devastating? A recent study by Ernst & Young noted that Obama's tax hike, far from being "balanced," would cost 700,000 people their jobs.
>
> And it will no doubt kill hundreds of thousands if not millions more jobs in the future as would-be entrepreneurs decide not to start businesses in such a hostile tax and regulatory environment.

It's important for us to realize that the people voting for Obama have no idea about these facts. A lot of people are annoyed that we lost the election last week. I think that if we want to win the next one then we have to start to think about becoming more persuasive with the people around us. We have to learn to deflate the slogans of those on the left with facts.

Sean McDowell explains the pro-life view to ordinary people in an ordinary church

November 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ordinary:

42 minutes – worth your time. There are some graphic images of aborted babies in each trimester in the last couple of minutes, so close your eyes!

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Video:10-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Objective truth in the abortion debate – a pro-life training video
- Alan Shlemon explains a classification system for pro-abortion arguments
- What is the best single book on the pro-life position?

And some posts motivating Christians and conservatives to take abortion seriously:

- Why Christians should focus on cultural issues as well as evangelism
- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion
- Are Christians too involved in politics?
- What did the early church fathers think about abortion?
- Scott Klusendorf confronts a "pro-life" nun who voted for Obama

A primer on the fiscal cliff facing us in January 2013: tax hikes and Obamacare

November 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a medium-length article from the Tax Foundation. I found it fascinating to read, because I am busy making plans myself to deal with the next four years under Barack Obama.

Excerpt:

> On December 31, 2012, a large swath of the federal income tax code is scheduled to expire, an event which has come to be known as the "fiscal cliff." Among the expiring provisions are the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts enacted under President Bush, a compromise on the estate tax, a "patch" in the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) reducing its impact, the temporary 2 percent payroll tax holiday, increased business expensing, and the "extenders" package of miscellaneous tax deductions. On January 1, 2013, five taxes enacted as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)—popularly referred to as Obamacare—also take effect, along with sequester spending reductions of $109 billion due to the failure of the "Supercommittee" to reach consensus on budget reductions.
>
> In late February, the U.S. government will hit the debt ceiling, exhausting its ability to borrow to finance ongoing spending without an increase by Congress. Finally, the federal government's continuing resolution appropriating spending expires on March 27, 2013.

Here are some of the things to look out for, which are all described in detail in the article:

- 2001 and 2003 Tax Cuts Expiration
- Estate Tax Increase
- Alternative Minimum Tax
- Payroll Tax Increase
- Business Depreciation Expense
- Taxes in PPACA (Obamacare)
- Debt Ceiling
- Sequestration

I am most concerned about income tax increase, the capital gains tax increase, the dividend tax increase and the payroll tax increase. These are all going to clobber me. I will have less money for charity and savings, and will have to retire later – and have less time for my Christian activities as a result of having to work longer. The voters in the last election have decided that I must sacrifice more of my earnings so that Obama can hand it all out to his constituents in exchange for their votes.

It helps to know exactly what will be changing in the future, because I have to know how to respond to this. Some adjustments that I might make cannot be done at the drop of a hat. Some take months to plan and execute. It's best to think about things in advance. We have two deadlines: December 31st and March 27th. It will be interesting to see what Washington decides to do.

UPDATE: James Pethokoukis of AEI explains the significance of the tax increases for capital gains and dividends. Other countries have lower rates on these taxes, so expect the capital that funds businesses and creates jobs to leave the country. Obama likes to rail against outsourcing, but he actually causes it – because of his ignorance.

Should government get out of the marriage business?

November 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me three articles by Jennifer Roback Morse, post on The Public Discourse. The articles answer the charge from social liberals and libertarians that we should "get the government out of marriage".

Here's the first article which talks about how government will still be involved in marriage, even if we get rid of the traditional definition of marriage, because of the need for dispute resolution in private marriage contracts. She uses no-fault divorce as an example showing how it was sold as a way to get government out of the divorce business. But by making divorce easier by making it require no reason, it increased the number of disputes and the need for more government to resolve these disputes.

Here's the second article which talks about how the government will have to expand to resolve conflicts over decisions about who counts as a parent and who gets parental rights. With traditional marriage, identifying who the parents are is easy. But with private marriage contracts where the parties are not the biological parents, there is a need for the state to step in and assign parental rights.

Here's the third article which talks about how marriage is necessary in order to defend the needs and rights of the child at a time when they cannot enter into contracts and be parties to legal disputes.

The third article was my favorite, so here is an excerpt from it:

> The fact of childhood dependence raises a whole series of questions. How do we get from a position of helpless dependence and complete self-centeredness, to a position of independence and respect for others? Are our views of the child somehow related to the foundations of a free society? And, to ask a question that may sound like heresy to libertarian ears: Do the needs of children place legitimate demands and limitations on the behavior of adults?
>
> I came to the conclusion that a free society needs adults who can control themselves, and who have consciences. A free society needs people who can use their freedom, without bothering other people too much. We need to respect the rights of others, keep our promises, and restrain ourselves from taking advantage of others.
>
> We learn to do these things inside the family, by being in a relationship with our parents. We can see this by looking at attachment- disordered children and failure-to-thrive children from orphanages and foster care. These children have their material needs met, for food, clothing, and medical care. But they are not held, or loved, or looked at. They simply do not develop properly, without mothers and fathers taking personal care of them. Some of them never develop

> consciences. But a child without a conscience becomes a real problem: this is exactly the type of child who does whatever he can get away with. A free society can't handle very many people like that, and still function.
>
> In other words I asked, "Do the needs of society place constraints on how we treat children?" But even this analysis still views the child from society's perspective. It is about time we look at it from the child's point of view, and ask a different kind of question. *What is owed to the child*?
>
> **Children are entitled to a relationship with both of their parents. They are entitled to know who they are and where they came from. Therefore children have a legitimate interest in the stability of their parents' union, since that is ordinarily how kids have relationships with both parents. If Mom and Dad are quarreling, or if they live on opposite sides of the country, the child's connection with one or both of them is seriously impaired.**
>
> **But children cannot defend their rights themselves. Nor is it adequate to intervene after the fact, after harm already has been done. Children's relational and identity rights must be protected proactively.**
>
> **Marriage is society's institutional structure for protecting these legitimate rights and interests of children.**

I recommend taking a look at all three articles and becoming familiar with the arguments in case you have to explain why marriage matters and why we should not change it. I think it is important to read these articles and to be clear that to be a libertarian doctrine does not protect the right of a child to have a relationship with both his or her parents. Nor does libertarianism promote the idea that parents ought to stick together for their children.

The purpose of marriage is to make adults make careful commitments, and restrain their desires and feelings, so that children will have a stable environment with their biological parents. We do make exceptions, but we should not celebrate exceptions and we should not subsidize exceptions. It's not fair to children to have to grow up without a mother or father just so that they adults can make poor, emotional decisions and have fun.

How I got started with Christian apologetics

November 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I started reading transcripts of William Lane Craig debates while I was an undergraduate student.

Here's one of my favorites, the Craig-Nielsen debate on grounding morality without God

Summary:

> THE CRAIG-NIELSEN DEBATE: GOD, MORALITY, AND EVIL
> William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen
> with annotations by William Lane Craig
> February 1991, University of Western Ontario

Best part:

Finally, he raises the issue of immortality and says, "Death doesn't undermine moral values. In fact, things that we value become all the more precious." Well, in one sense he's right. It's the *absence of God* that undermines the objectivity of moral values, not *death*. But let's suppose that there are objective moral values. What would be undermined by the lack of immortality? I think two things.

First, I think there would be no reason to adopt the moral point of view. Since you're going to die, everyone ends up the same. It doesn't make any difference whether you live as a Hitler or a Mother Teresa. There is no relationship between your moral living and your ultimate fate. And so in that sense, death undermines the reason for adopting the moral point of view rather that just being an egoist and living for self.

Second, there's no basis for self-sacrifice on this point of view. Why should an atheist, who knows everything is going to end in death, do things that are morally right that go against self-interest? For example, a few years ago there was a terrible mid-winter air disaster in Washington, DC, as a plane crashed into a bridge spanning the Potomac River, spilling its passengers into the icy waters. And as the helicopters came to rescue these people, attention focused on one man who again and again passed by the rope ladder rather than be pulled to safety himself. Seven times he did this, and when they came again, he was gone. The whole nation turned its eyes to this man in respect and admiration for the noble act of self-sacrifice that he did. And yet on the atheistic view, that man wasn't noble. He did the *stupidest* thing possible. He should have gone for the rope ladder first, pushed others away, if necessary, in order to survive! But to give up all the brief existence he will ever have for others he didn't even know? Why? It seems to me, then, that it's not simply the absence of God that undermines objective moral values, but ethical living is also undermined by the atheistic point of view because you then have no reason to adopt the moral point of view and you have no basis for acts of self-sacrifice.

By contrast, on the Christian view, where you have both God and immortality, you have the necessary presuppositions for the affirmation of objective moral values and for

consistent living of the ethical life.

And another of my favorites, the Craig-Taylor debate on the ontological grounding of morality.

Summary:

> Is The Basis Of Morality Natural Or Supernatural?
> Richard Taylor and William Lane Craig
> October 1993, Union College, Schenectady, New York

Sample Craig:

(2) I argued that moral accountability also exists under the supernaturalist view, and Professor Taylor didn't deny the point.

(II) What about my critique, then, of naturalism? I said that naturalism doesn't provide a sound foundation for morality, and here I made two points:

(1) On the naturalist view, objective right and wrong do not exist. Again, Professor Taylor doesn't deny this point; he just says, "Well, to say that they're conventional doesn't mean they're contemptible." Well, granted; but it *does* mean they're arbitrary, they're non–objective. There's no more difference between moral right and wrong than driving on the right–hand side of the road versus the left–hand side of the road. It's simply a societal convention. And the modern evolutionist thinks these conventions are just based in socio–biological evolution. According to Michael Ruse, a professor of the philosophy of science,

> The position of the modern evolutionist…is that humans have an awareness of morality…because such an awareness is of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation, no less than are hands and feet and teeth…. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, [ethics] is illusory. I appreciate that when somebody says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves…. Nevertheless...such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction and…any deeper meaning is illusory….{26}

This is essentially the same view as Professor Taylor's. Moral values are simply rooted in socio–biological evolution, that have passed down as certain taboos and certain commands, but they have no objective validity in terms of their moral rightness or wrongness. Professor Taylor says, "But I have a high regard for people who are truly moral and decent." I don't deny that. Of course he does! But the point is that in his ethics, in his philosophy, he has no *basis* for that affirmation. What I bring is not a new set of values—I think we pretty much hold those in common—but I'm offering a secure *foundation* for those values that we all want to hold dear.

You see, on Professor Taylor's view, there really isn't any objective morality. I think every one of us here tonight would agree that it's wrong to kill babies and that the holocaust was morally wrong. But in his book Professor Taylor says, "The infanticide practiced by

the Greeks of antiquity did not violate their customs. If we say it was nevertheless wrong, we are only saying that it is forbidden by *our* ethical and legal rules. And the abominations practiced by the Nazis…are forbidden by our rules, and not, obviously, by theirs."{27} I submit that that is simply a patently false view of moral values and that naturalism, therefore, can't provide any objective basis for right and wrong.

And another of my favorites, the Craig-Tooley debate on the problem of evil.

Summary:

> A Classic Debate on the Existence of God
> Dr. William Lane Craig & Dr. Michael Tooley
> November 1994, University of Colorado at Boulder

Sample Craig:

(2) Christian doctrines increase the probability of the coexistence of God and the evils in the world. Let me just mention a couple of these.

(i) On the Christian view, the purpose of life is not happiness as such in this life. Rather it is the knowledge of God—which will ultimately produce true and everlasting happiness. What that means is that many evils occur in this life which might be utterly pointless with respect to producing human happiness. But they might not be pointless with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Dr. Tooley assumes when he talks about changes that would make this world a better place, that the purpose of life is basically to be happy in this life. And I certainly admit that you could make changes that might appear to make this life a better place, make it happier. But that's not God's purpose. So if you understand that the purpose of life is not happiness as such, I think that you can see that the existence of evil doesn't necessarily cast any improbability upon God's existence.

(ii) It's also the Christian view that God's purpose spills over into eternal life. In the afterlife God will bestow a glory and happiness upon us that is incomparable to what we've suffered here on earth. And the longer we spend in eternity with Him, the more the sufferings in this life shrink by comparison to an infinitesimal instant. Dr. Tooley admits in his article that it is possible that immortality could justify such evils. But, he says, it's "very unlikely" that there is life after death. Well, I have two comments. First, I'd like him to prove that it's unlikely that there is life after death.{26} Second, I suggest that the resurrection of Jesus gives us grounds for hoping in life after death, and I've attempted to justify that historically. So given these Christian doctrines, I think you can see that the existence of God and evil is not so improbable after all.

[…]

(4) Finally, I think that there is actually an argument for God from evil. It would go like this:

(i) If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist. If there is no God, moral values are either socio-biological by-products or just expressions of personal preference.

(ii) Evil exists. That's the premise of the atheist. There is real evil in the world.

(iii) Therefore, objective values do exist. Some things are really wrong.

(iv) Therefore, God exists.

Thus the presence of evil in the world actually demonstrates God's existence because in the absence of God, there wouldn't be any distinction objectively between good and evil, between right and wrong. So although evil in one sense calls into question God's existence, in a much deeper sense, I think, it actually requires God's existence.

So in the light of these four responses, I think that the argument from evil, as difficult and emotionally pressing as it might be, in the end doesn't constitute a good argument against the existence of God. So I think the four arguments given against the existence of God by Dr. Tooley are inconclusive. You've still got my six arguments for God's existence, and therefore I still think that on balance the evidence favors theism as the more rational worldview.

I hope they are helpful to you.

Walter Williams explains why capitalism is moral in 5 minutes

November 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Who is Walter Williams?

> Dr. Walter E. Williams holds a B.A. in economics from California State University, Los Angeles, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in economics from UCLA. He has served on the faculty of George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, as John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics, since 1980.
>
> Williams was born into an African-American family. His family during childhood consisted of himself, his mother, and his sister. His father played no role in raising either child. He grew up in Philadelphia. The family initially lived in West Philadelphia, moving to North Philadelphia and the Richard Allen housing projects when Williams was ten. In 1959 he was drafted into the military, and served as a Private in the United States Army. Following his military service, he re-entered college as a far more motivated student.
>
> While at UCLA, Thomas Sowell arrived on campus in 1969 as a visiting professor. Though he never took a class from Dr. Sowell, the two met and began a friendship that has lasted to this day.

Watch this 5-minute video where he explains why capitalism is more moral than socialism:

And here's another 5-minute video where he explains the profit motive:

Now let's consider another economist, Thomas Sowell:

> Thomas Sowell (born June 30, 1930) is an American economist, social theorist, political philosopher, and author. A National Humanities Medal winner, he advocates laissez-faire economics and writes from a conservative and libertarian perspective. He is currently the Rose and Milton Friedman Senior Fellow on Public Policy at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. He is considered a leading representative of the Chicago school of economics.
>
> Sowell was born in North Carolina, but grew up in Harlem, New York. He dropped out of high school, and served in the United States Marine Corps during the Korean War. He received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1958 and a master's degree from Columbia University in 1959. In 1968, he earned his doctorate degree in Economics from the University of Chicago.
>
> Sowell has served on the faculties of several universities, including Cornell University and University of California, Los Angeles, and worked for think tanks such as the Urban Institute. Since 1980 he has worked at the Hoover Institution.

> He is the author of more than 30 books.

Here is a 33-minute interview with Thomas Sowell on basic economics:

Lately, I have been thinking a lot about Christians who focus on only one issue during elections, typically abortion. I consider this to be a weak and short-sighted approach. Even if the main goal you desire is to stop the murder of unborn babies, you would do well to consider your opponent and use *every* tool available to defeat them in elections. Our opponent on the abortion issue is the Democrat voter. A Democrat is a person who is liberal on social policy – who supports abortion and gay marriage. If you want to defeat the Democrat candidate in an election, then you need to appeal to as many voters as possible on as many issues as possible – not just on social policy. You need to defeat Democrat fiscal policy with arguments and evidence. You need to defeat Democrat foreign policy with arguments and evidence. If you engage every target using every argument and every piece of evidence, you will get more success and win the battle for public opinion.

Let's face it. We are not going to win elections if we turn only to people who call themselves Christians and try to get them to vote pro-life. There are not enough Christians – and not every person who calls himself a Christians is one. Focusing only on Christians is not going to get the pro-life majority we are looking for. It may be easier to avoid confronting people outside of our church, but it won't work. A much better idea is to use every argument against every person – Christian or not. And to be able to address objections on every issue – not just one social issue. If the voters don't care about one issue, then you can argue on another issue. You must be all things to all people so that you can win some by knowing what to say when they ask you for reasons and evidence. Now where have I heard that before?

Here is a full audio course on economics from famous Christian philosopher Ron Nash which I recommend to those who have not yet learned to integrate their Christian faith with economics. His two favorite economists are Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell – he says so in the lectures. In fact, he actually quotes a lot of Walter Williams material from his public lectures on economics, and Thomas Sowell material from his books on economics.

Note: for those who want MP3s of the Thomas Sowell lecture I posted above, here they are:

- http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1701569/BasicEconomics1of5.mp3
- http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1701569/BasicEconomics2of5.mp3
- http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1701569/BasicEconomics3of5.mp3
- http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1701569/BasicEconomics4of5.mp3
- http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1701569/BasicEconomics5of5.mp3

These are low-quality so they could be smaller for downloading.

Papa John pizza CEO: cuts to employee hours likely, because of Obamacare

November 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> The CEO of popular pizza chain Papa John's says his employees may face reduced hours and he expects his business costs to rise because President Obama's re-election most likely insures the president's health care reform law will be implemented in full.
>
> NaplesNews.com reports John Schnatter made the remarks to a small group at Edison State College's Collier County campus the day after the election.
>
> Schnatter, who supported Mitt Romney in the election, said all Americans having health insurance under ObamaCare is a good, but estimates the change will cost Papa John's $5 million to $8 million annually.
>
> Schnatter estimated that these rising costs could adversely affect his workers. Since only full-time employees working 30 hours or more must be covered under the new law, he said he expects franchise owners will be forced to cut employees' hours because they can't afford the costs of health insurance plans.
>
> "That's probably what's going to happen," he said according to NaplesNews.com. "It's common sense. That's what I call lose-lose."
>
> The comments were not Schnatter's first statements on ObamaCare. He made headlines in August for telling shareholders the law may lead to increases in the price of his pizza.
>
> In addition, the Applebee's family restaurant chain is under public attack, including the threat of boycotts after New York-area franchisee Zane Tankel told Fox Business Network that cost increases related to implementing ObamaCare might result in no expansion or additional hiring. Critics appear to have interpreted Tankel's comments to mean he will layoff customers as a result of ObamaCare.

It's too bad that Obama's policies will hurt people who want to work for a living, but it's a hard lesson that we all need to learn: socialism means that we have higher unemployment, less take home pay, lower quality goods, and higher prices. It means having less prosperity and less liberty. And we voted for it.

Obama calls for $1.6 trillion of new taxes as economy faces a new recession

November 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do you raise taxes in a recession? Obama once thought that raising taxes would hurt a recovery and hamper job creation.

Fox News reports on what Obama the President thinks now.

Excerpt:

> **President Obama, ahead of his first press conference since winning re-election and a meeting later this week with congressional leaders, staked out his starting point for fiscal cliff negotiations — $1.6 trillion in tax hikes.**
>
> **White House Press Secretary Jay Carney made clear that the president is sticking by his original budget plan, which includes $1.6 trillion in new revenue, by raising taxes on households making more than $250,000.**
>
> […]Republicans, though, are adamantly opposed to raising tax rates, despite a willingness to deal on closing loopholes and deductions.
>
> […]On Tuesday he met with labor leaders and liberal groups, telling them he would stand behind his campaign pledge to make top earners pay more in taxes.
>
> "We're prepared to stand up to make sure there is shared sacrifice here, so the rich actually start paying their fair share and the middle class don't get soaked for that," said AFL-CIO labor union federation President Richard Trumka.
>
> At issue is an annual U.S. budget deficit that now is routinely above $1 trillion and a national debt that has risen to near $16.5 trillion.
>
> Washington politicians have just over seven weeks, including breaks for the Thanksgiving holiday next week and the Christmas holiday season, to avert the year-end fiscal cliff.

$1.6 trillion of tax increases won't hurt the middle class?

This article from Arthur C. Brooks addresses that point.

Excerpt:

> On average, failed attempts to close budget gaps relied 53 percent on tax increases and 47 percent on spending cuts. Successful consolidations averaged 85 percent spending cuts and 15 percent tax increases. Some of the most successful financial comebacks–like Finland's in the late 1990s–involved more than 100 percent spending cuts, so that taxes could be lowered. The spending cuts by the successful countries centered on entitlements and government

> personnel.
>
> **Now let's look at the moral argument against raising taxes. Why does the president want to increase America's tax burden? You may think it's just a way to increase revenues and reduce the deficit. But even the president knows he can't solve the fiscal crisis by helping himself to bigger and bigger chunks of the income of America's most successful people. Even if individuals earning more than $200,000 were taxed at a 100 percent marginal rate–and we confiscated their passports so they could not flee–the take would come to $1.27 trillion, or just 77 percent of this year's deficit.**
>
> **For the administration, it's not about the money–as we have heard again and again, it's about "fairness." The president believes that we will be a better nation if we redistribute more money from those who have more to those who have less. How much more do we need to redistribute until our system is fair?**
>
> As you ponder this question, remember the facts: The wealthiest 5 percent of Americans already account for 59 percent of federal income taxes. Nearly half of our citizens pay no federal income taxes at all–yet two-thirds of us believe that everybody should at least pay something, even if just to remind ourselves that government isn't free. The Tax Foundation reports that the percentage of Americans who are net takers from the tax system is nearing 70 percent.

Note that even if you confiscated the passports of the wealthy, as communists tend to do, they would not agree to work for free voluntarily – they would stop working and do other things with their time instead. Perhaps Obama's plan involves forcing the rich to continue to work while confiscating the fruits of their labor to distribute to his non-working constituencies. That would be slavery, which is not surprising if you know your history of slavery in the United States. Abraham Lincoln was a Republican, after all, and William Wilberforce was a Conservative.

The right way to solve this problem is with spending cuts and shutting down duplicate programs, waste and entire federal departments that are unconstitutional. But since we re-elected Obama, this is unlikely to happen. The Democrats are the party of big government and they will pass the costs of big government onto the middle class and their employers. When you tax the rich, you tax job-creating businesses and job-creating investors. You lose jobs. You make more people dependent on government. That's what "making the wealthy pay their fair share" really means.

William Lane Craig lectures against naturalism at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland

November 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: even if you have heard Dr. Craig's arguments before, I recommend jumping to the 48 minutes of Q&A time, which starts 72 minutes in.

About Dr. William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich, Germany in 1984.

Dr. Craig was in Scotland to lecture at a physics conference, but a local church organized this public lecture at the University of St. Andrews. I was astonished when, during this lecture, Dr. Craig claimed that his ancestors are Scottish! Scotland is one of the most secular, left-wing places on Earth! Can anything good come out of Scotland? (Except for James Clerk Maxwell, of course) Maybe Dina will know, since she lives there, and because I tease her about Scotland all the time, so she is used to defending Scotland.

Anyway, Scottish-teasing aside, here is the full lecture with Q&A: (2 hours)

Summary:

- Naturalism defined: the physical world (matter, space and time) is all that exists
- Dr. Craig will present 7 reasons why naturalism is false
- 1) the contingency argument
- 2) the kalam cosmological argument
- 3) the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life
- 4) the moral argument
- 5) the ontological argument
- 6) the resurrection of Jesus

- 7) religious experience

The Q&A time starts around 1:12:00.

Dr. Craig does mention an 8th argument early in the Q&A – the argument from the non-physicality of mental states (substance dualism), which is an argument that I find convincing, because a materialist conception of mind is not compatible with rationality, consciousness and moral agency. He gets a couple of questions on the moral argument early on – one of them tries to put forward an evolutionary explanation for “moral” behaviors. There’s another question the definition of naturalism. There is a bonehead question about the non-existence of Jesus based on a Youtube movie he saw – which Craig responds to with agnostic historian Bart Ehrman’s book on that topic. There’s a question about God as the ground for morality – does morality come from his will or nature. Then there is a question about the multiverse, which came up at the physics conference Dr. Craig attended the day before. There is a good question about the Big Bang theory and the initial singularity at time t=0. Another good question about transfinite arithmetic, cardinality and set theory. One questioner asks about the resurrection argument. The questioner asks if we can use the origin of the disciples belief as an argument when other religions have people who are willing to die for their claims. One of the questioners asks about whether the laws of nature break down at 10^-43 after the beginning of the universe. There is a question about the religious experience argument, and Craig has the opportunity to give his testimony.

I thought that the questions from the Scottish students and faculty were a lot more thoughtful and respectful than at American colleges and universities. Highly recommended.

Christian business to pay up to $1.3 million per day in HHS mandate fines

November 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration is set to levy as much as a $1.3 million per day fine against a Christian retail business based on their religious objection to abortifacient drugs, according to a lawsuit filed this week.
>
> Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc., with more than 500 arts and crafts stores in 41 states and over 22,500 employees, is reportedly the largest for-profit business yet to file suit over the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate requiring businesses to provide free abortion-causing drugs, such as the "week-after" pill Ella, as non-negotiable "preventive services."
>
> Lawyers for the private retail chain filed a lawsuit in the US District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma, where the company is based.
>
> The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty says the company, which started in a garage in Oklahoma City in 1972, is now a booming business amid a struggling economy – making the government crackdown even more outrageous.
>
> "Hobby Lobby is one of few companies adding jobs during recession, and the government is penalizing them," said the lawyers, who filed the complaint on behalf of the business. "If Hobby Lobby does not comply with the HHS Mandate, they will be forced to pay up to 1.3 million dollars per day in fines."
>
> That success, says founder and CEO David Green, is inextricably connected to its groundings in the Christian faith.
>
> "We have always operated our company in a manner consistent with Biblical principles, including integrity and service to others," said Green in a statement Thursday. "We believe wholeheartedly that it is by God's grace and provision that Hobby Lobby has been successful. Therefore, we seek to honor him in all that we do."
>
> Green noted the company keeps fewer hours than most and, like Christian-founded restaurant chain Chick-Fil-A, is closed on Sundays. Meanwhile, he said Hobby Lobby's minimum wage is 80 percent above the national average, and its headquarters even offers an in-house clinic where employees with company health insurance can visit for free.
>
> Green and his wife Barbara in 2010 signed a pledge to donate the majority of their wealth to philanthropy: "For me and my family, charity equals ministry, which equals the Gospel of Jesus Christ."
>
> "Our family is now being forced to choose between following the laws of the land

> that we love," said Green, "or maintaining the religious beliefs that have made our business successful, and have supported our family and thousands of our employees and their families."

If you own a business, then you have to pay for abortion-causing drugs for your employees. It's that simple. Obama says you must. And if you don't you pay a million dollars a day in fines.

I wonder how many jobs this secular leftist fascism by the Obama administration will cost? It seems like his whole purpose is to cause more people to be unemployed, so that they can become dependent on government programs. Why would he want that? And why would people who claim to be Christians vote for him? It's a mystery.

Obamacare in action: Denny's to charge 5% surcharge and cut employee hours

November 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story here from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> President Obama's election victory ensured his Affordable Care Act would remain the centerpiece of his first term in power – but that has left some business owners baulking at the extra cost Obamcare will bring.
>
> Florida based restaurant boss John Metz, who runs approximately 40 Denny's and owns the Hurricane Grill & Wings franchise has decided to offset that by adding a five percent surcharge to customers' bills and will reduce his employees' hours.
>
> With Obamacare due to be fully implemented in January 2014, Metz has justified his move by claiming it is 'the only alternative. I've got to pass on the cost to the customer.'
>
> The fast-food business owner is set to hold meetings at his restaurants in December where he will tell employees, 'that because of Obamacare, we are going to be cutting front-of-the-house employees to under 30 hours, effective immediately.'
>
> I think it's a terrible thing. It's ridiculous that the maximum hours we can give people is 28 hours a week instead of 40,' said Metz to the Huffington Post.
>
> 'It's going to force my employees to go out and get a second job.'
>
> Obamacare requires businesses or franchises with more than 50 workers must offer an approved insurance plan or pay a penalty of $2,000 for each full-time worker over 30 workers.
>
> The program mandates that only employees working more than 30 hours a week are covered under their employers health insurance plan, chains like Olive Garden and Red Lobster are already considering reduced worker hours.
>
> 'Obviously, I'd love to cover all our employees under that insurance,' said Metz.
>
> 'But to pay $5,000 per employee would cost us $175,000 per restaurant and unfortunately, most of our restaurants don't make $175,000 a year. I can't afford it.'
>
> Claiming that he is not anti-insurance Metz has said that he understands the problems this will cause for his employees.
>
> Several other restaurants including Papa John's, Apple Metro and Jimmy John's have announced plans to skirt Obamacare by reducing employees hours to make them part-time.
>
> […]Earlier this week Papa John's CEO John Schnatter told shareholders in a

> conference call this week that Obamacare would cost the company 11 to 14 cents per pizza, a cost that would be passed on to customers.

My hope is that many of the people who voted for Obama will face these higher prices. But they are probably too stupid to connect cause to effect. After all, you don't learn about economics by watching "Dancing with the Stars" and MTV. My big fear is that after Obama inflates the gas prices with his energy regulations carbon taxes, the insurance prices with his regulations and taxes, and so on, that the people will turn against business and demand communism. I pray that it doesn't go that far, but many Americans are so bad at understanding economics these days.

Related posts

- Papa John pizza CEO: cuts to employee hours likely, because of Obamacare
- A primer on the fiscal cliff facing us in January 2013: tax hikes and Obamacare
- Companies announce layoffs in the wake of Obama's re-election
- Sally Pipes: how Obamacare causes doctors to quit practicing medicine
- Why do some people oppose Obamacare? What does Obamacare do?
- The full list of Obamacare tax hikes in order from largest to smallest
- California: Obamacare exchanges will raise health insurance premiums up to 25%
- Survey: doctors prefer Romney over Obama
- Health insurance premiums up $3,000 since Obama was elected
- Report: Obamacare regulations will cost taxpayers and businesses $1.8 trillion
- Obamacare subsidizes the risky behaviors of sexually active women
- Obamacare begins forcing states to cap and cut prescription drug benefits
- Department of Justice threatens to seize business from Catholics
- CBO: 20 million Americans could lose employer-provided health coverage under Obamacare
- A simple introduction to Obamacare
- 75% of the costs of Obamacare will be paid by those making $120,000 or less
- CBO: Obamacare cost is $1760 billion, not $940 billion that Obama claimed
- CBO report: four million will lose employer health care due to Obamacare
- Democrat Jim Cramer explains how Obamacare forces businesses to outsource

Responses to popular pro-choice arguments

November 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A very good read to make sure that you can handle the obvious ones, from Neil Shenvi, Ph.D.

Here are the objections:

- "Women have a right to do what they want with their own bodies."
- "The government has no right to make laws telling a woman she can't have an abortion"
- "The unborn is not a human being, it is just a mass of cells."
- "Until the fetus has a heart and brain, it is not a human being."
- "It is moral to kill a fetus as long as it feels no pain."
- "No one should be forced to carry and raise the child of their rapist."
- "Making abortion illegal will not decrease abortion; it will only make drive it underground and make it less safe."
- "Laws should not be based on religion"
- "If you are opposed to abortion, don't have one."
- "We should combat abortion by reducing poverty, not by making it illegal."
- "Most people (i.e., men) who are against abortion will never even become pregnant."

And here's the detail on one of them:

> **"Women have a right to do what they want with their own bodies."**
>
> The fundamental problem with this objection is that it assumes that laws against abortion are primarily concerned with what a woman can and cannot do to her own body. But they are not. Why? Ask yourself a simple question: how many brains does a woman have? One. But how many brains does a pregnant woman have? Still one. The woman's body is not the issue in abortion: the baby's body is. The developing fetus has a complete set of human DNA different than the mother's. It has its own circulatory system, its own brain, its own fingers and toes and arms and legs. If it is a male, it even has a different gender than the mother. Therefore, the fetus is clearly not just 'part of the woman's body'. Laws against abortion aren't telling a woman what she can and cannot do with her own body; they are telling a woman what she can and cannot do with someone else's body.

Read them all, and pass them along.

You can find more answers to pro-choice questions here, from Dr. Francis Beckwith. These are the early versions to some of the arguments that later ended up in his academic book on pro-life apologetics entitled "Defending Life", published by Cambridge University Press. The best introductory book on pro-life arguments is Scott Klusendorf's "The Case for Life". I really recommend that one, because he is the top pro-life debater

in the world, and he speaks from that experience of dealing with pro-choice arguments in public debates.

Further study

Learn about the pro-life case:

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Objective truth in the abortion debate – a pro-life training video
- Alan Shlemon explains a classification system for pro-abortion arguments
- What is the best single book on the pro-life position?

And some posts motivating Christians and conservatives to take abortion seriously:

- Why Christians should focus on cultural issues as well as evangelism
- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion
- Are Christians too involved in politics?
- What did the early church fathers think about abortion?
- Scott Klusendorf confronts a "pro-life" nun who voted for Obama

Twinkies company liquidates due to demands of greedy labor union

November 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal explains.

Excerpt:

> Hostess Brands is going to liquidate, a blow to lovers of Twinkies, Wonder Bread and Drake's Coffee Cakes all around the globe.
>
> But CEO Gregory Rayburn told CNBC today that as the company winds down its operations after failing to reach an agreement with a union, it will try to sell its various brands. There are 30 separate brands under the companies sugary umbrella.
>
> […]Rayburn, a restructuring veteran brought in for the bankruptcy, did not shy away from blaming the striking bakers' union for the liquidation after the company put out an ultimatum earlier this week for them to return to work or face this consequence. He told the television network the union hasn't "returned our calls in a couple of months."

There is a silver lining to this story, though:

> The reason: insurmountable (and unfundable) difference in the firm's collective bargaining agreements and pension obligations, which resulted in a crippling strike that basically shut down the company… [the company] was unable to survive empowered labor unions who thought they had all the negotiating leverage… until they led their bankrupt employer right off liquidation cliff.
>
> […]**Hostess' numerous brands will be bought in a stalking horse auction by willing private buyers, however completely free and clear of all legacy labor and pension agreements which ultimately led to the company's liquidation.**

Now that's progress. But what causes union bosses to be so uninformed and ignorant of basic economics? How is it that they do not understand how businesses work?

Consider this quote from Richard Trumka about the looming fiscal crisis:

> AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka has declared there's no fiscal cliff and any address of runaway government spending is just "a manufactured crisis."
>
> […]"'Take what the media are calling 'the fiscal cliff.' There is no fiscal cliff!" Trumka thundered at a National Mediation Board Conference Thursday, sounding like an alcoholic pleading for one last swig well before he hits rock bottom.
>
> […]"What we're facing," he said Thursday, "is an obstacle course within a manufactured crisis that was hastily thrown together in response to inflated

> rhetoric about our federal deficit.
>
> “But all the deficit chatter has distracted us from our real crisis — the immediate crisis of 23 million unemployed or underemployed workers. It’s time to protect Social Security benefits. It’s time to protect Medicare and Medicaid benefits. And it’s time to raise taxes for the richest 2%,” he went on.
>
> In short, Trumka is arguing that there’s no such thing as too much government spending, that deficits don’t matter and that entitlements cannot be cut. Such denialist thinking is beyond irresponsible in the face of a $16 trillion debt, highest on global record and a sign of an irrational agenda often followed by would-be tyrants.
>
> Trumka is trying to intimidate congressional Democrats into intransigence on a debt deal with Republicans to restore the solvency of the U.S. Instead, he wants them to stand fast on the idea that the debt, deficit and entitlements can be addressed simply by taxing higher-income earners who already account for more than half of federal income-tax revenue.
>
> This is the kind of irresponsible thinking that has triggered riots in Greece and Spain — a belief that the money is there and only the meanness of austerity is keeping the common man from his share.
>
> In reality, the money is not there — the pot is empty. Medicare and Social Security are now on “unsustainable paths,” paying out more in benefits than they take in, with their trust funds projected to run dry by 2024 and 2033, according to their own trustees.
>
> Socialism is meeting its natural end — which, in the words of former U.K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, is when it “runs out of other people’s money.”

Unions don’t make anything on their own, only businesses do. And they just don’t understand that. They don’t understand that at some point it is possible to suck too much blood from the host so that the host dies.

I feel bad for the conservatives who are forced to join these labor unions and pay dues to greedy union bosses who don’t understand capitalism or economics. My recommendation is that individual states pass right-to-work laws. Right-to-work states have created FOUR TIMES as many jobs as forced unionization states, since 2009. That’s what happens when you embrace freedom and capitalism.

Petraeus: Al Qaeda involvement was taken out of CIA account of Benghazi

November 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> Former CIA Director David Petraeus testified in a closed-door hearing Friday morning that his agency determined immediately after the Sept. 11 Libya attack that "Al Qaeda involvement" was suspected — but the line was taken out in the final version circulated to administration officials, according to a top lawmaker who was briefed.
>
> Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., who spoke to reporters after Petraeus testified before the House Intelligence Committee, indicated he and other lawmakers still have plenty of questions about the aftermath of the attack.
>
> "No one knows yet exactly who came up with the final version of the talking points," he said.
>
> […]**Petraeus' testimony both challenges the Obama administration's repeated claims that the attack was a "spontaneous" protest over an anti-Islam video, and according to King conflicts with his own briefing to lawmakers on Sept. 14. Sources have said Petraeus, in that briefing, also described the attack as a protest that spun out of control.**
>
> […]**"The original talking points were much more specific about Al Qaeda involvement. And yet the final ones just said indications of extremists," King said, adding that the final version was the product of a vague "inter-agency process."**
>
> **Further, King said a CIA analyst specifically told lawmakers that the Al Qaeda affiliates line "was taken out."**
>
> […]**The suggestion that the intelligence was altered raised questions about who altered it, with King asking if "the White House changed the talking points."**
>
> **One source told Fox News that Petraeus "has no idea what was provided" to Rice or who was the author of the talking points she used.**
>
> **"He had no idea she was going on talk shows" until the White House announced it one or two days before, the source said.**
>
> […]The pressure was on Petraeus to set the record straight, after other top intelligence officials struggled a day earlier to explain why their initial talking points after the Libya attack minimized the role of militant groups.
>
> Lawmakers on the House and Senate intelligence committees heard testimony

> Thursday in private meetings with Director of National Intelligence James Clapper and Acting CIA Director Mike Morell. But Fox News was told there were heated exchanges on the House side, particularly over the talking points that administration officials relied on in the days after the Sept. 11 strike.
>
> Fox News was told that neither Clapper nor Morell knew for sure who finalized that information. And they could not explain why they minimized the role of a regional Al Qaeda branch as well as the militant Ansar al-Sharia despite evidence of their involvement.

Here's what I think happened.

I think that the FBI found out about the affair months ago and the White House used that information to blackmail Petraeus into saying that Benghazi was not a terrorist attack. I think that they told him that if he lied for them, he could keep his job. I think that after the election, he was fired to prevent him from testifying and to discredit anything he said about Benghazi. I think that Ambassador Rice was sent out by the White House to deliberately lie to the American people in order to save Obama's re-election chances. And I think that she did it in order to get selected as the new Secretary of State. It will be interesting to see whether my speculations are proved right as the inquiry proceeds.

Related posts

- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA's account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Four out of five Sunday news shows fail to mention the Benghazi cover-up
- Kyle Clarke of 9NEWS grills Obama on Benghazi and green energy corruption
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack
- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser
- Obama administration warns contractors to delay layoffs to after election
- Obama wants to send $1 billion of aid to Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
- Report: Iran shipping arms and personnel to Syria through Iraq
- Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)
- The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration
- Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month
- Democrat defense cuts to an already weakened military expose us to aggression
- Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES
- Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?

- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority
- Obama’s neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Obama’s Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel’s plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors
- Obama’s defense cuts undermine our national security
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them

Peer-reviewed paper in Nature falsifies junk DNA prediction by Darwinists

November 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's see what Darwinian evolutionists say about junk DNA, before we look at what the experiments show.

Here's biologist John Timmer to explain the orthodox Darwinian view of DNA from 2007:

> Personally, I fall into the "it's all junk" end of the spectrum. If almost all of these sequences are not conserved by evolution, and we haven't found a function for any of them yet, it's hard to see how the "none of it's junk" view can be maintained. There's also an absence of support for the intervening view, again because of a lack of evidence for actual utility. The genomes of closely related species have revealed very few genes added from non-coding DNA, and all of the structural RNA we've found has very specific sequence requirements. The all-junk view, in contrast, is consistent with current data.

Got that? According to Darwinists, DNA is almost entirely junk – this is what is consistent with the view that creatures have evolved through a process of random mutation and selection. The estimates that I've seen from evolutionary biologists range from 95% to 99% junk. Now let's compare the religion with the lab experiments and separate myth from fact.

Now let's compare that with intelligent design theorist William Dembski's view of "junk" DNA, from 1998:

> Even if we have a reliable criterion for detecting design, and even if that criterion tells us that biological systems are designed, it seems that determining a biological system to be designed is akin to shrugging our shoulders and saying God did it. The fear is that admitting design as an explanation will stifle scientific inquiry, that scientists will stop investigating difficult problems because they have a sufficient explanation already.
>
> But design is not a science stopper. Indeed, design can foster inquiry where traditional evolutionary approaches obstruct it. Consider the term "junk DNA." Implicit in this term is the view that because the genome of an organism has been cobbled together through a long, undirected evolutionary process, the genome is a patchwork of which only limited portions are essential to the organism. **Thus on an evolutionary view we expect a lot of useless DNA. If, on the other hand, organisms are designed, we expect DNA, as much as possible, to exhibit function. And indeed, the most recent findings suggest that designating DNA as "junk" merely cloaks our current lack of knowledge about function… Design encourages scientists to look for function where evolution discourages it.**

Now let's look at the experimental evidence and see whose prediction was right.

Evolution News reports on a new peer-reviewed paper published in Nature, the top peer-reviewed science journal. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A groundbreaking paper in *Nature* reports the results of the Encyclopedia of DNA Elements (ENCODE) project, which has detected evidence of function for the "vast majority" of the human genome. Titled "An integrated encyclopedia of DNA elements in the human genome," the paper finds an "unprecedented number of functional elements," where "a surprisingly large amount of the human genome" appears functional. Based upon current knowledge, the paper concludes that at least 80% of the human genome is now known to be functional:
>
> The Encyclopedia of DNA Elements (ENCODE) project has systematically mapped regions of transcription, transcription factor association, chromatin structure and histone modification. **These data enabled us to assign biochemical functions for 80% of the genome**, in particular outside of the well-studied protein-coding regions. Many discovered candidate regulatory elements are physically associated with one another and with expressed genes, providing new insights into the mechanisms of gene regulation.
>
> (The ENCODE Project Consortium, "An integrated encyclopedia of DNA elements in the human genome," *Nature*, Vol. 489:57-74 (September 6, 2012) (emphasis added))

If you doubt Evolution News, we can always turn the ultra-leftist Los Angeles Times, reporting on the same study. (H/T Wes from Reason to Stand)

Excerpt:

> The $123-million effort involved more than 400 scientists and more than 1,600 experiments during five years of work. If presented graphically, the data generated so far would cover a poster 30 kilometers wide and 16 meters high, Birney has estimated.
>
> This is still just a start — akin to "grainy images beamed back to Earth by the first satellite," said Dr. Eric Green, director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, which funded ENCODE. But already, it's throwing up surprises.
>
> **Strikingly, the data overturn old ideas that the bulk of DNA in our cells is useless — albeit inoffensive — junk just carried along for the evolutionary ride. Back in 2003 when the human genome was published, scientists estimated that less than 2% of it carries instructions for making proteins, and many of them thought the rest didn't do very much.**
>
> **But the new analysis shows that more than 80% of the human genome is active in at least one biological process that the ENCODE team**

> **measured. Nearly every part of it could end up being active when the data are more complete.**

Here's the ultra-left-wing New York Times, confirming the statement I made earlier about the dogma of the Darwinians:

> The discoveries were published on Wednesday in six papers in the journal Nature and in 24 papers in Genome Research and Genome Biology. In addition, The Journal of Biological Chemistry is publishing six review articles, and Science is publishing yet another article.
>
> […]**The thought before the start of the project, said Thomas Gingeras, an Encode researcher from Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, was that only 5 to 10 percent of the DNA in a human being was actually being used.**
>
> **The big surprise was not only that almost all of the DNA is used but also that a large proportion of it is gene switches. Before Encode, said Dr. John Stamatoyannopoulos, a University of Washington scientist who was part of the project, "if you had said half of the genome and probably more has instructions for turning genes on and off, I don't think people would have believed you."**

It's just another prediction of Darwinian orthodoxy falsified by experimental evidence published in the top scientific peer-reviewed journal. Will this cause Darwinians to revise their theory to fit the evidence? Not likely. Their motivations for clinging to naturalism, the religion that undergirds Darwinism, are entirely beyond correction by evidence.

I wonder what people like P.Z. Myers and Larry Moran do when their religion comes into conflict with scientific evidence from lab experiments? Do they bitterly cling to their mythology from the 19th century? Or do they adjust their worldview to be in line with the progress of science?

Let Richard Dawkins explain evolution and the role of evidence:

> "My argument will be that Darwinism is the only known theory that is in principle capable of explaining certain aspects of life. If I am right it means that, even if there were no actual evidence in favour of the Darwinian theory (there is, of course) we should still be justified in preferring it over all rival theories." — p. 287, Blind Watchmaker" (1986)

Or Richard Lewontin:

> "Our willingness to accept [naturalistic] scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science *in spite of* the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite of* its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite of* the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior

> commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our own a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, not matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door." (Richard Lewontin in *New York Review of Books*, January 9, 1997, p. 28)

Junk DNA isn't the only battle in the long war between atheism and scientific evidence. Naturalists fought the Big Bang tooth and nail, trying to save their eternal universe from the progress of science. Naturalists invented the now discredited oscillating model of the universe in order to "explain" the evidence for a cosmic beginning. Naturalists invented the unobservable, untestable multiverse to "explain" the cosmic fine-tuning. Aliens are posited in order to "explain" the origin of life. Precursor fossils are invented without evidence in order to "explain" the Cambrian era explosion in complexity. And so on.

Evidence doesn't matter to people who are motivated by naturalistic faith. Like belief in a flat-Earth, the delusion of naturalism is not accountable to scientific evidence. They believe what they want to believe. It's not up for debate. For some people like Richard Dawkins, a prior lifestyle commitment makes theism (and the moral law!) an impossibility *a priori*. But rational people know that believing something just so that your actions are "justified" doesn't make what you believe *true*.

For the intelligent design take on junk DNA, check out this article. To see who was right about predicting whether "vestigial organs" like the appendix have function, check out this post. You can find more predictions that follow from intelligent design right here.

Democrat-run California now leads America in poverty rankings

November 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller, a story about what happens when you allow Democrats to dominate at every level of government for years and years and years.

Excerpt:

> The Golden State has reached a poverty rate that is now twice as bad as West Virginia's and substantially worse than the rates of poverty in Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas and Texas, according to a new measure of poverty developed by the federal Census Bureau.
>
> Democrat-run California earned its last-place rank under the federal government's new measure of poverty, which incorporates more detailed analyses of welfare payments and the local costs of food, gasoline and housing. **(View the new census data report)**
>
> The state's costs are boosted by its environmental and workplace regulations, and by 38 million residents' competition for housing close to the sea.
>
> […]Democratic California Gov. Gerry Brown's office did not release a comment Nov. 15 about the new ranking, but did note that he would be attending a housing conference, the "Greenbuild International Conference and Expo," in San Francisco Nov. 16.
>
> […]The report estimates that roughly 8.8 million people in California were poor during between 2009 and 2011, when Democrats controlled the state legislature and governorship, as well as the White House.
>
> The stunning reversal in fortunes for the Democrat-dominated state — once a worldwide symbol of glitz and wealth — is underlined by previous census reports, which showed that only 11.1 percent of the state's population was poor in 1969.
>
> Only 13.7 percent of Americans were poor in 1969, and many of them were found in the agricultural states of the Old South. A third of Americans in Mississippi, and a quarter of Americans in Arkansas, Louisiana, South Carolina and Western Virginia, were poor.
>
> Forty years later, after waves of federal and state regulations on housing, banking, health care and air quality, and amid increased financial aid for unmarried parents, youth, immigrants and unskilled people, the national poverty rate has climbed to 15.8 percent, according to the new Census Bureau measure.
>
> The new measure supplants a poverty gauge developed in the 1960s. It incorporates the economic impact of welfare programs, transportation and child-care costs, changes in child-rearing practices — especially the impact of single parents raising kids — plus differences in the region's average prices and health

> care costs.
>
> The new ranking leaves California at the bottom, along with and close to the 23.2 percent poverty rate in the District of Columbia.
>
> […]The well-being of Californian children has also shriveled in recent decades, partly because of the state's declining education sector, according to a July report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

California just voted to raise their state income tax. Because they do not understand economics. They do not ask how a policy impacts *all people*. They do not think beyond stage one. They do not learn from history and experience. Economics is just not what socialists *do*. The primary goal of the socialist is to demonize the other, to feel good about himself, and to project an image to others of being "nice" in order to be liked. When you elect narcissists like this, all you get is rhetoric, never results.

That rhetoric certainly seems to work on certain segments of the electorate – those who don't follow current events and who don't understand economics. The truth is that hard-headed capitalism, the rule of law, free trade and property rights, helps the poor more – by growing the economy so that the poor will have *jobs.* We need to learn as a nation that demonizing "the rich", raising taxes and spending ourselves into enormous debt is not going to help the poor. Self-aggrandizing talk doesn't help the poor.

Man thought to be in a vegetative state able to communicate with doctors

November 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this article from the BBC that may cause you to re-think your beliefs about people in "vegetative" states.

Excerpt:

> A Canadian man who was believed to have been in a vegetative state for more than a decade, has been able to tell scientists that he is not in any pain.
>
> It's the first time an uncommunicative, severely brain-injured patient has been able to give answers clinically relevant to their care.
>
> Scott Routley, 39, was asked questions while having his brain activity scanned in an fMRI machine.
>
> His doctor says the discovery means medical textbooks will need rewriting.
>
> […]Mr Routley suffered a severe brain injury in a car accident 12 years ago.
>
> None of his physical assessments since then have shown any sign of awareness, or ability to communicate.
>
> But the British neuroscientist Prof Adrian Owen – who led the team at the Brain and Mind Institute, University of Western Ontario – said Mr Routley was clearly not vegetative.
>
> "Scott has been able to show he has a conscious, thinking mind. We have scanned him several times and his pattern of brain activity shows he is clearly choosing to answer our questions. We believe he knows who and where he is."
>
> […]Scott Routley's parents say they always thought he was conscious and could communicate by lifting a thumb or moving his eyes. But this has never been accepted by medical staff.
>
> Prof Bryan Young at University Hospital, London – Mr Routley's neurologist for a decade – said the scan results overturned all the behavioural assessments that had been made over the years.
>
> […]"I was impressed and amazed that he was able to show these cognitive responses. He had the clinical picture of a typical vegetative patient and showed no spontaneous movements that looked meaningful."

It seems to me that an increasing number of people in society are turning away from the idea that human life is sacred because it is made in the image of God, and towards the idea that human life has value so long as powerful people think it has value. You can see it easily in the abortion debate where an entire category of humans are deemed "subhuman" because they impost obligations on a stronger group of people. Basically, the right to happiness of the strong trumps the right to life of the weak. I don't think that

life is about feeling happy thought. I think that life is about doing the right thing.

Public health care working as designed in the UK and Canada

November 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail gives us a bird's eye view of the largest government-run health care delivery system in the world.

Excerpt:

> A mother has described how her baby was left to die 'like an abandoned animal' after hospital doctors repeatedly ignored her desperate pleas for help.
>
> Paula Stevenson begged doctors to act as her one-year-old daughter Hayley struggled to breathe in the days after a major heart operation.
>
> She was so desperate she even tried 'bribing' a nurse with a £100 shopping voucher to give Hayley the attention she needed. Instead, hospital staff 'humiliated and belittled' her – treating her like a 'nuisance' for speaking up, she said.
>
> Tragically, Mrs Stevenson's maternal instinct was proven right when Hayley died of heart failure after both her lungs collapsed under the hospital's watch.
>
> **Yesterday, as an inquest into her death concluded, a coroner said there had been 'serious failings' in Hayley's care. Birmingham Children's Hospital admitted full liability for her 'avoidable' death.**
>
> **[…]Doctors failed to update her medical charts, were slow to look at X-rays and failed to refer Hayley to intensive care when her condition worsened.**

People only care about giving you good service if they have to compete for your business in a free market, where suppliers have to offer higher quality at a lower price. Maybe that's why the American for-profit system delivers so much better care than anywhere else in the world, and why the socialized medicine system in the UK is a miserable failure at everything except killing patients dead. The customer is never right in a government-run system. You are forced to pay into it first, and then they decide later what treatment you can have – after they've already been paid.

Well, maybe that's just a problem in the UK. Canada has a single-payer government run health care system. Maybe it works better than the UK government-run system? The Montreal Gazette reports on health care in Quebec – la belle province – Canada's most secularized and socialist province.

Excerpt:

> Surgery wait times for deadly ovarian, cervical and breast cancers in Quebec are three times longer than government benchmarks, leading some desperate patients to shop around for an operating room.

> But that's a waste of time, doctors say, since the problem is spread across Quebec hospitals. And doctors are refusing to accept new patients quickly because they can't treat them, health advocates say.
>
> […]**The latest figures from the provincial government show that over a span of nearly 11 months, 7,780 patients in the Montreal area waited six months or longer for day surgeries, while another 2,957 waited for six months or longer for operations that required hospitalization.**
>
> **The worst cases are gynecological cancers, experts say, because usually such a cancer has already spread by the time it is detected. Instead of four weeks from diagnosis to surgery, patients are waiting as long as three months to have cancerous growths removed.**

But maybe the government-run health care systems cost less than the private systems? After all, governments can be more efficient than the private sector, because they have a monopoly and that's more efficient, right? The Vancouver Sun reports on what single-payer health care costs in Canada.

Excerpt:

> **The true cost of Canada's health care system is more than $11,000 in taxes each year for an average family, according to Vancouver-based think tank The Fraser Institute.**
>
> […]Institute senior fellow Nadeem Esmail said in a news release sent out this morning: "There's a widespread belief that health care is free in Canada. It's not; our tax dollars cover the cost of it. But the way we pay for health care disguises exactly how much public health care insurance costs Canadian families and how that cost is increasing over time."
>
> **The release noted that since 2002, the cost of health care insurance for the average Canadian family increased by 59.8 per cent before inflation.**
>
> "By way of comparison, the cost of public health care increased more than twice as fast as the cost of shelter, roughly four times as fast as the cost of food, and more than five times as fast as the cost of clothing," the release said.

This is the system that Obamacare is trying to force onto us by eliminating private sector health care. We voted for a system that takes the consumer out of the health care business. Now government will call the shots, just like in the UK and in Canada.

Related posts

- NHS paying millions to hospitals to deny food and fluids to end-of-life patients
- UK socialism in action: patients waiting on trolleys for over 50 hours
- NHS makes patients wait unnecessarily in order to avoid "raising expectations"
- NHS refuses to treat woman who is starving to death
- Former NHS hospital director dies on surgery waiting list
- Women gives birth after NHS nurses send her home from hospital

- UK patients denied treatment as “public option” system makes cutbacks
- How do governments control costs in a single-payer health care systems?
- NHS patients giving birth in waiting rooms
- What does universal health care really mean?
- How well is government-run health care working out in the UK?
- British national health care system prepares to cut 20 billion dollars
- NHS kills a man’s wife by delaying cancer treatment for 7 months
- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
- Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water
- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care
- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care
- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- NHS refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

SAS war hero jailed for keeping trophy pistol given to him by Iraqi Army

November 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Telegraph reports.

Excerpt:

> An SAS soldier has been jailed for possessing a “war trophy” pistol presented to him by the Iraqi Army for outstanding service.
>
> Sgt Danny Nightingale, a special forces sniper who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, was sentenced to 18 months in military detention by a court martial last week.
>
> His sentence was described last night as the “betrayal of a war hero”, made worse because it was handed down in the run-up to Remembrance Sunday.
>
> Sgt Nightingale had planned to fight the charge of illegally possessing the 9mm Glock.
>
> But his lawyer said he pleaded guilty after being warned that he could otherwise face a five-year sentence.

> The soldier had hoped for leniency given the circumstances. At the court martial, even the prosecution described him as a serviceman of exemplary character, who had served his country for 17 years, 11 in the special forces.
>
> The court was told that he returned to Britain in a hurry after two friends were killed in Iraq, leaving his equipment — including the pistol — to be packed up by colleagues.
>
> It accepted evidence from expert witnesses that he suffered severe memory loss due to a brain injury.
>
> Judge Advocate Alistair McGrigor, presiding over the court martial, could have spared the soldier prison by passing a suspended sentence. Instead he handed down the custodial term.
>
> Sgt Nightingale and his family chose to waive the anonymity usually given to members of the special forces.
>
> His wife, Sally, said her husband’s sentence was a “disgrace”. She called him a “hero who had been betrayed”. She said she and the couple’s two daughters, aged two and five, faced losing their home after his Army pay was stopped.
>
> The soldier’s former commanding officer and politicians have called for the sentence to be overturned.
>
> Lt Col Richard Williams, who won a Military Cross in Afghanistan in 2001 and was Sgt Nightingale’s commanding officer in Iraq, said the sentence “clearly needed

> to be overturned immediately".
>
> He said: "His military career has been ruined and his wife and children face being evicted from their home — this is a total betrayal of a man who dedicated his life to the service of his country."
>
> Patrick Mercer, the Conservative MP for Newark and a former infantry officer, said he planned to take up the case with the Defence Secretary. Simon McKay, Sgt Nightingale's lawyer, said: "On Remembrance Sunday, when the nation remembers its war heroes, my client — one of their number — is in a prison cell.
>
> "I consider the sentence to be excessive and the basis of the guilty plea unsafe. It is a gross miscarriage of justice and grounds of appeal are already being prepared."
>
> In 2007, Sgt Nightingale was serving in Iraq as a member of Task Force Black, a covert counter-terrorist unit that conducted operations under orders to capture and kill members of al-Qaeda.
>
> He also helped train members of a secret counter-terrorist force called the Apostles. At the end of the training he was presented with the Glock, which he planned to donate to his regiment as a war trophy.

The Special Air Service is the absolute best counter-terrorism unit in the world. Better than the U.S. Army's Delta Force, better than the U.S. Navy SEALS, better than the Central Intelligence Agency's Special Operations Group. This is no way to treat a member of the SAS.

There is more compassion for the criminal in the UK than for the law-abiding person. But why is that? I believe it's because the UK has become dominated at every level by women, because of feminism. Women don't like the sound of guns, and they don't like people to own guns, even if they are ex-military or ex-police. Women just don't value men who use strength and arms to do the right thing – strength and force makes them uncomfortable. Women tend to want to suppress moral judgments because they don't want anyone, even burglars and criminals, to feel bad. Women like compassion. Women like tolerance. Women think that if every belief is true and all points of view are equally correct. They want to minimize disagreements and violence. They are uncomfortable with men using force because that makes evil people feel bad. That's why they have these ridiculous anti-male laws.

Feminism seeks to abolish the special roles played by men, like protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. The policies of the UK government are designed to block men from filling those roles. Handguns were banned in 1997 and men who defend their families and homes are regularly prosecuted by the UK government. Tax rates are extremely high the more you earn, making it harder for a man to support a family on one income while his wife stays home with the children to raise them. Out-of-wedlock birth is facilitated through state-run health care and single-mother welfare payments, so that women can raise fatherless children with ease. The antipathy against strong men reflected in laws and policies is probably one of the reasons why men shy away from marriage. Why take

on a commitment like that when you cannot even defend your family from evil?

What is the meaning and purpose of life, the universe and everything?

November 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture:

(37 minutes)

Topic:

> Does life have a purpose? If naturalism is true, what is the purpose of life? If Christianity is true, what is the purpose of life?

Dr. Shenvi's web site is here. Lots of great articles there on every conceivable topic.

Summary:

- Dr. Shenvi's brief testimony and background
- There is no purpose to the universe and us on naturalism
- The answer to every why-question on naturalism is chance and necessity (laws)
- Nothing in the universe has intrinsic / objective value
- There is no hope on naturalism because of the heat death of the universe: everything dies
- Nothing that humans do, on naturalism, matters in the long run
- Given sufficient time, the universe will not even know we were here
- Famous atheists like Bertrand Russell and Richard Dawkins agree on this

Purpose on naturalism:

- Purpose response: we can invent our own arbitrary made-up purposes
- The monopoly in a prison illustration

Meaning on naturalism:

- Meaning response: we can invent our own arbitrary made-up meaning
- The scrabble vs Shakespeare illustration

Value on naturalism:

- Value response: we can invent our own arbitrary made-up values
- The subjective opinion vs objective truth illustration

Hope on naturalism:

- Hope response: we can invent our own arbitrary made-up hopes
- The heat death of the universe ensures that all hopes fail on naturalism

If Christianity is true:

- The universe and human beings have an objective purpose
- There is a meaning to life that is objective
- Human beings have intrinsic value, because God made them and values them
- There is hope because there is an life after death that extends eternally

Conclusion:

- This lecture does not argue that Christianity is true because it gives us goodies
- People should become Christians because Christianity is true
- Christianity is actually quite difficult because it requires self-denial and self-sacrifice
- What God has done to help us overcome with our rebellion?

Note that these are not *arguments for God's existence,* because he covered that in a previous lecture. And this lecture is not about *arguing for Christianity*, because he covered that in a previous lecture.

Dr. Shenvi is a research scientist in theoretical chemistry. However, this lecture is not only passionate, but snarky and humorous.

Lesbian complains about Muslim barber to Human Rights Commission

November 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story from the Calgary Sun is from free speech warrior Ezra Levant. He's talking about the Canadian Human Rights Commissions, which exist to censor offensive thoughts and offensive speech.

Excerpt:

> Faith McGregor is the lesbian who doesn't like the girly cuts that they do at a salon. She wants the boy's hairdo.
>
> Omar Mahrouk is the owner of the Terminal Barber Shop in Toronto. He follows Shariah law, so he thinks women have cooties. As Mahrouk and the other barbers there say, they don't believe in touching women other than their own wives.
>
> But that's what multiculturalism and unlimited immigration from illiberal countries means. A central pillar of many immigrant cultures is the second-class citizenship of women and gays.
>
> So if we now believe in multiculturalism, and that our Canadian culture of tolerance isn't any better than the Shariah culture of sex crimes and gender apartheid, who are we to complain when Omar Mahrouk takes us up on our promise that he can continue to practise his culture — lesbian haircuts be damned?
>
> He's not the one who passed the Multiculturalism Act, and invited in hundreds of thousands of immigrants with medieval attitudes towards women and gays and Jews, etc. We did.
>
> Mahrouk's view is illiberal. But in Canada we believe in property rights and freedom of association — and in this case, freedom of religion, too.
>
> But McGregor ran to the Human Rights Tribunal and demanded that Mahrouk give her a haircut.
>
> In the past, human rights commissions have been a great ally to gay activists. Because, traditionally, gay activists have complained against Christians. And white Christians are the one ethnic identity group that human rights commissions don't value, and that multiculturalism doesn't include.
>
> In recent years, Canadian human rights commissions have weighed a complaint about a women's-only health club that refused a pre-operative transsexual male who wanted to change in the locker rooms.
>
> They've ordered bed and breakfasts owned by Christian families to take in gay couples. They've censored pastors and priests who have criticized gay marriage. Gays win, because it's a test of who is most outraged and offended.

> But in the case of the Muslim barbers, the gay activists have met their match. If the test is who can be the most offended or most politically correct, a lesbian's just not going to cut it.
>
> Oh, McGregor is politically correct. But just not politically correct enough. It's like poker.
>
> A white, Christian male has the lowest hand — it's like he's got just one high card, maybe an ace. So almost everyone trumps him.
>
> A white woman is just a bit higher — like a pair of twos. Enough to beat a white man, but not much more.
>
> A gay man is like having two pairs in poker.
>
> A gay woman — a lesbian like McGregor — is like having three of a kind.
>
> A black lesbian is a full house — pretty tough to beat.
>
> Unless she's also in a wheelchair, which means she's pretty much a straight flush.
>
> The only person who could trump that would be a royal flush. If the late Sammy Davis Jr. — who was black, Jewish and half-blind — were to convert to Islam and discover he was 1/64th Aboriginal.
>
> So which is a better hand: A lesbian who wants a haircut or a Muslim who doesn't want to give it to her?

Don't get me wrong, I don't support all the speech and thoughts that the Human Rights Commission finds offensive. But I wouldn't use the power of the government to suppress ideas and speech that I disagree with. I'm not a fascist. I don't like forcing other people to do things that they don't want to do with the force of government.

How did the Reagan tax cuts and Bush tax cuts affect unemployment?

November 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, which discusses how the Reagan tax cuts affected the unemployment rate.

Excerpt:

> In 1980, President Carter and his supporters in the Congress and news media asked, "how can we afford" presidential candidate Ronald Reagan's proposed tax cuts?
>
> Mr. Reagan's critics claimed the tax cuts would lead to more inflation and higher interest rates, while Mr. Reagan said tax cuts would lead to more economic growth and higher living standards. What happened? Inflation fell from 12.5 percent in 1980 to 3.9 percent in 1984, interest rates fell, and economic growth went from minus 0.2 percent in 1980 to plus 7.3 percent in 1984, and Mr. Reagan was re-elected in a landslide.
>
> […]Despite the fact that federal revenues have varied little (as a percentage of GDP) over the last 40 years, there has been an enormous variation in top tax rates. When Ronald Reagan took office, the top individual tax rate was 70 percent and by 1986 it was down to only 28 percent. All Americans received at least a 30 percent tax rate cut; yet federal tax revenues as a percent of GDP were almost unchanged during the Reagan presidency (from 18.9 percent in 1980 to 18.1 percent in 1988).
>
> What did change, however, was the rate of economic growth, which was more than 50 percent higher for the seven years after the Reagan tax cuts compared with the previous seven years. This increase in economic growth, plus some reductions in tax credits and deductions, almost entirely offset the effect of the rate reductions. Rapid economic growth, unlike government spending programs, proved to be the most effective way to reduce unemployment and poverty, and create opportunity for the disadvantaged.

The conservative Heritage Foundation describes the effects of the Bush tax cuts.

Excerpt:

> President Bush signed the first wave of tax cuts in 2001, cutting rates and providing tax relief for families by, for example, doubling of the child tax credit to $1,000.
>
> At Congress' insistence, the tax relief was initially phased in over many years, so the economy continued to lose jobs. In 2003, realizing its error, Congress made the earlier tax relief effective immediately. Congress also lowered tax rates on

> capital gains and dividends to encourage business investment, which had been lagging.
>
> It was the then that the economy turned around. Within months of enactment, job growth shot up, eventually creating 8.1 million jobs through 2007. Tax revenues also increased after the Bush tax cuts, due to economic growth.
>
> In 2003, capital gains tax rates were reduced. Rather than expand by 36% as the Congressional Budget Office projected before the tax cut, capital gains revenues more than doubled to $103 billion.
>
> The CBO incorrectly calculated that the post-March 2003 tax cuts would lower 2006 revenues by $75 billion. Revenues for 2006 came in $47 billion above the pre-tax cut baseline.
>
> Here's what else happened after the 2003 tax cuts lowered the rates on income, capital gains and dividend taxes:
>
> - GDP grew at an annual rate of just 1.7% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the six quarters following the tax cuts, the growth rate was 4.1%.
> - The S&P 500 dropped 18% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts but increased by 32% over the next six quarters.
> - The economy lost 267,000 jobs in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the next six quarters, it added 307,000 jobs, followed by 5 million jobs in the next seven quarters.
>
> The timing of the lower tax rates coincides almost exactly with the stark acceleration in the economy. Nor was this experience unique. The famous Clinton economic boom began when Congress passed legislation cutting spending and cutting the capital gains tax rate.

Those are the facts. That's not what you hear in the media, but they are the facts.

How biological convergence falsifies Darwinian evolution

November 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Cornelius Hunter, a software engineer / biologist with a Ph.D in bioinformatics from UIUC explains the latest discovery of biological convergence on his blog. (H/T Tweet from J. Warner Wallace)

Excerpt:

> The theory of evolution states that the species arose spontaneously, one from another via a pattern of common descent. This means the species should form an evolutionary tree, where species that share a recent common ancestor, such as two frog species, are highly similar, and species that share a distant common ancestor, such as humans and squids, are very different. But the species do not form such an evolutionary tree pattern. In fact this expectation has been violated so many times it is difficult to keep track. These violations are not rare or occasional anomalies, they are the rule. Entire volumes have been written on them. Many examples are the repeated designs found in what, according to evolution, must be very distant species. Such evolutionary *convergence* is biology's version of lightning striking twice. To explain this evolutionists must say that random mutations just happened to hit upon the same detailed, intricate design at different times, in different parts of the world, in different ecological niches, and so forth. The idea that the most complex designs we know of would spontaneously arise by themselves is, itself, not scientifically motivated and a real stretch of the imagination. But for the same intricate designs to arise independently by chance is even more of a stretch. That is why evolutionist's claim this week that they have found evidence for convergent evolution was so intriguing.
>
> […]Though evolutionists sometimes deny biological convergence, it is a scientific fact. And a paper from this week added yet another example:
>
> In mammals, hearing is dependent on three canonical processing stages: (i) an eardrum collecting sound, (ii) a middle ear impedance converter, and (iii) a cochlear frequency analyzer. Here, we show that some insects, such as rainforest katydids, **possess equivalent biophysical mechanisms for auditory processing**. Although katydid ears are among the smallest in all organisms, these ears perform the crucial stage of air-to-liquid impedance conversion and signal amplification, with the use of a distinct tympanal lever system. Further along the chain of hearing, spectral sound analysis is achieved through dispersive wave propagation across a fluid substrate, as in the mammalian cochlea. **Thus, two phylogenetically remote organisms, katydids and mammals, have evolved a series of convergent solutions to common**

> **biophysical problems, despite their reliance on very different morphological substrates**.
>
> It is another curious example of biological convergence, so rather than attempt to deny the undeniable, evolutionists now claim it as another confirmation of evolution.

I'm a software engineer, and we re-use components all the time for different programs that have no "common ancestor". E.g. – I can develop my String function library and use it in my web application and my Eclipse IDE plug-in, and those two Java programs have no common ancestry, but they do have a common designer. So you find the same bits in two different programs because I am the developer of both programs.

Previously, I blogged about another example of convergence reported by Science Daily. One of the predictions of intelligent design theory is that examples of convergence, which is really just re-use of common code by the designer, will be everywhere in nature. And that predictions just keeps getting confirmed as science marches forward, and the primitive religion of naturalism retreats.

New FAA regulations will cause shortage of airline pilots

November 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> U.S. airlines are facing what threatens to be their most serious pilot shortage since the 1960s, with higher experience requirements for new hires about to take hold just as the industry braces for a wave of retirements.
>
> Federal mandates taking effect next summer will require all newly hired pilots to have at least 1,500 hours of prior flight experience—six times the current minimum—raising the cost and time to train new fliers in an era when pay cuts and more-demanding schedules already have made the profession less attractive. Meanwhile, thousands of senior pilots at major airlines soon will start hitting the mandatory retirement age of 65.
>
> […]Another federal safety rule, to take effect in early 2014, also will squeeze the supply, by giving pilots more daily rest time. This change is expected to force passenger airlines to increase their pilot ranks by at least 5%. Adding to the problem is a small but steady stream of U.S. pilots moving to overseas carriers, many of which already face an acute shortage of aviators and pay handsomely to land well-trained U.S. captains.
>
> […]Estimates differ on the problem's magnitude. Airlines for America, a trade group of the largest carriers that collectively employ 50,800 pilots now, cites a study by the University of North Dakota's aviation department that indicates major airlines will need to hire 60,000 pilots by 2025 to replace departures and cover expansion.
>
> Mr. Darby's firm calculates that all U.S. airlines, including cargo, charter and regional carriers, together employ nearly 96,000 pilots, and will need to find more than 65,000 over the next eight years.
>
> […]Dave Barger, chief executive of JetBlue Airways Corp., said in an October speech that the industry is "facing an exodus of talent in the next few years" and could "wake up one day and find we have no one to operate or maintain those planes."

The same thing is already happening with doctors because of Obamacare. And there is also a broad-based effort to put policies in place that cause private sector businesses to raise their prices, for example, by raising gas prices because of blocks on domestic energy development. Why would a socialist government pass taxes and regulations that cause consumers to become dissatisfied the private sector?

How prestigious evangelical scholars helped debunk the Jesus wife myth

November 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Journalists hoped that the Jesus-wife story offered by feminist Karen King could be used to bash traditional Christianity, but it was later exposed as a forgery. A recent article by New Testament scholar Peter Williams has an after action report on the affair, and he explains why it was shot down so quickly. (H/T Tweet from J. Warner Wallace)

Excerpt:

> Peter Williams of Tyndale House, Cambridge, follows through on a recent claim about Christ
>
> On September 18, the news broke of a small fragment of papyrus purporting to record words of Jesus. It contained the striking phrase, 'Jesus said to them, "My wife …"' and then the text breaks off at the right hand margin.
>
> The scholar making the announcement decided that this credit-card-sized scrap was a 'gospel' and gave it the bold title 'The Gospel of Jesus's Wife'. The announcement was made simultaneously at an academic conference in Rome and through pre-arranged media channels by Karen King, Professor at Harvard Divinity School and holder of the oldest endowed chair in the USA. Dr. King said she was not at liberty to identify the owner and that the papyrus was of unknown geographical origin, but had spent time recently in Germany.
>
> King claimed that the papyrus was from the fourth century, but that its content came from the second century. She was careful to state that this had nothing to do with the Jesus of history. Naturally, the media went into a frenzy and began to link it with debates about the ordination of women (BBC), or claimed it was 'one of the most significant discoveries of all time' (Smithsonian Channel, subsequently deleted), while Yahoo News led with the headline 'Jesus had a wife, newly discovered gospel suggests'. The blogosphere and social media were wild with excitement, though some of the most sceptical realised that they were not at liberty to believe in the marriage of Jesus when they doubted his existence.

In my previous post about this, I talked about how Karen King is affiliated with the radical extremist liberal atheist Jesus Seminar group, how reputable scholars immediately found problems with the discovery, and how the mainstream media pushes these sensational discoveries because they have an agenda to discredit Christianity, and Judeo-Christian values. But this time I want to say something different, based on what Peter Williams says here:

> **[I]t's noteworthy that British and British-educated scholars like Watson, Bernhard, and Goodacre mentioned above, along with evangelicals Simon Gathercole and Christian Askeland, played a significant role in**

> **exposing the problems with the manuscript and claims about it on blogs and in the media.** Andrew Brown of *The Guardian* was commendably quick to notice and publish the doubts being raised.
>
> **It is worth reflecting on the progress here. Evangelicals now make up a significant proportion of those with the technical expertise to tackle a subject like this, and some of them had an intellectual firepower on the subject considerably exceeding that of the Harvard professor. I was contacted by Christians in touch with the media and was able to refer them to Simon Gathercole, a leading evangelical expert on apocryphal gospels. The rapid and informed response by Christians probably went a considerable way to deflating the story.**
>
> It is now well known by many who are not believers that there is a vigorous conspiracy-theory industry propagandising against the Christian faith. If Christians are seen as standing on history while others follow spin, even what seems like adverse publicity will ultimately end up glorifying God's name.

I think that we have to understand as Christians that some Christians are more effective than others, because of their knowledge and skills. Instead of sort of going through life willy-nilly (doing whatever feels good, or whatever attracts more people to our church, or whatever makes more people accept us), and making excuses about why we are justified in not studying anything hard, maybe we need to focus more on what actually works. We need to ask ourselves "what actually works in order to honor God and defend his reputation?" and "what kind of knowledge is useful in a debate about the facts and evidence for and against Christianity?"

Belly-dancing for Jesus and poetry-writing for Jesus and worship-leading for Jesus are not as good for Jesus as astrophysics for Jesus or New Testament scholarship for Jesus or philosophy of religion for Jesus or even hedge fund management for Jesus (a job which can pay for many willing students to complete their Ph.Ds). That's the way the world really works. The sooner we start making our decisions about what to study based the needs and feelings of God instead of the needs and feelings of man, the better off we will be. We need to be careful about spiritualizing our desire to be happy and calling our emotional hedonism "God's mysterious will". We have to do hard things, because doing hard things puts us in a position to be effective and influential when it counts.

We have to study things that don't make us feel happy so that God will feel happy. God's happiness doesn't depend on whether we're happy. Feeling happy is not how we serve God. Feeling happy is not as good for God as debunking lies about him with the authority that comes from studying the issues and knowing the evidence. God is happy when more people people acknowledge his existence, his actual character and his good actions in history. We need to choose to study things that can contribute to those goals. I think we just need to stop projecting our emotions and feelings onto God, and stop thinking that the point of life is for us to have happy feelings of well-being and health and peer-approval. That's not Christianity, that's just narcissism.

The Hamas-Israel conflict and “disproportionate use of force”

November 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There is no moral equivalence between Hamas and Israel

Dina tweeted this editorial in the radically leftist UK Guardian, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Hamas’s charter includes the aspiration that “The Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews (killing the Jews)”. While many concentrate on its death-cult worship, its bloodthirsty killing of adversaries, or its contempt for women, Christians and homosexuals, it is this aspiration for genocide that is at the root of Hamas activities. This is the primary reason why Hamas, the governing regime in Gaza, will never recognise or accept a peace accord with Israel in any form.
>
> Since Israel left Gaza in 2005, thousands of rockets have rained down on Israeli cities and towns in deliberate contravention not just of international law, but all humanity and morality.
>
> […]Every rocket from Gaza is a double war crime. First, the rockets are aimed at civilians; second, they are fired from built-up civilian areas, often close to schools, mosques and hospitals. And about 10% of Hamas rockets fired from Gaza don’t reach Israel, exploding in Gaza. Mohammed Sadallah – a four-year-old killed on Saturday, his body displayed in a press conference with Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas’s leader – was, according to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, most likely killed by an errant Hamas rocket.
>
> Hamas leaders frequently declare that their people actively seek death. Fathi Hamad, a senior member of Hamas, stated in 2008 that “for the Palestinian people, death became an industry, at which women and children excel. Accordingly we created a human shield of women, children and elderly. We seek

> death as you [Israelis] desire life."
>
> […]Israel has successfully targeted in excess of 1,300 weapons caches, rocket launchers and other elements of Hamas's terrorist infrastructure. Yet despite this, the number of Palestinian casualties remains around one for every 13 strikes, the majority killed being active members of Hamas and combatants.

There is no moral equivalence here – one side is good and the other side is evil. It's a black and white issue.

When I was in graduate school, I was partnered up with an exchange student from Egypt. She said that Israelis were terrorists because they killed civilians while using force. I told her that terrorism is the intentional targeting of civilians for attacks rather than military targets. Therefore, Hamas and Hezbollah are terrorists, and Israel is not. Israel uses arms in self-defense, and they try to minimize civilian casualties by giving warnings of strikes. Islamic groups intentionally target civilians – schools and hospitals. The Islamic groups are terrorists and the IDF is acting in self-defense against unprovoked rocket attacks.

If Islamic terrorists laid down their arms, then tomorrow there would be peace. But if Israeli Defense Forces laid down their arms, then tomorrow, Israel would be destroyed, and every Jew in it. That is why the IDF has to do what the IDF has to do. And this time, I hope that they don't use half-measures to stop the flow of rockets into Israel. They must use the appropriate force necessary to stop the rocket attacks.

Harvard economist explains why spending cuts are better than tax increases

November 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily, an editorial by Dr. Alberto Alesina of Harvard University, that explains which approach to reducing debt and deficits works best. Is it cutting spending and reducing regulation? Or is it continuing to borrow and spend, and raising taxes?

Let's see what Dr. Alesina says:

> The evidence speaks loud and clear: When governments reduce deficits by raising taxes, they are indeed likely to witness deep, prolonged recessions. But when governments attack deficits by cutting spending, the results are very different.
>
> In 2011, the International Monetary Fund identified episodes from 1980 to 2005 in which 17 developed countries had aggressively reduced deficits. The IMF classified each episode as either "expenditure-based" or "tax-based," depending on whether the government had mainly cut spending or hiked taxes.
>
> When Carlo Favero, Francesco Giavazzi and I studied the results, it turned out that the two kinds of deficit reduction had starkly different effects: cutting spending resulted in very small, short-lived — if any — recessions, and raising taxes resulted in prolonged recessions.
>
> […]The obvious economic challenge to our contention is: What keeps an economy from slumping when government spending, a major component of aggregate demand, goes down? That is, if the economy doesn't enter recession, some other component of aggregate demand must necessarily be rising to make up for the reduced government spending — and what is it? The answer: private investment.
>
> Our research found that private-sector capital accumulation rose after the spending-cut deficit reductions, with firms investing more in productive activities — for example, buying machinery and opening new plants. After the tax-hike deficit reductions, capital accumulation dropped.
>
> The reason may involve business confidence, which, we found, plummeted during the tax-based adjustments and rose (or at least didn't fall) during the expenditure-based ones. When governments cut spending, they may signal that tax rates won't have to rise in the future, thus spurring investors (and possibly consumers) to be more active.
>
> Our findings on business confidence are consistent with the broader argument that American firms, though profitable, aren't investing or hiring as much as they might right now because they're uncertain about future fiscal policy, taxation and

> regulation.
>
> But there's a second reason that private investment rises when governments cut spending: the cuts are often just part of a larger reform package that includes other pro-growth measures.
>
> In another study, Silvia Ardagna and I showed that the deficit reductions that successfully lower debt-to-GDP ratios without sparking recessions are those that combine spending reductions with such measures as deregulation, the liberalization of labor markets (including, in some cases, explicit agreement with unions for more moderate wages) and tax reforms that increase labor participation.
>
> Let's be clear: This body of evidence doesn't mean that cutting government spending always leads to economic booms. Rather, it shows that spending cuts are much less costly for the economy than tax hikes and that a carefully designed deficit-reduction plan, based on spending cuts and pro-growth policies, may completely eliminate the output loss that you'd expect from such cuts. Tax-based deficit reduction, by contrast, is always recessionary.

UPDATE: George Mason University economists agree: debt is wrecking the economy and the right way to stop it is with spending cuts, not tax increases. In order to grow the economy we need a balanced approach of *spending cuts and tax cuts*.

Excerpt:

> The United States' high levels of debt are already contributing to slower economic growth and decreased competitiveness. These impacts will worsen if the nation's debt-to-GDP levels continue to rise, as is currently projected.
>
> […]High levels of government debt undermine U.S. competitiveness in several ways, including crowding out private investment, raising costs to private businesses, and contributing to both real and perceived macroeconomic instability.
>
> […]Carmen Reinhart and Kenneth Rogoff examine historical data from 40 countries over 200 years and find that when a nation's gross national debt exceeds 90% of GDP, real growth was cut by one percent in mild cases and by *half* in the most extreme cases. This result was found in both developing and advanced economies.
>
> Similarly, a Bank for International Settlements study finds that when government debt in OECD countries exceeds about 85% of GDP, economic growth slows.

> […]While fundamental tax reform is required to correct a host of structural inefficiencies, policymakers can quickly reduce the U.S. statutory rate of 35% to the OECD average rate of 26% or less.

That's what research tells us. But that's not what we are doing, because we voted for Barack Obama.

Six ways for women to stamp out the risk of divorce

November 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal Huffington Post, of all places. (H/T Stuart Schneiderman)

First, here's the list of skills for women to develop to avoid divorce:

- Skill #1: Do at Least Three Things a Day for Your Own Pleasure
- Skill #2: Relinquish Control of People You Can't Control
- Skill #3: Receive Gifts, Compliments and Help Graciously
- Skill #4: Respect The Man You Chose
- Skill #5: Express Gratitude Three Times Daily
- Skill #6: Strive to be Vulnerable

And here's the detail on one that I think is the most important:

> Skill #4: Respect The Man You Chose
>
> Being respectful will resurrect the man you fell in love with. You're too smart to have married a dumb guy, so if he seems dumb now, it's because you're focused on his shortcomings. It's not that you made a mistake in marrying him, it's that you've been *focused* on his mistakes *since* you married him. A man who feels respected by the woman who knows him best also feels self-respect, which is far more attractive than cowering and hostility.
>
> Lack of respect causes more divorces than cheating does because for men, respect is like oxygen. They need it more than sex. Respect means that you don't dismiss, criticize, contradict or try to teach him anything. Of course he won't do things the same way you do; for that, you could have just married yourself. But with your respect, he will once again do the things that amazed and delighted you to begin with — so much so that you married him.

And here's the detail on the one that I think is the most neglected:

> Skill #6: Strive to be Vulnerable
>
> Intimacy and vulnerability are directly connected. If you want intimacy, then you'll need to take the risk of admitting that you're lonely, embarrassed or hurt. This is not the same as weakness; it actually requires great strength.
>
> When you're vulnerable you don't care about being right, you're just open and trusting enough to say "I miss you" instead of "you never spend time with me." It means you simply say, "ouch!" when he's insensitive instead of retaliating. That vulnerability completely changes the way he responds to you.
>
> Vulnerability is not only attractive, it's the only way to get to that incredible feeling of being loved just the way you are by someone who knows you well. There's nothing like the joy of intimacy that results from vulnerability. It really is

> worth dropping the burden of being an efficient, overscheduled superwoman to have it.

Before I get started, a piece of advice for men. I really, really recommend that single men take the time to read ALL the comments by the women underneath that post before they even think about getting married. It's important for single men to realize that your old-fashioned ideas about marriage and what women should do in a marriage are often not accepted by modern women – even Christian women. Most churches don't emphasize the things in the list above, because they are trying to make women feel good, and not to tell them what needs doing and how to do it. When you read the comments by women blaming men and attacking the 6 points, that will help you to see what you should be looking for, so you know how to make sound judgments about who to marry and whether to marry at all.

Right. Let's begin with the 6 points.

From that list above, the ones I have personally encountered are #1, #3, #4, #5 and #6.

For #1, many unmarried women think that relationships are more about being happy than achieving things. If the woman gets into a relationship for happiness, and is not happy, then she may blame the man for failing to make her happy. The solution is to have a more realistic balance between happiness and self-sacrificial service. An unmarried women should focus on finding out what the man's plans and goals are, and why he needs her. She has to focus on showing him that she wants to be informed and engaged in helping him. That is the best way for her to work through this desire to be happy, so that she learns by doing how to balance the need for happiness with the obligation to serve and achieve. Another way to lower the need for happiness provided by the man is for the woman to have her own interests. For example, my favorite single woman likes to spend time in the evening decompressing with stuff like cross-stitching, reading, playing with her cat, etc. before we do stuff together. She has her own sources of happiness and that means that I am not overburdened every day as the sole source of happiness. That can be overwhelming on days where she is stressed out from work.

For #3 and #5, I have to tell a funny story about what I have been doing lately with my favorite single woman, whose name I won't mention. I have been busy trying to get her to tell me all about what her life is like from day to day and then buying her small things to help her out with her daily struggles. For example, I bought her an ice scraper so that she wouldn't have to scrape ice off her windshield with her gloves. I bought her kitchen shears so that she wouldn't have to fuss with raw chicken. And I am planning to get her a new corded hand-vacuum for Christmas because she has to lug the heavy one up and down the stairs now. Why am I fussing so much about this woman? Because she is the most grateful woman I know. Whenever I do anything for her, she tells everyone about it and I hear about how helpful I've been every time she uses whatever I bought her. Women, get it clear: men prefer to help grateful women. Especially ones who are busy helping them with their plans and goals. When we see you serving God in accordance with our priorities and goals (e.g. – apologetics!), that's when we really want to give you

gifts and listen to your needs. Because we see you doing what we are passionate about, and we naturally think “how can I motivate her to do that?” and “how can I make it easier for her to do that?”

For #4, I have a whole post on the importance of respect. I think the scariest thing for a woman is thinking that she will have to respect a bad men, even when he is bad. But women like that are looking at marriage wrong. The respect is *non-negotiable*. You will respect your husband or you will be cheated on or divorced. So with that in mind, *choose a man who you do respect*. That’s the solution – test the men carefully and effectively and choose one who is easy to respect. Find out during the courtship if you like the way he leads, persuades and makes decisions. Choose a man who listens to you and motivates you to do good things. Choose a man based on what marriage will require him to be doing, not based on how he makes you feel or whether your friends will be impressed.

For #6, I think that women really need to realize the power of vulnerability. My view, which is controversial, is that the reason why women are focusing so much on their appearance and getting themselves drunk in order to do hook-up sex is because feminism has made it illegal for them to attract men with traditional femininity. Vulnerability, trust, modesty, nurturing, care, concern, attention, support, etc. are all viewed by unmarried women as illegal and even immoral – even though they work on men very well. In particular, vulnerability, respect and trust are among the most important things to a good man. Men treat women nicely when they see how sensitive women are to good treatment and bad treatment. If a woman squeals, squeaks and coos when she gets flowers and treats them like pets and rearranges them often and photographs them and tweets them on Twitter, then the chances are that she will get a lot more flowers from that man. Because men are motivated by the desire to make a difference and to be appreciated and to be special to a woman who needs us. When a good woman doing good things that are challenging and difficult explains her real doubts and feelings and worries and fears to a man, that’s when a man feels motivated to swoop in there and rescue her. Women need to practice being vulnerable, and to protect their ability to *be vulnerable* by avoiding premarital sex and messy breakups. Choose good men so that you always see men at their best, and marry one that you have chosen before you kiss him on the lips. I knew one woman once who was cheating on her boyfriend with a guy who had a girlfriend, and his girlfriend called and he lied right in front of her! What do you think that this does to her ability to trust men in the future? It ruins it – having bad experiences like that. Maintain your ability to trust and be vulnerable by being rational, prudent and responsible with men. It is fun to be vulnerable with a man! Don’t compromise your ability to *be a woman* by choosing the wrong men for the wrong reasons and then getting bitter and jaded and mistrustful.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian

- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are feminized churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

November 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing

- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don’t have any earlier sources, so we just don’t know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn’t check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Study finds that attitude of gratitude has many health benefits

November 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Harvard Mental Health Newsletter.

Excerpt:

> Two psychologists, Dr. Robert A. Emmons of the University of California, Davis, and Dr. Michael E. McCullough of the University of Miami, have done much of the research on gratitude. In one study, they asked all participants to write a few sentences each week, focusing on particular topics.
>
> One group wrote about things they were grateful for that had occurred during the week. A second group wrote about daily irritations or things that had displeased them, and the third wrote about events that had affected them (with no emphasis on them being positive or negative). After 10 weeks, those who wrote about gratitude were more optimistic and felt better about their lives. Surprisingly, they also exercised more and had fewer visits to physicians than those who focused on sources of aggravation.
>
> Another leading researcher in this field, Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, tested the impact of various positive psychology interventions on 411 people, each compared with a control assignment of writing about early memories. When their week's assignment was to write and personally deliver a letter of gratitude to someone who had never been properly thanked for his or her kindness, participants immediately exhibited a huge increase in happiness scores. This impact was greater than that from any other intervention, with benefits lasting for a month.
>
> Of course, studies such as this one cannot prove cause and effect. But most of the studies published on this topic support an association between gratitude and an individual's well-being.
>
> Other studies have looked at how gratitude can improve relationships. For example, a study of couples found that individuals who took time to express gratitude for their partner not only felt more positive toward the other person but also felt more comfortable expressing concerns about their relationship.
>
> Managers who remember to say "thank you" to people who work for them may find that those employees feel motivated to work harder. Researchers at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania randomly divided university fund-raisers into two groups. One group made phone calls to solicit alumni donations in the same way they always had. The second group — assigned to work on a different day — received a pep talk from the director of annual giving, who told the fund-raisers she was grateful for their efforts. During the following

> week, the university employees who heard her message of gratitude made 50% more fund-raising calls than those who did not.

My editor Mary writes: *There is a health bonus to thankfulness but health isn't why we should be thankful. We should be thankful because we are the recipients of many good things and it is appropriate under such circumstances to express gratitude. It is also the overflow of a heart made happy by the generosity of another.*

To help us be thankful, here is a famous Thanksgiving day proclamation.

Here it is:

> PRESIDENTIAL THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATIONS
>
> 1789-1815 : George Washington, John Adams, James Madison
>
> THANKSGIVING DAY 1789
>
> BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION
>
> Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor – and Whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me "to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."
>
> Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be – That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks – for his kind care and protection of the People of this country previous to their becoming a Nation – for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his providence, which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war –for the great degree of tranquillity, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed – for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.
>
> And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions – to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually – to render our national government a blessing to all the People, by constantly being a government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly

> and faithfully executed and obeyed – to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord – To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and Us – and generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.
>
> Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.
>
> (signed) G. Washington

That’s from George Washington.

Happy Thanksgiving Day!

What was Thanksgiving Day really like in history?

November 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

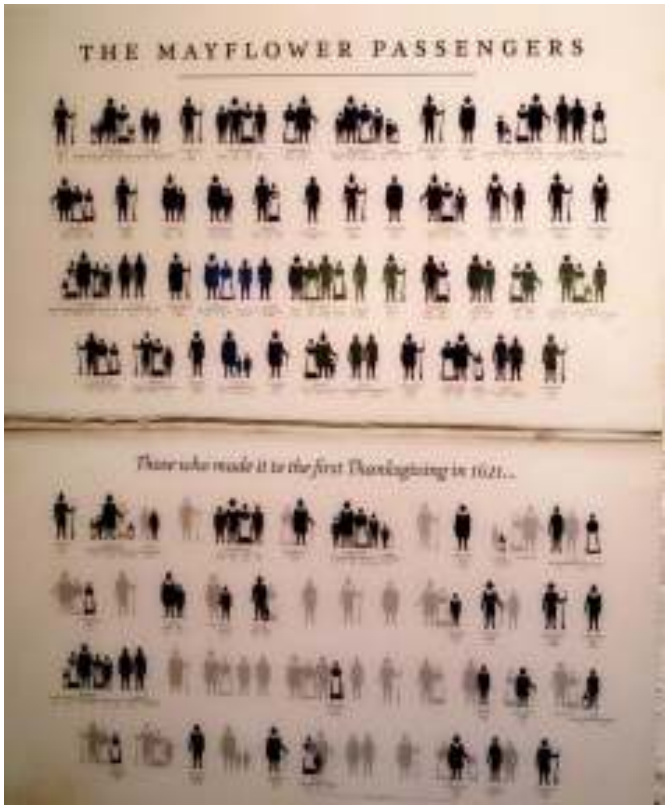

The First Thanksgiving

A mysterious Dr. J (not that Dr. J, this one is Jewish) posted this article on Facebook.

Full text:

> The major similarity between the first Jamestown settlers and the first Plymouth settlers was great human suffering.
>
> November was too late to plant crops. Many settlers died of scurvy and malnutrition during that horrible first winter. Of the 102 original *Mayflower* passengers, only 44 survived. Again like in Jamestown, the kindness of the local Native Americans saved them from a frosty death.
>
> The Pilgrims' remarkable courage was displayed the following spring. When the *Mayflower* returned to Europe, not a single Pilgrim deserted Plymouth.
>
> Massasoit, chief of the Wampanoag tribe, signed a treaty with the Pilgrams in 1621, that was never broken. As a result, the two groups enjoyed a peaceful coexistence.
> By early 1621, the Pilgrims had built crude huts and a common house on the shores of Plymouth Bay. Soon neighboring Indians began to build relations with the Pilgrims. SQUANTO, a local Indian who had been kidnapped and taken to England nearly a decade before, served as an interpreter with the local tribes. Squanto taught the Pilgrims to fertilize the soil with dried fish remains to produce a stellar corn crop.

> MASSASOIT, the chief of the nearby Wampanoags, signed a treaty of alliance with the Pilgrims in the summer. In exchange for assistance with defense against the feared Narragansett tribe, Massasoit supplemented the food supply of the Pilgrims for the first few years.
>
> The modern conception of a Pilgrim might include a man in a black hat with a buckle, but not all of the original settlers of Plymouth County fit this description. Successful colonies require successful leadership. The man to step forward in Plymouth colony wasWILLIAM BRADFORD. After the first governor elected under the Mayflower Compact perished from the harsh winter, Bradford was elected governor for the next thirty years. In May of 1621, he performed the colony's first marriage ceremony.
>
> Under Bradford's guidance, Plymouth suffered less hardship than their English compatriots in Virginia. Relations with the local natives remained relatively smooth in Plymouth and the food supply grew with each passing year.
>
> By autumn of 1621, the Pilgrims had much for which to be thankful. After the harvest, Massasoit and about ninety other Indians joined the Pilgrims for the great English tradition of HARVEST FESTIVAL. The participants celebrated for several days, dining on venison, goose, duck, turkey, fish, and of course, cornbread, the result of a bountiful corn harvest. This tradition was repeated at harvest time in the following years.
>
> It was President Lincoln who declared Thanksgiving a national celebration in 1863. The Plymouth Pilgrims simply celebrated survival, as well as the hopes of good fortune in the years that lay ahead.

This might be a good thing to read out at the Thanksgiving table if you are looking for something meaningful to read.

Congresswoman Michele Bachmann’s Thanksgiving Day wishes

November 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here you go:

My favorite Congresswoman, and she’s wearing my colors, too! :)

Teachers face termination for refusing to promote gay marriage

November 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Primary school teachers could face the sack for refusing to promote gay marriage once same-sex unions become law, a minister has signalled.
>
> Liz Truss, an education minister, refused to rule out the possibility that teachers, even in faith schools, could face disciplinary action for objecting on grounds of conscience.
>
> Miss Truss said simply that it was impossible to know what the impact of the legislation would be at this stage.
>
> Her admission came in a letter to a fellow Conservative MP, David Burrowes, last month.
>
> […]Mr O'Neill, an expert on human rights, was asked to advise on the impact redefining marriage to include same-sex couples could have on schools, churches, hospitals, foster carers and public buildings.

> Among his conclusions was that schools could be within their statutory rights to dismiss staff who wilfully fail to use stories or textbooks promoting same-sex weddings.
>
> Parents who object to gay marriage being taught to their children would also have no right to withdraw their child from lessons, he argued.
>
> And, in theory, the fact that a school was a faith school would make no difference, he added.

Read the rest, because our country just voted for Barack Obama, and he supports gay marriage.

How would gay marriage change your life?

Nearly half of 15-year-olds are not living with both parents

November 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Telegraph, which features our favorite Conservative MP, Iain Duncan Smith.

Excerpt:

> Some 45% see their mother and father's relationship break down before then, although 80% are born to a couple living together.

> The figures were released as the Government announced plans to change the way it measures the effectiveness of social programmes for the poor.
>
> Halting the breakdown of family life will become the key measure of success, with officials being asked to record how they promote family stability and tackle joblessness, and whether children in the families affected perform as well their peers in other families.
>
> Companies providing the programmes to provide help for Britain's 120,000 so-called problem families will be paid in accordance with how well they improve the statistics in these areas, the Daily Mail reported.

> Iain Duncan Smith, the Work and Pensions Secretary, told the Social Justice Conference in London: "Stable, loving families matter.
>
> "They matter for this government, and they matter for the most vulnerable in society
>
> "By measuring the proportion of children living with the same parents from birth and whether their parents report a good quality relationship we are driving home the message that social programmes should promote family stability and avert breakdown.
>
> "You don't help families by shrugging your shoulders when parental relationships fall apart.
>
> "When families are strong and stable, so are children, showing higher levels of wellbeing and more positive outcomes.
>
> "But when things go wrong – either through family breakdown or a damaged parental relationship – the impact on a child's later life can be devastating."
>
> Mr Duncan Smith warned last week that the welfare system was promoting destructive behaviour by encouraging poorer families to have more children and denying them the incentive to get a job.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could have a frank talk in this nation about the social costs of family breakdown and how to prevent it? We need to spend time as a nation going over

the harm that family breakdown causes to children, and developing best practices for dating, courting, mate-selection and behaviors with marriage.

I wrote quite a long post about how women can prevent divorce earlier this week and was surprised that we did not get many comments on it. I noticed that many people read it, but no one commented. Sometimes I feel that a whole bunch of us have this view of relationships such that we choose our mate based on emotions, and that the purpose of the relationship is to make us feel happy. But that's not going to provide children with the stability they need.

Related posts

- 67% of single / unmarried / divorced women vote for pro-abortion, pro-gay-marriage Obama
- New study: staying a virgin longer enables more satisfying relationships
- Study explains why college women abandon courtship for hook-ups
- New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially for women
- New study: marriage drops probability of child poverty by 82%
- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less
- How do prostitutes stay in business in an era of hook-up sex?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce

- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

Study: 70% of divorces caused by domestic issues like money or housework

November 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the UK Telegraph. (H/T Stuart Schneiderman)

Excerpt:

> According to analysis of divorce cases by Gateley, a UK law firm, seven in ten marriages fall apart because couples fail to reach an agreement on decisions relating to the home, such as how monthly finances are arranged, where couples live or how household responsibilities are carved up.

> Only one in five marriages ends because of infidelity, the law firm said.
>
> The company said that couples who treat marriage as a "business merger" – and talk about domestic issues – are much more likely to stay together in the long term.
>
> **Of the seven in ten marriages that fail because people can not agree on simple domestic issues, by far the most common cause is lack of agreement over finances. One in eight of these marriages disintegrate because couples are unable to agree on where to settle down.**

> **Elizabeth Hassall, a partner and head of the family division at Gateley, said that it is surprising how many "fundamental decisions" are barely discussed before couples get married.**
>
> **She said: "Yes it's romantic to be walking down the aisle, but the realities of a 'merger' are a little more cut and dry, It is often the case that people simply don't think about it, or feel comfortable discussing life choices, but what is apparent is that going into a marriage blind could be a recipe for disaster."**

That study is from one law firm, but it reminded me about this story about a Norwegian study that discusses the importance of traditional roles within the marriage.

Excerpt:

> Couples who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a Norwegian study sure to get tongues wagging has shown.
>
> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled Equality in the Home, said.

> Researchers found no, or very little, cause-and-effect. Rather, they saw in the correlation a sign of “modern” attitudes.
>
> “Modern couples are just that, both in the way they divide up the chores and in their perception of marriage” as being less sacred, Mr Hansen said, stressing it was all about values.
>
> “In these modern couples, women also have a high level of education and a well-paid job, which makes them less dependent on their spouse financially. They can manage much easier if they divorce,” he said.
>
> There were only some marginal aspects where researchers said there may be cause-and-effect.
>
> “Maybe it’s sometimes seen as a good thing to have very clear roles with lots of clarity … where one person is not stepping on the other’s toes,” Mr Hansen suggested.
>
> “There could be less quarrels, since you can easily get into squabbles if both have the same roles and one has the feeling that the other is not pulling his or her own weight,” he added.

For another academic study on this featuring Brad Wilcox, click here.

I think that these studies are interesting because I often hear from women that they are most afraid of being cheated on by men and that this is the cause of divorces. That is the number one threat to divorce in their minds – adultery. But the data seems to show that there are other issues that are more important – and more preventable. Feelings of love don’t resolve these domestic issues that are the real threat to marriage – it takes rational communication and planning before the marriage to defuse them. Naturally, negotiation works best when there are no distractions from crazy emotions and sexual passions. But I have often found that women are opposed to answering tough questions and being led in a particular direction during courtship. So on the one hand, they are fussing about adultery, which is a low-risk problem. And on the other hand, they are preferring an emotional roller coaster to reasonable courting discussions, which exposes them to the real threat to marriage.

More than 100 Conservative MPs express opposition to gay marriage law

November 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail about the push by Prime Minister David Cameron to legalize same-sex marriage in the UK. Although Cameron calls himself a conservative, I can't think of anything that he's done that's conservative. It's nice to see that there is a sizable minority in his party that opposes his plans to legalize SSM.

Excerpt:

> The full extent of the revolt among Tory MPs over plans to allow gay marriage was revealed last night. In all, more than 100 Conservatives out of 303 have written to constituents indicating their unease. If they all vote against, it would be the biggest Tory rebellion in modern times.
>
> […]The vote could happen as early as January after Mr Cameron decided this week to 'get it done and get it done quickly'.
>
> […]The sheer scale of the opposition means Mr Cameron is facing what has become the biggest Tory rebellion in recent history.
>
> Even though No 10 has signalled that it will be a free vote in the Commons, ministers will be under huge pressure to back the measure because the PM has staked so much personal authority on the change.
>
> Even though the policy was not in the party's election manifesto, his Old Etonian-dominated kitchen cabinet have told the PM that this legislation is a litmus test of his efforts to 'decontaminate' the Tories' image on social issues.
>
> […][A] survey by the polling organisation ComRes found that 62 per cent of voters and 68 per cent of Tory supporters believe marriage should continue to be defined as a 'life-long exclusive commitment between a man and a woman'.
>
> A further 65 per cent said that plans to legalise gay marriage are 'more to do with trying to make the Conservative Party look trendy and modern' than a matter of conviction.
>
> These findings are reinforced by a petition set up by the lobby group Coalition For Marriage (C4M) which has been signed by 612,000 people. It declares: 'I support the legal definition of marriage which is the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.'
>
> The Prime Minister has exacerbated tension on the Tory benches by issuing what has been described as a 'guillotine' – rushing the Bill into the Commons to fast-track the reform.
>
> […]One can only assume that the Tory whips have drawn Mr Cameron's attention to this growing rebellion. In any case, it is now patently clear that the PM cannot write off opponents of his policy as the usual hardline right-wingers who have

> never been reconciled to his modernisation efforts.

The UK has a Parliamentary system that normally does not allow free votes. I would expect that even a view people in the Labour Party might vote against the legalization of same-sex marriage.

UPDATE: The actual number is up to 118 now.

Why does the cause of the universe have to be God?

November 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Cold Case Christianity. (H/T Tweet from Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

> Big Bang cosmology, often referred to as the Standard Cosmological Model, demonstrates that everything we see in the universe (all space, time, and matter) had a beginning and came from nothing. If this is true, the first cause of the universe must itself be non-spatial, a-temporal, and immaterial.
>
> […]There are two kinds of forces in the universe: personal forces and impersonal forces. Impersonal forces, like the force of gravity, have no choice about how they affect their environment. They enter, their effect is realized. Imagine a gravity free room in which everything is simply floating in midair. Now introduce the impersonal force of gravity. What happens? We would expect the effect of gravity to be felt immediately. The instant gravity enters this room every object will be drawn to the floor. Impersonal forces cannot decide when to act; if they are present, their effect is felt. This truth has a great impact on the way we understand the first cause of the universe.
>
> If the cause of the universe is an impersonal force, its effect (the appearance of everything from nothing) would be realized the instant the force was present. If that were the case, the first cause of the universe could be no older than the universe itself. The appearance of the cause (the impersonal force) and its effect (the creation of space, time and matter) would be simultaneous events; one would be no older than the other. But if that's the case, we would once again find ourselves looking for what caused the first cause to appear in the first place! See the problem? The first cause of the universe must itself be uncaused and eternal in order for us to avoid the illogical and endless pursuit of a prior cause. Unless we are willing to accept the irrational premise that the cause of the universe is itself only as old as the universe itself, we are going to have to admit that this cause cannot be an impersonal force. The cause of the universe had the ability to decide to bring the universe into existence, and the ability to decide is an attribute of personhood.

The rest of the post takes a look at what can be deduced about the cause of the universe from the effect: the creation of the universe according to what science tells us.

This is a straightforward argument. We start with science. Science tells us what happened at the beginning of the universe. And then we ask ourselves what kind of cause can account for the effect that science detected. If you limit yourself to pure logic and pure experimental science, then there is one possible explanation: a supernatural cause brought the entire physical universe into being. All attempts to evade what good science tells us about the universe takes one of two forms; 1) speculating about unobservable,

untestable entities or 2) hoping that all the good science we have today will be overturned tomorrow by different science. Those are the 3 options: God, speculation without evidence or speculation without evidence.

Related posts

- William Lane Craig lectures against naturalism at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland
- William Lane Craig lectures on naturalistic alternatives to the Big Bang
- William Lane Craig debates Peter Millican on the existence of God
- Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University
- Three ways that the progress of science conflicts with naturalistic speculations
- Henry F. Schaefer: Stephen Hawking, the Big Bang and God
- Stephen C. Meyer: does the Big Bang cosmology support God or atheism?
- What conditions support the minimum requirements for complex life?
- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?
- Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist
- William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?

Foster children removed from UK family because of political beliefs

November 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Joyce Thacker, the face of fascism

Melanie Phillips writes about it in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> The story sounds just too idiotic and outrageous to be true. A Rotherham couple, by all accounts exemplary foster parents for nearly seven years, took on two children and a baby in an emergency placement.
>
> Eight weeks later, social workers came and took the children away — despite the fact that they were thriving — on the grounds that because the couple belonged to the UK Independence Party this was not 'the right cultural match'.
>
> Astonishingly, the official in charge is still unrepentant. Joyce Thacker, the council's director of children and young people's services, has said that the children, who were from 'EU migrant backgrounds', had been removed to protect their 'cultural and ethnic needs' from UKIP's 'strong views' and apparent 'opposition to multiculturalism'.
>
> […]The clear implication is that they were racists. But there is nothing racist about opposing multiculturalism. Indeed, many immigrants themselves oppose it. To damn this couple in this way is an appalling smear.
>
> […]Ms Thacker said: 'I have to think about how sensitive I am being to those children.' Is this woman for real? Clearly, she is actually doing them harm by putting ideological dogma above the children's own needs.
>
> […]In the early Nineties, I unearthed what, it is no exaggeration to say, was a climate of totalitarianism in social-work training.
>
> Anti-racist zealots had captured the social workers' training body, and built into

> the social-work diploma the explicit assumption that society was fundamentally racist and oppressive.
>
> […]As a result, the needs of vulnerable children and other social-work clients have been junked in favour of the overriding requirement to impose an ideological view of the world in which minorities can do no wrong while the majority can do no right.
>
> Over the years, this has given rise to one horror story after another. Twelve years ago, an eight-year-old Ivorian child, Victoria Climbié, was tortured and murdered by her guardians under the noses of social workers who believed such behaviour had to be respected as part of African culture.
>
> In the early Nineties, Islington council was revealed to have ignored the systematic sexual abuse and prostitution of children in its care because it was terrified of being called racist or homophobic if it disciplined black or gay staff perpetrating such crimes.
>
> […]In Rotherham itself, the sickening sexual enslavement of under-age white girls by organised prostitution and pimping rings was largely ignored for more than two decades, in part because the abusers came overwhelmingly from Pakistani Muslim backgrounds.
>
> And for years, would-be adoptive parents have been turned down by social workers because they are deemed to be too white, too middle class or in some other way fall foul of the politically correct inquisition.

And don't go calling me racist – I'm a visible minority, with darker skin than Obama. Half my family is Muslim, and the other half is Hindu and Catholic.

And here's another interesting and related story:

> An unusual custody battle involving a surrogate mother and two Houston men is playing out in a Harris County courtroom.Cindy Close, 48, gave birth to twins at Texas Children's Medical Center in July, but on the night of their birth she was visited by a social worker. "She told me we had a surrogacy situation," Close said. "I looked at her and said 'I'm not a surrogate, what are you talking about?'" Close said that she had been duped by Marvin McMurrey, a man who she said had pretended to be her friend and allegedly promised to be a partner in raising the children. He had paid for her in vitro fertilization using his sperm and a donor egg. When the children were born, he claimed custody with his partner.

> Close said they were not in a romantic relationship and that she never even knew he was gay. "We didn't have everything nailed down because it was based on trust," Close said. "There was never any contract and no money was exchanged."The twins had been born prematurely and spent weeks at the hospital. It was during that time a suit was filed challenging the mother-child relationship. Since Close is not linked to the children genetically, it alleged they were not hers. All she has now are visitation rights for two hours a day, six days a

> week.

Notice that in both cases we are dealing with social workers. I think that social workers tend to be more liberal and less inclined towards objective standards of morality. In practice, that means calling good evil, and evil good, and then subsidizing the evil with money taken from the good through taxes. They call this “compasssion” and “fairness”. They also like to use the power of the state to force those around them to agree with their view. I call that fascism.

When Obama legalizes gay marriage, I would expect to see things like this – children being taken away from families that oppose gay marriage and given to gay couples. It starts with stories like this.

Obama foreign policy: Muslim Brotherhood imposing anti-US dictatorship in Egypt

November 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

North Africa and Middle East Political Map

The Heritage Foundation explains what Obama enabled by using American military force to remove Hosni Mubarak in Egypt.

Excerpt:

> Egypt was wracked by protests today, the day after President Mohamed Morsi purged key judicial officials and issued a decree that granted himself sweeping new powers. In Cairo, protesters gathered in Tahrir Square, the epicenter of Egypt's stalled revolution, to denounce Morsi's power grab and chant: "Morsi is Mubarak." There were reports of heavy rioting in three Suez Canal cities, Suez, Port Said, and Ismaila, with angry crowds burning the offices of Morsi's political party, the Freedom and Justice Party.
>
> Opposition political leaders accused Morsi of "monopolizing all three branches of government." Mohamed El Baradei tweeted that Morsi had "appointed himself Egypt's new pharaoh."

And more from a different Heritage Foundation article:

> Egypt has been rocked once again by a political crisis triggered by President Mohamed Morsi's relentless efforts to secure dictatorial power. Hundreds of protesters from liberal and secular opposition groups demonstrated in Cairo's Tahrir Square, the birthplace of Egypt's stunted "Arab Spring" revolt. One barometer of the coming test of strength between Morsi and the weak and splintered opposition will be whether the disappointed democrats can retain control over Tahrir Square in the face of police and Muslim Brotherhood countermoves.
>
> Egypt's judiciary also has pushed back against Morsi's power grab. The Supreme

> Council of the Judiciary denounced Morsi's unilateral assertion of power over the judiciary as "an unprecedented attack on judicial independence." The Judges Club, an association of judges made up of many appointees by the Mubarak regime, called for a strike by courts across Egypt.
>
> But the judges alone will not be enough to reverse Morsi's power grab. The key vote will be wielded by the armed forces. Morsi appears confident that he can count on support from key military leaders, whom he hand-picked after purging the top ranks of Mubarak loyalists in August.
>
> While the army's ultimate verdict on Morsi's power grab is not yet apparent, Egypt's investors voted with their wallets and withdrew their money from Egypt's stock market, which plunged almost 10 percent on Sunday. Even if Morsi does secure the backing of the army, his assertion of dictatorial powers will further undermine what little confidence remains in Egypt's deteriorating economy.

Guess what? It's not always a good idea to use American power abroad. We have to ask what is in it for us. And in Egypt and Libya, there was nothing in it for us. We should have intervened appropriately in Syria and Iran, which are much more threatening to us.

Practical apologetics: conversations and interviews

November 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Cold-case detective J. Warner Wallace has a new post up at Cold Case Christianity.

Excerpt:

> Most of us are familiar with these kinds of interactions. Conversations are two directional; they involve a dialogue between both parties. Most of my professional interactions with *anyone* begin this way. In the early part of my interaction, I want to build relational bridges with the people I engage.
>
> […]I began to eat meals with the people I arrested. After taking them into custody, I would often ask them if they were hungry, and if they were, I would order something and make sure I ate with them in the interview room. I recognized that many of God's most important conversations with humans have been over a meal (the Lord's Supper is the most powerful example of this). We don't eat with people we don't know well, and a simple meal can unite two people in a way that few other settings can achieve. Once my heart was broken for people, I was actually willing to eat with the people I arrested. The conversations we had were powerful, even though they weren't directed intentionally at the issues we would later cover together. Conversations are benign interactions between two people who share something of themselves with the person they are engaging. Be prepared to open up a bit and share something personal if you expect the other person to do this with you.
>
> At some point, conversations turn toward interviews. In an interview, one person begins to probe more deeply into an area by asking specific questions related to that area of interest. Something is usually mentioned in the initial conversation that triggers a line of questioning. When we begin to probe this aspect of the conversation, we are slipping into interview mode. Interviews are not antagonistic, they are simply inquisitive. My questions are not *pointed* at this stage of the interaction, they are simply curious and directed. My goal is to establish a baseline from the person with whom I am talking. What do they believe? What did they see? What did they do? What happened next? If I am talking to a witness, I am simply trying to collect data. If I am talking to a suspect, I am trying to establish a preliminary story and baseline that I can then compare to later statements and evidence I have at the scene.

I favor the interview approach. Go in there with a list of questions. Buy them lunch or dinner. Ask the questions. Don't respond to them or argue with them. Think of how you would respond.Write a blog post. Send them the blog post before you publish it to check it for accuracy. Then publish it so everyone else can see.

By the way, Wallace's new book on apologetics is now available for pre-order.

Here is the description:

> Written by an L. A. County homicide detective and former atheist, *Cold Case Christianity* examines the claims of the New Testament using the skills and strategies of a hard-to-convince criminal investigator.
> Christianity could be defined as a “cold case”: it makes a claim about an event from the distant past for which there is little forensic evidence. In *Cold Case Christianity,* J. Warner Wallace uses his nationally recognized skills as a homicide detective to look at the evidence and eyewitnesses behind Christian beliefs. Including gripping stories from his career and the visual techniques he developed in the courtroom, Wallace uses illustration to examine the powerful evidence that validates the claims of Christianity.
> A unique apologetic that speaks to readers’ intense interest in detective stories, *Cold Case Christianity* inspires readers to have confidence in Christ as it prepares them to articulate the case for Christianity.

His book is not a general apologetics book with lots of science and philosophy. It is a homicide detective’s look at the historical accounts about the life of Jesus. This might be a good book to pick up if you want to present Christianity from a practical point of view. Everybody likes mysteries and detectives, after all.

Why is the Latino poverty rate going up?

November 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> It has been reported recently that the poverty rate among Latinos has reached 28 percent.
>
> The number, based on a new poverty measure by the Obama Administration, should be interpreted with caution, as explained here and here. However, the overall point that more American Latino families, and Americans in general, are struggling to achieve self-sufficiency is troubling.
>
> What's not mentioned in news reports, however, is the greatest driver of child poverty in the U.S. today: unwed childbearing. Among Latinos, unmarried parent families are roughly three times as likely to be poor as married families. Tragically, over half of Latino children born today are born outside of marriage. The rate has increased from less than 40 percent in the 1990s to more than half—nearly 53 percent—today.
>
> These facts are rarely mentioned, and few attempts made to address the matter. Instead, big government proponents clamor that the antidote to poverty is greater government welfare spending. Unfortunately, these programs do not help people overcome poverty. Today, the U.S. spends roughly five times the amount necessary to pull every poor person out of poverty, and welfare is the fastest-growing part of government spending, exceeding even the cost of defense spending. However, poverty rates have not declined.
>
> While welfare can provide temporary relief to those who have no other options, the vast majority of welfare programs are based on promoting government dependence rather than self-reliance. To pave the way to upward mobility, anti-poverty efforts should address the causes of poverty, such as family breakdown, not simply transfer material goods. Institutions of civil society—faith-based and community-based—are better suited to address the complexities of poverty, having a greater ability to reach individuals on a personal level.

Avoiding poverty in America is easy: you just have to finish high school, stay out of jail, get married before you have kids, stay married, and work at any job.

You just have to make the right choices, and that would be even easier if the government stopped rewarding people with taxpayer money for making the wrong choices – and then blaming others for their own poor decisions. People choose poverty, and they ought to be held responsible for it. If we really wanted to "help the poor", then we would be increasing tax breaks for charity, for marrying and for working at any job – no matter how much it pays.

New study from China links abortion to breast cancer

November 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> A study in the Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention shows abortion increases the risk of breast cancer for women.
>
> C. Yanhua of the First Peoples' Hospital of Kunming in Yunnan province and his colleagues found the abortion-breast cancer association after comparing data from 263 cases of breast cancer and 457 controls without the disease. Their analysis covers the years 2009-2011.
>
> The authors examined information on disease diagnosis, demographics, medical history, and reproductive characteristics of the patients involved and also looked at short menstrual cycle, old age at first live birth, never breastfeeding, history of oral contraceptive use, postmenopausal status and nulliparity to determine in abortion-breast cancer link exists.
>
> They write that "multivariate model analysis revealed the significant independent positive associations with breast cancer of shorter menstrual cycle, older age at first live birth, never breastfeeding, history of oral contraception experience, increased number of abortion, menopause status, and nulliparities."
>
> "Number of abortion showed an increasing higher risk of breast cancer," they added, while saying that women who had one live birth lowered their risk. "As far as women who had once a live birth, it showed decreased the risk of breast cancer compared to nulliparous."
>
> "This study showed an increased risk of breast cancer with times of abortion. The association between abortion and risk of breast cancer in a study in China showed that the risk factors of female breast cancer included abortion times more than two (Li et al., 2006)," they continued. "Another study found that risk was raised among women reporting at least one abortion, but no trend was seen with number of abortions (Heuch et al., 2008). In a meta-analysis study, pooled odds ratio for number of abortions greater than and equal three was statistically significant (95%CI:1.68-5.36) (Tao et al.,2011)."
>
> "In conclusion, in this study the estrogen related risk factors of breast cancer included woman who had longer menstrual cycle, older age of first live birth, never breastfeeding, nulliparity, and number of abortions more than one. Therefore, it is recommended to women with these risk factors perform breast cancer screening tests earlier and regularly," they said.

Previously, another study was published in Oxford University's European Journal of Public Health, and the abstract is posted on the US National Library of Medicine National

Institutes of Health (aka PubMed).

Here are the results:

> With statistical controls for number of pregnancies, birth year and age at last pregnancy, the combination of induced abortion(s) and natural loss(es) was associated with more than three times higher mortality rate than only birth(s). Moderate risks were identified with only induced abortion, only natural loss and having experienced all outcomes compared with only birth(s). Risk of death was more than six times greater among women who had never been pregnant compared with those who only had birth(s). Increased risks of death were 45%, 114% and 191% for 1, 2 and 3 abortions, respectively, compared with no abortions after controlling for other reproductive outcomes and last pregnancy age. Increased risks of death were equal to 44%, 86% and 150% for 1, 2 and 3 natural losses, respectively, compared with none after including statistical controls. Finally, decreased mortality risks were observed for women who had experienced two and three or more births compared with no births.

Life Site News adds more:

> A single induced abortion increases the risk of maternal death by 45 percent compared to women with no history of abortion, according to a new study of all women of reproductive age in Denmark over a 25 year period.
>
> The study found that each additional abortion is associated with an even higher death rate. Women who had two abortions were 114 percent more likely to die during the period examined, and women had three or more abortions had a 192 percent increased risk of death.
>
> Elevated rates of death were also observed among women who experienced miscarriages, ectopic pregnancies or other natural losses. Among women with a history of multiple pregnancies, women with a history of both abortions and natural losses, but no live births, had the highest mortality rate.
>
> Women who had never been pregnant had the highest mortality rate overall.
>
> However, women with a history of successful deliveries were the least likely to die during the 25 years examined.
>
> The study is the second record linkage analysis of Danish mortality data to be published this month.
>
> The earlier study was limited to comparing mortality rates following only the first pregnancy outcome. It found that abortion of a first pregnancy was associated with a higher rate of death compared to death rates among women who delivered a first pregnancy. The higher death rate among women who had abortions persisted for each of the first ten years following the first pregnancy outcome.
>
> […]Dr. Reardon is the director of the Elliot Institute, which funds research related

> to abortion. He believes further research is needed to explore how the outcomes observed in this latest study may be influenced by abortion's impact on natural pregnancy losses. A new population study from Finland, for example, has found that abortion is associated with higher rates of preterm delivery, low birth weight delivery, and perinatal deaths in subsequent pregnancies.
>
> "We knew from our previous studies of low income women in California that women who have multiple pregnancy outcomes, such as having a history of both abortion and miscarriage, have significantly different mortality rates," Reardon said.
>
> "But this new study is the first to examine how each experience with abortion or miscarriage contributes to higher mortality rates," Reardon observed.
>
> "This is called a 'dose effect' because each exposure, or 'dose,' is seen to produce more of the same effect, which is what one would expect if there is a cause-effect relationship," he said.
>
> Reardon believes that a truer picture of the benefits of childbirth and the risks of abortion and pregnancy loss is now emerging because of a shift to more reliable record linkage studies. Such studies have been conducted in Finland, Denmark and the United States.

Is this the only bad effect of abortion on women's health?

Let's see the studies and then we'll decide.

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> A new study published in the *Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention* in February reported a very statistically significant increased risk of breast cancer for women with previous abortions as opposed to women who have never had one.
>
> The study, consisting of 1,351 women and led by researcher Ai-Ren Jiang, reported a statistically significant 1.52-fold elevation in risk for women with induced abortions and a "significant dose-response relationship between (the risk) for breast cancer and number of induced abortions," meaning the risk climbed with a higher number of previous abortions.
>
> For premenopausal women who have had abortions, the numbers were relatively small, and the observed 16% risk elevation was not statistically significant. However, for those with three or more abortions, the risk climbed to a statistically significant 1.55-fold elevation.
>
> "The results have revealed that induced abortion was related to increased risk of breast caner. Premenopausal women who had ≥3 times of induced abortion were at increased crude odds ratio (OR) (2.41, 95%CI: 1.09-5.42) and adjusted-OR (1.55, 95%CI: 1.15-5.68)," they wrote. "Postmenopausal women with a previous

> induced abortion were at increased crude OR (2.04, 95%CI: 1.48-2.81) and adjusted-OR (1.82, 95%CI: 1.30-2.54), and there was a significant increase trend in OR with number of induced abortions (p for trend: 0.0001).”
>
> […][A] Chinese study in 1995 by L. Bu and colleagues, including Janet Daling of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, reported a statistically significant 4.5-fold elevated risk among women with previous induced abortions who developed breast cancer at or before age 35, compared to older women (who experienced a statistically significant 2.5-fold elevated risk)

Here’s the latest study from the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), showing that excessive consumption of alcohol is a rish factor for breast cancer.

Excerpt:

> Consumption of 3 to 6 alcoholic drinks per week is associated with a small increase in the risk of breast cancer, and consumption in both earlier and later adult life is also associated with an increased risk, according to a study in the November 2 issue of JAMA.
>
> “In many studies, higher consumption of alcohol has been associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. However, the effect of low levels of drinking as is common in the United States has not been well quantified,” according to background information in the article. “In addition, the role of drinking patterns (i.e., frequency of drinking and ‘binge’ drinking) and consumption at different times of adult life are not well understood.”
>
> Wendy Y. Chen, M.D., M.P.H., of Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, and colleagues examined the association of breast cancer with alcohol consumption during adult life, including quantity, frequency, and age at consumption. The study included 105,986 women enrolled in the Nurses’ Health Study who were followed up from 1980 until 2008 with an early adult alcohol assessment and 8 updated alcohol assessments. The primary outcome the researchers measured was the risk of developing invasive breast cancer.
>
> During the follow-up period, there were 7,690 cases of invasive breast cancer diagnosed among the study participants. Analyses of data indicated that a low level of alcohol consumption (5.0 to 9.9 grams per day, equivalent to 3-6 glasses of wine per week) was modestly but statistically significantly associated with a 15 percent increased risk of breast cancer. In addition, women who consumed at least 30 grams of alcohol daily on average (at least 2 drinks per day) had a 51 percent increased risk of breast cancer compared with women who never consumed alcohol.
>
> The researchers also found that when examined separately, alcohol consumption levels at ages 18 to 40 years and after age 40 years were both strongly associated with breast cancer risk. The association with drinking in early adult life

> still persisted even after controlling for alcohol intake after age 40 years.
>
> Binge drinking, but not frequency of drinking, was also associated with breast cancer risk after controlling for cumulative alcohol intake.

Now let's take a look at some other factors that raise the risk of breast cancer.

Abortion and breast cancer

Many studies show a link between abortion and breast cancer.

Study 1: (September 2010)

> Based on the expression of estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2/neu (HER2), breast cancer is classified into several subtypes: luminal A (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2-), luminal B (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2+), HER2-overexpressing (ER-, PR-, and HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-, PR-, and HER2-). The aim of this case-control study is to determine reproductive factors associated with breast cancer subtypes in Chinese women. A total of 1,417 patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the First Affiliated Hospital, China Medical University, Shenyang, China between 2001 and 2009 and 1,587 matched controls without a prior breast cancer were enrolled.
>
> […]Postmenopause and spontaneous abortion were inversely associated with the risk of luminal tumors. By contrast, multiparity, family history of breast cancer and **induced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer**.

Study 2: (March 2010)

> OBJECTIVE: To explore the risk factors of breast cancer for better control and prevention of the malignancy.
>
> METHODS: The clinical data of 232 patients with pathologically established breast cancer were investigated in this 1:1 case-control study to identify the risk factors of breast cancer.
>
> RESULTS: The history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and**multiple abortions were the statistically significant risk factors of breast cancer**, while breast feeding was the protective factor.
>
> CONCLUSION: A history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and multiple abortions are all risk factors of breast cancer.

But wait, there's more.

Birth control pills

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9)

> and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed childbearing was a risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

So, things that feminists tell women are good are actually really bad. This is not even to mention things like sex-selection abortions, which is really bad for unborn women.

Conclusion

The total cost for breast cancer treatment, which raises medical insurance premiums (private health care) or taxes (single-payer health care), has been estimated to be between $1.8 billion and $3.8 billion dollars. In addition, the government spends billions of dollars each year on breast cancer research. All of this spending is costing taxpayers a lot of money, as people demand more and more government funding of breast cancer research and breast cancer treatment (with either private or single-payer health care).

New discovery of early fragment of the book of Romans to be published by academic press

November 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Manuscript expert Daniel B. Wallace reports on the exciting find.

Excerpt:

> At the Society of Biblical Literature's annual conference in Chicago last week (17–20 Nov 2012), Grant Edwards and Nick Zola presented papers on a new papyrus fragment from Romans. They have dated it to the (early) third century, which makes this perhaps only the fifth manuscript of Romans prior to the fourth (though a couple of others are usually thought to also be from the third century). This manuscript is part of the Green Collection (inventory #425). It will be published in the first volume of a new series by the Dutch academic publishing house, E. J. Brill. The series, edited by Dirk Obbink and Jerry Pattengale, is called the Green Scholars Initiative: Papyrus Series. Volume one is edited by Jeff Fish of Baylor University.
>
> The text of the fragment is from Rom 9.18–21 and small portions of Rom 10. Edwards presented information about the paleography and provenance of the fragment, while Zola presented his findings on the textual affinities of the papyrus.

And don't forget, we are expecting (in 2013) an academic publication about the first century fragment of the gospel of Mark.

From the Christian Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Following the discovery of a first-century fragment of Mark's Gospel in the Middle East, more new information has emerged, along with two new claims.
>
> Also found were an early sermon on Hebrews and the earliest known manuscripts of Paul's letters.
>
> **Details about the finds will be published in an academic book in 2013, says Dallas Theological Seminary's Daniel B. Wallace, a New Testament professor. Wallace started the buzz on Feb. 1 when, during a debate with author and skeptic Bart Ehrman, he made the claim about the Mark fragment, which would be the earliest-known fragment of the New Testament.**
>
> Wallace provided a few more details on his website and then a few more during a Feb. 24 interview with radio host Hugh Hewitt, saying the fragments and manuscripts were found in Egypt.
>
> **The significance of all the manuscripts, Wallace said, would be on par**

> **with the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls.**
>
> The Mark fragment is “a very small fragment, not too many verses, but it’s definitely from Mark,” Wallace said. “… To have a fragment from one of the Gospels that’s written during the lifetime of some of the eyewitnesses to the resurrection is just astounding.”
>
> To date, the earliest-known fragment of the New Testament is from John’s Gospel and dates from around 125 A.D.
>
> The Mark fragment, Wallace said, will affirm what is already written in that portion of Mark’s Gospel.
>
> The paleographer who dated it, Wallace said, is “one of the world’s leading paleographers.” Wallace previously said the paleographer is certain it’s from the first century. Still, Wallace told Hewitt, several more paleographers will look at the Mark fragment before the book is published.
>
> The Mark fragment will be published in a book along with six other manuscripts, Wallace said. One of those will be a second-century sermon on Hebrews 11. The significance: It shows Hebrews — whose author is unknown — was accepted early by the church as Scripture.
>
> “What makes that so interesting is the ancient church understood by about A.D. 180 in what’s called … the Muratorian Canon, that the only books that could be read in churches must be those that are authoritative,” Wallace said. “To have a homily or a sermon on Hebrews means that whoever wrote that sermon considered Hebrews to be authoritative, and therefore, it could be read in the churches.”
>
> Also among the finds are second-century fragments from Luke and from Paul’s letters. Wallace did not state which letters were found.
>
> “Up until now, our oldest manuscript for Paul’s letters dates about AD 200, [known as] P-46,” Wallace said. “Now we have as many as four more manuscripts that predate that.”

The transcript of the interview with Dan Wallace is here.

The learned helplessness of young men in a feminist state

November 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Stuart Schneiderman writes an article that perfectly explains what young men are facing in a feminist-dominated society.

Excerpt:

> It begins in the schools. There, empowered female teachers have set out to enhance the performance of girls by systematically favoring them at the expense of boys.
>
> The Huffington Post reported that British boys are convinced that female teachers grade them unfairly. On the other hand, schoolgirls believe that male teachers grade them fairly.
>
> I do not know the extent to which female American teachers try to punish boys in order to improve the performance of girls, but girls are consistently outperforming boys in schools and are taking up most of the places in colleges.
>
> It seems inevitable that some boys are dropping out of school and failing to pursue advanced education because they have been demoralized.
>
> Think about it, if all the girls receive great grades then boys will, at first try to improve their performance. Once they discover that they are still receiving lower grades, they will give up. This translates into depression.
>
> Convinced, and not without reason, that the game is rigged, they stop playing.
>
> Depression, as Martin Seligman defined it, is learned helplessness. When something is learned, someone is teaching it. When your female teachers convince you that you can never get it right and that you will never be judged fairly, you will become demoralized and depressed.
>
> […]Rob Long suggests that when these boys grow up they are unlikely to believe that it is possible to have harmonious relationships with women.
>
> A recent poll bears this out. Suzanne Venker reports:
>
> According to Pew Research Center, the share of women ages eighteen to thirty-four that say having a successful marriage is one of the most important things in their lives rose nine percentage points since 1997 – from 28 percent to 37 percent. For men, the opposite occurred. The share voicing this opinion dropped, from 35 percent to 29 percent.
>
> More women want to get married and more men don't. This suggests that men are increasingly being conditioned to dread close contact with women. It also suggests that men have discovered that, like school, the marriage game is rigged against them.

Read the whole thing.

I post a lot of things for Christian men about how to detect a marriage-enabled Christian woman. But I think we can short-circuit all of that, if you're rushed. Just send the woman this article and then ask her whether the situation facing young men is a problem she is concerned about, and what she intends to do *personally* in order to stop it. That's a one question interview right there.

UPDATE: Reformed Seth has more on this problem.

Two-thirds of British millionaires disappeared after income tax increase on the rich

November 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What happens when you "tax the rich", like Obama wants to do?

The UK Telegraph explains what actually happens when you tax the rich.

Excerpt:

> Almost two-thirds of the country's million-pound earners disappeared from Britain after the introduction of the 50p top rate of tax, figures have disclosed.
>
> In the 2009-10 tax year, more than 16,000 people declared an annual income of more than £1 million to HM Revenue and Customs.
>
> This number fell to just 6,000 after Gordon Brown introduced the new 50p top rate of income tax shortly before the last general election.
>
> The figures have been seized upon by the Conservatives to claim that increasing the highest rate of tax actually led to a loss in revenues for the Government.
>
> It is believed that rich Britons moved abroad or took steps to avoid paying the new levy by reducing their taxable incomes.

> […]**Last night, Harriet Baldwin, the Conservative MP who uncovered the latest figures, said: "Labour's ideological tax hike led to a tax cull of millionaires.**
>
> **Far from raising funds, it actually cost the UK £7 billion in lost tax revenue.**

Similarly in France, with their Socialist leader's 75% top tax rate: (worse than Obama!)

> A flood of top-end properties are hitting the market as businessmen seek to leave France before stiff tax hikes hit, real estate agents and financial advisors say.
>
> "It's nearly a general panic. Some 400 to 500 residences worth more than one million euros ($1.3 million) have come onto the Paris market," said managers at Daniel Feau, a real-estate broker that specialises in high-end property.
>
> […]While the Socialists' plan to raise the tax rate to 75 percent on income above 1.0 million euros per year has generated the most headlines, a sharp increase in taxes on capital gains from the sales of stock and company stakes is pushing most people to leave, according Didier Bugeon, head of the wealth manager Equance.
>
> French entrepreneurs have complained vociferously against a proposal in the Socialist's 2013 budget to increase the capital gains tax on sales of company stakes, which they argue will kill the market for innovative start-up companies in France.

> Entrepreneurs in the high-tech sector in particular often invest their own money and take low salaries in the hope they can later sell the company for a large sum.
>
> They say a stiff increase in capital gains tax would remove incentives to do this in France. They also argue that capital has already been taxed several times in the making.

Rich people are not stupid. If you change the rules of the game, they make adjustments. Why on Earth would anyone keep working as hard as before when the government takes *more* of what they earn and gives it away to left-wing special interest groups? You either stop working as hard as before or you leave the country entirely. Rich people are not our slaves.

We let people keep the profits they make *so that* they will risk their capital and try to invent new things and create jobs. If we don't let them keep their profits, then they will not save, invest, take risks and create jobs. People who depend on "Obamaphones" don't create jobs. Only rich people do. And the more you tax the rich, the fewer jobs you will have. That's the way the world really works. Taking money from those who work and giving it to those who don't sounds "nice", but it doesn't actually help the poor. What helps the poor is having a job, not giving them free stuff paid for by others who work. You should not be able to make more money by not working than by working in this country, either.

Remember what happened when Reagan and Bush cut taxes? Massive drops in unemployment and *higher* revenues from taxes.

Should Republicans let the Bush tax cuts expire?

November 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In previous posts I noted how government revenues *increased* when the Bush tax cuts were passed, because more money was taken out of savings and invested on enterprises, resulting in more tax revenue from profits. I also noted that the deficit was shrinking after the tax cuts – down to $160 billion in 2007. Not growing, but shrinking even though we were fighting two wars. I also noted that unemployment *decreased* when those tax cuts were passed, because more entrepreneurial activity means more hiring.

Take a look at some of the facts about the Bush tax cuts from Investors Business Daily.

Here's a snippet: (links removed)

> The rich paid more. Despite endless claims by critics that Bush's tax cuts favored the rich, the fact is the rich ended up paying more in taxes after they went into effect.
>
> In fact, IRS data show that the richest 1% paid $84 billion more in taxes in 2007 than they had in 2000 — that's a 23% increase — even though their average tax rate went down.
>
> What's more, their share of the overall income tax burden grew, climbing from 37% in 2000 to 40% in 2007.
>
> At the other end of the spectrum, the bottom half of taxpayers paid $6 billion less in income taxes in 2007 than they had seven years earlier — a 16% drop — and their share of the total income tax burden dropped from 3.9% to 2.9%.
>
> Millions dropped from the tax rolls entirely. Another unheralded feature of the Bush tax cuts is that they pushed nearly 8 million people off the tax rolls entirely because, among other things, Bush doubled the per-child tax credit to $1,000 and lowered the bottom rate to 10%.
>
> The Tax Foundation estimated that these changes benefited modest-income married couples with children, who were the ones most likely to fall from the tax rolls.
>
> The tax cuts didn't cause the massive deficits. Critics routinely blame the Bush tax cuts for turning surpluses late in the Clinton administration to huge deficits under Bush. Not true.
>
> In August 2001, after the first round of the Bush tax cuts were in place, the CBO projected a surplus of $176 billion in fiscal year 2002, with surpluses continuing to grow in the following years.
>
> […]And after Bush signed the second round of tax cuts into law in 2003, federal deficits started to shrink. By 2007, the federal deficit was just $160 billion, and the CBO was again forecasting annual surpluses starting in 2012.
>
> […]Over the next decade… the middle class tax cuts that Obama wants to keep

> will cost $3.7 trillion, according to the CBO .
>
> But tax cuts for the "rich" that Obama wants to abandon add up to just $824 billion.

That's $824 billion over 10 years – but Obama has run the national debt up by $6 trillion in only 4 years. $824 billion over 10 years is chicken feed compared to that $6 trillion in debt in only 4 years.

Should we let the Bush tax cuts expire?

Here's is Marc Thiessen in the liberal Washington Post to make the case that the tax cuts should be allowed to expire.

> While the Bush tax cuts expire on Dec. 31, so do a lot of tax policies the Democrats support. For example:
>
> - The 10 percent income tax bracket would disappear, so the lowest tax rate would be 15 percent.
> - The employee share of the Social Security payroll tax would rise from 4.2 percent to 6.2 percent.
> - An estimated 33 million taxpayers — many in high-tax blue states — would be required to pay the alternative minimum tax, up from 4 million who owed it in 2011.
> - The child tax credit would be cut in half, from $1,000 today to $500, and would no longer be refundable for most.
> - Tax preferences for alternative fuels, community development and other Democratic priorities would go away.
> - And the expansions of the earned income tax credit and the dependent care credit would disappear as well.
>
> […]Right now, Democrats are demanding that Republicans raise taxes while Republicans are demanding that Democrats agree to cut Social Security and Medicare spending. A grand bargain this fall, then, would mean that Republicans get to raise revenue from their own supporters (small-business job creators) in exchange for cutting spending for their own supporters (seniors). Genius! Much better to wipe the slate clean, and start over with more leverage for fundamental tax reform and structural entitlement reform.
>
> […]During the campaign, President Obama repeatedly told us how he wants to "go back to the income tax rates we were paying under Bill Clinton — back when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and plenty of millionaires to boot." Well if the Clinton tax rates were so great, let's go back to all of the Clinton rates and relive the booming '90s.
>
> At least going back to the Clinton rates would put more people on the tax rolls, and give more Americans a stake in constraining government spending. It would also force all Americans — including the middle class — to pay for growing

> government services, instead of borrowing the money from China and passing the costs on to the next generation.
>
> Americans had a choice this November, and they voted for bigger government. Rather shielding voters from the consequences of their decisions, let them pay for it.

His point is that if we do nothing, then the Democrats will be tarred with having to *pay for* the trillions of spending that they have incurred in the last 4 years. Obama complained and complained about them, and when we repeal them and it wrecks economy, he will take the blame.

The people who voted for them have been insulated from paying for all of his spending, because it is all been passed on to children, born and unborn. Taxes have not been raised enough to pay for all the spending, it's just been added to the debt. Maybe we should make the beneficiaries of that spending foot the bill, so that they will understand how they need to vote next time. Republicans aren't voting for tax increases. They are just letting them expire, exactly as Obama wants. He will take the blame for this, and then people will have a real choice to make in 2016. Let the people who voted for bigger government pay the bill for bigger government.

CDC report: Youths make up 1 in 4 new HIV cases

November 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> Teens and young adults now account for more than a quarter of the new cases of HIV identified in the United States annually, and a clear majority of those cases involve young gay or bisexual men, the federal government said in a major new survey Tuesday.
>
> Of the nearly 48,000 new HIV cases identified in the United States in 2010, the latest year for which complete data are available, more than 12,000 involved teens and young adults, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found in its latest report.
>
> About 72 percent of these new HIV cases in younger adults occurred in young men who are gay or bisexual, according to the CDC report.
>
> […]According to the CDC figures, black youths accounted for the largest share of new HIV cases, with Hispanic youths and white youths accounting for about 20 percent each.
>
> About 1.1 million people are estimated to be living with HIV in the United States. Some 47,129 new HIV cases were identified in 2010.
>
> The CDC's new report, "Vital Signs: HIV Infection, Testing, Risk Behaviors Among Youths, United States," estimated that youths aged 13 to 24 accounted for 12,200, or 26 percent, of new HIV infections in 2010.
>
> Of these new cases, 7,000 were among black youths, 2,390 were among Hispanics, and 2,380 were among whites.
>
> About 8,800 cases were attributed to male-to-male sexual contact.
>
> HIV/AIDS is incurable, and an estimated 17,774 people with AIDS died in 2009. Some 619,000 persons have died of AIDS in the United States since the epidemic began in the early 1980s, according to the CDC.

Numbers like this should cause us to reconsider whether we should be encouraging behaviors that cause widespread disease and enormous health care costs. All we have to do is tell the truth – some things are morally wrong, and people should choose not do them. If they choose to do them anyway, let them pay the costs of their own decisions themselves. Why does government need to get involved to pay for some people's choices, and not others? If people want to make poor choices, let them do it. But let's not celebrate it or encourage it. Let's not pay for it, because that just means we'll get more of it.

William Lane Craig debates Peter Atkins: Does God Exist?

November 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that Apologetics 315 posted the video of a debate from the Reasonable Faith speaking tour in the UK:

This is a must-see debate. You will love this debate. LOVE IT. I LOVED THIS DEBATE.

Details:

> On Wednesday 26th October 2011 William Lane Craig debated Peter Atkins on the topic: *Does God Exist?* This debate took place at the University of Manchester as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig. The debate was chaired by Christopher Whitehead, Head of Chemistry School at the University. Post-debate discussion was moderated by Peter S Williams, Philosopher in Residence at the Damaris Trust, UK.

Dr. William Lane Craig:

> **William Lane Craig** (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich in 1984.

Dr. Peter Atkins:

> **Peter William Atkins** (born 10 August 1940) is a British chemist and former Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Lincoln College. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.
>
> Atkins studied chemistry at the University of Leicester, obtaining a bachelor's

> degree in chemistry, and – in 1964 – a PhD for research into electron spin resonance spectroscopy, and other aspects of theoretical chemistry. Atkins then took a postdoctoral position at the UCLA as aHarkness Fellow of the Commonwealth fund. He returned to Oxford in 1965 as fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, and lecturer in physical chemistry (later, professor of physical chemistry).

You can get the audio of the debate here, along with links to their previous debate from 1998. This debate is accessible and understandable to novice-level Christians.

I am happy when debates like this come out. I have friends who are Christians who doubt the importance of apologetics in evangelism, because they don't think that apologists can prove anything or win arguments. I have friends who are skeptical of using arguments that assume a 14-billion year old universe, because they think that the Big Bang is compatible with atheism (!). I have friends who think that philosophical arguments have no persuasive force. I have friends who think that nothing can be proven from history, beyond a reasonable doubt. I have co-workers who ask me whether anyone wins these debates. I think that this debate answers all of those questions.

This debate clearly shows why Christians should not shy away from studying science, philosophy and history. We will not discover anything that harms Christian theism by thinking logically and by looking at the evidence. To the contrary, it is the atheist who makes war on the progress of science, and who is forced to resist the clear experimental evidence, and to resort to baseless speculations and blind faith. If you want to see a good debate with an intelligent atheist, I recommend watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican instead. But if you want to see a really, really overwhelming defeat for atheism, watch this debate. It is very clear at the end of this debate why Richard Dawkins refused to debate William Lane Craig at Oxford.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING SPEECHES

I only had time to summarize the first two speeches. Keep in mind that Dr. Craig always shines in his rebuttals, and this debate is no different. So you'll want to watch those rebuttals. Dr. Atkins *literally* says in this debate in his first rebuttal "There was nothing here originally. There is nothing here now. But it is an interesting form of nothing which seems to be something." And the audience laughs nervously. This debate is like that. You will see a clear winner and clear loser in this debate. This fight is decided by knockout.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

1. the origin of the universe
2. the moral argument
3. the resurrection of Jesus

Peter Atkins opening speech:

1. Dr. Craig is stupid, lazy and evil:
– Dr. Craig's arguments are old: from the 11th century! Old arguments can't be true
– Dr. Craig is just asserting that "God did it" because he is lazy

– Dr. Craig feels pressured to agree with the theistic majority
– Dr. Craig needs a psychological crutch to comfort him
– Dr. Craig is fearful of death
– Dr. Craig is just wishing for an eternal life of bliss
– Dr. Craig is driven by his heart, and not by his head

2. Origin of the universe:
– Maybe the universe is eternal and has no beginning – we don't know
– Maybe mommy universes can give birth to daughter universes
– It is naive to think that a cause is needed to cause the creation of the universe from nothing
– Science is just about to show how it is possible that something appears out of nothing without cause
– Some scientists have already begun to speculate about about how something can come into being out of nothing
– Maybe nothing is not really nothing, but it is actually something
– It would be admitting defeat to say that God created the universe out of nothing

3. Fine-Tuning:
– It could be the case that the fundamental constants are not variable
– It could be the case that the fine-tuning of the cosmic constants is a happy accident
– It could be the case that there are billions of billions of unobservable universes that are not fine tuned
– It could be the case that the cosmic constants in these billions and billions of unobservable universes are all random so that some are fine-tuned
– Anyone who infers that an intelligence is the best explanation of a finely-tuned set of life-permitting cosmic constants is lazy

4. Purpose:
– Philosophers and theologians are stupid
– I don't think that there is purpose in the universe
– I think that the universe is more grand if there is no purpose, so there is no purpose

5. Miracles:
– I don't think that miracles happen
– The resurrection is a fabrication
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't exist
– It could be the case that Jesus wasn't really crucified
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't really die after being crucified
– It could be the case that the disciples stole his body
– It could be the case that the women went to the wrong hole in the ground
– the gospels are political propaganda written long after the events they are reporting on

6. Theodicy:
– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing humans to perform actions that result in suffering

– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing nature to cause suffering

7. Morality:

– customs and conventions emerges arbitrarily in different times and places based on an awareness of the consequences of actions, as well as various anecdotes and experiences

– these customs and conventions are decided based on the goal for survival, in much the same way as politeness and manners emerge for decorum and to avoid offense

– it is childish to presume that there is an umpire God who decides moral values and duties

8. Religious believers are stupid, lazy and evil:

– the notion of God has arisen because people are stupid and want to be comforted

– there are no arguments or evidences for belief in God

– people who believe in God do not think, but instead take refuge in incomprehensible nonsense

Greg Koukl explains how to be a consistent moral relativist

November 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The absolute easiest way to get into a good conversation with someone is to ask them what makes something right or wrong on their view. You have to be careful not to get into a fight about a particular moral issue, though, so you have to choose a clear-case example, not something controversial.

Just ask the person you want to engage two questions:

1. Is it it wrong to treat people badly just because of their skin color?
2. What makes it wrong?

Now, as I see it, there are only 3 possible answers to this question.

1. I personally prefer not to do that – it is wrong *for me.*
2. Our culture has evolved a set of customs that apply for us in this time and place, and that set of customs says that members of the society ought not to do that. It is wrong *for us, here and now.*
3. Humans are designed to act in a certain way, and part of that design is that we ought not to do that. Acting in line with our design allows us to flourish, (Aristotle's *eudaimonia*).

Response #1, is called "moral relativism". Response #2 is called "cultural relativism". Response #3 is my view: moral realism. I believe in a hierarchy of moral absolutes that exist objectively, because they are part of God's design for us and the universe.

I wanted to go over a paper by Greg Koukl from Stand to Reason, in which he critiques moral relativism. His paper is called "Seven Things You Can't Do as a Moral Relativist". First, let's see the list of sevent things.

1. You can't make moral judgments about other people's moral choices
2. You can't complain about God allowing evil and suffering
3. You can't blame people or praise people for their moral choices
4. You can't claim that any situation is unfair or unjust
5. You can't improve your morality
6. You can't have meaningful discussions about morality
7. You can't promote the obligation to be tolerant

You'll have to read the paper to see how he argues for these, but I wanted to say a brief word about number 1.

> **Rule #1: Relativists Can't Accuse Others of Wrong-Doing**
>
> Relativism makes it impossible to criticize the behavior of others, because

> relativism ultimately denies that there is such a thing as wrong- doing. In other words, if you believe that morality is a matter of personal definition, then you can't ever again judge the actions of others. Relativists can't even object on moral grounds to racism. After all, what sense can be made of the judgment "apartheid is wrong" when spoken by someone who doesn't believe in right and wrong? What justification is there to intervene? Certainly not human rights, for there are no such things as rights. Relativism is the ultimate pro-choice position because it accepts every personal choice—even the choice to be racist.

In moral relativism, what you ought to do is totally up to you. Morality is just like a lunch buffet – you pick what you like based on your personal preferences.

I remember one particular discussion I had with a non-Christian co-worker. Both she and her live-in boyfriend were moral relativists. They were fighting because she was angry about his not having (or wanting) a job, and he was angry because when he asked her for space, she immediately ran out and cheated on him.

What's interesting is that both of these people chose the other in order to escape being judged themselves. I think this happens a lot in relationships today. Both people don't want to be judged by the other person, but they both want to the other person to treat them well and to honor moral obligations. Isn't that interesting? I don't think that you can have something like marriage work when neither person takes moral obligations to the other person seriously.

Brian Auten interviews Jim Wallace of Please Convince Me

November 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this on Apologetics 315.

The MP3 file is here. (43 minutes)

Details from Brian's post:

> Today's interview is with Jim Wallace of PleaseConvinceMe.com and host of the PleaseConvinceMe Podcast. As a cold case detective, Jim brings a unique perspective to his approach to apologetics and a very down-to-earth logical style. In this interview, Jim talks about his approach to the evidence (inference to the best explanation), Tactics[image] and apologetics, debate vs. dialogue, pitfalls to apologists, and more.

Topics:

- Jim's background as an Catholic-raised atheist, and cold-case detective
- Jim believed in the progress of science to answer all the unresolved questions
- How did Jim become an atheist?
- Why didn't Jim respond to Christians witnessing to him without evidence?
- What approach worked to start him thinking about becoming a Christian?
- What did Jim do to grow as a Christian?
- How did Jim's police training help him to investigate Christianity?
- What investigative approach is used in his police work?
- Does "abductive reasoning" also work for investigating Christianity?
- What sort of activities did Jim get involved in in his community?
- How Jim's experience as a youth pastor convinced him of the value of apologetics
- How young people learn best by training for engagement with opponents
- How Jim takes his youth on mission trips to UC Berkeley to engage the students
- Is it possible to run an apologetics ministry part-time while keeping a day job?
- Do you have to be an expert in order to have an apologetics ministry?
- What books would Jim recommend to beginning apologists?
- How the popular apologist can have an even bigger impact than the scholar
- How the tactical approach is different for debates and conversations
- Jim's advice for Christians who are interested in learning apologetics
- How Christian apologist need to make sure they remain humble and open-minded
- How your audience determines how much you need to know from study

Jim's reason for becoming an atheist, (his mother was excluded from the Catholic church after her divorce), is one I have heard before. Without saying anything about the Catholic church's policy. I like the way he eventually came back to Christianity. No big emotional

crisis, just taking a sober second look at the evidence by himself, and talking with his Christian friends. I’m impressed with the way he has such a productive ministry, as well.

William Lane Craig lectures on Bart Ehrman and the historical Jesus

November 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture by Dr. Craig on Bart Ehrman's approach to the historical Jesus.

Clip 1 of 6:

Clip 2 of 6:

Clip 3 of 6:

Clip 4 of 6:

Clip 5 of 6:

Clip 6 of 6:

And then there is the debate between William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman, (transcript here), where you get to see it all in action in front of real students at a real university!

I also see that Brian Auten posted something here, but I don't know whether it is the audio from this lecture or something else entirely.

All my Christian readers – I hope you guys can all make a case for the resurrection that stands up. Bill's case stands up – in the university, against the toughest opponents. Will you stand up for Jesus, too?

Further study

The top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Three debates where you can see this play out:

- Craig Evans and Bart Ehrman
- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Extra stuff

Stand to Reason has a post featuring Mike Licona discussing Ehrman.

A simple explanation of middle knowledge by Dr. Craig Blomberg

December 1, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is from Denver Seminary, where Dr. Blomberg and Dr. Groothuis both teach.

Excerpt:

> Middle knowledge is a proposed solution to predestination vs. free will, to divine sovereignty and human responsibility, going all the way back to the medieval Jesuit priest Molina (so sometimes it's also called Molinism).
>
> Classic Calvinists, properly concerned to safeguard divine sovereignty, have typically rejected any theological system that bases God's predestining activity on the basis merely of his foreknowledge of how humans will respond to the gospel, because they're convinced that makes human free choice the ultimate determiner. Romans 8:29, of course, *does*base predestination on God's foreknowledge, but the Calvinist typically argues that the Greek *prōginoskō* ("foreknow") there begins already to shade over into the idea of election because in the Old Testament the Hebrew *yādā'* ("know") often appears roughly synonymous with "choose." That would explain why Paul doesn't say just that those whom God foreknew he also predestined, which could be seen as tautologous, but "predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son."
>
> Classic Arminians and Wesleyans, properly concerned to safeguard human freedom and accountability, have typically rejected any theological system that bases God's predestining activity on the basis merely of his gratuitous election, because they're convinced that makes human free choice ultimately a chimera. They often point out that *prōginoskō* is not the same verb as just *ginoskō* (which the LXX uses to translate *yādā'* and that in Greek it most commonly means simple knowledge in advance. Thus predestination *is* based on God's foreknowledge.
>
> Middle knowledge argues for both! If open theism in recent years has diminished divine omniscience more than orthodoxy has classically permitted, middle knowledge magnifies or expands God's omniscience beyond what most people have thought about. But it makes good sense: middle knowledge claims that God's perfect, infinite knowledge must be able to know not only what sentient creatures *will* freely choose in all situations in their lives but what everyone *would* do in every possible situation that they could confront. Even more magnificently, divine and unlimited knowledge must be able to discern what all possibly created beings would do in all possible situations (or, as philosophers like to say, all possible worlds).
>
> So far so good, I hope. Now here's the rub. Because there will only ever have been a finite number of humans created before God brings this world as we know

> it to an end, that means there remain countless uncreated beings that he could have chosen to create but didn't. So God's very choice to create you and me and not various other people he could have is an act of his sovereign election utterly prior to our existence. Calvinists should be happy. But it is based on knowing what we will and would do in all actual and all possible situations. Arminians should be happy. Thus, William Lane Craig in *The Only Wise God* defends this view from a libertarian Arminian perspective; Alvin Plantinga in a chapel talk at Denver Seminary years ago did the same from a libertarian Calvinist perspective, and Terrance Tiessen in *Providence and Prayer* does so from a compatibilist Calvinist perspective.

Somebody in the comments mentions that even Paul Helm has written positively about middle knowledge. Middle Knowledge shows what is going on under the hood of classical Calvinism, which affirms both the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Middle knowledge explains how God can achieve both goals simultaneously.

The apostle Paul has this to say in Acts 17:22-31:

> 22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.
> 23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ' N D ' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.
> 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;
> 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;
> 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, **having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,**
> **27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;**
> 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'
> 29 "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.
> 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,
> 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

In this research paper, Craig explains in detail what middle knowledge is, and how it works to resolve problems, like "what about those who have never heard of Jesus?" and "how can we reconcile divine sovereignty and human freedom and responsibility?" Highly

recommended tool for your tool chest.

$100,000 grant to teach young girls to talk to boyfriends about condoms

December 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Washington Examiner reports.

Excerpt:

> The administration is funding a $100,000 study of pregnant and "at-risk" 14-17-year-old girls on probation in Houston, Texas, to determine ways to help them choose safer lifestyles and avoid pregnancy, including better "condom negotiation" tactics.
>
> The National Institutes of Health, part of the Health and Human Services Department, is providing a University of Houston researcher the money because of the lack of study of female teen juveniles in trouble with the law.
>
> The school said the study, "Choices – Teen: A Bundled Risk Reduction Intervention for Juvenile Justice Females," will include 30 at-risk girls, ages 14-17, on intensive probation with the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department.
>
> The goal, said the school, is to determine if intervention programs will help the kids make better life decisions.
>
> According to Danielle Parish, the assistant professor at the school's Graduate College of Social Work who is conducting the NIH-funded effort, one of the big problems young girls need to learn is how to talk their boyfriends into using condoms.

Here's the professor's web page. This is where "stimulus" spending goes. It's taking money from workers and their employers to give it to social work professors who want to normalize and facilitate premarital sex.

Government-run health care: starving sick babies and children to death

December 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a scary story from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dan Mitchell)

Excerpt:

> Now sick babies go on death pathway: Doctor's haunting testimony reveals how children are put on end-of-life plan
>
> - Practice of withdrawing food and fluid by tube being used on young patients
> - Doctor admits starving and dehydrating ten babies to death in neonatal unit
> - Liverpool Care Pathway subject of independent inquiry ordered by ministers
> - Investigation, including child patients, will look at whether cash payments to hospitals to hit death pathway targets have influenced doctors' decisions
>
> Sick children are being discharged from NHS hospitals to die at home or in hospices on controversial 'death pathways'.
>
> Until now, end of life regime the Liverpool Care Pathway was thought to have involved only elderly and terminally-ill adults.
>
> But the Mail can reveal the practice of withdrawing food and fluid by tube is being used on young patients as well as severely disabled newborn babies.
>
> One doctor has admitted starving and dehydrating ten babies to death in the neonatal unit of one hospital alone.
>
> Writing in a leading medical journal, the physician revealed the process can take an average of ten days during which a baby becomes 'smaller and shrunken'.
>
> The LCP – on which 130,000 elderly and terminally-ill adult patients die each year – is now the subject of an independent inquiry ordered by ministers.
>
> The investigation, which will include child patients, will look at whether cash payments to hospitals to hit death pathway targets have influenced doctors' decisions.

Read the whole thing, but here's a snip:

> Bernadette Lloyd, a hospice paediatric nurse, has written to the Cabinet Office and the Department of Health to criticise the use of death pathways for children.
>
> She said: 'The parents feel coerced, at a very traumatic time, into agreeing that this is correct for their child whom they are told by doctors has only has a few days to live. It is very difficult to predict death. I have seen a "reasonable" number of children recover after being taken off the pathway.
>
> 'I have also seen children die in terrible thirst because fluids are withdrawn from

> them until they die.
>
> ‘I witnessed a 14 year-old boy with cancer die with his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth when doctors refused to give him liquids by tube. His death was agonising for him, and for us nurses to watch. This is euthanasia by the backdoor.’

This is what Democrats believe about health care. When the government runs health care, health stops being about curing sickness and starts being about buying votes. Suddenly, free abortions, breast enlargements, in vitro fertilization, drugs to calm down fatherless children, contraception, HIV/AIDS all become priorities. There are some people out there who want government to pay for the health effects of their own immoral / reckless choices, and that’s what government-run health care is really about. Enabling certain lifestyles that require health care subsidies so those people can live “as good as” traditional morality lifestyles. It’s interesting to note that in countries that have government-run health care, like Canada, doctors and nurses are regularly forced to act against their consciences to murder rather than cure. It’s no surprise because socialists in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany have essentially the same view of conscience as modern leftists like the Democrat Party.

There isn’t enough money for us to pay people to voluntarily incur health care costs (and other social costs) with their immoral / irresponsible choices. But that’s exactly what happens when you make everything “health care” and then make it “free” in order to buy votes from people like Sandra Fluke. What Democrats do is look for groups that need subsidies or validation and they offer it to them with taxpayer money and laws prohibiting dissent. They essentially take the complete anti-freedom point of view on every question. They hate liberty, and love power. The want to control others and to be adored by those who depend on their benevolent redistribution of other people’s money.

Related posts

- Public health care working as designed in the UK and Canada
- NHS paying millions to hospitals to deny food and fluids to end-of-life patients
- UK socialism in action: patients waiting on trolleys for over 50 hours
- NHS makes patients wait unnecessarily in order to avoid “raising expectations”
- NHS refuses to treat woman who is starving to death
- Former NHS hospital director dies on surgery waiting list
- Women gives birth after NHS nurses send her home from hospital
- UK patients denied treatment as “public option” system makes cutbacks
- How do governments control costs in a single-payer health care systems?
- NHS patients giving birth in waiting rooms
- What does universal health care really mean?
- How well is government-run health care working out in the UK?
- British national health care system prepares to cut 20 billion dollars
- NHS kills a man’s wife by delaying cancer treatment for 7 months
- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?

- Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water
- How government-run health care leads to euthanasia
- NHS employees leapfrog their own waiting lists to access private health care
- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
- The deadly consequences of rationing health care
- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care
- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- NHS refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

Study in feminist journal calls chivalry and gentlemanly behavior “dangerous”

December 2, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Stuart Schneiderman reports on the study.

Excerpt:

> With heavy heart we turn to Kathleen Connelly and Martin Heesacker’s article, entitled: “Why Is Benevolent Sexism Appealing?” Co-authored by a graduate student and a professor at the University of Florida, is has been published by a scholarly Journal called the *Psychology of Women Quarterly*.
>
> Here is how the PWQ describes itself:
>
> *Psychology of Women Quarterly (PWQ) is a feminist, scientific, peer-reviewed journal that publishes empirical research, critical reviews and theoretical articles that advance a field of inquiry, brief reports on timely topics, teaching briefs, and invited book reviews related to the psychology of women and gender.*

Here is a snip from the abstract of the study:

> Previous research suggests that benevolent sexism is an ideology that perpetuates gender inequality.
>
> […]The results imply that although benevolent sexism perpetuates inequality at the structural level, it might offer some benefits at the personal level. **Thus, our findings reinforce the dangerous nature of benevolent sexism and emphasize the need for interventions to reduce its prevalence.**

Got that? Treating men and women differently in good ways is “dangerous” even though it has good effects. So no more giving women flowers, and no more giving men respect.

Dr. Schneiderman comments:

> Connelly/Heesacker have discovered that when men behave like gentlemen toward women it produces “life satisfaction” for both parties.
>
> They conclude that gentlemanly behavior is “dangerous” and that we must intervene “to reduce its prevalence.”
>
> By their pseudo-reasoning, the positive benefits that accrue to men and women when men act like gentlemen provide a false sense of satisfaction that undermines the feminist revolution.
>
> Since I did not spring for the $25.00 fee to read the article, I can only surmise that by benevolent sexism the authors mean such simple courtesies as asking a woman out on a date, paying for her, holding the door for her, helping her with her coat, accompanying her home and so on.
>
> This argument is not new. It came in with second wave feminism. It was intended

> to assert women's independence and autonomy. It resulted in more men treating more women discourteously and disrespectfully.
>
> From a feminist perspective, if a man acted like a gentleman, a woman was expected to act like a lady. This was a bad thing, a betrayal of a woman's allegiance to the feminist cult.
>
> Feminists believed that gentlemanly behavior signified that women were the weaker sex, needing male protection.
>
> They also believed that when a man paid for dinner and a show a woman felt obligated to repay the favor with her "favors."
>
> From a feminist perspective it's better for women to give it away for free because then she will not feel that she is being bought.
>
> As I say, feminists have been rebelling against "benevolent sexism" for around four decades now.
>
> As a result, women are more likely to be abused. They are more likely to be used for sex. They are less likely to be involved in sustained relationships.
>
> Men have been excoriated for acting courteously and politely, lest they be accused of being patronizing, so they have concluded that they need to act badly toward women.
>
> Men concluded that they could further the revolutionary feminist cause by being revolting.
>
> When feminism decided that courtship and even dating was a relic of a bygone age, all the rude, lewd, crude dudes rejoiced.
>
> Today, Connelly and Heesacker have their backs.

Here's a nice video showing a traditional marriage:

See those traditional sex roles? Feminists think we should intervene to reduce its prevalence because it's "dangerous".

I've written before about how feminists push women into premarital recreational sex because they want to undermine sexist notions like chivalry, courtship, marriage and stay-at-home motherhood. Their number one target is the traditional family, where the husband works and the wife stays home and raises the children. They know that if they can get women to binge-drink and hook-up with a bunch of men, then marriage will die. And that's their goal. That's what it means to be a feminist – act promiscuously and depend on the government for free condoms, free abortions and single mother welfare. Government replaces men.

Related posts

- Why do about 70% of single / divorced / unmarried women vote Democrat?
- New study: brain of child neglected by mother is smaller and underdeveloped
- Traditional marriage is a threat to the values of single women

- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- Should Christian men marry? What's the worst that could happen?
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the "hook-up" culture on campus
- How feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- How feminism's war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

John Boehner on Fox News Sunday discussing the fiscal cliff

December 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's time for our weekly update on the fiscal cliff.

Full text:

> On *Fox News Sunday*, Speaker John Boehner said Republicans have offered a balanced approach to averting the fiscal cliff but the president is "not being serious about coming to an agreement." Boehner says the White House is holding tax increases over the heads of the middle class while demanding more spending and tax rate hikes that will hurt small businesses.
>
> Here are some of the highlights:
>
> **Boehner: President Obama' s Fiscal Cliff Offer is "Nonsense," a "Non-Serious Proposal":**
>
> "A non-serious proposal. The president was asking for $1.6 trillion worth of, uh, new revenue over 10 years, twice as much as he's been asking for in public. He has stimulus spending in here that exceeded the amount of new cuts that he was willing to consider. It was not a serious offer. … I looked at [Secretary Geithner] and I said, 'you can't be serious?' … You know, we've got several weeks between Election Day and the end of the year. And, uh — and three of those way — weeks have been wasted, uh, with the — with this nonsense."
>
> **Boehner: President Obama Asked for More New Spending Than Spending Cuts:**
>
> "We've put a serious offer on the table by putting revenues up there to try to get this question resolved. But the White House has responded with virtually nothing. They have actually asked for more revenue than they've been — been asking for the whole entire time. … And all of this new stimulus spending would literally be more than the spending cuts that he was willing to put on the table. … Look at the fact that they put $400 billion worth of unspecified cuts up that they'd be willing to talk about, but yet, at the same time, that's over $400 billion over 10 years. Uh, while he wants over $400 billion in new stimulus spending. And this is — this is — it's a non-serious proposal."
>
> **Boehner: What Will President Obama Do With $1.6 Trillion? Spend It!**
>
> "I mean think about the — the proposal we got from the president. If we gave the president $1.6 trillion of new money, what do you think he'd do with it? He's going to spend it. It's what Washington does. … They'll spend it."
>
> **Boehner: Raising Tax Rates Will Hurt Small Businesses and Destroy Jobs**:
>
> "Now, listen, I believe that raising tax rates hurts our economy, hurts the

> prospects for more jobs in our country. And I realize that the president may disagree. But the fact is, is that if there's another way to get revenue, uh, from upper income Americans, that doesn't hurt our economy, then why wouldn't we consider it?"
>
> **Boehner: Spending Cuts & Reforms Must Exceed Any Increase in the Debt Limit**:
>
> "Forever. Silliness. Congress is never going to give up this power. I've made it clear to the president that every time we get to the debt limit, we need cuts and reforms that are greater than the increase in the debt limit. It's the only way to leverage the political process to produce more change than what it would if left alone.
>
> **Boehner: Going Over the Fiscal Cliff Will Hurt Our Economy, Is Not Fair to the American People**:
>
> "[T]his isn't an issue about Democrats and Republicans. My goodness, this is about our country. And we get — ought to get serious about dealing with the problems at the end of the year. And we need to get serious about our deficit and our debt, uh, that are burying our children's future. … [G]oing over the cliff will hurt our economy, will hurt job creation in our country. It's not fair to the American people. … This agreement should come sooner rather than later, because just the threat of the fiscal cliff is already hurting our economy."

That's where the Republicans stand. They did offer to tax the rich by capping tax deductions, so that the very wealthy would pay more in taxes. But Obama turned down that offer. That was a solid offer, and Obama turned it down.

Right now, I am just sick of the American people who re-elected this spendthrift. I want the Republicans to let all the tax cuts expire. It will be good for the American people as a whole to see the importance of not re-electing an ignorant fool. Maybe we have to hit the bottom of how much we can borrow before the people who voted for "Obamaphones" will feel the effects of their economic ignorance.

Democrats push for school quotas and speech codes in defense bill amendment

December 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Washington D.C. lawyer Hans Bader explains at College Insurrection blog.

Excerpt:

> Suing schools and colleges has nothing to do with supporting our troops.

> But that didn't stop Senators from seeking to add an amendment, SA 3215, to the 2013 Defense Authorization bill on Thursday, containing provisions that would overturn two Supreme Court rulings in order to promote such lawsuits. The amendment, proposed by Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Al Franken (D-Minn.), Bernie Sanders (Vt.) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), would dramatically expand the reach of two federal statutes, Title VI and Title IX, to allow colleges, schools, and recipients of federal funds to be sued for "disparate impact."

Disparate impact is what people call school policies that have no motive to discriminate, but end up affecting some groups more than others. For example, standardized tests for mathematics have nothing to do with race, but some racial groups perform better than others. The Democrats think that this is grounds for a lawsuit, apparently.

More:

> The amendment, backed by trial lawyers, would also allow colleges, schools, and other institutions to be sued for unlimited punitive damages.
>
> […]The specter of liability for disparate impact could make schools get rid of standardized tests designed to ensure that students are really learning, and detect failing schools, since all but the easiest standardized tests arguably have a racially "disparate impact."
>
> It could also result in racial quotas in school discipline. The Obama Administration has alreadypressured some school districts to adopt *de facto* racial quotas in school discipline (school districts are reluctant to defy the Administration's legally-dubious demands lest it cut off their federal funds), requiring even liberal school districts that already bend over backwards not to suspend disruptive black students to cut their suspension rates, and spend millions of dollars to comply with bureaucratic dictates imposed by the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights, where I used to work.
>
> […]Expanding Title VI liability and punitive damages could also lead to more campus speech codes, as colleges, terrified of racial harassment liability under Title VI, clamp down on any speech that might *conceivably* contribute to what is perceived as a racially hostile learning environment.

Hans explains why these laws cause schools and universities to create “speech codes”:

> But schools persist in imposing overbroad harassment policies, both because they would rather be sued for First Amendment violations than for racial or sexual harassment… and because private colleges are not directly subject to the First Amendment at all, but can be sued for racial and sexual harassment.
>
> […][T]o avoid liability, private colleges in particular may clamp down on campus speech about racial and sexual issues like affirmative action and feminism, lest such speech provide potential “building blocks” of a hostile environment claim under the “totality of circumstances” test.

Trial lawyers are one of the groups that donate a lot of money to Democrats, so naturally they will be happy with any law that makes more business for them.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

December 3, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

If you want to hear Dr. Craig correct Dr. Dacey on the misquote during their second

debate, you can click here for the audio.

Crime rates in Chicago and DC drop after gun control laws are struck down

December 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News – what happens to crime rates when gun control laws are repealed?

Excerpt:

> Murder and violent crime rates were supposed to soar after the Supreme Court struck down gun control laws in Chicago and Washington, D.C.
>
> Politicians predicted disaster. "More handguns in the District of Columbia will only lead to more handgun violence," Washington's Mayor Adrian Fenty warned the day the court made its decision.
>
> Chicago's Mayor Daley predicted that we would "go back to the Old West, you have a gun and I have a gun and we'll settle it in the streets…"
>
> The New York Times even editorialized this month about the Supreme Court's "unwise" decision that there is a right for people "to keep guns in the home."
>
> But Armageddon never happened. Newly released data for Chicago shows that, as in Washington, murder and gun crime rates didn't rise after the bans were eliminated — they plummeted. They have fallen much more than the national crime rate.
>
> Not surprisingly, the national media have been completely silent about this news.
>
> One can only imagine the coverage if crime rates had risen. In the first six months of this year, there were 14% fewer murders in Chicago compared to the first six months of last year – back when owning handguns was illegal. It was the largest drop in Chicago's murder rate since the handgun ban went into effect in 1982.
>
> Meanwhile, the other four most populous cities saw a total drop at the same time of only 6 percent.
>
> Similarly, in the year after the 2008 "Heller" decision, the murder rate fell two-and-a-half times faster in Washington than in the rest of the country.
>
> It also fell more than three as fast as in other cities that are close to Washington's size. And murders in Washington have continued to fall.
>
> If you compare the first six months of this year to the first six months of 2008, the same time immediately preceding the Supreme Court's late June "Heller" decision, murders have now fallen by thirty-four percent.
>
> Gun crimes also fell more than non-gun crimes.
>
> Robberies with guns fell by 25%, while robberies without guns have fallen by eight percent. Assaults with guns fell by 37%, while assaults without guns fell by 12%.

> Just as with right-to-carry laws, when law-abiding citizens have guns some criminals stop carrying theirs.

Read the whole thing, there are more lovely facts in there. If you ever need to debate this, I recommend buying these academic studies published by the University of Chicago Press and by Harvard University Press. The former shows how crime rates dropped in the USA when Americans rescinded gun control laws, and the latter shows how crime rates rose in the UK when the British strengthened their gun control laws. Sometimes is good to have the data handy.

Let's learn about the issue from the news

ABC News explains in this short 6-minute clip:

And here is a longer 44-minute show from Fox Business: (featuring a debate between economist John Lott and the Brady Campaign spokesman)

There are other debates in the show as well.

Now watch a 3-on-3 debate on gun control

This debate is in 13 parts, featuring the two of the *best* proponents of legal firearm ownership – John Lott and Gary Kleck. The real sparks fly during the Q&A, so don't miss that. (If you can't watch the debate, then you can read this post and this post instead).

Here's part 1, which contains the introduction.

Here are the remaining speeches:

- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John R. Lott (2 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: R Gil Kerlikowske (3 **of 13**)
- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Stephen Halbrooke (4 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: John J Donohue III (5 **of 13**)
- Pro-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Gary Kleck (6 **of 13**)
- Anti-firearm: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Paul Helmke (7 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 1 (8 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 2 (9 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 3: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 3 (10 **of 13**)
- Q&A Part 4: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate**: Q&A Part 4 (11 **of 13**)
- Conclusions Part 1: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 1 (12 **of 13**)
- Conclusions Part 2: **Guns Reduce Crime Debate** Closing Arguments Part 2 (12 **of 13**)

This is everything you need to know about whether legal ownership of firearms reduces crime.

Related posts

- Police threatened to charge man who defended his wife with attempted murder
- Couple arrested for using legally-owned gun to defend home from burglars

- Armed bystander stops stabbing outside school
- Obama campaign contributor and gun control advocate ran Fast and Furious
- If you defend your home from armed intruders in the UK, you get arrested
- UK family arrested for defending their home from burglar
- Police warn UK woman for scaring away burglars with kitchen knife
- 61-year-old British man convicted for cutting up fruit with a Swiss Army knife
- Could tougher gun control laws lower the violent crime rate?
- Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home
- Crime rates in Chicago and DC drop after gun control laws are struck down
- Do gun control laws cause crime rates to go down?
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple victim shootings?
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Do guns reduce crime? Watch this debate and hear both sides
- Liberal MSNBC says that more legal firearm ownership reduces crime rates
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Formal debate on gun control featuring John Lott and Gary Kleck
- Tom Sowell on gun control and judicial activism
- Grandmother jailed for five years for owning family heirloom handgun
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple-victim public shootings in Europe?
- Understanding how concealed carry laws save lives
- Why do people favor legal private ownership and concealed carry of handguns?

Mark Steyn: Americans must choose between low taxes and big government

December 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that John Hawkins at Right Wing News had come up with his list of the top conservative commentators, and guess who is at the top of the list? Canadian writer Mark Steyn.

Here's Mark Steyn writing in Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> According to the most recent (2009) OECD statistics: Government expenditures per person in France, $18,866.00; in the U.S., $19,266.00. That's adjusted for purchasing-power parity, and yes, no comparison is perfect, but did you ever think the difference between America and the cheese-eating surrender monkeys would come down to quibbling over the fine print?
>
> In that sense, the federal debt might be better understood as an American Self-Delusion Index, measuring the ever-widening gap between the national mythology (a republic of limited government and self-reliant citizens) and the reality (a 21st century cradle-to-grave nanny state in which Democrats boast, "Government is the only thing we do together").
>
> Generally speaking, functioning societies make good-faith efforts to raise what they spend, subject to fluctuations in economic fortune: Government spending in Australia is 33.1% of GDP, and tax revenues are 27.1%. Likewise, government spending in Norway is 46.4% and revenues are 41% — a shortfall, but in the ballpark. Government spending in the U.S. is 42.2%, but revenues are 24% — the widest spending/taxing gulf in any major economy.
>
> So the agonizing over our annual trillion-plus deficits overlooks the obvious solution: Given that we're spending like Norwegians, why don't we just pay Norwegian tax rates? No danger of that. If Jews earn like Episcopalians but vote like Puerto Ricans, Americans are taxed like Puerto Ricans but vote like Scandinavians.
>
> We already have a more severely redistributive taxation system than Europe in which the wealthiest 20% of Americans pay 70% of income tax while the poorest 20% shoulder just three-fifths of 1%. By comparison, the Norwegian tax burden is relatively equitably distributed.
>
> Yet Obama now wishes "the rich" to pay their "fair share" — presumably 80% or 90%. After all, as Warren Buffett pointed out in the New York Times last week, the Forbes 400 richest Americans have a combined wealth of $1.7 trillion. That sounds a lot, and once upon a time it was. But today, if you confiscated every penny the Forbes 400 have, it would be enough to cover just over one year's

> federal deficit. And after that you're back to square one.
>
> It's not that "the rich" aren't paying their "fair share," it's that America isn't. A majority of the electorate has voted itself a size of government it's not willing to pay for.
>
> […]So given that the ruling party will not permit spending cuts, what should Republicans do? If I were John Boehner, I'd say: "Clearly there's no mandate for small government in the election results. So, if you milquetoast pantywaist sad-sack excuses for the sorriest bunch of so-called Americans who ever lived want to vote for Swede-sized statism, it's time to pony up."

And this view is shared by many conservative commentators.

Marc Thiessen wants the Republicans to let the Bush tax cuts expire for *everyone:*

> During the campaign, President Obama repeatedly told us how he wants to "go back to the income tax rates we were paying under Bill Clinton — back when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and plenty of millionaires to boot." Well if the Clinton tax rates were so great, let's go back to all of the Clinton rates and relive the booming '90s.
>
> At least going back to the Clinton rates would put more people on the tax rolls, and give more Americans a stake in constraining government spending. It would also force all Americans — including the middle class — to pay for growing government services, instead of borrowing the money from China and passing the costs on to the next generation.
>
> Americans had a choice this November, and they voted for bigger government. Rather shielding voters from the consequences of their decisions, let them pay for it.

And now he's being backed up by Charles Krauthammer:

> Why are the Republicans playing along? Because it is assumed that Obama has the upper hand. Unless Republicans acquiesce and get the best deal they can right now, tax rates will rise across the board on Jan. 1, and the GOP will be left without any bargaining chips.
>
> But what about Obama? If we all cliff-dive, he gets to preside over yet another recession. It will wreck his second term. Sure, Republicans will get blamed. But Obama is never running again. He cares about his legacy. You think he wants a second term with a double-dip recession, 9 percent unemployment and a totally gridlocked Congress? Republicans have to stop playing as if they have no cards.
>
> Obama is claiming an electoral mandate to raise taxes on the top 2 percent. Perhaps, but remember those incessant campaign ads promising a return to the economic nirvana of the Clinton years? Well, George W. Bush cut rates across the board, not just for the top 2 percent. Going back to the Clinton rates means middle-class tax hikes that yield four times the revenue that you get from just

> the rich.
>
> So give Obama the full Clinton. Let him live with that. And with what also lies on the other side of the cliff: 28 million Americans newly subject to the ruinous alternative minimum tax.
>
> Republicans must stop acting like supplicants. If Obama so loves those Clinton rates, Republicans should say: Then go over the cliff and have them all.

That’s my view as well. Americans voted for big government, and now we must pay for it. Maybe next time, we will put the remote control down and pay attention to the issues.

N.T. Wright lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

December 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's the video:

For those who cannot see the video, here is a written version of the lecture that Wright gave on the resurrection. And please note that I do not endorse anything that N.T. Wright says on any topic outside of history. History is his field of expertise, and I think he has no authority outside of the field of history.

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable*apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the

> future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an invented exaltation was already available to do the job.
3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.

5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

Department of Education investigates school over Bible and homosexuality comments

December 4, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Christian Post, a story about how far the secular left will go to censor anyone who makes them feel bad.

Excerpt:

> A federal investigation has begun in an Alabama school district after a Junior ROTC instructor allegedly expressed his belief that the Bible does not support the homosexual lifestyle during class.
>
> The U.S. Department of Education recently sent a letter to Huntsville City Schools Superintendent Casey Wardynski, informing him that the department will be looking into the incident that occurred in April at Grissom High School.
>
> A female student in the class was offended after the instructor, 1st Sgt. Lynn Vanzandt, expressed his beliefs about same-sex relationships. The 15-year-old student and her mother, Mia Gonzales, then contacted a local gay advocacy group, GLBT Advocacy and Youth Services, which complained to the school on the student's behalf.
>
> "My first thought was, 'What if there was a gay student in that class that looked up to that instructor?'" Gonzales told AL.com in August. "I'm not arguing with what people believe. But what if this one student would have committed suicide? That was a concern for me."
>
> […]In May an attorney from the Freedom From Religion Foundation, a Wisconsin-based atheist organization, also emailed the district's superintendent to complain about the situation. The email says Vanzandt "bullied" students and "preached" his beliefs to them, and claims at least one student left the class in tears.
>
> It also acknowledges that Vanzandt apologized to students, but says an apology isn't enough.

Got that? If you disagree with homosexuality, then you are bullying someone who might feel so bad that they commit suicide. Therefore, you need to be intimidated and silenced so that you don't offend anyone by disagreeing with their view.

Poll: More people believe in an afterlife than believe in God

December 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace tweeted this study from the Institute of Education at the University of London.

Excerpt:

> More people may believe in an afterlife than believe in God, according to a nation-wide survey of Britons born in 1970.
>
> Almost half – 49 per cent – of those surveyed earlier this year by the Institute of Education, University of London believe that there is 'definitely' or 'probably' life after death. Only 31 per cent have said that they believe in God, either without doubts (13 per cent) or with some doubts (18 per cent).
>
> Researchers at the IOE's Centre for Longitudinal Studies are canvassing more than 9,000 members of the 1970 British Cohort Study. The study, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, is following a group of people born in England, Scotland and Wales in spring 1970. It collects detailed information on many aspects of people's lives including health, wellbeing, and financial circumstances. The latest survey, at age 42, is being carried out between May and December.
>
> While members of the 1970 cohort have been asked about religion at earlier points in their lives, the current survey is the first to make the important distinction between religious upbringing, affiliation, practice and belief.
>
> An analysis of the first 2,197 responses shows that 32 per cent of interviewees were not brought up in any particular religion, and an equal number said they were raised in the Church of England. Fourteen per cent said they grew up as Christian (no denomination) and ten per cent as Roman Catholic.
>
> However, when asked if they currently see themselves as belonging to a particular religion, 47 per cent said no, followed by 21 per cent who said the Church of England. Fifteen per cent felt they were Christian (no denomination) and seven per cent said they were Roman Catholic.
>
> Seventy-four per cent of respondents reported never or rarely attending religious services, followed by 16 per cent who attend services less than once a month. Seven per cent attend services once a week or more.

I'm pretty sure that you need to have a God there if there is an afterlife, because if there is no God, then there is no grounding for souls that can survive the death of the body. I think that what's going on here is that people like the idea of having an afterlife, but they don't like the idea of being accountable to God. That's why they hold two mutually

incompatible beliefs.

I think that this study tells us a very important thing about how people view religion. Somehow, people have gotten the mistaken impression that religion is like choosing what to eat or what to wear. You choose what you like. You choose what makes your family and friends like you. But imagine if doctors, engineers and scientists operated like that. It strikes me as psychotic to choose a religion based on your feelings. Religion, at the minimum, is a set of propositions about the way the world is. To believe in a religion is to accept it as true, and to take on the epistemic and moral obligations – to know true things and to do right things. To anyone who denies that religion is like any other form of knowledge, then you need to prove that. In my own religion, we have testable claims that can be evaluated using the methods of logic, history and science.

You know this study reminds me of a formative experience I had when I was younger. I remember talking to a project manager when I was a brand new software engineer, and her telling me that she had grown up Baptist but it was “too strict” so she became an atheist. Also, God had allowed her to fall off her bicycle when she was young and she chipped her teeth. So she knew there couldn’t possibly be a loving God. But anyway, she asked me if I believed in souls for animals. I surveyed a few philosophers and concluded with J.P. Moreland’s view, that animals don’t have souls. She said that her dog was going to Heaven when she died. I told her, look I would like it if my cockatiel went to Heaven (he is was about 8 then, and is 24 now) but I have to accept what is true. She looked at me like I was crazy to say such a mean thing. I will never forget that conversation. Back then, I had limited exposure to church and didn’t realize that most Christians are exactly like her. We really need to stop with the postmodern, relativism, universalism and get back to reason and evidence.

The Great Global Warming Swindle Channel 4 documentary

December 5, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Details:

> The film, made by British television producer Martin Durkin, presents scientists, economists, politicians, writers, and others who dispute the scientific consensus regarding anthropogenic global warming.
>
> The film's basic premise is that the current scientific opinion on the anthropogenic causes of global warming has numerous scientific flaws, and that vested monetary interests in the scientific establishment and the media discourage the public and the scientific community from acknowledging or even debating this. The film asserts that the publicised scientific consensus is the product of a "global warming activist industry" driven by a desire for research funding. Other culprits, according to the film, are Western environmentalists promoting expensive solar and wind power over cheap fossil fuels in Africa, resulting in African countries being held back from industrialising.
>
> The film won best documentary at the 2007 Io Isabella International Film Week.
>
> A number of academics, environmentalists, think-tank consultants and writers are interviewed in the film in support of its various assertions. They include the Canadian environmentalist Patrick Moore, former member of Greenpeace but for the past 21 years a critic of the organisation; Richard Lindzen, professor of meteorology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Patrick Michaels, Research Professor of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia; Nigel Calder, editor of New Scientist from 1962 to 1966; John Christy, professor and director of the Earth System Science Center at University of Alabama; Paul Reiter of the Pasteur Institute; former British Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson; and Piers Corbyn, a British weather forecaster.

Famous economist Thomas Sowell has written about the documentary in National Review. He likes it:

> Distinguished scientists specializing in climate and climate-related fields talk in plain English and present readily understood graphs showing what a crock the current global-warming hysteria is.
>
> […]There is no question that the globe is warming but it has warmed and cooled before, and is not as warm today as it was some centuries ago, before there were any automobiles and before there was as much burning of fossil fuels as today.
>
> None of the dire things predicted today happened then.

> The documentary goes into some of the many factors that have caused the earth to warm and cool for centuries, including changes in activities on the sun, 93 million miles away and wholly beyond the jurisdiction of the Kyoto treaty.
>
> According to these climate scientists, human activities have very little effect on the climate, compared to many other factors, from volcanoes to clouds.
>
> These climate scientists likewise debunk the mathematical models that have been used to hype global-warming hysteria, even though hard evidence stretching back over centuries contradicts these models.

Take a look. I liked this documentary so much that I purchased the DVD of it.

Related posts

- New study: Earth was warmer 1000 years ago, during Medieval Warming Period
- New study: there has been no global warming since 1997
- Global warming: 2000 new record low temperatures in October
- New study: global warming skeptics know more about science than alarmists
- New study finds that cosmic rays and the sun cause global warming
- Drowning polar bears scientist being investigated for misconduct
- NASA data shows that atmosphere will trap far less heat than UN predicted
- Global warmist Phil Jones admits there’s been no global warming since 1995
- Chairman of UN’s IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s
- Polar bear populations are not decreasing now
- Oceans are not warming now
- Polar ice caps are not melting now

Will raising taxes on the rich help the economy and create more jobs?

December 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The presidents of my two favorite think tanks, Arthur Brooks (AEI) and Edwin Feulner (Heritage) explain in this USA Today editorial.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> First, there is no evidence that tax increases will actually solve our troubles. On the contrary, years of data from around the world show that when nations try to solve a fiscal crisis primarily by raising tax revenues, they tend to fail. In contrast, fiscal approaches based on entitlement reform and spending cuts tend to succeed.
>
> American Enterprise Institute economists Kevin Hassett, Andrew Biggs and Matthew Jensen examined the experiences of 21 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries between 1970 and 2007. They found that countries with successful fiscal reforms, on average, closed 85% of their budget gaps with spending cuts. The countries with failed reforms, on average, relied at least 50% on tax increases. President Obama's strategy falls firmly in the latter camp. After discounting the accounting tricks that create fictitious spending cuts, the president's plan would impose about $3 in tax hikes for every $1 in spending cuts.
>
> That is, his approach would probably land America in the "failed attempt" column. Five years down the line, we would be in the same fiscal mess we are in today, just with higher taxes and a bigger government.
>
> Second, tax hikes aimed at small segments of the population wouldn't raise much in revenues. Consider the "Buffett Rule" that the president spent many months promoting. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, it would raise about $47 billion over a decade. The federal government currently spends about $4 billion more per day than it takes in. The Buffett Rule, then, would raise about enough next year to cover 28 hours of government overspending. Heritage Foundation economist Curtis Dubay finds that closing the deficit solely by raising the two highest tax brackets would require hiking them to 159% and 166%, respectively.
>
> Third, as economists and business executives have noted repeatedly, raising taxes on families earning over $250,000 per year is effectively a massive tax hike on small businesses. Most small businesses today organize as S-corporations or other pass-through entities; their income is taxed as personal income. A study by Ernst and Young shows that Obama's proposed tax hike would force these small businesses to eliminate about 710,000 jobs. Moreover, these households already bear a great deal of tax liability. According to the most

> recent Internal Revenue Service data, those earning $250,000 and above — roughly 2% of all taxpayers — earn 22% of income, but pay 45% of all federal income taxes.
>
> Simply put, increasing tax rates on the wealthy is not a serious approach to solving America's fiscal woes. The problem is purely one of excessive spending, not inadequate taxing.

Revenues haven't changed substantially over the last decade, but government spending is way, way up. That's what's causing us to go into debt – massive government spending on turtle tunnels and Solyndra. We can do better than socialism.

Kindle edition of “Is God Just a Human Invention?” on sale for $2.99

December 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

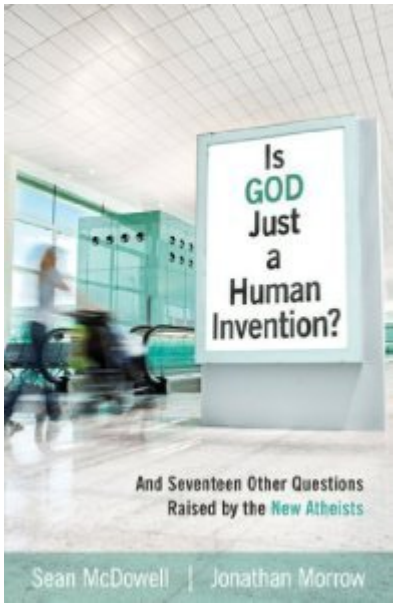

Is God Just A Human Invention?

Here’s the link to the Kindle edition of the book. I consider this book to be my favorite introduction to Christian apologetics. I give this book to everyone and one of my friends even started teaching it to a group of women in her church.

The thorough, chapter-by-chapter review of the book is here at Apologetics 315. The book is also a former read-along selection by Apologetics 315.

Excerpt:

> One of the brashest challenges that religious truth has experienced over the past several decades is the remarkable rise of the pugnacious New Atheists. Sean McDowell and Jonathan Marrow, new generation Christian apologists, have undertaken the task of contesting this anti-theistic upsurge. And in *Is God Just a Human Invention? And Seventeen Other Questions Raised by the New Atheists* the authors have pulled together a wide range of research that powerfully critiques the arguments from the combative non-theists.
>
> […]The authors deal with the scientific and philosophical challenges to Christian theism in a reasoned and respectful manner.
>
> […]*Is God Just a Human Invention?* is loaded with exceptional quotes from Christian and non-Christian thinkers. Additionally, the book furnishes very short essays at the back of each chapter from various erudite Christian scholars that augment the thesis of what was advanced by the authors.
>
> This volume combines simplicity and applicability without forfeiting precision. The authors lead the reader into the full girth of the many contemporary discussions concerning the defense of Christianity. They offer several of the leading

> arguments for Christian theism while toppling some of the most belligerent of the objections promoted by the New Atheists. They have written, with abundant care, to attain a thoroughness that is not often established in popular books. The wisdom and excellence with which each chapter is written makes this a crucial volume for the budding apologist's library.

Here are the 18 topics, and after each topic a Christian scholar discusses the relevance of each topic.

1. Is Faith Irrational? (Commentary by: Gregory Koukl)
2. Are Science and Christianity at Odds? (Commentary by: John Warwick Montgomery)
3. Are Miracles Possible? (Commentary by: Gary R. Habermas)
4. Is Darwinian Evolution the Only Game in Town? (Commentary by: William A. Dembski)
5. How Did the Universe Begin? (Commentary by: R. Douglas Geivett)
6. How Did Life Begin? (Commentary by: Fazale R. Rana)
7. Why Is the Universe Just Right for Life? (Commentary by: Jay W. Richards)
8. Has Science Shown There Is No Soul? (Commentary by: Dale Fincher and Jonalyn Fincher)
9. Is God Just a Human Invention? (Commentary by: Garry DeWeese)
10. Is Religion Dangerous? (Commentary by: Douglas Groothuis)
11. Does God Intend for Us to Keep Slaves? (Commentary by: Paul Copan)
12. Is Hell a Divine Torture Chamber? (Commentary by: Frank Turek)
13. Is God a Genocidal Bully? (Commentary by: Clay Jones)
14. Is Christianity the Cause of Dangerous Sexual Repression? (Commentary by: Kerby Anderson)
15. Can People Be Good Without God? (Commentary by: Mark D. Linville)
16. Is Evil Only a Problem for Christians? (Commentary by: Randy Alcorn)
17. What Good Is Christianity? (Commentary by: Glenn S. Sunshine)
18. Why Jesus Instead of the Flying Spaghetti Monster? (Commentary by: Darrell L. Bock)

If you're looking for a good book on Christian apologetics for beginners, this is a great choice. My Dad read it and he liked it, and he's not an expert in apologetics.

Evangelism and apologetics: Which one is mandatory? Which one is optional?

December 6, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The answer might surprise you – it surprised me! J. Warner Wallace explains. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Excerpt:

> Why do we embrace the burden of evangelism while relegating the burden of Case Making to professional "apologists"? Paul says something interesting in his letter to the Ephesians:
>
> ***Ephesians 4:11-13***
> *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*
>
> Paul repeatedly tells us that *some* of us are designed and given to perform certain functions. Some are apostles, some are prophets, some are evangelists, some are teachers, and some are pastors. Think about that for a minute. The reasonable inference here is that some of us are given to function in this way*some of us are not*. You may be gifted and given by God to be a pastor *or you may not*. In a similar way, you may *not* be an evangelist. We may be called to share our faith (as described in the passages in Mark, Luke, John and Acts), but we probably shouldn't beat ourselves up and feel guilty if we aren't great at evangelism. That may not be our gift or our God-given role.
>
> But there's another calling we ought to feel on our lives as Christians that we usually ignore altogether. Look at what Peter says in a letter written to "exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia":
>
> ***1 Peter 3:15-16:***
> *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*
>
> When addressing Christ followers who had been dispersed into regions filled with non-believers, Peter reminded Christians that everyone shared a responsibility to defend what they believed.

I attended Intervarsity Christian Fellowship while getting my undergraduate degree and

Campus Crusade for Christ while getting my graduate degree. Both groups had leadership teams that rejected apologetics – including the showing of debate DVDs – because evangelism was mandatory while apologetics was only for professionals who had a special gift. It turns out that they had it exactly backwards. Make sure you get your marching orders right.

Michigan approves right-to-work law for private sector unions

December 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

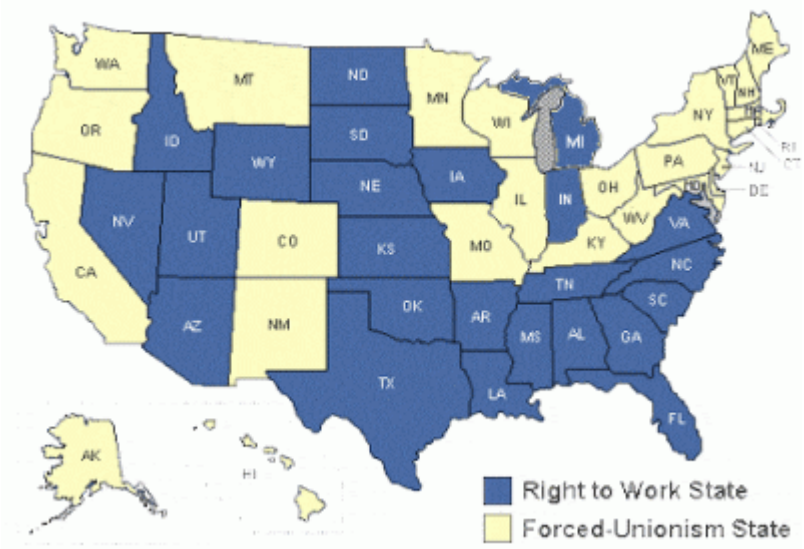

Map of right-to-work states: Michigan is #24

Dad sent me this article from Fox News, which reports on how Michigan became the 24th right-to-work state.

Excerpt:

> Republicans rushed right-to-work legislation through the Michigan Legislature Thursday, drawing raucous protests from hundreds of union supporters, some of whom were pepper-sprayed by police when they tried to storm the Senate chamber.
>
> With six-vote margins in both chambers, the House and Senate approved measures prohibiting private unions from requiring that nonunion employees pay fees. The Senate was debating a similar bill, with Democrats denouncing it as an attack on worker rights and the GOP sponsor insisting it would boost the economy and jobs. Separate legislation dealing with public-sector unions was expected to come later.
>
> Because of rules requiring a five-day delay between votes in the two chambers on the same legislation, final enactment appears unlikely until next week. Republican Gov. Rick Snyder, who previously had said repeatedly that right-to-work was “not on my agenda,” told reporters Thursday he would sign the measures.
>
> […]In an interview with The Associated Press, Snyder said he had kept the issue at arm’s length while pursuing other programs to bolster the state economy. But he said circumstances had pushed the matter to the forefront.
>
> “It is a divisive issue,” he acknowledged. “But it was already being divisive over the past few weeks, so let’s get this resolved. Let’s reach a conclusion that’s in

> the best interests of all."
>
> Also influencing his decision, he said, were reports that some 90 companies had decided to locate in Indiana since that state adopted right-to-work legislation. "That's thousands of jobs, and we want to have that kind of success in Michigan," he said.

Do right-to-work states create more jobs than forced-union-dues states, like the Republican governor says?

The radically left-wing Washington Post takes a look at it:

> The Facts
>
> We searched the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics Web site to find data on each state's non-farm, seasonally adjusted employment during the past 10 years. Just as Romney said, right-to-work states have better employment numbers on the whole.
>
> Romney's camp relied on numbers from the BLS household survey. The data, which his team compiled in July, show that right-to-work states experienced a net gain of 3.6 million jobs during the past decade, while "union states" saw a net loss of 900,000 jobs over the same time span.

The updated BLS numbers are right here.

Unions are a Democrat constituency, and that means that unions support abortion and gay marriage. It is wrong that unions are able to force socially conservative workers to pay dues that are used to elect pro-abortion and anti-marriage leftists. Right-to-work laws protect workers from being forced to support causes that violate their consciences. They can pay the dues if they want to, but they don't have to. You shouldn't have to support abortion and gay marriage just so you can work.

Now ask yourself another question. Why would Democrats want to prevent job creation? Could it be that they want more people to be dependent on government for their daily bread, so that they can control them and coerce them into voting for bigger government?

Democrats are the party of dependence, debt and unemployment. They hate jobs, they hate business. That's why we have seen an explosion of debt, unemployment, taxes and regulations over the last four years, with more to come in the next four. You can't argue with these numbers, and no amount of spirited teleprompter-reading will change what actually works. And what actually doesn't work.

Related posts

- Twinkies company liquidates due to demands of greedy labor union
- Indiana passes right-to-work law and is now open for business – and jobs
- Do right-to-work or forced union states create more high-paying jobs?
- What is a "right-to-work" law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Florida Republicans ban automatic deduction of union dues

- Republicans introduce national right-to-work legislation
- Ohio Republicans pass bill to cut bloated union salaries and benefits

Surprise! WMDs from Iraq were moved to Syria by Saddam Hussein

December 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

As I expected. I wonder if the mainstream media will apologize now that the truth is out.

Expected:

> As the regime of Bashar Assad disintegrates, the security of his chemical arsenal is in jeopardy. The No. 2 general in Saddam Hussein's air force says they were the WMDs we didn't find in Iraq.
>
> King Abdullah of neighboring Jordan warned that a disintegrating Syria on the verge of civil war puts Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons at risk of falling into the hands of al-Qaida.
>
> "One of the worst-case scenarios as we are obviously trying to look for a political solution would be if some of those chemical stockpiles were to fall into unfriendly hands," he said.
>
> The irony here is that the chemical weapons stockpile of Syrian thug Assad may in large part be the legacy of weapons moved from Hussein's Iraq into Syria before Operation Iraqi Freedom.
>
> If so, this may be the reason not much was found in the way of WMD by victorious U.S. forces in 2003.
>
> **In 2006, former Iraqi general Georges Sada, second in command of the Iraqi Air Force who served under Saddam Hussein before he defected, wrote a comprehensive book, "Saddam's Secrets."**
>
> **It details how the Iraqi Revolutionary Guard moved weapons of mass destruction into Syria in advance of the U.S.-led action to eliminate Hussein's WMD threat.**
>
> **As Sada told the New York Sun, two Iraqi Airways Boeings were converted to cargo planes by removing the seats, and special Republican Guard units loaded the planes with chemical weapons materials.**
>
> **There were 56 flights disguised as a relief effort after a 2002 Syrian dam collapse.**
>
> **There were also truck convoys into Syria. Sada's comments came more than a month after Israel's top general during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Moshe Yaalon, told the Sun that Saddam "transferred the chemical agents from Iraq to Syria."**
>
> **Both Israeli and U.S. intelligence observed large truck convoys leaving Iraq and entering Syria in the weeks and months before Operation Iraqi**

> **Freedom, John Shaw, former deputy undersecretary of defense for international technology security, told a private conference of former weapons inspectors and intelligence experts held in Arlington, Va., in 2006.**

Well, there you have it. Should you believe the mainstream media?

New study: domestic violence is twice as likely for two-income couples

December 7, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Psych Central. (H/T Stuart Schneiderman)

Excerpt:

> Intimate partner violence is two times more likely to occur in two income households, compared to those where only one partner works, according to a new study.
>
> Conducted by Sam Houston State University researchers Cortney A. Franklin, Ph.D., and doctoral student Tasha A. Menaker and supported by the Crime Victims' Institute, the study looked at the impact of education levels and employment among heterosexual partners as it relates to domestic violence.
>
> While the researchers found that differences in education levels appeared to have little influence, when both partners were working, intimate partner violence increased.
>
> **"When both male and females were employed, the odds of victimization were more than two times higher than when the male was the only breadwinner in the partnership, lending support to the idea that female employment may challenge male authority and power in a relationship," said the researchers.**
>
> The study was based on telephone interviews with 303 women who identified themselves as either currently or recently in a serious romantic relationship.
>
> […]The study found that more than 60 percent of women in two-income couples reported victimization, while only 30 percent of women reported victimization in cases when only the male partner was employed.
>
> […]The study is scheduled to be published in the journal *Violence Against Women.*

Dr. Schneiderman comments:

> To the best of my knowledge the research does not show whether the wives in question were using their income as a way to diminish and disrespect their husbands.
>
> Feminism has long been claiming that the male role of provider or breadwinner is a social construct designed to oppress women. If, however, the role is instinctive, and if it is intrinsic to male pride, then the feminist derogation of it is a losing fight.

In my own case, I would never, ever ever marry a woman who expected to work at all if

there were children under 5 in the home. What a woman does in marriage is care for her husband and her children. If she is dismissive of the needs of men and children, then marriage is not for her. That's why it is so important to talk to women about what they believe marriage is, why they want to get married, and why they want to have children. Ask them what the needs of men are in a marriage. Ask them what the needs of children are through their development. What is her plan for her husband and children? How does she intend to achieve those plans? What decisions has she made to prepare? What actions has she performed to show where her priorities lie?

Marriage is not just whatever people decide marriage is. It's the joining together of two opposite sexual natures, and there are rules and guidelines about how to do that. It is a tense, close-quarters situation that requires that both parties understand that the sexes are different and have different needs. A man has to make certain choices and perform certain actions to fuel his wife and keep her engaged. And a woman has to make certain choices and perform certain actions to fuel her husband and keep him engaged. You can't have a real marriage with a feminist who repudiates sex differences and the obligations that natural marriage imposes on each partner. It's fine if a woman says things like "I want to keep working after I get married" or "I will put my children in day care a few weeks after they are born". All that means is that she isn't qualified for marriage. Cohabitation is a better option, or maybe just hook-up sex, divorce, single motherhood and spinsterhood. Those are the options – either marriage or feminism.

By the way, please note that research shows that women are as likely to commit domestic violence as men. That's not my opinion, that's what studies by the Canadian and UK governments show.

Why Christian parents should not teach their children that Santa Claus is real

December 8, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Dr. Lydia McGrew, who blogs at What's Wrong with the World.

Excerpt:

> Here's another anecdotal example of a child's linking belief in God and in Santa Claus dangerously: In March a young girl visited my (small) church, and my eldest daughter spent some time talking with her. My daughter ended up much concerned about her. The younger girl, age 9, had clearly been trying to test the waters to see what the 16-year-old wanted her to say. At one point she said, "I'm not even sure I believe in God. Well, I sort of believe in Him. I sort of believe in God and Santa Claus." This was not reassuring.

> Consider what it means to teach a young child to believe that Santa Claus is real. You are teaching the child that a person exists who is benevolent and has super-powers, who can do incredible things, who sees his actions while remaining unseen, who rewards good acts, and with whom (if you encourage letter-writing to Santa) the child can communicate.
>
> If you're a Christian parent, you are very likely teaching the child at the same time in his life and at the same stage in his development to believe in God–a powerful and benevolent Being who sees his actions while remaining unseen, who rewards good actions and punishes evil actions, and with whom the child can communicate by praying. In fact, you encourage him to pray to this Unseen Being.
>
> To induce belief in your child in both of these teachings, you are relying on the fact that children naturally believe what their parents tell them.
>
> But one is an unimportant falsehood and the other is the ultimately important Truth.
>
> Belief in Santa Claus is temporary. Eventually kids figure out that Mom and Dad have been telling them a white lie and that the causes of the presents on Christmas morning are mundane. As the above story about the artist's daughter shows, it isn't that much of a stretch for the astute child to wonder whether the *other* story about an invisible, benevolent Being who is the cause of all things, seen and unseen, has also been a white lie and whether the causes of all the things previously attributed to Him are, instead, mundane.
>
> Atheists trade on this. I'm sure my astute readers could find dozens of examples of atheist rants to very much the "when I became a man, I put away childish things" effect. And this trope can be very effective for older young people as well. A Christian high school or college student will*no doubt* at some point encounter

> the following line of thought: “Why do you believe in God? Because your parents told you that He exists, right? But you believed in Santa Claus on the same basis. If you’d been raised in another culture, you would believe a different religion, and they can’t all be true. At some point you have to start thinking for yourself. Just as it turned out that Santa Claus doesn’t exist, so, you’ll find, it turns out that God doesn’t exist either. You’re old enough to figure this out for yourself.”
>
> Unfortunately, most Christian young people do not go to college primed with evidences for the existence of God and for Christianity. This argument against authority may well strike them as devastating. And–I’m sorry to have to say it, but it must be said–it will strike them as all the more devastating if the coin of parental speech has been devalued by those little white lies told them in their innocence for the sake of cuteness.

When I ask parents why they would want to tell their children something that they know isn’t true, they usually tell me that having their children believe nice-sounding things is amusing to them. It seems to me that it’s a split between:

- pride: knowing something that the children don’t know
- deception: making children think that the world is nicer than it really is
- manipulation: tricking children into “being good” by appealing to material goods (easy), instead of presenting reasons and articulating a full-blown theistic worldview that grounds morality as part of the design of the Creator (hard)

I am a former camp counselor and teacher. When I was in my teens, I worked with children of all different ages from 3-12 as well as with developmentally delayed adults – mostly teaching them sports, games, math, logic and other useful things. I always treated the children with respect, because in my mind, these were all future Airborne Rangers, future submarine drivers, future diplomats/CIA spies, future software engineers, future Congressman, future cryptographers, future nurses, future doctors, etc. And what I found is that although children like it when they are allowed to be childish, they also like it when you talk to them like adults and treat them like a smaller version of you. They understand treating them like a to-be grown-up as a form of respect. Young men especially love to be trusted with big responsibilities.

I looked at each child and thought to myself, “this is how football players look at age 8” or “this person could be my boss one day”. And guess what? They really like being treated with respect, and they really like it when people tell them what to expect in the future. They like understanding what school will be like, what work will be like, how to make money, how cars work, what going to the airport and flying on a plane is like, and how to write computer programs. And when you lie to them about *anything*, it undermines their trust in you for *everything*. I’m not saying that it’s wrong to proportion rewards to good behavior, I’m saying that it’s wrong to tie rewards to a myth which will eventually be exposed.

Just this week I was busy scheming with some Christian college students about their

future jobs and what they should be learning and doing in order to be successful while still having a ministry. Why not treat children and young adults like that? Why not give them good advice and do things together with them and build them up with resources so that they can achieve? They are not your pets, they are not there to amuse you. They work for God – just like you. You both have the same boss, and the same job. You have a responsibility to act in a way that will help them to achieve goals, be effective and be influential.

Young workers pay into entitlements that will be bankrupt when they retire

December 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

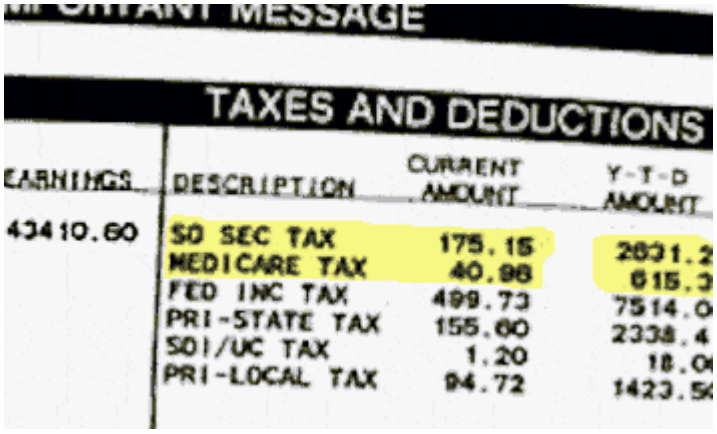

TAXES AND DEDUCTIONS

EARNINGS	DESCRIPTION	CURRENT AMOUNT	Y-T-D AMOUNT
43410.60	SO SEC TAX	175.15	2691.2
	MEDICARE TAX	40.98	615.3
	FED INC TAX	499.73	7514.0
	PRI-STATE TAX	155.60	2338.4
	SDI/UC TAX	1.20	18.0
	PRI-LOCAL TAX	94.72	1423.5

Payroll taxes for Social Security and Medicare

Doug Ross from Director Blue has a public service announcement for young people. Even if they are able to find jobs, they can look forward to paying a large chunk of their income to the government for retirement programs, Social Security and Medicare, that will be bankrupt by the time they are ready to retire.

Excerpt:

> Ever seen these numbers on your pay stub? The numbers I've highlighted?
>
> **That money is being taken from you** — or, more properly, it's being stolen from you — to fund a myth. A mirage.
>
> You're never going to see a dime of that "Social Security Retirement Insurance" you're paying for.
>
> You'll never a see a nickel of that "Medicare Health Care Insurance" either.
>
> That money is being taken from your pay — your livelihood — to fund a system that will be bankrupt in less than a dozen years.
>
> Oh, and it's not me saying that: Medicare's own actuary, Richard Foster, is. Social Security is in a similar situation, according to Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner, who serves as the system's senior trustee.
>
> Suffice it to say that these systems will actually go broke far sooner than anyone's really admitting because the economy remains poor and appears to be slowing down even further.
>
> **My public service message is this**: this money is being taken from your pay in exchange for a promise that will be broken in just a few years. You'll never see that money again. And it is the government — *the government*, not "the rich", not the Koch brothers, not the oil companies — that is ripping you off.
>
> It is the government, not corporations, spending untold billions on "green energy" scams like Solyndra. It is the government, not "the rich", slathering EBT-

> welfare cards around like confetti. And it is the government, not "the Tea Party", that is promoting illegal immigration and offering huge financial benefits to those in the country illegally. All *with your money*.

Medicare is the one that is really in trouble, as Forbes magazine explains:

> The Trustees of the Medicare program have released their annual report on the solvency of the program. They calculate that the program is "expected to remain solvent until 2024, the same as last year's estimate." But what that headline obfuscates is that Obamacare's tax increases and spending cuts are counted towards the program's alleged "deficit-neutrality," **Medicare is to go bankrupt in 2016. And if you listen to Medicare's own actuary, Richard Foster, the program's bankruptcy could come even sooner than that.**

See, the funny, funny thing about young people is that they are almost complete uninformed about basic economics. They don't know where jobs come from. They don't know where the money that the government spends come from. They don't know how much the government spends. They don't know about our debt-to-gdp ratio. Their view of economics is all determined by socialist public schools and socialist Hollywood and socialist mainstream media. It's all emotional for them. They have feelings that the rich are greedy, and must be taxed, and that the government is Santa Claus, helping the poor with money from the rich. It's the ultimate system of slavery, except the slaves want to be enslaved.

What is the meaning of Advent? Why do Christians celebrate Advent?

December 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

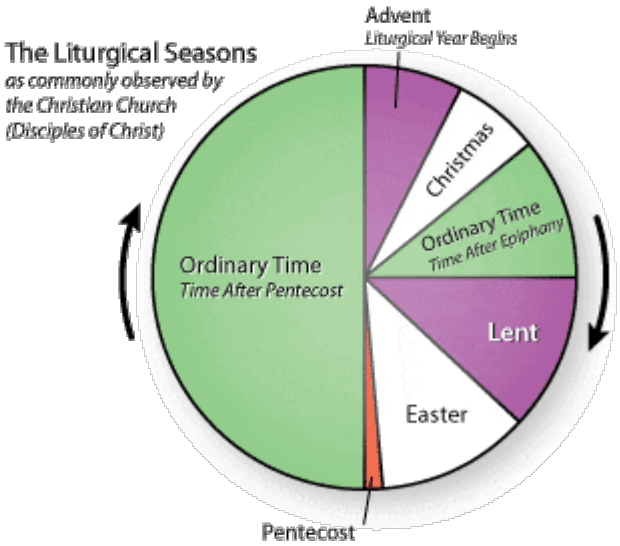

Calendar of Christian Holidays and festivals

Advent is:

> Advent is the season that begins the liturgical year. It consists of four Sundays starting with the Sunday closest to November 30th. The word advent is derived from the Latin adventus, which means "coming" or "arrival." In the societies of the Roman empire, the word adventus referred to the arrival of a person of dignity and great power — a king, emperor, or even one of the gods. For Christians, Advent is the time when the church patiently prepares for the coming of the King of Kings, Jesus Christ. On a personal spiritual level, Advent is a time when we should long for a new breaking in of God's Spirit upon us.

Here is a good post about the story of Advent by Rev. Donald Sensing at Sense of Events blog.

Excerpt:

> They were not a wealthy couple. They got by all right in Nazareth because Joseph was a carpenter, a skilled job, but he didn't make enough money for the finer things of life. Like everyone else in their country, Joseph and Mary relied heavily on their extended families to help them get through the lean times. And when they were doing well, there was always a third cousin or an aunt twice removed who wasn't, so they helped as much as they could.
>
> To say it was inconvenient to leave Nazareth to travel to Bethlehem would be the greatest of understatements. They had not counted on leaving Nazareth before the child was born. In fact, they didn't think they would leave Nazareth ever. But a decree had gone out from the Roman emperor that the whole empire would have to pay a special tax. For some reason, the rulers of Judea decided that they

> may as well take a census while they were at it. Because of the tribal and clannish nature of society, the authorities ordered everyone to go to their ancestral hometowns to be counted and pay the tax.
>
> Protests that some people could not make the trip, such as the aged and infirm, were simply met with rebuff. So Mary, very late in pregnancy, was compelled to schlep down the Jordan River valley on the back of a donkey. The journey by road was about ninety miles, plus having to climb more than 1,300 feet in altitude, so the trip took more than a week. You can't travel fast leading a donkey on foot carrying a very pregnant woman.
>
> They arrived in Bethlehem on yom rishon, which simply means, "the first day of the week," the Jews having a specific name for a day of the week only for the Sabbath, the last day of the week. On the Sabbath, they had not traveled because religious law forbade long-distance travel on that day. Besides, they had needed the rest. So on Sunday afternoon, yom rishon, they reached Bethlehem, just one couple among hundreds of families arriving for the census.
>
> Joseph was a lineal descendant of King David, whose hometown had been Bethlehem. Joseph never made too much of his royal ancestry. Certainly, he was not the only descendant of David, and just as certainly, Joseph never thought about claiming the ancient throne. The Jews had lived under foreign domination for hundreds of years, first by the Greeks and then the Romans. The idea of regaining political independence was simply absurd. There was no way successfully to fight the Roman army, as dozens of Mediterranean nations had discovered.
>
> The little town of Bethlehem lacked the infrastructure to cope with a large influx of people needing to stay for several days at a minimum. The early arrivers had gained lodging with relatives, but the small houses filled up fast. There were few inns in the town that had filled well before Joseph and Mary got to town.
>
> Joseph tried to gain lodging at an inn, but the owner was unyielding. He explained that to take them in, he'd have to throw someone else out. He would not have such dishonor on his head, pregnant Mary or no.
>
> "Try the outside of town," the man said. "There may be a few homes there with space for a kinsman."

Click here to read the rest. This is a good post to send to people who don't know what Christmas is about.

73% of the new jobs created in the last 5 months were government jobs

December 9, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> In June, a total of 142,415,000 people were employed in the U.S, according to the BLS, including 19,938,000 who were employed by federal, state and local governments.
>
> By November, according to data BLS released today, the total number of people employed had climbed to143,262,000, an overall increase of 847,000 in the six months since June.
>
> **In the same five-month period since June, the number of people employed by government increased by 621,000 to 20,559,000. These 621,000 new government jobs created in the last five months equal 73.3 percent of the 847,000 new jobs created overall.**

How is it possible that the unemployment rate is going down? It's simple. The government is borrowing over $1 trillion dollars a year from unborn and born children, and they are using that money to reduce the unemployment rate.

That explains part of the drop in unemployment, but there's more.

Excerpt:

> As for that big "drop" in the unemployment rate, all of it was due to the fact that 540,000 Americans are no longer looking for work. They either dropped out, took early disability or retired. Since the start of 2009, 9.7 million Americans have fallen into this category.
>
> **All told, more than 24 million Americans who want jobs don't have them, driving the labor force participation rate to 63.6%, just above August's 31-year low of 63.5%. This is the worst labor market in a recovery ever.**
>
> And it may get worse. The quarterly Wells Fargo/Gallup small-business survey found that 21% plan to cut jobs over the next six months — a surge from 10% last June and a record high.
>
> IBD's own research shows that small businesses account for nearly 80% of all new job creation in America. A small-business slump means no jobs. It's that simple.

Business are already being regulated to death by Obamacare, and all this deficit spending means borrowing that has to be paid back with inflation or higher taxes. Why on Earth

would anyone try to hire people now? This economy is a wreck.

When health insurance is forced to cover more, insurance premiums go up

December 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily explains how Obamacare forces insurance companies to provide coverage for more stuff in their health care plans, and how that raises the cost of health insurance for you.

Excerpt:

> In a recent New York Times article, chiropractors and acupuncturists bragged about how they're getting their services mandated under ObamaCare's "essential benefits" rule. That part of the law says all insurance — which the government forces everyone to buy — has to cover certain basic benefits and leaves it up to the states to fill in a lot of the blanks.
>
> […]Other coverage mandates that various states have announced they plan to require under ObamaCare include weight-loss surgery and infertility treatment. These are on top of the federal mandates the Obama administration has already announced, including things like "free" preventive service and contraception coverage.
>
> Since health care dollars don't fall from trees, each of those mandates will end up adding to the cost of insurance. Worse, these mandates will only grow over time.
>
> […]Other coverage mandates that various states have announced they plan to require under ObamaCare include weight-loss surgery and infertility treatment. These are on top of the federal mandates the Obama administration has already announced, including things like "free" preventive service and contraception coverage.
>
> […]States currently impose 2,262 benefit mandates, up from 2,156 the year before, according to the Council for Affordable Health Insurance. There were just 850 mandates in 1992, when CAHI first started tracking them.
>
> Among the more ridiculous are requirements that insurance cover breast implant removal, circumcision, wigs for chemotherapy patients, smoking-cessation service and varicose vein removal.
>
> CAHI figures state mandates add 10% to 50% to the cost of insurance. A report from the Maryland Health Care Commission figures that around 20% of premiums in that state are the result of its 45 benefit mandates.
>
> In addition to preventive-care rules, ObamaCare bans lifetime limits on coverage and puts caps on out-of-pocket costs, each of which will drive up premiums. Its requirement that insurers cover "children" up to 26 years old has already added as much as 3% to premiums, according to Towers Watson.
>
> Along with mandated benefits, ObamaCare declares war on high-deductible

> health plans proved to hold costs down.
>
> Individual plans won't be allowed to have a deductible higher than $2,000. This rule will mean that 1-in-7 workers will be forced to take a lower deductible, then pay higher insurance costs as a result.

When insurance companies have to cover more stuff, then premiums increase to be able to pay the claims.

Previously, I blogged about how health insurance premiums had already gone up $3,000 during Obama's first four years. And now you know why.

Why won’t Christians defend their faith in public?

December 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I would like to describe a situation that arises frequently that concerns me. The situation I describe below brings out a flaw I see in the way that rank-and-file Christians respond to criticisms of Christianity in the public square.

Here is the situation

Eve is busy programming away at her desk, rushing to check in her unit tests so she can spend her lunch hour reading the latest Stephenie Meyer novel, or check on the schedule for her local sports team, “the Vicariouses” (she has tickets for Thursday). Suddenly Eve hears Alice talking to Bob on the other side of her cubicle. She stops typing to listen to the following unencrypted conversation.

Alice: I was watching a documentary on the Discovery Channel last night that said that the universe has always existed, so there is no God!

Bob: I was watching a documentary on PBS last night showing simulations of how the first life started on Earth! God didn’t do it!

Alice: I saw “Inherit the Spin” on the weekend! The only reason people oppose evolution is because of the Bible! Not because of science!

Bob: I’m going to see “The Va Dinci Code” this weekend! It says that the Gospels are unreliable and that Jesus didn’t even die on the cross!

Alice: I just bought the latest Dichard Rawkins book “Christians Should Be Fed to Lions and the Bible Should Be Burned”!

Bob: I will read that as soon as I finish Histopher Chritchens’ book “Why God is the Evilest, Stupidest Person in the World”!

Eve double-majored in business and computer science at the Indian Institute of Technology, and has an MBA from the London School of Economics. She has spent a ton of time, effort and money studying very difficult subjects for her job, and she even publishes research papers. She works full-time and runs her own business part-time, and teaches night classes for a well-known university. She earns about 200K per year. She lives in a huge house, drives an expensive car, and goes on vacation abroad to all the best vacation spots.

Eve thinks she is a Christian. She has attended church since childhood, her husband is a church elder and she sings in the church choir. She reads the Bible and prays every night, because it helps her to get sleepy before bed. She gives lots of money to the poor. She teaches Sunday school to very small children. She has even read all of the Narnia novels *five times*! She even has a calendar filled with nature scenes and itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny Bible verses posted on her office wall at work! Judging from all of these facts, you might expect Eve to get in on that conversation with Alice and Bob, and set them straight.

But she won’t. Why not?

Why won't Eve stand?

I am wondering if anyone can explain to me why it is that most church Christians are not able or not willing to make a public defense when God's reputation is called into question. It seems to me that there are two bad effects that follow from Eve's unwillingness to stand up and invite Alice and Bob to lunch so that she can address their questions and concerns.

1. God's reputation is being trashed by Alice and Bob on the basis of lies they've swallowed from pop culture. These lies about God's existence and character could be easily corrected with a minimal amount of study, which Eve is capable of – she is a genius and has amazing entrepreneurial skills. If someone said similar lies about her husband or children, she *would* speak up, but she won't speak up for God.
2. Alice and Bob are bound for Hell unless someone cares enough to correct their mistaken beliefs, which, along with their sinfulness, is what is keeping them from a relationship with God that would go on in Heaven. If Eve's husband or children were mistakenly about to drink poison thinking it was Aspirin, then Eve *would* speak up. But to save her co-workers from Hell, she won't speak up.

Eve is capable of studying to defend the faith, because of her great success in other areas where so much time and effort were required to master difficult material. So why has she not applied herself to answering public challenges to her Christian faith from her professors, teachers, actors, the media, politicians, scientists, historians, etc.? She's heard these questions about God's existence and character all through high school and into university and then now in her career. Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says to prepare a defense? Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says to acknowledge God before men? Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says that all authentic believers in Jesus will suffer a little for their faith?

It seems to me that if she did spend some time studying, and then made her defense to her co-workers, then two good things would follow:

1. Eve would be demonstrating her love for God and her friendship with God by protecting his reputation when it is called into question by unbelievers in public settings. That's what friends do – if Eve wanted to be God's friend, she would care that no one believed lies about him and told lies about him in public settings.
2. Eve would be demonstrating her love for her neighbor if she was able to correct some of these false beliefs, such as that the universe is eternal, or that a historical case cannot be made for the resurrection, or that evil is not compatible with theism. It's important for Alice and Bob to know that Christianity is not stupid.

So why is it that Eve is able to go to church for 20 years, sing in the choir, read the Bible, read the Narnia stories, pray on her knees, and yet still be unwilling to do the best thing for God and the best thing for her neighbor?

Questions for my readers

Can anyone help me to understand why Christians are willing to accept this? Why is this not being addressed by churches?

Do you have an experience where a Christian group stifled apologetics? Tell me about that, and why do you think they would do that, in view of the situation I outlined above? My experience is that atheists (as much as I tease them) are FAR more interested in apologetics than church Christians – they are the ones who borrow books and debates, and try to get their atheist wives to go to church after they becomes interested in going to church. Why is that?

I'm not saying we all have to be geniuses. I am just saying that we should put as much effort into learning apologetics as we put into learning school stuff and work stuff.

Note: I picked these names because there is a running gag in computer network security where these names are used to describe the actors. Eve is the eavesdropping hacker, get it?

William Lane Craig discusses naturalism and secular humanism in the Washington Post

December 10, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. William Lane Craig in the liberal Washington Post – explaining his arguments and evidence to an audience that has probably never heard them before.

Excerpt:

> The American Humanist Association is promoting a new Web site that is designed to furnish children with a naturalistic or atheistic perspective on science, sexuality, and other topics. The stated goal of the Web site is laudatory: "to encourage curiosity, critical thinking, and tolerance among young people, as well as to provide accurate information regarding a wide range of issues related to humanism, science, culture, and history."
>
> The problem is that those values have no inherent connection with naturalism, which is a philosophical viewpoint that holds that there is nothing beyond the physical contents of the universe. One doesn't need to be a naturalist in order to endorse curiosity, critical thinking, tolerance, and the pursuit of accurate information on a wide range of topics.
>
> Ironically, the AHA has been remarkably *uncritical* in thinking about the truth of naturalism and of humanism in particular.
>
> […]The problem for the humanist is even worse, however. For humanism is just one form of naturalism. It is a version of naturalism that affirms the objective value of human beings. But why think that if naturalism were true, human beings would have objective moral value? There are three options before us:
>
> - The theist maintains that objective moral values are grounded in God.
> - The humanist maintains that objective moral values are grounded in human beings.
> - The nihilist maintains that moral values are ungrounded and therefore ultimately subjective and illusory.
>
> The humanist is thus engaged in a struggle on two fronts: on the one side against the theists and on the other side against the nihilists. This is important because it underlines the fact that humanism is not a default position. That is to say, even if the theist were wrong, that would not mean that the humanist is right. For if God does not exist, maybe it is the nihilist who is right. The humanist needs to defeat both the theist and the nihilist. In particular, he must show that in the absence of God, nihilism would not be true.

This is a must-read and a must-forward. Share this far and wide, please.

Dr. Craig has had to debate against secular humanism before. You can see him debate a

secular humanist leader named Paul Kurtz on this issue.

Related posts

- William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?
- William Lane Craig debates Peter Atkins: Does God Exist?
- William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus
- William Lane Craig debates Peter Millican on the existence of God
- William Lane Craig debates Arif Ahmed: Does God Exist?
- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?
- William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?
- William Lane Craig lectures to Richard Dawkins: Does God Exist?

New York Times columnist exposes the moral hazards created by welfare programs

December 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ultra-leftist Nicholas Kristoff writes about the incentives created by welfare programs in the New York Times.

Excerpt:

> This is what poverty sometimes looks like in America: parents here in Appalachian hill country pulling their children out of literacy classes. Moms and dads fear that if kids learn to read, they are less likely to qualify for a monthly check for having an intellectual disability.
>
> Many people in hillside mobile homes here are poor and desperate, and a $698 monthly check per child from the Supplemental Security Income program goes a long way — and those checks continue until the child turns 18.
>
> "The kids get taken out of the program because the parents are going to lose the check," said Billie Oaks, who runs a literacy program here in Breathitt County, a poor part of Kentucky. "It's heartbreaking."
>
> This is painful for a liberal to admit, but conservatives have a point when they suggest that America's safety net can sometimes entangle people in a soul-crushing dependency. Our poverty programs do rescue many people, but other times they backfire.
>
> Some young people here don't join the military (a traditional escape route for poor, rural Americans) because it's easier to rely on food stamps and disability payments.
>
> Antipoverty programs also discourage marriage: In a means-tested program like S.S.I., a woman raising a child may receive a bigger check if she refrains from marrying that hard-working guy she likes. Yet marriage is one of the best forces to blunt poverty. In married couple households only one child in 10 grows up in poverty, while almost half do in single-mother households.
>
> Most wrenching of all are the parents who think it's best if a child stays illiterate, because then the family may be able to claim a disability check each month.
>
> "One of the ways you get on this program is having problems in school," notes Richard V. Burkhauser, a Cornell University economist who co-wrote a book last year about these disability programs. "If you do better in school, you threaten the income of the parents. It's a terrible incentive."
>
> About four decades ago, most of the children S.S.I. covered had severe physical handicaps or mental retardation that made it difficult for parents to hold jobs — about 1 percent of all poor children. But now 55 percent of the disabilities it covers are fuzzier intellectual disabilities short of mental retardation, where the

> diagnosis is less clear-cut. More than 1.2 million children across America — a full 8 percent of all low-income children — are now enrolled in S.S.I. as disabled, at an annual cost of more than $9 billion.
>
> That is a burden on taxpayers, of course, but it can be even worse for children whose families have a huge stake in their failing in school. Those kids may never recover: a 2009 study found that nearly two-thirds of these children make the transition at age 18 into S.S.I. for the adult disabled. They may never hold a job in their entire lives and are condemned to a life of poverty on the dole — and that's the outcome of a program intended to fight poverty.

Charles Murray of the American Enterprise Institute is delighted that a leftist has finally discovered what welfare programs actually do in practice:

> Several people have tagged me and *Losing Ground* since Nicholas Kristoff's column on Friday about the ways that social programs can backfire. It was a praiseworthy column—all of us on both sides of the political spectrum should be as ready as Kristoff to acknowledge problems with our beliefs. But it also offers an opportunity to recall the three laws of social programs in Losing Ground, because the backfires are not idiosyncratic. They occur everywhere and always for inherent reasons.
>
> **1. The Law of Imperfect Selection**. Any objective rule that defines eligibility for a social transfer program will irrationally exclude some persons.
>
> This law accounts for the reason that programs like Food Stamps and the Supplemental Security Income program constantly expand. Whenever the people who administer the programs run into a case of a genuinely needy person who has been excluded under a current rule, they tend to redefine the rule or otherwise alter the program's administration to be more inclusive, which in turn brings more people who don't need the social transfer under its umbrella.
>
> **2. The Law of Unintended Rewards.** Any social transfer increases the net value of being in the condition that prompted the transfer.
>
> Kristoff referenced the increased net value of being illiterate because of the "intellectual disability" payment of $698 per month that leads parents to withdraw their children from literacy classes. But the same thing is true of every payment of any kind that requires people to demonstrate that they have a problem before they qualify for the payment. It is not a defect in program design. It is inescapable whenever you give rewards for having a problem.
>
> **3. The Law of Net Harm**. The less likely it is that the unwanted behavior will change voluntarily, the more likely it is that a program to induce change will cause net harm.
>
> This is not as obvious as the first two laws, but just as inexorable. My favorite chapter of Losing Ground is a thought experiment about a government program that uses financial rewards to reduce smoking. If the rewards are small, nothing

> will change. If they are large enough to induce a significant number of people to quit smoking, the program will inevitably lead to more people who take up smoking in the first place and the net number of inveterate smokers.
>
> Fewer and fewer people are old enough to remember, but once upon a time almost all children were born to married couples and almost all young men were physically able to work and knew how to show up on time and work hard. Then, in the mid-1960s, before globalization, before manufacturing jobs disappeared, while working-class wages were still going up, we decided that compassion should be bureaucratized. The three laws of social programs explain a lot of what has happened to the working class since then.

The Daily Caller reported that food stamp usage reached a record high – now up to 47.7 million. That's about 1 in 6 Americans. We used to be a country of independence, entrepreneurship and hard work. But things changed – we had an explosion in welfare spending. Welfare spending changed the incentives and that changed behaviors. We have to understand that having the government reward laziness gets us more laziness. Taxing people who create jobs gets us fewer jobs. It's that simple – people respond to incentives.

The apologetics adventures of Matt and Madeleine Flannagan in New Zealand

December 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Posted at the Christian Apologetics Alliance.

Excerpt:

> Here in New Zealand, I am often told by evangelical leaders that we now live in a post-modern society, which has moved beyond "arguments" and that Apologetics is an outdated "modernist concept." They say we need instead to "tell the story" so that people will see the "meta-narrative of scripture"—whatever exactly that means.
>
> Last night, Madeleine and I were invited to a Christmas function for new lawyers, organised by the Law Society, the professional association for lawyers in New Zealand. The function was in a major law firm in central Auckland's business district. So I was right in the thick of the up-and-coming legal professionals in New Zealand.
>
> Anyway, Madeleine struck up a conversation with some young lawyers who were working for an arm of the government. They discussed aspects of their respective legal professions. Then one of them turned to me and asked me, "what do you do?" I answered that I was a theologian. Immediately, this caused them to pause (it often has this effect) and one told me he had been reading a book called *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins. Without thinking, I said, "Oh, that book, it's crap." He replied, "Yeah, but you have to say that, don't you?" I responded, "No I don't actually." I then mentioned to him the works of some other atheists to whom I would not respond in that fashion, despite the fact I disagreed with their conclusions.
>
> Then, for the next thirty minutes, these lawyers began asking me genuine questions about the Christian faith.

You have to click through to read all the interesting questions and answers, but here is the conclusion:

> Sometimes being an apologist in New Zealand is surreal. I commented to Madeleine on the way home that we, two people from west Auckland—a theologian who did not have full time employment and very little resources to support my ministry, and a lawyer from a tiny firm who largely does legal work for poor people who don't pay handsomely—were at a function at one of the largest law firms in the country, in the central heart of Auckland city, sharing our faith with some of the most successful up-and-coming lawyers in NZ, many who worked for the government. How can Apologetics be boring when stuff like that happens? I also wonder, however, how many of my "post-modernist"

> colleagues with their youth churches and really "cool" music, would have been able to have that conversation with any real meaning with the urbane elite of Auckland.
>
> I also have to say that this is not the first time something like this has happened. In the last few years Madeleine and I have frequently found similar things have happened over and over. Apologetics is not "dead". It is not a "thing of the past". It's extremely relevant. What's irrelevant are those who are so culturally out of touch that they don't realise that **the questions apologists address are being asked, and answers to those questions assumed**, in the conversations of some of the top lawyers in New Zealand; and those people, ostensibly secular liberals, are **hungry and interested in credible answers to those questions**.

I can sense some of the frustration that Matt and Madeleine feel, because I also know what it is to do what actually works with no support or recognition. In my case, the problem is with the Church, which is largely opposed to apologetics and scholarship in general.

I was having a chat about Matt's post with my friend Dina Monday night, and I told her that I believed that Christians are not entitled to many of the things that the world considers fun. We aren't entitled to popularity, we aren't entitled to happiness, we aren't entitled to a life of comfort. But we are entitled to the joy of defending our faith to interested skeptics in a world that is chock-full of logic, historical evidence, and scientific evidence. That is one source of happiness that we are fully allowed to draw on. If we put in the time to study the laws of logic, and the evidence from mainstream science and history, then these wonderful encounters become possible. Anyone who has had a good encounter will tell you that it is a good feeling. It doesn't make up for the difficult side of being a Christian, but it is something.

Here are a few Bible verses that I think are relevant to Matt's post:

1 Peter 3:15-16:

[15] But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

[16] keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Matthew 10:32-33:

[32] "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.

[33] But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2:

[1] So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the

secret things of God.

[2] Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

I like the third one especially.

God expects us to testify about his existence and character. And not by sharing our personal experiences, but with evidence. Fortunately, our task is easier because there is plenty of evidence available to us. This is the world that God has made, and his fingerprints are all over it. It is a joy to be asked questions and to have studied and prepared in order to know the answer. It good for us to be called by God to give a defense, and to be found faithful. Cultivating our intelligence through difficult and often dull study is one of the ways that we show God that we are his friends. We show him that when push comes to shove, we side with him. We are his friends and his allies.

Eastern Michigan University loses attempt to silence Christian graduate student

December 11, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news from Alliance Defending Freedom.

Excerpt:

> Eastern Michigan University has agreed to settle an Alliance Defending Freedom lawsuit filed on behalf of Julea Ward, a graduate student whom the university expelled from a counseling program for abiding by her religious beliefs. As a result, a federal district court issued an agreed-uponorder of dismissal Monday.
>
> Even though counseling referrals are a common and accepted professional practice, the university expelled Ward when she sought to avoid violating her religious beliefs by referring a potential client to another counselor. In January, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit ruled in her favor.
>
> "Public universities shouldn't force students to violate their religious beliefs to get a degree. The 6th Circuit rightly understood this and ruled appropriately, so the university has done the right thing in settling this case," said Senior Legal Counsel Jeremy Tedesco, who argued before the court in October of last year. "When Julea sought to refer a potential client to another qualified counselor–a common, professional practice that is endorsed by her profession's code of ethics–EMU denied the referral. Then it attacked and questioned her religious beliefs, ultimately expelling her from the program. We are pleased that Julea and her constitutionally protected rights have been vindicated."
>
> EMU initiated its disciplinary process against Ward shortly after she enrolled in a counseling practicum course in January 2009, when she was assigned a potential client seeking assistance regarding a sexual relationship that was contrary to Ward's religious convictions. Ward recognized the potential conscience issue with the client and asked a supervisor how to handle the matter. The supervisor advised Ward to reassign the potential client to a different counselor. EMU then informed Ward that she could only stay in the counseling program if she agreed to undergo a "remediation" program. Its purpose was to help her "see the error of her ways" and change her "belief system" as it relates to counseling about homosexual relationships.
>
> In a strongly worded opinion in *Ward v. Wilbanks*, the 6th Circuit reversed the district court decision in favor of the university and sent the case back for trial, saying, "a reasonable jury could conclude that Ward's professors ejected her from the counseling program because of hostility toward her speech and faith…." Moreover, the decision notes, "A university cannot compel a student to alter or violate her belief systems based on a phantom policy as the price for obtaining a

> degree.”

When I read this story, it made me think of all the other students who went along quietly with whatever left-wing political correctness the university wanted to indoctrinate them with, just so they could pass and get their degrees. I don’t think it’s an accident that this happened in a non-STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) field, either. That’s where the left is the strongest – in the areas of study that are the least rooted in reality.

Michigan governor Rick Snyder signs right-to-work bill into law

December 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

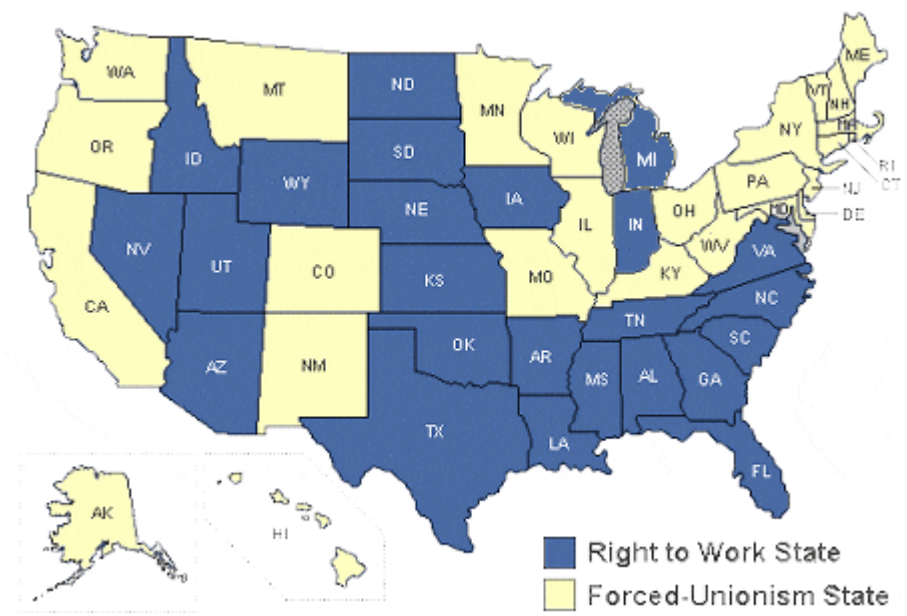

Map of right-to-work states: Michigan is #24

It's official – Michigan has enacted a new right-to-work law that will create more jobs and free workers from having to violate their consciences by forcibly supporting pro-abortion, pro-gay marriage policies via their mandatory union dues.

Here's an interesting article by Byron York in the Washington Examiner, discussing the political significance of this development.

Excerpt:

> Republicans say the move would not only give current workers the freedom to choose whether to join a union and pay dues but would, more importantly, bring many, many new jobs to Michigan. Rep. Gov. Rick Snyder, who supports the bill, points out that Indiana enacted (after a long and bitter fight) the same kind of law earlier this year. "We've carefully watched what's gone on in Indiana since they passed similar legislation back in February," Snyder told Fox News' Greta van Susteren last week, "and they've seen a significant increase in the number of companies talking about [bringing] thousands of jobs to their state."
>
> Of course, the move is not just economic. It's political, too. Democrats depend on millions — actually, billions — of dollars in support from the forced dues of union members. If that money supply were to dry up, or even just decrease, the Democratic Party would be in serious trouble.

De-funding the unions is the first step to education reform. And Michigan students need education reform very badly. Even 40% of the union workers – who are much more sensible and patriotic than the union bosses – agree with the new law:

> Regardless of news reports, the people of Michigan are behind this. A recent poll showed that 51 percent of Michigan voters support right-to-work. Only 41 percent are opposed. In fact, 40 percent of union households supported it. In November, Michigan voters rejected a ballot proposal that would have amended the state constitution to prevent the legislature from passing a right-to-work law and elevated union contracts above state law. *The New York Times* called it "a test case on enshrining the rights of unions," and unions spent more than $23 million campaigning for the initiative. It lost by 15 points.
>
> […][M]aking union dues voluntary makes union organizers less aggressive—they get less financial benefit from organizing new firms, because they cannot force workers to pay them. Union organizing attempts drop 40 percent to 50 percent after states pass a right-to-work law. That in turn attracts business investment. Employers want to know unions will leave them alone if they treat their workers well. As a result, right-to-work states have lower unemployment rates—and more manufacturing jobs.

CNS News reports that only 7% of Detroit public school 8th graders can read at proficiency level.

Excerpt:

> In the public schools in Detroit, Mich., according to the U.S. Department of Education, only 7 percent of the eighth graders are grade-level proficient or better in reading.
>
> Some public school teachers in the City of Detroit and around the state of Michigan are reportedly taking a vacation or a sick day today to protest right-to-work legislation likely to be approved by the state legislature. Under current law, Michigan public school teachers must pay dues to the teachers' union. If the right-to-work law is enacted, Michigan public-school teachers will be free to join the union and pay dues to it if they wish, but they will also be free not to join the union and not to pay it dues.
>
> Detroit public-school eighth graders do even worse in math than they do in reading, according to the Department of Education. While only 7 percent scored highly enough on the department's National Assessment of Educational Progress test in 2011 to be rated "proficient" or better in reading, only 4 percent scored highly enough to be rated "proficient" or better in math.
>
> Statewide in Michigan, only 32 percent of public-school eighth graders scored grade-level proficient or better in reading, and only 31 percent scored grade-level proficient or better in math.

According to this report, over 26,000 students missed school because of the "sick day" protest by the teachers.

Here's a video of what happens at the protests:

The actual unemployment rate of right-to-work states is 6.7%. Compare that with the 8.7% unemployment rate of forced-unionism states. Jobs are the number one priority right now, and right-to-work means more jobs.

Related posts

- Michigan approves right-to-work law for private sector unions
- Twinkies company liquidates due to demands of greedy labor union
- Indiana passes right-to-work law and is now open for business – and jobs
- Do right-to-work or forced union states create more high-paying jobs?
- What is a “right-to-work” law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Florida Republicans ban automatic deduction of union dues
- Republicans introduce national right-to-work legislation
- Ohio Republicans pass bill to cut bloated union salaries and benefits

Obama administration gives 20 upgraded F-16D fighter aircraft to Islamists in Egypt

December 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Egyptian F-16D Falcon: A gift for Morsi from Obama

Dad sent me this article from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Instability in Egypt, where a newly-elected Islamic government teeters over an angry population, isn't enough to stop the U.S. from sending more than 20 F-16 fighter jets, as part of a $1 billion foreign aid package.
>
> […]"Should an overreaction [by Egypt] spiral into a broader conflict between Egypt and Israel, such a scenario would put U.S. officials in an embarrassing position of having supplied massive amounts of military hardware … to both belligerents," said Malou Innocent, a foreign policy analyst at the Cato Institute. "Given Washington's fiscal woes, American taxpayers should no longer be Egypt's major arms supplier."
>
> […]The $213 million order, which is paid for by U.S. taxpayers and is part of Egypt's foreign aid package from America, had to be approved by lawmakers in Washington.While the basic F-16 has been a military workhorse for top air forces for more than 25 years, the cockpit electronics are constantly updated and the models Egypt is getting are the best defense contractor Lockheed Martin makes.

I'm not a big fan of F-16 Falcons in the air superiority role, but they do a fairly good job at air-to-ground strike missions. Egypt is getting the latest "D" variant, which has upgraded sensors and fire control. You don't just hand these out to Islamic dictators for free, especially during a recession.

William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?

December 12, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the details of the debate that I got from Cloud of Witnesses:

> The OSU [Oregon State University] Socratic Club will sponsor a public dialogue entitled, "Two Philosophers Debate the Existence of God," on Monday, March 1, at 7 p.m. in the LaSells Stewart Center on the OSU campus. William Lane Craig will argue for the Christian view that a personal God exists and Victor J. Stenger the atheist position that there is no God.

In this debate, Victor Stenger does affirm his belief that the universe could be eternal in his second rebuttal (1:02:30), thus denying the standard Big Bang cosmology. He also denies the law of conservation of energy and asserts that something can come from nothing in his concluding speech (1:33:50). He also caused the audience to start laughing when he said that Jesus was not moral and supported slavery. There is almost no snark in this summary. Instead, I quoted Dr. Stenger *verbatim* in many places. I still think that it is very entertaining even without the snarky paraphrasing.

The debate includes 30 minutes of Q&A with the students.

Here is the MP3 file for the audio.

Here's the video of the debate:

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

- The ontological argument
- The contingency argument
- The cosmological argument
- The moral argument
- The resurrection of Jesus (3-fact version)
- Religious experience

Dr. Stenger's opening speech:

- There is no scientific evidence for God's existence in the textbooks
- There is no scientific evidence for God acting in the universe
- God doesn't talk to people and tell them things they couldn't possibly know
- The Bible says that the Earth is flat, etc.
- There is no scientific evidence that God answers prayers
- God doesn't exist because people who believe in him are ignorant
- Human life is not optimally designed and appears to be the result of a blind, ad hoc evolutionary process
- The beginning of the universe is not ordered (low entropy) but random and chaotic

- It’s theoretically possible that quantum tunneling explains the origin of the universe
- The laws of physics are not objectively real, they are “our inventions”
- Regarding the beginning of the universe, the explanation is that something came from nothing*
- Nothing* isn’t really nothing, it is “the total chaos that we project existed just before the big bang”
- If something has no structure, then “it is as much nothing as nothing can be”
- Consciousness is explainable solely on the basis of material processes
- There are well-informed, rational non-believers in the world and God would not allow that

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

Stenger’s argument that there is no objective evidence for God’s existence:

- First, it is not required that God rely only on objective evidence in order to draw people to himself (Alvin Plantinga)
- Second, God is not required to provide evidence to everyone, only to the people who he knows would respond to him
- Third, Craig gave lots of objective evidence, from science, history and philosophy
- Stenger asks for certain evidence (answered prayers, prophecy, etc.), but Craig presented the evidence we have

Stenger’s argument that the balance of energy is zero so “nothing” exists:

- if you have the same amount of assets and liabilities, it doesn’t mean that nothing exists – your assets and liabilities exist
- Christopher Isham says that there needs to be a cause to create the positive and negative energy even if they balance
- the quantum gravity model contradicts observations
- the vacuum is not the same as nothing, it contains energy and matter
- the BVG theorem proves that *any* universe that is expanding must have a beginning

Stenger’s argument that mental operations can be reduced to physical operations:

- mental properties are not reducible to physical properties
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with self-identity over time
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with thoughts about other things
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with free will
- substance dualism (mind/body dualism) is a better explanation for our mental experience
- God is a soul without a body

Dr. Stenger’s first rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- Craig's premise is "everything has a cause", but quantum mechanics has causeless events
- There are speculative theories about how something could have come into being uncaused out of nothing
- "I don't know of a single working cosmologist today who believes there was a singularity prior to the Big Bang"
- "If there wasn't a singularity then there's no basis for arguing that time began at that point"
- "There's no reason from cosmology that we know of that the universe can't be eternal"
- "When I talk about an eternal universe, I mean a universe that has no beginning or end"
- The Hartle-Hawking model doesn't have a beginning
- "There was no violation of energy conservation by having a universe coming from nothing"
- "The universe *could have* come from a previous universe for example or even just from a region of chaos"
- The paper by Vilenkin is counteracted by other papers (he doesn't specify which ones)

Craig's moral argument:

- Dr. Craig is arguing from ignorance
- But morality can be decided by humanity just like governments pass laws, and that's objective
- Dr. Craig has too little respect for the human intellect
- I don't need to tell me that slavery is wrong
- The Bible supports slavery
- Atheists can behave as good as theists
- Morality just evolved naturally as an aid to survival

Craig's resurrection argument:

- No Roman historians wrote about the execution of Jesus but none of them did
- The empty tomb is doubtful because it is only mentioned in the gospels, not by Paul
- John Dominic Crossan says there was no empty tomb
- Christianity only survived because the Roman empire thought that they were useful

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

Craig's cosmological argument:

- There is no reason to prefer an indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics
- Dr. Stenger himself wrote that deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics are possible

- The vacuum in quantum mechanics is not nothing
- The quantum vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal
- The cosmological argument does not require a singularity
- The Hartle-Hawking model is from 1983
- Hawking says that there is a beginning of space and time *after* that model
- The Hartle-Hawking model *does still have a beginning of time* – the model is not eternal
- The BVG theorem that requires a beginning for expanding universes is widely accepted among cosmologists

Craig's moral argument:

- Stenger redefined objective to mean that most people agree with it – but that's not what objective means
- Objective means right and wrong whether anyone accepts it or not
- Richard Dawkins himself says that on atheism there is "no evil and no good" – why is he wrong?
- Even Dr. Stenger says that morality is the same as passing laws – it's arbitrary and varies by time and place
- But on his view, right and wrong are the same as deciding which side of the road to drive on
- But somethings really are right and some things are really wrong

Craig's resurrection argument:

- Josephus is a Roman historian and he wrote about Jesus, for example
- There were four biographies of Jesus are the best sources for his life
- The scholars that Stenger mentioned are on the radical fringe

Dr. Stenger's second rebuttal:

Knowledge and the burden of proof:

- Dr. Craig has to bear the burden of proof, not me – because his claim is more "extravagant"
- "I don't have to prove that a God was not necessary to create the universe"
- "I don't have to prove that a God did not design the universe and life"
- "I don't have to prove that the universe did not have a beginning"
- "I don't have to prove that God did not provide us with our moral sense"
- There are a lot of books written about how morality evolved naturally
- "I don't have to prove that the events surrounding the supposed resurrection of Jesus did not take place"
- Bart Ehrman says that the gospels are generally unreliable (Note: Ehrman accepts all 3 of Craig's minimal facts)
- Just because people are willing to die for a cause, does not make their leader God,

e.g. – the Emperor of Japan

Aesthetic concerns about the universe:

- I don't like dark matter and I wouldn't have made the universe with dark matter
- I don't like the doctrine of penal substitution
- I don't like the doctrine of original sin
- I don't like the heat death of the universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion:

The case for atheism:

- Dr. Stenger had two arguments and he has to support his premises
- Dr. Craig addressed his two arguments and each premise and Dr. Stenger never came back on it

The contingency argument:

- Dr. Stenger has dropped the refutation of this argument

The cosmological argument:

- The theoretical vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal

The moral argument:

- He asserts that things are wrong, but there is no grounding for that to be objective on atheism

The resurrection of Jesus:

- There are surveys of scholars on the empty tomb and 75% of them agree with it
- Bart Ehrman agrees with all 3 of the minimal facts that Dr. Craig presented
- Ehrman's objection to the resurrection is not historical: he's an atheist – he thinks miracles are impossible

Religious experience:

- No response from Dr. Stenger

Dr. Stenger's conclusion

The cosmological argument:

- "I argued that we have very good physical reasons to understand how something can come from nothing"
- "There is a natural tendency in the universe… to go from.. simpler thing to the more complicated thing"

- The transition from a vapor to a liquid to ice shows how something could come from nothing
- “It cannot be proven that the universe had a beginning”

The moral argument:

- Objective morality, which is independent of what people think, could be developed based on what people think
- “Jesus himself was not a tremendously moral person… he had no particular regard for the poor… he certainly supported slavery… he was for the subjugation of women” (audience laughter)

The resurrection argument:

- Bart Ehrman says that the majority of the gospels are unreliable

Religious experience:

- I don’t see any evidence that there is anything more to religious experience than just stuff in their heads

God’s purpose of the world should be to make people feel happy:

- God could have made people feel happier
- God could have made people not die
- God could could have made the universe smaller: it’s too big
- God could have made it possible for humans to live anywhere “even in space”

Unemployment rates are lower and wages are higher in right-to-work states

December 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

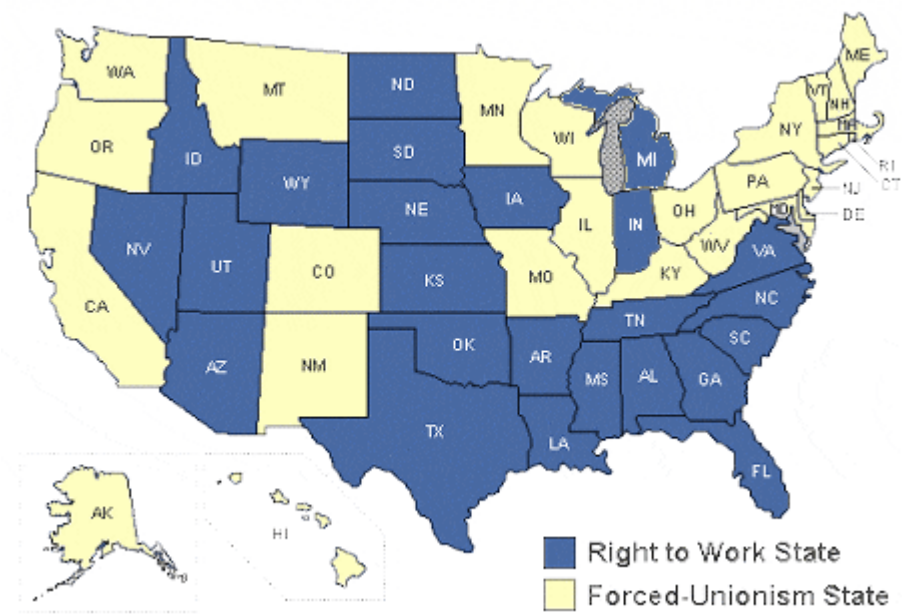

Map of right-to-work states: Michigan is #24

Previously, we saw that unemployment rates in right-to-work states were MUCH lower than in states that force workers to join unions and pay union dues in order to work.

Curtis sent me this article from Investors Business Daily, which looks at whether wages are lower in states that have right-to-work laws.

Excerpt:

> The president says right-to-work laws mean "the right to work for less money." So how does he explain the fact that incomes are up in RTW states while forced unionism is a proven job killer?
>
> Campaigning Monday in Michigan as it stood poised to become the nation's 24th right-to-work state, President Obama spoke the exact opposite of the truth to union workers at a Daimler Detroit Diesel plant in the birthplace of organized labor.

Is Obama telling the truth?

Let's see:

> According to Michigan's Mackinac Center, using data taken from the Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of Labor Statistics, private-sector, inflation-adjusted employee compensation in right-to-work states increased by 12% between 2001 and 2011 compared with just 3% over the same period in forced-unionization states.
>
> These good wages came from good jobs. Employment in right-to-work states

> expanded 2.4% over the same stretch vs. a 3.4% decline in non-right-to-work states. Ironically, Obama is taking credit for jobs created in RTW states.
>
> According to the National Institute for Labor Relations Research, right-to-work states (excluding Indiana, which passed a RTW law in early 2012) "were responsible for 72% of all net household job growth across the U.S. from June 2009 through September 2012."
>
> This is why people vote with their feet and move to these states. RTW states experienced large population gains of 15.3% from 2000 to 2010, compared to 5.9% in non-RTW states.
>
> Obama did get one thing right, though, when he said the bills that passed both houses of the Michigan legislature "don't have to do with economics. They have everything to do with politics."
>
> The president who fought Boeing's expansion in RTW South Carolina knows it's all about his keeping union dues flowing into Democratic coffers and maintaining the plush lifestyles of the union leaders who support him.

The right thing for Republicans to do when they get elected is to cut off all sources of funding for the Democrat Party. Right-to-work laws and school choice promote freedom and diminish the amount of power that left-wing, pro-abortion, pro-gay-marriage labor unions can exert. They will have less money, and with less money, they will have less influence on elections. Let the people decide, not the powerful, corrupt labor unions.

Related posts

- Michigan governor Rick Snyder signs right-to-work bill into law
- Michigan approves right-to-work law for private sector unions
- Twinkies company liquidates due to demands of greedy labor union
- Indiana passes right-to-work law and is now open for business – and jobs
- Do right-to-work or forced union states create more high-paying jobs?
- What is a "right-to-work" law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Florida Republicans ban automatic deduction of union dues
- Republicans introduce national right-to-work legislation
- Ohio Republicans pass bill to cut bloated union salaries and benefits

Single mothers are better off with a $29,000 job and welfare than with a $69,000 job

December 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

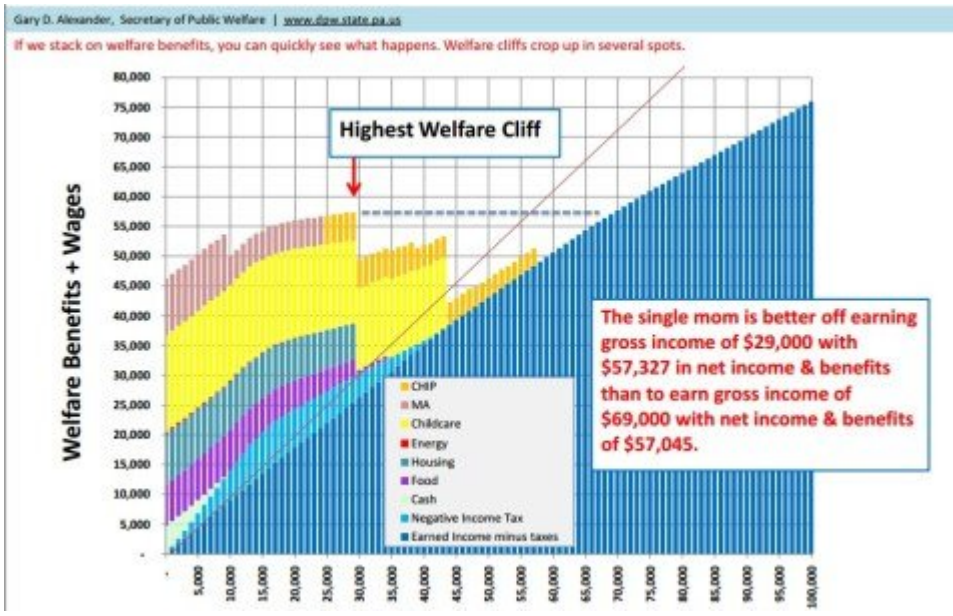

Socialism subsidizes single motherhood by choice
(click for larger image)

James Pethokoukis of the American Enterprise Institute explains how the welfare state discourages women from getting married before they have children.

Excerpt:

> The U.S. welfare system sure creates some crazy disincentives to working your way up the ladder. Benefits stacked upon benefits can mean it is financially better, at least in the short term, to stay at a lower-paying jobs rather than taking a higher paying job and losing those benefits. This is called the "welfare cliff."
>
> Let's take the example of a single mom with two kids, 1 and 4. She has a $29,000 a year job, putting the kids in daycare during the day while she works.
>
> As the above chart – via Gary Alexander, Pennsylvania's secretary of Public Welfare — shows, the single mom is better off earning gross income of $29,000 with $57,327 in net income and benefits than to earn gross income of $69,000 with net income & benefits of $57,045.
>
> It would sure be tempting for that mom to keep the status quo rather than take the new job, even though the new position might lead to further career advancement and a higher standard of living. I guess this is something the Obama White House forgot to mention in its "Life of Julia" cartoons extolling government assistance.

Fatherlessness is absolutely horrible for children across the board. Not just in terms of their development, but also their material well-being and their physical safety.

Fatherlessness is a loss in three ways for children. The federal government should NOT be taking money from good married households and transferring it to women who decline to marry before choosing to have reckless, irresponsible recreational sex.

Kevin DeYoung's article opposing gay marriage has broad appeal

December 13, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

In my own secular case against gay marriage from last year, I argued for 3 points:

- same-sex marriage is bad for liberty, especially religious liberty
- same-sex marriage is bad for children
- same-sex marriage is bad for public health

My hope when I wrote that was that pastors and other Christian leaders would learn to argue for what the Bible says by using evidence from *outside* the Bible, so that they would be able to appeal to *more* people instead of only appealing to the minority of people who accept the Bible. I think that Christians who argue for their views by citing the Bible only will only be convincing to people who already accept the Bible. But there is not a majority of people who do accept the Bible as an authority, so I think that pastors have to make another plan. They need to argue using the Bible to those who accept the Bible, and without the Bible to those who don't accept it.

Now with that said, take a look at this article by pastor Kevin DeYoung that Dina sent me. It's from earlier this week. The article makes the same exact three points as I made in my article last year. Let's take a look at how Kevin does that.

My first point was liberty, especially religious liberty. He writes:

> [I]n the long run, the triumph of gay marriage (should it triumph as a cultural and legal reality) will mean the restriction of freedoms for millions of Americans.
>
> This will happen in obvious ways at first–by ostracizing those who disagree, by bullying with political correctness, and by trampling on religious liberty. Surely, Christians must realize that no matter how many caveats we issue, not matter how much we nuance our stance, no matter how much we encourage or show compassion for homosexuals, it will not be enough to ward off the charges of

> hatred and homophobia.
>
> [G]ay marriage will challenge our freedoms in others way too. It's not just Evangelicals, traditional Catholics, and Mormons who will be threatened. Once the government gains new powers, it rarely relinquishes them. There will be a soft tyranny that grows as the power of the state increases, a growth that is intrinsic to the notion of gay marriage itself.

My second point was bad for children. He writes:

> [T]he state has an interest in promoting the familial arrangement which has a mother and a father raising the children that came from their union. The state has been in the marriage business for the common good and for the well-being of the society it is supposed to protect. Kids do better with a mom and a dad. Communities do better when husbands and wives stay together. Hundreds of studies confirm both of these statements (though we all can think of individual exceptions I'm sure). Gay marriage assumes that marriage is re-definable and the moving parts replaceable.

My third point was bad for public health. He writes:

> The unspoken secret, however, is that homosexual behavior is not harmless. Homosexuals are at a far greater risk for diseases like syphilis, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, gonorrhea, HPV, and gay bowel syndrome. The high rate of these diseases is due both to widespread promiscuity in the gay community and the nature of anal and oral intercourse itself. Homosexual relationships are usually portrayed as a slight variation on the traditional "norm" of husband-wife monogamy. But monogamy is much less common among homosexual relationships, and even for those who value monogamy the definition of fidelity is much looser.

He also talks about the definition of marriage, and more.

I've criticized pastors before for dealing with social issues by only citing the Bible, like John Piper does. That approach won't work on enough people to change society, because not enough people consider the Bible to be an authority in their decision-making. We have to use evidence from outside the Bible – like Wayne Grudem does in his "Politics According to the Bible".

I think that pastor Kevin's article is quality work, because it follows the pattern of taking an all-of-the-above approach to persuasion. He uses all means to persuade so that he might win some over to his side. I hope that many more pastors will do the same thing on this issue of marriage and other issues – even fiscal issues. Fiscal issues do have an impact on moral issues – think of how abortion subsidies and single mother welfare lower the penalties of recreational premarital sex. We can do this, we just have to do what works, instead of what makes us feel "holier-than-thou".

Can Darwinian evolution create new functional biological information?

December 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a great article from Evolution News that explains the trouble that Darwinian evolution has in building up to functional new biological information by using a process of random mutation and natural selection.

Casey Luskin takes a look at a peer-reviewed paper that claims that Darwinian evolution can do the job of creating new information, then he explains what's wrong with the paper.

Excerpt:

> In Wilf and Ewens's evolutionary scheme there is a smooth fitness function. Under this view, there is no epistasis, where one mutation can effectively interact with another to affect (whether positively or negatively) fitness. As a result, any mutations that move the search toward its "target" are assumed to provide an immediate and irrevocable advantage, and are thus highly likely to become fixed. Ewert *et al.* compare the model to playing *Wheel of Fortune*:
>
> The evolutionary model that Wilf and Ewens have chosen is similar to the problem of guessing letters in a word or phrase, as on the television game show *Wheel of Fortune*. They specify a phrase 20,000 letters long, with each letter in the phrase corresponding to a gene locus that can be transformed from its initial "primitive" state to a more advanced state. Finding the correct letter for a particular position in the target phrase roughly corresponds to finding a beneficial mutation in the corresponding gene. During each round of mutation all positions in the phrase are subject to mutation, and the results are selected based on whether the individual positions match the final target phrase. Those that match are preserved for the next round. … After each round, all "advanced" alleles in the population are treated as fixed, and therefore preserved in the next round. Evolution to the fully "advanced" state is complete when all 20,000 positions match the target phrase.

The problem with this approach is that a string of biological information that has only some letters that are part of a useful sequence has no *present function*, and therefore cannot survive and reproduce.

Look:

> **Thus, Wilf and Ewens ignore the problem of non-functional intermediates. They assume that all intermediate stages will be functional, or lead to some functional advantage. But is this how all fitness functions look? Not necessarily. It's well known that in many instances, no benefit is derived until multiple mutations are present all at once. In such a case, there's no evolutionary advantage until multiple**

> **mutations are present. The "correct" mutations might occur in parallel, but the odds of this happening are extremely low.** Ewert *et al.* illustrate this problem in the model by using the example of the difficulty of one phrase evolving into another:
>
> Suppose it would be beneficial for the phrase
>
> "all_the_world_is_a_stage___"
>
> to evolve into the phrase
>
> "methinks_it_is_like_a_weasel."
>
> What phrase do we get if we simply alternate letters from the two phrases?
>
> "mlt_ihk__otli__siaesaaw_a_e_."
>
> Under the assumptions in the Wilf and Ewens model, the "fitness" of this nonsense phrase ought to be exactly half-way between the fitnesses of "all the world is a stage" and "methinks it is like a weasel." Such a result only makes sense if we are measuring the fitness of the current phrase by its proximity to the target phrase.
>
> But the gibberish of the intermediate phrase doesn't cause any problem under Wilf and Ewens's model. Not unlikeRichard Dawkins, they assume that intermediate stages will always yield some functional advantage. And as more and more characters in the phrase match the target, it becomes more and more fit. This yields a nice, smooth fitness function — rich in active information — not truly a blind search.

Not only is there that first problem, but here's a second:

> Wilf and Ewens endowed their mathematical model of evolution with foresight. It is directed toward a target — an advantage that natural selection conspicuously lacks. And what, in our experience, is the only known cause that is goal-directed and has foresight? It's intelligence. This means that once again, the Evolutionary Informatics Lab has shown that simulations of evolution seem to work only because they've been intelligently designed.

This is worth the read. If Darwinian mechanisms really could generate code, then there would be no software engineers. The truth is, the mechanisms don't work to create new information. For that, you need an intelligent designer.

How would redefining marriage affect your marriage?

December 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An interesting article by Ryan T. Anderson appeared on Ricochet.

First, a bit about the author.

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education as the William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society at The Heritage Foundation. He also has expertise in bioethics, marriage, religious liberty and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined Heritage's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work focuses on the moral and constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012). The three also co-wrote the article "What is Marriage?" in the winter 2011 issue of *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*.
>
> […]Anderson received his bachelor of arts degree from Princeton University, graduating*Phi Beta Kappa* and *magna cum laude.* He is a doctoral candidate in political philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, where he received his master's degree.

The point I wanted to pull out his piece on Ricochet was that gay activists admit that one of the motives for redefining marriage is to destroy central aspects of traditional marriage, such as monogamy, sexual exclusivity and pledged permanence.

He writes:

> Redefining marriage would abandon the norm of male-female sexual complementarity as an essential characteristic of marriage. Making that optional would also make other essential characteristics—like monogamy, exclusivity and permanency—optional, as my co-authors and I argue in our new book, *What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*. We also show how it is increasingly confirmed by the rhetoric and arguments of those who would redefine marriage ("revisionists") and by the policies that their more candid leaders increasingly embrace. Indeed, several commentators on Tuesday's post explicitly jettisoned monogamy, sexual exclusivity and pledged permanence as demands of marriage.
>
> Consider the norm of monogamy. In testifying before Congress against the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), prominent New York University professor Judith

> Stacey expressed hope that the revisionist view's triumph would give marriage "varied, creative and adaptive contours . . . [leading some to] question the dyadic limitations of Western marriage and seek . . . small group marriages."
>
> In their statement "Beyond Same-Sex Marriage," more than 300 self-styled LGBT and allied scholars and advocates—including prominent Ivy League professors—call for legally recognizing sexual relationships involving more than two partners. University of Calgary professor Elizabeth Brake argues in her book *Minimizing Marriage* that justice requires using legal recognition to "denormalize the ideal of heterosexual monogamy" and correct for "past discrimination against homosexuals, bisexuals, polygamists and care networks."
>
> And exclusivity? Andrew Sullivan, who has extolled the "spirituality" of "anonymous sex," writes in his book *Virtually Normal* that the "openness" of same-sex relationships could enhance the bonds of husbands and wives:
>
> Same-sex unions often incorporate the virtues of friendship more effectively than traditional marriages; and at times, among gay male relationships, the openness of the contract makes it more likely to survive than many heterosexual bonds. . . . [T]here is more likely to be greater understanding of the need for extramarital outlets between two men than between a man and a woman. . . . [S]omething of the gay relationship's necessary honesty, its flexibility, and its equality could undoubtedly help strengthen and inform many heterosexual bonds.
>
> Similarly, in a *New York Times* Magazine profile titled "Married, With Infidelities", Dan Savage encourages spouses to adopt "a more flexible attitude" about allowing each other to seek sex outside their marriage. A piece titled "Monogamish" in *The Advocate*, a gay-interest newsmagazine, supports this point still more candidly:
>
> Anti-equality right-wingers have long insisted that allowing gays to marry will destroy the sanctity of "traditional marriage," and, of course, the logical, liberal party-line response has long been "No, it won't." But what if—for once—the sanctimonious crazies are right? Could the gay male tradition of open relationships actually alter marriage as we know it? And would that be such a bad thing?
>
> As the article's blurb reads: "We often protest when homophobes insist that same-sex marriage will change marriage for straight people too. But in some ways, they're right."
>
> These are the words of leading supporters of same-sex marriage. If you believe in monogamy and exclusivity—and the benefits these bring to orderly procreation and child wellbeing—but would redefine civil marriage, take note.

I wrote before about how feminism debased marriage, and same-sex marriage should be viewed as phase two of the radical feminist enterprise. Surprise! These left-wing groups don't like natural, traditional marriage.

J.W. Wartick reviews new apologetics book “Cold Case Christianity”

December 14, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s the book review up at Always Have a Reason.

Here’s his introduction:

> I’ll forego the preliminaries here and just say it: *this is the best introductory apologetics book in regards to the historicity of the Gospels I have ever read*. If you are looking for a book in that area, get it now. If you are not looking for a book in that area, get it anyway because it is that good. Now, on to the details.
>
> *Cold-Case Christianity* by J. Warner Wallace maps out an investigative journey through Christian history. How did we get the Gospels? Can we trust them? Who was Jesus? Do we know anything about Him? Yet the way that Wallace approaches this question will draw even those who do not care about these topics into the mystery. As a cold-case homicide detective, Wallace approaches these questions with a detective’s eye, utilizing his extensive knowledge of the gathering and evaluation of evidence to investigate Christianity forensically.

And here’s his method in the book – building a cumulative case with circumstantial evidence:

> Chapter 3, “Think Circumstantially” is perhaps the central chapter for the whole book. Wallace notes that what is necessary in order to provide evidence “beyond a reasonable doubt” is not necessarily “direct evidence.” That is, direct evidence–the type of evidence which can prove something all by itself (i.e. seeing it rain outside as proof for it actually raining)–is often thought of to be the standard for truth. Yet if this were the standard for truth, then we would hardly be able to believe anything. The key is to notice that a number of indirect evidences can add up to make the case. **For example, if a suspected murderer is known to have had the victim’s key, spot cleaned pants (suspected blood stains), matches the height and weight a witness saw leaving the scene of the crime, has boots that matched the description, was nervous during the interview and changed his story, has a baseball bat (a bat was the murder weapon) which has also been bleached and is dented, and the like, these can add up to a very compelling case (57ff). Any one of these evidences would not lead one to say they could reasonably conclude the man was the murderer, but added together they provide a case which pushes the case beyond a reasonable doubt–the man was the murderer.**

J.W. goes over a bunch of the evidence that composes the bulk of the book, then writes

this:

> **All of these examples are highlighted by real-world stories from Wallace's work as a detective. These stories highlight the importance of the various features of an investigator's toolkit that Wallace outlined above. They play out from various viewpoints as well: some show the perspective of a juror, while others are from the detectives stance.** Every one of them is used masterfully by Wallace to illustrate how certain principles play out in practice. Not only that, but they are all riveting. Readers–even those who are hostile to Christianity–will be drawn in by these examples. It makes reading the book similar to reading a suspense novel, such that readers will not want to put it down. For example, when looking at distinguishing between possible/reasonable, he uses a lengthy illustration of finding a dead body and eliminating various explanations for the cause of death through observations like "having a knife in the back" as making it much less probable that accidental death is a reasonable explanation, despite being possible.

Regular readers will know that I have featured J. Warner Wallace's work a lot on this blog, and that's mostly because I love the way that he has a real day job as a detective. I think that I do get annoyed when Christians talk abotu Christianity in a kind of subjective, inside-baseball way. Detective Wallace doesn't do that – he talks about these things like he might talk about any other subjective. Not skirting over difficulties, not being credulous, but just being a detective. He's used to having to convince juries, so he knows how to talk to people in a persuasive way.

How much wealth do the poor in America have?

December 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A recently published paper from the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> Each year for the past two decades, the U.S. Census Bureau has reported that over 30 million Americans were living in "poverty." In recent years, the Census has reported that one in seven Americans are poor. But what does it mean to be "poor" in America? How poor are America's poor?
>
> For most Americans, the word "poverty" suggests destitution: an inability to provide a family with nutritious food, clothing, and reasonable shelter. For example, the Poverty Pulse poll taken by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development asked the general public: "How would you describe being poor in the U.S.?" The overwhelming majority of responses focused on homelessness, hunger or not being able to eat properly, and not being able to meet basic needs.[1] That perception is bolstered by news stories about poverty that routinely feature homelessness and hunger.
>
> Yet if poverty means lacking nutritious food, adequate warm housing, and clothing for a family, relatively few of the more than 30 million people identified as being "in poverty" by the Census Bureau could be characterized as poor.[2] While material hardship definitely exists in the United States, it is restricted in scope and severity. The average poor person, as defined by the government, has a living standard far higher than the public imagines.
>
> As scholar James Q. Wilson has stated, "The poorest Americans today live a better life than all but the richest persons a hundred years ago."[3] In 2005, the typical household defined as poor by the government had a car and air conditioning. For entertainment, the household had two color televisions, cable or satellite TV, a DVD player, and a VCR. If there were children, especially boys, in the home, the family had a game system, such as an Xbox or a PlayStation.[4] In the kitchen, the household had a refrigerator, an oven and stove, and a microwave. Other household conveniences included a clothes washer, clothes dryer, ceiling fans, a cordless phone, and a coffee maker.
>
> The home of the typical poor family was not overcrowded and was in good repair. In fact, the typical poor American had more living space than the average European. The typical poor American family was also able to obtain medical care when needed. By its own report, the typical family was not hungry and had sufficient funds during the past year to meet all essential needs.
>
> Poor families certainly struggle to make ends meet, but in most cases, they are struggling to pay for air conditioning and the cable TV bill as well as to put food on the table. Their living standards are far different from the images of dire

> deprivation promoted by activists and the mainstream media.
>
> Regrettably, annual Census reports not only exaggerate current poverty, but also suggest that the number of poor persons[5] and their living conditions have remained virtually unchanged for four decades or more. In reality, the living conditions of poor Americans have shown significant improvement over time.

These are the people that the elites on the left are constantly making us feel guilty about. But keep in mind that it is very easy to avoid poverty in America (link no longer active). A person just has to make four decisions, as economist Walter Williams explains.

Excerpt:

> Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And, finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior.
>
> If you graduate from high school today with a B or C average, in most places in our country there's a low-cost or financially assisted post-high-school education program available to increase your skills.
>
> Most jobs start with wages higher than the minimum wage, which is currently $5.15. A man and his wife, even earning the minimum wage, would earn $21,000 annually. According to the Bureau of Census, in 2003, the poverty threshold for one person was $9,393, for a two-person household it was $12,015, and for a family of four it was $18,810. Taking a minimum-wage job is no great shakes, but it produces an income higher than the Bureau of Census' poverty threshold. Plus, having a job in the first place increases one's prospects for a better job.
>
> The Children's Defense Fund and civil rights organizations frequently whine about the number of black children living in poverty. In 1999, the Bureau of the Census reported that 33.1 percent of black children lived in poverty compared with 13.5 percent of white children. It turns out that race per se has little to do with the difference. Instead, it's welfare and single parenthood. When black children are compared to white children living in identical circumstances, mainly in a two-parent household, both children will have the same probability of being poor.
>
> How much does racial discrimination explain? So far as black poverty is concerned, I'd say little or nothing, which is not to say that every vestige of racial discrimination has been eliminated. But let's pose a few questions. Is it racial discrimination that stops black students from studying and completing high school? Is it racial discrimination that's responsible for the 68 percent illegitimacy rate among blacks?
>
> The 1999 Bureau of Census report might raise another racial discrimination question. Among black households that included a married couple, over 50 percent were middle class earning above $50,000, and 26 percent earned more than $75,000. How in the world did these black families manage not to be poor?

> Did America’s racists cut them some slack?

In America, poverty is self-inflicted. But that doesn’t mean that the Democrats don’t help the poor to stay poor.

Democrats wants to raise minimum wage, which promotes higher unemployment among younger workers – and more dependence on government programs. They want to subsidize single motherhood and enact no-fault divorce laws, to destroy marriage. And they want to push gay history and green propaganda in the public schools, to diminish the economic value of a high school education. They don’t want the poor to lift themselves out of poverty so that they are independent of government. Redistribution of wealth makes Democrats feel good about themselves – so they need the poor to stay poor. Democrats take money from the wealthy, causing them not to hire workers, and then give that money to the poor, so that they don’t need to work for anything.

Connecticut shooting shows why we need to ban gun-free zones

December 15, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

"Dang. Now what do we do?"

Do criminals about to do a mass shooting care about signs?
(Thanks to TM for the image)

USA Today has an editorial about the recent shooting in Connecticut and gun-free zones.

Excerpt:

> "After a shooting spree," author William Burroughs once said, "they always want to take the guns away from the people who didn't do it." Burroughs continued: "I sure as hell wouldn't want to live in a society where the only people allowed guns are the police and the military."
>
> Plenty of people — especially among America's political and journalistic classes — feel differently. They'd be much more comfortable seeing ordinary Americans disarmed. And whenever there is a mass shooting, or other gun incident that snags the headlines, they do their best to exploit the tragedy and push for laws that would, well, take the guns away from the people who didn't do it.
>
> There are a lot of problems with this approach, but one of the most significant is this one: It doesn't work. One of the interesting characteristics of mass shootings is that they generally occur in places where firearms are banned: malls, schools, etc. That was the finding of a famous 1999 study by John Lott of the University of Maryland and William Landes of the University of Chicago, and it appears to have

> been borne out by experience since then as well.
>
> In a way, this is no surprise. If there's someone present with a gun when a mass shooting begins, the shooter is likely to be shot himself. And, in fact, many mass shootings — from the high school shooting by Luke Woodham in Pearl, Miss., to the New Life Church shooting in Colorado Springs, Colo., where an armed volunteer shot the attacker — have been terminated when someone retrieved a gun from a car or elsewhere and confronted the shooter.
>
> Policies making areas "gun free" provide a sense of safety to those who engage in magical thinking, but in practice, of course, killers aren't stopped by gun-free zones. As always, it's the honest people — the very ones you want to be armed — who tend to obey the law.

Here's Dr. John R. Lott to make the case.

Excerpt:

> It wasn't supposed to happen in England, with its very strict gun-control laws. And yet last week, Derrick Bird shot twelve people to death and wounded eleven others in the northwestern county of Cumbria. A headline in the London Times read: "Toughest laws in the world could not stop Cumbria tragedy."
>
> But surely this was an aberration. Because America has the most guns, multiple-victim public shootings are an American thing, right? No, not at all. Contrary to public perception, Western Europe, most of whose countries have much tougher gun laws than the United States, has experienced many of the worst multiple-victim public shootings. Particularly telling, all the multiple-victim public shootings in Western Europe have occurred in places where civilians are not permitted to carry guns. The same is true in the United States: All the public shootings in which more than three people have been killed have occurred in places where civilians may not legally bring guns.
>
> Look at recent history. Where have the worst K–12 school shootings occurred? Nearly all of them in Europe. The very worst one occurred in a high school in Erfurt, Germany, in 2002, where 18 were killed. The second-worst took place in Dunblane, Scotland, in 1996, where 16 kindergartners and their teacher were killed. The third-worst, with 15 dead, happened in Winnenden, Germany. The fourth-worst was in the U.S. — Columbine High School in 1999, leaving 13 dead. The fifth-worst, with eleven murdered, occurred in Emsdetten, Germany.
>
> It may be a surprise to those who believe in gun control that Germany was home to three of the five worst attacks. Though not quite as tight as the U.K.'s regulations, Germany's gun-control laws are some of the most restrictive in Europe. German gun licenses are valid for only three years, and to obtain one, the person must demonstrate such hard-to-define characteristics as trustworthiness, and must also convince authorities that he needs a gun. This is on top of prohibitions on gun ownership for those with mental disorders, drug or

> alcohol addictions, violent or aggressive tendencies, or felony convictions.
>
> The phenomenon is not limited to school attacks. Multiple-victim public shootings in general appear to be at least as common in Western Europe as they are here. The following is a partial list of attacks since 2001. As mentioned, all of them occurred in gun-free zones — places where guns in the hands of civilians are outlawed.

He then lists about two dozen incidents – all occurring in gun free zones.

Related posts

- Police threatened to charge man who defended his wife with attempted murder
- Couple arrested for using legally-owned gun to defend home from burglars
- Armed bystander stops stabbing outside school
- Obama campaign contributor and gun control advocate ran Fast and Furious
- If you defend your home from armed intruders in the UK, you get arrested
- UK family arrested for defending their home from burglar
- Police warn UK woman for scaring away burglars with kitchen knife
- 61-year-old British man convicted for cutting up fruit with a Swiss Army knife
- Could tougher gun control laws lower the violent crime rate?
- Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home
- Crime rates in Chicago and DC drop after gun control laws are struck down
- Do gun control laws cause crime rates to go down?
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple victim shootings?
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Do guns reduce crime? Watch this debate and hear both sides
- Liberal MSNBC says that more legal firearm ownership reduces crime rates
- John Stossel makes the case against gun control in 6 minutes
- Formal debate on gun control featuring John Lott and Gary Kleck
- Tom Sowell on gun control and judicial activism
- Grandmother jailed for five years for owning family heirloom handgun
- Do gun-free zones prevent multiple-victim public shootings in Europe?
- Understanding how concealed carry laws save lives
- Why do people favor legal private ownership and concealed carry of handguns?

10 people shot on Friday in Chicago, the city with the strictest gun control laws

December 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Chicago Tribune: (H/T Doug Ross)

> Shootings across the city Friday afternoon and night wounded at least ten people, according to Chicago police, including four teens in three separate South and West side attacks.

The rest of the article has details on who was shot and where.

In August 2012, 13 people were shot in 30 minutes in Chicago.

Now, you might think that Chicago has some of the most permissive gun control laws in the country – especially if you were a leftist. But that's not the case. Chicago is run by an anti-gun radical named Rahm Emmanuel, and they basically have a de facto ban on guns in the entire city. So how is banning guns working for them?

Take a look at this CNS News article:

> There were 192 shootings in Chicago throughout the month of November – a 49 percent increase from a year earlier – according to police records obtained by the Chicago Tribune.
>
> In November of 2011, Chicago recorded 129 shootings compared to the 192 shootings this November. Police records also reveal that shootings increased more than 11 percent in the first 11 months of 2012 compared with a year earlier.
>
> Total homicides in Chicago rose to 480 for the first eleven months of 2012; a 21 percent increase from last year. On November 30, 2012, there were four fatal shootings within the city. These murders brought the homicide total to 38 for the month, just above the 37 recorded in November of last year.

Back in 2011, a ban on guns was overturned and crime rates were dropping. But then along came Rahm Emmanuel in 2012, pushing for gun registries and more gun control.

The policies of the left are not working. And that's because they are not looking at the root cause of crime.

Doug Ross explains:

> How much of the violence in Chicago that occurs each night is authored by kids without fathers?
>
> That's the question we should be asking. Only *that* question won't be asked and it won't be answered, because **it indicts the Democrat Party's failed policies on a monumental scale**.
>
> How many dead, crippled and imprisoned inner-city youths has "Great Society"

> left in its wake? Tens of thousands? Hundreds of thousands? Millions?
>
> How many have died thanks to "the War on Drugs", "the War on Guns", and "the War on Poverty"? **And how many more must die** before we reverse course on the Democrats' failed welfare state policies and their catastrophic impact on the two-parent family?

And he's not just making that up. Take a look at the evidence from National Review:

> A Detroit study found that about 70 percent of juvenile homicide perpetrators did not live with both parents. Another study found that of girls committed to the California Youth Authority (for serious delinquents), 93 percent came from non-intact homes. Nationally, seventy percent of youths incarcerated in state reform institutions come from single-parent or no-parent homes. A survey of juvenile delinquents in state custody in Wisconsin found that fewer than 1/6 came from intact families; over two-fifths were illegitimate.
>
> […]Young black males from single-parent families are twice as likely to engage in crime as young black males from two-parent families. If the single-parent family is in a neighborhood with a large number of other single-parent families, the odds of the young man becoming involved in crime are tripled. These findings are based on a study conducted for the Department of Health and Human Services by M. Anne Hill and June O'Neill of Baruch College. The study held constant all socioeconomic variables (such as income, parental education, or urban setting) other than single parenthood.
>
> Crime has often been thought to be a problem of race or poverty, since poor people and racial minorities comprise a larger portion of the violent criminal population than of the population as a whole. But in fact, the causal link between fatherlessness and crime "is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime," as Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her famous "Dan Quayle was Right" article.

The real cause of gun violence is the antagonism towards marriage by people on the left. They don't like the traditional family because it has different roles: men work and women raise young children. That clashes with their feminist ideology which says that women should be identical to men. They are the ones that push sex onto young people with early sex education, free contraceptives and free abortions. Premarital sex is good, according to Democrats, because it undermines the traditional (sexist) courting that leads to traditional (sexist) marriage.

For a leftist, it is a wonderful thing when they can reward a woman who has premarital sex with welfare, because single women and especially single mothers vote *overwhelmingly* for bigger government and higher taxes. Encouraging risky sexual behavior is how Democrats stay in power. When families break down, it creates all sorts of opportunities to grow government and make more people dependent on government.

Sandy Hook CT school shooting shows need for tougher fatherlessness laws

December 16, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If we were really serious about stopping gun crime, then we should go after the root cause of gun crime. So what is that root cause? The answer might surprise you.

Here is Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to explain:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:
>
> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as

> adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

People on the left claim that poverty causes crime, but they don't look for the root cause of poverty. The root cause of poverty is the decline of marriage. But people on the left favor that, so they can't admit the truth.

Dr. Michael Tanner of the libertarian Cato Institute explains one of the causes of fatherlessness in his testimony to Congress:

> Welfare contributes to crime in several ways. First, children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. According to one study, children raised in single-parent families are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior.(3) Moreover, O'Neill found that, holding other variables constant, black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as black children from a family where the father is present. Nearly 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 percent of prison inmates.(4) Research indicates a direct correlation between crime rates and the number of single-parent families in a neighborhood.(5)
>
> As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her seminal article for The Atlantic Monthly:
>
> The relationship [between single-parent families and crime] is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family break up as the most important source of rising rates of crime.(6)
>
> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on

> family structure concluded that “providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women.”(9)

The poverty that everyone complains about is not the root cause of crime. The poverty is caused by fatherlessness. The fatherlessness is caused by welfare. Fatherlessness is also caused by laws and policies that make it easier for people to divorce, e.g. – no-fault divorce laws. Again, it’s people on the left who push for no-fault divorce laws. So the left is pushing two policies, welfare and no-fault divorce, which cause crime.

What happened in Sandy Hook

The Connecticut shooter came from a broken home (H/T Tom) and had not spoken to his father in two years (H/T Dina). If we are serious about stopping school shootings, then we need to go after the source.

How do we stop this? We go after the laws and policies that promote fatherlessness. No-fault divorce laws make it easy to get out of a marriage, which means that people rely on “chemistry” and peer-approval to decide who to marry instead of choosing the right person for the actual duties of the job. The divorce court system rewards the person who files for divorce first, which is the women in about 70% of the cases. The incentives all favor fatherlessness.

If we were serious about fixing fatherlessness, we should reform divorce laws to make people take marriage more seriously. Instead of giving alternatives to marriage the same benefits as marriage, we should give benefits to people who are able to get married, stay married and produce productive, law-abiding children.

New paper in Nature: Ediacaran fossils not ancestors of Cambrian fauna

December 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Uncommon Descent reports on a new paper in the most prestigious peer-reviewed science journal.

Excerpt:

> A new paper has just been published in *Nature* by Gregory J. Retallack of the University of Oregon. The paper argues that the Ediacaran fauna are not ancestral to the animals which arose in the Cambrian explosion and that life existed on land 65 million years before previously thought. Retallack further argues that the iconic fossils of *Dickinsonia* and *Springgina*, which appear in the Precambrian Ediacaran assemblages, were not in fact animals at all. Rather they were, according to Retallack, lichens, soil structures and traces of slime moulds.

And they link to this post about the paper from Science Daily, which makes the significance of the discovery even clearer:

> Ancient multicellular fossils long thought to be ancestors of early marine life are remnants of land-dwelling lichen or other microbial colonies, says University of Oregon scientist Gregory J. Retallack, who has been studying fossil soils of South Australia.
>
> […]"This discovery has implications for the tree of life, because it removes Ediacaran fossils from the ancestry of animals," said Retallack, professor of geological sciences and co-director of paleontological collections at the UO's Museum of Natural and Cultural History. His evidence, mostly gathered from a site in the Flinders Ranges, is presented in a paper placed online ahead of print by the journal Nature.
>
> "These fossils have been a first-class scientific mystery," he said. "They are the oldest large multicellular fossils. They lived immediately before the Cambrian evolutionary explosion that gave rise to familiar modern groups of animals."
>
> Retallack studied numerous Ediacaran fossils and determined that the diversity reflects a preference by the ancient organisms for "unfrozen, low salinity soils, rich in nutrients, like most terrestrial organisms." Thus the fossils in Australia's iconic red-rock ranges, he concludes, were landlubbers. In his closing paragraph, Retallack outlines implications for a variety of other Edicaran fossils, that could have been lichens, other microbial consortia, fungal fruiting bodies, slime molds, flanged pedestals of biological soil crusts, and even casts of needle ice.
>
> Ediacaran fossils, he said, represent "an independent evolutionary radiation of life on land that preceded by at least 20 million years the Cambrian evolutionary explosion of animals in the sea." Increased chemical weathering by large

> organisms on land may have been needed to fuel the demand of nutrient elements by Cambrian animals. Independent discoveries of Cambrian fossils comparable with Ediacaran ones is evidence, he said, that even in the Cambrian, more than 500 million years ago, life on land may have been larger and more complex than life in the sea.

Here’s a quick re-cap of the Cambrian explosion:

Part 1: (7:50)

Part 2: (3:25)

This explosion in biological complexity fits nicely with an intelligent designer . Intelligent agents make information by sequencing symbols into functional instructions. That’s what new body plans are. It’s like new software, and new software requires a software engineer.

The standard naturalist response to this problem of sudden origins of anaimal body plans used to be that the Cambrian explosion did have precursors. The precursors were thought to be the Ediacaran fossils. But that’s all been shot to Hell now, with this new paper in Nature. Ooops!

What did early church fathers think about abortion and infanticide?

December 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about early church traditions
This is from Birds of the Air. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Summary:

> Recently I came across a reading of the Didache. "The *what*?" you may ask. The Didache is a book written somewhere in the first or second century. For a long time it was up for consideration as Scripture. It was believed to be the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Eventually it was agreed that the book was an excellent book, but not inspired Scripture. So I was pleased to be able to download this admirable book containing good teachings from the early Church fathers.
>
> The book seemed to be largely a lot of quotes from Scripture. You'll learn the basic rules of Christianity — "First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself." You'll learn that "grave sins" are forbidden, like adultery, murder, fornication, and so on. (They specifically include pederasty in the list.) There are instructions regarding teachers, prophets, Christian assembly, and so on. Lots of the normal, good stuff. But, since this was written sometime prior to 200 AD, I was somewhat surprised at this instruction: "You shall not murder a child by abortion" (Didache, Ch 2).

Honestly, there is no real factual disagreement on abortion. People justify killing the weak the same way as they always do – because the weak are in their way and they are

stronger and can get away with it. The politically correct jibber-jabber about “choice” is just to make them (the man and the woman) feel good afterward. Really, abortion is just selfishness taken to the nth degree – you create another human being by recreational sex (fun) and then you kill them in order to avoid have to take responsibility for that new life that you made through your own free choices.

It’s like going out and getting drunk then getting behind the wheel of a car and killing someone with the car. It may not be what they intended to do, but it was their decisions that led up to it. They’re responsible. But they don’t want to face the natural consequences of their own actions, and they are willing to do the most heinous crime imaginable in order to do so. Sex makes babies. If you can’t welcome a baby into the world, *don’t have sex*. I don’t. And the chance of getting a woman pregnant is of the reasons why. (One of the others is that I don’t want to hurt a woman by leaving her after sex – which is why I believe in *married* sex. I don’t want to hurt anyone, most of all babies.

Given the pro-life practices of the early church, I find it hard to understand how people can think that fornicating (pre-marital sex) and abortion are OK. We were not like that then, and we shouldn’t be like that now. Sex outside of marriage was not a recreational activity then, and it is not a recreational activity now.

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf’s 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- My own religion-free case for the pro-life position in plain English
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: Cute 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech

Violent crime rate more than doubled in the four years after the 1997 UK gun ban

December 17, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.

> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people.

I found this interesting article from August 2011 by Dr. Malcolm in the Wall Street Journal, where she catches us up on what it is like to live in the UK under draconian gun control laws.

Excerpt:

> As wild gangs of youths burned homes, shops and cars and severely beat anyone who tried to stop them last week, English people tried to defend themselves. Their desperation triggered a 5,000% increase in purchases of baseball bats from Amazon.
>
> This is a sad symbol of the failure of the British approach to crime—with its sympathy for offenders, intolerance of self-defense, and unwillingness to pay for adequate crime control. A people once proud of their peaceful country and unarmed policemen had to resort to clubs to protect life and limb.
>
> Great Britain's leniency began in the 1950s, with a policy that only under extraordinary circumstances would anyone under 17 be sent to prison. This was meant to rehabilitate young offenders. But the alternative to incarceration has been simply to warn them to behave, maybe require community service, and return them to the streets. There has been justifiable concern about causes of crime such as poverty and unemployment, but little admission that some individuals prefer theft to work and that deterrence must be taken seriously.
>
> Victims of aggression who defend themselves or attempt to protect their property have been shown no such leniency. Burglars who injured themselves breaking into houses have successfully sued homeowners for damages. In February, police in Surrey told gardeners not to put wire mesh on the windows of their garden sheds as burglars might hurt themselves when they break in.
>
> If a homeowner protecting himself and his family injures an intruder beyond what the law considers "reasonable," he will be prosecuted for assault. Tony Martin, an English farmer, was sentenced to life in prison for killing one burglar and wounding another with a shotgun during the seventh break-in at his rural home in 1999. While his sentence was later reduced to five years, he was refused parole in 2003 because he was judged a danger to burglars.
>
> In 2008, a robber armed with a knife attacked shopkeeper Tony Singh in West Lancashire. During the struggle the intruder was fatally stabbed with his own knife. Although the robber had a long record of violent assault, prosecutors were

> preparing to charge Mr. Singh with murder until public outrage stopped them.

The UK experience with gun control really shows where the anti-gun people would take us. This is their view – this is what the gun control supporters want. People who refuse to permit and promote responsible gun ownership by law-abiding citizens side with the criminals. They want criminals to be free to threaten, assault and murder law-abiding citizens. That’s the truth of it. I would also say that if a man does not believe in using any and all means necessary to protect his family, and others, by opposing aggression by criminals in his own home, then he is not a man to marry. Ladies, avoid him.

Tea Party conservative Tim Scott headed to U.S. Senate to replace Jim Demint

December 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Senator Tim Scott

Those darn Republicans and their racist racisty racism!

The leftist New York Times moans about it:

> Ms. Haley seriously considered a number of potential contenders, particularly Jenny Sanford, the ex-wife of former Gov. Mark Sanford, who supported Ms. Haley in her race two years ago. But in choosing Mr. Scott, she selected a lawmaker with a strong conservative voting record during his two years in Congress.
>
> Mr. Scott, 47, also offers a unique story and background, one that is in scant supply in the Republican Party right now. Raised by a single mother, he was, by his account, a lost child who struggled with school and with life until a Chick-fil-A franchise owner took him on as a protégé and schooled him in conservative principles.
>
> "Coming from a single-parent household and almost flunking out of high school," Mr. Scott said in 2010, during his bid for the House, "my hope is I will take that experience and help people bring out the best that they can be."
>
> […]Mr. Scott will become South Carolina's first black senator, and the first black Republican in the Senate since Edward Brooke of Massachusetts left in 1979. Over all, he will be the seventh black senator, and the chamber's fourth black Republican.

He is the only black Senator in the Senate, from either party. Racism!

The leftist Washington Post is not happy:

> Since 2010, Republicans have either elected or appointed a black Senator, two Hispanic Senators (Marco Rubio of Florida and Ted Cruz of Texas) as well as two Hispanic governors (Susana Martinez of New Mexico and Brian Sandoval of Nevada) and an Indian-American governor (Nikki Haley of South Carolina). That group joins Gov. Bobby Jindal, an Indian-American, who was elected in 2007.
>
> "As the country changes, our party is walking the walk in reflecting the role of all Americans in our politics today," said Eric Ueland, a Republican lobbyist and one-tim chief of staff to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (Tenn.).

Tim Scott with Nikki Haley and Michele Bachmann:

Tim Scott with fellow Tea Party members Nikki Haley and Michele Bachmann

They also had some interesting facts about Tim Scott:

- Rep. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) grew up in Charleston, S.C., where he was raised by his mother after his parents divorced when he was 7.
- In 1997, he found himself at the center of controversy when he hung the Ten Commandments outside the Charleston County Council's chambers to remind the members of the morals they must follow. The Commandments were later removed after the council was sued by Charleston residents and the American Civil Liberties Union. "I've always said and remain in this position: Whatever it costs in the pursuit of this goal (of displaying the Commandments) is worth it," Scott said at the time.
- He was first elected to the House of Representatives with strong support from tea party groups during the Republican wave election in 2010.
- He was one of two freshmen selected in 2010 to join the House Republican leadership.
- After graduating from college, Scott sold insurance and co-owned a real estate agency.
- Scott crashed the 2012 Democratic National Convention in Charlotte with South

Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley and Rep. Michele Bachmann (see picture above)
- After his mentor died when Scott was 17, the future congressman wrote a "mission statement" setting the goal of having a positive impact on the lives of 1 billion people before he dies.

Life News is happy:

> Republican Congressman Tim Scott, a black pro-life advocate, will replace pro-life Sen. Jim DeMint in the U.S. Senate, after DeMint stepped down to take over as the head of the conservative Heritage Foundation.
>
> Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina announced today that she chose Representative Tim Scott to replace Jim DeMint in the United States Senate, a move which makes him the first black senator from the South in decades. Scott will serve until a special election is held in 2014.
>
> Like DeMint, Scott is a staunch pro-life advocate who has a 100 percent pro-life voting record with the National Right to Life Committee. This year, Scott voted to stop abortion funding in Obamacare, de-Fund the Planned Parenthood abortion business, and stop taxpayer funding of abortion in various instances. He voted for a ban on sex-selection abortions, for enforcing parental notification laws, to repeal Obamacare, and to ban abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy in the District of Columbia.
>
> […]In 2010, then candidate Tim Scott outlined the development of his political positions and party allegiance to *The Weekly Standard,* which wrote: "As he tells it, Scott became a Republican in three stages. First, there was the military influence… Second, there was his becoming a Christian in college. That turned him into a social conservative and strong foe of legalized abortion. This, too, turned him toward Republicans, he says."

And so is the pro-America Tea Party:

> Conservatives online cheered the news on Monday that Rep. Tim Scott has been picked for Sen. Jim DeMint's South Carolina Senate seat, citing both his conservative credentials and the diversity he brings to the table.
>
> Guy Benson of Townhall.com noted on Twitter, "@townhallcom readership reaction is pretty much unanimous: Enthusiastic virtual applause for Gov. Haley's pick of Tim Scott for US Senate."
>
> Katie Pavlich, also of Townhall.com, added, "Super happy about Tim Scott, great job Nikki Haley."
>
> […]"So happy it's Tim Scott that will replace Sen. DeMint!," offered Kathleen McKinley, a conservative blogger.
>
> […]"Tim Scott has taken our core values seriously in the House and we have every reason to expect similar, principled behavior in the Senate," said Jenny Beth Martin, co-founder of the Tea Party Patriots group, in a statement.

> […]“Tim Scott is among perhaps the rarest kind of Washington official: One who knows how to articulate the moral case for conservatism and explain our fiscal challenges to the average American,” said Ned Ryun, the president and CEO of the conservative group American Majority Action, in a statement. “This form of leadership outweighs identity politics.”
>
> […]The conservative commentator Dana Loesch tweeted, “great news about Rep. Tim Scott.”
>
> Colin Hanna, the president of the conservative group Let Freedom Ring, also heaped praise on Scott.
>
> “Gov. Nikki Haley made a wise and courageous choice by nominating Rep. Tim Scott,” Hanna said in a statement. “Sen. DeMint was a voice for limited government, fiscal responsibility and the advance of liberty. We have the same hopes for Tim Scott.”

This makes up for losing Allen West in Florida – a Congressman I deeply admired and respected. Maybe he will win again in 2016.

Even though I am visible minority myself, I really only care if people are conservative or not, not what color they are. But when stories like this come out, I must mock the racist Democrats who are obsessed with things that don’t matter, like race. What matters is this – promoting policies that defend the rights and freedoms of all the people equally. And Tim Scott is going to do about as well doing that as anyone in the Senate can do. That’s why we like him.

Does a loving God send people Hell just because they don't accept Jesus?

December 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Jim Wallace at Please Convince Me. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Excerpt:

> A "just" God does justice, which means to punish or reward appropriately. In the Western tradition, we punish people for the actions they commit, but the extent of punishment is dependent also on the person's mental state, and a person's mental state is reflective of his or her beliefs. Premeditated murder is worse than manslaughter, and is punished more severely, and a hate crime is a sentencing enhancement that adds more punishment to the underlying crime. In both examples, a person's beliefs are at play: the premeditated murderer has reflected on his choices and wants the victim dead; a hate crime reflects a belief that the rights of a member of the protected group are especially unworthy of respect. So, considering a person's beliefs may well be relevant, especially if those beliefs have motivated the criminal behavior.
>
> But the challenger's mistake is even more fundamental. He is wrong to assert that people are condemned for not accepting the gospel. Christians believe that people are condemned for their sinful behavior – the "wages of sin is death" – not for what they fail to do. The quoted challenge is like saying that the sick man died of "not going to the doctor." No, the person died of a specific condition – perhaps cancer or a heart attack – which a doctor might have been able to cure. So too with eternal punishment. No one is condemned for refusing to believe in Jesus. While Jesus can – and does – provide salvation for those who seek it, there is nothing unjust about not providing salvation to those who refuse to seek it. After all, we don't normally feel obliged to help someone who has not asked for, and does not want, our assistance. So too the Creator has the right to withhold a gift – i.e. eternity spent in His presence – from those who would trample on the gift, and on the gift-giver.
>
> The quoted assertion also demonstrates an unspoken belief that we can impress God with our "kind" or "generous" behavior. This fails to grasp what God is – a perfect being. We cannot impress Him. What we do right we should do. We don't drag people into court and reward them for not committing crimes. This is expected of them. They can't commit a murder and then claim that punishment is unfair, because they had been kind and generous in the past. When a person gets his mind around the idea of what perfection entails, trying to impress a perfect Creator with our "basic goodness" no longer seems like such a good option.

Here's a related answer from CARM. This one answers the question about degrees of punishment in Hell.

Excerpt:

> Yes, there are different degrees of punishment in hell.
>
> […]But, not all people are equally bad. Though all deserve damnation because all are sinners, different people have committed different degrees of sin.
>
> - Mt. 11:20-22, "Then He began to reproach the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 "Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you…I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you."
> - Luke 12:47-48, "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."
> - John 19:11, "Jesus answered [Pilate], 'You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin.' "
> - Heb. 10:29, "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?"
>
> So, if Jesus speaks of greater condemnation for Chorazin and Bethsaida than Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 11:21-22), one slave received more punishment than another (Luke 12:47-48), the one who delivered Jesus to Pilate has the greater sin (John 19:11), and a more severe punishment is reserved for those who trample underfoot the Son of God, then does not greater sin mean that greater punishment will also happen in hell? Yes it does.

Not only are there degrees of punishment in Hell, but there are degrees of reward in Heaven, based on what you do on Earth and what strengths you start out with.

Philippians 4:10-18:

[10] I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

[11] I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever

the circumstances.

[12] I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

[13] I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

[14] Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

[15] Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;

[16] for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

[17] Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.

[18] I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Everyone who believes in Jesus gets salvation, but your experience in Heaven will be different based on what you do while you are alive. And that's also the answer to another common question – about deathbed conversions. Both deathbed converts and William Lane Craig will get the same experience of being in the presence of God, but there are completely different levels of reward. One Christian has an empty account, and the other Christian has huge massive amounts of virtuous, self-sacrificial action on deposit. One has experienced following and imitating Jesus very little, and the other one a lot.

Having said that, I think the real reason that Christians are trying to do good things here on Earth is that they like God, and they want to be his friend. They want to work on the relationship, even if it means a little self-denial, and a little sacrifice. We all have things that we would rather be doing for ourselves, but sometimes we have to things that work – things that are effective – for someone else. My values are not his values. Sometimes it is good to do something based on what He values. I don't always have to get my way, because then it wouldn't be a real relationship.

I enjoy thinking about Bible puzzles like this… so often in church we just make Christianity a checklist of things that we are supposed to believe somehow, by brute force willpower. I think reflecting on these problems, asking questions, and making sense of them on our own, is a much better approach.

John Fund: the facts about mass shootings

December 18, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review. This article was being shared a lot on Facebook.

Excerpt:

> Mass shootings are no more common than they have been in past decades, despite the impression given by the media.
>
> In fact, the high point for mass killings in the U.S. was 1929, according to criminologist Grant Duwe of the Minnesota Department of Corrections.
>
> Incidents of mass murder in the U.S. declined from 42 in the 1990s to 26 in the first decade of this century.
>
> The chances of being killed in a mass shooting are about what they are for being struck by lightning.
>
> Until the Newtown horror, the three worst K–12 school shootings ever had taken place in either Britain or Germany.
>
> […]First, the mental-health issue. A lengthy study by *Mother Jones* magazine found that at least 38 of the 61 mass shooters in the past three decades "displayed signs of mental health problems prior to the killings."*New York Times* columnist David Brooks and Cornell Law School professor William Jacobson have both suggested that the ACLU-inspired laws that make it so difficult to intervene and identify potentially dangerous people should be loosened. "Will we address mental-health and educational-privacy laws, which instill fear of legal liability for reporting potentially violent mentally ill people to law enforcement?" asks Professor Jacobson. "I doubt it."
>
> […]Economists John Lott and William Landes conducted a groundbreaking study in 1999, and found that a common theme of mass shootings is that they occur in places where guns are banned and killers know everyone will be unarmed, such as shopping malls and schools.
>
> I spoke with Lott after the Newtown shooting, and he confirmed that nothing has changed to alter his findings. He noted that the Aurora shooter, who killed twelve people earlier this year, had a choice of seven movie theaters that were showing the Batman movie he was obsessed with. All were within a 20-minute drive of his home. The Cinemark Theater the killer ultimately chose wasn't the closest, but it was the only one that posted signs saying it banned concealed handguns carried by law-abiding individuals. All of the other theaters allowed the approximately 4 percent of Colorado adults who have a concealed-handgun permit to enter with their weapons.
>
> […]Lott offers a final damning statistic: "With just one single exception, the attack on congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson in 2011, every public

> shooting since at least 1950 in the U.S. in which more than three people have been killed has taken place where citizens are not allowed to carry guns.”
>
> There is no evidence that private holders of concealed-carry permits (which are either easy to obtain or not even required in more than 40 states) are any more irresponsible with firearms than the police. According to a 2005 to 2007 study by researchers at the University of Wisconsin and Bowling Green State University, police nationwide were convicted of firearms violations at least at a 0.002 percent annual rate. That’s about the same rate as holders of carry permits in the states with “shall issue” laws.

Please read it. It’s good to have the facts when deciding what to make of individual tragic occurrences.

New study: married women less likely to suffer post-partum depression

December 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> The study of more than 6,000 women looked at the risks and benefits of marriage.
>
> It found women who cohabited with their partners rather than being married to them were also more likely to suffer domestic abuse and/or abuse drugs. The less time they had lived together, the higher their risk.
>
> Research leader Dr. Marcelo Urquia, from the University of Toronto, said: 'We did not see that pattern among married women, who experienced less psychosocial problems, regardless of the length of time they lived together with their spouses.'
>
> The study found that 10.6 per cent of married women suffering from post-natal depression.
>
> The figure rose to 20 per cent for women cohabiting in 'common-law' relationships and 35 per cent for single women.
>
> Most dramatically, it rose to 67 per cent for women who were separated or divorced in the year prior to the birth of a child.
>
> […]The study, published in the American Journal of Public Health, coincides with the latest [UK] Census figures unveiled this week which revealed married couple households are in the minority for the first time.
>
> While the number of married people stays constant at 21.2 million, the number of single adults households has rises by three million compared with 2001.
>
> The census report said there were just under 2.3 million cohabiting couples last year, compared to 2.06 million in 2001.
>
> Cohabitees now make up 10 per cent of all households, while married couples lead 33 per cent of households.
>
> Lone parent households make up another 10 per cent, and 30 per cent of homes have just one individual.

The troubling thing to me is that people aren't serious about doing what it takes to prepare for marriage, and then choosing the right person for the job. Everyone knows that marriage is better for you financially, emotionally, and for your health, but somehow, people treat it as a casino game. We don't know how to prepare for marriage with practices that work, like chastity, courting and church attendance. Bad outcomes like cohabitation, divorce and single motherhood don't just happen by accident. People choose wrong approaches because they don't want to do things the right way.

Woman shoots man who broke into her house and tried to stab her

December 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Oh, here's a story from the Philadelphia Daily News that won't get national media attention and crocodile tears from Obama.

Excerpt:

> A 17-year-old learned the hard way that breaking into houses is a pretty bad idea after police say a woman he attempted to stab during a home-invasion in Northeast Philadelphia shot him early Saturday morning.
>
> Cops said the teen was one of about 10 men who kicked in the door of a house on Greenmount Road near Millbrook shortly after midnight Saturday and started fighting with two men, ages 26 and 42, who were inside. During that fight, one of the thugs threw a 40-ounce beer bottle and hit a 49-year-old woman who was also in the house at the time in the stomach.
>
> Police said the 17-year-old who was shot during the melee went after that woman with a knife, so she pulled out a gun and shot him in the stomach. A private car dropped him off at Aria Health's Torresdale hospital, where he was listed in critical condition.
>
> Cops said the rest of the pack who broke into the house took off in a gold vehicle. The 26-year-old man who'd been in the house at the time of the incident was bitten several times on his back and suffered lacerations to his face and body, cops said. Police did not report injuries to the woman or the other man who were attacked.
>
> The woman will not be charged in the incident, as she acted in self-defense, authorities said. The 17-year-old is expected to face charges of aggravated assault and related offenses, according to police.

It's very important to balance the number of times that guns are used to prevent or thwart a crime against the number of times that crazy people with crazy mothers go on a rampage. Some people drive without licenses, and some people shouldn't be driving. That doesn't mean that we should ban cars when unqualified and/or drunk drivers get innocent people killed in car accidents.

An important question to ask people who want restrictions on firearms is this: what would happen to this law-abiding woman if she did not have a weapon to protect herself with? The answer is that she would be assaulted and/or raped and/or murdered. And that is just fine with Democrats on the secular left, because they think that criminals are morally good, and law-abiding people are morally bad. They would have nothing to offer this woman, and that is a point that needs to be emphasized.

William Lane Craig explains the moral argument to Georgia Tech students and faculty

December 19, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can grab the MP3 file of the lecture, or read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

If you want to show this lecture and Q&A to your apologetics group, you can find the DVD here.

You can also read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor.

Off-duty policewoman uses her gun to stop a mass shooting at a theater

December 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from WOAI News.

Excerpt:

> Two people are hospitalized after a gunman chased terrified restaurant patrons into the lobby of the Santikos Mayan 14 movie theater during a showing of "The Hobbit" last night, 1200 WOAI news reports.
>
> Police detectives and sheriff's investigators say the incident started in the China Garden Restaurant on Southwest Military Drive about 9 PM Sunday, when an employee of the restaurant walked in looking for a woman.
>
> When the woman, who officials say is also a restaurant employee, wasn't there, the man pulled a gun and attempted to open fire in the restaurant but his weapon jammed.
>
> "It started at the restaurant and then went into the parking lot and then into the movie theater," Deputy Lou Antu told 1200 WOAI news.
>
> Investigators say some of the terrified restaurant patrons poured into the movie theater, and the gunman followed.
>
> He opened fire, shooting one man in the chest, before Antu says an off duty sheriff's deputy who was working security at the theater shot him once.
>
> "The officer involved, she took the appropriate action to try to keep everyone safe in the movie theater," Antu said.
>
> The gunman and the patron are hospitalized.
>
> Antu says the gunman never made it into the theater itself, thanks largely to the heroic work of the off duty deputy.
>
> "She did what she felt she had to do," Antu said. "I feel that she saved a lot of lives by taking the action she had to take."

That's what could have happened at Sandy Hook in Newtown, Connecticut – if some of the teachers had been armed with concealed weapons. If doesn't have to be a security guard or an off-duty police officer. Anyone who has a legally-owned firearm can stop a shooting like this, and even deter others.

My recommended charity for 2012: Life Training Institute

December 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about what to get WK for Christmas

Scott Klusendorf, the best and most experienced pro-life debater in the United States, wrote this on Facebook:

> Life Training Institute just received a $45,000 gift toward helping us reach 20,000 additional students next year! That's half of what we need to complete the project!
>
> The other half ($45,000) must come from concerned donors like you. Would you consider helping us get there?
>
> We'll use the money to get our speaking team into more schools than any year previous.
>
> Excited to see our work growing,
> Scott Klusendorf
>
> Donate on-line at: https://www.prolifetraining.com/donate_general.asp

Scott is one of my favorite Christians, and I fully endorse his pro-life ministry. Some of you have asked how you could help me with the blog or donate. I am fully supplied already, so if you really want to send me a present, please consider making a donation to Scott's pro-life ministry. They are absolutely solid in their use of evidence as well as in their theology. You couldn't find a better group to support.

If you are more the kind of person who likes to buy books, then you can do that as well. Scott is the author of the #1 pro-life book at the popular level. It is call “The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture”.

- The paperback version is here
- The Kindle version is here

And he has a new book out as well, called “Stand for Life: Answering the Call, Making the Case, Saving Lives”:

- The paperback version is here

And if you want to see Scott in action, here is a recent debate he did with Nadine Strossen:

Abortion can be a complicated issue, but the nice thing about Scott is that he cuts right to the core of the debate and makes sure to clarify what each side is saying. He strips away the rhetoric and gets down to the real arguments on each side and the pro-life side comes out on top.

Recently, Scott taught two classes on the techniques that he uses when debating abortion.

The first talk was on Tactics. Here is the PDF. In the handout, Scott explains how to use questions to make your opponent give reasons for their views instead of just asserting them.

The second talk was on Relativism. Here is the PDF. In the handout, Scott explains what moral relativism is, and some of the problems with the view.

How much did taxpayers lose in Obama's GM bailout?

December 20, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily does the math on the GM bailout.

Excerpt:

> Sale of the U.S. government's stake in General Motors Corp. ends a sorry saga. Not only were Americans lied to about the costs, but the bailout underscores why replacing market forces with federal bailouts doesn't work.
>
> The Obama administration says it will unload 200 million shares — or about 40% of its holdings — back to GM right away. The rest, 300 million shares, are to be sold by March 2014.
>
> […]Well, GM on Wednesday said it will buy back the 200 million share government stake for $5.5 billion, or $27.50 a share.
>
> The break-even point on the government's total holdings was $53 a share. But now, with $20.9 billion in taxpayer funds left to pay off from 300 million shares, the break-even point has risen to $69.72 a share.
>
> In other words, at current prices, taxpayers are sitting with a loss of 61%, or nearly $15 billion, on their investment.

So where did the money go, then?

> According to a study last summer by the Heritage Foundation, the $80 billion auto bailout gave the UAW and its members nearly $27 billion due to the fact that GM couldn't shed its outrageously expensive labor contracts, something it could have done in a normal bankruptcy.
>
> As such, Obama didn't bail out the auto industry; he bailed out the unions. Without the unions' added costs, taxpayers would have owed nothing.
>
> It's not hard to see how this happened. The UAW and its affiliates give tens of millions of dollars each election cycle, almost entirely to Democrats.
>
> This union influence explains why Obama's auto czars, Steve Rattner and Ron Bloom, arranged a government bankruptcy for GM that flew in the face of hundreds of years of bankruptcy law and violated investor rights.
>
> Bondholders took huge losses, while unions got a big chunk of ownership in GM stock that they weren't legally entitled to.
>
> In a shocking display of favoritism and blatant unfairness, GM's union workers kept their pensions, while nonunion workers at GM spin-off Delphi lost theirs.

Those unions paid Obama back by working hard to get him re-elected. That's how socialism works.

Interview with cold case homicide detective J. Warner Wallace

December 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

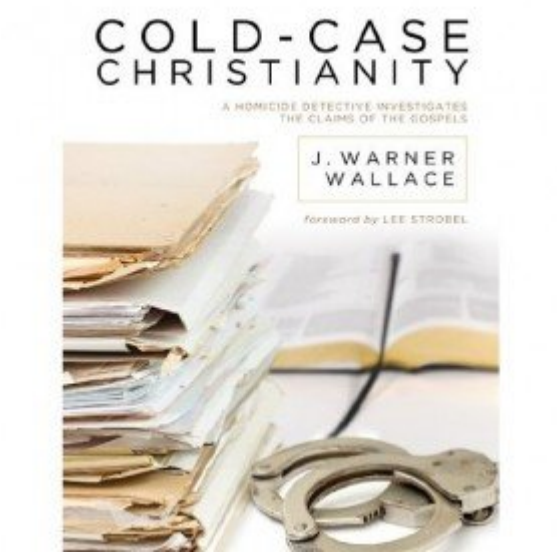

Cold-Case Christianity by J. Warner Wallace

J.W. Wartick reviewed the book a while back, and called it "*the best introductory apologetics book in regards to the historicity of the Gospels I have ever read*".

Well, here is a new interview with J. Warner Wallace about the new book.

Excerpt:

> **How is Christianity a "cold case"?** When detectives investigate cold cases, they're investigating events (murders) from the distant past for which there are often no living eyewitnesses and little, if any, direct or forensic evidence to make the case. Detectives learn how to evaluate and employ circumstantial evidence to demonstrate what happened at the scene of the crime. In a similar way, Christianity makes a claim about an event in the distant past for which there are no living eyewitnesses and little, if any, direct or forensic evidence.
>
> **What is your background as a detective?** I've been working murders in Los Angeles County for 15 years and cold cases for the past 12. Many of these cases have drawn national attention and have been featured on FOX News, Court TV and *Dateline NBC*. Along the way, I came to appreciate the nature of circumstantial evidence and recognized the skills I developed as a cold-case detective would serve me well in my investigation of the claims of the New Testament Gospels.
>
> **What are some of the principles of investigation used in *Cold-Case Christianity* to evaluate the claims of the New Testament?** I've identified 10 principles of investigation I believe will assist believers and skeptics as they evaluate the Gospel accounts. *Cold-Case Christianity* will help people to understand the importance of investigative presuppositions, the role of abductive

> reasoning, the power and nature of circumstantial evidence, the value of word choice in eyewitness statements and much more. The techniques we use as detectives are appropriate and relevant to the study of the claims of Christianity.
>
> **What made you change from a self-described "angry atheist" to a passionate defender of the gospel?** When I first read through the Gospels, I observed "unintended eyewitness support" from one Gospel account to another. Like eyewitnesses I had interviewed at crime scenes, one Gospel writer would describe an event in a way that raised as many questions as it answered. The parallel testimony of another Gospel writer would then inadvertently answer the questions raised by the first account. This "eyewitness attribute" I observed in the Gospels intrigued me as an investigator. I eventually decided to use the tools of Forensic Statement Analysis to evaluate the Gospel of Mark. My conclusions forced me to take Mark's account seriously. My journey toward Jesus began with this investigative approach to the Gospels.

This book makes me think of Lee Strobel's "The Case for Christ" book. He brought a journalist's perspective to the historical Jesus. What could be *more interesting* than a journalist? A cold case homicide detective who has to make cases to juries all the time. Like Strobel, Wallace is coming from a skeptical background, too. So he knows how to talk to skeptics in a way that many Christians who have always been on the inside don't know. I think it helps that he has an outside-the-ivory-tower career and has to deal with non-Christians and even criminals all the time. He's rooted in real-life, and knows how to talk about spiritual things in ways that are interesting to ordinary people.

By the way, there is a Kindle edition of it, although I will want a hard copy to lend. I'm pretty sure that this book will be easy to lend to my co-workers – there is just something about detectives that people find interesting. Think of Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot, for example.

Remembering “The Piltdown Man” – 100 years later

December 21, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have the Darwinian faithful ever been so optimistic about their theory that they stretched the evidence dishonestly? Well, yes, there have been instances of “hiding the decline” in the biological sciences.

Here’s one described in the Seattle Times: (H/T Evolution News)

> Tuesday is the centennial of the grossest fraud of 20th-century science: Piltdown man. It is a case worth remembering.
>
> On Dec. 18, 1912, amateur geologist Charles Dawson presented to the Geological Society of London a partial skull. It was purported to be a human ancestor 500,000 to 1 million years old, an age scientists now assign to *Homo erectus*. Dawson said he had found the fossils in a gravel pit near Piltdown Common, south of London.
>
> Dawson had no scientific credentials, but his friend Arthur Smith Woodward did. Woodward was the keeper of the geological department at the British Museum. He had been at the dig and had seen the jawbone “fly out” of the ground under the blow of Dawson’s pick.
>
> There was a problem with the jawbone. It was from an orangutan only a few hundred years old. It was fitted with two fossilized chimpanzee teeth, filed down to make them look more like human teeth. The cranium fragments *were* human, from the Middle Ages. All had been treated with an iron solution and acid to make them look older.
>
> Scientists didn’t have many fossil skulls in 1912, but none of them looked like a human cranium with an ape jaw.
>
> Several scientists, including one from the Smithsonian Institution, argued that the jaw and cranium did not match. It took 40 years for them to be proved right, and even longer for Dawson to be confirmed as the con man responsible.

The surprising thing is that this is not the only time that this has happened with Darwinists and global warmists.

Mark Goodacre debates Richard Carrier: Did Jesus exist?

December 22, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Once in a while, it's fun to post a debate on a strange topic.

Topic:

> Richard Carrier is the world's foremost proponent of the "mythicist" view of Jesus – that he never actually existed as a historical person. He explains his theory that St. Paul only ever spoke of Jesus in the spiritual realm and that the Gospels are "extended parables". Mark Goodacre is NT professor at Duke University. He contends that Carrier's mythicist view is extremely far fetched and the evidence for the historical Jesus is beyond reasonable doubt.

Here are the participants:

> **Mark Goodacre** is an Associate Professor in New Testament at the Department of Religion, Duke University, North Carolina, USA. He earned his MA, M.Phil and DPhil at the University of Oxford and was Senior Lecturer at the University of Birmingham until 2005. His research interests include the Synoptic Gospels, the Historical Jesus and the Gospel of Thomas.
>
> **Richard Carrier** holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University in ancient history, specializing in the intellectual history of Greece and Rome, particularly ancient philosophy, religion, and science, with emphasis on the origins of Christianity and the use and progress of science under the Roman empire.

The MP3 file is here.

This debate took place on Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable?" show based in the UK.

Carrier uses the letters of Paul as his sources, because they are the earliest. He doesn't think that there is enough there to ground Jesus as a real person in history. Goodacre responds by looking at the letters of Paul to see what facts about a real, historical Jesus are there, and also which other eyewitnesses Paul talked to. In particular, Carrier has to respond to the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15 as well as his meeting with Peter and James, two other eyewitnesses, twice in Galatians. 1 Corinthians and Galatians are two early Pauline letters that are unanimously regarded as authentic. Carrier's strategy is to try to introduce parallels between myths and the historical Jesus.

Goodacre also raises the crucifixion a historical fact about Jesus, which is a virtually undeniable fact about Jesus that is not even denied by people like the radical atheist John Dominic Crossan. Goodacre says that the crucifixion story would be embarrassing to the early Christians. They would not have invented a story of their Messiah-candidate being crucified – it was considered to shameful of a way to die. Carrier responded that other groups make up history that is embarrassing to them all the time. Goodacre says this

practice was not common among the groups of Jews that we know about. Carrier says that there are other unknown groups of Jews that we have no evidence for who did do that. Then he calls arguing based on the practices of the Jews that we do not know about an “argument from ignorance”.

Carrier talks about how Philippians has that embarrassing passage about Jesus abandoning his divine capabilities to humble himself by becoming an actual human being, and says that this is evidence that he was not an actual human being. (Unforced error!) Philippians is another one of the Pauline epistles that is not in doubt. Carrier then says that John invents historical reports in order to emphasize certain things about Jesus, and therefore that means that other non-John sources are therefore all falsified by John’s exaggerating on some details. He then cites the radical atheist John Dominic Crossan to say that historical narratives are actually extended parables.

How to tell if a woman is ready for the challenges of marriage

December 23, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend of mine sent me this Christian woman's profile from OKCupid. I think it provides a window into what Christian women think that men and marriage are all about. Count the number of times she says "fit", "fun" and "cute". She likes football and Harry Potter books and movies.

Speaking for myself, I would not recommend that a Christian man marry this woman. If you consider all the challenges that married couples will face (see below), then this is not the person you would choose as your ally for life. Note, though, that "blame men" pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung would tell you that this woman is a desirable catch. She meets all the requirements to be a wife and mother, because she reads the Bible, attends church and has a degree and a job. But is that all that Christian men are looking for in a woman?

I made a list of questions below to address the real concerns that Christian men have about marriage. Does "PackersGirl007" addresses those male concerns?

QUESTIONS

1. Cosmology

What scientific evidence would you point to to show that God created the universe OR that God fine-tuned the universe, or parts of the universe, for intelligent life?

SAMPLE ANSWER: The big bang theory, the fine-tuning argument, galactic habitability, stellar habitability, or terrestrial habitability.

BONUS POINTS: referencing hard evidence like light element abundances, cosmic microwave background radiation, or specific instances of fine-tuning.

WHY IT MATTERS: She can't be a Christian unless she *knows* God exists, and that can't just be based on feelings and community. An awareness of the scientific evidence shows a seriousness about spiritual things – that her belief is rooted in objective reality, not in subjective feelings, culture, community, etc. It's not "her truth", it's "the truth". If she doesn't know why she believes, then she can't be relied upon to make decisions as a Christian, especially in stressful situations. There is always going to be a conflict between doing what one feels like and doing what is consistent with reality. Having scientific facts helps a person to do what they ought to do.

2. Intelligent Design

Explain the concept of intelligent design and explain how it applies to the i) origin of life OR ii) to the fossil record.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the concept of specified complexity and Dembski's explanatory filter, then explain how it applies to (i) amino acid sequencing or the double helix, OR (ii) to the sudden origin of animal phyla in the Cambrian explosion.

BONUS POINTS: Ideally, for the origin of life question, she's going to mention things like UV radiation, chirality, cross-reactions and peptide bonds, then calculate the approximate probabilities for generating a protein by chance. For the Cambrian explosion, she should graph out the introduction of phyla over time, and explain the Ediacaran fauna and why they are not precursors to the Cambrian fauna. Bonus points for bashing theistic evolution, or talking about the early earth environment and the problems with forming amino acids.

WHY IT MATTERS: Darwinian evolution is bad science because it is really just philosophy (naturalism) masquerading as science. You can't marry anyone who pre-supposes a materialist view of metaphysics like naturalists do, and then allows that philosophical assumption to overrule the scientific evidence. You don't want to be paired up with someone who lets their prejudices overturn data.

3. The problems of evil and suffering

Assuming that Christianity is true, why do you think that God would allow suffering and evil in the world? Distinguish between human evil and natural evil in your answer. Also explain what role you think God's permission of evil and suffering has in maturing Christians.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Define the deductive and inductive problems of evil, explains several different responses to them, such as free will, character formation, natural law, the ripple effect, etc. Mention the burden of proof for claims that certain evils are gratuitous, i.e. – noseeums.

BONUS POINTS: explaining how evil relates to Christian theology and God's purposes for humans being knowledge of him and not just happiness, talking about Jesus' own suffering and the meaning and purpose of it. More bonus points for pointing out how atheists cannot even complain about evil without assuming objective morality, which requires a moral lawgiver.

WHY IT MATTERS: Lots of nasty things can happen in a marriage. Children can get sick or die, jobs can be lost, and so on. It helps when you are dealing with a person who expects it and will not jettison their responsibilities and belief in Christ in order to pursue happiness unencumbered. The main thing is that the woman thinks that the purpose of life is to know God, and that suffering and evil play a role in gaining knowledge of God. You definitely do not want to marry someone who thinks that the purpose of life is happiness, and that God is some big bearded grandfather in the sky who just wants to hand out goodies to people and make sure they are having a good time regardless of what they choose to do.

4. The moral argument

What is the is-ought fallacy? What is the difference between moral objectivism and moral relativism? Give one reason why moral relativism is false. Give one reason why an atheist cannot rationally ground prescriptive morality. Explain why objective morality relates to God's existence.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the is-ought fallacy. Explain objective and subjective morality.

Discuss the reformer's dilemma and how it refutes relativism. Explain that atheism requires materialism, and materialism denies free will – so moral choices are impossible. Outline the moral argument.

BONUS POINTS: Give more than one reason where only one was asked for, refute attempts to assert objective morality on atheism, explain how moral obligations are related to God's design for humans.

WHY IT MATTERS: You can't marry a person who thinks that the moral law is not a brake on their desire to be happy. There are going to be times in the marriage when self-sacrifice is required by the moral law – either for you, for God, or for the children. It will not be easy to be moral then, so you are looking for someone who thinks that morality is real, and not subject to their feelings and whims. It might be worth asking the person when she has had to do the right thing when it was against her self-interest, like those valedictorians who name Jesus in their speeches and then get censored.

5. The resurrection of Jesus

Assume you are talking to a non-Christian. Explain how you would make a case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus on historical grounds. This person does not accept the Bible as inspired and/or inerrant.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the criteria for establishing minimal facts / historical bedrock, list a set of minimal facts, explain why they pass the criteria, propose at least two naturalistic alternatives to the resurrection, and disprove them. MUST mention 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 in order to pass.

BONUS POINTS: listing atheist scholars who support each minimal fact, discussing N.T. Wright's work on the Jewish concept of resurrection, referencing Richard Bauckham's work on the gospels as eyewitness testimony, mentioning the pre-suppositions (naturalism, relativism) of liberal scholars like Crossan and Borg.

WHY IT MATTERS: The resurrection is the cornerstone of Christian belief. A person cannot encounter skeptics and not be able to defend the resurrection on historical grounds to them. The resurrection matters to how people act: they act completely differently depending on whether they believe that this life is all there is, or that this life is just a precursor to eternal life with God. You want someone who takes the long-term perspective.

6. World religions

Name two major world religions and argue against them using either the laws of logic, scientific evidence or historical evidence. Explain the concept of middle knowledge, and why it is relevant to the problem of religious pluralism.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Refute Theravada Buddhism with the big bang, or refute Islam with the crucifixion of Jesus, etc. MUST mention specific beliefs of that religion that are testable, and not just argue that they reject Christianity and are therefore false. Explain how middle knowledge reconciles free will and divine sovereignty, and that it also helps to solve the problem of people who have never heard the gospel.

BONUS POINTS: Using evidence that is universally accepted by people outside of that religion. Using scientific evidence. Referencing Acts 17:27 or other Bible passages when explaining middle knowledge. Mentioning objections to middle knowledge, such as the grounding objection.

WHY IT MATTERS: Many younger Christians today believe that Christianity is moralistic therapeutic deism. They think that the purpose of religion is to have good feelings and to be nice to other people and to make other people feel good. It's all about feelings. You need to make sure that she knows how to make people feel bad and is comfortable doing it, with evidence. Middle knowledge also grounds the person's willingness to see people as being responsible for their acceptance or rejection of Christ. Instead of taking a hands-off fatalistic approach to salvation, someone who accepts middle knowledge is going to take persuasion seriously and expend effort to try to change the people around them.

7. Abortion

How would you establish that the unborn are fully human and deserve protection? Explain three pro-abortion arguments and then show why they are false. Name three incremental pro-life policies that you would introduce if you were a legislator.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Use the SLED test and the law of biogenesis. Talk about the DNA signature of the unborn being distinct from the mother. Explain and refute the back-alley abortions argument, the it's the woman's body argument, the Judith Jarvis Thompson violinist argument, etc. Legislation would be parental notification, banning funding for abortion providers, mandatory sonograms, etc.

BONUS POINTS: Refute more pro-abortion arguments, reference specific legislation that is in-flight or was recently signed into law. Experiences protesting abortion or debating abortion with pro-abortionists. Experience counseling a post-abortive or crisis pregnancy woman. Mentioning biological details of foetus development.

WHY IT MATTERS: Basically, because people who think that sex is for recreation, and that it is ok to kill children to avoid any limits on the pursuit of happiness are not qualified for marriage. You can't enter into an intimate commitment with someone who is willing to commit murder in order to get out of the consequences of their own selfish pursuit of pleasure. That is not going to work in a marriage – you need someone who makes good decisions, avoids harming others, is chaste and self-controlled, and takes responsibility for her actions when they go awry.

8. Marriage

Explain the public purposes of marriage, and then outline three threats to marriage and explain what legislation you would propose to neutralize these threats. What choices should people make before marriage to make sure they will have a stable, loving marriage?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Some public purposes of marriage are i) to force moral constraints on sexual activity, ii) to produce the next generation of humans, iii) to provide children with a stable, loving environment in which to grow up. Three threats to marriage are i) cohabitation, ii) no-fault divorce – which leads to fatherlessness, and iii) same-sex

marriage. There are others, too. For legislation, there are things like tax incentives, shared parenting laws, school choice to de-monopolize politicized public schools, etc. Pre-marriage behaviors are things like chastity, experience with children, having lots of savings, being physically fit, etc. Having a degree in experimental science, math or economics is excellent for a woman. Avoid artsy degrees, especially English.

BONUS POINTS: Name more threats to marriage, explain the effects of fatherlessness on children, explain how divorce courts work, explain how socialism impacts the family through taxation and wealth redistribution, explain what happens to women and children after a divorce.

WHY IT MATTERS: It's important for people who want to get married that they understand that marriage takes time and effort, and it requires both spouses to prepare for marriage, to be diligent at choosing a good spouse, and to understand what spouses and children need in order to stay engaged.

9. Children

Explain a person you admire and then tell me what you would do as a mother in order to produce that person from one of your children. What are some people and laws that you would change to make your job easier?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Jay Richards. Jay Richards is one of the most well-rounded Christian scholars operating today. He has knowledge of multiple areas, including economics and science. To make a Jay Richards, you need to be very careful about his education – which could mean homeschooling and saving money for later university tuition, as well as exposing him to apologetics and debates at an earlier age. He would need to have the dedicated attention of his mother for the first two years of his life, at least. Some laws that would help would be lower taxes, school choice, and academic freedom laws.

BONUS POINTS: Explaining how different things like day care, public schools, divorce, etc. harm children. Explaining how mother and fathers contribute to the child's moral, cognitive, spiritual, etc. development at different times. Explain how the child is harmed if both parents are not present and engaged to play these roles.

WHY IT MATTERS: Marriage is an enormous sacrifice for a man. Not only is there the risk of divorce, but wives and children are very expensive. A man can serve God fine as a bachelor. He has to have compelling reasons why getting married would serve God more than staying single. Producing influential children seems to be one of the major reasons for a man to get married, and he needs to see evidence that his wife is on board with that.

10. Husbands

Explain the roles of a man in a marriage, and tell me some of the things you would do in order to help your man to achieve those roles. What groups would oppose your husband from fulfilling those roles, and what have you done in your life to prepare yourself to help your husband in his roles? What are some of the most important things that a man needs from a woman, and what specific things should a wife do to provide them?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Men are supposed to be protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders. In order to help men to be protectors, women have to give them time to study to discern truth from lie, and support their ability to be physically strong, and to own firearms. It is also a good idea for women to have a positive view of good men who use force to restrain evil, as with the American military. Women should support the use of force against radical Islam and terrorists, as well. In order to help men to be providers, women have to advocate for fiscal conservatism in the public square. That would mean advocating for lower taxes, less government spending and smaller government. It would also mean being frugal in the home and helping the man to move ahead at work. If the children are up and out of the house, it could mean going back to work or starting a business to help make ends meet – or monitoring investments. For a man to be a moral and spiritual leader, a woman has to be supporting of him making moral judgments in the home, disciplining the children, holding her accountable for moral errors, and for making exclusive truth claims when it comes to spiritual things. She should not censor him when he gets into debates about spiritual things, even if other people who disagree feel bad – so long as he is not being a jerk. Her goal is not to be popular or liked, but to support her husband in his roles. The most important thing a man needs is respect, and that means treating him as important and significant, being grateful for his contributions, soliciting his opinion on things, being mindful of his male nature, which is more visual and sexual.

BONUS POINTS: Having read “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands”, “Men and Marriage”, “Love and Economics” and “Taken Into Custody”. More bonus points for having written about what she learned about men and marriage from books like that. The goal here is for her to have a real awareness and sympathy for what men are facing as husbands and fathers, and to have an idea of what women can do to support them in their roles.

WHY IT MATTERS: As a man, you have certain needs – the biggest need is for respect. If you are thinking of marrying a woman who cannot define respect, and doesn’t know how to give you respect, then you are going to be in for a world of hurt. The more she views marriage as a joint project with specific goals and external challenges, the more understanding and support you will get. No one wants to fly a plane with someone who doesn’t know how to fly a plane, fix a plane or navigate a plane. The more she knows about men and marriage, the better it will go for you – and the children.

Parting thoughts

This list is not exhaustive, it’s just to give you an idea of the kinds of things you should be looking for. A lot of it is the attitude. You are looking for a woman who does not shift blame onto you, who takes responsibility when she is wrong, who argues using logic and evidence, who loses arguments gracefully, and wins arguments gracefully, and who loves you and cares for you even if you are fighting. If the woman is resentful and doesn’t want to learn anything to deepen her faith, then drop her and find someone who will learn – it will be much better for you to partner with someone lovable and helpful, instead of a selfish lazy feminist.

If I were making a list for women, I would emphasize different things more centered around the specific roles that men play in the marriage – asking for his resume, work history, savings, investments, past relationships with women, parenting ability, self-defense ability, mentoring ability, and especially on moral issues and Christian truth claims.The most important thing that a woman needs is love, and the man should be ready to speak about love at length, and explain how he is going to provide her with love during the courtship and during the marriage. Women need to know that they are significant and desired by the man.

Related posts

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Kenosis and the doctrine of the Incarnation in Philippians 2:5-11

December 24, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's Christmas Eve, so it's time to see what the Bible says about who Jesus was and what it tells us about the character of God.

Here are the relevant verses in Phil 2:5-11 [NASB]:

> [5] Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
>
> [6] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
>
> [7] but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.
>
> [8] Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by
> becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
>
> [9] For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
>
> [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
>
> [11] and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Here's respected New Testament scholar Ben Witherington to help us make sense of it:

> Incarnation refers to the choices and acts of a pre-existent divine being, namely the Son of God, that the Son took in order to become a human being. He took on flesh, and became fully, truly human without ceasing to be fully, truly divine. Divinity is not something Jesus acquired later in life, or even after his death and resurrection. According to the theology of Incarnation he had always been the divine Son of God, even before he became Jesus, a human being. Strictly speaking the name Jesus only applies to a human being. It is the name the Son of God acquired once he became a human being in the womb of Mary, a name which he maintains to this day as he continues to be a human being.
>
> […]When I try and explain the incarnation to my students I deliberately choose to use the phrase divine condescension. What do I mean by this? Put another way, if there is going to be a corporate merger between a divine being and a human nature, then the divine side of the equation must necessarily limit itself, take on certain limitations, in order to be truly and fully human. The next question is…. what does it mean to be fully human? It means to have limitations of time and space and knowledge and power, and of course being mortal. Jesus exhibited all these traits. He was even tempted like us in every respect, but he avoided sin.

> What we should deduce from this is sinning is not a necessary part of being truly human. Yes, it is a trait of all fallen humans, but no, it is not how God made us in the first place. It is not necessary to sin in order to be truly or fully human.
>
> […]While the hymn is clear that the Son was 'in very nature God' at the same time he chose before he became human not to take advantage of his divine prerogatives. What were those? I call them the omnis– omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence.
>
> […]And here I think is what Paul is driving at when he says 'have this mind in yourselves that was also in Christ Jesus'. It says that he 'humbled himself'. Now contrary to what the world may think humility has nothing to do with feelings of low self-esteem. It has nothing to do with feelings of low self-worth. If Jesus is the model of true humility, it can't have anything to do with those things, because Jesus surely was the one person who walked this earth who did not have such feelings, did not have an identity crisis, and so on. Humility is the posture of a strong person who steps down to serve others, as Jesus did.

This IVP commentary on Bible Gateway talks more about what this "divine condescension" means to us, using that passage from Philippians:

> Christ's selflessness for the sake of others expressed itself in his emptying himself by taking the "form" of a slave. Historically, far too much has been made of the verb "emptied himself," as though in becoming incarnate he literally "emptied himself" of something. However, just as*harpagmos* requires no object for Christ to "seize" but rather points to what is the opposite of God's character, so Christ did not empty himself of anything; he simply "emptied himself," poured himself out, as it were. In keeping with Paul's ordinary usage, this is metaphor, pure and simple. What modifies it is expressed in the phrase that follows; he "poured himself out by taking on the 'form' of a slave."
>
> Elsewhere this verb regularly means to become powerless or to be emptied of significance (hence the NIV's *made himself nothing;* cf. KJV, "made himself of no reputation"). Here it stands in direct antithesis to the "empty glory" of verse 3 and functions in the same way as the metaphorical "he became poor" in 2 Corinthians 8:9. Thus, as in the "not" side of this clause (v. 6b), we are still dealing with the character of God as revealed in the mindset and resulting activity of the Son of God. The concern is with divine selflessness: God is not an acquisitive being, grasping and seizing, but self-giving for the sake of others.

I think it's important to be clear that Jesus didn't give up anything of his divine attributes by becoming a man. Rather, he added a human nature to his divine nature. The humility is because he came to serve others.

I think that it is important for us to emphasize the doctrine of the Incarnation at Christmas, in order to correct the grasping and seizing that is so widespread. The really interesting thing about Christmas is the Incarnation, and what it tells us about God and

us. It tells us that we have value, because Jesus loved us. But it also says that following Jesus means being humble and being a servant to others. It means pouring yourself out to others in order to serve them. And these obligations are not metaphorical – they are rooted in the historical facts. This is the way the world is as a matter of fact, although certainly we have freedom to rebel against it.

For those looking for defenses to the doctrine of the Incarnation, you can find a chapter on it by Paul Copan in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". That's for intermediate readers. For advanced readers you can look for a chapter in "The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology", edited by Charles Taliaferro and Chad Meister, and published by Cambridge University Press. I just bought that latter book for one of the graduate students I sponsor. I know that Thomas V. Morris also has a couple of books out there on the Incarnation – one for intermediate readers and one for advanced readers. The latter book is published by Cornell University Press.

Why do people celebrate Christmas?

December 25, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s the time of year when we explain what Christianity is about.

God exists

Basically, we know from a variety of scientific arguments that the universe was created and fine-tuned for life by an intelligent agent that existed causally prior to the beginning of the universe, because this agent brought the universe into being. Our purpose as humans is to enter into a two-way loving relationship with this Creator/Designer of the universe. This is the only way that we can ultimately be happy and fulfilled.

We avoid God

Now, when you look at human experience, none of us is interested in finding out about the character of this Creator/Designer, because we are afraid that if we find out too much about him then we will have our freedom to do as we please constrained by the demands of a relationship with an all-powerful, all-good being. Just knowing that such a person exists and has a character distinct from our own is enough to cause us to flee from him so that we can stay autonomous from the obligations of the moral law that he expects us to follow.

Christians believe that this universal desire to avoid an all-powerful, all-good God who will judge us is a result of bad behaviors inherited by us from the very first rebellion against God by our ancestors. Ever since that rebellion, the capability for relating to God has been lost, because we no longer have the ability to stop our rebellion against God. Christians call the first rebellion of our ancestors “The Fall of Man”.

What does this rebellion look like for us today? Well, we want to do whatever we want, in order to be happy, and to ignore God’s demands. We want to have happy feelings, including security, community and being morally good, all without a relationship with

God. We want to acquire and rearrange matter for our selfish ends without acknowledging and honoring the Creator/Designer of that matter. And, of course, we would like other people to affirm, voluntarily or involuntarily, that our rebellion against God is really the height of moral goodness.

Additionally, some people imagine that God, if he exists at all, must desire our happiness. And of course when their needs are not met by this invented God, then they become even more bitter at God, and eventually decide that God could not really exist since their selfish needs are not being met by him. It never seems to occur to us humans that some pain and suffering may be permitted by God in order to turn our attention away from pleasure and security in this life, and back towards a relationship with him.

This is the mess we find ourselves in. This propensity for turning away from God and trying to pursue selfish happiness and security apart from a relationship with God is what the Bible calls "sin". Every single one of us deserves severe punishment for refusing to pursue a genuine two-way love relationship with the God who is there. That is the mess we are in before Jesus appears to address this problem.

Jesus saves the day

I cannot say much about *how* Jesus solves the problem of rebellion against God, because that is really the story of Easter, and today we are dealing with the story of Christmas. But I can say that the solution to the problem requires that God step into history to communicate with his creatures and to perform actions in order to be reconciled with them. That is the message of Christmas: God is stepping into history to do something to end our rebellion. Easter is the story of *what he does*.

This is talked about in the Bible in John 1, for example.

John 1:1-5:

[1]In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[2]He was with God in the beginning.

[3]Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

[4]In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

[5]The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

You can substitute the word "Word" there for *Logos*, which really means *logic* or *reason* or *wisdom.* This is a person with a divine nature, identified with the eternal being of God, who exists causally prior to the creation of the universe, who is going to take on an additional human nature, including a human body. (Christians believe that there is one divine "what" being and three divine "who" persons). Software engineers, you can think of Jesus having two natures as multiple inheritance in C++.

And it continues in John 1:10-14:

[10]He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

[11]He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

[12]Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

[13]children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

[14]The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Here the word grace doesn't mean like a graceful ballet dancer. It means an instance of mercy received from a superior. A person (a "who") identified with the divine being (a "what") has decided to make us a top-down offer of mercy.

The same message of God stepping into history is found in the Christmas carols that people sing at Christmas.

Christmas carols

Here's the best one, "O, Holy Night", and it says:

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining.
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

When we were in rebellion, we had lost our most valuable capacity – the capacity of being in a direct relationship with God. And if the newborn baby Jesus can accomplish his mission (and he did), then we are going to regain that capacity for a direct relationship with God.

Now look at "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", which one of my favorites:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

Basically, as I often say, there are only two kinds of people in the world. There are people who are willing to respond to the offer of a relationship with God, with all the little sacrifices and compromises that a relationship entails, and then there are people who are not willing to respond. For the people who are willing to respond, the appearance of Jesus is the best thing that could possibly happen, because now we are finally going to have a chance to deal directly with God, face-to-face, to find out what he is like, and change ourselves to be more like him, with his help.

And that is why people celebrate Christmas. It's the anniversary of the birth of Jesus. It is the story of God stepping into history to be reconciled with his rebellious creatures. It's the story of the divine *Logos* subjecting himself to the life of a creature in order to rescue us from our sinful, self-destructive rebellion. This love for undeserving creatures is above and beyond the call of duty. We didn't love him, but instead he loved us first, and he loved us enough to come down here and suffer with us so that we could be reconciled with God.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

A Dad: the tenth most popular gift requested by children at Christmas

December 26, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this sad article from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> A study of 2,000 British parents found most children will put a new baby brother or sister at the top of their Christmas list, closely followed by a request for a real-life reindeer.

> A "pet horse" was the third most popular choice, with a "car" making a bizarre entry at number four.

> Despite their material requests, the tenth most popular Christmas wish on the list was a "Dad".
>
> […]A request for a "mum" reached number 23 on the list.

It's sad. I think that there is a perception among many young women today that it is OK to have recreational premarital sex that may lead to having a child out of wedlock. Many unmarried women have an intuition (not supported by data) that a child will turn out fine without a father in the home. Some think (against the data) that fathers can be substituted with a government welfare check and that children won't notice the difference. But the research shows that this is a false belief.

Excerpt:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. **But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.**
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. **In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.**
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For

> example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:
>
> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. **Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes**, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families.[24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. **This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original differences in family income and poverty during childhood.**[26]

And here's a bit more data showing that having government replace fathers via higher taxes and more redistribution of wealth doesn't take away the bad effects of fatherlessness:

> **Children from low-income, two-parent families outperform students from high-income, single-parent homes. Almost twice as many high achievers come from two-parent homes as one-parent homes.** Source: "One-Parent Families and Their Children;" Charles F. Kettering Foundation (1990).
>
> Children reared by a divorced or never-married mother are less cooperative and score lower on tests of intelligence than children reared in intact families. Statistical analysis of the behavior and intelligence of these children revealed "significant detrimental effects" of living in a female-headed household. Growing up in a female-headed household remained a statistical predictor of behavior problems **even after adjusting for differences in family income**. Source: Greg L. Duncan, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Pamela Kato Klebanov, "Economic Deprivation and Early Childhood Development," Child Development 65 (1994).
>
> **After taking into account race, socioeconomic status, sex, age, and ability, high school students from single-parent households were 1.7 times more likely to drop out than were their corresponding counterparts living with both biological parents.** Source: McNeal, Ralph B.

> Jr."Extracurricular Activities and High School Dropouts." Sociology of Education 68(1995): 62-81.

I think that these are significant in light of the recent shooting in Connecticut:

> In studies involving over 25,000 children using nationally representative data sets, children who lived with only one parent had lower grade point averages, lower college aspirations, poor attendance records, and higher drop out rates than students who lived with both parents. Source: McLanahan, Sara and Gary Sandefur. Growing up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.
>
> A 1988 Department of Health and Human Services study found that at every income level except the very highest (over $50,000 a year), children living with never-married mothers were more likely than their counterparts in two-parent families to have been expelled or suspended from school, to display emotional problems, and to engage in antisocial behavior. Source: James Q. Wilson, "In Loco Parentis: Helping Children When Families Fail Them," The Brookings Review, Fall 1993.
>
> 72% of adolescent murderers grew up without fathers. 60% of America's rapists grew up the same way. Source: D. Cornell (et al.), Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 5. 1987. And N. Davidson, "Life Without Father," Policy Review. 1990.
>
> The likelihood that a young male will engage in criminal activity doubles if he is raised without a father and triples if he lives in a neighborhood with a high concentration of single-parent families. Source: A. Anne Hill, June O'Neill, "Underclass Behaviors in the United States," CUNY, Baruch College. 1993.

The shooter in Connecticut hadn't spoken to his father in two years:

> Peter Lanza, the father of Sandy Hook shooter, hadn't spoken to his son for more than two years and his father is at a loss for what drove Adam to kill 20 students and six teachers at his old elementary school.
>
> […]Adam, 20, had not spoken to his brother Ryan or father for upwards of two years at the time of the shooting. Adam reportedly distanced himself from his father Peter when he started to become serious with his new girlfriend, and current wife.
>
> Peter and Adam's mother Nancy split in 2001 but did not formally divorce until November 2008. Court records made the split appear amicable as both parties agreed to put their sons needs above any bitterness, but Adam was apparently the one to cut ties with his father in 2010.

Women need to think ahead and realize that the little children will be impacted by her choice of man, as well of her choice of whether to have recreational premarital sex with a man. If she doesn't test him adequately and makes poor choices, then the children will be deprived of a father in the home. I don't think that the sentiment "he makes me happy

and horny and my friends approve of him” necessarily translates into “he can do the job of protecting, providing and leading on moral and spiritual issues”. Those are two different sets of criteria, and often at cross-purposes in a culture that despises traditional male roles as “sexist”.

Surprise! Social Security ran a $47.8 billion dollar deficit in 2012

December 27, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> The Social Security program ran a $47.8 billion deficit in fiscal 2012 as the program brought in $725.429 billion in cash and paid $773.247 for benefits and overhead expenses, according to official data published by Social Security Administration.
>
> The Social Security Administration also released new data revealing that the number of workers collecting disability benefits hit a record 8,827,795 in December–up from 8,805,353 in November.
>
> The overall number of Social Security program beneficiaries—including retired workers, dependent family members and survivors and disabled workers and their dependent family members—also hit a record in December, climbing from 56,658,978 in November to 56,758,185 in December.
>
> In 2011, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there was an average of 112.556 million full-time workers in the United States, of whom 17.806 million worked full-time for local, state or federal government. That left an average of only 94.750 million full-time private sector workers in the country.
>
> **That means that for every 1.67 Americans who worked full-time in the private sector in 2011, there is now 1 person collecting benefits from the Social Security administration.**

There are about 310 million people in the United States.

Now consider that the same people who make you wait in line at the post office and the department of motor vehicles are teaching your children in public schools. What are the children learning there? Are they learning marketable skills so that they will be able to get private sector jobs and pay for these programs? No, they are learning about recreational sex, global warming, feminism, gay activism and other leftist dogma. They learn how to feel offended, how to blame men, how to blame white people, how to blame job creators ("the rich"), and how to blame the our armed forces.

We have borrowed over one trillion dollars from future generations to pay for these entitlement programs, and there is no reason to believe that a bunch of brainwashed children will be up to the task of paying for those entitlements. We shouldn't be aborting 1 million unborn children a year either – we should be marrying and raising them with two opposite sex parents. The welfare state is just not sustainable when we destroy the supply line of new law-abiding productive workers. We have a growing public sector

parasite feeding on a shrinking private sector host. It just won’t work for much longer.

New study: fewer than one in ten women staying home with children

December 28, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Fewer than one in ten women stay at home to look after their children
>
> - Latest census figures show 300,000 fewer staying home than thought
> - Concerns for well-being of mothers and impact on toddlers in day care
> - Stay-at-home figures dropped from 17 per cent of women 20 years ago
>
> The stay-at-home mother is fast becoming consigned to history, according to the latest census figures.
>
> Returns showed there are 300,000 fewer than officials had previously estimated, with those who devote their lives to bringing up families now reduced to a tiny minority.
>
> Fewer than one in ten women of working age are stay-at-home mothers.
>
> The collapse follows a decade in which governments urged mothers to take jobs on the grounds that working is the route to fulfilment for women and that families with two incomes are much less likely to fall into poverty.
>
> Critics, however, are concerned for the well-being of mothers who might prefer to be with their families, and the impact on increasing numbers of toddlers who spend long hours in day care.
>
> The 2011 census results found there are 1,598,000 women who do not work because they are looking after their home and family – 298,000 fewer than estimates from the Office for National Statistics.

Note that this is applauded by feminist groups, like the UK Labour Party:

> The decline in numbers of stay-at-home mothers will be welcomed by ministers as the Labour drive to push mothers into work has continued under the Coalition.
>
> Childcare minister Elizabeth Truss has made a priority of providing cheaper day care to help mothers into jobs.
>
> In an article earlier this year she said it was 'vital' for mothers to work, adding: 'To power ahead Britain needs to look at best practice from overseas to discover how to increase women's participation, especially for those who are parents.'
>
> But critics say the sky-high level of house prices and the lack of help for two-parent families in the tax and benefit systems means most mothers have to work, whether they like it or not.

Earlier this week I blogged studies that showed the importance of fathers to children. But it's important to remember that mothers are also important to children, especially in the first few years of the child's life. And we have studies to back that up as well.

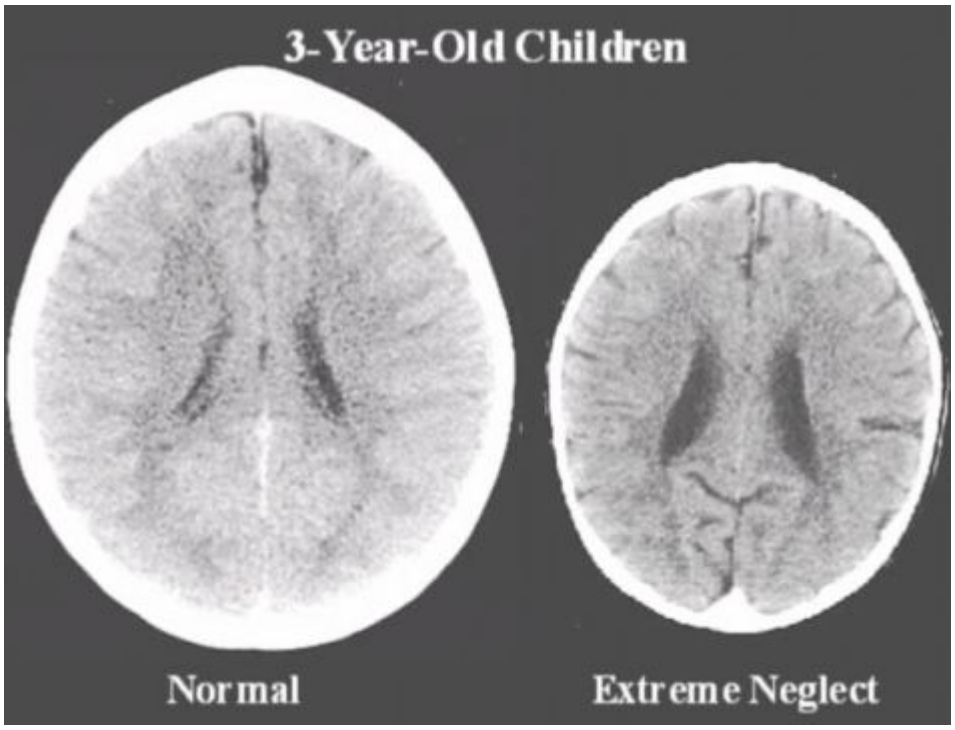

Brain scans of 3-year old children: normal vs neglected

This was discussed before in another article from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Both of these images are brain scans of a two three-year-old children, but the brain on the left is considerably larger, has fewer spots and less dark areas, compared to the one on the right.
>
> According to neurologists this sizeable difference has one primary cause – the way each child was treated by their mothers.
>
> The child with the larger and more fully developed brain was looked after by its mother – she was constantly responsive to her baby, reported The Sunday Telegraph.
>
> But the child with the shrunken brain was the victim of severe neglect and abuse.
>
> According to research reported by the newspaper, the brain on the right worryingly lacks some of the most fundamental areas present in the image on the left.
>
> The consequences of these deficits are pronounced – the child on the left with the larger brain will be more intelligent and more likely to develop the social ability to empathise with others.
>
> But in contrast, the child with the shrunken brain will be more likely to become addicted to drugs and involved in violent crimes, much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on state benefits.
>
> The child is also more likely to develop mental and other serious health

> problems.
>
> Professor Allan Schore, of UCLA, told The Sunday Telegraph that if a baby is not treated properly in the first two years of life, it can have a fundamental impact on development.
>
> He pointed out that the genes for several aspects of brain function, including intelligence, cannot function.
>
> […]The study correlates with research released earlier this year that found that children who are given love and affection from their mothers early in life are smarter with a better ability to learn.
>
> The study by child psychiatrists and neuroscientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, found school-aged children whose mothers nurtured them early in life have brains with a larger hippocampus, a key structure important to learning, memory and response to stress.
>
> The research was the first to show that changes in this critical region of children's brain anatomy are linked to a mother's nurturing, Neurosciencenews.com reports.
>
> The research is published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Early Edition.
>
> Lead author Joan L. Luby, MD, professor of child psychiatry, said the study reinforces how important nurturing parents are to a child's development.

If we are really interested in providing for the needs of young children, then we have to voluntarily limit the freedom of adults. Traditional marriage is the way that societies have provided for the needs of young children. Marriage puts boundaries on sexual activity (premarital chastity, post-marital fidelity) that are beneficial to children. Children need to have access to their parents over the course of their development.

We should be promoting behaviors and policies that strengthen marriage, like chastity and low tax rates. We should be opposing behaviors and policies that weaken marriages, like hooking-up and no-fault divorce. That's what we would do if we really had the best interests of children at heart instead of the best interests of adults.

Conservative Party MP Pierre Poilievre explains how Canada escaped the recession

December 29, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Conservative M.P. Pierre Poilevre (Nepean-Carleton), a member of the majority government in Canada, explains how Canada embraced the free entreprise system that America has rejected, and the results they got.

Here is the speech that went viral on Youtube:

And here is his article in the liberal Huffington Post.

Excerpt:

> In a few days the "fiscal cliff" deadline will arrive and potentially bring massive automatic spending cuts and tax increases. Even if Congress and the President agree to avoid the cliff, the next crisis awaits. Treasury Secretary, Timothy Geithner, wrote the Senate this week to report that the "statutory debt limit will be reached on December 31, 2012," which will require extraordinary measures to prevent a mass default. These measures will give the government 60 days before it runs out of money and Uncle Sam's head smashes into the so-called "debt ceiling."
>
> It has long been said that when the U.S. sneezes, Canada catches a cold. So why have these debt-related ailments in the U.S. not afflicted the Canadian government?
>
> The answer is that Canada has been practicing what the U.S. always preached: free markets, low taxes and minimal state interference. And it is working.
>
> For example, Canada avoided the interventionist policies that led the U.S. to the sub-prime crisis.
>
> In an attempt to expand home ownership, administrations from Carter to Bush Jr. forced banks to offer mortgages to people who would otherwise not qualify for them. Washington then ordered government-sponsored enterprises such as Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae to insure these "sub-prime" mortgages.
>
> According to a 2010 Report on the U.S. Financial Crisis by the World Bank's Development Research Group, Freddie and Fannie bought an estimated 47 per cent of these toxic mortgages. Harvard financial historian Niall Ferguson indicates that the amount of mortgage debt backed by these government-sponsored enterprises grew from $200-million in 1980 to $4-trillion in 2007.(1) The government pumped so much air into the housing bubble that it burst in 2008. The resulting financial crisis led to government bailouts of the banking sector.
>
> Big government caused the economic crisis. So we are told the solution is more big government. Funny how the problem becomes the solution.

> Because the Canadian government did not impose sub-prime mortgages on the country's charter banks, we avoided the crisis and did not bailout a single financial institution. To keep it that way, Canada's Finance Minister has ended all government-backed insurance of low-down payment and long-amortization mortgages. In other words, if you want to take on risky debt, taxpayers will not insure you.
>
> Governments must lead by example when managing their own debt and spending. Low debt is the result of low spending. Federal government spending as a share of the overall economy is 15 per cent in Canada (2) and 24 per cent in the U.S. (3). The numbers are not merely the result of prodigious U.S. military spending, though that is certainly a factor. Non-military federal government spending is 14 per cent of Canada's economy (4), and 18 per cent of America's (5).

Take a look at some of these graphs from earlier in the year about the Canadian 2012 budget. (This is straight from their government's web site – they have new transparency/anti=corruption measures now, so the citizens know everything that government does). When comparing the deficit and debt of Canada to the United States, always multiply the Canadian number by 10 to get a benchmark to compare. For example, Canadian GDP is 1.7 trillion, and the US GDP is 15 trillion.

Canada's budget deficit is around 30 billion, but ours is 1.2 trillion:

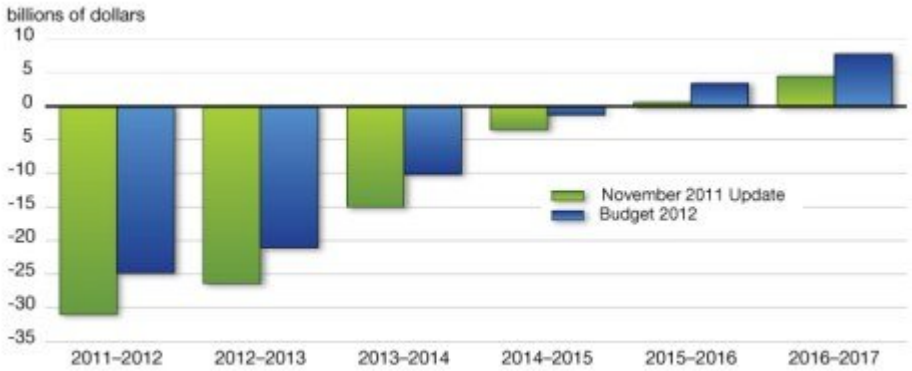

Canada Federal Budget Deficit / Surplus 2012

If we were doing as well as Canada, our deficit would be about $300 billion. But we have run up about 6 trillion in debt over 4 years! Not only that, but Canada's national debt is only $600 billion. If we multiple that by 10, we would expect ours about $6 trillion. And it was that – during the Bush Presidency. But then the Democrats took over the House and Senate in 2007 and everything went wrong and we packed trillions and trillions onto the debt, including about $6 trillion during Obama's first term.

Canada's Debt to GDP ratio is 34%:

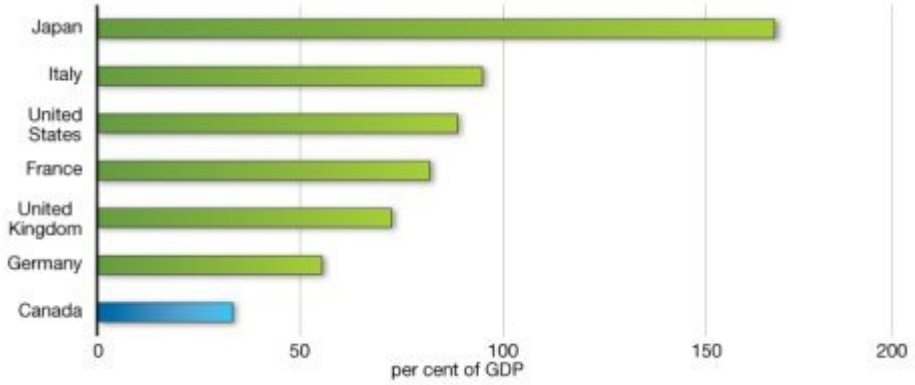

Canada vs US Debt to GDP

But things are even worse for the United States, now. The current United States Debt to GDP is 105%, according to official U.S. government figures. We are due for yet another credit downgrade, and should see Greece-like levels of Debt to GDP during Obama's second term. We are spending too much, and we aren't going to be able to make up trillion dollar deficits even if we confiscate every penny that rich people earn. (And they won't be daft enough to keep working as hard if we did that – they would move, and probably to Canada)

What is happening to us here in the United States is *self-inflicted*. We are – and have been – voting to impoverish ourselves and generations of children born and unborn, by punishing those who work hard and play by the rules, and rewarding those who don't work and don't play by the rules. It didn't have to be this way. We could have elected a President who actually knew something about business and economics. Knowledge matters. We can't just choose a President who gives us the "tingles" and then expect him to perform the actual duties of being President. Competence is more important than confidence. Substance is more important than style.

Christian business Hobby Lobby defies Obamacare abortion mandate

December 30, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the United States, Christian taxpayers are already forced to subsidize the murder of unborn children by supporting Planned Parenthood through taxes. Planned Parenthood is a major donor to the Democrat Party. In addition, Obamacare contains a provision that forces businesses to provide certain abortion-causing drugs to their employees. Failure to comply with this pro-abortion agenda will result in massive fines – over a million dollars per year for Hobby Lobby.

Breitbart reports on how Christians are being forced into civil disobedience.

Excerpt:

> Now that Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor has denied Hobby Lobby's application for an emergency injunction protecting them from Obamacare's HHS Mandate on abortion and birth control, Hobby Lobby has decided to defy the federal government to remain true to their religious beliefs, at enormous risk and financial cost.
>
> Hobby Lobby is wholly owned and controlled by the Green family, who are evangelical Christians. The Greens are committed to running their business in accordance with their Christian faith, believing that God wants them to conduct their professional business in accordance with the family's understanding of the Bible. Hobby Lobby's mission statement includes, "Honoring the Lord in all we do by operating the company … consistent with Biblical principles."
>
> The HHS Mandate goes into effect for Hobby Lobby on Jan. 1, 2013. The Greens correctly understand that some of the drugs the HHS Mandate requires them to cover at no cost in their healthcare plans cause abortions.
>
> Today Hobby Lobby announced that they will not comply with this mandate to become complicit in abortion, which the Greens believe ends an innocent human life. Given Hobby Lobby's size (it has 572 stores employing more than 13,000 people), by violating the HHS Mandate, it will be subject to over $1.3 million in fines *per day*. That means over $40 million in fines in January alone. If their case takes another ten months to get before the Supreme Court—which would be the earliest it could get there under the normal order of business—the company would incur almost a *half-billion dollars* in fines.
>
> […]The HHS Mandate is a gross violation of the religious beliefs of the Green family. The issue before the courts here is whether the Greens religious-liberty rights include running their secular, for-profit business consistent with their religious beliefs. In other words, is religious liberty just what you do in church on a Sunday morning, or does it include what you do during the week at your job?

I wrote before about my reasons for thinking that Barack Obama is not a Christian. Not only is he pro-abortion, but also pro-gay-marriage. He also doesn't believe in Hell, which is one of the most common things that Jesus taught about. All of that is interesting, but now Obama is moving beyond that to punish Bible-believing Christians for publicly acting out their faith in public. Atheism is fine, but now he is headed into fascism: using the power of the state to coerce others to accept that their religious and moral views are false.

That is why I find it pretty interesting that so many people who call themselves Christians voted for someone who persecutes Christians for taking the Bible seriously. I think that this is a pretty good signal that not everyone who claims to be a Christian really is a Christian.

A Christian is someone who accepts the truth claims of the Bible and accepts the moral authority of the Bible in defining what is good and evil for individuals and for society as a whole.

A Democrat is someone who affirms and promotes:

- abortion, gay marriage, persecuting Bible-believing Christians, premarital sex, fatherlessness
- poverty, unemployment, greed, envy, covetousness, intergenerational theft, crime (by criminalizing and banning self-defense)
- causing wars through a weak foreign policy and supporting evil dictators in places like Iran, Syria and Egypt

It does not seem to me that Christianity and Democrat policies are compatible.

Obama’s fiscal cliff plan would increase debt to $20 trillion by 2016

December 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Forbes magazine explains why Obama’s plan doesn’t solve our long-term spending problem.

Excerpt:

> The President, while not presenting concrete proposals, has been quite clear on what he wants: to raise taxes on the top two percent, keep the Bush tax cuts for everyone else, offer only vague promises of future spending cuts, and gain the unprecedented authority to raise the debt limit without Congressional approval. He does not plan to reform the entitlements so dear to his heart and his base’s. Instead of less spending, he would like to spend more on “stimulus” and “investments.” Obama knows that physicians will desert Medicare if he cuts their compensation by the scheduled 26.5 percent. That is simply not going to happen.
>
> Here are Obama’s desired alternative fiscal policies to avoid the fiscal cliff in order of their effect on the five-year budget as estimated by the CBO:
>
> 1. Preserve Bush tax cuts and other tax provisions for everyone except the top 2 percent: *Raises the five-year deficit by $2.0 trillion.*
>
> 2. Drop the fiscal-cliff sequestration of spending and expand discretionary spending by the rate of inflation: *Raises the five-year deficit by another trillion dollars.*
>
> **3. Raise the tax rate on the top 2 percent: *Lowers the five-year deficit by $300 billion.***
>
> 4. Extend enhanced unemployment benefits: *Raises the five-year deficit by $200 billion*.
>
> 5. Do not cut Medicare payment rates to physicians: *Raises the five-year deficit by some $100.*
>
> Four of the five fiscal policies on Obama’s wish list raise the deficit. Only one – the vaunted tax on the rich on which he based his campaign – lowers the deficit, but only by a miniscule $300 billion ($60 billion per year). If Obama gets the tax and spending changes he wants, his 2017 successor will inherit a national debt in excess of $20 trillion.
>
> A warning: The 2013-2017 budget deficits could be much higher. No one knows what the costs of Obama Care will be. By 2017, the federal government will be spending more on health care than on social security. The CBO projection assumes that the costs of Obama Care come in on target. If Obama Care cannot contain health care costs, we could easily see a five-year deficit well in excess of $5 trillion, for an annual deficit of more than a trillion dollars. The CBO also uses

> a historically low rate of increase of discretionary non-defense spending equal to the rate of inflation. If we return to “business as usual” in Washington, the discretionary spending figure could also be blasted out of the water.
>
> Obama based his re-election campaign on “the rich should pay their fair share” and “I killed Osama.” Well before the election, it was clear from the government’s own figures that taxing the top two percent would make only a tiny contribution to solving our deficit problems.
>
> Why was this not pointed out by the media, who played along with the “tax the rich” fairy tale? Why was this not the central theme of the Republican campaign?

I think that point I highlighted in bold deserves emphasis. Obama ran up over $6 trillion in new debt – pushing us to a $16.5 trillion dollar debt. His “balanced approach” will generate a measly $60 billion a year in “new revenues”, assuming that “the rich” don’t just curtail their productive activities and shift their operations elsewhere (Canada). If you generate $60 billion in revenues, there is NO WAY that this is going to pay for a trillion dollars a year in new debt. So we are on track to hit over $20 trillion in national debt in Obama’s second term, taking us into Greece-like territory.

And that is according to the official CBO numbers.

Has the text of the Bible been corrupted during its translation?

December 31, 2012 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's introduce New Testament scholar Daniel B. Wallace:

> Daniel B. Wallace, Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary
>
> B.A., Biola University, 1975; Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; Ph.D., 1995.
>
> Dr. Wallace influences students across the country through his textbook on intermediate Greek grammar. It has become the standard textbook in the English-speaking world on that subject. He is a member of the Society of New Testament Studies, the Institute for Biblical Research, the Society of Biblical Literature, and the Evangelical Theological Society.
>
> […]He has been a consultant on four different Bible translations.
>
> […] He works extensively in textual criticism, and has founded The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (csntm.org), an institute with an initial purpose of preserving Scripture by taking digital photographs of all known Greek New Testament manuscripts.
>
> […]His postdoctoral work includes work on Greek grammar at Tyndale House in Cambridge, textual criticism studies at the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster, and the Universität Tübingen, Germany.

And here is an article by Dr. Wallace that corrects many misconceptions about the transmission and translation of the Testament.

He lists five in particular:

- ***Myth 1: The Bible has been translated so many times we can't possibly get back to the original.***
- ***Myth 2: Words in red indicate the exact words spoken by Jesus of Nazareth.***
- ***Myth 3: Heretics have severely corrupted the text.***
- ***Myth 4: Orthodox scribes have severely corrupted the text.***
- ***Myth 5: The deity of Christ was invented by emperor Constantine.***

And here's the detail on number one, which I think is important:

> This myth involves a naïve understanding of what Bible translators actually did. It's as if once they translated the text, they destroyed their exemplar! Sometimes folks think that translators who were following a tradition (such as the KJV and its descendants, the RV, ASV, RSV, NASB, NKJB, NRSV, and ESV) really did not

> translate at all but just tweaked the English. Or that somehow the manuscripts that the translators used are now lost entirely.
>
> The reality is that we have almost no record of Christians destroying biblical manuscripts throughout the entire history of the Church. And those who translated in a tradition *both* examined the English *and* the original tongues. Decent scholars improved on the text as they compared notes and manuscripts. Finally, we still have almost all of the manuscripts that earlier English translators used. And we have many, many more as well. The KJV New Testament, for example, was essentially based on seven Greek manuscripts, dating no earlier than the eleventh century. Today we have about 5800 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, including those that the KJV translators used. And they date as early as the second century. So, as time goes on, we are actually getting closer to the originals, not farther away.

All the translations that we have today are one step away from the Greek originals. There is no chain of translations that was corrupted.

Check out the rest of the myths, especially for those who favor one Bible translation over others – you know who you are!

UK judge rules that Christians can be forced to work on Sundays

January 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article by Christina Odone from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> I'm scared that was the last Christmas we celebrated with a church service. The High Court ruled last week that Sunday is not a core part of a Christian's belief; next, they'll decide that Christmas is not, either. Mr Justice Langstaff has decided that a Baptist who works in a care home can be forced by her employers to work through Sunday too. This, even though her colleagues were happy to take Celestina Mba's Sunday shift so she could do what all devout Christians do on a Sunday – go to church.
>
> It didn't matter that no one was complaining about Celestina Mba's Sunday observance; her employers, Labour-led Merton Council, wanted her to drop her religious obligations. They'd decide what she was to do on the Sabbath day – not some dusty Bible. God? Who's He? The Fourth Commandment? What's that?
>
> Christians like Celestina Mba had better take note: they live in an environment so hostile to Christians that any show of allegiance to this religion will get them into trouble. Don't wear crucifixes, don't pray for a patient, don't try to foster a child: practising Christians are now barred from any of these activities. This, even though the majority of Britons still count themselves as Christians.
>
> The clash of Christians and a newly strident secular establishment has become an everyday story: a cultural civil war that constantly claims Christian victims. Lawyers, and judges like Mr Justice Langstaff, have shown themselves, again and again, to stand on the side of the secularists. I still smart at the memory of the Law Society refusing to host a conference on the virtues of heterosexual marriage. Incredibly, this kind of censorship is allowed to go on under a Tory PM who himself claims allegiance to the majority Church.

In the UK, it seems like a common practice to use "lawfare" in order to coerce behavior. They use the nuclear option against individual Christians and conservatives in order to send a message to all. The message is that the government has a right to silence anyone who makes the secular left feel "offended". The state is telling Christians and conservatives that it's easier to go along with secularism and socialism just to get by. Even if you win your case, you will have to pay and pay legal costs to win it. Don't try to be a hero, because if you do, we will get you.

You can even see this being done when law-abiding citizens defend themselves and get prosecuted for it. The message then is similar – don't scare or offend criminals by deterring them with weapons.

Who would live in such a society?

William Lane Craig's historical case for the resurrection of Jesus

January 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Craig's famous minimal facts case for the resurrection has been posted at the Christian Apologetics Alliance. He presents 4 facts admitted by the majority of New Testament historians, and then he supplies multiple pieces of evidence for each fact.

Here are the four facts:

- FACT #1: *After his crucifixion, Jesus was buried in a tomb by Joseph of Arimathea.*
- FACT #2: *On the Sunday following the crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by a group of his women followers.*
- FACT #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.*
- FACT #4: *The original disciples believed that Jesus was risen from the dead despite their having every predisposition to the contrary.*

Here's the detail on fact #3, the post-mortem appearances.

> FACT #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.*
>
> This is a fact which is almost universally acknowledged among New Testament scholars, for the following reasons:
>
> 1. The list of eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection appearances which is quoted by Paul in I Cor. 15. 5-7 guarantees that such appearances occurred. These included appearances to Peter (Cephas), the Twelve, the 500 brethren, and James.
>
> 2. The appearance traditions in the gospels provide multiple, independent attestation of these appearances. This is one of the most important marks of historicity. The appearance to Peter is independently attested by Luke, and the appearance to the Twelve by Luke and John. We also have independent witness to Galilean appearances in Mark, Matthew, and John, as well as to the women in Matthew and John.
>
> 3. Certain appearances have earmarks of historicity. For example, we have good evidence from the gospels that neither James nor any of Jesus' younger brothers believed in him during his lifetime. There is no reason to think that the early church would generate fictitious stories concerning the unbelief of Jesus' family had they been faithful followers all along. But it is indisputable that James and his brothers did become active Christian believers following Jesus' death. James was considered an apostle and eventually rose to the position of leadership of the

> Jerusalem church. According to the first century Jewish historian Josephus, James was martyred for his faith in Christ in the late AD 60s. Now most of us have brothers. What would it take to convince you that your brother is the Lord, such that you would be ready to die for that belief? Can there be any doubt that this remarkable transformation in Jesus' younger brother took place because, in Paul's words, "then he appeared to James"?
>
> Even Gert Ludemann, the leading German critic of the resurrection, himself admits, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus' death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."3

Yes, Gerd Ludemann is actually an atheist new Testament historian, and he has even debated Dr. Craig on the resurrection – not once, but *twice*. That's the kind of evidence Dr. Craig uses in his case. Not just what your pastor will give you, but what atheists will give you. We need to learn to debate like that.

Fiscal cliff deal raises taxes by $600 billion, increases spending $330 billion

January 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation explains.

Excerpt:

> The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) just now released its score of the bill the Senate passed early this morning while everyone was celebrating the beginning of the New Year. Despite knowing for a long time that taxes would go up on all Americans today, the Senate waited until we technically went over the cliff to act. Washington's dysfunction was even fodder for New Year's revelers in Times Square.
>
> Going over the cliff allows Congress to technically say that it isn't raising taxes, but is cutting them instead. CBO's score backs them up on this by scoring the Senate bill as a $3.6 trillion tax cut. No one should fall for this. The Senate bill is a tax hike because it allows taxes to go up from 2012 to 2013. The tax increases in the bill will reportedly raise about $600 billion over the next 10 years.
>
> Also of note in the CBO score is that the Senate bill *increases* spending by around $330 billion by extending expanded unemployment benefits, a temporary "doc fix" patch to prevent cuts to Medicare, and extension of the agriculture programs.
>
> There was some good in the Senate bill — the harmful defense sequester cuts were postponed and most tax hikes were avoided. But there was bad — tax hikes that will hurt the economy and do little to tame the deficit, especially factoring in the spending in the bill.

As I noted before, the CBO has predicted that the bill will add $4 trillion to the national debt, taking us over the $20 trillion mark.

Bloomberg:

> The budget deal passed by the U.S. Senate today would raise taxes on 77.1 percent of U.S. households, mostly because of the expiration of a payroll tax cut, according to preliminary estimates from the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center in Washington.
>
> More than 80 percent of households with incomes between $50,000 and $200,000 would pay higher taxes. Among the households facing higher taxes, the average increase would be $1,635, the policy center said. A 2 percent payroll tax cut, enacted during the economic slowdown, is being allowed to expire as of yesterday.

According to the CBO, the deal would raise taxes by $41 for every $1 cut from the

budget. Have we really dodged a fiscal cliff?

Why is it so hard for a woman to find a good man to marry her?

January 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Captain Capitalism explains all the reasons why men are not getting married any more, and what women can do to reverse the so-called "marriage strike". In his view, it is women who voted for bigger government and higher taxes who are responsible for the decline of marriage among men.

His massive bullet-point list explains some of the things that women support that cause men to avoid marriage:

- Did you hear of this "divorce fad" going around? Apparently men get to pay out the majority of the time be it alimony or child support.
- Did you hear about this "divorce fad" going around? Apparently 65% of the time it's women who initiate divorce.
- Kids cost around $500,000 each to raise. given employment prospects we can't afford that. Much rather buy a boat or frankly work all that much less.
- Hey, you hear about this federal budget deficit and debt? Apparently we elected this guy "Barack Obama" and a bunch of democrats into office who are now mortgaging the future. This means our expenses in the future will be higher. Well, of course us "foolish, immature, pooping, farting boys" were too "immature" to vote for him like you wise women, but then again we're too busy flinging poo at each other to ponder the future macro-economic ramifications of a collapsing dollar.
- Hey, you hear about this social security medicare thing? Apparently enough "smart wise women" disproportionately kept voting for democrats to essentially have those immature 20 something men pay for the livelihood for these aging people. This added expense on our futures make's it that much harder economically to commit to a wife and children.
- Hey, you hear about this "welfare state" "medicaid" thing? Apparently enough "smart wise women" disproportionately over the years voted in enough democrats to essentially replace the role of fathers with government programs making fathers not only unnecessary, but an increasingly risky and unrewarding proposition, not to mention, making it easier for women to just up and leave their husbands, because well, "they needed to find themselves" and the government will take care of the kids while they go pursue their EPL fantasy.
- Hey, did you hear about this "welfare state" thing? Apparently because we've now outsourced bringing up children to the government and have to create government jobs for all the "sociology majors" and "education majors"and "communications majors" our tax bill will go through the roof. Oh! Wait!!! No it doesn't! I forgot! I'm a guy! I can live on very little, work a crappy job, work part time, live in a crappy apartment with my buds and STILL have enough disposable income to play video

games and buy booze.

Remember that 77% of young, unmarried women voted for Obama (70% of unmarried women, but 77% of young unmarried women). And research shows that women consistently vote for bigger and bigger government, more wealth redistribution for the "poor", and more intrusion into the family by the state. More government means higher taxes, and that makes it harder for men to have the authority in the home that comes from being the principle provider.

Not only that, but you have problems like no-fault divorce and biased domestic violence laws. Not to mention how feminism in the schools have left men earning fewer and fewer degrees, so that men lose the lion's share of jobs during recessions. Women also lobbied Barack Obama to make sure that the stimulus was slanted towards preserving women's jobs. I've merely touched on *a few* of the incentives against marriage. I could list even more factors, such as the easy availability of hook-up sex – why should men commit to the wife when they can get the sex for free?

What to make of all these facts? Well, men don't like paying more in taxes and getting less liberty. It makes it harder for us to justify marriage rationally. We want to get married, but when we run the numbers, we see red, not black. Men can either afford marriage and family or government social programs, but we cannot afford both. We can either be husbands and fathers, or we can pay for welfare checks and social programs that replace men, for women who don't want to have to deal with relating to a man.

I think the problem of men not wanting to marry is caused by women actually believing feminism – that men and women are identical. Once you believe that, there is no special role that men are supposed to play, and no way to distinguish a man who fills that role from one who doesn't. According to feminism, which most young women believe, men aren't meant to be providers, protectors or moral/spiritual leaders. Chastity is out. A boring, good-paying job is out. Morality is out. Sobriety is out. Apologetics and theology are out.

What's in? Being good-looking, inoffensive, and entertaining. Women are not selecting responsible men because they think that the men can be changed to be responsible, through sex, or maybe through nagging, and eventually through the threat of losing all his money and custody of his children. Men aren't stupid. They've noticed that responsibility and morality are out, and they're acting like clowns because that's what women prefer when getting drunk and hooking up. Remember that Duke University student and her report on all the men she slept with? – they were graded by physical attractiveness, sexual technique, popularity and *athletic ability*.

Many women today accept feminism, with its strong emphasis on selfishness and career advancement. Those women end up wasting their 20s on their careers and only pursue men who are attractive and entertaining. They aren't looking to settle down with a protector/provider/moral leader/spiritual leader. They don't want anyone to judge them or lead them. (Just try offering a woman a book on apologetics, and you'll see what I mean). By the time they hit 35 and decide to get married, all the men are cautious. Men want to

get married to women in their early 20s. What is the point of marrying a 35-year old woman who has lost her looks and her fertility? What is the value proposition for a man at that time? Plus, two decades of binge drinking, partying and hook-ups are not good preparations for creating a helpful, loving wife. Men are not stupid. We know the difference between a bitter, cynical harpy and chaste, loving princess.

Men do what women expect them to do in order to get sex. Just read the peer-reviewed studies on hooking up. If women don't select men who can do specific things as husbands and fathers, then men won't prepare themselves to do specific things. If they are already getting sex for playing the fool, then why should they do more than play the fool? If women obsessed over Paul Ryan and William Lane Craig, then that's what men would aspire to. They don't, and so men don't. Mature men intimidate women with their strong opinions, moral judgments, and exclusive theological claims. Much better to have an immature man who is shallow and politically correct.

There is a way for women to get what they want from men, but they actually have to engage in conversations with men and find out what men want from women. And what men want from a marriage. What they want from children. What they want from government. What they want from schools. What they want from the workplace. What they want from the church. You can't take away everything men need to marry and then expect them to marry. Nagging, belittling, withholding sex and controlling are not incentives for men to marry. Every time you break a man down, that is one less husband and father candidate. And eventually, the money flow dries up for the sperm-banks and social programs that substitute for men. What will women do then?

For myself, I am NOT on the same track as secular men (video games, alcohol, girlfriends and TV). I'm earning and saving to support Christian scholars and apologetics events in churches and universities. That's my role right now until women destroy feminism with their own hands. Marriage is only good for me if it is good for God. And I need to be convinced that it will be good for God by whoever is applying for the job. I would like to see the reasons why I should marry in a woman's moral decisions, her studying of difficult apologetic topics, and her political and economic conservatism. I would like to see that she understands men and marriage and understands how marriage and parenting can serve God, if done in an unselfish, moral and disciplined way. No pursuing happiness as the most important thing. No dismissing her moral obligations as "legalism".

Making one woman feel happy with a diamond ring and an expensive wedding is not a good choice for me when I could spend a lot less money sponsoring a stack of debates over my lifetime on Christian topics, in front of hundreds of thousands of university students, or even in churches. There are ways that marriage could be a good deal for God, but I want to see the value proposition for marriage before I sign up. So far, most women seem to resent the idea that marriage should be have to be proven good for God. They resent being asked questions that test their authenticity and capabilities as Christians. But everything we do is for God, don't I have a right to ask what is in it for him? I think a lot of Christian men are asking that question. What's in it for God? In fact, Paul recommends the single life in 1 Cor 7 precisely because of the dampening effect that

ineffective Christian women have on men. Most Christian women refuse to “woman up” and learn how to be a good wife and mother – so why should a man choose that?

Related posts

- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
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- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- Can a person be a feminist and still believe in marriage?
- What happens when the government pays people to have babies out-of-wedlock?
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Research to help you understand the “hook-up” culture on campus
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is really responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Obama’s new proposals penalize married couples and stay-at-home parents
- How feminism’s war against men ends up hurting women
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?

Moody's anticipates U.S. credit downgrade following fiscal cliff deal

January 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the latest from the Moody's web site.

Excerpt:

> Moody's Investors Service said that the fiscal package passed by both houses of Congress yesterday is a further step in clarifying the medium-term deficit and debt trajectory of the federal government. It does not, however, provide a basis for a meaningful improvement in the government's debt ratios over the medium term. The rating agency expects that further fiscal measures are likely to be taken in coming months that would result in lower future budget deficits, which are necessary if the negative outlook on the government's bond rating is to be returned to stable. **On the other hand, lack of further deficit reduction measures could affect the rating negatively. Notably, yesterday's package does not address the federal government's statutory debt limit, which was reached on December 31.** The need to raise the debt limit may affect the outcome of future budget negotiations.
>
> […]The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that the net increase in budget deficits from the fiscal package when compared to its baseline scenario (which assumes taxes on all income levels would increase) is about $4 trillion over the coming decade, excluding higher interest costs on the resultant higher debt. Based on that estimate, a preliminary calculation by Moody's shows that the ratio of government debt to GDP would peak at about 80% in 2014 and then remain in the upper 70 percent range for the remaining years of the coming decade. Stabilization at this level would leave the government less able to deal with future pressures from entitlement spending or from unforeseen shocks. Thus, further measures that bring about a downward debt trajectory over the medium term are likely to be needed to support the Aaa rating.

This will not be our first credit rating downgrade, we had one before from Standard and Poor's in August 2011 and a second one from Egan Jones in April 2012. So this will be the third one in a row during Obama's borrowing and spending spree.

Would you like to see some graphs showing the impact that the fiscal cliff deal has on our long-term debt? There is a pretty good article on National Review by Yuval Levin that has the charts. The truth is that entitlements are driving our debt, and the fiscal cliff deal does nothing about it.

All Obama seems to be able to do as President is borrow from future generations in order to spend now. When I consider his drug-using years with his "Choom Gang" friends, I'm not sure that he is really qualified to do anything other than borrow and waste money. So

far, he’s spent a lot more time using drugs than running businesses in the private sector, it seems to me. Maybe he has an addiction issue with borrowing and spending?

New study: delaying sexual activity produces improves relationship quality and stability

January 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail about a new study showing the importance of chastity for relationship quality and stability.

Excerpt:

> New couples who jump into bed together on the first date do not last as long in relationships as those who wait a new study has revealed.
>
> Using a sample of almost 11,000 unmarried people, Brigham Young University discovered a direct correlation between the length and strength of a partnership and the amount of time they took to have first have sex.
>
> The study showed that those who waited to initiate sexual intimacy were found to have longer and more positive outcomes in their relationships while those who couldn't help themselves reported that their dalliances struggled to last more than two years.
>
> 'Results suggested that waiting to initiate sexual intimacy in unmarried relationships was generally associated with positive outcomes,' said the report authored published by the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health.
>
> 'This effect was strongly moderated by relationship length, with individuals who reported early sexual initiation reporting increasingly lower outcomes in relationships of longer than two years.'
>
> The study examined four sexual-timing patterns: Having sex prior to dating, initiating sex on the first date or shortly after, having sex after a few weeks of dating, and sexual abstinence.
>
> Each one of these fields yielded different results in relationship satisfaction, stability and communication in dating situations.

Should we be telling children moral rules, backed by evidence, so that they will have better lives? Or should we be telling them lies so that they won't feel bad about behaving immorally? That's the choice that every grown-up has to make. Are we going to tell the children something that will guide them away from harm? Or are adults going to tell them something that makes them feel better about their own mistakes?

When I see studies like this, it makes me glad that I am still a virgin, and I really recommend that to everyone, especially to men. It's important to keep a clear head and to protect your ability to make bond to the right woman, should she come along. That's what gives you the ability to make a tight bond, and helps you to trust women and to believe the best about the good one that you finally decide on. Too much early sex, and

seeing women at their worst, and you lose your ability to trust the good ones.

Related posts

- Traditional marriage is a threat to the values of single women
- New study: staying a virgin longer enables more satisfying relationships
- Study explains why college women abandon courtship for hook-ups
- New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially for women
- New study: marriage drops probability of child poverty by 82%
- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less
- How do prostitutes stay in business in an era of hook-up sex?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
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- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

Obama rejects conscience protections for military chaplains

January 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> President Obama issued a statement Wednesday rejecting several provisions of the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), including a conscience protection for military chaplains that he called “ill-advised”.
>
> “Section 533 is an unnecessary and ill-advised provision, as the military already appropriately protects the freedom of conscience of chaplains and service members,” he said in his signing statement.
>
> Obama made clear that his administration would remain unmoved by the NDAA’s conscience provision, stating that the Department of Defense would continue to implement the repeal of the military’s ban on homosexual service members.
>
> “My Administration remains fully committed to continuing the successful implementation of the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, and to protecting the rights of gay and lesbian service members; Section 533 will not alter that.”
>
> The president said that the Secretary of Defense would ensure that no “discriminatory” actions result from Section 533’s conscience protections.

This is not the first time that Obama has trampled on freedom of conscience and religious liberty.

Here’s an article from Life Site News from back in 2011.

Excerpt:

> The Obama Administration has rescinded a federal regulation from 2008 that protected the conscience rights of health care providers opposed to providing abortifacient contraception, such as the Plan-B “morning-after” pill.
>
> The Health and Human Services Department under Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, issued the new “final rule,” which leaves health-care workers of federally funded entities a narrower conscience exemption that only protects them from having to participate in abortions or sterilizations.
>
> The new regulation replaces the earlier one enacted in the waning days of the George W. Bush administration, which broadened the interpretation of existing federal conscience statutes related to abortion to include health professionals opposed to emergency contraception, such as Ella or Plan-B, drugs which pro-life advocates say also act as abortifacients.
>
> Sebelius alleged in the promulgation of the new final rule that the Bush-era

> conscience regulations “instead led to greater confusion”, citing comments received by HHS. She said her department was changing the rule because it was “unclear and potentially over-broad in scope.”
>
> The HHS Secretary said in her statement that her department did share the concern of those in favor of rescinding the rule that it had the “potential to negatively impact patient access to contraception and certain other medical services” esp. for certain sub-populations, such as “low income patients, minorities, the uninsured, patients in rural areas, Medicaid beneficiaries, or other medically under-served populations.”
>
> The ruling is a victory for Planned Parenthood and other “family planning” groups that have insisted that drugs like Plan-B (taken within 72 hours of sexual intercourse) and Ella (taken within five-days of intercourse) should be defined as “contraception.” Pro-life groups countered that pro-life health providers should be protected from discrimination under federal statutes, because these drugs could prevent a conceived human embryo from implanting in the mother’s womb, thereby aborting it.
>
> […]“Today’s erosion of conscience protections for medical professionals is a blow both to medicine and the right to practice one’s deeply-held convictions,” said Dr. J. Scott Ries, on behalf of the 16,000-member Christian Medical Association (CMA).
>
> Ries said the new HHS final rule disregarded the findings of the previous HHS 2008 final rule which stated that allowing health professionals to practice according to their convictions would negatively impact patient services or create “new barriers.”
>
> “Losing conscientious healthcare professionals and faith-based institutions to discrimination and job loss especially imperils the poor and patients in medically underserved areas,” said Ries. “We are already facing critical shortages of primary care physicians, and the Obama administration’s decision now threatens to make the situation far worse for patients across the country who depend on faith-based health care.”

If religious liberty is a concern, then you can’t be a liberal. They don’t support religious liberty.

Mike Licona explains the As, Bs, Cs, Ds and Es of New Testament reliability

January 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Licona is one of my favorite Christian apologists, and here is an excellent lecture to show you why.

In the lecture, he explains why the four biographies in the New Testament should be accepted as historically accurate: (55 minutes)

Summary:

- What a Baltimore Ravens helmet teaches us about the importance of truth
- What happens to Christians when they go off to university?
- The 2007 study on attitudes of American professors to evangelical Christians
- Authors: Who wrote the gospels?
- Bias: Did the bias of the authors cause them to distort history?
- Contradictions: What about the different descriptions of events in the gospels?
- Dating: When were the gospels written?
- Eyewitnesses: Do the gospel accounts go back to eyewitness testimony?

This is basic training for Christians. They ought to show this lecture whenever new people show up, because pastors should not quote the Bible until everyone listening has this information straight.

Woman uses gun to defend herself and her children from home intruder

January 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From WSB-TV in Georgia. (H/T Pro-Existence)

Excerpt:

> A woman hiding in her attic with children shot an intruder multiple times before fleeing to safety Friday.
>
> The incident happened at a home on Henderson Ridge Lane in Loganville around 1 p.m. The woman was working in an upstairs office when she spotted a strange man outside a window, according to Walton County Sheriff Joe Chapman. He said she took her 9-year-old twins to a crawlspace before the man broke in using a crowbar.
>
> But the man eventually found the family.
>
> "The perpetrator opens that door. Of course, at that time he's staring at her, her two children and a .38 revolver," Chapman told Channel 2's Kerry Kavanaugh.
>
> The woman then shot him five times, but he survived, Chapman said. He said the woman ran out of bullets but threatened to shoot the intruder if he moved.
>
> "She's standing over him, and she realizes she's fired all six rounds. And the guy's telling her to quit shooting," Chapman said.
>
> […]In February, Slater was arrested on simple battery charges, according to the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office. He has been arrested six other times in the county since 2008.

And here's what makes this story interesting to me:

> Kavanaugh was the first reporter at the scene as deputies investigated. The victim's husband told Kavanaugh he's proud of his wife. He was on the phone with her as the intruder broke in.
>
> "My wife is a hero. She protected her kids. She did what she was supposed to do as responsible, prepared gun owner," Donnie Herman said.
>
> He said he's thankful for his family's safety.
>
> "Her life is saved, and her kids' life is saved, and that's all I'd like to say," Herman said.

I think that this last part is important. I have many reasons for being cautious about marriage in a time like this. Marriage is a particular thing and there are certain jobs that men and women need to perform in the marriage. Society can either support them or hinder them in those roles. Married men are supposed to be protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders in the home, but some laws and policies can hinder their ability to

do those roles. For example, high tax rates prevent men from providing, by decreasing economic growth and decreasing take-home pay. Similarly, laws that regulate, ban and criminalize self-defense deter marriage-minded men from marrying. In the UK, homeowners are regularly arrested, tried and convicted for defending their property and family from criminals.

If I were to get married, I need to be able to defend my family. That means owning weapons and being legally protected to use them. Although gun regulations and bans are very popular with single women, I think that this is just another areas where single women need to change their view. Single women have to understand that marriage is a lot more complicated than “happily ever after”. There are specific tasks to perform in marriage. Each parent is suited to different tasks. Single women need to change their views to support policies that are marriage-friendly.

Target acquisition and interception in dragonflies

January 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a fascinating post about some of the capabilities of dragonflies from Evolution News.

Selective attention

First, dragonflies have "selective attention" – the ability to focus on a single prey and ignore other distractions:

> Dragonflies are among the best flyers in the insect world. Their twin pairs of paper-thin wings allow them to hover and move in all directions, even in mating. When the time comes to dart after prey at high speed, they rarely miss.
>
> What's their secret? One is "selective attention" — a trait previously known only in primates, according to new research from the University of Adelaide, Australia. Selective attention is the ability to focus on one object and exclude others. Just as a tennis player must focus on the ball and ignore the cheers of the crowd, a dragonfly must pick out one target from a swarm of insects and avoid being distracted by all the others.

Here's a snip from the research paper:

> Our data make a compelling case that CSTMD1 reflects **competitive selection of one target.** We emphasize "competitive," because the attended target is not always the same between trials or even within a trial, as seen in **strikingly perfect switches from one to the other**…. Competition is further suggested by rare examples where the activity observed under Pair stimulation initially lags both $T_1$and T_2 responses… **suggesting initial conflict** in the underlying neural network **before resolution of competition by a "winning" target.**
>
> We previously showed that CSTMD1 still **responds robustly to a target** even when it is embedded within a **high-contrast natural scene containing numerous potential distracters**. Taken together with recent evidence that the behavioral state of insects **strongly modulates responses of neurons involved in visuomotor control**, our new data thus suggest a **hitherto unexpected sophistication** in **higher-order control of insect visual processing, akin to selective attention in primates.**Perhaps the **most remarkable feature** of our data is that **once the response "locks" onto a target** (or following a switch), **the second target exerts no influence** on the neuron's response: the **distracter is ignored completely.**

In order to succeed at the task of catching its prey, the dragonfly has to tune out all other distractions.

Target selection

In addition, dragonflies have the ability to intercept a target in mid-air – similar missile defense systems on AEGIS cruisers and destroyers.

The Evolution News article explains:

> Another paper on dragonflies shows that these marvels of the insect world are equipped with navigational equipment that can do vector calculus. In the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Gonzalez-Bellido and a team at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute discerned "**Eight pairs of descending visual neurons in the dragonfly [that] give wing motor centers accurate population vector of prey direction.**"

> **Intercepting a moving object requires prediction of its future location.** This **complex task** has been **solved by dragonflies**, who **intercept their prey in midair with a 95% success rate**. In this study, we show that a group of 16 neurons, called target-selective descending neurons (TSDNs), **code a population vector** that reflects the direction of the target with **high accuracy and reliability across 360°**. The TSDN **spatial** (receptive field) and **temporal** (latency) properties matched the area of the retina where the prey is focused and the **reaction time**, respectively, during predatory flights. The **directional tuning curves** and morphological traits (3D tracings) for each TSDN type were consistent among animals, but spike rates were not. Our results emphasize that **a successful neural circuit for target tracking and interception** can be achieved with **few neurons** and that in dragonflies **this information is relayed from the brain to the wing motor centers in population vector form.**

What did I make of this? Well, evidence like this always causes me to think aboutthe reality of God, and the disturbing thought that we do not live in an accidental universe where I can do whatever I want and be accountable to no one. It's easier to believe that – it requires less work and it frees us to be our own boss and make our happiness the first priority. As individuals, it's very tempting for us to think that we are number one, and to resent our obligations to anyone else. The problem is that the scientific data doesn't support that worldview. The facts are what they are and it is up to us, now, to try to find out who the designer is and what he wants from us.

Obama supporters shocked and angry at new tax increases

January 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mathetes posted this Washington Times story in a comment and I had to use it.

Excerpt:

> Sometimes, watching a Democrat learn something is wonderful, like seeing the family dog finally sit and stay at your command.
>
> With President Obama back in office and his life-saving "fiscal cliff" bill jammed through Congress, the new year has brought a surprising turn of events for his sycophantic supporters.
>
> "What happened that my Social Security withholding's in my paycheck just went up?" a poster wrote on the liberal site DemocraticUnderground.com. "My paycheck just went down by an amount that I don't feel comfortable with. I guarantee this decrease is gonna' hurt me more than the increase in income taxes will hurt those making over 400 grand. What happened?"
>
> Shocker. Democrats who supported the president's re-election just had NO idea that his steadfast pledge to raise taxes meant that he was really going to raise taxes. They thought he planned to just hit those filthy "1 percenters," you know, the ones who earned fortunes through their inventiveness and hard work. They thought the free ride would continue forever.
>
> So this week, as taxes went up for millions of Americans — which Republicans predicted throughout the campaign would happen — it was fun to watch the agoggery of the left.
>
> "I know to expect between $93 and $94 less in my paycheck on the 15th," wrote the ironically named "RomneyLies."
>
> "My boyfriend has had a lot of expenses and is feeling squeezed right now, and having his paycheck shrink really didn't help," wrote "DemocratToTheEnd."
>
> "BlueIndyBlue" added: "Many of my friends didn't realize it, either. Our payroll department didn't do a good job of explaining the coming changes."
>
> […]The Twittersphere was even funnier.
>
> "Really, how am I ever supposed to pay off my student loans if my already small paycheck keeps getting smaller? Help a sister out, Obama," wrote "Meet Virginia." "Nancy Thongkham" was much more furious. "F***ing Obama! F*** you! This taking out more taxes s*** better f***ing help me out!! Very upset to see my paycheck less today!"
>
> "_Alex™" sounded bummed. "Obama I did not vote for you so you can take away alot of money from my checks." Christian Dixon seemed crestfallen. "I'm starting

> to regret voting for Obama." But "Dave" got his dander up over the tax hike: "Obama is the biggest f***ing liar in the world. Why the f*** did I vote for him"?

If there was one thing that conservatives made clear on our blogs over and over again, it's that Obama could only get $80 billion a year by restoring the Clinton-era tax rates on people who earn over $250,000 per year. All the conservative bloggers knew that we had run up over $5 trillion in deficits during Obama's first term, and that a few billion wouldn't put a dent in it. You have to wonder how these liberals are informing themselves before voting. Do they pay attention to actual numbers, or is it all just emotional for them? Everyone knows that the Democrat Party is the party of higher taxes, and everyone should have known that they would *never* be able to pay for all of their spending by taxing only the top earners.

UPDATE: Nancy Pelosi, who would like to get rid of the debt ceiling completely, has now called for more taxes in future fiscal cliff deals. Surprise, surprise – this is the only way that they can pay for the trillions in spending.

William Lane Craig lectures on the logical problem of evil

January 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Craig delivered morning and afternoon lectures in Denmark on the topic of the problem of evil.

Here is the description:

> The problem of innocent suffering–usually called ‘the problem of evil’ by philosophers–is the most important argument against the existence of God. Dr. Craig differentiates between the emotional and intellectual problems of evil in order to help keep our thinking about this controverted subject clear. He further differentiates between internal and external versions of the intellectual problem of evil, arguing that while the former is generally thought to have been resolved, the latter remains a subject of debate. During his morning lecture Dr. Craig will set up the problem and discuss the internal version; during the afternoon lecture he shall address the external version.

Below are videos for the morning lecture.

Part 1:

Part 2:

I’ll be posting the afternoon lectures tomorrow. I am watching it now, and I am curious to see how it will stack up against my favorite lecture on the problem of evil by Doug Geivett.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidential problem of evil

January 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Craig delivered morning and afternoon lectures in Denmark on the topic of the problem of evil.

Here is the description:

> The problem of innocent suffering–usually called 'the problem of evil' by philosophers–is the most important argument against the existence of God. Dr. Craig differentiates between the emotional and intellectual problems of evil in order to help keep our thinking about this controverted subject clear. He further differentiates between internal and external versions of the intellectual problem of evil, arguing that while the former is generally thought to have been resolved, the latter remains a subject of debate. During his morning lecture Dr. Craig will set up the problem and discuss the internal version; during the afternoon lecture he shall address the external version.

Below are videos for the afternoon lecture.

Part 1:

Part 2:

If you like this lecture, you can also check out my favorite lecture on the problem of evil by Doug Geivett. I am still watching the two lectures I posted Monday and today, so they may become my new favorites.

Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding

January 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dad sent this disturbing article from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Planned Parenthood reported receiving a record $542 million in taxpayer support in fiscal 2012, marking a steady increase in government funding despite Republican-led efforts at the state and federal levels to cut off that stream.
>
> The funding figures were included in the abortion provider's annual report released Monday. The numbers showed roughly 45 percent of Planned Parenthood's budget now comes from taxpayer dollars.
>
> Pro-life groups quickly seized on the report to renew their calls for Congress to "defund" Planned Parenthood.
>
> "Americans are sick and tired of underwriting the nation's largest abortion business," said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List.
>
> Republican Tennessee Rep. Diane Black said the report "underscores the pressing need to cut off all federal funding for Planned Parenthood."
>
> The Republican-controlled House voted in the last session to strip federal funding for the organization But the measure did not advance.
>
> Separate efforts at the state level to yank funding have been blocked by the courts. Mostly recently, a federal appeals court in October blocked Indiana from carrying out a law to cut Medicaid funding for Planned Parenthood.

My other favorite Congresswoman, Marsha Blackburn, has already introduced the first pro-life bill of the new session of Congress. It's up to the Republicans to protect innocent unborn children from the ravages of selfish, irresponsible adults. The Democrats are profiting from the killing, because right after Planned Parenthood collects all that taxpayer money, they turn around and make massive donations to the Democrat party. It's all about the money for the Democrats. My other favorite Congresswoman, Michele Bachmann recently introduced a bill to repeal Obamacare, which forces businesses to offer abortion drugs as part of their health care plans.

Related posts

- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- Hawaii Planned Parenthood caught counseling sex-selection abortions
- War on women: Obama and Democrats oppose ban on sex-selection abortion
- Live Action sting: Planned Parenthood counsels late-term sex-selection abortion

- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?
- Another study confirms the link between abortion and breast cancer
- New study finds that abortion increases risk of breast cancer by 40%

Stephen Meyer debates Peter Ward on intelligent design vs Darwinism

January 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The speakers

Stephen C. Meyer is director of the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture (CSC) and a founder both of the intelligent design movement and of the CSC, intelligent design's primary intellectual and scientific headquarters. Dr. Meyer is a Cambridge University-trained philosopher of science, the author of peer-reviewed publications in technical, scientific, philosophical and other books and journals. His signal contribution to ID theory is given most fully in *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, published by HarperOne in June 2009.

Graduating from Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington, in 1981 with a degree in physics and earth science, he later became a geophysicist with Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) in Dallas, Texas. From 1981 to 1985, he worked for ARCO in digital signal processing and seismic survey interpretation. As a Rotary International Scholar, he received his training in the history and philosophy of science at Cambridge University, earning a PhD in 1991. His thesis offered a methodological interpretation of origin-of-life research.

Peter D. Ward, Ph.D., is a paleontologist and professor in the Departments of Geology and Biology at the University of Washington in Seattle. He also serves as an adjunct professor of zoology and astronomy. His research specialties include the Cretaceous–Tertiary extinction event and mass extinctions generally. His books include the best-selling "Rare Earth: Why Complex Life Is Uncommon in the Universe" (co-author Donald Brownlee, 2000), "Under a Green Sky: Global Warming, the Mass Extinctions of the Past, and What They Can Tell Us About Our Future" (2007), and "The Medea Hypothesis: Is Life on Earth Ultimately Self-Destructive?" (2009).

The debate

Here's the video of the debate:

The debate itself starts at around 8:19, after all the moderators have spoken.

There is a review of this debate here on Evolution News, and I include a snip to encourage you to watch it:

> Last night, the Seattle Times Talk of the Times at Town Hall Seattle featured a debate over evolution and intelligent design between CSC Director Stephen Meyer and US paleontologist Peter Ward. The event was sold out with 800+ in attendance for what turned out to be a really good debate.
>
> […]The debate last night was almost ALL about science–from gene sequencing, to nanotechnology, to the Cambrian explosion, to the philosophy of science that decides how to define the terms in the first place. Both scientists are experts in

> their fields and the audience was eager to hear what they had to say. No matter how much Darwinists claim there is no debate, and that intelligent design somehow kills curiousity, you can't argue with hundreds of people showing up to eagerly hear what both sides have to say about the issue. Clearly they were curious about the debate that doesn't exist.

That article also includes a blow-by-blow summary by a person sympathetic to ID who attended the debate. This is probably the best debate on intelligent design out there, and it was only recently uploaded to Youtube in September last year. When I watch a *great* debate like this, it really makes me hope that we who do believe that life is designed are raising up the next generation of scientists who ask questions, and don't assume this philosophical assumption of naturalism. Do the science first. Don't assume anything religious. Don't let the religion of naturalism determine what science can and cannot discover. That's the burden of our side, anyway.

And now a surprise! There is actually a transcript of this debate that I found on the Discovery Institute web site. Isn't it amazing that intelligent design has been out there for such a long time, yet almost no one can define it, and no one has ever seen a debate where both sides come out to debate it. You can download the audio here, but it's 90 Mb.

Even though Peter Ward is an atheist, he has co-written a fabulous book that I own and have read called "Rare Earth: Why Complex Life is Uncommon in the Universe". I really recommend getting this book, as it is a great book by two non-theists on the habitability argument. It's sort of a secular precursor to Jay Richards' and Guillermo Gonzalez's "The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos is Designed for Discovery". The habitability argument is a really neglected argument, but it's a good one.

Take a lesson from Canada: gun registries are later used to confiscate guns

January 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada with cities

My absolute favorite Canadian journalist, by far, is Brian Lilley. There is no one like him in the Canadian media. I think that he is more informative than even Mark Steyn and Ezra Levant.

Take a look at this Daily Beast column warning Americans about bills that set up gun registries.

Excerpt:

> Last year Canada ended its national long gun registry, a national database of every rifle and shotgun in the country that was supposed to help police track the movement of and sale of weapons. When it was introduced twenty years ago critics said the registration of firearms would eventually lead to confiscation, a criticism dismissed as ridiculous, yet that's what happened and more right up until its dismantling.
>
> As recently as last winter law abiding gun owners who had complied with the registry were having their rifles confiscated. In late 2011 hundreds if not thousands of people who had legally purchased the Armi Jager AP80, a .22 calibre variant of the AK47, were informed that their rifles had been deemed illegal and must be surrendered .
>
> "You are required by law to return your firearm registration certificates, without delay, either by mail to the address shown in the top left corner of this page or in person to a peace officer or firearms officers. You have 30 days to deliver your firearms to a peace officer, firearms officer of Chief Firearms Officer or to

> otherwise lawfully dispose of them," read the letter sent by the Canadian Firearms Centre.
>
> The reason for the need to surrender what had been legal firearms was simply cosmetic, the AP 80 looked too similar to the AK47. There were no interchangeable parts between the two rifles, the rifles used vastly different ammunition, had vastly different uses but they looked the same.
>
> What was more worrisome was that the decision to reclassify what for years had been a legal rifle was made by a bureaucrat not by elected officials. There was no debate, no vote just a decision by a bureaucrat who felt the AP80, legally owned for decades, was too dangerous to be privately owned by Canadians.

It is important for us to look at what is being tried in other countries, especially ones that have similar cultures, so that we can see the consequences. Gun registries should be opposed with the same vigor as gun confiscations, because they are the same thing, eventually. Individuals have a right to defend themselves from crime, and that is not a right that is meant to be enjoyed only by our smooth-talking politicians in Washington. I can guarantee you that those same politicians that want to confiscate your weapons will be themselves guarded by armed men. Hypocrites!

Why didn't Luke mention the deaths of Paul, Peter and James in the book of Acts?

January 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace makes the case for an early date for Luke's gospel.

Excerpt:

> I make a much more elaborate and cumulative case for the early dating of the gospels in Cold Case Christianity, but a portion of this case revolves around Luke's omission of three important deaths in the Book of Acts: the deaths of Paul, Peter and James. A recent listener to the Stand to Reason "Please Convince Me" Podcast recently wrote: "Firstly, perhaps such historical events were simply beyond the scope of the author of Acts? It has been suggested that the author may have been aware of the aforementioned events, but he chose instead to end his account thematically with the Gospel finally reaching the heart of Gentile civilization, Rome… Is it really viable to suggest that these possibilities are less reasonable than the early dating hypothesis?" One of the evidences in the Book of Acts that makes the *omission* of Paul, Peter and James' death so powerful is the *inclusion* of two other deaths in the narrative: the deaths of Stephen and James, the brother of John:
>
> ***Acts 7:58-60***
> *When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of da young man named Saul. They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.*
>
> ***Acts 12:1-2***
> *Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.*
>
> As important as Stephen and James, the brother of John, were to the early Church, it can hardly be argued that Paul, Peter and James, the three most important Christian leaders of the first century and the primary characters of the Book of Acts narrative, would not be considered important enough to describe their deaths. Is it possible (viable) that Luke "may have been aware of the aforementioned events, but chose instead to end his account thematically with the Gospel finally reaching the heart of Gentile civilization, Rome?" Of course it's possible, because anything and everything is possible. But it's not reasonable.

I am one of those people who thinks that all three synoptic gospels should be dated prior to 65 A.D. and this is one of my main reasons for thinking so. I might be willing to

concede later dates in a debate situation, but I think that the synoptic gospels were written from 40 to 65 AD.

By the way, if you haven't got your copy of Cold Case Christianity, what are you waiting for? The thing is getting rave reviews from everyone!

Man shoots robbery suspect to protect his 2-year-old son

January 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a local news story from Columbus, Ohio about gun violence.

Excerpt:

> A Columbus man said that he fought back when a man tried to rob him at gunpoint in west Columbus Monday night.
>
> Kelby Smith, 34, told police he was in the driveway of the home on Crescent Drive just before 9 p.m. when he was approached by a robber.
>
> **Smith said that he had his 2-month-old in a car carrier and had to shield him from the robber who held a gun at Smith's head.**
>
> The suspect took Smith's money and started to flee the scene as he pointed the gun back at Smith and his child.
>
> That's when Smith pulled out his own gun and fired at the robber.
>
> The robber continued to run, but police said that a man fitting his description arrived at Mount Carmel West a short time later with a gunshot wound.
>
> **Authorities said Smith does have a permit to carry a concealed weapon, and they believe he was trying to defend himself.**
>
> Police are continuing to investigate, but the man at the hospital could face charges if it's determined he is the robbery suspect.
>
> Smith and his child were uninjured in the robbery.

Right now, the Democrats are going to be pushing for restrictions on guns, but it's important to understand what guns are most commonly used for. For every one school shooting, there are hundreds of thousands of cases where guns are used for self-defense. If you are a leftist who believes in banning guns, ask yourself what would have happened if that legally-owned gun had not been there in this story. What should the victim do when confronted with a criminal? What I hear from leftists when I ask that question is that they think that criminals have more rights to commit crimes than law-abiding people have to defend themselves. That's their view, although they usually don't come out and say it. For people on the left, those who have property and wealth didn't get it by working, and so it can be stolen from them. Law-abiding people have no right to upset the poor criminals by defending themselves.

Ben Shapiro takes on CNN actor Piers Morgan on gun control and the second amendment

January 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ben Shapiro takes on CNN leftist Piers Morgan: (H/T Wes)

The full transcript is here.

Excerpt:

> Shapiro: I think the reason that it's about left and right here is because fundamentally, the right believes that the basis for the Second amendment–and they believe in the Second Amendment–the basis for the Second Amendment is not really about self defense, and it's not about hunting. It's about resistance to government tyranny. That's what the Founders said, and that's what the right believes in this country.
>
> Morgan: Which tyranny are you fearing, yourself?
>
> Shapiro: I fear the possibility of a tyranny rising in the country in the next fifty to a hundred years. Let me tell you something, Piers. The fact that my grandparents and great grandparents in Europe didn't fear that is why they're now ashes in Europe. So this kind of leftist revisionist history where there's never any fear of democracy going usurpatious or tyrannical, is just that. It's fictitious.

The fascism that arose in Germany in the 1930s sprang from a political vision called "National Socialism". They stood against free trade, freedom of conscience, freedom of religion and private ownership of arms – just like the Democrat Party of today. Socialism means big government, and big government means smaller individuals and less freedom.

Piers Morgan and the UK ban on guns

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom

> is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: “Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world.” The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain’s Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. You might think that CNN actors would be vetted to make sure that they are familiar with research papers and academic books before they open their mouths, but actually they are just ignorant celebrities. They know nothing whatsoever about the things they talk about.

Overpopulation? Latest research suggests that we face a decline in population

January 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-wing Slate, of all places.

Excerpt:

> A report issued last month by the Pew Research Center found that immigrant births fell from 102 per 1,000 women in 2007 to 87.8 per 1,000 in 2012. That helped bring the overall U.S. birthrate to a mere 64 per 1,000 women—not enough to sustain our current population.

> **Moreover, the poor, highly fertile countries that once churned out immigrants by the boatload are now experiencing birthrate declines of their own. From 1960 to 2009, Mexico's fertility rate tumbled from 7.3 live births per woman to 2.4, India's dropped from six to 2.5, and Brazil's fell from 6.15 to 1.9. Even in sub-Saharan Africa, where the average birthrate remains a relatively blistering 4.66, fertility is projected to fall below replacement level by the 2070s.** This change in developing countries will affect not only the U.S. population, of course, but eventually the world's.
>
> Why is this happening? Scientists who study population dynamics point to a phenomenon called "demographic transition."
>
> "For hundreds of thousands of years," explains Warren Sanderson, a professor of economics at Stony Brook University, "in order for humanity to survive things like epidemics and wars and famine, birthrates had to be very high." Eventually, thanks to technology, death rates started to fall in Europe and in North America, and the population size soared. In time, though, birthrates fell as well, and the population leveled out. The same pattern has repeated in countries around the world. Demographic transition, Sanderson says, "is a shift between two very different long-run states: from high death rates and high birthrates to low death rates and low birthrates." Not only is the pattern well-documented, it's well under way: Already, more than half the world's population is reproducing at below the replacement rate.
>
> If the Germany of today is the rest of the world tomorrow, then the future is going to look a lot different than we thought. Instead of skyrocketing toward uncountable Malthusian multitudes, researchers at Austria's International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis foresee the global population maxing out at 9 billion some time around 2070. On the bright side, the long-dreaded resource shortage may turn out not to be a problem at all. On the not-so-bright side, the demographic shift toward more retirees and fewer workers could throw

> the rest of the world into the kind of interminable economic stagnation that Japan is experiencing right now.

It kind of undercuts the need for the leftist fixation on abortion, environmentalism, etc. doesn't it?

Ari also sent me this article from Foreign Policy magazine that argues that the declining rate of population is actually good news for conservatives.

Excerpt:

> Declining birthrates also change national temperament. In the United States, for example, the percentage of women born in the late 1930s who remained childless was near 10 percent. By comparison, nearly 20 percent of women born in the late 1950s are reaching the end of their reproductive lives without having had children. The greatly expanded childless segment of contemporary society, whose members are drawn disproportionately from the feminist and countercultural movements of the 1960s and 70s, will leave no genetic legacy. Nor will their emotional or psychological influence on the next generation compare with that of their parents.
>
> Meanwhile, single-child families are prone to extinction. A single child replaces one of his or her parents, but not both. Nor do single-child families contribute much to future population. The 17.4 percent of baby boomer women who had only one child account for a mere 7.8 percent of children born in the next generation. By contrast, nearly a quarter of the children of baby boomers descend from the mere 11 percent of baby boomer women who had four or more children. These circumstances are leading to the emergence of a new society whose members will disproportionately be descended from parents who rejected the social tendencies that once made childlessness and small families the norm. These values include an adherence to traditional, patriarchal religion, and a strong identification with one's own folk or nation.
>
> This dynamic helps explain, for example, the gradual drift of American culture away from secular individualism and toward religious fundamentalism. Among states that voted for President George W. Bush in 2004, fertility rates are 12 percent higher than in states that voted for Sen. John Kerry. It may also help to explain the increasing popular resistance among rank-and-file Europeans to such crown jewels of secular liberalism as the European Union. It turns out that Europeans who are most likely to identify themselves as "world citizens" are also those least likely to have children.
>
> Does this mean that today's enlightened but slow-breeding societies face extinction? Probably not, but only because they face a dramatic, demographically driven transformation of their cultures. As has happened many times before in history, it is a transformation that occurs as secular and libertarian elements in society fail to reproduce, and as people adhering to more traditional, patriarchal

> values inherit society by default.
>
> At least as long ago as ancient Greek and Roman times, many sophisticated members of society concluded that investing in children brought no advantage. Rather, children came to be seen as a costly impediment to self-fulfillment and worldly achievement. But, though these attitudes led to the extinction of many individual families, they did not lead to the extinction of society as a whole. Instead, through a process of cultural evolution, a set of values and norms that can roughly be described as patriarchy reemerged.

I think that if conservative men and women can get together and raise effective, influential children outside of the public school system, then we have some hope for the future. The welfare that is used to support single motherhood by choice is going to come to an end because of the debt crisis. When that happens, families headed by high-achieving men will be raising a higher proportion of the leaders of the next generation. Men and women who pool their resources and have more children will have more of an influence on the next generation.

Pregnant South African women binge drinking in order to get more welfare

January 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A horrible article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Pregnant South African women are deliberately drinking large quantities of alcohol to harm their unborn babies in a bid to earn more welfare money, it has been claimed.
>
> Expectant mothers living in the Eastern Cape, one of the poorest areas in South Africa, are bingeing on a 'moonshine' type drink which contains battery acid – with some drinking up to five and six bottles a day.
>
> It has been reported they do it to claim a disability benefit from the government – using their disabled children as a source of income.
>
> Video taken by Sky News shows a mother drinking a homemade brew called 'kah-kah' while heavily pregnant.
>
> […]The addictive milky brown brew is made from yeast, water and battery acid.
>
> […]The World Health Organisation said there has been an increase in the number of babies born with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in the area since 2002.
>
> The syndrome is also the most common birth defect in South Africa.
>
> The irreversible symptoms mean children suffer from speech problems, physical deformities, learning difficulties and behavioural issues.
>
> Families receive 250 South African rand ($29 US) per child, per month but a disabled child brings in around 1200 rand a month ($138 US).

It's very important for Christians to understand that policies that sound compassionate can actually provide incentives to people to do *more* bad things in order to get more money from the government. A good rule of thumb is this: whatever you tax, you get less of. And whatever you subsidize, you get more of. We shouldn't be paying people to do evil things. We should be encouraging people who do good things instead. It's important that we not just feel good, but that we do good.

Study of elementary school children finds entrenched discrimination against boys

January 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The study is here (PDF), and Susan Walsh writes about the study on her blog. (H/T Stuart Schneiderman)

Excerpt:

> A new study of nearly 6,000 elementary school children has found that boys are discriminated against beginning in kindergarten. Christopher Cornwell, an economics professor at the University of Georgia, says that "gender disparities in teacher grades start early and uniformly favor girls."
>
> Despite having higher scores on standardized tests, boys get lower grades than girls. Why? Because teachers are basing grades at least partly on classroom behavior, and the standards are very much geared to female norms.
>
> […]Here's what the disparity looks like for kindergarten boys:
>
> | Std. Deviation | Test Scores | Grades |
> |---|---|---|
> | Reading | -.017 | -.27 |
> | Math | +.02 | -.15 |
> | Science | +.035 | -.14 |
>
> (Note: Values are approx., gauged visually from study graphic.)
>
> Another interesting finding was that boys who adhere to female norms on non-cognitive skills were not penalized. Effectively, the more female behavior was rewarded with a grade "bonus" for males.
>
> The implications of this are obvious. Masculinity, even normal maleness, is being punished in schools from a very young age. Only the most female-acting boys are rewarded with a fair assessment.

I found this story on Stuart Schnederman's blog, and this is what he had to say about it:

> The results demonstrated that schoolteachers are prejudiced against boys. When teachers do not just grade on performance, but include a number of intangible qualities that girls are more likely to possess, they are acting as bigots.

I recommend that everyone pick up a copy of "The War Against Boys" by AEI scholar Christina Hoff Sommers to learn more about this anti-male discrimination problem.

I see a lot of people raving at men to "man up" these days. Many of those people are pastors who remain ignorant about the real, systemic causes of male underachievement. Even very obvious factors – like the dominance of female teachers and administrators in schools – are ignored by the blame-men crowd. Boys generally learn better when they

learn from male teachers in all-male classrooms. But unfortunately for boys, there are people who don’t want to do what works for men, especially when it doesn’t fit with feminist ideology.

What is intelligent design? Dr. Stephen C. Meyer explains the theory

January 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell". (H/T Chris S.)

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (30 MB)

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell

- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

Hundreds of thousands of citizens protest against same-sex marriage in France

January 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> Holding aloft ancient flags and young children, hundreds of thousands of people converged Sunday on the Eiffel Tower to protest the French president's plan to legalize gay marriage and thus allow same-sex couples to adopt and conceive children.
>
> The opposition to President Francois Hollande's plan has underscored divisions among the secular-but-Catholic French, especially more traditional rural areas versus urban enclaves. But while polls show the majority of French still support legalizing gay marriage, that backing gets more lukewarm when children come into play.
>
> The protest march started at three points across Paris, filling boulevards throughout the city as demonstrators walked three miles to the grounds of France's most recognizable monument. Paris police estimated the crowd at 340,000, making it one of the largest demonstrations in Paris since an education protest in 1984.
>
> "This law is going to lead to a change of civilization that we don't want," said Philippe Javaloyes, a literature teacher who was bused in with 300 people from Franche Comte in the far east. "We have nothing against different ways of living, but we think that a child must grow up with a mother and a father."
>
> Public opposition spearheaded by religious leaders has chipped away at the popularity of Mr. Hollande's plan in recent months. About 52 percent of French favor legalizing gay marriage, according to a survey released Sunday, down from as high as 65 percent in August.
>
> […]Harlem Desir, the leader of Mr. Hollande's Socialist Party, said the protest would not affect the proposal's progress. The Socialists control parliament, and a vote is expected by the end of January.
>
> "The right to protest is protected in our country, but the Socialists are determined to give the legal right to marry and adopt to all those who love each other," he said. "This is the first time in decades in our country that the right and the extreme right are coming into the streets together to deny new rights to the French."

Isn't interesting that the same political party that loves high tax rates also wants to redefine traditional marriage? Why is that?

Jay Richards: what should Christians think about global warming?

January 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture Jay Richards did for the Acton Institue.

And here is a related article from Boundless.

Excerpt:

> The big environmental issue nowadays is global warming. Anyone who watches or reads the news even occasionally has been told that humans are causing global warming through all the fossil fuels we're burning. They've also been told that this warming process eventually will prove catastrophic if we don't reverse course as soon as possible.
>
> As thinking Christians and good stewards, how should we respond?
>
> The short answer is, we should respond thoughtfully. Thoughtless stewards are rarely good stewards.
>
> Notice that my brief summary of the global warming controversy bundled together several distinct claims. To think clearly about this issue, we have to tease apart this bundle of claims and consider each one. For each claim, there is a corresponding question we need to answer. And it's only *after* answering these questions that we can be in a position to determine what, if anything, we ought to do about global warming.
>
> Here are the four central questions:
>
> 1. Is the earth warming?
> 2. If the earth is warming, is human activity (like carbon dioxide emissions) causing it?
> 3. If the earth is warming, and we're causing it, is that bad overall?
> 4. If the earth is warming, we're causing it, and that's bad, would any of the proposed "solutions" (e.g., the Kyoto Protocol, legislative restrictions on carbon dioxide emissions) make any difference?

It's important for us to think carefully about how best to achieve the goals set out by the Bible. And that means undertaking a close study of how the world works and how best to affect change for the good.

Medical premiums will continue to rise as Obamacare is implemented

January 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal explains what will happen to medical insurance premiums as more of Obamacare is implemented in 2014.

Excerpt:

> Central to ObamaCare are requirements that health insurers (1) accept everyone who applies (guaranteed issue), (2) cannot charge more based on serious medical conditions (modified community rating), and (3) include numerous coverage mandates that force insurance to pay for many often uncovered medical conditions.
>
> […]We compared the average premiums in states that already have ObamaCare-like provisions in their laws and found that consumers in New Jersey, New York and Vermont already pay well over twice what citizens in many other states pay. Consumers in Maine and Massachusetts aren't far behind. Those states will likely see a small increase.
>
> By contrast, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, Wyoming and Virginia will likely see the largest increases—somewhere between 65% and 100%. Another 18 states, including Texas and Michigan, could see their rates rise between 35% and 65%.
>
> While ObamaCare won't take full effect until 2014, health-insurance premiums in the individual market are already rising, and not just because of routine increases in medical costs. Insurers are adjusting premiums now in anticipation of the guaranteed-issue and community-rating mandates starting next year. There are newly imposed mandates, such as the coverage for children up to age 26, and what qualifies as coverage is much more comprehensive and expensive. Consolidation in the hospital system has been accelerated by ObamaCare and its push for Accountable Care Organizations. This means insurers must negotiate in a less competitive hospital market.
>
> Although President Obama repeatedly claimed that health-insurance premiums for a family would be $2,500 lower by the end of his first term, they are actually about $3,000 higher—a spread of about $5,500 per family.

The big concern I have about all of these socialist schemes is that the public will not connect rising prices to Obama's policies. We have been printing money (inflation), running huge deficits, imposing taxes and regulations on businesses, and so on. All of this will causes the prices that consumers pay for goods and services to go higher.

When the prices of goods and services go higher, the people who voted for Obama won't make the connection between his policies and the rising prices. We have reached a point

where a majority of the American public is as ignorant of basic economics as the peasant populations that elect communist governments. We are ready for government-controlled economy and central planning, because we can’t make the connection between cause and effect.

Walter Bradley: three scientific phenomena that point to a designed universe

January 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor.

Here's a bio:

> Walter Bradley (B.S., Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin) is Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He comes to Baylor from Texas A&M University where he helped develop a nationally recognized program in polymeric composite materials. At Texas A&M, he served as director of the Polymer Technology Center for 10 years and as Department Head of Mechanical Engineering, a department of 67 professors that was ranked as high as 12th nationally during his tenure. Bradley has authored over 150 refereed research publications including book chapters, articles in archival journals such as the Journal of Material Science, Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites, Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials, Journal of Composites Technology and Research, Composite Science and Technology, Journal of Metals, Polymer Engineering and Science, and Journal of Materials Science, and refereed conference proceedings.
>
> Dr. Bradley has secured over $5.0 million in research funding from NSF grants (15 yrs.), AFOSR (10 years), NASA grants (10 years), and DOE (3 years). He has also received research grants or contracts from many Fortune 500 companies, including Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, 3M, Shell, Exxon, Boeing, and Phillips.
>
> He co-authored The Mystery of Life Origin: Reassessing Current Theories and has written 10 book chapters dealing with various faith science issues, a topic on which he speaks widely.
>
> He has received 5 research awards at Texas A&M University and 1 national research award. He has also received two teaching awards. He is an Elected Fellow of the American Society for Materials and the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the largest organization of Christians in Science and Technology in the world. He is President elect of the ASA and will serve his term in 2008.

You can read more about his recent research in this article from Science Daily.

Below, I analyze a lecture entitled “Is There Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer?”. Dr. Bradley explains how the progress of science has made the idea of a Creator and Designer of the universe more acceptable than ever before.

The MP3 file is here.

Evidence #1: The design of the universe

1. The correspondence of natural phenomena to mathematical law

- All observations of physical phenomena in the universe, such as throwing a ball up in the air, are described by a few simple, elegant mathematical equations.

2. The fine-tuning of physical constants and rations between constants in order to provide a life-permitting universe

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants and ratios: (there are more examples in the lecture)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would be able to build up the nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.
- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living

beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – "carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can't be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

3. Fine-tuning to allow a habitable planet

- A number of factors must be fine-tuned in order to have a planet that supports life
- Initial estimates predicted abundant life in the universe, but revised estimates now predict that life is almost certainly unique in the galaxy, and probably unique in the universe.
- Even though there are lots of stars in the universe, the odds are against *any* of them supporting complex life.
- Here are just a few of the minimal requirements for habitability: must be a single star solar system, in order to support stable planetary orbits, the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to have liquid water at the surface, the planet must sufficient mass in order to retain an atmosphere, etc.

The best non-theistic response to this argument is to postulate a multiverse, but that is very speculative and there is no experimental evidence that supports it.

Evidence #2: The origin of the universe

1. The progress of science has shown that the entire physical universe came into being out of nothing (= "the big bang"). It also shows that the cause of this creation event is non-physical and non-temporal. The cause is *supernatural*.

- Atheism prefers an eternal universe, to get around the problem of a Creator having to create the universe.
- Discovery #1: Observations of galaxies moving away from one another confirms that the universe expanded from a single point.
- Discovery #2: Measurements of the cosmic background radiation confirms that the universe exploding into being.
- Discovery #3: Predictions of elemental abundances prove that the universe is not eternal.
- Discovery #4:The atheism-friendly steady-state model and oscillating model were both falsified by the evidence.

- And there were other discoveries as well, mentioned in the lecture.

The best non-theistic response to this argument is to postulate a hyper-universe outside of ours, but that is very speculative and there is no experimental evidence that supports it.

Evidence #3: The origin of life

1. The progress of science has shown that the simplest living organism contains huge amounts of biological information, similar to the Java code I write all day at work. This is a problem for atheists, because the sequence of instructions in a living system has to come together all at once, it cannot have evolved by mutation and selection – because there was no replication in place prior to the formation of that first living system!

- Living systems must support certain minimum life functions: processing energy, storing information, and replicating.
- There needs to be a certain amount of complexity in the living system that can perform these minimum functions.
- But on atheism, the living system needs to be simple enough to form by accident in a pre-biotic soup, and in a reasonable amount of time.
- The minimal functionality in a living system is a achieved by DNA, RNA and enzymes. DNA and RNA are composed of sequences of proteins, which are in turn composed of sequences of amino acids.

Consider the problems of building a chain of 100 amino acids

- The amino acids must be left-handed only, but left and right kinds are equally abundant in nature. How do you sort out the right-handed ones?
- The amino acids must be bound together using peptide bonds. How do you prevent other types of bonds?
- Each link of the amino acid chain needs to be carefully chosen such that the completed chain with fold up into a protein. How do you choose the correct amino acid for each link from the pool of 20 different kinds found in living systems?
- In every case, a human or other intelligence could solve these problems by doing what intelligent agents do best: *making choices.*
- But who is there to make the choices on atheism?

The best current non-theistic response to this is to speculate that aliens may have seeded the Earth with life at some point in the past.

The problem of the origin of life is not a problem of chemistry, it is a problem of engineering. Every part of car functionality can be understood and described using the laws of physics and chemistry. But an intelligence is still needed in order to assemble the components into a system that has the minimal requirements for a functioning vehicle.

Economist Walter Williams blames school violence on secularism and moral relativism

January 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Walter Williams

My two favorite economists are Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell. Both are conservative or libertarian. Both of them happen to be black. But neither is especially outspoken about religion. But imagine my surprise when I read this CNS News column on gun violence in schools by Walter Williams, who I always thought was the more libertarian of the two.

Look:

> When I attended primary and secondary school — during the 1940s and '50s — one didn't hear of the kind of shooting mayhem that's become routine today. Why? It surely wasn't because of strict firearm laws. My replica of the 1902 Sears mail-order catalog shows 35 pages of firearm advertisements. People just sent in their money, and a firearm was shipped.
>
> Dr. John Lott, author of "More Guns, Less Crime," reports that until the 1960s, some New York City public high schools had shooting clubs where students competed in citywide shooting contests for university scholarships. They carried their rifles to school on the subways and, upon arrival, turned them over to their homeroom teacher or the gym coach and retrieved their rifles after school for target practice. Virginia's rural areas had a long tradition of high-school students going hunting in the morning before school and sometimes storing their rifles in the trunks of their cars that were parked on school grounds. Often a youngster's 12th or 14th birthday present was a shiny new .22-caliber rifle, given to him by his father.

Fathers? Children don't grow up with fathers any more, 42% of the time. And why not? The feminists told us that men are evil, and that marriage is sexist. And the socialists told

us that rewarding single motherhood was a good idea, because it makes women who don't bother to get married before having sex more equal to those who do bother to get married first. But fatherlessness is a huge factor in criminal behavior, as I showed before.

Dr. Williams continues:

> What explains today's behavior versus yesteryear's? For well over a half-century, the nation's liberals and progressives — along with the education establishment, pseudo-intellectuals and the courts — have waged war on traditions, customs and moral values. These people taught their vision, that there are no moral absolutes, to our young people. To them, what's moral or immoral is a matter of convenience, personal opinion or a consensus.
>
> During the '50s and '60s, the education establishment launched its agenda to undermine lessons children learned from their parents and the church with fads such as "values clarification." So-called sex education classes are simply indoctrination that sought to undermine family and church strictures against premarital sex.
> Lessons of abstinence were ridiculed and considered passé and replaced with lessons about condoms, birth control pills and abortions. Further undermining of parental authority came with legal and extralegal measures to assist teenage abortions with neither parental knowledge nor consent.
>
> Customs, traditions, moral values and rules of etiquette, not laws and government regulations, are what make for a civilized society. These behavioral norms — transmitted by example, word of mouth and religious teachings — represent a body of wisdom distilled through ages of experience, trial and error, and looking at what works.
>
> The importance of customs, traditions and moral values as a means of regulating behavior is that people behave themselves even if nobody's watching. Police and laws can never replace these restraints on personal conduct so as to produce a civilized society. At best, the police and criminal justice system are the last desperate line of defense for a civilized society. The more uncivilized we become the more laws that are needed to regulate behavior.
>
> Many customs, traditions and moral values have been discarded without an appreciation for the role they played in creating a civilized society, and now we're paying the price. What's worse is that instead of a return to what worked, people want to replace what worked with what sounds good, such as zero-tolerance policies in which bringing a water pistol, drawing a picture of a pistol, or pointing a finger and shouting "bang-bang" produces a school suspension or arrest.

See, now that's a smart libertarian. Smart libertarians understand that liberty depends on people being aware of the design of the universe, and the objective moral obligations imposed by that design. If we don't promote institutions and people that help us to

explore the design of the universe, then we are going to have to rely on big government to regulate us instead of regulating ourselves. What we've done instead is make impossible to speak about the reality of God and the reality of objective morality in schools, or in any other public place, for that matter. Hearing about God and morality is just too offensive to people who want to put their own selfishness above the moral law.

Similarly, libertarians should not be pushing for promiscuity, abortion and same-sex marriage, either. Intact families are necessary for raising the next generation of citizens to be well-adjusted, law-abiding and productive. Marriages are more stable when the participants are chaste and/or abstinent for a period of time early in the relationship. And children do better when raised by a mother and a father, and less well in other arrangements. Either we feel an obligation to control our own desires and make a plan for marriage success, so that we can provide children with a stable nurturing environment, or the government will have to control the anti-social behavior of fatherless children.

Thomas Sowell has posted a more traditional argument against gun control, in the extremist left-wing UK Guardian, of all places.

Paul Davies: the hard problem of the origin of life is not “complexity” – it’s information

January 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this column on the origin of life from the radically leftist UK Guardian, written by agnostic cosmologist Paul Davies. (The same Paul Davies who is occasionally quoted by William Lane Craig)

Excerpt:

> The origin of life is one of the great outstanding mysteries of science. How did a non-living mixture of molecules transform themselves into a living organism? What sort of mechanism might be responsible?
>
> […]Most research into life’s murky origin has been carried out by chemists. They’ve tried a variety of approaches in their attempts to recreate the first steps on the road to life, but little progress has been made. Perhaps that is no surprise, given life’s stupendous complexity. Even the simplest bacterium is incomparably more complicated than any chemical brew ever studied.
>
> But a more fundamental obstacle stands in the way of attempts to cook up life in the chemistry lab. The language of chemistry simply does not mesh with that of biology. Chemistry is about substances and how they react, whereas biology appeals to concepts such as information and organisation. Informational narratives permeate biology. DNA is described as a genetic “database”, containing “instructions” on how to build an organism. The genetic “code” has to be “transcribed” and “translated” before it can act. And so on. If we cast the problem of life’s origin in computer jargon, attempts at chemical synthesis focus exclusively on the hardware – the chemical substrate of life – but ignore the software – the informational aspect. To explain how life began we need to understand how its unique management of information came about.
>
> […]Sara Walker, a Nasa astrobiologist working at Arizona State University, and I have proposed that the significant property of biological information is not its complexity, great though that may be, but the way it is organised hierarchically. In all physical systems there is a flow of information from the bottom upwards, in the sense that the components of a system serve to determine how the system as a whole behaves. Thus if a meteorologist wants to predict the weather, he may start with local information, such as temperature and air pressure, taken at various locations, and calculate how the weather system as a whole will move and change. In living organisms, this pattern of bottom-up information flow mingles with the inverse – top-down information flow – so that what happens at the local level can depend on the global environment, as well as vice versa.
>
> […]The way life manages information involves a logical structure that differs fundamentally from mere complex chemistry. Therefore chemistry alone will not

> explain life’s origin, any more than a study of silicon, copper and plastic will explain how a computer can execute a program. Our work suggests that the answer will come from taking information seriously as a physical agency, with its own dynamics and causal relationships existing alongside those of the matter that embodies it – and that life’s origin can ultimately be explained by importing the language and concepts of biology into physics and chemistry, rather than the other way round.

The point of me posting this is simple. The thing to be explained in the origin of life is not a cake, where you can jumble ingredients together and get *something*. The thing to be explained is information. The origin of life is a programming problem, not a cooking problem. Where did the software come from – the first basic program that allowed for the basic functions of life, like self-replication.

Dr. Davies is hoping for a naturalistic solution to the problem, because he is a naturalist. But at least he is clear about specifying the thing that needs to be explained. A lot more clear than the journalists who explain intelligent design as the belief that some things are too complex to have evolved. But that’s wrong. The real question is: where did the information come from?

The US postal service and Amtrak: which one will go bankrupt first?

January 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Will it be the USPS? (H/T Wes)

Excerpt:

> Inspector general David Williams says cash-strapped service, saddled with debt and low revenues, is in 'very serious trouble'.
>
> The chief postal watchdog has warned that the troubled US Postal Service will go out of business this year unless Congress acts to rescue it.
>
> David Williams, the inspector general of the USPS, says the service is in "very serious trouble", after five years lumbered with heavy debt and falling revenues.
>
> In an interview with the Guardian, Williams warns that Congress, which has been distracted by November's elections and the fiscal cliff crisis, must act this year to save the service.
>
> The USPS lost over $16bn last year, and has lost about $41bn over the past five years, according to Robert Taub, a vice-chairman of the Postal Regulatory Commission.

Or will it be Amtrak?

Excerpt:

> Amtrak triumphantly proclaimed 2012 to be a success. The reason? It posted a loss of only $361 million for the year. That's its smallest operating loss since 1975, amid growing ridership along the Northeast Corridor between Washington and Boston. Although this represents progress in the right direction, Amtrak is still not worth what it costs American taxpayers.
>
> Amtrak has never been profitable. From its outset in 1971, it has been backed by taxpayers with billions of dollars in direct aid and loans. Over the past three years alone, Amtrak has received more than $4.4 billion in federal aid, and it still was not able to finish any of those years in the black.
>
> […]But after more than 40 years of government funding, $4.4 billion in aid over the past three years should be particularly disconcerting. Rail transportation is not becoming cheaper because of government investment in the market; to the contrary, the price has gone up, especially as compared with other major public works projects.
>
> […]Rather than successfully spurring on American business, Amtrak provides slower trains at higher prices. It is a symbol of government waste because it fails to make any progress toward self-sufficiency and fails to innovate.

> It is time to admit this train has left the station. Amtrak cannot and will not be run efficiently with the backstop of government funding behind it. Someday, a public-private partnership on railroads could be in the American interest, as it has been in the past. But for Amtrak, the government should shut off the spigot.

Or will Obama just borrow a few more trillion from your children, so that his public sector supporters in USPS and Amtrak can continue to vote for socialism?

The funny thing about this is that we could sell these wasteful government-owned organizations and privatize their functions. Then we wouldn't have to sink more and more taxpayer money in public sector boondoggles.

Brian Auten interviews pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf

January 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about pro-life apologetics

Scott Klusendorf is the director of the excellent Life Training Institute, and he's been interviewed by Brian Auten on Apologetics 315.

Details of the interview:

> Today's interview is with Scott Klusendorf, president of Life Training Institute. LTI is the first place to look for excellent resources to get better equipped to defend the pro-life position. Scott talks about defining abortion and its terms, the issue of the debate, the legal history of abortion, defending the pro-life view using science and philosophy, the four pillars of the pro-life argument, answering a litany of objections to the pro-life position, the right and wrong use of emotional appeals, taking on the right tone in the debate, how to get better equipped, and more.

Grab the MP3 file here at Apologetics 315.

The article Scott mentions "How to Defend Your Pro-Life Views in 5 Minutes or Less" is worth the read, and it's a good summary of some of the points he makes in the lecture.

If you like this interview, please be sure and buy the best *basic* book on pro-life apologetics – Scott Klusendorf's "The Case for Life".

And there is actually a full transcript, and here's an excerpt:

BA: Great stuff. Now I want you to go into these pillars if you will of defending the pro-life position with science and philosophy, and in your web site prolifetraining.com one of the things that you provide is sort of a four point acronym, some would say sled S-L-E-D. Can you lay out what those main pillars are and their relevance to the issue?

SK: Well as I mentioned a moment ago, pro-life advocates argue that elective abortion unjustly takes the life of a developing human being, and we defend that claim using science and philosophy. We use science to determine what kind of thing the unborn is, and we use philosophy to show that there's no relevant deference between the embryos we once were and the adults we are today that would justify killing us at that earlier stage of development. Scientifically, as I mentioned just moments ago embryology text books worldwide indicate that from the very beginning you and I were distinct living whole human beings. You can't see that I'm doing this right now, Brian, but at the moment I'm picking cells off the back of my hand. These cells, which we call somatic cells, contain my entire DNA and coding. But you don't thing I just committed mass murder by sending a couple hundred of those puppies hurling to their deaths on the floor in front of me. And the reason is, you know that these cells though they contain my DNA and coding are merely part of a larger human being, me. They are not distinct whole living organisms the way that you were when you were an embryo. The way I was when I was an embryo. In other words, there is a difference in kind between each of our bodily cells and the embryonic human beings we once were. That's what science teaches us; that's what the science of embryology lays down for us.Philosophically, we argue using that SLED acronym that you mentioned a moment ago that there's no difference between that embryo we once were and the adult we are today. The adults we are today that justify killing us at that earlier stage of development and as Steven Schwarz points out, the differences between that embryo and the adult that you are today are one of size, level of development, environment and degree of dependency. Think of the acronym SLED and you will remember those four differences. Size, yeah you were smaller as an embryo, but since when does body size determine the rights that you have. Shaquille O'Neal, the seven foot two basketball star with the Boston Celtics, is a foot taller than I am, but he doesn't have a greater right to life simply because he's bigger.

Level development? Sure, we were less developed as embryos but since when is a matter of principal does that mean we can kill you? Two-year-old girls are less developed than twenty-year-old young women. We don't think though the two year old girl has less to a right to life simply because she can't function at the level that the twenty year old can. Level of size, I should say level of development. What about environment; where you are located there is the letter "E" in that SLED acronym. You were once in the womb now you're out but sense when does were you are determine what you are? When you walk from your

> living room into the studio to do this interview. You changed location but you didn't stop being you. When I jump on an airplane and fly from Atlanta to London's Heathrow airport. I get off the plane I'm in a new location, but I'm the same being as I was when I left Atlanta. If that's true how does a journey of eight inches down the birth canal suddenly change me from non-human, non-valuable thing that we can kill? To a valuable human being that we can't kill. And the answer is, if I wasn't already human and valuable I'm not going to get there by changing my address. And then finally, degree of dependency—yes we depended on our mother for survival but sense when does dependency on another human being mean we can kill you? Conjoined twins depend on each other for survival and unless one of the twins is killing its partner we don't go ahead and slit the throat of both twins simply because they can't live independent of each other. Size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency, think "SLED" those are the only four differences between that embryo you once were and the adult you are today. And the pro-lifer would argue that not one of those four differences justifies killing you at that earlier stage.

You can see Scott in a debate about abortion right here.

And if you like that interview, I have some more things for you to read from Dr. Francis Beckwith.

Learn more by reading

Frank Beckwith is the author of "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice". He wrote that book for Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal.

Here are four essays that answer common arguments in favor of legalized abortion.

- Part I. The Appeal to Pity
- Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem
- Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?
- Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

I have a copy of Dr. Beckwith's previous book "Politically Correct Death", which I read bit-by-bit on my lunch hours 10 years ago. Excellent stuff.

A lecture on basic economics by Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

January 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, former professor of economics at Yale University and George Mason University, gave a lecture on basic economics.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- The study of economics is anti-postmodern – there is objective truth independent of what people think
- The study of economics believes in fixed principles of human nature
- Economics studies the allocation of scarce resources that have alternative uses
- Economics studies how people exchange resources
- How both people who engage in a voluntary trade always believe that they will be better off
- How both people who engage in a voluntary trade both benefit from the exchange
- How incentives motivate people to act
- Understanding supply and demand
- Understanding how "free" government services are rationed
- Understanding opportunity costs
- How prices signal producers to produce more or less, and consumers to buy or not buy
- Market-driven prices versus price controls
- The role of substitution
- The necessity of allowing failure in a free market

The requirements of economic growth:

- private property
- contracts
- the profit motive
- competition

- free trade
- entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation
- the rule of law

If you like this podcast, you can take a look at Thomas Sowell's textbook on "Basic Economics". Highly recommended!

Guillermo Gonzalez lectures at UC Davis on the requirements for life

January 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The 5 video clips that make up the full lecture.

The playlist for all 5 clips is here.

About the speaker

> Guillermo Gonzalez is an Associate Professor of Physics at Grove City College. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington and has received fellowships, grants and awards from such institutions as NASA, the University of Washington, the Templeton Foundation, Sigma Xi (scientific research society) and the National Science Foundation.

Learn more about the speaker here.

The lecture

Here's part 1 of 5:

And the rest are here:

- Part 2 of 5
- Part 3 of 5
- Part 4 of 5
- Part 5 of 5

Topics:

- What is the Copernican Principle?
- Is the Earth's suitability for hosting life rare in the universe?
- Does the Earth have to be the center of the universe to be special?
- How similar to the Earth does a planet have to be to support life?
- What is the definition of life?
- What are the three minimal requirements for life of any kind?
- Requirement 1: A molecule that can store information (carbon)
- Requirement 2: A medium in which chemicals can interact (liquid water)
- Requirement 3: A diverse set of chemical elements
- What is the best environment for life to exist?
- Our place in the solar system: the circumstellar habitable zone
- Our place in the galaxy: the galactic habitable zones
- Our time in the universe's history: the cosmic habitable age
- Other habitability requirements (e.g. – metal-rich star, massive moon, etc.)

- The orchestration needed to create a habitable planet
- How different factors depend on one another through time
- How tweaking one factor can adversely affect other factors
- How many possible places are there in the universe where life could emerge?
- Given these probabilistic resources, should we expect that there is life elsewhere?
- How to calculate probabilities using the “Product Rule”
- Can we infer that there is a Designer just because life is rare? Or do we need more?

The corelation between habitability and measurability.

- Are the habitable places in the universe also the best places to do science?
- Do the factors that make Earth habitable also make it good for doing science?
- Some places and times in the history of the universe are more habitable than others
- Those exact places and times also allow us to make scientific discoveries
- Observing solar eclipses and structure of our star, the Sun
- Observing stars and galaxies
- Observing the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Observing the acceleration of the universe caused by dark matter and energy
- Observing the abundances of light elements like helium of hydrogen
- These observations support the big bang and fine-tuning arguments for God’s existence
- It is exactly like placing observatories on the tops of mountains
- There are observers existing in the best places to observe things
- This is EXACTLY how the universe has been *designed for making scientific discoveries*

This lecture was delivered by Guillermo Gonzalez in 2007 at the University of California at Davis.

Man who doesn’t believe in guns thanks gun owners for protecting him from burglar

January 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From KHOU News.

Excerpt:

> HOUSTON — A couple of strangers came to the rescue when a man was robbed at gunpoint. Now, the victim wants to say thank you to the Good Samaritans.
>
> Police believe the criminal who was canvassing a neighborhood in the 2500 block of Wichita near Hermann Park had no idea what he was in for when he picked his target.
>
> The victim in this case had just walked back to his car from a bar around the corner.
>
> Kevin Dorsey says he hadn’t even closed his car door Thursday night when a man wearing all black and a ski mask put a gun to his chest. The man took Dorsey’s wallet, cell phone and car keys.
>
> After he was robbed, Dorsey began running down the street and says two men in a Mercedes asked him what had happened.
>
> Dorsey told them and they not only caught up with the suspect, but they started shooting at him.
>
> The suspect fired back. In the end, the two witnesses turned vigilantes won and took down the bad guy.
>
> “I don’t believe in guns,” said Dorsey. “I don’t own a gun. I’m totally at the mercy of my saviors. They obviously sent two angels to help me. These people protected me when I couldn’t protect myself.”
>
> After the robber had been shot, police say he jumped over a fence and was attacked by a German Shepherd. That attack prevented him from getting away.
>
> The suspect, identified as Christopher Hutchins, is being treated at Ben Taub Hospital. He’s expected to recover.

You’ll never hear the national media report on the hundreds of thousands of crimes preventing or stopped by law-abiding people who get concealed-carry permits and legally-owned firearms. It doesn’t fit their agenda.

By the way, Neil Simpson has a big round up on gun-related stories here on his blog.

UPDATE: Right Scoop posted this video of a very attractive young lady demonstrating that ALL the weapons that people want to ban are semi-automatic, and that means one trigger pull per bullet.

Obama’s first term: number of Americans not in labor force rises 8,332,000

January 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

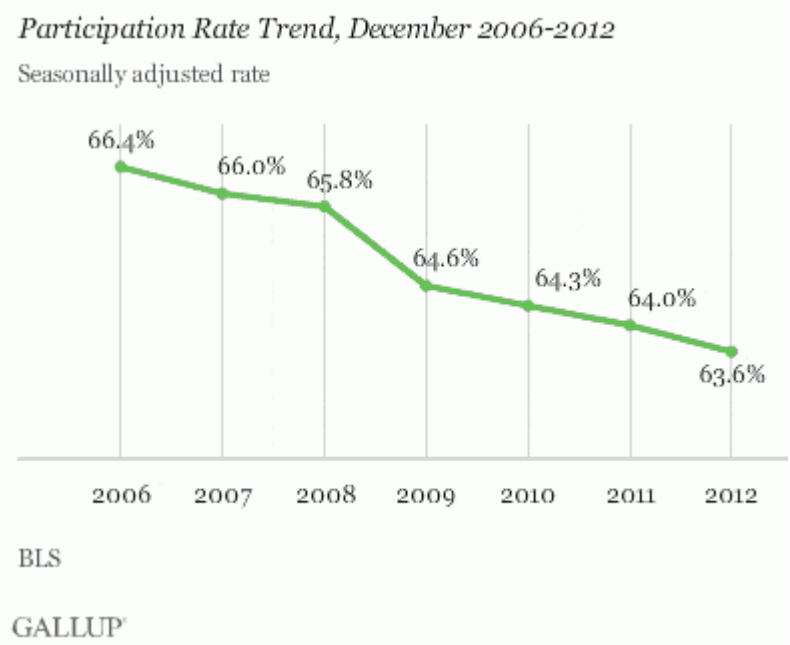

Democrats take over House and Senate in 2007
From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The number of Americans age 16 or older who decided not to work or even to seek a job increased by 8,332,000 to a record 88,839,000 in President Barack Obama’s first term, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
>
> At the same time, the number of retired workers collecting Social Security increased by only 4,234,480.
>
> The increase in Americans opting out of the labor force during Obama’s first term resulted in a decrease in the labor force participation rate from 65.7 percent in January 2009, the month Obama was first inaugurated, to 63.6 percent in December 2012, the latest month reported. Before Obama took office, the labor force participation rate had not been as low as 63.6 percent since 1981, the year President Ronald Reagan took over from President Jimmy Carter.
>
> To be in the labor force a person must either have a job or actively sought one in the previous four weeks.
>
> When Obama was inaugurated in January 2009, there were 80,507,000 American civilians age 16 or older who did not have a job or seek one. In December 2012, there were 88,839,000—thus, the increase of 8,332,000.

In early 2007, the unemployment rate under George W. Bush was around 4.4%. The media at the time was not impressed with such a “high” amount of unemployment.

Starting in mid-2007, we saw a huge spike in unemployment, just after the Democrats took over the House and Senate. The media is now thrilled that unemployment is now much less of a problem than it was under that evil capitalist George W. Bush, so it's not worth reporting on.

Related posts

- 73% of the new jobs created in the last 5 months were government jobs
- Unemployment rate is 10.5%, counting those who have stopped job-hunting
- Obama: private sector job creation is "doing fine"
- New jobs report: unemployment rises and 70% chance of recession
- Economy improving? New CBO report says that real unemployment is at 15%
- 1.2 million people dropped out of the labor force in one month

Politifraud: Left-wing Politifact's "Lie of the Year" is literally true

January 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Politifact's "Lie of the Year":

> It was a lie told in the critical state of Ohio in the final days of a close campaign — that Jeep was moving its U.S. production to China. It originated with a conservative blogger, who twisted an accurate news story into a falsehood. Then it picked up steam when the Drudge Report ran with it. Even though Jeep's parent company gave a quick and clear denial, Mitt Romney repeated it and his campaign turned it into a TV ad.
>
> And they stood by the claim, even as the media and the public expressed collective outrage against something so obviously false.
>
> People often say that politicians don't pay a price for deception, but this time was different: A flood of negative press coverage rained down on the Romney campaign, and he failed to turn the tide in Ohio, the most important state in the presidential election.
>
> PolitiFact has selected Romney's claim that Barack Obama "sold Chrysler to Italians who are going to build Jeeps in China" at the cost of American jobs as the 2012 Lie of the Year.

Now that the election is over, Reuters is reporting that… Chrysler is going to build Jeeps in China: (H/T The Weekly Standard)

> Fiat (FIA.MI) and its U.S. unit Chrysler expect to roll out at least 100,000 Jeeps in China when production starts in 2014 as they seek to catch up with rivals in the world's biggest car market.
>
> Output could double, the Italian carmaker's Chief Executive Sergio Marchionne, without giving a precise timeframe.
>
> Chrysler, in which Fiat has a 58.5 percent stake, said on Tuesday it had agreed to make Jeeps in China with Guangzhou Automobile Group (601238.SS).
>
> […]"We expect production of around 100,000 Jeeps per year which is expandable to 200,000," Marchionne, who is also CEO of Chrysler, said on the sidelines of a conference, adding production could start in 18 months.

The Romney ad said: "Obama took GM and Chrysler into bankruptcy and sold Chrysler to Italians who are going to build Jeeps in China. Mitt Romney will fight for every American job."

And the *literal truth* is that Fiat, an Italian car company, owns a 58.5% majority of Chrysler. And the *literal truth* is that Chrysler IS "going to build Jeeps in China" – exactly what Romney said. We now know that for a fact because it has been reported by Reuters.

Jeep production is starting up in China, it is not being expanded in the United States. Politifact has exposed itself as a left-wing organization that is willing to lie in order to get their Democrat candidate elected.

What happens when you raise taxes on businesses and punish people for working hard and playing by the rules? Very simple. *They leave and move to a place where they can keep more of what they earn.* Obama likes to hear the sound of applause from those who depend on government for handouts and bailouts, but he is being applauded for spending other people's money. Money he himself did not earn. Eventually, people get sick and tired of being abused by big-mouth politicians and they take their capital and move on. It's the Democrat Party that causes jobs to be shipped overseas.

Public school suspends 5-year-old girl for making threat with soap bubble gun

January 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> A 5-year-old Pennsylvania girl who told another girl she was going to shoot her with a pink Hello Kitty toy gun that blows soapy bubbles has been suspended from kindergarten.
>
> Her family has hired an attorney to fight the punishment, which initially was 10 days for issuing a 'terroristic threat.' But her punishment was reduced to two days after her mother met with school officials and had the incident dropped to 'threatening to harm another student,' which apparently carries a lesser punishment.
>
> "It's laughable," Robin Ficker, the girl's attorney told FoxNews.com.
>
> […]Ficker says Mount Carmel Area School District officials said the girl made the threat on Jan. 10 as she waited for a school bus with friends. A school official overheard the remark and searched the girl's backpack and did not find the Hello Kitty gun, he said.
>
> The next day, the girls involved were 'interrogated' by school officials, Ficker said. By the time the girl was done speaking to administrators about the incident, she was crying, he said. A teacher called out the girl in front of her class and told her police may get involved, he said.
>
> Ficker called the girl "the least terroristic person in Pennsylvania."
>
> "What parent that you know would want their 5-year-old questioned about making terroristic threats without them in the room?" Ficker asked.

A 5-year-old girl with a toy gun that shoots soap bubbles is a terrorist, according to these government-run public schools.

And this is not an isolated incident, here's another one from last week.

Excerpt:

> A lime-green Nerf toy gun caused an hours-long lock-down at a Long Island school on Tuesday.
>
> A 911 caller told Nassau County Police she saw a suspicious teen at about 7:38 a.m. Tuesday wearing a black jacket and carrying a black backpack at Elmont Memorial high School in Elmont.
>
> The caller said he was also carrying a lime green gun.
>
> A SWAT team searched the school room by room. Parents were allowed to pick

> up their children early Tuesday afternoon.
>
> They eventually found the toy lime green and yellow lever action Nerf gun in a student locker. Police did not make any arrests and the lockdown was lifted.
>
> School officials confiscated the toy gun and say it will be returned to the parents.
>
> Inspector Kenneth Lack says the heightened response was due to “an abundance of precaution.”

That’s another public school, run by the government.

If you have a job, some of the money you earn is taken by the government to pay for this worthless public school monopoly. There is no opt-out from this stupidity.

Post-1960s progressivism: a lecture from Hillsdale College

January 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tom sent me this excellent bird's eye view of the progressive agenda. It's very direct, and it does NOT shy away from moral standards and social issues. It squarely hits on feminism and gay rights as it relates to marriage and family. (H/T Tom)

The lecture: (37 minutes)

Here's a snippet from a summary of the lecture from the Hawaiian Reporter:

> The natural man-woman-children family was considered the only way to structure healthy family life by both the Founders and Old Progressives. The Founders believed strong families arose from the natural law and were an essential building block to a virtuous and productive society. They expected states to pass laws to support the family structure. The Old Progressives believed similarly that social science required government support of the natural family. Part of this "support" included the need for trained experts in "home economics" to assist families in the scientific practice of family life. From both traditions we had laws that made divorce difficult, usually requiring serious grounds like adultery, and placing children in the custody of the father to further discourage frivolous divorce. Both traditions stressed sexual activity within the family structure. Both traditions understood the centrality of the natural family to the strength of the society. Churches and schools supported this traditional morality.
>
> New Progressives adopted sexual liberation as a main value. They have been indifferent to the natural family as merely one option of how to live, and, in many cases, with a sneering belief that it is not all that good an option. Sexual liberation contradicts both the natural law of the Founders and the scientific ethical ideal of the Progressives. Rather than supporting the natural family, the government of the New Progressive does its best to undermine it. Welfare goes to unmarried women, reducing motivation to marry, replacing fathers with government. No fault divorce has exploded the divorce rate, with actions brought overwhelmingly by women who are more likely to benefit from it. "Self expression" of the New Progressives trumps "self control" of natural law. 57% of college students are now women, and Title 9 (that wrought so much damage to men's smaller sports in college) is now beginning to be applied to STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) studies in academia. Hiring preferences for women exist throughout government. There has been no similar concerns about the status of men. Exploding out of wedlock births (over 40% of all births now) demonstrate the destruction of the natural family. Now gay marriage is the new cause, an attempt to place such relationships on the same plane as the natural family. Social health requires children, and children require a father and mother

> in the same household. Gay marriage can lead to no procreation, and anti-family policy ensures an underclass of angry, neglected children.
>
> Justice Douglas had embraced sexual liberation as a form of self-expression that frees us from rigid traditional morality of self-control. Hence first amendment protection of nude dancing. In Lawrence v Texas, the 2003 Court decision that found state sodomy laws unconstitutional, Justice Kennedy had this to say: *"At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."* A libertarian might well find criminalizing such conduct as unwise and unjust, but unconstitutional in a document that celebrates natural law? And we have gone far beyond decriminalization to government celebration of gay alternative life styles.
>
> Even in our foreign policy. Secretary Clinton considers gay marriage and other aspects of sexual liberation a priority in our foreign policy: "The Obama Administration defends the human rights of LGBT people as part of our comprehensive human rights policy….The President has directed all U.S. Government agencies engaged overseas to combat the criminalization of LGBT status and conduct." The Founders believed that American foreign policy should be about the protection of unalienable rights of Americans. The Old Progressives that it should be about spreading Progressive ideas of freedom and the uplift of less advanced peoples. The New Progressives that its should be about spreading sexual liberation throughout the world.

It does discuss fiscal issues, but it does not ignore moral and social ones, since sexual liberation and the breakdown of the family is what drives a lot of the fiscal issues anyway.

The full index to the "Constitution 201" series is on Youtube in this channel.

Obama pushes for gay marriage at second inauguration

January 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News. (links removed)

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama forcefully advanced the homosexual agenda in his second inaugural address this afternoon, saying redefining marriage must be enacted "by [God's] people here on earth."
>
> […]"Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law – for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well," the president said.
>
> Although the president trumpeted his support for redefining marriage during the presidential campaign, he promised to leave the issue to be settled by the states. However, his decision to include gay 'marriage' in an inaugural address alongside issues such as green energy, amnesty for illegal immigrants, and robust entitlement programs, which he has pledged to actively champion, suggests it may be part of the president's legislative, or administrative, agenda.
>
> The president wove homosexual activism into multiple aspects of the inaugural ceremonies.
>
> A clergyman who supports the homosexual movement gave the benediction in place of a pastor who supports the traditional family.
>
> Luis León, the rector of St. John's Episcopal Church just across the street from the White House, has been described by MSNBC as a "pro-gay Episcopal priest."
>
> […]Leon replaced Rev. Louie Giglio, who was pressured out of giving the benediction by homosexual activists who had discovered a sermon he delivered in the 1990s offering a "Christian response to homosexuality."
>
> […]At another juncture in the inaugural festivities, poet Richard Blanco earned the distinction of becoming the first gay Hispanic poet ever to read a poem during an inauguration.

If gay marriage is legalized, then speaking and acting like an authentic Christian ill be much harder. Dr. Robert P. George explains why that's so in Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> Since most liberals and even some conservatives, it seems, apparently have no understanding at all of the conjugal conception of marriage as a one-flesh union—not even enough of a grasp to consciously consider and reject it—they uncritically conceive marriage as sexual-romantic domestic partnership, as if it just couldn't possibly be anything else. This is despite the fact that the conjugal

conception has historically been embodied in our marriage laws, and explains their content (not just the requirement of spousal sexual complementarity, but also rules concerning consummation and annulability, norms of monogamy and sexual exclusivity, and the pledge of permanence of commitment) in ways that the sexual-romantic domestic partnership conception simply cannot. Still, having adopted the sexual-romantic domestic partnership idea, and seeing no alternative possible conception of marriage, they assume—and it is just that, an assumption, and a gratuitous one—that no actual reason exists for regarding sexual reproductive complementarity as integral to marriage. After all, two men or two women can have a romantic interest in each other, live together in a sexual partnership, care for each other, and so forth. So why can't they be married? Those who think otherwise, having no rational basis, discriminate invidiously.

[…]Thus, advocates of redefinition are increasingly open in saying that they do not see these disputes about sex and marriage as honest disagreements among reasonable people of goodwill. They are, rather, battles between the forces of reason, enlightenment, and equality—those who would "expand the circle of inclusion"—on one side, and those of ignorance, bigotry, and discrimination—those who would exclude people out of "animus"—on the other. The "excluders" are to be treated just as racists are treated—since they are the equivalent of racists. Of course, we (in the United States, at least) don't put racists in jail for expressing their opinions—we respect the First Amendment; but we don't hesitate to stigmatize them and impose various forms of social and even civil disability upon them and their institutions. In the name of "marriage equality" and "non-discrimination," liberty—especially religious liberty and the liberty of conscience—and genuine equality are undermined.

The fundamental error made by some supporters of conjugal marriage was and is, I believe, to imagine that a grand bargain could be struck with their opponents: "We will accept the legal redefinition of marriage; you will respect our right to act on our consciences without penalty, discrimination, or civil disabilities of any type. Same-sex partners will get marriage licenses, but no one will be forced for any reason to recognize those marriages or suffer discrimination or disabilities for declining to recognize them." *There was never any hope of such a bargain being accepted.* Perhaps *parts* of such a bargain would be accepted by liberal forces *temporarily* for strategic or tactical reasons, as part of the political project of getting marriage redefined; but guarantees of religious liberty and non-discrimination for people who cannot in conscience accept same-sex marriage could then be eroded and eventually removed. After all, "full equality" requires that no quarter be given to the "bigots" who want to engage in "discrimination" (people with a "separate but equal" mindset) in the name of their retrograde religious beliefs. "Dignitarian" harm must be opposed as resolutely as more palpable forms of harm.

> […][T]here is, in my opinion, no chance—*no chance*—of persuading champions of sexual liberation (and it should be clear by now that this is the cause they serve), that they should respect, or permit the law to respect, the conscience rights of those with whom they disagree. Look at it from their point of view: Why should we permit "full equality" to be trumped by bigotry? Why should we respect religions and religious institutions that are "incubators of homophobia"? Bigotry, religiously based or not, must be smashed and eradicated. The law should certainly not give it recognition or lend it any standing or dignity.
>
> The lesson, it seems to me, for those of us who believe that the conjugal conception of marriage is true and good, and who wish to protect the rights of our faithful and of our institutions to honor that belief in carrying out their vocations and missions, is that there is no alternative to winning the battle in the public square over the legal definition of marriage. The "grand bargain" is an illusion we should dismiss from our minds.

You can read about some examples of attacks against proponents of traditional marriage in my secular case against same-sex marriage.

Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up

January 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's all a vast right-wing conspiracy:

Who cares about whose fault it is that four Americans are dead? Not her. Stop asking her questions, she has a headache!

Here's the UK Telegraph assessment of Hillary's performance at the hearings.

Excerpt:

> It was not exactly a bravura performance today from the Secretary of State, who testified this morning before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Hillary Clinton came across as defiant, evasive, blasé,and at times hugely unconvincing when answering questions from Republican Senators about the death of four Americans at the hand of Islamist terrorists in Benghazi last September, including the assassination of the US Ambassador to Libya, Christopher Stevens. After listening to several hours of Mrs. Clinton defending her administration's handling of the Benghazi debacle, including UN Ambassador Susan Rice's preposterous suggestion on Sunday morning talk shows that this might not have been a terrorist attack, the American public will only be left with the impression that this is a presidency that doesn't take any responsibility for its actions, is highly incompetent, and remains firmly in denial over the scale of the al-Qaeda threat.
>
> […]With an eye on a possible 2016 presidential bid, Hillary Clinton did herself no favours with today's testimony, just a few days before she steps down from high office. It underscores the fact that Clinton has been a less than impressive Secretary of State, whose leadership on an array of foreign policy matters, from Syria to Egypt and Iran, has been underwhelming. Some of her initiatives have been disastrous, including the much-hyped and weak-kneed Russian "reset," which now appears to have sunk without a trace after Moscow decided not to cooperate. And who can forget Mrs. Clinton's decision to stand alongside Cristina Kirchner in Buenos Aires, and support the Argentine president's call for UN-brokered negotiations over the sovereignty of the Falklands? Or her department's extraordinary attempts to intervene in the internal British debate over membership of the European Union.
>
> The last four years have been a period of marked U.S. decline, coupled with a sneering disregard for America's key allies such as Britain and Israel. The Secretary of State floundered today before the Senate, struggling to defend a feeble foreign policy that has undercut American leadership and projected weakness in the face of America's adversaries. The Obama administration's blundering response to Benghazi is symbolic of its wider failure in the Middle East

> and beyond, one that does not bode well for the next four years.

Remember, Hillary's focus as Secretary of State is not what you would expect.

She has other priorities:

> Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said last week that she has stood up for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and and Transgender rights all around the world.
>
> "Memories are short, and we can't afford to rest on the laurels of the past," Clinton said Thursday at an event co-hosted by the State Department and Foreign Policy Magazine. "So it's our job to reintroduce a post-Iraq generation of young people around the world to principled American leadership."
>
> "That is part of why I've logged so many miles over the last four years going to something on the order of 112 countries, holding town hall meetings with young people from Tunis to Tokyo, shining a spotlight on the concerns of religious and ethnic minorities from the Copts in Egypt to the Rohingya in Burma, putting down a clear marker on internet freedom, going to the UN Human Rights Council to stand up for the rights and lives of the LGBT people around the world, advancing a new approach to development that puts human dignity and self-sufficiency at the heart of our efforts, and pushing women's rights and opportunities to the top of the diplomatic agenda," Clinton continued.

National security? What's that? The State Department's job is to promote abortion and gay rights.

Rand Paul sums up my response to our affirmative action Secretary of State:

The question that this shrill shrieking suggests to me is this: is the feminist "blame men for the glass ceiling" attitude compatible with competence and accountability? Should you put a feminist in charge of something and then expect her to take responsibility for mistakes and be transparent?

Related posts

- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA's account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Four out of five Sunday news shows fail to mention the Benghazi cover-up
- Kyle Clarke of 9NEWS grills Obama on Benghazi and green energy corruption
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser
- Obama administration warns contractors to delay layoffs to after election
- Obama wants to send $1 billion of aid to Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
- Report: Iran shipping arms and personnel to Syria through Iraq
- Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)
- The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration
- Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month
- Democrat defense cuts to an already weakened military expose us to aggression
- Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES
- Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?
- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority
- Obama's neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Obama's Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors
- Obama's defense cuts undermine our national security
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them

Video: Christopher Hitchens debates William Dembski: does God exist?

January 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video:

Details:

- Opening statements – 15 minutes
- First rebuttal – 10 minutes
- Second rebuttal – 5 minutes
- Q&A – 30 minutes

Summary of Hitchens' opening speech, snarkified and with spin removed

Contentions:

1. God has to make the universe the way I would, but he didn't.
2. I don't like some things that people who claim to be religious do.

Arguments from science:

The fact that our current universe is running out of usable energy (entropy) means that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that the universe should go on forever.

The fact that the universe is a very big place means that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that the universe should be very small.

The fact that the universe is a very old place means that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that the universe should be very young.

The fact that the universe contains exploding stars means that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that the universe should not contain exploding stars.

The fact that the universe is expanding means that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that the universe should not be expanding.

The fact that the Earth is a small rock means that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that the Earth should not be a small rock.

Arguments from history:

Although I don't believe that there is any objective standard of right and wrong, I personally feel that Islamic terrorism is yucky yuck yuck. It's just my opinion though, since there is no objective standard of morality on atheism, but only arbitrary personal preferences and arbitrary customs that vary by time and place. Since these Muslim terrorists claim to be acting on behalf of God, and I don't like what they do, therefore God doesn't exist.

Although I don't believe that there is any objective standard of right and wrong, I personally feel that Israeli military expansion is yucky yuck yuck. It's just my opinion though, since there is no objective standard of morality on atheism, but only arbitrary personal preferences and arbitrary customs that vary by time and place. Since these Israeli military expansionists claim to be acting on behalf of God, and I don't like what they do, therefore God doesn't exist.

Arguments from the human condition:

Although I said a minute ago that we should be cautious about the good experimental science that supports theism by showing that the universe came into being from nothing, fine-tuned for complex life, based on multiple lines of experimental evidence, I actually think that Darwinian evolution is true beyond a shadow of a doubt, based on ZERO lines of experimental evidence for macro-evolution (the evolution of new body plans and organ types). But since Darwinism is definitely true – as true as man-made global warming! – then God couldn't exist. Why? Because God would not use a gradual process to create life, because I wouldn't use a gradual process to create life. God, if he existed, would always do what I would do if I were God. Also, we are similar to chimpanzees which proves that molecules to man evolution is true. Certainly there is no peer-reviewed evidence that human and chimpanzee DNA are actually very different. (Note that the link goes to Nature, the #1 peer-reviewed science journal).

When you were in your mother's womb, you grew some hair and then it fell off, proving there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that babies should not grow hair in their mother's womb, only to have it fall off.

Humans have appendices that have no purpose that is apparent to me, based on my vast experience with biology gleaned from writing snarky columns. Since I don't see a purpose to your appendix – certainly there is no peer-reviewed evidence that the appendix has any useful biological purpose – therefore God does not exist.

When you were a child, you grew some teeth and then they fell off, proving there is no God, because God, if he existed, would agree with me that children should not grow teeth, only to have them fall off.

There are a lot of species that go extinct in the history of life and this proves that there is no God, because God, if he existed, would not have wanted lots of species to go extinct.

The smart theistic evolutionist Francis Collins believes in Darwinian evolution and he's smart. I can't give you any reasons why he believes in Darwinian evolution right now, but you should definitely believe in evolution because of his authority and his skill at avoiding debates on evolution with his critics in the intelligent design movement.

You need to be more humble like me, you ignorant fools. If you simply read more cosmology, physics, chemistry and biology, like we clever journalists have, then you would be a smart atheist like me! And humble, too, you ignorant, illiterate fundamentalists!

Summary of Dembski's opening speech

Contentions:

1. Evolution is false, Hitchens' proofs from his book don't work.
2. Hitchens makes historical claims that are falsified by the evidence.
3. The progress of science falsifies atheism
4. Theism explains the big question of life better than atheism

Darwinian evolution vs. the evidence:

Junk DNA is not junk because the latest peer-reviewed scientific evidence shows that the so-called Junk-DNA actually has important functions in the cell. (Note that the link goes to Nature, the #1 peer-reviewed science journal).

The fossil record does not show a gradual pattern of emerging body plans because the latest evidence on the Cambrian explosion shows that new body plans emerged fully-formed without gradual developmental pathways.

The inverted retina is not a bad design, the counter-intuitive design actually is superior when the latest published research is considered.

Hitchens' argument about the evolution of the eye rely on mathematical simulations, not on experimental evidence.

Hitchens is committed to Darwinism whether there is any evidence or not, because he pre-supposes materialism, so some form of evolution MUST be true, regardless of how lousy the observable evidence is for it.

Historical arguments:

Hitchens dismisses Israel's time in Egypt and at Mount Sinai, but the evidence is written up in books like those of James K. Hoffmeier, published by Oxford University Press.

- *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition. (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Hitchens dismisses the historical records about Jesus, but these are again made clear in publications of top academic presses. (E.g. – N.T. Wright, Richard Bauckham, etc.)

The progress of science falsifies atheism:

Atheism requires that chemical evolution be true. Darwin thought that cells were simple because he needed them to be simple for this theory, and he didn't know anything about what cells were really like. But the progress of science has shown that the complexity of cells is enormous.

You can actually use rigorous methods developed by Bill in his book "The Design Inference", published by Cambridge University Press, and apply them to effects in nature, like archaeological artifacts, radio signals from space, and… cells and molecular machines.

When you apply the mathematical methods for inferring design to biology in books like “Signature in the Cell” or “The Design of Life”, components of living systems are found to be designed for a purpose.

The big questions are answered better by theism than atheism:

Other arguments: the cosmological argument, the fine-tuning argument, the moral argument, the argument from rationality/reason, the argument from mathematical foundations of reality, the argument from the the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus, etc.

New study: feminism in education causes boys to underperform academically

January 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Belfast Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> A five-year study of hundreds of post-primary pupils in Northern Ireland has found flaws in our education system that could be hindering boys' ability to learn.
>
> The research — funded by the Departments of Education and Justice — was carried out following concerns about boys' educational underachievement, health and well-being.
>
> It has previously been noted as a particular problem among boys from working-class Protestant areas.
>
> Key findings of the 'Taking Boys Seriously' report, by Dr Ken Harland and Sam McCready from the University of Ulster, include:
>
> - A lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills from primary school which is not being dealt with early post-primary.
> - Boys from lower academic class streams perceiving they are not given the same opportunities to learn as those from higher.
> - Boys being unprepared for key transitional stages (such as moving schools or moving from junior stream into senior) during adolescence.
> - Bullying.
> - The formal nature of the classroom leaving a significant number of boys feeling bored, frustrated and impacting negatively on their concentration.
>
> The study of 378 male pupils from nine post-primary schools across Northern Ireland quizzed the boys annually between Years 8 and 12.
>
> […]Recommendations in the 114-page report include:
>
> - Encouraging more males into teaching.
> - Teacher training should support teachers to understand the changing needs of adolescent boys.

Life Site News adds:

> The problem of boys' underachievement in primary and secondary school follows them into their later lives. Research from 2006 has tracked the decline in male academic performance over the same period as the rise of feminist-dominated ideologies in academia and policymaking.
>
> The ratio of males to females graduating from a four-year college stood at 1.60 in

> 1960, fell to parity by 1980, and continued its decline until by 2003, there were 135 females for every 100 males who graduated from a four-year college. Another study found that half of the current gender gap in college attendance can be linked to lower rates of high-school graduation among males, particularly for young black men.
>
> The work of one American researcher may offer clues to the question of why and how. Professor Christopher Cornwell at the University of Georgia has found that a heavily feminist-driven education paradigm systematically favours girls and disadvantages boys from their first days in school.
>
> Examining student test scores and grades of children in kindergarten through fifth grade, Cornwell found that boys in all racial categories are not being "commensurately graded by their teachers" in any subject "as their test scores would predict."
>
> The answer lies in the way teachers, who are statistically mostly women, evaluate students without reference to objective test scores. Boys are regularly graded well below their actual academic performance.
>
> Boys are falling significantly behind in grades, "despite performing as least as well as girls on math tests, and significantly better on science tests."
>
> After fifth grade, he found, student assessment becomes a matter of "a teacher's subjective assessment of the student's performance," and is further removed from the guidance of objective test results. Teachers, he says, tend to assess students on non-cognitive, "socio-emotional skills." This has had a significant impact on boys' later achievement because, while objective test scores are important, it is teacher-assigned grades that determine a child's future with class placement, high school graduation and college admissibility.
>
> Eliminating the factor of "non-cognitive skills…almost eliminates the estimated gender gap in reading grades," Cornwell found. He said he found it "surprising" that although boys out-perform girls on math and science test scores, girls out-perform boys on teacher-assigned grades.
>
> In science and general knowledge, as in math skills, the data showed that kindergarten and first grade white boys' grades "are lower by 0.11 and 0.06 standard deviations, even though their test scores are higher." This disparity continues and grows through to the fifth grade, with white boys and girls being graded similarly, "but the disparity between their test performance and teacher assessment grows."
>
> […]The study, he said, shows that "teachers' assessments are not aligned with test-score data, with greater gender disparities in appearing in grading than testing outcomes". And the "gender disparity" always favours girls.

This is why I recommend homeschooling for boys especially up until grade 6 or later, when grading is more objective. And boys should focus on math, science, technology and

engineering, where there is less room for discrimination by feminist teachers who are biased against boys. Unfortunately, even though you are homeschooling, you still have to pay taxes for the feminist-dominated public school system, which enjoys overwhelming support from women voters, especially single women voters.

The best book on this topic is by Christina Hoff Sommers, entitled "The War Against Boys". If you click through to the Life Site News article, they have a section on it towards the end of the article. It is very important that pastors and other conservatives understand that the current problems with boys and young men are not going to be solved by ignorant male-blaming slogans like "Man Up!". Christians and conservatives need to think more deeply about these problems, and they may find that they are actually espousing the very thing (feminism) that is the root cause of the decline in men, and their lack of interest in marriage. Let's take a look at the studies and be bound by research instead of the desire to please women in our churches by telling them that men are to blame for their woes.

Check out my previous post about the Cornwell study, which compared teacher-assigned test scores with standardized test scores for girls and boys.

What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George

January 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When it comes to defending marriage, there are two ways to argue. My way is to argue using evidence that same-sex marriage harms society by harming children, by harming public health and safety and harming liberties, especially religious liberty. But there is another way to argue, a more philosophical way. And that's the way that three scholars have argued in a new book called "What Is Marriage?: Man and Woman: A Defense".

Here are the authors:

> **Sherif Girgis** is a Ph.D. student in philosophy at Princeton University and a J.D. candidate at Yale Law School. After graduating Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude from Princeton, where he won prizes for best senior thesis in ethics and best thesis in philosophy, as well as the Dante Society of America's national Dante Prize, he obtained a B.Phil. in moral, political, and legal philosophy from the University of Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar.
>
> **Ryan T. Anderson** is William E. Simon Fellow at the Heritage Foundation and the editor of *Public Discourse: Ethics, Law, and the Common Good*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute. A Phi Beta Kappa and magna cum laude graduate of Princeton University, he is a Ph.D. candidate in political philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. He has worked as assistant editor of *First Things* and was a Journalism Fellow of the Phillips Foundation. His writings have appeared in the *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, *First Things*, the *Weekly Standard*, *National Review*, the *New Atlantis*, and the *Claremont Review of Books*.
>
> **Robert P. George** is a Visiting Professor at Harvard Law School and McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University. He is a member of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and previously served on the President's Council on Bioethics and as a presidential appointee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. He is a former Judicial Fellow at the Supreme Court of the United States, where he received the Justice Tom C. Clark Award. He is a recipient of the United States Presidential Citizens Medal and the Honorific Medal for the Defense of Human Rights of the Republic of Poland.

And here is an academic publication that they wrote previously, which was the basis for the new book.

And here is a lecture they did explaining the book, in 3 parts.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 3 of 3:

This book is probably the most important book to come out in opposition to same-sex marriage so far, so it makes sense to watch the lecture and get an idea of how scholars at the very top of the academic tower make the case for natural marriage. If you leave marriage to the Comedy Channel leftists, you will never hear a real discussion of the issues.

Is a higher minimum wage good for younger workers and minority workers?

January 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at the data, and leave the feelings and rhetoric out of it.

Excerpt:

> Battles are brewing in New York, California, Minnesota and the nation's capital over hiking minimum wages, with Democrats having the votes to ram through hikes in all four cases.
>
> These politicians are claiming the moral high ground, saying it will help the poorest in our communities. Don't be fooled.
>
> Hiking the minimum wage hurts — not helps — the lowest-paid workers, especially young black men. A 10% hike in the minimum wage causes a 2.5% drop in employment among young white men without a high school diploma and a staggering 6.5% drop among young black men without that degree.
>
> Young black males get clobbered three times as hard because they tend to work in the fast-food and restaurant industries, where any increase in labor costs produces layoffs.
>
> […]Only 5% of American workers earn the federal minimum, according to the latest government data, compared with 13% in 1979. Minimum wage workers are largely first-time workers. They are learning what all of us learn on our first job: to be prompt, dress appropriately, do what the boss asks and be reliable.
>
> First-time workers face the biggest risk of being priced out of the job market by a minimum wage hike. They aren't worth much to an employer when they start working. They don't have the skills.
>
> When the government increases the minimum wage, it's more expensive to hire first-timers. According to David Neumark and J.M. Salas, University of California economists, and William Wascher of the Federal Reserve Board, "minimum wages tend to reduce employment among teenagers."
>
> New York needs that like a hole in the head. Teen unemployment in New York City hit a stunning 35.6% last August, compared with 23.7% nationwide.
>
> All teens are harmed, but black male teenagers are hit hardest by minimum wage hikes, according to a 2011 study by labor economists David Macpherson and William Evans. Unemployment among young black males is currently 29%, double the rate for young white males.
>
> Macpherson and Evans found the reason is that one out of three young black men without a high school diploma works in the restaurant/fast-food industry, where profit margins are thin. Any labor-cost hikes compel these businesses to

> cut their workforce.
>
> On top of the threatened minimum-wage hikes, businesses now face the certainty of ObamaCare, which will impose the largest government-mandated labor-cost hike in history.
>
> In 2014, employers with 50 or more full-time workers will be required to provide a package of "essential health benefits" or pay a penalty. This government mandated package will add a whopping $1.79 an hour to the cost of hiring an employee. Maybe that's affordable when you're hiring lawyers or bankers, but not for hiring unskilled first-time workers.

When considering what economic policies to adopt, it is not enough to do what feels good. Liberals and conservatives agree that it is good to help the poor. Liberals think that higher minimum wage rates help the poor, and conservatives think that lower minimum wage rates help the poor. This is not a topic that is up for debate, though, because economists across the left-right spectrum *agree* on this one.

Take a look at this post from Harvard University economist Greg Mankiw.

He writes:

> My favorite textbook covers business cycle theory toward the end of the book (the last four chapters) precisely because that theory is controversial. I believe it is better to introduce students to economics with topics about which there is more of a professional consensus. In chapter two of the book, I include a table of propositions to which most economists subscribe, based on various polls of the profession. Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:

1. A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)
2. Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)
3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do

transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)

11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

And that's not all. There have actually been studies done on this, and they echo the consensus.

Consider this 2009 article from the Wall Street Journal that discusses some of the studies.

Excerpt:

> Earlier this year, economist David Neumark of the University of California, Irvine, wrote on these pages that the 70-cent-an-hour increase in the minimum wage would cost some 300,000 jobs. Sure enough, the mandated increase to $7.25 took effect in July, and right on cue the August and September jobless numbers confirm the rapid disappearance of jobs for teenagers.
>
> he September teen unemployment rate hit 25.9%, the highest rate since World War II and up from 23.8% in July. Some 330,000 teen jobs have vanished in two months. Hardest hit of all: black male teens, whose unemployment rate shot up to a catastrophic 50.4%. It was merely a terrible 39.2% in July.
>
> […]Two years ago Mr. Neumark and William Wascher, a Federal Reserve economist, reviewed more than 100 academic studies on the impact of the minimum wage. They found "overwhelming" evidence that the least skilled and the young suffer a loss of employment when the minimum wage is increased.
>
> […]State lawmakers are also at fault. At least 10 states have raised their minimum wages above the federal level in the last decade, largely in response to union lobbying and in the name of helping the working poor. Four states with among the highest wage rates are California, Massachusetts, Michigan and New York. Studies have shown in each case that their wage policies killed jobs for teens. The Massachusetts teen employment rate sank by one-third when the minimum wage rose by 88% between 1995 and 2008.
>
> According to new numbers from the Labor Department, in 2008 only 1.1% of Americans who work 40 hours a week or more even earned the minimum wage. In other words, 98.9% of 40-hour-a-week workers earn more than the minimum. The data also show that teenagers are five times more likely to earn the minimum wage than adults. Minimum wage jobs are nearly all first-time or part-time jobs, and an estimated two of every three minimum wage workers get a pay raise within a year on the job.

You can read more about minimim wage and unemployment from my second favorite

economist Walter Williams, and from my first favorite economist Thomas Sowell. This is an issue that matters to them, because they are both black, and blacks are the hardest hit by these policies – even though most blacks support these policies by voting overwhelmingly for socialists.

This issue is simple and straightforward. To help the poorest and least experienced workers, we have to take away any regulations that separate them from their *first* employer. From there, they will gain the experience to move up. Nobody stays in a minimum wage job all their lives. They move up when they get experience and a resume. That's why that first job is so crucial. We have to make it easier for employers to get employees started in their careers.

Does abortion produce fewer out-of-wedlock births, less child abuse, and lower crime rates?

January 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article that commenter Scott sent me from the Public Discourse.

Topic snippet:

> In the 1960s and 1970s, abortion advocates used a variety of arguments to advance their cause. Some emphasized women's liberty and autonomy. Others tried to persuade people that easy access to abortion would benefit society as a whole. Consider just two representative quotations:
>
> "A policy that makes contraception and abortion freely available will greatly reduce the number of unwanted children, and thereby curb the tragic rise of child abuse in our country." (NARAL, 1978)
>
> "The impact of the abortion revolution may be too vast to assess immediately. It should usher in an era when every child will be wanted, loved, and properly cared for." (NARAL co-founder Larry Lader, 1974)
>
> Legal abortion, advocates argued, would result in fewer out-of-wedlock births and less child abuse, and would ensure that every child was wanted. Over time, these arguments lost credibility because neither out-of-wedlock births nor child abuse was decreasing.
>
> In the early 2000s, academics Steven Levitt (University of Chicago) and John Donohue (Yale University) published a study in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, titled "The Impact of Legalized Abortion on Crime," claiming that legal abortion unexpectedly lowered crime rates in many American cities during the 1990s. Groups supporting abortion rights generally distanced themselves from this argument, fearing its eugenic implications. Though the findings have received some widespread credibility because of Levitt's popular book *Freakonomics,* they have been much criticized by other academics.
>
> In this essay I show that easy access to abortion during the past forty years has *not* benefited society as a whole. Legal abortion has not reduced out-of-wedlock births, child abuse, or crime rates.

And here's a sample: (I chose one that I haven't posted about before)

> Abortion advocates frequently argued that legal abortion would decrease child abuse. Children who were wanted, they claimed, would be less likely to suffer from abuse than those who were unwanted. But social science data suggest that this logic is flawed. A landmark study of 674 abused children by Edward Lenoski (University of Southern California) found that 91 percent of the parents admitted that they wanted the child they had abused. A 2005 study by Priscilla Coleman

> (Bowling Green University) showed that women who obtained abortions were 144 percent more likely to abuse their own children.
>
> At a more theoretical level, Dr. Philip G. Ney, head of the Department of Psychiatry at Royal Jubilee Hospital in Canada, has outlined why abortion can lead directly to child abuse.
>
> 1. Abortion decreases an individual's instinctual restraint against the occasional rage felt toward those dependent on his or her care.
> 2. Permissive abortion diminishes the taboo against aggressing [against] the defenseless.
> 3. Abortion increases the hostility between the generations.
> 4. Abortion has devalued children, thus diminishing the value of caring for children.
> 5. Abortion increases guilt and self-hatred, which the parent takes out on the child.
> 6. Abortion increases hostile frustration, intensifying the battle of the sexes, for which children are scapegoated.
> 7. Abortion cuts the developing mother-infant bond, thereby diminishing her future mothering capability.
>
> Overall, American statistics paint a clear picture. Legal abortion did not reduce child abuse. In fact, the exact opposite happened. The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect has reported that child abuse has increased more than 1,000 percent since the legalization of abortion in 1973. According to data from the US Statistical Abstract, deaths due to child abuse continued to rise after the *Roe* v. *Wade* decision and increased by 400 percent between 1972 and 1990. Obviously, child abuse is caused by a variety of complicated factors. Still, our experience in the United States provides no evidence that legal abortion reduces child abuse.

This is a good one to bookmark, I'll bet you will be able to use it in a debate. By the way, if you want more of a rebuttal of Freaknomics, you can check out John Lott's book "Freedomnomics". It has a whole section on abortion and crime.

Must pro-lifers be more concerned about born children before they save unborn ones?

January 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was busily working away on a new project this week, mostly doing Oracle database stuff – schema stuff and trigger stuff. Our team lead and I were talking about the problem of fatherlessness and he said that pro-lifers ought to be more concerned with born children instead of being so lopsidedly concerned with unborn children.

So, I decided to quote this little illustration from Life Training Institute to make a point:

> Joe found the young girl unconscious in her upstairs closet. By the time he got there, the structure was a raging inferno. No one else dared go inside. Scooping up the girl, he took his only exit, straight out the second story window and into the bushes below. The girl lived. For his part, Joe sustained three cuts and two sprained ankles—and an avalanche of questions. The media wanted to know how he planned to pay for the girl's food, clothing, and health care now that he'd rescued her. The evangelical pastor asked if the time spent saving the girl from temporal flames might be better spent saving people from eternal ones. The social justice coordinator of the Catholic parish insisted that if Joe truly cared about saving lives, he'd care about all life and spend equal time rescuing poor workers from corrupt corporations. The local Congressman asked if he supported tax hikes aimed at reducing fire risk. Joe just kept looking at the girl.

Remember that next time someone gives you a similar objection.

If Sean McDowell explains the fine-tuning argument, anyone can understand it

January 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Combination Lock

Sean McDowell wrote a blog post that has a very simple illustration to show what the fine-tuning argument is about, and then he supplies one of the best known illustrations: the strong force.

Here's the simple illustration:

> I grew up in the mountain town of Julian, California. I have always enjoyed walking the mountain trails and hiking in the woods. I have introduced my young children to exploring the forests.
>
> Let's assume I'm out hiking with my son Scottie. About two hours into our hike Scottie says, "Dad, I'm getting tired. And I'm thirsty." Right then we catch sight of what looks like a structure through the trees. As we approach, we see a picture-perfect cabin in the middle of the woods. The door has been left wide open.
>
> Scottie and I make our way into the cabin. To our amazement my favorite music is playing. Scottie's favorite Wii video game appears on the TV screen. We see a sign on the refrigerator that says, Favorite Drinks Inside. Scottie runs over, opens the refrigerator, and takes out a Sierra Mist. "Can you believe this, Dad?" he blurts out just before guzzling down his drink. This would all be just too amazing, right?
>
> What would you conclude by all this? Could these circumstances have come about by sheer chance? It would seem that someone had to have known we were

> coming and designed the cabin, the music, game, and drinks with us in mind.
>
> While this fantastic cabin discovery is just a story, the reality is that Planet Earth is even more amazing and fantastic. As with the cabin illustration, it is as if someone carefully prepared our world exactly with us in mind. Certain laws of nature rest within very narrowly defined parameters that allow humans to exist here.

You can click through for the strong force point, which is one of the oldest and best-recognized instances of cosmic fine-tuning. The thing to note is that fine-tuning doesn't just mean fine-tuning *for humans.* It means that unless these constants and quantities are set exactly right, then there will be no life *of any kind*.

The strong force example he introduces has to be fine-tuned in order to have chemical diversity – elements that include hydrogen, but also other elements other than hydrogen. You cannot make *any kind* of life out of only hydrogen. And you cannot make life without hydrogen. *Any kind* of life needs water. And water has to be made with hydrogen. So, in order to have life, you need some hydrogen, but you have to have more than just hydrogen because you need other elements, too. The production of hydrogen depends on the fine-tuning of the strong force.

Milwaukee police urge residents to arm themselves after law enforcement cuts

January 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A sheriff who released a radio ad urging Milwaukee-area residents to learn to handle firearms so they can defend themselves while waiting for police said Friday that law enforcement cutbacks have changed the way police can respond to crime.
>
> In the 30-second commercial, Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke Jr. says personal safety is no longer a spectator sport.
>
> “I need you in the game,” he says.
>
> “With officers laid off and furloughed, simply calling 911 and waiting is no longer your best option,” he adds. “You can beg for mercy from a violent criminal, hide under the bed, or you can fight back. … Consider taking a certified safety course in handling a firearm so you can defend yourself until we get there.”
>
> […]But he also said he wanted to call on residents to be law enforcement “partners.” He said he could either whine about budget cuts that forced him to lay off 48 deputies last year or he could get creative.
>
> “People are responsible to play a role in their own safety, with the help of law enforcement,” Clarke said. “I’m here to do my part, but we have fewer and fewer resources. We’re not omnipresent, and we have to stop giving people that impression.”

The mayor of Milwaukee, Tom Barrett, is against arming law-abiding citizens who want to prevent the redistribution of their wealth to criminals. He is a Democrat, so criminals are one of his main voting groups.

Obama violates his own stimulus law by refusing to release status reports

January 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports.

Excerpt:

> Have you heard much about President Obama's $787,000,000,000 economic "stimulus" (now estimated to cost $831,000,000,000) lately? In its last report, published in 2011, the president's own Council of Economic Advisors released an estimate showing that, for every $317,000 in "stimulus" spending that had by then gone out the door, only one job had been created or saved. Even in Washington, that's not considered good bang for the buck.
>
> Moreover, that was the fifth consecutive "stimulus" report that showed this number getting progressively worse.
>
> Alas, that was the last report we've seen. Never mind that Section 1513 of the "stimulus" legislation, which Obama spearheaded and signed into law, requires the executive branch to submit a new report every three months. It reads:
>
> "In consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and the Secretary of the Treasury, the Chairperson of the Council of Economic Advisers shall submit quarterly reports to the Committees on Appropriations of the Senate and House of Representatives that detail the impact of programs funded through covered funds on employment, estimated economic growth, and other key economic indicators."
>
> […]By now, [the Obama administration] was supposed to have released fourteen such reports. It has released only eight. The last one covered the period ending in June 2011. That's right — 2011.
>
> With only 58.6 percent of Americans currently employed — down 2.4 percent from the time of Obama's *first* inauguration — it's not surprising that the Obama administration doesn't really want to fulfill it legal responsibilities and release subsequent reports on its failed "stimulus." However, it hardly seems fair — to use one of Obama's favorite words — that the rich and (extremely) powerful think that they can choose whether or not to abide by the laws they spearhead and sign, while the rest of us are forced to obey them.

I'm not surprised by this, because we all know that Democrats are the biggest tax cheats ever. It's not surprising to me that they pass laws that they have no intention of following themselves, because they are hypocrites. The laws are meant to stop others from succeeding, but Democrats themselves always seem to be exempt. Just like the waivers that the big labor unions got from Obamacare. Poverty for thee, but not for me.\

Related posts

- 9 reasons why the economy is not moving “forward” under Barack Obama
- CBO: each job created by stimulus cost between $4.1 million and $540,000
- Green firm that got $1.46 billion in bailouts announces 2000 layoffs
- CBO report predicts 30% higher taxes and trillion-plus dollar deficit
- Did Obama’s $800 billion dollar stimulus program stimulate the economy?
- Obamanomics: $500,000 stimulus grant to grow trees creates 1.72 jobs
- Solar power firm goes bankrupt after receiving $535 million taxpayer dollars
- Public schools spend $130,000 of stimulus money on diversity training books
- Democrat economists: “stimulus” cost $278,000 per job
- Obama blasts private jet tax breaks created by his own stimulus
- Obama spent $80 billion dollars on green jobs so where are the jobs?

Christian homeschooling mom recommends teaching kids to think through policies

January 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a neat post from Lydia McGrew, Ph.D, a homeschooling mom.

Excerpt:

> As we Protestant conservatives view with great dismay what seems to us the hair-tearing foolishness of a new generation of young, "emergent" evangelicals spouting the platitudes of the left and getting their priorities all messed up, either abandoning or downplaying the pro-life movement, voting Democrat, and embracing left-wing economics, we need to think of something that cannot be said too often: What the left wants is not what is best for the poor, the weak, the little guy. In fact, we can sometimes even go farther: The left does not want what is best for the poor and the weak. Viz. the Obama administration's willingness to shut down Catholic hospitals, Catholic charities, and anyone else who won't toe the line on his HHS mandate. Viz. the Obama administration's cutting off the Catholic bishops' funding for anti-trafficking, because they wouldn't refer for abortions. Viz. the left's shut-down of adoption agencies that won't place children with homosexual couples. The list goes on and on.
>
> And there is more: The *actual economic policies* advocated by the left mean fewer jobs, higher prices, and small businesses pushed out by high regulatory costs, all of which is very bad for the people who need jobs the most. We're seeing this right now with the economic burden of Obamacare, but that's only one example. The *actual environmental policies* advocated by the left are radically anti-human and will result in grave economic harm both to our own country and, even more, to developing countries. I have just been reading a book I hope to write more about later, *Merchants of Despair* by Robert Zubrin. In it he chronicles case after case after case of leftist policies that have harmed the poorest of the poor in Third-World countries, from coercive population control to crackdowns forcing Third-World countries to eschew the advantages of more nutritious modified grains.
>
> When our young people are growing up we Christians and conservatives often teach them biblical principles, and that is very good. But we also need to teach them economic principles. We need to teach them that there is no free lunch. We need to have them read books like Zubrin's and like Thomas Sowell's *The Vision of the Anointed*. We need to talk through with them the ways that policies that sound oh-so-kind to "make things free" or "force employers to pay more" or "give health insurance to everyone" actually harm the people they are meant to help. We need to expose to them the viciously anti-human underside of the environmental movement, as well as its empirical fecklessness.

This one is a must-read! Please click through and read the whole thing, especially if you have Christian children.

Lydia's group blog "What's Wrong With the World?" is also good reading.

Great grandmother fires at mugger with legally-owned, legally-carried handgun

January 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> A 56-year-old great-grandmother from Detroit has a permit to carry her 9 mm handgun, and when she was assaulted on a city bus, she used it.
>
> Ramona Taylor Kamate, 56, boarded a bus Thursday at Northland Mallin Southfield, Mich., Click on Detroit reports. It was there she came face to face with her attacker.
>
> "He was saying 'you smell good, looks like you have money' and I said no I don't," Ms. Kamate said. "He grabbed my book bag and I grabbed it back and we started tussling, I bit him on his left hand. When he struck me in my head we started fighting."
>
> No one tried to help her.
>
> "It's sad you have all those men on the bus, and no one helped me," she added.
>
> The assailant ran off the bus with Ms. Kamate's purse, and the grandmother ran after him.
>
> "Somebody said he had a gun, and when he turned and faced me he went down, and when he went down I just pulled my 9 out and started shooting him," she said.
>
> Ms. Kamate said she fired 11 shots, but he still got away. Her purse was later found, minus the cash in her wallet.
>
> "At first, I felt remorse because I have grandchildren," she told Click on Detroit. "If my grandchildren are out here doing what these punks are doing, they need to get the same thing."

The local Fox channel, Fox 2 Detroit, has a video of the lady explaining what happened. She seems like a normal, old-fashioned law-abiding person who has had it with young punks. Her handgun is an H&K USP9 – an excellent handgun. I was surprised that she missed him with it.

Whenever we see stories like this it is important to ask what the Democrats would do with this woman after they banned all guns, which is what they want. Guns like Romona's H&K USP9 are banned in the far-left UK and effectively banned in Australia. In Canada, certain pistols can be owned, but not carried concealed by law-abiding citizens for self-defense. Criminals, of course, can and do own and carry guns of any type. Imagine what would happen if the Democrats got through gun bans similar to what other left-leaning countries have done? Without a gun, that woman would not be able to defend herself against a

younger, stronger attacker. All women should own firearms and have concealed-carry permits. But if it were up to Democrats, women like that great grandmother would always be the victims of stronger, more aggressive, men. And sometimes men don’t just want money alone.

Marine Captain explains her opposition to allowing women to serve in the infantry

January 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager mentioned this must-read article on his radio show on Monday. It is written by a female United States Marine named Katie Petronio, who has served in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. Marines are above average troops, with much stricter requirements to get in than the Army, Navy and Air Force.

In her article, Captain Petronio explains what serving in the infantry during combat operations did to her body.

Excerpt:

> As a young lieutenant, I fit the mold of a female who would have had a shot at completing IOC, and I am sure there was a time in my life where I would have volunteered to be an infantryman. I was a star ice hockey player at Bowdoin College, a small elite college in Maine, with a major in government and law. At 5 feet 3 inches I was squatting 200 pounds and benching 145 pounds when I graduated in 2007. I completed Officer Candidates School (OCS) ranked 4 of 52 candidates, graduated 48 of 261 from TBS, and finished second at MOS school. I also repeatedly scored far above average in all female-based physical fitness tests (for example, earning a 292 out of 300 on the Marine physical fitness test). Five years later, I am physically not the woman I once was and my views have greatly changed on the possibility of women having successful long careers while serving in the infantry. I can say from firsthand experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, and not just emotion, that we haven't even begun to analyze and comprehend the gender-specific medical issues and overall physical toll continuous combat operations will have on females.
>
> I was a motivated, resilient second lieutenant when I deployed to Iraq for 10 months, traveling across the Marine area of operations (AO) and participating in numerous combat operations. Yet, due to the excessive amount of time I spent in full combat load, I was diagnosed with a severe case of restless leg syndrome. My spine had compressed on nerves in my lower back causing neuropathy which compounded the symptoms of restless leg syndrome. While this injury has certainly not been enjoyable, Iraq was a pleasant experience compared to the experiences I endured during my deployment to Afghanistan. At the beginning of my tour in Helmand Province, I was physically capable of conducting combat operations for weeks at a time, remaining in my gear for days if necessary and averaging 16-hour days of engineering operations in the heart of Sangin, one of the most kinetic and challenging AOs in the country. There were numerous occasions where I was sent to a grid coordinate and told to build a PB from the ground up, serving not only as the mission commander but also the base

> commander until the occupants (infantry units) arrived 5 days later. In most of these situations, I had a sergeant as my assistant commander, and the remainder of my platoon consisted of young, motivated NCOs. I was the senior Marine making the final decisions on construction concerns, along with 24-hour base defense and leading 30 Marines at any given time. The physical strain of enduring combat operations and the stress of being responsible for the lives and well-being of such a young group in an extremely kinetic environment were compounded by lack of sleep, which ultimately took a physical toll on my body that I couldn't have foreseen.
>
> By the fifth month into the deployment, I had muscle atrophy in my thighs that was causing me to constantly trip and my legs to buckle with the slightest grade change. My agility during firefights and mobility on and off vehicles and perimeter walls was seriously hindering my response time and overall capability. It was evident that stress and muscular deterioration was affecting everyone regardless of gender; however, the rate of my deterioration was noticeably faster than that of male Marines and further compounded by gender-specific medical conditions. At the end of the 7-month deployment, and the construction of 18 PBs later, I had lost 17 pounds and was diagnosed with polycystic ovarian syndrome (which personally resulted in infertility, but is not a genetic trend in my family), which was brought on by the chemical and physical changes endured during deployment. Regardless of my deteriorating physical stature, I was extremely successful during both of my combat tours, serving beside my infantry brethren and gaining the respect of every unit I supported. Regardless, I can say with 100 percent assurance that despite my accomplishments, there is no way I could endure the physical demands of the infantrymen whom I worked beside as their combat load and constant deployment cycle would leave me facing medical separation long before the option of retirement. I understand that everyone is affected differently; however, I am confident that should the Marine Corps attempt to fully integrate women into the infantry, we as an institution are going to experience a colossal increase in crippling and career-ending medical conditions for females.

This article is a must-read, and it contains an audio interview and a video clip from CNN. Thank goodness that she spoke out about this, because right now it seems like the Democrats are passing a lot of legislation with a complete disregard to the long-term consequences and the incentives they are introducing. This issue is related to so many of the other issues being pushed by the left. They want to eradicate the differences between men and women – that's what they mean by feminism. Abortion is there way of making women equal to men, with respect to recreational sex. And pushing women into combat roles is their way of making women equal to men, with respect to war. No one is stopping to ask what women really want, or what men and children need from women.

Fideism vs the Bible: blind faith vs knowledge

January 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are basically two views of Christianity.

The first view of faith is the Biblical view of faith as active trust in propositions we know to be true, because we have reasons and evidence to believe those propositions. This view is not only rooted in the Bible, but it extends through Augustine and Aquinas to the present day. I have written about this view of faith before, and quoted many theologians in support of it. I also showed how people in the Bible use miracles as a sign in order to convince skeptics. For example, Peter appealing to the resurrection in Acts 2. The Bible teaches that faith is active trusting based on evidence.

The second view is blind faith. This view is nowhere in the Bible, and this view asserts that becoming a Christian is a leap-of-faith in the dark against all the evidence. This view not only minimizes evidence, but it actually opposes presenting evidence to unbelievers and skeptics in the way that the Bible teaches. This view is nowhere in the Bible, and it was not the method used by Jesus or his followers. It is an unBiblical way of viewing faith, but it is very popular in some circles of Christianity. It is also popular among atheists, because this is what many Christian leaders and pastors tell them that faith is. Why would these Christian leaders reject the plain teaching of the Scripture on faith, and adopt a man-made view of evangelism that opposes the use of evidence?

Well, I have an idea why, based on my experiences trying to get apologetics into the church and university. Suppose a pastor or campus group leader wants to avoid having to learn physics and cosmology, or the minimum facts case for the resurrection, or how to respond to apparently gratuitous suffering, or the problem of religious pluralism. Suppose he thinks that Christianity, if it is about anything, is about his feeling happy and comfortable with a minimum of effort and work. So, he diligently avoids reading apologetics, because learning evidence is hard work. He avoids watching debates on God's existence and the resurrection, because this is hard work. He avoids conversations with people who do study these things, and implies that there is something wrong with them for studying these things. He endeavors to conceal his laziness and ignorance and cowardice from his flock with much pious God-talk and fervent praise-hymn-singing.

Eventually, some member of his church asks him to go for lunch with an actual non-Christian family member. The pastor agrees and when he meets the unbelieving family member, he has nothing at all to say about typical challenges that unbelievers face. He has no knowledge of evolution, the problem of evil, the hiddenness of God, or the hallucination theory. He has never read a single atheist, and never read a single piece of evidence to refute them from Christian scholars. He lacks humility, refusing to admit that other Christian scholars may know more than he does because they have studied other areas. Needless to say, he fails to defend God's reputation to the non-Christian. What will he say to the members of his flock about his failure? How will he justify his obstinate refusal to do what everyone else in the Bible does when confronting non-believers?

Well, consider this review of a recent book that defends the Gospels and the historicity of the resurrection by one such fideist pastor.

He writes:

> There are, however, two significant shortcomings to the book.
>
> First, *Cold-Case Christianity* places far too much emphasis on the role of extrabiblical sources. No doubt there is a legitimate role for biblical archaeology and extrabiblical writing from antiquity. Christianity is, after all, a faith firmly rooted in human history. But there is a grave danger when truth is suspended because of an apparent lack of corroboration from extrabiblical sources. And Wallace, I'm afraid, wanders too close to this dark side of apologetics.
>
> All of chapter 12, for instance, is devoted to proving the Gospels have external corroborative evidence—"evidence that are independent of the Gospel documents yet verify the claims of the text" (183). Wallace then addresses the historicity of the pool of Bethesda and makes another worrying statement: "For many years, there was no evidence for such a place outside of John's Gospel. Because Christianity makes historical claims, archaeology ought to be a tool we can use to see *if these claims are, in fact, true*" (201-202, emphasis added).
>
> In other words, Wallace seems to suggest we cannot affirm the truth of the Gospel accounts without the stamp of approval from archaeology and other extrabiblical sources. Such reasoning is dangerous, not least because it cannot affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. But also, it places the final court of appeal in the realm of extrabiblical sources rather than of God's all-sufficient, all-powerful Word.

That is a textbook definition of fideism – that belief is somehow more pious and praiseworthy the less evidence we have. And the best way to have less evidence is to study nothing at all, but to just make a leap-of-faith in the dark. Of course, a leap-of-faith can land you anywhere – Islam, Mormonism. Presumably this pastor is like the Mormons who eschew all evidence and prefer to detect the truth of Mormonism by "the burning of the bosom" which happens when people read the all-sufficient, all-powerful Book of Mormon. His view of faith is identical to theirs, and 180 degrees opposed to the Bible. He has made his leap-of-faith, and that leap-of-faith is not accountable to arguments and evidence. His faith is private and personal, based on his own feelings. He considers it blasphemous to have to demonstrate what he believes to those who disagree with him. Where is this in the Bible? It's nowhere. But it is everywhere in anti-intellectual Christian circles.

There is a good response to this blind-faith pastor on Deeper Waters. Much less angry than my response.

Excerpt:

> The dark side of apologetics? Did I somehow step into a Star Wars universe?

> Yes. How horrible to show that the Bible is backed up by sources outside of it. How terrible to show that these events did not happen in a vacuum. Thankfully, no one in the Bible took this approach.
>
> Except for the fact that when the gospel was being preached, there were no gospels per se and there were no epistles. Paul told Agrippa that the events done weren't done in a corner. In other words, investigate the claims for yourself! The early testimony was eyewitness testimony. Sources like Tacitus and others show the eyewitnesses were right! This was not done in a corner! This was done out in the open! Archaeology helps us confirm the biblical writings and shows that unlike the pagan myths, these events were rooted in a place and time. Is there some danger that our faith will be destroyed by outside sources?
>
> It really becomes a fideistic approach. If your worldview is true, you should have no problem putting it to the strictest scrutiny. If it is not, then you will have a problem. No Christian should fear further research into what they believe. No Christian should have a problem with extra-biblical sources. Now I do agree there is a problem with stating that EVERYTHING must be backed extra-biblically. I think this is a prejudice we too often have where nothing in the Bible can be considered historical unless it's verified somewhere else. A gospel account alone could count as a historical claim itself that can be investigated, and indeed is in NT scholarship, but where we can get extra-biblical evidence, I'm all for it.
>
> […]Christianity is a faith that is rooted in evidences so we should be able to use evidences to demonstrate it. I have often been told by those of the presuppositional bent that the approach is used all the time in the Bible. The problem is I can't find one. I get told passages like "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Yes. It is. Wisdom refers to godly living. It doesn't refer to confirming the gospel to be true. When I look at the apostles in every case, I see them pointing to evidences.

I think that Christians are much better off following the example of authentic Christian pastors like R.C. Sproul, who, in a conference on evangelism, invited Dr. Stephen C. Meyer to present multiple lines of evidence from mainstream science to establish the existence of God. The only reason not to take this approach is laziness, which leads to ignorance, which leads to cowardice. And failure. It is pastors like Pastor Bungle above who are responsible for the great falling away from Christianity that we are seeing when we look at young people. Pastors who pride themselves in refusing to connecting the Bible to the real world, with evidence and with policy analysis, are causing young people to abandon the faith.

Obama’s fiscal cliff deal leaves us on a path to 200% debt to GDP

January 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Hill.

Excerpt:

> The nation’s long-term fiscal outlook hasn’t significantly improved following the recent agreement between Congress and the White House over tax and spending issues, according to a new analysis.
>
> The “fiscal cliff” deal, combined with the debt-limit agreement of August 2011, only slightly delays the United States reaching debt-to-gross domestic product levels that would damage the economy and risk another fiscal crisis, according to a **report** from the Peter G. Peterson Foundation released on Tuesday.
>
> The agreement “may have prevented the immediate threats that the fiscal cliff posed to our fragile economic recovery, but we haven’t remotely fixed the nation’s debt problem,” said Michael A. Peterson, president and COO of the Peterson Foundation.
>
> “The primary goal of any sustainable fiscal policy is to stabilize the debt as a share of the economy and put it on a downward path, and yet our nation is still heading toward debt levels of 200 percent of GDP and beyond,” he said.
>
> **The report concludes that the recent round of deficit-reduction measures won’t make major improvements because they fail to address most of the major contributors to the debt and deficit, including rapidly rising healthcare costs.**
>
> […]At a House Ways and Means Committee hearing last week, lawmakers and budget experts agreed that rising healthcare costs, such as Medicare, must be addressed this year as part of efforts to overhaul the tax code and entitlement programs.
>
> “Until spending in those areas is reduced, tax revenues are increased, or policymakers implement a combination of both, the United States will continue to have a severe long-term debt problem,” the report said.
>
> “Reforms should be implemented gradually, and fiscal improvements must be achieved before our debt level and interest payments are so high that sudden or more draconian reforms are required to avert a fiscal crisis.”
>
> The latest deal that stopped income tax increases for those making $400,000 a year or less may have only improved the burgeoning debt situation by a year.
>
> **Scheduled spending cuts from the 2011 budget deal, combined with the fiscal cliff agreement, put the debt on track to reach 200 percent of GDP by 2040, five years later than was projected prior to the passage of the**

> **two deals.**
>
> **The recent deficit-reduction measure gave the nation an additional year before hitting that 200 percent threshold, the report showed.**

I saw an interesting interview featuring Captain Capitalism in the Washington Times. He thinks that the debt spiral is irreversible.

Excerpt:

> **DDG:** *What was your take on the "solution" we saw earlier this month to the so-called fiscal cliff crisis?*
>
> **Clarey:** Band-Aid put on a cut aorta.
>
> **DDG:** *My concern is that inflation is distorting all levels of American society. For example, as prices skyrocket from monetary dilation at the Fed, we have this effect where as Rose Wilder Lane says, everything becomes increasingly more expensive and government starts creating laws and fines just for the purpose of revenue generation. So the formation of a police state and this loss of freedoms is in large part a result of government wanting to get more and more revenues to finance outlays that are being dilated as a result of the inflation they themselves are creating. What's your take on this?*
>
> **Clarey:** I don't know if it would be at the police state yet where the federal government comes in and confiscates wealth, as much as it is something much more clandestine. The government likes inflation in that it increases asset prices. Thus when somebody sells an asset – land, stocks, bonds, et cetera – they have to pay a capital gains tax.
>
> Forget whether there was an actual real rate of return for the investor, the government gets to tax the real capital gains and the inflationary capital gains. Inflation also erodes the value of the federal debt, forcing the costs on US treasury holders. However, unless things change, the government will be forced [to cope with] with a simplified problem: Does it inflate its way out of its debts or does it confiscate wealth to pay for it?
>
> **I can't read Paul Krugman and Barack Obama's minds – if any exist – but I believe they will opt to go the inflationary route to solve the country's debt problems. If they went the wealth-confiscation route, that would mean nationalizing people's IRAs, 401(k)s and brokerage accounts much like they did in Argentina and Bulgaria. I fear however, because of their political ideology they have no problems doing both.**

I am expecting inflation to continue in the near term, followed by seizing retirement accounts if the Democrats take back the House in 2014. The amnesty of 12 million illegal immigrants should give them that. So, if you have a plan to escape this, you'd better execute it in the two years. The clock is ticking.

Craig Hazen explains why Christianity is not like other religions

January 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A 28-minute lecture delivered at Biola University.

Topics:

- Christianity is different from other religions for several reasons
- Christianity is testable using objective evidence
- you can offer objective evidence for and against it
- compare that to Zen Buddhism, for example, which is about subjective experiences
- Buddhism is subjective, you can't test it objectively
- Christianity can be tested using the historical method
- if Jesus did not rise from the dead, Christianity is false
- Christianity is set up for inquiry
- You can know whether the resurrection happened using historical methods
- "faith" in Christianity is not belief without arguments and evidence
- the Bible presents it's claims about God as testable and public

This was very fun to watch.

UPDATE: Here's a related post at the Simpson blog.

Obamacare’s new tax on medical devices trickles down to hospitals and patients

January 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Small medical-device makers have little choice but to pass their new 2.3% excise tax— meant to pay for the health law —on to hospitals and other customers, said the chief executive of one manufacturer that began surcharging hospitals for its wares on Jan. 1.
>
> “The government thinks we’re just going to absorb these costs, but for a company like us, it’s a lot of money,” said Kevin Rudolph, the chief executive of the family-run respiratory valve maker, Hans Rudolph Inc. Instead, he said, device makers will be raising prices or adding surcharges to bills— just like other companies that faced excise taxes in the past.
>
> In a December letter to several thousand hospital customers, Mr. Rudolph told hospitals his company would add a new line item for the tax beginning on Jan. 1. Hospitals and group-purchasing organizations began protesting last week as similar warnings from other device makers began piling up, the Wall Street Journal reported Saturday.
>
> The tax is meant to raise $30 billion to help cover the health law. The device industry has lobbied to repeal the tax, which applies to sales, rather than profits. The recent clashes between hospitals and device makers underscores the breadth of the tax: It applies to companies that make big ticket items such as pacemakers and hip implants, as well as smaller firms selling surgical tools or making the plastic tubes, clips and valves that are ubiquitous in hospitals and nursing homes.
>
> Mr. Rudolph said his firm had opted to tell hospitals upfront they’d be charged for the tax, rather than sneaking it into price increases. “I think it’s better for the customer to know what’s going on, even if they don’t like it,” he said Monday.
>
> Hans Rudolph Inc. typically makes a 4% to 6% profit on about $5 million to $6 million in annual sales, Mr. Rudolph said. The 53-year-old Shawnee, Kan., company was founded by Mr. Rudolph’s father, and grandfather, Hans. The two elder Rudolphs built the company out of a Kansas City, Mo., basement, where Hans devised several respiratory devices. Key products still include spirometry components, for the common breath test in which patients are asked to exhale into plastic tubes.
>
> Though the company has done well, Mr. Rudolph said, it can’t afford the tax. “We just like people to understand that the government is imposing this tax on us, so

> the cost of medical devices is going up," he said.

I think that the lesson to learn here is that big government socialism doesn't reduce the cost of anything by raising taxes on job creators. Those anti-business taxes just get passed onto consumers. In some cases, the business moves abroad or at least expands abroad, instead of staying in high tax environments. There was a plan put forward by the Republicans to reduce the costs of health care by introducing free market forces of choice and competition. Free market forces reduce the costs of all our other consumer goods, while improving the quality. Just think of computers and cell phones that are always getting better for less money. But Americans rejected that plan for Obama's big government plan. We thought we would escape the costs of health care by taxing and regulating the providers of health care. But we were wrong. In the end, we'll pay for it.

Related posts

- Medical premiums will continue to rise as Obamacare is implemented
- Christian business Hobby Lobby defies Obamacare abortion mandate
- When health insurance is forced to cover more, insurance premiums go up
- Obamacare in action: Denny's to charge 5% surcharge and cut employee hours
- Papa John pizza CEO: cuts to employee hours likely, because of Obamacare
- A primer on the fiscal cliff facing us in January 2013: tax hikes and Obamacare
- Companies announce layoffs in the wake of Obama's re-election
- Sally Pipes: how Obamacare causes doctors to quit practicing medicine
- Why do some people oppose Obamacare? What does Obamacare do?
- The full list of Obamacare tax hikes in order from largest to smallest
- California: Obamacare exchanges will raise health insurance premiums up to 25%
- Survey: doctors prefer Romney over Obama
- Health insurance premiums up $3,000 since Obama was elected
- Report: Obamacare regulations will cost taxpayers and businesses $1.8 trillion
- Obamacare subsidizes the risky behaviors of sexually active women
- Obamacare begins forcing states to cap and cut prescription drug benefits
- Department of Justice threatens to seize business from Catholics
- CBO: 20 million Americans could lose employer-provided health coverage under Obamacare
- A simple introduction to Obamacare
- 75% of the costs of Obamacare will be paid by those making $120,000 or less
- CBO: Obamacare cost is $1760 billion, not $940 billion that Obama claimed
- CBO report: four million will lose employer health care due to Obamacare
- Democrat Jim Cramer explains how Obamacare forces businesses to outsource

What causes outsourcing, offshoring and tax avoidance? Greedy Democrat tax policies

January 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have to link to this Fox News editorial, because they linked to my blog, and because it features a sensible libertarian Wayne Allyn Root, whom I blogged about before.

Excerpt:

> The signs are everywhere that a tax rebellion has begun.
>
> The latest U.S. Census showed us that the states with low taxes enjoyed the fastest population growth- states like Nevada, Texas, Florida, and Arizona.
>
> Not surprisingly, the states losing the most population are all high tax states like California, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, and of course Obama's Illinois.
>
> These states that Americans are running from are all governed just like Obama wants to govern the entire country. Soon these same Americans running away from California, New York and Illinois will instead be running away from America.
>
> Ask the co-founder of Facebook, who recently renounced his citizenship and left for Singapore (where the capital gains taxes are zero).
>
> Ask big-time Democratic contributor Denise Rich, who recently renounced her citizenship to leave for Austria.
>
> The trickle is turning into a torrent. Record numbers of wealthy Americans are giving up their citizenship- eight times more than before Obama became president.
>
> Of course we already know that only one year after the UK imposed a "Millionaires Tax" two thirds of the millionaires in England disappeared off the tax rolls.
>
> High taxes have worked well in England…they are about to endure an unheard of in history triple dip recession…the third recession in 5 years. Folks that's called a Great Depression.
>
> We already know that millionaires are escaping France at a record pace because of high tax rates imposed by the new Obama-clone Socialist President of France. Even leftist actors like Gerard Depardieu have been forced to abandon the country they love.
>
> The famous actor isn't alone. Requests by citizens to leave France are up by 500%.
>
> But then came the coup de grace. Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy has just announced he is leaving France because of taxes.
>
> High taxes are even chasing away the presidents of their own countries!

> High taxes work great in France. Their Labor Minister announced just this week that France is “totally bankrupt.” His words.

I removed all the links from the excerpt except the link to me. But you can see all the links on the original Fox News version of the article.

I think that there is this attitude on the left that the hardest-working people are like sitting pigeons. That they can be financially raped over and over by rhetoricians who preen themselves in the public eye, while demonizing their victims. It doesn’t go on forever. Eventually people who produce scale back their efforts, or just move somewhere else. Why work for other people who hate you? Charity is one thing, but slavery is something else entirely. Companies also respond to incentives, and shift to greener pastures where the socialists are not in charge.

New study: couples who divide housework on traditional sex roles have a lot more sex

January 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the press release from Agence France Presse. (H/T Stuart Schneiderman)

Excerpt:

> The road to hell is paved with good intentions, as they say: the more housework married men do, the less sex they have, according to a new study published Wednesday.
>
> **Husbands who spend more time doing traditionally female chores — such as cooking, cleaning, and shopping — reported having less sex than those who do more masculine tasks, said the study in the American Sociological Review.**
>
> "Our findings suggest the importance of socialized gender roles for sexual frequency in heterosexual marriage," said lead author Sabino Kornrich, of the Center for Advanced Studies at the Juan March Institute in Madrid.
>
> "Couples in which men participate more in housework typically done by women report having sex less frequently. Similarly, couples in which men participate more in traditionally masculine tasks — such as yard work, paying bills, and auto maintenance — report higher sexual frequency."
>
> His study, "Egalitarianism, Housework, and Sexual Frequency in Marriage," looks at straight married couples in the United States, and was based on data from the National Survey of Families and Households.
>
> […]"The results suggest the existence of a gendered set of sexual scripts, in which the traditional performance and display of gender is important for creation of sexual desire and performance of sexual activity," Kornrich said.

Prior to that study, there was this Norwegian study.

Excerpt:

> Couples who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a Norwegian study sure to get tongues wagging has shown.
>
> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled Equality in the Home, said.
>
> […]"Maybe it's sometimes seen as a good thing to have very clear roles with lots of clarity … where one person is not stepping on the other's toes," Mr Hansen

> suggested.
>
> “There could be less quarrels, since you can easily get into squabbles if both have the same roles and one has the feeling that the other is not pulling his or her own weight,” he added.

Men, if you want to avoid losing everything by marrying the wrong woman and getting a divorce, then pay attention to these studies and choose wisely. Find out what you are designed to do in a marriage, and what women are designed to do. Train to do your jobs well, and pick a woman who not only does her jobs, but wants you to do yours. And respects you for doing your jobs.

Live streaming: William Lane Craig vs atheist Alex Rosenberg this Friday at Purdue University

January 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: I have posted a FULL SUMMARY and a link to the MP3 AUDIO of the Craig/Rosenberg debate.

The information about how to get live-streaming for the debate is available at the Biola web site.

Details about the debate:

> **Debate: Alex Rosenberg vs. William Lane Craig**
>
> February 1, 2013 — 7:00-9:30 pm EST LIVE — Purdue University
>
> And: 7:00-9:30 pm PST West Coast Delayed Feed
>
> **Cost:** FREE
>
> **Location:** Elliot Hall of Music
> Purdue University
> West Lafayette, IN

Here's some of what Biola sent me in an e-mail after I registered:

> **VIEWING OPTIONS**
>
> In addition to the live debate at 7:00 pm EST we will be re-airing the debate at 7:00 pm PST for those on the West Coast. The debate will also be available on-demand after 2 pm EST on Saturday, February 2. Please visit http://live.biola.edu/faq/ for more details on viewing options.
>
> **VIEWING LOCATIONS**
>
> Many groups are hosting viewings that are open to the public. Check out the full list here: http://live.biola.edu/locations/ and join people in your community to watch the debate and dialogue. If you are interested in a hosting a public viewing please contact us at conference.coordinator@biola.edu to have your location added!
>
> **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SCREENING AT BIOLA UNIVERSITY**
>
> Are you near Biola? The debate may be happening in freezing Indiana, but we'll be hosting a viewing in Sutherland Auditorium on the Biola campus at 7:00 pm PST. This event is FREE. For more information and to RSVP please visit www.apologeticsevents.com.
>
> **FAQ & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**
>
> Please test your equipment and connection at our test site: http://live.biola.edu/faq/ If you run into any issues, please contact us before

> the event so we can help resolve them with you. Contact us at conference.coordinator@biola.edu.
>
> **HOW TO VIEW THE DEBATE**
>
> After you've tested your equipment and gathered round your friends and family, we recommend logging onto the debate website at least 20 minutes before the event begins. You will connect to www.biola.edu/debate (the same place you registered!) and be directed to log in. You will use the same email address you provided when registering. Remember: registration is required so if you have friends in other cities watching as well remind them to register now at www.biola.edu/debate.

I thought this snip from Wikipedia was also interesting:

> During the 2006 Duke University lacrosse case, he was one of the so-called Group of 88 professors who, shortly after members of the university's lacrosse team were accused of rape, signed a letter calling attention to problems with race relations at Duke and thanking protesters for "making a collective noise" on "what happened to this young woman." After a year-long ordeal that is now widely viewed as one of the most conspicuous miscarriages of justice by a prosecutor in modern American history, the lacrosse players were found innocent of the rape charges. The so-called "Group of 88" letter is regarded by some conservatives as an example of unfair prejudgment.

You can read something that Alex Rosenberg wrote about his naturalistic worldview in the left-wing New York Times.

Chuck Hagel hammered for pro-Iran, anti-Israel statements

February 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(Video H/T American Power Blog)

Fox News reports on the Senate hearings to confirm Chuck Hagel as Secretary of Defense.

Excerpt:

> Defense secretary nominee Chuck Hagel endured a barrage of criticism Thursday during his all-day confirmation hearing on Capitol Hill, challenged repeatedly by Republican lawmakers about his past positions on Israel, Iran, Iraq and other issues he'd be sure to confront at the helm of the Pentagon.
>
> The former Nebraska Republican senator was compelled under questioning to walk back a series of past statements, including one in which he complained about the "Jewish lobby." He had several sparring partners throughout the day, but was questioned perhaps most aggressively by fellow Vietnam War veteran Sen. John McCain and freshman Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, both Republicans.
>
> Hagel was caught by surprise when Cruz played two tapes from appearances on Al Jazeera — one of which showed him not challenging a caller who accused Israel of war crimes, another in which he appeared to agree with the assertion that America is "the world's bully."
>
> Of the Israel interview, Cruz said: "The caller suggests that the nation of Israel has committed war crimes, and your response to that was not to dispute that characterization." He then asked Hagel directly whether he thinks Israel has committed war crimes.
>
> "No, I do not," Hagel said, while saying he wanted to see the "full context" of the interview.
>
> Cruz called the war-crimes suggestion "particularly offensive given that the Jewish people suffered under the most horrific war crimes in the Holocaust."
>
> "I would also suggest," he continued, "that for … a prospective secretary of Defense not to take issue with that claim is highly troubling."
>
> Cruz then played the tape of Hagel being asked about the perception and "reality" that America is the world's bully. Hagel could be heard calling the point a "good one."
>
> Cruz said the answer is "not the conduct one would expect of a secretary of Defense."

At other times in the hearings, Hagel was also asked about his previous opposition to sanctions against Iran, his desire to let Iran have nuclear weapons and then "contain"

them, and his support for eliminating nuclear arms (note that ours are the only ones he could eliminate). In short, the man is a naive left-wing radical who makes Neville Chamberlain look like George S. Patton. Why would anyone vote for him to have control of our military?

Armed guard stops school shooting in Atlanta

February 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A report from The Blaze.

Excerpt:

> A student opened fire at his middle school Thursday afternoon, wounding a 14-year-old in the neck before an armed officer working at the school was able to get the gun away, police said.
>
> […]The armed resource officer who took the gun away was off-duty and at the school, but police didn't release details on him or whether he is regularly at Price. Since 20 children and six adults were shot to death at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut in December, calls for armed officers in every school have resonated across the country.

Although it's very clear what actually works to prevent/contain school shootings, you won't hear the media or the Democrats (but I repeat myself) calling for what works.

In fact, Obama's daughters go to a school with 11 armed security guards. When Obama says that guns don't make anyone safer, he is a liar. And he knows he is lying, because in real life, he does the complete opposite of what he reads off the teleprompter in speeches.

Here's another case from just yesterday where guns were used to stop a crime.

> A home invasion suspect was arrested at a hospital after a mother shot him during the crime at a Montgomery County home, deputies said Wednesday.
>
> Erin, who asked to be identified only by her first name, told Local 2 she was putting her 6-year-old son to bed when she heard a loud noise coming from her bedroom on Mink Lake Drive Friday night…
>
> Erin said she turned around and saw three masked men, pointing a gun right at her…
>
> "Somehow the way it happened, as they were going down the hallway, I told them sometimes I keep money under the mattress, which is not true. But I needed to get to where my gun was," she said.
>
> The men followed her to her bedroom.
>
> "I was pretending to move the mattress. It's really heavy, so I was trying to move their attention to the mattress because they wouldn't take their eyes off of me. I needed a split second for them to take their eyes off of me. I said, 'It might be under here.' They started talking to each other in Spanish and then a roll of duct tape came out," said Erin…
>
> "They all turned around and looked. I grabbed my gun, cocked it, I turned and shot him right in the stomach," said Erin.

But have no fear, the Department of Homeland Security has a better idea than armed guards.

Look:

> The federal government recommends you bring scissors to a gunfight.
>
> The Department of Homeland Security offers Americans tips on how to survive an attack by an “active shooter,” including “throw[ing] items” and grabbing a pair of scissors.
>
> DHS recommends Americans either “evacuate” the building or “hide out” depending on the situation, according to a 2008 handbook and “pocket card.”
>
> But the third option, “take action,” is considered a “last resort” by the government.
>
> One can “attempt to incapacitate the shooter” by “act[ing] with physical aggression and throw[ing] items at the active shooter,” suggests DHS.
>
> A web video released by DHS in January says, “you might consider trying to overpower the shooter” as a last resort, “with whatever means are available.”
>
> The clip shows an office worker grabbing a pair of scissors for the purpose of “trying to overpower the shooter.”

Surprise! People on the left care as much about born children as they do about unborn children. That’s the truth. That’s the truth.

Unemployment rate rises: 169,000 more people not in labor force

February 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, I hope everyone remembers about the William Lane Craig vs Alex Rosenberg debate tonight at Purdue University. There is live-streaming available, details here.

And now, three scary stories from CNS News.

First, this one about the recent depressing jobs report.

Excerpt:

> The number of Americans not in the labor force grew by 169,000 in January, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' latest jobs report.
>
> BLS labels people who are unemployed and no longer looking for work as "not in the labor force," including people who have retired on schedule, taken early retirement, or simply given up looking for work. There were 89 million of them last month.
>
> […]The nation's unemployment rate increased a tenth of a point in January, rising to 7.9 percent from 7.8 percent, a level the Labor Department described as "essentially unchanged."

Second, this one about Obamacare health care plans.

Excerpt:

> In a final regulation issued Wednesday, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) assumed that under Obamacare the cheapest health insurance plan available in 2016 for a family will cost $20,000 for the year.
>
> Under Obamacare, Americans will be required to buy health insurance or pay a penalty to the IRS.
>
> The IRS's assumption that the cheapest plan for a family will cost $20,000 per year is found in examples the IRS gives to help people understand how to calculate the penalty they will need to pay the government if they do not buy a mandated health plan.
>
> The examples point to families of four and families of five, both of which the IRS expects in its assumptions to pay a minimum of $20,000 per year for a bronze plan.

And finally, this one about Obamacare's effect on job creators, aka "the rich" who need to "pay their fair share".

Excerpt:

> Sixty-one percent of U.S. small business owners said they were "worried about

> the potential cost of healthcare" and 56 percent said they were "worried about new government regulations," according to the Wells Fargo/Gallup small business index released on Jan. 31, which also showed that 30 percent of small business owners are not hiring and fear going out of business within a year.
>
> "At the bottom of the list, but still at a surprisingly high level, 30% of owners say they are not hiring because they are worried they may no longer be in business in 12 months," according to Gallup's index summary. "This is up from 24% who had the same worry in January 2012."
>
> […]Gallup said the reasons given for less hiring, such as healthcare and government regulations, are "troublesome" and have negative implications for the U.S. economy.

Bad news! I remember the good old days of the Bush administration, when we had lower taxes, a 4.4% unemployment rate, and a $160 billion dollar budget deficit. Maybe watching tonight's debate with WLC and this Duke University naturalist tonight will cheer me up.

Summary and audio: William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist?

February 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below, please find my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University. The debate was streamed over the Internet live.

Brian Auten has posted the MP3 audio of the debate at Apologetics 315. Everybody bookmark that web site for the fastest access to debate audio. J.W. Wartick has a review of the debate here. Tom Gilson has a review of the debate here. Here's another review of the debate from Carson Witnauer.

The debaters

William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.
>
> Craig's CV is here.
>
> Craig's list of publications is here.

Alex Rosenberg:

> I joined the Duke faculty in 2000. Previously I was professor of philosophy at Dalhouse University in Canada, Syracuse University, University of California, Riverside and at the University of Georgia, in the US. I have also been a visiting professor and/or fellow of the Center for Philosophy of Science at the University of Minnesota, as well as the University of California, Santa Cruz, Oxford University (Balliol College) and the Research School of Social Science of the Australian

> National University. Here at Duke, I am co-director of the Center for Philosophy of Biology, along with Robert Brandon, Dan McShea and Fred Nijhout.
>
> In addition I am the director of the AB Duke Scholarship Program and its associated summer Duke in Oxford Program at New College. Along with Professor Martha Reeves of the Sociology Department I co-direct Duke's summer program on Globalization in Geneva. Check the links below for more information on these programs.
>
> My interests focus on problems in metaphysics, mainly surrounding causality, the philosophy of social sciences, especially economics, and most of all, the philosophy of biology, in particular the relationship between molecular, functional and evolutionary biology.

Below is the summary from tonight (February 1st, 2013).

If you like the summary below, please friend me on Facebook and/or follow me on Twitter.

Summary of the debate

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry

- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates
- You didn't need to come out on this cold night
- Craig's arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn't listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don't require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that "every effect requires a cause"
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can't see
- There are things we can't see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato's dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don't require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig's three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism

5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said. Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means

everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

New study: divorcing after kids turn seven causes them to underform at school

February 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me news of this interesting study from Medical Daily.

Excerpt:

> Kids whose parents divorce after they turn seven are significantly more likely to suffer a drop in performance at school, a UK government sponsored study has revealed.
>
> The latest research sponsored by the UK education department linked exposure to parental divorce or constant arguing among parents after the age of seven to "lower educational attainment" in secondary or high school, according to The Telegraph.
>
> The study conducted by the Childhood Wellbeing Research Center found that a variety of family factors affected children's education performance and behavior.
>
> Researchers also found that while children who have several brothers and sisters perform worse at school, they are not more likely to be poorly behaved.
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>
> Researchers also found that while children who have several brothers and sisters perform worse at school, they are not more likely to be poorly behaved.

> Children who watch a lot of television were also found to have weaker verbal skulls, whereas children who have strict parents who enforce rules at home are more likely to have better verbal skills and have better scores on school tests. However, researchers noted that frequent punishment at home was linked to worse test scores and behavior at school.
>
> Researchers found that parental skills were crucial in determining a child's school performance and mothers and fathers could actively help to boost their children's verbal skills by reading with them.
>
> The good news is that children with the risk factors found in the report could benefit from extra help at school to "realize their potential".
>
> Researchers analyzed up to 40 factors on thousands of children and looked at how traumatic events like divorce or death and the family affected results in tests at the age of 14 and GCSEs (subject tests UK students need take to pass

> high school) at 16 and children's behavior and well-being, based on parental questionnaires.
>
> Researchers found that exposure to parental divorce after the age of seven was associated with worse behavior and worse GCSE test results. Based on the findings, researchers suggest that younger children may not be as affected as older kids because they are less able to understand the implications of divorce. Experts noted that the factors which affect test results at the age of seven are also likely to affect achievement later on in the child's educational career.
>
> "These findings highlight the continuing significance of family separation, conflict and dissolution on the educational attainment and wellbeing outcomes of young adolescents," researchers wrote in the study, according to Daily Mail.
>
> The study found that parenting skills, poverty and illness or disability had the most impact on a child's success in school.

Social conservatives and Christians agree that it is important for us to minimize divorce, because of the negative impact that it has on children. We need to think through what policies make it easier and more profitable for people to get divorced, and then oppose those policies. Policies like no-fault divorce. We need to promote policies that discourage divorce, like tax incentives for marriage and mandatory shared-parenting laws. We know what is good. Now we who believe in the good have to advocate for laws and policies that promote the good. Children are depending on us to get informed and persuasive on these issues.

This study was also reported on in the UK Telegraph.

Video: William Lane Craig debates Peter Millican on the existence of God

February 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The audio of the debate can be downloaded from Apologetics 315.

Description:

> Christian philosopher William Lane Craig debates atheist Peter Millican on the topic: *Does God Exist?*The debate was organised by the Philosophy Society at Birmingham University on October 21, 2011 for the Reasonable Faith tour. The Tour was co sponsored by UCCF, Damaris and Premier Christian Radio (audio via their Unbelievable podcast). Want to hear every audio debate by William Lane Craig? Check out the audio debate feed here.
>
> Full Debate MP3 Audio here. *(2hr 23min)*

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any errors. The debate audio has 32 minutes of Q&A.

And if you like my summary, check out another summary by J.W. Wartick.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It’s not just that the settings are unlikely, it’s that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a “herd morality” that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved “herd morality”. However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a

God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It's possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It's also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the

universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in

the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the

resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Wall Street Journal covers the demographic crisis in America

February 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this socially conservative article in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> The nation's falling fertility rate underlies many of our most difficult problems. Once a country's fertility rate falls consistently below replacement, its age profile begins to shift. You get more old people than young people. And eventually, as the bloated cohort of old people dies off, population begins to contract. This dual problem—a population that is disproportionately old and shrinking overall—has enormous economic, political and cultural consequences.
>
> […]Low-fertility societies don't innovate because their incentives for consumption tilt overwhelmingly toward health care. They don't invest aggressively because, with the average age skewing higher, capital shifts to preserving and extending life and then begins drawing down. They cannot sustain social-security programs because they don't have enough workers to pay for the retirees. They cannot project power because they lack the money to pay for defense and the military-age manpower to serve in their armed forces.
>
> […]If you want to see what happens to a country once it hurls itself off the demographic cliff, look at Japan, with a fertility rate of 1.3. In the 1980s, everyone assumed the Japanese were on a path to owning the world. But the country's robust economic facade concealed a crumbling demographic structure.
>
> The Japanese fertility rate began dipping beneath the replacement rate in 1960 for a number of complicated reasons (including a postwar push by the West to lower Japan's fertility rate, the soaring cost of having children and an overall decline in the marriage rate). By the 1980s, it was already clear that the country would eventually undergo a population contraction. In 1984, demographer Naohiro Ogawa warned that, "Owing to a decrease in the growth rate of the labor force…Japan's economy is likely to slow down." He predicted annual growth rates of 1% or even 0% in the first quarter of the 2000s.
>
> From 1950 to 1973, Japan's total-factor productivity—a good measure of economic dynamism—increased by an average of 5.4% per year. From 1990 to 2006, it increased by just 0.63% per year. Since 1991, Japan's rate of GDP growth has exceeded 2.5% in only four years; its annual rate of growth has averaged 1.03%.
>
> Because of its dismal fertility rate, Japan's population peaked in 2008; it has already shrunk by a million since then. Last year, for the first time, the Japanese bought more adult diapers than diapers for babies, and more than half the

> country was categorized as “depopulated marginal land.” At the current fertility rate, by 2100 Japan’s population will be less than half what it is now.

If the Wintery Knight blog stands for anything it stands for 1) defending Christianity with reasons and evidence and 2) promoting fusionism, which is the view that social conservatives and fiscal conservatives are allies who need to understand each other’s views so that we can work together. Well, fiscal conservatives, now you know that social conservative issues are your problem. Conservativism is a seamless garment.

William Lane Craig debates Peter Atkins: Does God Exist?

February 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that Apologetics 315 posted the video of a debate from the Reasonable Faith speaking tour in the UK:

This is a must-see debate. You will love this debate. LOVE IT. I LOVED THIS DEBATE.

Details:

> On Wednesday 26th October 2011 William Lane Craig debated Peter Atkins on the topic: *Does God Exist?* This debate took place at the University of Manchester as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig. The debate was chaired by Christopher Whitehead, Head of Chemistry School at the University. Post-debate discussion was moderated by Peter S Williams, Philosopher in Residence at the Damaris Trust, UK.

Dr. William Lane Craig:

> **William Lane Craig** (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich in 1984.

Dr. Peter Atkins:

> **Peter William Atkins** (born 10 August 1940) is a British chemist and former Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Lincoln College. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.
>
> Atkins studied chemistry at the University of Leicester, obtaining a bachelor's

> degree in chemistry, and – in 1964 – a PhD for research into electron spin resonance spectroscopy, and other aspects of theoretical chemistry. Atkins then took a postdoctoral position at the UCLA as aHarkness Fellow of the Commonwealth fund. He returned to Oxford in 1965 as fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, and lecturer in physical chemistry (later, professor of physical chemistry).

You can get the audio of the debate here, along with links to their previous debate from 1998. This debate is accessible and understandable to novice-level Christians.

I am happy when debates like this come out. I have friends who are Christians who doubt the importance of apologetics in evangelism, because they don't think that apologists can prove anything or win arguments. I have friends who are skeptical of using arguments that assume a 14-billion year old universe, because they think that the Big Bang is compatible with atheism (!). I have friends who think that philosophical arguments have no persuasive force. I have friends who think that nothing can be proven from history, beyond a reasonable doubt. I have co-workers who ask me whether anyone wins these debates. I think that this debate answers all of those questions.

This debate clearly shows why Christians should not shy away from studying science, philosophy and history. We will not discover anything that harms Christian theism by thinking logically and by looking at the evidence. To the contrary, it is the atheist who makes war on the progress of science, and who is forced to resist the clear experimental evidence, and to resort to baseless speculations and blind faith. If you want to see a good debate with an intelligent atheist, I recommend watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican instead. But if you want to see a really, really overwhelming defeat for atheism, watch this debate. It is very clear at the end of this debate why Richard Dawkins refused to debate William Lane Craig at Oxford.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING SPEECHES

I only had time to summarize the first two speeches. Keep in mind that Dr. Craig always shines in his rebuttals, and this debate is no different. So you'll want to watch those rebuttals. Dr. Atkins *literally* says in this debate in his first rebuttal "There was nothing here originally. There is nothing here now. But it is an interesting form of nothing which seems to be something." And the audience laughs nervously. This debate is like that. You will see a clear winner and clear loser in this debate. This fight is decided by knockout.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

1. the origin of the universe
2. the moral argument
3. the resurrection of Jesus

Peter Atkins opening speech:

1. Dr. Craig is stupid, lazy and evil:
– Dr. Craig's arguments are old: from the 11th century! Old arguments can't be true
– Dr. Craig is just asserting that "God did it" because he is lazy

– Dr. Craig feels pressured to agree with the theistic majority
– Dr. Craig needs a psychological crutch to comfort him
– Dr. Craig is fearful of death
– Dr. Craig is just wishing for an eternal life of bliss
– Dr. Craig is driven by his heart, and not by his head

2. Origin of the universe:
– Maybe the universe is eternal and has no beginning – we don't know
– Maybe mommy universes can give birth to daughter universes
– It is naive to think that a cause is needed to cause the creation of the universe from nothing
– Science is just about to show how it is possible that something appears out of nothing without cause
– Some scientists have already begun to speculate about about how something can come into being out of nothing
– Maybe nothing is not really nothing, but it is actually something
– It would be admitting defeat to say that God created the universe out of nothing

3. Fine-Tuning:
– It could be the case that the fundamental constants are not variable
– It could be the case that the fine-tuning of the cosmic constants is a happy accident
– It could be the case that there are billions of billions of unobservable universes that are not fine tuned
– It could be the case that the cosmic constants in these billions and billions of unobservable universes are all random so that some are fine-tuned
– Anyone who infers that an intelligence is the best explanation of a finely-tuned set of life-permitting cosmic constants is lazy

4. Purpose:
– Philosophers and theologians are stupid
– I don't think that there is purpose in the universe
– I think that the universe is more grand if there is no purpose, so there is no purpose

5. Miracles:
– I don't think that miracles happen
– The resurrection is a fabrication
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't exist
– It could be the case that Jesus wasn't really crucified
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't really die after being crucified
– It could be the case that the disciples stole his body
– It could be the case that the women went to the wrong hole in the ground
– the gospels are political propaganda written long after the events they are reporting on

6. Theodicy:
– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing humans to perform actions that result in suffering

– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing nature to cause suffering

7. Morality:

– customs and conventions emerges arbitrarily in different times and places based on an awareness of the consequences of actions, as well as various anecdotes and experiences

– these customs and conventions are decided based on the goal for survival, in much the same way as politeness and manners emerge for decorum and to avoid offense

– it is childish to presume that there is an umpire God who decides moral values and duties

8. Religious believers are stupid, lazy and evil:

– the notion of God has arisen because people are stupid and want to be comforted

– there are no arguments or evidences for belief in God

– people who believe in God do not think, but instead take refuge in incomprehensible nonsense

Oxford University Press book asks: does religion cause violence?

February 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J.W. Wartick posted a review of a book called "The Myth of Religious Violence", and written by Dr. William T. Cavanaugh.

Let's take a look at some of the review.

Here, J.W. quotes from the book:

> The story goes that, after the Protestant Reformation divided Christendom along religious lines, Catholics and Protestants began killing each other for holding to different doctrines. The wars of religion… demonstrated to the West the inherent danger of public religion. The solution to the problem lay in the rise of the modern state, in which religious loyalties were marginalized and the state secured a monopoly on the means of violence…
>
> This story is more than just a prominent example of the myth of religious violence. It has a foundational importance for the secular West, because it explains the origin of its way of life and its system of governance. It is a creation myth for modernity (123).

Then writes this:

> Following the lines of thinking of Voltaire, John Locke, and others, Cavanaugh argues that the myth of religious violence is perpetuated in order to marginalize that which is considered religious and give rise to the nation-state. According to this myth, "All theological religions are to be tolerated, provided they do not interfere with the obligations of citizens to the state…" (129). The myth is that religion is divisive and that they "fight over doctrines or 'religious creeds'" so that "the state steps in to make peace" (130).
>
> Cavanaugh shows that this myth is indeed false. The "wars of religion" had any number of motivating factors. The use of this story is not so much to tell a truth as it is a means by which to legitimize the nation-state. He argues towards these conclusions by showing that many "wars of religion" were in fact wars of economy, wars of power structures, and the like. He notes four primary factors for this myth to work: that combatants were motivated by religious difference, that the primary cause of war was religion, that religious causes are analytically separable from political, economic, and social causes at the time of the wars, and that the rise of the modern state was not a cause of the wars (141-142). He then analyzes each of these in turn based upon the historical record and shows that these all fail to account for the actual history of the "wars of religion." In fact, the opposite is true in each case (142-177).
>
> "We must conclude that the myth of the wars of religion is finally incredible,

> which is to say, false” (177).

> […]Perhaps the most challenging and paradigm-shifting portion of the book is that which focuses upon the uses of the myth of religious violence. Cavanaugh argues that the myth is so perpetuated because of its usefulness.

Cavanaugh has his BA from the University of Notre Dame, his MA from Cambridge University, and his PhD from Duke University. Do the secularists have anything to stack up against someone with his credentials?

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

February 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing

- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don’t have any earlier sources, so we just don’t know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn’t check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Socialist Argentina follows-up runaway inflation with price controls on groceries

February 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Take a look at this article from the leftist Washington Post, which reports on how the socialists in Argentina have imposed price controls in order to minimize the impact of runaway inflation caused by money printing.

Excerpt:

> Argentina announced a two-month price freeze on supermarket products Monday in an effort to stop spiraling inflation.
>
> The price freeze applies to every product in all of the nation's largest supermarkets — a group including Walmart, Carrefour, Coto, Jumbo, Disco and other large chains. The companies' trade group, representing 70 percent of the Argentine supermarket sector, reached the accord with Commerce Secretary Guillermo Moreno, the government's news agency Telam reported.
>
> […]Economist Soledad Perez Duhalde of the abeceb.com consulting firm predicted on Monday that the price freeze will have only a very short term effect, and noted that similar moves in Argentina had failed to control inflation. Consumers shouldn't be surprised if the supermarkets are slow to restock their shelves and offer fewer products for sale, she added.
>
> A more effective way to contain inflation would be to "reduce government spending, which is financing an expansion of the money supply, and to have a credible price index."

Isn't ironic that the United States is pursuing the exact same policy of printing money and overspending as Argentina has? Excerpt we are a little further along.

So what happens next in Argentina? Zero Hedge explains:

> What consumers will *certainly* do is scramble into local stores to take advantage of artificially-controlled prices knowing very well they have two short months to stock up on perishable goods at today's prices, before the country's inflation comes soaring back, only this time many of the local stores will not be around as their profit margins implode and as owners, especially of foreign-based chains, make the prudent decision to get out of Dodge while the getting's good and before the next steps, including such measures as nationalization, in the escalation into a full out hyperinflationary collapse, are taken by Argentina's female ruler.
>
> […]So to summarize: first capital controls, then a currency crisis, then expectations of sovereign default, then a rise in military tensions, and finally – price controls, after which all out chaos usually follows.

> Study this sequence well: it is coming to every “developed” country near you in the months and years ahead.

Just to be clear, price controls are a clear signal to suppliers to stop supplying, since they cannot make any money if prices are held low by government decree. Price controls lead to shortages, necessarily. And that’s what’s in store for Argentina once the private sector food suppliers (and other companies) pull out of there when they can’t make a profit. There are other places they need to be.

Imagine if America elected a charismatic, incompetent fool to run our country like socialist dictators do in Argentina or Venezuela. Imagine if the mainstream media, with their non-quantitative degrees and lack of real-world experience, covered for his every blunder. Where would we be then?

Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college

February 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> The man who murdered one woman and paralyzed another during a 2011 Atlanta shooting spree testified at his trial last week that he was motivated by beliefs he had acquired about white people when he was an anthropology major at the University of West Georgia.
>
> Nkosi Thandiwe, 23, argued that the bizarre political views he encountered — and accepted — in college led to a mental state that should have been grounds for a defense of temporary insanity, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reports.
>
> "I was trying to prove a point that Europeans had colonized the world, and as a result of that, we see a lot of evil today," Thandiwe testified. "In terms of slavery, it was something that needed to be answered for. I was trying to spread the message of making white people mend."
>
> Thandiwe explained in court that he had attended an event designed to address concerns about racial inequality the night before the shooting spree. He became furious when he saw two white people there.
>
> "I was upset," Thandiwe said. "I was still upset Friday. I took the gun to work because I was still upset from Thursday night."

Maybe we should have a ban on guns – a ban applicable only to Democrats. Guns don't kill people, Democrats kill people.

Dennis Prager's latest column looks at a college student was brainwashed to have obviously false views on war and foreign policy. Be careful what you study in college – it's better to stick with math, science, technology and engineering – especially during a socialism-induced recession. Stick with things that can be measured and tested to insulate yourself from leftist speculations. You want to get a degree in something useful, not in leftist dogma.

Related posts

- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
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- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
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- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
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Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

February 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

The article goes on to make some very informative comments on the relationship between apologetics and belief.

Leak of top secret Stuxnet program could provide grounds for impeachment

February 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The left-leaning Washington Post explains.

Excerpt:

> Imagine if The Post broke a story about the biggest scandal of the Obama-era — and Washington responded with a collective yawn?
>
> That's precisely what happened recently when The Post reported on its front page that senior Obama administration officials were being investigated by the FBI and Justice Department for the leak last summer that the president had personally ordered cyberattacks on the Iranian nuclear program using a computer virus developed with Israel called Stuxnet.
>
> The Post quotes a source who says that FBI agents and prosecutors are pursuing "everybody — at pretty high levels." The paper further reports that investigators "have conducted extensive analysis of the e-mail accounts and phone records of current and former government officials" and that some have been confronted "with evidence of contact with journalists."
>
> This is big. And former senior government lawyers I spoke with recently explained why it could get a whole lot bigger:
>
> The leaks clearly came from someone in the president's inner circle. As The Post explains, "Knowledge of the virus was likely to have been highly compartmentalized and limited to a small set of Americans and Israelis." Moreover, whoever leaked the information was present when the president discussed this covert action program in the Situation Room. There is a tiny universe of individuals who could have shared the details of President Obama's personal deliberations on the covert program with the press.
>
> […][T]he Stuxnet leak was incredibly damaging. It exposed intelligence sources and methods, including the top secret codename for the program ("Olympic Games"). And it exposed the involvement of a U.S. ally, Israel. At one point in the New York Times story, a source says the Israelis were responsible for an error in the code who allowed it to replicate itself all around the world. The Times directly quotes one of the president's briefers telling him "We think there was a modification done by the Israelis," adding that "Mr. Obama, *according to officials in the room*, asked a series of questions, fearful that the code could do damage outside the plant. The answers came back in hedged terms. Mr. Biden fumed. 'It's got to be the Israelis,' he said. 'They went too far'" (emphasis added).
>
> So a person who was "in the room" when the president and vice president were briefed publicly confirmed Israeli involvement in a covert action against Iran. The

> damage this did — both to the operation and the trust between our two countries — is incalculable.
>
> There are no credible national security grounds for such a disclosure. The only person whose interests could possibly be served by such a disclosure was Obama. The leak appeared six months before the president stood for reelection and was clearly intended to make Obama appear strong on foreign policy and counterterrorism. (One anonymous senior official is quoted by the Times as saying "From his first days in office, he was deep into every step in slowing the Iranian program — the diplomacy, the sanctions, every major decision.")
>
> If the president authorized the disclosure of national security secrets that exposed a covert action and undermined a U.S. ally in an effort to gain a political advantage in his reelection campaign, that would be a scandal of gigantic proportions. As one former top Justice Department official told me "if done for political gain, rather than for a bona fide purpose advancing the public interests of the United States, it could be grounds for impeachment."

I wouldn't put it past Obama to leak sensitive data to help his election campaign. If you check the related links below, you'll see that the Obama administration is just awful at national security.

Related posts

- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Obama covers-up DOJ operation that allowed gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama's neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel's plan to strike Iran?
- Is Obama promising the Russians more unilateral disarmament after the election?
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them

J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" lecture

February 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to pick a few lectures that really changed my life, then this lecture by J.P. Moreland would definitely be on that list. This lecture also gave me many of my personality quirks, like saying "Does that make sense to you?" all the time. Dr. Moreland is a great speaker.

The MP3 file.

Topics:

- How J.P. Moreland become a Christian
- How evangelism drove his efforts to answer skeptics
- How can evangelicals be so numerous, and yet have so little influence?
- When did the church stop being able to out-think her critics?
- How studying and thinking can be a way of worshiping God
- Romans 12:1-2 – what does this passage mean?
- Are your beliefs under the control of your will?
- Can you "try" to believe something by an act of will?
- If not, then how can you change your beliefs?
- Changing your mind is the only way to change your life
- Matthew 22:37 – what is this passage saying?
- How can you love God by using your intellect?
- How can you defend God's honor, when it is called into question?
- In a debate, should you quote sources that your opponent doesn't accept?
- Should you only study the Bible, or should you study rival worldviews?
- 1 Pet 3:15 – what does this passage mean?
- If you knew you were going to be in a debate, what should you do?
- How can you be bold in witnessing? Where does boldness come from?
- What should the church do to make bold evangelists?
- 2 Cor 10:5 – what is this passage talking about?
- The passage talks about destroying fortresses – what are the fortresses?
- List of some of the speculations that we are supposed to be destroying
- What does the phrase "spiritual warfare" really mean?

And here is a longer version of the same lecture (MP3) presented to an audience of university students and faculty.

Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty

February 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> The man accused of opening fire and shooting a security guard at the conservative Family Research Council headquarters last August plead guilty to three charges in a D.C. federal court Wednesday.
>
> Floyd Lee Corkins, II of Herndon, Virginia entered guilty pleas to a federal weapons charge as well as a local terrorism charge and a charge of assault with intent to kill, according to news reports.
>
> The Washington Post reports that, according to the plea agreement Corkins signed, he told FBI agents on the day of the shooting that he "intended to kill as many people as possible" and planned to "smother Chick-fil-A sandwiches in their faces."
>
> Investigators found additional magazines and 15 Chick-fil-A sandwiches in his backpack on the day of the shooting.
>
> Following the guilty plea the FRC issued a statement placing a large portion of the blame for the shooting at the feet of the liberal Southern Poverty Law Center, which had listed FRC as a hate group. FRC noted that prosecutors discovered Corkins identified his targets on the SPLC's website.
>
> "The day after Floyd Corkins came into the FRC headquarter and opened fire wounding one of our team members, I stated that while Corkins was responsible for the shooting, he had been given a license to perpetrate this act of violence by groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center which has systematically and recklessly labeled every organization with which they disagree as a 'hate group,'" FRC president Tony Perkins said in a statement, which went on to demand that SPLC stop attacking organizations that have a different opinion on gay rights.
>
> The shooting happened shortly after Chick-fil-A made headlines over the company president's disagreement with gay marriage.

This reminds me of the story from earlier in the week where another shooter was shot at white people after being indoctrinated in racist dogma at a liberal college. It seems like there are a lot of leftists using guns to shoot at people who disagree with them. Why does anyone think that people on the left are tolerant?

Related posts

- Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college

- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
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- The mainstream media’s biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
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- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

CBO: Obamacare will push 7 million Americans out of job based health insurance

February 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Washington Times reports.

Excerpt:

> President Obama's health care law will push 7 million people out of their job-based insurance coverage — nearly twice the previous estimate, according to the latest estimates from the Congressional Budget Office released Tuesday.
>
> CBO said that this year's tax cuts have changed the incentives for businesses and made it less attractive to pay for insurance, meaning fewer will decide to do so. Instead, they'll choose to pay a penalty to the government, totaling $13 billion in higher fees over the next decade.
>
> But the non-partisan agency also expects fewer people to have to pay individual penalties to the IRS than it earlier projects, because of a better method for calculating incomes that found more people will be exempt.
>
> Overall, the new health provisions are expected to cost the government $1.165 trillion over the next decade — the same as last year's projection.
>
> With other spending cuts and tax increases called for in the health law, though, CBO still says Mr. Obama's signature achievement will reduce budget deficits in the short term.
>
> During the health care debate Mr. Obama had said individuals would be able to keep their plans.

Obama said one thing, and something else happened. So why did an obvious liar win re-election in 2012?

The purpose of Democrat policies is not to make our lives better. The purpose of their policies is to make them feel good about themselves. Their good intentions matter more than actual results. But it's not enough to say that everyone will have great health care. Politicians have to put in place policies that will solve the real problem and make things better. Nothing that Obama did solves the problem. In fact, what he did made the problem worse. That's what happens when you appoint an imbecile to a difficult task. You get failure.

Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger's critique of cosmic fine-tuning

February 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Victor Stenger is a famous "Internet Infidel" atheist, but what makes him different is that he is has a PhD in physics. He wrote a book published by the atheist publisher Prometheus Press where he explains why he thinks that the universe is not fine-tuned for embodied sentient life.

An Australian physicist named Luke Barnes decided to write a response to his book, and the response is summarized (without the math!) on Uncommon Descent. Barnes has a PhD in Astronomy from Cambridge. He did postdoctoral research in Switzerland at the Institute for Astonomy, and now he is doing more postdoctoral research at the University of Sydney . The response that he wrote does not talk about God, or explanations of why the fine-tuning happened. I have no idea where his convictions are on any of that, because his response just talks about the fine-tuning itself from a scientific point of view.

Here's how Uncommon Descent explains Barnes' response.

Summary:

> Professor Victor Stenger is an American particle physicist and a noted atheist, who popularized the phrase, "Science flies you to the moon. Religion flies you into buildings". Professor Stenger is also the author of several books, including his recent best-seller, The Fallacy of Fine-Tuning: How the Universe is Not Designed for Humanity (Prometheus Books, 2011). Stenger's latest book has been received with great acclaim by atheists: "Stenger has demolished the fine-tuning proponents," writes one enthusiastic Amazon reviewer, adding that the book tells us "how science is able to demonstrate the non-existence of god."
>
> Well, it seems that the great Stenger has finally met his match. Dr. Luke A. Barnes, a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute for Astronomy, ETH Zurich, Switzerland, has written a scathing critique of Stenger's book. I've read refutations in my time, but I have to say, *this one is devastating.*
>
> In his paper, Dr. Barnes takes care to avoid drawing any metaphysical conclusions from the fact of fine-tuning. He has no religious axe to grind. His main concern is simply to establish that the fine-tuning of the universe is real, contrary to the claims of Professor Stenger, who asserts that all of the alleged examples of fine-tuning in our universe can be explained without the need for a multiverse.
>
> Dr. Barnes' ARXIV paper, The Fine-Tuning of the Universe for Intelligent Life (Version 1, December 21, 2011), is available online, and I shall be quoting from it below. Since the paper is quite technical at times, I've omitted mathematical equations and kept the references to physical parameters to a

> minimum, since I simply wish to give readers an *overview* of what Dr. Barnes perceives as the key flaws in Professor Stenger's book.

First, the abstract:

> The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life has received a great deal of attention in recent years, both in the philosophical and scientific literature. The claim is that in the space of possible physical laws, parameters and initial conditions, the set that permits the evolution of intelligent life is very small. I present here a review of the scientific literature, outlining cases of fine-tuning in the classic works of Carter, Carr and Rees, and Barrow and Tipler, as well as more recent work. **To sharpen the discussion, the role of the antagonist will be played by Victor Stenger's recent book *The Fallacy of Fine-Tuning: Why the Universe is Not Designed for Us*.** Stenger claims that all known fine-tuning cases can be explained without the need for a multiverse. Many of Stenger's claims will be found to be highly problematic. We will touch on such issues as the logical necessity of the laws of nature; objectivity, invariance and symmetry; theoretical physics and possible universes; entropy in cosmology; cosmic inflation and initial conditions; galaxy formation; the cosmological constant; stars and their formation; the properties of elementary particles and their effect on chemistry and the macroscopic world; the origin of mass; grand unified theories; and the dimensionality of space and time. I also provide an assessment of the multiverse, noting the significant challenges that it must face. **I do not attempt to defend any conclusion based on the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life.** This paper can be viewed as a critique of Stenger's book, or read independently.

Here's a quote that I wanted to put out there from the paper about how widely accepted fine-tuning is among scientists:

> There are a great many scientists, of varying religious persuasions, who accept that the universe is fine-tuned for life, e.g. Barrow, Carr, Carter, Davies, Dawkins, Deutsch, Ellis, Greene, Guth, Harrison, Hawking, Linde, Page, Penrose, Polkinghorne, Rees, Sandage, Smolin, Susskind, Tegmark, Tipler, Vilenkin, Weinberg, Wheeler, Wilczek. They differ, of course, on what conclusion we should draw from this fact. Stenger, on the other hand, claims that the universe is not fine-tuned.

That is a very diverse list. I know that Sandage, Ellis, Page, Tipler and Polkinghorne are theists. But I also know that Weinberg, Rees, Hawking, Greene, and Dawkins are atheists. So scientists all across the spectrum of worldview admit that the fine-tuning is real.

Now, let's look at Barnes' paper and see why Victor Stenger disagrees with the view of those scientists.

1) Stenger doesn't show why the entropy at the beginning of the universe isn't a case of

fine-tuning:

> **Entropy**
>
> We turn now to cosmology. **The problem of the apparently low entropy of the universe is one of the oldest problems of cosmology.** The fact that the entropy of the universe is not at its theoretical maximum, coupled with the fact that entropy cannot decrease, means that the universe must have started in a very special, low entropy state. (p. 23)
>
> Let's return to Stenger's proposed solution… Stenger takes it for granted that the universe is homogeneous and isotropic. We can see this also in his use of the Friedmann equation, which assumes that space-time is homogeneous and isotropic. Not surprisingly, once homogeneity and isotropy have been assumed, Stenger finds that the solution to the entropy problem is remarkably easy.
>
> **We conclude that Stenger has not only failed to solve the entropy problem; he has failed to comprehend it.** He has presented the problem itself as its solution. Homogeneous, isotropic expansion cannot solve the entropy problem – it is the entropy problem. Stenger's assertion that "the universe starts out with maximum entropy or complete disorder" is false. A homogeneous, isotropic spacetime is an incredibly low entropy state. **Penrose (1989) warned of precisely this brand of failed solution two decades ago.**.. (p. 26)

2) Stenger responds to calculations showing the need for fine-tuning by speculating that future calculations will overturn the ones we have now:

> **The Cosmological Constant, Lambda**
>
> The cosmological constant problem is described in the textbook of Burgess & Moore (2006) as "arguably the most severe theoretical problem in high-energy physics today, as measured by both the difference between observations and theoretical predictions, and by the lack of convincing theoretical ideas which address it". A well-understood and well-tested theory of fundamental physics (Quantum Field Theory – QFT) predicts contributions to the vacuum energy of the universe that are [approx.] 10^120 times greater than the observed total value. Stenger's reply is guided by the following principle:
>
> Any calculation that disagrees with the data by 50 or 120 orders of magnitude is simply wrong and should not be taken seriously. We just have to await the correct calculation. [FOFT p. 219]
>
> This seems indistinguishable from reasoning that the calculation must be wrong since otherwise the cosmological constant would have to be fine-tuned. One could not hope for a more perfect example of begging the question. **More importantly, there is a misunderstanding in Stenger's account of the cosmological constant problem.** The problem is not that physicists have made an incorrect prediction. We can use the term *dark energy* for any form of energy that causes the expansion of the universe to accelerate, including a

> "bare" cosmological constant (see Barnes et al., 2005, for an introduction to dark energy). Cosmological observations constrain the total dark energy. QFT [quantum field theory – VJT] allows us to calculate a number of contributions to the total dark energy from matter fields in the universe. Each of these contributions turns out to be 10^120 times larger than the total. There is no direct theory-vs.-observation contradiction as one is calculating and measuring different things. **The fine-tuning problem is that these different independent contributions, including perhaps some that we don't know about, manage to cancel each other to such an alarming, life-permitting degree.** This is not a straightforward case of Popperian falsification. (pp. 34-35)

3) Stenger doesn't consider the full range of values when deciding if something is fine-tuned or not:

> **Protons, Neutrons, Electrons**
>
> We turn now to the relative masses of the three most important particles in our universe: the proton, neutron and electron, from which atoms are made. Consider first the ratio of the electron to the proton mass, … of which Stenger says: "…we can argue that the electron mass is going to be much smaller than the proton mass in any universe even remotely like ours." [FOFT p. 164] (p. 50)
>
> The fact that Stenger is comparing the electron mass in our universe with the electron mass in universes "like ours" is all the evidence one needs to conclude that **Stenger doesn't understand fine-tuning.** The fact that universes like ours turn out to be rather similar to our universe isn't particularly enlightening. (p. 50)
>
> Finally, and most importantly, note carefully Stenger's conclusion. He states that no fine-tuning is needed for the neutron-proton mass difference in our universe to be approximately equal to the up quark-down quark mass difference in our universe. **Stenger has compared our universe with our universe and found no evidence of fine-tuning. There is no discussion of the life-permitting range**, no discussion of the possible range of [mass(neutron) – mass(proton)] (or its relation to the possible range of [mass(down quark) – mass(up quark)], and thus no relevance to fine-tuning whatsoever. (p. 51)

Those are just a few of the examples in the paper, highlighted in the Uncommon Descent article (emphasis theirs).

By the way, here is a good debate between William Lane Craig and Victor Stenger from 2010 (this is their re-match):

It's very important, I think, for theists and atheists alike to understand the force of the fine-tuning argument, and how *firmly rooted* the fine-tuning argument is in science. Christian theists look to science to ground the way we see the world. And this is really just an extension of Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians to Christians to be ready to dump Christianity if the resurrection didn't happen. If the world isn't the way we say it is, then

there is no point in going through the motions to make parents and church people happy.

UPDATE: Peter Sean Bradley note that Krauss is now walking back his rhetoric in response to criticisms from people like atheist John Horgan.

Boy suspended for trying to save the world from evil with imaginary weapon

February 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Denver Post.

Excerpt:

> A 7-year-old Mary Blair Elementary School student says he's confused about getting in trouble for trying to save the world from evil, though Thompson School District officials contend that the boy broke one of the school's "absolutes."
>
> Parent Mandie Watkins said Mary Blair principal Valerie Lara-Black called her Friday afternoon to inform her that her second-grade son, Alex, had been suspended for throwing an imaginary grenade during recess on the playground.
>
> Alex did not have anything in his hand at the time and made no threats toward other people, Watkins reportedly was told.
>
> Watkins said Alex's story matched up with the principal's account: He threw the pretend grenade at an imaginary box that had something evil inside.
>
> He was going to save the earth this way, and when he threw the grenade he pretended that the box exploded, in apparent success.

I keep finding these stories where people are astonished to find that no bystanders will help them when they are attacked by criminals. People today just look the other way instead of helping. Why is that? May I suggest it's because schools are indoctrinating young people in moral relativism and demonizing the use of force to punish evil. Don't expect men to come to your rescue if you teach them not to do it. The same people who complain that men don't "man up" are often the ones that want them to act more like women. Maybe we need to have more men in teaching and administration positions in schools so that they are not so controlling and coercive when handling the better instincts of young men.

What are the earliest historical sources that argue for Jesus' divinity?

February 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend those sources *on historical grounds*.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

4So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

5For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

6yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

5Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

6Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

7but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

9Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above

every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The “Q” source for Matthew and Luke

Here’s Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier “Q” source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Learn more

You can learn more about the early belief in the divinity of Jesus by listening to a lecture by William Lane Craig and reading the related paper, and by listening to the debate between Richard Bauckham and James Crossley on that topic. The first link contains other scholarly debates on Jesus.

Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency

February 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez very different?
From the Boston Globe.

Excerpt:

> Venezuela's government announced Friday that it is devaluing the country's currency, a long-anticipated change expected to push up prices in the heavily import-reliant economy.

> Officials said the fixed exchange rate is changing from 4.30 bolivars to the dollar to 6.30 bolivars to the dollar.

So, if you are earning and saving Bolivars, you just got a massive cut to your earnings and savings.

More:

> By boosting the bolivar value of Venezuela's dollar-denominated oil sales, the change is expected to help ease a difficult budget outlook for the government, which has turned increasingly to borrowing to meet its spending obligations.
>
> […]Economist Jose Guerra told The Associated Press that given the devaluation, he predicts inflation of more than 25 percent this year.
>
> The announcement of the devaluation came after the country's Central Bank said annual inflation rose to 22.2 percent in January, up from 20.1 percent at the end of 2012.
>
> The oil-exporting country, a member of OPEC, has consistently had Latin America's highest officially acknowledged inflation rates in recent years. Spiraling

> prices have come amid worsening shortages of some foods.

> […]It was the fifth time that Chavez's government has devalued the currency since establishing the currency exchange controls a decade ago in an attempt to combat capital flight.
>
> […]The government's announcement drew strong criticism from opposition leader Henrique Capriles, who said that the government's heavy spending was to blame for the situation and that officials were trying to slip the change past the public at the start of a long holiday weekend.

The opposition party explains why this is happening:

> 'They spent the money on campaigning, corruption, gifts abroad!'' Capriles said in one of several messages on his Twitter account. Capriles was defeated by Chavez in an October presidential vote that was preceded by a burst of heavy government spending.

Who else do we know who likes to spend money and borrow from future generations? Someone whose economic policies are similar to Chavez? Who could it be? Increasing inflation is a very attractive policy to socialists who want to spend more money without raising taxes. It's a hidden tax on those who try earn more and save their money. It punishes independence and makes dependence on the government inevitable.

Related posts

- Obama's buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Dr. Ben Carson holds Obama accountable for Obamacare and other bad policies

February 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the video:

The Wall Street Journal had a response to this video entitled "Ben Carson for President".

And this is what they said:

> Whether this weekend finds you blowing two feet of snow off the driveway or counting the hours until "Downton Abbey," make time to watch the video of Dr. Ben Carson speaking to the White House prayer breakfast this week.
>
> Seated in view to his right are Senator Jeff Sessions and President Obama. One doesn't look happy. You know something's coming when Dr. Carson says, "It's not my intention to offend anyone. But it's hard not to. The PC police are out in force everywhere."
>
> Dr. Carson tossed over the PC police years ago. Raised by a single mother in inner-city Detroit, he was as he tells it "a horrible student with a horrible temper." Today he's director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins and probably the most renowned specialist in his field.
>
> Late in his talk he dropped two very un-PC ideas. The first is an unusual case for a flat tax: "What we need to do is come up with something simple. And when I pick up my Bible, you know what I see? I see the fairest individual in the universe, God, and he's given us a system. It's called a tithe.
>
> "We don't necessarily have to do 10% but it's the principle. He didn't say if your crops fail, don't give me any tithe or if you have a bumper crop, give me triple tithe. So there must be something inherently fair about proportionality. You make $10 billion, you put in a billion. You make $10 you put in one. Of course you've got to get rid of the loopholes. Some people say, 'Well that's not fair because it doesn't hurt the guy who made $10 billion as much as the guy who made 10.' Where does it say you've got to hurt the guy? He just put a billion dollars in the pot. We don't need to hurt him. It's that kind of thinking that has resulted in 602 banks in the Cayman Islands. That money needs to be back here building our infrastructure and creating jobs."
>
> Not surprisingly, a practicing physician has un-PC thoughts on health care:
>
> "Here's my solution: When a person is born, give him a birth certificate, an electronic medical record, and a health savings account to which money can be contributed—pretax—from the time you're born 'til the time you die. If you die, you can pass it on to your family members, and there's nobody talking about death panels. We can make contributions for people who are indigent. Instead of sending all this money to some bureaucracy, let's put it in their HSAs. Now they

> have some control over their own health care. And very quickly they're gong to learn how to be responsible."
>
> The Johns Hopkins neurosurgeon may not be politically correct, but he's closer to correct than we've heard in years.

Here's a bit more about the speech from the Blaze.

Excerpt:

> One of the more unique speeches delivered at this morning's National Prayer Breakfast came from Dr. Benjamin S. Carson, a world-renowned pediatric neurosurgeon at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Taking the stage before President Barack Obama's faith-filled address, Carson spoke for more than 25 minutes, tackling issues ranging from education to personal responsibility. His keynote, while predicated upon the theme of Jesus Christ as his ultimate role model, also took a starkly political tone, advocating against some of the very policies the president has implemented.
>
> At the beginning of his speech, Carson shared an intense disdain for political correctness. Without getting too specific on the issue front, he said that Americans should stop being afraid to speak up and defend their beliefs; he also encouraged people to respect the individuals they disagree with. Carson held little back, condemning political correctness as "a horrible thing" that is "dangerous," as it hampers freedom of thought and expression.
>
> "We've reached a point where people are actually afraid to talk about what they want to say, because somebody might be offended," Carson said, noting the example of people refraining from saying "Merry Christmas." "We've got to get over this sensitivity and it keeps people from saying what they really believe."
>
> Carson encouraged discussion about societal issues, also pointing out education as an essential conundrum the country needs to confront. He highlighted his own path from poverty to success, sharing very personal details about his parents and early family life and subsequently described the importance of helping students seeking to advance academically through his Carson Scholars Fund.
>
> The speech took an interesting turn when the doctor cautioned that moral decay and fiscal irresponsibility can have dire consequences — even for powerful countries like America. Here, he became even more pointed and impassioned.
>
> "I think particularly about ancient Rome. Very powerful — nobody could even challenge them militarily…they destroyed themselves from within," Carson continued. "Moral decay. Fiscal irresponsibility."
>
> While he said America's issues are dire, he was positive that the nation can fix its ways, as there are bright and innovative people who simply need to come together to address the problems at hand.
>
> "And one of our big problems right now…our deficit is a big problem," he said, as Obama watched him intently. "Think about it — and our national debt — $16 and

> a half trillion dollars.”

I blogged about the Darwinish Inquisition and Ben Carson before. He has faced persecutions from the Darwinists because he has scientific concerns about evolution. If you need something to watch on a Saturday night, this is the speech for you.

Fracking propels North Dakota to 3.2% unemployment rate

February 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What happened when North Dakota lowered its regulatory barriers to energy development?

This:

> North Dakota had the highest payroll-to-population rate (P2P) and the lowest underemployment rate in 2012, thanks mostly to the state's booming oil & gas industry.
>
> According to Gallup's "State of the States" analysis released today, North Dakota ranked number one among the lower 48 states, with a payroll to population rate of 53.6 percent.
>
> Gallup said it measured each state's P2P rate by the percentage of the adult population aged 18 and older employed full-time by an employer for at least 30 hours per week.
>
> The analysis noted that the numbers are not seasonably adjusted and variations across states reflect a number of factors, including the overall employment situation for each state as well as the demographic composition of that state's population. P2P rates in Alaska, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia were not considered in the analysis.
>
> Factoring in the most recent unemployment data is key to the Gallup analysis. North Dakota reported just a 3.2 percent unemployment rate, well below the national average unemployment rate of 7.9 percent, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
>
> The number one ranking should not come as much of a surprise given the Peace Garden state's rise in oil and gas production and the subsequent rise in jobs over the past few years.
>
> According to North Dakota Jobs Service data from 2011, the most recent available, the number of oil and gas jobs in North Dakota has risen 57.5 percent since 2010 – going from 10,660 jobs in 2010 to 16,786 jobs in 2011, with the oil and gas payroll nearly doubling — going from $852 million in 2010 up to $1.5 billion in 2011.
>
> North Dakota now produces more oil than any other state, including Alaska, which ranked number one in 2011, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.
>
> Hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking" which uses high-pressure water, sand, and chemicals to force oil from underground rock formations, has largely contributed to the recent boom in North Dakota's fossil fuel industry.

North Dakota, as you might expect, is a very, very conservative state.

What about the US as a whole, under Barack Obama and the Democrats? Well, Obama killed the Keystone XL pipeline, which would have created 20,000 jobs. His administration has introduced many burdensome regulations on energy development, as well. Democrat energy policies have been a disaster, and it explains, in part, why we have a huge number of people not in the work force. We could have allowed North Dakota's success to spread across the United States, if we had only approved that pipeline and removed barriers to energy development imposed by high taxes and regulations. But we didn't. There'll be another chance to vote for jobs in 2016.

Truthbomb Apologetics reviews “Cold Case Christianity”

February 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

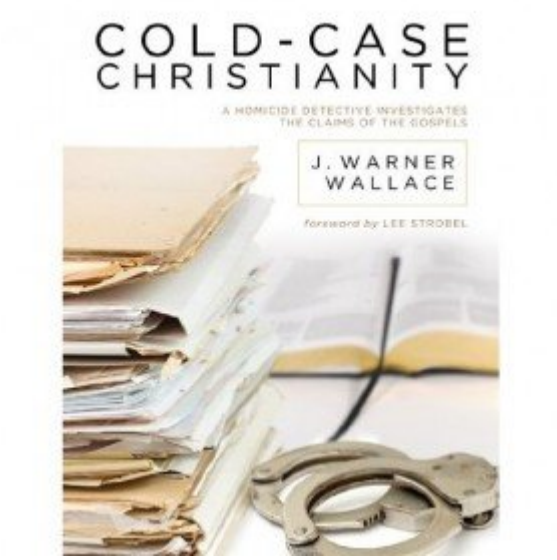

Cold-Case Christianity by J. Warner Wallace

Here’s a book review by Chad of the best apologetics book of the year so far.

Excerpt:

> This reviewer was also very impressed with Wallace’s ability to explain what could be considered difficult topics to some in very plain language that virtually anyone can understand. As someone who teaches apologetics, I know that many believers are sometimes intimated by the terms used in many of the typical arguments; however, not only does Wallace explain concepts such as abductive reasoning, circumstantial evidence and the nature of truth in easy-to-understand language, he further demonstrates to the reader that they already do this kind of thinking without even realizing it! The brilliance of this is that the reader realizes that they don’t have to learn a completely new way of thinking to evaluate the Christian worldview, but just apply what they already know to it’s claims.
>
> […]After learning the chief principles of investigation, Wallace turns the readers attention to the claims of the NT. This reader was very impressed with the breadth and depth of difficult matters that the author was able to convincing deal with. Readers who master Wallace’s work will be equipped to:
>
> - Defend the conviction that the gospels were written fairly early to the events they record
> - Deal with common objections to the gospel accounts
> - Learn how to deal with “late additions” to the NT text
> - Share Non-Christian sources for Jesus
> - Share examples of how archaeology continues to validate the claims of the

> NT
> - Demonstrate that there are good reasons to believe that the NT was handed down accurately and is trustworthy
> - Demonstrate that the NT Canon was established in the first-century
> - Deal with the objection of bias
>
> […]It is this reviewer's conviction that both believer and non-believer will benefit from Wallace's work. The believer will find in Wallace an outstanding teacher who is able to take complex concepts and make them exciting and engaging. Further, they will be more equipped than ever before to defend the gospels, the New Testament, and the Christian worldview with sound thinking and a respectful approach.The unbeliever could quite possibly find a like-minded individual in J. Warner Wallace, himself a former atheist and self-proclaimed, "outspoken skeptic." The author fairly represents the opposition's views, respectfully offers counter arguments and gently challenges the skeptic to reconsider the pre-suppositions they may be hindering their investigation of Christianity.

I already had the book version of this book, and I just bought the unabridged audio book version today! Everyone is talking about this book.

By the way, the author of the book, J. Warner Wallace, will be on the nationally-syndicated Laura Ingraham show tomorrow morning. He tweeted this: "REALLY looking forward to my interview with Laura Ingraham on Monday at 8:30 AM PST. I'm a BIG fan of her work…." Click here to find a station. You might be able to catch a repeat of the third hour here, later, as well.

Report: Patients receiving poor care at NHS hospital

February 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A damning report on the state of government-run health care in the UK, found in the leftist New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Shockingly bad care and inhumane treatment at a hospital in the Midlands led to hundreds of unnecessary deaths and stripped countless patients of their dignity and self-respect, according to a scathing report published on Wednesday.
>
> The report, which examined conditions at Stafford Hospital in Staffordshire over a 50-month period between 2005 and 2009, cites example after example of horrific treatment: patients left unbathed and lying in their own urine and excrement; patients left so thirsty that they drank water from vases; patients denied medication, pain relief and food by callous and overworked staff members; patients who contracted infections due to filthy conditions; and patients sent home to die after being given the wrong diagnoses.
>
> […]The report into what has been called the biggest scandal in the modern history of the health service found that many of the problems were due to the efforts of the hospital to meet health-service targets, like providing care within four hours to patients arriving at the emergency room. It also said that in its efforts to balance its books and save $16 million in 2006 and 2007 in order to achieve so-called foundation-trust status, which made it semi-independent of control by the central government, the hospital laid off too many people and focused relentlessly on external objectives rather than patient care.

Patients have to be cared about in a for-profit system, otherwise, no one will *get paid*. In a socialist system, patients pay first and then hope to get care later. Although there are many hard-working doctors and nurses in the NHS, you can't separate the care that a patient gets from the reward that doctors and nurses get, otherwise, they lose their incentive to care for patients.

But an even bigger problem is that when government runs health care, all kinds of things start to get covered that are not really health care, as the government begins to use health care as a way to buy votes. Suddenly, patients with real health care needs have to get in line behind people who want sex changes, breast implants, IVF, elective abortions and so on. There just isn't time to give everyone care when the people seeking have no incentive to live responsible lives and make responsible choices in order to avoid risks that may require care. I do believe that the majority of NHS doctors and nurses mean well. They want to serve and help others. But when patients have no incentive to be responsible, there will be too much demand for care, and there will be shortages. When prices are health below market value, demand surges and a shortage will occur.

Here’s a bit more about the NHS health care problem from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> This week, the scathing report on the Stafford Hospital Scandal — after abuse and neglect led to the unnecessary deaths of hundreds of patients — said ‘fundamental change’ was needed in the NHS. It condemned ‘failings at every level’ and contained 290 recommendations for reform. However, Robert Francis QC’s report was merely the latest damning indictment of the health service.
>
> In November 2012 the Care Quality Commission found that ten per cent of hospitals and 15 per cent of care homes weren’t treating their patients with respect. Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, warned that cruelty and neglect had become normal in some hospitals and care homes.
>
> […]Reports in 2011 from Age UK and The Patients’ Association exposed some horrendous instances of abuse and neglect — not only enforced incontinence and unanswered buzzers, but patients left hungry and thirsty or in soiled bed-linen.

Another reason for these shortages is bureaucratic red tape. Government-run enterprises are inefficient:

> Talking with a cross-section of hospital staff, older nurses told me where they feel the problems lie. They say it is not so much a question of cruelty and neglect — although they acknowledge that this can exist — but more that ward culture has changed.
>
> In the past, the patient’s comfort and needs came first, but now it is all too easy for elements of patient care to be missed as nursing staff focus on paperwork and meeting targets.

Should we have government-run health care? Let’s look at how it works in other countries and decide using the evidence.

Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent

February 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

***** WARNING: This post is definitely for grown-ups only! *****

I was listening to a Dr. J podcast on "Why Marriage Matters", and I heard about a woman named Dawn Stefanowicz, who was raised by her gay father in Toronto.

So, I looked around and found this interview with Dawn posted on MercatorNet. This is mature subject matter.

Intro:

> Gay marriage and gay adoption are being fiercely debated in a number of countries. Usually these issues are framed as a human rights issue. But whose rights? Patrick Meagher, *MercatorNet's* contributing editor in Canada, recently interviewed a woman who was raised by a homosexual father. She feels that her rights as a child were completely ignored.
>
> Dawn Stefanowicz (www.DawnStefanowicz.com) grew up in Toronto. Now in her 40s, she has written a book, *Out From Under: Getting Clear of the Wreckage of a Sexually Disordered Home*, to be released later this year. Stefanowicz has now been married for 22 years, is raising a family, and also works as an accountant. She has also testified about same-sex marriage in Washington and Ottawa.

Sample:

> **MercatorNet:** How did you feel about what was going on around you?
>
> **Stefanowicz**: You become used to it and desensitised. I was told at eight years old not to talk about this but I knew that something was wrong. I was not thinking "this is right or wrong" but I was disturbed by what I was experiencing. I was unhappy, fearful, anxious and confused. I was not allowed to tell my father that his lifestyle upset me. You can be four-years-old and questioning, "Where is Daddy?" You sense women are not valued. You think Daddy doesn't have time for you or Daddy is too busy to play a game with you. All this is hard because as a child this is the only experience you have.
>
> **MercatorNet:** How did this affect your relationship with others?
>
> **Stefanowicz**: I had a hard time concentrating in school on day-to-day subjects and with peers. I felt insecure. I was already stressed out by an early age. I'm now in my 40s. You're looking at life-long issues. There is a lot of prolonged and unresolved grief in this kind of home environment and with what you witness in the subcultures.
>
> It took me until I was into my 20s and 30s, after making major life choices, to begin to realise how being raised in this environment had affected me.

> Unfortunately, it was not until my father, his sexual partners and my mother had died, that I was free to speak publicly about my experiences.

And:

> **MercatorNet:** Why do so few children speak out?
>
> **Stefanowicz:** You're terrified. Absolutely terrified. Children who open up these family secrets are dependent on parents for everything. You carry the burden that you have to keep secrets. You learn to put on an image publicly of the happy family that is not reality. With same-sex legislation, children are further silenced. They believe there is no safe adult they can go to.

Have you ever considered what effect it has on a child that they have to grow up without their mother or their father? Is that good for them? Is that something that we should be promoting so that there is more of it? It's a sad thing to tell adults that they cannot do whatever they want, but it's a sadder thing to harm children just so that adults can do whatever they want. We need to choose to be careful not to harm children by making poor decisions.

Related posts

- Mark Regnerus's research vindicated by University of Texas at Austin
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families
- Obama openly supports gay marriage: 48 hours after top gay donors cut off funding
- Democrat introduces bill to defund adoption agencies that favor married couples
- A secular case against same-sex marriage

Is it wise for women to postpone marriage?

February 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This UK Daily Mail article that ECM posted on Facebook got a lot of comments.

Excerpt:

> Eight years after that wonderful engagement party in 1989, I walked away from dear, devoted, loyal Matthew, convinced that somewhere out there, a better, more exciting, more fulfilling life awaited me.
> Only there wasn't.
>
> Now I am 42 and have all the trappings of success – a high-flying career, financial security and a home in the heart of London's trendy Notting Hill. But I don't have the one thing I crave more than anything: a loving husband and family.

So what happened? Well, here's what:

> In the summer of 1989, while out for a romantic meal, Matthew proposed properly with a diamond solitaire ring. Two months later, we held our engagement party for 40 friends and family at the little house we were renting at the time.
>
> The following year, we bought a tiny starter home in Grays, Essex, which we moved into with furniture we had begged, borrowed and stolen. We giggled with delight at the thought of this grown-up new life.
> I was in my first junior role at a women's magazine and Matthew worked fitting tyres and exhausts, so our combined salaries of around £15,000 a year meant we struggled to make the mortgage payments. But we didn't care, telling ourselves that it wouldn't be long before we were earning more and able to afford weekly treats and a bigger home where we could bring up the babies we had planned.
>
> But then, the housing market crashed and we were plunged into negative equity.
>
> Struggling should have brought us closer together, and at first it did. But as time went on, and my magazine career – and salary – advanced, I started to resent Matthew as he drifted from one dead-end job to another.
>
> I still loved him, but I began to feel embarrassed by his blue-collar jobs, annoyed that, despite his intelligence, he didn't have a career. Then he bought a lurid blue and pink VW Beetle.
>
> Why couldn't he drive a normal car? Things that now seem incredibly insignificant began to niggle.
>
> I began to wish he was more sophisticated and earned more. I felt envious of friends with better-off partners, who were able to support them as they started their families.
>
> I stopped seeing Matthew as my equal. I stopped seeing all the qualities that had

> made me fall in love with him – his fierce intelligence, our shared sense of humour, his determination not to follow the crowd. Instead, I saw someone who was holding me back.
>
> Our sex life had dwindled and nights out together were rare. I stopped appreciating little things he did, like leaving romantic notes on the pillow or scouring secondhand bookshops for novels he knew I'd love. He was my best friend, yet I took him totally for granted.
>
> After festering for weeks about his shortcomings, I told Matthew I was leaving. We spent hours talking and crying as he tried to convince me to stay, but I was adamant.
>
> My parents were horrified that I was walking away from a man they felt was right for me. My father's words to me that day continue to haunt me. 'Karen, think carefully about what you're doing. There's a lot to be said for someone who truly loves you.'
>
> But, I refused to listen, convinced there would be another, better Mr Right waiting around the corner.
>
> I moved into a rented flat a few miles away in Hornchurch, Essex, and embraced single life with a vengeance. By now I was an editor on a national magazine. Life was one long round of premieres and dinner or drinks parties.

One of the commenters on Facebook said this:

> This is what feminism and narcissism (which are rampant in our society) have done to women. Feminism told her that she should work, have a career, climb the ladder – and that this is the most important thing. Marriage and family are goals unworthy of a woman, according to feminism. Narcissism told her that her own goals and desires were the most important thing in the world. Other people and their needs are only important if they coincide with what she wants. If someone is "bringing her down" or "holding her back" they need to get out of the way because her desires are what is most important. So when her marriage required her to actually sacrifice a bit of her own ambition, she walked away from it. What a stupid and self-centered thing to do.

I found another article by her where she spent £5,000 on cosmetic surgery. It's just strange where she ended up.

Should we believe what Obama says in his State of the Union speech?

February 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

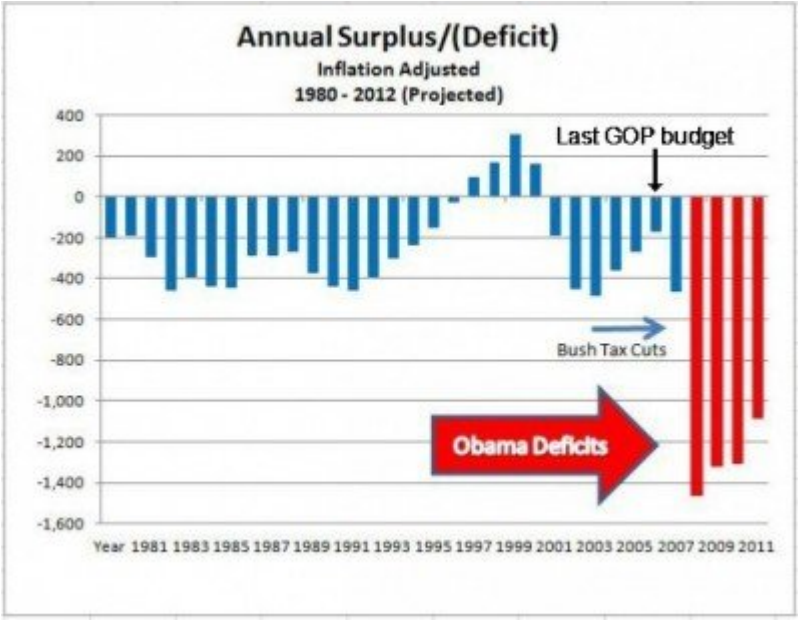

Barack Obama Budget Deficits

What should we expect from the State of the Union speech tonight? We should expect Obama to argue against spending cuts, and for more spending.

Excerpt:

> President Obama will use his State of the Union speech Tuesday to turn public opinion against automatic spending cuts and argue that some of the money to replace the cuts should instead come from higher taxes.
>
> He will use the prime-time TV address to argue the economy would be damaged if $85 billion in automatic spending cuts were to go ahead on schedule on March 1, and will seek to set up Republicans to take the blame if they do.
>
> The State of the Union address is also expected to highlight Obama's second-term shift on the deficit.
>
> From 2010 to 2012, the president consistently argued for new spending to spur on the economy, but also called for accompanying spending cuts and tax hikes to rein in the deficit.
>
> But in his radio address on Saturday, Obama emphasized that the White House and Congress already have "cut our deficit by more than $2.5 trillion" through spending cuts and higher tax rates imposed on households with annual incomes above $450,000.

Look at the graph above. Does that look like we have cut our deficit? It used to be *$160 billion* in 2006/2007 under George W. Bush. Obama ran trillion dollar deficits for FOUR years. How is that cutting the deficit? What is Obama talking about? Bush added $4

trillion to the debt in 8 years, Obama's added nearly $6 trillion to the debt in 4 years.

More:

> A Congressional Budget Office report issued last week found the budget deficit will drop below $1 trillion this year to $845 billion, before falling further by 2015 to $430 billion.
>
> In a more ominous sign, the same CBO report found an aging population and soaring healthcare costs would lead to an explosion in entitlement spending in later years, with budget deficits approaching $1 trillion again by 2023.

Obama thinks that not reforming entitlements is fiscally responsible. Should we believe that he knows what he is doing when it comes to the economy?

The Heritage Foundation says we shouldn't believe Obama, because he lied the last time he gave a State of the Union speech.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Take a look at some of the promises Obama made back in 2009 during his first State of the Union.
>
> ***"I pledged to cut the deficit in half by the end of my first term in office."***
>
> During his first State of the Union, newly inaugurated President Obama vowed to cut the deficit in half by the end of his first term. Instead, Obama has averaged deficits nearly three timesthat of his predecessor.
>
> For those who were concerned with President George W. Bush's $4 trillion national debt, this pledge may have seemed like the "hope and change" the American people voted for in 2008. However, the reality of America's additional debt over the past four years under the Obama Administration is staggering—almost $6 trillion in four years, on track to triple the amount Bush accumulated over his *eight* years as President. Now that Obama is heading into his second term, we've seen quite a change from the Barack Obama who thought $4 trillion in debt was"irresponsible" and "unpatriotic."
>
> ***"Over the next two years, this [stimulus] plan will save or create 3.5 million jobs."***
>
> The President promised great things from the stimulus plan, but as Heritage's J.D. Foster has said, we have to look at his record. He may have promised 3.5 million new jobs, but he's 7.7 million jobs in the hole instead.
>
> ***"…we must have quality, affordable health care for every American. It's a commitment that's paid for in part by efficiencies in our system that are long overdue."***
>
> President Obama's promise that Obamacare would provide health insurance for every American has been proven false. According to the Congressional Budget Office, 30 million Americans are projected to remain uninsured even after

> Obamacare is fully implemented.
>
> The idea that Obamacare would improve the “efficiencies” of the health care system is laughable. Obama’s plan for “efficiencies” in the system was just slashing Medicare provider reimbursement rates to the tune of $716 billion to help pay for Obamacare. The mammoth law is going to take 127 million hours of paperwork per year for Americans to comply with it. And Members of Congress are already walking back their support for the law—they are grumbling about several parts of it and even repealed one part in the fiscal cliff deal.

What the Republicans should do is just walk out of there. Why sit there and listen to high-minded rhetoric that never amounts to anything? Well, except to make Obama feel good about himself.

Dr. Ben Carson: a distinguished scientist who doubts Darwinism

February 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting post about Dr. Ben Carson on Evolution News. This is the same Ben Carson who lectured Obama on the merits of a flat tax and individual health savings accounts at the National Prayer Breakfast.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Ben Carson's accomplishments, personal and professional, are simply astounding. Although the world now knows him as the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at one of the world's greatest hospitals (Johns Hopkins), a groundbreaking surgeon, best-selling author, and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom (phew!), Dr. Carson wasn't exactly born into his success. Raised in Detroit by his impoverished single mother who could hardly even read, Dr. Carson initially struggled greatly in school; that is, before rising to the top of his class and earning a scholarship to Yale University. To say his life journey is inspiring seems both inadequate and unnecessary.
>
> So why did so many Emory professors and students protest his invitation to deliver the 2012 commencement address? Dogmatists in academia disapproved of, and perhaps were threatened by, Dr. Carson's rejection of Darwinian evolutionary theory. As he mentions in his interview at IDTF, Dr. Carson has found unavoidable scientific evidence of purpose and design throughout his medical studies, and not just in the human brain:
>
> I think one of the most damning pieces of evidence against evolution is the human genome. You can see that you have very complex, sophisticated coding mechanisms for different amino acids, and various sequences that give you millions of different genetic instructions — very much like computer programming, which uses a series of zeros and ones in different sequences, but gives you very specific information about what that computer is to do.In the end, Dr. Carson gave his address and President Wagner of Emory University promised to perform background checks on future commencement speakers to screen out Darwin-doubters.

Dr. Carson when on the ID the Future podcast to explain his whole ordeal dealing with the Darwinian censors at Emory University. Have a listen. It's 10 minutes long. Dr. Carson also mentions two areas of the natural world that are at odds with materialist dogma: the origin of the universe and the origin of life (biological information). He also brings up common design as an explanation for similarities between organism, the same re-use that good engineers do when designing software.

I keep everyone to avoid non-quantitative majors in higher education, and to stick with

science, technology, math and engineering. One reason to do this is for the money, but another reason is to avoid being persecuted by the high priests of naturalism. Well, it turns out that there are some areas of science to avoid, unless you know what you are doing. Just ask Bill Dembski.

Obama’s minimum wage hike will raise unemployment, especially for younger workers

February 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama is proposing a hike to the minimum wage rate, so that employers are forced to pay the youngest and/or least skilled workers more money than they are worth. Will this lower unemployment?

When considering what economic policies to adopt, it is not enough to do what feels good. Liberals and conservatives agree that it is good to help the poor. Liberals think that higher minimum wage rates help the poor, and conservatives think that lower minimum wage rates help the poor. This is not a topic that is up for debate, though, because economists across the left-right spectrum *agree* on this one.

Take a look at this post from Harvard University economist Greg Mankiw.

He writes:

> My favorite textbook covers business cycle theory toward the end of the book (the last four chapters) precisely because that theory is controversial. I believe it is better to introduce students to economics with topics about which there is more of a professional consensus. In chapter two of the book, I include a table of propositions to which most economists subscribe, based on various polls of the profession. Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:

1. A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)
2. Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)
3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)

11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

And that's not all. There have actually been studies done on this, and they echo the consensus.

Consider this 2009 article from the Wall Street Journal that discusses some of the studies.

Excerpt:

> Earlier this year, economist David Neumark of the University of California, Irvine, wrote on these pages that the 70-cent-an-hour increase in the minimum wage would cost some 300,000 jobs. Sure enough, the mandated increase to $7.25 took effect in July, and right on cue the August and September jobless numbers confirm the rapid disappearance of jobs for teenagers.
>
> he September teen unemployment rate hit 25.9%, the highest rate since World War II and up from 23.8% in July. Some 330,000 teen jobs have vanished in two months. Hardest hit of all: black male teens, whose unemployment rate shot up to a catastrophic 50.4%. It was merely a terrible 39.2% in July.
>
> […]Two years ago Mr. Neumark and William Wascher, a Federal Reserve economist, reviewed more than 100 academic studies on the impact of the minimum wage. They found "overwhelming" evidence that the least skilled and the young suffer a loss of employment when the minimum wage is increased.
>
> […]State lawmakers are also at fault. At least 10 states have raised their minimum wages above the federal level in the last decade, largely in response to union lobbying and in the name of helping the working poor. Four states with among the highest wage rates are California, Massachusetts, Michigan and New York. Studies have shown in each case that their wage policies killed jobs for teens. The Massachusetts teen employment rate sank by one-third when the minimum wage rose by 88% between 1995 and 2008.
>
> According to new numbers from the Labor Department, in 2008 only 1.1% of Americans who work 40 hours a week or more even earned the minimum wage. In other words, 98.9% of 40-hour-a-week workers earn more than the minimum. The data also show that teenagers are five times more likely to earn the minimum wage than adults. Minimum wage jobs are nearly all first-time or part-time jobs, and an estimated two of every three minimum wage workers get a pay raise within a year on the job.

You can read more about minimim wage and unemployment from my second favorite economist Walter Williams, and from my first favorite economist Thomas Sowell. This is

an issue that matters to them, because they are both black, and blacks are the hardest hit by these policies – even though most blacks support these policies by voting overwhelmingly for socialists.

This issue is simple and straightforward. To help the poorest and least experienced workers, we have to take away any regulations that separate them from their *first* employer. From there, they will gain the experience to move up. Nobody stays in a minimum wage job all their lives. They move up when they get experience and a resume. That's why that first job is so crucial. We have to make it easier for employers to get employees started in their careers.

First black president: unemployment rate up for blacks and women since Obama's election

February 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Unemployment for both women and African-Americans is higher today than it was when President Barack Obama first took office in 2009, according to federal government data.
>
> Despite an economy that has technically been in recovery since June of 2009, many economic indicators are the same or worse than when President Obama gave his first address to a Joint Session of Congress in February 2009.
>
> "We will rebuild, we will recover, and the United States of America will emerge stronger than before," Obama said in that speech.
>
> However, employment for African-Americans and women has not recovered and, in fact, is worse today than it was when Obama said those words.
>
> **At the end of January 2009, 12.7 percent of African-Americans were unemployed. Four years later, January 2013, the situation was worse, with unemployment higher at 13.8 percent.**
>
> Further, an additional 1.2 million African-Americans had left the workforce entirely during the same time period, with the number of those reported as not in the workforce rising from 10.3 million in January 2009 to 11.5 million in January 2013.
>
> People not in the labor force are those who are younger than the retirement age who are unemployed and no longer looking for work, indicating they have either given up looking for work or gone into early retirement.
>
> For women, the story is not much better. **In January 2009, 6.9 percent of women in America were unemployed. By January 2013, 7.8 percent of women were unemployed.**

He's had four years, and his new plan to raise the minimum wage is not going to help younger workers, unskilled workers or minority workers.

Video and transcripts of Marco Rubio and Rand Paul’s responses to Obama’s SOTU speech

February 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio:

Full text of Marco Rubio’s response is here.

Rand Paul:

Full text of Rand Paul’s response is here.

Food stamp president: nearly 16 million more people getting food stamps since Obama's election

February 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Since taking office in 2009, food stamp rolls under President Barack Obama have risen to more than 47 million people in America, exceeding the population of Spain.
>
> "Now is the time to act boldly and wisely – to not only revive this economy, but to build a new foundation for lasting prosperity," said Obama during his first joint session address to Congress on Feb. 24, 2009.
>
> Since then, the number of participants enrolled in food stamps, known as the Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program (SNAP), has risen substantially.
>
> When Obama entered office in January 2009 there were 31,939,110 Americans receiving food stamps. As of November 2012—the most recent data available—there were 47,692,896Americans enrolled, an increase of 49.3 percent.

Not only are we borrowing trillions of dollars to pay for all these handouts, but being dependent on government is not good for people.

Arthur Brooks explains in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Earned success means defining your future as you see fit and achieving that success on the basis of merit and hard work. It allows you to measure your life's "profit" however you want, be it in money, making beautiful music, or helping people learn English. Earned success is at the root of American exceptionalism.
>
> The link between earned success and life satisfaction is well established by researchers. The University of Chicago's General Social Survey, for example, reveals that people who say they feel "very successful" or "completely successful" in their work lives are twice as likely to say they are very happy than people who feel "somewhat successful." It doesn't matter if they earn more or less income; the differences persist.
>
> The opposite of earned success is "learned helplessness," a term coined by Martin Seligman, the eminent psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania. It refers to what happens if rewards and punishments are not tied to merit: People simply give up and stop trying to succeed.
>
> During experiments, Mr. Seligman observed that when people realized they were powerless to influence their circumstances, they would become depressed and

> had difficulty performing even ordinary tasks. In an interview in the New York Times, Mr. Seligman said: “We found that even when good things occurred that weren’t earned, like nickels coming out of slot machines, it did not increase people’s well-being. It produced helplessness. People gave up and became passive.”
>
> Learned helplessness was what my wife and I observed then, and still do today, in social-democratic Spain. The recession, rigid labor markets, and excessive welfare spending have pushed unemployment to 24.4%, with youth joblessness over 50%. Nearly half of adults under 35 live with their parents. Unable to earn their success, Spaniards fight to keep unearned government benefits.
>
> Meanwhile, their collective happiness—already relatively low—has withered. According to the nonprofit World Values Survey, 20% of Spaniards said they were “very happy” about their lives in 1981. This fell to 14% by 2007, even before the economic downturn.

If we really cared about people, we would give incentives to job creators (“the rich”) to create jobs for them. Earned success makes people happy.

New paper: paralyzed man uses thoughts to control robotic arm

February 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Science Daily. (H/T The Best Schools)

Excerpt:

> Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and UPMC describe in PLoS ONE how an electrode array sitting on top of the brain enabled a 30-year-old paralyzed man to control the movement of a character on a computer screen in three dimensions with just his thoughts. It also enabled him to move a robot arm to touch a friend's hand for the first time in the seven years since he was injured in a motorcycle accident.
>
> With brain-computer interface (BCI) technology, the thoughts of Tim Hemmes, who sustained a spinal cord injury that left him unable to move his body below the shoulders, were interpreted by computer algorithms and translated into intended movement of a computer cursor and, later, a robot arm, explained lead investigator Wei Wang, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Pitt School of Medicine.
>
> "When Tim reached out to high-five me with the robotic arm, we knew this technology had the potential to help people who cannot move their own arms achieve greater independence," said Dr. Wang, reflecting on a memorable scene from September 2011 that was re-told in stories around the world. "It's very important that we continue this effort to fulfill the promise we saw that day."
>
> Six weeks before the implantation surgery, the team conducted functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) of Mr. Hemmes' brain while he watched videos of arm movement. They used that information to place a postage stamp-size electrocortigraphy (ECoG) grid of 28 recording electrodes on the surface of the brain region that fMRI showed controlled right arm and hand movement. Wires from the device were tunneled under the skin of his neck to emerge from his chest where they could be connected to computer cables as necessary.
>
> For 12 days at his home and nine days in the research lab, Mr. Hemmes began the testing protocol by watching a virtual arm move, which triggered neural signals that were sensed by the electrodes. Distinct signal patterns for particular observed movements were used to guide the up and down motion of a ball on a computer screen. Soon after mastering movement of the ball in two dimensions, namely up/down and right/left, he was able to also move it in/out with accuracy on a 3-dimensional display.
>
> "During the learning process, the computer helped Tim hit his target smoothly by restricting how far off course the ball could wander," Dr. Wang said. "We

> gradually took off the ‘training wheels,’ as we called it, and he was soon doing the tasks by himself with 100 percent brain control.”

I think that this is relevant to the physicalism vs immaterial mind/soul debate. Here’s a person using mental effort to control matter.

Are women paid less than men because of discrimination?

February 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hans Bader from the Competitive Enterprise Institute explains.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> As *The Washington Post*'s Glenn Kessler notes, government data shows women work fewer hours than men, which explains much of the apparent pay gap: "since women in general work fewer hours than men in a year, the statistics used by the White House may be less reliable for examining the key focus of the legislation — wage discrimination." I discuss some other unfounded claims made in support of the Paycheck Fairness Act at this link.
>
> As Steve Tobak noted at CBS News,
>
> Men are far more likely to choose careers that are more dangerous, so they naturally pay more. Top 10 most dangerous jobs (from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics): Fishers, loggers, aircraft pilots, farmers and ranchers, roofers, iron and steel workers, refuse and recyclable material collectors, industrial machinery installation and repair, truck drivers, construction laborers. They're all male-dominated jobs. . .Men are far more likely to take work in uncomfortable, isolated and undesirable locations that pay more. Men work longer hours than women do. The average fulltime working man works six hours per week or 15 percent longer than the average fulltime working woman.
>
> According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, 92 percent of all workers who die on the job are men, even though only a bare majority of all workers are men. These examples are at odds with the assumption of many supporters of the Paycheck Fairness Act and the Ledbetter Act that pay disparities are simply the result of gender bias or sexism.
>
> The Society for Human Resource Management contends the Paycheck Fairness Act "would effectively prohibit employers from using many legitimate factors to compensate their employees, including professional experience, education, training, employer need, local labor market rates, hazard pay, shift differentials and the profitability of the organization."

A popular article by Carrie Lukas in the Wall Street Journal agrees.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Labor's Time Use survey shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. One would expect that someone who works 9% more would also earn more. This one fact alone accounts for more than a third of the

> wage gap.
>
> […]Recent studies have shown that the wage gap shrinks—or even reverses—when relevant factors are taken into account and comparisons are made between men and women in similar circumstances. In a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30, the research firm Reach Advisors found that women earned an average of 8% more than their male counterparts. Given that women are outpacing men in educational attainment, and that our economy is increasingly geared toward knowledge-based jobs, it makes sense that women's earnings are going up compared to men's.

Moreover, if there is a pay gap, it certainly is not in our major cities, as the leftist New York Times explains.

Excerpt:

> Young women in New York and several of the nation's other largest cities who work full time have forged ahead of men in wages, according to an analysis of recent census data.
>
> The shift has occurred in New York since 2000 and even earlier in Los Angeles, Dallas and a few other cities.
>
> Economists consider it striking because the wage gap between men and women nationally has narrowed more slowly and has even widened in recent years among one part of that group: college-educated women in their 20s. But in New York, young college-educated women's wages as a percentage of men's rose slightly between 2000 and 2005.
>
> The analysis was prepared by Andrew A. Beveridge, a demographer at Queens College, who first reported his findings in Gotham Gazette, published online by the Citizens Union Foundation. It shows that women of all educational levels from 21 to 30 living in New York City and working full time made 117 percent of men's wages, and even more in Dallas, 120 percent. Nationwide, that group of women made much less: 89 percent of the average full-time pay for men.
>
> Just why young women at all educational levels in New York and other big cities have fared better than their peers elsewhere is a matter of some debate. But a major reason, experts say, is that women have been graduating from college in larger numbers than men, and that many of those women seem to be gravitating toward major urban areas.

Here is Carrie Lukas again, writing in National Review, about the real pay gap.

She cites the radically left-wing Time magazine:

> …according to a new analysis of 2,000 communities by a market research company, in 147 out of 150 of the biggest cities in the U.S., the median full-time salaries of young women are 8% higher than those of the guys in their peer group. In two cities, Atlanta and Memphis, those women are making about 20%

> more. This squares with earlier research from Queens College, New York, that had suggested that this was happening in major metropolises. But the new study suggests that the gap is bigger than previously thought, with young women in New York City, Los Angeles and San Diego making 17%, 12% and 15% more than their male peers, respectively. And it also holds true even in reasonably small areas like the Raleigh-Durham region and Charlotte in North Carolina (both 14% more), and Jacksonville, Fla. (6%).

And then Carrie says this:

> As this new research shows, it's women's (and men's) attributes and career choices that determine earnings. Yet there's something troubling about *Time*'s tone, which suggests that we should all be celebrating the idea of women dominating the workplace. To the extent that this trend is driven by men losing jobs and remaining out of work, and young men failing to attain the skills needed to meaningfully contribute to the economy, this is not good news at all.
>
> Of course, we all want women to have the opportunity to compete and succeed in whatever profession they choose. But we want the same to be true for men. Furthermore, given that some women still wish to stay home or reduce their workload in order to spend time raising children, women's higher earnings may actually be a symptom of hardship: More women are having to work more since the men in their lives can't provide for the family alone or because they are providing for themselves.

Hmmmn, if men can't find good jobs, then their wives can't stay home with children, and the government gets to raise them. Why would Obama want that instead of stay-at-home moms?

When Obama talks about "pay equity" and the "wage gap", he is trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist. The only thing that he will achieve is to discourage even more men from marrying. If you agree with Obama's delusions, don't complain when men refuse to get married. Men marry when they can afford to marry, and when they get respect for being the primary breadwinner. Take away the provider role, and you take away men's willingness to marry. That's the way men work in reality.

Childless single adults “co-parenting” children in loveless partnerships

February 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this depressing article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> An increasing number of childless men and women, who are finding themselves single at 40, are now pairing up to build families, minus any romance.
>
> Instead of becoming single parents by choice, these middle-age professional are turning to co-parenting, a growing trend where singles meet online with the sole objective to become
> equal partners in raising a child.

Here’s one case:

> Dawn Pieke, 43, is one woman who turned to co-parenting after her live-in boyfriend, who she was was ready to have children with, cheated on her.
>
> ‘I’ve met so many women in this same situation, who aren’t married and feel like they missed the boat,’ she said.
>
> Ms Pieke said she found a Facebook group devoted to co-parenting, and soon found Australian resident Fabian Blue, 41, who wanted to be an equal partner in raising a child as much as she did.
>
> She wanted a baby, but feared doing it alone because it was important for her to have a child who knew their father. She said, ‘I didn’t grow up with my dad.’
>
> So rather than focusing on a love match, she decided to find someone to share both the financial and emotional stresses of child rearing.
>
> Mr Blue had considered adoption, but ‘figured no one would let a single gay male adopt a child, and I didn’t have the kind of income for a surrogate,’ he said.

Here’s another one:

> Rachel Hope, a 41-year-old real estate developer and freelance writer in Los Angeles, is usingModamily to seek a man who lives near her, is healthy, and ‘has his financial stuff together,’ she toldthe New York Times.
>
> She met the athletic Parker Williams, a gay 42-year-old founder of QTheory, a charity auction company also in Los Angeles, and since October, the pair have been in serious discussions about having, and raising, a child together.
>
> Ms Hope, who has a 22-year-old son and a 3-year-old daughter, both from co-parenting partnerships, and believes she may have found a third co-parent in Mr Parker, revealed that her first co-parent was a close friend – they decided to become non-romantic partners because of their belief that the institution of

> marriage was broken.
>
> While they both had romantic relationships with others, they were first and foremost committed to their son, she said.
>
> ‘I get all the benefits of being married but I didn’t have all the weather patterns of sexual-romantic destabilization,’ she explained to Buzzfeed. ‘He was late twice in 20 years. And my son is extraordinary.

I’m not surprised by this. This is the next step up from single motherhood by choice, IVF and gay marriage. Children have become commodities, like an iPhone or a hand bag. They have no rights, and their needs are being neglected by selfish, narcissistic adults. These adults can’t be bothered to make wise decisions that will lead to a stable environment in which to raise a child. They don’t care that the child will never see the love between his or her mother and father. They only care about themselves.

Jennifer Roback Morse on the injustice of the American family court system

February 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I find myself thinking about life-long married love on Valentine's Day, so I'm going to post an article by marriage-defender Jennifer Roback Morse about one of the biggest challenges to life-long married love.

Excerpt:

> Easy divorce opens the door for an unprecedented amount of government intrusion into ordinary people's lives. This unacknowledged reality is the subject of *Taken Into Custody,* by Stephen Baskerville**.** With penetrating insight, the political scientist exposes the truly breathtaking consequences of no-fault divorce for the expansion of state power and the decline of personal autonomy.
>
> First, no-fault divorce frequently means unilateral divorce: one party wants a divorce against the wishes of the other, who wants to stay married. Kim Basinger dumped Baldwin for no particular reason, unleashed the power of the Los Angeles Family Court system to inflict pain on him and, in the process, inflicted untold damage on their child. Second, the fact that one party wants to remain married means that the divorce has to be enforced. Baldwin wanted to stay married and to continue to be a husband and father. Yet, the coercive and intrusive machinery of the state must be wheeled into action to separate the reluctantly divorced party from the joint assets of the marriage, typically the home and the children.
>
> Third, enforcing the divorce means an unprecedented blurring of the boundaries between public and private life. People under the jurisdiction of family courts can have virtually all of their private lives subject to its scrutiny. If the courts are influenced by feminist ideology, that ideology can extend its reach into every bedroom and kitchen in America. Baldwin ran the gauntlet of divorce industry professionals who have been deeply influenced by the feminist presumptions that the man is always at fault and the woman is always a victim. Thus, the social experiment of no-fault divorce, which most Americans thought was supposed to increase personal liberty, has had the consequence of empowering the state.
>
> Some might think the legacy of no-fault divorce is an example of the law of unintended consequences in operation. That assumes its architects did not intend for unilateral divorce to result in the expansion of the state. But Baskerville makes the case in this book—as well as his 2008 monograph, "The Dangerous Rise of Sexual Politics," in The Family in America—that at least some of the advocates of changes in family law certainly have intended to expand the power of the state over the private lives of law-abiding citizens.

She explains who is really behind the attempt to destroy marriage, and the answer might shock you.

It's important for people to understand the real reasons why people are not getting married, so that we can do something to encourage them to marry that really fixes the problem. Talk to any man and he will tell you that aside from the concerns about the economy and the national debt, the main reason why he is not willing to get married is the unfairness of the family courts. If you don't understand the threats that men are seeing with respect to marriage, it might be a good idea to take a look at this essay by Stephen Baskerville, hosted by the Christian Touchstone magazine. It's a summary of the book that Dr. Morse reviewed. I consider that book "Taken Into Custody" to be a must-read for anyone contemplating marriage.

Democrat senator Barbara Boxer introduces carbon tax legislation

February 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Today, Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) introduced a bill to levy a carbon tax. But, back on Nov. 15 of last year, Pres. Obama's press secretary promised the administration would "never" do so.
>
> According to Reuters, the new tax law "would set a $20 tax for each ton of carbon dioxide equivalent a polluter would emit beyond a set limit, which would rise 5.6 percent annually over a 10-year period."
>
> Last November, however, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney told reporters that would never happen:
>
> "We would never propose a carbon tax, and have no intention of proposing one. The point the President was making is that our focus right now is the same as the American people's focus, which is on the need to extend economic growth, expand job creation. And task number one is dealing with these deadlines that pose real challenges to our economy, as he talked about yesterday."
>
> "A **carbon tax will skyrocket [the] price of everything,"** a statement from Sen. David Vitter (R-LA), a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, warned today:
>
> "It's not just energy prices that would skyrocket from a carbon tax, the cost of nearly everything built in America would go up."

The cost of everything is already going up because of inflation. This carbon tax is just going to make it worse, especially for the poor.

Dr. Ben Carson's story, and hour-long appearance Friday on Hannity

February 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two articles from the American Spectator about Ben Carson to provide background for his hour-long appearance on Hannity's TV show Friday night on Fox News Channel.

First article from the American Spectator introduces Ben Carson.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Ben Carson is fast becoming America's Doctor.
>
> And he will make an hour-long house call with Sean Hannity in a Hannity Special on Fox News Friday night.
>
> Along with a handful of guests in an on-set audience, of which I will be privileged to be one.
>
> Dr. Carson, of course, has been in the news lately for this speech at the National Prayer Breakfast. In which, with a surgeon's precision, the good doctor deftly dissected both Obamanomics and Obamacare — with President Obama seated two seats away.
>
> If you aren't yet familiar with Dr. Carson you should make the time.
>
> Here is a man whose single mother, one of 24 children — you read that right — married at 13, had two children (Ben and his brother Curtis), eventually finding out that her husband had an entirely different wife and family. Which is to say, he was a bigamist and soon departed from Ben's family when the discovery was made by Ben's mother. He was as well a man with an alcohol problem. Mom had a third grade education.
>
> Not exactly an auspicious start for a young African-American kid in Detroit.
>
> But Mom — that would be Sonya Carson — presented with her share of life lessons that every human being walking must face, was paying attention to her two boys. First, she set the example herself. Determined to avoid the welfare system, she worked "constantly," Carson tells us. Her faith in God having her insist to her son, "Bennie, we're going to be fine."
>
> No. she said, you cannot watch television all the time. She laid down a rule — one of many. Young Ben would not be allowed more than two or three TV programs a week. What he must do instead is read two books from the Detroit public library — and write book reports on each.
>
> So began Ben Carson's lifelong love affair with education — with reading. Dutifully, he would make the trek to the library, read the two books of his choice, write up book reports — and get them back from his mother with a check mark to acknowledge his work.

> Did I mention that Sonya Carson couldn't read? No matter — only much later would young Ben figure this out. In the meantime Ben Carson went from being called "dummy" by his fifth grade friends to a top student at Yale University not to mention the top of his class at the University of Michigan Medical School. And now one of the world's most accomplished (not to mention famous) physicians, presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George W. Bush.

Second article from the American Spectator talks about why the left-wing media hates him. This one is by Dr. Paul Kengor of Grove City College. (H/T Ram)

Excerpt:

> Liberals continue their hysteria over remarks made by Dr. Ben Carson at the National Prayer Breakfast last week. Carson, a prominent pediatric surgeon from Johns Hopkins University, dared to weigh in on healthcare — something he knows something about, and certainly knows better than Barack Obama. In the liberal mind, Carson committed a grave transgression; he had dared to disagree with Obama, and in Obama's presence.
>
> In a discussion of Carson's moral effrontery, Candy Crowley, host of CNN's *State of the Union*, asked her panelists whether they were offended by Carson's comments. "He [Carson] was talking about the idea of, you know, weaving the Bible into some objections he appears to have with the president's approach," said Crowley, as if the president would never likewise do anything so outrageous. Count Democratic Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky among the offended. She told Crowley: "I think it's… not really an appropriate place to make this kind of political speech and to invoke God as his [Carson's] support for that kind of point of view."
>
> In truth, what the likes of Crowley and Schakowsky object to is the mere fact that someone publicly disagreed with Obama on healthcare, and especially in the context of faith. This was sheer blasphemy. For liberal Democrats, conservative Republicans are never permitted to use their faith to disagree; no, only liberal Democrats enjoy such freedoms. I could give a thousand examples illustrating the point; I've written entire books doing so. For now, however, here are some particularly salient examples involving Obama, liberals, and healthcare reform:
>
> From the very first year of Obama's presidency, the Religious Left (Obama included) incessantly claimed God's support for their vision of healthcare reform. This was no surprise whatsoever, just as it was no surprise that the liberal press was not only not outraged but silently supportive. There was nary a whimper of protest from liberal journalists, let alone their usual howls (when a Republican cites his faith) of "separation of church and state!"
>
> For instance, in August 2009, Obama addressed a "virtual gathering" of 140,000 Religious Left individuals. It was a huge conference call to liberal Christians, Jews, and other people of faith. Obama told them that he was "going to need your

> help" in passing healthcare reform. Christ-like, Obama penitently invoked a period of "40 Days," a trial of deliverance from conservative evildoers. He lifted up the brethren, assuring them, "We are God's partner in matters of life and death."
>
> Like a great commissioning, in the 40 Days that followed the Religious Left was filled with the spirit, confidently spreading the word, pushing for — among other things — abortion funding as part of an eternally widening "social justice" agenda. A group called the Religious Institute, which represented 4,800 clergy, urged Congress to include abortion funding in "healthcare" reform. To not help poor women secure their *reproductive rights* was unjust, declared the progressive pastors. As the Rev. Debra Hafner, executive director of the Religious Institute, complained, federal policy already "unfairly prevents low-income women and federal employees from receiving subsidized" abortions.

Watch him Friday night for the full hour of Hannity.

My previous articles on Dr. Carson: 1) his opposition to Darwinism and his persecution by Emory University, and 2) the National Prayer Breakfast speech that rocketed him to national fame.

Mike Licona lectures on new insights into the resurrection of Jesus

February 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This lecture is from March 15, 2012, but it was only posted last November. I haven't seen anyone else blog it. It's a quick overview of his latest BIG BOOK on the resurrection.

60 minutes of lecture, 20 minutes of Q&A.

Summary:

- Dr. Licona's background and education
- The definition of history and philosophy of history
- Postmodern approaches to history
- Historical bedrock: facts that are historically demonstrable
- Historical criterion 1: Explanatory scope
- Historical criterion 2: Explanatory power
- Historical criterion 3: Plausibility
- Historical criterion 4: Ad Hoc / Speculation / non-evidenced assumptions
- Inference to the best explanation
- Investigating miracle claims: is it possible? How?
- Objection of James D.G. Dunn
- Objection of Bart Ehrman
- New Testament sources: Gospels and Paul's letters
- The Gnostic gospels: are they good sources?
- The minimal facts
- The hallucination hypothesis
- The best explanation

While watching this lecture, it struck what good preparation it was for understanding debates. And I have a new Mike Licona debate to post next week, too.

If you're interested in Mike's minimal facts case for the resurrection, here's a video on that:

Lee Strobel and Mike discuss the minimal facts approach to the resurrection, as well as the views of skeptical scholar Bart Ehrman, whom Mike has debated several times.

You can donate to Mike Licona's ministry here: Risen Jesus. I do recommend his ministry.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

What causes Colombia’s economy to grow? What causes Venezuela’s economy to shrink?

February 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of South America

Would you like to have a growing economy? Then follow the lessons of Colombia.

Excerpt:

> Colombia expects lower fiscal deficits in 2013 than in 2012, while economic growth is projected at 4.8 percent for both years, Finance Minister Juan Carlos Echeverry said on Thursday.
>
> Latin America’s No. 4 oil producer has seen a strong recovery from the global economic crisis, recouping three investment-grade credit ratings and continuing to reap strong inflows in the mining and oil sectors.
>
> **Presenting the latest fiscal plan, Echeverry said the government had revised down the 2012 central government fiscal deficit target to 2.4 percent of gross domestic product from 2.8 percent previously, and the consolidated deficit to 1.2 percent of GDP from 1.8 percent. The consolidated deficit includes the central and regional governments.**
>
> The central government deficit target is seen at 2.2 percent of GDP in 2013, with the consolidated deficit at 1 percent.
>
> “This fiscal plan is serious, reasonable, we’re not extracting liquidity from the economy, but injecting liquidity into the economy,” Echeverry told reporters.

> The government expects the economy to grow 4.8 percent this year and next. Economic expansion was 5.9 percent in 2011, the fastest growth rate in four years, helped by high foreign investment and strong consumer spending growth.
>
> Colombia has attracted billions of dollars in foreign direct investment over the past decade, mostly into the oil and mining sectors after U.S. military aid helped security forces deal crippling blows to leftist guerrillas and cocaine cartels.
>
> Consumer prices have remained at steady levels in recent months, and economists expect 2012 annual inflation to fall within the central bank's target of 2 percent to 4 percent.
>
> The fiscal plan forecasts full-year inflation at 3 percent this year and next.

Under Obama, the United States has been running deficits of between 8-10% GDP. Revenue is the same as usual, but spending to reward reckless, irresponsible behavior has skyrocketed.

Would you like to avoid a shrinking economy? Then avoid the policies of Venezuela.

Excerpt:

> Venezuela has devalued its currency, joining Iran, Argentina and others whose wars on math brought the same result. Some call this a "restorative." It's not. It's what happens when big government hits a wall.
>
> **Venezuela's monster 47% devaluation from 4.3 to 6.3 bolivars to the dollar, reportedly ordered by President Hugo Chavez from his hospital bed in Cuba, marks the reckoning for his regime's big-spending ways in Venezuela's low-growth economy.**
>
> […]This devaluation is characteristic of all tyrannies, which benefit by effectively expropriating the savings of the private sector through monetary means rather than the more common thuggery.
>
> Chavez's meltdown is coming for the same reason devaluations are also shaking Argentina, which is undergoing a new fiscal disaster of its own, Egypt, which is going through a slo-mo devaluation that's pushing up the price of food and prompted its Islamofascist rulers to actually urge people to eat less food, and Iran, whose madhouse economics has triggered hyperinflation.
>
> **It's how dictators do business. This is Chavez's sixth devaluation in the last decade of his big-spending power, following devaluations in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2010 and 2011. Every one of these devaluations inflates away some of his debts — but at the expense of the country's savings and investment, which are snapped away through inflation.**
>
> What's more, this devaluation, which was done to plug his deficit spending and prop up the state oil company, will only cover 60% of the country's deficit, meaning more devaluations ahead this year, likely to take the bolivar to 8 by year end.

> Venezuelan officials, predictably, claimed it was “good” as well as an “improvement” that protects the middle class against “speculators,” echoing the party line of establishment economists such as Joseph Stiglitz, former Bill Clinton adviser and chief economist of the International Monetary Fund, who in the past has called devaluations an economic ” restorative.”
>
> Tell that to the panic buyers across Venezuela. There, terrified consumers who are buying goods ahead of expectations of soaring prices, while the poor have seen their life savings wiped out.

When Obama took office, a US dollar was worth over 1.20 Canadian. Today it’s worth about 98 cents. He has been devaluing the currency in order to pay for massive government spending. Private savings of individuals have been devalued, as a result. Inflation is a hidden tax on those who earn and save.

In the United States, we are doing the exact opposite of Colombia. We are embracing Venezuela policies, and expecting Colombia results. Why are we stupid enough to believe words instead of results? Socialism doesn’t work. Capitalism does work. We should choose what works.

Video: Dr. Ben Carson on the Sean Hannity show

February 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have no idea how long this will stay up on YouTube, so watch it now!

Here's an earlier interview with Hannity as well. This is a good example of what you see on Fox News. Honest, long-format detailed explorations of the real issues.

My understanding is that HE IS open to running for President.

Related posts

- Dr. Ben Carson's story, and hour-long appearance Friday on Hannity
- Dr. Ben Carson: a distinguished scientist who doubts Darwinism
- Dr. Ben Carson holds Obama accountable for Obamacare and other bad policies

U.S. Department of Justice arguing that homeschooling is not a right

February 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post on the Washington Times Communities page.

Excerpt:

> In 1938, the practice of homeschooling was outlawed in Germany by Adolf Hitler and the infamous Third Reich. It was a rough period in German history, as thousands of young people were being pried from their parents' direction and authority and drafted into the Hitler Youth program, where they were supposed to be trained as Aryan supermen (and women). In a few short years, vast numbers of these youth would be bleeding out on the battlefields of Europe, on the wrong side of the war for the soul of the world.
>
> Sadly for freedom and for many families, Germany has never lifted this archaic and totalitarian ban on homeschooling. On the contrary, the German government seems to have stepped up its opposition to homeschooling over the past decade, forcing several families to flee, and others to enroll their children in state-approved schools against their will. The German Supreme Court has stated that the purpose of the homeschooling ban is to, *"counteract the development of religious and philosophically motivated parallel societies."* It sounds like they aren't really big on religious or philosophical diversity over there.
>
> Some notable victims of this small-minded and grasping totalitarianism are Uwe and Hannelore Romeike and their five children. Uwe and his wife are music teachers and evangelical Christians who for years have been unsuccessfully seeking the right to homeschool their children. The Romeikes withdrew their children from German public schools in 2006, after becoming concerned that the educational material employed by the school was undermining the tenets of their Christian faith, and that the school was not providing their children with an ideal learning environment. "*I don't expect the school to teach about the Bible,*" Mr. Romeike said, but *"part of education should be character-building."*
>
> After accruing the equivalent of around $10,000 in fines, and facing police visits to their home and the forcible removal of their children from the home, the Romeikes fled Germany in 2008 to seek asylum in the land of the free and the home of the brave. Their case was taken up by the Homeschool Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), which helped the Romeikes in 2010 to become the first family ever granted asylum in the US for the protection of their homeschooling rights.
>
> The HSLDA explains, "*The U.S. law of asylum allows a refugee to stay in the United States permanently if he can show that he is being persecuted for one of several specific reasons. Among these are persecution for religious reasons and*

> *persecution of a 'particular social group.' "*
>
> On January 26, 2010, Memphis federal immigration judge Lawrence Burman granted the Romeikes political asylum, ruling they had a reasonable fear of persecution for their beliefs if they returned to their homeland. Judge Burman also denounced the German policy heatedly. In a statement, he called it, *"utterly repellent to everything we believe as Americans."*
>
> […]The Romeikes were able to continue quietly homeschooling their children in a small Tennessee town. For a time.
>
> Sadly, their period of respite was not to last. The Romeikes' case is now before the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, with the US government seeking to revoke their asylum and force them to return to Germany. And the details of Attorney-General Holder's arguments in the brief for *Romeike v. Holder* are sinister, to say the least.
>
> According to Holder, parents have no fundamental right to home-educate their children.

Please read the whole thing. It always amazes me that people who voted for secularism and leftism claim to be Christians. If you are trying to raise your children to be authentic, effective Christians, then you do not promote any law or policy that takes away your right to pull them out of schools that are not partnering with YOUR GOALS. Christians should never vote to vote a public school system that not only is at odds with Christianity and morality, but may not even be doing a good job of teaching math, science and technology correctly. We need to have the option to opt out of attending failing schools. I think we should even have the option to opt out of FUNDING failing schools. I am opposed to mandatory taxation for homeschooling parents.

You can read more about this story here on the Christian Post, as well.

Mormonism and Christianity: which one is supported by evidence?

February 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The scientific evidence

One area where we can test the two religions is in the area of cosmology. What does each religion claim about cosmology?

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed.

What do the best Christian theologians believe about the origin of the universe?

> "By what means did you make heaven and earth? What tool did you use for this

> vast work? You did not work as a human craftsman does, making one thing out of something else as his mind directs… Nor did you have in your hand any matter from which you could make heaven and earth, for where could you have obtained matter which you had not yet created, in order to use it as material for making something else? It must therefore be that you spoke and they were made. In your Word you created them." (Augustine, *Confessions* 11.5.7.)
>
> "As said above (Question 44, Article 2), we must consider not only the emanation of a particular being from a particular agent, but also the emanation of all being from the universal cause, which is God; and this emanation we designate by the name of creation. Now what proceeds by particular emanation, is not presupposed to that emanation; as when a man is generated, he was not before, but man is made from "not-man," and white from "not-white." Hence if the emanation of the whole universal being from the first principle be considered, it is impossible that any being should be presupposed before this emanation. For nothing is the same as no being. Therefore as the generation of a man is from the "not-being" which is "not-man," so creation, which is the emanation of all being, is from the "not-being" which is "nothing"." (Summa Theologica, part 1, question 45)
>
> "Let this, then, be maintained in the first place, that the world is not eternal, but was created by God." (John Calvin, Genesis)
>
> "We firmly believe and simply confess that there is only one true God … the Creator of all things visible and invisible, spiritual and corporeal; who from the very beginning of time by His omnipotent power created out of nothing both the spiritual beings and the corporeal." (The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215)

So who is right? Has the universe always existed or did it come into being out of nothing?

Breaking the tie

To break the tie, we must use the ordinary tools of investigation – logic, science, historical methods, and so on. Let's use science this time.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It is based on several lines of evidence, and is broadly compatible with Genesis. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly

> have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

The historical evidence

You can find other disagreements between Christianity and Mormonism, if you are not so busy putting on make-up like politicians and journalists are. For example, Christianity is monotheistic (one God) and Mormonism is polytheistic (many gods). That means Mormonism is more like Hinduism than it is like Christianity – Mormonism and Hinduism even agree on the eternally oscillating universe. You can read all about it, with citations from Mormon scholars, in this article, authored by Baylor University professor Francis J. Beckwith. Or you could take a look at the history of Mormonism, and see if the claims made in the religious texts of Mormonism are historical. Or you could take a look at the prophetic claims of the founder of Mormonism and see if they were accurate.

Here's an examination of the historical basis for the Mormon Scriptures, for example:

This is how responsible people evaluate religions to see whether they are all the same as the others, and, more importantly, *if one is true*. The point of religion is not to make people feel good, or to make them have a sense of community. The point of religion is to know how we got here, where we are going, and what we are supposed to be doing – *as matters of fact*.

As long as you don't assume, *before doing any research,* that all religions are the same, and that all of their claims are equally untestable, then you can actually investigate things and come to some conclusions. Investigating is good, but watching debates with different views that feature public, testable evidence is also a good idea. The important thing is that you are serious about *evaluating the testable claims of different religions*, and that you don't *assume* that choosing a religion is just like taste in clothes or taste in food, which varies by time and place and is really not making objective propositional claims about reality, instead of subjective claims about individual tastes and preferences. Just because you were born into a country that believed that the Earth was flat (or round) that wouldn't take away the obligation on you to test those views and go looking at other views using the tools of logic, science and historical analysis.

New study by HHS: Head Start early childhood education programs don't work

February 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from last month, but I wanted to post about a government study that evaluated the government's own Head Start early childhood education programs.

Fox News reports on the study.

Excerpt:

> Head Start is an $8 billion per year federal preschool program, designed to improve the kindergarten readiness of low-income children. Since its inception in1965, taxpayers have spent more than $180 billion on the program.
>
> But HHS' latest Head Start Impact Study found taxpayers aren't getting a good return on this "investment." According to the congressionally-mandated report, Head Start has little to no impact on cognitive, social-emotional, health, or parenting practices of its participants. In fact, on a few measures, access to the program actually produced negative effects.
>
> The HHS' scientifically-rigorous study tracked 5,000 children who were randomly assigned to either a group receiving Head Start services or a group that did not participate in Head Start. It followed their progression from ages three or four through the end of third grade. The third-grade evaluation is a continuation to HHS' first-grade study, which followed children through the end of first grade.
>
> The first-grade evaluation found that any benefits the children may have accrued while in the Head Start program had dissipated by the time they reached first grade.
>
> The study also revealed that Head Start failed to improve the literacy, math and language skills of the four year-old cohort and had a negative impact on the teacher-assessed math ability of the three-year-old cohort.

More here from the Heritage Foundation:

> In a newly released paper, Heritage's Lindsey Burke and David Muhlhausen discuss the findings, summarized as follows:
>
> - **Cognitive development.** Of 11 measures of cognitive ability—including reading, language, and math ability—access to Head Start made no difference for either three- or four-year-old students on any outcomes.
> - **Social-emotional development.** Of 19 measures of social-emotional development—such as aggression, hyperactive behavior, and conduct problems—for the three-year-old cohort, access to Head Start was connected to a slight benefit in "social skills and positive approaches to learning," as reported by parents, but it had no impact on any of the other

> outcomes. For four-year-olds, Head Start was associated with a small decrease in aggressive behavior but also appeared to be significantly linked to harmful impacts, including higher teacher reports of "an unfavorable impact on the incidence of children's emotional symptoms," as well as poorer peer relations.
>
> - **Child health outcomes.** Of five measures of health outcomes, Head Start made no difference for either group, including no impact on "receipt of dental care, health insurance coverage, and overall child health status being excellent or good."
> - **Parenting outcomes.** Of the 10 measures of parental outcomes, Head Start appeared to have only one benefit for each group. Parents of the three-year-old cohort reported higher levels of authoritative parenting, and parents of the four-year-old cohort reported spending more time with their children.
>
> After five decades, Head Start continues to default on its aim to boost school readiness. In addition to the program's overall ineffectiveness, there are government reports of fraud in the program. Yet Head Start continues to receive billions of taxpayer dollars every year. Since Head Start began, more than $180 billion taxpayer dollars have been spent to fund it—and Congress is currently contemplating allocating millions of extra dollars to the program through the supplemental aid package for Hurricane Sandy victims.

The article also points out how the HHS sat on the report for 4 years – they finished their data collection in 2008. I found it interesting that Obama wants to spend MORE money on these programs, even though they don't work.

Upcoming apologetics conferences in Calgary, Alberta and Abbotsford, British Columbia

February 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The first one is in Calgary, Alberta.

Here's the Executive Director of Faith Beyond Belief:

Here's the schedule:

> **Friday March 8, 2013**
>
> - 5:30pm – Registration
> - 7:00pm – Introductions
> - 7:20pm – Mini-lectures featuring Craig Hazen, J.P. Moreland and Sean McDowell
> - 8:30pm – Clay Jones: *Why God Allows Evil*
>
> **Saturday March 9, 2013**
>
> - 7:30am – Registration
> - 8:30am – Craig Hazen: *Christianity and the Challenge of World Religions*
> - 9:30am – Sean McDowell: *Apologetics for a New Generation*
> - 10:20am – Break-out sessions
> - 11:15am – Lunch break
> - 12:15pm – J.P. Moreland: *The Case for the Soul*
> - 1:10pm – William Lane Craig: *Arguments for the Existence of God*
> - 2:00pm – Conference finishes

The other conference is in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

Schedule:

> **Friday, March 1st – 7:00 – 9:00 pm (Q&A 9:15 – 10:00 pm)**
>
> - 5:30 pm: Doors open and registration begins.
> - 7:00 pm: Worship and special presentation by Andy Steiger
> - 7:45 – 9:00 pm: Keynote Speaker William Lane Craig – Is Belief in God Reasonable?
> - 9:15 – 10:00 pm: Q & A (attendance optional)
>
> **Saturday, March 2nd – 7:00 am – 4:00 pm**
>
> - 8:00 – 9:30 am: Keynote Speaker Andy Banister – Engaging a World of Competing Beliefs
> - 9:30 – 9:45 am: Break

> - 9:45 – 11:00 am: Keynote Speaker John Patrick – A Medical Doctor’s Prognoses for Culture
> - 11:00 am – 12:30 pm: Lunch
> - 12:30 – 1:15 pm: Breakout Session #1 (Choose a topic of interest to you.)
> - 1:15 – 1:30 pm: Break
> - 1:30 – 2:15 pm: Breakout Session #2 (Breakout sessions will be repeated.)
> - 2:15 – 2:30 pm: Break
> - 2:30 – 4:00 pm: Keynote Speaker J. Warner Wallace – Cold Case Christianity

If you are in Western Canada, this is your chance to get some training!

Peter J. Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospel narratives

February 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Peter J. Williams

This is a lecture I found from British historian Dr. Peter J. Williams.

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?

- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?
- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

You can read an interview with Peter Williams here on Between Two Worlds.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate. That link contains a link to the audio of the debate as well as my snarky summary. It's very snarky.

And Apologetics 315 also posted Peter Williams' assessment of Bart Ehrman's "Misquoting Jesus".

Can science explain why anything at all exists?

February 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This interesting post is from cosmologist Luke Barnes. (H/T ECM)

Dr. Barnes takes issue with Lawrence Krauss' book about the origin of the universe, in which Krauss, an atheist and materialist, tries to explain how something came from nothing without God.

He writes:

> Here is my argument.
> **A:** The state of physics at any time can be (roughly) summarised by three things.
>
> 1. A statement about what the fundamental constituents of physical reality are and what their properties are.
> 2. A set of mathematical equations describing how these entities change, move, interact and rearrange.
> 3. A compilation of experimental and observational data.
>
> In short, the stuff, the laws and the data.
>
> **B:** None of these, and no combination of these, can answer the question "why does anything at all exist?".
>
> **C:** Thus physics cannot answer the question "why does anything at all exist?".

And here is his conclusion:

> Now, why think that neither the stuff, the laws or the data or a combination can answer the question of why anything exists?
>
> **1 can't do it:** A statement of the basic constituents of reality, in and of itself, obviously cannot explain *why* such things exist, any more than the statement "the sky is blue" can explain *why* the sky is blue. So 1 is out.
>
> **2 can't do it:** Mathematical equations describe properties, and existence is not a property. 5 dollars plus 5 dollars equals 10 dollars, but that fact will not tell you how much money is actually in my account. The same is true for all mathematical equations, even the more sophisticated ones used by modern physics. Write down any equation you like – you will not be able to deduce from that equation that the thing it describes really exists. Mathematical equations are abstract entities, they have no causal powers. They can't do anything, least of all jump off the blackboard and pull entities into existence. So the answer cannot be found in 2.
>
> **1 and 2 can't do it:** 1 and 2 together give a *theoretical* description of reality as we know it, so succumb to the same problems as 2 alone.
>
> **3 can't do it:** for the same reason that 1 can't. The statement "I observed an electron strike a screen" cannot explain why there are electrons at all, and thus

> (*a fortiori*) cannot explain why anything exists at all.
>
> **1, 2 and 3 can't do it:** Sitting and staring at 1+2 on one hand, and 3 on the other, will tell you why we think that 1+2 really describes our universe. They account for the data, which is what science does. But once again we see no resources to attack the question of why anything at all exists. We've successfully described our universe. But that is all.
>
> Thus, physics cannot answer the question "why does anything at all exist?".
>
> It is important to realise that no amount of progress in physics will change this situation. Imagine the final equation, *the* law of nature, written on a blackboard to thunderous applause. After the adoration dies down, we will still be faced with the question "why does a universe described by that equation actually exist?".

This reminds me of what the famous physicist Richard Feynman says about how scientists should speak to laymen.

He writes:

> I would like to add something that's not essential to the science, but something I kind of believe, which is that you should not fool the layman when you're talking as a scientist. I am not trying to tell you what to do about cheating on your wife, or fooling your girlfriend, or something like that, when you're not trying to be a scientist, but just trying to be an ordinary human being. We'll leave those problems up to you and your rabbi. I'm talking about a specific, extra type of integrity that is not lying, but bending over backwards to show how you're maybe wrong, that you ought to have when acting as a scientist. And this is our responsibility as scientists, certainly to other scientists, and I think to laymen.
>
> For example, I was a little surprised when I was talking to a friend who was going to go on the radio. He does work on cosmology and astronomy, and he wondered how he would explain what the applications of his work were. "Well," I said, "there aren't any." He said, "Yes, but then we won't get support for more research of this kind." I think that's kind of dishonest. If you're representing yourself as a scientist, then you should explain to the layman what you're doing–and if they don't support you under those circumstances, then that's their decision.

It seems to me that Dr. Barnes is acting on Dr. Feynman's advice, while Lawrence Krauss, in writing a sensational book that attempts to mislead laymen about what science can and cannot do, is not.

I think that science is a good thing, and that it is helpful to theists. It strengthens the theistic hypothesis in many ways, especially with research about the Big Bang, research about cosmic fine-tuning, research about the origin of life and DNA, research about the fossil record and the Cambrian explosion, research in astrobiology and habitability, and so on.

A quote from Cold Case Christianity, by J. Warner Wallace

February 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

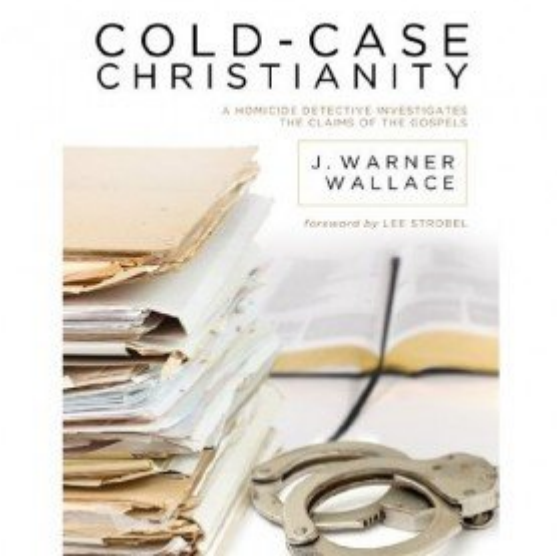

Cold-Case Christianity by J. Warner Wallace

Here it is, from page 51:

> As I speak around the country, I often encounter devoted, committed Christians who are hesitant to embrace an *evidential* faith. In many Christian circles, faith that requires evidential support is seen as weak and inferior. For many, *blind faith* (a faith that simply trusts without question) is the truest, most sincere, and most valuable form of faith that we can offer God. Yet Jesus seemed to have a high regard for evidence. In John 14:11, He told those watching Him to examine "the evidence of miracles" (NIV) if they did not believe what He said about His identity. Even after the resurrection, Jesus stayed with His disciples for an additional forty days and provided them with "many convincing proofs" that He was resurrected and was who He claimed to be (Acts 1:2-3 NIV). Jesus understood the role and value of evidence and the importance of developing an evidential faith. It's time for all of us, as Christians, to develop a similarly reasonable faith".

So far, the book is written in a very engaging tone with lots of detective stories and crime scenes. He focused so far on 1) the role of presuppositions, especially naturalism, 2) the abductive method of reasoning, 3) the minimal facts (he chose death, empty tomb, appearances, transformed lives/resurrection proclamation), and 4) a list of naturalistic scenarios and what is wrong with them.

One concern I have so far is that he quoted Matthew 27 (the guard at the tomb) to support the empty tomb. That is one of the least defensible parts of the New Testament. You cannot just use that to refute a naturalistic theory without qualifying it. It worries me that he used that passage without qualifying it. But his general approach is a minimal

facts approach, so that’s good and defensible.

Oh, don’t panic all of you, I am an inerrantist. But you can’t argue like that with non-Christians.

William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?

February 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Audio of the William Lane Craig vs. Lawrence Krauss debate at North Carolina State University has now been posted at Apologetics 315.

And I also posted some background information on Craig's arguments.

And now for one of my snarkiest summaries, which is fitting because Krauss is one of the worst debaters ever.

William Lane Craig's case

William Lane Craig made 5 arguments for the existence of God:

- the contingency argument
- theargument from the origin of the universe (kalam)
- the argument from cosmic fine-tuning
- the moral argument
- the argument from the miracle of the resurrection

These arguments went unrefuted during the debate.

Lawrence Krauss's case

Lawrence Krauss made the following arguments in his first speech:

- Dr. Craig is a professional debater
- Dr. Craig is not a scientist
- Dr. Craig is a philosopher
- Disproving God's is a waste of my valuable time
- Dr. Craig has the burden of proof to show evidence
- My job is not to present any evidence
- I think that "extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence" is a nice slogan, but I have no evidence for it
- I don't like that God doesn't appear on Youtube, therefore he doesn't exist
- I don't like that God didn't appear to humans until recently, therefore he doesn't exist
- I don't like that the stars didn't come together to spell "I am here", therefore God doesn't exist
- Dr. Craig has to supply extraordinary evidence, because my favorite slogan says he has to
- Dr. Craig talks about logic, but the universe is not logical
- Dr. Craig doesn't have any arguments, just things he doesn't like
- Dr. Craig doesn't like infinity, and that's why he believes in the Big Bang cosmology
- Dr. Craig doesn't like chance, and that's why he believes in cosmic fine-tuning

- Dr. Craig doesn't like rape, and that's why he believes in the ontological foundations of morality
- If people believe in logic, then they can't do science
- The things that science discovers contradict the laws of logic
- For example, Dr. Craig doesn't like infinity, so he believes in the experimental measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation
- For example, Dr. Craig doesn't like chance, so he believes in the fine-tuning of the gravitational constant for the formation of stable stars
- Quantum mechanics shows that the universe is stranger than you think, therefore all of Craig's arguments are false
- My t-shirt says 2 + 2 = 5, therefore all of Craig's arguments are false
- Atheism may look ridiculous, but it's true, and if you don't like it, too bad – because the universe is very strange
- Accidents happen all the time, so that explains the cosmic fine-tuning
- We all have to convince ourselves of 10 impossible things before breakfast, and atheism is impossible, so you need to convince yourself of it
- I don't know about the Big Bang, so Dr. Craig cannot use the Big Bang to to prove the universe began to exist
- I don't know about the cosmic fine-tuning, so Dr. Craig cannot use the fine-tuning of cosmological constants to prove the fine-tuning
- I don't know anything about science, so Dr. Craig cannot use science in his arguments
- Dr. Craig says that the universe is contingent because it began to exist 13.7 billion years ago based on the state-of-the-art scientific evidence for the Big Bang creation out of nothing from 1) red-shift of light from distant galaxies, 2) cosmic microwave background radiation, 3) helium-hydrogen abundances, 4) experimental confirmation of general relativity, 5) the second law of thermodynamics, 6) radioactive element abundances, etc., but how does he know that? I don't know that
- It's fine not to know the answer to scientific questions like whether the universe began to exist, it's more exciting
- Thinking that the universe began to exist based on 6 pieces of scientific evidence is the "God-of-the-Gaps" fallacy, it's intellectual laziness
- But all kidding aside, the universe actually did begin to exist 13.72 billion years ago, exactly like Craig says in his argument
- I could argue that God created the universe 4.5 seconds ago with all of us sitting believing that we heard Dr. Craig, and how could you prove me wrong? It's not falsifiable
- Universes can spontaneously appear out of nothing, and in fact they have to appear out of nothing
- *Nothing is unstable*, and space and time can come into existence out of nothing, so that's not a problem
- Our universe could have appeared out of a multiverse, an unobservable, untestable multiverse that I have no way of observing or testing

- The universe is not fine-tuned for life, and no scientist says so, especially not Martin Rees, the atheist Astronomer Royal, and every other scientist
- What if God decided that rape was OK, would it be OK? God can change his moral nature arbitrarily, can't he?

Here are the arguments in Krauss' second speech:

- We don't understand the beginning of the universe
- We don't understand whether the universe had a cause
- Steven Weinberg says that science makes it possible to be an atheist, so therefore the universe didn't begin and didn't have a cause
- It's just intellectual laziness to say that the universe came into being 13.7 billion years ago, and that things that come into being of nothing have a cause
- Dr. Craig is an expert on nothing, ha ha ha!
- There are multiple versions of nothing, there's nothing, and then there is something, which is also nothing if I want it to be
- There was no space, there was no time, and then the space create the empty space
- I'm going to give Dr. Craig a break
- At least in the nothing there were laws like *F=ma*, and those laws created the empty space, because *descriptions of matter that does not even exist yet* can create space out of nothing
- Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin are good friends of mine and I talk to them all the time, unlike Dr. Craig
- Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin don't mention God in their scientific papers, therefore the universe didn't begin and didn't have a cause
- Maybe there is a multiverse that cannot be observed or tested? And my unscientific speculations are a refutation of Craig's scientific evidence for the fine-tuning
- Dr. Craig just doesn't like my speculations about the unobservable, untestable multiverse, and that's why he believes in the Big Bang cosmology
- And if you let me speculate about an unobservable, untestable multiverse, then maybe the inanimate invisible universes reproduce and compete for food and mutate like animals and then there is natural selection so that the finely-tuned universes survive and now we're in one!
- My cool animation of blue goo mutating proves that the multiverse is real! Empty space is not empty!
- Darwinism, which is a theory about the origin of species, explains the cosmic fine-tuning that occurred at the moment of creation
- The unobservable, untestable multiverse universes all have different laws, I believe
- We don't know what the right answer is, but we are willing to look at any possibility, as long as the possibilities we look at are not supernatural possibilities
- The discovery of the origin of the universe could be an accident, I don't know if the universe began to exist or not, maybe all the six scientific evidences are wrong because if I don't like the evidence we have, so I'll just wait for new evidence to

overturn the evidence we have which I don't like
- Maybe there are other forms of life that are unobservable and untestable that are compatible with a universe that has no stable stars, no planets, no elements heavier than hydrogen, no hydrogen, no carbon, etc.

Here are the arguments in Krauss' third speech:

- Dr. Craig is stupid
- Why should we even care about Dr. Craig's arguments and evidence, we can just count the number of scientists who are atheists and decide whether God exists that way – I decided everything based on what my teachers told me to believe
- I actually know general relativity, not like Dr. Craig who co-wrote a book on general relativity published by Oxford University Press
- What quantum mechanics shows is that virtual particles come into being in a quantum vacuum, and then go out of existence almost immediately – and that is exactly like how a 13.7 billion year old universe came into being in a quantum vacuum, and we're going to disappear *very soon*
- Space and the laws of physics can be created, possibly, if you accept my speculations about an unobservable, untestable multiverse
- I don't like the God of the Old Testament, therefore he doesn't exist
- Groups of people can decide what they think is good and evil, like the Nazis and slave-owners did, and then that becomes good for them in that time and place, and that's what I mean by morality
- Here's something I studied that wasn't fine-tuned, therefore there is no fine-tuning of the universe
- Not knowing things is really exciting! Dr. Craig is not really exciting because he knows things – phooey!

Here are the arguments in Krauss' fourth speech:

- If you will just grant me an observable, untestable multiverse, then there must be some universe where intelligent life exists
- Infinite numbers of things exist everywhere in nature, you can see lots of infinite collections of things, like jelly beans and bumblebees and invisible pink unicorns
- I don't like the fine-tuning, but if my speculations about the multiverse are proven true, then I won't have to learn to live with the fine-tuning
- Inflation, the rapid expansion of the universe which occurs at some time after the the origin of the universe ($t = 0$), explains the absolute origin of time, space, matter and energy out of nothing that occurred at $t = 0$
- Physical processes that develop subsequent to the creation of the universe at $t > 0$ can explain the fine-tuning of quantities that are set at $t = 0$
- Morality is just a bunch of arbitrary conventions decided by groups of people in different times and places by an accidental process of biological and social evolution, but *that* practice over there by *those* people is *objectively* wrong!

- 1 Cor 15:3-7, which most scholars, even atheists like James Crossley, admit is dated to within 3 years of the death of Jesus, is actually dated to 50 years after the death of Jesus
- The historical case for the resurrection made by people like N.T. Wright in their multi-volume academic works is on par with the story of Mohammed ascending to Heaven on a horse

If you liked this, please check out my snarky summary of Christopher Hitchens' speeches in the Craig-Hitchens debate.

Man uses firearm to defend home and 2-year-old son from criminals

February 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

NBC12 reports on a story sure to be ignored by the anti-gun national media.

Excerpt:

> Prince Edward sheriff's deputies are investigating a deadly home invasion that happened early Sunday morning in Prospect. Two of the three suspects are dead, shot by the homeowner in self defense, according to investigators on scene. Meanwhile, the search continues for the third suspect.
>
> This situation began unfolding at about 4:30 a.m. in the 5000 block of Prince Edward Highway, or Route 460. Investigators told NBC12's Kelly Avellino three unknown men forced their way in the front door of the home, where a man was alone with a 2-year-old child.
>
> According to a press release issued by Sheriff Wesley W. Reed, that man called 911 to report a home invasion and said the suspects were armed. Reed also said gunfire was exchanged between the suspects and the caller.
>
> Authorities said two suspects were pronounced dead at the scene, while the third managed to escape on foot.
>
> We're told the homeowner and the child were not harmed.

Just another use of legally-owned firearms to defend property and innocent people. It happens all the time, in places where guns aren't banned by leftists.

Related posts

- Great grandmother fires at mugger with legally-owned, legally-carried handgun
- Man who doesn't believe in guns thanks gun owners for protecting him from burglar
- Man shoots robbery suspect to protect his 2-year-old son
- Woman uses gun to defend herself and her children from home intruder
- 12-year-old girl shoots home intruder in the shoulder with legally owned firearm
- Armed bystander stops stabbing outside school
- 14-year old boy uses parents' handgun to deter armed intruder
- Woman defends herself from intruder using legally-owned firearm
- Recently widowed mother uses legally owned gun to defend her child
- Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home

Did Obama really cut the deficit the deficit by 2.5 trillion?

February 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

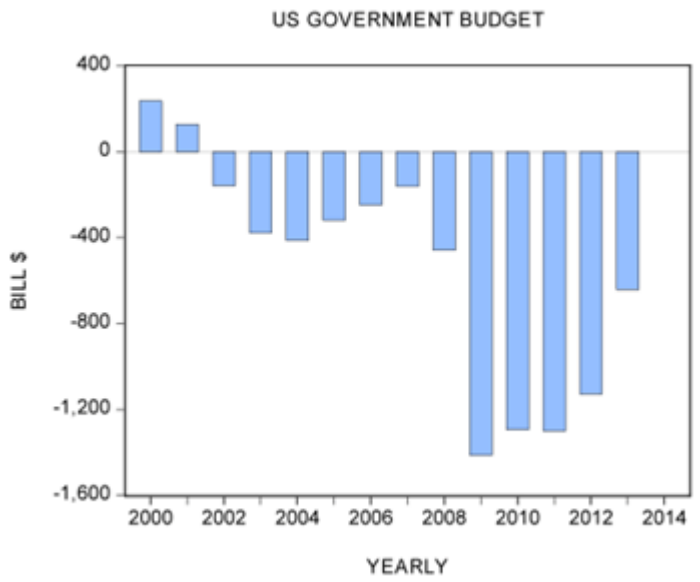

Democrats controlled the House and Senate in 2007. The last budget deficit with Republicans in control was $161 billion.
CNS News takes a look at the raw numbers.

Obama's claim:

> President Barack Obama claimed today that since he has been president both parties have worked together to cut the federal deficit by $2.5 trillion—despite the fact that the national debt has increased $5.9 trillion during Obama's presidency, which is more than it increased under all presidents from George Washington through Bill Clinton combined.
>
> "Over the last few years both parties have worked together to reduce our deficits by more than $2.5 trillion," Obama said in a speech at the White House in which he called on Congress to avoid modest automatic cuts in anticipated spending that are set to begin on March 1.

The facts:

> When Obama was inaugurated on Jan. 20, 2009, the federal government's debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08. As of the close of business on Feb. 14, 2013, the federal government's debt was $16,540,800,290,147.46. Thus, since Obama has been president, the federal debt has increased $5,913,923,241,234.38. That is more than all the debt accumulated by all the presidents from George Washington through Bill Clinton.
>
> […]Federal spending and federal deficits have both increased sharply under President Obama. In fiscal 2008, the last full fiscal year before Obama took office,

> the federal government spent $2.9716 trillion. In fiscal 2012, the federal government spent $3.538 trillion.
>
> In fiscal 2008, the federal deficit was $454.8 billion. In fiscal 2012, it was $1.2967 trillion. By this measure, President Obama did not reduce federal deficits by $2.5 trillion. He increased the annual deficit by $841.9 billion.

Not sure what Obama is talking about with this $2.5 trillion number, because both deficits and debt are WAY UP under his leadership. Why is he lying? And why do his supporters believe his lies?

How does Obamacare cause medical premiums to rise?

February 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The facts are not in dispute – Obamacare will make health insurance premiums go up.

The Wall Street Journal explains what will happen to medical insurance premiums as more of Obamacare is implemented in 2014.

Excerpt:

> Central to ObamaCare are requirements that health insurers (1) accept everyone who applies (guaranteed issue), (2) cannot charge more based on serious medical conditions (modified community rating), and (3) include numerous coverage mandates that force insurance to pay for many often uncovered medical conditions.
>
> […]We compared the average premiums in states that already have ObamaCare-like provisions in their laws and found that consumers in New Jersey, New York and Vermont already pay well over twice what citizens in many other states pay. Consumers in Maine and Massachusetts aren't far behind. Those states will likely see a small increase.
>
> By contrast, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, Wyoming and Virginia will likely see the largest increases—somewhere between 65% and 100%. Another 18 states, including Texas and Michigan, could see their rates rise between 35% and 65%.
>
> While ObamaCare won't take full effect until 2014, health-insurance premiums in the individual market are already rising, and not just because of routine increases in medical costs. Insurers are adjusting premiums now in anticipation of the guaranteed-issue and community-rating mandates starting next year. There are newly imposed mandates, such as the coverage for children up to age 26, and what qualifies as coverage is much more comprehensive and expensive. Consolidation in the hospital system has been accelerated by ObamaCare and its push for Accountable Care Organizations. This means insurers must negotiate in a less competitive hospital market.
>
> **Although President Obama repeatedly claimed that health-insurance premiums for a family would be $2,500 lower by the end of his first term, they are actually about $3,000 higher—a spread of about $5,500 per family.**

But why? How does it happen?

Investors Business Daily has a look at the chain of causation.

Excerpt:

> For years, ObamaCare critics focused on its least popular feature — the mandate that everyone buy insurance — taking their fight all the way to the Supreme Court.
>
> But as ObamaCare's official launch date approaches, even its backers are beginning to admit that the law could actually create powerful incentives for millions of people and thousands of businesses to drop their coverage, despite the mandate.
>
> There is growing concern, for example, that the law's market reforms will cause a huge "rate shock," particularly for those young and healthy.
>
> **A February survey of major health insurance companies in five cities across the country found that they expect premiums for this group to climb an average 169%.**
>
> **The cause of this rate shock is simple: ObamaCare imposes what is called "community rating" on insurance companies, effectively forcing them to charge the young and healthy more so they can charge older and sicker consumers less.**
>
> The five-city survey, for example, found that while the law will jack up rates for the young, it will lower them an average 22% for older and sicker customers.
>
> At the same time, ObamaCare also forbids insurance companies from turning anyone down — a reform called "guaranteed issue" — which also will provide an incentive for some to drop coverage, knowing they can get it back any time.
>
> "Even with the tax penalty … some healthy people would avoid purchasing coverage until they are sick," Howard Shapiro, director of public policy at the Alliance of Community Health Plans, told regulators .
>
> **The problem is that if the young and healthy drop coverage, the result would be what the industry calls a "death spiral." Premiums will climb as the pool of insured gets sicker, causing still more to cancel their policies.**
>
> This is just what happened in states that imposed strict community rating and guaranteed issue reforms in the past. In fact, of the eight states that did so, most ended up either dropping the reforms or loosening the rules after they saw enrollment decline and premiums climb.

It's very important to understand that what Obama did with his health care plan will not cause premiums to go down. On the contrary, they have gone up and they will go up.

GAO report finds that Obama's massive spending is not sustainable

February 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Government Accountability Office is a federal government agency that audits the finances of the federal government. They report to Obama and they are part of his administration. So what do they think about his plans to fix the economy?

Take a look at this article from Breitbart.

Excerpt:

> The Government Accountability Office (GAO)—the personal auditor of President Obama and the federal government—released its assessment of the federal government on January 17, 2013. The report's findings illuminate just how dire America's spending problem is and, therefore, how little the current cuts debated by Congress do to fix it.
>
> The findings of the paper include these excerpts (emphasis added):
>
> - "The projections in this Report indicate that current policy is not sustainable… Preventing the debt-to-GDP ratio from rising over the next 75 years is estimated to require some combination of spending reductions and revenue increases that amount to 2.7 percent of GDP over the period."
> - "It is estimated that running primary surpluses that average 1.0 percent of GDP over the next 75 years would result in the 2087 debt-to-GDP ratio equaling its level in fiscal year 2012, which compares with primary deficits that average 1.7 percent of GDP under current policies."
> - "It is noteworthy that preventing the debt-to-GDP ratio from rising over the next 75 years requires that primary surpluses be substantially positive on average. This is true because projected GDP growth is on average smaller than the projected government borrowing rate over the next 75 years."
> - "If the primary surplus was precisely zero in every year, then debt would grow at the rate of interest in every year, which would be faster than GDP growth."
> - "The differences between the primary surplus boost starting in 2023 and 2033 (3.2 and 4.1 percent of GDP, respectively) and the primary surplus boost starting in 2012 (2.7 percent of GDP) is a measure of the additional burden policy delay would impose on future generations. Future generations are harmed by a policy delay of this sort, because the higher the primary surplus is during their lifetimes the greater the difference is between the taxes they pay and the programmatic spending from which they benefit."
>
> […]This is the reality: when President Obama's personal auditor says the federal government has a spending problem, it indeed has a spending problem—and one

> that is growing rapidly.

Something to think about during the debate on sequestration. We can’t stay on the course that we’re on. Things will not be OK.

Three debates on divine sovereignty, predestination and free will

February 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The two views being debated below are Calvinism and simple foreknowledge. Calvinism is the view that God unilaterally predetermines a selected group of individuals who will know him – the "elect". Foreknowledge is the view that God draws people to him who he foreknows will freely respond to his overtures and come to know him. What does the Bible teach about these issues?

The Calvinist debater is Dr. James White:

> James White is the director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, a Christian apologetics organization based in Phoenix, Arizona. He is a professor, having taught Greek, Systematic Theology, and various topics in the field of apologetics. He has authored or contributed to more than twenty books, including *The King James Only Controversy*, *The Forgotten Trinity*, *The Potter's Freedom*, and *The God Who Justifies*. He is an accomplished debater, having engaged in more than one-hundred moderated, public debates with leading proponents of Roman Catholicism, Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mormonism, as well as critics such as Bart Ehrman, John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, and John Shelby Spong. He is an elder of the Phoenix Reformed Baptist Church, has been married to Kelli for more than twenty-eight years, and has two children, Joshua and Summer.

The Foreknowledge debater is Dr. Michael Brown:

> Michael L. Brown holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and has served as a visiting or adjunct professor at Southern Evangelical Seminary, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary (Charlotte), Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Fuller Theological Seminary, Denver Theological Seminary, the King's Seminary, and Regent University School of Divinity. He has contributed numerous articles to scholarly publications, including the Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religion and the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Dr. Brown is the author of twenty books, including, Our Hands Are Stained with Blood: The Tragic Story of the "Church" and the Jewish People, which has been translated into more than twelve languages, the highly-acclaimed five-volume series, Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, a commentary on Jeremiah (part of the revised edition of the Expositor's Bible Commentary), and several books on revival and Jesus revolution.

Now, let's get ready to rumble!

First debate

A nice friendly debate that introduces the topic. This is the best debate for casual

listeners and non-Christians.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- Introduction to Calvinist James White and some of his 90 debates
- What is Calvinism and why is it important?
- Does God love all people the same way in Calvinism?
- Does God desire the salvation of all people in Calvinism?
- Is the offer of salvation to all people a genuine offer on Calvinism?
- Does Calvinism diminish or augment God's sovereignty?
- Can God accomplish his will by permitting evil creaturely actions?
- Did Jesus die only for the "chosen", or for the possibility of salvation for all?
- Does a person's responding to God's offer of savaltion detract from Gods glory?
- Does our ability to resist God's grace mean that we are "stronger" than God?

There is a little static in the audio for a few seconds every time they come back from a break, but nothing major.

Second debate, on specific passages in the Bible

Same two guys, but this time they tackle the meaning of specific Bible passages.

The MP3 file is here.

The passages being disputed:

- John 6
- Romans 8, 9
- Ephesians 1

Each person gets 8 minutes to exegete the text, followed by 4 minutes of cross-examination by the other debater, followed by 3 minute conclusions by each debater. These texts were chosen by the Calvinist debater.

Third debate, on specific passages in the Bible

Same two guys, but this time they tackle the meaning of specific Bible passages.

The MP3 file is here.

The passages being disputed:

- Luke 13:34-35 (Deuteronomy 5:28-29)
- Ezekiel 18:21-32 (Jeremiah 3:19-20; Ezekiel 22:30-31)
- 1 John 2:1-2 (2 Pet 2:1).

Each person gets 8 minutes to exegete the text, followed by 4 minutes of cross-examination by the other debater, followed by 3 minute conclusions by each debater. These texts were chosen by the foreknowledge debater.

Woman raped at gunpoint in “gun free zone” on university campus

February 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> Recently, Revealing Politics released a video of Colorado Rep. Joe Salazar arguing that college women don’t need guns to prevent rape because they can use whistles, “safe zones”, and call boxes instead. His theory behind this was that just because women feel they’re going to be raped, doesn’t mean it’s actually going to happen.
>
> On Wednesday, NRA News Radio Host Cam Edwards interviewed Amanda Collins, a woman who was raped at the University of Nevada at gun point in a gun free zone. The brave woman responds to the comments made by Rep. Joe Salazar.
>
> “It is so frustrating. I wish I could sit down with each one of these policy makers and have a face-to-face conversation with them and tell them my story, especially the representative out of Colorado who made the comment that he did on Friday – I have it in front of me. He said, ‘It’s why we have call boxes, it’s why we have safe zones, it’s why we have whistles.’ And, I can just go through and argue each one of those statements with the experience that I had.
>
> “For one, all of these are just sentiments that give a false sense of security. In my experience, I know that. The university that I attended, the University of Nevada, Reno, they didn’t have any call boxes the night that I was attacked, they afterwards they installed them. I can tell you that a call box above my head while I was straddled on the parking garage floor being brutally raped wouldn’t have helped me one bit. The safe zones? Well I was in a safe zone and my attacker didn’t care,” said Collins.
>
> Edwards asks, “What do you mean you were in a safe zone?”
>
> “The campuses are designated as a safe zone, or as I take it, a gun free zone. All it does is ensure the perpetrator that they are going to be unmatched when they pick a victim”, Collins responds.
>
> “You were attacked in what would be considered a safe zone, I’m assuming. You were within sight of the campus police department.”
>
> “Right. I’m going to share something this afternoon that I haven’t shared before, and that is that knowing that I could see the police cruisers less than 50 feet away from me where from where I was being attacked- the moment I saw those cruisers I knew no one was coming for me”, she replied.

Here’s Dr. John R. Lott to explain why gun-free zones should really be called “helpless

victim zones”.

Excerpt:

> Contrary to public perception, Western Europe, most of whose countries have much tougher gun laws than the United States, has experienced many of the worst multiple-victim public shootings. Particularly telling, all the multiple-victim public shootings in Western Europe have occurred in places where civilians are not permitted to carry guns. The same is true in the United States: All the public shootings in which more than three people have been killed have occurred in places where civilians may not legally bring guns.
>
> Look at recent history. Where have the worst K–12 school shootings occurred? Nearly all of them in Europe. The very worst one occurred in a high school in Erfurt, Germany, in 2002, where 18 were killed. The second-worst took place in Dunblane, Scotland, in 1996, where 16 kindergartners and their teacher were killed. The third-worst, with 15 dead, happened in Winnenden, Germany. The fourth-worst was in the U.S. — Columbine High School in 1999, leaving 13 dead. The fifth-worst, with eleven murdered, occurred in Emsdetten, Germany.
>
> It may be a surprise to those who believe in gun control that Germany was home to three of the five worst attacks. Though not quite as tight as the U.K.’s regulations, Germany’s gun-control laws are some of the most restrictive in Europe. German gun licenses are valid for only three years, and to obtain one, the person must demonstrate such hard-to-define characteristics as trustworthiness, and must also convince authorities that he needs a gun. This is on top of prohibitions on gun ownership for those with mental disorders, drug or alcohol addictions, violent or aggressive tendencies, or felony convictions.
>
> The phenomenon is not limited to school attacks. Multiple-victim public shootings in general appear to be at least as common in Western Europe as they are here. The following is a partial list of attacks since 2001. As mentioned, all of them occurred in gun-free zones — places where guns in the hands of civilians are outlawed.

Dr. Lott then lists about two dozen incidents – all occurring in gun free zones. The only reliable way to defend yourself against a criminal is to defend yourself *yourself*. The only people who oppose self-defense are the people who think that only criminals should have guns – not law-abiding citizens. Gun control supporters don’t care if law-abiding people are raped, killed, robbed or tortured. They are more concerned about criminals – they don’t want the criminals to be scared or hurt when they are raping, stealing and killing their law-abiding victims.

Muslim terrorists found guilty of plotting largest attack on UK soil

February 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news! The UK Telegraph reports.

Excerpt:

> The ringleaders of an al-Qaeda backed British jihadi group have been found guilty of plotting the worst terror attack on UK soil.
>
> The Birmingham-based gang planned to use eight suicide bombers, armed with guns, to cause "mass death" and "carnage" on the streets of Britain.
>
> They planned to cause more damage than the 7/7 London bombings and wanted to carry out "another 9/11".
>
> Police believe had they been successful it would have been the largest terrorist atrocity on home soil.
>
> Irfan Naseer, 31, Irfan Khalid, 27, and Ashik Ali, 27, were today found guilty of planning a terror campaign after a four and a half month trial at Woolwich Crown Court.

> They were also guilty of raising money for terrorism and recruiting others for a terror act.
>
> […]In a first for the UK, Naseer, a pharmacy graduate, had planned to extract ammonium nitrate – used as main explosive – from sports injury cold packs.
>
> Although no target was settled on, Ali told police they had planned to attack soldiers but they also talked hitting "crowded places" and turning a Birmingham street in to a "little war zone".
>
> […]They also considered other forms of attack such a putting poison in hand cream to rub on car and door handles or even putting blades on the front of a vehicle and driving it in to a crowd of people.
>
> The gang raised more than £20,000 by claiming to be collecting for Muslim Aid to fund their atrocity but lost large parts of it after investing it in the foreign exchange markets.

One has to wonder why the Muslim community as a whole does not speak out more against terrorism. I find it difficult to believe that people who are given everything by their adopted country – freedom, prosperity, security – would turn against them. Speaking as an immigrant to a Western country, I really have no idea how people can leave their homeland and then attack the citizens of the country that welcomed them. As Shakespeare's King Lear says "Monster Ingratitude!".

Can we fix poverty by redistributing money, or is the problem something else?

February 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This little blurb by a doctor is making the rounds on Facebook:

> Dear Mr. President:
>
> During my shift in the Emergency Room last night, I had the pleasure of evaluating a patient whose smile revealed an expensive Shiny gold tooth, whose body was adorned with a wide assortment of elaborate and costly tattoos, who wore a very expensive brand of tennis shoes and who chatted on a new cellular telephone equipped with a popular R&B ringtone.
>
> While glancing over her Patient chart, I happened to notice that her payer status was listed as "Medicaid"! During my examination of her, the patient informed me that she smokes more than one costly pack of cigarettes every day and somehow still has money to buy pretzels and beer.
>
> And, you and our Congress expect me to pay for this woman's health care?
>
> I contend that our nation's "health care crisis" is not the result of a shortage of quality hospitals, doctors or nurses. Rather, it is the result of a "crisis of culture", a culture in which it is perfectly acceptable to spend money on luxuries and vices while refusing to take care of one's self or, heaven forbid, purchase health insurance.
>
> It is a culture based on the irresponsible credo that "I can do whatever I want to because someone else will always take care of me". Once you fix this "culture crisis" that rewards irresponsibility and dependency, you'll be amazed at how quickly our nation's health care difficulties will disappear.
>
> Respectfully,
> STARNER JONES, MD

My first reaction to this thing was HOAX, but Snopes says it's not a hoax. In fact, it was a letter published in a newspaper.

And there was even a follow-up letter by the same doctor:

> I continue to receive numerous phone calls, letters, emails and face-to-face comments about my letter ("Why Pay For the Care of the Careless") which appeared in your newspaper a few months ago.
>
> Most people express highest approval for the opinion set forth. Indeed, the truth has an illuminating quality all its own.
>
> However, a few have disagreed and all of them falsely assume that a person who holds the views which I espouse must have been raised in a privileged home.

> Nothing could be further from the truth.
>
> **I grew up in a lower middle class, single parent home in the rural hill country of Pontotoc, Mississippi. While attending public schools, I paid attention in class and did my homework. I ran with the right crowd and stayed out of trouble. My dedication in school resulted in a full-paid scholarship to the prestigious University of the South in Sewanee, TN. After college, I left to go to medical school with everything I owned in three bags. The rest is history.**
>
> Motivation, not entitlement, is the key to personal success and happiness in life.

The fact of the matter is that it is often people who have come out of poverty themselves who most disagree with those who want to keep people in poverty by subsidizing their poor decision making. I come from a background where my parents were immigrants and my father worked 3 jobs and my mother worked one. We saw people around us who were poor like us, making these irresponsible spending decisions and they were encouraged to persist in it by welfare programs like Medicaid. They were getting tens of thousands of dollars in benefits, and they would lose those benefits if they worked their way out of poverty.

The fact of the matter is that we are doing the able-bodied non-working poor no favors by allowing them to persist in *the worldview of poverty*, which is encourages dependence, recklessness, consumption and waste. Eventually, the state runs out of other people's money to subsidize the able-bodied non-working poor in their perpetual childhood, and then where will they be? We are already $16.5 trillion in debt, and this level of welfare spending is not sustainable. Eventually, they will have to fend for themselves. We will be leaving them uneducated, with no resume, and a host of addictions ranging from the lottery and cigarettes up to drugs and alcohol.

Instead of fretting over feelings, and worrying about being judgmental, we should be fretting about enacting policies that promote marriage, school choice, entrepreneurship, work and so on. Strengthening the family and rewarding hard work. If the concern is that health care costs too much, there are ways to lower the cost of health care with market-oriented reforms. We should be studying the economics of health care and promoting consumer choice, ownership and competition among health care providers. Government is not the answer.

I really recommend that everyone read a book by British doctor Theodore Dalrymple, who gives a close-up view of what government programs actually do to the people we would all like to help. I have linked to all the chapters here, so there is no excuse not to read it and get informed. Then we can read other books on consumer-driven health care in order to learn about how to reduce the cost of health care without growing government.

New study: single motherhood hampers the development of children

February 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal newspaper USA Today, of all places.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> A few small, high-quality programs have shown enduring benefits for at-risk kids. But intensive study of Head Start, the nation's largest and oldest preschool program, finds that the beneficial effects, which are real, wear off by third grade.
>
> The probable reason is not hard to deduce. Children are most likely to succeed in school when pushed by parents who provide stability, help with schooling, and instill an education and work ethic. But for decades now, the American family has been breaking down.
>
> Two-fifths of children born in the USA are born to unmarried mothers, an eightfold increase since 1960. Many succeed thanks to the heroic efforts of strong, motivated single parents and other relatives. But research shows that children of single parents suffer disproportionately high poverty rates, impaired development and low performance in school.
>
> Ron Haskins, an expert on children and families at the Brookings Institution, calls single parenthood a "little motor pushing up the poverty rate." In 2011, the rate for children of single mothers was more than four times greater than that for children of married couples.
>
> Researchers at Princeton and Columbia, following 5,000 children born to married and unmarried parents, have found that the effects of single parenthood seep into every aspect of kids' lives.
>
> A typical pattern in these "fragile families" looks like this: When a child is born, most fathers and mothers are in a committed relationship. By the time the child reaches 5, though, many fathers have disappeared. As the mothers move on to new relationships, the children face more instability, often with new siblings born to different fathers. Boys without strong male role models are more likely to turn to gangs and crime.
>
> Single mothers read less to their children, are more likely to use harsh discipline and are less likely to maintain stable routines, such as a regular bedtime. All these behaviors are important predictors of children's health and development.
>
> It is a tragically familiar pattern. In 1965, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then a Johnson administration official and later a U.S. senator, warned about an alarming rise — to nearly 24% — in unmarried births in the black community. His prescient warning created a furor among liberals and civil rights leaders, who accused him of blaming the victim. The rates are now 73% for blacks, 53% for Hispanics and

> 29% for whites.

That's why I find it so strange that Obama is pushing for more funding for government-run early childhood education, i.e. – "Head Start". The government's own studies have shown that Head Start doesn't work.

In fact, you can argue that Democrat policies actually undermine the family, by paying women to have babies out of wedlock.

Cato Institute economist Dr. Michael Tanner explains:

> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on family structure concluded that "providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women."(9)
>
> Of course women do not get pregnant just to get welfare benefits. It is also true that a wide array of other social factors has contributed to the growth in out-of-wedlock births. But, by removing the economic consequences of a out-of-wedlock birth, welfare has removed a major incentive to avoid such pregnancies. A teenager looking around at her friends and neighbors is liable to see several who have given birth out of wedlock. When she sees that they have suffered few visible immediate consequences (the very real consequences of such behavior are often not immediately apparent), she is less inclined to modify her own behavior to prevent pregnancy.
>
> Proof of this can be found in a study by Professor Ellen Freeman of the University of Pennsylvania, who surveyed black, never-pregnant females age 17 or younger. Only 40% of those surveyed said that they thought becoming pregnant in the next year "would make their situation worse."(10) Likewise, a study by Professor Laurie Schwab Zabin for the Journal of Research on Adolescence found that: "in a sample of inner-city black teens presenting for pregnancy tests, we reported that more than 31 percent of those who elected to carry their pregnancy to term told us, before their pregnancy was diagnosed, that they believed a baby would

> present a problem…”(11) In other words, 69 percent either did not believe having a baby out-of-wedlock would present a problem or were unsure.
>
> Until teenage girls, particularly those living in relative poverty, can be made to see real consequences from pregnancy, it will be impossible to gain control over the problem of out-of- wedlock births. By disguising those consequences, welfare makes it easier for these girls to make the decisions that will lead to unwed motherhood.
>
> Current welfare policies seem to be designed with an appallingly lack of concern for their impact on out-of-wedlock births. Indeed, Medicaid programs in 11 states actually provide infertility treatments to single women on welfare.(12)
>
> I should also point out that, once the child is born, welfare also appears to discourage the mother from marrying in the future. Research by Robert Hutchins of Cornell University shows that a 10 percent increase in AFDC benefits leads to an eight percent decrease in the marriage rate of single mothers.(13)
>
> As welfare contributes to the rise in out-of-wedlock births and single-parent families, it concomitantly contributes to the associated increase in criminal activity.

Democrats also support the normalizing recreational sex for young children and handing out contraceptives to students without the permission or knowledge of parents. What kind of lasting bond can you create when people have had dozens of sexual partners and have been indoctrinated to view sex as a recreational activity? It just trivializes relationships so that they about sex and fun, instead of being about self-sacrifice, commitment and responsibility. If we are serious about helping children, we need to keep feminists and government out of love and marriage.

The first thing to fix is the widespread belief that men do not have any special roles, and fathers can be substituted for with welfare checks and government programs. Women need to think through what marriage is like, and then control their feelings in order to choose the right man for the roles of husband and father. That is the real cure for single motherhood. The strangest thing in the world I hear from women is what good mothers they would make, and that’s why they should be allowed to use a sperm donor to have a fatherless child. I think that any woman who would contemplate subjecting a child to fatherlessness by choice is *by definition* someone who does not know or care about the needs of the child. What is amazing to me is many “socially conservative” Christians treat single motherhood as something heroic and praiseworthy, instead of treating it as reckless and harmful to children.

21-year-old man uses legally owned firearm to defend family from three criminals

February 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From KHOU Houston.

Excerpt:

> A 21-year-old man sprang into action to protect his family Thursday night when three suspects barged into their northwest Harris County home.
>
> The young man was home with his mother and father in the 3900 block of Brook Garden when the armed men forced their way into the house around 8 p.m., according to Harris County Sheriff's deputies.
>
> The family was in the middle of baking a cake, when there was a knock at the door.
>
> "I see a young boy and I think it is a friend of my son so I open it a little bit," the father explained. "These guys push and out comes two more, they push me on the ground."
>
> After the father was down, the suspects went after the mother. That is when the son ran and got his dad's gun. He opened fire and hit one of the suspects, who died in the back bedroom. The other two suspects fled the scene.
>
> […]Neighbors said the son was just doing what he had to do.
>
> "People can't go breaking into people's homes and not expect some sort of consequence," said Harry Moulder.
>
> No charges were expected to be filed against the homeowner's son.

Another day, another defensive gun use by a law abiding citizen to thwart a crime. When I read stories like this one, I ask myself this question: what's the liberal alternative resolution to this scenario? They just want the law abiding people to submit to the criminals. The liberal alternative is to let the three people in the home die at the hands of criminals.

Don't believe me?

Take a look at this list of recommendations for victims of rape, which was put out by a liberal university.

Look:

> 1. Be realistic about your ability to protect yourself.
> 2. Your instinct may be to scream, go ahead! It may startle your attacker and give you an opportunity to run away.
> 3. Kick off your shoes if you have time and can't run in them.
> 4. Don't take time to look back; just get away.

> 5. If your life is in danger, passive resistance may be your best defense.
> 6. Tell your attacker that you have a disease or are menstruating.
> 7. Vomiting or urinating may also convince the attacker to leave you alone.
> 8. Yelling, hitting or biting may give you a chance to escape, do it!
> 9. Understand that some actions on your part might lead to more harm.
> 10. Remember, every emergency situation is different. Only you can decide which action is most appropriate.

That's the best campus leftists can do for law-abiding victims of crime. Pee on yourself and maybe your rapist will go away. But you can't own a gun, because guns scare criminals with their loud noises.

Related posts

- Woman raped at gunpoint in "gun free zone" on university campus
- Man uses firearm to defend home and 2-year-old son from criminals
- Great grandmother fires at mugger with legally-owned, legally-carried handgun
- Man who doesn't believe in guns thanks gun owners for protecting him from burglar
- Man shoots robbery suspect to protect his 2-year-old son
- Woman uses gun to defend herself and her children from home intruder
- 12-year-old girl shoots home intruder in the shoulder with legally owned firearm
- Armed bystander stops stabbing outside school
- 14-year old boy uses parents' handgun to deter armed intruder
- Woman defends herself from intruder using legally-owned firearm
- Recently widowed mother uses legally owned gun to defend her child
- Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home

Is the concept of moral responsibility compatible with physicalism / materialism?

February 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 linked to this post by J. Warner Wallace. Excerpt:

> When examining the causes for an event (such as a death) we can separate them into two categories: event causation and agent causation (prior physical events cause things to happen and free agents cause things to happen). It's important to recognize that free agents alone have the freedom to act or respond without a prior physical causal event. Physical objects, like dominoes, cannot cause themselves to fall over; they require a prior event to cause them to fall. But you and I have the ability to cause the first domino to fall as a simple matter of choice (we don't need a prior event to cause this action). You can't blame a car for running over a victim; the car is simply a physical object subject to a series of physical processes, none of which can be held morally culpable. But we *can* blame the*driver* of the car for driving the car over the victim. The driver is a free agent, and we recognize that his choices are just that: free choices. The driver is not like the car. His choice is not simply the result of a series of purely physical processes, like dominoes falling. He had the freedom to choose otherwise, and this is why we seek to arrest and prosecute him.
>
> Our recognition of the moral culpability of the driver (rather than the car) is an admission that materialism (physicalism) fails to explain who we are as humans. Consider the following argument:
>
> **No Physical System is a Free Agent**
> Physical systems are either "determined" (one event necessarily following the other) or "random"
>
> **Therefore No Physical System Has Moral Responsibility**
> Moral responsibility requires moral freedom of choice
>
> **Human Beings DO Have Moral Responsibility**
> We recognize that each of us has the responsibility *and choice* to act morally, and indeed, we seek to hold each other legally accountable for each other's free-will choices
>
> **Therefore, Human Beings Are NOT Simply Physical Systems**
> Our recognition of moral responsibility and our efforts to hold each other accountable are irrational and unwarranted if humans are merely physical systems
>
> If we, as humans, are only physical systems (merely matter), we ought to stop trying to hold each other accountable for misbehavior. In fact, there can be

> no *misbehavior* if we are only physical brains and bodies; there can only be *behavior*. Our actions have no moral content at all unless we truly have the freedom to choose and the ability to break the bondage of physical event causation.

I finally learned what the "Twinkie defense" was by reading that post. It's worth it for that reason alone.

This quote by JWW reminded me of a famous chapter in Theodore Dalrymple's famous book "Life at the Bottom", in which he explains the worldview of the lower classes in Britain. The chapter is called "The Knife Went In", and it shows how people in the underclass describe their crimes in a way that completely minimizes their own free choices and their own responsibilities.

Take a look:

> It is a mistake to suppose that all men, or at least all Englishmen, want to be free. On the contrary, if freedom entails responsibility, many of them want none of it. They would happily exchange their liberty for a modest (if illusory) security. Even those who claim to cherish their freedom are rather less enthusiastic about taking the consequences of their actions. The aim of untold millions is to be free to do exactly as they choose and for someone else to pay when things go wrong.
>
> In the past few decades, a peculiar and distinctive psychology has emerged in England. Gone are the civility, sturdy independence, and admirable stoicism that carried the English through the war years. It has been replaced by a constant whine of excuses, complaint, and special pleading. The collapse of the British character has been as swift and complete as the collapse of British power.
>
> Listening as I do every day to the accounts people give of their lives, I am struck by the very small part in them which they ascribe to their own efforts, choices, and actions. Implicitly, they disagree with Bacon's famous dictum that "chiefly the mould of a man's fortune is in his own hands." Instead, they experience themselves as putty in the hands of fate.
>
> It is instructive to listen to the language they use to describe their lives. The language of prisoners in particular teaches much about the dishonest fatalism with which people seek to explain themselves to others, especially when those others are in a position to help them in some way. As a doctor who sees patients in a prison once or twice a week, I am fascinated by prisoners' use of the passive mood and other modes of speech that are supposed to indicate their helplessness. They describe themselves as the marionettes of happenstance.
>
> Not long ago, a murderer entered my room in the prison shortly after his arrest to seek a prescription for the methadone to which he was addicted. I told him that I would prescribe a reducing dose, and that within a relatively short time my prescription would cease. I would not prescribe a maintenance dose for a man with a life sentence.

> “Yes,” he said, “it’s just my luck to be here on this charge.”
>
> Luck? He had already served a dozen prison sentences, many of them for violence, and on the night in question had carried a knife with him, which he must have known from experience that he was inclined to use. But it was the victim of the stabbing who was the real author of the killer’s action: if he hadn’t been there, he wouldn’t have been stabbed.
>
> My murderer was by no means alone in explaining his deed as due to circumstances beyond his control. As it happens, there are three stabbers (two of them unto death) at present in the prison who used precisely the same expression when describing to me what happened. “The knife went in,” they said when pressed to recover their allegedly lost memories of the deed.
>
> The knife went in—unguided by human hand, apparently. That the long-hated victims were sought out, and the knives carried to the scene of the crimes, was as nothing compared with the willpower possessed by the inanimate knives themselves, which determined the unfortunate outcome.

I wonder how much the secularism and atheism of the Britain academics has now seeped down to the lower classes and caused them to view themselves as lumps of meat or animals, rather than responsible free agents. Britain is the country of Charles Darwin and the idea of unguided Darwinian evolution. If you believe that you are an animal who evolved by accident in an accidental universe, then you don’t believe in free will, moral choices or moral obligations. The funniest thing in the world to me is how atheists go about their lives helping themselves to moral language that is not grounded by their worldview. Like parrots who have been trained to talk about the stock market. There is no realm of objective moral values and duties on atheism, so why are they using moral language and making moral judgments? On their view right and wrong are just social customs and conventions that vary by time and place, and human actions are biologically determined anyway. There are no choices. There is no responsibility.

You can read the whole Dalrymple book for free online, and I’ve linked to all the chapters in this one post.

Hollywood selects leftist propaganda movie “Argo” for “Best Picture” Oscar

February 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

As USA Today reports, the truth is that the Canadians did almost all of the work of the rescue mission.

Excerpt:

> The former Canadian ambassador to Iran who protected Americans at great personal risk during the 1979 Iran hostage crisis says it will reflect poorly on Ben Affleck if he doesn’t say a few words about Canada’s role should the director’s film “Argo” win the Oscar for best picture Sunday.
>
> But Ken Taylor — who said he feels slighted by the movie because it makes Canada look like a meek observer to CIA heroics in the rescue of six U.S. Embassy staff members caught in the crisis — is not expecting it.
>
> “I would hope he would. If he doesn’t then it’s a further reflection,” Taylor told The Associated Press. But the 78-year-old Taylor added that given what’s happened in the last few months, “I’m not necessarily anticipating anything.”
>
> Taylor kept the Americans hidden at his residence and the home of his deputy, John Sheardown, in Tehran and facilitated their escape by arranging plane tickets and persuading the Ottawa government to issue fake passports. He also agreed to go along with the CIA’s film production cover story to get the Americans out of Iran.
>
> Taylor became a hero in Canada and the United States afterward. He felt the role that he and other Canadians played in helping the Americans to freedom was minimized in the film.
>
> “In general it makes it seem like the Canadians were just along for the ride. The Canadians were brave. Period,” Taylor said.
>
> […][Former U.S. President Jimmy] Carter appeared on CNN on Thursday night and said “90 percent of the contributions to the ideas and the consummation of the plan was Canadian,” but the film “gives almost full credit to the American CIA.”
>
> Carter also called “Argo” a complete distortion of what happened when he accepted an honorary degree from Queen’s University in Canada in November.
>
> “I saw the movie Argo recently and I was taken aback by its distortion of what happened because almost everything that was heroic, or courageous or innovative was done by Canada and not the United States,” Carter said.
>
> Taylor said there would be no movie without the Canadians.
>
> “We took the six in without being asked so it starts there,” Taylor said. “And the

> fact that we got them out with some help from the CIA then that's where the story loses itself. I think Jimmy Carter has it about right, it was 90 percent Canada, 10 percent the CIA."
>
> He said CIA agent Tony Mendez, played by Affleck in the film, was only in Iran for a day and a half.

So, naturally, it gets the Oscar for Best Picture. It's a fake movie, and that's what we expect from uneducated artists who play make-believe for a living. The real Best Picture of 2012 was Dinesh D'Souza's "2016", but they'll never pick that, because it told the truth. It was not even included as a nominee for Best Documentary, although it made more money than all the 15 nominees for Best Documentary, combined.

Black-listed “2016” grossed more than all 15 “Best Documentary” Oscar nominees combined

February 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> **“2016: Obama’s America,” a conservative documentary, raked in more money than all the 15 films being considered for the Best Documentary Academy Award combined.** But the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences on Monday announced “2016″ won’t even get a shot to win a nomination for the award.
>
> Gerald Molen, the Oscar-winning producer of “Schindler’s List” and “2016,” blames Hollywood’s “bias against anything from a conservative point of view” for the Academy Award snub, according to The Hollywood Reporter.
>
> The film, directed by conservative author Dinesh D’Souza, earned $33.4 million nationwide, making it the highest-grossing documentary of the year.

The Independent Journal explains who is responsible.

Excerpt:

> The left-wing media keep pretending there is no “gray-list” in Hollywood, but it’s crystal clear that there is a kind of reverse McCarthyism in the ranks of the entertainment elite. D’Souza’s smash-hit biographical film about Barack Obama is the second-highest grossing political documentary of all time, taking backseat only to Michael Moore’s anti-Bush conspiracy film Fahrenheit 9/11. But forget about that being enough to qualify *2016* for nomination at the upcoming Oscars.
>
> Professed communist and multi-millionaire Michael Moore is currently the Academy Award Governor for documentaries, just for a bit of perspective (can anyone imagine a conservative like Dinesh D’Souza in that role?). Since D’Souza’s film is a fact-driven critique of Barack Obama’s past, rather than a herald of the ‘triumphant’ Obama narrative (complete with soaring gospel hymnals), no one expected *2016* to make the Oscar short-list for documentaries. But its erasure from history at the February 26th Oscars will be merely another confirmation of Hollywood’s left-wing bias.
>
> […]**Today’s left-wing bias can easily be seen regarding *2016* by the wide gulf in reviews between the critics and the audience on the popular film review site *Rotten Tomatoes*. While critics gave *2016*a dismal 27% review, the audience mostly enjoyed the film at 75%.** This is one of the widest disparities this user has ever seen on the website. By comparison, Michael Moore’s *Fahrenheit 9/11* was liked by 83% of critics and 69% of audiences; while

> Al Gore's discredited Oscar-winning flick *An Inconvenient Truth* garnered 93% positive critical review to an audience approval clip of 75%.

Had you heard about 2016? I blogged about it several times, and Reformed Seth sent me this interview with Dinesh D'Souza, where you can learn more. He's being interviewed by Stanley Fish in that interview.

Should you be giving a dime of your money to Hollywood? I almost never go to the movie theater, except to see movies like Expelled, the Great Raid, Bella and 2016. You can purchase a DVD of 2016 from Amazon.com.

Related posts

- Dinesh D'Souza draws inept response from Obama for his 2016 documentary
- 2016 movie reveals some of the radical influences on Barack Obama
- 2016 is the top conservative political documentary of all time
- Looking for a good movie this weekend? Try Dinesh D'Souza's "2016″

Jerry Walls lectures on objections to Calvinism

February 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

WARNING: This lecture is a very sharp and pointed critique of Calvinist theology. Viewer discretion is advised.

In Protestant Christianity, there is a division between people who accept Calvinist doctrines and those who don't. Both groups think that the other group are genuine Christians, but the debate has more to do with the human free will, human responsibility and who God loves.

About Dr. Jerry Walls:

- BA in Religion and Philosophy, Houghton College
- MDiv, Princeton Seminary
- STM, Yale Divinity School
- PhD in Philosophy, Notre Dame

He is a professor at Houston Baptist University. You can find a more detailed profile here.

Dr. Walls is Protestant (like me). He is a substance dualist (like me). And he believes in a real eternal Hell (like me). And he is very, very assertive. Definitely no confidence problems here. And you're not going to have a problem keeping your attention on this lecture!

Note that I do not agree with or endorse Dr. Walls on all of his views.

Here's the lecture: (64 minutes)

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- What are the main doctrines of Calvinism? (TULIP)
- A look at the Westminster Confession
- The nature of freedom and free will
- Calvinist doctrine of freedom: compatibilism
- The implications of compatibilism
- Who determines what each person will desire on Calvinism?
- Who does God love on Calvinism?
- The law of non-contradiction
- Does God make a genuine offer of salvation to all people on Calvinism?
- Does God love "the elect" differently than the "non-elect" on Calvinism?

He quotes at least a half-dozen Calvinist theologians in this lecture, including John Piper, J.I. Packer and D.A. Carson. And he also mentions 3 videos at the end of the lecture where he goes over specific Bible verses that seem to support Calvinism (part 4, part 5, part 6 are the ones he mentioned).

This lecture is very strong stuff, and I think that he could have been nicer when presenting it, but he hit on every single objection that I have to Calvinism, and he worked through my reasoning too! So I really liked that he validated all of my concerns about Calvinism. I'm not as bothered about the problems with Calvinism as he is, though. I don't think it's a big divisive issue. I almost always read Calvinist theologians when I am reading theology. I just conjoin Calvinism with middle knowledge and resistible grace, and it's fine. Calvinists are some of the best theologians, they are just wrong on the things he discusses in his lecture.

You may also be interested in these debates on salvation between a Calvinist and a non-Calvinist.

How privatization turned the worst-performing NHS hospital around

February 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the American Spectator.

Excerpt:

> [T]he most successful of the "drastic" experiments put in place is that much-hated bête noire of progressives and Obamacare supporters everywhere: privatization. *The Mail Online*reports that Hinchingbrooke Hospital, "The first NHS trust to be operated entirely by a private company has recorded one of the highest levels of patient satisfaction in the country."
>
> In other words, the Brits were so desperate to fix their crumbling health care system, they experimented with the private market and it is outperforming government-run health care without breaking a sweat. Hinchingbrooke was, like so many hospitals in the UK, about to go under when a private company called Circle Holdings was awarded a 10-year contract to run it. This is the first time such a company has been given control of an NHS hospital and the results will not come as a surprise to anyone who understands free enterprise.
>
> As the *Mail Online* goes on to report, "The company running the trust has slashed losses at the hospital by 60 per cent and will soon begin to pay… debts built up over years of mismanagement." Though will be no surprise to free market advocates, it has been a real eye-opener to the NHS. Privatization isn't the dirty word it once was in the much-maligned health system: "The takeover deal … is seen as a blueprint for the future of many NHS trusts. The George Eliot Hospital in Warwickshire is already considering adopting the model."
>
> It will also come as no surprise to those who believe the market provides the most efficient health care delivery model that, in addition to dramatically improving the financial prospects, privatization has improved patient satisfaction. Before Hinchingbrooke was taken over by Circle Holdings, patients had a very low opinion of the hospital and the care it provided. Now, this perception is dramatically improved: "Patient satisfaction has risen to 85 per cent, placing Hinchingbrooke in the top six of the East of England's 46 hospitals."

I took a look at the UK Daily Mail article and found an interesting section:

> Patient satisfaction has risen to 85 per cent, placing Hinchingbrooke in the top six of the East of England's 46 hospitals. The feedback is calculated by asking families and patients whether they would recommend the hospital, then weighting the answers compared to local peers.
>
> Previously the trust was among the lowest ranking for satisfaction.

> Figures also show that Hinchingbrooke has risen from being one of the worst performing trusts to one of the best under the private firm's management.When Circle took over, the hospital was consistently near the bottom of the 46 trusts, with many patients waiting more than four hours in A&E.
>
> It now tops the list for short waiting times, seeing 98.2 per cent of patients within the required window.
> The hospital also ranks fifth for the proportion of patients with suspected cancer having tests within a fortnight.
>
> Before the takeover it had missed targets every month since June 2010.
>
> It now treats 89 per cent of cancer patients within 62 days, beating the 85 per cent target.
>
> Circle saved millions of pounds a year by cutting out arduous paperwork and middle management.
>
> Under the former ownership, a lengthy form had to be filled out every time a lightbulb needed changing, in a process that often took more than a week.
>
> The group, which runs independent hospitals in Reading and Bath, inherited debts of £39million with the project.
>
> The hospital had been expected to lose £10million last year, but this has been whittled down to £3.7million by the Circle group.
>
> It made up the deficit from its own coffers, rather than taxpayer funds, and is expected to break even in the current year.

Do you think that we might consider privatizing Medicaid and Medicare, since we know that privatization is good for health care consumers and taxpayers? Of course not, because privatization is bad for politicians, who want to retain control of health care. Privatization is good, but we're not going to get it unless we vote the socialists out.

Mark D. Linville: The Moral Poverty of Evolutionary Naturalism

February 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard an atheist tell you that naturalistic evolution is an answer to the moral argument? I have. And I found a good reply to this challenge in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". The chapter that responds to the challenge is authored by Dr. Mark D. Linville. It is only 13 pages long. I have a link to the PDF at the bottom of this post.

First, a bit about the author:

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> Blog: The Tavern at the End of the World
> Current positions:
>
> - PhD Research Fellow
> - Tutoring Fellow in Philosophy
>
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>
> - PhD in Philosophy with a minor in South Asian Studies and a specialization in Philosophy of Religion, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy of Religion, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
> - MA in Theology, Cincinnati Christian Seminary
> - BA in Biblical Studies, Florida Christian College

Here is his thesis of the essay:

> Darwin's account of the origins of human morality is at once elegant, ingenious, and, I shall argue, woefully inadequate. In particular, that account, on its standard interpretation, does not explain morality, but, rather, explains it away . We learn from Darwin not how there could be objective moral facts, but how we could have come to believe—perhaps erroneously—that there are.
>
> Further, the naturalist, who does not believe that there is such a personal being as God, is in principle committed to Darwinism, including a Darwinian account of the basic contours of human moral psychology. I'll use the term evolutionary naturalism to refer to this combination of naturalism and Darwinism. And so the naturalist is saddled with a view that explains morality away. Whatever reason we have for believing in moral facts is also a reason for thinking naturalism is false. I conclude the essay with a brief account of a theistic conception of morality, and argue that the theist is in a better position to affirm the objectivity

> of morality.

And here’s a sample to get your attention:

> But even if we are assured that a “normal” person will be prompted by the social instincts and that those instincts are typically flanked and reinforced by a set of moral emotions, we still do not have a truly normative account of moral obligation. There is nothing in Darwin’s own account to indicate that the ensuing sense of guilt—a guilty feeling—is indicative of actual moral guilt resulting from the violation of an objective moral law. The revenge taken by one’s own conscience amounts to a sort of second-order propensity to feel a certain way given one’s past relation to conflicting first-order propensities (e.g., the father’s impulse to save his child versus his impulse to save himself). Unless we import normative considerations from some other source, it seems that, whether it is a first or second-order inclination,one’s being prompted by it is more readily understood as a descriptive feature of one’s own psychology than material for a normative assessment of one’s behavior or character. And, assuming that there is anything to this observation, an ascent into even higher levels of propensities (“I feel guilty for not having felt guilty for not being remorseful over not obeying my social instincts…”) introduces nothing of normative import. Suppose you encounter a man who neither feels the pull of social, paternal or familial instincts nor is in the least bit concerned over his apparent lack of conscience. What, from a strictly Darwinian perspective, can one say to him that is of any serious moral import? “You are not moved to action by the impulses that move most of us.” Right. So?
>
> The problem afflicts contemporary construals of an evolutionary account of human morality. Consider Michael Shermer’s explanation for the evolution of a moral sense—the “science of good and evil.” He explains,
>
> By a moral sense, I mean a moral feeling or emotion generated by actions. For example, positive emotions such as righteousness and pride are experienced as the psychological feeling of doing “good.” These moral emotions likely evolved out of behaviors that were reinforced as being good either for the individual or for the group.2
>
> Shermer goes on to compare such moral emotions to other emotions and sensations that are universally experienced, such as hunger and the sexual urge. He then addresses the question of moral motivation.
>
> In this evolutionary theory of morality, asking “Why should we be moral?” is like asking “Why should we be hungry?” or “Why should we be horny?” For that matter, we could ask, “Why should we be jealous?” or “Why should we fall in love?” The answer is that it is as much a part of human nature to be moral as it is to be hungry, horny, jealous, and in love.3
>
> Thus, according to Shermer, given an evolutionary account, such a question is

> simply a non-starter. Moral motivation is a given as it is wired in as one of our basic drives. Of course, one might point out that Shermer's "moral emotions" often do need encouragement in a way that, say, "horniness," does not. More importantly, Shermer apparently fails to notice that if asking "Why should I be moral?" is like asking, "Why should I be horny?" then asserting, "You ought to be moral" is like asserting, "You ought to be horny." As goes the interrogative, so goes the imperative. But if the latter seems out of place, then, on Shermer's view, so is the former.
>
> One might thus observe that if morality is anything at all, it is irreducibly normative in nature. But the Darwinian account winds up reducing morality to descriptive features of human psychology. Like the libido, either the moral sense is present and active or it is not. If it is, then we might expect one to behave accordingly. If not, why, then, as a famous blues man once put it, "the boogie woogie just ain't in me." And so the resulting "morality" is that in name only.
>
> **In light of such considerations, it is tempting to conclude with C. S. Lewis that, if the naturalist remembered his philosophy out of school, he would recognize that any claim to the effect that "I ought" is on a par with "I itch," in that it is nothing more than a descriptive piece of autobiography with no essential reference to any actual obligations.**

When it comes to morality, we are not interested in mere descriptions of behavior. We want to know about prescriptions of behavior, and whether why we should care about following those prescriptions. We are interested in what grounds our sense of moral obligation in reality. What underwrites our sense of moral obligation? If it is just rooted in feelings, then why should we obey our moral sense when obeying it goes against out self-interest? Feelings are subjective things, and doing the right thing in a real objective state of affairs requires more than just feelings. There has to be a real objective state of affairs that makes it rational for us to do the right thing, even when the right thing is against our own self-interest. That's what morality is – objective moral obligations *overriding* subjective feelings. I wouldn't trust someone to be moral if it were just based on their feelings.

The PDF is right here for downloading, with the permission of the author.

UPDATE: Reformed Seth weighs in with his thoughts on this post.

William Lane Craig vs Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God's existence

February 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has done in my opinion. (The other two are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates) This one doesn't seem to get a lot of play on the Internet: there's no video, transcript or anything. But it is a great debate, and on a problem we are all concerned about: the problem of evil and suffering. One other thing – Sinnott-Armstrong is also a very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics.

The MP3 file is here.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

- If God exists, gratuitous does not exist.
- *God exists*
- Therefore, gratuitous does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists:

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

Obama administration to release hundreds of illegal immigrants detained by ICE

February 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I don't mean regular illegal immigrants, I mean real criminals that were being held by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Homeland Security has started releasing hundreds of illegal immigrants held in local jails in anticipation of automatic budget cuts, in a move one Arizona sheriff called politically motivated — and dangerous.
>
> Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu said Tuesday that Immigration and Customs Enforcement released more than 500 detainees in his county alone over the weekend. A spokesman for Babeu told FoxNews.com that ICE officials have said they plan to release a total of nearly 10,000 illegal immigrants.
>
> The numbers, though, are in dispute. ICE officials said that it's unclear how many ultimately might be released and that only 303 have been released from four Arizona facilities so far, though all those are in Pinal County. According to ICE, 2,280 detainees are still in custody in those facilities.
>
> Babeu described the move as a "mass budget pardon" and suggested the administration was going to unnecessary lengths to demonstrate the impact of the so-called sequester.
>
> "President Obama would never release 500 criminal illegals to the streets of his hometown, yet he has no problem with releasing them in Arizona. The safety of the public is threatened and the rule of law discarded as a political tactic in this sequester battle," he said.
>
> An ICE spokeswoman confirmed the plans without specifying how many illegal immigrants might be released.
>
> […]In Arizona, Babeu slammed the move, painting his community as a victim of gridlock in Washington.
>
> "Clearly, serious criminals are being released to the streets of our local communities by this mass budget pardon. These are illegals that even President Obama wants to deport. This is insane that public safety is sacrificed when it should be the budget priority that's safeguarded," he said.

This is Obama's little tantrum. All the time in the last 5 years he has been mocking Republicans for being unreasonable about balancing spending cuts with job-killing tax increases on entrepreneurs and their employees. But the truth is that he would rather release criminals than cut one dime of federal spending. This is the real Obama. Wastrel,

thief and spendthrift. I’m not surprised that he would resort to putting the citizens of Arizona at the mercy of criminals just to get revenge for being forced to cut a couple percent from his bloated spending. After all, this is the same administration that oversees the trafficking of assault weapons to Mexican drug cartels. He doesn’t care if law-abiding citizens gets murdered by criminals.

Obama supporters using fake twitter accounts to push for gun control

February 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation reports.

Excerpt:

> How far would President Obama's supporters go to make his message dominant on gun control? Too far, according to Representative Steve Stockman's (R-TX) office, which identified a number of fake Twitter accounts posting the same message: "I'm one of the 92% of Americans who support universal background checks. #WeDemandAVote."
>
> After President Obama called on supporters to tweet their Congressman with the #WeDemandAVote hashtag, bloggers recognized the duplicated, suspicious messages being aimed at Stockman.
>
> In a press release, Stockman noted that of the 16 tweets directed at him, all were identical, only six were from real people and only one was actually from a constituent. Ten of 16 tweets sent were clearly fake accounts curated for the purpose of astroturfing the Twittersphere.
>
> With no profile photos, no interaction with other people, and mostly following only members of Obama's digital team, the tweeters in question don't appear to be organic accounts. Additionally, many of the profiles appear to have been created less than 48 hours before the online campaign began – and one "user" hadn't sent a tweet since 2008.

You can see the actual tweets in the Heritage post, and then look up the accounts yourself.

The Washington Times covers the same news story here.

How the new Obamacare mandates are reducing full-time employment

February 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Here's a trend you'll be reading more about: part-time "job sharing," not only within firms but across *different* businesses.
>
> It's already happening across the country at fast-food restaurants, as employers try to avoid being punished by the Affordable Care Act. In some cases we've heard about, a local McDonalds has hired employees to operate the cash register or flip burgers for 20 hours a week and then the workers head to the nearby Burger King or Wendy's to log another 20 hours. Other employees take the opposite shifts.
>
> Welcome to the strange new world of small-business hiring under ObamaCare. The law requires firms with 50 or more "full-time equivalent workers" to offer health plans to employees who work more than 30 hours a week. (The law says "equivalent" because two 15 hour a week workers equal one full-time worker.) Employers that pass the 50-employee threshold and don't offer insurance face a $2,000 penalty for each uncovered worker beyond 30 employees. So by hiring the 50th worker, the firm pays a penalty on the previous 20 as well.
>
> These employment cliffs are especially perverse economic incentives. Thousands of employers will face a $40,000 penalty if they dare expand and hire a 50th worker. The law is effectively a $2,000 tax on each additional hire after that, so to move to 60 workers costs $60,000.
>
> A 2011 Hudson Institute study estimates that this insurance mandate will cost the franchise industry $6.4 billion and put 3.2 million jobs "at risk." The insurance mandate is so onerous for small firms that Stephen Caldeira, president of the International Franchise Association, predicts that "Many stores will have to cut worker hours out of necessity. It could be the difference between staying in business or going out of business." The franchise association says the average fast-food restaurant has profits of only about $50,000 to $100,000 and a margin of about 3.5%.
>
> Because other federal employment regulations also kick in when a firm crosses the 50 worker threshold, employers are starting to cap payrolls at 49 full-time workers. These firms have come to be known as "49ers." Businesses that hire young and lower-skilled workers are also starting to put a ceiling on the work week of below 30 hours. These firms are the new "29ers." Part-time workers don't have to be offered insurance under ObamaCare.

> […]A 2012 survey of employers by the Mercer consulting firm found that 67% of retail and wholesale firms that don't offer insurance coverage today "are more inclined to change their workforce strategy so that fewer employees meet that [30 hour a week] threshold."

The biggest problem I have with these socialist policies like Obamacare is that they often affect people who didn't vote for Obama. It wouldn't bother me at all if only Democrats were harmed by Democrat policies. But I don't like it when innocent people who didn't want these policies have to suffer the consequences of Democrat policies. Maybe we just need to be better at explaining things to Democrats using very simple words before the next election, so that they can vote for competence and results instead of voting for charisma and rhetoric.

Journalist Bob Woodward gets e-mail threat from senior person in the White House

February 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

That video is from left-leaning CNN.

Here is Newsbusters with the transcript.

Excerpt:

> Tonight, Washington Post's Bob Woodward alleged that because he is sticking to his guns in insisting that sequestration was the brainchild of the Obama White House, that it was personally approved by Obama, and that bringing up tax increases now to try to resolve the current sequestration impasse is "moving the goalposts," he has been threatened by "a very senior person" in the White House. Woodward said so on CNN's Situation Room earlier today. What's even more troubling is that Woodward told two Politico reporters the same thing yesterday, and that they appear to have sat on the revelation until this evening when the CNN interview forced their hand. Relevant portions of the CNN transcript and Politico column follow the jump.
>
> This is from a rush transcript at CNN. Woodward was interviewed by the network's Wolf Blitzer and Kate Bolduan (I checked the first portion of it against the video; there was no supporting video for the last line quoted below; bolds are mine throughout this post):
>
> BOLDUAN: What do you make of the White House's response to your article?
>
> WOODWARD: Well, I think they're confused. I think they've got this idea. I mean, they put out these long talking points and said, see, even Woodward's book reports that Speaker Boehner said, let's get $600 billion over ten years in revenue in the super committee. That's exactly right. That's not the sequester. And they've said – they have,as you know, I said, get somebody from the White House here, and we'll debate.
>
> BLITZER: We invited the White House to send someone here, to debate this issue with you, and they declined.
>
> WOODWARD: Why? Why? Because it's irrefutable; that's exactly what happened. I'm not saying this is a moving of the goalposts that was some criminal act or something like that, I'm just saying, that's –
>
> **… BLITZER: You're used to this kind of stuff, but share with our viewers what's going on between you and the White House.**
>
> **WOODWARD: Well, they're not happy at all, and some people kind of, you know, said, look, we don't see eye to eye on this. They never really said, though – afterwards, they've said that this is factually wrong, and they – and it was said to me in an e-mail by a top –**

> **BLITZER: What was said? Yes.**
>
> **WOODWARD: It was said very clearly, you will regret doing this.**
>
> BLITZER: Who sent that e-mail to you?
>
> WOODWARD: Well, I'm not going to say.
>
> **BLITZER: Was it a senior person at the White House?**
>
> **WOODWARD: A very senior person. And just as a matter – I mean, it makes me very uncomfortable to have the White House telling reporters, you're going to regret doing something that you believe in. And even though we don't look at it that way, you do look at it that way. And I think if Barack Obama knew that was part of the communication's strategy – let's hope it's not a strategy, but it's a tactic that somebody's employed, and said, look, we don't go around trying to say to reporters, if you, in an honest way, present something we don't like, that, you know, you're going to regret this. And just – it's Mickey Mouse.**
>
> … BOLDUAN: That line clearly has touched a nerve with folks at the White House. There's no question about that.

Why would anyone think that the tactics of this socialist, big-government regime would be any different than other socialist, big-government regimes? They don't like criticism. They don't like questions. They don't like being held accountable.

You can find a list of some of the previous acts of thuggish intimidation against journalists here:

> Hey, Bob, you can't say we didn't warn you. We knew this White House was capable of attacking even the great Bob Woodward for telling the truth.
>
> You could have listened to Michael Barone. He saw it coming even before Barack Obama was elected. In October 2008, he penned "The Coming Obama Thugocracy."
>
> I experienced it when DOJ press harpy Tracy Schmaler yelled at a half dozen reporters, as the White House official did to you, about my under-oath testimony involving the New Black Panther dismissal. Her victims included Pete Williams, Quin Hillyer, and Shayrl Attkisson. After Schmaler's thug tendencies were well known, she was nurtured and promoted within the Thugocracy instead of being canned as any administration before this one would have done to her — Republican or Democrat.
>
> Schmaler has since been appointed a Made Man of sorts, entering the rarefied private sector air of David Axelrod's shop.
>
> Schmaler's story is typical of this gang. Her shouting, threats, and rants at reporters would have rendered her unqualified to serve in the press shop of a state department of agriculture.

Leftists have always been like this – the sense of moral superiority, and the dismissal of critics as immoral. The thuggishness is natural because they believe that their plans can never fail because of their innate moral superiority. If their plans do fail, (e.g. – high minimum wage produces higher unemployment), it must be because some group of people is undermining them, and those people must be purged. It can never be that their plans are wrong and don't produce the results they want. They have good intentions, and how could that not produce good results? Leftists are the same everywhere.

Free speech under attack from the secular left in the UK and Canada

February 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this article from the UK Telegraph by Christina Odone.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Tomorrow the High Court will decide whether a Christian group that helps gays "overcome" their sexual inclination has the right to advertise its services. You may remember that Stonewall, the gay rights group, was allowed to run the slogan: "Some people are gay. Get over it." on London buses. But when Core Issues Trust (CIT), a Christian group, decided to counter with a poster that read "Not gay! Post-gay, ex-gay and proud. Get over it!" Mayor Boris Johnson vetoed their campaign.
>
> If the High Court ruling goes against CIT – as I fear it will – the judgement will prove a setback for free speech, as well as religious freedom. As Philip Johnston writes in today's *Telegraph*, "Just as gays are entitled to extol their own sexual identity, so people who take another view, on whatever grounds, should be allowed to say so, shouldn't they?"
>
> The problem, as Johnston notes, is that "you might think it is right to muzzle such people because, in reality, they just don't like gays and are hiding their disapproval behind a spurious religiosity… In some cases that may be true, but it is not the issue here: this is about free speech."
>
> Our newfound intolerance worries me – and I write more on this on my own website, Freefaith.com. All Britons, and not just those of faith, will be scared of speaking against the prevailing culture. We'll watch our words and our backs, terrified of breaking the unwritten code upheld by the guardians of our illiberal establishment. The punishment is not just derision and verbal abuse; in some quarters expressing the wrong sentiment will mean I'll get a criminal record or a fine. I might even have a minister call for my boss to fire me, as happened to Julie Burchill when she wrote something recently that offended the transgender lobby.
>
> That used to happen, on a regular basis, to journalists living in Stalin's USSR. Any expression of subversive tendency (ie one that did not tally with the regime's own viewpoint) could end a hack's career forever. Or land her in Siberia. Even Lynne Featherstone cannot dispatch her victims in this way, yet. But if tomorrow's court hearing about the Christian advertising campaign goes against them, I will feel the cold winds of Siberia blowing.

It's not just in the UK, but Canada, too. The Supreme Court just decided a case where a foolish Christian (the kind I am constantly deriding on this blog) decided to push Christian

moral views with Bible verses and vulgar insults in public. The Supreme Court decided that his free speech was criminal. (H/T Keith)

Excerpt:

> In an unanimous decision today in the case of Saskatchewan (Human Rights Commission) v. Whatcott, the Supreme Court of Canada struck a blow against freedom of speech.
>
> […]CCF Executive Director and lawyer Chris Schafer said, "The Supreme Court missed an excellent opportunity to rein in the power of various human rights commissions and tribunals to censor the expression of unpopular beliefs and opinions". Schafer added, "While the Canadian Constitution Foundation does not take any position on the content of the materials distributed by Mr. Whatcott, it believes that it is the right of every Canadian to freely and peacefully express themselves without fear of censorship or persecution by the state. Free expression is the lifeblood of democracies and all forms of expression, especially the offensive kind, needs to be protected. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court disagrees."

I think this Canadian story shows the importance of Christians being intelligent about how they argue against things they oppose. Quoting Bible verses on placards and being insulting is not the same as doing a PhD and then publishing quality arguments and evidence for your point of view. All this offensive person achieved was handing the left the perfect case for them to restrict free speech for everyone. Christians need to be smarter than that, and to know that being persuasive means being articulate and intelligent. Only a complete idiot would quote Bible verses to people who do not accept the Bible, instead of using academic books and academic research. And yet our pious pastors frequently prepare lay Christians to do nothing but quote the Bible to non-Christians, so it is understandable. We need to get better at making cases.

Note that these anti-free-speech laws were passed by the Labor Party in the UK and by the Liberal Party in Canada. It's the secular left that restricts speech, not the religious right.

Stephen C. Meyer and Keith Fox debate intelligent design and evolution

February 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable" podcast.

Details:

> Stephen Meyer is a leading proponent of Intelligent Design who directs the Centre for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. His most recent book "Signature in the Cell" claims to show that the DNA code is the product of intelligent mind, not naturalistic processes. Keith Fox is Professor of Biochemistry at Southampton University. He chairs the UK Christians in Science network but disagrees strongly with ID. They debate how life could have originated and whether design is allowed as an explanation in science.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary: (stuff in italics is my snarky paraphrase)

Meyer:

- background and how he got interested in intelligent design
- his research focus is on the origin of life – the first replicator
- summarizes the history of origin of life studies
- authored the book "Signature in the Cell"
- the DNA enigma: where did the information in DNA come from?
- naturalistic explanations of the DNA information have failed
- but intelligent agents are known to be able to produce information
- the best explanation of the information in DNA is that an intelligent agent authored it
- Meyer's book was named by atheist philosopher of science Thomas Nagel as a Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year in 2010
- why is design so controversial? Many people think that Darwin explained why nature appears design
- the Darwinian view is that nature can create the appearance of design using mutation and selection
- however, Darwinian mechanisms cannot explain the origin of the first living cell, it assumes replication, and the origin of life is about where the first replicator comes from

Fox:

- Meyer's argument is not about the evolution of life after the first cell
- Meyer's case for design is about the origin of life

- naturalists do not know a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- there are a number of naturalistic hypotheses for the origin of life, like the RNA-first hypothesis
- maybe in a few years one of them will turn out to be correct
- what intelligent design is arguing from a gap in our current naturalistic knowledge to infer that God intervened in nature

Meyer:

- that's not what intelligent design is at all
- the approach ID theorists use is the inference to best explanation
- you evaluate all explanations, non-intelligent causes and intelligent causes
- you prefer the best possible explanation
- we know that minds are capable of producing information just like the information we find in DNA

Fox:

- living cells replicate, so they have the ability to introduce mutations as they replicate and then some of those mutations can be selected
- so maybe the process of replicating that living cells do created the first living cell
- maybe the first living cell created itself, X brought X into being, self-creation, what's irrational about that?

Meyer:

- the issue is the origin of life – where did the first living cell come from?
- you cannot appeal to the operations that a living cell can perform to explain the origin of the first living cell
- there was no first living cell operating before the first living cell
- there was no replication, mutation or selection before the first living cell
- in fact, in my book I show that there is no known naturalistic mechanism that is able to produce the information needed for the first living cell
- *nothing can create itself, that is self-contradictory*

Fox:

- Well, you are just saying that because something is complex that God did it

Meyer:

- Sadly, no. What I actually said needed to be explained was the information, not complexity
- And we know from software engineering that the process of adding information to code is performed by programmers
- in the absence of any adequate naturalistic explanation for information, we are

justified in taking the explanation that we are familiar with – namely, intelligent agency – based on our uniform, universal experience of what causes information

Fox:

- well, maybe we can appeal to the mutation and selection in existing living cells to explain the origin of the first living cell
- maybe there were living cells before the first living cell, and then these other living cells created the first living cell

Meyer:

- we can't keep invoking mutation and selection when those processes are not operating prior to the origin of the first living cell

Fox:

- well maybe some bare-bones self-replication molecule was a precursor to the first living cell

Meyer:

- even to generate very limited replicator would require a large amount of information
- the argument I am making is – where does the evolution come from?

Fox:

- well, maybe we will think of an explanation for information that is naturalistic in 20 years
- we've thought of explanations to things that were NOT information before
- so maybe we will be able to think of something to explain information based on our ability to explain NOT information before

Moderator: Change topics: the Dover decision

Meyer:

- the Discovery Institute opposed the policy that causes the trial
- the wording of the statute was poor
- the judge was completely wrong in his decision
- young earth creationists used the phrase "intelligent design" to cover their agenda
- intelligent design is an inference using the normal methods of science

Fox:

- intelligent design is a science stopper because it stops looking for a naturalistic explanation
- everything in nature must have a naturalistic explanation
- everything has to be explained using matter and time and chance

- it just has to be that way!!!!

Meyer:

- well, what luck would you have explaining an effect like Mt. Rushmore?
- can you explain that using matter,time and chance?
- Mt. Rushmore was the product of intelligence, not wind and erosion
- similarly, there is information in the cell, and we know that intelligence causes information

Fox:

- So you are saying that we don't understand and therefore an intelligence is necessary?

Meyer:

- no I am saying we DO understand and we are making an inference based on that understanding
- you are the one who is insisting on a material explanation because you pre-suppose materialism
- we know that minds have causal powers, and we can infer mind as an explanation from information

Fox:

- well nature is a seamless chain of material causes and effects

Meyer:

- agents can act without violating the laws of nature
- even humans can act as intelligent agents to create information in books, and they don't violate the laws of nature
- intelligent causes are real, and they explain effects in nature

Fox:

- you're trying to impose on science something to do with meaning and purpose

Meyer:

- no that's not what we're doing, we're inferring from from the fact that we ourselves are known causes of information to the fact that an intelligence cause is the best explanation for information in the cell

Fox:

- *but I am a materialist*, I need a materialist explanation

Meyer:

- mind IS an answer to the how question
- we infer to mind in many other scientific disciplines, like cryptography, archaeology, etc.
- a materialist might accuse an archaeologist of engaging in a “scribe-of-the-gaps” argument, but the best explanation of an artifact with information is a scribe
- we are inferring that mind is the cause from the nature of the effect: information

Moderator: is it appropriate to call DNA “information”
Fox:

- well DNA is just a molecular polymer, any reference to information is just by analogy

Meyer:

- DNA is a molecular polymer, but it also exhibits the property of specified complexity
- the arrangement of bases, which function as machine instructions in a software program, for performings task in the cell
- we have observed that the property of specified complexity always comes from an intelligence

Fox:

- well, maybe there are other sequences that would work, so maybe it’s really not uncommon to develop functioning sequences by chance alone, without an intelligence

Meyer:

- you can measure how precise the functional specificity is in DNA and proteins

Moderator: is Shannon information the same as functional information
Meyer:

- Shannon information refers to the sequences of digits or symbols that do not necessarily have any function, i.e. – a four character string QSZX has as much Shannon information as WORD. However, only the latter is functional against the pattern of the English language. There are arrangements of DNA bases and amino acids that have the same number of symbols/characters as a functional sequence would have, but they have no biological function – they do not exhibit specified complexity

Fox:

- Well, maybe there are lots and lots of sequences of DNA and proteins so that it is fairly easy to get a functional one by chance

Meyer:

- DNA sequences that are functional are extremely rare, protein sequences are even more rare
- this is not my opinion, this is what the research shows – functional protein sequences are rare

Fox:

- well maybe there are other functional sequences that are occur before the first functional sequence that are precursors to the first functional sequence
- maybe there are billions of years of replication, mutation and selection before the first replication, mutation and selection

Meyer:

- you can't get to the first selectable functional sequence by appealing to precursor selectable functional sequences – there are no selectable functional sequences before the FIRST one
- you have to get the first selectable functional sequence by chance alone, because there is nothing to mutate or select before the first replicator
- the chance hypothesis has been rejected because the minimal amount of information for the simplest replicator is too high to get by chance alone, given the resources, including time, that are available

Moderator: *Keith are you confident that naturalism will be able to substantiate these naturalism-of-the-gap speculations that you offer in response to Meyer's actual science that we have today?*

Fox:

- well, it is hard to know for sure because it was just a fluke event
- but there's nothing irrational or unscientific or miraculous about it – the fluke would have a material explanation
- there is nothing that we can detect that would implicate God, my speculations about a fluke which I cannot observe or measure or test would all be compatible with an atheistic worldview that omits God as a causal entity

Meyer:

- where are those material processes that could account for this fluke then?
- the whole point of this argument is that the information in DNA transcends the material components in the sequence
- it's the arrangement of the material parts/letters/characters/symbols/instructions that needs to be explained

Fox:

- Well, I just have a different philosophy of science that rules out intelligent causation a priori

Meyer:

- Yes, that's the difference between us – you pre-suppose that all explanations of natural phenomena must exclude intelligent causes

There is a bit more where Meyer talks about how parts of the cell are implementations of various design patterns (Gang of Four design patterns) that are used by software architects who design software.

Find more posts on Stephen C. Meyer here.

Women who made 11 false rape accusations is finally put in jail – for 16 months

March 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this frightening article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A woman who cried rape was jailed yesterday after a court heard it was her eleventh false claim.
>
> Compulsive liar Elizabeth Jones, 22, was exposed when CCTV footage disproved her allegation against a man she 'did not like any more'.
>
> She had made her first false rape claim in 2004 when she was just 13, Southampton Crown Court heard.
>
> Between 2005 and 2007 she made another eight allegations which police investigated and dismissed, although she was not prosecuted.
>
> In 2009 she was sentenced to a ten-month detention and training order for a similar offence.
>
> Jones's latest victim was a boyfriend against whom she made the allegation after the pair had an argument.
>
> Police began an investigation after Jones, from Southampton, persuaded a friend to report she had been assaulted.
>
> She later went to the police station for a medical examination and repeated her allegation. The man was arrested and questioned for nine hours before being released without charge.
>
> Prosecutor Jennie Rickman said he denied rape and detectives later viewed CCTV covering part of the house in which Jones claimed to have been attacked.
>
> The video did not support her story that the man forced himself on her.
>
> Miss Rickman said: 'There is a history of her making false allegations of this nature and this is the 11th incident.
>
> 'Police had to take her allegation seriously and carried out an appropriate investigation.
>
> 'She was later arrested and accepted she had lied about being raped. She said she did it because she did not like him.'
>
> Jones admitted to attempting to pervert the course of justice and was jailed for 16 months.

What do you think would be a good jail sentence for someone who made 11 false accusations? Maybe if this person got a real sentence, it would deter future false accusations. Then there would be more police time and money to prosecute *real rapes*.

DePaul University punishes pro-life student who was victim of pro-abortion vandals

March 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a scary story from Todd Starnes, posted on Townhall.

Excerpt:

> The head of a conservative student organization at DePaul University has been sanctioned by the university and could be expelled after he released the names of vandals who destroyed a pro-life flag display.
>
> Kristopher Del Campo, the chairman of the Young Americans for Freedom chapter, was found guilty by the university on two counts – "Disorderly, Violent, Intimidating or Dangerous Behavior to Self or Others" and "Judicial Process Compliance."
>
> DePaul University did not return calls seeking comment.
>
> Last January Del Campo and other pro-life students received permission from the university to erect a pro-life display featuring 500 flags. Vandals later destroyed the display – stuffing a number of the flags into trash cans.
>
> The university's public safety department launched an investigation and eventually identified 13 students who confessed to the crime. Those names were then released by the university to Del Campo.
>
> On Feb. 5 the national Young Americans for Freedom organization posted the names of the vandals on their website. The posting generated negative comments directed at the vandals – and the university held Del Campo responsible.
>
> Three days later, Del Campo was informed that he had violated DePaul's Code of Student Responsibility. He was formally charged ten days later.
>
> "Instead of supporting a student whose free speech rights were violated, DePaul University bullied Kristopher Del Campo for daring to expose the 13 vandals," said Young America's Foundation President Ron Robinson. "They put him through a Soviet-style show trial."
>
> Free speech and conservative groups said they are shocked that the university is punishing the victim of a crime.
>
> […]Del Campo said he is speaking out because he doesn't want other conservatives to suffer through the ordeal he's been subjected to.
>
> **"The dean told me not to fight," he said. "He told me it wasn't worth it – that I just have 13 weeks left at the university. But I'm going to fight this. This is wrong. This university has a problem with free speech rights and this time they met a challenger who is not backing down."**

> **Kate Edwards, of YAF, said they are demanding that DePaul University drop all charges against Del Campo.**
>
> **“His free speech rights were completely violated,” she told me. “They intimidated him. They threatened him. They placed a gag order on him.”**
>
> **Edwards said the university even forbade Del Campo from contacting YAF and was not allowed to have any counsel during his tribunal.**
>
> **“He couldn’t get a lawyer – he was completely intimidated,” Edwards said.**

This story reminds me of Ari Mendelsohn’s book “Bias Incident”. I had to go through this as a student as well. Not only was our Christian club banned, but our pro-life club, too. It’s very important to understand what you are getting before you hand leftists your money. They have no qualms at all about using your money to impose their views on you, and hold you hostage by threatening you with expulsion or grading down.

Frank Turek: is “equality” the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?

March 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s part one in a two-part series.

Excerpt:

> Here is my thesis*:* Marriage between a man and a woman is the foundation of civilized society and should be the only sexual relationship promoted by the government. That is the essence of the Marriage Protection Amendment, and its passage in no way violates anyone’s civil rights.
>
> In order to see this, we need to ask, “For what primary purpose is the government involved in marriage at all?” *It’s not because two people love one another or to make individuals “happy.”* The main reason most governments promote the union of a man and woman exclusively is because only the committed union of a man and a woman perpetuates and stabilizes society. I’ll call this union “natural marriage” because of the natural biological compatibility of male and female bodies and to differentiate it from same-sex marriage.
>
> Here are four ways natural marriage perpetuates and stabilizes society:
>
> 1. **Natural Marriage procreates and provides the most stable, balanced and nurturing environment for children.** While not every marriage results in children, the only marriages than can procreate are those between a man and a woman. And statistically, children and the country do best when kids are brought up in a biological two-parent home. Children from intact natural marriage homes are:
>
> a. Seven times less likely to live in poverty
>
> b. Six times less likely to commit suicide
>
> c. Less than half as likely to commit crime
>
> d. Less than half as likely to become pregnant out of wedlock
>
> e. Develop better academically and socially
>
> f. Are healthier physically and emotionally when they reach adulthood
>
> This makes sense in light of the fact that men and women are different and parent differently—each sex brings unique abilities and role modeling that aids in child development. While single parents do amazing work, every child starts with and *deserves* a mother and a father. If you deny this, then which parent is dispensable?
>
> 2. **Natural Marriage civilizes men** and focuses them on productive pursuits such as procreating and caring for their family. Studies invariably show that marriage reduces crime. (How many married men do you know who roam

> neighborhoods in street gangs?) Civilization requires civilized men, and natural marriage does that well.
>
> 3. **Natural Marriage protects women** from being used and abandoned by uncommitted men. Women often postpone or give up their careers to have children, and Natural Marriage protects them and their children from deadbeat dads.
>
> 4. **Natural Marriage lowers social costs** to government and thus taxpayers. One major reason for our soaring deficit is the breakdown of the two-parent family. When the family breaks down, government expenditures swell to deal with increased crime and poverty. Increased taxation also slows the economy. That's one reason why you cannot bifurcate the social and financial issues. They are inescapably connected.
>
> In short, when our natural marriages are strong, our society is strong. When they are weak, our society is weak. That means all in our society—even those who never get married—benefit immensely from government promotion of natural marriage.

He is promoting fusionism there, which is my view of economics. Social and fiscal issues are tightly coupled and mutually reinforcing.

Here's part two of two.

Excerpt:

> But why not promote both natural marriage *and* same sex marriage?
>
> Several reasons, but I can only briefly mention three.
>
> First, same-sex marriage would make the institution of marriage genderless. There would *not* be two forms of marriage—natural and same-sex—but marriage legally and culturally would become a genderless institution about merely coupling. In Massachusetts it's Partner A and Partner B. In other words, same-sex marriage divorces children from marriage. The law is a great teacher, and same-sex marriage teaches that marriage is about adult desires, not the needs of children. Marriage should be more about what children need than what adults want. If marriage isn't about the needs of children, then what institution *is* about children and the next generation? So homosexuality really isn't the issue here—making marriage genderless and childless is.
>
> Second, since natural marriage and same-sex marriage are different behaviors with different outcomes they should not be equated legally. To see this, consider two questions.
>
> Question 1: *What would be the benefits to society if everyone lived faithfully in natural marriage?* It would benefit everyone in society because it would result in a massive reduction in poverty, crime, child abuse, welfare, and government spending.

> Question 2: *What would be the benefits to society if everyone lived faithfully in same-sex marriage?* It would be the end of society itself.
>
> Now, I am *not* suggesting that a law would fully achieve either, but only to point out that natural and same-sex marriage should not be legally or culturally equated. The truth is homosexual and heterosexual relationships are not the same, can never be the same, and will never yield the same benefits to individuals or society. We hurt everyone, especially children, by pretending otherwise.
>
> Finally, as jurisdictions with same-sex marriage show us, people lose their freedoms of speech, association, religion and even parenting due to the imposition of same-sex marriage. InMassachusetts, for example, parents now have no right to even *know* when their kids as young as kindergarten are being taught about homosexuality, much less opt out of it; business owners must now provide benefits to same-sex couples, and they can be fined for declining to provide services at homosexual weddings; Catholic charities were forced to close and leave Massachusetts and Washington D.C. because both governments mandated that all adoption agencies had to provide children to homosexuals. So much for freedom of religion! And in Canada, same-sex marriage has led to such a chilling restriction on speech, that my speech here today could get me fined or jailed if given there.

If you like what Frank Turek had to say there, just keep in mind that he's written a book about the issue.

And I just have to throw in a quick quote from another case in favor of natural marriage by Ryan T. Anderson (one of the famous Gang of Three who wrote that fabulous new book on marriage).

Excerpt:

> Government recognizes marriage because it is an institution that benefits society in a way that no other relationship does. Marriage is society's least restrictive means to ensure the well-being of children. State recognition of marriage protects children by encouraging men and women to commit to each other and take responsibility for their children. While respecting everyone's liberty, government rightly recognizes, protects, and promotes marriage as the ideal institution for childbearing and childrearing.
>
> Redefining marriage would further distance marriage from the needs of children. It would deny as a matter of policy the ideal that a child needs a mom and a dad. We know that children tend to do best when raised by a mother and a father. The confusion resulting from further delinking childbearing from marriage would force the state to intervene more often in family life and cause welfare programs to grow even more.
>
> In recent years marriage has been weakened by a revisionist view that is more

> about adults' desires than children's needs. Redefining marriage represents the culmination of this revisionism: Emotional intensity would be the only thing left to set marriage apart from other kinds of relationships. Redefining marriage would put a new principle into the law—that marriage is whatever emotional bond the government says it is.
>
> Redefining marriage to abandon the norm of male-female sexual complementarity would also make other essential characteristics—such as monogamy, exclusivity, and permanency—optional. But marriage can't do the work that society needs it to do if these norms are further weakened. All Americans, especially conservatives who care about thriving civil society capable of limiting the state, should be alarmed.
>
> Redefining marriage is a direct and demonstrated threat to religious freedom that marginalizes those who affirm marriage as the union of a man and a woman. We have already seen this in neighboring Canada and right here in places such as Massachusetts and Washington, D.C.

I keep hearing people talk about tolerance, tolerance, tolerance. But I don't think they understand the purpose of marriage. If they did, they would see that we need what marriage provides, and that we need to promote it. The marriage issue is not a buffet where you pick what you like.

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

March 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to MP3 file)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> His new book "The Edge of Evolution" takes his conclusions further, arguing that the Darwinian processes of random mutation and natural selection are incapable of producing the variation and complexity we see in most of life.
>
> So can we conclude that life was intelligently designed by a creator?
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

I get the impression that Fox learned everything he knows about ID by reading Darwinists.

The MP3 file is here.

The summary below is rated VERY SNARKY.

Summary

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism
- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program
- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent
- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true
- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's

experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah

- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet X!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren't going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

How to teach a basic pro-life seminar

March 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life Training Institute has posted an outline that shows how to prepare and present a pro-life seminar. (H/T Mary)

Here is an outline of their outline, with all the details and links removed:

> Suggested Text: The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture (Crossway, 2009)
>
> Thesis: To be an effective pro-life apologist, you must meet 3 key objectives:
>
> 1) You must simplify the issue
> 2) You must make a persuasive case using science and philosophy
> 3) You must handle objections graciously and incisively
>
> **I. Effective pro-life apologists simplify the issue by focusing the debate on one question, What is the unborn?**
>
> A. Example: Daddy can I kill this? (Koukl) That depends: What is it?
> B. Debate w/ Nadine Strossen: "I agree, IF. If What?
> C. Trot out a toddler for objections based on privacy, trusting women, poverty, etc.
> D. Visuals: Use them to awaken moral intuitions, but use them wisely.
>
> **II. Effective pro-life apologists make a persuasive case for the lives of the unborn w/ science and philosophy**.
>
> A. Science: From the beginning, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings.
>
> B. Philosophy: There is no essential difference between the embryo you once were and the adult you are today that would justify killing you at that earlier stage of development
>
> **III. Effective pro-life apologists answer objections persuasively**.
>
> A. Columbo Tactic (Koukl)
>
> B. The 3 Columbo questions:
>
> C. Eight bad ways people argue about abortion

Please take a look. If anyone in the USA or Canada would like a copy of the book, I have 4 extra ones to give away. Just send your address to me by e-mail or Facebook and I will send you one, especially if you would like to use it to present a seminar like this one or teach a course in your church.

Michele Bachmann questions Ben Bernancke

March 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Awesome:

Partial transcript:

> **BACHMANN:** So the Fed wouldn't need to be buying all these treasuries then. We could find other buyers of our debt. Is that true?
>
> **BERNANKE:** Yes.
>
> **BACHMANN:** So then why are we doing it?
>
> **BERNANKE:** To keep rates a little bit lower, to help support housing, automobiles, and other parts of the economy that need support.
>
> **BACHMANN:** But if there are other buyers, why the FED?
>
> **BERNANKE:** To get rates a little bit lower.
>
> **BACHMANN:** So if my 18-year-old daughter was spending 40 percent more than what my husband and I were giving her, and she didn't just do it this month but she did it the next month and the next month and the next month — and finally my husband and I said, 'We're just not going to bail you out anymore, we're not going to continue to finance that overspending that you're doing,' and she said to me, 'Mother, we need to align our solution with the problem,' — in other words, you need to keep giving me that money because it's really not a problem yet — I would say, I think you have a problem today.
>
> And the reason why I would say that is because the analogy with the federal government, in January of 2007, our debt was 8.67 trillion. That debt today is closer to 16.5 trillion with the intra-government debt, according to your calculation.
>
> Do you think that's a problem, that in six years, we've gone from 8.67 trillion to 16.5 trillion?
>
> **BERNANKE:** Certainly I think it's a problem, and I think it's important we have measures to bring down it down over time.
>
> **BACHMANN:** But you said we need to align the solution with the problem. It seems to me we have a big problem. and I'll tell you why. When I was home this last week and talking to a lot of women, they were telling me, 'I don't get this — gasoline at Christmastime was $2.99 a gallon, now it's $4 a gallon.' They say, 'I can't keep up with the price increases at the grocery store. And we just got our health insurance premium and its going to be $300-a-month more than what it was.'
>
> And so all I want to say Mr. Chairman is that what I'm hearing from people is that they are having to deal with the inflationary pressure.

Inflation is nothing but a hidden tax on people who save their money so that they can be independent in their old age. It’s nice to see Michele looking out for savers like me.

Indiana man saves his two children from drowning in icy pond

March 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From WANE News in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Excerpt:

> [S]amantha Buuck, 8, was walking behind her home when she ventured out onto the frozen pond. She fell through the ice and called for help. She was struggling to stay afloat. Her 12-year-old brother, Anthony, heard her calling for help and jumped into the water. He got to Samantha and started calling for help too.
>
> The children's father, Dale Buuck, heard the calls from inside their home. He ran to help and also went into the icy water. He was able to push Samantha and Anthony into shallower water. The conservation officers said Anthony was then able to get himself and Samantha out of the water. Anthony started to perform CPR on his sister until Dale got out of the water and took over. Anthony then called 911.
>
> It's estimated Samantha was under water for about two minutes. Paramedics transported Samantha to a hospital in critical condition. They were able to get her breathing back and she is expected to recover.

I think that the mother of those children made a good decision when she chose that man, because he can do the job of protecting the children. The government workers would never have got there in time, and that's why it's important that men be there and be effective in dealing with threats using their own judgment.

Florida high school student suspended after disarming gunman

March 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> A 16-year-old Florida high school student says he was suspended for three days for wrestling a loaded gun away from a teen threatening to shoot.
>
> Fox4Now.com reports that the student, who attends Cypress Lake High School in Fort Myers, tackled the 15-year-old suspect on a school bus after he allegedly pointed the weapon at another student.
>
> “I think he was really going to shoot him right then and there,” said the student, who declined to be identified.
>
> According to the referral the student received the following day, he was suspended for his role in an “incident” where a weapon was present and given an “emergency suspension,” the station reported.
>
> The boy’s mother told Fox4Now.com her son was suspended because he refused to cooperate with the investigation, adding that he was scared.
>
> The suspected gunman was arrested and charged with possession of a firearm on school property and assault with a deadly weapon without intent to kill, the report states.
>
> Sgt. David Valez of the Lee County Sheriff’s Office told the station an investigation into the incident is ongoing.
>
> School officials declined to a request for comment from Fox4Now.com due to privacy issues.

If you have young boys, do not send them to public schools. Public schools are not male-friendly places, they do not understand or support men. They view masculinity as something to be suppressed or neutralized. We really need to have more men in the public school system in the classroom as well as in the administration.

William Lane Craig debates John Shelby Spong on the resurrection of Jesus

March 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig is the greatest Christian debater in the history of the church, and Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong is a very liberal non-Christian.

Part 1 of 2: (61 minutes)

Part 2 of 2: (42 minutes)

The moderator is none other than the famous journalist David Aikman! The opening speeches are only 15 minutes, and the rebuttals are 10 minutes. This debate is accessible because Craig's opponent is not really attacking him on a scholarly basis, but more as the pretty typical liberal atheist that you meet at work.

Craig spends all of his opening speech explaining historical methods, sources, dating and how he infers the resurrection as the best explanation of the minimal facts. The resurrection of Jesus is quite awesome to debate when people are given time to explain the historical methods and how the scholars use these methods to evaluate which facts are likely to be historical and which are not.

Police chaplain forced to resign for supporting traditional marriage

March 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary sent me this article from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> A police chaplain says he was forced out of his post after criticising the Government's plans for gay marriage on his personal website, MPs have been told.
>
> Rev Brian Ross said he was summoned to a meeting with a senior officer and told that postings on his blog on the subject of marriage did not fit with the force's equality and diversity policies.
>
> Campaigners against same-sex marriage claimed that the case was "just the start of things to come".
>
> They said it backed up warnings that chaplains in hospitals, prisons and the armed forces as well as teachers and other public servants could be dismissed legally from their jobs if they take what they consider to be a stand on grounds of conscience over the issue.
>
> Ministers have repeatedly insisted that no one should be sacked from their job for voicing opposition to same-sex marriage and have built in special "protections" for clerics into the Government's Marriage Bill.

> But in a written submission to a committee of MPs revising the bill in the House of Commons Rev Ross claimed that his case was "typical of the kind of situation that could, and would, arise" once gay marriage becomes law.
>
> […][Ross] went on: "Just before the summer, a particular senior officer in one of the divisions read my personal blog and objected to my expressed support for traditional marriage as, it was claimed, it went against the force's equality and diversity policies.
>
> "I was summoned to a meeting, the end result of which has been that my services have been dispensed with.
>
> "This, I would emphasise, is before any legislation has been placed on the Statute Book."

I recommend that Christians who like to blog on social issues blog under an alias, because this kind of thing happens more than you expect, and the consequences can be much worse than this. Depending on where you are, you might end up paying tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees as you go through a multi-year trial in front of some political correctness tribunal.

How would legalizing gay marriage affect your marriage?

March 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a comprehensive backgrounder published in National Review.

It answers the following questions in detail:

1. Why focus on opposing the recognition of same-sex partnerships as marriages? Aren't widespread divorce and single parenting the real problems?
2. Why worry so much about policy?
3. Why wouldn't you want to recognize committed, monogamous same-sex relationships?
4. How would recognizing same-sex relationships as marriages hurt marriage?
5. Isn't the fight against redefining marriage a losing battle?
6. Why limit freedom in the name of sectarian values?

Here's the detail on number 4:

> Recognizing same-sex relationships as marriages requires replacing one basic vision of what marriage is (in our law, and hence in our mores, and hence in practice) with another vision of marriage. The new vision is one that equates marriage with the much broader category of companionship. Companionate bonds have great personal value, but they can't ground in a principled way the norms that set marriage apart.
>
> To the extent that marriage is misunderstood, it will be harder to see the point of its norms, to live by them, and to encourage their strict observance. And this, besides making any remaining restrictions on marriage arbitrary, will damage the many cultural and political goods that first got the state involved in marriage. Here is a summary of those goods.
>
> *Real marital fulfillment*. No one acts in a vacuum. We all take cues from cultural norms, many of which are shaped by the law. To form a true marriage, one must freely choose it. And to choose marriage, one must have at least a rough idea of what it is. The revisionist view would harm people (especially future generations) by distorting their idea of what marriage is. It would teach that marriage is essentially about emotional fulfillment and cohabitation, without any inherent connections to bodily union or procreation and family life. As individuals internalized this view, their ability to realize genuine marital union would diminish. This would be bad in itself, since marital union is good in itself. It would be the subtlest but also the primary harm of redefining marriage; other harms include the *effects* of misconstruing marriage.
>
> *Spousal well-being*. Marriage tends to make spouses healthier, happier, and

wealthier. But what does this is *marriage*, especially through its distinctive norms of permanence, exclusivity, and orientation to family life. As the state's redefinition of marriage makes these norms harder to understand, justify, and live by, spouses will enjoy less marital stability and less of the psychological and material advantages that flow from it.

Children's well-being. If same-sex relationships are recognized, not only will the stabilizing norms of marriage be undermined, but the notion that men and women tend to bring different gifts to parenting will not be reinforced by any civil institution. Redefining marriage would soften the social pressures and lower the incentives — already diminished these past few decades — for husbands to stay with their wives and children and for men and women to marry before having children. All this would harm children's development into happy, productive, upright adults.

Friendship. Misunderstandings about marriage will speed our society's drought of deep friendship, with special harm to the unmarried. The state will have defined marriage mainly by degree or intensity — as offering the most of what makes any relationship valuable: shared emotion and experience. It thus will become less acceptable to seek (and harder to find) emotional and spiritual intimacy in nonmarital friendships. Instead of being seen as different from marriage and therefore distinctively appealing, they will be regarded simply as less. Only the conjugal view, which gives marriage a definite orientation to bodily union and family life, preserves a horizon richly populated with many types of association and affection, each with its own scale of depth and specific forms of presence and care.

Religious liberty. As the conjugal view of marriage comes to be seen as irrational ("bigoted"), freedom to express and live by it will be curbed. Several states already have forced Catholic Charities to choose between giving up its adoption services and placing children with same-sex partners, against Catholic principles. Some defenders of marriage have been fired or denied employment or educational and career opportunities for publicizing their views. If marriage is redefined, believing what virtually every human society once believed about marriage — that it is a male-female union — will be seen increasingly as a malicious prejudice, to be driven to the margins of culture. The consequences for observant Christians, Jews, Muslims, and others are becoming apparent.

Limited government. The state is (or should be) a supporting actor in our lives, not a protagonist. It exists to create the conditions under which individuals and our freely formed communities can thrive. The most important free community, on which all others depend, is the marriage-based family; and the conditions for its thriving include the accommodations and pressures that marriage law provides for couples to stay together. Redefining marriage will further erode marital norms, thrusting the state further into leading roles for which it is poorly suited: parent and discipliner to the orphaned, provider to the neglected, and

> arbiter of disputes over custody, paternity, and visitation. As the family weakens, our welfare and correctional bureaucracies grow.

People on both sides of this issue should be able to articulate the reasons for each point of view. The article is a good place to find the case for natural marriage.

Related posts

- Frank Turek: is “equality” the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults “co-parenting” children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child’s perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
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- A secular case against same-sex marriage

Gay marriage debate: Michael Brown debates Eric Smaw on same-sex marriage

March 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the debate:

> On April 21, 2011 at 7:30pm at UCF's Health and Public Affairs Building (Room 119), Rollins College professor, Dr. Eric Smaw and author and seminary professor Dr. Michael L. Brown will debate the question "Should same sex marriage be legalized in America?" The event will be held at 4000 Central Florida Blvd and is open to the public. After the formal portion of the debate, Brown and Smaw will field questions from the audience.

About the speakers:

> **Dr. Smaw** will be responding in the affirmative. He earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Law from the University of Kentucky in 2005. His areas of expertise are philosophy of law, international law, human rights, ethics, and modern philosophy. He has published articles on human rights, terrorism, and cosmopolitanism. His most recent publication is "Swaying in the Balance: Civil Liberties, National Security, and Justice in Times of Emergency".
>
> **Dr. Brown** will be responding in the negative. He earned his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and is a nationally known evangelical lecturer and radio host. He is the author of numerous scholarly articles and twenty books, including the recently published study "A Queer Thing Happened to America", which is quickly being recognized as the definitive work on the history and effects of gay activism on American culture.

Here are the first two parts:

Part 1 of 10:

Part 2 of 10:

The rest of the segments are here.

Summaries of the opening speeches

Summary of Dr. Brown's opening speech:

There is no compelling reasons by the state should change the definition of marriage

The reason the state conveys benefits for marriage is because marriage is beneficial for the state

Traditional marriage is recognized by the state for several reasons:
– it domesticates men
– it protects women
– it provides a stable, nurturing environment for children

Marriage has three public purposes:
– to bind men and women together for RESPONSIBLE procreation
– to get the benefit
– to provide children with two parents who are bonded to them biologically
– to create the next generation of people to keep the society going

Normally, opposite sex couples create children

Homosexual couples can NEVER create children together

Men and women are differences that are complementary

Monogamy is the norm for opposite sex couples.

For gay men, open relationships / cheating is the norm.
This is because women have a tempering effect on sexuality.

There is no evidence that recognizing same-sex civil unions and marriages have changed this trend.

Same-sex marriage guarantees that children will either not have a father or a mother
So which of the sexes is dispensable when raising children?

For example, consider Dawn Stefanowicz, who grew up with a gay father and no mother
She never got a chance to see a man model love and protect a women within a marriage
That makes an enormous difference in a woman's life – in the way she relates to men

Even with scientific advancements, every baby has a mother and a father

If we change the definition of marriage so that it is based on consent, then why limit it to just two people
If marriage is not the union of male and female, then why have only TWO people
In Canada, you have civil liberties lawyers arguing for for polygamy
In the United States, Professor David Epstein was in a consensual relationship with his daughter
Should incestuous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?
Should polyamorous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?

Sexual orientation is not the same as race
Men are women are different in significant ways, but different races are not
You need separate bathrooms for men and women, but not for people of different races

Summary of Dr. Smaw's opening speech: (He ended his speech after only 10 minutes)

You can redefine marriage so that it no longer based on the public purposes he mentioned (controlling procreation, fusing complementary male and female natures, providing children with mothers and fathers who are biologically linked to them, providing children with a comparatively stable development environment that offers comparatively less instability, promiscuity and domestic violence rates compared to cohabitation, etc.), but is instead based on consent and feelings, and that redefinition of marriage won't open marriage up to polygamy, polyamory, etc.

If you like feminism, then you should allow same-sex marriage

If you like abortion rights, then you should allow same-sex marriage

Homosexuals participate in society by working at various jobs, so they are participating in society

Homosexuals should be given the same tax breaks as married people because they work at various jobs for money

Working at a job for money achieves the same public purpose as procreating and staying together to raise children in a stable environment

You can listen to the rest for the rebuttals, and cross-examination. Oh yes – there was cross-examination! It starts two thirds of the way through Part 5, if you want to jump to it. And sparks were flying! There is also Q&A from the audience of students.

This is such a great debate – I love to hear two passionate guys disagreeing about something. I love to hear both sides of the issues. There is always something to learn by listening to the other side. It makes me more effective and more tolerant when I stand up to defend my side of the argument.

By the way, my own secular case against same-sex marriage is right here, if you want to see how I would debate this issue. Also check out the recent studies on the effects of gay parenting on children.

Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense

March 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This book review of a great recent book on marriage is worth reading in full.

Excerpt:

> Why should the state have an interest in intimate personal relationships? Nowhere do the authors suggest that consenting adults should be prevented from forming whatever intense emotional bonds they please. But it is a fallacy to conflate the issue of freedom of sexual expression with the institution of marriage. The state has an interest in children, first of all because it has a responsibility to promote their welfare, and secondly because the common institutions of society have an interest in our common future. Marriage, the authors write,
>
> is a bond of a special kind. It unites spouses in body as well as mind and heart, and it is especially apt for, and enriched by, procreation and family life. In light of both these facts, it alone objectively calls for commitments of permanence and exclusivity. Spouses vow their whole selves for their whole lives. This comprehensiveness puts the value of marriage in a class apart from the value of other relationships.
>
> That is the conjugal view of marriage, in the authors' definition. It is permanent and comprehensive, as opposed to an intense emotional bond, which may dissolve as quickly as it was formed. That may be convenient for lovers but catastrophic for their children.
>
> Only the union of a man and woman can be comprehensive, the authors argue. The issue isn't dignity, which all human beings deserve. Instead, the issue is what a married man and woman can do that no other human arrangement can do: "Marriage is ordered to family life because the act by which spouses make love also makes new life; one and the same act both seals a marriage and brings forth children. That is why marriage alone is the loving union of mind and body fulfilled by the procreation – and rearing – of whole new human beings."
>
> Across the ideological spectrum, researchers agree that "the family structure that helps children the most is a family headed by two biological parents in a low-conflict marriage. Children in single-parent families, children born to unmarried mothers, and children in stepfamilies or cohabiting relationships face higher risks of poorer outcomes," as the research institution Child Trends concluded. And as Professor Bradford Wilcox of the University of Virginia's National Marriage Project concluded, "The core message…is that the wealth of nations depends in no small part on the health of the family."

> Adoption by gay parents does not do as well: The authors present a wide range of research showing that "compared to children of parents at least one of whom had a gay or lesbian relationship, those reared by their married biological parents were found to have fared better on dozens of indicators". Part of the reason that married biological parents do better may have to do with sexual exclusivity, which is virtually nonexistent in male homosexual relationships according to the standard research on the subject.
>
> The state cannot help but take an interest, for it gets the bill for the damages when marriage breaks down. As George *et al* write, "Since a strong marriage culture is good for children, spouses, indeed our whole economy, and especially the poor, it also serves the cause of limited government. Most obviously, where marriages never form or easily break down, the state expands to fill the domestic vacuum by lawsuits to determine paternity, visitation rights, child support, and alimony."
>
> That is the fallacy of the libertarian argument in favor of absenting the state from all questions involving personal intimacy. Society can get along with a small government if it has strong private institutions: families, churches, charities, schools and volunteer associations. Among these the family has more weight than all the rest put together. The state, and above all a state that seeks self-limitation, needs the family to flourish.

This book review is a great summary of the history of marriage, the essential issue in the redefinition of marriage (the selfishness of adults), and why marriage matters to society. Really recommend this one! Everyone who defends marriage these days seems to get called every kind of name possible. We face all kinds of persecution from being put on trial to being harmed in the academy and the workplace. Largely because we cannot put our intuitions about the goodness of marriage into arguments, and then support them with evidence.

Related posts

- Frank Turek: is "equality" the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
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An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela

March 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez very different?
From Reason magazine. (H/T Ian L.)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Hugo Chávez' presidency has been a disaster for the Venezuelan people. Chávez' "Socialism of the 21st Century" changed Venezuela from one of the most prosperous and politically free countries in Latin America to one of the least competitive and most repressive countries worldwide. Venezuelans who go to the polls today will ponder many of the President's policy failures, including a long list of Chávez'nblunders in the last year alone.
>
> Under Chávez' rule, oil-rich Venezuela has become one of the least economically competitive countries in the world. In 2012, the country ranked 126 of 144 in a study by the World Economic Forum. According to the report, Venezuela now has some of the lowest scores worldwide in functioning of public institutions, trust in the justice system and domestic competition. It has some of the highest scores in terms of regulation, trade tariffs, and rules that deter foreign investment. The country has an inflation rate of 26 percent, and has also suffered several food shortages this year.
>
> Venezuelan infrastructure has been falling apart under Chávez. On August 15th, the Cupira bridge near Caracas collapseddespite repeated warnings from engineers that it was in disrepair. Last month, poor drainage infrastructure led to nationwide flooding, resulting in over 400 families losing their homes and 1,500 people ending up in shelters. Chávez also mismanages Venezuela's oil wealth. Since the government effectively took control of the national oil company in

> 2004, it has become much less efficient and production is 25 percent lower than when Chávez took office. Accidents are common—an offshore oil rig sank into the sea in 2010 and an oil refinery explosion in August killed at least 48 people. Despite sitting atop the world's largest proven oil reserves, Venezuela nowimports and rations gasoline.
>
> According to *USA Today*, Venezuela has the fourth highest murder rate in the world and is now the most violent South American country. Between the time Chávez took power in 1998 and 2012, kidnappings have risen from a few hundred annually to a record of 16,000 in 2011. Homicide rates have nearly tripled and suspect arrests have fallen by 61 percent. Only eight in every 100 murder investigations lead to an arrest. Murder of police officers has risen by 45 percent in the last year alone. Violence is much worse for Venezuela's inmates despite Chávez' campaign promises of prison reform. A prison riot on August 24 left 26 people dead and 43 injured after inmates took over the compound and held it for four hours. Venezuelans are 20 times more likely to be killed in penitentiaries than outside of them. More than three hundred people have died and 572 have been injured in Venezuelan prisons this year alone.
>
> Venezuelans have also witnessed alarming revocations of political liberties during Chávez' presidency. On September 10th, Chávez decided to withdraw from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. He regularly targets media who expose his failures. He recently arrested two journalists for writing a satirical article about his leadership. In addition, he demanded the names of voters who participated in the opposition's primary election last February, just as he did to those who unsuccessfully voted to remove him from office in 2004. Chávez has banned foreign funding for civil society watch dogs, which will make electoral transparency in upcoming elections difficult.

UPDATE: Reformed Seth sent me this article from Human Rights Watch as well. Excerpt:

> Hugo Chávez's presidency (1999-2013) was characterized by a dramatic concentration of power and open disregard for basic human rights guarantees.
>
> After enacting a new constitution with ample human rights protections in 1999 – and surviving a short-lived coup d'état in 2002 – Chávez and his followers moved to concentrate power. They seized control of the Supreme Court and undercut the ability of journalists, human rights defenders, and other Venezuelans to exercise fundamental rights.
>
> By his second full term in office, the concentration of power and erosion of human rights protections had given the government free rein to intimidate, censor, and prosecute Venezuelans who criticized the president or thwarted his political agenda. In recent years, the president and his followers used these powers in a wide range of prominent cases, whose damaging impact was felt by

> entire sectors of Venezuelan society.
>
> Many Venezuelans continued to criticize the government. But the prospect of reprisals – in the form of arbitrary or abusive state action – forced journalists and human rights defenders to weigh the consequences of disseminating information and opinions critical of the government, and undercut the ability of judges to adjudicate politically sensitive cases.
>
> […]Chávez also rejected international efforts to promote human rights in other countries. In recent years, Venezuela consistently voted against UN General Assembly resolutions condemning abusive practices in North Korea, Burma, Iran, and Syria. Moreover, Chávez was a vocal supporter of Syria's Bashar al-Assad, Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, and Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, bestowing upon each of these leaders the "Order of the Liberator," Venezuela's highest official honor.
>
> Under Chávez, Venezuela's closest ally was Cuba, the only country in Latin America that systematically represses virtually all forms of political dissent. Chávez identified Fidel Castro – who headed Cuba's repressive government until his health deteriorated in 2006 – as his model and mentor.

That's the dream of people on the left like Sean Penn. They love the idea of doing away with liberty and human rights. They want to force their secular leftist ideology on everyone at gunpoint.

Everyone who is praising this communist dictator today should be ashamed. None of them would move out of the United States to live in Venezuela – it's nothing but hypocrisy.

Related posts

- What causes Colombia's economy to grow? What causes Venezuela's economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama's buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank

- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

State Department report finds that Keystone XL pipeline is safe for the environment

March 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation reports.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> In Washington, a presidential Administration releases news it doesn't like at 5 p.m. on Fridays. So it pays to pay attention when everyone is leaving work for the weekend.
>
> Late last Friday, the State Department released a positive environmental review of the Keystone XL pipeline. President Obama has been delaying this pipeline—which would carry oil from Canada to refineries in Texas—for more than three years.
>
> The delay has meant that America is still waiting on an additional 700,000 to 830,000 barrels of oil per day from a close ally, not to mention 179,000 American jobs.
>
> Why has this taken so long, when all environmental reports thus far have been positive? Heritage's Nicolas Loris, the Herbert and Joyce Morgan Fellow, explains:
>
> Given the need for jobs and more oil on the global market to offset high prices, the permit application had been moving along positively with bipartisan support without much attention until environmental activists made blocking the Keystone XL pipeline their issue to rally around for 2011. Although President Obama and the Department of State (DOS) said they'd make a decision at the end of 2011, they ultimately catered to a narrow set of special interests, punting the decision until after the 2012 elections.
>
> The State Department, which is overseeing the pipeline because it crosses a U.S. border, has "already conducted a thorough, three-year environmental review with multiple comment periods," Loris reported last year.
>
> The review has been comprehensive:
>
> DOS studied and addressed risk to soil, wetlands, water resources, vegetation, fish, wildlife, and endangered species. They concluded that the construction of the pipeline would pose minimal environmental risk. Keystone XL also met 57 specific pipeline safety standard requirements created by DOS and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

This confirms the previous assessment done by the Nebraska government, which concluded that the Keystone XL pipeline was safe for Nebraska's environment as well.

Related Posts

- Fracking propels North Dakota to 3.2% unemployment rate
- Ten ways that the Obama administration could lower gas prices right now
- The ten worst energy policies of the Obama administration
- Is Obama telling the truth about U.S. oil reserves?
- Production of oil, gas and coal on federal lands sinks to 9-year low
- Did Obama really create jobs with his green energy and stimulus programs?
- In Canada, a revolt against global warming socialism creates an economic boom
- Obama pleases environmental lobby by killing 20,000-job Keystone XL pipeline

Apologetics conference in Calgary, Alberta starts tonight – live streaming

March 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The conference is in Calgary, Alberta.

Here's the Executive Director of Faith Beyond Belief:

Here's the schedule: NOTE: ALL TIMES ARE IN THE MOUNTAIN TIME ZONE.

> **Friday March 8, 2013**
>
> - 5:30pm – Registration
> - 7:00pm – Introductions
> - 7:20pm – Mini-lectures featuring Craig Hazen, J.P. Moreland and Sean McDowell
> - 8:30pm – Clay Jones: *Why God Allows Evil*
>
> **Saturday March 9, 2013**
>
> - 7:30am – Registration
> - 8:30am – Craig Hazen: *Christianity and the Challenge of World Religions*
> - 9:30am – Sean McDowell: *Apologetics for a New Generation*
> - 10:20am – Break-out sessions
> - 11:15am – Lunch break
> - 12:15pm – J.P. Moreland: *The Case for the Soul*
> - 1:10pm – William Lane Craig: *Arguments for the Existence of God*
> - 2:00pm – Conference finishes

And there are some other events, including one on Thursday night: NOTE: ALL TIMES ARE IN THE MOUNTAIN TIME ZONE.

An evening with Christian speaker and author, Dr. William Lane Craig

Topic: Is the Physical World all there is?
When: Thursday March 7th at 7:00pm
For who: Students, General Public
Where: University of Calgary campus: The Alberta Room inside the Dining Centre ("DC" on the campus map) next to Hotel Alma (169 University Gate NW)."
Contact: info@faithbeyondbelief.ca or 403-689-5890
Event is free

Teaching the Christian Worldview: A Night for Christian Educators with Christian speaker and author, JP Moreland

When: Thursday March 7 at 7:00pm
Where: First Nazarene Church – 65 Richard Way SW, Calgary, AB

For who: Christian Educators
RSVP Required: This is a free event and is by invite. RSVP is required
Contact: info@faithbeyondbelief.ca or 403-689-5890

Pastors and Ministry Leaders Breakfast with Christian speaker and author, Dr. William Lane Craig

When: Friday March 8th at 9:00am
Where: First Nazarene Church – 65 Richard Way SW, Calgary, AB
For who: Pastors and ministry workers
RSVP Required: This is a free event but RSVP is required
Contact: info@faithbeyondbelief.ca or 403-689-5890

Even the parallel sessions look quite good, featuring well known Christian scholars like Michael Horner and Tawa Anderson! Lots of Masters degrees and Ph.Ds in the breakout sessions. Even some professors.

Finally, the event on Thursday night with William Lane Craig will be live-streamed. They say it will start at 7:15 PM Mountain Time, which is 9:15 PM Eastern Time.

Why do leftists prefer to cut essential services instead of trimming waste?

March 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell, an economist for the people

Conservative/libertarian economist Thomas Sowell explains it.

Excerpt:

> Back in my teaching days, many years ago, one of the things I liked to ask the class to consider was this: Imagine a government agency with only two tasks: (1) building statues of Benedict Arnold and (2) providing life-saving medications to children. If this agency's budget were cut, what would it do?
>
> The answer, of course, is that it would cut back on the medications for children. Why? Because that would be what was most likely to get the budget cuts restored. If they cut back on building statues of Benedict Arnold, people might ask why they were building statues of Benedict Arnold in the first place.
>
> The example was deliberately extreme as an illustration. But, in the real world, the same general pattern can be seen in local, state and national government responses to budget cuts.
>
> At the local level, the first response to budget cuts is often to cut the police department and the fire department. There may be all sorts of wasteful boondoggles that could have been cut instead, but that would not produce the public alarm that reducing police protection and fire protection can produce. And public alarm is what can get budget cuts restored.
>
> The Obama administration is following the same pattern. The Department of

> Homeland Security, for example, released thousands of illegal aliens from prisons to save money — and create alarm.
>
> The Federal Aviation Administration says it is planning to cut back on the number of air traffic controllers, which would, at a minimum, create delays for airline passengers, in addition to fears for safety that can create more public alarm.

He’s not going to do the right thing for America, because he doesn’t see that as his job. He wants to grow government and shrink the private sector.

Why do atheists like Dan Barker abandon their faith?

March 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unbelievable's latest radio show featured a discussion with former Christian Dan Barker, the founder and co-President of the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

I thought that I would make some general comments about why I think that many people leave the Christian faith, and what you should be careful of in order to avoid following in Dan Barker's footsteps, specifically.

Basically, there are four major reasons why people leave Christianity.

1. They want to do something immoral with impunity. This type of person wants to do something immoral that is forbidden by Christianity, like pre-marital sex. They dump Christianity in order to feel better about seeking happiness in this life, apart from God and his moral duties.
2. They want to pursue happiness in irresponsible ways. This type of person thinks that God's job is to save them when they act irresponsibly while pursuing happiness. When God disappoints them by not giving them what they want in order to be happy, they leave the faith.
3. They want to be loved by people, not by God. This type of person thinks that Christianity is a tool that they can use to become popular. When they first try to articulate the gospel in public, they find that people don't like them as much, and they feel bad about offending people with exclusive truth claims that they cannot back up using logic and evidence. So, they water down Christianity to get along with atheists, liberal Christians and other religions. Finally, they jettison Christianity completely and focus on making everyone feel good about whatever they believe.
4. They don't want to learn to defend their faith. This type of person is asked questions by skeptics that they cannot answer. Usually this happens when people go to university after growing up in the shelter of the Church. The questions and peer pressure make them feel stupid. Rather than investigate Christianity to see if it's true and to prepare to defend it in public, they dump it so they can be thought of as part of the "smart" crowd.

Now listen to the discussion and see if you can identify some of these factors from Barker's own carefully-prepared words. He is trying very hard to make himself look honest and moderate, because he wants Christians to be sympathetic with his story and his motives for leaving Christianity. But I think that there is enough in his statements to construct a different hypothesis of why he left Christianity.

I've grouped the data by risk factor. (These are not his *exact* views)

Non-rational, emotional approach to Christianity

- he was raised in a devout Christian family where he probably wouldn't have faced skeptical questions
- he converted to Christianity at age 15 as a result of a religious experience, not a serious investigation
- his idea of God was probably idealized and uninformed, e.g. – a loving God who wants us to be happy
- he wandered around from church to church preaching, with no fixed address or source of income
- he earned money by collecting "love offerings" from churches where he performed his music
- he wrote Christian songs and Christian musicals, but nothing substantive on apologetics and theology
- he worked in three churches known for being anti-intellectual and fundamentalist
- there's no evidence that of any deep study of philosophy, science and history during this time

Desire to gain acceptance from non-Christians

- he began to notice that some people were uncomfortable with sin and Hell
- he began to avoid preaching about sin and Hell in order to make these people comfortable
- he watered-down the gospel to focus on helping people to be happy in this life
- his manic approach to Christian ministry was challenged by the "real life" needs of his growing family
- he met liberal pastors while performing his music in their churches
- he found it difficult to disagree with them because they seemed to be "good" people
- he watered down his message further in order to appeal to people across the theological spectrum

Ignorance of Christian apologetics

- he began to think that if there are many different views of religion, then no view can be correct
- he was not intellectually capable of using logic and evidence to test these competing claims to see which was true
- he decided to instead re-interpret Christian truth claims as non-rational opinions, so they could all be "valid"
- he became a theological liberal, abandoning theism for an impersonal "ground of being"
- he embraced religious pluralism, the view that all religions are non-rational and make no testable truth claims
- he began to see God as a "metaphor" whose purpose is to make people have a sense of meaning and purpose
- he jettisoned God completely and focused more on helping people find meaning and

morality apart from God
- seems to think that religion is about having a “great life”, and felt that you can have a “great life” without religion
- seems to think that religion is about being “good”, and felt that you can be “good” without religion
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them what to do instead of letting them do anything they want
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them what is true, instead of letting them believe whatever they want
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them that God will hold them accountable for their beliefs and actions

So what do I think happened?

I think he abandoned his faith because he wanted people to like him and because he needed to be invited to liberal churches in order to make money to pay for the “real life” needs of his family.

He seems to have thought that Christianity is about having his needs met and being liked by others. I think he wanted to feel good and to make people feel good with his preaching and singing. He seems to have become aware that the exclusive claims of Christianity made other people feel offended, so he cut them out. He hadn’t studied philosophy, science or history so that he would have been able to demonstrate to other people whether what he was saying was true. It’s hard to offend people when you don’t really know whether your claims are true or not, and when you don’t know how to demonstrate whether they are true or not.

I also think money was a factor. It seems to me that it would have hurt his career and reduced his invitations from liberal churches if he had kept up teaching biblical Christianity. In order to appeal to a wider audience, (like many Christian singers do – e.g. – Amy Grant, Jars of Clay, etc.), he would have felt pressured to water down the unpleasant parts of his preaching and singing. Lacking apologetics skill, he instead abandoned his message. He needed to account for his family’s needs and “real life”, and exclusive truth claims and Hell-talk would probably have reduced his ability to do that. It seems to me that he should have scaled back his extreme schedule of preaching and singing, and instead gotten a steady job so that he could afford “real life” and a family without being pressured into altering his message.

Life isn’t a fairy tale. God isn’t there to reward risky behavior. We need to be more shrewd about financial matters so that we have the ability to *not care* about what people think of us. Look at this blog. I work all day as a senior software engineer with two degrees in computer science so that I can refuse donations. I save most of what I make in case a tragedy strikes. Since I am financially secure, I can say what I think, and disregard anyone who wants me to change my message because they are offended. Becoming a Christian isn’t a license to behave irrationally and immaturely with money. For some people, (like William Lane Craig), stepping out in faith works. But if it doesn’t work, it’s

better to retreat and re-trench, rather than to compromise your message for money.

Barker didn't seem to make any effort to deal intellectually with typical challenges like the existence of Hell and religious pluralism. He just wanted to be liked by people instead of being liked by God. He seemed to have thought that being a Christian would make him happy and that other people would all respond to him and like him without having to do any work to explain why Christianity is true. But that's not Biblical. When the singing and preaching is over, you still have to know how to give an answer to non-Christians. But Barker couldn't give an answer – not one that allowed him to retain his beliefs. He had not prepared a defense.

What does Dan Barker think about Christianity today?

Many atheists today are interested in eradicating public expressions of Christian beliefs in the public square, because they hate Christianity and believe that Christians should not be allowed to make them feel bad by exercising their rights of free speech. Is Dan Barker one of these militant atheists?

Well, take a look at this video, in which he objects to a nativity scene and demands that an atheistic denunciation of theism be posted alongside it. In the video, Barker explains that the nativity scene is *hate speech*, and that the baby Jesus is a *dictator*. He seems to be totally oblivious to the the idea that if Christianity is *true,* then it doesn't matter whether it's mean and exclusive. And this seems to me to have been his problem all along, from the day of his "conversion".

So the real question is this: is it true? Barker seems to be much more interested in asking "is it nice?" and "will it make me happy?".

SATIRE: Paul Krugman spends himself into bankruptcy

March 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

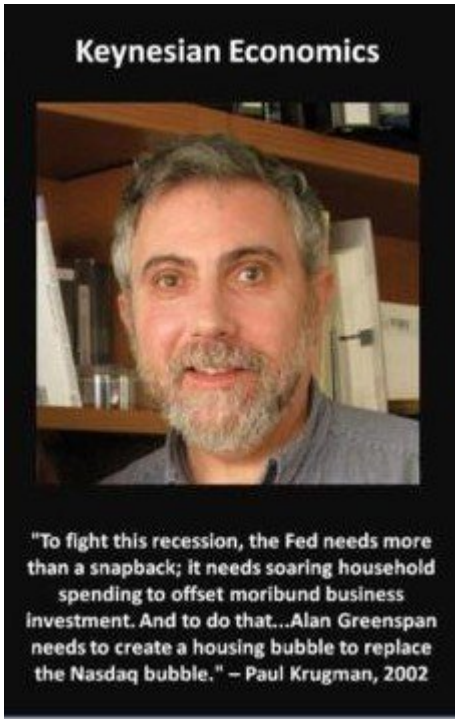

From Daily Currant. (Not a conservative site!)

Excerpt:

> Economist and columnist Paul Krugman declared personal bankruptcy today following a failed attempt to spend his way out of debt.
>
> In a Chapter 13 filing to the United States Bankruptcy Court in the Southern District of New York, lawyers for Krugman listed $7,346,000 in debts versus $33,000 in assets.
>
> The majority of his debts are related to mortgage financing on a $8.7 million apartment in lower Manhattan, but the list also includes $621,537 in credit card debt and $33,642 in store financing at famed jeweler Tiffanys and Co.
>
> The filing says that Krugman got into credit card trouble in 2004 after racking up $84,000 in a single month on his American Express black card in pursuit of rare Portuguese wines and 19th century English cloth
>
> Rather than tighten his belt and pay the sums back, the pseudo-Keynesian economist decided to "stimulate" his way to a personal recovery by investing in expenses he hoped would one day boost his income.
>
> […]Between 2004 and 2007 Krugman splurged on expensive cars, clothes, and travel in hopes that the new lifestyle would convince his bosses at the *New York Times* to give him a giant raise.
>
> "They say always dress for the job you want," Krugman explains. "So I thought

> maybe if I showed up in $70,000 Alexander Amosu suits they would give me ownership of part of the company. If I had only been granted a *sliver* of the New York Times Co., I could have paid everything back."
>
> Even after he realized an equity stake was not going to happen, Krugman continued to spend wildly hoping his bling and media appearances would increase demand for his personal brand and lift his book sales.
>
> His biggest mistake came in 2007, when at the height of the financial bubble he decided to invest in high-end real estate in New York City. His multi-million dollar apartment lost 40 percent of its value just months after its purchase, and has been underwater ever since.
>
> "You'd think a Nobel Prize winning economist could recognize a housing bubble," says Herman Minsky, a retired television executive who purchased Krugman's home at a huge discount. "But hey, I'm not complaining."

That's your Friday funny.

William Lane Craig lectures against naturalism at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland

March 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you missed last night's lecture that was live-streamed from the University of Calgary, you can watch this one, which was on the same topic.

Note: even if you have heard Dr. Craig's arguments before, I recommend jumping to the 48 minutes of Q&A time, which starts 72 minutes in.

About Dr. William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich, Germany in 1984.

Here is the full lecture with Q&A: (2 hours)

Summary:

- Naturalism defined: the physical world (matter, space and time) is all that exists
- Dr. Craig will present 7 reasons why naturalism is false
- 1) the contingency argument
- 2) the kalam cosmological argument
- 3) the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life
- 4) the moral argument
- 5) the ontological argument
- 6) the resurrection of Jesus
- 7) religious experience

The Q&A time starts around 1:12:00.

Dr. Craig does mention an 8th argument early in the Q&A – the argument from the non-physicality of mental states (substance dualism), which is an argument that I find

convincing, because a materialist conception of mind is not compatible with rationality, consciousness and moral agency. He gets a couple of questions on the moral argument early on – one of them tries to put forward an evolutionary explanation for “moral” behaviors. There’s another question the definition of naturalism. There is a bonehead question about the non-existence of Jesus based on a Youtube movie he saw – which Craig responds to with agnostic historian Bart Ehrman’s book on that topic. There’s a question about God as the ground for morality – does morality come from his will or nature. Then there is a question about the multiverse, which came up at the physics conference Dr. Craig attended the day before. There is a good question about the Big Bang theory and the initial singularity at time t=0. Another good question about transfinite arithmetic, cardinality and set theory. One questioner asks about the resurrection argument. The questioner asks if we can use the origin of the disciples belief as an argument when other religions have people who are willing to die for their claims. One of the questioners asks about whether the laws of nature break down at 10^-43 after the beginning of the universe. There is a question about the religious experience argument, and Craig has the opportunity to give his testimony.

I thought that the questions from the Scottish students and faculty were a lot more thoughtful and respectful than at American colleges and universities. Highly recommended.

The New Republic takes Darwinists to task for witch-hunt against Thomas Nagel

March 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM found this striking article in The New Republic, of all places.

Excerpt:

> I understand that nobody is going to burn Nagel's book or ban it. These inquisitors are just more professors. But he is being denounced not merely for being wrong. He is being denounced also for being heretical. I thought heresy was heroic. I guess it is heroic only when it dissents from a doctrine with which I disagree. Actually, the defense of heresy has nothing to do with its content and everything to do with its right. Tolerance is not a refutation of heresy, but a retirement of the concept. I am not suggesting that there is anything outrageous about the criticism of Nagel's theory of the explanatory limitations of Darwinism. He aimed to provoke and he provoked. His troublemaking book has sparked the most exciting disputation in many years, because no question is more primary than the question of whether materialism (which Nagel defines as "the view that only the physical world is irreducibly real") is true or false.

And:

> A few of Nagel's scientific critics have been respectful: in *The New York Review of Books*, H. Allen Orr has the decency to concede that it is not at all obvious how consciousness could have originated out of matter. But he then proceeds to an almost comic evasion. Finally, he says, we must suffice with "the mysteriousness of consciousness." A *Darwinii mysterium tremendum*! He then cites Colin McGinn's entirely unironic suggestion that our "cognitive limitations" may prevent us from grasping the evolution of mind from matter: "even if matter does give rise to mind, we might not be able to understand how." Students of religion will recognize the dodge—it used to be called fideism, and atheists gleefully ridiculed it; and the expedient suspension of rational argument; and the double standard. What once vitiated godfulness now vindicates godlessness.

The author of this article is in the minority on the secular left, though.

Have you ever wondered why there are so many atheists in a universe that is so obviously created and intelligently designed? Just look at the close-minded hand-wringing over Nagel's book, and you'll see the real atheism. The atheism that refuses to debate. The atheism that would rather silence critics by force than look through the microscope.

Two famous near-death experiences: Pam Reynolds and Maria's tennis shoe

March 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Mario Beuregard writes about out of body experiences and near death experiences in the leftist Salon.com, of all places. (I said Slate before, but it's Salon, thanks Mary for the correction)

NDE number one:

> Pam was brought into the operating room at 7:15 a.m., she was given general anesthesia, and she quickly lost conscious awareness. At this point, Spetzler and his team of more than 20 physicians, nurses, and technicians went to work. They lubricated Pam's eyes to prevent drying, and taped them shut. They attached EEG electrodes to monitor the electrical activity of her cerebral cortex. They inserted small, molded speakers into her ears and secured them with gauze and tape. The speakers would emit repeated 100-decibel clicks—approximately the noise produced by a speeding express train—eliminating outside sounds and measuring the activity of her brainstem.
>
> At 8:40 a.m., the tray of surgical instruments was uncovered, and Robert Spetzler began cutting through Pam's skull with a special surgical saw that produced a noise similar to a dental drill. At this moment, Pam later said, she felt herself "pop" out of her body and hover above it, watching as doctors worked on her body.

> Although she no longer had use of her eyes and ears, she described her observations in terms of her senses and perceptions. "I thought the way they had my head shaved was very peculiar," she said. "I expected them to take all of the hair, but they did not." She also described the Midas Rex bone saw ("The saw thing that I hated the sound of looked like an electric toothbrush and it had a dent in it … ") and the dental-drill sound it made with considerable accuracy.
>
> Meanwhile, Spetzler was removing the outermost membrane of Pamela's brain, cutting it open with scissors. At about the same time, a female cardiac surgeon was attempting to locate the femoral artery in Pam's right groin. Remarkably, Pam later claimed to remember a female voice saying, "We have a problem. Her arteries are too small." And then a male voice: "Try the other side." Medical records confirm this conversation, yet Pam could not have heard them.

I like the second one even better than the first.

NDE number two:

> Maria was a migrant worker who had a severe heart attack while visiting friends in Seattle. She was rushed to Harborview Hospital and placed in the coronary

> care unit. A few days later, she had a cardiac arrest but was rapidly resuscitated. The following day, Clark visited her. Maria told Clark that during her cardiac arrest she was able to look down from the ceiling and watch the medical team at work on her body. At one point in this experience, said Maria, she found herself outside the hospital and spotted a tennis shoe on the ledge of the north side of the third floor of the building. She was able to provide several details regarding its appearance, including the observations that one of its laces was stuck underneath the heel and that the little toe area was worn. Maria wanted to know for sure whether she had "really" seen that shoe, and she begged Clark to try to locate it.
>
> Quite skeptical, Clark went to the location described by Maria—and found the tennis shoe. From the window of her hospital room, the details that Maria had recounted could not be discerned. But upon retrieval of the shoe, Clark confirmed Maria's observations. "The only way she could have had such a perspective," said Clark, "was if she had been floating right outside and at very close range to the tennis shoe. I retrieved the shoe and brought it back to Maria; it was very concrete evidence for me."
>
> This case is particularly impressive given that during cardiac arrest, the flow of blood to the brain is interrupted. When this happens, the brain's electrical activity (as measured with EEG) disappears after 10 to 20 seconds. In this state, a patient is deeply comatose. Because the brain structures mediating higher mental functions are severely impaired, such patients are expected to have no clear and lucid mental experiences that will be remembered. Nonetheless, studies conducted in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and United States have revealed that approximately 15 percent of cardiac arrest survivors do report some recollection from the time when they were clinically dead. These studies indicate that consciousness, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings can be experienced during a period when the brain shows no measurable activity.

Here's the author bio:

> Mario Beauregard is associate research professor at the Departments of Psychology and Radiology and the Neuroscience Research Center at the University of Montreal. He is the coauthor of "The Spiritual Brain" and more than one hundred publications in neuroscience, psychology and psychiatry.

It's a helpful article, and one you might want to share or tweet to get a discussion started.

Obama administration tells 60,000 Border and Customs agents to take furloughs

March 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you needed any proof that Obama does not have the temperament to be President, here it is in this Newsmax article.

Excerpt:

> Sixty-thousand federal employees responsible for securing the nation's borders and facilitating trade will be furloughed for as many as 14 days starting next month because of $85 billion in cross-government spending cuts.
>
> The federal government notified the workers on Thursday, CNN reports.
>
> U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials said the furloughs and other austerity measures would cause delays at ports of entry, including international arrivals at airports, and would reduce the number of border patrol officers on duty at any one time, CNN reports.
>
> […]Customs collects more money for the federal government than any agency other than the Internal Revenue Service, the National Treasury Employees Union said in a statement.
>
> "There is no escaping the reality that sequestration is having serious effects on the traveling public and on vital commerce," the union's president, Colleen M. Kelley, said in the statement.
>
> Late last month, Napolitano and other Obama administration officials came under fire — particularly from officials in Arizona — for the release of hundreds of illegal immigrants held in local jails to save money as the sequester neared.
>
> Napolitano has since promised to release more illegals, primarily on supervised release, saying the sequester had left her no choice.
>
> "We're going to continue to do that for the foreseeable future," Napolitano said at a March 4 breakfast meeting hosted by Politico. "We are going to manage our way through this by identifying the lowest-risk detainees, and putting them into some kind of alternative to release."

The border is a national security issue, because anyone coming through with a weapon of mass destruction could cost the lives of many Americans. The Border and Customs programs are not what is driving our debt. The biggest driver of our debt is entitlement spending, especially spending on Medicare. But that's not what Obama is choosing to focus on. He wants to hurt the American people rather than doing the hard work of cutting back big government. There are lots of places where we could cut billions without impacting effectiveness. Why not look at cutting fat (Solyndra) rather than muscle (border security)?

Marriage was weakened in countries that legalized same-sex marriage

March 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A sociologist summarizes what can be known about the effects of gay marriage on society by appealing to evidence from other countries. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Gay marriage will further destabilise marriage and family life in Britain, a leading sociologist has warned Parliament.
>
> Dr Patricia Morgan told the House of Commons that same-sex marriage reinforced the idea that marriage is irrelevant to parenthood.
>
> This was the principle factor, she said, that has caused the collapse in marriage rates between heterosexuals in countries where gay marriage had been introduced – as well as a sharp rise in cohabitation and the numbers of children born out of wedlock.
>
> She said there was no evidence whatsoever to prove the Coalition Government's assertions that gay marriage would bolster the institution.
>
> She made her claims in a 22-page paper submitted at the Committee Stage of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill.
>
> It contained a detailed analysis of marriage trends in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Spain, Belgium, Canada and some U.S. states were gay marriage has been legalised.
>
> […]Spain in particular, she said, saw a "precipitous" downward acceleration in the numbers of all marriages by a 15,000 a year in first three years that followed the legalisation of same-sex marriage by the Socialist government in 2005.
>
> The rate of decline later more than doubled to 34,000 fewer marriages a year in between 2008 and 2010.
>
> Dr Morgan also produced evidence to show that heterosexual marriages were less stable in those countries where same-sex marriage had been introduced because they were expected to conform to the values of gay couples whose unions were often open, rather than exclusive, and far more likely to break down.
>
> Cohabiting gay couples were 12 times more likely to separate that married heterosexual couples, she said.
>
> Dr Morgan also predicted the widespread victimisation of individuals and institutions who dared to resist the redefinition of marriage.
>
> "Some clearly hope that compulsion to perform same sex weddings will sever Church and state and further push Christianity out of the public arena and, therefore, consciousness," she said.

> “Undermined and stigmatised for their unreasonableness and prejudice, the moral authority of religious institutions will further retreat in favour of a narrow secular ideology, particularly as sexual behaviour at odds with traditional norms is further encouraged and advanced.”

Why can’t we stop talking about abstract concepts like “tolerance” and “homophobia” and just look at the results of legalizing same-sex marriage? We want to strengthen marriage, because marriage is better for children emotionally and financially. If we look at the results of legalizing same-sex marriage in other countries, we can know for certain whether it strengthened marriage, and therefore helped children. Rhetoric and insults doesn’t tell us anything. We need to look at the data that we have from other countries.

Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage

March 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A must-read long paper from the Heritage Foundation. It's a great concise presentation of the reasons why the United States should not redefine marriage. (H/T A tweet from Ryan T. Anderson)

Abstract:

> *Marriage is based on the truth that men and women are complementary, the biological fact that reproduction depends on a man and a woman, and the reality that children need a mother and a father. Redefining marriage does not simply expand the existing understanding of marriage; it rejects these truths. Marriage is society's least restrictive means of ensuring the well-being of children. By encouraging the norms of marriage—monogamy, sexual exclusivity, and permanence—the state strengthens civil society and reduces its own role. The future of this country depends on the future of marriage. The future of marriage depends on citizens understanding what it is and why it matters and demanding that government policies support, not undermine, true marriage.*

Excerpt:

> Supporters of redefinition use the following analogy: Laws defining marriage as a union of a man and a woman are unjust—fail to treat people equally—exactly like laws that prevented interracial marriage. Yet such appeals beg the question of what is essential to marriage. They assume exactly what is in dispute: that gender is as irrelevant as race in state recognition of marriage. However, race has nothing to with marriage, and racist laws kept the races apart. Marriage has everything to do with men and women, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers and children, and that is why principle-based policy has defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman.
>
> Marriage must be color-blind, but it cannot be gender-blind. The color of two people's skin has nothing to do with what kind of marital bond they have. However, the sexual difference between a man and a woman is central to what marriage is. Men and women regardless of their race can unite in marriage, and children regardless of their race need moms and dads. To acknowledge such facts requires an understanding of what, at an essential level, makes a marriage.

And a bit later:

> If the law taught a falsehood about marriage, it would make it harder for people to live out the norms of marriage because marital norms make no sense, as matters of principle, if marriage is just intense emotional feeling. No reason of

> principle requires an emotional union to be permanent or limited to two persons, much less sexually exclusive. Nor should it be inherently oriented to family life and shaped by its demands. This does not mean that a couple could not decide to live out these norms where temperament or taste so motivated them, just that there is no reason of principle to demand that they do so. Legally enshrining this alternate view of marriage would undermine the norms whose link to the common good is the basis for state recognition of marriage in the first place.
>
> Insofar as society weakens the rational foundation for marriage norms, fewer people would live them out, and fewer people would reap the benefits of the marriage institution. This would affect not only spouses, but also the well-being of their children. The concern is not so much that a handful of gay or lesbian couples would be raising children, but that it would be very difficult for the law to send a message that *fathers matter* when it has redefined marriage to make *fathers optional*.

And one last one:

> In fact, much of this is already occurring. Heritage Foundation Visiting Fellow Thomas Messner has documented multiple instances in which redefining marriage has already become a nightmare for religious liberty.[48] If marriage is redefined to include same-sex relationships, then those who continue to believe the truth about marriage—that it is by nature a union of a man and a woman—would face three different types of threats to their liberty: the administrative state, nondiscrimination law, and private actors in a culture that is now hostile to traditional views.[49]
>
> After Massachusetts redefined marriage to include same-sex relationships, Catholic Charities of Boston was forced to discontinue its adoption services rather than place children with same-sex couples against its principles.[50] Massachusetts public schools began teaching grade-school students about same-sex marriage, defending their decision because they are "committed to teaching about the world they live in, and in Massachusetts same-sex marriage is legal." A Massachusetts appellate court ruled that parents have no right to exempt their children from these classes.[51]
>
> The New Mexico Human Rights Commission prosecuted a photographer for declining to photograph a same-sex "commitment ceremony." Doctors in California were successfully sued for declining to perform an artificial insemination on a woman in a same-sex relationship. Owners of a bed and breakfast in Illinois who declined to rent their facility for a same-sex civil union ceremony and reception were sued for violating the state nondiscrimination law. A Georgia counselor was fired after she referred someone in a same-sex relationship to another counselor.[52] In fact, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty reports that "over 350 separate state anti-discrimination provisions would likely be triggered by recognition of same-sex marriage."[53]

This article is long and comprehensive. It will take some time to read. It's includes logical arguments as well as empirical evidence from research – with footnotes. I really recommend taking a look at the article. Even if it takes a long time to read, it will definitely expand your mind to think about why we had a definition of marriage in the first place, and what we would lose by changing that definition. When you debate people who want to redefine marriage, it's very important to appeal to logical arguments and evidence from studies. Get the conversation away from emotions and instead introduce facts and arguments.

You can get an even longer treatment in the new book by Ryan T. Anderson and his co-authors Sherif Girgis and Robert P. George. This is *the* book to get on the marriage issue.

Related posts

- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Frank Turek: is "equality" the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults "co-parenting" children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families
- Obama openly supports gay marriage: 48 hours after top gay donors cut off funding
- Democrat introduces bill to defund adoption agencies that favor married couples
- A secular case against same-sex marriage

Let the grown-ups lead: Paul Ryan describes his proposal to balance the budget

March 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

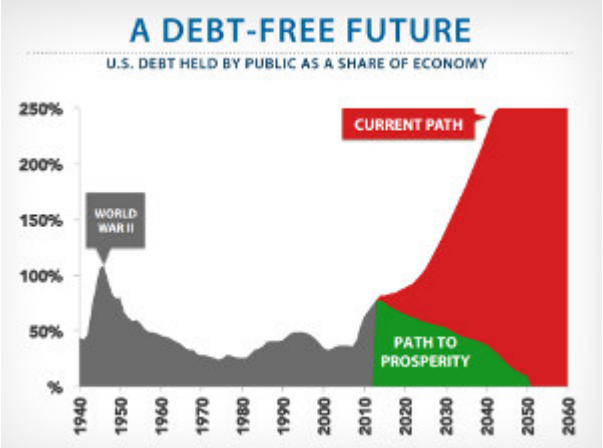

Paul Ryan's Balanced Budget Proposal
In the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> America's national debt is over $16 trillion. Yet Washington can't figure out how to cut $85 billion—or just 2% of the federal budget—without resorting to arbitrary, across-the-board cuts. Clearly, the budget process is broken. In four of the past five years, the president has missed his budget deadline. Senate Democrats haven't passed a budget in over 1,400 days. By refusing to tackle the drivers of the nation's debt—or simply to write a budget—Washington lurches from crisis to crisis.
>
> House Republicans have a plan to change course. On Tuesday, we're introducing a budget that balances in 10 years—without raising taxes. How do we do it? We stop spending money the government doesn't have. Historically, Americans have paid a little less than one-fifth of their income in taxes to the federal government each year. But the government has spent more.
>
> So our budget matches spending with income. Under our proposal, the government spends no more than it collects in revenue—or 19.1% of gross domestic product each year. As a result, we'll spend $4.6 trillion less over the next decade.
>
> Our opponents will shout austerity, but let's put this in perspective. On the current path, we'll spend $46 trillion over the next 10 years. Under our proposal, we'll spend $41 trillion. On the current path, spending will increase by 5% each year. Under our proposal, it will increase by 3.4%. Because the U.S. economy will grow faster than spending, the budget will balance by 2023, and debt held by the public will drop to just over half the size of the economy.
>
> Yet the most important question isn't how we balance the budget. It's why. A

> budget is a means to an end, and the end isn't a neat and tidy spreadsheet. It's the well-being of all Americans. By giving families stability and protecting them from tax hikes, our budget will promote a healthier economy and help create jobs. Most important, our budget will reignite the American Dream, the idea that anyone can make it in this country.
>
> The truth is, the nation's debt is a sign of overreach. Government is trying to do too much, and when government does too much, it doesn't do anything well. So a balanced budget is a reasonable goal, because it returns government to its proper limits and focus. By curbing government's overreach, our budget will give families the space they need to thrive.

Since Obama was elected, he's added over $5.5 trillion to the national debt. This is not sustainable. We cannot continue to pass on enormous levels of debt to our children so that 30-year-old students can have free condoms bought for them. It is immoral to spend trillions of dollars and then pass the bill to the next generation. Democrats like to talk about helping the children, but really they just want to force them to pay for their wasteful spending. It's got to stop.

Jeffrey Schwartz and the effectiveness of “mental effort”

March 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s a summary of the research of UCLA professor Jeffrey Schwartz which appeared in First Things.

Excerpt:

> Schwartz provides a nonmaterialist interpretation of neuroscience and argues that this interpretation is more compelling than the standard materialist interpretation. He arrived at this position as a psychiatrist specializing in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). OCD sufferers recognize obsessive-compulsive thoughts and urges as separate from their intrinsic selves. For instance, after a few washings, the compulsive hand-washer realizes that his hands are clean and yet feels driven to keep washing them. It was reflection on this difference between the obvious truth (the hands are clean) and the irrational doubts (they might still be dirty) that prompted Schwartz to reassess the philosophical underpinnings of neuroscience.
>
> From brain scans, Schwartz found that certain regions in the brain of OCD patients (the caudate nucleus in particular) exhibited abnormal patterns of activity. By itself this finding is consistent with a materialist view of mind (if, as materialism requires, the brain enables the mind, then abnormal patterns of brain activity are likely to be correlated with dysfunctional mental states). Nonetheless, having found abnormal patterns of brain activity, Schwartz then had OCD patients engage in intensive mental effort through what he called relabeling, reattributing, refocusing, and revaluing (the 4 Rs). In the case of compulsive hand-washing, this involved a patient acknowledging that his hands were in fact clean (relabeling); attributing anxieties and doubts about his hands being dirty to a misfunctioning brain (reattributing); directing his thoughts and actions away from handwashing and toward productive ends (refocusing); and, lastly, understanding at a deep level the senselessness of OCD messages (revaluing).
>
> Schwartz documents not only that patients who undertook this therapy experienced considerable relief from OCD symptoms, but also that their brain scans indicated a lasting realignment of brain-activity patterns. Thus, without any intervention directly affecting their brains, OCD patients were able to reorganize their brains by intentionally modifying their thoughts and behaviors. The important point for Schwartz here is not simply that modified thoughts and behaviors permanently altered patterns of brain activity, but that such modifications resulted from, as he calls it, “mindful attention”-conscious and purposive thoughts or actions in which the agent adopts the stance of a detached

> observer.

So mind-brain interaction is not a one-way street. Everyone knows that you can alter your consciousness, beliefs, moods, sensations, etc. by changing your brain. But it turns out that you can also will to focus your thoughts on certain things in order to change your brain chemistry. So the causation is not just bottom-up, but top-down. This research falsifies materialism and argues for substance dualism.

Federal government spends $1.5 million to study overweight lesbians

March 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dad sent me this astonishing example of government waste, posted at Fox News.

Excerpt:

> The National Institutes of Health awarded a Boston hospital more than $1.5 million to figure out why nearly three-quarters of lesbians are overweight — calling the disparities a significant public health issue.
>
> "It is now well-established that women of minority sexual orientation are disproportionately affected by the obesity epidemic, with nearly three-quarters of adult lesbians overweight or obese, compared to half of heterosexual women," according to a **description of the grant.**
>
> The taxpayer money was awarded to Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston to study the relationship between sexual orientation and obesity.
>
> […]"Obesity is one of the most critical public health issues affecting the U.S. today," the grant states. "Racial and socioeconomic disparities in obesity are receiving increasing attention; however, one area of disparities that is only beginning to be recognized is the striking interplay of gender and sexual orientation."
>
> […]Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, said it is disturbing that tax dollars are being used to fund the study.
>
> "When you look at a nation that's $17 trillion in debt – there's a reason. It's because we do frivolous studies that serve no benefit other than to give a special interest group something to talk about," he told Fox News. "Why are we issuing grants to study things that have no affect on the well-being of the nation as a whole?"

Oh I have no doubt this is worth studying… but maybe they could use their own money instead of my money, since I need my money for other things – and I actually had to do the work to earn it. Why do people on the left think that they have the right to spend money that I earned? Were they there in my calculus class? Were they there in the labs with me doing assignments? I don't mind if they want to spend their own money on lesbian obesity, but why are they so convinced that they have a right to spend my money on that?

Five Guys franchise owner says Obamacare will force him to raise prices

March 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Five Guys is my favorite place to go for a reasonably-priced cheeseburger. But the reasonable prices might be changing now.

Excerpt:

> Business owners across America say they're experiencing poor sales, holding back hiring, and planning layoffs because of "Obamacare," or so says the Federal Reserve's latest Beige Book (an overview of the business conditions in each of its 12 districts).
>
> But in case you don't trust the Beige Book's anecdotal reporting, here's something else to consider: Five Guys franchise holder Mike Ruffer said on Monday that the cost of The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, President Obama's landmark healthcare bill, will force him to raise the price of burgers and hot dogs, according to the Washington Examiner's Paul Bedard.
>
> "He will need all the profits from at least one of his eight outlets just to cover his estimated added $60,000-a year in new Obamacare costs," Bedard's report notes.
>
> "Any added costs are going to have to be passed on," said Ruffer, who operates eight Five Guys in the Raleigh-Durham, N.C. area.
>
> But wait! There's more: Ruffer also said that he had to scrap plans to build three additional restaurants because he's still waiting for after the Obama administration to explain all the rules and penalties involved in the healthcare bill.
>
> […]The report goes on to explain that Ruffner thought he'd be exempt from "Obamacare" because he built each restaurant as its own company. However, the healthcare law doesn't recognize this distinction – so now he's exploring whether laying off employees or cutting back hours will keep his franchise safe from "Obamacare."
>
> "He said that 'scorched earth plan,' however, would hurt his restaurants, so Ruffer is likely to either pay the fine or buy insurance," the Washington Exmainer reports. "But spreading the costs over his basic menu of fries, drinks, burgers and hot dogs, could scare off customers, he worries. He said that the recent spike in gas prices cut into his profits since fewer people were stopping at his restaurants."
>
> "And the health care law isn't only going to hit Ruffer. He's quizzed his workers to ask if they understand that they will be fined if they don't get health insurance. Just one of 20 workers were aware of the $95 tax penalty that rises to $695 by

> 2016," the report adds.

The recent spike in gas prices is also caused in part by Obama's blocking of American energy development. It as if everything he does hurts the individual consumer.

Maybe next time, people will turn off their televisions and hit the books before voting. In the meantime, the fairest way to decide which employees to lay off is to take a walk through parking lot and pick every employee with an Obama sticker on their car.

Awakening the “moral sense” of the public in the abortion debate

March 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scott Klusendorf linked to this article from the Public Discourse. The article talks about the need to augment logical arguments in other ways in order to awaken the moral sense of the public so that they will support the pro-life cause and vote to repeal pro-abortion laws.

Excerpt:

> In a manner similar to the case of slavery as outlined by Douglass, there are two simple points that, once admitted, join to condemn clearly the practice of abortion: (1) the embryo is a human being from the moment of conception, and (2) all human beings have a natural right to life.
>
> The second point, as in the case of the natural right to liberty, doesn’t require serious argument on the level of ordinary judgment, even though many pro-choice philosophers have tried to argue that only persons have a right to life, and the unborn, in their view, aren’t persons. To make such arguments, however, requires choosing an arbitrary cut-off point for personhood, as pro-life philosophers such as George, Tollefsen, and Lee have shown.
>
> The first point is more often chosen as promising ground for challenges, but it too is plainly obvious to the unbiased mind.
>
> Once conception occurs, the embryo is something other than the woman who carries it. The fact that the embryo requires the mother’s body to live is no argument against this—dependence does not exclude otherness, otherwise none of us would be distinguishable from everyone and everything else in the world upon which we depend in innumerable ways. The embryo is obviously something other than a part of the mother, but what is it?
>
> This is where it gets easy, despite the messy, abstract philosophical arguments. The more appropriate version of the question is the following: What else could it be besides a human being? Is there a single example in natural history of sexual intercourse between two individuals of the same species resulting in something other than another individual of that species? Is it plausible to guess that sexual intercourse between two human beings might result in a fish, at least initially? Or maybe a frog? Such speculation is entirely fanciful and runs directly contrary to our experience of the world since the beginning of recorded history.
>
> It should be obvious to anyone that the two points hold, and that the embryo is a human being possessing a natural right to life from the moment of its conception. The problem is that the younger and less developed the embryo is, the less it excites what some have called our “moral sense,” our sympathy with it as

> another human being like us. And as Hume correctly notes, human beings tend to be moved more by their passions and feelings, including the so-called "moral sense," than by their intellectual understanding of the world when determining their actions. Even if our reason and common sense tell us clearly—as they undoubtedly do—that the embryo is a human being with the right to life, our moral sense or sympathy lets us off the hook.
>
> So where does this leave pro-life advocates? How can we bridge the Humean—and human—gap between intellectual understanding and actual practice in our nation? The answer lies in the parallel between the issue of abortion and those of slavery and subsequent civil rights. The pro-life movement needs to model more closely in its organization and practices the antebellum abolition movement and the civil rights movement in order to achieve similar success in ending the evil of abortion. It needs to take up the mantle of these causes in a manner beyond rhetorical parallel or intellectual analogy and be prepared to undergo similar hardships before achieving its goals.
>
> Both of these historical movements ultimately succeeded not by winning arguments, but by awakening the moral sense or conscience of a majority of the nation. Legislation relating to the provision of an ultrasound prior to an abortion, currently in place in some form in more than twenty states, is very well suited to this purpose. The dissemination of graphic images relating to abortion procedures, though controversial in pro-life circles, is also highly appropriate to this purpose.
>
> The civil rights movement was driven forward significantly by television and photographic coverage of the inhuman treatment of protestors, as well as the publication of vivid written reports of racially motivated cruelties. Moral senses or sympathies are sparked most effectively by distasteful, unsettling, and shocking information; and when intellectual argument has had its day in trying to awaken consciences and has shown itself insufficient, recourse must be had to the level of moral sense and feeling.

There can be no doubt that pro-lifers are the abolitionists of this generation, urging the powerful not to take advantage of the powerless.

This reminds me about the story of Emmett Till. Have you heard of that? Here it is explained in a letter from Gregg Cunningham of CBR, a pro-life group.

Excerpt:

> Many pro-lifers have heard about Emmett Till, the fourteen-year-old black boy from Chicago who, while visiting relatives in Mississippi, was tortured to death, allegedly for whistling at a white woman (or bidding her farewell with a flippant "bye baby" – accounts vary). But this tragic civil rights story offers more lessons for effective pro-life activism than is generally understood.
>
> BlackPressUSA.com, August 27, 2001, reported in a story entitled "1955 –

> Emmett Till Killed in Mississippi" that Emmett's mother "had insisted that the casket be opened when it arrived in Chicago, although it had been sealed when it left Mississippi." There was a reason that authorities in Mississippi did not want the world to see the body of Emmett Till.
>
> The Washington Post, August 28, 2005, published a story on the legacy of Emmett Till entitled "Dead End," with a subhead which read "On the Trail of a Civil Rights Icon, Starting Where He Did":
>
> …Ahmed A. Rayner Sr., … prepared Emmett's body for services after it was pulled from the Tallahatchie River – with a cotton-gin fan tied around his neck with barbed wire. Tortured and bruised, with most of his teeth missing, his remains were returned in a sealed box on a train to Chicago.
>
> Ahmed Rayner is dead and the family-owned funeral home is run by his granddaughter [Pamela Rayner].
>
> […]'I remember him saying that he had to do something because the way that he [Emmett] was brought up here, he looked so bad that it would probably scare most of the people,' says Rayner. There was the eye that her grandfather had to put back into Till's head and the fixing of his swollen tongue that hung out of his mouth – the stitching and patchwork to make the boy presentable in a glass-covered casket.
>
> There was also a reason that Emmett's mother demanded the unsealing of the crate in which the condition of her son's body had been hidden:
>
> 'After the body arrived I knew I had to look and see and make sure it was Emmett. That was when I decided that I wanted the whole world to see what I had seen. There was no way I could describe what was in that box. No way. And I just wanted the world to see.' (BlackPressUSA.com, February 21, 2001, 'A Disturbing Picture')
>
> Sounds a lot like abortion: no way it can be described; vital that we show the world how horrifying it looks.

I think the right approach is to give the arguments and the evidence first, and then to show the ultrasound images or the graphical images second (warning people to look away if they are squeamish, first). This is the way that moral people have always argued against injustices. If it worked to change minds then, then it will probably work to change minds now, too. For my own part, I've chose not to engage in sexual behavior at all until I am in a position where I can welcome a child into the world. I want to give my future children a safe environment with a committed mother and father. And if I have to give up short-term recreation in order to avoid putting myself in a situation where abortion might be a temptation, then that's what I'm going to do. It's called acting responsibly.

Richard Dawkins defends the moral goodness of infanticide and adultery

March 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Richard Dawkins' recent tweet (see below) caused me to re-post this old post about how atheists struggle with morality. And not just Stalin, but run-of-the-mill atheists, too.

Richard Dawkins explains morality on atheism
Here's the latest moral wisdom from atheist Richard Dawkins, courtesy of Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> I want to raise another question that interests me. Why are we so obsessed with monogamous fidelity in the first place?
>
> […]The underlying presumption — that a human being has some kind of property rights over another human being's body — is unspoken because it is assumed to be obvious. But with what justification?
>
> In one of the most disgusting stories to hit the British newspapers last year, the wife of a well-known television personality, Chris Tarrant, hired a private detective to spy on him. The detective reported evidence of adultery and Tarrant's wife divorced him, in unusually vicious style. But what shocked me was the way public opinion sided with Tarrant's horrible wife. Far from despising, as I do, anybody who would stoop so low as to hire a detective for such a purpose, large numbers of people, including even Mr. Tarrant himself, seemed to think she was fully justified. Far from concluding, as I would, that he was well rid of her, he was covered with contrition and his unfortunate mistress was ejected, covered with odium. The explanation of all these anomalous behavior patterns is the ingrained assumption of the deep rightness and appropriateness of sexual jealousy. It is manifest all the way from Othello to the French "crime passionnel" law, down to the "love rat" language of tabloid newspapers.
>
> […]Why should you deny your loved one the pleasure of sexual encounters with others, if he or she is that way inclined?
>
> I, for one, feel drawn to the idea that there is something noble and virtuous in rising above nature in this way.
>
> […]And why don't we all admire — as I increasingly do — those rare free spirits confident enough to rise above jealousy, stop fretting about who is "cheating on" whom,

Here's a little snippet about Richard Dawkins' ability to stay married:

> In 1984, Dawkins divorced his wife of 17 years, Marian Stamp; later that same year, he married Eve Barham. Dawkins also divorced Barham, though the precise circumstances of this divorce are unclear. He married science fiction actress Lalla Ward in 1992; at present, the two are still married.

I have been advised that the full article featuring Dawkins' views is far, far worse that what was excerpted by UD.

What does atheist morality amount to, in practice? It amounts to the strong acting selfishly and allowing the weak to suffer for it. That's why atheists are almost entirely for abortion and sexual permissiveness – the children are the first to be screwed by the moral relativism of the adults. That's where abortion, no-fault divorce, fatherlessness, etc. come from – they are crimes committed by selfish adults against vulnerable children – because they can. It's the strong abusing the weak, exactly as Darwinism would have them do. There are no human rights on atheism, and there is no reason for self-sacrificial moral behavior, either. Do what you want, and don't get caught. Get them, before they can get you. Don't let anyone diminish your happiness with their moral rules. That's "atheist morality".

This isn't the first time that we've caught a glimpse of Dawkins' atheist perspective on morality, either.

Morality according to atheist Richard Dawkins

Rev. George Pitcher writes about an interview of Christopher Hitchens conducted by Richard Dawkins. (H/T Thinking Christian)

Excerpt:

> But the centrepiece of this Christmas edition is the main coup for the New Statesman – an interview by Prof. Dawkins with Christopher Hitchens, the great polymath who today lost his fight against cancer. It's a fascinating read over three double-page spreads. Not least because Prof. Dawkins reveals a charming humility, allowing Hitchens to show his intellectual superiority at his own expense. Hitchens is thoughtful about CS Lewis and Christianity and rather leaves Prof. Dawkins floundering in his wake, occasionally interjecting little assents to show that he's still there, as he struggles to keep up.
>
> But one of these interjections is most revealing. About half-way through, the Prof gets this in edgeways: 'Do you ever worry that if we win and, so to speak, destroy Christianity, that vacuum would be filled by Islam?'
>
> So, 'if we win…and destroy Christianity'. True, there's a 'so to speak' in there, but it doesn't do much. Try 'If we win and, so to speak, kill all the Jews' as an alternative. Doesn't really work, does it? And Prof Dawkins can hardly claim that he was misquoted or taken out of context. He was editing the magazine, after all – there's even a picture of him doing so, pen poised masterfully over page proofs.

Now you might think that Dawkins intends to destroy Christianity in debates, and not in the wars and purges of atheism that occurred last century in North Korea, Cambodia, China, the Soviet Union, and so on. Those atheist regimes caused the deaths of 100 million people, according to Harvard University Press. But Dawkins has refused to debate William Lane Craig on more than one occasion. So whatever he means by "destroy Christianity", he doesn't mean "defeat them in rational debate, using superior arguments and evidence". He had his chance to do that, and he passed on it. So, he must mean something else by "destroying Christianity" other than persuasion.

Let's find out what Richard Dawkins thinks about morality. Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

Dawkins' view is that nothing is really good or bad objectively. Cultures just evolve certain conventions, and those conventions vary arbitrarily by time and place. I think we need to interpret his goal of destroying Christianity against the backdrop of his nihilism. 50 million unborn children have been killed in the United States since 1973 alone. That's 50 million people with distinct genetic codes different from their mothers or their fathers, who will never grow up to achieve their potential.

Dawkins himself is in favor of infanticide:

So what might destroying Christianity look like to an atheist?

Here it what destroying Christianity means in North Korea, the most atheistic country on the planet.

Excerpt:

> A Christian woman accused of distributing the Bible, a book banned in communist North Korea, was publicly executed last month for the crime, South Korean activists said Friday.
>
> The 33-year-old mother of three, Ri Hyon Ok, also was accused of spying for

> South Korea and the United States, and of organizing dissidents, a rights group said in Seoul, citing documents obtained from the North.
>
> The Investigative Commission on Crime Against Humanity report included a copy of Ri's government-issued photo ID and said her husband, children and parents were sent to a political prison the day after her June 16 execution.

That's what Kim Jong Il means by "destroy Christianity". What does Dawkins mean by it?

FLASHBACK: American Atheists calls for the eradication of Christianity.

Carolyn Castiglia: a liberal feminist comedian and her beliefs about God

March 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: Earlier versions of this post were edited and proof-read by Mary and Dina, whose help I greatly appreciate.

I noticed this article that was mentioned on the latest Reasonable Faith podcast. The article is written by a liberal ex-Catholic woman whose 7-year-old daughter is an atheist. What I want to focus on is her own article on Babble.com, but I really recommend that you listen to Bill Craig's commentary on it as well.

First the biography of the author:

> **Carolyn Castiglia** is a New York-based comedian/writer wowing audiences with her stand-up and freestyle rap. You may recognize her hip-hop alter ego Miss CKC from Comedy Central, VH1 and MTV2. Carolyn's web vids have been nominated for an ECNY Award and featured in two issues of *EW* magazine. She's appeared in *TONY*, *The NY Post*, *The Idiot's Guide to Jokes* and *Life & Style*. You can find Carolyn's writing elsewhere online at MarieClaire.com and The Huffington Post.

Look at what she wrote:

> I was raised Catholic, and like most people my age who were raised Catholic, I no longer attend church on Sundays. We're "recovering Catholics." That's what so many of us call ourselves. We're still disgusted with the Church for the way it covered up the sex abuse perpetrated against my generation and roll our eyes at the Church's stance on things like abortion, gay marriage and women's rights.
>
> […]I learned a lot about being a Good Person from the things I heard in church… I wanted to be a Good Person, not just because only Good People go to Heaven. I just liked the idea. The meek shall inherit the Earth. It sounded right. Somehow all this shit I'm swallowing now, it's gonna pay off later.
>
> I'm pretty much agnostic now (sometimes believing more strongly, other times thinking the concept of God is kind of a joke), but I value the way the idea of God has gotten me through the rough patches. And that has been the payoff. Somehow this notion that there is a giant man in the sky with long hair and a big robe who will hug you from heaven if you need it and carry you on the beach when you've had one too many wine coolers to walk without falling down and getting sand all up in your bikini has been very comforting to me. The image of Jesus but as God but totally as a bro (a homeboy, if you will), there's something righteous about it, if you know what I mean.
>
> But the way I imagine God has changed over the years — He's gone from being a person, a man, to being more of a Thing, a notion. Goodness. The Oneness of the

> Universe. With something female in there. The energy that keeps the whole thing afloat. God as I know it now when I know it is kind of a cocktail made from a shot of Buddhism, a shot of feminist activism and a splash of ginger ale (because that, my friends, is something you can always count on).

Now the Christians who are reading this will be cringing because we know that these beliefs are not taken out of the Bible. She seems to be speaking more about her opinions rather than what is true. She doesn't seem to be focused on finding truth, but more on being a "good person" and having God as a crutch to pull out if she falls down while pursuing her own plan.

She's wrong that "good people" go to Heaven. Only people who accept Jesus as their leader (Lord) and accept his death as a sacrifice for their rebellion against God (Savior) are resurrected to eternal life. If she is a relativist, then I guess what she means by being a "good person" is that she thinks of herself as good and that the people around her think of her as good. However, the main purpose of Christianity is not to be a good person, or to have people like you or to be happy and comforted. The main goal of Christian living is to puzzle about the truth about God's existence and character, and then to re-prioritize your life based on who God is and what God has done. So the focus in Christianity is on truth, and that's what her church should have taught her from a young age.

In my opinion, the Catholic church is NOT a good place to learn the full story about what the Bible says about God, nor to learn the importance of searching for truth over and above being a "good person". It's not surprising to me that she would catch the idea from Catholicism that God is more interested in humans being good to other people than in having true beliefs. In my experience, Catholics emphasize doing good works more than they emphasize having true beliefs that are rooted in evidence rather than church tradition and authority. Catholics believe many things that are not in the Bible or history based on authority.

For example, Jesus strictly forbids calling church leaders "Father" in Matthew 23:1-12, as well as having elaborate garments for church leaders. But the Catholic church has an entire hierarchy of titles from Father to Holy Father, as well as special uniforms for church leaders up to and including elaborate costumes for the pope. Catholicism claims that Jesus has no brothers and sisters, but the Bible (and history!) says he had brothers and sisters, including James, whose role in the early church is solidly attested by history. Catholicism says that Mary was bodily assumed into Heaven, but there is no record of that tradition in history for 700 years after Jesus died. The earliest records even have a burial location for her. Catholics also embrace inclusivism, which is the idea that you can be made right with God by being a sincere adherent of a religion that does not teach the truth about who Jesus was and what he did. So clearly the emphasis there is not on having true beliefs.

Those are just a few examples. The Catholic focus is more on doing good deeds, and they do a lot of that, especially on opposing abortion, promoting adoption and defending marriage. But there is a disadvantage for people raised with a focus on good works

compared with a person who is focused on developing true beliefs. In Protestantism, each person is responsible for reading their own Bible and for testing and debating everything against science and history. Protestants prefer people like William Lane Craig and Mike Licona, because they study things using evidence outside the Bible and church tradition, and then debate outsiders to see what is true and false. Catholics are more likely to prefer people like Mother Teresa, who do lots of good things, but then on the other hand they encourage Hindus to be good Hindus and Muslims to be good Muslims. This is not what Jesus actually taught about the exclusivity of salvation. Catholics care about doing good actions. Protestants like good actions, too, but those good actions are secondary in importance to loving God. See Jesus' own words in Matthew 22:36-40. And in order to love God, you first have to have accurate beliefs about who he is and what he's done. That's what Protestants emphasize.

I think another problem with a Catholic upbringing is that there is too much dependence on authority figures to tell people what to believe. I once worked with a Catholic guy who dismissed my every question about what he believed with the same line: "whatever the Catholic church tells me to believe, that's what I believe, because I'm Catholic". This sounds similar to what happened the woman who wrote the article. We really need to make truth the main thing about Christianity. We really need to show people how to develop true beliefs by using the laws of logic and empirical evidence. It's important for us to show our work and explain *how we arrived at our beliefs* instead of just picking and choosing what we like from what people around us (or over us) say.

But there is more to her story – her child has been affected by her problematic views of Christianity and God.

She writes:

> My daughter, on the other hand, at the ripe old age of 7, is convinced that there is no God. Not even a god. Yup, my kid's an atheist. And she pretty much has been since she was 5.
>
> It's not for lack of exposure to God or god or even gods and spirituality, because she has attended Church and church and a UU "church" and it has made no impact. We've prayed together. I talk about God sometimes, in a good way. When I asked her recently why she doesn't believe in God she told me, succinctly, "Because I know too much about science!"

Is it a good idea to take scientific advice from a 7-year-old child? Children who grow up fatherless are already predisposed towards atheism. I think that we should instead prefer to learn from scholars who research and debate issues in science and religion, and then teach the child based on what we have learned. Perhaps the woman could get the debate between Mike Behe and Keith Fox, or the debate between Stephen Meyer and Peter Ward, or the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican and teach the child from that. This is why it was so important to emphasize *how people arrive at true beliefs* in the church. If she had done the work herself to arrive at true beliefs, then she would

know what to say to her child's presumptuous ignorance.

More:

> The other night over dinner my daughter looked up at me and said, "Who created the Earth?" And I said, "Well, some people believe that God created the Earth, and some people believe that nature is a creation unto itself." My daughter replied, "I think nature is a creation unto itself." I said, "You know, you're pretty staunch about the fact that there is no God." And she told me, "Well, I don't think he exists. If he does, he's a ghost, and that's weird. I just don't believe it. You know, there are Universes beyond our Universe. Once you get outside the Milky Way galaxy, there's a lot more stuff out there."
>
> Wow. When I was 7 I didn't know there was a world outside my town.

So the universe created itself? How could it create itself? It would have to have existed in order to do anything like create. So it would have to have existed… *before it began to exist*. That's a contradiction, and so it cannot be true. It would be great if the mother had read books or sought out people who had thought about logic and science, so that they could advise her child about self-contradictory statements as well as the Big Bang cosmology. But she never did the work. We should be teaching people to do the work in church, not to just be spectators and then pick and choose what feels good. Nobody picks and chooses what feels good when it comes to chemistry lab or the stock market. In church, we need to show that religion is no different from anything else in life that can be studied. Truth is the main thing.

She continues:

> Oh sure, my mother thinks raising a child without religion is dangerous. "I understand you don't think she needs God now, Carolyn. But you gotta give her religion so it's there for her when she needs it later." When the shit hits the fan, when everything falls apart. When you realize there is no one but God you can trust.

See, here is where she needs someone to point out that it's not God's job to help you through crises. It's not his job to make you happy. It's not God's job to make sure that your selfish pursuit of pleasure ends well. It's not God's job to keep you free from suffering and evil. This is where it would have been great if she had taken some of her time to read the Bible, and real theology books. It would have been better if she had sought out real scholars instead of relying on her mother for theology. But again, that's her decision, to believe the people who tell her that religion is a crutch, instead of seeking truth and then bending her will to fit what is true.

Don't be that gal

One last point. You might be wondering where the father is, since it is the father's responsibility to teach the children about spiritual and moral things in Christianity. That's what Christian women should be taught to look for in a man, along with protecting and

providing abilities. That’s what the church would be telling them to look for if the church was not thoroughly compromised by feminism and egalitarianism. In the case of the woman who wrote the article, she has separated from the father of her child. She says so in the article.

Did she pick a man who was good at theology, apologetics and moral issues? Well, we don’t know. But judging from her politics and her profession, I would say that she did not. If there is one thing that liberal feminists absolutely detest in men, it’s exclusive truth claims about religion and exclusive moral judgments. They tend to choose men who know nothing at all about God as he really is and morality as it really is. They want to avoid men who will try to lead them on moral and spiritual issues. Unfortunately, though, a man who does not know what he believes and why he believes about religion and morality cannot persuade anyone. And a man who cannot persuade cannot lead.

What happens to children when such women choose men who cannot lead on moral and spiritual issues? Men like that have no reason to stick around in a marriage, because they have no plan and no purpose for the marriage other than pleasure. A religious and moral man sticks around in a marriage because he has a plan and a purpose that is above his own feelings and needs. He is motivated to teach the children and to lead the wife, because he has definite spiritual and moral convictions, and he is able to persuade others to buy into them using evidence and arguments. Smart women choose men like this when they are looking for someone to fulfill the father role. Women need to know the duties of the married man, and choose the right man for the job.

Gay activists pressure DC Comics to fire pro-marriage author Orson Scott Card

March 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> After pro-homosexual activists promoted an online petition demanding the firing of award-winning speculative fiction writer Orson Scott Card from an upcoming Superman comic anthology, DC Comics confirmed that Card's portion of the project has been shelved indefinitely.
>
> Card, who is Mormon, sits on the board of the National Organization for Marriage (NOM) and has been outspoken about his opposition to redefining marriage to include same-sex couples.
>
> […]In another commentary for Sunstone Magazine, he wrote, "[G]ay activism as a movement is no longer looking for civil rights, which by and large homosexuals already have. Rather they are seeking to enforce acceptance of their sexual liaisons as having equal validity with heterosexual marriages, to the point of having legal rights as spouses, the right to adopt children, and the right to insist that their behavior be taught to children in public schools as a completely acceptable 'alternative lifestyle.'"
>
> "It does not take a homophobe to recognize how destructive such a program will be in a society already reeling from the terrible consequences of 'no-fault' divorce, social tolerance of extramarital promiscuity, and failing to protect our adolescents until they can channel their sexual passions in a socially productive way," Card continued. "Having already lost control of the car, we now find the gay activists screaming at us to speed up as we drive headlong toward the cliff."
>
> Homosexual activists said his views should have disqualified him from being hired in the first place. While his Superman short story was not expected to touch on gay issues, activists argued that to give him a paycheck for his work was tantamount to funding NOM directly.
>
> The petition demanding his firing said, "To DC Comics: By hiring Orson Scott Card despite his anti-gay efforts you are giving him a new platform and supporting his hate. Make sure your brand stands for equality and drop Orson Scott Card now."
>
> DC's decision to shelve Card's portion of the project came after illustrator Chris Sprouse backed out of doing the art for Card's short story under heavy pressure from gay advocates and the media. "The media surrounding this story reached the point where it took away from the actual work, and that's something I wasn't comfortable with," Sprouse said.

It's very important to see which side of the same-sex marriage debate features the real

bigots and the real bullies.

Related posts

- Police chaplain forced to resign for supporting traditional marriage
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- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
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- The mainstream media’s biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- Obama administration linked to gay activist Dan Savage
- Gay activist Dan Savage bullies Christian teens and bashes Christianity
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- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
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- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
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- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- Do Democrats like Chai Feldblum believe in religious liberty?

Hope: California set to offer college credit for online courses

March 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are forces in motion that could turn the tide against the secular left, and one of them is online education.

Excerpt:

> A bill in California's Legislature would force public colleges to award students credit for taking some outside online courses. It looks likely to pass, and its implications for higher education are vast.
>
> A successful monopoly has an impregnable wall around some much-desired good, such as education, and controls the only door.
>
> The higher education establishment in America has always operated this way. But cracks are starting to appear in its wall. A significant one opened this week.
>
> On Wednesday, a bill was introduced in California's state Senate to require public colleges to give students credit for online courses from outside providers.
>
> If students can't take an introductory or remedial class in the traditional way, they can turn to offerings from businesses such as Coursera, Udacity and StraighterLine, or the nonprofit EdX, a joint project of Harvard and MIT.
>
> The bill looks likely to pass in some form.
>
> […]For the first time, colleges would have to offer credit for courses outside the academic establishment. As StraighterLine founder Burck Smith told the New York Times, "This would be a big change, acknowledging that colleges aren't the only ones who can offer college courses."
>
> Up to now, online teaching could offer plenty of knowledge but not the credits leading to degrees.
>
> Colleges could refuse to recognize the courses, and most did. That balance of power would shift if Steinberg's bill becomes law.
>
> That would be the start of real competition.
>
> If online courses can teach more students just as well and cost the public less, the professors behind the walls will have to change their hidebound ways or lose more business to outsiders.
>
> Either way, the public would be well served.

The faster we can disrupt the current higher education monopoly and focus students back on getting marketable skills at a reasonable price, the better off we'll be. The financial crisis actually helps with this, because young people now have to be more serious about what they are choosing to study and how much they are paying to study. We have a

chance here to turn the tide. It’s good news!

Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?

March 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is

stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this

passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The "Q" source for Matthew and Luke

Here's Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier "Q" source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Learn more

You can learn more about the early belief in the divinity of Jesus by listening to a lecture by William Lane Craig and reading the related paper, and by listening to the debate between Richard Bauckham and James Crossley on that topic. The first link contains other scholarly debates on Jesus.

New study: formation of life-permitting elements carbon and oxygen is fine-tuned

March 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's review the structure of the fine-tuning argument.

The argument goes like this:

1. The fine-tuning of the universe to support life is either due to law, chance or design
2. It is not due to law or chance
3. Therefore, the fine-tuning is due to design

Here are the facts on the fine-tuning:

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, a universal solvent, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the ratios between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible values spans 70 orders of magnitude.
- The constants are *selected* by whoever creates the universe. They are not determined by physical laws. And the extreme probabilities involved required put the fine-tuning beyond the reach of chance.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Carbon is that element that can serve as a hub, and oxygen is also a vital element, since it is a component of water, which is required for life. So both carbon (the hub of large molecules) and oxygen (a building block of water) are required for complex life of any imaginable kind.

Now for the new study.

Reader Jen who blogs at Victory Rolls and V8s sent me this amazing article on Science Daily about a new peer-reviewed study that supports the fine-tuning argument.

Here's an excerpt:

> Life as we know it is based upon the elements of carbon and oxygen. Now a team

> of physicists, including one from North Carolina State University, is looking at the conditions necessary to the formation of those two elements in the universe. They've found that when it comes to supporting life, the universe leaves very little margin for error.
>
> Both carbon and oxygen are produced when helium burns inside of giant red stars. Carbon-12, an essential element we're all made of, can only form when three alpha particles, or helium-4 nuclei, combine in a very specific way. The key to formation is an excited state of carbon-12 known as the Hoyle state, and it has a very specific energy — measured at 379 keV (or 379,000 electron volts) above the energy of three alpha particles. Oxygen is produced by the combination of another alpha particle and carbon.
>
> NC State physicist Dean Lee and German colleagues Evgeny Epelbaum, Hermann Krebs, Timo Laehde and Ulf-G. Meissner had previously confirmed the existence and structure of the Hoyle state with a numerical lattice that allowed the researchers to simulate how protons and neutrons interact. These protons and neutrons are made up of elementary particles called quarks. The light quark mass is one of the fundamental parameters of nature, and this mass affects particles' energies.
>
> **In new lattice calculations done at the Juelich Supercomputer Centre the physicists found that just a slight variation in the light quark mass will change the energy of the Hoyle state, and this in turn would affect the production of carbon and oxygen in such a way that life as we know it wouldn't exist.**
>
> […]The researchers' findings appear in *Physical Review Letters*.

So that's the latest research that supports the fine-tuning argument. But how effective is this argument really? Is it only admitted by theists, or do atheists accept the fine-tuning as well?

Is the fine-tuning real?

Yes, it's real and it is conceded by the top-rank of atheist physicists. Let me give you a citation from the best one of all, Martin Rees. Martin Rees is an atheist and a qualified astronomer. He wrote a book called "Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape The Universe", (Basic Books: 2001). In it, he discusses 6 numbers that need to be fine-tuned in order to have a life-permitting universe.

Rees writes here:

> These six numbers constitute a 'recipe' for a universe. Moreover, the outcome is sensitive to their values: if any one of them were to be 'untuned', there would be no stars and no life. Is this tuning just a brute fact, a coincidence? Or is it the providence of a benign Creator?

There are some atheists who deny the fine-tuning, but these atheists are in firm

opposition to the progress of science. The more science has progressed, the more constants, ratios and quantities we have discovered that need to be fine-tuned. Science is going in a theistic direction. Next, let's see how atheists try to account for the fine-tuning, on atheism.

Atheistic responses to the fine-tuning argument

There are two common responses among atheists to this argument.

The first is to speculate that there are actually an infinite number of other universes that are not fine-tuned, (i.e. – the gambler's fallacy). All these other universes don't support life. We just happen to be in the one universe is fine-tuned for life. The problem is that there *is no way of directly observing these other universes and no independent evidence that they exist.*

Here is an excerpt from an article in Discover magazine, (which is hostile to theism and Christianity).

> Short of invoking a benevolent creator, many physicists see only one possible explanation: Our universe may be but one of perhaps infinitely many universes in an inconceivably vast multiverse. Most of those universes are barren, but some, like ours, have conditions suitable for life.
>
> The idea is controversial. Critics say it doesn't even qualify as a scientific theory because the existence of other universes cannot be proved or disproved. Advocates argue that, like it or not, the multiverse may well be the only viable nonreligious explanation for what is often called the "fine-tuning problem"—the baffling observation that the laws of the universe seem custom-tailored to favor the emergence of life.

The second response by atheists is that the human observers that exist today, 14 billion years after the universe was created out of nothing, actually caused the fine-tuning. This solution would mean that although humans did not exist at the time the of the big bang, they are going to be able to reach back in time at some point in the future and manually fine-tune the universe.

Here is an excerpt from and article in the New Scientist, (which is hostile to theism and Christianity).

> …maybe we should approach cosmic fine-tuning not as a problem but as a clue. Perhaps it is evidence that we somehow endow the universe with certain features by the mere act of observation… observers are creating the universe and its entire history right now. If we in some sense create the universe, it is not surprising that the universe is well suited to us.

So, there are two choices for atheists. Either an infinite number of unobservable universes that are not fine-tuned, or humans go back in time at some future point and fine-tune the beginning of the universe, billions of years in the past.

Why the fine-tuning argument matters

We need to make a decision *today* about how we are going to live. The evidence available *today* supports the fine-tuning of the universe by a supernatural mind with immense power. The progress of science has strengthened this theory against determined opposition from rival naturalistic theories.

Those are the facts, and we must all choose what to do with them.

Further study

Here is a paper by Walter L. Bradley that contains many more examples of the fine-tuning, and explanations for *what happens* when you change the constants, quantities and rations even slightly.

New Tasmania bill undermines conscience rights for pro-life medical workers

March 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Australia

The inimitable Dr. Lydia McGrew has a must-read blog post up about it at "What's Wrong With The World?" (H/T Jay from Life Training Institute)

Here's a snip:

> This first part directly attacks the conscience of doctors opposed to abortion by requiring them, on penalty of a fine, to refer the patient to a doctor who will do the deed. See my further discussion of referrals, here.
>
> But there's more: The Tasmania law also says that *counselors* who are opposed to abortion and from whom a pregnant woman has sought advice must refer the woman to a different counselor who is known to be not thus opposed!

> Here is how the law defines "counselor":

> *counsellor* means a person who provides a service that involves counselling whether or not for fee or reward;

> Smith is, plausibly enough, of the opinion that this would apply to those who work even as volunteers for Crisis Pregnancy Centers and hence would "obliterate pro-life crisis pregnancy counseling."
>
> Even insofar as the law applies to professional counselors, those with counseling licenses who are working with a pregnant woman officially in their professional capacity, this is disturbing enough. It is yet another attempt to undermine the helping professions by forcing those in them to offer material cooperation with lifestyle decisions (including, in this case, murderous ones) preferred by the leftists.

> But as the law applies to volunteers as well, we've entered wholly new territory. Volunteer pregnancy counselors are essentially just private people devoting themselves to trying to help pregnant women in their spare time. It is difficult to see any principled distinction between regulating what such an entirely non-professional person says to a woman in a private conversation and regulating what the woman's aunt, mother, or friend says to her in a private conversation. The law is explicit that such a referral must take place "if a woman seeks pregnancy options advice from a counsellor and the counsellor has conscientious objections to terminations." So if a woman deliberately seeks out and goes to a center calling itself "Alternatives Crisis Pregnancy Center" and offering explicitly in its advertising to help a woman to find alternatives to abortion, the counselors there would be obligated by this law, on pain of a fine, to round off their personal conversation with her by offering her a referral to a pro-abortion counselor! This despite the fact that the whole raison d'etre of the center is to try to save babies from abortion.

This law reminds me of a a post I saw a while back on Well Spent Journey, which is a blog written by a future physician. He was concerned about conscience rights and wrote about it just before the last election.

He writes:

> This issue is sometimes overlooked, but it goes hand-in-hand with abortion. As a future physician, it affects me personally.
>
> […]Only a month after taking office, President Obama announced that he would be rescinding HHS regulations protecting the conscience rights of healthcare workers:
>
> *"[Specific publicly-funded entities may not] discriminate in the employment, promotion, or termination of employment of any physician or other health care personnel because he performed or assisted in the performance of a lawful sterilization procedure or abortion, because he refused to perform or assist in the performance of such a procedure or abortion on the grounds that his performance or assistance in the performance of the procedure or abortion would be contrary to his religious beliefs or moral convictions, or because of his religious beliefs or moral convictions respecting sterilization procedures or abortions…"*
>
> In April 2009, these rules were officially eliminated. Then, in 2011, the administration approved the now-infamous HHS contraception mandate, requiring employer-provided insurance plans to cover birth control and early-term abortion drugs…regardless of the provider's religious objections. (As an aside, I highly recommend R.J. Snell's article,"The Contraception Mandate and Secular Discourse".)
>
> Other recent attacks have centered around the Weldon Amendment (2004),

> which prohibits federally funded agencies from discriminating against health care providers who refuse to provide, pay for, provide coverage for, or refer for abortions.
>
> Additionally, a 2009 online survey of 2,865 faith-based healthcare professionals found that:
>
> - 39% of faith-based healthcare professionals have “experienced pressure from or discrimination by faculty or administrators based on [their] moral, ethical, or religious beliefs.”
> - 20% of faith-based medical students say they are “not pursuing a career in Obstetrics or Gynecology” because of perceived discrimination and coercion in that field.
> - 12% of faith-based healthcare professionals have “been pressured to perform a procedure to which [they] had moral, ethical, or religious objections.”
> - 91% of faith-based physicians agreed with the statement, “I would rather stop practicing medicine altogether than be forced to violate my conscience.”
>
> So aside from the clear injustice of legalized abortion, my interest in this election is based on a desire to learn and practice medicine without being pressured to violate my moral convictions. Not to belittle the importance of other social, economic, and foreign policy issues, but these will be my overriding concerns in the ballot box.

Make no mistake, Christians should in no way shape or form support big government, because this is the kind of law that big government passes. If we are concerned about the poor, it’s better for us to solve the problem of poverty ourselves rather than grow government so that they can have the power to impose their will on us like this. This is something that all Christians need to realize, and vote accordingly.

Clay Jones and his truth S.E.R.U.M.M. inoculates you against moral relativism

March 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada with cities

Moral relativism is the idea that when it comes to right and wrong, no point of view is any more correct than any other. Morality is not independent of what humans think, so that it applies to all of us equally. Moral relativism says that every person or society invents their own standard of morality. Each standard is arbitrary and varies by time or place arbitrarily. There is no viewpoint that is better than any other – they are all equal.

How do you get around that? Well Justin Wishart of the Faith Beyond Belief team in Calgary, Alberta has posted a list of helpful points that he got from Dr. Clay Jones of Biola University.

Here's the introduction from Justin:

> I had the pleasure of driving Professor Clay Jones to Airdrie Koinonia Christian School to present a talk to grade 11 and 12 students. Jones is a Professor of Apologetics at one of the top Christian universities, BIOLA. He started with a succinct history lesson, explaining how most students do not accept there are objective moral truths – that morality is relative. This is called moral relativism, which Jones summed up as, "you have your truth, I have my truth, your truth is no better than my truth and my truth is no better than your truth, and there is no moral truth with a capital T".
>
> Even though this sounds so open-minded and tolerant to our modern ears, Jones insists it isn't. He presented the students with an acronym that spells "S.E.R.U.M.M." which shows that moral relativism is absurd and even dangerous.

Here is the acronym in brief:

- **S= Self-Refuting**
- **E= Evil-Enabling**
- **R= Racist Befriending**
- **U= Utterly Hypocritical**
- **M= Morally Stagnating**
- **M= Mind Closing**

Let's take a look at the first one only:

> Moral relativists will often say things like, "you can't push your morality on others!" But, this is obviously absurd, for, the moral relativist is saying "you shouldn't" do something which is the definition of pushing your morality on others. He is doing the very thing that he says you cannot do. Even more fundamental, moral relativism is a distinct moral system that the moral relativist obviously thinks is right. But, moral relativism by definition says that there is no correct moral system, which means that moral relativism is wrong. In other words, to say that moral relativism is right is to say that moral relativism is wrong. It refutes itself.

You can click through for the rest of the list. They have other good things to read on their blog, as well.

Gay activist introduces bill to ban speech critical of homosexuality in schools

March 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

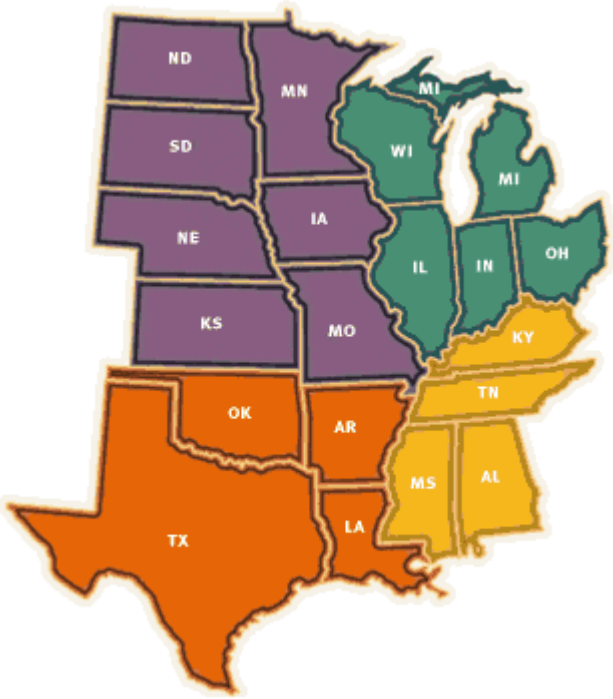

Central United States
Not just public schools, but private schools, including Christian schools.

Take a look at this story from Life Site News.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Homosexual activists in Minnesota are pushing for a broad "Safe and Supportive Schools Act" that would outlaw speech that could interfere with a student's ability "to participate in a safe and supportive learning environment." The bill is being promoted as the strongest "anti-bullying" law in the nation, but critics say it could have a chilling effect on free speech, especially in religious schools that teach Christian beliefs on sexuality.
>
> "We agree … that school bullying is a serious issue that needs to be ameliorated," said Pete Noll, education director of the Minnesota Catholic Conference, testifying before the state legislature. "All children are entitled to a safe, secure learning environment." But he disagreed that the "Safe and Supportive Schools Act" should apply to religious schools.
>
> The bill, as written, would apply not only to public schools, but also to private schools that receive resources of any kind from the state. As Noll reminded the legislature last Tuesday, although Catholic and other religious schools are forbidden to receive state funding, many of their students receive textbooks, testing and other services from the state. He said he worried this might be used

> as justification to freeze speech in private religious schools.
>
> "Combating bullying should never be a pretext to impose an agenda of groups of people, or to undermine the rights of parents to bestow their religious or moral values on their children," the Catholic conference wrote in a statement.
>
> The bill was introduced by state senator Scott Dibble, an open homosexual who "married" his partner in California before the passage of Proposition 8 (their marriage is not recognized by the state of Minnesota). He announced the bill's introduction in a guest post for the homosexual "Human Rights Campaign" website and thanked the group for their support. He also credited gay activist group Outfront Minnesota for its role in the development of the bill, saying that the group "leads this work" and is "poised to push for a positive vote."
>
> A similar bill was introduced during the 2009 legislative session and passed both the House and Senate by overwhelming margins, but it was vetoed by then-Governor Tim Pawlenty. If it passes this year, Governor Mark Dayton, who helped to write the bill, is expected to sign.

How would legalizing same-sex marriage affect you? Is it just about tolerance, or will you be forced to celebrate and affirm a lifestyle that you disagree with? Think about it now while you still have the freedom to do something about it, and vote accordingly.

Related posts

- Gay activists pressure DC Comics to fire pro-marriage author Orson Scott Card
- Police chaplain forced to resign for supporting traditional marriage
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Department of Education investigates school over Bible and homosexuality comments
- Teachers face termination for refusing to promote gay marriage
- Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- Obama administration linked to gay activist Dan Savage
- Gay activist Dan Savage bullies Christian teens and bashes Christianity
- Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll's Mars Hill Church
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired
- California Democrats mandate gay history in public schools
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration

- UK Equalities Minister introduces law allowing gays to marry in churches
- Christian business owners found guilty for disagreeing with homosexuality
- Belgian archbishop targeted by gay activists over AIDS remarks
- Christian couple barred from having foster children
- Christian student loses case with Eastern Michigan University
- Ireland considers bill to criminalize dissent from same-sex civil unions
- Catholic Charities closes adoption agency due to same-sex marriage law
- Do Democrats like Chai Feldblum believe in religious liberty?

Pro-life conservative shouted down by pro-abortion thugs at University of Waterloo

March 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

WARNING: Video contains very vulgar pro-abortion language.

From the National Post. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Full text:

> The University of Waterloo is investigating after an anti-abortion Conservative MP was blocked from delivering a lecture Wednesday night by protesters led by a man dressed as a giant vagina.
>
> Ethan Jackson, 21, an art student at nearby Wilfrid Laurier University, said he calls his pink costume Vulveta, and that Stephen Woodworth's talk about the universality of human rights came from an oppressive western discourse that ignores the rights of indigenous people.
>
> "That kind of speech, that kind of facts, are not acceptable," he said. "We decided to go by the route of using satire instead of intimidation…. We decided to make Stephen Woodworth feel as uncomfortable as he makes us feel."
>
> Ellen Rethore, associate vice-president of communications and public affairs, said the disruptive behaviour was "unacceptable," and that a joint inquiry of the school's secretariat, police, and student success office was underway.
>
> "Our goal is to ensure an environment of tolerance and uphold the right of individuals to advance their views openly," she said.
>
> Mr. Woodworth — who gave a third of his talk before a woman in a red dress commandeered the podium to award him a trophy as "Kitchener-Waterloo's Nastiest Misogynist" — said it is "a mark of extremism to take disrespect of others as a virtue."
>
> "I couldn't outshout the shouters. I'm not there to engage in a shouting match," he said.
>
> After the talk was cancelled and the protesters left, Mr. Woodworth said he was able to stay and have a discussion with a few people.
>
> He was speaking about the section of Canada's Criminal Code that, in the context of defining homicide, says a child "becomes a human being within the meaning of this Act when it has completely proceeded, in a living state, from the body of its mother."
>
> His legislative effort to have Parliament study the definition of "human being" failed in a House of Commons vote last year, despite support from eight cabinet ministers, including Status of Women Minister Rona Ambrose and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney. It cannot be revived in this Parliament.

Listen to the hate and intolerance from those brainwashed leftists in that video. This is why it's important to have an alias when writing online, because these students are brainwashed by public education to hate those who are different from them, and they are only too happy to use violence and intimidation against anyone who disagrees with them. Many of these students are probably growing up in broken homes where they are never exposed to fathers and the relationship between husband and wife. Fatherlessness is a serious social problem.

Fascism is and always has been a phenomena of the political left. Mussolini was a socialist, Hitler was a socialist, Stalin was a socialist, Mao was a socialist, and so on. To be a socialist is to on the same continuum that leads to totalitarianism and fascism. People on the left do not believe in natural rights like freedom of speech and the right to life. They are nihilists, and anything is permitted on nihilism. If they are willing to kill innocent children in order to escape the consequences of recreational sex, they could do anything. Abortion is the rock-bottom of immorality.

Related posts

- Video of armed police arresting pro-life students at Carleton University
- Carleton University orders peaceful pro-life students arrested
- University of Calgary convicts eight pro-life students
- University of Calgary denies legal counsel to accused accused students
- University of Calgary students face expulsion for pro-life display
- McGill University and University of Calgary censor pro-life students
- University of Ottawa cancels Ann Coulter appearance
- Ann Coulter files hate speech claim against Canadian university
- Canadian student union leader says pro-lifers are all potential murderers
- Lakehead University bans pro-life club
- Pro-life debater shouted down at McGill University
- Pro-life debater shouted down at St. Mary's University
- Pro-life club at McGill University banned
- University of Calgary uses police to threaten pro-life students(More from Ezra Levant)
- Canadian pro-life student quarantined by public school principal

Supreme Court of Canada rules that politically incorrect speech is a criminal offense

March 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of Canada

Canada is hostile to free speech, as shown in the recent Supreme Court decision.

Excerpt:

> Canada's top court has released a unanimous decision today that critics say has struck a monumental blow against freedom of speech, opinion, and religion across the country. The court ordered the defendant, a Christian pro-family activist with a reputation for intense activism, not only to pay a fine, but also to pay court costs which could amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars.
>
> […]In *Saskatchewan (Human Rights Commission) v. Whatcott*, the Supreme Court decided that born-again Christian William Whatcott was guilty of hate speech for distributing flyers to neighborhoods in Saskatoon and Regina in 2001 and 2002. While the flyers used vehement language against homosexual practices and the homosexual agenda, they did not directly attack homosexual persons.
>
> […]The Court focused on Whatcott's main argument, namely that he loves homosexuals with a brotherly Christian love, and it is only their sexual activity that he denounces.
>
> But the Supreme Court found that with regards to hate speech, the distinction between 'sin and sinner' no longer applies.
>
> "I agree that sexual orientation and sexual behaviour can be differentiated for certain purposes," the Court stated. "However, in instances where hate speech is

> directed toward behaviour in an effort to mask the true target, the vulnerable group, this distinction should not serve to avoid s. 14(1)(b) [the hate-crime clause of the Code]."
>
> "Courts have recognized a strong connection between sexual orientation and sexual conduct and where the conduct targeted by speech is a crucial aspect of the identity of a vulnerable group, attacks on this conduct stand as proxy for attacks on the group itself," the Court stated.
>
> The Court ordered Whatcott to pay the Human Rights Commission's legal fees and to pay $7,500 in compensation to two homosexuals who were offended by his flyers.
>
> Gwen Landolt, national vice-president of REAL Women of Canada, called the ruling "very depressing" and "bad news".
>
> […]"On the one hand they're saying, 'Oh, no, no, no, we're not really infringing on freedom of religion and freedom of speech and freedom of opinion', but in fact, what they say is not what they've done," she said in an interview with LifeSiteNews.com.

Next time we have an election, can we vote in favor of free speech? I don't agree with anything Whatcott did – form or content. The man is a fool. But I can easily see how this ruling could be used to silence reasonable speech that disagrees with homosexuality and gay marriage on secular grounds. The motivation of these judges is to silence speech critical of the gay agenda, and we should all be concerned about that. They pick these kooks like Whatcott to attack because they won't get any opposition from normal people. But later you'll find out that these legal precedents will furnish the foundation for eliminating free speech altogether. It's happened before.

Apparently, there is some effort to repeal section 13 in Canada, which is the part that criminalizes speech deemed offensive by the political left. That might affect future rulings of the Supreme Court if it is made clear that the right to free speech is absolute.

Related posts

- Free speech under attack from the secular left in the UK and Canada
- By repealing section 13, Canada takes a baby step toward freedom of speech
- Free speech hero Mark Steyn reflects on the demise of Section 13 fascism
- Canadian conservatives pass bill to repeal Section 13 speech code
- Youtube reverses decision to ban video critical of gay activism in Canada
- Alberta judge rules that it is legal to disagree with homosexuality
- Conservative MP's bill to repeal Section 13 moves to committee
- Conservative MP introduces bill to abolish Section 13 speech code
- Ezra Levant on the new Sun News television network
- What happens when same-sex marriage conflicts with religious liberty?
- Human Rights Tribunal finds Catholic school board guilty of discrimination
- Saskatchewan planning to abolish its Human Rights Tribunal

- In Canada, Blazing Cat Fur is being sued for linking to Mark Steyn
- Canadian Human Rights Commissions continue war on Christians
- Video of Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn testifying against Canadian HRCs
- The Conservative Party takes up free speech in British Columbia
- The Conservative Party takes up free speech in Ontario
- Video of Ezra Levant discussing free speech on the Michael Coren show
- Video interview with Ezra Levant by the libertarian Fraser Institute

Eurozone bailout of Cyprus includes seizing portion of individual savings accounts

March 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How well is socialism working in Cyprus? The Financial Times explains what happened. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> International lenders agreed to a €10bn bailout of Cyprus early on Saturday morning after 10 hours of fraught negotiations, which included convincing Nicosia to seize €5.8bn from Cypriot bank deposits to help pay for the rescue, a first for any eurozone bailout.
>
> However an emergency parliamentary session on Sunday to discuss the levy on bank savings was postponed until Monday, according to the Cyprus News Agency. Earlier, Cyprus president Nicos Anastasiades postponed an informal meeting of lawmakers also scheduled for Sunday morning.
>
> The cash from Cypriot account holders will come in the form of a one-time 9.9 per cent levy on all deposits over €100,000 that will be slashed from their savings before banks reopen Tuesday, a day after a Cypriot holiday. An additional 6.75 per cent levy will be imposed on deposits below that level.
>
> Cypriot finance minister Michalis Sarris said his government had already moved to ensure deposit holders could not make large withdrawals electronically before Tuesday's open; Jörg Asmussen, a member of the European Central Bank executive board, said a portion of deposits equivalent to the levies would likely be frozen immediately.
>
> […]Mr Asmussen justified the measure by saying it broadened the number of people who will shoulder the burden of the bailout. **Without the measures, he said, much of it would fall on Cypriot taxpayers; by going after all large deposit holders – many of whom are Russian or British – outsiders would help fund the rescue.**
>
> […]While Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the Dutch finance minister who chairs the group of eurozone finance ministers that hashed out the deal in all-night talks, declined to categorically rule out hitting depositors in future bank bailouts, he insisted that it was not being currently considered for any other country.

Got that? Even Russian and British depositors are having their funds confiscated, and all electronic transfers have been frozen to stop them from getting their money out. My prediction is that anyone with any money in these poor-performing socialist countries will be pulling it out in the next few days. Property rights are not respected by European socialists – that's the clear message to people who earn and save their money.

New study: smoking marijuana raises risk of having a stroke

March 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports:

Excerpt:

> Recent research from Duke University in Durham, N.C., found teenagers who smoked marijuana habitually during their adolescence showed a decrease in their general intellectual ability as they progressed into adulthood.
>
> But now, there is an even more chilling possible side effect of cannabis use – an increased risk of stroke.
>
> According to a new study from the University of Auckland in New Zealand, marijuana may double the risk of ischemic stroke and transient ischemic attack (TIA) in young adults – even those who had no risk factors that often contribute to an attack.
>
> The study's lead author, Dr. P. Alan Barber, a professor of clinical neurology at the University of Auckland, said he was interested in studying the link between stroke and marijuana after a curious incident of stroke occurred in one of his younger patients.
>
> "I look after people with strokes," Barber told FoxNews.com, "and we had a patient come in with stroke; they were young, but they didn't have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, and they were reasonably fit and well. They were clean from a risk factor point of view, but they had a stroke while smoking marijuana. So we looked at the literature and saw sporadic stroke reports among marijuana users."
>
> Conducting the first case-controlled study of its kind, Barber and his colleagues studied 160 ischemic stroke/TIA patients between the ages of 18 to 55 (an average age of 45), who had their urine samples screened when they entered the hospital. As a comparison, the researchers examined urine samples of 160 control subjects who had been admitted to the hospital for other medical reasons.
>
> Of the 160 stroke patients, 16 percent tested positive for marijuana use within the past couple of days, compared to only 8.1 percent of the control patients. According to Barber, the stroke patients were very well matched to the controls, with no differences in age, mechanisms for stroke or other vascular risk factors.

This is in addition to the study from last year that found that smoking marijuana can permanently damage intelligence.

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Teenagers who regularly smoke cannabis are putting themselves at risk of permanently damaging their intelligence, according to a landmark study.
>
> Researchers found persistent users of the drug, who started smoking it at school, had lower IQ scores as adults.
>
> They were also significantly more likely to have attention and memory problems in later life, than their peers who abstained.
>
> Furthermore, those who started as teenagers and used it heavily, but quit as adults, did not regain their full mental powers, found academics at King's College London and Duke University in the US.
>
> They looked at data from over 1,000 people from Dunedin in New Zealand, who have been followed through their lives since being born in 1972 or 1973.
>
> […]Professor Terrie Moffitt, of KCL's Institute of Psychiatry, who contributed to the study, published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, said "persistent users" who started as teenagers suffered a drop of eight IQ points at the age of 38, compared to when they were 13.

In addition to looking at studies, it's important to look at countries that have legalized marijuana, so that we can see the results.

Other countries have tried permissive drug policies have been tried and they have *failed*.

Excerpt:

> Amsterdam authorities say they are to halve the number of brothels and marijuana shops in the city's "red light" district and surrounding area

> The city announced plans to clean up the area a year ago and since then 109 sex "windows", from which prostitutes attract customers, have been closed. The new measures aim to reduce the number of windows to 243 from 482 last year, a city spokesman said.
>
> Amsterdam also wants to close half of the 76 cannabis shops in the city centre.
>
> "Money laundering, extortion and human trafficking are things you do not see on the surface but they are hurting people and the city. We want to fight this," deputy mayor of Amsterdam Lodewijk Asscher told Reuters.

The Family Research Council explains how permissive drug policies don't actually work.

Excerpt:

> History provides evidence that legalization of drugs in foreign nations has not been successful. For example, opium was legalized in China earlier this century. That decision resulted in 90 million addicts and it took a half-century to repair the damage.[59]
>
> Egypt allowed unrestricted trade of cocaine and heroin in the 1920s. An epidemic

> of addiction resulted. Even in Iran and Thailand, countries where drugs are readily available, the prevalence of addiction continues to soar.[60]
>
> Modern-day Netherlands is often cited as a country which has successfully legalized drugs. Marijuana is sold over the counter and police seldom arrest cocaine and heroin users. But official tolerance has led to significant increases in addiction. Amsterdam's officials blame the significant rise in crime on the liberal drug policy. The city's 7,000 addicts are blamed for 80 percent of all property crime and Amsterdam's rate of burglary is now twice that of Newark, New Jersey.[61] Drug problems have forced the city to increase the size of the police force and the city fathers are now rethinking the drug policy.[62]
>
> Dr. K. F. Gunning, president of the Dutch National Committee on Drug Prevention, cites some revealing statistics about drug abuse and crime. Cannabis use among students increased 250 percent from 1984 to 1992. During the same period, shootings rose 40 percent, car thefts increased 62 percent, and hold-ups rose 69 percent.[63]
>
> Sweden legalized doctor prescriptions of amphetamines in 1965. During the first year of legalization, the number of intravenous"speed" addicts rose 88.5 percent. A study of men arrested during the legalization period showed a high correlation between intravenous use and a variety of crimes.[64]
>
> Dr. Nils Bejorot, director of the Swedish Carnegie Institute and professor of social medicine at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, believes the solution to the growing drug problem is consistent social and legal harassment of both users and dealers.[65]
>
> Great Britain experimented with controlled distribution of heroin between 1959 and 1968. According to the British Medical Journal, the number of heroin addicts doubled every sixteen months and the increase in addicts was accompanied by an increase in criminal activity as well.[66] And British authorities found that heroin addicts have a very good chance of dying prematurely. On the crime front, Scotland Yard had to increase its narcotics squad 100 percent to combat the crime caused by the "legal" addicts.[67]
>
> The Swiss opened a "legalized drug" area in Zurich seven years ago and local addicts were given drugs, clean needles, and emergency medical care. Unfortunately, the liberal policy backfired and the number of addicts surged to 3,500; violence surged, too. "Needle Park," as it came to be known, was a place of open warfare among rival gangs, and even police faced gunfire. Their cars were attacked and overturned. In February 1995, officials ended the experiment, conceding that it had evolved into a grotesque spectacle.[68]

Why does legalizing drugs increase crime? Because drugs are addictive and they cost money to obtain, even if they are legal. Addiction reduces the ability to hold down a job, which is a legal way of getting money. Therefore, addicts will resort to crime in order to get the money to buy their drugs.

William Lane Craig on the relationship between science and religion

March 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Chris Shannon shared this article from Reasonable Faith on Facebook. The faster we get used to this material, the better off Christianity will fare in the marketplace of ideas.

Here's the introduction:

> What has happened, however, in the second half of this century is that historians and philosophers of science have come to realize that this supposed history of warfare is a myth. As Thaxton and Pearcey point out in their recent book *The Soul of Science,* for over 300 years between the rise of modern science in the 1500's and the late 1800s the relationship between science and religion can best be described as an *alliance.* Up until the late 19th century, scientists were typically Christian believers who saw no conflict between their science and their faith—people like Kepler, Boyle, Maxwell, Faraday, Kelvin, and others. The idea of a warfare between science and religion is a relatively recent invention of the late 19th century, carefully nurtured by secular thinkers who had as their aim the undermining of the cultural dominance of Christianity in the West and its replacement by naturalism—the view that nothing outside nature is real and the only way to discover truth is through science. They were remarkably successful in pushing through their agenda. But philosophers of science during the second half of the 20th century have come to realize that the idea of a warfare between science and theology is a gross oversimplification. White's book is now regarded as something of a bad joke, a one-sided and distorted piece of propaganda.
>
> Now some people acknowledge that science and religion should not be regarded as foes, but nonetheless they do not think that they should be considered friends either. They say that science and religion are mutually irrelevant, that they represent two non-over-lapping domains. Sometimes you hear slogans like "Science deals with facts and religion deals with faith." But this is a gross caricature of both science and religion. As science probes the universe, she encounters problems and questions which are philosophical in character and therefore cannot be resolved scientifically, but which can be illuminated by a theological perspective. By the same token, it is simply false that religion makes no factual claims about the world. The world religions make various and conflicting claims about the origin and nature of the universe and humanity, and they cannot *all* be true. Science and religion are thus like two circles which intersect or partially overlap. It is in the area of intersection that the dialogue takes place.

Here are his six ways that science and religion overlap:

1. *Religion furnishes the conceptual framework in which science can flourish.*
2. *Science can both falsify and verify claims of religion.*
3. *Science encounters metaphysical problems which religion can help to solve.*
4. *Religion can help to adjudicate between scientific theories.*
5. *Religion can augment the explanatory power of science.*
6. *Science can establish a premise in an argument for a conclusion having religious significance.*

Part 2 was my favorite part. Here's part of it:

> When religions make claims about the natural world, they intersect the domain of science and are, in effect, making predictions which scientific investigation can either verify or falsify. Let me give some examples of each.
>
> […]Another interesting example of science's falsifying a religious view is the claim of several Eastern religions like Taoism and certain forms of Hinduism that the world is divine and therefore eternal. The discovery during this century of the expansion of the universe reveals that far from being eternal, all matter and energy, even physical space and time themselves, came into existence at a point in the finite past before which nothing existed. As Stephen Hawking says in his 1996 book *The Nature of Space and Time*, "almost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang."3 But if the universe came into being at the Big Bang, then it is temporally finite and contingent in its existence and therefore neither eternal nor divine, as pantheistic religions had claimed.
>
> On the other hand, science can also verify religious claims. For example, one of the principal doctrines of the Judaeo-Christian faith is that God created the universe out of nothing a finite time ago. The Bible begins with the words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth" (Gen. 1.1). The Bible thus teaches that the universe had a beginning. This teaching was repudiated by both ancient Greek philosophy and modern atheism, including dialectical materialism. Then in 1929 with the discovery of the expansion of the universe, this doctrine was dramatically verified. Physicists John Barrow and Frank Tipler, speaking of the beginning of the universe, explain, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo* (out of nothing)."4 Against all expectation, science thus verified this religious prediction. Robert Jastrow, head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, envisions it this way:
>
> [The scientist] has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.5

This is a popular-level article, and I recommend it. It really speaks to what I see as the

biggest problem that I find among my co-workers who call themselves theists. There is a strange view of faith out there that says that faith is about life enhancement. God's job is to provide us with a happy life, via mystical coincidences. God's job is to make us happy – to make our plans work out and to protect us from suffering in this life. On this view, God is part of a subjective experience. When people who have this view talk about God, they talk about him as a kind of rabbit's foot or lucky charm. They are not trying to know if God exists objectively, or to know his character objectively. They are trying to run their own lives, and they want to believe that the there is a mysterious force in the universe that orders everything to make them happy. And perhaps they sing praise hymns in church to reward this mystical God. Praise hymns make them happy, so it must make him happy, too. There are Christians in my office who have this postmodern view of God as cosmic safety blanket, and they do not see it as incompatible with other views like pluralism, universalism, pro-abortion, pro-gay-marriage, pro-socialism, and so on. This subjectivist view of religion is, of course, nowhere in the Bible.

Enter science. Scientific evidence (and its partner, historical evidence) is the antidote to this subjective, life-enhancement version of Christianity. Scientific evidence establishes premises in arguments for God's existence. These arguments make the existence of God knowable apart from private experiences, personal preferences, mysticism and singing praise songs. If God really exists, then he is not just a projection of our own minds that serves our needs for comfort. God is not a crutch that we pull out by force of our own will – he is out there and he is real. Historical evidence, and the theology that is based on it, is also important, because it establishes the character of God objectively. Now instead of pushing our views onto God, and making him serve us, we can get to know him and serve him. Instead of having God arrange things mystically to serve our needs, we can use our wills to achieve the things that matter to him, while working within the rules of engagement that he has set out.

Science helps us know that God is real regardless of our personal preferences, our communities, our feelings, our desires and all that subjective stuff. And if God is real, then we find out what he is like by looking outward, not by looking inward, and not by agreeing with the people around us. Not everyone who claims to be a Christian is happy about the idea of God being real and knowable, because it threatens their autonomy to invent their own God. That's why it's important to know the science to correct even Christians, who have somehow adopted this postmodern, personal-preference view of religion.

China to end one-child policy that killed 336 million unborn children?

March 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Telegraph has bad news and good news.

First the bad news:

> More than half a billion birth control procedures, including at least 336 million abortions, have been performed in the name of the one-child policy, China's Health ministry revealed yesterday.
>
> The figure illustrates the enormous impact that the one-child policy has had on China in the four decades since it began.
>
> Official statistics showed that in addition to the terminations, Chinese doctors have sterilised 196 million men and women since 1971.
>
> […]There are more than 13 million abortions a year, or 1,500 an hour, in China, according to government researchers, who blame the high figure on a lack of sex education.

> Fewer than ten per cent of sexually active couples regularly use condoms, according to the state-run Science and Technology Research Institute. By comparison, there are roughly 11 million abortions each year in India.

And now the good news:

> China's demographics have been dramatically skewed by strict family planning. Last year, the working age population shrank for the first time in 50 years, a serious threat in an economy built on a huge pool of cheap labour.
>
> The incoming Chinese leadership has already moved to dismantle the Family Planning Commission, which has enforced the one-child policy, sometimes brutally.
>
> […]Wang Feng, a population expert and director of the Brookings-Tsinghua Center for Public Policy in Beijing, told the Wall Street Journal that the government had begun the process of bringing the policy to an end.

That's incremental progress that I can support. But there are an awful lot of people who are going to face God on Judgment Day and have to answer for what they did. Not just the doctors, but the people who made the policies in the first place.

UPDATE: My friend Lydia is telling me to be skeptical of this report, because China has made similar statements before about this policy and nothing has changed.

Brookings Institute: three simple rules to avoid poverty

March 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An editorial from the left-leaning Washington Post, by scholar from the left-leanings Brookings Institute.

Take a look at this:

> Policy aimed at promoting economic opportunity for poor children must be framed within three stark realities. First, many poor children come from families that do not give them the kind of support that middle-class children get from their families. Second, as a result, these children enter kindergarten far behind their more advantaged peers and, on average, never catch up and even fall further behind. Third, in addition to the education deficit, poor children are more likely to make bad decisions that lead them to drop out of school, become teen parents, join gangs and break the law.
>
> In addition to the thousands of local and national programs that aim to help young people avoid these life-altering problems, we should figure out more ways to convince young people that their decisions will greatly influence whether they avoid poverty and enter the middle class. Let politicians, schoolteachers and administrators, community leaders, ministers and parents drill into children the message that in a free society, they enter adulthood with three major responsibilities: at least finish high school, get a full-time job and wait until age 21 to get married and have children.

> Our research shows that of American adults who followed these three simple rules, only about 2 percent are in poverty and nearly 75 percent have joined the middle class (defined as earning around $55,000 or more per year). There are surely influences other than these principles at play, but following them guides a young adult away from poverty and toward the middle class.

The most interesting part of the editorial was where the left-wing pro-abortion group Planned Parenthood complained that telling people the likely consequences of their own actions was either “racist” or “judgmental”:

> The recent attacks by Planned Parenthood on Michael Bloomberg, New York City’s mayor, for launching a campaign designed to inform teenagers of the consequences of teen pregnancy provides a good example of how many in our society face the effects of nonmarital births on teen mothers and their children. In one of the campaign posters, a baby with tears rolling down his face says: “I’m twice as likely not to graduate high school because you had me as a teen.” Another shows a girl saying to her mom: “Chances are he won’t stay with you.

> What happens to me?" Planned Parenthood criticized the ads, displayed in the subway and bus shelters, for ignoring racial and economic factors that contribute to teen pregnancy. Other critics say the ads stigmatize teen parents and their children.

This is what George W. Bush called "the soft bigotry of low expectations". Planned Parenthood thinks that trying to get women to think in terms of cause and effect is pointless. They are too stupid to do anything but have sex with brutes and then murder their children. Over and over. That's Planned Parenthood's view of women. They won't lift a finger to help women towards marriage, and the prosperity and security it would bring them and their children.

The simple fact is that Planned Parenthood makes a lot of money off of killing babies, and they don't want the killing to stop.

William Lane Craig debates Arif Ahmed: Does God Exist?

March 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that I would summarize a debate that occurred at Cambridge University between Dr. William Lane Craig and Dr. Arif Ahmed. Everyone knows Dr. Craig, but I should say that Arif Ahmed is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Philosophy at Cambridge University.

The full MP3 is available here.

Below, I've summarized the two opening speeches from each debater. I put snarky clarifications in italics.

Here is Dr. Craig's opening speech: (1:24)

Craig's case for God.

1) The origin of the universe (3:10)
– an eternal universe is not compatible with mathematics
– the impossibility of an actual infinite in nature (cites David Hilbert)
– an eternal universe is not compatible with science
– the big bang theory requires space and time to come into being out of nothing (cites PCW Davies)
– even radical alternative theories require an absolute beginning (cites Stephen Hawking)
– atheists must believe that the origin of space and time came from nothing and by nothing (cites Anthony Kenny)

Argument:
P1.1) Whatever begins to exist requires a cause
P1.2) The universe begin to exist
C1.3) Therefore, the universe requires a cause

What can the cause be:
– it must be eternal, because it caused time to exist
– it must be non-physical, because it caused space to begin to exist

Why must the cause of the universe be a person instead of a force?
Only minds can exist non-physically
– the only non-physical entities we know of are abstract objects and minds
– but abstract objects can't cause physical effects
– therefore, the cause universe is a personal mind

Only minds can cause effects in time without antecedent conditions
– causally prior to the universe's beginning, there were no antecedent conditions
– the only entity capable of acting freely, not based on antecedent conditions, are free agents
– therefore, the cause of the universe is a free agent

2) The fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe (9:15)
– the fine-tuning of the universe is supported by science
– the constants and quantities given in the big bang can take any of a range of values
– the actual values are within a extremely narrow range that supports the requirements of life
– he gives the example of the fine-tuning of the gravitational constant
– he gives the example of the fine-tuning of the weak force

Argument:
P2.1) The fine-tuning is either due to law, chance or design
P2.2) It is not due to law, because the numbers are independent of the law
P2.3) It cannot be due to chance, the life-permitting band is tiny compared to the possible values
C2.4) Therefore, the fine-tuning is due to design

3) Objective moral values are plausibly grounded in God (12:41)
– objective moral values are values that exist and are binding regardless of what individuals think
– objective moral values cannot be rationally grounded on an atheistic worldview (cites Michael Ruse)
– atheists can recognize moral values and act on them, but they cannot explain their origin and existence
– atheists can only appeal to personal or cultural preferences to say what is right and wrong
– the existence of objective moral is undeniable

Argument:
P3.1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist
P3.2) Objective moral values do exist
C3.3) Therefore, God exists

4) The resurrection of Jesus implies that God exists (16:04)
– if the resurrection of Jesus happened, then it would be a miracle, implying that God exists
– three facts are recognized by the majority of scholars
– the tomb was found empty after his death (cites Jacob Kramer)
– individuals and groups saw Jesus after his death (cites Gerd Ludemann)
– the belief in the resurrection of Jesus was totally unexpected (cites N.T. Wright)
– naturalistic explanations of these facts have been rejected by the consensus of scholars

Argument:
P4.1) The 3 minimal facts are established
P4.2) The hypothesis that God raised Jesus from the dead is the best explanation for these facts
P4.3) The hypothesis that God raised Jesus from the dead entails that God exists
C4.4) Therefore, God exists

5) God can be known directly by personal experience (20:02)
– God can be experienced just like you experience a relationship with human persons

Dr. Ahmed's first opening speech: (22:10)

Rebuttal to Craig's case for God.

0) Craig is wrong about faith and reason (25:20)
– Craig's book Reasonable Faith, he makes a number of statements about faith and reason
– He writes that Christianity is not accountable to reason if reason goes against Christianity
– He writes that the truth of Christianity is knowable without rational arguments
– He writes that even if there are no reasons to believe, and many reasons to disbelieve, humans are still obligated to believe
– Question for Craig: is Christianity reasonable or isn't it? Do reasons matter or don't they?

1) Response to Craig's first argument: the origin of the universe (28:27)
– what mathematicians say about the contradictory nature of subtraction and division for actual infinities is wrong
– what cosmologists and physicists say about the beginning of time is wrong, every event follows another one, there is no first event
– even if the universe is 15 billion years old, the act of Creation requires time and there was no time prior to the supposed beginning of the universe for God to act in
– the cause of the universe need not be a personal agent
– all minds are made of matter so a mind cannot be the cause of the universe,
– it is impossible for a person to act outside of time
– why did God wait 15 billion years before creating humans and relating to them?

2) Response to Craig's second argument: the fine-tuning of the creation (32:38)
– where do these probabilities that Craig is using come from?

3) Response to Craig's third argument: the moral argument (34:07)
– I have personal preferences about what counts as right and wrong, and they are superior to God's preferences
– moral intuitions are not a good way of discovering objective moral values, so therefore objective moral values don't exist

4) Response to Craig's fourth argument: the resurrection (36:00)
– the number of eyewitnesses is not enough, because groups number of eyewitnesses can be fooled by illusions, as in David Copperfield illusions
– the Gospels contradict themselves, e.g. – the story of Matthew's earthquake and walking dead isn't in Mark – so that's a contradiction, so the Gospels are not reliable sources for Craig's 3 minimal facts

5) Response to Craig's fourth argument: personal experience (37:30)
– there are many different religious experiences because there are many different religions, which means that no one religion can be right

Ahmed's case against God.

1) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence (39:00)
– if there is are no reasons to believe in God, then this is evidence that he doesn't exist

2) The inductive argument from evil (40:04)
– some evil is gratuitous – events cause people to suffer, and has no benefit that I can see, which argues against the existence of a good God
– God would not have allowed people to suffer, because he has no overriding purpose that would justify his permission of human suffering

3) Belief in God makes people evil (41:52)
– all genuinely religious people are very immoral, *when measured against my subjective standard of morality*

Further study

In case you are wondering about his inductive argument from evil, please read this summary on the problems of evil and suffering, which is taken from my list of arguments for and against Christian theism. Keep in my mind that I am a software engineer with two degrees in computer science… not philosophy!

Craig mentions a paper by the late William P. Alston of Syracuse University in his rebuttal to the inductive problem of evil. The paper lists six limitations on human cognitive capacities that make it difficult for humans to *know* that some instance of apparently gratuitous evil really is gratuitious – that God has no morally sufficient reason for permitting this specific instance of evil. Since Ahmed is making the claim that some evil is gratuitous, he bears the burden of proof.

Federal government spends $2.7 million to study lesbians who drink too much

March 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has awarded $2.7 million to study why lesbians are at a higher "risk for hazardous drinking."
>
> The University of Illinois has received grants since 2009 for its project, "Cumulative Stress and Hazardous Drinking in a Community of Adult Lesbians," which aims to develop "culturally sensitive" strategies to prevent lesbians from being drunks.
>
> "Studies using both probability and nonprobability samples provide ample evidence of lesbians' vulnerability to hazardous drinking," the grant's description reads. "However, very little is known about the factors that increase lesbians' risk for hazardous drinking."
>
> "We propose to build on and extend our study of sexual identity and drinking… to model effects of cumulative stress on hazardous drinking among lesbians."
>
> […]The grant states that there are "chronic stressors unique to sexual minorities, creating cumulative stress that may be compounded in lesbians of color."
>
> The study is being led by Tonda Hughes, professor at the Department of Health Systems Science at the University of Illinois, an "internationally recognized expert in the area of alcohol use among lesbians," according tothe University.
>
> […]The University of Illinois is not alone in receiving federal funds to study "sexual minorities" and their propensity to drink. The University of Washington has been awarded $1,154,445 since 2010 for its project "High Risk Drinking in Emerging Adult at-Risk Women," which seeks to find out why young lesbians and bisexuals face an "elevated" chance for hazardous drinking.
>
> Old Dominion University in 2012 received $446,056 for its study titled "Minority Stress, Alcohol Use, and Intimate Partner Violence Among Lesbians."

Last time, we saw that the federal government was spending $1.5 million on studying why so many lesbians are overweight. Never believe the government knows more about how to spend the money they take from you than you do. It's your money. They are wasting it. Instead of cutting wasteful spending like this, they release illegal immigrants with criminal convictions. You should never vote for bigger government. If you want to help people, use your own money.

Pew Research study: MSNBC has the least news coverage and the most opinion

March 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Forbes magazine. (H/T Jared)

Excerpt:

> If you're like most cable news viewers, you probably think the channel you favor has a monopoly on the facts and the other ones are nothing more than a bunch of ranting. In fact, which cable network is the most opinionated is not a matter of opinion. It's MSNBC.
>
> A full 85% of the Comcast-owned network's coverage can be classified as opinion or commentary rather than straight news, according to the authors of the Pew Research Center's annual State of the News Media report.
>
> CNN and Fox News Channel, meanwhile, fall much closer to a 50/50 distribution, with Fox News skewing somewhat more heavily toward opinion.
>
> Not coincidentally, MSNBC also spends by far the least producing its news: some $240 million in 2012, according to an estimate by SNL Kagan. CNN spent $682 million, while Fox led the pack with an outlay of $820 million.

I think that Fox, at least, has both sides on when they cover opinion.

Below, please find some other academic studies of media bais. If you are going to link this article in a discussion forum, please link directly to the studies, not to me. I see my posts on media bias being linked a lot in forums, and people dismiss them because I am a Christian. So just link to the studies directly and you'll be good.

Peer-reviewed academic studies of media bias

Let's take a look at peer-reviewed academic studies of media bias, and see if they confirm or falsify what Pew Research found.

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts,

> as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three

> major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

Those are the facts.

So what?

Now consider this column from Brent Bozell, which explains the difference media bias makes to political intelligence.

Excerpt:

> **A 2008 survey by the Pew Research Center asked media consumers three questions: which party was in control of Congress (Democrats), who was the secretary of state (Condi Rice) and who was the prime**

> **minister of Britain (Gordon Brown).**
>
> **Let's document how the viewers of "Hannity &Colmes" were better informed than Stewart's "Daily Show" gigglers on basic political facts. Hannity viewers beat Stewart's on the Democratic majority (84 percent to 65 percent correct answers), Condi Rice (a dramatic 73 percent to 48 percent gap) and Gordon Brown (49 percent to 36). Overall, as a percentage getting all three questions right, Hannity won 42-30.**

Just keep that in mind when you are watching the mainstream media news shows. A very good site to bookmark and read is Newsbusters, which documents mainstream media bias daily. I even have an RSS feed of their latest stories on the front page on this blog.

UK offers more money to working women and single mothers, nothing for stay-at-home moms

March 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this UK Daily Mail article about the "Conservative Party" of the UK.

Excerpt:

> Mothers who stay at home to look after their children do not need as much financial help as those who work, according to the Treasury.
>
> The insulting claim was inadvertently published yesterday as part of a briefing on the Government's new childcare plans.
>
> It fuelled accusations that the scheme will deliberately discriminate against traditional single-earner families in an attempt to force more mothers back to work.
>
> Critics described the new policy as a 'slap in the face for two million stay-at-home mothers'.
>
> The Treasury briefing, designed to help press officers 'rebut' criticism, stated: 'Working families who are struggling with their childcare costs, or families where parents want to go to work but can't afford to are in greater need of state support for child care than families where one parent chooses to stay at home and look after their children full-time.'
>
> **David Cameron and Nick Clegg yesterday confirmed that working couples who each earn less than £150,000 will qualify for child care tax breaks worth up to £1,200 a year per child from 2015.**
>
> **That means they could have a joint income of nearly £300,000 and still qualify.**
>
> **They will receive 20 per cent – equivalent to the basic rate of tax – of their yearly childcare costs, up to a total of £6,000 per child. This will save a typical working family with two children under 12 up to £2,400 a year.**
>
> **Single parents who are employed and earn less than £150,000 will also be eligible.**
>
> **But, in a move that will anger Tory traditionalists, the Government confirmed that families in which only one parent works will not receive a penny.**

David Cameron is also pushing gay marriage really hard, in spite of public opinion. I'm not even sure why he calls himself a conservative.

The psychological profile of atheists

March 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Triablogue has a fascinating quote posted from "The Cambridge Companion to Atheism". (H/T J. Warner Wallace)

Take a look:

> Findings regarding those who come from religious homes and then give up religion show that they have had more distant relations with their parents (Hunsberger 1980, 1983; Hunsberger and Brown 1984). Caplovitz and Sherrow (1977) found that the quality of relations with parents was a crucial variable, as well as a commitment to intellectualism. Hunsberger and Brown (1984) found that lesser emphasis placed on religion in home, especially by the mother, and self-reported intellectual orientation had a positive impact on rejecting the family's religiosity as a young adult. Dudley (1987) found that alienation from religion in Seventh-Day Adventist adolescents was correlated (0.72) with the quality of their relationship with their parents and other authority figures. Alienation was tied to authoritarianism and harshness on the part of the parents. But parents may also have a more consonant effect on their children's religiosity. Sherkat (1991), analyzing large-scale U.S. surveys in 1988, found that parents' religious exogamy and lapses in practice led to their children's apostasy. Thus, children may be following in their parents' footsteps or acting out their parents' unexpressed wishes.
>
> Attachment theory (Kirkpatrick 2005) assumes that interpersonal styles in adults, the ways of dealing with attachment, separation, and loss in close personal relationships, stem directly from the mental models of oneself and others that were developed during infancy and childhood. Attachment styles can be characterized as secure, avoidant, or anxious/ambivalent. Secure adults find it relatively easy to get close to others. Avoidant adults are somewhat uncomfortable being close to others. Anxious/ambivalent adults find that others are reluctant to get as close as they would like. Kirkpatrick (2005) reports that in a study of 400adults in the United States, those having an avoidant attachment style were most likely to identify themselves as either atheist or agnostic.
>
> Does losing a parent early in life lead one to atheism? Vetter and Green (1932–33) surveyed 350 members of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, 325 of whom were men. Among those who became atheists before age twenty, half lost one or both parents before that age. A large number in the group reported unhappy childhood and adolescence experiences. (The twenty-five women reported "traumatic experiences" with male ministers. We can only wonder about those today.) Vitz (1999) presents biographical information from the lives of more than fifty prominent atheists and theists as

> evidence for his theory that atheism is a reaction to losing one's father.

This is why Christians need to do more than quote the Bible to people. We need to be concerned with politics. We need to support policies that promote and strengthen marriage and parenting. We need to oppose policies that undermine the stability of the marriage commitment. Not only should Christians be informed and outspoken about same-sex marriage, but we should also be informed and outspoken on other laws that weaken marriage, such as no-fault divorce laws. Not everything we need to know is in the Bible. The Bible does say that divorce is wrong, and homosexuality is wrong, but we need to look outside the Bible at research in order to influence the society as a whole. Most of the people who need influencing in public policy discussions will not accept Bible verses alone – they need arguments and evidence.

If we really care about bringing people to Christ, then we need to understand that public policy plays a role. Christians need to stop being pious about being apolitical.

Related posts

- Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?
- Why do people become atheists?
- Why do young Christians become atheists in college?

What causes homosexuality?

March 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from NARTH by Julie Hamilton, Ph.D, that explains what most people already know about the causes of homosexuality.

Excerpt:

> While environmental factors may include experiences of sexual abuse or other traumatic events, a common contributor to same-sex attractions is a disruption in the development of gender identity. Gender identity refers to a person's view of his or her own gender; that is, his or her sense of masculinity or femininity. Gender identity is formed through the relationships that a child has with the same-sex parent and same-sex peers.
>
> The process of gender identification begins approximately between age two and a half and four. For boys, it is during this phase that they begin to move from their primary attachment with the mother to seeking out a deeper attachment with the father. For males, the relationship between a boy and his father is the initial source of developing a secure gender identity. It is through the father-son relationship that a boy discovers what he needs to know about being male, including who he is as a boy, how boys walk, how they talk, how they act, and so forth. As the father spends time with the son, shows interest in the son, and gives the son affirmation and affection, the father imparts to the son a sense of masculinity. The boy begins to develop a sense of his own gender by understanding himself in relation to his father.
>
> When the child reaches the age of five, he begins to face another task, that is, to begin to attach to same-sex peers. At this age, he starts school and begins to look to the other boys to answer the same questions that his dad has been answering. He looks to the other boys to discover how they walk, how they talk, how they play, and how he measures up in relation to them. He seeks to be included, accepted, and acknowledged. Through the relationships he forms with other boys, he continues to gain a sense of masculinity, discovering more about others boys and therefore more about himself as a boy.
>
> […]The female development of homosexuality is a bit more complex. As with the male development, there are a number of factors that can contribute. For some women who end up with same-sex attractions, the development is similar to the male development previously described. For others, negative perceptions regarding femininity may lead to an internal detachment from their own femininity. For example, if a girl watches her father abuse her mother, the girl might conclude that to be feminine is to be weak. At an early age she might make an unconscious decision to detach from her female identity. She might detach from her own gender in an effort to protect herself from the perceived

> harmful effects of being female.
>
> Sexual abuse is another factor that can contribute to a homosexual orientation. In these cases men are seen as unsafe, and lesbianism becomes a way of protecting against further hurt from a male. For some there might be a disconnection from the mother, and lesbianism becomes a search for motherly love. For others, same-sex attractions may not initially be present, but may later develop as a result of entering into a non-sexual friendship which becomes emotionally dependent. An emotionally dependent relationship is one in which two people seek to have their needs met by one another. It is a relationship in which healthy boundaries are not in place. The absence of appropriate emotional boundaries can then lead to a violation of physical boundaries.

I think this is very sad because it turns out that it's really the parents who make the decisions that will push someone towards or away from homosexuality. It would be better for everyone, homosexuality aside, if people who have children think twice about the needs of those children. Maybe the adults need to be a little more informed and accommodating about what children need? And maybe we need to do a better job of picking spouses based on their ability to provide for the needs of children?

Speaking as a Christian, I know why I want to have children, and I would be very interested in bonding with them and developing them. And people can see that in me because of the way that I mentor and support so many younger Christians in their studies and plans. We need to get better at caring for young people and just spending time with them instead of always doing our own thing and handing them off to strangers. It's wrong to have children and not give them the attention and time they need to grow up.

You may also be interested in this post by Dr. Trayce Hansen on the identical twin studies that show that homosexuality is not determined by genetics, although that certainly is a factor. I also recommend the book "A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality" by Dr. Joseph Nicolosi for more background on these issues.

The divinity of Jesus according to the early church

March 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

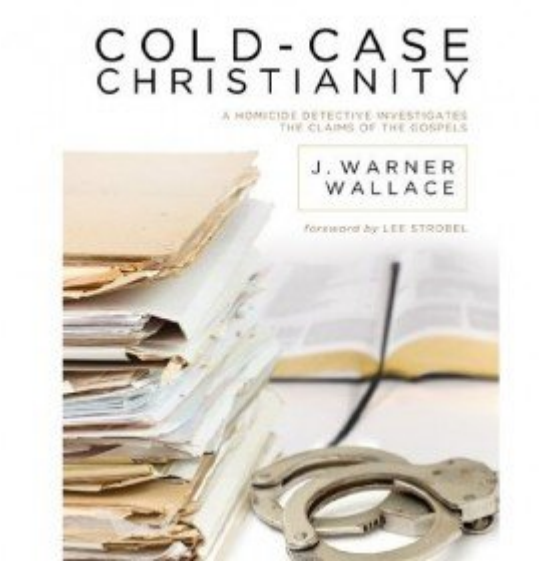

Cold-Case Christianity by J. Warner Wallace

Earlier, I wrote a post about the evidence for the divinity of Jesus in the earliest New Testament documents. And now I've found a wonderful follow-up to that post from J. Warner Wallace, author of "Cold-Case Christianity", the book I am currently reading. I am on chapter 14.

He lists quotations from all of these early church fathers about the divinity of Jesus:

- Barnabas, companion of Paul (c. 70-130AD)
- Ignatius, Bishop of the Church at Antioch (c. 110AD)
- Clement of Rome, Bishop of the Church at Rome (c. 120AD)
- Irenaeus, Bishop of the Church at Lyons, Modern Day France (c. 180AD)
- Clement of Alexandria, Renowned Christian Teacher in Egypt (c. 195AD)
- Hippolytus, Leading Presbyter at the Church in Rome (c. 205AD)
- Tertullian, Passionate Christian Apologist in Carthage, North Africa (c. 207AD)
- Origen, Famous Pupil of Clement of Alexandria (c. 225AD)

This post is actually very similar to material in chapter 13 of Wallace's book. Have you read it yet?

One of the most thorough reviews that I've seen of the book was on Luke Nix's blog, in case you want to take a closer look.

Assistant to Kermit Gosnell admits to killing ten born-alive babies

March 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

WARNING: this story is really horrific. Reader discretion is advised.

CNS News points out that Gosnell joked with his staff about later-term abortions.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Kermit Gosnell, an abortionist now on trial in Philadelphia charged with seven counts of first-degree murder–he allegedly cut the spinal cords of late-term aborted babies who were born alive–apparently used to joke about the large size of some the infants he aborted and in one case, according to what a co-worker told the grand jury, said, "This baby is big enough to walk around with me or walk me to the bus stop."
>
> Gosnell, 72, who ran a multi-million dollar abortion business in West Philadelphia, was arrested on Jan. 19, 2011, and his trial started Monday, Mar. 18, 2013. The first-degree murder counts refer to seven late-term aborted babies who were born alive and then killed, their spinal cords cut with scissors.
>
> Gosnell is also charged with the third-degree murder of a pregnant woman, Karnamaya Mongar, 41, who died after being given a pain killer at Gosnell's office. He also faces several counts of conspiracy and violation of Pennsylvania's law against post-24-week abortions.
>
> In testimony on Monday, Adrienne Moton, who used to work for Gosnell at the Women's Medical Society in West Philadelphia, said she recalled one baby – "Baby Boy A" – who was aborted in July 2008. Baby A was so large, Moton took a photo of the child with her cell phone before Gosnell took the baby out of the room.
>
> "I just saw a big baby boy. He had that color, that color that a baby has," Moton said in court. "I just felt he could have had a chance. … He could have been born any day."

Moten described how she helped to kill at least 10 born-alive babies by cutting their spinal cords.

More on the story from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The grand jury report includes the account of another of Gosnell's employees, Kareema Cross, describing the moment of Baby A's birth:
>
> After the baby was expelled, Cross noticed that he was breathing, though not for long. After about 10 to 20 seconds, while the mother was asleep, "the doctor just slit the neck," said Cross. Gosnell put the boy's body in a shoebox. Cross

> described the baby as so big that his feet and arms hung out over the sides of the container. Cross said that she saw the baby move after his neck was cut, and after the doctor placed it in the shoebox. Gosnell told her, “it’s the baby’s reflexes. It’s not really moving.”
>
> A neonatologist who testified on behalf of the grand jury said that Gosnell’s explanation for the baby’s movements was false, and that in all likelihood Gosnell failed immediately to kill the baby, and that his “few moments of life were spent in excruciating pain.”
>
> The neonatologist also estimated the baby’s age as around 32 weeks gestation.
>
> […]Gosnell’s lawyer is arguing that the prosecution can’t prove that any of the seven babies he stands accused of murdering were born alive. He told the courtroom yesterday that the prosecution of his client is a racist-inspired “lynching.”

Gosnell is calling the charges against him an “elitist, racist prosecution”.

Does science support mothers who leave their young children to go to work?

March 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina is very concerned about the UK's leftist coalition government's attempt to punish women who stay at home with their young children. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Under plans unveiled in the Budget on Wednesday, families will only benefit from the generous new deal, which will come into force in 2015, if 'all parents' have a job. If one parent works but the other stays at home looking after their young children, they will get nothing.
>
> It is the second time in just a few months that the Government has triggered controversy with its changes to the tax and benefit systems, which appear to penalise stay-at-home mothers.
>
> As a result of the recent child benefit changes, a couple can both earn £50,000 and keep their child benefit, worth £1,752 a year for two children.
>
> But a couple where one parent earns £60,000 and the other earns nothing – but have a far lower joint income – do not get a penny.
>
> Again, this week's initiative favours those couples where both parents go out to work. It will even benefit parents who each earn a salary of £149,999.

Note that this plan is being put forward by socialist Liberal Democrat Party, as well as the "Conservative" Party.

Dina thinks that the science is pretty clear that children suffer if their mothers leave them at a young age. Take a look at the video above, and then the brain scan below.

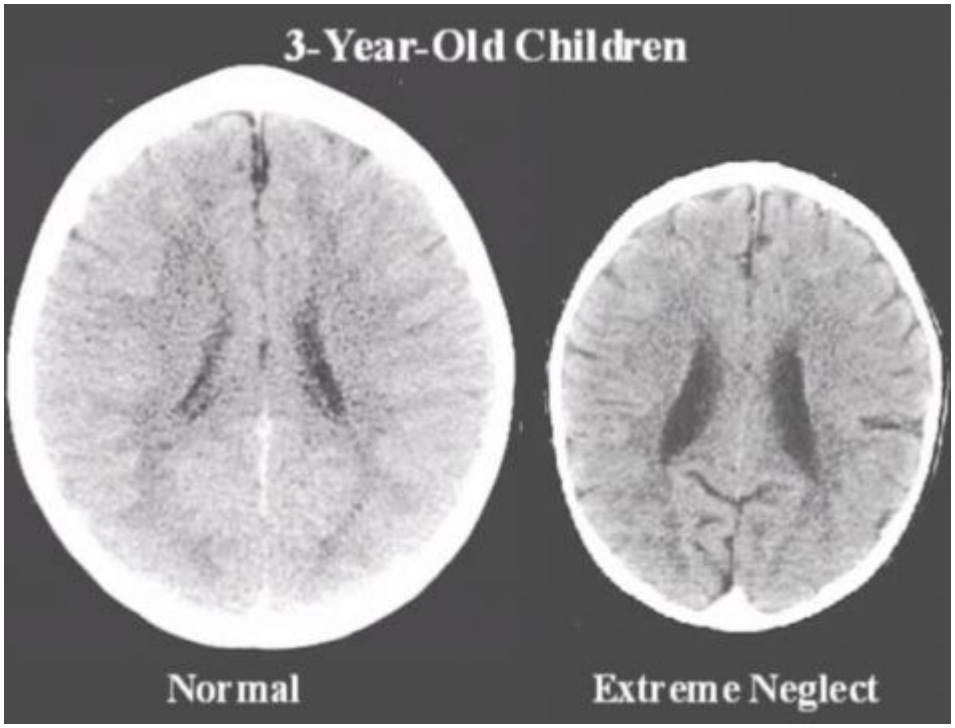

Brain scans of 3-year old children: normal vs neglected

Here's the article that goes with the brain scan from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Both of these images are brain scans of a two three-year-old children, but the brain on the left is considerably larger, has fewer spots and less dark areas, compared to the one on the right.
>
> According to neurologists this sizeable difference has one primary cause – the way each child was treated by their mothers.
>
> The child with the larger and more fully developed brain was looked after by its mother – she was constantly responsive to her baby, reported The Sunday Telegraph.
>
> But the child with the shrunken brain was the victim of severe neglect and abuse.
>
> According to research reported by the newspaper, the brain on the right worryingly lacks some of the most fundamental areas present in the image on the left.
>
> The consequences of these deficits are pronounced – the child on the left with the larger brain will be more intelligent and more likely to develop the social ability to empathise with others.
>
> But in contrast, the child with the shrunken brain will be more likely to become addicted to drugs and involved in violent crimes, much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on state benefits.
>
> The child is also more likely to develop mental and other serious health problems.
>
> Professor Allan Schore, of UCLA, told The Sunday Telegraph that if a baby is not treated properly in the first two years of life, it can have a fundamental impact on

> development.
>
> He pointed out that the genes for several aspects of brain function, including intelligence, cannot function.
>
> […]The study correlates with research released earlier this year that found that children who are given love and affection from their mothers early in life are smarter with a better ability to learn.
>
> The study by child psychiatrists and neuroscientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, found school-aged children whose mothers nurtured them early in life have brains with a larger hippocampus, a key structure important to learning, memory and response to stress.
>
> The research was the first to show that changes in this critical region of children's brain anatomy are linked to a mother's nurturing, Neurosciencenews.com reports.
>
> The research is published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Early Edition.
>
> Lead author Joan L. Luby, MD, professor of child psychiatry, said the study reinforces how important nurturing parents are to a child's development.

This is why I argue that feminism, which is the ideology that demands that women work outside the home in order to be "equal" to men, is harmful to children. If we really cared about children, then we need to not be subsidizing the child abuse schemes of Liberal Democrats like Nick Clegg. We need to be clear that gender feminism (third-wave feminism) is an anti-child ideology and it should be opposed. The science is settled on this issue. Feminism harms innocent young children. And feminism isn't just opposed to the rights of born children. They oppose the right to life of unborn children, too.

Florida Atlantic University student suspended for refusing to stomp on Jesus

March 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> A Florida Atlantic University student said he was punished after he refused a professor's directive to stomp on a piece of paper with the word "Jesus" written on it. The university, meanwhile, is defending the assignment as a lesson in debate.
>
> "I'm not going to be sitting in a class having my religious rights desecrated," student Ryan Rotela told **television station WPEC**. "I truly see this as I'm being punished."
>
> Rotela, who is a devout Mormon, said the instructor in his Intercultural Communications class told the students to write the name "Jesus" on a sheet of paper. Then, they were told to put the paper on the floor.
>
> "He had us all stand up and he said 'Stomp on it,'" Rotela said. "I picked up the paper from the floor and put it right back on the table.
>
> The young college student told the instructor, **Deandre Poole**, that the assignment was insulting and offensive.
>
> "I said to the professor, 'With all due respect to your authority as a professor, I do not believe what you told us to do was appropriate,'" **Rotela said.** 'I believe it was unprofessional and I was deeply offended by what you told me to do.'"
>
> Rotela took his concerns to Poole's supervisor – where he was promptly suspended from the class.
>
> Poole did not return calls seeking comment.
>
> According to his university profile, he has a PhD from Howard University and is authoring a book titled, "Obamamania: The Rise of a Mythical Hero."
>
> A university spokesperson told they could not comment about Rotela's case due to student privacy laws.
>
> However, the university is defending the instructor's assignment to stomp on the name of Jesus.
>
> "As with any academic lesson, the exercise was meant to encourage students to view issues from many perspectives, in direct relation with the course objectives," said Noemi Marin, the university's director of the school of communication and multimedia studies.
>
> "While at times the topics discussed may be sensitive, a university environment is a venue for such dialogue and debate," Marin added.

Yes, the university is a place for dialog and debate, which is why they suspend you if you disagree with their leftist mythology.

The troubling thing is that the suspended students had to pay money to have leftist religion shoved down his throat. He even paid to be suspended for refusing to participate in their anti-religious bigotry. If you're going to go to college, try to study something quantitative and testable, like engineering or computer science. The non-quantitative part of university is absolutely dominated by secular leftists like this bully Poole. It's not a debate they are looking for, it's compliance. There is *no* critical thinking among these leftists. They are so close-minded that they attack anyone who disagrees with them. They can't even listen to a different point of view. It's best to just study something that you can get paid for, especially if your goal is to get married and support a family. Don't take classes in things like "International Communication" – that's where you find the unqualified and unskilled people teaching their leftist ideology.

CDC: risk of HIV 150 times greater for gay men than for heterosexual men

March 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

MercatorNet reports on the latest HIV-related numbers from the United States government's Center for Disease Control.

Excerpt:

> Recent statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on HIV infection in the United States reveal some disturbing trends concerning gay males or, in CDC terminology, "men who have sex with men" (MSM). In recent data the CDC estimated that 61 percent of the 48,079 HIV infections diagnosed in 2010 occurred through male to male sexual contact.(1) According to the CDC data, sexual contact and injection drug use are the predominant means by which HIV is transmitted.
>
> The CDC data on HIV diagnoses came from forty-six states and five U.S. dependent areas. Some 29,194 new HIV diagnoses in 2010 were linked to male homosexual contact where no injection drug use took place. There were approximately 4550 HIV male diagnoses linked to heterosexual contact. Injection drug use was involved in 5481 cases. Women contracting the HIV virus through heterosexual contact accounted for approximately 8,800 cases. Another 47 HIV cases came from sources other than the four listed. Included in the other 47 cases were blood transfusions and prenatal exposure.(2) When CDC statistics are analyzed using the estimate of the MSM population at 4 percent of the American male population and assuming the other 96 percent who do not have sex with men are heterosexual, the risk of HIV infection from sexual contact for MSM was approximately 150 times greater than the heterosexual male population in 2010.(3)
>
> To put the HIV risk for MSM into perspective a comparison with the health risks of smoking can be made. Smoking tobacco is a causative factor of many types of cancer, the most common being lung cancer. According to the CDC the risk of lung cancer for men who smoke is 23 times greater than for men who do not smoke. For women who smoke the risk is 13 times greater than for women who do not. Those who smoke are also 2 to 4 times more likely to suffer coronary heart disease and 2 to 4 times more likely to suffer a stroke.(4)
>
> […]Similar to smoking, homosexual behavior has other unhealthy side effects. The CDC stated that the rate of primary and secondary syphilis among MSM is "more than 46 times that of other men and more than 71 times that of women."(8) Studies have shown that MSM are at higher risk of alcohol and drug abuse, anxiety, major depression, and thoughts of suicide.(9)

The footnotes in the MercatorNet article either go directly back to the CDC web site, or in some cases to peer-reviewed published research.

CDC numbers were also recently reported in the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> Teens and young adults now account for more than a quarter of the new cases of HIV identified in the United States annually, and a clear majority of those cases involve young gay or bisexual men, the federal government said in a major new survey Tuesday.
>
> Of the nearly 48,000 new HIV cases identified in the United States in 2010, the latest year for which complete data are available, more than 12,000 involved teens and young adults, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found in its latest report.
>
> About 72 percent of these new HIV cases in younger adults occurred in young men who are gay or bisexual, according to the CDC report.
>
> […]According to the CDC figures, black youths accounted for the largest share of new HIV cases, with Hispanic youths and white youths accounting for about 20 percent each.
>
> About 1.1 million people are estimated to be living with HIV in the United States. Some 47,129 new HIV cases were identified in 2010.
>
> The CDC's new report, "Vital Signs: HIV Infection, Testing, Risk Behaviors Among Youths, United States," estimated that youths aged 13 to 24 accounted for 12,200, or 26 percent, of new HIV infections in 2010.
>
> Of these new cases, 7,000 were among black youths, 2,390 were among Hispanics, and 2,380 were among whites.
>
> About 8,800 cases were attributed to male-to-male sexual contact.
>
> HIV/AIDS is incurable, and an estimated 17,774 people with AIDS died in 2009. Some 619,000 persons have died of AIDS in the United States since the epidemic began in the early 1980s, according to the CDC.

If you really love a person, you don't hide the risks of certain activities from them. You tell them the truth about the risks, so that they have all the information they need when making decisions. I wouldn't let any of my friends smoke cigarettes without getting a stern warning, supported by evidence. Somehow, we've redefined love to mean approving of whatever people want to do, regardless of risks. Why is that a good thing? Telling people the truth about what they doing are should never be viewed as "intolerant".

Florida Atlantic University professor Deandre Poole is a Democrat Party official

March 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Chris S. posted this article from Biz Pac Review about the recent stomping of Jesus at Florida Atlantic University.

Excerpt:

> A South Florida college professor's bizarre classroom antics have made waves for their shocking display of religious intolerance. But they were even more instructive in educating the rest of us on the alarming thought process of yet another Palm Beach County Democratic leader.
>
> Florida Atlantic University professor Deandre Poole instructed his intercultural communications class earlier this month to write the name "Jesus" on a piece of paper, then drop it on the floor and stomp on it.
>
> One student, a devout Mormon, was so so disturbed by the exercise that he complained to school officials, saying Poole had offended his religious convictions. The school responded by suspending the student from the class.
>
> While the incident has made the news, the media has failed to report a key component of Poole's resume: He is vice-chairman of the Palm Beach County Democratic Party. His recent actions add fire to an already-disturbing pattern of hate coming out of the local party.
>
> Mark Siegel, the former chairman of the county Democratic Party, was forced to resign in September under a barrage of criticism over an anti-Christian tirade at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C.
>
> Siegel, who is Jewish, told an interviewer at the convention that pro-Israel Christians want to see Jews "slaughtered."
>
> "Oh no, the Christians just want us to be there so we can all be slaughtered and converted and bring on the second coming of Jesus Christ," he said at the time.
>
> Just two months earlier, in a series of emails, Evelyn Garcia, a Democratic Executive Committee member from Palm Beach County and one of the local party's Democratic National Committee representatives, accused Israel of "crimes against humanity" and running "mass concentration prison camps."
>
> Garcia also quit her post in the wake of the public response to her comments.

His biography doesn't say what area his PhD was in, but judging from this story I'm guessing that it must be in Marxist Studies.

Global warming in the UK: coldest March in 50 years, Winter extending into Spring

March 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Doug Ross)

Excerpt:

> Today is officially the first day of spring – but it will bring little respite to freezing Britain as snow continues to fall, closing schools and causing chaos on the roads.
>
> The country is on track to suffer its coldest March in more than 50 years as conservationists warned that the prolonged winter weather was damaging wildlife.
>
> The unrelenting cold weather is showing no signs of slowing this week as snow continues to fall across the North.
>
> Today is the vernal equinox, traditionally regarded as the end of winter and the day that spring arrives, but the news could come as a surprise to Britons affected by the snow and cold.
>
> More light snow will settle throughout the day in the north-east of England and eastern Scotland, adding to large amounts of up to 10cm which hit the regions yesterday.
>
> Higher ground will see up to another 5cm, while lower areas could see around 2cm – along with parts of Northern Ireland and Wales.
>
> […]**The Central England Temperature – covering an area bounded by Lancashire, Bristol and London – shows temperatures have been 2.8C lower than normal for the month.**
>
> **The last time March was so cold was in 1962, when the average temperature was 2.4C (36F) – or 4.1C below the norm.**

Meanwhile, in the midwestern United States, we get snow storms in the Spring:

> Winter's late-season grip on the nation continued into the first full week of spring with a powerful snowstorm moving east, leaving major highways closed, flights canceled and heavy accumulation in the Midwest.
>
> The largest snowfall totals of 10 inches or more fell across Kansas and over St. Louis, Mo., before the storm began churning up the Ohio River Valley toward the East Coast on Sunday.
>
> In the mid-Missouri town of Columbia, TV station KOMU was briefly evacuated Sunday morning because of high winds and a heavy buildup of snow on the broadcast tower next to the building.
>
> Two distinct patterns of heavy snow were following one another across the

> nation’s midsection, engulfing areas of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. The storm was forecast to bring heavy snow to portions of the Midwest. About 6 to 10 inches were forecast from Missouri to Ohio on Sunday. Winter storm warnings were issued for much of central Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio.
>
> […]Forecasters Sunday said travel across the Mid-Atlantic will be disrupted with slush and snow accumulating along the I-95 corridor from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C. With temperatures expected to hover around freezing Monday, it was difficult for officials to be certain how quickly snow would melt.
>
> […]In the west, Highway I-70 was shut down from Denver — where 100 flights were canceled — into Kansas Saturday as truckers pulled off treacherous roadways and hotels quickly filled up.
>
> Forecasters were predicting a few inches in and around the nation’s capital and further to the north in New York City. Heavier accumulation was expected in areas in between, such as Baltimore and Philadelphia.

Do you know what we need to stop this global warming? A nice carbon tax. And thankfully, Obama is working hard on that.

William Lane Craig on historical reliability of the gospels

March 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Reasonable Faith, a challenge from a non-Christian who watched the Craig-Ehrman debate. (PDF of the transcript here at Apologetics 315)

Here are his questions:

> 1) What outside sources (outside of the canon) are there that support Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection in bodily form, and ascension into heaven?
>
> 2) The message of Jesus was spread by word of mouth until the gospels were written. How do we know legend wasn't developed? Such as Jesus being buried by Joseph of Arimathea.
>
> 3) What about other pagan miracle workers such as Honi the Circle-Drawer, Hanina be Dosa, and Apollonius of Tyana (p 27). Doesn't the fact that these pagan people doing miracles similar to Jesus discredit Jesus as a miracle worker?
>
> 4) What about the seeming contradictions in the different gospel accounts? Please give me a different answer then "These are only secondary details and does not lie at the heart of the matter." If we go to a University that declares the Bible is inerrant, then shouldn't we be able to explain these?
>
> I quote from Mr. Ehrman in his debate vs Craig on p. 11:
>
> "What day did Jesus die on and what time of day? Did he die on the day before the Passover meal was eaten, as John explicitly says, or did he die after it was eaten, as Mark explicitly says? Did he die at noon, as in John, or at 9 a.m., as in Mark? Did Jesus carry his cross the entire way himself or did Simon of Cyrene carry his cross? It depends which Gospel you read. Did both robbers mock Jesus on the cross or did only one of them mock him and the other come to his defense? It depends which Gospel you read. Did the curtain in the temple rip in half before Jesus died or after he died? It depends which Gospel you read. Or take the accounts of the resurrection. Who went to the tomb on the third day? Was it Mary alone or was it Mary with other women? If it was Mary with other women, how many other women were there, which ones were they, and what were their names? Was the stone rolled away before they got there or not? What did they see in the tomb? Did they see a man, did they see two men, or did they see an angel? It depends which account you read. What were they told to tell the disciples? Were the disciples supposed to stay in Jerusalem and see Jesus there or were they to go to Galilee and see Jesus there? Did the women tell anyone or not? It depends which Gospel you read. Did the disciples never leave Jerusalem or did they immediately leave Jerusalem and go to Galilee? All of these depend on which account you read."

Now check this out – Dr. Craig *quoting Ehrman* to respond to a challenge raised by Ehrman:

4. *What about the seeming contradictions in the different gospel accounts?*

Here's your straight answer, Grant: *they don't matter*. I could accept that all of these apparent discrepancies are irresolvable, and it wouldn't affect my historical argument one wit. Don't believe me? Then let's let Bart Ehrman speak for himself. Does he think that the seeming contradictions he lists undermine the historical credibility of the facts upon which my argument is based? No! He says,

The resurrection of Jesus lies at the heart of Christian faith. Unfortunately, it also is a tradition about Jesus that historians have difficulty dealing with. As I said, there are a couple of things that we can say for certain about Jesus after his death. We can say with relative certainty, for example, that he was buried. . . .

Some scholars have argued that it's more plausible that in fact Jesus was placed in a common burial plot, which sometimes happened, or was, as many other crucified people, simply left to be eaten by scavenging animals (which also happened commonly for crucified persons in the Roman Empire). But the accounts are fairly unanimous in saying (the earliest accounts we have are unanimous in saying) that Jesus was in fact buried by this fellow, Joseph of Arimathea, and so it's relatively reliable that that's what happened.

We also have solid traditions to indicate that women found this tomb empty three days later. This is attested in all of our gospel sources, early and late, and so it appears to be a historical datum. As so I think we can say that after Jesus' death, with some (probably with some) certainty, that he was buried, possibly by this fellow, Joseph of Arimathea, and that three days later he appeared not to have been in his tomb ("From Jesus to Constantine: A History of Early Christianity," Lecture 4: "Oral and Written Traditions about Jesus" [The Teaching Company, 2003]).

The same goes double—well, many times more than double—for Jesus' crucifixion. This event is widely recognized as the most solidly established fact about the historical Jesus, denied only by kooks and Muslim true believers. Yet Ehrman's first five discrepancies are all connected, not with the burial and empty tomb narratives, but with the crucifixion accounts! So are you going to deny that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified under Roman authority at the time of the Jewish Passover feast in AD 30 because of these differences in the narratives? If so, Grant, then you will have not only intellectually marginalized yourself but also shown that you are not a sincere seeker after truth.

Do you see now, Grant, why I refused to be drawn into a dispute about how many angels there were at the tomb? Insofar as the historicity of the empty tomb is concerned, it just doesn't matter.

This article also contains a bit of broad, educational material on how to do history:

> In addition to these general considerations, scholars have enunciated certain "criteria of authenticity" to help detect historically reliable information about Jesus even in a document which may not be generally reliable. What the criteria

> really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events narrated in the sources. For some saying or event S, evidence of a certain type E, and our background information B, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, Pr (S|E&B) > Pr (S|B). In other words, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given, for example, its early, independent attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> 1. *Historical congruence*: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
> 2. *Independent, early attestation*: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor upon a common source.
> 3. *Embarrassment*: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
> 4. *Dissimilarity*: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
> 5. *Semitisms*: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebraic linguistic forms.
> 6. *Coherence*: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> Notice that these criteria do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same criteria are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the criteria do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' general reliability or every claim attributed to Jesus in the Gospels (much less their inerrancy!).

Click here for the rest. It is very important that Christians be able to use the Bible as a historical source with non-Christian challengers who do not accept the Bible as inerrant, nor even as generally reliable. The best way to learn is by seeing how Christian scholars make the case in debates and discussions.

Mike Licona debates Bart Ehrman on the Unbelievable radio show

March 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Unbelievable radio show.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is well known as a US New Testament Scholar who lost his Christian faith and now questions many core precepts of Christianity, including the Resurrection of Jesus. When Mike Licona had doubts he devoted himself to investigating the evidence and became convinced that Jesus resurrection is the only rational explanation for the facts.
>
> They debate key historical facts about the resurrection – are the letters of Paul that report the resurrection and the Gospel accounts trustworthy or theologised and changed with time? What about apparent contradictions between the Gospels? Does the consensus of scholars count as evidence, or is there a Christian bias? Can a miracle count as an explanation for historical data?

The MP3 file is here.

Snarky summary of the radio debate: (items with * are my made-up paraphrases/clarifications)

Ehrman:
– Bart's new book is about forgeries in the ancient world
– some books were falsely attributed to prominent Christian figures
– there are mistakes in the Bible
– there are mistakes in the resurrection narratives
– the defeat of inerrancy led to his conversion to liberal Christianity
– the problem of evil and suffering caused him to become a non-Christian

Licona:
– there are minimal facts that are agreed to by a broad spectrum of scholars
– the minimal facts are accepted because they pass standard historical criteria
– Fact 1: Jesus died by crucifixion
– Fact 2: Individuals and groups had visions of Jesus after his death
– Fact 3: Paul, a skeptic and an enemy, had an appearance of Jesus that converted him
– these facts are agreed to atheist scholars, liberal scholars, etc.
– virtually 100% of scholars agree with these three facts
– there is no naturalistic explanation of these three facts
– therefore, the best explanation of these three facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Ehrman:
– all historians would accept these three facts, except for maybe the group appearances

– the death of Jesus is irrelevant to the resurrection
– the second and third point can be collapsed together
– so really there is only one fact

Moderator:
– the crucifixion is relevant because Muslims don't admit that fact
– the crucifixion important because it establishes a resurrection, not a resuscitation

Ehrman:
– well, if the point is that he died, then yes, this does require a resurrection

Licona:
– the crucifixion refutes Muslims who deny that Jesus died
– the crucifixion refutes the apparent death theory (swoon theory)
– the death is required for a bodily resurrection
– it's important to know what facts most scholars, regardless of worldview, agree on
– it's important to emphasize that Licona is working from historical bedrock facts
– the resurrection is the best explanation for the historical bedrock facts

Ehrman:
– you are trying to list 3 things, but really it is just one thing – the appearances
– and not ALL scholars agree that the group visions occurred

Licona:
– name one prominent scholar who denies the group appearances

Ehrman:
– the radically leftist atheist nutcase John Dominic Crossan denies the group appearances
* Crossan is so far on the left that I look like a nutcase for even citing him
* Crossan believes in the Secret Gospel of Mark, which is a hoax – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan believes that the synoptics are LATER than gnostic forged gospels – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan presupposes atheism, so he cannot admit to miracle stories as a pre-supposition – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan pre-supposes religious pluralism, so he cannot allow any exclusive claims Christians make – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan is a good historian, it's just that he is so far to the left that no one – NO ONE – agrees with his all of crazy theories
* I think it is a good idea to cite historians who pre-suppose atheism and political correctness before they sit down to do history

Licona:
– let me explain why most scholars accept the individual and group post-mortem appearances
– the best source for the appearances is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 15:3-8
– Paul himself had an appearance of Jesus after Jesus' death
– Paul received this material from a source very soon after the appearances – within 1-3 years

– we know that Paul met with Jesus disciples multiple times prior to writing
– Paul probably received it from Peter and James, who were themselves eyewitnesses

Moderator:
– this early dating presumably rules out legend

Licona:
– well legends CAN start quickly
– it does show that Paul was an eyewitness
– it does show that Paul was in contact with reliable eyewitnesses

Ehrman:
– 1 Corinthians is written around 55 AD, twenty-five years after Jesus died
– it is not implausible that Paul got the creed from the disciples, who were eyewitnesses
– but you don't need a long time for legends to emerge, so that is a possibility

Licona:
– only about 3% of people could read and write back them
– instead, people had enormous capacity for memorization
– the Pharisees were particularly good at memorization
– Jews were very serious about passing along traditions accurately
– Paul, a prominent Pharisee, would have been capable of passing on early creeds accurately
– Paul, in 1 Cor 7, shows that he is willing to separate his opinions from authentic tradition
– Paul had an opportunity in 1 Cor 7 to put words into Jesus' mouth, but he wouldn't do it

Ehrman:
– cultural anthropologists show that things do get changed in some oral cultures
– in these oral cultures, it is assumed that the story teller will change the story
– only in written cultures are they careful to avoid changing the story
– in the New Testament, you can compare the same story in two different gospels, there are differences

Licona:
– Ehrman is right that the gospel writers pick and choose things from the oral tradition that they want to include in their gospels
– different oral tradition transmission schemes have more or less embellishment
– african tribes embellish more, rabbinic teaching embellishes less
* Jesus' followers would have viewed him as a rabbi, and been careful about adding to his teachings
– Paul, an eyewitness, probably received the creed in 1 Cor 15 from other eyewitnesses
– Paul speaks about going twice to Jerusalem in Galatians
– he is meeting with Peter and James to check his facts

Ehrman:
– when you look at Mark and John, there are lots of differences in the narrative

Licona:
– I agree that the gospels have differences, but the oral tradition is likely fixed

Ehrman:
– but Mark and John have different sayings
– why doesn't Mark have the same explicit high Christology that John has?

Licona:
– first, John is trying to weave the oral tradition into a compelling story
– and second, when you look in Mark, the high Christology is there in the Son of Man sayings
– the apocalyptic Son of Man is in Mark, and everywhere in the New Testament

Ehrman:
– the "apocalyptic Son of Man" isn't in John

Licona:
– what about in John 9 with the man who was born blind

Ehrman:
– where is the apocalyptic part?

Licona:
– the healed man worships Jesus because he is the Son of Man
– that links to the apocalypic passages in the Old Testament

Moderator:
– what about the differences between the gospels?

Ehrman:
* well, now is the time for me to set up an inerrantist straw man and then knock it down!
* who was at the empty tomb: one angel or two angels? we don't know, so the whole Bible is false!
* I used to be an inerrantist, so one minor difference is enough for me to dump the whole Bible
* I'll kill you, you stupid straw man! I hate you, Moody Bible Institute! You lied to me!

Licona:
– many of these problems can be solved by realizing that the gospel writers compress time
– the stories don't have to list ALL the characters in every scene
– you don't have to force the Bible to meet some sort of wooden chronology
– the main thing is that the events happened, not that the descriptions match word for word across sources

Ehrman:
– you can't infer a miracle from history, David Hume says so
* extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, David Hume says so
* no I don't know what begging the question is, I'm not a philosopher
* no I don't remember when Bill Craig kicked my ass on this Hume objection in our debate
– the New Testament gospels contradict each other at every point, they are not reliable at all!
* they cannot even agree what Jesus' name is! There are 1 trillion variants of Jesus'

name!
* “one angel vs two angels” proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point
* my expansive list of FOUR theologically insignificant variants proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point

Licona:
– um, the gospels agree on the central narrative and disagree on the peripherals
– and they agree on the minimal facts I presented, even if they disagree about the number of angels

Ehrman:
* they have to agree on everything and be inerrant! The Moody Straw Man Bible Institute says so!
* I really really really need to have the number of angels be the same, or Jesus didn’t die on the cross

Licona:
– but you don’t deny any of the three minimal facts I presented (crucifixion, appearances, Paul)

Ehrman:
– well, I don’t know if the group appearances occurred – maybe they did
– i think Jesus died on the cross, and I think that people said they saw him alive afterward

Licona:
– if you deny the minimal facts, then you are outside the majority of scholars

Ehrman:
– the majority of scholars who agree to the minimal facts you presented are Christians
* Gerd Ludemann is an atheist Christian
* James Crossley is an atheist Christian
* Hector Avalos is an atheist Christian
* the majority of the atheist scholars are all Christians!
– VIRTUALLY EVERYBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IS A CHRISTIAN!!! (Yes, he said that)

Licona:
– you really think so?

Ehrman
– you name one non-Christian in the SBL

Licona:
– (incredulous) um, John Dominic Crossan is an atheist

Ehrman:
– but he CLAIMS TO BE A CHRISTIAN so that means HE IS A CHRISTIAN
* all you have to do to be a Christian is claim to be one
* you can even deny the existence of God and the divinity of Christ and still be one, you bigot!

Licona:
– would Jesus or the apostles recognize a Christian as being someone who doubts God's existence

Ehrman:
– my view is that Jesus and the apostles would not recognize evangelical Christians as Christians
* a non-theist can be a Christian just by claiming to be one, but evangelical Christians are not Christians even if they claim to be Christians
– Christians can't record accurate history about the resurrection because they are biased

Licona:
– on your view, if a person is a Christian then he can't write about the evidence for the resurrection
– so then similarly, you would not allow Jews to write about the historicity of the Holocaust
– because you think that if people have an interest in what they are recording then they can't be objective
– but you have to consider the evidence we have, taking the biases of the sources into account

Ehrman:
– but the only people who believe in the resurrection are Christians!

Licona:
– well, people can consider the evidence for the resurrection as non-Christians
– and then if they accept it they can become Christians

Moderator:
– what about your bias? you don't believe in God – doesn't that pre-supposition affect how you do history?

Ehrman:
– well, I presuppose naturalism, so I can't admit to anything in history that implicates supernatural causes
* no I have never heard of the arguments for the Big Bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, limits on mutations creating information, habitability and so on – I never heard about that stuff from my atheist university professors and even if I had I would have been expelled for talking about it because that would make people feel bad about their sinning

Licona:
– so it's not bias you are concerned about, it's that you don't want history to contradict your untested religion of naturalism?
– why not just do the history without pre-suppositions to gather the minimal facts and then see what the best explanation is?

Ehrman:
* well God is out of bounds as an explanation because I could not have got my PhD if I

mentioned God
* I really needed my smart atheist professors to like me and give me good grades so God is RIGHT OUT
* ideas like a real God and moral laws and Hell makes my atheist professors uncomfortable and that means low grades for me
* I'm not really interested in butting heads with professors – it's easier to just agree with them and move on to selling books to the gullible
* My books are much more sensational than Dan Brown books, so please buy lots of them!

Licona:
– what if the historical evidence is good enough to show that Jesus rose from the dead?

Ehrman:
– well I would not call someone rising from the dead a miracle – I would call it weird
* I also think that the Big Bang is "weird" but that doesn't prove that God created the universe out of nothing
* if it's a miracle then I'm going to have to not sin, and maybe even go to Hell, and we can't have that

Licona:
– well, you accept the three minimal facts
– what if we try all the naturalistic explanations for those three facts and there are problems with all of them?
– what if the resurrection is the best explanation for the three minimal facts?

Ehrman:
– but I want to arbitrarily rule God put because I want to pre-suppose naturalism
– there is not historical reason I have to rule put supernatural explanations a priori

Licona:
– I think you are struggling with the theological implications of a historical conclusion

Ehrman:
– well when you do theology, you have to avoid grounding your theology on science or history
– theology has to be completely made up or it's not good theology

Licona:
– I think you are letting your dislike of the implications of the resurrection determine your historical conclusions
– you have to use historical methods to gather the minimal facts that every scholar accepts, regardless of worldview
– then you weigh ALL the hypotheses, natural and supernatural, that could account for these minimal facts
– then you choose the hypothesis that best explains the minimal facts

Democrat diplomacy: John Kerry pleads with Iraq to interdict Iranian arms shipments

March 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East

The Wall Street Journal explains how well Democrat diplomacy worked in the Middle East. (H/T Dennis Prager)

Excerpt:

> The strategic cost of President Obama's election-driven total withdrawal from Iraq is now becoming clearer. On Sunday Secretary of State John Kerry was reduced to pleading with Iraqi officials to search Iranian flights that fly over Iraq on their way to arming Bashar Assad's Syrian government.
>
> With private entreaties doing no good, Mr. Kerry took his complaints public on Sunday on a visit to Baghdad, telling reporters that Iraq's failure even to search Iran's overflights leaves the American people "wondering how it is a partner." Too bad Mr. Obama didn't think about that in 2011 when he could have struck a deal to station 10,000 or so U.S. troops in Iraq for the long haul, which would have sealed the kind of partnership Mr. Kerry now wants.
>
> Mr. Kerry's predecessor, Hillary Clinton, thought she had secured a Baghdad pledge last year to search Iran's flights, but U.S. officials say Iraq has searched only two of what have become almost daily trips to Damascus. Mr. Kerry implies that this is an Iraq betrayal, but with the U.S. seen as wanting to withdraw from the region and Iran able to stir up plenty of political trouble inside Iraq, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has little incentive to take a risk for U.S. interests.
>
> Mr. Obama is also discovering that there are strategic costs to doing so little in two years to topple Iran's proxy government in Syria. Refugees are flooding into Jordan, threatening the stability of that U.S. ally, and no one seems sure who has

> control over Syria's chemical weapons. Mr. Obama claims "the tide of war is receding," but the main result of his abdications is that the U.S. has less influence to stop war from spreading.

We withdrew our forces from the key area of the Middle East, Iraq, which is located between Iran and its puppet state, Syria. Without a military force in the area, we have *no influence* and *nothing* to bargain with. We can't even support covert operations. We have lost all credibility in the Middle East by appearing weak. That's what happens when you put Democrats in control of foreign policy. They think that people will listen to them because they are so nice – redistributing wealth and silencing those mean moral people. They have such compassion. But in the real world, countries understand that pacifists are weak. Iraq knows that they have more to fear from Iran than the United States, so they side with Iran. Our weakness has caused our allies in Afghanistan and Iraq to side with the stronger force in the Middle East, our enemy Iran.

UK survey finds that men and women expect to have sex after a few dates

March 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this depressing article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Men now expect to sleep with a new partner on their third date – but women typically won't consider it until the fifth, according to an intriguing new study on dating in the 21st century.
>
> On the first date men are most likely to pay for dinner and drinks, with most couples tending to split the bill from the second date onwards.
>
> But by the third date men expect sex and are willing to splash their cash to hurry the romance along.
>
> […]Both sexes are now spending small fortunes in a bid to prepare themselves for a date that could end in sex, the study found.
>
> Men typically spend £46.79 on grooming, while women spend £5 less at £41.79.
>
> Women prepare for a first night of passion by waxing their legs (58 per cent), buying new lingerie (32 per cent), and waxing their bikini line (17 per cent).
>
> Men are most likely to buy new underwear (28 per cent), groom their pubic hair (27 per cent), and buy new bed linen (15 per cent).
>
> The money is being spent wisely, as men say their biggest turn-offs are a hairy upper lip, dirty sheets, and hairy legs.
>
> And women are turned off by dirty sheets, untidy nails, and an untidy bedroom.

I've posted before about how having a large number of premarital sex partners causes marriages to fail. This finding is true for men who have many partners, and especially true for women. The fun that people have before they are married gets paid for later when they cannot hold the relationship together. Premarital promiscuity teaches you nothing about how to be faithful and self-sacrificial in a marriage. It trains you to think that sex is not something to save for a commitment, but something to be done in order to have "fun". When people have premarital sex, they are treating sex as a recreational activity. They are not willing to commit to loving and taking care of the person they are having sex with for life, so that the other person will not be harmed if the relationship fails. We shouldn't be having fun with a person in ways we're we will be deeply connected to them and then just pull away from them and leave them alone. If that happens to a person enough, it ruins their ability to be trusting and vulnerable. It's hard to repair the damage once it's been done.

I think that if we are going to be serious about marriage, then we need to think seriously about rolling back our support for this sort of promiscuity, as well as laws that promote

break-ups like no-fault divorce. Instead of encouraging people to think that sex before marriage is normal, we should be encouraging them to look at the data that shows that waiting a long time (or even better, waiting until marriage) before having sex is the right thing to do.

And for Christians, let me just reiterate that premarital sex and adultery are both forbidden. You cannot be a Christian and be having sex outside of marriage. The Bible is very very clear about that. Although people like to think that Christianity is compatible with sex outside of marriage, it's not. We need to be careful about watering down Christianity in order to avoid the need to bow the knee to God's authority in sexual areas.

Related posts

- New study: delaying sexual activity produces improves relationship quality and stability
- Traditional marriage is a threat to the values of single women
- New study: staying a virgin longer enables more satisfying relationships
- Study explains why college women abandon courtship for hook-ups
- New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially for women
- New study: marriage drops probability of child poverty by 82%
- What do radical feminists want women to want?
- New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less
- How do prostitutes stay in business in an era of hook-up sex?
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- How feminist pastors like Mark Driscoll and Kevin DeYoung undermine marriage

- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing

Gay conservative explains his opposition to same-sex marriage

March 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Public Discourse, a different perspective on gay marriage.

Excerpt:

> The notion of same-sex marriage is implausible, yet political correctness has made stating the obvious a risky business. Genderless marriage is not marriage at all. It is something else entirely.
>
> Opposition to same-sex marriage is characterized in the media, at best, as clinging to "old-fashioned" religious beliefs and traditions, and at worst, as homophobia and hatred.
>
> I've always been careful to avoid using religion or appeals to tradition as I've approached this topic. And with good reason: Neither religion nor tradition has played a significant role in forming my stance. But reason and experience certainly have.
>
> […]Unfortunately, a few years later my marriage ended—a pain known too easily by too many. At this point, the divorce allowed me to explore my homosexuality for the first time in my life.
>
> At first, I felt liberated. I dated some great guys, and was in a couple of long-term relationships. Over several years, intellectual honesty led me to some unexpected conclusions: (1) Creating a family with another man is not completely equal to creating a family with a woman, and (2) denying children parents of both genders at home is an objective evil. Kids need and yearn for both.
>
> It took some doing, but after ten years of divorce, we began to pull our family back together. We have been under one roof for over two years now. Our kids are happier and better off in so many ways. My ex-wife, our kids, and I recently celebrated Thanksgiving and Christmas together and agreed these were the best holidays ever.
>
> Because of my predilections, we deny our own sexual impulses. Has this led to depressing, claustrophobic repression? No. We enjoy each other's company immensely. It has actually led to psychological health and a flourishing of our family. Did we do this for the sake of tradition? For the sake of religion? No. We did it because reason led us to resist selfish impulses and to seek the best for our children.
>
> And wonderfully, she and I continue to regard each other as "soul mates" now, more than ever.
>
> Over the last couple of years, I've found our decision to rebuild our family ratified

> time after time. One day as I turned to climb the stairs I saw my sixteen-year-old son walk past his mom as she sat reading in the living room. As he did, he paused and stooped down to kiss her and give her a hug, and then continued on. With two dads in the house, this little moment of warmth and tenderness would never have occurred. My varsity-track-and-football-playing son and I can give each other a bear hug or a pat on the back, but the kiss thing is never going to happen. To be fully formed, children need to be free to generously receive from and express affection to parents of both genders. Genderless marriages deny this fullness.
>
> There are perhaps a hundred different things, small and large, that are negotiated between parents and kids every week. Moms and dads interact differently with their children. To give kids two moms or two dads is to withhold from them someone whom they desperately need and deserve in order to be whole and happy. It is to permanently etch "deprivation" on their hearts.

I think that children also need to see moms and dads cooperating with each other and caring for each other in a relationship that is not driven by selfishness or lust (e.g. – premarital hooking up) but is driven by self-sacrificial love from within a lifelong commitment. Kids need to see the two people who made them in their homes and to know that something more than "love" is holding their parents together to care for them.

Anyone can see that a child needs to have two people who are their parents who will model for them male/female love and give them male and female guidance. It's wrong to deprive children of the safety of a home where both of their parents are present and taking care of them. Gay marriage is not the *only* threat to this ideal. It's not even the *largest* threat (divorce and single motherhood by choice are worse threats, in my view). But we have to dig in our heels and protect marriage somewhere, so let's start here and then work on rolling back no-fault divorce and single motherhood by choice.

UPDATE:

My attention has been drawn to this article by the same author, Douglas Mainwaring, in which he says some very disturbing things, seeming actually to endorse homosexual parenting and societal approval for homosexual "families," including children, which runs counter to what he appears to be saying in the article I have linked here. Many of the things he says above about parenting and gender are very good, but conservatives should know for future reference that Mainwaring is actually not consistent nor truly conservative on these issues.

Is the economic recovery real or illusory?

March 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Obama administration has poured about $6 trillion of *borrowed money* into this economy over the last four years. Has this resulted in a growing economy, or is the economy slowing down?

Take a look at this must-read editorial in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> The Great Recession is an apt name for America's current stagnation, but the present phase might also be called the Grand Illusion—because the happy talk and statistics that go with it, especially regarding jobs, give a rosier picture than the facts justify.
>
> The country isn't really advancing. By comparison with earlier recessions, it is going backward. Despite the most stimulative fiscal policy in American history and a trillion-dollar expansion to the money supply, the economy over the last three years has been declining. After 2.4% annual growth rates in gross domestic product in 2010 and 2011, the economy slowed to 1.5% growth in 2012. Cumulative growth for the past 12 quarters was just 6.3%, the slowest of all 11 recessions since World War II.
>
> […]February's headline unemployment rate was portrayed as 7.7%, down from 7.9% in January. The dip was accompanied by huzzahs in the news media claiming the improvement to be "outstanding" and "amazing." But if you account for the people who are excluded from that number—such as "discouraged workers" no longer looking for a job, involuntary part-time workers and others who are "marginally attached" to the labor force—then the real unemployment rate is somewhere between 14% and 15%.
>
> […]The number of Americans unemployed for six months or longer went up by 89,000 in February to a total of 4.8 million. The average duration of unemployment rose to 36.9 weeks, up from 35.3 weeks in January. The labor-force participation rate, which measures the percentage of working-age people in the workforce, also dropped to 63.5%, the lowest in 30 years. The average workweek is a low 34.5 hours thanks to employers shortening workers' hours or asking employees to take unpaid leave.

When we borrow massive amounts of money and spend it today, we should expect to see some sort of return for all of that spending. But it turns out that when government does the spending instead of private citizens and private industry, then much of the money is wasted on nonsense that doesn't create jobs and grow the economy. The numbers we have today put this point beyond dispute.

The Obama administration has been failing skilled immigrants for the past four years, as

well:

> When employers can’t expand or develop new lines because of the shortage of certain skills, the employment opportunities for the less skilled are also restricted. To help with this shortage, the administration’s proposals for job-training programs do deserve support. The stress should be on vocational training, postsecondary education and every program that will broaden access to computer science and strengthen science, technology, engineering and math in high schools and at the university level.
>
> But the payoffs from these programs are in the future, and it is vital today to increase the number of annual visas and grants of permanent residency status for foreigners skilled in science and technology. The current situation is preposterous: The brightest and best brains from all over the globe are attracted to American universities, but once they get their degrees America sends them packing. Keeping these foreigners out means they will compete against us in the industries that are growing here and around the world.

This administration prides itself on being “pro-immigration” but they actually favor giving citizenship and voting privileges to millions of people who *do not* have marketable skills, who *cannot* speak English, and who *disrespect the law* by coming here illegally. The administration wants those people to become citizens because those people will vote Democrat. Meanwhile, skilled immigrants with advanced degrees in math, science, engineering and technology can just clear out of the country. They can learn here and work here temporarily, but eventually they have to go home. There are no green cards or naturalizations for skilled immigrants – they have skills, and they may be tempted to do nasty things like vote Republican. Democrats don’t want any of those independent, hard-working immigrants in this country. They are too hard to control and too hard to lie to.

Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms

March 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation. (H/T Tom)

Excerpt:

> Weakening marital norms and severing the connection of marriage with responsible procreation are the admitted goals of many prominent advocates of redefining marriage. E. J. Graff celebrates the fact that redefining marriage would change the "institution's message" so that it would "ever after stand for sexual choice, for cutting the link between sex and diapers." Enacting same-sex marriage, she argues, "does more than just fit; it announces that marriage has changed shape."[3]
>
> Andrew Sullivan says that marriage has become "primarily a way in which two adults affirm their emotional commitment to one another."[4]
>
> **The Norm of Monogamy.** New York University Professor Judith Stacey has expressed hope that redefining marriage would give marriage "varied, creative and adaptive contours," leading some to "question the dyadic limitations of Western marriage and seek…small group marriages."[5] In their statement "Beyond Same-Sex Marriage," more than 300 "LGBT and allied" scholars and advocates call for legal recognition of sexual relationships involving more than two partners.[6]
>
> University of Calgary Professor Elizabeth Brake thinks that justice requires using legal recognition to "denormalize[] heterosexual monogamy as a way of life" and "rectif[y] past discrimination against homosexuals, bisexuals, polygamists, and care networks." She supports "minimal marriage" in which "individuals can have legal marital relationships with more than one person, reciprocally or asymmetrically, themselves determining the sex and number of parties, the type of relationship involved, and which rights and responsibilities to exchange with each."[7]
>
> In 2009, *Newsweek* reported that the United States already had over 500,000 polyamorous households.[8] The author concluded:
>
> [P]erhaps the practice is more natural than we think: a response to the challenges of monogamous relationships, whose shortcomings…are clear.… [C]an one person really satisfy every need? Polyamorists think the answer is obvious—and that it's only a matter of time before the monogamous world sees there's more than one way to live and love.[9]
>
> A 2012 article in *New York Magazine* introduced Americans to "throuple," a new term akin to a "couple," but with three people whose "throuplehood is more or

less a permanent domestic arrangement. The three men work together, raise dogs together, sleep together, miss one another…and, in general, exemplify a modern, adult relationship. Except that there are three of them."[10]

The Norm of Exclusivity. Andrew Sullivan, who has extolled the "spirituality" of "anonymous sex," also thinks that the "openness" of same-sex unions could enhance the bonds of husbands and wives:

[A]mong gay male relationships, the openness of the contract makes it more likely to survive than many heterosexual bonds…. [T]here is more likely to be greater understanding of the need for extramarital outlets between two men than between a man and a woman…. [S]omething of the gay relationship's necessary honesty, its flexibility, and its equality could undoubtedly help strengthen and inform many heterosexual bonds.[11]

"Openness" and "flexibility" are Sullivan's euphemisms for sexual infidelity. Similarly, in a *New York Times Magazine* profile, gay activist Dan Savage encourages spouses to adopt "a more flexible attitude" about allowing each other to seek sex outside their marriage.[12] *The New York Times* recently reported on a study finding that exclusivity was not the norm among gay partners: "'With straight people, it's called affairs or cheating,' said Colleen Hoff, the study's principal investigator, 'but with gay people it does not have such negative connotations.'"[13]

Leading Advocates of Redefining Marriage Celebrate That It Will Weaken Marriage

Some advocates of redefining marriage embrace the goal of weakening the institution of marriage *in these very terms*. "[Former President George W.] Bush is correct," says Victoria Brownworth, "when he states that allowing same-sex couples to marry will weaken the institution of marriage…. It most certainly will do so, and that will make marriage a far better concept than it previously has been."[14]Professor Ellen Willis celebrates the fact that "conferring the legitimacy of marriage on homosexual relations will introduce an implicit revolt against the institution into its very heart."[15]

Michelangelo Signorile urges same-sex couples to "demand the right to marry not as a way of adhering to society's moral codes but rather to debunk a myth and radically alter an archaic institution."[16]Same-sex couples should, he says, "fight for same-sex marriage and its benefits and then, once granted, redefine the institution of marriage completely, because the most subversive action lesbians and gay men can undertake…is to transform the notion of 'family' entirely."[17]

It is no surprise that there is already evidence of this occurring. A federal judge in Utah allowed a legal challenge to anti-bigamy laws.[18] A bill that would allow a child to have three legal parents passed both houses of the California state legislature in 2012 before it was vetoed by the governor, who claimed he wanted

> “to take more time to consider all of the implications of this change.”[19]

It’s very important to understand that the typical gay relationship between males is not going to conform to the lifelong, exclusive commitment that heterosexual marriage involves. You can read about the numbers right here on this paper from the Family Research Council, which collects together evidence from secular sources, such as the U.S. Census and peer-reviewed research.

Take a look:

> Research indicates that the average male homosexual has hundreds of sex partners in his lifetime:
>
> ▪ The Dutch study of partnered homosexuals, which was published in the journal *AIDS*, found that men with a steady partner had an average of eight sexual partners per year.[12]
>
> ▪ Bell and Weinberg, in their classic study of male and female homosexuality, found that 43 percent of white male homosexuals had sex with 500 or more partners, with 28 percent having one thousand or more sex partners.[13]
>
> ▪ In their study of the sexual profiles of 2,583 older homosexuals published in the *Journal of Sex Research*, Paul Van de Ven et al. found that “the modal range for number of sexual partners ever [of homosexuals] was 101-500.” In addition, 10.2 percent to 15.7 percent had between 501 and 1,000 partners. A further 10.2 percent to 15.7 percent reported having had more than one thousand lifetime sexual partners.[14]
>
> ▪ A survey conducted by the homosexual magazine *Genre* found that 24 percent of the respondents said they had had more than one hundred sexual partners in their lifetime. The magazine noted that several respondents suggested including a category of those who had more than one thousand sexual partners.[15]
>
> […]Even in those homosexual relationships in which the partners consider themselves to be in a committed relationship, the meaning of “committed” or “monogamous” typically means something radically different than in heterosexual marriage.
>
> ▪ A Canadian study of homosexual men who had been in committed relationships lasting longer than one year found that only 25 percent of those interviewed reported being monogamous.” According to study author Barry Adam, “Gay culture allows men to explore different…forms of relationships besides the monogamy coveted by heterosexuals.”[16]
>
> ▪ The *Handbook of Family Diversity* reported a study in which “many self-described ‘monogamous’ couples reported an average of three to five partners in the past year. Blasband and Peplau (1985) observed a similar pattern.”[17]
>
> ▪ In *The Male Couple*, authors David P. McWhirter and Andrew M. Mattison reported that, in a study of 156 males in homosexual relationships lasting from

> one to thirty-seven years:
>
> Only seven couples have a totally exclusive sexual relationship, and these men all have been together for less than five years. Stated another way, all couples with a relationship lasting more than five years have incorporated some provision for outside sexual activity in their relationships.[18]

Are we ready to call that marriage? Isn't it bad enough that we already have undermined the permanence and stability of marriage with no-fault divorce laws and giving benefits to common-law couples? Don't you think that these factors will undermine stability, the same way that infidelity undermines heterosexual relationships?

But marriage is a particular thing. It's permanent. It's exclusive. It's not based on feelings and desires. The purpose of marriage is to recognize and encourage people to constrain and bound their sexual activity for the benefit of society. We want to encourage parents to bond together permanently and exclusively, so that the bond is stable. We should be encouraging people to be chaste before marriage, to make good decisions about who to marry, to reward marriages that last, and to make it harder to get out of a marriage. Especially one with children.

Ryan T. Anderson explains marriage to Piers Morgan and Suze Orman

March 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the two clips.

Part 1 of 2:

Part 2 of 2:

Here's a description of what happened from the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> Anderson, co-author of the book "What Is Marriage" and Heritage's William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society, opened the show by explaining his view of marriage:
>
> I think marriage exists to bring a man and woman together as husband and wife, to be mother and father to any children their union produces. And the Supreme Court, in the cases they're hearing today and tomorrow, should really not cut short the democratic debate that we're having. Citizens all across the country are discussing what marriage is and why it matters. And what we want to see the court do is uphold our constitutional authority to have that debate.
>
> After peppering Anderson with several hostile questions on marriage — all of which he answered with composure — Morgan turned to his guest Orman to deliver an emotionally charged tirade in which she called Anderson "uneducated."
>
> […]"What are you really feeling right now?" Morgan asked Orman. "Because this is the debate laid bare. This is a guy sitting a few feet away from you who says, 'Nope, I don't want people like you to have the same right to get married as people like him.'"
>
> Orman, a lesbian who lives with her partner Kathy Travis, responded:
>
> > I feel compassion for you. And I'll tell you why. Because I know you believe very strongly what you believe, but I also know that you're very uneducated in how it really works.
> >
> > I believe from the bottom of my heart that if you really understood why the government does need to get involved, why it does need to be legal on a federal level, if you really understood that, there's no way that you would sit there and say what you are saying right now.
>
> Anderson's response:
>
> > Why do you assume that I'm ignorant? You say I just don't know. I don't assume anything badly about you. I just think we disagree. President

> > Obama himself has said there are people of good will and sound mind on both sides of this issue. I agree with the President.
>
> > I'm not going to call you names and I'm not going to say you're ignorant or don't understand. But up until the year 2000, no political community on the face of earth had ever defined marriage as anything other than a male-female relationship. I think there are good reasons for that.
>
> […]Morgan, a British journalist recently schooled by Breitbart's Ben Shapiro on gun control, ended the interview by cuting off the discussion and declaring, "The idea that you want to stop people like Elton [John] and David [Furnish] or Suze and K.T. from getting married in America in the modern era, I just find a bit offensive these days. It's not fair, it's not tolerant, it's not American."

Why is it that people on the left cannot bear to stay calm and listen to anyone who disagrees with them? Is it because they deliberately surround themselves with people who agree with them about everything? Maybe they just need to be more open-minded and tolerant of views they don't agree with? I think that they should seek out more diversity of thought and critical thinking in their circle of friends. That would make it easier for them to listen to people who disagree, instead of trying to shame them, coerce them and silence them.

Four ways that the progress of science conflicts with naturalistic speculations

March 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When people ask me whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism, I offer the follow four basic pieces of scientific evidence that are more compatible with theism than atheism.

Here are the three pieces of evidence best explains by a Creator/Designer:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the biological information in the first replicator (origin of life)
4. the sudden origin of all of the different body plans in the fossil record (Cambrian explosion)

And I point to specific examples of recent discoveries that confirm those four arguments. Here are just a few of them:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (From an article from Caltech)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning (there at least 40 examples of cosmic fine-tuning), (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)
4. Evidence showing that Ediacaran fauna are not precursors to the Cambrian fossils, (from the journal Nature)

Atheists will typically reply to the recent scientific discoveries that overtured their speculations like this:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause
2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes
4. Maybe we will find a seamless chain of fossils that explain how the Cambrian explosion occurred slowly, over a long period time

Ever heard any of these responses?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the four responses of atheists to the experimental data.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
>
> †Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, USA
>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear

> to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists. Leave no doubt.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.
>
> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities."
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have

no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. Leave no doubt.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can't make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can't make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth's interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to

solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them. Leave no doubt.

4) The best candidate to explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian era fossils was the Ediacaran fauna, but those are now recognized as not being precursors to the Cambrian fossils.

Science Daily reports on a paper from the peer-reviewed journal Science:

> Evidence of the single-celled ancestors of animals, dating from the interval in Earth's history just before multicellular animals appeared, has been discovered in 570 million-year-old rocks from South China by researchers from the University of Bristol, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Paul Scherrer Institut and the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.
>
> […]This X-ray microscopy revealed that the fossils had features that multicellular embryos do not, and this led the researchers to the conclusion that the fossils were neither animals nor embryos but rather the reproductive spore bodies of single-celled ancestors of animals.
>
> Professor Philip Donoghue said: "We were very surprised by our results — we've been convinced for so long that these fossils represented the embryos of the earliest animals — much of what has been written about the fossils for the last ten years is flat wrong. Our colleagues are not going to like the result."
>
> Professor Stefan Bengtson said: "These fossils force us to rethink our ideas of how animals learned to make large bodies out of cells."

The trend is that there is no evolutionary explanation for the body plans that emerged in the Cambrian era. If you want to make the claim that "evolution did it", then you have to produce the data *today*. Not speculations about the future. The data we have today says no to naturalism. The only way to affirm naturalistic explanations for the evidence we have is *by faith*. We need to minimize our leaps of faith, though, and go with the simplest and most reasonable explanation – an intelligence is the best explanation responsible for rapid generation of biological information.

Conclusion

I do think it's important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see way too much G. K. Chesterton, Francis Chan and other untestable, ineffective jibber-jabber. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it's too hard. It's not too hard. Everyone can understand "Who Made God?" by Edgar Andrews – start with that! Then get Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". That's more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works. You don't want to be anti-science like atheists are. I recommend reading Uncommon Descent and Evolution News every day for a start.

Can gay marriage supporters prove that it won't harm society in the long run?

March 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Check out this article by George Mason University professor Nelson Lund, which addresses that very question. (H/T Robert G.)

Excerpt:

> The Supreme Court is hearing two cases this week that represent a challenge to one of the oldest and most fundamental institutions of our civilization.
> In *Hollingsworth v. Perry* and *United States v. Windsor,* the court is being asked to rule that constitutional equal protection requires the government to open marriage to same-sex couples.
>
> The claimed right to same-sex marriage is not in the Constitution or in the court's precedents, so the court must decide whether to impose a new law making marriage into a new and different institution. The justices are unlikely to take so momentous a step unless they are persuaded that granting this new right to same-sex couples will not harm children or ultimately undermine the health of our society.
>
> A significant number of organizations representing social and behavioral scientists have filed briefs promising the court that there is nothing to worry about. These assurances have no scientific foundation. Same-sex marriage is brand new, and child rearing by same-sex couples remains rare. Even if both phenomena were far more common, large amounts of data collected over decades would be required before any responsible researcher could make meaningful scientific estimates of the long-term effects of redefining marriage.
>
> […]The prominent National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study, for instance, relied on a sample recruited entirely at lesbian events, in women's bookstores and through lesbian newspapers. Other studies relied on samples as small as 18 or 33 or 44 cases. The effect of parenting by male homosexual couples remains in the realm of anecdotes. Most research has relied on reports by parents about their children's well-being while the children were still under the care of those parents. Even a social scientist should be able to recognize that parents' evaluations of their own success as parents might be a little skewed.
>
> In 2012, sociologist Loren Marks conducted a detailed re-analysis of 59 studies of parenting by gays and lesbians that were cited by the American Psychological Association in a 2005 publication. Mr. Marks, who teaches at Louisiana State University, concluded that the association drew inferences that were not empirically warranted.
>
> There has been only one study using a large randomized sample, objective

> measures of well-being, and reports of grown children rather than their parents. This research, by Mark Regnerus, a sociologist at the University of Texas Austin, found that children raised in a household where a parent was involved in a same-sex romantic relationship were at a significant disadvantage with respect to a number of indicators of well being—such as depression, educational attainment and criminal behavior—compared with children of intact biological families.
>
> One might expect this work at least to raise a caution flag, but it has been vociferously attacked on methodological grounds by the same organizations that tout the value of politically congenial research that suffers from more severe methodological shortcomings. This is what one expects from activists, not scientists.

In order for us to be comfortable with adopting same-sex marriage, we need to know that there is evidence showing that there will be no long-term harm to society. Gay marriage advocates are the ones who are demanding a change in the law, so can they prove to us why the change won't do more harm than good? Have they done a good job of shouldering the burden of proof? I don't think so. And that means that we should be careful with changing the definition of marriage. We've already seen how much damage to children that no-fault divorce, (the last change to the definition of marriage), did to society. We have evidence that same-sex marriage would also harm society. We know that some policies are not good for society, and the side that wants the change bears the burden of proof.

Related posts

- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Frank Turek: is "equality" the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults "co-parenting" children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families
- Obama openly supports gay marriage: 48 hours after top gay donors cut off funding
- Democrat introduces bill to defund adoption agencies that favor married couples
- A secular case against same-sex marriage

N.T. Wright lectures on the resurrection of Jesus: did Jesus rise from the dead?

March 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's the video:

For those who cannot see the video, here is a written version of the lecture that Wright gave on the resurrection. And please note that I do not endorse anything that N.T. Wright says on any topic outside of history. History is his field of expertise, and I think he has no authority outside of the field of history.

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable*apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the

> future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an invented exaltation was already available to do the job.
3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.

5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

Gay marriage debate: Michael Brown debates Eric Smaw on same-sex marriage

March 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the debate:

> On April 21, 2011 at 7:30pm at UCF's Health and Public Affairs Building (Room 119), Rollins College professor, Dr. Eric Smaw and author and seminary professor Dr. Michael L. Brown will debate the question "Should same sex marriage be legalized in America?" The event will be held at 4000 Central Florida Blvd and is open to the public. After the formal portion of the debate, Brown and Smaw will field questions from the audience.

About the speakers:

> **Dr. Smaw** will be responding in the affirmative. He earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Law from the University of Kentucky in 2005. His areas of expertise are philosophy of law, international law, human rights, ethics, and modern philosophy. He has published articles on human rights, terrorism, and cosmopolitanism. His most recent publication is "Swaying in the Balance: Civil Liberties, National Security, and Justice in Times of Emergency".
>
> **Dr. Brown** will be responding in the negative. He earned his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and is a nationally known evangelical lecturer and radio host. He is the author of numerous scholarly articles and twenty books, including the recently published study "A Queer Thing Happened to America", which is quickly being recognized as the definitive work on the history and effects of gay activism on American culture.

Here are the first two parts:

Part 1 of 10:

Part 2 of 10:

The rest of the segments are here.

Summaries of the opening speeches

Summary of Dr. Brown's opening speech:

There is no compelling reasons by the state should change the definition of marriage

The reason the state conveys benefits for marriage is because marriage is beneficial for the state

Traditional marriage is recognized by the state for several reasons:
– it domesticates men
– it protects women
– it provides a stable, nurturing environment for children

Marriage has three public purposes:
– to bind men and women together for RESPONSIBLE procreation
– to get the benefit
– to provide children with two parents who are bonded to them biologically
– to create the next generation of people to keep the society going

Normally, opposite sex couples create children

Homosexual couples can NEVER create children together

Men and women are differences that are complementary

Monogamy is the norm for opposite sex couples.

For gay men, open relationships / cheating is the norm.
This is because women have a tempering effect on sexuality.

There is no evidence that recognizing same-sex civil unions and marriages have changed this trend.

Same-sex marriage guarantees that children will either not have a father or a mother
So which of the sexes is dispensable when raising children?

For example, consider Dawn Stefanowicz, who grew up with a gay father and no mother
She never got a chance to see a man model love and protect a women within a marriage
That makes an enormous difference in a woman's life – in the way she relates to men

Even with scientific advancements, every baby has a mother and a father

If we change the definition of marriage so that it is based on consent, then why limit it to just two people
If marriage is not the union of male and female, then why have only TWO people
In Canada, you have civil liberties lawyers arguing for for polygamy
In the United States, Professor David Epstein was in a consensual relationship with his daughter
Should incestuous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?
Should polyamorous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?

Sexual orientation is not the same as race
Men are women are different in significant ways, but different races are not
You need separate bathrooms for men and women, but not for people of different races

Summary of Dr. Smaw's opening speech: (He ended his speech after only 10 minutes)

You can redefine marriage so that it no longer based on the public purposes he mentioned (controlling procreation, fusing complementary male and female natures, providing children with mothers and fathers who are biologically linked to them, providing children with a comparatively stable development environment that offers comparatively less instability, promiscuity and domestic violence rates compared to cohabitation, etc.), but is instead based on consent and feelings, and that redefinition of marriage won't open marriage up to polygamy, polyamory, etc.

If you like feminism, then you should allow same-sex marriage

If you like abortion rights, then you should allow same-sex marriage

Homosexuals participate in society by working at various jobs, so they are participating in society

Homosexuals should be given the same tax breaks as married people because they work at various jobs for money

Working at a job for money achieves the same public purpose as procreating and staying together to raise children in a stable environment

You can listen to the rest for the rebuttals, and cross-examination. Oh yes – there was cross-examination! It starts two thirds of the way through Part 5, if you want to jump to it. And sparks were flying! There is also Q&A from the audience of students.

This is such a great debate – I love to hear two passionate guys disagreeing about something. I love to hear both sides of the issues. There is always something to learn by listening to the other side. It makes me more effective and more tolerant when I stand up to defend my side of the argument.

By the way, my own secular case against same-sex marriage is right here, if you want to see how I would debate this issue. Also check out the recent studies on the effects of gay parenting on children.

Ryan T. Anderson debates gay marriage with S.E. Cupp on the Blaze

March 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video:

And here's the description from the Heritage Foundation:

> Anderson, co-author of the book "What Is Marriage" and Heritage's William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society, faced skeptical questions from S.E. Cupp, Buck Sexton, and Amy Holmes. Yet, as he's done in interviews all week, Anderson articulated compelling reasons against redefining marriage. Of particular note was a debate between Anderson and Cupp about the federal government's role in marriage and the why children benefit from both a mother and father.
>
> The full segment runs about 12 minutes. In addition to Cupp, Sexton and Holmes, other panelists included Will Cain and Ben Domenech.

You can get his new book on marriage here. No one is better at defending marriage! You can see him debating on CNN with Piers Morgan and Suze Orman, as well.

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Must-read: comprehensive survey of all the research on gay marriage

March 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ari and Mathetes sent me this amazing evaluation of all of the research on same-sex marriage.

Excerpt: (links removed)

The most detailed effort yet to open the hood and see what is actually inside these studies was performed by Loren Marks of the LSU School of Human Ecology, who published a paper in *Social Science Research* in 2012 examining the 59 published studies behind the APA's breezy assertion of a scientific consensus. (Marks did not examine the other 8 studies cited by the APA, which were "unpublished dissertations.") Marks opened his paper by comparing the research on same-sex families to the by-now bulletproof research showing the advantages of traditional married parents over "cohabiting, divorced, step, and single-parent families," noting that those studies used "large, representative samples" such as "four nationally representative longitudinal studies with more than 20,000 total participants." By contrast, Marks found:

> -"[M]ore than three-fourths (77%) of the studies cited by the APA brief are based on small, nonrepresentative, convenience samples of fewer than 100 participants. Many of the non-representative samples contain far fewer than 100 participants, including one study with five participants"

> -The samples were "racially homogenous," none of them focusing on African-American, Hispanic or Asian-American families. Of course, social science studies of the family commonly find large racial disparities – picking an all-white sample is an extremely easy way to bias your results.
>
> -More broadly, he cited a "continuing tendency of same-sex parenting researchers to select privileged lesbian samples…'Much of the research [still] involved small samples that are predominantly White, well-educated [and] middle-class.'"
>
> -"[C]omparison studies on children of gay fathers are almost non-existent in the 2005 Brief."
>
> -"[I]n selecting *heterosexual* comparison groups for their studies, many same-sex parenting researchers have not used marriage-based, intact families as heterosexual representatives, but have instead used single mothers…[one pair of researchers] used 90.9 percent single-father samples in two other studies."
>
> -The APA, while ignoring these flaws in the studies it relied on, excluded one of the largest studies available, which had found significant differences in educational outcomes on the theory that assessments by teachers (i.e., tests and progress reports) were "subjective assessments." Note the contrast between this

> and the APA's eager acceptance of self-reporting by parents.
>
> -Most of the studies ignored "societal concerns of intergenerational poverty, collegiate education and/or labor force contribution, serious criminality, incarceration, early childbearing, drug/alcohol abuse, or suicide that are frequently the foci of national studies on children, adolescents, and young adults," and again the APA simply ignored one "book-length empirical study" that had used a more diverse sample and had concluded that "If we perceive deviance in a general sense, to include excessive drinking, drug use, truancy, sexual deviance, and criminal offenses, and if we rely on the statements made by adult children (over 18 years of age)…[then] children of homosexual parents report deviance in higher proportions than children of (married or cohabiting) heterosexual couples."
>
> -"[V]irtually none of the peer-reviewed, same-sex parenting comparison studies" looked at adults raised in same-sex parent homes, but only at children and adolescents, thus excluding from consideration social and emotional problems that are commonly observed only in adulthood. Research on children of divorce, for example, has found a number of problems that do not surface until adulthood.
>
> Nobody who has not already made their mind up would find research of this nature conclusive of anything.

And regarding the new Regnerus large-scale study of gay parenting: (links removed)

> One recent study that attempted to fix the problems Marks identified was published in the same edition of the same journal by University of Texas professor Mark Regnerus. Regnerus' study had – as he freely admitted – limitations of its own, discussed below. But the reaction to Regnerus' work – in contrast to how the badly flawed studies examined by Marks were swallowed uncritically – vividly illustrates why credible, unbiased research on this topic is so hard to come by.
>
> Regnerus set out to do a truly randomly selected study over a large population sample, and to remove the problem of biased parental reporting by interviewing adults about their childhood experiences. His sample covered 15,000 respondents, and despite the subsequent firestorm, no problem was ever identified with his methods or the data he gathered. Unlike most of the prior research, the respondents with a "gay father" or "lesbian mother" (more on which below) were, respectively, 48% and 43% black or Hispanic. His findings were dramatic across numerous types of outcomes, detailing greatly elevated incidence of parental rape, parental pedophilia and suicidal tendencies; as he explained his findings,
>
> Even after including controls for age, race, gender, and things like being bullied as a youth, or the gay-friendliness of the state in which they live, such respondents were more apt to report being unemployed, less healthy, more

depressed, more likely to have cheated on a spouse or partner, smoke more pot, had trouble with the law, report more male and female sex partners, more sexual victimization, and were more likely to reflect negatively on their childhood family life, among other things.[…]Anyone familiar with how liberals respond to scientific findings they don't like can predict what happened next: immediately upon the publication of his study, Regnerus was subjected to a campaign of vilification aimed at discrediting his work, destroying his professional reputation and deterring any other scholar from pursuing a similar line of inquiry. The University of Texas convened an audit of his study to deal with the pressure campaign, and the editor of the journal hired a prominent, vocal critic of Regnerus to audit the peer-review process that led to its publication. Andrew Ferguson and Matthew Franck detail the blow-by-blow of this campaign to destroy Regnerus.

And by and large, Regnerus passed the audits. The UT audit found "no falsification of data, plagiarism or other serious ethical breaches constituting scientific misconduct."The journal audit grudgingly concluded the journal editor acted correctly, despite a lot of sniping by its hostile author at Regnerus and the peer reviewers. But the liberal blogs and newspapers continued to act as if Regnerus had been unmasked as a charlatan.

Twenty-seven scholars (including Marks) signed a joint letter defending Regnerus' sample selection:

> [T]he demographics of his sample of young-adult children of same-sex parents – in terms of race and ethnicity – come close to resembling the demographics of children from same-sex families in another large, random, and representative study of gay and lesbian families by sociologist Michael Rosenfeld that has been well received in the media and in the academy…We are disappointed that many media outlets have not done their due diligence in investigating the scientific validity of prior studies, and acknowledging the superiority of Regnerus's sample to most previous research….We are also disappointed that many of our academic colleagues who have critiqued Regnerus have not publicly acknowledged the methodological limitations of previous research on same-sex parenting.
>
> …Regnerus has been chided for comparing young adults from gay and lesbian families that experienced high levels of family instability to young adults from stable heterosexual married families. This is not an ideal comparison. (Indeed, Regnerus himself acknowledges this point in his article, and calls for additional research on a representative sample of planned gay and lesbian families; such families may be more stable but **are very difficult to locate in the population at large**.) But what his critics fail to appreciate is that Regnerus chose his categories on the

> basis of young adults' characterizations of their own families growing up, and the young adults whose parents had same-sex romantic relationships also happened to have high levels of instability in their families of origin. This instability may well be an artifact of the social stigma and marginalization that often faced gay and lesbian couples during the time (extending back to the 1970s, in some cases) that many of these young adults came of age. It is also worth noting that **Regnerus's findings related to instability are consistent with recent studies of gay and lesbian couples based on large, random, representative samples from countries such as Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Sweden, which find similarly high patterns of instability among same-sex couples. Even Judith Stacey, a prominent critic of Regnerus's study, elsewhere acknowledges that studies suggest that lesbian "relationships may prove less durable" than heterosexual marriages.** Thus, Regnerus should not be faulted for drawing a random, representative sample of young-adult children of parents who have had same-sex romantic relationships and also happened to have experienced high levels of family instability growing up.

(Emphasis mine; footnotes omitted).

The vehemence of the attacks on Regnerus, by people who were happy to tout far less reliable studies, ought to be a gigantic red flag to anyone tempted to view the social science in this area as the work of disinterested professionals who care only to find the truth. And any tour of the work of Marks, Regnerus and their critics should disabuse anyone of the notion that we have ironclad-for-all-time scientific proof of equal outcomes that should be cast permanently into Constitutional law. Given the many common-sense reasons, grounded in experience, to think that both fatherhood and motherhood have unique value, the overwhelming scientific evidence that traditional marriage is superior to all the *other* family structures that have been studied, the relative recency and rarity of same-sex parent households and the current state of the science, the most logical answer is that both Congress and the voters of the State of California could rationally conclude that a family with a mother and a father is preferable to a family with two mothers and no father or two fathers and no mother.

I really urge all of my readers to click through and read this entire essay, and then please tweet or share it or send it to all your friends. We do NOT want a repeat of what happened when the liberal left rammed through no-fault-divorce, which was the first redefinition of marriage. We can't afford another round of this. We already have a 42% out of wedlock birth rate, and it's going up.

We've had the normalization of premarital sex put through by leftist public schools,

taxpayer-funded contraception pushed through by the leftist Obama administration, and no-fault divorce pushed through by leftist feminists and leftist trial lawyers. We can't keep taking shots at the institution of marriage. Marriage was designed from the start to protect and provide for innocent, vulnerable children. We are doing harm to children every time that we privilege the desires of adults over the needs of children. I find it disgusting that the people who are so influential at destroying marriage today are often the same ones who benefited from intact families and two loving parents yesterday.

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New study: Obamacare will raise cost of medical claims by 32%

March 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Yahoo News. (H/T Ted Cruz)

Excerpt:

> Insurance companies will have to pay out an average of 32 percent more for medical claims on individual health policies under President Barack Obama's overhaul, the nation's leading group of financial risk analysts has estimated.
>
> That's likely to increase premiums for at least some Americans buying individual plans.
>
> The report by the Society of Actuaries could turn into a big headache for the Obama administration at a time when many parts of the country remain skeptical about the Affordable Care Act.
>
> While some states will see medical claims costs per person decline, the report concluded the overwhelming majority will see double-digit increases in their individual health insurance markets, where people purchase coverage directly from insurers.
>
> The disparities are striking. By 2017, the estimated increase would be 62 percent for California, about 80 percent for Ohio, more than 20 percent for Florida and 67 percent for Maryland. Much of the reason for the higher claims costs is that sicker people are expected to join the pool, the report said.
>
> […]Obama has promised that the new law will bring costs down. That seems a stretch now. While the nation has been enjoying a lull in health care inflation the past few years, even some former administration advisers say a new round of cost-curbing legislation will be needed.

Yes. The government will have to cut costs by rationing care, based on political expediency. Obamacare was nothing but a government takeover of health care, designed to allow the government to buy votes by redistributing wealth via health care. That was the goal.

What does the concept of resurrection mean to Jewish theologians?

March 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a helpful post from Eric Chabot talks about this and other interesting topics related to the resurrection.

Excerpt:

> **Where do we see resurrection in the Hebrew Bible?**
>
> As just stated, belief in a resurrection of persons from the dead are seen in eight passages: (Job 19:26; Ps. 17:15; 49:15; 73:24; Is. 26:19; 53:10; Dn. 12:2;12:13). The resurrection terminology is seen in two places (Ezek. 37:1-14; Hos. 6:2) to show a national and spiritual restoration brought about by the return from the exile. As far as the nature of the future bodily resurrection, it may involve a corpse or the receipt of a material body comparable to the present physical body (Job 19:26; Is. 26:19), or it may be a matter of transformation (Dn. 12:2-3 and perhaps 12:13); or glorification after reanimation, in the case of the righteous.
>
> As far as the function of the resurrection, it may be personal vindication (Is. 26:16; 53:10-12). Resurrection may also have a function in relation to reward or punishment (Dn. 12:2; 12:13), an assumption to heaven and enriched fellowship with God (Ps. 49:15; 73:24,26), or preface to the beatific vision of God (Ps. 17:15 and possibly Job 19:26). (1)
>
> The Greek word for resurrection is "anatasis" which means "a raising up" or "rising." There are resuscitations in the Tanakh such as the example of Elijah and Elisha raising a person from death (1 Kings 17-23; 2 Kings 4:34-35). While these figures may have been raised in a resurrection sense, they were not raised immortal in the same way Jesus was.
>
> **Extra-Biblical Passages on Resurrection**
>
> There are also extra-biblical passages that speak about the resurrection (Enoch 92:2; 4 Ezra 7:32; Enoch 91:10; 2 Maccabees 7:9; 14; 28-29). Even the The Messiah Apocalypse, which is dated between 100 and 80 B.C.E mentions resurrection: "He [God] frees the captives, makes the blind see, and makes the bent over stand straight…for he will heal the sick, revive the dead, and give good news to the humble and the poor he will satisfy, the abandoned he will lead, and the hungry he will make rich." (2)
>
> In the Rabbinical literature there are explicit teachings on the resurrection. It says in the Mishnah 10.1, it says, "All Israelites have a share in the world to come; … and these are they that have no share in the world to come: he that says that there is no resurrection of the dead prescribed in the Law." Moses Maimonides, a Jewish rabbi and a medieval Jewish philosopher who has forever

> influenced the Jewish and non-Jewish world said:
>
> ” The resurrection of the dead is one of the cardinal principles established by Moses our teacher. A person who does not believe this principle has no real religion, certainly not Judaism. However, resurrection is for the righteous. This is the earning of the statement in Breshit Rabbah, which declares: “the creative power of rain is both for the righteous and the wicked, but the resurrection of the dead is only for the righteous.” Our sages taught the wicked are called dead even when they are still alive; the righteous are alive even when they are dead” (Bab. Talmud Brakhot 18 b).
>
> 3 points are made here: 1. Resurrection is a cardinal principle taught in the Torah which all Jews must believe 2. It is for the righteous alone 3. All men must die and their bodies decompose. (3)

It’s important to understand that the concept of resurrection had a meaning before Christianity ever started. And it’s interesting to ask why the early Christians applied the notion of resurrection to Jesus. What is the best explanation for their decision to do such a strange thing? Why not just give up on him and deny that he was the Messiah when he was killed by the Romans?

William Lane Craig presents the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

March 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s Resurrection Day, so that means it’s time for a William Lane Craig lecture:

Christ is risen, and it’s a historical fact. And if you like the lecture, you can see these ideas defended in a formal academic debate right here.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

March 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing

- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don’t have any earlier sources, so we just don’t know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn’t check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Should government get out of the marriage business?

March 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me three articles by Jennifer Roback Morse, post on The Public Discourse. The articles answer the charge from social liberals and libertarians that we should "get the government out of marriage".

Here's the first article which talks about how government will still be involved in marriage, even if we get rid of the traditional definition of marriage, because of the need for dispute resolution in private marriage contracts. She uses no-fault divorce as an example showing how it was sold as a way to get government out of the divorce business. But by making divorce easier by making it require no reason, it increased the number of disputes and the need for more government to resolve these disputes.

Here's the second article which talks about how the government will have to expand to resolve conflicts over decisions about who counts as a parent and who gets parental rights. With traditional marriage, identifying who the parents are is easy. But with private marriage contracts where the parties are not the biological parents, there is a need for the state to step in and assign parental rights.

Here's the third article which talks about how marriage is necessary in order to defend the needs and rights of the child at a time when they cannot enter into contracts and be parties to legal disputes.

The third article was my favorite, so here is an excerpt from it:

> The fact of childhood dependence raises a whole series of questions. How do we get from a position of helpless dependence and complete self-centeredness, to a position of independence and respect for others? Are our views of the child somehow related to the foundations of a free society? And, to ask a question that may sound like heresy to libertarian ears: Do the needs of children place legitimate demands and limitations on the behavior of adults?
>
> I came to the conclusion that a free society needs adults who can control themselves, and who have consciences. A free society needs people who can use their freedom, without bothering other people too much. We need to respect the rights of others, keep our promises, and restrain ourselves from taking advantage of others.
>
> We learn to do these things inside the family, by being in a relationship with our parents. We can see this by looking at attachment- disordered children and failure-to-thrive children from orphanages and foster care. These children have their material needs met, for food, clothing, and medical care. But they are not held, or loved, or looked at. They simply do not develop properly, without mothers and fathers taking personal care of them. Some of them never develop

> consciences. But a child without a conscience becomes a real problem: this is exactly the type of child who does whatever he can get away with. A free society can't handle very many people like that, and still function.
>
> In other words I asked, "Do the needs of society place constraints on how we treat children?" But even this analysis still views the child from society's perspective. It is about time we look at it from the child's point of view, and ask a different kind of question. *What is owed to the child*?
>
> **Children are entitled to a relationship with both of their parents. They are entitled to know who they are and where they came from. Therefore children have a legitimate interest in the stability of their parents' union, since that is ordinarily how kids have relationships with both parents. If Mom and Dad are quarreling, or if they live on opposite sides of the country, the child's connection with one or both of them is seriously impaired.**
>
> **But children cannot defend their rights themselves. Nor is it adequate to intervene after the fact, after harm already has been done. Children's relational and identity rights must be protected proactively.**
>
> **Marriage is society's institutional structure for protecting these legitimate rights and interests of children.**

I recommend taking a look at all three articles and becoming familiar with the arguments in case you have to explain why marriage matters and why we should not change it. I think it is important to read these articles and to be clear that to be a libertarian doctrine does not protect the right of a child to have a relationship with both his or her parents. Nor does libertarianism promote the idea that parents ought to stick together for their children.

The purpose of marriage is to make adults make careful commitments, and restrain their desires and feelings, so that children will have a stable environment with their biological parents. We do make exceptions, but we should not celebrate exceptions and we should not subsidize exceptions. It's not fair to children to have to grow up without a mother or father just so that they adults can make poor, emotional decisions and have fun.

Good news: school choice victory in Indiana, pro-life victory in North Dakota

April 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation reports.

Excerpt:

> It's hard to overstate what an outstanding victory for school choice Indiana's Supreme Court issued yesterday.
>
> Indiana's highest court ruled unanimously in *Meredith v. Pence* that the Choice Scholarship Program (CSP), which provides vouchers to low-income and middle-income families in the Hoosier State, is constitutional. The suit, brought by the teachers unions, sought to end the country's largest and most inclusive school voucher program.
>
> Thankfully for the families currently participating in the CSP—and for the 600,000 children who are now eligible to receive scholarships to attend a private school that meets their unique learning needs—the court sided 5–0 with educational freedom. As the Institute for Justice's Bert Gall notes that
>
> the unions' legal claims focused on two types of constitutional provisions that are common in most other state constitutions: 1) provisions requiring that states provide a "general and uniform" system of public education; and 2) provisions forbidding state support of religion.
>
> With regard to requiring a uniform system of public education, Gall goes on to write that the court "showed that the duty to provide a 'general and uniform' system of public schools is not violated when a state provides educational options above and beyond the system."
>
> As for the provision prohibiting state support of religion, the court noted that
>
> any benefit to program-eligible schools, religious or non-religious, derives from the private, independent choice of the parents of program-eligible students, not the decree of the state, and is thus ancillary and incidental to the benefit conferred on these families.
>
> The Indiana ruling not only ends the challenge to the voucher program in the state, it is also an important victory for school choice and, as Gall put it, "solidifie[s] the growing body of case law supporting school choice and expose[s] the flaws in the teachers' unions' favorite legal claims."

That's good news for fiscal conservatives, but there was also good news for social conservatives last week – in North Dakota.

Excerpt:

> If abortion proponents condemned 2011 as "the year of abortion restrictions…

> mark[ing] a sea change for abortion rights," and 2012 as "an unmitigated disaster for abortion rights," I can't imagine what they will say about 2013.
>
> In 2011 there were a record 92 pro-life laws enacted in the states, followed by the second highest number, 43, in in 2012. This year has already seen at least 14 pro-life bills become law, according toMailee Smith, Staff Counsel for Americans United for Life, so we are on track for another banner year.
>
> But in 2013 we are not only seeing a high volume of typical pro-life legislative fare, we are seeing passage of pro-life legislation on steroids, the likes of which has never been observed in 40 years of legalized abortions throughout the U.S.
>
> Yesterday, North Dakota adopted the "heartbeat" ban, which outlaws abortion once a baby's heart tones can be detected, as early as six weeks. At the same time ND Governor Jack Dalrymple signed the first ever ban against eugenic abortions for fetal abnormalities or gender.
>
> Bumped from the top spot, held only three weeks, was Arkansas, which on March 6 passed what was then an unprecedented ban on abortions after 12 weeks.
>
> Just a week prior, Arkansas became the 10th* state to pass a ban on abortions after 20 weeks.
>
> Then there's the Personhood Amendment. On March 22 North Dakota became the first state to legislatively authorize a ballot initiative that would establish the right to life from the moment of conception.

All the more reason for sensible Americans to continue their mass emigration from leftist blue states to conservative red states.

Child's complaints of sexual abuse by gay couple were ignored by social workers

April 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story was reported in the UK Telegraph. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Social services insisted on returning Andy Cannon to live with the couple, even though staff at Wakefield council had received up to six allegations of physical and sexual abuse over a number of years.
>
> Mr Cannon, now 23, said he believed social workers would have removed him from his abusers had they not been gay.
>
> He said: "If my adoptive dad was in a heterosexual relationship then my complaints would have been listened to earlier.
>
> "It seems the council didn't want to be seen as victimising gay people – they'd rather look 'politically correct' and let them get away with it to avoid any repercussions."
>
> In a damning report now obtained by Mr Cannon's legal team Wakefield social services officials were accused of "folly and gross misjudgement" and of putting the victim at "significant risk" of harm after missing six opportunities to save Mr Cannon from his abusers.
>
> The 160-page internal report by Patrick Ayre, a former child protection manager, said social services records of his history were "fragmentary" and even censored to keep certain details secret.
>
> Mr Ayre wrote: "That any consideration at all was being given to returning the claimant to his father's care must be regarded as surprising, in view of the concerns which should have been felt both about the possibility of violence and about the allegations made about sexual advances from Mr Scarfe."
>
> During his ordeal Mr Cannon was repeatedly plied with Ecstasy and cannabis before being molested by David Cannon and John Scarfe.
>
> His complaints to care workers were ignored and at one stage he was wrongly diagnosed as having mental disorders.
>
> Both men were eventually arrested and charged after Mr Cannon was readmitted to into council care following a domestic incident, at which point he managed to persuade a Forster carer he was being abused.
>
> Cannon, 54, and 31-year old Scarfe were each jailed for 30 months in 2006, for inciting sexual activity with a child.
>
> […]"The council should have been there to prevent this from happening but they would rather just sweep it under the carpet. Of course I was happy when I was

> finally listened to and dad and John were sent to prison – but their conviction was a walk in the park compared to what happened to me.
>
> “I have overdosed so many times in the past and I have tried to kill myself at least six occasions after what happened. I had a breakdown about four years ago and still have days thinking that my girlfriend would have a better life without me.
>
> “I was my dad’s sex toy and there were many times that I thought he was going to kill me. Most people when they grow up want a nice house, highflying job and holidays abroad each year – but all I live for are my kids and my girlfriend.”
>
> Cannon was allowed to adopt Andy in December 1997, when the youngster was aged eight. This came despite the fact he had earlier been convicted and put on probation for 12 months for assaulting the boy’s mother, Elaine Moss, possessing cannabis and handling a stolen computer.
>
> Miss Moss had also claimed Cannon had been abusing her son.
>
> A social worker failed to bring the allegations to the attention of the family court and instead called Cannon a “very caring parent who considered his children’s need”.
>
> Further allegations of sexual impropriety were made against Cannon by Andy and his mother after he started dating a gay man in 2002 and again when he began a relationship with Scarfe.

Associated Press reported before about a homosexual Penn State coach who sexually abused boys.

Excerpt:

> An explosive sex abuse scandal and allegations of a cover-up rocked Happy Valley after former Penn State defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky, once considered Joe Paterno’s heir apparent, was charged with sexually assaulting eight boys over 15 years. Among the allegations was that a graduate assistant saw Sandusky assault a boy in the shower at the team’s practice center in 2002.
>
> […]Sandusky, 67, was arrested Saturday and released on $100,000 bail after being arraigned on 40 criminal counts. Curley, 57, and Schultz, 62, were expected to turn themselves in on Monday in Harrisburg.
>
> The allegations against Sandusky, who started The Second Mile in 1977, range from sexual advances to touching to oral and anal sex. The young men testified before a state grand jury that they were in their early teens when some of the abuse occurred; there is evidence even younger children may have been victimized. Sandusky’s attorney Joe Amendola said his client has been aware of the accusations for about three years and has maintained his innocence.
>
> […]A preliminary hearing scheduled for Wednesday would likely be delayed, Amendola said. Sandusky is charged with multiple counts of involuntary deviate

> sexual intercourse, corruption of minors, endangering the welfare of a child, indecent assault and unlawful contact with a minor, as well as single counts of aggravated indecent assault and attempted indecent assault.
>
> […]The grand jury said eight boys were targets of sexual advances or assaults by Sandusky. None was named, and in at least one case, the jury said the child's identity remains unknown to authorities.
>
> One accuser, now 27, testified that Sandusky initiated contact with a "soap battle" in the shower that led to multiple instances of involuntary sexual intercourse and indecent assault at Sandusky's hands, the grand jury report said.
>
> He said he traveled to charity functions and Penn State games with Sandusky, even being listed as a member of the Sandusky family party for the 1998 Outback Bowl and 1999 Alamo Bowl. But when the boy resisted his advances, Sandusky threatened to send him home from the Alamo Bowl, the report said.
>
> Sandusky also gave him clothes, shoes, a snowboard, golf clubs, hockey gear and football jerseys, and even guaranteed that he could walk on to the football team, the grand jury said, and the boy also appeared with Sandusky in a photo in Sports Illustrated. He testified that Sandusky once gave him $50 to buy marijuana, drove him to purchase it and then drove him home as the boy smoked the drug.
>
> The first case to come to light was a boy who met Sandusky when he was 11 or 12, the grand jury said. The boy received expensive gifts and trips to sports events from Sandusky, and physical contact began during his overnight stays at Sandusky's home, jurors said. Eventually, the boy's mother reported the allegations of sexual assault to his high school, and Sandusky was banned from the child's school district in Clinton County in 2009. That triggered the state investigation that culminated in charges Saturday.
>
> But the report also alleges much earlier instances of abuse and details failed efforts to stop it by some who became aware of what was happening.
>
> Another child, known only as a boy about 11 to 13, was seen by a janitor pinned against a wall while Sandusky performed oral sex on him in fall 2000, the grand jury said.
>
> And in 2002, Kelly said, a graduate assistant saw Sandusky sexually assault a naked boy, estimated to be about 10 years old, in a team locker room shower. The grad student and his father reported what he saw to Paterno, who immediately told Curley, prosecutors said.

Again, reports about the gay coach's activities were ignored by authorities. Why?

And here's another similar story, this time from Scotland where the head of a gay youth organization was running a child sex ring.

Excerpt:

> Eight men in a Scottish paedophile ring have been found guilty of a series of “horrific” sex offences against children and babies.
>
> […]Two of the men – convicted sex offender Neil Strachan and gay rights campaigner James Rennie – were convicted of sex attacks on children.
>
> Strachan, 41, and Rennie, 38, both from Edinburgh, were also found guilty of conspiring to abuse youngsters, as were three other members of the gang.
>
> […]The jury found Rennie, the former chief of LGBT Youth Scotland, an organisation dedicated to helping young gay people, guilty of molesting a young boy over more than four years.
>
> The child was just three months old when the abuse began.

I think that we need to be more careful about the needs of children when making decisions about public policy.

Thomas Sowell: could a Cyprus-style confiscation of private savings happen here?

April 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Thomas Sowell, an economist for the people

Surprise! It already is happening here. Thomas Sowell explains in the American Spectator.

Excerpt:

> One of the big differences between the United States and Cyprus is that the U.S. government can simply print more money to get out of a financial crisis. But Cyprus cannot print more euros, which are controlled by international institutions.But could similar policies be imposed in other countries, including the United States?
>
> Does that mean that Americans' money is safe in banks? Yes and no.
>
> The U.S. government is very unlikely to just seize money wholesale from people's bank accounts, as is being done in Cyprus. But does that mean that your life savings are safe?
>
> No. There are more sophisticated ways for governments to take what you have put aside for yourself and use it for whatever the politicians feel like using it for. If they do it slowly but steadily, they can take a big chunk of what you have sacrificed for years to save, before you are even aware, much less alarmed.
>
> That is in fact already happening. When officials of the Federal Reserve System speak in vague and lofty terms about "quantitative easing," what they are talking about is creating more money out of thin air, as the Federal Reserve is authorized to do — and has been doing in recent years, to the tune of tens of

> billions of dollars a month.
>
> When the federal government spends far beyond the tax revenues it has, it gets the extra money by selling bonds. The Federal Reserve has become the biggest buyer of these bonds, since it costs them nothing to create more money.
>
> This new money buys just as much as the money you sacrificed to save for years. More money in circulation, without a corresponding increase in output, means rising prices. Although the numbers in your bank book may remain the same, part of the purchasing power of your money is transferred to the government. Is that really different from what Cyprus has done?

I noticed that Brian Lilley had an article about whether Cyprus-style confiscations could happen in Canada. The short answer: yes – for amounts above $100,000 Canadian.

Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion

April 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports.

Excerpt:

> Florida legislators considering a bill to require abortionists to provide medical care to an infant who survives an abortion were shocked during a committee hearing this week when a Planned Parenthood official endorsed a right to post-birth abortion.
>
> Alisa LaPolt Snow, the lobbyist representing the Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood Affiliates, testified that her organization believes the decision to kill an infant who survives a failed abortion should be left up to the woman seeking an abortion and her abortion doctor.
>
> "So, um, it is just really hard for me to even ask you this question because I'm almost in disbelief," said Rep. Jim Boyd. "If a baby is born on a table as a result of a botched abortion, what would Planned Parenthood want to have happen to that child that is struggling for life?"
>
> "We believe that any decision that's made should be left up to the woman, her family, and the physician," said Planned Parenthood lobbyist Snow.
>
> Rep. Daniel Davis then asked Snow, "What happens in a situation where a baby is alive, breathing on a table, moving. What do your physicians do at that point?"
>
> "I do not have that information," Snow replied. "I am not a physician, I am not an abortion provider. So I do not have that information."
>
> Rep. Jose Oliva followed up, asking the Planned Parenthood official, "You stated that a baby born alive on a table as a result of a botched abortion that that decision should be left to the doctor and the family. Is that what you're saying?"
>
> Again, Snow replied, "That decision should be between the patient and the health care provider."

What I find the most disturbing is that Planned Parenthood receives taxpayer money, thanks to their supporters in the Democrat party.

Related posts

- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- Hawaii Planned Parenthood caught counseling sex-selection abortions

- War on women: Obama and Democrats oppose ban on sex-selection abortion
- Live Action sting: Planned Parenthood counsels late-term sex-selection abortion
- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?

Americans finding out the true costs of Obamacare

April 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Caller has a sobering article about the true costs of Obamacare.

Excerpt:

> Millions of Americans are receiving double-digit premium hikes. For many people under 30, their health insurance premiums are going up much more — by as much as 189 percent. What happened to candidate Barack Obama's 2008 promise that every family's health care costs would go down by $2,500 by the end of his first term? (Costs actually went up by $3,000.)
>
> The Congressional Budget Office projects Obamacare will cost tens of billions more over the next decade than the agency projected just three years ago. Those increases were not budgeted for, and will add to massive deficits.
>
> So much for the promise that the law "will not add one dime to the deficit."
>
> Millions of workers at places like Wendy's and Olive Garden are now being preemptively reclassified as part-time, and an estimated 7 million to 20 million employees face the loss of workplace health benefits altogether.
>
> So much for the oft-heard promise that "If you like your health care plan, you can keep your health care plan."
>
> […]Seniors were assured that the new system wouldn't affect their benefits, despite Obamacare's $716 billion in ten-year cuts to Medicare (to help pay for the new entitlement).
>
> That promise was broken recently, when the Medicare agency issued surprise regulations cutting Medicare even more deeply than Congress had directed — cuts that target a popular and very successful part of Medicare, one that actually features consumer choice and competition, namely, Medicare Advantage (MA).
>
> Seniors who opt into MA enjoy greater care coordination, disease management for chronic conditions, and on-call nurses available by phone. Those extra services — which in some cases mean the difference between life and death — are now slated for the chopping-block.
>
> Rosemarie Battaglia will be among the millions of victims of these new regulations, which beginning April 1 will effectively shave MA plan payments by about 2 percentage points. On top of prior cuts enacted in Obamacare, that spells an 8 percent cut next year — a level higher than the profit margins for these plans.
>
> Actuarial experts at the American Action Forum predict the cuts will cause between 2 and 5 million seniors to lose their MA benefits, and that MA recipients face health care cost increases averaging $2,235 a year.

When a President makes promises about economic policy, we shouldn't believe him unless we have reasons to believe that he understands business and economics. We had no reason to believe that Obama understood economics. And, when given the reins of the economy, he's proven that. Instead of electing people who sound nice in speeches, we should be electing people who have shown that they know how to solve the problems we're facing in the economy. A track record of success at creating jobs, reducing the costs of health care, improving health care quality and choice, etc. should have counted for more than rhetoric. We chose the rhetoric and now we're getting the screws.

Related posts

- New study: Obamacare will raise cost of medical claims by 32%
- Five Guys franchise owner says Obamacare will force him to raise prices
- How the new Obamacare mandates are reducing full-time employment
- How does Obamacare cause medical premiums to rise?
- Obamacare's new tax on medical devices trickles down to hospitals and patients
- Medical premiums will continue to rise as Obamacare is implemented
- Christian business Hobby Lobby defies Obamacare abortion mandate
- When health insurance is forced to cover more, insurance premiums go up
- Obamacare in action: Denny's to charge 5% surcharge and cut employee hours
- Papa John pizza CEO: cuts to employee hours likely, because of Obamacare
- A primer on the fiscal cliff facing us in January 2013: tax hikes and Obamacare
- Companies announce layoffs in the wake of Obama's re-election
- Sally Pipes: how Obamacare causes doctors to quit practicing medicine
- Why do some people oppose Obamacare? What does Obamacare do?
- The full list of Obamacare tax hikes in order from largest to smallest
- California: Obamacare exchanges will raise health insurance premiums up to 25%
- Health insurance premiums up $3,000 since Obama was elected
- Report: Obamacare regulations will cost taxpayers and businesses $1.8 trillion
- CBO: Unemployment rises to 9.1% in 2013, health care spending doubles by 2022
- Obamacare subsidizes the risky behaviors of sexually active women
- Obamacare begins forcing states to cap and cut prescription drug benefits
- CBO: 20 million Americans could lose employer-provided health coverage under Obamacare

New Rasmussen poll: 13% drop in belief in the resurrection since last Easter

April 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> A study released by the Rasmussen Reports polling firm on Good Friday found that 64% of Americans believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.
>
> While Americans who believe in the resurrection remain in the majority, that number is down significantly when compared to a Rasmussen Poll that asked the same question, released a year ago.
>
> On April 7th, 2012 Rasmussen released a poll finding that 77% of Americans believed the resurrection of Christ to be historical fact.
>
> The difference between the two polls shows a 13 percentage point drop in the number of Americans who believe that Christ rose from the dead, since last Easter.
>
> Additionally, this year's poll found that 19% of Americans reject the central tenant of the Christian faith and do not believe that Christ was resurrected. That's compared to only 7% who said they didn't believe that Christ rose from the dead a year ago. A staggering 12 percentage point jump.

I've been posting some resurrection-related material lately, trying to get people to focus more on the evidence for the resurrection. But I can't change what pastors teach their flocks on Sundays. If I had my way, pastors would be using materials like J. Warner Wallace's "Cold-Case Christianity" to train people to make the case for the historical resurrection of Jesus. But it seems to me that most pastors are more interested in providing their flocks with praise hymns, worship and subjective experiences. None of that can demonstrate that the resurrection really happened. We need pastors who emphasize teaching real knowledge of objective truths linked to the real world.

Thomas Sowell: Guns can be used defensively to save lives

April 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Thomas Sowell

Thomas Sowell's latest column is up at National Review. If you've ever read any of Dr. John Lott's books, you'll know that his central argument is that allowing law-abiding citizens to own and carry firearms has a net positive effect, when compared with restricting or banning gun ownership. How could that be? What good effect could there be to allowing people to own guns? Well, that's what Tom Sowell – a former pistol marksmanship instructor – is going to explain to us in his article.

Excerpt:

> We all know that guns can cost lives because the media repeat this message endlessly, as if we could not figure it out for ourselves. But even someone who reads newspapers regularly and watches numerous television newscasts may never learn that guns also save lives — much less see any hard facts comparing how many lives are lost and how many are saved.
>
> But that trade-off is the real issue — not the Second Amendment or the National Rifle Association, which so many in the media obsess about. If guns cost more lives than they save, we can always repeal the Second Amendment. But if guns save more lives than they cost, we need to know that, instead of spending time demonizing the National Rifle Association.
>
> The defensive use of guns is usually either not discussed at all in the media or else is depicted as if it means bullets flying in all directions, like the gunfight at the O.K. Corral. But most defensive uses of guns do not involve actually pulling

> the trigger.
>
> If someone comes at you with a knife and you point a gun at him, he is very unlikely to keep coming and far more likely to head in the other direction, perhaps in some haste, if he has a brain in his head. Only if he is an idiot are you likely to have to pull the trigger — and if an idiot with a knife is coming after you, you had better have a trigger to pull.
>
> Surveys of American gun owners have found that 4 to 6 percent reported using a gun in self-defense within the previous five years. That is not a very high percentage but, in a country with 300 million people, that works out to hundreds of thousands of defensive uses of guns per year.
>
> Yet we almost never hear about these hundreds of thousands of defensive uses of guns from the media, which will report the killing of a dozen people endlessly around the clock. The murder of a dozen innocent people is unquestionably a human tragedy. But that is no excuse for reacting blindly by preventing hundreds of thousands of other people from defending themselves against meeting the same fate.
>
> Although most defensive uses of guns do not involve actually shooting, nevertheless, the total number of criminals killed by armed private citizens runs into the thousands per year. A gun can also come in handy if a pit bull or some other dangerous animal is after you or your child.

This is an important article that expresses the central argument for allowing law-abiding citizens to protect themselves and their families from criminals.

It’s worth noting that both Thomas Sowell and John Lott are economists, and economists use quantitative methods to evaluate policies. It would be great if everyone who talked about policies like gun legislation argued from logic and evidence, like economists do. We need to ask what effects and incentives are created for all groups of people when policies are adopted. And that’s what economists do.

Philip E. Johnson lectures on science, evolution and religion

April 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this fun lecture by the grandfather of the big-tent intelligent design movement, Berkeley law professor Philip E. Johnson.

I'll bet you guys have all heard of him, but you've never heard him speak, right? Well, I was a young man, I used to listen to Phil's lectures and his debates with Eugenie Scott quite a bit. This is one of my favorite lectures. Very easy to understand, and boilerplate for anything else in the origins debate. This is a great lecture – funny, engaging and useful. You will definitely listen to this lecture several times if you listen to it once.

The MP3 is here. (91 minutes, 62 megabytes)

The Inherit the Wind stereotype

- Many people get their understanding of origins by watching movies like "Inherit the Wind" (or reading science fiction)
- The actual events of the Scopes trial are nothing like what the movie portrays
- The law forbidding the teaching of evolution was symbolic, not meant to be enforced
- The actual Scopes trial was a publicity stunt to attract attention to Dayton, TN to bring business to the town
- The ACLU advertised for a teacher who would be willing to be sued
- They found a substitute physical education teacher who would be willing to "break" the law
- The movie is nothing like the actual events the movie is a morality play
- The religious people are evil and stupid and ignorant and bigoted
- The scientists and lawyers are all intelligent, romantic, and honest seekers of the truth
- The religious people think that the Bible trumps science and science is not as reliable as the Bible
- The movie argues that the reason why there is ANY dissent to evolution is because of Biblical fundamentalism
- The movie presents the idea that there are no scientific problems with evolution
- The movie says that ONLY Biblical fundamentalists who believe in 6 day, 24-hour creation doubt evolution
- The movie says that Biblical fundamentalism are close-minded, and not open to scientific truth
- The movie says that people who read the Bible as making factual claims are misinterpreting the Bible
- The movie says that smart people read the Bible for comfort and feelings and arbitrary values, not for truth

Guided evolution and methodological naturalism

- What scientists mean by evolution is that fully naturalistic, unguided, materialistic mechanisms caused the diversity of life
- Scientists do not allow that God had any real objective effect on how life was created
- Scientists think that nature did all the creating, and any mention of God is unnecessary opinion – God didn't DO ANYTHING
- Scientists operate with one overriding rule – you can only explain the physical world with physical and material causes
- Scientists DO NOT allow that God could have done anything detectable by the sciences
- Scientists WILL NOT consider the idea that natural, material processes might be INSUFFICIENT for explaining everything in nature
- You cannot even ask the question about whether natural laws, matter and chance can explain something in nature
- Intelligent causes can NEVER be the explanation for anything in nature, and you can't even test experimentally to check that
- Scientists ASSUME that everything can be explained with natural laws, matter and chance – no questioning of natural causes is allowed
- Where no natural explanation of a natural phenomenon is available, scientists SPECULATE about undiscovered natural explanations
- The assumption of naturalistic sufficiency is called "methodological naturalism"
- To question the assumptions that natural is all there is, and that nature has to do its own creating, makes you an "enemy of science"
- But Johnson says that *naturalists* are the enemies of science, because they are like the Biblical fundamentalists
- Naturalists have a presumption that prevents them from being willing to follow the evidence where it is leading
- Experiments are not even needed, because the presumption of naturalism overrides any experimental finding that falsifies the sufficiency of natural causes to explain some natural phenomenon

What can natural selection and mutation actually do?

- what evolution has actually been observed to do is explain changing populations of moths and finches
- finches with smaller or larger beaks are observed to have differential survival rates when there are droughts or floods
- no new body plan or new organ type has been observed to emerge from these environmental pressures
- the only kind of evolution that has been observed is evolution *within types* – no new genetic instructions are created

- in textbooks, only confirming examples are presented – but what is required is a broad pattern of gradual development of species
- if you look at the fossil record, what you see in most cases is variation within types based on changing environments
- the real question is: can natural law and chance *be observed* to be doing any creating of body plans and organ types?

What kind of effect requires an intelligent cause?

- the thing to be explained in the history of life is the functional information sequences
- you need to have a sequence of symbols or characters that is sufficiently long
- your long sequence of characters has to be sequenced in the right order to have biological function
- the only thing that can create long sequences of functional information is an intelligent cause
- intelligent design people accept micro-evolution – changes within types – because that's been observed
- the real thing to be explained is the first living cell's functional information, and the creation of new functional information

Critical response

The next 15 minutes of the lecture contain a critical response from a philosophy professor who thinks that there have been no developments in design arguments since Aquinas and Paley. He basically confirms the stereotypes that Johnson outlined in the first part of the lecture. I recommend listening to this to see what opposition to intelligent design really looks like. It's not concerned with answering scientific questions – they want to talk about God, the Bible and Noah's ark. It's our job to get people like this critic to focus on the science.

Here's my snarky rendition of what he said:

1) Don't take the Bible literally, even if the genre is literal.

- all opposition to evolution is based on an ignorant, fundamentalist, literal reading of the Bible
- the Bible really doesn't communicate anything about the way the world really is
- the Bible is just meant to suggest certain opinions and experiences which you may find fetching, or not, depending on your feelings and community
- if Christians would just interpret the Bible as myths and opinions on par with other personal preferences, then evolution is no threat to religious belief

2) As long as you treat the design argument as divorced from evidence, it's not very effective

- the latest and best version of the design argument is the old Paley argument which

involves no experimental data, so I'll critique that
- this 200-year old argument which doesn't rely on science has serious problems, and unnamed Christians agree with me!
- Christians should NOT try to prove God's existence using evidence from the natural world (as Romans 1 says), and in fact it's "Pelagianism" to even try
- Christians should divorce their faith from logic and evidence even though the Bible presents faith as being rooted in reason and evidence
- Christians should not tie their faith to the science of today, because science is always changing and the theism-friendly evidence of today might be overturned tomorrow
- It's a good idea for me to critique the arguments of 1000-year old people who did not know anything about the cosmic fine-tuning argument – that's fair!
- I find it very useful to tell people that the argument from design is false without mentioning any design arguments from DNA or cosmic fine-tuning
- We need to assume that the natural world is explainable using only natural causes before we look at any evidence
- We should assume that natural causes create all life, and then rule out all experimental evidence for intelligent causes that we have today
- As long as you accept that God is a personal opinion that has nothing to do with reality, then you can do science
- The non-Christian process theologian Teilhard de Chardin accepts evolution, and therefore so should you
- Remember when theists said God caused thunder because he was bowling in the clouds and then we found out he didn't? Yeah well – maybe tomorrow we'll find out that functional sequences of amino acids and proteins have natural causes! What would you do then?

3) What the Bible really says is that you should be a political liberal

Q&A time

The lecture concludes with 13 minutes of questions.

William Lane Craig and atheist Daniel Dennett discuss cosmology and fine-tuning

April 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This audio records a part of the Greer-Heard debate in 2007, between prominent atheist Daniel Dennett and lame theistic evolutionist Alister McGrath. Craig was one of the respondents, and this was the best part of the event. It is a little bit advanced, but I have found that if you listen to things like this over and over with your friends and family, and then try to explain it to non-Christians, you'll get it.

By the way, this is mostly original material from Craig, dated 2007, and he delivers the speech perfectly, so it's entertaining to listen to.

Craig presents three arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe:

- the contingency argument
- the kalam cosmological argument
- the teleological argument

He also discusses Dennett's published responses to these arguments.

Dennett's response to Craig's paper

Here is my snarky paraphrase of Dennett's reponse: (this is very snarky, because Dennett was just awful)

- Craig's three arguments are bulletproof, the premises are plausible, and grounded by the best cutting edge science we know today.
- I cannot find anything wrong with his arguments right now, but maybe later when I go home it will come to me what's wrong with them.
- But atheism is true even if all the evidence is against it today. I know it's true by my blind faith.
- The world is so mysterious, and all the science of today will be overturned tomorrow so that atheism will be rational again. I have blind faith that this new evidence will be discovered any minute.
- Just because the cause of the beginning of time is eternal and the cause of the beginning of space is non-physical, the cause doesn't have to be God.
- "Maybe the cause of the universe is the idea of an apple, or the square root of 7". (HE LITERALLY SAID THAT!)
- The principle of triangulation might have brought the entire physical universe into being out of nothing.
- I don't understand anything about non-physical causation, even though I cannot even speak meaningful sentences unless I have a non-physical mind that is causing my body to emit the meaningful sentences in a non-determined manner.
- Alexander Vilenkin is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat

him up good with phantom arguments.
- Alan Guth is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- This science stuff is so complicated to me – so Craig can't be right about it even though he's published about it and debated it all with the best atheists on the planet.
- If God is outside of time, then this is just deism, not theism. (This part is correct, but Craig believes that God enters into time at the moment of creation – so that it is not a deistic God)
- If deism is true, then I can still be an atheist, because a Creator and Designer of the universe is compatible with atheism.
- I'm pretty sure that Craig doesn't have any good arguments that can argue for Christianity – certainly not an historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus based on minimal facts, that he's defended against the most prominent historians on the planet in public debates and in prestigous books and research journals.

I was in the second row at the Baylor Conference on intelligent design when Guth debated Craig on the origin of the universe. Guth admitted afterwards that the universe did require a cause.

I do not recommend purchasing the whole 2007 debate, because McGrath is a squish. You're better off with the 2005 and 2008 sets. The 2006 one is OK, but not great. I don't have the 2009 one yet, but it looks good.

New housing bubble: Obama proposes lowering mortgage-lending requirements

April 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I must have blogged a million times about how the Democrats caused the recession by forcing banks to make bad loans to people who couldn't pay them back. Although the Republicans got blamed for the crisis, they were the ones who tried to regulate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, but they were shut down by Democrats. Well, guess what? The Democrats didn't learn their lesson the first time, and they want to start another housing bubble, just like the first one that gave us the recession.

Take a look at this article in the leftist Washington Post. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration is engaged in a broad push to make more home loans available to people with weaker credit, an effort that officials say will help power the economic recovery but that skeptics say could open the door to the risky lending that caused the housing crash in the first place.
>
> […][A]dministration officials say they are working to get banks to lend to a wider range of borrowers by taking advantage of taxpayer-backed programs — including those offered by the Federal Housing Administration — that insure home loans against default.
>
> Housing officials are urging the Justice Department to provide assurances to banks, which have become increasingly cautious, that they will not face legal or financial recriminations if they make loans to riskier borrowers who meet government standards but later default.
>
> Officials are also encouraging lenders to use more subjective judgment in determining whether to offer a loan and are seeking to make it easier for people who owe more than their properties are worth to refinance at today's low interest rates, among other steps.
>
> Obama pledged in his State of the Union address to do more to make sure more Americans can enjoy the benefits of the housing recovery, but critics say encouraging banks to lend as broadly as the administration hopes will sow the seeds of another housing disaster and endanger taxpayer dollars.
>
> "If that were to come to pass, that would open the floodgates to highly excessive risk and would send us right back on the same path we were just trying to recover from," said Ed Pinto, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and former top executive at mortgage giant Fannie Mae.

And if that was not enough,the Democrats also have another bubble being inflated. They nationalized the student loan industry, and now taxpayers are going to have to bail out

those risky unpaid student loans as well.

Excerpt:

> America's now-nationalized student loan industry just reached a value of $1 trillion, according to Citigroup, growing at a 20 percent-per-year pace. Since President Obama nationalized the industry (a tacked-on provision of the Obamacare bill), tuition has gone up 25 percent and the three-year default rate is at a record 13.4 percent.
>
> […]With many young people unable to pay their loans (average graduating debt is about $29,000), Citigroup and others are speculating that this industry might be ripe for a bailout.
>
> To pay off all the current defaults, Citigroup says it would cost taxpayers $74 billion. However, this number doesn't include those who will default in the coming years, and, when the government rewards the defaulters, it will encourage more borrowers not to pay their debts.
>
> And liberals in Congress have proposed forgiving all student loans via "The Student Loan Forgiveness Act 2012," costing taxpayers $1 trillion.
>
> Adding another $1 trillion dollars to the national debt isn't exactly "forgiveness" for young people—it's prolonging the payoff. In fact, student loan bailouts are a catch-22 for young people because they're going to be held accountable for paying off the national debt and interest payments.

At least the young people who voted for Obama are going to be the ones to get the bill for his socialist economic policies.

Related posts

- What was the real cause of the financial crisis?
- Thomas Sowell on the root causes of the mortgage lending crisis
- Democrat Barney Frank admits his role in causing the recession
- If you had to blame the recession on one person, who would it be?
- Who benefits from the Democrats financial regulation bill?
- Wall Street bankers gave Obama millions in campaign contributions
- Who are the ten most corrupt politicians of 2009?
- Thomas Sowell explains how politicians cause recessions while getting elected
- Democrats planning government regulation of more large companies
- Democrats use TARP money to shore up personal fortunes
- Democrats caused the recession and Republicans tried to stop it

Pro-life group at Johns Hopkins University denied official club status

April 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life Training Institute tweeted this article from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> The Student Government Association at Johns Hopkins University has denied a pro-life group official club status at the Baltimore school for fear the group will make students feel uncomfortable.
>
> "They were denied status because the students on the student council felt being pro-life violates their harassment policy," Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life of America, told Fox News.
>
> The SGA at Johns Hopkins voted March 12 to deny the group, called Voice for Life, the right to become an official student club. The vote was affirmed on March 24 by the SGA's Senate, Fox News reports.
>
> According to emails obtained by Fox News, members of the SGA compared the pro-life students to white supremacists, which Ms. Hawkins said was deeply offensive to the group's black members.
>
> "To compare pro-lifers with white supremacists — it's unreal," she told Fox News.
>
> Another SGA member said that allowing pro-life demonstrations made her feel "personally violated, targeted and attacked at a place where we previously felt safe and free to live our lives."
>
> An SGA senator said: "**We have the right to protect our students from things that are uncomfortable.** Why should people have to defend their beliefs on their way to class?"
>
> Voice for Life is searching for an attorney to help them fight the ban. SGA representatives did not return calls seeking comment, Fox News reports.

Now the secular leftists who run the universities like to think of themselves as tolerant, open-minded and diverse. But, actually, they are so intolerant that they cannot even bear to listen to any view other than their own view. What we need on university campuses is an Academic Bill of Rights that guarantees basic liberties to students and faculty who do not toe the leftist line. That would be real diversity, and it would encourage real critical thinking. The university feels that it is fine to make pro-life students uncomfortable, with the many pro-abortion groups on campus. But making pro-abortion students uncomfortable is unthinkable.

William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?

April 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the details of the debate that I got from Cloud of Witnesses:

> The OSU [Oregon State University] Socratic Club will sponsor a public dialogue entitled, "Two Philosophers Debate the Existence of God," on Monday, March 1, at 7 p.m. in the LaSells Stewart Center on the OSU campus. William Lane Craig will argue for the Christian view that a personal God exists and Victor J. Stenger the atheist position that there is no God.

In this debate, Victor Stenger does affirm his belief that the universe could be eternal in his second rebuttal (1:02:30), thus denying the standard Big Bang cosmology. He also denies the law of conservation of energy and asserts that something can come from nothing in his concluding speech (1:33:50). He also caused the audience to start laughing when he said that Jesus was not moral and supported slavery. There is almost no snark in this summary. Instead, I quoted Dr. Stenger *verbatim* in many places. I still think that it is very entertaining even without the snarky paraphrasing.

The debate includes 30 minutes of Q&A with the students.

Here is the MP3 file for the audio.

Here's the video of the debate:

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

- The ontological argument
- The contingency argument
- The cosmological argument
- The moral argument
- The resurrection of Jesus (3-fact version)
- Religious experience

Dr. Stenger's opening speech:

- There is no scientific evidence for God's existence in the textbooks
- There is no scientific evidence for God acting in the universe
- God doesn't talk to people and tell them things they couldn't possibly know
- The Bible says that the Earth is flat, etc.
- There is no scientific evidence that God answers prayers
- God doesn't exist because people who believe in him are ignorant
- Human life is not optimally designed and appears to be the result of a blind, ad hoc evolutionary process
- The beginning of the universe is not ordered (low entropy) but random and chaotic

- It’s theoretically possible that quantum tunneling explains the origin of the universe
- The laws of physics are not objectively real, they are “our inventions”
- Regarding the beginning of the universe, the explanation is that something came from nothing*
- Nothing* isn’t really nothing, it is “the total chaos that we project existed just before the big bang”
- If something has no structure, then “it is as much nothing as nothing can be”
- Consciousness is explainable solely on the basis of material processes
- There are well-informed, rational non-believers in the world and God would not allow that

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

Stenger’s argument that there is no objective evidence for God’s existence:

- First, it is not required that God rely only on objective evidence in order to draw people to himself (Alvin Plantinga)
- Second, God is not required to provide evidence to everyone, only to the people who he knows would respond to him
- Third, Craig gave lots of objective evidence, from science, history and philosophy
- Stenger asks for certain evidence (answered prayers, prophecy, etc.), but Craig presented the evidence we have

Stenger’s argument that the balance of energy is zero so “nothing” exists:

- if you have the same amount of assets and liabilities, it doesn’t mean that nothing exists – your assets and liabilities exist
- Christopher Isham says that there needs to be a cause to create the positive and negative energy even if they balance
- the quantum gravity model contradicts observations
- the vacuum is not the same as nothing, it contains energy and matter
- the BVG theorem proves that *any* universe that is expanding must have a beginning

Stenger’s argument that mental operations can be reduced to physical operations:

- mental properties are not reducible to physical properties
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with self-identity over time
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with thoughts about other things
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with free will
- substance dualism (mind/body dualism) is a better explanation for our mental experience
- God is a soul without a body

Dr. Stenger’s first rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- Craig's premise is "everything has a cause", but quantum mechanics has causeless events
- There are speculative theories about how something could have come into being uncaused out of nothing
- "I don't know of a single working cosmologist today who believes there was a singularity prior to the Big Bang"
- "If there wasn't a singularity then there's no basis for arguing that time began at that point"
- "There's no reason from cosmology that we know of that the universe can't be eternal"
- "When I talk about an eternal universe, I mean a universe that has no beginning or end"
- The Hartle-Hawking model doesn't have a beginning
- "There was no violation of energy conservation by having a universe coming from nothing"
- "The universe *could have* come from a previous universe for example or even just from a region of chaos"
- The paper by Vilenkin is counteracted by other papers (he doesn't specify which ones)

Craig's moral argument:

- Dr. Craig is arguing from ignorance
- But morality can be decided by humanity just like governments pass laws, and that's objective
- Dr. Craig has too little respect for the human intellect
- I don't need to tell me that slavery is wrong
- The Bible supports slavery
- Atheists can behave as good as theists
- Morality just evolved naturally as an aid to survival

Craig's resurrection argument:

- No Roman historians wrote about the execution of Jesus but none of them did
- The empty tomb is doubtful because it is only mentioned in the gospels, not by Paul
- John Dominic Crossan says there was no empty tomb
- Christianity only survived because the Roman empire thought that they were useful

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

Craig's cosmological argument:

- There is no reason to prefer an indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics
- Dr. Stenger himself wrote that deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics are possible

- The vacuum in quantum mechanics is not nothing
- The quantum vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal
- The cosmological argument does not require a singularity
- The Hartle-Hawking model is from 1983
- Hawking says that there is a beginning of space and time *after* that model
- The Hartle-Hawking model *does still have a beginning of time* – the model is not eternal
- The BVG theorem that requires a beginning for expanding universes is widely accepted among cosmologists

Craig's moral argument:

- Stenger redefined objective to mean that most people agree with it – but that's not what objective means
- Objective means right and wrong whether anyone accepts it or not
- Richard Dawkins himself says that on atheism there is "no evil and no good" – why is he wrong?
- Even Dr. Stenger says that morality is the same as passing laws – it's arbitrary and varies by time and place
- But on his view, right and wrong are the same as deciding which side of the road to drive on
- But somethings really are right and some things are really wrong

Craig's resurrection argument:

- Josephus is a Roman historian and he wrote about Jesus, for example
- There were four biographies of Jesus are the best sources for his life
- The scholars that Stenger mentioned are on the radical fringe

Dr. Stenger's second rebuttal:

Knowledge and the burden of proof:

- Dr. Craig has to bear the burden of proof, not me – because his claim is more "extravagant"
- "I don't have to prove that a God was not necessary to create the universe"
- "I don't have to prove that a God did not design the universe and life"
- "I don't have to prove that the universe did not have a beginning"
- "I don't have to prove that God did not provide us with our moral sense"
- There are a lot of books written about how morality evolved naturally
- "I don't have to prove that the events surrounding the supposed resurrection of Jesus did not take place"
- Bart Ehrman says that the gospels are generally unreliable (Note: Ehrman accepts all 3 of Craig's minimal facts)
- Just because people are willing to die for a cause, does not make their leader God,

e.g. – the Emperor of Japan

Aesthetic concerns about the universe:

- I don't like dark matter and I wouldn't have made the universe with dark matter
- I don't like the doctrine of penal substitution
- I don't like the doctrine of original sin
- I don't like the heat death of the universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion:

The case for atheism:

- Dr. Stenger had two arguments and he has to support his premises
- Dr. Craig addressed his two arguments and each premise and Dr. Stenger never came back on it

The contingency argument:

- Dr. Stenger has dropped the refutation of this argument

The cosmological argument:

- The theoretical vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal

The moral argument:

- He asserts that things are wrong, but there is no grounding for that to be objective on atheism

The resurrection of Jesus:

- There are surveys of scholars on the empty tomb and 75% of them agree with it
- Bart Ehrman agrees with all 3 of the minimal facts that Dr. Craig presented
- Ehrman's objection to the resurrection is not historical: he's an atheist – he thinks miracles are impossible

Religious experience:

- No response from Dr. Stenger

Dr. Stenger's conclusion

The cosmological argument:

- "I argued that we have very good physical reasons to understand how something can come from nothing"
- "There is a natural tendency in the universe… to go from.. simpler thing to the more complicated thing"

- The transition from a vapor to a liquid to ice shows how something could come from nothing
- “It cannot be proven that the universe had a beginning”

The moral argument:

- Objective morality, which is independent of what people think, could be developed based on what people think
- “Jesus himself was not a tremendously moral person… he had no particular regard for the poor… he certainly supported slavery… he was for the subjugation of women” (audience laughter)

The resurrection argument:

- Bart Ehrman says that the majority of the gospels are unreliable

Religious experience:

- I don’t see any evidence that there is anything more to religious experience than just stuff in their heads

God’s purpose of the world should be to make people feel happy:

- God could have made people feel happier
- God could have made people not die
- God could could have made the universe smaller: it’s too big
- God could have made it possible for humans to live anywhere “even in space”

A Harvard University student explains how evidence changed her mind about God

April 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a must-read article about the effectiveness of apologetics on college campuses in Christianity Today. (H/T Sanjay M.)

Excerpt:

> I don't know when I first became a skeptic. It must have been around age 4, when my mother found me arguing with another child at a birthday party: "But how do you know what the Bible says is true?" By age 11, my atheism was so widely known in my middle school that a Christian boy threatened to come to my house and "shoot all the atheists." My Christian friends in high school avoided talking to me about religion because they anticipated that I would tear down their poorly constructed arguments. And I did.
>
> As I set off in 2008 to begin my freshman year studying government at Harvard (whose motto is *Veritas*, "Truth"), I could never have expected the change that awaited me.
>
> It was a brisk November when I met John Joseph Porter. Our conversations initially revolved around conservative politics, but soon gravitated toward religion. He wrote an essay for the *Ichthus*, Harvard's Christian journal, defending God's existence. I critiqued it. On campus, we'd argue into the wee hours; when apart, we'd take our arguments to e-mail. Never before had I met a Christian who could respond to my most basic philosophical questions: How does one understand the Bible's contradictions? Could an omnipotent God make a stone he could not lift? What about the Euthyphro dilemma: Is something good because God declared it so, or does God merely identify the good? To someone like me, with no Christian background, resorting to an answer like "It takes faith" could only be intellectual cowardice. Joseph didn't do that.
>
> And he did something else: He prodded me on how inconsistent I was as an atheist who nonetheless believed in right and wrong as objective, universal categories. Defenseless, I decided to take a seminar on meta-ethics. After all, atheists had been developing ethical systems for 200-some years. In what I now see as providential, my atheist professor assigned a paper by C. S. Lewis that resolved the Euthyphro dilemma, declaring, "God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God."
>
> Joseph also pushed me on the origins of the universe. I had always believed in the Big Bang. But I was blissfully unaware that the man who first proposed it, Georges Lemaître, was a Catholic priest. And I'd happily ignored the rabbit trail of a problem of what *caused* the Big Bang, and what *caused* that cause, and so on.

> By Valentine's Day, I began to believe in God. There was no intellectual shame in being a deist, after all, as I joined the respectable ranks of Thomas Jefferson and other Founding Fathers.
>
> I wouldn't stay a deist for long. A Catholic friend gave me J. Budziszewski's book Ask Me Anything, which included the Christian teaching that "love is a commitment of the will to the true good of the other person." This theme—of love as sacrifice for true good—struck me. The Cross no longer seemed a grotesque symbol of divine sadism, but a remarkable act of love. And Christianity began to look less strangely mythical and more cosmically beautiful.

Now, I'm going to get into a lot of trouble for saying this, but I think that if you are a Christian and you are in a secular university, then you really need to have put in the effort to study the areas of science, history and philosophy that are relevant to the Christian faith. This is regardless of your personal abilities or field of study. We must all make an effort regardless of how comfortable we are with things that are hard for us to learn.

Granted, most atheists are not interested in truth, because they tend to jettison truth whenever it conflicts with their personal autonomy – their desire to seek pleasure apart from moral constraints. But there is another kind of atheist. This kind of atheist is honest, open-minded, and they just have never encountered any good reasons or evidence to think that God exists and that Jesus is anything other than a man. There are a lot of atheists like that who are just waiting to hear some decent evidence. Our job is to prepare for them and then engage them, if they are willing to be engaged.

I think that definition of love she cited – self-sacrifice for the true good of another person – is important. I don't think that ordinary Christians like you or me spends time on apologetics because we "like" it. I know lots of Christians who are in tough, expensive academic programs trying to get the skills they need to defend truth in areas that matter. They do this because they know that there are people out there who are interested in truth, and who are willing to re-prioritize their lives if the truth is made clear to them. We need to be willing to serve God by doing hard things that work.

William Lane Craig lectures on failure in the Christian life

April 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this audio on Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 web site.

Here is the MP3 file.

And here is my summary.

Intro:

- the topic of failure is not one that is often discussed by Christians
- failure #1: failure in the Christian life which is the result of sin
- failure #2: when a Christian is defeated while trying to serve God
- the consequences for failure #1 can be worse for the Christian
- the consequences for failure #2 can be worse for the world as whole
- how is it possible for a person to fail when they are obeying God? (#2)
- how can it be that God can call someone to a task then let them fail?
- failure is not persecution – persecution is normal for Christians
- failure is not trials – testing is normal for Christians to grow

Bill's failure:

- Bill had submitted all the coursework for his second doctoral degree
- but he had to pass a comprehensive oral examination
- he failed to pass the comprehensive exam
- Bill and Jan and his supporters had all prayed for him to pass
- how could God allow this to happen?

Solution to the problem:

- God's will for us may be that we fail at the things we try in life
- there are things that God may teach us through failure
- Bill learned that human relationships are more important than careers
- we need to realize that "success" in life is not worldly success
- true success is getting to know God well during your life
- and failure may be the best way to get to know God well
- it may even be possible to fail to know God while achieving a lot
- the real measure of a man is loving God and loving your fellow man

Practical:

- give thanks to God regardless of your circumstances
- try to learn from your failure
- never give up

The ending of Bill's story:

- Bill spent an entire year preparing for a re-take of his exam
- Bill was awarded his second doctorate "magna cum laude" (with great distinction)
- Bill learned that American students are not well prepared for exams
- the year of studying remedied his inadequate American education
- in retrospect, he is thankful for the failure – he learned more

If you like this, you should pick up Craig's book "Hard Questions, Real Answers", which has a chapter on this problem. And here is a similar lecture that Dr. Craig gave at his home church in Atlanta on the same topic. I'm not posting this because I've had a catastrophic failure or anything. But I think in this economy, I am seeing a lot of my plans dashed and I am being forced to circle the wagons a little and take fewer risks. I am being forced to aim for smaller goals, and plan for future difficulties. It does bother me that I can't comfortably take risks to achieve the best goals that I want to achieve. But I have to play the hand I'm dealt, and do what looks doable right now. Some of my friends are having the same problem of having to recalculate what is probable and what is possible.

Gary Habermas: five reasons to believe Jesus rose from the dead

April 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Greg West, who runs The Poached Egg, found this article by Dr. Gary Habermas in the left-wing Washington Post, of all places.

Habermas tries to make his case based on the "minimal facts" about Jesus that virtually all historians will admit to, regardless of where they line up theologically.

Here are his five minimal facts:

> (1) Most scholars agree that Jesus' tomb was discovered empty shortly afterwards. With almost two dozen reasons favoring this report alone, what best explains this? Other hypotheses do not account for all the data.
>
> (2) Many eyewitnesses assert that they saw the risen Jesus, both individually and in groups. Even apart from the Gospels, we can establish this totally from just two passages in Paul's "undisputed writings":
>
> - Paul told the Corinthians that he had received the Gospel resurrection report from others (1 Corinthians 15:1-8).
> - The consensus critical view is that Paul probably obtained this material in Jerusalem, when he visited the eyewitness apostles Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:18-24).
> - Paul returned to Jerusalem 14 years later and specifically checked out the nature of the Gospel message, again with eyewitnesses Peter, James, and now John (Galatians 2:1-10).
> - All the apostles agreed that Jesus appeared to them after his death (1 Corinthians 15:11).

> (3) Further, critical scholars also agree that Paul received this material from the other apostles at an exceptionally early date-only about five years after the crucifixion. But since the others knew the reports before Paul did, we are right back to the events themselves. Even the best-known critical scholar today, non-Christian specialist Bart Ehrman, dates several Christian traditions as early as just a year or two after the crucifixion!
>
> (4) But why should we believe that these eyewitnesses were being honest? We have first century sources that the three apostles mentioned above were all martyred: Paul, Peter, and James the brother of Jesus. Of course, people die for all sorts of ideas, but only for what they are convinced is true. But unlike others, the apostles were in a position to know whether or not they had seen Jesus Christ alive after his death. By being willing to die, scholars agree that they were convinced that Jesus had indeed appeared to them. At the very least, this

> addresses their honesty and conviction.
>
> 5) Of these eyewitnesses, Paul was a persecutor of the early Christians, and James was an unbeliever. Skeptical scholars accept this in both cases. But why did they become believers? Again, they were certainly in a position to know whether the risen Jesus had appeared to them.

This might be a good one to forward along to your skeptical friends, because of where it was published. It's probably review for most Christians, but to someone who is new to historical Jesus studies, this might be a good conversation starter. What are the "undisputed" parts of the Bible, and which are the facts virtually everyone admits to? How did historians decide which books and which facts were more verifiable by historians, and which were not? Are the minimal facts enough to warrant the belief that Jesus rose from the dead?

200,000 fewer people are employed, labor force participation reaches 1979 level

April 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

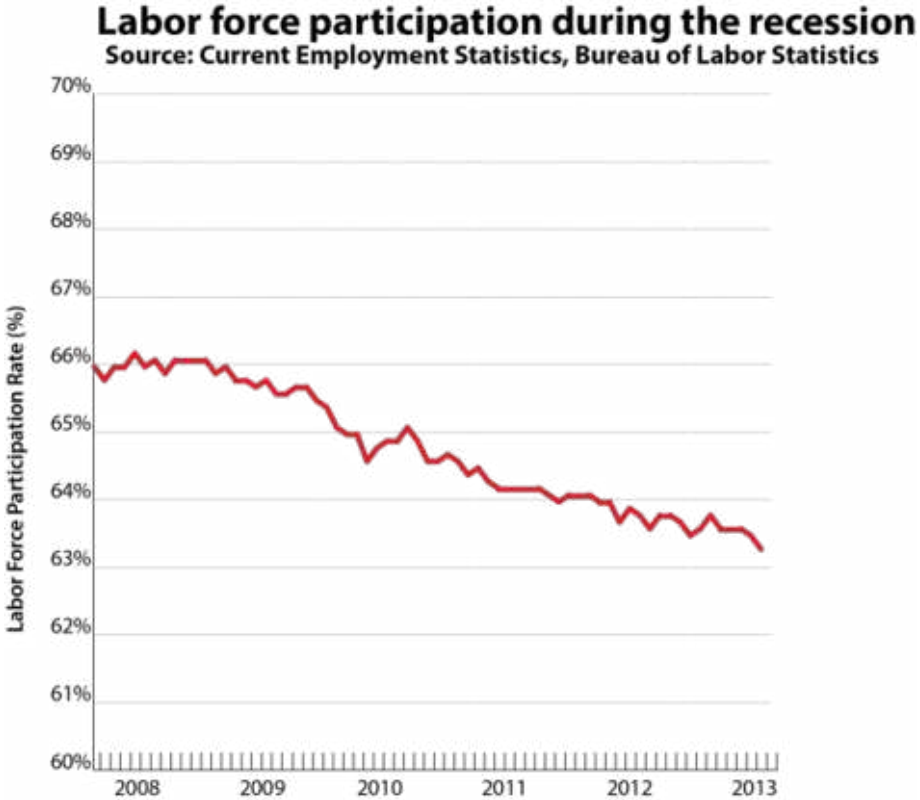

Labor Force Participation 2013 March

CNS News writes about some of the numbers from the latest jobs report.

Excerpt:

> A record 89,967,000 Americans were not in the labor force in March, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. That is an increase of 663,000 from the 89,304,000 Americans who were not in the labor force in February.
>
> Since President Barack Obama was first inaugurated in January 2009, 9,460,000 people have dropped out of the labor force.
>
> The BLS counts a person as not in the civilian labor force if they are at least 16 years old, are not in the military or an institution such as a prison, mental hospital or nursing home, and have not actively looked for a job in the last four weeks. The department counts a person as in the civilian labor force if they are at least 16, are not in the military or an institution such as a prison, mental hospital or nursing home, and either do have a job or have actively looked for one in the last four weeks.
>
> The number of people that BLS considers “in the labor force” affects the unemployment rate–which is the percentage of people “in the labor force” who are unable to find a job during the month. If someone previously considered “not in the labor force” were to go out and search for a job and not find one, they

> would have to be counted as in the labor force for that period–and thus would increase the unemployment rate.
>
> To the degree that Americans choose to simply drop out of the labor force rather than search unsuccessful for a job they decrease the unemployment rate.
>
> In keeping with the increase in the number of people not in the labor force, the labor force participation rate decreased from 63.5 percent in February to 63.3 percent in March. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of Americans in the civilian population over age 16 who did not have a job or seek a job during the month.

One of Obama's favorite constituencies also has a lot to think about with this report. The labor union voters, who thought that socialism would provide them with "good paying jobs". Well, socialism did provide someone with good-paying jobs. When union workers voted for anti-business radical, there were lots of good paying jobs created by American companies – just not in America. That's what attacking business achieved, it made them expand elsewhere or close up entirely. Obama's union supporters need to think about whether they can make a living on gay marriage alone.

And that's not all:

> The number of American workers collecting federal disability payments climbed to yet another record of 8,853,614 in March, up from 8,840,427 in February, according to newly released data from the Social Security Administration.
>
> […]March was the 194th straight month that the number of American workers collecting federal disability payments increased. The last time the number of Americans collecting disability decreased was in January 1997. That month the number of workers taking disability dropped by 249 people—from 4,385,623 in December 1996 to 4,385,374 in January 1997.
>
> As the overall number of Americans collecting disability has increased, the ratio of full-time workers to disability beneficiaries has decreased.

But there is some good news in the new report:

> Figures released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) on Friday show that 315,000 women dropped out of the labor force in March.
>
> According to BLS, the number of women not in the labor force grew to 49 million in March, up from 48.7 million in February, continuing a trend of women leaving the labor force in every month of 2013.

This is good news because one of Obama's biggest constituents is unmarried women, with or without children. These are the people who are most likely to vote for a President like they might vote for a contestant on Dancing with the Stars or American Idol. The people who switched their votes because Al Gore kissed his wife as a staged event. The Sandra Fluke wing of the Democrat party. The good news is that now they have

something to think about before the next election besides free contraception.

Related posts

- 73% of the new jobs created in the last 5 months were government jobs
- Unemployment rate is 10.5%, counting those who have stopped job-hunting
- Obama: private sector job creation is “doing fine”
- New jobs report: unemployment rises and 70% chance of recession
- Economy improving? New CBO report says that real unemployment is at 15%
- 1.2 million people dropped out of the labor force in one month

J. Warner Wallace: I am not a Christian because it works for me

April 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Linked by Captain Capitalism, who, although non-religious, thinks that real Christians ought to walk the walk.

Here's a must-read post from Cold-Case Christianity author J. Warner Wallace.

Excerpt:

> Life on this side of my decision hasn't always been easy. It's been nearly seventeen years since I first trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. I still struggle to submit my prideful will to what God would call me to do. Christianity is not easy. It doesn't always "work" for me. There are times when I think it would be easier to do it the old way; easier to cut a corner or take a short cut. There are many times when doing the right thing means doing the most difficult thing possible. There are also times when it seems like non-Christians have it easier, or seem to be "winning". It's in times like these that I have to remind myself that I'm not a Christian because it serves my own selfish purposes. I'm not a Christian because it "works" for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn't always been easy.
>
> I'm a Christian because it is true. I'm a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I'm a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative.

I think this is important. There are people who I know who claim to be Christian, but they are clearly believing that God is a mystical force who arranges everything in their lives in order to make them happy. They are not Christians because it's true, but because of things like comfort and community. But people ought to become Christians because they think it's true. Truth doesn't necessarily make you happy, though. Truth can impose intellectual obligations and moral obligations on you. Seeing God as he really is doesn't help us to "win" at life, as the culture defines winning.

Winning in Christianity doesn't mean making lots of money, or being famous, or winning human competitions, or being approved of by lots of people. Winning for a Christian might involve things like building relationships with people and leading them to know that God exists and who Jesus is. That has no cash value, and it's not going to make you famous. Actually, it will probably cost you money and time, and make you unpopular with a lot of people.

The Bible doesn't promise that people who become Christians will be happier. Actually, it promises that Christians will suffer for doing the right things. Their autonomy will suffer, as they sacrifice their own interests and happiness in order to make God happy, by serving his interests. Christianity isn't something you add on to your before-God life in

order to achieve your before-God goals. When you become a Christian, you get a new set of goals, based on God’s character and his design for you. And although you might be very successful in the world as part of serving God, there is no guarantee of that. Christianity is not life enhancement.

Socialism in France: economy contracts by largest amount in four years

April 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the BBC with some bad news for Europe.

Excerpt:

> Germany's economy slowed to "near stagnation" last month, while France's recorded its biggest contraction for four years, according to a closely watched survey.
>
> The Markit composite purchasing managers' index (PMI), which measures both the manufacturing and services sectors, declined to 50.6 in Germany last month, from 53.3 in February.
>
> Any figure above 50 indicates growth.
>
> France's reading fell to 41.9 points, its worst since March 2009.
>
> For the eurozone as a whole, the index fell to 46.5 from 47.9 in February.
>
> Chris Williamson, chief economist at Markit, said the latest data painted a gloomy picture.
>
> "The [eurozone] recession is deepening once again as businesses report that they have become increasingly worried about the region's debt crisis and political instability," he said.
>
> "The unresolved election in Italy was commonly cited as a key factor clouding the economic outlook in March, and the botched bail-out of Cyprus could well filter through to a further worsening of business sentiment across the region in April."
>
> Mr Williamson added that the weak showing from Germany "suggests that the only source of bright light in an otherwise gloomy region has once again begun to fade".
>
> Germany's index reading was the worst in the country for three months.

The French socialist government has also been rocked by a scandal:

> It is hard to think of a worse scandal for the Socialist government in France. As "President Normal" and "Mr Fair", François Hollande's whole being and essence was to crack down on tax evasion and financial corruption, making the wealthy pay their share in dragging France out of its economic woes. Riding his scooter, living in his modest flat and taking a salary cut, Hollande had promised that, unlike Nicolas Sarkozy before him, his presidency would be "exemplary", squeaky clean, and totally just.
>
> But now Jerome Cahuzac, the trusted tax tsar and budget minister who had vigorously led Hollande's crusade against fraudsters and tax-dodging

> millionaires, has made a shock confession of his own monumental fraud. With investigators and journalists closing in on the truth, he admitted hiding €600,000 (£509,000) from the taxman in a secret foreign account for 20 years. Not only that; Cahuzac had spent the past four months repeatedly lying on TV and to parliament, where he insisted from the government benches: “I do not have, I have never had, an account abroad, not now, not ever.”

Last year, France decided to elect a socialist prime minister named Francois Hollande, and then the people of France voted to give him a socialist majority in Parliament. And now we are seeing the results of that decision. Hollande’s priorities are things like a 75% income tax rate, hiring 60,000 new unionized teachers, lowering the retirement age back to 60, and massive spending on government-owned housing. It doesn’t look like his plan is working to grow the French economy.

Defense Department brands evangelical Christians and Catholics as “extremists”

April 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

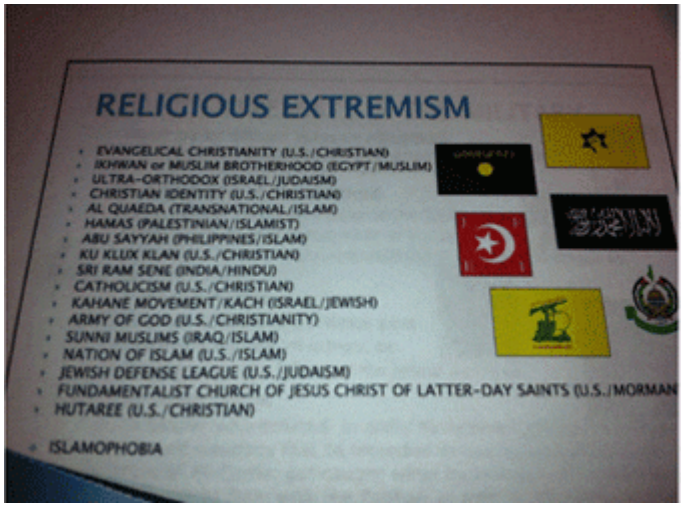

Anti-Christian bias at the Defense Department

The Washington Times reports on the latest Obama administration department to marginalize religious Americans. (H/T Lydia)

Excerpt:

> The Defense Department came under fire Thursday for a U.S. Army Reserve presentation that classified Catholics and Evangelical Protestants as “extremist” religious groups alongside al Qaeda and theKu Klux Klan.
>
> The presentation detailed a number of extremist threats within the U.S. military, including white supremacist groups, street gangs, and religious sects.
>
> The presentation identified seventeen religious organizations in a slide titled “religious extremism.” They include al Qaeda, Hamas, the Filipino separatist group Abu Sayyaf, and the Ku Klux Klan, which the slide identifies as a Christian organization.
>
> “Religious extremism is not limited to any single religion, ethnic group, or region of the world,” the slide explains, in language that closely resembles the text of a Wikipedia page on “extremism.”
>
> While outfits such as al Qaeda and the KKK are explicitly violent, the presentation also lists Catholicism and evangelical Protestantism as extremist groups.

I noted the careful way that the article refuses to say whether the presenter was a man or a woman. I have an opinion on that.

This isn’t the first time that characterizations of the right like this have been seen in the government, either.

Take a look at this article about FBI training from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Documents LifeNews.com obtained today reveal the Obama administration partnered with leading pro-abortion organizations to host an FBI training seminar in August with the main focus of declaring as “violent” the free speech activities of pro-life Americans.
>
> On August 25, 2010, the FBI and the United States Department of Justice co-sponsored a training seminar with Planned Parenthood, the National Abortion Federation and the Feminist Majority Foundation.
>
> When information about the seminar, which took place at FBI headquarters in Portland, Oregon, reached pro-life advocates, they asked officials for permission to attend and were granted access to the seminar and the training materials.
>
> FBI and Obama administration officials provided participants with an 84-page document entitled “Resource Guide: Violence Against Reproductive Health Care Providers” that contained print copies of Power Point presentations prepared by the Justice Department and an analysis of alleged pro-life “violence” prepared by the pro-abortion groups.
>
> The so-called violence perpetrated by pro-life advocates mostly contained examples of constitutionally-protected free speech, including activities such as praying, providing women outside abortion centers with alternatives information, and peaceful protesting or picketing.

That material was prepared by the Obama administration Department of Justice.

And most significant of all, the report by the Department of Homeland Security.

Excerpt:

> Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said Wednesday that she was briefed before the release of a controversial intelligence assessment and that she stands by the report, which lists returning veterans among terrorist risks to the U.S.
>
> […]The Times reported Tuesday that the department’s Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) issued April 7 the nine-page document titled “Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment.” Outcry from veterans groups, Republican lawmakers and conservative activists followed, but the reaction spread Wednesday to Democratic lawmakers and liberal-leaning groups.
>
> […]“Rightwing extremism,” the report said in a footnote on Page 2, goes beyond religious and racial hate groups and extends to “those that are mainly antigovernment, rejecting federal authority in favor of state or local authority, or rejecting government authority entirely.”
>
> “It may include groups and individuals that are dedicated to a single issue, such as opposition to abortion or immigration,” said the report, which also listed gun owners and veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars as potential risks.

I am not surprised by this, because there really is no interaction with thoughtful, scholarly Christians throughout the K-12 process in public schools. You have a bunch of unionized education majors teaching children for 13 years. Then those children go off to college, often to non-quantitative departments that indoctrinate rather than teach practical skills. And then they graduate and get unionized jobs in the government – not the private sector. When would they ever be exposed to thoughtful conservative scholarship? Never. And that's what causes this intolerance – it's lack of critical thinking and lack of viewpoint diversity. They don't know any thoughtful Christians, and they don't care to correct their views by looking for them.

New testimony from another ex-employee of the Kermit Gosnell abortion clinic

April 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me the latest on this story, from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A medical school graduate has given a graphic account of working at a Philadelphia abortion clinic and how he routinely saw babies born alive and then killed with scissors
>
> Stephen Massof, 50, of Pittsburgh, was giving evidence at the trial of his former boss Kermit Gosnell on Thursday.
>
> Gosnell, 72, is accused of killing seven live babies at the Philadelphia Women's Medical Society clinic and a woman who was administered too much anesthesia.
>
> […]Massof, who is awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty to the murder of two newborns at the clinic, revealed Thursday that he witnessed an abortion at 26 weeks – two weeks beyond the 24-week limit in the state.
>
> He also claimed he saw about 100 babies born alive and then 'snipped' with surgical scissors in the back of the neck, to ensure their 'demise'.
>
> He also spoke of the gruesome scenes at the clinic which was allegedly found dirty and rundown with rusting surgical instruments.
>
> 'It would rain fetuses. Fetuses and blood all over the place. It is literally a beheading. It is separating the brain from the body,' he told NBC.
>
> He also alleges the clinic's ultrasound machine was manipulated to make fetuses appear smaller and therefore younger.
>
> […]Prosecutors allege Gosnell took more than $1 million a year at the clinic where women were charged up to $3,000 for an abortion.

David Freddoso has a column in the Washington Examiner on the media coverage of the Gosnell trial, which has been very different from the media's coverage of the Sandy Hook shooting.

Excerpt:

> Whatever one's position on gun control, the appropriately heavy coverage of the Sandy Hook massacre at least served a public purpose by starting a discussion about mass shootings.
>
> At its most thoughtful, the debate considered what measures might have prevented the massacre and which could be squared with Americans' constitutional rights.
>
> At its worst, the debate suffered from media cheerleading for panic gun control

> legislation — as in, “pass something, anything!” — including but not limited to such left-leaning figures as CNN’s Piers Morgan.
>
> In stark contrast, television coverage of Gosnell’s trial has been “hard to find,” as the Wall Street Journal’s Peggy Noonan put it very charitably last Sunday on “Meet the Press.”
>
> In fact, not counting Noonan’s allusion, Gosnell’s case has not been mentioned even once on any of the three major networks in the last month (his trial began March 18).
>
> It has received only seven mentions on cable television since it began, one on CNN and six on Fox News. In print, Gosnell’s case has been largely ignored outside of local media outlets in Pennsylvania and Delaware.
>
> It’s not as though there isn’t an obvious connection between the Gosnell case and public policy. Legislators in some states (including Pennsylvania and now Alabama) have acted since Gosnell’s arrest to crack down on the next abortion quack.
>
> The media have collectively and perhaps deliberately failed to draw the obvious connection between the two stories.

I think that the differences in the levels of coverage is useful to show that media bias is not always done by biased reporting. It can also be just the decision of what to report on. You can read my previous post on the peer-reviewed studies that document left-wing media bias.

Craig Blomberg on the historical reliability of the New Testament

April 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In J. Warner Wallace's Cold-Case Christianity, chapter 5, he leverages the work of two experts on the New Testament. He cites Dan Wallace on textual transmission, and Craig Blomberg on textual criticism. Let's take a look at an article written by Craig Blomberg which presents 10 reasons why the gospels are reliable. (H/T Chris S.)

Here are points 4 and 5:

> Fourth, ancient Jews and Greeks meticulously cultivated the art of memorization, committing complex oral traditions to memory. Even before the Gospels or any other written sources about Jesus were compiled, Jesus' followers were carefully passing on accounts of His teachings and mighty works by word of mouth. This kept the historical events alive until the time they were written down.
>
> Fifth, the ancient memorization and transference of sacred tradition allowed for some freedoms in retelling the stories. Guardians of the tradition could abbreviate, paraphrase, prioritize, and provide commentary on the subject matter as long as they were true to the gist or meaning of the accounts they passed on. This goes a long way to explaining both the similarities and the differences among the four Gospels. All four authors were true to the gist of Jesus' life, yet they exercised reasonable freedom to shape the accounts in ways they saw fit.

Take a look if you want a quick overview of reasons why we should give the gospels the benefit of the doubt unless they prove faulty in one or more areas.

How Margaret Thatcher, the Iron Lady, saved Britain

April 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from the UK Daily Mail with some more details about her.

> Margaret Thatcher stood almost alone in driving through the tough policies now credited with saving the economy, secret papers reveal.
>
> The Tory Premier had to take on her predecessor Harold Macmillan, Bank of England governor Gordon Richardson and even her own Chancellor Geoffrey Howe to push through the policies which pulled Britain back from the brink of economic chaos.
>
> Documents released by the National Archives under the 30-year rule show the pressure Mrs Thatcher faced from the Establishment behind the scenes – and the extent to which she was isolated.
>
> In 1980, the year after becoming Britain's first female Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher embarked on a controversial programme to revive the moribund economy through deep public spending cuts and strict control of the money supply, intended to stamp out inflation.
>
> He warned that while her programme of cuts might give a 'sense of exhilaration' to her supporters, the country was heading for industrial collapse and 'dangerous' levels of unemployment.
>
> Macmillan, then 86, sent the letter following a meeting with the Prime Minister at Chequers in August 1980.
>
> He criticised her for abandoning 'consensus politics' to pursue radical reforms and 'divisive politics', which he said went against the 'essence of Tory democracy'.
>
> It was Macmillan who coined the phrase 'you've never had it so good' in 1957 during the long post-war economic boom.
>
> His brand of consensus politics is now credited with contributing to the economic malaise that brought Britain to its knees in the late 1970s.
>
> Years later, in her memoirs, Mrs Thatcher poured scorn on consensus politics, writing: 'What great cause would have been fought and won under the banner "I stand for consensus"?.'
>
> […]In 1981, 365 economists wrote to The Times urging Mrs Thatcher to change course and limit the damage caused by the recession.
>
> But she was unmoved, and her tough stance succeeded in reducing inflation from 27 per cent to four per cent in four years, putting Britain on the road to recovery.
>
> Mrs Thatcher's economic views were heavily influenced by the right-wing Cabinet minister Sir Keith Joseph, with whom she set up the free market think tank the

> Centre for Policy Studies in 1974.
>
> Both drew on the work of the influential American economist Milton Friedman whose monetary theories challenged the post-war consensus on economic thinking.

I recommend reading the whole article for some more articles where Lady Thatcher had to stand against everyone and hold onto her convictions in the teeth of the majority.

Here's an article from Forbes magazine that summarizes her effort to turn Britain around.

Excerpt:

> It's hard to appreciate today how desperate Britain's condition was before Thatcher took office. Its economy was a laughing stock, the perennial sick man of Europe. Strikes were endemic and union bosses effectively governed the country. Her Conservative Party had long ago made its peace with the welfare state and the ethos of high spending and high taxes. While the previous Tory Prime Minister, Edward Heath, wanted to revive Britain, he hadn't a clue how to do it. In a make-or-break showdown with the coal miner's union, Heath called a special election under the banner "Who Governs Britain?" Heath lost and unions' dominance in Britain seemed secure.
>
> Great leaders have an astute sense of taking advantage of circumstances. Even though Heath had lost two elections, none of the senior party officials would challenge him. At the time, Thatcher was not regarded as one of the party's major figures. But she was the only Tory who firmly believed in free markets and in Britain's ability to become again a proud nation based on the principles of liberty. She was a devotee of Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman and of the idea of paring back big government and giving free enterprise room to flourish. Astonishingly she beat Heath in a leadership fight in 1975 and led the Tories to victory in 1979.
>
> Immediately she began slashing income tax rates and reining in galloping spending and fighting inflation. She also exhibited that critical sense of timing. When she took office, she was faced with a potential strike of nurses whose union was demanding huge pay increases. Thatcher compromised in a way that some thought she didn't have the backbone to turn Britain around. Instead she was exhibiting a great politician's sense of knowing when to pick a fight. Thatcher eventually pushed through major labor union reforms and made it clear she would not tolerate any union riots or violence. Shortly after Thatcher won reelection, the coal miners union, which had destroyed Heath, decided to take her on. But unlike Heath Thatcher was fully prepared. The big showdown ensued and Thatcher beat the coal miner's union resoundingly. It never recovered from that defeat.
>
> Thatcher knew the deadweight on the economy of excessive taxation. She cut the top income tax rate from 98% to 40%. She cut the corporate income tax rate

> from 52% to 35%.
>
> One of Thatcher's greatest innovations was the systematic selling off of the government's business assets, dubbed privatization. After World War II Britain nationalized enormous swaths of the economy which actions subsequent Conservative governments left largely untouched. Thatcher sold government companies off and her example has been followed by countless nations around the world.
>
> In the area of privatizations, she did two remarkable things. She sold off much of Britain's public housing. An enormous number of Britons, far more than in the U.S., lived in these government-owned buildings. Thatcher pushed the sale of these apartments to occupants at low prices and on very advantageous terms. The purpose was to begin to shift the mentality of people and their dependence on government. Her other smart move was in the privatization of government-owned companies: offering a significant number of shares to workers at very low prices. Union leaders hated privatization but their opposition was undermined as their members realized that they could do very well buying cheap shares in these newly-privatized entities. Here again she was changing peoples' thinking: pro-big government workers now saw themselves as share owners, taking on more of a capitalist mentality.
>
> Before Thatcher, many social observers thought that Britain had an ingrained, unchangeable, anti-commercial culture that would forever stand in the way of the country becoming an economic success. Yet within a decade of her taking office, Britain had the most vibrant, large economy in Europe, one even more dynamic, innovative than that of Germany's. London became a magnet for entrepreneurs from France, Sweden and elsewhere.
>
> One unchangeable characteristic of a great leader is courage and that means taking career-breaking risks. Thatcher demonstrated her mettle in the Falkland Islands crisis. When the Argentinean military dictatorship seized Britain's Falkland Islands, most military experts felt the Sceptred Isle simply did not possess the military means to take them back. Defying almost the entire political establishment which was haunted by both Britain's current weakness and the memory of the Suez Canal debacle in 1956, Thatcher declared that the seizure would not stand and that Britain would go to war to take the Islands back. Thankfully she received critical help from the U.S. thanks to in large part the unrelenting efforts of Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger (who years later became Publisher and Chairman of Forbes). To the surprise of experts, Britain's military expedition succeeded. The Argentinean military dictatorship fell and democracy was restored in that country. For Britain the Falklands war was a huge boost to a demoralized nation. To the world it meant that once again tyranny would be resisted.

I recommend reading that whole article. It's hard not to smile at a woman who clearly

loved her country and worked to save it from poverty.

Why good men love Maggie

And now I must offend everyone. See, I have a theory about women. I think that women generally tend to be more beholden to the opinions and fashions of the crowd than men are. It's not absolute, but it's maybe two-thirds to one-third, in my experience. I think that it is generally hard for them to hold to their convictions in the face of peer pressure. That's why so few young, unmarried women are conservative after graduating from college. As soon as they reach college, they are swayed towards liberal views by their need to feel good about themselves and their need to be liked by others. Their views at home were not rooted in real knowledge, they were just fitting in with their families and churches and saying whatever words they were expected to say. And then they go off to college and learn other words to say from another community that uses praise and blame to replace their former convictions with new convictions.

But Maggie Thatcher wasn't like that. And here's why:

> John Ranelagh writes of Margaret Thatcher's remark at a Conservative Party policy meeting in the late 1970's, "Another colleague had also prepared a paper arguing that the middle way was the pragmatic path for the Conservative party to take .. Before he had finished speaking to his paper, the new Party Leader [Margaret Thatcher] reached into her briefcase and took out a book. It was Friedrich von Hayek's *The Constitution of Liberty*. Interrupting [the speaker], she held the book up for all of us to see. 'This', she said sternly, 'is what we believe', and banged Hayek down on the table." (John Ranelagh, *Thatcher's People: An Insider's Account of the Politics, the Power, and the Personalities*. London: Harper Collins, 1991.)

Policies like unilateral disarmament, wealth redistribution and redefining marriage *sound good* to many women – especially in college, and especially when only one side is presented and the other side is demonized. The only way to resist ideas that *feel good* and ideas that *get you peer-approval* is to have formed your own views through independent study. Lady Thatcher's economic policies were formed through a study of real economists like Nobel-prize-winning economist F.A. Hayek and Nobel-prize-winning economist Milton Friedman. The reason why she was able to hold to her principles is because she knew what she was talking about, and her opponents did not. She didn't care about feeling good. She didn't care about what other people thought of her. She knew was right, and that was enough to sustain her in trying times. She had the knowledge, and her opponents couldn't change her core convictions by trying to shame her. It didn't work.

Is it still safe to defend marriage using your real name?

April 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A Facebook friend is in hot water from his left-leaning classmates for a short essay that he wrote defending marriage. It was published in his college newspaper. In it, he makes a case that society has an interest in promoting marriage because the state has an interest in the development of children.

He writes (in part):

> Marriage is a comprehensive union with a special link to children. It is a private union with a public purpose.
>
> Private in that comprehensive union exemplifies the love of the spouses. Public in that their comprehensive union is intrinsically directed toward a purpose beyond the love of the spouses: children.
>
> The state regulates marriage because it has an interest in children. Marriage produces and cultivates the development of future citizens within a family unit held together by norms of fidelity, monogamy, exclusivity, and permanence. The state incentivizes marriage both because it recognizes child-rearing to be a difficult task and because it wants to encourage men and women to form family units. Not all marriages have children; some are infertile. Nevertheless, all marriages between men and women are still capable of engaging in the kind of unitive act that is intrinsically directed toward children.

The essay is a 500-word version of a longer essay that he posted before.

Scary comments

I wanted to bring this up because if you read some of the comments on his post, you will find that most of them seem to be unable to even understand the case that he was trying to make in his small, short 500-word version of the longer essay. Yet, even though these people could not understand what he was saying, they nevertheless went ahead and insulted him personally, over and over and over again.

Take a look at some of these comments, and ask yourself – are they trying to engage with his arguments? Are they bringing new research to bear on the problem? Or are they just offering personal attacks and emotional outbursts?

Look:

> The argument in the letter has been debunked time and time again. Ultimately, it implies gay couples aren't human. At the very least, it implies that gay people aren't already parents, which is false. I'm absolutely disgusted at your discretion in publishing this trash. You have stooped to an unbelievable low this time. As a side note, I'm embarrassed for [the academic department you belong to].

If it’s been debunked so many times, then we can’t he explain what’s wrong with it instead of becoming insulting?

Here’s another from that same person, right after the first one:

> You don’t like gay people. How original. As a side note, I did offer arguments against the ridiculous fallacies in logic that you presented. But it’s not like you’re here to have a discussion. I’m sure you’ve made up your mind re: profile pictures and such.

Um, he never did post any arguments. He just posted about his feelings “disgusted” “embarassed”. That’s not an argument.

And here’s the same person again:

> Your article is an insult to anyone who’s LGBT– yes, even your “friends.” It’s an affront to humanity. See Perry v. Schwarzenegger for an obliteration of your argument. I can’t even bother when the facts are all there in Supreme Court records for your easy consumption.

And the funny thing is – people keep clicking like on his comments. Why is that? Why do they think that he has said anything of value?

My advice

And here is the point I want to make about this. I do not recommend to people, and especially to students, that you write about social issues under your real name. I also recommend that even if you use an alias, that you do not make it widely known what your real name is to people who you meet casually online. You do not want to be in a situation where someone can just do a web search for your name before a job interview or a school admission. People who are on the left on these issues are not exposed to other points of view, so they do not tolerate other points of view. Often, they are coming from a position where they already have made lifestyle choices (I mean straight people, too) where they cannot allow themselves to consider the possibility that they would have to regulate their sexuality for the good of children or society.

Real unemployment rate for youth is 22.9%

April 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an article from the Wall Street Journal via Lonely Conservative in Captain Capitalism's latest round-up .

Excerpt:

> When the recession began in December, 2007, 59.2% of the under-25 population was in the labor force, meaning they were either working or looking for work. Today, that figure has fallen to 54.5%. That may not sound like a big drop, but it makes a huge difference. If the so-called participation rate had remained unchanged, there would be 1.8 million more young people in the labor force today than there actually are. Counting those people as unemployed, rather than out of the labor force, would push the unemployment rate up to 22.9%. That's only a hair better than the 23.9% youth unemployment rate in the euro zone, and has shown only very modest improvement during the recovery.
>
> The decline in the participation rate among the young can't all be attributed to the recession. Labor force participation among young people peaked at just under 70% in 1989, and has trended downward ever since, primarily due to rising rates of college attendance.
>
> The decline accelerated during the recession, as many young people sought refuge in college or other forms of education or training. In a normal cycle, that might have worked out well, leaving a generation of highly educated workers ready to re-enter the job market when the economy recovered. Instead, they have been graduating into a labor market that remains deeply challenged, especially for those without much work experience. To make matters worse, many graduates are carrying hefty debt burdens, and those who can find work are often being forced to low-skill jobs.

But are these young people victims? Or are they doing this to themselves?

Young UK socialists rejoice over Maggie Thatcher's death

I was looking over the Captain's blog and I found a post where he argues that young people are not victims.

He writes:

> However, before we all jump on the baby boomer generation (and don't worry, history will be INCREDIBLY harsh on them) we have to look at our own generational selves in the mirror. Specifically, whether we deserve all these programs or not.
>
> Of course, the question is moot and academic. I don't think there will be any money to be paid out in the first place, but let's just say there was. Do our generations really deserve all the unicorns, puppies, hope, and change the government says we're entitled to? I say no and here is the reason why.
>
> Gen X and Gen Y are doing the EXACT same thing as their baby boomer predecessors did. They are spending more money than they make. They expect other people to take care of themselves. They are entitled WAY more than the baby boomers ever were. And (most importantly) THEY VOTED IN DROVES FOR BARACK OBAMA and thus THE MORTGAGING OF THEIR OWN FUTURES.
>
> Much as I loathe the baby boomers, the successive generations, mine included, are worse. Despite BLATANT and OBVIOUS financial problems our generations faced, we lacked the adult maturity (let alone simple 2nd grade mathematics) to turn this country around. And while the baby boomers have been voting more and more conservative, it is the younger generations through galactic stupidity, ignorance and selfishness that merely nailed a couple more nails in the US-coffin and thus our own futures.
>
> Like I said, I doubt there will even be any money for Gen Y, Gen X and any future generations to make good on all those socialist entitlement goodies we promised ourselves. But before we start blaming previous generation's for our current problems, we should start blaming ourselves for making our future problems

> worse.

We should be careful about pitying young people who are struggling to find work, and who won’t get a dime from social programs like Social Security and Medicare. They are voting to punish employers with taxes and regulations. Most of them don’t know or care about what they are doing – they don’t connect their vote to their unemployed status. They think that education means jobs, and that they can vote in order to feel good and be liked, and still find work. They think that if they pay into these entitlement programs, then the money will be there. They trust Obama and they vote for him. They are not victims.

Massachusetts man facing multiple charges for shooting a bear on his property

April 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the libertarian Reason magazine (with links to news media stories).

Excerpt:

> Richard Ahlstrand, of Auburn, Massachusetts, faces criminal charges after encountering a bear in his back yard and shooting the damned thing to avoid being mauled or eaten. Specifically, as noted at Reason 24/7, he's charged with "illegally killing a bear, illegally baiting a bear, illegal possession of a firearm and failure to secure a firearm." All of these charges, once translated from Massachusetts to American, seem to stack up to outrage that Ahlstrand didn't make his yard completely inhospitable to animals that are rarely seen in the area, and then investigated a suspicious noise with a weapon in hand rather than cower under the bed. Worst of all, he actually defended himself when he encountered danger.
>
> […]In both the *Telegram* and CBS articles, "authorities" are quoted as saying they don't think the bear was a threat to people. I suppose it's possible that the black bears in Massachusetts are a kinder, gentler breed than the one that mauled a man near Payson, Arizona, last June. Or the one that tore up a woman in the same area in May. And then there was the bear that did a job on a woman near Pinetop …

When I see stories like this, the first thing that I think is that my role as a protector has been criminalized by the state. Suppose that I owned property and had a family and a bear wandered onto my property and threatened my family. The environmentally-friendly authorities think that I should let the bear eat my family, or at least sit still and hope that he doesn't. Is it reasonable to have a family if you can't protect them? What kind of incentive are these tree-hugging leftists offering men to get married when men know perfectly well that the state prefers them to watch their family be mauled by a bear rather allow that man to shoot that bear?

John Hawkins: 7 reasons why marriage is falling apart in America

April 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

John Hawkins, who blogs at Right Wing News, has a new post up at Clash Daily in which he lists 7 reasons why marriage is in decline.

Here are his reasons:

1. The Sexual Revolution
2. The Inability Of Many Poor Men To Support A Family
3. A "Marrying Up" Gap
4. No Fault Divorce
5. Increased Economic Options For Women
6. Marriage has become a much less attractive option for men
7. Children have become more of an economic hindrance than a help

And here is one in detail:

> **6. Marriage has become a much less attractive option for men:** There was a time when the man was expected to provide for his wife and kids and in return, he was treated as the king of the castle. Now, men are often treated more like partners than kings. Moreover, if there's a divorce, men know they may not be treated fairly by the court system. Almost every man knows a guy who has had access to his child used as a bargaining chip, who has to pay Draconian child support payments or who has otherwise been generally treated unfairly because of his gender, not the merits. No man wants to end up as the guy paying a huge chunk of his income to a woman who broke his heart while he wonders if he'll be allowed to have access to his own child.

As far as I can tell, the response to men's lack of incentives to get married has been to legislate and spend even more to help *women*. In fact, I'm not even sure if most people understand what Mr. Hawkins outlined about male needs. Do women realize that one of the major reasons why men might like to get married is because then they would have a little team to protect, provide for and lead? Men don't like it when government steps in and steals half their earnings, teaches their children bad ideas, and prevents them from protecting their family by disarming them. Maybe women can get men to be more interested in marriage if they think about why men would want to get married, and then make marriage more like what men want. That might involve rolling back feminism and socialism, and it might involve women changing who they are. There are two people in a relationship, and both of them have needs.

Could you convince people that chocolate chip cookies are the best cookies?

April 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an insightful post from J. Warner Wallace, author of Cold-Case Christianity.

Excerpt:

> Why do we hesitate to share the Gospel with non-believers? I think it's because we treat the gospel as a cookie rather than a cure.
>
> I asked the Christian students if they would be willing to follow me into the streets of Huntsville to try to convince people that chocolate chip cookies are the best cookies in the world. The school cafeteria at SHU makes excellent chocolate chip cookies, so we could have taken some with us to convince the local populace. Unsurprisingly, none of the students were excited about going. When asked, they quickly admitted that it seemed pointless to try to convince people of something as subjective as a personal opinion about cookies. They recognized that cookie preference is a matter of subjective opinion, rather than objective truth, and none of them were willing to go out of their way to argue for an opinion. I then asked them if they would be willing to follow me into a region of Huntsville that was suffering from a Tuberculosis outbreak to convince those infected with TB to take the one known cure, Isoniazid. All of them found this to be a worthy effort and said they would be willing to help for a cause such as this. They recognized the difference between the cookie and the cure. Cookies are a matter of subjective opinion, but cures are a matter of objective truth. If the people suffering with TB didn't know about the cure, they would die. Personal opinions about Isoniazid are irrelevant. Some TB sufferers might, for example, prefer to take Ibuprofen. But the objective truth about TB and Isoniazid overshadows any opinion someone might hold about their favorite treatment. Cures are like that. When we are objectively convinced that a particular treatment is the exclusive cure for what is ailing us, we ignore our preferences and act quickly to save ourselves and share the truth with others.
>
> There is a relationship between our categorization of Christian claims and our desire to share them with the world around us. Some of us hesitate to share the Gospel because (whether we care to admit it or not) we've come to see religious truth as a matter of subjective opinion rather than objective truth. We treat the Gospel more as a cookie than a cure.

I don't think I could convince someone who liked oatmeal and raisin cookies that chocolate chip cookies were better. They would just say that they had their preference and I had my preference and there was no reason for them to switch. But I'll bet that I could convince a person to save for their retirement instead of wasting their money on

partying. And I'll bet that I could convince a person to study computer science in college instead of studying art history. Know why? Because I know about these things, and I could appeal to objective facts to make a case for them. Those facts pack a punch whether or not the person has a preference for what I am recommending or not. And we need to treat Christianity the same way. Move the whole question beyond personal preferences to evidence. That's how you can be persuasive – *on any topic.*

Finally: liberal USA Today reports on Kermit Gosnell infanticide case

April 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Liberal columnist Kirsten Powers writes about the Kermit Gosnell case in liberal USA Today. (H/T Ian L., Mary, Stuart S.)

Full text:

> Infant beheadings. Severed baby feet in jars. A child screaming after it was delivered alive during an abortion procedure. Haven't heard about these sickening accusations?
>
> It's not your fault. Since the murder trial of Pennsylvania abortion doctor Kermit Gosnell began March 18, there has been precious little coverage of the case that should be on every news show and front page. The revolting revelations of Gosnell's former staff, who have been testifying to what they witnessed and did during late-term abortions, should shock anyone with a heart.
>
> NBC-10 Philadelphia reported that, Stephen Massof, a former Gosnell worker, "described how he snipped the spinal cords of babies, calling it, 'literally a beheading. It is separating the brain from the body." One former worker, Adrienne Moton, testified that Gosnell taught her his "snipping" technique to use on infants born alive.
>
> Massof, who, like other witnesses, has himself pleaded guilty to serious crimes, testified "It would rain fetuses. Fetuses and blood all over the place." Here is the headline the Associated Press put on a story about his testimony that he saw 100 babies born and then snipped: "Staffer describes chaos at PA abortion clinic."
>
> "Chaos" isn't really the story here. Butchering babies that were already born and were older than the state's 24-week limit for abortions is the story. There is a reason the late Democratic senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan called this procedure infanticide.
>
> Planned Parenthood recently claimed that the possibility of infants surviving late-term abortions was "highly unusual." The Gosnell case suggests otherwise.
>
> Regardless of such quibbles, about whether Gosnell was killing the infants one second after they left the womb instead of partially inside or completely inside the womb — as in a routine late-term abortion — is merely a matter of geography. That one is murder and the other is a legal procedure is morally irreconcilable.
>
> A Lexis-Nexis search shows none of the news shows on the three major national television networks has mentioned the Gosnell trial in the last three months. The exception is when Wall Street Journal columnist Peggy Noonan hijacked a segment on Meet the Press meant to foment outrage over an anti-abortion rights

> law in some backward red state.
>
> The Washington Post has not published original reporting on this during the trial and The New York Times saw fit to run one original story on A-17 on the trial's first day. They've been silent ever since, despite headline-worthy testimony.
>
> Let me state the obvious. This should be front page news. When Rush Limbaugh attacked Sandra Fluke, there was non-stop media hysteria. The venerable NBC Nightly News' Brian Williams intoned, "A firestorm of outrage from women after a crude tirade from Rush Limbaugh," as he teased a segment on the brouhaha. Yet, accusations of babies having their heads severed — a major human rights story if there ever was one — doesn't make the cut.
>
> You don't have to oppose abortion rights to find late-term abortion abhorrent or to find the Gosnell trial eminently newsworthy. This is not about being "pro-choice" or "pro-life." It's about basic human rights.
>
> The deafening silence of too much of the media, once a force for justice in America, is a disgrace.

Whenever I see things like this (the media's silence about some atrocity committed by the secular left) it reminds me why I have a strong belief in a literal eternal Hell. When you cover up the harming of innocents in order to protect something selfish like the irresponsible use of sex, that's pure evil. We do not kill other innocent people just so that we can protect our "right" to get drunk and hook up. And we certainly should not subsidize it, nor celebrate it, as Barack Obama and the Democrat Party do. That is wrong.

Related posts

- Washington Post writer explains why she refuses to report on Gosnell case
- Finally: liberal USA Today reports on Kermit Gosnell infanticide case
- New testimony from another ex-employee of the Kermit Gosnell abortion clinic
- Assistant to Kermit Gosnell admits to killing ten born-alive babies
- Mark Steyn on big government and the violence of abortion
- From January 19th, 2011: State regulators ignored abortionist who killed born-alive infants with scissors

Three reasons to read “Darwin’s Doubt”, the sequel to Signature in the Cell

April 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

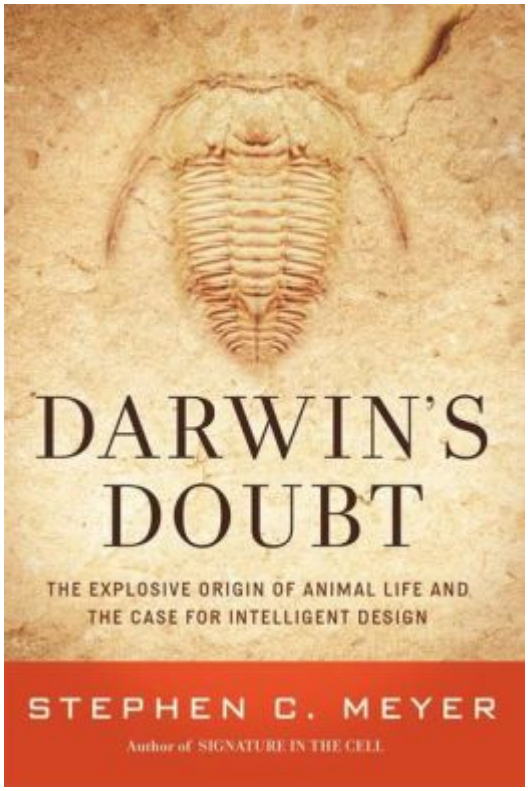

“Darwin’s Doubt” by Stephen C. Meyer

If someone asked me to name the best intermediate to advanced book on intelligent design, I would name Stephen C. Meyer’s “Signature in the Cell“. This book even got a lot of positive comments from non-ID people, including the famous atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel. So, it’s no surprise then that I am recommending that everyone pre-order Darwin’s Doubt, which is Stephen C. Meyer’s sequel to “Signature in the Cell“.

And Casey Luskin has penned four reasons why you should pre-order it:

> 1. Arguments for intelligent design in the Cambrian explosion have certainly been made before. But Darwin’s Doubt will be by far the most in-depth and mature development of those arguments to date, addressing in detail many ideas and rebuttals and theories advanced by evolutionary scientists, and showing why the theory of intelligent design best explains the explosion of biodiversity in the Cambrian animals.
>
> 2. When published, Darwin’s Doubt will be the single most up-to-date rebuttal to neo-Darwinian theory from the ID-paradigm. In this regard, one exciting element of Darwin’s Doubt is that Meyer reviews much of the peer-reviewed research that’s been published by the ID research community over the last few years, and highlights how ID proponents are doing relevant research answering key questions that show Darwinian evolution isn’t up to the task of generating new

> functional information.
>
> 3. As many ENV readers already know, we now live in a “post-Darwinian” world, where more and more evolutionary biologists are realizing that neo-Darwinism is failing, so they scramble to propose new materialistic evolutionary models to replace the modern synthesis. (These models include, or have included, self-organization, evo-devo, punc eq, neo-Lamarckism, natural genetic engineering, neutral evolution, and others.) In this regard, Darwin’s Doubt does something that’s never been done before: it surveys the landscape of these “post-neo-Darwinian evolutionary models,” and shows why they too fail as explanations for the origin of animal body plans and biological complexity.

I’ve pre-ordered mine!

If you think this book might be too difficult for you, then I recommend an introductory book like The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design.

Obama’s budget proposal would increase taxpayer funding of abortion

April 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation explains.

Excerpt:

> President Obama’s fiscal year (FY) 2014 budget released yesterday persists in entangling taxpayer dollars in the abortion industry.
>
> Obama’s budget includes $327 million for Title X family planning programs, a more than $30 million increase over last year’s request. Title X is one of a number of sources of government funding to Planned Parenthood, which performs roughly one out of every four abortions in the United States and was recently accused of tacitly supporting infanticide.
>
> In 2011 alone, Planned Parenthood received over $542 million in total taxpayer funding while performing a record 333,964 abortions. According to analysis by the Susan B. Anthony List, Planned Parenthood has performed almost 1 million abortions in the past three reporting years alone.
>
> Even though the organization boasts the title of the nation’s largest abortion provider, Planned Parenthood has ridden the waves of taxpayer funding to millions of dollars in annual surpluses. During its last reporting year, like many before it, Planned Parenthood saw a very comfortable income, reporting excess revenues exceeding $87 million and net assets of more than $1.2 billion.

How does Planned Parenthood feel about infanticide? Let’s see:

> If the organization’s single-minded provision of abortion services isn’t enough to question the continual stream of federal tax dollars, recent disturbing admissions by a local Florida Planned Parenthood affiliate should at least raise scrutiny of the organization’s federal funding.
>
> A few weeks ago, a local Planned Parenthood representative testified against a Florida bill that would require abortion doctors to provide emergency care for infants born after a failed abortion attempt. “If a baby is born on a table as a result of a botched abortion,” asked one Florida legislator during the hearing, “what would Planned Parenthood want to have happen to that child that is struggling for life?”
>
> Instead of expressing the need to provide potentially life-saving medical care to the child, Planned Parenthood official Alisa LaPolt Snow simply responded, “We believe that any decision that’s made should be left up to the woman, her family, and the physician.”
>
> The Obama Administration also continues to export taxpayer funding of abortion,

> requesting $37 million for the United Nations Family Population Fund (UNFPA). Despite continued assertions that UNFPA has been involved in China's coercive one-child policy, the U.S. government persists in sending tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to an organization complicit in forced abortions and involuntary sterilizations.

Previously, I wrote about how Obama voted for infanticide several times and he opposed the ban on partial birth abortions.

Excerpt:

> BAIPA [The Born Alive Infant Protection Act] (both the federal and Illinois state versions) on the other hand, was introduced to insure that babies who survive attempted abortions are provided the same medical care and sustenance as any other infant born alive. BAIPA was introduced after evidence was presented that babies born alive after unsuccessful abortions were simply discarded in utility closets without food, care, or medical treatment until they died.
>
> As both Andy and I pointed out last night (and numerous times before), state senator Obama fought against the Illinois version of BAIPA that was identical in all material respects to the federal version. During the 2008 presidential campaign, Obama claimed that he voted against the Illinois BAIPA because it failed to contain a "neutrality clause" making it clear that the bill did not affect the right to an *abortion*. This is false. Documents obtained by National Right to Life show that the Illinois BAIPA did, in fact, contain a neutrality clause identical to the federal version.
>
> As noted yesterday, not one U.S. senator voted against BAIPA. Even NARAL didn't oppose it. At the time of the vote, CNN reported that NARAL's spokesman said the following:
>
> We, in fact, did not oppose the bill. There is a clear legal difference between a fetus *in utero* versus a child that's born.***And when a child is born, they deserve every protection that the country can provide.*** (Emphasis added).
>
> The logical import of Obama's vote against BAIPA is that he disagrees, i.e., once a baby has been targeted for abortion it thereafter has no inherent right to the food, comfort, and medical care provided to other babies born alive. Indeed, during Illinois state senate deliberations on BAIPA, Obama stated that one of his objections was that the bill was "designed to***burden the original decision*** of the woman and the physician to induce labor and perform an abortion." Apparently, once the decision to abort has been made, a child is doomed even if born alive.

When it comes to abortion, there is no one more radical than Barack Obama.

Washington Post writer explains why she refuses to report on Gosnell case

April 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you tweet this post, please use the Twitter hash tag #Gosnell. Thanks!

Mollie over at Get Religion blog questioned a Washington Post reporter about why she isn't writing about the Kermit Gosnell abortion / infanticide case.

Here's the relevant snippet: (links removed)

> Inspired by Kirsten Powers' *USA Today* column yesterday, I decided to start asking journalists about their personal involvement in the Gosnell cover-up.
>
> […]I decided, since tmatt has me reading the *Washington Post* every day, to look at how the paper's health policy reporter was covering Gosnell. I have critiqued many of her stories on the Susan G. Komen Foundation (she wrote quite a bit about that) and the Sandra Fluke controversy (she wrote quite a bit about that) and the Todd Akin controversy (you know where this is going). In fact, a site search for that reporter — who is named Sarah Kliff — and stories Akin and Fluke and Komen — yields more than 80 hits. Guess how many stories she's done on this abortionist's mass murder trial.
>
> Did you guess zero? You'd be right.
>
> So I asked her about it. Here's her response:
>
> Hi Molly – I cover policy for the Washington Post, not local crime, hence why I wrote about all the policy issues you mention.
>
> Yes. She really, really, really said that. As Robert VerBruggen dryly responded:
>
> Makes sense. Similarly, national gun-policy people do not cover local crime in places like Aurora or Newtown.
>
> So when a private foundation privately decides to stop giving money to the country's largest abortion provider, that is somehow a policy issue deserving of three dozen breathless hits. When a yahoo political candidate says something stupid about rape, that is a policy issue of such import that we got another three dozen hits about it from this reporter. It was so important that journalists found it fitting to ask every pro-lifer in their path to discuss it. And when someone says something mean to a birth control activist, that's good for months of puffy profiles.
>
> But gosh darn it, can you think of any policy implications to this, uh, "local crime" story? And that's all it is. Just like a bunch of other local stories the *Washington Post*also refuses to cover — local crimes such as the killing of Trayvon Martin and the killing of Matthew Shepard and the killing of students at an elementary school in Connecticut. Did the *Washington Post* even think of covering those local crime stories? No! Oh wait, they did? Like, all the time? Hmm. That's weird. But

> did they cover them in terms of policy implications? Asking politicians for their views and such? Oh they did that, too? Hmm. So weird. Oh, and Sarah Kliff herself wrote one of those stories? Well, gosh, I'm so confused.
>
> And what policies could possibly be under discussion with this Gosnell trial? Other than, you know, abortion clinic hiring practices? And enforcement of sanitary conditions? And laws on abortion practices that extend to killing live infants by beheading them? And the killing of their mothers? And state or federal oversight of clinics with records of botched abortions? And pain medication practices? And how to handle the racist practices of some clinics? And how big of a problem this is (don't tell anyone but another clinic nearby to Gosnell was shut down this week over similar sanitation concerns)? And disposal of babies' bodies? And discussion of whether it's cool to snip baby's spines after they're born? And how often are abortion clinics inspected anyway? What are the results of inspections? When emergency rooms take in victims of botched abortions, do they report that? How did this clinic go 17 years without an inspection? Gosh, I just can't think of a single health policy angle here. Can you?

By the way, Neil Simpson tried to do a search on MSNBC for "Kermit Gosnell" and he got no results. I did a search for "Gosnell" and got no results, too. This is why mainstream media is dying. No one believes that they can tell the truth about anything. They're just working for the Democrat Party, not doing journalism.

Related posts

- Washington Post writer explains why she refuses to report on Gosnell case
- Finally: liberal USA Today reports on Kermit Gosnell infanticide case
- New testimony from another ex-employee of the Kermit Gosnell abortion clinic
- Assistant to Kermit Gosnell admits to killing ten born-alive babies
- Mark Steyn on big government and the violence of abortion
- From January 19th, 2011: State regulators ignored abortionist who killed born-alive infants with scissors

Do Kermit Gosnell and Barack Obama have the same views on abortion?

April 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's look at this re-cap of the Gosnell story in the Atlantic. This story features a full re-cap of facts, and then concludes with a discussion of media bias.

Take a look at the facts of the case:

> On February 18, 2010, the FBI raided the "Women's Medical Society," entering its offices about 8:30 p.m. Agents expected to find evidence that it was illegally selling prescription drugs. On entering, they quickly realized something else was amiss. In the grand jury report's telling, "There was blood on the floor. A stench of urine filled the air. A flea-infested cat was wandering through the facility, and there were cat feces on the stairs. Semi-conscious women scheduled for abortions were moaning in the waiting room or the recovery room, where they sat on dirty recliners covered with blood-stained blankets. All the women had been sedated by unlicensed staff." Authorities had also learned about the patient that died at the facility several months prior.
>
> Public health officials inspected the surgery rooms. "Instruments were not sterile," the grand jury states. "Equipment was rusty and outdated. Oxygen equipment was covered with dust, and had not been inspected. The same corroded suction tubing used for abortions was the only tubing available for oral airways if assistance for breathing was needed. There was no functioning resuscitation or even monitoring equipment, except for a single blood pressure cuff." Upon further inspection, "the search team discovered fetal remains haphazardly stored throughout the clinic – in bags, milk jugs, orange juice cartons, and even in cat-food containers."
>
> And "Gosnell admitted to Detective Wood that at least 10 to 20 percent of the fetuses were probably older than 24 weeks in gestation – even though Pennsylvania law prohibits abortions after 24 weeks. In some instances, surgical incisions had been made at the base of the fetal skulls." Gosnell's medical license was quickly suspended. 18 days later, The Department of Health filed papers to start the process of closing the clinic. The district attorney submitted the case to the grand jury on May 4, 2010. Testimony was taken from 58 witnesses. Evidence was examined.
>
> In Pennsylvania, most doctors won't perform abortions after the 20th week, many for health reasons, others for moral reasons. Abortions after 24 weeks are illegal. Until 2009, Gosnell reportedly performed mostly first and second trimester abortions. But his clinic had come to develop a bad reputation, and could attract only women who couldn't get an abortion elsewhere, former employees have said. "Steven Massof estimated that in 40 percent of the second-trimester

> abortions performed by Gosnell, the fetuses were beyond 24 weeks gestational age," the grand jury states. "Latosha Lewis testified that Gosnell performed procedures over 24 weeks 'too much to count,' and ones up to 26 weeks 'very often.' …in the last few years, she testified, Gosnell increasingly saw out-of-state referrals, which were all second-trimester, or beyond. By these estimates, Gosnell performed at least four or five illegal abortions every week."

Now let's recall what Obama's position is on born-alive abortion:

> There wasn't any question about what was happening. The abortions were going wrong. The babies weren't cooperating. They wouldn't die as planned. Or, as Illinois state senator Barack Obama so touchingly put it, **there was "movement or some indication that, in fact, they're not just coming out limp and dead."**
>
> No, Senator. They wouldn't go along with the program. They wouldn't just come out limp and dead.
>
> They were coming out alive. Born alive. Babies. Vulnerable human beings Obama, in his detached pomposity, might otherwise include among "the least of my brothers." But of course, an abortion extremist can't very well be invoking Saint Matthew, can he? So, for Obama, the shunning of these least of our brothers and sisters – millions of them – is somehow not among America's greatest moral failings.
>
> But not Barack Obama. As an Illinois state senator, he voted to permit infanticide. And now, running for president, he banks on media adulation to insulate him from his past.
>
> The record, however, doesn't lie.
>
> Infanticide is a bracing word. But in this context, it's the only word that fits. Obama heard the testimony of a nurse, Jill Stanek. She recounted how she'd spent 45 minutes holding a living baby left to die.

And let's review Obama's position on partial-birth abortion:

> Obama's 2008 endorsement of late-term abortion bans also appeared to be in conflict with his support for the Freedom of Choice Act. In 2007, Obama cosponsored the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), which would strike down restrictions on abortion at the state and federal level. The bill stated that all abortions must be legal before "viability" for any reason and that abortions must be legal until birth if a woman's health is at risk. FOCA does not contain a definition of "health," therefore "anything an abortionist says is related to 'health' is sufficient," according to Douglas Johnson, legislative director of the National Right to Life Committee. "A state would not be able to adopt any limiting definition (for example, defining 'health' to exclude emotional distress), because that would be to narrow and infringe on the federally guaranteed right which

> FOCA would establish. The entire purpose of FOCA is to prohibit any narrowing of the federally guaranteed right — for example, by requiring parental notification, or by refusing to fund abortions."

Could it be that the reason that the media is not reporting on this story is because they are trying to protect the President?

Related posts

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Married gay couple face charges of raping their adopted children

April 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The NY Daily News reports on the case, and links to CBS News and the Hartford Courant. (H/T Robert Stacy McCain)

Excerpt:

> The case of a same-sex Connecticut couple accused of repeatedly raping and abusing two of their nine adopted boys is headed for trial.
>
> Married couple George Harasz and Douglas Wirth of Glastonbury were supposed to be sentenced Friday in Hartford Superior Court under a plea deal, but instead withdrew from their agreement with prosecutors. The men had already pleaded no contest in January to one felony count each of risk of injury to a minor — a reduction from even more serious charges related to sexual assault.
>
> […]Harasz and Wirth adopted nine children — three sets of male siblings — beginning in 2000, and ran a home-based dog breeding business called The Puppy Guy.
>
> The couple was arrested in November 2011 following a police and state investigation of sex-abuse allegations. The children were removed from the home.
>
> Police said two boys, ages 5 and 15, accused Harasz of sexually assaulting them. Harasz was initially facing first-degree sexual assault and other charges, while Wirth had been charged with third-degree sexual assault of the 15-year-old boy.
>
> Their arrest warrants claimed the couple not only sexually and physically abused the children, but also forced them to sleep in closets.
>
> […]One of the victims who spoke during the court hearing said sexual assault began when he was 6.
>
> "They took turns raping me over and over," he said.

Now, a lot of these rape accusations turn out to be false, so we don't really know if anyone is guilty until the trial concludes. But I've posted before about other trials that did conclude, so that you know that these things are in fact happening. In fact this case is very similar to the case where the Duke University official was offering his 5-year-old adopted son for sex on the Internet.

Why would a good God allow people to suffer?

April 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just wanted to draw your attention to this 4 page essay by Joe Manzari, which is the best darn summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen. The problem of evil is an objection to the existence of God based on the presence of evil or suffering in the world. The arguments basically infer that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then there should not *be* any evil or suffering.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An example of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omnipotent being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order for the character of humans to develop through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to show* that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that premise 2 is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil that we observe more compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.
   Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life.

And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.

2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   We humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. Part of knowing God is knowing what he designed us to do – to love him and to love others. And so, the less we know about God, the more we stray from his design for our lives.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.
(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That's right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is

just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again. More on this argument for God's existence *from evil* here.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I've been through… but then, that's why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

For more on the problem of evil, listen to this lecture by Douglas Geivett, professor of philosophy at Biola University. Then you *must listen* to this debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (with summary by me). Another debate transcript is here, with William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen. Here's a book debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, published by Oxford University Press, 2004.

William Lane Craig: churches should focus on apologetics to attract more men

April 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Triablogue quoted this passage from William Lane Craig's April newsletter, which made me very excited and happy.

Here it is:

> One overwhelming impression of these engagements is the way in which the intellectual defense of Christian faith attracts men. Both at Texas A&M and again at Miami every single student who got up to ask a question was a guy! I wondered if the girls are just shy. But then I remembered a lengthy clip Jan and I watched of cast members of Downton Abbey doing a Q&A with an audience in New York. Almost every person who came to the microphone at that event was a woman! It wasn't until late into the evening that a man finally asked a question, which was remarked by all the cast members. Why the difference between that session and the ones I experienced?—simply because the Downton Abbey program is highly relational, which is more appealing to women, whereas my talks were principally intellectually oriented, which is more appealing to men.
>
> Churches have difficulty attracting men, and the church is becoming increasingly feminized. I believe that apologetics is a key to attracting large numbers of men (as well as women) to church and to Christ. By presenting rational arguments and historical evidences for the truth of the Gospel, by appealing to the mind as well as the heart, we can bring a great influx of men into the Kingdom. I'm so pleased that the church in Canada seems to be awakening to this challenge! I'm convinced that we have the opportunity to revolutionize Western Christianity by reclaiming our intellectual heritage.

I could tell you many, many stories of what it was like for me being shut down by churches who were overly sensitive to the desires of women. In college, I and the other male students had *every attempt* to bring in scholars to lecture or debate *shut down* by female leadership. Every single week it was prayer walks, testimonies, hymn sings… over and over. Eventually, the more manly Christians just quit going. Later on, I witnessed apologetics being shut down in the church from the top down and from the bottom up, as well.

I remember one week an excited male friend invited me to his church because his male pastor was giving sermons using Hugh Ross and Gerald Shroeder books. He was trying to tie in the existence of God to cosmology. Well, I showed up the next Sunday to hear, and was disappointed. I could tell that the pastor wanted to go back to that subject, but he never really did. Later on, we found out that a female parishioner had complained that too much science and evidence had ruined her experience of feeling good and being

comforted.

I could go on and on and on telling stories like this. To this day, I cannot stand being in a church unless that church has organized things like apologetic training classes, public lectures, public debates or public conferences. But that's the minority of churches. The fact is that churches are attended far more by women than by men, and pastors are catering to women more than men. Not only will apologetics not be mentioned, but elements of feminism will creep into doctrine (egalitarianism) and all political issues will be avoided. Church has become a place to have good feelings, and it is far divorced from anything like evidence or politics which might be viewed as judgmental and divisive.

On Saturday night, ECM (a male deist) and I were talking about the Gosnell scandal, and he was asking me why churches don't mention things like this. And I told him that the feminization of the church means that Christianity can only be cashed out in subjective terms. I told him about the church-attending women I know who are 100% Democrat because it's more "tolerant". And I told him about my difficulties getting the church and campus groups to take up apologetics. Is it any wonder that non-Christian men view Christianity as weak, because we can't even talk about politics and current events in church?

Commenters on Triablogue think that Dr. Craig will draw flak for his comment, but he's not going to draw flak from mature Christians. What he said is correct. Mature Christians are right behind him on this point. Christian men who have tried to act to defend God's reputation in public know that there is something wrong in the churches. And eventually, men just tune out of church because we know that there is nothing there for us. If women want men to come back to church, then they have to change the church away from what it is now.

UPDATE: Lydia read this post and reminded me that pre-suppositionalism is very popular with men and is a kind of fideist approach to Christianity that's nowhere found in the Bible. I totally forgot to mention that. Presuppositionalism, in my experience, is very popular with men. I take a strong view on it, that it's basically fideism, but I have been disagreed with on that by many people. In my mind, the only right way to do apologetics is by addressing presuppositions like naturalism, universalism, pluralism, etc. and using scientific and historical evidence as well. So there is an area where men are working against effective apologetics by embracing an unBiblical approach to apologetics that tries to minimize the use of evidence.

Christian men, be selective when giving attention to women

April 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a thought-provoking post from agnostic libertarian economist Captain Capitalism. Excerpt:

> Of the many lies men will be told from the ages of 12 to…umm….death, one of the more misleading ones (that can trip you up for years unless you learn the deceit behind it) is,
>
> "I don't do X for you! I do it for myself!"
>
> "X" being
>
> dressing up
> make up
> working out
> lingerie
> etc. etc.
>
> […][T]he reason this lie is so tricky is because when a woman says this, it is a half-truth.
>
> While she is NOT dressing up for you, she IS dressing up for somebody else. And that somebody else certainly is NOT her (at least in a direct sense).
>
> Again, we revisit the realm where economics and sexuality meet. Women are (primarily) driven by attention. Attention from who? Attention from anybody.
>
> Oh, go ahead and threaten me with your Adria Richard's hallow threats, I'm sorry dearies, I have nothing left to lose. Besides, this is a fact and is truth. And if you don't like that…well, then maybe you really don't like being treated as an equal and perhaps like every other guy I could continue lying to your face to spare your precious little feelings. But I'm sorry, I'm not a sexist. I believe in the equality of the sexes so you'll APPRECIATE me treating you as a GENUINE equal and never daring to lie to you as that would be degrading.
>
> Anyway, women crave attention. And the primary way (before social media) they can get that is by simply dressing the part. This is why in large part you can be at a bar/club, see a group of girls LITERALLY dressed as ladies of the evening, approach them and get your butt shot down. They REALLY weren't dressing that way for you, just as they technically weren't dressing that way for themselves. They were merely dressing that way to get your attention and the attention of others. And should a supreme specimen of man (professional athlete, celebrity, obvious rich man) approach them, that is also why they dressed that way or went to the gym.
>
> In other words, don't be a fool on either end of this half-lie, half truth. She really

> isn't doing it for you. And, yes, in a roundabout way she is doing it for herself. But she is ultimately doing it to garner the attention of other people, both men and women.

So this caused me to think a little, because it echoes what Dina explained to me just a few months back, and Mariangela verified it as well. (My knowledge of women is mostly theoretical, so some of these obvious things have escaped me). Anyway, they basically agreed with the Captain's assessment, that many of the things that women do are to get attention. This is fine. The point of this post is not to pick on women, but to warn men. And so here's the warning for Christian men.

Christian Men: Like everything in life, God asserts sovereignty over your choices with women. One of those choices is who you pay attention to, and why. Whenever you pay attention to a woman, you are in some way validating her choices, beliefs and lifestyle. Therefore, you need to be careful to choose women who deserve attention for the right reasons. You need to pass on women who show a lot of skin to people they hardly know. You need to pass on women who are known to use sex to get attention from men easily, without having to listen to his values. You need to pass on women who won't read things that men care about, like apologetics, economics, etc.

Whenever I get distracted by a woman who is trying to get attention from me without wanting to listen or be led by me, I ask myself questions about her and her motives.

I ask:

- Has this women ever borrowed a lecture or a debate form me?
- Has this woman ever read a book that I asked her to read?
- Does this woman let me talk if I bring up religion or politics?
- Is this woman pro-life, and pro-marriage?
- Is this woman grieved by big government socialism?
- Is this woman pro-child, and anti-feminism?

And so on. Now if you are a woman reading this, you might think "why do you have to do that? Obviously they haven't, so why pay attention to them? I've done all that good stuff, so pay attention to me!". But it's not that simple for a man, not even a virgin like me. About 99% of the time, I don't have to go through this process. But there are some days…. you could call it my time of the month… where suddenly blubbering out how great this woman looks to her seems *rational*. And I don't want to do that. I would rather get on my e-mail or Facebook and encourage a Christian woman who is actually doing the right things. I don't want to be encouraging other women who are trying to cheat their way to attention without letting me express my faith, talk about politics, and so on. If I can't lead you to learn about God so that you can serve God, then you shouldn't get attention from me. One of the most helpful things I ever learned was from a young lady who had a sexual past, who flat out told me that she used sex in order to pacify and control men so that they would continue to give her attention no matter how much of a witch she was to them. That helped me to understand why I have to be selective with

who I am going to endorse with my attention.

I think that men need to recognize that just as women who embrace feminism are responsible for wrecking men with all of this hooking-up, high tax rates, gun control, no-fault divorce, etc., that men are wrecking women by rewarding them with attention for the wrong reasons. If you want to fix women, the easiest thing to start with is to favor the good ones – the ones who listen to you, the ones who study hard things, the ones who want to serve God. Avert your eyes from the flirty ones. Don't talk to them. Consciously prefer the best, most moral, most hard-working, women. That's going to communicate the right message to women, and give them an incentive to value the right feminine qualities.

Christian men, if you are single, why not just take a minute now to go to the book store and buy a good apologetics or economics book and some white flowers for the Christian woman you know who does the most good for God? That would be a start. I recommend "Is God Just a Human Invention?" and three white carnations, some baby's breath and some greenery. They are not too expensive and they last a long time. If you get her that book, tell her about Brian Auten's read-along, which just started again. We all have to do the best we can to fix male-female relations. Women, and men. The solution to the problem of women being bad is not for men to be bad, too. It's for men to be selective.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Support for my view of courting from… Jane Austen?!!

April 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I get into a lot of trouble because I have this loooong list of questions that I pose to women during courtship in order to evaluate them for marriage, and to let them know how I want them to prepare for my plan for the marriage. Basically, my view of courting is that it is the time for the man to present his plan to serve God as a married couple, and where he wants to be effective, and how he wants to be effective, and where the woman fits into to his plan. The purpose of the pre-marriage courting is for me to explain all of this, and then the woman has the opportunity to first decide if she wants to help with that plan and then demonstrate that she can help with it. My job after laying out the plan is to make sure that she has all the tools she needs and lots of affection and tenderness, too. I am auditioning for the roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. And she is auditioning for the roles of helper, motivator and nurturer.

Anyway, all of that is evil, if you ask any non-Christians and Christians today. The ladies in my workplace are always telling me that I am "too strict" and that I need to "lower my standards". What they mean by this is that they resent me taking on the role of leader in the relationship and telling them what marriage to me will be about and what they need to be able to do to help. And they especially resent having to prove that they can do it. Men they've known in the past have been pacified with some earnest words of agreement, and maybe some hugs and kisses. But that doesn't work on me. I want books to be read, and actions to be performed.

For example, I want public speeches defending marriage, presentations on abortion in church, apologetics book clubs, apologetics conference organizing, apologetics lectures and debates in the local university, economics degrees, law school degrees, and pro-family conservative political views. (These are all the things my current favorite lady and her predecessors have done / are doing). In short, if I am coming to the table with lots of evidence that I can do my roles, then I want to see evidence that she can do her roles. I call this view of courtship the wisdom view, and the popular alternative to it I call the fairy tale view.

The funniest thing is that right now I am working together with a woman who is very very high up in her profession. Manages dozens of people, has her own receptionist, wins lots of awards. Her job is incredibly stressful. But the funniest thing is that she is actually the easiest one of all to lead. And that's because she is a good listener and she reads a ton of books and then independently designs and executes operations designed to move the ball forward on the things that I care about. She thinks my vision for serving God is good, and she knows how to get the job done, without being micromanaged. Here is a close-up of some flowers that I sent her recently to recognize her. She is also the least attention seeking female of the ones I know. She doesn't want public recognition for what she does.

And with that said, let's take a look at a quote about my favorite British author, Jane Austen, courtesy of Reformed Seth's blog:

> [Austen] was committed to the ideal of "intelligent love," according to which the deepest and truest relationship that can exist between human beings is **pedagogic**. This relationship consists in the giving and receiving of knowledge about right conduct, in the formation of one person's character by another, the acceptance of another's guidance in one's growth. The idea of a love based in pedagogy may seem quaint to some modern readers and repellent to others, but unquestionably it plays a decisive part in the power and charm of Jane Austen's art. And if we attempt to explain the power and charm that the genre of the novel exercised in the nineteenth century, we must take full account of its pedagogic intention and of such love as a reader might feel was being directed towards him in the solicitude of the novel for *his* moral well-being, in its concern for the right course of his development.
>
> – Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 82.

There! I'm vindicated by someone who ought to know how these things work. When I was a young man, I read everything I could get my hands on from Jane Austen and the Bronte sisters. It's nice to know that I wasn't misinterpreting what they were telling me, and that I've applied it well. Just because it's not "cool" today, doesn't mean it's not right.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

New NOAA report: 2012 summer drought NOT caused by global warming

April 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Last year's huge drought was a freak of nature that wasn't caused by man-made global warming, a new federal science study finds.
>
> Scientists say the lack of moisture usually pushed up from the Gulf of Mexico was the main reason for the drought in the nation's midsection.
>
> Thursday's report by dozens of scientists from five different federal agencies looked into why forecasters didn't see the drought coming. The researchers concluded that it was so unusual and unpredictable that it couldn't have been forecast.
>
> "This is one of those events that comes along once every couple hundreds of years," said lead author Martin Hoerling, a research meteorologist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "Climate change was not a significant part, if any, of the event."
>
> […]Other scientists have linked recent changes in the jet stream to shrinking Arctic sea ice, but Hoerling and study co-author Richard Seager of Columbia University said those global warming connections are not valid.
>
> Hoerling used computer simulations to see if he could replicate the drought using man-made global warming conditions. He couldn't. So that means it was a random event, he said.

I have an idea. Let's not give away millions of dollars in taxpayer money to crony corporations to solve a problem that doesn't even exist. And let's not tax, regulate or otherwise block energy development here at home. We need the jobs here.

William Lane Craig asks: are there objective truths about God?

April 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a lecture entitled “Are there Objective Truths About God?”, philosopher William Lane Craig responds to the nasty reactions you get from postmoderns when you claim that your religion is true, and that other religions are false. See, we think that there are objective truths about God – that there are some propositions that describe the way God is, and that people who don’t believe in them are factually mistaken. But some people want to say that every statement about God is subjective – true for each person – so that conflicting claims are fine and no one is wrong, because everyone is just describing their own preferences. Unfortunately, Christianity claims to be true for everyone – (e.g. – God is three persons and one being), so that Christians are committed to defending the idea that there are objective truths about God.

Here’s the link to a page containing the lecture audio. (H/T Be Thinking)

The MP3 file is here.

So what questions does Bill answer in the lecture?

What is a self-refuting statement?

The main concept in the lecture is self-refutation. A self-refuting sentence is a sentence that, if true, makes itself false or meaningless. For example, suppose someone said to you: “there are no sentences longer than 5 words” then that would be self-refuting since it falsifies itself. Bill argues that objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God are all self-refuting.

What is truth?

Craig holds that “truth” is a property of a proposition such that a proposition is true if it corresponds to the external world. For example, if I claim that there is a crocodile in your closet and we find a crocodile in your closet, then my statement was true. If there is no crocodile in your closet then my statement was false. The real objective world out there is what makes propositional claims true or false – these are not claims about an individual’s preferences, they are claims about the world. Bill is concerned with truth claims about God that are objective – whether there are propositions about God that are true regardless of what anyone thinks.

Are there objective truths about God?

Bill discusses 3 objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God. Each objection seeks to make religion subjective, (true for each person, like food preferences or clothing fashion).

Objection #1:The Challenge of Verificationism

The first challenge is that religious claims cannot be verified using the 5 senses, and therefore religious statements are objectively meaningless.

Consider the statement “Only propositions that can be verified with the 5 senses are meaningful”. That statement cannot be verified with the 5 senses. If the statement is true, it makes itself meaningless. It’s self-refuting.

Objection #2: The Challenge of Mystical Anti-Realism

The second challenge is that religious claims, and claims about God, are neither true nor false.

Consider the statement “Propositions about God cannot be true or false”. Craig asks – why should we accept that? Any reason given would have to assert something about God that is true or false, and those reasons would contradict the original statement. For example, “God is too great to be grasped by human categories of thought” is a proposition about God that the speaker thinks is true, which contradicts the original assertion.

Objection #3: The Challenge of Radical Pluralism

The third challenge is that each person invents an entire reality of their own, and that there is no mind-independent objective world shared by individuals.

Consider the statement “There is no objective reality shared by all individuals”. That statement is a statement that applies to all individuals, regardless of what they think. It’s self-refuting.

Conclusion

Craig ends the lecture by arguing that it is OK for Christians to think that other people’s views are false. It does not follow that just because someone thinks other people’s views are wrong that they am going to mistreat other people. In fact, in Christianity it is objectively true that it is good for Christians to love their enemies. It is objectively true that all human beings have value, because human beings are made by God. So even if Christians disagree with others, they still treat them well, because they think that there are moral truths that they have to conform to.

My thoughts

Sometimes, non-Christians think that it is dangerous to hold beliefs too strongly. But I think what really matters is the content of the belief – some beliefs are false and some are true – you want to believe the true beliefs as strongly as you can, as long as the evidence warrants it. In Christianity, I am absolutely obligated to treat people with whom I disagree with respect and gentleness (1 Pet 3:15-16). The more convinced I am about *that* belief, the *better* my opponents will be treated. A *stronger* belief in Christianity means *more* tolerance for those who disagree.

Why do non-Christians get so offended when Christians claim to be right about there being only one way to be rightly related to God? Well, for many it’s because their worldview is a personal preference, and they feel uncomfortable having to defend it rationally and evidentially – which is what Christians do that makes us so different from everyone else. For most people, religion is just their cultural preference – like cooking style, or favorite sport, or clothing style. That’s why they respond to your truth claims

with name-calling like “you’re intolerant” and “you’re judgemental” and “you’re arrogant”. These are just shorthand ways of saying, “I’m offended that you’ve thought things through more than I have, and that your careful arguments and evidence make the blind faith that I was raised in look bad – so I’ll just call you a name rather than do any thinking about what you’re saying”.

This happens a lot with insecure people who are raised to think that their religion is a racial, national or cultural identity. They haven’t thought anything through, or considered any alternatives, and they think that if you tell them they are wrong *on matters of fact* that somehow this amounts to some sort of racism or prejudice. You make factual claims, and they hear discrimination. But that’s not how Christians think of religion – we only care if it’s true or not – just like we care whether the claims of history or science are true or not. For many non-Christians, religion is not about truth at all but about personal preferences – and they cannot understand why Christians say that they have to go to Hell for having the wrong personal preferences. You have to *tell them* that religion is about truth. Then they understand why you are disagreeing with them and you can have a conversation about what is true.

For further study

A debate between a Christian and a postmodern, featuring Christian scholar Peter Williams and a very strange liberal person. This audio really makes it clear why people are opposed to objective truth claims about religion. Williams’ opponent is the epitome of postmodern relativist irrational universalism.

Brian Auten interviews Dr. Angus Menuge on philosophy of mind

April 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Click here for the interview. It's up at Apologetics 315!

Details:

> Today's interview is with Dr. Angus Menuge, Professor of Philosophy at Concordia University, and author of *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science*. He talks about his background and work, the philosophy of mind, what reason (or reasoning) is, what materialism is as a worldview, things excluded from a materialistic worldview, methodological naturalism and materialism, accounting for free will, materialistic accounts of reason, the epistemological argument from reason, the ontological argument from reason, finding the best explanation for reason, problems with methodological naturalism, implications of materialism, practical application of the argument from reason, advice for apologists, the International Academy of Apologetics, and more.

If what Dr. Menuge says in this interview is true, and I think it is, then a person who believes in materialism can neither ground free will nor rationality! So atheism wouldn't really be freethought so much as it would be… un-free… non-thought.

In case people don't want to listen to the podcast, then I've got some things for you to read below.

The ontological argument from reason

Dr. Menuge presented a paper at the real Evangelical Philosophical Society conference for students and professors of philosophy, and you can download the paper here in Word format. (here's a PDF version I made)

Here is the introduction to the paper that Dr. Menuge read at the EPS conference:

> The argument from reason is really a family of arguments to show that reasoning is incompatible with naturalism. Here, naturalism is understood as the idea that foundationally, there are only physical objects, properties and relations, and anything else reduces to, supervenes on, or emerges from that. For our purposes, one of the most important claims of naturalism is that all causation is passive, automatic, event causation (an earthquake automatically causes a tidal wave; the tidal wave responds passively): there are no agent causes, where something does not happen automatically but only because the agent exerts his active power by choosing to do it. The most famous version of the argument from reason is *epistemological*: if naturalism were true, we could not be justified in believing it. Today, I want to focus on the *ontological* argument from reason, which asserts that there cannot be reasoning in a naturalistic world, because

> reasoning requires libertarian free will, and this in turn requires a unified, enduring self with active power.
>
> The two most promising ways out of this argument are: (1) Compatibilism—even in a deterministic, naturalistic world, humans are capable of free acts of reason if their minds are responsive to rational causes; (2) Libertarian Naturalism—a self with libertarian free will emerges from the brain. I argue that neither of these moves works, and so, unless someone has a better idea, the ontological argument from reason stands.

The paper is 11 pages long, and it is helpful for those of you looking for some good discussion of one of the issues in the area of philosophy of mind.

You may also be interested in Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason, which is related to this argument. It shows that even to have the ability to think, you have to have a certain anthropology and you have to have mental faculties that are designed for reason, not survival.

Methodological naturalism

Dr. Menuge also wrote an article entitled "Is methodological materialism good for science?".

Intro:

> Should science by governed by methodological materialism? That is, should scientists assume that only undirected causes can figure in their theories and explanations? If the answer to these questions is yes, then there can be no such thing as teleological science or intelligent design. But is methodological materialism a defensible approach to science, or might it prevent scientists from discovering important truths about the natural world? In my contribution to The Waning of Materialism (Oxford University Press, 2010), edited by Robert Koons and George Bealer, I consider twelve of the most common arguments in favor of methodological materialism and show that none of them is convincing.
>
> Of these arguments, perhaps the most prevalent is the "God of the gaps" charge, according to which invoking something other than a material cause is an argument from ignorance which, like a bad script writer, cites a *deus ex machina* to save our account from difficulty. Not only materialists, but also many Christian thinkers, like Francis Collins, worry that appeal to intelligent design commits the God of the gaps fallacy.
>
> As I argue, however, not only is an inference to an intelligent cause not the same as an inference to the supernatural, it is a mistake to assume that all gap arguments are bad, or that only theists make them. If a gap argument is based solely on ignorance of what might explain some phenomenon, then indeed it is a bad argument. But there are many good gap arguments which are made both by scientific materialists and proponents of intelligent design.

So how do you make an argument like that?

> As Stephen Meyer has argued in his *Signature in the Cell*, intelligent design argues in just the same way, claiming not merely that the material categories of chance and necessity (singly or in combination) are unable to explain the complex specified information in DNA, but also that in our experience, intelligent agents are the only known causes of such information. The argument is based on what we know about causal powers, not on what we do not know about them.
>
> Since the inference is based on known causal powers, we learn that the cause is intelligent, but only further assumptions or data can tell us whether that intelligence is immanent in nature or supernatural. It is a serious mistake to confuse intelligent design with theistic science, and the argument that since some proponents of design believe that the designer is God, that is what they are claiming can be inferred from the data, is a sophomoric intensional fallacy.

If you think this is interesting, then do have a listen to the podcast. Dr. Menuge is not an ordinary academic – he is very direct. He calls materialism “a catastrophe” in the podcast! Not a shrinking violet.

Pro-infanticide Barack Obama has no comment on Kermit Gosnell trial

April 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> White House spokesman Jay Carney today said President Barack Obama has no comment on the murder trial involving late-term abortion practitioner Kermit Gosnell.
>
> A reporter asked: "There is a murder trial in Pennsylvania, that I know you now is getting a lot of attention — more attention that the media was not getting on it — Kermit Gosnell, this doctor who is accused of having delivering some babies who were literally screaming and then beheading them. He's facing murder charges on that and it hasn't been decided yet obviously, since he's still on trial. Is the president following this at all, does the White House have any reaction to that kind of situation?
>
> "The president is aware of it. The president does not and cannot take a position on an ongoing trial, so I won't as well," Carney said.

Life Site News has an idea about why Obama isn't going to take sides like he did with the Trayvon Martin case.

Excerpt:

> Of course the White House wants to avoid this topic. What a disaster Gosnell is for Obama.
>
> Gosnell first brings to Obama's door the uncomfortable topic of infanticide. Obama is well known to have voted four times against the **Illinois Born Alive Infants Protection Act**as state senator, which sought to protect abortion survivors.
>
> But Obama also opposed two companion bills to BAIPA, one of which brings him zero degrees of separation from Gosnell.

If convicted, we'll know that Gosnell was only acting out what Obama believes. And that's why the media tried to hush this up. They know.

Report: biofuels raise the cost of gas for little environmental benefit

April 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal BBC.

Excerpt:

> A report by Chatham House says the growing reliance on sustainable liquid fuels will also increase food prices.
>
> The author says that biodiesel made from vegetable oil was worse for the climate than fossil fuels.
>
> Under EU law, biofuels are set to make up 5% of the UK's transport fuel from today.
>
> Since 2008, the UK has required fuel suppliers to add a growing proportion of sustainable materials into the petrol and diesel they supply. These biofuels are mainly ethanol distilled from corn and biodiesel made from rapeseed, used cooking oil and tallow.
>
> But research carried out for Chatham House says that reaching the 5% level means that UK motorists will have to pay an extra £460m a year because of the higher cost of fuel at the pump and from filling up more often as biofuels have a lower energy content.
>
> The report say that if the UK is to meet its obligations to EU energy targets the cost to motorists is likely to rise to £1.3bn per annum by 2020.
>
> […]There are also worries that taking EU land out of production to grow rapeseed oil in particular is creating more climate problems than it solves. The more fuel of this type that is put into cars the bigger the deficit created in the edible oils market. This had lead to increased imports of palm oil from Indonesia, often produced on deforested land.
>
> "Once you take into account these indirect effects, biofuels made from vegetable oils actually result worldwide in more emissions than you would get from using diesel in the first place," said Rob Bailey.
>
> "Plus you are asking motorists to pay more for the fuel – it makes no sense, it is a completely irrational strategy."

Meanwhile, closer to home:

> The Obama administration on Monday renewed an interagency agreement that backs the development of biofuels for the aviation industry and reiterated its support for embattled federal renewable fuel targets.
>
> U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood

> signed a pact extending a program that has worked with the private sector and rural communities to create an alternative to fossil fuels for aviation.
>
> “We want to re-affirm the importance of this particular industry in this administration,” Vilsack told reporters at an industry conference in Washington.
>
> The “Farm to Fly” program aims to support annual production of 1 billion gallons of aviation biofuels by 2018.
>
> The program will focus on evaluating various sources of renewable alternatives to jet fuel, while also developing state and local partnerships with private companies.
>
> Federal support for biofuels has come under increased scrutiny amid complaints from livestock producers and refiners that the federal biofuels mandate has contributed to higher food prices and could threaten gasoline supplies.

This isn’t a smart way to improve air quality, and it’s not going to help consumers who are already paying a ton of money for gas.

Do Christian apologists need to know how to defend chastity and marriage?

April 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rod Dreher, not one of my favorite people, writes about it in the American Conservative. (H/T Dalrock)

He writes:

> Though he might not have put it quite that way, the eminent sociologist Philip Rieff would probably have said yes. Rieff's landmark 1966 book *The Triumph Of the Therapeutic* analyzes what he calls the "deconversion" of the West from Christianity. Nearly everyone recognizes that this process has been underway since the Enlightenment, but Rieff showed that it had reached a more advanced stage than most people—least of all Christians—recognized.
>
> Rieff, who died in 2006, was an unbeliever, but he understood that religion is the key to understanding any culture. For Rieff, the essence of any and every culture can be identified by what it forbids. Each imposes a series of moral demands on its members, for the sake of serving communal purposes, and helps them cope with these demands. A culture requires a *cultus*—a sense of sacred order, a cosmology that roots these moral demands within a metaphysical framework.
>
> You don't behave this way and not that way because it's good for you; you do so because this moral vision is encoded in the nature of reality. This is the basis of natural-law theory, which has been at the heart of contemporary secular arguments against same-sex marriage (and which have persuaded no one).
>
> Rieff, writing in the 1960s, identified the sexual revolution—though he did not use that term—as a leading indicator of Christianity's death as a culturally determinative force. In classical Christian culture, he wrote, "the rejection of sexual individualism" was "very near the center of the symbolic that has not held." He meant that renouncing the sexual autonomy and sensuality of pagan culture was at the core of Christian culture—a culture that, crucially, did not merely renounce but redirected the erotic instinct. That the West was rapidly re-paganizing around sensuality and sexual liberation was a powerful sign of Christianity's demise.
>
> […]As philosopher Charles Taylor writes in his magisterial religious and cultural history *A Secular Age*, "The entire ethical stance of moderns supposes and follows on from the death of God (and of course, of the meaningful cosmos)." To be modern is to believe in one's individual desires as the locus of authority and self-definition.
>
> Gradually the West lost the sense that Christianity had much to do with civilizational order, Taylor writes. In the 20th century, casting off restrictive

> Christian ideals about sexuality became increasingly identified with health. By the 1960s, the conviction that sexual expression was healthy and good—the more of it, the better—and that sexual desire was intrinsic to one's personal identity culminated in the sexual revolution, the animating spirit of which held that freedom and authenticity were to be found not in sexual withholding (the Christian view) but in sexual expression and assertion. That is how the modern American claims his freedom.
>
> To Rieff, ours is a particular kind of "revolutionary epoch" because the revolution cannot by its nature be institutionalized. Because it denies the possibility of communal knowledge of binding truths transcending the individual, the revolution cannot establish a stable social order. As Rieff characterizes it, "The answer to all questions of 'what for' is 'more'."
>
> Our post-Christian culture, then, is an "anti-culture." We are compelled by the logic of modernity and the myth of individual freedom to continue tearing away the last vestiges of the old order, convinced that true happiness and harmony will be ours once all limits have been nullified.
>
> Gay marriage signifies the final triumph of the Sexual Revolution and the dethroning of Christianity because it denies the core concept of Christian anthropology. In classical Christian teaching, the divinely sanctioned union of male and female is an icon of the relationship of Christ to His church and ultimately of God to His creation. This is why gay marriage negates Christian cosmology, from which we derive our modern concept of human rights and other fundamental goods of modernity. Whether we can keep them in the post-Christian epoch remains to be seen.
>
> It also remains to be seen whether we can keep Christianity without accepting Christian chastity.

One of the reasons why I write so much about chastity and dating and courting on this blog is to try to convince people that it is necessary to have a rigorous, grounded understanding of the practical execution of chastity and marriage. See, a lot of apologists have tunnel vision. They want to focus on apologetics, especially on philosophy, without talking about sexual morality, politics, current events, and other things that *will affect* whether a person is open to Christianity or not. Like it or not, Christianity has regulations on sexual behavior, and we have to be able and willing to defend those regulations.

I am not opposed to basic Christian apologetics on God's existence and Christ's resurrection, but I recognize that people who are too deeply compromised by unbounded sexual appetites are not going to be open to a genuine Christian re-prioritizing following conversion. I am not saying that we need to stop talking about the problem of evil and the women discovering the empty tomb and the fine-tuning of the cosmological constant. I am saying that we need to add onto all of that good stuff an understanding of public policy and ideology. We need to promote, in the culture, lifestyles and moral rules that are going to make it easier for a person to become a Christian. And that means studying

to be persuasive on things like premarital sex, cohabitation, no-fault divorce, same-sex marriage, and so on.

I think a very important thing that Christians need to be able to do is to explain and demonstrate that chastity empowers an individual to love others in a way that is not available to them if they are sexually active with that person before marriage. See the papers below for more.

Related posts

- New study: delaying sexual activity produces improves relationship quality and stability
- New study: staying a virgin longer enables more satisfying relationships
- Study explains why college women abandon courtship for hook-ups
- New study: relationship quality diminished by early sexual activity, especially for women
- New study: marriage drops probability of child poverty by 82%
- New study finds that Christians who regularly attend church divorce less
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Study: 80% of single evangelicals aged 18-29 are no longer virigins
- For women under 30, most births occur outside of marriage
- In the UK welfare state, single motherhood is passed from mother to daughter
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- How more compassion and less moral judgments increases teen pregnancy
- New survey finds women more sexually active than men in high school
- Why do feminist academics think that feminism has empowered women?
- Who is responsible for the abolition of marriage? Men or feminists?
- Who is to blame for the hook-up culture?
- How the feminist welfare state causes generations of fatherlessness
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think that marriage precedes child-bearing

In just two years, nine abortion clinics in Michigan have closed

April 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news from Life News.

Excerpt:

> The ninth abortion clinic has closed in the state of Michigan in the last two years — and the sixth abortion business has closed in the state since just seven months ago.
>
> That's the good news the pro-life group Citizens for a Pro-Life Society relayed to LifeNews today in announcing the American Family Planning abortion center, , owned and operated by 73-year-old Korean-born abortion practitioner Noon-Nahm Ann for over 20 years, has permanently closed.
>
> […] "The closing of AFP marks the 6th abortion center to close its doors in Michigan since last September 2012 and the 9th abortion center to close, or be kept from opening in Michigan in the last 18 months! In addition, the retirement of Ann means that 3 major Michigan abortionists have retired this year—namely the notorious Alberto Hodari, as well as Enrique Gerbi."
>
> It may be possible to add a 4th abortionist who appears to have left the abortion practice, Robert Alexander. The group made a call to him four weeks ago and he confirmed that he was no longer doing abortions. At one time Alexander owned four abortion clinics in Michigan but his last clinic was shut down last December 2012 by order of the Muskegon fire marshal due to unsafe and unsanitary conditions.

Michigan is pro-life!

Feminist lawyer’s son falsely charged by university kangaroo court

April 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal. (H/T Stuart Schneiderman)

It starts like this:

> I am a feminist. I have marched at the barricades, subscribed to Ms. magazine, and knocked on many a door in support of progressive candidates committed to women’s rights. Until a month ago, I would have expressed unqualified support for Title IX and for the Violence Against Women Act.
>
> But that was before my son, a senior at a small liberal-arts college in New England, was charged—by an ex-girlfriend—with alleged acts of “nonconsensual sex” that supposedly occurred during the course of their relationship a few years earlier.
>
> What followed was a nightmare—a fall through Alice’s looking-glass into a world that I could not possibly have believed existed, least of all behind the ivy-covered walls thought to protect an ostensible dedication to enlightenment and intellectual betterment.
>
> It began with a text of desperation. “CALL ME. URGENT. NOW.”
>
> That was how my son informed me that not only had charges been brought against him but that he was ordered to appear to answer these allegations in a matter of days. There was no preliminary inquiry on the part of anyone at the school into these accusations about behavior alleged to have taken place a few years earlier, no consideration of the possibility that jealousy or revenge might be motivating a spurned young ex-lover to lash out. Worst of all, my son would not be afforded a presumption of innocence.
>
> In fact, Title IX, that so-called guarantor of equality between the sexes on college campuses, and as applied by a recent directive from the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, has obliterated the presumption of innocence that is so foundational to our traditions of justice. On today’s college campuses, neither “beyond a reasonable doubt,” nor even the lesser “by clear and convincing evidence” standard of proof is required to establish guilt of sexual misconduct.
>
> These safeguards of due process have, by order of the federal government, been replaced by what is known as “a preponderance of the evidence.” What this means, in plain English, is that all my son’s accuser needed to establish before a campus tribunal is that the allegations were “more likely than not” to have occurred by a margin of proof that can be as slim as 50.1% to 49.9%.
>
> How does this campus tribunal proceed to evaluate the accusations? Upon what

> evidence is it able to make a judgment?
>
> The frightening answer is that like the proverbial 800-pound gorilla, the tribunal does pretty much whatever it wants, showing scant regard for fundamental fairness, due process of law, and the well-established rules and procedures that have evolved under the Constitution for citizens' protection. Who knew that American college students are required to surrender the Bill of Rights at the campus gates?
>
> My son was given written notice of the charges against him, in the form of a letter from the campus Title IX officer. But instead of affording him the right to be fully informed, the separately listed allegations were a barrage of vague statements, rendering any defense virtually impossible. The letter lacked even the most basic information about the acts alleged to have happened years before. Nor were the allegations supported by any evidence other than the word of the ex-girlfriend.
>
> The hearing itself was a two-hour ordeal of unabated grilling by the school's committee, during which, my son later reported, he was expressly denied his request to be represented by counsel or even to have an attorney outside the door of the room. The questioning, he said, ran far afield even from the vaguely stated allegations contained in the so-called notice. Questions from the distant past, even about unrelated matters, were flung at him with no opportunity for him to give thoughtful answers.
>
> The many pages of written documentation that my son had put together—which were directly on point about his relationship with his accuser during the time period of his alleged wrongful conduct—were dismissed as somehow not relevant. What was relevant, however, according to the committee, was the unsworn testimony of "witnesses" deemed to have observable knowledge about the long-ago relationship between my son and his accuser.
>
> That the recollections of these young people (made under intense peer pressure and with none of the safeguards consistent with fundamental fairness) were relevant—while records of the accuser's email and social media postings were not—made a mockery of the very term. While my son was instructed by the committee not to "discuss this matter" with any potential witnesses, these witnesses against him were not identified to him, nor was he allowed to confront or question either them or his accuser.

This reminds of exactly what Ari wrote about in his novel "Bias Incident".

Dr. Schneiderman adds his comments:

> The process rests on a sad irony. Many years ago feminists decided strong, independent liberated women do not need to be protected by men. Not by their fathers, not by their brothers, not by their husbands.
>
> As a matter of fact, a gentleman who offered a small courteous gestures of

> respect was routinely denounced by feminists as a gross insult. He was treating a woman as a member of the weaker sex.
>
> If a man opened a door for a woman, he was called a sexist for assuming that the woman could not open the door herself.
>
> The feminist message was clear: modern women can take care of themselves.
>
> Well, not exactly. Since men are predators, prone to abuse and molest strong, independent women, these women need an extra level of protection: they need to have an extra-judicial procedure that can inflict serious punishment on any male who would see fit to ill-treat them.
>
> No one needs to worry that women might abuse the privilege by bringing unfounded charges against certain men. No, it can't happen. Women always tell the truth.
>
> Apparently, the problem of violence against women is so bad that the criminal justice system cannot deal with it. It is so out-of-control that the civil justice system cannot do the job.

That's the real problem: *feminism*.

When you have a group of feminists who set out to destroy the traditional gender roles of men, and who criminalize the traditional virtues of men, then you should NOT be surprised that government has to grow to fill the void. They told women that chastity was out, and chivalry was out. Traditional male roles of protector, provider, and moral/spiritual leader are out. What kind of men do women choose if they want to avoid all of those traditional male virtues? Bad men. And when bad men aren't doing what the feminists want, they resort to big government to coerce and punish them. Every other man looking on to this situation is going to be reinforced not to pursue relationships with women, out of fear that they could be hit with false accusations for upsetting her – even if he hasn't done anything at all!

Eventually, men will just opt out of all contact with women in order to have their freedom to say and do what they feel like. I will look forward to the day when feminists spent the last 40 years of their lives alone in their apartments, talking to their cats. What man in his right mind would want anything to do with these nutcases and their weird ideology?

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalistic alternatives to the Big Bang

April 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture, which was given in 2004 at the University of Colorado, Boulder. A very liberal university!

This lecture is suitable for intermediate and advanced Christian apologists.

The description of the video states:

> This is quite simply one of the best lectures William Lane Craig (a philosopher of science) has given. Craig explores the origins of the universe. He argues for a beginning of the universe, while refuting scientific models like the Steady State Theory, the Oscillating Theory, Quantum Vacuum Fluctuation Model, Chaotic Inflationary Theory, Quantum Gravity Theory, String Theory, M-Theory and Cyclic Ekpyrotic Theory.

And here is the description of the lecture from Reasonable Faith:

> A Templeton Foundation lecture at the University of Colorado, Boulder, laying out the case from contemporary cosmology for the beginning of the universe and its theological implications. Includes a lengthy Q & A period which features previous critics and debate opponents of Dr. Craig who were in attendance, including Michael Tooley, Victor Stenger, and Arnold Guminski.

Craig has previously debated Stenger and Tooley previously. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A time of this lecture. Imagine – having laid out your entire case to two people who have debated you before and who know your arguments well. What did they ask Craig, and how did he respond?

This lecture is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The whole research paper that the lecture is based on is posted online.

Chris Sinkinson debates John Hick on exclusivism and pluralism in religion

April 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Looks like Justin Brierley on the Unbelievable radio show found a pastor with a Ph.D in philosophy, and he can really whip some ass.

The players:

> John Hick is a noted philosopher and theologian who is a proponent of a pluralist view of religion – that there is one light (God) but many lampshades (religious expressions).
>
> Chris Sinkinson is a pastor and Bible tutor who has critiqued Hick's work. He says that pluralism empties Christianity of any content and in its own way disrespects other religions more than his own exclusivist stance.

The MP3 file is here.

Justin does a great job as moderator of this debate. He said what I was thinking of saying a number of times during the debate.

Anyway, here is my snarky summary. I creatively paraphrase some of the things that Hick says to make it more clear. And funny.

—-

Hick:
– had an experience looking at the buildings of other religions
– other religions have buildings, so all religions are equal
– I spent some time in the East, and met nice Eastern people
– since Eastern people are nice that means all religions are equal

Justin:
– isn't Jesus' claim to be the exclusive path to salvation offensive?

Sinkinson:
– all religions that are exclusive and have to deal with religious pluralism
– even John Hick writes polemically in favor of his own view
– even John Hick thinks that religions that are exclusive are false

Justin:
– what about the blind man and the elephant?
– the story seems to say that other people have a partial grasp?
– but the story-teller himself has the privileged view
– so isn't the religious pluralist just as arrogant as exclusivists?

Hick:
– well, it's not arrogant to claim to have the right answer
– Jesus never made the claim to be God incarnate

– Jesus never made the claim to be the exclusive path to God
– historians don't think that John's gospel is reliable because it is late
– the proclamation of exclusivity was added by evangelists much later

Sinkinson:
– the historians who doubt the high Christology are radical skeptics
– the mainstream of historical scholarship accepts a high Christology
– the EARLIEST history about Jesus has the highest Christology

Hick:
– the moderate scholars do think Jesus was divine but that he didn't think he was divine
– the phrase "Son of God" was used to describe any remarkable person
– only later did the early church turn the generic term into "God the Son"

Sinkinson:
– there is reflection on Jesus' identity and developments, but not invention
– Jesus and his followers were in trouble precisely for linking him to deity
– why else would Jesus get into trouble and get crucified?

Hick:
– the Romans crucified him because people were saying he was the Messiah
– but the Messiah was not identified as being divine, but political
– and that's why the Romans crucified him

Justin:
– do you (Sinkinson) think that people in other religions can be saved?

Sinkinson:
– the traditional view is exclusivism
– the other world religions are logically contradictory with Christianity
– you have to respect their differences – they are not the same as Christianity
– exclusivists allow that people can be saved by responding to natural theology
– and there are also other cases where non-Christians are saved, like old testament saints and babies who die in infancy

Hick:
– but people's religions are based on where they are born
– so it's not fair for God to expect people to be saved in one religion only

Sinkinson:
– the plurality of religions grouped by location doesn't make christianity false
– that would be the genetic fallacy – rejecting an idea because of its origin
– the real question to consider is whether it is true
– and even the objection assumes that God is a God of love, who should be fair
– but how do you know that God is loving? that is an exclusive view
– how can the "blob" ultimate of religious pluralism be "loving" and "fair"

Hick:
– the ultimate reality is loving or not loving depending on each person's religion

Sinkinson:
– but some religions and theistic and some are atheistic
– how can those God exist and not exist?

Hick:
– God is beyond everyone's understanding, except mine
– God is beyond all definitions, except mine
– God is beyond all human understanding, except mine
– i'm not contradicting myself, it's a mystery! a mystery!
– as long as you don't look to closely, they're all the same!
– allow me to tell you about God, which no one can do but me

Justin:
– doesn't your religious pluralism mean that Christianity is false?

Hick:
– well, Christianity can't be true, because it disagrees with other religions
– Christianity can't falsify other religions, that would be mean to them
– other religions are just as "profound" as Christianity – and that's what matters – not whether a religion makes true claims
– some religions are older than Christianity, that means they can't be disagreed with
– we can't let Christianity be true, because then some people will feel bad
– if people feel bad, then they don't like me and then I feel bad
– if there's one thing I know about the unknowable ultimate reality, it's that it wants me to be liked by lots of people

Sinkinson:
– your view seems to be agnosticism – that nothing can be known about the "ultimate real"
– if we can't express in words what God is like, then why are you saying what God is like?

Hick:
– the indescribable ultimate is described (falsely, but interestingly) by various tradition

Sinkinson:
– does the "ultimate real" exist?

Hick:
– no

Justin:
– are all the exclusive religions wrong, and only you are right?

Hick:
– all propositions about God in all the religions are false
– the experience of being deluded and having feelings about your delusions is "valid" in all religions
– all religions are equally good ways to believe false things and to have feelings about your false beliefs
– only my propositions about God are true

– everyone who disagrees with me is wrong

Sinkinson:
– so all the propositions of all the religions are wrong
– but all the experiences and feelings are “right”

Hick:
– yes
– all propositions about God are humanly constructed, and so false
– except mine – mine are true!

Sinkinson:
– so everything distinctive about Christianity are literally false?

Hick:
– yes, Christian doctrines are all false
– because if they were true, other religions would be false, and they would feel bad
– and we can’t have that, because everyone has to like me
– only things that don’t offend people in other religions can be true

Sinkinson:
– so do we have to then treat all religions as non-propositional?

Hick:
– well just don’t ask people about the content of their beliefs
– just treat their religion as non-cognitive rituals, feelings and experiences
– don’t inquire too deeply into it, because all religions are all nonsense
– i’m very respectful and tolerant of different religions!

Sinkinson:
– but Muslims, for example, think their religion is making truth claims

Hick:
– but there can be tolerance as long as you treat religions as non-propositional nonsense

Sinkinson:
– um, I have a higher respect for religions than you do
– I actually consider that the claims of other religions could be true
– I think that other religions make truth claims and not nonsense claims

Hick:
– well they are all useful because they are all false
– I don’t emphasize beliefs, I emphasize living, experiences and feelings
– as long as everyone accepts my view and rejects their religion, we’ll all be tolerant

Justin:
– erm, isn’t that an exclusive claim?
– you’re trying to say that your view of what religion is is right, and everyone else is wrong

Hick:
– I’m not arrogant, I just think that all the religions of the worlds are false

– only my statements about religion are true – everyone else is wrong
– I'm tolerant, and Christians are arrogant

Justin:
– but you think Sinkinson's view is wrong
– why should we accept your view and deny his view?

Hick:
– His view of salvation is false, and mine is true

Sinkinson:
– you use words with set meanings, but you mean completely different things
– when I say salvation, I mean deliverance from sins through Jesus

Hick:
– I get to decide what salvation means for everyone, you intolerant bigot

Sinkinson:
– but that word has a specific meaning that has held true in all of Christian history
– but what you mean by salvation is people having subjective delusions that are not true

Hick:
– I don't like using the word salvation

Sinkinson:
– but you just used it!
– and you think that it is present in different world religions, but it isn't

Hick:
– God is unknowable and indescribable
– God isn't a wrathful God though
– and the Christian description of God is false
– Evangelical Christians are mean
– I had experiences with people of other faiths
– and these experiences taught me that religions that think that the universe is eternal are true
– as long as you reduce religion to behaviors and not truth, then religions are all good at producing behaviors
– if you just treat all religions as clothing fashion and food customs, they are all valid
– the main point of religion is for people to agree on cultural conventions and stick to them
– never mind the propositional statements of religions… who cares about truth? not me!
– but Christianity is definitely false

Sinkinson:
– the Judeo-Christian God is different – he reveals himself to humans
– he is distinct from the other religions
– he is personal, and is loving but also angry at sin

Hick:

– But God isn’t a person, and he isn’t a non-person
– I can’t say what he is – I’ll offend someone if I say anything at all!
– except Christians – I can offend them because they are arrogant bigots
– I’m also very spiritual – I meditate on my breathing

Sinkinson:
– you can’t assess a religion by the experiences that people have
– people who have weird experiences do all kinds of evil things
– so the real question has to be about truth – is the New Testament reliable?, etc.

How would redefining marriage affect your marriage?

April 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An interesting article by Ryan T. Anderson appeared on Ricochet.

First, a bit about the author.

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education as the William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society at The Heritage Foundation. He also has expertise in bioethics, marriage, religious liberty and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined Heritage's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work focuses on the moral and constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012). The three also co-wrote the article "What is Marriage?" in the winter 2011 issue of *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*.
>
> […]Anderson received his bachelor of arts degree from Princeton University, graduating*Phi Beta Kappa* and *magna cum laude.* He is a doctoral candidate in political philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, where he received his master's degree.

The point I wanted to pull out his piece on Ricochet was that gay activists admit that one of the motives for redefining marriage is to destroy central aspects of traditional marriage, such as monogamy, sexual exclusivity and pledged permanence.

He writes:

> Redefining marriage would abandon the norm of male-female sexual complementarity as an essential characteristic of marriage. Making that optional would also make other essential characteristics—like monogamy, exclusivity and permanency—optional, as my co-authors and I argue in our new book, *What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*. We also show how it is increasingly confirmed by the rhetoric and arguments of those who would redefine marriage ("revisionists") and by the policies that their more candid leaders increasingly embrace. Indeed, several commentators on Tuesday's post explicitly jettisoned monogamy, sexual exclusivity and pledged permanence as demands of marriage.
>
> Consider the norm of monogamy. In testifying before Congress against the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), prominent New York University professor Judith

> Stacey expressed hope that the revisionist view's triumph would give marriage "varied, creative and adaptive contours . . . [leading some to] question the dyadic limitations of Western marriage and seek . . . small group marriages."
>
> In their statement "Beyond Same-Sex Marriage," more than 300 self-styled LGBT and allied scholars and advocates—including prominent Ivy League professors—call for legally recognizing sexual relationships involving more than two partners. University of Calgary professor Elizabeth Brake argues in her book *Minimizing Marriage* that justice requires using legal recognition to "denormalize the ideal of heterosexual monogamy" and correct for "past discrimination against homosexuals, bisexuals, polygamists and care networks."
>
> And exclusivity? Andrew Sullivan, who has extolled the "spirituality" of "anonymous sex," writes in his book *Virtually Normal* that the "openness" of same-sex relationships could enhance the bonds of husbands and wives:
>
> Same-sex unions often incorporate the virtues of friendship more effectively than traditional marriages; and at times, among gay male relationships, the openness of the contract makes it more likely to survive than many heterosexual bonds. . . . [T]here is more likely to be greater understanding of the need for extramarital outlets between two men than between a man and a woman. . . . [S]omething of the gay relationship's necessary honesty, its flexibility, and its equality could undoubtedly help strengthen and inform many heterosexual bonds.
>
> Similarly, in a *New York Times* Magazine profile titled "Married, With Infidelities", Dan Savage encourages spouses to adopt "a more flexible attitude" about allowing each other to seek sex outside their marriage. A piece titled "Monogamish" in *The Advocate*, a gay-interest newsmagazine, supports this point still more candidly:
>
> Anti-equality right-wingers have long insisted that allowing gays to marry will destroy the sanctity of "traditional marriage," and, of course, the logical, liberal party-line response has long been "No, it won't." But what if—for once—the sanctimonious crazies are right? Could the gay male tradition of open relationships actually alter marriage as we know it? And would that be such a bad thing?
>
> As the article's blurb reads: "We often protest when homophobes insist that same-sex marriage will change marriage for straight people too. But in some ways, they're right."
>
> These are the words of leading supporters of same-sex marriage. If you believe in monogamy and exclusivity—and the benefits these bring to orderly procreation and child wellbeing—but would redefine civil marriage, take note.

I wrote before about how feminism debased marriage, and same-sex marriage should be viewed as phase two of the radical feminist enterprise. Surprise! These left-wing groups don't like natural, traditional marriage.

Sherif Girgis: intellectual diversity in university law schools

April 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is there a diversity problem in elite law schools? Sherif Girgis thinks that there is, and in this lecture he makes the case.

(27 minutes of lecture, 6 minutes of Q&A)

I highly recommend watching this video, especially if you are on the left on social issues, and you think everyone on the right is stupid and evil.

Reuters: scientists struggling to explain 15 years of global cooling

April 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-leaning Reuters news service.

Excerpt:

> Scientists are struggling to explain a slowdown in climate change that has exposed gaps in their understanding and defies a rise in global greenhouse gas emissions.
>
> Often focused on century-long trends, most climate models failed to predict that the temperature rise would slow, starting around 2000. Scientists are now intent on figuring out the causes and determining whether the respite will be brief or a more lasting phenomenon.
>
> […]"The climate system is not quite so simple as people thought," said Bjorn Lomborg, a Danish statistician and author of "The Skeptical Environmentalist" who estimates that moderate warming will be beneficial for crop growth and human health.
>
> Some experts say their trust in climate science has declined because of the many uncertainties. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had to correct a 2007 report that exaggerated the pace of melt of the Himalayan glaciers and wrongly said they could all vanish by 2035.
>
> "My own confidence in the data has gone down in the past five years," said Richard Tol, an expert in climate change and professor of economics at the University of Sussex in England.

I think it's important to note that science is not to blame for these failed predictions. What is to blame is government handing money to corrupt charlatans who then produce "scientific research" that proves that bigger government is needed to control capitalism and constrain individual liberty. In effect, government bribed the university charlatans to fake research that would trick the public into voting for more government control of job creators and their employees. The fastest way to solve this would be to get the government out of the higher education business and let science serve the needs of ordinary people instead of corrupt socialists.

Surprise, liberal media! Boston bombing suspects are Muslim foreigners

April 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The secular leftist media was really hoping that those responsible for the Boston marathon bombing would be their political opponents. “This time, Republicans for sure!” they said. “If a person is for lower taxes, less government spending, the right to life, and natural marriage, then they are hateful racist violent bigoted crazies!”

The Daily Caller explains:

> The liberal online magazine Salon published an opinion piece Tuesday evening by columnist David Sirota entitled, “Let’s hope the Boston Marathon bomber is a white American.”
>
> Sirota argued that if the perpetrator of Monday’s bombing attack, which left at least three people dead, is identified as a Muslim, then conservative Republicans will use the tragedy to block Obama administration policy goals like immigration reform.
>
> […]Sirota is not the only liberal media commentator to attempt to politicize Monday’s tragedy. CNN anchor Wolf Blitzer speculated on a link between Patriots Day and the motive behind the bombings, while NBC News reporter Luke Russert speculated that the 1993 Waco siege, which occurred on Patriots Day, might have inspired a right-wing terrorist in Boston.
>
> New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof used the tragedy to attack Republican politicians, tweeting Monday, “Explosion is a reminder that ATF needs a director. Shame on Senate Republicans for blocking apptment.” Kristof later apologized for the tweet.
>
> Sirota has employed attention-grabbing, race-baiting rhetoric in the past.
>
> Sirota said in December, in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre, that a new profiling system should be established to monitor mentally-ill individuals, but that Republicans would not support that effort because it would mean profiling white men.

Now you might think that’s racism and bigotry, but it’s not, because the mainstream media tells me that racism can never be committed by leftists.

And now let’s see what reality has to say about the speculations and wishing of the radical lefttists in the mainstream media.

Reuters / Yahoo News reports:

> Boston bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev posted links to Islamic websites and others calling for Chechen independence on what appears to be his page on a Russian language social networking site.

> Abusive comments in Russian and English were flooding onto Tsarnaev's page on VK, a Russian-language social media site, on Friday after he was identified as a suspect in the bombing of the Boston marathon.
>
> […]On the site, the younger Tsarnaev identifies himself as a 2011 graduate of Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, a public school in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
>
> […]His "World view" is listed as "Islam" and his "Personal priority" is "career and money".
>
> He has posted links to videos of fighters in the Syrian civil war and to Islamic web pages with titles like "Salamworld, my religion is Islam" and "There is no God but Allah, let that ring out in our hearts".
>
> He also has links to pages calling for independence for Chechnya, a region of Russia that lost its bid for secession after two wars in the 1990s.

It seems to me that the liberal media is trying to have it both ways. They want to agree with Kermit Gosnell on abortion, they want to agree with Floyd Lee Corkins III on gay marriage, they want to agree with Hugo Chavez on economics, and they want to sympathize with Dzhokhar Tsarnaev on foreign policy. Then they want to believe that pro-family, pro-life, pro-child, free market capitalists are all radical terrorists. Sorry mainstream media, but you are the nutters. You are the crazies. You are the radicals.

See the related posts below for more leftist violence. The reality, which the mainstream media doesn't want you to know, is that it is far more likely that violence is caused by the radical left. The radical right is too busy getting married, making babies, starting businesses, waking up to go to work, paying our taxes, helping our neighbors and listening to sermons in church. The radical right doesn't have time for violence, we're trying to live well and we are good at it.

Related posts

- Do Kermit Gosnell and Barack Obama have the same views on abortion?
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Zeitgeist conspiracy movie had profound impact on Jared Loughner
- Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning
- Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist

- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

What is intelligent design? Dr. Stephen C. Meyer explains the theory

April 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (30 MB)

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the

first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

New study: pro-gay television shows have shifted public opinion on gay marriage

April 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life Site News reports.

Excerpt:

> Ipsos MediaCT, a global market research company, have just released a study…
>
> According to the report, 18 percent of Americans between the ages of 13 and 64 said that television has directly contributed to their increasing support for same-sex "marriage."
>
> That's nearly double the number (10 percent) who reported television had increased their opposition to marriage redefinition.
>
> "Based on this data, I think we can conclude that TV has, at least in part, moved the needle of public opinion to see same-sex marriage in a positive way," Ben Spergel, Senior Vice President and Head of TV Insights at Ipsos MediaCT said in a statement.
>
> "With everything from higher profile portrayals of gay characters, to celebrity support of gay marriage, to last year's groundbreaking endorsement by President Obama, we are seeing a shift in our culture that is being influenced by popular culture," he said.
>
> Last month, liberal writer Andrew O'Hehir wrote an article for *Salon* crediting the American movement toward homosexual acceptance to television shows like "Will and Grace,""Roseanne," "The Real World," "Ellen DeGeneres," "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," "Modern Family," and "Glee."
>
> "From 'Soap' to Ellen DeGeneres to Richard Hatch on 'Survivor' to the macho male couple who won season 4 of 'The Amazing Race,'" O'Hehir wrote, "televisual images of sexual diversity have gradually moved away from victimology and 'gay best friend' stereotypes toward a 'normalizing vision'of LGBT culture."
>
> "While the startling public shift on gay marriage – something few people of my generation, straight or gay, thought they'd ever see — is not solely the product of TV, it represents the ultimate fulfillment of TV's vision of sexual equality," O'Hehir added.
>
> Support for same-sex "marriage" is on the rise in the United States.
> Recent polls show more than half of Americans support redefining marriage to include homosexual couples, and several states now allow gay nuptials in defiance of federal law.

One reason I don't have a TV in my house is because television is used as a way to

change people's minds without making rational arguments or showing evidence. It's easy enough for gay-friendly Hollywood to make TV shows where all the gay characters are funny, hard-working, faithful and moral. But that doesn't reflect what studies tell us about gay relationships. They are non-exclusive, short-lived, have higher rates of violence and abuse, etc.

If gay marriage were to become legal, then marriage would would no longer be permanent, faithful, or child-centered, as this gay activist recently explained.

> It's a no-brainer that (homosexuals) should have the right to marry, but I also think equally that it's a no-brainer that the institution of marriage should not exist. . . . Fighting for gay marriage generally involves lying about what we are going to do with marriage when we get there—because we lie that the institution of marriage is not going to change, and that is a lie.
>
> The institution of marriage is going to change, and it should change. And again, I don't think it should exist. And I don't like taking part in creating fictions about my life. That's sort of not what I had in mind when I came out thirty years ago.
>
> **I have three kids who have five parents, more or less, and I don't see why they shouldn't have five parents legally. . . . I met my new partner, and she had just had a baby, and that baby's biological father is my brother, and my daughter's biological father is a man who lives in Russia, and my adopted son also considers him his father. So the five parents break down into two groups of three. . . . And really, I would like to live in a legal system that is capable of reflecting that reality, and I don't think that's compatible with the institution of marriage.**

The purpose of gay marriage is to normalize and celebrate any arrangements that makes adults happy, whether or not it provides for the needs of the children. Evidence from large-scale studies shows that gay relationships are not as good for children as natural marriage. But people who watch TV and don't read studies will have their minds changed by TV, and then they will vote. And children not yet born will have to grow up without mothers and fathers because of it.

In a very real sense, stupidity and selfishness are destroying the next generation of children. It's not just the crushing 17 trillion dollar debt being run up by selfish adults for their entitlements. It's not just that our public schools are insulated from reform by powerful politically connected teacher unions. It's not just that we liberalized divorce laws so that women can divorce men when they are not "happy" any more. It's not just that we force employers to ship jobs overseas by raising their corporate taxes and burdening them with nonsense regulations. It's not just that government pays irresponsible women to have babies out of wedlock. It's not just that we abort the next generation of taxpayers because we can't be bothered to get married and make a home for them before having sex. Now, we have to go beyond all that . We have to go even further. Now we have to formalize and normalize the complete supremacy of selfish adults over the needs of

children. God help us all.

Boston bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was a pot-smoker who supported Obama

April 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> Chris Barry, who attended the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth with Tsarnaev, described him as normal teenager who loved to smoke pot and cigarettes every day.
>
> "He was a pot head, a normal pot head," said Barry in an interview with Politico. "I couldn't even imagine him being mad at someone let alone hurting someone."
>
> Tsarnaev, a Muslim, did not come across as strongly religious, said Barry.
>
> "He never brought it up. It seemed like he could care less," he said.
>
> Tsarneav's Twitter account provided clues about the suspected bomber's political views. On November 6th, he retweeted several statements suggesting a preference for President Obama over Republican candidate Mitt Romney.
>
> He retweeted a statement from President Obama's Organizing for Action account that said: "This happened because of you. Thank you," in reference to Obama's victory.
>
> He also retweeted a statement and a picture making fun of Romney. The Tweet said: "WTF Romney is winning ??" and linked to this image.

Not all left-wing people are crazy, but all crazy people are left-wing.

Related posts

- Surprise, liberal media! Boston bombing suspects are Muslim foreigners
- Do Kermit Gosnell and Barack Obama have the same views on abortion?
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Zeitgeist conspiracy movie had profound impact on Jared Loughner
- Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning
- Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist

- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense

April 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reformed Baptist theologian Wayne Grudem speaks on the Bible and the right of self-defense.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- what about turning the other cheek? doesn't that undermine self-defense?
- what does Jesus say about the right to self-defense in the New Testament
- did Jesus' disciples carry swords for protection during his ministry?
- why did Jesus tell his disciples to sell their cloaks and buy swords?
- what about Jesus stopping Peter from using force during Jesus' arrest?
- shouldn't we rely on police instead of our own personal weapons?
- what about brandishing a handgun vs actually trying to shoot someone?
- what are violent crime rates in pro-gun USA and in the anti-gun UK?
- does outlawing guns cause violent crime to increase or decrease?
- do academic studies show that gun control decreases crime?
- do academic studies show that concealed carry laws decreases crime?
- what do academic studies show about defensive handgun usage?
- do many children die from guns in the home compared to other causes?
- doesn't the US Constitution limit the usage of guns to the army and police?
- what did the Founding Fathers believe about lawful ownership of firearms?
- What should be the goal of someone who uses a weapon in self-defense?

This is a good example of applying the Bible to real life. We need more of that!

Related posts

- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment
- Christian professor of economics discusses capitalism, socialism and the Bible
- How I got interested in the relationship between Christianity and economics
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Ron Nash explains what should Christians believe about social justice

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The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?
- what did God say to Noah about CP?
- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?
- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?
- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?
- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?

- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the “whole life ethic” and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

Another great example of practical Bible study.

Related posts

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Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools

April 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must-listen, especially for any single Christian woman who would like to get married and have children. If you want to marry a Christian man, you should listen to this lecture and also the Dr. Morse lecture on marriage *Every Day.* Christian men expect Christian women to know a lot about marriage. About why children need mothers, and why they need fathers, and how the state is always taxing families and then using that money to poke their noses in and teach the children all kinds of bad things.

With that introduction, here is the MP3 file on education policy.

Note: public schools = government-run schools.

Topics:

- Does God care whether we people marry and have children?
- Does God care whether Christian parents raise their children to know him?
- Should government promote bearing children?
- What are some effects of declining birth rates in other countries?
- What are the economic effects of declining birth rates?
- Who has the right to decide how children are trained: government or parents?
- What does the Bible say about parents having to raise children to know him?
- Does the government have the responsibility for training children?
- What do educational bureaucrats think of parents training children?
- What do school boards think of parents training children?
- Should school boards be elected by local, state or federal government?
- Should Christians be opposed to government-run education? (public schools)
- How should schools be viewed by parents? As a replacement or as a helper?
- How are schools viewed by those on the left and in communist countries?
- How can you measure how supporting a government is of parental rights?
- How is parental authority viewed in left-wing EU countries like Germany?
- How is parental authority respected in the United States?
- Should parents have a choice of where their children go to school?
- What is a voucher program? How is it related to parental autonomy?
- How does competition (school choice) in education serve parental needs?
- Why do public school teachers, unions and educrats oppose competitition?
- How well do public schools do in educating children to achieve?
- Does the government-run monopoly of public schools produce results?
- Does paying more and more money to public schools make them perform?
- How do teacher unions feel about having to compete in a voucher system?
- Does the public school monopoly penalize the poorest students?
- Does the public school monopoly penalize children of certain races?

- Does the public school monopoly cause racial predujice?
- What else should parents demand on education policy?
- Is it good for parents when schools refuse to fire underperforming teachers?

This podcast is just amazing! This is what we need to be teaching in church. Church should be the place where you go to learn and reflect about how to tailor your life plan based on what the Bible says. And I think that this whole notion of free market – of choice and competition benefiting the consumer (parents) – applies to everything that government does, especially education and health care.

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What do children learn in “anti-bullying” school programs?

April 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The answer might surprise you. Take a look at this article that Lydia found.

Excerpt:

> Young girls at a New York middle school were instructed to ask one another for a lesbian kiss and boys were given guidance on how to tell if women are sluts during an anti-bullying presentation on gender identity and sexual orientation, angry parents allege.
>
> The special health class was held last week at **Linden Avenue Middle School in Red Hook, NY**. The students were separated by gender – with students from Bard College leading the workshops.
>
> Parents are especially furious after their young daughters were told that it was perfectly normal for 14-year-old girls to have sex and there was nothing their parents could do to intervene.
>
> The boys and girls were also given a sexual vocabulary primer – that included words like “pansexual” and “genderqueer.”
>
> “I am furious,” said Mandy Coon, whose daughter was in the class. “I am her parent. Where does anyone get the right to tell her that it’s okay for her to have sex?”
>
> Coon told Fox News that her daughter was upset by the classroom lecture and was confused about why she had to ask another girl for a kiss.
>
> “She told me, ‘Mom, we all get teased and picked on enough – now I’m going to be called a lesbian because I had to ask another girl if I could kiss her,’” Coon said.
>
> She said the school told her that the purpose of the lesson was to “teach girls boundaries and how to say no.”
>
> “They also picked two girls to stand in front of the class and pretend they were lesbians on a date,” Coons said.
>
> Paul Finch, the superintendent of the Red Hook Central School District, told the **Poughkeepsie Journal** that the workshop focused on “improving culture, relationships, communication and self-perceptions.”
>
> He told the newspaper those were issues the school was obligated to teach under the state’s Dignity for All Students Act.
>
> The state law requires schools to create a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment and bullying, the newspaper reported.

> Parents said they were not notified about the class or the subject matter.

Now, the public schools are dominated by feminists and Democrats who think that it is a good idea to sexualize children as early as possible as a way of breaking their ability to marry and form stable families that will function independently of the state. The left does not like the traditional family. They would much rather that children are either aborted or raised fatherless. It is very important to the left that children grow up in situations where they take dependency on the state to be normal. It’s much easier to rule over a people that is used to receiving money from the government, and having the government intrude into their lives.

Republican governors in Kansas and North Dakota sign pro-life bills

April 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First North Dakota has passed a ban on abortions after 20 weeks.

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, North Dakota's governor signed a bill into law banning abortions after 20 weeks, when an unborn baby begins to feel pain. This comes just one month after he signed landmark pro-life legislation making it the first state to prohibit both sex-selection abortions and abortions for genetic abnormalities.
>
> […]Senators voted 30-17 to ban abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy based on scientific information showing unborn children feel pain at least at that point in pregnancy.
>
> The 20-week abortion ban is thought to fit within the current framework of the pro-abortion Supreme Court and stand up in court to a lawsuit from abortion proponents.
>
> […]Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska and Oklahoma have passed such legislation.
>
> […]The science behind the concept of fetal pain is fully established and Dr. Steven Zielinski, an internal medicine physician from Oregon, is one of the leading researchers into it. He first published reports in the 1980s to validate research showing evidence for it.
>
> He has testified before Congress that an unborn child could feel pain at "eight-and-a-half weeks and possibly earlier" and that a baby before birth "under the right circumstances, is capable of crying."
>
> He and his colleagues Dr. Vincent J. Collins and Thomas J. Marzen were the top researchers to point to fetal pain decades ago. Collins, before his death, was Professor of Anesthesiology at Northwestern University and the University of Illinois and author of *Principles of Anesthesiology*, one of the leading medical texts on the control of pain.

See, what I like here is that we have pro-life scientists who are researching this in order to provide us with facts that back policies that the majority of people will support.

That's good news, and here is more good news from Kansas.

Excerpt:

> This morning, Governor Sam Brownback signed HB 2253, the Pro-life Protections Act, into law.
>
> HB 2253 codifies abortion informed consent materials authorized by the state

> health department, and removes all tax streams that pay for abortion and give tax advantages to abortion businesses.
>
> The informed consent section has an added mandate for the state health department to facilitate medical information access and community support for families facing pre-birth and post-birth diagnoses of Down Syndrome and other conditions.
>
> HB 2253 assures taxpayers are not directly funding abortion or abortion training at the state university, and forbids state discrimination against pro-life citizens and entities. The legislation also includes SB 141, the ban on abortions done solely for the gender of the unborn child.

Naturally, these advances are not going to please people who think that the strong should be able to deprive the weak of basic human rights, but they are in the minority. At least they are in conservative states like North Dakota and Kansas.

Two Muslim immigrants arrested in Canada for Al-Qaeda-inspired terrorist plot

April 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper in Afghanistan

The CBC reports on a blockbuster story from Canada. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> Canadian police say they have arrested two men and thwarted a plot to carry out a major terrorist attack on a Via passenger train in the Greater Toronto Area.
>
> In a press conference that followed an exclusive report by CBC's Greg Weston, police named the two accused as Chiheb Esseghaier, 30, of Montreal, and Raed Jaser, 35, from Toronto. They have been charged with conspiracy to carry out a terrorist attack and "conspiring to murder persons unknown for the benefit of, at the direction of, or in association with a terrorist group."
>
> The two men arrested are not Canadian citizens, police said Monday, but would not provide any details about their nationalities.
>
> The RCMP accused the two men of conspiring to commit an "al-Qaeda-supported" attack.
>
> Police said the two accused were getting "direction and guidance" from al-Qaeda elements in Iran. There was no information to suggest the attacks were state sponsored, police said.
>
> Chief Supt. Jennifer Strachan said the two suspects watched trains and railways in the Greater Toronto Area. There was a specific route targeted, not necessarily a specific train, Strachan said, although she declined to reveal which route was allegedly being targeted.
>
> "We are alleging that these two individuals took steps and conducted activities to initiate a terrorist attack," she told reporters.

> The two men are expected to appear at Old City Hall courthouse in Toronto tomorrow.

With Prime Minister Stephen Harper at the helm, the Conservative Party majority gets the job done again!

Too bad Harper is not in charge down here. Democrats think that only married, Bible-believing small business owning Tea Party conservatives who served in the Armed Forces can be domestic terrorists. They think that William Lane Craig is more likely to be a terrorist than KSM. That's what they believe.

I have to share Blazing Cat Fur's headline for this "Canada: Muslims Fear Backlash Over Latest Thwarted Terror Plot – Linked To Amish Division Of Al Qaeda". He also points out that the Canadian chapter of CAIR is urging the Canadian government not to pass national security legislation.

Blazing Cat Fur is the place to be for the latest news from Canada. Best Canadian blog.

Yeah, I'm pretty sure that the Canadian media will try to blame this on the Amish, or whatever the Canadian equivalent of the Tea Party is. They can't bring themselves to believe that they made a mistake by ratcheting up unregulated immigration from Muslim countries in order to move their country to the left. Bringing in skilled immigrants who learn English is one thing, but bringing in radical extremists is something else entirely.

Video, audio and summary: Jay Richards and Jim Wallis debate Christianity and the common good

April 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: if you are having trouble liking this page on Facebook or sharing it on Twitter, please click here for an updated one that is shareable. Something went wrong in Facebook and they've marked this post as spam! But the new one is fine for sharing.

The video recording:

- The organizers of the debate tell me that the video will be posted shortly after the debate, and I will link to it in this very post.

The audio recording:

- Click here to download the low quality MP3 audio recording (32 kbps, 29 MB)
- Click here to download the high quality MP3 audio recording (64 kbps, 58 MB)

The debaters

Jay Richards:

> Jay Richards, Ph.D., is a Senior Fellow of the Discovery Institute where he directs the Center on Wealth, Poverty and Morality, and is a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Faith, Work & Economics. Most recently he is the co-author with James Robison of the best-selling *Indivisible: Restoring Faith, Family, and Freedom Before It's Too Late".*
>
> In addition to writing many academic articles, books, and popular essays on a wide variety of subjects, he recently edited the new award winning anthology, *God & Evolution: Protestants, Catholics and Jews Explore Darwin's Challenge to Faith* . His previous book was *Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem* (HarperOne, May 2009), for which he received a Templeton Enterprise Award in 2010.
>
> […]In recent years, he has been a Contributing Editor of The American at the American Enterprise Institute, a Visiting Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, and a Research Fellow and Director of Acton Media at the Acton Institute. Richards has a B.A. with majors in Political Science and Religion, an M.Div. (Master of Divinity) and a Th.M. (Master of Theology), and a Ph.D. (with honors) in philosophy and theology from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Jim Wallis:

> Jim Wallis (born June 4, 1948) is a Christian writer and political activist. He is best

> known as the founder and editor of *Sojourners* magazine and as the founder of the Washington, D.C.-based Christian community of the same name. Wallis is well known for his advocacy on issues of peace and social justice. Although Wallis actively eschews political labels, he describes himself as an evangelical and is often associated with the evangelical left and the wider Christian left. He works as a spiritual advisor to President Barack Obama. He is married to the Rev. Joy Carroll, who was one of the first female priests in the Church of England. He is also a leader in the Red-Letter Christian movement.
>
> […]In 2010, Wallis admitted to accepting money for Sojourners from philanthropist George Soros after initially denying having done so. When conservative writer Marvin Olasky pointed this out, and that Soros also financed groups supporting abortion, atheism, and same-sex marriage, in a WORLD magazine column, Wallis said Olasky "lies for a living"; he subsequently apologized to Olasky for the comments. In 2011, Wallis acknowledged that Sojourners had received another $150,000.00 from Soros' Open Society Foundation.
>
> […]In regard to the 2011 United States budget proposal, Wallis described Congressman Paul Ryan and his congressional allies as "bullies" and "hypocrites."

Wallis just came out this month in favor of gay marriage. He is also a strong supporter of Barack Obama, who is radically pro-abortion, according to Planned Parenthood. Some pro-lifers have argued that Barack Obama has the same views on abortion as Kermit Gosnell, who is currently on trial for murdering born babies.

The format of the debate

- 20 minute opening speeches
- 10 minute rebuttals
- 10 minutes of discussion
- Q&A for the remainder

SUMMARY

I use italics below to denote my own observations.

Jim Wallis' opening speech:

My goal is to spark a national conversation on the "common good".

A story about my son who plays baseball.

The central goal of Christianity is to promote the "common good".

Quotes "Catholic social teaching" which values "human flourishing".

The "common good" is "human flourishing".

Is the purpose of Christianity is to make sure that everyone has enough material stuff or to preach the gospel?

When Christians go on mission trips, it's good that they focus on things like human trafficking.

Democrat John Lewis is the "conscience of the U.S. Congress".

John Lewis gets a 0% rating from the American Conservative Union in 2012.

John Lewis gets a 8% rating from the American Conservative Union in 2011.

John Lewis gets a 2.29% lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union.

Nothing is going well in Washington right now except comprehensive immigration reform.

Does he think that Christianity means giving 12-20 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship, while skilled engineers cannot even get green cards, even though there is a shortage of them? Does he think that the other people in society who earn more than they receive from the government ought to be taxed more in order to provide more services and benefits to those who earn less than they take from the government?

Jay Richards' opening speech:

Two topics: 1) what is the common good? 2) what should Christians do to promote the common good?

Catholicism defines the "common good" as "Indeed, the common good embraces the sum of those conditions of the social life whereby men, families and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection." (Source)

We have natural ends that we are supposed to be achieving and some places, like South Korea, are better for allowing that to happen.

The common good is broader and prior to any sort of political specification.

It's not the political good or what the state is supposed to do.

It's not about the communal good, as in Soviet Russia, where the communal good was above individual and familial good.

The common good is the social conditions that promote the things that we humans have in common as individuals and members of family.

The common good takes account of who we are as individuals and in associations with other individuals, e.g. – families.

Christians don't have to be doing the same things to promote the common good, e.g. – pastors, entrepreneurs, etc.

The church, as the church, has as its primary goal making disciples of all nations.

But even in that capacity, the church should be interested in more than just conversions and saving souls.

We also have to care about God's created reality including things like physics, education, etc.

How should Christians promote the common good in politics?

Question: when is coercion warranted?

In Romans 13, Paul says that the state does have power to coerce to achieve certain

ends, like justice.

Most Christians think that there are some things where the state can use coercion, for example, to prevent/punish murder.

It is OK for the police to use coercive force to maintain public order and the rule of law.

But we need to ask whether other things are legitimate areas for the state to use coercive force.

We should only give the state power to coerce when there is no other way to achieve a goal.

We need to leverage the science of economics in order to know how to achieve the common good.

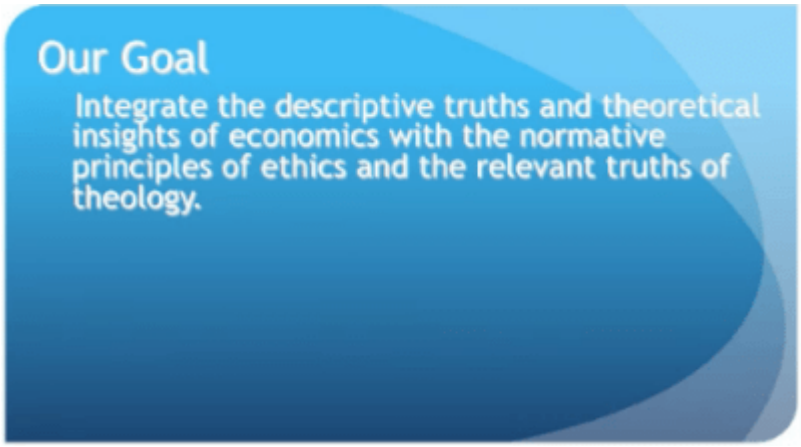

Jay Richards' main point in the debate

Henry Hazlitt: "The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups."

For example, what happens if we raise the federal minimum wage to $50. What happens next for all groups? That's what we need to ask in order to know which policies achieve the common good.

When it comes to economics a lot of things have been tried in other places and times.

We can know what works and doesn't work by studying what was tried before and in other places.

Many things are counter-intuitive – things that sound good don't work, things that sound bad do work.

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We all agree on the goal. But how do we do things that will achieve that goal?

We have to distinguish aspirations from principles and prudential judgment.

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Prudence: Seeing the world as it is, and acting accordingly.

Example policies: which minimum wage is best? None? $10? $20?

We decide based on seeing how different economic policies achieve the goal of helping the poor.

Jim Wallis' first rebuttal:

Jesus commanded us to "care for the poor and help to end poverty".

Actually, Jesus thought that acknowledging him and giving him sacrificial worship was more important than giving money to the poor, see Matthew 26:6-13:

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[7] a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

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[9] "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

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It's not clear to me whether Jim Wallis thinks that preaching is more important than redistributing wealth to address material inequality.

I like what Jesus said in a TV series, even though it's not in the Bible when an actor playing Jesus said to "change the world".

Jesus never said to "change the world" in the Bible. Should we be concerned that he is quoting a TV actor playing Jesus instead of Jesus.

Here is a terrific story about Bill Bright.

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I go to the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland every year. I spoke once at 7 AM on the 4th floor.

It's a funny place for a Christian to be if they care about the poor – rubbing shoulders with leftist elites. He must have named a dozen high-profile people that he spoke with during the debate, as if he could win the debate by some sort of argument from name-dropping. He mentioned the Davos thing several times!

The greatest beneficiary of government actions to deal with the economic crisis was Wall Street banks.

And Wall Street bankers are huge supporters of Barack Obama for exactly that reason.

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I've had conversations with business leaders where I tell them to integrate moral truths.

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Who is responsible for your own children? Who knows the most about them?

Parents should have more discretion over their children because they have more knowledge about their child and what’s best for them.

The Good Samaritan doesn’t show that government should confiscate wealth through taxation and redistribute it.

The Good Samaritan emphasizes voluntarily charity to help people who are not necessarily your immediate neighbor.

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But then we are back to leveraging economics to know what policies are good for those other people in other countries.

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The best place to take care of children is within the family.

Only if the family fails should wider and wider spheres get involved.

Although we want to think of the common good in a global sense, we don’t want to lose sight of the fact

The financial crisis: we need to integrate moral truths, but also economic truths.

We don’t want to assume policies based on intuitions, we want to check our intuitions using economic principles.

Why did we have a financial crisis in mortgages, but not in commodities futures or technology, etc.?

Greed is a contributing factor in all areas of business.

Something more was going on in the mortgage markets than just greed.

There were specific policies that caused the mortgage lending crisis.

The root cause of the problem were “affordable housing policies” that lowered lending restrictions on low income people.

The policy ended up degrading the underwriting standards on loans.

Government intruded into the market and undermined the normal ways of

People were getting massive loans with no income, no jobs, no assets and no down payment.

The federal government created a market for risk loans by guaranteeing

There was a government imposed quota on mortgage lenders such that 50% of their loans had to be given to high-risk borrowers.

That is what led to the financial crisis. Not the free market, but intrusions into the free market.

These policies were well-meaning and implemented by people from both parties. But they had bad effects.

Alabama homeschooling family sends 6 kids to college – by age 12!

April 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From NBC News.

Excerpt:

> At 7, when many kids figure they might be firemen, Seth announced he would be a military archeologist. His mom, Mona Lisa, encouraged that curiosity. "Wow! That kid was into this!" she marvels.
>
> By 12, Seth was hanging out with students nearly twice his age, studying the Middle Ages at Faulkner University, near his home in Montgomery, Alabama. "How's he doing?" I ask assistant professor Grover Plunkett.
>
> "He's got the highest average in the class."
>
> Seth was motivated by his brother Keith's success. Keith is just down the hall, studying finite mathematics, a college senior — at 14.
>
> "It makes you wonder," their friend Wesley Jimmerson says, shaking his head. "Are they advanced, or are we just really behind?"
>
> Sister Hannah was the first of the Harding kids to take college entrance exams — at age 12. "I didn't expect to pass," she says, "so I started crying, because I was thinking, 'Now what?'"
>
> By 22 she was designing spacecraft. She holds master's degrees in math and mechanical engineering.
>
> Ten-year-old Katrinnah Harding hopes to enter college next year. Her brother Heath started at age 11. He's finishing his master's in computer science — at 17.
>
> "If they're going to be working at my kitchen table," Mona Lisa says with a smile, "why not earn college credit for what they're doing?"
>
> **Named after her mother's favorite song, Mona Lisa Harding home-schools her children in the basics, but found that her kids learned more quickly (and got less bored) when they were allowed to study deeply — something they loved.**
>
> **"I don't have any brilliant children," she contends. "I'm not brilliant. My husband's not brilliant. We're just average folks." Who inspired six children to enter college before they became teenagers.**
>
> […]I can understand maybe convincing one or two children to enter college early, but Mona Lisa has more kids than Mother Hubbard: 10.
>
> She shrugs. "By the time you get down to number five, number six, they just think learning seems normal. **We find out what their passions are, what they really like to study, and we accelerate them gradually.**"

> But what happens to their childhood?
>
> “We didn’t limit their experience,” Mona Lisa says. “They’re taking college classes, but socially, they are just teenagers.” **Who live at home, not in college dorms.**

What’s their secret? What I got out of the story is that parents don’t have to be smart in order to have smart kids. They just have to take an interest in what the children want to do and then guide them to the next level and the next level and the next level. It’s hands-on parenting!

Does atheism mean “a lack of belief in God”?

April 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Excerpt:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.
>
> But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.
>
> There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position,

and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.

One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.

So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of

> atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, “So is there a God or not?”

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these “subjective atheists”?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says “I lack a belief in the gravitational force!”. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God’s existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don’t care about a person’s psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over “I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God”? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: “I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!” What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: “Wintery Knight won’t listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!”. I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that’s why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don’t *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I’m not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

UPDATE: I noticed that Reasons for God has a post up about this.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument

Live streaming: Jay Richards debates Jim Wallis tonight at 8 PM Eastern time

April 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: The audio, video and summary of the debate are posted here.

Looking for something good to watch tonight? How about a debate?

Details:

> Jay Richards (Discovery Institute) and Jim Wallis (Sojourners) will address the question of Christian social engagement through the subject of the Common Good. Each will present a proposal (and response) on the question, "What is the common good? And how should the Church and Christians pursue it?"
>
> The debate will take place **Tuesday April 23 at 7:00 p.m., in the chapel** at Trinity International University. If you cannot make it here, you will be able to watch the event live at stream.tiu.edu.

Note that Trinity International University is in the Central time zone, so the debate will go from 8 PM to 10 PM Eastern.

I asked Dr. Richards about the format of the debate, and he said it will be a formal debate, with 20-minute opening speeches, timed rebuttals, and possibly timed counter-rebuttals. There will also be a time of Q&A with the audience. So this is not going to be a free for all.

Dr. Richards is one of a handful of scholars I really admire. Although Ron Nash got me started on investigating Christianity and economics, it was Jay Richards who pointed me towards F. A. Hayek and Thomas Sowell. He also did quality work inventing a new argument for design in his work with Guillermo Gonzalez in the book "The Privileged Planet". He also took on theistic evolution by editing a collection of essays on that topic, entitled "God and Evolution". So he's studied economics and intelligent design, and written on both. This will not be Richards' first debate – he's debated Christopher Hitchens before (audio, video).

My understanding is that Wallis is an Obama-supporter who just came out in favor of gay marriage. He is a registered Democrat, so that gives you an idea of what he thinks about abortion, as well. It will be interesting to see whether he is able to find in Biblical support for the idea of forced redistribution of wealth by a powerful central government in the Scriptures. I'm betting that he can't. In addition, it's worth pointing out that Jim Wallis has admitted that he takes funding from the prominent atheist and socialist George Soros.

Debate preparation

To get you prepared for tonight's debate, why not check out this 51-minute lecture on

Christianity and economics by Jay Richards?

For those who can't see the debate, here is an MP3 that covers the same material, hosted by the Acton Institute.

If you like what you see, I recommend the books "Indivisible" and "Money, Greed and God" which both discuss Christianity and economics.

Relatet posts

- Jay Richards: what should Christians think about global warming?
- What conditions support the minimum requirements for complex life?
- Answering the question "Who Designed the Designer?"
- Should Christians be socialists?
- Jay Richards asks: what should Christians believe about global warming?
- Should Christians support wealth redistribution as a way to alleviate poverty?
- Brian Auten interviews Jay Richards about Christian apologetics
- Jay Richards investigates whether George Soros is funding Jim Wallis
- Frank Turek interviews Jay Richards on Christianity and capitalism
- Doug Axe publishes a new peer-reviewed paper on protein folding
- Jay Richards explains when you should doubt "scientific consensus"
- First Things reviews Jay Richards' Money, Greed and God
- Video of the Stanford debate between Jay Richards and Christopher Hitchens

Video, audio and summary: Jim Wallis debates Jay Richards on Christianity and the common good

April 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had to re-post this post again because Facebook decided to mark it as SPAM. This is the same post I put out 4 hours ago.

The video recording:

- The organizers of the debate tell me that the video will be posted shortly after the debate, and I will link to it in this very post.

The audio recording:

- Click here to download the low quality MP3 audio recording (32 kbps, 29 MB)
- Click here to download the high quality MP3 audio recording (64 kbps, 58 MB)

The debaters

Jay Richards:

> Jay Richards, Ph.D., is a Senior Fellow of the Discovery Institute where he directs the Center on Wealth, Poverty and Morality, and is a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Faith, Work & Economics. Most recently he is the co-author with James Robison of the best-selling *Indivisible: Restoring Faith, Family, and Freedom Before It's Too Late".*
>
> In addition to writing many academic articles, books, and popular essays on a wide variety of subjects, he recently edited the new award winning anthology, *God & Evolution: Protestants, Catholics and Jews Explore Darwin's Challenge to Faith* . His previous book was *Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem* (HarperOne, May 2009), for which he received a Templeton Enterprise Award in 2010.
>
> […]In recent years, he has been a Contributing Editor of The American at the American Enterprise Institute, a Visiting Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, and a Research Fellow and Director of Acton Media at the Acton Institute. Richards has a B.A. with majors in Political Science and Religion, an M.Div. (Master of Divinity) and a Th.M. (Master of Theology), and a Ph.D. (with honors) in philosophy and theology from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Jim Wallis:

> Jim Wallis (born June 4, 1948) is a Christian writer and political activist. He is best known as the founder and editor of *Sojourners* magazine and as the founder of the Washington, D.C.-based Christian community of the same name. Wallis is well known for his advocacy on issues of peace and social justice. Although Wallis

> actively eschews political labels, he describes himself as an evangelical and is often associated with the evangelical left and the wider Christian left. He works as a spiritual advisor to President Barack Obama. He is married to the Rev. Joy Carroll, who was one of the first female priests in the Church of England. He is also a leader in the Red-Letter Christian movement.
>
> […]In 2010, Wallis admitted to accepting money for Sojourners from philanthropist George Soros after initially denying having done so. When conservative writer Marvin Olasky pointed this out, and that Soros also financed groups supporting abortion, atheism, and same-sex marriage, in a WORLD magazine column, Wallis said Olasky "lies for a living"; he subsequently apologized to Olasky for the comments. In 2011, Wallis acknowledged that Sojourners had received another $150,000.00 from Soros' Open Society Foundation.
>
> […]In regard to the 2011 United States budget proposal, Wallis described Congressman Paul Ryan and his congressional allies as "bullies" and "hypocrites."

Wallis just came out this month in favor of gay marriage. He is also a strong supporter of Barack Obama, who is radically pro-abortion. Some pro-lifers have argued that Barack Obama has the same views on abortion as Kermit Gosnell.

The format of the debate

- 20 minute opening speeches
- 10 minute rebuttals
- 10 minutes of discussion
- Q&A for the remainder

SUMMARY

I use italics below to denote my own observations.

Jim Wallis' opening speech:

My goal is to spark a national conversation on the "common good".

A story about my son who plays baseball.

The central goal of Christianity is to promote the "common good".

Quotes "Catholic social teaching" which values "human flourishing".

The "common good" is "human flourishing".

Is the purpose of Christianity is to make sure that everyone has enough material stuff or to preach the gospel?

When Christians go on mission trips, it's good that they focus on things like human trafficking.

Democrat John Lewis is the "conscience of the U.S. Congress".

John Lewis gets a 0% rating from the American Conservative Union in 2012.

John Lewis gets a 8% rating from the American Conservative Union in 2011.

John Lewis gets a 2.29% lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union.

Nothing is going well in Washington right now except comprehensive immigration reform.

Does he think that Christianity means giving 12-20 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship, while skilled engineers cannot even get green cards, even though there is a shortage of them? Does he think that the other people in society who earn more than they receive from the government ought to be taxed more in order to provide more services and benefits to those who earn less than they take from the government?

Jay Richards' opening speech:

Two topics: 1) what is the common good? 2) what should Christians do to promote the common good?

Catholicism defines the "common good" as "Indeed, the common good embraces the sum of those conditions of the social life whereby men, families and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection."

We have natural ends that we are supposed to be achieving and some places, like South Korea, are better for allowing that to happen.

The common good is broader and prior to any sort of political specification.

It's not the political good or what the state is supposed to do.

It's not about the communal good, as in Soviet Russia, where the communal good was above individual and familial good.

The common good is the social conditions that promote the things that we humans have in common as individuals and members of family.

The common good takes account of who we are as individuals and in associations with other individuals, e.g. – families.

Christians don't have to be doing the same things to promote the common good, e.g. – pastors, entrepreneurs, etc.

The church, as the church, has as its primary goal making disciples of all nations.

But even in that capacity, the church should be interested in more than just conversions and saving souls.

We also have to care about God's created reality including things like physics, education, etc.

How should Christians promote the common good in politics?

Question: when is coercion warranted?

In Romans 13, Paul says that the state does have power to coerce to achieve certain ends, like justice.

Most Christians think that there are some things where the state can use coercion, for example, to prevent/punish murder.

It is OK for the police to use coercive force to maintain public order and the rule of law.

But we need to ask whether other things are legitimate areas for the state to use coercive force.

We should only give the state power to coerce when there is no other way to achieve a goal.

We need to leverage the science of economics in order to know how to achieve the common good.

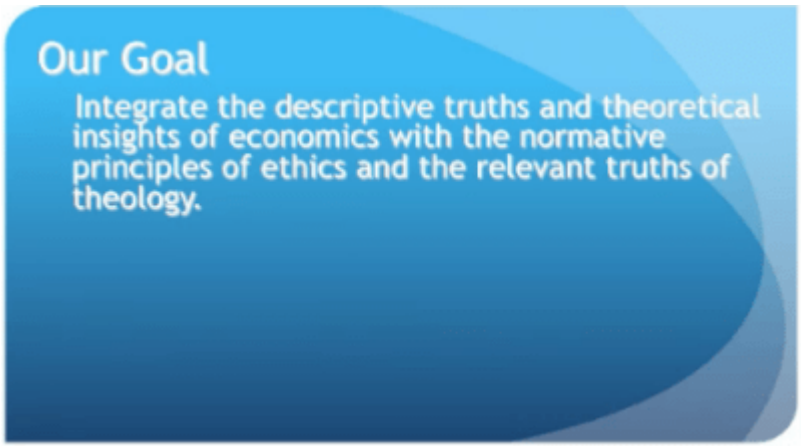

Jay Richards' main point in the debate

Henry Hazlitt: "The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups."

For example, what happens if we raise the federal minimum wage to $50. What happens next for all groups? That's what we need to ask in order to know which policies achieve the common good.

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We can know what works and doesn't work by studying what was tried before and in other places.

Many things are counter-intuitive – things that sound good don't work, things that sound bad do work.

Principle: "We are our brother's keeper". Christians have an obligation to care for their neighbors.

We all agree on the goal. But how do we do things that will achieve that goal?

We have to distinguish aspirations from principles and prudential judgment.

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Actually, Jesus thought that acknowledging him and giving him sacrificial worship was more important than giving money to the poor, see Matthew 26:6-13:

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[7] a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

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I talk about the Good Samaritan parable.

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The financial crisis: we need to integrate moral truths, but also economic truths.

We don't want to assume policies based on intuitions, we want to check our intuitions using economic principles.

Why did we have a financial crisis in mortgages, but not in commodities futures or technology, etc.?

Greed is a contributing factor in all areas of business.

Something more was going on in the mortgage markets than just greed.

There were specific policies that caused the mortgage lending crisis.

The root cause of the problem were "affordable housing policies" that lowered lending restrictions on low income people.

The policy ended up degrading the underwriting standards on loans.

Government intruded into the market and undermined the normal ways of

People were getting massive loans with no income, no jobs, no assets and no down payment.

The federal government created a market for risk loans by guaranteeing

There was a government imposed quota on mortgage lenders such that 50% of their loans had to be given to high-risk borrowers.

That is what led to the financial crisis. Not the free market, but intrusions into the free market.

These policies were well-meaning and implemented by people from both parties. But they had bad effects.

How the UK government penalizes stay-at-home moms and pushes kids into daycare

April 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this must-read article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> For years, parents like me who believe that the best place for a young child is at home with a loving parent have been ignored or mocked as smothering, over-protective mothers. Go back to work and put your child in nursery where he can socialise, we were told by 'experts' and feminists. Don't feel guilty.
>
> Unfortunately, the politicians listened — and state-subsidised childcare grew as a result. Between 1995 and 2010, mostly under the Labour governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, for children under five years old it grew by 36.4 per cent. It's been an unmonitored social experiment on a huge scale.
>
> […][T]he tragic irony is that the plethora of unruly children ill-fitted to school coming out of our nurseries is a direct result of successive governments' tunnel vision childcare policy.
>
> It's a policy which, through tax advantages and financial incentives, encourages mothers to go out to work, leaving young children in nurseries.
>
> Under Labour, working mothers were championed and childcare was considered best left to state-subsidised nurseries. It was taboo even to suggest that stay-at-home mothers were performing an equally valid role.
>
> The tragedy is that the Coalition seems to be continuing in the same vein.
>
> […]The most comprehensive research studies have shown that daycare nurseries breed bad behaviour.
>
> A study in the U.S., which followed 1,000 children from birth to 15, found that those children who spent long hours in early daycare were more aggressive than those who had been cared for at home.
>
> This is because young children are not designed to socialise in large groups of their peers. It may promote a quasi independence — but of the wrong kind.
>
> It leads to children bullying or being bullied for social survival. 'We let them fight it out,' is how one helper describe her nursery's approach.
>
> […]As a result of writing about childcare and bringing up children, I hear frequently from mothers who are distraught that they have had to return to work, leaving their children in daycare, because the Government has made it financially impossible for them to remain at home.
>
> Not only has it withdrawn child benefit from households where a single breadwinner earns £60,000, while families in which both parents work and pull in

> a combined income of up to £98,000 will keep every penny, more recently it announced that families with two working parents will get tax breaks worth £2,000 a year.
>
> The message is loud and clear: neither Cameron nor Clegg genuinely value the role of stay-at-home parents.
>
> Their policies are cruel to mothers and to children, and they don't bode well for the mental health or resilience of future generations.
>
> Cameron and Clegg should create, at the very least, a neutral tax system that does not penalise mothers for staying at home.
>
> And they should stop ignoring what all studies, mothers' instincts and millennia of evolution have told us: that the best place for a very young child is with their mother or father.

I have some pretty strong feelings against daycare, unless it's a last resort. I think this article is helpful because a lot of people who vote for Democrats are women who one day hope to marry and be stay-at-home moms. They believe that socialism is somehow compatible with a strong marriage, a man who provides for the family, and a mother who focuses on the needs of her toddlers as they grow up. But socialism isn't compatible with that, because socialism is wed to feminism. Feminism is the idea that women need to act like men in order to be equal to men. And the way that social engineers on the left achieve that goal is by creating taxes and incentives to push women out of the home. A stay-at-home mom has no value to the government because she isn't paying taxes for the government to spend, too. They want her to work, both for ideological reasons and for financial reasons. People on the left think that society is more "equal" when parents are separated from their children and the children are raised communally by strangers. That's "equal". Some of the women in the UK who are complaining now undoubtedly voted for these policies. Maybe they had no choice since the Conservatives are the least bad option. But we have choices here, and we need to think carefully when we have the opportunity to vote.

How marital affairs can lead to divorce, which harms children

April 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this article from the UK Daily Mail about affairs and the harm they cause.

Excerpt:

> Jean Duncombe, a sociologist who has conducted extensive research on the subject, says: 'I'm puritanical when someone tells me they're having an affair — because of the work we've done on the impact of divorce on the children.
>
> 'If people say to me that the children don't know, I say: "Are you sure?" or "Think about what you're doing to the children" — and I never would have said that 20 years ago.'
>
> For parents who have affairs are not only lying to their partners, they are often deceiving themselves about the impact their infidelity can have on their offspring.
>
> 'The children are too young to understand what's happening,' they reason. 'In any case, it doesn't concern them. And children are resilient.'
>
> All of the evidence points to the contrary. People don't just betray their partners when they shatter family life with a serious affair — the sad truth is that their children grow up believing their parents have been unfaithful to them, too.
>
> There is substantial research on the short and long-term effects of divorce if it isn't handled well.
>
> For children, these include low self-esteem, a sense of being abandoned, poor performance at school, anti-social behaviour and the heartbreak of simply missing the absent parent.
>
> **Separations provoked by an affair tend to be the most acrimonious. Each parent shoves the blame for the split on to the other, sometimes forcing the children to take sides by supporting his or her version of events.**
>
> **By tearing a child's loyalty in two, parents can inflict profound damage. To make matters worse, research has shown that around half of all fathers lose contact with their offspring within two years of the separation.**
>
> An acrimonious divorce, according to research, doesn't simply hurt children at the time; it can also store up problems for their future.
>
> So, even if their parents separated when they were small, they won't necessarily suffer the full effects until they become adults themselves.
>
> It can contribute to their own marital problems — including affairs of their own —

> or hamper their ability to form lasting relationships.
>
> […] When an affair is discovered, both parents are so anxious, angry and even traumatised that they have limited resources for dealing with more stress from their children, who are likely to be more demanding than usual.
>
> In some families, sons and daughters are sucked into the emotional vortex. In others, they are given little by way of explanation other than: ‘Mummy and Daddy aren’t getting on very well at the moment.’
>
> Lily says her adult children find it hard to trust and respect their father because he lied to them as children and still denies he had an affair with the woman to whom he’s now married.
>
> ‘My son went through a very bad time as a teenager, drinking too much and running away,’ she says.
>
> ‘Both children mind to this day that my ex has never come clean about what really happened.
>
> ‘My daughter hasn’t settled down with anyone yet — she doesn’t trust that it could last.
>
> ‘My son, who’s married, once asked me if I thought infidelity might be in his genes because of the fact his father was serially unfaithful.
>
> ‘He seriously considered not getting married at all because he didn’t want to risk hurting his girlfriend in the way that he’d been hurt.’

Very interesting read about what it is like to be a child in an environment like that. I think it’s worth it for us to read articles like this so that we take the problem seriously and make plans to avoid it. If we know how hard it is for children to go through something like this, then not only will we be more careful ourselves, but we’ll be more confident when telling other people who ask for our advice on these things. Sometimes, knowing the details of the harm that can be caused helps us to avoid behaviors that lead up to the harm. We have to know the harm, and we have to know the causes of the harm. Affairs cause divorces, and divorces harm children.

So let’s be careful when we choose who to marry. Has this person shown that they can be faithful? Can they control themselves sexually? Are they good at providing for our needs so that we won’t be tempted to have an affair? Are we good at providing for their needs so that they won’t be tempted to have an affair? How serious are they about religion and morality – do they care about moral obligations when they go against their self-interest? How accustomed are they to limiting their own conduct for the good of others, especially children and animals? Those are the questions we should be asking before getting married.

New study: function found for beta-globin pseudogene that was labeled “junk” during Dover trial

April 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Casey Luskin tells us about a new study in Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> A new paper in *Genome Biology and Evolution* argues that the famous beta-globin pseudogene is functional. Why is this pseudogene famous?
>
> Well, it’s been Exhibit A — literally, offered as evidence in a court case — for critics of intelligent design who argue that our genome is full of useless, functionless junk, and therefore can’t be a product of design. Near the beginning of his testimony on the very first day of the 2005 Kitzmiller v. Dover trial, Brown University biology professor Kenneth Miller testified to the court that the beta-globin pseudogene is “broken, and it has a series of molecular errors that render the gene non-functional.” (Day 1 AM, p. 79.) He further told the court:
>
>> And the fact that all three of these species have matching mistakes leads us to just one conclusion, and that’s the same conclusion that Charles Darwin predicted almost a century and a half ago, and that is that these three species share a common ancestor. Matching mistakes are evidence of common ancestry. (Day 1 AM, p. 81)
>
> In his 2008 book *Only a Theory*, Miller is even more explicit in asserting that this pseudogene refutes intelligent design. He writes that “A detailed analysis of the beta-globin pseudogene shows a series of mutations have rendered it nonfunctional” (p. 102). In Miller’s view, that takes care of ID:
>
>> The gorilla and chimpanzee pseudogenes have *exactly* the same set of molecular errors [in their beta-globin pseudogene] … There’s no escaping the implication of these matching mistakes, and there’s no point in arguing that six identical mistakes could have turned up independently in three unrelated species. The only sensible interpretation is that the original errors developed at random in a single common ancestor of these three species. In a court of genetic copyright law, any motion that a designer could claim originality for the human genome would be tossed out in a flash. (pp. 102-103)
>
> Now a new paper in *Genome Biology and Evolution*, “Evolutionary Constraints in the β-Globin Cluster: The Signature of Purifying Selection at the δ-Globin (HBD) Locus and Its Role in Developmental Gene Regulation, argues that the beta-globin pseudogene is not broken, but in fact performs an important function in

> regulating gene expression.

Remember, Darwinists are still reeling from the ENCODE study that found that the non-coding DNA that they said was *100% junk* was actually *80% functional*. The trouble is that they are always letting their philosophy of naturalism get in the way of their science. They assume that nature is all there is. They assumed that everything is not designed. Then they are quick to say that things that aren't junk are junk, in order to confirm their assumption. Problems occur later when good science comes along and proves their philosophical assumption of naturalism wrong. Do they then give up the philosophical assumption? Heck no – that's their religion! But they ought to give it up if they were honest, and stick with the science instead. Too much bad religion among the Darwinists – that's the problem.

Chad Meister: can atheists rationally ground morality?

April 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Philosopher Chad Meister takes a look at the attempts of some prominent atheists to make rational sense of morality within their worldviews.

Here is the abstract:

> Atheists often argue that they can make moral claims and live good moral lives without believing in God. Many theists agree, but the real issue is whether atheism can provide a justification for morality. A number of leading atheists currently writing on this issue are opposed to moral relativism, given its obvious and horrific ramifications, and have attempted to provide a justification for a nonrelative morality. Three such attempts are discussed in this article: Walter Sinnott-Armstrong's position that objective morality simply "is"; Richard Dawkins's position that morality is based on the selfish gene; and Michael Ruse and Edward Wilson's position that morality is an evolutionary illusion. Each of these positions, it turns out, is problematic. Sinnott-Armstrong affirms an objective morality, but affirming something and justifying it are two very different matters. Dawkins spells out his selfish gene approach by including four fundamental criteria, but his approach has virtually nothing to do with morality—with real right and wrong, good and evil. Finally, Ruse and Wilson disagree with Dawkins and maintain that belief in morality is just an adaptation put in place by evolution to further our reproductive ends. On their view, morality is simply an illusion foisted on us by our genes to get us to cooperate and to advance the species. But have they considered the ramifications of such a view? Each of these positions fails to provide the justification necessary for a universal, objective morality—the kind of morality in which good and evil are clearly understood and delineated.
>
> […]We can get to the heart of the atheist's dilemma with a graphic but true example. Some years ago serial killer Ted Bundy, who confessed to over thirty murders, was interviewed about his gruesome activities. Consider the frightening words to his victim as he describes them:
>
> *Then I learned that all moral judgments are "value judgments," that all value judgments are subjective, and that none can be proved to be either "right" or "wrong"….I discovered that to become truly free, truly unfettered, I had to become truly uninhibited. And I quickly discovered that the greatest obstacle to my freedom, the greatest block and limitation to it, consists in the insupportable "value judgment" that I was bound to respect the rights of others. I asked myself, who were these "others"? Other human beings, with human rights? Why is it more wrong to kill a human animal than any other animal, a pig or a sheep or a*

steer? Is your life more to you than a hog's life to a hog? Why should I be willing to sacrifice my pleasure more for the one than for the other? Surely, you would not, in this age of scientific enlightenment, declare that God or nature has marked some pleasures as "moral" or "good" and others as "immoral" or "bad"? In any case, let me assure you, my dear young lady, that there is absolutely no comparison between the pleasure I might take in eating ham and the pleasure I anticipate in raping and murdering you. That is the honest conclusion to which my education has led me—after the most conscientious examination of my spontaneous and uninhibited self.[5]

While I am in no way accusing atheists in general of being Ted Bundy-like, the question I have for the atheist is simply this: *On what moral grounds can you provide a response to Bundy?* The atheistic options are limited. If morality has nothing to do with God, as atheists suppose, what does it have to do with? One response the atheist could offer is moral relativism, either personal or cultural. The personal moral relativist affirms that morality is an individual matter; you decide for yourself what is morally right and wrong. But on this view, what could one say to Bundy? Not much, other than "I don't like what you believe; it offends me how you brutalize women." For the personal relativist, however, who really cares (other than you) that you are offended by someone else's actions? On this view we each decide our own morality, and when my morality clashes with yours, there is no final arbiter other than perhaps that the stronger of us *forces* the other to agree. But this kind of Nietzschean "might makes right" ethic has horrific consequences, and one need only be reminded of the Nazi reign of terror to see it in full bloom. This is one reason why thoughtful atheists, such as Christopher Hitchens, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, and others don't go there.[6]

But what about cultural moral relativism—the view that moral claims are the inventions of a given culture? Most thoughtful atheists don't tread here either, and this is one reason why: If right and wrong are cultural inventions, then it would always be wrong for someone within that culture to speak out against them. If culture defines right and wrong, then who are you to challenge it? For example, to speak out against slavery in Great Britain in the seventeenth century would have been morally wrong, for it was culturally acceptable. But surely it was a morally good thing for William Wilberforce and others to strive against the prevailing currents of their time and place to abolish the slave trade. For the cultural moral relativist, all moral reformers—Wilberforce, Martin Luther King, Jr., even Jesus and Gandhi, to name a few—would be in the wrong. But who would agree with this conclusion? Thankfully, most leading atheists agree that moral relativism is doomed.[7]

So what do they affirm? Here are three accounts that recent atheists have defended: (1) objective morality simply "is," (2) morality is based on the selfish gene, and (3) morality is an evolutionary illusion.[8] Let's take a brief look at each

> of them.

Have you ever heard any of these three categories of objections? If so, click on through and see Chad Meister’s responses.

Five terrorist attacks succeeded under Obama, but none succeeded under Bush after 9/11

April 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports.

Excerpt:

> Congressman Tom Cotton took to the House floor "to express grave doubts about the Obama Administration's counterterrorism policies and programs".
>
> "I rise today to express grave doubts about the Obama Administration's counterterrorism policies and programs," said the freshman congressman from Arkansas. "Counterterrorism is often shrouded in secrecy, as it should be, so let us judge by the results. In barely four years in office, five jihadists have reached their targets in the United States under Barack Obama: the Boston Marathon bomber, the underwear bomber, the Times Square Bomber, the Fort Hood shooter, and in my own state—the Little Rock recruiting office shooter. In the over seven years after 9/11 under George W. Bush, how many terrorists reached their target in the United States? Zero! We need to ask, 'Why is the Obama Administration failing in its mission to stop terrorism before it reaches its targets in the United States?'

FIVE terrorist attacks linked to Islamic fundamentalism under Obama, but ZERO such attacks once Bush got serious after the 9/11 attack.

This accusation comes on the heels of a new Congressional report that shows that the Obama administration did indeed lie to cover up their failures on the Benghazi debacle.

The Washington Times summarized what's in the report:

> The report says the State Department quickly notified the White House that the attack was taking place in Benghazi, and that within two hours of the start of the attack the department was telling the White House that al Qaeda-linked Ansar al-Sharia was claiming responsibility for it.
>
> "In an 'Ops Alert' issued shortly after the attack began, the State Department Operations Center notified senior Department officials, the White House Situation Room, and others, that the Benghazi compound was under attack and that 'approximately 20 armed people fired shots; explosions have been heard as well,'" said the report.
>
> "Two hours later, the Operations Center issued an alert that al-Qa'ida linked Ansar al-Sharia (AAS) claimed responsibility for the attack and had called for an attack on Embassy Tripoli," said the report. "Neither alert mentioned that there had been a protest at the location of the attacks. Further, Administration documents provided to the Committees show that there was ample evidence that

> the attack was planned and intentional. The coordinated, complex, and deadly attack on the [CIA's] Annex [down the road from the State Department mission]–that included sophisticated weapons–is perhaps the strongest evidence that the attacks were not spontaneous. "
>
> "The U.S. government knew immediately that the attacks constituted an act of terror," says the report.
>
> **The report says that the Obama administration purged references to al Qaeda from the talking points that U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Susan Rice used when she appeared on Sept. 16 on five Sunday talks shows to discuss the Benghazi attacks.**
>
> **"After the attacks, the Administration perpetuated a deliberately misleading and incomplete narrative that the violence grew out of a demonstration caused by a YouTube video," says the report. "The Administration consciously decided not to discuss extremist involvement or previous attacks against Western interests in Benghazi."**
>
> **"To protect the State Department, the Administration deliberately removed references to al Qaeda-linked groups and previous attacks in Benghazi in the talking points used by Ambassador Rice, thereby perpetuating the deliberately misleading and incomplete narrative that the attacks evolved from a demonstration caused by a YouTube video," says the report.**
>
> **The reports criticizes the administration for responding to the attack as a criminal event requiring an FBI investigation rather than as an act of terrorism against the United States requiring a military response.**

Investors Business Daily is flat out saying that Hillary Clinton lied to cover up the Benghazi attack. (H/T Doug Ross)

The Obama administration ignored warnings from Russia

A third point to consider is this article from the Boston Globe. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> Russian authorities contacted the US government with concerns about Tamerlan Tsarnaev not once but "multiple'' times, including an alert it sent after he was first investigated by FBI agents in Boston, raising new questions about whether the FBI should have paid more attention to the suspected Boston Marathon bomber, US senators briefed on the investigation said Tuesday.
>
> The FBI has previously said it interviewed Tsarnaev in early 2011 after it was initially contacted by the Russians. In their review, completed in summer 2011, the bureau found no evidence that Tsarnaev was a threat. "The FBI requested but did not receive more specific or additional information from" Russia, the

> agency said last week.
>
> Following a closed briefing of the Senate Intelligence Committee Tuesday, Senator Richard Burr, a North Carolina Republican, said he believed that Russia alerted the United States about Tsarnaev in “multiple contacts,” including at least once since October 2011.

So, in view of these three points, why do you think it is that the Obama administration cannot keep us safe from attacks in the way that Bush could? Well, the *first* reason is that Bush was willing to go to war with states that harbored terrorists in order to deter future attacks. Obama pulls out of the places that are known to train and harbor terrorists. Terrorists interpret Obama’s retreats as weakness, and that’s why terrorist-sponsoring states feel confident about not cracking down within their own borders. Terrorists feared that Bush would do nasty things to them – like sanction strikes by Israel, or invading Syria, or blockading Iran – if they did not crack down on terrorism themselves and give up their WMDs (as Libya did).

The *second* reason is because Democrats can’t believe in their heart of hearts that evil could be caused by anyone other than America and conservative Americans. I’ve written before about how the Obama administration considers their political enemies to be the real terrorists. People who are pro-life, or want smaller government. That’s who this administration is focused on. So, we should not be surprised that the real terrorists are slipping by. Heck, we are even supplying terrorists with welfare to fund their attacks on us. Why shouldn’t we expect attacks to increase? We elected people who aren’t serious about dealing with our real enemies.

Do women believe that marriage imposes wife-obligations on them regarding sex?

April 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager features a lot of discussions about male-female relationships on his show, particularly during the male-female hour.

He did a two part series a while back on 1) male sexuality and 2) what women should do about it within a marriage. Basically, he makes the case that in general, if a woman is married to a good man – a good man whom she freely chose – then she should be willing to say yes to his sexual advances more than she says no.

Part 1 is here.

Excerpt:

> It is an axiom of contemporary marital life that if a wife is not in the mood, she need not have sex with her husband. Here are some arguments why a woman who loves her husband might want to rethink this axiom.
>
> First, women need to recognize how a man understands a wife's refusal to have sex with him: A husband knows that his wife loves him first and foremost by her willingness to give her body to him. This is rarely the case for women. Few women know their husband loves them because he gives her his body (the idea sounds almost funny). This is, therefore, usually a revelation to a woman. Many women think men's natures are similar to theirs, and this is so different from a woman's nature, that few women know this about men unless told about it.
>
> This is a major reason many husbands clam up. A man whose wife frequently denies him sex will first be hurt, then sad, then angry, then quiet. And most men will never tell their wives why they have become quiet and distant. They are afraid to tell their wives. They are often made to feel ashamed of their male sexual nature, and they are humiliated (indeed emasculated) by feeling that they are reduced to having to beg for sex.
>
> When first told this about men, women generally react in one or more of five ways…

It's important to restate that Prager is assuming that the woman has done a competent job of choosing a man who is serious about holding his end of the marriage up. I take this to mean that she has chosen a man who protects, provides and leads on moral and spiritual issues.

Prager then explains the 5 ways that women respond to his statement.

Here's one:

> 1. You have to be kidding. That certainly isn't my way of knowing if he loves me. There have to be deeper ways than sex for me to show my husband that I love

> him.

And this is the common mistake that some women (especially Western women who are often influenced by radical feminism) make because they think that men are just hairy women with no feelings and desires of their own that are distinctly theirs. In the past, *all* women understood how men are different than women, but today almost no younger women do. In fact, many younger women today struggle with the idea that there is anything about men's natures (and children's natures) that they need to learn about. Younger women in the West today often think that they only need to be in touch with their own feelings – and that men and children simply have to get used to the idea that they have no right to make any demands on a woman – she has no moral obligations in a marriage.

Here's another from the list:

> 4. You have it backwards. If he truly loved me, he wouldn't expect sex when I'm not in the mood.

Again, this is the common mistake that many younger Western/feminist women today make in thinking that love is a one-way street – flowing from men and children to the woman. If men and children DON'T do what the woman wants, or if they make demands on her, then they don't "love" her and she is justified in ignoring them. In older generations, women knew that they had moral obligations that existed whether they felt like doing them or not. They especially knew that their free decision to get married to a man would impose obligations on them to supply for the man's distinct male needs. She might not understand those needs. She might be made happy by fulfilling them. But old-fashioned women *knew* what men needed, and they felt obliged to perform their role if the man was perform his roles (protector, provider, moral/spiritual leader). She didn't have to be "happy" to do the roles, just as the man doesn't have to be "happy" about doing his roles. Marriage is about commitment to roles that impose moral obligations on each partner. Marriage is not about happiness, primarily.

I think this whole problem of Western/feminist women not understanding men, of treating men as objects, and of demeaning male feelings and values, is very serious. In my opinion, there is a whole lot of work that needs to be done by Western/feminist women in order to fix this problem. The best place to learn about this is in Dr. Laura's book "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands", which is a book that women should have to read and write about in order to begin a relationship with a man, just to prove that they understand the needs of men and the concept of moral obligations. It's like an application form for a serious relationship. Sex is just one thing in a marriage, but a serious man should insist that a woman take him seriously about it. He should also make sure that she has shown, during the courtship, that she is comfortable doing things to help him that don't necessarily make her happy.

It is important for a man to test-drive a woman before marrying her by giving her things to do that are good things (e.g. – reading a book on apologetics or economics or

intelligent design) so that he can see that she is willing to do good things whether they make her happy or not. Men seem to be very silly these days about marrying women who have only shown that they like having fun all the time, and never want to learn anything hard. Pre-marital sex, having fun, getting drunk, and going out, etc. are not the right foundation for marriage, which requires mutual self-sacrifice. There is no such thing as a "feminist" marriage – marriage is not about selfishness and playing the victim. Men should understand that many women who are willing to have sex before marriage will cut it out after marriage, because they are not used to doing things that don't make them happy. I think you can even remain chaste and still test a women during courtship for this self-sacrificial quality by asking her to do other things that are still very good for her to do. The important thing is to see if "doing right" is more important to her than "feeling happy".

And just because a woman is a virgin and a Christian, it doesn't make her immune to the danger of feeling justified in withholding sex. I actually had a conversation with a chaste Christian woman once who said that women should not be obligated to do things that they didn't feel like doing in a marriage. So, I asked her if men were obligated to go to work when they didn't feel like going. She said yes, and acted as though I were crazy for asking. I just laughed, because she didn't even see the inconsistency. Men – there is a double standard that many Western/feminist women have, even chaste Christian women can have it. Most young women today just don't understand men, and they don't want to understand them. They just want what they want and in the quickest way possible. Understanding the needs of men and children, or how feminist-inspired laws discourage men from committing to marriage and parenting, are of no interest at all many Western/feminist women.

Part 2 is here.

Excerpt:

> Here are eight reasons for a woman not to allow not being in the mood for sex to determine whether she denies her husband sex.

He then explains the eight reasons.

Here's one of them:

> 7. Many contemporary women have an almost exclusively romantic notion of sex: It should always be mutually desired and equally satisfying or one should not engage in it. Therefore, if a couple engages in sexual relations when he wants it and she does not, the act is "dehumanizing" and "mechanical." Now, ideally, every time a husband and wife have sex, they would equally desire it and equally enjoy it. But, given the different sexual natures of men and women, this cannot always be the case. If it is romance a woman seeks — and she has every reason to seek it — it would help her to realize how much more romantic her husband and her marriage are likely to be if he is not regularly denied sex, even of the non-romantic variety.

This makes the point that many young women today do not really understand that they are, in a sense, capable of changing their husband's conduct by the way they act themselves. I think that younger women seem to think that their role in the relationship is to sort of do nothing and wait for the man to serve them. This actually happened to me with another "Biblical Manhood and Womanhood" Calvinist woman. I sat down with her and tried to explain to her what I did for a living, and she got up and left, claiming she did not need to know how the money was made – nor did she need to support me in earning that money. On another occasion, I was explaining a difficult financial problem I had to solve and she screeched back her chair and said "go ahead and solve it then". This is actually very common. Many, many women can read an entire book on "Biblical Manhood and Womanhood" and come out of it knowing all the obligations and responsibilities of men, and none of the obligations and responsibilities of women. Men, it's your *job* to test for this during courtship, if you expect your woman to help you in making a marriage and children for God's glory.

Let me emphasize the point. Women in the West who are influenced by radical feminism are really totally unaware that their role in the relationship is not to stand back and refuse to do anything, then respond to the man's subsequent unwillingness to perform with nagging and complaining and gossiping to their girlfriends. What is interesting is that often many of these women who are very active in fashionable heroic causes are the least capable of self-denial and self-sacrifice when in a relationship with a man. They can march around with signs defending the unborn and promoting marriage, and still be very comfortable ignoring male needs and disrespecting men. Activism *can be* an expression of narcissism. "Look at me! I'm so great!" The very woman you see on TV being interviewed about abortion, homeschooling and daycare is the same one you need to test during courtship to see if she thinks that YOU are as deserving of concern as an unborn or born child is. One pro-family activist I spoke to about this told me that setting out obligations on her that would make the marriage serve God was "too strict". She admitted that the things I was asking her to learn were good things, but that they were "too strict" for her, even if they were good things.

At the end of the article, Prager makes a general point about women that I think needs to be emphasized over and over and over:

> That solution is for a wife who loves her husband — if she doesn't love him, mood is not the problem — to be guided by her mind, not her mood, in deciding whether to deny her husband sex.

I think that is an excellent question to ask a woman. What does it mean to love a man? One of my favorite questions to ask women who I am courting is "If we were married for a day, legally, and before God, what are some of the things that you would want to do to me and for me?" Usually the response is to turn the question around and make it about them. Then I dazzle them with a string of activities that addresses their needs in specific ways, based on their feelings and past experiences. Men – you definitely want to ask women what she wants to provide for you if you were to get married. How does she see

your feelings and past experiences, and what specific things would she like to do to address them with her own two hands? Does she even see marriage as having anything to do with you at all?

How did the Reagan tax cuts and Bush tax cuts affect unemployment?

April 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, which discusses how the Reagan tax cuts affected the unemployment rate.

Excerpt:

> In 1980, President Carter and his supporters in the Congress and news media asked, "how can we afford" presidential candidate Ronald Reagan's proposed tax cuts?
>
> Mr. Reagan's critics claimed the tax cuts would lead to more inflation and higher interest rates, while Mr. Reagan said tax cuts would lead to more economic growth and higher living standards. What happened? Inflation fell from 12.5 percent in 1980 to 3.9 percent in 1984, interest rates fell, and economic growth went from minus 0.2 percent in 1980 to plus 7.3 percent in 1984, and Mr. Reagan was re-elected in a landslide.
>
> […]Despite the fact that federal revenues have varied little (as a percentage of GDP) over the last 40 years, there has been an enormous variation in top tax rates. When Ronald Reagan took office, the top individual tax rate was 70 percent and by 1986 it was down to only 28 percent. All Americans received at least a 30 percent tax rate cut; yet federal tax revenues as a percent of GDP were almost unchanged during the Reagan presidency (from 18.9 percent in 1980 to 18.1 percent in 1988).
>
> What did change, however, was the rate of economic growth, which was more than 50 percent higher for the seven years after the Reagan tax cuts compared with the previous seven years. This increase in economic growth, plus some reductions in tax credits and deductions, almost entirely offset the effect of the rate reductions. Rapid economic growth, unlike government spending programs, proved to be the most effective way to reduce unemployment and poverty, and create opportunity for the disadvantaged.

The conservative Heritage Foundation describes the effects of the Bush tax cuts.

Excerpt:

> President Bush signed the first wave of tax cuts in 2001, cutting rates and providing tax relief for families by, for example, doubling of the child tax credit to $1,000.
>
> At Congress' insistence, the tax relief was initially phased in over many years, so the economy continued to lose jobs. In 2003, realizing its error, Congress made the earlier tax relief effective immediately. Congress also lowered tax rates on

> capital gains and dividends to encourage business investment, which had been lagging.
>
> It was the then that the economy turned around. Within months of enactment, job growth shot up, eventually creating 8.1 million jobs through 2007. Tax revenues also increased after the Bush tax cuts, due to economic growth.
>
> In 2003, capital gains tax rates were reduced. Rather than expand by 36% as the Congressional Budget Office projected before the tax cut, capital gains revenues more than doubled to $103 billion.
>
> The CBO incorrectly calculated that the post-March 2003 tax cuts would lower 2006 revenues by $75 billion. Revenues for 2006 came in $47 billion above the pre-tax cut baseline.
>
> Here's what else happened after the 2003 tax cuts lowered the rates on income, capital gains and dividend taxes:
>
> - GDP grew at an annual rate of just 1.7% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the six quarters following the tax cuts, the growth rate was 4.1%.
> - The S&P 500 dropped 18% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts but increased by 32% over the next six quarters.
> - The economy lost 267,000 jobs in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the next six quarters, it added 307,000 jobs, followed by 5 million jobs in the next seven quarters.
>
> The timing of the lower tax rates coincides almost exactly with the stark acceleration in the economy. Nor was this experience unique. The famous Clinton economic boom began when Congress passed legislation cutting spending and cutting the capital gains tax rate.

Whenever people with savings take risks to grow their wealth, there will be jobs created.

The undisputed best book on intelligent design now has a sequel

April 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The very best book on intelligent design is Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's "Signature in the Cell", which discusses the knotty problem of the origin of life. And now, a new book by Dr. Meyer has been announced to tackle another huge problem: the fossil record.

Here is the description of the new book, entitled "Darwin's Doubt":

> Darwin's *Origin of Species* launched a revolution whose scientific, cultural and spiritual effects are still with us. Now a new revolution is on the horizon. On June 18, the HarperOne imprint of HarperCollins will publish *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design*, by Stephen C. Meyer.
>
> […]Meyer begins with what Darwin himself regarded as a troubling enigma, a subject of doubt and even some scientific distress. It is a mystery from which subsequent generations of Darwinists have sought to distract the public's attention. Some 530 million years ago, in the event called the Cambrian explosion, there sprang suddenly into existence the majority of animal body plans (phyla) that have existed on Earth. The shallow seas of the Cambrian period abruptly teemed with diverse, exotic animals.
>
> Evolutionary biologists and paleontologists have struggled to explain this epic event. Dr. Meyer takes his readers on a journey through scientific history, starting with the discovery of the Burgess Shale by Charles Walcott in 1909. He shows how failed attempts to give a satisfying Darwinian explanation of the Cambrian explosion have opened the door to increasingly profound questions, posed by evolutionary biologists themselves, leading to a far greater mystery: the origin of the biological information necessary to build the animals of the Cambrian and all the living creatures that have existed on Earth.

I have already pre-ordered my copy!

Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You

April 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life Site News reports.

> During his speech to the Planned Parenthood abortion business today, President Barack Obama asked God to bless the number one abortion performer in the United States.
>
> Here is how he ended his speech:
>
> "As long as we've got to fight to make sure women have access to quality, affordable health care, and as long as we've got to fight to protect a woman's right to make her own choices about her own health, I want you to know that you've also got a president who's going to be right there with you, fighting every step of the way," said Obama. "Thank you, Planned Parenthood. God bless you."

Planned Parenthood gets millions of dollars in taxpayer funding, and they then spend a portion of those millions in subsidies on donations to the Democrat Party.

See the related posts to see what Planned Parenthood does that is so "good".

Related posts

- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- Hawaii Planned Parenthood caught counseling sex-selection abortions
- War on women: Obama and Democrats oppose ban on sex-selection abortion
- Live Action sting: Planned Parenthood counsels late-term sex-selection abortion
- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation

- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?

Stephen C. Meyer on the nationally syndicated Michael Medved show

April 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Michael Medved show is a national radio show broadcast out of Seattle, Washington. According to Talkers magazine, he has the fifth largest radio audience. Mr. Medved will now have a segment on origins, evolution and intelligent design every week.

Here is the announcement:

> Does science conflict with religious faith? Does nature offer scientific evidence of design? Should public-school students learn about all sides of contentious scientific issues? Or should teachers spoon-feed them with only the politically approved views? Should scientists be free to pursue the truth, wherever the search takes them? What if it leads to conclusions that are disturbing to a rigidly secular point of view?
>
> Starting this Thursday, April 25, the Michael Medved Show will shine a bright light on these and other fascinating questions that are vital to the future of our nation and our culture.
>
> […]From Darwinian evolution to climate change, science has become a major flashpoint in the culture war. In using science as a political and cultural weapon, aggressive, evangelizing materialists count on our not knowing enough to argue back. That's why, to follow and participate in the greatest debates of our day, you *need to know about the science* behind the controversies.
>
> Each week, leading fellows from Discovery will join Mr. Medved to talk about the intersection of science and culture, how bad science and biased science are corroding the best American values. They'll talk about the assault on human dignity and uniqueness, about attempts to silence dissenting scientists and suppress academic freedom. They will discuss the danger posed by revived Social Darwinism and the new eugenics. And yes, they'll explore the debate over scientific materialism versus intelligent design.
>
> The Michael Medved Show is one of the top ten most listened to radio talk shows in the United States. Syndicated to some 200 radio stations, it reaches an estimated weekly audience of 3-4 million people.

Here is the first segment, courtesy of the Intelligent Design: The Future podcast.

The MP3 file is available for download at the link above.

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, hear Dr. Stephen Meyer talk with Michael Medved on the Medved Show's very first "Science and Culture Update."
>
> Each week, leading fellows from Discovery Institute will join Mr. Medved to talk

> about the intersection of science and culture. Listen in live online or on your local Medved station, or stay tuned for at ID the Future for the weekly podcast.

The podcast is about 15 minutes long, and focuses on work of the atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel, and his views on intelligent design. I highly recommend that you listen to the podcast. It was awesome.

This segment was broadcast in the third hour of the Thursday show, so I am expecting that it will be a regular feature of the third hour. This is cause for rejoicing – a mainstream radio audience is going to have a chance to think about how science and culture interact. Great news!

Now might be a good time to subscribe to the ID: The Future podcast.

New York Times editorial blames Americans for Boston Muslim terrorist attack

April 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mark Steyn takes a look at it in his National Review article. (H/T Doug Ross)

Excerpt:

> Eight-year-old Martin [Richards] was killed; his sister lost a leg; and his mother suffered serious brain injuries. What did the Richards and some 200 other families do to deserve having a great big hole blown in their lives? Well, according to the *New York Times*, they and you bear collective responsibility. Writing on the op-ed page, Marcello Suarez-Orozco, dean of the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, and Carola Suarez-Orozco, a professor at the same institution, began their ruminations thus:
>
> "The alleged involvement of two ethnic Chechen brothers in the deadly attack at the Boston Marathon last week should prompt Americans to reflect on whether we do an adequate job assimilating immigrants who arrive in the United States as children or teenagers."
>
> […]How hard would it be for Americans to be less inadequate when it comes to assimilating otherwise well-adjusted immigrant children? Let us turn once again to Mrs. Tsarnaev:
>
> "They are going to kill him. I don't care," she told reporters. "My oldest son is killed, so I don't care. I don't care if my youngest son is going to be killed today. . . . I don't care if I am going to get killed, too . . . and I will say Allahu Akbar!"
>
> You can say it all you want, madam, but everyone knows that "Allahu Akbar" is Arabic for "Nothing to see here." So, once you've cleared the streets of body parts, you inadequate Americans need to redouble your efforts.

It's our fault that this happened. We didn't supply Mrs. Tsarnaev with enough welfare money. We need to spend more on public schools and free health care and food stamps. At least, that's how the left views it. That's how the Obama administration views it. They would never deport people like the Boston bombers, because that would be "intolerant".

Victor Davis Hanson explains how far the United States will go to avoid deporting welfare-collecting criminals:

> Deportation is now politically incorrect, sort of like the T-word "terrorism" which the administration also seeks to avoid.
>
> […]Why were the Tsarnaevs granted asylum in the United States – and why were some of them not later deported? Officially, they came here as refugees. As ethnic Chechens and former residents of Kyrgyzstan, they sought "asylum" here

> from anti-Muslim persecution – given that Russia had waged a brutal war in Chechnya against Islamic militants.
>
> Yes, the environment of Islamic Russia was and still can be deadly. But if the Tsarnaevs were supposedly in danger there, why did the father, Anzor, after a few years choose to return to Dagestan, Russia, where he now apparently lives in relative safety? Why did one of the alleged Boston bombers, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, return to Russia for six months last year – given that escape from such an unsafe place was the very reason that the United States granted his family asylum in the first place?
>
> […]What, exactly, justifies deportation of immigrants of any status? Failure to find work and become self-supporting? Apparently not. The Tsarnaev family reportedly had been on public assistance. This is not an isolated or unusual instance.
>
> […]Should those residing here illegally at least avoid committing crimes and follow the rules of their adopted country? Apparently not – given that Tamerlan Tsarnaev, a skilled boxer, was charged in 2009 with domestic violence against his girlfriend. His mother, Zubeidat, also back in Russia now, was reportedly arrested last year on charges of shoplifting some $1,600 in goods from a Boston-area store.

Meanwhile, skilled immigrants who come to this country and work for decades without getting so much as a speeding ticket can just go back where they came from. We don't want them – we need to deport them. They are "bad" immigrants who need to go back where they came from. We want the welfare-collecting terrorist immigrants, instead. Like Mrs. Tsarnaev. She is a "good" immigrant who needs to be fast-tracked to permanent residency and citizenship.

Meanwhile, the Department of Homeland Security continues to ignore real terrorism and claim that white male gun owners are the real terrorists in their training material. Just like the FBI claims that pro-lifers are the real terrorists in their training material. The Obama administration isn't serious about national security.

Live Action sting: abortion clinic recommends drowning live baby in toilet

April 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> In a new undercover, investigative video, a staffer at an abortion clinic in Bronx, New York is shown on film telling a customer to flush the body of a baby born alive following a failed abortion down the toilet.
>
> The video shows how the kinds of gruesome late-term and live-birth abortions done at abortion practitioner Kermit Gosnell's "House of Horrors" abortion clinic are not limited to his abortion facility alone.
>
> […]In the video, the abortion counselor is caught on tape describing, in gruesomely precise terms, how late-term abortions happen. She details what is done with a baby after the abortion and advises to "flush" the baby down the toilet if he or she is delivered at home before the final stage of the two- or three-day abortion procedure.
>
> *"If it comes out, then it comes out. Flush it. … if anything, you know, put it in a bag or something or somewhere and bring it to us."*

What might Obama say to the abortion worker in this story? Well, he told Planned Parenthood "God Bless You" recently, and they defended the Gosnell view of abortion at a committee hearing.

J. Warner Wallace: making sense out of the creation from nothing

April 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from “Cold Case Christianity” author J. Warner Wallace.

Excerpt:

> Even as an atheist, I understood the challenge offered by the “Standard Cosmological Model” (theBig Bang Theory) when examined from my naturalistic worldview. This model infers a “cosmological singularity” in which all space, time and matter came into existence at a point in the distant past. In others words, “everything” came from “nothing”. I knew this presented a problem for me as a naturalist; if the universe had a beginning, the “principle of causality” inclined me to believe there must have been a cause. But, what could cause something as vast as the universe? Could it have caused itself to come into existence, or must the first cause of all space, time and matter be non-spatial, atemporal and immaterial? How could “*every*thing” come from “*no*thing”?
>
> One way to navigate this dilemma is simply to redefine the terms we are using. What do we mean when we say “everything” or “nothing”? At first these two terms might seem rather self-explanatory, but it’s important for us to take the time to define the words. By “everything” we mean all space, time and matter. That’s right, space is “something”; empty space is part of “everything” not part of “nothing”. For some of us, that’s an interesting concept that might be hard to grasp, but it’s an important distinction that must be understood. When we say “nothing”, we mean the complete absence of everything; the thorough non-existence of anything at all (including all space time and matter). These two terms, when defined in this way, are consistent with the principles of the Standard Cosmological Model, but demonstrate the dilemma. If everything came from nothing, what caused this to occur? What is the non-spatial, atemporal, immaterial, uncaused, first cause of the universe? A cause of this sort sounds a lot like a supernatural Being, and that’s why I think many naturalists have begun to redefine the terms.

I was just being asked about this by a friend of mine who I sent two copies of Wallace’s book to. (One for non-Christian him, and one for his non-Christian girlfriend, too). He wanted to know what was outside the expansion of space and whether the space would expand forever and what was the space expanding into and would we ever be able to see what was outside of our space. Well, these are all good questions and that’s why Christians need to get used to the standard cosmology. There is nothing at all about that hurts us, but it’s just awful for atheists who think that the universe exists without a cause.

You can click on the link to the article for a hilarious illustration of how atheists redefine

nothing!

Is Baltimore's plan to use female prison guards in a male prison working?

April 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The liberal Daily Beast reports. (H/T Ari)

Excerpt:

> The secretary of Maryland's Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services watched this week as the agency he has run for the last six years turned into a national laughingstock after federal officials indicted 13 women who, as guards at the Baltimore City Detention Center, acted like little more than underlings for members of a dangerous prison gang, the Black Guerrilla Family. Four of the correctional officers became reportedly pregnant by the leader of the gang, and two of them had his name tattooed onto their bodies—one on her neck, the other on her wrist.
>
> […]The allegations unsealed in the federal indictment are eye-popping. Many have been quick to make the comparison to *The Wire,* the crime drama that put Baltimore's criminal underworld into the public consciousness, but what appears to have gone on at the Baltimore City Detention Center, a medieval-looking hulk of a jail in the center of town, would strain the credulity of HBO. Female guards smuggled cellphones, marijuana, and prescription drugs to inmates. Gang members ordered hits from inside the jail and dined on salmon and Grey Goose vodka that was smuggled in on their behalf. Corrections officers stood guard for one another so they could have sex with inmates. They warned prisoners of upcoming searches of their cells by unfriendly colleagues. Tavon White, the leader of the Black Guerrilla Family who allegedly impregnated four of the guards and was there waiting for his murder trial to commence, was caught bragging on a wiretap: "This is my jail. You understand that? I'm dead serious. I make every final call in this jail."

Maybe we should be setting some limits on the feminist idea that men and women are interchangeable, and that women have to make up have the workforce of every job that men do. That's the feminist ideal, but I don't think that customers (in this case, the taxpayers) are well-served by it.

If we as citizens keep voting for bigger government, we need to understand that government is thoroughly compromised by left-wing ideologies that are not interested in producing results for us. If you want to get value for money, you go to the private sector and buy something from a private business that is accountable to you on price and quality. We already have lots of private sector run prisons here, and they work better than Baltimore, that's for sure. Even other countries have tried privatized prisons, why not Maryland?

Tsarnaev family received $100,000 in welfare, food stamps and other benefits

April 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Boston Herald reports. (H/T Ari)

Excerpt:

> The Tsarnaev family, including the suspected terrorists and their parents, benefited from more than $100,000 in taxpayer-funded assistance — a bonanza ranging from cash and food stamps to Section 8 housing from 2002 to 2012, the Herald has learned.
>
> "The breadth of the benefits the family was receiving was stunning," said a person with knowledge of documents handed over to a legislative committee today.
>
> The state has handed over more than 500 documents to the 11-member House Post Audit and Oversight Committee, which today met for the first time and plans to call in officials from the Department of Transitional Assistance to testify.
>
> Transitional assistance officials also told the Herald tonight that the agency was conducting its own investigation into whether Tamerlan Tsarnaev's family ever notified the DTA about his extended trip to Russia, and has since expanded its probe to include a full history of the benefits received by the entire Tsarnaev family.

Arthur Brooks has done some work on seeing what makes people happy, and he concluded that "earned success" is much better for an individual than dependency on government, even if the person has the same amount of wealth either way.

Take a look:

It turns out that making everyone equal by handing redistributing wealth from those who work to those who don't doesn't really make everyone equally happy. Maybe if the Tsarnaevs had to work to an their success by serving their fellow man in the private sector, they would not be so miserable. It cannot be good for people to be dependent on the government. It doesn't make them grateful. It doesn't make them good citizens. It doesn't make them care about their neighbors. Capitalism and the dignity of labor do that.

Feminist Nancy Pelosi pushes national daycare program

April 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports on it.

Excerpt:

> Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) told a gathering in Cleveland that childcare for all should be the next "pillar" of American government and "the president comes close in his budget when he says 'preschool for all' because we have a situation of children learning, parents earning."
>
> […]"What we have to do and not necessarily as, shall we say, as transformative as Social Security and Medicare and the Affordable Care Act for everybody– but I think very important to our country is to have affordable quality childcare for all of America's children. If we are going to unleash all that women have to offer we have to really get to this point."
>
> […]"Now, the president comes close in his budget when he says 'preschool for all' because we have a situation of children learning, parents earning."

With respect to children, the goals are feminism are simple. Force women to act like men. Women have to be encouraged not to marry and then raise their young children. Or, if they do have children, then the children must be taken away so that they keep working and paying taxes to the smart people in government. The one thing that is not permitted by the ideology of feminism is for a man to go to work and for a woman to stay home and attend to her young children. Having a mother stay home with the children is better for them, according to science, but it's not something that feminists like Nancy Pelosi support.

I think another one of the reasons why they don't support it is that they don't like the idea that some women make the choice to get married to a man who can protect and provide, and some don't. They think "how can I make those women equal, so that no one is honored or shamed for choosing wisely?" And the solution is to have the government raise all the children. The woman who chose wisely has a husband who works for $80,000 in income. The government takes half of it and gives it to the single mother who didn't bother to choose a good man. Both sets of children end up in government-run day care, and everyone is equal. Isn't that a good idea? To make it easier for women to not have to care about finding and keeping a good man? Well, people on the left do think it's a good idea.

Can the worldview of naturalism rationally ground mind, meaning and morality?

April 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace, author of "Cold Case Christianity", explains why it can't.

Here's just one of the three troubles with naturalism:

> **Morality**
>
> If naturalism is true, morality is nothing more than a matter of opinion. All of us, as humans, have simply come to embrace those cultural or personal mores that best promote the survival of the species. There is no transcendent, objective moral truth. Instead, cultures merely embrace the values and moral principles that "work" for them and have resulted in the flourishing of their particular people group. If this is the case, one group of evolved humans has no business trying to tell another evolved group what is truly right or wrong from a moral perspective. After all, each group has successfully arrived at their particular level of development by embracing their own accepted moral standards. Arguments over which moral truths provide for greater human flourishing are simply subjective disagreements; there is no transcendent, objective standard that can adjudicate such disagreements from a naturalistic perspective.

Click the link to read the other two!

It is fun to put naturalists on the defensive. I think that the most odd thing about naturalism is that they think that all moral statements are true or false depending on personal preferences. For example, slavery. Whether to own slaves or not is really the slave owner's choice, on naturalism. Some societies in some places and times allow it, and others don't. Naturalism has nothing at all to say about which view is correct, because there is no design for humans on naturalism – no way we ought to be. Every view is as good as any other, because there is no one to decide.

The justification for moral values and duties is important because the justification is what helps us to do the right thing when it involves self-sacrifice and self-denial. Anybody can be good when it's easy. Being good when it's hard takes rationality, and naturalists don't have that in their worldview. When a naturalists says "I'm a good person without God", you have to understand that they are making that statement as a statement of preference. On their view, there is nothing right or wrong with anything, *as a matter of fact*. They have determined themselves what counts as good, and they are in compliance with their own arbitrary preferences. That's what they mean by "I'm good".

Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available

May 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a report from one of the whistle-blowers who is shedding light on the Benghazi cover-up.

Excerpt:

> A military special ops member who watched as the deadly attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi unfolded last September told Fox News the U.S. had highly trained forces just a few hours away, and said he and others feel the government betrayed the four men who died in the attack.
>
> Speaking on condition of anonymity, and appearing in a Fox News Channel interview with his face and voice disguised, the special operator contradicted claims by the Obama administration and a State Department review that said there wasn't enough time for U.S. military forces to have intervened in the Sept. 11 attack in which U.S. Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens, an embassy employee and two former Navy SEALs working as private security contractors were killed.
>
> "I know for a fact that C-110, the EUCOM CIF, was doing a training exercise in … not in the region of North Africa, but in Europe," the operator told Fox News' Adam Housley. "And they had the ability to act and to respond."
>
> The C-110 is a 40-man Special Ops force capable of rapid response and deployment specifically trained for incidents like last year's attack in Benghazi. During the night of the Sept. 11, 2012, attack in Libya, in which U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans were killed in Libya, the C-110 were training in Croatia, just 3 ½ hours away.
>
> "We had the ability to load out, get on birds and fly there, at a minimum stage," the operator told Fox News. "C-110 had the ability to be there, in my opinion, in a matter of about four hours…four to six hours."
>
> Being so close, C-110s would have been able to respond had there been a second attack, the source added.

Will this testimony come to light at a hearing, or will it be covered up by the Obama administration?

Fox News reports that the Obama administration is threatening whistle-blowers.

Excerpt:

> At least four career officials at the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency have retained lawyers or are in the process of doing so, as they prepare to provide sensitive information about the Benghazi attacks to Congress, Fox

> News has learned.
>
> Victoria Toensing, a former Justice Department official and Republican counsel to the Senate Intelligence Committee, is now representing one of the State Department employees. She told Fox News her client and some of the others, who consider themselves whistle-blowers, have been threatened by unnamed Obama administration officials.
>
> "I'm not talking generally, I'm talking specifically about Benghazi – that people have been threatened," Toensing said in an interview Monday. "And not just the State Department. People have been threatened at the CIA."
>
> Toensing declined to name her client. She also refused to say whether the individual was on the ground in Benghazi on the night of Sept. 11, 2012, when terrorist attacks on two U.S. installations in the Libyan city killed four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens.
>
> However, Toensing disclosed that her client has pertinent information on all three time periods investigators consider relevant to the attacks: the months that led up to the attack, when pleas by the ambassador and his staff for enhanced security in Benghazi were mostly rejected by senior officers at the State Department; the eight-hour time frame in which the attacks unfolded, and the eight-day period that followed the attacks, when Obama administration officials incorrectly described them as the result of a spontaneous protest over a video.
>
> "It's frightening, and they're doing some very despicable threats to people," she said. "Not 'we're going to kill you,' or not 'we're going to prosecute you tomorrow,' but they're taking career people and making them well aware that their careers will be over [if they cooperate with congressional investigators]."

In general, Democrats are not strong on foreign policy, because they blame America for everything and praise our enemies when they attack us. You won't get much security from that attitude. When things go wrong, they will try to cover it up. They will even resort to outright lies in order to avoid the blame they deserve for opening us up to terrorist attacks.

Related posts

- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA's account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up

- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama’s security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack
- Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser
- Obama administration warns contractors to delay layoffs to after election
- Obama wants to send $1 billion of aid to Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
- Report: Iran shipping arms and personnel to Syria through Iraq
- Obama is skipping over half of his daily intelligence briefings (PDBs)
- The top 10 foreign policy failures of the Obama administration
- Russian attack submarine operates undetected in Gulf of Mexico for a month
- Democrat defense cuts to an already weakened military expose us to aggression
- Richard Miniter: Obama canceled Bin Laden kill mission THREE TIMES
- Can the Democrats be trusted to protect our national security?
- Obama administration leaked name of British agent who stopped Al Qaeda attack
- Obama overrides Congress to send $192 million to Palestinian Authority
- Obama’s neutrality on the Falklands dispute puts special relationship at risk
- Obama’s Arab Spring: Rockets fired from Egypt hit Israeli city
- Is the Obama administration behind the leak of Israel’s plan to strike Iran?
- Top Iranian official assisting Syria to crackdown on protestors
- Obama’s defense cuts undermine our national security
- Iran set to steal military technology from the drone Obama gave them

New EPA report: natural gas production is even cleaner than previously thought

May 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal Associated Press. (H/T Hot Air)

Excerpt:

> The Environmental Protection Agency has dramatically lowered its estimate of how much of a potent heat-trapping gas leaks during natural gas production, in a shift with major implications for a debate that has divided environmentalists: Does the recent boom in fracking help or hurt the fight against climate change?
>
> Oil and gas drilling companies had pushed for the change, but there have been differing scientific estimates of the amount of methane that leaks from wells, pipelines and other facilities during production and delivery. Methane is the main component of natural gas.
>
> The new EPA data is “kind of an earthquake” in the debate over drilling, said Michael Shellenberger, the president of the Breakthrough Institute, an environmental group based in Oakland, Calif. “This is great news for anybody concerned about the climate and strong proof that existing technologies can be deployed to reduce methane leaks.”
>
> The scope of the EPA’s revision was vast. In a mid-April report on greenhouse emissions, the agency now says that tighter pollution controls instituted by the industry resulted in an average annual decrease of 41.6 million metric tons of methane emissions from 1990 through 2010, or more than 850 million metric tons overall. That’s about a 20 percent reduction from previous estimates. The agency converts the methane emissions into their equivalent in carbon dioxide, following standard scientific practice.
>
> The EPA revisions came even though natural gas production has grown by nearly 40 percent since 1990. The industry has boomed in recent years, thanks to a stunning expansion of drilling in previously untapped areas because of the use of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, which injects sand, water and chemicals to break apart rock and free the gas inside.

Wow, when you have the EPA on board with responsible energy development, then you know it’s solid.

See my previous post in which I talked about how the EPA had exonerated fracking in Dimock, Pennsylvania.

Advice for Christians who discuss their faith with atheists… from an atheist

May 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this post by Jeffery Jay Lowder on The Secular Outpost, and I think it's good advice.

> There are times where two people speak the same language, use the same words, and mean *very* different things by the same words. In conversations between Christians and atheists, "faith" is one such word. For many atheists, the word "faith" means, by default, belief *without* evidence or even belief *against* the evidence. In contrast, I doubt many Christians would accept that definition. For example, according to the NIV translation, Hebrews 11:1 states, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."
>
> Victor Reppert, at *Dangerous Idea,* writes this about the word "faith."
>
> Every time you use the word "faith" in a discussion with an atheist, they are going to declare victory. They will presume that you are believing for no reason, and that you are are admitting that the evidence is against you.
>
> I think he is probably right. If Christians want to dialogue with atheists, I think Christians would be well served to speak the 'language' of atheists. The word "faith" simply has too much baggage associated with it; inserting that word into the conversation is likely to become a distraction from whatever point the Christian was probably trying to make. So if you're a Christian talking with atheists, my advice is to temporarily delete the word "faith" from your vocabulary. Find some other way to make your point.

A better word to use is "trust", and here's Christian apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason to make the same point:

Christian apologist Jonathan Morrow had a similar post on Think Christianly. (Mark well the part he put in bold)

Excerpt:

> In today's post I want to share a conversation I had with some of the sharp young men during lunch. It had to do with how we talk about Christianity with our friends, family, and coworkers. Most of the time, well meaning Christians talk about Christianity in the context of religion…not reality. Is that a problem? Yes, and here's why. Religion is understood as a personal and private feeling that is not accessible by everyone else. You can't question, challenge, or investigate it; you must simply be tolerant of it (and by tolerant, I am using the modern misunderstanding of tolerance which believes that all religious views are equally valid simply because a person sincerely believes them). That's why having a

> conversation about Christianity as a religion is a dead end. It's a non-starter.
>
> That's why I encouraged these students to talk about Christianity in the context of reality where terms like truth, knowledge, reason, and evidence apply. Any claim about reality is either true or false (it can't be both). *If Christianity is not the kind of thing that can be true or false…the battle has already been lost and the Gospel cannot be seriously considered*. We need to talk about Christianity in the same way we talk about having a prescription filled at the pharmacy or receiving instruction from a Doctor.
>
> In today's society, religion is a fuzzy (i.e., socially constructed or psychologically projected) category that makes little difference in everyday life. **But if Christianity is true, then it speaks to ALL of life. It makes a comprehensive claim on reality**. Jesus didn't intend to merely address two hours of our week. As Christians we need to have more conversations about reality and less about religion.

I've even written a post about the concept of faith that is presented in the Bible and the word faith has nothing to do with blind belief in the Bible – it's always based on evidence, so that people can know for certain what the truth is. I highly recommend it for anyone who disagrees with Jeffery,Greg or Jonathan. When you're talking about Christianity, you're talking about what you know. You're talking about the way the world is, for everyone. When you talk about your belief in God, you should say "trust". You should not say "faith".

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Department of Defense states that it will punish Christians for evangelizing

May 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM posted this story from Breitbart.

Excerpt:

> The Pentagon has released a statement confirming that soldiers could be prosecuted for promoting their faith: "Religious proselytization is not permitted within the Department of Defense…Court martials and non-judicial punishments are decided on a case-by-case basis…".
>
> The statement, released to Fox News, follows a Breitbart News report on Obama administration Pentagon appointees meeting with anti-Christian extremist Mikey Weinstein to develop court-martial procedures to punish Christians in the military who express or share their faith.
>
> (From our earlier report: Weinstein is the head of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, and says Christians–including chaplains–sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in the military are guilty of "treason," and of committing an act of "spiritual rape" as serious a crime as "sexual assault." He also asserted that Christians sharing their faith in the military are "enemies of the Constitution.")
>
> Being convicted in a court martial means that a soldier has committed a crime under federal military law. Punishment for a court martial can include imprisonment and being dishonorably discharged from the military.
>
> So President Barack Obama's civilian appointees who lead the Pentagon are confirming that the military will make it a crime–possibly resulting in imprisonment–for those in uniform to share their faith. This would include chaplains—military officers who are ordained clergymen of their faith (mostly Christian pastors or priests, or Jewish rabbis)–whose duty since the founding of the U.S. military under George Washington is to teach their faith and minister to the spiritual needs of troops who come to them for counsel, instruction, or comfort.
>
> This regulation would severely limit expressions of faith in the military, even on a one-to-one basis between close friends. It could also effectively abolish the position of chaplain in the military, as it would not allow chaplains (or any service members, for that matter), to say anything about their faith that others say led them to think they were being encouraged to make faith part of their life. It's difficult to imagine how a member of the clergy could give spiritual counseling without saying anything that might be perceived in that fashion.

Wow. So you can be openly gay in the military but you can't be openly Christian. Thanks Barack Obama.

See, the problem is that the people who pass these laws think that a person can be a Christian without evangelizing. But Christianity is a missionary faith, there is an obligation to evangelize included in the practices of an authentic Christian life. To forbid evangelism is to be intolerant of genuine Christainity. The people who made this law are ordering Christians to override their obligations to Jesus Christ. It's essentially fascism – using the power of secular government to force individuals to deny their freely chosen religion.

Let me illustrate from the Bible exactly what is expected of Christians.

Matthew 10:32-33:

32 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.

33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

That's what's at stake here. These are just a couple of examples, there are many more.

People on the left should reflect and understand what it is exactly that they are doing by marginalizing Christianity and trying to stop people from believing it by shaming and intimidating Christians, and leading people into sin. If Christianity is true, then actions like that are probably *the absolute worst thing you can do.* It's particularly nasty when you realize that the reason that secular leftists try to suppress Christians from being authentic Christians is because of *their feelings.* Secular leftists *feel* that they have a right to suppress the freedoms of others by force of law. They feel justified in forcing Christians to act like atheists because they *feel* offended.

Let's double-check that with the Bible and make sure. (Note: This is Jesus talking)

Matthew 18:6-14:

6 "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

7 Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!

8 If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown

into eternal fire.

[9] And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

[10] “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

[12] “What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?

[13] And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off.

[14] In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

Trying to persuade a Christian that they are wrong is fine, but using the power of the state to take away a faithful Christian’s job, which discourages them from being Christian, is something else. It is wrong to intimidate someone away from an authentic relationship with God as he really is, *just because of your feelings of discomfort at public expressions of religious faith.* The right of each person to express their religion in public is a basic right, but there is no right not to be offended by someone else’s use of liberty to just be themselves. No one is asking for non-Christians to be forced to convert to Christianity or to be forced to celebrate and affirm Christianity by the power of the state. We’re just asking to be who we are without losing our jobs.

ESPN newscaster punished for not affirming the goodness of homosexuality

May 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a popular post at the American Spectator.

Excerpt:

> As homosexuals come out of the closet, Christians go into it. "Authenticity" is highly prized in society today, provided that what one feels falls safely within the dictates of political correctness. Sports analyst Chris Broussard stepped briefly outside of the Christian closet on Monday and paid the price for it.
>
> "Personally I don't believe that you can live an openly homosexual lifestyle or an openly premarital sex [lifestyle] between heterosexuals. If you're openly living that type of lifestyle, the Bible says you know them by their fruits, it says that's a sin," Broussard said on ESPN. "If you're openly living in unrepentant sin, whatever it may be, not just homosexuality, adultery, fornication, premarital sex between heterosexuals, whatever it may be. I think that's walking in open rebellion to God and to Jesus Christ."
>
> ESPN, not long thereafter, apologized for permitting these remarks to disrupt Monday's canonization: "We regret that a respectful discussion of personal viewpoints became a distraction from today's news. ESPN is fully committed to diversity and welcomes Jason Collins' announcement."
>
> Naturally, a Soviet-style clarification was in order from the guilty party, and Broussard supplied it via Twitter by Monday night: "Today on [ESPN], as part of a larger, wide-ranging discussion on today's news, I offered my personal opinion as it relates to Christianity, a point of view that I have expressed publicly before. I realize that some people disagree with my opinion and I accept and respect that. As has been the case in the past, my beliefs have not and will not impact my ability to report on the NBA. I believe Jason Collins displayed bravery with his announcement today and I have no objection to him or anyone else playing in the NBA."

Broussard did a good job of expressing his opposition to marriage, but any kind of restrictions on sex are no longer welcome in a society that thinks that there are no moral rules when it comes to sex. Obviously, he could have a better job of expressing his opposition with some evidence, but I don't see why he should be censored and forced to apologize.

One other funny thing about the gay NBA player story. He had a girlfriend for 8 years and was going to marry her in 2009. He called it off. She found out that he was gay just a few days before the big announcement was made to the public. I wonder how this sort of thing squares with the popular myth that gay people are born gay?

What is marriage? Ryan T. Anderson debates Alastair Gamble at Arizona State University

May 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Details:

> A debate about what marriage is, hosted by the Federalist Society at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, featuring Ryan T. Anderson and Alastair Gamble.

The debate took place at the law school at Arizona State University.

The speakers:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson's recent work focuses on the moral and constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012). The three also co-wrote the article "What is Marriage?" in the winter 2011 issue of *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*.
>
> Anderson received his bachelor of arts degree from Princeton University, graduating *Phi Beta Kappa* and*magna cum laude.* He is a doctoral candidate in political philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, where he received his master's degree.
>
> Alastair Gamble is an attorney in the firm's Litigation group and focuses his practice on Labor and Employment at both the trial and appellate level.
>
> From 2008 – 2012, Mr. Gamble practiced in Los Angeles, California, where he focused on Labor and Employment and Securities litigation. Before that, he served as a law clerk to Hon. Andrew Hurwitz of the Arizona Supreme Court and as a judicial extern to Hon. Michael Daly Hawkins of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.
>
> Mr. Gamble holds the J.D., Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University and the B.A., History, Emory University, 2000.

The video is 70 minutes:

The format is 15 minute opening speeches, 5 minute rebuttals, then Q&A.

Good news! Liberty University offers scholarship to persecuted Eagle Scout

May 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is such a heart-warming story that I had to post it!

Fox News reports.

> A North Carolina Eagle Scout who was arrested and faces expulsion for accidentally leaving a shotgun in his pickup truck in the school parking lot has been offered a scholarship to attend Liberty University.
>
> Cole Withrow was just a few weeks from graduating with honors from Princeton High School when he was arrested on Monday and slapped with a felony weapons charge. Withrow had been skeet shooting with friends a day before and had only noticed he had left his shotgun in his truck as he reached to grab his book bag.
>
> When he realized his mistake, he went to the front office and called his mother. An administrator overheard the conversation and called police.
>
> Withrow's story has generated national attention. Hundreds of people have joined a Facebook community to show their support. And many local parents are upset over what many believe is a case of a young man getting severely punished for trying to do the right thing.
>
> "You teach your kids if you're in trouble or if you see you've done something wrong, go ahead and admit it," family friend Kimberly Boykin said. "Be a man and it'll be fixed. In this case, that's what he did and he's being punished for it. That's not the lesson we need to teach our kids."
>
> Jerry Falwell, Jr., the chancellor of Liberty University, had been traveling through North Carolina and saw a local television news account of Withrow's ordeal. He also noticed that the 18-year-old was wearing a "Liberty University" t-shirt.
>
> Falwell told Fox News that he made a few calls and discovered that Withrow's sister is a Liberty graduate.
>
> "I was really impressed with what a meek and humble Christian kid he is," Falwell said. "I thought he would be a perfect fit at Liberty."
>
> So the chancellor made the 18-year-old an offer he couldn't refuse.
>
> "I told him that we would give him whatever scholarships he needed to attend Liberty University," he said.
>
> Falwell said the university is willing to do whatever it takes to make sure the teenager gets a college education.
>
> "The anti-gun zealots seem to be vilifying him for making an honest mistake," he told Fox News. "We want to reward him for trying to do the right thing."
>
> And that means even helping the young man finish his last few weeks of high

> school. Falwell said they offered to let him finish his high school work through their online academy.

Wow! Isn’t that a great way to show the public school tyrants a better way? Be sure and share / tweet this story if you liked it, because it really shows how Christians can step up and do the right thing when the secular left is too brainwashed by political correctness make a right judgment.

Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument

May 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a must-listen interview from Apologetics 315.

Details:

> Today's interview is with Robin Collins, professor of philosophy at Messiah College. His training is in physics and in philosophy and he is a leading advocate for using the fine-tuning of the universe as a design argument for theism. He talks about his background and training, the fine-tuning argument, the different types of fine-tuning with examples and illustrations (laws, constants and initial conditions), two different ways of presenting the fine-tuning argument, answering common objections to the argument, the uniqueness of life, variations of the multiverse hypothesis, the failure of multiverse theory to explain away fine-tuning, objections to Victor Stenger, upcoming books, simplifying the fine-tuning argument for practical use, common mistakes when presenting the argument, the most common objection (*who designed God?*), and more.

Get the MP3 file from Apologetics 315.

Dr. Collins is extremely cautious and circumspect in his assessment of the fine-tuning argument. He takes the objections to the argument, like the multiverse, seriously and that comes across in the interview. He is familiar with criticisms of the argument and he has engaged with skeptics like Victor Stenger in his published work. I highly recommend it. It is a little more suited to intermediate-level Christians, but not so advanced that it's impossible for non-math beginners to follow the broad thrust of what's being said.

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered

> Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

You can read Robin Collins' testimony here.

The fine-tuning argument

Here's a short article where Collins gives TWO examples of the fine-tuning. He is very modest in his argument, merely asserting that the fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than it is with atheism.

Excerpt:

> Science is commonly thought to have undercut belief in God. As Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg famously remarked, "the more we find out about the universe, the more meaningless it all seems." Yet, the discoveries of modern physics and cosmology in the last 50 years have shown that the structure of the universe is set in an extraordinarily precise way for the existence of life; if its structure were slightly different, even by an extraordinarily small degree, life would not be possible. In many people's minds, the most straightforward explanation of this remarkable fine-tuning is some sort of divine purpose behind our universe.

> This fine-tuning falls into three categories: the fine-tuning of the laws of nature, the fine-tuning of the constants of physics, and the fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe. "Fine-tuning of the laws of nature" refers to the fact that if the universe did not have precisely the right combination of laws, complex intelligent life would be impossible. If there were no universal attractive force (law of gravity), for example, matter would be dispersed throughout the universe and the energy sources (such as stars) needed for life would not exist. Without the strong nuclear force that binds protons and neutrons together in the nucleus, there would not be any atoms with an atomic number greater than hydrogen, and hence no complex molecules needed for life. And without the Pauli-exclusion principle, all electrons would fall to the lowest orbital of an atom, undercutting the kind of complex chemistry that life requires.

> Some fundamental physical numbers governing the structure of the universe—called the constants of physics—also must fall into an exceedingly narrow range for life to exist. For example, many have estimated that the cosmological constant—a fundamental number that governs the expansion rate of empty space—must be precisely set to one part in 10^{120} in order for life to occur; if it were too large, the universe would have expanded too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form, and if it were too small, the universe would have collapsed back on itself. As Stephen Hawking wrote in his book A Brief History of Time, "The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life." Finally, the initial distribution of mass energy at the time of the big bang must have an enormously special configuration for life to

> occur, which Cambridge University mathematical physicist Roger Penrose has calculated to be on the order of one part in $10^{10^{123}}$. This is an unimaginably small number.

I know what you're thinking: How do we know that non-Christian scientists acknowledge the fine-tuning of gravity in the way that Collins describes?

Well, the New Scientist actually talks about the fine-tuning of the force of gravity. And they're not Christians.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe's birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15}at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Here's a very long paper by Collins on the fine-tuning argument, where he answers several objections to the argument, including the multiverse/many-universe hypothesis.

If you want a longer response to the multiverse argument, but you don't want to shell out big bucks for Collins' chapter in the "Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology", then you can just get James Sinclair's essay in "Contending With Christianity's Critics".

Neil Simpson on gay NBA player Jason Collins and his 8-year fiance Carolyn Moos

May 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Read Neil's post here first.

And here's my comment to his post:

> Neil, the story of this woman investing eight years with this man has been on my mind all week. I am not saying she is innocent. She is a fool. And she is responsible for choosing him. But my point would be this: why is everyone CELEBRATING this man? All he did is steal 8 years of her life and then abandoned her for the gay lifestyle, with all that that entails. Why is this good? I am not minimizing her responsibility. She is 100% responsible because she chose him over better marriage-minded men. But why celebrate this guy? What is there to celebrate? I would rather celebrate Neil Simpson and his marriage and family and Christian children if we are going to have to celebrate anything.

So, I wanted to make a comment about women who choose cads like Jason Collins.

What is it that causes these women to think that just because a man is athletic that he has what it takes to protect, provide and lead on moral and spiritual issues? Why pick someone who has fame from shooting a basketball or playing a guitar? What does that have to do with making commitments, being faithful, and teaching children? It's completely irrational. Remember Tiger Woods? He could whack a golf ball really well, but commitment and fidelity were just not his things. Why celebrate him? Why marry him? What does swinging a club in front of a crowd have to do with life-long married love?

Don't be that gal

If you are a woman and want to avoid making poor choices like Carolyn Moos, you can reverse engineer my dating questions and use them to detect fakes.

Here's question 8 from the list that I ask women:

8. Marriage

Explain the public purposes of marriage, and then outline three threats to marriage and explain what legislation you would propose to neutralize these threats. What choices should people make before marriage to make sure they will have a stable, loving marriage?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Some public purposes of marriage are i) to force moral constraints on sexual activity, ii) to produce the next generation of humans, iii) to provide children with a stable, loving environment in which to grow up. Three threats to marriage are i) cohabitation, ii) no-fault divorce – which leads to fatherlessness, and iii) same-sex marriage. There are others, too. For legislation, there are things like tax incentives, shared parenting laws, school choice to de-monopolize politicized public schools, etc. Pre-

marriage behaviors are things like chastity, experience with children, having lots of savings, being physically fit, etc. Having a degree in experimental science, math or economics is excellent for a woman. Avoid artsy degrees, especially English.

BONUS POINTS: Name more threats to marriage, explain the effects of fatherlessness on children, explain how divorce courts work, explain how socialism impacts the family through taxation and wealth redistribution, explain what happens to women and children after a divorce.

WHY IT MATTERS: It's important for people who want to get married that they understand that marriage takes time and effort, and it requires both spouses to prepare for marriage, to be diligent at choosing a good spouse, and to understand what spouses and children need in order to stay engaged.

I can assure you that Jason Collins wouldn't survive 5 seconds with a woman who was using my checklist, and it would save her a lot of time. Guess what? There is more to marriage-mindedness than *broad shoulders* and *basketball skillz*. Marriage requires a worldview that grounds self-sacrificial love and objective moral obligations RATIONALLY. The man should be able to present a plan for marriage that shows that some thought has been put into what he is trying to achieve with the marriage and the children, and why he needs you in particular to help.

Good behaviors have to be reasonable to a man, based on his prior efforts to study areas of knowledge that *make them reasonable*. He has to have a worldview that makes the duties of a husband and father – providing, parenting, teaching, fidelity, commitment, etc. – REASONABLE TO HIM. His goodness cannot be just talk. His goodness cannot be rooted in just preferences. It has to be rooted in knowledge derived from reasoning and a careful study of evidence. It takes study to ground the worldview that makes a good marriage. When will women learn?

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5
- Courting rules: what should a Christian woman be looking for in a man?
- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Are churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

9.5 million people have left the workforce under Obama

May 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

BLS Labor Force Participation April 2013

CNS News explains the real state of the work force in America.

Excerpt:

> 9.5 million Americans have left the workforce during the presidency of Barack Obama, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
>
> In April, the total number of Americans counted as "not in the labor force" declined for the first time since December, but that number was still near a record high at 89,936,000.
>
> Those not in the labor force declined by 31,000, from a record high of 89,967,000 in March. That broke the recent record of 89,304,000 not in the labor force in February of this year.
>
> Since February 2009, the first full month of Obama's presidency, 9,549,000 people have left the labor force. There were 80,387,000 Americans not working that month, compared with 89,936,000 not working or looking today, according to the latest economic release from BLS.
>
> The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) labels people who are unemployed and no longer looking for work as "not in the labor force,"and that includes people who have retired on schedule, taken early retirement, or simply given up looking for work.
>
> In the 50 months since Obama has been in office, the number of people counted as not in the labor force has declined 16 times.

Remember that during that period, we have been adding more people through birth and immigration, and running up our national debt by over SIX TRILLION dollars since Obama took office (total debt is now $17 trillion). When you spend that much money, you should be seeing MORE people employed. And you would be seeing that, if it's being spent on private sector job creation. But it's not. It's being wasted. And the very people who voted

for Obama – the young people – are the ones who will have to pay it all back. Without jobs! Is collecting money from government welfare a long-term solution to repaying the debt? That's what we are doing now – putting millions of people on disability and welfare. Is that going to help them to pay back all of Obama's borrowing later?

Related posts

- 200,000 fewer people are employed, labor force participation reaches 1979 level
- 73% of the new jobs created in the last 5 months were government jobs
- Unemployment rate is 10.5%, counting those who have stopped job-hunting
- Obama: private sector job creation is "doing fine"
- New jobs report: unemployment rises and 70% chance of recession
- Economy improving? New CBO report says that real unemployment is at 15%
- 1.2 million people dropped out of the labor force in one month

Lightning round: Ryan T. Anderson answers several questions about marriage

May 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

John Stonestreet interviews marriage defender Ryan T. Anderson: (Source: The Colson Center)

Questions:

- Don't gay couples have a right to express their love in marriage like everyone else?
- How would legalizing gay marriage hurt your marriage?
- Marriage is already in such bad shape, how could it hurt marriage to allow more people to marry?
- Aren't natural marriage proponents on the "wrong side of history"?

Every word counts in this concise primer on defending marriage. Blink, and you'll miss pure gold.

You can watch Ryan debate gay marriage at Arizona State University right here.

Smart Faith apologetics conference coming to Phoenix, AZ in June 2013

May 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the conference page.

Schedule:

> **June 7th – Pre-conference dinner with special guest speaker Greg Koukl, President of Stand to Reason**
> We will enjoy a catered, pre-conference dinner together followed by Greg Koukl talking to us about the importance of contending for the Faith. Seating for this pre-conference event is limited and those who buy a ticket to this event will have free-admittance to the conference on Saturday, June 8th. This event is scheduled to start at 6:30 PM at the conference location. Doors will open at 6 PM.
>
> **June 8th – Conference Schedule**
> 8:00 – 9:00 AM – doors open for walk-up registration
> 9:00 – 10:00 AM – "Truth is not Ice Cream" ~ Greg Koukl
> 10:00 – 10:20 AM – break
> 10:20 – 11:20 AM – "iWitness Biblical Archaeology" ~ Doug Powell
> 11:20 AM – 1:00 PM – Lunch
> 1:00 – 2:00 PM – "The Cold Case Difference Between Artifacts and Evidence" ~ J Warner Wallace
> 2:00 – 2:20 PM – break
> 2:20 – 3:20 PM – Break-out Sessions
>
> - "Pro-Life" ~ Letitia Wong
> - "How Objective Beauty Proves God's Existence" ~ Doug Powell
> - "An Introduction to Christian Apologetics" ~ Dr. Craig Hazen
>
> 3:20 – 3:40 PM – break
> 3:40 – 4:10 PM – Interview with J Warner Wallace on his new book "Cold-Case Christianity"
> 4:10 – 4:30 PM – break
> 4:30 – 5:30 PM – "Christianity and the Challenge of World Religions" ~ Dr. Craig Hazen

If you are in the Phoenix area, this looks like a great conference to attend!

Stephen C. Meyer discusses Richard Dawkins on the Michael Medved show

May 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Michael Medved show is a national radio show broadcast out of Seattle, Washington. According to Talkers magazine, he has the fifth largest radio audience. In the last week of April, Mr. Medved accounced a new segment on origins, evolution and intelligent design that will be heard each week.

Here is the original announcement:

> Does science conflict with religious faith? Does nature offer scientific evidence of design? Should public-school students learn about all sides of contentious scientific issues? Or should teachers spoon-feed them with only the politically approved views? Should scientists be free to pursue the truth, wherever the search takes them? What if it leads to conclusions that are disturbing to a rigidly secular point of view?
>
> Starting this Thursday, April 25, the Michael Medved Show will shine a bright light on these and other fascinating questions that are vital to the future of our nation and our culture.
>
> […]From Darwinian evolution to climate change, science has become a major flashpoint in the culture war. In using science as a political and cultural weapon, aggressive, evangelizing materialists count on our not knowing enough to argue back. That's why, to follow and participate in the greatest debates of our day, you *need to know about the science* behind the controversies.
>
> Each week, leading fellows from Discovery will join Mr. Medved to talk about the intersection of science and culture, how bad science and biased science are corroding the best American values. They'll talk about the assault on human dignity and uniqueness, about attempts to silence dissenting scientists and suppress academic freedom. They will discuss the danger posed by revived Social Darwinism and the new eugenics. And yes, they'll explore the debate over scientific materialism versus intelligent design.
>
> The Michael Medved Show is one of the top ten most listened to radio talk shows in the United States. Syndicated to some 200 radio stations, it reaches an estimated weekly audience of 3-4 million people.

Here is the second segment from this past week, courtesy of the Intelligent Design: The Future podcast.

The MP3 file is available for download at the link above.

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Dr. Stephen Meyer continues his conversation

> with Michael Medved on the Medved Show's "Science and Culture Update."
> Listen in as Meyer and Medved discuss a recent prominent criticism of Richard Dawkins and take questions from callers about intelligent design.
>
> Each week, leading fellows from Discovery Institute will join Mr. Medved to talk about the intersection of science and culture. Listen in live online or on your local Medved station, or stay tuned for at ID the Future for the weekly podcast.

In addition to talking about Dawkins, he also discusses the Cambrian explosion and takes calls from angry Darwinists.

Now might be a good time to subscribe to the ID: The Future podcast.

Previous entries

- Episode one: Thomas Nagel and intelligent design

Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack "from the get-go"

May 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBS News. This is a news article, not an editorial.

Excerpt:

> "Everybody in the mission" in Benghazi, Libya, thought the attack on a U.S. consulate there last Sept. 11 was an act of terror "from the get-go," according to excerpts of an interview investigators conducted with the No. 2 official in Libya at the time, obtained by CBS News' "Face the Nation."
>
> "I think everybody in the mission thought it was a terrorist attack from the beginning," Greg Hicks, a 22-year foreign service diplomat who was the highest-ranking U.S. official in Libya after the strike, told investigators under authority of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Hicks, the former U.S. Embassy Tripoli deputy chief of mission, was not in Benghazi at the time of the attack, which killed Chris Stevens – then the U.S. ambassador to Libya – and three other Americans.
>
> When he appears this week before the committee, chaired by Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., Hicks is expected to offer testimony at odds with what some American officials were saying in public – and on "Face the Nation" – just five days after the attack. Benghazi whistleblowers have rallied attention to discrepancies among the administration's reaction to the attack, which The Weekly Standard suggests was frayed by ever-evolving talking points that sought to remove references to al Qaeda.
>
> On Sept. 16, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice hit the media circuit, appearing on all five Sunday talk shows to dispel the notion that the strike was a premeditated terrorist act and to perpetuate the case that it began "spontaneously" out of protests in Egypt. Rice's spot on "Face the Nation" that day was preceded by the new President of Libya Mohammed al-Magariaf, who said his government had "no doubt that this was preplanned, predetermined."
>
> […]Appearing on "Face the Nation" to address Hicks's remarks, chairman Issa agreed Sunday that the "fatal error" in a debacle that marked a "misinformation campaign at best, and a cover-up at worst," was tossing into the lurch the relationship between the United States and Libya.

Read the whole article for a lot more about this critical scandal.

The attack was pre-planned. American personnel on the ground in Libya knew it was a pre-planned attack. The talking points that were put out were false. The purpose of the talking points was to save Obama's re-election campaign by hiding the fact that his weakness emboldened our enemies to commit more terrorist attacks than happened

under Bush. Frank Gaffney even suggests that the cover-up was meant to hide the Obama administration's efforts to supply Syrian opposition forces, including Al Qaeda, with heavy weapons. A sort of "Fast and Furious " gun-walking program for Jihadis, instead of Mexican drug cartels.

Other links

- Doug Ross: a complete Benghazi timeline

Related posts

- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA's account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions

May 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News has the latest on another of Benghazi whistle-blowers.

Excerpt:

> On the night of Sept. 11, as the Obama administration scrambled to respond to the Benghazi terror attacks, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and a key aide effectively tried to cut the department's own counterterrorism bureau out of the chain of reporting and decision-making, according to a "whistle-blower" witness from that bureau who will soon testify to the charge before Congress, Fox News has learned.
>
> That witness is Mark I. Thompson, a former Marine and now the deputy coordinator for operations in the agency's counterterrorism bureau. Sources tell Fox News Thompson will level the allegation against Clinton during testimony on Wednesday before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, chaired by Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif.
>
> Fox News has also learned that another official from the counterterrorism bureau — independently of Thompson — voiced the same complaint about Clinton and Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy to trusted national security colleagues back in October.
>
> […]Sources close to the congressional investigation who have been briefed on what Thompson will testify tell Fox News the veteran counterterrorism official concluded on Sept. 11 that Clinton and Kennedy tried to cut the counterterrorism bureau out of the loop as they and other Obama administration officials weighed how to respond to — and characterize — the Benghazi attacks.
>
> "You should have seen what (Clinton) tried to do to us that night," the second official in State's counterterrorism bureau told colleagues back in October. Those comments would appear to be corroborated by Thompson's forthcoming testimony.
>
> […]**Documents from the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Council, first published in the May 13 edition of "The Weekly Standard," showed that senior officials from those agencies decided within days of the attacks to delete all references to Al Qaeda's known involvement in them from "talking points" being prepared for those administration officers being sent out to discuss the attacks publicly.**
>
> **Those talking points — and indeed, the statements of all senior Obama administration officials who commented publicly on Benghazi during the**

> **early days after the attacks — sought instead to depict the Americans' deaths as the result of a spontaneous protest that went awry. The administration later acknowledged that there had been no such protest, as evidence mounted that Al Qaeda-linked terrorists had participated in the attacks. The latter conclusion had figured prominently in the earliest CIA drafts of the talking points, but was stricken by an ad hoc group of senior officials controlling the drafting process. Among those involved in prodding the deletions, the documents published by "The Weekly Standard" show, was State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland, who wrote at one point that the revisions were not sufficient to satisfy "my building's leadership."**
>
> The allegations of the two counterterrorism officials stand to return the former secretary of state to the center of the Benghazi story. Widely regarded as a leading potential candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016, Clinton has insisted she was not privy to decisions made by underlings about the inadequate security for the U.S. installations in Benghazi that were made in the run-up to the attacks. And she has portrayed her role — once the attacks became known in Washington — as that of a determined fact-finder who worked with colleagues to fashion the best possible response to the crisis.
>
> […]**The counterterrorism officials, however, concluded that Clinton and Kennedy were immediately wary of the attacks being portrayed as acts of terrorism, and accordingly worked to prevent the counterterrorism bureau from having a role in the department's early decision-making relating to them.**
>
> Also appearing before the oversight committee on Wednesday will be Gregory N. Hicks, the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Libya at the time of the Benghazi terrorist attacks. Like Thompson, Hicks is a career State Department official who considers himself a Benghazi whistle-blower. His attorney, Victoria Toensing, a former chief counsel to the Senate Intelligence Committee, has charged that Hicks, too, has faced threats of reprisal from unnamed superiors at State.

Be sure and check out the previous article on Hicks' testimony. I personally think that this is enough to impeach Obama and rule Hillary Clinton out as a candidate in 2016. But only if people find out about it. I'm not optimistic about the media doing its job on this, though, especially given that CBS News spent 30 minutes on the gay basketball player and still has not mentioned Gosnell. The liberal media is covering up for Obama. They have become Watergate co-conspirators.

Related posts

- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack "from the get-go"
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available

- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
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- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

When is it appropriate for Christians to start dating?

May 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, read this article from a Crisis Pregnancy Center worker.

Excerpt:

> I have a bone to pick with young, socially conservative Americans, and I know it's something that will get under your skin. Just sit tight, though, and hear me out, because the elephant in our tidy little room is starting to tear things up. It's time we acknowledge his existence, and maybe even call in some animal movers to take him back to the zoo.
>
> I currently live in a small community in the Bible-belt of the country and I have been given some opportunities to mentor young people from my area through different venues. I can count on one hand the kids I know from the local high school whose parents have never been divorced. I've witnessed reactions of genuine surprise and envy from students who hear that my parents are still together. In any given conversation with groups of youth, I can expect to hear continual references to step-parents, step-siblings, and half-siblings. Divorce is a way of life down here – albeit one that has taken its toll in the lives of the young people that will make up the next generation.
>
> However, while I could certainly write extensively on my experience with the negative effects of divorce on children and on society at large, I actually want to address something else entirely. I have concerns about the number one way that our culture chooses to perpetuate the cancer of broken marriages and failed relationships– underage dating.
>
> You can follow them on Facebook – the failed attempts at love, I mean. Somebody is always changing their status from "in a relationship" to "single." Unfortunately, a huge number of these disappointed lovers are too young to be legally married. I wonder sometimes if I am the only one who winces to hear a thirteen-year old speak with cavalier abandon of his or her "ex?" Since when is it considered healthy and acceptable for underage people to be in "relationships?" Just what do parents and educators expect to be the result of the romantic conquests of these middle-school children and young high school students? The results I've witnessed personally are beyond disturbing; they are downright sinister, and have caused me to question whether or not those who claim to champion marital fidelity and family values are paying any attention at all to the standards we are passing to our children.
>
> The trouble with underage dating is that it presents an entirely faulty view of what interaction with the opposite gender should be about. Rather than placing emphasis on building one strong relationship with one person at a stage of life when a marital commitment is feasible, dating encourages young people to pour

> their energies into consistently seducing other young people at a time when neither of them are capable of making any long-term commitments. Their "relationships" are destined to fail from the get-go because they are founded on unhealthy perceptions of love and not backed by any real necessity to stick it out.
>
> The beauty of marriage, as it was intended to be, is that it teaches two people of opposite genders to learn to work through incompatibilities and give of themselves. In the same way, the great ugliness of dating as it is practiced by our culture and portrayed by our media, is that it teaches two people of opposite genders to be selfish by giving them an easy "out" when things don't go according to their initial feelings. I believe it is fair to say that this form of dating is a training manual for divorce, because it encourages young people to grow accustomed to giving their hearts away and then taking them back.
>
> Sadly, parents who should know better continue to display shocking naïveté regarding the absurd practices of driving their twelve year olds out on a "date," or purchasing provocative clothing for their sixteen-year-olds, or sympathizing with their broken-hearted fourteen-year-olds by assuring them that they'll "find someone better." "They're just having fun," they'll tell us, rolling their eyes at what they consider to be our tightly wound principles. I work a volunteer shift at Crisis Pregnancy Clinic where I witness every week the ruined lives and broken dreams that "fun" has left with our youth.

And now here's my take.

Basically, you can start dating as a prelude to courting when the woman and man are able to demonstrate to the other person that they are ready to fulfill their roles in the marriage.

For example, the woman should be able to show that she has been able to maintain commitments to caring for others through some period of time, maybe with small children or pets. She should be voluntarily entering into relationships and responsibilities with other people where she is giving of herself – like volunteering at a crisis pregnancy center or caring for an ailing or elderly relative. That shows potential suitors that she has the right attitude to relationships – serving others self-sacrificially, and not looking for tingles and amusement. She should be able to show that she is good at making commitments and solving problems by studying hard subjects in school like nursing, economics, biology, chemistry, physics, engineering or computer science. That shows that she is able to do hard things that she doesn't feel like doing, and apply herself over time until she has a degree. Obviously being conservative politically and being good at apologetics are also important if she intends to raise children.

And for the man, he should be able to show that he is able to do his roles – protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. He should be able to prove that he is able to mentor and guide other people to learn things and do things that will make them more effective Christians. That's moral and spiritual leadership. He should have studied a subject that is

going to allow him to find work. If he is committed to going to graduate school, then he can study philosophy and law and other “world-changing” subjects, like a William Lane Craig or a Ryan Anderson. Otherwise, he should study things like petroleum engineering, computer science, or other fields that will allow him to be stable and secure. It’s not enough to be a hard worker, you have to be able to pull in the money and save it and still have time left over to care for your wife and lead the children. Again, conservative politics and apologetics are a must.

I think there are other ways for men and women to show that they are ready for marriage, but those are some ways. The key thing is that people shouldn’t be dating until they are able to show that they know the roles that they are expected to fill in marriage as men and women. They should also be looking for the right things in others. They can’t be looking for the shallow things that give them tingles, like looks, athleticism, etc. They can’t be looking for sexual attraction, primarily. Marriage requires specific behaviors from men and women, which are derived from what men and women do in marriage. Before men and women start dating, they have to be able to show that they are working on being able to handle their responsibilities, and they have to show that their selection criteria for the opposite sex are at least partly based on the responsibilities that the opposite sex has in a marriage. Otherwise they are just training to be governed by their tingles and to be selfish and to break up when all that falls apart.

Ryan T. Anderson's commencement speech at Regent University

May 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The full text is up at National Review. I wanted to highlight a couple of points.

First, the importance of marriage and family for raising children:

> As a graduate of Regent University you know that the obligations we have to our neighbors are not dependent on race, or sex, or social class. Neither are those duties dependent on age, or size, or stage of development. Or whether someone is wanted or unwanted, planned or unplanned, healthy or sick, "perfect" or disabled.
>
> This starts with you and me. We need to love our children. Graduating class, if you have a daughter with Down syndrome, love her. If your son is conceived "by accident," love him. As my late mentor Fr. Richard John Neuhaus explained, we have the responsibility to see to it that every human being is protected in law and cared for in life.
>
> The best care comes from the family. Some of you may have already started your families. Most of you will start one in the next decade. And as you welcome children into this world you will experience firsthand that the best way to ensure that children are cared for in life by the man and the woman who gave them life is to unite that man and woman as husband and wife in marriage.
>
> We are created male and female. And marriage unites a man and a woman permanently and exclusively as husband and wife to take responsibility for their children as father and mother. That's what marriage is all about. And our marriage policy should respect these truths. So, too, should our churches and our own lives. Graduating class: Live lives of fidelity and service to your spouse and your children.
>
> Your children will be educated in this society. And as mothers and fathers you have the responsibility to care for and educate your children. Government should empower you to fulfill those duties. It shouldn't interfere or indoctrinate. Nor should it use healthcare laws or anti-bullying programs to promote a sexual ideology at odds with the values that responsible parents try to instill in their children.

Second, the free market and the need for job creation:

> Our responsibilities extend beyond our families. One of the best ways to care for our neighbors is by serving them in our professional callings, performing quality work at a fair price. Creating wealth and value for our neighbors. Who among the Class of 2013 will be the next David Green, the founder of Hobby Lobby? Who will be the next Truett Cathy, the founder of Chick-fil-a? Who will improve our lives

> with new technology or medical devices? Who will create new jobs that pay decent wages? This is your responsibility as future business leaders and entrepreneurs.
>
> We know that the market economy—along with families headed by married couples—has done more to lift people out of poverty and into a flourishing life than any other institution. But it only works if people of good character and upright morals are at the helm. Markets are inert apart from the values that actors bring to them—and you have responsibility for your market action.
>
> Look at leaders like David Green and Truett Cathy. They run their businesses in accordance with their Christian beliefs. There's a simple reason why: They know that they have duties to serve God—and not just on Sundays, but also on the other six days of the week, when they enter the workforce and marketplace. Remember, you can't check your faith or morals at the door.

It's worth a look. The actual speech can be seen here, starting at 41 minutes in. It goes on for about 19 minutes.

What caused Melanie Phillips to turn away from the left and embrace conservatism?

May 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this article from the UK Daily Mail, by famous moderate conservative Melanie Phillips.

She sets up her article this way:

> [Leftists] reserve a special loathing for me. This is not just because I refuse to be cowed.
>
> It's because I was once one of them, one of the elect, a believer.
>
> I come from the kind of family in which it was simply unthinkable to vote Conservative. For my parents, the Tory Party represented the boss class, while Labour supported the little man — people like us.
>
> My father was haunted all his life by the poverty he endured growing up in the old East End of London in the Twenties and Thirties.
>
> His family of six lived in two rooms; he never had enough to eat. He left school at the age of 13.
>
> As a university-educated young woman with hippie-style hair and an attitude, I, too, generally toed the standard Leftist line in the late Seventies and early Eighties.
>
> Poverty was bad, cuts in public spending were bad, prison was bad, the Tory government was bad.
>
> The state was good, poor people were good, minorities were good, sexual freedom was good.
>
> And pretty soon I had the perfect platform for those views when I went to work as a journalist on The Guardian, the self-styled paper of choice for intellectuals and the supposed voice of progressive conscience.

The UK Guardian is the most liberal newspaper in Britain.

Here's what turned her around:

> The defining issue for me — the one that launched me on a personal trajectory of confrontation with the Left and with my colleagues and friends — was the persistent undermining of the family as an institution.
>
> By the late Eighties, it was glaringly obvious that families were suffering a chronic crisis of identity and self-confidence.
>
> There were more and more divorces and single parents — along with mounting evidence that family disintegration and the subsequent creation of step-families or households with no father figure at all did incalculable damage to children.

> ‘Too many children lack a consistent mother or father figure,’ researchers told me.
>
> Poverty, the Left’s habitual excuse, could not be the culprit since middle-class children were also not receiving the parental attention they required.
>
> For me, the traditional family is sacred because it embodies the idea that there is something beyond the selfish individual.
>
> But it was being turned into a mere contract that either side could break more or less at will.
>
> I listened to the evidence of those with no particular ideological fixation or agenda, but who simply spoke of what they saw was happening.
>
> […]From Zelda West-Meads of the marriage guidance counsellors Relate, I learned that, though many single mothers did a heroic job, it was the absence of the father that did such terrible damage to their children. So I described how fathers were vital to the emotional health of children.
>
> Fatherless families were also at least partly responsible for a national breakdown in authority and rising levels of crime.
>
> My view was backed in 1992 when three influential social scientists with impeccable Left-wing pedigrees produced a damning report.
>
> From their research, they concluded that children in fractured families tend to suffer more ill-health, do less well at school, are more likely to be unemployed, more prone to criminal behaviour and to repeat as adults the same cycle of unstable parenting.
>
> But instead of welcoming this analysis as identifying a real problem, the Left turned on the authors, branding them as evil Right-wingers for being ‘against single mothers’.
>
> Their sanity was called into question. ‘What do these people want?’ one distinguished academic said to me.
>
> ‘Do they want unhappy parents to stay together?’
>
> Eventually, he admitted that the authors’ research was correct. But he said it was impossible to turn back the clock and wondered why there was so much concern about the rights of the child rather than of the parents.
>
> He turned out to be divorced — revealing a devastating pattern I was to encounter over and over again. Truth was being sacrificed to personal expediency. Evidence would be denied if the consequences were inconvenient.
>
> Self-centred individualism and self-justification ruled, regardless of the damage done to others.

This article is a long read, but a good one. If you like to read things that are maybe a little longer than most articles I post, then I really recommend this one. You won’t be disappointed.

Fiscal and foreign policy conservatives will be surprised by how important social issues are when pulling someone away from the left. All conservative ideas are testable with reason – not just fiscal and foreign policy, as some might have you believe. I often hear Christians and conservatives trying to win people over with just one issue, instead of knowing a little bit about everything. Well, let me be clear. If I can get Obama out of office by winning someone over on record low labor force participation, then that means no more taxpayer-funded abortion drugs. If I can get Obama out of office by winning someone over on security and stability in the Middle East, then that means no more spiraling national debt. And if I can get Obama out of office on the defense of traditional marriage, then that means we might get a fence build on our southern border so that Hezbollah cannot just walk right in and try to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador in New York.

It’s all related, and we need to be persuasive on every issue, not just one issue.

Which Bible verse is used most frequently by non-Christians to attack Christianity?

May 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace has posted about it on his Cold Case Christianity blog.

Excerpt:

> As a Christian, I'm often at odds with the culture around me. As our society embraces a growing number of unbiblical behaviors and attitudes, I find myself becoming more and more vocal in my opposition. I'm not alone; many other conservative Christians are also taking a stand for what the Bible teaches, particularly when it comes to moral behavior. Maybe that's why I seem to hear Matthew 7:1 tossed around so frequently by those who want Christians to quiet down:
>
> *"Do not judge so that you will not be judged."*
>
> Whenever we, as Christians, speak out against something in the culture, one of two labels is immediately employed in an effort to silence us: we are either branded "intolerant" or "judgmental". To make matters worse, the second label is often attached to the teaching of Jesus Himself. Are we Christians defying the words of our Master when we speak against the behaviors, attitudes or worldviews affirmed by others? Did Jesus command us to be silently non-judgmental?
>
> This selective use of scripture by the opposition is perhaps the finest example of what we at Stand to Reason are addressing when we caution people to "never read a Bible verse." Matthew 7:1, when read in isolation from the larger context of the Sermon on the Mount, may seem to command a form of silent acceptance and tolerance advocated by the culture, but a closer examination of the verse reveals Jesus' true intent.

Click it to read the response to the challenge.

It sure would be nice if people who think that Jesus' opinion matters would do a better job of looking at what he actually taught. The four gospels are the best records for the life of Jesus. What he did and what he said are known.

Ryan T. Anderson: the hidden agenda behind gay marriage activism

May 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ryan T. Anderson exposes the real agenda behind same-sex marriage advocacy in the New York Daily News.

Excerpt:

> Same-sex marriage will never be widely accepted in America for a simple reason: It's based on a lie. But don't take my word on this; leading LGBT scholars and activists say as much.
>
> Take Masha Gessen, acclaimed author and former Russian director of Radio Liberty. "Fighting for gay marriage generally involves lying about what we are going to do with marriage when we get there — because we lie that the institution of marriage is not going to change," Gessen said last year.
>
> Last month, I was part of a debate at the NYU School of Law at which Judith Stacey, a sociology professor at the university, declared: "Children certainly do not need both a mother and a father."
>
> Stacey went on to suggest that three parents might be better than two. In fact, while asserting she is in favor of same-sex marriage because of "equal justice," Stacey admitted she isn't a fan of marriage. "Why should there be marriage at all?" she asked.
>
> I pointed out that marriage exists, and the government takes an interest in marriage because the sexual union of a man and woman produces children — and children need both a mom and a dad.
>
> […]In congressional testimony against the Defense of Marriage Act, she expressed hope that redefining marriage would give marriage "varied, creative and adaptive contours," including "small group marriages."
>
> Stacey was among more than 300 scholars and advocates who signed a statement, "Beyond Marriage," calling for legal recognition of sexual relationships involving more than two partners. During our NYU debate, she asserted that nothing gives the state an interest in monogamy.
>
> The very day of the debate, Slate posted an article headlined "Legalize Polygamy!" The author, Jillian Keenan, argues: "Just like heterosexual marriage is no better or worse than homosexual marriage, marriage between two consenting adults is not inherently more or less 'correct' than marriage among three (or four, or six) consenting adults."
>
> She concludes: "Legalized polygamy in the United States is the constitutional, feminist and sex-positive choice."
>
> And this is why the marriage redefiners are doomed to fail: Redefinition has no

> logical stopping point. Its logic leads to the effective elimination of marriage as a legal institution. This will harm women, children and society as a whole.
>
> If we redefine marriage to exclude the norm of men and women complementing each other in (ideally) a lifelong familial bond, Gessen admits, “The institution of marriage is going to change, and it should change . . . I don’t think it should exist.”

Is the the viewpoint of all gay people? Not at all. Many gay people are conservative and don’t want to change the institution of marriage. But it is the view that animates the activists who are pushing to redefine marriage for everyone. And if the activists succeed, it will affect everyone. It will affect children who don’t even have a say in the debate today, just like no-fault divorce affected children when that became the law of the land.

Homosexual man complains to NZ Human Rights Tribunal for being barred from seminary

May 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Some friends of mine in New Zealand sent me this article.

Excerpt:

> A homosexual man is taking the Anglican Bishop of Auckland to the Human Rights Tribunal after being rejected for training as a priest.
>
> A hearing begins today following a complaint from the man, who says he feels discriminated against because of his sexuality.
>
> It is understood the man – who is in a sexual relationship with his partner – has wanted to enter the church's training programme for priests for years.
>
> But after applying to enter after years of study, he was rejected by the Bishop Ross Bay, who approves entrants.
>
> Bishop Bay told *One News* last night that he was simply following the church's doctrines.
>
> The man was rejected "by reason of the defendant not being chaste in terms of canons of the Anglican Church," the bishop said.
>
> That means that anyone wanting to become ordained needs to be in what the Anglican Church deems to be a chaste relationship – a marriage between a man and a woman or committed to a life of celibacy.
>
> In a statement to the tribunal, the complainant says he "felt totally humiliated that I had spent six years of my life in study, for a process that I was not permitted to enter because I was a gay man and in a relationship".
>
> "My humiliation and disappointment continue to this day."

And this humiliation is so terrible that the government has to step in and drag the church in front of a secular court to pass judgment on Judeo-Christian values.

And here's another story from Mercator:

> Family First New Zealand has received notification that government's Charities Commission intends to deregister the charity. Why? Family First has a traditional view of marriage being one man and one woman. The commission's investigation began just after NZ's gay marriage debate started last year.
>
> The decision means that the organisation will no longer be exempt from income tax and, more importantly for a non-profit, donations to it will no longer be tax-deductible.
>
> "This is a highly politicised decision which is grim evidence that groups that think differently to the prevailing politically correct view will be targeted in an attempt

> to shut them up," says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ.

New Zealand recently decided to legalize gay marriage, and now we are seeing some of the repercussions. This is exactly what happened in Canada as well, where Christians are regularly dragged in front of Human Rights Tribunals and Human Rights Commissions for refusing to affirm the goodness of homosexuality and gay marriage. There, Christians can be tried by non-Christians for months and even years. They are never found innocent, and can look forward to being censored, forced to apologize, fined, etc. Why? Because once gay marriage is made legal, it becomes a crime to disapprove of homosexuality or disagree with gay marriage.

Legalized gay marriage is not compatible with religious liberty. We as a society have to choose one or the other.

UPDATE: Bill Muehlenberg's commentary on New Zealand, gay marriage and liberty.

Carson Weitnauer: putting atheism on the defensive

May 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article at Reasons for God that explains a few simple questions that you can ask your atheist friends.

He writes:

> Though it has been persistently marketed to us as a worldview that stands for reason and science, the truth is that the atheistic worldview is riddled with contradictions and outlandish claims. And because most secular people haven't studied why atheism is true, an excellent evangelistic strategy for you and your church is to understand these five challenges for atheism.
>
> In my experience, it is only once people realize that their own worldview doesn't work that they become interested in seeking something that does. While some would suggest you just have to wait for people to hit rock bottom, I think a more gracious and effective approach is to humbly challenge their pretense to have a sensible worldview.
>
> By God's grace, studying these five holes in the atheistic worldview can create a powerful opportunity for you and your church to share the wisdom and love of Jesus Christ.
>
> […]Because of their fundamental commitment to impersonal matter and laws, the atheist faces very difficult problems in at least five unique areas:
>
> - Consciousness
> - Free will
> - Purpose
> - Reason, including mathematics and science
> - Objective moral facts, including universal human rights and the reality of evil

Here's my favorite of the 5:

> Leading atheists such as Sam Harris dismiss free will as a matter of course. Or as Tom Clark at Naturalism.org puts it, "Judged from a scientific and logical perspective, the belief that we stand outside the causal web in any respect is an absurdity, the height of human egoism and exceptionalism."
>
> Dr. Angus Menuge, the current President of the Evangelical Philosophical Society, explains the problem: "before we can talk of being responsible for our decisions, we need an account of why those decisions belong to us. But the trouble is, on a naturalistic view, there is no entity that can plausibly own any mental states, there is simply a plurality of parallel, impersonal processes in the brain."
>
> The denial of free will logically leads to the denial of personal responsibility for

> any of our behaviors or beliefs. But if everything about “you” is determined, then “you” could not have reasonably chosen to believe what you do. If a-rational things and laws determined your neurological structure, “you” literally cannot make any decisions about what you believe or why you believe it.

This article is worth a look if you want to start a discussion with an atheist.

Is Richard Dawkins really the world's leading thinker?

May 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rabbi David Wolpe writes about it on the liberal Huffington Post.

Excerpt:

> *Prospect* magazine just named the 65 leading intellectuals in the world.
>
> First on the list was Richard Dawkins, known for his work in biology and for his polemics against religion. Dawkins on biology is an elegant, lucid and even enchanting explicator of science. Dawkins on religion is historically uninformed, outrageously partisan and morally obtuse. If Dawkins is indeed our best, the life of the mind is in a precarious state.

He breaks his criticisms into 3 sections:

- Historical Ignorance
- Intellectual Narrowness
- Moral Obtuseness

Here's my favorite:

> To write, as Dawkins has, not only that religion is a form of child abuse but indeed may be more damaging than actual sexual abuse, is closer to raving than to reason: "Priestly groping of child bodies is disgusting. But it may be less harmful in the long run than priestly subversion of child minds." Puerile swipes at the religion of a billion people are beneath any intellectual, much less a "leading" one.
>
> That religions, for all their many and frequently noted faults, do great good in the world (the largest aid organization in the USA is World Vision, a Seattle-based Christian group), and are integral to the art, culture and even scientific development of both the east and west is all germane, but not central. Central to the evaluation of an intellectual's integrity is whether they are arguing with the best in the opposing position. Dawkins grabs every depredation of religion as though it were a central tenet and everything noble as though it were an accidental, replaceable byproduct. This is a sophist's strategy, unserious and unworthy.
>
> Thoughtful atheism is an important contribution to the debate. Far more credible is the conclusion of an ideological confederate of Dawkins, editor of *Skeptic* magazine, Michael Shermer: "However for every one of these grand tragedies there are a thousand acts of personal kindness that go unreported. … Religion, like all social institutions of such historical depth and cultural impact,

> cannot be reduced to an unambiguous good or evil."
>
> Such vapid reductionism would never be undertaken, of course, by anyone with genuine intellectual integrity. The idea that this simplification would be assayed by the world's leading intellectual is a mockery — like the list that enshrines him.

Jonathan M. posed this link to the scientific publications of the greatest thinker in the world. I'm not impressed.

What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers

May 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the PJ Tatler, seven points:

1. **There were multiple stand-down orders, not just one.**
2. **Ambassador Stevens' reason for going to Benghazi has been cleared up.**
3. **Clinton was briefed at 2 am on the night of the attack, was never told that a movie had anything to do with the attack by those on the ground in Libya, yet blamed the movie anyway.**
4. **Whistleblowers were intimidated into silence.**
5. **"The YouTube movie was a non-event in Libya."**
6. **Democrats were uninterested in getting at most of the facts, but were very interested in destroying Mark Thompson.**
7. **House hearings are a poor way to determine who did what and why during and after the attack.**

Here's my favorite one:

> **5. "The YouTube movie was a non-event in Libya."** Hicks directly testified that the YouTube movie, for which a man remains in jail, was not in any way relevant to the attack in Benghazi. Why Obama, Clinton, Rice et al blamed that movie for the attack remains an unanswered question. Hicks said that no American on the ground in Libya that night believed the movie was to blame. He also testified that there was no protest prior to the attack. When the attack began, he was in Tripoli. He texted Stevens, who was in Benghazi, to advise him of the riot in Cairo at the U.S. embassy. In that riot, jihadists had stormed the walls and replaced the American flag with the black flag of Islam. Stevens had not been aware of the Cairo situation at all, but shortly after Hnicks texted him about it, Stevens called and told Hicks that the Benghazi consulate was under attack. He never mentioned a protest.
>
> Hicks also testified that blaming the movie had strongly adverse real-world effects. According to him, it humiliated Libya's president, who had correctly stated that Benghazi was a terrorist attack. Blaming the movie, Hicks said, did "immeasurable damage" to our relations with Libya and delayed the FBI investigation. On Sept. 12, Ambassador Susan Rice told the first of her many untruths, claiming in an email that the FBI investigation into the attack was already underway. It would not actually get underway for 17 days after the attack, by which time the scene of the attack had been compromised and contaminated.
>
> We still do not know who decided to change the original CIA talking points and blame the movie, but the finger is pointing directly at Hillary Clinton. She was

> briefed by Hicks during the attack, the movie was never mentioned, but in her first public statement on September 12, she blamed the movie. Her subordinate, Ambassador Susan Rice, also blamed the movie the following weekend. The fact that Obama himself blamed the movie repeatedly, though, strongly suggests that he took part in the decision as well.

The Obama administration just flat out lied, because they didn't want the American people to know that their policies of appeasement and moral equivalence make us less safe. Democrats aren't serious about national security and foreign policy. Their goal with national security, as with anything, is to feel good about themselves. And they do that by pretending that our actual enemies are our allies, and that America is to blame for any attacks against us. Benghazi is the direct result of this attitude of apologizing, disarming and bowing to dictators. Weakness invites aggression. Strength deters aggression. That's the way the world works, like it or not.

The Weekly Standard has an excellent podcast summarizing the findings, as well.

UPDATE: Guy Benson lists twelve findings from the Benghazi hearings on Townhall.com.

Related posts

- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack "from the get-go"
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA's account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

Why do corporations ship jobs overseas? What causes outsourcing of jobs?

May 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Country	2000 statutory corporate tax rate	2012 statutory corporate tax rate*	Percent change
G7			
Canada	43.3	26.2	(39.5)
France	37.8	36.10**	(4.5)
Germany	52.0	33.0	(36.5)
Italy	39.5	31.4	(20.5)
Japan	43.3	38.01***	(12.2)
United Kingdom	30.0	24.0	(20.0)
United States	39.4	39.0	(1.0)
BRIC			
Brazil	34.0	34.0	–
Russia	35.0	20.0	(42.9)
India	42.0	32.5 Foreign cos. 42.2	(22.6)
China	33.0	25.0	(24.2)

World Corporate Tax Rates

Here is a news story from Yahoo News that explains the problem and the cause of the problem. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> Large U.S. companies boosted their offshore earnings by 15 percent last year to a record $1.9 trillion, avoiding hefty tax bills by keeping the profits abroad, according to a new report.
>
> The overseas earnings stockpile has climbed by 70 percent over the past five years, said research firm Audit Analytics. Data in its report covers the Russell 3000 index of the largest U.S. corporations.
>
> U.S.-based multinationals do not have to pay U.S. corporate income tax on foreign earnings as long as the earnings do not enter the United States. Accounting rules also let the companies avoid recognizing a tax expense if management intends to keep the earnings indefinitely reinvested overseas.
>
> “It would probably be nice to have this money in our country being used in our economy, but at the moment we see it growing elsewhere,” said Don Whalen, general counsel and director of research at Audit Analytics.
>
> Conglomerate General Electric Co (GE.N), had the most indefinitely reinvested

> overseas earnings, at about $108 billion, while drugmaker Pfizer Inc (PFE.N) was next with $73 billion, according to Audit Analytics.

The simple answer is that Americans believe that corporations need to pay high taxes and operate under burdensome regulations. This eats into their profits, making it harder for them to grow and expand. The plain truth is that it is easier for corporations to expand and hire in countries with lower taxes and fewer regulations. Besides, who wants to be wiped out by a nuisance lawsuit just because someone spills coffee on themselves and then refuses to take responsibility? The smart play is to just opt out completely, and that’s what many corporations do – earning higher profits in more business-friendly countries.

Large numbers of Christians fleeing oppression in Muslim countries

May 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News put up an editorial about a tragedy that is often neglected by the liberal media. Excerpt:

> A mass exodus of Christians is currently underway. Millions of Christians are being displaced from one end of the Islamic world to the other.
>
> […]In 2003, Iraq's Christian population was at least one million. Today fewer than 400,000 remain—the result of an anti-Christian campaign that began with the U.S. occupation of Iraq, when countless Christian churches were bombed and countless Christians killed, including by crucifixion and beheading.
>
> The 2010 Baghdad church attack, which saw nearly 60 Christian worshippers slaughtered, is the tip of a decade-long iceberg.
>
> […]In October 2012 the last Christian in the city of Homs—which had a Christian population of some 80,000 before jihadis came—was murdered. One teenage Syrian girl said: "We left because they were trying to kill us… because we were Christians…. Those who were our neighbors turned against us. At the end, when we ran away, we went through balconies. We did not even dare go out on the street in front of our house."
>
> In Egypt, some 100,000 Christian Copts have fled their homeland soon after the "Arab Spring." In September 2012, the Sinai's small Christian community was attacked and evicted by Al Qaeda linked Muslims, Reuters reported. But even before that, the Coptic Orthodox Church lamented the "repeated incidents of displacement of Copts from their homes, whether by force or threat.
>
> […]In Mali, after a 2012 Islamic coup, as many as 200,000 Christians fled. According to reports, "the church in Mali faces being eradicated," especially in the north "where rebels want to establish an independent Islamist state and drive Christians out… there have been house to house searches for Christians who might be in hiding, churches and other Christian property have been looted or destroyed, and people tortured into revealing any Christian relatives." At least one pastor was beheaded.
>
> Even in European Bosnia, Christians are leaving en mass "amid mounting discrimination and Islamization." Only 440,000 Catholics remain in the Balkan nation, half the prewar figure.
>
> Problems cited are typical: "while dozens of mosques were built in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo, no building permissions [permits] were given for Christian churches." "Time is running out as there is a worrisome rise in radicalism," said one authority, who further added that the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina were

> “persecuted for centuries” after European powers “failed to support them in their struggle against the Ottoman Empire.”

The article has even more disturbing statistics.

This violence is not surprising, considering the attitudes of Muslims in Muslim dominated countries.

Consider this article from the liberal Washington post.

Excerpt:

> A majority of Muslims in several countries say that any Muslim who leaves the faith should be executed, with the share who support this nearing two-thirds in Egypt and Pakistan. In Afghanistan, 78 percent say apostates should be killed.
>
> As I wrote yesterday, the issue of apostasy is a complicated one with its roots in Islam’s unique foundational history. But the effect is a deeply chilling one for religious freedom, with atheists and converts often persecuted.

I was listening to a debate recently featuring Jim Wallis and Jay Richards on Christianity and economics, and I was surprised when Jim Wallis sort of threw out this strange thought at the end of one of his speeches about Islam. Something like “What are Christians doing to love their Muslim neighbor?” I think a very good thing for Christians in the West to do would be to realize that not all religions are the same, and that some are more peaceful than others. Maybe instead of worrying about not offending Muslims all the time, we could instead think about what it is like for Christians to be living in these Muslim countries, and facing horrors like being killed, raped and tortured.

Casey Luskin and Stephen C. Meyer discuss the Cambrian explosion

May 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest episode of ID the Future is short and sweet – only 7 minutes long.

Details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Casey Luskin sits down with Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, author of *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design*. Dr. Meyer explains his inspiration for writing *Darwin's Doubt* and discusses the main piece of evidence that Darwin could not explain in his theory.
>
> *Special limited time offer: Save 43% and get 4 free digital books when you pre-order Darwin's Doubt.*

You can grab the MP3 here.

Topics:

- what evidence caused Darwin to doubt his own theory of evolution?
- has the progress of science made the problem more, or less, problematic for naturalists?
- why is the problem of the Cambrian explosion so significant in biology?
- how many animal body plans are there in total?
- how many animal body plans emerged suddenly in the Cambrian explosion?

If you haven't yet read Meyer's first book, "Signature in the Cell", you should probably grab that one. It's the best book on intelligent design that's out right now. It talks about the origin of the first living cell, surveying all naturalistic explanations for it, and concluding that the best explanation – the one most consistent with what we know *now* – is intelligent design.

ABC News: State Department scrubbed terrorism details from Benghazi talking points

May 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The mainstream media is slowly discovering the Benghazi scandal, eight months after it happened.

This time, it's ABC News reporting.

Excerpt:

> When it became clear last fall that the CIA's now discredited Benghazi talking points were flawed, the White House said repeatedly the documents were put together almost entirely by the intelligence community, but White House documents reviewed by Congress suggest a different story.
>
> ABC News has obtained 12 different versions of the talking points that show they were extensively edited as they evolved from the drafts first written entirely by the CIA to the final version distributed to Congress and to U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Susan Rice before she appeared on five talk shows the Sunday after that attack.
>
> Related: Read the Full Benghazi Talking Point Revisions
>
> **White House emails reviewed by ABC News suggest the edits were made with extensive input from the State Department. The edits included requests from the State Department that references to the Al Qaeda-affiliated group Ansar al-Sharia be deleted as well references to CIA warnings about terrorist threats in Benghazi in the months preceding the attack.**
>
> That would appear to directly contradict what White House Press Secretary Jay Carney said about the talking points in November.
>
> […]Summaries of White House and State Department emails – some of which were first published by Stephen Hayes of the Weekly Standard – show that the State Department had extensive input into the editing of the talking points.
>
> State Department spokesman Victoria Nuland raised specific objections to this paragraph drafted by the CIA in its earlier versions of the talking points:
>
> "The Agency has produced numerous pieces on the threat of extremists linked to al-Qa'ida in Benghazi and eastern Libya. These noted that, since April, there have been at least five other attacks against foreign interests in Benghazi by unidentified assailants, including the June attack against the British Ambassador's convoy. We cannot rule out the individuals has previously surveilled the U.S. facilities, also contributing to the efficacy of the attacks."
>
> **In an email to officials at the White House and the intelligence agencies, State Department spokesman Victoria Nuland took issue with including**

> **that information because it "could be abused by members [of Congress] to beat up the State Department for not paying attention to warnings, so why would we want to feed that either? Concerned …"**
>
> **The paragraph was entirely deleted.**
>
> Like the final version used by Ambassador Rice on the Sunday shows, the CIA's first drafts said the attack appeared to have been "spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo" but the CIA version went on to say, "That being said, we do know that Islamic extremists with ties to al-Qa'ida participated in the attack." The draft went on to specifically name the al Qaeda-affiliated group named Ansar al-Sharia.
>
> **Once again, Nuland objected to naming the terrorist groups because "we don't want to prejudice the investigation."**

The radically leftist BBC now has a story up as well.

Should Hillary Clinton be President after this revelation? This isn't the first time she's been caught in a lie and had to recant. The woman embellishes her past in order to appear more experienced and competent than she really is. Period. Like a little child tells lies about himself to seem more grown up.

In case you aren't following the story, Guy Benson has a list of 12 revelations from the Benghazi hearings in this article.

Here are the ones I thought were most significant:

1. The Democrats prevented Gregory Hicks from talking to the Congressional investigator.
2. The Democrats demoted Hicks for objecting to the falsified talking points about the Youtube video.
3. Ambassador Susan Rice and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton lied about the Youtube video and protest.
4. American forces were ordered to "stand down" rather than intervene to stop the terrorist attack.
5. Hilary Clinton was aware of the repeated requests for more security in Libya.
6. The ambassador was put in a dangerous situation at the behest of Hilary Clinton.
7. No U.S. Marines were present to defend the Consulate during the attacks.
8. The attack lasted eight hours, so there was ample time for the Obama administration to intervene.
9. Reduced funding because of "austerity" had nothing to do with the lack of security.

I'll just post the first two with video, because I blogged about 3 and 4 already.

Point #1:

> **(1)** Murdered US Ambassador Chris Stevens' second in command, Gregory Hicks, was instructed not to speak with a Congressional investigator by Sec. Hillary Clinton's chief of staff, Cheryl Mills. Hicks said he'd "never" faced a similar

> demand at any point during his distinguished 22-year diplomatic career. When he refused to comply with this request, the State Department dispatched an attorney to act as a "minder," who insisted on sitting in on all of Hicks' discussions with members of Congress (higher quality video is available here):

Video:

Point #2:

> **(2)** When Hicks began to voice strenuous objections to the administration's inaccurate talking points with State Department higher-ups, the administrationturned hostile. After being lavishly praised by the president and the Secretary of State for his performance under fire, Assistant Secretary of State Beth Jones instantly reversed course and launched into a "blistering critique" of Hicks' leadership. He was subsequently "effectively demoted." Hicks called Rice's talking points "stunning" and "embarrassing."

Video:

This is important, so be sure and read the whole list.

Related posts

- What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack "from the get-go"
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
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- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

BBC News covers whistle-blower testimony: “After Benghazi revelations, heads will roll”

May 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

And now the radically secular and leftist BBC News is on board, because of the ABC News story.

Excerpt:

> There’s new evidence, obtained by ABC, that the Obama administration did deliberately purge references to “terrorism” from accounts of the attack on the Benghazi diplomatic mission, which killed four people including the US ambassador to Libya.
>
> Conservatives have long maintained that the administration deliberately suppressed the truth about the attacks.
>
> This is the first hard evidence that the state department did ask for changes to the CIA’s original assessment.
>
> Specifically, they wanted references to previous warnings deleted and this sentence removed: “We do know that Islamic extremists with ties to al-Qa’ida participated in the attack.”
>
> There’s little doubt in my mind that this will haunt Hillary Clinton if she decides to run for president, unless she executes some pretty fancy footwork.
>
> State department spokesperson Victoria Nuland is directly implicated, and the fingerprints of senior White House aides Ben Rhodes and Jay Carney are there as well.

And look at this closely:

> In the interests of full disclosure I have to say I have not in the past been persuaded that allegations of a cover-up were a big deal. It seemed to me a partisan attack based on very little.
>
> I remember listening to reports from the BBC and others at the time that did suggest the attack in Benghazi was a spontaneous reaction to a rather puerile anti-Islamic video.
>
> I understand President Barack Obama’s careful use of the word “terrorism” when it actually means something, rather than as a knee-jerk description of any violence by foreigners against Americans, often in order to justify a “war on terror”.
>
> But the evidence is there in black and white, unless we doubt the documents obtained by ABC, which I don’t.
>
> Mr Obama’s critics are often not very clear what is behind their allegations. I

> presume they think that the White House wanted to avoid claims the murders were the result of terrorism because this would undermine his claim that al-Qaeda was seriously "degraded". There's also a vague sense he's "soft on terror".

The purpose of this deception was to make the American people re-elect Democrats who are soft on terrorism, by hiding the fact that Democrats are soft on terrorism. Democrats prefer to think that Tea Party, low-tax, small government, pro-life conservatives are terrorists. Not the radical Muslims who actually do terrorist attacks in the real world. Democrats think they need to be affirmed and defended from criticism.

Frankly, I think that Obama should feel obligated to resign over this self-serving deception. If the media had done their jobs before the election, we wouldn't have this man as President. As it stands, we'll just have to vote his America-blaming, terrorist-sympathizing Democrat Party out in 2016.

Related posts

- ABC News: State Department scrubbed terrorism details from Benghazi talking points
- What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack "from the get-go"
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA's account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

Tonight: Stand to Reason's 20th anniversary conference will be live-streamed

May 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Biola Apologetics Events page. Note that all of the times below are Pacific Time zone.

> **Description:**
>
> Join us as we celebrate 20 years of Stand to Reason and clear thinking Christianity. The event kicks off Friday night with stimulating apologetics lectures and a celebration! Join us for the full conference on Saturday featuring lectures from the Stand to Reason speakers and friends. Can't make it to Biola? This event will be available via live stream online.
>
> ## Conference Schedule:
>
> **Friday Night, May 10 (7:00 – 9:30 pm)**
>
> > *6:15 pm* – Doors Opens
> > *7:00 – 8:05 pm* – Lectures from J.P. Moreland, Sean McDowell, Mary Jo Sharp, and Craig Hazen
> > *8:05 – 8:25 pm* – Break
> > *8:15 – 9:30 pm* – Panel featuring Stand to Reason's Speakers Greg Koukl, Brett Kunkle, Alan Shlemon, and J. Warner Wallace
> > *9:30 pm* – Cake & Book Signing in the Courtyard
>
> **Saturday, May 11 (9:00 am – 12:30 pm)**
>
> > *8:00 am* – Registration Opens
> > *8:30 am* – Doors Opens
> > *9:00 – 9:50 am* – Session 1: "Who's Waiting for Your Kids?"
> > Lecture by Stand to Reason's Brett Kunkle
> > *9:50 – 10:00 am* – Break
> > *10:00 – 10:40 am* – Session 2: "Compromise Is Not an Option"
> > Lecture by Stand to Reason's Alan Shlemon
> > *10:40 – 10:50 am* – Break
> > *10:50 – 11:30 am* – Session 3: "Cold-case Christianity"
> > Lecture by Stand to Reason's J. Warner Wallace
> > *11:30 – 11:40 am* – Break
> > *11:40 am – 12:30 pm* – Session 4: "Still Standing"
> > Lecture by Stand to Reason's Greg Koukl
>
> **Conference Location:**
>
> Sutherland Auditorium

> Biola University
> 13800 Biola Avenue
> La Mirada, CA 90639
> View Map

If you are in the South California area, you can attend in person. Otherwise, you can watch it online.

IRS apologizes for flagging conservative groups for audits in 2012 election year

May 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Associated Press.

Excerpt:

> The Internal Revenue Service inappropriately flagged conservative political groups for additional reviews during the 2012 election to see if they were violating their tax-exempt status, a top IRS official said Friday.
>
> Organizations were singled out because they included the words “tea party” or “patriot” in their applications for tax-exempt status, said Lois Lerner, who heads the IRS division that oversees tax-exempt groups.
>
> In some cases, groups were asked for their list of donors, which violates IRS policy in most cases, she said.
>
> “That was wrong. That was absolutely incorrect, it was insensitive and it was inappropriate. That’s not how we go about selecting cases for further review,” Lerner said at a conference sponsored by the American Bar Association.
>
> “The IRS would like to apologize for that,” she added.
>
> […]Many conservative groups complained during the election that they were being harassed by the IRS. They accused the agency of frustrating their attempts to become tax exempt by sending them lengthy, intrusive questionnaires.
>
> The forms, which the groups made available at the time, sought information about group members’ political activities, including details of their postings on social networking websites and about family members.

It’s gangster-government all over again. A continuous stream of abuses of government power.

Stephen C. Meyer and Peter Atkins debate intelligent design

May 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This dialog occurred in 2010 on the Unbelievable radio show.

I made a rough transcript, so please see below for that.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

Details:

> The documentary film "Expelled" is presented by US Actor Ben Stein and makes the case that scientists who question Darwinian orthodoxy and support Intelligent Design are being "expelled" from academia.
>
> As the UK edition of the DVD is released we ask "Is freedom of thought at stake or is Intelligent Design out of bounds when it comes to biological science?"
>
> Stephen C Meyer is co founder of the Discovery Institute in the USA and a major proponent of Intelligent Design.
>
> Peter Atkins is Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University and an outspoken atheist.
>
> They both feature in "Expelled" and join Justin to debate the pros and cons of Intelligent Design theory.
>
> Mark Haville who is bringing the film to the UK also joins the discussion.

Meyer's PhD is from Cambridge, and he has a wonderful book called "Signature in the Cell". He explains intelligent design for beginners here in his CNN editorial.

Note: The transcript below is quite snarky and may include paraphrases of Dr. Atkins for the sake of humor.

My rough transcript of the Meyer-Atkins debate

Stephen Meyer:
– started researching on ID while doing his PhD at Cambridge
– the question is whether the information-bearing properties in DNA require a designer
– what cause is adequate to explain the digital code that in the simplest living cell
– alternative explanations like self-organization and RNA-first have failed
– so the best explanation for functional sequences of parts is an intelligent designer
– Darwinists have responded to this argument with insults and suppression of dissent

Peter Atkins:
– intelligent design is creationism
– there is no science at all in it
– information can emerge without an intelligent designer
– structures emerge spontaneously, no agent is needed to generate the structure

– information in DNA is also a structure

Stephen Meyer:
– structure and information are two different things
– many structures emerge spontaneously
– structure may be like the vortex that occurs when water goes down a drain

Peter Atkins:
– the vortex is information

Stephen Meyer:
– structures are different from functionally-specified digital information
– in DNA, there is a 4-digit alphabet that is used to create code sequences
– the thing to be explained is where do the functional sequences come from

Peter Atkins:
– information can grow without an agent
– the second law of thermodynamics
– the universe is falling into disorder
– but there are local abatements of chaos that create information
– evolution can cause the amount of information to grow

Stephen Meyer:
– that's just an assertion
– I agree that energy flow through a system can produce spontaneous order
– but spontaneous order is not the same thing as information

Peter Atkins:
– spontaneous order is the same as information

Stephen Meyer:
– it's not order that needs to be explained it's specified complexity

Peter Atkins:
– what do you mean by specified complexity?

Stephen Meyer:
– the chemical bonds that connect to each letter do not determine the letter
– the chemical bonding sites will accept any letter as easily as any other
– any one of the 4 bases (letters) can attach at any place along the backbone

Peter Atkins:
– the selection of which letter comes next is determined by evolution

Stephen Meyer:
– that is just an assertion
– there is no physical process that sequences the letters to have a function

Peter Atkins:
– do you believe in evolution? YES OR NO!

Mark Haville:
– for him to answer the question you have to define the word

– do you mean macro or micro? biological or stellar? directed or undirected?

Peter Atkins:
– undirected molecules to man evolution by natural processes

Stephen Meyer:
– but even Dawkins doesn't believe in evolution then
– you're including the origin of life from non-living matter in evolution
– Dawkins says that there is no known naturalistic explanation for that

Mark Haville:
– you need to define your terms

[They discuss of the movie Expelled and the case of Richard Sternberg]

Stephen Meyer:
– the problem is people don't want to talk about the science
– they denounce dissent as unscientific
– they will not debate about whther natural causes can explain the information
– I want to talk about the science

Peter Atkins:
– ID people raise interesting questions for naturalists to work on
– but you want to tell us what the answer is (intelligence) before we begin
– you start from the idea that an intelligence was involved

Justin Brierley:
– but you start with the idea that natural mechanisms can explain everything!

Stephen Meyer:
– for Dr. Atkins, only explanations based on material processes are valid

Peter Atkins:
– that is correct

Stephen Meyer:
– but we think that the activities of mind can explain some effects
– e.g. – the best explanation of the Rosetta stone is a mind

Peter Atkins:
– but we naturalists think of minds as material as well

Stephen Meyer:
– that's a materialist pre-supposition on your part
– we would have to have a debate about mind and body

Mark Haville:
– I think that the materialist position is socially dangerous
– the problem with naturalism is that it is an ideology
– the ideology pushes absurdities, e.g. – the universe came from nothing uncaused
– and naturalists exert power over others to force them to believe nonsense

Stephen Meyer:
– science progresses as the result of scientists disagreeing

– both sides agree to the facts
– the debate is about the interpretation of those facts
– and one side is being ruled out a priori based on the pre-supposition of materialism

Peter Atkins:
– why do you say that an intelligence is involved in DNA but not general relativity

Stephen Meyer:
– it is always logically possible that intelligence can be invlved in any effect
– the main thing is that explanations based on intelligence should not be ruled out

Peter Atkins:
= well you can't appeal to any non-material process in expaining anything
– those are the rules

Moderator:
– what does intelligent design have to do with religion?

Stephen Meyer:
– creationism is about understanding the istory of life using the Bible
– intelligent design is about using the same method of inquiry as Darwin
– we know that information arises from intelligent causes
– humans create information all the time by using intelligence to sequence parts

Moderator:
– are intelligent design proponents disreputable?

Stephen Meyer:
– what's disreputable is shutting down debate by setting arbitrary rules

Peter Atkins:
– we are both interested in the same questions

Moderator:
– why won't you let Stephen publish his papers then?

Peter Atkins:
– because it breaks the pre-suppositions of naturalism and materialism

Stephen Meyer:
– you're shutting down inquiry by using an arbitrary definition of science

Mark Haville:
– we need to define the word science
– science should be based on what we can observe empirically
– we can observe micro-evolution empirically
– but Darwinism goes beyond what is observable to postulate macro-evolution

Peter Atkins:
– but paleobiology is replete with evidence

Stephen Meyer:
– paleobiology uses a method of inference that I think is valid

– but intelligent design uses the same mode of reasoning which is also valid

Peter Atkins:
= you're intellectually lazy
– we're smart, we're using our brains

Moderator:
– you're saying that appeals to intelligent causes ends science?
– is ID the view that some things are too complex to be explained with naturalism?

Peter Atkins:
– yes, and to teach children that materialism is false is child abuse

Stephen Meyer:
– let's drop the insults and the rhetoric and focus on the arguments
– the ID argument is not based on what we don't know, it's based on what we DO know
– first, we can ask what undirected natural processes can and cannot do
– second, we can ask what we know about intelligent causes from our own experience
– what we do know seems to me to require an intelligent agent as a cause

Peter Atkins:
– GOD! Do you mean God!? Do you mean God!?

Stephen Meyer:
– I personally mean God, but all that the arguments proves is a generic intelligent cause
– and I am using the same method of investigation that Darwin used to get there
– what we know from our experience is that a mind is needed to create information

Peter Atkins:
– NONSENSE! ABSOLUTE NONSENSE!

Stephen Meyer:
– in my book, I list 10 predictions made by ID, so it's not a science-stopper
– furthermore, the enterprise of science began with th goal of understanding God
– consider the earliest scientists, people like James Boyler and Johannes Kepler

Peter Atkins:
– that was 300 years ago, we've moved on

Mark Haville:
– what about Max Planck then?

Stephen Meyer:
– how about James Clark Maxwell?

Mark Haville:
– we need to focus on the facts

Peter Atkins:
– what do you mean by the facts?

Mark Haville:
– well the fact is that Darwinism has no mechanism to produce new information

Peter Atkins:
– well copying errors introduces beneficial mutations

Stephen Meyer:
– let’s focus on where we get the first information from the simplest organism
– you can’t account for the first organism by appealing to copying errors
– to add functionality to a program, you need new lines codes from an intelligence
– once you have life, you can generate some new information
– but you can’t generate macro-evolution either

Peter Atkins:
– if we give you your explanation for teh origin of life, will you give this up

Stephen Meyer:
– of course! I’m a former theistic evolutionist
– but right now the evidence is not there for it
– we have to decide these questions based on what we see with our own eyes today

Peter Atkins:
– but I pre-suppose materialism as the starting point of all explanations
– you’re just intellectually lazy to abandon my pre-supposition

Stephen Meyer:
– why is it is less intellectually lazy to insist that materialism is true
– we are making plenty of predictions, and isn’t that what science is about?
– consider Junk DNA – you guys said it had no use
– now we know it has a use

Peter Atkins:
– naturalists were open to the idea that junk DNA might have a use before ID

Moderator:
– Dr. Meyer, what about the wall that locks out intelligence as an explanation?

Stephen Meyer:
– if these are interesting questions, then we should allow freedom of inquiry
– that’s how science advances

Peter Atkins:
– for all their science-talk really they are just saying God did it
– people who don’t agree with me are not using their brains, like I do
– to give up on my pre-supposition of materialism is a denial of humanity

Mark Haville:
– there are important issues that are affected by our view of origins
– everyone who hasn’t seen Expelled movie should definitely see it

John G. West discusses the value of human life on the Michael Medved show

May 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Michael Medved show is a national radio show broadcast out of Seattle, Washington. According to Talkers magazine, he has the fifth largest radio audience. He has a regular weekly segment on science and culture featuring scholars from the Discovery Institute.

Here is the third segment from this past week, courtesy of the Intelligent Design: The Future podcast.

The MP3 file is available for download. (37 minutes)

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Dr. John West appears on the Medved Show to discuss the trial of Dr. Gosnell and how it relates to our culture's valuation of human life.
>
> Each week, leading fellows from Discovery Institute will join Mr. Medved to talk about the intersection of science and culture. Listen in live online or on your local Medved station, or stay tuned for at ID the Future for the weekly podcast.

The topics this time are Kermit Gosnell, Peter Singer, infanticide, environmentalism, eugenics, animal rights, overpopulation.

Now might be a good time to subscribe to the ID: The Future podcast.

Previous entries

- Episode one: Stephen C. Meyer on Thomas Nagel and intelligent design
- Episode two: Stephen C. Meyer on Richard Dawkins and the Cambrian explosion

New study: belief in God can significantly improve mental health outcomes

May 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Psych Central. (H/T Rob P.)

Excerpt:

> A new study suggests belief in God may significantly improve the outcome of those receiving short-term treatment for psychiatric illness.
>
> Researchers followed patients receiving care from a hospital-based behavioral health program to investigate the relationship between patients' level of belief in God, expectations for treatment and actual treatment outcomes.
>
> In the study, published in the current issue of *Journal of Affective Disorders*, researchers comment that people with a moderate to high level of belief in a higher power do significantly better in short-term psychiatric treatment than those without.
>
> "Belief was associated with not only improved psychological well-being, but decreases in depression and intention to self-harm," says David H. Rosmarin, Ph.D., an instructor in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.
>
> The study looked at 159 patients, recruited over a one-year period. Each participant was asked to gauge their belief in God as well as their expectations for treatment outcome and emotion regulation, each on a five-point scale.
>
> Levels of depression, well-being, and self-harm were assessed at the beginning and end of their treatment program.

Obviously, the issue of God's existence is a matter to be decide based on what is true and false, but this kind of story might help us to get motivated for persuasion.

How two moms halted the Common Core curriculum in Indiana

May 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review. (H/T Maggie G., Nancy P.)

Excerpt:

> Indiana has become the first state to retreat from the Common Core standards, as Governor Mike Pence has just signed a bill suspending their implementation.
>
> A great deal has been written and spoken about Common Core, but it is worth rehearsing the outlines again. Common Core is a set of math and English standards developed largely with Gates Foundation money and pushed by the Obama administration and the National Governors Association. The standards define what every schoolchild should learn each year, from first grade through twelfth, and the package includes teacher evaluations tied to federally funded tests designed to ensure that schools teach to Common Core.
>
> Over 40 states hurriedly adopted Common Core, some before the standards were even written, in response to the Obama administration's making more than $4 billion in federal grants conditional on their doing so. Only Texas, Alaska, Virginia, and Nebraska declined. (Minnesota adopted the English but not the math standards.)
>
> […]In Indiana, the story starts with two Indianapolis moms, Heather Crossin and her friend Erin Tuttle.
>
> In September 2011, Heather suddenly noticed a sharp decline in the math homework her eight-year-old daughter was bringing home from Catholic school.
>
> "Instead of many arithmetic problems, the homework would contain only three or four questions, and two of those would be 'explain your answer,'" Heather told me. "Like, 'One bridge is 412 feet long and the other bridge is 206 feet long. Which bridge is longer? How do you know?'"
>
> She found she could not help her daughter answer the latter question: The "right" answer involved heavy quotation from Common Core language. A program designed to encourage thought had ended up encouraging rote memorization not of math but of scripts about math.
>
> […]These standards are designed not to produce well-educated citizens but to prepare students to enter community colleges and lower-level jobs. All students, not just non-college-material students, are going to be taught to this lower standard.
>
> I want to pause and highlight the significance of Heather and Erin's testimony. Heather Crossin and Erin Tuttle did not get involved in opposing Common Core because of anything Michelle Malkin or Glenn Beck said to rile them up, but

> because of what they saw happening in their own children's *Catholic* school. When experts or politicians said that Common Core would not lead to a surrender of local control over curriculum, Heather and Erin knew better. (Ironically, the leverage in Indiana was Tony Bennett's school-choice program, which made state vouchers available to religious schools, but only if they adopted state tests — which were later quietly switched from ISTEP to the untried Common Core assessments.)
>
> At first Heather thought maybe her ignorance of Common Core was her fault. Maybe, with her kids (as she imagined) safely ensconced in good Catholic schools, she hadn't paid attention.
>
> That's when she and Erin started contacting people — "and we found out something more shocking: *Nobody* had any idea," Heather told me.
>
> A friend of Heather's who is a former reporter for a state newspaper and now a teacher didn't know. Nor did her state senator, Scott Schneider, even though he sat on the state senate's Education Committee. (In Indiana, as in most states, Common Core was adopted by the Board of Education without consulting the legislature.) Nor, evidently, did the state's education reporters — Heather could find literally no press coverage of the key moment when Indiana's Board of Education abandoned its fine state standards and well-regarded state tests in favor of Common Core.
>
> "They brought in David Coleman, the architect of the standards, to give a presentation, they asked a few questions, there was no debate, no cost analysis, just a sales job, and everybody rubber-stamped it," Heather said.
>
> So began an 18-month journey in which these two mothers probably changed education history.

There's definitely an agenda, I think, by people in the government to dumb down the electorate with these educational fads. It's good to see vigilant mothers who are able to challenge the system and win. I hope that other states will take a look at this and see that Obama's bribes aren't worth the costs to our children. We've already saddled them with trillions of dollars in debt. We shouldn't be taking away their ability to earn money, too.

Obama: editing of talking points to cover-up of Benghazi terrorist attack is a “sideshow”

May 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Townhall.

Excerpt:

> Speaking to reporters during a joint press conference with Prime Minister David Cameron Monday, President Obama called the controversy surrounding the editing of Benghazi talking points a “sideshow.”
>
> “The whole issue of talking points, frankly throughout this process has been a sideshow,” Obama said. “There’s no there, there.”
>
> Despite openly blaming a YouTube video in the immediate aftermath of the Benghazi attack, Obama said Monday at the time of the attack his administration wasn’t sure who was responsible for the deaths of four Americans, including U.S Ambassador Chris Stevens.
>
> “Immediately after this event happened we were not clear who exactly carried it out, how it occured or what the motivations were,” Obama said. “Nobody understood exactly what was taking place during the course of those first few days.”
>
> Last Wednesday, Whistleblower and Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Libya Gregory Hicks said in sworn testimony that he spoke to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at 2 a.m. on the night of the attack and told her, “We are under attack.” He didn’t mention a protest because there wasn’t one. Hicks also said he was shocked when he heard UN Ambassador Susan Rice blame a YouTube video and a spontaneous protest on Sunday talk shows five days after the attack occurred.
>
> ABC News reported late last week that the Benghazi talking points were edited 12 times and that all references to terrorism and al Qaeda were scrubbed. The initial version of unedited talking points were from the CIA and included warnings about terrorism, al Qaeda and a lack of security at the consulate in Benghazi. The best assessment sent from the intelligence community included multiple warnings about the deteriorating security situation in Benghazi. The final talking points with scrubbed references to terrorism and al Qaeda were edited by the State Department after communication and a meeting in the White House.

Just a quick refresher from Mark Steyn about what Benghazi means:

> The L.A. Times, a dying newspaper, had a lame headline, even by its own pathetic and abysmal standards, playing up the partisan element. There isn’t actually a partisan element here. All the players involved in this are Democrats.

> Chris Stevens is in fact the poster boy for the Obama-Clinton view of the Arab Spring. He's one of their guys. I mean, as chaps like me look on it, he was in large part deluded about the nature of the Arab Spring, that he was a personally courageous and brave man who was on the front line of the Obama-Clinton narrative about the Arab Spring. And they let him die, and then told lies over his coffin. And Democrats, liberals should ask themselves about that, if they are willing to, that's, no right wingers, no Republicans, no conservatives are involved in this. They did that to one of their own.
>
> […]…it is now clear that the local militia on who the security of these guys, to whom the security of these guys was entrusted, were actually complicit in the attacks. Elements of the militia participated in the attacks. His body, the dying ambassador was taken to a hospital in the control of one of the radical Islamic groups. He was there in Benghazi on a symbolic day at the personal request of Senator Clinton. In a sense, he not only died for the Obama-Clinton fiction, he was sacrificed to the Obama-Clinton fiction of the Arab Spring. This is absolutely disgraceful. I cannot conceive of how empty and dead you have to be inside to put Ambassador Stevens through that, then leave him to die, and all the nonsense we heard about oh, they couldn't have got there in time? Oh, really? You had, it's like a football match, is it? It's like a football game, you've got an end time, you know they're all going to pack up and go home at 5:00 in the morning or whatever? They didn't know how long it was going to last. They left him to die. They decided to let their guy die in the confusion of the stuff happening in Egypt and Tunisia over the stupid no-account video.

Stuart Schneiderman has an idea about what is motivating the Democrats with their "protesting a video" cover-up.

He writes:

> It might not seem obvious, but the Obama terrorism policy has been run by an idea.
>
> The idea tells us that the fault for Islam terrorism does not lie with the terrorists. It lies with the racism and Islamophobia of the victims. As Jeremiah Wright famously suggested, America was responsible for the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. It got what was coming to it. Some would call it justice.
>
> To the Obama administration Muslims are rightly outraged at being disrespected by many people in the world. Their outrage is so righteous that they must try to restore their honor by committing terrorist acts.
>
> In order to put an end to terrorism, the administration has chosen to remove all references to Muslim terrorism, whether it involves the massacre perpetrated by Major Nidal Hasan or the attack on the Benghazi consulate. Associating Islam with terrorism is offensive, and, since offensive language is the root of the terrorism problem, eliminating it will eventually eliminate terrorism.

No one should have been surprised when Jonathan Karl of ABC News reported on the extensive bowdlerization of administration talking points about Benghazi.

Unfortunately, the government does not exercise absolute control over the marketplace of ideas. So, despite the best efforts of the Obama administration, a random Islamophobe might well do or say something that offends Muslims to the point that they feel obliged to defend the honor of their religion by killing a few Americans.

In that case, the fault lies with the instigator, not with the perpetrator. As Hillary Clinton famously said to the mother of one of the murdered Navy SEALs, the administration would stop at nothing to punish the person responsible: the filmmaker.

Peggy Noonan described what happens when this theory was put into practice in Benghazi:

Because of that, it [The White House] could not tolerate the idea that the armed assault on the Benghazi consulate was a premeditated act of Islamist terrorism. That would carry a whole world of unhappy political implications, and demand certain actions. And the American presidential election was only eight weeks away. They wanted this problem to go away, or at least to bleed the meaning from it.

Because the White House could not tolerate the idea of Benghazi as a planned and deliberate terrorist assault, it had to be made into something else. So they said it was a spontaneous street demonstration over an anti-Muhammad YouTube video made by a nutty California con man. After all, that had happened earlier in the day, in Cairo. It sounded plausible. And maybe they believed it at first. Maybe they wanted to believe it. But the message was out: Provocative video plus primitive street Arabs equals sparky explosion. Not our fault. Blame the producer! Who was promptly jailed.

If what happened in Benghazi was not a planned and prolonged terrorist assault, if it was merely a street demonstration gone bad, the administration could not take military action to protect Americans there. You take military action in response to a planned and coordinated attack by armed combatants. You don’t if it’s an essentially meaningless street demonstration that came and went.

By Noonan’s analysis, the Obama administration was conducting policy in a fictional world. In its alternative world, what happened in Benghazi was a spontaneous protest provoked by an offensive video. You do not send in commandos to gun down righteous protesters.

[…]If the world does not correspond to your vision, you act as though it does. Your job, if you work for the Obama administration is to change the world by changing the fictional lens through which we see it.

Of course, this looks suspiciously like government by propaganda. Naturally,

> sophisticated academic thought has offered a theoretical rationalization for it.
>
> Many of the smartest academics in the best universities have convinced themselves that reality is just another fictional world, one that has been constructed by the powerful to exploit the weak.
>
> When put upon to explain why so many people accept that reality is real, they explain that all of these people have been brainwashed by the ruling powers.
>
> When lots of people say it's real, more and more people act as though it's real. Then, it becomes real.
>
> By this theory, what we inaccurately call Islamic terrorism is really just a spontaneous and understandable expression of Muslim outrage. It represents a moral reckoning for insults, injuries and slights dating back to the Crusades. It might be a crime, but it does not reflect on individual Muslims.

It's government by postmodernism. There is no reality independent of our ideology. If you just believe our propaganda about America being to blame for everything that evil people freely do, then there will be world peace. Islamic terrorists just want us to blame ourselves for their killing of us, then they'll stop killing us.

The main goal of the Obama administration is to make sure that the Islamic world is not judged by the actions of Islamic terrorists. That's why terrorist attacks can never be the fault of Islam. It must always be America's fault. We caused the protest with our YouTube videos. Major Nidal Hasan's shooting up Fort Hood was not terrorism… it was "workplace violence". The terrorists are always the victims. This is what you get when you put leftists in charge of national security. There will be more violence against us in the future, because the truth is that weakness emboldens aggressors to attack more. That's not what Obama and his leftist ilk learned in university, but that's what history teaches.

UPDATE: Stephen Hayes of the Weekly Standard has a podcast up on Obama's dismissal of the evolving talking points scandal.

Related posts

- BBC News covers whistle-blower testimony: "After Benghazi revelations, heads will roll"
- ABC News: State Department scrubbed terrorism details from Benghazi talking points
- What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack "from the get-go"
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA's account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi

- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama’s Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama’s Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama’s security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

Have today's young women been taught to select marriage-capable men?

May 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm not going to write a big post on this, but here is Exhibit A from the NY Post.

Excerpt:

> Thousands of American teen girls are crushing on Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar "Jahar" Tsarnaev, 19 — and leading a social-media movement to exonerate him.
>
> The swooning teens will not accept allegations that the bushy-haired college kid — whom they refer to by his nickname, "Jahar" — and his brother, Tamerlan, 26, killed three and maimed hundreds by setting off bombs at the April 15 race and killed an MIT police officer during the ensuing manhunt.
>
> While some scrawl the hashtag "#FreeJahar" on their hands with markers, an 18-year-old in Topeka, Kansas, is going to the extreme — she wants the Dzhokhar's words inked on her arm forever.
>
> "Getting one of Jahar's tweets tattooed on me tomorrow. Guess you could say I'm a #FreeJahar supporter," "@keepitbluntedd" tweeted on May 7.
>
> The tatted-up teen, Alisha, told The Post she'd soon put Tsarnaev's April 7 tweet on her upper inside of her arm. It will read, "If you have the knowledge and the inspiration all that's left is to take action."
>
> The waitress insists she believes Tsarnaev is innocent because the evidence against him doesn't add up. She read through all of his tweets.
>
> […]"@FreeJahar97," who identified herself on Twitter as "Gianna," a 16-year-old with "big boobs," likened Tsarnaev to a heartthrob.
>
> "Yes i like Justin Bieber and i like Jahar but that has nothing to do with why i support him. I know hes innocent, he is far too beautiful," she tweeted on April 25.

This is not unexpected, because women were similarly attracted to Osama Bin Laden and Luka Magnotta.

What do we learn from this? Well, I read on Sunshine Mary's blog that women are attracted to LAMPS, which stands for Looks, Athleticism, Money, Power, and Status. You can't really question what women are attracted to, because that's just the way they are. Similarly, men are attracted to things that are not terribly relevant to a successful marriage. It's just a fact that tingles are not a reliable guide for selecting a solid mate, if the goal is really life-long, exclusive, committed married love.

I think that men are probably learning that physical attraction is no guarantee of performance in the wife and mother roles. Men are learning to be more careful because

of the penalties for unilateral divorce for men. But somebody needs to be telling women that attraction and tingles do not translate into a lasting, stable, faithful marriage to a marriage-capable man. It translates into Tiger Woods and John Edwards. To really choose a man, you have to think about what roles a man plays in a marriage and then select a man who shows evidence of being able and willing to perform those roles.

What young unmarried women need to hear is that they need to be more careful about marriage as a vocation. Is anyone brave enough to hold them accountable? We have an epidemic of single motherhood, divorce, abortion, etc. Instead of blaming men for everything, let’s take a careful look at young women and see what they believe and how they have been influenced by pop culture.

Department of Justice secretly obtained Associated Press phone records over two months

May 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the report from the famous news service, Associated Press.

Excerpt:

> The Justice Department secretly obtained two months of telephone records of reporters and editors for The Associated Press in what the news cooperative's top executive called a "massive and unprecedented intrusion" into how news organizations gather the news.
>
> The records obtained by the Justice Department listed outgoing calls for the work and personal phone numbers of individual reporters, for general AP office numbers in New York, Washington and Hartford, Conn., and for the main number for the AP in the House of Representatives press gallery, according to attorneys for the AP. It was not clear if the records also included incoming calls or the duration of the calls.
>
> In all, the government seized the records for more than 20 separate telephone lines assigned to AP and its journalists in April and May of 2012. The exact number of journalists who used the phone lines during that period is unknown, but more than 100 journalists work in the offices where phone records were targeted, on a wide array of stories about government and other matters.
>
> In a letter of protest sent to Attorney General Eric Holder on Monday, AP President and Chief Executive Officer Gary Pruitt said the government sought and obtained information far beyond anything that could be justified by any specific investigation. He demanded the return of the phone records and destruction of all copies.
>
> "There can be no possible justification for such an overbroad collection of the telephone communications of The Associated Press and its reporters. These records potentially reveal communications with confidential sources across all of the newsgathering activities undertaken by the AP during a two-month period, provide a road map to AP's newsgathering operations and disclose information about AP's activities and operations that the government has no conceivable right to know," Pruitt said.

So, the government's been wire tapping journalists? Whatever happened to freedom of the press?

Surprise! The leftists have been exposed as the real fascists! Oh wait, that's just like every other time. To be for big government is *to be a fascist*. There is no such thing as a "fascism" on the right. Conservatives believe in strong families, parental authority, freedom of religion, separation of church and state, small government, an armed

populace and free markets. Right-wing conservatism is founded on liberty, private property and the rule of law itself. Big government control is solely a phenomenon of the left. We've been dallying with big government for 5 years under this socialist. Why are we surprised that he uses government to spy on us? It's the left wing thing to do.

What does the Bible say about the death penalty?

May 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: This post has a twin post which talks about the evidence against capital punishment from science.

First, let's take a look at what the Bible says in general about capital punishment, using this lecture featuring eminent theologian Wayne Grudem.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

A PDF sermon outline is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?
- what did God say to Noah about CP?
- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?
- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?

- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?
- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?
- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the "whole life ethic" and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

You can find more talks by Wayne Grudem here.

What about the woman caught in adultery?

Some people like to bring up the woman caught in adultery as proof that Jesus opposed capital punishment. But that passage of the Bible was added much later after the canon was decided.

Daniel B. Wallace is an eminent New Testament scholar who also teaches at Dallas Theological Seminary, an extremely conservative seminary.

About Dr. Wallace:

> Dr. Daniel B. Wallace
>
> - Professor of New Testament Studies
> - B.A., Biola University, 1975; Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; Ph.D., 1995.

> Dr. Wallace influences students across the country through his textbook on intermediate Greek grammar. It is used in more than two-thirds of the nation's schools that teach that subject. He is the senior New Testament editor of the *NET Bible* and coeditor of the *NET-Nestle Greek-English diglot*. Recently his scholarship has shifted from syntactical and text-critical issues to more specific work in John, Mark, and nascent Christology. However he still works extensively in textual criticism, and has founded The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, an institute with an initial purpose to preserve Scripture by taking digital photographs of all known Greek New Testament manuscripts. His postdoctoral work includes work on Greek grammar at Tyndale House in Cambridge and textual criticism studies at the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster.

And Dr. Wallace writes about the passage in John on Bible.org.

Excerpt:

> One hundred and forty years ago, conservative biblical scholar and Dean of

Canterbury, Henry Alford, advocated a new translation to replace the King James Bible. One of his reasons was the inferior textual basis of the KJV. Alford argued that “a translator of Holy Scripture must be…ready to sacrifice the choicest text, and the plainest proof of doctrine, if the words are not those of what he is constrained in his conscience to receive as God’s testimony.” He was speaking about the Trinitarian formula found in the KJV rendering of 1 John 5:7–8. Twenty years later, two Cambridge scholars came to the firm conclusion that John 7:53–8:11 also was not part of the original text of scripture. But Westcott and Hort’s view has not had nearly the impact that Alford’s did.

For a long time, biblical scholars have recognized the poor textual credentials of the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11). The evidence against its authenticity is overwhelming: The earliest manuscripts with substantial portions of John’s Gospel (P66 and P75) lack these verses. They skip from John 7:52 to 8:12. The oldest large codices of the Bible also lack these verses: codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both from the fourth century, are normally considered to be the most important biblical manuscripts of the NT extant today. Neither of them has these verses. Codex Alexandrinus, from the fifth century, lacks several leaves in the middle of John. But because of the consistency of the letter size, width of lines, and lines per page, the evidence is conclusive that this manuscript also lacked the *pericope adulterae*. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, also from the fifth century, apparently lacked these verses as well (it is similar to Alexandrinus in that some leaves are missing).The earliest extant manuscript to have these verses is codex Bezae, an eccentric text once in the possession of Theodore Beza. He gave this manuscript to the University of Cambridge in 1581 as a gift, telling the school that he was confident that the scholars there would be able to figure out its significance. He washed his hands of the document. Bezae is indeed the most eccentric NT manuscript extant today, yet it is the chief representative of the Western text-type (the text-form that became dominant in Rome and the Latin West).

When P66, P75, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus agree, their combined testimony is overwhelmingly strong that a particular reading is not authentic. But it is not only the early Greek manuscripts that lack this text. The great majority of Greek manuscripts through the first eight centuries lack this pericope. And except for Bezae (or codex D), virtually all of the most important Greek witnesses through the first eight centuries do not have the verses. Of the three most important early versions of the New Testament (Coptic, Latin, Syriac), two of them lack the story in their earliest and best witnesses. The Latin alone has the story in its best early witnesses.

[…]It is an important point to note that although the story of the woman caught in adultery is found in most of our printed Bibles today, the evidence suggests that the majority of Bibles during the first eight centuries of the Christian faith did not contain the story. Externally, most scholars would say that the evidence for it

> not being an authentic part of John's Gospel is rock solid.But textual criticism is not based on external evidence alone; there is also the internal evidence to consider. This is comprised of two parts: *intrinsic evidence* has to do with what an author is likely to have written; *transcriptional evidence* has to do with how and why a scribe would have changed the text.
>
> Intrinsically, the vocabulary, syntax, and style look far more like Luke than they do John. There is almost nothing in these twelve verses that has a Johannine flavor. And transcriptionally, scribes were almost always prone to add material rather than omit it—especially a big block of text such as this, rich in its description of Jesus' mercy. One of the remarkable things about this passage, in fact, is that it is found in multiple locations. Most manuscripts that have it place it in its now traditional location: between John 7:52 and 8:12. But an entire family of manuscripts has the passage at the end of Luke 21, while another family places it at the end of John's Gospel. Other manuscripts place it at the end of Luke or in various places in John 7.
>
> The *pericope adulterae* has all the earmarks of a pericope that was looking for a home. It took up permanent residence, in the ninth century, in the middle of the fourth gospel.

As this debate between Peter Williams and Bart Ehrman shows, there are only TWO disputed passages in the entire NT that are theologically significant. The long ending of Mark and this adultery passage. A good case can be made for the long ending of Mark, but it's best not to assume it in a debate. The adultery passage is practically impossible to defend as authentic. Dr. Wallace talks about both passages in this Parchment & Pen article. Wallace has also debated Bart Ehrman in the Greer-Heard Forum. What that debate showed is that the New Testament text is actually quite reliable except for those two passages, but it's important to be honest about the two places that are not well supported.

Dr. George Yancey lectures on anti-Christian bias in academia, and beyond

May 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My good friend Wes posted this 28-minute lecture.

If you watch 5 minutes, then you'll definitely stay and watch the whole thing. It's fascinating.

Details:

> Join Dr. George Yancey in an in depth discussion of the bias taking place within academia against religion in general, but more specifically Christianity. Within the discussion Dr.Yancey uses brief explanations of his previous book, Compromising Scholarship and many other excerpts of his past research as well as his forthcoming research to give us a new viewpoint on academia and religion.

I found a quick description of Dr. Yancey's work in this New York Times article from July 2011.

It says:

> Republican scholars are more likely than Democrats to end up working outside academia,as documented by Daniel Klein, an economist at George Mason University. Dr. Klein, who calls himself a classical liberal (a k a libertarian), says that the university promotes groupthink because its system of "departmental majoritarianism" empowers the dominant faction to keep hiring like-minded colleagues. And when a faculty committee is looking to hire or award tenure, political ideology seems to make a difference, according to a "collegiality survey" conducted by George Yancey.
>
> Dr. Yancey, a professor of sociology at the University of North Texas, asked more than 400 sociologists which nonacademic factors might influence their willingness to vote for hiring a new colleague. You might expect professors to at least *claim* to be immune to bias in academic hiring decisions.
>
> But as Dr. Yancey reports in his new book, "Compromising Scholarship: Religious and Political Bias in American Higher Education," more than a quarter of the sociologists said they would be swayed favorably toward a Democrat or an A.C.L.U. member and unfavorably toward a Republican. About 40 percent said they would be less inclined to vote for hiring someone who belonged to the National Rifle Association or who was an evangelical. Similar results were obtained in a subsequent survey of professors in other social sciences and the humanities.
>
> Dr. Yancey, who describes himself as a political independent with traditional Christian beliefs and progressive social values, advises nonliberal graduate

> students to be discreet during job interviews. “The information in this research,” he wrote, “indicates that revealing one’s political and religious conservatism will, on average, negatively influence about half of the search committee one is attempting to impress.”
>
> Dr. Yancey’s research was a survey, not a field experiment, so it’s impossible to know how many of those academics who confessed to hypothetical bias would let it sway an actual decision. Perhaps they’d try to behave as impartially as the directors of graduate studies in Dr. Gross’s experiment.

The lecture is a real eye-opener. It turns out that in academia, you are likely to be viewed the same way as blacks were viewed by slave-owners, and Jews were viewed by Nazis. Stereotypes, ignorance and hatred abound.

We have a lot of work to do to correct these perceptions, and unfortunately nothing that Christians see and hear in church is likely to change this. Until we get serious about prodding our young people to think and achieve, this is what people on the secular left will think of us. Not because they really are smarter, but because we are not capable of pointing out the nonsense on their side of the aisle, e.g. – eternal universes, aliens seeding the Earth with life, fatherlessness is good for children, and so on. If we don’t study the evidence, then their stupidity will rule the day, and they are the ones who are entrenched in academia.

IRS gave confidential documents from conservative groups to liberal group ProPublica

May 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The IRS also held up tax-exemption applications of conservative groups.

Excerpt:

> A newly obtained watchdog report described how the "inappropriate" IRS program that flagged conservative groups for extra scrutiny led to massive delays, with some organizations stuck waiting years to find out about their applications.
>
> The findings were contained in a highly anticipated and highly critical inspector general's report, obtained by Fox News, on a practice that IRS officials first acknowledged on Friday.
>
> The report revealed that the program began as far back as 2010. The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration concluded that it was the result of "ineffective management" and "inappropriate criteria" which must be corrected.
>
> Describing the impact of the IRS program, the report said the flawed criteria led to Tea Party and other groups being singled out and subjected to "substantial delays." More than 80 percent of the cases it reviewed were left open more than one year, and some were left in limbo for more than three years.
>
> […]**The internal investigation found that the "inappropriate criteria" — which led to the IRS asking Tea Party and other groups about their donors and making other intrusive requests — was allowed to stay in place for more than 18 months. During that time, conservative groups had their applications put on hold for months, even years.**

What did the IRS do with these applications and donor lists?

Breitbart.com explains what happened next:

> **The progressive-leaning investigative journalism group ProPublica says the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) office that targeted and harassed conservative tax-exempt groups during the 2012 election cycle gave the progressive group nine confidential applications of conservative groups whose tax-exempt status was pending.**
>
> The commendable admission lends further evidence to the lengths the IRS went during an election cycle to silence tea party and limited government voices.
>
> ProPublica says the documents the IRS gave them were "not supposed to be made public":
>
> The same IRS office that deliberately targeted conservative groups applying for tax-exempt status in the run-up to the 2012 election released nine pending

> confidential applications of conservative groups to ProPublica late last year… In response to a request for the applications for 67 different nonprofits last November, the Cincinnati office of the IRS sent ProPublica applications or documentation for 31 groups. Nine of those applications had not yet been approved—meaning they were not supposed to be made public. (We made six of those public, after redacting their financial information, deeming that they were newsworthy.)
>
> The group says that "no unapproved applications from liberal groups were sent to ProPublica."

The National Organization for Marriage had their donor list leaked by someone in the IRS.

Excerpt:

> **The National Organization for Marriage (NOM) today released documents showing that their confidential U.S. tax return containing private donor information came directly from the Internal Revenue Service and was provided to NOM's political opponents, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). Joe Solmonese, president of the HRC, is a national co-chair of President Obama's reelection campaign.**
>
> "The American people are entitled to know how a confidential tax return containing private donor information filed exclusively with the Internal Revenue Service has been given to our political opponents whose leader also happens to be co-chairing President Obama's reelection committee," said NOM President Brian Brown. "It is shocking that a political ally of President Obama's would come to possess and then publicly release a confidential tax return that came directly from the Internal Revenue Service. We demand to know who is responsible for this criminal act and what the Administration is going to do to get to the bottom of it."
>
> On March 30, 2012, the Huffington Post published NOM's confidential 2008 tax return filed with the IRS, which it said came from the Human Rights Campaign. The HRC has said on its own site the documents came from a "whistleblower." However, NOM has determined that the documents came directly from the Internal Revenue Service.

The Human Rights Campaign was one of the groups that denounced the Family Research Council as a "hate group". This is the same Family Research Council that was attacked by a gun-wielding gay activist named Floyd Lee Corkins II. The crime was prosecuted as an act of domestic terrorism, and Corkins was convicted. The Human Rights Campaign has gotten people fired for disagreeing with same-sex marriage.

Remember that everything that the IRS was doing was not paid for with money that they themselves earned themselves by providing useful products and services. The IRS gets money by culling it from profitable private sector businesses and their employees, through compulsory confiscation of earned income. Should we be paying them to do this?

Is this good value for the money?

IRS audited the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association after they ran pro-marriage ads

May 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Todd Starnes of Fox News Radio reports.

Excerpt:

> The man known as America's pastor was among those targeted by the Internal Revenue Service after the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association ran newspaper advertisements promoting traditional marriage and biblical values, according to a letter his son wrote to President Obama.
>
> "I am bringing this to your attention because I believe that someone in the Administration was targeting and attempting to intimidate us," wrote Franklin Graham in his letter and shared with Fox News. "This is morally wrong and unethical – indeed some would call it 'un-American.'"
>
> Graham is president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association as well as the international charity Samaritan's Purse. Both organizations received word of audits on the same day – not long after they ran full –page ads supporting North Carolina's Marriage amendment.
>
> […]The IRS eventually cleared both the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan's Purse, but Graham noted that the audit cost the ministries money.
>
> "Unfortunately, while these audits not only wasted taxpayer money, they wasted money contributed by donors for ministry purposes, as we had to spend precious resources servicing the IRS agents in our offices," Graham wrote.

This is just crass intimidation by a secular state against private religious organizations.

UPDATE: Todd posted an update to the story this morning.

Police and social workers ignored sex-trafficking, rape and abuse by Muslims

May 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> The gang recruited its victims from the Oxford area between May 2004 and January last year, deliberately targeting vulnerable girls.

> Some were spotted drinking or playing truant along the city's Cowley Road, while others were chosen because they were living in care homes.
>
> Once under their control the abusers forced the girls to have sex using threats of extreme violence.
>
> Some were gang raped, while others were prostituted to men who would travel from all parts of UK to have sex with them.
>
> If they did not comply they were beaten and burned with cigarettes while one girl was even branded with her abusers' initials.
>
> When one victim fell pregnant at the age of 12 she was forced to undergo a dangerous backstreet abortion.
>
> Another girl was abused with a string of bizarre sex toys to 'prepare' her for one of the gang rapes.
>
> Police were first alerted to the activities of the grooming ring in 2006 when a 14-year-old girl complained that she had been held against her will by two Asian men and forced to take drugs.
>
> Seven months later the same girl was found by officers in an Oxford park complaining that she had been forced to perform a sex act on one of the defendants, Akhtar Dogar.
>
> Dogar was interviewed by police but denied raping the girl and the case was dropped when the girl withdrew her complaint.
>
> The same year another 14-year-old girl informed police she had been forced to have sex with several different men, but again the case was dropped when she became too scared to press charges.
>
> Again in 2006 police were called to a guest house in Oxford after a man staying there dialled 999 to report that he feared a prostitute was being beaten up in an adjoining room.
>
> When police arrived they found a 14-year-old girl cowering in the basement and complaining that had been raped and beaten.
>
> She too eventually withdrew her complaint and the case was dropped.

> Social workers also claimed they alerted police to concerns about one of the victims who regularly ran away from her care home and was often seen in the company of older Asian men.
>
> A serious case review was announced while Thames Valley Police and Oxfordshire County Council apologised for their failure to spot the pattern earlier.
>
> […]The case is the latest in a string of high profile trials involving Asian gangs who have convicted of targeting and abusing vulnerable white girls.
>
> Last May eight men of Pakistani origin and one Afghan were convicted of trafficking and raping girls in the Rochdale area.
>
> Five Asian men were also jailed in 2010 after being convicted of grooming girls as young as 12 in the Rotherham area.
>
> Just last week a gang of Asian men who groomed vulnerable white girls in Shropshire between 2006 and 2009 were jailed for more than 50-years.

More here from the Evening Standard:

> Police and council leaders today apologised for their failings as a gang of paedophiles was convicted at the Old Bailey of serial abuse of schoolgirls while in care.

> The girls, some as young as 11, were drugged, raped, trafficked and used as prostitutes while supposedly in the safe-keeping of the local authority in Oxford.
>
> They had all been targeted because they were vulnerable, drinking and taking drugs.
>
> The exposure of this child sex ring comes less than a year after a similar gang was jailed in Rochdale and an inquiry by a group of MPs found systemic failings in care across the country.
>
> Last month police revealed that new evidence had emerged of abuse by 84 staff at the Bryn Estyn home in North Wales dating back to the 1960s.
>
> **Today five men of Pakistani origin and two from North Africa were convicted of more than 40 charges spanning eight years.** They will be sentenced at a later date by judge Peter Rook QC. Two defendants were cleared.
>
> The charges involved six girls between the ages of 11 and 15 who were abused over nine years in the Cowley area of Oxford.
>
> After the guilty verdicts a fight broke out in the dock with one of the convicted paedophiles punching another who had been cleared.
>
> The men were described by police as “predators who identified the most vulnerable girls in society and corrupted them entirely”. Police missed several chances to catch gang members before they were finally arrested.
>
> The victims were forced to relive the horror in some of the most distressing witness evidence heard at the Old Bailey.

> One after the other, the girls broke down as they described how they were groomed, beaten, betrayed and sold into prostitution around the country.
>
> Girl D told how, at the age of 11, she was branded with a heated hairpin by a trafficker and loaned to other abusers for £600 an hour.
>
> Over five years she was repeatedly raped by large groups of men in what she described as "torture sex".
>
> She was so frightened of her attacker that she refused to give evidence for fear he would hurt her again.
>
> It was only after she was given legal advice that Girl D agreed to tell her story from a videolink from another room in the building.
>
> Another victim, Girl A, complained of her plight to police on two occasions but no one was charged.

What caused police and social workers to avoid rescuing the white girls from the Muslim men? Well, I think if you ask any university-educated liberal, they would explain to you that charging Muslims with crimes in Western societies is "Islamophobia". This is what people learn in university. You can't treat Muslims like everyone else, equal under the law, because that's "Islamophobia". The Labor Party, which enacted the lax immigration policies of the last decade in the United Kingdom, would tell you that those British pre-teen girls just need to be more sensitive to other cultures and stop being so racist while they are being raped.

The previous Muslim sex-trafficking gang

Here are the facts from the previous "grooming" case from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A sex grooming gang targeted white girls because they were not part of their 'community or religion' said a judge as he jailed them for a total of 77 years yesterday.
>
> Detectives are now preparing to make more arrests after they revealed they suspect up to 50 mainly Pakistani-born men took part in the abuse.
>
> But despite the judge's hard-hitting comments, police in Greater Manchester continued to insist that the men's race and religion were not factors in their crimes.
>
> Yesterday senior politicians clashed over the case – with one former Labour MP claiming police and social workers ignored complaints because they were 'petrified of being called racist'.
>
> With experts on paedophilia insisting street grooming by Muslim men was a real problem, Judge Gerald Clinton made it clear he believed religion was a factor.
>
> He jailed the 59-year-old ringleader for 19 years and eight other men for between four and 12 years, telling them they had treated their victims 'as though they

> were worthless and beyond all respect'.
>
> He added: 'I believe one of the factors which led to that is that they were not of your community or religion.'
>
> But he branded outbursts by some of the men claiming the prosecution was racially-motivated 'nonsense', telling them they found themselves in the dock because of their 'lust and greed'.
>
> The gang raped and abused up to 47 girls – some as young as 13 – after plying them with alcohol and luring them to takeaways in Heywood, near Rochdale.
>
> Detective Inspector Michael Sanderson, of Greater Manchester Police, said none of the convicted men had ever shown 'the slightest bit of remorse'.

The keeping of sex slaves is sanctioned by the Qur'an.

What's interesting about this case is that the police knew about the ring years before, but refused to prosecute:

> A victim of the ring said she was 'let down' by police and the Crown Prosecution Service because the issue of Asian gangs grooming young white girls was 'unheard of' at the time.
>
> The girl, who was 15 when she was targeted by the gang, reported the abuse to police in August 2008 but the CPS decided not to prosecute because they did not believe a jury would find her 'credible'.
>
> After reporting the abuse she suffered for four more months at the hands of the gang and continued to be forced into having sex by her 'friend' – a teenage girl who was acting as a pimp for the men.
>
> She said the problem got 'worse' after telling the police.
>
> 'I felt let down. But I know that they (police) believed me… but… because they said to me at the end that something should have been done but the CPS just would not – what's the word? – prosecute is it?
>
> 'It's like, then, in 2008 it weren't really heard of… Asian men with white girls.
>
> 'It was just unheard of. I've never heard of it. Now it's going on everywhere. You think of Muslim men as religious and family-minded and just nice people. You don't think… I don't know… you just don't think they'd do things like that.'
>
> The girl, now 20, only escaped the gang in December 2008 when she fell pregnant and moved away. She was then made to wait until August 2009 for the CPS to tell her they were not taking the case to trial.
>
> She called the men who abused her 'evil' and said she hopes they pay for their crimes.
>
> 'They ripped away all my dignity and all my last bit of self-esteem and by the end of it I had no emotion whatsoever because I was used to being used and abused daily,' she said.

> ‘It was just blocked out, it was just like it wasn’t me any more. They just took everything away and I just think hopefully they’ll pay for what they’ve done.’

Under the policies of the UK Labour Party, the police had all been fully trained in multiculturalism and political correctness. Some groups favored by the secular left are above the law and cannot be persecuted, even when they rape little children. We can thank Harriet Harman and her ilk for this. We can even thank her for the immigration policies that created isolated communities that do not respect the laws and values of Western civilization, and Judeo-Christian values in particular.

But that’s not all. Think about what the feminism promoted by the Labour Party achieves. The feminism embraced by the Labour Party under Harriet Harman had one goal. To destroy the institution of marriage and eject fathers from the home. Men were to be replaced with government handouts and welfare payments. Under the rule of the Labour Party, illegitimacy has skyrocketed while marriage has declined. The UK government literally pays women to have children out of wedlock – children who will grow up fatherless. IVF is taxpayer-funded under the NHS.

When women do not have to care about whether a man is a good provider, they can have sex with any man – whichever one they like, based on the unwise standards of the culture. But men who have not been carefully picked by women to be husbands and fathers do not stick around. Who is left,then, to protect the girls who are born without fathers to raise them? No one. This is the end result of feminism’s attempt to destroy the traditional roles that men play in the home: protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. Government programs, politically correct social workers and welfare checks are not a substitute for a father.

Obama administration won't prosecute wind farms for killing thousands of endangered birds

May 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News. (H/T Melissa)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has never fined or prosecuted a wind farm for killing eagles and other protected bird species, shielding the industry from liability and helping keep the scope of the deaths secret, an Associated Press investigation has found.
>
> **More than 573,000 birds are killed by the country's wind farms each year, including 83,000 hunting birds such as hawks, falcons and eagles, according to an estimate published in March in the peer-reviewed Wildlife Society Bulletin.**
>
> Each death is federal crime, a charge that the Obama administration has used to prosecute oil companies when birds drown in their waste pits, and power companies when birds are electrocuted by their power lines. No wind energy company has been prosecuted, even those that repeatedly flout the law.
>
> […]Documents and emails obtained by The Associated Press offer glimpses of the problem: 14 deaths at seven facilities in California, five each in New Mexico and Oregon, one in Washington state and another in Nevada, where an eagle was found with a hole in its neck, exposing the bone.
>
> One of the deadliest places in the country for golden eagles is Wyoming, where federal officials said wind farms had killed more than four dozen golden eagles since 2009, predominantly in the southeastern part of the state. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose the figures. Getting precise figures is impossible because many companies aren't required to disclose how many birds they kill. And when they do, experts say, the data can be unreliable.
>
> When companies voluntarily report deaths, the Obama administration in many cases refuses to make the information public, saying it belongs to the energy companies or that revealing it would expose trade secrets or implicate ongoing enforcement investigations.
>
> Nearly all the birds being killed are protected under federal environmental laws, which prosecutors have used to generate tens of millions of dollars in fines and settlements from businesses, including oil and gas companies, over the past five years.
>
> "What it boils down to is this: If you electrocute an eagle, that is bad, but if you chop it to pieces, that is OK," said Tim Eicher, a former U.S. Fish and Wildlife

> Service enforcement agent based in Cody, Wyo.

Most other people like dogs and cats, but I like birds. I am concerned about birds of prey who are endangered species. I believe in conservation. To me, what this story says is that Obama doesn’t really care about the environment. The federal government does have some legitimate functions, like protecting us from threats, maintaining roads and protecting endangered species. But they don’t have to be subsidizing wind power, especially when it causes pain and suffering to innocent birds.

Released e-mails show that State Department edited terrorism out of Benghazi talking points

May 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports on the newly released e-mails.

Excerpt:

> State Department officials repeatedly objected to — and tried to water down — references to Islamic extremist groups and prior security warnings in the administration's initial internal story-line on the Benghazi attack, according to dozens of emails and notes released by the White House late Wednesday.
>
> […]**Individual emails leading up to that assessment show State officials repeatedly objecting to the intelligence community's early version of events.**
>
> **The early versions stated that "Islamic extremists with ties to Al Qaeda" participated in the assault and discussed links to militant group Ansar al Sharia — and referenced prior attacks against western targets in Benghazi, as well as intelligence warnings.**
>
> **State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland complained that she had "serious concerns" about "arming members of Congress" to make assertions the administration was not making. "In same vein, why do we want Hill to be fingering Ansar al Sharia, when we aren't doing that ourselves until we have investigation results … and the penultimate point could be abused by Members to beat the State Department for not paying attention to Agency warnings so why do we want to feed that either? Concerned …"**
>
> She also wrote that the line saying the administration knows there were extremists among the demonstrators "will come back to us at podium," voicing concern that some would question how the administration knows that. She said she would "need answers" if that line is used.
>
> In response to her concerns, Assistant Secretary of State David S. Adams voiced agreement. He said the line about prior incidents "will read to members like we had been repeatedly warned."
>
> The emails show Petraeus' deputy Mike Morell involved in circulating revised points. In one email, he too noted the State Department had "deep concerns" about referencing prior "warnings."
>
> A page of hand-written notes showed Morell scratching out mentions of Al Qaeda, the experience of fighters in Libya, Islamic extremists and a warning to the U.S. Embassy in Cairo on the eve of the attacks of calls for a demonstration. Ultimately, all of that was scrubbed from the talking points. The final version said

> “extremists” participated, without mentioning prior attacks and warnings in the region.

This editing of the talking points is what Barack Obama called “a sideshow”. Not worth talking about.

The motivation behind the State Department’s editing was pretty clearly to avoid identifying the attackers as Muslim terrorists. The timing of the election was undoubtedly a factor in the decision making. They edited the talking points in order to create the impression for voters that Obama had been effective at reining in terrorism with his weak foreign policy and appeasement. Democrats are weak on foreign policy. They do ignore warnings. They do prefer to blame America for the bad actions of Muslim extremists. This approach does not deter aggression. Rather than admit their mistake and toughen up, the Democrats preferred to cover up the facts. And they won the election.

Related posts

- Obama: editing of talking points to cover-up of Benghazi terrorist attack is a “sideshow”
- BBC News covers whistle-blower testimony: “After Benghazi revelations, heads will roll”
- ABC News: State Department scrubbed terrorism details from Benghazi talking points
- What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack “from the get-go”
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA’s account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama’s Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama’s Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama’s security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

Live stream: Dr. Fazale Rana debates Dr. Michael Ruse on evolution vs design

May 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: Video posted:

A debate on origins happening TODAY! (May 16th)

Details here. There is a free live stream!

> The Origin of Life: The Great God Debate
> Fuz Rana vs. Michael Ruse
>
> Michael Ruse and Fuz Rana square off to debate the question "Are natural processes sufficient to explain the origin and the complexity of the cell?" The debate will be moderated by Craig Hazen. Sponsored by The Well Christian Club at UCR, Come Reason Ministries, and Biola University.
>
> May 16, 2013
>
> Thursday Night
> Time: 7:00 pm, PDT
> Cost: $10 ($5 with student ID)
> Parking $5
> Live Stream: FREE
>
> Event Registration Information Here!
>
> Live Stream Information Here!

Location:

> University of California Riverside Campus
> Gymnasium
> 900 University Ave,
> Riverside, CA 92507

Format of the debate:

- Opening Arguments: 20 minutes each
- 1st Cross-Examination: 6 minutes each side
- Rebuttals: 10 minutes each
- 2nd Cross-Examination: 6 minutes each side
- Concluding Arguments: 5 minutes each
- Q &A: 40 minutes (Questions can come from Twitter and SMS)

Dr. Fazale Rana has written a number of books on intelligent design, and is a biochemist by trade. Dr. Ruse is a philosopher.

Dr. Rana will also be doing a lecture on the origin of life tomorrow evening. Details here.

Texas Lt. Governor demands probe of late-term abortion provider

May 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Breitbart.com.

Excerpt:

> The lieutenant governor of Texas, David Dewhurst, demanded an investigation Wednesday of an abortionist whose employees claim he twisted the heads off of babies who were born alive during abortion procedures.
>
> A new video exposé released Tuesday of the Aaron Women's Clinic in Houston, one of three clinics owned by abortionist Douglas Karpen, depicts gruesome details of the practices of an abortionist who is currently facing a criminal investigation for allegedly allowing late-term babies to be born alive then twisting their heads off with his bare hands.
>
> According to LifeNews, three former employees of Karpen's brought forward photos taken on their cell phones at his clinic on Schumacher Lane in Houston. The photos depicted two babies aborted well beyond the legal limit of 24 weeks in Texas. The babies' necks had been cut.
>
> "In a week when serial murderer Kermit Gosnell was found guilty of killing babies, I read with disgust about the allegations of Houston-based abortionist Douglas Karpen performing illegal late-term abortions surrounded by appalling sanitary conditions in his clinic," Dewhurst said. "The Harris County authorities should perform a full-scale investigation and take action against those who broke state law."
>
> In the new video produced by Life Dynamics, a national pro-life organization, the three former employees of abortionist Karpen allege that the Kermit Gosnell "house of horrors" abortion clinic was not the anomaly that the abortion industry says it is.

The article has graphic details of the allegations of the former employees, in their own words. Horrifying stuff.

I found some disturbing images of the aborted babies on another Life News post.

IRS official who targeted Tea Party groups now a director in Obamacare administration

May 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ABC News reports.

Excerpt:

> The Internal Revenue Service official in charge of the tax-exempt organizations at the time when the unit targeted tea party groups now runs the IRS office responsible for the health care legislation.
>
> Sarah Hall Ingram served as commissioner of the office responsible for tax-exempt organizations between 2009 and 2012. But Ingram has since left that part of the IRS and is now the director of the IRS' Affordable Care Act office, the IRS confirmed to ABC News today.
>
> Her successor, Joseph Grant, is taking the fall for misdeeds at the scandal-plagued unit between 2010 and 2012. During at least part of that time, Grant served as deputy commissioner of the tax-exempt unit.
>
> Grant announced today that he would retire June 3, despite being appointed as commissioner of the tax-exempt office May 8, a week ago.
>
> As the House voted to fully repeal the Affordable Care Act Thursday evening, House Speaker John Boehner expressed "serious concerns" that the IRS is empowered as the law's chief enforcer.
>
> "Fully repealing ObamaCare will help us build a stronger, healthier economy, and will clear the way for patient-centered reforms that lower health care costs and protect jobs," Boehner, R-Ohio, said.
>
> "Obamacare empowers the agency that just violated the public's trust by secretly targeting conservative groups," Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-Ind., added. "Even by Washington's standards, that's unacceptable."
>
> Sen. John Cornyn even introduced a bill, the "Keep the IRS Off Your Health Care Act of 2013," which would prohibit the Secretary of the Treasury, or any delegate, including the IRS, from enforcing the Affordable Care Act.
>
> "Now more than ever, we need to prevent the IRS from having any role in Americans' health care," Cornyn, R-Texas, stated. "I do not support Obamacare, and after the events of last week, I cannot support giving the IRS any more responsibility or taxpayer dollars to implement a broken law."
>
> Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell also reacted to the revelation late Thursday, stating the news was "stunning, just stunning."

More here from Guy Benson, who linked to this story. He reports that Sarah Hall Ingram received more than $100,000 in taxpayer-funded bonuses while working at the IRS.

New report on Obamacare claims that premiums will go up 100% to 400%

May 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Internal cost estimates from 17 of the nation's largest insurance companies indicate that health insurance premiums will grow an average of 100 percent under Obamacare, and that some will soar more than 400 percent, crushing the administration's goal of affordability.
>
> New regulations, policies, taxes, fees and mandates are the reason for the unexpected "rate shock," according to the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which released a report Monday based on internal documents provided by the insurance companies. The 17 companies include Aetna, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Kaiser Foundation.
>
> The report found that individuals will face "premium increases of nearly 100 percent on average, with potential highs eclipsing 400 percent. Meanwhile, small businesses can expect average premium increases in the small group market of up to 50 percent, with potential highs over 100 percent."
>
> […]It concluded: "Despite promises that the law will lower costs, [Obamacare] will in fact cause the premiums of many Americans to spike substantially. The broken promises are numerous, and the empirical data reveal that many Americans, from recent college graduates to older adults, will not be able to afford the law's higher costs."

In other news, Congresswoman Michele Bachmann led the Republican-controlled House of Representatives to pass a bill to repeal Obamacare. However, the bill is not expected to pass in the Democrat-controlled Senate. Elections matter.

Amy Hall: Will right and wrong always be obvious?

May 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from Amy Hall of Stand to Reason that will cause you to think.

She writes:

> A person doesn't have to know the Bible in order to know right and wrong, right? Well, yes and no. It all depends on what value system is being fed to that person by society. A society saturated in a Christian understanding of morality will reinforce that understanding, even among its atheists. A society without the background of Christianity behind it will enforce a different understanding of morality. Atheists have the mistaken idea that objective morality is simply obvious to everyone, but the truth is, it's not. All one has to do is look back through history (and in other cultures today) to see that this is so. Our damaged consciences are malleable.
>
> Is murdering your child right or wrong? Ask these mothers in India, where it's commonplace in some areas to let your girl die if you prefer a boy. Ask pre-Christian cultures. This is why I think atheists are being far too hasty when they argue that Christianity is expendable—unnecessary for a good society. If we see atrocious moral crimes in cultures not influenced by Christianity, we have no reason to think our current standards will continue in a culture that rejects Christianity.
>
> […]As I've written before, intrinsic human value has to be taught. A society's view of the human person and its value will affect what that society views as being moral: We are just animals. Imperfect animals aren't worth the trouble. Therefore, there's a case to be made for killing them rather than caring for them. That conclusion reasonably follows from the non-Christian premise. As Christianity fades in influence and a different view of the human person gains acceptance, don't expect that our society will continue to recognize that conclusion to be immoral. At that point, people will still consider themselves to be perfectly moral…but only because they're judging themselves by a different standard of morality.
>
> It's difficult for us to recognize the depth our depravity when "everyone else is doing it." Ask Gosnell's nurses.

I like this post because it connects an apologetic concern to real life. This concern about right and wrong isn't merely theoretical. It's practical.

Think about the abortion really means, in practice. Basically, you have two-grown ups who are engaging in a recreational activity. In the course of that activity, they create a new innocent life that is distinct from their lives. A new human genetic code. This new person is weaker than either of her two parents. And her life imposes certain obligations on them. She needs food, and safety, and care. Like a baby bird who has fallen out of her

tree. But when there is no God, there is no purpose to putting your needs second, and someone else's first. You could do it, if it makes you feel happy. But having to take care of a newborn doesn't normally make people who are have risky recreational sex happy. After all, people who have recreational sex instead of procreative sex are looking for *recreation* not *responsibility.*

And so what do these powerful people do to the new life they have created? Do they let this new life impose obligations on them? Do they let this new life lower the amount of happiness they themselves will have? No. They kill it. For the strong to refrain from killing the weak when the weak impose obligations on them, there has to be a design for human nature that makes moral obligations and selflessness rational, instead of merely pleasurable. Because we all know that being saddled with a newborn baby is not fun. There has to be something more going on than the pursuit of pleasure if the baby is going to live.

Similarly with no-fault divorce and gay marriage. First, we enacted no-fault divorce, which weakened the stability of marriage so that many children now grow up fatherless. No one is careful about marriage anymore in order to provide children with what they need. Instead, we just "marry for love" and then dissolve it when it doesn't feel good anymore. Same-sex marriage is the same thing again. The voluntarily removal of the biological father or mother from a child's life. And why? Because the needs of children don't matter. They're smaller than we are, so we don't care about them.

Is there anything more going on in our society other than the seeking of pleasure? I think that the seeking of "happiness" instead of goodness is now the dominant view. No one wants to be responsible for anyone else. No one wants to be obligated to anyone else. We all seem to want to be free of feeling bad. If we do wrong, we don't want to be judged or reminded about what we did. If we hurt someone else, then we don't want to have to make restitution for what we did. We try to hand our children off to strangers so that we don't have to teach them ourselves. We don't want to learn anything that might make us feel obligated to do the right thing instead of what we feel like doing. Other people are just there to give us pleasure. It's sad.

All of these concepts had meaning in a Judeo-Christian society that encouraged marriage and families. But those days are drifting away. Once upon a time, we had a social consensus that what mattered was doing the right thing – what we were designed to do. And it was OK to not feel good and to not feel happy, if you were doing the right thing. Happiness wasn't the main goal of life. Now things are different.

Obama administration wins appeal to deport German homeschooling family

May 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Breitbart News.

Excerpt:

> The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals has upheld the Obama administration's denial of asylum granted to the Romeike family, who fled Germany over its strict anti-homeschooling laws.
>
> In a press release Tuesday, Michael Farris, founder and chairman of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), said, "We believe the Sixth Circuit is wrong and we will appeal their decision. America has room for this family and we will do everything we can to help them."
>
> The Romeikes fled Germany in 2008 when they were subjected to criminal prosecution for homeschooling, which is largely illegal in their country. In 2010, however, the family was granted asylum by Immigration Judge Lawrence O. Burman, whose decision was overturned by the Board of Immigration Appeals in 2012. A three-judge panel of the Sixth Circuit heard the Romeikes' appeal on April 23rd and issued a unanimous decision against the family.
>
> In its decision, the court said that the Romeikes had not made a sufficient case and that the United States has not opened its doors to every victim of unfair treatment.
>
> While the court acknowledged that the U.S. Constitution recognizes the rights of parents to direct the education and upbringing of their children, it refused to concede that the threats of heavy fines or loss of custody of their children by German authorities if the Romeikes refused to send their children to government schools were enough to classify them as a persecuted group and warrant asylum in the United States.
>
> HSLDA has obtained over 120,000 signatures on a White House petition to stop deportation of the Romeike family.

If you are a Muslim "refugee" from Chechnya, you can collect $100,000 in welfare and then blow up some of the people who worked to pay for that. But a German homeschooling family? They are disgusting evangelical Christians who believe in marriage and family. They have to go back to Germany and have their children taken away from them by the government.

Doug Axe explains the chances of getting a functional protein by chance

May 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've talked about Doug Axe before when I described how to calculate the odds of getting functional proteins by chance.

Let's calculate the odds of building a protein composed of a functional chain of 100 amino acids, by chance. (Think of a meaningful English sentence built with 100 scrabble letters, held together with glue)

Sub-problems:

- BONDING: You need 99 peptide bonds between the 100 amino acids. The odds of getting a peptide bond is 50%. The probability of building a chain of one hundred amino acids in which all linkages involve peptide bonds is roughly (1/2)^99 or 1 chance in 10^30.
- CHIRALITY: You need 100 left-handed amino acids. The odds of getting a left-handed amino acid is 50%. The probability of attaining at random only L–amino acids in a hypothetical peptide chain one hundred amino acids long is (1/2)^100 or again roughly 1 chance in 10^30.
- SEQUENCE: You need to choose the correct amino acid for each of the 100 links. The odds of getting the right one are 1 in 20. Even if you allow for some variation, the odds of getting a functional sequence is (1/20)^100 or 1 in 10^65.

The final probability of getting a functional protein composed of 100 amino acids is 1 in 10^125. Even if you fill the universe with pre-biotic soup, and react amino acids at Planck time (very fast!) for 14 billion years, you are probably not going to get even 1 such protein. And you need at least 100 of them for minimal life functions, plus DNA and RNA.

Research performed by Doug Axe at Cambridge University, and published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Molecular Biology, has shown that the number of functional amino acid sequences is tiny:

> Doug Axe's research likewise studies genes that it turns out show great evidence of design. Axe studied the sensitivities of protein function to mutations. In these "mutational sensitivity" tests, Dr. Axe mutated certain amino acids in various proteins, or studied the differences between similar proteins, to see how mutations or changes affected their ability to function properly. He found that protein function was highly sensitive to mutation, and that proteins are not very tolerant to changes in their amino acid sequences. In other words, when you mutate, tweak, or change these proteins slightly, they stopped working. In one of his papers, he thus concludes that "functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences," and that functional protein folds "may be as low as 1 in 10^77."

The problem of forming DNA by sequencing nucleotides faces similar difficulties. And remember, mutation and selection cannot explain the origin of the *first* sequence, because mutation and selection require replication, which does not exist until that first living cell is *already in place*.

But you can't show that to your friends, you need to send them a video. And I have a video!

A video of Doug Axe explaining the calculation

Here's a clip from Illustra Media's new ID DVD "Darwin's Dilemma", which features Doug Axe and Stephen Meyer (both with Ph.Ds from Cambridge University).

I hope you all read Brian Auten's review of Darwin's Dilemma! It was awesome.

Related DVDs

Illustra also made two other great DVDs on intelligent design. The first two DVDs "Unlocking the Mystery of Life" and "The Privileged Planet" are must-buys, but you can watch them on youtube if you want, for free.

Here are the 2 playlists:

- Unlocking the Mystery of Life (12 videos in a playlist)
- The Privileged Planet (12 videos in a playlist)

I also recommend Coldwater Media's "Icons of Evolution". All three of these are on sale from Amazon.com.

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing
- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

The IRS abuse of power scandal started from the top

May 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This Wall Street Journal article argues that the IRS was simply following the overall public tone set by Obama.

Excerpt:

> In April 2012, an Obama campaign website named and slurred eight Romney donors. It tarred Mr. VanderSloot as a "wealthy individual" with a "less-than-reputable record." Other donors were described as having been "on the wrong side of the law."
>
> This was the Obama version of the phone call—put out to every government investigator (and liberal activist) in the land.
>
> Twelve days later, a man working for a political opposition-research firm called an Idaho courthouse for Mr. VanderSloot's divorce records. In June, the IRS informed Mr. VanderSloot and his wife of an audit of two years of their taxes. In July, the Department of Labor informed him of an audit of the guest workers on his Idaho cattle ranch. In September, the IRS informed him of a second audit, of one of his businesses. Mr. VanderSloot, who had never been audited before, was subject to three in the four months after Mr. Obama teed him up for such scrutiny.
>
> The last of these audits was only concluded in recent weeks. Not one resulted in a fine or penalty. But Mr. VanderSloot has been waiting more than 20 months for a sizable refund and estimates his legal bills are $80,000. That figure doesn't account for what the president's vilification has done to his business and reputation.
>
> The Obama call for scrutiny wasn't a mistake; it was the president's strategy—one pursued throughout 2012. The way to limit Romney money was to intimidate donors from giving. Donate, and the president would at best tie you to Big Oil or Wall Street, at worst put your name in bold, and flag you as "less than reputable" to everyone who worked for him: the IRS, the SEC, the Justice Department. The president didn't need a telephone; he had a megaphone.
>
> The same threat was made to conservative groups that might dare play in the election. As early as January 2010, Mr. Obama would, in his state of the union address, cast aspersions on the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* ruling, claiming that it "reversed a century of law to open the floodgates for special interests" (read conservative groups).
>
> The president derided "tea baggers." Vice President Joe Biden compared them to "terrorists." In more than a dozen speeches Mr. Obama raised the specter that these groups represented nefarious interests that were perverting elections. "Nobody knows who's paying for these ads," he warned. "We don't know where

> this money is coming from," he intoned.
>
> In case the IRS missed his point, he raised the threat of illegality: "All around this country there are groups with harmless-sounding names like Americans for Prosperity, who are running millions of dollars of ads against Democratic candidates . . . And they don't have to say who exactly the Americans for Prosperity are. You don't know if it's a foreign-controlled corporation."
>
> Short of directly asking federal agencies to investigate these groups, this is as close as it gets. Especially as top congressional Democrats were putting in their own versions of phone calls, sending letters to the IRS that accused it of having "failed to address" the "problem" of groups that were "improperly engaged" in campaigns. Because guess who controls that "independent" agency's budget?

The Daily Caller explains Obama's allies in the Senate also called for harsher treatment of conservatives.

Excerpt:

> Long before the Internal Revenue Service revealed it had improperly targeted conservative 501(c)(4) groups, a group of Democratic senators led by New York Sen. Chuck Schumer urged the IRS to do just that.
>
> The IRS's admission last Friday that it had singled out tea party and other groups for extra audits and delays has raised concerns that President Barack Obama's administration quietly attempted to stymy opponents through intimidation. But many prominent Democrats — including Montana Sen.Max Baucus, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State and the New York Times editorial board — had been publicly calling for tighter restrictions on 501(c)(4) groups affiliated with the tea party and conservatives.
>
> Last year, Schumer, along with Democratic Sens. Michael Bennet, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeff Merkley, Tom Udall, Jeanne Shaheen and Al Franken, penned a letter calling on the agency to cap the amount of the political spending by groups masquerading as "social welfare organizations."

So, the IRS was merely following the lead of the President and his powerful allies in the Senate. It wasn't just a few "low-level employees".

Stephen C. Meyer and John Lennox discuss human exceptionalism on the Michael Medved show

May 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Michael Medved show is a national radio show broadcast out of Seattle, Washington. According to Talkers magazine, he has the fifth largest radio audience. He has a regular weekly segment on science and culture featuring scholars from the Discovery Institute.

Here is the fourth segment from this past week, courtesy of the Intelligent Design: The Future podcast.

The MP3 file is available for download. (38 minutes)

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Stephen Meyer and Oxford professor John Lennox discuss human exceptionalism and the deeper significance of the Gosnell verdict on the Michael Medved Show's Science and Culture Update.
>
> *Each week, leading fellows from Discovery Institute will join Michael Medved to talk about the intersection of science and culture. Listen in live online or on your local Medved station, or stay tuned at ID the Future for the weekly podcast.*

The topics this time are Kermit Gosnell, human exceptionalism and Darwinism.

Now might be a good time to subscribe to the ID: The Future podcast.

Previous entries

- Episode one: Stephen C. Meyer on Thomas Nagel and intelligent design
- Episode two: Stephen C. Meyer on Richard Dawkins and the Cambrian explosion
- Episode three: John G. West discusses Darwinism and the value of human life

Casey Luskin and Stephen C. Meyer discuss information outside the genome

May 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This episode of ID the Future is 20 minutes long and it's a follow up to a previous podcast I posted.

Details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, hear the second part of Casey Luskin's interview with Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, author of the forthcoming book *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design*. Dr. Meyer discusses how the origin of information in the Cambrian explosion poses a problem for evolutionary biology.
>
> *Special limited time offer: Save 43% and get 4 free digital books when you pre-order Darwin's Doubt.*

You can grab the MP3 here.

Topics:

- Last time, they discussed how the sudden origin of animal body plans requires an infusion of new information
- Also, the sudden origin of animal forms is inexplicable naturalistically, because there are no transitional forms
- New body plans require new genetic information
- The Cambrian explosion involve a sudden increase of body plans, which means a sudden increase of information
- For example, a new body plan requires dozens of new cell types
- Each cell type will be composed of new proteins and enzymes
- Proteins are composed of functional sequences of amino acids – genetic information
- Can the neo-Darwinian mechanisms generate new functional sequences?
- The problem with making functional sequences by chance: Product Rule
- When calculating probabilities of forming a functional sequence, you *multiply* to calculate probabilities
- A bike lock with 4 dials and 10 possibilities has 10 x 10 x 10 x 10 = 10,000 possibilities
- Each sequence is equally likely to get by random guesses
- But it's far more likely that any random attempt will NOT work
- Getting one or two settings right has no value to opening the lock, and will not be saved for later attempts
- There is no credit for partial success: you have to get the whole combination right the first time
- In addition, there are other sources of information other than DNA that are required

for new body plans
- For example, there is information in cell membranes, cytoskeletons, etc. which is also needed
- Neo-Darwinism can only work on mutating genes – even in the best case it would just give you new proteins
- Neo-Darwinism cannot add information in non-genome areas, which are required for new animal forms
- The information in these non-genome areas are required to arrange the proteins to make new body pans
- Genetic inofrmation = information in the genome, Epigenetic information = information outside the genome
- This problem of information outside the genome is called “the problem of the origin of form”

So those last few points are, I think, a sneak peek into the contents of the new “Darwin’s Doubt” book.

If you haven’t yet read Meyer’s first book, “Signature in the Cell”, you should probably grab that one. It’s the best book on intelligent design that’s out right now. It talks about the origin of the first living cell, surveying all naturalistic explanations for it, and concluding that the best explanation – the one most consistent with what we know *now* – is intelligent design.

New York Times: Democrats knew about IRS scandal 5 months before the 2012 election

May 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> Representative Dave Camp, Republican of Michigan, the usually mild-mannered chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, set the tone Friday at Congress's first hearing on the targeting of conservative groups by the I.R.S., laying out details, from the alleged threatening of donors to conservative nonprofit groups to the leaking of confidential I.R.S. documents.
>
> […]Republicans raised a long list of issues. Mr. Camp contended, for instance, that a White House official's divulging of a private company's tax status constituted "a clear intimidation tactic." The 2010 incident involved an offhand comment by the White House economist Austan Goolsbee that Koch Industries had not paid corporate income taxes because it pays taxes through the personal income tax code. As it turned out, that was not true, but the assertion was made in a discussion of tax reform ideas, not politics.
>
> The Republicans also criticized the publication of donors to the National Organization for Marriage, a group opposed to same-sex marriage. That donors list surfaced mysteriously in March 2012 from a whistle-blower whose identity is still unknown. The whistle-blower apparently obtained it by simply requesting it from the I.R.S.
>
> Linkage to the health care law came through Sarah Hall Ingram, a longtime I.R.S. official who has headed the agency's program to carry out the Affordable Care Act since December 2010. Before that, she led the I.R.S.'s tax-exempt and government-entities division, which contained the political targeting effort.
>
> "This is an audit, and it's helpful," Representative Tim Griffin, Republican of Arkansas, said of the investigation of I.R.S. targeting by the Treasury inspector general for tax administration, "but it's the tip of the iceberg."
>
> But the inspector general made clear that effort did not reach the attention of high-level I.R.S. officials until 2011 at the earliest.
>
> The inspector general gave Republicans some fodder Friday when he divulged that he informed the Treasury's general counsel he was auditing the I.R.S.'s screening of politically active groups seeking tax exemptions on June 4, 2012. He told Deputy Treasury Secretary Neal Wolin "shortly after," he said. That meant Obama administration officials were aware of the matter during the presidential campaign year.

Is it really reasonable to believe that Obama didn't know about this? I think a far more

likely scenario is that he did know about it, and that his administration covered it up – just like they covered up Fast and Furious and Benghazi. Why think that this IRS scandal would be any different?

Obama administration spied on Fox News reporter's e-mails and phone calls

May 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Twitchy has everything linked here. And UPDATE: THREE Fox News reporters, including MEGYN KELLY were targeted.

Here's a quick snapshot of what happened from radically left-wing UK Guardian, of all places: (links removed)

> Fox News chief Washington correspondent James Rosen had his emails read by the Obama DOJ, which accused him of being a co-conspirator in a criminal leak case.

> It is now well known that the Obama justice department has prosecuted more government leakers under the 1917 Espionage Act *than all prior administrations combined* – in fact, *double* the number of all such prior prosecutions. But as last week's controversy over the DOJ's pursuit of the phone records of AP reporters illustrated, this obsessive fixation in defense of secrecy also targets, and severely damages, journalists specifically and the newsgathering process in general.
>
> New revelations emerged yesterday in the Washington Post that are perhaps the most extreme yet when it comes to the DOJ's attacks on press freedoms. It involves the prosecution of State Department adviser Stephen Kim, a naturalized citizen from South Korea who was indicted in 2009 for allegedly telling Fox News' chief Washington correspondent, James Rosen, that US intelligence believed North Korea would respond to additional UN sanctions with more nuclear tests – something Rosen then reported. Kim did not obtain unauthorized access to classified information, nor steal documents, nor sell secrets, nor pass them to an enemy of the US. Instead, the DOJ alleges that he merely communicated this innocuous information to a journalist – something done every day in Washington – and, for that, this arms expert and long-time government employee faces more than a decade in prison for "espionage".
>
> The focus of the Post's report yesterday is that the DOJ's surveillance of Rosen, the reporter, extended far beyond even what they did to AP reporters. The FBI tracked Rosen's movements in and out of the State Department, traced the timing of his calls, and – most amazingly – obtained a search warrant to read two days worth of his emails, as well as all of his emails with Kim. In this case, said the Post, "investigators did more than obtain telephone records of a working journalist suspected of receiving the secret material." It added that "court documents in the Kim case reveal how deeply investigators explored the private communications of a working journalist".

> But what makes this revelation particularly disturbing is that the DOJ, in order to get this search warrant, insisted that not only Kim, but also Rosen – the journalist – committed serious crimes. The DOJ specifically argued that by encouraging his source to disclose classified information – something investigative journalists do every day – Rosen himself broke the law. Describing an affidavit from FBI agent Reginald Reyes filed by the DOJ, the Post reports [emphasis added]:
>
> "Reyes wrote that there was evidence *Rosen had broken the law, 'at the very least, either as an aider, abettor and/or co-conspirator'.* That fact distinguishes his case from the probe of the AP, in which the news organization is not the likely target. Using italics for emphasis, Reyes explained how Rosen allegedly used a 'covert communications plan' and quoted from an e-mail exchange between Rosen and Kim that seems to describe a secret system for passing along information. . . . However, it remains an open question whether it's ever illegal, given the First Amendment's protection of press freedom, for a reporter to solicit information. No reporter, including Rosen, has been prosecuted for doing so."
>
> Under US law, it is not illegal to publish classified information. That fact, along with the First Amendment's guarantee of press freedoms, is what has prevented the US government from ever prosecuting journalists for reporting on what the US government does in secret. This newfound theory of the Obama DOJ – that a journalist can be guilty of crimes for "soliciting" the disclosure of classified information – is a means for circumventing those safeguards and criminalizing the act of investigative journalism itself. These latest revelations show that this is not just a theory but one put into practice, as the Obama DOJ submitted court documents accusing a journalist of committing crimes by doing this.

I find it amusing that the journalists on the left are just now realizing that the most left-wing President we have ever had is just like all the other left-wing leaders. He's a fascist. Fascism is solely a phenomenon of the left. What fascism means is "big government". To be on the right is to be for smaller government, free trade, and more liberty for families and individuals. That's why fascism is only enacted by parties on the political left. Free-market capitalism means limited government.

Is the gay lifestyle the same as the heterosexual lifestyle?

May 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am going to post this disturbing article from the radically left-wing New York Times about the latest new disease affecting the gay community in New York. (H/T ECM)

Here's an excerpt:

> At around 4 on a Saturday morning, a time when most of the gay bars in New York have closed and locked their doors, a steady stream of young and middle-aged men, almost all shirtless and some stripped down to their boxer briefs, have found their way down a dark stairwell and into a maze of basement rooms, where the décor can best be described as fallout-shelter chic.
>
> They have come to Paddles, an after-hours sex club in Chelsea, not yet ready to end their evening. They prowl the long cinder-block hallway, exchanging knowing glances. A husky, bearded man in his 40s lounges on a corrugated black rubber bench, admiring a chorus line of smooth-chested 20-somethings, their flesh glowing under a pink neon sign and black lights. A man in a metal-studded black leather chest harness strides toward a back room, the hookup room, where a circle of men, skin glistening with sweat, hover around a swing, watching.
>
> Then, in walks a skinny man in a black baseball cap, with soulful eyes and a nose that juts forward like the prow of a ship. He stops at a folding table set up between two video screens showing continuous reels of gay pornography. He strips off his black leather jacket, flexing toned biceps in a black muscle shirt. He sets up a red hazardous-waste bin as nonchalantly as if it were a plastic juice jug from Costco, arranges some Band-Aids and a bowl of lollipops next to it, and pulls out a syringe.
>
> This is Demetre Daskalakis, a doctor and gay activist who has come to spread the message that a new health threat has emerged among the city's gay population and that he is there to stop it.
>
> "Have you been vaccinated?" he asks, smiling, his voice warm, as the half-naked men walk by.
>
> A new, casually transmittable infection — a unique strain of bacterial meningitis — has cast a pall over the gay night life and dating scene, with men wondering whether this is AIDS, circa 1981, all over again. Seven men have died in New York City, about a third of diagnosed cases, since 2010. And in the last few months, the contagion seemed to be accelerating. It has targeted gay and bisexual men, and nobody knows exactly why.
>
> The city's best hope to curb the outbreak is to vaccinate as many at-risk men as possible, focusing on those most in danger: men who regularly hook up with

> other men whom they meet at parties, bars, clubs and through apps like Grindr. Dr. Don Weiss, the director of surveillance for the city's Bureau of Communicable Disease, has called it "Russian roulette sex," because "sooner or later, you are going to come across this organism and be exposed."

In case anyone would like to understand the health effects of the gay lifestyle, here is an excellent resource which links to data from mainstream sources.

Here is an excerpt:

> **Hepatitis:** A potentially fatal liver disease that increases the risk of liver cancer.
>
> - Hepatitis A: The *Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report* published by the CDC reports: "Outbreaks of hepatitis A among men who have sex with men are a recurring problem in many large cities in the industrialized world."[20]
> - Hepatitis B: This is a serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the liver. The virus, which is called hepatitis B virus (HBV), can cause lifelong infection, cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death. Each year in the United States, more than 200,000 people of all ages contract hepatitis B and close to 5,000 die of sickness caused by AIDS. The CDC reports that MSM are at increased risk for hepatitis B.[21]

And more:

> **HIV/AIDS Among Homosexuals.** The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is responsible for causing AIDS, for which there exists no cure.
>
> - Homosexual men are the largest risk category. The CDC reports that homosexuals comprise the single largest exposure category of the more than 600,000 males with AIDS in the United States. As of December 1999, "men who have sex with men" and "men who have sex with men and inject drugs" together accounted for 64 percent of the cumulative total of male AIDS cases.[39]

And more:

> **Homosexuals with STDs Are at an Increased Risk for HIV Infection.** Studies of MSM treated in STD clinics show rates of infection as high as 36 percent in major cities.[46] A CDC study attributed the high infection rate to having high numbers of anonymous sex partners: "[S]yphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia apparently have been introduced into a population of MSM who have large numbers of anonymous partners, which can result in rapid and extensive transmission of STDs."[47] The CDC report concluded: "Persons with STDs, including genital ulcer disease and nonulcerative STD, have a twofold to fivefold increased risk for HIV infection."[48]

CDC means the government’s Center for Disease Control.

The article that I linked above has nearly 80 footnotes to respected sources of evidence. It’s very important to know the facts when discussing this issue so that we tell people the truth and then let them make good decisions. At the very least we should be telling them what we tell our friends who smoke: “it’s not good for your health”.

Obama met with anti-Tea Party IRS Union boss one day before the IRS persecutions began

May 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Newsbusters reports on this incredible scoop by the American Spectator.

Excerpt:

> Jeffrey Lord at the American Spectator has reviewed the White House logs looking for a relationship between meetings listed there and the timeline found in the Inspector General's report on the targeting of Tea Party and conservative groups issued last Tuesday. Lord's work represents yet another example of alternative media scooping a lazy or negligent establishment press.
>
> What Lord has found (single-page print version) is that President Barack Obama met with the President of the National Treasury Employees Union Colleen Kelley, on March 31, 2010. The NTEU is "the 150,000 member union that represents IRS employees along with 30 other separate government agencies." The Inspector General's report, blandly titled "Inappropriate Criteria Were Used to Identify Tax-Exempt Applications for Review," indicates that the IRS, in Lord's words, "set to work in earnest targeting the Tea Party and conservative groups around America" the very next day. Lord's work is a mandatory read-the-whole-thing item. Excerpts follow the jump (bolds are mine throughout this post):
>
> **Obama and the IRS: The Smoking Gun?***President met with anti-Tea Party IRS union chief the day before agency targeted Tea Party.*
>
> … According to the White House Visitors Log … the president of the anti-Tea Party National Treasury Employees Union, Colleen Kelley, visited the White House at 12:30pm that Wednesday noon time of March 31st.
>
> … **The very next day after her White House meeting with the President, according to the Treasury Department's Inspector General's Report, IRS employees — the same employees who belong to the NTEU — set to work in earnest targeting the Tea Party and conservative groups around America.** The IG report wrote it up this way:
>
> *April 1-2, 2010: The new Acting Manager, Technical Unit, suggested the need for a Sensitive Case Report on the Tea Party cases. The Determinations Unit Program Manager Agreed.*
>
> In short: the very day after the president of the quite publicly anti-Tea Party labor union — the union for IRS employees — met with President Obama, the manager of the IRS "Determinations Unit Program agreed" to open a "Sensitive Case report on the Tea party cases."
>
> … **The IG report contained a timeline prepared by examining internal IRS e-mails. The IG report did not examine White House Visitor Logs, e-**

> **mails, or phone records relating to the relationship between the IRS union, the IRS, and the White House.**
>
> … (the) 12:30 Wednesday, March 31, 2010 meeting between President Obama and the IRS union's Kelley was not unusual.
>
> On yet another occasion, Kelley's presence at the White House was followed shortly afterwards by the President issuing Executive Order 13522. **A presidential directive that gave the anti-Tea Party NTEU — the IRS union — a greater role in the day-to-day operation of the IRS than it had already — which was considerable.**
>
> … Six days following Kelley's attendance at the White House Christmas party with labor activists like herself, the President issued Executive Order 13522 (text found here, with an explanation here). The Executive Order, titled: "Creating Labor-Management Forums To Improve Delivery of Government Services" applied across the federal government and included the IRS. The directive was designed to:
>
> ***Allow employees and unions to have pre-decisional involvement in all workplace matters….***
>
> However else this December 2009 Executive Order can be described, **the directive was a serious grant of authority within the IRS to the powerful anti-Tea Party union.**
>
> Lord raises compelling "What did the President know and when did he know it?" questions. Read the whole thing for the matters he raises.

Read the full article here on the American Spectator.

A closer look at one of the conservatives persecuted by the fascist IRS

May 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review, a true story of the IRS persecuting a conservative group. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Catherine Engelbrecht's tale has all the markings of a classic conspiracy theory: She says she thinks that because of her peaceful political activity, she and her family was targeted for scrutiny by hostile federal agencies.
>
> Yet as news emerges that the Internal Revenue Service wielded its power to obstruct conservative groups, Catherine's story becomes credible — and chilling. It also raises questions about whether other federal agencies have used their executive powers to target those deemed political enemies.
>
> […]In July 2010, Catherine filed with the IRS seeking tax-exempt status for her organizations. Shortly after, the troubles began.
>
> That winter, the Federal Bureau of Investigation came knocking with questions about a person who had attended a King Street Patriots event once. Based on sign-in sheets, the organization discovered that the individual in question had attended an event, but "it was a come-and-go thing," and they had no further information on hand about him. Nevertheless, the FBI also made inquiries about the person to the office manager, who was a volunteer.
>
> The King Street Patriots weren't the only ones under scrutiny. On January 11, the IRS visited the Engelbrechts' shop and conducted an on-site audit of both their business and their personal returns, Catherine says.
>
> "What struck us as odd about that," she adds,"is the lengths to which the auditor went to try to "" it seemed like "" to try to find some error….She wanted to go out and see [our] farm, she wanted to count the cattle, she wanted to look at the fence line. It was a very curious three days. She was as kind as she could be, and she was doing her job…[but] it was strange."
>
> Bryan adds: "It was kind of funny to us. I mean, we weren't laughing that much, but we knew we were squeaky clean. Our CPA's a good guy. And who says God doesn't have a sense of humor: I got a little bit of a refund."
>
> Two months later, the IRS initiated the first round of questions for True the Vote. Catherine painstakingly answered them, knowing that nonprofit status would help with the organization's credibility, donors, and grant applications. In October, the IRS requested additional information. And whenever Catherine followed up with IRS agents about the status of True the Vote's application, "there was always a delay that our application was going to be up next, and it

was just around the corner,” she says,

As this was occurring, the FBI continued to phone King Street Patriots. In May 2011, agents phoned wondering “how they were doing.” The FBI made further inquiries in June, November, and December asking whether there was anything to report.

The situation escalated in 2012. That February, True the Vote received a third request for information from the IRS, which also sent its first questionnaire to King Street Patriots. Catherine says the IRS had “hundreds of questions “” hundreds and hundreds of questions.” The IRS requested every Facebook post and Tweet she had ever written. She received questions about her family, whether she’d ever run for political office, and which organizations she had spoken to.

“It’s no great secret that the IRS is considered to be one of the more serious [federal agencies],” Catherine says. “When you get a call from the IRS, you don’t take it lightly. So when you’re asked questions that seem to imply a sense of disapproval, it has a very chilling effect.”

On the same day they received the questions from the IRS, Catherine says, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) launched an unscheduled audit of their machine shop, forcing the Engelbrechts to drop everything planned for that day. Though the Engelbrechts have a Class 7 license, which allows them to make component parts for guns, they do not manufacture firearms. Catherine said that while the ATF had a right to conduct the audit, “it was odd that they did it completely unannounced, and they took five, six hours….It was so extensive. It just felt kind of weird.”

That was in February. In July, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration paid a visit to Engelbrecht Manufacturing while Bryan, Catherine, and their children were out of town. The OSHA inspector talked with the managerial staff and employees, inspecting the premises minutely. But Bryan says the agent found only “little Mickey Mouse stuff, like, “˜You have safety glasses on, but not the right kind; the forklift has a seatbelt, but not the right kind.'” Yet Catherine and Bryan said the OSHA inspector complimented them on their tightly run shop and said she didn’t know why she had been sent to examine it.

Not long after, the tab arrived. OSHA was imposing $25,000 in fines on Engelbrecht Manufacturing. They eventually worked it down to $17,500, and Bryan says they may have tried to contest the fines to drive them even lower, but “we didn’t want to make any more waves, because we don’t know [how much further] OSHA could reach.”

“Bottom line is, it hurt,” he says. Fifteen thousand dollars is “not an insignificant amount to this company. It might be to other companies, but we’re still considered small, and it came at a time when business was slow, so instead of giving an employee a raise or potentially hiring another employee, I’m writing a

> check to our government.”
>
> A few months later, True the Vote became the subject of congressional scrutiny. In September, Senator Barbara Boxer (D., Calif.) wrote to Thomas Perez, then the assistant attorney general of the civil rights division at the Department of Justice (who has now been nominated for labor secretary). “As you know, an organization called “˜True the Vote,’ which is an offshoot of the Tea Party, is leading a voter suppression campaign in many states,” Boxer wrote, adding that “this type of intimidation must stop. I don’t believe this is “˜True the Vote.’ I believe it’s “˜Stop the Vote.'”
>
> And in October, Representative Elijah Cummings (D., Md.), the ranking minority member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, attacked True the Vote in a letter. He wrote that “some have suggested that your true goal is not voter integrity, but voter suppression against thousands of legitimate voters who traditionally vote for Democratic candidates.” He added that: “If these efforts are intentional, politically motivated, and widespread across multiple states, they could amount to a criminal conspiracy to deny legitimate voters their constitutional rights.” He also decried True the Vote on MSNBC and CNN.
>
> Catherine now says that she “absolutely” thinks that because she worked against voter fraud, the Left was irked and decided to target her.
>
> The next month, in November 2012, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the state’s environmental agency, showed up for an unscheduled audit at Engelbrecht Manufacturing. Catherine says the inspector told her the agency had received a complaint but couldn’t provide any more details. After the inspection, the agency notified the Engelbrechts that they needed to pay for an additional mechanical permit, which cost about $2,000 per year.
>
> Since then, the IRS has sent two further rounds of questions to Catherine for her organizations. And last month, the ATF conducted a second unscheduled audit at Engelbrecht Manufacturing.
>
> Catherine says she still hasn’t received IRS approval for her nonprofits, though she filed nearly three years ago. And “the way all of these personal instances interweave with what was going on on the nonprofit side…it amounts to something. You can’t help but think that statistically, this has to be coordinated on some level.”

And that’s what the Obama administration has been up to behind closed doors over the last few years.

J.W. Wartick's summary of the debate between Michael Ruse and Fazale Rana

May 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Details of the debate:

> The Origin of Life: The Great God Debate
> Fuz Rana vs. Michael Ruse
>
> Michael Ruse and Fuz Rana square off to debate the question "Are natural processes sufficient to explain the origin and the complexity of the cell?" The debate will be moderated by Craig Hazen. Sponsored by The Well Christian Club at UCR, Come Reason Ministries, and Biola University.
>
> Format of the debate:
>
> - Opening Arguments: 20 minutes each
> - 1st Cross-Examination: 6 minutes each side
> - Rebuttals: 10 minutes each
> - 2nd Cross-Examination: 6 minutes each side
> - Concluding Arguments: 5 minutes each
> - Q &A: 40 minutes (Questions can come from Twitter and SMS)

Here on J.W. Wartick's blog, I found a summary of the debate (video above).

Excerpt:

> **Michael Ruse Opening**
>
> Michael Ruse was careful to note that he is not keen on saying design is not possible. Rather, his claim is that naturalism is the most plausible explanation for the origins of life.
>
> Ruse's argued that design is implausible. Specifically, he noted that if design is the hypothesis put forward, there are any number of ways that one might consider that hypothesis. Is the designer a natural being within the universe or a supernatural being like God? Is there only one designer, or was there a group of designers (and he notes that a group of designers seems more plausible because automobiles require many designers to bring them about)? Finally, he raised the issue of bad design choices. He asked why, if there were a "hands-on" designer, would that designer not grant immunity to HIV and the like.
>
> Ruse also argued that one can fall into the fallacy of selective attention- if one focuses upon only one example in isolation, then one might come to a conclusion that certain laws/theories may not be correct. But placing these same problems in context shows that they can be explained against "the background of our knowledge."

> Finally, Ruse ended with a number of examples for how problems which were seemingly insoluble were explained by naturalistic means. He also argued that one of the popular arguments for design, the flagellum, has so many different varieties (and is sometimes found to be a vestigial organ), and so cannot be shown to be designed.
>
> **Fazale Rana Opening**
>
> The problems which must be accounted for within an origins of life model are numerous. One must account for self-replication, the emergence of metabolism, the formation of protocells, the synthesis of prebiotic materials, the formation of life's building blocks, and more.
>
> Rana then turned to some primary models used by researchers to explain origin of life (hereafter OOL). First, there was the replicator-first model, which was problematic because in order for a molecule to be a self-replicator, it must be a homopolymer. But the complexity of the chemical environment on early earth rendered the generation of a homopolymer on the early earth essentially impossible. Next, the metabolism-first model runs into problem due to the chemical networks which have to be in place for metabolism. But the mineral surfaces proposed for the catalytic systems for these proto-metabolic systems cannot serve as such; Leslie Orgel held that this would have to be a "near miracle" and Rana argues that it is virtually impossible. Finally, the membrane-first model requires different steps with exacting conditions such that the model is self-defeating.
>
> Rana argued positively that OOL requires an intelligent agent in order to occur. The reason is because the only way that any of these models can be generated is through the work on OOL in a lab. Thus, they can only be shown to be proof-of-principle and the chemistry breaks down when applied to the early earth. The fact that information is found in the cell is another evidence Rana presented for design. The systems found in enzymes with DNA function as, effectively, Turing machines. Moreover, the way that DNA finds and eliminates mistakes is machine-like as well. The fact that the needed component for success in lab experiments was intelligence hinted, according to Rana, at positive evidence for design.
>
> Finally, Rana argued that due to the "fundamental intractable problems" with naturalistic models for the OOL and the fact that the conditions needed for the OOL and the processes required to bring it about have only been demonstrated as in-principle possible with intelligent agents manipulating the process.

He's got a summary of each of the speeches, and it rings true with what I saw when I watched the debate.

CBS News reporter Sharyl Atkisson has had her computers broken into

May 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reported on the leftist Politico web site. (H/T Bad Blue)

Full text:

> Sharyl Attkisson, the Emmy-award winning CBS News investigative reporter, says that her personal and work computers have been compromised and are under investigation.
>
> "I can confirm that an intrusion of my computers has been under some investigation on my end for some months but I'm not prepared to make an allegation against a specific entity today as I've been patient and methodical about this matter," Attkisson told POLITICO on Tuesday. "I need to check with my attorney and CBS to get their recommendations on info we make public."
>
> In an earlier interview with WPHT Philadelphia, Attkisson said that though she did not know the full details of the intrusion, "there could be some relationship between these things and what's happened to James [Rosen]," the Fox News reporter who became the subject of a Justice Dept. investigation after reporting on CIA intelligence about North Korea in 2009.
>
> On Sunday, The Washington Post reported that the Justice Dept. had searched Rosen's personal e-mails and tracked his visits to the State Dept. The court affadavit described Rosen as "at the very least, either as an aider, abettor and/or co-conspirator" of his government source, presumably because he had solicited classified information from that source — an argument that has been heavily criticized by other journalists.
>
> Attkisson told WPHT that irregular activity on her computer was first identified in Feb. 2011, when she was reporting on the Fast and Furious gun-walking scandal and on the Obama administration's green energy spending, which she said "the administration was very sensitive about." Attkisson has also been a persistent investigator of the events surrounding last year's attack in Benghazi, and its aftermath.

Normally reliable leftist Juan Williams is now saying that Obama has "CRIMINALIZED JOURNALISM". (H/T Bad Blue)

Check it out:

> STEVE DOOCY: A new twist in the federal government's probe of American journalists. The Department of Justice wasn't just targeting the Associated Press. Apparently it also went after Fox News reporter, our very own James Rosen. They tracked Rosen's comings and goings and secretly obtained copies of his personal

> e-mail to build a case against one of his sources. Has the Department of Justice finally crossed a line? Joining us now, Fox News contributor Juan Williams. Good morning.
>
> JUAN WILLIAMS: Good morning.
>
> DOOCY: You know, it's one thing to go after the leaker. It's another to go after the reporter who gets the leaked information.
>
> WILLIAMS: It really is. I think what you've got here is a situation where somehow now journalism has been criminalized, especially in this Rosen case. There is just no justification for somehow making out that the reporter who is trying to cultivate a source by doing so is a coconspirator in terms of a leaks investigation. I have never heard that before, never seen that before. It's never been done before.
>
> GRETCHEN CARLSON: Well, I have a couple of questions for you, Juan. First of all, the judge had to sign off on this in seeing James Rosen as a criminal. That's point one. Who's the judge? Number two is how many other reporters are currently being followed with their comings and goings and their personal e-mail and their phone conversations?
>
> **WILLIAMS: Gretchen, I don't know the answer to the first question about who is the judge. Clearly what the prosecutor and justice department did in signing off on the request for the subpoena was to support the idea that because Rosen had encouraged Stephen Kim, the state department official, to confess or to reveal information about the North Korean nuclear program, he was in a sense a coconspirator, and on that basis then they went after James Rosen's correspondence, e-mails, his comings and goings. They tracked his badge as he went in and out of the State Department and also phone records, you know, cell phone records and that kind of treatment of a reporter who is certainly doing journalism. I want to emphasize that; that's the craft we practice. It makes it difficult for journalists to do business. How do you do journalism if you are treated as a criminal for asking for information?**

And more:

> DOOCY: The thing about this is the fact that this administration, this president hates leaks, and now, given what's happening, a lot of people are going to clam up, and they are simply not going to tell the story that needs to get out.
>
> **WILLIAMS: That's the thing. You know, it's one thing to go after legitimate leaks that endanger national security. It's another thing to say somebody reporting a story — and I don't think the story had any grave national security implications — is a criminal. The second thing is to specifically target the reporter and the organization, even though he wasn't charged with any crime, the idea that he is listed as a co-**

> **conspirator is chilling to people who would leak and to reporters who pursue stories in Washington.**

Is this a small scandal? Well, people today are typically more interested in things like TV and movies and music. They’re not paying attention and they just trust Obama to do the right thing, because that’s what they learned in government-run schools: big government good, liberty bad. But for anyone who cares about the Big Picture and the American Experiment, the actions of the Obama administration constitute a serious threat to the core of the Republic.

IRS fascist Lois Lerner pleads the fifth to avoid transparency and accountability

May 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports.

Excerpt:

> The Los Angeles Times reported Tuesday afternoon that Lois Lerner, who heads up the Internal Revenue Service's tax-exempt division, plans to invoke the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in a hearing Wednesday before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Affairs.
>
> The Fifth Amendment provides that U.S. citizens may not be compelled to offer testimony if telling the truth would incriminate them.
>
> Lerner's defense lawyer, William W. Taylor III, wrote to the committee on Tuesday that his client would refuse to answer questions related to what she knew about the extra levels of scrutiny applied to conservative nonprofit organizations that applied for tax-exempt status beginning in 2010.
>
> She also will decline to say why she didn't disclose what she knew to Congress, according to the LA Times.
>
> […]The IRS applied special criteria to conservative organizations seeking tax-exempt status, putting them on a 'Be On The Lookout' (BOLO) list, based on the groups' names and political philosophies.
>
> […]Jay Carney, the president's chief spokesman, confirmed Monday that senior White House staff, including White House Counsel Kathy Ruemmler and Chief of Staff Denis McDonough, knew about the IRS's habits as early as April 24, and chose not to tell Obama.
>
> The Inspector General report found that Lerner and other IRS were notified in or before June 2011 that some staff in the agency's Cincinnati, Ohio office were using 'tea party,' 'patriots' and other key words to add applicants to the BOLO list.
>
> Once on that list, the groups were subjected to additional auditing of their financial practices, their membership and their political activities.
>
> Despite knowing about the program, Lerner and other senior IRS staffers withheld the information from Congress despite receiving several requests from House committees whose members heard from constituents that their tea party groups' tax-exempt approvals were taking as long as two years to be resolved.
>
> The House Oversight and Government Affairs Committee was among those that specifically asked the IRS whether it was inspecting tea party groups more closely than other applicants, including those on the political left.

Pleading the 5th is standard operating procedure for gangsters and mobsters who have committed crimes but do not want to be held accountable.

The Weekly Standard reports that she has a history of harassing and bullying Christians and conservatives. (H/T Director Blue)

Excerpt:

> [P]rior to joining the IRS, Lerner's tenure as head of the Enforcement Office at the Federal Election Commission (FEC) was marked by what appears to be politically motivated harassment of conservative groups.
>
> Lerner was appointed head of the FEC's enforcement division in 1986 and stayed in that position until 2001. In the late 1990s, the FEC launched an onerous investigation of the Christian Coalition, ultimately costing the organization hundreds of thousands of dollars and countless hours in lost work. The investigation was notable because the FEC alleged that the Christian Coalition was coordinating issue advocacy expenditures with a number of candidates for office. Aside from lacking proof this was happening, it was an open question whether the FEC had the authority to bring these charges.
>
> James Bopp Jr., who was lead counsel for the Christian Coalition at the time, tells THE WEEKLY STANDARD the Christian Coalition investigation was egregious and uncalled for. "We felt we were being singled out, because when you handle a case with 81 depositions you have a pretty good argument you're getting special treatment. Eighty-one depositions! Eighty-one! From Ralph Reed's former part-time secretary to George H.W. Bush. It was mind blowing," he said.
>
> All told the FEC deposed 48 different people—and that doesn't begin to account for all the FEC's requests for information. Bopp further detailed the extent of the inquiry in testimony delivered before the congressional Committee on House Administration in 2003:
>
> The FEC conducted a large amount of paper discovery during the administrative investigation and then served four massive discovery requests during the litigation stage that included 127 document requests, 32 interrogatories, and 1,813 requests for admission. Three of the interrogatories required the Coalition to explain each request for admission that it did not admit in full, for a total of 481 additional written answers that had to be provided. The Coalition was required to produce tens of thousands of pages of documents, many of them containing sensitive and proprietary information about finances and donor information. Each of the 49 state affiliates were asked to provide documents and many states were individually subpoenaed. In all, the Coalition searched both its offices and warehouse, where millions of pages of documents are stored, in order to produce over 100,000 pages of documents.
>
> Furthermore, nearly every aspect of the Coalition's activities has been examined by FEC attorneys from seeking information regarding its donors to information about its legislative lobbying. The Commission, in its never-ending quest to find

> the non-existent “smoking gun,” even served subpoenas upon the Coalition’s accountants, its fundraising and direct mail vendors, and The Christian Broadcasting Network.
>
> One of the most shocking things about the current IRS scandal is the revelation that the agency asked one religious pro-life group to detail the content of their prayers and asked clearly inappropriate questions about private religious activity. But under Lerner’s watch, inappropriate religious inquiries were a hallmark of the FEC’s interrogation of the Christian Coalition. According to Bopp’s testimony:
>
> FEC attorneys continued their intrusion into religious activities by prying into what occurs at Coalition staff prayer meetings, and even who attends the prayer meetings held at the Coalition. This line of questioning was pursued several times. Deponents were also asked to explain what the positions of “intercessory prayer” and “prayer warrior” entailed, what churches specific people belonged, and the church and its location at which a deponent met Dr. Reed.
>
> One of the most shocking and startling examples of this irrelevant and intrusive questioning by F EC attorneys into private political associations of citizens occurred during the administrative depositions of three pastors from South Carolina. Each pastor, only one of whom had only the slightest connection with the Coalition, was asked not only about their federal, state and local political activities, including party affiliations, but about political activities that, as one FEC attorney described as “personal,” and outside of the jurisdiction of the FECA [Federal Election Campaign Act]. They were also continually asked about the associations and activities of the members of their congregations, and even other pastors.

Too bad that the federal anti-bullying laws don’t apply to secular leftist fascists in government.

Finally: Discovery Institute develops first intelligent design friendly curriculum

May 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reported at Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Today, Discovery Institute Press released a new intelligent design (ID) curriculum for homeschool and private school educators, *Discovering Intelligent Design*. Co-authored by Gary Kemper, Hallie Kemper, and Casey Luskin, it's the first ID curriculum to comprehensively introduce the case for design in both cosmology and biology. For more information about the curriculum, and to order your copy or copies, visit www.discoveringid.org.

Here's a quick overview of what's in it:

> **ENV: The major theme is introducing intelligent design, but it sounds like the book covers a lot of ground. What are the major topics covered in the curriculum?**
>
> A: There are 20 chapters in the textbook, divided into six sections.
>
> Part I introduces the basic concepts of intelligent design and Darwinian evolution, and terminology important to the debate. It also covers some critical thinking tools useful to investigating human and animal origins.
>
> Part II examines the evidence for ID from cosmology, looking at the Big Bang and the evidence for design from cosmic fine-tuning, and the evidence showing that Earth is a "privileged planet."
>
> Part III explains the evidence for design in biology, starting with the idea of biological information and the origin of life, and also getting into mutations, molecular machines, and the design of animal body plans, including the human body. The capstone chapter of this section responds to "dysteological" arguments against ID, such as the increasingly dubious concept of "junk" DNA.
>
> Part IV explores common descent, and studies the relevant genetic and fossil evidence for a "tree of life," as well as discussing some common "icons" of evolution. The last chapter in this section looks at the genetic, fossil, and behavioral evidence surrounding human origins.
>
> Part V is a short section that lets the reader evaluate the scientific evidence as a whole and decide whether it supports materialism, or intelligent design.
>
> Part VI, the final section, investigates the larger context of the debate about intelligent design, and explains the importance of protecting academic freedom. One of my favorite parts of this section answers common criticisms of intelligent design, and exposes their logical fallacies. The book closes with tips for students

> and other readers on getting involved personally in the issue.

Looks like a good bridge to the best books for helping students to learn about intelligent design, which is “The Design of Life” by William Dembski and Jonathan Wells.

The kalam cosmological argument defended in a peer-reviewed science journal

May 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the peer-reviewed article. It appears in a scientific journal focused on astrophysics.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole article is posted online here.

Here's an excerpt in which Craig explains the Big Bang cosmology:

> The monumental significance of the Friedman-Lemaitre model lay in its historization of the universe. As one commentator has remarked, up to this time the idea of the expansion of the universe "was absolutely beyond comprehension. Throughout all of human history the universe was regarded as fixed and immutable and the idea that it might actually be changing was inconceivable."{8} But if the Friedman-Lemaitre model were correct, the universe could no longer be adequately treated as a static entity existing, in effect, timelessly. Rather the universe has a history, and time will not be matter of indifference for our investigation of the cosmos. In 1929 Edwin Hubble's measurements of the red-shift in the optical spectra of light from distant galaxies,{9} which was taken to indicate a universal recessional motion of the light sources in the line of sight, provided a dramatic verification of the Friedman-Lemaitre model. Incredibly, what Hubble had discovered was the isotropic expansion of the universe predicted by Friedman and Lemaitre. It marked a veritable turning point in the history of science. "Of all the great predictions that science has ever made over the centuries," exclaims John Wheeler, "was there

ever one greater than this, to predict, and predict correctly, and predict against all expectation a phenomenon so fantastic as the expansion of the universe?”{10}

As a GTR-based theory, the Friedman-Lemaitre model does not describe the expansion of the material content of the universe into a pre-existing, empty, Newtonian space, but rather the expansion of space itself. This has the astonishing implication that as one reverses the expansion and extrapolates back in time, space-time curvature becomes progressively greater until one finally arrives at a singular state at which space-time curvature becomes infinite. This state therefore constitutes an edge or boundary to space-time itself. P. C. W. Davies comments,

> An initial cosmological singularity . . . forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity. . . . On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.{11}

The popular expression “Big Bang,” originally a derisive term coined by Fred Hoyle to characterize the beginning of the universe predicted by the Friedman-Lemaitre model, is thus potentially misleading, since the expansion cannot be visualized from the outside (there being no “outside,” just as there is no “before” with respect to the Big Bang).{12}

The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, “At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*“{13}

[…]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Now such a conclusion is profoundly disturbing for anyone who ponders it. For the question cannot be suppressed: *Why does the universe exist rather than nothing?* In light of the universe’s origin *ex nihilo*, one can no longer dismiss this question with a shrug and a slogan, “The universe is just there and that’s all.” For the universe is not “just there;” rather it *came into being*. The beginning of the universe discloses that the universe is not, as Hume thought, a necessarily existing being but is contingent in its existence. Philosophers analyzing the concept of necessary existence agree that the essential properties of any necessarily existing entity include its being eternal, uncaused, incorruptible, and

> indestructible{14}–for otherwise it would be capable of non-existence, which is self-contradictory. Thus, if the universe began to exist, its lacks at least one of the essential properties of necessary existence-eternality. Therefore, the reason for its existence cannot be immanent, but must in some mysterious way be ultra-mundane, or transcendent. Otherwise, one must say that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of absolutely nothing, which seems absurd. Sir Arthur Eddington, contemplating the beginning of the universe, opined that the expansion of the universe was so preposterous and incredible that "I feel almost an indignation that anyone should believe in it–except myself."{15} He finally felt forced to conclude, "The beginning seems to present insuperable difficulties unless we agree to look on it as frankly supernatural."{16}
>
> I find that most scientists do not reflect philosophically upon the metaphysical implications of their theories. But, in the words of one astrophysical team, "The problem of the origin [of the universe] involves a certain metaphysical aspect which may be either appealing or revolting."{17}

Every theist should able to understand and defend this argument. It is a scientific refutation of materialism, and it is supported by six lines of scientific evidence – all of which emerged as science has progressed.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies
3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

Those are the scientific discoveries that have led us to the beginning of the universe, which support's Dr. Craig's argument.

Several naturalistic/materialistic cosmologies are refuted in Craig's peer-reviewed paper, including the steady-state model, oscillating model, the vacuum fluctuation model, the chaotic inflationary model, and the quantum gravity model. These naturalistic (no God) alternatives all have theoretical or observational difficulties. Atheism is at odds with modern cosmology – and the progress of science itself.

This is the kind of evidence I expect all my readers to be using when discussing whether God exists. Scientific evidence. When talking to non-Christians, it's best to avoid quoting the Bible, talking about theology, or sharing our personal feelings and experiences. That can come much later when the person is open to it. We first need to show that we understand science, because science is a reliable and respected way of getting knowledge about the universe. Science (experimental, testable, repeatable science) should set limits on what anyone can believe – including non-Christians, who might

otherwise not be inclined to listen to Bible verses and theology.

You should definitely print this article out and read it, then send it to your atheistic friends. I have tried this out on atheists, and the response I get is that scientific discoveries will soon emerge that falsifies all of these six scientific discoveries. That sounds more like faith than science to me. Let’s make the decisions based on what science is telling us today. Let’s not speculate against the science, let’s go with the flow of the recent discoveries.

Islamic terrorists behead unarmed British soldier in London street in broad daylight

May 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The left-leaning UK Independent reports.

Excerpt:

> Terrorism returned to the streets of Britain yesterday when a soldier was murdered by two suspected Islamists who attempted to behead and disembowel him as he left a barracks, in the first deadly attack since the 2005 London bombings.

> One of the suspected killers, who addressed an onlooker who had a camera, said the pair had carried out the attack "because David Cameron, [the] British government sent troops in Arabic country".
>
> As pedestrians stood close by the armed men, he went on: "We swear by almighty Allah we will never stop fighting you," according to footage obtained by ITV News .
>
> *The Independent* understands the dead soldier – who was wearing a Help for Heroes T-shirt – was a member of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, which is currently based overseas. He was ambushed by the men as he left the base in Woolwich, south-east London, who attacked him and then dragged his body into the middle of the road to pose for photographs while standing over him waving a cleaver and a gun, according to witnesses.
>
> […]One witness, identified only as James, said he and his partner saw two black men attack a young man aged about 20 with kitchen knives like he was "a piece of meat".
>
> "They were hacking at this poor guy, literally," he told LBC Radio, adding that a group of brave women tried to shield the soldier from the two men.
>
> "They were hacking at him, chopping him, cutting him. These two guys were crazed. They were just animals. They dragged him from the pavement and dumped his body in the middle of the road and left his body there."

More politically incorrect details here from Sky News. (H/T The Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> Two attackers armed with meat cleavers filmed their deadly assault on a man in London, according to Sky sources.
>
> A man reported to be a serving soldier died and two people have been shot in Woolwich, after what Sky sources understand is being treated as a terrorist attack.

> Senior Whitehall sources said the two attackers asked passers-by to film them, and they shouted **“Allahu Akbar” (Allah is great).**
>
> In footage that has emerged, one of the attackers wields a bloodied meat cleaver and says: **“We swear by almighty Allah we will never stop fighting you.”**
>
> The black man, dressed in a grey hooded jacket and black woolly hat, apologises to members of the public who witnessed the horrific scenes before making a number of political statements.
>
> In the footage, he is heard to say: “We must fight them as they fight us. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.
>
> “I apologise that women have had to witness this today, but in our land our women have to see the same. **You people will never be safe.**
>
> “Remove your government, they don’t care about you.”
>
> **Witnesses also described seeing the “crazed” Woolwich attackers “hacking” at their victim and posing for pictures before charging at police wielding meat cleavers.**

Here’s a still shot of one the murderers at the scene:

Islamic terrorist on camera: how will the liberal media spin this?

If this happened in the United States, I have no doubt that the fools on the secular left would be blaming this on the Tea Party conservatives and evangelical Christians. I have no doubt that the Democrats in the Obama administration will look at the video and the still images of the murderer and come away thinking that a crackdown on evangelical Christians who are pro-life and believe in limited government is needed. In addition to going after Bible-believing Christians, they would probably want to double welfare payments for people who are in the country illegally.

One other point. A lot of very stupid secularists see stories like this and then have the

view that there is something wrong with certainty and conviction in religion. There is nothing wrong with certainty and conviction in religion provided that the religion is not Islam. I have a friend who is a Christian who is very firm in her convictions and she carried groceries Wednesday to an atheist who was sick and on crutches. She is very convinced about the truth of her beliefs and acted on them. Being certain of your views and acting on them is fine as long as *the views are rooted in truth.*

New study: 9 out of 10 children born to co-habiting couples this year will see parents split by the time they are 16

May 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Nearly nine out of ten babies born to co-habiting parents this year will have seen their family break up by the time they reach the age of 16, says a study.
>
> Half of all children born this year will not be living with both natural parents when they reach their mid-teens, and almost all those who suffer family breakdown will be the children of unmarried parents, added the report.
>
> The study, based on figures from the national census and large-scale academic surveys, extrapolates from current trends and calculates that just 9 per cent of babies born to cohabiting couples today will still have their parents living together by the time they are 16.
>
> The report adds that the declining popularity of marriage and the rise of co-habitation will damage the lives of increasing numbers of children.
>
> The figures were produced by researcher Harry Benson, of the Marriage Foundation think tank, who said: 'The report provides solid evidence that married parents are more stable than unmarried parents.
>
> 'The contrast between married and unmarried parents who remain intact by the time their children reach their teenage years demonstrates that marital status plays a crucial role in family breakdown.
>
> 'With family breakdown costing an estimated £46 billion a year – more than the entire defence budget – in addition to the immeasurable social damage, it is clearly in the interest of the Government and the taxpayer to work to counter this devastating trend.'

Here in the United States, the cost of family breakdown $112 billion per year, and rising as the illegitimacy rate rises.

Casey Luskin and Stephen C. Meyer discuss the design inference

May 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This episode of ID the Future is 17 minutes long. It's the third in a series – here are parts one and two.

Details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Casey Luskin and Stephen Meyer finish up their talk with a discussion of why intelligent design presents the best explanation for the Cambrian explosion.
>
> *Special limited time offer: Save 43% and get 4 free digital books when you pre-order Darwin's Doubt.*

You can grab the MP3 here.

Topics:

- What sort of reasoning did Darwin use in The Origin of Species?
- Can this method of "inference to the best explanation" be applied to the Cambrian explosion
- The importance of appealing to causes that we have experienced ourselves
- Example: explaining from an effect (volcanic ash) to a cause that his adequate (volcanic eruption)
- We have experience of how volcanoes cause the ash, so we should infer based on what we know
- In the case where the effect is information in biology, we see that naturalistic mechanisms are inadequate
- But we know from our own experience that intelligent agents can generate information
- Many people think that science must confine itself to materialistic explanations
- If so, then it is possible miss out on the true explanation by ruling it out before looking at evidence

If you haven't yet read Meyer's first book, "Signature in the Cell", you should probably grab that one. It's the best book on intelligent design that's out right now. It talks about the origin of the first living cell, surveying all naturalistic explanations for it, and concluding that the best explanation – the one most consistent with what we know *now* – is intelligent design.

Global warming: Scotland hit by blizzards, road closures and 8 inches of snow

May 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Scotsman reports:

> The summer solstice is only 28 days away, but in parts of Scotland yesterday, it was like winter had never left, as people awoke to a blanket of snow.

> At a time of year when thoughts should be turning to sunscreen and barbeques, a blast of wintry weather swept in from the Arctic, bringing blizzards and icy temperatures to the North-east. Drifting snow closed two roads, and many more were only passable with care.

The Express reported on the comments of the pro-global warming Met Office:

> A freezing blast from the Arctic today will bring icy gusts, blizzards and temperatures plunging to -5C (23F), forecasters said.
>
> It comes as Met Office figures reveal this spring is likely to be the coldest for 30 years.
>
> The period from March to mid-May show average temperatures have not risen above 6.1C making it the 6th coldest on record.
>
> Forecaster Sarah Holland said: “This year’s particularly cold spring was heavily influenced by an exceptionally cold March which had a mean temperature 3.3 °C below the long-term average. April and May (so far) have been less cold, but have also registered slightly below average mean temperatures.
>
> […]Leon Brown, forecaster for The Weather Channel, said parts of Scotland were expecting up to eight inches of snow today.
>
> Heavy wintery showers in Aberdeenshire brought parts of the region to a standstill this morning and caused chaos on the roads and transport networks.
>
> Mr Brown said the entire county is going to be colder than average for the time of year with the mercury struggling to get into double figures.

This is all the fault of global warming! We have to let government regulate the private sector and control our consumption, or we’ll all burn up in flames for our eco-sins!

Pro-gay left's new #FreeKate campaign seeks to normalize underage sex

May 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Robert Stacy McCain writes about it in the American Spectator.

Excerpt:

> In January, Rush Limbaugh warned that there was "an effort under way to normalize pedophilia," and was ridiculed by liberals (including CNN's Soledad O'Brien) for saying so. But now liberals have joined a crusade that, if successful, would effectively legalize sex with 14-year-olds in Florida.
>
> The case involves Kaitlyn Ashley Hunt, an 18-year-old in Sebastian, Florida, who was arrested in February after admitting that she had a lesbian affair with a 14-year high-school freshman. (Click here to read the affidavit in Hunt's arrest.) It is a felony in Florida to have sex with 14-year-olds. Hunt was expelled from Sebastian High School — where she and the younger girl had sex in a restroom stall — and charged with two counts of "felony lewd and lascivious battery on a child." The charges could put Hunt in prison for up to 15 years. Prosecutors have offered Hunt a plea bargain that would spare her jail time, but her supporters have organized an online crusade to have her let off scot-free — in effect, nullifying Florida's law, which sets the age of consent at 16.
>
> Using the slogan "Stop the Hate, Free Kate" (the Twitter hashtag is #FreeKate) this social-media campaign has attracted the support of liberals including Chris Hayes of MSNBC, Daily Kos, Think Progress and the gay-rights group Equality Florida.
>
> […]This is "behavior that is both fairly innocuous and extremely common," the American Civil Liberties Union declared Tuesday in a statement condemning the prosecution of Hunt. The ACLU statement parrots the arguments of all the other "Free Kate" crusaders who emphasize that the sex between Hunt and the 14-year-old was consensual, and who are apparently indifferent (or even openly hostile) to the right of parents to safeguard their minor children against sexual exploitation. The liberal Daily Kos blog goes so far as to proclaim that officials are "prosecuting an 18-year-old for being in love."

This echoes other efforts to facilitate sex with children. The left regularly pushes for lowering the age of consent, as well as introducing sex education to younger and younger children. A common sense interpretation of these efforts leads one to believe that they want to normalize sex with children. Conservatives on the other hand favor strong marriages, more parental authority, and laws that protect children from sex before the children are old enough to understand what is happening to them. That's the difference between the two sides. The left wants to indoctrinate children in school and sexualize

them at an early age for the benefit of adults. The right wants to protect them and preserve their childhood and their bond to parents.

UPDATE: Letitia sent me this article about an entire movement trying to decriminalize sex with children.

UPDATE: Lydia sent me this article about how Planned Parenthood teaches sex classes to children.

Atheist Inquisition led by Jerry Coyne seeks to censor pro-ID physicist at Ball State University

May 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Evolution News reports.

Excerpt:

> There is a very disturbing affair going on at Ball State University that everyone needs to know about. The public university in Muncie, Indiana, has been under pressure from a rabid national atheist group and from atheist activist Jerry Coyne to discipline an assistant physics professor for teaching about intelligent design. Coyne and the Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) claim it's a legal, constitutional matter, no less: teaching about ID violates the First Amendment! "It's religion taught as science in a public university, and it's not only wrong but illegal," writes Coyne. "This will now go to the lawyers."
>
> Ball State has announced it will indeed scrutinize the situation. FFRF staff attorney Andrew L. Seidel complained in a legally vacuous letter to Ball State president Jo Ann Gora. Amazingly, the university responded with this ominous public statement:
>
> The university received a complaint from a third party late yesterday afternoon about content in a specific course offered at Ball State. We take academic rigor and academic integrity very seriously. Having just received these concerns, it is impossible to comment on them at this point. We will explore in depth the issues and concerns raised and take the appropriate actions through our established processes and procedures.
>
> Being the subject of such controversy, with your employer issuing public statements about how higher ups will be "explor[ing] concerns" about your "academic rigor" and "integrity," is obviously the last thing an academic in Eric Hedin's shoes wants. It's enough to make the blood drain from your face.

Click here to sign the petition to defend academic freedom at Ball State University.

Weekly Standard podcast on Sebelius vs Hobby Lobby

May 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard has a great podcast that covers fiscal, social and foreign policy issues from a conservative perspective.

Excerpt:

> THE WEEKLY STANDARD podcast with the Becket Fund's Adele Keim on the *Hobby Lobby* v. *Sebelius* case.
>
> This podcast can be downloaded here. Subscribe to THE WEEKLY STANDARD's iTunes podcast feed here.
>
> THE WEEKLY STANDARD would like to thank The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and Adele Keim for joining us.

Fox News has a report.

Excerpt:

> In the most prominent challenge of its kind, Hobby Lobby Stores Inc. asked a federal appeals court Thursday for an exemption from part of the federal health care law that requires it to offer employees health coverage that includes access to the morning-after pill.
>
> The Oklahoma City-based arts-and-crafts chain argued that businesses — not just the currently exempted religious groups — should be allowed to seek exception from that section of the health law if it violates their religious beliefs.
>
> The arguments Thursday centered on the Green family, founders of Hobby Lobby Stores Inc. and a sister company, Christian booksellers Mardel Inc. An eight-judge panel peppered both sides with questions about whether the contraceptives mandate is an undue burden on the Greens' religious belief.
>
> The Greens contend that emergency contraception is tantamount to abortion because it can prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in the womb. They also object to providing coverage for certain kinds of intrauterine devices.
>
> Hobby Lobby's lawyer argued that the Greens shouldn't face fines for not complying with mandatory contraceptive coverage simply because their business makes a profit. The stores are a "profit-making company, yes, but also a ministry," Kyle Duncan argued.
>
> Duncan cited the Citizens United campaign-finance decision that said corporations have constitutional protections.
>
> "We don't say, well, a corporation can't exercise a right because it's in corporate form," Duncan said.

> “Is religion the kind of right can only be exercised by a natural person? Well, the question nearly answers itself. … It’s not a purely personal right.”

In other news, voters support the repeal of Obamacare by a 22-point margin, which is increasing as more and more of the law is actually implemented. Too bad we did not vote to defeat Obama by a 22-point margin last November.

Woman opens fire on gang of thugs trying to get into her home

May 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Pearcey Report linked to this news story from The Blaze.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> A group of thugs figured it would be easy to overpower one Kansas City woman. After all, her husband had just left to run an errand, leaving her all alone in the home.
>
> They couldn't have been more wrong.
>
> The woman, later identified as Shirley Roberts, 52, immediately retrieved her gun after she heard someone jiggle the knob of the front door. She also witnessed two additional men heading to the back door.
>
> Looking through the blinds, Roberts saw the men putting on gloves and preparing to force their way into her home. So she trained her firearm on the men and opened fire.
>
> The criminals, scared silly, reportedly took off running. However, they also fired shots toward the house they attempted to break into.
>
> Robert's husband, Oscar Roberts, later said he and his wife have been going to the gun range to prepare for just that type of situation. "You've got to protect yourself," he told KMBC-TV.
>
> "I told her she'd done the right thing. We practiced that. She's shook up, though. That's the only thing about it, she's very shook up," Oscar added.
>
> The practice at the shooting range seemingly paid off as police later arrested three men who went to the Research Medical Center, one of which was treated for a gunshot wound to the chest.
>
> Police said the shooting seems to be justifiable self-defense.
>
> "If you're in fear for your life, most definitely we want you to protect yourself. We don't want any harm to come to anyone," Sgt. Marisa Barnes of the Kansas City Police Department told KMBC-TV.

So, a few points about this.

First, a leftist has no help to offer this woman. She can call the police if she has time and then wait 20 minutes for them to arrive. Leftists are more concerned with the safety and well-being of criminals than they are with allowing law-abiding property owners to deter criminals with weapons. It's very important to see that leftists have nothing to offer this woman except to say "be raped and killed".

Second, I think it was a good thing for the husband that he trained his wife to use firearms. I have tried to get two women I courted in a row to go to the range with me, and

both said no. I hope that more women will reconsider about that, because it sure is great for husbands to know that their wives are able to defend themselves.

Third, it’s a great thing that the police aren’t giving her any trouble about self-defense. In the UK, which is very feminized and socialist, this woman would have been challenged by the police if she had so much as brandished a kitchen knife at her attackers. If she actually owned a firearm, she would be arrested. And if she fired at them, she would be sent to prison.

Jay Richards and Stephen C. Meyer discuss scientific consensus on the Michael Medved show

May 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Michael Medved show is a national radio show broadcast out of Seattle, Washington. According to Talkers magazine, he has the fifth largest radio audience. He has a regular weekly segment on science and culture featuring scholars from the Discovery Institute.

Here is the fifth segment from this past week, courtesy of the Intelligent Design: The Future podcast.

The MP3 file is available for download. (35 minutes)

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Jay Richards and Stephen Meyer join Michael Medved for a discussion of the phrase "scientific consensus" and how it is used in debates over controversial issues such as Darwinian evolution and climate change.
>
> *Each week, leading fellows from Discovery Institute will join Michael Medved to talk about the intersection of science and culture. Listen in live online or on your local Medved station, or stay tuned at ID the Future for the weekly podcast.*

Topics:

- Does global warming cause more tornadoes?
- Are we having more tornadoes now?
- Is science decoded NY consensus?
- Why would someone appeal to consensus
- If a person defends their view by using sweeping rhetoric and insults is that am indicator of strength
- Is there more extreme weather than before now?
- When did the last warming begin?
- Are we in a waking or cooling cycle now?
- How are scientists who dissent from the consensus treated?
- How much CO2 is needed in the atmosphere in order to create warming?

I subscribe to the ID the Future podcast, and I really recommend that you do as well!

Previous entries

- Episode one: Stephen C. Meyer on Thomas Nagel and intelligent design
- Episode two: Stephen C. Meyer on Richard Dawkins and the Cambrian explosion
- Episode three: John G. West discusses Darwinism and the value of human life
- Episode four: Stephen C. Meyer and John Lennox discuss human exceptionalism

Is it always rational to be moral?

May 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tough Questions Answered explains how that question is answered on theism and on atheism. (H/T J. Warner Wallace tweet)

Excerpt:

> If you are a dictator, and you have complete control over your nation, and you have good reason to believe you will remain in control, why should you not take whatever you want from whomever you want in order to bring yourself pleasure? Why would it be rational for you to be moral?
>
> In certain cases of truth telling or repaying a debt or keeping a promise, and in those rarer cases where the performance of a duty risks death or injury, why do the moral thing? In an atheistic world, there may be instances where doing the moral thing does not advance my goals and desires for my life. In other words, doing the moral thing may not be the rational thing for me to do.

TQA then quotes from "*Good God: The The Theistic Foundations of Morality*" by David Baggett and Jerry Walls:

> It wouldn't make sense if the world required us to do what isn't in our ultimate self-interest. We think this was Kant's insight when he suggested that the moral enterprise needs, in a deep and radical way, the postulate of a God who can, and will, make happiness correspond to virtue. Morality fails to make sense when that correspondence fails.
>
> […]It's the atheistic world in particular, however, that introduces the failure of this correspondence. Reality itself must be committed to morality in some deep way for morality to make sense. Morality really must be a very deep feature and fixture of reality in order for its demands to retain their authoritative force. In an atheistic world there just doesn't seem likely to be the sort of ontological foundation to morality that renders it always rational to both believe in and do what's morally binding. The picture is very different for a theistic world of a certain sort.

One of the most obvious questions to ask atheists these days is whether it is OK to kill a special needs child. Atheists like Richard Dawkins and Peter Singer are already on record as saying that it is a good thing. It will be tough for an atheist to take any other position, because that is rational within their atheistic worldview. This is a clear case where the life of the strong person will be made less pleasurable if the stronger adult has to deal with the needs of the weaker child. On atheism, there is no such thing as a human right. The universe is an accident. Therefore, atheists will find it rational to kill anything and anyone who diminishes their happiness, so long as they can escape the consequences of being judged by others when they do.

On theism, though, it is rational to pursue morality, because the universe was made by a moral Creator, and his moral values are built into the design for us. Working to comply with that design is done within the context of that relationship with the Creator. A relationship which survives our deaths. Christian theists have even more reason to prefer self-sacrificial love, since the example of the life of the founder of Christianity exemplifies that self-sacrificial love. Caring for others even when it doesn't make you happy is the core of Christian doctrine and theology, and that's in fact what the church has done since the beginning.

Why celebrate Memorial Day? Why is Memorial Day important?

May 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Arlington National Cemetary

What is Memorial Day? It's the day that we remember all those brave men and women who have sacrificed to protect our liberties and our lives so that we could be safe from harm.

This video may help you to understand.

From Hot Air, a quote from Ronald Reagan.

> Memorial Day is an occasion of special importance to all Americans, because it is a day sacred to the memory of all those Americans who made the supreme sacrifice for the liberties we enjoy. We will never forget or fail to honor these heroes to whom we owe so much. We honor them best when we resolve to cherish and defend the liberties for which they gave their lives. Let us resolve to do all in our power to assure the survival and the success of liberty so that our children and their children for generations to come can live in an America in which freedom's light continues to shine.
>
> The Congress, in establishing Memorial Day, called for it to be a day of tribute to America's fallen, and also a day of national prayer for lasting peace. This Nation has always sought true peace. We seek it still. Our goal is peace in which the highest aspirations of our people, and people everywhere, are secure: peace with freedom, with justice, and with opportunity for human development. This is the permanent peace for which we pray, not only for ourselves but for all generations.
>
> The defense of peace, like the defense of liberty, requires more than lip service. It requires vigilance, military strength, and the willingness to take risks and to

> make sacrifices. The surest guarantor of both peace and liberty is our unflinching resolve to defend that which has been purchased for us by our fallen heroes.
>
> On Memorial Day, let us pray for peace — not only for ourselves, but for all those who seek freedom and justice.

And check some of my Medal of Honor posts:

- Navy SEAL Michael Murphy awarded Medal of Honor
- How Sal Giunta earned a Medal of Honor and lived to tell about it
- What can Christians learn from Rob Miller's Medal of Honor story?

If you want to help out our troops, you can send them things through Soldier's Angels.

I am listening to this podcast from the Heritage Foundation about the origin and meaning of Memorial Day.

God bless our soldiers, airmen and sailors!

For more reading, why not check out some of the military bloggers?

- BlackFive
- Mudville Gazette
- Froggy Ruminations
- Michael Yon
- Bill Roggio
- Adventures of Chester

If you want to help out our troops, you can send them things through Soldier's Angels.

Swedish riots continue as police disperse vigilantes and ignore rioters

May 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stuart Schneiderman wrote the best article I saw about the London terrorist attack and the Swedish riots.

Excerpt:

> In another post Hinderaker described the scene in Stockholm. There the police have taken a laissez-faire attitude toward Muslim rioters. They are too afraid to do anything, so they stand by and let it happen.
>
> One wonders whether Swedes are quite as tolerant of laissez-faire capitalism.
>
> Be that as it may, Hinderaker quotes the account offered by the Swedish publication, Fria Tider:
>
> *Since last Sunday, May 19, rioters have taken to the streets of Stockholm's suburbs every night, torching cars, schools, stores, office buildings and residential complexes. Yesterday, a police station in Rågsved, a suburb four kilometers south of Stockholm, was attacked and set on fire.*
>
> *But while the Stockholm riots keep spreading and intensifying, Swedish police have adopted a tactic of non-interference. "Our ambition is really to do as little as possible," Stockholm Chief of Police Mats Löfving* ***explained*** *to the Swedish newspaper Expressen on Tuesday.*
>
> *"We go to the crime scenes, but when we get there we stand and wait," elaborated Lars Byström, the media relations officer of the Stockholm Police Department. "If we see a burning car, we let it burn if there is no risk of the fire spreading to other cars or buildings nearby. By doing so we minimize the risk of having rocks thrown at us."*
>
> Why would they not riot? If no one has the courage to stop them, then their actions must be righteous.
>
> But, don't think that the Swedish police are not doing anything. When a meter maid comes across an illegally parked incinerated vehicle, she gives it a parking ticket.
>
> Fria Tider described the scene:
>
> *Swedish parking laws, however, continue to be rigidly enforced despite the increasingly chaotic situation. Early Wednesday, while documenting the destruction after a night of rioting in the Stockholm suburb of Alby, a reporter from Fria Tider observed a parking enforcement officer writing a ticket for a burnt-out Ford.*
>
> *When questioned, the officer explained that the ticket was issued because the*

> *vehicle lacked a tag showing its time of arrival. The fact that the vehicle had been effectively destroyed – its windshield smashed and the interior heavily damaged by fire – was irrelevant according to the meter maid, who asked Fria Tider's photographer to destroy the photos he had taken. Her employer, the parking company P-service, refused to comment when Fria Tider contacted them on Wednesday afternoon.*
>
> At least the meter maids are doing their jobs.
>
> […]Seeing the threat posed by vigilantes the Swedish police are springing into action. Fria Tider has the story:
>
> *In the Stockholm suburb of Tumba the police decided to abandon their earlier non-intervention policy as* ***a large group of police officers rounded up and dispersed a group of vigilantes trying to fend off rioters.***
>
> ***The decision to round up vigilantes while, according to Stockholm Chief of Police Mats Löfving, "doing as little as possible" to stop rioters, met with a wave of protests in various social media and on the Internet.***
>
> Swedish police fighting Swedish citizens for doing what the police refuse to do. Surely, the Muslim population is watching and laughing.

Secularism and leftism is not strength, it's weakness. It's postmodernism, moral relativism and dependency. It's subsidizing your own executioners because you have lost the will to live. I would argue that Sweden is even more advanced in cultural decline than the UK. But we are rapidly catching them up.

Is public school a viable option for Christian parents?

May 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A couple of quick anecdotes from Yahoo News first, then we'll see the numbers.

Excerpt:

> Take the case of Petrona Smith. She says in a lawsuit that she was fired from teaching at Bronx PS 211 in March 2012 after a seventh-grader reported that she'd used the "N" word, according to The New York Post.
>
> 'Negro.'
>
> Smith doesn't deny using the word. But she argues that everyone uses it, when speaking Spanish. She was teaching the Spanish words for different colors, and the color "black" in Spanish is "negro." She also taught the junior high school students, in this bilingual school, that the Spanish term for black people is "moreno." And by the way, Smith, who is from the West Indies, is black.

And more:

> The Akron Public Schools Board of Education voted in January to pursue the firing of Melissa Cairns. She was a math teacher at Buchtel Community Learning Center.
>
> The school district said that Ms. Cairns posted a photo on her personal Facebook page which showed 8 or 9 out of her 16 students with duct tape across their mouths. The caption read: "Finally found a way to get them to be quiet!!!" The district says a colleague of Cairns' notified a supervisor of the photo.
>
> […]This past week, Cairns was officially fired because "She showed a lack of good judgment. Her conduct was unbecoming of a teacher," Akron Public Schools spokesman Mark Williamson told Newsnet5.
>
> He went on to explain it wasn't the use of the duct tape, but the posting of the photo of children on Facebook that showed poor judgement.

As you know, you can't fire public school teachers for incompetence or sexual abuse of children.

Excerpt:

> He worked just one year as a full-time teacher in New York. But he has collected nearly $1 million for 13 years for doing almost nothing.
>
> Aryeh Eller, 46, a former music teacher at Hillcrest HS in Queens, is the longest-sitting "rubber room" teacher in the city. He was yanked from the classroom in 1999 and confessed to repeated sexual harassment of female students, according to a 2000 investigative report.

> […]Since his 1999 suspension, he has collected $943,000, plus health and pension benefits — and the total will hit $1 million this year.

Now let's see if this focus on political correctness instead of results is working for taxpayers and students.

The Wall Street Journal:

> Over the last four decades, public education spending has increased rapidly in the United States. According to the Department of Education, public schools spent, on average, $12,922 per pupil in 2008, the most recent year for which data are available. Adjusting for inflation, that's more than double the $6,402 per student that public schools spent in 1975.
>
> Despite that doubling of funds, just about every measure of educational outcomes has remained stagnant since 1975, though some have finally begun to inch upward over the last few years. Student scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—the only consistently observed measure of student math and reading achievement over the period—have remained relatively flat since the mid-1970s. High school graduation rates haven't budged much over the last 40 years, either.

You can find more data to flesh out those claims linked at the Heritage Foundation think tank.

To remove any doubt, just take a look at the libertarian Cato Institute's graph on public school spending vs scholastic achievement. We are are wasting money indoctrinating kids in political correctness. The extra money that we are spending on education isn't going into making students smarter or more productive.

Guillermo Gonzalez lectures at UC Davis on the requirements for complex life

May 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The 5 video clips that make up the full lecture.

The playlist for all 5 clips is here.

About the speaker

> Guillermo Gonzalez is an Associate Professor of Physics at Grove City College. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington and has received fellowships, grants and awards from such institutions as NASA, the University of Washington, the Templeton Foundation, Sigma Xi (scientific research society) and the National Science Foundation.

Learn more about the speaker here.

The lecture

Here's part 1 of 5:

And the rest are here:

- Part 2 of 5
- Part 3 of 5
- Part 4 of 5
- Part 5 of 5

Topics:

- What is the Copernican Principle?
- Is the Earth's suitability for hosting life rare in the universe?
- Does the Earth have to be the center of the universe to be special?
- How similar to the Earth does a planet have to be to support life?
- What is the definition of life?
- What are the three minimal requirements for life of any kind?
- Requirement 1: A molecule that can store information (carbon)
- Requirement 2: A medium in which chemicals can interact (liquid water)
- Requirement 3: A diverse set of chemical elements
- What is the best environment for life to exist?
- Our place in the solar system: the circumstellar habitable zone
- Our place in the galaxy: the galactic habitable zones
- Our time in the universe's history: the cosmic habitable age
- Other habitability requirements (e.g. – metal-rich star, massive moon, etc.)

- The orchestration needed to create a habitable planet
- How different factors depend on one another through time
- How tweaking one factor can adversely affect other factors
- How many possible places are there in the universe where life could emerge?
- Given these probabilistic resources, should we expect that there is life elsewhere?
- How to calculate probabilities using the “Product Rule”
- Can we infer that there is a Designer just because life is rare? Or do we need more?

The corelation between habitability and measurability.

- Are the habitable places in the universe also the best places to do science?
- Do the factors that make Earth habitable also make it good for doing science?
- Some places and times in the history of the universe are more habitable than others
- Those exact places and times also allow us to make scientific discoveries
- Observing solar eclipses and structure of our star, the Sun
- Observing stars and galaxies
- Observing the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Observing the acceleration of the universe caused by dark matter and energy
- Observing the abundances of light elements like helium of hydrogen
- These observations support the big bang and fine-tuning arguments for God’s existence
- It is exactly like placing observatories on the tops of mountains
- There are observers existing in the best places to observe things
- This is EXACTLY how the universe has been *designed for making scientific discoveries*

This lecture was delivered by Guillermo Gonzalez in 2007 at the University of California at Davis.

Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?

May 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from the American Thinker answers the question that vexes many men. As you read this excerpt below, ask yourself if it is a man or a woman writing this.

First of all, liberal women seem to be having an awful lot of sex these days. They are losing their virginity early, and working their way through as many "alpha males" as possible, but all the while they insist that a stream of recreational-sex relationships is somehow a path to lifelong married love. Can you turn a man who wants nothing more than recreational sex into the perfect husband, simply by invoking the magical power of sex?

Liberal women think that you can:

> On the one hand, liberal women believe wholeheartedly in the idiotic social construct they call, "sexual liberation." They pride themselves on losing their virginity, as though that "accomplishment" had ever been above the challenge-scale of an alley cat in heat.
>
> These liberal women I've known, having given away their female V-card over and over and over again, all the while scour their host of intimate "trial runs" searching for that mythical, Hollywood-construct, Mr. Right. This Mr. Right guy, for whom they are searching, is known to them up front as even more sexually-liberated than they, but this little factoid seems not to register in their liberated little heads as they frantically search for the equally mythical family home with the white picket fence, which somehow never gets hit by any of life's roving tornadoes. One can almost hear them say in unison, "And they all lived happily ever after."

I think it's one of the deepest mysteries of the world why women think that a man who has lots and lots of recreational sex is somehow marriage material. When I think of men who are qualified for marriage, I think of men who have studied hard subjects, gotten marketable skills, worked and worked, saved and saved, and shown that they can be faithful in marriage by exhibiting self-control in the courtship. But liberal women think that all of this reasoning is junk, and you must just jump right into sex to see if the relationship will "work out" or to find out what you "like". Recreational sex, they insist, is a superior way of finding a husband. Discussing who will do what in an actual marriage and what the actual marriage is for is apparently *ineffective*.

More:

> Evidently, the liberal woman is capable of the most severe form of psychological denial known to humankind. Certain that one of the men with whom she has copulated without strings will suddenly morph into a faithfully monogamous

> creature the minute she can convince one of them to say "I do" in front of a few witnesses, the liberal woman marches blindly down the aisle towards near-certain, adulterous doom. Yet, no amount of honest reason can dissuade liberal women from this self-destructive, moral myopia.
>
> What other term but "morally schizoid" could possibly describe this blatantly contradictory tendency among liberal women?
>
> Having spent their youth casually throwing their own sexual morality to the winds of fairytale "liberation," these liberal women still steadfastly cling to the faithfully monogamous ideal for that sometime-later moment when they actually do desire all the traditional things — the husband, the kids, the white picket fence — those pesky female-nature embedded longings, which coincidentally ensure the continuation of the human race.
>
> But these liberal women somehow — in perfect schizoid manner — convince themselves that once married, they will be the gratuitous beneficiaries of the monogamous respect they still desire, but have never once demanded or deserved. Intuitively, women know that strict monogamy provides the only real security for themselves and their own offspring. Yet, they continue themselves to spurn the demands of monogamy until the very last minute, believing that fidelity springs forth naturally in miraculous profusion among all "married" humans. Such pure poppycock can only be explained as a mental disorder.

I think women need to ask themselves questions honestly and rationally:

- can recreational sex make an unemployed man get a job?
- can recreational sex make a violent man be courteous and respectful?
- can recreational sex make an atheist turn into a Christian?
- can recreational sex make a male slut stay faithful?
- can recreational sex make wastefulness turn into frugality?
- can recreational sex make laziness turn into diligence?
- can recreational sex make irresponsibility turn into commitment?

Marriages last because both partners have prepared themselves for self-sacrifice, rational discussions, problem solving and cooperation.

Previously, I provided the male perspective on liberal women's poor decision-making about men and marriage. Read the article from the American Thinker (*written by a woman*), then read mine.

Related posts

- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage

- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children’s well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren’t men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste

What is more important? True beliefs about God or doing good actions?

May 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What does the Bible teach about the relative importance of actions and beliefs? Which should we settle first?

J.Warner Wallace explains:

> I just came home from a week in the great state of Utah. Our missions team of high school students had the opportunity to talk with many LDS and Christian believers about the nature of salvation. Many of our conversations centered on the relationship between faith and works. Christianity is unique in its characterization of salvation as the free gift of God:
>
> ***Ephesians 2:8-9***
>
> *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.*
>
> This concept of grace is missing in Mormonism (as it has been classically described by LDS prophets and Mormon scripture). In fact, many of the Mormon believers we talked with described Christians as people who consistently take advantage of "cheap grace". One member of the LDS church told us, "Christians say a prayer, get 'saved' and then run out and live like hell. They don't think it's important to obey the commandments." At times, in an effort to emphasis the *free* nature of salvation, many Christians minimize the importance of good works in the Christian life. We sometimes neglect to tell our LDS friends that a grateful life, surrendered in response to what Christ has done for us, does actually result in a life of good works. The passage in Ephesians provides us with an important equation that can help us make this distinction. If you divide this verse in the middle, you'll find faith and salvation on one side of the verse and works on the other:
>
> *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith | not by works, so that no one can boast.*
>
> This verse in Ephesians provides us with a simple equation that can help us remember a life transformed by the saving grace of God produces good works, even though good works are *not* what save us:
>
> *The Christian equation:*
>
> ***Salvation + Faith = Works***
>
> *The Non-Christian equation:*
>
> ***Faith + Works = Salvation***
>
> The question is not *whether* someone performs good works, but *why* someone performs good works. Both Christian and non-Christian believers have a place for

> good works in their respective equations. Works are not missing from the Christian calculation. But for us, good works are the result of our gratitude for (and recognition of) what God has done. When we realize that our own efforts are utterly impotent, we begin to understand the gift that God has given us. When we understand what God has done for us, we can't help but be humbled and grateful. A grateful life, ever reflective of the depth of God's kindness, results in a surrendered response. We can't help but want to live differently.

I think it's pretty important to get it clear that in Biblical Christianity, the focus is on getting the beliefs correct first. I actually think that the heavy burden of a works-based faith is a big reason why people are turned off about religion in general. It would really be much better for us all if we figured out who God is first and then made adjustments to live in light of that, instead of leaving the theology aside and just trying to join an organization and do what people tell us to do. Let's meet God in truth first, then act accordingly once that relationship is settled.

New book by Dr. Helen Reynolds explains men's changing motivations

May 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Captain Capitalism reviews a new book.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Helen of PJ Media fame is in a very small, but elite league. She is one of the few professionals (PhD in psychology) to address and bring to light the sexual-sociological backlash men and women are having to feminism. The only other person I've known to do this is Dr. Roy Baumeister with his book "Is There Anything Good About Men." However, while Dr. Baumeister's book focuses on society's current view or opinion of men, Dr. Helen's new book "Men on Strike" addresses the consequences of having a myopic and solipsistic societal view of the sexes. And the consequences aren't good.
>
> As the title would suggest, men are going on strike. They are striking from their traditional roles as breadwinners, innovators, hard workers, protectors, etc. But worse they are abandoning their roles as husbands and fathers. Not out of a lack of desire, but worse – they are being forced out of these roles as society has made both roles too risky to forfeit their precious and finite lives for.
>
> Naturally there is a backlash.
>
> Women want men to "man up" and marry them. Women want men give them children. But, particularly ironic, while women SAY they want men to be effeminate, sensitive, caring, listeners, their behaviors show their preferences for strong, thuggish bad boys have never changed. This confusion (and risk) to men has sent them fleeing, and blinded by feminism, modern day women can't figure out why. They are stumped as to why they're 42, single, with some other man's child, a masters degree in creative writing and NOT getting approached every day. They simply cannot connect the dots.
>
> Dr. Helen explores this reaction of men and tries to connect the dots for women. Her language is polite, diplomatic and correct. but this is a herculean task to ask of her because she is trying to undo the brainwashing women (and men) have received for 40 years. It is a harsh pill to swallow, too harsh for the progressively deteriorating and childish men and women who populate America today, and her blog receives more criticism than inquiry and acceptance. Regardless she tries and has a professional psychological background to back it up lending the book authority.

Here's the description from Amazon:

> American society has become anti-male. Men are sensing the backlash and are consciously and unconsciously going "on strike." They are dropping out of

> college, leaving the workforce and avoiding marriage and fatherhood at alarming rates. The trend is so pronounced that a number of books have been written about this "man-child" phenomenon, concluding that men have taken a vacation from responsibility simply because they can. But why *should* men participate in a system that seems to be increasingly stacked against them?
>
> As *Men on Strike* demonstrates, men aren't dropping out because they are stuck in arrested development. They are instead acting *rationally* in response to the lack of incentives society offers them to be responsible fathers, husbands and providers. In addition, men are going on strike, either consciously or unconsciously, because they do not want to be injured by the myriad of laws, attitudes and hostility against them for the crime of happening to be male in the twenty-first century. Men are starting to fight back against the backlash. *Men on Strike* explains their battle cry.

I took a quick look at the book, because I was concerned that it might not be good coming from a libertarian perspective. But it's been endorsed by fusionist conservatives like myself.

John Hawkins of Right Wing News:

> **This review is from: Men on Strike: Why Men Are Boycotting Marriage, Fatherhood, and the American Dream – and Why It Matters (Hardcover)**
> I can't say enough good things about Helen Smith's extraordinary new book. In our over-feminized society where at times, it can seem like traditional, heterosexual men are under attack from all sides, Dr. Helen's book presents a very different perspective. In fact, it reminds me a bit of Warren Farrell's "Why Men Are the Way They Are," but it's more aggressively pro-male while Farrell's book is more a straight-up antidote to male bashing feminism. Whether you're a man looking for a book that covers men's rights or a woman who wants to get a better idea of how most men react to the angry, left-wing feminist view of the world, this book comes highly recommended.

The paperback is available now, the Kindle book will be out later in June. I usually buy the Kindle book for books like this, but I'll be getting the other book that the Captain linked in hardcover, because it is Oxford University Press and will be a good conversation starter in my office.

I think that one of the most troubling things about the contemporary church is that pastors don't dare to read books like this to really find out what men are thinking. When you look at what pastors say about men – conservative pastors who claim to be pro-marriage – you will find there views that are hastening the demise of marriage and encouraging the sorts of conditions in which unborn children will be killed and born children will be raised fatherless. It is almost a guarantee that if you meet a pastor, then you are meeting someone who is working against social conservatism even as they praise it, because they have completely discounted how feminism and socialism have impacted

men in every area. What is needed is an appraisal of the incentives facing men, and that’s exactly what pastors are unwilling to do. But this book sounds like it would be the antidote to that.

IRS chief visited White House a reported 118 times from 2010 to 2011

May 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports.

Excerpt:

> The *Washington Examiner* reports that the IRS chief visited the White House more than once a week under President Obama, after having visited less than once a *year* under President Bush. The IRS chief came to the White House a reported 118 times from 2010 to 2011 under Obama, compared to only once from 2003 to 2007 under Bush — **a 236-fold increase per day**. Under Bush, a White House appearance from the taxman came as frequently as the opening of the Olympic Games; under Obama it came more frequently than *Sports Illustrated*.
>
> Aside from perhaps being there to discuss targeting efforts, the only plausible reason for the IRS chief to have visited the Obama White House so regularly was to discuss the IRS's significant expansion in power and scope under Obamacare.

But Obama only learned about how the IRS was implementing his own anti-conservative rhetoric by watching the news, just like you or I.

William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

May 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Craig's famous minimal facts case for the resurrection has been posted at the Christian Apologetics Alliance. He presents 4 facts admitted by the majority of New Testament historians, and then he supplies multiple pieces of evidence for each fact.

Here are the four facts:

- FACT #1: *After his crucifixion, Jesus was buried in a tomb by Joseph of Arimathea.*
- FACT #2: *On the Sunday following the crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by a group of his women followers.*
- FACT #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.*
- FACT #4: *The original disciples believed that Jesus was risen from the dead despite their having every predisposition to the contrary.*

Here's the detail on fact #3, the post-mortem appearances.

> FACT #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.*
>
> This is a fact which is almost universally acknowledged among New Testament scholars, for the following reasons:
>
> 1. The list of eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection appearances which is quoted by Paul in I Cor. 15. 5-7 guarantees that such appearances occurred. These included appearances to Peter (Cephas), the Twelve, the 500 brethren, and James.
>
> 2. The appearance traditions in the gospels provide multiple, independent attestation of these appearances. This is one of the most important marks of historicity. The appearance to Peter is independently attested by Luke, and the appearance to the Twelve by Luke and John. We also have independent witness to Galilean appearances in Mark, Matthew, and John, as well as to the women in Matthew and John.
>
> 3. Certain appearances have earmarks of historicity. For example, we have good evidence from the gospels that neither James nor any of Jesus' younger brothers believed in him during his lifetime. There is no reason to think that the early church would generate fictitious stories concerning the unbelief of Jesus' family had they been faithful followers all along. But it is indisputable that James and his brothers did become active Christian believers following Jesus' death. James was considered an apostle and eventually rose to the position of leadership of the

> Jerusalem church. According to the first century Jewish historian Josephus, James was martyred for his faith in Christ in the late AD 60s. Now most of us have brothers. What would it take to convince you that your brother is the Lord, such that you would be ready to die for that belief? Can there be any doubt that this remarkable transformation in Jesus' younger brother took place because, in Paul's words, "then he appeared to James"?
>
> Even Gert Ludemann, the leading German critic of the resurrection, himself admits, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus' death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."3

Yes, Gerd Ludemann is actually an atheist new Testament historian, and he has even debated Dr. Craig on the resurrection – not once, but *twice*. That's the kind of evidence Dr. Craig uses in his case. Not just what your pastor will give you, but what atheists will give you. We need to learn to debate like that.

Study explains why college women abandon courtship for hook-ups

May 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This study is from the Institute for American Values. It was done by Elizabeth Marquardt.

The PDF of study is here.

If you download the 88 page PDF, the first few pages are an executive summary.

I'd been exposed to this research before when I read Dr. Miriam Grossmann's book "Unprotected". (Boundless review here) I just got Dr. Miriam Grossmann's new book "You're Teaching My Child What?" and I also got Elizabeth Marquardt's new book "Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce". I don't think either of them is conservative, but I like their research anyway.

There are a couple of things that really struck me about this IAV study on hooking-up.

First, this one from p. 15:

> A notable feature of hook ups is that they almost always occur when both participants are drinking or drunk.
>
> A Rutgers University student observed, "You always hear people say, oh my gosh, I was so drunk, I hooked up with so and so…" Perhaps not surprisingly, many noted that being drunk helped to loosen one's inhibitions and make it easier to hook up. A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up. A Yale University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up." A New York University student observed, "[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking."
>
> A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."
>
> Other women observed that being drunk gives a woman license to act sexually interested in public in ways that would not be tolerated if she were sober. For instance, a University of Michigan student said, "Girls are actually allowed to be a lot more sexual when they are drunk…"
>
> A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."
>
> Some reported that drinking had led them to do things they later regretted. A University of Virginia student said, "My last random hook up was last October and it was bad. I was drunk and I just regretted it very much."

And this one from p. 30 on the effects of hooking-up on their future commitments:

> A few women did see an unambiguous connection between present relationships and future marriage.
>
> […]Many women either saw little or no connection between present and future relationships, or their understanding of this connection was curiously flat. A student at New York University said, "[The present and the future are] connected because I will still have the same values and principles that I have now, but I just won't be single anymore."A number of women said that the present and the future are connected because whatever heartache or confusion they experience now gives them lessons for the future.
>
> A University of Michigan student said, "Early relationships prepare you for marriage because it's like, oh, what type of person do I want to be with? Oh, I've had these bad experiences. Or, I've learned from this relationship that I should do this and I shouldn't do this."
>
> A sophomore at Howard University said that "I am kind of learning from a lot of the mistakes that I have made." At a further extreme, some women saw their future marriage as the reason to experiment widely in the present. A Rutgers University student said,"I think hooking up with different people and seeing what you like and don't like is a good idea. Because eventually you're going to have to… marry someone and I'd just like to know that I experienced everything."
>
> Although it is admirable to take risks and learn from one's mistakes, these women would probably find it difficult to explain how having your heart broken a few or even many times in your early years — or trying to separate sex from feeling, as in hooking up — is good preparation for a trusting and happy marriage later on.

And on p. 42, we learn what women think marriage is and isn't for:

> For instance, in the on-campus interviews one student complained, "[With] marriage…you have to debate everything… Why do you need a piece of paper to bond a person to you? …But I know if I don't get married I'll probably feel like… [a] lonely old woman… If anything, I'd get married [because of] that."
>
> This student went on to say that she would be satisfied to live with a man, but added that, if the man was committed to her, he would offer to marry her, and that this was the kind of commitment that she wanted. A student at the University of Washington said,"I don't want to get married right after I graduate from college. I just think that would stunt my growth in every way that there is. I would like to be in a very steady, committed relationship with a guy."

And on p. 44, we learn that they like co-habitation, which increases the risk of divorce by about 50% (but they don't know *that*):

> In the national survey, 58 percent of the respondents agreed that "It is a good

> idea to live with someone before deciding to marry him." This belief often coexists with a strong desire to marry, because it was embraced by 49 percent of the respondents who strongly agreed that marriage was a very important goal for them.
>
> […]Women we interviewed on campus reflected a similar range of attitudes about cohabitation. Some women thought that cohabitation was a good way to test whether one could spend a lifetime with a potential partner. In such cases, women often cited fears of divorce as the reason for trying cohabitation first. A senior at the University of Washington said, "I kind of don't really see marriages work ever, so I want to make sure that everything's all right before [we get married]. I don't see how people can get married without living together because I know like I have a best friend and I live with her and we want to kill each other, like, every few months."
>
> Other women felt that, in an age of divorce, cohabitation was a preferable alternative to marriage. A student at New York University said, "You see so [many] people getting divorces… I just don't see the necessity [of marriage]." She went on to say, "I think that I don't have to be married to [the] person that I'm with…. You know like… Goldie Hawn [and Kurt Russell]? They're not married."

But let's get back to the drinking and the hook-up sex…

Once a woman abandons femininity for feminism, then sex is all that she can use to get noticed by a man. Men are like hiring managers, and courting is like a job interview for the job of marriage and mothering. If a woman tries to get the job by having sex with the interviewer, he isn't going to hire her since sex has nothing to do with the job. There are children involved, you know – he has to think of them when he makes the hiring decision. But women have been taught to think bad things about men (they're rapists) and marriage (it's slavery) by feminists – so they don't even try to understand men, or to respect men, or prepare their character for being a wife and mother. Feminists just don't understand that hard work is needed to understand men and prepare for marriage.

In a previous post, I explained how feminists wanted to get women to drink like men, have sex like men, and to abolish courtship and marriage. Under the influence of feminism and Hollywood celebrities, women began to choose men to have sex with without any consideration of morality, religion, marriage, etc. They thought that sex was an easy way to trick a man into committing to them without having to treat him like a real person, or to take the demands of marriage and parenting seriously. (They have been taught to value education and careers over husbands and children, you understand). This results in a cycle of binge-drinking, one-night-stands, cheating, co-habitating, breaking-up, stalking, aborting, etc., until the woman's ability to trust and love anyone but herself is completely destroyed. And yet these college women somehow believe this is "adventurous", that it makes them feel "sexy", and that the experience of being selfish and seeing the worst kind of men acting in the worst possible ways, point blank, somehow prepares them for marriage and motherhood.

Often, a young unmarried woman’s biological father was NOT selected by her mother based on his ability to make commitments and moral judgments. Many feminists prefer men who do not judge women morally, nor impose his religion on her. But those very things that young unmarried women today seem to dislike most about men, because they fear rejection on moral and religious grounds, are exactly the things that make men good husbands and fathers. They don’t want to be judged or led spiritually, so they choose immoral, non-religious men. Men who are not firm on morality and religion cannot be counted on to act morally and self-sacrificially. And when they fail, and the marriages break up, the children grow up fatherless and may develop negative views of men.

Every young unmarried woman who chooses a bad man, and then has a bad experience with him is pushing away marriage with both hands. The more she destroys her ability to trust, love and care for others, the less she is able to be happy and effective in a marriage.

One-third of recent college graduates say they should have skipped college and gone to work

May 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Forbes magazine, a word of caution to young people, especially to young men who intend to marry and have children.

Excerpt:

> Here's an indication of how burdensome student loans have become: About one-third of millennials say they would have been better off working, instead of going to college and paying tuition.
>
> That's according to a new Wells Fargo study which surveyed 1,414 millennials between the ages of 22 and 32. More than half of them financed their education through student loans, and many say the if they had $10,000 the "first thing" they'd do is pay down their student loan or credit card debt.
>
> That's no surprise when you consider student borrowing topped the $100 billion threshold for the first time in 2010, and total outstanding loans exceeded $1 trillion for the first time in 2011. Student loan debt now exceeds credit card debt in the U.S. which stands at about $798 billion.
>
> Delinquencies are also on the rise. The number of borrowers who are at least 90 days late on student loan payments has jumped from 8.5% in 2011 to 11.7% today, according to a study by the New York Federal Reserve.
> The problem sometimes is that not all college educations are worth their cost since they can't guarantee a high-paying job to help pay off that student debt. A report from the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys says the rising student debt problem can have a bad impact on the economy. Even in the best of economic times when jobs are plentiful, young people with considerable debt burdens end up delaying life-cycle events such as buying a car, purchasing a home, getting married and having children.

There's nothing wrong with a good education in a trade school or community college.

The actual number for outstanding student loan debt is about $600 billion, and it's gone up a lot under Obama.

Excerpt:

> The outstanding balance for all of the direct student loans the federal government has issued topped $600 billion in April, according to newly released data from the U.S. Treasury.
>
> The total balance hit $600.457 billion by the end of April, says the Treasury, up from $592.142 billion at the end of March.
>
> The Federal Direct Student Loan Program already has built-in debt forgiveness

> plans for people who end up earning low incomes or for those who entered lines of work preferred by the government.
>
> In January 2009, when Obama was inaugurated, the balance was $119.803 billion and has since increased more than fivefold.
>
> The $480.654 billion increase since January 2009 in what is owed to the Treasury in direct student loans represents a climb of about 250 percent in just over four years.
>
> **Before Obama's first term, federally guaranteed student loans were made both by the government directly and by private lenders using their own capital through what was called the Federal Family Education Loan program. Language inserted into the the Obamacare law signed in March 2010, however, abolished the latter type of federally guaranteed student loan, giving the U.S. Treasury a monopoly over those loans.**
>
> **As the Congressional Research Service has described it, this Obamacare provision made the U.S. Treasury the exclusive "banker" for federally guaranteed student loans. Thus, U.S. taxpayers essentially own these loans.**

The troubling thing is that since the schools have spent all the time teaching children about global warming and the proper use of contraceptives, it's unlikely that they will be able to find real jobs in order to pay off their loans. They aren't learning how to manage money in school, and parents aren't taking the responsibility to teach kids about money at home. The sad thing is that they have been taught by their teachers to keep voting for more politicization of education and more government spending on fashionable causes. But at least they feel superior about it. For now.

New study: private religious schools outperform public schools and public charter schools

May 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reported by The Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> I recently conducted a meta-analysis of more than ninety studies on education, and the results suggest that perhaps it is time for America's leadership and the general public to take a second look at religious private schools. At the risk of immodesty, let me be frank. The study is hugely important because it is the first published meta-analysis to compare the three primary types of American schools: religious private schools, traditional public schools, and charter schools.
>
> A meta-analysis statistically combines all the relevant existing studies on a given subject in order to determine the aggregated results of the research. This meta-analysis yielded results that surprised many by indicating that students from public charter schools did no better than their peers in traditional public schools. In contrast, youth from religious private schools performed better academically than their counterparts in both public charter schools and traditional public schools, even when the results were adjusted to account for socioeconomic status, selectivity, race, and various other factors.
>
> […]Examining results from all ninety studies, I found that the average academic outcome for religious school students was .28 of a standard deviation unit higher than for traditional public school (TPS) students, while the average for charter school students was only .01 of a standard deviation unit higher. If one converts these numbers to percentiles, the average academic outcome was 11 percentage points higher than that of TPS pupils, while charter school attendees scored about the same as their TPS counterparts.
>
> Translated into more tangible numbers, students who attend private religious schools attain educational levels that average about twelve months ahead of those attending regular public schools. Even when the meta-analysis employed sophisticated controls, which included measures for socioeconomic status, selectivity, gender, and race, youth who attended faith-based schools achieved at levels seven months ahead of both TPS and public charter school students.
>
> One of the most intriguing results of the study is that the racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps are roughly 25 percent narrower in religious private schools than in public schools. This finding is particularly interesting when one considers that over the years the government has spent hundreds of billions of dollars to bridge the gaps, with only limited success. Higher expectations for students, and school leaders' insistence that pupils take demanding courses,

> could help to explain these circumstances in faith-based schools.
>
> The meta-analysis focused primarily on scholastic performance, but it also examined student behavior. The results indicated that youth from faith-based schools maintained even a larger edge in behavior than they did in school academics. That is, pupils from religious private schools exhibited fewer behavioral problems, even when socioeconomic status, selectivity, race, and gender were also controlled for. This translates into fewer gangs, lower levels of drug abuse, and greater racial harmony than one typically finds in public schools.
>
> Many people, even this researcher, expected public charter school students to perform somewhere in between the levels achieved by students attending faith-based schools and those attending traditional public schools, given that they were trying to mimic certain aspects of private religious schools.
>
> To the extent that neither traditional public schools nor charter schools are succeeding on a broad scale, it appears that the best hope for American education is religious private schools. Not only are they considerably more economically efficient, but their students also achieve better academic and behavioral results.

I think that it is noteworthy that Democrats opposes allowing parents – especially poor parents – to have a choice of what school their children will attend. The Obama administration even de-funded a voucher program that served poor-minority students. Teacher unions are one of the strongest pro-Democrat special interests. If the Democrat Party has to choose between poor, minority students and their powerful allies in the teach unions, the choice is not a hard one. They choose the teacher unions.

Summary and audio: William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist?

May 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below, please find my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

Brian Auten has posted the MP3 audio of the debate at Apologetics 315. J.W. Wartick has a review of the debate here. Tom Gilson has a review of the debate here. Here's another review of the debate from Carson Witnauer.

The debaters

William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.
>
> Craig's CV is here.
>
> Craig's list of publications is here.

Alex Rosenberg:

> I joined the Duke faculty in 2000. Previously I was professor of philosophy at Dalhouse University in Canada, Syracuse University, University of California, Riverside and at the University of Georgia, in the US. I have also been a visiting professor and/or fellow of the Center for Philosophy of Science at the University of Minnesota, as well as the University of California, Santa Cruz, Oxford University (Balliol College) and the Research School of Social Science of the Australian National University. Here at Duke, I am co-director of the Center for Philosophy of

> Biology, along with Robert Brandon, Dan McShea and Fred Nijhout.
>
> In addition I am the director of the AB Duke Scholarship Program and its associated summer Duke in Oxford Program at New College. Along with Professor Martha Reeves of the Sociology Department I co-direct Duke's summer program on Globalization in Geneva. Check the links below for more information on these programs.
>
> My interests focus on problems in metaphysics, mainly surrounding causality, the philosophy of social sciences, especially economics, and most of all, the philosophy of biology, in particular the relationship between molecular, functional and evolutionary biology.

Below is the summary from tonight (February 1st, 2013).

If you like the summary below, please friend me on Facebook and/or follow me on Twitter.

Summary of the debate

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates

- You didn’t need to come out on this cold night
- Craig’s arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn’t listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don’t require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that “every effect requires a cause”
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can’t see
- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism

6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said.

Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can’t God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus’ burial isn’t historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig’s concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg’s concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig’s arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don’t look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Another failed prediction for global warming: fewer extreme weather events

May 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Forbes magazine, the latest data falsifying global warming.

Tornados:

> New data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration show the past 12 months set a record for the fewest tornadoes in recorded history. Not only did Mother Nature just set a record for lack of tornado activity, she absolutely shattered the previous record for fewest tornadoes in a 12-month period. During the past 12 months, merely 197 tornadoes struck the United States. Prior to this past year, the fewest tornadoes striking the United States during a 12-month period occurred from June 1991 through July 1992, when 247 tornadoes occurred.
>
> The new tornado record is particularly noteworthy because of recent advances in tornado detection technology. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is able to detect more tornadoes in recent years than in prior decades due to technological advances. Even with such enhanced tornado detection capability, the past 12 months shattered all prior records for recorded tornadoes.

Hurricanes:

> Hurricane inactivity is also setting all-time records. The United States is undergoing its longest stretch in recorded history without a major hurricane strike, with each passing day extending the unprecedented lack of severe hurricanes, according to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration data.
>
> It has been more than 2,750 days since a major hurricane struck the United States. This easily smashes the prior record of less than 2,300 days between major hurricane strikes.

Droughts and wildfires:

> Pretty much all other extreme weather events are becoming less frequent and less severe, also. Soil moisture is in long-term improvement at nearly all sites in the Global Soil Moisture Data Bank. Droughts are less frequent and less severe than in prior, colder centuries. The number of wildfires is in long-term decline despite a recent change in wildfire policy that no longer actively suppresses wildfires. Just about any way you measure it, extreme weather events are becoming quite rare.

So will the Democrats stop pushing for more socialism using pseudo-science? Well, the

new Energy Secretary has declared that the debate over global warming is over. There' nothing to debate! Just like there's nothing to debate about Benghazi scandal, the IRS scandal, the phone-tapping scandal.

Convicted criminal commits burglary, murder and rape hours after early release from jail

May 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a sad, graphic news story from the NY Daily News that should make us all pause and reconsider whether the left-wing compassion crowd is right about giving lighter sentences to criminals. (H/T Dennis Prager)

Excerpt:

> A 24-year-old man charged with killing an elderly couple and raping their 2-year-old great-grandchild had been released early from prison just hours before the attacks, state officials said on Tuesday.
>
> Jerry Active was arrested on Saturday by police and has been charged in the murders of Sorn Sreap, 71, and her husband, Touch Chea, 73, and the rape of the toddler they were babysitting that night. Active is also charged with raping Sreap.
>
> The elderly victims' bodies had signs of blunt-force trauma, but autopsies will determine the cause of death, the Anchorage Police Department said in a statement.
>
> […]Active, who had pleaded guilty to breaking into a Dillingham, Alaska, home in 2009 and sexually assaulting a child and other residents, was released from prison on probation on Saturday morning after serving part of a seven-year sentence, said Kaci Schroeder, a spokeswoman for the Alaska Department of Corrections.

Do me, cases like this make it very clear that we need to be tougher on criminals. This would never have happened if this guy had been given the death penalty instead of early release for "good behavior". What would the compassion crowd say to evidence like this? My guess is that they would say that the victims of the crime need to be more tolerant of criminals and not be so judgmental and vindictive. After all, the victims probably caused the attack and the attacker is the real victim. That's how people on the left think.

The Gospel Coalition interviews Stephen C. Meyer on the Cambrian explosion

May 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A great introduction to the Cambrian explosion on The Gospel Coalition, of all places!

Here's one question and answer that emphasizes that the progress of science is making the problem posed by the Cambrian fossils *worse* for Darwinists.

> **Have the last century of fossil discoveries resolved or aggravated Darwin's doubt?**
>
> Fossil discoveries since Darwin's time have only made the Cambrian explosion problem worse for his theory.
>
> Darwin believed that the fossil record was woefully incomplete, and he predicted that the problem of abrupt appearance of animals in the Cambrian would be alleviated by future discoveries.
>
> But the opposite happened. Scientists have combed the Precambrian strata for the alleged precursors to the Cambrian animals, and they haven't found the direct evolutionary ancestors that Darwinian theory predicts. Instead, they have made new discoveries which confirmed that the Cambrian explosion was real event—and a worldwide one—and that the animal phyla really did appear abruptly.
>
> The first major Cambrian-era fossil discovery after Darwin's time took place over a hundred years ago now, in 1909, when Charles Doolittle Walcott (then the head of the Smithsonian Institution) discovered the Burgess Shale Cambrian deposit in the Canadian Rockies. This deposit showed many diverse soft and hard-bodied organisms which were preserved in exquisite detail. They all appeared in the Cambrian, with no clear evolutionary ancestors.
>
> The question remained, however, whether the Burgess Shale Cambrian animals were a lucky isolated event, or evidence of a worldwide pattern. Over the next decades, additional discoveries of Cambrian animals were made in other parts of the world, including Russia, Greenland, and Australia.
>
> But the most spectacular find of all took place in 1984, with the discovery of Cambrian fossils in Chengjiang, China. This deposit confirmed that the Cambrian explosion was a worldwide event, with many of the same creatures found in Canada being present in beautiful detail.
>
> So as more and more fossils have been discovered, we've found the same pattern over and over around the world: diverse types of animals appear abruptly in the Cambrian, without clear evolutionary precursors. This has accentuated the "dilemma" that Darwin faced.

So the progress of science is making the problem worse for Darwinists. The more discoveries we make, the tougher the problem becomes for them, and the more the effect looks like the result of intelligent action. Kudos to the Gospel Coalition for posting on science, too.

I've already ordered my copy of Darwin's Doubt at the reduced price. Have you? And don't forget that Dr. Meyer's first book, the ground-breaking Signature in the Cell, can also be obtained. That was the best book on intelligent design out there, but people who have read Darwin's Doubt are telling me that it will be far better!

Harvard geneticist has positive words for intelligent design in biology

June 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Evolution News writes about one of the people who has endorsed "Darwin's Doubt", the new book by Stephen C. Meyer about the Cambrian era fossils and intelligent design.

Excerpt:

> Harvard geneticist George Church has said some fascinating things on the theme of intelligent design. He's particularly interested, if I'm summarizing correctly, in the idea of biology as engineering. So is Discovery Institute's Stephen Meyer. Which is why, having read some of his published remarks, we sent Dr. Church an advance copy of *Darwin's Doubt* asking that he look in particular at the middle section of the book, "How to Build an Animal," which deals precisely with the massive engineering problems facing Darwinian evolutionary theory.
>
> We were grateful to get back this gracious comment, which appears on the dust jacket.
>
> **Stephen Meyer's new book *Darwin's Doubt* represents an opportunity for bridge-building, rather than dismissive polarization — bridges across cultural divides in great need of professional, respectful dialog — and bridges to span evolutionary gaps.**
>
> While very gratifying to have his warm wishes, it's not shocking that Dr. Church would share them with us. Back in 2008 he participated in a recorded seminar, "Life: What a Concept!," with Freeman Dyson, Robert Shapiro, J. Craig Venter, and others. He said:
>
> As a scientific discipline, many people have casually dismissed Intelligent Design without carefully defining what they mean by intelligence or what they mean by design. Science and math have long histories of proving things, and not just accepting intuition — Fermat's last theorem was not proven until it was proven. And I think we're in a similar space with intelligent design.
>
> Again:
>
> The ribosome, both looking at the past and at the future, is a very significant structure — it's the most complicated thing that is present in all organisms.Craig does comparative genomics, and you find that almost the only thing that's in common across all organisms is the ribosome. And it's recognizable; it's highly conserved. So the question is, how did that thing come to be? And if I were to be an intelligent design defender, that's what I would focus on; how did the ribosome come to be?
>
> Is he an advocate of intelligent design like Stephen Meyer? No. Is he a very interesting, independent thinker, who has made some suggestive comments

> relevant to ID, about which one would like to have the opportunity to question him much further? Yes.

Dr. Church is not an advocate of intelligent design. But what's striking is that unlike most people who don't support ID, he thinks that they should be allowed to ask questions and should be allowed to make their case. And what's more, if they make a good case, like Dr. Meyer does, then he thinks that people on the other side should consider that case respectfully. I wish more biologists would consider other views like that. Dr. Church is in the minority.

Calgary boy disciplined by school for protecting classmate from knife attack

June 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports.

Excerpt:

> A schoolboy who bravely tackled a knife-wielding pupil who was threatening a classmate was punished because such heroic actions are strictly banned.
>
> Briar MacLean, 13, stepped in after he spotted an argument was quickly beginning to escalate between two boys at Sir John A. Macdonald school in Alberta, Canada.
>
> Suddenly one of the boys pulled out a knife and began to threaten the other turning an scuffle into a potentially deadly situation.
>
> The heroic teenager charged and tackled the knife-brandishing youngster into a wall sending both attacker and knife falling to the floor.
>
> But for his bravery the pupil received not a commendation but a stern telling off from staff for ignoring school rules.
>
> According to the Calgary Board of Education, Briar should have left the scene to find a teacher – abandoning the unarmed student.
>
> Instead instincts kicked in and he chose to act – meaning there were no cuts, no stab wounds, and no need to call an ambulance.
>
> Briar said: 'He pulled out his flip knife so I came in and pushed him into the wall.
>
> 'It was just to help the other kid so he wouldn't get hurt.'
>
> Briar's reward for his bravery was a day in the school office, removed from the other students, and a stern lecture about not playing the hero.

Here in the United States, we had a similar event.

Excerpt:

> A kindergartner who brought a cowboy-style cap gun onto his Calvert County school bus was suspended for 10 days after showing a friend the orange-tipped toy, which he had tucked inside his backpack on his way to school, according to his family and a lawyer.
>
> The child was questioned for more than two hours before his mother was called, she said, adding that he uncharacteristically wet his pants during the episode. The boy is 5 — "all bugs and frogs and cowboys," his mother said.
>
> […]If the punishment stands, it would become part of the boy's permanent school record and keep him out of classes the rest of the school year, the family said. He would miss his end-of-year kindergarten program at Dowell Elementary

> School in Lusby.
>
> […]The case comes at a time of heightened sensitivity about guns in schools across the country. Locally, children in first and second grade have been disciplined for pointing their fingers like guns and for chewing a Pop-Tart-like pastry into the shape of a gun. In Pennsylvania, a 5-year-old was suspended for talking about shooting a Hello Kitty bubble gun that blows soap bubbles.

I definitely don’t recommend sending children to public schools – especially.

Natural marriage defenders defeat redefinition of marriage in Illinois

June 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The National Organization for Marriage has the story.

Excerpt:

> The National Organization for Marriage (NOM) today celebrated the failure of legislation to come to a vote late this evening in Illinois seeking to redefine marriage, thus preserving marriage in the state as the union of one man and one woman. The bill's House sponsor, Rep. Greg Harris, announced this evening that he did not have the votes to pass the measure and would not bring the legislation to a vote. Assuming this is the case, the bill is thus dead until the fall when the Legislature reconvenes for a veto session.
>
> "This effort to redefine marriage in Illinois was one of the most fiercely contested legislative battles in the country this year," said Brian Brown, NOM's president. "This is a great victory for our allies and supporters, as well as Illinois families who have worked tirelessly with us to preserve marriage in Illinois. We are gratified that our collective hard work has paid off in this stunning victory."
>
> Illinois is a heavily Democratic state and has been widely considered by the gay marriage lobby as virtually certain to redefine marriage. Backers of the legislation have frequently claimed, falsely, that they had the votes in hand to pass the legislation (SB 10). President Obama had urged his former colleagues to vote to redefine marriage, and it was a top priority of both Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Governor Pat Quinn. It even was supported by a former Republican Chairman who was forced to resign from his post for advocating a position contrary to Republican principles.
>
> "So much for the inevitability of gay marriage," said Brian Brown. "With a coalition that included strong support from the African American community as well as so many others throughout the state, we did what nobody in the intelligentsia thought was possible. This is a huge victory at a pivotal time, and totally undercuts the lie that somehow same-sex marriage is inevitable."
>
> NOM spent well over $125,000 on grassroots activities to defeat the bill, but praised others in the coalition for securing the victory.

Good news for those of us who support the idea that natural marriage is the best arrangement for protecting the needs of children and the interests of society as a whole. Illinois is one of the bluest states in the country, but it's nice to see that NOM was able to pull together enough people to get this legislation defeated.

Dan Barker debates Casey Luskin on academic freedom on the Michael Medved show

June 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Michael Medved show is a national radio show broadcast out of Seattle, Washington. According to Talkers magazine, he has the fifth largest radio audience. He has a regular weekly segment on science and culture featuring scholars from the Discovery Institute.

Here is the sixth segment from this past week, courtesy of the Intelligent Design: The Future podcast.

The MP3 file is available for download. (38 minutes)

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, the CSC's Casey Luskin and atheist Dan Barker of the Freedom From Religion Foundation debate academic freedom and free speech on the Medved Show. This debate was inspired by the ongoing case of Professor Eric Hedin, a physicist at Ball State University who is being threatened by the Freedom From Religion Foundation for favorably portraying intelligent design in the classroom.
>
> ***Please lend your voice to defend Professor Eric Hedin and academic freedom. Sign the petition at www.academicfreedompetition.com.***
>
> *Each week, leading fellows from Discovery Institute will join Michael Medved to talk about the intersection of science and culture. Listen in live online or on your local Medved station, or stay tuned at ID the Future for the weekly podcast.*

Topics: (note that I am paraphrasing Dan Barker for the sake of humor, and he will probably sue me, since that is his entire contribution to the search for truth in this debate)

- Michael Medved: untenured Ball State University professor Eric Hedin is under fire for teaching both sides of intelligent design in a college course
- Dan Barker: this complaint against professor Hedin came to our attention from Jerry Coyne not from students of Professor Hedin
- Dan Barker: professors are not allowed to question the presuppositions atheism, materialism, naturalism in the physics classroom
- Dan Barker: this is a science course and you cannot question the religion of naturalism in class or else it's teaching religion
- Dan Barker: we need to use the power of the courts to stifle any dissent from of my religion (naturalism)
- Dan Barker: the classroom of a university is not the proper place for students to inquire about both sides of scientific disputes
- Dan Barker: even if students are paying their money and choosing this course of

their own free will, they can't be allowed to hear both sides
- Casey Luskin: this course is not a science course, it is open to non-science students
- Casey Luskin: the course evaluations from students of all majors is overwhelmingly positive
- Casey Luskin: the course features people on both sides
- Casey Luskin: the course features brilliant scholars like Lennox and Penrose, both from Oxford University
- Casey Luskin: the course features opponents of intelligent design like Francis Collins and Karl Gilberson
- Casey Luskin: the course features non-Christians like Lee Spetner, Paul Davies, Roger Penrose and Gerald Schroeder
- Dan Barker: (taking over the host) you cannot study scientists like Francis Collins who mapped the human genome, that is "creationism"
- Michael Medved: academic freedom allows professors to put a slant on what they are teaching
- Dan Barker: if the professor's slant is against my religion of naturalism, then I have to put them in jail and inquisition them
- Dan Barker: you cannot teach science like the Big Bang and fine-tuning as if it is science because it contradicts naturalism
- Casey Luskin: Even radical atheist PZ Myers says that professors have the right to academic freedom
- Dan Barker: I'll burn that creationist at the stake, too! And smash his filthy microscopes and telescopes!
- Michael Medved: Casey, would you use state power to fire a professor who disagreed with you because you were offended?
- Casey Luskin: no, I had to take tons of courses from professors who had a slant against my views and I learned a lot from different views
- Dan Barker: you will address me as the Holy Father, please! Every professor who disagrees with my religion must burn!
- Casey Luskin: Barker has no idea what is going on in the class, he never attended it
- Casey Luskin: The atheists students who took his class gave him high ratings and said he graded fairly
- Dan Barker: I don't have to look through the telescope to know the Earth is flat – Hedin is a traitor! Off with his head!
- Dan Barker: Creationist PZ Myers is wrong, and I'll burn him at the stake for creationist heresy against my Holy Church!
- Dan Barker: Oxford professors like John Lennox are creationists because his Big Bang religion is grounded on experimental data like the cosmic background radiation, the hydrogen/helium abundances and the redshifting of light from distant galaxies
- Dan Barker: I have a degree in Religion and I write hymns, which makes me smarter than John Lennox since he is a "creationist"
- Dan Barker: I haven't published any scientific research myself, but I have written

some atheist praise hymns, so I am qualified to burn the heretics!
- Michael Medved: The course is taught by someone with a PhD in Physics, and the syllabus says that it investigates science and religion
- Michael Medved: Why is it wrong to investigate the science that questions philosophical assumptions like naturalism and materialism?
- Casey Luskin: The syllabus features amazing readings from all the latest science relevant to that question from both sides
- Michael Medved: What will Ball State U do to the professor?
- Casey Luskin: So far no action from Ball State U, but people need to sign the petition to protect the professor
- Michael Medved: Isn't academic freedom being applied inconsistently here?
- Casey Luskin: Yes and science is supposed to move forward by disagreement and debate
- Casey Luskin: How confident can intelligent design censors really be if their contribution to the debate is coercion and intimidation?
- Michael Luskin: Is Dan Barker right to say that Oxford professor John Lennox is a "creationist"?
- Casey Luskin: Creationism starts with the Bible, but intelligent design starts with scientific data

And there is a period of questions from the callers. This episode features a debate, so it is not to be missed.

You can see more about Dan Barker's educational background:

> Dan became a teenage evangelist at age 15. At 16 he was choir librarian for faith-healer Kathryn Kuhlman's Los Angeles appearances. He received a degree in Religion from Azusa Pacific University and was ordained to the ministry by the Standard Community Church, California, in 1975.
>
> […]Dan preached for 19 years. He maintained an ongoing touring musical ministry, including eight years of full-time, cross-country evangelism. An accomplished pianist, record producer, arranger and songwriter, he worked with Christian music companies such as Manna Music and Word Music. For a few years, Dan wrote and produced the annual "Mini Musicale" for Gospel Light Publications' Vacation Bible School curriculum.

I'm not sure if Dan Barker has the right background for disputing whether intelligent design belongs in a classroom or not. Remember, the bulk of his life was spent writing and singing feel-g0od, happy-clappy songs. In his debates with Christians, it's quite clear that he is totally unequipped to assess scientific evidence from the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, or habitability. It's just not his thing, and I don't think that musicians have what it takes to understand those arguments enough to feel comfortable using the courts to suppress people with actual PhDs in science.

You can read more about my opinion about how Dan Barker arrived at his atheism

through a mistaken view of the Christian life.

I subscribe to the ID the Future podcast, and I really recommend that you do as well!

Previous entries

- Episode one: Stephen C. Meyer on Thomas Nagel and intelligent design
- Episode two: Stephen C. Meyer on Richard Dawkins and the Cambrian explosion
- Episode three: John G. West discusses Darwinism and the value of human life
- Episode four: Stephen C. Meyer and John Lennox discuss human exceptionalism
- Episode five: Jay Richards and Stephen C. Meyer discuss scientific consensus

Cincinnati IRS employee: Washington told us to target the Tea Party

June 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breitbart has the transcript of the testimony.

Excerpt:

> House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA) revealed new testimony from IRS employees on CNN's *State of The Union* on Sunday. According to transcribed excerpts released by the Committee, a Cincinnati IRS employee made it clear they were told by Washington, D.C. personnel to give extra scrutiny to Tea Party groups:
>
> *Q: In early 2010, was there a time when you became aware of applications that referenced Tea Party or other conservative groups?*
>
> *A: In March of 2010, I was made aware.*
>
> ******
>
> *Q: Okay. Now, was there a point around this time period when [your supervisor] asked you to do a search for similar applications?*
>
> *A: Yes.*
>
> *Q: To the best of your recollection, when was this request made?*
>
> *A: Sometime in early March of 2010.*

And more:

> *Q: Did anyone else ever make a request that you send any cases to Washington?*
>
> *A: [Different IRS employee] wanted to have two cases that she couldn't — Washington, D.C. wanted them, but she couldn't find the paper. So she requested me, through an email, to find these cases for her and to send them to Washington, D.C.*
>
> *Q: When was this, what time frame?*
>
> *A: I don't recall the time frame, maybe May of 2010.*
>
> ******
>
> *Q: But just to be clear, she told you the specific names of these applicants.*
>
> *A: Yes.*
>
> *Q: And she told you that Washington, D.C. had requested these two specific applications be sent to D.C.*
>
> *A: Yes, or parts of them.*
>
> ******
>
> *Q: Okay. So she asked you to send particular parts of these applications.*

> *A: Mm-hmm.*
>
> *Q: And that was unusual. Did you say that?*
>
> *A: Yes.*
>
> *Q: And she indicated that Washington had requested these specific parts of these specific applications; is that right?*
>
> *A: Correct.*
>
> ******
>
> *Q: So what do you think about this, that allegation has been made, I think as you have seen in lots of press reports, that there were two rogue agents in Cincinnati that are sort of responsible for all of the issues that we have been talking about today. What do you think about those allegations?*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *A: It's impossible. As an agent we are controlled by many, many people. We have to submit many, many reports. So the chance of two agents being rogue and doing things like that could never happen.*
>
> ******
>
> *Q: And you've heard, I'm sure, news reports about individuals here in Washington saying this is a problem that was originated in and contained in the Cincinnati office, and that it was the Cincinnati office that was at fault. What is your reaction to those types of stories?*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *A: Well, it's hard to answer the question because in my mind I still hear people saying we were low-level employees, so we were lower than dirt, according to people in D.C. So, take it for what it is. They were basically throwing us underneath the bus.*
>
> ******
>
> *Q: So is it your perspective that ultimately the responsible parties for the decisions that were reported by the IG are not in the Cincinnati office?*
>
> *A: I don't know how to answer that question. I mean, from an agent standpoint, we didn't do anything wrong. We followed directions based on other people telling us what to do.*
>
> *Q: And you ultimately followed directions from Washington; is that correct?*
>
> *A: If direction had come down from Washington, yes.*
>
> *Q: But with respect to the particular scrutiny that was given to Tea Party applications, those directions emanated from Washington; is that right?*
>
> *A: I believe so.*

And more from a more senior IRS employee:

Q: But you specifically recall that the BOLO terms included "Tea Party?"

A: Yes, I do.

Q: And it was your understanding — was it your understanding that the purpose of the BOLO was to identify Tea Party groups?

A: That is correct.

Q: Was it your understanding that the purpose of the BOLO was to identify conservative groups?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: Was it your understanding that the purpose of the BOLO was to identify Republican groups?

A: Yes, it was.

******

Q: Earlier I believe you informed us that the primary reason for applying for another job in July [2010] was because of the micromanagement from [Washington, DC, IRS Attorney], is that correct?

A: Right. It was the whole Tea Party. It was the whole picture. I mean, it was the micromanagement. The fact that the subject area was extremely sensitive and it was something that I didn't want to be associated with.

Q: Why didn't you want to be associated with it?

A: For what happened now. I mean, rogue agent? Even though I was taking all my direction from EO Technical [Washington, D.C], I didn't want my name in the paper for being this rogue agent for a project I had no control over.

Q: Did you think there was something inappropriate about what was happening in 2010?

A: Yes. The inappropriateness was not processing these applications fairly and timely.

******

Q: You have stated you had concerns with the fairness and the timeliness of the application process. Did you have concerns with just the fact that these cases were grouped together and you were the only one handling them?

A: I was the only one handling the Tea Party's, that is correct.

Q: Did that specifically cause you concern?

A: Yes, it did. And I was the only person handling them.

Q: Were you concerned that you didn't have the capacity to process all of the applications in a timely manner?

A: That is correct. And it is just — I mean, like you brought up, the micromanagement, the fact that the topic was just weirdly handled was a huge concern to me.

> ******

The chain goes from the local IRS offices to the Washington office to the White House, where the IRS director was practically living in the oval office with the community organizer.

Implications of Georgia Tech's new $7,000-per-year Masters degree in computer science

June 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal reports on something that is of interest to all Christians.

Excerpt:

> Anyone who cares about America's shortage of computer-science experts should cheer the recent news out of Georgia Tech. The Atlanta university is making major waves in business and higher education with its May 14 announcement that the college will offer the first online master's degree in computer science—and that the degree can be had for a quarter of the cost of a typical on-campus degree. Many other universities are experimenting with open online courses, or MOOCs, but Georgia Tech's move raises the bar significantly by offering full credit in a graduate program.
>
> It comes just in time. A shortfall of computer-science graduates is a constant refrain in Silicon Valley, and by 2020 some one million high-tech job openings will remain unfilled, according to the Commerce Department.
>
> That's why Georgia Tech's online degree, powered by Udacity, is such a game-changer. For the same $7,000 a year that New York City spends per student on school buses, you can now get a master's from one of the most well-respected programs in the country. Moore's Law says these fees should drop to $1,000 by 2020—a boon for students and for the economy.

Wouldn't it be great if we could fire the majority of college professors and just keep the ones who are actually good at teaching students? Online education puts the focus back on teaching students – not on doing research, which may not be very useful for finding a job in any case. I had to do a lot of research for my Masters degree in computer science, and I applied little of what I researched to real life. The course work was far more useful to me in my career, and that's why I went to university.

More:

> MOOCs will inevitably come to K-12 education too. Everyone knows great public school teachers. But we also all know the tenured type who has been mailing it in for years. Parents spend sleepless nights trying to rearrange schedules to get out of Mr. Bleh's fourth-period math class. Online education is about taking the "best in class" teachers and scaling them to thousands or millions of students rather than 25-30 at a time.
>
> The union-dominated teaching corps can be expected to be just as hostile as college professors to moving K-12 to MOOCs. But a certain financial incentive will exist nonetheless. I noted this in a talk recently at an education conference where the audience was filled with people who create education software and

> services.
>
> I began by pointing out that in 2011 only 7.9% of 11th graders in Chicago public schools tested “college ready.” That’s failure, and it’s worse when you realize how much money is wasted on these abysmal results. Chicago’s 23,290 teachers—who make an average salary of $74,839, triple U.S. per capita income and 50% more than median U.S. household income—cost Chicago taxpayers $1.75 billion out of the city’s $5.11 billion budget.
>
> Why not forget the teachers and issue all 404,151 students an iPad or Android tablet? At a cost of $161 million, that’s less than 10% of the expense of paying teachers’ salaries. Add online software, tutors and a $2,000 graduation bonus, and you still don’t come close to the cost of teachers. You can’t possibly do worse than a 7.9% college readiness level.
>
> When I made this proposal, only slightly facetiously, in a roomful of self-described education entrepreneurs, it was if I’d said that Dewey had plagiarized his decimal system. I was upbraided for not understanding the plight of teachers. The plight of students, as is too often the case in discussions of education, didn’t seem to rate the same concern.

Online education is one of the forces that gives me hope for the future. The faster we take money away from leftists in the academy, the better things will be. Right now, a whole lot of people are buying useless degrees for far too much money. It’s even worse when you consider university administrators and other educational bureaucrats, who have inflated salaries and contribute nothing to a student’s real capabilities. The humanities are dominated by secular leftists, and should be totally overthrown by online competitors who will be more responsive to customers than left-wing tenured radicals.

Study shows that female-breadwinner marriages are less happy and less stable

June 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stuart Schneiderman writes about a new study about marriages where the woman earns more money than the man.

Excerpt:

> The study performed by his colleagues shows that when women earn more than their husbands it is bad for their marriages.
>
> Theoretically, Thaler says, married couples should be happy to see more money flowing into the family coffers. They should not care who is bringing home the bacon or the filet mignon. In the real world, couples do care:
>
> *Instead, there is a sharp drop in the number of male-female couples at exactly the point where the woman starts to earn more than half of household income.*
> You can blame this on social norms and outmoded gender identity expectations. What if social norms reflect a behavioral constant that cannot be eradicated with just a little nudge.
>
> […][T]he data suggest that when women earn more than men the rate of marriage declines:
>
> *This may be one of many reasons that the share of young adults in marriages decreased 30 to 50 percent across various racial and ethnic groups from 1970 to 2008. Clearly, a choice to marry later in life explains part of this decline, but Ms. Bertrand and her co-authors estimate that the trend in the percentage of women making more than men explains almost one-fourth of the marriage rate's decline in the 40 years ended in 2010.*
> Of course, couples find ways to adapt to a woman's greater earning potential. Thaler explains:
>
> *What happens when a man marries a woman who has the education and skills to earn more than him? The couple can avoid violating the "man earns more" social norm if the woman works part time or leaves the labor force altogether. The authors found evidence of both choices. But what if the woman stays in the labor force and does earn more than her spouse? How does this affect the marriage? The findings here are striking. In such couples, surveys show, both wife and husband generally report being less happy about the marriage.*
> Female breadwinner marriages are also more likely to lead to divorce:
>
> *Given these findings, it isn't surprising that when a wife earns more than her husband, the risk of divorce rises, too. To study this, the authors used a survey conducted in two waves, 1987-88 and 1992-93. (There were no more recent data available for this particular test.) Then they investigated the likelihood of a*

> *divorce in the five-year interval. For this sample, some 12 percent of all couples were divorced during this period — a sobering fact about the stability of marriages in general. But the divorce rate rose by half, to about 18 percent, for couples in which the wife earned more than the husband.*
> Similarly, a British study showed that in female breadwinner marriages, the male is more likely to have been prescribed Viagra while the female is more likely to have been prescribed anti-anxiety and anti-insomnia medication.

Housework is a factor, too

Here's an AFP story about a recent study from Spain.

Excerpt:

> The road to hell is paved with good intentions, as they say: the more housework married men do, the less sex they have, according to a new study published Wednesday.
>
> **Husbands who spend more time doing traditionally female chores — such as cooking, cleaning, and shopping — reported having less sex than those who do more masculine tasks, said the study in the American Sociological Review.**
>
> "Our findings suggest the importance of socialized gender roles for sexual frequency in heterosexual marriage," said lead author Sabino Kornrich, of the Center for Advanced Studies at the Juan March Institute in Madrid.
>
> "Couples in which men participate more in housework typically done by women report having sex less frequently. Similarly, couples in which men participate more in traditionally masculine tasks — such as yard work, paying bills, and auto maintenance — report higher sexual frequency."
>
> His study, "Egalitarianism, Housework, and Sexual Frequency in Marriage," looks at straight married couples in the United States, and was based on data from the National Survey of Families and Households.
>
> […]"The results suggest the existence of a gendered set of sexual scripts, in which the traditional performance and display of gender is important for creation of sexual desire and performance of sexual activity," Kornrich said.

Prior to that study, there was this Norwegian study about housework and divorce risk.

Excerpt:

> Couples who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a Norwegian study sure to get tongues wagging has shown.
>
> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas

> Hansen, co-author of the study entitled Equality in the Home, said.
>
> […]“Maybe it’s sometimes seen as a good thing to have very clear roles with lots of clarity … where one person is not stepping on the other’s toes,” Mr Hansen suggested.
>
> “There could be less quarrels, since you can easily get into squabbles if both have the same roles and one has the feeling that the other is not pulling his or her own weight,” he added.

These are things to think about. We have to let the way the world really is guide our decisions. Feminism might sound nice, but it’s not real world. In the real world, men are hard wired to want that provider/protector role. Do you want to have a happy marriage that lasts? Then learn about male roles from men, and not from a false ideology. Men need to be treated like men and they need to be encouraged to be male, and recognized for acting out male roles. Men are not woman, and forcing them take female roles is no good for anyone. Discriminating against men in school so that they underperform at male roles later on doesn’t work for anyone.

J. Warner Wallace: important differences between Christianity and Mormonism

June 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a podcast featuring J. Warner Wallace that I listened to twice on a recent road trip. This is an after action report from Wallace's recent missions trip to Utah to evangelize Mormons.

The MP3 file is here. (74 minutes)

Topics:

- Mormons disagree with Christians about the nature of God, Jesus and salvation
- The differences are so dramatic that the two religions are completely different views
- Mormons try to portray themselves as a denomination of Christianity
- The Utah missions trip: how Christians were trained to engage with Mormons
- Mormonism is a works-based religion – you earn your way to eternal life by doing works
- In Christianity, eternal life is a free gift from God to anyone who accepts Jesus as their leader and redeemer
- Mormons believe that doctrines can change from generation to generation (progressive revelation)
- Mormons commonly make the case for a works-based theology by appealing to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount
- Mormons believe that you have to be perfect in order to get "exalted" eternal life
- Christians are perfect because Jesus has paid the price of our rebellion against God
- Christians: Jesus' sacrifice pays for anything evil that we have done and could do
- Christians are made perfect because Jesus' perfection is applied to them
- Christians are not practically perfect, but they are perfect by accepting that the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross
- God credits righteousness to Christians because Jesus has already died to pay off the punishment for their sins
- The good works that Christians do are a voluntary response to this free gift of salvation
- The good works do not secure a Christian's salvation, they are the natural outworking of accepting the gift of salvation
- The Mormon view of the afterlife is different from the Christian view
- The best Mormon afterlife ("exaltation") requires continued righteousness to the end of one's natural life
- This is not compatible with Christian teaching about salvation being by grace and not by doing good works (Gal 3:10-14)
- Mormons can never know whether they are saved or not until the day they die
- Christians can be sure of their salvation from the moment they accept Jesus as their

leader and redeemer
- The Bible is clear that we can know whether we are saved or not (John 5:9-14)
- It is inconsistent for Mormons to claim to be Christians and then try to convert Christians to Mormonism
- The reason why Mormons go door to door is because they think Christians are wrong
- The Mormon view of Jesus is nothing like the Christian view of Christ (from the Bible)
- Mormonism is polytheistic, whereas Christianity is monotheistic
- Mormon "gods" are just beings who have a human nature who were "exalted" for doing good works
- When debating Mormons, they will try to argue that Mormonism is true because it results in good works
- The Biblical standard for a good prophet is to see whether his prophecies come true
- The Mormon view is that Joseph Smith is reliable because he did good works
- But good works are not a good way to test truth claims – a person could be "good" and still say false things
- A good question to ask Mormons: is the Book of Mormon ancient? It claims to be ancient, but is it?
- They may try to answer this question by appealing to fideism: praying for confirmation by burning bosom
- But this is not a question that can be assessed by subjective feelings (just pray about it)
- This is a question that needs to be assessed by historians using historical evidence
- There is no historical or archaeological support for the claims in the Book of Mormon
- In contrast, we have direct eyewitness testimony about the life of Jesus in the New Testament
- We have fragments of NT manuscripts dating back to first century so we know that the New Testament is ancient

Previously, I posted my refutation of Mormonism which used two evidential arguments. And J.W. Wartick has posted two philosophical arguments against Mormonism as well.

Ezra Klein on the costs of Obamacare: then and now

June 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from Forbes about Obamacare and how it was presented by Ezra Klein, a well-known journalist from the left-leaning Washington Post. (H/T Bernie M.)

Excerpt:

> The key thing to remember is that back when Obamacare was being debated in Congress, Democrats claimed that it was right-wing nonsense that premiums would go up under Obamacare. "What we know for sure," Obamacare architect Jonathan Gruber told Ezra Klein in 2009, "is that [the bill] will lower the cost of buying non-group health insurance." *For sure*.
>
> In 2009, was Ezra saying that it's ok that premiums will double for the average person, because a minority of people will pre-existing conditions will benefit? No.
>
> Earlier that year, AHIP, the private insurer trade group, commissioned a report from Price Waterhouse Coopers to analyze the impact of Obamacare on health insurance premiums in the individual market. That report, which I reviewed here and elsewhere, found that the version of Obamacare then being considered by the Senate Finance Committee would increase premiums by 14 to 32 percent, depending on the year you looked at. In retrospect, the PwC report was a bit optimistic.
>
> But Ezra described the PwC analysis as "the insurance industry's deceptive report," comparing it to sham research put out by the tobacco industry and Big Oil. Ezra did concede at the time that "buying better insurance will cost somewhat more," because insurers would no longer be able "to sell a deceptive and insufficient product."
>
> But high-deductible, catastrophic insurance isn't cheaper because it's dishonest. It's cheaper because it's more efficiently designed. And it's precisely that sort of efficiently-designed insurance that Obamacare abolishes.

I blogged about that study from Price Waterhouse Coopers before, too. In fact, I fully explained why specific provisions of Obamacare would *necessarily* raise health insurance premiums.

Before the 2012 election, I linked to an article from Investors Business Daily, which confirmed that premiums had indeed risen since the passage of Obamacare.

Excerpt:

> During his first run for president, Barack Obama made one very specific promise to voters: He would cut health insurance premiums for families by $2,500, and do so in his first term.
>
> But it turns out that family premiums have increased by more than $3,000 since

> Obama's vow, according to the latest annual Kaiser Family Foundation employee health benefits survey.
>
> Premiums for employer-provided family coverage rose $3,065 — 24% — from 2008 to 2012, the Kaiser survey found. Even if you start counting in 2009, premiums have climbed $2,370.
>
> What's more, premiums climbed faster in Obama's four years than they did in the previous four under President Bush, the survey data show.

Despite these *facts*, the American people went along with the mainstream media and re-elected Obama for a second term in 2012, blocking any repeal of Obamacare.

I think that the American people need to realize that most journalists cannot be counted on to handle research and evidence accurately. Most of them probably never even completed a high school math or science course. They studied journalism. Journalism is not computer science. Journalism is not petroleum engineering. Journalism is not nursing. Journalism is an area where students are graded based on their ability to parrot what their leftist professors tell them to believe. At best, left-wing journalists are not competent. At worst, they are outright liars. Study after study on media bias has confirmed that left-wing journalists cannot be trusted to report the news fairly. That is not my opinion, that's a fact.

Unfortunately for us, our failure to fix our little Obama mistake in the 2012 election is going to cost us all dearly – especially young people.

Related posts

- New report on Obamacare claims that premiums will go up 100% to 400%
- Americans finding out the true costs of Obamacare
- New study: Obamacare will raise cost of medical claims by 32%
- Five Guys franchise owner says Obamacare will force him to raise prices
- How the new Obamacare mandates are reducing full-time employment
- How does Obamacare cause medical premiums to rise?
- Obamacare's new tax on medical devices trickles down to hospitals and patients
- Medical premiums will continue to rise as Obamacare is implemented
- Christian business Hobby Lobby defies Obamacare abortion mandate
- When health insurance is forced to cover more, insurance premiums go up
- Obamacare in action: Denny's to charge 5% surcharge and cut employee hours
- Papa John pizza CEO: cuts to employee hours likely, because of Obamacare
- A primer on the fiscal cliff facing us in January 2013: tax hikes and Obamacare
- Companies announce layoffs in the wake of Obama's re-election
- Sally Pipes: how Obamacare causes doctors to quit practicing medicine
- Why do some people oppose Obamacare? What does Obamacare do?
- The full list of Obamacare tax hikes in order from largest to smallest
- California: Obamacare exchanges will raise health insurance premiums up to 25%
- Health insurance premiums up $3,000 since Obama was elected

- Report: Obamacare regulations will cost taxpayers and businesses $1.8 trillion
- CBO: Unemployment rises to 9.1% in 2013, health care spending doubles by 2022
- Obamacare subsidizes the risky behaviors of sexually active women
- Obamacare begins forcing states to cap and cut prescription drug benefits
- CBO: 20 million Americans could lose employer-provided health coverage under Obamacare

Can you trust big government to take care of your health?

June 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at another story about socialized medicine from the UK, from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> The picture Sarah Fleming took of her husband Stewart is one that will haunt her for ever.
>
> Taken on her mobile phone, it shows him sitting in a hospital cubicle, a hand clutching his stomach, his face a vivid reflection of the agony he was in, as he waited to be seen by doctors.
>
> Tragically, that picture is a heartrending reminder of the circumstances leading up to the railway signalman's death. It is also a vivid illustration of the turmoil unfolding in overstretched hospital emergency departments.
>
> For the father-of-two, 37, from Rainham, in Kent, had to endure a six–hour wait to see a doctor in A&E at Gillingham's Medway Maritime Hospital. He had a letter from his GP asking him to be admitted immediately.
>
> He had been to see his GP that day because the antibiotics he had been taking for flu-like systems had failed to work. He was referred straight to hospital. But when he arrived, on December 15, 2008, the hospital was facing an unusually busy period. Staff sickness, a cold weather snap and an increase in GP referrals meant the hospital was under pressure.
>
> He was admitted at 5.30pm, but was not seen until 11.15pm. By then, the mystery virus Stewart had contracted was attacking his heart, kidneys and liver. Despite being transferred to London's Harefield Hospital, where he was placed into a drug-induced coma, he died on December 27.

And another from the same article:

> She was a frail woman who deserved to be treated with dignity and kindness. Instead, Ethel Martin, 91, died after developing deep vein thrombosis having spent 16 hours on a trolley at Manchester Royal Infirmary.
>
> The great-grandmother was admitted to hospital on April 17, 2006, complaining of feeling breathless. Her family were with her when she was put in a curtained-off bay in the overstretched A&E department — the hospital saw 365 patients in A&E that day — at about 5pm.
>
> They returned home in the early hours, assuming she would be cared for, but were shocked when they came back the next day at 9am and found her in the same position. She hadn't slept because the trolley was so uncomfortable.

> After Mrs Martin, of Chorlton, Greater Manchester, was found a bed, her condition deteriorated and she was diagnosed with DVT. She was treated with blood-thinning drugs but died on May 1, following a cardiac arrest.
>
> At an inquest into her death, pathologist Dr Richard Fitzmaurice said lying on her trolley could have contributed to her death. ‘Immobility is a recognised factor in the build-up of deep vein thrombosis.’
>
> A coroner recorded a verdict of misadventure, on the grounds Mrs Martin’s death was the unintended consequence of medical treatment.

Mr. Stewart probably paid into the NHS his entire life before he needed care, and was denied it. That’s wow socialized medicine works. You pay into it. The government takes your money and buys votes from young people, by providing contraception, breast implants, HIV drugs, abortions, IVF and sex changes. When you get old, and need care, then you get in line behind people who have never paid a dime into the system. By that time, you’ll have no money of your own to get treatment from a private hospital. In Canada, you would have to leave the country and pay out of pocket for immediate care. That’s what the left thinks is such a great idea.

Was Hitler a Christian? Is Nazism similar to Christianity?

June 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the strangest things I have heard from atheists is the assertion that Christianity is somehow connected to the fascism, such as the fascism that existed under Adolf Hitler. Two posts by Jewish author Jonah Goldberg from National Review supply us with the facts to set the record straight.

Let's start with the first post.

Here are some of the points:

1) Hitler wanted Christianity removed from the public square

> Like the engineers of that proverbial railway bridge, the Nazis worked relentlessly to replace the nuts and bolts of traditional Christianity with a new political religion. The shrewdest way to accomplish this was to co-opt Christianity via the Gleichschaltung while at the same time shrinking traditional religion's role in civil society.

2) Hitler banned the giving of donations to churches

> Hitler banned religious charity, crippling the churches' role as a counterweight to the state. Clergy were put on government salary, hence subjected to state authority. "The parsons will be made to dig their own graves," Hitler cackled. "They will betray their God to us. They will betray anything for the sake of their miserable little jobs and incomes."

3) Hitler replaced Christian celebrations with celebrations of the state

> Following the Jacobin example, the Nazis replaced the traditional Christian calendar. The new year began on January 30 with the Day of the Seizure of Power. Each November the streets of central Munich were dedicated to a Nazi Passion play depicting Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch. The martyrdom of Horst Wessel and his "old fighters" replaced Jesus and the apostles. Plays and official histories were rewritten to glorify pagan Aryans bravely fighting against Christianizing foreign armies. Anticipating some feminist pseudo history, witches became martyrs to the bloodthirsty oppression of Christianity.

4) Hitler favored the complete elimination of Christianity

> When some Protestant bishops visited the Fuhrer to register complaints, Hitler's rage got the better of him. "Christianity will disappear from Germany just as it has done in Russia . . . The Germanrace has existed without Christianity for thousands of years . . . and will continue after Christianity has disappeared . . . We must get used to the teachings of blood and race."

5) Hitler favored the removal of mandatory prayers in schools

> In 1935 mandatory prayer in school was abolished…

6) Hitler favored the banning of Christmas carols and nativity plays

> …and in 1938 carols and Nativity plays were banned entirely.

7) Hitler abolished religious instruction for children

> By 1941 religious instruction for children fourteen years and up had been abolished altogether….

And now the second post.

8) Hitler opposed the ideas of universal truth and objective moral absolutes

> …Just as the Nazi attack on Christianity was part of a larger war on the idea of universal truth, whole postmodern cosmologies have been created to prove that traditional religious morality is a scam, that there are no fixed truths or "natural" categories, and that all knowledge is socially constructed.

Practically everything this man believed was 100% anti-Christian. But he fits in fine on the secular left.

Conclusion

Adolf Hitler was a man influenced by two big ideas: evolution and socialism. His party was the national SOCIALIST party. He favored a strong role for the state in interfering with the free market. He was in favor of regulating the family so that the state could have a bigger influence on children. And he favored the idea of survival of the fittest. His ideas are 100% incompatible with Christianity and with capitalism as well. Christians value individual rights and freedoms, small government and the autonomy of the family against the state. The differences are clear and significant.

MUST-SEE: Founder of Tea Party group testifies in Congress about IRS fascism

June 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports on the testimony of Becky Gerritson.

Excerpt:

> Becky Gerritson, President of Wetumpka Tea Party in Alabama, gave emotional and powerful testimony this morning during a hearing on how the IRS allegedly targeted her organization.
>
> Gerritson spoke of demands asked of her 'tiny group' by the agency, including detailed contents of every speech ever given by someone involved in the Tea Party branch, copies of any communication sent to any member of a legislative body, including her own representatives, and the list goes on.
>
> Gerritson fought back tears as she pointed her finger at the members of Congress sitting before her, saying of her group, "[we] had no party affiliation … It didn't matter … the only notion expressed was that our representative government had failed us."
>
> "In Wetumpka, we are patriotic Americans; we peacefully assemble; we petition our government; we exercise our right to free speech. We don't understand why the government tried to stop us. I'm not here as a serf or a vassal. I'm not begging my lord for mercy. I'm a born-free American woman, wife, mother, and citizen, and I'm telling my government that you've forgotten your place."
>
> She called the IRS' demands a "willful act of intimidation to discourage a point of view" and "un-American."
>
> Gerritson again became choked up as she concluded her statement, saying, "I'm not interested in scoring political points. I want to preserve and protect the America that I grew up in. The America that people crossed oceans and risked their lives to become a part of, and I'm terrified it's slipping away. Thank you very much."

And more: here's law professor John Eastman at the IRS hearings telling the truth:

It's very sad for me to see that so many American people could vote for a regime that is essentially Stalinist in nature. We fought wars against tyrannical regimes, and now we've changed – now we vote them into power. We are too busy entertaining ourselves instead of informing ourselves enough to make the right decisions about our future.

Christian valedictorian tears up censor-approved speech and recites the Lord's Prayer

June 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From WXII 12 local news, a story from South Carolina.

Full text:

> A school district under pressure to keep prayer out of meetings and gatherings got an unexpected delivery from one high school valedictorian
>
> Saturday, at Clemson's Littlejohn Coliseum, Liberty High Valedictorian Roy Costner IV took his speech to the podium, and in front of the crowd, tore it up.
>
> John Eby, Pickens County School District spokesman, said, "They write their speeches. They send them to someone on staff to have them approved."
>
> But Costner clearly had something else in mind.
>
> After speaking for a few minutes, he thanked his parents for leading him to the Lord at a young age, and then he said, "I think most of you will understand when I say, 'Our Father, who art in heaven…" as he began to recite the Lord's Prayer.
>
> Much of the crowd broke into tentative applause that then grew into cheers that nearly drown out Costner's voice as he continued the prayer.
>
> Brian Hoover, who is from Liberty and attended the graduation, said, "You couldn't even hear him doing the prayer anymore because everybody was clapping and cheering."
>
> Costner finished, pointing his finger in the air for emphasis, saying, "For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen," followed by more cheers and applause.
>
> Hoover said, "From the ACLU sending FOIA requests to every district in the state this year after the Chesterfield County case, then the Freedom From Religion Foundation sent us a complaint about religion at board meetings and some other issues as well. That is why the reaction to the prayer at graduation was loud."
>
> The district says there will be no repercussions because of the prayer.
>
> Costner was out of town on Monday, but he said he added the prayer to the speech because God is the biggest part of his life.
>
> **According to a school publication, "Costner plans to head to Clemson University in the fall to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science. He said he hopes to work as a computer programmer overseas, but has dreams of saving up enough to come back and start a chain of restaurants in the U.S. He said computer programming was an interest he picked up outside of school as he developed a local news website, "Liberty Speaks."**

> In the publication Costner is quoted as saying: “I have big ideas for mobile applications, and even for starting a new social network, but I don’t have the knowledge to pull it off yet.”

It warms my heart to see a good, brave Christian man take up computer science, where he should be able to find work in spite of the politically correct censors he might find on campus.

Here’s the verse that should scare anyone about what exactly it is that Jesus expects from his followers:

Matthew 10:32-39:

32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,

33 butwhoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

34 “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

36 And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household.

37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

That’s why he did what he did. He had to do it to honor God instead of pleasing godless men.

In other news, the ACLU, which opposes free speech that secular leftists find offensive, is also in favor of sex-selection abortions and race-selection abortions. I wonder which is more offensive? Free speech or killing a baby because it is the wrong sex or the wrong race? That’s what the ACLU stands for: sexism and racism and fascism.

IRS: cheapest Obamacare plan will be $20,000 per year per family [CORRECTED]

June 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: The $20,000 figure is wrong. Here is the correction from Investors Business Daily: (H/T Sonya M. via Scott S.)

> ***The most current information from the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation put the cost of a family policy purchased through an employer in 2016 at $20,000 vs. $15,745 last year.***
>
> ***In 2016, average premiums for a family of four buying a silver-level plan through ObamaCare's exchange are expected to be $15,400 — before subsidies. The lowest-cost bronze plan, which is far less comprehensive than typical employer policies, would cost about 85% of a silver plan, or $13,000.***

CNS News with some sobering news about health care.

Excerpt:

> In a final regulation issued Wednesday, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) assumed that under Obamacare the cheapest health insurance plan available in 2016 for a family will cost $20,000 for the year.
>
> Under Obamacare, Americans will be required to buy health insurance or pay a penalty to the IRS.
>
> The IRS's assumption that the cheapest plan for a family will cost $20,000 per year is found in examples the IRS gives to help people understand how to calculate the penalty they will need to pay the government if they do not buy a mandated health plan.
>
> The examples point to families of four and families of five, both of which the IRS expects in its assumptions to pay a minimum of $20,000 per year for a bronze plan.
>
> "The annual national average bronze plan premium for a family of 5 (2 adults, 3 children) is $20,000," the regulation says.
>
> Bronze will be the lowest tier health-insurance plan available under Obamacare–after Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Under the law, the penalty for not buying health insurance is supposed to be capped at either the annual average Bronze premium, 2.5 percent of taxable income, or $2,085.00 per family in 2016.
>
> In the new final rules published Wednesday, IRS set in law the rules for implementing the penalty Americans must pay if they fail to obey Obamacare's mandate to buy insurance.

You might be thinking that you will be OK because you have health care through your employer, but there are lots of problems with that. First, your premiums are going up already because your insurer has to cover more people. Second, Obamacare is designed to drive out and eliminate private health insurers. Third, you may not have your job much longer because of the taxes, spending and regulations that harm your employer's ability to stay afloat.

Does science cause people to disbelieve in God? A look at the research of Dr. Elaine Ecklund

June 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Elaine Ecklund explains her research about scientists and their beliefs in this paper. Excerpt:

> Scholars talk a great deal about research done in the 1960's that revealed differences in religious beliefs among members of different disciplines (especially comparisons between natural and social scientists). My findings, however, do not reveal vast discrepancies in religious belief and practice among disciplines and fields. The true difference lies between academics in these scientific disciplines and members of the general public. With little doubt, scientists at major research universities are less religious—at least according to traditional forms of religion—than members of the general public.
>
> During public lectures about the study, the question inevitably asked first is: Do the professors you studied believe in God? When asked their beliefs about God, nearly 34 percent of academic scientists answer "I do not believe in God" and about 30 percent answer "I do not know if there is a God and there is no way to find out," the classic agnostic response. This means that over 60 percent of professors in these natural and social science disciplines describe themselves as either atheist or religiously agnostic. In comparison, among those in the general U.S. population, about 3 percent claim to be atheists and about 5 percent are religiously agnostic. When it comes to affiliation with particular religions, scientists are also vastly different from members of the broader society. About 52 percent of scientists see themselves as having no religious affiliation when compared to only 14 percent of the general population. Scientists who are not religious justify their inattention to religion through language that stresses the irrelevance of science to religion. Those not raised in religious homes, the case for the majority of scientists without religious affiliation, also emphasize their lack of experience with religion.
>
> […]**What are we to make of this lack of traditional religion? Is knowledge of science somehow in conflict with being religious? Childhood religious background, not exposure to scientific education, seems to be the most powerful predictor of future irreligion. Those scientists raised in almost any faith tradition are more likely to currently be religious than those raised without any tradition. In addition, scientists who describe religion as important in their families as children are much more likely to practice faith currently. When compared to the general population, a larger proportion of scientists are raised in non-religious homes. When one considers that many more scientists come from non-religious homes**

> **or homes that were nominally religious, the distinctions between the general population and the scientific community make more sense. A large part of the difference between scientists and the general population may be due more to religious upbringing, rather than scientific training or university pressure to be irreligious, although these other possibilities should be further explored.**

I heard about this research in the latest episode of the Reasonable Faith podcast. You can listen to it to hear Dr. Craig's comments.

I think this research raises an important question that we need to ask scientists who don't believe in God. That question is: "which particular pieces of scientific evidence led you to doubt God's existence?" And then we should have done our scientific homework about the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability arguments from astrobiology, and so on, to be able to make a positive case for God's existence from science. Christians ought to be more excited about science, because we have nothing to fear – and everything to gain – from knowing a lot more about science than we know now.

You can see Ecklund's book about her research here on the Oxford University Press web site. You can also buy the book here from Amazon.com.

UPDATE: Commenter Eugene has found a related lecture from Cambridge University featuring Dr. Ecklund.

Ronald Reagan's 40th anniversary D-Day speech: the boys of Pointe du Hoc

June 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

June 6, 1944 D-Day Normandy Invasion Map

It's June 6th, today, and it's the anniversary of D-Day: the Allied invasion of northern France – the beginning of the end of World War 2. One of the most pivotal events of that day was the assault on German gun emplacements by members of the Army Rangers at a fortified position called "Pointe du Hoc".

President Ronald Reagan recognized the soldiers who attacked Pointe du Hoc back in 1984:

You can read the full transcript of that speech here.

Ronald Reagan also made the case for gratitude and vigilance:

Here's the hymn that starts to play at the end:

The Boys of Pointe du Hoc

Here's a summary of the Pointe du Hoc mission:

> [Lt. Col. James Earl] Rudder took part in the D-Day landings as Commanding Officer of the United States Army's 2nd Ranger Battalion. His U.S. Army Rangers stormed the beach at Pointe du Hoc and, under constant enemy fire, scaled 100-foot (30 meter) cliffs to reach and destroy German gun batteries. The battalion's casualty rate for this perilous mission was greater than 50 percent. Rudder himself was wounded twice during the course of the fighting. In spite of this, they dug in and fought off German counter-attacks for two days until relieved. He and his men helped to successfully establish a beachhead for the Allied forces.

You can watch a three-clip documentary on it, too: part 1, part 2, part 3.

You can read the complete story about their successful effort to destroy the 6 155mm German guns here on Military History Online. Although initially, the Rangers did not find the guns where they had expected them, they did find them further back behind the cliffs and destroyed them there, removing a threat to the forces that would be landing later.

What does D-Day mean to Christians in particular?

A female Christian friend asked me what she should be thinking about when I sent her one of the videos above, and so I wrote her this to explain why I sent her the video:

> To make you close your eyes and think in a more practical way about what it means for someone to sacrifice their lives to save you, of course. What it means to look up cliffs at machine guns, barbed wire and mortars raining death on you and to take a rope in your hands and to climb up a sheer cliff, under heavy fire, in order to save generations yet unborn and freedom itself.
>
> To think about a concrete example helps us to be able to appreciate what Christ did for us in giving his life for us so that we could be free of sin, as well.
>
> This is the insight that drives my entire interest in war and military history, in fact.
>
> What does this mean: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
>
> The more you know about D-Day, the more fearful what Jesus did appears, and the more you can be grateful.
>
> Bullets and shrapnel are scary… and so are nails and lashes. Why on Earth would anyone endure either for me? And what should my response be to it?
>
> I think it is helpful to explain Christianity to those who are not yet Christian, and for Christians to fully appreciate what Christianity is all about.
>
> We were in peril. And now we have been saved. But at a cost.

I think that it's important for Christians to look to history, art, poetry and music to help them to reflect and comprehend the sacrifice that Christ made for us in dying on the cross to protect us from peril. What must the cross have looked like to Jesus? It must have been something like what the Omaha beach looked like to the Americans landing in Normandy. Jesus saw whips, thorns and nails, and the heroes of Normandy saw 88 mm AT guns, 81 mm mortars and MG42 machine guns. How should you feel about people who face death on your behalf? Think about it.

Benghazi liar Susan Rice to be appointed National Security Adviser by grateful Obama

June 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Katie Pavlich of Townhall explains how Obama rewards those who lie to the American people on his behalf, just before an election.

Excerpt:

> President Obama won't condemn Attorney General Eric Holder for spying on reporters and now, he's tapped Benghazi YouTube video liar Susan Rice to serve as a top security adviser.
>
> President Barack Obama plans to appoint Susan Rice as his national security adviser, replacing Tom Donilon, who is resigning, in a major shift to the White House's foreign policy team.
>
> Obama plans to make the appointment, first reported by the New York Times, later on Wednesday. He will also fill Rice's current position, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.
>
> It's no surprise Rice is getting a promotion. After all, she served as a good foot soldier for the Obama administration when she went in five Sunday talk shows five days after the attack and lied about a YouTube video.
>
> We know a YouTube video was never part of the equation the night of the attack. Acting Libyan Ambassador and whistleblower Greg Hicks called former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at 2 a.m. from Libya and said, "We were under attack." Hicks told Congress under oath that a YouTube video was a "non-event" in Libya. A lack of security was one of the main reasons why the U.S. consulate in Benghazi was attacked on 9/11. Many security requests were sent to the State Department and Clinton but were repeatedly denied.

I noticed that the Weekly Standard's Bill Kristol did a podcast on the pick, and he was very concerned.

Description:

> THE WEEKLY STANDARD podcast with editor William Kristol on Susan Rice's promotion, the nomination of Samantha Power to be the next ambassador to the United Nations, and Congress's investigation into the Internal Revenue Service scandal.

Here is the MP3 file of the podcast.

How serious could this administration be about national security when appointments like this are made?

Related posts

- Released e-mails show that State Department edited terrorism out of talking points
- Obama: editing of talking points to cover-up of Benghazi terrorist attack is a “sideshow”
- BBC News covers whistle-blower testimony: “After Benghazi revelations, heads will roll”
- ABC News: State Department scrubbed terrorism details from Benghazi talking points
- What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack “from the get-go”
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA’s account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama’s Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama’s Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama’s security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

Obama's deputy campaign manager Stephanie Cutter met with IRS chief at the White House

June 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jake Tapper of the left-leaning CNN reports.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Comments made by former White House adviser and Obama deputy campaign manager Stephanie Cutter on CNN's "The Lead" last week about meetings at the White House attended by both her and the then-director of the Internal Revenue Service, Doug Shulman, have prompted some conservatives to question her role in those meetings.
>
> The White House has acknowledged that IRS officials seem to have inappropriately focused on conservative groups when vetting whether the groups qualified for special tax exempt status. White House visitor logs suggest that Shulman was cleared to attend meetings in the White House or Eisenhower Executive Office Building 157 times, which has prompted questions from Republican officials as to whether the targeting of conservative groups was ever discussed. More than 50 of Douglas Shulman's scheduled visits are described as "health care meetings" or "health care reform meetings," according to the visitor logs.
>
> On "The Lead's" political roundtable discussion about Shulman's visits on Friday, Cutter – now a CNN contributor – said that "many of those meetings were for health care implementation. I was in them with him. So there is nothing nefarious going on."
>
> […]Many conservative outlets have seized upon Cutter's presence in the meetings as reason for suspicion. "The president's deputy campaign manager attended the 'nonpolitical' ObamaCare implementation meetings with the former IRS commissioner at the White House," wrote an Investor's Business Daily editorial. "She wasn't there to discuss the Easter Egg Roll."
>
> Wrote Carol Platt Liebau at Townhall.com, "as everyone knows, Stephanie Cutter's expertise is not primarily in the policy area; it is in the realm of politics: Political strategy and communications. She has been described by the Daily Beast as a partisan 'pit bull.' Her job isn't the nuts and bolts of governing. She is a political fixer. That's why she was a Deputy Campaign manager for the President's re-election."

Here's what Carol Platt Liebau said in that Townhall article.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> An interesting fact emerges from a look at a transcript of last Friday's edition of

> “The Lead With Jake Tapper” — Stephanie Cutter was in on the White House meetings that IRS Commissioner Douglas Shulman attended.
>
> Cutter insists that Shulman was simply meeting about implementation of ObamaCare — and in fairness, one of her responsibilities was managing communications strategy for the unpopular law. But as everyone knows, Stephanie Cutter’s expertise is not primarily in the policy area; it is in the realm of politics: Political strategy and communications. She has been described by theDaily Beast as a partisan “pit bull.” Her job isn’t the nuts and bolts of governing. She is a political fixer. That’s why she was a Deputy Campaign manager for the President’s re-election.
>
> Given that’s the case, it’s far from clear why she would have been in meetings with Doug Shulman at all. The whole point of the IRS’ supposed “independence” is to insulate the agency from the influence and machinations of people *exactly like* Stephanie Cutter.
>
> So whether or not the stated purpose of the meetings was about ObamaCare — unless Shulman’s politics are very different from the lefty leanings of his wife — it isn’t hard to imagine Shulman and Cutter exchanging some congruent views. That’s particularly true given that foremost in political discussion at the time was the Citizens United case (holding it unconstitutional for the government to restrict speech by corporations, associations and unions), which had recently been handed down by the Supreme Court — and which scared President Obama to death. Is it really a stretch to think that Cutter and Shulman might have commiserated, bemoaned the supposed threat to democracy, and wished that something could be done, oh so subtly? . . . Consider the following timeline:
>
> - May 2009 – Cutter moves to White House from Treasury Department
> - January 2010 – Citizens United is handed down; Democrats are hysterical
> - March 2010 – IRS begins targeting Tea Party and other conservative groups
> - April 2010 – Cutter assigned to sell health care reform; if meetings with Shulman didn’t occur before, presumably they did so afterwards.
>
> Indeed, this time line and Cutter’s presence in the IRS meetings makes it more likely than ever that subtle political influence was wielded. Did anyone explicitly order Shulman to target conservatives? Probably not . . . because given the extent and type of contact he had with White House politicos, no explicit directive was needed.
>
> It seems likely that everyone understood each other just fine, and the IRS operated accordingly.

Do you think it’s possible that the Obama campaign worked with the IRS to delay and deny applications from conservative groups in order to influence the 2012 election? Why would the deputy campaign manager need to be in meetings with the head of the IRS at the White House?

Apologetics 315: Top ten reading plan for complete beginners to Christian apologetics

June 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the items from the Apologetics 315 training plan for complete beginners:

> 1. ***The Case for Christ*** by Lee Strobel
> All of Lee Strobel's books are required reading for two reasons. First, they are good introductions to the subject and provide a good overview of the material from some of the best scholars in their fields. Second, the writing style is very accessible, taking you alongside a journalist in his investigation of the evidence for Christianity. In this particular title, Strobel focuses on the life and identity of Jesus.
>
> 2. ***The Case for a Creator*** by Lee Strobel
> This book is just as readable as *The Case for Christ*, but this one delves into the evidence for the Creator. Another thing that makes this good reading for the beginner is this: whatever areas you find particularly interesting can be pursued further by reading the sources interviewed in the book.
>
> 3. ***The Case for Faith*** by Lee Strobel
> In *The Case for Faith,* Strobel moves from making a positive case for Christ and a Creator to defending Christianity from some common criticisms and objections. This one deals with the hard faith questions such as the problem of pain and suffering and issues of doubt. Again, all three of the Lee Strobel books are a great starting point for the beginner.
>
> 4. ***Holman QuickSource Guide to Christian Apologetics*** by Doug Powell
> Now it's time for something different. This odd-shaped and colorful book (with more graphics than words) will introduce you to the wide landscape of apologetics by outlining, diagramming, and illustrating all of the key arguments for the existence of God, the reliability of the Bible, the beliefs of other world views, and common objections. This is very helpful in providing visual categories for the content you are taking in. If certain things you have read up till this point have been overly academic, then this book will give you a sort of pictorial overview. This is also useful as a "primer" on the key topics and helpful to establish a bird's eye view. Illustrations of the ideas are also great for sharing with others what you have learned.
>
> 5. ***Love Your God With All Your Mind*** by J.P. Moreland
> Ok, so you have taken in some of the key content and ideas that Strobel presents in the "Case for" series. But what does intellectual engagement look like? What does it look like to "love God with all your mind"? In this book you'll be challenged to live a vibrant life of intellectual engagement with your faith. This is a classic book that every apologist should read, and that's why it finds itself

> firmly in the foundational books recommended here.
>
> 6. ***Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*** by Greg Koukl
> Information without application results in stagnation when it comes to apologetics. That's why it's time for a good dose of *Tactics*, which will train you not only to *use* apologetic content in everyday life, but it will also *train* you to be a better, more critical thinker. This is another "must read" book, and mastering its contents early in your apologetic studies will put feet to your faith.
>
> 7. ***The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*** by Mike Licona & Gary Habermas
> The resurrection of Jesus is central to Christianity. This book equips you to understand and defend the resurrection from an historical perspective. Not only does the book have useful diagrams, summaries, and an accessible style, but it also comes with a CD-ROM with interactive software for teaching you the material. This is an essential book for the apologist.
>
> 8. ***Is God Just a Human Invention? And Seventeen Other Questions Raised by the New Atheists*** by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow
> Now it's time to look at some of the most common objections that have come against Christianity since the rise of the new atheism. There's no better book at dealing with these in a concise yet dense way, while providing additional reading suggestions and introducing some of the key apologists that deal with these questions. If you really want to master this material, consider taking part in the Read Along project for this book.
>
> 9. ***I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be An Atheist*** by Geisler & Turek
> Geisler and Turek have authored a great apologetics book that also takes a step-by-step approach to showing that Christianity is true—and it's filled with *lots* of information. This gives the growing beginner a ton of good content, while strengthening the framework of a cumulative case for Christianity. This book will help to grow your overall general apologetic knowledge as well.
>
> 10. ***On Guard*** by William Lane Craig
> Finally, it's time to dig deeper into some of the more philosophically rigorous arguments with William Lane Craig. *On Guard* is, in essence, a shorter, more concise and accessible distillation of his weightier apologetics book *Reasonable Faith*. *On Guard* has illustrations, argument maps, and sidebars which aim to make the material easier to grasp and engage with. This book will introduce the newer apologist to Craig's time-tested arguments for the existence of God and the resurrection of Jesus. While it is still not light reading, this will serve the reader well before moving on to more advanced material. Highly recommended.

I love to give away books to people who want to learn apologetics (if I trust them not to give away my identity) and just last week I gave two people numbers 2, 4 and 8 last week. But all of these books are must reads. The ordering is good too! The only books I might add to this list is J. Warner Wallace's "Cold Case Christianity", which is a nice book

for beginners on how to defend the gospels as historical sources. I would put that one in at #9 drop his #9 completely. His #8 “Is God Just a Human Invention?” is my favorite basic apologetics book for beginners, because it covers everything just a little bit in only one book. If I had to pick one out of that list, I’d pick that one.

Good News: The Bible is number one on the bestseller list in Norway

June 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> Bibles have been flying off the book shelves in Norway, a country hailed more for its adherence to secular politics and culture than spiritual development. And while religious leaders aren't quite calling the strong biblical book sales proof positive of a spiritual awakening, they are seeing it as a sign of the nation's more public embrace of God and a continuing quiet growth in biblical teachings.
>
> A new Norwegian-language version of the Bible has become the country's No. 1 best-seller, The Associated Press reported. And its popularity has been evidenced for some time. The Blaze reported that the version has been in the top 15 best-seller list for 54 of the past 56 weeks.
>
> As The Guardian noted, Bible sales in Norway have topped the charts for longer the pop star Justin Bieber's autobiography or the hugely popular "Fifty Shades of Grey."
>
> Meanwhile, Norwegians are taking their faith to the stage, too. A six-hour play called "Bibelen," which means "The Bible" in Norwegian, has been drawing thousands. In a three-month span, more than 16,000 people saw the production, The Blaze reported.
>
> Leaders of the Lutheran Church of Norway say it's not quite an awakening. After all, they say, only 1 percent of the country's 5 million residents attend church. And others, such as biblical scholars, say the furor is over nothing — that Norwegians are traditionally quiet followers of the faith who don't necessarily need to go to church as part of their belief system. But the sales are significant, nonetheless. If nothing else, they show the mindset of the nation.
>
> "Thoughts and images from the Bible still have an impact on how we experience reality," said Karl Ove Knausgaard, one of the Norwegian authors who helped translate the popular Bible version, in the AP report.

Norway actually was one of the more conservative countries in Europe, and one of the last to have the big decline of the family that we see in the other Scandinavian countries.

Mark Regnerus: will same-sex marriage hurt the institution of marriage?

June 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Public Discourse.

Introduction:

> Lots of changes in marriage have, and will continue to, come about. What should we expect next? That's the question Liza Mundy pursues in her cover story in this month's *Atlantic Monthly*. "The Gay Guide to Wedded Bliss" explores the ways in which same-sex marriages may very well school those of us who have already entered—or someday will enter—the hallowed and embattled institution. Mundy is confident that such unions "could help haul matrimony more fully into the 21st century," and that real influence is possible. This is in stark contrast to the politically tailored message that same-sex marriage will change nothing.
>
> "What if same-sex marriage does change marriage, but primarily for the better," she wonders aloud. How would this work? By giving us "another image of what marriage can be," she asserts. What sort of image? According to Mundy, it's the cardinal virtue of equality, or egalitarianism. Sameness and fairness.
>
> Before we prematurely declare this image worth mirroring, consider for a few moments the side effects Mundy identifies on the way to the egalitarian utopia she praises. Three in particular stand out.

He continues by going over the three issues, but this one is the one that everyone needs to know:

> Mundy first explores the instability—or "dynamism," if you're an optimist—of lesbian relationships. Don't want a divorce, Mundy asks? "Don't marry a woman," she warns. University of British Columbia economist Marina Adshade concurs. The author of a new book—*Dollars and Sex*—on the fascinating economics of relationships, Adshade notes the dismal science around breaking up in Britain, where "62% of civil union dissolutions (i.e., divorces) in the UK are between women despite the fact that lesbian relationships only represent 44 percent of civil partnerships in that country." The greater instability, she reasons, is simply about gender differences in relationship preferences, and nothing more. I tend to agree.
>
> The elevated breakup rate among lesbian couples has been an open secret for a long while. Even NYU sociologist Judith Stacey—no fan of marriage in general—noted it back in 2000 in small, nonrandom studies of upper-middle-class, educated white lesbian parents, demographic factors historically associated with stability rather than dissolution. Stacey and her colleague Tim Biblarz attributed the instability to, among other things, the participants' "high

> standards of equality." In Mundy's words, "women are just picky, and when you have two women, you have double the pickiness."
>
> Writing in *Slate* last year, June Thomas highlights this predilection toward shorter, intense relationships, and wonders whether the marital shoe actually fits:
>
> I've noticed that my visceral anti-marriage animus is particularly strong when I hear twentysomething lesbians talking about their wives and fiancees. Are they really going to mate for life, like swans in sensible shoes? That seems attractive at 35, but at 25 it's positively Amish. Worst of all, it threatens the continued evolution of a talent perfected over the millennia as our relationships have gone unrecognized by church and state: a gift for breaking up. Lesbians tend to bond intensely and often.
>
> The pattern is evident in the Netherlands as well as Norway and Sweden, where Mundy notes that the risk of breakups for female partnerships more than doubles that found in male unions. The actual study she cites estimates that in Sweden 30 percent of female marriages are likely to end in divorce within six years of formation, compared with 20 percent for male marriages and 13 percent for heterosexual ones. The study's authors suggested that lesbian couples may be more "sociodemographically homogamous" than other couples, a fancy term for "too similar," and speculate that this may be conducive to a high level of dynamism, but perhaps not to the kind of inertia that has long been a hallmark of marital stability.
>
> Using nationally representative data on American relationships, Stanford demographer Michael Rosenfeld reported at the 2012 annual meeting of the American Sociological Association that lesbian couples report higher relationship satisfaction *alongside* higher break-up rates. The greater comparative instability among lesbian couples persists even after a lengthy series of control variables is included, including the presence of children.

Did you know that lesbian relationships are far more unstable than straight relationships? Children raised in such relationships would already be raised without a father, and without being able to observe the interaction of a man and a woman in marriage. But they are not likely to have even the stability of having their mother and the other woman raising the child. Lest you think that the birth mother would get custody, be aware that judges are assigning parental rights to the non-maternal woman in these cases. Is that fair to the child?

Study of young atheists suggests strategies for evangelism

June 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is posted in the left-leaning Atlantic, of all places. (H/T J. Warner Wallace)

Excerpt:

> Slowly, a composite sketch of American college-aged atheists began to emerge and it would challenge all that we thought we knew about this demographic. Here is what we learned:
>
> **They had attended church**
>
> Most of our participants had not chosen their worldview from ideologically neutral positions at all, but *in reaction* to Christianity. Not Islam. Not Buddhism. Christianity.
>
> **The mission and message of their churches was vague**
>
> These students heard plenty of messages encouraging "social justice," community involvement, and "being good," but they seldom saw the relationship between that message, Jesus Christ, and the Bible. Listen to Stephanie, a student at Northwestern: "The connection between Jesus and a person's life was not clear." This is an incisive critique. She seems to have intuitively understood that the church does not exist simply to address social ills, but to proclaim the teachings of its founder, Jesus Christ, and their relevance to the world. Since Stephanie did not see that connection, she saw little incentive to stay. We would hear this again.
>
> **They felt their churches offered superficial answers to life's difficult questions**
>
> When our participants were asked what they found unconvincing about the Christian faith, they spoke of evolution vs. creation, sexuality, the reliability of the biblical text, Jesus as the only way, etc. Some had gone to church hoping to find answers to these questions. Others hoped to find answers to questions of personal significance, purpose, and ethics. Serious-minded, they often concluded that church services were largely shallow, harmless, and ultimately irrelevant. As Ben, an engineering major at the University of Texas, so bluntly put it: "I really started to get bored with church."
>
> **They expressed their respect for those ministers who took the Bible seriously**
>
> Following our 2010 debate in Billings, Montana, I asked Christopher Hitchens why he didn't try to savage me on stage the way he had so many others. His reply was immediate and emphatic: "Because you believe it." Without fail, our former church-attending students expressed similar feelings for those Christians who

unashamedly embraced biblical teaching. Michael, a political science major at Dartmouth, told us that he is drawn to Christians like that, adding: “I really can’t consider a Christian a good, moral person if he isn’t trying to convert me.” As surprising as it may seem, this sentiment is not as unusual as you might think. It finds resonance in the well-publicized comments of Penn Jillette, the atheist illusionist and comedian: “I don’t respect people who don’t proselytize. I don’t respect that at all. If you believe that there’s a heaven and hell and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life or whatever, and you think that it’s not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward…. How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?” Comments like these should cause every Christian to examine his conscience to see if he truly believes that Jesus is, as he claimed, “the way, the truth, and the life.”

Ages 14-17 were decisive

One participant told us that she considered herself to be an atheist by the age of eight while another said that it was during his sophomore year of college that he de-converted, but these were the outliers. For most, the high school years were the time when they embraced unbelief.

The decision to embrace unbelief was often an emotional one

With few exceptions, students would begin by telling us that they had become atheists for exclusively rational reasons. But as we listened it became clear that, for most, this was a deeply emotional transition as well. This phenomenon was most powerfully exhibited in Meredith. She explained in detail how her study of anthropology had led her to atheism. When the conversation turned to her family, however, she spoke of an emotionally abusive father:

“It was when he died that I became an atheist,” she said.

I could see no obvious connection between her father’s death and her unbelief. Was it because she loved her abusive father — abused children often do love their parents — and she was angry with God for his death? “No,” Meredith explained. “I was terrified by the thought that he could still be alive somewhere.”

Rebecca, now a student at Clark University in Boston, bore similar childhood scars. When the state intervened and removed her from her home (her mother had attempted suicide), Rebecca prayed that God would let her return to her family. “He didn’t answer,” she said. “So I figured he must not be real.” After a moment’s reflection, she appended her remarks: “Either that, or maybe he is [real] and he’s just trying to teach me something.”

The internet factored heavily into their conversion to atheism

When our participants were asked to cite key influences in their conversion to atheism–people, books, seminars, etc. — we expected to hear frequent references to the names of the “New Atheists.” We did not. Not once. Instead, we heard vague references to videos they had watched on YouTube or website

> forums.

Reading this, it makes me think that the church should be making sure that young people between 12 and 20 in the church are regularly engaged by Christians who have been trained in apologetics. That’s what we should do if we want to get serious about building people up to have a lasting faith rooted in reason and evidence.

Soldier told not to read Levin, Limbaugh or Hannity while in uniform

June 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Todd Starnes of Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> Master Sgt. Nathan Sommers, a 25-year Army veteran and conservative Christian based at Fort Myer in Washington, believes his outspoken opposition to gay marriage prompted higher-ups to take a closer look at his beliefs. The recipient of an Army Commendation Medal and a soloist at the funeral of former First Lady Betty Ford, Sommers said his core beliefs are enough to mark a soldier for persecution in today's military.
>
> […]Army documents obtained by Fox News indicate Sommers was told that his actions bordered on being disrespectful to President Obama and the "slightest inference of disrespect towards superiors can have a demoralizing effect on the unit."
>
> "You should strive to express your opinion while being aware of the overall ramifications of your statements," the Army noted.
>
> […]During the summer months, Sommers came under fire for reading the works of Mark Levin, Sean Hannity and David Limbaugh.
>
> Sommers was reading Limbaugh's **"The Great Destroyer"**backstage at a U.S. Army Band concert at the U.S. Capitol. A superior officer told him that he was causing "unit disruption" and was offending other soldiers.
>
> "I wasn't reading aloud," he said. "I was just reading privately to myself. I was told they were frowning on that and they warned me that I should not be reading literature like that backstage because it was offensive."
>
> In another episode, he had been caught backstage reading a copy of Levin's **"Ameritopia: The Unmaking of America."**
>
> Sommers said he was told to refrain from reading the book "while in uniform or within sight of anyone from the band."
>
> "This is the first time since (my superior officer) indicated I had offended others with my choice of reading material, that I was officially counseled about it," he said. "The statement took my breath away. I was speechless."
>
> […]It's a long-standing tradition within the U.S. Army Band for promoted soldiers to host a party for their fellow troops. So the soldier decided to have Chick-fil-A cater the meal.
>
> "My family likes Chick-fil-A and we like what they stand for," he said. "I can make a statement and at least express a religious point of view at my promotion party

> – theoretically without any fear of reprisal."
>
> The soldier also tweeted about the party: "In honor of DADT repeal, and Obama/Holder's refusal to enforce DOMA act, I'm serving Chick-fil-A at my MSG promo reception for Army today."
>
> He also tweeted to radio host Mark Levin: "@Marklevinshow 'luv ya, Mark! Fellow Virginian & MSG, Army. Being promoted today, serving Chick-fil-A @ reception in honor of DADT repeal."
>
> Both tweets were cited in an official military document.
>
> "As a Soldier you must be cognizant of the fact that your statements can be perceived by the general public and other service members to be of a nature bordering on disrespect to the President of the United States," the document stated.
>
> Sommers said he paid for the party with personal money, not government funds.
>
> "I had no idea a Chick-fil-A sandwich would get me in trouble," he said.
>
> He was later summoned by a superior officer, who the soldier said is openly gay, and was told that unidentified individuals were offended by the tweets and some considered them to be racist.
>
> Sommers was reprimanded, threatened with judicial action and given a bad efficiency report. An investigation was also launched.

I keep telling people that the more that gay rights is pushed, the less religious liberty we will have. I find it striking that in a country that prides itself on being religious and moral, that we are so quick to throw out our religious liberty with both hands in order to be nice. Why do we care so much that our God-given liberties cause others to feel offended? Shouldn't we be informed enough about what is really going on with all these attempts to promote homosexuality to see what it really means for those of us who are religious and moral? The issue is that the gay activists think that their feelings of being offended are justification for silencing and coercing others – taking away our liberties. Let's see that clearly and then vote accordingly.

Meanwhile, here's another story of secularist fascism from the Air Force.

Pastors vs the Bible: should men be shamed into marrying?

June 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, a book was recommended by Ligonier Ministries that tried to shame men into marrying. Here is a review of that book on Amazon.com – currently rated the "most helpful" review, because it quotes the book and cites the page number, so you know this person actually read the book.

Some quotes from the book, which is written by a pastor:

> "it is imperative for your well being that you be married, to move beyond the "not good" status of single adulthood" (pg59).
>
> "And the first step for many of us in becoming the men God wants us to be is to become married, so that we will leave behind our selfish ways and begin fulfilling our masculine calling through our relationship with our wives." (pg64)
>
> "It does not work very well when a man remains unmarried" (pg57)
>
> "to realize how vitally important it is (in the vast majority of cases) that you become married" (pg59).
>
> "Today, when God looks on single males and says, Not good, He undoubtedly has in mind a long list of truly unfit helpers, among them the pornography, video games, sports obsessions, and empty pizza boxes that are intrinsic to so many young adult male lives, even among Christians" (pg60).
>
> "The best thing a young Christian man can do… is to marry a godly woman" (pg59)
>
> "If you have shied away from marriage, let me urge you to reconsider and (perhaps)
> to commit to the necessary growing up" (pg59).
>
> "God says the same thing about single adult men today. He looks into their apartments and refrigerators and sighs, Not good" (pg57)
>
> "But it is especially good to have to rise up in masculine virtue and strength for the sake of my wife, leaving behind a self-focus that was, at best, only intended for a temporary season of singleness" (pg64)
>
> "If you are single, what is keeping you from marriage? Pray for God to enable you to take a wife and for God to provide you with a wife." (pg158)

Keep in mind that Paul was single. Was he able to obey and serve God while being single? According to this pastor, Paul was a self-centered failure who needed to grow up, man up and get married so he could serve God instead of being an irresponsible, messy, immature loser. Paul needed a godly wife to civilize him, but he failed in life because he stayed single and immature. This view is probably the majority view in churches today,

and it probably explains why men can't be bothered with church. According to most pastors, women are already fully qualified to become wives, it's only that the lazy, useless men like Paul are not mature enough to abandon their video games and pizza boxes and get civilized by their saintly wives.

But what does the Bible actually say about men and marriage?

Let's look at this exegesis of the Bible from Unmasking Feminism.

Excerpt:

> And then there is this: 1 Corinthians 7:25-27 and 32-38
>
> *Now concerningthe betrothed,I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26* ***I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife.***
>
> Some Christians will say the "present distress" cited is not the same distress as our modern times and therefore we can reject this, but yet the bible is suppose to true at all times and all situations. There is and will always be a constant undertone of distress in our fallen world. If there wasn't, this would be Eden. The distress we are in now, which is clear to any red-pill thinker, is obviously the burden of feminism, liberalism, socialism, *et al* and the strains it has be put on our society. Under those strains, is it wise to seek a wife? Yes, if you have passions that will prevent you from being celibate, but if you can manage that, under the present distress, is there a point in taking a wife? See "Note" below for more on celibacy. Because there is no going back–these are hardcore, legitimate verses that men need to consider when pondering marriage.
>
> 32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. 33 **But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife,34 and his interests are divided.** And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. 35 I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.
>
> Again, if you have your passions under control, a life free of the worldly distraction (known as learning/managing/pleasing your wife) is the better, anxiety free route, to living a life that pleases the Lord. As it is said, "no man can have two masters". Either a Christian man is single and devoted to the causes of the Lord or married and devoted to the causes of Lord and wife. A distraction for sure, but necessary if his passion burns. He will just have to learn how to keep his wife from becoming a second master.
>
> 36 If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his

> passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. 37 But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. 38 **So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.**
>
> Those who refrain from marriage with their passions under control will do better. They will be more focused and dedicated on the Lord. That is very clear and Christian men need to hear that in order to weigh marriage properly. There is nothing wrong with marriage, just that it can be burdening. There is nothing wrong with being single, just that you can't have sex, but as you will see in my "note" below that marriage may entail no sex anyway.
>
> I say all this not to be a downer and to sway men from marriage, but so they can make an informed decision. Wives are not always sunshine and lollipops. The modern Christian message is to just man-up and marry any Christian looking woman and instantly your life will be transformed into this Garden of Eden haven. Don't be fooled. There will be no heaven on earth. A wife can be a blessing if she is a good wife, one that does not place undue burden and strain on her husband. One that does not cause anxieties. But, and its a big BUT, there is no guarantee that marriage for the sake of marriage will make a woman a good wife or that any given wife will not be wearing sheep's clothing. Its a gamble and tolerance for risk should be considered. A single, celibate life is for those averse to risk. If you can manage yourself, its smooth sailing and a life with minimal anxieties. That is all you have to control.

1 Corinthians 7 is the chapter that many a pastor cannot afford to take seriously. He cannot accept the plain meaning of the text as it is written. If he did, he would offend many people in the church who believe that the primary purpose of men is to please women, not God. In church, a man has no right to evaluate a women for marriage and then decide for himself whether a prospective marriage is worthwhile for God or not. He has no right to ask a woman questions or lead her in order to see whether she can perform what he needs her to perform in order to make the marriage serve God. Many pastors believe that a man exists to serve a woman, and not to serve God.

When these feminist pastors cannot find support in the Bible to make the case for their "blame men" view, then they resort to shaming men without the Bible. "Man Up" they bellow to single guys – as if marrying a woman were something that could be accomplished by spending more time in the weight room. Or that flexing muscles protects a man from the threat of no-fault divorce. "Single guys: don't overlook the single moms" as one particularly foolish pastor recently advised. It's very important to understand that many women who attend church today do not look to the Bible as an authority on morality. Many are also not prepared. Men have to be encouraged to select a woman who is ready for marriage, not be forced to rush into marriage with just any

women.

According to polls, women are more likely to support gay marriage than men, for example, which shows that many women don't really understand the need that a child has for a mother and a father. So that needs to be checked. And women are less likely to know how to defend their faith than men, as well. So that needs to be checked. Some Christian women are attacking the Bible's teaching on fornication, saying that they should be allowed to have premarital sex if they are "in love". So that needs to be checked, too. Instead of holding them accountable for being wrong on these issues, many pastors just urge men to "man up" and marry women, as is. But not all women are worth marrying, and so it may be better for a man to stay single if he can't find a good one.

The best thing for a Christian man to do with a woman is to ask her questions to see exactly how she has applied the Bible to her own life, and whether she has taken on obligations and duties in order to serve God that were not easy or pleasing for her. It's not enough to ask simple questions and await easy answers, you need to see that she has done the work to move from opinions to convictions. If she hasn't done the work, then it's better to stay single (and chaste). As 2 Timothy 2:4 says, "No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer."

Report: growth in homeschooling is outpacing new public school enrollments

June 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Breitbart.com. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A recent report in *Education News* states that, since 1999, the number of children who are homeschooled has increased by 75%. Though homeschooled children represent only 4% of all school-age children nationwide, the number of children whose parents choose to educate them at home rather than a traditional academic setting is growing seven times faster than the number of children enrolling in grades K-12 every year.
>
> As homeschooling has become increasingly popular, common myths that have long been associated with the practice of homeschooling have been debunked.
>
> Any concerns about the quality of education children receive by their parents can be put to rest by the consistently high placement of homeschooled students on standardized assessment exams. Data demonstrates that those who are independently educated generally score between the 65th and 89th percentile on these measures, while those in traditional academic settings average at around the 50th percentile. In addition, achievement gaps between sexes, income levels, or ethnicity—all of which have plagued public schools around the country—do not exist in homeschooling environments.
>
> According to the report:
>
> Recent studies laud homeschoolers' academic success, noting their significantly higher ACT-Composite scores as high schoolers and higher grade point averages as college students. Yet surprisingly, the average expenditure for the education of a homeschooled child, per year, is $500 to $600, compared to an average expenditure of $10,000 per child, per year, for public school students.
>
> The high achievement level of homeschoolers is readily recognized by recruiters from some of the best colleges in the nation. Home-educated children matriculate in colleges and attain a four-year degree at much higher rates than their counterparts from both public and private schools. Schools such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard, Stanford, and Duke Universities all actively recruit homeschoolers.

The post also cites another study that puts to rest the "socialization" nonsense objection to homeschooling.

Related posts

- Alabama homeschooling family sends 6 kids to college – by age 12!

Zack Kopplin debates Casey Luskin on the Louisiana Science Education Act on the Michael Medved show

June 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Michael Medved show is a national radio show broadcast out of Seattle, Washington. According to Talkers magazine, he has the fifth largest radio audience. He has a regular weekly segment on science and culture featuring scholars from the Discovery Institute.

Here is the seventh segment from this past week, courtesy of the Intelligent Design: The Future podcast.

The MP3 file is available for download. (38 minutes)

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, the Medved Show hosts the CSC's Casey Luskin and student Zack Kopplin, a leading activist in the effort to repeal the Louisiana Science Education Act. Luskin and Kopplin debate the implications of the Louisiana law for science education standards and whether or not the law promotes the teaching of creationism.
>
> *Each week, leading fellows from Discovery Institute will join Michael Medved to talk about the intersection of science and culture. Listen in live online or on your local Medved station, or stay tuned at ID the Future for the weekly podcast.*

Topics: (I tried harder to get Kopplin's statements right than with Dan Barker last week, because Kopplin isn't as much a jerk as Barker)

- Medved: Should teachers be forced to teach creationism in public schools?
- Luskin: The Discovery Institute has never advocated that creationism be taught in public schools
- Medved: Does the Louisiana law mandate that creationism be taught in public schools
- Kopplin: Yes, the bill does because Bobby Jindal said that the bill teaches creationism
- Luskin: (Reads the actual text of the law) the law EXPLICITLY STATES that teaching creationism is forbidden
- Luskin: Governor Jindal is misinfored about the law, but if you look at the law it says NO CREATIONISM
- Kopplin: I don't care about what the law actually says, I'll just repeat that Bobby Jindal thinks it's creationism
- Kopplin: Thirty years ago, there was an attempt to mandate creationism, therefore this law is doing the same thing
- Medved: Are there any complaints that creationism is being taught in any schools after this law has been passed

- Kopplin: No, I don't know of any, but that's not because there are none! Maybe there are some that I haven't heard about yet
- Medved: If you are taught something that you think is stupid, then is that automatically a violation of your rights?
- Kopplin: Because you cannot allow the progress of science to call the religion of naturalism into question
- Luskin: About that Jindal quote – he was talking about what he wanted to pass, not the law that actually passed
- Luskin: (reads the text of the law again) The law explicitly says that teachign creationism in the classroom is prohibited
- Luskin: Intelligent design is not creationism. Creationism starts with the Bible. Intelligent Design starts with science
- Luskin: The law only supports teaching both sides of things that are already in the curriculum
- Luskin: ID is not already in the curriculum, therefore, the law does not allow it to be discussed
- Medved: Take Stephen C. Meyer's book on the origin of life, could that be used in the classroom?
- Kopplin: I am not very familiar with Meyer's book, but if it is critical of Darwinism and naturalism, then it should not be taught. I don't need to read it before I can censor it
- Luskin: Meyer's book advocates for ID, so it should not be taught in science classrooms
- Luskin: non-ID science papers that are critical of Darwinism should be allowed in science classroom so students get both sides
- Medved: Consider this brand new Oxford University Press book that is critical of Darwinian mechanisms, authored by Masatoshi Nei who is at Penn State University professor (written up on Evolution News)
- Medved: Should this research critical of Darwinism be allowed in science classrooms?
- Kopplin: I don't know if this book should be allowed in science classrooms
- Kopplin: I already know without reading anything though that there will never be evidence that supports intelligent design
- Kopplin: There is no evidence against Darwinism and there is no controversy and there is no disagreement among scientists
- Luskin: There are hundreds of papers in mainstream science peer-reviewed publications critical of Darwinism
- Luskin: (lists a stack of papers critical of core tenets of Darwinian theory from respect science journals in the last few years)
- Luskin: Masatoshi Nei recently posted a comment critical of the usefulness of the mutation-selection mechanism
- Luskin: The real issue is whether students are allowed to hear mainstream scientific criticisms of Darwinism in the science classroom

- Medved: Is it OK for a teacher to admit that on a specific issue in science, that there is no credible naturalistic explanation?
- Kopplin: I am a history major, so I don't want to comment on whether it is OK to admit that naturalism doesn't explain everything
- Luskin: A Harvard chemist says that the origin of life is an open issue in this peer-reviewed journal article
- Luskin: Teachers should be allowed to say that there is no accepted naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- Luskin: teachers should NOT be teaching religion, or creationism, or even intelligent design in science classrooms
- Luskin: but teachers should be allowed to say what the Harvard chemist said in that peer-reviewed article in the science classroom
- Kopplin: there was a creationist woman who sat next to the Discovery Institute person when the law was being debated
- Kopplin: so based on that there is a scary hidden creationist agenda behind the law which is not reflected in the actual text law
- Luskin: Um, that woman has no connection to the Discovery Institute
- Luskin: seating arrangement at the hearings were pre-determined, not selected by those in attendance
- Luskin: what about people who are pushing Darwinism, who are anti-religious atheists and humanists? should they be disqualified?
- Luskin: we should not discredit the arguments of either side based on speculations about their motives – what counts is the evidence
- Kopplin: but I have a letter signed by lots of Nobel-prize winning scientists that opposes the Lousiana science education law
- Luskin: but that letter never actually quotes from the law, it is critiquing views that have nothing to do with the actual law
- Medved: Summarize your views
- Kopplin: Criticism of Darwinism and naturalism using mainstream scientific evidence SHOULD NOT be allowed in the science classroom
- Liskin: Criticism of Darwinism and naturalism using mainstream scientific evidence SHOULD be allowed in the science classroom

And there is a period of questions from the callers.

This episode features a debate, so it is not to be missed. it is *always a good idea to hear both sides.* Unfortunately, ID people are the only ones who think that both sides should be heard.

I subscribe to the ID the Future podcast, and I really recommend that you do as well!

Previous entries

- Episode one: Stephen C. Meyer on Thomas Nagel and intelligent design
- Episode two: Stephen C. Meyer on Richard Dawkins and the Cambrian explosion

- Episode three: John G. West discusses Darwinism and the value of human life
- Episode four: Stephen C. Meyer and John Lennox discuss human exceptionalism
- Episode five: Jay Richards and Stephen C. Meyer discuss scientific consensus
- Episode six: Dan Barker debates Casey Luskin on academic freedom

Gallup polls show that men are more pro-life and more pro-marriage than women

June 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: in this post, I will be addressing the views of young, unmarried women, who tend to be more liberal than married women. Married women are not being targeted in this post, because their views tend to be more pro-life and pro-marriage.

First, abortion. The latest Gallup poll shows that men are far more pro-life than women. Men are strongly pro-life by a margin of 8 points, 50-42. Women are more pro-abortion by a margin of 1 point, 47-46.

Second, marriage. Polls show that men are far more pro-marriage than women.

Excerpt:

> A new national poll points towards a gender gap over same-sex marriage.
>
> According to new numbers released Monday morning from Gallup, 50% of Americans say same-sex marriages should be legal. But break it down by gender, and 56% of women say same-sex couples should be legally allowed to marry, but only 42% of men feel the same way.

In addition, exit polls from the 2008 and 2012 elections revealed that about 70-80 percent of young, unmarried women voted for Obama, whose views on abortion are somewhere to the left of Kermit Gosnell. And Obama supports gay marriage. Men are more likely to vote conservative than young, unmarried women, especially married men.

Now some of you may find this data about men being good very surprising. According to many people these days, all young men do is look at porn, order in pizza and leave the boxes scattered around, play video games, binge drink, live in their parents' basement, underperform at school, and fail to find jobs so they can man up and marry these pro-abortion, pro-gay marriage women. None of this bad performance is caused by institutionalized feminism, or the effects of feminism on the family. It's all just bad, bad men being bad – so were are told. But somehow, despite reports that all men are losers, they seem to have better views on abortion and marriage than women.

What does it mean?

Think about what it means that a young, unmarried woman is pro-abortion.

Being pro-abortion means that a men and women should be allowed to have recreational sex before marriage, and then if a baby is conceived, then they should be able to terminate that unwanted pregnancy, and send taxpayers the bill. Pro-life doctors and nurses who don't want to perform the procedure must be forced to do it, lest the selfish grown-ups feel offended. Pro-life organizations who don't want to offer abortion-inducing drugs as part of their medical insurance must be forced to provide it, lest the selfish grown-ups feel offended. Pro-life taxpayers who don't want to pay for the recreational sex

risks of others must be forced to pay for them, lest the selfish grown-ups feel offended.

Now suppose a man is considering marriage to a young, unmarried woman. It's likely that she supports abortion, given what polls show and what exit polls show. Now if a woman thinks that it is OK to kill an innocent unborn child in order to avoid being burdened with that child's needs, even though she consented to the recreational sex that produced that child, then should the man marry her? I think that a man should not marry such a woman. After all, if a woman is willing to kill a baby in order to protect her happiness, then she will certainly divorce her husband to do the same. Husbands are much less innocent than babies.

Now think about what it means that a young, unmarried woman is pro-gay marriage.

Being pro-gay marriage means that two men and two women should be able to adopt children away from one or both of their biological parents and raise them. Churches who don't want to perform the wedding ceremonies must be forced to perform the wedding ceremonies, lest the selfish grown-ups feel offended. Christian companies that don't want to treat gay couples as married must be forced to treat gay couples as married, lest the selfish grown-ups feel offended. Christian taxpayers who don't want to pay for the next generation of children to be indoctrinated to believe that marriage can be between two men or two women must be forced to pay for government to indoctrinate children to believe in redefined marriage, lest the selfish grown-ups feel offended.

Now suppose a man is considering marriage to a young, unmarried woman. It's likely that she supports gay marriage, given what the polls show and what exit polls show. Now if a woman thinks that it's OK to deprive a child of a mother or of a father and expose children to a notion of marriage that deprives them of stability, sexual faithfulness and permanence, then should the man marry her? I think that a man should not marry such a woman. After all, if a woman is willing to deprive a child of a mother or a father and of the interaction between a man and a woman cooperating in marriage, then she will certainly be willing to deprive any children she has with him of his presence, since she already believes that fathers are expendable and that the selfishness of adults trumps the needs of children.

The way forward

What can we do to fix young, unmarried women so that they are more pro-life and more pro-marriage, like men already are? Well, men are pro-life and pro-marriage because we read pro-life and pro-marriage books and because we watch debates on abortion and marriage. Men like to focus on things like logical arguments and scientific research. Men like to see pictures of the different development stages of unborn babies and read research papers about how same-sex marriage harms children and how welfare policies encourage women to have babies out of wedlock. Men are not inclined to decide moral views based on feelings, peer opinions and popular culture. In order to make young, unmarried women more pro-life and more pro-marriage, we should try to introduce them to more books and debates and scientific evidence, so that their views will change based on what is true, not based on feelings and peer pressure and cultural trends.

Niall Ferguson argues that government is making it harder to run a business

June 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Seven years of data suggest that most of the world's countries are successfully making it easier to do business: The total number of days it takes to carry out the seven procedures has come down, in some cases very substantially. In only around 20 countries has the total duration of dealing with "red tape" gone up. The sixth-worst case is none other than the U.S., where the total number of days has increased by 18% to 433. Other members of the bottom 10, using this metric, are Zimbabwe, Burundi and Yemen (though their absolute numbers are of course much higher).
>
> Why is it getting harder to do business in America? Part of the answer is excessively complex legislation. A prime example is the 848-page Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of July 2010 (otherwise known as the Dodd-Frank Act), which, among other things, required that regulators create 243 rules, conduct 67 studies and issue 22 periodic reports. Comparable in its complexity is the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (906 pages), which is also in the process of spawning thousands of pages of regulation. You don't have to be opposed to tighter financial regulation or universal health care to recognize that something is wrong with laws so elaborate that almost no one affected has the time or the will to read them.
>
> […]Each year, the World Economic Forum publishes its Global Competitiveness Index. Since it introduced its current methodology in 2004, the U.S. score has declined by 6%. (In the same period China's score has improved by 12%.) An important component of the index is provided by 22 different measures of institutional quality, based on the WEF's Executive Opinion Survey. Typical questions are "How would you characterize corporate governance by investors and boards of directors in your country?" and "In your country, how common is diversion of public funds to companies, individuals, or groups due to corruption?" The startling thing about this exercise is how poorly the U.S. fares.
>
> In only one category out of 22 is the U.S. ranked in the global top 20 (the strength of investor protection). In seven categories it does not even make the top 50. For example, the WEF ranks the U.S. 87th in terms of the costs imposed on business by "organized crime (mafia-oriented racketeering, extortion)." In every single category, Hong Kong does better.
>
> At the same time, the U.S. has seen a marked deterioration in its World Governance Indicators. In terms of "voice and accountability," "government

> effectiveness," "regulatory quality" and especially "control of corruption," the U.S. scores have all gone down since the WGI project began in the mid-1990s. It would be tempting to say that America is turning Latin, were it not for the fact that a number of Latin American countries have been improving their governance scores over the same period.
>
> Whatever the root causes of the deterioration of American institutions, smart people are starting to notice it. Last year Michael Porter of Harvard Business School published a report based on a large-scale survey of HBS alumni. Among the questions he asked was where the U.S. was "falling behind" relative to other countries. The top three lagging indicators named were: the effectiveness of the political system, the K-12 education system and the complexity of the tax code. Regulation came sixth, efficiency of the legal framework eighth.
>
> Asked to name "the most problematic factors for doing business" in the U.S., respondents to the WEF's most recent Executive Opinion Survey put "inefficient government bureaucracy" at the top, followed by tax rates and tax regulations.

The troubling thing to me is that the private sector has to make a profit in order to fund government, and I don't see that the private sector will be able to producing the profits needed to fund our government's lavish spending. Nothing that I see about the next generation causes me to believe that they understand economics enough to vote to improve the business climate. They seem to be very much anti-business. One wonders where they expect to find jobs.

Greg Koukl debates Michael Shermer on God, atheism, meaning and morality

June 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The full transcript of a debate between Michael Shermer, editor of Skeptic magazine, and Greg Koukl, president of Stand to Reason. This debate occurred on Hugh Hewitt's radio show, and was moderated by Hugh Hewitt.

HH = Hugh Hewitt
GK = Greg Koukl
MS = Michael Shermer

Here is a 32-page PDF with the full debate transcript.

And here's an excerpt:

GK: Right. Actually, the big question here, Hugh, is whether it's possible to be good without God. Now I'm not talking about whether it's possible to be good without a belief in God. I certainly think that's possible, but be good without God. And the answer to that question hinges entirely on precisely what you mean by good. And so I was going to give an illustration. So a man drags a young girl into the alley, he sexually abuses her, strangles here, and tosses her into the dustbin. Is that act wrong? Now I think everybody listening is going to admit it is wrong. But here is the real question. What do we mean when we say that that act of rape and abuse and murder is wrong? Are we describing the action itself, the object? Are we saying that the object, the rape, the murder, has a quality of being wrong, and therefore, wherever that rape goes, the wrongness follows it, just like your height, 6' 2", or whatever it is, is an objective quality of you. Wherever you go, your height follows you in the same way. Does the wrongness follow the rape? Well, if it's a quality of the rape, if it's an objective quality of the rape, then it does. And it doesn't matter what people think about it, or what cultures decides, or what your evolutionary conditioning is. The rape is still wrong. The other alternative is that you're not talking about the rape. You're talking about yourself. You're talking about your genetic conditioning. You're talking about your culture's decision about that kind of thing. And if that's the case, then the truth of the wrongness of the rape is simply in the individual or the subject. And this is why philosophers distinguish between ethical objectivism and ethical subjectivism. Now there's lots of different subjectivisms in ethics. But simply put, if you're an ethical subjectivist, you're a relativist. And actual ethics don't exist. Ethics are an illusion. If you conclude that ethics are an illusion, there's lots of different ways to explain it. Michael's written a really great book, I think, called The Science Of Good And Evil. I've read most of it, and it's well written, and it's very compelling. But it's a description about how the illusion of ethics has taken place. If you want to go that route, you're welcome to go that route. But what you can't do is you can't then talk about morality as if it's objective when your explanations are subjective. So this is a problem that I think all atheists, including Michael, have to solve. Are ethics objective or relative?

And if they're relative, then how can we make moral judgments that are meaningful on other people?

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Wow, let's just get right into it. Well, I don't think it's quite so black and white. That is to say I think there are provisional moral truths that exist whether there's a God or not. In other words, it's wrong, morally, absolutely morally wrong to rape and murder. And that would be true whether there was a God or not. In other words, if…is God saying that it's wrong because it's really wrong, and He's instructing us in his Holy Scripture that it's wrong? Or is it only wrong because He said so? And if it turned out there wasn't a God, would that make it okay? And my answer is no, it really is wrong, whether God says it's wrong or not. That is to say I think it really exists, a real, moral standard like that. Why? Well, because first, you could ask the person who is being affected, we should always ask the moral recipient of the act, how do you feel about being raped or murdered or stolen from or lied to. And the moral actor will tell you, it doesn't matter whether, if I could use a current example, I haven't any idea if Tiger Woods and his wife are religious or not. But you can just ask his wife whether it was morally right or wrong, and she'll tell you. It doesn't matter whether there's a God or not. It's wrong. And so that's the first principle. Just ask. Ask the moral recipient of whether it's right or wrong. But I think Greg's after something deeper, that is to say is there something even deeper still behind the moral actor's feelings about how they're treated. And the answer is yes, I think so. We're a social species. We don't live in isolation. We live as members of a group. And as such, there's no possible way our group could survive, be cohesive, be a unit of any kind of solidarity against other groups, or against a harsh environment. If there were too much violations of social norms, that is if there were constant lying and cheating and raping and murdering, there's no way a social group could hang together. And as such, as we all know, we're very tribal. We're tribal against other groups, but within our groups, we're very pro-social, altruistic, cooperative. We have a good and evil in our nature. So to this extent, I find myself interesting often in agreement with my conservative friends on most of the things they consider morally, moral truths. That is, we share the same moral values, even though I come at it from a different perspective.

HH: Greg?

GK: Yeah, I'm actually not after something deeper here, Michael. At least to start out the discussion, I'm trying to be as simple and clear and precise as possible, because it's very easy to weave together a bunch of things that sound persuasive, but turn out to be different things. Like for example, Darwinian evolution, which is a materialistic process, and here I mean the blind watchmaker thesis, the neo-Darwinian synthesis, natural selection working on mutations, and a kind of a cultural evolution that Michael has just referred to as we work together as a group to survive as a group. Those are two entirely different things. One is materialistic, Darwinian, the other one is intelligent design, quite frankly, where the group gets together and makes some determinations to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What I'm trying to do is to be able to answer the question that came up initially, is God necessary for morality, which Michael denies. It's

to say well, what is it that morality, that we're trying to describe? It is either objective, and therefore an immaterial obligation that applies to certain behaviors, or it is subjective. The things that Michael described were variously subjective, evolutionary elements, subjective cultural elements, but then he affirmed that we all have good and evil in our nature, or an awareness of that. I agree with that entirely. We all are aware of those things. That's why even if we don't believe in God, we can still know morality and follow it. The question is what accounts for real, genuine objective morality?

HH: One minute to the break, Michael Shermer.

MS: I'm not arguing for cultural evolution. I'm actually arguing as part of our, what you described as materialistic, natural selection, Darwinian evolution, that it's not enough to just pretend or fake being a good group member. You actually have to believe it, feel it, and live it. So what I'm arguing is that natural selected certain moral sentiments, as Adam Smith called them, moral feelings, an actual empathy, Adam Smith talked about, we actually empathize with somebody else, we can put ourselves into their shoes and feel their pain, I'm arguing that's very real. It's every bit as real a part of our evolutionary heritage as our eyes and our hands.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, you were saying that evolutionary biology has produced a real morality.

MS: Yeah, I think really, Adam Smith had it right in his very first book, The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, long before Darwin, that we actually have in our biological nature, our human nature, the capacity to feel other people's pain. He called it empathy, we think of it often either as empathy or sympathy. That is, we really do connect to other people. A lot of good research on this now, brain scans, you can show somebody a little video of somebody they know, or have feelings for, getting pricked with a pin, and the same areas of their brain light up, the pain receptors, as in the person getting the pin prick. In other words, we have an evolved tendency to really be deeply, emotionally connected to our fellow group members. And that's why I say groups like World Vision, where you want to adopt a child, it doesn't help to show a picture of 10,000 starving African kids. What does affect us is one child, a picture of one child with a little biography. That's how you get people to adopt a child to donate. The reason for that is because essentially they're tricking the brain, our brains into making that stranger an honorary family member, an honorary within group member, which is why I argue that free trade is one of the best ways of defusing normal tribal tensions between people. It makes them honorary friends, honorary members. Well, what's going on there is we're tricking the brain into sort of this evolutionary rule of thumb – be nice to people that are like you and that are related to you, and that you know, and that are fellow group members, and don't do what our natural tendency is, is to be tribal and xenophobic against those other guys. And free trade is one of the best things you can do for that. So I'm arguing that's actually tapping something deep within us.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, basically, I agree with Mike completely here. We do have this tendency, and it seems to be universal among humankind. The question is, what is that tendency, actually? And what is the best way to explain it? And I see like a handful of significant problems with using evolution to explain morality. The first one is that evolution is a materialistic process. And here, I'm going back to an original point, and I don't want people to lose it. There is no way that you can take molecules, and reorganize them in any fashion, over any length of time, and have pop out of the mixture an objective moral principle that's immaterial, and that applies to human beings. All you're going to get is a reorganization of the molecules. And what they can produce, and this is what Mike has done in his book, and he mentioned just s few moments ago, they can produce sentiments. They can produce feelings. They can produce behavior. But this leads us to the second problem of using evolution to explain morality, is that morality is more than sentiments, feelings and behavior. Morality entails things like motive and intention. I mean, you could have a guy walk into a garage, walk out with a hose, and is that wrong? Well, it depends. Is it his hose or somebody else's hose? Did he intend to take the other person's hose? Is he borrowing the hose? So we can see here are elements that are part of the moral thing that needs to be explained, that are immaterial, and therefore the Darwinian explanation can't even in principle go there. It can't do that job. But here's the worst problem. Regardless of what our sentiments happen to be regarding moral actions, we can feel good or feel bad or whatever, the problem is that morality is prescriptive, not merely descriptive. That is it tells us not just what we did, but what we ought to have done in the past, and what we ought to do in the future. That is not something that any Darwinian mechanism can describe, because nothing about my biology can inveigh upon me to act a certain way for moral reasons in the future. It doesn't tell me why I should be good tomorrow. This is a huge difference between these two views, the descriptive and the prescriptive. Prescriptive is part of morality, and can't even, in principle, be explained by an evolutionary materialistic system.

HH: Michael Shermer, I'll give you a start on that. We have about 45 seconds to the break, so you may want to…we'll come back after the break and pick up. But what's your start to that?

MS: Well, the start would be that again, let's not think of evolution just as nature red and tooth and claw, and it's nasty, brutish and short, but that in fact, we have this whole other social evolution. And I'm not talking about cultural evolution where we consciously make decisions, but subconsciously, because it's in part of our nature to actually, seriously, deeply feel for other people and their actions, and the consequences of our actions, so that we actually have a sense of right and wrong that we're born with, but then culture taps into and tweaks, one way or the other.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, Greg had made the argument that the Darwinian model simply cannot explain immaterial concepts like morality, that there's just no way you can rearrange the molecules to get there. You're saying well, yes you

can.

MS: Yeah, I think so, because if we think of morality as another suite of emotions that are involved with other people's behaviors, the consequences of our actions, how we feel about them, how people feel about us when we do these things, that's as every bit as important a biological part of our nature as anything else we talk about. So let's take a real simple emotion. When you're hungry, nobody does any calculations about the caloric input/output ratios of eating an apple versus an ice cream, although now it's posted on the walls for us to see. But we just feel hungry, and we feel hungry for certain kinds of foods. The feeling of hunger is a proxy for something else. Evolution's done the calculating for us. You need food, so we're going to, your hypothalamus is going to secrete these certain chemicals that causes your stomach to rumble and so on. When you're attracted to somebody else, a member of the opposite sex, nobody does the calculation by, let's say, a man finds a woman attractive who has a .67 hip to waist ratio, and an hourglass figure, although that is pretty much universal. Nobody walks about with calipers taking measurements of who they're going to want to date or ask out. You just look around, and you just go wow, I really find this woman attractive. It's a feeling you have, okay? So those are kind of simple emotions, but sliding up the scale, the moral emotions are really no different. When I lie to somebody, I've violated a social norm, and they respond in a very angry, hostile way. So those emotions that we both share, guilt, shame, anger, disgust, involved a social relationship that whether it was a norm violation, those are the kinds of emotions that are just like hunger and sexual attraction that are built into us by nature, by evolution. Or, if you wish, this is how God created the moral sentiments, just like He created everything else in the universe, through a process of nature. I think that's equally reasonable to argue. So I don't see that it has to be an atheistic viewpoint versus a theistic viewpoint to get to our moral sentiments. Why couldn't God have used evolution to create the moral sentiments as I've described them?

GK: Yeah, well, you don't actually believe that, I know, Mike, so this is kind of like adding God to the soup, you know, if it makes people feel better. But the basic argument is that evolution all by itself can do the trick. And I think if your listeners are listening carefully, what they're going to hear is Mike has just described, and if I'm being unfair to your assessment here, let me know, Mike, that moral feelings are simply that. They are sophisticated emotions that do some work for us for survival, and even on a group level. Now there's a name for this. It's called emotivism. A.J. Ayer, the famous atheist, offered this description of morality. It's a relativistic scheme of morality. Morality doesn't actually exist, Ayer argued. There is no objective right or wrong. Rape isn't wrong itself. What happens is, we have feelings about it, and we express it in moral language, but rape isn't really wrong. So your listeners are going to have to ask themselves the questions. When they just survey their own moral senses, and we all have access to this, do we want to believe that scientists have figured out that really what we're doing is feeling sophisticated, complicated emotions, and that the emotions are in us, and we are not seeing anything about the action? Or does it seem like rape is wrong? Look, when I say rape is wrong, I'm talking about the rape. When I say liver is awful, I'm talking about me.

I'm talking about my own tastes and preferences. It's interesting, as Michael has given his explanation, though, that he's doing, and I don't know if you are aware of this, Michael, but you're doing the very thing that I kind of warned against. You give a description of the foundations of morality that turn out to be relativistic, but then there's a smuggling of a more objectivistic morality in the back door, like when Michael says you don't have to do what your nature tells you to do, in other words, what you've been programmed by evolution to do. You can kind of rise above that. Well, now we're talking about a morality that isn't dictated by evolution, but a morality that we can employ through our acts of will, to rise above this kind of brutish evolutionary morality. And that sounds suspiciously like the very thing that I'm talking about here.

MS: But I don't mean, there's nothing to rise above by itself. Yes, we have to say rise above our tribal instincts to be xenophobic when we meet somebody who's a stranger, who's different from us. We all struggle against that, particularly in a black and white America, where there's always been this underlying tension. Indeed, so culture helps us do that – education, travel, diversity of exposure to different people. That makes you a little more tolerant. Okay, but I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about is tapping into the good part of our nature, the fact that in addition to that xenophobic tribalism we have, we also have this other side that almost never gets discussed in evolutionary…even in evolutionary circles, you'll still hear evolutionary biologists talking about, in a way that Huxley did, and Herbert Spencer did in Darwin's own time, that we have to somehow struggle mightily against our genes to overcome that nasty tendency we have to want to rape, kill, pillage and destroy. Well no, actually, we have this whole other side that's just as genetically programmed into our nature. And the point of culture – education, politics, economics and so on, is to tap into the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said.

GK: Okay, here's the question I have for you, Michael, then. You've identified that really, we have good and we have bad. That's part of, under your terms, that's part of our genetic nature, and we can choose to tap into what you call the good side. Why ever should we do such a thing if there is not a higher standard that directs our action to the better side, your words, than the bad side, your words, if really, ultimately, they are both the result of a genetic evolution, and from outside terms, neither is better than the other. Why should we do that, Michael?

MS: Yeah, well I don't see how entering God into the equation changes that problem at all.

GK: Well, that's the next step. What I'm trying to show is that the should comes from the outside, and if we can demonstrate that, then we can ask…

Read the rest by click here to get the PDF.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

June 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

Phone call recording of IRS agent reveals anti-Christian, anti free speech bias

June 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Alliance Defending Freedom.

Excerpt:

> Alliance Defending Freedom made public Monday audio of a phone conversation that the Internal Revenue Service placed to a non-profit organization that provides support to women in abusive pregnancy situations. In the recorded phone conversation, an IRS agent lectures the president of the organization about forcing its religion and beliefs on others and inaccurately explains that the group must remain neutral on issues such as abortion.
>
> Alliance Defending Freedom represents the group, which did not receive its tax-exempt status until last week, nearly two and a half years after applying for it.
>
> "The IRS is a tax collector; it shouldn't be allowed to be the speech and belief police," said Senior Legal Counsel Erik Stanley. "The current scandal isn't new but has merely exposed the abuse of power that characterizes this agency and threatens our fundamental freedoms."
>
> The IRS grants tax exemptions to religious, educational, and/or charitable organizations. In January 2011, Pro-Life Revolution, which operates from Texas under all three purposes, filed an application for tax-exempt status with the IRS.
>
> Four months later, the IRS sent a letter requesting "more information" and an explanation of how the organization's activities are educational or charitable even though IRS rules specify that an organization need only operate for "one or more" of the three exempt purposes. President of Pro-Life Revolution Ania Joseph nonetheless replied and answered the IRS's questions.
>
> In March 2012, Joseph received a call from IRS Exempt Organization Specialist Sherry Wan, who told her that, in order to obtain a tax exemption, "You cannot force your religion or force your beliefs on somebody else…. You have to know your boundaries. You have to know your limits. You have to respect other people's beliefs."

The really horrible thing about this secular leftist fascism is that it is all taxpayer-funded. The victim of this inquisition is paying for the inquisition. Not even the Roman Catholic church did that.

Lee Strobel: why does God allow tragedy and suffering?

June 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found MP3 audio, video and a full transcript of Lee Strobel's sermon on suffering at Apologetics 315.

Strobel has 5 points in his sermon:

- God is not the creator of evil and suffering.
- Though suffering isn't good, God can use it to accomplish good.
- The day is coming when suffering will cease and God will judge evil.
- Our suffering will pale in comparison to what God has in store for his followers.
- We decide whether to turn bitter or turn to God for peace and courage.

Here's one of them:

> Though suffering isn't good, God can use it to accomplish good. He does this by fulfilling His promise inRomans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
>
> Notice that the verse doesn't say God causes evil and suffering, just that he promises to cause good to emerge. And notice that the verse doesn't say we all will see immediately or even in this life how God has caused good to emerge from a bad circumstance. Remember, we only see things dimly in this world. And notice that God doesn't make this promise to everyone. He makes the solemn pledge that he will take the bad circumstances that befall us and cause good to emerge if we're committed to following Him.
>
> The Old Testament gives us a great example in the story of Joseph, who went through terrible suffering, being sold into slavery by his brothers, unfairly accused of a crime and falsely imprisoned. Finally, after a dozen years, he was put in a role of great authority where he could save the lives of his family and many others.
> This is what he said to his brothers in Genesis 50:20: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." And if you're committed to God, He promises that He can and will take whatever pain you're experiencing and draw something good from it.
>
> You might say, "No, he can't in my circumstance. The harm was too great, the damage was too extreme, the depth of my suffering has been too much. No, in my case there's no way God can cause any good to emerge."
>
> But if you doubt God's promise, listen to what a wise man said to me when I was researching my book The Case for Faith: God took the very worst thing that has

> ever happened in the history of the universe — deicide, or the death of God on the cross — and turned it into the very best thing that has happened in history of universe: the opening up of heaven to all who follow Him. So if God can take the very worst circumstance imaginable and turn it into the very best situation possible, can he not take the negative circumstances of your life and create something good from them?
>
> He can and He will. God can use our suffering to draw us to Himself, to mold and sharpen our character, to influence others for Him – He can draw something good from our pain in a myriad of ways…if we trust and follow Him.

Click through for links to the audio and video, as well as a PDF of the full transcript.

I wrote a post on the problem of evil recently which surveys more academic responses to the problem of evil.

Mike Licona lectures on new insights into the resurrection of Jesus

June 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a quick overview of Michael Licona's latest book on the resurrection, entitled "The Resurrection of Jesus".

60 minutes of lecture, 20 minutes of Q&A.

Summary:

- Dr. Licona's background and education
- The definition of history and philosophy of history
- Postmodern approaches to history
- Historical bedrock: facts that are historically demonstrable
- Historical criterion 1: Explanatory scope
- Historical criterion 2: Explanatory power
- Historical criterion 3: Plausibility
- Historical criterion 4: Ad Hoc / Speculation / non-evidenced assumptions
- Inference to the best explanation
- Investigating miracle claims: is it possible? How?
- Objection of James D.G. Dunn
- Objection of Bart Ehrman
- New Testament sources: Gospels and Paul's letters
- The Gnostic gospels: are they good sources?
- The minimal facts
- The hallucination hypothesis
- The best explanation

While watching this lecture, it struck what good preparation it was for understanding debates. And I have a new Mike Licona debate to post next week, too.

If you're interested in Mike's minimal facts case for the resurrection, here's a video on that:

Lee Strobel and Mike discuss the minimal facts approach to the resurrection, as well as the views of skeptical scholar Bart Ehrman, whom Mike has debated several times.

You can donate to Mike Licona's ministry here: Risen Jesus. I do recommend his ministry.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

Obama administration approves Plan B morning after pill for young girls

June 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Family Research Council reports on a very disappointing story.

Excerpt:

> If there's one thing the Obama administration has mastered, it's walking out on their responsibilities in court. Yesterday, the Justice Department sent its Plan B appeal to the same dust heap as its DOMA defense, telling reporters that it would give up its legal campaign after a couple of recent setbacks. The administration's policy, which for two years had been the only thing standing between little girls and a powerful birth control drug, is now a thing of the past, as Health and Human Services (HHS) officially bows out of the battle so many parents willed it to keep fighting. The sudden surrender by Secretary Kathleen Sebelius means that the controversial and potent morning-after pill will be available to anyone — of any age — without a prescription.
>
> Before Monday, the administration took a lot of heat for pitting itself against the President's closest allies — radical feminists and abortion groups who object to even the slightest restrictions on "contraception." In a letter to U.S. District Judge Edward Korman, who authored the scathing ruling against Sebelius's policy, the government's attorneys promised to step aside and allow unlimited sales. As soon as the manufacturers submit a new drug application, the FDA promises to fast-track the pills to drugstore shelves.
>
> Initially, the DOJ had asked Korman to suspend his ruling until an appeals court could weigh in — which it did last week. And although the judges' decision was an obstacle, there were plenty of legal options to overcome it. Instead, the President dropped the case — along with the facade of concern.
>
> Judge Korman, like President Obama, has two children. Yet neither man seems overly concerned that the drug they're both endorsing has never been tested on pre-teen and adolescent girls. Judge Korman called HHS's policy "scientifically unjustified," when in fact, the only thing that's scientifically unjustified is the effect of these high doses of hormones on young girls. The FDA hasn't conducted a single study on Plan B's risks to girls under 17 — but as far as liberals are concerned, nothing should hinder access to anything related to sex, including personal safety.

There was one reaction to this story that I wanted to quote here:

> Janice Crouse, also of CWFA, responded: "Once again, those who yell the loudest about caring about the nation's children and youth applaud a decision to place our kids in a special interest experiment. Plan B, popularly called the 'morning-

> after pill' is a much-higher-dosage version of the regular birth control pill (which used to require a doctor's prescription and continued doctor's supervision). It is irresponsible to advocate over-the-counter use of these high-potency drugs, which would make them available to anyone – including those predators who exploit young girls. Mark my words, it will not be long before we see girls and women forced to purchase Plan B for their abuser to keep them and others enslaved. This is a pimp, predator, and pedophile's dream – unlimited access to Plan B."
>
> She added: "This is a political decision, made by those who stand to profit financially from an action that puts ideology ahead of the nation's girls and young women. Where is the scientific data and solid reasoning behind a decision that endangers minors?"
>
> Kristan Hawkins of Students for Life of America also weighed in on the decision.
>
> She told LifeNews: "President Obama is waging a War on Girls by allowing young children to get Plan B without a physician or parent's care or knowledge. The morning after pill is a megadose of the birth-control pill, which has been categorized by the World Health Organization as a Group I carcinogen. That's the highest possible ranking – cigarettes are also in Group I. So why are drugstores required to put cigarettes behind the counter and ask for a photo id to stop minors from purchasing them, but President Obama is now ordering the morning after pill be sold over the counter, next to candy bars and packs of gum? This is not reproductive justice, this is child abuse."

Just to be clear, according to the drug manufacturer, Plan B does cause abortions in some situations by preventing the implantation of a fertilized egg.

New York Times: no global warming in the last 15 years, despite CO2 increase

June 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> As unlikely as this may sound, we have lucked out in recent years when it comes to global warming.
>
> The rise in the surface temperature of earth has been markedly slower over the last 15 years than in the 20 years before that. And that lull in warming has occurred even as greenhouse gases have accumulated in the atmosphere at a record pace.
>
> The slowdown is a bit of a mystery to climate scientists. True, the basic theory that predicts a warming of the planet in response to human emissions does not suggest that warming should be smooth and continuous. To the contrary, in a climate system still dominated by natural variability, there is every reason to think the warming will proceed in fits and starts.
>
> But given how much is riding on the scientific forecast, the practitioners of climate science would like to understand exactly what is going on. They admit that they do not, even though some potential mechanisms of the slowdown have been suggested. The situation highlights important gaps in our knowledge of the climate system, some of which cannot be closed until we get better measurements from high in space and from deep in the ocean.

Here was a similar recent story from left-leaning Reuters news service.

Excerpt:

> Scientists are struggling to explain a slowdown in climate change that has exposed gaps in their understanding and defies a rise in global greenhouse gas emissions.
>
> Often focused on century-long trends, most climate models failed to predict that the temperature rise would slow, starting around 2000. Scientists are now intent on figuring out the causes and determining whether the respite will be brief or a more lasting phenomenon.
>
> […]“The climate system is not quite so simple as people thought,” said Bjorn Lomborg, a Danish statistician and author of “The Skeptical Environmentalist” who estimates that moderate warming will be beneficial for crop growth and human health.
>
> Some experts say their trust in climate science has declined because of the many uncertainties. The UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had

> to correct a 2007 report that exaggerated the pace of melt of the Himalayan glaciers and wrongly said they could all vanish by 2035.
>
> “My own confidence in the data has gone down in the past five years,” said Richard Tol, an expert in climate change and professor of economics at the University of Sussex in England.

Global warming is not now and has never been a scientific hypothesis. Global warming is the corruption of science in order to serve political ends. What is really happening is that big government is paying scientists to produce “research” which advocates for bigger government. In effect, government bribed the university professors to fake research that could be used to trick the public into voting for more government control of the private sector. The fastest way to solve this would be to get the government out of the higher education business and let science serve the needs of ordinary people instead of corrupt bureaucrats.

Greg Koukl explains how to be a consistent moral relativist

June 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The absolute easiest way to get into a good apologetics conversation with someone is to ask them what makes something right or wrong on their view.

Just ask the person you want to engage two questions:

1. Is it it wrong to treat people badly just because of their skin color?
2. What makes it wrong?

Now, as I see it, there are only 3 possible answers to this question.

1. I personally prefer not to do that – it is wrong *for me.*
2. Our culture has evolved a set of customs that apply for us in this time and place, and that set of customs says that members of the society ought not to do that. It is wrong *for us, here and now.*
3. Humans are designed to act in a certain way, and part of that design is that we ought not to do that. Acting in line with our design allows us to flourish, (Aristotle's *eudaimonia*).

Response #1, is called "moral relativism". Response #2 is called "cultural relativism". Response #3 is my view: moral realism. I believe in a hierarchy of moral absolutes that exist objectively, because they are part of God's design for us and the universe.

I wanted to go over a paper by Greg Koukl from Stand to Reason, in which he critiques moral relativism. His paper is called "Seven Things You Can't Do as a Moral Relativist". First, let's see the list of seven things.

1. You can't make moral judgments about other people's moral choices
2. You can't complain about God allowing evil and suffering
3. You can't blame people or praise people for their moral choices
4. You can't claim that any situation is unfair or unjust
5. You can't improve your morality
6. You can't have meaningful discussions about morality
7. You can't promote the obligation to be tolerant

You'll have to read the paper to see how he argues for these, but I wanted to say a brief word about number 1.

> **Rule #1: Relativists Can't Accuse Others of Wrong-Doing**
>
> Relativism makes it impossible to criticize the behavior of others, because relativism ultimately denies that there is such a thing as wrong- doing. In other words, if you believe that morality is a matter of personal definition, then you

> can’t ever again judge the actions of others. Relativists can’t even object on moral grounds to racism. After all, what sense can be made of the judgment “apartheid is wrong” when spoken by someone who doesn’t believe in right and wrong? What justification is there to intervene? Certainly not human rights, for there are no such things as rights. Relativism is the ultimate pro-choice position because it accepts every personal choice—even the choice to be racist.

In moral relativism, what you ought to do is totally up to you. Morality is just like a lunch buffet – you pick what you like based on your personal preferences.

I remember one particular discussion I had with a non-Christian co-worker. Both she and her live-in boyfriend were moral relativists. They were fighting because she was angry about his not having (or wanting) a job, and he was angry because when he asked her for space, she immediately ran out and cheated on him.

What’s interesting is that both of these people chose the other in order to escape being judged themselves. I think this happens a lot in relationships today. Both people don’t want to be judged by the other person, but they both want to the other person to treat them well and to honor moral obligations. Isn’t that interesting? I don’t think that you can have something like marriage work when neither person takes moral obligations to the other person seriously.

72-year-old grandmother uses gun to defend her home from intruder

June 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a really well-written news article by Fox News.

Full text:

> A 72-year-old Southern California grandmother who shot at — and narrowly missed — a man trying to break into her home said Tuesday she was shocked at the attention her action was getting but does not regret defending herself and her husband, an 85-year-old World War II veteran who uses a wheelchair.
>
> Jan Cooper, of Anaheim, fired one shot from her .357-magnum Smith & Wesson revolver around 12:30 a.m. Sunday as a man attempted to break into her home. During a 911 call of the incident, Cooper can be heard begging with the dispatcher to send deputies and warns that she has a gun at the ready as her Rottweiler barks furiously in the background.
>
> Minutes later, a breathless Cooper says the man has come to the back porch and is trying to get in the house through a sliding door. Through the vertical blinds, Cooper saw his silhouette just inches away through the glass as he began to slide open the door.
>
> “I’m firing!” Cooper shouts to the dispatcher as a loud band goes off.
>
> Cooper then curses at the suspect, shouting at him to “back up.”
>
> “You’d better get the police here. I don’t know whether I hit him or not. I’m not sure. He’s standing at my door, my back door. He’s in my yard,” she said.
>
> The suspect, 31-year-old Brandon Alexander Perez, was not hit and was arrested a short while later by responding deputies, who heard the gunshot, said Jim Amormino, spokesman for the Orange County Sheriff’s Department.
>
> Perez has pleaded not guilty to a burglary charge and has a court date later this month. The Associated Press was unable to leave an after-hours message for his attorney.
>
> Perez had a rap sheet that included other burglary and narcotics charges and was on parole and staying at a halfway house not far from the Coopers’ address, Amormino said.
>
> Cooper’s gun, which she has owned for about 20 years, was legally purchased and properly registered, he said.
>
> “Even though that dog was barking, he still was desperate to get in. So who knows what may have happened if she didn’t fire that round,” Amormino said.
>
> On Tuesday, Cooper was soft-spoken and composed, with her gray hair pulled back neatly in a hairband and her husband at her side during a news conference

> at a sheriff's substation.
>
> Cooper said she is amazed by the anger in her voice — and the curse word she let fly — after she fired the shot.
>
> "I am a Christian woman and I'm very proud of it and I don't curse but after I shot, rage took hold and I just blasted away," she said. "And, in fact, afterwards my husband said, `I've never heard you talk like that!"'
>
> The stunned intruder apologized to Cooper after she fired, she recalled, telling her, "I'm sorry, ma'am. I'm leaving. Please don't shoot."
>
> The grandmother of a 15-year-old grandson said she doesn't regret firing her weapon, although she has considered how she would have reacted if she had hit or killed the man. Deputies have told her that, based on his height and the bullet hole, the shot that she fired through a narrow gap in the sliding door passed within inches of his left cheek.
>
> "I don't mean to shoot anybody," said Cooper, a self-described tomboy who has also tried archery and knife-throwing and has owned guns since her teens. "But whatever's necessary to literally stop them — he was not going to come into my home."
>
> **Her husband, Bob Cooper, chuckled when asked if his wife had learned her aggression from him and his military service. Cooper worked gathering intelligence in Italy and France in the build-up to D-Day and spent years going to the shooting range with his wife after the war, he said.**
>
> **"I'm not surprised at all, not one bit," he said. "I know her capabilities and what she can do if she has to."**

This is a great story because it really explains what it is like to have a crazy criminal trying to break into your house, and the police are basically incapable of helping you. It's you and the criminal, and that's why Americans believe in legal firearm ownership for law-abiding citizens.

I really liked this article and the way it was written. Please consider forwarding it on to your friends who may not understand what being a victim of a crime is really like. And husbands, teach your wives how to use firearms. The life you save may be your own!

Related posts

- Woman opens fire on gang of thugs trying to get into her home
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense
- Massachusetts man facing multiple charges for shooting a bear on his property
- Thomas Sowell: Guns can be used defensively to save lives
- 21-year-old man uses legally owned firearm to defend family from three criminals
- Woman raped at gunpoint in "gun free zone" on university campus
- Man uses firearm to defend home and 2-year-old son from criminals

- Great grandmother fires at mugger with legally-owned, legally-carried handgun
- Man who doesn’t believe in guns thanks gun owners for protecting him from burglar
- Man shoots robbery suspect to protect his 2-year-old son
- Woman uses gun to defend herself and her children from home intruder
- 12-year-old girl shoots home intruder in the shoulder with legally owned firearm
- Armed bystander stops stabbing outside school
- 14-year old boy uses parents’ handgun to deter armed intruder
- Woman defends herself from intruder using legally-owned firearm
- Recently widowed mother uses legally owned gun to defend her child
- Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home

New study: health benefits of marriage are unique to opposite-sex unions

June 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the blog of the National Organization for Marriage.

Excerpt:

> A new study in the Journal of Epidemiology followed 6.5 million Danish persons for nearly 30 years (for a total of 112.5 million person-years) looking at how living arrangements (being single, cohabiting, married, widowed or in a same-sex union) affected their health outcomes.
>
> From the official abstract:
>
> "[Hazard Ratios] for overall mortality changed markedly over time, most notably for persons in same-sex marriage. In 2000–2011, opposite-sex married persons (reference, HR = 1) had consistently lower mortality than persons in other marital status categories in women (HRs 1.37–1.89) and men (HRs 1.37–1.66). Mortality was particularly high for same-sex married women (HR = 1.89), notably from suicide (HR = 6.40) and cancer (HR = 1.62), whereas rates for same-sex married men (HR = 1.38) were equal to or lower than those for unmarried, divorced and widowed men. Prior marriages (whether opposite-sex or same-sex) were associated with increased mortality in both women and men (HR = 1.16–1.45 per additional prior marriage)."

So, what do we learn? We learn that just slapping the label "marriage" onto gay couples doesn't give them the same health benefits as natural marriage.

How to respond to postmodernism, relativism, subjectivism, pluralism and skepticism

June 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Four articles from Paul Copan over at the UK site "BeThinking". Each article responds to a different slogan that you might hear if you're dealing with non-Christians on the street.

"That's just your interpretation!"

Some of his possible responses:

- Gently ask, 'Do you mean that your interpretation should be preferred over mine? If so, I'd like to know why you have chosen your interpretation over mine. You must have a good reason.'
- Remind your friend that you are willing to give reasons for your position and that you are not simply taking a particular viewpoint arbitrarily.
- Try to discern if people toss out this slogan because they don't like your interpretation. Remind them that there are many truths we have to accept even if we don't like them.
- 'There are no facts, only interpretations' is a statement that is presented as a fact. If it is just an interpretation, then there is no reason to take it seriously.

More responses are here.

"You Christians are intolerant!"

Some of his possible responses:

- If you say that the Christian view is bad because it is exclusive, then you are also at that exact moment doing the very thing that you are saying is bad. You have to be exclusive to say that something is bad, since you exclude it from being good by calling it bad.
- There is a difference, a clear difference between tolerance and truth. They are often confused. We should hold to what we believe with integrity but also support the rights of others to disagree with our viewpoint.
- Sincerely believing something doesn't make it true. You can be sincere, but sincerely wrong. If I get onto a plane and sincerely believe that it won't crash then it does, then my sincerity is quite hopeless. It won't change the facts. Our beliefs, regardless of how deeply they are held, have no effect on reality.

More responses are here.

"That's true for you, but not for me!"

Some of his possible responses:

- If my belief is only true for *me*, then why isn't your belief only true for you? Aren't

you saying you want me to believe the same thing you do?
- You say that no belief is true for everyone, but you want everyone to believe what you do.
- You're making universal claims that relativism is *true* and absolutism is *false*. You can't in the same breath say, 'Nothing is universally true' *and* 'My view is universally true.' Relativism falsifies itself. It claims there is *one* position that is true – *relativism!*

More responses are here.

"If you were born in India, you'd be a Hindu!"

Some of his possible responses:

- Just because there are many different religious answers and systems doesn't automatically mean pluralism is correct.
- If we are culturally conditioned regarding our religious beliefs, then why should the religious pluralist think his view is *less* arbitrary or conditioned than the exclusivist's?
- If the Christian needs to justify Christianity's claims, the pluralist's views need just as much substantiation.

More responses are here.

And a bonus: "How do you know you're not wrong?".

Being a Christian is fun because you get to think about things at the same deep level that you think about anything else in life. Christianity isn't about rituals, community and feelings. It's about truth.

In case you want to see this in action with yours truly, check this out.

J. Warner Wallace: who is responsible for explaining Christianity to your child?

June 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a must-read post from J. Warner Wallace, author of "Cold Case Christianity".

Excerpt:

> It's tempting to assign our responsibility as parents to others, especially when it comes to issues that require some expertise we don't already possess. When my daughter was struggling with geometry, my first inclination was to hire a tutor, even though my architecture degree forced me through several layers of calculus and I was proficient at geometry at one time myself. Instead of hiring someone, my son and I worked through each question with my daughter. I took the time to relearn the material so I could teach it to her. It was a pain, but it was worth it. I love my daughter and I know my daughter's learning style, her concerns and her personality. I can tell when she's "getting it" and when she's just pretending to get it. For this reason, I knew I was the best person to help her, and although it required some work on my part, it was the right decision.
>
> Spiritual instruction is really no different. It's tempting to assign this form of instruction to a youth pastor or ministry. Spiritual questions are often difficult to answer and questions related to secular philosophy, historical veracity and arguments for the existence of God can seem insurmountable. When the challenges arise, it's easy to look to someone else for an answer. At times like these, most of us find ourselves saying, "Let me get you a book," or "I'll try to find someone you can talk to." But, that's not what our kids need from us when they first begin questioning. They came to *us* with their questions and they need *us* to provide them with the answers. We're the ones who love our kids enough to understand their shape and the nature of their personalities. We ought to know how best to respond to their questions as well. When your son or daughter begins questioning his or her faith, *you're* the person who needs to become the best Christian Case Maker they know. This is especially true if your kids have questions when they are very young.

I've noticed some parents at my church who seem to focus the bulk of their efforts in this life on their own enterprises. They aren't quite sure what to do with their own children. They don't know why they had them, except in order to be made happy by them. If they are concerned with religion at all, they depend on other people to teach their children about it. If parents can't explain things to their children, then children will come to believe that Christianity is something that people affirm without reasons and evidence. In addition, parents who know why they believe what they believe will find it much easier to live out authentic Christian lives. And that has a huge impact on a child.

UPDATE: I was dressing for work this morning and checking for new podcasts and found that there is a podcast for this blog post. It’s really good, I listened to the whole thing while in the gym, and I highly recommend it, even if you don’t have children yourself.

If we redefine marriage, then what will the schools teach our children about it?

June 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good article in the Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> We need to be careful not to project our adult understandings onto children. They will develop identities based on the culture around them, not on the culture we grew up in. In the past, boys knew that if they married when they grew up, they would marry a woman; and girls knew that if they married when they grew up, they would marry a man. Children understood that marriage brought men and women together to form families because every aspect of our culture conveyed that message. There was nothing automatic about it. Change the culture, and you change the outcome.
>
> What will our culture teach children now? How will parents answer children's questions? If Billy says, "Do you think I might marry Timmy when I grow up?" what is the answer? "We'll have to wait and see what your sexual orientation is and what Timmy's sexual orientation is"? Or "If you get married, it will probably be to a girl"? Instead of a clear foundation for building their self-understanding, the children will receive nebulous answers.
>
> The educational system will be an authoritative source of insecurity for children. Planned Parenthood, the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), Advocates for Youth, Answer, and Future of Sex Education (FoSE) are powerful national organizations bonded together to promote not just sex education but also "gender education" to our young. These groups have produced the *National Sexuality Education Standards* "to address the inconsistent implementation of sexuality education nationwide."
>
> Under these standards, children ages eight to ten will be taught to "define sexual orientation as romantic attraction to an individual of the same gender or of a different gender."
>
> Children ages ten to twelve will be taught, among other things, to
>
> 1. Differentiate between gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.
> 2. Analyze external influences that have an impact on one's attitudes about gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
> 3. Access accurate information about gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.
> 4. Communicate respectfully with and about people of all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations.

> Throughout these and other guidelines published by national sex and gender education groups, there is an emphasis on teaching young children three identities, underscoring a distinction between each person's biological sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation. This "three identity" approach may help some students, but it will damage the vast majority of them.
>
> In fact, the "three identities" approach will confuse us all. For example, Massachusetts has a new transgender directive about the use of bathrooms and locker rooms. Suppose someone has a male body, a female gender, and a lesbian sexual orientation. Does that person use the girl's locker room or the boy's? This is not said in jest or with a trace of sarcasm. The issues are too important and the people involved are too important. Helping children who have gender questions navigate the world is laudable, but we need to do it in a way that demonstrates a caring and a love for *all* of the children.
>
> These gender standards or a version thereof are coming to a community near you. The goal of the "gender education" groups is to wrest control of education from local communities and parents and move the curriculum to a more centralized authority.

How will this work out in the future? Well, it's already being pushed by left-wing activists, legislators and lawyers:

> Last month, a bill was filed in Congress (H.R. 1652) entitled the Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA). It has the backing of the American Association of University Women; the American Federation of Teachers; the American Civil Liberties Union; the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network; the NAACP; the National Association of School Psychologists; the National Association of Secondary School Principals; the National Council of La Raza; the National Education Association; and the National Women's Law Center.
>
> SNDA would bring the Massachusetts gender model to all public schools across the country, prohibiting discrimination against any student on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. The bill authorizes lawsuits and permits federal authorities to intercede if necessary.
>
> The same effort is underway in many states that still allow local communities and parents a voice in sex and gender education. Even Massachusetts allows for a certain amount of local control but a bill is pending to eliminate local community influence and impose statewide standards.
>
> If local control cannot be taken by legislation or administrative directives, litigation will be employed. For example, the ACLU recently sued an elementary school in Utah because it removed a book about a lesbian couple from the school's library shelves and made the book available by request only. The school settled the lawsuit and put the book back on display.
>
> The drive to control sex and gender education in local school systems is and will

> continue to be relentless. The forces behind this movement are smart, powerful, and well-funded, often with millions of taxpayer dollars.

I wonder if people who support redefining marriage really have thought through the consequences of their position. They may think “this isn’t going to affect me at all”, and then one day wake up to find a big surprise, courtesy of the public school system.

Man of Steel movie opens today, and here's a review by Focus on the Family

June 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A review of the new "Man of Steel" movie, that opens today. (H/T ECM) This might be an excellent movie to take Dad to on Father's Day – see below for the reasons.

Excerpt:

> Clark is an extraordinary man of character who comes by his heroism tendencies honestly. His Kryptonian parents, Jor-El and Lara Lor-Van, put their lives at risk to save their infant son and stand up to the evil schemes of General Zod. And by way of hologram, Jor-El encourages his adult son to stand strong for the people of Earth, saying, "You can embody the best of both worlds."
>
> His earthly mom and dad also give him some direct examples: During an unexpected tornado, Jonathan Kent puts his own life at risk to save others, clearly showing his son the meaning of self-sacrifice. He talks repeatedly to his boy about the importance of good choices and solid character. And when a preadolescent Clark is having something of a breakdown thanks to the onset of his supersenses, Martha Kent talks him through it. "The world is too big, Mom," Clark cries from inside a locked closet at school. "Then make it small," Martha coaches him lovingly. "Focus on my voice."
>
> So when Clark finds out about his otherworldly origins, he cries out to his father, "Can't I just keep pretending that I'm your son?" To which Jonathan immediately embraces the boy and retorts with a breaking voice, "You *are* my son."
>
> Those kinds of parental moments of love and instruction are obviously reflected in Clark's subsequent choices, large and small. Even when he's in the heat of thunderous battle, he takes the time and puts in the extra effort to deflect harm from an innocent or break a wounded soldier's fall. And it's these kinds of others-focused actions that eventually motivate human soldiers and civilians alike to unquestioningly accept Clark (aka Superman) as one of their own—belying the Kents' fears of his probable rejection.

And not just character, but spiritual issues:

> [T]his *Man of Steel* movie is one of the most spiritually symbolic and Messianic-image-packed treatments ever made about this character. Here, Clark Kent even comes to understand—at the age of 33, no less—his responsibility to step up, face off with and destroy an ultimate evil that threatens all mankind.
>
> But that's at the end. At the climax. All through this film dialogue and images hint at connections between Superman and Jesus. Several people, from Jor-El to Jonathan to Zod's female second, Faora-Ul, talk to Clark about his ability (or lack of ability) to save the people on his adopted planet. Superman levitates with his

> arms spread in a cross-like form on several occasions. When he goes to his church to ask a priest for advice, the camera's eye frames a stained-glass representation of Christ over the young Clark's shoulder. The priest tells him, "Sometimes you have to take a leap of faith first. The trust part comes later."
>
> After Clark rescues a bus full of children, a kid's mother states, "This was an act of God!" Clark asks his dad, "Did God do this to me?" When Lara worries about her infant son's safety on Earth, Jor-El assures her, "He'll be a god to them." Bad guy Kryptonians tell Superman that they will win because "evolution always wins."

And their conclusion:

> "It's the most realistic movie I've made," director Zack Snyder (who helmed *Watchmen, 300* and *Dawn of the Dead*) told the *L.A. Times*. "There's no tongue in anyone's cheek. I'm not apologizing for Superman in any way. I'm saying, 'Superman is a thing that must be taken seriously and embraced and understood.'"
>
> Indeed, his version of the now 75-year-old superhero story *is* straightforward and earnest. It's an honest-to-goodness sci-fi opera that reflects both the classic roots and the modern comic book sensibilities of its well-known superhero legend.
>
> […][W]e come to what Snyder calls Superman's "inherent goodness." The director says, "If you really think about it, you still want him to be right and to make the right choices and to do the right thing. I think that we all hope for that in ourselves, and I think that's what always has made him a very interesting character. He's a Christ-like figure. There's no two ways about it."
>
> **And Snyder leaves that inherent goodness and Christ-likeness in his film for all to see.** (Through the cascades of sci-fi dust and debris, of course.)

Evolution News even commented on the evolution issue:

> No, I haven't seen *Man of Steel* yet since it just opened today but I do want to. Among other points of interest: the bad guys, pursuing Kal-El a/k/a Clark Kent to Earth, are animated in the film's telling by an eerily Darwinian philosophy.
>
> In one clip, chief bad guy General Zod confronts Superman's birth father Jor-El and calls on him to join in a campaign against the "degenerative bloodlines that led us to this state." Later, in a duel with planet Krypton's assassin sent to wipe him out, Superman gets knocked around, which prompts the villainess to observe that he is weak: "The fact that you possess a sense of morality, and we do not, gives us an evolutionary advantage. And if history has proven anything, it is that evolution always wins." (See the MTV clip above.)
>
> The only problem with her analysis is that evolution, in the presumed Darwinian sense here, "always wins" by discarding things that don't give an "evolutionary advantage." That would seem to include the exquisitely tuned conscience with

> which human beings are gifted — what advantage does *that* confer? — the existence of which, as we know well, poses one of many enigmas that a Darwinian view is helpless in explaining.

I think that it would be a good idea to go into the theaters and see this movie at least once to signal Hollywood about what people really want to see. Obviously, it would be great if we could go into theaters and see William Lane Craig debates and Thomas Sowell lectures, but when something good and wholesome comes out of Hollywood, we should go and see it so that we at least send a message to the movie makers who are influencing the culture. When an organization like Focus on the Family clears a movie, then surely it's safe to go see it.

If you don't feel like going out to see a movie this weekend, here's a list of older "character" movies that I also recommend:

- Rules of Engagement (Samuel L. Jackson)
- Bella
- The Lives of Others
- United 93
- Taken (Liam Neeson)
- Cinderella Man
- The Blind Side
- Cyrano de Bergerac (Gerard Depardieu)
- Amazing Grace (Ioan Gruffudd)
- We Were Soldiers
- Stand and Deliver
- Blackhawk Down
- The Pursuit of Happyness
- High Noon (Gary Cooper)
- The Way Back
- The Incredibles

If I like Superman enough, I might even add it to my list of favorites.

Greg Ganssle explains the problem of evil in three videos

June 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found these three videos on Apologetics 315. They are each about 5 minutes long.

Here's the first one:

Description:

> Part 1 of a trilogy. Greg lays out a classic argument that God does not exist, called 'The Problem of Evil'. He distinguishes two versions of that argument, which are sometimes called 'the deductive' and 'the evidential' version. He goes into some details on the deductive version.

And the second one:

Description:

> Part 2 of a trilogy. Here, Greg gives a response to the deductive version of the Problem of Evil on behalf of someone who believes that God exists. In thinking about this response, we need to think about whether God can make contradictions true, and whether God can have good reasons for allowing bad things to happen.

And the third one:

Description:

> Part 3 of a trilogy. Greg considers the evidential version of the Problem of Evil, and gives a response on behalf of someone who believes that God exists. This involves considering whether God might have a good reason to allow bad things to happen.

Recently, I was chastised by a suitor to one of my former proteges for not teaching her about what the word "theodicy" means, so I'm just going to fix that right now. Theodicy is "the branch of theology concerned with defending the attributes of God against objection s resulting from physical and moral evil".

See the links below for more.

Related posts

- Why would a good God allow people to suffer?
- William Lane Craig lectures on the evidential problem of evil
- William Lane Craig lectures on the logical problem of evil
- If God has a reason for allowing evil and suffering, should we know what it is?
- Why does God allow his creatures to suffer?
- Frank Turek: can God bring good effects out of evil events?

Texas Governor Rick Perry signs bill to legalize saying “Merry Christmas” and “Happy Hanukkah”

June 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> By law, it is now okay to say “Merry Christmas” or “Happy Hanukkah” in Texas public schools.
>
> Gov. Rick Perry signed House Bill 308 on Thursday, allowing public school students and staff to use traditional holiday greetings and display religious scenes and symbols on school property.
>
> “I’m proud we are standing up for religious freedom in our state,” Gov. Perry said.
>
> “Freedom of religion doesn’t mean freedom from religion, and people of faith often feel like they can’t express that faith publicly. HB 308 works to address that by ensuring that people of all faiths are free to use traditional holiday greetings, and display religious scenes and symbols, even on school property. It ensures freedom of expression where, for many students, teachers and administrators, it’s most important.”
>
> The bill states: “A school district may educate students about the history of traditional winter celebrations, and allow students and district staff to offer traditional greetings regarding the celebrations, including: (1) “Merry Christmas”; (2) “Happy Hanukkah”; and (3) “happy holidays.”
>
> The bill specifically says that schools may display scenes or symbols associated with religious holidays — as long as the display includes scenes or symbols of more than one religion or at least one secular scene or symbol.
>
> Displays “may not include a message that encourages adherence to a particular religious belief,” the bill says.
>
> Supporters of the bill argue that allowing teachers to display various holiday symbols associated with certain religions makes it possible for them to educate students about the history and roots of different religions.

Gosh, how will the militant fascists at American Atheists and Freedom From Religion Foundation deal with this? Militant atheism’s “good works” consist of threatening, jailing and execute people who have different beliefs than they do. That’s true atheist worship, right there. It’s about feeling good by taking away the basic human rights of other people who make you feel bad. Now that Texas has put limits on the practice of militant atheist religion (i.e. – Stalinism), the militant atheists might have to move to a country like North Korea. There, they will be happy because imprisoning and murdering Christians for acting

like Christians in public is legal. If militant atheism stands for anything, morally speaking, it stands for tyranny and totalitarianism.

Why do we celebrate Fathers Day? Why is fatherhood important?

June 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Father's Day is the day that children and wives are supposed to honor fathers by giving them respect for being providers, protectors and moral/spiritual leaders. One of the best ways to motivate this duty is by studying research to find out the difference that fathers make.

Some statistics on the importance of biological fathers from Fathers.com.

Excerpt:

> Some fathering advocates would say that almost every social ill faced by America's children is related to fatherlessness. Six are noted here. As supported by the data below, children from fatherless homes are more likely to be poor, become involved in drug and alcohol abuse, drop out of school, and suffer from health and emotional problems. Boys are more likely to become involved in crime, and girls are more likely to become pregnant as teens.

For a summary, I'll just list one fact from each of the six categories they listed.

> **1. Poverty**
>
> Fact:
>
> – Children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor. In 2002, 7.8% of children in married-couple families were living in poverty, compared to 38.4% of children in female-householder families.
>
> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002, P20-547, Table C8. Washington, D.C.: GPO 2003.
>
> **2. Drug and Alcohol Abuse**
>
> Fact:
>
> – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states, "Fatherless children are at a dramatically greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse."
>
> Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. Survey on Child Health. Washington, DC, 1993.
>
> **3. Physical and Emotional Health**
>
> Fact:
>
> – Unmarried mothers are less likely to obtain prenatal care and more likely to

> have a low birthweight baby. Researchers find that these negative effects persist even when they take into account factors, such as parental education, that often distinguish single-parent from two-parent families.
>
> Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. Report to Congress on Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing. Hyattsville, MD (Sept. 1995): 12.
>
> – Children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems.Source: Stanton, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics."National Health Interview Survey." Hyattsville, MD, 1988.
>
> **4. Educational Achievement**
>
> Fact:
>
> – After taking into account race, socioeconomic status, sex, age, and ability, high school students from single-parent households were 1.7 times more likely to drop out than were their corresponding counterparts living with both biological parents.Source: McNeal, Ralph B. Jr."Extracurricular Activities and High School Dropouts." *Sociology of Education* 68(1995): 62-81.
>
> **5. Crime**
>
> Fact:
>
> – Children in single parent families are more likely to be in trouble with the law than their peers who grow up with two parents.
>
> Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. National Health Interview Survey. Hyattsville, MD, 1988.
>
> **6. Sexual Activity and Teen Pregnancy**
>
> Fact:
>
> – A white teenage girl from an advantaged background is five times more likely to become a teen mother if she grows up in a single-mother household than if she grows up in a household with both biological parents.Source: Whitehead, Barbara Dafoe. "Facing the Challenges of Fragmented Families." *The Philanthropy Roundtable* 9.1 (1995): 21.

Now take a look at this Wall Street Journal article that explains some of the ways that fathers have beneficial effects on children.

Excerpt:

> As an estimated 70.1 million fathers prepare to celebrate Father's Day in the

> U.S., recent research shows that their distinct style of parenting is particularly worth recognition: The way dads tend to interact has long-term benefits for kids, independent of those linked to good mothering.
>
> […]The benefits of involved fathering are known: improved cognitive skills, fewer behavioral problems among school-age children, less delinquency among teenage boys and fewer psychological problems in young women, based on an analysis of 16 long-term studies of father involvement, published in 2008 in the scholarly journal Acta Paediatrica.
>
> Some of dads' behavior may spring from their roles as family breadwinners. Although mothers play a significant role in the workforce, men are still the primary breadwinners in more than three-fourths of married-couple households.
>
> And 48% of working fathers spend less than six hours a day with their children, compared with 31% of working mothers, according to a recent poll of 459 working adults by Workplace Options, a provider of employee-assistance and work-life programs in Raleigh, N.C.
>
> As a result, fathers may be less familiar with their children's nonverbal cues. Such dads tend to challenge children more to express themselves in words, helping foster the better cognitive skills researchers have found in 2-year-olds with involved fathers.
>
> Parenting patterns may be rooted in neurological differences. Under stress, research shows, men's brains are wired to respond to challenges physically, leaping into action. Women are more likely to withdraw or shut down.
>
> Because fathers have had to learn to manage their own impulses to strike out or react physically to frustration, they may be better equipped than mothers to help children manage their own urges to behave badly, Dr. Pruett says.
>
> Indeed, fathers typically aren't as upset as mothers by kids' tantrums or bad behavior, based on a 2009 survey of 1,615 parents by Zero to Three, a nonprofit child-development research and policy organization. Only half as many fathers as mothers say their children's temper tantrums are one of their biggest challenges.

Fathers matter, so women need to choose men who will be good fathers. And that means having an idea of what fathers do, and knowing how to evaluate a man to see if he can do what fathers do. There's more to fathers than handsomeness and fun!

Related posts

- New large-scale UK study confirms the importance of fathers to children
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families
- Marriage: Still the Safest Place For Women and Children
- Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty
- New study finds that fathers and marriage reduce drug use in children
- Do children do better when raised by married fathers?

- Can Christianity survive the decline of males?
- New study shows that children of divorce twice as likely to have a stroke
- Are boys performing poorly in schools?
- How do you persuade people to get married for the good of the children?
- New study shows how fathers reduce stress in children
- Feminist politican wants UK government to provide free IVF
- Are elderly women who have babies through IVF being selfish?
- Why two-parent families are better for children
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- What causes single motherhood, and how are children affected?
- Less than half of 7 to 21 year old women think marriage precedes child-bearing
- How socialism undermines the traditional family in Sweden
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- Obama praises non-traditional families on National Family Day

Marsha Blackburn will lead floor debate on House bill that bans abortions after 20 weeks

June 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Representative Marsha Blackburn
From the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> Rep. Marsha Blackburn, a Republican from Tennessee, told THE WEEKLY STANDARD Friday afternoon that she will manage the floor debate on a bill that would prohibit most abortions during the final four months of pregnancy. The bill has been revised to include exceptions for when the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest. The bill already included an exception for when a physical health condition puts the life of the mother at risk.
>
> "I think the reason that leadership asked me to handle the bill is the amount of pro-life work that I've done throughout my years in Congress," said Blackburn, a co-sponsor of the bill.
>
> […]Blackburn said on Friday that Nancy Pelosi's recent comments on late-term abortion were "absolutely abhorrent." At a press conference, Pelosi was unable to explain the difference between the killings of Kermit Gosnell and late-term abortions and called the issue "sacred ground."

> "The war on women is these crimes committed by Kermit Gosnell and some of these abortion clinics," Blackburn told me.
>
> "I think the American people are with us on this," Blackburn said. "Sixty percent of all Americans say abortion should not be allowed in the second trimester and over 80 percent say they shouldn't be allowed in the third-trimester."
>
> The bill will be amended through a self-executing rule to include an exception for

> abortions later than 22 weeks of pregnancy (20 weeks after conception) in the case of rape or incest. Unlike the Democratic amendment for an exception in the case of rape that was voted down on Wednesday, there will be a reporting requirement in the bill.
>
> Though the bill's authors originally found such an exception unnecessary, given how late in pregnancy the restriction would begin, Democrats would have had an opportunity to force the issue to the forefront through a motion to re-commit.
>
> The bill's supporters believe the reporting requirement is necessary so the exception will not turn into a loophole.

My second favorite Congresswoman is Marsha Blackburn. And she's going to be my most favorite as soon as Michele Bachmann retires at the end of her current term. I'm glad we have Marsha Blackburn to advocate for conservative policies.

John Hawkins of Right Wing News interviews Dr. Helen Smith about Men On Strike

June 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought this interview posted on Right Wing News was a very appropriate thing to post on Fathers Day. The whole thing is worth reading, because it's stuff that is never discussed much by the people who complain that men aren't marrying as they used to, under the new *changed* standard of what marriage is. Well, marriage has changed, and it's not as attractive to men as it used to be.

Here's a snip from the interview:

> **If a man came to you and he said, "Listen, I think marriage is great. There's no downside to it." What would you say to him? Not telling him not to do it, but maybe saying, "Have you thought about the other side of this?" What are some of the negatives for men in marriage that are making men less likely to marry?**
>
> Well, the first negatives are the legal ones. If man does get divorced, he's much more likely to pay alimony. For example, about 97 percent of alimony is paid by men, only about 3 percent by women. Men tend to lose with their children more often. Only about 10 percent of men get custody of their children if there's a divorce. In marriage, …if a man finds out a couple of years down the line that the child isn't his, the state, in certain states — not most states — a man can be forced to pay for that child even though that child is not his. At the same time, if he wants a vasectomy — now this one is hard because it's actually not on the books — but if a married man goes to a doctor and wants a vasectomy, most doctors in this country will not perform a vasectomy unless that man gets his wife to sign off.
>
> …If he wants to leave the marriage, a woman can just point her finger and tell her lawyer that a man committed child abuse, domestic abuse — and a lot of times it's just taken as a given. If a woman wants a restraining order against a man in a marriage, men most often are taken to jail when, you know, the woman calls the police. However, studies actually show that violence in domestic relations is almost 50% from men and 50% from women. If a woman gets angry for any reason, she can simply accuse a man and men are just assumed guilty in our society.
>
> The other thing is psychological reasons. Men's self-esteem suffers more than women when they don't see their friends as often and that's because women tend to congregate a little more. When men lose contact with those friends, their mental and, you know, their psychological health can suffer from that. Men are also generally given the worst part of the house once kids come along. The man is kind of put downstairs to the basement, whether he wants to be there or not.

> Now sure, a lot of men might enjoy the basement, but they shouldn't be forced down there.
>
> In my work over the years, I've actually seen men who hang around outside or they'll say, "I don't mind being outside in the garage," but the minute they get a divorce they're right back in that house and wanting the full use of it.
>
> So, I do think that there are a lot of issues that men want to consider when they think about marriage because in our society if you make a mistake and if you're a man, there's a lot more at stake. If you're a woman and you make a mistake, yes, it can be bad, but the state is with you. You probably are going to get your children; you probably are going to get some child support; it's more than likely you're not going to be kicked out of your house. There's even more support for you. There are a lot of organizations to help women; there are almost none to help men.

You know, one way to tell if a woman you like is interested in marriage is to read her an interview like this and then ask her for her feelings. If she is dismissive of the feelings of men, and the changing incentives that men face in this world, then you should really reconsider marriage to her.

By the way, if you'd like a quick re-cap about how feminism has changed marriage, here are a few of the main bullet points that describe what marriage used to mean:

1. Being the legally and socially recognized head of the household
2. An expectation of regular sex except in rare cases
3. Legal rights to children
4. Lifetime commitment
5. The presumption of premarital chastity from the wife
6. Spritual leadership role that is not undermined by forces outside the home
7. Moral leadership role that is not undermined by forces outside the home
8. The right to work to earn money and spend it as you see fit

There are more, but those are a few. And you can see, with a little reflection, how different laws and policies have degraded the old definition of marriage and put in place a new feminized definition that takes away the woman's responsibility to choose a man wisely, to be responsible and self-controlled, to do her part to be accountable to her husband's leadership, and to avoid choices that destroy the marriage.

Here are some specific things that undermined the 8 points above:

1. Governmental meddling in the household and imposing values on children in public schools
2. The normalization of sex-withholding as a way of undermining male leadership
3. Uneven custody laws and false accusations during custody hearings
4. No-fault divorce, which encourages women to initiate divorces in order to get the marital home, alimony and child support

5. Sex education, taxpayer-funded contraceptives, taxpayer-funded abortion, single mother welfare
6. Public schools teaching things that dogmatically that undermine religion, like Darwinian evolution
7. Public schools teaching things that dogmatically that undermine morality, like sex education
8. High tax rates, massive welfare spending which has resulted in inflationary monetary policy

Note: I am chaste and most of this stuff hasn't really impacted me personally as much as it affects men who have married and had children. I am just being analytical about the way the world is for men.

Very often, women are blissfully unaware of how their own voting undermines men's willingness and ability to get married and to stay married. Instead of recognizing the motivations and needs and goals of men and changing themselves, they often just resort to insults and blaming. And of course there is a non-stop chorus of male voices who affirm this – even conservatives and Christian leaders do it. The man-up crowd often tells men flat out to lower their standards and let the woman rule regardless of her ability to listen to men, care about men's goals or care about men's feelings.

DOL study finds that after correcting for choices, women are paid 95% of what men are paid

June 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation has a post up about it.

Excerpt:

> When a questioner at Tuesday's presidential debate stated that women make only 72 cents for every dollar that men make, both President Obama and Governor Mitt Romney agreed. Not so fast. This figure is highly misleading.
>
> The statistic comes from a Census Bureau report (see figure 2 here) comparing the median earnings of men and women in full-time jobs. However, many factors affect pay—e.g., occupational choice, education, experience, and hours of work. Doctors make more than store clerks, no matter their gender. Employees who work longer hours tend to make more, too.
>
> The Census report ignores all such factors. So it can say nothing about whether men and women with the same level of job performance make the same amount.
>
> Women are more likely than men to work in industries with more flexible schedules. Women are also more likely to spend time outside the labor force to care for children. These choices have benefits, but they also reduce pay—for both men and women. When economists control for such factors, they find the gender gap largely disappears.
>
> A 2009 study commissioned by the Department of Labor found that after controlling for occupation, experience, and other choices, women earn 95 percent as much as men do. In 2005, June O'Neil, the former director of the Congressional Budget Office, found that "There is no gender gap in wages among men and women with similar family roles." Different choices—not discrimination—account for different employment and wage outcomes.
>
> For the same reason, the recession has hit men harder than it has women. Since the recession, net employment for men has fallen by over 3 million jobs. Female employment has fallen by less than half that amount. Put another way, the male unemployment rate is currently 0.5 percentage points higher than the female unemployment rate.

Hans Bader from the Competitive Enterprise Institute explains more.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> As *The Washington Post*'s Glenn Kessler notes, government data shows women work fewer hours than men, which explains much of the apparent pay gap: "since women in general work fewer hours than men in a year, the statistics used by the White House may be less reliable for examining the key focus of the

> legislation — wage discrimination." I discuss some other unfounded claims made in support of the Paycheck Fairness Act at this link.
>
> As Steve Tobak noted at CBS News,
>
> Men are far more likely to choose careers that are more dangerous, so they naturally pay more. Top 10 most dangerous jobs (from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics): Fishers, loggers, aircraft pilots, farmers and ranchers, roofers, iron and steel workers, refuse and recyclable material collectors, industrial machinery installation and repair, truck drivers, construction laborers. They're all male-dominated jobs. . .Men are far more likely to take work in uncomfortable, isolated and undesirable locations that pay more. Men work longer hours than women do. The average fulltime working man works six hours per week or 15 percent longer than the average fulltime working woman.

A popular article by Carrie Lukas in the Wall Street Journal agrees.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Labor's Time Use survey shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. One would expect that someone who works 9% more would also earn more. This one fact alone accounts for more than a third of the wage gap.
>
> […]Recent studies have shown that the wage gap shrinks—or even reverses—when relevant factors are taken into account and comparisons are made between men and women in similar circumstances. In a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30, the research firm Reach Advisors found that women earned an average of 8% more than their male counterparts. Given that women are outpacing men in educational attainment, and that our economy is increasingly geared toward knowledge-based jobs, it makes sense that women's earnings are going up compared to men's.

Moreover, if there is a pay gap, it certainly is not in our major cities, as the leftist New York Times explains.

Excerpt:

> Young women in New York and several of the nation's other largest cities who work full time have forged ahead of men in wages, according to an analysis of recent census data.
>
> The shift has occurred in New York since 2000 and even earlier in Los Angeles, Dallas and a few other cities.
>
> Economists consider it striking because the wage gap between men and women nationally has narrowed more slowly and has even widened in recent years among one part of that group: college-educated women in their 20s. But in New York, young college-educated women's wages as a percentage of men's rose

> slightly between 2000 and 2005.
>
> […][The study] shows that women of all educational levels from 21 to 30 living in New York City and working full time made 117 percent of men's wages, and even more in Dallas, 120 percent. Nationwide, that group of women made much less: 89 percent of the average full-time pay for men.
>
> Just why young women at all educational levels in New York and other big cities have fared better than their peers elsewhere is a matter of some debate. But a major reason, experts say, is that women have been graduating from college in larger numbers than men, and that many of those women seem to be gravitating toward major urban areas.

When women make different choices about education and labor that are more like what men choose, they earn just as much or more than men.

UK: Half a million new STI infections in 2012

June 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-leaning UK Independent.

Excerpt:

> Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are soaring among young people, with chlamydia the most virulent, health officials have warned.

> Nearly half a million people were diagnosed with STIs last year, with those aged under-25 experiencing the highest rates of infection, according to new figures released today.
>
> Health experts have warned that the rise in STIs shows too many young people are still putting themselves at risk by failing to practice safe-sex.
>
> Last year there were 448,422 diagnoses, which was a rise of five per cent from 2011, said Public Health England (PHE).
>
> Almost half of all infections were chlamydia, amounting to 46 per cent of total STI diagnoses.
>
> The number of new gonorrhoea diagnoses increased by 21 per cent, which is a particular cause for concern among health officials as the global threat of antibiotic resistance grows.
>
> People aged under-25 accounted for 64 per cent of all chlamydia and 54 per cent of genital warts diagnoses in 2012.

The UK has some of the most aggressive and early sex education of any Western country. But all of this effort to educate young people hasn't reduced the amount of sexual activity at all. When young people learn about the mechanics of sex, and are taught that recreational sex is normal and healthy, then they have more of it. Young people aren't able to assess risks like adults can. They think that nothing will happen to them. No amount of sex education can cure youthful recklessness.

Gay man who captured, chained up and repeatedly raped boy gets 11 year sentence

June 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Sun News Canada.

Excerpt:

> David James Leblanc, 48, was sentenced to 11 years in prison Friday after he previously pleaded guilty to charges including kidnapping, forcible confinement and sexual assault. He also pleaded guilty to charges in an earlier case involving the sexual assault of two young boys.
>
> The teen's mother said her son was prescribed anti-HIV drugs and anxiety medication after he was chained and raped by two men in a cabin in Upper Chelsea, a rural area about 125 km west of Halifax.
>
> "If there's anything good that can come from this sickening crime against my son it would be to have David James Leblanc declared a dangerous offender," the mother said in her victim impact statement.
>
> "He has been filled with such an overwhelming amount of despair and hopelessness and to have your 16-year-old child tell you through tears and sobs that he doesn't want to live anymore."
>
> While she spoke, Leblanc rolled his eyes, sighed and shook his head.
>
> […]In September, Leblanc promised the teen a painting job.
>
> The boy said Leblanc conned him into getting into a van in Halifax, and drove him to a cabin in Upper Chelsea, where he met Leblanc's partner, Wayne Alan Cunningham.
>
> Leblanc gave him alcohol and offered him money to see his penis, and the boy said he was marched into a bedroom, chained to the floor and sexually assaulted.
>
> Over the next 10 days, the teen said he was sometimes chained standing with his arms above his head and other times locked to the bed while Cunningham and Leblanc took turns raping him.

It seems to me that the responsibility of the criminal court system is to protect the public from predators. How much does an 11-year sentence for kidnapping, forcible confinement and sexual assault deter future crimes like this one? Something tells me that if the victim had been a woman, and the perpetrator a straight white male, then that would have drawn a much longer sentence.

Douglas Groothuis lectures on the kalam cosmological argument

June 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I watched the lecture above and it was excellent and comprehensive. He even talked about J.P. Moreland, Alan Padgett and other scholars. There were some things I had heard before, and some things that were new. He covered a lot of books that I had to read when I was sorting all of this stuff out, too.

Here's the description from the video:

> Doug Groothuis gives a lecture on the Kalam Cosmological Argument. What's interesting about this lecture is that Groothuis did not accept the Kalam Cosmological Argument at first but was later convinced by it.
>
> Notes:
>
> http://www.relyonchrist.com/Lecture/13.htm
> http://www.relyonchrist.com/Lecture/14.htm
>
> Kalam Cosmological Argument
>
> (Moreland, Scaling the Secular City; see also William Lane Craig, Reasonable Faith [Crossway, 1994]; Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, Creation from Nothing [Baker, 2004]; William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, God: A Debate Between a Christian and an Atheist [Oxford, 2004])
>
> Preliminary: concepts of (a) the actual infinite and (b) the potential infinite
>
> 1. The universe had a beginning
> 2. The impossibility of the actual infinite (distinguish from potential infinite)
> 3. The impossibility of traversing an actual infinite (even if it exists); forming an actual infinite through successive addition, piece by piece…
> 4. Scientific confirmation from Big Bang cosmology (absolute origination). See also John Jefferson Davis, "Genesis 1:1 and Big Bang Cosmology," in The Frontiers of Science and Faith (InterVarsity, 2002), 11 — 36; and Robert Jastrow, God and the Astronomers (revised ed., 1992).
> 5. Scientific confirmation from second law of thermodynamics.
> 6. Astronomer Fred Hoyle (who once advanced the steady state cosmology) argues against the universe being infinitely old in virtue of its hydrogen consumption. The argument can be stated as a modus tolens deduction (denying the consequent).
> 7. Can everything come from nothing without a cause? The "pop theory" (biting the metaphysical bullet)
> 8. Philosophical critique of everything from nothing…
> 9. God and time (see Greg Gansell, editor, God and Time: Four Views [InterVarsity, 2001])

> 10. Argument against an impersonal cause
> 11. Argument against God needing a cause (Bertrand Russell)
> 12. Quentin Smith's acceptance of Big Bang cosmology and denial of God's existence.
> 13. Unitary: Ockham's razor
> 14. Incorrigible, inextinguishable (having existed, God cannot fail to exist)
> 15. Personal, volitional ("personal explanation"—R. Swinburne)
> 16. Omnipotent: nothing is a greater expenditure of power than exnihilating the entire cosmos. This is rational to hold, given the argument.
> 17. Supplies the necessary conditions for impeccable and omnipotent goodness: (1) – (4). Need (5) moral argument and (6) the Incarnation for the final necessary condition, which, with (1) – (4), make for necessary and sufficient conditions.

What I liked about this lecture is that it kept my attention all the way through. It was very fun to listen to, because he considers a ton of alternative views and explains his view, which doesn't agree with Bill Craig all the way. There is a 17 minute Q&A period at the end.

Obama warns that he will veto Republican bill that would ban third trimester abortions

June 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story from the Weekly Standard that makes clear where the President stands on abortion.

Excerpt:

> Last week, Jay Carney ducked a question on President Obama's position on a bill banning elective abortions during the final four months of pregnancy. The White House issued a statement Monday saying that the president would veto the bill:
>
> The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 1797, which would unacceptably restrict women's health and reproductive rights and is an assault on a woman's right to choose. Women should be able to make their own choices about their bodies and their health care, and Government should not inject itself into decisions best made between a woman and her doctor.
>
> Forty years ago, the Supreme Court affirmed a woman's constitutional right to privacy, including the right to choose. This bill is a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade* and shows contempt for women's health and rights, the role doctors play in their patients' health care decisions, and the Constitution. The Administration is continuing its efforts to reduce unintended pregnancies, expand access to contraception, support maternal and child health, and minimize the need for abortion. At the same time, the Administration is committed to the protection of women's health and reproductive freedom and to supporting women and families in the choices they make.
>
> If the President were presented with this legislation, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto this bill.

> H.R. 1797 prohibits most abortions that take place later than 22 weeks into pregnancy (20 weeks after conception), the point at which some babies can survive long-term if born. The bill contains exceptions for when the pregnancy is the result of rape, incest, or when a physical health condition puts the life of the mother at risk.

In addition to that, Obama supports abortions where the baby is born alive (infanticide):

> When Obama opposed a bill to stop infanticide as a member of the Illinois legislature, he said he did so because it reportedly contained language that would have contravened the Roe v. Wade decision. However, documents uncovered during the 2008 election show Obama has misrepresented his position.
>
> Obama, as a member of the Illinois Senate, opposed a state version of the federal

> Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, a measure that would make sure babies who survive abortions are given proper medical care.
>
> It also protected babies who were "aborted" through a purposeful premature birth and left to die afterwards.
>
> On the federal level, pro-abortion groups withdrew their opposition to the bill after a section was added making sure it did not affect the status of legal abortions in the United States. Ultimately, the bill was approved on a unanimous voice vote with even leading pro-abortion lawmakers like Hillary Clinton and John Kerry backing it.

And finally, Obama very likely supports sex-selection abortions.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama appears to oppose the ban on sex-selection abortions that the House of Representatives debated yesterday and will be voting on today.
>
> ABC News White House correspondent Jake Tapper posted a new report indicating President Obama opposes the bill to prohibit performing or coercing abortions to eliminate unborn babies of an undesired sex. Tapper raised the question at Wednesday's White House press briefing, but did not receive a respond to his question about Obama's position.
>
> […]White House deputy press secretary Jamie Smith told him in a statement: "The Administration opposes gender discrimination in all forms, but the end result of this legislation would be to subject doctors to criminal prosecution if they fail to determine the motivations behind a very personal and private decision. The government should not intrude in medical decisions or private family matters in this way."
>
> National Right to Life legislative director Douglas Johnson was upset to learn Obama opposes the common-sense bill, telling LifeNews: "It is appalling, but not surprising, that President Obama now stands with the pro-abortion political committees and his Hollywood donors, rather than with the coerced women, and their unborn daughters, who are victimized in sex-selection abortions."

The Democrat Party also supports sex-selection abortions. Their view is that the mere fact that an unborn child is female is sufficient reason to kill that child. Is that pro-women? What could be more discriminatory and anti-women than that?

In case you didn't know, Barack Obama is the most pro-abortion President that we've ever had, a fact that you can verify by skimming over his pro-abortion record. The man has essentially the same view of abortion as Kermit Gosnell. This is a person who does not have moderate, common-sense views on moral issues. If he ever acted on his radical, extremist views, like Gosnell did, then he would be thrown in jail, like Gosnell was. Instead, a bunch of people who *claim* to believe in God voted this man into office, twice.

How is that even possible?

Thinking Christian reviews “Darwin’s Doubt”, a new book by Stephen C. Meyer

June 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

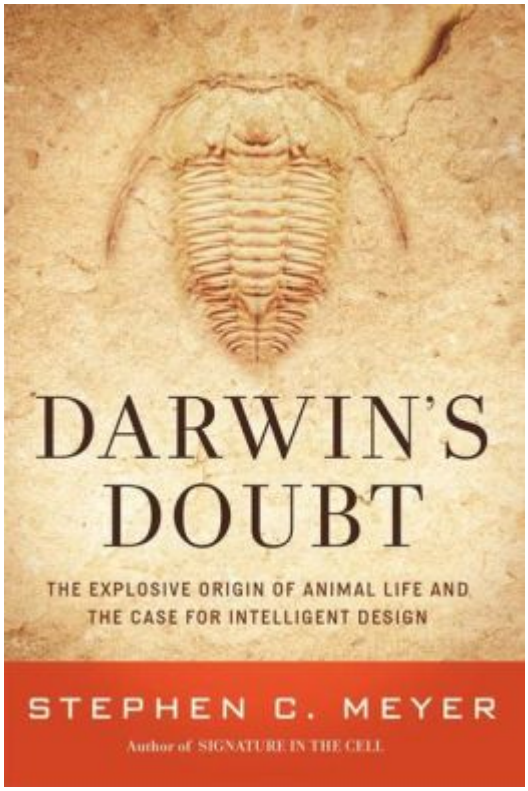

Darwin’s Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design

NOTE: you can tune in to the Dennis Prager radio show at 2 PM Eastern today in order to hear Dr. Meyer discuss the new book.

I found a book review of the new book on intelligent design by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. This book is concerned with the fossil record, and it is the sequel to the highly acclaimed “Signature in the Cell“, which dealt with the origin of biological information in the first living cell.

Excerpt:

> The title of the book refers to the difficulty [Charles Darwin] had in explaining the “Cambrian Explosion,” the vast proliferation of new animal body plans (new “phyla” or major animal groupings) that appears in fossils in the Cambrian strata, deposited some 530 million years ago. These animals appear suddenly in the fossil record, without any plausible predecessor such as Darwin’s theory predicted. Darwin wrote,
>
> The difficulty of understand the absence of vast piles of fossiliferous strata, which on my theory were no doubt somewhere accumulated before the Silurian [i.e., Cambrian] epoch, is very great. I allude to the manner in which numbers of species of the same group suddenly appear in the lowest known fossiliferous rocks.

> Darwin saw this accurately as a challenge to his theory. It remains one still. The animals appear too quickly in the record to be explained through his gradualistic theory.
>
> And it remains a challenge from the perspective of mainstream science. Various theories have been proposed in explanation of the suddenness with which these new phyla came on the scene. Perhaps selective fossilization caused their predecessors to disappear from paleontologists' view. Mainstream science casts serious doubt on that view. Statistical paleontology renders it deeply improbable. The soft-body hypothesis appears unlikely to succeed, since the evidence shows soft-bodied organisms have been frequently fossilized.
>
> Or maybe the Cambrian animals' precursors really are there in the record, in the form of exotic Ediacaran fossils. But these organisms are not clearly animals of any sort, and what they *are* is so in confusion that they could hardly be considered evidence for anything. Further,
>
> As *Nature* recently noted, if the Ediacaran fauna "were animals, they bore little or no resemblance to any other creatures, either fossil or extant." … This absence of clear affinities has led an increasing number of paleontologists to reject an ancestor/dependent relationship between the Ediacaran and Cambrian fauna.
>
> Scientists have proposed genetic histories for these phyla, but as Meyer pointedly puts it, these scenarios all "assume a gene." And a lot more besides. That is to say, they beg the question of evolution's explanatory adequacy by assuming that it must be true. From there they suggest pathways according to which genes "must have" evolved. But there's no evidence of it in the record.

Now the exciting thing is that at the time of writing (Monday night), the book is *number one* on Barnes and Noble:

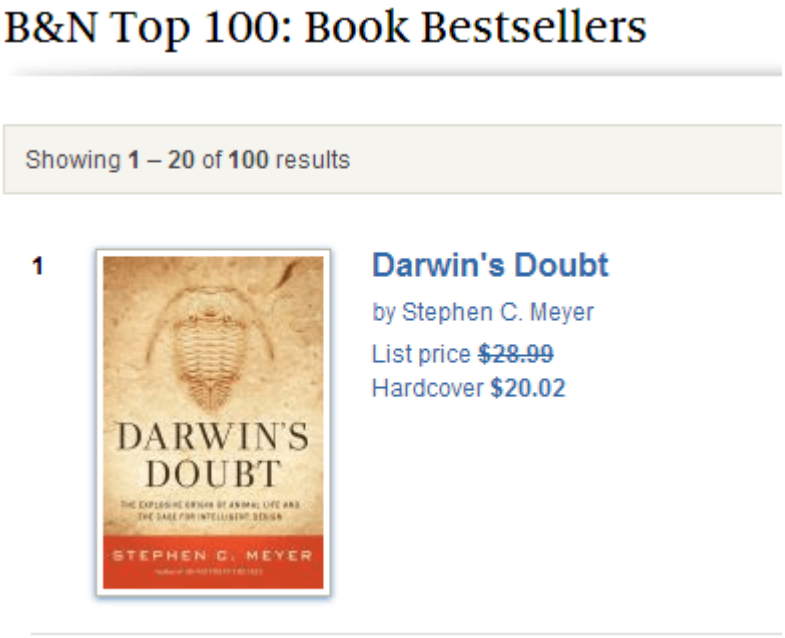

Darwin's Doubt #1 at Barnes and Noble
And *number ten* on Amazon:

Amazon Best Sellers

Our most popular products based on sales. Updated hourly.

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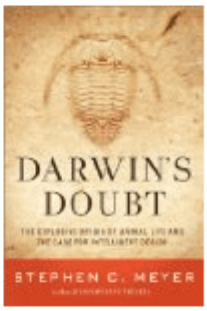

Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin...
by Stephen C. Meyer

Release Date: June 18, 2013

Hardcover

$20.23

Darwin's Doubt #10 at Amazon.com

Now is this a book for the layman? Well, I've met the guy who wrote the book review above face-to-face, and his background is not in biology. I think if he can struggle through it, then I could do it too. And so could you. I think that both of Dr. Meyer's books are must-read books for anyone interested in knowing how well the presumption of naturalism succeeds when confronted with the latest scientific evidence. These are the books you need to buy and read if you are serious about integrating science and religion. The thing to realize is that naturalists and atheists and materialists have no answer to these books. None. Do you like winning? Then spend the money and time on the books that are *unstoppable* in a debate.

Simon Brace on the nature of spiritual warfare and a plea to the Church

June 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This passionate, challenging lecture has been getting shared a lot on Facebook, so I thought that I would do a summary of it. (H/T M. Flannagan)

First, you can grab the MP3 file here.

Note that this talk is given by a very conservative evangelical Christian who is speaking to Christians. So this is not intended for a non-Christian audience. However, non-Christians are free to tune in if you want to hear a really passionate, fire-breathing conservative evangelical go non-linear over the superficial turn that the evangelical church has taken. If you are familiar with J.P. Moreland's view that spiritual warfare is really about disputing speculations and falsehoods using logic and evidence, then you'll know the meaning of the term "spiritual warfare" he has in mind. When he says spiritual warfare, he means apologetics: knowledge and preparation.

I would really caution you not to listen to this if you are not passionate about defending God's honor. It will overwhelm and upset you. Having said that, this lecture reflects my convictions about the churches need to drop anti-intellectualism and take up apologetics. And not pre-suppositional apologetics, which I think is ineffective, but *evidential* apologetics. Evidential apologetics is effective, which is why everyone in the Bible used it.

About the speaker:

> **Simon Brace** is the Director of Evangelism of Southern Evangelical Seminary. Simon was born in Zimbabwe and grew up in South Africa. Simon has a construction background and has lived in a number of countries and travelled extensively. He has a MA in Apologetics and BA in Religious Studies and is currently working on an MA in Philosophy at SES. Simon leads TEAM which is the missions program of SES on local, national, and international trips. In addition, Simon has worked with Ratio Christi at SES, and has an extensive knowledge of Ratio Christi's history and operation. Simon currently resides in North Carolina with his wife Nel and children, Eva and Olivia.

I liked the second part of the lecture more than the first part, so there is less summarizing of the first part.

Topics:

- What does the New Testament say about spiritual warfare in Ephesians?
- Christian slogans about spiritual warfare sound pious, but they are mistaken
- Today, Christianity is focused on piety and zeal, not on study and knowledge
- The result is that Christianity in the West is in a state of erosion and decline
- What we are doing about spiritual warfare is not working to stop the decline

- Preaching, publishing, programs, retreats, etc. are not very useful for spiritual warfare
- Enthusiasm and passion without knowledge are not very useful for spiritual warfare
- The Church has a theoretical understanding of spiritual warfare, but no real capability
- Doesn't work: trying to make Christianity seem popular and cool
- Doesn't work: making Christian music and art that non-Christians will like
- Doesn't work: pastors trying to be relevant by having cool clothes and cool haircuts
- Doesn't work: fundamentalists getting angry about peripheral issues
- Doesn't work: not read things apart from the Bible and sound foolish when speaking in the public square
- Doesn't work: church leaders think that careful exegesis and expository preaching is a good answer to skeptics
- What works: we need to train people who are prepared and willing to defend the truth of the Christian faith
- Evangelicalism has a deep suspicion of reading things outside the Bible, so they are unable to refute anything
- Evangelicals are hyper-spiritualized and hysterical, focusing on demons, prophecy and end-times, etc.
- Evangelicals have a pagan view of using their minds to alter reality, which is irrational and superstitious
- Evangelicals like conservative celebrity preachers who do *nothing* to correct anti-intellectualism in the church
- Evangelicals are focused on their personal relationships with Jesus instead of their whole worldview
- Evangelicals focus too much on homeschooling and not enough on how to impact the secular universities
- Church programs for youth are about "strumming guitars and eating pizza once a week", not apologetics
- Evangelicals have an over-inflated view of the effectiveness of their (non-intellectual) evangelism methods
- The primary focus and primary responsibility in spiritual warfare is not dealing with supernatural evil
- The real focus and responsibility in spiritual warfare is specified in 2 Cor 10:3-5
- What we ought to be doing is defeating speculations (false ideas), using logical arguments and evidence
- Defending the faith is not memorizing Bible verses and throwing them out randomly
- Defending the faith is not just preaching the gospel
- Demolishing an argument requires understanding arguments: premises, conclusions, the laws of logic
- We should exchange our pious Bible memorizing skills and the like for a class in critical thinking
- The New Testament requires that elders be capable of *refuting* those who oppose

sound doctrine (Titus 1:9)
- It is not enough to preach a good sermon, elders have to be able to defend the Christian faith as well
- People who run conservative seminaries do not mandate that M.Div graduates study apologetics
- Famous pastors like Driscoll, Begg, etc. need to teach other pastors to emphasize apologetics in church
- People in church won't engage the culture unless they have reasons and evidence to believe Christianity is true
- We need a balance of both piety and intellectual engagement
- We need to make our evangelism rooted in the intellect in order to have an influence at the university
- Mission organizations also have a responsibility to defend the faith and not merely preach (1 Peter 3:15)

And here is his closing quote from C.S. Lewis:

> To be ignorant and simple now not to be able to meet the enemies on their own ground would be to throw down our weapons and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.

I was really humbled by this, because I sort of knew that the church was anti-intellectual, but I didn't really reflect on how everyone else in society thinks that we are anti-intellectual. It's troubling. The quickest way to make Biblical Christianity respectable again is to hit the books and defeat all comers in intellectual disputations. Are we ready to make the sacrifices to do that?

UPDATE: A friend of mine who blogs at Think Apologetics has written a post on this same issue of anti-intellectualism in the church.

House Republicans pass legislation to ban post-viability abortions

June 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports on some good news: House Republicans have passed a bill that bans abortions after 20 weeks.

Excerpt:

> The House of Representatives voted 228 to 196 on Tuesday evening to pass a bill that prohibits most abortions later than 22 weeks in pregnancy (20 weeks after conception), the point by which some infants can survive long-term if born and the point by which medical science indicates they can feel pain. The bill contains exceptions for late-term abortions in the cases of rape, incest, or when a physical health condition puts the life of the mother at risk.
>
> It was mostly a party-line vote, with six Democrats voting for the bill and six Republicans voting against it. The White House issued a veto threat against the bill on Monday night. Though the bill stands no chance of becoming law so long as President Obama is in the White House, advocates see it as an important first step to reining in late-term abortions.
>
> The vote comes in response to the trial of Philadelphia doctor Kermit Gosnell, who was convicted of murder for severing the spines of three infants moments after they were born.

Here's another Democrat trying to explain why infanticide is OK with them:

Life News had some interesting comments about the bill:

> Rep. Chris Smith, the head of the pro-life caucus in the House, spoke eloquently from the House floor.
>
> "The brutality of severing the spines of defenseless babies—euphemistically called "snipping" by Gosnell—has finally peeled away the benign façade of the billion dollar abortion industry" he said.
>
> "Like Gosnell, abortionists all over America decapitate, dismember and chemically poison babies to death each and every day. That's what they do. Americans are connecting the dots and asking whether what Gosnell did is really any different than what other abortionists do. A D&E abortion—a common method after 14 weeks—is a gruesome, pain-filled act that literally rips and tears to pieces the body parts of a child," he added. "The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act is a modest but necessary attempt to at least protect babies who are 20 weeks old—and pain-capable—from having to suffer and die from abortion."
>
> One leading expert in the field of fetal pain, Dr. Kanwaljeet S. Anand at the

> University of Tennessee, stated in his expert report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice, “It is my opinion that the human fetus possesses the ability to experience pain from 20 weeks of gestation, if not earlier, and the pain perceived by a fetus is possibly more intense than that perceived by term newborns or older children.”
>
> “Surgeons entering the womb to perform corrective procedures on unborn children have seen those babies flinch, jerk and recoil from sharp objects and incisions. Ultrasound technology shows unborn babies at 20 weeks post-fertilization and earlier react physically to outside stimuli such as sound, light and touch,” Smith continued. “Surgeons routinely administer anesthesia to unborn children in the womb before performing lifesaving surgeries, and this has been associated with a decrease in the baby’s stress hormone levels during the medical procedure.”

Although President Obama, who is a radical on abortion, has promised to veto the bill, I believe that this vote had value. First, it shows that Republicans are solidly for protecting the lives of unborn children. Second, we learned that the Democrat position on abortion in the House of Representatives is virtually identical to that of Kermit Gosnell. And when this goes up for a vote in the Senate, we’ll find out how many of them take the Kermit Gosnell position on abortion. Finally, we learned what people who voted for Democrats believe about abortion. It is absolutely certain that if you meet a person who votes for Democrats in any election, that they support aborting children after 20 weeks when they can feel pain. That is the Democrat position, and now we all know it *for certain*.

Heather McDonald: the real risks of the Senate immigration amnesty bill

June 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from the moderate Manhattan Institute about the Senate immigration bill. (H/T Doug Ross)

No border enforcement:

> Mickey Kaus has demolished the Senate bill's central claim: that it makes border security a precondition for the granting of permanent-resident status. In fact, the enforcement goals consist of empty promises; nothing actually hangs on their achievement or requires that they ever be met. Immigrant advocate Frank Sharry candidly echoed Kaus's analysis in the *Wall Street Journal*: "The triggers [for obtaining green cards] are based on developing plans and spending money, not on reaching that effectiveness, which is really quite clever."

Amnesty almost immediately:

> But the legislation's most critical amnesty comes right away, before even the pretense of beefed-up security. Illegal aliens will get their illegal status removed six months after the bill is passed upon payment of $500. The formerly illegal aliens will be allowed to remain in the country legally, under so-called "probationary status," for ten years (while those who wish to enter the country legally wait patiently in their home countries for permission to enter).

Criminals are eligible for amnesty:

> Not one amnesty proposal has ever required a clean criminal record to qualify. The current bill allows aliens with two misdemeanor convictions to legalize. Given the incessant pressures on district attorneys to accept a plea in exchange for downgrading the crime charged and to ignore most arrests entirely, it takes considerable effort to rack up two misdemeanor convictions—whether by dealing drugs, assaulting fellow gangbangers, stealing, or tagging. The bill's authors apparently think that staying on the right side of the law is an insuperable burden and that having a criminal record is an ordinary part of being an American.

Permanent Democrat majority:

> The political effects of the proposed amnesty won't benefit the GOP, whatever the party's hopes might be. Hispanics will not shift their vote to Republicans in the next presidential election unless Republicans promote the same big-government programs, such as Obamacare, that attract Hispanics to the Democratic Party in the first place.

Hurts the poorest Americans:

> Harvard economist George Borjas has recently estimated that low-skilled American workers already suffer wage losses of $402 billion a year because of immigrant labor, a sum that does not include the costs to taxpayers of welfare paid to low-skill immigrant workers and their children. Amnesty proponents should explain how providing legal status to millions of illegal aliens will affect the job prospects of the poorest Americans.

Massive burden to taxpayers:

> Reconfiguring immigration priorities is crucial, because many children of unskilled immigrants are assimilating into the underclass. They are also placing enormous burdens on the nation's schools. California governor Jerry Brown proposes to redirect state taxpayer dollars from middle-class schools to those with high proportions of "English learners," because Hispanic students lag so far behind whites and Asians. Most of these "English learners" were born and raised in the U.S. but are characterized as non-native speakers because their academic language skills are so low. Nationally, only 18 percent of Hispanic eighth-graders read at or above proficiency levels, according to the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress. Because of their low academic achievement (and their high rates of illegitimacy), second- and third-generation Hispanics rely on government welfare programs far more than native-born whites.

I just wanted to be clear with everyone. I am in favor of legal immigration and even *automatic* green cards for skilled workers – especially in Information Technology. Skilled workers who come here legally and work here for 6 years without committing any crimes should get an *automatic* green card. Skilled immigrants pay more in taxes than they take from welfare programs. But this immigration bill does nothing for skilled immigrants. It's targeting unskilled immigrants who have already broken the law by coming here illegally and forcing enormous costs on taxpayers. We already have a $17 trillion debt and it's going up by a trillion every year. We can't afford this amnesty bill.

Dennis Prager's report from the recent conference on cosmic fine-tuning

June 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite national radio show host Dennis Prager in the National Review. This is a MUST-READ. (H/T Chris S.)

Full text:

> Last week, in Nice, France, I was privileged to participate along with 30 scholars, mostly scientists and mathematicians, in a conference on the question of whether the universe was designed, or at least fine-tuned, to make life, especially intelligent life. Participants — from Yale, Princeton, Harvard, Berkeley, and Columbia, among other American and European universities — included believers in God, agonistics, and atheists.
>
> It was clear that the scientific consensus was that, at the very least, the universe is exquisitely fine-tuned to allow for the possibility of life. It appears that we live in a "Goldilocks universe," in which both the arrangement of matter at the cosmic beginning and the values of various physical parameters — such as the speed of light, the strength of gravitational attraction, and the expansion rate of the universe — are just right for life. And unless one is frightened of the term, it also appears the universe is *designed* for biogenesis and human life.
>
> Regarding fine-tuning, one could write a book just citing the arguments for it made by some of the most distinguished scientists in the world. Here is just a tiny sample, collated by physicist **Gerald Schroeder**, who holds a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he later taught physics.
>
> **Michael Turner**, astrophysicist at the University of Chicago and Fermilab: "The precision is as if one could throw a dart across the entire universe and hit a bullseye one millimeter in diameter on the other side."
>
> **Paul Davies**, professor of theoretical physics at Adelaide University: "The really amazing thing is not that life on Earth is balanced on a knife-edge, but that the entire universe is balanced on a knife-edge, and would be total chaos if any of the natural 'constants' were off even slightly.
>
> **Roger Penrose**, the Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford, writes that the likelihood of the universe having usable energy (low entropy) at its creation is "one part out of ten to the power of ten to the power of 123." That is "*a million billion billion billion billion billion billion billion billion billion billion billion billion billion zeros.*"
>
> **Steven Weinberg**, recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physics, and an anti-religious agnostic, notes that "the existence of life of any kind seems to require a cancellation between different contributions to the vacuum energy, accurate to

> about 120 decimal places."

Life of any kind. Not just life as we know it, but *life of any conceivable kind*.

So the fine-tuning is real. It's mainstream science.

But then how do militant atheists like Weinberg respond to this scientific data?

> Unless one is a closed-minded atheist (there are open-minded atheists), it is not valid on a purely scientific basis to deny that the universe is improbably fine-tuned to create life, let alone intelligent life.
>
> Additionally, it is atheistic dogma, not science, to dismiss design as unscientific. The argument that science cannot suggest that intelligence comes from intelligence or design from an intelligent designer is simply a tautology. It is dogma masquerading as science.
>
> And now, many atheist scientists have inadvertently provided logical proof of this.
>
> They have put forward the notion of a multiverse — the idea that there are many, perhaps an infinite number of, other universes. This idea renders meaningless the fine-tuning and, of course, the design arguments. After all, with an infinite number of universes, a universe with parameters friendly to intelligent life is more likely to arise somewhere by chance.
>
> But there is not a shred of evidence of the existence of these other universes — nor could there be, since contact with another universe is impossible.
>
> Therefore, only one conclusion can be drawn: The fact that atheists have resorted to the multiverse argument constitutes a tacit admission that they have lost the argument about design in this universe. The evidence in this universe for design — or, if you will, the fine-tuning that cannot be explained by chance or by "enough time" — is so compelling that the only way around it is to suggest that our universe is only one of an infinite number of universes.
>
> Honest atheists — scientists and lay people — must now acknowledge that science itself argues overwhelmingly for a Designing Intelligence.

This is the same cosmic fine-tuning argument that is used by William Lane Craig in all of his debates. Are you surprised to learn that the top scientists from across the ideological spectrum agree with the fine-tuning? There is a reason why William Lane Craig can stand up in academic debates and make these arguments with confidence. The Big Bang cosmology and the fine-tuning of the Big Bang are two pieces of evidences for God's existence that are as solid as any piece of science can be. To deny that the universe came into being out of nothing requires a leap of faith. To deny the cosmic fine-tuning also requires a leap of faith.

The simple fact of the matter is that God, in his infinite wisdom, left us this evidence which we have now discovered so that anyone who denies his existence and intelligence is *without excuse*. If atheists were making the decision about whether to believe in God

solely based on science, then they would have to agree that the existence of God is beyond a reasonable doubt. We now know that God exists and created the universe for life *for certain*. The only reason to persist in unbelief now is because of non-rational concerns, e.g. – the desire to escape from moral obligations, childhood trauma, weak or absent father, etc.

You can read about some of the specific evidence for the origin of the universe out of nothing in this post, and you can read about some of the specific evidence for fine-tuning in this post.

Obamacare causing local governments to eliminate jobs and cut back on worker hours

June 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the top article on Investors Business Daily at the time of writing.

Excerpt:

> [W]hile private companies are getting all this unwelcome and hostile attention, local governments across the country have been quietly doing exactly the same thing — cutting part-time hours specifically so they can skirt ObamaCare's costly employer mandate, while complaining about the law in some of the harshest terms anyone has uttered in public.
>
> The result is that part-time government workers — many of them low-income — face pay cuts that can top $3,000 a year, and yet will still be left without employer-provided benefits.
>
> Here is just a small sampling of local news reports about what local government officials are saying about ObamaCare, and the steps they're taking to avoid or minimize its costs.
>
> […]**Dearborn, Mich.**: "If we had to provide health care and other benefits to all of our employees, the burden on the city would be tremendous," said Mayor John O'Reilly, explaining why the city is cutting its more than 700 part-time and seasonal workers down to 28 hours a week. "The city is like any private or public employer having to adjust to changes in the law."
>
> **Indiana**: "What I'm seeing across the state is school districts, unfortunately, having to reduce the hours that they are having some of their folks work, primarily so they don't have to worry about the (ObamaCare) penalties, or they don't have to provide them health insurance, which would be very, very costly," said Dennis Costerison, executive director of the Indiana Association of School Business Officials. Ft. Wayne Community Schools, for example, are cutting yours for nearly three-quarters of its part-time aides.
>
> **Omaha, Neb.**: "The biggest problem is everyone said that ObamaCare is only going to help cut costs. Nothing could be further from the truth," said Mike Kennedy , who serves on the board of Millard Public Schools, just outside the city, and figures ObamaCare will raise its costs by $400,000. A neighboring school district is reducing hours for up to 281 part-time employees to avoid $2.5 million in new costs, which will result in pay cuts of up to $3,300.
>
> **Long Beach, Calif.**: "We are in the same boat as many employers," said Tom Modica, Long Beach's director of government affairs. "We need to maintain the programs and service levels we have now." So the city is going to cut hours for 200 part-time workers so it doesn't have to pay $2 million to provide health

> benefits.
>
> **Salt Lake City, Utah**: “With new provisions in the Affordable Care Act, there was going to be a significant burden upon Granite School District and our taxpayers to offset the cost of benefits,” said spokesman Ben Horsley. He says covering the district’s part-time workers would cost about $14 million, and so about 1,000 will have their hours cut to 29 a week.
>
> […]**Virginia**: “The Commonwealth of Virginia is grappling with the same issues that many businesses in the private sector are as they struggle to deal with the costs imposed by the Affordable Care Act,” Paul Logan, a spokesman for Gov. McDonnell, said. The state is requiring that about 7,000 part-time government workers put in no more than 29 hours a week.
>
> **Texas**: “The Affordable Care Act has added so much complexity and administrative burden that there is nothing affordable about it,” said Jared Pope, who is consulting with Texas municipal governments on ObamaCare. Dallas expects its health costs to climb $2.1 million next year. Plano is cutting hours to avoid $1 million in new costs.
>
> **Kern County, Calif.**: “It will affect multiple departments, a majority of departments,” said the county’s deputy administrative officer Eric Nisbett, explaining that unless the county cut worker hours for 800 employees, ObamaCare would cost it up to $8 million a year.
>
> **Allegheny County, Pa.**: “There’s frustration and anger and sadness and resentment, you know, but you don’t have a voice,” said adjunct English professor Clint Benjamin in the wake of the Community College of Allegheny County’s decision to cut hours for about 400 adjunct faculty and other employees so it wouldn’t have to pay $6 million in ObamaCare-related fees next year.
>
> **Medina, Ohio**: “We feel bad as a city administration and as a council in having to cut hours from 35 to 29,” Medina Mayor Dennis Hanwell said. “We have the budget to pay the people, but we do not have the budget to pay for the health care.” If they hadn’t made that cut, the city faced up to $1 million in new health costs courtesy of ObamaCare.

It’s not just private companies who are cutting back on hours in order to escape being forced to pay for health insurance. I think I can pretty much guarantee that no one on the left thinks about where money comes from when they are giving these speeches about how much they care about everyone and how they will give everyone free money. The truth is that if you have a job, you are paying for people who don’t have jobs so that they can have the same life that you have without having to work. That’s what progressivism means. Equality regardless of wisdom and prudence.

We should not be ignoring the continued threat of radical Islam

June 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was surprised to find a strongly-worded article like this at the Christian web site Breakpoint, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Overnight, following the inauguration of Barack Obama, problematic phrasing such as the "global war on terror" (itself a euphemism) and "Muslim extremism" were expunged from the national lexicon in favor of generic terms such as "man-caused disasters." Explained Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, "We want to move away from the politics of fear toward a policy of being prepared for all risks that can occur."
>
> […][E]vents on the ground continue to belie the administration's euphemisms, parsings, and happy talk. The grisly murder of a British soldier in broad daylight by two machete- and knife-wielding Muslims in London came within mere days. Yet the Obama administration remains committed to its narrative, which it knows to be untrue, and is more than willing to twist the facts to keep it going. Worse, the administration has done all this at the risk of American lives and security. Let's go down the short list:
>
> Fort Hood shooter Maj. Nidal Hasan faces the death penalty or life without parole if convicted on 13 counts of premeditated murder and 32 counts of attempted premeditated murder in his 2009 rampage. Hasan, who shouted "Allahu Akbar!" ("God is great!") during the attack against his unarmed fellow soldiers, now says he was defending the Taliban. U.S. prosecutors are treating the bloodletting as an incident of "workplace violence," denying victims both Purple Hearts and certain combat-related medical benefits. Hasan, meanwhile, is preparing to defend himself in a court of law.
>
> Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev scribbled a message on the boat in which he was captured that said the Americans killed were collateral damage in U.S. wars in Muslim lands, and that an attack on one Muslim is an attack on all. The FBI, of course, failed to prevent his butchery, which killed three people and wounded 275, even after a warning from Russian intelligence about the Tsarnaev brothers.
>
> Then of course there is Benghazi. Seeking to maintain the pre-election fiction that the drone-happy President Obama had al Qaeda on the run ("The tide of war is receding," the president told the U.N.), the administration ignored months of warnings from Ambassador Chris Stevens and others about inadequate security at the U.S. consulate and the strengthening of Islamist forces in Libya. On September 11, Islamists linked to al Qaeda launched a coordinated assault on the

> consulate, killing four Americans, including Stevens. (Many more *would* have died if two former Navy SEALs had not disobeyed orders and rescued consulate staff.) Despite repeated calls to Washington for help and a rescue team that was ready to intervene, that night administration officials did *nothing*.
>
> And in the following weeks, they promulgated the lie that the assault was not an attack of Islamist terror but a “spontaneous demonstration” in response to a YouTube video. Adding insult to injury, Barack Obama has just selected the discredited U.N. ambassador, Susan Rice, who repeated the administration lie on numerous Sunday morning talk shows, to be his next national security adviser. Why not, since the bigger lie about the threat we face from radicalized Islam continues?

I was surprised to see so direct an article posted on Breakpoint. It shocked me more than when the Gospel Coalition interviewed old-Earth design theorist Stephen C. Meyer about his new book on the Cambrian explosion. It’s just so encouraging to see Christians rolling up their sleeves and applying their worldview to areas like science and foreign policy. The fact is, we do have to care about this issues, because Christian applies to every area of our lives. It’s not about feeling comfortable in our own hearts by having a private notion of Christianity that is just for our benefit. We should be letting Christian truth claims seep into every area of our lives, so that we continue to promote the good in every area, for everyone. Naturally, we have to study more in order to know how to achieve the good in every area. Some areas like economics and foreign policy are complicated, and not much fun for us, if our goal is personal happiness and comfort. But I think that’s what were are supposed to be doing – learning the truth about God, and then applying it out there in the real world. It’s OK for Christians to study up on these areas and have an informed opinion about them. It’s OK to speak out on these issues, too. We need more of that.

Jason Lisle debates Hugh Ross on the age of the Earth

June 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this radio debate about the age of the Earth on the Apologetics 315 Twitter feed.

Speakers:

Jason Lisle

Dr. Lisle graduated *summa cum laude* from Ohio Wesleyan University where he double-majored in physics and astronomy, and minored in mathematics. He did graduate work at the University of Colorado where he earned a Master's degree and a Ph.D. in Astrophysics. While there, Dr Lisle used the SOHO spacecraft to investigate motions on the surface of the sun as well as solar magnetism and subsurface weather. His thesis was entitled "Probing the Dynamics of Solar Supergranulation and its Interaction with Magnetism." Among other things, he discovered a previously unknown polar alignment of supergranules (solar convection cells), and discovered evidence of solar giant cells. He has also authored a number of papers in both secular and creation literature.

Hugh Ross

At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver's Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or "quasars," some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

So both have impeccable scientific credentials.

The MP3 file is here. (This is the updated version that Brian Auten fixed to remove the commercials!)

I don't always agree with Frank Pastore, (only 95%), but he knows the topic of the debate back to front, and guides the discussion in an incredibly useful, accurate way. This is a fine debate to listen to! You will learn a lot. And you will have fun learning.

The Bible and the early church fathers

Jason Lisle

- we take Genesis literally
- the starting point of YEC is Scripture
- the plain meaning of Scripture is that the earth was made in 6 24-hour days
- science has to be interpreted in a way that fits a plain reading of Genesis 1
- the evidence for an old universe and old Earth must be rejected a priori

Hugh Ross

- we take Genesis literally
- the Hebrew word for day (yom) can mean 24 hours or a long period of time
- there are multiple creation accounts in the Bible
- interpreting yom as long periods of time harmonizes all the accounts
- the Bible says that the seventh day is not even ended
- we believe in a literal Adam and Eve living thousands of years ago

Jason Lisle

- there's only 1 account of creation in the Bible: Genesis
- the normal view in church history is 6 24-hour days
- there are some early church fathers who that the days are long
- the other places where creation is discussed are not real accounts

Hugh Ross

- the early church did not spend a lot of time talking about the age of the Earth
- there is not unanimous agreement about the age of the Earth
- there is no definitive statement on the age of the Earth until Isaac Newton
- Newton strongly favored an old earth, hundreds of years before Darwin
- there are other creation accounts, Job 38-39
- Pslam 104 is a creation account

Jason Lisle

- a Psalm is not written in the genre of historical narrative
- Psalm 104 is not a creation account – it talks about ships, etc
- it's talking about the modern era, not a creation account

The evidence from science

Hugh Ross

- both of us believe in an absolute beginning of time, space and matter
- both of us believe that space is expanding now
- stars form as matter coalesces during the expansion of the universe
- star formation requires a universe aged on the order of billions of years

Jason Lisle

- if you pre-suppose my interpretation of Genesis, then the universe is young

Hugh Ross

- the speed of the expansion of the universe proves an old universe

- the light emitted from the oldest stars also proves an old universe

Jason Lisle

- if you pre-suppose my interpretation of Genesis, then the universe is young

Was the universe made with the appearance of age

Jason Lisle

- any evidence for an old universe is wrong
- stars didn't form gradually, they were created by God instantly
- stars have the appearance of age, but they're actually young

Hugh Ross

- God doesn't lie in the Bible or in the book of nature
- Scientists can look back in time by looking further out into the universe
- Because light takes a long time to travel to the Earth, we can see the past
- we can see a time when there were no stars yet
- stars formed slowly over time, not instantaneously
- we have photos of the universe before stars and after stars
- we can see a history of the universe by looking closer and further away

Does nature provide us with knowledge about creation?

They discuss Psalm 19 now, so here's Psalm 19:1-5:

[1] The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

[2] Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

[3] There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

[4] Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

[5] which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

Jason Lisle

- nature isn't a book
- nature doesn't provide knowledge about God
- Psalm 19 doesn't say that nature communicates to us
- **verse 3 says "There is no speech nor language"**

Hugh Ross

- **If you read all of verse 3, it says the exact opposite of what you just said it says**
- Verse 1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his

hands”
- Verse 2: “Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.”
- Verse 3: “There is no speech or language **where their voice is not heard.**“
- Verse 4: “Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

Jason Lisle

- You can’t take the Bible literally all the time

How important is the age of the Earth?

Hugh Ross

- it’s a non-essential because it has nothing to do with salvation or inerrancy
- both sides of the debate affirm the same views of salvation and inerrancy
- professional scientists have multiple lines of evidence saying the universe is old
- the only reason it matters is that young earth creationism is a barrier to faith
- if you have to deny science to be a Christian, then it stops people from being saved
- young earth opposition to science has been used by secularists to marginalize Christianity

Jason Lisle

- there was no death in the Garden of Eden, animal or human, before the Fall
- the Bible says that death was a consequence of Adam’s sin
- so there was no death before the Fall, according to the Bible
- old earth people believe in death before the Fall

Consider Romans 5:12:

[12]Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Hugh Ross

- Romans 5:12 says that Adam’s sin caused death to come **to all men**
- old earth people believe that only animal death existed before the Fall, not human death
- plant and animal death existed before the Fall – Adam and Eve were eating!

Jason Lisle

- I interpret the Bible to say that plants aren’t living creatures

What about dinosaurs, the Flood, and Noah’s ark?

Jason Lisle

- dinosaurs were created on the 6th day
- dinosaurs lived alongside humans and were vegetarians before the Fall
- dinosaurs were on the Ark – they’re not that big – just take baby dinosaurs
- it’s a global flood

Hugh Ross

- dinosaurs were created on the 5th day
- they were extinct before before humans ever appeared
- nobody in history ever wrote about dinosaurs until 200 years ago
- it’s a local flood

Wall Street Journal explains the death panel of Obamacare

June 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guess what! Sarah Palin was right, as the Wall Street Journal explains.

Excerpt:

> Signs of ObamaCare's failings mount daily, including soaring insurance costs, looming provider shortages and inadequate insurance exchanges. Yet the law's most disturbing feature may be the Independent Payment Advisory Board. The IPAB, sometimes called a "death panel," threatens both the Medicare program and the Constitution's separation of powers. At a time when many Americans have been unsettled by abuses at the Internal Revenue Service and Justice Department, the introduction of a powerful and largely unaccountable board into health care merits special scrutiny.
>
> For a vivid illustration of the extent to which life-and-death medical decisions have already been usurped by government bureaucrats, consider the recent refusal by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to waive the rules barring access by 10-year old Sarah Murnaghan to the adult lung-transplant list. A judge ultimately intervened and Sarah received a lifesaving transplant June 12. But the grip of the bureaucracy will clamp much harder once the Independent Payment Advisory Board gets going in the next two years.
>
> The board, which will control more than a half-trillion dollars of federal spending annually, is directed to "develop detailed and specific proposals related to the Medicare program," including proposals cutting Medicare spending below a statutorily prescribed level. In addition, the board is encouraged to make rules "related to" Medicare.

The decisions of the IPAB are absolute, and very hard to overturn:

> The ObamaCare law also stipulates that there "shall be no administrative or judicial review" of the board's decisions. Its members will be nearly untouchable, too. They will be presidentially nominated and Senate-confirmed, but after that they can only be fired for "neglect of duty or malfeasance in office."
>
> Once the board acts, its decisions can be overruled only by Congress, and only through unprecedented and constitutionally dubious legislative procedures—featuring restricted debate, short deadlines for actions by congressional committees and other steps of the process, and supermajoritarian voting requirements. The law allows Congress to kill the otherwise inextirpable board only by a three-fifths supermajority, and only by a vote that takes place in 2017 between Jan. 1 and Aug. 15. If the board fails to implement cuts, all of its powers are to be exercised by HHS Secretary Sebelius or her successor.

> The IPAB’s godlike powers are not accidental. Its goal, conspicuously proclaimed by the Obama administration, is to control Medicare spending in ways that are insulated from the political process.

That’s what people were voting for when they voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012. Conservatives tried to warn them about the death panels in Obamacare, but no one listened. No one listened when we told them abotu the rising health insurance premiums, or the worker hour cuts that would result. Well, guess who was right?

Human Rights Campaign refuses to reveal name of IRS leaker

June 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> The Human Rights Campaign, a homosexual advocacy group, will not say who provided it with a confidential list of donors to the National Organization for Marriage, although NOM's chairman believes someone at the Internal Revenue Service leaked the information. The IRS also is silent on the question.
>
> Providing such donor information is a felony, John C. Eastman, chairman of the board for the National Organization for Marriage, told CNSNews.com. The Justice Department deferred the matter to the Treasury Department, but Eastman said the probe by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration seems to have stalled.
>
> Nevertheless, Eastman told CNSNews.com, "We're going to keep pressing until we get criminal indictments brought against the people responsible."
>
> NOM, which advocates traditional marriage, and HRC are on opposite sides in the national political battle over same-sex marriage.
>
> The willful disclosure of donor information carries a penalty of up to five years in prison and a $5,000 fine.
>
> Human Rights Campaign spokesman Charlie Joughin did not respond to numerous phone and e-mail inquiries from CNSNews.com on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday asking who provided the list that was posted on the HRC website in March 2012. The HRC advocates for same-sex marriage and other homosexual issues.
>
> […]The willful disclosure of NOM's confidential tax information would violate 26 U.S.C. Section 6103, which states, "Returns and return information shall be confidential." It also says: "no officer or employee of the United States," "no officer or employee of any State, any local law enforcement agency," "any local child support enforcement agency, or any local agency administering a program," "no other person (or officer or employee thereof) who has or had access to returns or return information," "shall disclose any return or return information obtained by him in any manner in connection with his service as such an officer or an employee or otherwise or under the provisions of this section."

What a misnamed organization – the "Human Rights" Campaign. They are covering up for a felon because of their hatred and intolerance of those who support natural marriage.

William Lane Craig reviews new Dawkins/Krauss movie “The Unbelievers” in The Blaze

June 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. William Lane Craig

On The Blaze, a major political news site, Dr. William Lane Craig reviews a new atheist movie entitled “The Unbelievers” starring Lawrence Krauss and Richard Dawkins.

Excerpt:

> Richard Dawkins and Lawrence Krauss are two of the most important figures in the New Atheist movement. So one would naturally have high expectations that their new documentary, *The Unbelievers,* would present a vigorous, powerful attack upon the rationality of religious belief, featuring interviews with impressive scientists laying out the case against God. Instead, the film turns out to be merely a travelogue of Dawkins and Krauss’ “magical mystery tour” of speaking engagements before their enthusiastic fans. Rather than thought provoking, the film is shallow, boring, and narcissistic.
>
> […]Featuring sound bites from celebrities and film stars in support of their cause fits Dawkins and Krauss’ purpose more than substantive interviews with qualified but largely unknown academics. The film’s purpose is not to present a case but primarily to rally the troops.
>
> But there is a more fundamental reason for the absence of argument against religious belief. Dawkins and Krauss proceed on the unspoken assumption that science and religion are fundamentally mutually exclusive. Therefore, all one needs to do in order to discredit religion is to extol and celebrate the greatness of science. Science and religion are like two ends of a teeter-totter: if the one end goes up, the other automatically declines. Thus, Krauss asks Dawkins which he would rather do: explain science or destroy religion? It is assumed that these are two ways to the same end. Dawkins, of course, chooses to extol science. “I’m in love with science, and I want to tell the world.” His implicit assumption is that one cannot love both God and science.

> There is no argument given for the mutual exclusivity of science and religion; rather it is the unquestioned presupposition of the film. This is ironic because one of the repeated emphases of the film is the necessity of critical thinking. No view is off limits to examination; we must insist on permission to question everything. Yet Dawkins and Krauss are strangely oblivious to their own unexamined assumptions. Why think that science, restricted as it is to the exploration of the physical world, is incompatible with the existence of God? Alas, we are not told.
>
> […]Indeed, given their ignorance of the literature, one cannot help but wonder if Dawkins and Krauss are not, in fact, incapable of engaging in substantive conversation on these matters. Hence, their open endorsement of ridicule as "a useful tool for illuminating reality." Dawkins' philosophical gaucherie is on display when complains that his dialogue with the Archbishop of Canterbury was "ruined" by the chairman (Sir Anthony Kenny, himself an agnostic), who "is a philosopher and so thought it his duty to clarify things," which led, says Dawkins, to "skewing." Similarly, Dawkins breezily dismisses "Why?" questions as "silly."

So what do we make of Dr. Craig holding Dawkins and Krauss accountable? Well. it's one thing to treat Peter Millican and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong nicely. But Krauss and Dawkins really need to be spanked for their own good, at this point. What else do you do with ignorant children who run around insulting grown-ups?

What I find ironic is that there are 7 areas of science where theism has gained decisive support in the last 50 years:

1. The Big Bang cosmology
2. The cosmic fine-tuning
3. The origin of life
4. The origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
5. Galactic habitability
6. Stellar habitability
7. Irreducible complexity

Each of these poses a threat to naturalism, and a few of them are lethal to naturalism on their own. Atheists have been reduced to holding onto speculations to get around them. You know the sort: nothing creating something, unobservable multiverses explain fine-tuning, unseen aliens seeded the Earth with life, undiscovered pre-Cambrian fossil record, and so on. It's a bad time to be an atheist. Science has refuted atheism over and over again!

William Lane Craig podcasts about "The Unbelievers"

There are 3 of these podcasts so far in the series:

1. What was the point of the film?
2. Is science opposed to religion?
3. Unscientific assertions in the film

Obama administration says that it “strongly” opposes religious liberty in the military

June 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Alliance Defending Freedom. (H/T Tom G.)

Excerpt:

> In the past few weeks, the Obama administration has shown exactly what it believes the First Amendment protects: very little. First the Justice Department subpoenaed phone records and personal emails from journalists, then the IRS told an organization that provides support to pregnant women in abusive situations that they could not “disagree” with other groups if they wanted non-profit status.
>
> So maybe we shouldn’t be surprised that the Obama administration once again wants to ignore the First Amendment, this time “strongly” opposing a proposed amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that would protect service members’ actions and speech that reflects “the conscience, moral, principles, or religious beliefs of the member.” When an Air Force officer can’t display a Bible on his desk because it might make others uncomfortable, it’s clear that free exercise of religion is under attack.
>
> The military isn’t the only place where this administration wants to trample on the religious freedom of every day citizens. There are over 30 documented direct attacks by the Obama administration on religious liberty. As just one example, the administration has continually refused to allow businesses with conscientious objections to opt out of Obamacare, forcing businesses into court to protect their right not to pay for abortions and abortion-causing drugs.
>
> Because opposition to religion is real, we need explicit protections of our religious freedom. This amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act is an important safeguard for service members. Since members of the military have volunteered to defend the United States and its constitution, isn’t it only right that our nation gives them the freedom the constitution promised? Like all Americans, service members should be free to live out their faith. It is concerning and disappointing that the Obama administration doesn’t agree.

I think it’s worth explaining again why religious people should oppose expanding the scope and power government beyond the limits set by the Constitution. The federal government is secular, and when it has power outside of the areas specified by the Constitution, then secularism invades those areas as well. Therefore, religious people should be careful when people talk about how the government has to solve this problem and that problem, and needs more money to spend to solve them. Religious people should not be in favor of growing government, raising taxes, and so on. If problems need

solving, then families, churches and communities should be the first resort. Local government, and state government should be next, and federal government should be the last resort. Christians should be for limited government.

IRS sent $46 million in “tax refunds” to 23,994 illegal aliens, all living at the same address

June 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The Internal Revenue Service sent 23,994 tax refunds worth a combined $46,378,040 to “unauthorized” alien workers who all used the same address in Atlanta, Ga., in 2011, according to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA).
>
> That was not the only Atlanta address theoretically occupied by thousands of “unauthorized” alien workers receiving millions in federal tax refunds in 2011. In fact, according to a TIGTA audit report published last year, four of the top ten addresses to which the IRS sent thousands of tax refunds to “unauthorized” aliens were in Atlanta.
>
> The IRS sent 11,284 refunds worth a combined $2,164,976 to unauthorized alien workers at a second Atlanta address; 3,608 worth $2,691,448 to a third; and 2,386 worth $1,232,943 to a fourth.
>
> Other locations on the IG’s Top Ten list for singular addresses that were theoretically used simultaneously by thousands of unauthorized alien workers, included an address in Oxnard, Calif, where the IRS sent 2,507 refunds worth $10,395,874; an address in Raleigh, North Carolina, where the IRS sent 2,408 refunds worth $7,284,212; an address in Phoenix, Ariz., where the IRS sent 2,047 refunds worth $5,558,608; an address in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., where the IRS sent 1,972 refunds worth $2,256,302; an address in San Jose, Calif., where the IRS sent 1,942 refunds worth $5,091,027; and an address in Arvin, Calif., where the IRS sent 1,846 refunds worth $3,298,877.
>
> **Since 1996, the IRS has issued what it calls Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) to two classes of persons: 1) non-resident aliens who have a tax liability in the United States, and 2) aliens living in the United States who are “not authorized to work in the United States.”**
>
> **The IRS has long known it was giving these numbers to illegal aliens, and thus facilitating their ability to work illegally in the United States. For example, the Treasury Inspector General’s Semiannual Report to Congress published on Oct. 29, 1999—nearly fourteen years ago—specifically drew attention to this problem.**
>
> […]In addition to the 23,994 tax refunds worth a combined $46,378,040 that the IRS sent to a single address in Atlanta, the IG also discovered that the IRS had

> assigned 15,796 ITINs to unauthorized aliens who presumably resided at a single Atlanta address.
>
> The IRS, according to TIGTA, also assigned ITINs to 15,028 unauthorized aliens presumably living at a single address in Dallas, Texas, and 10,356 to unauthorized aliens presumably living at a single address in Atlantic City, N.J.
>
> Perhaps the most remarkable act of the IRS was this: It assigned 6,411 ITINs to unauthorized aliens presumably using a single address in Morganton, North Carolina. According to the 2010 Census, there were only 16,681 people in Morganton. So, for the IRS to have been correct in issuing 6,411 ITINS to unauthorized aliens at a single address Morganton it would have meant that 38 percent of the town's total population were unauthorized alien workers using a single address.
>
> TIGTA said there were 154 addresses around the country that appeared on 1,000 or more ITIN applications made to the IRS.

And now they are trying to pass an amnesty bill which they tell us contains no corruption, waste or fraud at all. How stupid do they think that we are? If they were serious about their desire to clean up the immigration system and encourage immigration of responsible, law-abiding skilled immigrants, then they would be building a fence now and cleaning up the messes that already exist. It's important to understand that illegal immigrants break the law and cheat the system – and the rest of us have to pay for it. We pay for their schools, their health care, their car accidents, their crimes and so on. Politicians who turn a blind eye to this want to appear to be generous, spending other people's money and calling it "compassion". But this money doesn't come from politicians, it comes from taxpayers like you and I. I don't know about you, but I had my own plans for the money I earn, and it didn't involve paying for corrupt politicians to feel good about their "generosity".

Frank Turek responds to Obama's speech opposing Christian schools

June 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Frank Turek's latest radio show podcast discusses Obama's assertion that Christian schools are divisive.

Let's start with a news story from the Daily Caller, and then we'll review the podcast.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama suggested that religiously-affiliated and denominational schools are at the root of The Troubles, the ethnic, religious and nationalist conflict that seems to perpetually afflict Northern Ireland.
>
> Obama made the chastising remarks in front of about 2,000 mostly young people at Belfast's Waterfront Hall on Monday, the Scottish Catholic Observer reported.
>
> "If towns remain divided — if Catholics have their schools and buildings and Protestants have theirs, if we can't see ourselves in one another and fear or resentment are allowed to harden — that too encourages division and discourages cooperation," Obama lectured.
>
> […]Monday's statement is not the first time Obama has suggested that religion is a dangerous crutch.
>
> In 2008, when he was running for president, Obama criticized unsophisticated Americans in "small towns in Pennsylvania" and the Midwest for their attachment to Christian religion and firearms.
>
> "So it's not surprising then that they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them, or anti-immigrant sentiment, or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations," Obama famously declared, according to The Huffington Post.

I'm sure that he has no problem with Maddrassas and secular-leftist public schools, though.

Anyway, on to the podcast, and let's see what Frank Turek makes of it.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Obama's point: he thinks that religious schools encourage division rather than cooperation
- The point is NOT that he wants to shut down Christian education
- His point is, though, that teaching religion in schools is a source of segregation and division
- Obama toured Muslim countries, but he didn't say a word about Muslim schools

being divisive
- In Ireland, the violence is not in accordance with Christianity
- We should not judge a religion by actions that are inconsistent with that religion
- George Washington: “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked: Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice ? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”
- You can see how morality has degraded, for example in public schools, as society has become more secular
- Our human rights and freedoms are in fact rooted in a Creator, and government should recognize that
- Instead of being critical of religion, Obama should have emphasized the unity of Christian denominations like Thomas Jefferson
- In order to be right with God, the essential thing is to believe that Jesus’ death is an atonement for human sinfulness
- We should not lose sight of what we have in common with other denominations and how important those common points are
- Augustine: “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”
- The most important question for humans to ask “Does God Exist?”, because it determines whether there is meaning and purpose
- The question cannot even be asked or debated in public (government-run) schools
- Problem: how can our education system be sound if we do not and cannot investigate life’s most important question?
- The answer to the question “Does God exist?” is assumed to be NO in our public / government-run school system
- Why do parents who are forced to pay thousands of dollars for public schools go on and spend thousands more on private school?
- It’s because everyone knows that it’s worth the money to send children to private schools, they learn more there
- The President’s comment: denominational schools cause divisions, is itself divisive
- Jesus himself says that Christianity will involve some appropriate divisiveness: e.g. – Matthew 10:34-38
- See 1 Corinthians 5, Obama himself would be expelled from the church for claiming to be Christian while excusing sexual immorality

Then there is a period of people calling in and discussing the topic with Dr. Turek.

How to marry a Christian man: a checklist for women to prepare for marriage

June 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever been in a job interview where the people hiring you just asked you for your opinions instead about your knowledge and experience? Imagine that. I'm a software engineer so in interviews, I get asked software engineering questions about what I know and what I've done. Employers never ask me "do you believe in testing your code?" and "do you like continuous integration?" and "how do you feel about design patterns?". They always ask me about what I know, and what I've done with what I know. They ask me what I've studied and what skills I've put into practice previously. And they call my past employers and make certain that what I've told them is true.

Why do they do this? Well, employers do this because they have a specific goal in mind for me – roles that they expect me to fill with specific duties that they need me to help them with. In exchange, they offer me a salary. It would be a very strange thing if they offered me a salary just for having opinions about things that I didn't know and had never put into practice.

My work consists of creating software for a client. I am used to asking the client about his or her needs are, and helping them to be specific about their needs. I work with the client in order to design a piece of software that will meet their needs. In software engineering, the customer's needs come first, and the whole process is designed to produce functional code that satisfies the customer. I have a lot of fun working together with people on software and it can be very fulfilling, but the feelings I have about my job don't matter as much as what I produce for my client. Often, it can mean a lot of self-sacrificial work that is very hard on me. But since the client has paid the bill, I make those sacrifices in order to achieve the client's goals.

Now consider marriage. In marriage the client of the marriage enterprise is God. His goals are that each of the grown-ups and any children they produce will know him and make him known to others. He expects that the marriage will last a long time and be faithful and loyal. He expects that the marriage will conform to his specifications, not to the specifications on any other ideology – like feminism. He has requirements that are different than any engineer's desire to be happy. The happiness of the engineers is not God's primary goal. The happiness that the engineer has comes from achieving the goals of the client. And each engineer does his or her best to make sure other engineers stay focused on those goals and feel good about working for the client. The success of the marriage does not depend primarily on making anyone in the marriage happy, because it is not God's plan for us to be "happy" in a worldly way. Our model is Jesus, and his example of obedience to God was self-sacrificial love for others, even at the point of suffering and dying for others.

So, when I am considering marriage to a woman, I want to make sure that she

understands that the marriage will serve God and to assess how much knowledge and experience she has with the sorts of things that a God-serving marriage will involve. In particular, I am focused on making sure that she knows whether God exists. I want to see whether she has acted on that knowledge in a self-sacrificial, competent way in the past. I want to make sure that she is able to do hard things and bear with evil and suffering while remaining committed to serving God. I want to make sure that she believes in doing her job no matter how hard it gets. I want to see whether she has reasons to believe that morality is real and whether she grounds her convictions about morality in evidence as well as in the Bible. I want to see how much she has been influenced by the society's descent into postmodernism and moral relativism. I also want her to understand the mechanics of marriage: what are her duties? what are my needs? how do we build faith in children that will last? why do people divorce? why do people cheat? what laws and policies make it easier to do a marriage and to raise Christian children?

So in view of all of that, I've written a list of questions below that are the ones I use to discuss marriage with a woman. My goal here is not to see that she already knows about all of these things. My goal is to know whether she sees marriage as a project to serve God, and whether she takes her obligations to serve God seriously and put her happiness second. Very often, the response I get is to these questions is rebellion and refusal to learn or answer. But people generally agree that these questions do what they are intended to do – they check to make sure that God's goals will be the focus of the marriage. Women who think that the marriage is there to make them happy will not be interested in learning how to answer these questions and then trying to put what they've learned into practice.

QUESTIONS

1. Cosmology

What scientific evidence would you point to to show that God created the universe OR that God fine-tuned the universe, or parts of the universe, for intelligent life?

SAMPLE ANSWER: The big bang theory, the fine-tuning argument, galactic habitability, stellar habitability, or terrestrial habitability.

BONUS POINTS: referencing hard evidence like light element abundances, cosmic microwave background radiation, or specific instances of fine-tuning.

WHY IT MATTERS: She can't be a Christian unless she *knows* God exists, and that can't just be based on feelings and community. An awareness of the scientific evidence shows a seriousness about spiritual things – that her belief is rooted in objective reality, not in subjective feelings, culture, community, etc. It's not "her truth", it's "the truth". If she doesn't know why she believes, then she can't be relied upon to make decisions as a Christian, especially in stressful situations. There is always going to be a conflict between doing what one feels like and doing what is consistent with reality. Having scientific facts helps a person to do what they ought to do.

2. Intelligent Design

Explain the concept of intelligent design and explain how it applies to the i) origin of life

OR ii) to the fossil record.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the concept of specified complexity and Dembski's explanatory filter, then explain how it applies to (i) amino acid sequencing or the double helix, OR (ii) to the sudden origin of animal phyla in the Cambrian explosion.

BONUS POINTS: Ideally, for the origin of life question, she's going to mention things like UV radiation, chirality, cross-reactions and peptide bonds, then calculate the approximate probabilities for generating a protein by chance. For the Cambrian explosion, she should graph out the introduction of phyla over time, and explain the Ediacaran fauna and why they are not precursors to the Cambrian fauna. Bonus points for bashing theistic evolution, or talking about the early earth environment and the problems with forming amino acids.

WHY IT MATTERS: Darwinian evolution is bad science because it is really just philosophy (naturalism) masquerading as science. You can't marry anyone who pre-supposes a materialist view of metaphysics like naturalists do, and then allows that philosophical assumption to overrule the scientific evidence. You don't want to be paired up with someone who lets their prejudices overturn data.

3. The problems of evil and suffering

Assuming that Christianity is true, why do you think that God would allow suffering and evil in the world? Distinguish between human evil and natural evil in your answer. Also explain what role you think God's permission of evil and suffering has in maturing Christians.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Define the deductive and inductive problems of evil, explains several different responses to them, such as free will, character formation, natural law, the ripple effect, etc. Mention the burden of proof for claims that certain evils are gratuitous, i.e. – noseeums.

BONUS POINTS: explaining how evil relates to Christian theology and God's purposes for humans being knowledge of him and not just happiness, talking about Jesus' own suffering and the meaning and purpose of it. More bonus points for pointing out how atheists cannot even complain about evil without assuming objective morality, which requires a moral lawgiver.

WHY IT MATTERS: Lots of nasty things can happen in a marriage. Children can get sick or die, jobs can be lost, and so on. It helps when you are dealing with a person who expects it and will not jettison their responsibilities and belief in Christ in order to pursue happiness unencumbered. The main thing is that the woman thinks that the purpose of life is to know God, and that suffering and evil play a role in gaining knowledge of God. You definitely do not want to marry someone who thinks that the purpose of life is happiness, and that God is some big bearded grandfather in the sky who just wants to hand out goodies to people and make sure they are having a good time regardless of what they choose to do.

4. The moral argument

What is the is-ought fallacy? What is the difference between moral objectivism and moral relativism? Give one reason why moral relativism is false. Give one reason why an atheist cannot rationally ground prescriptive morality. Explain why objective morality relates to God's existence.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the is-ought fallacy. Explain objective and subjective morality. Discuss the reformer's dilemma and how it refutes relativism. Explain that atheism requires materialism, and materialism denies free will – so moral choices are impossible. Outline the moral argument.

BONUS POINTS: Give more than one reason where only one was asked for, refute attempts to assert objective morality on atheism, explain how moral obligations are related to God's design for humans.

WHY IT MATTERS: You can't marry a person who thinks that the moral law is not a brake on their desire to be happy. There are going to be times in the marriage when self-sacrifice is required by the moral law – either for you, for God, or for the children. It will not be easy to be moral then, so you are looking for someone who thinks that morality is real, and not subject to their feelings and whims. It might be worth asking the person when she has had to do the right thing when it was against her self-interest, like those valedictorians who name Jesus in their speeches and then get censored.

5. The resurrection of Jesus

Assume you are talking to a non-Christian. Explain how you would make a case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus on historical grounds. This person does not accept the Bible as inspired and/or inerrant.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the criteria for establishing minimal facts / historical bedrock, list a set of minimal facts, explain why they pass the criteria, propose at least two naturalistic alternatives to the resurrection, and disprove them. MUST mention 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 in order to pass.

BONUS POINTS: listing atheist scholars who support each minimal fact, discussing N.T. Wright's work on the Jewish concept of resurrection, referencing Richard Bauckham's work on the gospels as eyewitness testimony, mentioning the pre-suppositions (naturalism, relativism) of liberal scholars like Crossan and Borg.

WHY IT MATTERS: The resurrection is the cornerstone of Christian belief. A person cannot encounter skeptics and not be able to defend the resurrection on historical grounds to them. The resurrection matters to how people act: they act completely differently depending on whether they believe that this life is all there is, or that this life is just a precursor to eternal life with God. You want someone who takes the long-term perspective.

6. World religions

Name two major world religions and argue against them using either the laws of logic, scientific evidence or historical evidence. Explain the concept of middle knowledge, and why it is relevant to the problem of religious pluralism.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Refute Theravada Buddhism with the big bang, or refute Islam with the crucifixion of Jesus, etc. MUST mention specific beliefs of that religion that are testable, and not just argue that they reject Christianity and are therefore false. Explain how middle knowledge reconciles free will and divine sovereignty, and that it also helps to solve the problem of people who have never heard the gospel.

BONUS POINTS: Using evidence that is universally accepted by people outside of that religion. Using scientific evidence. Referencing Acts 17:27 or other Bible passages when explaining middle knowledge. Mentioning objections to middle knowledge, such as the grounding objection.

WHY IT MATTERS: Many younger Christians today believe that Christianity is moralistic therapeutic deism. They think that the purpose of religion is to have good feelings and to be nice to other people and to make other people feel good. It's all about feelings. You need to make sure that she knows how to make people feel bad and is comfortable doing it, with evidence. Middle knowledge also grounds the person's willingness to see people as being responsible for their acceptance or rejection of Christ. Instead of taking a hands-off fatalistic approach to salvation, someone who accepts middle knowledge is going to take persuasion seriously and expend effort to try to change the people around them.

7. Abortion

How would you establish that the unborn are fully human and deserve protection? Explain three pro-abortion arguments and then show why they are false. Name three incremental pro-life policies that you would introduce if you were a legislator.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Use the SLED test and the law of biogenesis. Talk about the DNA signature of the unborn being distinct from the mother. Explain and refute the back-alley abortions argument, the it's the woman's body argument, the Judith Jarvis Thompson violinist argument, etc. Legislation would be parental notification, banning funding for abortion providers, mandatory sonograms, etc.

BONUS POINTS: Refute more pro-abortion arguments, reference specific legislation that is in-flight or was recently signed into law. Experiences protesting abortion or debating abortion with pro-abortionists. Experience counseling a post-abortive or crisis pregnancy woman. Mentioning biological details of foetus development.

WHY IT MATTERS: Basically, because people who think that sex is for recreation, and that it is ok to kill children to avoid any limits on the pursuit of happiness are not qualified for marriage. You can't enter into an intimate commitment with someone who is willing to commit murder in order to get out of the consequences of their own selfish pursuit of pleasure. That is not going to work in a marriage – you need someone who makes good decisions, avoids harming others, is chaste and self-controlled, and takes responsibility for her actions when they go awry.

8. Marriage

Explain the public purposes of marriage, and then outline three threats to marriage and explain what legislation you would propose to neutralize these threats. What choices

should people make before marriage to make sure they will have a stable, loving marriage?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Some public purposes of marriage are i) to force moral constraints on sexual activity, ii) to produce the next generation of humans, iii) to provide children with a stable, loving environment in which to grow up. Three threats to marriage are i) cohabitation, ii) no-fault divorce – which leads to fatherlessness, and iii) same-sex marriage. There are others, too. For legislation, there are things like tax incentives, shared parenting laws, school choice to de-monopolize politicized public schools, etc. Pre-marriage behaviors are things like chastity, experience with children, having lots of savings, being physically fit, etc. Having a degree in experimental science, math or economics is excellent for a woman. Avoid artsy degrees, especially English.

BONUS POINTS: Name more threats to marriage, explain the effects of fatherlessness on children, explain how divorce courts work, explain how socialism impacts the family through taxation and wealth redistribution, explain what happens to women and children after a divorce.

WHY IT MATTERS: It's important for people who want to get married that they understand that marriage takes time and effort, and it requires both spouses to prepare for marriage, to be diligent at choosing a good spouse, and to understand what spouses and children need in order to stay engaged.

9. Children

Explain a person you admire and then tell me what you would do as a mother in order to produce that person from one of your children. What are some policies and laws that you would change to make your job easier?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Jay Richards. Jay Richards is one of the most well-rounded Christian scholars operating today. He has knowledge of multiple areas, including economics and science. To make a Jay Richards, you need to be very careful about his education – which could mean homeschooling and saving money for later university tuition, as well as exposing him to apologetics and debates at an earlier age. He would need to have the dedicated attention of his mother for the first two years of his life, at least. Some laws that would help would be lower taxes, school choice, and academic freedom laws.

BONUS POINTS: Explaining how different things like day care, public schools, divorce, etc. harm children. Explaining how mother and fathers contribute to the child's moral, cognitive, spiritual, etc. development at different times. Explain how the child is harmed if both parents are not present and engaged to play these roles.

WHY IT MATTERS: Marriage is an enormous sacrifice for a man. Not only is there the risk of divorce, but wives and children are very expensive. A man can serve God fine as a bachelor. He has to have compelling reasons why getting married would serve God more than staying single. Producing influential children seems to be one of the major reasons for a man to get married, and he needs to see evidence that his wife is on board with that.

10. Husbands

Explain the roles of a man in a marriage, and tell me some of the things you would do in order to help your man to achieve those roles. What groups would oppose your husband from fulfilling those roles, and what have you done in your life to prepare yourself to help your husband in his roles? What are some of the most important things that a man needs from a woman, and what specific things should a wife do to provide them?

SAMPLE ANSWER: Men are supposed to be protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders. In order to help men to be protectors, women have to give them time to study to discern truth from lie, and support their ability to be physically strong, and to own firearms. It is also a good idea for women to have a positive view of good men who use force to restrain evil, as with the American military. Women should support the use of force against radical Islam and terrorists, as well. In order to help men to be providers, women have to advocate for fiscal conservatism in the public square. That would mean advocating for lower taxes, less government spending and smaller government. It would also mean being frugal in the home and helping the man to move ahead at work. If the children are up and out of the house, it could mean going back to work or starting a business to help make ends meet – or monitoring investments. For a man to be a moral and spiritual leader, a woman has to be supporting of him making moral judgments in the home, disciplining the children, holding her accountable for moral errors, and for making exclusive truth claims when it comes to spiritual things. She should not censor him when he gets into debates about spiritual things, even if other people who disagree feel bad – so long as he is not being a jerk. Her goal is not to be popular or liked, but to support her husband in his roles. The most important thing a man needs is respect, and that means treating him as important and significant, being grateful for his contributions, soliciting his opinion on things, being mindful of his male nature, which is more visual and sexual.

BONUS POINTS: Having read “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands”, “Men and Marriage”, “Love and Economics” and “Taken Into Custody”. More bonus points for having written about what she learned about men and marriage from books like that. The goal here is for her to have a real awareness and sympathy for what men are facing as husbands and fathers, and to have an idea of what women can do to support them in their roles.

WHY IT MATTERS: As a man, you have certain needs – the biggest need is for respect. If you are thinking of marrying a woman who cannot define respect, and doesn’t know how to give you respect, then you are going to be in for a world of hurt. The more she views marriage as a joint project with specific goals and external challenges, the more understanding and support you will get. No one wants to fly a plane with someone who doesn’t know how to fly a plane, fix a plane or navigate a plane. The more she knows about men and marriage, the better it will go for you – and the children.

Parting thoughts

This list is not exhaustive, it’s just to give you an idea of the kinds of things you should be looking for. A lot of it is the attitude. You are looking for a woman who does not shift

blame onto you, who takes responsibility when she is wrong, who argues using logic and evidence, who loses arguments gracefully, and wins arguments gracefully, and who loves you and cares for you even if you are fighting. If the woman is resentful and doesn't want to learn anything to deepen her faith, then drop her and find someone who will learn – it will be much better for you to partner with someone lovable and helpful, instead of a selfish lazy feminist.

If I were making a list for women, I would emphasize different things more centered around the specific roles that men play in the marriage – asking for his resume, work history, savings, investments, past relationships with women, parenting ability, self-defense ability, mentoring ability, and especially on moral issues and Christian truth claims.The most important thing that a woman needs is love, and the man should be ready to speak about love at length, and explain how he is going to provide her with love during the courtship and during the marriage. Women need to know that they are significant and desired by the man.

Stephen C. Meyer discusses his new book “Darwin’s Doubt” on the Michael Medved show

June 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Michael Medved show is a national radio show broadcast out of Seattle, Washington. According to Talkers magazine, he has the fifth largest radio audience. He has a regular weekly segment on science and culture featuring scholars from the Discovery Institute.

Here is the segment from this past week, courtesy of the Intelligent Design: The Future podcast.

The MP3 file is available for download. (38 minutes)

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, the Michael Medved Show welcomes Dr. Stephen Meyer to talk about his new bestselling book, *Darwin’s Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design*. Listen in as Meyer and Medved discuss the mysteries of the Cambrian explosion and why this phenomenon continues to stump Darwinian evolutionists.
>
> *Each week, leading fellows from Discovery Institute will join Michael Medved to talk about the intersection of science and culture. Listen in live online or on your local Medved station, or stay tuned at ID the Future for the weekly podcast.*

Topics:

- Darwinism offers a materialistic account of where humans and animals came from, but is that all human beings are?
- Darwin was the first to have doubt about his theory of evolution because of the sudden origin if many different animal forms in the Cambrian era
- The book is about the sudden origin of these animal forms and more generally about how much information is needed to make an animal genome
- An animal is not just the form or the organs it is also the information to make new proteins and the instructions to make proteins are in the DNA
- At least 20 new phyla appear suddenly in the Cambrian fossils and the question is what is capable of creating all of that new information
- Mathematicians and computer scientists are especially likely to doubt evolution as a way of making new features because they know that random changes to the code base of an application are more likely to break things and degrade performance
- Naturalists have tried to explain the Cambrian explosion as being a case of the transitional fossils being not yet discovered
- The consensus of science at this time is that there is no known naturalistic explanation for the sudden origin of these animal types
- Caller: how abrupt are we talking about for the introduction of these new animal

forms?

- Meyer: We can calculate the amount of time that is needed to generate change, and the period of time that is needed to generate new forms of life exceeds the time available
- Caller: is it possible that meteors, asteroids and comets could transport biological components to the Earth to shorten the development time?
- Meyer: that's related to my first book on the origin of the first living cell "Signature in the Cell", and that life-from-space hypothesis would only get you building blocks, but not the bio-molecules that have the building blocks sequences – it's the difference between a pile of Scrabble letters and a Shakespearean play – it's the arranging of the components that is the problem
- Medved: The book has a lot of endorsements from scientists who are working at good universities and institutions
- Meyer: the strange thing about exploring the limits of evolution is that you can cite mainstream papers to criticize the Darwinian mechanisms, and then the proponents of Darwinism just assert that no criticism of Darwinian evolution is allowed
- Caller Greg: are you saying that all the phyla came in during the Cambrian explosion?
- Meyer: No, of the 26 phyla that we see in the fossil record, 20 come in during the Cambrian explosion
- Caller Greg: But there are some sponges that existed before the Cambrian explosion, so maybe all the Cambrian phyla came from sponges?
- Meyer: There are 3 phyla present in the pre-Cambrian but they are not ancestral to the 20 Cambrian phyla, the sponges are very simple – 6-10 cell types, arthropods have 60-90 cell types – you can't go from sponges to compound eyes in just 5-10 million years
- Meyer: even the sponges in the pre-Cambrian appear abrutly at the end of the pre-Cambrian
- Caller Greg: but there are complex worms in the Pre-Cambrian as well, and maybe those are ancestral to the 20 new phyla that appear suddenly in the Cambrian explosion
- Caller Greg: what you're saying is that we scientists don't understand what happened so an intelligence did it
- Meyer: No, what I am saying is that the Cambrian explosion involves massive amounts of new biological information, and none of the naturalistic Darwinian mechanisms can create that much new information in that short of the time
- Caller Greg: it's magic!
- Meyer: there are two points in the development of life forms where intelligence is needed: the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion, and this is because of the new information that is being added
- Caller Greg: new information is added by Hox Gene duplication
- Caller: don't we have to look a bit more at epistemology when discussing these issues?

- Meyer: Yes, we have to highlight that many people reject intelligent design because of a pre-supposition of naturalism that prevents them from seeing that intelligence explains anything regardless of the evidence
- Caller: well if you define evolution as change over time, then evolution happened, and who cares about the details like the origin of life and Cambrian explosion?
- Meyer: well there are many definitions of evolution: 1) change over time, 2) universal common ancestry, 3) undirected random process can explain the origin of life and the explosion of new animal forms in the fossil record
- Meyer: I accept 1) and I am skeptical of 2) and 3)

You can read more about caller Greg and Hox gene duplication at Evolution News.

I subscribe to the ID the Future podcast, and I really recommend that you do as well!

Previous entries

- Stephen C. Meyer on Thomas Nagel and intelligent design
- Stephen C. Meyer on Richard Dawkins and the Cambrian explosion
- John G. West discusses Darwinism and the value of human life
- Stephen C. Meyer and John Lennox discuss human exceptionalism
- Jay Richards and Stephen C. Meyer discuss scientific consensus
- Dan Barker debates Casey Luskin on academic freedom
- Zack Copplin debates Casey Luskin on science education

W. Bradford Wilcox: the importance and impact of a good father

June 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A pro-father article by W. Bradford Wilcox, from the left-leaning Atlantic.

He lists four ways that fathers make a distinctive contribution to child development.

- Distinctive play style
- Encouraging risk
- Protection from threats
- Disciplining style

Here's the detail on the last one:

> **Dad's discipline:** Although mothers typically discipline their children more often than do fathers, dads' disciplinary style is distinctive. In surveying the research on gender and parenthood for our book, Palkovitz observes that fathers tend to be firmer with their children, compared to mothers. Based on their extensive clinical experience, and a longitudinal study of 17 stay-at-home fathers, Kyle Pruett and psychologist Marsha Kline Pruett agree. In *Partnership Parenting* they write, "Fathers tend to be more willing than mothers to confront their children and enforce discipline, leaving their children with the impression that they in fact *have* more authority." By contrast, mothers are more likely to reason with their children, to be flexible in disciplinary situations, and to rely on their emotional ties to a child to encourage her to behave. In their view, mothers and fathers working together as co-parents offer a diverse yet balanced approach to discipline.

Then he lists out some reasons why good dads matter:

- Lower delinquency
- Lower teen pregnancy
- Lower depression

A very good article with lots of citations.

Colorado man faces fine and/or jail for refusing to bake for gay couple

June 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation reports on the latest episode of the conflict between gay activism and religious liberty.

Full text:

> A same-sex couple in Denver has filed a discrimination complaint against baker Jack Phillips for refusing to provide his services to help celebrate their wedding.
>
> Phillips declined on the grounds that participating in such a ceremony violates his religious beliefs about marriage. Similar cases have involved a Washington florist and a New Mexico photographer.
>
> Even though the Colorado celebration was for a marriage actually performed in Massachusetts, and Colorado does not recognize same-sex marriage under its laws, the baker stands accused of violating Colorado's nondiscrimination law. Heritage's Tom Messner has written how situations such as those in Colorado are triggered:
>
> Conflicts between same-sex marriage and religious freedom will often involve some type of previously adopted nondiscrimination law or policy, and nondiscrimination laws can impose burdens on religious freedom even in jurisdictions that do not legally recognize homosexual unions as marriages.
>
> Colorado is proving the point. Same-sex marriage is not formally recognized in the state, but nondiscrimination law can, even in states without same-sex marriage, produce conflicts with religious freedom.
>
> **In this case, the attorney general of Colorado issued a formal complaint at the behest of the ACLU. The case is expected to go before Colorado's Civil Rights Commission. The complaint urges Phillips to "cease and desist" his activity. Phillips could face fines of $500 and up to a year in jail.**
>
> For Phillips, the issue at stake is whether law will force him to use his creative services in a way that violates his faith.
>
> Phillips told a reporter he serves non-wedding cakes to all customers—regardless of sexual orientation. It's the same-sex marriage to which he objects.
>
> Phillips's attorney believes that actions against him are yet another example of recent trends that restrict conscience.
>
> "At its heart, this is a case about conscience," said Nicolle Martin, his attorney. "It would force him to choose between his conscience and a paycheck. I just think

> that’s an intolerable choice.”
>
> Phillips refuses to compromise and remains determined to stand up for his religious views. “If it came to that point, we would close down the bakery before we would compromise our beliefs, so that may be what it comes to,” Phillips told KCNC-TV.

There was a pretty good article on this issue a few days ago on the Public Discourse, and it’s worth reading and sharing with people who think that gay marriage won’t affect them. The truth is that gay marriage is not compatible with religious liberty, and gay activists are willing to use the state to push their views onto anyone who refuses to celebrate and affirm their lifestyle.

Mary Eberstadt: why Christians should promote policies that strengthen marriage

June 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting post about a new book by Mary Eberstadt. The post is written by historian Benjamin Wiker.

Excerpt:

> As the West has become increasingly secularized, the loss of faith has coincided with the destruction of the natural family. The sexual revolution, higher and higher rates of divorce, cohabitation, same-sex marriage—all have combined to make life-long man-woman marital unions an increasing rarity.
>
> Clearly, the rejection of God has led to a rejection, or radical redefinition, of the family.
>
> But in her *How the West Really Lost God*, Mary Eberstadt bids her readers to look at things from the other end as well. The "decline of the natural family" in the West is not only the effect of the loss of faith, but the cause as well: "the ongoing deterioration of the natural family has both accompanied and accelerated the deterioration in the West of Christian belief."
>
> Briefly put, "family decline…helps to power religious decline."
>
> One affects the other because the two go together, argues Eberstadt, like the spiral ladder of the double helix. The fortunes of family and faith correlate, and causation goes both ways. Across the board, regardless of social status or income, the religious tend to have more children than the secular-minded. And the more children a couple has, the more likely they are to go to church.
>
> But that means, of course, that those who are most secular are least likely to have children, and those who are unmarried and/or have no children are least likely to be religious.
>
> That correlation explains the precipitous decline in the birth rate for the most secularized countries of Europe, but allows us to see it in a new light. It is not just that secularization has led to plummeting birth rates in Europe. *Europe's demographic collapse is actually speeding up its secularization*.
>
> This is not a correlation that exists only in recent history. The French Revolution gave the West the first self-consciously secular government at the end of the 1700s, and one of its first revolutionary acts was to liberalize its marriage laws. But what people may not realize, was that France was the first country in Europe to experience a decline in fertility rates within marriage, and an increase in cohabitation and illegitimacy, decades *before* the French Revolution. In the early 1700s, over a half century before the Revolution, illegitimacy was only at 1%, but by the storming of the Bastille, which ushered in the Revolution, France's

> illegitimacy rate had climbed to 20% overall, with a 30% rate in the boiling pot of Paris. The French Revolution's successful attack on Christianity, and the consequent secularization of France, was, in part, the result of the prior erosion of the family.
>
> We see the same pattern in the UK, argues Eberstadt. "In Britain…the decline in births started a century later [than in France] at the very height of Victorian England,…Bit by bit…the same family trends already established in France—fewer births, more divorces, more out-of-wedlock births—also began reshaping the world of Britain. By our own time, over half of all children in Britain are born to unmarried people, and the fertility rate stands at 1.91 children per woman." Not surprisingly, Britain's churches are, like those of France, largely empty.
>
> In the Scandinavian countries, like Sweden, where marriage rates are lowest, and divorce, cohabitation, and single-family households, and out-of-wedlock births are the highest, we find the greatest degree of secularization.
>
> The obvious lesson we must draw, says Eberstadt, is "Vibrant families and vibrant religion go hand in hand."
>
> America is no exception. On the positive side, the baby boom after World War II brought with it a kind of "boom" in religious practice in the US.
>
> But the negative side of the correlation between family and faith is now more evident. Eberstadt quotes the findings of sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, "The recent history of American religion illuminates what amounts to a sociological law: The fortunes of American religion rise with the fortunes of the intact, married family."

Now here's the part that I think is interesting. When you walk into a church, you will find very little, if any, education about the kinds of policies that cause marriages to actually not happen or actually break up. The trouble is that most pastors are so focused on reading the Bible, and only the Bible, that they have no idea what sorts of policies and incentives cause people to not marry or to not stay married. In order to know that, they would have to be reading outside the Bible, in the scientific literature, and then communicating that knowledge to their flocks to get them to make better decisions and to vote more intelligently.

I think that we need to read more widely in order to know how to reach our goals (promoting marriage, in this case) in a practical way. What can we say to people to show them how to get to marriage? What decisions should they be making now, in order to be ready for marriage later? What policies should we be supporting to nudge people towards marriage? What policies should we be against that make it easier for people to dispense with marriage?

William Lane Craig debates Peter Atkins: Does God Exist?

June 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics 315 posted the video of a debate from the Reasonable Faith speaking tour in the UK:

This is a must-see debate. It was extremely fun to watch.

Details:

> On Wednesday 26th October 2011 William Lane Craig debated Peter Atkins on the topic: *Does God Exist?* This debate took place at the University of Manchester as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig. The debate was chaired by Christopher Whitehead, Head of Chemistry School at the University. Post-debate discussion was moderated by Peter S Williams, Philosopher in Residence at the Damaris Trust, UK.

Dr. William Lane Craig:

> **William Lane Craig** (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich in 1984.

Dr. Peter Atkins:

> **Peter William Atkins** (born 10 August 1940) is a British chemist and former Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Lincoln College. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.
>
> Atkins studied chemistry at the University of Leicester, obtaining a bachelor's

> degree in chemistry, and – in 1964 – a PhD for research into electron spin resonance spectroscopy, and other aspects of theoretical chemistry. Atkins then took a postdoctoral position at the UCLA as aHarkness Fellow of the Commonwealth fund. He returned to Oxford in 1965 as fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, and lecturer in physical chemistry (later, professor of physical chemistry).

You can get the audio of the debate here, along with links to their previous debate from 1998. This debate is accessible and understandable to novice-level Christians.

I am happy when debates like this come out. I have friends who are Christians who doubt the importance of apologetics in evangelism, because they don't think that apologists can prove anything or win arguments. I have friends who are skeptical of using arguments that assume a 14-billion year old universe, because they think that the Big Bang is compatible with atheism (!). I have friends who think that philosophical arguments have no persuasive force. I have friends who think that nothing can be proven from history, beyond a reasonable doubt. I have co-workers who ask me whether anyone wins these debates. I think that this debate answers all of those questions.

This debate clearly shows why Christians should not shy away from studying science, philosophy and history. We will not discover anything that harms Christian theism by thinking logically and by looking at the evidence. To the contrary, it is the atheist who makes war on the progress of science, and who is forced to resist the clear experimental evidence, and to resort to baseless speculations and blind faith. If you want to see a good debate with an intelligent atheist, I recommend watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican instead. But if you want to see a really, really overwhelming defeat for atheism, watch this debate. It is very clear at the end of this debate why Richard Dawkins refused to debate William Lane Craig at Oxford.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING SPEECHES

I only had time to summarize the first two speeches. Keep in mind that Dr. Craig always shines in his rebuttals, and this debate is no different. So you'll want to watch those rebuttals. Dr. Atkins *literally* says in this debate in his first rebuttal "There was nothing here originally. There is nothing here now. But it is an interesting form of nothing which seems to be something." And the audience laughs nervously. This debate is like that. You will see a clear winner and clear loser in this debate. This fight is decided by knockout.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

1. the origin of the universe
2. the moral argument
3. the resurrection of Jesus

Peter Atkins opening speech:

1. Dr. Craig is stupid, lazy and evil:
– Dr. Craig's arguments are old: from the 11th century! Old arguments can't be true
– Dr. Craig is just asserting that "God did it" because he is lazy

– Dr. Craig feels pressured to agree with the theistic majority
– Dr. Craig needs a psychological crutch to comfort him
– Dr. Craig is fearful of death
– Dr. Craig is just wishing for an eternal life of bliss
– Dr. Craig is driven by his heart, and not by his head

2. Origin of the universe:
– Maybe the universe is eternal and has no beginning – we don't know
– Maybe mommy universes can give birth to daughter universes
– It is naive to think that a cause is needed to cause the creation of the universe from nothing
– Science is just about to show how it is possible that something appears out of nothing without cause
– Some scientists have already begun to speculate about about how something can come into being out of nothing
– Maybe nothing is not really nothing, but it is actually something
– It would be admitting defeat to say that God created the universe out of nothing

3. Fine-Tuning:
– It could be the case that the fundamental constants are not variable
– It could be the case that the fine-tuning of the cosmic constants is a happy accident
– It could be the case that there are billions of billions of unobservable universes that are not fine tuned
– It could be the case that the cosmic constants in these billions and billions of unobservable universes are all random so that some are fine-tuned
– Anyone who infers that an intelligence is the best explanation of a finely-tuned set of life-permitting cosmic constants is lazy

4. Purpose:
– Philosophers and theologians are stupid
– I don't think that there is purpose in the universe
– I think that the universe is more grand if there is no purpose, so there is no purpose

5. Miracles:
– I don't think that miracles happen
– The resurrection is a fabrication
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't exist
– It could be the case that Jesus wasn't really crucified
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't really die after being crucified
– It could be the case that the disciples stole his body
– It could be the case that the women went to the wrong hole in the ground
– the gospels are political propaganda written long after the events they are reporting on

6. Theodicy:
– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing humans to perform actions that result in suffering

– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing nature to cause suffering

7. Morality:

– customs and conventions emerges arbitrarily in different times and places based on an awareness of the consequences of actions, as well as various anecdotes and experiences

– these customs and conventions are decided based on the goal for survival, in much the same way as politeness and manners emerge for decorum and to avoid offense

– it is childish to presume that there is an umpire God who decides moral values and duties

8. Religious believers are stupid, lazy and evil:

– the notion of God has arisen because people are stupid and want to be comforted

– there are no arguments or evidences for belief in God

– people who believe in God do not think, but instead take refuge in incomprehensible nonsense

New study: IRS targeting of Tea Party conservatives had significant effect on 2012 election

June 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the American Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> In a new research paper, Andreas Madestam (from Stockholm University), Daniel Shoag and David Yanagizawa-Drott (both from the Harvard Kennedy School), and I set out to find out how much impact the Tea Party had on voter turnout in the 2010 election. We compared areas with high levels of Tea Party activity to otherwise similar areas with low levels of Tea Party activity, using data from the Census Bureau, the FEC, news reports, and a variety of other sources. We found that the effect was huge: the movement brought the Republican Party some 3 million-6 million additional votes in House races. That is an astonishing boost, given that all Republican House candidates combined received fewer than 45 million votes. It demonstrates conclusively how important the party's newly energized base was to its landslide victory in those elections, and how worried Democratic strategists must have been about the conservative movement's momentum.
>
> The Tea Party movement's huge success was not the result of a few days of work by an elected official or two, but involved activists all over the country who spent the year and a half leading up to the midterm elections volunteering, organizing, donating, and rallying. Much of these grassroots activities were centered around 501(c)4s, which according to our research were an important component of the Tea Party movement and its rise.
>
> The bottom line is that the Tea Party movement, when properly activated, can generate a huge number of votes-more votes in 2010, in fact, than the vote advantage Obama held over Romney in 2012. The data show that had the Tea Party groups continued to grow at the pace seen in 2009 and 2010, and had their effect on the 2012 vote been similar to that seen in 2010, they would have brought the Republican Party as many as 5 – 8.5 million votes compared to Obama's victory margin of 5 million.

How far was Barack Obama willing to go to win the 2012 election?

William Lane Craig lectures on Bart Ehrman and the historical Jesus

June 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture by Dr. Craig on Bart Ehrman's approach to the historical Jesus.

Clip 1 of 6:

Clip 2 of 6:

Clip 3 of 6:

Clip 4 of 6:

Clip 5 of 6:

Clip 6 of 6:

And then there is the debate between William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman, (transcript here), where you get to see it all in action in front of real students at a real university!

I also see that Brian Auten posted something here, but I don't know whether it is the audio from this lecture or something else entirely.

All my Christian readers – I hope you guys can all make a case for the resurrection that stands up. Bill's case stands up – in the university, against the toughest opponents. Will you stand up for Jesus, too?

Further study

The top 10 links to help you along with your learning.

1. How every Christian can learn to explain the resurrection of Jesus to others
2. The earliest source for the minimal facts about the resurrection
3. The earliest sources for the empty tomb narrative
4. Who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb?
5. Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?
6. What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?
7. Assessing Bart Ehrman's case against the resurrection of Jesus
8. William Lane Craig debates radical skeptics on the resurrection of Jesus
9. Did Christianity copy from Buddhism, Mithraism or the myth of Osiris?
10. Quick overview of N.T. Wright's case for the resurrection

Debates are a fun way to learn

Three debates where you can see this play out:

- Craig Evans and Bart Ehrman
- Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman
- William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman (transcript here)

Or you can listen to my favorite debate on the resurrection.

- James Crossley and William Lane Craig

Evangelicals for Biblical Immigration opposes Gang of Eight amnesty bill

June 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breitbart News reports on a new evangelical group that opposes the Senate's amnesty bill.

Excerpt:

> On Friday, Evangelicals for Biblical Immigration, an informal group of well-respected evangelical Christians announced its opposition to the Gang of Eight immigration bill. The group, recently organized by Kelly Monroe Kullberg, founder of the Veritas Forum and co-author and editor of *Finding God at Harvard*, featured a letter written to members of Congress by Kullberg outlining the Biblical principles on which opposition to the bill is based on its website and Facebook page.
>
> The Gang of 8 bill, Kullberg writes in her letter, "is flawed to the point of being unworkable. Please, scrap it and start over." She writes that "as a citizen in the Heartland, I have a simple request of the Senate: Please stop. Please, no more surprises. Rather, rebuild our trust."
>
> "There seems to be great confusion about what the bill means and how it will be implemented," she argues. "Rushing to a vote, once again, is not wise."
>
> Evangelicals for Biblical Immigration's opposition to the Gang of Eight bill comes just two weeks after a George Soros-backed group, the Evangelical Immigration Table, launched a $250,000 media campaign in support of the bill's passage.
>
> But Kullberg wants the Senate to know that American citizens "are not willing to 'pass the bill so that [we] can find out what is in it.' We The People never were willing to act so immorally, so foolishly, and certainly not now," she writes. "This is no time for another mystery bill that will forever change the nation we love and have the duty to steward."
>
> "Our future," Kullberg argues, "should not be shaped by those who break laws but by those who keep laws. Let's learn to care for both the citizen and the foreigner, and do this wisely with no surprises. Another 'Obamacare' will break our back as a nation."

You can read a letter that Kelly wrote about the immigration bill.

It's nice to see a group of authentic evangelicals stepping up to make clear what the Bible says about immigration.

But what about the fake Soros-funded "Evangelical Immigration Table" group?

Breitbart News explains more about them:

> Lynne Hybels… has become a national voice for the front group for the George

> Soros funded National Immigration Forum, a leading advocate for the crony capitalist laden Schumer-Rubio "Gang of Eight" immigration bill.
>
> Ms. Hybels was not only featured at a Thursday press conference at which the front group, Evangelical Immigration Table, announced the launch of a $250,000 ad campaign designed to pressure members of Congress to vote in favor of the "Gang of Eight" bill, she provides the narrative voice on one of the national radio advertisements included in the campaign. You can hear her make the case for her understanding of immigration reform here Note that Ms. Hybels also states the disclaimer at the end of the ad "paid for by the Evangelical Immigration Table. "
>
> However, Breitbart News reported on Sunday that the Evangelical Immigration Table does not exist as a legal entity. On Monday, Breitbart News reported that "Evangelicals Mislead on Funding of Immigration Ads." Though the ads that are now airing in 13 states contain a disclaimer that they are paid for by the Evangelical Immigration Table, however, the ads were actually paid for by the Soros-funded National Immigration Forum.

Lynne Hybels blogs at the leftist Sojourners blog. Sojourners is the group run by Jim Wallis, that also accepts massive donations from the atheist George Soros. Her husband Bill Hybels introduced Barack Obama at a speech. Lynne Hybels has previously worked for the pro-infanticide, pro-gay-marriage Barack Obama as a member of his outreach team to faith-based community groups. The Soros-backed pro-amnesty group also has connections to Marxist Jim Wallis, who backed the pro-infanticide, pro-gay-marriage Obama in the Presidential election. George Soros, of course, is a self-proclaimed atheist, and he supports abortion and gay marriage, just like Obama and his supporters.

J. Warner Wallace: what causes Christians to be fearful of explaining their faith?

June 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the blog post from the Please Convince Me blog.

Excerpt:

> I'm presently training a group of high school students at the Unleashed Camp here in Southern California held on the campus of Vanguard University. This camp prepares young people to share and defend their faith, and students spend every afternoon putting what they learn into practice as they share the Gospel with people in the local community. Yesterday was the first day of the camp, and there were many students there who had never participated in evangelism of this nature. I could sense some nervousness in the room. So, I began by asking what caused them to be fearful about sharing the Gospel. – See more at: http://coldcasechristianity.com/2013/the-source-of-our-fear-when-it-comes-to-evangelism/#sthash.D4VY1U0C.dpuf
>
> […]They were afraid about how they might look or what might happen to them. Would they experience something awkward or embarrassing? Would they become uncomfortable? Would they experience some pain? Most of our fear of evangelism is centered on our own desire to be comfortable, and there's nothing more uncomfortable than being embarrassed or humiliated by our peers. For these young people, it's bad enough that they might look foolish to strangers, but there's also the very real possibility that they'll look foolish to their fellow students!

Wallace quotes a couple of verses, but there are some more that I think are appropriate:

"In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you…"
(1 Pet 4:4)

"But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled…"
(1 Pet 3:14)

And a longer one:

1 This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed.

2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.

4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges

me.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

(1 Cor 4:1-5)

Or this one:

12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

(1 Cor 4:12-14)

Or this one:

[16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

[17] If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand.

[18] But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

(Dan 3:16-18)

Or this one:

26 “So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.

27 What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.

28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care.

30 And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

32 “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.

33 But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

34 “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35 For I have come to turn

“‘a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—
36 a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’

37 “Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.39 Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

(Matt 10:26-39)

That last one is one of my favorite passages, because my family on both sides isn’t Christian. They’re Hindu and Muslim. I am the first evangelical Protestant in my household. I didn’t grow up in the church, although I was a Christian at a young age. But I never got the idea from church that Christianity was about serving my needs and making me have happy feelings and comfort. When I think of Christianity and fear of not being liked by other people, I think of three simple words: BUT IF NOT. I never thought of Christianity as something that would make my family or community like me. I don’t care if people like me.

I think that there is a real problem with young people today, where they are looking to their peers for approval in a way that I never did when I was growing up. But then again, we were immigrants and I have brown skin, and didn’t really fit in with the cool people. When I was growing up, I just worked as much as I could to earn extra money and tried to do well in school. I spent all my free time programming computers and playing sports, role-playing games and tabletop wargames. What did I care what people thought of me? They were not good people anyway. These days, it’s really different. Young people want to be liked.

By the way, please subscribe to the Please Convince Me podcast. I think that right now, it’s my favorite podcast. Tough-minded, practical Christianity from a guy from a non-Christian background, who has real life experience outside of the Christian bubble. If you are sick of church, try this podcast. You will not be disappointed.

Does the church do a good job of equipping Christians to talk to non-Christians?

June 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Most churches these days are not doing a good job of helping Christians to understand how to explain and defend Christianity to non-Christians. They tend to be focused on providing comfort and entertainment, which is why so much of the focus is on compassion, singing and being "nice". Logical arguments are out. Scientific evidence is out. Historical evidence is out. There is a terrible fear of disagreeing with anyone. Everyone is focused on being "nice" and being "liked" by non-Christians. Instead of teaching people what Christians think is true, we teach people how to recycle cans and how to color pictures of Jesus.

Church is typically a mishmash of mysticism, piety and emotivism. Pastors in particular are often opposed to connecting anything the Bible says to evidence outside the Bible, whether it be research or experiments or philosophical arguments. Even the very best preaching pastors just assert things and then expect people to accept it because "the Bible says so". It's almost as if it dirties up Christianity to test it against what we know from other disciplines like cosmology and ancient history. People who are regarded as Christian leaders seem to never get around to explaining why anyone should accept the Bible as true.Accepting the Bible is just left up to your feelings, or maybe whether you think the pastor is "nice". That's it.

Now how well does this simple, blind-faith be-nice approach work on a real non-Christian?

Mary sent me this article from the New Statesman that explains how it works.

Excerpt:

> It's 7.30pm on a Tuesday evening and I'm at a small church in East London. A man called Adam* hands me a name label, pours me a plastic cup of squash and says dinner won't be long. I pull up a seat and introduce myself to ten strangers. It's all rather awkward.
>
> The reason I'm at church isn't because I'm religious (I'm not) or because my fridge is empty (it is). It's because I've signed up to Alpha, a weekly course run by churches all over the world in order to spread the Christian message. Although I'm an atheist, I don't have a problem with people who subscribe to religion. I am, however, wary of brainwashing, I think most religious beliefs are kind of stupid and I strongly suspect that organised religion is a horrible thing.
>
> […]Adam, the course leader, is wearing a Superdry shirt. After dinner, he explains that it's customary to sing. Rebecca plays the acoustic guitar and Adam mans the PowerPoint presentation, which would have got an A* if it was a piece of ICT GCSE coursework because the lyrics make noises when they appear on the screen.

Now, why on Earth would you make a non-Christian sing?? That makes no sense. If they don't accept Christianity, why would they sing about it?

More:

> After singing comes talking. Specifically, Adam talking. Over the next six weeks, his talks will cover: "Is there more to life than this?"; "Who is Jesus and why did he die?"; "How can we have faith?"; "How can we read the Bible?"; "Why and how do I pray"; and "What about the Church?". After each talk, we'll break off into groups and discuss what we've learnt.
>
> The first couple of sessions are similar. They involve Adam handing out copies of the Bible and saying things like, "So let's assume Jesus does exist and came to Earth to save us…" I'm genuinely the only person who is annoyed that Adam makes no attempt to prove Jesus's existence.

The first questions to address are thing like "Does God Exist?" and "Did Jesus Rise From the Dead?" and "Why Should People Think the Bible is Historically Reliable?". But those questions cannot be asked by Christians, because they are totally unaware, thanks to years and years of avoiding apologetics, that those questions come *before* praise hymns and Bible study and prayer. Christians are so unaware that they don't even realize how to discuss Christianity with a non-Christian, using authorities like logic, science and history, which non-Christians accept.

More:

> Adam's big points in the first two weeks are that we should love Jesus because he loves us in spite of our tendency to sin and that we should try to emulate his behaviour, because it's nice to have a role model.
>
> Discussion time isn't fruitful. Natalie asks me how I'm able to distinguish between moral and immoral behaviour if I don't base my actions on Jesus' example. I explain that I work out what makes my peers happy and try to do those things. Everyone laughs, which I find confusing because I'm not joking. I agree that having a role model can be helpful, but ask how they know Jesus is the best one. Anna and Will, who are married, tell me that it's because the Bible said so. But how do they know the Bible is right? "No offence, Tabatha," replies Louise, "but the Bible is quite far-fetched. I don't get why someone would have made that stuff up if it weren't true." It sounds like I'm lying, but I'm not.
>
> […]This week, Adam's main point is that Christianity isn't about rules. Fine, but there's still no attempt to prove God's existence.

What is going on here? It's that Christians are basically no different than cultists. We think that it's our jobs to just tell people things without ever proving anything with science or history. We don't know how to construct logical arguments. All we do is say what we believe and then hope that the person listening will accept it because "the Bible says so" or maybe because it makes the person feel like a nice person to accept it.

More:

> Then we talk about which bits of the Bible we should take literally. Louise tells me I'll work it out if I read the Bible. I tell her I've read it. She says I will never develop a full understanding because I'm not God so I can't understand everything. This is becoming a recurring theme. These people have answers to some problems, but as soon as they hit a brick wall they settle for not understanding God and refuse to think through alternatives.

Wow, how do Christians handle questions that they don't know the answer to? By going and finding the answer? NO! We think that it's not our job to find answers to this skeptic's questions, it's the skeptic's job to find answers. We hand the work to the skeptic to do, instead of doing the work for them. Finding answers is work, and if Christianity is about anything, it's apparently about avoiding work. That's what we learn in church, anyway.

More:

> This week, Leslie, a priest from the church, speaks about evolution, which has to be our most interesting topic to date. "How do I know evolution isn't true?" he begins, continuing: "Because God revealed himself to me through scripture." This annoys me: these people keep saying really obscure things and not explaining them. Leslie explains that scripture is "God-breathed," so when you read the Bible, God is speaking directly to you. I'm not an idiot but I have absolutely no conception of what that means.

This is pretty much the answer you're going to get from most pastors and church people, even in a time where we have amazing arguments coming out of the intelligent design community about the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion. And even without talking about evolution, we could be talking about the Big Bang cosmology and the cosmic fine-tuning. But those things can't be talked about because they are just too "real" and we want to keep religion in the realm of try-it-and-see-if-you-like-it bromides.

More:

> Leslie goes on to offer practical Bible-reading advice: you should read it for 15 minutes a day and ask God questions by verbalising your thoughts. By this stage, I'm annoyed. I want to know why we should read the Bible, how they know it's true, what God sounds like and how He chooses which prayers to listen to. Instead, Leslie says things like, "If we pray, we become trees. Trees grow fruit, so we will live fruitful lives." This kind of obscure, metaphorical chat is driving me mad.
>
> […]In discussion time, it becomes clear that although these people are interested in religion, they're uncritical of it. It's really starting to bother me that this institution encourages blind faith at the expense of scientific enquiry.

Again, Christians are incapable of understanding that they have to prove claims using arguments and evidence. They just want to state their beliefs, like cultists do when they

knock on your door. What exactly is the difference between us and the cults if it's not that we are able to make a case for our views based on evidence, not feelings?

More:

> Adam tells a story about his wedding ring. It's a more elaborate version of this: Adam went to Costa. He left his wedding ring behind. He realised what he'd done. He said a quick prayer. He went back to Costa. He found his ring. He reckons God answered his prayer.
>
> […]Louise claims that God once answered her prayer to get her to the airport on time. Alasdair thinks God stopped a wave breaking on him when he went surfing as a teenager. Robin tells us that God warned him to wear a helmet when he snowboards.
>
> […]"Anyone feel unconvinced by the power of prayer?" Natalie asks. "YES," I feel like shouting. "YOU'RE IDIOTS. ALL OF THOSE THINGS WERE PROBABLY COINCIDENCES THAT YOU'RE READING TOO MUCH INTO."

Sigh. Well I hope that this is helpful so that everyone understands what non-Christians really need from us. I think we need to focus on studying apologetics, so that we can answer questions. Instead of focusing on telling people weird things, we should just focus on the basics: God's existence, the minimal facts case for the resurrection, intelligent design in nature, the moral argument, the problems of evil and suffering. The basics. And stop trying to talk about our own lives or our own weird experiences, because you can't prove anything by telling stories or mystical experiences or pious feelings. We really need to stop treating religion as something different from practical things. We don't hire employees or pick stocks or buy medicine on the basis of how we feel about them. We study things carefully, we look at evidence, we use reason. Truth is the point of religion, not feelings, and when we focus on feelings when talking to non-Christians, we look like idiots. And rightly so.

Supreme Court overrules elected legislators and imposes new definition of marriage

June 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from National Review by professor Hadley Arkes to make sense of the SCOTUS decision on same-sex marriage.

Excerpt:

> These decisions, handed down by the Court today, affect to be limited in their reach, but they are even worse than they appear, and they cannot be cabined. They lay down the predicates for litigation that will clearly unfold now, and with short steps sure to come, virtually all of the barriers to same-sex marriage in this country can be swept away. Even constitutional amendments, passed by so many of the states, can be overridden now. The engine put in place to power this drive is supplied by Justice Kennedy's "hate speech," offering itself as the opinion of the Court in *U.S. v. Windsor*. Kennedy wrote for the Court in striking down Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), the part of the act that recognized as "marriage," in federal law, only the union of a man and woman. In Kennedy's translation, the Defense of Marriage Act showed its animus in its very title: The defense of marriage was simply another way of disparaging and "denigrating" gays and lesbians, and denying dignity to their "relationships." As Justice Scalia noted so tellingly in his dissent, Kennedy could characterize then as bigots the 85 senators who voted for the Act, along with the president (Clinton) who signed it. Every plausible account of marriage as a relation of a man and woman can then be swept away, as so much cover for malice and blind hatred.
>
> As Scalia suggested, that opinion can now become the predicate for challenges to the laws on marriage in all of the States. A couple of the same sex need merely go into a federal court and invoke Justice Kennedy's opinion in the DOMA case (*U.S. v. Windsor*): The Supreme Court has declared now that a law that refuses to recognize same-sex marriage is animated by a passion to demean and denigrate. Any such law cannot find a rational ground of justification. As Kennedy had famously said in *Romer v. Evans*, those kinds of laws can be explained only in terms of an irrational "animus."
>
> That may be enough to have the laws and the constitutional provision overruled. But it gets even better if the state has a Democratic governor: For he may declare now that he will not enforce the constitutional amendment, for he thinks it runs counter to the federal Constitution. And by the holding today in the case on Proposition 8 in California (*Hollingsworth v. Perry*), the backers of the constitutional amendment will have no standing in court to contest the judgment. Constitutional amendments are meant to secure provisions that will not be undone by the shift in season from one election to another. But with the

> combination of these two cases today, any liberal governor can virtually undo a constitutional amendment on marriage in his state.

Here is another reaction from the Family Research Council.

Here's a good article by Ryan T. Anderson, explaining how the redefinition of marriage really means the end of marriage. It also means the end of religious liberty. Make no mistake, this decision will force Christians to conduct same-sex wedding ceremonies on their property, whether they like it or not. That's what is already happening in countries that legalized gay marriage.

I for one am surprised that so many people who call themselves Christian could have voted for a political party that has now ended marriage as we know it. I think that most people who vote for the Democrat party are motivated by the desire for their neighbor's money – they voted for the party that gives them the most goodies. They decided to sacrifice the needs of children in order to keep the money from the welfare state flowing. I hope that this SCOTUS decision helps those who voted Democrat to understand that their true positions on issues like abortion and gay marriage. I am especially concerned with people who claim to believe in God and even claim to be Christians. When it came time to be counted, you voted for abortion and gay marriage. Your vote ensured that tiny little children would feel lost in the world, making it easier for them separated from their biological mother or their biological father. That's assuming that the selfish grown-ups even allow them to be born at all.

I think the greatest condemnation will be reserved for the pious celebrity pastors who took great pride in not educating members of their churches about what gay marriage would really do. They were so proud about not having any reasons outside of the Bible to oppose same-sex marriage. They made sure that opposition to gay marriage, like opposition to abortion and Darwinism, would be dismissed as so much religious bigotry in the public square by non-Christians. Those fideistic pastors paved the way for gay marriage, by sheltering their flock from the arguments and evidence that would have been persuasive to non-Christians. I hope that when they are forced to perform gay marriages in their churches, that they'll finally understand why research papers, studies and academic debates are more important than singing songs in church.

UPDATE: I have been advised by Sean G. that Proposition 8 is still the law in California after this ruling. This Breitbart article explains:

> As of today, there is no appellate opinion (meaning an opinion issued by a court of appeals) against Prop 8. The Supreme Court refused to issue one, and threw out the only other one (the Ninth Circuit's). There is only a trial court opinion. So every agency in California is legally bound to regard Prop 8 as binding law.
>
> Since no one who wants to defend Prop 8 has standing to appeal rulings on it to the Ninth Circuit, there will never be such an opinion in the federal court system. So the only way to get an appellate opinion would be in the California state court system. So someone would have to file a lawsuit regarding Prop 8, and then

> appeal it to a California court of appeals and then maybe to the California Supreme Court. Only when one of those courts hold Prop 8 unconstitutional can the public officials in that state regard it as stricken from the books.
>
> That litigation could take years. And in the meantime, supporters of traditional marriage can continue making the case for marriage.

So the outcome for Prop 8 is not as bad as the outcome for DOMA.

New poll: 26% of Obama supporters think Tea Party is top terrorist threat

June 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Nile Gardiner writes about it in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Rasmussen has just published an extraordinary poll which highlights the deep-seated prejudice against the Tea Party among both US government workers and supporters of President Obama. According to the poll:
>
> Half of all voters consider radical Muslims the bigger terrorist threat facing the nation, but supporters of President Obama consider the Tea Party to be as big a danger.
>
> A new Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey finds that 51% of Likely U.S. Voters consider radical Muslims to be the bigger threat to the United States today. Thirteen percent (13%) view the Tea Party that way, and another 13% consider other political and religious extremists to be the larger danger. Six percent (6%) point to local militia groups. Two percent (2%) see the Occupy Wall Street movement as the bigger terrorist threat.
>
> **However, among those who approve of the president's job performance, just 29% see radical Muslims as the bigger threat. Twenty-six percent (26%) say it's the Tea Party that concerns them most. Among those who Strongly Approve of the president, more fear the Tea Party than radical Muslims.**
>
> As for those who disapprove of Obama's performance, 75% consider radical Muslims to be the bigger terrorist threat. Just one percent (1%) name the Tea Party.
>
> … Conservatives overwhelmingly see radical Muslims as the greater terror threat. Liberals are fairly evenly divided between radical Muslims and the Tea Party.
>
> Twenty percent (20%) of government workers see the Tea Party as the nation's bigger terror threat. Twelve percent (12%) of private sector workers hold that view.
>
> […]The extraordinary success of the Tea Party has led to it being demonised by the Left, culminating in an unprecedented campaign by the IRS against it, which has prompted a resurgence in public support for the movement – up 14 points since January, to 44 percent among likely US voters. Today's Rasmussen poll illustrates the sheer depth of animosity towards the Tea Party within sections of the federal government and among President Obama's strongest supporters (the two are usually interchangeable).
>
> Some liberals have become so blinded by their hatred that they ludicrously see

> grassroots conservative groups defending the American Constitution as more dangerous than Islamist militants seeking to destroy the United States. Anyone opposed to their cause is a threat. This is irrational and deeply disturbing in a free society that has always cherished the cause of political freedom and open debate. It amply demonstrates just how extreme the American Left has become, and how out of touch it is with reality.

For a liberal in government, the problem is not adding a trillion plus to the national debt every year. That's fine, and nothing to be concerned about. The trouble is that some people oppose running up these trillion dollar deficits – that's terrorism. The Democrats believe that they are doing a good thing by using government to target Tea Party conservatives, because you would have to be a terrorist in order to oppose adding $8 trillion to the national debt. It's not just the IRS that targeted the Tea Party, either. It's the Department of Homeland Security, as well. Democrats aren't serious about national security.

Christianity and the doctrines of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism

June 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you familiar with the differences between *exclusivism, inclusivism* and *pluralism?* This article from Leadership University explains all three of them.

Here's exclusivism:

> The following is a succinct explanation of the central characters and ideas behind each position. The exclusivist position has been the dominant position of the church as a whole through much of its history until the Enlightenment. Major representatives include Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Hendrick Kraemer, D.A. Carson, William Lane Craig, and R. Douglas Geivett.
>
> Key to this position is the understanding of God's general and special revelations. God is manifested through creation (general revelation), but Man has responded by freely going against this revelation and, thus, stands guilty before a holy God. However, God has demonstrated a reconciliatory mercy through His word and deed, fulfilled completely in Jesus Christ. The historical person of Jesus, then, is the unique, final, decisive, and normative self-revelation of God to Man (special revelation). Exclusivists believe that Jesus Christ is the sole criterion by which all religions, including Christianity, should be understood and evaluated. Calvin Shenk explains:
>
> > Christ did not come just to make a contribution to the religious storehouse of knowledge. The revelation which he brought is the ultimate standard. Since in Christ alone is salvation and truth, many religious paths do not adequately reflect the way of God and do not lead to truth and life. Jesus is not, therefore, just the greatest lord among other lords. There is no other lord besides him.
>
> Specific texts often employed by exclusivists include Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 3:11; and 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

And inclusivism:

> Inclusivism is a blanket term to characterize a sort of "middle way" between exclusivism and pluralism. Most prominent within mainline Protestantism and post-Vatican II Catholicism, its notable proponents (in one formor another) include Karl Rahner, Raimundo Panikkar and Stanley Samartha, and Hans Kung. Evangelical theologians such as Clark Pinnock, Norman Anderson, and John Sanders have also identified themselves with this position. Herein, the agnosticism associated with the latter option above is replaced with outright optimism. Christian salvation is not confined to the historical or geographic

> extent special revelation has spread, rather it must be available to all cultures, irrespective of age or geography.Salvation is still posited wholly in Christ and his salvific work. Specific knowledge of this work, however, is not necessary for the effect (i.e., salvation) to apply to those within a different religious culture who have responded to the general revelation available. Once again, Shenk explains:
>
> > Inclusivists want to avoid monopolizing the gospel of redemption. They acknowledge the possibility of salvation outside of Christian faith or outside the walls of the visible church, but the agent of such salvation is Christ, and the revelation in Jesus is definitive and normative for assessing that salvation. Jesus Christ is believed to be the center, and other ways are evaluated by how they relate to him. Other religions are not just a preparation for Christ, but Christ is actually present in them.
>
> The fundamental differences between exclusivism and inclusivism… are the nature and the content of "saving faith." The former emphasizes explicit faith while the latter points to an implicit faith.

And pluralism:

> Finally, there is the pluralist position. This is undoubtedly the most difficult of the three to define in any general sense. The spectrum of pluralistic thought is as wide as it is long. The focusof this particular study will examine the contributions of its key figures: Paul Knitter, John Hick, and Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Just as in the previous positions, the interpretative range within just these three individuals varies. It is fitting, however, to focus primarily on them since they are the most vocal and influential figures espousing pluralism today.
>
> Hick and Knitter argue the case for pluralism on the following grounds: (1) ethically, it is the only way to promote justice in an intolerant world; (2) in terms of the "ineffability of religious experience," so no religion can claim an absolutist stance; and (3) through the understanding that historical and cultural contexts must be the filter for any absolute religious claim. Hick has argued that all world religions attempt to relate to the unknowable Ultimate Reality (or, the Real), but because of their various cultural and historical contexts these attempts are all naturally different. Hence the various conceptions of the Real and the salvation(s) sought. The common soteriological goal, toward which all religions strive, though, is rooted in the desire to transcend self-centeredness and, in turn, encounter a new (unexplainable) experience with the Real. But, he emphatically emphasizes the fact that there is "no public evidence that any one religion is soteriologically unique or superior to others and thus has closer access to Ultimate Reality."
>
> Therefore, with pluralism, Christ is no more definitive or normative than any religious figure or concept. Or, as Andrew Kirk explains, "Rather than confessing that Jesus Christ is the one Lord over all, this view asserts that the one Lord who

> has manifested himself in other names is also known as Jesus." By "crossing the Rubicon," as Hick and Knitter illustrate, Christians are encouraged to abandon any claim of Christian uniqueness and the possibility of absolute revelation, accepting the fact that the Christian faith is one among many options.

Now maybe you didn't know this, but Roman Catholics seem to have taken a turn away from exclusivism and towards inclusivism in the last century.

So, I thought I would post a rebuttal to the Roman Catholic embrace of inclusivism from one of my favorite Christian apologists, Greg Koukl.

Excerpt:

> There are some issues of Christianity that are intra-Nicene, intramural discussions between believers, in which I think a charitable person can easily see how another Christian can hold a different view because there are things that are difficult to understand in Scripture. For instance, though I'm Reformed in my soteriology, my understanding of salvation–I'm a Calvinist–I am sympathetic to an Arminian perspective because I can see how they, in lines of reasoning from the New Testament and verses themselves from the New Testament, can come to their view. So, though I would disagree, and I think they're mistaken, I understand how they can see it.But there are other positions that I cannot understand because there is no New Testament evidence in favor of it, and, to the contrary, almost to a word, as the New Testament touches the issue, it says quite the opposite.
>
> Earlier this week, I was honored, flattered, and, frankly, humbled to have a very unique opportunity on Monday to address an audience of about 150 Jewish people that were in the midst of Jewish High Holy Day services–morning services, evening services–at kind of a pause time in the afternoon, in which my host and I and another guest had a discussion about Jews and Christians. The three of us were on the panel: my host, Dennis Prager, a man I have a tremendous admiration and affection for, and Greg Coiro, a Roman Catholic priest and a professional friend. I've known both of these men over 20 years and have been in many discussions, both in private and public on the air with Dennis and Greg Coiro.
>
> It was in this opportunity that, in a sense, the ancient quarrel of sorts, theologically, was revisited, that I've had in the past many years ago when we were talking about this in interfaith dialogues. This difference of opinion is a historically new development in Roman Catholicism that stunned me when I first encountered it in the early days of being on Religion on the Line in the late eighties, a radio panel Dennis Prager hosted for many years. The priests on the panel uniformly held the conviction, informed by Vatican II, that Jews don't have to believe in Jesus in order to receive the benefits of Jesus' salvation. This is a view called "inclusivism." It's not the same as pluralism, but in my view, it seems to have the same impact: "Yes, Jesus is necessary for salvation, but you don't

> have to believe in Jesus to benefit from Jesus."
>
> Now, at this afternoon panel recently, the very first question that came up was whether trust in Jesus is necessary for salvation. "Greg, do you believe that? Do Protestants believe that?" I answered, "Yes, I believe that. And no, not all Protestants believe that. But let me try to explain it to you in a way that doesn't sound so stark. Let me try to give it some perspective." I explained that it wasn't as if God was up there looking down at a bunch of religious clubs and prefers some over others. He used to prefer the Jewish club and now He prefers the Christian club. It may sound that way to many when this doctrine of Christianity is put forward: Jesus is the only way of salvation; you must believe in Jesus in order to benefit from what Jesus did.

Talk about Daniel in the lions' den. Anyway, click through and read the whole article to get an idea of how to make your stand for exclusivism in difficult places.

For a general article defending the Christian doctrine of exclusivism, check out this article by William Lane Craig. One of my favorites, from way way back to when I was an undergraduate.

And, if you would like to listen to a debate on pluralism, then here is a debate featuring pluralist John Hick.

Treasury Dept. IG: IRS targeted 292 Tea Party groups but only 6 progressive groups

June 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tim M. sent me this article from the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Refuting Democratic suggestions that progressive groups were also swept up in the IRS probe of the tax status of Tea Party organizations, the Treasury Department's inspector general has revealed that just six progressive groups were targeted compared to 292 conservative groups.
>
> In a letter to congressional Democrats, the inspector general also said that 100 percent of Tea Party groups seeking special tax status were put under IRS review, while only 30 percent of the progressive groups felt the same pressure.
>
> The Wednesday letter to the top Democrat on the House Ways and Means Committee punched a huge hole in Democratic claims that progressive groups were targeted as much as the Tea Party groups from May 2010-May 2012, the height of the Tea Party movement.
>
> The letter from the Treasury Department Inspector General for Tax Administration revealed that there just weren't many progressive groups who even sought special tax exempt status. A total of 20 sought it, and six were probed. All 292 Tea Party groups, meanwhile, were part of the IRS witchhunt.
>
> "At this point, the evidence shows us that conservative groups were not only flagged, but targeted and abused by the IRS," said Sarah Swinehart spokeswoman for the Ways and Means Committee.

This article was useful to me because one of my co-workers tried to tell me that progressives were targeted just as much as conservatives by the IRS. So I showed him this article. If you know any leftists who need correction, be sure and send the article along to them, too.

New CDC study on gun violence that Obama requested undermines gun control

June 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article about the CDC study from the leftist Slate magazine. (H/T ECM)

First – Obama ordered this study, and it was performed by an agency under his control – the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The article says:

> Earlier this year, President Obama ordered the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to assess the existing research on gun violence and recommend future studies. That report, prepared by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council, is now complete. Its findings won't entirely please the Obama administration or the NRA, but all of us should consider them.

The article explains 10 findings of the report.

Here are a few of them:

> **2. Most indices of crime and gun violence are getting better, not worse.** "Overall crime rates have declined in the past decade, and violent crimes, including homicides specifically, have declined in the past 5 years," the report notes. "Between 2005 and 2010, the percentage of firearm-related violent victimizations remained generally stable." Meanwhile, "firearm-related death rates for youth ages 15 to 19 declined from 1994 to 2009." Accidents are down, too: "Unintentional firearm-related deaths have steadily declined during the past century. The number of unintentional deaths due to firearm-related incidents accounted for less than 1 percent of all unintentional fatalities in 2010."
>
> **5. Mass shootings aren't the problem.** "The number of public mass shootings of the type that occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary School accounted for a very small fraction of all firearm-related deaths," says the report. "Since 1983 there have been 78 events in which 4 or more individuals were killed by a single perpetrator in 1 day in the United States, resulting in 547 victims and 476 injured persons." Compare that with the 335,000 gun deaths between 2000 and 2010 alone.
>
> **7. Guns are used for self-defense often and effectively.** "Almost all national survey estimates indicate that defensive gun uses by victims are at least as common as offensive uses by criminals, with estimates of annual uses ranging from about 500,000 to more than 3 million per year … in the context of about 300,000 violent crimes involving firearms in 2008," says the report. The three million figure is probably high, "based on an extrapolation from a small number of responses taken from more than 19 national surveys." But a much lower estimate of 108,000 also seems fishy, "because respondents were not asked

> specifically about defensive gun use." Furthermore, "Studies that directly assessed the effect of actual defensive uses of guns (i.e., incidents in which a gun was 'used' by the crime victim in the sense of attacking or threatening an offender) have found consistently lower injury rates among gun-using crime victims compared with victims who used other self-protective strategies."
>
> **10. It isn't true that most gun acquisitions by criminals can be blamed on a few bad dealers.** The report concedes that in 1998, "1,020 of 83,272 federally licensed retailers (1.2 percent) accounted for 57.4 percent of all guns traced by the ATF." However, "Gun sales are also relatively concentrated; approximately 15 percent of retailers request 80 percent of background checks on gun buyers conducted by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System." Researchers have found that "the share of crime gun traces attributed to these few dealers only slightly exceeded their share of handgun sales, which are almost equally concentrated among a few dealers." Volume, not laxity, drives the number of ill-fated sales.

The findings of the CDC study are not aligned with either side of the gun control debate, but considering the source (an agency of the Obama administration), I expect them to be even more liberal than the real state of affairs.

A better place to look for the truth about guns is in the academic literature. Here are two books I really like for that.

- More Guns, Less Crime by Dr. John R. Lott (University of Chicago Press, 3rd ed.)
- Guns and Violence by Dr. Joyce Lee Malcolm (Harvard University Press)

Both of those books make the case that permitting law-abiding citizens to own firearms for self-defense reduces rates of gun violence.

Canada repeals Section 13 law that criminalized politically incorrect speech

June 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Political Map

Sun News reports on some good news up north.

Excerpt:

> An Alberta MP has succeeded in his bid to repeal a section of the Canadian Human Rights Act long seen by free-speech advocates as a tool to squelch dissenting opinions.
>
> Conservative MP Brian Storseth saw the Senate give third and final reading late Wednesday to his Bill C-304 which repeals Section 13 of the Human Rights Act, an act that had been used to, among other things, attack the writings of Sun News Network's Ezra Levant and Maclean's columnist Mark Steyn.
>
> Section 13 ostensibly banned hate speech on the Internet and left it up to the quasi-judicial human rights commission to determine what qualified as "hate speech." But, unlike a court, there was no presumption of innocence of those accused of hate speech by the commission. Instead, those accused had to prove their innocence.
>
> With elimination of Section 13, producing and disseminating hate speech continues to be a Criminal Code violation but police and the courts will adjudicate rather than human rights tribunals.
>
> Storseth drafted his bill in 2011 and enjoyed support from the highest levels in cabinet.
>
> "Our government believes Section 13 is not an appropriate or effective means for combating hate propaganda," Justice Minister Rob Nicholson said in late 2011. "We believe the Criminal Code is the best vehicle to prosecute these crimes."

> Last summer, Storseth's bill cleared the House of Commons in a free vote and, now that it's through the Senate, it will get royal assent and Section 13 should soon disappear.

Brian Lilley comments: (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

> To put it bluntly, the means you can't take someone through the federal human rights apparatus over hurt feelings via a blog post or a Facebook comment.
>
> Now the bill is passed and will become law but like many acts of Parliament it will not come into force for a year.
>
> Still after a long hard battle to restore free speech in Canada, this is a victory.

Canada just became a little more free. Congratulations to Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party of Canada for undoing a harmful policy enacted by the radical left.

Wind power turbine kills white-throated needletail

June 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

White-throated Needletail

My friend Barbara G. sent me this UK Telegraph story about rare birds, because she knows that I love birds.

Excerpt:

> Around 40 people were watching the White-throated Needletail, the world's fastest flying bird, on the Isles of Harris when the tragedy happened.

> Sightings of the bird have only been recorded eight times in the UK in nearly 170 years, most recently in 1991, prompting around 80 ornithologists to visit the island in the hope of catching a glimpse.
>
> John Marchant, a project coordinator for the British Trust for Ornithology, visited the island on a specially-arranged trip with a group of other birdwatchers and witnessed the death.
>
> The 62-year-old bird enthusiast said he travelled from Norfolk when he heard about the arrival of the bird, which had brown, blue and black bird plumage.
>
> "We were absolutely over the moon and thrilled to see the bird. We watched it for nearly two hours. While we were watching it suddenly it was a bit close to the turbine and then the blades hit it," he said.
>
> […]During the 1991 sighting, a single bird was spotted four times in Kent, Staffordshire, Derbyshire and finally Shetland.
>
> The White-throated Needletail, also known as the Needle-tailed Swift or Spine-tailed Swift, is known to fly up at speeds of up to 69mph, although there are

> unconfirmed reports of them reaching 105mph.
>
> The birds have very short legs, which they use only for clinging to vertical surfaces, and they build their nests in rock crevices in cliffs or hollow trees. They spend most of their lives in the air, living on the insects they catch in their beaks.
>
> They breed in rocky hills in central Asia and southern Siberia but migrate south to the Indian Subcontinent, southeast Asia and Australia.
>
> The SNP administration at Holyrood is pressing ahead with a rapid expansion in the number of wind farms after setting a target to generate the equivalent of all Scotland's electricity from renewable sources by 2020.

The SNP is the socialist Scottish National Party. They are basically secular communists, so they love subsidizing green energy – and killing rare birds.

Here's a related story closer to home, from Fox News. (H/T Melissa)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has never fined or prosecuted a wind farm for killing eagles and other protected bird species, shielding the industry from liability and helping keep the scope of the deaths secret, an Associated Press investigation has found.
>
> **More than 573,000 birds are killed by the country's wind farms each year, including 83,000 hunting birds such as hawks, falcons and eagles, according to an estimate published in March in the peer-reviewed Wildlife Society Bulletin.**
>
> Each death is federal crime, a charge that the Obama administration has used to prosecute oil companies when birds drown in their waste pits, and power companies when birds are electrocuted by their power lines. No wind energy company has been prosecuted, even those that repeatedly flout the law.
>
> […]Documents and emails obtained by The Associated Press offer glimpses of the problem: 14 deaths at seven facilities in California, five each in New Mexico and Oregon, one in Washington state and another in Nevada, where an eagle was found with a hole in its neck, exposing the bone.
>
> One of the deadliest places in the country for golden eagles is Wyoming, where federal officials said wind farms had killed more than four dozen golden eagles since 2009, predominantly in the southeastern part of the state. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose the figures. Getting precise figures is impossible because many companies aren't required to disclose how many birds they kill. And when they do, experts say, the data can be unreliable.
>
> When companies voluntarily report deaths, the Obama administration in many cases refuses to make the information public, saying it belongs to the energy companies or that revealing it would expose trade secrets or implicate ongoing

> enforcement investigations.
>
> Nearly all the birds being killed are protected under federal environmental laws, which prosecutors have used to generate tens of millions of dollars in fines and settlements from businesses, including oil and gas companies, over the past five years.
>
> “What it boils down to is this: If you electrocute an eagle, that is bad, but if you chop it to pieces, that is OK,” said Tim Eicher, a former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service enforcement agent based in Cody, Wyo.

Most other people like dogs and cats, but I like birds. I am concerned about birds of prey who are endangered species. I believe in conservation. To me, what this story says is that Obama doesn’t really care about the environment. The federal government does have some legitimate functions, like protecting us from threats, maintaining roads and protecting endangered species. But they don’t have to be subsidizing wind power, especially when it causes pain and suffering to innocent birds.

How do *you* define morality? Three options and a challenge

June 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Brian Auten tweeted this thought-provoking post from Come Reason Ministries.

He starts with this:

> In my posts on natural marriage and the recent Supreme Court decision on DOMA, I had made the claim that the Supreme Court cannot define morality. There are many people in the world who will claim that simply because an action is legal it is thus moral; I argue that the former does not necessarily imply the latter. But others have been confused on how I can make such a claim. So, I'd like to back up a bit and talk about just what I mean when I speak of morals and morality.
>
> The study of morality—what it is, how we come to know it, and its distinctions—is a field of study known as ethics. There are several ethical theories on just what morality is, but I will focus on the three main ways people define moral principles: the emotive definition of morality, the subjective definition of morality, and objective definition of morality.[1]Within the objective view, there are two more subsets: morality stemming from the nature of man and morality that transcends man's nature.

It lists 3 views of morality:

1. THE EMOTIVE DEFINITION OF MORALITY
2. THE SUBJECTIVE DEFINITION OF MORALITY
3. THE OBJECTIVE DEFINITION OF MORALITY

And then he explains each one.

I think that it is tremendously difficult to make sense of morality unless morality is objective. In my set of marriage questions for women, I wrote about how important the idea of objective morality is for marriage:

4. The moral argument

What is the is-ought fallacy? What is the difference between moral objectivism and moral relativism? Give one reason why moral relativism is false. Give one reason why an atheist cannot rationally ground prescriptive morality. Explain why objective morality relates to God's existence.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Explain the is-ought fallacy. Explain objective and subjective morality. Discuss the reformer's dilemma and how it refutes relativism. Explain that atheism requires materialism, and materialism denies free will – so moral choices are impossible.

Outline the moral argument.

BONUS POINTS: Give more than one reason where only one was asked for, refute attempts to assert objective morality on atheism, explain how moral obligations are related to God's design for humans.

WHY IT MATTERS: You can't marry a person who thinks that the moral law is not a brake on their desire to be happy. There are going to be times in the marriage when self-sacrifice is required by the moral law – either for you, for God, or for the children. It will not be easy to be moral then, so you are looking for someone who thinks that morality is real, and not subject to their feelings and whims. It might be worth asking the person when she has had to do the right thing when it was against her self-interest, like those valedictorians who name Jesus in their speeches and then get censored.

It's scary that people have let behind the notion of morality as a real, objective thing. What I see emerging from that is that the weakest people in society (unborn and born children) will suffer from the selfish decisions of the adults. I've been warning about that for a while now.

Report: Los Angeles students being trained by schools to promote Obamacare

June 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily reports on it.

Excerpt:

> With great excitement, the Los Angeles Unified School District has designed a nearly $1 million program to train teenagers to promote the glories of ObamaCare to parents, relatives and friends at home.
>
> The state's health insurance exchange, Covered California, is handing $990,000 to LA schools, along with federal grants totaling 36-million more U.S. taxpayer dollars to districts around the most populous state.
>
> The goal is to train millions of student messengers statewide to sell the idea of government-subsidized health insurance to parents and relatives at home and to get more people enrolled in ObamaCare.
>
> Taxpayer-paid public school staff will also be used to phone students' homes urging enrollment under Obama's Affordable Care Act. And they will be used to consume precious class instructional time to teach the students all about the healthcare program that the Democrat Congress did not read before passing in 2010.
>
> […]A spokeswoman for the LA school district proudly said the student ObamaCare scheme was actually a pilot program to see how well teenagers serve as messengers of government-sponsored information.
>
> The goal, she said, is to determine "whether young people can be trained as messengers to deliver" a broad array of school and government-sponsored messages to family and friends. Now, there's a student indoctrination idea that sounds like some country other than the United States.
>
> If they prove proficient at influencing their own families to believe material sent home from schools, she said, the teens will be used to deliver numerous other official messages to adults in their home and neighborhoods.

One thing that the Los Angeles schools could do is tell everyone how well the British "public option" health care system works.

Here's an article from the UK Daily Mail that the schools could use to make the case for Obamacare. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> As many as 1,165 people starved to death in NHS hospitals over the past four years fuelling claims nurses are too busy to feed their patients.

> The Department of Health branded the figures ‘unacceptable’ and said the number ofunannounced inspections by the care watchdog will increase.
>
> According to figures released by the Office for National Statistics following a Freedom of Information request, for every patient who dies from malnutrition, four more have dehydration mentioned on their death certificate.
>
> Critics say nurses are too busy to feed patients and often food and drink are placed out of reach of vulnerable people.
>
> In 2011, 43 patients starved to death and 291 died in a state of severe malnutrition, while the number of patients discharged from hospitalsuffering from malnutrition doubled to 5,558.

See? It works! Just think of it as post-birth abortion.

Who killed marriage? A look at the history of gay marriage activism

June 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review, a reminder from Ed Whelan on which political party pushed for the redefinition of marriage.

Excerpt:

> In 1996, defenders of marriage respond to judicial mischief against marriage by drafting and proposing the Defense of Marriage Act. DOMA wins overwhelming majorities in both Houses of Congress—85 to 14 in the Senate and 342 to 67 in the House. Among its supporters are many strong advocates of gay rights, including President Clinton, who signs DOMA into law, and then-senator Joe Biden.
>
> This modest measure merely reaffirms and makes crystal clear what Congress had always meant by the term *marriage* in provisions of federal law: a male-female union. DOMA doesn't intrude at all on a state's authority to regulate marriage under state law. It doesn't nullify or prohibit any marriages, or in any other respect preempt the operation of state law. On the contrary, it leaves the states free to define, or redefine, marriage as they please.
>
> **Initial litigation attacks against DOMA fail. But then President Obama is elected. First, the Obama administration, with the complicity of then-Solicitor General Elena Kagan, actively sabotages its purported defense of DOMA. Then, on the flimsiest of pretexts, it completely abandons its duty to defend DOMA and aggressively attacks DOMA. (See Part IV of my House testimony on the "First" proposition and the remainder of it on the latter.) The Supreme Court ends up invalidating DOMA in an opinion by Justice Kennedy that, in the course of breaking new ground, smears supporters of DOMA as mean-spirited bigots. To top off the farce, Kagan provides the decisive fifth vote.**
>
> The battle for marriage in California displays a similar pattern. In 2000, California voters adopt Proposition 22 to affirm that marriage in California remains what it has always been—the union of a man and a woman. In May 2008, the state supreme court, in a novel opinion and by a 4-3 vote, strikes down Proposition 22 as supposedly violative of the state constitution. Marriage supporters respond with Prop 8, which the voters of California adopt in November 2008. Intense and vicious bullying of supporters of Prop 8 ensues.
>
> Proponents of same-sex marriage then run to their favorite federal courthouse to challenge Prop 8 on federal constitutional grounds. They draw as the judge in the case Vaughn Walker, who proceeds to engage in what is probably the most egregious course of misconduct ever by a federal district judge (and who

> discloses only after his retirement from the bench that he is in a long-term same-sex relationship and thus was ruling on his own right to marry his same-sex partner). The Ninth Circuit ruling on appeal, which also holds Prop. 8 to be unconstitutional, is written by notorious liberal activist Stephen Reinhardt. Judge Reinhardt's wife, Ramona Ripston, directed an ACLU affiliate that filed briefs in support of the Prop. 8 challengers in the same case and publicly rejoiced over Judge Walker's ruling. Yet Judge Reinhardt somehow refuses to disqualify himself from deciding the appeal.
>
> As reprehensible is the unprecedented refusal of California officials to defend Prop 8—a refusal that ultimately leads five members of the Supreme Court (including Kagan, the decisive vote once again) to rule that the Court has no jurisdiction over the case.

So Obama's selection of Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court, a known opponent of marriage, was decisive. She was confirmed to the court in 2010, so you might expect all the church-attending people who supported Obama to not vote for him again in 2012. I wrote about her pro-abortion views and pro-gay-agenda views in 2010, so we all had the opportunity to realize what Obama believed by nominating Kagan. But something tells me that the church people who voted for Obama in 2008 just went ahead and voted for him a second time in 2012. Because they were not interested in his record at all. They were moved by shallowness and appearances.

One thing that I would like to say to people who attend church, but who voted for gay marriage activists. The Bibles in the pews are there for a reason. If you formulate your decision on how to vote without it, then that is not authentic Christianity. You should not vote without reading evidence from research (e.g. – scientific research like the Regnerus study) to confirm the Bible and apply the Bible. I don't think that God is pleased with people who disregard his Word and the evidence that confirms it. You are not here to be influenced by Hollywood or by public schools. You are here to know God and to puzzle these moral questions out using evidence.

Stephen Baskerville: five myths about no-fault divorce

June 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Catholic News Agency.

Introduction:

> Almost four decades after the "no-fault" divorce revolution began in California, misconceptions abound. Even the many books about divorce, including myriad self-help manuals, are full of inaccurate and misleading information. No public debate preceded the introduction of no-fault divorce laws in the 1970s, and no debate has taken place since.
>
> Yet divorce-on-demand is exacting a devastating toll on our children, our social order, our economy, and even our constitutional rights. A recent study estimates the financial cost of divorce to taxpayers at $112 billion annually. Recent demands to legitimize same-sex marriage almost certainly follow from the divorce revolution, since gay activists readily acknowledge that they only desire to marry under the loosened terms that have resulted from the new divorce laws. Divorce also contributes to a dangerous increase in the power of the state over private life.

Here are the five myths about no-fault divorce:

- No-fault divorce permitted divorce by mutual consent, thus making divorce less acrimonious
- We cannot force people to remain married and should not try
- No-fault divorce has led men to abandon their wives and children
- When couples cannot agree or cooperate about matters like how the children should be raised, a judge must decide according to "the best interest of the child"
- Divorce must be made easy because of domestic violence

And the details about number three:

> Myth 3: No-fault divorce has led men to abandon their wives and children.
>
> Fact: This does happen (wives more often than children), but it is greatly exaggerated. The vast majority of no-fault divorces — especially those involving children — are filed by wives. In fact, as Judy Parejko, author of Stolen Vows, has shown, the no-fault revolution was engineered largely by feminist lawyers, with the cooperation of the bar associations, as part of the sexual revolution. Overwhelmingly, it has served to separate large numbers of children from their fathers. Sometimes the genders are reversed, so that fathers take children from mothers. But either way, the main effect of no-fault is to make children weapons and pawns to gain power through the courts, not the "abandonment" of them by

> either parent.

Al Mohler wrote about the history of no-fault divorce a while back, and I think it's worth reviewing why we have this lousy law.

> The story behind America's love affair with no-fault divorce is a sad and instructive tale. As Baskerville documents, no-fault divorce laws emerged in the United States during the 1970s and quickly spread across the nation. Even though only nine states had no-fault divorce laws in 1977, by 1995, every state had legalized no-fault divorce.
>
> Behind all this is an ideological revolution driven by feminism and facilitated by this society's embrace of autonomous individualism. Baskerville argues that divorce "became the most devastating weapon in the arsenal of feminism, because it creates millions of gender battles on the most personal level." As far back as 1947, the National Association of Women Lawyers [NAWL] was pushing for what we now know as no-fault divorce. More recently, NAWL claims credit for the divorce revolution, describing it as "the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken."
>
> The feminists and NAWL were not working alone, of course. Baskerville explains that the American Bar Association "persuaded the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws [NCCUSL] to produce the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act." Eventually, this led to a revolution in law and convulsions in society at large. This legal revolution effectively drove a stake into the heart of marriage itself, with inevitable consequences. In effect, no-fault divorce has become the catalyst for one of the most destructive cultural shifts in human history. Now, no-fault divorce is championed by many governments in the name of human rights, and America's divorce revolution is spreading around the world under the banner of "liberation."

And note that Democrats oppose any effort to reform laws that make it easy to break up marriages:

> A basic dishonesty on the question of divorce pervades our political culture. Baskerville cites Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm as referring to divorce as a couple's "private decision." Granholm's comments came as she vetoed a bill intended to reform divorce law in her state. The danger and dishonesty of referring to divorce as a couple's "private decision" is evident in the fact that this supposedly private decision imposes a reality, not only on the couple, but also on children and the larger society. Indeed, the "private decision" is really not made by a couple at all–but only by any spouse demanding a divorce.

So, no-fault was pushed by two groups: feminists and trial lawyers. Christians rolled over for it because we thought we fell for the myths that no-fault divorce was "compassionate". That was a mistake, and one we need to roll back. (By the way, that's not a bad post by Al Mohler. I pick on him for having his head stuck in the Bible, but it

looks like he has a comprehensive view of marriage)

The reason I am writing about this is because of a post by Dr. Jerry Walls (H/T First Things) where he said that people who are opposed to gay marriage tend to say nothing at all against premarital sex and no-fault divorce. Well, I am against gay marriage and I am also personally a virgin and I would repeal premarital sex promotion in the schools and no-fault divorce in the courts if I could. And in fact regular readers know that I am always blogging about the damage caused by divorce and the damage caused by premarital sex, usually with study after study to support my views. I don't just say "the Bible says" and expect that to transform a culture that is largely indifferent or even hostile to what the Bible says.

I think that Christians need to become experts on everything from the fine-tuning of the cosmological constant to no-fault divorce to the Laffer curve to undesigned coincidences in the New Testament sources to WMD development and proliferation in rogue nations like North Korea and Iran. The more people regard Christians as intelligent, informed and circumspect, the more people will be curious about the gospel. We have to know everything about everything and we have to be concerned about every conflict between Christian convictions and what's happening in the world. Studying the way the world works is one way of serving God and defending his honor with people who want to dismiss him, and dismiss their obligations to him.

Gay man gets 40-year sentence for molesting boy he adopted from Russia

July 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Warning: The following story may be disturbing and offensive to some readers. Reader discretion is advised.

UPDATE: The Australian Broadcasting Corporation published an article praising the gay adoption by Mark Newton in 2010. I have posted the full text in this post and saved off a PDF. The article has since been pulled.

The Sydney Morning Herald reports on the latest example of gay adoption gone awry – this time from Australia. (H/T Mysterious S.)

Excerpt:

> Standing before an American court convicted of the most heinous of child sex crimes, the double lives of Australian citizen Mark J. Newton and his long-term boyfriend Peter Truong were laid bare.
>
> […]Moments later Newton was sentenced to 40 years in prison for sexually abusing the boy he and Truong, 36 from Queensland, had ''adopted'' after paying a Russian woman $8000 to be their surrogate in 2005.
>
> Police believe the pair had adopted the boy ''for the sole purpose of exploitation''. The abuse began just days after his birth and over six years the couple travelled the world, offering him up for sex with at least eight men, recording the abuse and uploading the footage to an international syndicate known as the Boy Lovers Network.
>
> […]Evidence before the court revealed the abuse began before the couple returned to Australia. One video is said to show Newton performing a sex act on the boy when he was less than two weeks old.
>
> Judge Barker said the pair brainwashed the child to believe the sexual abuse was normal. Newton was also said to have trained the boy to deny any inappropriate behaviour if he was ever questioned by authorities.
>
> Newton and Truong came to the attention of police in August 2011 after their connections to three men arrested over the possession of child exploitation material came to light. The couple had visited the three men in the US, New Zealand and Germany with their son.
>
> […]Newton and Truong claimed they were being targeted because they were homosexual.

This story comes on the heels of the new Labour Party leader Kevin Rudd's promise to legalize gay marriage.

Related posts:

- Washington Examiner: Duke University official offered his 5-year-old adopted son for sex on the Internet
- UK Telegraph: Adopted boy's complaints about his gay guardians were ignored by social workers
- Associated Press: Homosexual Penn State University coach who sexually abused boys
- Sky News: Head of a gay youth organization was running a child sex ring
- Sun News: Gay man kidnapped teen, chained him up and raped him multiple times over several days
- Jewish World Review: Jesse Dirkhising dies of suffocation after being tortured and raped
- San Francisco Chronicle: Gay activist arrested for possession of child p@rnography

Note: comments to this post will be strictly moderated because of the subject matter.

French mayor faces jail time for refusing to conduct gay couple's wedding

July 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the NY Daily News.

Excerpt:

> Jean-Michel Colo stirred up controversy by becoming the first French official to formally refuse to officiate at the wedding of a gay couple, Jean-Michel Martin and Guy Martineau-Espel. The Arcangues mayor's actions defied a landmark French law allowing same-sex unions.
>
> Two men are suing the mayor of a French village for refusing to marry them, in the first reported legal action over same-sex marriage since it was legalized in May amid strong, sometimes violent opposition.
>
> Guy Martineau-Espel and Jean-Michel Martin, both in their 50s, filed a legal complaint against the mayor for refusing to marry them at the town hall of Arcangues, a village in southwestern France where the couple has lived for a decade.
>
> "We will fight this battle to the finish," Martineau-Espel told Reuters.
>
> France adopted legislation in May that allows gay and lesbian couples to marry and adopt children, following in the footsteps of 13 other countries.
>
> But the move divided opinion in France and came at a political price for the already unpopular government of President Francois Hollande.
>
> Opponents of the law, led by Catholics and conservatives, staged mass street protests, some of which ended in violence, and the debate was also blamed for a spate of homophobic attacks in the mainly Catholic country.
>
> Weddings in France are conducted by mayors or their deputies at town halls, of which there are about 36,000.
>
> The couple in Arcangues applied to marry in May but the right-wing mayor, Jean-Michel Colo, turned them down.
>
> Colo was summoned earlier this week by a government official and told to apply the law. He asked for more time to consider his options, prompting the couple to take action.
>
> A refusal to comply with the gay marriage law could mean Colo faced up to five years in jail and a fine of up to 75,000 euros ($98,000).
>
> "Even if in the end we manage to get married, we will stay the course with our legal complaint," said Martineau-Espel.

This is pretty standard for countries that legalize gay marriage. You can just look at these examples from Canada, for confirmation that this is what happens after a country

legalizes gay marriage. And they *all* promise that religious liberty will be protected before it's passed, too. It's even happening in Massachusetts.

Do you believe Obama when he says that our religious liberty will be protected even if marriage is redefined to include gay marriage, polygamy and polyamory? I think you can believe Obama as much about that as you can believe him about being able to keep your health care plan or about the Benghazi attack being caused by a Youtube video. The man's a pathological liar, and that's been proven over and over again.

“Two Dads are Better Than One”: pro-gay adoption ABC profile of convicted pedophile

July 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Earlier, I blogged about how Mark Newton had been convicted for pedophilia and received a 40-year prison sentence. This was reported earlier by the Sydney Morning Herald.

Since then, I was notified about a pro-gay-adoption article from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, in which the pedophile and his partner were profiled.

The article has been pulled from the ABC web site, but I found it in Google cache, and made a PDF of it.

Full text:

> Headline: Two dads are better than one
> Date: 14 July, 2010 5:04PM AEST
> Author: Ginger Gorman
>
> A shiny child’s bike lies on its side on the front lawn of an immaculate garden.
>
> Around the back gay dads Pete and Mark chase their son’s pet chickens around, trying to catch them.
>
> Drake, 5, exclaims that the little birds are too fast for him.
>
> It’s a happy, relaxed family scene. But it wasn’t an easy road to get there. After many hurdles Drake was born by surrogacy in Russia.
>
> “We decided that we would have a child, that it was time for us to have a family. We wanted to experience the joys of fatherhood and we started our surrogacy over in the United States back in 2002,” Pete said.
>
> At the time, Pete and Mark were living and working in the US.
>
> “Surrogacy rules and laws are much easier in the United States,” Mark said.
>
> While not everybody was comfortable with the idea of surrogacy, Mark said the couple felt their options were limited.
>
> “We knew that there were certainly plenty of women willing to do it so if it OK with them, then I guess it was OK with us,” he said.
>
> Mark and Pete used the internet to find prospective mothers for the child they longed to have. Apart from the woman’s health, Pete said one of the big concerns was how genuine the candidates were.
>
> “We have heard about a lot of scams and certain people who represent themselves as so-called surrogate mothers who are really out there just to make money,” he said.
>
> Pete said the couple also wanted to make sure that any woman they employed as a surrogate fully understood the commitment she was making.

There was also the issue of whether the mother would actually give up her baby, Mark added.

After many failed attempts in the US, the cost was becoming prohibitive. The pair decided to try Russia as cheaper alternative.

That decision presented its own problems. Language was the main one. The couple took on a private Russian tutor and Pete gave up his job in Australia to oversee the process.

“We were very dedicated to making this work….we decided that at some point we didn’t have a budget. Our budget was anything that we had earned, anything that we had saved, anything that we could borrow to make this happen,” Pete said.

In the end Pete said they found a woman who they ‘clicked with personality-wise’.

“She was very quiet. She didn’t have a lot of demands or conditions that some of the other woman that we had met had. She seemed like somebody we could work with,” he said.

At the first attempt, Drake was conceived via artificial insemination using Mark’s sperm.

When asked why it was Mark’s sperm and not Pete’s, Mark laughed.

“A flip of the coin I think,” he said.

During the pregnancy the couple stayed in limited contact with the mother via a translator. Mostly they were in touch just when there were practical things to care of such as visiting a doctor or getting an ultrasound.

“We made it clear to her that we wanted her to take vitamins, that we wanted her to eat well. We provided the money to do that and we just had to hope that she would do it,” Mark said.

Neither man was at Drake’s birth because they felt it was important to protect the mother’s privacy.

When their son was five days old, Mark and Pete were handed their child. To their surprise, Drake’s mother gave them the baby and walked away.

“I think she had resigned herself to this much earlier on and was trying not to let emotions get in the way,” Mark said.

In fact, it wasn’t the mother who got in the way of Drake coming back to Australia with his two Dads. What followed was two and a half years of bureaucracy before the child received permanent Australian residency and another year before he got citizenship.

On arrival in Australia customs quizzed Mark and Pete for hours. Police were also sent around to their house on a Sunday morning to investigate.

“When people see two guys together, you know it’s like, ‘Where’s his mother?’

> We've had a lot of people ask that," Pete said.
>
> "I think that even if one of us was a woman, we wouldn't have had the same suspicions and problems that we went through."
>
> Thinking back to the police visit, Pete said the police seemed to want reassurance that the situation was 'right'.
>
> They checked if the couple had equipment to raise a child like a bed, clothes and bottles.
>
> Mark said he's sure that they were under suspicion of paedophilia. But despite the difficulties, he said the couple would do it again with no hesitation.
>
> "We're a family just like any other family," he said with pride.

ABC has since pulled the article from their web site, to cover up what they did. The caption from the image in the article is: "Proud dads Pete (left) and Mark (right), had their son Drake by surrogacy in Russia. (Ginger Gorman – ABC)". And you can still download the MP3 file from the article here, although I took a copy here. You can hear the proud dads talking with the ABC journalist in the MP3 file.

You can also find an article from a campus newspaper written by Mark Newton in which he advocates for gay marriage. I saved it as a PDF here. The article is from a campus newspaper called the Daily 49er from California State University, Long Beach.

UPDATE: Ace journalist Robert S. McCain is trying to dig into the story, but the ABC journalist who wrote the story has blocked him.

UPDATE: This post has been linked by the American Spectator and the Australian Daily Telegraph, as well as many other blogs. (See the trackbacks)

Darwin's Doubt will debut at #7 on the New York Times Hardcover Nonfiction Bestseller List

July 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Amazing news from Evolution News about the new book on the Cambrian explosion by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer.

Excerpt:

> Judging the success of an idea in reaching and convincing a large audience is a tricky business. In putting your case to the public in books and articles, are you making progress, just holding steady, or losing ground to competitors? What you want is a solid, unambiguous metric. Hmm, as a measure of success in getting a particular argument before a large chunk of the thoughtful, book-reading public, how does a spot on the *New York Times* bestseller list sound?
>
> That would do nicely. And in fact it is just what we are very pleased to report. As careful readers will already have discerned from the headline, Stephen Meyer's new book, *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design*, will debut this coming Sunday in the #7 place on the *New York Times* hardback nonfiction list. See it here.
>
> […]You'll also see the book opening at #10 on the Publishers Weekly bestseller list. Find it here.
>
> […]We attribute these indications of really impressive progress to the scientific, philosophical and yes, cultural and even spiritual importance of Dr. Meyer's book, the unprecedented rigor and scope of his argument, combined with a lucidly accessible style that bestselling novelist Dean Koontz has praised, saying that Meyer "writes beautifully" and "marshals complex information as well as any writer I've read."
>
> It doesn't hurt either that this broadly interdisciplinary book has won accolades from scientists representing a variety of relevant fields, including Harvard geneticist George Church, Mt. Holyoke paleontologist Mark McMenamin, State University of New York biologist Scott Turner, Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research biologist Wolf-Ekkehard Lönnig, and others, scientists whose own works are published by sources like Harvard University Press and Columbia University Press.
>
> Excitement from the media has also played a role in getting out the word. Dr. Meyer has been on the Michael Medved Show several times, on the Dennis Prager Show, the Dennis Miller Show, and many other national and local talk-radio programs. Not trivial either is the decision by Barnes & Noble to feature the book with in-store displays in 300 of its bookstores across the country, likely due in part to the strong sales record of Meyer's first book, *Signature in the Cell*.

The summary from the New York Times bestseller list web page is spot-on: “The theory of intelligent design best explains the appearance of animals in the fossil record without apparent ancestors.” That’s what the book is about, for certain.

Wow. It’s not every day that I link to the New York Times! But this isn’t surprising, considering that Dr. Meyer’s new book is picking up a lot of endorsements from mainstream scientists. Here’s the most recent one, by Dr. Mark C. Biedebach of California State University, Long Beach.

Recall that Dr. Stephen C. Meyer’s first book was one of the best books of 2009 according to the Times Literary Supplement.

Excerpt:

> Stephen C. Meyer’s Signature in the Cell: DNA and the evidence for Intelligent Design (HarperCollins) is a detailed account of the problem of how life came into existence from lifeless matter – something that had to happen before the process of biological evolution could begin. The controversy over Intelligent Design has so far focused mainly on whether the evolution of life since its beginnings can be explained entirely by natural selection and other non-purposive causes. Meyer takes up the prior question of how the immensely complex and exquisitely functional chemical structure of DNA, which cannot be explained by natural selection because it makes natural selection possible, could have originated without an intentional cause. He examines the history and present state of research on non-purposive chemical explanations of the origin of life, and argues that the available evidence offers no prospect of a credible naturalistic alternative to the hypothesis of an intentional cause. Meyer is a Christian, but atheists, and theists who believe God never intervenes in the natural world, will be instructed by his careful presentation of this fiendishly difficult problem.

The person who nominated his first book to that list was non other than atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel. If you haven’t read the first book, get them both and read them both. These are the scientific issues that everyone who is considering theism versus naturalism should be reading about.

The Chronicle of Higher Education profiles Dr. William Lane Craig

July 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the greatest defender of Christianity of all time has been profiled in the Chronicle of Higher Education by Nathan Schneider.

The article is titled "The New Theist", which is an allusion to "The New Atheism". The subscript is "How William Lane Craig became Christian philosophy's boldest apostle".

What I like about this article is that I learned new things about Dr. Craig's big plan:

> Along the narrow basement hallway that was home to the Biola philosophy master's program when I sat in on Craig's class in 2011, there was a map of the United States on the wall. On it were labels with the names of universities you've heard of—Notre Dame, Cornell, Rutgers—and some you probably haven't. The labels were fastened by pins in three colors. Blue signified alumni enrolled in doctoral programs. Red meant programs where alums had been accepted, and yellow meant where they held full-time teaching jobs. There were several more pins in the Atlantic Ocean: Oxford, King's College, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
>
> This is a not-unusual sight in the hallway of any placement-minded graduate program. But at Biola—a name derived from "Bible Institute of Los Angeles"—the map had particular significance.
>
> "My goal is for Christian theism as a worldview to be articulated cogently and persuasively in the academy," says Scott Rae, an ethicist who co-founded the master's program in the early 1990s. The purpose of the program was not simply to train evangelical Christian students for evangelical Christian schools, but to send those students off to doctoral programs, and eventually professorships, at leading secular universities. "We figured if we ended up with 30 or 40 students, and maybe we sent 20 of them to Ph.D.'s before we retired, that'd be awesome," Rae added. "The thing just snowballed."
>
> The program's other founder, J.P. Moreland, was already in high demand as an author and speaker on apologetics, in addition to being a philosopher of mind. Rae and Moreland invited William Lane Craig to join their team, though he comes to the campus only for brief, intensive courses in the fall and winter. Before long they were attracting more than 100 master's students at a time (including women, generally, in only single digits); as many as 150 have continued on to further graduate work. Despite having only a handful of faculty, perhaps no philosophy master's program in the English-speaking world enrolls so many students and, even if by that measure alone, few can claim to be so influential in shaping the next generation of analytic philosophers.
>
> Still, many in the profession aren't even aware of it. The Philosophical Gourmet

> Report, which ranks philosophy departments by the reputation of their faculty members, doesn't mention Biola on its Web page about master's programs. "No one has ever called to my attention that Biola's M.A. program should be included," says Brian Leiter, of the University of Chicago, who edits the report.
>
> Among philosophers—Christian or otherwise—who have worked with the Biola program's alums, the impressions tend to be positive. According to Laurence Bonjour, a philosopher at the University of Washington who has supervised the Ph.D. work of program graduates, "Biola students, especially those interested in epistemology, are often very well trained."
>
> "But," he is careful to add, "I doubt if the Christian aspect of the program has much to do with that."
>
> For the program's architects, however, the "Christian aspect" is everything. "What makes this program different from other philosophy programs is the distinctively Christian setting," says Rae. Students take courses in the Bible and theology as well as in logic, ethics, and metaphysics. On their application forms, they're asked to sign Biola's century-old, page-long doctrinal statement and note any points of disagreement; on the campus, alcohol, tobacco, and gambling are prohibited. Craig begins each day's lecture in his classes with a personal reflection on integrating the life of scholarship with the life of a Christian—covering such topics as marriage, prayer, and regular exercise. Everyone basically agrees on where, in the end, all the flights of argument and inquiry need to land.
>
> Gail Neal, a retired administrative coordinator for the program, says she always noticed a culture of mutual support and encouragement, rather than competition, among the students. "Their whole purpose is to help people know Christ and to make a difference in the world for him, and to bring people into his kingdom," she told me. "They just empty themselves of themselves, like Christ did for us."
>
> In a now-decade-old lecture, "Advice to Christian Apologists," Craig outlined his view of the university as "the single most important institution shaping Western culture." He argued that it's a lot easier for people throughout the society to accept Christ as their savior if Christianity appears reasonable in higher education, if the academic conversation takes it seriously, and if there are Christian professors to serve as role models. The Biola master's program is thus a strategic intervention designed to resound everywhere.
>
> "In order to change the university, we must do scholarly apologetics," he reasoned. "In order to do scholarly apologetics, we must earn doctorates. It's that simple."

And a bit more about how students respond to apologetics:

> Most outsiders are familiar with the caricatures of evangelical anti-intellectualism, from the Scopes "Monkey Trial" in 1925 to televangelists and the

> faux-folksiness of George W. Bush. So are evangelicals themselves. Almost 20 years ago, the evangelical historian (and historian of evangelicals) Mark Noll warned, at book length, about The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind. This, as much as secularism itself, is an ill that Craig and others at Biola have set out to cure.
>
> "Biblical Christianity retreated into the intellectual closet of Fundamentalism," he writes in the introduction to Reasonable Faith."Satan deceives us into voluntarily laying aside our best weapons of logic and evidence, thereby ensuring unawares modernism's triumph over us."
>
> Craig Hazen, who directs the apologetics department at Biola, calls the problem "blind-leaping." He told me, "The idea that we're blind-leaping into faith is actually reinforced by evangelical churches all the time."
>
> With close ties to the philosophy master's program, the apologetics program teaches a couple of hundred students at a time how to defend their faith with reasons. There are master's and certificate tracks, and about half the students take courses online from around the world. The program also organizes high-profile events, such as Craig's 2009 debate with Christopher Hitchens, and seminars at churches around the country. Part of the purpose of these is recruiting students, and part of it is advocacy; Hazen and his team have to convince fellow Christians that reason is not merely a dead end for faith, and that a grown-up faith in modern society requires grown-up reasons.
>
> "Frankly, I find it hard to understand how people today can risk parenthood without having studied apologetics," Craig has written. "We've got to train our kids for war."
>
> The students in Craig's classes at Biola, it's true, bear a kind of battle scar. A common story among them goes something like this: When they were teenage boys, growing up in evangelical households, their childhood faith began to buckle. Their classes in school and their classmates and the Internet posed questions they didn't know how to answer. Their parents and pastors couldn't help; they only recommended more prayer and faith, more blind-leaping. It didn't work.
>
> Then someone would lend them a book by William Lane Craig or J.P. Moreland, or send them a link to a debate on YouTube. All of a sudden, their questions were being taken seriously. They could chew on the latest science and philosophy while still going to church with their friends and families. They went to Biola to study philosophy or apologetics because they knew it would be a safe place to ask any question they needed to, with whatever rigor and detail they craved. Afterward they take the answers they get there back to their friends and to the Internet, and the entrepreneurs among them start apologetics ministries of their own.
>
> They're born again: rebaptized in philosophy.

Go read the whole thing! And share it! The article is balanced, and that's what I would

expect from a mainstream article. There's a lot more to the article that I couldn't excerpt here, so read it all!

Now for my comment: we really need to get to the point where people look to Christian scholars like Dr. Craig as the best representatives of Christianity. The scholars are doing the real work in a time when Christianity is being challenged in the culture. The real heroes of the faith are the scholars. Not the end-time fiction writers. Not the blind-faith preachers. Not the Christian music rock stars. Not the Hollywood celebrities. And especially not the Christian athletes.

Christianity is and has always been a *knowledge* tradition, and we should be familiar with and appreciative of our *scholars*, first and foremost. We should be especially appreciative of our philosophers, scientists and historians who deal in logic and evidence every day. These are the real heroes of the faith, in my opinion. We should be paying more attention to them and their work, and reading their books and learning how to apply the knowledge in our daily lives.

One of the things that I try to do in my role in the Kingdom is to try to support Christian college students in philosophy, science and history programs with guidance and awards for good grades. Every semester, I get e-mails from a group of people who report their grades and future plans to me, and then I reward them with items from their list of desired books. My favorite Christian student just completed a Bachelor and Masters degree in a scientific area and is now applying for PhD programs. Another Christian student I am supporting did NINE courses last semester, including TWO graduate courses. I have been sending him academic books to help him in his research twice a year since 2011. He is also planning to go on to a PhD program in philosophy and law.

I want everyone reading this post and ask yourself a question – what are you doing to help support the development the next William Lane Craig? He was an undergraduate student once, you know. And then he was a graduate student. Are we doing our best to support the Christians who are willing to pay the price to infiltrate into the secular university and bring back the PhDs we need? I am doing my part, and I want you to do your part, too. Think about it!

One thing that you can do to impact young people is to visit the Biola University apologetics web store and purchase some of the debates featuring Dr. William Lane Craig on DVD, and try to show them in your church. I recommend the first Craig-Dacey debate at Indiana U, the re-match Craig-Stenger debate at Oregon State U, the Craig-Crossley debate, and the Craig-Ehrman debate. This will help to encourage more of our young people, especially young men, to study hard things in university and go on to get their PhDs. Parents – you really need to be exposing your kids to Christian heroes, because they are the ones who will have an influence in the future. Don't neglect this precious resource!

Jay Richards discusses academic freedom on the Michael Medved show

July 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Michael Medved show is a national radio show broadcast out of Seattle, Washington. According to Talkers magazine, he has the fifth largest radio audience. He has a regular weekly segment on science and culture featuring scholars from the Discovery Institute.

Here is the segment from this past week, courtesy of the Intelligent Design: The Future podcast.

The MP3 file is available for download. (33 minutes)

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Dr. Jay Richards appears on the Michael Medved Show to discuss the meaning of academic freedom and the importance of teaching both sides of debated issues. Listen in as Richards and Medved look at intimidation in academia and the current efforts to censor Professor Eric Hedin at Ball State University.
>
> URGENT: Please consider signing our petition to defend the academic freedom of Professor Eric Hedin. To sign, visit www.academicfreedompetition.com.
>
> *Each week, leading fellows from Discovery Institute will join Michael Medved to talk about the intersection of science and culture. Listen in live online or on your local Medved station, or stay tuned at ID the Future for the weekly podcast.*

Topics:

- Medved: Why is a group of activists trying to challenge the hiring of Guillermo Gonzalez at Ball State University?
- Richards: When Guillermo was at Iowa State University, he was the best or second-best published assistant professor
- Richards: A rabid atheist professor of religion blocked his tenure because of his views on intelligent design
- Richards: Guillermo never mentioned intelligent design in class
- Richards: Militant Darwinian fundamentalist Jerry Coyne is trying to block Ball State from hiring Guillermo
- Medved: Eric Hedin, another professor at Ball State, is facing persecution for teaching both sides of evolution
- Medved: Tell us about the book “The Privileged Planet” that got him into trouble
- Richards: The book is about how the progress of science shows that habitable planets have to be fine-tuned
- Richards: The book argues that there is a correlation between habitability and the ability to make scientific discoveries

- Medved: Your book “Money Greed and God” talks about materialism has impacted economics as well
- Richards: It’s problematic to assume materialism when studying economics and neglect human creativity
- Medved: Why don’t intelligent design people just focus on religion, instead of trying to get into the science classroom?
- Richards: Darwin himself was trying to argue against design, so the evidence for design is part of the debate
- Caller1: There are many galaxies, solar systems and planets in the universe, so the odds are good of getting life by chance
- Richards: There are 10 to the 22 stars in the visible so we have an idea of the probabilistic resources available
- Richards: There are a lot of things that you need to get right in order to support life – the odds are less than 10 to the 22
- Caller1: Why can’t just teach about astrophysics and astrobiology in a religion or history class?
- Richards: Because the evidence for design is found in things like bacterial flagellums and the origin of life
- Richards: Since evidence for design is scientific, it makes no sense to talk about it in a history or religion class
- Caller2: Intelligent design argues that we are too complicated, but then the Designer must be even more complicated
- Richards: Consider a situation where a murder has been committed, but the murder suspect has fled the country
- Richards: Are we not allowed to infer that an agent murdered the victim if we can’t produce the murderer?
- Caller2: But inferring that an intelligence is the cause of some effect means that you stop asking questions
- Medved: Why is it so hard for you to accept
- Caller2: I’m an atheist and I like the Big Bang theory, and it explains where matter came from
- Medved: The Big Bang theory explains the origin of space and time from nothing: that’s not atheism, that’s theism
- Caller3: Intelligent design theory is nothing but a fear of randomness in the universe
- Richards: The arguments for intelligent design are based on discoveries abut the origin of life or the Cambrian explosion
- Richards: The real question is whether materialistic mechanisms and random chance can explain the evidence
- Caller4: Explain your idea that habitability is corelated with the ability to make discoveries
- Richards: Example: in order to have perfect solar eclipses, the masses of the Sun, moon and planet have to be fine-tuned
- Richards: Example: life-permitting atmosphere is also a transparent atmosphere, so

we can see past it to make discoveries
- Richards: Example: galactic habitable zone is also the best place to do astronomy and make discoveries

By the way, there was a troubling update about the Darwish Inquisition against Eric Hedin – it looks like the panel of investigators is stacked with close-minded naturalists.

I subscribe to the ID the Future podcast, and I really recommend that you do as well!

Previous entries

- Stephen C. Meyer on Thomas Nagel and intelligent design
- Stephen C. Meyer on Richard Dawkins and the Cambrian explosion
- John G. West discusses Darwinism and the value of human life
- Stephen C. Meyer and John Lennox discuss human exceptionalism
- Jay Richards and Stephen C. Meyer discuss scientific consensus
- Dan Barker debates Casey Luskin on academic freedom
- Zack Copplin debates Casey Luskin on science education
- Stephen C. Meyer discusses his new book “Darwin’s Doubt”

Amazing: California teachers challenge forced payment of union dues

July 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dad sent me this article from the Washington Free Beacon. It's good news!

Excerpt:

> A group of California teachers is preparing for a Supreme Court battle to overturn forced union dues in a groundbreaking lawsuits filed in June.
>
> For nearly three decades, the Supreme Court has allowed closed-shop unionism, in which public employees must pay dues to labor groups handling collective bargaining negotiations.
>
> The Supreme Court established Beck Rights in 1988 allowing workers to opt out of union dues for political activities, while continuing to pay for union negotiating expenses. The teachers are hoping to take that battle one step further by putting an end to all coercive union dues.
>
> Ten California schoolteachers are challenging California's policy of forcing all public employees to pay union dues for collective bargaining. The Center for Individual Rights (CIR) is aiding their suit. The CIR views the issue through the lens of the Constitution, rather than as a contest of labor policy.
>
> "Our efforts are not anti-union; we are trying to solidify the First Amendment rights of public employees to freely assemble," CIR president Terry Pell said.
>
> The plaintiffs filed a preliminary injunction on Tuesday asking the court to waive the teachers' union dues during the ongoing trial. Pell is certain the motion will fail, which is all the better for the plaintiffs because it will "fast-track" the litigation to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals and eventually the Supreme Court.
>
> "This is a piece of strategic litigation—we're trying to get the issue of compulsory union dues to the Supreme Court as quickly as possible," he said. "We know that lower courts can't overrule Supreme Court precedent, but this will expedite us through the system."
>
> The Roberts court opened the door to ending coercive unionism last year when it ruled 5-4 that Service Employees International Union improperly charged non-union members for political activities. Justice Samuel Alito, writing for the majority in *Knox v. Service Employees International Union*, said the forced dues on non-union members were "indefensible"

One of the biggest problems with California is the *stranglehold* that public sector unions have on the state. This would be a good first step to getting the state to turn around. Even liberals stop paying dues when it's not mandatory, because they want to keep their own money just like anyone does.

1 Corinthians 15: the earliest source for the basic facts about the life of Jesus

July 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the creed – which is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8:

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Almost all historians accept this creed as dating back to within 5 years of the death of Jesus. But why?

Here's a great article from Eric Chabot, director of Ratio Christi Apologetics Alliance, The Ohio State University to explain why.

Excerpt:

> The late Orthodox Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide was so impressed by the creed of 1 Cor. 15, that he concluded that this "formula of faith may be considered as a statement of eyewitnesses." (5)
>
> Paul's usage of the rabbinic terminology "passed on" and "received" is seen in the creed of 1 Cor. 15:3-8:
>
> "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born."
>
> There is an interesting parallel to Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 15:3-8 in the works of Josephus. Josephus says the following about the Pharisees.
>
> "I want to explain here that the Pharisees passed on to the people certain ordinances from a succession of fathers, which are not written down in the law of Moses. For this reason the party of the Sadducees dismisses these ordinances, averaging that one need only recognize the written ordinances, whereas those from the tradition of the fathers need not be observed." (6)
>
> As Richard Bauckham notes, "the important point for our purposes is that

Josephus uses the language of “passing on” tradition for the transmission from one teacher to another and also for the transmission from the Pharisees to the people.”(7)

Bauckham notes in his book Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony that the Greek word for “eyewitness” (autoptai), does not have forensic meaning, and in that sense the English word “eyewitnesses” with its suggestion of a metaphor from the law courts, is a little misleading. The autoptai are simply firsthand observers of those events. Bauckham has followed the work of Samuel Byrskog in arguing that while the Gospels though in some ways are a very distinctive form of historiography, they share broadly in the attitude to eyewitness testimony that was common among historians in the Greco-Roman period. These historians valued above all reports of firsthand experience of the events they recounted.

Best of all was for the historian to have been himself a participant in the events (direct autopsy). Failing that (and no historian was present at all the events he need to recount, not least because some would be simultaneous), they sought informants who could speak from firsthand knowledge and whom they could interview (indirect autopsy).” In other words, Byrskog defines “autopsy,” as a visual means of gathering data about a certain object and can include means that are either direct (being an eyewitness) or indirect (access to eyewitnesses).

Byrskog also claims that such autopsy is arguably used by Paul (1 Cor.9:1; 15:5–8; Gal. 1:16), Luke (Acts 1:21–22; 10:39–41) and John (19:35; 21:24; 1 John 1:1–4).

While the word “received” (a rabbinical term) can also be used in the New Testament of receiving a message or body of instruction or doctrine (1 Cor.11:23; 15:1, 3; Gal. 1:9, 12 [2x], Col 2:6; 1 Thess 2:13; 4:1; 2 Thess 3:6), it also means means “to receive from another.” This entails that Paul received this information from someone else at an even earlier date. 1 Corinthians is dated 50-55 A.D. Since Jesus was crucified in 30-33 A.D. the letter is only 20-25 years after the death of Jesus. But the actual creed here in 1 Cor. 15 was received by Paul much earlier than 55 A.D.

[…]Even the co-founder Jesus Seminar member John Dominic Crossan, writes:

“Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that “I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received.” The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he “went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days” (11).

This comment by Crossan makes sense because within the creed Paul calls Peter by his Aramic name, Cephas. Hence, if this tradition originated in the Aramaic language, the two locations that people spoke Aramaic were Galilee and Judea.

> (12) The Greek term “historeo” is translated as “to visit” or “to interview.” (13) Hence, Paul’s purpose of the trip was probably designed to affirm the resurrection story with Peter who had been an actual eyewitness to the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:5).

I know what you’re thinking. You’re thinking “Hey WK, isn’t John Dominic Crossan that wacky liberal atheist who is on the far-left fringe of historical Jesus scholarship? So wacky, that he actually thought that Secret Gospel of Mark was *real*, instead of just being a hoax?” Yes, that’s the nutty John Dominic Crossan I mean. The very one.

Here’s a bit more about this early creed from Gary Habermas.

Quote:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: “However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul’s.”[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul’s own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: “It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition.”[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]
>
> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul’s use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which

Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]

Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]

Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.

(3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]

These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.

(4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his

> firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

That’s how solid this early creed is – even atheists like Crossan and Ludemann accept it as historically reliable. It’s historical bedrock, as Michael Licona likes to say. This is the stuff that *everyone* accepts – across the ideological spectrum!

Walter Bradley: three scientific phenomena that point to a designed universe

July 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor.

Here's a bio:

> Walter Bradley (B.S., Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin) is Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He comes to Baylor from Texas A&M University where he helped develop a nationally recognized program in polymeric composite materials. At Texas A&M, he served as director of the Polymer Technology Center for 10 years and as Department Head of Mechanical Engineering, a department of 67 professors that was ranked as high as 12th nationally during his tenure. Bradley has authored over 150 refereed research publications including book chapters, articles in archival journals such as the Journal of Material Science, Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites, Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials, Journal of Composites Technology and Research, Composite Science and Technology, Journal of Metals, Polymer Engineering and Science, and Journal of Materials Science, and refereed conference proceedings.
>
> Dr. Bradley has secured over $5.0 million in research funding from NSF grants (15 yrs.), AFOSR (10 years), NASA grants (10 years), and DOE (3 years). He has also received research grants or contracts from many Fortune 500 companies, including Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, 3M, Shell, Exxon, Boeing, and Phillips.
>
> He co-authored The Mystery of Life Origin: Reassessing Current Theories and has written 10 book chapters dealing with various faith science issues, a topic on which he speaks widely.
>
> He has received 5 research awards at Texas A&M University and 1 national research award. He has also received two teaching awards. He is an Elected Fellow of the American Society for Materials and the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the largest organization of Christians in Science and Technology in the world. He is President elect of the ASA and will serve his term in 2008.

You can read more about his recent research in this article from Science Daily.

Below, I analyze a lecture entitled “Is There Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer?”. Dr. Bradley explains how the progress of science has made the idea of a Creator and Designer of the universe more acceptable than ever before.

The MP3 file is here.

Evidence #1: The design of the universe

1. The correspondence of natural phenomena to mathematical law

- All observations of physical phenomena in the universe, such as throwing a ball up in the air, are described by a few simple, elegant mathematical equations.

2. The fine-tuning of physical constants and rations between constants in order to provide a life-permitting universe

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants and ratios: (there are more examples in the lecture)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would be able to build up the nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.
- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living

beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – "carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can't be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

3. Fine-tuning to allow a habitable planet

- A number of factors must be fine-tuned in order to have a planet that supports life
- Initial estimates predicted abundant life in the universe, but revised estimates now predict that life is almost certainly unique in the galaxy, and probably unique in the universe.
- Even though there are lots of stars in the universe, the odds are against *any* of them supporting complex life.
- Here are just a few of the minimal requirements for habitability: must be a single star solar system, in order to support stable planetary orbits, the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to have liquid water at the surface, the planet must sufficient mass in order to retain an atmosphere, etc.

The best non-theistic response to this argument is to postulate a multiverse, but that is very speculative and there is no experimental evidence that supports it.

Evidence #2: The origin of the universe

1. The progress of science has shown that the entire physical universe came into being out of nothing (= "the big bang"). It also shows that the cause of this creation event is non-physical and non-temporal. The cause is *supernatural*.

- Atheism prefers an eternal universe, to get around the problem of a Creator having to create the universe.
- Discovery #1: Observations of galaxies moving away from one another confirms that the universe expanded from a single point.
- Discovery #2: Measurements of the cosmic background radiation confirms that the universe exploding into being.
- Discovery #3: Predictions of elemental abundances prove that the universe is not eternal.
- Discovery #4:The atheism-friendly steady-state model and oscillating model were both falsified by the evidence.

- And there were other discoveries as well, mentioned in the lecture.

The best non-theistic response to this argument is to postulate a hyper-universe outside of ours, but that is very speculative and there is no experimental evidence that supports it.

Evidence #3: The origin of life

1. The progress of science has shown that the simplest living organism contains huge amounts of biological information, similar to the Java code I write all day at work. This is a problem for atheists, because the sequence of instructions in a living system has to come together all at once, it cannot have evolved by mutation and selection – because there was no replication in place prior to the formation of that first living system!

- Living systems must support certain minimum life functions: processing energy, storing information, and replicating.
- There needs to be a certain amount of complexity in the living system that can perform these minimum functions.
- But on atheism, the living system needs to be simple enough to form by accident in a pre-biotic soup, and in a reasonable amount of time.
- The minimal functionality in a living system is a achieved by DNA, RNA and enzymes. DNA and RNA are composed of sequences of proteins, which are in turn composed of sequences of amino acids.

Consider the problems of building a chain of 100 amino acids

- The amino acids must be left-handed only, but left and right kinds are equally abundant in nature. How do you sort out the right-handed ones?
- The amino acids must be bound together using peptide bonds. How do you prevent other types of bonds?
- Each link of the amino acid chain needs to be carefully chosen such that the completed chain with fold up into a protein. How do you choose the correct amino acid for each link from the pool of 20 different kinds found in living systems?
- In every case, a human or other intelligence could solve these problems by doing what intelligent agents do best: *making choices.*
- But who is there to make the choices on atheism?

The best current non-theistic response to this is to speculate that aliens may have seeded the Earth with life at some point in the past.

The problem of the origin of life is not a problem of chemistry, it is a problem of engineering. Every part of car functionality can be understood and described using the laws of physics and chemistry. But an intelligence is still needed in order to assemble the components into a system that has the minimal requirements for a functioning vehicle.

Happy Independence Day 2013!

July 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

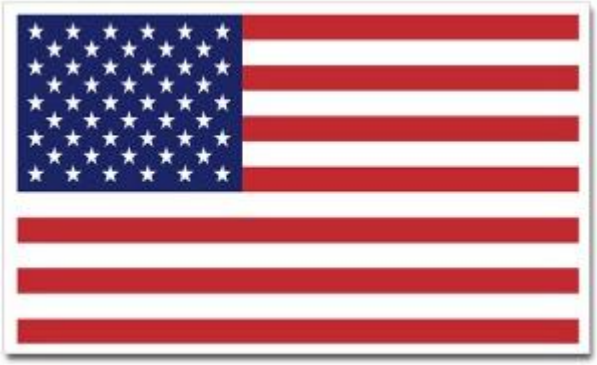

The Stars and Stripes

The Declaration of Independence

Here's the complete text of the Declaration of Independence here.

The best book to read about the Revolutionary War is David McCullough's "1776", which I highly recommend. The audio book version is awesome.

George Washington and the American Revolution

Washington Crossing the Delaware

To really understand the founding of the United States, you should read about the story of Washington crossing the Delaware. At this point in the Revolutionary War, the British commanders had achieved a stunning series of victories against the Americans. They had even sent word home to the King that the war was over, and that the Americans would be forced to surrender. But Washington did not give up. He attacked the British forces and took them by surprise – and he won the Battle of Trenton! That was the turning point of the war. There almost *never was* a United States of America – that's how close the revolution came to failing.

Ronald Reagan vision of America

Ronald Reagan

Here is a portion of Ronald Reagan's farewell speech:

Excerpt:

> I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind it was a tall proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace, a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity, and if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That's how I saw it, and see it still.
>
> And how stand the city on this winter night? More prosperous, more secure, and happier than it was eight years ago. But more than that; after two hundred years, two centuries, she still stands strong and true on the granite ridge, and her glow has held steady no matter what storm. And she's still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home.

This is no ordinary nation.

Songs of America

Whenever I drive on long trips, I always practice singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "America the Beautiful".

Even if you are not an American, you can be an honorary American, just for today, if you sing the songs below. God knows that there are other people in the world that love freedom and look to the United States as the model.

If we fall now, then you other freedom-loving people abroad must be ready to pick up the torch!

United States Air Force

The Star Spangled Banner

Lyrics:

“Oh, say can you see by the dawn’s early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight’s last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,
O’er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket’s red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe’s haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o’er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning’s first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
‘Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle’s confusion,
A home and a country should leave us no more!
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps’ pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war’s desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav’n rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: “In God is our trust.”
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave

O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!”

America the Beautiful

Lyrics:

“O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare of freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife.
Who more than self their country loved
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for halcyon skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the enameled plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee

Till souls wax fair as earth and air
And music-hearted sea!

O beautiful for pilgrims feet,
Whose stem impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till paths be wrought through
wilds of thought
By pilgrim foot and knee!

O beautiful for glory-tale
Of liberating strife
When once and twice,
for man's avail
Men lavished precious life!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till selfish gain no longer stain
The banner of the free!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till nobler men keep once again
Thy whiter jubilee!"

Here is my favorite version of America the Beautiful, sung by Ray Charles. This is the same version you hear on the Mark Levin show on Friday. Perfection.

Remember to be grateful for the Founding Fathers, and other patriots, who risked everything for liberty in the Revolutionary war. Be grateful to those men and women still fighting abroad to keep those freedoms safe from evil. And most of all, be grateful to God that America is still the beacon of liberty.

Happy Independence Day!

Dinesh D’Souza: What’s so great about America?

July 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dinesh D’Souza

Here is the essay, which provides an immigrant’s perspective on America (Dinesh is the son of East Indian immigrants).

Excerpt:

> Is America worthy of a reflective patriotism that doesn’t mindlessly assert, “My country, right or wrong,” but rather examines the criticisms of America and finds them wanting? As an immigrant who has chosen to become an American citizen, I believe that it is. Having studied the criticisms of America with care, my conclusion is that the critics have a narrow and distorted understanding of America. They exaggerate American faults, and they ignore what is good and even great about America.
>
> The immigrant is in a good position to evaluate American society because he is able to apply a comparative perspective. Having grown up in a different society-in my case, Mumbai, India-I am able to identify aspects of America that are invisible to people who have always lived here. As a “person of color,” I am competent to address such questions as what it is like to be a nonwhite person in America, what this country owes its minority citizens, and whether immigrants can expect to be granted full membership in this society. While I take seriously the issues raised by the critics of America, I have also developed an understanding of what makes America great, and I have seen the greatness of America reflected in my life. Unlike many of America’s homegrown dissidents, I am also acutely conscious of the daily blessings that I enjoy in America.
>
> Here, then, is my list of what makes America great.

He focuses on the following areas:

- America’s Good Life
- Equality
- The Pursuit of Happiness
- The Ethics of Work
- Religious Liberty
- Ideals and Interests
- America’s Virtue

Read the whole thing. It’s long it’s similar to his book of the same name, but up to date.

Abortion supporters chant “Hail Satan!” as pro-lifers sing “Amazing Grace”

July 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Everybody seemed to be posting about this story on Facebook, so I might as well blog about it, for those who haven’t seen it. (H/T Chris S.)

Excerpt:

> For several hours between Tuesday and Wednesday, the phrase “Hail Satan” trended on Twitter as word spread that abortion supporters had chanted it at pro-life Christians singing “Amazing Grace” amid mounting tensions over the pending passage of strict abortion laws in the Texas Capitol.
>
> This week, Texas Governor Rick Perry convened a second special session in the Texas Senate after Democratic activism botched the passage of legislation that would have banned abortions in that state after 20 weeks.
>
> The legislation would also require that abortions be performed at ambulatory surgical centers and mandate that doctors obtain admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of their practice. Opponents of the proposal argue that the proposal would virtually shut down abortion clinics in that state and pro-life supporters have no problem with that.
>
> “The world has seen images of pro-abortion activists screaming, cheering,” Republican Gov. Rick Perry noted, in an earlier report in which he vowed that the process would not be derailed a second time. “Going forward, we have to match their intensity, but do it with grace and civility.”
>
> […]On Tuesday, the pro-abortion supporters went from riotous to sacrilegious when they chanted “Hail Satan” repeatedly in a bid to silence Christian pro-lifers who were singing “Amazing Grace” in support of abortion restrictions in the state.
>
> The extremely unorthodox chant from the abortion supporters triggered a trend of “Hail Satan” on Twitter and many dismissed it as terrible public relations for the pro-abortion movement.
>
> “When your supporters go around yelling ‘hail satan’ you’re likely not gonna have fabulous #’s” tweeted investigative journalist Kerry Picket pointing to poll numbers showing Gov. Perry at a big advantage in a potential face-off with political upstart Wendy Davis.
>
> Other critics of the use of the “Hail Satan” chant like public relations expert Mark Demoss implied it was excessive.
>
> “Do supporters of late-term abortion in TX help their cause by chanting ‘Hail Satan’ (really) over top of pro-lifers singing Amazing Grace?” asked Demoss in a tweet on Wednesday.

> "'Hail Satan!' was actually the compromise chant. The hot-heads wanted 'We Know It's Murder And We Don't Care!'" tweeted conservative columnist Jonah Goldberg.

Hmmmn. So, I think it's pretty clear which side of the debate are the good guys, now.

Charles Krauthammer explains why Obama isn't going to be able to fix global warming

July 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the liberal Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Global temperatures have been flat for 16 years — a curious time to unveil a grand, hugely costly, socially disruptive anti-warming program.
>
> […]For the sake of argument, nonetheless, let's concede that global warming is precisely what Obama thinks it is. Then answer this: What in God's name is his massive new regulatory and spending program — which begins with a war on coal and ends with billions in more subsidies for new Solyndras — going to do about it?
>
> The United States has already radically cut carbon dioxide emissions — more than any country on earth since 2006, according to the International Energy Agency. Emissions today are back down to 1992 levels.
>
> And yet, at the same time, global emissions have gone up. That's because — surprise! — we don't control the energy use of the other 96 percent of humankind.
>
> At the heart of Obama's program are EPA regulations that will make it impossible to open any new coal plant and will systematically shut down existing plants. "Politically, the White House is hesitant to say they're having a war on coal," explained one of Obama's climate advisers. "On the other hand, a war on coal is exactly what's needed."
>
> Net effect: tens of thousands of jobs killed, entire states impoverished. This at a time of chronically and crushingly high unemployment, slow growth, jittery markets and deep economic uncertainty.
>
> But that's not the worst of it. This massive self-sacrifice might be worthwhile if it did actually stop global warming and save the planet. What makes the whole idea nuts is that it won't. This massive self-inflicted economic wound will have no effect on climate change.
>
> The have-nots are rapidly industrializing. As we speak, China and India together are opening one new coal plant *every week*. We can kill U.S. coal and devastate coal country all we want, but the industrializing Third World will more than make up for it. The net effect of the Obama plan will simply be dismantling the U.S. coal industry for shipping abroad.
>
> To think we will get these countries to cooperate is sheer fantasy. We've been negotiating climate treaties for 20 years and gotten exactly nowhere. China, India and the other rising and modernizing countries point out that the West had

> a 150-year industrial head start that made it rich. They are still poor. And now, just as they are beginning to get rich, we're telling them to stop dead in their tracks?
>
> Fat chance. Obama imagines he's going to cajole China into a greenhouse-gas emissions reduction that will slow its economy, increase energy costs, derail industrialization and risk enormous social unrest. This from a president who couldn't even get China to turn over one Edward Snowden to U.S. custody.

Now previously I wrote about how there hasn't been any global warming in the last 16 years. I linked to the New York Times saying that, and to Reuters saying that. So everyone who isn't a flat-Earther agrees that there has been no global warming in 16 years – those are the facts. This is just Obama's attempt to change the subject now that everyone knows how badly he's been screwing up on foreign policy and with the economy.

Two Christian preachers brutally beaten at Seattle Gay Pride Festival

July 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Warning: the video above has extremely coarse language and violence.

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> Two street preachers were brutally beaten — punched and kicked — by a crowd at a gay pride festival in Seattle and the entire melee was captured on video.
>
> The preachers were holding signs reading "Repent or Else" and "Jesus Saves From Sin." The video shows a group of people initially screaming and threatening the men during Pridefest at the Seattle Space Needle.
>
> Television station KOMO reported that some of the attackers belonged to a group called NOH8
>
> A group of women tried to steal their signs but were unsuccessful. The video then shows a group of men grabbing onto one of the preacher's signs and dragging him to the ground. At some point he was punched in the back of the head a number of times while others can be seen kicking the man.
>
> Another preacher was sucker punched in the back of the head.
>
> Police arrested two suspects – one of whom has a long rap sheet.

Now the first thing to say, obviously, is that the two Christians are going about their opposition to homosexuality in a wrong way. I don't think that it is a Biblical approach to expect non-Christians to accept Christian morality because of what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 5:9-12. If you want to disagree about homosexuality or same-sex marriage with a non-Christian, then you'll have to go outside the Bible and use evidence that is compelling to a non-Christian. And that's what I always do in my blog posts because my audience is non-Christians. So that's the first thing that needs to be said. There is a right way to argue against homosexuality with non-Christians, and these Christians were not doing it. The right way to discuss homosexuality is by using data found in books like "Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth" and "A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality". And the right context for presenting this data is probably in written work or in the context of a relationship with the other person. Not holding up signs with flames on it to strangers.

My sexual orientation

Now the point I want to make about this is that I have a sexual orientation, too. My sexual orientation is pre-marital virginity, pre-marital chastity and lifelong faithful married love (if I get married). Now I don't need to have a parade or get all kinds of government recognition and financial benefits in order to make me feel good about what I'm doing. In

fact, even if someone puts down my virginity and chastity, I wouldn't really care. In fact, the number one place where my sexual orientation is looked down on is in the church. In church, there is a whole group of people who are enamored of compassion and they are opposed to having any boundaries on sex at all, regardless of the harm it causes with things like abortion, divorce, fatherlessness and so on. Their idea is that people should be able to have sex if they are in love, and that they shouldn't be "shamed" or "judged" for doing so. However, I don't attack them and violently beat them up just because they disagree with me on my sexual orientation. I just let them say what they are going to say and mind my own business. I don't need anyone to tell me that what I am doing is right. I have reasons and evidence showing me that my view is right, like the peer-reviewed papers that show that premarital sex causes lower quality and stability in marriage. I know what I'm doing, and disagreement doesn't bother me.

Anti-chastity people could even hold up signs in front of my house saying "Repent of your chastity, evil virgin, or burn in Hell!" and it still wouldn't bother me. And that's because I know that what I believe causes no harm to anyone. It doesn't impose social costs on others because I need special drugs or health care for my chastity. It doesn't cause me to make other people sick. It doesn't break up marriages so I can go off with someone else. It doesn't leave children fatherless or motherless. It doesn't expose born or unborn children to harm from strangers. It doesn't require public schools to teach young people how great my virginity and chastity is. It doesn't require new school lessons telling everyone the contributions that virgins have made in history. It doesn't require the Supreme Court to force people to affirm chastity. It doesn't require anyone to be fired because they disagree with me on premarital sex. It doesn't require other people to have their freedom of speech or freedom of religion limited so that I can avoid feeling "offended" by what they say and do.

So in conclusion then, I don't respond with anger, vandalism, coercion or violence when people disagree with me about being a virgin and embracing chastity before marriage.

Related posts

- Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Gay activist Dan Savage bullies Christian teens and bashes Christianity
- Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll's Mars Hill Church

- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Pro-abortion vandals: destroying pro-life display was “free speech”
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Zeitgeist conspiracy movie had profound impact on Jared Loughner
- Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning
- Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist
- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill

July 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scheming unborn baby planning to move to Wisconsin

Dad sent me this encouraging article from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Gov. Scott Walker quietly signed a contentious Republican bill Friday that would require women seeking abortions to undergo an ultrasound and ban doctors who lack admitting privileges at nearby hospitals from performing the procedures.
>
> Opponents contend legislators shouldn't force women to undergo any medical procedure and the bill will force at least two abortion clinics where providers lack admitting privileges to shut their doors.
>
> The Republican-controlled Legislature passed the bill in mid-June.
>
> […]Under the bill, any woman seeking an abortion would have to get an ultrasound. The technician would have to point out the fetus' visible organs and external features to the woman. Abortion providers would have to have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles to perform the procedures.
>
> Republican supporters argue the ultrasound requirement is designed to help the woman bond with the fetus and convince her to save it. The admitting privileges mandate is meant to ensure an abortion provider can follow up with a patient at the hospital if an emergency arises, they say.

> The bill is part of national GOP push to curtail abortions. North Dakota's governor, Republican Jack Dalrymple, signed a law this spring that outlaws abortions as early as six weeks into a pregnancy, making North Dakota the most restrictive state in the nation to get an abortion. The state's lone abortion clinic has filed a federal lawsuit seeking to block the law.
>
> Republicans in Arkansas this spring passed a law that bans most abortions after 12 weeks. The American Civil Liberties Union of Arkansas and the Center for Reproductive Rights. A federal judge has temporarily blocked that law. A trial has been tentatively scheduled for next year.
>
> Republicans in Alabama passed a law similar to the Wisconsin bill in April requiring abortion providers to have admitting privileges at a local hospital. The ACLU and Planned Parenthood filed a lawsuit contending the law would shut down three of the state's five clinics because doctors at the clinics haven't been able to get admitting privileges at nearby hospitals. A federal judge temporarily blocked the law in June.
>
> The Wisconsin bill sparked a fierce debate in both the state Senate and Assembly as minority Democrats tried to push back. Republican leaders in the Senate abruptly halted a floor debate in that house. Senate President Mike Ellis, R-Neenah, flew into a rage as Democrats protested, pounding his gavel so hard he broke the base. Assembly Democrats, for their part, did a slow burn, complaining about the bill for hours. Republicans still rolled the bill through both houses.

How many times did you read the word "Republican" in that article? That's why pro-lifers need to work to get more Republicans elected. They aren't just concerned about economics – they are concerned about moral issues, too. By the way, Scott Walker is one of my three favorite governors right now. The others are Bobby Jindal and John Kasich. Recall that Scott Walker is the one who pushed through reforms to protect taxpayers from the costs of ballooning public sector union pensions. He is a social conservative and a fiscal conservative, too.

William Lane Craig lectures on radical skepticism and the historical Jesus

July 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten at Apologetics 315 posted a lecture by William Lane Craig on the historical Jesus.

In his post, Brian doesn't really say much about where or when the lecture was recorded. But I can tell you! This lecture has a special meaning for me because when I was just learning about apologetics, this was one of the first lectures I ordered. The lecture was delivered in 1996 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary as part of the distinguished Carver-Barnes Lecture Series. The title was "Re-Discovering the Historical Jesus". Hearing this again (I lent mine away and never got it back) was a real treat for me.

The MP3 file is here.

And here is a summary I made so you can follow along as you listen.

Lecture 1: the pre-suppositions of the Jesus Seminar
– the origins of the radically skeptical "Jesus Seminar" group
– what does the Jesus Seminar believe about Jesus?
– what is a pre-supposition?
– how do pre-suppositions affect the study of history?
– the Jesus Seminar's pre-supposition of naturalism (atheism)
– the Jesus Seminar's pre-supposition that the NT gospels are late
– the Jesus Seminar's pre-supposition of political correctness
– does the Jesus Seminar represent the consensus of NT scholars?

Lecture 2A: are the NT gospels historically reliable?
– should the gospels be assumed to be reliable or unreliable
– argument #1: insufficient time from events to written record
– argument #2: gospels contain very little legendary material
– argument #3: Jewish culture was good at oral transmission
– argument #4: eyewitness correction and apostolic supervision
– argument #5: the gospels are reliable where they can be tested
– #1: legendary elements only appear 1-2 generations after events
– but gospels were written within the lifetimes of the eyewitnesses
– sources for the gospels are even earlier, e.g. – 1 Cor 15:3-8
– on the other hand, the apocryphal gospels do contain legends
– #5: gospels are confirmed by history and archaeology were possible
– Luke includes details showing that he traveled with eyewitness Paul

Lecture 2B: the self-understanding of Jesus
– how early and reliable is believe in Jesus' divinity

– it would be hard to get monotheistic Jews to think Jesus was divine
– the only way this belief could have emerged is if Jesus taught it
– parable of the wicked tennants and vineyard – Jesus' self-understanding
– passage about no one knowing the father except the son, etc.
– passage about not knowing the date of his second coming
– the healings and exorcisms are well-attested and skeptics grant them

Lecture 2C: the trial and crucifixion of Jesus

– crucifixion is well-attested inside and outside the New Testament
– even the Jesus Seminar considers this an indisputable fact about Jesus
– Jesus was crucified for blasphemy – i.e. claiming to be divine

Lecture 2D: the minimal facts case for the resurrection

– minimal fact #1: the burial in a known location
– minimal fact #2: the empty tomb
– minimal fact #3: the appearances to individuals and groups
– minimal fact #4: the early belief that Jesus was resurrected
– the majority of scholars, including skeptics, accept the minimal facts
– naturalistic explanations are not able to account for these facts

There is a very noisy weird person in the audience who keeps shouting his approval. This lecture is almost identical to a lecture that Craig gave for Stand to Reason's Masters Series, on the pre-suppositions of the Jesus Seminar. There is no Q&A in this lecture, but there is Q&A in the STR version.

New study: children of divorce are more likely to be violent, take drugs and have underage sex

July 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this post from the UK Daily Mail. Let's take a look at the findings, and then I'll comment on it below.

Excerpt:

> Children who encounter family break-up are far more likely to be violent, unhappy and feel unfulfilled throughout their lives, according to an NHS study.
>
> Researchers found that the turmoil endured by youngsters has a crucial influence on nearly every facet of their later life.
>
> A cross-section of 1,500 people were asked if they had faced a range of 11 circumstances, known as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), covering abuse, family break-up, being raised with domestic violence and drink or drug addiction.
>
> Coupled with details of their current lives, the research revealed the legacy of broken homes appears to weigh more heavily than any other factor, as among the worst affected group – those with four or more ACEs – two thirds had seen their parents go their separate ways, compared with an average of 24 per cent.
>
> The chances of suffering a difficult childhood leapt for those born after 1971, when the law changed to make divorce easier. This generation was found to be significantly more likely to smoke, drink heavily, take drugs, fight, be mentally ill and have sex underage.
>
> Norman Wells of the Family Education Trust, a campaign group which researches the causes and consequences of family breakdown, said: 'Casting aside traditional patterns of family life carries a high price tag in terms of the health, education and employment prospects of the next generation.
>
> 'The relaxation of divorce laws – along with the increasing proportion of births outside marriage – has resulted in a growing number of children lacking the benefit of being raised by both their natural parents in a stable unit.'
>
> The report – a joint venture between Liverpool John Moores University and the NHS – found that 47 per cent of those questioned had been on the end of at least one bad childhood experience, and that adult life became tougher with each one added.
>
> It revealed that those with four or more ACEs were – compared to someone with none – twice as likely to have had sex underage, eat next to no fruit and vegetables, have no qualifications, break a bone or have an extended stay in hospital.

So the first thing to note about this article is that it is good because it identifies a factor

that causes divorce to be more frequent. That factor is no-fault divorce laws. These laws are supported by egalitarian feminists and by trial lawyer associations – both liberal constituencies. So, the article is indirectly identifying a solution to the problem. Roll back no-fault divorce laws, and you'll have fewer divorces. People will think more carefully about who they marry. People will think more carefully about preparing for marriage.

So who opposes the repeal of no-fault divorce laws? Well… the same people who passed no-fault divorce laws in the first place – feminists and trial lawyers. So it's very important that we understand that the solution to the epidemic of divorce is not to turn to men and blame men. The solution is to repeal no-fault divorce laws that make it easy and profitable for one party in a marriage (the woman, in 70% of cases) to initiate unilateral divorce. If the problem is divorce, then the solution is making divorce unprofitable from the spouses. We should also stop giving assistance to single women who have children, because that is another incentive to women to dispense with their husbands as providers and leaders in the home. Let's face it. Single mother welfare is an incentive for women to kick men out of the home. They are paid if they do it, and not paid if they don't. So again, the solution to divorce is not "man up", it's stop paying women who divorce their husbands. Leave it to private charities and churches to help those women.

If we pay women to have children before marrying, will they do it more?

July 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted another article from the UK Daily Mail about the problem of paying women to have children before marriage.

Excerpt:

> Talking about her future, a young woman neighbour told me: 'Everyone is going to be a single mother in the end — you just have to find the right donor.'
>
> Her view was shared by many of those who lived in the various council estates where I grew up. Single parenthood was the normal method of rearing children.
>
> While my own father left our home when I was young, my mother, who has lived in Britain since emigrating from Jamaica with my grandparents, has been devoted to her children.
>
> Although my father was a good dad and maintained contact, lots of my friends were not so fortunate. Few had any involvement with their fathers.
>
> In many of these homes, the State was almost invariably the main breadwinner, with the families in receipt of welfare cheques.
>
> With the State providing unceasing financial support, there was little thought given to the costs and responsibilities of having children.
>
> […]The welfare state was meant to be a symbol of civilised society, giving support to the genuinely poor and vulnerable. Today, though, it too often acts as a gigantic engine of social breakdown. Costing more than £220 billion a year, it simply incentivises personal irresponsibility and family collapse.
>
> Far from rescuing people from disadvantage, it traps many claimants and their children in the destructive cycle of welfare dependency, where values such as ambition and commitment are lost. It should come as no surprise that in the parts of the country where welfare dependency and joblessness are most prevalent, fatherhood is the exception rather than the rule.
>
> A report published last month by the independent think-tank, the Centre for Social Justice, showed that the number of lone-parent families is increasing by 20,000 every year, with the total expected to reach two million by 2015. Incredibly, in some areas of the country, such as Riverside in Liverpool or Ladywood in Birmingham, more than 70 per cent of households with dependent children are headed by lone parents.
>
> Children who grow up in these places rarely come across a male role model.
>
> Today, around half of British births take place outside wedlock, while just over a quarter of all families are headed by lone parents.

> Despite a wealth of evidence that absent fathers put children at a disadvantage, I find it deeply depressing that the political class is terrified of taking any action to shore up family life.
>
> Leftist political parties in the UK put in place a system in which women were encouraged to have children out of wedlock because they would receive taxpayer money – money taken from high-earning married men – in order to have children before getting married.

There's actually a reason why the government pays women to have children before marriage. It's because of an ideology called radical feminism. Radical feminism supports single motherhood by choice, because radical feminists are opposed to traditional marriage. In a traditional marriage, the man typically works to provide money to support the family, and he derives from that provider role the authority to lead the family on moral and spiritual issues. Women typically focus more on raising and educating the children and supporting the husband/father by doing home-related tasks. These traditional rules are suited to men and women respectively, but they are opposed by feminists because they are "unequal" – just because they are different. And that's why radical feminists want to undermine marriage. What better way to undermine marriage than by paying women to replace the male role in marriage with government?

Now how should we fix this? Is the solution to tell men to "man up"? No. That is a slogan, not a solution – it does not address the root cause of the problem of fatherlessness. One positive change is to remove the welfare that makes it easier for women to have children out of wedlock without needing to choose a man who is proven to be able to perform the provider role. Today, we have a massive problem where women are not even looking to men to provide for them. Traditional male roles are out. Bad boys are in. Many women grow up fatherless and have no idea what a man actually does in a marriage. When selecting men for relationships, their most important criteria is physical appearance – not providing, protecting, moral leading or spiritual leading.

I've even noticed a trend lately where women are even claiming that good-looking terrorists like Tsarnaev and murderers like Hernandez are innocent of the crimes they actually committed, just because these men are "too good looking to be guilty". This is a whole other level of wrong, but it's not surprising with women who have been taught that men have no special roles that they are supposed to be performing. The faster we cut off the money for women who prefer bad-boys to provider-men, the better off children will be.

The Talk Origins speciation FAQ and the problem of citation-bluffing

July 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The thing to be explained by Darwinism (in addition to the origin of life) is how can you get new, different body plans and organ types by the mechanisms of mutation and selection. Everyone admits that you can get cases where animal A mutates in a small way so that it can no longer breed with animal B. That is speciation of a sort, because the animals can no longer breed. But the real question is whether we can generate species *with different body plans* using these naturalistic Darwinian mechanisms of mutation and selection.

Here are two podcasts featuring Casey Luskin that discuss how much morphological change has really been observed according to research.

Here is the MP3 file from part one. (14 minutes)

Details:

> On this episode of **ID The Future**, Casey Luskin discusses *Talk Origins*, a resource often used by supporters of Darwinian evolution to refute arguments made by proponents of intelligent design. After taking a closer look, Luskin found FAQs on *Talk Origins* guilty of citation bluffing, overstated claims, and other misleading tactics. In particular, the *Talk Origins* FAQ on speciation claims to provide evidence of "observed instances" of new species. On further review, this turns out to be far from the case. Tune in to Luskin as he explains why.

Here is the MP3 file from part two. (21 minutes)

Details:

> On this episode of **ID The Future**, Casey Luskin continues his discussion about *Talk Origins*, a resource often used by supporters of Darwinian evolution to refute arguments made by proponents of intelligent design. After taking a closer look, Luskin found FAQs on*Talk Origins* guilty of citation bluffing, overstated claims, and other misleading tactics. In particular, the *Talk Origins* FAQ on speciation claims to provide evidence of "observed instances" of new species. On further review, this turns out to be far from the case. Tune in to Luskin as he explains why in this conclusion to a two-part series.

Basically, he takes a look at the details of cases of "speciation" claimed in the Talk Origins FAQ, and finds that the changes are minor changes, and not changes in morphology. This is not the change that we are looking for to support the hypothesis of macro-evolution. In order to become Darwinists, we need to observe change driven by mutations that leads to changes in body plans. And the mutations have to be heritable.

Highly recommended. You've got to love the directness of Casey Luskin explaining what

needs to be proved and what has been proved. By the way, here is a more detailed written assessment of speciation claims of the Darwinists.

Is it better to form beliefs based on evidence or based on consensus?

July 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stuart Schneiderman linked to this Wall Street Journal by Matt Ridley.

Take a look at this:

> Last week a friend chided me for not agreeing with the scientific consensus that climate change is likely to be dangerous. I responded that, according to polls, the "consensus" about climate change only extends to the propositions that it has been happening and is partly man-made, both of which I readily agree with. Forecasts show huge uncertainty.
>
> Besides, science does not respect consensus. There was once widespread agreement about phlogiston (a nonexistent element said to be a crucial part of combustion), eugenics, the impossibility of continental drift, the idea that genes were made of protein (not DNA) and stomach ulcers were caused by stress, and so forth—all of which proved false. Science, Richard Feyman once said, is "the belief in the ignorance of experts."
>
> My friend objected that I seemed to follow the herd on matters like the reality of evolution and the safety of genetically modified crops, so why not on climate change? Ah, said I, but I don't. I agree with the majority view on evolution, not because it is a majority view but because I have looked at evidence. It's the data that convince me, not the existence of a consensus.
>
> My friend said that I could not possibly have had time to check all the evidence for and against evolution, so I must be taking others' words for it. No, I said, I take on trust others' word that their facts are correct, but I judge their interpretations myself, with no thought as to how popular they are. (Much as I admire Charles Darwin, I get fidgety when his fans start implying he is infallible. If I want infallibility, I will join the Catholic Church.)
>
> And that is where the problem lies with climate change. A decade ago, I was persuaded by two pieces of data to drop my skepticism and accept that dangerous climate change was likely. The first, based on the Vostok ice core, was a graph showing carbon dioxide and temperature varying in lock step over the last half million years. The second, the famous "hockey stick" graph, showed recent temperatures shooting up faster and higher than at any time in the past millennium.
>
> Within a few years, however, I discovered that the first of these graphs told the opposite story from what I had inferred. In the ice cores, it is now clear that temperature drives changes in the level of carbon dioxide, not vice versa.
>
> As for the "hockey stick" graph, it was effectively critiqued by Steven McIntyre, a

> Canadian businessman with a mathematical interest in climatology. He showed that the graph depended heavily on unreliable data, especially samples of tree rings from bristlecone pine trees, the growth patterns of which were often not responding to temperature at all. It also depended on a type of statistical filter that overweighted any samples showing sharp rises in the 20th century.
>
> I followed the story after that and was not persuaded by those defending the various hockey-stick graphs. They brought in a lake-sediment sample from Finland, which had to be turned upside down to show a temperature spike in the 20th century; they added a sample of larch trees from Siberia that turned out to be affected by one tree that had grown faster in recent decades, perhaps because its neighbor had died. Just last week, the Siberian larch data were finally corrected by the University of East Anglia to remove all signs of hockey-stick upticks, quietly conceding that Mr. McIntyre was right about that, too.
>
> So, yes, it is the evidence that persuades me whether a theory is right or wrong, and no, I could not care less what the "consensus" says.

I think that one of the most troubling things about college students today is that they are so much under the influence of their professors that they regularly just parrot whatever their professors say in order to pass their classes. They can't afford to ask questions and disagree – they've already paid their money, and their job is to agree with the professors in order to pass. This is especially true with secular leftist professors who are often woefully incapable of respecting views other than their own. The ivory tower is not the best place for having one's views tested by reality, as Thomas Sowell has argued. This is especially true outside of the fields of engineering, math, science and technology. So, young people tend to come out of university parroting the view of their professors, who often don't know how the real world works at all. The right thing to do to fix this problem is for universities to promote a diversity of views. But that's not likely to happen in universities that are dominated by progressives. Non-progressive views are not just wrong, but evil. Rather than be viewed as evil by professors and peers for the crime of thinking critically, most students prefer to stick with the consensus views, whether they are defensible or not.

J. Warner Wallace: is the idea that you should only evangelize your friends Biblical?

July 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A recent post from the Please Convince Me blog analyzed whether it is normal for Christians to only evangelize their friends.

Excerpt:

> We typically only share our faith with people we know, so it's shouldn't surprise us that these are the people who come to know something about our faith! But does it have to be this way, and more importantly, is this approach consistent with what the New Testament teaches?
>
> In order to answer this question, we needn't go further than the words of Jesus. During His earthly ministry, Jesus commissioned seventy-two of His followers to travel from town to town, announcing, "The Kingdom of God has come near" (Luke 10:9). Were these disciples told to engage only people they already knew? Hardly. In fact, Jesus warned these budding evangelists that they would be in unknown, often dangerous territory; He told the group they would be "lambs in the midst of wolves" (Luke 10:3). Later, after the Resurrection, Jesus commissioned His apostles with a more sweeping directive: "You shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). It's clear that the expansive geographic parameters described by Jesus would require the apostles to move quickly beyond the limits of their friends and acquaintances.
>
> And that's exactly what the apostles proceeded to do. Paul repeatedly entered unfamiliar synagogues to announce the Good News to Jews who were strangers to Paul (i.e. Acts 13:13-42 and Acts 18:4-5), and he frequently evangelized "on the streets" from town to town to Jewish and Gentile groups he did not know (i.e. Acts 13:44-52 and Acts 17:16-21). In fact, there are very few examples of friendship evangelism on the pages of Scripture.
>
> I gently reminded the students that they needed to see strict friendship evangelism for what it truly is: a natural, fallen, human response to the fear of discomfort and worldly judgment. Most of us are more concerned with how we will be perceived (and the discomfort we might feel) than our godly responsibility to share the Gospel. Jesus has a message for us: Get over it. Get comfortable with discomfort. The more we talk about Jesus and reflect His nature and mission, the more likely the world will hate us (John 15:18-16:14). The more we stand up for the truth, the more likely the world will put us in a tough spot (Matthew 10:17-23). And the more we are ostracized by the fallen world around us, the more joy we ought to feel to have been given the opportunity to stand up for something more than our own immediate personal comfort (Luke 6:22-23).

See, I think the problem is that Christians, when they evangelize, are not equipped to do anything more than talk about their personal experiences and preferences when it comes to evangelism. The problem is that asserting that your experience/preference is better than someone else's experience/preference is uncomfortable. Especially if their preference makes them happy and makes them act nicely. That's why evangelizing people is so intimidating for us – because we're never telling people about facts that are true or false out there in the real world. It's not controversial to tell someone that their belief about the world out there is wrong. That's why I prefer to talk about public, testable data – like whether the universe began, or how to make a protein, or where the Cambrian animals came from. That's just like discussing anything else.

The publication of the new Darwin's Doubt book that was on the New York Times non-fiction bestseller list is a good example of something to talk about safely. Although I might intimidated about trying to talk about feelings, sinfulness and religious experiences with people, I don't mind talking about science with people. It's much easier to talk about facts and evidence that about my personal experiences. People understand that and they aren't intimidated by it, because they feel that they can disagree with factual claims and participate in the discussion.

For example, if I am talking to a Hindu, I'll show him the papers that argue against the oscillating universe model which is part of the Hindu religion. I don't even have to mention Hinduism, Christianity or religion. And then he has to come back to me on that factual claim. But it's a lot easier for me to tell him he's wrong about facts than to tell him he's wrong about religious preference claims. Think about it – you disagree with strangers and acquaintances all the time about facts, and you're not scared of that. I tell people they're wrong about computer science stuff every day. Why is it any different to tell them that they're wrong about facts that happen to be related to the claims of different religions? It's the same thing! That's why it's so important to speak about facts with strangers. It's normal. It's not weird. It's easy to say "You need to get your facts straight, because not knowing the facts is causing you to commit to the wrong religion". That's doable. Even with strangers.

Pastor’s Matt’s book of the year – and the rest of his astonishing reading list

July 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I have been pretty critical of pastors being unwilling to connect the Bible to evidence outside the Bible. I have always maintained that the secret to getting people to act like Christians and evangelize effectively was that we needed to train Christians to understand how to relate what the Bible says to the way the world really works outside church doors. Whether it be the existence of God, the resurrection of Jesus, social issues, fiscal issues and foreign policy issues, my view has always been that pastors by and large were just not taking seriously their obligation to train their flocks to engage with non-Christians. I guess that I expected that most pastors would be more like Wayne Grudem, who is really good at connecting the Bible to knowledge outside the Bible. But in my experience, most pastors aren’t like that.

Look, I don’t even think it’s possible – in a secularized, postmodern, relativistic, naturalistic society like ours – to impact the world for Christ unless our faith is connected to knowledge from the real world. Christians today say that they believe the Bible, but can they really live it out if it’s just private preferences, and not objective knowledge? Many beliefs that conflict with Christianity are accepted by most people today as being beyond dispute. In order to evangelize today, I think that we have to support our beliefs with knowledge. And that means building a worldview from the ground up, with each block the result of a careful study of some area of knowledge. We have to put as much effort into our faith as we do into our education, our careers, our investments, our fitness and nutrition, etc. That’s the only way to be an authentic Christian in such a hostile environment.

OK, so with that said, let’s take a look at Pastor Matt’s exciting post.

He writes:

> Hi, my name is Matt and I’m a book addict. It is a sickness that leads people to such reckless behavior as reading on a couch for hours during sunny days, spending free time wondering the racks at Barnes & Noble and boring the heck out of people at parties when soft-hearted fools make the mistake of inviting a well-known “bibliophile.” BUT my sickness may be your blessing because raging geeks like me can help you spend your money and time a little bit more wisely.
>
> My favorite book of the year so far is Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels by Detective J. Warner Wallace (David C. Cook 2013). Detective Wallace presents apologetics, the necessary but often dry discipline of defending the Christian faith, in a fresh and compelling manner. He approaches the Gospels as a cold-case detective and illustrates his points with fascinating stories from his years working as an investigator. It is a fun, well-written and helpful work that will embolden Christians to share their

> faith with others for decades to come. You MUST pick-up a copy of this book.

So far so good. But this is where things get really weird. You see, Pastor Matt is *really* addicted to reading. He has read SIXTY-SEVEN books so far this year, and he has a bunch more in progress.

Now just check out a few of these books and ask yourself – what would the world be like if every pastor was like Pastor Matt?

Behold, the awesomeness of his book list:

> 1. **Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions** by Greg Koukl (Zondervan 2009). A lot of budding apologists fill their head with knowledge but lack tact in conversing with non-believers–Koukl's book can help. A must read.
>
> 2. **Icons of Evolution** by Jonathan Wells (Regnery 2002). What unsupported claims do Darwinists hold to? Wells, a trained evolutionary biologists, points them out in this wonderful book.
>
> 4. **On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision** by William Lane Craig (David C. Cook 2010). A good apologetics resource although I think Craig struggles to explain in lay terms his response to scientific objections to the faith.
>
> 6. **True for You, but Not For Me: Answering Objections to the Christian Faith** by Paul Copan (Bethany 2009). A good but short guide to various objections. Recommended.
>
> 7. **How Do You Know You're Not Wrong? Responding to Objections that Leave Christians Speechless** by Paul Copan (Baker 2005). A good guide with more meat to it than *True For You, But Not For Me*. Recommended.
>
> 9-11. **The Case for Christ** (Zondervan 1998), **The Case for Faith** (Zondervan 2006) and **The Case for a Creator** (Zondervan 2004). The Strobel's trilogy serves as a wonderful introduction to apologetics. Strobel is a former journalist who interviews experts on matters of faith and reports them with crisp prose. Highly recommended.
>
> 12. **The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos is Designed for Discovery** by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Richards (Regnery 2004). A wonderful book on the fine-tuning of the universe. Highly recommended.
>
> 13. **Seven Days that Divide the World** by John Lennox (Zondervan 2011). A great little book, which serves as a fine introduction to old earth creationism. Recommended.
>
> 15. **The Reason for God** by Tim Keller (Dutton 2009). This is the 3rd time I have read through this work and it stands up as THE post-modern apologetic. A must read.
>
> 16. **Darwin on Trial: Deluxe Edition** by Phillip Johnson (IVP 2010). The best

analysis and refutation of Darwinisn. A must read.

18. **Good God: The Theistic Foundations of Morality** by David Baggett and Jerry Walls (Oxford 2011). A well argued but dense work for the moral argument for the existence of God. Highly recommended for those with a background in philosophy.

19. **How We Got the Bible** by Neil Lightfoot (Baker 2003). A readable history of how Bibles went from scrolls written by hand in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek to the plethora of translations we have today. Recommended.

21. **The New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties** by Gleason Archer, Jr. (Zondervan, 1982). A helpful book dealing alleged discrepancies but a bit dated.

22. **The Big Book of Difficulties** by Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe (Baker, 1992). Not as handy as Archer's book but still well worth consulting.

23. **The Return of Sherlock Holmes** by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Newness, 1905). My son and I finished the Adventures of Sherlock Holmes last year and had a blast working through the sequel.

28. **Is God A Moral Monster?** by Paul Copan (Baker 2011). A wonderful survey of the Old Testament with clear, concise answers. Highly recommended.

30. **The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus** by Gary Habermas and Michael Licona (Kregel 2004). A very good overview of the arguments for the historicity of the resurrection. Recommended.

34. **Reasonable Faith** by William Lane Craig (Crossway 2008). I have read through this book at least three times and am blessed every time. Highly recommended.

35. **The Myth of Junk DNA** by Jonathan Wells (Discovery Institute 2011). Dr. Wells debunks a common objection to intelligent design. Short but effective.

36. **Darwin's Black Box** by Michael Behe (Free Press, 2006 ed.). A classic that is often ridiculed by materialists but yet to be refuted!

37. **Signature in the Cell** by Stephen C. Meyer (HarperOne 2010 edition). Another classic but a long and difficult read.

42. **Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith** by Douglas Groothuis (IVP 2011). THE text-book for apologetics. Don't let the size of the book intimidate, it is readable yet truly comprehensive. Amazing.

43. **Holman QuickSource Guide to Christian Apologetics** by Doug Powell (Holman 2006). The entries are short but still handy. Recommended.

44. **A Man for All Seasons** by Robert Bolt (Vintage 1990 Edition). A classic ode to following your conscience. Highly recommended.

45. **The Resurrection of Jesus: A Dialogue between N.T. Wright and John Dominic Crossan** by Robert Stewart, ed. (Fortress Press 2005). An interesting

> but frustrating dialogue between two great New Testament scholars.
>
> 46. **Holman Quick Source Guide to Understanding Creation** by Mark Whorton and Hill Roberts (Holman 2008). The Holman Guides are always good to keep close even if they aren't as extensive as say the Baker Encyclopedia of Apologetics.
>
> 48. **Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up? A Debate Between William Lane Craig and John Dominic Crossan** Edited by Paul Copan (Baker Academic 1999). A fine read but how one can peruse this and not be dazed and confused by Crossan's positions is beyond me.
>
> 50. **The Marketing of Evil** by David Kupelian (WND 2005). How did liberals win the PR war in re: to so-called "same-sex marriage" and the butchering of unborn children? Kupelian does a good job of outlining it.
>
> 51. **Letters to a Young Progressive** by Mike S. Adams (Regnery 2013). Professor Adams has long been one of my favorite columnists and this book is a must read. I highly recommend it.
>
> 52. **A Conservative History of the American Left** by Daniel J. Flynn (Crown 2008). One of the few books in the last few years that I have read multiple times. A must read.
>
> 54. **The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World** by Niall Ferguson (Penguin 2009). A wonderful and readable economic history that is a must for any and all wanna be policy wonks and political junkies.
>
> 55. **God & Man at Yale** by William F. Buckley (Regnery 1986 ed.) A stunning indictment of Buckley's alma mater, which envisioned the takeover of academia by the secular left. A must.
>
> 56. **Reagan's War: The Epic Story of His Forty-Year Struggle and Final Triumph Over Communism** by Peter Schweizer (Anchor 2004). A compelling overview of one man's determination to destroy the evil of Soviet communism.
>
> I am currently re-reading **The Apologetics Study Bible** (B&H 2007), **A Patriot's History of the United States** by Larry Schweikart and Michael Allen (Sentinel 2007), **Intellectuals and Society** (revised and expanded) by Thomas Sowell (Basic 2012), **The Last Command** by Timothy Zahn (Spectra 1994) **Darwin's Doubt** by Stephen C. Meyer (HarperOne 2013) and **Ameritopia: The Unmaking of America** by Mark Levin (Threshold 2012). So far, I recommend them all.

This man is the James Bond of church! Where the heck did he come from? Where do they even make pastors like this? I've been in the church and in campus groups for the last 20 years, and I haven't met a single church leader who read books like this.

I really don't know what to say about this list. I am just so blown away. Can anyone tell me why it is that there is only one Pastor Matt? What's wrong with all the other pastors, or is it just that I haven't heard about any of the good ones in my travels? Is your pastor

like this? Does he mention ideas from these books in his preaching?

By the way, you can friend Matt on Facebook and follow him on Twitter. Recommended!

UPDATE: He’s written a new post explaining how he is able to read so many books.

New study: men and women have different goals and expectations when cohabitating

July 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Carson Weitnauer shared this fascinating article from the Atlantic, authored by marriage researcher W. Bradford Wilcox. The article discusses the variances between cohabitating men and women regarding goals and expectations.

Excerpt:

> According to a new paper from RAND by sociologists Michael Pollard and Kathleen Mullan Harris, cohabiting young adults have significantly lower levels of commitment than their married peers. This aversion to commitment is particularly prevalent among young men who live with their partners.
>
> Pollard and Harris found that the majority of cohabiting young men do not endorse the maximum indicator of relationship permanence: 52 percent of cohabiting men between ages 18 and 26 are not "almost certain" that their relationship is permanent. Moreover, a large minority (41 percent) of men report that they are not "completely committed" to their live-in girlfriends. By contrast, only 39 percent of cohabiting women in the same age group are not "almost certain" their relationship will go the distance, and only 26 percent say they are not "completely committed". Not surprisingly, the figures above and below also indicate that married women *and* men are much less likely to exhibit the low levels of commitment characteristic of many cohabiting relationships today.
>
> […]The only thing worse than being in a relationship for years with an uncommitted person, it would seem, is marrying one. Research by psychologists Scott Stanley and Galena Rhoades, spotlighted in a *New York Times* op-ed last year, suggests that cohabiting couples are in for trouble when they "slide" into cohabitation and then marriage rather than "decide" to take the same steps. Their work indicates that many couples begin living together without clear expectations, common values, or a shared commitment to one another. And after a time, some of these couples get married, in part because friends, family, and they themselves think it's the logical next step. But without common values and a shared sense of commitment, the couples who slide into cohabitation and marriage, instead of purposely deciding to deepen their commitment to one another, are more likely to divorce.
>
> Stanley and Rhoades illustrate this point by pointing to the research on cohabitation, engagement, and divorce. Women who cohabit prior to engagement are about 40 percent more likely to divorce, compared to those who do not cohabit. By contrast, couples who cohabit after an engagement do not face a higher divorce risk. Those who cohabit only after engagement or marriage also report higher marital quality, not just lower odds of divorce. Stanley and

> Rhoades think that “sliders” are more likely than “deciders” to cohabit prior to an engagement, and to have trouble in their marriage if they go on to tie the knot. On the other hand, couples who deliberately choose to move in together after a public engagement or wedding are more likely to enjoy the shared commitment that will enable their relationship to last.
>
> So, given the low levels of commitment and the gender mismatch in expectations often found among today’s cohabiting couples, young men and especially women who aspire to a strong and stable marriage should take caution when considering moving in together.

You can click through the article to see the graphs he is talking about in the excerpt. Highly recommended. It turns out that women cannot just pick a good-looking guy and drift into a commitment by stringing together good days and good experiences. Ladies, let’s be clear. A man who will have recreational premarital sex with you before marriage is not looking for marriage, but recreation. Marriage is a commitment to work hard, be disciplined, be self-sacrificial and to compromise with another person – all in close quarters. When choosing a mate, you need to look for someone who is good at commitments. Not someone who is good at fun.

The ability to have fun with a man is not a good predictor of marital success because fun is unrelated to the things that a man really does in a marriage: protect, provide, and lead on moral and spiritual issues. Similarly, the ability to impress your friends with a man’s appearance or entertainment value does not make a commitment work. What makes a commitment work… is a man who demonstrates that he is good at making plans and achieving goals through discipline and hard work. Marriage requires making plans and achieving goals more than it requires having fun. Recreational premarital sex is about having fun – not making plans and achieving goals. Instead of talking about the next good time with a man, maybe women need to learn to talk about the mechanics of marriage with a man. And talk about the man’s roles in a marraige with a man. And then they need to learn to avoid men who don’t have plans and who aren’t ready to perform those roles. There are plenty of men who are not “bad boys” who do have plans and who are ready to perform traditional male roles.

A final point. I have noticed today that women tend to avoid men who have strong, exclusive views on moral questions and spiritual questions. The minute a man expresses a moral point of view or a theological argument, women tend to want to avoid him. Sometimes they fear rejection from men with definite convictions. Sometimes they resent male leadership. And there are other reasons to avoid strong men. The problem is that a man who has definite moral views is exactly the kind of man who is likely to be trustworthy and predictable in the marriage. And a man who has definite spiritual views is exactly the kind of man who is going to have some sort of overarching plan for the marriage (AND PARENTING) beyond mere pleasure. You wouldn’t choose someone who was guided by hedonism to be your stock broker or your medical doctor, because doing a hard job requires self-sacrifice and discipline. The same rule applies to choosing

husbands. Husbands have duties that are typically best performed by moral, spiritual men.

New CDC report finds soaring rates of HIV among men who have sex with men

July 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life Site News reports on a new report from the Centers for Disease Control.

Excerpt:

> A fact sheet released at the end of June by the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) warns that HIV rates, already at epidemic proportions, are continuing to climb steadily among men who have sex with men (MSM).
>
> "Gay and bisexual men remain at the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS epidemic," says Jonathan Mermin, the director of the CDC's division of HIV/AIDS prevention.
>
> The CDC notes that while homosexual men make up only a very small percentage of the male population (4%), MSM account for over three-quarters of all new HIV infections, and nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of all new infections in 2010 (29,800).
>
> "Men who have sex with men remain the group most heavily affected by HIV in the United States," the fact sheet states.
>
> US News reports that if HIV infections among men who have sex with men (MSM) continue to rise at the current rates, more than half of college-aged homosexual men will have HIV by the age of 50.
>
> When broken down by age group, the CDC reported that new infections among the youngest MSM, aged 13-24, increased from 7,200 infections in 2008 to 8,800 in 2010, which translates into a 22 percent increase in that time span.
>
> Young black MSM continue to have the highest infection rate, according to the CDC, accounting for more than half (55 percent) of new infections among young MSM.
>
> "CDC's new estimates show that African Americans, more than any other racial/ethnic group, continue to bear the greatest burden of HIV in the United States," the report states. "While blacks represent approximately 14 percent of the total U.S. population, they accounted for almost half (44 percent) of all new HIV infections in 2010 (20,900). HIV incidence among blacks was almost eight times higher than that of whites – 68.9 v. 8.7 per 100,000 of the population."
>
> However, the total number of infections is highest amongst Whites: "White MSM continue to represent the largest number of new HIV infections among MSM (11,200), followed closely by black MSM (10,600) and Hispanic MSM (6,700)."

Previously, I've argued that promoting the gay lifestyle would not be good for society for two reasons. First, because it would increase the number of children who would grow up without a mother or without a father. And second, because it would negatively impacting

religious liberty. But an additional concern is how men having sex with men introduces health risks to the gay men themselves, and health costs that must be paid by society, especially as we move towards socialized medicine.

Shouldn’t we act with more common sense and maybe treat the gay lifestyle the same way we treat cigarette smoking? Let’s tell people the medical facts, make people face the costs of their own sexual decisions (to encourage them to make better decisions) and then leave them free to do what they want to do without affirming risky decisions. It’s not a good idea for us to celebrate risky behaviors as normal. It doesn’t help gay men, and it doesn’t help society. It’s possible to disagree with people without meaning them harm. When I see someone in the middle of the road about to be hit by a bus, I don’t think that it’s loving to keep quiet, for fear of offending them by pointing out a threat. Let’s point out the threat and then let them decide. That’s not hateful.

J.W. Wartick explains why Christians should not embrace a materialist conception of humanity

July 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the blog Always Have a Reason, a case against the idea that Christians can embrace a materialist conception of humanity.

Problem 1: a concept of the self that persists through the passage of time:

He writes:

> How do we maintain identity through time? Here, the problem must be answered by all materialists, not just Christian materialists.
>
> The problem is, of course, that our bodies don't maintain physical identity. We are continually replacing the physical parts of our body over time. Now, I am hesitant to make the oft-repeated claim that our entire bodies are replaced every so many years, as I have been unable to find any research confirming it. However, it simply is the case that large portions of our body *are* replaced. Given this fact, how do we maintain identity? What is it that keeps us the same person over time?
>
> Another major problem is this: to which part of our body are we identical? Or, to put it another way, which parts of our body do we need to keep in order to be the same person? Here we can appeal to a thought experiment. A mad scientist has us captured and he wants to see how long we can maintain identity. Slowly, he replaces each part of our body with a new one with the exact same DNA, structure, etc. As he replaces these parts, he discards the old ones and destroys them. He starts with the legs. Then he moves to the midsection, replacing one organ at a time. Then the heart, the arms, the ears, the eyes. When he gets to the brain, he goes through and replaces only single neurons at a time.
>
> The question is pretty obvious: When do we stop being the same person? The materialist simply has to admit that we are our bodies (for what else could we be?). But given that fact, to which part are we identical? The brain? If so, at one point in the experiment do we cease to exist? 51% of our brain is gone? 70%? All but one neuron? So is our identity grounded in that one neuron? If so, which one? Or is it just grounded in having *any* one neuron as the same? If so, how?

Problem 2: materialism cannot make sense of the bodily resurrection:

He writes:

> Central to the Christian hope is the hope for a future resurrection. The question which must be asked is this: Is this hope grounded in reality?
>
> Suppose materialism were true. If that is the case, then humans are identical with their bodies in some fashion. I am intentionally vague here because I admit

> I'm not convinced as to how identity works within a Christian view of materialism (see above). If this were the case, then when we die and our material body decomposes, it may go on to become all sorts of different things, which themselves later pass away (plants may grow from the nutrients broken down from the body; then those plants may be harvested and eaten by other humans/animals/etc, which then die and are broken down, etc.). In the resurrection, then, God creates our body anew, complete–I assume–with our memories, experiences, etc. built in (perhaps they are simply functions of our brain, which God recreated perfectly, which thus contains our experiences).
>
> Is there actual hope on this scenario?
>
> Suppose the mad scientist were to come and kidnap you. He gleefully announces that he is going to use you for excruciatingly painful experiments which will take place over several years until you die. But, do not worry, because once you die, he is going to create a new body which is an exactly perfect copy of you, which will of course have all your experiences (minus this torturous one) and memories in place, and then he is going to give you billions of dollars.* Would you be comforted by this scenario? After all, you're not going to remember the pain and you are going to come out the other end extremely rich!
>
> Well there is a problem: the new body is not you. It is just a copy. For any materialist, this is problematic. We seem to know that identity transcends the body. But let us not delve into that difficulty right now. Instead, we will focus on Christian materialism. Now, it seems to me that this problem is almost the same for the Christian materialist with the Resurrection. After all, we are going to die. But we are told, don't worry, we will be raised bodily by God! But *whose* body is going to be raised? How will God gather the material from our body (and at which time of our body–see above) in order to recreate us? And will not this body purely be a copy, rather than actually us?
>
> There is a real disconnect here. Christian materialism cannot offer us the hope of the resurrection, without which our faith is worthless (1 Corinthians 15). Instead, it offers us the hope for our future *copies*, which will themselves have our memories and experiences, but will not *be us*. Our bodies will die and distribute throughout various portions of the world (even the universe–who knows if an asteroid might hit and distribute the molecules which made up our body elsewhere?). Then God will create us again in some fashion, and that body will live on in the Kingdom. But that body is not us. It will be a new body. This isn't begging the question, it is merely stating a fact. The body that will be raised is not the body I have now. Thus, if I am my body, I am not raised.

And I would add to that additional problems with generic materialism, like first-person consciousness, freedom of the will, rationality, and so on. It's just not a sound view.

I remember attending a philosophy of religion conference at Wheaton College a long time back, where the main speaker was Christian materialist Peter Van Inwagen. Both of these

objections were raised against him, and neither objection was adequately responded to, in my opinion. In contrast, the orthodox view (body and soul dualism) holds up very well. The biggest problem with the dualist view (my view) is how do the body and soul/mind interact. But I think that problem is much smaller than the problems that J.W. raised above.

National Review and Weekly Standard agree: kill the immigration bill

July 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bill Kristol (Weekly Standard) and Rich Lowry (National Review) write about immigration reform in National Review.

Excerpt:

> We are conservatives who have differed in the past on immigration reform, with Kristol favorably disposed toward it and Lowry skeptical. But the Gang of Eight has brought us into full agreement: Their bill, passed out of the Senate, is a comprehensive mistake. House Republicans should kill it without reservation.
>
> […]The bill's first fatal deficiency is that it doesn't solve the illegal-immigration problem. The enforcement provisions are riddled with exceptions, loopholes, and waivers. Every indication is that they are for show and will be disregarded, just as prior notional requirements to build a fence or an entry/exit visa system have been – and just as President Obama has recently announced he's ignoring aspects of Obamacare that are inconvenient to enforce on schedule. Why won't he waive a requirement for the use of E-Verify just as he's unilaterally delayed the employer mandate? The fact that the legalization of illegal immigrants comes first makes it all the more likely that enforcement provisions will be ignored the same way they were after passage of the 1986 amnesty.
>
> Marco Rubio says he doesn't want to have to come back ten years from now and deal with the same illegal-immigration problem. But that's exactly what the CBO says will happen under his own bill. According to the CBO analysis of the bill, it will reduce illegal immigration by as little as a third or by half at most. By one estimate, this means there will be about 7.5 million illegal immigrants here in ten years. And this is under the implausible assumption that the Obama administration would administer the law as written.
>
> **The bill's changes in legal immigration are just as ill considered. Everyone professes to agree that our system should be tilted toward high-skilled immigration, but the Gang of Eight bill unleashes a flood of additional low-skilled immigration. The last thing low-skilled native and immigrant workers already here should have to deal with is wage-depressing competition from newly arriving workers. Nor is the new immigration under the bill a panacea for the long-term fiscal ills of entitlements, as often argued, because those programs are redistributive and most of the immigrants will be low-income workers.**
>
> Finally, there is the sheer size of the bill and the hasty manner in which it was amended and passed. Conservatives have eloquently and convincingly made the case against bills like this during the Obama years. Such bills reflect a mistaken

> belief in central planning and in practice become a stew of deals, payoffs, waivers, and special-interest breaks. Why would House Republicans now sign off on this kind of lawmaking? If you think Obamacare and Dodd-Frank are going swimmingly, you'll love the Gang of Eight bill. It's the opposite of conservative reform, which simplifies and limits government, strengthens the rule of law, and empowers citizens.

My position on immigration is simple. Build the fence first. Implement e-verify for employers and harsh penalties for hiring anyone without a work permit. Automatic green cards for *skilled* workers who prove they can work here, pay taxes, obey the law, and not collect federal benefits of any kind, for a period of six years (cumulative). A robust program to allow temporary low-skilled workers to work here *temporarily*, with no path to permanent residency or citizenship. No permanent residency for illegal immigrants. No path to citizenship for illegal immigrants.

Is environmentalism good for the environment?

July 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Although I am not a global warming alarmist, I am concerned with conservation. So, all things being equal, I think it's a good idea not to pollute the environment unnecessarily. Now, you might think that environmentalists agree with me on that.

Let's take a look at this article by Bret Stephens from the Wall Street Journal where he writes about how a train that was transporting shale oil was derailed and then exploded. (H/T Dennis Prager)

Excerpt:

> The derailed 72-car train belonged to a subsidiary of Illinois-based multinational Rail World, whose self-declared aim is to "promote rail industry privatization." The train was carrying North Dakota shale oil (likely extracted by fracking) to the massive Irving Oil refinery in the port city of Saint John, to be shipped to the global market. At least five people were killed in the blast (a number that's likely to rise) and 1,000 people were forced to evacuate. Quebec's environment minister reports that some 100,000 liters (26,000 gallons) of crude have spilled into the Chaudière River, meaning it could reach Quebec City and the St. Lawrence River before too long.

Now the question is, why is it that trains are used instead of pipelines, when pipelines are safer than trains?

Let's see why:

> The reason oil is moved on trains from places like North Dakota and Alberta is because there aren't enough pipelines to carry it. The provincial governments of Alberta and New Brunswick are talking about building a pipeline to cover the 3,000-odd mile distance. But last month President Obama put the future of the Keystone XL pipeline again in doubt, telling a Georgetown University audience "our national interest will be served only if this project does not significantly exacerbate the problem of carbon pollution."
>
> […]Like water, business has a way of tracing a course of least resistance. Pipelines are a hyper-regulated industry but rail transport isn't, so that's how we now move oil. As the Wall Street Journal's Tom Fowler reported in March, in 2008 the U.S. rail system moved 9,500 carloads of oil. In 2012, the figure surged to 233,811. During the same period, the total number of spills went from eight to 69. In March, a derailed train spilled 714 barrels of oil in western Minnesota.
>
> Predictable, you would think. And ameliorable: Pipelines account for about half as much spillage as railways on a gallon-per-mile basis. Pipelines also tend not to go straight through exposed population centers like Lac-Mégantic. Nobody suggests that pipelines are perfectly reliable or safe, but what is? To think is to weigh

> alternatives. The habit of too many environmentalists is to evade them.

Investors Business Daily has more on the benefits of pipelines:

> Railways suffer spills 2.7 times more often than pipelines, according to the Washington-based Association of American Railroads. If that seems self-serving, the State Department, citing a 2012 study from the free-market Manhattan Institute, said trains spill 33 times more oil than pipelines.
>
> […]"The evidence is so overwhelming that railroads are far less safe than pipelines," says Charles Ebinger, director of the Brookings Institution's energy security initiative.

Brookings is a left-leaning think tank, and they agree: pipelines are safer than trains.

It does make sense, I think, for Christians and conservatives to ask ourselves sensible questions about the environment. How do we make air clean enough? How do we make water clean enough? How do we avoid impacting nature unnecessarily? But I think this story about the train should help us realize that fundamentalist environmentalists are not the best people to be making these sorts of policy decisions. These decisions should be made by rational thinkers, who can consider all sides of an issue and think critically about the needs of everyone concerned. This is not a problem for secular leftist idealists who are more motivated by blind faith than by facts.

Peter Williams debates Bart Ehrman on his book "Misquoting Jesus"

July 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The audio for this Unbelievable radio show debate is available from Apologetics 315.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is the US author of the bestselling book "Misquoting Jesus" (In the UK "Whose word is it?"). He calls into question the authority of the New Testament as scribal changes over time have changed the documents.
>
> So can we trust the scripture? Bible scholar Peter Williams believes in the reliability of the New Testament and that Bart's prognosis is far too pessimistic.

This post is a re-post from 2011. I have been listening to this lecture by Peter J. Williams on "Misquoting Jesus" this week, and it reminded me to re-post this debate.

Summary of the Williams-Ehrman debate:

Note: this summary is *snarky*. It's very very very snarky, and it should really be viewed as childish, immature, crude, snarky, mendacious humor, rather than an accurate summary. I just cannot stand Bart Ehrman, which his sensational Dan Brown style of expressing himself. He just makes me so mad! I hope you can all forgive me for being snarky.

Ehrman:

- I had a mystical experience in childhood and became an evangelical Christian
- I went to Moody Bible Institute, and they told me that the Bible was inerrant
- For a while, I was committed to the view that there are no mistakes in the Bible
- At Princeton, I was taught *and graded* by professors who did not accept inerrancy
- By a strange coincidence, I began to see that the Bible did have errors after all!
- We don't have the original documents written by the original authors, we only have thousands of copies
- if the words of the Bible are not completely inerrant, then none of it is historical
- if all of the words in the copies of the Bible are not identical, then none of it is historical

Williams:

- I would say the New and Old testaments are the Word of God
- We don't need to have the original Greek writings in order to believe in the authority of the Bible
- I believe in inerrancy, but doesn't mean there are no problems
- the doctrine of inerrancy has always referred to the original Greek copies, not the translations

Moderator:

- what are the main points of Misquoting Jesus?

Ehrman:

- we don't have the originals of any of the books of the New Testament
- we have copies that are much later, sometimes even centuries later!!1!
- the copies we have all differ from one another – they were changed by scribes!!1!
- we have 5000 manuscripts in the original Greek language
- there are hundreds of thousands of differences!!1!
- most of the differences don't matter
- some differences are significant for meaning or doctrine
- errors are propagated because the next scribe inherits the mistake of their source copy
- a large gap between the time of writing and the first extant copy means more errors have crept in

Williams:

- the reason we have so many variants is because the number of manuscripts is large

Angry Jesus or compassionate Jesus in Mark

Ehrman:

- most manuscripts say that Jesus was compassionate when healing a leper, but one says he was angry
- it makes a huge huge huge really really big difference if Jesus is compassionate or angry
- the whole Bible needs to be thrown out because of this one word between different in one manuscript

Williams:

- this variant is important for understanding the passage, but it has no great meaning
- the change is probably just an accident – the two words are very similar visually in Greek
- it's just an accident – it emerged in one manuscript, and it impacted a few more
- the tiny number of manuscripts that have the error are geographically isolated
- I'm pretty sure that WK prefers the angry Jesus anyway – so who cares?

Ehrman:

- no! someone changed it deliberately! it's a conspiracy! you should buy my book! it's a *big deal*!!!!!1!!1!one!!eleventy-one!

The woman caught in adultery in John

Ehrman:

- it is isn't in any of the earliest manuscripts
- this is an apocryphical story that some scribe deliberately inserted into the text
- most people don't even know about this! it's a cover-up! you need to buy my scandalous book!

Williams:

- that's right, it's a late addition by some overzealous scribe
- and it's clearly marked as such in every modern Bible translation
- the only people who don't know about this are people who don't read footnotes in their Bible
- and in any case, this isn't a loss of the original words of the New Testament – it's an addition

Grace of God or apart from God in Hebrews

Ehrman:

- well this is just a one word difference, but it makes a huge huge really really big difference!
- the words are very similar, so it's could be an accident I guess
- but it wasn't! this was a deliberate change! it's a conspiracy! it's a cover-up! scandal!
- buy my book! It's almost as good as Dan Brown!

Moderator:

- hmmmn…. I kind of like "apart from God" – why is this such a big scandal again?

Ehrman:

- you don't care? how can you not care? it has to be inerrant! or the whole thing is false!
- Moody Bible Institute says!

Williams:

- yeah Bart is always saying that every change is deliberate but it's just an accident
- the words are very similar, just a few letters are different, this is clearly an accident
- I have no problem with apart from God, or by the Grace of God
- please move on and stop screaming and running around and knocking things over

Moderator:

- but what if pastors try to use this passage in a sermon?

Williams:

- well, one word doesn't make a big different, the meaning that appears is fine for preaching
- it's only a problem for people who treat the Bible as a magic book with magical incantations
- they get mad because if one word is out of place then the whole thing doesn't work for their spell
- then they try to cast happiness spells but the spells don't work and they experience suffering
- the suffering surprises them since they think that fundamentalism should guarantee them happiness
- then they become apostates and get on TV where they look wide-eyed and talk crazy

Ehrman:

- hey! are you talking about me? a lot of people buy my books! i am a big success!
- it is very important that people don't feel bad about their sinning you know!

Is Misquoting Jesus an attack?

Williams:

- it's rhetorically imbalanced and misleading
- it tries to highlight change and instability and ignore the majority of the text that is stable
- he makes a big deal out of 5 or so verses that are different from the mainstream text
- he says that scribes deliberately changed the scriptures, but he doesn't prove that
- it's just as likely that the differences are just scribal errors made by accident

Ehrman:

- well, maybe the variants aren't a big deal, but what about one angel vs. two angels?
- that's a significant issue! significant enough for me to become an apostate – a *rich* apostate
- if one word is different because of an accident, then the whole Bible cannot be trusted
- it has to be completely inerrant, so a one word difference means the whole thing is unreliable
- we don't even know if Jesus was even named Jesus, because of one angel vs two angels!!!1!
- buy my book! you don't have to read it, just put it on your shelf, then you'll feel

better about not having a relationships with God – because who’s to say what God really wants from you? Not the Bible!

Christians celebrate the end of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood government

July 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

North Africa and Middle East Political Map

CNS News explains how the downfall of Obama's Muslim Brotherhood allies is being greeted with joy by Egypt's Christian community.

Excerpt:

> Father Rafik Greiche, head of the press office of the Egyptian Catholic Bishops' Conference, declared that the ouster of Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood supporters on July 3 was "a joyous day for Christians." "The ousting of Morsi and the political new beginning is a joyous day for us Christians in Egypt and for all Egyptians. We hope that we will not be excluded from the political process that lies before us," he said during a talk last Thursday with the Catholic charity, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN).
>
> […]Fr. Greiche made a point to note that what happened in Egypt was not a coup d'état. Rather, he said, "the army carried out the will of the people. They expressed this unequivocally over the last few days through millions of signatures and massive demonstrations in Cairo and throughout the whole country."
>
> "A number of western media are now presenting it as a coup d'état. But a putsch happens when officers take power and act without the endorsement of the people. But this is exactly what did not happen in Egypt yesterday. Moreover, the army wanted to prevent the bloodshed the Muslim brothers were threatening. This is why they took action."
>
> […]A 2012 State Department report noted increased violence towards Egyptian Christians following the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak in 2011 and the election of Muslim Brotherhood-backed Morsi a year ago.
>
> "The government generally failed to prevent, investigate, or prosecute crimes against members of religious minorities, including Coptic Christians, which

> fostered a climate of impunity. In some cases, authorities reacted slowly or with insufficient resolve when mobs attacked Christians and their property," according to the State Department's International Religious Freedom Report.

I think this story beautifully illustrates why Christians should care about politics and foreign policy. The truth is that there are forces in places throughout the world that are hostile to Judeo-Christian values. Good foreign policy that promotes economic freedom and freedom of religion should be the cause of every informed Christian. One of the reasons why the Muslim Brotherhood, a group linked to terrorism, is doing so well is because Egypt's economy is doing so poorly.

Investors Business Daily thinks that the best way to bring freedom to Egypt is by bring prosperity to Egypt – the same way that freedom was brought to Chile in the past.

Take a look:

> Like with Morsi, Chile in 1973 was ruled by a so-called democrat, Salvador Allende, who after barely winning election revealed he didn't intend to govern democratically. A Marxist, Allende moved fast to ram through radical, Cuban-style "reforms" on an unwilling public.
>
> Allende foreshadowed Morsi, demolishing political institutions, trampling the free press, disrespecting minority rights, ignoring the constitution, disregarding the separation of powers, trashing property rights and ruining the economy. Also, Allende was in thrall to a failed and inhuman foreign ideology — communism — just as Morsi was to Islamofascism. In both cases, the only exit was a military coup.
>
> Had Chilean military commander Augusto Pinochet simply handed the country back to "democracy" without changing the root causes of the turmoil and tyranny, the cycle would have had a replay.
>
> But he didn't. He used his military government as an incubator for free-market changes, transforming his country into not just Latin America's best economy, but also Latin America's most durable democracy. Pinochet — who stepped down dutifully after 17 years upon losing a referendum — understood that economic freedom had to precede political freedom. He employed a brilliant group of mostly University of Chicago-educated young Chilean economists, known as the Chicago Boys, to transform the society by cleaning out thousands of weedlike laws choking Chile's economy — on labor, mining, currency, fishing, vineyards, startups and pensions.
>
> They made the central bank independent and instituted hard-core fiscal discipline that has left the country debt-free and pushed its credit rating toward triple A.
>
> Thousands of businesses were freed to open and operate without thickets of regulations — resulting in the spate of Chilean products now seen in America's supermarkets: wine, fruit, fish.

> They signed free-trade pacts with 60 countries to expand the reach of their tiny market to a global one — the better to attract foreign investment.
>
> And in what economist Milton Friedman called “the crown jewel” of these reforms, Chile’s 30-year-old Labor Minister Jose Pinera offered Chileans a choice of public or private pensions — making each worker a minicapitalist with a stake in the system — and giving the country a vast pool of capital to develop the country.
>
> Right now, frankly, this is what Egypt needs — a free-market economy that enables it citizens to matter.
>
> America now pushes for political freedom before the economic kind. It did this Iraq and now in Egypt, creating weak or failed democracies. In 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said she was getting calls from Egyptians during the Arab Spring asking how to replicate Chile’s reforms — and we’ve heard nothing since.
>
> But the Chilean example shows that economic freedom is what makes political freedom possible .

Fox News recalls why the Muslim Brotherhood got into power in the first place. Excerpt:

> Millions protesting in the streets. Another leader deposed. Dozens killed in violent clashes, including at least 51 people slain on Monday. Obama’s Mideast policy is in shambles. Nowhere is that more obvious that Egypt, which just held its second revolution in as many years.
>
> Egypt isn’t just a problem. It’s a full-fledged disaster, hand-delivered to us by President Obama. He sabotaged our ally Hosni Mubarak more than a year ago, then defended that strategy during his reelection campaign.
>
> […]Back in February 2011, Obama first said “change must take place” and about a week later outright called for Mubarak to go. Given the U.S.’s financial influence on Egypt, that effectively destroyed a key ally.
>
> […]When asked during the presidential debates in October if he regretted abandoning Mubarak, Obama was clear: “I don’t because I think that America has to stand with democracy.” He then listed several areas that he expected the new government to push including taking “responsibility for protecting religious minorities,” recognizing “the rights of women,” abiding “by their treaty with Israel,” and “developing their own economy.”
>
> With the exception of Israel, Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood failed at the rest and now Obama is standing by them. Christians have been attacked, women raped and terrorized, and the Egyptian economy is a disaster. Fuel shortages are common and half the population is living on less than $2 a day.
>
> The Muslim Brotherhood has shown itself to be radical and dangerous. One of the last straws for the Egyptians was apparently when Morsi called for a holy war in

> Syria in support of the Sunni Muslims against the Shia Muslim leadership.
>
> The Brotherhood even released a bizarre, anti-Semitic statement about Morsi's replacement, saying, "A Jew in Egypt's seat of power."
>
> Now that same military Obama trusted last time around has rejected Morsi's anti-American, radical Islamist government. The Obama response? He has ordered a review of the funding we send to Egypt. He even supported keeping the Brotherhood in the government.

What Christians should have done in 2008 and 2012 is voted against Obama, because apologizing to Muslim dictators and Communist dictators is not going to spread the prosperity and liberty we need in order to have world peace. Christians need to think hard about the role that foreign policy plays in a Christian worldview. I think this is especially important for Christian women, who in my experience struggle to understand how foreign policy works. We need to think about the way the world works in order to achieve good. Achieving good is not the same thing as being liked or feeling good. We want to achieve good, and that takes knowledge of how the world really works.

FOIA documents reveal that Holder DOJ facilitated anti-Zimmerman protests

July 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The legal watchdog Judicial Watch announced today that it has obtained documents revealing the Community Relations Service (CRS), a unit of the Department of Justice, was deployed to Sanford, Fla., following the death of Trayvon Martin to help organize rallies against George Zimmerman.
>
> […]According to the report, employees of the DOJ's CRS are required by law to "conduct their activities in confidence. Though the agency claims to use "impartial mediation practices and conflict resolution procedures," press reports suggest that the unit deployed to Sanford took an active role in mobilizing against Mr. Zimmerman.
>
> "These documents detail the extraordinary intervention by the Justice Department in the pressure campaign leading to the prosecution of George Zimmerman," said Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton. "My guess is that most Americans would rightly object to taxpayers paying government employees to help organize racially-charged demonstrations."

Fox News had some more on the story.

Excerpt:

> Judicial Watch, in claiming the agency crossed a line by aiding the anti-Zimmerman events, points to an April 2012 article in the Orlando Sentinel.
>
> That article detailed the role the CRS unit played during the protests. In one case, the Sentinel said they helped "set up a meeting between the local NAACP and elected officials that led to the temporary resignation of police Chief Bill Lee."
>
> In another, the article said they arranged an escort for college students for a 40-mile march to "demand justice."

Is that the proper role of government? They are going after a private individual with taxpayer money. That is nothing but tyranny.

Scientists trying to mimic the design of hummingbirds with nanorobots

July 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> In the Illustra documentary *Flight*, Dr. Thomas Emell of the University of Florida asks us to consider the speed of the synapses firing during the birds' wingbeats (more than 100 times a second) and heartbeats (1,250 times a minute). Now, we see that each wingbeat, taking place in less than 10 milliseconds, involves even more control: tuning the wing shape at each position to optimize lift.
>
> Masateru Maeda, a PhD student at Chiba University in Japan, captured the footage.
>
> The ultimate aim of his measurements of the movements of the wings is **to copy their function in the design of flying robots.**
>
> If something works, it's "not happening by accident," Discovery Institute Fellow Paul Nelson reminds us in the Illustra film. He describes how the unique shape of the shoulder bone allows the wing to invert on the reverse stroke, creating lift on both strokes. Now, Maeda has found that hovering also requires the hummingbirds to be able to sense their wings' shapes and respond accordingly.
>
> Mr Maeda said that the **birds must have a very acute sense of their wings' shape** in order to **remain so still** in the air.
>
> "If the wing shape isn't **optimised**," he explained, "it will fail to produce **lift** and the bird will start to sink.
>
> "So **it must be able to sense this and correct the shape of its wings**."
>
> What this implies is that the wing shape (involving control of the flight feathers' ability to slide as they flap), is under instantaneous control of the hummingbirds' central nervous system. The speed of signals from brain to flight muscles now becomes even more astonishing.
>
> In the documentary, viewers see a robotic hummingbird called the Nano Air Vehicle able to hover in mid-air. Its wings, however, perform simple back-and-forth movements while its stiff body floats upright in a fixed position. It has no internal guidance system, no heart or brain, and no fine control of wing shape. Without the human operator and his joystick, it would crash into the nearest wall. No wonder Nelson says that, despite its being a "sensational piece of engineering," it is still "light years behind the bird that inspired its creation."

What the Evolution News article didn't mention is that even if the scientists and engineers can mimic the flying capability of hummingbirds by intelligently designing robots, they

are missing out on a valuable aspect of what makes a humminbird a hummingbird. Can you guess what it is?

Take a look at this video:

Isn’t that amazing? Now, everyone knows that I am huge admirer of birds, and I have had birds as pets for most of my life. I know what these amazing little creatures can do firsthand. Not only can they fly, but they can build relationships with human beings – trusting them not to hurt them. No robot hummingbird can do that. Hummingbirds are exquisitely designed, and their design cries out for an explanation.

Wal-Mart cancels plans to build three stores after D.C. leftists raise minimum wage 50%

July 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox Business, a story that shows how completely clueless left-wing politicians are about economics.

Excerpt:

> Wal-Mart Stores (WMT) no longer plans to build three stores in the nation's capitol, after the city's council voted to force large retailers to pay starting wages that are 50% higher than the minimum wage there.
>
> The world's largest retailer also said it will consider its options related to three other Washington, D.C., stores that are still under construction.
>
> The bill, called the Large Retailer Accountability Act of 2013, was approved by an 8-to-5 vote, even though Walmart had warned that the company would leave the district.
>
> "Nothing has changed from our perspective: we will not pursue Skyland, Capitol Gateway, and New York Avenue and will start to review the financial and legal implications on the three stores already under construction," Walmart spokesman Steven Restivo said, referring to the locations of the planned stores.
>
> "This was a difficult decision for us—and unfortunate news for most D.C. residents—but the Council has forced our hand."
>
> The district's new law requires retailers with sales of more than $1 billion and with stores of at least 75,000 square feet to pay their workers starting salaries of at least $12.50 an hour, compared to the minimum wage of $8.25.
>
> Unionized businesses are exempt from the measure. Large stores that already have a presence in D.C., including Target (TGT) and Macy's (M), have four years to comply.

Now for most of my readers who understand economics, what happened here is going to be pretty obvious. But sometimes people get specialized in other areas and neglect the study of economics. The danger then is that they will be moved to support policies that appeal to their hearts. But it's very important to understand that policies that sound good, like raising wages, often have unexpected negative results.

Here is George Mason University economics professor Walter Williams to explain the problem with increasing the minimum wage, starting with the basics of economics.

Excerpt:

> Are people responsive to changes in price? For example, if the price of cars rose by 25 percent, would people purchase as many cars? Supposing housing prices rose by 25 percent, what would happen to sales? Those are big-ticket items, but

> what about smaller-priced items? If a supermarket raised its prices by 25 percent, would people purchase as much? It's not rocket science to conclude that when prices rise, people adjust their behavior by purchasing less.
>
> It's almost childish to do so, but I'm going to ask questions about 25 percent price changes in the other way. What responses would people have if the price of cars or housing fell by 25 percent? What would happen to supermarket sales if prices fell by 25 percent? Again, it doesn't require deep thinking to guess that people would purchase more.
>
> This behavior in economics is known as the first fundamental law of demand. It holds that the higher the price of something the less people will take and that the lower the price the more people will take. There are no known exceptions to the law of demand. Any economist who could prove a real-world exception would probably be a candidate for the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences and other honors.
>
> […]University of California, Irvine economist David Neumark has examined more than 100 major academic studies on the minimum wage. […]About 85 percent of the studies "find a negative employment effect on low-skilled workers." A 1976 American Economic Association survey found that 90 percent of its members agreed that increasing the minimum wage raises unemployment among young and unskilled workers. A 1990 survey found that 80 percent of economists agreed with the statement that increases in the minimum wage cause unemployment among the youth and low-skilled. If you're looking for a consensus in most fields of study, examine the introductory and intermediate college textbooks in the field. Economics textbooks that mention the minimum wage say that it increases unemployment for the least skilled worker.

When considering what economic policies to adopt, it is not enough to do what feels good. Liberals and conservatives agree that it is good to help the poor. Liberals think that higher minimum wage rates help the poor, and conservatives think that lower minimum wage rates help the poor. This is not a topic that is up for debate, though, because economists across the idological spectrum *agree* on this one – and for the reasons outlined above and illustrated in the Wal-Mart case.

Take a look at this post from moderate Harvard University economist Greg Mankiw.

He writes:

> I believe it is better to introduce students to economics with topics about which there is more of a professional consensus. In chapter two of the book, I include a table of propositions to which most economists subscribe, based on various polls of the profession. Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:

1. A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)
2. Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)

3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

When you raise the price of anything – including labor – fewer people will buy it. Wal-Mart will still spend the money on new stores and new employees, just not in Washington, D.C. – not with those laws. Notice that number one on his list is the case of rent control, where government good-intentioners try to hold the price of rent *down.* What happens next? Well, it the price goes *down* then everyone wants to buy more of whatever just went on sale. But the people providing what just went on sale stop making it because they can't make a profit. The unexpected consequence is that there is a housing shortage. The quantity of housing decreases, and the quality of housing decreases. The quality decreases because demand is so high that property owners no longer have to maintain the properties, since demand has skyrocketed. Economics is something that everyone should study, so that we don't just have good intentions, but also have good results.

A response to Judith Jarvis Thompson's violinist argument for abortion rights

July 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Amy posted this on the Stand to Reason blog, and it got a ton of comments.

Excerpt:

> The "Violinist" argument for keeping abortion legal is an illustration created by Judith Jarvis Thompson for the purpose of clarifying our moral intuitions about abortion by considering a parallel situation. The Violinist story goes like this (see the full, original story here): A woman wakes up to find she's been attached without her consent to a famous violinist who needs the help of her kidneys for the next nine months in order to live. If the woman detaches herself from him, he will die.
>
> According to Thompson, since it's clear that the woman ought not be forced by law to remain attached to this man (though he is a person with rights), in the same way, the law ought not force a woman to remain attached to an unborn child who is similarly using her body to live (though he is a person with rights).
>
> In response to this bodily rights argument, Stephen Wagner, Josh Brahm, and Timothy Brahm (along with others—see acknowledgments) have developed a new illustration that more closely parallels the situation of a pregnant woman (including those who are pregnant by rape), which they call "The Cabin in the Blizzard." From Stephen Wagner's paper, "De Facto Guardian and Abortion":
>
> Imagine that a woman named Mary wakes up in a strange cabin. Having gone to sleep in her suburban home the night before, she starts to scream frantically. She goes to the window and sees snow piled high. It appears she is snowed in. On the desk by the window, she finds a note that says,
>
> "You will be here for six weeks.
> You are safe, and your child is, too.
> There is plenty of food and water."
>
> Since she just gave birth a week ago, she instinctively begins tearing through each room of the cabin looking for her infant son. She finds an infant in a second room, but it is not her infant. It is a girl who appears to be about one week old, just like her son. Mary begins to scream.
>
> Pulling herself together, she goes to the kitchen area of the cabin and finds a huge store of food and a ready source of water. The baby begins to cry, and she rightly assesses that the baby is hungry. Mary sees a three-month supply of formula on the counter in the kitchen area.
>
> Now imagine that the police show up at the cabin six weeks later, and Mary emerges from the cabin. After determining she is in good health, albeit a good bit

> frazzled, one policeman says, “We’ve been investigating this situation for some time. The Behavioral Psychologists from the nearby University of Lake Wobegon are responsible. We’ll bring them to justice. We’re so glad you’re okay. Is there anyone else in the cabin?”
>
> Mary said quietly, “There was.”
>
> “There was?” The police hurry past her to the cabin. They search the cabin and find the infant formula unopened on the counter. They find the infant dead on a bed. The coroner confirms that the infant died from starvation.
>
> We can see that Mary was wrong for not feeding the baby in this situation, regardless of the fact that she did not consent to these demands being placed on her. As Wagner points out, our moral intuition tells us her obligation to feed the child exists even if her only option is to use her own body to breastfeed that child, causing her great discomfort.

Another problem with the violinist argument is that it neglects the fact that the baby is there *as a result of the woman’s own decision to have sex without being ready for a baby.* In the violinist example, the woman is a helpless victim of some group of music lovers. But in a real pregnancy, the woman had to have made a decision that resulted in the baby being born, (except in the case of rape).

Triablogue explains it thus:

> Thompson seems to make a distinction between consent to pregnancy and consent to sex (as Beckwith and others point out). But it seems that pregnancy is the designed result of sex, even though it may not be the desired result. It would seem that our sex organs have the purpose of being ordered towards procreation. Applying this to the violinist then: What if I engaged in an activity, say, spelunking, that regularly created rare kidney diseases in violinists? Say that every time I dropped 50 ft into the cave, a violinist was almost sure to develop the disease that only I had the blood type to correct or fix. If I did so, should I not be hooked up to him, voluntarily or not? Say that there was protection, some kind of spelunking helmet. Say that it was not 100% effective. If my helmet ripped, should I be attached to the violinist? Or say I tried to “pull up” before I hit 50 ft. Unfortunately, it felt so good to decend that I pulled up a little too late and my right foot passed the 50 ft mark. Should I be attached to the violinist? I don’t see why not. Indeed, say that the statistical evidence was that the first two people that ever spelunked together would eventually cause 6 billion violinists to come down with rare kidney diseases, I dare say the Society of Music Lovers, and almost everyone else for that matter, would call for *abstaining from spelunking* unless you agreed to take care of the violinists until they got better. This seems fatal to Thompson’s argument.

It’s very helpful illustration for dealing with pro-abortion people who admit that unborn children are human persons, but who still think that women should have a right to

terminate their pregnancy.

Pro-abortion thugs in Texas planned to attack legislators with urine and feces

July 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports.

Excerpt:

> The Texas Senate has given its initial approval for sweeping abortion restrictions late on Friday, sending them to Republican Governor Rick Perry to sign into law after weeks of protests and rallies that drew thousands of people to the Capitol and made the state the focus of the national abortion debate.
>
> Republicans used their large majority in the Texas Legislature to pass the Bill nearly three weeks after a filibuster by Democratic Senator Wendy Davis and an outburst by abortion-rights activists in the Senate gallery disrupted a deadline vote on June 25.
>
> As protesters came to the Capitol building in Austin on Friday, bottles of urine and feces, and even tampons were confiscated by state troopers as they tried to prevent anything from disrupting the debate.
>
> […]Those attending the debate were searched, and any item that could potentially be thrown from the gallery, including tampons, were confiscated, according to the Washington Post.
>
> A senator later stopped security officials confiscating tampons, calling the move 'bone headed'.
>
> However, Texas Department of Public Safety officers were reported to have found one jar suspected to contain urine, 18 jars suspected of holding feces and three jars suspected to contain paint.
>
> Four women who tried to chain themselves to a railing in the gallery were also arrested and a ten-minute break had to be called when another woman managed to chain herself to the railing.
>
> The Senate's leader, Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst told officers to remove a group of protesters who started chanting 'Give choice a chance' as the debate resumed.
>
> Outside the chamber, the crowd grew so loud that troopers were being issued earplugs, as protesters shouted 'Shame! Shame! Shame!' as senators gave their closing statements.

A recent poll found that the bill has the support of the American public.

Excerpt:

> Most Americans would favor sweeping new national restrictions on abortion after

> the 20th week of pregnancy, according to a new HuffPost/YouGov poll. But the poll also shows many Americans remain conflicted in their views on abortion.
>
> By a margin of 59 percent to 30 percent, respondents to the new poll said they would favor a federal law banning abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy.

And that's exactly what the Texas law does.

Isn't it amazing that pro-abortion activists would be against such a common-sense bill restricting abortions on viable unborn children? (And chant "Hail, Satan" in order to disrupt legislators!)

State Attorney Angela Corey fires whistleblower in Trayvon Martin case

July 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Florida Times-Union. (H/T Bad Blue)

> State Attorney Angela Corey fired her office's information technology director Friday after he testified last month about being concerned prosecutors did not turn over information to George Zimmerman's defense team in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin.
>
> On the same day attorneys finished their closing arguments in that nationally watched trial, a state attorney investigator went to Ben Kruidbos' home about 7:30 a.m. to hand-deliver a letter stating Kruidbos "can never again be trusted to step foot in this office."
>
> The letter contended Kruibos did a poor job overseeing the information technology department, violated public records law for retaining documents, and noted he was questioned in March when the office was trying to determine who had leaked personnel information obtained through a computer breach.
>
> In an interview Friday, Kruidbos denied the allegations in the letter, which was written by Cheryl Peek, the managing director of the State Attorney's Office.
>
> He said he had acted in good faith about "genuine concerns." He said he had been proud to work at the State Attorney's Office and feared the letter would cripple his chances at finding another job to support his family, including a 4-month-old son.
>
> "I don't have any regrets," he said, "but I am terrified about the future and what that will end up being."
>
> His attorney Wesley White — who resigned from the State Attorney's Office in December and is a critic of Corey — said the firing was aimed at sending a message to office employees "that if they feel like there is wrongdoing," they should not disclose it or seek legal guidance from a private attorney.
>
> "If they do speak to an attorney, then they are dead," he said. "The State Attorney's Office will do whatever is necessary to not only terminate them, but destroy their reputations in the process."
>
> Jackelyn Barnard, spokeswoman for Corey and the State Attorney's Office, did not return phone calls or emails for comment.

This is why I have to move to a very red state. I don't want to deal with a bunch of leftists who don't know right from wrong. I don't want to be prosecuted by people who have no respect for the law, and are just looking to push a political agenda.

What motivates William Lane Craig and why is he so effective?

July 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Nathan Schneider, who wrote a balanced profile of Dr. Craig for the Chronicle of Higher Education a few weeks back, has written an even more in-depth profile of Christianity's ablest defender.

Here's the introduction:

> Nobody—or just about nobody, depending on whom you ask—beats William Lane Craig in a debate about the existence of God, or the resurrection of Jesus, or any topic of that sort. During their debate at Notre Dame in April of last year, New Atheist author Sam Harris referred to Craig as "the one Christian apologist who seems to have put the fear of God into many of my fellow atheists."
>
> Over the course of working on my book about how people search for proof of God's existence, I had the chance to spend a generous amount of time with Craig, both in the Atlanta area where he lives and at Biola University, an evangelical school on the outskirts of Los Angeles, where he teaches a few weeks out of the year. For the book, I've gotten to write about ideas like his "kalam cosmological argument," one of the most-cited ideas of its generation in philosophy of religion, which fuses medieval Muslims with modern cosmology. I also tell of his entrepreneurial savvy in turning the Evangelical Philosophical Society into an academic organization that moonlights as a slick-as-a-banana apologetics platform for changing hearts like yours and mine. But none of that quite captures the man's role as a sage and exemplar, in which he renders something like the upbuilding service Oprah provides to home-bound American women, except that his acolytes are the precocious set among conservative, evangelical, young-adult males. He makes me almost wish I were that kind of conservative evangelical myself—which is, to him, the point.
>
> Craig dresses impeccably and professorially, often with a buttoned shirt and a patterned blazer, sweater, or sweater-vest. His dimples hint at a basic innocence that can be startling when it pokes through the frontage of logic. I find in Craig the decency associated with an era I am too young to be nostalgic for, and which I've been taught to imagine was imperialistic, sexist, homophobic, narrow-minded, or otherwise regressive. His rationalizations of certain parts of the Hebrew Bible can sound like he's okay with genocide. Yet none of these accusations quite sticks to him; none is even comprehensible in the cosmic snow-globe within which he expertly thinks his way through life, whose sole and constant storyline is bringing more and more souls to a saving knowledge of the one true Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
>
> I live in a different snow-globe from Craig's. Nevertheless, I've gained a lot from

> the lessons I learned with him, and from his carefully crafted advice, and from his answers to my questions. ("I may not answer, but you can ask!" he once warned.) They've improved my productivity, and my relationship with loved ones, and my physical fitness. It would be selfish if I did not pass some of these lessons on, in synthesized and practicable form, to you.

The article covers 7 points about Dr. Craig:

1. **Do Everything Like It's a Ministry**
2. **Make a Covenant with Your Wife**
3. **Organize the Day**
4. **Turn Weakness into Strength**
5. **Be Prepared**
6. **Remember That Time Is Everything—and Nothing**
7. **Love God and Authority**

And here's one that I found fascinating, being single myself:

> **3. Organize the Day**
>
> There was a time, says Craig, when he began to worry he was losing his knack for philosophy. "Honey," he remembers telling Jan, "I don't know what's the matter with me. I just can't seem to concentrate anymore. I used to be able to study all day long, and there was no problem, and now I find I just can't concentrate anymore. My mind wanders, and I'm tired." He was tempted to despair.
>
> "No, no, don't be ridiculous!" she told him. "You just need to organize your day."
>
> As usual, she was right. She put him on a new schedule: starting the workday with the hardest philosophical work in the morning, then lighter material, like his writing for popular audiences, after lunch. He doesn't look at his email until late afternoon, "when my brain is really fried." (For fear of being bombarded with mail, he doesn't even share his email address with his graduate students.) Soon after trying this regime, he regained his philosophical powers completely.
>
> The couple's life together, at home in the suburbs of Atlanta, is a picture of (a certain kind of) teamwork. Craig wakes up each morning at 5:30, and begins the day with devotional time, reading from the Church Fathers and the New Testament in Greek, and then he prays for the spread of the gospel in some benighted part of the world, with the help of the *Operation World* handbook. Soon, Jan is up. They have coffee together (which he dislikes, but recommends for the health and social benefits), after which he goes down to the weight room for an hour of exercise. By the time he reemerges, she has a hot breakfast ready and waiting—sometimes as elaborate, he says, as ham and eggs and pumpkin waffles with whipped cream and strawberries. ("She's a fabulous cook.") He'll return downstairs for an intensive morning of scholarship, and reemerge for the hot lunch Jan has prepared. Then, he's back downstairs for the lighter work of the

> afternoon, culminating in emails, which he responds to in longhand and she has often been the one to type out and send, since his rare neuromuscular disease—more on that in a moment—renders him unable to type. Between meals and typing sessions, Jan plays the stock market. Before long dinner is ready, and they eat, and spend the evening together, watching TV and drinking red wine (which he also dislikes, but also recommends for the health and social benefits).
>
> "She's not an intellectual herself," Craig says of his wife, "but she appreciates the value of what I do, and that's what matters." One would hope that this is true, because she has typed out all of his papers, books, and both doctoral dissertations. Would that we all had such devoted help, though it may be untenable in the present economic climate for those scholars among us unable to garner five-figure speaking fees. We can at least hold off on our email for a few hours—which I have since done, to enormous benefit.

It's very interesting to read this because it's got lots of positive and negative points. On the one hand, he finds Dr. Craig's conservative beliefs and exclusive positions difficult to accept. On the other hand, he has to admit that Dr. Craig really believes what he says he believes, and he's very good at persuading others. He's done his homework. I think the biggest problem that a person has with accepting Christianity is re-orienting the will. Another big problem is being willing to be disapproved of by non-Christians. Even if they can't beat you, the pressure to compromise and please others makes many people shy away from Christianity.

This new profile of Dr. Craig is getting tons of likes and shares on Facebook, so give it a look. Be sure and share it on Facebook and tweet it, too.

Related posts

- Dr. Craig explains the role that his wife played in his ministry
- Dr. Craig offers marriage advice to Christians

Suzanne Venker on the decline of men and male roles

July 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News editorial from a woman who defends men.

Excerpt:

> In November of last year, I wrote an article for Fox News called The War on Men (which I subsequently expanded to an eBook). To keep it pithy, in the piece I focused on one effect of this war: the lack of marriageable men. But there's so much more to it. The truth is, men have become second-class citizens.
>
> The most obvious proof is male bashing in the media. It is rampant and irrefutable. From sit-coms and commercials that portray dad as an idiot to biased news reports about the state of American men, males are pounced on left and right. And that's just the beginning.

She talks about the problems that boys face in feminized schools, and also in university, and then explains some of the reasons why men are shying away from marriage:

> When men become husbands and fathers, things get really bad. In family courts throughout America, men are routinely stripped of their rights and due process. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is easily used against them since its definition of violence is so broad that virtually any conflict between partners can be considered abuse.
>
> "If a woman gets angry for any reason, she can simply accuse a man and men are just assumed guilty in our society," notes Dr. Helen Smith, author of the new book, "Men on Strike." This is particularly heinous since, as Smith adds, violence in domestic relations "is almost 50% from men and 50% from women."
>
> Shocked? If so, that's in part because the media don't believe men can be victims of domestic violence—so they don't report it. They would rather feed off stories that paint women as victims. And in so doing, they've convinced America there's a war on women.
>
> Yet it is males who suffer in our society. From boyhood through adulthood, the White American Male must fight his way through a litany of taunts, assumptions and grievances about his very existence. His oppression is unlike anything American women have faced. Unlike women, however, men don't organize and form groups when they've been persecuted. They just bow out of the game.
>
> America needs to wake up. We have swung the pendulum too far in the other direction—from a man's world to a woman's world.
>
> That's not equality. That's revenge.

It's not just the American White Male who sees these problems. I am an American Brown

Male, and I have the same problems.

Is she right that men and women commit domestic violence equally? That's not what we are told in school and in the media, but let's look at the studies and see.

Studies on domestic violence

Let's see what's happening with domestic violence rates in the UK.

Excerpt:

> Data from Home Office statistical bulletins and the British Crime Survey show that men made up about 40% of domestic violence victims each year between 2004-05 and 2008-09, the last year for which figures are available. In 2006-07 men made up 43.4% of all those who had suffered partner abuse in the previous year, which rose to 45.5% in 2007-08 but fell to 37.7% in 2008-09.
>
> Similar or slightly larger numbers of men were subjected to severe force in an incident with their partner, according to the same documents. The figure stood at 48.6% in 2006-07, 48.3% the next year and 37.5% in 2008-09, Home Office statistics show.
>
> The 2008-09 bulletin states: "More than one in four women (28%) and around one in six men (16%) had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16. These figures are equivalent to an estimated 4.5 million female victims of domestic abuse and 2.6 million male victims."
>
> In addition, "6% of women and 4% of men reported having experienced domestic abuse in the past year, equivalent to an estimated one million female victims of domestic abuse and 600,000 male victims".

And the numbers from the government of Canada are the same.

Canada numbers:

> An estimated 7% of women and 6% of men in a current or previous spousal relationship encountered spousal violence during the five years up to and including 2004, according to a comprehensive new report on family violence.

So it's pretty even. Women are about as likely to commit violence as men are. And in lesbian relationships, the rate of domestic violence is extremely high, from 17% to 45%, depending on the study. I think in general, women are more violent when there is no man present, because they have more difficulty restraining their emotions and resolving disagreements with rational arguments instead of fist, feet and weapons.

You also see higher rates of violence by mothers against their own children, than with fathers. Mothers are more than twice as likely to abuse children as fathers. Biological fathers are programmed to protect children – it's the stepfathers and live-in boyfriends who harm children. In fact, one of the roles of the father in the marriage is to restrain the woman's outbursts and anger so that the children are not harmed, and to protect them from threats from outside the home, too.

The negative perception of men deters men from marrying

I am very conscious of the perception that women have of men these days. Instead of looking to men for leadership, the presumption is that our role is to entertain women. And not to make judgments or claims of knowledge. The worst part is that most women don’t know and don’t care about how men are perceived today. I think that is the worst problem for me with wanting to get married. I just don’t believe that there are any women out there who are really looking for a husband in the traditional sense of the word, and with the traditional male roles. The negative perception of men and the way that women prefer men who are non-judgmental, non-religious and ignorant are two major reasons why I personally am cold about marriage.

The real story in the Trayvon Martin George Zimmerman trial is media bias

July 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an excellent article by John Nolte on Breitbart that documents the mainstream media's efforts to make a crisis out of an open-and-shut case of self-defense.

Here are a few of the distortions from the mainstream media: (links removed)

> **March 21, 2012 – CNN Falsely Accuses Zimmerman of Saying "#censoredByWK#"**
>
> Knowing full well the phony racial storm brewing around the Zimmerman case was about to have gasoline thrown on it the next day, CNN went to extraordinary lengths to claim Zimmerman had uttered the racial slur "#censoredByWK#" when he had not.
>
> This has to be watched to be believed.
>
> CNN wouldn't officially retract their defamation until April 5th, long after it was too late.
>
> **March 27, 2012 – NBC News Edits 911 Audio to Make Zimmerman Look Racist**
>
> On the storied *Today Show*, NBC News told America Zimmerman said this on the 911 call:
>
> ZIMMERMAN: This guy looks like he's up to no good. He looks black.
>
> When the truth is that the unedited audio actually went like this:
>
> ZIMMERMAN: This guy looks like he's up to no good, or he's on drugs or something. It's raining and he's just walking around, looking about.
>
> DISPATCHER: Okay. And this guy, is he white, black, or Hispanic?
>
> ZIMMERMAN: He looks black.
>
> After the fraudulent editing was discovered by the New Media (first by Breitbart News), former NBC News president Steve Capus would claim that the edit was "a mistake and not a deliberate act to misrepresent the phone call."
>
> Eventually, several NBC producers would be fired (without being named), and Zimmerman would file a lawsuit against NBC; it remains unresolved.
>
> **March 28, 2012 – ABC News Falsely Claims Zimmerman Wasn't Injured Night of Shooting**
>
> The day after NBC News released its falsified 911 bombshell, ABC News released a phony, hyped-up story of its own. Using grainy surveillance video of Zimmerman at the police station on the night of the shooting, ABC News claimed, "A police surveillance video taken the night that Trayvon Martin was shot dead

> shows no blood or bruises on George Zimmerman."
>
> Obviously, if true, this would go a long way towards proving Zimmerman was not in fear of his life the night of the shooting and had lied about being beaten up.
>
> The only problem is that the ABC News story was not true — not even close. The network didn't bother to enhance the video before breaking the news. Had they, Zimmerman'sbloody head would have been quite apparent.
>
> It would take four days for ABC to retract its falsehood.

Now just compare the biased coverage of the Zimmerman case with the non-coverage of the Gosnell case, where a black abortionist was murdering unborn and born children left, right and center for years.

As John Lott argued, there should not even have been a trial:

> The case was so weak that the local Sanford District Attorney refused to bring charges against Zimmerman. That is why, on the orders of the governor, an outside District Attorney, Angela Corey, had to be brought in to handle it.
>
> Sanford Police Chief Bill Lee was fired because he also refused to charge Zimmerman with a crime.
>
> Even the lead detective on the case, Christopher Serino, told the jury he believed Zimmerman's version of the events.

If the media was really concerned about violence against blacks, then they would be concerned about black-on-black violence.

Look at this article from the leftist UK Guardian.

Excerpt:

> Startling statistics reveal that between 1980-2008, African-Americans were six times more likely than whites to be victims of gun violence and seven times more likely to kill with guns than whites, according to the Justice Department. African-Americans represent a mere 13% of the US population yet more than 50% of federal prisoners are black. You can claim racial bias in the judicial system, but that doesn't explain all of it.
>
> Why aren't so-called black leaders outraged and marching over the recent shooting rampage in Chicago. During the 4 July holiday weekend, including the Wednesday leading up to it, 62 people were wounded by gun violence in Chicago and 12 others killed. The holiday shooting spree raised Chicago's homicide tally to 200 for the year. Last year about 500 people were killed, and most of those killing and being killed in Chicago are black. According to the Chicago Tribune, "blacks make up about 33% of the city's population, they accounted for nearly 78% of the homicide victims through the first six months of 2012".
>
> With the mainstream media's national attention on the Zimmerman murder trail,

> I think it’s stunning that scant, if any, attention was given to the violence raging in Chicago or other cities across the country. As I’ve said many times during this case, Americans, especially black Americans, have come to accept blacks killing other blacks as normal.

Why does the mainstream media have nothing to say about that? Why does the black community have nothing to say about that? The real cause of violent crime is fatherlessness, but the left is in favor of promoting and subsidizing fatherlessness, so they’re not going to say a word against it. Single mothers are one of the left’s main constituencies come election time. It’s disgusting that they want to prop up single mothers who make poor choices with men. Not to mention protecting the failed public school system and attacking vouchers that would help black children out of poverty. And not to mention the epidemic of abortion in the black community. Children deserve better than abortion, public schools and fatherlessness. But to help children, we have to start being honest about the causes of their real problems.

By the way, I have to point out that I am not white. I have brown skin. I have darker skin that Barack Obama. But unlike the mainstream media, when I see evil, I call it evil, regardless of people’s skin color. The mainstream media is not interested in telling the truth. They are interested in creating divisions based on skin color. They are the real racists. They are the real destroyers.

This was nothing but a circus of media bias. See this related post for academic studies that document left-wing media bias.

A closer look at the hook-up culture at the University of Pennsylvania

July 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stuart Schneiderman linked to a balanced article from the New York Times Magazine which offers scary insights into the hook-up culture at one of our elite universities.

First, feminism is definitely a driver of the hook-up culture, and women are voluntarily choosing it:

> At 11 on a weeknight earlier this year, her work finished, a slim, pretty junior at the University of Pennsylvania did what she often does when she has a little free time. She texted her regular hookup — the guy she is sleeping with but not dating. What was he up to? He texted back: Come over. So she did. They watched a little TV, had sex and went to sleep.
>
> Their relationship, she noted, is not about the meeting of two souls.
>
> "We don't really like each other in person, sober," she said, adding that "we literally can't sit down and have coffee."
>
> Ask her why she hasn't had a relationship at Penn, and she won't complain about the death of courtship or men who won't commit. Instead, she'll talk about "cost-benefit" analyses and the "low risk and low investment costs" of hooking up.
>
> "I positioned myself in college in such a way that I can't have a meaningful romantic relationship, because I'm always busy and the people that I am interested in are always busy, too," she said.
>
> "And I know everyone says, 'Make time, make time,' " said the woman, who spoke on the condition of anonymity but agreed to be identified by her middle initial, which is A. "But there are so many other things going on in my life that I find so important that I just, like, can't make time, and I don't want to make time."
>
> It is by now pretty well understood that traditional dating in college has mostly gone the way of the landline, replaced by "hooking up" — an ambiguous term that can signify anything from making out to oral sex to intercourse — without the emotional entanglement of a relationship.
>
> Until recently, those who studied the rise of hookup culture had generally assumed that it was driven by men, and that women were reluctant participants, more interested in romance than in casual sexual encounters. But there is an increasing realization that young women are propelling it, too.
>
> Hanna Rosin, in her recent book, "The End of Men," argues that hooking up is a functional strategy for today's hard-charging and ambitious young women, allowing them to have enjoyable sex lives while focusing most of their energy on academic and professional goals.

And a bit more about “A”:

> For A., college is an endless series of competitions: to get into student clubs, some of which demand multiple rounds of interviews; to be selected for special research projects and the choicest internships; and, in the end, to land the most elite job offers.
>
> As A. explained her schedule, “If I’m sober, I’m working.”
>
> In such an overburdened college life, she said, it was rare for her and her friends to find a relationship worth investing time in, **and many people avoided commitment because they assumed that someone better would always come along.**
>
> “We are very aware of cost-benefit issues and trading up and trading down, so no one wants to be too tied to someone that, you know, may not be the person they want to be with in a couple of months,” she said.
>
> Instead, she enjoyed casual sex on her terms — often late at night, after a few drinks, and never at her place, she noted, because then she would have to wash the sheets.
>
> […]“‘I’ve always heard this phrase, ‘Oh, marriage is great, or relationships are great — you get to go on this journey of change together,’ ” she said. “That sounds terrible.
>
> “I don’t want to go through those changes with you. I want you to have changed and become enough of your own person so that when you meet me, we can have a stable life and be very happy.”
>
> In the meantime, from A.’s perspective, she was in charge of her own sexuality.
>
> “I definitely wouldn’t say I’ve regretted any of my one-night stands,” she said.
>
> “I’m a true feminist,” she added. “I’m a strong woman. I know what I want.”
>
> At the same time, she didn’t want the number of people she had slept with printed, and she said it was important to her to keep her sexual life separate from her image as a leader at Penn.
>
> “Ten years from now, no one will remember — I will not remember — who I have slept with,” A. said. “But I will remember, like, my transcript, because it’s still there. I will remember what I did. I will remember my accomplishments and places my name is hung on campus.”

These high-powered feminist students are having sex with strangers because they are “hot”, not because they are in love or because the man is marriage-enabled.

I think the key point about this is that these women think that they are actually on a path to marriage by focusing on themselves and their careers. Their alcohol abuse is a path to marriage. Their promiscuity with bad boy men who have no interest in marriage is a path to marriage. Their career and selfishness is a path to marriage. This despite the fact that research clearly shows that the number of sexual partners that a woman has before

marrying directly impacts her ability to perform in a relationship. It raises her expectations of who she thinks she is entitled to while diminishing her ability to perform marriage obligations for a marriage-minded man.

Nothing that these women are doing is preparation for actual commitment and support. They can't even converse with men, much less do the duties of a wife. Their ability to choose a man who can perform actual husband/father duties is not being formed by study or courtship. There is no wisdom. There is no self-sacrifice. There is no chastity. There is no support. There is no communication. These women are pro-abortion – that's their view of the rights and dignity of children. They are pro-gay marriage – that's their view of providing for children's relationship needs. These are literally the worst women in the world to marry. Their ignorance of what they must do to be good wives and mothers, and their messed up criteria for choosing men who can be husband and fathers makes them the worst women in the world to marry.

Read this carefully:

> Some women went to college wanting a relationship, but when that seemed unlikely, they embraced hooking up as the best alternative. M., an athletic freshman with long legs and a button nose, arrived at college a virgin and planned to wait to have sex until she had her first boyfriend, something she expected to happen in college. But over the course of the fall, as she saw very few students forming relationships, she began to lose hope about finding a boyfriend and to see her virginity as a hindrance.
>
> "I could be here for four years and not date anyone," she said she realized. "Sometimes you are out, and there's a guy you really are attracted to, and you kind of want to go back home with him, but you kind of have that underlying, 'I can't, because I can't just lose my V-card to some random guy.' "
>
> At a party in the spring semester, she was taking a break from dancing when she ran into a guy she had had a class with in the fall. They started talking, then danced until the party was over. M. went back to his room, where they talked some more and then started making out.
>
> By this time, she said, "I wasn't very drunk — I was close to sober," which made her believe she could make a considered decision.
>
> "I'm like, 'O.K., I could do this now,' " she recalled thinking. " 'He's superhot, I like him, he's nice. But I'm not going to expect anything out of it, either.' "
>
> The alternative, she said, was that "I could take the chance that one night I get really drunk and sleep with someone that I don't want to sleep with, which probably is what would have ended up happening."
>
> So she had sex with him. In the morning, he walked her home.
>
> "Honestly, all of my friends, they're super envious, because I came back with the biggest smile on my face," M. said. As she had expected, she and the guy remained friendly but nothing more. Yet she was still happy with her decision.

> “All of my friends are jealous, because I had such a great first experience,” she added. Over spring break, she slept with someone else.
>
> In general, she said, she thought that guys at Penn controlled the hookup culture. But women played a role as well.
>
> “It’s kind of like a spiral,” she said. “The girls adapt a little bit, because they stop expecting that they’re going to get a boyfriend — because if that’s all you’re trying to do, you’re going to be miserable. But at the same time, they want to, like, have contact with guys.” So they hook up and “try not to get attached.”
>
> Now, she said, she and her best friend had changed their romantic goals, from finding boyfriends to finding “hookup buddies,” which she described as “a guy that we don’t actually really like his personality, but we think is really attractive and hot and good in bed.”

I think I would really like everyone reading this to just read that over a few times, and let that sink in. You have a minority of good looking athletic men having sex with most of the women on campus, while the majority of men who opt-out of the hook-up culture and want to court and marry are left wondering where all the women went. And many of those will reinvent themselves as “bad boys” in order to at least get some contact with women, so that there are even fewer chaste, marriage-enabled men.

So, what are we seeing? We are seeing that women think of extra-marital sex as a form of recreation. When I was a student, I completed a Bachelor degree and Masters degree, both in computer science, and this is what I saw women doing. There was no interest in courting or marriage whatsoever, and no concern about preserving chastity or courting effectively with the goal of marriage. They did not want to hear about moral values, moral obligations, theological debates or apologetics. They were all into feeling good and being popular – a popularity facilitated by “hooking up” with good-looking promiscuous athletes.

I really recommend reading some of Dr. Schneiderman’s comments on this article. He is really not happy about it, and he puts the blame squarely on feminists. As do I. Radical feminism is the ideology that gave us abortion, fatherlessness and divorce come from. We should call it what it is: selfish and destructive.

Update: Nancy P. posted a link to this rebuttal to the NYT article on Facebook to talk me down from the ledge.

Quote:

> The article somehow overlooked a recent survey of 3,907 students that found only 1 in 10 people in college said they had had casual sex in college, with men being twice as likely as women to have such an encounter. Or that at a comparable Ivy League school, Harvard University, two-thirds of the class of 2013 said in a survey they had two or fewer sexual partners during college.

That’s good data that does calm me down a little.

Related posts

- John Hawkins of Right Wing News interviews Dr. Helen Smith about Men On Strike
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?
- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships
- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste

Jim Spiegel: the free will theodicy and the soul-making theodicy

July 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting post about two of the better known defenses to the problem of evil, from philosopher Jim Spiegel.

Here is his introduction:

> The evidential problem of evil presents the theist with the burden of explaining why an almighty and all-good God would permit evil. Many such reasons, known as theodicies, have been proposed as solutions to this problem. Two of the more promising among these are the free will theodicy and the soul-making theodicy. While each of these approaches has strong proponents, rare are those who advocate the use of bothin response to the problem of evil. In fact, it is often the case that defenders of one are strong critics of the other. Given that theists, and more specifically Christian apologists, share the conviction that the evidential objection from evil fails and that theism is quite reasonable despite the reality of evil, it is curious that there isn't more interest in embracing both of these theodicies as helpful responses to the problem. In what follows I want to offer a comparative analysis of these two theodicies in hopes of both understanding the divide between their proponents and making the case that the two are best used in tandem when dealing with the problem of evil. Towards the latter end I hope to show that these theodicies have more in common than has been traditionally thought and that their differences have more to do with their divergent aims than their relative merits as potential solutions to the problem of evil.

I am not going to be able to summarize his entire case in this post, but I at least wanted everyone to know what the two theodicies were. In the case of the free will theodicy, evil is permitted because without it we could not have free will. And free will is necessary in order to achieve certain higher moral goods.

Dr. Spiegel explains:

> First, this theodicy places the blame for moral evil entirely on human beings. God did nothing wrong in creating us with the capacity to sin, however much he might have anticipated our rebellion. Second, notice the high premium that is placed on self-determination. Proponents of the free will theodicy typically assume that personal autonomy is so valuable that it makes the risk of moral evil worthwhile. But it is not really self-determination itself that is of ultimate value. The ultimate good for which such autonomy is a critical means is genuine loving relationships between persons, whether between humans or between God and humans.

And here is his explanation of the soul-making theodicy:

> Defenders of the soul-making theodicy point out that there are numerous moral virtues that cannot be achieved except by struggling against or in the midst of evil. These “second order” goods include patience, courage, sympathy, forgiveness, mercy, perseverance, overcoming temptation, and much greater versions of faith, hope, love, and friendship. What sense could be made of the trait of courage in a world in which there was no danger and nothing to fear? How could one show sympathy if there were no sorrow or affliction with which to sympathize? How might one forgive where there has been no offense? And how can one be said to “persevere” through perfectly pleasant circumstances? These characteristics-courage, sympathy, forgiveness, perseverance-are not just good traits. They are, among the greatest of all character traits. And, according to Hick and other proponents of the soul-making theodicy, it is worth God’s permitting evil in order to realize these goods.

I’m going to confess my ignorance and say that I always used both of these when discussing the problems of evil and suffering. It never occurred to me that they would be in conflict. So I enjoyed reading the rest of the paper where Dr. Spiegel argues that far from being in conflict, the two are actually dependent on each other! The discussion of the two kinds of theodicies is actually really good for understanding the details of them. I think it’s going to be worth for me to read it over a few times and then explain it to someone else, so that I really get it straight. I just have to find a willing victim to listen while I work it through.

Dennis Prager interviews Stephen C. Meyer about intelligent design

July 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This episode of the Dennis Prager show is actually from the day that "Darwin's Doubt" came out. Darwin's Doubt is the new book on the sudden origin of animal body plans in the fossil record. Dennis had previously interviewed Dr. Meyer about his first book "Signature in the Cell", which was about the origin of life. I listen to the Dennis Prager show every day, if work permits. It's the only radio show I listen to regularly.

The MP3 file is here. (32 minutes)

Summary:

- What did Darwin have a doubt about? What is the Cambrian explosion?
- The mystery of the missing precursor fossil record for the Cambrian animals
- The mystery of the origin of all of the new body plans that appeared in the Cambrian explosion
- The problem of building a new animal is basically the problem of adding new code
- Mutations generally don't improve the quality of code but intelligent agents do improve it
- Do paleontologists acknowledge these problems? What is their solution to these problems?
- A new book by non-ID paleontologists Douglas and Valentine admits the two problems
- They argue that no known mechanism exists to explain the origin of these animal forms
- What has the reaction to Darwin's Doubt been from paleontologists?
- Stephen J. Gould's punctuated equilibrium theory: the fossil record shows stasis and jumps
- But Gould's theory did not propose a mechanism adequate to explain the stasis and jumps
- Caller Bob: what good is partial function? Why would an organism keep half-an-eye around?
- Meyer: exquisite organs in the Cambrian animals also come into being suddenly
- Is the book understandable by lay people? Could Dennis Prager understand it?
- Critiques of naturalistic attempts to explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian animal forms
- The Cambrian explosion is an explosion of information: where did it come from?
- Illustrating probabilities with combination locks: the product rule
- The search for the combination to the lock is bounded by the time available
- There is not unlimited time to generate this new biological information
- Prager: how can science conclude that a non-material explanation is the best

explanation?
- Meyer: Darwin used the method of “inference to the best explanation” in his theory
- the book uses the same method of investigation that Darwin used
- the best explanation for the explosion of new information is an intelligent agent
- we are already familiar with intelligent causes creating information – we do it all the time
- information can be speech, writing, coding, etc., which human intelligence does all the time
- Prager: is the method of inferring an intelligent cause for this Cambrian data “creationism”?
- Meyer: ID is based on scientific evidence
- Meyer: Creationism is an interpretation or deduction from religious authority
- Meyer: ID is agnostic on the age of the Earth, Creationism requires a young Earth
- Caller Marty: life could have been brought here on asteroids
- Meyer: we don’t have evidence to assess whether an alien intelligence was responsible
- Meyer: the theistic explanation is better because of the cosmology and fine-tuning arguments

It’s very important for Christians to broaden out philosophical and historical arguments with scientific evidence. Most of the people reading this post are familiar with the Big Bang cosmology and the fine-tuning arguments. But the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion are two more areas that we all need to be aware of as much as we can. It probably wouldn’t hurt to be familiar with the galactic and stellar habitability arguments made by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Richards, too. That’s a good half-dozen scientific arguments, which is 6 more than any atheist you meet is likely to have. Why go about unarmed when the scientific data is right there waiting for you? Fill your hands.

Note: if you think that these books might be too difficult for you, then by all means pick up these three intelligent design DVDs for about $18. That will cover the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion and both habitability arguments. You can get a good look at the Big Bang and fine-tuning arguments in this lecture by Dr. William Lane Craig delivered at the University of Colorado (Boulder). If you want to see those two arguments presented in a debate, then get Dr. Craig’s debate with atheist Christopher Hitchens on DVD for $11. Everybody reading this post should own those DVDs so you can show them to other people and change minds.

Related posts

- Darwin’s Doubt will debut at #7 on the New York Times Hardcover Nonfiction Bestseller List
- Stephen C. Meyer discusses his new book “Darwin’s Doubt” on the Michael Medved show
- Thinking Christian reviews “Darwin’s Doubt”, a new book by Stephen C. Meyer
- Three reasons to read “Darwin’s Doubt”, the sequel to Signature in the Cell

Three labor union leaders write letter to Democrats attacking Obamacare

July 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> The roll out of President Obama's health care reform package was always going to be tricky, with vehement opposition from his political opponents and pushback from employers large and small. But after announcing last week that penalties for companies failing to comply with the law will be delayed by a year, the Affordable Care Act has a new, high profile set of dissenters: Unions.
>
> The leaders of three major U.S. unions, including the highly influential Teamsters, have sent a scathing open letter to Democratic leaders in Congress, warning that unless changes are made, President Obama's health care reform plan will "destroy the foundation of the 40 hour work week that is the backbone of the American middle class."
>
> If that's not bad enough, the Affordable Care Act, if not modified, will "destroy the very health and wellbeing of our members along with millions of other hardworking Americans," the letter says.

Here's one part from the letter than I think is worth posting:

> When you and the President sought our support for the Affordable Care Act (ACA), you pledged that if we liked the health plans we have now, we could keep them. Sadly, that promise is under threat. Right now, unless you and the Obama Administration enact an equitable fix, the ACA will shatter not only our hard-earned health benefits, but destroy the foundation of the 40 hour work week that is the backbone of the American middle class.
>
> [..]First, the law creates an incentive for employers to keep employees' work hours below 30 hours a week. Numerous employers have begun to cut workers' hours to avoid this obligation, and many of them are doing so openly. The impact is two-fold: fewer hours means less pay while also losing our current health benefits.

Of course, when the unions were busy lobbying for the passage of Obamacare, conservative voices were talking about all of these defects in the law, and more besides. But the unions weren't listening. Labor unions just don't understand economics, and that's why people need to be careful about taking their advice on economic issues.

Teen heroes rescue abducted child in Lancaster, Pennsylvania

July 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a great hero story from Lancaster Online.

Excerpt:

> [Temar] Boggs, a McCaskey freshman who lives in Gable Park Woods, had been hanging out with a friend at nearby Lancaster Arms apartments and helping move a couch when a man came by asking if they'd seen a missing girl.
>
> They hadn't, Boggs said, so they went to watch TV.
>
> A short time later, his friend went outside and saw lots of police officers and people from the neighborhood looking for the girl.
>
> Police said that the girl had been taken that afternoon from the 100 block of Jennings Drive.
>
> Boggs and about six friends joined the search.
>
> […][Boggs] and another friend, Chris Garcia, rode on area streets — Michelle Drive, St. Phillips Drive, Gable Park Road — looking for her.
>
> That's when a maroon car caught his eye. (He had gotten a bit ahead of Garcia.)
>
> The car was on Gable Park and turned around when it got near the top of a hill toward Millersville Pike, where Boggs said several police officers were gathered with the kind of cart used to carry an injured football player off the field.
>
> The driver, an older white man, then began quickly turning onto and out of side streets connecting to Gable Park, Boggs said.
>
> The neighborhood is something of a maze; many of its streets are cul-de-sacs.
>
> Boggs got close enough to the car to see a little girl inside. Garcia was nearby.
>
> The driver looked at Boggs and Garcia, then stopped the car at Gable Park and Betz Farm Road and pushed the girl out of the car. The driver then drove off, Boggs said.
>
> Boggs said he didn't see where the car went.
>
> "She runs to my arms and said, 'I need to see my mommy,' " Boggs said.
>
> Boggs scooped the girl onto his shoulders and began riding the bike toward home, but then decided that wasn't safe, so he carried her and walked back while Garcia pedaled along, guiding the bike Boggs had been using.
>
> Back at Lancaster Arms, when Boggs and Garcia arrived with the girl, someone summoned a firefighter or law enforcement officer.
>
> Boggs said the girl was reluctant to leave him and go to the official.
>
> "She didn't want to leave me because she thought they were going to do

> something to her. I said, ‘No, it’s OK,’ ” he said.
> […]Boggs doesn’t see himself as a hero.
> “I’m just a normal person who did a thing that anybody else would do,” he said.

That’s a good positive story of young men being heroic.

Bro-Choice: understanding the motivations of the pro-choice man-child

July 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ben Sherman: man-child

Ask the Bigot first alerted me to a post by a pro-abortion male (not man, male) in which he explains why males such as himself favor abortion.

Now the context of this post is the Texas bill banning abortions after 20 weeks.

Here's the point I want to focus on:

> How #HB2 Hurts Straight Texas Men
>
> Your sex life is at stake
>
> Can you think of anything that kills the vibe faster than a woman fearing a back-alley abortion? Making abortion essentially inaccessible in Texas will add an anxiety to sex that will drastically undercut its joys. **And don't be surprised if casual sex outside of relationships becomes far more difficult to come by.**
> It's clear: if the Legislature basically takes away a Texas woman's right to choose, having sex becomes a much, much riskier proposition for women and men.

Now let's see what AtB thinks of this. She writes:

> Hey Ben. BRO! Sex is not primarily recreational and women's bodies don't exist to serve your every-72-hours-discharge needs. Sex has life-creating properties, and this bill will make it harder for you to separate that reality from your weekend hook-ups.
>
> (An aside. LADIES. You are a fool to chance a lifetime connection with a man-child of this caliber. You and your future children deserve MUCH better. Free love has done so much damage to women and children. Sex without consequences makes us women exactly what we claim we don't want to be. Objectified,

> disrespected and used.)
>
> Unfortunately for you, Bro, the Texas House approved HB2 this morning. Much to the silent rejoicing of the in-utero babies created in your "relationships with women that may have lasted anywhere from a few minutes to many years," you might now have to act like a real man by living for someone other than yourself. Or perhaps, at least, stop treating women as sperm depositories.
>
> I know that this legislation puts your Peter Pan lifestyle at risk. But look at the bright side. If your sexual expression is limited by this legislation, you could always move to one of the 49 states where unfettered infanticide paves the way for your never-ending, hedonistic sexual "freedom and choice".

So this post by the man-child explains why pro-abortion men are pro-abortion. They basically think that they should be allowed to have recreational sex with a woman without having to deal with the consequences of their own actions. They think that it is OK to kill an innocent child aged 20 weeks or more in order to keep the flow of consequence-free recreational sex flowing. They think it's OK to motivate women to give then free recreational sex by using abortion as a form of birth control. Pro-abortion men think that it's OK to legalize what Kermit Gosnell was doing to women after 20 weeks, so that women continue to give them recreational sex without having to love and serve women in a lifelong commitment. Ben Sherman is the beneficiary of Kermit Gosnell's practice. Kermit Gosnell is Ben's enabler.

Before I go any further, let me say that according to the latest Gallup poll, more men are pro-life than not, and more women are pro-abortion than not. Young unmarried women are especially likely to vote for abortion and gay marriage (about 75% voted for Obama). This man-child Ben Sherman is the exception to the way that men normally are, while women on the other hand are more likely to agree with his conclusions about unborn children. Most young, unmarried women vote the way Ben Sherman votes. Let's get that clear. This man-child is the exception to the way men normally are.

My real concern about the man-child's point of view is this. How is it even possible that a woman would come within 10 feet of a man who said such a thing? It seems to me that women ought to prefer relationships with good men who have a worldview that grounds responsibility over hedonism. Women ought to prefer men who want to take responsibility for the well-being of others over the long term. Women ought to prefer men who want to protect the innocent and the weak. That sort of moral character used to be highly prized by women. Now they just seem to want "nice" – meaning inoffensive and entertaining.

When a man like Ben Sherman says what he said, it really makes me wonder about what women who choose him for sex are thinking about. When a woman pays attention to a man, she endorses his worldview. And vice versa. If women stopped talking to selfish, immoral men like Ben Sherman, then there would be no abortion. The man thinks that babies should die so that he can have a good time with no strings attached. He doesn't want to have to deal with the needs of others, he would rather use them for pleasure and then kill them when they stop pleasing him. Is that attractive in a man? Ben Sherman

continues in his views because some women are rewarding him with sex.

Abortion plays right into the hands of men who want to use women merely for sex. Legal abortion = more casual sex for men without the inconvenience of a relationship where they might need to think of the woman as a person instead of a means to sexual pleasure. I am concerned by the trend away from formal courtship towards anonymous hook-up sex. Abortion is definitely one of the reasons why that is happening. If the group of women who give men sex without commitment grows, it will put even more pressure on women who want marriage to do things the right way. It gets harder and harder for marriage-minded women to hold out as sex without commitment leads to sex without any meaningful communication. We need to push back against the trend to treat women as objects, and women have a role to play in that: they can refuse pro-abortion men.

UPDATE: Another reaction here from my pro-life friend Neil Simpson.

Panama seizes shipment of missile guidance equipment from Cuba bound for North Korea

July 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

RSN-75 Radar for SA-2 SAM
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Cuba, long derided in international policy circles as a basket case and no threat to the U.S., has been caught smuggling weapons of war to North Korea in blatant violation of U.N. sanctions. This is a wake-up call.
>
> Sharp-eyed Panamanian authorities, watching the North Korean freighter Chong Chon Gang since June, received intelligence it might be shipping illegal drugs, something it had been caught doing before.
>
> As the vessel lumbered into the Atlantic side of the Panama Canal from Cuba, Panamanian authorities cornered the 450-foot rust-bucket, battled a maniacally violent crew who slashed ship lines to make it hard to unload the ship, and then watched as the ship's captain tried to kill himself before having a heart attack.
>
> After subduing the crew, the Panamanians found no drugs buried beneath sloppily packed brown sugar, but did find defensive RSN-75 "Fan Song" fire-control radar equipment for SA-2 surface-to-air missiles.
>
> The discovery, and the crew's behavior, were signs of something big the North Koreans didn't want known — weapons smuggling, a violation of both United Nations sanctions prohibiting all sales of weapons to North Korea and Panama's own laws governing the canal.
>
> "You cannot go around shipping undeclared weapons of war through the Panama Canal," declared Panamanian President Ricardo Martinelli, a U.S. ally, who

> tweeted a photo of the illegal shipment for the world to see.
>
> It’s significant that the enabler of this violation of international law was none other than Cuba, which has worked hard to convince the Obama administration to drop all travel and trade sanctions against it — and which is currently negotiating a migration pact with the U.S. It’s time to stop that right now, and sanction Cuba further.
>
> The brazen shipment of Russian-made weapons through Panama signaled that little has changed in Cuba — a state sponsor of global terror that has in fact been trying to destroy the U.S. since 1962.
>
> “This is a serious and alarming incident that reminds us that the North Korean regime continues to pursue its nuclear and ballistic programs, and will stop at nothing in that pursuit,” said House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee Chairwoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. “It also illustrates that the Castro tyranny continues to aid and abet America’s enemies and continues to pose a national security threat to the United States so long as the Castro apparatchik holds control over the island.”
>
> It’s also the work of a rogue state. And at just 90 miles away, one that is as chillingly close to our shores as it is warm and friendly to North Korea.
>
> […]Although it’s unknown why North Korea, a major weapons exporter, is importing weapons from Cuba right now, defense analysts speculate that the weapons may be making their way back to Pyongyang for an upgrade and return to Cuba.
>
> That would be worrisome given that North Korea has said it means to strike the U.S. on its own home turf. What better launching pad could it ask for than Cuba?
>
> Two weeks ago, North Korea’s military commander visited Cuba to a red-carpet welcome. The visit raises questions as to what the two discussed — and, given the threat we see now, whether U.S. intelligence was aware of it.

If there is one thing that the United States definitely should not do, it’s dropping sanctions against Cuba.

Greg Koukl: six things you have to believe to be a Christian

July 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the article on the Stand to Reason web site describing essential Christian beliefs. Excerpt:

> The six essential doctrines would be: the Trinity, the deity and humanity of Christ, the bodily resurrection, man's fallenness and guilt, salvation by grace through faith by the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, and belief that Jesus is the Messiah. And you have a seventh doctrine that strikes me as a functional necessity, that is the ultimate authority of Scripture without which none of the other truths can be affirmed or asserted with confidence.
>
> By the way, it's really important that people know these doctrines because many Christians are quite kind-hearted and they end up not being very careful about drawing distinctions between truth and falsity because they don't want to disagree. I understand that. But if you were really kind-hearted then you would be honest and straight-forward with people about the demands of the gospel on their lives. The demand of the gospel is that you believe particular things to be true. It's not just a matter of mere belief, as if these are just some incidental details of theology that you might happen to be mistaken about. And if you just happen to be mistaken, why should you go to hell because of that?
>
> You don't go to hell because you just happen to mistake a doctrine. You go to hell because you have broken God's law. It is very critical to understand that. God only judges guilty people. People get judged by God not because they mess up on their theology but because they are guilty. People who are guilty get condemned. That's it. There is a way to get around that but you've to know a couple of particular things that are true before you can take advantage of the forgiveness God offers. That's where the essential doctrines come in.

I think it's a good thing to go back and refresh ourselves on the basics of the gospel once in a while, and this article does a pretty good job of doing that in a basic, understandable way. I'm posting this for some of the non-Christians I know who ask me questions like this rather than apologetics questions. Sometimes people just want to ask what I believe, and not how I know what I believe. Well, this is what I believe.

How brief was the period in which the Cambrian phyla suddenly appeared?

July 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Cambrian explosion refers to the sudden appearance of new body plans in the fossil record. ID proponents think that the period is between 5-10 million years at the most. Naturalists want to stretch out the period in which the body plans appear to tens of millions of years. The two sides can't both be right. What's the truth?

Evolution News has the answer.

Excerpt:

> To establish the length of the most explosive period of innovation within the Cambrian explosion itself, Meyer cites the work of MIT geochronologist Samuel Bowring and his colleagues as well the work of another group led by Smithsonian paleontologist Douglas Erwin. The Bowring-led study showed that (in their words) "the main period of **exponential diversification**" within the Cambrian lasted "only 5-6 million years" (emphasis added). Meyer explains:

> An analysis by MIT geochronologist Samuel Bowring has shown that the main pulse of Cambrian morphological innovation occurred in a sedimentary sequence spanning no more than 6 million years. Yet during this time representatives of at least sixteen completely novel phyla and about thirty classes first appeared in the rock record. In a more recent paper using a slightly different dating scheme, Douglas Erwin and colleagues similarly show that thirteen new phyla appear in a roughly 6-million-year window. (p. 73)

> […][T]ake a look first at the following figure that Bowring and his colleagues included in their definitive 1993 article, published in the journal Science. They use radiometric methods to date the different stages of the Cambrian period, including the crucial Tommotian and Atdabanian stages in which the greatest number of new animal phyla and classes arise. Note that the so-called Manykaian stage of the Cambrian period lasts about 10-14 million years. Note also that the main pulse of morphological innovation didn't begin during this stage but rather during the Tommotian and Atdabanian — a period that they describe as taking between "5 to 10 million years," and in a more detailed passage as taking about 5-6 million years.

> […]In the figure above, the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages of the Cambrian period together span only about 5 million years, starting at about 530 and ending about 525 million years ago. Bowring's figure also depicts the total number of classes and orders present at any given time during the Cambrian period. The biggest increases in morphological innovation occur during the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages. Indeed, during this period the number of known orders nearly

> quadruples. Moreover, Bowring and his colleagues also make clear that this period corresponds to the main pulse of Cambrian morphological innovation as measured by the number of new phyla and classes that first appear. They note that, while a few groups of animals do arise in the earliest Manykaian stage of the Cambrian, the most rapid period of "exponential increase of diversification," corresponding to the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages, "lasted only 5 to 6 m.y."

You can see the figure they are reference in the Evolution News article.

Also, check out these clips that explain the Cambrian explosion:

Part 1:

Part 2:

The first clip features James Valentine, a professor of biology at the University of California who just co-authored a new book on the Cambrian explosion and *is not* a proponent of intelligent design.

The consensus among scientists regarding the period of time *in which the new body plans appear* is 5-6 million years. Biologically speaking, that's a blink of an eye. You aren't going that kind of complexity and innovation in such a short period of time any more than you can expect to win the lottery by buying 5-6 million tickets when the odds of winning are 1 in a googol (10 to the 100th power – 1, followed by 100 zeroes). You don't have enough lottery tickets to make winning the lottery likely. Similarly, 5-6 million years is not enough time for naturalistic mechanisms to code brand new body plans from scratch. It would be like trying to research and write a Ph.D thesis during a single lunch hour. It's just not enough time to produce the amount of information that's required.

Related posts

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DOJ won't prosecute government officials for unauthorized access of tax records

July 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Washington Times reports on a story of government tyranny.

Excerpt:

> A government watchdog has found for the first time that confidential tax records of several political candidates and campaign donors were improperly scrutinized by government officials, but the Justice Department has declined to prosecute any of the cases.
>
> Its investigators also are probing two allegations that the Internal Revenue Service "targeted for audit candidates for public office," the Treasury's inspector general for tax administration, J. Russell George, has privately told Sen. Chuck Grassley.
>
> In a written response to a request by Mr. Grassley, the ranking Republican on the Judiciary Committee, Mr. George said a review turned up four cases since 2006 in which unidentified government officials took part in "unauthorized access or disclosure of tax records of political donors or candidates," including one case he described as "willful." In four additional cases, Mr. George said, allegations of improper access ofIRS records were not substantiated by the evidence.
>
> Mr. Grassley has asked Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. to explain why the Justice Department chose not to prosecute any of the cases. The Iowa Republican told The Washington Times that the IRS "is required to act with neutrality and professionalism, not political bias."
>
> […]"The Justice Department should answer completely and not hide behind taxpayer confidentiality laws to avoid accountability for its decision not to prosecute a violation of taxpayer confidentiality laws," Mr. Grassley told The Times. "With the IRS on the hot seat over targeting certain political groups, it's particularly troubling to learn about 'willful unauthorized access' of tax records involving individuals who were candidates for office or political donors. The public needs to know whether the decision not to prosecute these violations was politically motivated and whether the individuals responsible were held accountable in any other way."

But do you know who the Department of Justice will prosecute, after he's been found innocent in a trial that should never even have occurred? George Zimmerman. It doesn't matter if he's innocent, he has to be persecuted to make a point. Meanwhile, the real criminals in the IRS get a pass from the real criminals in the Department of Justice.

The latest news from the leftist Washington Post on the IRS scandal is that it is now confirmed that the targeting of conservatives was not the work of a few low-level

employees in Cincinnati.

Excerpt:

> The chief counsel's office for the Internal Revenue Service, headed by a political appointee of President Obama, helped develop the agency's problematic guidelines for reviewing "tea party" cases, according to a top IRS attorney.
>
> In interviews with congressional investigators, IRS lawyer Carter Hull said his superiors told him that the chief counsel's office, led by William Wilkins, would need to review some of the first applications the agency screened for additional scrutiny because of potential political activity.
>
> Previous accounts from IRS employees had shown that Washington IRS officials were involved in the controversy, but Hull's comments represent the closest connection to the White House to date.

Oh, but I'm sure that the Obama administration is doing everything possible to bring the criminals (themselves) to justice. In between smuggling arms to Mexican drug cartels and covering up Benghazi, I mean.

Related Posts

- Treasury Dept. IG: IRS targeted 292 Tea Party groups but only 6 progressive groups
- New study: IRS targeting of Tea Party conservatives had significant effect on 2012 election
- IRS sent $46 million in "tax refunds" to 23,994 illegal aliens, all living at the same address
- Human Rights Campaign refuses to reveal name of IRS leaker
- Phone call recording of IRS agent reveals anti-Christian, anti free speech bias
- Obama's deputy campaign manager Stephanie Cutter met with IRS chief at the White House
- MUST-SEE: Founder of Tea Party group testifies in Congress about IRS fascism
- Cincinnati IRS employee: Washington told us to target the Tea Party
- IRS chief visited White House a reported 118 times from 2010 to 2011
- IRS fascist Lois Lerner pleads the fifth to avoid transparency and accountability
- A closer look at one of the conservatives persecuted by the fascist IRS
- Obama met with anti-Tea Party IRS Union boss one day before the IRS persecutions began
- The IRS abuse of power scandal started from the top
- IRS official who targeted Tea Party groups now a director in Obamacare administration
- IRS audited the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association after they ran pro-marriage ads
- IRS gave confidential documents from conservative groups to liberal group ProPublica
- IRS apologizes for flagging conservative groups for audits in 2012 election year

- IRS refunding billions to illegal immigrants for children in Mexico

New report exposes NHS socialized medicine as an unmitigated disaster

July 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Telegraph reports on the sorry state of socialist Britain. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Eleven NHS trusts were put into "special measures" after an investigation found thousands of patients died needlessly because of poor care.

> The report blamed poor staffing levels and lack of oversight, and said that staff did not address the needs of patients. It concluded the hospitals investigated were "trapped in mediocrity".
>
> […]The review, ordered by the Prime Minister, began in February following the public inquiry into the scandal at Mid Staffordshire Hospital Foundation Trust, where up to 1,200 people died amid "appalling" failings in care.

> Inspectors visited 21 hospitals, run by 14 NHS trusts, which had the highest recent mortality rates in England. They found that some of the risks to patients were so severe that they were forced to step in immediately.
>
> […]At Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, junior doctors described a "frightening" workload which left them responsible for up to 250 patients at weekends. Elderly patients were left on the lavatory with the door open, while others were left on trolleys for hours on end. At one of the trust's community hospitals, nurses were forced to call 999 because there were not enough doctors.
>
> At Blackpool Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust, patients' families had to feed other patients because nurses were busy while other vulnerable elderly people were left in soiled conditions. At Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust, relatives said they were not only washing and dressing patients but turning them to prevent bed sores. Receptionists were left to take decisions about how quickly patients were seen in A&E, as happened in Mid Staffs.
>
> Sir Bruce said: "For me this is in many ways a difficult day for the NHS — because we are laying bare some truths. On the other hand, the transparency with which this review has been conducted, I hope will be a turning point for the NHS."
>
> Dirt and dust was found to be "ingrained" on the wards at North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust and two operating theatres were shut immediately due to poor hygiene.
>
> Figures showed up to 13,000 excess deaths since 2005 at the 14 trusts investigated, advisers to the review said.
>
> "No statistics are perfect but mortality rates suggest that since 2005 thousands

> more people may have died that would normally be expected at the 14 trusts reviewed," Mr Hunt told the Commons.
>
> At Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, up to 1,600 people more than expected may have died during the period. Inspectors found patients stayed up to two weeks in temporary areas without shower facilities. Others were left in ambulances "stacked" outside A&E departments, or waiting hours on trolleys.
>
> At East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, high numbers of stillbirths at the maternity unit — eight in March — were never investigated, nor reported to the trust's board. An elderly woman was discharged at 3am and told she had "no choice", inspectors found.
>
> Patients at George Eliot Hospital waited up to 10 days to see a senior doctor. Nurses were not trained to treat bedsores, leaving patients in crippling pain. At Sherwood Forest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, inspectors found significant backlogs of scans and X-rays which had never been examined, and complaints which dated back three years.
>
> At Tameside Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, whose chief executive and medical director resigned this month, wards had no doctors in charge at nights, while patients were shifted from ward to ward.
>
> At United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust there were 12 "never events" — incidents so serious, such as operations on the wrong part of the body, or surgical instruments left inside a patient, that they should never occur — in three years. Patients felt too frightened to complain in case it led to worse care, the report found.

What happened? How is it that UK citizens and businesses pay over half their incomes to the government, and yet the government cannot even provide basic health care for customers?

The missing factor

Let Dr. Walter Williams, professor of economics at George Mason University, explain why the NHS has failed to please their customers:

The NHS is what happens when people repeatedly elect governments that are ignorant of basic economics.

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Miriam Grossman: a brief history of sex education

July 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Miriam Grossman is a psychiatrist at UCLA who helps the students there. She's written two books on sex and college students, and I've gotten both of them. Here's an article from the Public Discourse authored by her.

First, she explains that sex education today is not about biology, it's about advocacy:

> Now we have *comprehensive sexuality education*. It includes discussion of identity, gender, reproductive rights, and discrimination. Children learn that they're sexual from birth, and that the proper time for sexual activity is when they feel ready. They're taught that they have rights to pleasure, birth control, and abortion.
>
> The terms husband and wife aren't used, the union of man and woman is one of several options, and morality? Well, that's judging, and judging is not allowed.
>
> You won't find much biology in sexuality education, but there's voluminous information on the varieties of sexual expression, the pros and cons of different contraceptives and abortions, and the harms of gender stereotypes.
>
> Gender itself is a complicated matter. A boy might turn into a man, a woman, or something else. A girl might feel she was born in the wrong body, and want her breasts removed. This is all normal, children learn.
>
> There are over two dozen sexually transmitted diseases, and infection with one of these "lovebugs" is considered by some to be a part of growing up. A doctor declares on YouTube, "Expect to have HPV once you become sexually intimate. All of us get it."
>
> And childhood innocence? Forget it! Material created for children makes most *adults* uncomfortable. On websites recommended to students, nothing is taboo—sadomasochism, polyamory, and what were once called "deviant" behaviors . . . they're all good.

Here's how it came to be:

> [I]n 1964 Dr. Mary Calderone founded the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). This is the group behind the sexuality education guidelines published by UNESCO, aggressively promoted to nations all over the world. Calderone created SIECUS with seed money provided by Hugh Hefner.
>
> Like Kinsey, she was on a crusade to change society. Sex education has too much negativity, she insisted, too much focus on unwanted pregnancy and diseases. The real problem, she insisted, following Kinsey, was that society is puritanical and repressed.

There were too many nos in sex ed. The approach of SIECUS, Calderone promised, would be based on yesses. Proper sex ed would teach children that from the day they're born they are sexual beings, and that the expression of their sexuality is positive, natural, and healthy.

She told parents, "Children are sexual and think sexual thoughts and do sexual things . . . parents must accept and honor their child's erotic potential." She also told them, "Professionals who study children have recently affirmed the strong sexuality of the newborn."

What did it mean, exactly, to be open and positive, and to replace the nos of sex education with yesses? What did it mean to "break from traditional views"?

It meant more than premarital and extramarital sex. Much more. Modern sex ed was about breaking boundaries. There were officials within SIECUS who were so radical that they argued publicly for relaxing the taboos against adult/child sexuality, even incest. Wardell Pomeroy, for example, a disciple of Kinsey's who served as president of SIECUS, argued, "It is time to admit that incest need not be a perversion or a symptom of mental illness."

TIME magazine described Pomeroy as part of the "pro-incest lobby." He wrote a book, *Boys & Sex*, for grades six and up. There he argued that "our sexual behavior…is like that of other animals….There is essentially nothing that humans do sexually that is abnormal." Calderone provided a blurb for the book jacket: "As I read your manuscript, I kept saying to myself, 'At last it is being said…'"

Another figure to know is Dr. John Money. In 1955, he introduced the radical concept that maleness and femaleness are feelings, separate from anatomy and chromosomes. He was convinced we are born without gender, then conditioned by society to identify either as male or female.

Money was a prominent psychologist; he's well respected to this day. He described pedophilia as "a love affair between an age-discrepant couple." Money was also part of the incest lobby: "For a child to have a sexual experience with a relative," he wrote, "was not necessarily a problem." Like Kinsey, Money had deep emotional wounds. His identity as a man was troubled, and he molested young boys.

What's so astonishing is that these men, these very disturbed men, using fraudulent data and theories that have been discredited, succeeded in transforming much of society. Today's sexuality education is based on their teachings.

Once I understood who the founders were—Kinsey, Calderone, Pomeroy, Money, and others—I understood how we got to today's "comprehensive sexuality education." I knew how we had reached today's madness.

It came from disturbed individuals with dangerous ideas—radical activists who wanted to create a society that would not only accept their pathology, but

> celebrate it!
>
> These men were pedophiles. It was in their interest to see children as miniature adults who enjoyed sexual contact, and had the right to consent to it, without other adults, or the law, interfering.
>
> Why would they value childhood innocence? They didn't believe that children were innocent to begin with. They also thought that restricting sex to husband and wife was unnatural and destructive. They weren't fighting disease, they were fighting ancient taboos; they were fighting biblical morality.
>
> The bottom line: sex ed began as a social movement, and it remains a social movement. Its goal is for students to be open to just about any form of sexual expression. Sex ed is not about preventing disease, it's about sexual freedom, or better—sexual license. It's about changing society, one child at a time.

I think that a lot of young people today are growing up in a household that is very different than what I grew up with. I grew up in a household where I had two parents biologically related to me who were married before they had me and are still married. People knew back then that the marital bond was stronger when two people had guarded their chastity prior to marrying one another. That stable marriage that I grew up with was an asset to my development. But thanks to sex education, which normalized recreational sex outside of marriage, children today are far less likely to have the kind of childhood that I had.

If you are growing up without a father, you should thank sex education. If you are growing up without a mother, you should thank sex education. If you were abused by a relative or your mothers boyfriend (or girlfriend), you should thank sex education. If you grew up fatherless and sought a boyfriend to have sex with before you could even vote, then thank sex education. If the premarital sex that your parents had caused them to divorce, thank sex education. If you are growing up in any household that is not a happily married long-lasting married household, thank sex education.

One last point. The fiscal conservative in me is appalled that this advocacy is all being taught in public schools with taxpayer money. You and I are paying these people to indoctrinate children in views that puts their safety, health and emotional well-being at risk. You and I are paying to have their sexually transmitted diseases treated. You and I are paying for their contraceptives and abortions. You and I are paying for the costs of teenage pregnancies and increases crime from fatherless boys. Thank sex education for all of these social ills.

Rasmussen poll finds that men are more pro-life than women

July 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports on a new poll that confirms the results from the previous Gallup poll, which showed that men are more likely to be pro-life than women.

Take a look:

> A new Rasmussen poll out today shows the support for the pro-abortion side is at its lowest level in three years, while support for the pro-life position is at its highest.
>
> Rasmussen asked: "Generally speaking, on the issue of abortion, do you consider yourself pro-choice or pro-life?"
>
> The Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey finds that 46% of Likely U.S. Voters now consider themselves pro-choice, the lowest finding in three years of regular surveying. Forty-three percent (43%) say they are pro-life, matching the highest finding to date. Eleven percent (11%) are undecided.
>
> And now the part that is very interesting:
>
> Fifty percent (50%) of women consider themselves pro-choice, compared to 42% of men. Forty-six percent (46%) of men and 41% of women are pro-life.
>
> Men are also more likely than women to say it is too easy to get an abortion in the United States and that there should be a waiting period. Women are more likely to think it's too hard to get an abortion. Men are also more likely to feel abortion is morally wrong most of the time.

So, men are pro-life by a margin of 46-42. This is similar to the Gallup poll released in May 2013, that showed that men were pro-life by a margin of 50-42. I think that the first instinct of a man is to protect and provide for the unborn child. Men tend to want to take responsibility for their own decisions. And they are OK with giving up happiness and pleasure in order to sacrifice for the child. Men are more moved to protect things that are weak and vulnerable, even if it means that they will be less free to pursue their own pleasures. That's how men really are, although that's often not what women believe about men, and it's not what is portrayed in the media about men.

In contrast, women are more likely to be pro-abortion, by a huge margin of 50-41. This is similar to the results from the Gallup poll of May 2013, which showed that women were more likely to be pro-abortion by a margin of 47-46. The split is even large when you notice that women are overwhelmingly more likely to vote for the unrestricted abortion policies of the Democrat party. Exit polls from the last two federal elections have shown that unmarried women in particular vote for Democrats 67% of the time. That number is even higher when you look at young, unmarried women.

Not just unborn children, but born children

Previously, I also documented how polls show that men are far more pro-marriage than women.

Excerpt:

> A new national poll points towards a gender gap over same-sex marriage.
>
> According to new numbers released Monday morning from Gallup, 50% of Americans say same-sex marriages should be legal. But break it down by gender, and 56% of women say same-sex couples should be legally allowed to marry, but only 42% of men feel the same way.

So what do we learn from this? We learn that despite massive systemic challenges in the education system and the workplace, that men have nevertheless not given up on the needs of unborn and born children.

I notice that there is a trend among Christian women to try to blame men for abortion and gay marriage, and to try to say that the reason that women have abortions is because of men. But this is false, of course. The reason why women have abortions is because they deliberately prefer men who are bad boys. They are attracted to these men, and these men want premarital sex. They give them the sex in order to be liked by these bad men. They choose the bad men. The good men who are chaste and marriage minded are passed over. You can read about it in the article I blogged about earlier in the week about the hook-up culture, and see a study on the hook-up culture from the Institute of American Values too. And remember that the hook-up culture is praised by feminist leaders. They are the ones who wanted it.

Most women are attracted to bad men. Many cannot resist the attraction and choose the bad men. They are attracted to men who do not try to lead them or judge them on moral or spiritual issues. They go too far with them physically and bond to them and then cannot see their flaws. They eventually have sex with them to try to make them commit. Bad men don't commit when they are given sex, though. Then the women vote for abortion to get out of it – because they feel that they are victims. Then they blame all men for their own bad choices and claim that the consequences of their actions could not be predicted. They make themselves out to be victims. But the real victims are the children and the good men who are passed over.

None of this would be happening if women thought through what they really wanted – lifelong married love – and then 1) prepared themselves to be wives and mothers and 2) chose chaste men who were prepared to be fathers and husbands. They choose the wrong men. They pass over good men because we are "too strict". They deprive children of life or fathers. They blame men. It's that simple. The problem is that we are too scared to tell women that they are wrong about how they choose men.

A recent survey sent to me by Nancy P. even found that men are more interested in marriage and commitment than women. When will we realize where the problem really lies? Blaming men isn't the answer. We need to teach women to disregard the tingles and

the peer pressure and pick the right man for the jobs of husband and father, based on the requirements of the male roles. And that means that we need to roll back feminism, and defeat the idea that man have no roles. Marriage-capable men only turn away from male roles when they see that women are not interested in marriage-minded men.

Is the root cause of crime poverty or fatherlessness?

July 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If we were really serious about stopping gun crime, then we should go after the root cause of gun crime. So what is that root cause? The answer might surprise you.

Here is Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to explain:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:
>
> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original

> differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

People on the left claim that poverty causes crime, but they don't look for the root cause of poverty. The root cause of poverty is the decline of marriage, which produces fatherless children. Unfortunately, some people promote the decline of marriage because they do not like the "unequal gender roles" inherent in marriage. So what is the main tool that the anti-marriage people use to increase the number of fatherless children?

Dr. Michael Tanner of the libertarian Cato Institute explains one of the causes of fatherlessness in his testimony to Congress:

> Welfare contributes to crime in several ways. First, children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. According to one study, children raised in single-parent families are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior.(3) Moreover, O'Neill found that, holding other variables constant, black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as black children from a family where the father is present. Nearly 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 percent of prison inmates.(4) Research indicates a direct correlation between crime rates and the number of single-parent families in a neighborhood.(5)
>
> As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her seminal article for The Atlantic Monthly:
>
> The relationship [between single-parent families and crime] is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family break up as the most important source of rising rates of crime.(6)
>
> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on

> family structure concluded that “providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women.”(9)

The poverty that everyone complains about is not the root cause of crime. The poverty is caused by fatherlessness. The fatherlessness is caused by welfare. Fatherlessness is also caused by laws and policies that make it easier for people to divorce, e.g. – no-fault divorce laws. Again, it’s people on the left who push for no-fault divorce laws. So the left is pushing two policies, welfare and no-fault divorce, which cause crime.

J. Warner Wallace: the difference between murder and killing in the Bible

July 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's former LAPD detective turned apologists J. Warner Wallace to explain what the Bible says about killing vs murder.

Excerpt:

> I occasionally present a talk on the nature of truth, and as part of this presentation, I discuss the existence of objective moral truth claims. I often ask my attendees if it is ever "OK" to kill someone. Every group typically contains a large number of people who believe the Christian worldview condemns the use of deadly force unilaterally. But the Scripture delineates a distinction between killing and murdering. "You shall not kill" is actually *not* a command found in the Ten Commandments. The command from scripture in the original language actually says "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). The Hebrew word for "murder" literally means "the intentional, premeditated killing of another person with *malice*."

He then goes over the provisions governing murder in the laws of his home state of California.

And then this:

> It's interesting to note, however, these exceptions are *not* the invention of modern humans; they are simply a reflection of ancient Biblical Law. The Bible is the source for these modern laws and the exceptions come straight from the pages of scripture:
>
> **An accidental killing is not murder:**
>
> ***Exodus 21:12-13***
> *Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death. However, if he does not do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate.*
>
> ***Numbers 35:22-25***
> *But if without hostility someone suddenly shoves another or throws something at him unintentionally or, without seeing him, drops a stone on him that could kill him, and he dies, then since he was not his enemy and he did not intend to harm him, the assembly must judge between him and the avenger of blood according to these regulations. The assembly must protect the one accused of murder from the avenger of blood and send him back to the city of refuge to which he fled.*
>
> **A killing performed in self-defense (or in defense of one's home) is not murder:**

> ***Exodus 22:2***
> *If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed*
>
> **A killing performed in an attempt to save the life of an innocent person is not murder:**
>
> ***Exodus 2:11-12***
> *One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. (God did not judge Moses as a murderer because he was protecting the life of the slave)*
>
> ***Genesis 14:14-16***
> *When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people. (God did not judge Abram as a murderer because he was protecting the life of Lot)*
>
> Killing becomes murder when (and only when) it is not properly justified, and the justifications are clear: you can use whatever force necessary to protect your own life from a hostile aggressor, or to save the life of an innocent from such imminent, life-threatening danger. The difference between the legal or illegal use of deadly force is really a matter of *motive*, *intent* and *justification*, and these distinctions come straight from the pages of Scripture.

Previously, I wrote a post featuring the famous theologian Wayne Grudem, where he takes a look at the concept of self-defense in the Bible and concludes that it is justified.

Carson Weitnauer reviews the new DVD on hummingbird flight

July 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a review of a new DVD from Illustra Media about birds and flight. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

> First, the film features interviews with a variety of scientists, a philosopher, and a wildlife photographer. The full list includes Carsten Egevang, Thomas Emmel, Ann Gauger, Paul Nelson, Timothy Standish, and Dylan Winter. While some of the interviews felt a bit repetitive, they were generally woven together with skill, suggestively making the case for intelligent design. (One of the weakest moments is when one of them admits he wants to "make a shrine" to honor the birds).

I don't see why anything is wrong with that! These are *birds* we are talking about – not *cats*.

He continues:

> That's the power of the 'argument' in the film: they don't quote any holy books, they don't make up any "Christian" facts, they just explain, in some detail, how the different component parts of a bird makes avian flight possible. From the development of the egg, to the first flight of a new bird, to a microscopic view of the feathers, to the unique functionality of the hummingbird's tongue and the distinct nature of its flight, to the extraordinary coordination of the massive starling murmuration, and the unbelievable migration pattern of the artic tern, the question is raised: how could this have come about by an unguided process of survival of the fittest, random mutation, and lots of time?
>
> Flight is an "all or nothing proposition." Either you can fly or you can't. But to fly, birds require numerous, highly sophisticated systems to work in coordination: the rapid beating of the heart, the huge breast muscles to power the wings, an efficient respiratory system, a lightweight digestive system, navigational systems for migration, an internal gyroscope for stable flight, acute vision to identify food, and more. How could all of these interconnected systems have emerged, without any foresight or plan, to create the new ability to *fly*?
>
> Furthermore, it is clear that hummingbirds are a very unique kind of bird, with, for example, wings that can beat more than a hundred times *a second* and a heart that can beat more than 1,250 times *a minute*. Hummingbirds eat so much, the equivalent amount of daily food for an adult human would be 150 pounds a day! To accomplish this feeding frenzy, the tongue extends and withdraws a unique mechanism in *less than one-twentieth of a second, thousands of times a*

> *day*.
>
> The second line of argument is the comparison of birds with award-winning, groundbreaking examples of intelligently designed flying machines. That is, when you compare a Boeing 747 or the "Nano Air Vehicle" (an experimental surveillance drone), it is evident that the flying systems of birds are more advanced. Why, the film asks, if we so readily accept 'intelligent design' for 747s, are we averse to using this same explanation for birds?
>
> […]The third feature is a wide range of computer animations that provide detail and insight into various biological components. I was worried these might be cheesy or overwrought, but they are instead illuminating and interesting. Nor are they stuffed into the film to show off some fancy computer graphics, but inserted with purpose, to more emphatically make distinct points. The professional standards make these animations a strong addition to the overall effect of the film.

I already have this DVD, and I am going to watch it this weekend, and this review makes me even more interested in doing that. Sometimes I quote something from a review here and think "now the readers don't need to read it" but I really do recommend clicking through and reading this review of the Flight DVD. He's not just reviewing the DVD, there are a lot of opinions and ideas in there!

I noticed that Carson had some words of caution about Paul Nelson and Tim Standish because they are young Earth creationists, but I don't think that is a problem because there is a huge difference between a Ken Ham or a Ken Hovind and a Paul Nelson or a Tim Standish. Paul Nelson has a PhD in philosophy of science from the University of Chicago and Tim Standish has a PhD in biology from George Mason University. They are also both involved with the intelligent design movement. These are not outsiders.

By the way, I posted previously about how scientists are trying to reverse engineer the design of the flight feature in the hummingbird system, for use in nanorobotics.

UPDATE: Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi has another review of it here.

Clear thinking about Rachael Slick's departure from Christianity

July 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 tweeted a post from Right Reason by philosopher Glenn Peoples about Rachael Slick, the daughter of CARM president Matt Slick. Rachael recently announced her departure from Christianity for atheism.

Here is the passage where she explains why she left Christianity:

> This changed one day during a conversation with my friend Alex. I had a habit of bouncing theological questions off him, and one particular day, I asked him this: If God was absolutely moral, because morality was absolute, and if the nature of "right" and "wrong" surpassed space, time, and existence, and if it was as much a fundamental property of reality as math, then why were some things a sin in the Old Testament but not a sin in the New Testament?

Now this is not necessarily basic apologetics, but it is fairly easy to respond to, and I posted something about it earlier in the week. I just want to point out that I don't really view these sorts of objections as serious objections, since the core of Christianity is about the existence of God and the resurrection of Jesus. Peripheral issues like Bible difficulties don't really matter if the core is sound. The main focus in Christian apologetics isn't on fine points of inerrancy or doctrine, it's on God's existence and the resurrection, which authenticates Jesus as the Messiah. More on that later.

I wanted to quote from the post that Brian found though, because I think this really explains some very important things that Christians need to understand in order to avoid these sorts of Bart Ehrman / Dan Barker de-conversion stories.

And here it is:

> To a Christian who up until now has taken the faith seriously an an intellectual level, holding a view that this faith is robust enough to withstand a bit of light prodding such as this, the solution would have been a bit of light (yes, actually very light) reading on the subject – and there is plenty to be done. This is to say nothing about the rather idiosyncratic view of morality expressed here (comparing moral truths to mathematical truths does not bode well!). And yet this moment of dorm room theology banter lead headlong to this:
>
> I still remember sitting there in my dorm room bunk bed, staring at the cheap plywood desk, and feeling something horrible shift inside me, a vast chasm opening up beneath my identity, and I could only sit there and watch it fall away into darkness.*The Bible is not infallible*, logic whispered from the depths, and I had no defense against it. *If it's not infallible, you've been basing your life's beliefs on the oral traditions of a Middle Eastern tribe. The Bible lied to you.*Everything I was, everything I knew, the structure of my reality, my society,

> and my sense of self suddenly crumbled away, and I was left naked. I was no longer a Christian. That thought was a punch to the gut, a wave of nausea and terror. Who was I, now, when all this had gone away? What did I know? What did I have to cling to? Where was my comfort? ??I didn't know it, but I was free.
>
> Dramatise much? You couldn't answer a much discussed question in theological ethics. You could have added a bit of learning at this point, but instead you make out that you intellectual world has been nuked. The closing statement sums it up better, I think: "I was free." And that was really the point of this. Here's my pick for the real culprit, in the next breath:
>
> For a long time I couldn't have sex with my boyfriend (of over a year by this point) without crippling guilt. I had anxiety that I was going to Hell. I felt like I was standing upon glass, and, though I knew it was safe, every time I glanced down I saw death.
>
> But over time – thanks to the deconversion, that changed. It's telling that she chose to draw attention to this. Numerous times I have seen people turn away from the faith, not because they became aware of new intellectual reasons to reject it, but because the appeal of remaining in the faith became dulled by the drive to live a life that was not compatible with it (and that number includes "apologists" for atheism). You see something, you want it. But you have this belief that you shouldn't do it. So, as is human nature, you rationalise. You re-create the world of truth around you and what you want. "Maybe this Christianity thing isn't true after all…" What changed? The evidence? Nope. The arguments are as good as ever. Your *will* is what has changed. This is confirmed by the celebratory comment that "Freedom is my God now." No doubt, and that is what you were pursuing. Christianity hindered you, so bye bye Christianity. As was shown in the study *Losing my Religion*, and as I commented in a recent podcast about why some reject Christianity, there is a correlation between having sex outside of marriage and giving up one's religion (usually Christian, in the American context in which the study was carried out). Other factors that correlate with abandoning the faith include drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders and get this – *lacking* a higher education. But that's another matter, and of course does *not* answer questions about the truth or otherwise of atheistic or religious claims. It also makes sense that the time when a young person leaves their parents' home and out into an environment where a smorgasbord of choices are now available to them is the most likely time that they will walk away. The comments thread at the blog where this story is told is full of the usual and can be paraphrased thus: "Oh, you taught her to THINK? Big mistake Dad, of course she was going to walk away!" Not even close to the mark. It was not critical thinking that sunk this faith. It was desire, as it so often is. The intellectual reason offered is absolutely flimsy, and certainly not offered an intellectually respectable presentation.

I think that's very well said, and my experience with other decoverted fundamentalists has always been that they often had non-cognitive issues driving the deconversion:

- boyfriend and girlfriend issues
- popularity issues
- sexual activity / sexual orientation issues
- unrealistic expectations of a pain-free life
- unrealistic expectations of God providing financially
- unrealistic expectations of God making their foolish decisions "work out"

So here's my advice to parents who want to avoid this sort of rebellion.

First, don't concentrate on the inerrancy of the Bible as much as you emphasize the good philosophical and scientific arguments for a Creator/Designer. More effort should be put on the mainstream findings of science: cosmology, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, galactic habitability, stellar habitability. The resurrection is also key, but should be defended with a minimal facts approach using mainstream historical methods – not by assuming inerrancy. The existence of God and the resurrection are the strong core of Christianity, not inerrancy. I am saying this as someone who believes in inerrancy for the autographs. It's better to lay a foundation rather than trying to defend too much.

Secondly, don't try to force children to act beyond what their worldview can bear. It is OK for you to have children and to go about doing your Christian ministry based on your convictions, without trying to demand that your kids operate at that level. Instead of telling them what to think, always try to show them both sides. Once a person sees a couple of William Lane Craig debates or Mike Licona debates, they are probably going to want to be like Craig and Licona naturally. But the main thing is that the actions have to be supported by knowledge. When the young person has taken the time to study on their own and sorted out the evidence for themselves, then they will be able to operate more and more authentically as a Christian. The studying comes first, and then the acting like a Christian comes second – at least in a challenging society like ours where we really have to know our stuff cold to stand firm. But you can't expect the actions before the studying.

Third, don't just rest your support or opposition to various positions on the Bible. For example your views on theism and the resurrection should be rooted in secular arguments and secular evidence. Consider it a joy when you can go outside the Bible and confirm something the Bible says with secular evidence. Especially scientific and historical evidence. Connecting the Bible to real world evidence eliminates the painful anxiety of being "separate" and "other". Always make the data the issue, not the position. The data can be debated more easily.

For example, if the issue is gay marriage, spend lots of time talking about the health effects of the gay lifestyle on gay men, the effects of same-sex parenting on children, the social costs of HIV/AIDS, the scientific evidence against the "gay gene", the low levels of stability and exclusivity in gay relationships, etc. Look – young people don't want to feel weird having to defend every moral conviction with the Bible in public. Teach them

secular reasons for everything that the Bible says, and it will reduce their anxiety and make being a fully convinced Christian in public much easier.

I think that one of the biggest problems out there right now is that Christian men and women are under so much pressure to conform to the sexual standards of the day in order to have a boyfriend or girlfriend. Some people really want to have boyfriends and girlfriends who are first and foremost physically attractive, and their faith gets in the way of achieving that goal. They see superhot guys and superhot girls, and they think about how impressed their friends will be if they are "with" that person. Young Christians basically have a "God will provide the perfect person for me" view of relationships, and their method of figuring out who God wants is by having tingles, not by thinking about what marriage is and finding someone who can do the job. Very often, just being superhot is no guarantee of willingness to marry, though, and may actually be more of a guarantee that you are going to be pressured for sex. Did Rachael do a good job of choosing a marriage-minded boyfriend who values chasity and is ready to commit in order to get sex?

So what to do about that pressure for sex? Well, when I think about why I am totally convinced that premarital sex is stupid, it's because I want my future marriage to last. And I have looked at evidence from peer-reviewed studies that shows that the number of premarital sex partners is a threat to relationship quality and stability. I want to make effective Christian children, and to impact the church and the university. I want my marriage to be an example to others. A divorce wrecks all of those plans. With the evidence in my hand from mainstream research, it is much easier to accept and act on what the Bible says about premarital sex. The Bible doesn't have this data, we have to look outside the Bible to get the data to confirm it. Has Rachael looked outside the Bible to be persuasive about what the Bible says?

For a young person facing her non-Christian peers, parroting "the Bible says" is not as reasonable or defensible as saying "the Bible says, and mainstream scientific evidence confirms". We need to make evidence the foundation. The problem with young people is that they are surrounded by other young people who are just as clueless as they are. A pretty easy question from a young friend cannot easily be answered by a person who has a very limited knowledge apologetics gleaned from Christian rock music and television shows. What we need to do is to get them looking outside of their peer group for answers, and that means connecting them to real scholars with real logical arguments supported by real mainstream science and history. We need to connect the Bible to the data in the real world.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion

- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Related posts on chastity

- New study: delaying sexual activity produces improves relationship quality and stability
- New study: staying a virgin longer enables more satisfying relationships
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Two things you can do to make your marriage last

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

July 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of my favorite lectures, by one of the people I admire the most for his scientific work and robust, evangelical Christian faith.

About Michael Strauss:

His full biography is here. (I removed his links from my excerpt text below)

Excerpt:

> I had an interest in science and theology, so in 1977 I chose to go to Biola University where I could study both subjects in detail. I thoroughly enjoyed college and participated in intramural sports, was elected to student government, served as a resident assistant, competed in forensics, and studied a lot. As I neared college graduation my dual interest continued so I applied to seminary and to graduate school. After graduating *summa cum laude* from Biola, I decided to pursue a graduate degree in physics at UCLA.
>
> During my first few years of graduate school, I developed an increased interest in quantum mechanics and subatomic physics and decided to do research in a field that dealt with these subjects. I joined a High Energy Physics experimental group doing research at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to actively participate in research at SLAC. I graduated in 1988 with my Ph.D in High Energy Physics (a.k.a. Elementary Particle Physics). If you would like to know more about High Energy Physics, the Particle Data Group at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory has a very nice interactive adventure that teaches you all about the subject. My research advisor was professor Charles Buchanan and my disertation was titled "A Study of Lambda Polarization and Phi Spin Alignment in Electron-Positron Annihilation at 29 GeV as a Probe of Color Field Behavior."
>
> After graduation, I accepted a post-doctoral research position with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I continued to do research at SLAC where I joined the SLD experiment. My research interests centered on the SLD silicon pixel vertex detector. I wrote most of the offline software for this device, and did physics analysis which used the vertex detector, including tagging *b* quark events for flavor specific QCD (Quantum Chromodynamics) analysis. In the seven years I was employed by UMASS, I only spent 3 days on the Amherst campus. The rest of the time was spent in California.
>
> […]In August 1995, I accepted a job as an Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of Oklahoma (OU) in Norman, Oklahoma. The University of Oklahoma has a vibrant high energy physics research group involved in experiments at the

> Fermi National Accelerator Center (Fermilab), and CERN. I joined the DØ experiment at Fermilab where I continue to do research in elementary particle physics. As a member of the DØ collaboration I have made contributions to the testing of silicon sensors for the upgraded vertex detector, to the track finding algorithms, to a measurement of the photon production cross section which probes the gluon content of protons, and to other QCD measurements. I am currently studying properties of *B* mesons that contain a *b*-quark, the production cross section of jets coming from quarks and gluons, and other QCD analyses. At CERN, I am a collaborator on the ATLAS detector.
>
> I received tenure in 2001 and was promoted to the rank of Professor in the summer of 2010. Most of the time at OU I have taught introductory physics classes to physics majors, engineers, and life science majors. In these classes I have used a number of interactive techniques to facilitate student participation and learning. I have been privileged to win a few awards for my teaching. In 1999, the Associated Students selected me as the Outstanding Professor in the College of Arts and Science, and in 2000 I was awarded the BP AMOCO Foundation Good Teaching Award. In 2002, I was given the Regents Award for Superior Teaching. I received the Carlisle Mabrey and Lurine Mabrey Presidential Professorship in 2006 which is given to "faculty members who excel in all their professional activities and who relate those activities to the students they teach and mentor."

He seems to have done a fine job of integrating his faith with a solid career in physics research. It would be nice if we were churning out more like him, but that would require the church to get serious about the integration between science and faith.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips, one of which I was able to try out recently at IHOP, and it worked.

Here is a clip:

The full video can be watched on Vimeo:

UPDATE: I pulled the MP3 audio from the lecture in case anyone wants just the audio.

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries

– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

It's a good lecture explaining basic arguments for a cosmic Creator and Designer. If you add the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion (Stephen C. Meyer's arguments), then you will be solid on science apologetics. That's everything a rank-and-file Christian needs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Can computers become conscious by increasing processing power?

July 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There is a very famous thought experiment from UC Berkeley philosopher John Searle that all Christian apologists should know about. And now everyone who reads the Wall Street Journal knows about it, because of this article. (H/T Sarah)

Searle is writing about the IBM computer that was programmed to play Jeopardy. His Chinese room example shows why no one should be concerned about computers acting like humans. There is no thinking computer. There never will be a thinking computer. And you cannot build up to a thinking computer my adding more hardware and software.

Excerpt:

> Imagine that a person—me, for example—knows no Chinese and is locked in a room with boxes full of Chinese symbols and an instruction book written in English for manipulating the symbols. Unknown to me, the boxes are called "the database" and the instruction book is called "the program." I am called "the computer."
>
> People outside the room pass in bunches of Chinese symbols that, unknown to me, are questions. I look up in the instruction book what I am supposed to do and I give back answers in Chinese symbols.
>
> Suppose I get so good at shuffling the symbols and passing out the answers that my answers are indistinguishable from a native Chinese speaker's. I give every indication of understanding the language despite the fact that I actually don't understand a word of Chinese.
>
> And if I do not, neither does any digital computer, because no computer, qua computer, has anything I do not have. It has stocks of symbols, rules for manipulating symbols, a system that allows it to rapidly transition from zeros to ones, and the ability to process inputs and outputs. That is it. There is nothing else.

By the way, Searle is a naturalist – not a theist, not a Christian. But he does oppose postmodernism. So he isn't all bad. But let's hear from a Christian scholar who can make more sense of this for us.

UPDATE: Drew sent me a link to the full article by Searle.

Here's an article by Christian philosopher Jay Richards.

Excerpt:

> Popular discussions of AI often suggest that if you keep increasing weak AI, at some point, you'll get strong AI. That is, if you get enough computation, you'll eventually get consciousness.

The reasoning goes something like this: There will be a moment at which a computer will be indistinguishable from a human intelligent agent in a blind test. At that point, we will have intelligent, conscious machines.

This does not follow. A computer may pass the Turing test, but that doesn't mean that it will actually be a self-conscious, free agent.

The point seems obvious, but we can easily be beguiled by the way we speak of computers: We talk about computers learning, making mistakes, becoming more intelligent, and so forth. We need to remember that we are speaking metaphorically.

We can also be led astray by unexamined metaphysical assumptions. If we're just computers made of meat, and we happened to become conscious at some point, what's to stop computers from doing the same? That makes sense if you accept the premise—as many AI researchers do. If you don't accept the premise, though, you don't have to accept the conclusion.

In fact, there's no good reason to assume that consciousness and agency emerge by accident at some threshold of speed and computational power in computers. We know by introspection that we are conscious, free beings—though we really don't know how this works. So we naturally attribute consciousness to other humans. We also know generally what's going on inside a computer, since we build them, and it has nothing to do with consciousness. It's quite likely that consciousness is qualitatively different from the type of computation that we have developed in computers (as the "Chinese Room" argument, by philosopher John Searle, seems to show). Remember that, and you'll suffer less anxiety as computers become more powerful.

Even if computer technology provides accelerating returns for the foreseeable future, it doesn't follow that we'll be replacing ourselves anytime soon. AI enthusiasts often make highly simplistic assumptions about human nature and biology. Rather than marveling at the ways in which computation illuminates our understanding of the microscopic biological world, many treat biological systems as nothing but clunky, soon-to-be-obsolete conglomerations of hardware and software. Fanciful speculations about uploading ourselves onto the Internet and transcending our biology rest on these simplistic assumptions. This is a common philosophical blind spot in the AI community, but it's not a danger of AI research itself, which primarily involves programming and computers.

AI researchers often mix topics from different disciplines—biology, physics, computer science, robotics—and this causes critics to do the same. For instance, many critics worry that AI research leads inevitably to tampering with human nature. But different types of research raise different concerns. There are serious ethical questions when we're dealing with human cloning and research that destroys human embryos. But AI research in itself does not raise these concerns. It normally involves computers, machines, and programming. While all

> technology raises ethical issues, we should be less worried about AI research—which has many benign applications—than research that treats human life as a means rather than an end.

Jay Richards is my all-round favorite Christian scholar. He has the Ph.D in philosophy from Princeton.

When I am playing a game on the computer, I know exactly why what I am doing is fun – I am conscious of it. But the computer has no idea what I am doing. It is just matter in motion, acting on it's programming and the inputs I supply to it. And that's all computers will ever do. Trust me, this is my field. I have the BS and MS in computer science, and I have studied this area. AI has applications for machine learning and search problems, but consciousness is not on the radar. You can't get there from here.

Why did Detroit go bankrupt? Who is to blame? Whose fault was it?

July 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from Front Page magazine traces the history of the city of Detroit.

Excerpt:

> Beginning in 1962, Detroit has endured a steady diet of Democratic mayors and their social welfare agenda. Beginning in 1962, Mayor Jerome Cavanagh ushered in a "Model City" program to a nine-square-mile section of the city. It was based on a Soviet Union-style approach, aimed at rebuilding entire urban areas all at once. The effort was funded by a commuter tax and a new income tax that Cavanagh told residents would be paid by "the rich." Yet the same central planning that that formed the heart of the Model City program was extended to the people themselves, who eventually resented being told by government how to run their businesses and their lives in exchange for government goodies. Unsurprisingly, the program was a monumental failure.
>
> Then there were the riots. In 1967, police broke up a celebration at a "blind pig." Blind pigs were after-hours clubs that featured gambling and prostitution and had been part of the traditional black culture in Detroit since Prohibition. The political leadership considered them antithetical to the Model City program. An enraged neighborhood did not. People took to the streets, igniting the worst race riot of the decade. Black-owned business were looted and burned to the ground. Forty people were killed and 5,000 were left homeless. Thus began the "white flight" out of the city center, totaling 140,000 people over an eighteen month period, ensued. The city never recovered.
>
> None of this stopped the progressive agenda from continuing to be implemented. Public employees were given precisely the exorbitant wage and benefits packages that are coming back to haunt the city now. This Democrat-fostered attitude extended to private sector unions, whose equally exorbitant packages, along with efficiency-strangling work rules, made the cost of doing business in the Motor City prohibitive. As a result, much of the car industry that formed the city's employment backbone left for right-to-work states that provided a far less hostile — and far more affordable — business climate.
>
> As chronicled here, the same progressive-inspired insanity destroyed the Detroit public school system (DPS), which itself stands on the brink of bankruptcy. This tragedy is highlighted by several sad realities. In 2009, DPS students turned in the lowest scores ever recorded in the national math proficiency test over its then-21-year history. The state of Michigan, led by Detroit, has one of the highest black-white achievement gaps in the nation. As of June 12, only 1.8 percent of the system's students were capable of doing college level work.

> Yet by far the most telling indictment of the system is this mind-bending reality: a full 47 percent of city residents are *functionally illiterate.*

The governor of Michigan Rick Snyder has just come out and said that he will not ask for a bailout from the federal government of Detroit.

Excerpt:

> Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder and the bankruptcy specialist he appointed to fix Detroit's unprecedented financial problems put the blame Sunday squarely on the city and defended their decision to file for Chapter 9.
>
> The Republican governor said Detroit created the problems and stood steadfast behind his decision to file Thursday for bankruptcy, with the city roughly $19 billion in debt.
>
> "This is a tragic, difficult decision, but a right one," he said. "It's not about just more money, it's about accountable government."
>
> He said corruption and city leaders ignoring warning signs for 60 years contributed to the problems. Among his biggest concerns, Snyder said, is the decline of municipal services for Detroit's remaining 700,000 residents, including police response times of nearly one hour.

Thank God. Maybe now they will start to elect Republicans for the first time in over 50 years.

Hobby Lobby granted temporary injunction from Obamacare abortion mandate

July 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> A federal appeals court granted The Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc. a preliminary injunction against the Obamacare contraception mandate, Friday.
>
> The ruling prevents the government from enforcing the mandate against the Christian craft company, which has resisted the healthcare law's requirement that companies provide employees health care plans that cover contraception on religious grounds.
>
> In a decision read from the bench the court ruled, "There is a substantial public interest in ensuring that no individual or corporation has their legs cut out from under them while these difficult issues are resolved."
>
> The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which is representing Hobby Lobby, considers the ruling to be a major victory.
>
> "We were extremely pleased that the court granted [the preliminary injunction]," Adele Keim, a an attorney with the Becket Fund on the Hobby Lobby's case said in an interview with TheDC. She explained that the Justice Department has until September 25 to decide whether to appeal the ruling.
>
> "The tide has turned against the HHS mandate," Kyle Duncan, general counsel with the Becket Fund and lead attorney for Hobby Lobby, said in a statement.
>
> If the government were to enforce the mandate against the Hobby Lobby, failure to provide contraception in their plans would cost the company $1.3 million a day in fines, according to the Becket Fund.
>
> There are currently 63 lawsuits challenging the contraception mandate, according to the Becket Fund.

The Weekly Standard had an article about the Obamacare abortion mandate a while back.

Excerpt:

> As of August 1st of next year, the morning-after pills that must be provided free of charge, from coast to coast, will include Plan B and ella. Both drugs arguably act, in part, as abortifacients — by keeping a fertilized egg (or a newly conceived being) from implanting in the uterine wall. ("Pregnancy" is no longer medically defined as commencing with conception, but days later, at implantation.) None other than Planned Parenthood — a favorite of President Obama — admits that taking a morning-after pill not only helps prevent ovulation but also "thins the

> lining of the uterus," adding, "In theory, this could prevent pregnancy by keeping a fertilized egg from attaching to the uterus."
>
> […]CBS News notes ella's "chemical similarity" to RU-486 (which will not be "free" under Obamacare). The *New York Times* describes it as being RU-486's "chemical relative." The *Washington Post* describes it as being RU-486's "close chemical relative." WebMD says that it works to prevent the implantation of a fertilized egg — in other words, as an abortifacient. Dr. Justo Aznar writes that between 50 percent and 70 percent of the time, ella "will act by an abortive mechanism." The European Medicine Agency acknowledges that the drug has the "ability to delay maturation of the endometrium likely resulting in prevention of implantation."
>
> Far from denying that ella can prevent implantation of the fertilized egg in the womb, the FDA observes that it could potentially cause an abortion even later. It notes that there "are no adequate and well controlled studies in pregnant women" pertaining to ella, while the drug has been found to cause abortions in pregnant rats and rabbits: "Embryofetal loss was noted in all pregnant rats and in half of the pregnant rabbits," the FDA declared.
>
> Jeanne Monahan of the Family Research Council writes that, like RU-486, ella not only works to prevent implantation but also causes embryos to be aborted post-implantation. She writes, "Plan B can prevent an embryo from implanting in the uterus, thereby causing its demise. However, Plan B cannot terminate an already implanted embryo…. Ella can cause the demise of an embryo that is already implanted in its mother's womb, in addition to preventing implantation after fertilization." Dr. Rich Poupard of the Life Training Institute (who doesn't think that Plan B likely acts as an abortifacient) says that "ella is basically RU-486." He explains that both drugs act to block implantation, and, if implantation does occur, they act to prevent progesterone from adhering to the uterine lining, thereby denying the embryo the nutrients it needs to survive.

Obamacare forces pro-life individuals and businesses to subsidize abortions.

Iowa Human Rights Commissioner told pastor and family to “burn in Hell”

July 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports.

Excerpt:

> In Sioux City, Iowa, a local pastor is asking for the removal of a newly appointed member of the city’s human rights commission. The city council appointed Scott Raasch to the commission, which adjudicates discrimination complaints, on July 8. However, the Rev. Cary Gordon, executive pastor of Cornerstone World Outreach, recently brought to light threatening comments_Raasch left comments on Gordon’s Facebook page over Gordon’s vocal opposition to the Iowa Supreme Court legalizing gay marriage.
>
> According to the report from the *Sioux City Journal*:
>
> In one comment, Raasch wrote: “You are haters and bigots and you will get what’s coming to you sooner or later. I hope you rot in hell.”
>
> Gordon replied, “I hope you repent of your sins and accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. I wouldn’t want you or anyone else to go to hell.”
>
> Raasch wrote, “I know Christ and don’t need a snake oil salesman like you to tell me about him. I guess that’s the difference between us because I think there are many people that deserve to burn in hell … including you and your entire family.”
>
> “He gives blatant death wishes to anyone who disagrees with his political or sexual views,” Gordon said Thursday. “He is obviously unstable and filled with raging hatred.”

It’s very important to understand what kinds of people are appointed to these Human Rights Commissions. They sound so good, but actually they are just politically correct Inquisitions. And they appoint the most radical left-wing extremists to them – people who are incapable of even listening to points of view other than their own. We don’t need Inquisition panels to tell us what to think.

Related posts

- Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue “hate” rhetoric
- The mainstream media’s biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center

- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Zeitgeist conspiracy movie had profound impact on Jared Loughner
- Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning
- Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist
- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

What the death of Prop 8 means for democracy and the rule of law

July 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM messaged me about this post from the Public Discourse. The author is the person who managed to get a constitutional amendment defining marriage in California, only to see if defeated three times by judges.

Federal judge was in a gay relationship:

> The Prop 8 challenge landed in the San Francisco federal courtroom of Vaughn Walker. We're supposed to accept that this happened randomly, and that the plaintiffs weren't tipped off by someone in the court system to file the case at a particular time when Judge Walker happened to be the one who'd get it.
>
> Whether by accident or grand design, it was a fortunate assignment for the plaintiffs. Walker was a judge in a long-term committed relationship with another man—in other words, he was in exactly the type of relationship as the plaintiffs who were bringing suit. Walker never disclosed this critical fact to Prop 8 supporters, or to the public, despite judicial rules requiring such disclosure if even the *appearance* of impropriety was present.

Private citizens have to defend the law of the land:

> While the lawsuit stood before a hometown judge, state officials did everything in their power to throw the case. Both then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and then-Attorney General Jerry Brown refused to defend the law enacted by the people of California, despite their sworn oath of office to do so. The current Attorney General, Kamala Harris, dutifully took the same course.
>
> Of course, the constitution of California does not give to the governor or the attorney general the power to decide for themselves which laws are constitutional and which are not, nor are they free to determine which laws shall be defended and which shall be abandoned. But no matter.
>
> **Having orphaned Prop 8, leaving it and the seven million citizens who enacted it defenseless in court, it fell to the backers of the initiative to defend the law in the federal courts. This not only cost the supporters of Prop 8 over $10 million in legal expenses; it ultimately put a sleeper hold on the initiative.**

Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals:

> Next the case headed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, where it became the province of a panel including Stephen Reinhardt, senior judge of the circuit and widely considered to be one of the most liberal (and most overturned) judges in America. I frankly never expected much relief out of what many conservatives

> ruefully refer to as the “Ninth Circus.” But even I was surprised by the chicanery involved in Reinhardt’s handling of the case.
>
> It turns out that his wife, an attorney with the ACLU, had advised the plaintiffs’ lawyers on strategy before this very case was even filed! Reinhardt refused to recuse himself from deciding the case his wife had participated in, and went on to write a majority opinion finding that Prop 8 was unconstitutional.

And then on the Supreme Court, and we know how that ended.

The conclusion of the piece is very moving, but saddening too.

Here’s part of it:

> I feel like we were cheated. Just like I felt as a kid watching the bad guy put a sleeper hold on his opponent, or hitting him below the belt or with the brass knuckles while the referee had his back turned, so have the legal system and politicians cold-cocked the people of California—seven million of whom went to the polls to lawfully enact Prop 8. Only this time, I realize there’s not likely to be a rematch. The cheaters won.
>
> I feel like the rule of law has been shredded, and conniving politicians have been rewarded for ignoring their sworn oath of office. Public confidence in the judicial system has been dealt a severe blow. Supporters of same-sex “marriage” may be happy with the result today, but hold on until the tables are turned and a conservative governor and attorney general refuse to defend a law they don’t personally support, and there’s nobody left with standing to defend it. The seeds of that action will have been sown by leftist politicians like Brown, Harris, and Schwarzenegger.
>
> I feel like a broadside has ripped a great hole in the initiative and referendum process itself. I have managed nearly forty statewide ballot initiative campaigns in my career. The initiative process is one of the few viable ways to get a recalcitrant government to respond to legitimate issues that are not being addressed by the legislature or the state administration. By its nature, citizens are often pushing a law that is opposed by those in power.
>
> Now those very people in power—the governor and attorney general—have been given a pocket veto over the initiative process itself. They can invalidate any measure they don’t personally support simply by refusing to defend it in federal court. Such power was never contemplated by the framers of the constitution, or by the people of California, but that is the practical result of the Supreme Court’s ruling on Prop 8. Again—it is marriage today, but tomorrow it could be any other issue on the political spectrum.
>
> I feel a measure of sadness for all the people who worked so hard for something they believed so passionately—a belief shared by millions of people. Campaigns are about ideas and laws, certainly, but they involve real people.
>
> So I think about people like Scott Eckern, a distinguished musical producer, who

> was forced to resign from the California Musical Theater in Sacramento over his $1,000 contribution in support of Prop 8. I think about Marjorie Christofferson, a then-67-year-old employee at her family-owned Mexican restaurant in Los Angeles, who was forced to take a leave from the business over donating a mere $100 to our campaign.
>
> I think about the 80,000 people just like them—moms and dads, retirees, students, husbands and wives—who gave generously of their financial resources to allow us to mount a winning campaign. I think about all the pastors, priests, bishops, rabbis, imams, and other religious leaders who put their religious differences aside to work together in support of the eternal truth about marriage—that it is a covenant between one man and one woman, modeled after God's own covenant with us.
>
> And I think about the 250,000 volunteers in our campaign who walked precincts, knocked on doors, and manned phone banks, including Jose Nunez, a proud immigrant and newly sworn-in US citizen, who was physically assaulted by a Prop 8 opponent while waiting to distribute signs outside his Catholic church.
>
> All of these people paid a tremendous price. They, and the voters, deserved better than to be left undefended before the legal system, abandoned by those sworn to defend them, ignored by judges determined to impose a particular result, and then orphaned by the Supreme Court as the great referee pretended not to see all the nefarious activity going on with the case right in front of them.

I still haven't really gotten my head around all of the unfairness that happened with the defeat of Prop 8 by leftist lawyers and judges. How can it be that elected officials refuse to defend the law of the land? But this is not just a California issue. The Obama administration also refused to defend DOMA in court. The amount of money and time that was spent in vain by the pro-marriage team on these legal efforts makes me very unhappy. The Prop 8 campaign involved millions of dollars, thousands of volunteers, and enormous amounts of time spent by everyone. Conservatives can't take on these Herculean tasks and keep losing. The money and time we spent on defending marriage is gone once it's gone. It can't be spent a second time on something else.

We are already living in a time where over 40% of children are being born out-of-wedlock – facing the world without their father, because women choose to take welfare instead of marrying a good man before getting pregnant. We are already living in a world where over 40% of first-time marriages end in divorce, thanks to no-fault divorce laws and anti-male divorce courts. Gay marriage just makes it worse, and that's the real tragedy. The family is dying, and no one seems to care. No one seems to be aware of the purpose of marriage for society. They are so busy smashing it down that they never stop to ask why it was there in the first place.

10 Facts About the NT Canon that every Christian should memorize

July 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace tweeted this must-read post about a series of 10 posts by New Testament expert Mike Krueger.

Here's the list of 10 facts:

> Mike Kruger, author of *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books* (Crossway, 2012) and the forthcoming *The Question of Canon: Challenging the Status Quo in the New Testament Debate* (IVP, 2013), has a helpful series on the New Testament canon, linked below, "designed to help Christians understand ten basic facts about its origins. This series is designed for a lay-level audience and hopefully could prove helpful in a conversation one might have with a skeptical friend."
>
> Here are the posts:
>
> 1. "The New Testament Books are the Earliest Christian Writings We Possess"
> 2. "Apocryphal Writings Are All Written in the Second Century or Later"
> 3. "The New Testament Books Are Unique Because They Are Apostolic Books"
> 4. "Some NT Writers Quote Other NT Writers as Scripture"
> 5. "The Four Gospels are Well Established by the End of the Second Century"
> 6. "At the End of the Second Century, the Muratorian Fragment lists 22 of Our 27 NT Books"
> 7. "Early Christians Often Used Non-Canonical Writings"
> 8. "The NT Canon Was Not Decided at Nicea—Nor Any Other Church Council"
> 9. "Christians Did Disagree about the Canonicity of Some NT Books"
> 10. "Early Christians Believed that Canonical Books Were Self-Authenticating"

Here is one from the list that I did not know before. (#4)

Excerpt:

> For Christians struggling to understand the development of the New Testament canon, one of the most confusing (and perhaps concerning) facts is that early Christian writers often cited from and used non-canonical writings. In other words, early Christians did not just use books from our current New Testament, but also read books like the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the*Gospel of Peter*, and the *Epistle of Barnabas*.
>
> Usually Christians discover this fact as they read a book or article that is highly critical of the New Testament canon, and this fact is used as a reason to think that our New Testament writings are nothing special. The literary preferences of the earliest Christians were wide open, we are told. Or, as one critic put it, early

> Christians read a “boundless, living mass of heterogenous” texts.[1]
>
> Because this fact is used to criticize the integrity of the New Testament canon, then all Christians should be keen to learn it. While the fact itself is true—early Christians did read and use many writings not in the canon—the conclusions often drawn from this fact are often not.
>
> When scholars mention the Christian use of non-canonical writings, two facts are often left out:
>
> 1. *The manner of citation*. It is important to note that while Christians often cited and used non-canonical literature, they only rarely cited them as Scripture. For the most part, Christians were simply using these books as helpful, illuminating, or edifying writings. This is not all that different than practices in our modern day. A preacher may quote from CS Lewis in a sermon, but that does not mean he puts Lewis’s authority on par with Scripture itself.
>
> A good example of this phenomenon is the use of the *Gospel of Peter* by the church at Rhossus at the end of the second century. Scholars often appeal to this story as evidence that early Christians had no established gospel canon. However, there is no evidence that the church there used the book as Scripture.
>
> When we ask the question about which books early Christians cited most often *as Scripture*, then the answer is overwhelmingly in favor of the books that eventually made it into the New Testament canon.
>
> 2. *Frequency of citation*. Another often overlooked factor is the relative degree of frequency between citations of New Testament books and citations of non-canonical books. For example, scholars often appeal to Clement of Alexandria as the standard example of an early Christian that used non-canonical literature equally with canonical literature. But, when it comes to frequency of citation, this is far from true.
>
> J.A. Brooks, for instance, has observed that Clement cites the canonical books “about sixteen times more often than apocryphal and patristic writings.”[2] When it comes to gospels, the evidence is even better. Clement cites apocryphal gospels only 16 times, whereas, he cites just the gospel of Matthew 757 times.[3]
>
> In sum, Christians need to memorize this simple fact about the New Testament canon: early Christians used many other books besides those that made it into our Bibles. But, this should not surprise us. For, indeed, we still do the very same thing today even though we have a New Testament that has been settled for over 1600 years.

How many of these did you not know? Check them out!

Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage

July 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ari and Mathetes sent me this amazing evaluation of all of the research on same-sex marriage.

Excerpt: (links removed)

The most detailed effort yet to open the hood and see what is actually inside these studies was performed by Loren Marks of the LSU School of Human Ecology, who published a paper in *Social Science Research* in 2012 examining the 59 published studies behind the APA's breezy assertion of a scientific consensus. (Marks did not examine the other 8 studies cited by the APA, which were "unpublished dissertations.") Marks opened his paper by comparing the research on same-sex families to the by-now bulletproof research showing the advantages of traditional married parents over "cohabiting, divorced, step, and single-parent families," noting that those studies used "large, representative samples" such as "four nationally representative longitudinal studies with more than 20,000 total participants." By contrast, Marks found:

> -"[M]ore than three-fourths (77%) of the studies cited by the APA brief are based on small, nonrepresentative, convenience samples of fewer than 100 participants. Many of the non-representative samples contain far fewer than 100 participants, including one study with five participants"

> -The samples were "racially homogenous," none of them focusing on African-American, Hispanic or Asian-American families. Of course, social science studies of the family commonly find large racial disparities – picking an all-white sample is an extremely easy way to bias your results.
>
> -More broadly, he cited a "continuing tendency of same-sex parenting researchers to select privileged lesbian samples…'Much of the research [still] involved small samples that are predominantly White, well-educated [and] middle-class.'"
>
> -"[C]omparison studies on children of gay fathers are almost non-existent in the 2005 Brief."
>
> -"[I]n selecting *heterosexual* comparison groups for their studies, many same-sex parenting researchers have not used marriage-based, intact families as heterosexual representatives, but have instead used single mothers…[one pair of researchers] used 90.9 percent single-father samples in two other studies."
>
> -The APA, while ignoring these flaws in the studies it relied on, excluded one of the largest studies available, which had found significant differences in educational outcomes on the theory that assessments by teachers (i.e., tests and progress reports) were "subjective assessments." Note the contrast between this

> and the APA's eager acceptance of self-reporting by parents.
>
> -Most of the studies ignored "societal concerns of intergenerational poverty, collegiate education and/or labor force contribution, serious criminality, incarceration, early childbearing, drug/alcohol abuse, or suicide that are frequently the foci of national studies on children, adolescents, and young adults," and again the APA simply ignored one "book-length empirical study" that had used a more diverse sample and had concluded that "If we perceive deviance in a general sense, to include excessive drinking, drug use, truancy, sexual deviance, and criminal offenses, and if we rely on the statements made by adult children (over 18 years of age)…[then] children of homosexual parents report deviance in higher proportions than children of (married or cohabiting) heterosexual couples."
>
> -"[V]irtually none of the peer-reviewed, same-sex parenting comparison studies" looked at adults raised in same-sex parent homes, but only at children and adolescents, thus excluding from consideration social and emotional problems that are commonly observed only in adulthood. Research on children of divorce, for example, has found a number of problems that do not surface until adulthood.
>
> Nobody who has not already made their mind up would find research of this nature conclusive of anything.

And regarding the new Regnerus large-scale study of gay parenting: (links removed)

> One recent study that attempted to fix the problems Marks identified was published in the same edition of the same journal by University of Texas professor Mark Regnerus. Regnerus' study had – as he freely admitted – limitations of its own, discussed below. But the reaction to Regnerus' work – in contrast to how the badly flawed studies examined by Marks were swallowed uncritically – vividly illustrates why credible, unbiased research on this topic is so hard to come by.
>
> Regnerus set out to do a truly randomly selected study over a large population sample, and to remove the problem of biased parental reporting by interviewing adults about their childhood experiences. His sample covered 15,000 respondents, and despite the subsequent firestorm, no problem was ever identified with his methods or the data he gathered. Unlike most of the prior research, the respondents with a "gay father" or "lesbian mother" (more on which below) were, respectively, 48% and 43% black or Hispanic. His findings were dramatic across numerous types of outcomes, detailing greatly elevated incidence of parental rape, parental pedophilia and suicidal tendencies; as he explained his findings,
>
> Even after including controls for age, race, gender, and things like being bullied as a youth, or the gay-friendliness of the state in which they live, such respondents were more apt to report being unemployed, less healthy, more

depressed, more likely to have cheated on a spouse or partner, smoke more pot, had trouble with the law, report more male and female sex partners, more sexual victimization, and were more likely to reflect negatively on their childhood family life, among other things.[…]Anyone familiar with how liberals respond to scientific findings they don't like can predict what happened next: immediately upon the publication of his study, Regnerus was subjected to a campaign of vilification aimed at discrediting his work, destroying his professional reputation and deterring any other scholar from pursuing a similar line of inquiry. The University of Texas convened an audit of his study to deal with the pressure campaign, and the editor of the journal hired a prominent, vocal critic of Regnerus to audit the peer-review process that led to its publication. Andrew Ferguson and Matthew Franck detail the blow-by-blow of this campaign to destroy Regnerus.

And by and large, Regnerus passed the audits. The UT audit found "no falsification of data, plagiarism or other serious ethical breaches constituting scientific misconduct."The journal audit grudgingly concluded the journal editor acted correctly, despite a lot of sniping by its hostile author at Regnerus and the peer reviewers. But the liberal blogs and newspapers continued to act as if Regnerus had been unmasked as a charlatan.

Twenty-seven scholars (including Marks) signed a joint letter defending Regnerus' sample selection:

> [T]he demographics of his sample of young-adult children of same-sex parents – in terms of race and ethnicity – come close to resembling the demographics of children from same-sex families in another large, random, and representative study of gay and lesbian families by sociologist Michael Rosenfeld that has been well received in the media and in the academy…We are disappointed that many media outlets have not done their due diligence in investigating the scientific validity of prior studies, and acknowledging the superiority of Regnerus's sample to most previous research….We are also disappointed that many of our academic colleagues who have critiqued Regnerus have not publicly acknowledged the methodological limitations of previous research on same-sex parenting.
>
> …Regnerus has been chided for comparing young adults from gay and lesbian families that experienced high levels of family instability to young adults from stable heterosexual married families. This is not an ideal comparison. (Indeed, Regnerus himself acknowledges this point in his article, and calls for additional research on a representative sample of planned gay and lesbian families; such families may be more stable but **are very difficult to locate in the population at large**.) But what his critics fail to appreciate is that Regnerus chose his categories on the

> basis of young adults' characterizations of their own families growing up, and the young adults whose parents had same-sex romantic relationships also happened to have high levels of instability in their families of origin. This instability may well be an artifact of the social stigma and marginalization that often faced gay and lesbian couples during the time (extending back to the 1970s, in some cases) that many of these young adults came of age. It is also worth noting that **Regnerus's findings related to instability are consistent with recent studies of gay and lesbian couples based on large, random, representative samples from countries such as Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Sweden, which find similarly high patterns of instability among same-sex couples. Even Judith Stacey, a prominent critic of Regnerus's study, elsewhere acknowledges that studies suggest that lesbian "relationships may prove less durable" than heterosexual marriages.** Thus, Regnerus should not be faulted for drawing a random, representative sample of young-adult children of parents who have had same-sex romantic relationships and also happened to have experienced high levels of family instability growing up.

(Emphasis mine; footnotes omitted).

The vehemence of the attacks on Regnerus, by people who were happy to tout far less reliable studies, ought to be a gigantic red flag to anyone tempted to view the social science in this area as the work of disinterested professionals who care only to find the truth. And any tour of the work of Marks, Regnerus and their critics should disabuse anyone of the notion that we have ironclad-for-all-time scientific proof of equal outcomes that should be cast permanently into Constitutional law. Given the many common-sense reasons, grounded in experience, to think that both fatherhood and motherhood have unique value, the overwhelming scientific evidence that traditional marriage is superior to all the *other* family structures that have been studied, the relative recency and rarity of same-sex parent households and the current state of the science, the most logical answer is that both Congress and the voters of the State of California could rationally conclude that a family with a mother and a father is preferable to a family with two mothers and no father or two fathers and no mother.

I really urge all of my readers to click through and read this entire essay, and then please tweet or share it or send it to all your friends. We do NOT want a repeat of what happened when the liberal left rammed through no-fault-divorce, which was the first redefinition of marriage. We can't afford another round of this. We already have a 42% out of wedlock birth rate, and it's going up.

We've had the normalization of premarital sex put through by leftist public schools,

taxpayer-funded contraception pushed through by the leftist Obama administration, and no-fault divorce pushed through by leftist feminists and leftist trial lawyers. We can't keep taking shots at the institution of marriage. Marriage was designed from the start to protect and provide for innocent, vulnerable children. We are doing harm to children every time that we privilege the desires of adults over the needs of children. I find it disgusting that the people who are so influential at destroying marriage today are often the same ones who benefited from intact families and two loving parents yesterday.

Related posts

- Ryan T. Anderson debates gay marriage with S.E. Cupp on the Blaze
- Ryan T. Anderson explains marriage to Piers Morgan and Suze Orman
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Frank Turek: is "equality" the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults "co-parenting" children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families
- Obama openly supports gay marriage: 48 hours after top gay donors cut off funding
- Democrat introduces bill to defund adoption agencies that favor married couples
- A secular case against same-sex marriage

WaPo poll: most “moderate” and “conservative” Democrats oppose Obamacare

July 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> The landmark health-reform law passed in 2010 has never been very popular and always highly partisan, but a new Washington Post-ABC News poll finds that a group of once loyal Democrats has been steadily turning against Obamacare: Democrats who are ideologically moderate or conservative.
>
> Just after the law was passed in 2010, fully 74 percent of moderate and conservative Democrats supported the federal law making changes to the health-care system. But just 46 percent express support in the new poll, down 11 points in the past year. Liberal Democrats, by contrast, have continued to support the law at very high levels – 78 percent in the latest survey.
>
> […]The shift among the Democratic party’s large swath in the ideological middle– most Democrats in this poll, 57 percent, identify as moderate or conservative – is driving an overall drop in party support for the legislation: Just 58 percent of Democrats now support the law, down from 68 percent last year and the lowest since the law was enacted in 2010. This broader drop mirrors tracking surveys by the non-partisan Kaiser Family Foundation and Fox News polls, both of which found Democratic support falling earlier this year.

The Weekly Standard notes that Democrat legislators have been switching sides lately, and voting to delay implementation of some of the Obamacare mandates.

What is pre-suppositionalism? What is presuppositional apologetics?

July 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Messianic Drew has a post up where he explains seven reasons, and I'll add a still more important reason below.

His introduction:

> While most Christians will agree that there is a need to defend the faith, many will not realize that there is a debate regarding methodologies. This paper will address the various apologetics methods, and then analyze before critiquing the relatively new method of presuppositionalism. While this method has a lot to offer from a practical apologetics standpoint, it cannot be held rationally as a worldview. This paper will give seven reasons why this is the case.
>
> Before addressing presuppositionalism, an introduction to other apologetic methodologies is in order. The main form of apologetics used historically is called Classical Apologetics. Under this method, the apologist gives arguments for the existence of God, and then proceeds to develop Christian evidences for the Christian worldview. Arguments like the moral argument, and other reason-based argumentation tend to dominate this method.
>
> If classical apologetics is a two-step method, evidentialism is a one-step method. The evidentialist will usually forego rationalistic argumentation and will simply bring out evidences for the Christian worldview. The method of Gary Habermas is an example of evidentialism.
>
> Those methods as well as presuppositionalism are the main methods of apologetics. There are others as well, such as fideism, which tells people to just believe without argument. Polemical apologetics seeks to attack other worldviews. There are cumulative case methods of apologetics, where two worldviews face off for which one better answers life's deepest questions. There is also eclectic apologetics, which seeks to borrow methods from other schools of apologetics depending on the need.
>
> This brings the discussion to presuppositionalism, which seeks to examine the underlying assumptions of any worldview. In short, presuppositionalism states that one's foundational views are the only truly relevant factor in discussing worldviews. The founder of modern presuppositionalism is Cornelius van Til.

Here are his 7 points:

1. Presuppositionalism is circular reasoning
2. Presuppositionalism minimizes common grace
3. Presuppositionalism confuses ontological priority with epistemic priority

4. Presuppositionalism presupposes a highly controversial theory of knowledge
5. Presuppositionalism often forgets that Christianity is, at least in principle, falsifiable
6. Van Til's apologetic might not even be Christian, but may be merely theistic
7. Presuppositionalism faces the problem of incommensurability

And here is #6 in detail:

> John Johnson gives a devastating critique as to why Van Til's system is wholly inadequate when addressing other faiths, such as Islam. Van Til argues from Romans 1:18-21 that non-Christians suppress the truth, and that a presuppositional technique is necessary. However, this section of the Bible deals with knowledge of God, but not theological issues about the Trinity, Jesus, salvation by grace through faith alone, etc. [12] Instead, it only says that unbelievers are without excuse for denying monotheism. Paul reinforces this in Acts 17, when he talks about the statue to an unknown God. Paul deals with the Athenians on their own ground.
>
> A more practical example is what I call Artscroll Judaism. This is a fundamentalist sect of Orthodox Judaism, with its own think tanks which can give you an answer to anything. Anyone who is willing to take the leap into the system will find it every bit as coherent as one would find the Reformed Christian view.
>
> John Warwick Montgomery gives a fable about a conversation between two presuppositionalists from two different religions: the Shadok religion, and the Gibi religion.
>
> Shadok: You will never discover the truth, for instead of subordinating yourself to revelational truth (The Shadok Bible) you sinfully insist on maintaining the autonomy of your fallen intellect.
>
> Gibi: Quite the contrary. [He repeats the same assertion substituting the Gibi Bible for the Shadok Bible.] And I say this not on the basis of my sinful ego but because I have been elected by the Gibi God.
>
> Shadok: Wrong again! [He repeats the exact same claim, substituting Shadok Election for Gibi Election.] Moreover, the sovereign election of which I am the unworthy recipient has been the very work of God the Shadok Holy Spirit. And all of this is clearly taught in the self-validating Scripture of our people, which, I should not have to reiterate, derives from the true God and not from sinful, alledgedly autonomous man.
>
> Gibi: How dare you invert everything. [He laboriously repeats the preceding argument, substituting Gibi election, the Gibi Holy Spirit, and the Gibi Bible.]
>
> Shadok: Absurd! This is the inevitable result of your colored glasses.
>
> Gibi: It is you who have the glasses cemented to your face. Mine have been transparent through sovereign grace and Gibi election, as proclaimed by the Gibi God's word.

> Shadok: Your religion is but the inevitable byproduct of sin—a tragic effort at self-justification through idolatry. Let's see what the Shadok God really says about his word.
>
> Gibi: I will not listen to your alleged "facts." Unless you start with the truth, you have no business interpreting facts at all. Let me help you by interpreting facts revelationally.
>
> Shadok: Of course you will not listen to the proper interpretation of facts. Blinded by your sin, you catch each fact as you would a ball—and then you throw it into a bottomless pit.
>
> Gibi: That's what you do with what I say—a clear proof of your hopeless, pseudo-autonomous condition. May the Gibi God help you.
>
> Shadok: May the Shadok God help you![13]
>
> As Montgomery notes, this encounter is hopeless, since neither side can appeal to neutral facts to solve the dispute. Both sides are reduced to chest-thumping, loud assertion, and empty fideism.

It's funny but it's true! This is presuppositionalism in action. It's arguing without appealing to any facts.

And here is my eighth point from my post on presuppositionalism.

Excerpt:

> My view of presuppositional apologetics is that is as a system, it is circular reasoning. It assumes Christianity in order to prove Christianity. But there is an even worse problem with it. It's not a Biblical way of doing apologetics. It's man's way of doing apologetics, not God's. I think that the best way to understand Van Til's apologetics is by saying that it really just a sermon disguised as apologetics. The problem is that Van Til's sermon has no basis in the Bible. Wherever he is getting his view from, it's not from the Bible. When I look the Bible, I don't see any Biblical support for the view that pre-suppositional apologetics is the *only approved way* of defending the faith. Instead, the standard method seems to be evidentialism.
>
> In Romans 1, Paul writes that people can learn about God's existence from the natural world.
>
> Romans 1:18-23:
>
> 18The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,
>
> 19since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.
>
> 20For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

[21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[22]Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

[23]and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

And in Acts, Peter appeals to eyewitness testimony for the resurrection, and Jesus' miracles.

Acts 2:22-24, and 36:

[22]"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[23]This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

[24]But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

And finally from the same chapter:

[36]"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Professor Clay Jones of Biola University makes the case that the use of evidence when preaching the gospel was *standard operating procedure* in the early church. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Intro:

In 1993 I started working for Simon Greenleaf University (now Trinity Law School) which offered an M.A. in Christian apologetics (Craig Hazen was the director). Much of my job was to promote the school and although I had studied Christian apologetics since my sophomore year in high school, I decided I needed to see whether an apologetic witness had strong Biblical precedence.

It does.

As I poured through the Scripture I found that Jesus and the apostles preached the resurrection of Christ as the sign of the truth of Christianity.

What follows are some of the passages which support the resurrection witness.

Here is my favorite verse from his massive list list of verses in favor of the evidential approach to Christian apologetics:

Mat. 12:39-40: A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jesus is saying that the resurrection was deliberately given as a sign to

> unbelievers to convince them. ("The Sign of Jonah" = the resurrection)
>
> So, I see that God uses nature and miracles to persuade, which can be assessed using scientific and historical methods. Can anyone find me a clear statement in the Bible that states that only pre-suppositional arguments should be used? I could be wrong, and I am willing to be proven wrong. I think we should use the Biblical method of apologetics, not the fallen man's method of apologetics.

Presuppositional arguments, like the ontological argument from reason or the epistemological argument from reason are good. Presuppositionalism as a system is not good. It's good to learn presuppositional arguments, but as part of a quiver of arguments – not in isolation.

By the way, Eric Chabot posted a fascinating discussion between presuppositionalist James White and Richard Howe on this topic, where the point about how presupositionalism cannot prove Christianity in particular came up.

Presuppositionalism is not a Christian methodology. It's neither Biblical, nor can it be used to prove Christianity. It's man's system of apologetics, not God's.

UPDATE: David Haines posted a couple of criticisms of presuppositionalism here.

UPDATE: A rebuttal to the first of Messianic Drew's points is here.

Pastor Matt: How apologetics saved my faith

July 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a must-read post from Pastor Matt Rawlings whose reading list I wrote about before.

Excerpt:

> I became a Christian at 24 after a cancer diagnosis. I had been an atheist for 10 years but came to God in desperation. I left Capitol Hill (and politics altogether) to learn about Christianity. I attended what many believed was a conservative seminary but had slowly slipped into liberalism by the time I arrived in 1999. I was sold on "higher criticism" (or a skeptical approach to the historicity and inerrency of Scripture) and joined the then growing "Emergent Church" movement. Within a few years, I was where Rob Bell is now–a soft universalist with a condescending attitude toward conservatives. Yet, I was also spiritually dead and was struggling with depression. I was quickly headed back to the atheism I had thought I had left behind while praying for my life.
>
> During this time of personal struggle, my wife and I were helping a small church in Charleston, West Virginia. When an elder learned my wife had a degree in micro-biology and had helped overseen a science program at Cornell, he asked her to meet with the youth group and answer their questions about science and the faith. In preparation, she picked up the book The Case for a Creator by Lee Strobel (Zondervan 2005). She devoured the book and went on and on about wonderful it was and how I had to read it. I resisted as the cover struck me as "fundamentalist nonsense." Yet, she persisted and it became clear that either I was going to read the book or spend a few nights on the couch!
>
> I opened the book with a bad attitude. After all, my seminary professors had told me that "apologetics is dead!" and that "Generation-X and -Y desired experience not 'answers.'" I was even more resistant when I saw the first few chapters take on evolution. I was convinced Genesis 1-11 was all myth, Darwin had been proven correct and that only nutters questioned it. But after reading Strobel's interaction with Dr. Jonathan Wells and Dr. Stephen C. Meyer of the Discovery Institute, I realized I had no real counter argument to intelligent design.

Read the rest.

The Case for a Creator is one of my favorite apologetics books. I have read it once, but I've listened to the audio version TEN TIMES. This book more than any other is the perfect introduction to science apologetics for beginners. I really recommend the audio book as a companion to the print version. I gave it to a friend of mine in Scotland who is from a very fundamentalist background, but she has been able to apply what's in the book in conversations because she listens to the audio book while she drives.

When I read this post by Pastor Matt, I felt that his faith was not just castles built in the

sky. A lot of pastors basically start by assuming (without any evidence) that the Bible is correct in everything it says, and then they start lecturing everyone else about what the Bible says without ever having done a moment of investigation into the evidence for or against what they are preaching about. They've never read anyone who disagrees with them, and they don't know how to explain what they believe to anyone outside the church walls. I have to tell you that this is one of the *the most uncomfortable feelings* to have when you are not yet a Christian. You are in a building filled with people who don't know whether what they believe is true. You are being lectured by a man who typically has no idea how to show others that what he is talking about is true, except for appealing to feelings. I don't know about you, but that really makes me uncomfortable. I trust people more when I know they are good at something practical, like mechanical engineering, medicine, automobile mechanics, weight-lifting, nutrition or cooking. When you read outside the Bible, it's basically treating Christianity like it's a real area of knowledge. That makes me interested, because it means we are talking about something real, not just a personal preference or a subjective experience or a community custom.

Pastor Matt is different. He's read tons of stuff outside the Bible, and he's not presupposing anything when he preaches about God and Jesus. He's got informed beliefs about this stuff. He's authentic. And you can see the strength of his convictions by looking at what he's read. He talks about his faith like we might talk about our professions. We have convictions about what we do that creates value for others because *we know how to do it*. When a pastor reads a lot on logic, philosophy, history and science, then he is able to know whether what he says he believes is really true or not *out there in the real world*. When I listen to my pastor and look at our church book store, I get very disappointed. It makes me wonder why I can't go to a church like Pastor Matt's church. Wouldn't that be great? I would really fly out of bed on Sunday morning if I thought "what is he going to teach on this morning, that I can use at work on Monday morning?" I am always interested in hearing what someone else *knows*. I am one of those people who is always asking the dentist, the doctor, the mechanic, and the food preparers "how did you do that?" I even got the recipe for the cilantro-lime rice that Chipotle makes by asking the woman who was making my burrito bowl. How did you do it? I want to know how you know.

I have a good friend of mine right now who is going through a tough time with her church. She keeps telling me that Sunday school is very emotional, and clearly designed to comfort people and make them feel "gooey" (her word). This is a woman who is on fire academically and is making tons of money in a summer job in her field. She just got a new scholarship, too. She keeps thinking that Sunday school is supposed to be the time to learn about difficult things and practical things. It's causing her to really get bored with church and even to look for a new church. I think a lot of young people are tired of being entertained in church, and they would like to get their minds on some real knowledge about God and what he's done in history and in nature. I'll bet that Pastor Matt doesn't have any problems packing his church with young people. Young people can tell when someone really knows what they are talking about, the same way that a dentist knows

about teeth, or that a tax preparer knows about tax laws.

By the way, J. Warner Wallace had something to say about what he taught kids when he was a youth pastor in his latest podcast. I think it's relevant to this post.

Obama's D.C. appeals court nominee equated pro-lifers with Ku Klux Klan

July 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Powerline blog, a look at the record of Obama's latest judicial nominee.

She opposed the church invoking the First Amendment as a defense to government intervention in hiring decisions:

> Only four Republican Senators out of eight on the Committee asked questions today. Ranking Member Grassley (and later Sen. Cruz) inquired about a statement Pillard made regarding *Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church v. EEOC*. In that case, the Supreme Court, by a vote of 9-0, found that the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment bar suits brought on behalf of ministers against their churches under the anti-employment discrimination laws, because churches and other religious groups must be free to choose their leaders without government interference.
>
> Prior to the decision, Pillard wrote that the position of the defendant church represents "a substantial threat to the American rule of law." This statement was the focus of questions by Grassley and Cruz.
>
> Pillard tried to side-step the inquiry by confessing that she is an imperfect predictor of how the Supreme Court will rule (she was referring to a statement she had also made that "the big news will be if the Court decides [the case] for the Church"). This was a cynical evasion.
>
> The problem is not Pillard's failure to predict how the Court would rule; **the problem was her radical position that the church's invocation of its First Amendment rights substantially threatens the rule of law.** Pillard was unwilling to defend this position, so she dodged the question.
>
> The significance of the 9-0 vote in favor of the church is not Pillard's failure to anticipate it. The significance lies in the fact that she took a position too radical for any of the Court's liberals to adopt. In fact, according to Cruz, Justice Kagan described the government's position in the case, which Pillard supported, as "amazing."

She compared pro-lifers to the Ku Klux Klan:

> Pillard did no better with a question from Senator Lee about her argument that anti-abortion protesters are comparable to the members of the Ku Klux Klan who were the subject of the anti-KKK post-civil war statute. Pillard made this argument in the context of litigation trying to use that statute against anti-abortion protesters.
>
> Pillard testified today that the comparison is "not at all fair." She explained that

> she had been forced to rely the anti-Klan law because there was nothing else on the books with which to go after militant anti-abortion protesters (Pillard hoped to use RICO, but the Supreme Court had shot theory that down). Pillard assured Sen. Lee that, because Congress has since passed legislation to deal with such protesters, there is no longer a need to use the anti-Klan law.

She opposes federalism, one of the biggest causes of American prosperity:

> Finally, Sen. Flake questioned Pillard about her "transnationalism" referred to in my earlier report. He asked her about a statement in which, apparently, she indicated that international law provides a promising source of new rights for U.S. citizens, now that recognized domestic sources of such rights may be largely exhausted.
>
> Pillard said she doesn't agree with this view. She testified that she merely trying to explain to a Swiss audience the difference between our system and the system to which Europeans are accustomed. Specifically, she was trying to explain that we have a federal system.
>
> I don't have the statement that Sen. Flake was referring to, and thus cannot yet evaluate the plausibility of Pillard's explanation of it. I can say, however, that Pillard is a less than ideal candidate to be explaining federalism to foreigners or anyone else. For she views "the federalism impulse" as a "sort of demonization of government" and an "effort to impede the ability of government to govern."

Here's more on her record from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Among some of her greatest hits, the former Deputy Assistant Attorney General argues that abortion is necessary to help "free women from historically routine *conscription* into maternity." As if her militant feminism wasn't apparent enough, she takes the opportunity in some of her writings to slam anyone who opposes the abortion-contraception mandate as "reinforce[ing] broader patterns of discrimination against women as a class of *presumptive breeders*."
>
> A mother of two, Nina wrote a 2011 paper, "Against the New Maternalism," which argues that by celebrating motherhood, society is creating a "self-fulfilling cycle of discrimination." Those ideas bleed into Pillard's extreme pro-abortion views, which suggest that technology is somehow manipulating Americans to consider the personhood of the unborn. In one of her most jaw-dropping statements, the President's nominee even criticizes the ultrasound. She believes it manufactures "deceptive images of fetus-as-autonomous-being that the anti-choice movement has popularized since the advent of amniocentesis."
>
> As crazy and outrageous as her other comments are, this one is a denial of basic biology! She actually rejects modern science on human development because it

> conflicts with her hard-core ideology. If that doesn't disqualify someone from the second most prestigious court in America, I'm not sure what does. Except maybe this: Pillard is so fiercely opposed to abstinence education that she has said publicly she would declare it unconstitutional. In "Our Other Reproductive Choices," Nina argues that abstinence-only curriculum is "permeated with stereotyped messages and sex-based double standards" which, in her mind, makes it "vulnerable to an equal protection challenge."

Wow, you can really tell a lot about Obama's views on churches and pro-lifers from his judicial nominees, can't you?

Robert P. George: what is religious liberty? what is conscience?

July 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Public Discourse, an article that explains why freedom of religion is a human right. (H/T Chris S.)

Excerpt:

> In its fullest and most robust sense, religion is the human person's being in right relation to the divine—the more-than-merely-human source or sources, if there be such, of meaning and value. In the perfect realization of the good of religion, one would achieve the relationship that the divine—say God himself, assuming for a moment the truth of monotheism—wishes us to have with Him.
>
> Of course, different traditions of faith have different views of what constitutes religion in its fullest and most robust sense. There are different doctrines, different scriptures, different ideas of what is true about spiritual things and what it means to be in proper relationship to the more-than-merely-human source or sources of meaning and value that different traditions understand as divinity.

Religious liberty is the ability to use reason and evidence to determine the truth about religion:

> **For my part, I believe that reason has a very large role to play for each of us in deciding where spiritual truth most robustly is to be found. And by reason here, I mean not only our capacity for practical reasoning and moral judgment, but also our capacities for understanding and evaluating claims of all sorts: logical, historical, scientific, and so forth. But one need not agree with me about this in order to affirm with me that there is a distinct human good of religion—a good that uniquely shapes one's pursuit of and participation in all the aspects of our flourishing as human beings—and that one begins to realize and participate in this good from the moment one begins the quest to understand the more-than-merely-human sources of meaning and value and to live authentically by ordering one's life in line with one's best judgments of the truth in religious matters.**
>
> If I am right, then the existential raising of religious questions, the honest identification of answers, and the fulfilling of what one sincerely believes to be one's duties in the light of those answers are all parts of the human good of religion. But if that is true, then respect for a person's well-being, or more simply respect for the person, demands respect for his or her flourishing as a seeker of religious truth and as one who lives in line with his or her best judgments of what is true in spiritual matters. And that, in turn, requires respect for everyone's

> liberty in the religious quest—the quest to understand religious truth and order one's life in line with it.
>
> Because faith of any type, including religious faith, cannot be authentic—it cannot be *faith*—unless it is free, respect for the person—that is to say, respect for his or her dignity as a free and rational creature—requires respect for his or her religious liberty. That is why it makes sense, from the point of view of reason, and not merely from the point of view of the revealed teaching of a particular faith—though many faiths proclaim the right to religious freedom on theological and not merely philosophical grounds—to understand religious freedom as a fundamental human right.

Here's the definition of conscience – it's not just autonomy to do whatever you want:

> Conscience, as Newman understood it, is the very opposite of "autonomy" in the modern sense. It is not a writer of permission slips. It is not in the business of licensing us to do as we please or conferring on us "the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." Rather, conscience is one's last best judgment specifying the bearing of moral principles one grasps, yet in no way makes up for oneself, on concrete proposals for action. Conscience identifies our *duties* under a moral law that we do not ourselves make. It speaks of what one must do and what one must not do. Understood in this way, conscience is, indeed, what Newman said it is: a stern monitor.
>
> Contrast this understanding of conscience with what Newman condemns as its counterfeit. Conscience as "self-will" is a matter of feeling or emotion, not reason. It is concerned not so much with the identification of what one has a duty to do or not do, one's feelings and desires to the contrary notwithstanding, but rather, and precisely, with sorting out one's feelings. Conscience as self-will identifies permissions, not obligations. It licenses behavior by establishing that one doesn't feel bad about doing it, or, at least, one doesn't feel so bad about doing it that one prefers the alternative of not doing it.
>
> I'm with Newman. His key distinction is between conscience, authentically understood, and self-will—conscience as the permissions department. His core insight is that conscience has rights *because it has duties*. **The right to follow one's conscience, and the obligation to respect conscience—especially in matters of faith, where the right of conscience takes the form of religious liberty of individuals and communities of faith—obtain not because people as autonomous agents should be able to do as they please; they obtain, and are stringent and sometimes overriding, because people have duties and the obligation to fulfill them. The duty to follow conscience is a duty to do things or refrain from doing things not because one wants to follow one's duty, *but even if one strongly does not want to follow it*. The right of conscience is a right to do what**

> **one judges oneself to be under an obligation to do, whether one welcomes the obligation or must overcome strong aversion in order to fulfill it.** If there is a form of words that sums up the antithesis of Newman's view of conscience as a stern monitor, it is the imbecilic slogan that will forever stand as a verbal monument to the "Me-generation": "If it feels good, do it."

Where are these rights under attack today? Well, in this country we have situations where Christians are being forced to act like atheists in public in order to avoid offending atheists. The view that Christianity is something that should be kept private because it is offensive to atheists is an atheist view. So what this really is then is atheists forcing their atheism on Christians. You can see atheists attack religious liberty today when valedictorians are forced to hid their true beliefs in order to avoid making atheists feel bad. Conscience is under attack in many places, but one of them is the abortion mandate in Obamacare, which requires Christian business owners to provide their employees with drugs that can cause abortions. So there are very real threats to religious liberty and conscience today. If you value religious liberty and conscience rights, then you should oppose expanding the power of any government that is hostile to those rights.

Why doesn’t God give us more evidence of his existence?

July 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard someone say that if God existed, he would give us more evidence? This is called the “hiddenness of God” argument. It’s also known as the argument from “rational non-belief”.

Basically the argument is something like this:

1. God is all powerful
2. God is all loving
3. God wants all people to know about him
4. Some people don’t know about him
5. Therefore, there is no God.

You may hear have heard this argument before, when talking to atheists, as in William Lane Craig’s debate with Theodore Drange, (audio, video).

Basically, the atheist is saying that he’s looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that’s logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden when our eternal destination depends on our knowledge of his existence.

What reason could God have for remaining hidden?

Dr. Michael Murray, a brilliant professor of philosophy at Franklin & Marshall College, has found a reason for God to remain hidden.

His paper on divine hiddenness is here:
“Coercion and the Hiddenness of God“, American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us. Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him. God places a higher value on people having the free will to respond to him, and if he shows too much of himself he takes away their free choice to respond to him, because once he is too overt about his existence, people will just feel obligated to belief in him in order to avoid being punished.

But believing in God just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants for us. If it is too obvious to us that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and behave morally out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out of interest *in him*, just like we might try to get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is

actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God's veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don't seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to reach out to us and draw us to him. But I do think that we are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist's argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. In order to derive a contradiction, God MUST NOT have any possible reason to remain hidden. If he has a reason for remaining hidden that is consistent with his goodness, then the argument will not go through.

When Murray offers a possible reason for God to remain hidden in order to allow people to freely respond to him, then the argument is defeated. God wants people to respond to him freely so that there is a genuine love relationship – not coercion by overt threat of damnation. To rescue the argument, the atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free choice of his creatures to reject him.

More of Michael Murray's work

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007). The book chapter from the Cambridge book is here. The book chapter from the Routledge book is here.

Michael Murray's papers are really fun to read, because he uses hilarious examples. I should mention that I disagree with his view that God's work of introducing biological information in living creatures has to be front-loaded.

Here's more terrific stuff from Dr. Murray:

- "Who's Afraid of Religion?", Inaugural Lecture delivered March 30, 2006. Franklin and Marshall College.
- "Seek and You Will Find", in God and the Philosophers. Thomas Morris, editor. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1994.

Is there any evidence of God's existence?

Yes, just watch this lecture by Dr. William Lane Craig. It contains 5 reasons why God exists and 3 reasons why it matters.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information

- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument

Annual median household income down $4,500 since Democrats won Congress in 2006

July 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

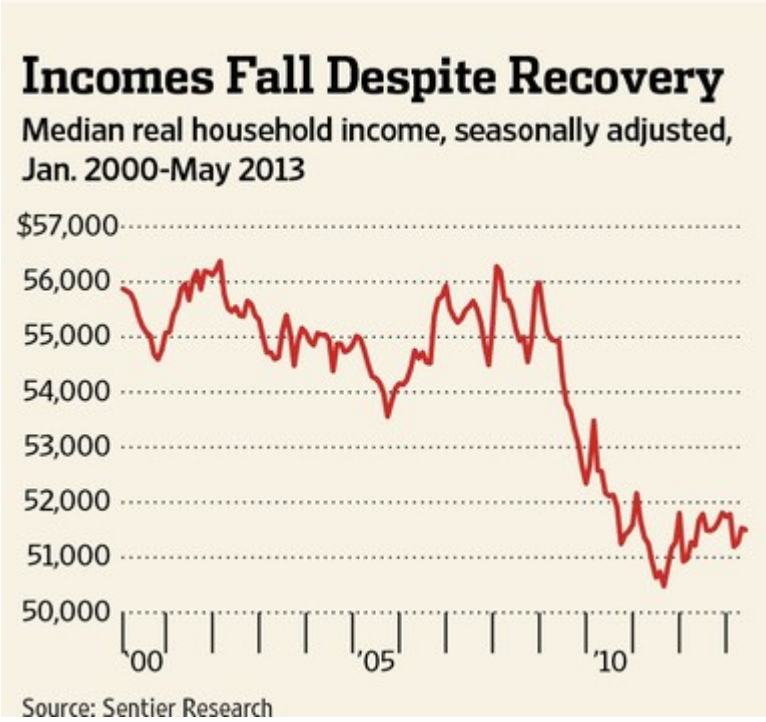

Median Household Income Under Obama

The Wall Street Journal reports.

Excerpt:

> The recovery that began four years ago has been one of the weakest on record, averaging a little more than 2%. And it has not gained speed. Growth in the fourth quarter of 2012 was 0.4%. It rose to a still anemic 1.8% in the first quarter but most economists are predicting even slower growth in the second quarter.
>
> We hope the predictions of a faster growth in the second half will be right, but the Obama Treasury and Federal Reserve have been predicting for four years that takeoff was just around the corner. Stocks are doing great, and housing prices are rising, but job growth remains lackluster. What has never arrived is the 3%-4% growth spurt during typical expansions.
>
> […]What about the middle class that is the focus of Mr. Obama's rhetoric? Each month the consultants at Sentier Research crunch the numbers from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and estimate the trend in median annual household income adjusted for inflation. In its May 2013 report, Sentier put the figure at $51,500, essentially unchanged from $51,671 a year earlier.
>
> And that's the good news. The bad news is that median real household income is $2,718, or 5%, lower than the $54,218 median in June 2009 when the recession officially ended. Median incomes typically fall during recessions. But the striking

> fact of the Obama economy is that median real household income has fallen even during the recovery.
>
> While the declines have stabilized over the last two years, incomes are still far below the previous peak located by Sentier of $56,280 in January 2008. No wonder Mr. Obama is now turning once again to his familiar political narrative assailing inequality and blaming everyone else for it. He wants to change the subject from the results on his watch.
>
> The core problem has been Mr. Obama's focus on spreading the wealth rather than creating it. ObamaCare will soon hook more Americans on government subsidies, but its mandates and taxes have hurt job creation, especially at small businesses. Mr. Obama's record tax increases have grabbed a bigger chunk of affluent incomes, but they created uncertainty for business throughout 2012 and have dampened growth so far this year.
>
> The food stamp and disability rolls have exploded, which reduces inequality but also reduces the incentive to work and rise on the economic ladder. This has contributed to a plunge in the share of Americans who are working—the labor participation rate—to 63.5% in June from 65.7% in June 2009. And don't forget the Fed's extraordinary monetary policy, which has done well by the rich who have assets but left the thrifty middle class and retirees earning pennies on their savings.
>
> Mr. Obama would have done far better by the poor, the middle class and the wealthy if he had focused on growing the economy first. The difference between the Obama 2% recovery and the Reagan-Clinton 3%-4% growth rates is rising incomes for nearly everybody.

And remember, thanks to Obamacare, medical insurance premiums have soared over $3,000. We are getting *poorer* because of Obama's big government policies.

Whose fault is it?

In the 2006 mid-term elections, the Democrats took over the House and Senate. That was the beginning of the Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid spending spree. Millions of dollars have been wasted on ineffective government programs, handouts and bailouts. We've had trillion dollar deficits for the last four years under Obama, and over 8 trillion added to the national debt since Pelosi/Reid 2007. All that deficit spend does have an effect on economic growth – businesses know that they are going to have to pay it off at some point, either through higher taxes or inflation or both.

Democrat bill to punish criticism of cross-dressing heads to Senate

July 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> The full Senate will consider a bill sponsored by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) that would add "actual or perceived sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to the list of federally protected traits, which currently include race, religion, age, gender and disability.
>
> The Family Research Council describes The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (S. 815) as "giving special rights and protections to people based solely on their sexual behavior," warning that ENDA "is to the office what the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell was to the military." (S.815.pdf)
>
> ENDA cleared the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee July 10th on a 15-7 vote, with Republicans Mark Kirk (Ill.), Orrin Hatch (Utah), and Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) voting with the committee's Democratic majority.
>
> […]"[The President] thanks Committee Chairman [Tom] Harkin, Senator Merkley, and Senator Kirk for their leadership on this important issue. The President has long supported an inclusive ENDA, which would enshrine into law strong, lasting and comprehensive protections against employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. "
>
> The bill imposes penalties under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Employee Rights Act of 1991 on private employers who discriminate against individuals on the basis of their "gender identity," which the legislation describes as "the gender-related identity, appearance or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of an individual, with or without regard to the individual's designated sex at birth."
>
> Under the bill, state and local officials, including those who work for local school districts, are not immune, and can also be sued in federal court for employment discrimination.
>
> "Unlike past bills, Sen. Merkley's version doesn't include an exemption for bathrooms, which means that employers at daycares, public schools, and Christian businesses would all have to change their restroom and shower policies to accommodate men who dress like women and vice-versa.," FRC president Tony Perkins noted.

Republican senator Ted Cruz is alarmed at the way that government is trying to force their moral views on individuals and businesses.

Excerpt:

> In an interview with the Christian Broadcasting Network, Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) said he believes the legalization of same-sex “marriage” may lead to those who express religious objections to homosexuality being prosecuted for hate speech.
>
> “If you look at other nations that have gone down the road towards gay marriage, that’s the next step of where it gets enforced,” Cruz told CBN host David Brody. “It gets enforced against Christian pastors who decline to perform gay marriages, who speak out and preach biblical truths on marriage, that has been defined elsewhere as hate speech, as inconsistent with the enlightened view of government.”
> In Canada, where gay ‘marriage’ was legalized in 2005, Christian pastors, public officials, educators and business owners have all faced heavy fines and lengthy court battles after speaking critically of the homosexual lifestyle. In one case a pastor was fined $7000 and ordered never again to speak publicly about the issue of homosexuality after he wrote a letter to the editor of a local newspaper criticizing the homosexual agenda in schools.
>
> Both Sweden and the United Kingdom have also prosecuted people who expressed traditional views on homosexuality, including a Christian pastor in Sweden who was sentenced to a suspended jail term for “inciting hatred” for preaching against homosexual behavior. The UK has recently seen a rash of cases in which Christian street preachers were arrested simply for preaching that homosexual conduct is sinful.
>
> The French government has criminalized speech against homosexuality, resulting in a member of parliament being hit with a $4,000 penalty and ordered to pay $2,000 in court fees after he said he thought homosexuality was “inferior” to heterosexuality and said the practice would be “dangerous for humanity if it was pushed to the limit.”

There is a word for using the power of government to force religious and moral views onto citizens. That word is *fascism*.

Three debates on divine sovereignty, predestination and free will

July 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The two views being debated below are Calvinism and simple foreknowledge. Calvinism is the view that God unilaterally predetermines a selected group of individuals who will know him – the "elect". Foreknowledge is the view that God draws people to him who he foreknows will freely respond to his overtures and come to know him. What does the Bible teach about these issues?

The Calvinist debater is Dr. James White:

> James White is the director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, a Christian apologetics organization based in Phoenix, Arizona. He is a professor, having taught Greek, Systematic Theology, and various topics in the field of apologetics. He has authored or contributed to more than twenty books, including *The King James Only Controversy*, *The Forgotten Trinity*, *The Potter's Freedom*, and *The God Who Justifies*. He is an accomplished debater, having engaged in more than one-hundred moderated, public debates with leading proponents of Roman Catholicism, Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mormonism, as well as critics such as Bart Ehrman, John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, and John Shelby Spong. He is an elder of the Phoenix Reformed Baptist Church, has been married to Kelli for more than twenty-eight years, and has two children, Joshua and Summer.

The Foreknowledge debater is Dr. Michael Brown:

> Michael L. Brown holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and has served as a visiting or adjunct professor at Southern Evangelical Seminary, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary (Charlotte), Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Fuller Theological Seminary, Denver Theological Seminary, the King's Seminary, and Regent University School of Divinity. He has contributed numerous articles to scholarly publications, including the Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religion and the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Dr. Brown is the author of twenty books, including, Our Hands Are Stained with Blood: The Tragic Story of the "Church" and the Jewish People, which has been translated into more than twelve languages, the highly-acclaimed five-volume series, Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, a commentary on Jeremiah (part of the revised edition of the Expositor's Bible Commentary), and several books on revival and Jesus revolution.

Now, let's get ready to rumble!

First debate

A nice friendly debate that introduces the topic. This is the best debate for casual

listeners and non-Christians.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- Introduction to Calvinist James White and some of his 90 debates
- What is Calvinism and why is it important?
- Does God love all people the same way in Calvinism?
- Does God desire the salvation of all people in Calvinism?
- Is the offer of salvation to all people a genuine offer on Calvinism?
- Does Calvinism diminish or augment God's sovereignty?
- Can God accomplish his will by permitting evil creaturely actions?
- Did Jesus die only for the "chosen", or for the possibility of salvation for all?
- Does a person's responding to God's offer of savaltion detract from Gods glory?
- Does our ability to resist God's grace mean that we are "stronger" than God?

There is a little static in the audio for a few seconds every time they come back from a break, but nothing major.

Second debate, on specific passages in the Bible

Same two guys, but this time they tackle the meaning of specific Bible passages.

The MP3 file is here.

The passages being disputed:

- John 6
- Romans 8, 9
- Ephesians 1

Each person gets 8 minutes to exegete the text, followed by 4 minutes of cross-examination by the other debater, followed by 3 minute conclusions by each debater. These texts were chosen by the Calvinist debater.

Third debate, on specific passages in the Bible

Same two guys, but this time they tackle the meaning of specific Bible passages.

The MP3 file is here.

The passages being disputed:

- Luke 13:34-35 (Deuteronomy 5:28-29)
- Ezekiel 18:21-32 (Jeremiah 3:19-20; Ezekiel 22:30-31)
- 1 John 2:1-2 (2 Pet 2:1).

Each person gets 8 minutes to exegete the text, followed by 4 minutes of cross-examination by the other debater, followed by 3 minute conclusions by each debater. These texts were chosen by the foreknowledge debater.

New study: marijuana use by teens is linked to permanent brain abnormalities

July 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the National Post.

Summary:

> Smoking a few joints with friends growing up may be the furthest thing from harmless for developing young brains, a new U.S. study suggests.
>
> Teenagers who regularly use cannabis during their adolescent years may cause permanent brain abnormalities by using the drug, and increase their risk of developing serious mental disorders such as schizophrenia, a study published this month in the journal *Neuropsychopharmacology*, a division of the journal *Nature*, hints at.

The problems occurred in younger mice but not in older mice:

> The study, conducted by researchers at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, examined the cortical oscillations in mice. Cortical oscillations (patterns of activity of neurons in the brain believed to underlie various functions) are very abnormal in schizophrenia and in other psychiatric disorders. Scientists exposed young mice to very low doses of the active ingredient in marijuana for 20 days, and then allowed them to return to their siblings and develop normally.
>
> "In the adult mice exposed to marijuana ingredients in adolescence, we found that cortical oscillations were grossly altered, and they exhibited impaired cognitive abilities," says the study's lead author, Sylvina Mullins Raver, a PhD candidate in neuroscience and neurobiology at the University of Maryland, in a press release with the study. "We also found impaired cognitive behavioral performance in those mice. The striking finding is that, even though the mice were exposed to very low drug doses, and only for a brief period during adolescence, their brain abnormalities persisted into adulthood."
>
> When researchers repeated the experiment solely on adult mice, cortical oscillations and ability to perform cognitive behavioral tasks remained normal.
>
> […]"Previous research has shown that children who started using marijuana before the age of 16 are at greater risk of permanent cognitive deficits, and have a significantly higher incidence of psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia. There likely is a genetic susceptibility, and then you add marijuana during adolescence and it becomes the trigger," says the study's senior author Asaf Keller, PhD, Professor of Anatomy and Neurobiology at the University of Maryland.

Now I know that young people have trouble making decisions, and that they have the

attitude that no matter what they do, nothing bad will happen to them. But I still think that when you teach a young person, it's important to appeal to evidence like this and say to them "this isn't just me telling you what to do, this me me telling you what is true". Obviously how you impart this information to them is going to affect whether they believe it and apply it to themselves.

In case you need more data, here is some more from previous posts.

Fox News reports:

Excerpt:

> Recent research from Duke University in Durham, N.C., found teenagers who smoked marijuana habitually during their adolescence showed a decrease in their general intellectual ability as they progressed into adulthood.
>
> But now, there is an even more chilling possible side effect of cannabis use – an increased risk of stroke.
>
> According to a new study from the University of Auckland in New Zealand, marijuana may double the risk of ischemic stroke and transient ischemic attack (TIA) in young adults – even those who had no risk factors that often contribute to an attack.
>
> […]Conducting the first case-controlled study of its kind, Barber and his colleagues studied 160 ischemic stroke/TIA patients between the ages of 18 to 55 (an average age of 45), who had their urine samples screened when they entered the hospital. As a comparison, the researchers examined urine samples of 160 control subjects who had been admitted to the hospital for other medical reasons.
>
> Of the 160 stroke patients, 16 percent tested positive for marijuana use within the past couple of days, compared to only 8.1 percent of the control patients. According to Barber, the stroke patients were very well matched to the controls, with no differences in age, mechanisms for stroke or other vascular risk factors.

Here's a study from last year that found that smoking marijuana can permanently damage intelligence.

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Teenagers who regularly smoke cannabis are putting themselves at risk of permanently damaging their intelligence, according to a landmark study.
>
> Researchers found persistent users of the drug, who started smoking it at school, had lower IQ scores as adults.
>
> They were also significantly more likely to have attention and memory problems in later life, than their peers who abstained.
>
> Furthermore, those who started as teenagers and used it heavily, but quit as

> adults, did not regain their full mental powers, found academics at King's College London and Duke University in the US.
>
> They looked at data from over 1,000 people from Dunedin in New Zealand, who have been followed through their lives since being born in 1972 or 1973.
>
> […]Professor Terrie Moffitt, of KCL's Institute of Psychiatry, who contributed to the study, published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, said "persistent users" who started as teenagers suffered a drop of eight IQ points at the age of 38, compared to when they were 13.

In addition to looking at studies, it's important to look at countries that have legalized marijuana, so that we can see the results.

Other countries have tried permissive drug policies have been tried and they have *failed*.

Excerpt:

> Amsterdam authorities say they are to halve the number of brothels and marijuana shops in the city's "red light" district and surrounding area

> The city announced plans to clean up the area a year ago and since then 109 sex "windows", from which prostitutes attract customers, have been closed. The new measures aim to reduce the number of windows to 243 from 482 last year, a city spokesman said.
>
> Amsterdam also wants to close half of the 76 cannabis shops in the city centre.
>
> "Money laundering, extortion and human trafficking are things you do not see on the surface but they are hurting people and the city. We want to fight this," deputy mayor of Amsterdam Lodewijk Asscher told Reuters.

The Family Research Council explains how permissive drug policies don't actually work.

Excerpt:

> History provides evidence that legalization of drugs in foreign nations has not been successful. For example, opium was legalized in China earlier this century. That decision resulted in 90 million addicts and it took a half-century to repair the damage.[59]
>
> Egypt allowed unrestricted trade of cocaine and heroin in the 1920s. An epidemic of addiction resulted. Even in Iran and Thailand, countries where drugs are readily available, the prevalence of addiction continues to soar.[60]
>
> Modern-day Netherlands is often cited as a country which has successfully legalized drugs. Marijuana is sold over the counter and police seldom arrest cocaine and heroin users. But official tolerance has led to significant increases in addiction. Amsterdam's officials blame the significant rise in crime on the liberal drug policy. The city's 7,000 addicts are blamed for 80 percent of all property crime and Amsterdam's rate of burglary is now twice that of Newark, New Jersey.[61] Drug problems have forced the city to increase the size of the police

> force and the city fathers are now rethinking the drug policy.[62]
>
> Dr. K. F. Gunning, president of the Dutch National Committee on Drug Prevention, cites some revealing statistics about drug abuse and crime. Cannabis use among students increased 250 percent from 1984 to 1992. During the same period, shootings rose 40 percent, car thefts increased 62 percent, and hold-ups rose 69 percent.[63]
>
> Sweden legalized doctor prescriptions of amphetamines in 1965. During the first year of legalization, the number of intravenous"speed" addicts rose 88.5 percent. A study of men arrested during the legalization period showed a high correlation between intravenous use and a variety of crimes.[64]
>
> Dr. Nils Bejorot, director of the Swedish Carnegie Institute and professor of social medicine at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, believes the solution to the growing drug problem is consistent social and legal harassment of both users and dealers.[65]
>
> Great Britain experimented with controlled distribution of heroin between 1959 and 1968. According to the British Medical Journal, the number of heroin addicts doubled every sixteen months and the increase in addicts was accompanied by an increase in criminal activity as well.[66] And British authorities found that heroin addicts have a very good chance of dying prematurely. On the crime front, Scotland Yard had to increase its narcotics squad 100 percent to combat the crime caused by the "legal" addicts.[67]
>
> The Swiss opened a "legalized drug" area in Zurich seven years ago and local addicts were given drugs, clean needles, and emergency medical care. Unfortunately, the liberal policy backfired and the number of addicts surged to 3,500; violence surged, too. "Needle Park," as it came to be known, was a place of open warfare among rival gangs, and even police faced gunfire. Their cars were attacked and overturned. In February 1995, officials ended the experiment, conceding that it had evolved into a grotesque spectacle.[68]

Now are the people who push for legalizing marijuana aware of these facts? Do they think about society will be like if more human beings who have spouses, children and jobs are more able to get their hands on drugs? Will they complain when their spouse loses their job, or they lose their job, and their children suffer? Will they blame themselves, or will they keep on smoking and blame others for their own decisions? We all have to think about the people around us before we do stupid, selfish things.

Crime in Canada reaches lowest level in 40 years due to Conservative party policies

July 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper
From the National Post.

Excerpt:

> New figures show Canada's crime rate dipped to its lowest level in 40 years last year, the very year the federal government enacted some of its harshest tough-on-crime policies.
>
> Just under two million criminal incidents were reported to police in 2012, about 36,000 fewer than the previous year, according to a Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics study on police-reported crime.
>
> The decline is primarily attributed to decreases in non-violent crimes. In fact, 2012 marked the ninth consecutive year that both the volume and severity of crime was down.
>
> According to the study, 543 homicides were reported across the country, 55 fewer than in 2011. Youth crime was also down.
>
> "As a result, the homicide rate fell to its lowest level since 1966," the report concluded.

Relaxing gun control laws was also likely a factor:

> Although crime rates have been falling for years, the federal government passed a controversial omnibus crime bill early last year. It set a number of mandatory minimum penalties for drug trafficking and sex crimes against children and got

> tough on pot producers, young offenders, Canadians imprisoned abroad seeking a transfer to a Canadian institution and ex-cons seeking a pardon.
>
> **The government also scrapped the controversial long gun registry last year.**

A gun registry is nothing but a promise that the government will confiscate weapons later. When the registry goes away, people feel safer about buying guns. The more citizens who are legally armed, the worse it is for criminals.

I’m posting this to show that unlike our own government, some governments are actually doing things that work to solve problems. But all of this goes back to qualifications. Stephen Harper *has* the BA and MA in Economics. He is an economist, so he understands how laws and policies influence human behavior. That’s why when he makes a policy, he gets the results he wants to get. He actually knows what he is doing. He is actually doing work that he knows how to do. It *can* happen.

Why do younger evangelicals put happiness and popularity over morality and truth?

July 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting post by Mark Tooley in the American Spectator.

Excerpt:

> A new generation of evangelical elites is imploring evangelicals to step back from the culture wars. Mostly they want to escape polarizing strong stances on same-sex marriage and abortion, and perhaps also contentious church-state issues, like the Obamacare contraceptive mandate.
>
> Purportedly the evangelical church is failing to reach young, upwardly mobile professionals because evangelicals, who now broadly comprise perhaps one third of all Americans, are seen as reactionary and hateful. On their college campuses, at their coffee shops, and in their yoga classes, among other venues, some outspoken hip young evangelicals want a new public image for their faith.
>
> […]A popular young evangelical blogger echoing Merritt's theme is Rachel Evans, who conveniently grew up in the Tennessee small town famous for the Scopes Monkey Trial. Her 2010 book was *Evolving in Monkey Town: How a Girl Who Knew All the Answers Learned to Ask the Questions.* "We are tired of the culture wars," she explained in a recent interview. "We are tired of politics." Lamenting the church's preoccupation with "shame and guilt," she urged evangelicals to reconsider their opposition to same-sex unions.

The post has a nice history of how evangelicals have always been involved in moral and political issues, and it's worth reading. But I want to make a different point below.

What's at the root of this movement to back away from moral issues? Here's what I think is the problem. When you advocate for moral causes like protecting the unborn, or school choice, or freeing the slaves, a bunch of people are not going to like you. Christians in the time of Jesus knew that being bold about their Christian convictions would make a lot of people think bad things about them – they expected it. But young evangelicals have gotten the idea that being a Christian should not involve any sort of unhappiness and unpopularity. They wouldn't have learned this from the Bible, because the Bible emphasizes suffering and unpopularity as part of the normal Christian life. It is their experience of church (and the hedonistic culture around them) that is likely to reinforce that view.

What young evangelicals learn in many churches is that religion is something that is centered on the Bible and the church building – it is not something that flows into real life. They learn that you can't find out anything about God from the Big Bang, the DNA, the fossil record, or even from the peer-reviewed research on abortion, divorce, or gay marriage. They learn from the Bible that helping the poor is good, but then they never

pick up an economic textbook to see *which economic system really helps the poor.* What you learn about in church is that religion is private and has no connection to reality whatsoever. This fits in with their view that Christianity should make them happy, because they've learned that it doesn't involve any studying to connect the Bible to the real world.

What follows from having a view that Christianity only lives in the Bible and church, and not out there in the real world of telescopes and microscopes? Well, most young evangelicals interpret what their pastor is telling them as "our flavor of ice cream" or "our cultural preference". They don't link Christianity to the real world, they don't think that it's true for everyone. They think that you just accept what the Bible says on faith, and that's all. No reasons can be given to non-Christians outside of just asking them to accept the Bible. Younger evangelicals believe that there are no facts that confirm or disprove Christianity – it's just a blind belief. Young evangelicals think that their faith doesn't have to be complemented with careful study of how things work in the real world.

What is the result of this anti-intellectual compartmentalization of faith? The result is that young evangelicals will balk at the idea of telling someone that they are going to Hell if they don't believe in Jesus. They will balk at the idea that feminism is to blame for the destruction of the family. They will balk at the idea that the best way to help the poor is to push for free market capitalism. They will balk at the idea that it is wrong to kill unborn children. They will balk at the idea that disarmament and pacifism embolden terrorists and tyrants to attack peace-loving people. They will balk at the idea that traditional marriage is better for society and children. They will balk at the idea that man-made catastrophic global warming is not supported by science. *They lack courage because they first lack knowledge*. They don't know how to make the case using hard evidence. They don't learn that hard evidence is important in church.

If the purpose of religion is to have happy feelings and be liked, then studying the real world to find out whether the Bible is true is bad religion. If religion is divorced from reality, then it's just a personal preference influenced by how a person was raised. No young evangelical is going to lift a finger to take bold moral stands if they think their worldview is just one option among many – like the flavors of ice cream in the frozen section of the grocery store. They have to know that what they are saying is true – then they will be bold. An example: there was a time when people believed that God did not create the first living cell, because it was just a simple lump of protoplasm that could easily come about by accident. Now we know better, and we can boldly make the case for intelligent design based on hard evidence – if we put in the time to study the evidence. And it is the same for everything – from theological claims, to moral claims, to social claims, to economic claims, to foreign policy claims. It doesn't matter if people call you names when you have the facts to support unpopular claims, *and that's why public, authentic Christianity is built on facts.* Non-Christians being offended by your claims doesn't change the way the world is.

We have to turn away from our own ignorance, laziness and cowardice if we hope to have the ability to stand up for our beliefs in public. Christianity is not about being happy and

feeling good and being liked by others. In a society that is increasingly secular and relativistic, studying outside the Bible necessarily precedes an authentic Christian life. There is no shortcut. We might have been able to get away with fideism 50 years ago, but not anymore. Not now.

Does a commitment to naturalism undermine rational thought and textual meaning?

July 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. William Lane Craig recently had a formal debate with an atheist philosopher named Alex Rosenberg. Rosenberg is a strong naturalist and he suggests all kinds of counterintuitive outworkings of naturalism in his book. Dr. Craig brought up a bunch of those strange views in his debate, and I listed them out in my summary of the debate as follows:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

We are concerned with #1 and #2 in this post.

Now I was visiting my parents last week in my home town and Dad and I went to church on Sunday. He wanted to listen to some weird sing-song-voiced pastor on the drive there, but I plugged in my smartphone and we listened to these three podcasts by William Lane Craig instead.

- Arguments in the Debate "Is Faith in God Reasonable?" Part 1
- Arguments in the Debate "Is Faith in God Reasonable?" Part 2
- Arguments in the Debate "Is Faith in God Reasonable?" Part 3

Dr. Craig was explaining in part 3 (I think) about how he went on the offensive with the 8 points, and Dad asked me why Dr. Rosenberg wrote that if naturalism is true, then nothing written down is meaningful. He also wanted to know why Dr. Rosenberg would write a book if his worldview entailed that nothing written down is meaningful.

The solution has to do with Rosenberg's denial of "intentionality", which is the idea that something can be about something else. For example, I can think about what I had for breakfast today on the way to church (two apples and coffee) or I can think about the sermon today in my home church and how good it was. A naturalist believes that the whole universe is made up of pure matter alone, and matter cannot be about anything. So Rosenberg denies this common sense view of "intentionality" or "aboutness" because there is no room for it on his naturalistic / materialistic / physicalist view of reality.

Here is a post by Bill Valicella on Maverick Philosopher blog that answers Dad's questions. First, Rosenberg's own view from his book.

> A single still photograph doesn't convey movement the way a motion picture does. Watching a sequence of slightly different photos one photo per hour, or per minute, or even one every 6 seconds won't do it either. But looking at the right sequence of still pictures succeeding each other every one-twentieth of a second produces the illusion that the images in each still photo are moving. Increasing the rate enhances the illusion, though beyond a certain rate the illusion gets no better for creatures like us. But it's still an illusion. There is noting to it but the succession of still pictures. That's how movies perpetrate their illusion. The large set of still pictures is organized together in a way that produces in creatures like us the illusion that the images are moving. In creatures with different brains and eyes, ones that work faster, the trick might not work. In ones that work slower, changing the still pictures at the rate of one every hour (as in time-lapse photography) could work. But there is no movement of any of the images in any of the pictures, nor does anything move from one photo onto the next. Of course, the projector is moving, and the photons are moving, and the actors were moving. But all the movement that the movie watcher detects is in the eye of the beholder. That is why the movement is illusory.
>
> The notion that thoughts are about stuff is illusory in roughly the same way. Think of each input/output neural circuit as a single still photo. Now, put together a huge number of input/output circuits in the right way. None of them is about anything; each is just an input/output circuit firing or not. But when they act together, they "project" the illusion that there are thoughts about stuff. They do that through the behavior and the conscious experience (if any) that they produce. (Alex Rosenberg,The Atheists' Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life Without Illusions. The quotation was copied from here.)

And here is what Bill says about that:

> Rosenberg is not saying, as an emergentist might, that the synergy of sufficiently many neural circuits gives rise to genuine object-directed thoughts. He is saying something far worse, something literally nonsensical, namely, that the object-directed thought that thoughts are object-directed is an illusion. The absurdity of Rosenberg's position can be seen as follows.
>
> 1. Either the words "The notion that thoughts are about stuff is illusory" express a thought — the thought that there are no object-directed thoughts — or they do not.
> 2. If the latter, then the words are meaningless.
> 3. If the former, then the thought is either true or false.
> 4. If the thought is true, then there there are no object-directed thoughts, including the one expressed by Rosenberg's words, and so his words are

> once again meaningless.
> 5. If the thought is false, then there are object-directed thoughts, and Rosenberg's claim is false.
>
> Therefore:
>
> - Rosenberg's claim is either meaningless or false. His position is self-refuting.
>
> As for the analogy, it is perfectly hopeless, presupposing as it does genuine intrinsic intentionality. If I am watching a movie of a man running, then I am under an illusion in that there is nothing moving on the movie screen: there is just a series of stills. But the experience I am undergoing is a perfectly good experience that exhibits genuine intrinsic intentionality: it is a visual experiencing of a man running, or to be perfectly punctilious about it: a visual experiencing AS OF a man running. Whether or not the man depicted exists, as would be the case if the movie were a newsreel, the experience exists, and so cannot be illusory.
>
> To understand the analogy one must understand that there are intentional experiences, experiences that take an accusative. But if you understand that, then you ought to be able to understand that the analogy cannot be used to render intelligible how it might that it is illusory that there are intentional experiences.
>
> What alone remains of interest here is how a seemingly intelligent fellow could adopt a position so manifestly absurd. I suspect the answer is that he has stupefied himself by his blind adherence to scientistic/naturalistic ideology.

If you want to sort of double check the details, then go ahead and watch the debate or read my summary or listen to the debate audio, and then listen to Dr. Craig's three podcasts that I linked above.

I know a lot of you are thinking right now "Hey! You cheater! That's a presuppositional argument! You said they were bad!" Well, I didn't say they were bad, I said that the epistemological view of presuppositionalism was bad. Presuppositional arguments are *good.* See below for a few posts about them. Use them all you can, but use the good scientific and historical evidence, too.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones

- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument

Should Christians expect to know God's will by means of feelings and intuitions?

July 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two views on the topic of decision making and the will of God. The view you learn in the church is called "the traditional view". I call this view the feelings/intuition view. This view that elevates feelings / intuitions to the level of divine communications from God. The more practical view is called "the wisdom view". I call this view the battlefield commander view. I am a proponent of the wisdom / commander view.

Let's learn about the two different views:

> [The traditional view is] that God has a plan for our lives and that we receive guidance through methods such as "open and closed doors", "feeling led" and "the still, small, voice".
>
> [The wisdom view] holds that God does not have an "individual will" for our lives, but rather that all of God's will can be summed up within two categories, God's sovereign will and God's moral will. Basically God's sovereign will is all the things that god decrees will happen. It is hidden (mostly) from us, and does not play an active part in our decision, although some of it is revealed in the bible. God's moral will is the part that we must concern ourselves with in making decisions. It is fully revealed in the bible and our decisions must be made within it. We may use wisdom in applying god's moral will to our lives, or we may be in an area not covered by god's moral will. We must finally submit in advance to God's sovereign will, being prepared for him to sovereignty intervene and redirect us through whatever means he wills (see James).

Here's a bit more from someone else:

> Regarding the view that God has a personal will for us individually that we have to discern and find, J.I. Packer says, "The first thing to say is that the idea of guidance is actually a novelty among orthodox evangelicals. It does not go back farther than the last century. Second, it has led people to so much foolish action on the one hand, and so much foolish inaction on the other, as well as puzzlement and heartbreak when the 'hotline' to God seems to go silent, that it has to be discredited. Third, it must be said that Scripture gives us no more warrant constantly to expect personal 'hotline,' 'voice-from-the-control-tower' guidance than to expect new authoritative revelations to come our way for the guidance of the whole church." (Hot Tub Religion, page 118).
>
> As to the point of the question, how do I make decisions, I attempt to make decisions in light of three factors: God's moral will, wisdom, and my personal desires. If something is opposed to God's moral will, then I should obviously flee from it. If it's not opposed, then I consider the wisdom of the choices. For

> example, would it be wise for me to marry a woman who loves Jesus, though we have nothing else in common? Probably not. If the options pass the criteria of wisdom, then I'm free to choose how I wish. If I'm offered two jobs, and both are honoring to God, and both would be wise to take, then I'm free to choose the job I would like more. I don't need to put out a fleece or await some other confirmation from God. If it's moral and wise, then the only question as to whether or not it will honor Him is my attitude.
>
> Some examples of this model used in the Bible (in theological circles referred to as the Wisdom Model) are in Paul's planning of a mission to Rome in Romans 1:9-15, 15:22-24, the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29), and Paul's instructions for legal disputes (1 Cor 6:3-6).

The best book on this topic is Garry Friesen's "Decision Making and the Will of God". In it, you'll find a full assessment about what the Bible teaches on this topic.

When I am trying to decide what will be effective, I look at Christian scholars, at their papers, books, and public debates. That's effectiveness because it is addressed to a non-Christian audience in public with the force of reason and evidence. It is persuasion and it is addressed to rational minds. I want to change the minds of people who have a large influence on society on the whole. I don't think that offering Christianity as life-enhancement or self-help is really "having an influence". I think that offering Christianity as truth, with support, is "having an influence".

So let me be clear about what I believe:

- I don't think that God normally talks to people directly
- I don't believe that life is an Easter egg hunt, filled with clues accessible only to emotion and intuition
- I don't believe that God expects people to discover a specific will for their lives using non-rational means
- I think that people make up their own life plan that is consistent with the Bible
- The goal of the life plan is to be effective, and there are no other considerations
- I think that there are many good things a person can do, but that some are more effective than others
- I think that with respect to the goal of serving God effectively, *my happiness is expendable*
- I don't think that the purpose of doing something for the Lord is to feel good about ourselves
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they like them
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they are good at them
- I think people should do hard things that they don't like – as long as it's more effective
- I don't think that any course of action is as effective as any other – some plans

accomplish more
- I don't think that life is totally unpredictable and irrational and subjective
- I think that we can know what is or is not effective by studying and learning about the world
- I think life is like a battlefield that must be surveyed, understood and acted upon deliberately

I think that every person is the commanding officer of his or her own life, and each person must study everything they can, make a plan that is consistent with the Bible's moral prescriptions, execute the plan and achieve whatever they can achieve for the Lord. And the goal is not comfort or happy feelings, but real achievements. Not for the purpose of being saved, of course, because salvation is a free gift of God because of what Jesus did on the cross. Life is more like a battle than a vacation resort or a buffet or a shopping center. God's will for us is not have happy feelings, but that we freely choose to sacrifice ourselves out of obedience and service to him. In my case, that means studying hard things, making money, saving money, and giving money away to good scholars, sponsoring good events and being persuasive to non-Christians. None of this necessarily makes me happy, but it does work to bring glory to God. I cried when I had to learn calculus, because it was so hard. But who cares? The main thing is that I have money now to sponsor Christian speakers or to give books to Christians to read, and God is happy with that.

I think that it is very important to realize that God is not impressed by our not being smart and not being effective. If we have the ability to be smart, then we should be smart, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability to make money, then we should make money, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability have a great influence, then we should have a great influence, whether it makes us happy or not. There will be plenty of time for happiness after we're dead. But this life is a time of serving, and we should try to serve effectively, whether it makes us happy or not. With respect to God's purposes in the world, my happiness is expendable.

Whenever someone questions my goals and plans by saying that I am asserting my will over God's will, the first question I want to ask that person is this: "how do you know what God's will is?" and "what is your basis for thinking that my plan to serve will not be effective?". I want to know if I have misunderstood something about the way the world is, or miscalculated in some way. I want someone to look at my calculations and show where they are going to produce a less optimal result for the Lord. That's the only concern I have – effectiveness for the Lord. Usually what I have found is that the other person wants to make the purpose of life *their own happiness*, and it makes them happier to choose what to do moment by moment, without having to study anything or make plans. It's not that they have better goals (for God) or better plans (for God). It's that they want their goals to be above God, and they don't want to make plans other than to do whatever makes them happy.

This article by Greg Koukl may be helpful.

And I also found this summary of the Friesen book useful:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4
- Part 5
- Part 6
- Part 7
- Part 8
- Part 9

In nine parts.

IRS employee union opposes making Obamacare apply to themselves

July 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> The National Treasury Employees Union, which represents Internal Revenue Service employees, is urging its members to oppose legislation that would force federal employees off their government healthcare plans and onto the state and national healthcare exchanges established under Obamacare.
>
> Members of Congress and their staffers are already required to participate in the exchanges, which will go into effect next October 1st under the Affordable Care Act.
>
> However, a bill (HR 1780) introduced in April by Rep. David Camp (R–Mich.) would extend that requirement to all federal employees, an idea that does not sit well with the union.
>
> So NTEU is strongly urging its members – including the Internal Revenue Service agents tasked with implementing Obamacare – to oppose Camp's legislation, which would compel them to personally participate in the same healthcare program they will be enforcing.
>
> **On the NTEU website, union members are urged to email their congressman and senators, asking them to oppose H.R.1780. NTEU provides a sample letter that members can simply sign and send, or rewrite it as they wish:**
>
> **"I am a federal employee and one of your constituents. I am very concerned about legislation that has been introduced by Congressman Dave Camp to push federal employees out of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) and into the insurance exchanges established under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).**
>
> […]Last election cycle, the NTEU donated $547,812 to pro-Obamacare Democrat candidates, including Rep. Nancy Pelosi ($10,000), Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) ($11,000), and Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) ($12,500). And that figure doesn't include the $62,500 the NTEU donated to the Democrat National Committee, or the $125,000 it gave to various left-leaning super PACs.
>
> However, the union only donated $24,000 total to Republican candidates during the same time period.

Wow. And recently we saw that three of the biggest automobile manufacturer unions were also pushing back against Obamacare. Apparently, no one who actually worked to

get Obamacare passed wants it for themselves. They just want it for other people.

Reza Aslan’s new book on the historical Jesus gets celebrated by left-wing media

July 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports. (H/T Melissa P.M.)

Excerpt

> Reza Aslan, author of the new book, “Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth” has been interviewed on a host of media outlets in the last week. Riding a publicity wave, the book has surged to #2 on Amazon’s list.
>
> Media reports have introduced Aslan as a “religion scholar” but have failed to mention that he is a devout Muslim.
>
> His book is not a historian’s report on Jesus. It is an educated Muslim’s *opinion* about Jesus — yet the book is being peddled as objective history on national TV and radio.
>
> Aslan is not a trained historian. Like tens of thousands of us he has been formally educated in theology and New Testament Greek.
>
> He is a bright man with every right to hold his own opinion about Jesus—and to proselytize his opinion.
>
> As a sincere man, Aslan’s Muslim beliefs affect his entire life, including his conclusions about Jesus. But this is not being disclosed. “Zealot” is being presented as objective and scholarly history, not as it actually is—an educated Muslim’s opinions about Jesus and the ancient Near East.
>
> “Zealot” is a fast-paced demolition of the core beliefs that Christianity has taught about Jesus for 2,000 years. Its conclusions are long-held Islamic claims—namely, that Jesus was a zealous prophet type who didn’t claim to be God, that Christians have misunderstood him, and that the Christian Gospels are not the actual words or life of Jesus but “myth.”
>
> These claims are not new or unique. They are hundreds of years old among Muslims. Sadly, readers who have listened to interviews on NPR, “The Daily Show,” Huffington Post or MSNBC may pick up the book expecting an unbiased and historic report on Jesus and first century Jewish culture. (I will let my Jewish friends address Aslan’s statement on MSNBC that, “there were certainly a lot of Jewish terrorists in first century Palestine.”)

I took a look at the author’s CV and I don’t see a single degree in ancient history on it. He is a professor of creative writing, though. Studying “religion” is not the same thing as studying ancient history, by the way.

Here is his faculty page at UC Riverside:

> Professor Aslan joins UCR from the Center of Public Diplomacy at University of

> Southern California. He has Degrees in Religions from Harvard University, and the University of California, Santa Barbara, as well as a Masters in Fine Arts from the University of Iowa, where he was named the Truman Capote Fellow in Fiction. He is currently working on his Ph.D. at University of California, Santa Barbara. He is the author of the New York Times Bestseller, No god but God: The origins, Evolution, and the future of Islam which has been translated into half a dozen languages, short-listed for the Guardian (UK) First Book Award, and nominated for a PEN USA award for research Non-Fiction.

He has a PhD in sociology of religions. SOCIOLOGY. Not history.

A search of publications on Google Scholar turns up no academic articles on the historical Jesus.

Here are his recent non-academic publications from his web site – see if you see any in academic history journals:

> The Devastating Consequences of the anti-Morsi Revolution
> Vocative, July 2, 2013
>
> Bahrain's Fake Sectarian War
> Foreign Affairs, June 30, 2013
>
> Missing Mahmoud
> Foreign Policy, June 12, 2013
>
> The impact of the Arab Spring on the Palestinian Authority's foreign policy.
> Council on Foreign Relations, April 24, 2013
>
> Israel risks its place in America's affections by its tone-deaf policy
> The National, February 4, 2013
>
> Divided by the Same Father
> Tony Blair Faith Foundation, November 30, 2012
>
> Rejected by Religions, but Not by Believers
> New York Times, October 4, 2012
>
> Political Islam in the Middle East
> Council on Foreign Relations, December 7, 2012
>
> Grand Ayatollah or Grand Old Party?
> Foreign Policy, February 29, 2012
>
> Fire This Time
> Los Angeles Review of Books, September 11, 2011
>
> Ibn Battuta: World Wanderer
> Time Magazine, July 21, 2011
>
> **Backward Glances: Islamic Erotica, Then and Now**
> **Playboy Magazine, January 2011**

Now, I do think it's possible for someone without formal training to write a book on the

historical Jesus. But I would regard such books with skepticism. Especially when he dates the Gospel of Mark to later than 70 A.D. – definitely not a mainstream view. The atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark to the late 30s to early 40s, for example. But a plausible case can be made (by an actual historian) that the Gospel of Mark is dated sometime in the mid-50s.

The real story here though is media bias. Why is the liberal media so interested in promoting a book about the historical Jesus which questions the orthodox view of Jesus, whereas they were not doing anything to promote Darwin's Doubt, which questioned the orthodox view of Darwinism? I think there is a double standard here. Meyer did his PhD work on these issues and has the relevant academic publications in science journals. (Here is one that was published in a peer-reviewed journal) And Meyer has actually debated his thesis with his opponents.

My previous post on media bias explains a bit more about what the left-wing media is really like.

UPDATE: Mathetes posted a link to this article on First Things.

Excerpt:

> Aslan does have four degrees… a 1995 B.A. in religion from Santa Clara University, where he was Phi Beta Kappa and wrote his senior thesis on "The Messianic Secret in the Gospel of Mark"; a 1999 Master of Theological Studies from Harvard; a 2002 Master of Fine Arts in Fiction from the University of Iowa; and a 2009 Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California, Santa Barbara.
>
> None of these degrees is in history, so Aslan's repeated claims that he has "a Ph.D. in the history of religions" and that he is "a historian" are false. Nor is "professor of religions" what he does "for a living." He is an associate professor in the Creative Writing program at the University of California, Riverside, where his terminal MFA in fiction from Iowa is his relevant academic credential. It appears he has taught some courses on Islam in the past, and he may do so now, moonlighting from his creative writing duties at Riverside. Aslan has been a busy popular writer, and he is certainly a tireless self-promoter, but he is nowhere known in the academic world as a scholar of the history of religion. And a scholarly historian of early Christianity? Nope.
>
> **What about that Ph.D.? As already noted, it was in sociology. I have his dissertation in front of me. It is a 140-page work titled "Global Jihadism as a Transnational Social Movement: A Theoretical Framework." If Aslan's Ph.D. is the basis of a claim to scholarly credentials, he could plausibly claim to be an expert on social movements in twentieth-century Islam. He cannot plausibly claim, as he did to Lauren Green, that he is a "historian," or is a "professor of religions" "for a living."**

Well that settles it. His PhD has nothing to do with the historical Jesus. He's unqualified.

William Lane Craig debates Peter Millican: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

July 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The audio of the debate can be downloaded from Apologetics 315.

Description:

> Christian philosopher William Lane Craig debates atheist Peter Millican on the topic: *Does God Exist?*The debate was organised by the Philosophy Society at Birmingham University on October 21, 2011 for the Reasonable Faith tour. The Tour was co sponsored by UCCF, Damaris and Premier Christian Radio (audio via their Unbelievable podcast). Want to hear every audio debate by William Lane Craig? Check out the audio debate feed here.
>
> Full Debate MP3 Audio here. *(2hr 23min)*

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any errors. The debate audio has 32 minutes of Q&A.

And if you like my summary, check out another summary by J.W. Wartick.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It’s not just that the settings are unlikely, it’s that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a “herd morality” that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved “herd morality”. However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a

God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It's possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It's also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the

universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in

the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the

resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

North Carolina Republicans get pro-life bill signed into law

July 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican governor Pat McCrory signed a pro-life bill into law in North Carolina. ABC local news reports.

Excerpt:

> North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory on Monday signed into law a measure directing state officials to regulate abortion clinics based on the same standards as those for outpatient surgical centers, a change that critics say will force most to close.
>
> […]The law, pushed through by the Republican-majority legislature in the session's waning days, directs the Department of Health and Human Services to revise the rules for abortion clinics. It follows similar actions by Republican-controlled legislatures in other states.
>
> Critics say the move will effectively close most of North Carolina's 16 abortion clinics because only one now meets the standards of an outpatient surgical center. An ambulatory surgical center costs about $1 million more to build than an abortion clinic, state Division of Health Service Regulation (DHHS) director Drexdal Pratt told lawmakers earlier this month. It's unclear how much it would cost existing clinics to convert to higher standards once they are set by DHHS.
>
> […]The law also prohibits abortions for gender selection and allows any health care provider to opt out of participating in abortions, extending that option beyond doctors and nurses. The measure also prohibits abortion coverage in insurance plans offered by cities, counties or the online marketplace for private policies being established under the federal health overhaul law.

Life News reported on the reaction from North Carolina pro-lifers.

Excerpt:

> The law addresses concerns about the administration of abortion inducing drugs and rules for abortion facilities, North Carolina Right to Life informs LifeNews. The pro-life provisions that were left intact after the compromise are: the opt out for abortion in the federal exchange and the city and county employee health plans, as well as the sex selection and web cam abortion bans.
>
> "Thousands of unborn children's lives will be protected from abortion," stated Barbara Holt, President of North Carolina Right to Life, "by preventing the expansion of tax payer funded abortion through the federal exchange. By passing this legislation, our state has also demonstrated that it will not tolerate unborn babies being aborted just because they are the wrong sex or doctors being miles away from the patient when they administer drugs that kill the

> unborn baby and can harm the child's mother."
>
> […]North Carolina joins Virginia, South Carolina, and Tennessee, as well as 19 other states, by opting out of abortion in the federal exchange; 14 states , by banning "web cam" abortions; and 6 states, by prohibiting sex selection abortions.

How's that for some Tuesday morning good news?

Planned Parenthood must pay $1.4 million in Medicaid fraud settlement

July 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation reports.

Excerpt:

> Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast, which serves southeast Texas and Louisiana, agreed this week to pay $1.4 million to the state of Texas, settling claims that one of the largest abortion providers in the Southeast had fraudulently overbilled the state's Medicaid program.
>
> Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott's office stated that its investigation into the fraud allegations "revealed that Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast improperly billed the Texas Medicaid program for products and services that were never actually rendered, not medically necessary, and were not covered by the Medicaid program."
>
> The Texas Planned Parenthood allegedly "falsified material information in patients' medical records" to bolster fraudulent claims for reimbursement.
>
> Alliance Defending Freedom's recent analysis of state and federal audits of family planning programs suggests that in 12 states, Planned Parenthood affiliates overbilled Medicaid for more than $8 million. One federal audit of New York's Medicaid family planning program reported that certain providers, "especially Planned Parenthoods," had engaged in improper practices resulting in overpayment.
>
> Despite mounting accusations of fraud, the organization that performs roughly one out of every four abortions in the U.S. has continued to ride the waves of taxpayer funding to annual surpluses. During its last reporting year alone, Planned Parenthood received over half a billion dollars in taxpayer government funding, all the while performing a record 333,964 abortions. To solidify its place as the top abortion provider in the country, Planned Parenthood announced that all local affiliates would have to begin providing abortion services starting in 2013.

A one million dollar fine doesn't seem like much, compared to over $500 million in taxpayer subsidies. But it's a start. Abortion is a for-profit business. If we make abortion unprofitable, then abortion will go away.

Related posts

- Live Action sting: abortion clinic recommends drowning live baby in toilet
- Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You
- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion

- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- Hawaii Planned Parenthood caught counseling sex-selection abortions
- War on women: Obama and Democrats oppose ban on sex-selection abortion
- Live Action sting: Planned Parenthood counsels late-term sex-selection abortion
- Does the United Way give money to abortion-provider Planned Parenthood?
- New House GOP bill de-funds Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration wants birth control to be covered by health insurance
- Obama administration threatens Indiana for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Are the Girl Scouts linked to the abortion provider Planned Parenthood?
- 91% of Planned Parenthood clinics help hide statutory rapists
- What is Planned Parenthood and why do Democrats support them?
- Does Planned Parenthood really use taxpayer money to provide mammograms?
- Planned Parenthood stung three more times by Live Action
- Planned Parenthood caught helping pimp to run underage sex-trafficking ring
- Planned Parenthood releases annual report – 324,008 babies aborted
- Undercover video of Planned Parenthood selling abortion with misinformation
- Is Planned Parenthood overbilling state and local governments?
- Planned Parenthood conceals rape and breaks the law
- How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?
- How much profit does the non-profit Planned Parenthood make?

Answering 9 objections to the resurrection of Jesus

July 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this post on Eric Chabot's Think Apologetics blog.

Here is his list of objections:

1. The Legends Hypothesis
2. The Naturalistic Objection
3. We Can't Use the Historical Method to Determine Whether A Resurrection Took Place
4. False Testimonies Hypothesis
5. The Resurrection Story Was Invented From Other Dying and Rising God Stories
6. The Intramental/Hallucination Hypothesis Objection
7. The Analogical Objection
8. The Genre of the Gospels Are Historical Fiction!
9. The Faulty Sources Objection

Here's the detail on #4:

> There is no reason to distrust the conviction of those that testified to having seen the risen Jesus. As James Warner Wallace points out in his latest book people lie or have an ulterior motive for three reasons:
>
> 1.Financial Gain: In this case, we don't see any evidence for this. The NT shows the disciples/apostles being chased from location to location, leaving their home and families and abandoning their property and what they owned.
>
> 2. Sexual or Relational Desire: The NT does not say much about their "love lives." There are Scriptures that speak to sexual purity and chastity.
>
> 3. Pursuit of Power: While Christianity became a state sponsored religion in the 4th century and the Popes became powerful both politically and religiously, there is no evidence (pre 70 AD), for the early disciples pursuing power as they proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus. Just look at Paul's testimony here:
>
> "I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked." – 2 Cor. 11: 23-27

There are lots of useful links to answer many of the objections. It’s worth reading because Eric is used to having to deal with these objections in his daily work. What you see on the list is what he sees on the ground, dealing with the questions of skeptical students at a major university.

Cell biologist Michael Denton interviewed on the merits of the design argument

July 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest ID the Future podcast is short (11 minutes) and sweet.

The MP3 file is here.

Quick biography of Dr. Michael Denton:

> Michael Denton is a Senior Research Fellow in Human Genetics in the Biochemistry Department at the University of Otago in New Zealand. Dr. Denton studied medicine at Bristol University and developmental biology at Kings College, London University, where he gained a PhD in 1974. He trained in Pathology at the Post-Graduate Medical School, London, and at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. He has held university lectureships in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia. For many years his main research focus has been on the genetics of human retinal disease, and he wrote the book *Nature's Destiny*.

He is critical of Darwinism, but his own theories about the design of the cell tend more towards higher order physical laws than direct intervention by an intelligent agent. But he does acknowledge design arguments in three areas, see below.

Topics:

- The mechanistic reductionist view of cells has broken down
- Now, people are more looking at the higher order organization of matter
- A better explanation is that there are higher order laws that organize base matter
- These are not mysterious, these are higher order physical laws
- The focus used to be on genes are everything – the building blocks
- The form of the cell is more important
- The machine analogy is failing at the higher order level – that's the first area of design
- Another area of design is at the lower level
- At the lower order level, there are machines like the ribosome
- These machines have complex specified information, and they need an explanation too
- The origin of life, the origin of ribosomes, are another area that looks designed
- A third area of design is the fine-tuning of the universe for biological organisms
- The argument made by Stephen C. Meyer about the origin of life is correct
- Origin of life research is declining because it cannot be explained without design
- Design is the best explanation for the OOL we have right now, based on the data we have

See below for other recent ID the Future podcasts.

Previous entries

- Stephen C. Meyer on Thomas Nagel and intelligent design
- Stephen C. Meyer on Richard Dawkins and the Cambrian explosion
- John G. West discusses Darwinism and the value of human life
- Stephen C. Meyer and John Lennox discuss human exceptionalism
- Jay Richards and Stephen C. Meyer discuss scientific consensus
- Dan Barker debates Casey Luskin on academic freedom
- Zack Copplin debates Casey Luskin on science education
- Stephen C. Meyer discusses his new book “Darwin’s Doubt”

Obama administration gave $500 million of foreign aid to Islamic radicals

July 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The sequester has "cost jobs," says President Obama, and "gutted investments in education and science and medical research." But somehow he's earmarked $500 million for Hamas terrorists.
>
> Circumventing Congress and with no fanfare, President Obama last week issued an executive order enabling him to send an additional $500 million directly to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank — much of which you can bet will wind up going to the Iranian-backed Hamas terrorist organization.
>
> According to Obama, "it is important to the national security interests of the United States to waive the provisions of" Congress' legislative restrictions "in order to provide funds . .. to the Palestinian Authority."
>
> At the beginning of his first term, Obama promised close to $1 billion in aid to the Palestinian Authority, with then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pledging none of it would reach Hamas.
>
> But the Hebrew-language newspaper Yediot Acharonot has documented that tens of millions of dollars in aid for the PA — from Israel — ended up being used by Hamas for weapons. If Israel can't guarantee its own aid is safe, how can we?

The Christian Science Monitor has more on Obama's generous use of taxpayer dollars.

Excerpt:

> The US military has been ignoring warnings that its spending in Afghanistan is funding Al Qaedaand the Taliban. And John F. Sopko, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), appears to have had enough.
>
> He issued a blistering cover letter with SIGAR's quarterly report to Congress today that called into question what "appears to be a growing gap between the policy objectives of Washington and the reality of achieving them in Afghanistan."
>
> The US has $20 billion of Afghan reconstruction spending scheduled, and a further $10 billion requested for the 2014 budget. But after 11 years of war, there are "serious shortcomings in US oversight of contracts: poor planning, delayed or inadequate inspections, insufficient documentation, dubious decisions, and – perhaps most troubling – a pervasive lack of accountability," Mr. Sopko wrote. Good intentions, he added, appear to be running way ahead of commitment to execution.

Now I know what Obama meant when he said that the economy works better when you “spread the wealth around”.

Republican Congresswoman refuses to abort baby diagnosed with fatal condition

July 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about doing the right thing

Here's a story from National Review:

> *World* magazine brings some happy news today: Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler (R., Wash.) and her husband Daniel Beutler have announced the birth of their daughter. What makes this particular arrival noteworthy is that Abigail was diagnosed in utero with Potter's Sequence, a rare condition that impairs kidney and lung formation. Doctors informed the Beutlers that their daughter would not be able to breathe and would therefore expire moments after birth; they recommended an abortion.
>
> Instead, the couple sought out treatment and prayed for a miracle. They finally discovered an experimental procedure, involving saline injections into the uterus to assist in lung development, and physicians at Johns Hopkins who were willing to try it. On July 15, a mere 28 weeks into the pregnancy, their faith and persistence yielded the world's first recorded survivor of Potter's Sequence. Despite lacking functional kidneys and weighing a mere 44 ounces at birth, little Abigail is breathing independently and responding well to peritoneal dialysis.
>
> In a statement on the congresswoman's Facebook page, the Beutlers thank the many doctors and nurses who rendered assistance, as well as "the thousands who joined us in praying for a miracle. But most of all, we are grateful to God for

> answering those prayers."

Fox News had more:

> The congresswoman explained on her official website as well as on her social media pages that many doctors were pessimistic about the baby's chances of making it to term, and were fairly certain that if she survived through birth, she would live only moments. Herrera Beutler is against abortion and said she refused to consider it as an option.
>
> "With hearts full of hope, we put our trust in the Lord and continued to pray for a miracle," she wrote on her congressional site.
>
> The announcement by the congresswoman was, essentially, a testimony about holding out hope and defying the odds.
>
> Abigail has no kidneys and had no amniotic fluid in the womb. During the pregnancy, doctors injected saline solution into the womb in the place of amniotic fluid.
>
> At birth, Abigail had fully developed lungs and she is breathing on her own, suggesting that the relatively uncommon treatment had worked. Abigail still requires ongoing dialysis and will eventually need a kidney transplant.
>
> Herrera Beutler and her husband said they were thankful for the doctors and nurses who were not willing to accept the fatal diagnosis.
>
> "We are grateful to the thousands who joined us in praying for a miracle. But most of all, we are grateful to God for hearing those prayers," Herrera Beutler and her husband said in a joint statement. "As far as every doctor we've spoken with knows, Abigail is the first baby with bilateral renal agenesis to breathe sustainably on her own."
>
> Dr. Louis Halamek, a neonatologist at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital in California, said they are cautiously optimistic about the future of the baby, born after a 28-week pregnancy.
>
> "Despite Abigail's prematurity, small size and life-threatening disease, she is doing well," Halamek said.
>
> Herrera Beutler, 34, is in her second term in Congress, representing the 3rd district covering the southwest portion of Washington state. The *National Journal* included her on its list of "The Top 25 Most Influential Washington Women Under 35."

I think that a lot of Democrats are going to be surprised with this story, because they think that protecting the unborn is something that Republicans want to impose on others, but won't do themselves. After all, Democrats are always passing taxes and regulations from others – but they don't think that any of that applies to them. Al Gore rants on and on about global warming, but he still spends $30,000 a year in utility bills. So imagine how surprised the Democrats are to see that Republicans aren't frauds and hypocrites.

Yes, we actually believe in protecting the unborn even if it means that we will be less “happy” and less “fulfilled”. That’s what being pro-life means – welcoming children into the world and supplying for their needs, even if it requires us to make sacrifices.

Do atheists and agnostics have a burden of proof to bear?

July 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend William B. shared this Enlightenment Journal post, written by philosopher Paul Copan.

Excerpt:

> In conversations with atheists, they may challenge us: "You're claiming that God exists. Therefore, the burden of proof rests on you, not me. So … where's your evidence?"
>
> Atheist Michael Scriven insists "we need not have a proof that God does not exist in order to justify atheism. Atheism is obligatory in the absence of any evidence for God's existence."1 Or perhaps someone has told you that belief in God is just like belief in Santa Claus or the tooth fairy. Where do we begin to respond to such assertions?

Here is his list of advice:

1. define your terms — especially *atheism*
2. the atheist also bears the burden of proof in making the claim, "God does not exist."
3. look out for the "atheist's" slide into agnosticism, from claiming *dis*belief to mere *un*belief.
4. distinguish between the two types of agnostics — *ordinary* and *ornery*.
5. distinguish between "proof" and "good reasons*."*
6. we have good reasons for belief in the biblical God, but not in mythical beings like mermaids, elves, unicorns, the tooth fairy, or flying spaghetti monsters.
7. we should distinguish between two types of ignorance — innocence and culpable — and the agnostic would be quite culpable of refusing to seek.

I want to say something about #7, so here's the detail on that one:

> **Seventh, we should distinguish between two types of ignorance — innocence and culpable — and the agnostic would be quite culpable of refusing to seek.**When a Western tourist travels to Cambodia, she might not be aware that exposing the sole of her foot or bottom of her shoe is insulting and offensive. The tourist may offend someone out of ignorance of this cultural taboo. But this ignorance is *innocent*.
>
> There's another kind of ignorance. What if you are driving down a highway and not paying attention to speed limit signs? An officer may stop you and ask why you were speeding. You cannot rightly say, "I didn't know what the speed limit was — or even how fast I was going. So you shouldn't give me a ticket." Obviously, if you are driving, you are responsible for paying attention. Ignorance

> is no excuse. It is *blameworthy* rather than innocent.
>
> Likewise, to say “I do not know if God exists” may reveal a failure in my responsibility to seek God (“I do not *want*to know”). In this case, I would be at fault. The Christian Geneticist Francis Collins of Human Genome Project fame said he was an agnostic in college. Yet he confesses that his “I don’t know” was more an “I don’t want to know” attitude — a “willful blindness.”11 This agnosticism eventually gave way to outright atheism — although Collins would later come to faith in Christ. He began reading C.S. Lewis’ *Mere Christianity*, and Collins realized his own antireligious constructs were “those of a schoolboy.”12
>
> Because the existence of God is a massively important topic, we cannot afford not to pay attention — especially in an age of so many diversions. Philosopher Tom Morris points out that sports, TV, restaurants, concerts, cars, billiards, and a thousand other activities can divert us from the ultimate issues of life. As a result, we don’t “tune into” God. And when a crisis hits (death, hospitalization, natural disaster), we are not really in the best condition to process and make accurate judgments about those deep questions.13 The person who says, “I do not know if God exists,” may have *chosen* to live by diversions and distractions and thus to ignore God. This is not an innocent ignorance; this ignorance is the result of our neglecting our duty.
>
> So the theist, atheist, and militant (ornery) agnostic all bear a burden of proof; the theist does not have a heavier burden since all claim to know something. Furthermore, even the alleged ordinary agnostic still is not off the hook. For one thing, one *cannot* remain neutral all his life; he will make commitments or hold beliefs all along the way that reflect either an atheistic or theistic worldview. He is either going to be a practical atheist or practical theist (or a mixture of the two) in some fashion throughout his life. But he can’t straddle the fence for long. Also, the ordinary agnostic may say, “I do not know,” but this often means “I do not care” — the view of an “apatheist.” Refusing to seek out whether God exists or not; refusing to humble oneself to seek whatever light about God is available; living a life of distractions rather than thoughtfully reflecting about one’s meaning, purpose, or destiny leaves one *culpable* in his ignorance, not *innocent*.

I had have conversations with people who were not believers, who often tell me flat out that they don’t know whether God exists, or what he is like, but that they live their lives as if he doesn’t exist, and they are not investigating whether they are right. They are very happy operating without any God looking over their shoulder. And God is OK with that, because he doesn’t want to force people who don’t want him into an eternal afterlife with him. He is seeking after and drawing people who will respond to him.

It’s very important to ask questions of atheists and agnostics that will surface this often hidden desire to live life without God. Often, you can get people to show some interest in God’s existence and who Jesus was just by letting them put into words their own decision to avoid God and not investigate God. That is an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to step in.

It’s not that you have to be mean, it’s just a good idea to ask questions and then don’t jump on them when they confess. Letting them get the words out there is all you need to do.

Here’s my previous post on whether atheism means a lack of belief in God.

Ball State University sides with Darwinian Inquisition and against academic freedom

August 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Evolution News reports:

> In a blatant attack on academic freedom and the unfettered consideration of scientific viewpoints, the president of Ball State University (BSU) in Muncie, IN, has imposed a gag order on science faculty forbidding their discussion of the theory of intelligent design (ID) in science classrooms.
>
> Ball State has been the focus of media attention since an extremist atheist group, the Freedom from Religion Foundation, demanded an investigation into whether Ball State physicist Dr. Eric Hedin had informed his students about the theory of ID. Dr. Hedin's interdisciplinary honors course "Boundaries of Science" included a "Partial Bibliography" listing books favorable to, and others critical of, intelligent design.
>
> Now BSU's President Jo Ann Gora has declared that ID is a "religious" idea at variance with "the consensus of science scholars" and may not be discussed in science classes, since that would be a violation of "academic integrity."
>
> "Students and the public are owed a genuine evaluation of the merits of ID, touching as the theory does on ultimate questions of life's origins," responded Dr. Stephen Meyer, director of Discovery Institute's Center for Science & Culture. "However, when scientific discussion is censored by a university, fair-minded evaluation becomes impossible."
>
> Dr. Meyer is the author of the recent *New York Times* bestseller *Darwin's Doubt*, a rigorous summary of the current state of the argument for intelligent design.
>
> "In the Orwellian world of Ball State's president, academic freedom apparently means only the 'freedom' to support the majority's view," said Dr. John West, associate director of the Center for Science & Culture. "This is exactly how the academic 'consensus' against the theory of intelligent design is maintained — by intimidation, fiat, and legal threats."
>
> ID theorists hold that a variety of features observable and testable in living creatures and in the fossil record are best explained as the product an intelligent cause rather than an unguided process such as natural selection. Dr. Meyer's book, for example, begins by examining the abrupt origin of complex, diverse animal life in the Cambrian era, 530 million years ago.

Not unexpected, given what we knew about the panel charged with evaluating Dr. Hedin's course.

But I do have some good news today. Tune in at 2 PM to read my report on yet another

new peer-reviewed paper hostile to Darwinism.

Related posts

- Dan Barker debates Casey Luskin on academic freedom on the Michael Medved show
- Atheist Inquisition led by Jerry Coyne seeks to censor pro-ID physicist at Ball State University

New PNAS study: maximum animal diversity exists at the beginning of the fossil record

August 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Phys.org – news of a study that is *lethal* to orthodox Darwinian belief. This is *huge*.

Excerpt:

> Our understanding of how animals on the planet evolved may be wrong, according to scientists at the University.
>
> In a new paper, recently published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, evolutionary biologists from the Department of Biology & Biochemistry looked at nearly one hundred fossil groups to test the notion that it takes groups of animals many millions of years to reach their maximum diversity of form.
>
> Contrary to popular belief, not all animal groups continued to evolve fundamentally new morphologies through time. The majority actually achieved their greatest diversity of form (disparity) relatively early in their histories.
>
> Lead researcher from the Department of Biology & Biochemistry, Dr Matthew Wills said: "This pattern, known as 'early high disparity', turns the traditional V-shaped cone model of evolution on its head. What is equally surprising in our findings is that groups of animals are likely to show early-high disparity regardless of when they originated over the last half a billion years. This isn't a phenomenon particularly associated with the first radiation of animals, or periods in the immediate wake of mass extinctions."
>
> The team used published descriptions of extinct groups in order to construct 'morphospaces'; empirical spaces in which anatomically similar species plotted close together, and more dissimilar species plotted further apart. By looking at the manner in which the occupied 'volume' of space changed through time, they were able to track changes in morphological disparity.

Evolution News analyzes how the authors of the study explain away their findings to keep faith with Darwin.

Excerpt:

> Why did 20 or more separate animal phyla suddenly appear in the geological blink of an eye? Because "**Clades reach highest morphological disparity early in their evolution**," answer Martin Hughes, Sylvain Gerber, and Matthew Albion Will… The Cambrian animals exploded onto the scene because evolution works fast sometimes. It seems to be a pattern that high disparity occurs early on. Must be a law of nature. What, you've got a problem with that?
>
> These three biologists from the University of Bath took a bath in their own assumptions. They don't deny that the animals appear suddenly. They just

> believe that when opportunity arises, evolution works fast to fill up the landscape with endless forms most beautiful. Under the section, "**Why Do Clades Have Early High Disparity?**" they say:
>
> **What might explain the prevailing pattern** of **early high disparity in clade evolution**? Both **ecological** and **developmental** explanations have been **proposed**, and our results remain **consistent with both**. The **"empty ecospace" model**predicts that **clades will radiate and diversify more rapidly when colonizing a new environment**. This colonization **may** occur because **ecospace has been vacated** by other occupants (e.g., in the wake of some other extinction, typically the result of external, physical factors) or because a **hitherto inaccessible environment** or other **resource** has been rendered viable by **the acquisition** of some **novel, "key" adaptation** or **series of characters** (an intrinsic, biological trigger). **Morphological change** under these circumstances **may** be **rapid** either**because transitions are unusually large** or because **rates of cladogenesis** are**unusually high** (even with "normal" step sizes at each splitting event). (Emphasis added, reference numbers omitted.)
>
> Jaws should drop at that "explanation." If Hughes, Gerber and Wills were simply *describing* what is found in the fossil record — the sudden appearance of complex animals — it would be one thing. But they attempted to *explain* how these complex animals appeared, so suddenly as Jonathan Wells described in the film *Darwin's Dilemma*, that it's comparable to less than two minutes on a twenty-four-hour clock.
>
> […]As Stephen Meyer shows in *Darwin's Doubt*, prior to the Cambrian explosion there were only microbes, sponges and the enigmatic Ediacaran fauna that most paleontologists do not consider related to the Cambrian animals. There were no jointed appendages, eyes, guts, nervous systems or any of the other organs, tissue types and body plans that characterize Cambrian phyla. What kind of Darwinian "miracle" would it take to get all those complex traits in blink of an eye? Calling it "cladogenesis" is like calling the simultaneous chance appearance of cars, boats, and airplanes "vehicle-o-genesis."
>
> The model has striking similarities to the old notion of Punctuated Equilibrium discussed in Chapter 7 of *Darwin's Doubt*. In fact, the *PNAS* paper was edited by Steven Stanley, "an early advocate of the punctuated equilibrium model" according to Meyer (p. 137). As such, this new model is really a throwback to the old "punk eek," and suffers from the same drawbacks: it's an attempt to explain away the absence of evidence for evolution by claiming, without any mechanism better than old-fashioned neo-Darwinism, why the fossil record shows a discontinuous pattern, not a record of a gradually branching tree.

There's a lot more in that Evolution News article.

Now, I'm pretty sure I read about this upside-down tree of life years ago in a little book by biologist Jonathan Wells entitled "Icons of Evolution". Dr. Wells made the case that Darwin's iconic picture of "the tree of life" should really be inverted. Darwin thought that the root came early in the fossil record, and the branches came later – by mutation and selection. The truth is that the branches come first. The diversity is all at the beginning of the fossil record. This falsifies evolution (again).

Is this new study going to make the naturalists change their religion? Probably not. Because science has nothing to do with the presupposition of naturalism. Darwinists presuppose naturalism for other reasons that are insulated from experimental science. It's a faith commitment – and they don't care about revising their faith when the progress of science reveals new facts.

Related posts

- New study finds that advantageous traits don't easily infuse in populations
- New study: function found for beta-globin pseudogene that was labeled "junk" during Dover trial
- New study of tar pits shows absence of evolutionary change
- New peer-reviewed paper in Nature falsifies Darwinian junk DNA prediction
- New study: Gorilla genome calls common ancestry thesis into question
- Peer-reviewed paper in medical journal challenges Darwinian evolution
- New study shows that human and chimpanzee DNA are very different

Michelle Malkin: why do so many women judge men's character by their appearance?

August 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michelle Malkin is concerned by women who think that convicted criminals are actually innocent. Why? Because they are *HAWT.*

She writes:

> I would like to declare a war on women — namely, all those cringe-inducing ninnies who lust after every celebrity criminal defendant with big muscles, tattoos, puppy-dog eyes or Hollywood hair.
>
> You know who I'm talking about, right? America's Bad Boy groupies. They'reon the courthouse steps with their "Free Jahar" signs, cooing over how "hot" and "cute" the bloodstained Boston Marathon bombing suspect is. He "can blow me up with babies," one moral reprobate quipped shortly after his capture. "I'm not gonna lie, the second bombing suspect, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, is hot. #sorrynotsorry," another young girl boasted.
>
> Among the callous accused killer's victims, in case you'd forgotten: 8-year-old boy Martin Richard, who had been cheering on his dad and other family friends at the race. But who cares about an innocent dead child blown to bits by pressure cooker bombs in the name of Allah? *Jahar is HAWT!*
>
> Far from a minuscule fringe, the Ja-harem is a growing social media phenomenon. Its members mimic Justin Bieber's Beliebers, adopting the last name of their Tiger Beat terrorist and doodling hearts around his mug shot. In heat or in jest, these depraved females continue to spread viral photos, memes and hashtags of their Islamist Idol. One woman showed up at Tsarnaev's court appearance Wednesday donning a "Free the Lion" T-shirt. Another sported a "Dzhokhar Tsarnaev is innocent" tee, while her gal pal shouted, "Exonerate!"
>
> For those ladies who prefer jocks to jihadis, there's accused murderer/NFL star Aaron Hernandez. He's "fine as wine," one woman lusted. He's "too damned sexy to go to prison," another lamented. "He can come to jail at my house," sighed yet another. In response to one of gangsta Hernandez's Glock-wielding Instagram pics, one sick chick slavered, "Soooo hot with the combination handgun-mirror selfie."
>
> Fugitive cop-killer Christopher Dorner also had his own fan club. Parked in front of their TV sets, women cheered on the "kinda sexy" homicidal maniac as he terrorized Southern California before perishing in a cabin inferno. "I'd honestly hide Dorner in my house," one fan girl enthused. Tens of thousands "liked" Dorner's various support pages on Facebook.
>
> Harmless Internet chitter-chatter? Don't kid yourselves. While some of the

> murderers' panting minions may be joking, it's irresponsible women like these who end up enabling, marrying and conspiring with public menaces.
>
> They're your neighbors and relatives, suburban gals like Colleen "Jihad Jane" LaRose and Jamie "Jihad Jamie" Paulin-Ramirez of Colorado, who agreed to wed Muslim terrorists and conspired to kill Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks. Paulin-Ramirez dragged her 6-year-old (whom she renamed "Walid") to Ireland to assist with the plot. Family members said she was "easily influenced" and that "any man that came along … she kind of followed like a lost puppy."

There's a lot more like that in the article. I think that what is happening to women today is that they are convinced that the relationship is for their benefit, not God's, and not the children's. They know that being seen with a good looking man makes them happy. They don't really know much about married life and how much marriage costs. Instead of trying to pick a man with some savings and a good job and a gapless resume, they prefer to choose someone who is "hawt" and who is fun and amusing. There is no other consideration in play – they just want a man to make them happy, and they think that marrying a man will transform him into a happy-feeling making machine. Who cares about mortgages, bills and obligations?

It reminds me of a study I saw a while back, which was discussed in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> It takes a woman just three minutes to make up her mind about whether she likes a man or not, a study has revealed.
>
> The average female spends the time sizing up looks, physique and dress-sense as well as taking in scent, accent and eloquence of a potential suitor.
>
> Women also quickly judge how he interacts with her friends and whether he is successful or ambitious.
>
> It also emerged most women believe 180 seconds is long enough to gauge whether or not he is Mr Right, or Mr Wrong.
>
> The study also found women rarely change their mind about a man after their initial reaction – and believe they are 'always right' in their assumptions and judgments.
>
> The report which was commissioned among 3,000 adults to mark the release of Instinct, a new book by Ben Kay.
>
> Kay said: 'I think a lot of people believe in trusting their instincts when dating. It makes it seem more magical, like it's coming from somewhere deeper.

I am not sure if this method of choosing mates should be used by Christian women. If the goal of a relationship is to please God and serve him, then our feelings should not be the guide. God is the customer of the relationship, not the woman, and not the man. The goal of a relationship is not primarily to have happy feelings – because that can lead to being selfish and destructive. It makes no sense to say that you are driving drunk in order to

please God, or playing Russian roulette in order to please God – pleasing God needs to be done intelligently, with preparation, and respecting strict moral boundaries, if it is going to stand the chance of being effective at achieving his goals. It's so easy to think that God is just interested in our happiness, but he isn't. He is interested in us knowing him, serving him, suffering with him and understanding him.

Also, think of the harm that can be caused if women use emotions to choose men for the role of making them happy, instead of the role of making God happy. Men are designed by God to be protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders. According to this study, women are completely disinterested in whether a man can perform these traditional male roles. Because it is clear that nothing at all can be known about a man's ability to perform these roles by looking at his appearance and style. Even if a man has a confident way of saying what a great provider he is, it doesn't mean anything – if you want to know how much a man earns, look at his paycheck. I told that to a woman once, and she told me that she would rather use her "intuition" to guess how much a man makes. And to have the "feeling" that he makes a lot, instead of seeing the paycheck. That makes no sense to me, though. The only way to know if a man has savings is to see his investment portfolio. You can't see the size of his portfolio by looking at his shoes.

Here are some ideas about what women should be doing to assess men for these roles:

- protector: does he understand which ideologies and policies oppose marriage, faith and family? is he good at defending his views against secular leftists?
- provider: what does his balance sheet look like? what does his resume look like? what does his university transcript look like? does he give to charity?
- moral leader: what has he written or spoken about related to moral issues like abortion, marriage, parental rights, etc.?
- spiritual leader: what has he written or spoken about related to theology and apologetics? does he have long-term mentoring relationships with other committed Christians?

None of these ways of judging a man can be accomplished in 180 seconds, and probably not even in 180 hours. It takes time to measure a man for marriage. And having fun with him is not the way to measure him.

New study finds connection between early use of marijuana and mental illness

August 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal reports.

Excerpt:

> There is a significant and consistent relationship between marijuana use and the development of schizophrenia and related disorders. Schizophrenia is considered by psychiatrists to be the most devastating of mental illnesses. Patients who suffer from it often experience auditory or visual hallucinations, severe social withdrawal and cognitive impairment. Many require frequent and prolonged hospitalization in psychiatric wards.
>
> Schizophrenia affects almost three million Americans—more than six times the number of people with multiple sclerosis, two and a half times the number of people with Parkinson's disease, and more than twice the number of people with HIV/AIDS. Less than one-third of patients with schizophrenia can hold a steady job or live independently. A large portion (about one-third) of homeless people in the U.S. suffer from the disease.
>
> Though they receive little attention in the legalization debate, the scientific studies showing an association between marijuana use and schizophrenia and other disorders are alarming. A 2004 article in the highly respected British Journal of Psychiatry reviewed four large studies, all of which showed a significant and consistent association between consumption of marijuana (mostly during teenage years or early 20s) and the later development of schizophrenia. The review concluded that marijuana is a "causal component," among others, in the development of schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders.
>
> A 2007 study in the Lancet, a British medical journal, concludes that using marijuana increases the risk of young people developing a psychotic illness, such as schizophrenia. This risk is greatest—up to a 200% increase—among those who use marijuana heavily and who start using at a younger age.

I thought this article was useful for parents who need some ammunition when talking to their children about drugs. Children can be pretty irrational. You show them studies, and they say "that will never happen to me". That's just how they are. But at least when you show them the evidence, it might stick in their mind a little more. It's all in the way you present it, I think. The idea is to be truth-focused and authentic, rather than confrontational. Maybe discuss it as a policy issue rather than a parenting issue.

Related Posts

- New study: marijuana use by teens is linked to permanent brain abnormalities

- New study: smoking marijuana raises risk of having a stroke
- New study: smoking marijuana/cannabis permanently lowers IQ
- Should we legalize drugs and prostitution like Ron Paul wants?

New study: breastfeeding is slightly better for children's intelligence

August 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Breast-feeding longer can make children smarter. That's the conclusion of a study published Monday in JAMA Pediatrics, a journal of the American Medical Association.
>
> […]The latest study examined and rated each child's environment based on factors such as how many books are available, and gave each mother an IQ test. They also asked detailed questions about factors that might influence IQ, such as child care, income and parental education. They then subtracted those factors using a statistical model. Dr. Belfort said she hopes that "what we have left is the true connection" with nursing and IQ.
>
> […]Researchers at Boston Children's hospital followed 1,312 babies and mothers from 1999 to 2010. They found out how many of those children were still consuming their mothers' milk at their first birthday, and then tested the children's intelligence at ages 3 and 7.
>
> […]Children who were still nursing after a year had higher receptive language scores at age 3, which means they understood what was being said to them better than their formula-fed peers. At age 7, the breast-fed children scored higher on verbal and nonverbal intelligence tests.
>
> In 3 year olds, every month of breast-feeding raised cognition scores by an average of .21 point. Each month of breast-feeding was associated with a .35 more verbal IQ point and a .29 more nonverbal point in the 7 year olds. A full year of nursing would boost a child's IQ by about 4 points over a child who didn't nurse, said Dr. Belfort, a significant bump considering that IQs average around 100. That is for children getting some breast milk in their diets; those consuming only breast milk before starting to eat solid foods around six months of age saw even greater advantages.
>
> […]The possible link between breast milk and brain development is only starting to be teased out. Some theories suggest that it isn't the content of the milk but the bond between mother and child developed while nursing that accounts for some of the boost. Other ideas hinge on nutrients found in breast milk such as DHA and ARA, which are fatty acids linked to brain development. Some formula companies put DHA and ARA in their offerings.
>
> […]One difficulty in studying breast milk is that every feeding can vary based on the mother and what she has eaten. So the Boston researchers also examined a

> component in mothers' diets that might be responsible for children's brain development: fish, which contains DHA.
>
> The authors found that more than two or more servings of fish per week seemed to confer IQ benefits, but that boost in children's cognition wasn't statistically significant.

Gee, we haven't had any controversy on this blog since… yesterday! I wonder what everyone thinks of this study. Does it ring true to you?

Ryan Anderson explains how gay marriage is already infringing on religious liberty

August 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Ryan Anderson writes about the threat to religious liberty in National Review.

Excerpt:

> Thomas Messner, a visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation, has documented multiple instances in which laws forbidding discrimination based on sexual orientation, as well as laws redefining marriage, have already eroded religious liberty and the rights of conscience.
>
> After Massachusetts redefined marriage to include same-sex relationships, Catholic Charities of Boston faced a mandate to place children with same-sex couples. Rather than go against its principles, Catholic Charities decided to get out of the adoption business — a move that helps neither the orphans nor society. When Massachusetts public schools began teaching grade-school students about same-sex marriage, the town of Lexington's school superintendent, Paul Ash, defended the decision to the *Boston Globe* with this statement: "Lexington is committed to teaching children about the world they live in, and in Massachusetts same-sex marriage is legal." A Massachusetts appellate court ruled that parents have no right to exempt their children from these classes.
>
> The New Mexico Human Rights Commission prosecuted a photographer for declining to photograph a same-sex "commitment ceremony." Doctors in California were successfully sued for declining to perform an artificial insemination on a woman in a same-sex relationship. Owners of a bed-and-breakfast in Illinois who declined to rent their facility for a same-sex civil-union ceremony and reception were sued for violating the state nondiscrimination law. A Georgia wellness counselor was fired after she referred someone in a same-sex relationship to another counselor.
>
> In fact, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty reports that "over 350 separate state anti-discrimination provisions would likely be triggered by recognition of same-sex marriage."
>
> In a letter sent to priests, deacons, and pastoral facilitators in 131 parishes, the Catholic bishop of Springfield, Ill., explains that a same-sex-marriage bill state lawmakers are considering this year does not include meaningful protections for religious liberty:
>
> [It] would not stop the state from obligating the Knights of Columbus to make their halls available for same-sex "weddings." It would not stop the state from requiring Catholic grade schools to hire teachers who are legally "married" to

> someone of the same sex. This bill would not protect Catholic hospitals, charities, or colleges, which exclude those so "married" from senior leadership positions. . . . This "religious freedom" law does nothing at all to protect the consciences of people in business, or who work for the government. We saw the harmful consequences of deceptive titles all too painfully last year when the so-called "Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act" forced Catholic Charities out of foster care and adoption services in Illinois. . . . There is no possible way– none whatsoever — for those who believe that marriage is exclusively the union of husband and wife to avoid legal penalties and harsh discriminatory treatment if the bill becomes law. Why should we expect it be otherwise? After all, we would be people who, according to the thinking behind the bill, hold onto an "unfair" view of marriage. The state would have equated our view with bigotry — which it uses the law to marginalize in every way short of criminal punishment.
>
> Georgetown University law professor Chai Feldblum, an appointee to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, argues that the push to redefine marriage trumps religious-liberty concerns:
>
> For all my sympathy for the evangelical Christian couple who may wish to run a bed-and-breakfast from which they can exclude unmarried, straight couples and all gay couples, this is a point where I believe the "zero-sum" nature of the game inevitably comes into play. And, in making that decision in this zero-sum game, I am convinced society should come down on the side of protecting the liberty of LGBT people.
>
> Indeed, for many supporters of redefining marriage, such infringements on religious liberty are not flaws but virtues of the movement.

Now, I have previously written that a good case can be made against same-sex marriage on secular grounds alone, but make no mistake – the more gay rights advance, the more religious liberty declines. This issue is not about equality, it's about trampling on the rights of anyone who voices any disagreement with the gay lifestyle.

After pro-life laws were passed, abortions declined 7.4% in Arizona

August 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News has some good news for us.

Excerpt:

> A new report from the state health department in Arizona shows the number of abortions there has declined more than seven percent, thanks in part to the passage of more pro-life laws limiting abortions.
>
> The Department of Health Services annual abortion report shows a 7.4% decrease in the number of abortions performed in Arizona in 2012 as compared to 2011.
>
> Abortions dropped 8 percent from 2010-2011 after dropping 30 percent the year before.

Here's a bit more about the law passed by the Republicans in Arizona:

> Early in 2012, Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer signed a pro-life bill into law to ban abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy. This bill, called "The Mother's Health and Safety Act":
>
> - Prohibits abortion after 20 weeks because of the safety risks to the mother and the pain endured by the preborn child
> - Ensures women have an ultrasound at least 24 hours prior to an abortion
> - Establishes an informed consent website which details the facts about fetal development, risks of abortion, and services available.
> - Requires doctors performing surgical abortions to have admitting privileges at a hospital within thirty miles of the abortion facility.

Lately, we are seeing a lot of these bans on abortions after 20 weeks in states that have Republican-controlled legislatures and Republican governors. It's good news! And in 2014, we'll get another chance to vote pro-life again and see some more hope and change.

Millionaire gay couple sues Church of England to get gay wedding in a church

August 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, that didn't take long, did it?

The UK Daily Mail reports.

Excerpt:

> The first legal challenge to the Church of England's ban on same-sex marriage was launched today – months before the first gay wedding can take place.
>
> Gay father Barrie Drewitt-Barlow declared: 'I want to go into my church and marry my husband.' He added: 'The only way forward for us now is to make a challenge in the courts against the Church.'
>
> The legal move means an early test for David Cameron's promise to the CofE and Roman Catholic bishops that no church would be forced to conduct same-sex weddings against the will of its leaders and its faithful.
>
> Ministers set down a 'quadruple lock' in the new same sex marriage law – which received Royal Assent last month – which is supposed to protect those churches which oppose gay marriage.
>
> However the guarantees will have to be tested in the courts and gay rights groups have been expecting to bring an early challenge.

How is the suit likely to be resolved?

The article notes that:

> [A] succession of past court cases have resulted in defeats for Christians who were in disputes over equality laws, and in particular courts have always found in favour of gays who have challenged Christians.
>
> In recent years notable cases have ended in the sacking of a town hall registrar who refused to conduct civil partnership ceremonies, the sack for a Relate counsellor who said he would not give sex advice to gay couples, and defeat for a couple who declined to let a room in their hotel to a gay couple on the grounds that they were unmarried.
>
> Colin Hart, of the Coalition for Marriage said: 'The ink's not even dry on the Bill and churches are already facing litigation. We warned Mr Cameron this would happen, we told him he was making promises that he couldn't possibly keep.
>
> 'He didn't listen. He didn't care. He's the one who has created this mess. Mr Cameron's chickens are coming home to roost and it will be ordinary people with a religious belief who yet again fall victim to the totalitarian forces of political correctness.'

> Mr Hart added: ‘We now face the real prospect of churches having to choose between stopping conducting weddings, or vicars, and priests defying the law and finding themselves languishing in the dock.’

Yesterday, I blogged about how gay activists are already infringing on religious liberty in the United States. It’s happening here. Isn’t interesting that many people who falsely claim to be Christian nevertheless voted for a President who is in favor of gay marriage? And now we are getting the consequences of gay marriage – the end of religions liberty.

Short pro-life responses to six pro-choice slogans

August 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two posts: (first post, second post) by Daniel Rodger, who lives in the UK.

Here are the six slogans:

1. *'It's a women's right to choose.'*
2. *'Don't like abortion? Don't have one.'*
3. *'Keep your Rosaries off my ovaries.'*
4. *'Vote Pro-choice. Politicians make crappy doctors.'*
5. *'May the fetus you save be gay.'*
6. *'Stop the war on women.'*

I had not heard #5 before. But here are the first two responses:

> 1. *'It's a women's right to choose.'*
>
> Of course we all respect someone's right to choose, it would make you seem like a moral monster to deny something western civilisation values so highly. However, clearly there are many circumstances where the right to choose has its limitations. No-one is trying to tell women they can't choose what to eat or who to talk to but the idea that choice is absolute is nonsense. One must clarify what is being referred to when we talk about having a right to choose to do something. If I wanted to choose to shoot my dog or beat a child for fun you would likely be abhorred at the nature of my choice and tell me that I have no such right to do so.
>
> Very few people think that we should be able to kill other human beings with impunity which means that the nature of this 'choice' begs the question and assumes something about the nature of the unborn. That they are different, less valuable, outside of our moral circle, disposable and whose geographical location justifies their killing in the name of Western autonomy. Clearly whether someone is male or female they do not have the 'right' to choose to do whatever they want. Dressed up in more philosophical language we would find ourselves responding to the bodily autonomy objection that has been suitably refuted elsewhere ad nauseam.
>
> 2. *'Don't like abortion? Don't have one.'*
>
> Let's try and use similar logic on some other moral quandaries, 'Don't like slavery? Don't own one.' Don't like wife beating? Don't beat yours.' Don't like child abuse? Don't abuse yours. Don't like strawberries? Don't eat them. What this slogan does quite effectively is that it moves abortion from being something that may be an objective moral wrong that kills a developing and innocent human being to one of personal tastes. Very few people would accept that preferring strawberries over apricots is morally similar to preferring to keep

> slaves or not, yet this is the category the slogan is putting abortion in. Slavery is wrong because it treats intrinsically valuable human being's as a commodities that can be traded and sold.
>
> However the real crime of this slogan is that it promotes the idea that those who are Pro-life only think abortion is wrong because they don't like it, which is false. Whether someone likes strawberries or apricots is a personal preference that no-one would disagree with, but equivocating between that and an act that kills another human being is absurd and assumes moral relativism. This leaves the proponent of such a slogan in the position of having no authority to tell us that neither slavery and wife beating are wrong if I happened to like them. Lets get this straight, when someone who holds the Pro-life view says abortion is wrong they are not simply saying they don't like abortion, they are saying it is objectively wrong regardless of how someone may feel about it.

His first post covers the first three objections, the second post covers the latter three objections.

If you like these, you can find a whole collection of them here.

Leftist RINO Lindsay Graham will get primary challenge from Nancy Mace

August 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican candidate Nancy Mace (South Carolina)

The Daily Caller has some great news for conservatives who are sick and tired of being stabbed in the back by a fake Republican.

Excerpt:

> The first woman to graduate from the Citadel is planning to challenge South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham in the Republican primary next year.
>
> Charleston businesswoman Nancy Mace will head to Goose Creek Saturday to announce her Senate campaign, The Daily Caller News Foundation has learned.
>
> "This isn't about one senator," Mace told TheDCNF. "The only way to change Washington is to change who we send to Washington."
>
> "Washington is out of touch," she added. "Voters are frustrated. They're looking for someone authentic."
>
> In a June fundraising email, the Senate Conservatives Fund listed Graham as one of three Republican senators the group would support a primary campaign against if "strong, conservative challengers emerge."
>
> Mace, who has written articles for The Daily Caller, is a Fort Bragg native who graduated from South Carolina's military college in 1999, becoming the first woman graduate since the Citadel was founded in 1842. She later wrote a

> memoir of her experience at the school and runs a public relations firm in Charleston.
>
> […]When Paul ran ads against several swing state Democratic senators who voted against his proposal to stop foreign aid to Egypt, Pakistan and Libya, Graham came to their aid. Graham joined West Virginia Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin in a conference call defending his vote.
>
> “I think the overwhelming majority of Americans oppose giving tax dollars to countries that hate our culture, burn our flag and train terrorists,” Mace told TheDCNF.
>
> Mace said that Graham refers to his Republican critics as being “to the left of Obama, but he has has been with Obama on many issues.” She pointed to the Gang of Eight immigration bill — Graham’s harshest critics nickname him “Grahamnesty” — along with the Troubled Assets Relief Program bailout, cap and trade and his votes to confirm Supreme Court Justices Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor.
>
> Mace argued that justices in the mold of these Obama appointments “upheld Obamacare,” the controversial federal health care reform law she would like to defund.
>
> Last year, Graham distanced himself from the Americans for Tax Reform pledge against tax increases, causing the group’s leader Grover Norquist to brand him “not a thought leader in the Republican Party.”

She’s only 35 years old!

Now if we could just find someone young and conservative to challenge John McCain in a primary, we’d really be in good shape.

New study confirms that predictions about junk DNA by Darwinian naturalists are false

August 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's see what Darwinian evolutionists predict about junk DNA, before we look at what the experiments show.

Here's biologist John Timmer to explain the orthodox Darwinian view of DNA from 2007:

> Personally, I fall into the "it's all junk" end of the spectrum. If almost all of these sequences are not conserved by evolution, and we haven't found a function for any of them yet, it's hard to see how the "none of it's junk" view can be maintained. There's also an absence of support for the intervening view, again because of a lack of evidence for actual utility. The genomes of closely related species have revealed very few genes added from non-coding DNA, and all of the structural RNA we've found has very specific sequence requirements. The all-junk view, in contrast, is consistent with current data.

Got that? According to Darwinists, DNA is almost entirely junk – this is what is consistent with the view that creatures have evolved through a process of random mutation and selection. The estimates that I've seen from evolutionary biologists range from 95% to 99% junk. Now let's compare the religion with science, and separate mythology from reality.

Now let's compare that with intelligent design theorist William Dembski's view of "junk" DNA, from 1998:

> Even if we have a reliable criterion for detecting design, and even if that criterion tells us that biological systems are designed, it seems that determining a biological system to be designed is akin to shrugging our shoulders and saying God did it. The fear is that admitting design as an explanation will stifle scientific inquiry, that scientists will stop investigating difficult problems because they have a sufficient explanation already.
>
> But design is not a science stopper. Indeed, design can foster inquiry where traditional evolutionary approaches obstruct it. Consider the term "junk DNA." Implicit in this term is the view that because the genome of an organism has been cobbled together through a long, undirected evolutionary process, the genome is a patchwork of which only limited portions are essential to the organism. **Thus on an evolutionary view we expect a lot of useless DNA. If, on the other hand, organisms are designed, we expect DNA, as much as possible, to exhibit function. And indeed, the most recent findings suggest that designating DNA as "junk" merely cloaks our current lack of knowledge about function… Design encourages scientists to look for function where evolution discourages it.**

Now let's look at the experimental evidence and see whose prediction was proven right by the progress of science.

Science Daily reports on a new study that confirms the previous study that falsified Darwinian predictions about junk DNA.

Excerpt:

> Researchers from the Gene and Stem Cell Therapy Program at Sydney's Centenary Institute have confirmed that, far from being "junk," the 97 per cent of human DNA that does not encode instructions for making proteins can play a significant role in controlling cell development.
>
> […]Using the latest gene sequencing techniques and sophisticated computer analysis, a research group led by Professor John Rasko AO and including Centenary's Head of Bioinformatics, Dr William Ritchie, has shown how particular white blood cells use non-coding DNA to regulate the activity of a group of genes that determines their shape and function. The work is published today in the scientific journal*Cell*.
>
> "This discovery, involving what was previously referred to as "junk," opens up a new level of gene expression control that could also play a role in the development of many other tissue types," Rasko says. "Our observations were quite surprising and they open entirely new avenues for potential treatments in diverse diseases including cancers and leukemias."

Now, this is yet another falsification of Darwinism, to go with the other papers that I keep posting about new research that falsifies Darwinism. How many papers do we need to falsify Darwinism? Or maybe belief in Darwinism is like belief in naturalism: just a philosophical presupposition that is not accountable to the evidence at all.

William Lane Craig vs Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God's existence

August 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has done in my opinion. (The other two are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates) This one doesn't seem to get a lot of play on the Internet: there's no video, transcript or anything. But it is a great debate, and on a problem we are all concerned about: the problem of evil and suffering. One other thing – Sinnott-Armstrong is also a very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics.

The MP3 file is here.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

- If God exists, gratuitous does not exist.
- *God exists*
- Therefore, gratuitous does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists:

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

Aetna pulls out of Obamacare exchanges in Maryland – can't operate at a loss

August 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Left-leaning Reuters reports on the implementation of Obamacare in Maryland.

Excerpt:

> Aetna Inc pulled out of Maryland's health insurance exchange being created under President Barack Obama's healthcare reform law after the state pressed it to lower its proposed rates by up to 29 percent.
>
> Under the law, often called Obamacare, each U.S. state will have an online exchange where Americans will be able to buy insurance plans, starting on October 1. The government is counting on about 7 million people to enroll next year for this insurance, many of whom will qualify for subsidies.
>
> The success of the exchanges, as well as the expansion of the government's Medicaid program for the poor, are key elements in the political battle between Republicans and Democrats. State officials say the price of the new insurance plans will help determine whether enough people sign up.
>
> In an August 1 letter sent to the Maryland Department of Insurance, Aetna said the state's requirement for rate reductions off its proposed prices would lead it to operate at a loss. The rate reductions include products from Aetna and Coventry Health Care, which it bought this spring.
>
> "Unfortunately, we believe the modifications to the rates filed by Aetna and Coventry would not allow us to collect enough premiums to cover the cost of the plans, including the medical network and service expectations of our customers," Aetna said in the letter to insurance commissioner Therese Goldsmith.
>
> **According to online documents, Aetna had requested an average monthly premium of $394 a month for one of its plans and the agency had approved an average rate of $281 per month.**
>
> Aetna Chief Executive Officer Mark Bertolini said earlier this week during a conference call to announce financial results that it was closely looking at its plans for the exchanges since buying Coventry.

> Like most other large U.S. insurers, Aetna has taken a cautious approach to the new products which must include a broader set of benefits and be sold to all people regardless of their health.

Doug Ross blogged about the cost of health insurance in Ohio a while back. He linked to this article from Forbes magazine.

Excerpt:

> [O]n Thursday, the Ohio Department of Insurance announced that, based on the rates submitted by insurers to date, the average individual-market health insurance premium in 2014 will come in around $420, "representing an increase of 88 percent" relative to 2013…
>
> […]It's called "rate shock," but it's not shocking to people who understand the economics of health insurance. In August 2011, Milliman, one of the nation's leading actuarial firms, predicted that Obamacare would increase individual-market premiums in Ohio by 55 to 85 percent. This past March, the Society of Actuaries projected that the law would increase premiums in that market by 81 percent…
>
> […]What are the drivers of the increase? According to Milliman, the two biggest drivers are (1) risk pool composition changes, such as forcing the young to subsidize the old, and the healthy to subsidize the sick; and (2) Obamacare's required expansion of insurance benefits, particularly its mandated reductions in deductibles and co-pays…

Doug makes the point that we already knew what happens to the cost of health care when government imposes price controls – we get a shortage of health care, and prices go up. We knew that. Obamacare is nothing but a further intervention into free market to impose more price controls. Guess what? It's going to do the exact same thing. The only way out of this mess is going to be for government to ration care by reducing the number of doctors and delaying treatment with waiting lists – exactly what happens today in Canada.

During the election campaign, Obama promised everyone that his health care policy would result in lower premiums. What reasons did we have to believe him when he said that? Did he have a record of competence on health care policy, like Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal does? Did he have a career in private sector health care to draw on, like Mark Bertolini does? No. Obama had nothing but talk. And we were too busy watching television to care.

Related posts

- Ezra Klein on the costs of Obamacare: then and now
- New report on Obamacare claims that premiums will go up 100% to 400%
- How does Obamacare cause medical premiums to rise?
- Medical premiums will continue to rise as Obamacare is implemented
- Health insurance premiums up $3,000 since Obama was elected
- Obamacare: higher taxes, higher debt, higher unemployment and higher premiums
- Has the passage of Obamacare reduced health insurance premiums?

Virginia crime rate dropping after post-Obama gun buying spree

August 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dad sent me this article from the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Excerpt:

> Gun-related violent crime continues to drop in Virginia as the sales of firearms continue to soar, a pattern that one local criminologist finds interesting "given the current rhetoric about strengthening gun laws."
>
> Major gun crime collectively dropped for a fourth consecutive year statewide, while firearms sales climbed to a new record in 2012 with 490,119 guns purchased in 444,844 transactions — a 16 percent rise over 2011, according to federally licensed gun dealer sales estimates obtained by the Richmond Times-Dispatch.
>
> The proliferation of guns occurred as the total number of major reported crimes committed with all types of firearms in Virginia dropped 5 percent, from 4,618 offenses in 2011 to 4,378 last year, according to Virginia State Police data.
>
> Looking back over seven years, total firearm sales in Virginia have risen a staggering 101 percent from 2006 to 2012, while gun-related crime has dropped 28 percent during that period.

The one really good thing about the Obama Presidency is that it's caused a lot of law-abiding Americans to purchase firearms out of fear that the government would ban them. Increased firearm ownership by law-abiding citizens is very bad for criminals, who now face a stronger deterrent to their criminal ambitions.

Previously, I had blogged about what the Bible says about self-defense, with some help from famous sytematic theologian Wayne Grudem. Dr. Gudem, whose PhD is from Cambridge University, concluded that the Bible was consistent with self-defense and firearm ownership. Now let's take a look at the peer-reviewed data and see how we can explain why self-defense is a good idea to others.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

August 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Justin Brierley, host of the Unbelievable radio show, tweeted about this lecture.

This is a long form explanation of the resurrection argument that Dr. Craig makes in all of his debates on the existence of God. The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early

dating
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthew, which Mike Licona and I doubt is intended to be historical, but is more likely to be apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

You can see this evidence used in an actual debate, against a historian who disagrees with Dr. Craig. That post contains a point by point summary of the debate that I wrote while listening to it.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

President Obama intervenes to exempt Congress from Obamacare

August 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> To adapt H.L. Mencken, nobody ever went broke underestimating the cynicism and self-dealing of the American political class. Witness their ad-libbed decision, at the 11th hour and on the basis of no legal authority, to create a special exemption for themselves from the ObamaCare health coverage that everybody else is mandated to buy.
>
> […][Obamacare] means that about 11,000 Members and Congressional staff will lose the generous coverage they now have as part of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). Instead they will get the lower-quality, low-choice "Medicaid Plus" of the exchanges. The Members—annual salary: $174,000—and their better paid aides also wouldn't qualify for ObamaCare subsidies. That means they could be exposed to thousands of dollars a year in out-of-pocket insurance costs.
>
> The result was a full wig out on Capitol Hill, with Members of both parties fretting about "brain drain" as staff face higher health-care costs. Democrats in particular begged the White House for help, claiming the Reid language was merely an unintentional mistake. President Obama told Democrats in a closed-door meeting last week that he would personally moonlight as HR manager and resolve the issue.
>
> And now the White House is suspending the law to create a double standard. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that runs federal benefits will release regulatory details this week, but leaks to the press suggest that Congress will receive extra payments based on the FEHBP defined-contribution formula, which covers about 75% of the cost of the average insurance plan. For 2013, that's about $4,900 for individuals and $10,000 for families.
>
> […]This latest White House night at the improv is also illegal. OPM has no authority to pay for insurance plans that lack FEHBP contracts, nor does the Affordable Care Act permit either exchange contributions or a unilateral bump in congressional pay in return for less overall compensation. Those things require appropriations bills passed by Congress and signed by the President.
>
> But the White House rejected a legislative fix because Republicans might insist on other changes, and Mr. Obama feared that Democrats would go along because they're looking out for number one. So the White House is once again rewriting the law unilaterally, much as it did by suspending ObamaCare's

> employer mandate for a year. For this White House, the law it wrote is a mere suggestion.
>
> The lesson for Americans is that Democrats who passed ObamaCare didn't even understand what they were doing to themselves, much less to everyone else. But you can bet Democrats will never extend to ordinary Americans the same fixes that they are now claiming for themselves. The real class divide in President Obama's America is between the political class and everyone else.

Just keep in mind that there is only one party fighting to repeal this monstrosity, and it's the Republican Party. The Democrat Party wrote this bill, they supported this bill, and their supporters helped push it through. Now they are trying to get THEMSELVES out of it. But they still want it to apply to YOU. The only people trying to get YOU out of it is the Republican Party.

Related posts

- IRS employee union opposes making Obamacare apply to themselves
- Three labor union leaders write letter to Democrats attacking Obamacare
- Labor unions who lobbied for Obamacare receive the most waivers from Obamacare
- Obamacare contains billions of dollars in pork for Obama's union allies
- Obamacare waivers skyrocket to 729 including TONS of unions
- Ezra Klein on the costs of Obamacare: then and now
- New report on Obamacare claims that premiums will go up 100% to 400%
- How does Obamacare cause medical premiums to rise?
- Medical premiums will continue to rise as Obamacare is implemented
- Health insurance premiums up $3,000 since Obama was elected
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Wendy Davis can't explain how Gosnell murders and late-term abortions differ

August 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard asked Texas state senator Wendy Davis about her filibuster of the ban on abortions after 20 weeks.

Excerpt:

> Texas state senator Wendy Davis spoke at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Monday afternoon about her 13-hour filibuster of a bill limiting late-term abortion, her life story, and her future in politics.
>
> Davis has become a champion for pro-choice activists, but during her recent whirlwind national media tour, she never commented on late-term abortion doctor Kermit Gosnell, who was convicted of murder in May for killing infants moments after they were born.
>
> Following her Press Club speech on Monday, THE WEEKLY STANDARD asked Davis to explain the difference between the late-term abortions that the Texas state senator wants to keep legal and the illegal Gosnell killings.
>
> Davis didn't answer the question. "I don't know what happened in the Gosnell case," she told me.
>
> **THE WEEKLY STANDARD**: The supporters of these bans, they argue that there really isn't much of a difference between what happened in that Philadelphia case with abortion doctor Kermit Gosnell [killing born-alive infants] 23 weeks into pregnancy and legal late-term abortions at 23 weeks. What is the difference between those two, between legal abortion at 23 weeks and what Gosnell did? Do you see a distinction between those two [acts]?

> **SEN. WENDY DAVIS**: I don't know what happened in the Gosnell case. But I do know that it happened in an ambulatory surgical center. And in Texas changing our clinics to that standard obviously isn't going to make a difference. The state of the law obviously has to assure that doctors are providing safe procedures for women and that proper oversight by the health and human services department is being given. It sounds as though there was a huge gap in that oversight, and no one can defend that. But that's not the landscape of what's happening in Texas.
>
> In June, House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi was similarly unable to explain the difference between the Gosnell murders and late-term abortions. Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards ducked the question in July.
>
> Polls have consistently shown that solid majorities of Americans, including

> women, support banning most abortions that occur later than 20 weeks after conception.
>
> Asked what she thinks of polls showing women support limiting abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy, Davis told me that people "don't really understand" the issue.

I actually think that it's pro-abortion people like Nancy Pelosi and Wendy Davis, and their media sycophants, who don't understand abortion.

Here is the ignorance again, this time on Jezebel, a radical feminist web site, as reported by the American Spectator.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Other examples include a Jezebel article that declares "the concept of fetal pain is bullshit." It's a fascinating piece, full of superfluous nicknames and profanities, centered on the astounding assertion that "there's no evidence that nonviable fetal pain is a thing." Even more fascinating, however, is that the author, Katie J.M. Baker, doesn't cite one ounce of scientific evidence to support her claim. Instead, she awkwardly transitions into an incoherent rant against Republicans.
>
> But despite the left's panic, there is a strong case to be made that unborn children feel pain by 20 weeks.
>
> In a 1999 article published in the *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, Dr. Vivette Glover and Dr. Nicholas M. Fisk explain a key fact:
>
> The most important evidence [of fetal pain] is anatomical. For the fetus to feel pain, it is necessary for the requisite nociceptive pathways to be developed. This involves neural connections between peripheral receptors and the spinal cord, upward transmission via the spinal cord to the thalamus, and from there to the outer cerebral layers.
>
> Among the scientific jargon lies a key word – "nociception," which has to do with nociceptive neurons. These "generate trains of action potentials in response to painful stimuli, and the frequency of firing signals the intensity of the pain." In other words, they are what make pain painful. Glover and Fisk say that "most incoming pathways, including nociceptive ones, are routed through the thalamus and, as stated above, penetrate the subplate zone from about 17 weeks" into a pregnancy.
>
> Now it's true we might never know for sure exactly when an unborn child feels pain and to what extent. But Glover, Fisk, and others conclude that it is very possible pain is felt by at least 20 weeks. "Given the anatomical evidence, it is possible that the fetus can feel pain from 20 weeks and is caused distress by interventions from as early as 15 or 16 weeks. This sets a limit to the earliest stage that analgesia might be considered," according to Glover and Fisk. They don't suggest that abortions should cease, but instead recommend that painkillers be administered to children about to be aborted.

Pro-lifers are very familiar with what a baby can do at all stages of development. We have to be, because we have to be able to debate this issue using the real evidence. We are also the ones who push for informed consent and mandatory ultrasound, whereas the other side opposes both of those. Why is that? It's because the pro-life side has the evidence and pushes it, whereas the pro-abortion side tries to hide the evidence and appeal to feelings. Abortion supporters don't know, and they don't want anyone to know. Their embrace of abortion *depends* on their not knowing the truth.

Pro-lifer Amy Hall tweeted about an editorial from CNN that makes this point about willful ignorance. The author writes that pro-lifers want to ban abortion after 20 weeks in order to protect unborn children who have a heart beat. Huh? Unborn babies have a heart beat at week 6, according to the well-respected Mayo Clinic. That means that the CNN journalist was off by 14 weeks in her statement. That's the level of knowledge that you have on the other side of the abortion debate. It's a self-serving ignorance designed to give them maximum autonomy and maximum irresponsibility.

For myself, I think that I'll continue to look up to pro-life women like Jaime Herrera Beutler and Michele Bachmann. They get it.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

August 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing

- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don’t have any earlier sources, so we just don’t know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn’t check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Erika Harold: Harvard law graduate and former Miss America runs for Congress

August 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican candidate Erika Harold

The Weekly Standard reports.

Excerpt:

> The most interesting House primary of the 2014 cycle began in June in the 13th District of Illinois. It pits freshman Republican congressman Rodney Davis against an insurgent candidate named Erika Harold. Davis is a political operative who won his seat last year nearly by accident. Erika Harold is a 33-year-old lawyer. Who happens to have been Miss America.
>
> […]In addition to the charisma and poise native to good politicians, Harold has exhibited the principled toughness of the best pols. And again, to appreciate this aspect of her character, you need only go back to Miss America.

Her platform as a Miss America candidate included abstinence:

> Harold competed three times for the Miss Illinois crown, which she finally won in 2003. Each time, she ran on a platform of abstinence. But one of the arcane traditions of Miss America is that while contestants choose their own platforms when competing for the state crown, it's the state organization that decides what platform the winner will take to Atlantic City. The year Harold was named Miss Illinois, her state committee settled on a bland platform opposing "youth

> violence." (Think of it as "world peace," for the children.) Harold agreed to oppose youth violence.
>
> After she was named Miss America, however, Harold decided to add abstinence to her platform for the year of her reign. She didn't abandon "youth violence" but rather included it, along with abstinence, in a broad appeal to kids to respect themselves by standing up to bullies and avoiding sex, drugs, and alcohol. This was, as a matter of both intellectual coherence and moral sense, a significant improvement on the pure "youth violence" platform she'd been handed. The Miss America organization did not like it one bit.
>
> The organization pushed back hard and told Harold to keep quiet—especially about sex. The disagreement made national headlines and culminated in a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington, where the newly crowned Harold told reporters, "I will not be bullied. I've gone through enough adversity in my life to stand up for what I believe in." Miss America stared down the pageant and won.

Promotes fiscal conservativism to African Americans:

> Harold was already interested in politics. During a Miss America appearance at East St. Louis High School, students asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up. She told them, "My ultimate goal is that I want to be the first black female president of the United States." While still an undergraduate at Illinois, she volunteered for conservative Patrick O'Malley's doomed 2002 Illinois gubernatorial campaign. She also volunteered with the Republican National Committee in an effort to promote conservative economic principles in African-American communities. After graduating from law school, she joined a Chicago firm where her practice has specialized in health care law and religious freedom.
>
> […][W]hile Harold tries to resist easy classification, her ideological markers are highly suggestive of a conservative worldview. There's the abstinence, of course. She's fiercely pro-life. She favors concealed-carry gun laws. And she's on the board of Prison Fellowship Ministries, the program founded by Chuck Colson.

Focused on religious liberty:

> The most interesting part of Harold's legal practice has been her work defending faith-based entities. In one case, for example, she represented a retirement community affiliated with a religious group. The organization featured a cross on its logo and used a Bible verse in its mission statement—which attracted a lawsuit from an advocacy group contending that this amounted to discrimination. Describing this work, Harold says, "It's a passion of mine."
>
> Looking across the broader national landscape, Harold sees ample reason to be concerned about religious freedom. "We're starting to see ways in which our constitutional protections are being encroached upon," she says. "We all are less

> free when any group isn't afforded their constitutional protections."
>
> And not just less free, but less well off. Harold says that her time with Prison Fellowship Ministries has deepened her appreciation for the good religious organizations can do. "I've seen firsthand the need for there to be a space in public life for religious groups to be able to offer service to their fellow man," she says. When government seeks to quarantine religious organizations, moving from freedom of religion to "freedom of worship" (to use the formulation President Obama favors), "it's far too limiting in terms of the good they can do for the public, and it's far too restrictive in terms of the protections which are afforded religious groups by the Constitution. We give something up when we say that certain voices aren't welcome in the public square."
>
> Harold says she intends to make religious freedom an issue in her campaign. This is fitting at a time when the HHS mandate, the Hobby Lobby case, and the torrent of litigation about to be unleashed by the Supreme Court's gay marriage decisions appear likely to make religious freedom a central front in the culture war.

We have such a deep bench, so there's reason for optimism – if you're a Republican like me! Here's another story I found about another young, female Republican candidate Elise Stefanik. I would not be annoyed at all if all of our candidates were women or minorities or minority women. I wouldn't even be annoyed if our candidates were some sort of dolphin-alligator hybrid monstrosities, (although I prefer pretty lawyers ladies). The main thing I want is that our candidates are *conservative*. That's what really matters to me.

Woman who claims to be a Christian denounces premarital chastity

August 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: This post has been linked by Captain Capitalism, a libertarian non-Christian who respects Christians who act consistently with their beliefs.

Here's the plan for this post. We're going to take a look at a post by a woman who claims to be a Christian. In that post, she offers some reasons why premarital chastity is wrong. Then we'll take a look at what the Bible says. Then we'll take a look at what the research says. Then I explain what this trend among Christian women means for marriage-minded men.

First here is the post by "Joy". Her reasons for disagreeing with premarital chastity are as follows:

1. Chastity makes women who have had premarital sex feel ashamed
2. It does no harm for a woman to have premarital sex before marriage
3. God made people with a sexual drive, so God thinks that premarital sex is OK
4. Most people are already having sex, so God thinks that premarital sex is OK
5. Practicing sex with men you don't intend to marry makes you better at marital sex

In another post, she is more clear about her views: (these are her actual words)

- Choosing to not to abstain from sexual intercourse before marriage is not shameful.
- Your decision to abstain or not to abstain does not necessarily have any connection to the health of your future marriage.
- Your decision to abstain or not to abstain does not necessarily have any connection to the health of your future sex life.

Now first off, she has no Biblical evidence for any of these assertions in the original post I linked to. She also has no evidence from outside the Bible for any of her assertions. Assertion #3 in the list of 5 above seems to me to justify adultery as easily as it justifies premarital sex. Now, you might expect a person who claims to be a Christian to look first to the Bible to see what is right and wrong, then to look to evidence to strengthen the argument when discussing it with others inside and outside the church. For Joy, feelings and peer-pressure are enough to make anything morally OK. Now let's take a quick look at what the Bible says about chastity and premarital sex:

> 1 Cor. 7:8-9
>
> 8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to stay single as I am.
>
> 9 But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

> The idea of "burning" here has to do with sexual desire. Here Paul tells all unmarried people that if they cannot control their sexual desires, they need to get married. Why? Because Paul assumes that one cannot fulfill this sexual desire outside of the marital bed. While Paul would love for them to remain single (1 Cor. 7:7), he believes that sex outside of marriage is a destructive sin and *cannot* be used as a gratifying release of our sexual passions.

Now what evidence outside the Bible is there to support that? Here's some:

- New study: delaying sexual activity produces improves relationship quality and stability
- New study: staying a virgin longer enables more satisfying relationships
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Two things you can do to make your marriage last

Now back to Joy, What I have found when dealing with women like Joy in the church is that the Bible has no authority over them. Not even the words of Jesus have authority to lead them. And obviously they are not impressed with evidence from science, history, etc. Their sole reason for acting the way they do is their own feelings, which largely stem from hedonism and vanity – the desire to feel good and to please and impress their peers. Whatever they do that seems right to them cannot be questioned or judged. If things don't "work out", then they are a helpless victim. God's will for them is that they do whatever they feel like in order to be happy.

It's very very important for men who are seeking marriage to understand that the typical woman they meet in the church does not understand that Christianity imposes any obligations on them. They don't look at the Bible for moral guidance, but for comfort. And they don't study outside the Bible to become persuaded (and persuasive) about what the Bible teaches. Their view of Christianity is that they are good where they are, and that there is nothing that they should be studying or planning for in order to achieve goals, like evangelism or marriage. Everything has to be easy and feel good.

Fortunately, there is a way to detect the women who are serious about Christianity, and it can be done by simply asking them questions to see if they have moved beyond the feelings/selfishness model of Christianity to the truth/responsibility model of Christianity. All you have to do is ask them questions to see how much effort they've put into confirming what the Bible teaches by reading outside the Bible. Christians read the Bible to know what's true, and they read outside the Bible to convince themselves to act on what they know is true, and to show to others what's true in a persuasive way. But reading outside the Bible is at war with the feelings/victim/don't-judge-me view of Christianity pushed by people like Joy. That is because the more you read, the less room there is for doing what you feel like. When you study, what you learn constrains your actions.

When you ask a women questions about Christianity before marriage, you can see whether 1) she has studied these issues already or 2) she wants to study these issues, or 3) whether she has no interest in studying anything, no matter how useful to God it might be. You do not want to be married to someone who thinks that breaking God's law is OK if she feels like it, and who has done no reading or studying of relevant moral issues in order to build up her own ability to have self-control for the good of others around her.

I think men should avoid women who respond to the claims of Scripture and the evidence from research by sticking their fingers in their ears and saying "don't judge me! don't shame me!". You can't make a *marriage* with someone who is dismissive of moral obligations, and who acknowledges no higher authority than her own feelings and the approval of her secular, progressive peers. The Bible forbids "unequal yoking", which is the marriage of a Christian to a non-Christian.

And I'll go one step further and say that this attitude of "rules make people feel bad, so we shouldn't have any" is destroying our society. We really need to be a bit more brave about holding immoral, destructive people like Joy and her progressive friends accountable. Note: Just to be clear, I don't mind if a person is a non-Christian and has had premarital sex, then becomes a christian and is from that point on abstinent before marriage – that is *fine.* It needs some attention and care to make sure that it doesn't cause problems, but it's totally acceptable to marry someone like that in my view. What is wrong is to claim that Christianity and premarital sex are *compatible*. That's the mistake I am arguing against.

UPDATE: In the comments below I like to other posts on "A Deeper Story" showing that these women are also pro-gay-marriage. So they are really not Christians in any knowledge-oriented sense, but just applying the label to themselves inconsistently, perhaps like secular Jews call themselves culturally Jewish while not believing in God.

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalistic alternatives to the Big Bang

August 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture, which was given in 2004 at the University of Colorado, Boulder. A very liberal university!

This lecture is suitable for intermediate and advanced Christian apologists.

The description of the video states:

> This is quite simply one of the best lectures William Lane Craig (a philosopher of science) has given. Craig explores the origins of the universe. He argues for a beginning of the universe, while refuting scientific models like the Steady State Theory, the Oscillating Theory, Quantum Vacuum Fluctuation Model, Chaotic Inflationary Theory, Quantum Gravity Theory, String Theory, M-Theory and Cyclic Ekpyrotic Theory.

And here is the description of the lecture from Reasonable Faith:

> A Templeton Foundation lecture at the University of Colorado, Boulder, laying out the case from contemporary cosmology for the beginning of the universe and its theological implications. Includes a lengthy Q & A period which features previous critics and debate opponents of Dr. Craig who were in attendance, including Michael Tooley, Victor Stenger, and Arnold Guminski.

Craig has previously debated Stenger and Tooley previously. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A time of this lecture. Imagine – having laid out your entire case to two people who have debated you before and who know your arguments well. What did they ask Craig, and how did he respond?

This lecture is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The whole research paper that the lecture is based on is posted online.

Blue Cross, Aetna, United, Humana opt out of Obamacare exchanges

August 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Major health insurance companies – Blue Cross, Aetna, United, Humana – have fled the Obamacare health care exchanges in various states, which are scheduled to start on Oct. 1.
>
> […]The ACA requires every American to have health insurance, or pay a penalty. Individuals who are not covered by their employer can enroll in the state or federal government-run health care "marketplace," which will provide subsidies to individuals between 100 and 400 percent of the poverty line.
>
> Aetna, a fortune 100 company with $34.2 billion in revenue, has pulled out of public exchanges in three states, and will not be part of the individual health insurance exchange in its home base, Connecticut.
>
> […]Aetna will also not participate in California's exchange, and a spokesperson told CNSNews.com that the company never intended to do so.
>
> "We did not withdraw exchange plans in California, as we never planned participation nor filed [Qualified Health Plans] QHPs to participate in the California exchange," a spokesperson said.
>
> Anthem Blue Cross has withdrawnfrom its bid to participate in the state's small business exchange, as well.
>
> United Health Group, the largest health insurer in the United States, has also taken a pass on the Golden State's individual insurance market under Obamacare.
>
> As a result, roughly 8,000 policyholders will be left searching for new insurance.
>
> […]Only three companies remain in Connecticut's "Access Health CT" exchange, following Aetna's departure.
>
> Similarly, only five plans are participating in the exchange in Georgia, after Aetna and Coventry Health Insurance dropped out last week.
>
> The *Savannah Morning News* noted that this will "leave residents of some parts of the state with limited choice."
>
> […]Two of the three largest health insurers in Wisconsin will also not participate in the state's online marketplace under Obamacare, it was announced on Wednesday.

But I thought that Obama said that people who liked their current health care plan could

keep it?

> “No matter how we reform health care, we will keep this promise: If you like your doctor, you will be able to keep your doctor, period,” Obama said on June 15, 2009.
>
> “If you like your health care plan, you will be able to keep your health care plan. Period,” he said. “No one will take it away. No matter what.”
>
> That promise, however, has been revised by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which now says, “you may be able to keep your current doctor” in the health insurance marketplace.

Oh I see, once the election is over, then the truth comes out. But it doesn’t matter, because Obama already won the election on the strength of the lie.

Related posts

- Ezra Klein on the costs of Obamacare: then and now
- New report on Obamacare claims that premiums will go up 100% to 400%
- How does Obamacare cause medical premiums to rise?
- Medical premiums will continue to rise as Obamacare is implemented
- Health insurance premiums up $3,000 since Obama was elected
- Obamacare: higher taxes, higher debt, higher unemployment and higher premiums
- Has the passage of Obamacare reduced health insurance premiums?

Five common objections to the moral argument

August 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics 315 posted a list of five objections to the moral argument from philosopher Paul Rezkalla.

Here are the 5 points:

1. "But I'm a moral person and I don't believe in God. Are you saying that atheists can't be moral?"
2. "But what if you needed to lie in order to save someone's life? It seems that morality is not absolute as you say it is."
3. 'Where's your evidence for objective morality? I won't believe in anything unless I have evidence for it.'
4. 'If morality is objective, then why do some cultures practice female genital mutilation, cannibalism, infanticide, and other atrocities which we, in the West, deem unacceptable?'
5. 'But God carried out many atrocities in the Old Testament. He ordered the genocide of the Canaanites.'

That last one seems to be popular, so let's double-check the details:

> For starters, this isn't really an objection to the moral argument. It does not attack either premise of the argument. It is irrelevant, but let's entertain this objection for a second. By making a judgement on God's actions and deeming them immoral, the objector is appealing to a standard of morality that holds true outside of him/herself and transcends barriers of culture, context, time period, and social norms. By doing this, he/she affirms the existence of objective morality! But if the skeptic wants to affirm objective morality after throwing God out the window, then there needs to be an alternate explanation for its basis. If not God, then what is it? The burden is now on the skeptic to provide a naturalistic explanation for the objective moral framework.

If you have heard any of these objections before when discussing the moral argument, click through and take a look.

William Lane Craig lectures on failure in the Christian life

August 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this audio on Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 web site.

Here is the MP3 file.

And here is my summary.

Intro:

- the topic of failure is not one that is often discussed by Christians
- failure #1: failure in the Christian life which is the result of sin
- failure #2: when a Christian is defeated while trying to serve God
- the consequences for failure #1 can be worse for the Christian
- the consequences for failure #2 can be worse for the world as whole
- how is it possible for a person to fail when they are obeying God? (#2)
- how can it be that God can call someone to a task then let them fail?
- failure is not persecution – persecution is normal for Christians
- failure is not trials – testing is normal for Christians to grow

Bill's failure:

- Bill had submitted all the coursework for his second doctoral degree
- but he had to pass a comprehensive oral examination
- he failed to pass the comprehensive exam
- Bill and Jan and his supporters had all prayed for him to pass
- how could God allow this to happen?

Solution to the problem:

- God's will for us may be that we fail at the things we try in life
- there are things that God may teach us through failure
- Bill learned that human relationships are more important than careers
- we need to realize that "success" in life is not worldly success
- true success is getting to know God well during your life
- and failure may be the best way to get to know God well
- it may even be possible to fail to know God while achieving a lot
- the real measure of a man is loving God and loving your fellow man

Practical:

- give thanks to God regardless of your circumstances
- try to learn from your failure
- never give up

The ending of Bill's story:

- Bill spent an entire year preparing for a re-take of his exam
- Bill was awarded his second doctorate "magna cum laude" (with great distinction)
- Bill learned that American students are not well prepared for exams
- the year of studying remedied his inadequate American education
- in retrospect, he is thankful for the failure – he learned more

If you like this, you should pick up Craig's book "Hard Questions, Real Answers", which has a chapter on this problem. And here is a similar lecture that Dr. Craig gave at his home church in Atlanta on the same topic. I'm not posting this because I've had a catastrophic failure or anything. But I think in this economy, I am seeing a lot of my plans dashed and I am being forced to circle the wagons a little and take fewer risks. I am being forced to aim for smaller goals, and plan for future difficulties. It does bother me that I can't comfortably take risks to achieve the best goals that I want to achieve. But I have to play the hand I'm dealt, and do what looks doable right now. Some of my friends are having the same problem of having to recalculate what is probable and what is possible.

New study: college women binge drinking more often than college men

August 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article about a recent Harvard study in U.S. News and World Report.

Excerpt:

> Female college students exceed government-suggested limits on weekly alcohol consumption more often than male students do, according to a new report by researchers at Harvard University.
>
> Men and women are starting on something of an uneven playing field. In 1990, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, a division of the National Institutes of Health, suggested that men drink a maximum of four drinks daily and 14 drinks weekly. The guidelines for women suggest that they max out at three drinks a day and seven drinks a week.
>
> "Recommended drinking limits are lower for women than for men because research to date has found that women experience alcohol-related problems at lower levels of alcohol consumption than men," says Bettina Hoeppner, a Harvard Medical School professor and coauthor of the study, published in Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research Friday.
>
> […]"With women's greater tendency to exceed weekly guidelines than men, there may be long-term implications for women in particular," the study suggests. "Women are at a greater risk than men of engaging in drinking habits during college that are more likely to result in long-term harm."
>
> Hoeppner says that the weekly limits are designed to prevent future health problems due to excessive drinking, such as liver disease and breast cancer. Of students who had had at least one drink during the first year, 60 percent of men and 64 percent of women reported exceeding the weekly guidelines at least once.
>
> Earlier this year, the Centers for Disease Control warned about the increasing number of women and girls who binge drink and said that it's an "under-recognized problem."
>
> "It is alarming to see that binge drinking is so common among women and girls, and that women and girls are drinking so much when they do," Robert Brewer, head of the CDC's alcohol program, said in a statement.

The College Fix wrote about this article, and noted that the response from feminist blogs like Jezebel were dismissive.

Excerpt:

> Reaction to the piece has emerged via a write up on the feminism

> website *Jezebel* that defended the girls' decision to join, saying sororities "suck," and that "equal opportunity for women to succeed means equal opportunities to act like liver-shredding idiots."
>
> *Jezebel* writer Erin Gloria Ryan goes on to claim these girls are content with their decisions:
>
> "When college women are free to do what they want, some of them are going to want to behave like college jackasses. They're going to drink, swear, hook up sloppily and indiscriminately, barf in the streets, and generally act like boorish male characters in straight-to-DVD sex comedies. Oh, and one more thing: despite what an entire subgenre of concernmongering Little Girls Lost trend pieces on the phenomenon might have you think, they're perfectly happy."

Everything is going according to plan here, if you ask the feminists. In fact, this was their goal: equality.

What do you think is causing women to binge drink more than men? Is it some external force or is it something inside them that is driving it? When I talk to college-aged women about this, they usually don't have a good answer for why they are doing it except because their friends are, and they feel obligated to participate.

In a previous post, I wrote about a study from the Institute of American Values that found that one of the reasons why women binge drink so much is to make them feel less responsible for hooking up with anonymous men at parties. After all, they reason, if they choose to drink themselves into a stupor then they aren't responsible for what happens next. They can have stories to tell people about the superhot guys they hooked up with, but without feeling guilty about anything.

The kalam cosmological argument explained in a 4-minute video

August 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the 4-minute video that I would like everyone to tweet and share on Facebook:

It does go over the scientific evidence that has emerged recently that caused scientists to accept the beginning of the universe.

Here's a re-cap of the three main evidences for the Big Bang cosmology from Caltech.

Excerpt:

> **What is the Big Bang?**
>
> According to the big bang theory, the universe began by expanding from an infinitesimal volume with extremely high density and temperature. The universe was initially significantly smaller than even a pore on your skin. With the big bang, the fabric of space itself began expanding like the surface of an inflating balloon – matter simply rode along the stretching space like dust on the balloon's surface. The big bang is not like an explosion of matter in otherwise empty space; rather, space itself began with the big bang and carried matter with it as it expanded. Physicists think that even time began with the big bang. Today, just about every scientist believes in the big bang model. The evidence is overwhelming enough that in 1951, the Catholic Church officially pronounced the big bang model to be in accordance with the Bible.
>
> Until the early 1900s, most people had assumed that the universe was fixed in size. New possibilities opened up in 1915, when Einstein formulated his famous general relativity theorythat describes the nature of space, time, and gravity. This theory allows for expansion or contraction of the fabric of space. In 1917, astronomer Willem de Sitter applied this theory to the entire universe and boldly went on to show that the universe could be expanding. Aleksandr Friedmann, a mathematician, reached the same conclusion in a more general way in 1922, as did Georges Lemaître, a cosmologist and a Jesuit, in 1927. This step was revolutionary since the accepted view at the time was that the universe was static in size. Tracing back this expanding universe, Lemaître imagined all matter initially contained in a tiny universe and then exploding. These thoughts introduced amazing new possibilities for the universe, but were independent of observation at that time.
>
> **Why Do We Think the Big Bang Happened?**
>
> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to

> be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

The article goes into detail about each of these three evidences.

The Big Bang is not compatible with atheism

According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by atheist Scriptures.

This is a bad time to be an atheist, given the state of science. It was easier to be an atheist before we made these scientific discoveries, but given the progress of science it's not rational to be an atheist anymore.

William Lane Craig offers advice to Christians considering marriage

August 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post is a 3 in one: one lecture, one question and answer, and another lecture – all on different topics. My friend Neil S. requested this so I'm posting it.

I got this lecture from the Reasonable Faith web site.

Dr. William Lane Craig is the top living Christian apologist and debater in the world today, and has 2 Masters degrees and 2 Ph.Ds. He also has scores of academic publications including books from Oxford University Press, etc.

The MP3 file is here. (14.5 Mb, about 41 minutes)

Topics:

- the stresses of ministry on marriages
- the Christian position on divorce
- balancing marriage with academic pursuits
- the importance of marrying the right person
- Dr. Craig's politically incorrect advice for choosing a spouse
- Advice for men: Marry someone who believes in you and who supports you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be the kind of person who can commit to being a helper and supporter
- Advice for men: Beware of the career woman who will put their career over supporting you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be careful about marrying if you think that your goals are more important than your husband's goals
- Advice: Don't try to find the right person *for you* but instead focus on learning about marriage and preparing for marriage
- Advice: Flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, love and peace
- Advice: God intends for sex to be within the bounds of marriage, so you need to guard yourself against unchastity
- Advice for men: be careful what images and movies you see with the goal of keeping your chastity
- Advice: your highest responsibility after your relationship with God is your spouse, and your studies are third
- Advice: it's better to drop classes or give up your graduate studies entirely rather than destroy your marriage
- Advice for women: understand that you have to work at the marriage in order to help your man finish his studies
- Advice: set aside a period of the day for communicating and bonding with your

spouse
- Advice: cultivate the ability to talk with your spouse on a personal level, and maintain eye contact
- Advice for men: do not break eye contact with your wife, and also hold her hand when communicating
- Advice: do not be embarrassed to seek out a marriage counselor, but make it a good counselor
- Advice: don't just be doing stuff for your mate, but also be vulnerable and transparent with your mate
- How your relationship with your wife helps you with your relationship with God
- How do you handle the rebellion of children without being overbearing and authoritarian?

There is a period of Q&A at the end. There is another piece of advice that comes out in the Q&A for women: take an interest in your spouse's work even if you don't care about it, and ask him about it every day and try to understand it. Go to the man's workplace and see what he does. Go to his presentations. Get involved in the man's ministry and help him in practical ways. Another piece of advice is to not paper over the differences – it's good to argue, because it means that problems are being confronted and worked through. Husbands should have a good male friend to talk to, and wives should have a good female friend to talk to.

I like how Dr. Craig has thought about how to have a successful marriage, how to choose the right woman, and how to love his wife. I like how he calls out men on the chastity thing. I think that chastity is more important for men than for women, because it's the men who take the lead in choosing and pursuing the right woman for their plan.

Secondly, here is my previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for married couples, where he gives 5 points of advice for married couples.

Here are the main pieces of advice Dr. Craig gives:

1. *Resolve that there will be no divorce*
2. *Delay having children*
3. *Confront problems honestly*
4. *Seek marital counseling*
5. *Take steps to build intimacy in your relationship*

And here's the controversial one (#2):

> 2. *Delay having children.* The first years of marriage are difficult enough on their own without introducing the complication of children. Once children come, the wife's attention is necessarily diverted, and huge stresses come upon you both. Spend the first several years of marriage getting to know each other, working through your issues, having fun together, and enjoying that intimate love relationship between just the two of you. Jan and I waited ten years before having

> our first child Charity, which allowed me the finish graduate school, get our feet on the ground financially, establish some roots, and enjoy and build our love relationship until we were really ready to take on the responsibilities of parenthood. The qualifier here is that if the wife desperately wants children now, then the husband should accede to her wish to become a mother, rather than withhold that from her. Her verdict should be decisive. But if you both can agree to wait, things will probably be much easier.

Third and finally, here is a previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for choosing a good spouse, with illustrations from his own marriage.

For example, Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

If you want to hear another Christian husband talk about how his wife supports him, listen to this lecture called "Giants in the Land" with Dr. Walter Bradley. It's actually my favorite lecture. I also really like his testimony lecture. If you're looking for guidance, these are some of the people I would recommend.

Mark Steyn: Nidal Hasan trial shows we are not serious about national security

August 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review. This one is a must-read. It was hard to even find the "best part" to excerpt.

Excerpt:

> On December 7, 1941, the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor was attacked. Three years, eight months, and eight days later, the Japanese surrendered. These days, America's military moves at a more leisurely pace. On November 5, 2009, another U.S. base, Fort Hood, was attacked — by one man standing on a table, screaming "Allahu akbar!" and opening fire. Three years, nine months, and one day later, his court-martial finally got under way.
>
> The intervening third-of-a-decade-and-more has apparently been taken up by such vital legal questions as the fullness of beard Major Hasan is permitted to sport in court. This is not a joke: See "Judge Ousted in Fort Hood Shooting Case amid Beard Debacle" (CBS News). Army regulations require soldiers to be clean-shaven. The judge, Colonel Gregory Gross, ruled Hasan's beard in contempt, fined him $1,000, and said he would be forcibly shaved if he showed up that hirsute next time. At which point Hasan went to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, which ruled that Colonel Gross's pogonophobia raised questions about his impartiality, and removed him. He's the first judge in the history of American jurisprudence to be kicked off a trial because of a "beard debacle." The new judge, Colonel Tara Osborn, agreed that Hasan's beard was a violation of regulations, but "said she won't hold it against him."
>
> […]Maybe this Clinton-era directive merits reconsideration in the wake of Fort Hood? Don't be ridiculous. Instead, nine months after Major Hasan's killing spree, the Department of Defense put into place "a series of procedural and policy changes that focus on identifying, responding to, and preventing potential workplace violence."
>
> Major Hasan says he's a soldier for the Taliban. Maybe if the Pentagon were to reclassify the entire Afghan theater as an unusually prolonged outburst of "workplace violence," we wouldn't have to worry about obsolescent concepts such as "victory" and "defeat." The important thing is that the U.S. Army's "workplace violence" is diverse. After Major Hasan's pre-post-traumatic workplace wobbly, General George W. Casey Jr., the Army's chief of staff, was at pains to assure us that it could have been a whole lot worse: "What happened at Fort Hood was a tragedy, but I believe it would be an even greater tragedy if our diversity becomes a casualty." And you can't get much more diverse than letting your military personnel pick which side of the war they want to be on.

It’s so depressing. I guess we can only hope that we come to our senses before the next attack.

William Lane Craig explains the moral argument to Georgia Tech students and faculty

August 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can grab the MP3 file of the lecture, or read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

If you want to show this lecture and Q&A to your apologetics group, you can find the DVD here.

You can also read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor.

Pro-life doctors banned from presenting scientific evidence at MWIA conference

August 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> A group of pro-life OB/GYN doctors was unceremoniously banned at the last minute from presenting a panel on abortion at an international conference for women in medicine in South Korea last week.
>
> Dr. Mary Davenport, one of the three pro-life doctors scheduled to speak, told The Daily Caller she was shocked because the group's presentations detailing the risks of abortion were "straight academic talks."
>
> "It wasn't any kind of advocacy position about what any nation's abortion laws should be or anything like that," said Davenport. "But we find this all over — that due to political correctness there's some things you can't say."
>
> Davenport and her two colleagues from the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists (AAPLOG) learned of the cancellation the night before the presentation was supposed to take place.
>
> As to why the group was invited only to have its event cancelled, Davenport said "it doesn't make a lot of sense to me." She theorized there was a split between the conference's organizers, the Medical Women's International Association (MWIA), and its Korean hosts.
>
> "The Korean people wanted to hear what we had to say," Davenport said. "But I guess they were overruled by the leadership of this particular organization."

Life News had more about another attempt by the MWIA organizers to shut the scientists down.

Excerpt:

> MWIA's press release emphasizes that the presentations were censored because their conclusions were politically incorrect. The title of the press release is "MWIA is proud to stand for women's rights." It "regrets" that MWIA invited presenters "who would deny women their basic right to choice." For good measure, it throws in some slander, stating that the speakers' presentations– which were to summarize recent studies from such esteemed journals as the Journal of Reproductive Medicine, BJOG, PLoS ONE, and numerous others– have "no scientific merit."
>
> The real motivation is clear: these speakers were censored for daring to share data that might show that abortion has downsides for women.
>
> What's worse, MWIA leaders actively prevented people who wanted to learn more

about the topic on their own time from doing so!

> With the cancellation of our talks, our host Anna Choi, head of group of 680 Korean obgyn physicians who stopped doing abortions, had decided to set up a radio and newspaper interview for us during the time that we were supposed to present.

> When we got to the “radio” interview that Anna had set up, it was actually a television interview, and the newspaper reporter was there also.

> They put the three of us up front like a “panel” discussion, and the reporters started asking us questions about our presentation, allowing us an opportunity to talk about what we came to present. About 20 minutes into the interview, the Secretary General of MWIA, a Canadian woman, burst into the room (I kid you not. …and all of this is on camera), and came up to the table and said “What presentation is this? Donna Harrison said “it’s not a presentation”. So she snarled “Why are you being interviewed? At that point, the answers were left to Anna, our host. Anna said that this was a requested interview by the press.

> The SecGen then said “Who gave you permission to interview these people?” And the reporters said “We are the press, we don’t need anyone’s permission. We have freedom of the press” And the Sec Gen snarled at Anna and said “Did you arrange this? Did you talk to the organizing committee?” And Anna said “I am on the organizing committee. I don’t need to talk to anyone.” And the Sec Gen stood in front of the camera, and refused to move, and said “The interview is over.” Then the reporters said “You can’t do this. We have the freedom of the press. You are interfering with the freedom of the press.” But the Sec Gen would not move and said “The interview is over.”

> We exited to the hall, and a Belgian and German woman were waiting. They started to make fun of the Korean translator, and to snap pictures in her face. And she said “You can’t do this. This is my country. I will call the police.” And they actually grabbed at her, and then one of the Korean reporters put a huge camera in the Belgian woman’s face and started taking photos of her. A fist fight almost ensured between the women, but another of the Koreans stepped in and kept any contact from happening. And all of this was on camera. And then our Korean hosts ushered us down the hall, and down the elevator, along with the reporters and camera crew, and we resumed the interview in the commons area downstairs by the trash cans and the bathroom. We were able to complete the entire interview, and instead of our audience being a few women doctors from the conference, we now have an audience of

> > probably a few thousand.

Wow. This is probably why pro-choice people oppose those laws that require that a woman have an ultrasound before having an abortion. If they actually know what they are aborting, then maybe they wouldn’t do it. The pro-choicers don’t want them to know the facts. Not from peer-reviewed journals, and not from ultrasounds.

Can you dispense with apologetics and just preach the gospel when evangelizing?

August 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this post by another apologetics-enabled pastor thanks to a tweet from J. Warner Wallace.

I'm going to quote the whole thing in full:

> There are those who wholly question the enterprise of Christian apologetics. They assert that God will call those whom he chooses, and apologetics is just a distraction to the work of the Holy Spirit and the revelation of God. This was Karl Barth's position.
>
> The idea is prima facie nonsense. When a missionary travels to another country to proclaim the gospel, she learns the language of the people so as to communicate in terms that they understand. **Apologetics is simply the language the secular world uses to talk about God.** To say we shouldn't practice a rational defense of the Christian faith is like saying the missionary need not study language, because the Holy Spirit can do whatever it wants.
>
> When I was a junior in high school, a church youth group in which I was participating took me to a weekend retreat in hopes of setting up camp in my heart. This was in Southeast Texas, and the only people who ran Christian camps there were Baptists. I remember listening to a firey preacher say quite a bit about hellfire, and I spent a good deal of time after his lectures asking him questions. Admittedly, I had not read the Bible, and he had. The Jesus I wanted to talk about was a projection of the niceties I most enjoyed. He was frustrated with me. I'm sure I was not particularly respectful or informed or interesting to him. And after what was probably a lot of patience, he said to me, "Sometimes you have to stop doubting and just believe." Of course this was a wasted answer on a thinking person. It was an act of the missionary saying, "I'm tired of learning your language."
>
> Compassion requires translation. We must be about the work of addressing hard questions with meaningful answers. And the cause of Christian apologetics will always be essential.

Oh, what a world it would be if every pastor was like this. It would be a different world.

Here's a related post I found in Brian Auten's Weekly Apologetics Bonus Links.

Excerpt:

> And Tim Keller wrote, in his book, The Reason for God, "All doubts, however skeptical and cynical they may seem, are really a set of alternate beliefs." Whenever we doubt, whenever we question, we are philosophers.

> This is also true of evangelism and apologetics – we are all evangelists, we are all apologists; although many wish to distinguish between the two, there is no distinction, for every time we clarify our beliefs to a sceptic, we are defending it from misunderstanding and misrepresentation. The Apostle Peter wrote, in 1 Peter 3:

"But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame."

> Here evangelism, apologetics, righteous behaviour and worship are all woven together into one seamless whole – "if you should suffer for righteousness' sake"; "in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy"; "always being prepared to make a defense to anyone"; "the hope that is in you"; "do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience"; it is how we are called to live.
>
> This, indeed, is the role of the church, and we all have our part to play.

> **Unfortunately our time is often wasted: too many Evangelicals engage in endless debate about worship styles (or, more accurately, musical styles), because, we say, we must find ways of attracting people to church so that we might preach the gospel to them. We organise and promote endless programmes to the same end – fashionable attempts to catch the attention of a fashionable fickle world. Some, perhaps, have merit, and some, perhaps, are reached; but sooner or later we must explain what we believe, why we believe it and why unbelievers don't; and, we must learn to do this on 'their' turf, in terms they understand.**

There's that view again, that preaching the gospel without any evidence to strangers is what causes them to become Christians. Just bring them to church and preach at them – that will turn Muslims and Hindus into Christians, they tell us. I don't think it works, though.

I was just having a chat with a certain lady who lives in the South who was explaining to me about what a poor job Christians are doing (in general) of evangelizing down there. Apparently, they are often doing one of three things. 1) they ask people to come to church, 2) they ask people to read the Bible, or 3) they preach the bare gospel message to them and hope that this will magically work to convince people to become Christians.

I think that sometimes Christians can be so enveloped in their own culture that they forget how to talk to people from outside that culture. In fact when you look at those 3 approaches, the main common denominator seems to be a complete unwillingness to inquire into the person's current views and life situation. Instead of trying to have some context in which to maneuver, the popular approach seems to be to dismiss all of that

inquiring into the other person’s views. And even if the questions are asked about where the other person is coming from, then there is still work that needs to be done to answer those questions. Work that isn’t being done in many cases.

I think that the most common Biblical model agrees with this, too. In the Bible, if you could authenticate your message using miracles, then you did that, as with Jesus and the paralytic. If you couldn’t do miracles, then you pointed to other miracles that someone else had done, like Peter in Acts. But always you were aware and informed about what your opponents believed, in order to counter them, like Jesus vs the Sadducees, or Paul vs the Greeks. I think we need to do better than just expecting that people will believe you based on your say-so instead of having non-rational and rational objections that need to be addressed first.

Why does Richard Dawkins refuse to debate William Lane Craig?

August 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Because Richard Dawkins doesn't understand basic logic:

That's the latest video from Peter Byrom, aka BirdieUpon. (H/T Peter S. Williams)

And don't take my word for it, look at what sensible atheist Jeffrey Jay Lowder has to say about it:

> I find myself in an odd situation. I agree with Dawkins' decision not to debate Craig, but *not* for the reasons he has given (more on that in a moment). With all due respect to Dawkins, I don't think he should debate Craig because he simply isn't qualified to do so. If *The God Delusion* is any indication, Dawkins clearly isn't familiar with contemporary philosophy of religion, whereas Craig is an *expert* on the philosophy of religion.
>
> The idea of Dawkins debating Craig would would be like a championship bodybuilder, who just happens to have a green belt in Taekwondo, agreeing to a fight with an eigth-degree black belt. Bodybuilding is not *completely* irrelevant to Taekwondo and the bodybuilder may be the best bodybuilder in the world, but bodybuilding and Taekwondo are clearly not the same thing. The black belt would *easily* and *decisively*beat the bodybuilder.
>
> There is no shame or dishonor in declining a mismatch. If the black belt challenged the green belt (bodybuilder) to a fight, the bodybuilder would be rational–indeed, *wise*–to decline the invitation. The bodybuilder needs to clearly acknowledge, however, that he is declining because it would be a mismatch.
>
> And if Dawkins did decline the invitation on the grounds it was a mismatch, theists shouldn't act as if they've scored some major victory, just as, say, Billy Graham's refusal to debate an atheist philosopher of religion shouldn't be viewed as a victory for atheism.

Billy Graham shouldn't debate Peter Millican the same way that Richard Dawkins shouldn't debate William Lane Craig. Exactly!

But I don't even agree with Mr. Lowder that Dawkins can do biology, either.

Drawings of Haeckel's embryos were discredited in the 19th century, according to research published in the peer-reviewed journal Science.

But Dawkins cites the faked the 19th century embryo drawings as evidence of evolution. He's not good at biology, either.

Dawkins' recent book doesn't even interact with recent scientific discoveries and publications.

Excerpt:

> Richard Dawkins' new book, The Greatest Show on Earth, is being touted as a scathing rebuttal to intelligent design (ID), yet an actual response to mainstream ID thinking can hardly be found in the book. Though the book makes passing mention of "irreducible complexity" in a couple places, there are zero mentions of leading ID proponents like Michael Behe, William Dembski, Jonathan Wells, Phillip Johnson, Stephen Meyer, or any other well-known ID proponent. Instead, Dawkins refers extensively to "creationists," repeatedly attacking young earth creationism, while also making heavy use of fallacious (and dubious) "poor design" examples that rebut no argument made by a leading advocate of design since perhaps the 19th century. It seems that Dawkins didn't have the stomach to tackle the actual modern theory of intelligent design in his new book.

Mr. Dawkins, when he isn't busy pushing for infanticide and adultery and aliens causing the origin of life, hasn't bothered to engage at all with recent criticisms of evolution – he is still stuck in the 19th century. This is not a person who is credible about anything related to evolution and biology. He cites professors of German language as an authority on the historical Jesus, for goodness' sake.

The reason why atheists like him is because he is rude, crude and insulting. And that's what popular atheism is all about. Blindly believing in eternal universes, unseen aliens and untestable multiverses, and being insulting to real scientists, real historians and real philosophers. If you are a science-respecting person, then you are reading Stephen C. Meyer's "Signature in the Cell" and "Darwin's Doubt". That's where the real science is being done – not using faked embryo drawings from the 19th century.

Related posts

- Richard Dawkins defends the moral goodness of infanticide and adultery
- Coward Richard Dawkins flees from yet another debate, this time in Scotland
- Richard Dawkins, who claims to oppose genocide, vows to "destroy" Christianity
- Video: William Lane Craig debates empty chair meant for coward Dawkins in Oxford
- BBC London radio interviews William Lane Craig
- UK Independent joins UK Guardian in call for Dawkins to debate Craig
- Atheist philosopher: Dawkins refusal to debate is cynical and anti-intellectual
- Richard Dawkins responds to Craig's debate challenge in a UK Guardian editorial
- Richard Dawkins, A.C. Grayling and Polly Toynbee refuse to debate atheism
- Humanist Association president Polly Toynbee runs away from debate on God
- Coward A.C. Grayling and chicken Dawkins flee debate with Willim Lane Craig

19 facts about illegal immigration

August 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Doug Ross' blog.

Excerpt: (links to mainstream sources removed)

> The following are 19 very disturbing facts about illegal immigration that every American should know…
>
> **#1**57 percent of all households that are led by an immigrant (legal or illegal) are enrolled in at least one welfare program.
>
> **#2** According to one study, the cost to U.S. taxpayers of legalizing current illegal immigrants would be approximately 6.3 trillion dollars over the next 50 years.
>
> **#3** The Obama administration has distributed flyers that tell illegal immigrants that their immigration status **will not be checked** when they apply for food stamps.
>
> **#4** The Department of Homeland Security says that it has lost track of a million people that have entered this country but that appear never to have left.
>
> **#5**One out of every five children living in Los Angeles County has a parent that is in the country illegally.
>
> **#6** In one recent year, taxpayers in Los Angeles County spent 600 million dollars on welfare for children of illegal immigrants.
>
> **#7** Thanks to illegal immigration, California's overstretched health care system is on the verge of collapse. Dozens of California hospitals and emergency rooms have shut down over the past decade because they could not afford to stay open after being endlessly swamped by illegal immigrants who were simply not able to pay for the services that they were receiving. As a result, the remainder of the health care system in the state of California is now beyond overloaded. This had led to brutally long waits, diverted ambulances and even unnecessary patient deaths. At this point, the state of California now ranks dead last out of all 50 states in the number of emergency rooms per million people.
>
> **#8** It has been estimated that U.S. taxpayers spend $12,000,000,000 a year on primary and secondary school education for the children of illegal immigrants.
>
> **#9** It is estimated that illegal aliens make up approximately 30 percent of the population in federal, state and local prisons and that the total cost of incarcerating them is more than $1.6 billion annually.
>
> **#10** The federal government actually has a website that teaches immigrants how to sign up for welfare programsonce they arrive in the United States.
>
> **#11** The Obama administration recently introduced the very first "unmanned" border station along the Texas-Mexico border.

> **#12** The Obama administration has sued individual states such as Arizona that have tried to crack down on illegal immigration.
>
> **#13** According to the FBI, there are approximately 1.4 million gang members living in our cities. Illegal immigration has been one of the primary factors that has fueled the growth of these gangs.
>
> **#14** As I have written about previously, there are only about 200 police officers assigned to Chicago's Gang Enforcement Unit to handle the estimated 100,000 gang members living in the city.
>
> **#15** Mexican drug cartels make approximately 6.6 billion dollars a year "exporting" illegal drugs to the United States.
>
> **#16** It is an open secret that Mexican drug cartels are openly conducting military operations inside the United States. The handful of border patrol agents that we have guarding the border are massively outgunned and outmanned.
>
> **#17** According to the Justice Department's National Drug Intelligence Center, Mexican drug cartels were actively operating in 50 different U.S. cities in 2006. By 2010, that number had skyrocketed to 1,286.
>
> **#18** Overall, more than 55,000 people have been killed in drug-related violence in Mexico since 2006. That same level of violence will eventually show up in major U.S. cities unless something dramatic is done about illegal immigration.
>
> **#19** It is being projected that the Senate immigration bill will bring 33 million more people to the United States over the next decade.

Please click through to Doug's blog post to get the links if any of these surprise you. They shouldn't.

As always, I am in favor of increasing legal immigration by skilled immigrants. But illegal immigration is something else entirely. It is infuriating to me that the costs for all of this Democrat "generosity" to law-breaking illegal immigrants is going to be paid for by our children, who are on the hook for a $17 trillion national debt. Not only that, but it's the poorest of the poor who have to face the problem of the drug cartels and pay the costs for the schools, hospitals and social programs that support illegal immigration.

Left-wing media turning on Obama over his foreign policy failures

August 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Stuart Schneiderman has read all the left-wing news sources and found some surprising views.

Excerpt:

> The news hasn't really reached the public, but Obama-supporting media outlets are starting to see the mess that the Obama/Clinton/Kerry foreign policy has produced.
>
> It is so bad that columnists are not even trying to moderate their negative judgments.
>
> From Frida Ghitis on the CNN site:
>
> America's foreign policy has gone into a tailspin. Almost every major initiative from the Obama administration has run into sharp, sometimes embarrassing, reverses. The U.S. looks weak and confused on the global stage.
>
> This might come as happy news to some opponents of the administration who enjoy seeing Barack Obama fail, but it shouldn't.
>
> America's failure in international strategy is a disaster-in-the-making for its allies and for the people who see the U.S. model of liberal democracy as one worth emulating in their own nations.
>
> On Russia, she continues, the verdict is clear:
>
> Relations with Russia have fallen off a cliff, making the theatrical "reset" of 2009 look, frankly, cringe-worthy.
>
> Syria, of course, is even worse:
>
> Obama dramatically warned Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, as he slaughtered his people by the thousands, that if he used chemical or biological weapons, he would cross a "red line." The line was crossed and not much happened. Syria is crumbling, self-destructing in a civil war that I, for one, believe could have turned out quite differently if Washington had offered material and diplomatic support for moderates in the opposition. Fears that the opposition would be dominated by extremists became a self-fulfilling prophecy.
>
> The centerpiece of the Obama/Clinton foreign policy initiative was Egypt. You know how that has worked out:
>
> But it is Egypt where America's foreign policy fiasco is most visible.
>
> It was in Cairo in 2009, where the newly elected Obama, still reflecting the glow of sky-high expectations, launched his campaign to repair relations with the so-called "Muslim World."…

> Nobody knew what would happen in Cairo's Tahrir Square a few years later. But today, the same people who yearned for democracy despise Washington. When Egyptians elected a Muslim Brotherhood president, Washington tried to act respectfully, but it showed a degree of deference to the Muslim Brotherhood that ignored the ways in which the group violated not only Egyptians' but America's own standards of decency and rule of law.
>
> As tensions in Egypt grow between Islamists on one side and the military and anti-Islamists on the other, there is one sentiment shared by all: Both sides feel betrayed by Washington.
>
> Egypt's most powerful man, Gen. Abdel Fatah al-Sissi, said, "You [the U.S.] left the Egyptians; you turned your back on the Egyptians, and they won't forget that."

It's not just CNN, though. He has quotations from articles in the radically, radically leftist New York Times and the left-wing extremist New Yorker, too. The New Yorker is disgusted with the way that Obama has handled Libya. It's getting so bad that not even Obama's biggest cheerleaders can ignore it.

Why do Christians leave the faith? The surprising importance of apologetics

August 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Black, White and Gray.

Excerpt:

> Several colleagues and I recently finished a study of why Christians leave the faith, and we were surprised at what made a difference as well what didn't seem to matter. In the next few weeks, I'll be reviewing our findings in a series of posts.
>
> To start with, let me tell you how we conducted our study. We were interested in how people who left the faith—let's call them deconverts—explained their actions; i.e., why did they think they left the faith. In order to do this, we found a website on-line in which former Christians post their "testimonials" about their religious history. We chose 50 of these testimonials and read, reread, and reread again each one and then we discussed them as a group. Our goal was to find themes in these deconversion narratives, and several themes did emerge.
>
> […]All told, we found four general explanations offered by these 50 people as to why they left Christianity.
>
> The first explanation regards intellectual and theological concerns about the faith. A full two-thirds of the testimony writers emphasized these concerns and some wrote about little else.
>
> Some of the intellectual concerns were issues that would be faced by members of any religion, not just Christianity. For example, what is the relationship between religion and science? Does believing in one negate the other? What is the role of logic versus faith?
>
> One man, who was a fundamentalist Christian in young adulthood, defined faith and reason as mutually contradictory, and he described his departure from Christianity as a victory of reason. He wrote: "for most of us, the battle was entirely within ourselves. It was a pitched battle between our faith and our reason, and eventually our reason just refused to be suppressed any longer, no matter what the potential consequences."
>
> Many other writers, though, focused on theological issues specific to Christianity. One of the issues that arose with the existence of hell and how that could be reconciled with the Christian image of a loving God. Basically, how could a loving God throw his children into hell for eternity?
>
> A man raised as a Baptist expressed what he viewed as a contradiction between love and hell: "Would a loving father really not allow some people to have a chance and send them to hell for eternity? I don't think so!"

> One woman, who loved her grandparents, now deceased, wondered how God could condemn them for not having believed in Him. She exclaimed: “what the hell kind of jerk was God if he’d condemn people like my grandparents?”
>
> A related theological issue regarded human suffering here on Earth. If God is powerful and loving, why is there suffering? One writer likened God’s allowance of suffering to a negligent police officer. “What if a police officer sat and watched silently as a child was murdered even though he had the power to stop it?”
>
> Other writers attributed to God a more active role in human suffering, often pointing to His actions in the Old Testament. A former Methodist wrote of his doubts about God starting early in his life when he learned about Noah’s Ark. “The turning argument for me was actually a story that is in children’s Sunday school books – Noah’s Ark. I started to really think about the fact that God pretty much killed the ENTIRE planet.” Similarly, a former Pentecostal described God’s actions in the Old Testament as “atrocity after atrocity.”
>
> The final frequently-expressed concern regarded the Bible and its reliability. Is it accurate? Is it believable? A former Catholic dismissed the Bible altogether. She wrote: “Science has all but proven that the Old Testament could not have happened. It is also fast proving that the New Testament is nothing but fiction.”

My friend ECM had a different take on it, commenting on Facebook:

> I’m going to go out on a limb and state that most people simply don’t care.
>
> You can refute arguments/do apologetics all day long to the run-of-the-mill village atheist, but that’s not going to do you much good in reaching the average non-believer since they’re generally apathetic about the whole project–God, etc., simply has no impact on their daily lives.
>
> What I think would help is if *actual* Christians walked the walk a bit–I think this is, really, the crux of your problem. Too many of you say you believe in God and are Christians, but how many actually abide by the general strictures of the faith?
>
> This has a rather disconcerting effect on non-believers and it makes people like me, who are at least open to the idea*, more wary because how can I very well take you seriously if you’re not actually practicing it? It smacks of “do as I say, not as I do.” (It also gives the media et al a hammer w/ which to beat Christians over the head with ad nauseaum, causing massive damage to credibility.)
>
> (It doesn’t give me an pleasure in saying any of this, but there it is from someone that’s at least open to the concept.)
>
> (And please! Please let’s not turn this into a thread on apologetics aimed at ‘showing me the light’–I know all the arguments and have gone over them a thousand times w/ the Knight via email, chat, etc., so I’m well-versed on all it.)
>
> *I would classify myself as a small ‘d’ deist.
>
> I should clarify: when I say “average non-believer” I am also referring to, in far

> too many (most?) cases, those that actually profess a belief in God and identify as Christian.

And my friend Dina wrote this:

> Apologetics should be more than winning debates with athiests. Today, defending the faith ought to be more concerned with ridding the church of the crowd pleasing rot that has infiltrated it over the last century. The problem is exactly what ECM and lots of us see in professing Christians. Sadly, many many people who profess to be Christians are no different from the world, so the world views us all as either hypocrites or liars. Times may change, society may change but God and the bible does not. The bible is the only rule to direct us and while philosophy has much to offer, if it backs up the bible do we need it in the first place? If it goes against the bible, then its worthless man made opinions. The problems with Christianity started in the church, and the solution will have to start in the church as well. He did it before and He will do it again.

I replied and said that stronger, more consistent Christians are important, but I think apologetics is needed in order to build them up – because, as I've written before – people only act Christianly when they have reasons to believe that Christianity is objectively true.

Harry Reid: Obamacare is “absolutely” a step towards single payer health care system

August 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s a Forbes magazine article by health care policy expert Avik Roy.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> When I speak to conservatives about health care policy, I’m often asked the question: “Do you think that Obamacare is secretly a step toward single-payer health care?” I always explain that, while progressives may want single-payer, I don’t think that Obamacare is deliberately designed to bring about that outcome. Well, yesterday on PBS’ *Nevada Week In Review*, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D., Nev.) was asked whether his goal was to move Obamacare to a single-payer system. His answer? “Yes, yes. Absolutely, yes.”
>
> In one sense, this isn’t shocking. Reid and many other Democrats, including President Obama, have often stated that their ideal health-care system is one in which the government abolishes the private insurance market. Video of the PBS discussion isn’t yet online, but here’s how Karoun Demirjian of the *Las Vegas Sun* described it:
>
> Reid said he thinks the country has to “work our way past” insurance-based health care during a Friday night appearance on Vegas PBS’ program “Nevada Week in Review.”
>
> “What we’ve done with Obamacare is have a step in the right direction, but we’re far from having something that’s going to work forever,” Reid said.
>
> When then asked by panelist Steve Sebelius whether he meant ultimately the country would have to have a health care system that abandoned insurance as the means of accessing it, Reid said: “Yes, yes. Absolutely, yes.”
>
> Reid noted that he and other progressives fought hard for a “public option” in the exchanges as a Trojan horse for single-payer, but Democrats didn’t have 60 votes in the Senate to achieve it:
>
> The idea of introducing a single-payer national health care system to the United States, or even just a public option, sent lawmakers into a tizzy back in 2009, when Reid was negotiating the health care bill.
>
> “We had a real good run at the public option … don’t think we didn’t have a tremendous number of people who wanted a single-payer system,” Reid said on the PBS program, recalling how then-Sen. Joe Lieberman’s opposition to the idea of a public option made them abandon the notion and start from scratch.
>
> Eventually, Reid decided the public option was unworkable.
>
> “We had to get a majority of votes,” Reid said. “In fact, we had to get a little

> extra in the Senate, we have to get 60."

Do you like the service you get at the Department of Motor Vehicles or the Post Office? How would you like to get your health care the same way? That's what the Democrats are trying to do. We could have gone in another direction and legislated consumer-focused health care, providing an experience similar to Amazon.com – but we didn't. We can't keep electing communists and then acting surprised when they push us towards communism.

Apologetics 315 interviews Dr. Phil Fernandes on apologetic preaching

August 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was going on a long road trip recently and was looking for some good audio to listen to. Dina suggested SermonAudio.com to me, and I found some excellent lectures from Dr. Phil Fernandes. I find it it very easy to listen to this guy. And here's Brian Auten to interview him on apologetic preaching – the inclusion of apologetics in regular Sunday preaching.

The MP3 file is here.

Description:

> Today's interview is with Phil Fernandes, president of the Institute of Biblical Defense, and the pastor of Trinity Bible Fellowship in Silverdale, Washington. He talks about apologetic preaching, how to incorporate apologetics training into the local church, evangelism, common objections to apologetics, encouragement and advice to pastors, audio/video resources, and more.
>
> Phil's books include:
>
> - *Hijacking the Historical Jesus*
> - *The Atheist Delusion*
> - *Seven Great Apologists*
> - *Contend Earnestly for the Faith: A Survey of Christian Apologetics*

This interview is awesome, especially in the second half. Here's a sample: "It's not my job as a pastor to meet people's felt needs". Awesomeness.

I like this Dr. Phil. He's very very practical and his preaching is informed by encounters with people who disagree with him. Sometimes I get the idea that pastors aren't really talking to people outside their church, but not this guy. He's grounded.

Why do Christians leave the faith? Dashed expectations of a “nice” God

August 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Part 2 of a brilliant series by Bradley Wright. This time he explains how people leave Christianity because they expect God to meet their needs and he doesn’t.

Excerpt:

> In a study of religious deconversion, we analyzed 50 on-line testimonies posted by former Christians, and in these testimonies we found four general explanations for deconversion. The first explanation, which I wrote about last week, regarded intellectual and theological concerns about the Christian faith. The second, which I elaborate here, regards a failed relationship with God. Almost half (22 of 50) of the writers expressed sentiments that in some way God had failed them by His not doing what they thought He should.
>
> God’s perceived failure took various forms, most of which fall under the general heading of “unanswered prayers.”
>
> One way that people felt that God had failed them happened when He did not respond to requests for help during difficult times. A young man raised in a Baptist church epitomized this feeling of failure when he wrote about God not answering his prayers about family difficulties. He wrote: “The first time I questioned the faith was when my grandmother shriveled up in front of me for 6 month’s due to cancer. I was 13 & my mother & father [were] getting a divorce. My father told me I should have been aborted. I prayed to God but nothing fails like prayers.”

So you can see here where people have this expectation that it is God’s job to give them good health. But is that anywhere in the Bible? Is it God’s job to make us healthy so that we can have a happy life, even if we are busy spending that happy life ignoring him and not knowing his character. When you ask a serious Christian what it is like to be a Christian, we will tell you that what God is about is NOT making us healthy or happy, but instead giving us time and peace to study him, to make plans to serve him, to execute those plans, and to have (sometimes unhappy) experiences that cause our sympathies to change as we feel what God feels. In short, life is about getting closer to him, and suffering and sickness is one of the tools God uses in order to get us to know him as he is and to participate in the relationship.

> Likewise, a woman raised in a Methodist household described her step-father as “cruel and abusive” to her, and she could not understand why “if God loves me, why won’t he protect me instead of letting this happen to me?”

I think the reason why God allows suffering like this is to create people who take his rules

about sexual morality seriously. When I was growing up I had front-row seats to the divorces of many of my friends. I remember vividly talking to children who cried to me about how they felt when their mothers invited new men into the house after the divorce. Pain and suffering like this is a reminder to us that the moral law is real, that God expects us to follow it in order to prevent harm. One of the reasons why I am chaste is because I listen to the stories of men whose girlfriends aborted their babies, the stories of women who cohabitated and then were betrayed, the stories of the children of divorces. And from this I learn that morality is real and it matters.

> In a variation of this theme, some deconverts lamented God's inactivity amidst spiritual difficulties. A man in his forties, a former elder at a charismatic church, wrote: "In my own life, no matter how much I submitted to 'God' and prayed in faith, 'sin' never seemed to leave me. Well, what's the point of being 'saved' if you aren't delivered from 'sin'?"

This is why accurate theology matters. No serious Christian thinks that you stop sinning after you become a Christian, and no serious Christian thinks that prayer alone is a solution to sin. To stop sinning, you need to engage more than the spirit, you need to engage the mind. Most people want to spiritualize things because prayer is easier than study. But if you want to stop sinning, the best way is a combination of prayer and study. If you want to stop premarital sex, study how premarital sex affects STD infection, risk of divorce, future marital stability, oxytocin, quality of marriage, and so on. Study the risks of divorce. That's how you stop sinning. Some people want to dumb Christianity down to the level of superstition then they complain that it doesn't work. But Christianity is better when you learn more and work harder.

> A former Southern Baptist described the various good things that God failed to give him: "God promises me a lot in the bible and he's not come through. Ask and it shall be given. Follow me and I will bless you. I promise you life and promise abundance. Man should not be alone. I have a plan for you. Give tithe and I will reward you. All broken promises. This god lacks clarification. This god lacks faith in me. He wants my faith. I want his too."

Do you know what I expect from God after reading the Bible? I expect what Jesus got: pain and suffering during obedience. What kind of simpleton reads the Bible and thinks that it is about getting goodies from God? That is NOWHERE in the Bible. It's projecting Santa Claus onto God and that isn't going to work – God has other plans for us, and those plans involve work and pain. People become Christians because they want to be like Jesus, and they understand that Jesus was not having fun. He was doing a job, and he wasn't happy or appreciated.

> Other writers took a different approach to God's failures. They too sought God's help, but when they did not receive it, they simply concluded that God did not exist. A former member of an Assemblies of God church explicitly linked unanswered prayers and the existence of God: "How many humble and totally

> selfless prayers offered up to and ignored by the imaginary skydaddy does it take for the average person to finally throw in the towel and say [God doesn't exist]!!!!" His answer: "Too damn many."

It's so strange to me that people think that the best way to see God interfere is to pray. The way I see God working in my life is when I go home and listen to some debate about the problem of evil, and then the next day some atheist asks me out to lunch to talk about why God allows evil. Maybe instead of doing easy things, we should actually invest in our relationship with God and then see if he responds by giving us work to do. Maybe a relationship with God is about serving him, and the joy is about seeing him reward those efforts by working with us and through us. Maybe God has more for us than just entertainment.

> Still others sought a tangible sign of God's presence. A former Pentecostal exclaimed: "There were many nights while in bed I would ask God to show me the truth, or give me some type of sign to show that he or she existed. These prayers would never be answered. So I would just go on with my life having doubts." Likewise, a former Baptist missionary wrote: "I've begged God to show himself to me and put an end to my inner torture. So far it hasn't happened and the only thing I know for sure is that I have unanswered questions."

I think this paragraph is interesting, since I consider attending church, praying and singing hymns to be less practical when compared with practical and difficult things like chastity, apologetics, charity, studying hard things, getting a good job, committing to caring for others who have special needs, etc. If you want to feel the presence of God, then do the right thing and take the punishment for doing it. That's what Christianity is really about. When William Dembski was drummed out of Baylor University for opposing the presupposition of naturalism in the sciences, he experienced God more than all snake-handling, tongue speaking Pentecostals in the history of the universe. Similarly for Michele Bachmann's decision to take in 23 foster children into her home. Christianity is a serious religion, and it is not accessible to superstitious people who reduce it to singing and praying alone. Christianity is about serious people doing serious things. Even reading the Bible is not enough – you need to study the Bible.

The example of Dan Barker

I've actually written about this before in the context of Dan Barker, a charismatic fundamentalist praise hymn singer and writer who expected God to validate all of his irresponsible ministry decisions. Eventually, he fell away from the church because he had this ludicrous Santa Claus caricature of God that didn't match reality. Dan Barker is the complete opposite of everything I consider a manly Christian to be. He is the polar opposite of what I recommend to men when I recommend that they study math, science, engineering and technology, avoid music, singing and dancing, and prefer apologetics and conservative politics over speaking in tongues and apocalyptic fiction. This man, when he was a "Christian", was the complete opposite of the WK Christian man model.

Men should be practical.

I think that Christians should protect themselves from the Dan Barker outcome by being aware of how emotional experiences and praise hymns warp your view of God. God is a person, and he has a goal for you – to know him. To achieve that goal, it may not be effective to just give you everything you want. It may be the case that God has to allow you to experience some suffering, to increase your character and to bring your goals in line with his character. Children have to grow up, and shielding them from pain and responsibility doesn't allow them to grow up.

In my own case, I have my own disappointment with God, revolving around my chastity while waiting for marriage. But does that cause me to reject God? Hell, no. I just assume that he has something else he wants me to do instead of being married, and I am OK with that. It's part of this relationship that God's goals are important to me. I have to participate and hold up my end of the relationship. When it comes to God's purposes in the world, my happiness and comfort are expendable. That is an appropriate response, I think, to Jesus' own self-sacrificial behavior on the cross. I was born obligated to him, and I am OK with that. It does not bother me.

By the way, I wrote about Part 1 in the series, which was about how the #1 cause of apostasy is lack of apologetics.

Which culture condones killing young girls or throwing acid in their faces?

August 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Blazing Cat Fur)

Excerpt:

> A 10-year-old schoolgirl died after being shot as she was walking home from a bible study class in Egypt.
>
> Jessi Boulus died from the single shot to the chest as she made her way through the streets of Cairo on Tuesday.
>
> Her death is yet another example of rising tensions against Christians in the country after supporters of ousted President Mohammed Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood started to target Egypt's Christian minority, holding them partly responsible for his removal.
>
> Jessi's mother told the BBC News she believes her daughter was targeted due to her religion.
>
> 'She was my best friend, my everything. Jessi was just becoming a young woman,' she said.
>
> 'Every woman dreams of becoming a mother, and for 10 years I was lucky enough to be a mum. I'll miss Jessi calling me mum – I know I won't ever hear it again.'
>
> Jessi's father told the website: 'Jessi was everything to us. Her killers didn't know that Jessi was my life – my future. They killed our future. I lived for her. We both did.'
>
> Her parents said that they had noticed rising tensions in recent months and had discussed emigrating but had decided to stay in Egypt as it was their home.
>
> In April, a Muslim mob attacked the main cathedral of the Coptic Orthodox Church as Christians held a funeral and protested there over four Christians killed in sectarian violence the day before.
>
> Pope Tawadros II publicly blamed Morsi for failing to protect the building.
>
> Egyptian security forces stood by during a brutal attack on Coptic Christians in Luxor days after Mohamed Morsi's removal, according to Amnesty International.
>
> During the 18-hour-long attack on 5 July, the security forces left six besieged Coptic Christian men – four of whom were then killed and one hospitalised – to the mercy of an angry crowd.
>
> An angry mob armed with metal bars, knives, tree branches and hammers attacked Christian homes and businesses in Nagah Hassan, 11 miles west of Luxor, after the dead body of a Muslim man was discovered near the homes of

> Christian families.
>
> Despite local residents' and religious leaders' repeated calls for help, security forces on the scene made only half-hearted attempts to end the violence and sufficient reinforcements failed to arrive.

And another story from the leftist BBC.

Excerpt:

> The Zanzibar government has offered a reward of 10m Tanzanian shillings (£3,970; $6,170) for information leading to the capture of attackers who threw acid at two UK women, police say.
>
> Kirstie Trup and Katie Gee, both 18 and from London, had acid thrown on their faces, chests and hands.
>
> The island's Police Commissioner Musa Ali Musa told the BBC that there was "no prime suspect" for the attack.
>
> He said that a lot of people had been questioned and information gathered.
>
> However no-one has been arrested or charged and investigations are continuing, Mr Musa said.
>
> […]The two young Britons, who were volunteering for the charity Art in Tanzania, have been flown back to the UK.

Previously I wrote about Islamic child sex-trafficking and Islamic gang rape.

I post these stories because it's become fashionable in certain circles to condemn "judging". Everybody wants to be liked these days, and that means being "tolerant" and seeing all views and cultures as equally valid. Even Christains are taken in by it, extolling the virtues of not judging anyone, and judging people who do think that evil really is evil.

When you meet someone who says that it is wrong to judge, show them these news stories.

Gay activists pressure D.C. mayor to remove ex-gay singer from MLK memorial concert

August 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News, a story about one of the most Democrat cities in America, and its Democrat mayor. (H/T Mysterious WG)

Excerpt:

> D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray admitted Monday that he made the final decision to remove gospel singer Donnie McClurkin from the lineup of performers at a city-sponsored concert held Saturday at the Martin Luther King memorial in respond to complaints by gay activists.
>
> McClurkin was to have been a headline performer at the event , called "Reflections on Peace: Ghandi to King," which marked the beginning of a planned series of events to commemorate King's life during the run-up to the 50th anniversary of the civil rights leader's "I Have a Dream" speech.
>
> But on Friday, several homosexual activists contacted the mayor's office to complain about McClurkin's inclusion in the show because the gospel singer is a vocal ex-gay who believes homosexuality is a "curse" which can be overcome through prayer and determination. They threatened to protest the event if he was allowed to perform. Soon after, it was announced that McClurkin would no longer be part of the program.
>
> Initially, the mayor's office claimed McClurkin had volunteered to step aside. "The Arts and Humanities Commission and Donnie McClurkin's management decided that it would be best for him to withdraw because the purpose of the event is to bring people together," said Gray's spokeswoman, Doxie McCoy. "Mayor Gray said the purpose of the event is to promote peace and harmony. That is what King was all about."
>
> But on Saturday, McClurkin posted a video to social media claiming there was nothing mutual about the decision, and that the mayor's office told him not to come.
>
> On Monday, Gray confirmed McClurkin's account, telling the *Washington Post*, "This was an issue involving a potential controversy at an event that was going to focus on harmony and peace, and we just didn't think that was appropriate for this event."
>
> McClurkin said the decision was made to placate a group of 15-20 homosexual activists. "Fifteen or twenty people," the gospel singer said, shaking his head, "compared to thousands upon thousands who were coming out to worship Jesus."

Well, to be fair, gay activists and their allies in the Democrat Party aren't really keen on

worshipping Jesus, either. And not shy about preventing others from doing so.

> This is not the first time former homosexuals have been subjected to campaigns of intimidation by gay activists in the nation's capital.
>
> The kickoff event for the first-ever "Ex-Gay Pride Month," scheduled to be held at Family Research Council headquarters in D.C., was postponed last month after threats of protests and violence by gay activists.
>
> And in 2007, at a county fair in the nearby suburb of Arlington, angry homosexual activists harassed and assaulted a group of ex-gays and members of Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (PFOX) at their fair booth.
>
> Last year, a metro Washington school district was sued by PFOX after the superintendent publicly told students that the group's flyers offering information on unwanted same-sex attraction and urging tolerance for those who leave the homosexual lifestyle were "reprehensible and deplorable" and labeled their contention that sexual orientation can be changed "a really, really disgusting message."
>
> In 2008, an American Psychological Association symposium on the role of religion in homosexual therapy to be held at the Washington Convention Center was canceled under pressure from gay activists who worried the panel might lend credibility the notion that individuals can overcome their homosexual inclinations, either through reparative therapy or other means.
>
> "Conservatives … were going to use this event to draw credibility to the so-called reparative therapy movement," Gene Robinson, the openly homosexual then-bishop of the Episcopal Church told the *Washington Blade* gay news outlet at the time, taking partial credit for the symposium's cancellation. "It became clear to me in the last couple of weeks that just my showing up and letting this event happen…lends credibility to that so-called therapy."
>
> On Capitol Hill, some Democratic legislators have called for an outright ban on such therapies. One California congresswoman introduced a resolution in the last session of Congress called "Stop Harming Our Kids" that condemns therapies aimed at changing sexual orientation, and urges states to introduce laws banning their use with minors.

So who is right about reparative therapy and ex-gay people? Let's look at the peer-reviewed science.

This study was done by Otago University in New Zealand.

Excerpt:

> Otago University researcher associate professor Elisabeth Wells has looked at the connection between adverse childhood events and sexuality and found those who experienced trauma were significantly more likely to be non-heterosexual.
>
> The study used results from the New Zealand Mental Health Survey, which

> surveyed almost 13,000 people aged over 16 between 2003 and 2004.
>
> Participants were asked whether they thought of themselves as bisexual, heterosexual or homosexual and if they had same-sex sexual experiences or relationships.
>
> Less than one per cent of people identified themselves as homosexual, but three per cent had a same-sex encounter.
>
> Wells said the more "adverse events" experienced in childhood – including sexual assault, rape and domestic violence – the more likely the person identified with one of the non-exclusively heterosexual groups.
>
> She said most people from disturbed backgrounds were heterosexual.
>
> However, the study showed a clear relationship between negative events in childhood and homosexual or bisexual relationships later in life.

I actually studied the issue of what causes homosexuality and whether it can be repaired using therapy a while back using books by medical doctors like Jeffrey Satinover and Joseph Nicolosi. (Nicolosi's new book is here) It turns out that there are some genetic factors that make homosexuality more likely, but the real causes are environmental, e.g. – sexual abuse during childhood or failure to bond emotionally with the same-sex parent.

I wonder how many people actually go after the research when forming their opinions on issues like abortion and same-sex marriage? I always head straight for the research and debates. I think that my opponents prefer personal attacks and speech codes!

Comments to this post will be strictly filtered to stay clear of Obama's laws restricting free speech on controversial issues.

Related posts

- Two Christian preachers brutally beaten at Seattle Gay Pride Festival
- Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Gay activist Dan Savage bullies Christian teens and bashes Christianity
- Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll's Mars Hill Church
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses

- Pro-abortion vandals: destroying pro-life display was “free speech”
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Zeitgeist conspiracy movie had profound impact on Jared Loughner
- Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning
- Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist
- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

Physicist Frank Tipler on the usefulness of refereed journals, then and now

August 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I really enjoyed this episode of the ID the Future podcast.

Description:

> Is the only good science peer-reviewed science? Are there other avenues to present important scientific work? On this episode of **ID The Future**, Professor of Mathematics Dr. Frank Tipler discusses the pros and cons of peer review and refereed journals. More than fifty peer-reviewed papers discussing intelligent design have been published, but critics of the theory still proclaim a lack of peer-reviewed work as an argument. Listen in as Tipler shows how things have changed with the peer review process and what we can do about it.

About the speaker:

> Frank Tipler was born and raised in Andalusia, Alabama. His first science project was a letter written in kindergarten to Werner von Braun, whose plans to launch the first earth satellite were then being publicized. Von Braun's secretary replied, regretting he had no rocket fuel for Tipler as requested. By age five, he knew he wanted to be an astrophysicist. But he's always been a polymath, reading widely across disciplines and into the history of science and theology. After graduating from MIT and the University of Maryland, he did postdoctoral work at Oxford and Berkeley, before arriving at Tulane in 1981.

Whenever William Lance Craig often cites a book by two physicists named "Barrow and Tipler" called "The Anthropic Cosmological Principle" (Oxford University Press, 1988) in his debates to support the fine-tuning argument. This Tipler is that Tipler! Dr. Tipler is a master of the physics of cosmology and fine-tuning. However, I definitely disagree with him on some of his ideas.

The MP3 file is here. (17 minutes)

Topics:

- the changing nature of refereed journals and peer-review
- previously, the refereed journals were more about communication
- now, ideas are not taken seriously unless they are published in these journals
- the problem is that referees can be motivated by ideological concerns
- before, an obscure patent official named Einstein submitted a physics paper and it was published
- now, an uncredited person would not be able to have a brilliant paper published like that
- today, there are so many scientists that many more papers are submitted

- although it restricts BAD ideas, it can also end up censoring NEW ideas
- the problem is that any really brilliant idea has to go against the prevailing consensus
- peer-review may actually be holding back the progress of science by censoring NEW ideas
- some referees are motivated to censor ideas that undercut their reputation and prestige
- Dr. Tipler was told to remove references to intelligent design before one of his papers would be published
- how scientists with NEW ideas can bypass the system of refereed journals when they are censored
- peer-review has value when it finds errors, but not when it suppresses new ideas

I think this one is a must listen. As much as I like peer-reviewed research, it's important to acknowledge the limitations. I think if you're going into a debate, you definitely want to be the one with the peer-reviewed evidence. Let the other guy be the one making assertions and stating his preferences and opinions. But that doesn't mean that the peer-review process can't be improved – I think that it can be improved.

Here is a listing of some recent peer-reviewed publications related to intelligent design.

AF first sergeant faces reprisals from gay boss for refusing to affirm homosexuality

August 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the first one from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Monk has served as a first sergeant at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio since 2011. He recently returned from a deployment and discovered he had a new commander – an open lesbian.
>
> "In one of our first meetings, she was talking about her promotion and she mentioned something about a benediction," Monk told Fox News. "She said she wanted a chaplain but objected to one particular chaplain that she called a bigot because he preached that homosexuality is a sin."
>
> "She then said, 'I don't know what kind of people actually believe that kind of crap,'" Monk said, recalling the meeting. "I knew I was going to have a rough time in this unit and I would have to be very careful what I said."
>
> That moment came when Monk was called in to advise the commander on a disciplinary matter involving an Air Force instructor accused of making comments objecting to gay marriage.

And then Monk had to advise his lesbian officer about someone who disagreed with homosexuality:

> Seven people filed complaints about the remarks. It then became Monk's job to advise the commander on disciplinary action.
>
> "Her very first reaction was to say, 'we need to lop off the head of this guy,'" Monk said. "The commander took the position that his speech was discrimination."
>
> Monk suggested she use the incident as a learning experience – a way to teach everyone about tolerance and diversity.
>
> "I don't believe someone having an opinion for or against homosexuality is discriminatory," Monk told Fox News.
>
> From that point, Monk said he was told that he wasn't on the same page as the commander and if I didn't get on the page they were on, they would find another place for me to work."
>
> "I'm being chastised about what's going on," he said. "I'm told that members of the Air Force don't have freedom of speech. They don't have the right to say anything that goes against Air Force policy."
>
> Monk, who is a devout evangelical Christian, said he met with the young

> instructor and told him that he was fighting for him.
>
> “He was really concerned,” he said. “He said he felt like he was on an island – that he couldn’t be who he is anymore. He didn’t understand why somebody would be offended.”
>
> The instructor was eventually punished by having a letter of counseling placed in his official file.
>
> Monk soon found himself in a very similar position after his commander ordered him to answer a question about whether people who object to gay marriage are guilty of discrimination.
>
> “She said, ‘Sgt. Monk, I need to know if you can, as my first sergeant, if you can see discrimination if somebody says that they don’t agree with homosexual marriage,’” he said. “I refused to answer the question.”
>
> Monk said to answer would have put him in a legal predicament.
>
> “And as a matter of conscience I could not answer the question the way the commander wanted me to,” he said.

I actually wanted to joint the military when I was young. But I knew that if I ever disagreed with my superiors on issues like abortion or gay marriage, that I would have trouble transferring my skills to a new career. I chose to go into computer science so that I could get my skills without being censored or sanctioned by teachers who didn’t agree with me. I wanted to avoid having to change who I was because someone else disagreed with me and wanted to push their views on me by exercising power. I had read about what atheists did to Christians in communist countries, and I didn’t want to be exposed to that. I knew that I had to choose a field where I could always take my skills and leave if I sensed danger.

New study finds highest-ever risk of breast cancer from abortion

August 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports on the latest studies confirming the link between abortion and breast cancer.

Excerpt:

> A newly-published study shows the highest-ever abortion-breast cancer risk for women of any previously-published study on the link between the two.
>
> A Bangladesh study published in the Journal of Dhaka Medical College on risk factors for breast cancer, led by Dr. Suraiya Jabeen, found a statistically significant 20.62-fold increased risk among women with abortion histories. The new study on the abortion-breast cancer link is by far the highest risk elevation reported among 73 published abortion-breast cancer studies.
>
> Physical inactivity, being menopause, positive family history of breast cancer and history of induced abortion were found important risk factors," the authors wrote.
>
> Professor Joel Brind, a professor at Baruch College, City University of New York who is an expert on the abortion-breast cancer link, said the reason why the risk elevation is so high is because it's "a measure of relative risk."
>
> Observing that women in Bangladesh have very traditional childbearing patterns that reduce breast cancer risk, he explained: "Almost all the women are married (97% currently married; the rest widowed) and with child by the time they are 20, and all of the kids are breastfed. Ninety percent had their first child at age 21 or younger (99% of controls did). They typically neither take contraceptive steroids nor have any abortions. Nulliparity (childlessness) or abortion before first full term pregnancy (both of which mean no breastfeeding) in a population in which breast cancer is almost unheard of, makes the relative risk very high."
>
> Brind continued: "Although the authors did not include a measure of their abortion link's statistical significance, their raw data was complete enough to calculate a 95% confidence interval of 12.85-32.51, making abortion by far the strongest and most significant risk factor observed in these Bengali women. In plain English, women in this population who had any induced abortions were more than 20 times as likely to get breast cancer, compared to women with no abortions."
>
> According to the study, additional minor reproductive factors influencing breast cancer risk included: use of oral contraceptives (1.47-fold increased risk); early first birth at or before age 21 (0.35-fold reduced risk); having two or more children (0.29-fold reduced risk); and increased number of months spent breastfeeding (0.30-fold reduced risk).

Now let's take a look at some of the previous studies.

Previous studies

Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> A study in the Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention shows abortion increases the risk of breast cancer for women.
>
> C. Yanhua of the First Peoples' Hospital of Kunming in Yunnan province and his colleagues found the abortion-breast cancer association after comparing data from 263 cases of breast cancer and 457 controls without the disease. Their analysis covers the years 2009-2011.
>
> The authors examined information on disease diagnosis, demographics, medical history, and reproductive characteristics of the patients involved and also looked at short menstrual cycle, old age at first live birth, never breastfeeding, history of oral contraceptive use, postmenopausal status and nulliparity to determine in abortion-breast cancer link exists.
>
> They write that "multivariate model analysis revealed the significant independent positive associations with breast cancer of shorter menstrual cycle, older age at first live birth, never breastfeeding, history of oral contraception experience, increased number of abortion, menopause status, and nulliparities."
>
> "Number of abortion showed an increasing higher risk of breast cancer," they added, while saying that women who had one live birth lowered their risk. "As far as women who had once a live birth, it showed decreased the risk of breast cancer compared to nulliparous."
>
> "This study showed an increased risk of breast cancer with times of abortion. The association between abortion and risk of breast cancer in a study in China showed that the risk factors of female breast cancer included abortion times more than two (Li et al., 2006)," they continued. "Another study found that risk was raised among women reporting at least one abortion, but no trend was seen with number of abortions (Heuch et al., 2008). In a meta-analysis study, pooled odds ratio for number of abortions greater than and equal three was statistically significant (95%CI:1.68-5.36) (Tao et al.,2011)."
>
> "In conclusion, in this study the estrogen related risk factors of breast cancer included woman who had longer menstrual cycle, older age of first live birth, never breastfeeding, nulliparity, and number of abortions more than one. Therefore, it is recommended to women with these risk factors perform breast cancer screening tests earlier and regularly," they said.

Previously, another study was published in Oxford University's European Journal of Public Health, and the abstract is posted on the US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health (aka PubMed).

Here are the results:

> With statistical controls for number of pregnancies, birth year and age at last pregnancy, the combination of induced abortion(s) and natural loss(es) was associated with more than three times higher mortality rate than only birth(s). Moderate risks were identified with only induced abortion, only natural loss and having experienced all outcomes compared with only birth(s). Risk of death was more than six times greater among women who had never been pregnant compared with those who only had birth(s). Increased risks of death were 45%, 114% and 191% for 1, 2 and 3 abortions, respectively, compared with no abortions after controlling for other reproductive outcomes and last pregnancy age. Increased risks of death were equal to 44%, 86% and 150% for 1, 2 and 3 natural losses, respectively, compared with none after including statistical controls. Finally, decreased mortality risks were observed for women who had experienced two and three or more births compared with no births.

Life Site News adds more:

> A single induced abortion increases the risk of maternal death by 45 percent compared to women with no history of abortion, according to a new study of all women of reproductive age in Denmark over a 25 year period.
>
> The study found that each additional abortion is associated with an even higher death rate. Women who had two abortions were 114 percent more likely to die during the period examined, and women had three or more abortions had a 192 percent increased risk of death.
>
> Elevated rates of death were also observed among women who experienced miscarriages, ectopic pregnancies or other natural losses. Among women with a history of multiple pregnancies, women with a history of both abortions and natural losses, but no live births, had the highest mortality rate.
>
> Women who had never been pregnant had the highest mortality rate overall.
>
> However, women with a history of successful deliveries were the least likely to die during the 25 years examined.
>
> The study is the second record linkage analysis of Danish mortality data to be published this month.
>
> The earlier study was limited to comparing mortality rates following only the first pregnancy outcome. It found that abortion of a first pregnancy was associated with a higher rate of death compared to death rates among women who delivered a first pregnancy. The higher death rate among women who had abortions persisted for each of the first ten years following the first pregnancy outcome.
>
> […]Dr. Reardon is the director of the Elliot Institute, which funds research related to abortion. He believes further research is needed to explore how the outcomes

> observed in this latest study may be influenced by abortion's impact on natural pregnancy losses. A new population study from Finland, for example, has found that abortion is associated with higher rates of preterm delivery, low birth weight delivery, and perinatal deaths in subsequent pregnancies.
>
> "We knew from our previous studies of low income women in California that women who have multiple pregnancy outcomes, such as having a history of both abortion and miscarriage, have significantly different mortality rates," Reardon said.
>
> "But this new study is the first to examine how each experience with abortion or miscarriage contributes to higher mortality rates," Reardon observed.
>
> "This is called a 'dose effect' because each exposure, or 'dose,' is seen to produce more of the same effect, which is what one would expect if there is a cause-effect relationship," he said.
>
> Reardon believes that a truer picture of the benefits of childbirth and the risks of abortion and pregnancy loss is now emerging because of a shift to more reliable record linkage studies. Such studies have been conducted in Finland, Denmark and the United States.

And another from Life News.

Excerpt:

> A new study published in the *Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention* in February reported a very statistically significant increased risk of breast cancer for women with previous abortions as opposed to women who have never had one.
>
> The study, consisting of 1,351 women and led by researcher Ai-Ren Jiang, reported a statistically significant 1.52-fold elevation in risk for women with induced abortions and a "significant dose-response relationship between (the risk) for breast cancer and number of induced abortions," meaning the risk climbed with a higher number of previous abortions.
>
> For premenopausal women who have had abortions, the numbers were relatively small, and the observed 16% risk elevation was not statistically significant. However, for those with three or more abortions, the risk climbed to a statistically significant 1.55-fold elevation.
>
> "The results have revealed that induced abortion was related to increased risk of breast caner. Premenopausal women who had ≥3 times of induced abortion were at increased crude odds ratio (OR) (2.41, 95%CI: 1.09-5.42) and adjusted-OR (1.55, 95%CI: 1.15-5.68)," they wrote. "Postmenopausal women with a previous induced abortion were at increased crude OR (2.04, 95%CI: 1.48-2.81) and adjusted-OR (1.82, 95%CI: 1.30-2.54), and there was a significant increase trend in OR with number of induced abortions (p for trend: 0.0001)."
>
> […][A] Chinese study in 1995 by L. Bu and colleagues, including Janet Daling of

> the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, reported a statistically significant 4.5-fold elevated risk among women with previous induced abortions who developed breast cancer at or before age 35, compared to older women (who experienced a statistically significant 2.5-fold elevated risk)

Here's another study from the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), showing that excessive consumption of alcohol is a rish factor for breast cancer. Excerpt:

> Consumption of 3 to 6 alcoholic drinks per week is associated with a small increase in the risk of breast cancer, and consumption in both earlier and later adult life is also associated with an increased risk, according to a study in the November 2 issue of JAMA.
>
> "In many studies, higher consumption of alcohol has been associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. However, the effect of low levels of drinking as is common in the United States has not been well quantified," according to background information in the article. "In addition, the role of drinking patterns (i.e., frequency of drinking and 'binge' drinking) and consumption at different times of adult life are not well understood."
>
> Wendy Y. Chen, M.D., M.P.H., of Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, and colleagues examined the association of breast cancer with alcohol consumption during adult life, including quantity, frequency, and age at consumption. The study included 105,986 women enrolled in the Nurses' Health Study who were followed up from 1980 until 2008 with an early adult alcohol assessment and 8 updated alcohol assessments. The primary outcome the researchers measured was the risk of developing invasive breast cancer.
>
> During the follow-up period, there were 7,690 cases of invasive breast cancer diagnosed among the study participants. Analyses of data indicated that a low level of alcohol consumption (5.0 to 9.9 grams per day, equivalent to 3-6 glasses of wine per week) was modestly but statistically significantly associated with a 15 percent increased risk of breast cancer. In addition, women who consumed at least 30 grams of alcohol daily on average (at least 2 drinks per day) had a 51 percent increased risk of breast cancer compared with women who never consumed alcohol.
>
> The researchers also found that when examined separately, alcohol consumption levels at ages 18 to 40 years and after age 40 years were both strongly associated with breast cancer risk. The association with drinking in early adult life still persisted even after controlling for alcohol intake after age 40 years.
>
> Binge drinking, but not frequency of drinking, was also associated with breast cancer risk after controlling for cumulative alcohol intake.

Now let’s take a look at some other factors that raise the risk of breast cancer.

Abortion and breast cancer

Many studies show a link between abortion and breast cancer.

Study 1: (September 2010)

> Based on the expression of estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2/neu (HER2), breast cancer is classified into several subtypes: luminal A (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2-), luminal B (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2+), HER2-overexpressing (ER-, PR-, and HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-, PR-, and HER2-). The aim of this case-control study is to determine reproductive factors associated with breast cancer subtypes in Chinese women. A total of 1,417 patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the First Affiliated Hospital, China Medical University, Shenyang, China between 2001 and 2009 and 1,587 matched controls without a prior breast cancer were enrolled.
>
> […]Postmenopause and spontaneous abortion were inversely associated with the risk of luminal tumors. By contrast, multiparity, family history of breast cancer and **induced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer**.

Study 2: (March 2010)

> OBJECTIVE: To explore the risk factors of breast cancer for better control and prevention of the malignancy.
>
> METHODS: The clinical data of 232 patients with pathologically established breast cancer were investigated in this 1:1 case-control study to identify the risk factors of breast cancer.
>
> RESULTS: The history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and**multiple abortions were the statistically significant risk factors of breast cancer**, while breast feeding was the protective factor.
>
> CONCLUSION: A history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and multiple abortions are all risk factors of breast cancer.

But wait, there’s more.

Birth control pills

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9) and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed

> childbearing was a risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

All of this research shows that abortion is bad for women, but I also should mention that abortion is always bad for the unborn child, especially sex-selection abortions, which target women more than men.

Conclusion

The total cost for breast cancer treatment, which raises medical insurance premiums (private health care) or taxes (single-payer health care), has been estimated to be between $1.8 billion and $3.8 billion dollars. In addition, the government spends billions of dollars each year on breast cancer research. All of this spending is costing taxpayers a lot of money, as people demand more and more government funding of breast cancer research and breast cancer treatment (with either private or single-payer health care).

Physicist Luke Barnes previews Craig-Krauss debate in Sydney, Australia

August 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, a preview of the Craig-Krauss debate that took place yesterday from Sydney-based philosopher Luke Barnes, whom I've written about before.

Excerpt:

> Krauss is in Sydney to debate the question "Why is there something rather than nothing?" – the traditional starting point for an ancient argument for the existence of God. Kraus, of course, is a cosmologist, known in the field for his work on the cosmological constant and dark matter, and to the wider public for books such as *The Physics of Star Trek* and *A Universe from Nothing*. Krauss's opponent is the Christian philosopher William Lane Craig. He has built a career around the philosophical defence of theism, and is best known outside academia for his many public debates with atheists.
>
> I am, like Krauss, a professional cosmologist and astrophysicist. I've also interacted with a philosopher or two, and I've read a lot of Craig's work. So I thought it might be opportune to offer a guide to the uninitiated.
>
> […]Krauss's latest book claims that advances in science have shown that we can answer the question "why is there something rather than nothing?" without invoking God. His argument can be summarised as follows:
>
> 1. The basic stuff of the universe, as we now understand it, consists of matter and energy, space and time, governed by laws of nature.
> 2. Particles of matter correspond to certain configurations of quantum fields. There is a configuration that corresponds to no particles (the "vacuum"). A state with no particles can evolve into a state with particles. Thus, matter can appear from no-matter.
> 3. The universe as a whole may have zero net energy.
> 4. There are theories that suggest that that space and time themselves are not fundamental, but emerge from a state without space and time.
> 5. The laws of nature may be stochastic and random, in which case there may be no ultimate laws of nature.
> 6. Since we can imagine the universe coming from a state with no matter, no particles, no space, no time and no laws, something can come from nothing.
>
> Krauss's book was far from universally acclaimed. Fellow unbeliever and physicist-turned-philosopher David Albert wrote a scathing review for the *New York Times*. Krauss responded by calling Albert "moronic" and generally dismissing philosophy as a waste of time. I'd love to stick up for a fellow

> cosmologist, but I'm with Albert and my reasons mirror his.
>
> Fundamental physics is, always has been and – unless it undergoes a major identity crisis – always will be about what the basic stuff of the universe is and how it interacts and rearranges. There is nothing deeper. Thus, there can be no answer within science as to where that stuff came from, why it is that type of stuff, why it obeys laws, why those laws, or why there is anything at all. All scientific explanations stop at the basic stuff.
>
> This is why Krauss's argument fails. Particles can appear from no-particles, not from nothing. The underlying field is always there. A state with zero energy is not nothing. There must first be a thing before we can measure its energy, even if the number we get is zero. A physical state with no space or time, however strange, is still not thereby nothing. A universe with laws that vary from place to place and time to time is clearly not the same as one with no laws at all. It just makes the laws more complicated. Step 6 makes an unjustified leap from "something from not-these-five-things" to "something from nothing."
>
> There must always be questions that science leaves unanswered. Naturalism posits that there is nothing but the stuff of science. Here, then, is the challenge for naturalism. To believe naturalism, one must believe that these questions are unanswerable. Not just unanswered, not just awaiting a breakthrough, not just an open research question. They must be non-questions, meaningless strings of words, nonsense cleverly disguised as the oldest and deepest questions mankind has asked about reality. Unfortunately for Krauss, to have any hope of doing that he's going to need to put on his philosopher's hat.

Dr. Craig posted his comments about the debate after it happened:

> The dialogue last night with Krauss went really well! We largely avoided the personal attacks and finally focused on the philosophical issues. Krauss did not mount much of a defense of his claim that physics can offer plausible explanations of why something exists rather than nothing and did not seem to understand Leibniz's argument, taking it to be about the temporal origin of he universe. Now on to Melbourne, where the dialogue will be moderated by none other than Graham Oppy!

You can also find a full review of the debate by someone who attended it here.

Excerpt:

> Krauss decided not to primarily attack the premises of the contingency argument but rather the very nature of deductive syllogisms. To do this he presented the following syllogism (I admittedly did not get to write this down but this was the general idea):
>
> 1. Mammals practice homosexuality.
> 2. Craig is a mammal

> 3. Therefore Craig practices homosexuality. (I honestly can't remember the exact phrasing of the conclusion but you can see the general gist)
>
> This shocked me. Not only was it an obviously invalid argument but it got a big laugh from the audience (who didn't seem to see how bad it was). To Krauss' credit he did at least say that the conclusion was obviously false (at least to his knowledge) but it struck me as very disrespectful. Krauss complimented Craig on being a genuinely nice guy but continued to make regular quips about his use of deductive logic and lack of intellectual honesty. He also attacked the second premise of the argument as obviously question begging.
>
> Krauss concluded his last minute with personal E-mail correspondence between himself and Alexander Vilenkin concerning the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem, a piece of evidence that Craig often employs to demonstrate that the universe began to exist. Unfortunately there was a lot of text on the slide but the main point from Vilenkin seemed to be that the BVG theorem could break down if it turned out that a quantum theory of gravity held to be true. I look forward to this letter becoming public so we can have a better look at it. I was disappointed that Krauss did not raise this earlier or spend more time explaining it. Krauss appealed to evolution, the multiverse and the appearance of apparent "poor tuning" as a way of defeating the teleological argument. Clearly Krauss was conflating the teleological argument from cosmology with some sort of intelligent design argument for biological complexity; a forgivable error for a layperson but not someone of Krauss' stature.

I am praying that Dr. Craig is able to help Dr. Krauss consider the existence of God respectfully and fairly, and I hope you will as well. I do admire Krauss for agreeing to have these debates. He's not just having one debate or two debates, but several. And this is not the first time he's debated Dr. Craig either. You have to admire the man's willingness to defend his views. I think a lot of atheists in the universities are insulated from arguments like Dr. Craig's, and they'll stay insulated form them unless them make an effort to hear the other side.

Should young people be dating before they are ready to get married?

August 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A thoughtful post on The College Conservative that I agree with, written by Bryana Johnson.

Excerpt:

> I wonder sometimes if I am the only one who winces to hear a thirteen-year old speak with cavalier abandon of his or her "ex?" Since when is it considered healthy and acceptable for underage people to be in "relationships?" Just what do parents and educators expect to be the result of the romantic conquests of these middle-school children and young high school students? The results I've witnessed personally are beyond disturbing; they are downright sinister, and have caused me to question whether or not those who claim to champion marital fidelity and family values are paying any attention at all to the standards we are passing to our children.
>
> The trouble with underage dating is that it presents an entirely faulty view of what interaction with the opposite gender should be about. Rather than placing emphasis on building one strong relationship with one person at a stage of life when a marital commitment is feasible, dating encourages young people to pour their energies into consistently seducing other young people at a time when neither of them are capable of making any long-term commitments. Their "relationships" are destined to fail from the get-go because they are founded on unhealthy perceptions of love and not backed by any real necessity to stick it out.
>
> The beauty of marriage, as it was intended to be, is that it teaches two people of opposite genders to learn to work through incompatibilities and give of themselves. In the same way, the great ugliness of dating as it is practiced by our culture and portrayed by our media, is that it teaches two people of opposite genders to be selfish by giving them an easy "out" when things don't go according to their initial feelings. I believe it is fair to say that this form of dating is a training manual for divorce, because it encourages young people to grow accustomed to giving their hearts away and then taking them back.
>
> Sadly, parents who should know better continue to display shocking naïveté regarding the absurd practices of driving their twelve year olds out on a "date," or purchasing provocative clothing for their sixteen-year-olds, or sympathizing with their broken-hearted fourteen-year-olds by assuring them that they'll "find someone better." "They're just having fun," they'll tell us, rolling their eyes at what they consider to be our tightly wound principles. I work a volunteer shift at Crisis Pregnancy Clinic where I witness every week the ruined lives and broken

> dreams that “fun” has left with our youth.
>
> Another defense offered for the ridiculous habit of underage dating is that the kids are “just learning how to relate to the opposite sex.” It doesn’t take a Ph.D. to figure out that what they’re really learning is how to recover quickly from a break-up and set their sights on another gorgeous and equally hormonal person. The culture of dating is a culture of hunger and unsatisfied eyes that are always looking around for affirmation via someone or something else.
>
> But perhaps the most ludicrous and most willfully naïve assertion is that “relationships” between young teens are “not really about sex.” Just what do we think such relationships are about between people too young to be interested in any of the other things (family, stability, home-making, etc.) that come out of a romantic involvement with the opposite gender? Contrary to such half-baked assurances, it *is* all about sex for these young people. Whenever they forget that, the pop-culture is quick to remind them of it. In the media, girls are unfailingly presented as having value to boys only in proportion to their physique and their manner of flaunting it. Boys are presented as bestial and incapable of responsibility. Overwhelming, this is the primary message being offered to our kids by the movies, magazines, music artists, and commercials directed at their age group. It is inexcusably irrational for us to suppose that their relationships with one another are untainted by the stereotypes that surround them.
>
> […]While social conservatives may proclaim the virtues of pre-marital abstinence and fidelity, their actions don’t line up with their words. They behave as though they expect our young people to embrace or at least abide by the values we preach to them, all the while continuing to direct them in lifestyle choices that foster the opposite principles and attitudes.

I really like it when women are very very direct about boundaries. There’s something reassuring to about a woman who makes moral judgments and doesn’t care about whether it makes people like her less. She’s trying to help people make wiser decisions so that they don’t get hurt over and over and wreck their chances of having a stable marriage. I have to give her my respect for that. I’ve always subscribed to the duct tape theory of love. The more you bond and pull away, the less you can bond to someone you really care about. Teenage dating is breakup training. Boys shouldn’t be dating until they have proven that they can carry out their roles: protector, provider, moral and spiritual leader.

Walt Russell explains how to read the Bible effectively

August 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below I go over two potss written by Biola University New Testament professor Walt Russell. The material below is almost the same talk he gave for the Stand to Reason Masters Series in Christian Thought. His book on the subject of interpreting the Bible is called "Playing With Fire: How the Bible Ignites Change in Your Soul". I highly recommend that you read the book, so you know how to read the Bible effectively. But these four articles will teach you most of what you need to know if you don't want to buy the book.

Here is part one which talks about how postmodern relativism is at odds with discovering the original intent of an author.

Excerpt:

> Twenty-four year-old "Janet" (not her real name) was angry at my emphasis on seeking to discover authors' intentions when we read their texts. She was an evangelical Christian and a second grade teacher in a public school. She prided herself in helping her 20 students learn to love literature. She would read them a story as they gathered around her, and then ask each child, "What does the story mean to you?" She prodded them to come up with their own unique meanings. With such strong encouragement, the class of 20 would eventually have 20 different meanings for the one story. Janet sensed that I was a naysayer about such "love of literature." Pouring a little emotional gasoline on the fire, I said, "Janet, you're certainly doing your part to insure that these 7 year-olds will never recover from a radically relativistic view of meaning!" Now I had her full attention.

Here is part two which talks about the importance of knowing the genre of a text before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" — the newspaper headline virtually screams out at you. The thought of something being slain is repulsive. You're gripped by a mental image of southern India's Bengal tiger. You imagine its beautiful face, its stripes and piercing eyes. Then your image is shattered by the sudden blast of a high-powered rifle. You see the exquisite creature writhe in pain, fall gracelessly in its tracks and die. Having read no further than the headline, you feel sick, as if you've witnessed something tragic.
>
> But *should* you feel this way? The slaughter of an endangered species — especially one as magnificent as the Bengal tiger — is horrifying, no doubt. But suppose you failed to notice that the headline "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" appeared in the *sports page* of the morning paper. Clearly enough, it now refers to different

> Indians, different Tigers and a different manner of slaying than you originally thought. And is it really that tragic that the Cleveland Indians badly beat the Detroit Tigers in a major league baseball game last night? Not unless you're a long-suffering Detroit Tigers' baseball fan. But how do you now know that the headline is about baseball and not tiger-slaying in India? You look at the words "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS" and you know exactly what each word means. When you combine these words, how can they not mean exactly what you first thought they did — that *Indians slay tigers*? Answer: because their meanings are communicated (as the meanings of *all* words are) through *genres*!

Here is part three which talks about the importance of reading the context of a verse before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "Never Read a Bible Verse!" That's the title of a little booklet my friend and Christian radio personality, Gregory Koukl, has written to help people read the Bible well. What great advice. "That's right, never read a Bible verse. Instead, always read a paragraph — at least." But the current is flowing the other way in our popular sound-bite culture. Not to be left out (or left behind!), the Church has its own version of sound-bite culture: *verse-bite culture*. In verse-bite culture we take a sentence or sentence-fragment from a biblical paragraph, memorize it out of context, write it on a little card, put it on a billboard, a plaque, a rock, etc. Somehow we think that just because this little chunk of Scripture has a verse number in front of it, it was meant to be a free-standing unit of thought. Nothing could be further from the truth.
>
> Apart from the fact that chapter and verse divisions weren't added to the New Testament text until 1560 — long after the New Testament's inspired authorship — there is a more important reason for never reading just a Bible verse, and instead reading at least the paragraph that contains it.

Here is part four which talks about the importance of applying the words of the Bible to your life.

One verse that is often misinterpreted is missing from the articles, but present in the STR lecture. It's Philippians 1:6 that says "6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus". Russell says in the lecture that this promise is specifically intended for the church in Philippi, to whom Paul is writing, not necessarily to all Christians. He is giving them a promise just after directly referring to their good work in supporting him in his ministry. Some verses are just not meant for us, and the context reveals it.

Correcting four myths about the history of the Crusades

August 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an interesting article from First Principles Journal. (H/T The Poached Egg)

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the

> peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

This is always good to know when you are answering Muslims, because they do tend to bring it up.

A clip from the 2013 Reasonable Faith speaking tour in Australia

August 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The question is "why should anyone care about Paul's view on homosexuality, since Paul never met Jesus?"

Here is the answer:

Dr. Craig's answer is two-fold. First, he said that Jesus was a Jew and had the same views on this question as Jews normally did. Second, he cited Jesus' teaching about marriage being the union of one man and one woman in Mark 10:7-9 and Matthew 19:5. I heard this same verse presented when I was listening to the "It takes a Family" 2013 lectures, in the lecture by Dr. Robert Gagnon, who is an expert on what Jesus says about homosexuality.

Here are the relevant links, if you want to get yourself ready:

- "Jesus and Marriage" ~ Dr. Robert Gagnon @ ITAF '13
- Jesus and Marriage Q&A ~ Dr. Robert Gagnon @ ITAF '13
- "Paul and Homosexual Practice" ~ Dr. Robert Gagnon @ ITAF '13
- "Paul and Homosexual Practice" Q&A ~ Dr. Robert Gagnon @ ITAF '13

I had to respond to a similar question recently in the comments of this blog, too. The questioner "JB" asserted that Christians could also be pro-abortion, and I replied with this:

> Well there you have it. It doesn't matter that the early church took in abandoned infants and prohibited abortion, because JB knows what the Bible really meant – not the early church.
>
> Look:
> http://birdsoftheair.blogspot.com/2010/11/early-christianity-on-abortion.html
>
> Quote:
>
> Recently I came across a reading of the Didache. "The what?" you may ask. The Didache is a book written somewhere in the first or second century. For a long time it was up for consideration as Scripture. It was believed to be the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Eventually it was agreed that the book was an excellent book, but not inspired Scripture. So I was pleased to be able to download this admirable book containing good teachings from the early Church fathers.
>
> The book seemed to be largely a lot of quotes from Scripture. You'll learn the basic rules of Christianity — "First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself." You'll learn that "grave sins" are forbidden, like adultery, murder, fornication, and so on. (They specifically include pederasty in the list.) There are instructions regarding teachers, prophets, Christian assembly, and so on. Lots of the normal, good stuff. But, since this was written sometime

> prior to 200 AD, I was somewhat surprised at this instruction: “You shall not murder a child by abortion” (Didache, Ch 2).
>
> More are linked here: http://www.priestsforlife.org/magisterium/earlychurchfathers/fatherscover.html
>
> Notice how these early Christian sources conflict with JB’s assertion that there can be pro-abortion Christians. Not just one time, but many, many times. That’s because JB is wrong in his interpretation of the Bible.
>
> Basically, what JB has been doing in his comments is interpreting the Bible against the grid of modern non-Christian ideologies and completely disregarding the interpretations of the text by the people who were closer to the original events. Bible-believing Christians get the meanings of the words from the people who were closest to them, whereas JB is trying to project modern immorality back into the ancient text for his own purposes.

Note: I do get annoyed with people who claim to be Christians but aren’t, so I wasn’t at my best there.

But just like Dr. Craig, I am appealing to the people nearest the events to see how the Bible was interpreted at the time. Of course I had all the time in the world for my reply, and Dr. Craig had to have his ready in a split-second. Still Dr. Craig could not have answered this challenger, because he was busy in Australia doing debates with Lawrence Krauss in several big Australian cities. He couldn’t be here to answer this person’s questions. I hope my answers were as good, but it was left to me and two other commenters WorldGoneCrazy and Doug to answer JB. There was no one else to do the job.

J. Warner Wallace recently wrote a post about what it takes to be a Christian apologist.

He had 3 points:

> **Accept Your Identification**
> Peter tells us in 1 Peter 3:15 that *all* of us have a duty to be ever-ready to make the case for our hope in Jesus. This isn’t an option reserved for a few well-trained professionals; all of us, regardless of position or vocation, are tasked with this honor. As I wrote in *Cold Case Christianity*, when we, as Christians, live without embracing this aspect of our identity, we are living an *abbreviated* Christian life. The sooner you accept this aspect of your Christian character and identify yourself as an apologist, the more likely you are going to take it seriously. Start calling yourself a Christian Case Maker (“apologist”) today.
>
> **Accept Your Obligation**
> Although every Christian is called to be a Case Maker, some are definitely better than others. Once you begin to identify yourself in this way, you’ll sense your own inadequacies as you engage others. As a result, you’ll likely begin to train yourself (formally or informally) to meet the challenge. You may find yourself in a certification or advanced education program, but you may not. Some of the best

> and most effective apologists are not formally trained in apologetics. The two best-selling apologetics authors in America, Josh McDowell and Lee Strobel, have no formal training in the area of apologetics or philosophy. It's clear, however, that both of these men take their obligation as Christian Case Makers seriously and have studied their worldview and practiced their craft.
>
> **Accept Your Location**
> While many of us would love to leave our "day jobs" to work as vocational apologists, let me encourage you to stay wherever God has already placed you. I am a "one dollar apologist"; a Christian Case Maker who still derives 90% of my income from my career as a detective. I have always equated my life as a Christian with my life as a Christian Case Maker. For this reason, I could no more call myself a vocational Christian apologist than I could call myself a vocational Christian. God has given me this set of investigative skills so I can share them with others, and He's placed me in this career, at this time and place, as part of the larger Christian family.

I don't think anyone sees the battlefield as well as J. Warner Wallace does. And he is tolling the bell for you in that post.

Were you in?

I remember vividly a story in the past when walking down the corridor of my apartment building with my laundry hamper full of dried clothes. I was being stopped by a U.S. Marine who asked me about the U.S. Marine hoodie I was wearing. He asked me a question I will never forget. He said "were you in?". I said that no, I was not in, because I was trained as a software engineer at the undergraduate and graduate level and that it was my day job to write code. (In fact, I am going to be working all day Saturday and Sunday with JQuery, JSP, CXF, JAXB, JSON, JPA/Hibernate and other technologies to get my REST web services complete for Monday morning stand-up). But I told him then that as part of learning about America, which all Americans should do, that I had been reading the U.S. Marine Corps reading list and that I bought this hoodie to show my support for the Marines. I think he was hoping that I was a former marine. The motto of the USMC is

“Semper fidelis” which means “always faithful”. And that’s exactly what God expects from us, according to 1 Corinthians 1:1-5.

Were you in?

After action reports from William Lane Craig vs Lawrence Krauss debate in Sydney

August 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The first one is from blogger Stephen of ChristianFaith.com. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Excerpt:

> William Lane Craig (WLC) attempted to deal with the main topic along classic logic paradigms (too much in my view), but Krauss (at times) was simply spoiling the dialogue with constant interruptions and diversions. In other words, he chose not to fight fair and intentionally landed some low blows.
>
> […]After that he gave us a useful dumbed-down materialist version of how the universe came into existence from 'nothing' and attacked Craig's model for a transcendent beginning to the universe(s). An odd analogy (a reference to homosexuality) was used to counter Craig's Kalaam cosmological argument but his 15 minutes were, overall, engaging, well-paced and entertaining. His personal style of humour was critical to his presentation as he freely admits that scientists within his own discipline of physics are often regarded as 'obnoxious' (his word, not mine).
>
> In short, Krauss was confident, engaging, cocky and unconvincing re: the actual topic – *'Why is there something rather than nothing?'*
>
> Craig's 15 minutes were a direct contrast to Krauss's.
>
> Craig relied on his written notes far more heavily than the free flowing style of Krauss and he presented his views on the topic with intense logic and refined public speaking skills. His constant reference to the Leibnizian cosmological argument firmly imprinted in my mind that Craig was firmly committed to the central topic and he did his expert best to convince us of it. For example, Krauss's various concepts of 'nothing' has been the subject to much derision by some (not just theists) and Craig deliberately exposed Krauss's inconsistencies by quoting Krauss himself! For example:
>
> - "There are a variety of forms of nothing, they all have various definitions."
> - "The laws of quantum mechanics tells us that nothing is unstable."
> - "Nothing weighs something."
> - "Nothing is almost everything."
>
> And this is where Krauss's biggest problem lay. It's his definition, ultimately, of 'nothing'. Craig exposed the issue in just one slide and even Krauss looked uncomfortable in his chair as the quotes above were read out.
>
> Which brings me to the next point, which for some of you will seem quite trivial.
>
> I was seated close to the stage and had a great view of Krauss the man. I

> watched him closely as Craig presented his views and was very disappointed to see some of his reactions that I would describe as just plain rude. Without a buzzer this time, Krauss was constantly either rolling his eyes in disapproval at some of Craig's statements or even raising his hands at times to publicly announce his disapproval.
>
> Why do this? One can only interpret this as arrogance and rudeness. I could not imagine Craig himself or Ravi Zacharias or John Lennox adopting these negative (look-at-me-folks) non-verbal gestures.

Stephen then links to a reaction to the debate from physicist Luke Barnes, whose preview of the debate I blogged about before.

The review is in a comment by Dr. Barnes:

> It went alright, I think. A little too much interruption, and some red-herrings from the moderator, but reasonably civil and on-topic.
>
> The most interesting bit came when Craig was trying to justify premise 2 of his argument:
>
> "If the universe has an explanation, then that explanation is God."
>
> Krauss disputed this premise in the opening speech, saying that it just assumed God did it. Craig's argument for premise 2 went something like this:
>
> A. Definition: the universe is the totality of physical reality. (Call it the multiverse if you like, if there is one.)
> B. Then, if the universe has an explanation, it cannot be in terms of physical things.
> C. Since the universe includes all matter, energy, space and time, the explanation must then be a transcendent, immaterial, spaceless and timeless entity.
> D. The only thing that Craig can think of that can be a cause whilst being immaterial is an unembodied mind.
> E. Thus, if the universe has an explanation, then that explanation is a transcendent, immaterial, spaceless and timeless mind. That being deserves the title "God".
>
> Krauss responded by questioning the definition. He tried to get Craig to say that physical reality was just everything in spacetime, since then he could say that science can talk about spacetime foams and other postulated physical things more fundamental than spacetime. I think, given more time to clarify, Craig would have said that spacetime foam is a physical thing (since it can appear in physical theories) so its part of the universe.
>
> Krauss also responded that D merely states the limit of the human mind, and says nothing about reality. Craig could have responded by asking for an alternative, or rephrased the argument as an inference to the best explanation. I think that "the only hypotheses I can think of" type assumptions are lurking

> behind almost all inferences. (Maybe I can show that from Bayes theorem. I'll have a think about that.).
>
> This was the most relevant bit of the debate, but then things got sidetracked (I think because of the moderator).

I replied to Dr. Barnes on his blog like this:

> I think that Dr. Craig is leaving it to his opponent to present and defend alternatives to his views. It's not his job in the time he has to present alternatives and refute. That's the job of his opponent. Dr. Peter Millican did a good job of doing that in his debate with Dr. Craig, and Dr. Craig had to defend and refute the alternatives that Dr. Millican presented.
>
> Thanks for your comments, Dr. Barnes. I linked to your preview and to this review of the debate as well.

Not sure if I want to spend the time summarizing these debates. It's a joy to summarize a debate with Austin Dacey, or Walter Sinnott-Armstrong or Peter Millican, but Dr. Krauss is not in that class of debaters. But I think these debates are useful to show the fundamental unattractiveness of atheism as a worldview. I don't want to be anti-reality like Dr. Krauss – always taking refuge in speculations and hiding from scientific evidence in order to keep up the delusion for as long as possible.

RNC threatens to cancel 2016 primary debates on pro-Democrat CNN

August 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Hill (left-leaning) reports.

Excerpt:

> The Republican National Committee (RNC) voted unanimously Friday to pull the group's partnership with NBC and CNN for the 2016 GOP presidential primary debates unless the networks kill their planned films on Hillary Clinton.
>
> "We don't have time for the media's games," RNC Chairman Reince Priebus said before the vote at the RNC summer meeting in Boston. "We're done putting up with this nonsense. There are plenty of other news outlets."
>
> According to the resolution, called "In support of media objectivity and accountability" and obtained by The Hill, the RNC called the planned films "political favoritism" and accused NBC and CNN of airing "programming that amounts to little more than extended commercials promoting former Secretary Clinton."
>
> CNN announced last month it had planned a feature-length film on the life of the former secretary of State and possible Democratic presidential contender. NBC will air a four-hour mini-series starring Diane Lane as Clinton.
>
> Earlier this month, Priebus sent letters to CNN President Jeff Zucker and NBC Chairman Robert Greenblatt warning he'd pull GOP debates from the networks over the films, which he called "a thinly veiled attempt at putting a thumb on the scales of the 2016 presidential election."
>
> The chairman argued that moving ahead with the movie projects was evidence that neither network could be trusted to be fair arbiters in a presidential debate.
>
> […]The RNC is looking to exert more influence over the debate process. In 2011 and 2012, the GOP candidates endured more than 20 debates, which some have said resulted in the party emerging from the primaries weakened by infighting and embarrassing nationally televised incidents.
>
> This week, the *Washington Examiner* reported that the RNC is considering some high-profile conservative media personalities, like Sean Hannity and Rush Limbaugh, as potential debate moderators.
>
> "I actually think that's a very good idea," Priebus said.

The Washington Examiner reports Mark Levin is also being considered, and I think he'd be a much better choice than Limbaugh or Hannity.

Excerpt:

> The move comes as several conservatives are pressuring the party to have Limbaugh, Hannity and Levin ask the debate questions. “It makes a lot of sense. We’d get a huge viewership, they’d make a lot of news and maybe have some fun too,” said one of the advocates of the radio trio hosting debates.
>
> The idea took on life when RNC Communications Director Sean Spicer was asked about debate hosting during a Sirius XM radio interview last week. “Mark Levin should ask the questions,” Spicer said, according to Breitbart news. That way, he said, grassroots conservatives would have a debate questioner who thinks like them.
>
> Party boss Reince Priebus earlier this month also told conservative radio’s fast-rising star Andrea Tantaros that he would be open to a talk radio debate including her, Hannity and Levin. “I actually think that’s a very good idea,” Priebus said on the Andrea Tantaros Show. “I mean, there’s a lot of good people out there that can actually understand the base of the Republican Party, the primary voters.”
>
> Potential candidates, however, might have a problem with the developing plan. New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, for example, is a target of Levin, who this week told Fox that he will urge voters to reject the moderate Republican. “I will do everything I can, in my little way, to make sure he is not the nominee,” Levin told Neil Cavuto.

I agree with Levin on Christie. Christie helped Obama get elected in 2012.

What do you think? Would you rather have Mark Levin than Candy Crowley as a debate moderator? I think that CNN is basically an extension of the Democrat Party, and the academic studies on media bias bear that out. The GOP should stay as far away from CNN as possible during the 2016 election.

Former soldiers arrested by UK police for defending their business from burglar

August 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So this news story from the UK Daily Mail should come as no surprise to anyone who reads British writers like Theodore Dalrymple or James Hannan or Peter Hitchens.

Excerpt:

> Two men were dragged to court for apprehending a Romanian they caught burgling their business.
>
> A nine-month ordeal ended for Steven Iliffe, 54, and son Daniel, 26, yesterday when a judge threw out the case against them.
>
> They had begged police to go on a roof to arrest career criminal Petre Ilie.
>
> But officers were barred by their superiors, via their radio, due to health and safety rules.
>
> Eventually, the father and son, both former soldiers, went on the roof themselves to tackle the armed man.
>
> They were stunned when the police later arrested them on suspicion of attempted murder – and later charged them with the lesser offence of causing grievous bodily harm with intent.
>
> Yesterday, the pair said they were considering legal action against Leicestershire Police.
>
> Mr Iliffe senior said he had suffered a heart attack in a cell triggered by the stress of his arrest at their scrap metal business in Hinckley, Leicestershire, last December.
>
> He added: 'We had suffered a string of burglaries and went up onto that roof only because the police had refused to do so.'

The criminal is in the country illegally, too:

> Leicester Crown Court was told yesterday that Ilie, 39, already had 'a number of convictions for burglary, failing to surrender and breaching court orders' in the UK under the name Christopher Tudor.
>
> In 2010 he was deported but sneaked back into the UK.
>
> He was then arrested again alongside the Iliffes.

I hope that the United States doesn't ever get to the point where the government prevents law-abiding citizens from defending themselves from criminals. The UK is a very liberal country, so they are very much into the idea that evil is good, and good is evil, so that everyone is "equal" and liberals can feel compassionate.

I know that formerly liberal countries like Canada have been pushing back hard against

crime, with measures like abolishing the long gun registry, a tough “omnibus” crime bill, and renewed protections for self-defense. I guess that’s why their crime rates are at a 40-year low. Canada is serious about stopping crime. They do what works, and then they get the results that they expect to get.

William Lane Craig Alex Rosenberg debate: Does God Exist? Video, MP3 audio and summary

August 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below, please find my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

Brian Auten has posted the MP3 audio of the debate at Apologetics 315. J.W. Wartick has a review of the debate here. Tom Gilson has a review of the debate here. Here's another review of the debate from Carson Witnauer.

The debaters

William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.
>
> Craig's CV is here.
>
> Craig's list of publications is here.

Alex Rosenberg:

> I joined the Duke faculty in 2000. Previously I was professor of philosophy at Dalhouse University in Canada, Syracuse University, University of California, Riverside and at the University of Georgia, in the US. I have also been a visiting professor and/or fellow of the Center for Philosophy of Science at the University of Minnesota, as well as the University of California, Santa Cruz, Oxford University (Balliol College) and the Research School of Social Science of the Australian National University. Here at Duke, I am co-director of the Center for Philosophy of

> Biology, along with Robert Brandon, Dan McShea and Fred Nijhout.
>
> In addition I am the director of the AB Duke Scholarship Program and its associated summer Duke in Oxford Program at New College. Along with Professor Martha Reeves of the Sociology Department I co-direct Duke's summer program on Globalization in Geneva. Check the links below for more information on these programs.
>
> My interests focus on problems in metaphysics, mainly surrounding causality, the philosophy of social sciences, especially economics, and most of all, the philosophy of biology, in particular the relationship between molecular, functional and evolutionary biology.

Below is the summary from tonight (February 1st, 2013).

If you like the summary below, please friend me on Facebook and/or follow me on Twitter.

Summary of the debate

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates

- You didn’t need to come out on this cold night
- Craig’s arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn’t listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don’t require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that “every effect requires a cause”
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can’t see
- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism

6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said.

Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can’t God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus’ burial isn’t historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig’s concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg’s concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig’s arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don’t look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Thirteen cases where the Obama administration has acted outside the law

August 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the most popular article on Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

1. Aug. 14, 2013: The Obama administration delayed the provision in ObamaCare to cap out-of-pocket health care costs, picking and choosing parts of the law to enforce, which is to exceed its authority.
2. July 17, 2013: The 4th Circuit Court of Appeals joined the federal appeals courts in D.C. and Philadelphia in ruling President Obama's National Labor Relations Board recess appointments — who by law must be approved by Congress — were unconstitutional. Thus far, the president has ignored the ruling.
3. July 1, 2013: The Obama administration unilaterally decided to delay the employer mandate provision of ObamaCare for a year, which is to provide information to the feds about the extent of an applicant's insurance. Never mind that the law states the mandate must go into effect on Jan. 1, 2014 — they are now relying on the "honor system" from applicants to determine if they are qualified for subsidies.
4. June 25, 2013: The Supreme Court ruled in Shelby County v. Eric Holder that Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act is "unconstitutional" and that "the formula can no longer be used as a basis for subjecting jurisdiction to preclearance." Instead of complying with the ruling, Holder filed suit to order Texas to submit to preclearance, in defiance of Congress' authority to legislate and the Supreme Court's authority to rule on the constitutionality of the law.
5. June 15, 2012: The Obama administration announced it will stop deporting illegal immigrants under the age of 30 in a "deferred action" policy to circumvent immigration laws. This comes after Congress rejected a similar measure about a year ago. Since then, more than 500,000 illegals have received the deferment and only 20,000 have been rejected. As for the law-abiding applicants who have been waiting in line, well, that's Obama's idea of "lawfulness."
6. May 20, 2013: A Washington Post article revealed that Fox News reporter James Rosen was investigated by the DOJ, which subpoenaed his phone records and emails in direct contravention of the First Amendment under the pretense of a leak investigation.
7. May 13, 2013: AP reported the DOJ secretly collected phone records of AP reporters and editors, a move completely outside the realm of law. Even the AP — which up until then had been pretty submissive to the Obama agenda — was appalled by the breach.
8. May 10, 2013: The IRS revealed it targeted conservative groups applying for tax-exempt status beginning in March 2010, a direct targeting of political opponents

through the tax laws. It's one of the crimes that led Congress to impeach President Nixon.

9. May 3, 2011: When asked when he first heard of Operation Fast and Furious, Attorney General Eric Holder falsely testified, "I'm not sure of the exact date, but I probably heard about Fast and Furious for the first time over the last few weeks." Head of the National Drug Intelligence Center Michael Walther told Holder about Fast and Furious in a July 2010 memo. Subsequent revelations showed he knew all along.
10. March 27, 2012: EPA issued final rules regulating greenhouse gas emissions on electric utilities that require power plants to use nonexisting carbon capture-and-control technology to meet new emission standards, in defiance of the Congress' rejection of cap-and-trade legislation.
11. April 23, 2012: The administration postponed Medicare Advantage cuts by calling them a "demonstration project" and used funds not approved by Congress to delay effects of those cuts before the election.
12. March 1, 2011: Attorney General Holder lied to Congress, saying "decisions made in the New Black Panther Party case were made by career attorneys in the department." Associate A.G. Thomas Perrelli, an Obama political appointee, overruled a unanimous recommendation for prosecution by DOJ attorneys.
13. Feb. 3, 2010: Judge Martin Feldman held the Obama administration in contempt for re-imposing an offshore drilling moratorium that was struck down by the courts.

Thomas Sowell talks about the political left in his books "The Vision of the Anointed" and "A Conflict of Visions". He presents the view that the left believes that they are the "anointed". They are morally superior, and therefore they do not have to care about the rule of law or consequences or the criticisms of the opposition, when they are implementing their policies. When the policies fail, they never blame themselves, they just go outside the law even more. You can see this in socialist regimes in other times and places. It can never be the case that the schemes of the anointed are wrong-headed. The solution is always to act more and more lawlessly, and to silence, coerce and purge all opposition until the policies work.

Mainstream media silent as Muslim Brotherhood targets Christians in Egypt

August 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily reports.

Excerpt:

> Christians in Egypt are again the target of Islamist Muslim Brotherhood supporters using the new violence as a cover for ongoing persecution. If Christians were burning mosques, the world would be outraged.
>
> Amid the raging violence in Egypt, a less-publicized war is being waged against Egypt's long-persecuted Coptic Christians, this time using the excuse that they were somehow involved in the military's ouster of the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsi from power.
>
> Coptic Christians comprise up to 10% of Egypt's 84 million people.
>
> Ishaq Ibrahim from the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights group has documented as many as 39 incidents of violence against churches, monasteries, Coptic schools and shops in different parts of the country within the past few days. They include Thursday's torching of the Prince Tadros Church in the province of Fayoum, where three similar attacks occurred on other churches the day before.
>
> Islamists firebombed the Mar Gergiss Church in Sohag, a city with a large community of Coptic Christians, burning it to the ground. Islamists previously raised an al-Qaida flag over the church.
>
> Another two places of worship, the Churches of Abraham and the Virgin Mary, were attacked in El-Menia province, leaving them partially damaged by fire. St. Theresa Church in Assiut in Upper Egypt was also burned.
>
> […]In a terrorist attack one minute after midnight on Jan. 1, 2011, 21 Christians attending a New Year's mass were killed, and 97 people, mostly Christians, were injured as worshipers were leaving a New Year's mass at the Saints Church in Alexandria.
>
> On April 7, two Copts were killed and 84 injured by a mob using guns, wielding machetes, throwing stones and possibly hurling Molotov cocktails at mourners exiting St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Cairo. The worshippers were mourning the deaths of four Copts in an April 4 attack in Khossus in which a nursery and church were burned.
>
> An investigation into the October 2011 attack on Coptic Christians in Cairo's Maspero district, leaving 30 dead and more than 500 wounded, was shut down by the Morsi regime. In the Egypt of the Muslim Brotherhood, Christian lives mean little.

> As the administration quibbles over the definition of a “coup” regarding Egypt’s military aid, we are reminded the U.S. and NATO went to war over the “ethnic cleansing” of Muslims in Bosnia. What will be our response to the ethnic cleansing of 10% of Egypt’s population?

One of the troubling things that I’ve noticed with younger evangelicals and libertarians is that they don’t understand that wars start when bad people believe that they can behave aggressively and no one will stop them. Being nice doesn’t work on bad people, it just makes them act that more more aggressively.

Here’s an article from Townhall by famous economist Thomas Sowell, in which he explains how tyrants respond to weak foreign policy.

Excerpt:

> On the international scene, trying to assuage aggressors’ feelings and look at the world from their point of view has had an even more catastrophic track record. A typical sample of this kind of thinking can be found in a speech to the British Parliament by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in 1938: “It has always seemed to me that in dealing with foreign countries we do not give ourselves a chance of success unless we try to understand their mentality, which is not always the same as our own, and it really is astonishing to contemplate how the identically same facts are regarded from two different angles.”
>
> Like our former ambassador from the Carter era, Chamberlain sought to “remove the causes of strife or war.” He wanted “a general settlement of the grievances of the world without war.” In other words, the British prime minister approached Hitler with the attitude of someone negotiating a labor contract, where each side gives a little and everything gets worked out in the end. What Chamberlain did not understand was that all his concessions simply led to new demands from Hitler — and contempt for him by Hitler.
>
> What Winston Churchill understood at the time, and Chamberlain did not, was that Hitler was driven by what Churchill called “currents of hatred so intense as to sear the souls of those who swim upon them.” That was also what drove the men who drove the planes into the World Trade Center.
>
> Pacifists of the 20th century had a lot of blood on their hands for weakening the Western democracies in the face of rising belligerence and military might in aggressor nations like Nazi Germany and imperial Japan. In Britain during the 1930s, Labor Party members of Parliament voted repeatedly against military spending, while Hitler built up the most powerful military machine in Europe. Students at leading British universities signed pledges to refuse to fight in the event of war.
>
> All of this encouraged the Nazis and the Japanese toward war against countries that they knew had greater military potential than their own. Military potential only counts when there is the will to develop it and use it, and the fortitude to

> continue with a bloody war when it comes. This is what they did not believe the West had. And it was Western pacifists who led them to that belief.
>
> Then as now, pacifism was a “statement” about one’s ideals that paid little attention to actual consequences. At a Labor Party rally where Britain was being urged to disarm “as an example to others,” economist Roy Harrod asked one of the pacifists: “You think our example will cause Hitler and Mussolini to disarm?”
>
> The reply was: “Oh, Roy, have you lost all your idealism?” In other words, the issue was about making a “statement” — that is, posturing on the edge of a volcano, with World War II threatening to erupt at any time. When disarmament advocate George Bernard Shaw was asked what Britons should do if the Nazis crossed the channel into Britain, the playwright replied, “Welcome them as tourists.”

Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher called this view “peace through strength”. There is only one reason why evil people do not attack – because they think that good people have the firepower tomake them pay dearly for their aggression, and – and this is very important – the will to use it.

The important thing to realize is that without a powerful military, there is nothing that we can do when the Muslim Brotherhood goes after Coptic Christians in Egypt. Happy talk isn’t going to solve anything. To deter aggression, you need to have a credible threat of military force deployed in the region. Even if you don’t go to war, the other guy has to believe that you can and that you will. That’s what stops bad people from being aggressive. What Benghzi showed the Islamists is that they could do anything they wanted, and no one is going to stop them. That’s why Christians are dying by the bushel in Egypt today.

William Lane Craig answers challenges to Christianity in Australia

August 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video: (34 minutes)

Questions:

- How do you reconcile a good God with animal death before the Fall?
- If Paul never even met Jesus, then why should we care about his opinion of homosexuality?
- In the parable of the prodigal son, the prodigal got forgiveness without any atoning death – so why did Jesus have to die an atoning death?
- If Herod could believe that John the Baptist rose from the dead without evidence, couldn't the other disciples have believed in Jesus' resurrection without evidence?
- If Jesus is God, then was God dead for 3 days in the grave?
- Was it justified when God commanded the Israelites to conquer Canaan?
- How can you reconcile the failure of Christians to live according to what they proclaim, especially when God is supposedly santifying them?
- If a person already has a happy life they like, then why should they give that up to believe in Christianity?
- Re: cosmological argument, did the physical laws come into being? Doesn't quantum mechanics show that things can come into being out of nothing without a cause?
- If Jesus' resurrection body is physical, then does that mean that Heaven is a physical place?
- Should people spend time thinking about ultimate questions? What if they don't feel that ultimate questions are important?

These challenges from Australians are not the same as the ones I hear in North America, so it's good to hear how Dr. Craig responds to these questions.

New study from the Federal Reserve finds that QE stimulus doesn't grow the economy

August 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily reports on our incompetent government's policies.

Excerpt:

> For four years now, we've heard policymakers and pundits alike defend the Federal Reserve's quantitative easing based on the idea that, without it, the nation's economy would have imploded.
>
> Now, a new study from the Fed itself suggests that's not the case.
>
> The study, by San Francisco Federal Reserve economist Vasco Curdia and New York Fed economist Andrea Ferrero, suggests that quantitative easing (QE) has done little to boost the economy's trajectory.
>
> "Asset purchase programs like QE2 appear to have, at best, moderate effects on economic growth and inflation," the economists wrote in a special research note that was released last week.
>
> In their study, Curdia and Ferrero looked specifically at the impact of the Fed's QE2 program, which totaled $600 billion.
>
> Assuming the $600 billion program lasts for five years — with the Fed buying bonds the first year, holding them for two, then selling them off for the remaining two — the spending turns out largely to have been a waste.
>
> That level of QE stimulus, even when coupled with the Fed's promise to hold interest rates at zero, likely boosted GDP by a mere 0.13 percentage point, the study found. It added just 0.03 percentage point to inflation.
>
> Bottom line: $600 billion in QE2 spending boosted GDP by less than $200 billion.
>
> […]And even that minor amount of growth was due in large part to the Fed's explicit vow to hold official interest rates at close to 0% until the unemployment rate reaches 6.5% or lower, Curdia and Ferrero said.
>
> Take away that promise, and QE2 added just 0.04 percentage point to GDP and 0.02 percentage point to inflation.

What caused it?

> With $17 trillion in total U.S. debt — an amount that's now growing at a rate of $1 trillion a year — the authors argue that the Fed is essentially trapped into printing money through QE.
>
> If QE — which now pushes $85 billion a month into U.S. Treasury and agency debt — stops, interest rates will soar, dragging the economy down.
>
> Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke has been sanguine about this, suggesting this

> enormous pile of debt can all be sold off with little disruption.
>
> We’re not so sure. Once the Fed begins selling off its massive $3.6 trillion in assets acquired under the QE program (see chart), it will send interest rates surging and tank the economy.
>
> Even more troubling is what it says about current politics.
>
> The White House and a Democrat-led Senate have boosted spending dramatically — outlays as a share of GDP rose initially by 25% under President Obama
>
> The Fed, by buying up much of the newly issued federal debt, has become the No. 1 enabler of a spendthrift government that’s pushing us to the brink of fiscal disaster.
>
> At $85 billion a month, QE2 spending is roughly equal to the amount of federal debt we add each month.

We elected a Keynesian who thought that government could create economic growth (jobs!) by *borrowing money and printing money*. The countries of the world largely cheered our decision to elect him. He failed to grow the economy and he failed to create jobs. Eventually, the money he’s been spending to keep a sinking ship afloat is going to run out.

Christina Hoff Sommers: school has become hostile to boys

August 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christina Hoff Sommers

In the leftist Time magazine, of all places.

Excerpt:

> As school begins in the coming weeks, parents of boys should ask themselves a question: Is my son really welcome? A flurry of incidents last spring suggests that the answer is no. In May, Christopher Marshall, age 7, was suspended from his Virginia school for picking up a pencil and using it to "shoot" a "bad guy" — his friend, who was also suspended. A few months earlier, Josh Welch, also 7, was sent home from his Maryland school for nibbling off the corners of a strawberry Pop-Tart to shape it into a gun. At about the same time, Colorado's Alex Evans, age 7, was suspended for throwing an imaginary hand grenade at "bad guys" in order to "save the world."
>
> In all these cases, school officials found the children to be in violation of the school's zero-tolerance policies for firearms, which is clearly a ludicrous application of the rule. But common sense isn't the only thing at stake here. In the name of zero tolerance, our schools are becoming hostile environments for young boys.
>
> […]Boys are nearly five times more likely to be expelled from preschool than girls. In grades K-12, boys account for nearly 70% of suspensions, often for minor acts of insubordination and defiance. In the cases of Christopher, Josh and Alex, there was no insubordination or defiance whatsoever. They were guilty of nothing more than being typical 7-year-old boys. But in today's school environment, that

> can be a punishable offense.
>
> […][M]illions of boys *are* struggling academically. A large and growing male cohort is falling behind in grades and disengaged from school. College has never been more important to a young person's life prospects, and today boys are far less likely than girls to pursue education beyond high school. As our schools become more risk averse, the gender gap favoring girls is threatening to become a chasm.
>
> […]Across the country, schools are policing and punishing the distinctive, assertive sociability of boys. Many much-loved games have vanished from school playgrounds. At some schools, tug of war has been replaced with "tug of peace." Since the 1990s, elimination games like dodgeball, red rover and tag have been under a cloud — too damaging to self-esteem and too violent, say certain experts. Young boys, with few exceptions, love action narratives. These usually involve heroes, bad guys, rescues and shoot-ups. As boys' play proceeds, plots become more elaborate and the boys more transfixed. When researchers ask boys why they do it, the standard reply is, "Because it's fun."
>
> According to at least one study, such play rarely escalates into real aggression — only about 1% of the time. But when two researchers, Mary Ellin Logue and Hattie Harvey, surveyed classroom practices of 98 teachers of 4-year-olds, they found that this style of play was the least tolerated. Nearly half of teachers stopped or redirected boys' dramatic play *daily* or *several times* a week — whereas less than a third reported stopping or redirecting girls' dramatic play weekly.
>
> Play is a critical basis for learning. And boys' heroic play is no exception. Logue and Harvey found that "bad guy" play improved children's conversation and imaginative writing. Such play, say the authors, also builds moral imagination, social competence and imparts critical lessons about personal limits and self-restraint. Logue and Harvey worry that the growing intolerance for boys' action-narrative–play choices may be undermining their early language development and weakening their attachment to school. Imagine the harm done to boys like Christopher, Josh and Alex who are not merely discouraged from their choice of play, but are punished, publicly shamed and ostracized.

So what's the problem? Well, here's some data to help us fix the problem.

Excerpt:

> A lack of male role models at home and school is turning boys off reading at a young age as they increasingly reject books as "feminine", it is claimed.
>
> Large numbers of boys are failing to develop a love of reading during primary education because of a shortage of male teachers combined with an anti-book culture among many fathers, an inquiry has found.
>
> Gavin Barwell, chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Literacy, said

> reading was not seen as a “masculine thing” by boys – leaving them lagging behind girls from the age of four onwards.
>
> In many cases, schools failed to equip them with a selection of adventure and action novels by authors such as Enid Blyton, Roald Dahl and J.R.R Tolkien that are significantly more likely to appeal to boys at a young age, he suggested.
>
> It is claimed that a failure to read properly as an infant has a serious impact on standards across the curriculum, with children struggling to grasp the basics in all other major academic subjects.

> According to Government figures, boys are less likely to read basic words or recite the alphabet by the age of five and the gap widens throughout compulsory education.
>
> By the age of 16, fewer than 59 per cent of boys gained a good GCSE in English last year compared with 72.5 per cent of girls.
>
> […]On Monday, the cross-party committee of MPs and peers – along with the National Literacy Trust – will publish the findings of a six-month inquiry into reading failure among boys.
>
> It is expected to make a series of sweeping recommendations designed to get boys interested in books at home and school, including more gender-specific books and the introduction of reading mentors.
>
> Speaking before the launch, Mr Barwell, the Conservative MP for Croydon Central, said boys were currently held back because of a “number of gender stereotypes which seem to kick in early”.
>
> “Dads are much less likely to read with their sons and they are also much less likely than mum to be seen reading themselves, so from a very young age boys will clearly pick up in a home environment that reading is not a masculine thing,” he said.
>
> He added: “The primary school workforce is also very feminised and it is now rare to have more than one male teacher.
>
> “I have boys of my own and when I want to recommend books for them I think of what I read when I was their age; The Hobbit, The Famous Five books or something by Roald Dahl.
>
> “It may well be that schools – with the workforce being all female – are going to struggle to pick up on the stuff that appeals to boys because they’ve not read it themselves.”
>
> The report is likely to conclude that boys are struggling to read in the majority of schools and most have no plan in place to tackle the gender gap.

You can read about a couple more studies here that also argue that the problem is a lack of male teachers in the classroom. The Canadians are already looking into how to solve the problem. But that isn’t likely to happen here. I also wrote previously about a study

showing that female teachers were grading boys more harshly than girls.

So boys aren't reading as well as girls are. You can't do well in school if you can't read. But boys have no interest in reading girly nonsense books. Boys like war, monsters and adventures. But girly nonsense is what female teachers and female administrators and female education bureaucrats pick as classroom texts. So the boys are stuck reading boring books. The only way out of this mess for boys is homeschooling or private schools, which are hard to do since their parents are already paying for these useless, underperforming public schools. And the educational bureaucracy resist any attempts to give parents more choice. Their goal is to maintain their inflated salaries and job security, not to educate boys.

So we need more male teachers in the classroom – why don't we have them? There are many reasons why men are discouraged from becoming teachers. Discrimination, unionization, political correctness, being forced to teach left-wing propaganda to children, etc. Don't look for the performance of boys to improve any time soon unless we get serious at changing education policy to attract more men. Of course, the people in charge have a vested interest in preventing that. They'll just keep blaming boys for underperforming and refuse to solve the real problem.

Percentage of single mothers who have never married 11 times higher than in 1960

August 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation reports.

Excerpt:

> F**orty-four percent of single mothers have never been married. This is 11 times the percent of never-married single mothers in 1960.**
>
> The Pew Research Center reports:
>
> In 1960, of all single mothers, more than eight-in-ten (82%) were divorced, separated or widowed. An additional 14% were married, but their spouses were not living in the household. Only 4% of all single mothers had never been married.
>
> The percent of unwed births also grew dramatically over the same period. Today, over 40 percent of all children are born to single women, compared with less than 10 percent in 1960.
>
> Children raised in single-parent homes are much more likely to live in poverty or struggle with other problems that take a toll on their ability to thrive.
>
> Of course, other trends such as a high divorce rate—although the divorce rate has declined since its peak in the 1980s—have implications for children's and society's well-being.
>
> Today, less than half (46 percent) of American children who reach age 17 have been raised by their continuously married, biological parents. This is taking a toll. Children do best when raised by their married mother and father. They are at lower risk of engaging in substance abuse, delinquent behavior, and early sexual activity, and they are less likely to drop out of high school or suffer abuse.

Michael Tanner of the Cato Institute explains how welfare provides an incentive to women to have babies without getting married.

Cato Institute economist Dr. Michael Tanner explains:

> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley

> Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on family structure concluded that "providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women."(9)
>
> Of course women do not get pregnant just to get welfare benefits. It is also true that a wide array of other social factors has contributed to the growth in out-of-wedlock births. But, by removing the economic consequences of a out-of-wedlock birth, welfare has removed a major incentive to avoid such pregnancies. A teenager looking around at her friends and neighbors is liable to see several who have given birth out of wedlock. When she sees that they have suffered few visible immediate consequences (the very real consequences of such behavior are often not immediately apparent), she is less inclined to modify her own behavior to prevent pregnancy.
>
> Proof of this can be found in a study by Professor Ellen Freeman of the University of Pennsylvania, who surveyed black, never-pregnant females age 17 or younger. Only 40% of those surveyed said that they thought becoming pregnant in the next year "would make their situation worse."(10) Likewise, a study by Professor Laurie Schwab Zabin for the Journal of Research on Adolescence found that: "in a sample of inner-city black teens presenting for pregnancy tests, we reported that more than 31 percent of those who elected to carry their pregnancy to term told us, before their pregnancy was diagnosed, that they believed a baby would present a problem…"(11) In other words, 69 percent either did not believe having a baby out-of-wedlock would present a problem or were unsure.
>
> Until teenage girls, particularly those living in relative poverty, can be made to see real consequences from pregnancy, it will be impossible to gain control over the problem of out-of- wedlock births. By disguising those consequences, welfare makes it easier for these girls to make the decisions that will lead to unwed motherhood.
>
> Current welfare policies seem to be designed with an appallingly lack of concern for their impact on out-of-wedlock births. Indeed, Medicaid programs in 11 states actually provide infertility treatments to single women on welfare.(12)
>
> I should also point out that, once the child is born, welfare also appears to discourage the mother from marrying in the future. Research by Robert Hutchins of Cornell University shows that a 10 percent increase in AFDC benefits leads to an eight percent decrease in the marriage rate of single mothers.(13)

What is this story about welfare and single mothers doing in the 6 PM "Christian apologetics" time slot?

Well, it turns out that without a father in the home, children are far more likely to lose

their faith.

Here is some statistical evidence that should have Christians everywhere concerned.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the

> determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Here's an interesting post about a new book by Mary Eberstadt which makes the same point with even more data.

Excerpt:

> The French Revolution gave the West the first self-consciously secular government at the end of the 1700s, and one of its first revolutionary acts was to liberalize its marriage laws. But what people may not realize, was that France was the first country in Europe to experience a decline in fertility rates within marriage, and an increase in cohabitation and illegitimacy, decades *before* the French Revolution. In the early 1700s, over a half century before the Revolution, illegitimacy was only at 1%, but by the storming of the Bastille, which ushered in the Revolution, France's illegitimacy rate had climbed to 20% overall, with a 30% rate in the boiling pot of Paris. The French Revolution's successful attack on Christianity, and the consequent secularization of France, was, in part, the result of the prior erosion of the family.
>
> We see the same pattern in the UK, argues Eberstadt. "In Britain…the decline in births started a century later [than in France] at the very height of Victorian England,…Bit by bit…the same family trends already established in France—fewer births, more divorces, more out-of-wedlock births—also began reshaping the world of Britain. By our own time, over half of all children in Britain are born to unmarried people, and the fertility rate stands at 1.91 children per woman." Not surprisingly, Britain's churches are, like those of France, largely empty.
>
> In the Scandinavian countries, like Sweden, where marriage rates are lowest, and divorce, cohabitation, and single-family households, and out-of-wedlock births are the highest, we find the greatest degree of secularization.
>
> The obvious lesson we must draw, says Eberstadt, is "Vibrant families and vibrant religion go hand in hand."

I get annoyed when I hear people talk about how they are socially conservative, but not fiscally conservative. If you are socially conservative, and you believe in faith, marriage and family, then you need to think about what policies do to encourage people to either get married or not get married. Single mother welfare is nothing more than paying people to have children before they are married. Not only is it bad for them to be dependent on government, but that money has to come from somewhere else – probably from some hard-working man who is now taxed so much that his wife has to go to work to make ends meet, weakening the family and potentially exposing the child to more unfiltered influence from secular schools and secular culture. Think about fiscal policy, because it matters.

Judge bars prosecution from introducing evidence of Nidal Hasan's jihadi motives

August 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From ABC News.

Excerpt:

> Lawyers representing the family members of those killed and injured in the Ft. Hood shooting rampage were outraged today when an Army judge limited prosecutors from introducing evidence, including emails to a known Al Qaeda operative, that would establish accused shooter Maj. Nidal Hasan's "jihadi" motives.
>
> The judge's rulings could inhibit the ability of the victims' families to claim in a civil suit that the shootings were an act of terror. Federal lawyers involved in the civil suit claim that the people shot during Hasan's murderous rage were victims of workplace violence, a designation that could sharply limit the damages in a civil suit.
>
> "This is first degree mass murder case and motive is absolutely relevant to prove premeditation," said Neal Sher, a lawyer representing many of the victims and their family members in a separate civil suit against the government.
>
> Prosecutors have sought to portray Hasan as a Muslim extremist, motivated by Islamist ideology and in touch with known al Qaeda member Anwar Alwaki.
>
> "He didn't want to deploy and he came to believe he had a jihad duty to murder soldiers," lead prosecutor Col. Steve Henricks said in his opening statements. He wanted to "kill as many soldiers as he could."
>
> The judge, Col. Tara Osborn, ruled today that prosecutors could not mention Hasan's correspondence with Alwaki, an American born al Qaeda recruiter and organizer. Osborn also barred prosecutors from mentioning Hassan's interest in seeking conscientious objector status and drawing parallels to a 2003 incident in which another Muslim American soldier attacked U.S. troops in Kuwait, according to the Associated Press.
>
> […]Many of the victims and their family members have filed a civil suit against the government, arguing that the attack should be classified as a terrorist attack, allowing victims to receive combat medals, like the Purple Heart, and receive better benefits.
>
> The government maintains that the attack was an incidence of "workplace violence."

Wow. Maybe this explains why our foreign policy has basically set the entire Middle East on fire. If we can't identify radical Islam as a threat, then what hope do we have of

winning a war against them?

Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws

August 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> Abortion are on the decline in Wisconsin and they are poised to drop further thanks to new pro-life laws signed by Governor Scott Walker. Abortions dropped 7.4 percent in Wisconsin in the prior report.
>
> Last year, Walker added to his pro-life list of accomplishments today by signing bills the pro-life movement supported, including measures to stop abortion funding in Obamacare and webcam abortions.
>
> Wisconsin Right to Life officials told LifeNews Wisconsin abortions have decreased 68% from their all-time high in 1980 and 60% since Wisconsin began requiring abortion reporting in 1987.
>
> […]According to an AP report, abortions declined 4.4 percent from 2011-2012:
>
> The Department of Health Services reported Monday that there were 6,927 abortions in 2012. That is down from 7,249 in 2011 for a drop of 4.4 percent.
>
> It marks the third year in a row that abortions have gone down. Prior to an increase between 2008 and 2009, abortions had dropped for five straight years.
>
> The rate of women aged 15-44 who had an abortion in 2012 was 6.1 per 1,000, down from 6.3 per 1,000 the year before. That is well below the national rate of 15.1 per 1,000 as of the most recent data available from 2009.
>
> State law requires any facility that provides abortions to report statistics to the state.
>
> In July, Walker signed Senate Bill 206 (Sonya's Law) into law. This important new law requires that women seeking abortions in Wisconsin be given the opportunity

> to see their unborn children through ultrasound.
>
> Just hours before Walker signed the law, the Planned Parenthood abortion business announced it would file a lawsuit seeking to stop women from seeing these ultrasounds.
>
> […]After Walker signed the bill, the Planned Parenthood abortion business shut down one clinic in Appleton and another facility end abortions at another center in Green Bay.

But he's not just a social conservative, but a fiscal conservative, too.

Excerpt:

> Wisconsin is living proof that elections have consequences. The last 10 years of public policy in the state proves this, providing a sharp contrast between Republicans and Democrats and highlighting the positive results of Republican leadership.
>
> The previous Governor left Wisconsin with a $3.6 billion budget deficit and a bleak economic outlook. In fact, during Governor Jim Doyle's last term, Wisconsin lost over 133,000 jobs, and only 10% of employers thought our state was headed in the right direction.
>
> At the polls in 2010, Wisconsinites elected Scott Walker and Republican majorities in the Assembly and Senate. Since taking office, Republicans have turned things around. Unlike the Democrats, who in 2009 were debating over $3 billion in tax hikes, State Republicans have been cutting taxes and eliminating regulations to foster a pro-growth environment in Wisconsin. In fact, the current budget provides nearly $1 billion in tax relief for hard-working middle class families.
>
> In a stunning reversal of Doyle-era job loss, Wisconsin created over 14,000 jobs in June alone. The budget is balanced, and 94% of employers say our state is headed in the right direction. Furthermore, a leading economic indicator from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia just ranked Wisconsin second in the nation in jobs outlook for the next six months.

What if he were to run in 2016? Well, Scott Walker is a favorite of social conservatives, but remember that this is the same Scott Walker who took on the labor unions to limit collective bargaining and he won. His law, which has produced an economic boom in Wisconsin, is still standing. He's showing leadership on social AND fiscal issues. It's not just talk, it's action. I think he should be considered in 2016, along with governors Bobby Jindal (LA), Rick Perry (TX), John Kasich (OH), and Mike Pence (IN).

Related posts

- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election

- Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- What is a "right-to-work" law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues
- Wisconsin Republicans order police to take AWOL Democrats into custody
- Democrat lawmakers flee state to avoid voting on spending cuts

Alexander Pruss answers an objection to mind-body dualism

August 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this post on the Biola University Christian Thought blog. It's by famous philosopher Alexander Pruss. In it, he considers 3 arguments against non-physical souls.

Here is the third objection:

> **The third objection** is based on the Closure Principle: The physical world is explanatorily closed—the explanations of physical states of affairs are always physical in nature. The closure principle would let one be confident that scientists don't need to look for miracles—that explanations of physical events will never go beyond science. If the Closure Principle is true, then no physical event in the brain has an explanation by means of a soul.

And here is his reponse:

> I'm going to argue that the Closure Principle is more likely to be false than true.
>
> My argument has two parts. The first part will be to establish the No Physical Explanation Thesis:
>
> *No Physical Explanation Thesis*: Whether or not the Closure Principle is true, some physical states of affairs have no physical explanations.
>
> The second part will argue that if the above thesis is true, then the Closure Principle is more likely to be false than true.

Sounds to me like he is just talking about the assumption of metaphysical naturalism, which some people accept because of the success of explaining nature using natural explanations. But can you really explain everything with only natural explanations?

Let's see:

> So, first, I need to argue that some physical states of affairs have no physical explanations. A quick argument for this thesis is to consider all of physical reality as a whole. This constitutes a gigantic physical state of affairs. This gigantic physical state of affairs cannot have a physical explanation. For if it had a physical explanation, that physical explanation would be a part of the gigantic physical state of affairs, since that gigantic state contained all of physical reality. But then the explanation, in explaining that gigantic state, would also explain itself, since it itself is a part of the gigantic state. But no physical state of affairs can explain itself—that would be like the absurdity of being one's own parent.
>
> A second (related) argument is that if every physical state of affairs has a physical explanation, we end up with a vicious infinite regress of physical states of affairs. Physical state #1 is explained by physical state #2 (maybe, my

existence is explained by my parents' existence), which then must be explained by physical state #3, and so on. So we have an infinite regress of physical states of affairs. But the regress does not stop there. For the whole infinite regress will be a physical state of affairs, and hence will need an explanation. So we will have another regress, and another, and so on. This is really absurd.

A third argument is that current science gives us good reason to think that physical reality is not infinitely old, that it came into existence some finite amount of time ago, maybe in a Big Bang. If so, then the state of affairs of physical reality *coming into existence* won't have a physical explanation.

These three arguments for the No Physical Explanation Thesis are basically adaptations of the Cosmological Argument for the existence of God, but I am not concluding from them that there is a God—just that something physical has no physical explanation.

So now we've learned that some physical state of affairs has no physical explanation.

Let's give a name to some such physical state of affairs—call it "Blob." Blob, then, has no physical explanation. There are now two possibilities. Either (1) Blob has no explanation at all, or (2) Blob has a non-physical explanation.

If Blob has a non-physical explanation, then the Closure Principle is false, since the Closure Principle said that no physical state of affairs has a non-physical explanation, and here is Blob—a physical state of affairs with a non-physical explanation.

Of the two options, which is more likely? Blob having no explanation at all? Or Blob having a non-physical explanation? I will argue that think the likelier option is the latter—that Blob has a non-physical explanation.

For physical states of affairs are *contingent*—they don't have to be there. Blob, thus, doesn't have to be there. The idea of something contingent having no explanation is like the idea of something coming into existence out of nothing. It is intuitively absurd. Much more absurd than the alternative, namely that it has a non-physical explanation. Maybe it's hard for something physical to happen because of a non-physical cause—but it should be far harder for something physical to happen for no cause at all. If we think that that something contingent could happen for no cause at all, it should be *even easier* for it to happen due to a non-physical cause. So it is more likely that Blob has a non-physical explanation than that it has no explanation at all. But if it has a non-physical explanation, then the Closure Principle is false. So, most likely, the Closure Principle is false.

Moreover, if we admitted that a physical state of affairs, namely Blob, could take place for no reason at all, with no explanation, then it would be a wonder why all sorts of other physical things don't happen for no reason at all. Why doesn't a dog-headed person suddenly pop into existence for no cause at all in front of me? Why doesn't a golden mountain materialize in the middle of the Pacific Ocean out

> of nowhere? I can give a very simple explanation of why all these infinitely many strange things don't happen: *all physical states of affairs have to have explanations*. But this explanation also implies that the Closure Principle is false. For we know that Blob has no physical explanation, and so Blob's explanation must be non-physical.
>
> The Closure Principle was introduced in large part to save science from giving up on physical explanations and looking for supernatural ones. But if we accept the Closure Principle, then we have to say that some physical states of affairs have no explanation at all. And it is much worse to be willing to give up *completely*on a search for explanation than to be willing to give up on a search for *physical* explanation.
>
> We should thus think that most likely the Closure Principle is false, and hence this argument against interaction between the soul and the body fails as much as the previous ones did.

This sounds a lot like William Lane Craig's contingency argument, and I think that it is particularly mean (to the naturalists) to invoke science to smash their naturalism. I certainly accept non-physical causation when it comes to the origin of the universe – nothing too mysterious about that. And I think he's right to say that this shows that it's at least possible, then, that a non-physical entity could effect material things like our bodies. In fact, I've heard J.P. Moreland argue that this is what God actually is – a non-physical mind.

Unionized UPS to drop health insurance for 15,000 spouses because of Obamacare

August 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Washington Times reports. (H/T Letitia)

Excerpt:

> Citing Obamacare, the United Parcel Service plans to remove 15,000 spouses from its health care plan because they are eligible for coverage elsewhere.
>
> Rising medical costs, "combined with the costs associated with the Affordable Care Act, have made it increasingly difficult to continue providing the same level of health care benefits to our employees at an affordable cost," UPS said in a memo to employees, Kaiser Health News reported.
>
> UPS expects the move will save about $60 million a year, company spokesman Andy McGowan said.
>
> The health law requires large employers to cover employees and dependent children, but not spouses or domestic partners, Kaiserreported.
>
> On Tuesday, Forever 21 Inc. became the latest national company to cut employee hours to counter the impact of Obamacare, the Atlanta Business Chronicle reported.

The Heritage Foundation has more on that Forever 21 story.

Excerpt:

> A leaked memo shared last week on social media with the hashtag #Never21 proves the company capped some full-time workers at 29.5 hours a week as of August 18, resulting in a loss of the health coverage and other benefits offered to full-time workers.
>
> Conservatives have warned that the provision under Obamacare defining a full-time worker as one who works 30 hours a week or more incentivizes businesses to drastically cut workers' hours to avoid the heavy financial burden of mandatory insurance requirements under the bill.
>
> Forever 21 joins **several fast food chains** that have cut workers' hours to less than 30 in the past few months, ahead of the provision taking effect.

I've blogged about several of these companies who are having to adjust to Obamacare, but actually, this is not happening to a company here and a company there.

Reuters explains:

> U.S. businesses are hiring at a robust rate. **The only problem is that three out of four of the nearly 1 million hires this year are part-time and many of**

> **the jobs are low-paid.**
>
> Faltering economic growth at home and abroad and concern that President Barack Obama's signature health care law will drive up business costs are behind the wariness about taking on full-time staff, executives at staffing and payroll firms say.
>
> Employers say part-timers offer them flexibility. If the economy picks up, they can quickly offer full-time work. If orders dry up, they know costs are under control. It also helps them to curb costs they might face under the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare.

Now on first glance, it would seem that conservatives should be *happy* because the leftists who voted for Obama are finally getting what they deserve.

However, my conservative deist friend ECM says "not so fast":

> This would be entertaining, but this is a feature, not a bug.
>
> Remember: they passed the present Ocare on the premise that 44-million were uninsured (never mind how bogus that stat was/is)–now that the ranks are being swelled by the self-same act, there will be tens of millions more which, as the left is wont to do, will be used as 'proof' that we need single-payer, not that Ocare wrecked a working market for healthcare.
>
> (No, it doesn't matter that everyone against this law said *exactly* this would happen, because, to the left, cause and effect and accurate predictions–despite their pretensions at being scientifically-minded–are never valid unless it confirms their biases, so they'll just blame 'big business' and the bogeyman for why it's going in exactly the direction the sane said it would. The media will reinforce this and, pow, single-payer.)
>
> So laugh while you can–it won't be funny for long.

I think that this could go either way. If the media covers up for Obama because they want single payer, and the conservatives pick someone like Mitt Romney instead of Bobby Jindal or Paul Ryan or Ted Cruz, then we are going to lose. We are going to lose because people will blame the decisions of private businesses instead of the Obamacare that forced them to make those decisions.

We still have the 2014 elections coming up. The public needs to have a good taste of what Obamacare does in order to understand what they're getting. If they still choose to elect Democrats after seeing the effects of socialism, then they'll have to live with socialism. I'm fine with it. I don't plan to be working when the bill comes due, and I'm not going to be paying for big houses and college tuition, either.

Grindr for heterosexuals: new Pure mobile app facilitates hooking up

August 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this disturbing article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Young people looking for no-strings-attached sex who don't want to go through the rigmarole of chit-chat online are looking forward to the launch of a new app next week.
>
> Pure, which has been described as 'bringing Seamless to the bedroom', offers sex on-demand by simply asking users their gender and the gender of their preference, whether they can host and then shows them potential partners who answer 'Okay' or 'No Way'.
>
> Pending approval by Apple's App Store, Pure's intentionally soul-less and potentially dangerous approach to hook-ups has no profiles, no chat sessions before-hand and deletes unfulfilled requests after an hour.
>
> Markedly different from more traditional internet dating sites such as Match.Com and OkCupid, Pure is also a departure from newer apps for anonymous sex hook-ups such as Tinder and Bang With Friends.
>
> All these apps and sites require some kind of profile and online conversation to get to know the potential date better.
>
> However, Pure, created by Roman Sidorenko and Alexander Kukhtenko removes all of that and simply provides two people who want to have sex **based on their image online** the ability to arrange a meet-up.

I see this story as the final conclusion of a trend I say when I was in my 20s where men and women were unable to evaluate the opposite sex for the responsibilities of marriage. Although young people said they wanted to get married, the way they did it was by choosing the best looking person available. There was no concept of courting, which is putting a person through their paces to see if they can actually do the job that marriage requires of them. I have literally been told by women that they can tell if a man is a good provider based on his appearance. If he is good looking then there is no need to investigate his academic credentials, his resume, his savings and so on. The tingles and peer approval, according to the criteria seen in the culture, are everything she needs to know his balance sheet. This app is the next phase of that, with pleasurable sex taking the place of slow, steady evaluation.

Now it is so bad that people actually want to have sex with people based on a photo. Honestly, this is so far from where I am and what my plans are that I think that it is pointless to even consider marriage at this point. The rules of this society are going to be made by people like the Bro-Choice man and the Duke University athlete hook-up

woman. As women keep choosing men based on appearance, government is going to grow and grow to subsidize their behavior with free condoms, free breast enlargements, free abortions, free single mother welfare, and (for the feminists), free IVF. Why would I get involved with an enterprise like marriage where half the women are Sandra Fluke and the other half disagrees with Sandra Fluke, but is too cowardly to say anything about it for fear of "judging" and being seen as "divisive". If no one is standing up for courtship and marriage, then why should I feel obligated to risk what I have? It seems like people are just not serious about *real marriage.* Bills, duties, obligations, intimacy, faithfulness.

There is never going to be evidence that shows that anonymous recreational sex is good for marriage or parenting. People can do it if they want to, but it doesn't help anyone like me who really wants marriage and parenting done right. The truth is that premarital sex is bad for marriage and parenting. It reduces marital stability and quality. It puts children at risk for many dangerous thing, for example child neglect, child abuse and poverty. If I lowered my standards and married someone in her 30s after she had lived a life of binge-drinking and hooking-up, it would put the quality of my marriage and children in jeopardy. I would not be able to trust such a woman like that with the responsibilities of wife and mother. I would be paying for a marriage and children, but not getting the kind of marriage and parenting that counts for God.

I don't mind if a woman wants to go on the "photo-only hook-ups" path through her 20s and early 30s, but I'm not obligated to make those choices (WRONG choices) work out for her. Chivalry means picking a good woman who is struggling while doing good things, and helping her to do good things. Chivalry does not mean picking an immoral woman and trying to make her happy. That's not chivalry, it's stupidity. Marriage is not something you do with someone who chooses recreational premarital sex partners based on photographs. Period. Marriage is not compatible with that level of stupidity.

Average public school teacher paid more than median household income

August 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> The average public school teacher in the United States is paid more in base salary alone for just the work he or she does during the school year than the median U.S. household earns in an entire year.
>
> In the 2011-2012 school year, according to a newly released report by the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, the average base salary for a full-time public school teacher in the United States was $53,100 for the regular school year—not counting any earnings made for summer work.
>
> In 2011, the latest year estimated by the Census Bureau, median household income in the United States was $50,054.
>
> Thus, the average base salary paid to a public school teacher for the regular school year was $3,064 more than the income the median household made in an entire year.
>
> According to the NCES, many public school teachers are paid additional money—over and above their base salaries—by the public school systems that employ them. For example, 41.8 percent are paid an average of $2,500 during the school year to work in extracurricular activities; 4.4 percent get an average of $1,400 during the school year in compensation based on their students' performance; and 7.9 percent get an average of $2,100 during the school year from other school-system sources.
>
> Also, 16.1 percent of public school teachers have a second job outside the school system that employs them as a teacher. These teachers earn an average of $4,800 during the school year from those outside jobs.
>
> When all sources of teacher income are taken into account, according to the NCES, the average teacher income during the 2011-2012 school year was $55,100.
>
> If two public school teachers were married to one another, and each earned only a public school teacher's average base salary of $53,100; their combined income would be $106,200. That is 212 percent of the nation's median household income.

And what are you paying for, exactly?

One of the reasons why I think that teachers should not be paid so much is because they are not accountable when they do wrong. Thanks to teachers unions, it's almost

impossible to fire them. I can understand paying people less when they have more job security, but we are paying teachers more and they have tons of job security. How much job security? Well, consider this story about a public school teacher who molested one of his students and was convicted of rape. That part is not surprising. What is surprising is how seven of his female colleagues wrote letters on his behalf to try to get him a lighter sentence. Do you think that those seven teachers will be fired for doing that? Guess again.

One of the character witnesses is the rapist's own wife:

> High school teacher Toni Erickson is the wife of child rapist Neal Erickson. Clearly, Mrs. Erickson has exhibited loyalty toward her husband and is willing to overlook that he molested an eighth grade boy for three years, and that is very touching. But what's scary is that from Toni's lopsided perspective, the child is less a victim than the rapist.
>
> In her letter to the judge on Neal's behalf, Mrs. Erickson said this:
>
> As for punishment, because I know that is something the community expects, hasn't he been punished enough? He is losing a job he has held for 17 years [during three of which he was raping a child] and losing all future career potential as a teacher.
>
> It's clear that Toni seems more upset about the damage to her husband's future than the physical and psychological damage he imposed on a child. Mrs. Erickson also blames the community for demanding what she apparently feels is a disproportionate level of punishment, and deems herself qualified to determine how much penance for a child rapist is penance enough.
>
> Toni's moral position that statutory rape is not harmful to children was further exposed when she said,
>
> I have seen many delightful students who have been damaged by horrible events in their lives. While I acknowledge that Neal's conduct with [a victim he found 'delightful'] was wrong, I do not believe [the 14-year-old] was damaged by Neal's action[s].
>
> Furthermore, she said,
>
> "I base my opinion on my personal interaction with [the boy], both before and after Neal's actions. However [my daughter] very likely could be [damaged]. Please don't punish her by [her father's] absence in her life."
>
> So according to a woman who has overseen a high school classroom for 15 years, jailing a dangerous predator is cruel, because when he's not molesting boys, Neal is needed to father their daughter?

Would you like to get your money back from the public school system and send your child to a school that is accountable to you? Well, tough. You can't. You can't even have them fired when they condone raping children. If they're not going to be accountable, then I

don’t see why they should be paid so much.

Obama administration sues state of Texas for passing laws to prevent voter fraud

August 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Hill.

Excerpt:

> The Justice Department will file a lawsuit against Texas on Thursday, arguing that the state's voter ID law violates the Voting Rights Act.
>
> Attorney General Eric Holder vowed to fight state voting laws that the DOJ views as unfair or in violation of federal law, despite a recent Supreme Court decision striking down a key part of the Voting Rights Act (VRA).
>
> […]The Texas law requires voters to produce one of the following before casting a ballot: a driver's license, a personal ID card, a military ID card, a citizenship certificate with a photograph, a U.S. passport or a license to carry a concealed handgun.
>
> Opponents of the law argue that it unfairly discriminates against minority voters who might not have a photo ID and might not able to obtain one easily.
>
> Many Republicans, especially the Texas delegation, have balked at the possibility of the DOJ's lawsuit against Texas.
>
> Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.), the former chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, blasted the DOJ's decision to move against Texas.
>
> The congressman said he talked with Holder and asked him to withdraw the lawsuit, arguing Congress should be the one to resolve discrepancies within the Voting Rights Act.
>
> "I regret that the Department of Justice announced its intent to file a lawsuit against Texas' Voter ID law citing Section 2 to the Voting Rights Act," said Sensenbrenner in a statement. "Voter ID laws are an essential element in protecting the integrity of our electoral process and do not have a discriminatory intent or effect.

Some of my readers in other countries often ask me – "if Obama is such a bad President, then how come the majority of Americans voted for him". Well, first of all, a lot of these people are simply voting for Obama in order to get a share of what their working neighbors earn. They want the government to give them money, in short. But a lot of the votes for Democrats are simply fraudulent votes. People voting twice in two different states, dead people's names being used by fraudulent voters, etc. Voter fraud is a Democrat specialty. It's so sacred to them that even Attorney General Eric Holder is suing anyone who tries to take away voter fraud. This is about what you would expect from an administration that facilitated the sale of weapons to drug cartels and covered up

Benghazi by blaming a Youtube video.

Related posts

- Treasury Dept. IG: IRS targeted 292 Tea Party groups but only 6 progressive groups
- New study: IRS targeting of Tea Party conservatives had significant effect on 2012 election
- Federal court: Obama appointees interfered with New Black Panther prosecution
- Obama administration sues Florida for purging non-citizens from voter rolls
- College student discovers election fraud in Indiana's 2008 primary
- Is it "racial discrimination" to ask someone for a photo ID before they vote?
- How many ACORN employees have been convicted of voter fraud this year?
- Is Obama's Department of Justice enabling voter registration fraud?
- Department of Justice won't purge dead or ineligible voters from roll
- ACORN employees, voter fraud and the Democrats
- Democrats will push amnesty to give 12-20 million illegal aliens citizenship

If you want to annoy the left, then raise your children to be like Texas senator Ted Cruz

August 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Republican senator Ted Cruz

Here's a profile in National Review of my one of my favorite senators.

Excerpt:

> The party's highest-profile Texans, George W. Bush and Rick Perry, tended to match inarticulateness with cowboy swagger and lend themselves to mockery as intellectual lightweights. Bush went to Yale and Harvard Business School, yet no one naturally thinks of him as an Ivy Leaguer. The two Lone Star State governors played into the Left's stereotypes so nicely that if they didn't exist, the *New York Times* editorial board would have had to invent them.
>
> Cruz is different — a Princeton and Harvard man who not only matriculated at those fine institutions but excelled at them. Champion debater at Princeton. Magna cum laude graduate at Harvard. Supreme Court clerkship, on the way to Texas solicitor general and dozens of cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.
>
> Cruz is from the intellectual elite, but not of it, a tea-party conservative whose politics are considered gauche at best at the storied universities where he studied. He is, to borrow the words of the 2008 H.W. Brands biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt, a traitor to his class.
>
> Democrats and liberal pundits would surely dislike Cruz no matter where he went to school, but his pedigree adds an element of shocked disbelief to the disdain. "Princeton and Harvard should be disgraced," former Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell exclaimed on MSNBC, as if graduating a constitutionalist conservative who rises to national prominence is a violation of the schools' mission

> statements.
>
> […]In a *Washington Post* column a year ago, Dana Milbank noted Cruz's schooling and concluded that his tea-party politics must be a put-on, that he is, underneath it all, an "intellectually curious, liberal-arts conservative." Note the insulting assumption that an interest in books and ideas immunizes someone from a certain kind of conservative politics.
>
> **One of the Left's deepest prejudices is that its opponents are stupid, and Cruz tramples on it. At hearings, Cruz has the prosecutorial instincts of a . . . Harvard-trained lawyer. Watching Attorney General Eric Holder try to fend off Cruz's questioning on the administration's drone policy a few months ago was like seeing a mouse cornered by a very large cat.**
>
> Cruz hasn't played by the Senate rules that freshmen should initially be seen and not heard. In fact, he joined the upper chamber with all the subtlety of a SWAT team knocking down a drug suspect's front door.
>
> For people who care about such things — almost all of them are senators — this is an unforgivable offense. At another hearing, as Cruz says that the highest commitment of senators should be to the Constitution, another senator can be heard muttering that he doesn't like being lectured. Chairman Pat Leahy (probably the mutterer) eventually cuts him off and informs him he hasn't been in the Senate very long.
>
> Cruz lacks all defensiveness about his positions, another source of annoyance to his opponents, who are used to donning the mantle of both intellectual and moral superiority.

And here's a quick review of where Ted Cruz came from:

> Rafael Cruz, the father of Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, invigorated the crowd during tonight's FreedomWorks Free the People event.
>
> Describing his own personal journey escaping Cuba and working hard to build a life for himself in the U.S., the elder Cruz noted comparisons that he believes exist between Fidel Castro's governance and President Barack Obama's executive actions.
>
> Upon rising to power, he said that Castro, like Obama, spoke about hope and change. While the message sounded good at the time, it didn't take long for socialism to take root in his home country. And he paid the price.
>
> For his part in the revolution — one that many originally assumed would yield a more vibrant country — Cruz was punished while in Cuba.
>
> "I was in prison," he said. "I was tortured, but by the grace of God I was able to leave Cuba on a student VISA and came to the greatest country on the face of the earth."

> Cruz described his efforts working as a dishwasher in America and paying his own way through the University of Texas. From there, he built a life for himself — one that was filled with experiences that caused him to greatly appreciate the country that had given him so much.
>
> His plight in Cuba colored his American experience
>
> "You can't understand a loss of rights unless you've experienced it," Cruz told TheBlaze following the speech.
>
> His unique perspective leaves Cruz with the ability, he argues, to see the troubling signs surrounding socialism. Young people in America today, he told TheBlaze, take for granted the rights and privileges that the U.S. has afforded them.

Fascinating.

Now people always complain when I say that I am trying to find a wife with the background, education, experience and temperment to raise effective, influential children. I have a whole list of influential people I want to clone, in fact. I want a William Lane Craig, a Wayne Grudem, a Michael Licona, a Guillermo Gonzales, an Ann Gauger, a Jennifer Roback Morse, a Scott Klusendorf, a Mark Regnerus, and… a Ted Cruz. And I've saved the money to be able to get at least a few of those, too. The truth is that I had some of the experiences that Cruz's father had, and if he can make a Ted Cruz, then so should I be able to. They have to come from somewhere!

Now of course it's hard to guarantee outcomes when it comes to raising children, but there are some things you can prepare for. You can study things you hate that are hard, and save your money for Ph.D tuition. You can go to grad school yourself and publish research. You can look for a wife who shows the ability to nurture people so that they get better and rise higher. And maybe, you might just raise the next Ted Cruz. I think the old adage "if you aim at nothing, then you will surely hit it" is a good saying for marriage. If you are going to put hundreds of thousands of dollars and decades of your life into a marriage, then you should aim at something. You might hit it. You're not just there to make another person feel good – you're there to make the marriage serve God. Raising influential, effective children is *one way* of doing that. But it doesn't happen by accident. And it isn't necessarily going to be "fun".

By the way, my Canadian readers might like to know that Cruz was born in Calgary, Alberta – the most conservative city in Canada. And it shows. You guys up north still have your Stephen Harper and your Ezra Levant, but we took your Ted Cruz and your Mark Steyn. We need them more than you do!

Related posts

- Ted Cruz wins Texas Republican Senate primary election 56-44
- Tea Party conservatives and social conservatives endorse Ted Cruz in Texas primary
- Social conservative hero James Dobson endorses Ted Cruz
- George Will says that Ted Cruz is the candidate to rally around

New Mexico Supreme Court rules that Christian photographer must affirm gay marriage

August 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Pastor Matt tweeted about this story from the Alliance Defending Freedom, a pro-religious liberty group.

Excerpt:

> In 2006, Vanessa Willock asked Elaine Huguenin—co-owner with her husband, Jonathan, of Elane Photography in Albuquerque—to photograph a "commitment ceremony" that Willock and another woman wanted to hold in the town of Taos. Neither marriage nor civil unions are legal between members of the same sex in New Mexico. Huguenin declined because her and her husband's Christian beliefs are in conflict with the message communicated by the ceremony, which Willock asked Huguenin to help her "celebrate." Willock found another photographer for her ceremony, but nevertheless filed a complaint with the New Mexico Human Rights Commission accusing Elane Photography of discrimination based on "sexual orientation." The commission held a one-day trial in January 2008 and then issued an order several months later finding that Elane Photography engaged in "sexual orientation" discrimination prohibited under state law. The commission ordered Elane Photography to pay $6,637.94 in attorneys' fees to the two women who filed the complaint. Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys took the case to the New Mexico court system to appeal the commission's ruling. The state's Court of Appeals upheld the commission's ruling, and Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys appealed it to the New Mexico Supreme Court.
>
> The New Mexico Supreme Court ruled Thursday against a photographer who declined to use her artistic expression to communicate the story of a same-sex ceremony. In a concurrence accompanying the opinion, one of the justices wrote that the photographer and her husband, Elaine and Jonathan Huguenin, "now are compelled by law to compromise the very religious beliefs that inspire their lives," adding "it is the price of citizenship."
>
> "The idea that free people can be 'compelled by law to compromise the very religious beliefs that inspire their lives' as the 'price of citizenship' is a chilling and unprecedented attack on freedom," said Senior Counsel Jordan Lorence. "Americans are now on notice that the price of doing business is their freedom. We are considering our next steps, including asking the U.S. Supreme Court to right this wrong."
>
> A Rasmussen poll last month found that "If a Christian wedding photographer who has deeply held religious beliefs opposing same-sex marriage is asked to work a same-sex wedding ceremony, 85% of American adults believe he has the right to say no."

> **In other statements in the concurrence, Justice Richard C. Bosson wrote, "At its heart, this case teaches that at some point in our lives all of us must compromise, if only a little, to accommodate the contrasting values of others…. That compromise is part of the glue that holds us together as a nation, the tolerance that lubricates the varied moving parts of us as a people…. In short, I would say to the Huguenins, with the utmost respect: it is the price of citizenship."**

Compromising your beliefs to avoid offending unstable people who think that the world revolves around them is "the price of citizenship".

I was always surprised, during the Supreme Court trial on gay marriage, to find lots of Christians who had changed their Facebook profile image to an equal sign, indicating their support for redefining the definition of marriage. I suspect that they did this because they imagined that Christianity had nothing to do with what the Bible said, but was instead about telling non-Christians nice things in order to be liked by them. Just tell people that God is anything they want God to be. Just tell them that God isn't holy and doesn't care how they act. Just tell them that whatever they do in order to feel happy is fine with God.

I wonder what the people who supported the redefinition of marriage will say to Christians who were prosecuted by gay rights activists on Judgement Day? Here's a pro-tip for non-Christians. You want to avoid making it harder for other people to know God and to follow him. When you make it harder for other people to know God and follow him God is not happy with you for doing that. In fact, making it harder for Christians to know God and follow him is about the worst thing you can do to offend God. It's a bad idea to use the government to take away someone's basic human right to religious liberty just because they disagreed with you. Feeling offended is not a good justification for you to force your views on other people using the power of government.

Mike Licona debates Bart Ehrman on the Unbelievable radio show

August 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Unbelievable radio show.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is well known as a US New Testament Scholar who lost his Christian faith and now questions many core precepts of Christianity, including the Resurrection of Jesus. When Mike Licona had doubts he devoted himself to investigating the evidence and became convinced that Jesus resurrection is the only rational explanation for the facts.
>
> They debate key historical facts about the resurrection – are the letters of Paul that report the resurrection and the Gospel accounts trustworthy or theologised and changed with time? What about apparent contradictions between the Gospels? Does the consensus of scholars count as evidence, or is there a Christian bias? Can a miracle count as an explanation for historical data?

The MP3 file is here.

Snarky summary of the radio debate: (items with * are my made-up paraphrases/clarifications)

Ehrman:
– Bart's new book is about forgeries in the ancient world
– some books were falsely attributed to prominent Christian figures
– there are mistakes in the Bible
– there are mistakes in the resurrection narratives
– the defeat of inerrancy led to his conversion to liberal Christianity
– the problem of evil and suffering caused him to become a non-Christian

Licona:
– there are minimal facts that are agreed to by a broad spectrum of scholars
– the minimal facts are accepted because they pass standard historical criteria
– Fact 1: Jesus died by crucifixion
– Fact 2: Individuals and groups had visions of Jesus after his death
– Fact 3: Paul, a skeptic and an enemy, had an appearance of Jesus that converted him
– these facts are agreed to atheist scholars, liberal scholars, etc.
– virtually 100% of scholars agree with these three facts
– there is no naturalistic explanation of these three facts
– therefore, the best explanation of these three facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Ehrman:
– all historians would accept these three facts, except for maybe the group appearances

– the death of Jesus is irrelevant to the resurrection
– the second and third point can be collapsed together
– so really there is only one fact

Moderator:
– the crucifixion is relevant because Muslims don't admit that fact
– the crucifixion important because it establishes a resurrection, not a resuscitation

Ehrman:
– well, if the point is that he died, then yes, this does require a resurrection

Licona:
– the crucifixion refutes Muslims who deny that Jesus died
– the crucifixion refutes the apparent death theory (swoon theory)
– the death is required for a bodily resurrection
– it's important to know what facts most scholars, regardless of worldview, agree on
– it's important to emphasize that Licona is working from historical bedrock facts
– the resurrection is the best explanation for the historical bedrock facts

Ehrman:
– you are trying to list 3 things, but really it is just one thing – the appearances
– and not ALL scholars agree that the group visions occurred

Licona:
– name one prominent scholar who denies the group appearances

Ehrman:
– the radically leftist atheist nutcase John Dominic Crossan denies the group appearances
* Crossan is so far on the left that I look like a nutcase for even citing him
* Crossan believes in the Secret Gospel of Mark, which is a hoax – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan believes that the synoptics are LATER than gnostic forged gospels – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan presupposes atheism, so he cannot admit to miracle stories as a pre-supposition – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan pre-supposes religious pluralism, so he cannot allow any exclusive claims Christians make – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan is a good historian, it's just that he is so far to the left that no one – NO ONE – agrees with his all of crazy theories
* I think it is a good idea to cite historians who pre-suppose atheism and political correctness before they sit down to do history

Licona:
– let me explain why most scholars accept the individual and group post-mortem appearances
– the best source for the appearances is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 15:3-8
– Paul himself had an appearance of Jesus after Jesus' death
– Paul received this material from a source very soon after the appearances – within 1-3 years

– we know that Paul met with Jesus disciples multiple times prior to writing
– Paul probably received it from Peter and James, who were themselves eyewitnesses

Moderator:
– this early dating presumably rules out legend

Licona:
– well legends CAN start quickly
– it does show that Paul was an eyewitness
– it does show that Paul was in contact with reliable eyewitnesses

Ehrman:
– 1 Corinthians is written around 55 AD, twenty-five years after Jesus died
– it is not implausible that Paul got the creed from the disciples, who were eyewitnesses
– but you don't need a long time for legends to emerge, so that is a possibility

Licona:
– only about 3% of people could read and write back them
– instead, people had enormous capacity for memorization
– the Pharisees were particularly good at memorization
– Jews were very serious about passing along traditions accurately
– Paul, a prominent Pharisee, would have been capable of passing on early creeds accurately
– Paul, in 1 Cor 7, shows that he is willing to separate his opinions from authentic tradition
– Paul had an opportunity in 1 Cor 7 to put words into Jesus' mouth, but he wouldn't do it

Ehrman:
– cultural anthropologists show that things do get changed in some oral cultures
– in these oral cultures, it is assumed that the story teller will change the story
– only in written cultures are they careful to avoid changing the story
– in the New Testament, you can compare the same story in two different gospels, there are differences

Licona:
– Ehrman is right that the gospel writers pick and choose things from the oral tradition that they want to include in their gospels
– different oral tradition transmission schemes have more or less embellishment
– african tribes embellish more, rabbinic teaching embellishes less
* Jesus' followers would have viewed him as a rabbi, and been careful about adding to his teachings
– Paul, an eyewitness, probably received the creed in 1 Cor 15 from other eyewitnesses
– Paul speaks about going twice to Jerusalem in Galatians
– he is meeting with Peter and James to check his facts

Ehrman:
– when you look at Mark and John, there are lots of differences in the narrative

Licona:
– I agree that the gospels have differences, but the oral tradition is likely fixed

Ehrman:
– but Mark and John have different sayings
– why doesn't Mark have the same explicit high Christology that John has?

Licona:
– first, John is trying to weave the oral tradition into a compelling story
– and second, when you look in Mark, the high Christology is there in the Son of Man sayings
– the apocalyptic Son of Man is in Mark, and everywhere in the New Testament

Ehrman:
– the "apocalyptic Son of Man" isn't in John

Licona:
– what about in John 9 with the man who was born blind

Ehrman:
– where is the apocalyptic part?

Licona:
– the healed man worships Jesus because he is the Son of Man
– that links to the apocalypic passages in the Old Testament

Moderator:
– what about the differences between the gospels?

Ehrman:
* well, now is the time for me to set up an inerrantist straw man and then knock it down!
* who was at the empty tomb: one angel or two angels? we don't know, so the whole Bible is false!
* I used to be an inerrantist, so one minor difference is enough for me to dump the whole Bible
* I'll kill you, you stupid straw man! I hate you, Moody Bible Institute! You lied to me!

Licona:
– many of these problems can be solved by realizing that the gospel writers compress time
– the stories don't have to list ALL the characters in every scene
– you don't have to force the Bible to meet some sort of wooden chronology
– the main thing is that the events happened, not that the descriptions match word for word across sources

Ehrman:
– you can't infer a miracle from history, David Hume says so
* extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, David Hume says so
* no I don't know what begging the question is, I'm not a philosopher
* no I don't remember when Bill Craig kicked my ass on this Hume objection in our debate
– the New Testament gospels contradict each other at every point, they are not reliable at all!
* they cannot even agree what Jesus' name is! There are 1 trillion variants of Jesus'

name!
* “one angel vs two angels” proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point
* my expansive list of FOUR theologically insignificant variants proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point

Licona:
– um, the gospels agree on the central narrative and disagree on the peripherals
– and they agree on the minimal facts I presented, even if they disagree about the number of angels

Ehrman:
* they have to agree on everything and be inerrant! The Moody Straw Man Bible Institute says so!
* I really really really need to have the number of angels be the same, or Jesus didn’t die on the cross

Licona:
– but you don’t deny any of the three minimal facts I presented (crucifixion, appearances, Paul)

Ehrman:
– well, I don’t know if the group appearances occurred – maybe they did
– i think Jesus died on the cross, and I think that people said they saw him alive afterward

Licona:
– if you deny the minimal facts, then you are outside the majority of scholars

Ehrman:
– the majority of scholars who agree to the minimal facts you presented are Christians
* Gerd Ludemann is an atheist Christian
* James Crossley is an atheist Christian
* Hector Avalos is an atheist Christian
* the majority of the atheist scholars are all Christians!
– VIRTUALLY EVERYBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IS A CHRISTIAN!!! (Yes, he said that)

Licona:
– you really think so?

Ehrman
– you name one non-Christian in the SBL

Licona:
– (incredulous) um, John Dominic Crossan is an atheist

Ehrman:
– but he CLAIMS TO BE A CHRISTIAN so that means HE IS A CHRISTIAN
* all you have to do to be a Christian is claim to be one
* you can even deny the existence of God and the divinity of Christ and still be one, you bigot!

Licona:
– would Jesus or the apostles recognize a Christian as being someone who doubts God's existence

Ehrman:
– my view is that Jesus and the apostles would not recognize evangelical Christians as Christians
* a non-theist can be a Christian just by claiming to be one, but evangelical Christians are not Christians even if they claim to be Christians
– Christians can't record accurate history about the resurrection because they are biased

Licona:
– on your view, if a person is a Christian then he can't write about the evidence for the resurrection
– so then similarly, you would not allow Jews to write about the historicity of the Holocaust
– because you think that if people have an interest in what they are recording then they can't be objective
– but you have to consider the evidence we have, taking the biases of the sources into account

Ehrman:
– but the only people who believe in the resurrection are Christians!

Licona:
– well, people can consider the evidence for the resurrection as non-Christians
– and then if they accept it they can become Christians

Moderator:
– what about your bias? you don't believe in God – doesn't that pre-supposition affect how you do history?

Ehrman:
– well, I presuppose naturalism, so I can't admit to anything in history that implicates supernatural causes
* no I have never heard of the arguments for the Big Bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, limits on mutations creating information, habitability and so on – I never heard about that stuff from my atheist university professors and even if I had I would have been expelled for talking about it because that would make people feel bad about their sinning

Licona:
– so it's not bias you are concerned about, it's that you don't want history to contradict your untested religion of naturalism?
– why not just do the history without pre-suppositions to gather the minimal facts and then see what the best explanation is?

Ehrman:
* well God is out of bounds as an explanation because I could not have got my PhD if I

mentioned God
* I really needed my smart atheist professors to like me and give me good grades so God is RIGHT OUT
* ideas like a real God and moral laws and Hell makes my atheist professors uncomfortable and that means low grades for me
* I'm not really interested in butting heads with professors – it's easier to just agree with them and move on to selling books to the gullible
* My books are much more sensational than Dan Brown books, so please buy lots of them!

Licona:
– what if the historical evidence is good enough to show that Jesus rose from the dead?

Ehrman:
– well I would not call someone rising from the dead a miracle – I would call it weird
* I also think that the Big Bang is "weird" but that doesn't prove that God created the universe out of nothing
* if it's a miracle then I'm going to have to not sin, and maybe even go to Hell, and we can't have that

Licona:
– well, you accept the three minimal facts
– what if we try all the naturalistic explanations for those three facts and there are problems with all of them?
– what if the resurrection is the best explanation for the three minimal facts?

Ehrman:
– but I want to arbitrarily rule God put because I want to pre-suppose naturalism
– there is not historical reason I have to rule put supernatural explanations a priori

Licona:
– I think you are struggling with the theological implications of a historical conclusion

Ehrman:
– well when you do theology, you have to avoid grounding your theology on science or history
– theology has to be completely made up or it's not good theology

Licona:
– I think you are letting your dislike of the implications of the resurrection determine your historical conclusions
– you have to use historical methods to gather the minimal facts that every scholar accepts, regardless of worldview
– then you weigh ALL the hypotheses, natural and supernatural, that could account for these minimal facts
– then you choose the hypothesis that best explains the minimal facts

Audio, summary and review of William Lane Craig vs. Stephen Law debate

August 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You can also download the audio at Apologetics 315.

Scorecard:

Craig's case:

- The origin of the universe: Law had no response.
- The moral argument: Law denied that there are objective moral values.
- The resurrection argument: Law told a story about a UFO sighting.

Law's case:

- The evidential argument from evil: Law later denied that evil existed, thus undermining his entire argument. Christian theists DON'T consider it evil when people suffer, if that suffering is necessary in order to get people to know God. We don't agree with Law's definition of evil that "people suffering" is automatically evil – because there can be a morally sufficient reason why that suffering is allowed by God to happen, since his goal is not our happiness but for us to know him. Law was not able to show how we know that God doesn't have a morally sufficient reason to permit the evils we do see. And he has to prove that in order to assert (in his premise 1) that gratuitous evil exists. How does he know that? How does he know that some specific instance of evil is pointless for the purpose of improve the knowledge of God overall? The one good thing that Law did was to press Craig to defend his premise that if God doesn't exist, then objective moral values also don't exist. Craig did talk about how if there is no God, then morality is just a herd morality that evolves by accident, though.

Final score: 3 to 0 for Craig. Law was better than Craig's average opponent though, for all the snarky things I might say about him, below.

Below is the snarky summary of the debate. I sometimes paraphrase entire sentences and insert commentary in order to explain what's going on without the spin.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

Two contentions:

C1) There are good reasons to think that God exists.
C2) There are no good reasons to think that God does not exist.

Arguments for the existence of God.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. Whatever begins to exist requires a cause.

2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe requires a cause.

The beginning of the universe is confirmed by philosophy and science.

An actual infinite number of past events is impossible. The concept of an actual infinite is mathematically unintelligible for the operations of subtraction and division.

Cosmologists have now proven that any universe that is now in a state of expansion must have begun to exist, independent of any physical description of the model. Even speculative alternatives to the current Big Bang model require a beginning at some point.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The moral argument.

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a “herd morality” that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional.

Dr. Law affirms objective morality in his written work (but can he ground it on atheism?).

In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God’s existence by pointing to the “evil” in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values, in order to make the charge. Therefore, it is impossible to complain about the evil in the world without assuming the existence of God.

A3) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum; the empty tomb, the post-mortem appearances of Jesus, the early belief in the resurrection of Jesus.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

Craig’s opponent thinks that Jesus never existed, a position that virtually no historian holds.

Stephen Law’s opening statement:

A1) The evidential argument from evil

1. Gratuitous evil exists.
2. God would be able to remove evil, would know about the evil, and would want to remove gratuitous evil.
3. It is implausible that God exists.

There are moral evil actions committed by agents
There are natural evils like earthquake.

Animals suffer. e.g. – from being eaten by other animals.
Humans suffer, e.g. – from disease.

Craig's cosmological argument does prove that a Creator exists, but the evidential argument from evil proves that this Creator is not good.

If the Creator really were good, then we would all be spared from all suffering, both physical and mental, because God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing anyone to suffer. God, if he existed, would prevent humans from committing moral evil by removing our free will. God would also prevent us from having any unhappy feelings caused by natural evil.

A2) Theodicies offered by Christians fail

Freedom Will Theodicy: An evil God might like to allow humans to have free will.

Laws of Nature: An evil God might like to have laws of nature to allow predictable consequences.

Afterlife compensation: An evil God might like an evil afterlife to make us suffer more.

Craig's first rebuttal:

RA1) Law's evidential argument from evil fails

The mere presence of evil is not a problem if God has morally sufficient reasons for permitting instances of evil. Since Dr. Law is making the claim that God would not allow the evil, then he has to bear the burden of proof for showing that there is no morally sufficient reason for God to permit evil and sufering.

The purpose of life on the Christian view is not merely to have happy feelings. The purpose of life on the Christian view is coming to know God and having a relationship with him. Many evils that are not good for giving us happy feelings may be good for getting us to think seriously about whether God is there and what to do to have a relationship with him.

Theists don't infer the goodness of God because they survey the universe and find lots of good things. They infer the goodness of God based on the mere fact that they are aware of an objective moral standard of good and evil, and inalienable human rights, and they identify God as the source of that standard of Good and evil. Those things cannot exist unless there is a God to ground an objective standard of right and wrong. Since the source of the standard is God's own unchanging nature, he cannot act in a way that is evil.

Moral evil actually proves the existence of God. If Dr. Law claims that there is moral evil, then he has to have an objective moral standard that allows the distinction between good and evil. The only way to make an objective distinction between good and evil is if there is a Design for the universe that determines what is good and evil. And a design for the universe requires a Designer of the universe.

With respect to animal suffering, any ecosystem require predators in order to control population. For example, in Canada, Canadians have had to reintroduce wolves into the ecosystem in order to cull the populations of caribou, which was de-stabilizing the ecosystem. Since humans depend on the existence of these animals, God has to allow these predators in order to balance the ecosystem.

Animals do not suffer pain the same way as humans do, research shows that although they suffer pain, they are not aware of that suffering in the way that humans are. Once you understand the biology of animals, you understand that they do not experience pain the same way as humans.

Law's first rebuttal:

Craig thinks that you need an objective standard in order to judge things as objectively good or evil. But that's false. I can use my subjective opinions to claim that some things are objective evil. If God doesn't do what I like (prevent moral and natural evil), then he isn't objectively good. I don't need to buy into the notion of objective good and evil in order to say that something is good or evil. I can say that something is good or evil while denying the existence of objective good and evil. (IMPORTANT NOTE: DR. LAW HAS AT THIS POINT RETRACTED HIS SUPPORT FOR OBJECTIVE MORAL VALUES, WHICH MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO EMPLOY THE EVIDENTIAL ARGUMENT FROM EVIL)

Dr. Craig says that I think that people determine the goodness or evilness of God by counting good things and evil things. But that's false. My argument is that people determine the goodness or evilness of God by counting good things and evil things. It's completely different!The presence of good things undermines the existence of evil God, and the existence of evil things undermines the existence of good God.

Craig's second rebuttal:

Dr. Law has not yet responded to any of the 3 arguments for God's existence.

A1) No response to the argument from the origin of the universe. How can you admit to a Creator of the universe and still be an atheist? His argument from evil doesn't refute a supernatural cause of the universe.

A2) Dr. Law is now denying that objective moral values exist, contrary to his written work. This means that he is not able to use the terms "good" and "evil" intelligibly. He is merely expressing his subjective opinions, and therefore he cannot press the evidential argument from evil, because there is no such thing as evil, objectively speaking, on his view. It's just his personal preference.

A3) No response to the argument concerning the resurrection.

RA1) He has to show that God doesn't have morally sufficient reasons for permitting the

evils we see. He admits that he can't.

He says that the world is morally ambiguous and you can't infer the goodness of God by counting the amount of evil and good in the world, just like you can't infer the evilness of God by counting the amount of evil and good in the world. And that's correct, and theists don't infer God's goodness by counting good and evil instances. The point is that if you can't infer God's goodness or evilness by counting instances of good or evil, then you can't infer that God isn't good, because you don't know whether God has a morally sufficient reason for permitting the evils that we see. And it's the atheist's burden of proof to show that God DOESN'T have a morally sufficient reason, and Dr. Law is unable to do that.

Dr. Law says that you don't need to have a standard of good and evil to press the problem of pain and suffering. But if you deny that there is any good or evil independent of pain and suffering, then you can't impugn God's goodness because you don't have a standard in place to say that gratuitous pain and suffering is evil.

Any event that occurs in history can have effects far into the future or in another country. Physicists understand that small effects can trigger results that cannot be foreseen. And what this means is that humans are simply not in a position to know whether God has a moral sufficient reason for permitting specific instances of evil.

Finally, the purpose of life on the Christian view is not to have happy feelings and be free from suffering. God's purpose for us is to know him and to be rightly related to him. Many instances of evil may be pointless for making people feel good, but may be effective for drawing people towards God.

Law's second rebuttal:

RA2) The vast majority of philosophers reject the moral argument, for example Richard Swinburne. (No reasoning for the denial is explained, just the denial of the argument's effectiveness by citing Richard Swinburne as an authority). This is a fallacy of arguing from an authority.

Dr. Craig has to prove that no atheistic account of morality can be given. He has disprove them all, even the ones that no one has thought of yet. It's not my job, AS THE ATHEIST, to prove that I can give an account of objective truth of moral claims can be given ON ATHEISM. I don't have to do anything except stand here and speculate about some possible account of morality on atheism and I win.

The existence of objective moral values is not obvious to me. I.e. – I don't see anything objectively wrong with torturing babies for fun, it's a matter of opinion. I also don't see anything evil about those things that I said were evil in my first speech. I was just kidding, people, can't you take a joke? It just seems to some people like Dr. Craig that there are objective moral values, but actually there aren't. Dr. Craig merely wants to believe that evil is real, but actually it isn't. Except when I want to argue that it is in in my evidential argument FROM EVIL.

RA3) Although the majority of ancient historians accept the historicity of the empty tomb because of the early sources, multiple attestation, enemy attestation etc., the tomb was

not empty because of this story I'm going to tell about a UFO.

Although virtually all ancient historians accept the post-mortem appearances because of the early sources, multiple attestation, etc., the post-mortem appearances did not occur because of this story I'm going to tell about a UFO.

Although virtually all ancient historians accept the early belief that Jesus was bodily resurrected because of the early sources, multiple attestation, etc., the early belief that Jesus was bodily resurrected did not occur because of this story I'm going to tell about a UFO.

Craig's final rebuttal:

A1) Dr. Law accepts that the universe was created by an eternal, non-material, uncaused being. What a strange sort of atheist, who admits that there exists a supernatural Creator of the universe.

A2) Dr. Law employed the fallacy of arguing from authority. But Dr. Craig can cite a much longer list of atheists who agree that if God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist, e.g. – Nietzche, Russell, Sartre, Mackie, etc. Consistent atheists understand that if there is no God, there is no design for how the universe ought to be (natural evil), or how we ought to be (moral evil).

A3) We have to be careful when inferring a supernatural explanation and use objective criteria. All natural explanations fail to explain the full set of minimal facts that virtually all historians accept. In addition, the resurrection takes place within a religio-historical context where one might expect God to intervene if what Jesus was saying was true.

RA1) You can't disprove God's goodness by appealing to instances of evil, nor can you disprove God's evilness by appealing to instances of good. This is because humans are not in a position to assess the ripple effects of permitting any instance of evil (good). It is therefore possible and inscrutable as to whether God has a morally sufficient reason for permitting any and all instances of apparent evil (good).

Dr. Law's final rebuttal:

A2) There is a lot of pain and suffering in the history of the world. This is a challenge to God's goodness because God's purpose for us is to make us happy, and not at all for us to know him or for us to be related to him, as the Bible says.

Here's my argument. Craig thinks that you can determine God's goodness by counting instances of good and evil in the world, although he explicitly denies that. And I've actually done the counting and found that you can't determine God's goodness because there's too much gratuitous evil. Never mind what Craig said about the ripple effect through time and space, or about chaos theory, or about morally sufficient reasons. These instances of gratuitous evil I'm telling you about have no morally sufficient reasons, in any time or in any place. Trust me, I looked everywhere and in the future, using my time machine.

Now, in my argument, when I said the word evil, I don't really mean evil, because to use an objective standard of good and evil, I would have to have a moral lawgiver to ground

that objective standard. So when I say moral and natural evil, I don't mean moral and natural evil, I actually mean things that I don't personally like. So I'm going to change my argument's name to the Evidential Argument From Things That I Find Yucky.

Dr. Craig provided no justification for his premise that "if there is no God, there there are no objective moral values". And it's not my job to produce an atheistic theory about how objective moral values could exist, especially since my argument from evil relies on objective moral values.

A3) UFOs.

UK business owner on trial for tackling burglars on his own property

August 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> A businessman who confronted a burglar raiding his premises appeared in court yesterday accused of attacking him.
>
> Andrew Woodhouse, 43, was chasing thieves off his property when he claims one of them 'came at' him with a wooden stick.
>
> Father-of-five Woodhouse allegedly used the stick to injure the man's legs before holding him down while his wife called the police.
>
> But when officers arrived they arrested Woodhouse and held him in a cell for 18 hours.
>
> **He appeared at Newport Crown Court yesterday charged with grievous bodily harm with intent which has a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.**
>
> Andrew Taylor, defending, said: 'Mr Woodhouse apprehended two of the burglars at his tyre depot.
>
> 'It happened after two or three men decided they were going to remove a large quantity of diesel from his premises.
>
> 'Mr Woodhouse has been interviewed by police and has provided a full explanation about what happened.
>
> 'There is a CCTV recording of the incident and we are waiting to see the footage.'
>
> […]Woodhouse was in bed with his wife Lisa at their detached home in the village of Govilon, near Abergavenny, when his burglar alarm went off at about 12.30am.
>
> […]Woodhouse drove to his business premises where the alleged assault happened.
>
> […]His wife Lisa said her husband was prepared to go through the legal process to clear his name.
>
> She said: 'But I fail to see where there was any intent on Andrew's part.
>
> 'He didn't intend to get up in the middle of the night to assault anyone. All he did was protect his property.
>
> 'People may think he took the law into his own hands but what was he supposed to do, stand by and watch?'
>
> Woodhouse employs six staff including two of his sons at the family business,

> which was set up 20 years ago.
>
> **The firm has lost £15,000 in recent years to thefts of diesel and tools.**
>
> Two fuel thieves who stole £50 worth of diesel from Woodhouse's premises on the night of the alleged assault have been dealt with in court.
>
> Timothy Cross, 31, and Kevin Green, 52, took two jerry cans of diesel from Woodhouse's tyre depot in Abergavenny.
>
> **Cross and Green both admitted theft and were fined £75 by Cwmbran magistrates.**

People sometimes wonder why I think that the UK is the most wussified country in the world. This is not an arbitrary opinion that I hold. The UK is a nanny state, where the people in charge treat men as if they are toddlers in day care. This country has the least respect for men and male nature of any country that I am aware of at this time. I don't see how you could be a man and be comfortable living in a society that basically criminalizes the righteous use of force against evil. It's so strange to me when I hear complaints from UK women about how men are not taking responsibility any more, or making commitments, or being ambitious. Well, here's a little newsflash for you. If you treat men like children and resent them using force to defend their homes and businesses, then you are discouraging manliness. The kinds of men you will get then are wussified, feminized men who attempt nothing and defend nothing.

I was having a conversation with a friend of mine who lives in the UK recently. She was explaining to me how women who are under a certain age are *given* government housing if they have babies out-wedlock. What kind of message is that sending? It is telling young women that men are optional, and that they don't have to choose men wisely in order to get one who can do the provider role. So on the one hand, men are punished by the state for protecting, and on the other, they are punished by the state for providing. The state taxes men with jobs to subsidize the losers who get sex without having to commit first. And I know that young women often prefer these men because they don't want a man who has authority from having a job to tell them what to do. (See here for some examples)

The UK has been trying to undermine and replace men who perform the traditional male roles for decades. The role of protecting has been demonized by punishing men who protect their families and businesses. The role of providing has been marginalized through higher taxes, socialized medicine and welfare benefits. And moral and spiritual leadership have been dismantled with pervasive moral relativism, multicultaralism and secularism. Everything that a strong, virtuous man could do to be recognized has been marginalized and discredited by the socialist, feminist government of the UK. UK women have no right to complain now when men act like children – they caused it by punishing men who were only doing what good men are supposed to do in any good society.

Just 70 years ago we lived in the time of British heroes like Eric "Digger" Dowling, Guy Gibson, Douglas Bader, Patrick Reid and Tommy McPherson. I learned from watching World War 2 movies as a child that British men were courageous and fierce, and able to

defend Western civilization from tyranny with force, if necessary. Now all that is going, going, gone thanks to the British socialist welfare state. Men do understand what messages the feminist welfare state is sending by subsidizing single motherhood, taxing men more when their wives stay home, criminalizing self-defense and capitalism, arresting military heroes for owning handguns, discriminating against boys in schools that are dominated by women, and so on. Men understand the message that's being sent there, and they do adjust.

Related posts

- Former soldiers arrested by UK police for defending their business from burglar
- SAS war hero jailed for keeping trophy pistol given to him by Iraqi Army
- Violent crime rate more than doubled in the four years after the 1997 UK gun ban
- If you defend your home from armed intruders in the UK, you get arrested
- UK woman warned for brandishing kitchen knife at trespassers
- UK man charged with murder after defending home from two burglars
- 72-year-old grandmother uses gun to defend her home from intruder
- Woman opens fire on gang of thugs trying to get into her home
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense
- Massachusetts man facing multiple charges for shooting a bear on his property
- Thomas Sowell: Guns can be used defensively to save lives
- 21-year-old man uses legally owned firearm to defend family from three criminals
- Woman raped at gunpoint in "gun free zone" on university campus
- Man uses firearm to defend home and 2-year-old son from criminals
- Great grandmother fires at mugger with legally-owned, legally-carried handgun
- Man who doesn't believe in guns thanks gun owners for protecting him from burglar
- Man shoots robbery suspect to protect his 2-year-old son
- Woman uses gun to defend herself and her children from home intruder
- 12-year-old girl shoots home intruder in the shoulder with legally owned firearm
- Armed bystander stops stabbing outside school
- 14-year old boy uses parents' handgun to deter armed intruder
- Woman defends herself from intruder using legally-owned firearm
- Recently widowed mother uses legally owned gun to defend her child
- Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home

What happened to the economy after Democrats won the House and Senate in 2007?

August 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

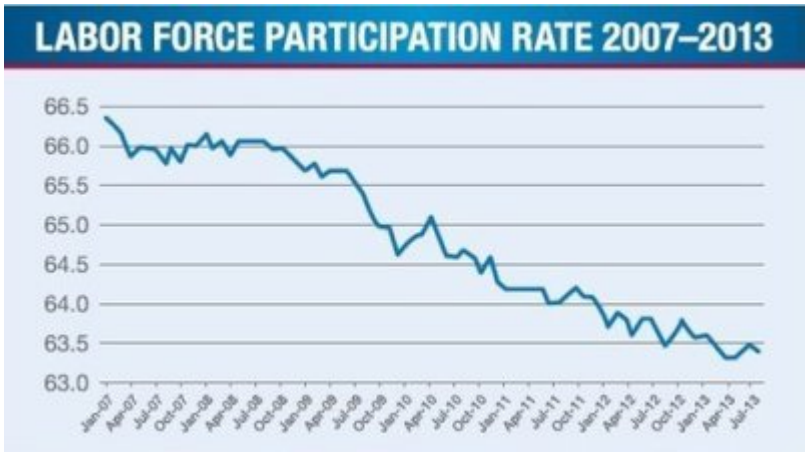

Labor Force Participation Rate from 2007 (Pelosi/Reid) to 2013

Three data points explain what happens when government gets bigger, and job creators get smaller.

First from Investors Business Daily, Obama's failure to reduce health insurance premiums with his big government takeover of health care.

Excerpt:

> The average employer-provided family health insurance premiums have climbed $2,976 since 2009, according to an annual Kaiser Family Foundation survey released this week. They're up $3,671 compared with the year before President Obama took office. That's despite Obama's repeated promises that the health care reform law he championed would cut premiums by $2,500 in his first term.
>
> And while annual premium increases have moderated over the past two years, that's due to trends in the insurance market largely unrelated to ObamaCare, and trends the law could actually reverse.
>
> The Kaiser survey found that the average family premium this year is $16,351, up 4% over last year, and up 22% since 2009. After adjusting for inflation, premiums climbed an average 3.2% a year in Obama's first term, higher than the 2.7% average during President Bush's last four years in office.
>
> During his first campaign for president, Obama repeatedly claimed that his health reform plan would, as he said at a Virginia rally in 2008 "lower premiums by up to $2,500 for a typical family per year."

Now, let's take a look the second failure, as reported by the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> President Obama likes to talk about income inequality, but what matters far more is the actual income of the typical American. And how has the typical American

> household income fared on Obama's watch? Well, the economic "recovery" has now spanned an Olympiad, and during that time the typical American household income has not only dropped—it has dropped more than twice as much as it did during the recession.
>
> New estimates derived from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey by Sentier Research indicate that the real (inflation-adjusted) median annual household income in America has fallen by 4.4 percent during the "recovery," after having fallen by 1.8 during the recession. During the recession, the median American household income fell by $1,002 (from $55,480 to $54,478). During the recovery—that is, from the officially defined end of the recession (in June 2009) to the most recent month for which figures are available (June 2013)—the median American household income has fallen by $2,380 (from $54,478 to $52,098). So the typical American household is making almost $2,400 less per year (in constant 2013 dollars) than it was four years ago, when the Obama "recovery" began.

> Importantly, these income tallies include government payouts such as unemployment compensation and cash welfare. So Obama's method of funneling ever-more money and power to Washington, and then selectively divvying some of it back out, clearly isn't working for the typical American family.

And finally, the third example, from the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> In 35 states, welfare benefits pay more than a minimum wage job, according to a new study by the libertarian Cato Institute, and in 13 states welfare pays more than $15 per hour.
>
> "One of the single best ways to climb out of poverty is taking a job, but as long as welfare provides a better standard of living than an entry-level job, recipients will continue to choose it over work," said Michael Tanner, senior policy analyst and co-author of the study.
>
> The study is an updated version of one Tanner put out in 1995 that estimated the full value of welfare benefits packages across the states. The 1995 study found that such tax-free welfare benefits greatly exceeded the poverty level and "their dollar value was greater than the amount of take-home income a worker would receive from an entry-level job."
>
> Despite efforts to curb welfare spending, many welfare programs and benefits have continued to outpace the income that many workers can receive for working an entry-level job, which disincentivizes work, according to the study.
>
> "The current welfare system provides such a high level of benefits that it acts as a disincentive for work," reads the study. "Welfare currently pays more than a minimum-wage job in 35 states, even after accounting for the Earned Income Tax

> Credit, and in 13 states it pays more than $15 per hour."
>
> According to the study, the federal government funds 126 separate programs designed to support low-income earners. Seventy-two of these programs provide cash or in-kind benefits to recipients. This is on top of additional welfare programs operated by state and local governments.
>
> Welfare recipients in Hawaii get the most benefits, according to Tanner, at $29.13 per hour — or $60,590 pre-tax income annually. However, the state's minimum wage is only $7.25 per hour, according to the Labor Department. Hawaiians on welfare also earn 167 percent of the median salary in the state, which is only $36,275.

What if a fireman showed up in front of your house on your birthday and claimed that he wanted to put out the candles on your birthday cake because they were a fire hazard? What if he read out a long, passionate, prepared speech about how much he wanted to put out fires? What if he then dumped a bucket of gasoline on your cake? What if your house caught fire and he claimed that you should let him keep throwing gas on the fire to put it out? What if you found out that this person was a lawyer and a community organizer, and knew nothing at all about putting fires out? Obama was not prepared to run the economy, and, as expected, he spent a ton of money without getting the results he said he was going to get. He gave speeches about jobs and poverty and everything he's done has been to increase unemployment and increase poverty – and now we are $17 trillion dollars in debt. Speeches about achieving objective X during a campaign don't necessarily translate into achieving objective X. You actually have to know what you are doing in order to achieve objectives, preferably because you've done it before in real life.

The Mysterious Drew lectures on Christianity and the culture war in Defenders

August 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Drew's blog is here. He taught Dr. William Lane Craig's Defenders class for two weeks in a row while Dr. Craig was in Australia. He chose to focus on secularism.

Note: Drew has some problems with the microphone for the first 2.5 minutes of part 1. Be patient.

Part 1 deals with how Europe and America became secular in different ways. (You can read his essay for part 1 here)

Part 1 topics:

- Secularism: the attempt to take values based on religion (e.g. – Judeo-Christian values) out of the public square
- Television programs that are targeted to more thoughtful viewers favor secular or liberal worldviews
- Consider the sexual revolution – a new set of beliefs about sex are being pushed into the culture
- Sex revolution includes: same-sex marriage, pornography, hookup culture, no-fault divorce
- The effect of the sexual revolution has been to introduce widespread fatherlessness, which is very bad for children
- The sexual revolution is being pushed in the popular culture, but also in the school sexual education programs
- You can see where secularism has led to by looking at Europe, which has largely rejected its Christian roots
- For example, Germany and Sweden are very aggressive about stamping out homeschooling
- They do this because they are trying to push a government-approved set of beliefs and meanings onto children
- How bad could it get? You can look at how Orthodox Judaism was persecuted in Russia after the communist revolution
- How did Europe become so secular?
- Wars in Europe between Protestants and Catholics caused people to think that theistic religion was bad
- Secularists first attacked theism philosophically by trying to replace it with deism – the view that miracles do not occur
- Secularists then pushed a radical empirism which attempted to reduce religious claims to meaningless irrationality
- The Christian church responded by retreating from philosophical and theological claims and focusing on moral claims

- That's how Europe became secular, but how did America become secular?
- America became secular because Christianity was transformed from a knowledge tradition to an emotional tradition
- Pastors started to move away from presenting Christianity as *true* and instead presented it as *emotionally fulfilling*
- Pastors emphasized personal experiences instead of philosophical theology and apologetics
- European ideas arrived: deism, Darwinism, Bible criticism, etc.
- Christianity responded to this by abandoning the centers of learning it had founded (universities) into pious isolation
- As the universities became more secular, they turned out the next generation of influencers, including the media
- This retreat from intellectual engagement was augmented by a fixation on end-times speculation (e.g. Left Behind)
- (Drew talks to Jeremy, a philosophy student at Georgia State University, about whether Christianity is respected in his classes)
- How politicians and the media used the Scopes Monkey Trial to marginalize Christianity as anti-science
- The perception of Christians in the public square changed – they were viewed as ignorant, irrational and anti-science
- Instead of causing Christians to work harder at science, they became even *more* fundamentalist, and less influential
- Christians today are a tiny minority of influential groups, e.g. – scientists, media, etc.
- In contrast, secular Jews, who tend to grow up in a culture that values learning, have a much greater influence
- Even if Christians try to retreat to the country where they can homeschool, there is no hiding from the Internet
- Which organizations are working against secularism today?
- Example of what Christians can do: Plantinga's refutation of the problem of evil
- Example of what Christians can do: widespread use of ultrasound to move people to the pro-life view
- Example of what Christians can do: Liberty University's effort to produce Christians who can work in media
- A story about William Lane Craig and a secular physicist who had lost her faith

People must have liked what they heard and saw in the first week, because he got a big turnout in the second week.

Part 2 deals with practical tips for engaging in the culture. (You can read his essay for part 2 here)

Topics in Part 2:

- The real root cause of opposition to Christianity is from the sexual revolution
- For example, moral relativism is so popular in the university, but it is almost entirely

driven by sexual liberation
- Evangelism and culture-shaping are not the same thing – each requires a different set of skills
- Where do people get their information? Public school, news media, late night comedy shows, etc.
- Two things for every Christian need to do: 1) Get informed, and 2) Get involved
- First: you do not need to be smarter than average. Dr. Craig is a leading scholar because he studies 9 hours a day
- Implying that people with influence are "smart" just provides us with an excuse not to try if we are not "smart"
- Ordinary Christians need to be willing to give up fun more than they need to be naturally "smart"
- Asks Cody: what about that Christian apologist who hung out mostly with internet atheists and then became one
- Famous quantum chemist: you're right, I am not much smarter than most people, I just work a lot harder at it
- Drew: to get informed, you should follow good Christian blogs like Apologetics 315 and Wintery Knight
- Drew knows Wintery Knight personally and WK is someone who knows apologetics but he also knows other things
- WK connects the Christian worldview to lots different things, e.g. = marriage – he can find you the right people and books
- (Drew holds up "What is Marriage?" book) This is the best book to argue the same-sex marriage issue
- (Drew hold up "The Case for Life" book) This is the best book to argue the pro-life position
- Slacktivism: don't just send people links that you find on the Internet – read the articles and books and then talk about them
- (Drew holds up the Lee Strobel "Case for" books) These are the best introductory books on basic Christian apologetics
- Audio books are a great way for people to take in the information, and you can get them for free from the library
- The Internet is not the best place for arguing about the things you learn – face to face conversations are much better
- Biola's apologetics certificate program is an excellent resource, and it's all audio lectures so you just listen to them
- You can get free apologetics audio from Apologetics 315 and Phil Fernandes
- We also need to learn how to how to change the culture and how the other side changes the culture
- To really make a difference, then a graduate degree might be for you – especially the M.A. in apologetics from Biola
- The university is also very important – Christianity needs to be represented in the university

- Influential people like Supreme Court justices come out of the university, which is why we need to be there
- The Discovery Institute is doing the most to provide a credible rival to naturalistic science
- They have a budget of $4 million dollars and they are punching way above their weight
- If every evangelical sent them $20, they'd have a budget of $1.2 billion – what could they do with that?
- (Drew puts a check for $20 for Discovery Institute in an envelope and seals it, to show how it's done)
- The Truth Project, which is put out by Focus on the Family – it's another excellent training resource
- When it comes to politics, focus on discussing policy issues, not on pushing particular candidates
- If every evangelical Christian just *pulled their own weight*, it would make a big difference
- It all starts by making the decision to take some leisure time to do things that really work

You can also find the list of recommended resources for both weeks here. This was the handout that he mentioned.

I could not agree with him more on his selections on the marriage debate and the abortion debate. I have bought at least a half-dozen of each of those for people. And I highly recommend getting the Strobel books on audio, especially the Case for a Creator. *Love that book.* Listen to it a bunch a times and you will start to talk like Lee Strobel.

I listened to all the Biola University lectures before they even had the certificate program, along with the Stand to Reason Masters Series in Christian Thought and about 60 Veritas Forum leture sets. Those things probably did the most for me in terms of turning me from engineer to apologetics-enabled engineer. It's funny because what I do these days is listen to Apologetics 315 interviews and Phil Fernandes lectures. I was listening to the Fernandes lectures on Roman Catholicism that he mentioned on a recent long drive to visit my parents (Dina recommended them to me).

He mentions the Biola M.A. in apologetics, but I want to do the Biola M.A. in Science and Religion. That's my "mid-life crisis" plan. A new roadster and the Biola M.A. in Science and Religion.

The point he made about giving money to the Discovery Institute is important. This week I am sending $300 to bring a scholar to a major university (total for this effort is $900) and another $300 for pro-life training and debates. Money matters. If you are going to college, study something that pays well and be generous. It's one way to make a difference.

I think he's right when he talks about everyone pulling their own weight. I spend about

2-3 hours a day reading and blogging. I donate a portion of my earnings to Christian scholars who study and/or speak at the university. I support Christian students who are doing degrees in philosophy, science and engineering. In church, I don't do anything, because they don't even know about me there, but I have a network of friends who are more sociable who do things in church, like organize lectures, debates and apologetics book studies.

I got started on this by putting in the time on some of the things he mentioned in part 2 of his talk. The basic things to do are reading introductory books on apologetics, especially the ones on philosophy of religion, historical Jesus and physical sciences. If you can't read, then at least get hold of lectures from Biola University and listen to those, along with Lee Strobel audio books, Brian Auten interviews, Phil Fernandes lectures and William Lane Craig debates. Just put them in the car and listen, and soon you'll be sounding just like them.

New study finds that many young people won't purchase Obamacare plans

August 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. David Hogberg of the National Center for Public Policy Research explains how Obamacare affects young people.

Here's the executive summary:

> If the ObamaCare health insurance exchanges are to function properly, it is crucial that a substantial number of people ages 18-34 join them. This age group that is young and relatively healthy must purchase health insurance on the exchanges in order to "cross-subsidize" people who are older and sicker. Without the young and healthy, the exchanges will enter a "death spiral" where only the older and sicker participate and price of insurance premiums will increase precipitously.
>
> This study finds that in 2014 many single people aged 18-34 who do not have children will have a substantial financial incentive to forego insurance on the exchanges and instead pay the individual mandate penalty of $95 or one percent of income. About 3.7 million of those ages 18-34 will be at least $500 better off if they forgo insurance and pay the penalty. More than 3 million will be $1,000 better off if they go the same route. This raises the likelihood that an insufficient number of young and healthy people will participate in the exchanges, thereby leading to a death spiral.

The design of the plan is to tax younger, healthier people – especially men – in order to obtain the money to pay for heavy users of health care.

> To compel the young and healthy to purchase insurance, the architects of ObamaCare included an individual mandate that requires individuals to either buy insurance or pay a penalty. The penalty, which increases over time, is whichever is greater: $95 or one percent of income in 2014, $325 or two percent of income in 2015, and $695 or 2.5 percent of income in 2016 and thereafter.
>
> […]The gender breakdown of these individuals presents another problem. Women have higher rates of health utilization than men, including more visits to primary-care physicians and greater use of diagnostic tests and emergency care. However, as Table 3 shows, **roughly two-thirds of the individuals for whom insurance will cost at least $1,000 more than the fine are men.**

Hard to see why any young man would have voted Democrat, and yet many did. Did they know that they were voting for a tax on themselves at a time when many of them are poorly educated by government-run schools, and can't even find jobs? How can you pay a fine for not having health care when you don't have a proper education or a proper job?

The net effect of the “community rating” and “guaranteed issue” provisions of Obamacare will be to raise health insurance premiums and force private companies to stop offering plans:

> If the exchanges do not attract a sufficient number of people in the 18-34 age demographic, they will eventually enter an insurance “death spiral.” This occurs when the young and healthy drop out of the “insurance pool.” This leads to “adverse selection” in which insurance is only attractive to those who are generally older and sicker. If the insurance pool is comprised largely of people who are older and sicker, then insurance prices will rise to cover their costs. That rate increase causes even more young and healthy people drop their insurance, leaving the pools even older and sicker than before, and so on. Eventually, all but a few insurers will be forced to discontinue their business on the exchanges because they can no longer make a profit. Fewer insurers means less competition, resulting in even higher insurance premiums.
>
> Community rating and guaranteed issue are catalysts for a death spiral. In its strictest form, community rating means that insurers must charge everyone the same premium, regardless of factors such as health status and age. Guaranteed issue means that an insurer must sell a policy to a consumer anytime.
>
> Under ObamaCare, the exchanges use a modified version of both of these regulations. Its form of community rating doesn’t allow insurers to vary rates based on health status. It does allow, however, for modification of premiums if one smokes and to compensate for age (although in a more restricted manner than the market currently does). Regarding guaranteed issue, insurers must sell policies to all comers but (with a few exceptions) only during the annual open enrollment period from October to December.
>
> Both of these rules give young and healthy people big incentives to forgo insurance coverage altogether. Community rating means young people have a reduced incentive to buy insurance since they will pay a premium that is above the market rate. Many who are currently purchasing insurance in the individual market, for example, will see a substantial premium increase if they switch to the exchange.
>
> In a market without guaranteed issue, consumers run the risk of insurers not selling them policies when they get seriously ill. But that risk is largely gone under the exchanges. For instance, a young person who gets a serious illness in June only has to wait until October to sign up for insurance and then wait until January 1 of the next year to receive coverage. Combined, community rating and guaranteed issue give the young and healthy big incentives to forgo insurance until they are sick.

“Community rating” and “guaranteed issue” have actually already been tried at the state level. What happened then?

This:

> The late Conrad Meier, then a senior fellow in health care policy for the Heartland Institute, examined what happened when these two regulations were instituted on the state level in his 2005 monograph “Destroying Insurance Markets.” In the early 1990s eight states — Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Vermont and Washington — imposed community rating and guaranteed issue on their individual insurance markets. The result, according to Meier, was the above-described death spiral.
>
> **For example, in 1992 the New Jersey legislature adopted community rating and guaranteed issue rules for its individual insurance market with the passage of the “Individual Health Coverage Program.” The monthly premium for family coverage from Aetna rose from $769 in 1994 to $6,005 in 2005, a whopping increase of 683 percent! Other insurers saw similar increases.**
>
> **Before the reforms began, there were about 28 insurers covering the New Jersey individual market. By 2007 there were only seven. According to the Census Bureau, the number of people in New Jersey’s individual market fell from about 998,000 in 1994 to 630,000 in 2005, a decline of 37 percent.**

It’s pretty clear that Obamacare was designed to replicate this same effect that’s been observed in states at a national level, paving the way for single payer health care. What will Americans think when their healthcare is controlled by the kind of people who run USPS, Amtrak, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and the IRS?

Obama administration blocks Louisiana school voucher program

August 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> The Justice Department is trying to stop a school vouchers program in Louisiana that attempts to help families send their children to independent schools instead of under-performing public schools.
>
> The agency wants to stop the program, led by Republican Gov. Bobby Jindal, in any school district that remains under a desegregation court order.
>
> In papers filed in U.S. District Court in New Orleans, the agency said Louisiana distributed vouchers in 2012-13 to roughly 570 public school students in districts that are still under such orders and that "many of those vouchers impeded the desegregation process."
>
> The federal government argues that allowing students to attend independent schools under the voucher system could create a racial imbalance in public school systems protected by desegregation orders.
>
> Jindal — who last year expanded the program that started in 2008 — said this weekend that the department's action is "shameful" and said President Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder "are trying to keep kids trapped in failing public schools against the wishes of their parents."
>
> The Justice Department says Louisiana has given vouchers this school year to students in at least 22 of 34 districts remaining under desegregation orders.
>
> Jindal called school choice "a moral imperative."

Vouchers are a way of helping poor, minority students to get a quality education by letting them choose to attend better schools – any school the parents choose.

This lady from the Cato Institute explains in a 5-minute video why vouchers are a good thing.

A longer video featuring John Stossel is here:

You can learn more about vouchers below.

Related posts

- Indiana voucher program offers hope to low-income students
- Secretary of Education rescinds previously awarded D.C. vouchers
- Arizona Supreme Court rules voucher program unconstitutional
- New study: private religious schools outperform public schools and public charter schools

- How two moms halted the Common Core curriculum in Indiana
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools
- Good news: school choice victory in Indiana, pro-life victory in North Dakota
- Atlanta public schools caught helping students to cheat on standardized tests
- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- 10% of US students are subject to sexual misconduct by school staff
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Eleven schools teaching children to praise and worship Obama
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

Brian Auten interviews pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf on pro-life apologetics

August 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about pro-life apologetics

Scott Klusendorf is the director of the excellent Life Training Institute, and he's been interviewed by Brian Auten on Apologetics 315.

Details of the interview:

> Today's interview is with Scott Klusendorf, president of Life Training Institute. LTI is the first place to look for excellent resources to get better equipped to defend the pro-life position. Scott talks about defining abortion and its terms, the issue of the debate, the legal history of abortion, defending the pro-life view using science and philosophy, the four pillars of the pro-life argument, answering a litany of objections to the pro-life position, the right and wrong use of emotional appeals, taking on the right tone in the debate, how to get better equipped, and more.

Grab the MP3 file here at Apologetics 315.

The article Scott mentions "How to Defend Your Pro-Life Views in 5 Minutes or Less" is worth the read, and it's a good summary of some of the points he makes in the lecture.

If you like this interview, please be sure and buy the best *basic* book on pro-life apologetics – Scott Klusendorf's "The Case for Life".

And there is actually a full transcript, and here's an excerpt:

BA: Great stuff. Now I want you to go into these pillars if you will of defending the pro-life position with science and philosophy, and in your web site prolifetraining.com one of the things that you provide is sort of a four point acronym, some would say sled S-L-E-D. Can you lay out what those main pillars are and their relevance to the issue?

SK: Well as I mentioned a moment ago, pro-life advocates argue that elective abortion unjustly takes the life of a developing human being, and we defend that claim using science and philosophy. We use science to determine what kind of thing the unborn is, and we use philosophy to show that there's no relevant deference between the embryos we once were and the adults we are today that would justify killing us at that earlier stage of development. Scientifically, as I mentioned just moments ago embryology text books worldwide indicate that from the very beginning you and I were distinct living whole human beings. You can't see that I'm doing this right now, Brian, but at the moment I'm picking cells off the back of my hand. These cells, which we call somatic cells, contain my entire DNA and coding. But you don't thing I just committed mass murder by sending a couple hundred of those puppies hurling to their deaths on the floor in front of me. And the reason is, you know that these cells though they contain my DNA and coding are merely part of a larger human being, me. They are not distinct whole living organisms the way that you were when you were an embryo. The way I was when I was an embryo. In other words, there is a difference in kind between each of our bodily cells and the embryonic human beings we once were. That's what science teaches us; that's what the science of embryology lays down for us.Philosophically, we argue using that SLED acronym that you mentioned a moment ago that there's no difference between that embryo we once were and the adult we are today. The adults we are today that justify killing us at that earlier stage of development and as Steven Schwarz points out, the differences between that embryo and the adult that you are today are one of size, level of development, environment and degree of dependency. Think of the acronym SLED and you will remember those four differences. Size, yeah you were smaller as an embryo, but since when does body size determine the rights that you have. Shaquille O'Neal, the seven foot two basketball star with the Boston Celtics, is a foot taller than I am, but he doesn't have a greater right to life simply because he's bigger.

Level development? Sure, we were less developed as embryos but since when is a matter of principal does that mean we can kill you? Two-year-old girls are less developed than twenty-year-old young women. We don't think though the two year old girl has less to a right to life simply because she can't function at the level that the twenty year old can. Level of size, I should say level of development. What about environment; where you are located there is the letter "E" in that SLED acronym. You were once in the womb now you're out but sense when does were you are determine what you are? When you walk from your

> living room into the studio to do this interview. You changed location but you didn't stop being you. When I jump on an airplane and fly from Atlanta to London's Heathrow airport. I get off the plane I'm in a new location, but I'm the same being as I was when I left Atlanta. If that's true how does a journey of eight inches down the birth canal suddenly change me from non-human, non-valuable thing that we can kill? To a valuable human being that we can't kill. And the answer is, if I wasn't already human and valuable I'm not going to get there by changing my address. And then finally, degree of dependency—yes we depended on our mother for survival but sense when does dependency on another human being mean we can kill you? Conjoined twins depend on each other for survival and unless one of the twins is killing its partner we don't go ahead and slit the throat of both twins simply because they can't live independent of each other. Size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency, think "SLED" those are the only four differences between that embryo you once were and the adult you are today. And the pro-lifer would argue that not one of those four differences justifies killing you at that earlier stage.

You can see Scott in a debate about abortion right here.

And if you like that interview, I have some more things for you to read from Dr. Francis Beckwith.

Learn more by reading

Frank Beckwith is the author of "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice". He wrote that book for Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal.

Here are four essays that answer common arguments in favor of legalized abortion.

- Part I. The Appeal to Pity
- Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem
- Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?
- Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

I have a copy of Dr. Beckwith's previous book "Politically Correct Death", which I read bit-by-bit on my lunch hours 10 years ago. Excellent stuff.

Department of Defense training manual labels Founding Fathers as “extremists”

August 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Caller reports. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> A Department of Defense teaching guide meant to fight extremism advises students that rather than “dressing in sheets” modern-day radicals “will talk of individual liberties, states’ rights, and how to make the world a better place,” and describes 18th-century American patriots seeking freedom from the British as belonging to “extremist ideologies.”
>
> The guide comes from documents obtained by Judicial Watch and is authored by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, a DoD-funded diversity training center.
>
> Under a section titled “extremist ideologies,” the document states, “In U.S. history, there are many examples of extremist ideologies and movements. The colonists who sought to free themselves from British rule and the Confederate states who sought to secede from the Northern states are just two examples.”
>
> Besides a brief reference to 9/11 and another to the Sudanese civil war, the guide makes no mention of Islamic extremism.
>
> **The guide also repeatedly tells readers to use the Southern Poverty Law Center as a resource in identifying hate groups. The SPLC has previously come under fire for its leftist bias and tendency to identify conservative organizations such as the American Family Association as hate groups.**
>
> **In August 2012, an attempted terrorist attack occurred at the Family Research Council, another conservative organization the SPLC has branded a hate group. FRC president Tony Perkins said the SPLC’s designation prompted the attack, stating the gunman “was given a license to shoot … by organizations like the Southern Poverty Law Center.”**
>
> In a statement, Judicial Watch president Tom Fitton slammed the Department of Defense documents for what he described as their bias against conservatives.
>
> “The Obama administration has a nasty habit of equating basic conservative values with terrorism. And now, in a document full of claptrap, its Defense Department suggests that the Founding Fathers, and many conservative Americans, would not be welcome in today’s military,” said Fitton. ”And it is striking that some the language in this new document echoes the IRS targeting language of conservative and Tea Party investigations. After reviewing this

> document, one can't help but worry for the future and morale of our nation's armed forces."

The Elusive Wapiti lists some of the factors in the document which are linked to extremists like the Founding Fathers, and then comments:

> I suppose it's a marker of my supposed extremism that the Left exhibits most or all of these so-called "extremist traits". For isn't it the very operative definition of a Liberalist as one who engages in Alinskyite fix-it-freeze-it-polarize-it *ad hominem* attacks against his/her opponents, who makes sweeping generalizations of their ideological adversaries, who makes repeated assertions unsupported by facts, sometimes long after their assertions have been debunked, who view their adversaries as evil rather than merely misinformed, who'd readily resort to intimidation and sloganeering rather than rational discourse, who assume they're morally superior to all those unevolved knuckle-draggers in flyover territory, and who themselves are in thrall to Malthusian apocalyptic dogma (overpopulation, environmentalism, anthropogenic global warming)?
>
> If I didn't know any better, I'd say this training manual joins other documents shown to DoD personnel, characteristic of a consistent, maybe even extremist, anti-Right worldview, as little more than a cynical attempt at projection…to deflect criticism away from one's behaviors by accusing your opponents of doing exactly what you yourself do.

Todd Starnes, who follows the persecution of Christians in the military, commented on this story over at Fox News.

Excerpt:

> It's not the first time the military has been caught using training materials that depict conservatives and Christians as extremists.
>
> In April Fox News obtained an email sent by a lieutenant colonel at Fort Campbell to three dozen subordinates warning them to be on the lookout for any soldiers who might be members of "domestic hate groups" like the FRC and the American Family Association.
>
> "When we see behaviors that are inconsistent with Army Values – don't just walk by – do the right thing and address the concern before it becomes a problem," the email advised.
>
> At the time the Army denied there was any attack on Christians or those who hold religious beliefs.
>
> "The notion that the Army is taking an anti-religion or anti-Christian stance is contrary to any of our policies, doctrines and regulations," an Army spokesman told Fox News at the time.
>
> However, in a separate incident, an Army training instructor listed Evangelical

> Christianity and Catholicism as examples of religious extremism – along with Al Qaeda and Hamas.
>
> The same Army spokesman said the training session was an "isolated incident not condoned by the Department of the Army."
>
> Fitton told Fox News the military seems to be having a lot of isolated incidents and it appears the Pentagon is sending a message to Christians.
>
> "They are putting out the not-welcome sign to conservative Christians," Fitton said. "They are trying to make the military an unwelcome place for conservative Christians."

So the person who wrote this is citing the Southern Poverty Law Center, which was a source of information for the homosexual activist Floyd Lee Corkins II who tried to shoot up the Family Research Council think tank. Isn't it ironic that the author of an anti-conservative document is citing the same source that supplied the information used by a convicted domestic terrorist who attacked a conservative organization with guns? I find that ironic. I also find it ironic that the military is so politically correct that it is trying to label what a real domestic terrorist like Nidal Hasan did as "workplace violence". I find that ironic. Ironic and perplexing. So, Congressman Paul Ryan advocates for small government, and he's an extremist domestic terrorist, but Floyd Corkins and Nidal Hasan don't even get a mention in a DOD training manual.

Do you think this person has ever read a book by someone like Thomas Sowell or a Robert George or a Mark Levin? I think that they probably went through their entire education without ever reading a single thing written by an intelligent conservative. They probably can't even name an intelligent conservative. But they still got a job in the government, working at taxpayers' expense. I think that we should really reform the government-run public school system that produces people like this DOD writer, so that we can get students graduating with a higher degree of open-mindedness, tolerance and critical thinking. It probably wouldn't hurt if we steered more students toward math and science instead of the liberal arts areas, which are more vulnerable to this sort of fact-free demonization of conservatives.

Related posts

- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training
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- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"

- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center

What factors are contributing to the higher education bubble?

August 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the Wall Street Journal was discussed at length by Dennis Prager on his radio show yesterday.

Excerpt:

> College costs have continued to explode despite 50 years of ostensibly benevolent government interventions, according to Mr. Vedder, and the president's new plan could exacerbate the trend. By Mr. Vedder's lights, the cost conundrum started with the Higher Education Act of 1965, a Great Society program that created federal scholarships and low-interest loans aimed at making college more accessible.
>
> In 1964, federal student aid was a mere $231 million. By 1981, the feds were spending $7 billion on loans alone, an amount that doubled during the 1980s and nearly tripled in each of the following two decades, and is about $105 billion today. Taxpayers now stand behind nearly $1 trillion in student loans.
>
> Meanwhile, grants have increased to $49 billion from $6.4 billion in 1981. By expanding eligibility and boosting the maximum Pell Grant by $500 to $5,350, the 2009 stimulus bill accelerated higher ed's evolution into a middle-class entitlement. Fewer than 2% of Pell Grant recipients came from families making between $60,000 and $80,000 a year in 2007. Now roughly 18% do.
>
> This growth in subsidies, Mr. Vedder argues, has fueled rising prices: "It gives every incentive and every opportunity for colleges to raise their fees."
>
> Many colleges, he notes, are using federal largess to finance Hilton-like dorms and Club Med amenities. Stanford offers more classes in yoga than Shakespeare. A warning to parents whose kids sign up for "Core Training": The course isn't a rigorous study of the classics, but rather involves rigorous exercise to strengthen the glutes and abs.
>
> Or consider Princeton, which recently built a resplendent $136 million student residence with leaded glass windows and a cavernous oak dining hall (paid for in part with a $30 million tax-deductible donation by Hewlett-Packard CEO Meg Whitman). The dorm's cost approached $300,000 per bed.
>
> […]Some college officials are also compensated more handsomely than CEOs. Since 2000, New York University has provided $90 million in loans, many of them zero-interest and forgivable, to administrators and faculty to buy houses and summer homes on Fire Island and the Hamptons.
>
> Former Ohio State President Gordon Gee (who resigned in June after making defamatory remarks about Catholics) earned nearly $2 million in compensation

last year while living in a 9,630 square-foot Tudor mansion on a 1.3-acre estate. The Columbus Camelot includes $673,000 in art decor and a $532 shower curtain in a guest bathroom. Ohio State also paid roughly $23,000 per month for Mr. Gee's soirees and half a million for him to travel the country on a private jet.

[…]Colleges have also used the gusher of taxpayer dollars to hire more administrators to manage their bloated bureaucracies and proliferating multicultural programs. The University of California system employs 2,358 administrative staff in just its president's office.

"Every college today practically has a secretary of state, a vice provost for international studies, a zillion public relations specialists," Mr. Vedder says. "My university has a sustainability coordinator whose main message, as far as I can tell, is to go out and tell people to buy food grown locally. . . . Why? What's bad about tomatoes from Pennsylvania as opposed to Ohio?"

[…]Today, only about 7% of recent college grads come from the bottom-income quartile compared with 12% in 1970 when federal aid was scarce. All the government subsidies intended to make college more accessible haven't done much for this population, says Mr. Vedder. They also haven't much improved student outcomes or graduation rates, which are around 55% at most universities (over six years).

[…]"Thirty-percent of the adult population has college degrees," he notes. "The Department of Labor tells us that only 20% or so of jobs require college degrees. We have 115,520 janitors in the United States with bachelor's degrees or more. Why are we encouraging more kids to go to college?"

Mr. Vedder sees similarities between the government's higher education and housing policies, which created a bubble and precipitated the last financial crisis. "In housing, we had artificially low interest rates. The government encouraged people with low qualifications to buy a house. Today, we have low interest rates on student loans. The government is encouraging kids to go to school who are unqualified just as it encouraged people to buy a home who are unqualified."

The higher-ed bubble, he says, is "already in the process of bursting," which is reflected by all of the "unemployed or underemployed college graduates with big debts." The average student loan debt is $26,000, but many graduates, especially those with professional degrees, have six-figure balances.

Mr. Obama wants to help more students discharge their debts by capping their monthly payments at 10% of their discretionary income and forgiving their outstanding balances after 20 years. Grads who take jobs in government or at nonprofits already can discharge their debt after a decade.

"Somehow working for the private sector is bad and working for the public sector is good? I don't see on what basis one would make that conclusion," Mr. Vedder says. "If I had to make some judgment, I would do just the opposite."

He adds that the president's approach "creates a moral hazard problem. What it

> signals to current and future loan borrowers is that I don't have to take these repayment of loans very seriously. . . . I don't have to worry too much about getting a high-paying job." It encourages "sociology and anthropology majors compared with math and engineering majors."

The most trouble thing for me is that we are taxing money away from current earners, and borrowing money from future earners, in order to subsidize many, many degrees that will never pay back the initial investment we are making to send them to college. The more that government jumps in to pay people to do useless degrees and then doesn't get the money back, the more students are going choose useless degrees. Other countries like New Zealand and Canada have major problems right now because these loans are not being paid back. That's what happens when government takes over student loan administration – they aren't as concerned about being paid back.

What's also troubling to me is that people who choose not to go to college but instead to go to trade school or start their own businesses are subsidizing the worthless degrees that so many people choose to pursue today. Why would the government waste taxpayer money on these worthless degrees? Well, because college is four years of liberal indoctrination. Students are so stupid that they will actually accept the propaganda pushed by professors as if it were true, even though these professors often have no experience in the private sector themselves. And these students will have the illusion of being educated as they vote for the secular left come election time. They don't even realize that they are voting to harm their prospective employers and increase the national debt which they will have to pay back. When I try to talk to them about it, they seem to fall back on name-calling instead of making any kind of factual case. This seems to be the result of college as well. They've learned to demonize their opponents rather than debate them with evidence.

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

August 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to MP3 file)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> His new book "The Edge of Evolution" takes his conclusions further, arguing that the Darwinian processes of random mutation and natural selection are incapable of producing the variation and complexity we see in most of life.
>
> So can we conclude that life was intelligently designed by a creator?
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

I get the impression that Fox learned everything he knows about ID by reading Darwinists.

The MP3 file is here.

The summary below is rated VERY SNARKY.

Summary

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism
- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program
- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent
- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true
- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's

experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah

- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet X!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren't going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

How the weak Democrat foreign policy caused the Syria crisis, and what to do now

August 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East

The UK Telegraph's Nile Gardiner explains how Democrat foreign policy made the current crisis in Syria worse.

Excerpt:

> Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria is monstrous. A hundred thousand civilians have died at its hands in the last two years, and more than a million Syrians have fled the country since it began its war of attrition against rebel groups. It is almost certainly responsible for the massacre of up to 1,300 people in a suburb of Damascus last week through the use of chemical weapons. Many of the victims included women and children. Assad is a Baathist thug of the highest order, a figure of unremitting evil with few parallels in the modern world. The downfall of his dictatorship cannot come soon enough, and no peace can be realistically achieved in Syria until Assad goes.
>
> In the face of Assad's brutality, however, Washington and the West as a whole have been largely impotent. The White House's strategy has been one of abject confusion, with no clear leadership from the president. Barack Obama's approach has been one of "leading from behind," a phrase first coined by one of his own advisers. He has been content to farm out US foreign policy to a feckless United Nations, and has kowtowed to a ruthless Moscow, which views Syria as a client state, a useful bulwark against American influence in the Middle East, and a thorn in the side of the world's superpower.
>
> The Russian "reset," pioneered by Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State, has been one of the biggest foreign policy flops of the modern era, involving an

> extraordinary degree of deference towards a major strategic adversary. Clinton, it should be recalled, referred to Assad as "a reformer" as recently as April 2011, while former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, as well as former Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman John Kerry, made a number of trips to Damascus to meet with Assad prior to the civil war.
>
> Similarly, the Obama administration has been content to allow the Iranians to plough money, arms and military personnel into Syria in support of Assad, providing a vital lifeline for the pariah state. Washington's engagement strategy with Tehran has been a massive folly, simply emboldening the Mullahs with no consequences.

My Dad and I were talking about what the United States should do now to deter the use of chemical weapons, and we came up with two alternatives. Use our covert operations capability (such as it is) to kill Assad or go with a tactical military strike against the top of the Assad regime – either surface-to-surface missiles or standoff air strike. I think that Obama has weakened the clandestine services so much over the years by exposing their methods, exposing their sources, prosecuting them for doing their jobs, etc. that they are not strong enough to do the job. So it's going to have to be a more messy military strike against the top level of the Assad regime, if the goal is to solve the problem.

Foreign policy expert Bret Stephens writes about that option in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Should President Obama decide to order a military strike against Syria, his main order of business must be to kill Bashar Assad. Also, Bashar's brother and principal henchman, Maher. Also, everyone else in the Assad family with a claim on political power. Also, all of the political symbols of the Assad family's power, including all of their official or unofficial residences. The use of chemical weapons against one's own citizens plumbs depths of barbarity matched in recent history only by Saddam Hussein. A civilized world cannot tolerate it. It must demonstrate that the penalty for it will be acutely personal and inescapably fatal.
>
> […]As it is, a strike directed straight at the Syrian dictator and his family is the only military option that will not run afoul of the only red line Mr. Obama is adamant about: not getting drawn into a protracted Syrian conflict. And it is the one option that has a chance to pay strategic dividends from what will inevitably be a symbolic action.
>
> […]On Monday John Kerry spoke with remarkable passion about the "moral obscenity" of using chemical weapons, and about the need to enforce "accountability for those who would use the world's most heinous weapons against the world's most vulnerable people." Amen, Mr. Secretary, especially considering that you used to be Bashar's best friend in Washington.
>
> […]The world can ill-afford a reprise of the 1930s, when the barbarians were given free rein by a West that had lost its will to enforce global order. Yes, a

> Tomahawk aimed at Assad could miss, just as the missiles aimed at Saddam did. But there's also a chance it could hit and hasten the end of the civil war. And there's both a moral and deterrent value in putting Bashar and Maher on the same list that once contained the names of bin Laden and Anwar al-Awlaki.

The rest of the article evaluates alternatives like striking Syria's chemical weapons dumps, but concludes that a strike against the top of the Assad regime as the best option, *if the goal is to solve the problem*. I am not even sure if it is possible to get the top of the Assad regime this way, since we need intelligence to know where they are, and maybe even to point LTIDs at the targets. That can't be done with the push of a button. These options require intelligence work to have been done up front, and we haven't done it. Now we are stuck with the need to deter chemical weapon use, but we have few options and fewer capabilities.

There are two problems with Bret Stephens' preferred scenario. First, the Assad regime has the backing of the Russians and the Iranians. They might not like it if we took out their puppet and his helpers. Second, the influence of the moderates in the Syrian opposition is uncertain. We don't have a clear ally in the Syrian opposition, like we do in Egypt with the Egyptian army. From what I am hearing, the rebels are significantly Al Qaeda. We could have been cultivating those relationships with the moderate faction, but we were not doing that. So the whole thing is very risky. It didn't need to be this bad, but we elected the pacificist multiculturalist moral relativist CYA Democrats in charge, and they've made a mess of the Middle East. Instead of elevating the Muslim Brotherhood in Libya and Egypt, we should have been focused like a laser beam on Syria. We weren't engaged like we should have been.

To quote again from Nile Gardiner's UK Telegraph article:

> Syria is not Iraq or Afghanistan, where the United States had clear-cut military objectives and national interests at stake when it went to war. The conflict in Syria is further complicated by the rise of Islamist groups with links to al-Qaeda, who have thrived amidst the chaos, and in some cases have targeted the Christian minority in the country. The Obama administration has made little serious effort to cultivate pro-Western, non-Islamist rebels in Syria, whose influence has waned, while the Islamists have gained strength.
>
> Ultimately, the Syrian debacle has exposed the emptiness of the Obama doctrine, one that is based upon hand-wringing, appeasement, and the scaling back of American power. President Obama has been content to weaken US influence, while playing a back seat role on the world stage. There are many things the White House could have done to erode Assad's regime over the past two years while strengthening the hand of pro-Western rebels, including aggressively challenging Iranian support for Damascus, forcefully standing up to Moscow at the UN Security Council, coordinating support for the Free Syrian Army among the Gulf States and Turkey, and pressuring the Saudis to crack down on Islamist networks fueling al-Qaeda-tied groups in Syria.

But, of course, the Obama administration did none of those things, because those things would require leadership and vision.

By the way, in case you are wondering where Syria's chemical weapons came from, the most likely scenario is that they were moved from Iraq. We had reliable intelligence before the Iraq war that Saddam had chemical weapons, and evidence emerged later that Iraq's WMDs were moved to Syria.

UPDATE: Ralph Peters who is an expert in foreign policy is saying no to the strike idea. He prefers do nothing to an effective strike (the Bret Stephens option). But Peters doesn't think that Obama will do an effective strike. So I am not sure what to do now. I am hearing that the opposition is not moderate in any way, and we shouldn't be helping them at all by attacking Assad.

Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy paper: gun control doesn't lower murder rate

August 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Doug Ross linked to this study published in the Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy. He writes:

> The Harvard study attempts to answer the question of whether or not banning firearms would reduce murders and suicides. Researchers looked at crime data from several European countries and found that countries with **HIGHER** gun ownership often had **LOWER** murder rates.
>
> Russia, for example, enforces very strict gun control on its people, but its murder rate remains quite high. In fact, the murder rate in Russia is **four times higher**tahn in the "gun-ridden" United States, cites the study. "Homicide results suggest that where guns are scarce other weapons are substituted in killings." In other words, the elimination of guns does not eliminate murder, and in the case of gun-controlled Russia, murder rates are quite high.
>
> The study revealed several European countries with significant gun ownership, like Norway, Finland, Germany and France – had remarkably low murder rates. Contrast that with Luxembourg, "where handguns are totally banned and ownership of any kind of gun is minimal, had a murder rate **nine times higher** than Germany in 2002.
>
> The study found no evidence to suggest that the availability of guns contributes to higher murder rates anywhere in the world. "Of course, it may be speculated that murder rates around the world would be higher if guns were more available. But there is simply no evidence to support this."
>
> The authors also took a look at the effect of gun control laws in various U.S. states, gun ownership in rural and urban areas, and across racial lines. The long and short of it is that a small number of extremely active criminals with lengthy criminal records are responsible for the overwhelming super-majority of all gun crimes, and these criminals are psychopaths that ignore all laws.
>
> The study also cited a previous report that was unable to find a single gun control law implemented in the United States that is proven to have reduced violent crime.

This is not the first time that a study in a presitigious journal has challenged the liberal gun control narrative. People who oppose guns oppose them because of feelings. Guns are scary and guns are loud, they say. That's their reasoning. But if you actually look at the data, you'll find that guns do reduce crime rates.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

If you still think that guns are somehow bad for reducing crime, why not check out a formal academic debate featuring 3 people on each side of the debate?

Stephen C. Meyer debates Michael Ruse about intelligent design and evolution on NPR

August 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Details: (from evil NPR web site)

> About one third of Americans believe in intelligent design, according to a recent Gallup poll. That's the idea that humans evolved over time from lesser life forms – with the process guided by God. It's added a new dimension to the old debate over where humans come from and raised serious concern in the scientific world about mixing faith with science.
>
> - Stephen C. Meyer, author of Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design
> - Michael Ruse, Director of the History and Philosophy of Science Program at Florida State University

The MP3 file is here. (28 minutes)

The following summary is rated S for Slightly Snarky. Reader discretion is advised.

Topics:

- Moderator: (to Meyer) define creationism, evolution, and intelligent design
- Meyer: creationism is based on an interpretation of the Bible
- Meyer: evolution is an unguided process of mutation and selection that produces organisms
- Meyer: intelligent design is the idea that the best explanation for certain features of life
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Where do you disagree?
- Ruse: Intelligent design is similar to creationism, but I won't say how exactly
- Meyer: ID is a good explanation for the sudden origin of animal body plans in the Cambrian era
- Moderator: (to Meyer) Is the designer God? Is the designer the Christian God?
- Meyer: No, ID theory is an inference that is rooted in scientific evidence, not in a religious text
- Meyer: ID can be inferred from the origin of biological information and from molecular machines
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Where do you disagree?
- Ruse: Meyer is disingenuous because ID requires the designer to be God
- Meyer: The biological evidence for intelligent design by itself does not implicate God
- Meyer: The fine-tuning of the cosmos is intelligent design in physics, and that *would* require God
- Moderator: (to Meyer) Explain what the Cambrian explosion is

- Meyer: sudden origin of 36 body plans in 10 million years 530 million years ago
- Moderator: So you think that 36 body plans in 10 million years is too sudden for Darwinian mechanisms to produce?
- Meyer: Yes, for two reasons. One, there are no precursors prior to the start of the explosion in complexity
- Meyer: And two, the complexity of animal life includes code, circuitry, hierarchies – best explained by a designer
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Is it a problem for you?
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that denies that the Ediacaran fauna are precursors to the Cambrian animals
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that denies that microfossils are precursors to the Cambrian animals
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that denies that animal complexity goes from simple to complex in the fossil record
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that shows that the Cambrian explosion took place over a few million years
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that shows that there were complex organ types at the start of the Cambrian explosion
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that denies that we already have a materialist explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Ruse: everything is solved! nothing to see here! (folds arms and beams) I trust that my unsupported assertions have relieved your doubts, yes?
- Moderator: Is intelligent design undermined by more recent science?
- Meyer: no, there is an absence of precursor fossils in the period before the Cambrian explosion
- Meyer: there are other things that make the problem even worse for naturalism, like information from epigenetics
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Answer that
- Ruse: He is just pulling out passages out of context because he is a creationist!
- Moderator: The leftist New Yorker reviewer Gareth Cook says that the Cambrian explosion took tens of millions of years
- Meyer: Actually, the peer-reviewed science is clear that the standard date is at most 10 million nears
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Deny the mainstream date
- Ruse: Well, Prothero says no! Ho ho ho! (folds arms) He just says it. No it’s not published in peer-reviewed research
- Ruse: We know so much more than Darwin did, how could the progress of science disprove my materialist pre-supposition? It’s unpossible!
- Moderator: (to Meyer) Isn’t ID pseudo-science?
- Meyer: If we limit ourselves to materialist explanations only, then we cannot infer intelligence when we see artifacts like the Rosetta Stone
- Meyer: wind and erosion is not an adequate explanation for certain systems – systems that are rich in information

- Meyer: the best explanation is the explanation that relies on known causes – we know that intelligence produces information
- Moderator: (to Meyer) so the intelligence is the best explanation of systems that have information?
- Meyer: yes, think about software code – the best explanation of new computer instructions is an intelligence
- Meyer: we have uniform and repeated experience of intelligence bringing new information into being, and new animals need new information
- Moderator: (to Ruse) must science only work with natural explanations?
- Ruse: intelligent design is religion! Ho ho ho ho! (folds arms)
- Ruse: there is no a priori way of ruling out supernatural causes in order to explain nature
- Ruse: We don't need to introduce supernatural causes to explain information in living systems or in software code
- Ruse: Steve is asking me to explain the Cambrian explosion, but why does he want me to explain that?
- Ruse: How did anything start to fly? How did whales come? There, those questions explain the Cambrian explosion naturalistically
- Ruse: Steve's answer to explain new information is to bring in miracles, like when he said that new computer code requires God
- Ruse: inferring intelligence as an explanation for information like the computer code is religion! God! Creationism! Prayer in schools!
- Ruse: we have to keep looking for naturalistic explanations for the Big Bang, the DNA, the fine-tuning, the Cambrian fossils, etc.
- Ruse: we are never justified in inferring an intelligence to explain information, because that would deny my religion of materialism
- Moderator: (to Ruse) what are the requirements for a theory to be scientific?
- Ruse: any explanation has to be naturalistic, because I am an atheist and that's my religion, and we can't go against my religion
- Ruse: it's "really stupid" to infer God as the explanation of the creation of the entire physical universe or the cosmic fine-tuning
- Moderator: (to Meyer) why is intelligent design so popular when we have court cases saying it is not science?
- Meyer: the Discovery Institute does not have an agenda to teach intelligent design in public schools
- Meyer: intelligent design is about inferring intelligence as a causal explanation for information in living systems, and elsewhere
- Moderator: (to Ruse) are evolutionists unwilling to entertain the possibility of intelligence being the best explanation?
- Ruse: scientists have to make sure that that all their explanations don't go outside of the materialist reservation
- Ruse: intelligent design is evangelical Christianity dressed up to look like science, the Dover judge said so

- Ruse: Meyer is disingenuous! Ho ho ho ho ho! (folds arms contentedly)
- Meyer: first, judges don't decide science, evidence decides science
- Meyer: the Dover people made a mistake by trying to go to the courts to get things into the schools
- Meyer: intelligent design is about research, writing books and papers based on what we learn from science
- Moderator: (to Ruse) is intelligent design dangerous?
- Ruse: yes, intelligent design is not about cosmic fine-tuning, origin of life, molecular machines or Cambrian explosion
- Ruse: intelligent design is about abstinence, prayer in schools, pro-life and man-woman marriage
- Ruse: my reason for opposing ID is the socially conservate agenda which emerges from protein folding calculations
- Ruse: I don't want to be drafted to fight in Vietnam, I don't want them to take away my drugs, etc. so that's why I believe Darwinism
- Moderator: (to Meyer) why do you want to take abortion away, you meany?
- Meyer: actually, intelligent design is about science, and in any case National Review gave my book a bad review
- Moderator: (to Ruse) are science and religion in conflict?
- Ruse: well religion can just abstain from making any claims about the physical world, and just stick to subjective nonsense – that's fair
- Moderator: (to Meyer) isn't all opposition to evolution rooted in fundamentalist religion?
- Meyer: you can believe in Darwinism and be a theist, but the real reason for doubting Darwinism is scientific evidence, not religion

Tell me how you think Dr. Meyer did in the comments. I think that Ruse is a bloviating boffin – a buffoon who blows smoke and has no idea what the science shows. He admits his motivations are political in the debate. And that's as far as it goes. Evolution, because I don't like that my girlfriend is making me wait for sex until we're married. That's the whole breadth of his opposition to the science. All the science was cited by Meyer, and Ruse had *nothing* to say in response. No evidence, certainly. But he's a nice guy, and I appreciate him debating the issue. Things are tough right now for his side.

Columbia University School of Journalism gets $9.7 million from George Soros

August 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Media Research Center reports.

Excerpt:

> The Media Research Center's Business and Media Institute has extensively researched Columbia University School of Journalism, including its faculty, alumni, student publications, funding, guest lecturers, endorsements and awards. BMI found that there was a significant left-wing bias prevalent at the school – a bias that then migrates with its graduates to permeate the daily operations of news organizations across the United States. These results include the following:
>
> - **68 Percent of the Professors Work for Liberal Outlets**: The faculty list of the Columbia University School of Journalism reads like a Who's Who of liberal organizations. Of the 40 full-time members of the faculty, 27 work at left-wing news outlets and organizations including The Huffington Post, Slate, Mother Jones, Salon, The Nation and Greenpeace. Adjunct faculty work at Al Jazeera, Alternet, The Daily Beast, Salon and The Nation. These professors are also cited as experts by major news outlets, such as The New York Times, ABC, CBS, The Washington Post and USA Today, thanks to their status as Columbia faculty.
> - **More than $9.7 Million in Soros Funding**: Columbia University has received $9,708,486 from liberal billionaire George Soros's Open Society Foundation. That makes it the third-most Soros-funded school in the world, and the second-most in the U.S. The school also received an additional $1.63 million from the liberal Tides Foundation, which Soros also supports.
> - **Soros-funded Liberal Leadership**: Incoming dean Steve Coll has his own left-wing rap sheet. Coll, who will take over as dean of Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in July 2013 is currently the president of the New America Foundation, a left-leaning public policy organization which has received more than $4.2 million in Soros funding since 2001. Before working at New America Foundation, Coll was managing editor at The Washington Post.
> - **Ties to Terror-Friendly Al Jazeera**: Al Jazeera English was awarded more than just the Columbia Award, the highest honor that Columbia could give. It was also granted a fellowship, and allowed to host its show, "Empire," with a guest panel of full-time Columbia University School of Journalism professors. Al Jazeera employees work as adjunct faculty and guest

> lecturers, and the journalism school also listed Al Jazeera English and Current TV (which has been bought by Al Jazeera) as potential vendors at its upcoming jobs fair for 2013. Both were in attendance for the 2012 jobs fair. This is the same "news" organization that, in 2008, threw a birthday party for a Lebanese terrorist who had previously killed a police officer, a civilian and a 4-year-old girl.

But what do academic studies say about media bias? Is it real, or is it just a subjective judgment made by angry conservatives?

The Baltimore Sun reports on a new Pew Research study. (H/T WGB)

Excerpt:

> In writing about the Pew study released today, I was struck by the big story of how negative coverage on several levels of presidential politics had become.
>
> […]**On MSNBC, the ratio of negative to positive stories on GOP candidate Mitt Romney was 71 to 3.**
>
> […]**The ratio of negative to positive stories in Fox's coverage of President Obama was 46 to 6.**
>
> Check out the full Pew study here. It's a good one, and there is much food for thought in its findings as we approach the end of an election cycle marked by poor media performance.

Pew Research is a left-of-center organization, so the finding is even more striking.

Peer-reviewed academic studies of media bias

Let's take a look at peer-reviewed academic studies of media bias, and see if they confirm or falsify what Pew Research found.

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other

> moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.

> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

Those are the facts.

So what?

Now consider this column from Brent Bozell, which explains the difference media bias makes to political intelligence.

Excerpt:

> **A 2008 survey by the Pew Research Center asked media consumers three questions: which party was in control of Congress (Democrats), who was the secretary of state (Condi Rice) and who was the prime minister of Britain (Gordon Brown).**
>
> **Let's document how the viewers of "Hannity &Colmes" were better informed than Stewart's "Daily Show" gigglers on basic political facts. Hannity viewers beat Stewart's on the Democratic majority (84 percent to 65 percent correct answers), Condi Rice (a dramatic 73**

> **percent to 48 percent gap) and Gordon Brown (49 percent to 36). Overall, as a percentage getting all three questions right, Hannity won 42-30.**

Just keep that in mind when you are watching the mainstream media news shows. A very good site to bookmark and read is Newsbusters, which documents mainstream media bias daily. I even have an RSS feed of their latest stories on the front page on this blog.

Heritage Foundation recommends no military action in Syria

August 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Middle East

I posted earlier in the week about how our best option was a targeted strike (SSM or standoff) to the top level of the Assad regime, but it looks like there is another viable conservative view on what to do about Syria.

Here's the post from the Heritage Foundation, my favorite conservative think tank.

Five reasons:

1. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine is not adequate justification for direct military intervention.
2. A vital U.S. interest is not at stake.
3. It would not be a wise use of military force.
4. Missile attacks would only make President Obama look weaker.
5. It would distract from what the U.S. should be doing.

Here's the detail on Number 4:

4. Missile attacks would only make President Obama look weaker. Much like President Clinton's ineffective cruise missile strikes on Osama bin Laden's terrorist camps, strikes would only be seen as a sign that the U.S. is lacking a clear, decisive course of action. The Middle East would see this as another effort from the Obama Administration to look for an "easy button" and lead from behind rather than exercise

real, constructive leadership.

The other concern that people have is the opposition is even more penetrated by Al Qaeda than I first thought.

More Heritage Foundation:

> **What should America be doing?**
>
> We should not be doing missile strikes, as many reports have indicated could be a possibility.
>
> Al-Qaeda and other Islamist groups have been the principal beneficiaries of Obama's passive, "hands-off" approach to the worsening Syria crisis. The Obama Administration urgently needs to develop a strategy not only to counter Assad's use of chemical weapons but prevent those weapons from falling into the hands of al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, or other Islamist terrorist groups that have flocked to Syria.
>
> Rather than attempting to intervene directly in the conflict, the U.S. should be working with other countries in the region to hasten the end of the Assad regime and deal with the refugee crisis and terrorist strongholds.

I don't think that Heritage is responding to the idea of a targeted strike against the key people in the Assad regime as much as they are opposed to a general military strike against military targets. Everyone agrees on that, though. The strike option I presented (from Bret Stephens of the Wall Street Journal) was aimed at Assad and his henchmen.

The other concern that's emerged (in the Associated Press, no less) is that it's not 100% certain that the Assad regime was responsible for the use of chemical weapons. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The intelligence linking Syrian President Bashar Assad or his inner circle to an alleged chemical weapons attack is no "slam dunk," with questions remaining about who actually controls some of Syria's chemical weapons stores and doubts about whether Assad himself ordered the strike, U.S. intelligence officials say.
>
> […]A report by the Office of the Director for National Intelligence outlining that evidence against Syria includes a few key caveats — including acknowledging that the U.S. intelligence community no longer has the certainty it did six months ago of where the regime's chemical weapons are stored, nor does it have proof Assad ordered chemical weapons use, according to two intelligence officials and two more U.S. officials.
>
> […]A three-page report released Thursday by the British government said there was "a limited but growing body of intelligence" blaming the Syrian government for the attacks. And though the British were not sure why Assad would have carried out such an attack, the report said there was "no credible intelligence" that the rebels had obtained or used chemical weapons.

> Like the British report, the yet-to-be-released U.S. report assesses with “high confidence” that the Syrian government was responsible for the attacks that hit suburbs east and west of Damascus, filled with a chemical weapon, according to a senior U.S. official who read the report.
>
> The official conceded there are caveats in the report and there is no proof saying Assad personally ordered the attack. There was no mention in the report of the possibility that a rogue element inside Assad’s government or military could have been responsible, the senior official said.

ECM wonders why the Assad regime would try to hasten their own demise by using chemical weapons, especially when they are winning. Still, I think it’s more likely than not right now that Assad is responsible for using the chemical weapons.

Ed Morrissey at Hot Air notes that Obama has not presented a comprehensive case for intervention in Syria. Who says? Donald Rumsfeld! Morrissey says that Bush administration’s case for war was much more thorough and had more support than Obama’s case against Syria.

My reasons for initially supporting the strike at the top level of the regime was to *deter the future use of chemical weapons.* I still favor that course of action, but on the condition that we clear up these uncertainties *first* and get Congressional approval *first*. You can’t just do these things willy-nilly, especially when there are uncertainties.

Four ways that the progress of science conflicts with naturalistic speculations

August 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When people ask me whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism, I offer the follow four basic pieces of scientific evidence that are more compatible with theism than atheism.

Here are the four pieces of evidence best explained by a Creator/Designer:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the biological information in the first replicator (origin of life)
4. the sudden origin of all of the different body plans in the fossil record (Cambrian explosion)

And I point to specific examples of recent discoveries that confirm those four arguments. Here are just a few of them:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (From an article from Caltech)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning (there at least 40 examples of cosmic fine-tuning), (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)
4. Evidence showing that Ediacaran fauna are not precursors to the Cambrian fossils, (from the journal Nature)

Atheists will typically reply to the recent scientific discoveries that overturned their speculations like this:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause
2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes
4. Maybe we will find a seamless chain of fossils that explain how the Cambrian explosion occurred slowly, over a long period time

Ever heard any of these responses?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the four responses of atheists to the experimental data.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
>
> †Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, USA
>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear

> to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists. Leave no doubt.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.
>
> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities."
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have

no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. Leave no doubt.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can't make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can't make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth's interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to

solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them. Leave no doubt.

4) The best candidate to explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian era fossils was the Ediacaran fauna, but those are now recognized as not being precursors to the Cambrian fossils.

Science Daily reports on a paper from the peer-reviewed journal Science:

> Evidence of the single-celled ancestors of animals, dating from the interval in Earth's history just before multicellular animals appeared, has been discovered in 570 million-year-old rocks from South China by researchers from the University of Bristol, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Paul Scherrer Institut and the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.
>
> […]This X-ray microscopy revealed that the fossils had features that multicellular embryos do not, and this led the researchers to the conclusion that the fossils were neither animals nor embryos but rather the reproductive spore bodies of single-celled ancestors of animals.
>
> Professor Philip Donoghue said: "We were very surprised by our results — we've been convinced for so long that these fossils represented the embryos of the earliest animals — much of what has been written about the fossils for the last ten years is flat wrong. Our colleagues are not going to like the result."
>
> Professor Stefan Bengtson said: "These fossils force us to rethink our ideas of how animals learned to make large bodies out of cells."

The trend is that there is no evolutionary explanation for the body plans that emerged in the Cambrian era. If you want to make the claim that "evolution did it", then you have to produce the data *today*. Not speculations about the future. The data we have today says no to naturalism. The only way to affirm naturalistic explanations for the evidence we have is *by faith*. We need to minimize our leaps of faith, though, and go with the simplest and most reasonable explanation – an intelligence is the best explanation responsible for rapid generation of biological information.

Conclusion

I do think it's important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see way too much G. K. Chesterton, Francis Chan and other untestable, ineffective jibber-jabber. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it's too hard. It's not too hard. Everyone can understand "Who Made God?" by Edgar Andrews – start with that! Then get Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". That's more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works. You don't want to be anti-science like atheists are. I recommend reading Uncommon Descent and Evolution News every day for a start.

UPDATE: Jeffery Jay Lowder (a naturalist) replies here.

New study finds that unborn babies can recognize spoken words

August 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scheming unborn baby can hear what you're saying, potty-mouth

The study was published in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal *Science.*

Excerpt:

> As a fetus grows inside a mother's belly, it can hear sounds from the outside world—and can understand them well enough to retain memories of them after birth, according to new research.
>
> It may seem implausible that fetuses can listen to speech within the womb, but the sound-processing parts of their brain become active in the last trimester of pregnancy, and sound carries fairly well through the mother's abdomen. "If you put your hand over your mouth and speak, that's very similar to the situation the fetus is in," says cognitive neuroscientist Eino Partanen of the University of Helsinki. "You can hear the rhythm of speech, rhythm of music, and so on."
>
> A 1988 study suggested that newborns recognize the theme song from their mother's favorite soap opera. More recent studies have expanded on the idea of fetal learning, indicating that newborns already familiarized themselves with sounds of their parent's native language; one showed that American newborns seem to perceive Swedish vowel sounds as unfamiliar, sucking on a high-tech pacifier to hear more of the new sounds. Swedish infants showed the same response to English vowels.

> But those studies were based on babies' behaviors, which can be tricky to test. Partanen and his team decided instead to outfit babies with EEG sensors to look for neural traces of memories from the womb. "Once we learn a sound, if it's repeated to us often enough, we form a memory of it, which is activated when we hear the sound again," he explains. This memory speeds up recognition of sounds in the learner's native language and can be detected as a pattern of brain waves, even in a sleeping baby.
>
> The team gave expectant women a recording to play several times a week during their last few months of pregnancy, which included a made-up word, "tatata," repeated many times and interspersed with music. Sometimes the middle syllable was varied, with a different pitch or vowel sound. By the time the babies were born, they had heard the made-up word, on average, more than 25,000 times. And when they were tested after birth,these infants' brains recognized the word and its variations, while infants in a control group did not, Partanen and colleagues report online today in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.
>
> Babies who had heard the recordings showed the neural signal for recognizing vowel and pitch changes in the pseudoword, and the signal was strongest for the infants whose mothers played the recording most often. They were also better than the control babies at detecting other differences in the syllables, such as vowel length. "This leads us to believe that the fetus can learn much more detailed information than we previously thought," Partanen says, and that the memory traces are detectable after birth.
>
> "This is a well-respected group and the effects are really convincing," says Patricia Kuhl, a neuroscientist at the University of Washington in Seattle. Combined with previous work, she says, these results suggest "that language learning begins in the womb."

More evidence that unborn babies are not just blobs of tissue. Every one is precious, and we need to be more careful with our decisions so that we welcome them into the world and look after them as they grow up. Not just giving them protection and sustenance, but a mother and a father close by, too. That's what they need.

Why has New York City been able to avoid another terrorist attack?

August 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily praises the NYPD.

Excerpt:

> Now we know why New York City has avoided another terror attack: The police there treat radical mosques as the terror enterprises they are and investigate accordingly.
>
> The New York Police Department uses pro-active counterterror tactics, while the FBI's approach is reactive. Guess which one has a better record preventing terror attacks?
>
> NYPD has disrupted a whopping 16 major terror plots since Manhattan was attacked on Sept. 11, 2001. The department's intelligence unit has foiled attacks on the Brooklyn Bridge, the New York City subway system, New York Stock Exchange, Manhattan and Bronx synagogues, the Federal Reserve Bank and returning U.S. military service members, among other targets.
>
> The FBI's success? Not so good. Since 9/11, the federal agency has missed the Boston bombings and the Fort Hood massacre, among other jihadi attacks.
>
> We knew the CIA-trained NYPD was good. But we didn't know how good until now.
>
> According to the Associated Press, which has obtained secret police documents, the NYPD has been labeling entire radical mosques as "terrorism organizations," a designation that allows detectives to use informants to record violent sermons and spy on mosque clerics suspected of inciting jihad or recruiting terrorists. The tactic also makes anyone attending the mosques fair game for surveillance.
>
> The FBI has shunned this wildly effective tool in the war on Islamic terrorists as too invasive and politically incorrect.
>
> "As a tactic, opening an enterprise investigation on a mosque is so potentially invasive that while the NYPD conducted at least a dozen, the FBI never did one," the AP reported.
>
> […]Studies show some 80% of American mosques preach jihad or distribute violent literature. Many raise money for terrorists. Some even store caches of weapons inside their buildings. One investigated by the NYPD set up a martial arts training center in its basement.
>
> If Washington really wanted to protect Americans from Islamic terrorists, it would adopt the NYPD's counterterrorism tactics.

The article takes a look at why the FBI is unable to have the same kind of success as the

NYPD and concludes that political correctness hampers their ability to their jobs.

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

August 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

The article goes on to make some very informative comments on the relationship between apologetics and belief.

Conservative coalition leader Tony Abbott leads by 6 points in latest Australia election poll

August 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tony Abbott, future Prime Minister of Australia

First the latest Nielsen poll results from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

Excerpt:

> Latest opinion polls show a further drop in support for Labor two weeks out from an election, with one indicating the Prime Minister may struggle to hold his own seat.
>
> The Nielsen poll, published on Fairfax websites, shows Labor's primary vote has fallen two points to 35 per cent.
>
> After preferences, that gives the Coalition a six-point lead – 53 per cent to 47 per cent.
>
> If the results were replicated evenly across the country on election day, Labor would lose 10 seats.
>
> The poll of 2,500 respondents has a margin of error of 2.6 per cent.
>
> Meanwhile, a Newspoll published in The Australian newspaper, shows Prime Minister Kevin Rudd is behind the Coalition candidate, Bill Glasson, in his Brisbane seat of Griffith.
>
> The poll of 500 voters shows Mr Rudd trails his opponent 52 per cent to 48 per cent on a two-party preferred basis. The margin of error is 4.4 per cent.

> Another Newspoll of almost 1,400 voters in the Coalition's eight most marginal seats in Queensland shows the Coalition's primary vote has surged eight points to 54 per cent, while the ALP's primary vote has slipped to 32 per cent.
>
> It shows the Coalition has a commanding two-party preferred lead of 60 per cent to Labor's 40 per cent.
>
> Mr Rudd's personal support has also fallen to 39 per cent, with 49 per cent of voters across the marginal seats preferring Opposition Leader Tony Abbott.

The Coalition is is composed of the Liberal party (which is actually the conservative party) and the National party (which is also conservative).

I found an interview with Tony Abbott posted on India Today, when I searched for some keywords related to his policies. I searched for a detailed policy-oriented interview in the mainstream media, but couldn't find much. Strangely enough, the Australian media seemed to be more concerned with gaffes and fear-mongering about Abbott's socially conservative views. It's as if the mainstream media is aiming for some sort of Jon Stewart coverage of the election, instead of telling us about each candidate's plans and proposals.

Here's some of the interview:

> **1. What are your plans to grow the economy?**
> The Liberal Party understands that successful businesses generate prosperity for the entire community by creating jobs, investing in growth and earning important export income.
>
> We will lower costs for Australian businesses by removing Labor's carbon tax. We will take the shackles off Australian businesses by cutting $1 billion in red tape every year. And we will boost productivity by encouraging more people into the workforce with better child care and a paid parental leave scheme and we will build 21st century infrastructure.
>
> The economy will be strengthened by a new lowered company tax rate of 28.5% from 1 July 2015. This builds on the Coalition's track record of delivering real tax reform focussed on cutting and simplifying taxation in Australia. Our fully funded tax cut will restore confidence in the management of Australia's economy and boost job creation and investment.
>
> The Coalition will also build a more diverse, world-class economy – a 5 pillar economy – to unleash Australia's real economic potential. In particular, we will build on our strengths in manufacturing innovation, agriculture exports, advanced services, world class education and research as well as boosting mining exports.
>
> **2. The cost of living has gone up in the recent years, how will the Liberals help families cope with the rising costs?**
> We will start reducing cost of living pressures for families by immediately scrapping Labor's carbon tax, taking the pressure off rapidly rising electricity and

gas prices.

The average family will be $500 better off next year alone and seniors will still keep their fortnightly pension and benefit increases- all without a carbon tax. We will not proceed with Labor's FBT changes on cars. And we will restore the Private Health Insurance Rebate as soon as we responsibly can.

3. We have a lot of small businesses in our community, how will Liberals help them?

The Liberal Party understands the small businesses are the real job creators in the economy, employing almost half of the workforce in Australia. We will reduce costs for every business by abolishing the carbon tax, directly reducing electricity, gas and transport costs. By removing $1 billion of red tape each year, small businesses will be able to put more time, effort and resources in their 'real' work, rather than complying with complex and unnecessary government requirements.

The Coalition's paid parental leave scheme will mean small businesses would no longer be disadvantaged in the 'war for talent', attracting and keeping quality staff.

We will also ease expense pressures on small businesses by delaying the increase of compulsory superannuation contributions to 12 per cent by a further two years.

8. Do you have a view about same-sex marriage?

There are very strong feelings on both sides of this particular issue right now. I take a conservative position on it myself. I think that we should not lightly change something which has been this way since time immemorial. But I don't believe that I can necessarily impose my view on society for all time, all I can do is candidly and honestly tell people what my view is. I support the traditional definition of marriage as between a man and a woman. Now I know that others dispute this, because I have lots of arguments inside my own family on this subject now. But my position, it's always been clear, it's always been consistent, and as long as I'm in the Parliament if the issue comes up that's the way I will vote. Whether it remains for all time the Liberal Party, and the Coalition's position, well that will be a matter for our party, for our Coalition if it were to come up in a future Parliament.

11. Everyone is talking about the Asian Century, what does this mean for the Liberals? What are your plans?

An important element of our economic plan for Australia is to strengthen our trading relationships with Asia, welcome investment from the region, boost our exports and deepen Australia's knowledge of and engagement with countries in Asia. We recognise the rapid emergence of both China and India and the opportunities this will afford Australia in the future.

Specifically, we will take real action to increase economic activity by fast-tracking

> Free Trade Agreements with China and India amongst others.
>
> We will strengthen our diplomatic relationship and trade ties with India and boost mining exports by exporting uranium to that country.
>
> We will help Australians gain study and work experience, strengthen the ties with the region, learn to adapt behaviour to Asian contexts and work more effectively with Asian governments.
>
> The Coalition's new Colombo Plan would encourage and support Australian undergraduates to study for part of their degrees in a university in the Asia-Pacific region, so promoting Australia's deeper engagement with the region to the benefit of both.

It's nice to see what policies a conservative would propose. We haven't had much of that around here for a long time, have we?

The Australian election will be held on September 7th. I would appreciate it if my Australian readers can keep me informed about stories related to the election campaign.

J. Warner Wallace on the importance of engaging young people with training

August 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post by J. Warner Wallace made it onto Pastor Matt's three must-read posts of the week.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> I've been writing this week about my recent experience at Summit Worldview Academy and the nature of student training. There are a number of similar worldview programs around the country (including the Centurions Program and the Worldview Academy), and I'm always impressed to see how many students are interested in this kind of intensive preparation. To be sure, there are always some students at these conferences who are present because their parents demanded their attendance, but these young people are always in the vast minority. Most students come (and put themselves through the rigorous material) because they heard about it through a friend who highly recommended the experience. And while there are some fun opportunities to hike, relax and play games along the way, these activities (commonly associated with youth group retreats) are typically few and far between at worldview camps. Students are here to roll up their sleeves and get to work. They're far more interested in learning than lounging. Youth pastors can glean somethingfrom worldview academies.
>
> I have to confess: When I was a new youth pastor, I was more likely to provide my students with pizza than preparation. I thought the only way to attract students in the first place was to satisfy their desire for entertainment and social interaction. I simply tried to wedge in the important stuff (theological and apologetics training, Spiritual formation and Biblical literacy) along the way. It took me a year or so to find a better approach. I eventually realized my students would willingly delay their *desire for fun* if I could effectively show them their *need for truth*. I began to take them to places where their worldview was tested and I did my best to demonstrate their deficiencies. As a result, the Utah and Berkeley trips became a regular offering of my ministry. It wasn't long before my students were ready to do whatever it took to better defend themselves. They were more than willing to delay their desire for what they used to think of as fun to achieve a greater goal. Along the way, they discovered how satisfying it is to learn the truth, articulate it effectively, and engage the world.
>
> It turns out that students are willing to raise the bar and do much more than we expect of them in most youth groups across the country. If you're a youth pastor or are serving in a youth ministry, think about what your students are typically willing to do in order to succeed on their club sports team or to prepare for their

> next academic AP test. Our students are already working hard to prepare themselves in some area of their young lives; why aren't we willing to ask them to prepare this rigorously as Christians? It's time to show students why it's so important to equip themselves as Christian ambassadors. It's time to stop teaching and start training.

Wallace has also posted a new podcast on this very topic.

The Please Convince Me podcast is my favorite podcast. There is just something about the way he speaks about Christian topics that is so practical and real-world. I even like it better than all the political and policy podcasts that I listen to. This particular episode is *so good.* I never had parents and youth pastors and pastors that sounded like this.

I blogged before about another podcast that he did about training a group of students to defend the faith at the University of California at Berkeley . That's what our youth pastors should be doing instead of working to hard at entertaining the young adults. He really knows what it is like to deal with young people, and he has a real passion for teaching high school students about how to defend their worldview before they get to university. I would really like to see more pastors looking at young people in this way – as people in need of training who will be facing challenges in college. Without the training, our young people will be the ones who are changed. I don't think that a lot of pastors and parents are working on projects like this the way that Wallace is. That needs to change.

Labor Force Participation hits 34-year record low

September 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

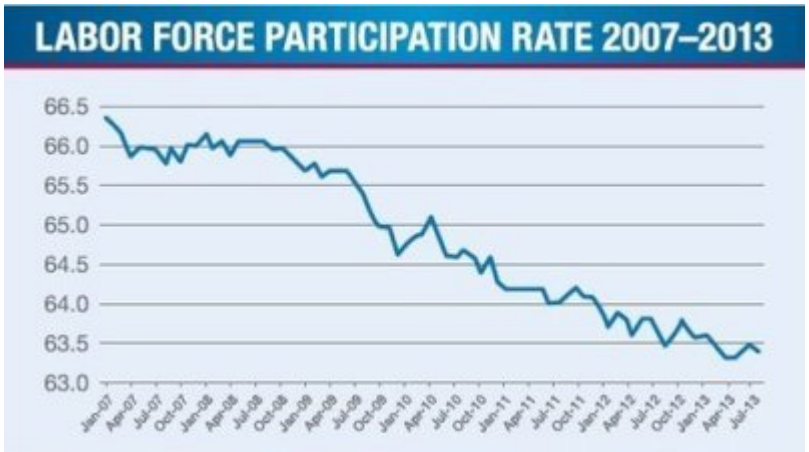

Labor Force Participation Rate from 2007 (Pelosi/Reid) to 2013

Power Line blog reports on a disturbing new white paper about unemployment in America.

Excerpt:

> A comprehensive disaster like the Obama administration can't be summed up in one statistic, but the one that comes closest is labor force participation. The combined effect of many misguided policies–Obamacare, ballooning spending, massive debt, tax increases, subsidizing of inefficient energy, anti-growth regulation, encouragement of food stamp fraud, and many more–has been to drive many millions of Americans out of the labor force. Express Employment Professionals has produced a white paper that illuminates this human tragedy:
>
> The labor force participation rate is currently at a level not seen since the 1970s – 63.4 percent.
>
> While the unemployment rate has steadily decreased from its high of 10.0 percent in October of 2009 to 7.4 percent in July of 2013, the percentage of Americans in the labor force has not risen. It has fallen about 2.7 percentage points since the onset of the latest recession.
>
> This is a tragedy in the making, and its impact on the country has been underestimated. When Americans quit looking for work because they conclude not working beats working, America faces a significant problem.
>
> […]President Obama's policies have devastated all age groups, but the most heartbreaking impact is on the young:
>
> Gallup reports that, "The lack of new hiring over the past several years…seems to have disproportionately reduced younger Americans' ability to obtain full-time jobs."
>
> According to Gallup's "Payroll to Population" measure, **fewer Millennials were working full time in June of 2013 than in June of 2012, 2011, or 2010**.

> A recent 2012 Pew Research Center study found that 36 percent of the nation's Millennials were still living with their parents.

And massive growth in the number of people collecting disability, too:

> Fourteen million Americans on disability–that is more than the populations of Wyoming, Vermont, North Dakota, Alaska, South Dakota, Delaware, Rhode Island, Montana, New Hampshire, Maine, Hawaii, Idaho and West Virginia, combined: every man, woman and child in 13 states. The exploding ranks of the "disabled" are due to the absence of jobs in Barack Obama's economy.

Keep in mind that we are blowing through over a trillion dollars in deficits for EACH of Obama's 4 years in office. Shouldn't we be getting a higher level of labor force participation? If you took out a loan to expand your business, you would certainly expect to be able to hire more people and get more sales and make more products, wouldn't you? But it seems as if we took out a HUGE loan as a nation and we are actually contracting our business.

Related posts

- 9.5 million people have left the workforce under Obama
- 200,000 fewer people are employed, labor force participation reaches 1979 level
- 73% of the new jobs created in the last 5 months were government jobs
- Unemployment rate is 10.5%, counting those who have stopped job-hunting
- Obama: private sector job creation is "doing fine"
- New jobs report: unemployment rises and 70% chance of recession
- Economy improving? New CBO report says that real unemployment is at 15%
- 1.2 million people dropped out of the labor force in one month

How the research of Jeffrey M. Schwartz on mindfulness confirms free will

September 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a summary of the research of UCLA professor Jeffrey Schwartz which appeared in First Things.

Excerpt:

> Schwartz provides a nonmaterialist interpretation of neuroscience and argues that this interpretation is more compelling than the standard materialist interpretation. He arrived at this position as a psychiatrist specializing in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). OCD sufferers recognize obsessive-compulsive thoughts and urges as separate from their intrinsic selves. For instance, after a few washings, the compulsive hand-washer realizes that his hands are clean and yet feels driven to keep washing them. It was reflection on this difference between the obvious truth (the hands are clean) and the irrational doubts (they might still be dirty) that prompted Schwartz to reassess the philosophical underpinnings of neuroscience.
>
> From brain scans, Schwartz found that certain regions in the brain of OCD patients (the caudate nucleus in particular) exhibited abnormal patterns of activity. By itself this finding is consistent with a materialist view of mind (if, as materialism requires, the brain enables the mind, then abnormal patterns of brain activity are likely to be correlated with dysfunctional mental states). Nonetheless, having found abnormal patterns of brain activity, Schwartz then had OCD patients engage in intensive mental effort through what he called relabeling, reattributing, refocusing, and revaluing (the 4 Rs). In the case of compulsive hand-washing, this involved a patient acknowledging that his hands were in fact clean (relabeling); attributing anxieties and doubts about his hands being dirty to a misfunctioning brain (reattributing); directing his thoughts and actions away from handwashing and toward productive ends (refocusing); and, lastly, understanding at a deep level the senselessness of OCD messages (revaluing).
>
> **Schwartz documents not only that patients who undertook this therapy experienced considerable relief from OCD symptoms, but also that their brain scans indicated a lasting realignment of brain-activity patterns.** Thus, without any intervention directly affecting their brains, OCD patients were able to reorganize their brains by intentionally modifying their thoughts and behaviors. The important point for Schwartz here is not simply that modified thoughts and behaviors permanently altered patterns of brain activity, but that such modifications resulted from, as he calls it, "mindful attention"-conscious and purposive thoughts or actions in which the agent adopts the stance of a detached

> observer.

So mind-brain interaction is not a one-way street. Everyone knows that you can alter your consciousness, beliefs, moods, sensations, etc. by changing your brain. But it turns out that you can also will to focus your thoughts on certain things in order to change your brain chemistry. So the causation is not just bottom-up, but top-down.

Now mindfulness therapies – which are documented in the research papers published by Schwartz (like this one and this one and this one)- assume the existence of *free will*. Naturalists don't like these scientific publications because naturalists don't believe in free will, as the famous naturalist philosopher Alex Rosenberg explained in his debate with William Lane Craig.

This post from Uncommon Descent explains the naturalist conundrum. (H/T J. Warner Wallace tweet)

Excerpt:

> The issue, for Schwartz, turns on whether or not there is such a thing as free will. The assumption of free will is critical to mindfulness therapies *for practical purposes*.
>
> Philosophies and religions have various opinions about ultimate free will. **The therapist must ask, is my patient capable of carrying out a program that requires that he choose to focus his attention on A and not B? In practice, this turns out to be true for many patients, which makes the therapy useful. There is neuroscience evidence for brain reorganization as a result, showing that it is not merely an imagined effect.**
>
> **Now, if someone wishes to claim, as many outspoken advocates of Darwinian evolution have, for example, that free will is impossible, the only thing that a mindfulness therapist can say is, go away. Either they are mistaken or the research results from mindfulness therapies are.**

By the way, if you like this topic, and want a resource to show your friends, be sure and get a hold of the debate on mind vs. brain between Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Michael Shermer.

Police invade home of homeschooling family and seize four children

September 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports.

Excerpt:

> Armed police in Germany launched a terrifying raid on a family's home to seize their four children after they defied the country's ban on home schooling.
>
> A team of 20 social workers, police officers, and special agents stormed the home of Dirk and Petra Wunderlich because they refused to send their children to state schools.
>
> The youngsters were taken to unknown locations after officials allegedly ominously promised the parents that they would not be seeing them again 'any time soon'.
>
> The only legal grounds for the removal of the children, aged from seven to 14, were the family's insistence on home schooling their children, with no other allegations of abuse or neglect.
>
> According to court documents obtained and translated by the Home Schooling Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), officials did not even allege that the parents had failed to provide an adequate education.
>
> The raid took place on Thursday morning at 8am at the Wunderlichs' home near Darmstadt, 25 miles south of Frankfurt, in south-west Germany.
>
> Citing the parents' failure to cooperate 'with the authorities to send the children to school', the judge even authorised the use of force 'against the children' if necessary, according to court documents cited by the HSLDA.
>
> […]Mr Wunderlich said that he and his wife had been left devastated by the authorities' decision to take their children. He said that his 14-year-old daughter Machsejah had to be forcibly taken out of the home.
>
> 'When I went outside, our neighbour was crying as she watched. I turned around to see my daughter being escorted as if she were a criminal by two big policemen,' he said.
>
> 'They weren't being nice at all. When my wife tried to give my daughter a kiss and a hug goodbye, one of the special agents roughly elbowed her out of the way and said — "It's too late for that".
>
> 'What kind of government acts like this?'

Funny that you would ask that, Mr. Wunderlich, because here's a story about a German homeschooling family that is being ejected from the United States.

Excerpt:

> The White House has posted a response to the petition to stop the deportation of the Romeikes, a homeschooling family from Germany. The White House does not respond to issues before the courts, the response said, but they understand why parents would value the freedom to homeschool.
>
> […]Though the White House says it understands why parents would value the freedom to homeschool, the administration, through the Justice Department, has been trying to deport the Romeikes back to Germany, where they could lose custody of their children if they were to continue to homeschool. In the various court cases, the Justice Department has argued that the right of parents to decide their children's education is not a fundamental right, and it agreed with a German court's opinion that banning homeschooling teaches tolerance of diverse views.
>
> The Romeikes lost their last appeal in the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Home School Legal Defense Association, which represents the Romeikes, has now appealed the case to the Supreme Court.
>
> In a blog post on the HSLDA website, HSLDA Chairman Michael Farris criticized the administration for taking so long say that it could not respond, and for allowing certain current unauthorized immigrants, the so-called "dreamers," to stay in the country while going out of its way to try to deport one family.
>
> "No one can understand why the White House is showing so much leniency to millions of immigrants who have come here illegally in hopes of securing better jobs, but is so determined to deport this one family who has come to America in search of freedom for themselves and their children," Farris declared. "This petition was the perfect opportunity for the White House to explain why this administration appealed the original grant of asylum. This was a perfect opportunity for the White House to explain the blatantly unequal treatment being received by the Romeike family. But the White House stalled for four months and said absolutely nothing."

Isn't that interesting? The same administration that is pushing for amnesty for 20 million illegal immigrants wants to deport one family for homeschooling their children. What is it that causes people on the left to want to drive a wedge between parents and their own children? Why are they so anxious to raise taxes so that both parents are forced to work, and the children will be raised in government-run public schools? What is their goal in doing that? What pleasure do they get out of separating mothers from their 1-year olds? What pleasure do they get in taking a man's child away and teaching the child things that are opposed to the father's values – while taking his salary to pay for it?

I know that there are a lot of people who are very passionate about public education, and making everyone equal, and pushing left-wing ideologies onto children against the will of their parents. Every Democrat votes for it when they vote to tax families more to pay for

higher pay and benefits for public school teachers. Still, you would think that a story like this might cause them to think twice about what their support for state-run education really means. Make no mistake, Democrats are opposed to homeschooling, and even private schooling. They don’t want parents to have a say – they just want them to pay for whatever the government decides to do with their children.

Six reasons why people reject Christianity

September 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post on practical evangelism by Christian scholar Don Johnson.

His list of reasons why people often reject Christianity:

1. Christians behaving badly
2. Disappointment with God
3. Weak or absent father
4. Social pressure
5. Cost of discipleship
6. Immorality (especially sexual immorality)

And here's the detail on #6:

> Of all the motivations and reasons for skepticism that I encounter, immorality is easily the most common. In particular, sexual sin seems to be the largest single factor driving disbelief in our culture. Brant Hanson calls sex "The Big But" because he so often hears this from unbelievers: "'I like Jesus, BUT…' and the 'but' is usually followed, one way or the other, with an objection about the Bible and… sex. People think something's deeply messed-up with a belief system that says two consenting, unmarried adults should refrain from sex." In other words, people simply do not want to follow the Christian teaching that sexual intercourse should take place only between and man and woman who are married, so they throw the whole religion out.
>
> The easiest way to justify sin is to deny that there is a creator to provide reality with a nature, thereby denying that there is any inherent order and purpose in the universe.
>
> Aldous Huxley admitted that this is a common reason for skepticism:
>
> I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently I assumed that it had none and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption…. Those who detect no meaning in the world generally do so because, for one reason or another, it suits their books that the world should be meaningless. …
>
> For myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was …liberation from … a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom…. There was one admirably simple method in our political and erotic revolt: We could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever. Similar tactics had been adopted during the eighteenth century and for the same reasons. (Ends and Means, 270-273)

Indeed, similar tactics have been used extensively up to the present day. If you are looking for two great resources that document the extent to which the work of the world's "great" atheistic thinkers has been "calculated to justify or minimize the shame of their own debauchery," (Spiegel, 72) I recommend *Intellectuals* by Paul Johnson and *Degenerate Moderns: Modernity as Rationalized Sexual Misbehavior* by E. Michael Jones. The bottom line is that these skeptical scholars didn't reach their conclusions by following the evidence where it led. They didn't "discover" that the world was meaningless and then proceed to live accordingly. They lived sinful lives (usually involving some type of sexual deviancy) and then produced theories that justified their actions.

This connection between immorality and unsound thought is clearly scriptural. Paul tells the Ephesians that they "must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more" (Eph. 4:17-19) Paul blames futile thinking and a lack of understanding on hard hearts. When we compare this passage with Romans 1, it seems that immorality and bad ideas work together in a vicious cycle that spirals downward. Sin leads to false philosophies which then lead to more sin.

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised (Rom. 1:18-25)

So Paul argues that the nature of reality is clear to everyone but people *suppress the truth by their wickedness*. Rebellious people become fools as they deny the obvious meaning of creation because of their sin. Their foolishness leads them to indulge in more immorality. Thus immorality is very closely linked to skepticism and we need to be aware that sin will almost always be at least an underlying issue in our conversations.

This post is of such high quality and has such practical wisdom in it that I really want everyone reading to click through and read it. I'm sure you'll really like it. I recognize every one of these types of people in non-Christians that I have known.

Mr. Johnson's bio seems to suggest that he has a lot of experience as a pastor, but he's not like many pastors that I've known. If all pastors could interact with so many different sources like and weave together an argument like this, we wouldn't be in the mess we're in.

Caveat:

People have been asking me about whether this undermines the need for evidential apologetics. Not at all. Let me explain.

Since about 30-40 percent of my posts are on evidential apologetics, and maybe 1-2 a year are on psychological issues, I think that evidence is important. I think that when people say they are atheists, then evidential apologetics is what I focus on. But if they say "I was a Christian once, then I gave it up" then I still work the evidential apologetics in public, but in my mind I am thinking "what's your number?". And if there is a break in the debating of the evidence, I ask about it.

Scott Klusendorf responds to atheist P.Z. Myers on the Issues, Etc. show

September 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scott Klusendorf, Life Training Institute

About Scott:

> Scott Klusendorf travels throughout the United States and Canada training pro-life advocates to persuasively defend their views in the public square. He contends that the pro-life message can compete in the marketplace of ideas if properly understood and properly articulated.
>
> […]Scott has participated in numerous debates at the collegiate level. His debate opponents have included Nadine Strossen, President of the ACLU (1991-2008) – Kathyrn Kolbert, an attorney that has argued for abortion rights in a United States Supreme Court case – and Kathy Kneer, President of Planned Parenthood of California.
>
> Scott has debated or lectured to student groups at over 70 colleges and universities, including Stanford, USC, UCLA, Johns Hopkins, Loyola Marymount Law School, West Virginia Medical School, MIT, U.S. Air Force Academy, Cal-Tech, and University of North Carolina.
>
> Each year thousands of students at Protestant and Catholic high schools are trained by Scott to make a persuasive case for life as part of their worldview training prior to college. He's provided that same training to students at Summit Ministries and Focus on the Family Institute.
>
> Scott is the author of *The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the*

> *Culture*, released in March 2009 by Crossway Books. Scott has also published articles on pro-life apologetics in *The Christian Research Journal*, Clear Thinking, Focus on the Family*Citizen*, and *The Conservative Theological Journal*.
>
> Chuck Colson, founder and Chairman of the Board of Prison Fellowship, says: "Scott first grabbed my attention when Focus on the Family featured one of his presentations on its national broadcast. I was struck by his ability to communicate truth so clearly and insightfully. I've heard many speakers who deliver excellent content, but few who can actually equip people to communicate their pro-life convictions to a secular culture. In fact, I was so impressed with Scott's talk that I phoned him directly to learn more about his work. After that, I scheduled him as a keynote speaker for our own Breakpoint conference."
>
> Scott is a graduate of UCLA with honors and holds a Masters Degree in Christian Apologetics from Biola University.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Myers: I could imagine a culture where a child doesn't have the right to life until they are 5-years old
- Moderator: Myers is an atheist. He believes that standards of conduct are variable depending on what is dominant in a culture. Since cultures vary by time and place, and none is objectively right or wrong, then a 5-year limit for personhood is as valid as any other standard that might evolve. There is no way to judge between cultures against some objective standard
- Moderator (to Klusendorf): Myers says that the unborn is a "piece of meat". It's not a person until well after birth. Do only atheists believe this?
- Klusendorf: No others hold them. But what is more interesting is that he just asserts his views, he never argues for them. He says that pro-lifers lie when debating this issue
- Moderator: (to Myers) What is the unborn?
- Myers: It's a piece of tissue that will develop into a human being over time
- Moderator: (to Myers) What is it 5 minutes before it's born?
- Myers: It's fetus, it's not a baby
- Klusendorf: The development stages of a human are all stages of development of the same entity, as even Peter Singer and David Boonin admit
- Moderator: He made a distinction between before birth and after birth
- Klusendorf: Yes, and that contradicts what he says later when he says there are no sharp boundaries
- Klusendorf: Myers is confusing parts with wholes. The skin cells on my hand are part of a larger human being. The embryo is not part of a larger human being, they are a whole human being, directing its own development
- Klusendorf: Myers also makes the claim that embryos are constructed piece by piece from the outside. But the science of embryology is clear – the embryo

develops itself.

- Moderator (to Myers): Is the unborn a person?
- Myers: Personhood develops gradually. A newborn baby is not a person. A baby's brain is still forming so it's not a person. There is no specific moment when a baby becomes a person. It is culturally determined. Our society says it's birth. Some people say viability. Either of those are acceptable to me
- Moderator: (to Myers): So drawing the line between unborn and born is arbitrary?
- Myers: Yes it is
- Klusendorf: He is separating human beings into classes: persons and non-persons. This has resulted in injustices, historically speaking. E.g. – with American Indians

(Break until 15:00)

- Klusendorf: He says that a human being becomes a person when their brain is fully developed, but even teens don't have fully developed brains
- Klusendorf: Look at this scientific evidence from PBS about NIH research which shows that brains still developing in teens and it causes them to make poor decisions
- Klusendorf: If development gives us value, then those with more of it have more of a right to life than those with less
- Klusendorf: This point was made by Lincoln in his debates about slavery, when he warned his opponent that someone with lighter skin could enslave him
- Moderator (to Myers): How do you decide these life issues?
- Myers: We use the notion of "greater good"
- Moderator (to Myers): that's a culturally determined notion?
- Myers: Yes. The greater good here is that we maximize the security and happiness of most people in the society. Women are persons, so we favor their rights.
- Klusendorf: His response begs the question. He is assuming that the unborn are not human persons. He talks about the need for women's rights. Are unborn women included in those who have rights?
- Klusendorf: If cultures decide who is and who is not a person, then he cannot oppose cultures that say that Jews are not persons, or that women are not persons
- Klusendorf: He admits that he cannot oppose cultures that think that children of age 5 are not persons, and can be killed
- Moderator (to Myers): You call that kind of society "brutal", why do you say that?
- Myers: It's my personal preference because I like my own kids
- Moderator (to Klusendorf): Respond to that
- Klusendorf: He has no argument, just his own opinion. He cannot oppose any society that things that it is OK to traffic, kill, etc. 5-year-olds
- Klusendorf: He says that he has a personal preference. That is an interesting fact about his psychology, but he has no argument
- Klusendorf: In an atheistic worldview, human beings at any stage are cosmic accidents

- Klusendorf: How do we get any kind of intrinsic value and human rights out of an atheist worldview? I don't see how you can
- Klusendorf: Even a woman's absolute right to an abortion is not grounded by atheism
- Moderator (to Myers): What do you think of the pro-life movement?
- Myers: I'm a developmental biologist. The pro-life movement is lying to people. An embryo is not a person. "Personhood implies much more than being a piece of meat with the right number of chromosomes in it". The primary issue in abortion is women's autonomy. It is entirely the woman's decision
- Klusendorf: You have to present arguments to prove that pro-lifers are lying. There are pro-abortion scholars who have arguments, he isn't one. He only has assertions, opinions and preferences.
- Klusendorf: What if a woman gets pregnant solely in order to take a drug during pregnancy in order to have a deformed child. Myers has no argument against that

Myers also has no argument against sex-selection abortions. So much for "women's rights".

I just want to mention that the Life Training Institute is one of the ministries I recommend to people. They are the only pro-life group I support, because they are apologists all the way. If they're not debating, they're training others to debate. If you like Christians who have battlefield experience on the pro-life issue, this is your organization.

You can get Scott's book on pro-life apologetics here on Amazon.com. It's the best introductory book on pro-life apologetics out there. And he has another book about making a pro-life case on campus.

UPDATE: P.Z. Myers responds to this post here. Reader discretion is advised.

IRS hindered efforts to stop illegal immigrants from using fake Social Security numbers

September 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> An audit report published this month by the inspector general for the Social Security Administration says that the Internal Revenue Service's reluctance to penalize employers who consistently file W-2s on which the Social Security Number and name do not match has "hindered" the SSA's efforts to stop "unauthorized noncitizens" from using Social Security Numbers that are fake or belong to someone else.
>
> The audit report looked at "inaccurate wage reporting"—or the filing of W-2 forms on which the name and the Social Security Number do not match. The SSA has long said these no-match W-2s are frequently filed on behalf of illegal aliens. According to the IG audit report released earlier this month, a senior IRS official admitted to the IG that the service knows this is the case.
>
> "Furthermore," said the report, "a senior employment tax official at the IRS acknowledged that unauthorized noncitizens accounted for a high percentage of inaccurate wage reporting."
>
> […]The IG's audit report said SSA staff believed employers had an incentive to file bad W-2s because they were not worried about the IRS doing anything about it.
>
> […]"SSA senior staff did not believe employers had an incentive to submit accurate annual wage reports because the IRS rarely enforced existing penalties," said the report. "SSA staff believed applying penalties would deter SSN misuse. Furthermore, SSA senior staff believed the Agency could provide the IRS with sufficient evidence to show an employer knew or should have known its employees' SSNs were incorrect. For example, a reasonable person should recognize that hundreds of workers could not have the same or consecutively numbered SSNs."

The IRS is commonly known as one of the most left-wing, socialist departments in the government – these are the guys who punished Tea Party groups in order to get Obama re-elected.

Feminist Hanna Rosin debunks the myth of a gender pay gap caused by discrimination

September 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the far-left Slate, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The official Bureau of Labor Department statistics show that the median earnings of full-time female workers is 77 percent of the median earnings of full-time male workers. But that is very different than "77 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men." The latter gives the impression that a man and a woman standing next to each other doing the same job for the same number of hours get paid different salaries. That's not at all the case. "Full time" officially means 35 hours, but men work more hours than women. That's the first problem: We could be comparing men working 40 hours to women working 35.

> How to get a more accurate measure? First, instead of comparing annual wages, start by comparing average weekly wages. This is considered a slightly more accurate measure because it eliminates variables like time off during the year or annual bonuses (and yes, men get higher bonuses, but let's shelve that for a moment in our quest for a pure wage gap number). By this measure, women earn 81 percent of what men earn, although it varies widely by race. African-American women, for example, earn 94 percent of what African-American men earn in a typical week. Then, when you restrict the comparison to men and women working 40 hours a week, the gap narrows to 87 percent.

> But we're still not close to measuring women "doing the same work as men." For that, we'd have to adjust for many other factors that go into determining salary. Economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn did that in a recent paper, "The Gender Pay Gap.”."They first accounted for education and experience. That didn't shift the gap very much, because women generally have at least as much and usually more education than men, and since the 1980s they have been gaining the experience. The fact that men are more likely to be in unions and have their salaries protected accounts for about 4 percent of the gap. The big differences are in occupation and industry. Women congregate in different professions than men do, and the largely male professions tend to be higher-paying. If you account for those differences, and then compare a woman and a man doing the same job, the pay gap narrows to 91 percent. So, you could accurately say in that Obama ad that, "women get paid 91 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men."

I believe that the remainder of the gap can be accounted for by looking at

other *voluntary* factors that differentiate men and women.

The Heritage Foundation says that a recent study puts the number at 95 cents per dollar.

Excerpt:

> Women are more likely than men to work in industries with more flexible schedules. Women are also more likely to spend time outside the labor force to care for children. These choices have benefits, but they also reduce pay—for both men and women. When economists control for such factors, they find the gender gap largely disappears.
>
> A 2009 study commissioned by the Department of Labor found that after controlling for occupation, experience, and other choices, women earn 95 percent as much as men do. In 2005, June O'Neil, the former director of the Congressional Budget Office, found that "There is no gender gap in wages among men and women with similar family roles." Different choices—not discrimination—account for different employment and wage outcomes.

A popular article by Carrie Lukas in the Wall Street Journal agrees.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Labor's Time Use survey shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. One would expect that someone who works 9% more would also earn more. This one fact alone accounts for more than a third of the wage gap.
>
> […]Recent studies have shown that the wage gap shrinks—or even reverses—when relevant factors are taken into account and comparisons are made between men and women in similar circumstances. In a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30, the research firm Reach Advisors found that women earned an average of 8% more than their male counterparts. Given that women are outpacing men in educational attainment, and that our economy is increasingly geared toward knowledge-based jobs, it makes sense that women's earnings are going up compared to men's.

When women make different choices about education and labor that are more like what men choose, they earn just as much or more than men. What does it mean that people on the left keep pushing pseudo-science on us to try to punish men and reward women? Why are men so awful that they need to be denigrated like this? And how will men respond to social expectations when they have to face being told that they are "bad"? It seems to me that putting men down is going to lower their level of engagement.

William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia: Does God Exist?

September 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video from the third debate from Dr. William Lane Craig's speaking tour in Australia.

Format:

- William Lane Craig (15 min)
- Lawrence Krauss (15 min, but was actually 21:40)
- Moderated discussion
- Question and answer

Dr. Graham Oppy, the moderator, is a well-known atheist philosopher. He let Dr. Krauss speak for 21 minutes and 40 seconds, which is why my summary of Krauss is so long.

The video:

Summary

After careful consideration, I decided not to be snarky at all in this summary. What you read below is what happened. There may be some small mistakes, but I will fix those if people tell me about them. I also included some quotes and timestamps for the more striking things that Dr. Krauss said.

The debate itself starts at 4:50 with Dr. Craig's opening speech. He does use slides to show the structure of his arguments.

Dr. Craig's opening speech. (4:50)

1. The kalam cosmological argument:
    - God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe
    - The Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem supports the absolute beginning of the universe
    - Even if our universe is part of a multiverse, the multiverse itself would have to have an absolute beginning
    - Speculative cosmologies try to challenge the Big Bang theory, but none of them – even if true – can establish that the past is eternal
    - Only two types of things could explain the origin of spece, time, matter and energy – either abstract objects or minds
    - Abstract objects do not cause effects, but minds do cause effects (we do it ourselves)
    - A mind is the best explanation for the origin of the universe
2. The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
    - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature

    - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
    - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
    - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see
3. The cosmic fine-tuning for the existence of intelligent life
    - There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) cosmological constants and 2) quantities
    - These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life
    - There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design
    - Law is rejected because they are put in at the beginning or matter – they don't emerge from matter
    - Chance must be rejected, because they odds are just too long unless you appeal to a world-ensemble
    - We do not observe what the world ensemble hypothesis predicts that we should observe
    - Design is the best explanation for finely-tuned constants and quantities
4. The existence of objective moral values and duties
    - Our experience of morality (values and duties) is that it is objectively real and incumbent on us
    - When someone goes into a classroom and shoots at innocent children, that is objectively wrong
    - On naturalism, moral values and moral duties do not exist – they are conventional and variable by time and place
    - The best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties is that God exists
5. The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus
    - There are three widely-accepted facts that are best explained by the resurrection hypothesis
    - 1) the empty tomb, 2) the post-mortem appearances, 3) the early church's belief in the resurrection
    - Naturalistic attempts to explain these 3 boilerplate facts fail
    - The best explanation of the 3 minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead
6. The immediate experience of God
    - Belief in God is a "properly basic" belief – rational even without arguments because of experience of God

Dr. Krauss' opening speech. (21:12)

Slides: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

1. Religious pluralism I

    - There have been lots of different gods created by people through history
    - We've gotten rid of all of them by understanding how the universe works by doing science
    - Religion is just stories, and the stories are inconsistent with how the universe works
2. Progress of naturalistic science I
    - Newtonian physics refutes the idea that angels push planets around
    - Darwinian evolution refutes design arguments, including the one that Dr. Craig presented (24:10)
    - Biochemistry hasn't explained how life originated, but we will have the solution soon
    - Physics shows us that matter can be created and destroyed without need a God
    - Physics shows us that universes can be created and destroyed "no problem"
3. Religious pluralism II
    - Since we have been able to disprove all the gods we've invented, why hang on to the last one
    - It's unlikely that the God that Dr. Craig presented exists, because we disproved all the others he didn't present
4. Hiddenness of God
    - There is a complete lack of evidence for the other 999 gods, so how likely is it that the God Dr. Craig presented exists
5. Religious pluralism III
    - There are inconsistencies between various religions, so therefore there can be no religion that is right
6. Progress of naturalistic science II
    - Peasants had a very low level of knowledge about the world and they believed in God
    - But our level of knowledge has increased over time, so we shouldn't believe in God now
    - Peasants thought that the Earth orbited the Sun, but this is now known to be false
    - The Scriptures said that the Earth orbited the Sun, but now we know that's false from science
7. Christianity plagiarizes from other religions I
    - There is nothing new or special about Jesus
    - He's just as unpleasant as all the other gods
    - Everything particular to Jesus occurs in other religions
8. Catholics are inconsistent about what they believe
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in transubstantiation
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in the virgin birth
9. The resurrection is copied from many other religions
    - Dionysus, Osiris, etc.

10. There is no evidence for the resurrection
    - The stories about Jesus were written “decades or hundreds of years after the fact”
    - The stories are inconsistent with each other
    - Dr. Craig tells me that historical Jesus scholars all accept that the resurrection happened
    - That’s like saying that all alien abductions experts agree that alien abductions happened
    - It’s unreasonable to think that the resurrection happened because no one saw it happen
    - I accept that people reported on appearances, but hallucination theory can explain that
11. The timeline for the creation and incarnation are all wrong
    - The creation, planet formation, hominids, incarnation, etc. all take place in the wrong times
    - If God knew what he was doing, he would done everything at better times to be more efficient
12. David Hume’s argument against miracles is sound
    - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – nothing wrong with this argument
    - Miracles are really just coincidences
    - Catholic apparitions at Lourdes disprove the historical argument that Dr. Craig made for the resurrection
13. God is petty and jealous
    - God shouldn’t demand that we trust him, esteem him and consider his character when we make decisions
    - The atoning death of Jesus for the sins of the world also makes no sense
14. Belief is based on geography
    - What you believe is clearly correlated with where you are born
    - There is even an Islamic clone of Dr. Craig who “uses the exact same arguments” that he does to prove Islam
    - Belief in God is decreasing in the Internet-accessible world
15. Science can develop morals without God
    - Reason is able to guide our actions to be moral
    - Morality evolves over time, so there is no objective morality
    - Catholicism teaches things that are immoral
    - Some things are prohibited by biological revulsion, such as incest
    - But if a brother and sister have sex using condoms “is that morally wrong? I can’t say it is frankly” (37:24)
16. Dr. Craig is irrational
    - “I came here convinced based on my past interactions and his writing that Dr. Craig was a dishonest Charlatan”
    - “Any argument that validates God is reasonable to him”

    - “And any argument against it is not only unreasonable but wrong and worth distorting”
    - “Because it must be wrong – he’s decided the answer in advance”
17. Dr. Craig is immoral
    - Dr. Craig thinks it is OK for God to command that Canaanite children are killed
    - “So in fact if they were Canaanite children in that schoolroom that he talked about then it would be OK”
    - It’s not reasonable to justify genocide in that way, but Dr. Craig is willing to go to those lengths
18. The cause of the origin of the space time universe need not be God
    - Dr. Craig says that if there is an explanation for the origin or space, time, matter and energy it must be God
    - But it could just as easily be turtles or Zeus
19. Dr. Craig misrepresents the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem
    - Alexander Vilenkin wrote me an e-mail that says that the theorem doesn’t work in all cases
    - “Dr. Craig is so convinced that these arguments must be true that he won’t listen to the fact that they’re not”
20. Darwinian evolution explains the fine-tuning
    - “Life was fine tuned – we got rid of it with Darwin”
    - Mutation and natural selection explain the cosmic fine-tuning argument that Dr. Craig presented
21. Suboptimal design disproves the fine-tuning argument
    - “We get back aches” therefore “This argument that [the universe] is fine-tuned for life is nonsense”
22. William Lane Craig can be proven to exhibit homosexual behavior using logical arguments
    - Look, you can construct arguments that are clearly wrong
    - Premise 1: “All mammals exhibit homosexual behavior”
    - Premise 2: “William Lane Craig is a mammal”
    - Seems to be saying that logical arguments can prove false things “it’s nonsense”
23. Dr. Craig distorted a podcast that some group made on pain receptors
    - Dr. Craig’s faith is so strong that it causes him to distort what this group said

Discussion: (44:35)

I will not be summarizing everything that was said, just a few main points.

The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the

universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can't even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don't work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don't have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON'T KNOW!!!!!!!" (raising his voice)
- Craig: I'm not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"
- Craig: "I wonder what you deleted from the original letter"
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "I just told you!"
- Craig: "Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) 'You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is

highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.'
- Craig: "That's Vilenkin."
- Krauss: "In this paper, that's absolutely right"
- Krauss: But it's ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it's unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: "Isn't it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?"
- Krauss: "No"
- Craig: "Well, can you give us one then"
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) "In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong"
- Krauss: "You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it's hard"
- Craig: "Right"

I noticed that a huge number of atheist web sites are taking the Vilenkin quote that Krauss used out of context, like this one and this one. There are probably a lot more of them like that, which I think is interesting. That's why we have these debates, I guess. To set the record straight about who accuses people of being dishonest, and who is actually dishonest.

Fine-tuning:

- Krauss tried to argue that he had explained the fine-tuning with the Higgs particle, but Dr. Craig said that only applied to the cosmological constant, not all the other examples of fine-tuning. Krauss said that it wasn't impressive that this universe permitted life and that "It would have been much more surprising if we evolved in a universe in which we couldn't live". Krauss argued the fine-tuning was only for "Life like us". But Dr. Craig explained that the fine-tuning is what allows us to have the basics of any kind of life, like slow-burning stars, chemical diversity, etc. – things that are required for basic minimal life functions in any living system. Craig said that he was working with the current physical laws of this universe (F = ma, etc.) and that he was looking at what changed if we changed those even slightly. Krauss tried to say that if he changed things like the mass of particles then the strength of forces would change. (But the forces aren't laws!) Krauss argued that the cosmological constant would be even better for life if it was zero, and Craig said that the life permitting range did include zero, but that the range of life-permitting values was narrow.

Jesus' existence:

- Craig reponded to the mystery religions charge, the charge that the evidence for the minimal facts is too late/too weak, the charge that grief visions explained the evidence better, and Hume's argument against miracles. Craig brought up the early

creed from 1 Cor 15:3-7 and explained to Krauss that it was 5 years after the events, and that Jewish standards of oral transmission were strong enough to ensure that the creed was reliable, and most of the eyewitnesses would still have been alive.

Audience Q and A: (1:21:09)

The first topic is the grounding of morality. Krauss agrees that there is no objective morality and no objective moral oughts. He also said that that standards of behavior are arbitrary, and that they change over time and they are adopted for promoting social order. Dr. Craig pressed the point that science itself would collapse without ethical values. It assumes them, but cannot ground them.

The next topic was free will. Krauss is a determinist. Craig asked him how he could reconcile moral responsibility with determinism.

The next topic was the effectiveness of mathematics. Krauss didn't have an explanation for it and didn't think it needed one. Then they got into whether the Genesis has been verified by science and whether it is meant to be taken literally.

The next topic was whether philosophy makes any progress. Craig gave the example of verificationism being rejected as too narrow, and self-refuting. Krauss: "I'm going to come to the defense of philosophy for the first time". Craig: "That's amazing!" Krauss said that science provides new knowledge. Craig said there were some things that could be known apart from science.

Christian-owned bakery closes after threats and harassment by gay activists

September 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Todd Starnes reports on a troubling at Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A family-owned Christian bakery, under investigation for refusing to bake a wedding cake for a lesbian couple, has been forced to close its doors after a vicious boycott by militant homosexual activists.
>
> […]Last January, Aaron and Melissa Klein made national headlines when they refused to bake a wedding cake for a lesbian couple.
>
> Klein tells me he has nothing against homosexuals — but because of their religious faith, the family simply cannot take part in gay wedding events.
>
> "I believe marriage is between a man and a woman," he said. "I don't want to help somebody celebrate a commitment to a lifetime of sin."
>
> The lesbian couple filed a discrimination with the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries and told their story to local newspapers and television statements.
>
> Within days, militant homosexuals groups launched protests and boycotts. Klein told me he received messages threatening to kill his family. They hoped his children would die.
>
> The LGBT protestors then turned on other wedding vendors around the community. They threatened to boycott any florists, wedding planners or other vendors that did business with Sweet Cakes By Melissa.
>
> "That tipped the scales," Klein said. "The LGBT activists inundated them with phone calls and threatened them. They would tell our vendors, 'If you don't stop doing business with Sweet Cakes By Melissa, we will shut you down.'"

The actions of the diversity activists were augmented with an inquisition by state government.

More:

> To make matters worse, the Oregon's Bureau of Labor and Industries announced last month they had launched a formal discrimination investigation against the Christian family.
>
> Commissioner Brad Avakian told The Oregonian that he was committed to a fair and thorough investigation to determine whether the bakery discriminated against the lesbians.
>
> "Everybody is entitled to their own beliefs, but that doesn't mean that folks have the right to discriminate," he told the newspaper. "The goal is to rehabilitate. For

> those who do violate the law, we want them to learn from that experience and have a good, successful business in Oregon."

Let's hope that those intolerant bigoted Christians learned their lesson not to offend anyone else by disagreeing with them and refusing to celebrate things that they disagree with. After all, Christians should be forced by the state to act like non-Christians in public.

Related posts

- Gay activists pressure D.C. mayor to remove ex-gay singer from MLK memorial concert
- Two Christian preachers brutally beaten at Seattle Gay Pride Festival
- Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Gay activist Dan Savage bullies Christian teens and bashes Christianity
- Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll's Mars Hill Church
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Pro-abortion vandals: destroying pro-life display was "free speech"
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired

Sociologist Rodney Stark discusses whether religion is good for society

September 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mysterious Chris S. posted this interview with Baylor University sociologist / historian Rodney Stark.

About Rodney Stark:

> Rodney Stark grew up in Jamestown, North Dakota, and began his career as a newspaper reporter. Following a tour of duty in the U.S. Army, he received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, where he held appointments as a research sociologist at the Survey Research Center and at the Center for the Study of Law and Society. He left Berkeley to become Professor of Sociology and of Comparative Religion at the University of Washington. In 2004 he joined the faculty of Baylor University. He has published 30 books and more than 140 scholarly articles on subjects as diverse as prejudice, crime, suicide, and city life in ancient Rome. However, the greater part of his work has been on religion. He is past president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and of the Association for the Sociology of Religion. He also has won a number of national and international awards for distinguished scholarship. Many of his books and articles have been translated and published in foreign languages, including Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, and Turkish.
>
> Education:
>
> - B.A. University of Denver, 1959, Journalism.
> - M.A. University of California, Berkeley, 1965, Sociology.
> - Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, 1971, Sociology.

Excerpt:

> **Q: After examining hundreds of relevant studies, what's the biggest misconception you've found about the typical religious believer?**
>
> **Rodney Stark:** Even some leading evangelical scholars take it for granted that religious Americans are lacking in appreciation for "high culture," for music, art, literature, and the like. Nothing could be further from the truth. The more often Americans attend religious services, the more likely they are to read newspapers, poetry, novels, and to admire writers. The same applies to liking classical music, to attending symphony concerts, operas, and stage plays, and to dislike rock 'n roll.
>
> **Q: Some recent books, like Christopher Hitchens' *God Is Not Great*, suggest that "religion poisons everything." But your book indicates that**

> **religious belief offers society many tangible benefits. What are some of these benefits?**
>
> **Rodney Stark:** Religious Americans are more law abiding, have superior mental and physical health, are far more generous vis-à-vis charities, have much better family life, are more successful, and religious couples even have more satisfactory sex lives!
>
> **Q: In the book's Conclusion you look at religion's effect on many areas of society—crime, schooling, health, employment, welfare—and you determine that, by a conservative estimate, religion saves America over $2.6 trillion each year. What are some of the biggest contributors to this savings?**
>
> **Rodney Stark:** The biggest by far has to do with the criminal justice system. If all Americans committed crimes at the same level as those who do not attend religious services, the costs of the criminal justice system would about double to, perhaps, $2 trillion annually. Second is health costs. The more often people attend religious services, the healthier they are. However, the net savings involved is reduced somewhat by the fact that religious Americans live, on average, seven years longer than those who never attend religious services.

Previously, I noted how people who attend church or synagogue have much better marriage stability than atheists.

Let's just review that with some research done by W. Bradford Wilcox:

> Married couples who attend church together tend to be happier than couples who rarely or never attend services, according to sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox of the University of Virginia.
>
> Using three nationally representative surveys – the General Social Survey (GSS), the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), and the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) – Wilcox found that married church-going Americans across denominational and racial classifications were more likely to describe themselves as "very happy" than their non-religious counterparts.
>
> Couples who attended church regularly were also less likely to divorce than couples who seldom attended church services, Wilcox found.
>
> "Attending church only seems to help couples when they attend together," Wilcox told **Cybercast News Service**. "But when they do, they are significantly happier in their marriages, and they are much less likely to divorce, compared to couples who do not attend church. I would say that church attendance is a beneficial component of marriage when it is done together."
>
> Wilcox explained that regular church attendance offers certain positive benefits to a married couple: "Churches supply moral norms like sexual fidelity and forgiveness, family-friendly social networks that lend support to couples facing the ordinary joys and challenges of married life, and a faith that helps couples

> make sense of the difficulties in their lives-from unemployment to illness-that can harm their marriages."
>
> "So, in a word, the couple that prays together stays together," said Wilcox.
>
> […]"Men and women who hold a religious faith and put that faith into practice by attending church on a regular basis do look different in the marital realm," Wilcox said.
>
> "At least in the marriage arena, faith alone doesn't work. You've got to combine faith and works to enjoy a happy and stable marriage. You need the consistent message, the accountability, and the support a church community can provide to really benefit from religious faith," he added.

This Wall Street Journal article from a while back, entitled "Look Who's Irrational Now" argues that atheists are less skeptical than believers.

Excerpt:

> The reality is that the New Atheist campaign, by discouraging religion, won't create a new group of intelligent, skeptical, enlightened beings. Far from it: It might actually encourage new levels of mass superstition. And that's not a conclusion to take on faith — it's what the empirical data tell us.
>
> "What Americans Really Believe," a comprehensive new study released by Baylor University yesterday, shows that traditional Christian religion greatly decreases belief in everything from the efficacy of palm readers to the usefulness of astrology. It also shows that the irreligious and the members of more liberal Protestant denominations, far from being resistant to superstition, tend to be much more likely to believe in the paranormal and in pseudoscience than evangelical Christians.
>
> The Gallup Organization, under contract to Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion, asked American adults a series of questions to gauge credulity. Do dreams foretell the future? Did ancient advanced civilizations such as Atlantis exist? Can places be haunted? Is it possible to communicate with the dead? Will creatures like Bigfoot and the Loch Ness Monster someday be discovered by science?
>
> The answers were added up to create an index of belief in occult and the paranormal. While 31% of people who never worship expressed strong belief in these things, only 8% of people who attend a house of worship more than once a week did.
>
> Even among Christians, there were disparities. While 36% of those belonging to the United Church of Christ, Sen. Barack Obama's former denomination, expressed strong beliefs in the paranormal, only 14% of those belonging to the Assemblies of God, Sarah Palin's former denomination, did. In fact, the more traditional and evangelical the respondent, the less likely he was to believe in, for instance, the possibility of communicating with people who are dead.

> […]Surprisingly, while increased church attendance and membership in a conservative denomination has a powerful negative effect on paranormal beliefs, higher education doesn't. Two years ago two professors published another study in Skeptical Inquirer showing that, while less than one-quarter of college freshmen surveyed expressed a general belief in such superstitions as ghosts, psychic healing, haunted houses, demonic possession, clairvoyance and witches, the figure jumped to 31% of college seniors and 34% of graduate students.

And naturally, studies show that religious people are both more generous than their secular counterparts.

Why does God allow so much natural evil from phenomena like earthquakes?

September 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi shared this video with me, which features chemist Fazale Rana.

The video runs under 4 minutes:

Basically, there was an atheist who challenged the idea that nature is designed because there are things in nature which cause suffering, like earthquakes and volcanoes.

Now the first thing to note is that atheists commonly think that God's job is to make humans happy. If he doesn't make humans feel happy – regardless of their knowledge of him and relationship with him – then he is a big failure. Many atheists think that, it is one of the most common reasons why people become atheists. But of course anyone who reads the Bible and reads the story of Jesus knows that the purpose of life on God's view is for humans to know him and to be disciples of a *suffering* Messiah who sacrifices himself in order to obey God the Father. So that's the first thing to say – purpose of life *not* happiness, but knowledge of God and being a disciple of Jesus. This may involve all kinds of suffering, and that's to be expected.

Second, there is a response to the problem of evil based on the necessity of natural laws. The argument goes that you can't have genuine morality without a predictable, knowable system of natural laws.

But I want to talk about something different in this post. In the video, Dr. Rana thinks that many of the things that cause suffering in the natural world are actually necessary for life to exist at all. He provides the example of plate tectonics in his video above, and I want to take that one and add to it the example of heavy element production and the stellar lifecycle. These are both from a book called "Rare Earth", which is written by two non-Christians – Peter Ward and Donald Brownlee, but I'll link to web sites to make the case.

Plate tectonics.

Here's an article from Reasons to Believe by Dr. David Rogstad, who has a PhD in physics from Caltech – the top school for experimental science. The article not only goes over the basic plate tectonics to carbonate-silicate cycle connection, but it adds a newer discovery to boot.

Excerpt:

> Earthquakes are a byproduct of plate tectonics, a theory in geology developed in recent years for explaining motions near the surface of the Earth. One of the benefits from plate tectonics is that Earth maintains the right levels of carbon dioxide (CO_2) in the atmosphere to compensate for the Sun's increasing luminosity. This is accomplished by what is called the carbonate-silicate cycle. CO_2 is removed from the atmosphere through weathering. The weathered

> products are eventually drawn into the Earth's interior via plate tectonics. Processes inside the Earth's interior release the CO_2 back into the atmosphere via volcanoes. While all aspects of this mechanism are not yet fully understood, it has been instrumental in providing a stable environment for life on the Earth for billions of years.
>
> New research provides yet another component that appears fine-tuned for life. In a letter in the September 27, 2007 issue of Nature together with a corresponding news release from the University of Bonn, Arno Rohrbach and his colleagues have discussed another mechanism similar to the carbonate-silicate cycle. It also depends on plate tectonics but, in this case, the mechanism controls the amount of oxygen on the surface of the Earth.
>
> Oxygen becomes bound up in various oxides which are then drawn into the Earth's interior, where various processes result in its being incorporated into an exotic mineral called majorite. The results reported in this letter established that majorite functions as a kind of "reservoir" for oxygen, and when the majorite ascends nearer to the surface of the Earth it breaks down and releases its oxygen. Some of this oxygen also binds with hydrogen released from the interior of the Earth to form water. The authors have referred to the whole process as an "oxygen elevator."
>
> They go on to say that "without the 'oxygen elevator' in its mantle the Earth would probably be a barren planet hostile to life. According to our findings, planets below a certain size hardly have any chance of forming a stable atmosphere with a high water content."
>
> This research confirms the existence of one more finely tuned mechanism that depends on plate tectonics and contributes to an environment that can support life. It also gives humans one more reason to be appreciative rather than dismayed when we experience an earthquake that breaks some precious possessions beyond repair.

Astronomer Dr. Hugh Ross who has a PhD in Astronomy from the University of Toronto and did a 5-year post-doctoral work at Caltech, adds to this with another discovery.

Excerpt:

> In the December 2007 issue of *Astrobiology* Stanford University geophysicists Norman H. Sleep and Mark D. Zoback note that the higher tectonic activity during Earth's early history could have played a key role in cycling critically important nutrients and energy sources for life. The production of numerous small faults in the brittle primordial crust released trapped nutrients. Such faults could also release pockets of methane gas and molecular hydrogen. The methane and hydrogen could then provide crucial energy sources for nonphotosynthetic life. Finally, the production of faults could bring water to otherwise arid habitats, such as rocks far below Earth's surface.

> Faulting, generated by active and widespread tectonics, allowed a youthful Earth to support diverse and abundant life. This enhanced diversity and abundance of life quickly transformed Earth's surface into an environment safe for advanced life. Also, the buildup of biodeposits for the support of human civilization occurred more rapidly due to active tectonics.
>
> The more rapid preparation of Earth for humanity is critical. Without such rapid preparation, humans could not come upon the terrestrial scene before the Sun's increasing luminosity would make their presence impossible (due to excessive heat).

So that's the science behind earthquakes. So that's a brief look at why we need plate tectonics for life, and we just have to buck up and take the earthquakes with it. It's not God's job to give us happiness and health. That's not his plan. People who complain about earthquakes have to show how God could get the life-permitting effects of earthquakes without wrecking his ability to succeed in his plan to make people know him and follow him. But how can an atheist do that? They can't. I think that people just need to realize that humans are not in charge here and we have to live with that. We have to accept that we didn't make the universe, and we don't get to decide what purpose it has. God decides.

On to star formation.

Star formation

Atheists often complain that the universe is too big or too old (which is actually the same thing, since the more time passes, the more it expands). The fact of the matter is that life appeared the earliest it could appear – we needed the universe to be a certain age before it could support life.

Dr. Hugh Ross explains in this article.

Excerpt:

> The second parameter of the universe to be measured was its age. For many decades astronomers and others have wondered why, given God exists, He would wait so many billions of years to make life. Why did He not do it right away? The answer is that, given the laws and constants of physics God chose to create, it takes about ten to twelve billion years just to fuse enough heavy elements in the nuclear furnaces of several generations of giant stars to make life chemistry possible.
>
> Life could not happen any earlier in the universe than it did on Earth. Nor could it happen much later. As the universe ages, stars like the sun located in the right part of the galaxy for life (see chapter 15) and in a stable nuclear burning phase become increasingly rare. If the universe were just a few billion years older, such stars would no longer exist.

The Rare Earth book explains the details on p. 40-4:

> The trick for getting from helium to the generation of planets, and ultimately to life, was the formation of carbon, the key element for the success of life and for the production of heavy elements in stars. Carbon could not form in the early moments following the Big Bang, because the density of the expanding mass was too low for the necessary collisions to occur. Carbon formation had to await the creation of giant red stars, whose dense interiors are massive enough to allow such collisions. Because stars become red giants only in the last 10% of their lifetimes (when they have used up much of the hydrogen in their cores), there was no carbon in the Universe for hundreds of millions to several billion years after the Big Bang—and hence no life as we know it for that interval of time.
>
> […]The sequence of element production in the Big Bang and in stars provided not only the elements necessary for the formation of Earth and the other terrestrial planets but also all of the elements critical for life—those actually needed to form living organisms and their habitats.

> […]The processes that occurred during the billions of years of Earth's "prehistory" when its elements were produced are generally well understood. Elements are produced within stars; some are released back into space and are recycled into and out of generations of new stars. When the sun and its planets formed, they were just a random sampling of this generated and reprocessed material. Nevertheless, it is believed that the "cosmic abundance" mix of the chemical elements—the elemental composition of the sun—is representative of the building material of most stars and planets, with the major variation being the ratio of hydrogen to heavy elements.
>
> […]Many stars are similar in composition, but there is variation, mainly in the abundance of the heavier Earth-forming elements relative to hydrogen and helium. The sun is in fact somewhat peculiar in that it contains about 25% more heavy elements than typical nearby stars of similar mass. In extremely old stars, the abundance of heavy elements, may be as low as a thousandth of that in the sun. Abundance of heavy elements is roughly correlated with age. As time passed, the heavy-element content of the Universe as a whole increased, so newly formed stars are on the average more "enriched" in heavy elements than older ones.
>
> […]The matter produced in the Big Bang was enriched in heavier elements by cycling in and out of stars. Like biological entities, stars form, evolve, and die. In the process of their death, stars ultimately become compact objects such as white dwarfs, neutron stars, or even black holes. On their evolutionary paths to these ends, they eject matter back into space, where it is recycled and further enriched in heavy elements. New stars rise from the ashes of the old. This is why we say that each of the individual atoms in Earth and in all of its creatures—including us—has occupied the interior of at least a few different stars.

What he's saying is that heavy elements are created gradually because of the star formation lifecycle. The first generation of stars are metal-poor. The next generation of stars is better. And so on until we get to stars that can support life by providing a steady, stable amount of energy – as well as other benefits like planets with an atmosphere. Our planet is 4.5 billion years old, and the universe is about 14 billion years old. Simple life appears about 4 billion years ago on Earth. That means we got life practically immediately, given that we had to develop the heavy elements needed to make a life-supporting star, a life-supporting planet and *us.*

UPDATE: Sean from ReligioPolitical Talk pointed out this related post out to me:

> Another examples is that hurricanes help to regulate the earths temperature, and cause "sea deserts" to bloom… assisting in many ways earth's climate:
>
> "Some parts of the ocean are like deserts, because there isn't enough food for many plants to grow. A hurricane's high winds stir up the ocean waters and help bring nutrients and phytoplankton to the surface, where they get more sunlight, allowing the plants to bloom," Babin said. (**NASA**)
>
> To support the above, via **The Columbia Tribune**:
>
> …."Most certainly," says Steve DiMarco, a Texas A&M University oceanography professor who for 16 years has studied the Gulf of Mexico, which has a "dead zone" where oxygen-depleted water can kill marine life.
>
> In early July, most of the Texas-Louisiana shelf from Freeport, Texas, to the Mississippi River Delta was hypoxic – meaning the salt water has lost large amounts of oxygen. Later in July, Hurricane Dolly disrupted the dead zone and re-oxygenated the shallow waters south of Louisiana and the entire shelf off Texas. Oxygen levels started to drop again within days after the storm.
>
> In early August, Hurricane Eduard re-oxygenated the Louisiana shelf, but by mid-August oxygen concentrations dropped to hypoxic levels.
>
> And guess what?
>
> Hurricane Ike re-oxygenated the shelf when it made landfall Sept. 12 in Texas. The latest data collected in October showed oxygen concentrations nearly all at normal levels, DiMarco said….

Now that's good blogging.

Stephen Moore: Obama's failing economy has hit his supporters the hardest

September 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal, a must-read.

Excerpt:

> Each month the consultants at Sentier analyze the numbers from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and estimate the trend in median annual household income adjusted for inflation. On Aug. 21, Sentier released "Household Income on the Fourth Anniversary of the Economic Recovery: June 2009 to June 2013." The finding that grabbed headlines was that real median household income "has fallen by 4.4 percent since the 'economic recovery' began in June 2009." In dollar terms, median household income fell to $52,098 from $54,478, a loss of $2,380.
>
> What was largely overlooked, however, is that those who were most likely to vote for Barack Obama in 2012 were members of demographic groups most likely to have suffered the steepest income declines. Mr. Obama was re-elected with 51% of the vote. Five demographic groups were crucial to his victory: young voters, single women, those with only a high-school diploma or less, blacks and Hispanics. He cleaned up with 60% of the youth vote, 67% of single women, 93% of blacks, 71% of Hispanics, and 64% of those without a high-school diploma, according to exit polls.
>
> According to the Sentier research, households headed by single women, with and without children present, saw their incomes fall by roughly 7%. Those under age 25 experienced an income decline of 9.6%. Black heads of households saw their income tumble by 10.9%, while Hispanic heads-of-households' income fell 4.5%, slightly more than the national average. The incomes of workers with a high-school diploma or less fell by about 8% (-6.9% for those with less than a high-school diploma and -9.3% for those with only a high-school diploma).
>
> To put that into dollar terms, in the four years between the time the Obama recovery began in June 2009 and June of this year, median black household income fell by just over $4,000, Hispanic households lost $2,000 and female-headed households lost $2,300.
>
> The unemployment numbers show pretty much the same pattern. July's Bureau of Labor Statistics data (the most recent available) show a national unemployment rate of 7.4%. The highest jobless rates by far are for key components of the Obama voter bloc: blacks (12.6%), Hispanics (9.4%), those with less than a high-school diploma (11%) and teens (23.7%).

> This is a stunning reversal of the progress for these groups during the expansions

> of the 1980s and 1990s, and even through the start of the 2008 recession. Census data reveal that from 1981-2008 the biggest income gains were for black women, 81%; followed by white women, 67%; followed by black men, 31%; and white males at 8%.
>
> […]Mr. Obama has often contemptuously, and wrongly, branded the quarter-century period of prosperity beginning with the presidency of Ronald Reagan as a "trickle down" era. For many in the groups that Mr. Obama set out to help, a return to the prosperity of that era would be a vast improvement.
>
> The Census Bureau data on incomes include cash government benefits, such as unemployment insurance, disability payments and the earned-income tax credit (but excludes Medicaid and food stamps). Most of the cash programs have surged in cost during the Obama presidency, yet incomes have still declined for the lowest-income eligible groups. This suggests that wages and salaries from employment have shrunk at an even faster pace than the Census data show. The shrinking paychecks of the past four years are consistent with two unwelcome anomalies of the recovery: a swift decline in labor-force participation to 63.4% from 65.5% during that period and a rise in part-time employment.
>
> What all of this means is that the stimulus-led economic revival that began officially in June 2009—Vice President Joe Biden's famous "summer of recovery"—has only resulted in lower incomes for at least half of Americans, the very ones who were instrumental in electing Mr. Obama twice.

Guess what? Borrowing trillions from future generations to spend on Democrat-run sham companies like Solyndra doesn't stimulate the economy. Shocking, I know. And yet that's what we voted for.

Investors Business Daily explains how the President's *own policies* are causing the troubles that his supporters are facing.

Look:

> More than 250 employers have cut work hours, jobs or taken other steps to avoid ObamaCare costs, according to a new IBD analysis.
>
> Mind the data have been the refrain from the White House as it downplays anecdotal reports of employers limiting workers to fewer than 30 hours per week.
>
> But the anecdotes are piling high enough that they now constitute a body of data that can help gauge the impact of the Affordable Care Act's employer mandate.
>
> IBD is introducing ObamaCare Employer Mandate: A List Of Cuts To Work Hours, Jobs — a compilation of employers who have opted to restrict work hours to limit new liability for employee health coverage.
>
> As of Sept. 3, this list has reached 258 — including more than 200 public-sector employers.
>
> Almost all of those employers have cut the hours of part-time workers to below

> 30 per week — the point at which ObamaCare's insurance mandate kicks in.
>
> A few have cut payrolls to steer clear of ObamaCare's 50 full-time-equivalent-worker definition of a large employer subject to employer fines. A few others have reduced staff while contracting with employment services firms to limit their ObamaCare exposure.

The Wall Street Journal explains how health care premiums, which Obama promised to LOWER by $2500, are up $3000.

Excerpt:

> Central to ObamaCare are requirements that health insurers (1) accept everyone who applies (guaranteed issue), (2) cannot charge more based on serious medical conditions (modified community rating), and (3) include numerous coverage mandates that force insurance to pay for many often uncovered medical conditions.
>
> […]We compared the average premiums in states that already have ObamaCare-like provisions in their laws and found that consumers in New Jersey, New York and Vermont already pay well over twice what citizens in many other states pay. Consumers in Maine and Massachusetts aren't far behind. Those states will likely see a small increase.
>
> By contrast, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, Wyoming and Virginia will likely see the largest increases—somewhere between 65% and 100%. Another 18 states, including Texas and Michigan, could see their rates rise between 35% and 65%.
>
> While ObamaCare won't take full effect until 2014, health-insurance premiums in the individual market are already rising, and not just because of routine increases in medical costs. Insurers are adjusting premiums now in anticipation of the guaranteed-issue and community-rating mandates starting next year. There are newly imposed mandates, such as the coverage for children up to age 26, and what qualifies as coverage is much more comprehensive and expensive. Consolidation in the hospital system has been accelerated by ObamaCare and its push for Accountable Care Organizations. This means insurers must negotiate in a less competitive hospital market.
>
> **Although President Obama repeatedly claimed that health-insurance premiums for a family would be $2,500 lower by the end of his first term, they are actually about $3,000 higher—a spread of about $5,500 per family.**

So, every cloud has a silver lining, and the silver lining to this Obama-cloud is that at least the people who voted for socialism are facing the consequences of their own economic illiteracy. I hope they learn. But if they don't learn now, then they'll learn when the welfare and entitlements run out. I hope that the people who voted for our American Idol president will take a Thomas Sowell book out of the library and learn something about

economics for a change.

UPDATE: From Ian B.: 40,000 Longshoremen (union workers) quit the AFL-CIO union. Socialism hurts employers? It’s all so unexpected! How could reality not match honeyed words and good intentions?

How early are the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity?

September 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a great post from Tough Questions Answered. They find evidence for the Incarnation and the Trinity in the writings of Ignatius, who was the third Bishop of Antioch from 70 AD to 107 AD.

Here's the raw quote from Ignatius' "Epistle to the Ephesians":

> But our Physician is the only true God, the Father and Begetter of the only-begotten Son. We have also as a Physician the Lord our God, Jesus the Christ, the only-begotten Son and Word, before time began, but who afterwards became also man, of Mary the virgin. For "the Word was made flesh." Being incorporeal, He was in a body; being impassible, He was in a passible body; being immortal, He was in a mortal body; being life, He became subject to corruption, that He might free our souls from death and corruption, and heal them, and might restore them to health, when they were diseased with ungodliness and wicked lusts.

And TQA discusses the passage:

> There are several aspects of this passage which demonstrate that Saint Ignatius held beliefs consistent with the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Dual Nature of Christ. First, he refers to two separate Persons, God the Father and Jesus Christ, yet he calls both of them God.
>
> [...]Second, Ignatius refers to Jesus Christ as begotten "before time began". This is almost word for word identical to the Nicene Creed, which says, "I believe in. . . one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. . ." Some today claim that the Early Church believed Christ's being "begotten" of the Father was in relation to His birth from Mary (specifically, this is an LDS claim). However, Ignatius' comment here demonstrates that the Early Church's understanding of Christ's nature as "only-begotten" was a relationship with the Father that was "before time began" and has nothing to do with His earthly incarnation. It is interesting to note that the Greek word translated as "only-begotten" both here and in the New Testament is "monogenes". Monogenes literally means "one of a kind," and to the Church Fathers it connoted Christ being of the same nature as the Father. . . something that was entirely unique to Him.
>
> In addition to calling Christ God and claiming Him to be the "only-begotten" of the Father "before time began", Ignatius tells us that "afterwards" Christ "became man". Ignatius then goes on to point out some aspects that Christ's becoming man added to His nature. He says that although Christ

> was incorporeal, He was in a body; although He was impassible, He was in a passible body; although He was immortal, He was in a mortal body; although He was life, He became subject to corruption. These differing aspects of Christ's nature, aspects that are polar opposites to one another, speak to Christ having two natures, one as God and one as man, and demonstrate that Saint Ignatius understood Christ in this manner. As God, Christ was incorporeal, impassible, immortal, and life itself. However, as man He was corporeal, passible, mortal, and subject to corruption.

Now I think you can pull the Incarnation and the Trinity right out the Bible, but it's still nice to see such a prominent church father writing about it decades after the events.

Chris Sinkinson debates John Hick on religious pluralism and salvation

September 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Looks like Justin Brierley on the Unbelievable radio show found a pastor with a Ph.D in philosophy, and he can really whip some ass.

The players:

> John Hick is a noted philosopher and theologian who is a proponent of a pluralist view of religion – that there is one light (God) but many lampshades (religious expressions).
>
> Chris Sinkinson is a pastor and Bible tutor who has critiqued Hick's work. He says that pluralism empties Christianity of any content and in its own way disrespects other religions more than his own exclusivist stance.

The MP3 file is here.

Justin does a great job as moderator of this debate. He said what I was thinking of saying a number of times during the debate.

Anyway, here is my snarky summary. I creatively paraphrase some of the things that Hick says to make it more clear. And funny.

—-

Hick:
– had an experience looking at the buildings of other religions
– other religions have buildings, so all religions are equal
– I spent some time in the East, and met nice Eastern people
– since Eastern people are nice that means all religions are equal

Justin:
– isn't Jesus' claim to be the exclusive path to salvation offensive?

Sinkinson:
– all religions that are exclusive and have to deal with religious pluralism
– even John Hick writes polemically in favor of his own view
– even John Hick thinks that religions that are exclusive are false

Justin:
– what about the blind man and the elephant?
– the story seems to say that other people have a partial grasp?
– but the story-teller himself has the privileged view
– so isn't the religious pluralist just as arrogant as exclusivists?

Hick:
– well, it's not arrogant to claim to have the right answer
– Jesus never made the claim to be God incarnate

– Jesus never made the claim to be the exclusive path to God
– historians don't think that John's gospel is reliable because it is late
– the proclamation of exclusivity was added by evangelists much later

Sinkinson:
– the historians who doubt the high Christology are radical skeptics
– the mainstream of historical scholarship accepts a high Christology
– the EARLIEST history about Jesus has the highest Christology

Hick:
– the moderate scholars do think Jesus was divine but that he didn't think he was divine
– the phrase "Son of God" was used to describe any remarkable person
– only later did the early church turn the generic term into "God the Son"

Sinkinson:
– there is reflection on Jesus' identity and developments, but not invention
– Jesus and his followers were in trouble precisely for linking him to deity
– why else would Jesus get into trouble and get crucified?

Hick:
– the Romans crucified him because people were saying he was the Messiah
– but the Messiah was not identified as being divine, but political
– and that's why the Romans crucified him

Justin:
– do you (Sinkinson) think that people in other religions can be saved?

Sinkinson:
– the traditional view is exclusivism
– the other world religions are logically contradictory with Christianity
– you have to respect their differences – they are not the same as Christianity
– exclusivists allow that people can be saved by responding to natural theology
– and there are also other cases where non-Christians are saved, like old testament saints and babies who die in infancy

Hick:
– but people's religions are based on where they are born
– so it's not fair for God to expect people to be saved in one religion only

Sinkinson:
– the plurality of religions grouped by location doesn't make christianity false
– that would be the genetic fallacy – rejecting an idea because of its origin
– the real question to consider is whether it is true
– and even the objection assumes that God is a God of love, who should be fair
– but how do you know that God is loving? that is an exclusive view
– how can the "blob" ultimate of religious pluralism be "loving" and "fair"

Hick:
– the ultimate reality is loving or not loving depending on each person's religion

Sinkinson:
– but some religions and theistic and some are atheistic
– how can those God exist and not exist?

Hick:
– God is beyond everyone's understanding, except mine
– God is beyond all definitions, except mine
– God is beyond all human understanding, except mine
– i'm not contradicting myself, it's a mystery! a mystery!
– as long as you don't look to closely, they're all the same!
– allow me to tell you about God, which no one can do but me

Justin:
– doesn't your religious pluralism mean that Christianity is false?

Hick:
– well, Christianity can't be true, because it disagrees with other religions
– Christianity can't falsify other religions, that would be mean to them
– other religions are just as "profound" as Christianity – and that's what matters – not whether a religion makes true claims
– some religions are older than Christianity, that means they can't be disagreed with
– we can't let Christianity be true, because then some people will feel bad
– if people feel bad, then they don't like me and then I feel bad
– if there's one thing I know about the unknowable ultimate reality, it's that it wants me to be liked by lots of people

Sinkinson:
– your view seems to be agnosticism – that nothing can be known about the "ultimate real"
– if we can't express in words what God is like, then why are you saying what God is like?

Hick:
– the indescribable ultimate is described (falsely, but interestingly) by various tradition

Sinkinson:
– does the "ultimate real" exist?

Hick:
– no

Justin:
– are all the exclusive religions wrong, and only you are right?

Hick:
– all propositions about God in all the religions are false
– the experience of being deluded and having feelings about your delusions is "valid" in all religions
– all religions are equally good ways to believe false things and to have feelings about your false beliefs
– only my propositions about God are true

– everyone who disagrees with me is wrong

Sinkinson:
– so all the propositions of all the religions are wrong
– but all the experiences and feelings are “right”

Hick:
– yes
– all propositions about God are humanly constructed, and so false
– except mine – mine are true!

Sinkinson:
– so everything distinctive about Christianity are literally false?

Hick:
– yes, Christian doctrines are all false
– because if they were true, other religions would be false, and they would feel bad
– and we can’t have that, because everyone has to like me
– only things that don’t offend people in other religions can be true

Sinkinson:
– so do we have to then treat all religions as non-propositional?

Hick:
– well just don’t ask people about the content of their beliefs
– just treat their religion as non-cognitive rituals, feelings and experiences
– don’t inquire too deeply into it, because all religions are all nonsense
– i’m very respectful and tolerant of different religions!

Sinkinson:
– but Muslims, for example, think their religion is making truth claims

Hick:
– but there can be tolerance as long as you treat religions as non-propositional nonsense

Sinkinson:
– um, I have a higher respect for religions than you do
– I actually consider that the claims of other religions could be true
– I think that other religions make truth claims and not nonsense claims

Hick:
– well they are all useful because they are all false
– I don’t emphasize beliefs, I emphasize living, experiences and feelings
– as long as everyone accepts my view and rejects their religion, we’ll all be tolerant

Justin:
– erm, isn’t that an exclusive claim?
– you’re trying to say that your view of what religion is is right, and everyone else is wrong

Hick:
– I’m not arrogant, I just think that all the religions of the worlds are false

– only my statements about religion are true – everyone else is wrong
– I'm tolerant, and Christians are arrogant

Justin:
– but you think Sinkinson's view is wrong
– why should we accept your view and deny his view?

Hick:
– His view of salvation is false, and mine is true

Sinkinson:
– you use words with set meanings, but you mean completely different things
– when I say salvation, I mean deliverance from sins through Jesus

Hick:
– I get to decide what salvation means for everyone, you intolerant bigot

Sinkinson:
– but that word has a specific meaning that has held true in all of Christian history
– but what you mean by salvation is people having subjective delusions that are not true

Hick:
– I don't like using the word salvation

Sinkinson:
– but you just used it!
– and you think that it is present in different world religions, but it isn't

Hick:
– God is unknowable and indescribable
– God isn't a wrathful God though
– and the Christian description of God is false
– Evangelical Christians are mean
– I had experiences with people of other faiths
– and these experiences taught me that religions that think that the universe is eternal are true
– as long as you reduce religion to behaviors and not truth, then religions are all good at producing behaviors
– if you just treat all religions as clothing fashion and food customs, they are all valid
– the main point of religion is for people to agree on cultural conventions and stick to them
– never mind the propositional statements of religions… who cares about truth? not me!
– but Christianity is definitely false

Sinkinson:
– the Judeo-Christian God is different – he reveals himself to humans
– he is distinct from the other religions
– he is personal, and is loving but also angry at sin

Hick:

– But God isn’t a person, and he isn’t a non-person
– I can’t say what he is – I’ll offend someone if I say anything at all!
– except Christians – I can offend them because they are arrogant bigots
– I’m also very spiritual – I meditate on my breathing

Sinkinson:
– you can’t assess a religion by the experiences that people have
– people who have weird experiences do all kinds of evil things
– so the real question has to be about truth – is the New Testament reliable?, etc.

Convergence detected in the genetic structure of bats and dolphins

September 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We have to start this post with the definition of convergence in biology.

> In evolutionary biology, convergent evolution is the process whereby organisms not closely related (not monophyletic), independently evolve similar traits as a result of having to adapt to similar environments or ecological niches.
>
> It is the opposite of divergent evolution, where related species evolve different traits.
>
> On a molecular level, this can happen due to random mutation unrelated to adaptive changes; see long branch attraction. In cultural evolution, convergent evolution is the development of similar cultural adaptations to similar environmental conditions by different peoples with different ancestral cultures. An example of convergent evolution is the similar nature of the flight/wings of insects, birds, pterosaurs, and bats.
>
> All four serve the same function and are similar in structure, but each evolved independently.

Jonathan Wells explains the problem that convergence poses for naturalistic evolution:

> Human designers reuse designs that work well. Life forms also reuse certain structures (the camera eye, for example, appears in humans and octopuses). How well does this evidence support Darwinian evolution? Does it support intelligent design more strongly?
>
> Evolutionary biologists attribute similar biological structures to either common descent or convergence. Structures are said to result from convergence if they evolved independently from distinct lines of organisms. Darwinian explanations of convergence strain credulity because they must account for how trial-and-error tinkering (natural selection acting on random variations) could produce strikingly similar structures in widely different organisms and environments. It's one thing for evolution to explain similarity by common descent—the same structure is then just carried along in different lineages. It's another to explain it as the result of blind tinkering that happened to hit on the same structure multiple times. Design proponents attribute such similar structures to common design (just as an engineer may use the same parts in different machines). If human designers frequently reuse successful designs, the designer of nature can surely do the same.

I'm a software engineer, and we re-use components all the time for different programs that have no "common ancestor". E.g. – I can develop my String function library and use

it in my web application and my Eclipse IDE plug-in, and those two Java programs have nothing in common. So you find the same bits in two different programs because I am the developer of both programs. But the two programs don't extend from a common program that was used for some other purpose – they have no "common ancestor" program.

Now with that in mind, take a look at this recent article from Science Daily, which Mysterious Micah sent me.

Excerpt:

> The evolution of similar traits in different species, a process known as convergent evolution, is widespread not only at the physical level, but also at the genetic level, according to new research led by scientists at Queen Mary University of London and published in Nature this week.
>
> The scientists investigated the genomic basis for echolocation, one of the most well-known examples of convergent evolution to examine the frequency of the process at a genomic level.
>
> Echolocation is a complex physical trait that involves the production, reception and auditory processing of ultrasonic pulses for detecting unseen obstacles or tracking down prey, and has **evolved separately** in different groups of bats and cetaceans (including dolphins).
>
> The scientists carried out one of the largest genome-wide surveys of its type to discover the extent to which convergent evolution of a physical feature involves the same genes.
>
> They compared genomic sequences of 22 mammals, including the genomes of bats and dolphins, which independently evolved echolocation, and found genetic signatures consistent with convergence in nearly 200 different genomic regions concentrated in several 'hearing genes'.
>
> […]Consistent with an involvement in echolocation, signs of convergence among bats and the bottlenose dolphin were seen in many genes previously implicated in hearing or deafness.
>
> **"We had expected to find identical changes in maybe a dozen or so genes but to see nearly 200 is incredible," explains Dr Joe Parker, from Queen Mary's School of Biological and Chemical Sciences and first author on the paper.**
>
> **"We know natural selection is a potent driver of gene sequence evolution, but identifying so many examples where it produces nearly identical results in the genetic sequences of totally unrelated animals is astonishing."**

Nature is the most prestigious peer-reviewed science journal. This is solid material.

There is an earlier article from 2010 in New Scientist that talked about one of the previous genes that matched for hearing capability.

Excerpt:

> Bats and dolphins trod an identical genetic path to evolve a vital component of the complex sonar systems they use to pursue and catch prey.
>
> The finding is unusual, because although many creatures have independently evolved characteristics such as eyes, tusks or wings, they usually took diverse genetic routes to get there.
>
> Analysis of a specific gene has now demonstrated that although bats live in air and dolphins in water, where sound travels five times faster, they independently evolved a near-identical gene that allows them to accept high-frequency sound in the ear – vital for sonar.
>
> The gene makes prestin, a protein in hair cells of the cochlea, which is the organ in the inner ear where sonar signals are accepted and amplified. Prestin changes shape when exposed to high-frequency sound, and this in turn deforms the fine hair cells, setting off an electrical impulse to the brain. So the protein has the important jobs of detecting and selecting high-frequency sounds for amplification.
>
> **When researchers examined the molecular structure of the prestin gene from a range of animals, they found that the variants in echolocating bats and dolphins were virtually indistinguishable.**

Indistinguishable genes in animals that don’t share a common ancestor? Maybe a better explanation for the evidence we have is – *common designer.*

Intelligence reports show Islamic extremists dominate Syrian opposition

September 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reuters reports on it with the headline "Kerry portrait of Syria rebels at odds with intelligence reports".

Excerpt:

> Secretary of State John Kerry's public assertions that moderate Syrian opposition groups are growing in influence appear to be at odds with estimates by U.S. and European intelligence sources and nongovernmental experts, who say Islamic extremists remain by far the fiercest and best-organized rebel elements.
>
> At congressional hearings this week, while making the case for President Barack Obama's plan for limited military action in Syria, Kerry asserted that the armed opposition to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad "has increasingly become more defined by its moderation, more defined by the breadth of its membership, and more defined by its adherence to some, you know, democratic process and to an all-inclusive, minority-protecting constitution.
>
> "And the opposition is getting stronger by the day," Kerry told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Tuesday.
>
> U.S. and allied intelligence sources and private experts on the Syrian conflict suggest that assessment is optimistic.
>
> While the radical Islamists among the rebels may not be numerically superior to more moderate fighters, they say, Islamist groups like the al Qaeda-aligned Nusra Front are better organized, armed and trained.
>
> Kerry's remarks represented a change in tone by the Obama administration, which for more than two years has been wary of sending U.S. arms to the rebels, citing fears they could fall into radical Islamists' hands.
>
> As recently as late July, at a security conference in Aspen, Colorado, the deputy director of the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency, David Shedd, estimated that there were at least 1,200 different Syrian rebel groups and that Islamic extremists, notably the Nusra Front, were well-placed to expand their influence.
>
> "Left unchecked, I'm very concerned that the most radical elements will take over larger segments" of the opposition groups, Shedd said. He added that the conflict could drag on anywhere "from many, many months to multiple years" and that a prolonged stalemate could leave open parts of Syria to potential control by radical fighters.
>
> U.S. and allied intelligence sources said that such assessments have not changed.

As an aside, the mainstream media has not been reporting on these intelligence reports. Excerpt:

> A new survey of the coverage of the Syrian civil war and the U.S. response to it by the big three networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC, shows that 94 percent of their stories have not mentioned that some of the rebel forces include America's enemy, al Qaeda.
>
> The survey, reported by the Media Research Center's Dan Gainor, finds that since August 21, 171 stories about the conflict have aired on the networks. Of those, only 11 stories mentioned the al Qaeda element of the war.
>
> ABC, for instance, has aired 51 stories about the Syrian conflagration but only mentioned al Qaeda in 3 of those reports. NBC was worse: out of its 64 stories, only 3 mentioned the notorious terrorist group. NBC was a little better, mentioning al Qaeda 5 times in its 56 stories.
>
> Al Qaeda is not yet ubiquitous among the rebel forces, but its presence is growing, something the networks should be warning their viewers about.

Now, I was initially in favor of a targeted strike aimed at the leadership of the Syrian regime, assuming two things were cleared up first. 1) We had to be sure that Assad was responsible for the use of the chemical weapons. Despite what the Obama administration says, we are still not sure who used the chemical weapons. 2) We had to be sure that there were moderate elements in the leadership of the Syrian opposition. Well, we now know that this is not the case. So, my position has changed, and now I am in favor of *not* launching a strike at the leaders of the Assad regime. (Note: this option was not what Obama was suggesting, anyway – his strike was not targeted at the leaders).

I do think that it is important to deter the use of chemical weapons. That is a valid concern, and a strike at leaders who use chemical weapons is a valid way of achieving that goal of saving civilians from future attacks. But we have to be sure that we don't do more harm, and right now it doesn't look like that will happen.

Satire: The end of moral duties

September 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

New Zealand philosopher Matt Flannagan wrote a satirical piece on moral duties from a naturalistic perspective: (H/T Michael's Theology)

> Some people claim we have a duty to not rape women, or that religious people have a duty to not engage in wars or acts of terrorism, conduct inquisitions and so on. I think this is nonsense as it assumes there is such a thing as a moral duty and this is false and here's why:
>
> First, the burden of proof is on he who makes a claim, as an amoralist I am not making a claim I am simply not affirming that moral duties exist, so I don't have to justify my non-belief in duties. Instead those who believe in duties have to come up with compelling proof they exist.
>
> Second, one cannot empirically verify the claim duties exist so it's meaningless incoherent nonsense until such verification is given.
>
> Third, no one has yet to provide a proof that duties of any sort exist. Such things if they can be decided at all must be shown to exist by the methods of natural science and to date no one has shown that belief in moral duties is necessary to any scientific theory. Neither physics or chemistry or biology has need of that hypothesis to explain the world.
>
> Fourth, think of all the evil done in the name of duties, almost every war fought through out history has been justified by those who did it claiming they were doing the right thing. Inquisitions, crusades and the suppression of science were all done in the name of doing the right thing and avoiding the wrong thing.
>
> Fifth, if you claim you believe we have duties such as a duty to not rape, I'll ask you to explain "which duty" do you follow. There are so many different "duties" appealed to. Some people claim there is one fundamental duty, but those who do disagree as to what it is or exactly how to conceive of it. Others claim there are many duties and a small number of people claim there are none. Everyone rejects some concept or account of duty; us 'adutyists' just deny one more duty than everyone else.
>
> Sixth – Think of how degrading and contrary to human autonomy the belief in duties is, duties are things we are supposed to live our lives in allegiance to. Rational people can figure out what to do for themselves using reason, we don't need moral duties to tell us what to do, it stifles human autonomy and is childish to believe in duties.
>
> Seventh – Evolutionary psychology shows us that small children from a very young age have evolved a disposition to believe certain things are right and wrong. The fact we can explain this belief entirely in evolutionary terms shows

> duties don't exist.
>
> Eight – What duties you believe is determined largely by your family and cultural background. If you were raised in Iran you would believe you had a duty to execute homosexuals. If you were raised in secular western Europe you would believe you had a duty to support same sex marriage. Clearly therefore, belief in duties is the result of parental and cultural brainwashing and up bringing.
>
> Ninth – We should treat all our beliefs from the perspective of a sceptical outsider, hence we should treat our belief in moral duties from the perspective of moral skeptics.
>
> Tenth – Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. The claim there are moral duties is extraordinary. It claims that there are things that tell us what to do and that we have to do it and this trumps every other reason or desire we have in favour of the action and that failure to do it makes us guilty or blameworthy. No other thing in reality has these features, hence those who believe in duties must provide us with extraordinary evidence.
>
> Eleventh – No-one has ever seen a duty. Duties have no colour, shape or smell, or sound hence they are invisible to sensory perception.

Michael's blog post on this added two more to the list:

> 12. Duties were developed by bronze age, desert dwelling peoples and we should grow out of such myths.
>
> 13. Those who argue for moral duties use metaethical reasoning and metaethics is not an academic subject.

I think that it's possible – but not rational – for naturalists to treat moral duties as objective. And that's good, because otherwise you couldn't trust them further than you could throw them for even little things. However, I wouldn't put naturalists into situations of extreme temptation where they felt were not being monitored. I don't think that they have what it takes in their worldview to do the right thing when no one is watching, especially when it goes against their own self-interest. It's just not rational for them to care about moral duties, on their worldview – they think that they are just accidents and they think that moral duties are just arbitrary conventions that vary arbitrarily in different places at different times. They are really up front about this view, and I think that we should take them at their word and understand that there are limits to their "moral" behavior. Certainly you don't want to be in a cloe relationship like a business partnership or a marriage with someone who thinks there is no free will, and therefore no moral duties and no moral responsibility. You might get lucky with them for a while, but eventually, they are going to break down.

For a more detailed look on what a typical non-theist might mean by "morality", take a look at this post on Uncommon Descent about the famous progressive lawyer Clarence Darrow.

Excerpt:

> In 1912, in Los Angeles, for example, Darrow himself went through two trials where he was both the defense lawyer and the defendant – **on two counts of attempting to bribe jurors in the union-related murder case**in which he had been, as usual, counsel for the defense. In response to the first charge Darrow told the jury:
>
> “I have committed one crime: I have stood for the weak and the poor.”
>
> And at that first trial the verdict was in Darrow’s favour, **though it is now generally accepted – even by Darrowphiles – that he was in fact guilty on both counts, plus other similar activities that he was never charged with.** At the second trial Darrow proved less able to “soft soap” his way out of trouble, and the proceedings ended with a hung jury. But although Darrow escaped being convicted, he certainly didn’t escape the consequences of his actions.
>
> Firstly he was made to leave California after undertaking never to practice law again in that state.
>
> Secondly he was dropped by the unions as one of their regular attorneys – **which is why he spent the last part of his career practising criminal law.**
>
> And thirdly, he reportedly suffered what would nowadays be described as a “nervous breakdown” and became, if it were possible, even more pessimistic and morose than had previously been the case.

Clarence Darrow is a hero for atheists like Jerry Coyne, and it’s interesting to see what this Darrow’s “morality” amounted to in practice. When a person denies free will, as Coyne and Darrow do, you can be sure of one thing – nothing evil that they do will be viewed by them as their responsibility. It was the fault of their genes, they’ll say. They will never admit that they are wrong, and their resistance to temptation will be lower than someone who believes in free will – and personal responsibility. I think that at the very core of atheism is this desperate, overarching desire to dispense with moral obligations – or at least to make them optional so that they are only binding if they don’t require any self-sacrifice. That’s why atheists are always celebrating each fresh assault on traditional morality, like gay marriage. They celebrate the breakdown of morality even for things they themselves don’t do, because they just want to be rid of moral duties and accountability entirely. I think there are some exceptions to this, but definitely it’s true of the rank-and-file atheist.

Portland bar owner fined $400,000 for offending transexuals

September 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow. Fresh on the heels of the Portland bakery closing comes this new story about a Portland bar closing.

Excerpt:

> A North Portland bar owner is facing a $400,000 fine for discriminating against a transgender woman's group.
>
> The Bureau of Labor and Industries handed down the fine yesterday to Chris Penner, the owner of the bar formerly known as the "P Club."
>
> Last summer, one woman said they received a voicemail from Penner, who said they were not allowed to return because he didn't want people to think he ran a "tranny bar." In the voicemail, Penner claimed the group was hurting business.
>
> "People think that A.) we're a tranny bar, or B.) that we're a gay bar. We are neither. People are not coming in because they just don't want to be here on a Friday night now," he said.
>
> Under Oregon law, Oregonians may not be denied full and equal service based on sexual orientation. The law provides an exemption for religious organizations and schools, but does not allow private business owners to discriminate based on sexual orientation, just as they cannot legally deny service based on race, sex, age, disability or religion.
>
> The fine is the first imposed under the 2007 Oregon Equality Act.
>
> Since 2007, Oregonians have filed 11 complaints of unlawful discrimination in public places.
>
> In addition to the massive fine, Penner also has to pay a $5,000 civil penalty.

The argument by radical gay activists is that free speech is less important their feelings of being offended. They don't want to be offended by your disagreement/disapproval. And if they are offended then they have to threaten you and attack you and hurt you and hurt your business and hurt your career until you stop offending them. And everyone on the left thinks that this is fine.

I would expect moderate gays to be speaking out to defend the right of individuals to disagree and disapprove of behaviors that they don't agree with, but I'm not seeing a lot of that.

Related posts

- Gay activists pressure D.C. mayor to remove ex-gay singer from MLK memorial concert

- Two Christian preachers brutally beaten at Seattle Gay Pride Festival
- Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue “hate” rhetoric
- The mainstream media’s biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Gay activist Dan Savage bullies Christian teens and bashes Christianity
- Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll’s Mars Hill Church
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Pro-abortion vandals: destroying pro-life display was “free speech”
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired

How to subscribe to and download the Wintery Knight's favorite podcasts

September 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought it might be a good idea to explain podcasts and RSS feeds to my readers and then list out the podcasts I like best.

So here is a quick introduction to RSS feeds:

> RSS stands for "Really Simple Syndication". It is a way to easily distribute a list of headlines, update notices, and sometimes content to a wide number of people. It is used by computer programs that organize those headlines and notices for easy reading.
>
> Most people are interested in many websites whose content changes on an unpredictable schedule. Examples of such websites are news sites, community and religious organization information pages, product information pages, medical websites, and weblogs. Repeatedly checking each website to see if there is any new content can be very tedious.
>
> Email notification of changes was an early solution to this problem. Unfortunately, when you receive email notifications from multiple websites they are usually disorganized and can get overwhelming, and are often mistaken for spam.
>
> RSS is a better way to be notified of new and changed content. Notifications of changes to multiple websites are handled easily, and the results are presented to you well organized and distinct from email.
> RSS works by having the website author maintain a list of notifications on their website in a standard way. This list of notifications is called an "RSS Feed". People who are interested in finding out the latest headlines or changes can check this list. Special computer programs called "RSS aggregators" have been developed that automatically access the RSS feeds of websites you care about on your behalf and organize the results for you.
>
> (RSS feeds and aggregators are also sometimes called "RSS Channels" and "RSS Readers".)

For the more technical people, RSS is an implementation of the Observer design pattern. When used in a distributed or enterprise environment, it is called Publish/Subscribe design pattern. You can implement it with technologies like message queues, and that's one of the things I do at work (sometimes).

So, if you look at the front page of my blog right now, you can see some little item lists from sources like Reasonable Faith and Investors Business Daily. Those are RSS feeds supplied by those people. My blog is subscribing to those feeds and display the last 5 items from each feed. And whenever those sources publish something new, then the

content of what is displayed on my blog's front page changes to show the new item.

On my home computer, I subscribe to lots of RSS news feeds, which is one way of finding news stories for my blog. The software I use for this at home is my Chrome browser pointed to the Feedly RSS aggregator web site. You have to have a gMail account to use Feedly. You can read about how to add RSS feeds to Feedly here. If you don't want to have a gMail account, then you can use a desktop application like RSS Owl and add feeds to that. On my Android phone, I use a application called gReader and add feeds to that.

I also have RSS feeds for podcasts so that I can see the new ones that people make and then download them and listen to them. I use an Android application called Podkicker for subscribing to podcasts. It also downloads them and plays them. Usually, I download them when I am at home and listen to them on the road.

Anyway, without further ado, here is my list of favorite podcasts:

> **NEWS**
>
> Name: Weekly Standard Podcast
> URL: http://dailystandardpodcast.weeklystandard.libsynpro.com/rss
>
> Name: FRC – Washington Watch Weekly – Tony Perkins
> URL: http://www.frc.org/rss/pod_WR.xml
>
> Name: FRC – Daily Commentary – Tony Perkins
> URL: http://www.frc.org/rss/pod_CM.xml
>
> **POLICY**
>
> Name: Banter: American Enterprise Institute
> URL: http://media.aei.org/category/banter-podcast/feed/rss/
>
> Name: Uncommon Knowledge – Hoover Institute – Peter Robinson
> URL: http://feeds.podtrac.com/raBAhhrHEQY$
>
> Name: Ruth Institute Podcast – Jennifer Roback Morse
> URL: http://ruthinstitute.libsyn.com/rss
>
> **SCIENCE**
>
> Name: Intelligent Design: The Future – Various
> URL: http://intelligentdesign.podomatic.com/rss2.xml
>
> Name: Reasons to Believe – Science News Flash
> URL: http://c450913.r13.cf2.rackcdn.com/podcast.xml
>
> **APOLOGETICS**
>
> Name: Reasonable Faith Podcast – Kevin Harris and WLC
> URL: http://feeds.feedburner.com/ReasonableFaithPodcast
>
> Name: Apologetics 315 Interviews – Brian Auten
> URL: http://feeds.feedburner.com/apologetics315interviews
>
> Name: Please Convince Me Podcast – J. Warner Wallace
> URL: http://thepleaseconvincemeradioshowpodcast.libsyn.com/rss

> Name: Stand to Reason Please Convince Me Podcast – J. Warner Wallace
> URL: http://pleaseconvinceme.libsyn.com/rss

So, if you’re looking from some good podcasts, those are the ones I recommend. Please don’t feel badly if your favorite podcast is not listed here. You can leave a comment and tell us all what it is.

Conservative Christian Tony Abbott wins majority in Australia

September 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tony Abbott, future Prime Minister of Australia

Timothy Stanley of the UK Telegraph reports that Australia has elected a Stephen Harper of their own.

Excerpt:

> Tony Abbott has won the Australian election – a blow not only to the Australian Labor Party but to Left-wingers everywhere who presumed that he was too "Neanderthal" to win. Well, us Neanderthals will be having a barbie tonight and sculling some beers to celebrate. "Good on yer, mate!"
>
> Abbott won for two reasons. First, the Australian Labor Party is going through a long-term identity crisis. The ALP was once the party of the working man (and Sheila) but in recent years it's succumbed to the worst aspects of factional politics, becoming a magnet for liberal pressure groups desperate for their slice of the taxpayers' pie. The party contained plenty of factions in the past but it always managed to steer a sensible middle course between them – so while it was the ALP in the 1970s that established Australia as an outward-looking, Pacific power it was also the ALP in the 1980s that recognised the need for economic reform and rejected protectionism. It's the party of both Gough Whitlam and Les Patterson.
>
> However, in recent years the Left gained an ascendance over the Right that

> undid that delicate balance. Under Gillard and Rudd, the ALP "bought" off Australia's metropolitan elites by embracing issues like gay marriage and the green agenda – the latter threatening the livelihoods of ordinary Australians trying to drill, mine and log their way through the global recession. It invested in silly, expensive projects that turned into giveaways to client companies and unions. And it displayed all of its internal bickering in public, reducing national politics to student union shenanigans. The ALP is now severed from the base that it once represented so well, leaving the ordinary blokes and blokesses looking around for something new.
>
> […]**On the quiet, Abbott has picked up some of the politics that the ALP abandoned. He is said to be a devotee of BA Santamaria, the Catholic thinker who tried to build a Christian Democratic movement that combined social justice and social conservatism. Abbott's conservatism is plain to see: he rejects doctrinaire environmentalism and favours a far freer and competitive market than the ALP's clients would ever tolerate.** But he also has Santamaria's concern for social justice: Abbott wants to introduce a scheme that would pay for parental leave to encourage mothers and fathers not only to spend more time with their children but to have more of them, too. Dig beneath that hard man image and you'll find a politician who is considerably softer and complex. Whereas some Western conservatives seem to be entirely motivated by the desire to win (Romney, Cameron), Abbott has a philosophy and – almost unique in our materialist age – a theology.
>
> **This puts him in the George W Bush, Stephen Harper compassionate conservative tradition – the tradition that tends to attract the most votes.** For while British Tories might look at Abbott's politics and language and sneer, they would do well to remember this important distinction. Tony Abbott wins elections; David Cameron has yet to do even that.

Congratulations, Conservative Coalition!

My previous post on Tony Abbott is here, if you want to know more about his policies.

Poland seizes bond investments in private pension plans

September 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Amy sent me this story from Reuters.

Excerpt:

> Poland said on Wednesday it will transfer to the state many of the assets held by private pension funds, slashing public debt but putting in doubt the future of the multi-billion-euro funds, many of them foreign-owned.
>
> The changes went deeper than many in the market expected and could fuel investor concerns that the government is ditching some business-friendly policies to try to improve its flagging popularity with voters.
>
> The Polish pension funds' organisation said the changes may be unconstitutional because the government is taking private assets away from them without offering any compensation.
>
> Announcing the long-awaited overhaul of state-guaranteed pensions, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said private funds within the state-guaranteed system would have their bond holdings transferred to a state pension vehicle, but keep their equity holdings.
>
> He said that what remained in citizens' pension pots in the private funds will be gradually transferred into the state vehicle over the last 10 years before savers hit retirement age.
>
> The reform is "a decimation of the …(private pension fund) system to open up fiscal space for an easier life now for the government," said Peter Attard Montalto of Nomura. "The government has an odd definition of private property given it claims this is not nationalisation."

I was looking for someone who could take the spin off of this and found this article on Zero Hedge.

Excerpt:

> While the world was glued to the developments in the Mediterranean in the past week, Poland took a page straight out of Rahm Emanuel's playbook and in order to not let a crisis go to waste, announced quietly that it would transfer to the state – i.e., confiscate – the bulk of assets owned by the country's private pension funds (many of them owned by such foreign firms as PIMCO parent Allianz, AXA, Generali, ING and Aviva), *without offering any compensation.* In effect, the state just nationalized roughly half of the private sector pension fund assets, although it had a more politically correct name for it: *pension overhaul*.
>
> […]By shifting some assets from the private funds into ZUS, **the government**

> **can book those assets on the state balance sheet to offset public debt, giving it more scope to borrow and spend**.

It is nationalization, and we should expect to see a lot more of it as spendthrift governments start to run of road to kick the can down. Maybe even here at home, some day. The United States is already up against the debt limit now, and our credit has been downgraded twice already. How soon until IRAs are nationalized into Social Security to prop it up?

Why Christian parents get nervous about evidence

September 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Homeschooling mother Dr. Lydia McGrew explains why Bible-believing Christians are uneasy with the use of evidence on her blog What's Wrong With The World. (H/T Eric Chabot)

Excerpt:

> 4) The idea that, if a young person gets deeply interested in Christian evidence, he will go out on the Internet (or at his public high school or secular college) seeking giants to slay and will get overwhelmed. Again, this worry has merit as a sociological matter. That can certainly happen.
>
> That is why we should say loud and clear to Christians interested in this topic: **Don't do that!** What do I mean? Just this: Being committed to investigating the evidence for Christianity does not mean that one has to find out *every possible thing* that anyone has ever said about or against Christianity and know the answer to it. That would be impossible because of the sheer bulk of (ultimately unpersuasive) objections which skeptics can bring up as though they were real problems.
>
> In this context the words of George Horne, an 18th century bishop, from his *Letters on Infidelity*, are wise and helpful. (Emphasis added.)
>
> In the thirty sections of their pamphlet, they have produced a list of difficulties to be met with in reading the Old and New Testament. Had I been aware of their design, I could have enriched the collection with many more, at least as good, if not a little better. But they have compiled, I dare say, what they deemed the best, and, in their own opinion, presented us with the essence of infidelity in a thumb-phial, the very fumes of which, on drawing the cork, are to strike the bench of bishops dead at once. Let not the unlearned Christian be alarmed, "as though some strange thing had happened to him," and modern philosophy had discovered arguments to demolish religion, never heard of before. The old ornaments of deism have been "broken off" upon this occasion, "and cast into the fire, and there came out this calf." These same difficulties have been again and again urged and discussed in public; again and again weighed and considered by learned and sensible men, of the laity as well as the clergy, who have by no means been induced by them to renounce their faith.
>
> [snip]
>
> Many and painful are the researches sometimes necessary to be made, for settling points of that kind. **Pertness and ignorance may ask a question in three lines, which it will cost learning and ingenuity thirty pages to answer. When this is done, the same question shall be triumphantly asked again the next year, as if nothing had ever been written upon the**

> **subject.**

And a bit later:

> 5) The unspoken fear that Christianity cannot stand up to scrutiny and doesn't really have good evidential support.
>
> Here I do not blame the parents, but not because I share the unspoken fear. I do not blame them, because in most cases no one has ever taught them otherwise. How many pastors and priests have really taught apologetics to their congregations, or even offered such studies as an option? Too few. How many courses on sharing your faith have explicitly taught people not to get involved in responding to questions and objections but just to "share their experience" because "no one can argue with that"? Too many. It's no wonder then that the congregation comes away with the sneaking suspicion that our Christian faith is no better grounded than Mormonism and that we, like they, must depend chiefly on the burning in the bosom.
>
> And one can always push the blame further back. Perhaps the pastors weren't taught Christian evidences at their seminaries.
>
> In fact, I would not be surprised if all too many theologians who give high-falutin' rationalizations for being anti-evidentialist are actually making a virtue out of what they deem to be a necessity. Since they don't think Christian faith *is* founded on fact, they might as well make up some profound-sounding theological theory that tells us that it shouldn't be.
>
> When Nathanael asks Philip, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip simply says, "Come and see." (John 1:46) And he brings him to Jesus. If you as a parent or mentor to the young are opposed to the study of Christian evidences partly because deep down you suspect that they aren't very good, I can only say to you as well, "Come and see."

I blogged about this tendency of church leaders to make a virtue out of laziness and ignorance before.

Here's a snip:

> Suppose a pastor or campus group leader wants to avoid having to learn physics and cosmology, or the minimum facts case for the resurrection, or how to respond to apparently gratuitous suffering, or the problem of religious pluralism. Suppose he thinks that Christianity, if it is about anything, is about his feeling happy and comfortable with a minimum of effort and work. So, he diligently avoids reading apologetics, because learning evidence is hard work. He avoids watching debates on God's existence and the resurrection, because this is hard work. He avoids conversations with people who do study these things, and implies that there is something wrong with them for studying these things. He endeavors to conceal his laziness and ignorance and cowardice from his flock

with much pious God-talk and fervent praise-hymn-singing.

Eventually, some member of his church asks him to go for lunch with an actual non-Christian family member. The pastor agrees and when he meets the unbelieving family member, he has nothing at all to say about typical challenges that unbelievers face. He has no knowledge of evolution, the problem of evil, the hiddenness of God, or the hallucination theory. He has never read a single atheist, and never read a single piece of evidence to refute them from Christian scholars. He lacks humility, refusing to admit that other Christian scholars may know more than he does because they have studied other areas. Needless to say, he fails to defend God's reputation to the non-Christian. What will he say to the members of his flock about his failure? How will he justify his obstinate refusal to do what everyone else in the Bible does when confronting non-believers?

Well, consider this review of a recent book that defends the Gospels and the historicity of the resurrection by one such fideist pastor.

He writes:

There are, however, two significant shortcomings to the book.

First, *Cold-Case Christianity* places far too much emphasis on the role of extrabiblical sources. No doubt there is a legitimate role for biblical archaeology and extrabiblical writing from antiquity. Christianity is, after all, a faith firmly rooted in human history. But there is a grave danger when truth is suspended because of an apparent lack of corroboration from extrabiblical sources. And Wallace, I'm afraid, wanders too close to this dark side of apologetics.

All of chapter 12, for instance, is devoted to proving the Gospels have external corroborative evidence—"evidence that are independent of the Gospel documents yet verify the claims of the text" (183). Wallace then addresses the historicity of the pool of Bethesda and makes another worrying statement: "For many years, there was no evidence for such a place outside of John's Gospel. Because Christianity makes historical claims, archaeology ought to be a tool we can use to see *if these claims are, in fact, true*" (201-202, emphasis added).

In other words, Wallace seems to suggest we cannot affirm the truth of the Gospel accounts without the stamp of approval from archaeology and other extrabiblical sources. Such reasoning is dangerous, not least because it cannot affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. But also, it places the final court of appeal in the realm of extrabiblical sources rather than of God's all-sufficient, all-powerful Word.

That is a textbook definition of fideism – that belief is somehow more pious and praiseworthy the less evidence we have. And the best way to have less evidence is to study nothing at all, but to just make a leap-of-faith in the dark. Of course, a leap-of-faith can land you anywhere – Islam, Mormonism. Presumably this pastor is like the Mormons who eschew all evidence and prefer to detect the truth of

> Mormonism by “the burning of the bosom” which happens when people read the all-sufficient, all-powerful Book of Mormon. His view of faith is identical to theirs, and 180 degrees opposed to the Bible. He has made his leap-of-faith, and that leap-of-faith is not accountable to arguments and evidence. His faith is private and personal, based on his own feelings. He considers it blasphemous to have to demonstrate what he believes to those who disagree with him. Where is this in the Bible? It’s nowhere. But it is everywhere in anti-intellectual Christian circles.
>
> […]I think that Christians are much better off following the example of authentic Christian pastors like R.C. Sproul, who, in a conference on evangelism, invited Dr. Stephen C. Meyer to present multiple lines of evidence from mainstream science to establish the existence of God. The only reason not to take this approach is laziness, which leads to ignorance, which leads to cowardice. And failure. It is pastors like Pastor Bungle above who are responsible for the great falling away from Christianity that we are seeing when we look at young people. Pastors who pride themselves in refusing to connecting the Bible to the real world, with evidence and with policy analysis, are causing young people to abandon the faith.

I think that many people who reject Christianity can point to a general impression that they got from Pastor Bungle and his ilk that faith is somehow *different from other areas of knowledge* and that it was *morally praise worthy to insulate faith from critical thinking and evidence*. Pastor Bungle could never justify his view by using the Bible, but a lot of church leaders have that view regardless of whether it’s Biblical or not.

The really troubling thing that I see again and again in the church is when pastors base all of their opposition to behaviors like abortion and gay marriage on Christianity. This effectively makes it impossible to do anything about these issues in the public square, because Christians are then taught to have nothing persuasive to say on these issues to non-Christians. It’s like pastors are more interested in striking a pious pose with their congregations instead of studying secular arguments and evidence so they can equip Christians to actually solve the problem.

Should college students be allowed to opt out of graphic sex education?

September 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> When 18-year-old twins Bella and Angelica Ayala found out that the sexual harassment session in their freshman orientation program included a graphic sex-ed presentation, they decided to opt out. The pro-life Catholic students respectfully voiced their desire to not partake in the program prior to its start.
>
> Bella told the pro-life group Survivors, "My sister actually contacted the orientation program beforehand to request that we be exempt from attending this part of orientation, but was given an ambiguous answer."
>
> A week after Angelica called the orientation program, a mass e-mail was sent out from the New Student & Transition Programs citing UCLA's policy codes and federal/state laws saying the presentation was mandated. Regardless, the Ayalas later received permission from their counselors to leave the program. The option to not partake in the sex-ed part of the program was not given to any other students.
>
> Angelica was told she wouldn't have to be present during the sex ed portion, but after she walked out, she was later reprimanded and told she'd have to make up the session. If she refused to make up the session, she was informed that the university would put a hold on her academic records.
>
> Before the session, the twins distributed literature to their peers that discussed STDs and risks of having sex prior to marriage. A counselor seeing the students reading the literature said, "This is not the message we want to communicate." The counselor told Angelica she knew she was responsible for passing out the literature and it wasn't allowed because the talk was a private event and she'd need permission from the dean's office to hand out information. A counselor took the pamphlets from the students by demanding they pass back the materials.

Jewish radio show host Dennis Prager often calls universities and colleges "left-wing seminaries", and stories like this help us to see why. More examples can be found in Prager's story on Florida Atlantic University and Prager's story on the University of Southern California.

If you are going to college, I really recommend that you try to focus on STEM areas (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). You do not want left-wing radicals taking your money and using the power of grading to indoctrinate you in false views. University is not the place for you to critically examine the views of leftists. There is no critical thinking in a left-wing seminary. It's better to get your degree in computer

science, get a job, and then work on the big questions on your own without having to face coercion and narrow-mindedness.

UK scientists predict global cooling after record Arctic ice growth

September 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

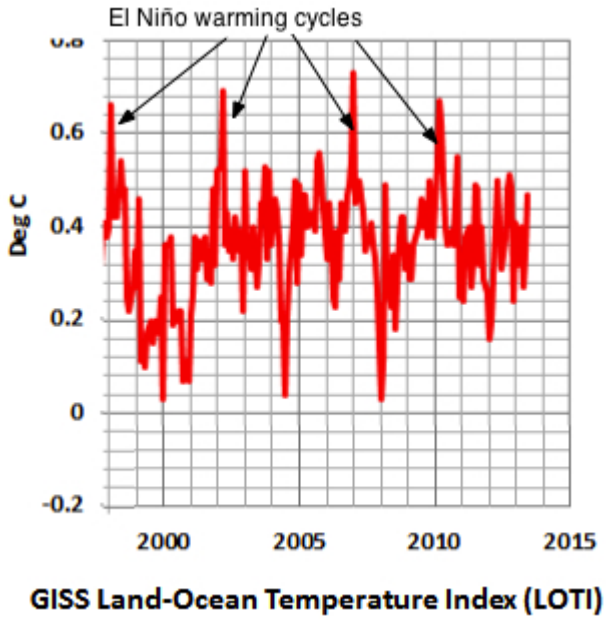

No significant global warming in 15 years
From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> **A cold Arctic summer has led to a record increase in the ice cap, leading experts to predict a period of global cooling.**
>
> **There has been a 60 per cent increase in the amount of ocean covered with ice compared to this time last year, they equivalent of almost a million square miles.**
>
> In a rebound from 2012's record low an unbroken ice sheet more than half the size of Europe already stretches from the Canadian islands to Russia's northern shores, days before the annual re-freeze is even set to begin.
>
> The Northwest Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific has remained blocked by pack-ice all year, forcing some ships to change their routes.
>
> A leaked report to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) seen by the Mail on Sunday, has led some scientists to claim that the world is heading for a period of cooling that will not end until the middle of this century.

> If correct, it would contradict computer forecasts of imminent catastrophic warming. The news comes several years after the BBC predicted that the arctic would be ice-free by 2013.
>
> Despite the original forecasts, major climate research centres now accept that there has been a "pause" in global warming since 1997.

> **The original predictions led to billions being invested in green measures to combat the effects of climate change.**

Yes, well. The BBC is run by the British government. It should be no surprise to anyone that they are going to say anything that results in bigger government. That is how they get paid. Of course the BBC thinks that government needs to control individual consumption and energy production – they want bigger government because bigger government means bigger salaries for the BBC.

I, for one, cannot wait to hear the leftists journalists who marveled at the stupidity of Republican voters who denied global warming complain that it really was global cooling that was the problem all along. And the solution is never going to be lower taxes and free market capitalism. The solution will always be more government control of business, families and individuals.

You know, I like to make fun of Christians who read end-of-the-world fiction, but I think even they know that what they are reading is fiction. The really scary thing about left-wing journalists, college professors, Hollywood celebrities, etc. is that they really believe their own nonsense. They see a picture of a polar bear on a small ice floe, and they think "The planet is on fire! It's the end of the world!". That's scary. It's scary that people who don't understand science can vote.

Related posts

- New York Times: no global warming in the last 15 years, despite CO2 increase
- Another failed prediction for global warming: fewer extreme weather events
- Global warming: Scotland hit by blizzards, road closures and 8 inches of snow
- New EPA report: natural gas prodution is even cleaner than previously thought
- Reuters: scientists struggling to explain 15 years of global cooling
- Report: biofuels raise the cost of gas for little environmental benefit
- Global warming in the UK: coldest March in 50 years, winter extending into spring
- Democrat senator Barbara Boxer introduces carbon tax legislation
- New study: Earth was warmer 1000 years ago, during Medieval Warming Period
- New study: there has been no global warming since 1997
- New study finds that cosmic rays and the sun cause global warming
- Global warmist Phil Jones admits there's been no global warming since 1995
- Chairman of UN's IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s

Quebec citizens dissatisfied with expensive government-run daycare

September 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

IMFC researcher Andrea Mrozek writes about a new survey in the Montreal Gazette.

Excerpt:

> For 16 years, the Quebec government has been providing highly subsidized daycare. Canada-wide and indeed internationally, this $7-a-day system is praised as a leading example and the path to follow.
>
> The question is whether Quebecers actually feel that way.
>
> Our recent poll about Canadians' daycare desires shows some interesting results in Quebec (imfcanada.org/daycaredesires/Quebec). When asked what Quebecers ideally prefer for children under age 6, a competent caregiver or a parent, 70 per cent of Quebecers say a parent.
>
> In short, a clear majority of Quebecers believe that the best place for children under 6 is with a parent — in spite of having a provincially funded system that gives preference to daycare centres.
>
> A second surprising result also emerged. When given options about how governments should help parents with child care, almost half of Quebecers polled (45 per cent) said money should go directly to parents. This option was placed next to other options like subsidies to childcare centres, child-tax deductions or providing funding exclusively for families in need, among others.
>
> Surprisingly, more Quebecers believed that money should go directly to parents; by way of contrast, 25 per cent of Canadians outside Quebec said governments should provide cash payments directly to parents.
>
> These poll results leave us with a lot to think about with regard to how governments enact childcare policy. Seven in 10 Quebecers believe the best place for a child under six is with a parent. Yet the government's public policy on that point does not remotely reflect this desire.
>
> In fact, when the government introduced its policy of subsidized daycare, other family funding and programs were cut. Scholars have shown how other family benefits were cancelled as Quebec ramped up spending on institutional daycare.
>
> Some may think the Quebec program is very popular simply because so many parents use it. That may not be the case. Anytime a government provides a service at lower-than-market costs, it provides an incentive to use that service. The reality is that child care is actually very expensive, regardless of who provides it. When the government provides it, we are all paying for it through increased taxes.
>
> In our poll, we asked simple and somewhat idealistic questions as to where

> children under 6 are better off. “What is best for children” is not necessarily the same as asking about what is possible for families. The two ought not be confused, of course. There might be many parents who think their presence would be better for their kids, but they simply cannot afford to stay home. Personal circumstances are just that, personal, and they vary from family to family.
>
> Still, there should still be a place for idealism — for a blue-sky view of how we would like things to go. And public policy should assess opportunity costs and unintended consequences. Where public policy is divorced from citizens’ desires, it does taxpayers a disservice. In effect, it means taxpayers are paying for something they would rather not use.

Quebec is the most liberal province in Canada, and it only survives because it receives *massive* transfers of wealth from the other business-friendly provinces. But that doesn’t stop them from sneering at their enablers, or from passive expensive socialist programs. But they do serve as a lesson to us – government doesn’t do child care better than moms and dads. And we shouldn’t be paying them massive amounts of money them to do things that they don’t do well. The ideology of feminism isn’t more important than the needs of children.

Related posts

- Quebec court orders Dunkin’ Donuts to pay $16.4 million to failed franchise owners
- Quebec launches taxpayer-funded anonymous registry of homophobic acts
- A look at redistribution of wealth from the workers to the non-workers in Canada
- New study on education quality of universal day care programs
- Quebec judge orders three-year-old into daycare for “socialization”
- Should Christians support government-run day care?
- Public schools hand out condoms to 5-year olds without parental consent

Air Force sergeant who disagreed with homosexuality faces court martial

September 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Todd Starnes of Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> A 19-year Air Force veteran who was relieved of his duties because he disagreed with his openly gay commander over gay marriage is now facing a formal investigation after he told me his story.
>
> Senior Master Sgt. Phillip Monk found himself at odds with his Lackland Air Force Base commander after he objected to her plans to severely punish an instructor who had expressed religious objections to homosexuality. During the conversation, his commander ordered him to share his personal views on homosexuality.
>
> "I was relieved of my position because I don't agree with my commander's position on gay marriage," he told me. "We've been told that if you publicly say that homosexuality is wrong, you are in violation of Air Force policy."
>
> In one of her first meetings with Monk, the commander expressed concern about the chaplain who would deliver the benediction at her promotion ceremony.
>
> "She said she wanted a chaplain but objected to one particular chaplain that she called a bigot because he preached that homosexuality is a sin," Monk said.
>
> After he was relieved of his duties, the Liberty Institute filed a religious discrimination complaint on his behalf.
>
> Last week, Monk was supposed to meet with an Air Force investigator tasked with gathering facts about the complaint. But when he arrived, Monk was immediately read his Miranda Rights and accused of providing false statements in a conversation Monk had with me.
>
> "I immediately got the sense that this was retaliation against me for coming forward with my religious discrimination complaint," he said.
>
> The accusations against Monk are a court-martial offense in the Air Force – and it's quite possible that the 19-year veteran with a spotless record could be booted out of the military because of his Christian beliefs.

That's why I found it so strange when I heard that people who called themselves Christians voted for Obama in 2008 or 2012. Anyone with a brain in their head who claimed to be Christian knew that they were voting for abortion, gay marriage and reduced religious liberty. That's what we have now – there is no denying it. Democrats are not the party of religious liberty. They are against it. They view religious expression as something they have to destroy – by any means necessary. It should make us think

about what we are doing by celebrating and affirming sin.

There is a reason why sin is called sin. Part of it is that the people who do it tend to be the kind of people who are willing to use force to get others to affirm them in what they are doing. Part of it is that it causes harm to others, often to unborn or born children – depriving them of what they need and treating them like commodities. That's why Christians should be diligent about what behaviors they affirm and who they vote for. Christianity is not a religion that has celebrating and condoning of immorality at its core.

How governor Rick Scott created jobs and eliminated a $3.5 billion debt in Florida

September 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This post at A View From The Right had the full transcript of the Florida governor's recent speech at the recent "Defending the American Dream Summit". I thought it was interesting to see what he was doing, since I have sort of been neglecting him and concentrating my attention on other Republican governors like Scott Walker, John Kasich, Bobby Jindal and Mike Pence.

He inherited a bad situation from his predecessor:

> In 2010, our state was in a free fall. We had lost more than 800,000 jobs during the four years before I took office. Our real estate market had collapsed. Our state debt had grown by about a billion dollars a year for two decades. And, thousands of government regulations were killing job creation.
>
> […]DC's spending addiction had spread to Florida. Hard decisions had been delayed and replaced with the shortsighted policies of more debt and more spending. Florida was in a hole, and for about four years the state just kept digging.
>
> When I took office, the bill had come due.
>
> It was time to stop digging and climb out of the hole. We knew the only way out was to create jobs. Taxes are primarily paid by successful companies and people with jobs. In Florida, it was time to make the hard decisions to: Right-size government. Reduce spending. And pay down debt.

Here's some of what the Scott administration has done:

> I took office with a projected $3.6 billion budget gap. As we made the hard decisions to live within our means during my first year in office, there was plenty of criticism to go around. We streamlined services and targeted reforms to help businesses compete. But, we heard from the critics when we turned down stimulus funds and balanced the budget. They said, federal money was "free." I was told to grab all the free federal money I could.
>
> As part of our effort to reduce fraud and help families, we also passed legislation requiring drug testing for welfare recipients. The critics were mad. They said that drug testing someone applying for welfare was a violation of their rights. I disagree. Welfare is designed to support children, and parents receiving government assistance should be drug free. Illegal drug use has no place in any family. Unfortunately, this reform is still stuck in the courts. But, we will keep fighting.
>
> To further reduce government waste, we reformed our unemployment assistance

> program. Federal unemployment money was pouring out of DC, but there wasn't enough oversight in place to limit waste and abuse. We passed a law to require people on unemployment to show they were actively seeking a job every week.

And more:

> I have now been in office for more than two years and we are beginning to see the results of conservative, pro-growth solutions in Florida:
>
> * We have turned around a four-year record of 800,000 lost jobs before I took office, and the private sector in Florida has now created nearly 370,000 jobs over the last 2 1/2 years.
>
> * Our unemployment rate has dropped below the national average, and Florida's rate has had the second biggest improvement in the country.
>
> * We have paid off $3.5 billion in state debt.
>
> * We have downsized our state government workforce to the lowest level in the history of Florida. Why? Because the private sector is the engine to job creation -– not government.
>
> * We have eliminated more than 2,600 state regulations on job creators.
>
> * We paid back $3.5 billion in federal loans for re-employment assistance.
>
> * And, we did all this while also cutting taxes five times in three years, including: The elimination of the sales tax on manufacturing equipment to help jump-start manufacturing investment. Continuing to roll back the business tax, so that today around 70 percent of our businesses no longer pay it. And, we cut property taxes for homeowners and businesses.
>
> […]* After right-sizing government and cutting taxes, this year, we had our first budget surplus in six years. But, it gets better.
>
> * Just a few weeks ago, our State Revenue Estimating Conference announced that the general revenue now forecasted for 2014-2015 in Florida will be the highest ever. The highest ever.

How are they doing it? With big government spending on "stimulus" programs? No:

> Working with the Florida Legislature, we have cut taxes year after year, even while forcing government to live within its means. This year, we are committed to returning even more money to the hard-working Florida families who earn it. I look forward to working with our friends in the Florida Legislature to make these tax cuts a reality.

They are cutting government spending and returning the taxes to the taxpayers. This is a good state to be in now, especially if you want to run your own business. What I liked about the speech is that he is passionate about pro-growth policies. While others seemed to be ashamed of low taxes and small government, Governor Scott is producing results and linking those good results to his conservative policies. I think that the next time we

have an election, it should be about choosing the person who has proven that they know how to run an economy. Governor Scott should be in the mix. The best stimulus program is a job, and we should be picking people who have proven that they know how to create jobs.

Governor Bobby Jindal’s fight to give poor, minority children quality education

September 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here’s an update on the Democrat war on vouchers in Louisiana, posted by governor Bobby Jindal in the left-leaning Washington Post. In it, he explains how is trying to reform education in his home state of Louisiana, and how the federal government is trying to stop him for doing that.

Excerpt:

> We all know the harsh cycle of poverty that exists in the United States and that a disproportionate share of those in poverty are minorities. Studies of health-care outcomes, incarceration levels and economic opportunity all show that education is key to improving quality of life.
>
> Millions of single parents in this country work two jobs to make ends meet, hoping that their children won’t have the same struggles. Hope is their only option because they live in neighborhoods with chronically failing public schools and lack the means to move to better school districts or to send their children to private schools.
>
> Obama and Holder think this should continue to be the reality. In Louisiana, we think the opposite is true. We believe every child deserves the opportunity to get a great education.
>
> That’s why we started a school choice program in 2008 in New Orleans and expanded it statewide in 2012. Low-income families with children in schools graded C, D or F by the state are eligible to apply for a scholarship and send their children to schools of their choice.
>
> The program works. From 2011 to 2013, students who had been trapped in failing schools and now attend scholarship schools showed improvement on literacy and math tests. The share of students performing at grade level rose 7 percent, state data show, even though in 2013, 60 percent of students taking the test had been in their new schools for only eight months. More than 90 percent of parents of students participating in the program reported satisfaction with their children’s schools.
>
> This opportunity is perhaps these children’s best chance to escape the cycle of poverty. No one in their right mind could argue that the Justice Department’s efforts to block the scholarship program will help these kids. This can only be an attempt to curry favor with the government unions that provide financial largess and political power.
>
> President Obama should do the right thing and order the Justice Department to drop the lawsuit. Not because I am asking, but because the parents and children

> in the scholarship program deserve an opportunity. For generations, the government has forced these families to hope for the best from failing schools. Shame on all of us for standing by and watching generations of children stay in failing schools that may have led them to lives of poverty.
>
> We in Louisiana are rejecting the status quo because we believe every child should have the opportunity to succeed. A scholarship program is not a silver bullet for student success. Maybe a student will perform well in a traditional public school, or a charter school, or a virtual school, but the point is that parents should be able to decide, not bureaucrats in Baton Rouge or Washington.
>
> If the president and the attorney general believe their path is right, I invite them to come to Louisiana and look these parents and children in the eyes and explain why they believe every child shouldn't have a fair shake.
>
> If the administration does not drop this lawsuit, we will fight every step of the way until the children prevail. Giving every child — no matter race or income — the opportunity to get a great education is a moral imperative.

You might remember that the Obama administration previously went after the D.C. voucher program, which was also for helping poor, minority students. Why are the Democrats doing this? The answer is simple. Come election time, the Democrats rely heavily on the fundraising and activism of the teacher unions. The teacher unions have more money if they have more children trapped in their failing public schools. Therefore, Obama has every incentive to make sure that no child is allowed to leave a failing school. He needs the help of the teacher unions at election time more than he needs to help children who cannot even vote. That's what is really going on here. Bobby Jindal would love to have the support of teacher unions, but given the choice between helping the unions and helping the children, he's choosing the children.

The main point here is that the politicians who talk the most about spending more money on education may not be thinking about what is best for children at all. They might be thinking about paying their union supporters more, so that they will do more at election time. An alternative to just giving more money to the unions would be Jindal's plan of giving money directly to parents and letting parents choose. Parents might not be as politically connected as teacher unions, but if your goal is to help children get an education, then maybe unions and elections don't matter as much.

Related posts

- Obama administration blocks Louisiana school voucher program
- Indiana voucher program offers hope to low-income students
- Secretary of Education rescinds previously awarded D.C. vouchers
- Arizona Supreme Court rules voucher program unconstitutional
- New study: private religious schools outperform public schools and public charter schools
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools

- Good news: school choice victory in Indiana, pro-life victory in North Dakota
- Atlanta public schools caught helping students to cheat on standardized tests
- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

Near-death experiences and mental effort: evidence for the soul

September 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I was listening to J. Warner Wallace's latest podcast on the mind and the brain last night and he mentioned 6 philosophical arguments for the existence of a non-physical mind. But he also said that science didn't have much to say on this question of mind/brain and body/soul. I think that there is some evidence for the the soul.

In this post, I wanted to link to a previous post the research of Dr. Jeffrey Schwartz. That research on "mental effort" is my first piece of evidence. Below, there is a second piece of evidence from "corroborated near-death experiences". This should help boost Wallace's case for the mind. I will do a separate post on Wallace's podcast later in the week. It was a great podcast.

Near-death experiences

Dr. Mario Beauregard writes about out of body experiences and near death experiences in the leftist Salon.com, of all places.

NDE number one:

> Pam was brought into the operating room at 7:15 a.m., she was given general anesthesia, and she quickly lost conscious awareness. At this point, Spetzler and his team of more than 20 physicians, nurses, and technicians went to work. They lubricated Pam's eyes to prevent drying, and taped them shut. They attached EEG electrodes to monitor the electrical activity of her cerebral cortex. They inserted small, molded speakers into her ears and secured them with gauze and tape. The speakers would emit repeated 100-decibel clicks—approximately the noise produced by a speeding express train—eliminating outside sounds and measuring the activity of her brainstem.
>
> At 8:40 a.m., the tray of surgical instruments was uncovered, and Robert Spetzler began cutting through Pam's skull with a special surgical saw that produced a noise similar to a dental drill. At this moment, Pam later said, she felt herself "pop" out of her body and hover above it, watching as doctors worked on her body.

> Although she no longer had use of her eyes and ears, she described her observations in terms of her senses and perceptions. "I thought the way they had my head shaved was very peculiar," she said. "I expected them to take all of the hair, but they did not." She also described the Midas Rex bone saw ("The saw thing that I hated the sound of looked like an electric toothbrush and it had a dent in it … ") and the dental-drill sound it made with considerable accuracy.
>
> Meanwhile, Spetzler was removing the outermost membrane of Pamela's brain, cutting it open with scissors. At about the same time, a female cardiac surgeon

> was attempting to locate the femoral artery in Pam's right groin. Remarkably, Pam later claimed to remember a female voice saying, "We have a problem. Her arteries are too small." And then a male voice: "Try the other side." Medical records confirm this conversation, yet Pam could not have heard them.

I like the second one even better than the first.

NDE number two:

> Maria was a migrant worker who had a severe heart attack while visiting friends in Seattle. She was rushed to Harborview Hospital and placed in the coronary care unit. A few days later, she had a cardiac arrest but was rapidly resuscitated. The following day, Clark visited her. Maria told Clark that during her cardiac arrest she was able to look down from the ceiling and watch the medical team at work on her body. At one point in this experience, said Maria, she found herself outside the hospital and spotted a tennis shoe on the ledge of the north side of the third floor of the building. She was able to provide several details regarding its appearance, including the observations that one of its laces was stuck underneath the heel and that the little toe area was worn. Maria wanted to know for sure whether she had "really" seen that shoe, and she begged Clark to try to locate it.
>
> Quite skeptical, Clark went to the location described by Maria—and found the tennis shoe. From the window of her hospital room, the details that Maria had recounted could not be discerned. But upon retrieval of the shoe, Clark confirmed Maria's observations. "The only way she could have had such a perspective," said Clark, "was if she had been floating right outside and at very close range to the tennis shoe. I retrieved the shoe and brought it back to Maria; it was very concrete evidence for me."
>
> This case is particularly impressive given that during cardiac arrest, the flow of blood to the brain is interrupted. When this happens, the brain's electrical activity (as measured with EEG) disappears after 10 to 20 seconds. In this state, a patient is deeply comatose. Because the brain structures mediating higher mental functions are severely impaired, such patients are expected to have no clear and lucid mental experiences that will be remembered. Nonetheless, studies conducted in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and United States have revealed that approximately 15 percent of cardiac arrest survivors do report some recollection from the time when they were clinically dead. These studies indicate that consciousness, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings can be experienced during a period when the brain shows no measurable activity.

Here's the author bio:

> Mario Beauregard is associate research professor at the Departments of Psychology and Radiology and the Neuroscience Research Center at the University of Montreal. He is the coauthor of "The Spiritual Brain" and more than

> one hundred publications in neuroscience, psychology and psychiatry.

It’s a helpful article, and one you might want to share or tweet to get a discussion started.

Fox Sports fires commentator Craig James for expressing disapproval of homosexuality

September 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Mysterious Chris S. posted this article by Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council. Excerpt:

> As a former quarterback, Craig James isn't used to being on the defensive. But unfortunately, that's exactly where Fox Sports is putting him in a story that should rock the football world. The retired Pro-Bowler became the latest face of the war on religious liberty, when — after one day on the job — Fox Sports gave James the boot for his conservative views on marriage. And here's the kicker: he made the comments, not at the sports desk, but during last year's Senate campaign!
>
> Apart from being a popular analyst, Craig also had political aspirations — aspirations he followed to Texas in an unsuccessful bid against Ted Cruz during the primary. In the course of the campaign, Craig was asked — as all candidates are — about his views on marriage and sexuality. James's opinion happens to coincide with the research, which is that no one is born gay. And, as an orthodox Christian, he didn't shy away from the eternal consequences of this sin or any other. "…[T]hey are going to have to answer to the Lord for their actions," he said before pledging not to support same-sex unions.
>
> According to *Sports Illustrated*, the regional affiliate of Fox hired Craig without involving upper management. "Fox Sports executives were not happy with the hire by the regional network," sources explain. High level executives felt he hadn't been properly vetted (or, properly excluded, depending on how you look at it). When the news broke, a Fox Sports spokesman tried to explain away the network's religious profiling. "We just asked ourselves how Craig's statements would play in our human resources department. He couldn't say those things here."
>
> First off, Craig *didn't* say them there — or anywhere in his commentating capacity. He stated his position as a candidate for public office — in response to legitimate constituent questions. To suggest that having an opinion on cultural issues disqualifies you from breaking down football plays is outrageous — especially when that opinion is shared by the majority of Americans! Is the grip of religious hostility so tight that Americans can't even have an open debate for fear it'll cost them their jobs?
>
> Dr. Angela McCaskill, Jerry Buell, Julea Ward, Damian Goddard, Senior Master Sergeant Phillip Monk, Crystal Dixon, and Air National Guardsman Layne Wilson certainly think so. To a man, they were all suspended, fired, or sued by their employers for their views on marriage — whether or not they expressed

> them at work! Like them, Craig James's ousting had nothing to do with his job performance — and everything to do with this new climate of Christian persecution.
>
> From the military to Fox Sports to city halls like San Antonio's, the overwhelming message seems to be that when it comes to the public arena, conservative Christians need not apply. Let the network know what a disappointment their political correctness is by contacting Fox Sports and protesting Craig James's dismissal.

By the way, I never miss the FRC podcasts and I mentioned both their daily and weekend podcast feeds in my recent post about my favorite podcasts. I start my day every morning with the Al Mohler Daily Briefing and the Family Research Council Daily Podcast during my morning commute. Take a look at my podcast post and see if there are any shows that you didn't know about. There are good podcasts in there on fiscal issues, foreign policy issues, social issues and lots of science and Christian apologetics, too.

Related posts

- Gay activists pressure D.C. mayor to remove ex-gay singer from MLK memorial concert
- Two Christian preachers brutally beaten at Seattle Gay Pride Festival
- Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Gay activist Dan Savage bullies Christian teens and bashes Christianity
- Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll's Mars Hill Church
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Pro-abortion vandals: destroying pro-life display was "free speech"
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired

MIT physicist explains the fine-tuning argument and the naturalistic response to it

September 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's the article from Harper's magazine. The MIT physicist says that the fine-tuning is real, and is best explained by positing the existence of an infinite number of universes that are not fine-tuned – the so-called multiverse.

Excerpt:

> While challenging the Platonic dream of theoretical physicists, the multiverse idea does explain one aspect of our universe that has unsettled some scientists for years: according to various calculations, if the values of some of the fundamental parameters of our universe were a little larger or a little smaller, life could not have arisen. For example, if the nuclear force were a few percentage points stronger than it actually is, then all the hydrogen atoms in the infant universe would have fused with other hydrogen atoms to make helium, and there would be no hydrogen left. No hydrogen means no water. Although we are far from certain about what conditions are necessary for life, most biologists believe that water is necessary. On the other hand, if the nuclear force were substantially weaker than what it actually is, then the complex atoms needed for biology could not hold together. As another example, if the relationship between the strengths of the gravitational force and the electromagnetic force were not close to what it is, then the cosmos would not harbor any stars that explode and spew out life-supporting chemical elements into space or any other stars that form planets. Both kinds of stars are required for the emergence of life. The strengths of the basic forces and certain other fundamental parameters in our universe appear to be "fine-tuned" to allow the existence of life. The recognition of this finetuning led British physicist Brandon Carter to articulate what he called the anthropic principle, which states that the universe must have the parameters it does because we are here to observe it. Actually, the word *anthropic*, from the Greek for "man," is a misnomer: if these fundamental parameters were much different from what they are, it is not only human beings who would not exist. No life of any kind would exist.

It's very important to note that life has certain minimum requirements, like stable stars, chemical diversity, universal solvent, etc. If we change the value of the finely-tuned constants and quantities, it's not that we will get a different kinds of life instead of life that we have now. Changing the quantities and constants means that we have no life *of any kind.* Maybe we are in a universe that has re-collapsed, or contains only hydrogen, or contains no hydrogen. We don't have the minimum requirements for the minimal functions of any living system. That's what the fine-tuning argument argues for – conditions for life *of any kind.* Not conditions for *human beings as we currently observe*

them. To find out more about this important point, check out this previous post featuring Dr. Walter Bradley.

More from the article:

> If such conclusions are correct, the great question, of course, is *why* these fundamental parameters happen to lie within the range needed for life. Does the universe care about life? Intelligent design is one answer. Indeed, a fair number of theologians, philosophers, and even some scientists have used fine-tuning and the anthropic principle as evidence of the existence of God. For example, at the 2011 Christian Scholars' Conference at Pepperdine University, Francis Collins, a leading geneticist and director of the National Institutes of Health, said, "To get our universe, with all of its potential for complexities or any kind of potential for any kind of life-form, everything has to be precisely defined on this knife edge of improbability…. [Y]ou have to see the hands of a creator who set the parameters to be just so because the creator was interested in something a little more complicated than random particles."
>
> Intelligent design, however, is an answer to fine-tuning that does not appeal to most scientists. The multiverse offers another explanation. If there are countless different universes with different properties—for example, some with nuclear forces much stronger than in our universe and some with nuclear forces much weaker—then some of those universes will allow the emergence of life and some will not. Some of those universes will be dead, lifeless hulks of matter and energy, and others will permit the emergence of cells, plants and animals, minds. From the huge range of possible universes predicted by the theories, the fraction of universes with life is undoubtedly small. But that doesn't matter. We live in one of the universes that permits life because otherwise we wouldn't be here to ask the question.

I thought I was going to have to go outside this article to refute the multiverse, but Lightman is honest enough to refute it himself:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.
>
> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a

> conjecture.

The multiverse is not pure nonsense, it is theoretically possible. The problem is that the multiverse generator itself would require fine-tuning, and, as Lightman indicates, we have no independent experimental evidence for the existence of the multiverse. So if you want to believe in the multiverse, then you are stuck waiting for evidence to confirm it. Meanwhile, the fine-tuning that we know about today is based on current evidence, and that evidence is best explained today by postulating a Designer.

Within the last 100 years, we have discovered that the physical universe came into being out of nothing 15 billion years ago, and we have discovered that this one universe is fine-tuned for intelligent life. Atheists are 100 years out of date, and they are hoping that all of this 100 years of progress will be overturned, so that they can go back to their comfortable belief that the universe is eternal and that the parameters of this universe are undesigned.

See it tested in a debate

To see the fine-tuning argument examined in a debate with a famous atheist, simply watch the debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens, and judge which debater is willing to form his beliefs on scientific progress, and which debater is forming his beliefs *against* the science we have today, and hoping that the good science we have today based on experiments will be overturned by speculative theories at some point in the future. When you watch that debate, it becomes very clear that Christian theists are interested in conforming their beliefs to science, and atheists are very interested in speculating against what science has shown.

J. Warner Wallace: six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds

September 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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(Podcast uploaded, with permission, by ReligioPolitical Talk)

This podcast is a must-listen. Please take the time to download this podcast and listen to it. I guarantee that you will love this podcast. I even recommended it to my *Dad* and I almost never do that.

Details:

> In this podcast, J. Warner examines the evidence for the existence of the mind (and inferentially, the soul) as he looks at six classic philosophical arguments. Jim also briefly discusses Thomas Nagel's book, Mind and Cosmos and discusses the limitations of physicalism.

The MP3 file is here. (67 MB, 72 minutes)

Topics:

- Atheist Thomas Nagel's latest book "Mind and Cosmos" makes the case that materialism cannot account for the evidence of mental phenomena
- Nagel writes in this recent New York Times article that materialism cannot account for the reality of consciousness, meaning, intention and purpose
- Quote from the Nagel article:

> Even though the theistic outlook, in some versions, is consistent with the available scientific evidence, I don't believe it, and am drawn instead to a naturalistic, though non-materialist, alternative. Mind, I suspect, is not an inexplicable accident or a divine and anomalous gift but a basic aspect of nature that we will not understand until we transcend the built-in limits of contemporary scientific orthodoxy.

- When looking at this question, it's important to not have our conclusions pre-determined by presupposing materialism or atheism
- If your mind/soul doesn't exist and you are a purely physical being then that is a defeater for Christianity, so we need to respond
- Traditionally, Christians have been committed to a view of human nature called "dualism" – human beings are souls who *have* bodies
- The best way* to argue for the existence of the soul is using philosophical arguments

The case:

- The law of identity says that if A = B' if A and B have the exact same properties

- If A = the mind and B = the brain, then is A identical to B?
- Wallace will present 6 arguments to show that A is not identical to B because they have different properties

Not everyone of the arguments below might make sense to you, but you will probably find one or two that strike you as correct. Some of the points are more illustrative than persuasive, like #2. However, I do find #3, #5 and #6 persuasive.

1) First-person access to mental properties

- Thought experiment: Imagine your dream car, and picture it clearly in your mind
- If we invited an artist to come and sketch out your dream car, then we could see your dream car's shape on paper
- This concept of your dream car is not something that people can see by looking at your brain structure
- Physical properties can be physically accessed, but the properties of your dream care and privately accessed

2) Our experience of consciousness implies that we are not our bodies

- Common sense notion of personhood is that we own our bodies, but we are not our bodies

3) Persistent self-identity through time

- Thought experiment: replacing a new car with an old car one piece at a time
- When you change even the smallest part of a physical object, it changes the identity of that object
- Similarly, your body is undergoing changes constantly over time
- Every cell in your body is different from the body you had 10 years ago
- Even your brain cells undergo changes (see this from New Scientist – WK)
- If you are the same person you were 10 years ago, then you are not your physical body

4) Mental properties cannot be measured like physical objects

- Physical objects can be measured (e.g. – use physical measurements to measure weight, size, etc.)
- Mental properties cannot be measured

5) Intentionality or About-ness

- Mental entities can refer to realities that are physical, something outside of themselves
- A tree is not about anything, it just is a physical object
- But you can have thoughts about the tree out there in the garden that needs water

6) Free will and personal responsibility

- If humans are purely physical, then all our actions are determined by sensory inputs and genetic programming
- Biological determinism is not compatible with free will, and free will is required for personal responsibility
- Our experience of moral choices and moral responsibility requires free will, and free will requires minds/souls

He spends the last 10 minutes of the podcast responding to naturalistic objections to the mind/soul hypothesis.

*Now in the podcast, Wallace does say that scientific evidence is not the best kind of evidence to use when discussing this issue of body/soul and mind/brain. But I did blog yesterday about two pieces of evidence that I think are relevant to this discussion: corroborated near-death experiences and mental effort.

You might remember that Dr. Craig brought up the issue of substance dualism, and the argument from intentionality ("aboutness"), in his debate with the naturalist philosopher Alex Rosenberg, so this argument about dualism is battle-ready. You can add it to your list of arguments for Christian theism along with all the other arguments like the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, stellar habitability, galactic habitability, irreducible complexity, molecular machines, the Cambrian explosion, the moral argument, the resurrection, biological convergence, and so on.

Surprise! New Stanford University study finds costs of Obamacare higher than estimated

September 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I'm just kidding. I'm not surprised. Here's the story from Reason magazine.

Excerpt:

> Obamacare could cost a lot more than the official estimates, according to a new study by researchers at Stanford University.
>
> That's because the law will create big incentives for employers to drop worker health coverage so that employees can get health insurance through the law's insurance exchanges. Anyone who buys insurance through an exchange and has a household income between 133 and 400 percent of the poverty line is eligible for publicly funded subsidies. So if a lot more people than expected end up in the exchanges, that means a lot more subsidies — and a much higher total cost for the law.
>
> The study, published this week in the journal *Health Affairs*, estimates that some 37 million people would benefit from shifting out of employer coverage and into exchanges. What "benefit" means, in this case, is that those people would be better off getting cash from their employer instead of coverage, and then buying subsidized coverage on the exchanges.
>
> If all 37 million people in this category were to switch into exchange-based coverage, it would result in a dramatic increase in the law's cost: about $132 billion annually in additional federal outlays, according to the study.
>
> […]The paper concludes with a warning: policy makers "should plan for the possibility that the exchange subsidies may end up costing the federal government much more than currently projected."
>
> It's a warning they should take seriously. It's also one they ought to have heard before. Former Congressional Budget Office director Douglas Holtz-Eakin and James Capretta of the Ethics and Public Policy Center have been sounding this alarm for years. Back in 2010, they estimated that, because of the law's incentives to drop coverage, 35 million more Americans than expected could end up in subsidized coverage through the exchanges.

On election day in 2012, I wrote this post that quoted Investors Business Daily's warning about Obamacare:

> Despite repeated promises that the more we knew about ObamaCare, the more we'd like it, the law has never been less popular. Just 38% now approve of it, down from 46% when it passed in March 2010, according to the latest Kaiser Family Foundation survey.

But unless voters defeat Obama on Tuesday, they'll never get rid of his disastrous "reform." Even before ObamaCare takes full effect, its damage is evident.

Insurance premiums, which Obama promised to slash $2,500 by the end of his first term, have climbed 14% since the law went into effect. Nearly six in 10 doctors say ObamaCare has made them less positive about the future of health care in America, and almost two-thirds say they'd retire today if they could, according to a Physicians Foundation survey.

Businesses are holding back on hiring, or are shifting workers to part time because of ObamaCare's looming coverage mandate. Darden Restaurants, for example, has stopped offering full-time schedules at several of its popular eateries "to help us address the cost implications of health care reform."

This is only one of the horrors ObamaCare will unleash if fully implemented in 2014. Among others:

- **ObamaCare will force as many as 20 million workers into government-run insurance exchanges after their employers drop coverage, according to the Congressional Budget Office.**
- More companies will follow Darden's example, refusing to schedule workers more than 30 hours wherever they can to avoid the coverage mandate.
- Insurance costs will explode. Even ObamaCare's fans admit that its benefit mandates, marketplace rules and bans on coverage caps will force premiums to skyrocket. Jonathan Gruber, who helped design ObamaCare, says the law will add 30% to premiums in the individual market in the states he's studied.
- Doctor shortages will reach 90,000 in about a decade, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges.
- Seniors will find it increasingly difficult to get treatments, as ObamaCare's deep Medicare payment cuts cause one in six hospitals to become unprofitable and still more doctors to refuse to see Medicare patients.
- Even when a patient does get to see a doctor, ObamaCare will intrude, using the law's "Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute" to create top-down rules for what doctors can prescribe for any given ailment.
- ObamaCare's vast new taxes — including a crippling $20 billion surtax on the medical device industry and a $123 billion surtax on investors — will slow down medical innovation.
- And when these and dozens of other new taxes fail to cover ObamaCare's massive 10-year $1.76 trillion price tag, everyone will suffer a bigger tax bite.

Not to mention the fact that ObamaCare will, for the first time in our nation's history, force people to buy a government-approved product, setting a

> frightening new precedent for federal intrusiveness.

That’s a warning that we should have heeded as voters in the 2012 election. But we didn’t. And 2014 is almost here.

Look, even when a person means well and wants to help others, if they don’t know what to do to help others, then we shouldn’t put them in charge. The best way to tell if someone knows how to do what they say they want to do is to look at their record and see if they have been able to do what they say they want to do in the past. That’s what a job interview is – it’s when the people doing the hiring look at the candidate’s record – not his rhetoric – and decide whether to hire him to do certain specific tasks. The requirements of the job should be key to the decision of whether to hire or not. Obama had no experience passing health care laws that lowered costs, improved access, and so on. He had never done anything remotely like that in all of his life. If we wanted to fix health care, then we should hire people like Bobby Jindal. People who know how to do the work because they’ve actually done the work before.

J.P. Moreland asks: does truth matter when choosing a religion?

September 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

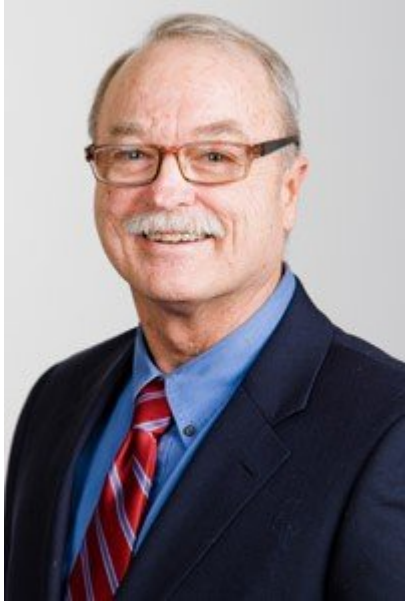

Dr. J.P. Moreland

This lecture contains Moreland's famous "Wonmug" illustration. Ah, memories! If you don't know who Wonmug is, you can find out in this lecture.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Is it intolerant to think that one religion is true?
- Is it more important to be loving and accepting of people regardless of worldview?
- How should Christians approach the question of religious pluralism?
- How does a person choose a religion anyway?
- Who is Wonmug, and would you like to be like Wonmug?
- Is it enough that a belief "works for you", or do you want to believe the truth?
- Can all the religions in the world be true?
- Is it wise to pick and choose what you like from all the different religions?
- Is it possible to investigate which religion is true? How?
- Which religions are testable for being true or false?
- How you can test Christianity historically (very brief)

This is the most fun lecture to listen to, you should listen to it, if you like fun.

J.P. Moreland lectures on “Love Your God With All Your Mind”

September 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

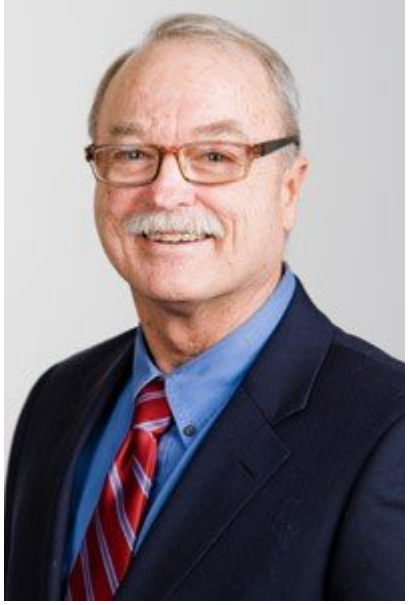

Dr. J.P. Moreland

If I had to pick a few lectures that really changed my life, then this lecture by J.P. Moreland would definitely be on that list.

The MP3 file.

Topics:

- How J.P. Moreland become a Christian
- How evangelism drove his efforts to answer skeptics
- How can evangelicals be so numerous, and yet have so little influence?
- When did the church stop being able to out-think her critics?
- How studying and thinking can be a way of worshiping God
- Romans 12:1-2 – what does this passage mean?
- Are your beliefs under the control of your will?
- Can you “try” to believe something by an act of will?
- If not, then how can you change your beliefs?
- Changing your mind is the only way to change your life
- Matthew 22:37 – what is this passage saying?
- How can you love God by using your intellect?
- How can you defend God’s honor, when it is called into question?
- In a debate, should you quote sources that your opponent doesn’t accept?
- Should you only study the Bible, or should you study rival worldviews?
- 1 Pet 3:15 – what does this passage mean?
- If you knew you were going to be in a debate, what should you do?
- How can you be bold in witnessing? Where does boldness come from?

- What should the church do to make bold evangelists?
- 2 Cor 10:5 – what is this passage talking about?
- The passage talks about destroying fortresses – what are the fortresses?
- List of some of the speculations that we are supposed to be destroying
- What does the phrase “spiritual warfare” really mean?

And here is a longer version of the same lecture (MP3) presented to an audience of university students and faculty.

By the way, the title of his lecture comes from a book that he wrote, which is now in its second edition.

First mechanical gear discovered in a living creature

September 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

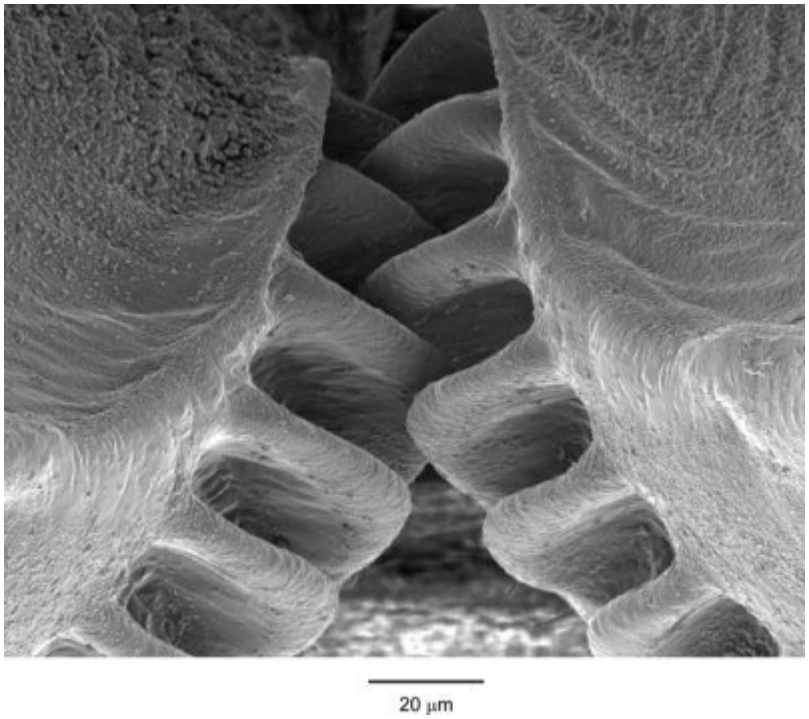

A scanning electron micrograph image of the issus gears

This article from Popular Mechanics will astonish you. (H/T Uncommon Descent via a tweet from J. Warner Wallace)

Excerpt:

> **With two diminutive legs locked into a leap-ready position**, the tiny jumper bends its body taut like an archer drawing a bow. At the top of its legs, a minuscule pair of gears engage—their strange, shark-fin teeth interlocking cleanly like a zipper. And then, faster than you can blink, think, or see with the naked eye, the entire thing is gone. In 2 milliseconds it has bulleted skyward, accelerating at nearly 400 g's—a rate more than 20 times what a human body can withstand. At top speed the jumper breaks 8 mph—quite a feat considering its body is less than one-tenth of an inch long.
>
> This miniature marvel is an adolescent issus, a kind of planthopper insect and one of the fastest accelerators in the animal kingdom. As a duo of researchers in the U.K. report today in the journal *Science*, the issus also the first living creature ever discovered to sport a functioning gear.
>
> […]The gears themselves are an oddity. With gear teeth shaped like cresting waves, they look nothing like what you'd find in your car or in a fancy watch. (The style that you're most likely familiar with is called an involute gear, and it was designed by the Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler in the 18th century.) There could be two reasons for this. Through a mathematical oddity, there is a limitless number of ways to design intermeshing gears. So, either nature evolved

> one solution at random, or, as Gregory Sutton, coauthor of the paper and insect researcher at the University of Bristol, suspects, the shape of the issus's gear is particularly apt for the job it does. It's built for "high precision and speed in one direction," he says. "It's a prototype for a new type of gear."
>
> Another odd thing about this discovery is that although there are many jumping insects like the issus—including ones that are even faster and better jumpers—the issus is apparently the only one with natural gears. Most other bugs synchronize the quick jolt of their leaping legs through friction, using bumpy or grippy surfaces to press the top of their legs together, says Duke University biomechanics expert Steve Vogel, who was not involved in this study. Like gears, this ensures the legs move at the same rate, but without requiring a complicated interlocking mechanism. "There are a lot of friction pads around, and they accomplish pretty much of the same thing," he says. "So I wonder what extra capacity these gears confer. They're rather specialized, and there are lots of other jumpers that don't have them, so there must be some kind of advantage."
>
> Even stranger is that the issus doesn't keep these gears throughout its life cycle. As the adolescent insect grows, it molts half a dozen times, upgrading its exoskeleton (gears included) for larger and larger versions. But after its final molt into adulthood—poof, the gears are gone. The adult syncs its legs by friction like all the other planthoppers. "I'm gobsmacked," says Sutton. "We have a hypothesis as to why this is the case, but we can't tell you for sure."

These gears remind me of the parts of the bacterial flagellum, which also correspond to machine parts, as Dr. Fazale Rana of Reasons to Believe has argued. But if you're a naturalist, then this all happened by chance.

Why would a good God allow people to suffer?

September 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This 4 page essay by Joe Manzari is the best summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An example of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omnipotent being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free

will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order for the character of humans to develop through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to show* that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that premise 2 is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil that we observe more compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.
   Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life. And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.

2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   We humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. Part of knowing God is knowing what he designed us to do – to love him and to love others. And so, the less we know about God, the more we stray from his design for our lives.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.
(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That's right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again. More on this argument for God's existence *from evil*

here.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I've been through… but then, that's why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

For more on the problem of evil, listen to this lecture by Douglas Geivett, professor of philosophy at Biola University. Then you *must listen* to this debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (with summary by me). Another debate transcript is here, with William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen. Here's a book debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, published by Oxford University Press, 2004.

N.T. Wright lectures on the resurrection of Jesus: did Jesus rise from the dead?

September 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's a video of his case for the resurrection:

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable*apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an invented exaltation was already available to do the job.
3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.
5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have

invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

Greg Koukl debates Michael Shermer on God, atheism, meaning and morality

September 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The full transcript of a debate between Michael Shermer, editor of Skeptic magazine, and Greg Koukl, president of Stand to Reason. This debate occurred on Hugh Hewitt's radio show, and was moderated by Hugh Hewitt.

HH = Hugh Hewitt
GK = Greg Koukl
MS = Michael Shermer

HH: Special edition of the Hugh Hewitt Show. As we come to the end of what I call the decade of the atheists, I am taking a day here at the end of the year to look back at what that has been about, and what progress or lack thereof has been made in that conversation, what it meant, and what it ought to mean, and whether or not those of you who are just finished celebrating Christmas were in fact simply involving yourself in a pagan kind of ritual that grew up over the years, or whether you're worshipping the one, true God. All that and more, because this has been the decade of the atheists, Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, many others, but today, I want to ask did they make a difference at all, or is in fact faith in God generally stronger than ever. To join me in this all day special conversation in studio, two guests. Greg Koukl is the founder and the president of Stand To Reason, http://www.str.org. He is a leading Christian apologist. He's an author most recently of Tactics: A Gameplan For Discussing Your Christian Convictions from Zondervan Press. Before that, Relativism, he's got a lot of other books and pamphlets as well at Amazon.com. But you can find out most about Greg at http://www.str.org. Michael Shermer is the editor of Skeptic Magazine. He is the founder of the Skeptic Society, author of a number of books, including The Mind Of The Market: How Biology And Psychology Shape Our Economic Minds, and Why Darwin Matters: The Case Against Intelligent Design. Both Michael and Greg have been guests on the Hugh Hewitt Show before. They're both very generous with their time to spend an entire day doing this, and so welcome to you both. Gentlemen, I believe in biography before everything. Greg Koukl, K comes before S. Give people a little bit of a rundown on who you are and how you ended up doing this.

GK: Well, just a broad background here. I approach the issue that we're talking about today not as a philosopher or a theologian, though I have advanced degrees in both, but really as a human being that's trying to make sense out of my world. What worldview, what picture of reality does the best job of answering the questions? That wasn't always my perspective. I was raised in a religious home, nominally religious. And then in the 60s, during the counterculture, like a whole bunch of other young people, I went crazy. You know, you abandon the views of the establishment, you embrace all these new things that are invading the world in the 60s, and I did that. I was at Michigan State University in their Honors College there as a prelaw student, as it turned out. I had thought I had tried

Christianity because of my background. I thought I was too smart to be a Christian. And so I just didn't give real serious consideration to that until I went to the West Coast, and went, I was a student at UCLA. And at that time, I began to give fresh consideration to the claims that Jesus of Nazareth was making on my life. And in 1973, I made a commitment to follow Him. And that began to change everything. In 1976, I spent three months in Europe, five weeks of that behind the Iron Curtain working with Christians who are suffering there as a result of their own convictions as Christians, back when they had an Iron Curtain. A number of years later, in 1982, I went to Thailand to work with Cambodian refugees. My job was to feed 18,500 people in Sakeo refugee camp, which the result of the Cambodian holocaust of 1975-1976, and then in 1993, I decided to kind of focus my efforts and start an organization with some other people, particularly Melinda Penner, who many who are listening know as The Enforcer. And that organization is called Stand To Reason. And Hugh, I had two basic goals with starting Stand To Reason. One is to train Christians to think more carefully about their convictions. There just was a lot of nonsense being spewed by Christians who I think had the right ideas, but were not communicating them well, and were not thinking well about those ideas. And secondly, I wanted to develop some tools to show that Christianity is actually worth thinking about. Some of these were tools of engagement. There was too much of a bellicose atmosphere between those who believed in Jesus and the Christian worldview and those who don't. And I wanted to see that engagement look more like diplomacy than D-Day. And so there's kind of a general attitude thing that I wanted to see happen, building ambassadors for Christ. Secondly, I wanted to help them with the new tools of evidence, and the information that has been coming out in the last ten or fifteen years that have been very, very powerful, I think, to commend the Christian worldview to the rest of the world – things about big bang cosmology, for example, the design inferences that we find in the universe, the evidence for the existence of the soul, the evidence from the primary source documents about Jesus of Nazareth and his resurrection. All of these things, there's been a lot of work done in the last fifteen or twenty years. And so our goal is to try to bring these things down to a level where people can understand them, throw the ball so that they can catch it, for believers in Christ to do so, but without having a bunch of religious language attached to it, one, and two, using an external approach. In other words, using the philosophy and the science to demonstrate that their views are worth thinking about, instead of simply throwing Bible verses at them, and in the process, I've written a number of books, one of them on abortion called Precious Unborn Human Persons. It's basically a small monograph. The next one, Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted In Mid-Air that I co-authored with Frank Beckwith, who you know. And the one most recently is the one you just mentioned, Tactics: A Game Plan For Discussing Your Christian Convictions.

HH: With that introduction, Mike Shermer, how about you?

MS: Well, I was born and raised in the Southern California area, and my home was, neither of my homes, as my parents were divorced, neither of them were religious, but neither were they anti-religious. They were just not religious. But in the nascent Jesus

movement of the early 70s, I became a born again when I was in high school, 1971. And I remember it was a, my best friend, he was a Presbyterian, so on a Saturday night, I accepted Christ into my heart. And then Sunday, I went to the local Presbyterian church with his family, and went up to the alter and all that with the other people that were called forward. And then on Monday, I remember returning back to high school to tell my buddy, Frank, that I had finally become religious and accepted Jesus like he had been telling me about, and hoping I would. And instead of being excited, he was disappointed, because he was a Jehovah's Witness, and that I had gone to the wrong church, the Presbyterians. Anyway, so that always stuck in the back of my mind like wow, aren't we all on the same bus together in the same journey? Well, not always. Anyway, so…but I took it pretty seriously. I went to Bible study classes. There was a little place in La Crescenta called the Barn, where Christians met and had Bible study classes, things like that. And then I went to Pepperdine University in Malibu there to, really to matriculate initially into theology, but then I switched to psychology, really for logistical reasons. I just wanted to be a college professor, because it's, you know, it's a great gig that you hardly have to work and you get good pay. Don't ever listen to those professors complain about their pay. It's the best gig going. And I wanted in on that. And theology was my field, but to get a PhD, you have to do Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic and Latin. And I could barely get through Spanish, so I realized okay, I have to do something I'm actually good at, which was science, which was experimental psychology. And so I switched fields. But while I was at Pepperdine, I took courses in the New Testament, the Old Testament, the life of Jesus. I took an entire semester course in the writings of C.S. Lewis. We read everything that Lewis wrote, and I really loved C.S. Lewis. I still like C.S. Lewis. I think he's a great writer. But then eventually, when I went to graduate school, when I was in a different environment, not surrounded by Christians, and getting different perspectives. And for a number of reasons, I ultimately lost my faith, and let go of God, and became essentially a secularist, or a non-believer, whatever. I never really call myself an atheist. I mean, I don't like to identify myself or define myself by what I don't believe, because atheism doesn't really stand for anything. There's no principles behind it. There's no platform or set of planks that we live our lives by. We just simply don't believe in God. So then I got into, well, actually I had a ten year span where I was a bike racer living here in Orange County, and did Race Across America five times, and I was the assistant director, and the executive director of the race. And so I spent quite a bit of time in a completely different profession, but teaching part time psychology. Then after ten years of bike racing, I realized my body wasn't going to hold out forever, and I might have to use my brain again. So I went back and got a PhD in the history of science at Claremont, and then became a fulltime professor at Occidental College in L.A. But on the side, we just started the Skeptics thing as just sort of a hobby in my garage. It was nothing, really, just for fun, and a lecture series at Cal Tech. And it just got bigger and bigger, and by 1997-98, when my first book, Why People Believe Weird Things did really well, I had a literary agent that got me a big advance for my next book, and a lecture agent, and so on, and I realized you know, I think I could actually make a living as a writer and an editor and a public intellectual, and actually teach more people than I can teach in a classroom, that is just

reach more people. And so I've been doing that every since. I quit teaching at Oxy in 98, and returned to teaching just two years ago at Claremont Graduate University, just one class a year, Evolution, Economics & the Brain. It's a PhD level course. So it's just for fun. So my main job, my day job, is editing and writing.

HH: We've got a minute and a half to the break, so I'll let you go first, Greg. What's your first question for Michael? I'll lead most of this conversation, but in between, I'll let you pose each other questions. Do you have a question or anything that you're curious about his background?

GK: Well, about his background?

HH: Just anything.

GK: Well, I think, and this is just going to seed further conversation, Michael, but I think the biggest, one of the biggest problems, it's not the only big problem, but one of the biggest problems that atheists have to deal with is the problem of morality. Listen, if you have a guy who drags a woman into an alley, and then molests her, and then…that's our music. Okay, I'll finish my illustration in just a few moments. But I want to raise the nature of morality, is the question, or how best to explain the existence of real morality.

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HH: When we went to break, I began just the first opportunity to ask each other a question. So Greg, you were bringing up the…rephrase it for the audience who just tuned in for Michael.

GK: Right. Actually, the big question here, Hugh, is whether it's possible to be good without God. Now I'm not talking about whether it's possible to be good without a belief in God. I certainly think that's possible, but be good without God. And the answer to that question hinges entirely on precisely what you mean by good. And so I was going to give an illustration. So a man drags a young girl into the alley, he sexually abuses her, strangles here, and tosses her into the dustbin. Is that act wrong? Now I think everybody listening is going to admit it is wrong. But here is the real question. What do we mean when we say that that act of rape and abuse and murder is wrong? Are we describing the action itself, the object? Are we saying that the object, the rape, the murder, has a quality of being wrong, and therefore, wherever that rape goes, the wrongness follows it, just like your height, 6' 2", or whatever it is, is an objective quality of you. Wherever you go, your height follows you in the same way. Does the wrongness follow the rape? Well, if it's a quality of the rape, if it's an objective quality of the rape, then it does. And it doesn't matter what people think about it, or what cultures decides, or what your evolutionary conditioning is. The rape is still wrong. The other alternative is that you're not talking about the rape. You're talking about yourself. You're talking about your genetic conditioning. You're talking about your culture's decision about that kind of thing. And if that's the case, then the truth of the wrongness of the rape is simply in the individual or the subject. And this is why philosophers distinguish between ethical objectivism and ethical subjectivism. Now there's lots of different subjectivisms in ethics. But simply put, if you're an ethical subjectivist, you're a relativist. And actual ethics don't exist. Ethics are

an illusion. If you conclude that ethics are an illusion, there's lots of different ways to explain it. Michael's written a really great book, I think, called The Science Of Good And Evil. I've read most of it, and it's well written, and it's very compelling. But it's a description about how the illusion of ethics has taken place. If you want to go that route, you're welcome to go that route. But what you can't do is you can't then talk about morality as if it's objective when your explanations are subjective. So this is a problem that I think all atheists, including Michael, have to solve. Are ethics objective or relative? And if they're relative, then how can we make moral judgments that are meaningful on other people?

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Wow, let's just get right into it. Well, I don't think it's quite so black and white. That is to say I think there are provisional moral truths that exist whether there's a God or not. In other words, it's wrong, morally, absolutely morally wrong to rape and murder. And that would be true whether there was a God or not. In other words, if…is God saying that it's wrong because it's really wrong, and He's instructing us in his Holy Scripture that it's wrong? Or is it only wrong because He said so? And if it turned out there wasn't a God, would that make it okay? And my answer is no, it really is wrong, whether God says it's wrong or not. That is to say I think it really exists, a real, moral standard like that. Why? Well, because first, you could ask the person who is being affected, we should always ask the moral recipient of the act, how do you feel about being raped or murdered or stolen from or lied to. And the moral actor will tell you, it doesn't matter whether, if I could use a current example, I haven't any idea if Tiger Woods and his wife are religious or not. But you can just ask his wife whether it was morally right or wrong, and she'll tell you. It doesn't matter whether there's a God or not. It's wrong. And so that's the first principle. Just ask. Ask the moral recipient of whether it's right or wrong. But I think Greg's after something deeper, that is to say is there something even deeper still behind the moral actor's feelings about how they're treated. And the answer is yes, I think so. We're a social species. We don't live in isolation. We live as members of a group. And as such, there's no possible way our group could survive, be cohesive, be a unit of any kind of solidarity against other groups, or against a harsh environment. If there were too much violations of social norms, that is if there were constant lying and cheating and raping and murdering, there's no way a social group could hang together. And as such, as we all know, we're very tribal. We're tribal against other groups, but within our groups, we're very pro-social, altruistic, cooperative. We have a good and evil in our nature. So to this extent, I find myself interesting often in agreement with my conservative friends on most of the things they consider morally, moral truths. That is, we share the same moral values, even though I come at it from a different perspective.

HH: Greg?

GK: Yeah, I'm actually not after something deeper here, Michael. At least to start out the discussion, I'm trying to be as simple and clear and precise as possible, because it's very easy to weave together a bunch of things that sound persuasive, but turn out to be different things. Like for example, Darwinian evolution, which is a materialistic process,

and here I mean the blind watchmaker thesis, the neo-Darwinian synthesis, natural selection working on mutations, and a kind of a cultural evolution that Michael has just referred to as we work together as a group to survive as a group. Those are two entirely different things. One is materialistic, Darwinian, the other one is intelligent design, quite frankly, where the group gets together and makes some determinations to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What I'm trying to do is to be able to answer the question that came up initially, is God necessary for morality, which Michael denies. It's to say well, what is it that morality, that we're trying to describe? It is either objective, and therefore an immaterial obligation that applies to certain behaviors, or it is subjective. The things that Michael described were variously subjective, evolutionary elements, subjective cultural elements, but then he affirmed that we all have good and evil in our nature, or an awareness of that. I agree with that entirely. We all are aware of those things. That's why even if we don't believe in God, we can still know morality and follow it. The question is what accounts for real, genuine objective morality?

HH: One minute to the break, Michael Shermer.

MS: I'm not arguing for cultural evolution. I'm actually arguing as part of our, what you described as materialistic, natural selection, Darwinian evolution, that it's not enough to just pretend or fake being a good group member. You actually have to believe it, feel it, and live it. So what I'm arguing is that natural selected certain moral sentiments, as Adam Smith called them, moral feelings, an actual empathy, Adam Smith talked about, we actually empathize with somebody else, we can put ourselves into their shoes and feel their pain, I'm arguing that's very real. It's every bit as real a part of our evolutionary heritage as our eyes and our hands.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, you were saying that evolutionary biology has produced a real morality.

MS: Yeah, I think really, Adam Smith had it right in his very first book, The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, long before Darwin, that we actually have in our biological nature, our human nature, the capacity to feel other people's pain. He called it empathy, we think of it often either as empathy or sympathy. That is, we really do connect to other people. A lot of good research on this now, brain scans, you can show somebody a little video of somebody they know, or have feelings for, getting pricked with a pin, and the same areas of their brain light up, the pain receptors, as in the person getting the pin prick. In other words, we have an evolved tendency to really be deeply, emotionally connected to our fellow group members. And that's why I say groups like World Vision, where you want to adopt a child, it doesn't help to show a picture of 10,000 starving African kids. What does affect us is one child, a picture of one child with a little biography. That's how you get people to adopt a child to donate. The reason for that is because essentially they're tricking the brain, our brains into making that stranger an honorary family member, an honorary within group member, which is why I argue that free trade is one of the best ways of defusing normal tribal tensions between people. It makes them honorary friends,

honorary members. Well, what's going on there is we're tricking the brain into sort of this evolutionary rule of thumb – be nice to people that are like you and that are related to you, and that you know, and that are fellow group members, and don't do what our natural tendency is, is to be tribal and xenophobic against those other guys. And free trade is one of the best things you can do for that. So I'm arguing that's actually tapping something deep within us.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, basically, I agree with Mike completely here. We do have this tendency, and it seems to be universal among humankind. The question is, what is that tendency, actually? And what is the best way to explain it? And I see like a handful of significant problems with using evolution to explain morality. The first one is that evolution is a materialistic process. And here, I'm going back to an original point, and I don't want people to lose it. There is no way that you can take molecules, and reorganize them in any fashion, over any length of time, and have pop out of the mixture an objective moral principle that's immaterial, and that applies to human beings. All you're going to get is a reorganization of the molecules. And what they can produce, and this is what Mike has done in his book, and he mentioned just s few moments ago, they can produce sentiments. They can produce feelings. They can produce behavior. But this leads us to the second problem of using evolution to explain morality, is that morality is more than sentiments, feelings and behavior. Morality entails things like motive and intention. I mean, you could have a guy walk into a garage, walk out with a hose, and is that wrong? Well, it depends. Is it his hose or somebody else's hose? Did he intend to take the other person's hose? Is he borrowing the hose? So we can see here are elements that are part of the moral thing that needs to be explained, that are immaterial, and therefore the Darwinian explanation can't even in principle go there. It can't do that job. But here's the worst problem. Regardless of what our sentiments happen to be regarding moral actions, we can feel good or feel bad or whatever, the problem is that morality is prescriptive, not merely descriptive. That is it tells us not just what we did, but what we ought to have done in the past, and what we ought to do in the future. That is not something that any Darwinian mechanism can describe, because nothing about my biology can inveigh upon me to act a certain way for moral reasons in the future. It doesn't tell me why I should be good tomorrow. This is a huge difference between these two views, the descriptive and the prescriptive. Prescriptive is part of morality, and can't even, in principle, be explained by an evolutionary materialistic system.

HH: Michael Shermer, I'll give you a start on that. We have about 45 seconds to the break, so you may want to…we'll come back after the break and pick up. But what's your start to that?

MS: Well, the start would be that again, let's not think of evolution just as nature red and tooth and claw, and it's nasty, brutish and short, but that in fact, we have this whole other social evolution. And I'm not talking about cultural evolution where we consciously make decisions, but subconsciously, because it's in part of our nature to actually, seriously, deeply feel for other people and their actions, and the consequences of our

actions, so that we actually have a sense of right and wrong that we're born with, but then culture taps into and tweaks, one way or the other.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, Greg had made the argument that the Darwinian model simply cannot explain immaterial concepts like morality, that there's just no way you can rearrange the molecules to get there. You're saying well, yes you can.

MS: Yeah, I think so, because if we think of morality as another suite of emotions that are involved with other people's behaviors, the consequences of our actions, how we feel about them, how people feel about us when we do these things, that's as every bit as important a biological part of our nature as anything else we talk about. So let's take a real simple emotion. When you're hungry, nobody does any calculations about the caloric input/output ratios of eating an apple versus an ice cream, although now it's posted on the walls for us to see. But we just feel hungry, and we feel hungry for certain kinds of foods. The feeling of hunger is a proxy for something else. Evolution's done the calculating for us. You need food, so we're going to, your hypothalamus is going to secrete these certain chemicals that causes your stomach to rumble and so on. When you're attracted to somebody else, a member of the opposite sex, nobody does the calculation by, let's say, a man finds a woman attractive who has a .67 hip to waist ratio, and an hourglass figure, although that is pretty much universal. Nobody walks about with calipers taking measurements of who they're going to want to date or ask out. You just look around, and you just go wow, I really find this woman attractive. It's a feeling you have, okay? So those are kind of simple emotions, but sliding up the scale, the moral emotions are really no different. When I lie to somebody, I've violated a social norm, and they respond in a very angry, hostile way. So those emotions that we both share, guilt, shame, anger, disgust, involved a social relationship that whether it was a norm violation, those are the kinds of emotions that are just like hunger and sexual attraction that are built into us by nature, by evolution. Or, if you wish, this is how God created the moral sentiments, just like He created everything else in the universe, through a process of nature. I think that's equally reasonable to argue. So I don't see that it has to be an atheistic viewpoint versus a theistic viewpoint to get to our moral sentiments. Why couldn't God have used evolution to create the moral sentiments as I've described them?

GK: Yeah, well, you don't actually believe that, I know, Mike, so this is kind of like adding God to the soup, you know, if it makes people feel better. But the basic argument is that evolution all by itself can do the trick. And I think if your listeners are listening carefully, what they're going to hear is Mike has just described, and if I'm being unfair to your assessment here, let me know, Mike, that moral feelings are simply that. They are sophisticated emotions that do some work for us for survival, and even on a group level. Now there's a name for this. It's called emotivism. A.J. Ayer, the famous atheist, offered this description of morality. It's a relativistic scheme of morality. Morality doesn't actually exist, Ayer argued. There is no objective right or wrong. Rape isn't wrong itself. What happens is, we have feelings about it, and we express it in moral language, but rape isn't

really wrong. So your listeners are going to have to ask themselves the questions. When they just survey their own moral senses, and we all have access to this, do we want to believe that scientists have figured out that really what we're doing is feeling sophisticated, complicated emotions, and that the emotions are in us, and we are not seeing anything about the action? Or does it seem like rape is wrong? Look, when I say rape is wrong, I'm talking about the rape. When I say liver is awful, I'm talking about me. I'm talking about my own tastes and preferences. It's interesting, as Michael has given his explanation, though, that he's doing, and I don't know if you are aware of this, Michael, but you're doing the very thing that I kind of warned against. You give a description of the foundations of morality that turn out to be relativistic, but then there's a smuggling of a more objectivistic morality in the back door, like when Michael says you don't have to do what your nature tells you to do, in other words, what you've been programmed by evolution to do. You can kind of rise above that. Well, now we're talking about a morality that isn't dictated by evolution, but a morality that we can employ through our acts of will, to rise above this kind of brutish evolutionary morality. And that sounds suspiciously like the very thing that I'm talking about here.

MS: But I don't mean, there's nothing to rise above by itself. Yes, we have to say rise above our tribal instincts to be xenophobic when we meet somebody who's a stranger, who's different from us. We all struggle against that, particularly in a black and white America, where there's always been this underlying tension. Indeed, so culture helps us do that – education, travel, diversity of exposure to different people. That makes you a little more tolerant. Okay, but I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about is tapping into the good part of our nature, the fact that in addition to that xenophobic tribalism we have, we also have this other side that almost never gets discussed in evolutionary…even in evolutionary circles, you'll still hear evolutionary biologists talking about, in a way that Huxley did, and Herbert Spencer did in Darwin's own time, that we have to somehow struggle mightily against our genes to overcome that nasty tendency we have to want to rape, kill, pillage and destroy. Well no, actually, we have this whole other side that's just as genetically programmed into our nature. And the point of culture – education, politics, economics and so on, is to tap into the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said.

GK: Okay, here's the question I have for you, Michael, then. You've identified that really, we have good and we have bad. That's part of, under your terms, that's part of our genetic nature, and we can choose to tap into what you call the good side. Why ever should we do such a thing if there is not a higher standard that directs our action to the better side, your words, than the bad side, your words, if really, ultimately, they are both the result of a genetic evolution, and from outside terms, neither is better than the other. Why should we do that, Michael?

MS: Yeah, well I don't see how entering God into the equation changes that problem at all.

GK: Well, that's the next step. What I'm trying to show is that the should comes from the

outside, and if we can demonstrate that, then we can ask…

MS: But there's no outside.

GK: That's my point. On your view, morals are relative, and there is no difference.

MS: No, but I don't think even in your view, there's an outside.

GK: Well, we can get to that in the next step.

MS: …because adding God doesn't add anything.

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HH: Greg, reset the debate. What just happened there?

GK: Well, what I'm arguing is basically, you have two choices. You have objective morality, or subjective morality. Subjective morality means that when we say something's wrong, we're not talking about the action itself, we're talking about ourselves. Now there are sophisticated ways of characterizing how we're talking about ourselves, whether it's culture, whether it's evolution. But ultimately, you end up with no morality. I think that's false. I think people know there is objective morality. And if evolution, no materialistic system can explain it, given the discovery of objective morality, then we have to take the next step and ask what is the best explanation for objective morality. Michael, I think, wants to deny objective morality, but I think he's been smuggling the notion in subtly, as many times happens in these kinds of discussions. And he's, I'm not sure if he's denied that or not.

MS: Well, I think there's only two kinds of people – those who think there's only two types of morality, objective and subjective, and those that don't, which is the rest of us.

GK: Okay.

MS: Seriously, I mean, I reject your dichotomy of there's either objective reality or it's all subjective relativism and anything goes, and what Hitler did is perfectly fine. No, I don't believe that. I don't think anybody, hardly anybody actually really believes that, except for maybe a few academic philosophers who've never been in the real world. Really, I think we all recognize that there are deep, provisional truths, moral truths, that we recognize as real. And so what you want to get at is what's the outside source? And as you know, since you read my book, this is an old problem that everybody's familiar with in your business anyway, and that is Plato's Euthyphro's dilemma, in which Socrates asks his student, Euthyphro, the point which I should first wish to understand is whether the pious, or holy, is beloved by the gods because it is holy, or holy because it is beloved of the gods. In other words, which comes first, that the moral principle really exists out there in sort of an ideational world, and the gods say hey, look…

GK: They're beholden to that.

MS: …that's a real, moral principle…

GK: Right.

MS: …and we're going to instruct you through the holy book that's what you should do.

GK: And that makes the gods contingent…

MS: Or do they not really exist other than in the mind of God, who says listen, I've decided that killing is wrong, and I'm telling you in this particular book, and ignore those other holy books, because they're wrong. And so now we get to the problem of which is, which do you believe, for example?

GK: Okay, this is a famous dilemma you actually mentioned at one of the earlier segments, and it has been answered very carefully. I'll give a possible answer for it.

HH: One minute to the break.

GK: Okay, one minute. One answer is to say that God says something is right because it's, the rightness of it is grounded in His nature. It's not an arbitrary act of His will, voluntarism, it isn't that he has some external standard that makes him now contingent, but that God is good in Himself, and that His commands flow forth from His nature. That's a possible solution for it. What you can't do is you can't jump from evolution and say well, if you go your way, I see a difficulty there, so I can ignore the evidence that's facing me right now for moral objectivism. That, I think, is a false move. So I can answer the objection, but also I think it's a false move.

HH: But you'll do it after the break.

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HH: But I want to go back and pick up the thread that we were at right before the end of the break. And Michael Shermer, I'm going to have you reset the debate for people wandered in off the street in the middle of this. Where are we in the conversation right now between you and Greg Koukl?

MS: Okay, just in case anybody's just checking on online, it's http://www.skeptic.com instead of…

HH: I'm sorry.

MS: No big deal. Anyway, so, well, is there an outside source to these moral principles that God then recognizes and says yeah, this is part of the universe, it really is wrong to kill other people, and I as the Deity am telling you this is what I know as part of nature? Or, do no such moral principles actually exist anywhere outside of the Deity Himself, and then He tells us through His Holy books? Okay, so which is the right answer to that question? And two, assuming that…well, you did say something about it's in God's nature. Well, if we're made in God's image, wouldn't that also put the moral principles in our nature as well?

GK: It does…

MS: So then we're tapping into those principles that really exist in us. And how is that any different from what I've been arguing already?

GK: No, the difference there, just on that particular issue, is I agreed earlier when you said it's part of our nature. The source is what's different. What's part of our nature is the knowledge of external things. In my case, these things are external. They are external like math principles are external to my mind. I don't invent them in my mind. In your case, the way you account for them being universal, in the sense that they're part of all

humankind, is that evolution has created this. These are two entirely different things. In my case, I'm talking about an object of reality, and in your case, you're talking about a subjective reality. And I know you want to jump in. Just one more point here. I am not complicating things at all, or oversimplifying things. The issue is quite simple if you start at the bottom. Either moral obligations are objects, or they're part of the object, or they're part of the subject. They are objectively true, or they're not. There are no other options. Now if you agree that morality is not objective, then it's a crap shoot, really. It's not whatever you want, if what you mean your society isn't going to allow you to do whatever you want. It's not whatever you want if you meant that well, evolution is going to determine certain things for you, that aids the species. But it is whatever you want. What is is right, if there is no outside objective moral standard that's governing you. Now how you want to ground that, that has it's own…that's another issue. And grounding it in God makes a lot of sense, and it even, I'm not even subject to the kind of problems that you Euthyphro dilemma that was just offered there. There is an answer to that, that avoids that problem. But it seems to me if there are objective moral laws, then that suggests an objective moral law giver. And if it's not, then it's just deterministic biology, or it's whatever the group says. And then we could be all over the map.

MS: Well, then you have the problem, it seems to me, of determining which moral values in the Holy book that you embrace, the Bible, which not everybody embraces as the source, other people have different holy books and sources, so…but anyway, granting yours, which of the moral principles are you going to adhere to, and which not? So for example, I presume you would reject slavery, as everybody would today. And yet Christians of centuries past embraced slavery, and used Biblical references as political support for slavery, as you well know. And William Wilberforce, who over, you know, sort of single-handedly, against all his fellow Christians who were standing up against him, said no, this is a bad idea. And so I think you have the problem of, like, which moral principles are you going obey, and which not?

GK: Oh, no, you're absolutely right, Michael. We have the problem as human beings, actually, regardless of our understanding about where morality comes from, of trying to figure out which is the appropriate applicable principle in this given situation. Your system suggests that we're basically kind of following an evolutionary impulse, and that's what we're obeying, and so we're not really obeying goodness itself, where I'm suggesting that the problem of moral decision making is difficult, because there are a lot of competing moral goods. But there is an answer to the problem if we think through it carefully. And you don't have to have a Bible, and I think you understand this, Michael. People…my view isn't that people have to have a Bible to know right and wrong. The Bible itself, in Romans Chapter 2, teaches that that is on everybody's heart in some fashion that allows him to have access to it, which is what you said earlier. It's in all of our natures. We agree on that particular point. So you don't need to have the Bible. But if you do, then you have a problem with interpretation. That's true of everything. We don't make the issue simpler in a sense by saying oh, well, morals are objective, because now we have to ask which objective moral principles apply in this circumstance.

MS: Well, so…right…

GK: So I readily agree that there's a challenge there in moral decision making.

MS: So how do you know what's right and wrong? How do you personally know? Is it from the Bible? Do you listen to the still, small voice within? Do you pray?

GK: I reflect on my moral nature, on my moral intuitions. Just like I know how math principles are right and wrong, I reflect on those things as well.

MS: Well, me, too. So how is it any different, because I do the same thing.

GK: And I have a…well, the difference is, well, I just described. You are reflecting on a nature that you're compelled by certain evolutionary things to do something, and it could just as well have been that evolution pushed you in an entirely different direction, so that rape or child molesting, or something like that, is wrong. I mean, we're not even talking now so far, Hugh, about the details of how evolution accomplishes this, which is another issue. We're just talking about it conceptually right now.

MS: Actually, I don't do that. I don't even think about evolution or Darwinism or anything like that when I'm thinking about right and wrong.

GK: Right, I know.

MS: Like when I interact with other people…

GK: …in the explanation, you do.

MS: Yeah, in my explanation. Yeah, but when I think about well, what should I do in this situation, how should I treat this other person, is this really right or wrong, I just try to put myself in their shoes, and think well, how would I feel?

GK: Fair enough.

MS: And I think you do, too. I think that's what we all do.

GK: We are both drawing on the same faculties.

MS: Right.

GK: That isn't the question whether we have the faculties. The question is where do the faculties come from, and what ground them? What makes these things good or bad? You just told me a few moments ago, Michael, that you can go either direction. You could obey your baser nature, which is evolutionary determined, or the higher nature. Well, what is higher and lower in evolution?

MS: Well, this is a good question. Say…take the slavery issue, for example. How do you know that's wrong?

GK: Actually, you raised the question of xenophobia earlier. We could do our tribal instinct thing, which we're by nature dictated to follow, but we can rise above that. So I don't know why…what's above that, unless you're importing some external standard of morality?

MS: Right, so where does it come from?

GK: How do you adjudicate between the two on an evolutionary basis?

MS: I think…yeah, I think that there is a long term trend over the last, maybe, couple of thousand years, to expanding the circle of moral sentiments of who we're going to count as fellow group members that we do not rape, pillage, destroy and kill. And the question is why has that happened, let's say, since the Enlightenment, where we no longer want to treat blacks like we used to, and we want to give women the right to vote, and so on, and now gay marriage is up on the table for discussion and so on. We keep sort of expanding the circle of sentiments. Why would that be? I actually think that it's possible there is sort of a built-in to maybe the universe or something, a tendency toward, well, Robert Wright calls this playing more nonzero games, more win-win games, that is all of us benefit if we have more positive moral exchanges between us. This is why I promote free trade. I think it's one of these mechanisms of generating not just more wealth, but more goodwill between people. And I think that may be very well built into the system, whether there's a God or not. I think it might actually be there.

GK: Well, this is a very important juncture in our conversation, because what Michael has appealed to is something very much like a universal mind, that is this perspective over the whole enterprise, looking down saying as all the things fit together, this would be better for everyone, and that somehow directs the process.

MS: I'm not quite committed to that, by the way. I just think it's an interesting idea…

GK: But if…okay, now fair enough…

MS: And I'm not sure if it's a bottom up process, or a top down process, so…

GK: Well, this is the question then. If it is a bottom up process, if it's in the genes, how is it that the genes, then, in any of their working, can anticipate, in a sense, the greater good for all mankind? That strikes me as completely con…

MS: Not just the genes, no, something a higher order than that, that in the species itself, I mean, we're not talking just about natural selection of individuals, where the organism is the target of selection. But here, I'm talking about group selection. I think group selection has a reasonable case to be built around social organizations, that they themselves are the target of selection. So religion, for example, is a great unifying social force. It brings people together, it unifies them for both good and evil actions, and it's, I think, also part of our nature.

GK: Okay, very good, group selection. There's natural selection, which is on the genes, and then there is group selection. Natural selection is materialistic, and it's unguided. Group selection entails intelligent design, because the group is involved there, encouraging or discouraging the behaviors. And when you form your group, it's kind of a social contract thing, that's fine as an explanation, but just keep in mind that both of them are relativistic. And if one group thinks that their group will do better by destroying other groups, it is certainly "morally" within their rights to do so.

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HH: Gentlemen, for people who have just walked in on the middle of this, we've been not going around in circles, we've been actually moving towards a very sharply defined disagreement. But I want you both to state what that disagreement is in one minute or

less, not to each other, but for the audience who just walked in. If you had to summarize for them in a minute, or in 90 seconds each, what they missed, Greg Koukl, how would you say that?

GK: You have to make a decision, listener, as to whether morality is objective in some sense, or merely subjective. Is it a quality of the action, so when we say rape is wrong, we're talking about rape? Or are we just talking about our feelings or our emotions, or maybe our biological conditioning? As far as I'm concerned, you can go either direction with it at this particular point, but if you decide to go with a subjectivist view, a relativistic view, which is what the evolutionary explanation offers, then you have to be consistent with that to be fair. You can't start then smuggling what sounds like objective morality in the back door, because now you've got another morality that is not accounted for by your evolutionary scheme. And you've got to find another accounting for that, and I think this turns out to be one of the best arguments in favor of theism of some sort, the moral argument. But this is the essence of it, what we're discussing right now.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Well, I reject what I consider to be a false alternative between objective and subjective morality. I reject subjective morality, I reject relativistic morality. I believe there are objective moral standards. I prefer, I slightly prefer the word transcendent moral values. I don't believe in God, but I could be wrong. If there's a God, it seems to me that the moral standards, moral principles should exist anyway, whether there's a God or not, and that what God is doing, if He's doing anything, is He's telling us what those are. And here, I see a serious problem you have of interpreting what those are, because there's more than one holy book. People have many claims about moral values based on God, of which we vehemently disagree with. So when I asked you earlier about how do you know what's right and wrong, you said I reflect upon it, and I used the expression the still, small voice within. And so okay, so we all do that. I think it all begins with the Golden Rule. Everything else is commentary after that, as the great rabbi said, that is how do you feel, how would you feel if I did this, how would I feel if you did this to me? Well, maybe I should put myself in your shoes, and that's where morality begins, and I think that's absolute, whether there's a God or not.

HH: Okay, gentlemen, I had a lot to cover that is not related to this, but I don't want to move on too expeditiously. Do you think we have covered this issue?

GK: Yeah, I think we've done a pretty good job, and I think the differences are fairly clear in the, what, hour or so we've been talking about this issue. And I mean, I can take another shot here, then I'd get the last word on it, but I think we've summed up our views fairly accurately.

HH: All right, then let me ask you one question before we move to my second set. Michael, you've referred a few times to the presence of many holy books as though that somehow diminishes the idea that one may or may not have more authority than the other. Is that necessarily true, just that there are many holy books, there may be a hierarchy of authority among them, correct?

MS: Just take the current events of Islam. Clearly, they have a very different view of morality of how women should be treated than we do, and yet they're basing it on similar holy texts, and some different holy texts. And so how are people of goodwill, who genuinely believe to get along in the world? Clearly, appeals to God is not going to solve our problem, is it?

HH: Okay, I didn't state it very well, then. What I was asking is just does the fact there are many holy books in any way diminish the authority of any one in particular? Just because there are many of them, you've said it a few times, and it's usually as an aside that…it's kind of …

MS: Oh, okay. There could be one, yeah, there could be one that's really right, and the rest are wrong.

HH: You know, there's kind of an implied, and I don't want to put words in your mouth, but when I'm a believer, as I am, in Scripture, and I hear you say that, I hear a sneer, oh, many holy books, but not an argument that one of them can't be right. Do you see what I'm getting at?

MS: Oh, yes, one of them could be right, and the rest wrong, but how do you know which one?

GK: Well, that's a different question.

MS: Because people of genuine belief in faith like you, who are Islamic, believe just as strongly as you do that women should be treated certain ways, and you would disagree. So how are we to settle this?

GK: I'm so glad he put it that way, because that point has absolutely nothing to do with the discussion. You don't cancel out…

MS: But isn't it an interesting point, though?

GK: Wait, let me finish. No, it is an interesting point, maybe, for sociologists, but as to the issue at question, let me finish the thought, Mike, and then you can respond to it. You don't decide whether a book or revelation is true or false, or anything else for that matter, by looking at how strongly different people hold the views. You have to look at the reasons for the views. I mean, let's just talk about science for example. There are very strongly held views by scientists on a lot of different things, even opposing views about how the Darwinian project worked out. It wouldn't be fair of me to Michael to say well, your particular view, I don't know if you're a punctuated equilibrium guy, or you're a classical Darwinist, or whatever, but it would be unfair for me to say to Michael look, you couldn't be right, nor could they be right, because you both have equally strong beliefs that you are true. That is a non-issue in the discussion. Something else has to be focused on to try to break the tie.

MS: Okay, that's a good example, because in that example, at least in principle, it could be settled through more data collection, whether evolution moves along in fits and starts, as described by punctuated equilibrium, or it moves gradually by gradualism. We can at least in principle settle that dispute.

GK: Why can't the other one be settled in principle?

MS: How would you settle the dispute between a Muslim and a Christian on how women should be treated? How would you settle that? I mean, they go look, it says right here in the Scripture, and you say but it says in my Scripture, so how are we going to settle that?

GK: Well…the question here, yeah, well in principle, it can be settled in actually two different ways. One, based on the authority of the book, and so you can look at the books, and say do I have any good, independent reasons, not just leaps of faith, but any good reasons to believe that this is actually a communication of God over and against this one being a communication of God? And there are lots of different strategies to go about that. Or one could just look at the claims themselves, and say look, based on what seems to be a common sense of right and wrong and morality that we all seem to have, and using our best faculties to reflect on it, I have reasons to mistrust this one, and trust this one more. Those are two, at least in principle ways, that you can go about adjudicating between those claims.

MS: I have a better way to settle it. Ask the women. How do you feel being treated like this? Which would you prefer? I think you'll get a pretty straightforward answer there, unless the guy's behind the door with a shotgun, and she has to give a certain answer.

GK: Okay, this presumes that we ought to care what other people think about how they're treated, which presumes an objective morality, and now we're back into that thing again. So that plays into my hands, not his.

MS: And I agree, there's an objective morality.

HH: But I…when I come back from break, we've got to go to break, when I come back, and I'll ask you, Michael, when we start, is there a way to adjudicate between the reasonability of those books, because it seems to me that the audience driving around right now has on their mind, and I always try and put myself in the point of the audience, wait a minute, how do you decide between many books claiming to be the revealed wisdom of God, and if your answer is you can't, don't bother, fine. If your answer is you can, pick this one, fine. But let's get to that. Is there an objective way to pick between the books?

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HH: But I want to get back to the subject I was raising. As between the books that claim to be the revealed wisdom of God, is there an objective way to judge them on their merits? Greg Koukl, let me start with you.

GK: Well yes, let's say, for example, if the documents in question claim that God communicated in an historical way, penetrated history and certain, particular things happened, now you've got an historical test for that kind of thing. You can look at the details that are expressed. Maybe there's some prophecy that is proclaimed at one time, and you have reason to believe was fulfilled at another time. You ask me in principle how it could be done, this is a way in principle that it could be done. You could see whether the view of the world that the books portray seem to comport with one's deepest intuitions about the way the world really is. I actually think religion is a very messy and

untidy business. And with my philosophical training, I like to have all the loose ends tied up. But the fact is, life is not tidy. And no matter what view you take, there are going to be problems and unanswered questions. So I take the perspective, as I mentioned at the beginning of the show, Hugh, as a man looking at my universe trying to make the most sense out of it. What picture of the world, what worldview does the best job of answering most of the questions? And I think this worldview-type analysis would be helpful here. If you have a book that gives a worldview that has a certain feature that seem to resonate with your deepest intuitions about the world, that seems to me a plus for the book. If you have another book that seems to indicate something entirely different, like the Vedas, for example, that suggest that the universe is just an illusion, that it's all Maya. Well this, to me, does not resonate with my deepest intuitions. So here's another way that in principle, at least, one could test one worldview against another with their religious books.

HH: Mike Shermer?

MS: That does seem problematic to me, even within your own Holy book, of how much we, how many of the Old Testament rules and laws we no longer obey – death penalty for disobedient children and adulterous people and so on. We would no longer practice that ever in our country. Why is that? I mean, that was once considered to be Holy Scripture, now it's rejected by most believers. So obviously, there are decisions being made in people's minds about what's right and wrong that is external to the source itself, that comes from, what, culture, parents, upbringing and so on.

HH: Okay, I'm going to recede from it, although my question was how would you choose between the books. I want to come back to that, Michael, but Greg has a response to that.

GK: Yeah, of course. Look, the Old Testament law was written for Jews. This is not like we're just making something up out here. It is a proper hermeneutic It was written to Jews under a very specific situation, and it was meant to be applied to them under the theocracy. There are some people who hold this, but certainly not the majority, that these same laws in the same way ought to be applied today. That's why we call it the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Even within the Christian worldview, there is a place for that, and now there's a place for something new. So there's no contradiction there at all.

HH: Yeah, you know, Michael, that does seem to me, Hitchens has made that argument to me a number of times, and it's just a silly argument.

MS: Which argument?

HH: The argument that the Old Testament rules that have been abandoned somehow indict the New Testament laws and morality. It's just a silly argument.

MS: Well wait. You still obey some of the Old Testament rules. So how do you…

HH: Yes.

MS: Which ones do you pick and choose from?

HH: I'll give you Al Mohler's book. Again, I'm not a participant. I don't want to answer. I want to ask you, though. To me, it was nonresponsive when I said as between the books,

how do you judge which books?

MS: Okay, which books? I would just say…

HH: Of all the holy books that claim to have universal wisdom and knowledge about God, and I could name ten of them, is there a way to choose…

MS: I don't think so. I'm answering your question. I don't think there is any outside way to do that. Even in principle, because the ultimate, the original source of those books came through some human source, some revelatory experience that somebody had, that had to at some point put pen to paper and write down what the God said.

HH: Let me rephrase it, then. On the basis of human reason, there is no way to evaluate all those books as to which ones are at least more closely approximating the way that people ought to live or not?

MS: Oh, that's a different question. Maybe I misheard, because I think we could do that, but what's that standard of the way we ought to live? What are we using for that standard? I would argue there is such a standard, and it's not from religion.

HH: And so you would evaluate those books based upon your independently arrived at understanding of what is morality?

MS: I think we do do that.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, I think we do do that to a degree, too, and here Mike and I have no debate about the existence of a moral sense in human beings. The difference is whether that moral sense is merely an expression of our subjective emotions, which it seems to me what he argues for, though he wants to ennoble that and call that kind of objective morality, or is it our ability to grasp moral realities that are outside of us that would not change, even if our own opinions about it happen to change. That's the difference between objective and subjective. And Mike, you appealed for a kind of third category, but either…I don't see where there is a third category. It's either in the object or in the subject, and that's pretty much the law of excluded middle there.

HH: Remember that thought. We'll come right back to Michael Shermer.

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HH: Michael Shermer, what were you going to say?

MS: Well, so let's take another current example of whether homosexuality is a sin, leaving aside marriage as a political question, but just is homosexuality a sin or not. Now I presume you would argue it is, and it's right there in the Old Testament, a man shall not sleep with another man, it's an abomination. But why stick with that one, which seems to me equally culturally dependent as some of the other Old Testament on small populations struggling in a harsh environment, in which you want lots of marriage, lots of children and so on. I could kind of see that rules back then, but why bother now? I mean, why not abandon that one along with slavery and some of the other ones?

HH: Greg Koukl? Well, okay, this one goes to a matter of authority, because I think there are complicated, and for some, persuasive arguments that homosexuality is wrong, per

se, because of natural law arguments or whatever, but those don't resonate with most people. I think what Michael's getting at here is how is it that the New Testament, or now why are you still holding over that from the Old Testament when things have changed? And the reason is, it's not just an incidental part of the Old Testament law. It seems to be indicated there that the behavior itself transcends, morally speaking, any local law. Some of the laws in the Old Testament were for local things, but some seemed to transcend, like it's wrong to kill, or rather, wrong the murder is the Hebrew word. And so in the New Testament, even though we're not in the Old Covenant situation, we have these same kinds of things, these more transcendent things that apply to all human beings, prohibited. And one of those that's spoken to is the homosexuality issue. And the reason that Paul gives in Romans Chapter 1 is that God made human beings for one purpose, the man for the woman, and the man, in the case of male homosexuality, abandoned the woman that God made for them and burned in their passion against someone else. So there's a violation of the natural order. Now this isn't something that I'm probably going to come up with all on my own just thinking about, and this is where I think Divine revelation is helpful to have us dial down on some of the moral things. And you're certainly free not to accept that, but this is what makes homosexuality durable as a sin, in a sense, from the Old Testament times to the New Testament, because of the reasons that God gives that it's wrong.

MS: But using that sort of a moral intuition, and the still, small voice or the reflective aspects of morality, given that we live in a modern world in which we have plenty of people, we don't need more, and somebody, the evidence seems to show people are just born this way, it's like asking a gay person when they chose to become homosexual would be like me asking you when you chose to become heterosexual. And you'd say well, I didn't choose. This is my nature. And that's what gay people say. This is my nature. I've always felt like this. So why would you care? Who cares if somebody finds love with a member of the same sex, and love and marriage leads to fidelity and more moral behavior that we all agree is good for society? Why block that?

GK: Okay, just as a matter of fact, it is not the case that science has shown that this is genetic. There is no gay gene. This has not been demonstrated.

MS: No, not a gay gene…

GK: Or anything like that.

HH: Okay, we're going way off the off-ramp, gentlemen.

GK: Okay, the answer is, why would any Christian object to that?

MS: Yeah.

GK: Because out of fidelity to their God, because they believe that God has said this is wrong, and so they're going to oppose it in principle, even though it is not within their purview, then, to bring persecution upon that person, because there's another value that they hold, and that is that all human beings are made in the image of God.

MS: Okay, here's my prediction.

HH: I don't want a prediction. I want to get back to my question, Michael Shermer.

MS: Yup.

HH: Based upon what I would say your evolutionarily-constructed moral law, what you consider to be the societal moral law, have you evaluated the various holy books, and given them a hierarchy, which is best, which is not so good, which is terrible?

MS: No, I guess I have not.

HH: And why not, if that matters so much?

MS: I don't, I'm not that interested. I love studying religion, though I have not read the Koran, for example.

HH: Greg Koukl, is it necessary for someone who's going to say there's an evolutionary moral law, and talk about God, to have that kind of assessment?

GK: I actually don't, I'm sympathetic to Mike. I mean, there's a lot of books to read, you can't read them all. And if he thinks he has come upon a cogent and powerful explanation for the world as he sees it, then he doesn't have a motivation to go outside of that. My argument has been that it's not adequate, and that's why some other kind of solution is going to be necessary.

HH: Okay, here's my objection. If there's a moral law, and there's a societal good, and one of these books is really bad for it, and one of these books generally support it, then you ought to, even as an agnostic, make a choice between that which is really horrific, a Hitlerian approach to, you know, a Nazi, Mein Kampf, don't read that one, that's horrible, versus the New Testament is pretty nice. I think…

MS: Yeah, I guess I would attest that the New Testament's better than the Old Testament. I guess I would agree. I think Jesus was a big step forward. I think the feminization of some of the morality in the book of Ruth toward the end of the Old Testament is a big improvement over the early books, so yeah, I guess I do evaluate.

HH: And where do you put the Koran in that? You haven't read it at all, it just doesn't matter?

MS: Oh, I've read it, of course since 9/11, I've read lots of parts of it that everybody quotes, which are all the, you know, the horrific parts. And that seems to me far beneath the Bible in terms of what we would consider moral values. But anyway…

HH: Do any of the books have a better grounding in natural science?

MS: No, I don't think so.

HH: Do any of the books have a better grounding in history?

MS: It depends on which books. I mean, parts of the Old Testament have some good grounding in history, and others don't.

HH: This is a transition. Greg Koukl, how is the historical evidence for the accounts of these various books?

GK: Well, it depends on which one you're talking about. Some of these books aren't history books. They're poetic books that are meant in poetic language, the Bhagavad

Gita, for example, to tell something about reality. I think the unique thing about the Judeo-Christian revelation is that principally, the theological story is told through history, so the history is really important. The big event of the Old Testament is the exodus, you know, and this was the salvation event where God intervened. The big event in the New Testament is similar to that, parallel to that, is the resurrection of Christ. Now obviously, we have a lot more access to information about the life of Jesus of Nazareth than we do about the exodus. In fact, there's a kind of a big hole there in terms of archaeology for that period of time. But there's not a big hole when it comes to the life of Christ. And the documentary evidence is quite extensive. And not just the primary source documentation for the life of Jesus, which we call Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which by the way, should not be simply dismissed because they were written by Christians. Historians don't dismiss them for that reason. But we have to look at these as historical documents. And when we do, we find a tremendous amount of powerful testimony from those documents about the person of Jesus, what He taught, and what He did, which also points to a literal time-history resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Now if that actually happened, that puts this worldview in a whole different category.

HH: Well, that's my transition, is to the person of Christ, because most of our audience is Christian. And a lot of this argument has been, as I've had with many of the new atheists, silly to believe in Jesus.

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HH: Mike Shermer, as I said at the end of last hour, last segment, is it silly to believe in the historical person of Jesus Christ? And is it silly to believe in the claims and the accounts of him as recorded in the New Testament.

MS: I don't like the word silly, because it trivializes a serious issue. I think it's an empirical claim on one level, whether Christ rose from the dead or not, but on the other hand, I think it's an article of faith. You can show all 13 million Jews in the world that evidence for the risen Christ, and eyewitnesses, and the rock was rolled away or whatever, and they almost universally, except for the small population of Jews For Jesus, reject the evidence. So I don't think it's ultimately provable. I do think it's an article of faith, like many other articles of faith of religion. I don't like the word silly at all. I think that trivializes it unnecessarily.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, a frustrating situation for atheists is that the vast majority of people in this country, the rank and file, don't believe in Darwinian evolution. But I wouldn't be free then to say well, this is just, evolution's obviously an article of faith, because look at all the people who look at the evidence that you provide so persuasively and don't believe it. This is an observation that leads to no conclusion about this issue at all.

HH: And so, and it's frustrating as well, because it seems to me central for agnostics, atheists, to answer the question about the empirical evidence, and whether it is of high quality…I had this conversation with Richard Dawkins. Dawkins likes to argue you know, I'm a Latin teacher, and I'm just arguing that Rome existed, and a lot of people are

arguing Rome didn't exist. And it's the same with evolution. And I challenged him, I asked him the historical evidence for the personhood of Jesus is overwhelming, isn't it?

MS: Yes.

HH: And so, is the proof…

MS: Well, I don't know about overwhelming. I think Jesus existed.

HH: Well, is it overwhelming? Or just a guess?

MS: I think there's good enough evidence for us to conclude that somebody named Jesus of Nazareth existed.

HH: And on the basis of what we know generally about historical text, isn't there pretty good, and perhaps even overwhelming evidence that the Gospels are reliable, historically tested accounts about what this person did?

MS: Well now, it's getting a little fuzzier, because of the inconsistency of the accounts. And you could say well, okay, eyewitnesses saw things slightly differently. Yeah, but there's some important differences between the four Gospels. And what about the other Gospels that are not in the canonical books, the gospel of Thomas, for example? And there's legitimate, theological research on these other books, and why can't those be concluded?

HH: One minute, Greg.

GK: Well, there is legitimate, theological research, and not only on Thomas, but a whole bunch of other pseudepigrapha that come afterwards. There are all kinds of literary documents that make claims to write about Jesus that we know, because of their dating, couldn't possibly have the eyewitness accounts of the information that the Matthew, Mark, Luke and John canonical Gospels have. So just because there are other things that claim to be gospels, it doesn't mean that they're contenders as source of historical information. And the scholars in the field make this distinction. Now Thomas is one of those few documents where they seem to take seriously, but our documents of Thomas are like 3rd Century, and looks to have been written in the 2nd Century. So why is it that the 1st Century documents of the Gospels don't get preeminence there as historical documents? They should.

HH: When we come back, the third hour is given over to do the anti-God people have to put up with the same rigorous defense of their beliefs as they ask the theists to put up with theirs. Stay tuned.

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HH: And I want to spend this hour talking really about the debate over the debate. And it's occurring at an unusual time, because just a couple of weeks ago surfaced one of the greatest scandals in the history of modern science, Climategate, in which incredibly unscientific behavior on the part of scientists has been revealed. The atheists have often in the past few years tried to position the debate as between reason and faith. But now we find the tactics that people of faith are often accused of, absolutely evident on the part of the behavior of scientists – data manipulation, witch hunts against scientists with

whom they disagreed with, a refusal to confront contrary evidence. And I took that, and I applied it to this debate over intelligent design, Michael Shermer, and I'm wondering whether or not the opponents of intelligent design have been using the same tactics that the Climategate scientists, who are now deeply scandalized, embarrassed and discredited, have been using for the last, obviously, we just learned about it. But have the proponents of the anti-God view been just as intellectually dishonest as the Climategate scientists?

MS: Well, on the Climategate thing, I think the smoking guns are not what I thought they would be. I have some sympathy for the global warming skeptics. I was once one, and could be persuaded again. I think that's just a data question there. But what I think it revealed was how political scientists are. They're very liberal and very tribal, and like everybody else, they circle the wagons when they think they're being attacked from outside. And I think that's what we saw. So to that extent, do atheists, have atheists done that? Yes, they have. They've circled the wagons, they feel like they're under siege. At time, I think particularly since 9/11 with the fear of Islamic terrorism, and then since the Bush administration pushing an Evangelical agenda into politics, way more than Bush Sr., ever did as a Methodist, and certainly more than Reagan ever did, I think that's what caused non-believers to feel like they needed to push back somewhat. And then you just get specific cultural phenomenon like Dawkins' book takes off, or Hitchens' book takes off, something like that. I mean, the book sales on those books are more than cumulative all the other books they've ever written, plus all of a bunch of other books, so I think you get a combination of those events there.

HH: Greg Koukl, first your response, then I have a follow up.

GK: Well yeah, I think that there is kind of a shell game and a muscling going on, and we see it in the field. And I think what people don't realize, and I didn't realize this until maybe six or seven years ago when this was explained to me, and when explained, I really saw this, that there are actually two definitions of science that are in play here, Hugh. One of them is a methodological definition, the scientific method. You know, follow certain methods, and you come up with the right results. Now if you don't follow that method, then that's called bad science, and you can't trust the results you come up with. But there's more going on here. It isn't just a methodology. There is also a philosophical definition. This philosophical definition is metaphysical materialism, or called naturalism. A metaphysical view is a total view of reality, and on this view, nothing exists but the molecules in motion. That's materialism. That's also part of the definition. So currently, in the state of science, in order to be doing science, good science, you have to be doing the right methodology, but you also have to come to the right kinds of conclusions. You have to come to conclusions that comport with naturalism and materialism. And if you don't, you're accused of doing religion instead of science. I just want people to see that there's a difference here, and lots of times in this discussion, this metaphysical issue trumps the methodology. Notice that a lot of times, the arguments aren't against ID proper, that is the evidence that they've offered. It's a dismissal by saying you're not doing science, you're doing religion. This isn't real scientists at work like we are, these are phonies. And

so it's a way of discrediting based on the kind of conclusions that they come up. Now this happens all the time, and you can see a bullying that's going on in the field, and a lot of people have identified this, Guillermo Gonzalez for example, a famous example from Iowa State University, denied tenure though very qualified. Francis Beckwith, for goodness sake, a philosopher, not a scientist, but the same kind of thing happened to him at Baylor before it got reversed, and a lot of other people. There's a political game going on here, and it seems to me that if the evidence for Darwinian evolution is so powerful, then why do you have to do these political moves that are driven not by the methodology, but largely by the metaphysics doing the magic? Why? And I think because the metaphysics are doing a large part of the work, and the method doesn't give the evidence that's necessary to convince the most people.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Of course, other fields of science don't deal with these issues, like why are Christian groups not up in arms about the Krebs cycle being taught in biochemistry classes and biology classes. Why not? I mean, if you're going to object to methodological naturalism, why pick on just one, particular little subfield?

GK: Because it doesn't have any ramifications for these other things.

MS: Yeah, of course. That's right.

GK: But it does…

MS: Because certain fields of science do bump up against political and religious implications.

GK: But it's not just that, Michael. It has to do with the evidence in question. Nobody has, even from my side of things, has any difficulty with the Krebs cycle, because methodological naturalism is the thing that governs day to day science.

HH: Why don't you explain the Krebs cycle for our audience.

MS: Oh, it's just a…

GK: I can, but he…

HH: I know, but don't use terms like that for the audience.

MS: It's just a biochemical process in cells of using energy.

GK: Yeah. And so at this point, to finish my thought, though…

MS: Yeah.

GK: What this points out is that these kinds of issues are not the kind of thing that affect day to day science. But when it comes to the issue of origins, then it's something entirely different. You have a different category that you're talking about, and this is where the muscling has been done, and that's why the complaints have been raised, muscling that is illegitimate considering what's at stake.

MS: Well, muscling on both sides. I mean, it's political on both sides, so the left and the right both push back against each other, all the way back to the Catholic Church and Galileo.

GK: Well, okay, I'm glad…

MS: I mean, that tension has always been there. Let's not…

GK: Great. And it was wrong with Galileo, and it should be wrong now. That's my point. If it was wrong then, and with the monkey trial and everything, now everything is in reverse, and I think this is what Hugh was getting at. If the power plays were wrong in the past, then they should be wrong now, and why don't we just let everybody lay their cards on the table and play fair, and then let the best idea win?

MS: I agree. So just put it out there. Like the Climategate? Yeah, let's get that original data. I agree. Sure. Now let me just back up for a second on an example not related to religion, but on another field that I deal with, extra sensory perception. Can we actually read the minds of other people? Okay, setting aside the TV psychics and all that silly stuff, there are some scientists who actually believe that mind exists separate from brain, and that we can connect to each other, and there's a famous physicist named Roger Penrose, who has this theory about that quantum mechanics explains how when neurons fire, the collapse of the wave function inside the atoms, inside the nerves, fire in a sequence that my cells can read your cells. They're actually communicating, somehow, across a distance, all right? I don't happen to think that's true, but let's say it turned out to be true, and that now we have a naturalistic explanation for extra sensory perception. Well, that would no longer be the paranormal, would it? Now it would be quantum neuroscience, or neurophysics, or something like that. So at some point, you need some kind of a natural explanation for the phenomenon in question that we can test. So for example, when somebody, when cosmologists talk about well, the galaxies are structured in this odd way where there must be more matter out there, we'll call it dark energy or dark matter, they don't actually mean that as an explanation. It isn't an explanation. It's just a word filler until we can figure out what's going on. So at some point, it's not that no one's allowing you to introduce the supernatural, it's just that no different than calling it ESP, that doesn't explain it. We need some kind of a mechanism that causes it.

GK: Okay, to be fair, Michael, I was at the debate one week ago that you did with Professor Prothero and Steve Meyer, and the others from the ID thing. And you started out your presentation by saying this is all about religion, it's not about science. That's the first thing you said. And then you referred to the other guys as, you and your partner, as 'those guys,' and we are doing real science, and they're not. In fact, Steve Meyer raised a complaint at the personal attack there, because both of them have advanced degrees in their fields. Now I mean, this is an example of the kind of thing that I'm talking about. It's like, you didn't say to these guys well, you're real scientists, we're real scientists, but really, the facts matter, so let's look at the facts. There are all of these kind of subtle and sometimes not so subtle invectives, or shout across there. Now I've been in debates before. I know how that works. I'm just simply saying that your kind of tone of innocence here, it strikes me as disingenuous, because this is a game that you guys play all the time when in public circumstances. And sometimes, it's not just invectives, it's actually muscling, we won't publish your paper, we won't let people know about it, we're going to

criticize you in front of all these people and try to discredit you.

HH: A response coming back from Michael Shermer when we return.

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HH: Michael Shermer, I was not at this debate. I have no idea what Greg just referenced. So I want to give you a chance to go back to what he was just talking about. Did you attack Steven Meyer's scientific credentials?

MS: Actually, I didn't. My partner did. Well, you know…

HH: Did you correct your partner at that point?

MS: Well…

GK: Steven Meyer corrected him, actually, is what happened.

MS: Yeah, I mean, this is a part of the format of debate, right? I mean, it's a contest. It's competitive. You're supposed to, you know, you're supposed to come out…like a lawyer, you're supposed to defend your position. You're not supposed to…if it's a panel discussion, that's different than a debate. This was a debate. I actually do think that it's perfectly fine for Steven Meyer to publish books like his new book on DNA, and put forth testable hypotheses. Okay, at least now we're getting somewhere, where if you give us something we can take back to the lab and test, then we're doing science. If it's just I infer that there's a designer behind this, okay, that's nice, but what am I supposed to do with that? So the analogy I made is that let's say it turns out life did not originate on Earth, that it was seeded here either through meteorites or comets, or maybe even extra-terrestrials brought it here and seeded it, and they are from the Planet Vega, a planet around the Star Vega. Let's say something like that.

HH: A dysfunctional GM car, okay.

MS: Yeah, exactly, yeah. Right. Good, we needed some humor there. And…but and let's say we found a little pod out in Blythe or something in the desert with the blueprints of how they made DNA. Well, that would be interesting, but we'd still want to know well, where did the Vegans come from? I mean, who made those guys? Did they evolve on this planet? Or were they seeded there from someplace else? Or did God do it? Or…in other words, at some point, we need some natural explanation for where life came from. And if you take this back far enough, you will end up at an infinite regress. Well, God, outside of space and time, came into our space and time, stirred the particles, and created life. Okay, but where did, if not God, the intelligent designer, where did He come from? Did he evolve? Or is he a standalone, the last causal link? And there, we bump up against the great unknown. I don't see how that's resolvable.

GK: I've got so much to say about this, I'm not sure where to begin. Let me just start with the power play. At that debate, Richard Sternberg was the other I.D. guy there, and Richard Sternberg used to be with the Smithsonian. But he had the audacity of publishing a paper by Steven Meyer in a journal, a peer review journal that was associated with the Smithsonian, and he got bounced. This is the kind of thing that I'm talking about.

MS: You know, I just called them. He's still there. At least, he's still on their list.

GK: Okay, well, the firestorm…

MS: I don't think he got bounced.

GK: …surrounding that, you don't…okay, forget the bounce thing. The firestorm surrounding it you don't deny?

MS: Yes, of course. We're all emotional, yeah. Right.

GK: Well, it goes beyond that. And so the point to bringing up the debate, I understand that there is these things you do in debates, but this in the debate was the microcosm of the bigger issue, and that's why I pointed that out. Now with regards to, you know, life beginning on other planets, and then who designed the Designer and that kind of thing, it's a very odd question. And virtually all the guys on Mike's side of this debate ask the same question – who created God, or some variation of that. And what's curious is that Mike and none of these other guys believe that God was created, because they don't believe in God. I don't believe that God was created, because I think that God is eternal. So nobody in the discussion believes that God was created or designed. So why does the question come up that who designed the Designer, or who created God? Frankly, it's a distraction. It's a distraction from the evidence in front of us, for intelligent design. If I'm walking down the beach as we could here in Newport, Hugh, and I see a footprint in the sand, a shoeprint in the sand, I don't need to know who the manufacturer of the shoe is before I can properly conclude from the evidence that a shoe made the print. The same thing is true here. We're focusing on one issue, and that is whether the evidence suggests an intelligent designer. If we come to the conclusion that that's the case, much like forensic pathology, there's a dead man with five holes in his chest from bullets, gee, it doesn't look like natural causes, now let's go search for the person who did it. That's the next step. But we can't say, I think, vacuous challenges like who created God when none, all of these guys know that nothing about our view requires God's creation. They say this to, I think, distract from the main issue, the evidence for design itself, which is compelling, Hugh.

MS: Oh, I don't say it as a distraction. I think it's a really interesting question. Where did the universe come from in the first place. And if there were multiple universes, you still have the same problem – where did those come from.

GK: I agree. I agree.

MS: And I do think, Greg, at some point, we do bump up against limitations of our knowledge, of our language…

GK: Right.

MS: …of what our brains are capable of solving. And there is a leap of faith for all of us. You either decide to believe, or you decide not to believe. And I don't think it's ultimately provable one way or the other. Now on the other question positing a designer from the evidence of design, I think there is an inference there in which we have vast experience of people shooting each other, and we know what that is. And so you come across somebody with five bullet holes, okay, there's a natural inference there based on experience. And we've seen people make tennis shoes, so we know that they're made

when we see the print. Okay, there's a natural inference there. But we've never seen any designer design DNA. We just have the product, the artifact, from which we infer what? And there, it isn't the same as an artifact that's made by us.

HH: All right. Now gentlemen, I want to switch for the last three segments of the show leading into a larger question about belief in God generally. Is it good or bad for people? And regardless of whether it's true, or the true true, to use Francis Schaeffer, but is it good or bad? Because that leads me to the second question, are the new atheists involved in an evil project or a good project? Because these are both obvious question. So Greg, you want to take a first pass?

GK: Yeah, I'll take a shot at it, and again, I want to go back to my earliest comment when we started talking about morality. It depends on what you mean by good. And I'm just weighing in now to say that when you're using the word good, I'm taking this as good in the objective sense.

HH: Yes.

GK: Do objective goods, oughts that we should do and whatever, come to pass better when there is belief in God? There's a famous story of a Hassidic Jew that was standing in front of a German machine gun having just dug his own grave. And he said just before he was gunned down, he said God is watching. Now one thing that the German officer didn't believe at that point was that God was watching. Nor did Mao, nor did Lenin, nor did Stalin, nor did many other people who did great atrocities, did they believe that God was watching. As David Berlinski has pointed out, that's actually the definition of secularism. God is not watching. Now I don't think it takes, you know, a lot of deep thinking to realize, and Michael might call this a shallow motivation regardless, to realize that if people really believe that God is watching, their behavior is going to be better on balance than if they really believe that God is not watching.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Well, I do think that religion and belief in God is good when it does good, and evil when it does evil. And we can make a laundry list of goods and evils that religion does. You have Hitchens' book here, and he's got a laundry list in there of all the evils.

GK: And we agree on that, by the way, Michael.

MS: And you could take David Brooks' book, Who Really Cares, and he documents how Republicans and conservatives and religious people give more money and more time, and donate more blood and so on then securalists, atheists, nonbelievers, and Democrats. So I would say that's great. I mean, I sponsor a child through World Vision, because I think they do the job. They put the boots on the ground, and they make things happen. And religion is really good for that. And so I think it's too simple to say is religion good or evil. I mean, come on, it's a big, complex, social, historical force that does lots of good things, and lots of bad things.

HH: When we come back, I'll follow up, because I don't think it's too simple. I think it's actually the question about whether or not the anti-God people are engaged in evil if

they're destroying belief in God.

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HH: So Michael, I come back to this. You said yeah, religion's done a lot of good and a lot of bad, but generally speaking, and the utilitarian view, is belief in God good for the planet? And if it is good for the planet, have the anti-God people been involved in an evil project?

MS: I don't think they have been involved in an evil project. I think what it…it makes it okay to not believe in God. Remember, atheism isn't a thing. There's no, like, central set of tenets that we adhere to or believe in, or anything like that as you would a Republican or conservative, or something like that, or a Christian or a Jew or whatever. We don't have anything like that, because there is nothing. It's just simply we just don't believe. Now because we're social creatures, we like to feel like we belong to a family, an extended family, a group of friends, a bowling league, social capital, this is called. Everybody likes to feel like they belong. Because religion is so dominant in America, particularly the Christian religion, those of us who are either not Christian or not believers, we feel a little alienated, a little lonely, and a little left out. And we'd like to have our own group. So in part, what the new atheist movement is tapping into is that social feeling of wanting to belong to a group. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think it's good that there are people out there, groups out there that make that okay.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, your question was not whether religion does good, but whether belief in God does good, if I recall it correctly.

HH: Yup.

GK: And so I want to return specifically to that. The atheists do have a code. It's not very complicated. It's just that as Michael just put it, there is nothing. So what is the moral consequence on a people if they believe there is nothing? That's really the question. The 20th Century, which we just left, was the bloodiest century in the history of the world. And just a casual adding up of the numbers shows over 100 million that were dead at the hands of just three people – Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Tse Tung. Now these people had a particular ideology at which atheism was its foundation. Because they didn't believe in God, and there is a natural kinship here between worldviews and the actions that follow them, because they didn't believe in God, it was the state that was the greater power. And if the state is the greatest power, and they were the state, then they had no one to answer to. And consequently, they were able to do these things that everyone views as an atrocity. Now this, I think, is logical. This follows from that worldview. I'm not saying that atheists are all evil like that. They're not. Mike is a fine guy. What I'm saying is that given the atheistic worldview, you are allowed to do those kinds of things, because there is no transcendent rule that's keeping you from doing otherwise.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Nobody kills or dies in the name of atheism, because there's nothing to kill or die for.

People kill and die for causes, for ideologies, for beliefs. And communism is a faux religion. It is exactly like a religion, a set of tenets that people adhere to, and then we're going to go out and change people's minds, or impose our views on them and so on. That's what social groups do, whether they're political, ideological, economic, religious, whatever. And that's what communism is. And it's nothing more than that. Nobody killed in the name of that. In any case, Hitler's not a good example, because as we've seen now…

GK: I didn't use him.

MS: …with the indictment of the Catholic Church, they were very much involved in the whole Nazi process there…

HH: That's…time out, Michael. That's simply not true, but let's not go there. I would want to have an expert in the Vatican's many, many interventions to save lives, and then we'd have a long conversation…

MS: Oh, of course they did. Yes, yes.

HH: Let's just not throw it out there. Let's just not throw it out there.

GK: The real issue here is not whether people did it in the name of atheism or not. But it has to do with the kinship of behaviors to worldviews. Whether people are thinking of this as a rationale, gee, I'm an atheist, so I can go kill people, is not the issue. The issue is how is it that people actually live out the deep beliefs that they have about the world? And it seems obvious that when people have believed that there's nothing else but us and our rules, what we make, for whatever reasons we do, and we answer to no one, and there isn't going to be any final justice or final judgment or final reckoning, well, it seems very clear to see how this is going to have a deleterious effect on behaviors.

MS: Yeah, but if Torquemada had gas chambers, wow, what would the numbers have been in the Inquisition? I mean, in the name of God, Torquemada…

GK: So you're saying there is no relationship between the worldviews?

MS: Well, you brought up the numbers.

GK: Right.

MS: It isn't numbers that's important. It's what your capable of doing. And religious beliefs and political ideologies are no different as belief systems driving behavior that's moral or immoral. People kill in the name of religion just as much as they do in the name of a political ideology.

GK: This is false, just quantifiably, first of all.

MS: No, I disagree.

GK: But secondly, there is the idea…

MS: Not by the numbers.

GK: The idea is what's important. People just have to reflect in the idea. Which one is a better encourager to good behavior, that God exists. That was your question.

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HH: It seems that we're onto something very important here, and Michael, I sense defensiveness on your part, so I'm going to let you go first. If, in fact, the new atheists launch a series of responses that lead people to not believe in God, and those people in not believing in God act a certain way, that's causation. That's responsibility. Ought the new atheists ought to own their responsibility? If they kill God, ought they not to own the results of killing God?

MS: First of all, I don't think that's going to happen. It didn't happen at the turn of the 20th Century.

HH: Didn't ask that question, though.

MS: Yeah, yeah, I know. Sure, okay, I'll stand up and be responsible. Why not?

HH: Greg Koukl, have they been? It's a flippant response. That's okay. But…

GK: Yeah, well…

MS: No, it's a true response. Yes…

GK: What I was…okay, great. So what do we take away from that?

HH: Right.

GK: Listen, I'm arguing if there is no God, then everything is permitted. There is no objective morality.

MS: I don't agree with that. Come on.

GK: I understand that. I understand you don't, but you have ground objective morality…

MS: Yes, you can. We're back to where we began.

GK: Your morality is subjective.

MS: No, it's not.

GK: It's something that's in the subject. It's in the genes…

MS: That's objective.

GK: And it creates…yes, okay. Well, it is objective, but it's not objective in the way that I'm talking about it. It's objectively in the subject, and ethicists have made this distinction for a long time between objective and subjective. I'm not going to go there again. Let me just finish the equation here. If there is no God, then everything is permitted. If the new atheists are right, then there is no God. Therefore, if the new atheists are right, then everything is permitted. Now I think that follows. And I think this, then, creates a problem. Again, I don't think that all of the atheists are bad people in everything that they do. They're just as bad as the rest of us religious people. Let's face it. The question has to do with the impact of worldviews, and that is really what's in play here.

HH: I do agree, Michael, that's where I'm coming back down to. I take responsibility for it if in fact the people who allowed and facilitated the rise of the atheist monsters of the 20th Century were around today, they would deny responsibility for them, even though they facilitated it with the collapse of the orders that previously held back the monsters. It seems to me now that Dawkins, et cetera, your rhetoric is much milder than Dawkins, but that they were about unleashing the beast again, because the beast is eager. The

most eager thing in the world for the Devil, the Christians have always said, is not to be believed in. And you guys are doing a good job.

MS: If they, if Dawkins and Hitchens and so on were promoting some kind of a political agenda hooked to the atheism, whereby you're supposed to go out and do this or do that, then yes, I'd think you have a point, and I'd be concerned about it. That is, is it leading to greater liberty, or greater tyranny? That's the question, liberty and tyranny, is at stake in terms of the boots on the ground, actual change.

HH: Greg Koukl, if you take down a dam when it's not raining, and nothing happens for give years, ten years, fifteen years, twenty years, and then the hundred year flood comes, which happens every hundred years, and you destroy everything in front of it…

GK: Then you're in trouble. Right.

HH: You're responsible.

GK: Well, you made the point. And actually, Sam Harris is very explicit about this in his book. He said that there are some beliefs that are so dangerous, and he's talking about theism here, that it's justified to even kill people for that belief. Now two things are in play here. Sam Harris acknowledges the relationship between worldviews. You believe certain things that have certain consequences, which I think is true and that's what I'm arguing, and then he exemplifies it himself with the danger of atheism. He thinks that they, atheists, not all believe this, and certainly Michael doesn't, he is not going to get involved in this, but he seems to suggest that some people should be killed for their beliefs. And whether Dawkins has a political agenda or not is irrelevant. If he is laying the foundation that justifies a certain political agenda, then the dominoes are going to fall. It's a logical slippery slope, and it's one to be concerned about.

MS: You see, I place at the feet of the monstrous evil of the 20th Century Marxism, Leninism. If Marx and Lenin just simply said we're atheists, and they wrote atheist books, nothing would have happened. It's that they hooked it to something else, which is the confiscation of private property, the confiscation of individual liberties, the ownership of productivity. That's what destroyed those societies and led to the monstrous problems.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Well yeah, I agree with that as far as it goes, except to say that there was something else that was in place that allowed them to do such a thing, and that there was a, again, a kinship between the belief system and the results of that belief system, the particular things. Now could religious people have done that? Yes, but it's a lot harder to hang the behavior of Christians who say they're Christians that's evil, on Jesus Himself, because Jesus didn't teach that kind of thing. Instead, you have Christians that are acting contrary to Jesus' own behavior and teaching. In this case, you have behaviors that are fully consistent with an atheistic worldview.

MS: But you left out the first World War, which was Christian nations fighting Christian nations – Germany and France and England were all Christian nations. They all believed God was on their side. And they imposed just as much destruction as happened in World

War II. They just didn't have any…

HH: I actually don't believe any of them believed God were on their side when they went into that war. I know the history of World War I fairly well. They did not march to war on the basis…

MS: Well, but you would call them Christian nations.

HH: But they did not, then went to war on the basis of economics…

MS: Well, okay…

GK: But even if they did, it's not the point.

HH: It had nothing to do with God.

MS: Okay, I would agree.

GK: The point is what is it that, does the worldview that they have justify what they did? And now we're back to Jesus again, which they can't put it on Jesus, but the atheists can put it on atheism.

HH: Very quickly, this segment and last, of the various world religions, which has contributed the most to human progress in the alleviation of suffering? It's an objective question. It's not a question about which is correct or which is true. Just if you look through of all the world religions, which has contributed the most to human progress and the alleviation of suffering? Michael Shermer, do you have an answer to that?

MS: I'd say probably Christianity.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, this is well documented. Under The Influence, for example, is one of the books that has been written to show this is the case.

MS: Oh, that's a Judeo-Christian…

HH: Does that necessarily tell us anything about the truth claims of the religion, Greg Koukl?

GK: Well, when you look at the particular truth claims, I think it does. These things were done in a way that were consistent with the Christian worldview, and seem to resonate with the other people who didn't share their worldview as something that's good. This is why going back to worldview perspective is so valuable. I think these are outliving of a worldview that deeply resonates with our deepest intuitions about the way the world actually is.

MS: I'm in favor of any ideology that gives more people more freedom and liberty and individual power, whether that's religious or nonreligious.

HH: We'll be back. I'm going to give a minute to each of my guests to wrap this up. Don't go anywhere, America.

– – – –

HH: I want to thank Michael Shermer of Skeptic Society, http://www.skeptic.com, and Greg Koukl of Stand To Reason, http://www.str.org for their time and their patience. Greg

Koukl, a minute, fifteen for you.

GK: Yeah, I started out talking about worldviews. And as a man trying to make sense of my world and finding a worldview that seems to fit reality as I experience it. I think atheism is way too austere for me, Hugh. It commits me to too many counterintuitive things – everything comes from nothing, like comes from nonlife, consciousness comes from matter, morality comes from a reorganization of molecules. None of this seems to make sense to me. There is another alternative that seems to make a lot more sense, that a big bang needs a big banger, that a moral law comes from a moral lawgiver, that design comes from a designer. These notions are captured well, I think, in the Biblical account of life. And the person of Jesus, especially, exemplifying these notions, and then giving us a way to live that makes sense. And this is why I'm a Christian and not an atheist. I think it makes the best sense of the world as we know it.

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: I'm an atheist, because I don't believe in God, and there's nothing to follow from that. I think we have an absolute moral standard, we have objective moral truths, we all know what they are, we listen to our small inner voice within that comes from our evolutionary heritage as a social primate species, in which we care deeply about our fellow group members. We have empathy and sympathy, and that's where the moral emotions come from. In terms of religion, I think religion is good when it does good, it's bad when it does bad. In general, I'm in favor of anything that leads to greater freedom, greater liberty, greater autonomy for more people in more places. And that has been the trend for the last five hundred years, that I attribute to the general secular idea, from the Enlightenment, that people have value in and of themselves, and I think religion has fostered, after the fact, sort of just slightly behind the wave, reinforcing those good, human values, and attenuating the bad ones. And that's why they've discarded so many of the Old Testament values that we no longer adhere to. So I think that's the long term trend, and I think we should continue to count people, more and more people as part of our fellow in-groups, and I think free trade and travel and the internet is the best way to encourage that.

HH: Thank you, Michael Shermer of Skeptic Magazine, http://www.skeptic.org, Greg Koukl of Stand To Reason, http://www.str.org. Once again, all their books I've been talking about are linked at Hughhewitt.com. I want to thank Adam and Generalissimo for all their work in producing today.

End of interview.

Kenosha teachers vote to de-certify their teacher union, 63 – 37

September 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Competitive Enterprise Institute reports.

Excerpt:

> Today, teachers in Kenosha, Wis., voted to decertify their union, the Kenosha Education Association, by a margin of nearly two to one. Only 37 percent of the teachers opted to retain the union in an election made possible by the labor reforms enacted under Gov. Scott Walker (R). The result goes to show that when workers have a choice on whether to join a union instead of being forced into one by law, they often choose to vote down the union.
>
> Competitive Enterprise Institute labor policy analyst **Matt Patterson** said regarding the vote in Kenosha:
>
> "Gov. Walker's bold and effective reforms have loosened the grip of unions on Wisconsin's public purse, to the benefit of taxpayers and to the detriment of Big Labor bosses. The news today proves what unions have long feared – that when workers are actually given a free and fair choice, they will often choose opt out of union membership altogether.
>
> "The public at large—and an increasing number of union members—have become wise to the fact labor unions stifle innovation and burden governments and businesses with unsustainable costs and regulations."

What that means is that the union not only does not get automatic contributions from teachers, but that the the school district cannot even withhold funds from teacher pay checks. Teachers will have to come to some sort of arrangement with the union to give them money on their own, if they want to.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel added some more details.

Excerpt:

> Christina Brey, speaking for the Wisconsin Education Association Council, downplayed recertification, calling it just another hoop for local unions to jump through.
>
> Unions can exist without certification, but they cannot bargain for limited base-wage increases with the district. And there are fees involved with chasing recertification.
>
> "It seems like the majority of our affiliates in the state aren't seeking recertification, so I don't think the KEA is an outlier or unique in this," Brey said.
>
> She added that certification gives the union scant power over a limited number of

> issues they'd like a voice in.
>
> Sheronda Glass, the director of business services in Kenosha, said it's a new experience for the district to be under Act 10.
>
> She said that, without the union being certified, the district is not obligated to even sit down and hear the concerns of the union over issues such as base wages and working conditions, a clause known as "meet and confer orders."
>
> Also, she said the district can no longer hold wages for union dues if the union is not certified.
>
> Employees would have to pursue a different avenue if they want their wages withheld, she said.
>
> "We've heard all kinds of stories about what has happened in other districts that came under Act 10 and had no teachers' contract," Glass said. "It's interesting now that we're in it."

That comment "It seems like the majority of our affiliates in the state aren't seeking recertification" is good news.

Related posts

- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- What is a "right-to-work" law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues
- Wisconsin Republicans order police to take AWOL Democrats into custody
- Democrat lawmakers flee state to avoid voting on spending cuts

Images of unborn babies developing in the womb

September 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post from Life News has ten excellent pictures of life inside the womb.

Here's my favorite from 10 weeks:

Unborn Baby – 10 weeks old
This is a first trimester baby!

I decided to go hunting to see what is developed at this time, and found this list:

> - From this week until birth, the developing organism is called a fetus.
> - The fetus is now the size of a small strawberry.
> - The feet are 2mm long (one tenth of an inch).
> - The neck is beginning to take shape.
> - The body muscles are almost developed. Baby has begun movement.
> - While still too small for you to feel, your little one is wriggling and shifting.
> - The jaws are in place. The mouth cavity and the nose are joined.
> - The ears and nose can now be seen clearly.
> - Fingerprints are already evident in the skin.
> - Nipples and hair follicles begin to form.
>
> The unborn baby is now called a fetus. Though the fetus is constantly moving, you will not be able to actually feel fetal movement for several more weeks. All of the organs, muscles, and nerves are in place and beginning to function. As the hands and feet develop fingers and toes, they have lost their paddle like look.

> The touch pads on the fingers form and already have fingerprints.
>
> During this week of pregnancy the crown to rump length of the fetus is 0.9 inch to 1.2 inches (22 to 30mm), weight 0.07 ounce (2gm). They are now on the way to forming their testicles or ovaries, getting ready for the next generation. Until the ninth week of fetus development, the fetal reproductive apparatus is the same one for the both sexes. The head is still large and curves into chest.
>
> Each week your uterus grows larger with the baby growing inside it. You may begin to see your waistline growing thicker by this time. A pelvic exam will detect that your uterus has grown from it's normal, size of your fist, to a little bigger than a grapefruit.

Fascinating!

North Korea reactivates nuclear reactor that was closed in 2007 deal

September 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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CNS News reports on a disturbing story.

Excerpt:

> While the international community has been focused on the crises in Syria and Egypt, North Korea evidently has been quietly preparing to resume operations at a nuclear reactor which it agreed under an international deal eight years ago to shut down, before warning amid heightened tensions last April that it would restart.
>
> Commercial satellite images captured in late August show columns of steam rising from a building alongside the five-megawatt plutonium-based reactor at Yongbyon, prompting experts at the U.S.-Korea Institute at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies to say it will likely be operational shortly.
>
> "The white coloration and volume are consistent with steam being vented because the electrical generating system is about to come online, indicating that the reactor is in or nearing operation," said analysts Nick Hansen and Jeffrey Lewis.
>
> They said the reactor is capable of producing six kilograms of plutonium a year, which the North Korean regime can use "to slowly increase the size of its nuclear weapons stockpile."
>
> In a separate analysis, the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) noted in addition to the reactor developments that the North Koreans has also recently expanded a building housing a centrifuge plant for uranium-enrichment.
>
> Pyongyang has said this is to obtain low-enriched uranium to fuel a separate light-water reactor under construction at the complex, although one of many unknowns in the North Korean program is whether it has also produced weapons-grade uranium, and if so, how much.
>
> The Yongbyon complex, some 60 miles north of Pyongyang, houses both the five-megawatt, graphite-moderated reactor and an associated reprocessing plant and nuclear fuel rod fabrication facility.
>
> Under an agreement at China-hosted at "six-party" talks, first hammered together in Sept. 2005 and then formalized in Feb. 2007, North Korea pledged to shut the facilities in exchange for economic and diplomatic concessions. Among them, the Bush administration agreed to unfreeze $25 million in North Korean funds, frozen in its account at a Macao-based bank.
>
> In July 2007 the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed that the

> Yongbyon shutdown was complete, and in 2008 the main cooling tower at the site was demolished in a dramatic supposed symbol of Pyongyang's commitment to the denuclearization deal.
>
> But after that the six-party talks – involving the U.S., the two Koreas, China, Japan and Russia – ran into more difficulties. In late 2008 they stalled amid disagreements over how to verify North Korean compliance with its commitments, and the talks have not reconvened since.
>
> Pyongyang tested a nuclear device for a second time in 2009, and again early this year.
>
> Last April, it announced plans to restart the Yongbyon reactor. It also vowed never to abandon its nuclear capability for political or economic benefits, and reiterated demands that the international community accept it as a nuclear weapons power.

Has our performance in Syria been a trigger for their decision?

> **Heritage Foundation scholar Bruce Klingner in an analysis Thursday said Pyongyang was likely encouraged by the Obama administration's policy on Syria and its chemical weapons use – "a dizzying array of contradictory U.S. statements, crossed redlines, and reticence to fulfill declarations of intent."**
>
> **"To the degree that North Korea can penetrate this confusing political morass, the regime is probably heartened by signs of a declining American willingness to intervene overseas even when confronted by evidence of the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)," he wrote.**
>
> **"Pyongyang will conclude that President Obama's bold rhetoric, including that directed against North Korea, was unlikely to be backed with significant military action," said Klingner, a senior research fellow for Northeast Asia at Heritage's Asian Studies Center.**
>
> **"The regime will incorporate this perceived American passivity into its decision-making in future confrontations with Washington and Seoul."**

The Heritage Foundation is against a strike, so I think what they are saying is that you don't make threats unless you intend to carry them out. If you say there's a red line, then don't follow up on that threat, you look weak. And when you look weak, bullies are emboldened to be aggressive. That's the way the world is.

Russia to supply Iran with state-of-the-art surface-to-air missile systems

September 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Jerusalem Post.

Excerpt:

> Russian President Vladimir Putin has approved the transfer of S-300 anti-aircraft missiles to Iran, according to the prestigious Russian daily newspaper Kommersant.
>
> The newspaper reported on Wednesday that the Russian government will revive the transfer three years after it canceled the original transaction.
>
> According to Kommersant, the Kremlin agreed to Tehran's request to complete the transaction, which will net the Russian treasury $800 million.
>
> In addition to the missile deal, Russia has also agreed to construct another nuclear reactor in Bushehr. According to the Kommersant report, the two sides are expected to finalize the details of the deal this coming Friday, when Putin is expected to meet his Iranian counterpart, Hassan Rouhani, in the central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan.
>
> […]The Russian-manufactured anti-aircraft batteries have been a source of concern to Israeli officials who fear that their enemies' possession of them could have adverse strategic consequences.

The article reports the range of the surface-to-air missile system as 200 km.

The missiles can be used to shoot down incoming missiles or strike aircraft. It would probably make any Israeli strike on Iranian nuclear weapons facilities much more dangerous. If the system is supposed to come online in 2016 then that would mean that the Israelis would have to strike before then.

I blogged before about how missile systems sold to Iran made their way to Syria and then to Hezbollah, where they were used to sink an Israeli ship. Could that happen with these S-300 SAMs?

Pro-gay web site “The Advocate” tells real story of the Matthew Shepard murder

September 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A fascinating article the radically pro-gay The Advocate.

Excerpt:

> What if nearly everything you thought you knew about Matthew Shepard’s murder was wrong? What if our most fiercely held convictions about the circumstances of that fatal night of October 6, 1998, have obscured other, more critical, aspects of the case? How do people sold on one version of history react to being told that facts are slippery — that thinking of Shepard’s murder as a hate crime does not mean it was a hate crime? And how does it color our understanding of such a crime if the perpetrator and victim not only knew each other but also had sex together, bought drugs from one another, and partied together?
>
> None of this is idle speculation; it’s the fruit of years of dogged investigation by journalist Stephen Jimenez, himself gay. In the course of his reporting, Jimenez interviewed over 100 subjects, including friends of Shepard and of his convicted killers, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, as well as the killers themselves (though by the book’s end you may have more questions than answers about the extent of Henderson’s complicity). In the process, he amassed enough anecdotal evidence to build a persuasive case that Shepard’s sexuality was, if not incidental, certainly less central than popular consensus has lead us to believe.

And here are the details:

> But in what circumstances does someone slam a seven-inch gun barrel into their victim’s head so violently as to crush his brain stem? That’s not just flipping out, that’s psychotic — literally psychotic, to anyone familiar with the long-term effects of methamphetamine. In court, both the prosecutor and the plaintiffs had compelling reasons to ignore this thread, but for Jimenez it is the central context for understanding not only the brutality of the crime but the milieu in which both Shepard and McKinney lived and operated.
>
> By several accounts, McKinney had been on a meth bender for five days prior to the murder, and spent much of October 6 trying to find more drugs. By the evening he was so wound up that he attacked three other men in addition to Shepard. Even Cal Rerucha, the prosecutor who had pushed for the death sentence for McKinney and Henderson, would later concede on ABC’s *20/20* that “it was a murder that was driven by drugs.”
> No one was talking much about meth abuse in 1998, though it was rapidly establishing itself in small-town America, as well as in metropolitan gay clubs,

where it would leave a catastrophic legacy. In Wyoming in the late 1990s, eighth graders were using meth at a higher rate than 12th graders nationwide. It's hardly surprising to learn from Jimenez that Shepard was also a routine drug user, and — according to some of his friends — an experienced dealer. (Although there is no real evidence for supposing that Shepard was using drugs himself on the night of his murder).

Despite the many interviews, Jimenez does not entirely resolve the true nature of McKinney's relationship to Shepard, partly because of his unreliable chief witness. McKinney presents himself as a "straight hustler" turning tricks for money or drugs, but others characterize him as bisexual. A former lover of Shepard's confirms that Shepard and McKinney had sex while doing drugs in the back of a limo owned by a shady Laramie figure, Doc O'Connor. Another subject, Elaine Baker, tells Jimenez that Shepard and McKinney were friends who had been in sexual threesome with O'Connor. A manager of a gay bar in Denver recalls seeing photos of McKinney and Henderson in the papers and recognizing them as patrons of his bar. He recounts his shock at realizing "these guys who killed that kid came from inside our own community."

Not everyone is interested in hearing these alternative theories.
When *20/20* engaged Jimenez to work on a segment revisiting the case in 2004, GLAAD bridled at what the organization saw as an attempt to undermine the notion that anti-gay bias was a factor; Moises Kaufman, the director and co-writer of *The Laramie Project,* denounced it as "terrible journalism," though the segment went on to win an award from the Writers Guild of America for best news analysis of the year.

There are valuable reasons for telling certain stories in a certain way at pivotal times, but that doesn't mean we have to hold on to them once they've outlived their usefulness. In his book, *Flagrant Conduct,* Dale Carpenter, a professor at the University of Minnesota Law School, similarly unpicks the notorious case of *Lawrence v. Texas,* in which the arrest of two men for having sex in their own bedroom became a vehicle for affirming the right of gay couples to have consensual sex in private. Except that the two men were not having sex, and were not even a couple. Yet this non-story, carefully edited and taken all the way to the Supreme Court, changed America.

In different ways, the Shepard story we've come to embrace was just as necessary for shaping the history of gay rights as *Lawrence v. Texas;* it galvanized a generation of LGBT youth and stung lawmakers into action. President Obama, who signed the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, named for Shepard and James Byrd Jr., into law on October 28, 2009, credited Judy Shepard for making him "passionate" about LGBT equality.

I think that it's good that The Advocate posted this correction to the story. I admire them for being willing to tell the truth about the story. However, note that the author is not sorry that a fake version of the case was used to push the gay agenda forward. Now what if the same willingness to twist the truth was shared by the gay activists who are redefining the issues in the culture as a whole? What if the people who are pushing the gay agenda in schools, in the media, in the workplace, and elsewhere, had the same willingness to twist the truth in order to advance their cause?

It's also helpful to understand the media bias angle of this story. Are they really interested in telling the truth? Or is there something else going on there? How much of a story was the attack on the Family Research Council building by a gun-wielding gay activist compared to the Matthew Shepard story? How much of a story is the persecution of Christians in the Middle East compared to the Matthew Shepard story? How much of a story is the loss of basic human rights like free speech and religious liberty here at home when compared to the Matthew Shepard story?

UPDATE: Mysterious Jack sends me this link from Breitbart News that has more about what really happened to Matthew Shepard.

Baby elephant in China cries for 5 hours after being stomped by his mom

September 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

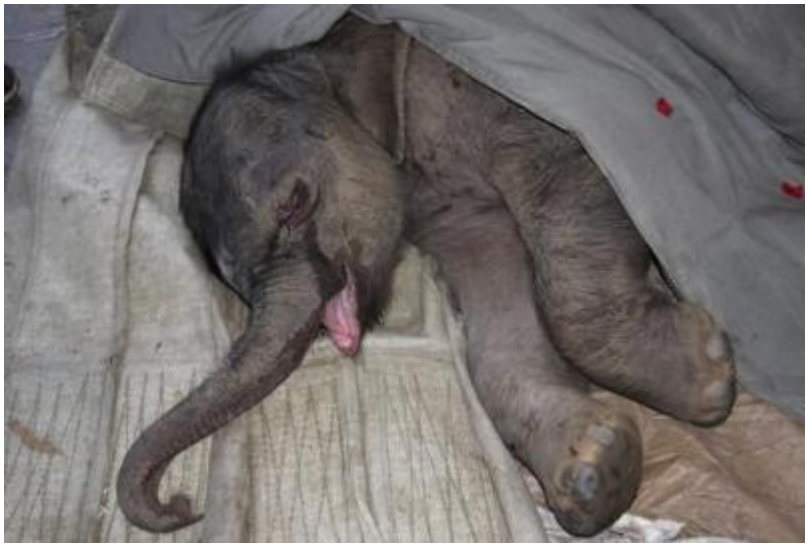

Baby elephant cries after being attacked by his own mother
From the New York Daily News. (Printable version linked)

Excerpt:

> Little Zhuangzhuang, a newborn elephant at a wildlife refuge in China, was inconsolable after his mother rejected him and then tried to stomp him to death.
>
> Tears streamed down his gray trunk for five hours as zookeepers struggled to comfort the baby elephant.
>
> They initially thought it was an accident when the mom stepped on him after giving birth, according to theCentral European News agency.
>
> Employees removed him, cleaned him up and treated his injuries, then reunited the baby with his momma.
>
> But she was having none of it, and began stomping him again.
>
> So the game keepers stepped in once more and permanently separated the two.
>
> “We don’t know why the mother turned on her calf but we couldn’t take a chance,” an employee told CEN.
>
> “The calf was very upset and he was crying for five hours before he could be consoled,” he said.
>
> “He couldn’t bear to be parted from his mother and it was his mother who was trying to kill him.”
>
> The petite pachyderm, born in August, is now doing well. The zookeeper who rescued him from his violent mother adopted him and helped him thrive at the Shendiaoshan wild animal reserve in Rong-cheng, China.

I found another photo of the baby elephant here:

A baby elephant's birthday is supposed to be happy
And Sun News added this:

> Elephants rejecting their young is not uncommon, either in captivity or in the wild. In 2004, baby elephant Keemaya died at the Calgary Zoo after its mother refused to care for it.

I am posting this because of the abortion issue (human abortion). I thought that by feeling sad for this baby elephant, it would remind us what abortion is really about. To me, abortion is about men and women having sex before they are able to take care of a child. When the child comes along "unexpectedly", then the child is viewed as an enemy who needs to be killed before she can interfere with the happiness of her parents. Yes, they are the child's parents. And yes, they are treating sex as recreational.

I guess a lot of my views on ethics are rooted in the obvious needs that children have. When I look at an unborn baby, I can tell what it needs. So, I am careful not to cause a pregnancy before I can supply its needs. The needs of the little unborn creature are driving these moral boundaries on me. And the same with born children. I oppose gay marriage because when I look at little children, I want them to have a stable environment to grow up in with a mother and father who are biologically related to them (in the best case). I permit lots of arrangements, but I promote one arrangement over the others because that's what's best for children. Anyone can look at unborn and born children and see that, just like anyone can look at a crying baby elephant and understand – "I have to govern my behavior so that I don't hurt you". If that means cutting off the premarital sex and making decisions that are likely to produce a stable marriage, then that's what we should do.

Children cry too, you know. They cry when we hurt them. They cry when we make bad decisions and then they don't get what they need. Children need mothers and fathers who care about them. Making a safe environment for a child isn't an accident. It isn't random and unpredictable. We have to control our desires before we have children, so that we provide children with what they need. It would be nice if men and women were more thoughtful and unselfish about *children* and *marriage* before they started in with sex.

Christina Hoff Sommers: how to make school better for boys

September 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christina Hoff Sommers

One of the most troubling things I see in the modern church is the tendency of church people and pastors to blame men for not being more aggressive about marrying. Often, the blame is placed on men. Men are told that we need to do better in school, work harder at work, and that we need to be more aggressive about courting and marrying. Very often, you hear the slogan "man up" directed at men, and we are told to stop playing video games and looking at porn and grow up.

The first thing to note is that marriage is much less attractive to men these days. First, the value proposition of marriage changed – especially the problem of no-fault divorce and divorce courts. The economic situation facing men has changed as well – the economy is poor, but the debt is very very high. Those are two important factors.

Another problem is fatherlessness, which is caused by welfare incentives. A lot of the behavior of young men is based on whether there is a father present in the home. The fact of the matter is that single motherhood by choice has become commonplace, and the aggravating factor for this trend is support for welfare. Welfare is bad for two reasons. First, it encourages women to raise children without a father. Boys raised without a father are not as likely to pursue courtship and marriage as boys raised with a father, because fatherlessness harms a boy's ability to learn to do the things needed for marriage.

Another problem is the availability of pre-marital sex. When a man can get sex without marriage, then he doesn't feel the same desire to get married.

So there are a few examples of things that we can change to nudge men toward marriage. Just speaking slogans like "man up" to men doesn't really address these

problems.

But in this post, I want to look at a problem that I haven't even mentioned yet – the problem of schools that don't produce men who can provide for a family.

Education Reform

Here is Christian equity-feminist Christina Hoff Sommers of the American Enterprise Institute to do that, writing in the left-leaning Atlantic about this problem.

Excerpt:

> Women in the United States now earn 62 percent of associate's degrees, 57 percent of bachelor's degrees, 60 percent of master's degrees, and 52 percent of doctorates.
>
> […]Boys in *all* ethnic groups and social classes are far less likely than their sisters to feel connected to school, to earn good grades, or to have high academic aspirations. A recent working paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research documents a remarkable trend among high-achieving students: In the 1980s, nearly the same number of top male and female high school students said they planned to pursue a postgraduate degree (13 percent of boys and 15 percent of girls). By the 2000s, 27 percent of girls expressed that ambition, compared with 16 percent of boys. During the same period, the gap between girls and boys earning mostly A's nearly doubled—from three to five percentage points.

I was a minority boy before I became a minority man – look at this:

> This gap in education engagement has dire economic consequences for boys. A 2011 Brookings Institution report quantifies the economic decline of the median male: For men ages 25 to 64 with no high school diploma, median annual earnings have declined 66 percent since 1969; for men with only a high school diploma, wages declined by 47 percent. Millions of male workers, say the Brookings authors, have been "unhitched from the engine of growth." The College Board delivered this disturbing message in a 2011 report about Hispanic and African-American boys and young adults: "Nearly half of young men of color age 15 to 24 who graduate from high school will end up unemployed, incarcerated or dead." Working-class white boys are faring only slightly better. When economist Andrew Sum and his colleagues at the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University examined gender disparities in the Boston Public Schools, they found that for the class of 2007, among blacks and Hispanics, there were 186 females for every 100 males attending a four-year college or university. For white students: 153 females to every 100 males.

Is this a U.S. – only problem? No. The problem exists in many places. But Dr. Sommers lists some of the initiatives those other countries are taking – trying to understand why boys are different and what needs to be done differently in order to get them to engage

and succeed. But we are not doing anything here. Why not?

Well, first – let's see what works:

> In a rare example of the academic establishment taking note of boys' trouble in school, the Harvard Graduate School of Education recently published a major study, Pathways to Prosperity, that highlights the "yawning gender gap" in education favoring women: "Our system… clearly does not work well for many, especially young men." The authors call for a national revival of vocational education in secondary schools. They cite several existing programs that could serve as a model for national reform, including the Massachusetts system, sometimes called the "Cadillac of Career Training Education."
>
> Massachusetts has a network of 26 academically rigorous vocational-technical high schools serving 27,000 male and female students. Students in magnet schools such as Worcester Technical, Madison Park Technical Vocational, and Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical take traditional academic courses but spend half their time apprenticing in a field of their choice. These include computer repair, telecommunications networking, carpentry, early childhood education, plumbing, heating, refrigeration, and cosmetology. As*Pathways* reports, these schools have some of the state's highest graduation and college matriculation rates, and close to 96 percent pass the states' rigorous high-stakes graduation test.
>
> Blackstone Valley Tech in Upton, Massachusetts, should be studied by anyone looking for solutions to the boy problem. It is working wonders with girls (who comprise 44 percent of the student body), but its success with boys is astonishing. According to a white paper on vocational education by the Commonwealth's Pioneer Institute, "One in four Valley Technical students enter their freshman year with a fourth-grade reading level." The school immerses these students in an intense, individualized remediation program until they read proficiently at grade level. These potentially disaffected students put up with remediation as well as a full load of college preparatory courses (including honors and Advanced Placement classes), because otherwise they could not spend half the semester apprenticing in diesel mechanics, computer repair, or automotive engineering.
>
> In former times, vocational high schools were often dumping grounds for low achievers. Today, in Massachusetts, they are launching pads into the middle class.

Who could possibly be opposed to turning boys into marriage-minded men? Look:

> Recent research shows that enrollment in high school vocational programs has dramatic effects on students' likelihood of graduating from high school—*especially boys*. But efforts to engage more boys in career and technical programs face a formidable challenge. In a series of scathing reports, the

> National Council on Women and Girls Education (NCWGE—a 38-year-old consortium that today includes heavy hitters such the AAUW, the National Women's Law Center, the ACLU, NOW, the Ms. Foundation, and the National Education Association) has condemned high school vocational training schools as hotbeds of "sex segregation."
>
> Because of decades of successful lobbying by NCWGE groups, high school and college career and technical training programs face government sanctions and loss of funds if they fail to recruit *and graduate* sufficient numbers of female students into "non-traditional" fields. Over the years, untold millions of state and federal dollars have been devoted to recruiting and retaining young women into fields like pipefitting, automotive repair, construction, drywall installing, manufacturing, and refrigeration mechanics. But according to *Statchat*, a University of Virginia workforce blog, these efforts at vocational equity "haven't had much of an impact." Despite an unfathomable number of girl-focused programs and interventions, "technical and manual occupations tend to be dominated by men, patterns that have held steady for many years."
>
> In March 2013 NCWGE released a report urging the need to fight even harder against "barriers girls and women face in entering nontraditional fields." Among its nine key recommendations to Congress: more federal funding and challenge grants to help states close the gender gaps in career and technical education (CTE); mandate every state to install a CTE gender equity coordinator; and impose harsher punishments on states that fail to meet "performance measures" –i.e. gender quotas.
>
> Instead of spending millions of dollars attempting to transform aspiring cosmetologists into welders, education officials should concentrate on helping young people, male and female, enter careers that interest them. And right now, boys are the underserved population requiring attention.

So. We know what works to make boys into marriage-ready men. And now we know who is standing in the way. What I'd like to see from the man-up crowd, especially the man-up crowd in the church, is a serious assessment of the research on this issue and some action.

But this is what we get from Mark Driscoll: (whom I almost always agree with)

> The number one consumer of online pornography is 12- to 17-year-old boys. What that means is he's home eating junk food, drinking Monster energy drinks, downloading porn, masturbating and screwing around with his friends. That really doesn't prepare you for responsible adulthood. That's a really sad picture, especially if you're a single gal hoping to get married someday. You're like: "Seriously, that's the candidate pool? You've got to be kidding me." **That's why 41 percent of births right now are to unmarried women. A lot of women have decided: "I'm never going to find a guy who is actually dependable and responsible to have a life with. So I'll just get a career and have a**

> **baby and just intentionally be a single mother because there are no guys worth spending life with."**

We really need better leadership – informed leadership – on these issues from prominent pastors. They need to start to read some research (e.g. – what Dr. Sommers presented) on these issues. Maybe pastors need to affirm the *traditional* view of the Bible on sexual morality, and then take on the root cause of the disengaged boys problem: feminism in the schools. We don't want to take on these problems in a superficial way and then actually make the problem *worse* by making excuses for views of sexuality that are unBiblical.

By the way, you should subscribe to the AEI podcast, which is on my list of favorite podcasts. And Dr. Sommers has a new edition of her classic book defending young men. If you have ever wondered what is going wrong with men, that book is required reading. It is required reading for anyone who wants to comment on this issue, in fact.

Video: compilation of interruptions by Lawrence Krauss from debates with William Lane Craig

September 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here is the video:

Now compare that video with this story about a professor who was denied tenure for being personally pro-ID:

> Internal e-mails and other documents obtained under the Iowa Open Records Act contradict public claims by Iowa State University (ISU) that denial of tenure to astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez was unrelated to his writing on the theory of intelligent design. According to these documents:
>
> - Dr. Gonzalez was subjected to a secret campaign of vilification and ridicule by colleagues in the Department of Physics and Astronomy who explicitly wanted to get rid of him because of his intelligent design views, not his scholarship.
> - Dr. Gonzalez's work and views on intelligent design were repeatedly attacked during department tenure deliberations.
> - Dr. Gonzalez's colleagues plotted to evade the law by suppressing evidence that could be used against them in court to supply proof of a hostile work environment.
> - One of Dr. Gonzalez's colleagues admitted to another faculty member that the Department of Physics and Astronomy had violated the principle of academic freedom "massively" when it came to Gonzalez, while other colleagues expressed qualms that their plotting against Gonzalez was unethical or dishonest.
> - Dr. Gonzalez's department chair misled the public after the denial of tenure by insisting that "intelligent design was not a major or even a big factor in this decision"–even though he had privately told colleagues that Gonzalez's support for intelligent design alone "disqualifies him from serving as a science educator."
> - In voting to reject tenure for Dr. Gonzalez, members of the Department of Physics and Astronomy all but ignored recommendations made by the majority of their own outside scientific reviewers, who thought Gonzalez clearly deserved tenure.
>
> The bottom line according to these documents is that Dr. Gonzalez's rights to academic freedom, free speech, and a fair tenure process were trampled on by colleagues who were driven by ideological zeal when they should have made an impartial evaluation of Gonzalez's notable accomplishments as a scientist.

I have noticed a troubling trend during the last few years as I have blogged about the

secular left. It seems to me that people on the left tend to have a strong, intense intolerance for any opinions that are different from their own. And they act on this intense intolerance by aggressively attacking the free speech and religious liberty of others.

You can see examples of this in the public schools and especially in the universities. Students being denied degrees, students being charged with offensive speech, students having secular leftist propaganda rammed down their throats, professors being prevented from teaching anything critical of the secular left, professors being denied tenure, and so on. It's not a surprise either when you think that authoritarian regimes are typically atheistic, like in North Korea, Cambodia, the Soviet Union, etc. North Korea would be a paradise for an atheist like Lawrence Krauss. If anyone said anything about Jesus or even owned a Bible, then he could just have them killed. It's less work than interrupting us, and more permanent.

I'm not saying that every atheist is like Krauss, but there does seem to be this tendency to silence, coerce and intimidate anyone who says anything that disagrees with atheism. Especially in the rank and file of the atheist movement. The whole atheist political effort (e.g. – Freedom from Religion Foundation, etc.) seems to be about forcing Christians to act like atheists in public, so that atheists don't have to be offended by hearing views that disagree with their own views. They want to silence Christians by using the coercive power of big government. You can see it in debates, you can see it in the universities, and you can see it in the courtroom. They're not trying to win arguments with evidence, they're trying to end the argument with threats and coercion.

You can see a video and summary of the third Craig-Krauss debate from Australia here.

You can read a statement of how militant atheists view Christians here. (Warning: reader discretion is advised)

Obama administration pressuring banks to lower mortgage lending standards

September 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Remember the housing bubble and the mortgage lending crisis of 2008? Well guess what – the Democrats want an encore.

Investors Business Daily explains.

> Bankers warn the administration's new "disparate impact" home-lending regulation will wreak havoc in credit markets, replacing merit standards with political correctness.
>
> The Department of Housing and Urban Development issued the controversial new anti-discrimination rule earlier this year. Now enforced by every federal regulator dealing with banks, it has the effect of criminalizing credit standards used to qualify borrowers for home loans.
>
> Last week, the Mortgage Bankers Association and Independent Community Bankers of America jointly filed a Supreme Court brief arguing that under the new HUD rule:
>
> "Virtually every lender in the United States could be sued for using non-discriminatory credit standards simply because variations in economic and credit characteristics produce different credit outcomes among racial and ethnic groups."
>
> In their 33-page brief, filed in support of a landmark housing case pending before the court, they complain that HUD recently launched 22 separate investigations against lenders alleging that their policies of requiring minimum credit scores "had a disparate impact on minorities in violation of the Fair Housing Act."
>
> Dozens of similar actions have been brought against lenders by Attorney General Eric Holder. He is basing claims of bias on statistics showing differences in loan outcomes by race while ignoring racially neutral credit-risk factors that explain those differences.
>
> Under disparate impact's low standard of proof, the government doesn't have to show lenders intentionally discriminated against borrowers.
>
> For the first time in history, businesses are being ordered to justify the necessity of a certain level of return on investment given the racial impact resulting from the use of credit-score thresholds.
>
> The mortgage trade groups argue the formalized disparate-impact rule also effectively criminalizes other legitimate business practices, including minimum down-payment requirements, sliding loan rates and the charging of brokers' fees.
>
> Banks today face increased litigation risk simply by complying with sensible

> lending standards for hedging against risk.
>
> […]The social engineers and race demagogues in this administration are trying to enforce a balance in financial outcomes that risks another collapse of the housing market. The Supreme Court must put an end to a scheme so reckless, unfair and unconstitutional.

Does that sound familiar? Yes. In the last recession, the government forced banks to make risky loans in order to increase home ownership. That is exactly what gave us the 2008 recession.

Excerpt:

> [Democrat] Congressman [Barney] Frank, of course, blamed the financial crisis on the failure adequately to regulate the banks. In this, he is following the traditional Washington practice of blaming others for his own mistakes. For most of his career, Barney Frank was the principal advocate in Congress for using the government's authority to force lower underwriting standards in the business of housing finance. Although he claims to have tried to reverse course as early as 2003, that was the year he made the oft-quoted remark, "I want to roll the dice a little bit more in this situation toward subsidized housing." Rather than reversing course, he was pressing on when others were beginning to have doubts.
>
> His most successful effort was to impose what were called "affordable housing" requirements on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in 1992. Before that time, these two government sponsored enterprises (GSEs) had been required to buy only mortgages that institutional investors would buy–in other words, prime mortgages–but Frank and others thought these standards made it too difficult for low income borrowers to buy homes. The affordable housing law required Fannie and Freddie to meet government quotas when they bought loans from banks and other mortgage originators.
>
> At first, this quota was 30%; that is, of all the loans they bought, 30% had to be made to people at or below the median income in their communities. HUD, however, was given authority to administer these quotas, and between 1992 and 2007, the quotas were raised from 30% to 50% under Clinton in 2000 and to 55% under Bush in 2007.
>
> […]It is certainly possible to find prime mortgages among borrowers below the median income, but when half or more of the mortgages the GSEs bought had to be made to people below that income level, it was inevitable that underwriting standards had to decline. And they did. By 2000, Fannie was offering no-downpayment loans. By 2002, Fannie and Freddie had bought well over $1 trillion of subprime and other low quality loans. Fannie and Freddie were by far the largest part of this effort, but the FHA, Federal Home Loan Banks, Veterans Administration and other agencies–all under congressional and HUD pressure–followed suit. This continued through the 1990s and 2000s until the

> housing bubble–created by all this government-backed spending–collapsed in 2007. As a result, in 2008, before the mortgage meltdown that triggered the crisis, there were 27 million subprime and other low quality mortgages in the US financial system. That was half of all mortgages. Of these, over 70% (19.2 million) were on the books of government agencies like Fannie and Freddie, so there is no doubt that the government created the demand for these weak loans; less than 30% (7.8 million) were held or distributed by the banks, which profited from the opportunity created by the government. When these mortgages failed in unprecedented numbers in 2008, driving down housing prices throughout the U.S., they weakened all financial institutions and caused the financial crisis.

Reduced lending standards caused the last recession, and now the same party that pushed for reduced lending standards are pushing for reduced lending standards again. Hold onto your hats, there’s a storm coming.

IPCC report: simulations drastically overestimated global warming

September 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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My good friend Andrew sent me this story from The Australian.

Excerpt:

> The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's latest assessment reportedly admits its computer drastically overestimated rising temperatures, and over the past 60 years the world has in fact been warming at half the rate claimed in the previous IPCC report in 2007.

> More importantly, according to reports in British and US media, the draft report appears to suggest global temperatures were less sensitive to rising levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide than was previously thought.
>
> The 2007 assessment report said the planet was warming at a rate of 0.2C every decade, but according to Britain's The Daily Mail the draft update report says the true figure since 1951 has been 0.12C.
>
> […]Professor Judith Curry, head of climate science at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, told The Daily Mail the leaked summary showed "the science is clearly not settled, and is in a state of flux".
>
> […]According to The Daily Mail, the draft report recognised the global warming "pause", with average temperatures not showing any statistically significant increase since 1997.
>
> Scientists admitted large parts of the world had been as warm as they were now for decades at a time between 950 and 1250, centuries before the Industrial Revolution.
>
> And, The Daily Mail said, a forecast in the 2007 report that hurricanes would become more intense had been dropped.

Looks like the Australians chose well when they chose Tony Abbott to repeal their carbon tax.

So it looks like the IPCC global warming simulations were misrepresented to push a socialist agenda. Shame on us for our scientific illiteracy in this country. But we can thank the naturalists in the schools for that, I suppose. They don't like debates about scientific theories. This is what we get from hearing one side of scientific controversies all the time, I guess.

Andrew also sent me this UK Telegraph article that shows how insulated from science global warming alarmism really is in Europe.

Excerpt:

> Regardless of whether or not scientists are wrong on global warming, the European Union is pursuing the correct energy policies even if they lead to higher prices, Europe's climate commissioner has said.
>
> Connie Hedegaard's comments come as the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is expected to admit that previous scientific predictions for global warming and the effects of carbon emissions have been proved to be inaccurate.
>
> In an interview with the Telegraph, Europe's most senior climate change official argued that the current policies are the correct ones because a growing world population will put pressure on energy supplies regardless of the rate of global warming.
>
> "I personally have a very pragmatic view.
>
> "Say that 30 years from now, science came back and said, 'wow, we were mistaken then now we have some new information so we think it is something else'. In a world with nine billion people, even 10 billion at the middle of this century, where literally billions of global citizens will still have to get out of poverty and enter the consuming middle classes, don't you think that anyway it makes a lot of sense to get more energy and resource efficient," she said.

> "Let's say that science, some decades from now, said 'we were wrong, it was not about climate', would it not in any case have been good to do many of things you have to do in order to combat climate change?."
>
> The Danish commissioner also rejected public complaints over increases in electricity prices to subsidise renewable energies, such as wind farms, as unrealistic because, she said, increased competition over diminishing energy resources such as oil and gas will lead to higher bills.
>
> "I believe that in a world with still more people, wanting still more growth for good reasons, the demand for energy, raw materials and resources will increase and so, over time so, over time, will the prices," she said.
>
> "I think we have to realise that in the world of the 21st century for us to have the cheapest possible energy is not the answer."
>
> Mrs Hedegaard, and the European Commission, have not changed their position that the science that is currently used to justify EU climate change policy is "over 90 per cent" certain that global warming exists and that it is manmade.

This story is just like the Matthew Shepard story that was misrepresented by the media to push a gay rights agenda. The sad thing is that both of these factions of the secular left got what they wanted, and the truth is only becoming known more widely now when laws and policies have already changed.

Maybe we should remember this lesson for the next time there is a "crisis" that requires us to lurch to the left.

Related posts

- UK scientists predict global cooling after record Arctic ice growth
- Antarctic sea ice now at the highest level ever recorded
- New York Times: no global warming in the last 15 years, despite CO2 increase
- Another failed prediction for global warming: fewer extreme weather events
- Global warming: Scotland hit by blizzards, road closures and 8 inches of snow
- New EPA report: natural gas prodution is even cleaner than previously thought
- Reuters: scientists struggling to explain 15 years of global cooling
- Report: biofuels raise the cost of gas for little environmental benefit
- Global warming in the UK: coldest March in 50 years, winter extending into spring
- Democrat senator Barbara Boxer introduces carbon tax legislation
- New study: Earth was warmer 1000 years ago, during Medieval Warming Period
- New study: there has been no global warming since 1997
- New study finds that cosmic rays and the sun cause global warming
- Global warmist Phil Jones admits there's been no global warming since 1995
- Chairman of UN's IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s

Obama-supporter Aaron Alexis opens fire in Navy Yard gun-free zone

September 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I want to make a few points about this latest multiple-victim public shooting, and I'll do it with several links.

My friend Conway posted this article from National Review showing that multiple-victim public shootings are common in gun-free zones.

Excerpt:

> Gun-free zones have been the most popular response to previous mass killings. But many law-enforcement officials say they are actually counterproductive. "Guns are already banned in schools. That is why the shootings happen in schools. A school is a 'helpless-victim zone,'" says Richard Mack, a former Arizona sheriff. "Preventing any adult at a school from having access to a firearm eliminates any chance the killer can be stopped in time to prevent a rampage," Jim Kouri, the public-information officer of the National Association of Chiefs of Police, told me earlier this year at the time of the Aurora, Colo., Batman-movie shooting. Indeed, there have been many instances — from the high-school shooting by Luke Woodham in Mississippi, to the New Life Church shooting in Colorado Springs, Colo. — where a killer has been stopped after someone got a gun from a parked car or elsewhere and confronted the shooter.
>
> Economists John Lott and William Landes conducted a groundbreaking study in 1999, and found that a common theme of mass shootings is that they occur in places where guns are banned and killers know everyone will be unarmed, such as shopping malls and schools.
>
> I spoke with Lott after the Newtown shooting, and he confirmed that nothing has changed to alter his findings. He noted that the Aurora shooter, who killed twelve people earlier this year, had a choice of seven movie theaters that were showing the Batman movie he was obsessed with. All were within a 20-minute drive of his home. The Cinemark Theater the killer ultimately chose wasn't the closest, but it was the only one that posted signs saying it banned concealed handguns carried by law-abiding individuals. All of the other theaters allowed the approximately 4 percent of Colorado adults who have a concealed-handgun permit to enter with their weapons.
>
> "Disarming law-abiding citizens leaves them as sitting ducks," Lott told me. "A couple hundred people were in the Cinemark Theater when the killer arrived. There is an extremely high probability that one or more of them would have had a legal concealed handgun with him if they had not been banned."
>
> Lott offers a final damning statistic: "With just one single exception, the attack on

> congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson in 2011, every public shooting since at least 1950 in the U.S. in which more than three people have been killed has taken place where citizens are not allowed to carry guns."
>
> There is no evidence that private holders of concealed-carry permits (which are either easy to obtain or not even required in more than 40 states) are any more irresponsible with firearms than the police. According to a 2005 to 2007 study by researchers at the University of Wisconsin and Bowling Green State University, police nationwide were convicted of firearms violations at least at a 0.002 percent annual rate. That's about the same rate as holders of carry permits in the states with "shall issue" laws.

And another point to make is that the shooter was a liberal Democrat who opposed George W. Bush and supported Barack Obama.

Shooter was a pro-Obama, anti-Bush leftist

Here's the news clip from CNN:

And the story from center-right Breitbart News about the clip:

> Tuesday, on CNN's "The Lead with Jake Tapper," Michael Ritrovato spoke at length about his friend, suspected Navy Yard shooter Aaron Alexis. After expressing his condolences to the victims and their families, Ritrovato then expressed his shock over the actions of a man he described as being "like a brother to me" and a "good-natured guy."
>
> **Ritrovato went on to explain that two of them had a close relationship based in part on their differences, specifically race and politics. Alexis was black, Ritrovato is white. Ritrovato described himself as conservative and Alexis is "more of a liberal type" who supported Barack Obama:**
>
> **I would say things like, 'You know, you are my brother from another mother.' And he would say things like, 'You're my Italian mafia guy from New York.' So we had things we joked about: Aaron wasn't conservative like I am. He was more of a liberal type; he wasn't happy with the former [Bush] administration. He was more happy with this [the Obama] administration — as far as presidential administrations.**

So he is a leftist just like the Fort Hood shooter was a leftist. Just like Tsarnaev was a leftist. Just like the FRC shooter Corkins was a leftist. Just like the Gabby Giffords shooter was a leftist. Just like Jared Loughner was a leftist. These people are all Democrats. (See below for links). If gun control is for anyone, it should be for leftists. They are the crazy ones who prefer violence to debate. They aren't used to debate, because they aren't used to hearing other points of view.

The non-existent AR-15

Finally, the radically leftist Washington Post reports that the mainstream media invented

an imaginary AR-15 semi-automatic rifle in their biased coverage, in a blatantly partisan attempt to push for more gun control.

Excerpt:

> **CNN correspondent Pamela Brown just reported on air that Aaron Alexis, the deceased suspect in the Navy Yard shootings, entered the facility yesterday armed with a shotgun. Citing the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms as well as law enforcement sources, Brown reported that the gunman had tried to purchase an AR-15 at a gun shop in Northern Virginia but was turned down. Two pistols were also recovered.**

He had a shotgun and two handguns – no AR-15, because he was turned down for an AR-15.

But radically leftist CNN reported that he had an AR-15:

> This morning, CNN's John Berman said on the network's program "Early Start": "Alexis is the only gunman now, officials say. Yesterday, there was word that there was maybe a second, a third possible person involved in the attack. That is no longer the case. Officials say that Aaron Alexis was a lone gunman. This is what we know about him this morning. We know that he had an AR-15, a semi-automatic rifle. He also had a different rifle and a glock, that is a handgun with him. It's believed that the AR-15 was the main murder weapon used from the atrium above. That is also the weapon you'll remember used by Adam Lanza in the Newtown massacre and James Holmes in Aurora. That's the Colorado movie theater massacre."

Other leftist "news" sources kept the lie going:

> […]The Associated Press:
>
> > Alexis carried three weapons: an AR-15 assault rifle, a shotgun, and a handgun that he took from a police officer at the scene, according to two federal law enforcement officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the investigation. The AR-15 is the same type of rifle used in last year's mass shooting at a Newtown, Conn., elementary school that killed 20 students and six women. The weapon was also used in the shooting at a Colorado movie theater that killed 12 and wounded 70.

The Washington Post notes that about a half-dozen leftist news sources reported on the fictitious AR-15, including the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post and the New York Times.

You would think these left-wing media people would learn from previous retractions not to let their left-wing politics determine the narrative, but they don't. It's the same thing

every day, over and over. This is what happens, though, when newsrooms are packed full of radical leftists. There is no diversity of opinion, no debate, no critical thinking. It's an echo chamber.

Related posts

- Boston bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was a pot-smoker who supported Obama
- Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Zeitgeist conspiracy movie had profound impact on Jared Loughner
- Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist
- Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning
- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

Adult stem cell therapy saves man who was told he had 120 days to live

September 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A striking story from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Tony Underhill lived a full, active life until Systemic Scleroderma ravaged his body and confined him to a wheelchair. The autoimmune disease slowly hardened his skin until he could hardly move.
>
> […]Tony went to the best doctors in Nashville and later to the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida. They tried everything to treat him but nothing worked. Eventually they sent him home with devastating news.
>
> "They told me I had systemic scleroderma," said Tony. "They treated me for 10 days and the day I checked out of the hospital, on my release papers under prognosis, it said "unfortunate." I asked the doctor, you know, unfortunate, what does this mean? He told me that, what he told me was there was no cure for it. And that basically I had 120 days left. So I came home and all the things that I was doing last year was going to be gone – and I was gonna be gone too!"

But the story didn't end there:

> An acquaintance of Missy and Tony had read a story in Reader's Digest about a patient being treated for Scleroderma with Adult Stem Cells. Missy went to work researching and tracked down the patient featured in the story. The patient told her she had undergone an adult stem cell transplant several years ago in a clinical trial and that adult stem cells had saved her life.
>
> Tony applied and was accepted into a similar clinical trial underway with **Dr. Richard Burt at Northwestern University** in Chicago. Missy says it was miraculous to see the adult stem cells go to work: "When he received the adult stem cell transplant, the day after, I have it videoed on my phone, literally we felt like he could move his hands slightly better, he could open his mouth wider. It was pretty immediate that we started to see results."
>
> Tony says, "Every day after I got my transplant, every day was getting better. Every day was like getting a new shot of life in your arm every day."
>
> And as of today, Tony has his health back again and he continues to improve. He's running his construction business, working out at his exercise bike and says he's back to about 80% of his original mobility.
>
> "I'm a walking miracle. I'm lucky to be here, you know. Now, if I'm working with my guys, if they need me out there to work, run a machine for them to make the day better or something like that, I'll run the backhoe, track hoe, drive a dump

> truck, run a Bobcat, asphalt roller, whatever I need to do."

Adult stem cell therapies not only work, but they don't involve the destruction of human life, like embryonic stem cell therapies do.

Related posts

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Fazale Rana responds to new paper claiming that rapid evolution explains Cambrian explosion

September 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Dr. Fazale Rana of Reasons to Believe takes on a new paper that claims that the evolution can explain the Cambrian explosion.

They linked to this article from NBC News, showing how the paper was popularized.

Excerpt:

> The team found that the emergence of many sea creatures during the Cambrian explosion could be explained by an accelerated — but not unrealistic — evolution by way of natural selection, or the process in which organisms change over time due to changes in heritable physical or behavioral traits. (For instance, changes that give an organism a leg up will help it survive to pass down that trait to offspring.) The team focused its study on animals related to arthropods, the group that includes crustaceans and other insects.
>
> "In this study we've estimated that rates of both morphological and genetic evolution during the Cambrian explosion were five times faster than today – quite rapid, but perfectly consistent with Darwin's theory of evolution," Lee said.

That's the challenge. If you can't listen to the entire podcast, then let me say that the problem with the paper is the way that they are measuring the "rate of change". They are only measuring the rates of change in genes and phenotypic characters. They are not measuring other important requirements for the new body plans, like the network interactions and regulatory elements of the network. Also, they haven't demonstrated a mechanism for even the rapid change they do measure in the genes and phenotypic characters.

Here's is the MP3 file. (29 minutes)

The interviewer is Joe Aguirre and the scientist is Dr. Fazale Rana.

Summary:

- JA: Does this paper explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian era fossils without the need for an intelligent cause?
- FR: The paper claims that the rapid rate of change in the Cambrian explosion is within the capability of Darwinian mechanisms
- JA: What is the Cambrian explosion?
- FR: Sudden appearance in the geological record of 50-80 percent of the animal body plans that have ever existed
- FR: Prior to that there were single-celled organisms
- FR: The only multi-cell organisms (Ediacaran fauna, etc.) are not precursors to the new body plans

- FR: This is not a diversification of plans from existing plans, this is about 30 new body plans
- FR: Not just body plans, but complex organs like eyes appear suddenly
- FR: The paper focuses on one body plan – arthropods (crustaceans, arachnids and insects)
- FR: The paper looks at anatomical features as well as genes
- FR: Paper says the rate of evolutionary change needed would be about 5 to 6 times the normal rate of change
- JA: Has the rate been the same since that time
- FR: No the rate of change we see is a fifth of what is seen in the Cambrian explosion, and it is constant
- FR: The claim is that the rate of change of 5X is anomalous, but is reasonable
- FR: The researchers established that what happened in the Cambrian explosion is unusual
- FR: The researchers just assert that the faster rate of change is plausible
- FR: They have not provided a mechanism for this faster rate of change
- JA: Has anyone come up with a mechanism for the higher rate of change?
- FR: No. There are speculations, but no one has published a robust, defensible explanation
- FR: They are saying, if you embrace the evolutionary paradigm, then the rate of evolution *has to be* 5 to 6 times faster
- FR: But they haven't demonstrated a mechanism that can produce that rate of change, they just asserted that it's no big deal
- FR: To me, a requirement for an accelerated rate of evolution is an argument for intelligent design
- JA: Why aren't people working on the mechanism?
- FR: The Cambrian explosion happens at a time when Earth is exiting a frozen stage
- FR: The environment becomes hospitable to life as we exit this "snowball event"
- FR: But just because the environment is now hospitable, that does not mean that the genetic changes are automatic
- FR: On a Genesis creation account, the Cambrian explosion is described in the 5th day
- FR: God creates the new animal types when the environment can accommodate them
- JA: Can the naturalist explain how they go from single-celled organisms to compound eyes with 3000 lenses?
- JA: Why did evolution-agitator Eugenie Scott say that the Cambrian proceeded "at a leisurely pace"?
- FR: doing a calculation like from single cells to compound eyes is difficult
- FR: these visual systems are intricate and sophisticated, with respect to field of depth, resolution, etc.
- FR: additionally, the eye requires support systems in order to function
- FR: The Cambrian era goes from 540 mya to 490 mya

- FR: The two most important sites to study it are the Burgess Shale and the Chengjiang Valley
- FR: The Chengjiang site shows the earlier period of the Cambrian, and the animals are there in the first 5 million years
- FR: The period is at most 5 million years
- FR: We are talking about completely different body plans and architectures
- FR: It's been shown that you cannot go from one body plan to another body plan, it will kill the intermediate forms
- JA: You have to explain how ALL of the phyla came in together in a short period
- FR: Yes. When evolutionists just assert that higher rates of change are "plausible" without specifying a mechanism, that's not good science

Uncommon Descent had another response to the paper.

Excerpt:

> I'd like to make two very general observations here. First, measuring rates of change in *existing* traits is not the same thing as measuring the rate at which *new* traits appear.
>
> Second, the rapid appearance of new body traits that occurred during the Cambrian explosion could never have taken place without a host of underlying changes at the genetic level. It is these changes that we need to explain. How do we explain, for instance, the sudden increase in the number of new cell types that occurred during the early Cambrian period? Lee *et al.* do not even discuss this question in their paper: a search on the phrase "cell type" turns up empty.
>
> […]In a recent post over at Evolution News and Views, Casey Luskin drew readers' attention to a new book by paleobtologists Douglas Erwin and James Valentine, entitled, *The Cambrian Explosion: The Construction of Animal Biodiversity* (Roberts and Company, 2013). The authors, who are recognized authorities in their field, are no friends of Intelligent Design, but they firmly reject the standard neo-Darwinian explanations that have been put forward for the Cambrian explosion. In particular, they take issue with the claim that macroevolution is nothing more than an extrapolation of microevolution.

He then prints a few excerpts from the Erwin and Valentine book.

Here's one:

> **Increased genetic and developmental interactions were also critical to the formation of new animal body plans.** By the time a branch of advanced sponges gave rise to more complex animals, their genomes comprised genes whose products could interact with regulatory elements in a coordinated network. Network interactions were critical to the spatial and temporal patterning of gene expression, to the formation of new cell types, and to the generation of a hierarchical morphology of tissues and organs. The evolving lineages could begin to adapt to different regions within the rich mosaic of conditions they

> encountered across the environmental landscape, diverging and specializing to diversify into an array of body forms.

Like Dr. Rana said, the new paper never takes these factors into account.

UD continues:

> Reading through the introduction, it is readily apparent that Erwin and Valentine have thought long and hard about the issues relating to the Cambrian explosion, and that they truly appreciate the magnitude of the problem of explaining this seismic event in the history of life. By contrast, the new study by Lee *et al.* fails to grapple with the deeper issues: its aim is merely to defend Darwinism, and it "succeeds" only by shrinking the problem by focusing on minutiae such as rates of change in genes and phenotypic characters. No wonder, then, that the study's authors perceive no threat to Darwinian evolution in the Cambrian explosion.

So should we be concerned about this paper? I don't think so – not until they have a mechanism that can drive the required level of innovation. The paper pushes a naturalistic explanation, and so we are within our rights to ask for a naturalistic mechanism. Even if they had the mechanism, they still aren't taking into account everything that needs to be explained – like regulatory elements in the coordinated network that Erwin and Valentine mentioned.

UPDATE: Kylie asked me a question that caused me to update this post. She asked me what about Behe's work that shows that Darwinian mechanisms cannot even account for the NORMAL rate of change? I just want to be clear and say that I don't think that Darwinian mechanisms can even account for *that*. What the paper does is *assume* that Darwinian mechanisms can account for the 1X "rate of change" they see. Then they further assume that evolution is able to do the 5X change rate as well. All they did was measure the amount of change and then assert that it's not that far off of normal. But I don't accept that Darwinian mechanisms can even do the normal rate of change, because of Behe's book on the limits of Darwinian mechanisms to drive change.

New PNAS study finds fracking emissions far lower than EPA estimates

September 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Investors Business Daily. Before you read the article, you should know that "fracking" is short for hydraulic fracturing. This is a technique for extracting shale oil by creating fractures in rocks.

Excerpt:

> Whether naturally occurring or not, environmentalists claim that fracking would release huge amounts of what they consider the most potent heat-trapping greenhouse gas, far outweighing the value of producing huge quantities of clean-burning natural gas.
>
> **Now comes a study, conducted by scientists at the University of Texas and published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences — and co-financed by one of the highest-profile environmentalists in the country — that shows much smaller amounts of methane emissions associated with fracking, far less than environmentalists and the Environmental Protection Agency have contended.**
>
> […]The study, billed as the first to measure the actual emissions of methane from natural gas wells, finds these emissions were, in some cases, only about 2% of the most recent national estimate by the EPA in 2011. An upcoming EPA rule, effective January 2015, requires all methane to be captured when liquids are removed after drilling.
>
> Seen by many as an attempt to stop fracking, which has boosted the economy through its ability to tap previously inaccessible oil and gas riches, the rule might be redundant. Two-thirds of the wells studied already were capturing or controlling the methane to reduce emissions.
>
> "For those wells with methane capture or control, 99% of the potential emissions were captured or controlled," the study notes.
>
> This proves once again there is no problem technology can't solve and that when decisions are made based on technology, rather than ideology, good things happen.
>
> A**n interesting aspect of the study is that it was funded in part by Tom Steyer, a billionaire environmentalist who has become highly active in national politics in the past year, backing environmentalist Democrats such as Massachusetts Sen. Ed Markey and Virginia gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe.**
>
> **Steyer's support for the University of Texas came by way of the Environmental Defense Fund, which helped finance the study.** He and his

> wife Kat Taylor are listed among individuals who provided "major funding for the EDF's 30-month methane research series, including their portion of the University of Texas study."
>
> […]Thanks in large part to fracking, energy-related carbon dioxide emissions in 2012 were the lowest in the U.S. since 1994, at 5.3 billion metric tons. With the exception of 2010, emissions have declined every year since 2007.

Back in May 2013, Associated Press reported that the EPA had *already lowered their estimates* before this study completed.

Excerpt:

> The new EPA data is "kind of an earthquake" in the debate over drilling, said Michael Shellenberger, the president of the Breakthrough Institute, an environmental group based in Oakland, Calif. "This is great news for anybody concerned about the climate and strong proof that existing technologies can be deployed to reduce methane leaks."
>
> The scope of the EPA's revision was vast. In a mid-April report on greenhouse emissions, the agency now says that tighter pollution controls instituted by the industry resulted in an average annual decrease of 41.6 million metric tons of methane emissions from 1990 through 2010, or more than 850 million metric tons overall. That's about a 20 percent reduction from previous estimates. The agency converts the methane emissions into their equivalent in carbon dioxide, following standard scientific practice.

So there's no harm to the environment, but about the economics benefits of fracking? Well, when states have embraced fracking, their economies have greatly benefited.

Here's what happened when North Dakota lowered its regulatory barriers to energy development.

This:

> North Dakota had the highest payroll-to-population rate (P2P) and the lowest underemployment rate in 2012, thanks mostly to the state's booming oil & gas industry.
>
> According to Gallup's "State of the States" analysis released today, North Dakota ranked number one among the lower 48 states, with a payroll to population rate of 53.6 percent.
>
> Gallup said it measured each state's P2P rate by the percentage of the adult population aged 18 and older employed full-time by an employer for at least 30 hours per week.
>
> The analysis noted that the numbers are not seasonably adjusted and variations across states reflect a number of factors, including the overall employment situation for each state as well as the demographic composition of that state's population. P2P rates in Alaska, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia were not

> considered in the analysis.
>
> Factoring in the most recent unemployment data is key to the Gallup analysis. North Dakota reported just a 3.2 percent unemployment rate, well below the national average unemployment rate of 7.9 percent, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
>
> The number one ranking should not come as much of a surprise given the Peace Garden state's rise in oil and gas production and the subsequent rise in jobs over the past few years.
>
> According to North Dakota Jobs Service data from 2011, the most recent available, the number of oil and gas jobs in North Dakota has risen 57.5 percent since 2010 – going from 10,660 jobs in 2010 to 16,786 jobs in 2011, with the oil and gas payroll nearly doubling — going from $852 million in 2010 up to $1.5 billion in 2011.
>
> North Dakota now produces more oil than any other state, including Alaska, which ranked number one in 2011, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

In New York, Chesapeake Energy just decided to pull up stakes and leave the state.

Excerpt:

> After more than five years of a fracking moratorium, a leading energy company walks away from its leases, leaving New York, its natural gas riches — and the jobs and wealth they could generate — unrealized.
>
> In 2000, people from Chesapeake Energy began arriving in Broome County, New York, a few miles north of the Pennsylvania border. Broome had seen better economic days but was lucky to be sitting right atop the natural gas-rich Marcellus Shale formation, which stretches through much of the Northeast.
>
> […]Interestingly, New York's very own Department of Environmental Conservation website on Marcellus drilling says, "No known instances of groundwater contamination have occurred from previous horizontal drilling or hydraulic fracturing projects in New York."
>
> A recent Department of Energy study has concluded that fracking chemicals do not taint drinking water.
>
> After a year of monitoring wells in western Pennsylvania, researchers found these fluids stayed thousands of feet below the areas that supply drinking water.
>
> A 2010 Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection report concluded that "no groundwater pollution or disruption of underground sources of drinking water have been attributed to hydraulic fracturing of deep gas formations."

But Pennsylvania allows fracking, and they are seeing the same economic boom as North Dakota:

> A recent study by the Manhattan Institute highlighted the economic impact of fracking in New York's neighbor to the south, Pennsylvania, which has had 5,000 wells fracked since 2002.
>
> The data are compelling, as counties with more than 200 wells, drilled between 2007 and 2011, saw a 19% increase in per-capita incomes, versus just 8% income growth for those with no wells fracked.
>
> Further, the number of county jobs grew by 7% in those with more than 200 wells fracked, against a 3% contraction in counties with no wells drilled.
>
> According to the Manhattan Institute's Diana Furchtgott-Roth, "Income of residents in the 28 New York counties above the Marcellus Shale has the potential to expand by 15% or more over the next four years if the state's moratorium is lifted."
>
> In Pennsylvania, according to the report, each well in the Marcellus Shale formation creates $5.5 million in direct economic benefits and 62 jobs, and the wells endanger no one. Pennsylvania's Department of Labor and Industry estimates that fracking in its part of the Marcellus created 72,000 jobs from the fourth quarter of 2009 to the first quarter of 2011, as New York's job- and growth-killing moratorium got underway.

Now tell me again why progressives are supposedly smarter than conservatives.

A simple explanation of middle knowledge by Dr. Craig Blomberg

September 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This article is from Denver Seminary, where Dr. Blomberg and Dr. Groothuis both teach.

Excerpt:

> Middle knowledge is a proposed solution to predestination vs. free will, to divine sovereignty and human responsibility, going all the way back to the medieval Jesuit priest Molina (so sometimes it's also called Molinism).
>
> Classic Calvinists, properly concerned to safeguard divine sovereignty, have typically rejected any theological system that bases God's predestining activity on the basis merely of his foreknowledge of how humans will respond to the gospel, because they're convinced that makes human free choice the ultimate determiner. Romans 8:29, of course, *does*base predestination on God's foreknowledge, but the Calvinist typically argues that the Greek *prōginoskō* ("foreknow") there begins already to shade over into the idea of election because in the Old Testament the Hebrew *yādā'* ("know") often appears roughly synonymous with "choose." That would explain why Paul doesn't say just that those whom God foreknew he also predestined, which could be seen as tautologous, but "predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son."
>
> Classic Arminians and Wesleyans, properly concerned to safeguard human freedom and accountability, have typically rejected any theological system that bases God's predestining activity on the basis merely of his gratuitous election, because they're convinced that makes human free choice ultimately a chimera. They often point out that *prōginoskō* is not the same verb as just *ginoskō* (which the LXX uses to translate *yādā'* and that in Greek it most commonly means simple knowledge in advance. Thus predestination *is* based on God's foreknowledge.
>
> Middle knowledge argues for both! If open theism in recent years has diminished divine omniscience more than orthodoxy has classically permitted, middle knowledge magnifies or expands God's omniscience beyond what most people have thought about. But it makes good sense: middle knowledge claims that God's perfect, infinite knowledge must be able to know not only what sentient creatures *will* freely choose in all situations in their lives but what everyone *would* do in every possible situation that they could confront. Even more magnificently, divine and unlimited knowledge must be able to discern what all possibly created beings would do in all possible situations (or, as philosophers like to say, all possible worlds).
>
> So far so good, I hope. Now here's the rub. Because there will only ever have been a finite number of humans created before God brings this world as we know

> it to an end, that means there remain countless uncreated beings that he could have chosen to create but didn't. So God's very choice to create you and me and not various other people he could have is an act of his sovereign election utterly prior to our existence. Calvinists should be happy. But it is based on knowing what we will and would do in all actual and all possible situations. Arminians should be happy. Thus, William Lane Craig in *The Only Wise God* defends this view from a libertarian Arminian perspective; Alvin Plantinga in a chapel talk at Denver Seminary years ago did the same from a libertarian Calvinist perspective, and Terrance Tiessen in *Providence and Prayer* does so from a compatibilist Calvinist perspective.

Somebody in the comments mentions that even Paul Helm has written positively about middle knowledge. Middle Knowledge shows what is going on under the hood of classical Calvinism, which affirms both the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Middle knowledge explains how God can achieve both goals simultaneously.

The apostle Paul has this to say in Acts 17:22-31:

> 22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.
> 23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ' N D ' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.
> 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;
> 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;
> 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, **having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,**
> **27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;**
> 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'
> 29 "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.
> 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,
> 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

In this research paper, Craig explains in detail what middle knowledge is, and how it works to resolve problems, like "what about those who have never heard of Jesus?" and "how can we reconcile divine sovereignty and human freedom and responsibility?" Highly

recommended tool for your tool chest.

House introduces new legislation to protect defenders of traditional marriage

September 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I would love to say that this new legislation was introduced only by Republicans, but there are Democrats co-sponsoring it, too!

Look:

> Rep. Raúl Labrador (R-ID), Rep. Steve Scalise, Chairman of the Republican Study Committee, Rep. Mike McIntyre (D-NC), and Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL) introduced a landmark bipartisan bill today to protect freedom of conscience on the issue of marriage. Their bill – H.R. 3133, the *Marriage and Religious Freedom Act* – would prohibit discrimination through the federal tax code against individuals or institutions that exercise religious conscience regarding marriage as the union of one man and one woman.
>
> "Regardless of your ideology, we can all agree about the importance of religious liberty in America," said Rep. Labrador. "Our bill will protect freedom of conscience for those who believe marriage is the union of one man and one woman. This is not a Republican or Democrat issue. As President Obama said, 'Americans hold a wide range of views' on marriage and 'maintaining our nation's commitment to religious freedom' is 'vital.' We agree.
>
> "Our bill will ensure tolerance for individuals and organizations that affirm traditional marriage, protecting them from adverse federal action. I'm proud to be joined by my colleagues in introducing this bill, and will strongly advocate for its passage."
>
> Most religious institutions fall within the 501(c) portion of the U.S. tax code, which allows for tax exemption. Under the *Marriage and Religious Freedom Act*, no individual or institution which celebrates and defines marriage as between one man and one woman would be denied or lose exemption from taxation provided for under federal law.

Ryan T. Anderson has an article on the Heritage Foundation web site that explains why this bill is needed.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Last month, the New Mexico Supreme Court ruled that the First Amendment does not protect a photographer's right to decline to take pictures of a same-sex commitment ceremony—even though doing so would violate the photographer's deeply held religious beliefs as a Christian.
>
> Christian adoption and foster care agencies have been forced to stop providing those services because they object to placing children in same-sex households.

> Other cases include a baker, a florist, a bed-and-breakfast, a t-shirt company, a student counselor, the Salvation Army, andmore.
>
> California's legislature was poised to pass a bill that would have stripped tax-exempt status from groups such as the Boy Scouts because of policies on sexual orientation. Though it had passed the state Senate, 27–9, the bill was tabled in early September after criticism from surprising quarters—including the liberal *Los Angeles Times*.
>
> These and other laws are creating a climate of intolerance and even intimidation for citizens who believe that we are created male and female, that marriage is the union of a man and a woman, and that sexual relations are properly reserved for marriage. These state and local laws are used to trump fundamental civil liberties such as freedom of speech and the free exercise of religion.
>
> Given the bad ruling and disparaging tone of the recent Supreme Court decision on the Defense of Marriage Act, Congress has an opportunity to protect religious liberty and the rights of conscience at the federal level.

Now, what's going to happen to this new legislation? Hard to say, because the Democrats control the Senate and the White House. I think that all we can hope for is to have everyone vote on it to see where they stand, so that we know that going into the 2014 mid-term elections.

Obama administration files papers to take Hobby Lobby to Supreme Court

September 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Life News.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration today filed papers taking the Christian craft store Hobby Lobby to the Supreme Court to make it comply with the HHS mandate that compels religious companies to pay for birth control and abortion-causing drugs for their employees.
>
> In July, a federal court granted Hobby Lobby a preliminary injunction against the HHS abortion-drug mandate. The injunction prevented the Obama administration from enforcing the mandate against the Christian company, but the Obama administration appealed that ruling today. The government's appeal makes it highly likely that the Supreme Court will decide the issue in the upcoming term.
>
> "The United States government is taking the remarkable position that private individuals lose their religious freedom when they make a living," said Kyle Duncan, general counsel of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and lead lawyer for Hobby Lobby. "We're confident that the Supreme Court will reject the government's extreme position and hold that religious liberty is for everyone—including people who run a business."
>
> Duncan said the appeals court victory for Hobby Lobby this summer had the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals rejecting the Obama administration's argument that the Green family and their family-owned businesses, Hobby Lobby and a Christian bookstore chain named Mardel, could not legally exercise their religious views. The court further said the businesses were likely to win their challenge to the HHS mandate.
>
> The government's petition comes the same day as a petition in *Conestoga Wood Specialties v. Sebelius*, another case involving a challenge to the HHS mandate.
>
> The court will consider the government's petition in the next six weeks. If the petition is granted, the case would be argued and decided before the end of the Court's term in June.

So now you know what "pro-choice" really means. It means force Christians to pay for drugs that kill unborn babies, against their consciences. It means *fascism.* Using the power of government to compel people to act against their consciences.

Five things to learn from “The Hobbit”

September 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This is from the Art of Manliness blog.

The 5 things:

1. You can aspire to and achieve greatness no matter who you are and no matter your stage in life
2. A great leader knows when it’s time to step back and let go
3. There are some things in life we just have to accomplish on our own
4. To simply continue on is one of the bravest things that can be done
5. A great story always has conflict or hardship

And my favorite of the five – the one that had meaning for me – is #5:

> **5. A great story always has conflict or hardship.** Imagine your life as a story. Not too long ago, we even had a guest post about this — our life is a journey, and a heroic one at that. Imagine yourself sitting down with your grandkids and telling them the story of you. “Well, I made some money, bought a few cars, sat around and watched TV for a few hours every night, and that’s about it.” Pretty boring, isn’t it? Now imagine that you can start hours worth of stories with, “I explored…I traveled…I fell in love…I fought and won…I overcame…I sweated…” Not only would the story be better, but you likely would be far more satisfied with the course of your life.
>
> J.R.R. Tolkien agrees. “Now it is a strange thing, but things that are good to have and days that are good to spend are soon told about, and not much to listen to; palpitating, and even gruesome, may make a good tale, and take a deal of telling anyways.” He is saying that a life of good ease is a boring one. It’s often what the American dream aspires to, but the reality is that personal growth, and even enjoyment, are things that come out of some kind of challenge. Whether it’s huffing and puffing and groaning your way up a mountain for the view at the top, or getting laid off and finally realizing you don’t want to be in a cubicle anymore, joy is often found after a bit of trudging. Don’t shy away from challenge. Embrace it, and know that someday it’ll make for a great story.

The Hobbit was the first big book that I ever read as a child, and I think that it inspired me to move far away from home as soon as I completed graduate school, so I could make my fortune. An adventurous spirit isn’t free – it has to be put into a boy by what he reads. When I was young, I read “The Hobbit”. You should make your children read “The Hobbit”. Put into their minds at a young age the idea that life is an adventure, that dangers and hardships are normal, and that character counts. Put into their minds that all goodness requires sacrifice. I think that things are going to get harder for Christians going forward so it’s better that they be ready for it.

Obamacare in action: 301 employers cut employee hours and/or jobs

September 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Investors Business Daily reports on the job creator response to Obamacare mandates.

Excerpt:

> More than 300 employers have cut work hours or jobs, or otherwise shifted away from full-time staff, to limit liability under ObamaCare, according to a newly updated IBD analysis.
>
> The ObamaCare Employer Mandate: A List Of Cuts To Work Hours, Jobs now includes 62 private employers and 239 public-sector employers. The list includes 80 school districts that have cited Affordable Care Act costs as a reason for cutting work hours — or in several cases outsourcing functions — of part-time instructional aides, cafeteria workers, custodians and bus drivers.
>
> It also includes 46 universities and colleges — in some cases college systems — that have reduced teaching loads for adjunct faculty.
>
> The 43 entries added to the list in the past two weeks reflect numerous actions taken before the Obama administration announced a one-year delay ofObamaCare employer mandate penalties on July 2. But the list also includes actions taken more recently, such as SeaWorld Entertainment's decision to limit part-time workers to 28 hours per week, down from 32 hours previously.
>
> Although the mandate won't take effect until January 2015, fines will be based on employment levels beginning in the second half of 2014 — or earlier.
>
> […]In addition to SeaWorld (SEAS), 10 other private employers just added to the list include a group home for disabled adults; a YMCA; two private universities; the K-VA-T Food Stores regional supermarket; the Bealls regional department store ; and four restaurant operations.
>
> […]Workers in low-wage industries clocked the shortest average workweek on record in July, just 27.4 hours, an IBD analysis of the latest available Bureau of Labor Statistics industry data shows.
>
> This low-wage segment covers 29 million private-sector workers, 25% of the total, in about 40 industry groups where nonsupervisors make up to about $14.50 an hour.
>
> While the IBD list of private-sector hour-cutters is quite small to prove otherwise, it does offer clues that can be of help in interpreting official industry data on hours worked.
>
> For example, the workweek at general merchandise stores tumbled from 31.1 hours in December to 29.8 hours in July. The inclusion of Wal-Mart (WMT) and Bealls on IBD's list point to ObamaCare's employer mandate as a significant

> contributing factor.
>
> The average workweek in the hotel and accommodations industry hit a record low in July — lower than in the aftermath of 9/11 or at the bottom of the Great Recession.
>
> In July, the workweek for nonsupervisors fell to 28.8 hours, down from 30.7 hours in March 2010, when ObamaCare was signed into law.

I’m looking forward to the 2014 elections, when we will get to vote again on this after we’ve seen “what’s in the bill”. I don’t think that the media’s blatherings are going to be able to convince people who are working under 30 hours a week that Obamacare was the right way to reform health care policy.

Jerry Walls lectures on the main problem with Calvinist theology

September 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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WARNING: This lecture is a very sharp and pointed critique of Calvinist theology. Viewer discretion is advised.

In Protestant Christianity, there is a division between people who accept Calvinist doctrines and those who don't. Both groups think that the other group are genuine Christians, but the debate has more to do with the human free will, human responsibility and who God loves.

About Dr. Jerry Walls:

- BA in Religion and Philosophy, Houghton College
- MDiv, Princeton Seminary
- STM, Yale Divinity School
- PhD in Philosophy, Notre Dame

He is a professor at Houston Baptist University. You can find a more detailed profile here.

Dr. Walls is Protestant (like me). He is a substance dualist (like me). And he believes in a real eternal Hell (like me). And he is very, very assertive. Definitely no confidence problems here. And you're not going to have a problem keeping your attention on this lecture!

Note that I do not agree with or endorse Dr. Walls on all of his views.

Here's the lecture: (64 minutes)

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- What are the main doctrines of Calvinism? (TULIP)
- A look at the Westminster Confession
- The nature of freedom and free will
- Calvinist doctrine of freedom: compatibilism
- The implications of compatibilism
- Who determines what each person will desire on Calvinism?
- Who does God love on Calvinism?
- The law of non-contradiction
- Does God make a genuine offer of salvation to all people on Calvinism?
- Does God love "the elect" differently than the "non-elect" on Calvinism?

He quotes at least a half-dozen Calvinist theologians in this lecture, including John Piper, J.I. Packer and D.A. Carson. And he also mentions 3 videos at the end of the lecture where he goes over specific Bible verses that seem to support Calvinism (part 4, part 5, part

6 are the ones he mentioned).

This lecture is very strong stuff, and I think that he could have been nicer when presenting it, but he hit on every single objection that I have to Calvinism, and he worked through my reasoning too! So I really liked that he validated all of my concerns about Calvinism. I'm not as bothered about the problems with Calvinism as he is, though. I don't think it's a big divisive issue. I almost always read Calvinist theologians when I am reading theology. I just conjoin Calvinism with middle knowledge and resistible grace, and it's fine. Calvinists are some of the best theologians, they are just wrong on the things he discusses in his lecture.

You may also be interested in these debates on salvation between a Calvinist and a non-Calvinist.

Obama administration effectively bans construction of future coal plants

September 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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CNBC explains. (H/T Bad Blue)

Excerpt:

> The proposal would help reshape where Americans get electricity, away from a coal-dependent past into a future fired by cleaner sources of energy. It's also a key step in President Barack Obama's global warming plans, because it would help end what he called "the limitless dumping of carbon pollution" from power plants.
>
> Although the proposed rule won't immediately affect plants already operating, it eventually would force the government to limit emissions from the existing power plant fleet, which accounts for a third of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.
>
> […]Despite some tweaks, the rule packs the same punch as one announced last year, which was widely criticized by industry and Republicans as effectively banning any new coal projects in the U.S.
>
> That's because to meet the standard, new coal-fired power plants would need to install expensive technology to capture carbon dioxide and bury it underground. No coal-fired power plant has done that yet, in large part because of the cost.
>
> […]"EPA has set a dangerous and far-reaching precedent for the broader economy by failing to base environmental standards on reliable technology," said Hall Quinn, president and CEO of the National Mining Association. The EPA regulation "effectively bans coal from America's power portfolio," he said.

The first effect of this decision will be to put a lot of Americans out of work.

The second effect will be to cause electricity costs to skyrocket, exactly as Obama promised.

Excerpt:

> Wind and solar energy are dilute, intermittent, and more costly than traditional hydrocarbon energy sources. After atmospheric absorption and system losses, only a single 100-watt bulb can be powered from a square meter of solar cells, and this only at midday on a cloudless day. Wind towers must be spaced about 140 meters apart to capture energy from the wind. As a result, solar requires 75 to 100 times the land and wind requires 150 to 250 times the land of traditional power sources.
>
> Solar systems don't output energy at night or at low angles of incoming sunlight. Wind systems provide rated output less than 30% of the time and this output

> varies chaotically. Traditional gas or coal power plants must be running as an active backup to maintain continuity of electricity supply. Like a car driving in stop-and-go conditions, installation of a wind farm converts the power system into a stop-and-go electrical system. In measured real world conditions, combined wind and hydrocarbon systems use more fuel, output more sulfur and nitrogen oxides, and emit more carbon dioxide than hydrocarbon-only electrical systems.
>
> Total cost estimates show that wind and solar systems are significantly more costly than hydrocarbon energy sources. Since wind requires an active backup hydrocarbon facility, wind can only replace some of the variable cost of a coal or gas plant. Department of Energy 2011 estimates place the variable cost of coal at 3 cents per kW-hr and gas at 5 cents per kW-hr, compared to 9 cents for on-shore wind and 24 cents for offshore wind. Solar costs are 20 to 30 cents per kW-hr.

We're getting what we voted for. We've had no significant global warming for 15 years, but that won't stop the Democrats from saddling private industry with regulatory costs – costs that they will pass on to consumers. I would not be surprised if consumers (who after all mostly voted for Obama) blame the energy companies and never identify the root cause of the rising costs.

Ann Furedi, CEO of UK's largest abortion provider, endorses sex-selection abortion

September 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> The chief executive of Britain's biggest abortion charity has said women are legally free to arrange an abortion because they are unhappy with the sex of their unborn baby.
>
> Ann Furedi, of BPAS, said the law does not prevent women from choosing a termination on the grounds of gender and she even compared it to abortion after rape.

> Mrs Furedi's comments come weeks after it was disclosed that the CPS had decided not to prosecute two doctors who were exposed by a Daily Telegraph investigation arranging terminations purely because the unborn baby was a girl.
>
> […]Writing for online magazine Spiked, she said: "A doctor agreeing to an abortion on grounds of rape would be breaking the law no more and no less than a doctor who agrees an abortion on grounds of sex selection," she said.
>
> "While it is true that the sex of the foetus is not a legal ground for abortion, nor is rape, or incest, or being 13 years old. Nor is being homeless, or abandoned, or just feeling there's no way you can bring a child into the world… yet they are all reasons why a doctor may believe a women has met the legal grounds of abortion."
>
> She added: "The woman gives her reasons, the doctor decides on the grounds as set out in the law … there is no legal requirement to deny a woman an abortion if she has a sex preference, providing that the legal grounds are still met.

> “The law is silent on the matter of gender selection, just as it is silent on rape.”

The UK Guardian is probably the UK’s best-known left-of-center newspaper. They responded to the story.

Excerpt:

> When you talk about being pro-choice, sex selective abortion is often slung at you as the triumphant gotcha. “You love women so much you want them to be in charge of what grows inside their bodies, but what about the women who *are* aborted, have a go at answering that? ZING!”
>
> The answer is actually remarkably simple, and it’s this: it doesn’t matter whether what’s growing inside you is liable to end up as a man or a woman. What matters is whether the person it’s growing inside – the person who is going to have to deliver the resulting baby, at not inconsiderable personal peril – actually wants to be pregnant and give birth to this child. In a world where it’s possible to end a pregnancy safely and legally, it seems like rank brutality to force anyone to carry to term against her will.
>
> And as far as I’m concerned, it doesn’t matter why any woman wants to end her pregnancy. As the conscious and legally competent entity in the conception set-up, it’s the woman’s say that counts, and even the most terrible reason for having an abortion holds more sway than the best imaginable reason for compelling a woman to carry to term.

The article goes on to accuse pro-lifers of “misogyny” for opposing the murder of unborn girls, just because they are girls.

Bed and Breakfast owners forced to sell hotel after harassment by gay activists

September 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay rights vs religious liberty

The Blaze reports.

> Christian bed and breakfast owners who once famously refused service to a gay couple in the U.K. now claim that they've been forced to sell their hotel following a contentious legal battle andongoing harassment.
>
> Hazelmary and Peter Bull insist that they have been the victims of vandalism, death threats and website attacks since the 2008 incident. As a result, in addition to the impending loss of the Chymorvah Hotel in Marazion, Cornwall, England, the couple has also grappled with intense anger from their ideological opponents.
>
> Since denying a room to Martyn Hall and Steven Preddy, a gay couple, they have been forced to pay for legal representation and to compensate Hall and Preddy, all-the-while attracting fewer guests as a result of their stance on homosexuality (the hotel only allows married adults to share a bed).
>
> "We were optimistic in the spring. Why wouldn't we be with the summer ahead of us?," Hazelmarytold the Daily Mail. "We have had a better summer than we thought but nowhere near good enough to pay our way. We were not even half-full. We must have been the only place in west Cornwall that had rooms left."
>
> […]In an interview with the outlet, the Bulls said that they also had a dead rabbit nailed to their fence and that someone even removed the bolts from the tires on their car. They have also reportedly encountered death threats.

The Blaze also had an article about the Oregon couple who had to sell their bakery because of harassment by gay activists.

Excerpt:

> But the harassment has also come in some very eerie forms, Melissa claims. In

> the early morning hours on Monday, the baker claims that someone broke into the Sweet Cakes truck, a vehicle the family uses to advance its business. The truck was parked in the Kleins' driveway. This was particularly nerve-wrecking for Melissa and Aaron, astheir home, where the truck was located, is in a highly secluded area — one that is nowhere near where their former shop.
>
> "Somebody came up into our driveway and rummaged through our truck and took stuff out," she said. "The really strange thing is, they didn't steal anything, they just made a mess. It kind of was a little creepy."
>
> The culprit didn't take any money, she said, which was also odd, as the truck contained cash. While she's definitely shaken by the incident, Melissa said that she feels safe, as her husband is a hunter who is trained to use a firearm. When he's home, she's fine, but when Aaron is out of the house, Melissa admitted that she does get a little scared.
>
> In addition to losing their business, the Klein family has been impacted in other ways. Their children are now homeschooled — a decision that Melissa said she made this year following the media firestorm that erupted. And in light of the bakery's closure, Aaron has gone back to work to help provide for the family.
>
> The harassing e-mails haven't stopped either. Melisa shared just a few of the messages she has received of late:
>
> - One message with the subject line "racist maggots" read, "People like you will burn in HELL, you racist pigs."
> - Another read, "Your homophobic rants will not be forgotten and you will go out of business. This is the 21st century, a**holes."
> - And another: "Do everyone a favor and fall off a cliff."
> - One individual made it very personal: "Honey it would take a lot to make your ugly a** look good! You are ugly inside and out!"
> - And finally: "Maybe your god will send you some cat food to eat when you are living on the street?"
>
> And those are just a few of the messages received over the past few days. Negative social media comments, too, have abounded.

This is what happens when cultural elites push the idea that their is only one side to the gay marriage debate. It probably doesn't help that most Christians have not bothered to prepare a secular case against policies that we disagree with. It's very easy for the secular left to dehumanize their opponents when they think that our position is based on religion only. We have to find arguments that appeal to moral non-Christians in order to build a coalition that will defend basic human rights from gay activists.

At least 75 Christians killed by Muslim suicide bombers in Pakistan

September 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East

Fox News reports. (H/T Letitia)

Excerpt:

> A pair of suicide bombers detonated their explosives outside a historic church in northwestern Pakistan on Sunday, killing 75 people in the deadliest-ever attack on the country's Christian minority, officials said.
>
> […]The attack on the All Saints Church, which also wounded 110 people, underlines the threat posed by the Pakistani Taliban at a time when the government is seeking a peace deal with the militants. It will likely intensify criticism from those who believe that negotiating peace with the Taliban is a mistake.
>
> The attack occurred as hundreds of worshippers were coming out of the church in the city's Kohati Gate district after services to get a free meal of rice offered on the front lawn, said a top government administrator, Sahibzada Anees.
>
> "There were blasts and there was hell for all of us," said Nazir John, who was at the church with at least 400 other worshippers. "When I got my senses back, I found nothing but smoke, dust, blood and screaming people. I saw severed body parts and blood all around."
>
> Survivors wailed and hugged each other in the wake of the blasts. The white walls of the church, which first opened in the late 1800s, were pockmarked with holes caused by ball bearings or other metal objects contained in the bombs to cause maximum damage. Blood stained the floor and was splashed on the walls. Plates filled with rice were scattered across the ground.

> The attack was carried out by a pair of suicide bombers who detonated their explosives almost simultaneously, said police officer Shafqat Malik. Authorities found their body parts and were trying to determine their age, he said.
>
> The blasts killed 75 people and wounded another 110, said Jamil Shah, a spokesman at the hospital in Peshawar where the victims were being treated. The dead included women and children, said Sher Ali Khan, another doctor at the hospital.
>
> The number of casualties from the blasts was so high that the hospital was running out of caskets for the dead and beds for the wounded, said Mian Iftikhar Hussain, a former information minister of surrounding Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province who was on the scene.
>
> "This is the deadliest attack against Christians in our country," said Irfan Jamil, the bishop of the eastern city of Lahore.
>
> One of the wounded, John Tariq, who lost his father in the attack, asked of the attackers, "What have we done wrong to these people? Why are we being killed?"
>
> Ahmad Marwat, who identified himself as the spokesman for the Jundullah wing of the Pakistani Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Strangely, the terrorist group claims that they attacked civilians because of U.S. drone attacks against other terrorists. Let me make sense of this for you. When a person targets innocent people directly, that's terrorism. Insofar as Muslims carry out attacks that target civilians, they are terrorists. The United States *never* targets civilians. Civilians may be killed because they are near to terrorists, or because terrorists use civilians as human shields. There is no moral equivalency here, regardless of what the mainstream media tries to make people believe.

UPDATE: There was also a massive terrorist attack in Kenya on the weekend.

William Lane Craig posts full Vilenkin e-mail misrepresented by Krauss in their debate

September 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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First, Dr. Craig posted the e-mail from Vilenkin to Krauss, which Krauss used in his debate with Craig, with the parts Krauss omitted in bold:

> Hi Lawrence,
>
> Any theorem is only as good as its assumptions. The BGV theorem says that if the universe is on average expanding along a given worldline, this worldline cannot be infinite to the past.
>
> A possible loophole is that there might be an epoch of contraction prior to the expansion. Models of this sort have been discussed by Aguirre & Gratton and by Carroll & Chen. **They had to assume though that the minimum of entropy was reached at the bounce and offered no mechanism to enforce this condition. It seems to me that it is essentially equivalent to a beginning.**
>
> **On the other hand,** Jaume Garriga and I are now exploring a picture of the multiverse where the BGV theorem may not apply. In bubbles of negative vacuum energy, expansion is followed by cocntraction, **and it is usually assumed that this ends in a big crunch singularity.** However, it is conceivable (and many people think likely) that singularities will be resolved in the theory of quantum gravity, so the internal collapse of the bubbles will be followed by an expansion. In this scenario, **a typical worldline will go through a succession of expanding and contracting regions, and** it is not at all clear that the BGV assumption (expansion on average) will be satisfied.
>
> **I suspect that the theorem can be extended to this case, maybe with some additional assumptions. But** of course there is no such thing as absolute certainty in science, especially in matters like the creation of the universe. Note for example that the BGV theorem uses a classical picture of spacetime. In the regime where gravity becomes essentially quantum, we may not even know the right questions to ask.
>
> Alex

Now recall that Krauss excuses the selective editing of the e-mail in the debate by saying that it was “too technical” to include. Judge for yourself if the omitted lines are “too technical” or whether they were omitted in order to mislead people about the evidence for the beginning of the universe.

Dr. Craig comments:

> Whoa! That puts a very different face on the matter, doesn’t it? Why didn’t

> Krauss read the sentence, “It seems to me that it is essentially equivalent to a beginning”? Because it was too technical? Is this the transparency, honesty, and forthrightness that Krauss extols? (By the way, Vilenkin’s criticism of these models is the same one that Vilenkin makes in his Cambridge paper: far from showing an eternal past, these models actually feature a universe with a common beginning point for two arrows of time.)
>
> And why did Krauss delete Vilenkin’s caveat that the BGV theorem can, in his estimation, be extended to cover the case of an expanding and contracting model such as Garriga and Vilenkin are exploring? And why delete the remark that such a model is usually assumed to be incorrect? It’s evident that Vilenkin’s email was selectively edited to give it the spin Krauss wanted.

Some people told me that they thought that Dr. Craig needed to be a little less gracious with Krauss in the debate, but that comment takes Krauss on directly. Too bad most of the people who watch the debate will never know unless they see the original e-mail from Vilenkin that Craig posted.

Dr. Craig then wrote to Dr. Vilenkin about this misrepresentation and here is part of the reply:

> The Aguirre-Gratton model can avoide singularities by postulating a small “initial” closed universe and then allowing it to evolve in both directions of time. I put “initial” in quotation marks, because Aguirre and Gratton do not think of it that way. But this model requires that a very special condition is enforced at some moment in the history of the universe. At that moment, the universe should be very small and have very low entropy. Aguirre and Gratton do not specify a physical mechanism that could enforce such a condition.
>
> Carroll and Chen claim that the universe did not have to be small at that special moment. But in my recent paper I show that in this case singularities are unavoidable.
>
> […]I think you represented what I wrote about the BGV theorem in my papers and to you personally very accurately.

Now I don’t want anyone to get the idea that all atheists are like Krauss. I distinctly remember another atheist named Anthony Flew debating Dr. Craig and a questioner from the audience asked him why not prefer speculative cosmologies like the eternally oscillating model. Dr. Flew (unlike Dr. Krauss) was honest – he said that we have to accept the science we have today based on the evidence we have today. Dr. Krauss is not willing to accept the science we have today and the evidence we have today. That’s the difference. This is a failing of Dr. Krauss’ will and intellect. He simply cannot bring himself to accept what science has shown, if it impacts his autonomy in any way. He would rather mislead himself and others with speculations rather than face reality.

Watch the whole debate – see for yourself

I’ll re-state the relevant part of my Craig-Krauss debate summary below. The summary

has the full video.

The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can't even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don't work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don't have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON'T KNOW!!!!!!!" (raising his voice)
- Craig: I'm not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"

- Craig: “I wonder what you deleted from the original letter”
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) “I just told you!”
- Craig: “Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) ‘You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.’
- Craig: “That’s Vilenkin.”
- Krauss: “In this paper, that’s absolutely right”
- Krauss: But it’s ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it’s unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: “Isn’t it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?”
- Krauss: “No”
- Craig: “Well, can you give us one then”
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) “In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong”
- Krauss: “You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it’s hard”
- Craig: “Right”

Krauss accused Dr. Craig of misrepresenting science many times in his three Australia debates, but now we know the truth about who misrepresented science.

UPDATE: This whole episode made me think of a lecture by famous physicist Richard Feynman.

Excerpt:

> The first principle is that you must not fool yourself–and you are the easiest person to fool. So you have to be very careful about that. After you’ve not fooled yourself, it’s easy not to fool other scientists. You just have to be honest in a conventional way after that.
>
> I would like to add something that’s not essential to the science, but something I kind of believe, which is that you should not fool the layman when you’re talking as a scientist. I am not trying to tell you what to do about cheating on your wife, or fooling your girlfriend, or something like that, when you’re not trying to be a scientist, but just trying to be an ordinary human being. We’ll leave those problems up to you and your rabbi. I’m talking about a specific, extra type of integrity that is not lying, but bending over backwards to show how you are maybe wrong, that you ought to have when acting as a scientist. And this is our responsibility as scientists, certainly to other scientists, and I think to laymen.

Now given what Krauss did in the debate, it seems to me that he is not in agreement with

Feynman.

UPDATE: Dr. Craig reports that Dr. Krauss refused to let the organizers live-stream the three Australia debates, as well as refusing to let the Australian Broadcasting Corporation live-broadcast the three debates.

How well is government promotion wind and solar power working out in Germany?

September 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

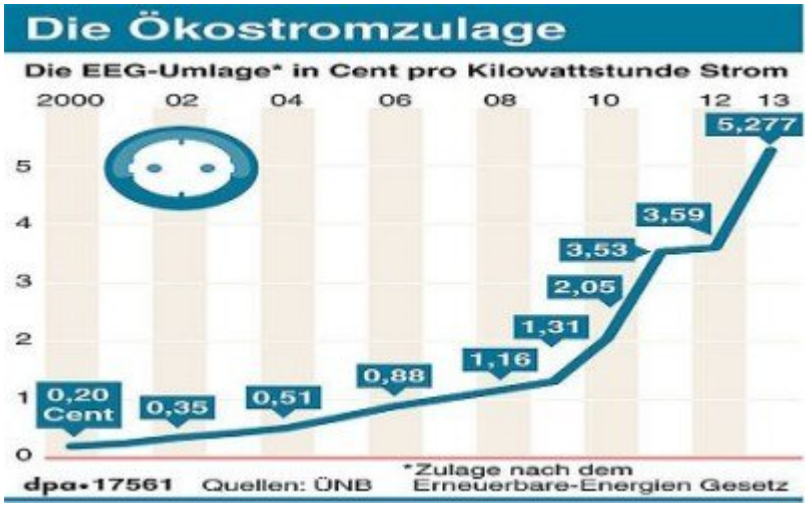

Surcharge paid by German households and SMEs

First, let's hear from the ultra-leftist New York Times. (H/T Dennis Prager)

Excerpt:

> It is an audacious undertaking with wide and deep support in Germany: shut down the nation's nuclear power plants, wean the country from coal and promote a wholesale shift to renewable energy sources.
>
> But the plan, backed by Chancellor Angela Merkel and opposition parties alike, is running into problems in execution that are forcing Germans to come face to face with the costs and complexities of sticking to their principles.
>
> German families are being hit by rapidly increasing electricity rates, to the point where growing numbers of them can no longer afford to pay the bill. Businesses are more and more worried that their energy costs will put them at a disadvantage to competitors in nations with lower energy costs, and some energy-intensive industries have begun to shun the country because they fear steeper costs ahead.
>
> Newly constructed offshore wind farms churn unconnected to an energy grid still in need of expansion. And despite all the costs, carbon emissions actually rose last year as reserve coal-burning plants were fired up to close gaps in energy supplies.
>
> A new phrase, "energy poverty," has entered the lexicon.
>
> "Often, I don't go into my living room in order to save electricity," said Olaf Taeuber, 55, who manages a fleet of vehicles for a social services provider in Berlin. "You feel the pain in your pocketbook."
>
> Mr. Taeuber relies on just a single five-watt bulb that gives off what he calls a

> “cozy” glow to light his kitchen when he comes home at night. If in real need, he switches on a neon tube, which uses all of 25 watts.
>
> Even so, with his bill growing rapidly, he found himself seeking help last week to fend off a threat from Berlin’s main power company to cut off his electricity. He is one of a growing number of Germans confronting the realities of trying to carry out Ms. Merkel’s most ambitious domestic project and one of the most sweeping energy transformation efforts undertaken by an industrialized country.
>
> […]The cost of the plan is expected to be about $735 billion, according to government estimates, and may eventually surpass even that of the euro zone bailouts that have received far more attention during Ms. Merkel’s tenure. Yet as the transition’s unknowns have grown, so have costs for the state, major companies and consumers.

> […]With consumers having to pay about $270 each in surcharges this year to subsidize new operators of renewable power, the hardest hit are low-wage earners, retirees and people on welfare, Mr. Gärtner said. Government subsidies for the plan amounted to $22.7 billion in 2012 and could reach $40.5 billion by 2020, according to John Musk, a power analyst at RBC Capital Markets.
>
> […]**Part of the reason consumer prices have risen so sharply is that, for now, the government has shielded about 700 companies from increased energy costs, to protect their competitive position in the global economy.**
>
> **Industrial users still pay substantially more for electricity here than do their counterparts in Britain or France, and almost three times as much as those in the United States, according to a study by the German industrial giant Siemens. The Cologne Institute for Economic Research said there had been a marked decline in the willingness of industrial companies to invest in Germany since 2000.**

Note that German industry has been EXEMPT from paying the green energy surcharge. Households and small-to-medium-size enterprises are paying it.

The key part of the article, I think, is this:

> **One of the first obstacles encountered involves the vagaries of electrical power generation that is dependent on sources as inconsistent and unpredictable as the wind and the sun.**
>
> **And no one has invented a means of storing that energy for very long, which means overwhelming gluts on some days and crippling shortages on others that require firing up old oil- and coal-burning power plants. That, in turn, undercuts the goal of reducing fossil-fuel emissions that have been linked to climate change.**
>
> **Last year, wind, solar and other nonfossil-fuel sources provided 22**

> **percent of the power for Germany, but the country increased its carbon emissions over 2011 as oil- and coal-burning power plants had to close gaps in the evolving system, according to the German electricity association BDEW.**

Didn't anyone think of that problem before starting out this crazy plan? No. Because they important thing was feelings – politicians had to feel good about solving a made-up crisis.

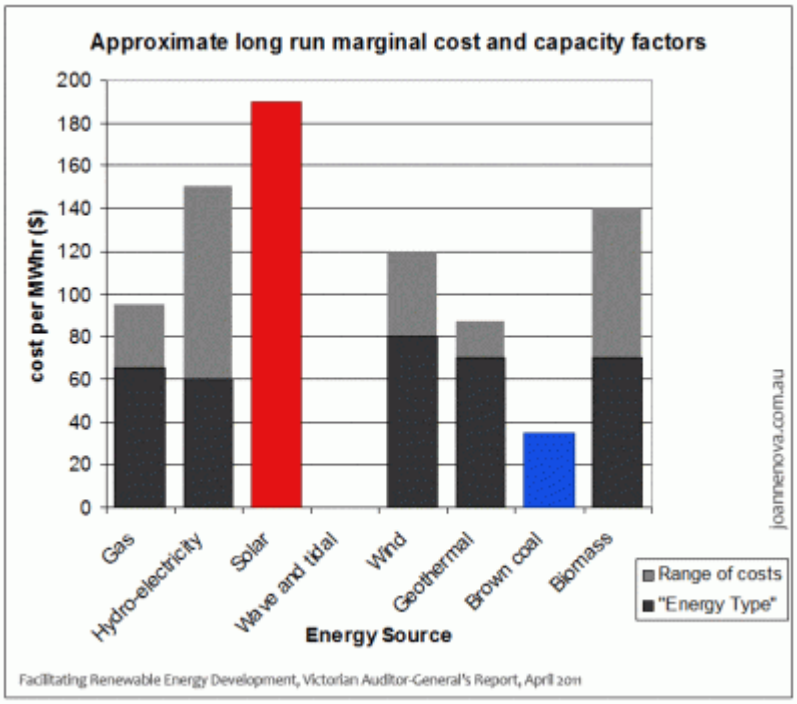

Cost of renewable wind and solar energy

Why can't leftists learn from the failed experiments of others?

Government-subsidized green energy scams have been tried before in Spain and Denmark. Did they work?

Well, we know that in Spain, the green jobs programs failed. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Subsidizing renewable energy in the U.S. may destroy two jobs for every one created if Spain's experience with windmills and solar farms is any guide.
>
> For every new position that depends on energy price supports, at least 2.2 jobs in other industries will disappear, according to a study from King Juan Carlos University in Madrid.
>
> U.S. President Barack Obama's 2010 budget proposal contains about $20 billion in tax incentives for clean-energy programs. In Spain, where wind turbines provided 11 percent of power demand last year, generators earn rates as much as 11 times more for renewable energy compared with burning fossil fuels.
>
> **The premiums paid for solar, biomass, wave and wind power – – which are charged to consumers in their bills — translated into a $774,000 cost for each Spanish "green job" created since 2000, said Gabriel Calzada, an economics professor at the university and author of the**

> **report.**
>
> **“The loss of jobs could be greater if you account for the amount of lost industry that moves out of the country due to higher energy prices,” he said in an interview.**
>
> The Heritage Foundation cites a study from Denmark, which shows that wind power has also failed.

Excerpt:

> But according to a new study from the Danish Centre for Political Studies (CEPOS), commissioned by the Institute for Energy Research, the road to increased wind power is less traveled for a reason. The study refutes the claim that Denmark generates 20 percent of its power from wind stating that its high intermittency not only leads to new challenges to balance the supply and demand of electricity, but also provides less electricity consumption than assumed. The new study says, “wind power has recently (2006) met as little as 5% of Denmark’s annual electricity consumption with an average over the last five years of 9.7%.” Furthermore, the wind energy Denmark exports to its northern neighbors, Sweden and Norway, does little to reduce carbon dioxide emissions because the energy it replaces is carbon neutral.
>
> The study goes on to say that the only reason wind power exists in Denmark is “through substantial subsidies supporting the wind turbine owners. Exactly how the subsidies have been shared between land, wind turbine owners, labor, capital and its shareholders is opaque, but it is fair to assess that no Danish wind industry to speak of would exist if it had to compete on market terms.”
>
> **But there’s a cost involved. When government spends more money, it necessarily diverts labor, capital and materials from the private sector. Just like promises are made in the United States about green jobs creation, the heavily subsidized Danish program created 28,400 jobs. But “this does not, however, constitute the net employment effect of the wind mill subsidy. In the long run, creating additional employment in one sector through subsidies will detract labor from other sectors, resulting in no increase in net employment but only in a shift from the non-subsidized sectors to the subsidized sector.”**
>
> And because these resources are being diverted away from more productive uses (in terms of value added, the energy technology underperforms compared to industrial average), “Danish GDP is approximately $270 million lower than it would have been if the wind sector work force was employed elsewhere.”

Why do people keep voting in leaders who don’t know what they are doing? Why are people surprised when emotional craziness and moral preening doesn’t work out financially?

Previously, I blogged about how Obama was causing our electricity prices to skyrocket by

effectively banning coal power. Not to mention blocking the Keystone XL pipeline. Keep that in mind when you are lighting your house with 5 Watt light bulbs. This doesn't happen by accident – you need politicians to wage war on the free market system in order for this to happen. And that's what we've been voting for in the last two elections.

Related Posts

- Fracking propels North Dakota to 3.2% unemployment rate
- Ten ways that the Obama administration could lower gas prices right now
- The ten worst energy policies of the Obama administration
- Is Obama telling the truth about U.S. oil reserves?
- Production of oil, gas and coal on federal lands sinks to 9-year low
- Did Obama really create jobs with his green energy and stimulus programs?
- In Canada, a revolt against global warming socialism creates an economic boom
- Obama pleases environmental lobby by killing 20,000-job Keystone XL pipeline

Thomas Aquinas on law, economics and government

September 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I found three posts at the AEI Values and Capitalism blog authored by a recent graduate of Grove City College.

Here the 3 posts:

- Thomas Aquinas on Private Property
- Thomas Aquinas on the Role of Government
- Thomas Aquinas on Helping the Poor

I'm going to snip the most interesting parts from each of the 3 posts.

First post talks about the Bible and private property:

> What, if any, role does government play in defining, bestowing and taking private property? This question underlies many modern-day political debates, but it's actually an issue scholars have debated for centuries. At the heart of this debate is the tension between private property and government confiscation: Does private property exist? If so, does government have the authority to take it from the citizens it governs?
>
> […]"It is false to say that human beings are not permitted to possess their own property," he writes, implying that individual human beings have a right to the external goods they own and no one else may possess ownership over their goods. The eighth commandment—"Thou Shalt Not Steal"—assumes the principle of private property. God, by commanding man to refrain from stealing from his neighbor, assumes that man can and does own material goods.
>
> […]In his book "Foundations of Economics: A Christian View," Dr. Shawn Ritenour of Grove City College puts it quite simply: "Our property is God's gift." The socialist idea that property rights come from government is false. Property rights come from our Creator.

So that's the first thing to get clear. The Bible assumes the concept of private property.

Second post talks about when the government is justified in taking the property of citizens:

> Theft is not justified on an individual level or a state level. Stealing is stealing. But if this is true, does government commit theft when it taxes its citizens? According to Aquinas, not quite. "If rulers exact from their subjects what is due them in **justice** in order to maintain the **common good**," he writes, "there is no robbery" (emphasis mine). Government may justly take from its citizens their God-given property only if it promotes justice for the common good of society.
>
> But this criterion is vague. The common good may be defined in a variety of

> ways. But Aquinas does not leave the reader without qualifying his statement:
>
> But public authority is committed to rulers in order that they may safeguard justice. And so they are permitted to use force and coercion only in the course of justice, whether in **wars against enemies** or in **punishing civilian criminals**. (emphasis mine)
>
> Government may take from its citizens, i.e. taxes, for the two-fold purpose of defended them from foreign enemies and convicting domestic criminals.

So the government can take money from citizens for defending them from external threats and internal threats. But what about helping the poor? Who is going to help the poor, if it's not government's job?

Third post talks about whose job it is to help the poor:

> We must help those in need directly, through private institutions and through the church, not allowing government to become a substitute for our individual responsibility of loving our neighbor. Aquinas writes:
>
> But because many persons are in need, and the same things cannot assist everybody, the dispensing of one's own goods is committed to each **individual**, so that each may out of them assist those in need. (emphasis mine)
>
> Because of the magnitude and specificity of each individual's needs, the government cannot adequately provide for every one of its citizens. As Christians, we must work to provide for our neighbors in accordance with the command in Scripture to love our neighbor as ourselves.
>
> Property is a gift from God—not government—to his people for the purposes of self-preservation and assisting those in need. When private institutions, churches and individuals fulfill their mandate to love our neighbors as ourselves, no need for government involvement exists.

Just a helpful reminder to everyone about what one of the pillars of the Christian faith thought about fiscal policy and the role of government. By the way, if you're thinking about studying economics and you're a Christian, I recommend Grove City College.

Christianity and economics

Here's an interview with Dr. Shawn Ritenour, economics professor at Grove City College. The interview is conducted by Dr. Paul Kengor.

Excerpt:

> **Kengor**: …it seems that the very foundation of economics, not to mention the American republic in some respects, is the right to private property. Do you agree? If so, is that Scriptural?
>
> **Ritenour**: The foundation of economic activity and policy is private property. All action requires the use of property and all economic policy is about how people can legally use their property. To benefit from the division of labor, we must be

able to exchange our products, which requires private property. Private property is definitely Scriptural. The Bible explicitly prohibits theft, fraud, moving property barriers, debasing money, violating labor contracts, as well as coveting. These prohibitions apply to both citizens and rulers. In my text, I apply this conclusion to issues such as confiscatory taxation, government subsidies, business regulation, and monetary inflation.

Kengor: I find it very telling that Karl Marx was first and foremost against private property, not to mention against God as well. In the "Communist Manifesto," he wrote plainly: "the theory of the Communists may be summed up in a single sentence: Abolition of private property." And yet, there are some religious left Christians who claim that the Bible, especially in certain Old Testament passages, preaches a form of socialism and even communism. A student of mine had a teacher at a private Christian school in Ohio who instructed the class that as Christians they should be communists. Can you address this argument?

Ritenour: Communism can be condemned strictly on the basis of the Christian ethic of property (among other reasons). Nothing in Scripture either commands or implies that the means of production should be controlled by the state. There are passages in the early chapters of Acts that are often cited as promoting "Christian communism," but, in fact, actually illustrate Christian sharing. The various Christians still owned their property, but were generous in sharing whenever they saw a need. When Peter rebukes Ananias in Acts 5, he explicitly says that both the property that Ananias and Sapphira sold and the monetary proceeds from selling it were theirs to do with what they wanted. That is not the gospel according to Marx.

Kengor: I like the way you turn the religious left's thinking on private property on its head. You note that "God prohibits our coveting the property of others." With that being the case, isn't it wrong for the government to use the mighty arm of the state to forcibly remove property from one person to give it to another?

Ritenour: I see no other way around that conclusion, especially when we realize that, in our day of mass democracy, the state usually accomplishes policies of wealth redistribution by inciting envy and covetousness among the populace.

Kengor: What about profits? Reconcile the profit motive with the God of Scripture. We have people in this society who portray profits as greedy or unjust.

Ritenour: Profit is the reward entrepreneurs receive for more successfully producing what people want. This is no easy thing to do. Entrepreneurs must invest in present production of goods they sell in the future. Neither entrepreneurs nor government bureaucrats know exactly what future demand will be. Therefore, production necessitates bearing risk. If the entrepreneur forecasts future demand incorrectly, he will waste resources and reap losses. If he forecasts the future correctly, he serves his fellow man by producing goods people want. It seems only right that such producers are rewarded with profit. In

> a free market, the only way entrepreneurs earn profits is to serve customers better than anyone else.

If you would like to learn more about the relationship between Christianity and economics, then I recommend "Money, Greed and God" and "Indivisible" by Jay Richards. The former is about what the Bible says about economics, the latter is about developing a Christian worldview of fiscal and social issues. If you really want a comprehensive assessment of the Bible and politics, then I recommend Wayne Grudem's "Politics According to the Bible".

Further study

- Jay Richards on the religious left
- Acton Institute review of Jay Richards' "Money, Greed and God" book
- The Cato Institute talks to Jay Richards about Christianity and capitalism
- Free e-book featuring Jennifer Roback Morse, Paul Ryan and Michele Bachmann

Which policies have caused our low labor force participation rate?

September 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

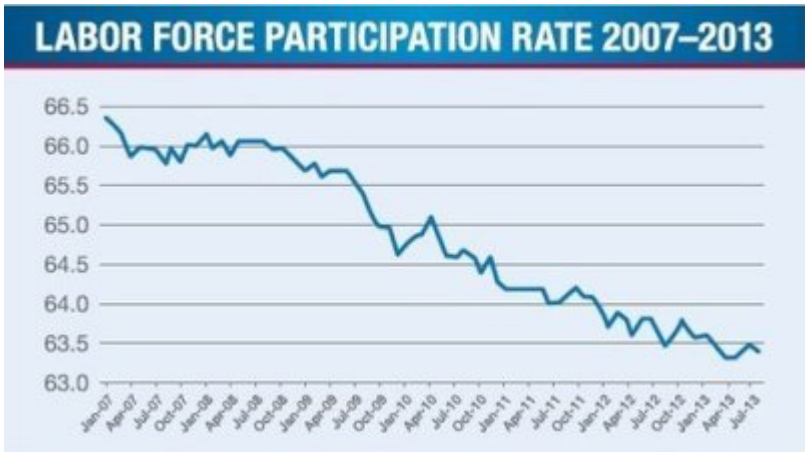

Labor Force Participation Rate from 2007 (Pelosi/Reid) to 2013

Jay Richards tweeted this article from the Wall Street Journal. The article is an interview with a business owner named Bob Funk whose job it is to match job seekers to job creators.

Hiring is down because of increased regulation of employers and fear of interventionism:

> Here's something you don't often see in Washington: a businessman trying to repeal a law that *helps* his company. That's Bob Funk's latest mission in life. He's the president and founder of Express Employment Services, the fifth-largest employment agency in America, with annual sales of $2.5 billion and more than 600 franchises across the country. This year he will place nearly half a million workers in jobs.
>
> "ObamaCare has been an absolute boon for my business," he says as we sit in his new office headquarters near downtown Oklahoma City. "I'm making a lot of money thanks to that law. We're up 8% this year. But it's just terrible for the country. I see that firsthand every day."
>
> Why is the health-care law good for Express but bad for the country? "Firms are just very reluctant to hire full-time workers," Mr. Funk says. "So they are taking on more temporary help, which is what we do." ObamaCare imposes new mandates and penalties on companies with more than 50 full-time employees—and even those working 30 hours a week are considered full-time.
>
> He quickly adds: "The problem isn't just ObamaCare, though. It's the entire regulatory assault on employers coming out of Washington—everything from the EEOC"—the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission hits companies hard when employees claim age, race or sex discrimination—"to the Dodd-Frank monstrosity. Employers are living in a state of fear."

So let’s take a look at what is causing a record low labor force participation rate.

The younger generation does not have a good work ethic:

> The primary jobs problem today, Mr. Funk says, is that too many workers are functionally unemployable because of attitude, behavior or lack of the most basic work skills. One discouraging statistic is that only about one of six workers who comes to Express seeking employment makes the cut. He recites a company statistic that about one in four applicants can’t even pass a drug test.
>
> “In my 40-some years in this business, the biggest change I’ve witnessed is the erosion of the American work ethic. It just isn’t there today like it used to be,” Mr. Funk says. Asked to define “work ethic,” he replies that it’s fairly simple but vital on-the-job behavior, such as showing up on time, being conscientious and productive in every task, showing a willingness to get your hands dirty and at times working extra hours. These attributes are essential, he says, because if low-level employees show a willingness to work hard, “most employers will gladly train them with the skills to fill higher-paying jobs.”
>
> He fears that too many of the young millennials who come knocking on his door view a paycheck as a kind of entitlement, not something to be earned. He is also concerned that the trendy concept of “life-balancing” is putting work second behind leisure.

Welfare spending discourages people from working:

> When pressed to explain what Washington can do to get Americans back on the job, Mr. Funk says the first step would be to start shrinking the “vast social welfare state programs that have become a substitute for work. There’s a prevalent attitude of a lot of this generation of workers that the government will always be there to take care of them. It’s hard to get people to take entry-level jobs when they can get unemployment benefits, health care, food stamps and the rest.”
>
> This week during the food-stamp debate in Congress, Democrats voted unanimously against work requirements and ridiculed Republicans who suggested that the expansion of food stamps to 47 million Americans has discouraged working. The Democrats are living in a fantasy world, according to Mr. Funk. He points to Congress’s decision in 2009 to increase unemployment-insurance benefits to 90 weeks or more as “a policy that held a lot of people out of the workforce until the checks stopped coming. We saw that here very clearly.”

Disability makes people less inclined to get a job:

> The most abused government program, he says, is disability insurance and the 14 million Americans who now collect these benefits. Express has found that over half of the disability claims brought by its workers have turned out to be

> fraudulent. “We win 90% of the disability cases that we challenge in court,” Mr. Funk says.

Skills deficit makes people less employable:

> Another big hurdle is the widening skills deficit. At any given time, Mr. Funk says, Express has as many as 20,000 jobs the company can’t fill because workers don’t have the skills required. His advice to young people who are looking for a solid career is to get training in accounting (thanks to Dodd-Frank’s huge expansion of paperwork), information technology, manufacturing-robotics programming, welding and engineering. He’s mystified why Express has so much trouble filling thousands of information-technology jobs when so many young, working-age adults are computer literate.

Public schools and universities don’t prepare people for work:

> He blames public schools and universities for the skills mismatch. Young people looking for a financially secure future might want to heed one of his favorite pieces of cautionary advice: “If you’ve got a college degree in psych, poly-sci or sociology, sorry, I can’t help you find a job.” He urges greater emphasis on vocational and practical skills training in schools, universities and junior colleges.
>
> With so many ideas about how to help get the country on track, Mr. Funk might seem ripe to enter politics, but he already made one electoral foray—he was a local school-board member for 11 years—and found it an exercise in pure frustration. Bringing his pay-for-performance values to the board, he spent years futilely trying to get rid of bad teachers and to reward “the 30% that are really good.”
>
> He says “teacher tenure is by far the most corrupt social institution in our time, because it doesn’t reward excellence or weed out bad teachers.” The teachers union had operational control of the school board, and Mr. Funk couldn’t get them to budge. He says the union celebrated when he left the board.

I think that this shows the important of having private sector experience in a President. When you are looking to hire a President, you want to hire someone who has already done what he claims he wants to do, at a smaller level. If you want someone to fix health care, pick someone like Bobby Jindal who has already done it in his state. If you want someone to make schools accountable, pick Scott Walker. If you want someone to cut spending, pick Rick Scott. If you want someone to create jobs, pick Rick Perry. If you want someone to balance the budget, pick John Kasich. Pick a candidate who can do the work. Not someone who passionately speaks about how *he wants to do the work.* Pick someone who has been fabulously successful at actually doing what he says he wants to do.

Our current President knew nothing about running a business or how jobs are created when he was elected. He was just a community organizer. Never did a thing in the private sector. Maybe he could get lucky at making policies that would create jobs, but “lucky”

our best option? Next time, let’s not take chances. Pick someone who has proved that he can do the work based on past performance. Not speeches.

Why does the cause of the origin of the universe have to be God?

September 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

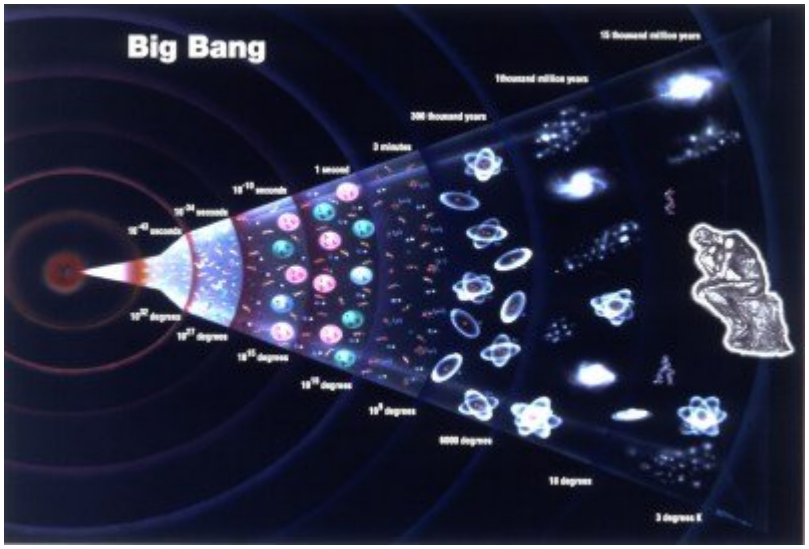

The cause of all the stuff is not itself stuff

Here's an excellent post by J. Warner Wallace to help us understand the cosmological argument. He asks why the cause of the universe has to be God.

Excerpt:

> **It's Reasonable to Believe God Is the Uncaused, "First Cause"**
>
> Rationality dictates the ultimate cause of the universe, (even if it isn't God), must have certain characteristics. In addition to being non-spatial, a temporal, immaterial and eternal (uncaused), it must also be powerful enough to bring everything into existence from nothing. Finally, there is good reason to believe the cause of the universe is *personal.* Impersonal forces cannot cause (or refuse to cause) *at will*. The minute an impersonal force exists, its effect is experienced. When the impersonal force of gravity is introduced into an environment, for example, its effect (the gravitational attraction) is felt immediately. If the cause of the universe is simply an impersonal force, its effect (the beginning of the universe) would occur simultaneous with its existence. In other words, the cause of the universe would only be as old as the universe itself. Yet we accept the reasonable existence of an *uncaused* first cause (one that is not finite like the universe it caused). For this reason, a personal force, capable of willing the beginning of the universe, is the best explanation for the first cause of the cosmos. This cause can be reasonably described as non-spatial, a temporal, immaterial, eternal, all-powerful and *personal*: descriptive characteristics commonly reserved for the Being we identify as God.
>
> All of us, whether we are atheists or theists, are trying to identify the first cause of the universe. The eternal nature of this non-spatial, a temporal, immaterial

> cause is required in order to avoid the problem of infinite regress. It is, therefore, irrational to ask “What caused the uncaused first cause?” It is far more reasonable to simply recognize the attributes of this cause as an accurate description of God.

If you are talking about the beginning of space, the cause of the beginning of space is not itself in space.

If you are talking about the beginning of time, the cause of the beginning of time is not itself in time.

If you are talking about the beginning of matter, the cause of the beginning of matter is not itself composed of matter.

If you are talking about an event without any physical antecedent conditions to cause it in a deterministic way (e.g. – water boiling when heated), then the cause is a free choice by a free agent.

The type of effect (new universe) determines the characteristics of the cause of the effect. Whatever has these properties of being non-material, eternal and personal is not something that atheists are going to like. A cause like this has no place in their naturalistic view.

Report: Krauss blocked ABC TV channel from broadcasting Australia debates

September 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Kevin Harris of Reasonable Faith interviews Dr. Craig about his recent speaking tour in Australia.

The MP3 file is here.

I pick up the recording at 02:30 in.

Summary:

- After the first debate at North Carolina State, Krauss was very angry at Dr. Craig
- He insisted that the three Australia debates be discussion without set speeches
- Dr. Craig insisted on opening speeches, followed by a discussion
- Dr. Craig also dialogged with his old debate partner Dr. Peter Slezak
- Dr. Slezak got Dr. Craig's paper in advance, and sent him his response in advance
- They read out the paper and the response in Sydney at a local university and it went well
- Australia is a post-Christian country, and many Australians are naturalists
- The audiences of the tour events were 40-50% non-Christian, Dr. Craig estimates
- There is a shortage of good, well-known Christian scholars in Australia
- Dr. Craig met many young philosophy students in Australia
- The organization who arranged the debates did not secure permission to record and distribute them
- The organization who arranged the debates intended to live stream the three debates
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation was supposed to show all three of the debates
- Dr. Krauss had not given his permission to record the debates
- Dr. Krauss had not given his permission to distribute recordings of the debates (e.g. – post them to YouTube)
- He later gave permission to record the first debate
- He would not allow the distribution of that first debate until it was over and he could decide whether to allow it to be posted
- He wanted to wait until the first debate ended before deciding whether to allow the second two to be recorded much less released
- Dr. Krauss blocked the live-streaming of the three debates on the Internet
- Dr. Krauss blocked the broadcast of the three debates on TV via the Australia Broadcast Corporation
- LESSON FOR PEOPLE WHO ARRANGE DEBATES: Get written permission from both speakers to record and distribute the recording FIRST
- Clearly, Dr. Krauss wanted to wait and see if he did well in the debates before allowing the recordings to be distributed (even on YouTube)

- Dr. Craig was warned not to say anything about Dr. Krauss' censorship, until all the events were finished
- Kevin Harris: we will be doing a series of podcasts on each of the three debates on Reasonable Faith

Check out my previous post on how Krauss misrepresented scientific evidence in his third debate. The full video and summary of the third debate is here.

I have not watched or summarized the first two debates.

Global warming: antarctic sea ice extents hits 35-year record high

September 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

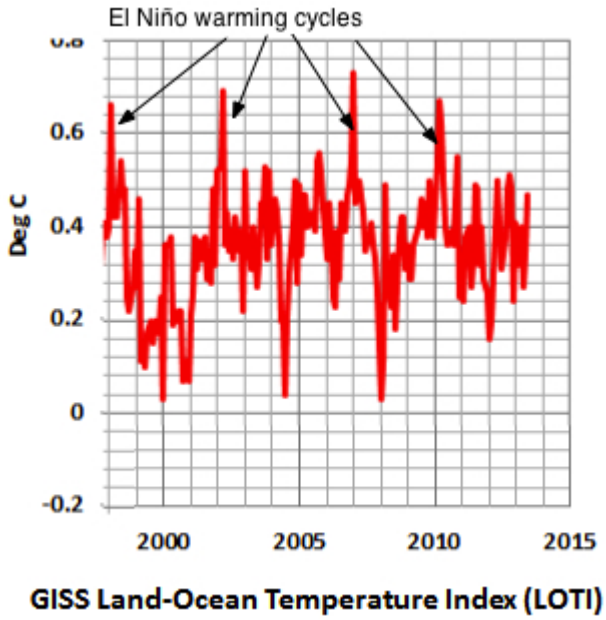

No significant global warming in 15 years

About two weeks ago, I blogged about record ice extents in the ARCTIC (north pole).

Now, here's a new story about record ice extents in the ANTARCTIC (south pole) – and from the radically leftist Washington Post, no less.

Excerpt:

> Antarctic sea ice has grown to a record large extent for a second straight year, baffling scientists seeking to understand why this ice is expanding rather than shrinking in a warming world.
>
> On Saturday, the ice extent reached 19.51 million square kilometers, according to data posted on the National Snow and Ice Data Center Web site. That number bested record high levels set earlier this month and in 2012 (of 19.48 million square kilometers). Records date back to October 1978.
>
> […]In a new study in the Journal of Climate, Zhang finds both strengthening and converging winds around the South Pole can explain 80 percent of the increase in ice volume which has been observed.
>
> "The polar vortex that swirls around the South Pole is not just stronger than it was when satellite records began in the 1970s, it has more convergence, meaning it shoves the sea ice together to cause ridging," the study's press release explains. "Stronger winds also drive ice faster, which leads to still more deformation and ridging. This creates thicker, longer-lasting ice, while exposing surrounding water and thin ice to the blistering cold winds that cause more ice growth."

> But no one seems to have a conclusive answer as to why winds are behaving this way.
>
> "I haven't seen a clear explanation yet of why the winds have gotten stronger," Zhang told Michael Lemonick of Climate Central.
>
> **Some point to stratospheric ozone depletion, but a new study published in the Journal of Climate notes that computer models simulate declining – not increasing – Antarctic sea ice in recent decades due to this phenomenon (aka the ozone "hole").**
>
> **"This modeled Antarctic sea ice decrease in the last three decades is at odds with observations, which show a small yet statistically significant increase in sea ice extent,"says the study, led by Colorado State University atmospheric scientist Elizabeth Barnes.**

It's a mystery. How could global warming be false?

Two weeks ago it was Arctic ice extents

Let's review my previous post about how ARCTIC ice extents had increased 60% from last year, despite predictions by the socialist BBC.

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> **A cold Arctic summer has led to a record increase in the ice cap, leading experts to predict a period of global cooling.**
>
> **There has been a 60 per cent increase in the amount of ocean covered with ice compared to this time last year, they equivalent of almost a million square miles.**
>
> In a rebound from 2012′s record low an unbroken ice sheet more than half the size of Europe already stretches from the Canadian islands to Russia's northern shores, days before the annual re-freeze is even set to begin.
>
> The Northwest Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific has remained blocked by pack-ice all year, forcing some ships to change their routes.
>
> A leaked report to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) seen by the Mail on Sunday, has led some scientists to claim that the world is heading for a period of cooling that will not end until the middle of this century.

> If correct, it would contradict computer forecasts of imminent catastrophic warming. The news comes several years after the BBC predicted that the arctic would be ice-free by 2013.
>
> Despite the original forecasts, major climate research centres now accept that there has been a "pause" in global warming since 1997.
>
> **The original predictions led to billions being invested in green measures to combat the effects of climate change.**

It’s so bad that environmentalists who thought there wouldn’t be any ice are trapped!

Not only have we had 15 years with no significant global warming, but now we have record ice extents in both the north pole and the south pole. Global warming alarmism is nothing but mythology dressed in a cheap tuxedo. When is the anti-science hysteria of the left going to end? What evidence will it take to convince them not to believe in fairies and leprechauns? I know they get a lot of brainwashing in public schools and universities, but eventually, they get out and they can look through telescopes and microscopes and see for themselves what is real. When experimental science has spoken about observations, then secularist doomsday fiction must give way. Mustn’t it?

Related posts

- UK scientists predict global cooling after record Arctic ice growth
- New York Times: no global warming in the last 15 years, despite CO2 increase
- Another failed prediction for global warming: fewer extreme weather events
- Global warming: Scotland hit by blizzards, road closures and 8 inches of snow
- New EPA report: natural gas prodution is even cleaner than previously thought
- Reuters: scientists struggling to explain 15 years of global cooling
- Report: biofuels raise the cost of gas for little environmental benefit
- Global warming in the UK: coldest March in 50 years, winter extending into spring
- Democrat senator Barbara Boxer introduces carbon tax legislation
- New study: Earth was warmer 1000 years ago, during Medieval Warming Period
- New study: there has been no global warming since 1997
- New study finds that cosmic rays and the sun cause global warming
- Global warmist Phil Jones admits there’s been no global warming since 1995
- Chairman of UN’s IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s

Basic economics: what’s wrong with raising minimum wage rates?

September 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Thomas Sowell

From Investors Business Daily, an article by famous economist Thomas Sowell.

Excerpt:

> Political crusades for raising the minimum wage are back again. Advocates of minimum-wage laws often give themselves credit for being more “compassionate” towards “the poor.”
>
> But they seldom bother to check what are the actual consequences of such laws.
>
> One of the simplest and most fundamental economic principles is that people tend to buy more when the price is lower and less when the price is higher.
>
> Yet advocates of minimum-wage laws seem to think that the government can raise the price of labor without reducing the amount of labor that will be hired.
>
> […]Switzerland is one of the few modern nations without a minimum-wage law. In 2003, the Economist magazine reported: “Switzerland’s unemployment neared a five-year high of 3.9% in February.”
>
> In February of this year, Switzerland’s unemployment rate was 3.1%. A recent issue of the Economist showed Switzerland’s unemployment rate as 2.1%.
>
> Most Americans today have never seen unemployment rates that low. However, there was a time when there was no federal minimum-wage law in the United States.
>
> The last time was during the Coolidge administration, when the annual

> unemployment rate went as low as 1.8%. When Hong Kong was a British colony, it had no minimum-wage law. In 1991 its unemployment rate was under 2%.
>
> […]Most people in the lower income brackets are not an enduring class. Most working people in the bottom 20% in income at a given time do not stay there over time. More of them end up in the top 20% than remain behind in the bottom 20%.
>
> There is nothing mysterious about the fact that most people start off in entry-level jobs that pay much less than they will earn after they get some work experience.
>
> But when minimum-wage levels are set without regard to their initial productivity, young people are disproportionately unemployed — priced out of jobs.
>
> In European welfare states where minimum wages, and mandated job benefits to be paid for by employers, are more generous than in the United States, unemployment rates for younger workers are often 20% or higher, even when there is no recession.
>
> Unemployed young people lose not only the pay they could have earned but, at least equally important, the work experience that would enable them to earn higher rates of pay later on.
>
> Minorities, like young people, can also be priced out of jobs. In the United States, the last year in which the black unemployment rate was lower than the white unemployment rate — 1930 — was also the last year when there was no federal minimum-wage law.
>
> Inflation in the 1940s raised the pay of even unskilled workers above the minimum wage set in 1938. Economically, it was the same as if there were no minimum-wage law by the late 1940s.
>
> In 1948 the unemployment rate of black 16-year-old and 17-year-old males was 9.4%. This was a fraction of what it would become in even the most prosperous years from 1958 on, as the minimum wage was raised repeatedly to keep up with inflation.
>
> **A survey of American economists found that 90% of them regarded minimum-wage laws as increasing the rate of unemployment among low-skilled workers.**

Harvard University economist Greg Mankiw puts the agreement level at 79%. This is not controversial. This is one of the most widely-accepted facts in economics. Generally, if you raise the price of domestic labor, without any increase in worker productivity, then it reduces demand for domestic labor and causes companies to reduce hiring and retention, possibly looking elsewhere for labor. Compassionate-sounding policies actually *cause* negative results like outsourcing and layoffs. The very people who agitate the most for a "living wage" *cause* higher unemployment – *especially* among youth and minorities.

The only sure way to help workers is to give them marketable skills and job experience – that’s what really draws higher salaries and better benefits. And that means advocating for smarter policies: fewer regulations on job creators, lowering the employer portion of payroll taxes, merit pay for teachers, vouchers to encourage competition between schools, making work pay more than collecting welfare for doing nothing. And so on. That would actually solve the problem of people not having work.

William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?

September 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This debate took place on March 1, 2010 at Oregon State University.

In this debate, Victor Stenger does affirm his belief that the universe could be eternal in his second rebuttal (1:02:30), thus denying the standard Big Bang cosmology. He also denies the law of conservation of energy and asserts that something can come from nothing in his concluding speech (1:33:50). He also caused the audience to start laughing when he said that Jesus was not moral and supported slavery. There is almost no snark in this summary. Instead, I quoted Dr. Stenger *verbatim* in many places. I still think that it is very entertaining even without the snarky paraphrasing.

The debate includes 30 minutes of Q&A with the students.

Here is the MP3 file for the audio.

Here's the video of the debate:

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

- The ontological argument
- The contingency argument
- The cosmological argument
- The moral argument
- The resurrection of Jesus (3-fact version)
- Religious experience

Dr. Stenger's opening speech:

- There is no scientific evidence for God's existence in the textbooks
- There is no scientific evidence for God acting in the universe
- God doesn't talk to people and tell them things they couldn't possibly know
- The Bible says that the Earth is flat, etc.
- There is no scientific evidence that God answers prayers
- God doesn't exist because people who believe in him are ignorant
- Human life is not optimally designed and appears to be the result of a blind, ad hoc evolutionary process
- The beginning of the universe is not ordered (low entropy) but random and chaotic
- It's theoretically possible that quantum tunneling explains the origin of the universe
- The laws of physics are not objectively real, they are "our inventions"
- Regarding the beginning of the universe, the explanation is that something came from nothing*
- Nothing* isn't really nothing, it is "the total chaos that we project existed just before the big bang"

- If something has no structure, then “it is as much nothing as nothing can be”
- Consciousness is explainable solely on the basis of material processes
- There are well-informed, rational non-believers in the world and God would not allow that

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

Stenger’s argument that there is no objective evidence for God’s existence:

- First, it is not required that God rely only on objective evidence in order to draw people to himself (Alvin Plantinga)
- Second, God is not required to provide evidence to everyone, only to the people who he knows would respond to him
- Third, Craig gave lots of objective evidence, from science, history and philosophy
- Stenger asks for certain evidence (answered prayers, prophecy, etc.), but Craig presented the evidence we have

Stenger’s argument that the balance of energy is zero so “nothing” exists:

- if you have the same amount of assets and liabilities, it doesn’t mean that nothing exists – your assets and liabilities exist
- Christopher Isham says that there needs to be a cause to create the positive and negative energy even if they balance
- the quantum gravity model contradicts observations
- the vacuum is not the same as nothing, it contains energy and matter
- the BVG theorem proves that *any* universe that is expanding must have a beginning

Stenger’s argument that mental operations can be reduced to physical operations:

- mental properties are not reducible to physical properties
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with self-identity over time
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with thoughts about other things
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with free will
- substance dualism (mind/body dualism) is a better explanation for our mental experience
- God is a soul without a body

Dr. Stenger’s first rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- Craig’s premise is “everything has a cause”, but quantum mechanics has causeless events
- There are speculative theories about how something could have come into being uncaused out of nothing
- “I don’t know of a single working cosmologist today who believes there was a singularity prior to the Big Bang”

- “If there wasn’t a singularity then there’s no basis for arguing that time began at that point”
- “There’s no reason from cosmology that we know of that the universe can’t be eternal”
- “When I talk about an eternal universe, I mean a universe that has no beginning or end”
- The Hartle-Hawking model doesn’t have a beginning
- “There was no violation of energy conservation by having a universe coming from nothing”
- “The universe *could have* come from a previous universe for example or even just from a region of chaos”
- The paper by Vilenkin is counteracted by other papers (he doesn’t specify which ones)

Craig’s moral argument:

- Dr. Craig is arguing from ignorance
- But morality can be decided by humanity just like governments pass laws, and that’s objective
- Dr. Craig has too little respect for the human intellect
- I don’t need to tell me that slavery is wrong
- The Bible supports slavery
- Atheists can behave as good as theists
- Morality just evolved naturally as an aid to survival

Craig’s resurrection argument:

- No Roman historians wrote about the execution of Jesus but none of them did
- The empty tomb is doubtful because it is only mentioned in the gospels, not by Paul
- John Dominic Crossan says there was no empty tomb
- Christianity only survived because the Roman empire thought that they were useful

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- There is no reason to prefer an indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics
- Dr. Stenger himself wrote that deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics are possible
- The vacuum in quantum mechanics is not nothing
- The quantum vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal
- The cosmological argument does not require a singularity
- The Hartle-Hawking model is from 1983
- Hawking says that there is a beginning of space and time *after* that model
- The Hartle-Hawking model *does still have a beginning of time* – the model is not

eternal
- The BVG theorem that requires a beginning for expanding universes is widely accepted among cosmologists

Craig's moral argument:

- Stenger redefined objective to mean that most people agree with it – but that's not what objective means
- Objective means right and wrong whether anyone accepts it or not
- Richard Dawkins himself says that on atheism there is "no evil and no good" – why is he wrong?
- Even Dr. Stenger says that morality is the same as passing laws – it's arbitrary and varies by time and place
- But on his view, right and wrong are the same as deciding which side of the road to drive on
- But somethings really are right and some things are really wrong

Craig's resurrection argument:

- Josephus is a Roman historian and he wrote about Jesus, for example
- There were four biographies of Jesus are the best sources for his life
- The scholars that Stenger mentioned are on the radical fringe

Dr. Stenger's second rebuttal:

Knowledge and the burden of proof:

- Dr. Craig has to bear the burden of proof, not me – because his claim is more "extravagant"
- "I don't have to prove that a God was not necessary to create the universe"
- "I don't have to prove that a God did not design the universe and life"
- "I don't have to prove that the universe did not have a beginning"
- "I don't have to prove that God did not provide us with our moral sense"
- There are a lot of books written about how morality evolved naturally
- "I don't have to prove that the events surrounding the supposed resurrection of Jesus did not take place"
- Bart Ehrman says that the gospels are generally unreliable (Note: Ehrman accepts all 3 of Craig's minimal facts)
- Just because people are willing to die for a cause, does not make their leader God, e.g. – the Emperor of Japan

Aesthetic concerns about the universe:

- I don't like dark matter and I wouldn't have made the universe with dark matter
- I don't like the doctrine of penal substitution
- I don't like the doctrine of original sin

- I don’t like the heat death of the universe

Dr. Craig’s conclusion:

The case for atheism:

- Dr. Stenger had two arguments and he has to support his premises
- Dr. Craig addressed his two arguments and each premise and Dr. Stenger never came back on it

The contingency argument:

- Dr. Stenger has dropped the refutation of this argument

The cosmological argument:

- The theoretical vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal

The moral argument:

- He asserts that things are wrong, but there is no grounding for that to be objective on atheism

The resurrection of Jesus:

- There are surveys of scholars on the empty tomb and 75% of them agree with it
- Bart Ehrman agrees with all 3 of the minimal facts that Dr. Craig presented
- Ehrman’s objection to the resurrection is not historical: he’s an atheist – he thinks miracles are impossible

Religious experience:

- No response from Dr. Stenger

Dr. Stenger’s conclusion

The cosmological argument:

- “I argued that we have very good physical reasons to understand how something can come from nothing”
- “There is a natural tendency in the universe… to go from.. simpler thing to the more complicated thing”
- The transition from a vapor to a liquid to ice shows how something could come from nothing
- “It cannot be proven that the universe had a beginning”

The moral argument:

- Objective morality, which is independent of what people think, could be developed

based on what people think
- “Jesus himself was not a tremendously moral person… he had no particular regard for the poor… he certainly supported slavery… he was for the subjugation of women” (audience laughter)

The resurrection argument:

- Bart Ehrman says that the majority of the gospels are unreliable

Religious experience:

- I don’t see any evidence that there is anything more to religious experience than just stuff in their heads

God’s purpose of the world should be to make people feel happy:

- God could have made people feel happier
- God could have made people not die
- God could could have made the universe smaller: it’s too big
- God could have made it possible for humans to live anywhere “even in space”

Obamacare will increase average individual-market premiums by 99% for men

September 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

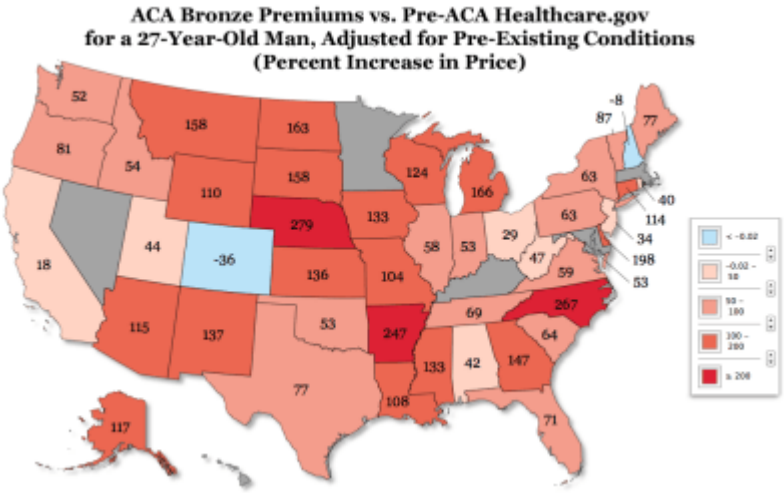

Percent increase in average health insurance premium after Obamacare
What will you be paying for the privilege of electing a socialist who made you feel good about yourself?

Avik Roy counts the cost in Forbes magazine.

Excerpt:

> For months now, we've been waiting to hear how much Obamacare will drive up the cost of health insurance for people who purchase coverage on their own. Last night, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services finally began to provide some data on how Americans will fare on Obamacare's federally-sponsored insurance exchanges. HHS' press release is full of happy talk about how premiums will be "lower than originally expected." But the reality is starkly different.
>
> Based on a Manhattan Institute analysis of the HHS numbers, Obamacare will increase underlying insurance rates for younger men by an average of 97 to 99 percent, and for younger women by an average of 55 to 62 percent. Worst off is North Carolina, which will see individual-market rates triple for women, and ***quadruple*** for men.
>
> […][M]any 27-year-olds will face steep increases in the underlying cost of individually-purchased insurance under Obamacare. For the states where we have data—the 36 reported by HHS, plus nine others that we had compiled for our map that HHS didn't report—rates will go up for men by an average of 97 percent; for women, 55 percent. (In the few cases where HHS reported on states that our map includes, we went with HHS' numbers.)
>
> Worst off was Nebraska, where the difference between the cheapest plan under the old system and under Obamacare was 279 percent for men, and 227 percent

> for women: more than triple the old rate. Faring best was Colorado, where rates will decline for both 27-year-old men and women by 36 percent. The only other state to see a rate decline in this analysis was New Hampshire: 8 percent for both men and women.
>
> (Still missing are data from Hawaii, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, and Nevada. The data from New York and New Jersey should be taken with a grain of salt, as their individual insurance markets are not like those of other states.)
>
> […]40-year-olds, surprisingly, will face a similar picture. The cheapest exchange plan for the average enrollee, compared to what a 40-year-old would pay today, will cost an average of 99 percent more for men, and 62 percent for women.

You might be asking why men have to pay more than women for Obamacare premiums, and the answer is simple. Even though women use a lot more health care, companies are now forbidden from making women pay more because they use more. Women will be paying less because men will be picking up the cost. That's called "equality". The same thing happened with the stimulus, which also favored women, because they are more likely than men to support big government Democrats at election time.

What about the subsidies that are being offered by the government to ease the transition to government-controlled health care?

> However, the overall results make clear that most people will not receive enough in subsidies to counteract the degree to which Obamacare drives premiums upward. Remember that nearly two-thirds of the uninsured are under the age of 40. And that young and healthy people are essential to Obamacare; unless these individuals are willing to pay more for health insurance to subsidize everyone else, the exchanges will not serve the goal of providing coverage to the uninsured.

Democrats like to make much of the subsidies that they are offering to offset these skyrocketing premiums, but that money is being *borrowed* from the children of today. They are the ones who will have to pay the money back. In effect, we are borrowing money from the next generation of workers to pay off the health care of the retirees of today. Obamacare is a massive transfer of wealth from young people to older people. Young people are still very much under the influence of the brainwashing they got from their teachers in government-run public schools. They have been taught that in order to be good people, they need to vote for socialism. And they do. It's only much later that the bill comes due – for now they are blissfully unaware of what they are doing to themselves.

Health insurance premiums have been going up since 2008

Remember, premium shave already gone up $3,000 on average since Obamacare was passed, despite Obama promising they would drop by $2,500. That's a $5,500 difference.

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> During his first run for president, Barack Obama made one very specific promise to voters: He would cut health insurance premiums for families by $2,500, and do so in his first term.
>
> But it turns out that family premiums have increased by more than $3,000 since Obama's vow, according to the latest annual Kaiser Family Foundation employee health benefits survey.
>
> **Premiums for employer-provided family coverage rose $3,065 — 24% — from 2008 to 2012, the Kaiser survey found.** Even if you start counting in 2009, premiums have climbed $2,370.
>
> What's more, premiums climbed faster in Obama's four years than they did in the previous four under President Bush, the survey data show.
>
> There's no question about what Obama was promising the country, since he repeated it constantly during his 2008 campaign.
>
> **In a debate with Sen. John McCain, for example, Obama said "the only thing we're going to try to do is lower costs so that those cost savings are passed onto you. And we estimate we can cut the average family's premium by about $2,500 per year."**
>
> **At a campaign stop in Columbus, Ohio, in February 2008, Obama promised that "We are going to work with you to lower your premiums by $2,500. We will not wait 20 years from now to do it, or 10 years from now to do it. We will do it by the end of my first term as president."**

A $5,500 difference doesn't mean a lot to Obama. But maybe it means a lot to you. We're going to find out exactly what we voted for very soon now.

Senator David Vitter's amendment to revoke Obamacare exemption for Congress

September 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Republican Senator David Vitter is trying to revoke the exemption from Obamacare for members of Congress and their staff.

The Heritage Foundation explains what the Vitter amendment would do.

Excerpt:

> President Obama, the White House staff, Cabinet secretaries, and all of the Administration's political appointees are *exempt* from any legal requirement to enroll in Obamacare's health insurance exchanges. While Members of Congress and their personal staffs are required to enroll in Obamacare's exchanges, the White House, through questionable administrative action, is providing them hefty taxpayer subsidies to offset the resultant increase in their personal health care costs. In other words, Washington's arrogant political class is getting exemptions or special treatment denied to ordinary Americans.
>
> […]During Senate floor debate on energy legislation last week, Louisiana Senator David Vitter (R) proposed an amendment that would end Obamacare exemptions and special taxpayer subsidies for Congress. His amendment is cosponsored by Senators Mike Enzi (R-WY), Mike Lee (R-UT), Ron Johnson (R- WI), Dean Heller (R-NV), and Jim Inhofe (R-OK). The prospect of having to vote on Vitter's amendment shut down floor debate on the bill last week.
>
> Vitter's amendment would do two things. First, the President, Vice President, Cabinet secretaries, and all political appointees—the policymaking agents of the executive branch—would be enrolled in the health insurance exchanges, just like millions of other Americans. Second, Members of Congress and their staffs—including all committee and leadership office staff—would also be enrolled in the health insurance exchanges under the same terms and conditions as other Americans. In other words, Congress and its staff would not get any special subsidies at taxpayer expense for their health insurance.
>
> […]The Vitter Amendment is equitable. It targets only Washington's political class, those who make policy for the national government. Federal employees, all career civil servants, would not be deprived of their current private health insurance plans through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). Vitter's approach is only fair: Capitol Hill cops, National Park Rangers, and Secret Service agents and their families are *not* responsible for Obamacare. Washington's political class and allied big special interest lobbyists are responsible. And until this bad law is fully repealed, the President's team and Congress should submit fully to its multiple and costly requirements, just like

> everybody else.
>
> […]Because of hasty legislative maneuvering, sloppy drafting, and an inability or unwillingness to focus on the consequences of what they were doing, Members of Congress who voted for Obamacare managed to dump themselves out of their existing coverage. Under Section 1312 of the law, they are to be enrolled in health insurance exchange plans, and will lose existing coverage in the popular and successful Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). And just like millions of other Americans dumped out of their existing coverage, they lose their employer's subsidy for insurance plus the generous federal and state tax breaks that accompany employer-based coverage. **But the Obama Administration recently "fixed" that for them by providing special subsidies for Members and congressional staff to reduce their premium costs in the Obamacare exchanges.**
>
> **Vitter's amendment would overturn this recent action. T**hat would be appropriate because there is no statutory authority, either in Obamacare or in Title V of the U.S Code, for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management to make government insurance contributions on behalf of federal employees to any plan other than an FEHBP plan. Curiously, the original health care law provided for employers to make a defined contribution for workers in the exchanges (a "free choice voucher"), but Congress scrapped it.
>
> Millions of Americans are going to be losing their existing coverage and paying more for health insurance. Under the Vitter Amendment, so would the Obama Administration's appointees, Congress, and congressional staff. They baked that cake. Now they can eat it, too.

If you don't like what Obamacare is doing to your health care, only a few people in the Republican Party are trying to help you. David Vitter is one of them. Ted Cruz and Mike Lee are two others. But don't expect the Democrat legislators to lift a finger to help, because this law doesn't apply to them. It doesn't apply to many of their union supporters, who also got exemptions. It doesn't apply to big corporations who support the Democrats – they got exemptions, too.

Does God’s omniscience conflict with human free will?

September 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here’s the question from Come Reason Ministries.

Excerpt:

> Hello,
>
> Christian doctrine holds that God is all knowing (1 John 3:20), and humans have free will (Deuteronomy 30:19 is my favorite example). however, at my favorite apologetics debate board, I have seen skeptics raise an objection to these points several times. the basic logic behind their arguments is this:
>
> 1. A being with free will, given two options A and B, can freely choose between A and B.
> 2. God is omniscient (all-knowing).
> 3. God knows I will choose A.
> 4. God cannot be wrong, since an omniscient being cannot have false knowledge.
> 5. From 3 and 4, I will choose A and cannot choose B.
> 6. From 1 and 5, omniscience and free will cannot co-exist.
>
> I have read many counter-arguments from apologetics sites, but they were either too technical (I couldn’t understand them), or not satisfying. so, I was wondering what would your input be on this issue?
>
> Thank you,
>
> Justin

Ever heard that one? Here’s Lenny Eposito’s answer:

> Hi Justin,
>
> Thanks for writing. This is a great question as it shows how even those who appeal to logic can have biases that blind them. Let’s examine this argument and see if it follows logically.
>
> Premises 1 and 2 in your outline above are the main premises to the argument and are not disputed. The Christian worldview argues that every human being is a free moral agent and is capable of making choices simply by exercising their will, not under compulsion or because of instinct. Also, it is a long held doctrine of Christianity that God is all-knowing. The Bible says that God knows “the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10).” For omniscience to be truly knowledgeable it must be correct knowledge, so premise number 4 is also granted.
>
> However, point number 5 is where the logic falters. Those who argue in this

> manner make the mistake of thinking that because God possesses knowledge about a specific matter, then he has influenced it. That does not follow at all. Just because God can foresee which choice you will make, it does not mean you couldn't still freely choose the other option.
>
> Let me give you an example. I have a five year old son. If I were to leave a chocolate chip cookie on the table about a hour before dinner time and my son was to walk by and see it, I know that he would pick up the cookie and eat it. I did not force him to make that decision. In fact, I don't even have to be in the room at all. I think I know my son well enough, though, to tell you that if I come back into the kitchen the cookie will be gone. His act was made completely free of my influence, but I knew what his actions would be.
>
> In examining the argument, the assumption is made in premise 3 that because God knows I will choose A somehow denies me the choice of B. That is the premise that Christianity rejects. Omniscience and free will are not incompatible and it is a non-sequitor to claim otherwise.
>
> Thank you Justin for this interesting question. I pray that you will continue to defend the gospel of our Lord and may He continue to bless you as you seek to grow in Him.

That's a great answer and should work in ordinary conversations.

More technical

J.W. Wartick maps out the arguments more fully with symbolic logic here on his Always Have A Reason blog. But I'll just excerpt the gist of it.

Excerpt:

> It is necessarily true that if God knows x will happen, then x will happen. But then if one takes these terms, God knowing x will happen only means that x will happen, not that x will happen *necessarily.* Certainly, God's foreknowledge of an event means that that event will happen, but it does *not* mean that the event could not have happened otherwise. If an event happens necessarily, that means the event could not have happened otherwise, but God's foreknowledge of an event doesn't somehow transfer necessity to the event, it only means that the event will happen. It could have been otherwise, in which case, God's knowledge would have been different.
>
> […]Perhaps I could take an example. Let's say that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow (and I do hope I will, I don't like missing classes!). God knows in advance that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow. His knowledge of this event means that it will happen, but it doesn't mean that I couldn't choose to stay in and sleep for a while, or play my new copy of Final Fantasy XIII, or do something more useless with my time. If I chose to, say, play Final Fantasy XIII (a strong temptation!), then God simply would have known that I would play FFXIII. His knowledge does not *determine* the outcome, His knowledge is simply *of the*

> *outcome*.

If we choose A, God would foreknow A. If we choose B, God would foreknow B. His foreknowledge of our choices is contingent on our making free choices.

I had to learn symbolic logic and Bayes' theorem in college for my computers science degrees, and it's pretty useful for understanding these philosophers. Philosophy is a lot like computer science, at least for analytical philosophy.

Nancy Pelosi: forcing workers to work fewer hours gives them “freedom”

September 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The video above shows a typical Democrat reaction to Obamacare’s side-effect of forcing workers from full-time to part-time work. Let them eat cake!

You don’t need to get paid for 40 hours per week, do you? It’s freedom to follow your passion – you don’t really need the money and work experience, do you?

The College Fix explains how students working their way through college feel about having their workers hours cut to comply with Obamacare.

Here’s an example from their article:

> Emily Klug, 22, a psychology and sociology major at the College of the Ozarks in Branson, Mo., is another Obamacare victim.
>
> Klug’s university offered her a work-study program over the summer, which she turned down in order to accept a full-time summer job for a national retailer. This would have allowed her to pay for the coming year of college, as well as save for grad school. Shortly thereafter, Klug learned that her employer had modified their policies: she would only be allowed to work part-time.
>
> “Their maximum limit *happened* to be the same one as the Obamacare classification for full-time,” she told *The Fix*.
>
> She spent the summer working 20 to 25 hours weekly, unable to save for grad school.
>
> “I’m not happy with it,” Klug added, regarding the Affordable Care Act. “I feel that it’s unconstitutional, and an infringement on my rights. I’m not looking forward to either buying insurance or paying the fine. I will probably be paying the fine. It’s my personal choice. That’s what I object to most in Obamacare – my personal choice is removed.”

Yes, but you get *free* condoms!!1! It’s so worth it! Maybe you could find another job. A job that uses a lot of free condoms!!! You’re free to pursue your passion. It’s about wellness! And if you have an unplanned pregnancy, then abortions and single mother welfare are *free!* Just follow your heart.

OK. And it’s not just off-campus work that’s being affected, it’s on-campus work, too.

Investors Business Daily explains.

Excerpt:

> If one job category stands out for bearing a heavy price from ObamaCare-related cuts to work hours, it might be adjunct college faculty.
>
> Among 313 employers now on IBD’s ObamaCare Employer Mandate List Of Cuts

> To Hours, Jobs that have cut work hours or permanent staff, or shifted to part-time hiring, there are 54 colleges and universities that have scaled back the hours adjunct faculty may teach.
>
> The list also includes 80 public school districts that have cut hours or outsourced the job functions of teacher aides, cafeteria workers and other employees.
>
> Still, the inclusion of a number of community college systems such as Maricopa, Ivy Techand Dallas County means that cuts in adjunct faculty hours now extend to nearly 200 college and university campuses attended by about 1.6 million students.
>
> All over the country, adjunct teaching loads are being limited to nine credit hours — just below the 30-hour threshold at which Affordable Care Act employer penalties hit. That's the equivalent of nine hours per week in the classroom and 18 hours of work preparing, grading, etc.
>
> In lean budget times, many schools became heavily dependent upon modestly paid, part-time faculty members who were ineligible for health benefits. Now, faced with providing the same type of generous coverage offered tenured professors or cutting hours, many see little choice but to cut.
>
> Of a dozen employers added to IBD's list on Sept. 25, nine are colleges and universities. Of those, eight put new restrictions on adjunct hours. Several also cut work hours for students, a step backward for helping future grads emerge with manageable levels of student loan debt.

They told me if I didn't vote for Obama, then college students would have a harder time paying for college. And they were right!

Related posts

- Senator David Vitter's amendment to revoke Obamacare exemption for Congress
- Obamacare will increase average individual-market premiums by 99% for men
- Obamacare in action: 301 employers cut employee hours and/or jobs
- Surprise! New Stanford University study finds costs of Obamacare higher than estimated
- Stephen Moore: Obama's failing economy has hit his supporters the hardest
- New study finds that many young people won't purchase Obamacare plans
- Unionized UPS to drop health insurance for 15,000 spouses because of Obamacare
- Harry Reid: Obamacare is "absolutely" a step towards single payer health care system
- Blue Cross, Aetna, United, Humana opt out of Obamacare exchanges
- President Obama intervenes to exempt Congress from Obamacare
- Aetna pulls out of Obamacare exchanges in Maryland – can't operate at a loss
- IRS employee union opposes making Obamacare apply to themselves

Republican senator Mike Lee introduces bill to cut taxes on parents

September 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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National Review reports on a new tax cut plan from Republican senator Mike Lee.

Excerpt:

> Today at AEI, Senator Mike Lee of Utah introduced an idea that's been missing in Congress for a long time: A conservative tax-reform plan that aims to improve opportunity and reduce the bias against families inherent in the U.S. tax code.
>
> It would significantly simplify how individual income taxes work, and result in a large tax cut on families with children, especially married ones: The system would be reduced to just two brackets — 15 percent on all income below $87,850 (at which the rate currently jumps from 25 percent to 28 percent) and 35 percent on all income above that. Most interestingly, though, it would provide much more compensation in the tax code for raising children: "The centerpiece" of the plan, as Lee put it, is a $2,500 tax credit per child under the age of 16, which would reduce what parents owe in income taxes dollar-for-dollar, and if that's reduced to zero, what they owe in payroll taxes, too. (The tax code currently provides a combination of a tax deduction for children, which only reduces the amount of one's income that's subject to the income tax and isn't, for most couples, nearly as valuable per dollar, and a smaller tax credit.)
>
> That represents a significant tax cut on a lot of middle-income earners, but a number of tax expenditures (deductions and credits) would be eliminated, and some would be smartly restricted — the mortgage-interest deduction, for instance, would be capped at $300,000 in principal, as Lee says, "focusing the deduction on the families and communities who need it the most." He highlights a "new charitable deduction that would be available to all taxpayers," which would be available to people who don't currently itemize their deductions (lower-income Americans, for one). The "marriage penalty" would be eliminated, because the bracket sizes would now just be doubled for married couples (preserving a "marriage bonus" for many couples).
>
> […]The plan hasn't been scored for its revenue effects, but it seems likely, overall, to reduce the receipts of the federal income tax slightly. Over the long term, though, while this isn't the main intent, a rise in fertility and increased investment in raising children should go a ways to reducing America's long-term fiscal gap (AEI's Jim Pethokoukis likes to refer to such an idea as a "human-capital tax cut" — while, again, it's about fixing a distortion in the tax code and not adding one, at the margins it's a big tax cut for having children).

So often on this blog, I post articles critical of Democrats, but not much about what

Republicans want to do. Here’s an example of what Republicans want to do.

Atheist philosopher of science Bradley Monton discusses intelligent design

September 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

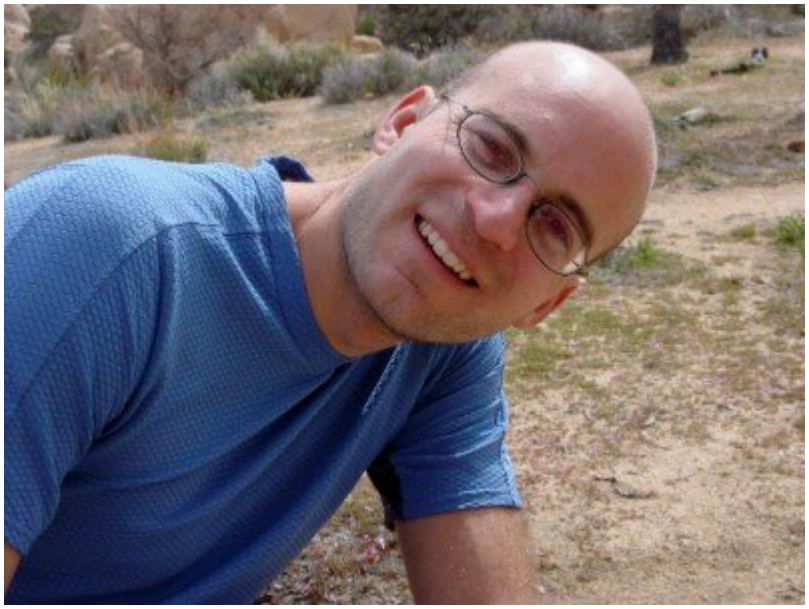

Philosopher Bradley Monton

About Bradley Monton:

> I'm a philosophy professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder. I work in philosophy of time, philosophy of religion, philosophy of science (especially physics), and probabilistic epistemology.

There's an interview with Dr. Monton in Salvo magazine's new issue, which is on science and faith.

The interview has more about his credentials:

> ***Bradley Monton*** • Associate Professor of the Philosophy of Science at the University of Colorado • BA in Physics and Philosophy from Rice University • PhD in Philosophy from Princeton University • Author of *Seeking God in Science: An Atheist Defends Intelligent Design*

And here are the interview questions:

1. What makes you take intelligent design (ID) seriously?
2. Why do you think some scientists refuse to take intelligent design seriously?
3. You write in your book that you don't fully endorse intelligent design. In your opinion, what are some of the weaknesses of ID?
4. Then why can't you fully support intelligent design?
5. So what are the strengths of intelligent design?
6. What do you think about the multiverse theory—this belief that there are actually an infinite number of universes out there, making the complexity of our own universe

more likely and less special?
7. Do you think intelligent design should be taught in public schools?
8. Do you teach your own students about intelligent design?
9. Do you think academic freedom is limited for *non*-tenured proponents of intelligent design?
10. How have other academics responded to your writings and statements on intelligent design?
11. You've written that intelligent-design arguments have made you less certain of your atheism. What would it take to make you abandon it altogether?
12. So what sort of scientific evidence would be compelling enough to change your mind?
13. Are there other atheist scientists out there who believe that intelligent-design arguments hold some merit?

Here's my favorite question (#12) and the answer:

> **So what sort of scientific evidence would be compelling enough to change your mind?**
>
> It would be evidence for mind as a fundamental feature of the universe. As far as I'm concerned, God would have to be a purely mental entity, not connected to physical reality in the way that we are through our bodies. So if we could discover some kind of evidence that mind is fundamental, then that would go a long way toward making me a believer. And if we could find evidence that the physical world isn't causally closed—that not only is mind a fundamental entity, but it likewise plays a causal role in the structure of the world—then that would also be compelling evidence for the existence of God. Now, if it is found that mind plays a role in our brain processes alone, that by itself wouldn't make me believe in God, though it would certainly make me more open to the idea. But if we were to discover that mind is intervening in other places in the world besides our brain processes, then that would pretty much be the smoking gun.

Yeah, I think there is good evidence for a non-physical mind, both from science and philosophy.

I think a lot of Christians who grew up with young-Earth creationism are startled to find that there are non-theistic, non-Christians scholars who take ID seriously. I think if I were a smart young-Earth creationist like Paul Nelson or Marcus Ross, I would try to create common ground with scholars by discussing intelligent design with them.

What does the word happiness mean on the Christian worldview?

September 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From happiness expert and Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland.

Excerpt:

> According to ancient thought, happiness is a life well lived, a life that manifests wisdom, kindness and goodness. For the ancients, the happy life — the life we should dream about — is a life of virtue and character. Not only did Plato, Aristotle, the Church Fathers and medieval theologians embrace this definition, but Moses, Solomon and (most importantly) Jesus did, too. Sadly their understanding is widely displaced by the contemporary understanding of happiness defined as pleasure and satisfaction, a subjective emotional state associated with fleeting, egocentric feelings.
>
> Consider the differences:

Contemporary Understanding	**Classical Understanding**
Happiness is:	Happiness is:
1. Pleasure and satisfaction	**1.** Virtue and character
2. An intense feeling	**2.** A settled tone
3. Dependent on external circumstances	**3.** Depends on internal state; springs from within
4. Transitory and fleeting	**4.** Fixed and stable
5. Addictive and enslaving	**5.** Empowering and liberating
6. Irrelevant to one's identity, doesn't color the rest of life and creates false/empty self	**6.** Integrated with one's identity, colors rest of life and creates true/fulfilled self
7. Achieved by self-absorbed narcissism; success produces a celebrity	**7.** Achieved by self-denying apprenticeship to Jesus; success produces a hero

> How can we be certain Jesus is inviting us to a classical understanding of happiness in Matthew 16:24-26? He isn't talking about going to heaven rather than hell, nor is He telling his followers how to avoid premature death. Where Matthew writes, "what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits *his soul*" (emphasis added), Luke clarifies Jesus' teaching by replacing "his soul" with the word "himself" (Luke 9:25). The issue is finding one's self vs. losing one's self. More specifically, to find one's self is to find out how life *ought* to look like and learn to live that way; it's to become like Jesus, with character that manifests the fruit of the Spirit and the radical nature of Kingdom living; it's to find out God's purposes for one's life and to fulfill those purposes in a Christ-honoring way.

In one of his lectures, he says, and I quote: “Happiness is the freedom to do what we ought to do”. Indeed. When a person is free to comply with God’s design for human flourishing, then he/she is happy.

Gregg Cunningham will debate Ann Furedi on abortion in London on October 3rd

September 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scheming unborn baby thinks that Gregg will win
A debate on abortion in London, England.

Details:

> *Join us for what is anticipated to be one of the most significant abortion debates of the decade.*
>
> *Ann Furedi, CEO of the UK's largest private abortion provider, BPAS, will be going head to head with Gregg Cunningham, the founder and director of the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform, a group that makes pictures of aborted babies available for public education projects across the globe.*
>
> *The point of contention is the use of graphic abortion images outside of abortion clinics in the UK.*
>
> **The Resolution:** *"This house believes that it is morally wrong for groups to approach women and display abortion imagery outside facilities which provide abortion services."*
>
> *The event will be charied by Brendan O'Neill, Editor of Spiked Online. It will take place at 18:30 on 3rd of October at the Emmanuel Centre, Marsham Street, Westminster, SW1P 3DW.*

Admission is free.

Ryan T. Anderson defends traditional marriage at Boston College

September 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

The Boston College student newspaper reports. I won't go over Anderson's case for traditional marriage, because you all know that from reading my previous posts. I want to highlight what went on at the lecture itself.

Excerpt:

> Students sat on the floor, wedged between backpacks and pressed back against the walls. Brightly colored "Support Love" t-shirts were sprinkled liberally throughout the audience in Cushing 001 on Thursday night, as students gathered to hear—and question—Ryan T. Anderson, the William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society at the Heritage Foundation.
>
> Titled "A Case Against Gay Marriage," Anderson's presentation was arranged by the St. Thomas More Society (STM), a student-run group at Boston College. Rev. Ronald Tacelli, S.J., the group's faculty advisor and a professor in the philosophy department, introduced Anderson, stating that the event would be more question-and-answer based, as opposed to the panel that had originally been planned. "When I see the size of the crowd, I think it was a better idea," he said, eliciting laughter.
>
> The large turnout for the talk can be attributed in part to a Facebook event created earlier in the week by BC Students for Sexual Health (BCSSH). The event, formed in opposition to Anderson's talk after an email about it was sent out to students on the philosophy and theology departments' listservs, encouraged students to show up wearing Support Love shirts and to participate in the discussion. "This is not the type of programming that fosters an accepting environment for students," the event description read. "This event is going to have to rely on the audience for any hope of a balancing opinion presence."

> After Tacelli's introduction, Anderson began by running down a list of things upon which he would not be basing his argument: morality, sexual orientation/homosexuality, religion, tradition. "I think frequently people have an expectation of what they're going to hear," he said. "I make a philosophical and policy argument about marriage."
>
> He then asked a question of the crowd. "From the looks of the t-shirts, this is probably a challenge for most of the audience," he said. "I want to know what you think marriage is … that's actually the question that people in favor of redefining marriage refuse to answer. And they refuse to answer that question by hiding behind what I think is a rather sloppy slogan: marriage equality."
>
> Anderson said that everyone involved in the debate over marriage is ultimately in favor of equality. "We all want the government to treat all real marriages in the same way. The question is, what type of relationship is a marriage?"

Eventually, they had to move to a bigger room and then they continued:

> Tacelli interrupted to inform the crowd that BCPD had requested that the event be moved to a larger auditorium, McGuinn 121. The audience left Cushing slightly before 8 p.m., and Anderson resumed his point on government interest in marriage less than 10 minutes later.
>
> […]Anderson then concluded his talk and commenced nearly an hour of question and answer, with Tacellimoderating.
>
> Nine students asked questions, with many challenging Anderson on various aspects of his argument, to applause from much of the audience. Most questions focused on his central point—that children who were raised by a heterosexual, married couple were better off than those raised by same-sex couples.

And the Q&A was interesting – it shows that even liberal Boston College students could be civil:

> "If further studies came out that show these children are fine—they're healthy, they grow up to be responsible adults and members of society—would you change your mind?" asked one student
>
> Anderson replied that if the studies showed that there was no difference based on family arrangement, then he would not think that government should be in the marriage business. "I don't think the government should be recognizing consenting adult love if ultimately it doesn't make a difference one way or another to the common good," he said. "If the science came back saying, actually, it's a wash … then yeah, I wouldn't care what the law or public policy would be about marriage. I would be surprised—and let me say that it wouldn't change my opinion about what marriage is, that would just be a study of parenting arrangements."
>
> Brandon Stone, A&S '14, asked whether, if the end goal was providing the best

> environment in which to raise children, that would also necessitate defining marriage along economic or class lines.
>
> "The idea here is not that we should only recognize marriages that are socially valuable," Anderson said. "The idea here is that marriage as an institution is a socially valuable institution, therefore the state tries to promote it. But when the state promotes marriage, it has to promote the truth about marriage. Poor people can get married, right—they can form the reality of that comprehensive unit. So it would be unjust to deny poor people the opportunity if they're actually capable of forming a marriage."
>
> Further questions centered around legal rights, such as the transferal of property after death; the specific definitions of "mothering" and "fathering"; and whether a non-child-producing heterosexual relationship could be considered a marriage.

Post-lecture discussion organized by the campus gay student group:

> After Tacelli ended the question and answer period, Alex Taratuta, chair of the GLBTQ Leadership Council (GLC) and A&S '14, stood up to announce that GLC would be hosting an after-event discussion for any students who wanted to keep talking.
>
> "Going into the event, GLC's main priority was the mental health and safety of the students," Taratuta said in an email. "This is one of the reasons that we held a post-event discussion afterwards; we wanted people to have some time to digest the conversation before going back to their dorms … I think it went better than I expected. I knew it would be well attended, but the amount of support from the student body for the GLBTQ community on campus and even the community as a whole, exceeded my expectations."
>
> Mike Villafranca, co-president of STM and A&S '14, stopped by the GLC discussion to speak with the students there.
>
> "I was concerned going into tonight's talk because I knew nothing about Mr. Anderson, and I was worried that the student reaction would be visceral and angry," Villafranca said later in an email. "Instead of that, I was impressed by the way that the students from GLC and BCSSH reacted to what Mr. Anderson said. It was clear that they came with ideas about what they wanted to ask, but that they listened to what he had to say, and they challenged him in terms of what he said rather than what they came expecting to hear. I'm glad that the Q&A stayed on an intellectual level and didn't descend into emotional outbursts, which it easily and justifiably could have done."

I think if you are going to discuss marriage face-to-face with people who are pro-SSM, then it's probably a good idea to just stick with the Anderson script. I don't think it's safe to discuss this issue unless you are careful about who you talk to and how you talk to them. That's why I am posting about this lecture – to show you how it's done in hostile environments. We've had a whole slew of people from photographers, to sportscasters, to

bakers getting into trouble for telling gay peope directly that they disagree with gay marriage. I don't think you want to take a chance on that approach of "The Bible says…" because it doesn't work. Ryan Anderson's approach seems to work a lot better. The people who get hammered are the ones who don't take the time to study anything except the Bible, who discriminate by appealing to the Bible, and who are not talking to people who have chosen to hear what they have to say – especially in an academic setting where they are there to learn. "The Bible says" ought to be perfectly legitimate in the United States, but thanks to the people in government, it's not working any more, and we have to adapt.

If you're going to discuss marriage with a pro-SSM person, then you should do it like Ryan Anderson does it. An academic setting is best. Talking about principles and policies instead of specific people is best. And a *secular* case for marriage is best. It's better if your employer won't be pressured to fire you. It's best to stick with public policy and secular reasons for marriage, instead of quoting the Bible to non-Christians – that just makes them angry. When you base your position in facts and arguments, they are less likely to get angry because they can disagree with you more easily by arguing against your facts and arguments. Be ready to show the public, peer-reviewed data that supports your view of marriage. So again, if you insist on doing it, do it like Ryan.

Warning: your comment is probably not going to be approved, so don't even bother, regardless of what side you're on.

Related posts

- Ryan Anderson explains how gay marriage is already infringing on religious liberty
- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson debates gay marriage with S.E. Cupp on the Blaze
- Ryan T. Anderson explains marriage to Piers Morgan and Suze Orman
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Frank Turek: is "equality" the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults "co-parenting" children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

- Obama openly supports gay marriage: 48 hours after top gay donors cut off funding
- Democrat introduces bill to defund adoption agencies that favor married couples
- A secular case against same-sex marriage

Kirsten Powers: American churches silent as Christians in Middle East face persecution

September 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Moderate Kirsten Powers writes about the persecution of Christians by Muslims in the left-leaning Daily Beast. (H/T Mysterious Chris S.)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Christians in the Middle East and Africa are being slaughtered, tortured, raped, kidnapped, beheaded, and forced to flee the birthplace of Christianity. One would think this horror might be consuming the pulpits and pews of American churches. Not so. The silence has been nearly deafening.
>
> As Egypt's Copts have battled the worst attacks on the Christian minority since the 14th century, the bad news for Christians in the region keeps coming. On Sunday, Taliban suicide bombers killed at least 85 worshippers at All Saints' church, which has stood since 1883 in the city of Peshawar, Pakistan. Christians were also the target of Islamic fanatics in the attack on a shopping center in Nairobi, Kenya, this week that killed more than 70 people. The Associated Press reported that the Somali Islamic militant group al-Shabab "confirmed witness accounts that gunmen separated Muslims from other people and let the Muslims go free." The captives were asked questions about Islam. If they couldn't answer, they were shot.
>
> In Syria, Christians are under attack by Islamist rebels and fear extinction if Bashar al-Assad falls. This month, rebels overran the historic Christian town of Maalula, where many of its inhabitants speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus. The AFP reported that a resident of Maalula called her fiancé's cell and was told by member of the Free Syrian Army that they gave him a chance to convert to Islam and he refused. So they slit his throat.

> Nina Shea, an international human-rights lawyer and expert on religious persecution,testified in 2011 before Congress regarding the fate of Iraqi Christians, two-thirds of whom have vanished from the country. They have either been murdered or fled in fear for their lives. Said Shea: "[I]n August 2004 … five churches were bombed in Baghdad and Mosul. On a single day in July 2009, seven churches were bombed in Baghdad … The archbishop of Mosul, was kidnapped and killed in early 2008. A bus convoy of Christian students were violently assaulted. Christians … have been raped, tortured, kidnapped, beheaded, and evicted from their homes …"

Well, we are pulling out of Iraq, so there is nothing we can do to protect anyone once we are gone.

Has anyone done anything about this?

> Yet so many Western Christians are silent. In January, Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA) penned a letter to 300 Catholic and Protestant leaders complaining about their lack of engagement. “Can you, as a leader in the church, help?” he wrote. “Are you pained by these accounts of persecution? Will you use your sphere of influence to raise the profile of this issue—be it through a sermon, writing or media interview?”
> There have been far too few takers.
>
> Wolf and Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA) sponsored legislation last year to create a special envoy at the State Department to advocate for religious minorities in the Middle East and South-Central Asia. It passed in the House overwhelmingly, but died in the Senate. Imagine the difference an outcry from constituents might have made. The legislation was reintroduced in January and again passed the House easily. It now sits in the Senate. According to the office of Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO), the sponsor of the bill there, there is no date set for it to be taken up.
>
> Wolf has complained loudly of the State Department’s lack of attention to religious persecution, but is anybody listening? When American leaders meet with the Saudi government, where is the public outcry demanding they confront the Saudis for fomenting hatred of Christians, Jews, and even Muslim minorities through their propagandistic tracts and textbooks? In the debate on Syria, why has the fate of Christians and other religious minorities been almost completely ignored?

The House passed the bill, the Senate is blocking it. The House is controlled by Republicans, the Senate is controlled by Democrats. You might think that the United States would be concerned about Christians – there are so many of us who claim to be Christians. But not everyone who claims to be a Christian has thought about how foreign policy affects the lives of Christians in other countries. Sometimes, they are more concerned about empowering the government to steal from their neighbor and give it to them. It really is that simple.

Republicans introduce Obamacare alternative: American Health Care Reform Act

September 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Endorsements for the American Healthcare Reform Act

The Daily Caller has an overview of what the bill would do.

There are 6 main sections:

1. Repeal of Obamacare
2. Increasing Access to Portable, Affordable Health Insurance
3. Improving Access to Insurance for Vulnerable Americans
4. Encouraging a More Competitive Health Care Market
5. Reforming Medical Liability Law
6. Respecting Human Life

I am a big supporter of making healthcare more consumer driven and less expensive, and of not violating conscience rights of medical workers. Does this bill do any of these things?

Section 4 addresses the need to make health care consumer-driven:

> Our bill would take steps toward creating a competitive health care marketplace. This legislation would take steps to address this problem by, most notably, allowing Americans to purchase health insurance products across state lines and by permitting small businesses to pool together to negotiate better rates.
>
> Other pro-patient reforms include amending the McCarran-Ferguson Act to ensure that federal anti-trust law applies to health insurance, making Medicare claims and payment data publicly available so that patients and taxpayers alike can better understand what they are being charged, helping states develop transparency portals with useful information on insurance plans, and stopping the federal government from denying coverage for health care services based upon comparative effectiveness data.

Just like with any area of the free market, increasing competition among sellers reduces prices and increases quality.

Section 5 caps non-economic damages in medical liability lawsuits at $250,000:

> This bill attempts to address the medical liability crisis that has played a role in the escalating cost of health care by implementing meaningful legal reforms that include caps on non- economic damages and limits to attorneys' fees. These provisions set no caps on economic damages, which are often the largest component of liability awards, thus patients will continue to have their rights to economic damages protected.

Why didn't Obamacare take that step? Because trial lawyers pressured them not to do it.

Section 6 should be of interest to anyone who believes in protecting the unborn:

> Provides that nothing in this act requires health plans to provide coverage of abortion services, or permits any government official to require coverage of abortion. Prohibits federal funds authorized or appropriated by this act from covering abortion, except in the case of rape, incest, or when the life of the mother is jeopardized. Ensures that no state pro-life or conscience protection laws will be preempted.

Pro-abortion groups made sure that Obamacare would offer free condoms and free abortion-causing drugs. That needs to be fixed.

So that's what health care reform would look like if Republicans did it. You can click here to find out more about the bill.

Where I found out about this

I found out about this bill from the Family Research Council Washington Watch Weekly podcast.

Details:

> On this week's edition of Washington Watch Weekly, I will be joined by veteran sportscaster, Craig James, who will tell us why he was sacked by Fox Sports and why he is fighting back, not only for himself, but for all Christians. The media continues to say that Republicans and Conservatives who are against Obamacare are ignoring the problems in our health care system and really don't care about the uninsured. Short response: they're wrong. Rep. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.) tells us why. Also, Tom Fitton with Judicial Watch tells us about the latest lawsuit against the Obama administration, who tries to say they are transparent. Well, this time, Tom and his team are suing the Pentagon over their relationship with the anti-Christian crusader, Mikey Weinstein.

Here is my full list of favorite podcasts.

Ethics week 2013: Five universities. Five nights. Five moral issues

September 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Details:

> DOING THE RIGHT THING Week 2013 is a nation wide university initiative to focus on a discussion of the foundation of morality, how do we determine what is right and wrong, and what it means to live ethically. These are questions that every college student, indeed every person on the planet, must grapple with as the answers affect government, society, our families, and ourselves.

Monday:

> SEPT. 30, 2013 | 6:30 PM EDT
>
> TRUTH, JUSTICE, & THE RESTORATION OF REASON | GEORGIA TECH
>
> DR. MICHAEL MILLER, Acton Institute
>
> PHYSICAL LOCATION: Student Center Theater

Tuesday:

> OCT. 1, 2013 | 8:00 PM EDT
>
> SEXUALITY & MARRIAGE: WHAT'S ETHICS GOT TO DO WITH IT? | RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
>
> KELLIE FIEDOREK, Alliance Defending Freedom | RYAN T. ANDERSON, Heritage Foundation
>
> PHYSICAL LOCATION: Cook Campus Center Multipurpose Room

Wednesday:

> OCT. 2, 2013 | 8:00PM EDT
>
> The History of American Eugenics: Lessons for the Second Genetic Century | OHIO UNIVERSITY
>
> DR. CHRISTOPHER HOOK, Mayo Clinic
>
> PHYSICAL LOCATION: Baker University Center, Ballroom A (8 PM EDT)
>
> **Noon Panel Discussion:**
>
> OCT. 2, 2013 | 12:00PM EDT
>
> Can We Safely and Successfully Re-Engineer Humanity?
>
> DR. CHRISTOPHER HOOK, Mayo Clinic; Scott Carson, Professor of Philosophy, Ohio University; & Scott Robe, Attorney, Athens, Ohio; TIM SHARP , News Director of WOUB, will facilitate

> PHYSICAL LOCATION: WOUB Studio A (Noon – 1:30 EDT)

Thursday:

> OCT. 3, 2013 | 8:00PM EDT
> DOES NATURAL LAW REQUIRE A MORAL LAW GIVER? | TEXAS A&M
> DR. FRANCIS BECKWITH, Baylor University
> PHYSICAL LOCATION: Rudder Theater

Friday:

> OCT. 4, 2013 | 7:00PM EDT
> DOING THE RIGHT THING AT THE BEGINNING OF LIFE | UC IRVINE
> DR. SCOTT RAE, Biola University
> PHYSICAL LOCATION: UCI Student Center, Pacific Ballroom C

Click here for more details on the events.

Obamacare health insurance exchanges impose massive penalties on married couples

September 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Hans Bader explains on the Competitive Enterprise Institute blog.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> On the Obamacare health insurance exchanges, being married can cost you a lot. Get divorced (or avoid getting married, if you live together), and you save $7,230 per year if you are a fairly typical 40-year-old couple with kids (example: the husband working full-time, and the wife working part time, with the husband making $70,000, and the wife making $23,000). If you are a 60-year-old couple with equal incomes and no kids, and you make $62,041 a year, you save $11,028 a year by getting divorced or remaining unmarried. These are the amounts of money you will lose if you get married, since you will lose this amount of taxpayer subsidies due to Obamacare's discriminatory treatment of married versus unmarried couples. That's the reality confirmed by an Obamacare "calculator" provided by the pro-Obamacare Kaiser Family Foundation showing how Obamacare's "tax credits" work.

It's not the first time that the Democrats have introduced additional marriage penalties:

> The tax increases Obama demanded in the fiscal cliff deal also contain a "marriage penalty," although only for upper-income households (since the maximum rate kicks in at $450,000 for married couples — that is, $225,000 for each spouse — versus $400,000 for singles). Obamacare's new tax on investment income, which applies to married couples making above $250,000 per year, also contains marriage penalties (for example, if an unmarried couple makes $390,000 — $195,000 for each partner — they owe no investment tax, even if all of their income is investment income, and even if a married couple with the same income would pay the Obamacare investment tax on a significant portion of their income).
>
> Historically, the effect of marriage penalties has been most profound for working-class people, who are punished severely for getting married by the welfare state. As Rep. Thomas Petri (R-Wisc.) has noted, "The decline in marriage and the rise in the number of children born to unmarried mothers are concentrated among lower-income families. One reason is that lower-income couples will often lose money if they get married. Many federal benefits such as food stamps and the earned income tax credit phase out as income rises. Under federal law, if two individuals earning the minimum wage choose to marry, combining their incomes results in the loss of some $7,000 in federal benefits. The result: Fewer marriages, more births outside marriage and reduced prospects for rising into the

> middle class."

The article goes on to explain why Obamacare penalizes does who work, but I want to stick with the Democrat antipathy to marriage.

Radical feminism opposes marriage

Why do Democrats want traditional marriage to go away? Well, because Democrats are radical feminists, and radical feminists want marriage to go away.

Here's a research paper written in 2003 from the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt: (footnote numbering and links removed)

> In her 1996 book In the Name of the Family: Rethinking Family Values in the Postmodern Age, Judith Stacey, Professor of Gender Studies and Sociology at the University of Southern California, consigned traditional marriage to the dustbin of history. Stacey contended that "Inequity and coercion…always lay at the vortex of that supposedly voluntary `compassionate marriage' of the traditional nuclear family." She welcomed the fact that traditional married-couple families (which she terms "The Family") are being replaced by single-mother families (which she terms the postmodern "family of woman"):
>
> > Perhaps the postmodern "family of woman" will take the lead in burying The Family at long last. The [married nuclear] Family is a concept derived from faulty theoretical premises and an imperialistic logic, which even at its height never served the best interests of women, their children, or even many men…. The [nuclear married] family is dead. Long live our families!
>
> Stacey urged policymakers to abandon their concern with restoring marital commitment between mothers and fathers and instead "move forward toward the postmodern family regime," characterized by single parenthood and transitory relationships.
>
> In 1996, Claudia Card, professor of Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, continued the attack:
>
> > The legal rights of access that married partners have to each other's persons, property, and lives makes it all but impossible for a spouse to defend herself (or himself), or to be protected against torture, rape, battery, stalking, mayhem, or murder by the other spouse…. Legal marriage thus enlists state support for conditions conducive to murder and mayhem.
>
> Other radical feminists suggested that a culture of self-sufficiency and high turnover in intimate relationships is the key to independence and protection from hostile home life. Activist Fran Peavey, in a 1997 Harvard article ironically titled "A Celebration of Love and Commitment," suggested that "Instead of getting

> married for life, men and women (in whatever combination suits their sexual orientation) should sign up for a seven-year hitch. If they want to reenlist for another seven, they may, but after that, the marriage is over." Also in 1997, radical feminist author Ashton Applewhite, in her book Cutting Loose–Why Women Who End Their Marriages Do So Well proclaimed: "Women who end their marriages are far better off afterward."
>
> Another feminist widely read during the 1990s was Barbara Ehrenreich, a former columnist with Time magazine who now writes for The Nation. Throughout her work, Ehrenreich extols single parenthood and disparages marriage. Divorce, she argues, produces "no lasting psychological damage" for children. What America needs is not fewer divorces but more "good divorces." Rather than seeking to strengthen marriage, policymakers "should concentrate on improving the quality of divorce." In general, Ehrenreich concludes that single parenthood presents no problems that cannot be solved by much larger government subsidies to single parents.
>
> Ehrenreich writes enthusiastically about efforts to move beyond the narrow limits of the nuclear married family toward more rational forms of human relationship:
>
> > There is a long and honorable tradition of "anti-family" thought. The French philosopher Charles Fourier taught that the family was a barrier to human progress; early feminists saw a degrading parallel between marriage and prostitution. More recently, the renowned British anthropologist Edmund Leach stated, "far from being the basis of the good society, the family with its narrow privacy and tawdry secrets, is the source of all discontents."
>
> While Ehrenreich recognizes that men and women are inevitably drawn to one another, she believes male-female relationships should be ad hoc, provisional, and transitory. She particularly disparages the idea of long-term marital commitment between fathers and mothers. In the future, children will be raised increasingly by communal groups of adults. These children apparently will fare far better than those raised within the tight constraints of the nuclear married family "with its deep impacted tensions."

The paper goes on to explain how these messages have entered into college textbooks. College textbooks used in classes where young women are expected to agree with the textbooks in order to get their good grades. This is what your children will learn. It's not what you think feminism is that matters – it's what they think feminism is. And what they think is what the textbooks tell them to think – or else they get drummed out of the university. This is where the 42% out-of-wedlock birth rate *came from*. And why our children are growing up without fathers, and as a consequence of that, growing further and further away from God. Marriage is bad, feminists tell us, because husbands and their traditional roles are bad. So what are men for? To donate sperm and to pay taxes for welfare programs that make men and marriage superfluous. In the past, men married

because they wanted the responsibility of the traditional male roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. If you want to know why men aren't marrying now, look to the policies that have removed the respect and responsibility that men enjoyed within their family and from society for taking on these traditional roles. We have been replaced by government, and radical feminism is to blame.

You can read more about what radical feminists think about marriage here, and realize that this is animating Democrat policy-making. If you want marriage, make sure you don't vote for a party that is trying to destroy it by every means possible – from redefinition, to divorce, to welfare, to exaggerations about domestic violence, to punitive taxation policies – and beyond. If you are a child of divorce, thank a Democrat. That was their intention – to deprive you of the stability you needed when you were growing up. One last point: it doesn't really address the policy issue when pro-marriage conservatives think that the solution to the decline of marriage is to tell men to "man up". That's an easy solution for empty-headed church leaders, but it doesn't reflect the real incentives that exist, thanks to policies pushed by the left.

What is theistic evolution? Can a person believe in God and evolution at the same time?

September 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Was Mount Rushmore designed?

Here's a post on Evolution News that explains what theistic evolution is:

> Three geologists stand at the foot of Mt. Rushmore. The first geologist says, "This mountain depicts perfectly the faces of four U.S. Presidents, it must be the work of a master sculptor." The second says, "You are a geologist, you should know that all mountains were created by natural forces, such as volcanoes and plate movements, the details were then sculpted by erosion from water and wind. How could you possibly think this was the work of an intelligent sculptor? Only a person completely ignorant of geophysics could think those faces were designed."
>
> The third geologist says to himself, "I don't want to be seen as ignorant, but the faces in this mountain sure do look like they were designed." So he thinks a moment and says to the second geologist, "Of course you are right, these faces were sculpted by natural forces such as erosion. Only an ignorant person would think they were designed." Then he turns to the first and says, "But what a magnificent result, there obviously must have been a master sculptor standing by and watching."

The third geologist is a theistic evolutionist. Someone who thinks that God did nothing detectable by science in the whole history of the universe, but who also loves to talk about their religious experience and what hymns they like to sing in church. Synonyms for this definition of theistic evolution are "supernaturalist naturalism" and "theistic atheism". I like the latter, myself. Theistic atheism. Atheism at work for my colleagues on Monday, and theism in the church for my pastor on Sundays.

Now if you call yourself a theistic evolutionist, but you think that intelligent design is *detectable in nature by non-theists doing ordinary science with ordinary scientific methods*, then you are not a theistic evolutionist according to this definition. This post is not describing you.

You can listen to a debate on theistic evolution between Michael Behe and theistic evolutionist Keith Fox right here to decide if theistic evolution is *true.* A summary is provided for those who prefer to read instead of listen.

Philip E. Johnson lectures on science, evolution and religion

September 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I found this fun lecture by the grandfather of the big-tent intelligent design movement, Berkeley law professor Philip E. Johnson.

I'll bet you guys have all heard of him, but you've never heard him speak, right? Well, I was a young man, I used to listen to Phil's lectures and his debates with Eugenie Scott quite a bit. This is one of my favorite lectures. Very easy to understand, and boilerplate for anything else in the origins debate. This is a great lecture – funny, engaging and useful. You will definitely listen to this lecture several times if you listen to it once.

The MP3 is here. (91 minutes, 62 megabytes)

The Inherit the Wind stereotype

- Many people get their understanding of origins by watching movies like "Inherit the Wind" (or reading science fiction)
- The actual events of the Scopes trial are nothing like what the movie portrays
- The law forbidding the teaching of evolution was symbolic, not meant to be enforced
- The actual Scopes trial was a publicity stunt to attract attention to Dayton, TN to bring business to the town
- The ACLU advertised for a teacher who would be willing to be sued
- They found a substitute physical education teacher who would be willing to "break" the law
- The movie is nothing like the actual events the movie is a morality play
- The religious people are evil and stupid and ignorant and bigoted
- The scientists and lawyers are all intelligent, romantic, and honest seekers of the truth
- The religious people think that the Bible trumps science and science is not as reliable as the Bible
- The movie argues that the reason why there is ANY dissent to evolution is because of Biblical fundamentalism
- The movie presents the idea that there are no scientific problems with evolution
- The movie says that ONLY Biblical fundamentalists who believe in 6 day, 24-hour creation doubt evolution
- The movie says that Biblical fundamentalism are close-minded, and not open to scientific truth
- The movie says that people who read the Bible as making factual claims are misinterpreting the Bible
- The movie says that smart people read the Bible for comfort and feelings and arbitrary values, not for truth

Guided evolution and methodological naturalism

- What scientists mean by evolution is that fully naturalistic, unguided, materialistic mechanisms caused the diversity of life
- Scientists do not allow that God had any real objective effect on how life was created
- Scientists think that nature did all the creating, and any mention of God is unnecessary opinion – God didn't DO ANYTHING
- Scientists operate with one overriding rule – you can only explain the physical world with physical and material causes
- Scientists DO NOT allow that God could have done anything detectable by the sciences
- Scientists WILL NOT consider the idea that natural, material processes might be INSUFFICIENT for explaining everything in nature
- You cannot even ask the question about whether natural laws, matter and chance can explain something in nature
- Intelligent causes can NEVER be the explanation for anything in nature, and you can't even test experimentally to check that
- Scientists ASSUME that everything can be explained with natural laws, matter and chance – no questioning of natural causes is allowed
- Where no natural explanation of a natural phenomenon is available, scientists SPECULATE about undiscovered natural explanations
- The assumption of naturalistic sufficiency is called "methodological naturalism"
- To question the assumptions that natural is all there is, and that nature has to do its own creating, makes you an "enemy of science"
- But Johnson says that *naturalists* are the enemies of science, because they are like the Biblical fundamentalists
- Naturalists have a presumption that prevents them from being willing to follow the evidence where it is leading
- Experiments are not even needed, because the presumption of naturalism overrides any experimental finding that falsifies the sufficiency of natural causes to explain some natural phenomenon

What can natural selection and mutation actually do?

- what evolution has actually been observed to do is explain changing populations of moths and finches
- finches with smaller or larger beaks are observed to have differential survival rates when there are droughts or floods
- no new body plan or new organ type has been observed to emerge from these environmental pressures
- the only kind of evolution that has been observed is evolution *within types* – no new genetic instructions are created

- in textbooks, only confirming examples are presented – but what is required is a broad pattern of gradual development of species
- if you look at the fossil record, what you see in most cases is variation within types based on changing environments
- the real question is: can natural law and chance *be observed* to be doing any creating of body plans and organ types?

What kind of effect requires an intelligent cause?

- the thing to be explained in the history of life is the functional information sequences
- you need to have a sequence of symbols or characters that is sufficiently long
- your long sequence of characters has to be sequenced in the right order to have biological function
- the only thing that can create long sequences of functional information is an intelligent cause
- intelligent design people accept micro-evolution – changes within types – because that's been observed
- the real thing to be explained is the first living cell's functional information, and the creation of new functional information

Critical response

The next 15 minutes of the lecture contain a critical response from a philosophy professor who thinks that there have been no developments in design arguments since Aquinas and Paley. He basically confirms the stereotypes that Johnson outlined in the first part of the lecture. I recommend listening to this to see what opposition to intelligent design really looks like. It's not concerned with answering scientific questions – they want to talk about God, the Bible and Noah's ark. It's our job to get people like this critic to focus on the science.

Here's my snarky rendition of what he said:

1) Don't take the Bible literally, even if the genre is literal.

- all opposition to evolution is based on an ignorant, fundamentalist, literal reading of the Bible
- the Bible really doesn't communicate anything about the way the world really is
- the Bible is just meant to suggest certain opinions and experiences which you may find fetching, or not, depending on your feelings and community
- if Christians would just interpret the Bible as myths and opinions on par with other personal preferences, then evolution is no threat to religious belief

2) As long as you treat the design argument as divorced from evidence, it's not very effective

- the latest and best version of the design argument is the old Paley argument which

involves no experimental data, so I'll critique that
- this 200-year old argument which doesn't rely on science has serious problems, and unnamed Christians agree with me!
- Christians should NOT try to prove God's existence using evidence from the natural world (as Romans 1 says), and in fact it's "Pelagianism" to even try
- Christians should divorce their faith from logic and evidence even though the Bible presents faith as being rooted in reason and evidence
- Christians should not tie their faith to the science of today, because science is always changing and the theism-friendly evidence of today might be overturned tomorrow
- It's a good idea for me to critique the arguments of 1000-year old people who did not know anything about the cosmic fine-tuning argument – that's fair!
- I find it very useful to tell people that the argument from design is false without mentioning any design arguments from DNA or cosmic fine-tuning
- We need to assume that the natural world is explainable using only natural causes before we look at any evidence
- We should assume that natural causes create all life, and then rule out all experimental evidence for intelligent causes that we have today
- As long as you accept that God is a personal opinion that has nothing to do with reality, then you can do science
- The non-Christian process theologian Teilhard de Chardin accepts evolution, and therefore so should you
- Remember when theists said God caused thunder because he was bowling in the clouds and then we found out he didn't? Yeah well – maybe tomorrow we'll find out that functional sequences of amino acids and proteins have natural causes! What would you do then?

3) What the Bible really says is that you should be a political liberal

Q&A time

The lecture concludes with 13 minutes of questions.

House Republicans offer deal: delay Obamacare for a year, no government shutdown

October 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This new House bill is a good compromise – even Tea Party stalwart Ted Cruz has endorsed it.

Excerpt:

> During a speech on the Senate floor Monday afternoon, Texas senator Ted Cruz endorsed the latest House bill to fund the government. This continuing resolution would not defund Obamacare, as Cruz has demanded for months, but it would delay Obamacare's individual mandate by one year and end employer subsidies for members of Congress and their staff.
>
> During his speech, Cruz praised the House of Represenatives for trying to compromise and criticized Senate majority leader Harry Reid for refusing to negotiate. Senator John Cornyn, Cruz's Republican colleague from Texas, then pointed out that the House will reportedly pass a continuing resolution that will include a delay the individual mandate and the Vitter amendment.
>
> Cruz said that the Senate should pass "whatever" the House passes this evening.
>
> "If the House of Representatives asks tonight I believe this Senate should come back immediately and pass the continuing resolution the House–whatever the House passes," Cruz said. "I don't know what it will be, but it will be yet another good faith effort to keep the government running and to address the trainwreck of a law that is Obamacare. And I very much hope that this body begins to listen to the people."
>
> Cruz's comments mark an apparent shift in his position on defunding Obamacare. During his 22-hour speech on Obamacare last week, Cruz said he could not support a compromise.
>
> […]Monday evening, the Club for Growth endorsed the House compromise but Heritage Action opposed it.

Not sure how I feel about this compromise, because this Wall Street Journal article makes it sound like a *good* deal.

Excerpt:

> Air traffic control will continue, in addition to airport and airplane safety inspections. All Federal Highway Administration activities will also continue.
>
> […]The IRS will cancel audit appointments.
>
> […]The Department of Education could have to delay its issuing of competitive and formula grant awards later this year.

> […]Workplace dispute cases would not be resolved until after the shutdown, as the National Labor Relations Board would halt all case handling.
>
> […]Agency functions that protect national security and ensure human safety are exempt from the shutdown. Military operations, border security, coastal protection (including the Coast Guard), law enforcement, criminal investigations, counter-terrorism efforts and care of prisoners are all expected to continue. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the U.S. Secret Service, and the U.S. Marshals Service will all continue to function. The Transportation Security Administration will continue to staff airports.
>
> On Friday, the Pentagon warned that a government shutdown could force the Defense Department to furlough about 400,000 civilian workers, delay military contracts and defer training.
>
> The move would impact about half the department's 800,000 civilian employees, most of whom were required to take six unpaid days off earlier this year as a result of the automatic spending cuts imposed under so-called sequestration.
>
> Because of the unique role the Pentagon plays in protecting the country, defense officials are planning to exempt large numbers of people and projects. All active duty military personnel will not be furloughed – and large numbers of civilians supporting the war in Afghanistan and other essential military initiatives will stay on the job.
>
> Pentagon leaders created a long list of exemptions, including counseling services for sexual assault victims, some child care facilities, and some base cafeterias.
>
> […] The U.S. Postal Service will continue to function as usual.
>
> Social Security payments will continue to go out, and the administration is expected to continue taking applications for benefits, as in plans released Friday. In that plan, the agency said it will furlough 18,006 of its 62,343 workers.
>
> Medicare and Medicaid payments will also continue, although the programs could encounter difficulty if the shutdown stretches into weeks.
>
> […]Food and Drugs: The Food and Drug Administration will continue its review of imports into the U.S., according to the Department of Health and Human Services' plan released Friday.
>
> Inspection of meat, poultry and egg products will continue, as these functions fall under the category of human safety. The HHS will furlough 40,512 workers, 52% of its staff.
>
> Disease: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will cease disease surveillance, which could be particularly problematic as flu season approaches.
>
> Medical care of inpatients and emergency outpatient care will continue.
>
> The National Institutes of Health clinical center will not accept new patients into clinical research, but it will continue to provide medical services for current patients. In the 1995-96 shutdowns, calls placed to NIH's disease hotline were

> not answered, according to the CRS report.
>
> Obamacare: The Affordable Care Act will continue to be funded.
>
> Other: Handling of hazardous waste, disaster assistance and power grid maintenance will continue.

On balance, it doesn’t sound like the catastrophe that the left-wing media make it out to be, at least for a couple of weeks.

Meanwhile, Senate Democrats are refusing to negotiate.

Do people go to Hell just because they don't accept Jesus?

October 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From J. Warner Wallace at Please Convince Me.

Excerpt:

> A "just" God does justice, which means to punish or reward appropriately. In the Western tradition, we punish people for the actions they commit, but the extent of punishment is dependent also on the person's mental state, and a person's mental state is reflective of his or her beliefs. Premeditated murder is worse than manslaughter, and is punished more severely, and a hate crime is a sentencing enhancement that adds more punishment to the underlying crime. In both examples, a person's beliefs are at play: the premeditated murderer has reflected on his choices and wants the victim dead; a hate crime reflects a belief that the rights of a member of the protected group are especially unworthy of respect. So, considering a person's beliefs may well be relevant, especially if those beliefs have motivated the criminal behavior.
>
> But the challenger's mistake is even more fundamental. He is wrong to assert that people are condemned for not accepting the gospel. Christians believe that people are condemned for their sinful behavior – the "wages of sin is death" – not for what they fail to do. The quoted challenge is like saying that the sick man died of "not going to the doctor." No, the person died of a specific condition – perhaps cancer or a heart attack – which a doctor might have been able to cure. So too with eternal punishment. No one is condemned for refusing to believe in Jesus. While Jesus can – and does – provide salvation for those who seek it, there is nothing unjust about not providing salvation to those who refuse to seek it. After all, we don't normally feel obliged to help someone who has not asked for, and does not want, our assistance. So too the Creator has the right to withhold a gift – i.e. eternity spent in His presence – from those who would trample on the gift, and on the gift-giver.
>
> The quoted assertion also demonstrates an unspoken belief that we can impress God with our "kind" or "generous" behavior. This fails to grasp what God is – a perfect being. We cannot impress Him. What we do right we should do. We don't drag people into court and reward them for not committing crimes. This is expected of them. They can't commit a murder and then claim that punishment is unfair, because they had been kind and generous in the past. When a person gets his mind around the idea of what perfection entails, trying to impress a perfect Creator with our "basic goodness" no longer seems like such a good option.

Here's a related answer from CARM. This one answers the question about degrees of punishment in Hell.

Excerpt:

> Yes, there are different degrees of punishment in hell.
>
> […]But, not all people are equally bad. Though all deserve damnation because all are sinners, different people have committed different degrees of sin.
>
> - Mt. 11:20-22, "Then He began to reproach the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 "Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you…I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you."
> - Luke 12:47-48, "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."
> - John 19:11, "Jesus answered [Pilate], 'You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin.' "
> - Heb. 10:29, "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?"
>
> So, if Jesus speaks of greater condemnation for Chorazin and Bethsaida than Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 11:21-22), one slave received more punishment than another (Luke 12:47-48), the one who delivered Jesus to Pilate has the greater sin (John 19:11), and a more severe punishment is reserved for those who trample underfoot the Son of God, then does not greater sin mean that greater punishment will also happen in hell? Yes it does.

Not only are there degrees of punishment in Hell, but there are degrees of reward in Heaven, based on what you do on Earth and what strengths you start out with.

Philippians 4:10-18:

[10] I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

[11] I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever

the circumstances.

[12] I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

[13] I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

[14] Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

[15] Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;

[16] for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

[17] Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.

[18] I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Everyone who believes in Jesus gets salvation, but your experience in Heaven will be different based on what you do while you are alive. And that's also the answer to another common question – about deathbed conversions. Both deathbed converts and William Lane Craig will get the same experience of being in the presence of God, but there are completely different levels of reward. One person has an empty account, and the other person has huge massive amounts of virtuous action on deposit. But I think the real reason that Christians are trying to do good things here on Earth is that they like God, and they want to be his friend. They want to work on the relationship, even if it means a little self-denial, and a little sacrifice. We all have things that we would rather be doing for ourselves, but sometimes we have to things that work – things that are effective – for someone else. My values are not his values. Sometimes it is good to do something based on what He values. I don't always have to get my way, because then it wouldn't be a real relationship.

I enjoy thinking about Bible puzzles like this… so often in church we just make Christianity a checklist of things that we are supposed to believe somehow, by brute force willpower. I think reflecting on these problems, asking questions, and making sense of them on our own, is a much better approach.

Dr. George Yancey lectures on anti-Christian bias in academia, and beyond

October 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My good friend Wes posted this 28-minute lecture.

If you watch 5 minutes, then you'll definitely stay and watch the whole thing. It's fascinating.

Details:

> Join Dr. George Yancey in an in depth discussion of the bias taking place within academia against religion in general, but more specifically Christianity. Within the discussion Dr.Yancey uses brief explanations of his previous book, Compromising Scholarship and many other excerpts of his past research as well as his forthcoming research to give us a new viewpoint on academia and religion.

I found a quick description of Dr. Yancey's work in this New York Times article from July 2011.

It says:

> Republican scholars are more likely than Democrats to end up working outside academia,as documented by Daniel Klein, an economist at George Mason University. Dr. Klein, who calls himself a classical liberal (a k a libertarian), says that the university promotes groupthink because its system of "departmental majoritarianism" empowers the dominant faction to keep hiring like-minded colleagues. And when a faculty committee is looking to hire or award tenure, political ideology seems to make a difference, according to a "collegiality survey" conducted by George Yancey.
>
> Dr. Yancey, a professor of sociology at the University of North Texas, asked more than 400 sociologists which nonacademic factors might influence their willingness to vote for hiring a new colleague. You might expect professors to at least *claim* to be immune to bias in academic hiring decisions.
>
> But as Dr. Yancey reports in his new book, "Compromising Scholarship: Religious and Political Bias in American Higher Education," more than a quarter of the sociologists said they would be swayed favorably toward a Democrat or an A.C.L.U. member and unfavorably toward a Republican. About 40 percent said they would be less inclined to vote for hiring someone who belonged to the National Rifle Association or who was an evangelical. Similar results were obtained in a subsequent survey of professors in other social sciences and the humanities.
>
> Dr. Yancey, who describes himself as a political independent with traditional Christian beliefs and progressive social values, advises nonliberal graduate

> students to be discreet during job interviews. “The information in this research,” he wrote, “indicates that revealing one’s political and religious conservatism will, on average, negatively influence about half of the search committee one is attempting to impress.”
>
> Dr. Yancey’s research was a survey, not a field experiment, so it’s impossible to know how many of those academics who confessed to hypothetical bias would let it sway an actual decision. Perhaps they’d try to behave as impartially as the directors of graduate studies in Dr. Gross’s experiment.

The lecture is a real eye-opener. It turns out that in academia, you are likely to be viewed the same way as blacks were viewed by slave-owners, and Jews were viewed by Nazis. Stereotypes, ignorance and hatred abound.

We have a lot of work to do to correct these perceptions, and unfortunately nothing that Christians see and hear in church is likely to change this. Until we get serious about prodding our young people to think and achieve, this is what people on the secular left will think of us. Not because they really are smarter, but because we are not capable of pointing out the nonsense on their side of the aisle, e.g. – eternal universes, aliens seeding the Earth with life, fatherlessness is good for children, and so on. If we don’t study the evidence, then their stupidity will rule the day, and they are the ones who are entrenched in academia.

Democrats refuse another offer from Republicans to avoid government shutdown

October 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

As expected, the Senate Democrats rejected the compromise on Tuesday.

> **Last Night, Senate Democrats Voted Along Party Lines To Shut Down The Government Rather Than Agree To Delay Obamacare's Individual Mandate And Surrender Their Special Insurance Subsidies.** "In an extraordinary back-and-forth between the House and Senate that extended late into the night, Democrats beat back attempt after attempt to gut President Barack Obama's signature health care law. After Senate Democrats rejected the House's year-long delay of Obamacare and a repeal of the medical device tax on Monday afternoon, Democrats returned to the floor after 9 p.m. to kill another House GOP proposal. The second measure would have kept the government open in exchange for delaying the health care law's individual mandate and eliminating federal health care contributions for lawmakers and Capitol Hill aides. (Burgess Everett and Manu Raju, "Government Shutdown Update: Senate Rejects House Plan – Again," *Politico*, 9/30/13)
>
> **According To The Congressional Budget Office, Delaying The Individual Mandate By One Year Would Reduce The Federal Budget Deficit By $35 Billion.** "CBO and the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) estimate that enacting H.R. 2668 would reduce federal deficits by roughly $36 billion over the 2014-2018 period and by roughly $35 billion over the 2014-2023 period." (Cost Estimate Of H.R. 2668: An Act To Delay The Application Of The Individual Health Insurance Mandate, To Delay The Application Of The Employer Health Insurance Mandate, And For Other Purposes, Congressional Budget Office, 9/6/13)
>
> **A July Poll Found That 77 Percent Of Registered Voters Support Delaying The Individual Mandate Or Repealing It Entirely.** (Morning Consult Poll, 2,076 RV, MOE 2%, 7/24-26/13)
>
> **Member of Congress And Their Staff Are Required To Enroll In ObamaCare's Exchanges.** "Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, then succeeded in adding a measure to Obama's health care bill three years ago requiring members of Congress and employees in their offices to leave the Federal Employee Health Benefits program and start buying their insurance through the state exchanges that open Tuesday under the Obamacare law." (Laurie Kellman, "GOP demanded lawmakers pay more for health care," *The Associated Press*, 10/1/13)
>
> **But OPM Granted Congress The Ability To Provide Subsidies, Which Are Not Available For Other Americans, To Help Purchase Insurance Though The Exchanges.** "But the statute means that about 11,000 Members and

> Congressional staff will lose the generous coverage they now have as part of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). Instead they will get the lower-quality, low-choice "Medicaid Plus" of the exchanges. The Members-annual salary: $174,000-and their better paid aides also wouldn't qualify for ObamaCare subsidies. That means they could be exposed to thousands of dollars a year in out-of-pocket insurance costs…And now the White House is suspending the law to create a double standard. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that runs federal benefits will release regulatory details this week, but leaks to the press suggest that Congress will receive extra payments based on the FEHBP defined-contribution formula, which covers about 75% of the cost of the average insurance plan. For 2013, that's about $4,900 for individuals and $10,000 for families." (Editorial, "Congress's ObamaCare Exemption," *The Wall Street Journal*, 8/5/13)

I listened to a recent episode of the Weekly Standard podcast, and guest Bill Kristol was advising the GOP to make exactly this proposal, saying that it was a strong move by the Republicans. I agree. We now have vulnerable Democrats going on record in favor of special perks for themselves and their staff, as well as the hated individual mandate. As soon as people see the sticker shock of being forced to buy insurance, or pay a fine, we are going to have a valuable tool in the 2014 elections. The left-wing media isn't going to be able to protect the Democrats from their own votes.

UPDATE: The Weekly Standard approves of what the GOP is doing.

Women earned more doctoral and Master's degrees than men in 2012

October 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Master's Degrees, By Field and Gender, 2012

	Male	Female	Females per 100 Males
Arts and Humanities	41.2%	**58.8%**	**142.7**
Biological, Agricultural Sciences	44.5%	**55.5%**	**124.7**
Business	57.3%	42.7%	74.5
Education	23.8%	**76.2%**	**320.2**
Engineering	76.9%	23.1%	30.0
Health Sciences	19.3%	**80.7%**	**418.1**
Mathematics and Computer Sciences	69.1%	30.9%	44.7
Physical Sciences	58.5%	41.5%	70.9
Public Administration	23.2%	**76.8%**	**331.0**
Social, Behavioral Sciences	37.9%	**62.1%**	**163.9**
Other Fields	37.4%	**62.6%**	**167.4**
Total	**40.5%**	**59.5%**	**146.9**

Source: Council of Graduate Schools

Women now earning majority of graduate degrees
From the American Enterprise Institute Ideas blog.

Excerpt:

> The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) released its annual report recently on U.S. graduate school enrollment and degrees for 2012, and here are some of the more interesting findings in this year's report:
>
> 1. **For the fourth year in a row, women in 2012 earned a majority of doctoral degrees**. Of the 67,220 doctoral degrees awarded in 2012 at U.S. universities, women earned 34,761 of those degrees and 52.2% of the total, compared to 31,830 degrees awarded to men who earned 47.8% of the total (see top chart above).
>
> […]2. **By field of study, women earning doctoral degrees in 2012 outnumbered men in 7 of the 11 graduate fields** tracked by the CGS (see top chart above)
>
> […]3. The middle chart above shows the **gender breakdown for master's degrees awarded in 2012**, and the gender disparity in favor of females is significant – women earned just under 60% of all master's degrees in 2012, which would also mean that women earned 146.9 master's degrees last year for every 100 degrees earned by men.
>
> […]Women represent 58.5% of all graduate students in the U.S., meaning that **there are now 141 women enrolled in graduate school for every 100 men.**

Click here for the charts.

The author of the post, Dr. Mark Perry, concludes this:

> **MP:** Here's my prediction – the facts that: a) men are underrepresented in graduate school enrollment overall (100 men were enrolled in 2012 for every 141 women), b) men received fewer master's (40.5% of the total) and doctoral degrees (47.8% of the total) than women in 2012, and c) men were underrepresented in 7 out of 11 graduate fields of study at both the master's and doctoral levels last year will get no attention at all from the media, universities and anybody in the higher education industry.
>
> Additionally, there will be no calls for government studies, or increased government funding to address the significant gender disparities in graduate schools, and nobody will refer to the gender graduate school enrollment and degree gaps favoring women as a problem or a "crisis." Further, neither President Obama nor Congress will address the gender graduate enrollment and degree gaps by invoking the Title IX gender-equity law, like they have threatened to do for the gender gap in some college math and science programs. And there won't be any executive orders to address the huge gender disparity in graduate schools by creating a White House Council on Boys and Men like the executive order issued by President Obama in 2009 to create the "White House Council on Women and Girls." Finally, despite their stated commitment to "gender equity," the hundreds of university women's centers around the country are unlikely to show any concern about the significant gender inequities in graduate school enrollment and degrees, and universities will not be allocating funding to set up men's centers or create graduate scholarships for men.
>
> **Bottom Line**: If there is any attention about gender differences in the CGS annual report, it will likely be about the fact that women are a minority in 4 of the 11 fields of graduate study including engineering and computer science (a gender gap which some consider to be a "national crisis"), with calls for greater awareness of female under-representation in STEM graduate fields of study and careers (except for the STEM field of biology, where women are*over-represented*). But don't expect any concern about the fact that men have increasingly become the second sex in higher education. The concern about gender imbalances will remain extremely selective, and will only focus on cases when women, not men, are underrepresented and in the minority.

Men outnumber women in business, computer science, engineering and physical sciences.

I echo Dr. Perry's point, and want to add this. In traditional Christianity, men are responsible for providing for their families. One of the ways that we men prepare for this is by getting advanced degrees in STEM-related fields, since these fields are the hardest and also pay the best. So with that in mind, what does it mean for men who want to prepare for this provider role that there is this obvious discrimination against men in

graduate schools and doctoral programs? Is anyone going to do anything to change policies and incentives to favor men, like they did when women were under-represented? *Of course not.* The only thing that will be done is to ignorantly urge men to "man up", while ignoring the real problems, e.g. – a lack of male teachers, schools that are not geared to male learning styles, and so on.

Related posts

- Christina Hoff Sommers: how to make school better for boys
- Christina Hoff Sommers: school has become hostile to boys
- New study: feminism in education causes boys to underperform academically
- Study of elementary school children finds entrenched discrimination against boys
- The learned helplessness of young men in a feminist state
- The consequences of the feminization of education in the UK
- How well are American schools teaching science?
- New study finds that female teachers give male students lower marks
- Report finds women outpacing men in educational attainment
- Young women now being paid more than young men
- Are boys performing poorly in schools?
- How discrimination against men in schools increases male unemployment

30% of gorilla genome contradicts Darwinian prediction of human and ape phylogeny

October 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest episode of ID the Future discusses a recent (March 2012) paper about the gorilla genome.

Details:

> On this episode of **ID The Future**, Casey Luskin discusses how the recent complete sequencing of the gorilla genome has challenged conventional thinking about human ancestry and explains what neo-Darwinists are doing to try to minimize the impact of this new information. Says Luskin: "There is not a clear signal of ancestral relationships that is coming out of the gorilla genome once you add it into the mix." Tune in to hear about this interesting development!

The MP3 file is here.

Rather than summarize this short 10-minute podcast, I wanted to excerpt a post of Evolution News about it.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> A whopping 30% of the gorilla genome — amounting to hundreds of millions of base pairs of gorilla DNA — *contradicts* the standard supposed evolutionary phylogeny of great apes and humans. That's the big news revealed last week with the publication of the sequence of the full gorilla genome. But there's a lot more to this story.
>
> Eugenie Scott once taught us that when some evolutionary scientist claims some discovery "sheds light" on some aspect of evolution, we might suspect that's evolution-speak for 'this find really messed up our evolutionary theory.' That seems to be the case here. Aylwyn Scally, the lead author of the gorilla genome report, was quoted saying, "The gorilla genome is important because it sheds light on the time when our ancestors diverged from our closest evolutionary cousins around six to 10 million years ago." NPR titled its story similarly: "Gorilla Genome Sheds Light On Human Evolution." What evolutionary hypothesis did the gorilla genome mess up?
>
> The standard evolutionary phylogeny of primates holds that humans and chimps are more closely related to one-another than to other great apes like gorillas. In practice, all that really means is that when we sequence human, chimp, and gorilla genes, human and chimp genes have a DNA sequence that is more similar to one-another's genes than to the gorilla's genes. But huge portions of the gorilla genome contradict that nice, neat tidy phylogeny. That's because these gorilla genes are more similar to the human or chimp version than the human or chimp versions are to one-another. **In fact, it seems that *some 30% of the***

> ***gorilla genome contradicts the standard primate phylogeny* in this manner.**

The Evolution News post then cites New Scientist and Nature's comments on the study.

This isn't the first time we've heard about a study like this – the last time was about the chimpanzee genome and the paper was published in Nature – the most prestigious peer-reviewed journal.

Harry Reid: government-controlled health care is more important than curing cancer

October 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

That's a video of Democrat Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid at a Democrat press conference. The Republicans in the House have passed a multitude of bills to fund critical areas of government, but the Democrats have rejected them all. This time, a CNN journalist asks about one bill that funds NIH research to cure cancer. Watch the video!

Washington Free Beacon has the transcript for those who can't see the video: (H/T Letitia)

> DANA BASH: You all talked about children with cancer unable to go to clinical trials. The House is presumably going to pass a bill that funds at least the NIH. Given what you've said, will you at least pass that? And if not, aren't you playing the same political games that Republicans are?
>
> HARRY REID: Listen, Sen. Durbin explained that very well, and he did it here, did it on the floor earlier, as did Sen. Schumer. What right did they have to pick and choose what part of government is going to be funded? It's obvious what's going on here. You talk about reckless and irresponsible. Wow. What this is all about is Obamacare. They are obsessed. I don't know what other word I can use. They're obsessed with this Obamacare. It's working now and it will continue to work and people will love it more than they do now by far. So they have no right to pick and choose.
>
> BASH: But if you can help one child who has cancer, why wouldn't you do it?
>
> REID: Why would we want to do that? I have 1,100 people at Nellis Air Force base that are sitting home. They have a few problems of their own. This is — to have someone of your intelligence to suggest such a thing maybe means you're irresponsible and reckless –
>
> BASH: I'm just asking a question.

So Harry Reid must be in charge of health care, and that it is worth letting children die of cancer. He can't trust you and I to earn our own money and buy our own health care in a free market – he has to choose how much much we can earn and how much health care we can pay for. And if a few hundred or a few thousand or a few million children have to die in order for him to get that control over our lives, then so be it. It's a very telling glimpse into the mind of a socialist. How dare you question his authority to control your life? You're irresponsible and reckless to demand answers from your betters, you peon. You should be grateful for Harry Reid's wise oversight.

But you know what the government does have money for during a shutdown? $2,163 for a "massage chair".

Shutdown doesn't hurt you? Then they'll make it hurt you

In fact, the Democrats are so worried that none of us will care about their stupid shutdown of government that actually have barricaded off public memorial monuments to keep world war II veterans from visiting them!

Obama barricades open-area war memorial to keep veterans out

Fortunately, Republican legislators like Michele Bachmann and Louie Gohmert intervened to make sure that veterans who had traveled to Washington to visit the monument were allowed in. They smashed the barricades down and let the veterans inside.

Michele Bachmann:

Republican congressman Pete King even distracted police to sneak some of the veterans in. The “Park Police” explained that they might press charges against the Republican legislators for breaking down the barricades to let the vets in. That all happened on Monday, but on Tuesday, the Democrats decided to pay union members to *protest* against the world war II veterans for breaking into the memorial area. I wouldn’t believe that this happened, except that there is a video.

Obama lied, health care died: 10 states where Obamacare killed existing health care plans

October 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama famously promised, "If you like your health care plan, you can keep your health care plan." He later got even more specific.
>
> "If you are among the hundreds of millions of Americans who already have health insurance through your job, or Medicare, or Medicaid, or the VA, nothing in this plan will require you or your employer to change the coverage or the doctor you have," Obama said.
>
> But as Obamacare's rollout approaches, we have learned this is not true. Here are the ten states where consumers may like their health care plans, but they won't be able to keep them.

I'll pick just three of the states:

> **1) California:**58,000 will lose their plans under Obamacare. The first bomb dropped in California with a mass exodus from the most populated state's Obamacare exchange. Aetna, the country's third largest insurer, left first in July and was closely followed by UnitedHealth. Anthem Blue Cross pulled out of California's Obamacare exchange for small businesses as well.
>
> Fifty-four percent of Californians expect to lose their coverage, according to an August poll.
>
> **3) Connecticut:** Aetna, the third largest insurer in the nation, won't offer insurance on the Obamacare exchange in its own home state, where it was founded in 1850. The reason? "We believe the modification to the rates filed by Aetna will not allow us to collect enough premiums to cover the cost of the plans and meet the service expectations of our customers," said Aetna spokesman Susan Millerick.
>
> **5) South Carolina:**28,000 people were insured by Medical Mutual of Ohio, SC's second-largest insurance company, until it decided to leave the state entirely in July due to Obamacare's "vast and quite complex" new regulations. Company spokesman Ed Byers said Medical Mutual's patients would be switched over to United Healthcare plans instead.

When Obama said that people could keep their health care plans if they liked them, what *evidence* did we have to believe him? What reason did we have to believe that he actually knew what he was talking about, instead of just reading a teleprompter-assisted speech that someone else wrote for him? Had he been governor of a state where he put

in a similar program and people kept their health plans? Did he commission a study that showed that people would be able to keep their health plans? What evidence did we have to believe him?

Why do so many people oppose Obamacare and why isn't Obama willing to fix it?

October 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from National Review provides a simple overview of a few of the main problems with Obamacare.

I'll just highlight a few of the points in the article.

Higher health care costs, higher health insurance costs, higher taxes:

> Under ACA, health-care spending is expected to rise significantly, even beyond the usual inflation in medical prices. President Obama's economic advisers originally had calculated that the bill would reduce health-care spending by $200 billion a year, from whence the president derived his intellectually indefensible conclusion that the bill would save the average family of four some $2,500 a year. Recently, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services calculated that ACA will not reduce health-care spending at all and will instead add about $70 billion per year in the immediate future. Estimates of the program's expense keep growing. It will spend more than originally estimated, it will tax more than originally estimated, and its vaunted deficit-reduction benefits have been evaporating at a pace suggesting that, as many predicted, they will never come to pass. In 2010, CBO projected that ACA would reduce the deficit by $140 billion through 2019; today that projection is a mere $4 billion. The estimated tax increases in the bill have doubled.

It discriminates against men by forcing them to subsidize women's health care:

> The difference between the increase in men's rates and those in women's rates is one of the more naked bits of ideology apparent in the bill. Women spend considerably more on health care than men do, and hence have paid higher health-insurance premiums. The architects of the ACA decided that this was not permissible, and so by fiat eliminated the difference, meaning a disproportionate increase in men's rates. Likewise, because there can be only so much difference permitted in prices paid by the young and the old, the young will pay much higher rates.

Employers are forced to make full-time employees work part-time:

> [The employer mandate creates a] powerful economic preferences for part-time workers. By mandating coverage for those working 30 hours or more, the employer mandate makes part-time workers that much more attractive to businesses, a fact not lost on President Obama's erstwhile supporters in organized labor. "The ACA will shatter not only our hard-earned health benefits, but destroy the foundation of the 40-hour work week that is the backbone of the

> American middle class," reads a joint letter from the major labor unions.

It creates incentives to not marry and to not work:

> And in an especially clumsy move, the program's architects have designed the income limits on its subsidies as hard cutoffs rather than gradual phaseouts. For example, as Ed Driscoll points out, a married couple earning $62,040 would face a $10,000 penalty for earning $1 extra — unless they get divorced. That's a very high effective marginal tax rate. Likewise, a married couple with two children with $93,000 in joint income would pay far more for insurance than they would if they divorced and custody were granted to the lower-earning spouse. So while the employer mandate creates a disincentive to hire, the high penalties for extra income create a disincentive to work — hardly the thing that's called for in a period of high joblessness and record welfare dependency.

That's enough – read the article for many, many more. And the article doesn't even cover all the problems, although some of my previous posts (like this one) have talked about these other problems that weren't mentioned in the National Review article. And there are even ethical problems, like the abortion drugs coverage mandate and the fact that pro-life taxpayers will be subsidizing abortions from day one. I could go on, but I'll try to keep this post short.

So what is Obama doing about the problems in his policy? The Republicans have asked him to delay the individual mandate for a year, and to make Congress give up their exemption from Obamacare – a law they passed themselves!

The Wall Street Journal explains Obama's response to the problems in his health care policy.

Excerpt:

> President Obama is sitting out one of the most important policy struggles since he entered the White House. With the government shutdown, it has reached the crisis stage. His statement about the shutdown on Tuesday from the White House Rose Garden was more a case of kibitzing than leading. He still refuses to take charge. He won't negotiate with Republicans, though the fate of ObamaCare, funding of the government and the future of the economic recovery are at stake. He insists on staying on the sidelines—well, almost.
>
> Mr. Obama has rejected conciliation and compromise with Republicans. Instead, he attacks them in sharp, partisan language in speech after speech. His approach—dealing with a deadlock by not dealing with it—is unprecedented. He has gone where no president has gone before.
>
> […][A]s he was predicting widespread suffering, Mr. Obama steadfastly refused to negotiate with Republicans. He told House Speaker John Boehner in a phone call that he wouldn't be talking to him anymore. With the shutdown hours away, he called Mr. Boehner again. He still didn't negotiate and said he wouldn't on the

> debt limit either.
>
> Mr. Obama has made Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid his surrogate in the conflict with Republicans. Mr. Reid has also declined to negotiate. In fact, Politico reported that when the president considered meeting with Mr. Boehner and Mr. McConnell, along with the two Democratic congressional leaders, Mr. Reid said he wouldn't attend and urged Mr. Obama to abandon the idea. The president did just that.
>
> […]The president's tactic of attacking Republicans during a crisis while spurning negotiations bodes for a season of discord and animosity in the final three-and-one-quarter years of the Obama presidency. That he has alienated Republicans doesn't seem to trouble Mr. Obama.

The important lesson we must all learn from this is that Barack Obama had no experience in health care policy. He didn't surround himself with people who understood health care policy, either. The next time that we have the opportunity to elect a President, we need to realize that we are not picking a favorite celebrity or an American Idol. The President's job is not to dance and sing and act to amuse us. The President's job is to *solve problems*. Part of being a problem solver is also being a good negotiator. We need to pick someone who has experience successfully solving the problems that are facing us as a nation. Speeches are no substitute for past performance.

Related posts

- Obamacare health insurance exchanges impose massive penalties on married couples
- Nancy Pelosi: forcing workers to work fewer hours gives them "freedom"
- Senator David Vitter's amendment to revoke Obamacare exemption for Congress
- Obamacare will increase average individual-market premiums by 99% for men
- Obamacare in action: 301 employers cut employee hours and/or jobs
- Surprise! New Stanford University study finds costs of Obamacare higher than estimated
- Stephen Moore: Obama's failing economy has hit his supporters the hardest
- New study finds that many young people won't purchase Obamacare plans
- Unionized UPS to drop health insurance for 15,000 spouses because of Obamacare
- Harry Reid: Obamacare is "absolutely" a step towards single payer health care system
- Blue Cross, Aetna, United, Humana opt out of Obamacare exchanges
- President Obama intervenes to exempt Congress from Obamacare
- Aetna pulls out of Obamacare exchanges in Maryland – can't operate at a loss
- IRS employee union opposes making Obamacare apply to themselves

Why sexual permissiveness is not compatible with the welfare of children

October 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a striking essay from the Public Discourse. It talks about how we, as a society, have generally taken on an anything-goes approach with respect to sex. The one exception (for now) is pedophilia, which is the sexual abuse of children by adults. The essay points out that there is no moral reason for having this one exception, on secularism. The exception exists because of a sort of "ick" factor – not because we have a moral framework that makes anything right or wrong objectively. The essay argues that we are not shy about harming children in a million other ways, and lists some examples. I just want to quote a few and then I'll comment about my own moral views around sexuality.

Quick summary of his argument:

> The moral structure of pedophilia is simply this: the welfare of children is subordinate to the sexual gratification of adults.
>
> […]We should be thankful that the Sanduskys and Laheys are still considered monstrous. But in contemporary America that condemnation rests on sentiment and not on moral reasoning. No one can simultaneously explain *why* their actions were so vile and uphold the first commandment of the sexual revolution: fulfill thy desires.
>
> […]No, it isn't *how* Sandusky and Lahey did what they did, or under what circumstances, that explains the disgust. It's *what* they did—but nobody wants to acknowledge that.
>
> The reason for that reluctance becomes clear, if we keep in mind the moral structure of pedophilia. Sexual gratification trumps. Thank goodness that for now, there aren't many men who are sexually attracted to youngsters. In that single case, we raise the banner for the children. But in no other case.

That's his argument.

Now, a quick excerpt:

> If we altered the question, and asked not how many people have done sexually abusive things with children, but how many people have done sexual things that redounded to the suffering of children, then we might confess that the only thing that separates millions of people from Jerry Sandusky is inclination. Everything that was once considered a sexual evil and that is now winked at or cheered, everything without exception, has served to hurt children, and badly.
>
> We might point here to divorce. Unless it is necessary to remove oneself and one's children from physical danger and moral corruption, the old wisdom

> regarding divorce should hold, if children themselves have anything to say about it. Parents will say, “My children can never be happy unless I am happy,” but they should not lay that narcissistic unction to their souls. Children need parents who love them, not parents who are happy; they are too young to be asked to lay down their lives for someone else. It is not the job of the child to suffer for the parent, but the job of the parent to endure, to make the best of a poor situation, to swallow his pride, to bend her knees, for the sake of the child.
>
> We might point to births out of wedlock. The child has a right to enter more than a little nursery decorated with presents from a baby shower. He should enter a human world, a story, a people. He should be born of a mother and a father among uncles and aunts and cousins and grandparents, stretching into the distant past, with all their interrelated histories, with his very *being* reflected in all those mirrors of relation, not to mention his eyes and his hair, the talents in his fingers and the cleverness in his mind. This *belonging* to a big and dependable world can be secured only in the context of the *permanent* love of his mother and father, declared by a vow before the community and before the One in whom there is no shadow of alteration.

And now my comments about this article.

So pretty much all my regular readers know that I take extremely conservative views on social issues, since I am an evangelical Protestant Christian. But I don’t just have conservative views – I am also chaste at a personal level. I am not one of these re-virgins – I have never had sex. Not once. And I don’t mean I have never had sexual intercourse only, I mean that I have never even kissed a woman on the lips. I am a radical on the issue of chastity. I don’t view chastity as depriving oneself of something good, I view it is as a thing that serious Christian men do when we want to enable and develop other capabilities. It’s my conviction that chastity enables the capability to see women as God sees them, which is a precursor to growing them up to serve him. That’s what women are for, on my view – exactly like men are for knowing and serving God. It’s my belief that once a man has premarital sex, it becomes much harder for him to view women that way.

So, I am really really really against any kind of sexual activity of any kind prior to marriage. I think that if a man wants to show affection to a woman, then sex before marriage is not the way to do that. There are other ways, and men ought to know how to speak the language of love to a woman in many different ways apart from sex, assuming that this is his goal for her. A man needs to create a context for sex before he can have it. Marriage is how a man provides a context for sex. Not just by giving a woman safety, but by specifying a shared vision which the woman agrees to support when she agrees to marriage. Men shouldn’t have intimate experiences with women who are not committed to a constructive partnership with specific goals, e.g. – birthing or adopting children in order to give them a stable, loving *sane* environment to grow up in. That is so rare nowadays, especially on college campuses which are inundated with sexual liberalism, thanks to radical feminism. My conviction that sex is not something that should be done

before marriage emerges partly from a concern that children should have the best opportunity for that stable environment. And that's what I want to focus on – sexual restraint as a means of providing for children and protecting children.

First, premarital sex creates a situations where abortion happens. Men and women should not engage in activities for recreational reasons that could possibility lead to the death of another human being, period. I am not one of these people who thinks "oh, poor woman who is pregnant, what a beastly man who did that to her – but she can do the right thing and keep the baby". I think that women are equally to blame with men for even having sex before marriage – the mistake was having sex in the first place. So getting pregnant and keeping the baby is good, but preventing fatherlessness and not putting burdens on taxpayers is much, much better. People who engage in premarital sex are not only selfish, immature and irresponsible, but they are actually acting in a *negligent* fashion towards the child that may result from their *choices*. We should not make choices that put innocent children at risk. Premarital sex can be compared with driving while drunk in that regard. You might think it's fun, but it's not a good, moral thing to do because of the harm that may result. Saying "but I didn't mean to" after the fact doesn't change the harm.

Second, I've blogged before about many studies (like this one) that show that premarital sex reduces relationship stability, duration, and quality. Another study I blogged about showed that the number of sexual partners that a man or woman has before marriage directly affects the probability that the relationship will provide a stable environment for raising children. So one of my reasons for being chaste is to maximize the probability of giving my future children that stable environment. Another reason to be chaste is to give my future wife that gift of fidelity. When a man has proven that he has the ability to restrain himself with his wife during the courtship, that is a signal to her that he is good at self-control. The ability to court without premarital sex shows her that he is able to think about her as a person, and that he is able to evaluate her objectively for the purpose of filling the roles of wife and mother. And that this is, in fact, his whole purpose for her. A purpose that will survive the decline of her appearance and youth. Security is another gift that a chaste man gives his wife, so that she can age confidently.

Thirdly, I have in the past blogged about research on gay unions showing how various factors that are more probable in gay relationships, (e.g. – elevated rates of domestic violence, low relationship stability, drug abuse, high rates of promiscuity, etc.), undermine the stability of the environment in which children grow up. More here. Dr. Ryan Anderson has argued that the norms present in gay relationships will undermine the norms of traditional marriage, (permanence, sexual exclusivity, etc.), if marriage is redefined to eliminate the gender requirement. I think we need to keep the traditional definition of marriage because it's better for children if we do (and there are other reasons to prefer natural marriage, as I've written about before).

I think I've said enough here to show that very often when it comes to sexual activity what is driving my conservative views is concern for others. Concern not just for the future children, but for the future wife. And not just for them, but for society as a whole,

who would have to pay the social costs of things like divorce, and the social costs of children of divorce, etc. And not just for society, but also for God, who intends sexuality for a very specific purpose – it is a form of communication for two people who have been bonded to each other for life. Marriage has to count for God and achieve his goals. One of those goals is raising up children well for his sake. And adults need to control themselves in order to provide children with what they need.

New study: premiums for young people to rise in all 50 states under Obamacare

October 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Washington Free Beacon reports on a new study.

Excerpt:

> Health insurance premiums for young people will rise in all 50 states under Obamacare, with an average increase of 260 percent, according to a study released Thursday.
>
> The young and healthy segment of the uninsured is considered crucial for the Affordable Care Act to succeed. Former President Bill Clinton suggested last week that Obamacare only works "if young people show up."
>
> However, an analysis of premiums both before and after the implementation of Obamacare shows that 18- to 35-year-olds are likely to opt out of high rates in the exchanges in favor of cheaper penalties for not having insurance.
>
> According to a study released by the American Action Forum, post-Obamacare premiums will average $187.08 per month, up from $62 per month in 2013, a 202 percent increase. Overall, states averaged an increase of 260 percent.
>
> Forty-four out of 50 states saw a three-digit percent increase, and in Vermont the cheapest available premium for a 30 year-old male nonsmoker will increase by $332.69, or 600 percent.
>
> […]Massachusetts had the lowest increase at 9 percent, though the state is considered an "outlier" since it already had similar health care reforms put in place under former Republican Gov. Mitt Romney.
>
> "[T]hat state's insurance market has been subject to ACA-like reforms since 2006, bloating the premium for the lowest-cost pre-ACA policy to nearly $214, making it the highest of the 2013 premiums analyzed in this study," the report said.

But what about the subsidies, won't they help cover the cost of all the free condoms and birth control pills and abortion drugs?

No:

> Given the high costs of the premiums, the study predicts that even with subsidies, most of the young uninsured will opt to pay the penalty rather than sign up for health care.
>
> Individuals between 100 and 400 percent of the federal poverty line are eligible for subsidies under the law.
>
> Only those who earn up to 133 percent of the poverty line will have a financial

> incentive to join the health exchange. An individual with an income of $15,281.70 would receive a subsidy to cover 100 percent of their health care premiums.
>
> Moving up the income bracket creates disincentives for the young to enroll. Those making $20,107.50, or 175 percent of the poverty line, will still face a $449 premium, which is three times higher than the penalty they would incur in 2014 ($103.57) if they did not purchase insurance.
>
> An individual earning $37,342.50 will receive no subsidy at all and will face a minimum premium of $2,839, as opposed to a $275.92 penalty in 2014.

I'm pretty sure that most people who get jobs out of college will make more than $37,342.50. Petroleum engineers start at around double that income.

So, I'm thinking that the young people – especially college-educated people with jobs – shouldn't have voted for Obama. Do you think that their teachers and professors explained to them what would happen to them if they voted for Obama? I think not. I think that their teachers and professors wanted their little wide-eyed charges to vote for more funding of education, with no performance checking, so that they could be paid more money. And the children believed their teachers and voted accordingly. This is a particularly bad deal for bright young men – the kind you might expect to be interested in marriage. Now not only have they inherited massive amounts of debt and a crappy socialist economy with no jobs, but they are being forced to buy expensive health care coverage that they don't need and won't use. Why? To subsidize the health care claims made by women and the elderly, who use more health care products and services.

Moshe Averick: the origin of life and atheism-of-the-gaps

October 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

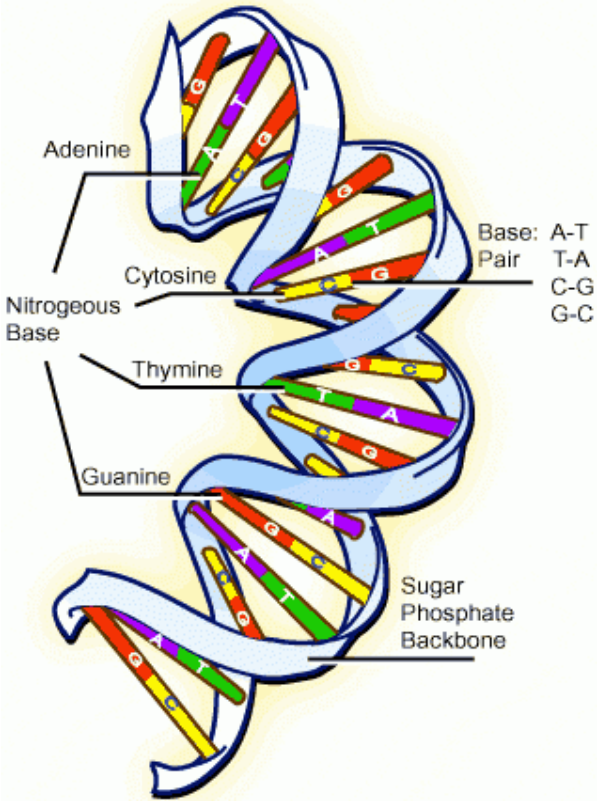

Can atheism explain the origin of life?

An amazing must-read article from a Jewish scholar named Moshe Averick, published in the Times of Israel. (H/T Mysterious Jacob via Mysterious Chris)

This is literally the greatest thing you will read all day, so everyone reading this sentence – please click the link, after you read my excerpts and snarky comments below.

His thesis:

> The history of scientific endeavor to discover a naturalistic origin of life reads like a laboratory version of a demolition derby. A researcher roars into the arena to propose a new theory and is summarily rammed and demolished by another theory driven by its respective theoretician who in turn is rammed and demolished by the next eager contestant.

Here are some of the naturalistic theories that have been proposed and demolished… frequently by other naturalists!

RNA-world theory:

- Dr. Robert Shapiro, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at NYU on the popular RNA-World theory: “Picture a gorilla at an immense keyboard [that] contains not only the symbols used in English and European languages but also…from every other known

> language and all of the symbol sets stored in a typical computer. The chances [of functional RNA molecules forming by themselves] can be compared to those of the gorilla composing, in English, a coherent recipe for the preparation of chili con carne…the spontaneous appearance of RNA chains on the lifeless Earth would have been a near miracle."

Shapiro is a naturalist himself.

Metabolism First theory:

- Dr. Leslie Orgel – a proponent of the RNA-World theory – on the Metabolism First theory proposed by the aforementioned Dr. Shapiro: "Theories of the origin of life based on metabolic cycles cannot be justified by the inadequacy of competing theories: they must stand on their own…solutions offered by supporters of …metabolist scenarios that are dependent on 'if pigs could fly' chemistry are unlikely to help." Dr. George Whitesides of Harvard University, one of the world's greatest living chemists, made the following comment on the Metabolism First theory: "It seems to me to be astonishingly improbable."

For details on why these naturalistic theories are dismissed by naturalists, you should read Stephen C. Meyer's absolutely amazing book "Signature in the Cell" will recognize much in this article. Please if you don't have Dr. Meyer's two books on the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion ("Darwin's Doubt"), you really need to get them.

The article continues smashing a few more lame naturalistic scenarios, and then this tour-de-force:

> The present state of Origin of Life research is best summed up by Dr. Eugene Koonin, a highly respected microbiologist and veteran researcher in the field. From his 2011 book, *The Logic of Chance*:*The Nature and Origin of Biological Evolution*: "The origin of life is one of the hardest problems in all of science…Origin of Life research has evolved into a lively, interdisciplinary field, but other scientists often view it with skepticism and even derision. This attitude is understandable and, in a sense, perhaps justified, given the "dirty" rarely mentioned secret: Despite many interesting results to its credit, when judged by the straightforward criterion of reaching (or even approaching) the ultimate goal, *the origin of life field is a failure* – we still do not have even a plausible coherent model, let alone a validated scenario, for the emergence of life on Earth. Certainly, this is due not to a lack of experimental and theoretical effort, but to the extraordinary intrinsic difficulty and complexity of the problem. A succession of exceedingly unlikely steps is essential for the origin of life…these make the final outcome seem almost like a miracle." Dr. Paul Davies, Origin of Life expert and physicist at Arizona State University concurs: "You might get the impression from what I have written not only that the origin of life is virtually impossible, but that life itself is impossible…so what is the answer? Is life a

miracle after all?”

Put quite simply: The proposition that the gaping chasm between non-living, inorganic chemicals and a living bacterium could be bridged by an unguided naturalistic process is so patently absurd that it can be rejected out of hand. Despite the abundant availability of raw materials such as mud, stones, straw and rocks in a rain forest, one does not need to “prove” that a mud hut in a clearing in that forest is the product of intelligent intervention. An appropriate metaphor for a bacterium would be more like finding Buckingham Palace.

It is obvious that life was created by an intelligent designer outside of the natural world and the reason why the origin of life “seems almost like a miracle,” is because it*is a miracle.*

However, atheist/materialist scientists refuse to give up so easily. Dr. Koonin himself has proposed a possible solution and escape hatch from having to accept a Creator of life: “The Many Worlds in One version of the cosmological model of eternal inflation might suggest a way out of the origin of life conundrum because, in an infinite multiverse with a finite number of macroscopic histories (each repeated an infinite number of times), the emergence of even highly complex systems by chance is not just possible, but inevitable.” *(The Logic of Chance)*

“The way out of the origin of life conundrum [is that] in an infinite multiverse…the emergence of even highly complex systems by chance is not just possible, but inevitable.”

Translation: The odds of rolling a six a thousand times in a row with a single die is 1 in 6 to the 1000th power, or 1 chance in 6 x 10 to the 999th power. The size of this number is beyond our comprehension but to provide some kind of baseline keep in mind that the number of atoms in the entire universe is roughly 10 to the 80th power. Despite this, as Koonin points out, if I am able to roll the die an infinite number of times, it is not only possible, but *inevitable* that it will happen. Although reason and scientific investigation have informed us of the virtual impossibility of life having formed on our planet by an undirected naturalistic process, the “way out of the origin of life conundrum” – that is to say, the way to avoid the obvious answer that life was created – is to propose a multiverse. With an infinite number of trials and errors available, it is not only possible but inevitable that life will form no matter how fantastic the odds against.

He is right of course. With an infinite number of trials and errors not only is the formation of life inevitable but it is *just as inevitable* that at least one of each of the following has formed by *pure chance* and can be found on our planet today: iPhone 5, Toshiba Satellite Laptop Computer, Schwinn Discover Men’s Hybrid Bike, full color poster of Jimmy Hendrix playing at Woodstock, Martin D-35 Acoustic Guitar, Mylec Eclipse Jet-Flow Hockey Stick, Revell 1:48 scale P-51D Mustang model airplane, and last but not least, a 2013 Rolls Royce Phantom

> Sedan (retail price- $465,000). I don't believe it, no one reading this article believes it, Eugene Koonin does not believe it, and even Richard Dawkins doesn't believe it.

Read the whole thing.

In my opinion, all of this loud worship of science from people like Dawkins, Atkins and Krauss is just a smokescreen. Atheism is first and foremost about dispensing with cosmic authority and moral accountability. If they have to believe in eternal universes, unseen aliens, untestable multiverses, undiscovered Cambrian precursor fossils, and even the freaking Flying Spaghetti Monster in order to see God's handiwork in nature, then they will do it.

Note: this concluding rant applies to village atheists like Christopher Hitchens, Lawrence Krauss and Richard Dawkins, not to exceptional academic non-theists like Peter Millican and Graham Oppy.

If you want to read a really good article on exactly how improbable the simplest living organism is, click here.

The really astonishing about the case for theism is that we have a half-dozen scientific arguments like this… this isn't even our best one! It's so strange because I find myself living in a world filled with atheists who basically believe in the Easter bunny even as they profess this great affection for the very thing that is exposing their madness – science! Like a person jealously hugging a chunk of radioactive material to himself and then claiming that it protects him from radiation sickness. *So surreal.*

Shabbat shalom, Moshe Averick, and Mazel Tov!

Can the worldview of naturalism rationally ground mind, meaning and morality?

October 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace, author of "Cold Case Christianity", explains why it can't.

Here's just one of the three troubles with naturalism:

> **Morality**
>
> If naturalism is true, morality is nothing more than a matter of opinion. All of us, as humans, have simply come to embrace those cultural or personal mores that best promote the survival of the species. There is no transcendent, objective moral truth. Instead, cultures merely embrace the values and moral principles that "work" for them and have resulted in the flourishing of their particular people group. If this is the case, one group of evolved humans has no business trying to tell another evolved group what is truly right or wrong from a moral perspective. After all, each group has successfully arrived at their particular level of development by embracing their own accepted moral standards. Arguments over which moral truths provide for greater human flourishing are simply subjective disagreements; there is no transcendent, objective standard that can adjudicate such disagreements from a naturalistic perspective.

Click the link to read the other two!

I think that the most odd thing about naturalism is that they think that all moral statements are true or false depending on personal preferences. For example, slavery. On naturalism, owning slaves or not owning slaves are both equally moral options, depending on whether most people decide that it's right in a particular time and place. Some societies in some places and times allow it, and others don't. And that's what makes it right or wrong. Naturalism has nothing at all to say about which view is correct, because there is no objective design for humans on naturalism – no way we ought to be. Every view is as good as any other, because there is no one to decide. If Richard Dawkins lived in a time where slavery was accepted, then Richard Dawkins would be perfectly justified, on atheism, with owning slaves. He has no source of objective moral values that can judge slavery as wrong. Right and wrong, for an atheist, is "whatever my colleagues will let me get away with". Perhaps Dawkins next book will be entitled "The Morality Delusion" – because morality *is* a delusion on atheism. It's just cultural conventions and personal preferences.

Anybody can be good when it's easy. Being good when it's hard requires that being good is *reasonable. N*aturalists don't have that in their worldview. After all if morality is basically like traffic laws and taste in food, then why would you "do the right thing" – comply with arbitrary customs that vary by time and place – when it goes against your self-interest? It makes no sense. It only makes sense to do the right thing when it goes

against your self-interest if it is part of your objective design as a human being – if there is a plan for how you ought to be.

When a naturalist says “I’m a good person without God”, you have to understand that they are making that statement as a statement of preference. On their view, there is nothing right or wrong with anything, *as a matter of fact*. They have determined themselves what counts as good *for them*, based on the arbitrary conventions of the society they live in and their own personal preferences. And they are in compliance with those conventions and preferences, then they are “good”. That’s what they mean by saying “I’m good” – they mean “I file my tax return every year and I don’t eat broccoli because I don’t like broccoli”. So you can have an atheist defending infanticide or adultery in one breath and then in the next breath claiming that he is a good person because he drives at the speed limit, recycles cans and doesn’t eat veal. The standard of morality is *their* standard of morality. It’s just made up. And yet they expect you to give them respect for this.

It’s very important to make clear to atheists when you are talking about morality that they believe that there is no objective truth about slavery. Make that clear. They love to tell you how good they are because of this position or that position, but it’s your job to say “the real issue isn’t your personal preference, it’s that you think that a person in a different time and place who practiced slavery could be as justified, morally speaking, as you are now in opposing it”. That’s the point you’ve got to make clear to them. They think that morality is like picking what to have for desert. If the action required by the moral law was difficult or dangerous to them, and their own self-interest, you can bet your bottom dollar that they won’t risk a thing to do the “right” thing. On their view, right and wrong are illusions.

Catholic chaplains face arrest for performing mass during shutdown

October 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Todd Starnes of Fox News does a good job of covering the how the secular left infringes on religious liberty in the military.

Check out his latest story. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The U.S. military has furloughed as many as 50 Catholic chaplains due to the partial suspension of government services, banning them from celebrating weekend Mass. At least one chaplain was told that if he engaged in any ministry activity, he would be subjected to disciplinary action.
>
> "In very practical terms it means Sunday Mass won't be offered," Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services told me. "If someone has a baptism scheduled, it won't be celebrated."
>
> The Archdiocese for the Military Services tells me the military installations impacted are served by non-active-duty priests who were hired as government contractors. As a result of a shortage of active duty Catholic chaplains, the government hires contract priests.
>
> Broglio said some military bases have forbidden the contract priests from volunteering to celebrate Mass without pay.
>
> "They were told they cannot function because those are contracted services and since there's no funding they can't do it – even if they volunteer," he said.
>
> John Schlageter, general counsel for the archdiocese, said any furloughed priests volunteering their services could face big trouble.
>
> "During the shutdown, it is illegal for them to minister on base and they risk being arrested if they attempt to do so," he said in a written statement.
>
> A well-placed source told me that a furloughed Air Force chaplain was threatened after he offered to forgo pay. The chaplain was told he could not go on base or enter his chapel offices. He was also barred from engaging in any ministry activity.
>
> The source told me the chaplain was told that if he violated those orders he and his supervisor would be subjected to disciplinary action – with the possibility of being fired.

I don't think anyone should be surprised that the Democrats are hostile to freedom of religion. They are, after all, socialists. Government is more important than religion, and if they conflict, government wins.

Pastor Matt: five books Christians should read to understand politics and public policy

October 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I agree with this list by Pastor Matt.

About Pastor Matt:

> Hello, my name is Matt and I am a book addict (i.e., well read, sophisticated, sad and lonely here is evidence). But I want my sickness to help you. I have been a political junkie since 1992 when I was recruited by my then Congressman to work for him. I then ran several campaigns including helping a businessman win a seat in the U.S. House in 1994. I spent two years working in the House during the Gingrich years of 1995-1997. I then attended seminary and law school but have remained a political and public policy junkie. During this week's political dust-ups, I read a lot of statements from Christians that qualify as "bumper sticker" logic at best. So, for those interested, here are five books every Christian leader should read if they want to truly understand politics and public policy.

The list:

1. A Patriot's History of the United States: From Columbus's Great Discovery to the War on Terror by Larry Schweikart and Michael Allen
2. The Heritage Guide to the Constitution by Ed Meese, Ed. (Regnery 2005)
3. Basic Economics by Thomas Sowell (Basic Books 2010)
4. Politics According to the Bible by Wayne Grudem (Zondervan 2010)
5. The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution by Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus (Crossway 2013)

I think it's nice to see that pastor Wayne Grudem appears twice in the list. He has a PhD from Cambridge University and is the best theologian who writes books about economic and political issues. (Notice how I left room for Pastor Matt to be the best overall on economics and political issues!)

Here's the detail on number three:

> Basic Economics by Thomas Sowell (Basic Books 2010). Most Christian leaders (and apparently most Americans) have a poor understanding of economics. Most seem to believe wealth is fixed (it isn't), incentives and effectiveness are secondary to fairness (they aren't), etc. Sowell, a long time professor of economics who has taught at Cornell and UCLA, has penned a long but very reader friendly work that you should take chapter-by-chapter.

On this blog, I feature Thomas Sowell a lot. The good thing about him is that even if you can't buy his book, you can read lots of his current events stuff for free. In fact, he wrote

a great column recently explaining the government shutdown that I think everyone should read. You can also get great sermons on politics and public policy from Wayne Grudem's "Essentials" class.

Are House Republicans doing anything wrong by refusing to fund Obamacare?

October 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Thomas Sowell

Thomas Sowell explains separation of powers.

Excerpt:

> The Republican-controlled House of Representatives voted all the money required to keep all government activities going — except for ObamaCare.
>
> This is not a matter of opinion. You can check the Congressional Record.
>
> As for the House of Representatives' right to grant or withhold money, that is not a matter of opinion either. You can check the Constitution of the United States. All spending bills must originate in the House of Representatives, which means that Congressmen there have a right to decide whether or not they want to spend money on a particular government activity.
>
> Whether ObamaCare is good, bad or indifferent is a matter of opinion. But it is a matter of fact that members of the House of Representatives have a right to make spending decisions based on their opinion.
>
> ObamaCare is indeed "the law of the land," as its supporters keep saying, and the Supreme Court has upheld its Constitutionality.
>
> But the whole point of having a division of powers within the federal government is that each branch can decide independently what it wants to do or not do, regardless of what the other branches do, when exercising the powers specifically granted to that branch by the Constitution.

> […]When Barack Obama keeps claiming that it is some new outrage for those who control the money to try to change government policy by granting or withholding money, that is simply a bald-faced lie. You can check the history of other examples of "legislation by appropriation" as it used to be called.
>
> Whether legislation by appropriation is a good idea or a bad idea is a matter of opinion. But whether it is both legal and not unprecedented is a matter of fact.
>
> Perhaps the biggest of the big lies is that the government will not be able to pay what it owes on the national debt, creating a danger of default. Tax money keeps coming into the Treasury during the shutdown, and it vastly exceeds the interest that has to be paid on the national debt.
>
> Even if the debt ceiling is not lifted, that only means that government is not allowed to run up new debt. But that does not mean that it is unable to pay the interest on existing debt.

The House Republicans have been passing bill after bill in order to fund essential responsibilities of government. It's their decision to fund whatever they want, because that's what the House does. But the Senate has been rejecting most of these bills. If parts of the government are "shut down" it's the fault of the Senate Democrats. But then again, they are no more obligated to approve whatever the House wants than the House is obligated to approve what the Senate wants. Or what the President wants. That's why there is a separation of powers: checks and balances.

What Christians can learn about morality from "Breaking Bad"

October 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this post about the TV series "Breaking Bad" through J.W. Wartick's "Really Recommended Posts".

The author of the post argues that most of what you see in the arts and entertainment field tries to give us the idea that there is a dichotomy between small choices and big choices. But Breaking Bad rejects this by trying to show how small choices add up to your character.

Take a look:

> I think *Breaking Bad* is a great show because it rejects this line of thinking [small vs big choices], because its running time is a five-season rebuttal to the idea that there are choices that matter and choices that don't. Walt's pride at a dinner table is ultimately as important to the villain he becomes as his murder, his lying as corruptive as his violence. In Gilligan's eyes, there's no differentiating between Walt's pride and his rage and his enviousness and his determination to succeed at all costs, to be *the* Kingpin, the only one. Telling the story of how Walt chose to become the villain takes every minute of all 67 episodes aired so far.
>
> **You do not accidentally end up a drug kingpin, says the show.** And the story is a five season long *a fortiori* argument whose conclusion is that you, viewer, also have a choice, in what to watch, or say, in how to treat people, in who to be. To echo James K.A. Smith, there are very few, if any, "morally neutral" practices. We get shaped by the things we do, or don't do, even unintentionally, even if you're not paying attention.
>
> *Breaking Bad* echoes that not only in content, but in form. In the critical importance of little decisions (Walt's wined-up boasting in front of Hank; his lying to his wife, Skyler; Marie's shoplifting; Hank's pride and arrogance affecting his job) that all compound in the direction of calamity.
>
> "I just feel like I never had a choice in any of this," Walt argues early on in season one, after he's declined cancer treatment. "I want a say, for once." When you first watch the scene, not knowing the kind of person Walt is going to choose to be, it's a poignant moment. Walt wants to spend his last months with his wife on *his* own terms, rather than as a powerless and weak and hollowed out shell of who he used to be.
>
> But as flashbacks inform the choices Walt made in the past, and as time and time again Walt refuses to stop cooking meth, to stop feeding his own pride, the scene is recontextualized as an ironic echo—as just another excuse for Walt's behavior. The paradox central to Walt's nature is that if you deny him a choice, he

> becomes furious. Because of this, most every conflict in the show stems from the interplay of Walt's staggering intelligence and his equally impressive capacity for stupid, pride-motivated decisions.
>
> But if you empower Walt, when he comes into real responsibility, he shirks it, he self-sabotages; he pretends he doesn't have a choice, or never did have a choice. He becomes paranoid, and self-aggrandizing, and manipulative, until he's relaxed from the tension of having responsibility—and as soon as that happens, he's out looking for it again.
>
> When all Walt has are *choices*, he demands a CHOICE; and as soon as it is presented to him, as soon as the danger of responsibility is there and real and able to hurt him, he denies it, labels it meaningless, and continues to victimize himself.
>
> Walter is us. And that is a dangerous message, and it hurts. It hurts to be awakened to choices you didn't know you were failing to make, or making poorly. It is always, always easier to deny choice than to accept it, to want to brush things off until it's *really* important, until it's a choice, and then perform well, and go back to the status quo of being a-volitional. We want to be fully ourselves *already*, and for our actions to be extrinsic, non-reflective. To keep separate who we are, our identities, and what we do in our everyday life.
>
> But that's not what it means to have character. And it's not what it means to be a human being, created to shift and change dynamically. The tragedy of Walter White makes for a great narrative, and for really compelling TV. But the lesson of *Breaking Bad* is invaluable, especially in a culture like ours, that's so allergic to prescriptive statements, to generalizations that aren't platitudes, to Truth Claims about the nature of humanity. *Breaking Bad* doesn't just make those claims—it does it with gusto. It confronts you with the ugliness of humanity like a Flannery O'Connor story, begging you to look and to look away, to see the outer extreme of an idea so that you'll kick back and respond and fight with it, because engaging is just as much of a choice as anything else.

That reminds me of this well-known saying:

> Sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action; reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character reap a destiny

Something to think about when we are making the decisions about "how far is too far?". The best way to avoid becoming a bad person is by not trying to walk on a dramatic line, but by making a million decisions every day to consciously get away from evil.

I find that in the church there is this strange and ridiculous idea everywhere that you can just do whatever you want and that God will give you the strength to be courageous and effective in these dramatic moments when you are tested – perhaps by being asked to deny Jesus or die. That will *probably never happen* for most of us. We overestimate how much an "act of God" can really do compared to the long, slow hum-drum day-to-day

work towards a goal. A person has to die a million little deaths in order to achieve big things, like marry well and raise Christian kids, or keep a job to support a home, to get an MS or a PhD, etc. It's the million little sacrifices that lead to making a big impact in the end.

Think abut it another way. How do the Armed Forces train soldiers in order to fight as a team and be brave? Do they just say "go about your lives, and when the time comes God will tell you what to do"? Hell, no. They drill and train and prepare for war because they know that this is what works. They have obstacle courses with live-fire machine guns and explosions to get soldiers used to making decisions under fire. They have classroom instruction and reading lists to share knowledge that will be useful in battle. All of this is to get the soldiers into the habit of making tiny brave decisions under controlled conditions. God doesn't throw ordinary Christians out in a university auditorium and say "now perform like Bill Craig". Bill Craig is Bill Craig because he chose to pass over fun things a million times and to instead focus on hard things like advanced degrees, reading advanced books and practicing debate. He isn't debating in front of thousands of people because he made one "big" choice, but because he has a million little choices.

This lie about service being something that God has to lead you to is one of the biggest lies in the church today. That you don't have to build the kind of life that honors God one self-sacrificial decision at a time. That you don't have to have a long-term plan to be effective, but instead just do what you "feel led" to do moment by moment. That you can have as much impact as a Jim Demint or a William Lane Craig or a Ryan Anderson without having to train and prepare for it. It's a lie to think that making an impact is a one-decision affair. We over-spiritualize the idea of serving God to give ourselves maximum autonomy and tell ourselves that "if it comes to that, I'll be faithful", while living ordinary lives the rest of the time. It's probably never going to come to that, so shouldn't you have some sort of day-to-day long-term self-sacrificial plan to achieve something for God instead?

How many people have signed up for Obamacare?

October 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports.

Excerpt:

> Treasury Secretary Jack Lew refused to answer Fox host Chris Wallace's simple question this morning: How many people have signed up for Obamacare?
>
> "I'm going to ask you one last time," said Wallace, "because, forgive me sir, you haven't answered it: do you not know how many people signed up, which would seem to indicate another major software glitch, or is it that the numbers are embarrassingly small?"
>
> "Chris, our metric for this week was, could people get online, get the information they need to make an informed," said Lew, sidestepping the straightforward question. "They have been getting that information. We are confident that they are going to make the decision — they have 6 months to make the decision."
>
> Wallace tried again: "So do you not know or is that the number is –"
>
> "Well, it's obviously not my primary area of responsibility," said the treasury secretary.

I have a more important question. Why did we elect a community organizer to make health care policy?

Reuters says that the IT architecture for the web application stinks.

Excerpt:

> Days after the launch of the federal government's Obamacare website, millions of Americans looking for information on new health insurance plans were still locked out of the system even though its designers scrambled to add capacity.
>
> […]Five outside technology experts interviewed by Reuters, however, say they believe flaws in system architecture, not traffic alone, contributed to the problems.
>
> […]"Adding capacity sounds great until you realize that if you didn't design it right that won't help," said Bill Curtis, chief scientist at CAST, a software quality analysis firm, and director of the Consortium for IT Software Quality. "The architecture of the software may limit how much you can add on to it. I suspect they'll have to reconfigure a lot of it."
>
> […]One possible cause of the problems is that hitting "apply" on HealthCare.gov causes 92 separate files, plug-ins and other mammoth swarms of data to stream between the user's computer and the servers powering the government website, said Matthew Hancock, an independent expert in website design. He was able to track the files being requested through a feature in the Firefox browser.

> […]”They set up the website in such a way that too many requests to the server arrived at the same time,” Hancock said.
>
> He said because so much traffic was going back and forth between the users’ computers and the server hosting the government website, it was as if the system was attacking itself.
>
> Hancock described the situation as similar to what happens when hackers conduct a distributed denial of service, or DDOS, attack on a website: they get large numbers of computers to simultaneously request information from the server that runs a website, overwhelming it and causing it to crash or otherwise stumble. “The site basically DDOS’d itself,” he said.
>
> […]The government official blamed the glitch on massive traffic, but outside experts said it likely reflected programming choices as well.

Obama doesn’t know anything about software engineering. And all his appointees are radical leftist political hacks. Obama’s administration has the least private sector experience of any recent administration. These people have no idea how to design large-scale web applications. They outsourced the whole thing and it blew up in their faces.

But do you know who does understand information technology? Someone with a Bachelor’s degree in mathematics and a Master’s degree in computer science from Purdue University would.

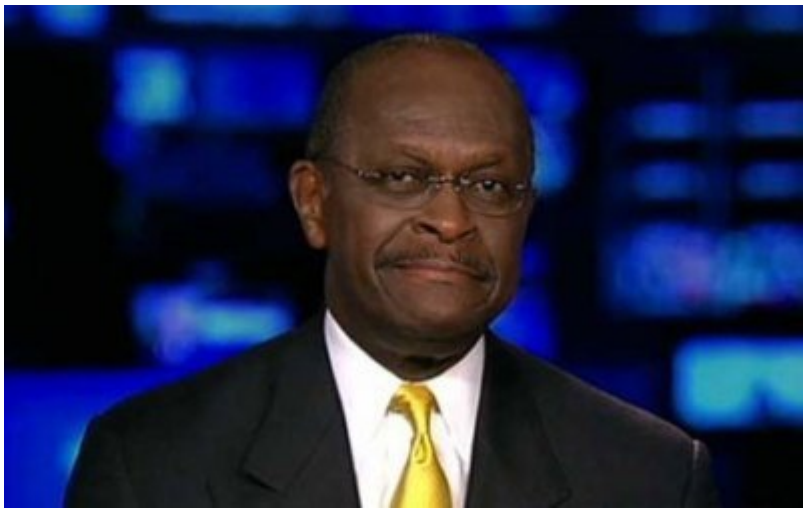

Presidential candidate Herman Cain

A while back, we had an opportunity to elect a software engineer who is also one of the country’s *most successful* businessmen – Herman Cain. His massive company had a huge IT infrastructure. But we didn’t vote for Herman Cain, we voted for Obama. If we had voted for Herman Cain, then IT would be leveraged successfully to support whatever government involvement in health care was appropriate. If you want software done right, then elect a software engineer. If you want to run the country like a successful business, elect a successful businessman.

John Boehner to leftist George Stephanopolous: no clean debt limit increase

October 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

John Boehner says that the Republicans are not going to be bullied by Barack Obama and Harry Reid.

Here's a rush transcript for the video above.

And here is the interesting part:

> STEPHANOPOULOS: How is this going to end? You're clearly not budging right now, even though you are taking — even though polls show that most Americans blame Republicans for the shutdown right now. How long is it going to go on? Is the government going to stay shut down until we reach the debt limit deadline of October 17th?
>
> BOEHNER: Listen, the debt limit is right around the corner. The president is saying, I won't negotiate. I won't have a conversation. Even though, President Reagan negotiated with Democrats who controlled the Congress back then. Even though President George Herbert Walker Bush had a conversation about raising the debt limit. During the Clinton administration, there were three fights over the debt limit. You and I participated in several of those. And even President Obama himself in 2011, went through a negotiation.
>
> Now, he's saying no. I'm not going to do this.
>
> I'm going to tell you what, George. The nation's credit is at risk because of the administration's refusal to sit down and have a conversation.
>
> STEPHANOPOULOS: They're saying it's at risk because of your refusal to pass a clean debt limit. There have been some reports–
>
> BOEHNER: We're not going to pass a clean debt limit increase.
>
> STEPHANOPOULOS: Under no circumstances?
>
> BOEHNER: I told the president, there's no way we're going to pass one. The votes are not in the House to pass a clean debt limit. And the president is risking default by not having a conversation with us.
>
> STEPHANOPOULOS: So under no circumstances will you pass a clean debt limit?
>
> **BOEHNER: We're not going down that path. It is time to deal with America's problems. How can you raise the debt limit and do nothing about the underlying problem?**
>
> **George, we've spent more than what we've brought in for 55 of the last 60 years. This year, the federal government will have more revenue than any year in the history of our country, and yet we're still going to have a nearly $700 billion budget deficit. We're squandering the future**

for our kids and our grandkids, by not dealing with this problem.

STEPHANOPOULOS: The deficit, as you know, has been coming down this year, but I want to press you on this issue of the risks of not passing a clean debt limit. The Treasury Department put out a report just the other day, where they said it would be unprecedented and catastrophic, that would be the impact of failing to pass a debt limit. They're going to say, credit markets could freeze. The value of the dollar could plummet. U.S. interest rates could skyrocket. The negative spillovers could reverberate around the world, and there might be a financial crisis and recession that could echo the events of 2008 or worse.

Do you agree with that assessment?

BOEHNER: I do. And the president is putting the nation at risk by his refusal to sit down and have a conversation.

STEPHANOPOULOS: As — we're going to go back on this. He says you're putting it at risk by refusing to pass a clean debt limit, so just let me — let me press that, because there have been some reports that you have told your own members that you would be willing to put a debt limit on the floor that would pass with Democratic votes, even if it didn't get a majority of the Republican caucus. Is that no longer true?

BOEHNER: My goal here is not to have the United States default on their debt. My goal here is to have a serious conversation about those things that are driving the deficit and driving the debt up. And the president's refusal to sit down and have a conversation about this is putting our nation at risk of default.

STEPHANOPOULOS: So are you saying that if he continues to refuse to negotiate, the country is going to default?

BOEHNER: That's the path we're on. The president canceled his trip to Asia. I assumed — well, maybe he wants to have a conversation. I decided to stay here in Washington this weekend. He knows what my phone number is. All he has to do is call.

STEPHANOPOULOS: So it's October 17th, 8:00 p.m. The clock is ticking towards midnight. The country is scheduled to run out of money, won't be able to pay its bills anymore. What do you do in that moment?

BOEHNER: No family in America can spend more than what it brings in for 55 of the last 60 years. No family or business in America can survive a $700 billion budget deficit in one year. It is time for us to deal with our underlying spending problems.

I'm willing to sit down and have a conversation with the president. But his refusal to negotiate is putting our country at risk.

STEPHANOPOULOS: So the clock is ticking on October 17th. You're not going to put that bill on the floor?

> BOEHNER: I want to deal with our underlying problem.
>
> STEPHANOPOULOS: Yes or no, would you put that bill on the floor?
>
> BOEHNER: I don't want the United States to default on its debt. But I'm not going to raise the debt limit without a serious conversation about dealing with problems that are driving the debt up. It would be irresponsible of me to do this.
>
> STEPHANOPOULOS: It's also been reported that you're going to guarantee that we do not default. It sounds like you're not prepared to offer that guarantee, you're not prepared to promise you would actually put the bill on the floor.
>
> BOEHNER: I've been willing to sit down with the president and have this conversation. His refusal to negotiate is what's putting the government at risk of default.

What is Boehner talking about having a conversation about debt?

This:

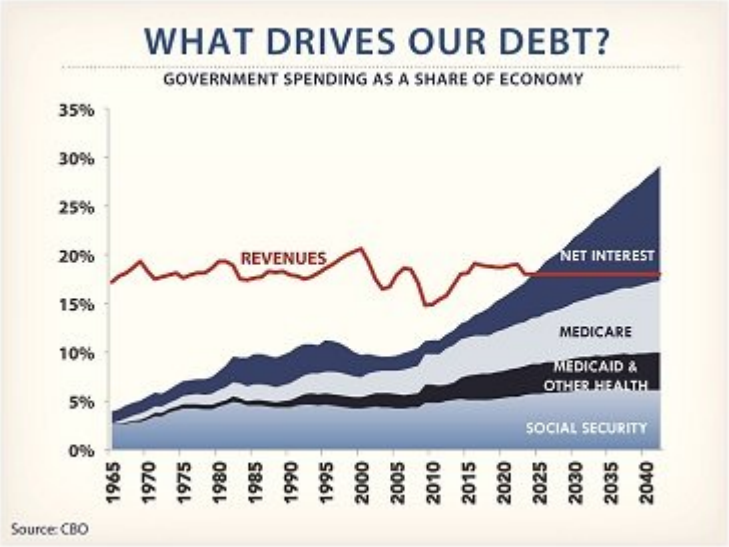

What Drives Our Debt

That's what Boehner is talking about. He doesn't want to keep raising the debt ceiling over and over when it looks like the entitlement programs are going to be consuming a greater share of government revenues, leaving no money left over for other programs. It looks like the Republicans in the House are serious about trying to stop our runaway spending problem. The Democrats? They just want a blank check to keep spending on Solyndra, and then they'll send your kids (and grandkids) the bill.

Democrats try to block whistleblower's Fast and Furious expose

October 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports on the latest Democrat cover-up scandal. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> The ATF agent who blew the whistle on Operation Fast and Furious has been denied permission to write a book on the botched anti-gun trafficking sting "because it would have a negative impact on morale," according to the very agency responsible for the scandal.
>
> After first trying to stop the operation internally, ATF Agent John Dodson went to Congress and eventually the media following the death of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry in December 2010. Two guns found at the murder scene were sold through the ATF operation.
>
> Dodson's book, titled "The Unarmed Truth," provides the first inside account of how the federal government permitted and helped sell some 2,000 guns to Mexican drug cartels, despite evidence the guns killed innocent people.
>
> Dodson, who is working with publisher Simon & Schuster, submitted his manuscript to the department for review, per federal rules. However, it was denied.
>
> Greg Serres, an ATF ethics official, told Dodson that any of his supervisors at any level could disapprove outside employment "for any reason."
>
> […]Dodson says "The Unarmed Truth" will come out in January, with or without the ATF's permission.

I hope this book sells a lot of copies.

Related posts

- Obama campaign contributor and gun control advocate ran Fast and Furious
- Obama covers-up DOJ operation that allowed gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Republicans prepare contempt citation for AG Eric Holder over Fast and Furious
- Eric Holder wants to brainwash people against legal gun ownership
- Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent's murder
- Eric Holder testifies on Fast and Furious gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Fast and Furious assault weapons seized from drug cartel enforcer's home
- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels

- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent’s family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano’s indifference

How early can you start to teach children about Christian apologetics?

October 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from a new blog called Beyond Teachable Moments, which offers best practices for Christian parents who want to prepare their children for a world that doesn't always support Christian convictions – and that's putting it mildly. In this post, the author explains how she is able to prepare her two boys for a pretty common objection to Christianity.

The challenge:

> I think all kids, and adults, have a curiosity about where the Bible came from, how it was put together, and how it was passed down. That is why my husband and I wanted to teach our kids some of the basics about this topic early on in their lives. We have found our kids to be really receptive to this material.
>
> […]Do these differences in the gospel accounts mean that the disciples made up the story about Jesus, or that they are at least unreliable eyewitnesses, as some conclude? If the eyewitnesses to the gospel accounts can't get their story straight, should we believe their testimony at all?

So the mom planned out an activity to teach her kids to defend against this objection: (how old do you think kids have to be for this to work?)

> The gist of this activity is to set up a scenario where your kids act as eyewitnesses to an event, and then help them to discover that they each will remember and report on different aspects of that event.
>
> There are many ways to do this activity. I chose to create my own scenario, which I detail below. You could alternatively have your kids, or one child and a different adult, watch a video clip together on YouTube or on a DVD. Just make sure to watch the clip on your own in advance so you that have the details straight in your own head first. Then ask similar pointed questions to the ones listed in the activity outlined below.
>
> I arranged for our kids to meet me in the living room at an appointed time. I told them that I had something special to show them. I didn't give them any further preparation.
>
> Then I dressed up in a strange and elaborate costume. I put on various pieces of my kid's dress up costumes (a hat, a mask, ponytails in my hair, a cape, a shirt with a picture on it, gloves, a scarf, and various things sticking out of my front and back pockets, and I had a stuffed animal tucked in somewhere to boot).
>
> At the appointed time, I came into the room where my kids were seated and announced with a strange accent: "Welcome everyone. I am Mommy the

> Magnificent and I have a magic show to perform for you!”
>
> I then explained how I was going to make something disappear in my magic hat. I put a small toy in my hat; I waved a fancy cloth over top of it that I had taken out of one of my pockets, turned around a bunch of times (mainly so they could see the back of my costume), and said some magic sounding words. I did some fancy dancing moves and made the toy disappear (by concealing it in my hand). I then bowed and left the room.
>
> The kids were amused, but also confused.
>
> I told the kids to stay where they were, and quickly took off all of my costume and hid it out of sight. I re-entered the room where my kids were bouncing off the walls, re-gathered them onto the couch and told them that that they were just eyewitnesses to what I had performed for them.
>
> Then I asked: What is an eyewitness? (Answer: Someone who sees something with their own eyes. As they also heard something, our kids coined the term ‘earwitness’ as well!)
>
> I told them that I was going to interview each of them to find out what they saw in my performance. I took them one by one into a different room where our conversation could not be overheard by their brother, and interviewed them individually. I told the one waiting to be interviewed to think hard about what he had just seen in preparation for his interview.

Click through to read how the kids responded. I don’t have any kids of my own, but I am reading this blog to see how it’s done. Each post is showing a completely new creative technique for teaching apologetics to these two young boys. If you have any techniques like this, post an example in the comments.

Do you think that it is worth it to have a stay-at-home mom doing these sorts of activities with kids? Do you think that a government-run daycare would do similar activities? What sort of policies should a liberty-minded government enact in order to free up mothers to stay home and nurture their children like this? Which political party do you think is pushing for those policies? Which party is trying to make it harder for moms to stay home and do these sorts of activities?

Obamacare supporters shocked that they have to pay for Obamacare

October 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that everything that the Democrats promise was free? Or at least, that only greedy rich employers would pay for it all.

Ooops:

> **Cindy Vinson and Tom Waschura are big believers in the Affordable Care Act. They vote independent and are proud to say they helped elect and re-elect President Barack Obama.**
>
> **Yet, like many other Bay Area residents who pay for their own medical insurance, they were floored last week when they opened their bills: Their policies were being replaced with pricier plans that conform to all the requirements of the new health care law.**
>
> **Vinson, of San Jose, will pay $1,800 more a year for an individual policy, while Waschura, of Portola Valley, will cough up almost $10,000 more for insurance for his family of four.**
>
> […]As state- and federal-run health insurance exchanges debuted across the country offering a range of prices for different tiers of insurance coverage, the new online marketplaces — which represent the centerpiece of Obamacare — could greatly benefit more than 40 million Americans who now lack coverage. But an additional 16 million — who buy individual health insurance policies on the open market — are finding out that their plans may not comply with the new law, which requires 10 essential benefits such as maternity care, mental health care and prescription drug coverage.
>
> In California, 1.9 million people buy plans on the open market, according to officials with Covered California, the state's new health insurance exchange. And many of them are steaming mad.
>
> "There's going to be a number of people surprised" by their bills, said Jonathan Wu, a co-founder of ValuePenguin, a consumer finance website. "The upper-middle class are the people who are essentially being asked to foot the bill, and that's true across the country."

But what about covering pre-exisitng conditions? Isn't that free at least?

Apparently not:

> Even those who don't qualify for the tax subsidies could see their rates drop because Obamacare doesn't allow insurers to charge people more if they have pre-existing conditions such as diabetes and cancer, he said.
>
> […]But people with no pre-existing conditions like Vinson, a 60-year-old retired

> teacher, and Waschura, a 52-year-old self-employed engineer, are making up the difference.
>
> "I was laughing at Boehner — until the mail came today," Waschura said, referring to House Speaker John Boehner, who is leading the Republican charge to defund Obamacare.
>
> "I really don't like the Republican tactics, but at least now I can understand why they are so pissed about this. When you take $10,000 out of my family's pocket each year, that's otherwise disposable income or retirement savings that will not be going into our local economy."
>
> Both Vinson and Waschura have adjusted gross incomes greater than four times the federal poverty level — the cutoff for a tax credit. And while both said they anticipated their rates would go up, they didn't realize they would rise so much.
>
> **"Of course, I want people to have health care," Vinson said. "I just didn't realize I would be the one who was going to pay for it personally."**

This is especially bad for young male Obama supporters, who are basically being forced to pay for things they will never use in order to pay for the votes that Obama bought to win the election. (Which is all that wealth redistribution is – it's vote buying)

Excerpt:

> Young men will be the biggest losers in the transition to Obamacare, according to a new report by the actuarial and consulting firm Milliman. The report estimates that males as a whole will see an 11 percent increase in insurance premiums, while females as a whole will see a nine percent decrease. Men under 40 will face insurance hikes of 18 to 31 percent; females under 40 will benefit from 13 to 19 percent decreases.
>
> But here's the real kicker: premiums for young men ages 25-36 could increase by more than 50 percent, and females 25-29 will face a 4 percent increase. In other words, if you're young, you lose. If you're a man, you lose. If you're a young man, you really lose.
>
> Recent news about Obamacare premium costs has tended to focus on whether the premiums will go up or down on average. What this data shows is that these broader national or state averages hide scarier changes in the group-by-group breakdowns. Young people are already the hardest hit by the recession and by the plethora of other entitlement programs that subsidize the boomers. Young men, in particular, are especially hurt by some of the country's current economic shifts. Passing a law that forces them to shoulder an even greater economic burden and then spending tons of money to convince them to sign up for this raw deal is both cruel and irresponsible.

Oh well, it's not like young men needed the money for anything. Like marriage and

fatherhood. In any case, I am sure that they'll continue to marry and have children the same as they did before if we just get pastors to tell them to "man up".

How much more are people paying for health insurance under Obamacare?

October 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story from the Charlotte Observer that explains how expensive Obamacare really is.

Excerpt:

> Across North Carolina, thousands of people have been shocked in recent weeks to find out their health insurance plans will be canceled at the end of the year – and premiums for comparable coverage could increase sharply.
>
> One of them is George Schwab of Charlotte, who pays $228 a month for his family's $10,000 deductible plan from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina.
>
> In a Sept. 23 letter, Blue Cross notified him that his current plan doesn't meet benefit requirements outlined in the Affordable Care Act and suggested a comparable plan for $1,208 a month – $980 more than he now pays.
>
> "I'm 62 and retired," Schwab said. "This creates a tremendous financial burden for our family.
>
> **"The President told the American people numerous times that… 'If you like your coverage, you can keep it,'" Schwab said. "How can we keep it if it has been eliminated? How can we keep it if the premium has been increased 430 percent in one year?"**

And another:

> Michael Hood, 46, who lives near Winston-Salem, is another of the Blue Cross customers who is suffering sticker shock after receiving a recent renewal letter.
>
> He and his wife, who is expecting their third child, now pay $324 per month for a plan with a $10,000 family deductible. The comparable plan suggested by Blue Cross for next year would cost $895.27 per month with an $11,000 family deductible. Their annual payment would rise from $14,000 to $24,000.
>
> Self-employed as part owner of a medical device distributorship, Hood said he and his wife "try to live a healthy lifestyle and keep our medical costs down." They chose the high-deductible plan to keep their premium low.
>
> Hood said his income is about $85,000 a year, which would mean he might be able to qualify for a subsidy. He said he checked the online marketplace, which has been operating only sporadically this week, and didn't think it looked like his family would be eligible.
>
> One of the pluses of any new plan is that it will cover maternity care, which his

> current plan doesn't. But "is that really worth paying $1,000 a month more for?"
>
> "I'm angry that legislation has been passed that is forcing me to purchase something that otherwise I would not have to purchase," Hood said.
>
> **"The President told us Obamacare would make health insurance affordable and reduce costs. It is now impossible for our family to afford private health insurance."**

I keep hearing from my friends in other countries how their media is reporting that Obamacare is enormously popular, and that Republicans are trying to hold up this great policy that Americans all want out of meanness and spite. I doubt that these foreign journalists are actually reporting the facts about this health care policy. The facts show a completely different picture.

New study: children of same-sex couples do less well than those of married couples

October 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Public Discourse reports on a new study out of Canada.

Excerpt:

> A new academic study based on the Canadian census suggests that a married mom and dad matter for children. Children of same-sex coupled households do not fare as well.
>
> There is a new and significant piece of evidence in the social science debate about gay parenting and the unique contributions that mothers and fathers make to their children's flourishing. A study published last week in the journal *Review of the Economics of the Household*—analyzing data from a very large, population-based sample—reveals that the children of gay and lesbian couples are only about 65 percent as likely to have graduated from high school as the children of married, opposite-sex couples. And gender matters, too: girls are more apt to struggle than boys, with daughters of gay parents displaying dramatically low graduation rates.
>
> Unlike US-based studies, this one evaluates a 20 percent sample of the Canadian census, where same-sex couples have had access to all taxation and government benefits since 1997 and to marriage since 2005.
>
> While in the US Census same-sex households have to be guessed at based on the gender and number of self-reported heads-of-household, young adults in the Canadian census were asked, "Are you the child of a male or female same-sex married or common law couple?" While study author and economist Douglas Allen noted that very many children in Canada who live with a gay or lesbian parent are actually living with a single mother—a finding consonant with that detected in the 2012 New Family Structures Study—he was able to isolate and analyze hundreds of children living with a gay or lesbian *couple* (either married or in a "common law" relationship akin to cohabitation).
>
> So the study is able to compare—side by side—the young-adult children of same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples, as well as children growing up in single-parent homes and other types of households. Three key findings stood out to Allen:
>
> children of married opposite-sex families have a high graduation rate compared to the others; children of lesbian families have a very low graduation rate compared to the others; and the other four types [common law, gay, single mother, single father] are similar to each other and lie in between the married/lesbian extremes.

> Employing regression models and series of control variables, Allen concludes that the substandard performance *cannot* be attributed to lower school attendance or the more modest education of gay or lesbian parents. Indeed, same-sex parents were characterized by higher levels of education, and their children were more likely to be enrolled in school than even those of married, opposite-sex couples. And yet their children are notably more likely to lag in finishing their own schooling.
>
> […]The truly unique aspect of Allen's study, however, may be its ability to distinguish gender-specific effects of same-sex households on children. He writes:
>
> the particular gender mix of a same-sex household has a dramatic difference in the association with child graduation. Consider the case of girls. . . . Regardless of the controls and whether or not girls are currently living in a gay or lesbian household, the odds of graduating from high school are considerably lower than any other household type. Indeed, girls living in gay households are only 15 percent as likely to graduate compared to girls from opposite sex married homes.
>
> Thus although the children of same-sex couples fare worse overall, the disparity is unequally shared, but is instead based on the combination of the gender of child and gender of parents. Boys fare better—that is, they're more likely to have finished high school—in gay households than in lesbian households. For girls, the opposite is true. Thus the study undermines not only claims about "no differences" but also assertions that moms and dads are interchangeable. *They're not*.

With a little digging, I found the abstract of the study:

> Almost all studies of same-sex parenting have concluded there is "no difference" in a range of outcome measures for children who live in a household with same-sex parents compared to children living with married opposite-sex parents. Recently, some work based on the US census has suggested otherwise, but those studies have considerable drawbacks. Here, a 20% sample of the 2006 Canada census is used to identify self-reported children living with same-sex parents, and to examine the association of household type with children's high school graduation rates. This large random sample allows for control of parental marital status, distinguishes between gay and lesbian families, and is large enough to evaluate differences in gender between parents and children. Children living with gay and lesbian families in 2006 were about 65 % as likely to graduate compared to children living in opposite sex marriage families. Daughters of same-sex parents do considerably worse than sons.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington.

Related posts

- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

New study: IVF babies are one third more likely to contract cancer

October 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Children born as a result of IVF are a third more likely to get cancer, a major study found.
>
> Scientists said those born after fertility treatments were 33 per cent more likely to have childhood cancer.
>
> They were 65 per cent more likely to develop leukaemia and 88 per cent more likely to develop cancers of the brain and central nervous system.
>
> […]The research, in the journal Fertility and Sterility, reviewed 25 studies from 12 developed countries, including the US, the UK, Denmark, France and Israel, from 1990 to 2010.
>
> 'The results of the largest meta-analysis on this topic to date indicate an association between fertility treatment and cancer in offspring,' wrote author Dr Marie Hargreave, of the Danish Cancer Society research centre, Copenhagen.
>
> 'The etiology [origin] of childhood cancer is still largely unknown, but it has been hypothesized that fertility treatment may play a role.'

In addition, IVF often results in abortions because unused embryos are discarded. And even worse, in countries like the UK, IVF is taxpayer-funded. I know that liberal groups in Canada and the U.S. would love to have taxpayer-funded IVF, as well.

Biological Colonialism

There's also a story about the "colonialism" of IVF by Wesley J. Smith in First Things.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> We already know that children born of IVF have poorer health outcomes than those conceived naturally. Yet, in the rush to allow these women to bear children, significant potential safety risks are being ignored.
>
> Indeed, a study published in *Science* just revealed that three-parent mice and other organisms *have significant health problems, including with "individual development, cognitive behavior, and [other] key health parameters."* The *Science*authors strongly recommend more studies, but go on to suggest that despite safety concerns, families with "offspring that were severely afflicted" by mitochondrial diseases could decide "take the risk" anyway.
>
> The willingness of some to do *anything* to have a baby has also spurred IVF biological colonialism, by which the fertility industry exploits the gestational

> capacities of destitute women in developing countries to fulfill the procreative desires of the well-off.
>
> "Outsourcing a Life," a recent investigative report published by the *San Francisco Chronicle* into India's surrogacy industry, revealed the high cost paid by women so poor they are willing to gestate other people's babies for pay. According to the story:
>
> - Women sign contracts requiring them to abort on demand of the biological parents;
> - Women are forced to leave their families for months and live in crowded dormitories with other pregnant surrogates;
> - Women are maneuvered into having medically unnecessary caesarean sections. Seventy-five percent of the surrogates in the clinic discussed in the story deliver surgically.
> - There may be adverse social consequences for the surrogate, who may become isolated by a disapproving family or culture.
>
> An Indian study revealed other profound wrongs associated with commercial surrogacy—including sex selection, parents refusing to take the child after birth, and surrogates being paid a pittance, with most money going to so-called baby brokers. The report also found that surrogate mothers sometimes "feel attached to the babies even they were not biologically their own children." Of course they do. Such feelings are a natural biological process associated with gestation. That's part of biological colonialism's cruelty.
>
> […]Indian surrogates have died giving birth to other people's babies, orphaning their own children.

I found that article very distrurbing. Maybe if people want babies, then they should focus on preparing themselves for marriage EARLIER, finding a marriage-capable man EARLIER, and then having babies the natural way. It would be better for the babies, and cost taxpayers (at least in the UK) a lot less. I don't understand why people are so selfish. You can't focus on other things until you are 40 and then wreck everyone else's life trying to fix your own choices at the last minute. It's scary to me that people do this.

New study: NHS patients are 45 percent more likely to die than US health care patients

October 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wes sent me this article from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Patients are 45% more likely to die in NHS hospitals than in US ones, according to figures revealing how badly England's health service compares with those of other countries.
>
> Previously unpublished data collated by Professor Sir Brian Jarman over more than 10 years found NHS mortality rates were among the worst of those in seven developed countries.
>
> A patient in England was five times as likely to die of pneumonia and twice as likely to die of septicaemia compared to similar patients in the US, the leading country in the study, the data suggested.
>
> The elderly were found to be particularly at risk in English hospitals compared with those in the other countries.
>
> The figures showed that the situation had improved since 2004, when the death rate in English hospitals was 58% higher than that in the best performing country.
>
> But NHS institutions still lagged behind in the most recent data, from 2012, despite reforms of the health service and increased funding.
>
> Of the other six countries studied, only the US was named because of the sensitivity of the data.
>
> Prof Sir Brian, who adjusted the data to take account of differences in the countries' health services, did not initially release his figures because he was so shocked by them he at first assumed there must be a flaw in his methodology.
>
> There was, however, "no means of denying the results," he said.
>
> "I expected us to do well and was very surprised when we didn't," the Imperial College London medic told Channel 4 News.
>
> "If you go to the States, doctors can talk about problems, nurses can raise problems and listen to patient complaints.
>
> "We have a system whereby for written hospital complaints only one in 375 is actually formally investigated. That is absolutely appalling."

Previously, I had posted a summary of a book by Scott Atlas, a medical doctor at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University. In that article, he laid out the reasons why the U.S. healthcare system was the best in the world.

Related posts

- Canada's "free" single-payer health care system costs each family $11,000 per year
- New report exposes NHS socialized medicine as an unmitigated disaster
- How privatization turned the worst-performing NHS hospital around
- Report: Patients receiving poor care at NHS hospital
- Government-run health care: starving sick babies and children to death
- Public health care working as designed in the UK and Canada
- NHS paying millions to hospitals to deny food and fluids to end-of-life patients
- UK socialism in action: patients waiting on trolleys for over 50 hours
- NHS makes patients wait unnecessarily in order to avoid "raising expectations"
- NHS refuses to treat woman who is starving to death
- Former NHS hospital director dies on surgery waiting list
- Women gives birth after NHS nurses send her home from hospital
- UK patients denied treatment as "public option" system makes cutbacks
- How do governments control costs in a single-payer health care systems?
- NHS patients giving birth in waiting rooms
- What does universal health care really mean?
- How well is government-run health care working out in the UK?
- British national health care system prepares to cut 20 billion dollars
- NHS kills a man's wife by delaying cancer treatment for 7 months
- How is socialized medicine working out in the UK and Canada?
- Police probe death of NHS hospital patient who begged for water
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- NHS delays treatment for broken arm for four months and counting
- One in six patients misdiagnosed by NHS
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- Health care in Britain: question a doctor and lose your children
- How death panels work in the British health care system
- One million NHS patients receive brutally inadequate health care
- 4000 NHS patients denied hospital beds to give birth to children
- Woman gives birth on pavement after NHS refuses to send an ambulance
- NHS hospitals infested with a dozen varieties of vermin
- 39-year old woman is prescribed painkillers and dies after 11-minute NHS exam
- NHS refuses to pay for lower-back painkillers

IRS exchanged confidential taxpayer information with White House

October 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this article from The Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> Top Internal Revenue Service Obamacare official Sarah Hall Ingram discussed confidential taxpayer information with senior Obama White House officials, according to 2012 emails obtained by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and provided to The Daily Caller.
>
> Lois Lerner, then head of the IRS Tax Exempt Organizations division, also received an email alongside White House officials that contained confidential information.
>
> Ingram attempted to counsel the White House on a lawsuit from religious organizations opposing Obamacare's contraception mandate. Email exchanges involving Ingram and White House officials — including White House health policy advisor Ellen Montz and deputy assistant to the president for health policy Jeanne Lambrew — contained confidential taxpayer information, according to Oversight.
>
> […]Federal employees who illegally disclose confidential taxpayer information could face five years in prison.
>
> […]Ingram appeared before Rep. Darrell Issa's House Oversight Committee Wednesday and claimed she could not recall a document that contained confidential taxpayer information.
>
> […]Issa has requested unredacted copies of the emails, citing a prohibition from misusing Section 6103 "for the purpose of concealing information from a congressional inquiry."
>
> Ingram headed the scandal-ridden IRS office responsible for overseeing tax-exempt nonprofit groups before leaving to head the agency's office in charge of Obamacare implementation.

I am not confident that any of the people responsible will face justice. Unless the Republicans are elected, all of this is going to be swept under the rug. Certainly, the media has no interest in holding the government accountable.

Related Posts

- IRS hindered efforts to stop illegal immigrants from using fake Social Security numbers
- IRS employee union opposes making Obamacare apply to themselves

- DOJ won't prosecute government officials for unauthorized access of tax records
- Treasury Dept. IG: IRS targeted 292 Tea Party groups but only 6 progressive groups
- New study: IRS targeting of Tea Party conservatives had significant effect on 2012 election
- IRS sent $46 million in "tax refunds" to 23,994 illegal aliens, all living at the same address
- Human Rights Campaign refuses to reveal name of IRS leaker
- Phone call recording of IRS agent reveals anti-Christian, anti free speech bias
- Obama's deputy campaign manager Stephanie Cutter met with IRS chief at the White House
- MUST-SEE: Founder of Tea Party group testifies in Congress about IRS fascism
- Cincinnati IRS employee: Washington told us to target the Tea Party
- IRS chief visited White House a reported 118 times from 2010 to 2011
- IRS fascist Lois Lerner pleads the fifth to avoid transparency and accountability
- A closer look at one of the conservatives persecuted by the IRS
- Obama met with anti-Tea Party IRS Union boss one day before the IRS persecutions began
- The IRS abuse of power scandal started from the top
- IRS official who targeted Tea Party groups now a director in Obamacare administration
- IRS audited the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association after they ran pro-marriage ads
- IRS gave confidential documents from conservative groups to liberal group ProPublica
- IRS apologizes for flagging conservative groups for audits in 2012 election year
- IRS refunding billions to illegal immigrants for children in Mexico

How one woman decided to have an abortion… then another… then another

October 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina said me this astonishing article from the UK Daily Mail, which shows one case where a woman chose abortion over and over.

Excerpt:

> **Her first abortion came when she was 17, following a bitterly regretted drunken encounter with a colleague at an office party.**
>
> […]Her bold decision to speak out about her abortions comes after it was revealed that the NHS spends more than £50 million a year on repeat terminations.
>
> One third of the 189,000 abortions carried out in England and Wales in 2010 involved women who'd had at least one before. In some cases, a staggering seven abortions had previously been carried out on the same woman.

Abortion one:

> The first one… was when she… got pregnant when she ended up in bed with a 22-year-old colleague called Brian.
>
> **'Although I knew I could get pregnant, we didn't use contraception. I just didn't think it would happen to me…**
>
> […]**Michelle visited her GP and found out she was entitled to a free NHS abortion at her local hospital.**

Abortion two:

> **[S]he met John, 35, an Irish soldier stationed at barracks near her home, and they embarked on a three-week fling. It left her with another unplanned, and unwanted, pregnancy.**
>
> […]**Michelle was once again granted an NHS abortion at nine weeks — this time at a private London clinic, in July 2000.**

Abortion three:

> Then, a year later, **she met her current partner, Paul, at a local pub.**
>
> […]Michelle says she was open about her abortions, and told Paul, 36 — who is an estates manager — that she didn't want any more children.
>
> […][I]n July, **Michelle was going through a rocky period with Paul when she discovered she was pregnant again.**
>
> She says: 'At the time we were barely speaking, as we were both so stressed out. We hadn't been intimate for months, but one night relations thawed and we had

> sex.
>
> **‘Until then, we’d been using condoms but this time we didn’t. Although I thought about getting the morning-after pill, I ended up leaving it to chance.’**
>
> […]**At nine weeks, Michelle was granted a third NHS abortion, at another London clinic.**

Three taxpayer-funded abortions for three pregnancies brought on by this woman’s own free decisions.

In the UK, abortions, IVF and single motherhood are all taxpayer-funded. If women had to pay for their own abortions, their own IVF, their own out-of-wedlock births, then maybe they would not be making decisions like this woman has. When you pay people to do something, you mustn’t be surprised when they do that thing more. Lowering the cost of anything means that more people will buy it. And making it free makes even more people do it.

The first step to ending abortion is that society needs to understand that virtually every woman who has one is at least partly responsible for her own decision-making. Very often, when it comes to abortion, we seem to place blame on men and assume that women can do no wrong – that they are victims of men. But clearly that is not always true. We seem to have a real problem in this society holding women accountable for making poor decisions. Maybe that needs to change? Pregnancy does not happen by accident – both the man and the woman have to make a choice to have recreational sex when they aren’t ready to welcome a baby into the world. We have to stop looking at people who have recreational sex as victims and expect *more* from them.

How do children end up fatherless? One woman's story

October 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this revealing article from the UK Daily Mail. It tells the story of a woman whose children are fatherless.

Excerpt:

> My marriage ended, without rancour or argument, 18 months after it had begun. There was no recrimination, just a realisation, as sharp as physical pain, that we would never — could never — agree on one fundamental point.
>
> I wanted children; my husband Anthony did not. You may think we should have resolved this crucial issue long before we bought a house and vowed to spend the rest of our lives together, but love had a way of blinding us to the depth of our disagreement.
>
> […]Today, I am 37 and a single mum to gorgeous three-month-old twin boys Charlie and William. They were conceived through IVF, using my eggs and sperm from an anonymous donor, and the love I feel for them is all-consuming.

> […]**Anthony, a policeman, was easy and fun**; we chatted comfortably together, and when we started dating I was impressed by his integrity. He had passionate views about fairness and loyalty. **He was attractive, too — tall, dark hair, blue eyes — and I felt we could build a loving relationship together.**

It seems to me that many women tend to prefer the wrong kind of men these days when it comes to marriage and parenting. Marriage requires a man to have a strong moral compass. That way, he can be expected to behave morally, himself. A man with a strong moral compass fuldills his moral obligations, but he also makes moral judgments. And women need to *prefer* men who make these moral judgments. The woman's phrase "Easy and fun" tells me that her choice of man was not a good one. A man who is easy and fun does not make divisive truth claims, does not make moral judgments, and does not set up moral boundaries. He can't be trusted to honor moral obligations. He can only be trusted to be "easy and fun". But marriage is not for men who want an easy life, nor a fun life. Marry requires self-sacrificial service. She should not have chosen an "easy and fun" man to have children with. That would be like me choosing a Paris Hilton and expecting her to be frugal and homeschool our kids. It's not going to happen. But many women these days are so clouded by "tall, dark hair, blue eyes" that they cannot connect what a man can do to what a man is supposed to do in a marriage. So long as he looks good, then he is good.

More:

> **After a month or so, our physical relationship began, but we did not rush things. It was a couple of years before he moved into my flat in Crawley, West Sussex, and I expected we'd eventually marry and have kids.**
>
> **Looking back, I suppose I should have heeded the warning signals. When I broached the subject of children, he stalled. His stock reply was: 'We'll have them later.'**
>
> **So although he was non-committal, I loved him and assumed that his paternal instinct would kick in as he grew older.** But the years passed and I was not reassured.

She thinks that a man who agrees to recreational sex after a month and then agrees to cohabitation after two years is the kind of man who is capable of making a lifelong commitment to be faithful to her and to raise children. That strikes me as equivalent to saying that a man whose favorite movie is Top Gun would also make a good airline pilot.

More:

> And then I reached 30. My friends were marrying; settling into comfortable domesticity, preparing for parenthood, and Anthony and I were still in this limbo.
>
> […]Then my best friend announced she was pregnant and the joy I felt for her was tainted by Anthony's absence of commitment to the idea of having children with me. So we had another discussion — this time, it was a passionate one. 'It's a deal-breaker,' I said. 'Much as I love you, if you don't want children we can't carry on.'
>
> But, again, he assured me that it would all happen. I just had to bide my time.
>
> So I waited until Anthony was 30, an age when I felt he was old enough to settle down. We loved each other whole-heartedly; we'd bought two successive homes together and the understanding was implicit: my future was bound up in his.
>
> […]**I wanted so much to believe he would warm to the idea**, but Anthony equivocated. He still wasn't ready, he protested.
>
> […]But then Anthony demonstrated just how strong his aversion to babies was. We were visiting a friend who'd recently given birth and, when her baby cried, Anthony made his excuses and went home.
>
> 'I just can't stand the sound of that crying,' he said testily when I confronted him later. 'If we had a baby, I'd have to move out for the first six weeks.'
>
> It wasn't a propitious sign, but eventually he seemed to soften.
>
> 'If we're going to have children, we'll have to get married first,' he said the next time I raised the subject, and for once I agreed absolutely. We should get married; by making a public commitment to stay together for the rest of our lives, we would be taking the first step towards establishing a secure home for our future babies.

> […]After six months as man and wife, there had been no mention from Anthony of children. So one day, as we walked home from town, I broached the subject again.
>
> ‘We can’t afford to have children,’ he responded sharply and, rather than discuss the topic further, he marched off ahead of me.
>
> […]**This was not the life I had planned for myself: for the first time I started to feel anger towards Anthony. I felt he had forced this situation onto me.**

The woman went on to have fatherless children using taxpayer-funded IVF.

What I find troubling about this story is that the first instinct of women – Christian women – and Christian pastors – is to blame men. Those rotten, no-good men. With their tallness, blue-eyes and dark hair! They are “easy and fun” one minute, and then the next minute they are… easy and fun. Yeah. Good-looking men who are easy and fun cannot be assumed to be good at marriage and parenting. They cannot be assumed to be good providers. They can’t be assumed to be good protectors. They can’t be assumed to be moral leaders. They can’t be assumed to be spiritual leaders. The faster that we learn to judge women who make poor decisions with men, the better it will be for children who need to 1) not be killed in the womb and 2) not grow up fatherless. The loving thing to do is to hold women accountable for making decisions about men with their eyes, instead of with their minds.

UK prosecutors refuse to charge doctors who perform sex-selection abortions

October 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Britain's top law officer is to come under pressure in the House of Commons this week to say why the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to prosecute over the gender selection abortion scandal.
>
> Dominic Grieve, the attorney general, will face questions from Tory MPs who want the Government to tighten up the 1967 Abortion Act in the wake of the scandal.

> The comments come as Britain's most senior prosecutor prepares to release a paper justifying his decision not to prosecute two doctors over an abortion scandal.

The Tory party is the conservative party of the UK, although they aren't very conservative. Still, sex-selection abortion is such a heinous crime that even they are shocked by it. To kill a person simply because she is female and not male? That's that real war on women right there. A war on women by leftists, where conservatives take the side of the women.

More:

> Two doctors were exposed by an undercover *Daily Telegraph* investigation offering to abort babies because of their gender.
>
> The Telegraph's probe prompted a 19 month investigation. However prosecutors told the doctors that they will not be charged even though there was enough evidence, because it did not consider the issue to be in the public interest.
>
> Mr Starmer has not commented on his reasons not to prosecute and is due to issue his reasons in the coming days, before he stands down as DPP at the end of this month.
>
> The CPS said the key reason for the decision was that the doctors would still be investigated by the General Medical Council.
>
> Mr Starmer was criticised by his predecessor as DPP Lord Macdonald of River Glaven, who said the decision had been "very dubious".
>
> Lord Macdonald said this amounted to letting them "avoid criminal action" because of their professional status – undermining the basic principle that "everyone is equal under the law".
>
> The two doctors, Dr Prabha Sivaraman and Dr Palaniappan Rajmohan, have had

> restrictions placed on their work while they are investigated by the GMC.

Meanwhile, in Australia, doctors are being persecuted for *not performing* sex-selection abortions.

New study: gambling hurts the poorest people in society

October 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Albany Times-Union reports on a new study on gambling. (H/T Al Mohler podcast)

Excerpt:

> Few things are clear about the expansion of casinos in New York, but additional slot machines will add significantly to problem gambling and may not be economically rewarding for the state, according to a fresh study by the Institute for American Values.

Note, the IAV's president is a pro-gay-marriage moderate. Don't be fooled by the conservative name.

More:

> The institute's new report, "Why Casinos Matter," is based on several government and academic studies here and abroad. The authors arrived at several conclusions:
>
> The new American casino is mostly a center filled with slot machines — essentially sophisticated computers designed to addict players. The machines figure out betting patterns and provide just enough in rewards to keep a person hooked for hours. "The more you play, the more you lose," the report says, backing up the statement with findings by MIT anthropologist Natasha Schull. Schull details her observations in the 2012 book "Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas."
>
> Modern slot machines "engineer the psychological experience of being in the 'zone' — a trancelike state that numbs feeling and blots out time/space. For some heavy slot players, the goal is not winning money," the study said.
>
> Casinos depend on problem gamblers for their revenue base, drawing 40 to 60 percent of slot machine revenues from these people, many of whom are low rollers.
>
> Living near a casino or working at a casino increases the chance of becoming problem gambler. Those who live within 10 miles of a casino are twice as likely to be a problem gambler than those who do not.
>
> Problem gambling is more widespread than many casino industry leaders claim. The problem gamblers frequently go to a casino, and their lives and livelihoods may be adversely affected by their betting. They are not necessarily the heavy gamblers who are pathological and who suffer from increasing preoccupations to gamble and a loss of control.
>
> The benefits of casinos are short-term and easy to measure, but many costs pop

> up during the longer term that are harder to quantify. Economic stimulus fades after the casino becomes a dominant business that drives out established local businesses, such as restaurants, replacing them with pawnshops, auto title lenders and check-cashing stores. And since problem gambling develops over four to seven years, the stress on families and finances may gradually become apparent.
>
> State regulation of casinos creates a conflict of interest. Government is supposed to protect people from harmful business practices, but the state is a partner with casinos or is co-sponsoring gambling. In New York, the Cuomo administration announced last week that it anticipates $430 million a year in annual revenues — $192 million for local governments and $238 million for schools or property tax relief — from four new upstate casinos. The New York Division of the Lottery reported almost $9 billion in revenues last year, a record, with more than $3 billion of that going to public education.

Although people on the left, like Mario Cuomo, like to talk about helping the poor, they actually favor policies that hurt the poor. It’s very important to separate what people say in front of cameras with what effects their policies actually cause. Good effects are more important than good intentions.

Do people become Christians because they are born in Christian countries?

October 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace takes on a textbook case of the genetic fallacy.

Excerpt:

> **The History of the Ancient World**
> Christianity emerged in a largely Jewish or Pagan culture (a polytheistic mix of religious beliefs within the Roman Empire) completely hostile to the claims of Christianity. History records the hardship faced by 1st Century Christians who concluded Christianity was true and devoted their lives to Jesus. These believers did not become Christians because Christianity was the default religion of the time.
>
> **The History of China**
> China also has a history of religious suppression related to Christianity. The native culture of China has historically embraced some version of Shenism or Taoism. While Christian missionaries labored in China for centuries, their efforts were often suppressed by governmental regimes (like the Communist Party of China). In spite of this suppression and the cultural inclination toward Shenism or Taoism, Christianity has continued to grow as an underground movement, with some reporting as many as 130 million Christians now living in China. These believers did not become Christians because Christianity was the default religion of their region or culture.
>
> **The History of Persecution**
> History has demonstrated Christianity continues to grow in spite of intense persecution. Christians have historically come to faith in regions where Christianity is *not* the default religion. For this reason, Christians are still the most persecuted religious group in the world, particularly in places like North Korea, Muslim countries, India, China, Vietnam, and the Philippines. These suffering believers did not become Christians because Christianity was the default religion of their region or culture.

And he concludes with this:

> Millions of Christians have historically demonstrated a willingness to embrace the Christian worldview simply because they found it to be true. In many of these situations, Christianity was not the default position of their family, culture, region or era in history. I was not raised in a Christian home. The one man I respected more than anyone else (my father) has always been a committed atheist. I didn't know any outspoken Christians growing up, and I was hostile to the claims of Christianity until the age of thirty-five. While I had examined a number of eastern

> religions, Mormonism, Islam and the Bahá'í Faith, I was eventually persuaded by the evidence of the New Testament gospel eyewitness accounts. On the basis of those accounts, I began an investigation of Christianity and the existence of God. Like so many others, I came to believe Christianity is true, not because of my surrounding influences, but on the strength of the case itself.

I remember Wallace saying in one of his podcasts or in the audio book how he didn't need anything when he became a Christian. He had a wife and family and a job he loved, which he excelled at. Sometimes, people just investigate things and then go where the evidence leads. My entire family on my mother's side is Muslim and atheist, and on my father's side it's Hindu and some Catholic. No one pressured me into becoming a Christian – I didn't even go to church until 5 years after my conversion. I am the first evangelical Protestant in my family. No one tries to deter me from it, because they lose the debate. They just haven't looked into it as much as I have. Usually, what happens is that it all ends up as "do it because we're your family". Well, that doesn't work on me.

Protestant Christianity is what you settle on when you investigate these things seriously, and are willing to live with what you find out. Most people don't want to live with what they find out. I have Hindus in my family who reject Christianity because of pride in their Indian culture. Others reject it for community reasons – they want to please their parents and relatives. Some in my family reject it because they wont let anything come between them and their pursuit of success, health and wealth. Others simply believe what their professors tell them in order to get good grades. I wasn't born into Christianity and even as a Christian, I've received no mentoring or support, even from people I look up to. I'm very much a lone wolf Christian – the kind that William Lane Craig warns everyone about. Sometimes, you just go where the evidence leads, whether people support you or not. I've never cared what people thought of me, or felt pressure to believe as others believe. I think that desire to fit in is a non-Christian trait.

James Crossley compares Joseph Atwill's Jesus conspiracy theory to Dan Brown fiction

October 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace tweeted this article from the UK Daily Mail featuring comments by atheist historian James Crossley. The article responds to a sensational story that came out in the past week about an alleged conspiracy by ancient Romans to "invent" Jesus. Naturally, this was reported far and wide in the press. But this article by Dr. Crossley offers a more sober assessment.

Here's the introduction:

> An American scholar claims to have made a controversial discovery that proves the entire story of Jesus was made up by Roman aristocrats.
>
> Joseph Atwill asserts that Christianity did not start as a religion, but was instead created as a sophisticated propaganda tool to pacify subjects of the Roman Empire.
>
> He says he noticed a pattern forming when he was studying the only surviving account of first-century Judea, which he claims contains dozens of parallels between the life of a Roman emperor and that of Jesus in the New Testament.
>
> Mr Atwill argues that these ancient 'confessions' provide 'clear evidence' that the biography of Jesus is 'actually constructed, tip to stern, on prior stories, but especially on the biography of a Roman Caesar'.

The theory itself seems to be based on finding parallels between the New Testament sources and other ancient sources:

> [Atwill] says he stumbled upon his discovery while studying War of the Jews by Josephus – the only remain first-person account of first-century Judea – alongside the New Testament.
>
> He said: 'I started to notice a sequence of parallels between the two texts.
>
> 'Although it's been recognised by Christian scholars for centuries that the prophesies of Jesus appear to be fulfilled by what Josephus wrote about in the First Jewish-Roman war, I was seeing dozens more.
>
> 'What seems to have eluded many scholars is that the sequence of events and locations of Jesus ministry are more or less the same as the sequence of events and locations of the military campaign of [Emperor] Titus Flavius as described by Josephus.'
>
> […]Atwill maintains he can demonstrate that 'the Roman Caesars left us a kind of puzzle literature that was meant to be solved by future generations, and that the solution to that puzzle is "We invented Jesus Christ and we're proud of it".'

I'm not very optimistic about these Jesus-parallels approaches to history, but maybe there is something to it this time.

But Dr. Crossley doesn't think that there is:

> But bible academic Professor James Crossley, from the University of Sheffield, compared Mr Atwill's theory to a Dan Brown fiction book.
>
> He told Mail Online: 'These types of theories are very common outside the academic world and are usually reserved for sensationalist literature.
>
> 'They are virtually non-existent in the academic world.'
>
> He also suggested the theories are not taken seriously by experts.
>
> Mr Crossley said: 'People do debate about how much we can know about Jesus, but the idea that Romans invented stories about Jesus is outside of the academic world.'
>
> He added that this sort of theory can be 'irritating' to religion academics.

Dr. Crossley has debated against evangelical scholars, in particular Dr. Michael Bird and Dr. William Lane Craig. Although he is on the other side, he is aware of the reasons why people believe in a more traditional picture of the historical Jesus. It's good to see experts on the other side weighing in on these sensational stories.

Related posts

- Richard Bauckham defends the reliability of the gospels against James Crossley
- Richard Bauckham defends the divinity of Jesus against James Crossley
- Crossley debated against William Lane Craig before on the resurrection
- Crossley against Michael Bird on the origins of Christianity, (part 1, part 2)

How to falsify a religion using scientific or historical evidence

October 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I notice that a lot of new atheists seem to think that "I don't like it" can refute a religion. What I often see among atheists is this tendency to set up expectations of how God would have acted and then complain that he doesn't met those expectations. I don't think that this is a good way to argue against a religion, because it's subjective. God isn't obligated to comport with atheist expectations.

So in this post, I wanted to show how a reasonable person can evaluate and reject different worldviews using evidence.

Falsifying a religion using science

Consider this argument:

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

Notice how I falsified the oscillating model with theoretical and experimental reasons.

The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with atheism, Buddhism, Mormonism, etc. because they also require an eternally existing universe.

Falsifying a religion using history

Consider this argument:

1. To be a Muslim, you must believe that the Koran is without error.
2. The Koran claims that Jesus did not die on a cross. (Qur'an, 4: 157-158)
3. The crucifixion of Jesus is undisputed among non-Muslim historians, including atheist historians.
4. Therefore, it is not rational for me to become a Muslim.

I'm going to support the premise that Jesus was crucified by citing historians from all

backgrounds.

Consider some quotes from the (mostly) non-Christian scholars below:

> "Jesus' death as a consequence of crucifixion is indisputable." Gert Lüdemann
>
> "That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be." J.D. Crossan
>
> "The passion of Jesus is part of history." Geza Vermes
>
> Jesus' death by crucifixion is "historically certain". Pinchas Lapide
>
> "The single most solid fact about Jesus' life is his death: he was executed by the Roman prefect Pilate, on or around Passover, in the manner Rome reserved particularly for political insurrectionists, namely, crucifixion." Paula Fredriksen
>
> "The support for the mode of his death, its agents, and perhaps its co-agents, is overwhelming: Jesus faced a trial before his death, was condemned, and was executed by crucifixion." L.T. Johnson
>
> "One of the most certain facts of history is that Jesus was crucified on orders of the Roman prefect of Judea, Ponitus Pilate." Bart Ehrman

That's 7 famous historians: 3 atheists, 3 Jews and 1 moderate Catholic. The atheists, Ludemann, Crossan and Ehrman, have all debated against the resurrection of Jesus with William Lane Craig. Johnson is the moderate Catholic, the rest are Jewish historians. The Koran was written in the 7th century. That is why no professional historian accepts the Koran as more authoritative than the many earlier Christian and non-Christian sources for the crucifixion story. Many of the sources for the crucifixion are dated to the 1st century. It's not faith. It's history.

I have seen debates with Muslim scholars, and I have never once heard them cite a non-Muslim historian to the effect that Jesus was not crucified. To my knowledge, there is no historian who denies the crucifixion of Jesus in his published work.

Can Christianity be falsified by science or history?

Yes. If you prove that the universe is eternal than would falsify the Bible's claim that God created the universe out of nothing. That would be a scientific disproof. If you could find the body of Jesus still inside a tomb, that would falsify the Bible's claim about a resurrection. That would be a historical disproof. The nice thing about Christianity is that we make lots of testable claims. Christianity is about forming beliefs that are in line with the available evidence.

Stephen C. Meyer and Peter Atkins debate intelligent design

October 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This dialog occurred in 2010 on the Unbelievable radio show.

I made a rough transcript, so please see below for that.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

Details:

> The documentary film "Expelled" is presented by US Actor Ben Stein and makes the case that scientists who question Darwinian orthodoxy and support Intelligent Design are being "expelled" from academia.
>
> As the UK edition of the DVD is released we ask "Is freedom of thought at stake or is Intelligent Design out of bounds when it comes to biological science?"
>
> Stephen C Meyer is co founder of the Discovery Institute in the USA and a major proponent of Intelligent Design.
>
> Peter Atkins is Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University and an outspoken atheist.
>
> They both feature in "Expelled" and join Justin to debate the pros and cons of Intelligent Design theory.
>
> Mark Haville who is bringing the film to the UK also joins the discussion.

Note: The transcript below is quite snarky and may include paraphrases of Dr. Atkins for the sake of humor.

My rough transcript of the Meyer-Atkins debate

Stephen Meyer:
– started researching on ID while doing his PhD at Cambridge
– the question is whether the information-bearing properties in DNA require a designer
– what cause is adequate to explain the digital code that in the simplest living cell
– alternative explanations like self-organization and RNA-first have failed
– so the best explanation for functional sequences of parts is an intelligent designer
– Darwinists have responded to this argument with insults and suppression of dissent

Peter Atkins:
– intelligent design is creationism
– there is no science at all in it
– information can emerge without an intelligent designer
– structures emerge spontaneously, no agent is needed to generate the structure
– information in DNA is also a structure

Stephen Meyer:
– structure and information are two different things

– many structures emerge spontaneously
– structure may be like the vortex that occurs when water goes down a drain

Peter Atkins:
– the vortex is information

Stephen Meyer:
– structures are different from functionally-specified digital information
– in DNA, there is a 4-digit alphabet that is used to create code sequences
– the thing to be explained is where do the functional sequences come from

Peter Atkins:
– information can grow without an agent
– the second law of thermodynamics
– the universe is falling into disorder
– but there are local abatements of chaos that create information
– evolution can cause the amount of information to grow

Stephen Meyer:
– that's just an assertion
– I agree that energy flow through a system can produce spontaneous order
– but spontaneous order is not the same thing as information

Peter Atkins:
– spontaneous order is the same as information

Stephen Meyer:
– it's not order that needs to be explained it's specified complexity

Peter Atkins:
– what do you mean by specified complexity?

Stephen Meyer:
– the chemical bonds that connect to each letter do not determine the letter
– the chemical bonding sites will accept any letter as easily as any other
– any one of the 4 bases (letters) can attach at any place along the backbone

Peter Atkins:
– the selection of which letter comes next is determined by evolution

Stephen Meyer:
– that is just an assertion
– there is no physical process that sequences the letters to have a function

Peter Atkins:
– do you believe in evolution? YES OR NO!

Mark Haville:
– for him to answer the question you have to define the word
– do you mean macro or micro? biological or stellar? directed or undirected?

Peter Atkins:
– undirected molecules to man evolution by natural processes

Stephen Meyer:
– but even Dawkins doesn't believe in evolution then
– you're including the origin of life from non-living matter in evolution
– Dawkins says that there is no known naturalistic explanation for that

Mark Haville:
– you need to define your terms

[They discuss of the movie Expelled and the case of Richard Sternberg]

Stephen Meyer:
– the problem is people don't want to talk about the science
– they denounce dissent as unscientific
– they will not debate about whther natural causes can explain the information
– I want to talk about the science

Peter Atkins:
– ID people raise interesting questions for naturalists to work on
– but you want to tell us what the answer is (intelligence) before we begin
– you start from the idea that an intelligence was involved

Justin Brierley:
– but you start with the idea that natural mechanisms can explain everything!

Stephen Meyer:
– for Dr. Atkins, only explanations based on material processes are valid

Peter Atkins:
– that is correct

Stephen Meyer:
– but we think that the activities of mind can explain some effects
– e.g. – the best explanation of the Rosetta stone is a mind

Peter Atkins:
– but we naturalists think of minds as material as well

Stephen Meyer:
– that's a materialist pre-supposition on your part
– we would have to have a debate about mind and body

Mark Haville:
– I think that the materialist position is socially dangerous
– the problem with naturalism is that it is an ideology
– the ideology pushes absurdities, e.g. – the universe came from nothing uncaused
– and naturalists exert power over others to force them to believe nonsense

Stephen Meyer:
– science progresses as the result of scientists disagreeing
– both sides agree to the facts
– the debate is about the interpretation of those facts
– and one side is being ruled out a priori based on the pre-supposition of materialism

Peter Atkins:
– why do you say that an intelligence is involved in DNA but not general relativity

Stephen Meyer:
– it is always logically possible that intelligence can be invlved in any effect
– the main thing is that explanations based on intelligence should not be ruled out

Peter Atkins:
= well you can't appeal to any non-material process in expaining anything
– those are the rules

Moderator:
– what does intelligent design have to do with religion?

Stephen Meyer:
– creationism is about understanding the istory of life using the Bible
– intelligent design is about using the same method of inquiry as Darwin
– we know that information arises from intelligent causes
– humans create information all the time by using intelligence to sequence parts

Moderator:
– are intelligent design proponents disreputable?

Stephen Meyer:
– what's disreputable is shutting down debate by setting arbitrary rules

Peter Atkins:
– we are both interested in the same questions

Moderator:
– why won't you let Stephen publish his papers then?

Peter Atkins:
– because it breaks the pre-suppositions of naturalism and materialism

Stephen Meyer:
– you're shutting down inquiry by using an arbitrary definition of science

Mark Haville:
– we need to define the word science
– science should be based on what we can observe empirically
– we can observe micro-evolution empirically
– but Darwinism goes beyond what is observable to postulate macro-evolution

Peter Atkins:
– but paleobiology is replete with evidence

Stephen Meyer:
– paleobiology uses a method of inference that I think is valid
– but intelligent design uses the same mode of reasoning which is also valid

Peter Atkins:
= you're intellectually lazy

– we’re smart, we’re using our brains

Moderator:
– you’re saying that appeals to intelligent causes ends science?
– is ID the view that some things are too complex to be explained with naturalism?

Peter Atkins:
– yes, and to teach children that materialism is false is child abuse

Stephen Meyer:
– let’s drop the insults and the rhetoric and focus on the arguments
– the ID argument is not based on what we don’t know, it’s based on what we DO know
– first, we can ask what undirected natural processes can and cannot do
– second, we can ask what we know about intelligent causes from our own experience
– what we do know seems to me to require an intelligent agent as a cause

Peter Atkins:
– GOD! Do you mean God!? Do you mean God!?

Stephen Meyer:
– I personally mean God, but all that the arguments proves is a generic intelligent cause
– and I am using the same method of investigation that Darwin used to get there
– what we know from our experience is that a mind is needed to create information

Peter Atkins:
– NONSENSE! ABSOLUTE NONSENSE!

Stephen Meyer:
– in my book, I list 10 predictions made by ID, so it’s not a science-stopper
– furthermore, the enterprise of science began with th goal of understanding God
– consider the earliest scientists, people like James Boyler and Johannes Kepler

Peter Atkins:
– that was 300 years ago, we’ve moved on

Mark Haville:
– what about Max Planck then?

Stephen Meyer:
– how about James Clark Maxwell?

Mark Haville:
– we need to focus on the facts

Peter Atkins:
– what do you mean by the facts?

Mark Haville:
– well the fact is that Darwinism has no mechanism to produce new information

Peter Atkins:
– well copying errors introduces beneficial mutations

Stephen Meyer:

– let’s focus on where we get the first information from the simplest organism
– you can’t account for the first organism by appealing to copying errors
– to add functionality to a program, you need new lines codes from an intelligence
– once you have life, you can generate some new information
– but you can’t generate macro-evolution either

Peter Atkins:
– if we give you your explanation for teh origin of life, will you give this up

Stephen Meyer:
– of course! I’m a former theistic evolutionist
– but right now the evidence is not there for it
– we have to decide these questions based on what we see with our own eyes today

Peter Atkins:
– but I pre-suppose materialism as the starting point of all explanations
– you’re just intellectually lazy to abandon my pre-supposition

Stephen Meyer:
– why is it is less intellectually lazy to insist that materialism is true
– we are making plenty of predictions, and isn’t that what science is about?
– consider Junk DNA – you guys said it had no use
– now we know it has a use

Peter Atkins:
– naturalists were open to the idea that junk DNA might have a use before ID

Moderator:
– Dr. Meyer, what about the wall that locks out intelligence as an explanation?

Stephen Meyer:
– if these are interesting questions, then we should allow freedom of inquiry
– that’s how science advances

Peter Atkins:
– for all their science-talk really they are just saying God did it
– people who don’t agree with me are not using their brains, like I do
– to give up on my pre-supposition of materialism is a denial of humanity

Mark Haville:
– there are important issues that are affected by our view of origins
– everyone who hasn’t seen Expelled movie should definitely see it

Astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on intelligent design and habitability

October 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The 5 video clips that make up the full lecture.

The playlist for all 5 clips is here.

About the speaker

> Guillermo Gonzalez is an Associate Professor of Physics at Grove City College. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington and has received fellowships, grants and awards from such institutions as NASA, the University of Washington, the Templeton Foundation, Sigma Xi (scientific research society) and the National Science Foundation.

Learn more about the speaker here.

The lecture

Here's part 1 of 5:

And the rest are here:

- Part 2 of 5
- Part 3 of 5
- Part 4 of 5
- Part 5 of 5

Topics:

- What is the Copernican Principle?
- Is the Earth's suitability for hosting life rare in the universe?
- Does the Earth have to be the center of the universe to be special?
- How similar to the Earth does a planet have to be to support life?
- What is the definition of life?
- What are the three minimal requirements for life of any kind?
- Requirement 1: A molecule that can store information (carbon)
- Requirement 2: A medium in which chemicals can interact (liquid water)
- Requirement 3: A diverse set of chemical elements
- What is the best environment for life to exist?
- Our place in the solar system: the circumstellar habitable zone
- Our place in the galaxy: the galactic habitable zones
- Our time in the universe's history: the cosmic habitable age
- Other habitability requirements (e.g. – metal-rich star, massive moon, etc.)

- The orchestration needed to create a habitable planet
- How different factors depend on one another through time
- How tweaking one factor can adversely affect other factors
- How many possible places are there in the universe where life could emerge?
- Given these probabilistic resources, should we expect that there is life elsewhere?
- How to calculate probabilities using the “Product Rule”
- Can we infer that there is a Designer just because life is rare? Or do we need more?

The corelation between habitability and measurability.

- Are the habitable places in the universe also the best places to do science?
- Do the factors that make Earth habitable also make it good for doing science?
- Some places and times in the history of the universe are more habitable than others
- Those exact places and times also allow us to make scientific discoveries
- Observing solar eclipses and structure of our star, the Sun
- Observing stars and galaxies
- Observing the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Observing the acceleration of the universe caused by dark matter and energy
- Observing the abundances of light elements like helium of hydrogen
- These observations support the big bang and fine-tuning arguments for God’s existence
- It is exactly like placing observatories on the tops of mountains
- There are observers existing in the best places to observe things
- This is EXACTLY how the universe has been *designed for making scientific discoveries*

This lecture was delivered by Guillermo Gonzalez in 2007 at the University of California at Davis.

Video, audio and summary: Jim Wallis debates Jay Richards on Christianity and economics

October 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had to re-post this post again because Facebook decided to mark it as SPAM. This is the same post I put out 4 hours ago.

The video recording:

- The organizers of the debate tell me that the video will be posted shortly after the debate, and I will link to it in this very post.

The audio recording:

- Click here to download the low quality MP3 audio recording (32 kbps, 29 MB)
- Click here to download the high quality MP3 audio recording (64 kbps, 58 MB)

The debaters

Jay Richards:

> Jay Richards, Ph.D., is a Senior Fellow of the Discovery Institute where he directs the Center on Wealth, Poverty and Morality, and is a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Faith, Work & Economics. Most recently he is the co-author with James Robison of the best-selling *Indivisible: Restoring Faith, Family, and Freedom Before It's Too Late".*
>
> In addition to writing many academic articles, books, and popular essays on a wide variety of subjects, he recently edited the new award winning anthology, *God & Evolution: Protestants, Catholics and Jews Explore Darwin's Challenge to Faith* . His previous book was *Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem* (HarperOne, May 2009), for which he received a Templeton Enterprise Award in 2010.
>
> […]In recent years, he has been a Contributing Editor of The American at the American Enterprise Institute, a Visiting Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, and a Research Fellow and Director of Acton Media at the Acton Institute. Richards has a B.A. with majors in Political Science and Religion, an M.Div. (Master of Divinity) and a Th.M. (Master of Theology), and a Ph.D. (with honors) in philosophy and theology from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Jim Wallis:

> Jim Wallis (born June 4, 1948) is a Christian writer and political activist. He is best known as the founder and editor of *Sojourners* magazine and as the founder of the Washington, D.C.-based Christian community of the same name. Wallis is well known for his advocacy on issues of peace and social justice. Although Wallis

> actively eschews political labels, he describes himself as an evangelical and is often associated with the evangelical left and the wider Christian left. He works as a spiritual advisor to President Barack Obama. He is married to the Rev. Joy Carroll, who was one of the first female priests in the Church of England. He is also a leader in the Red-Letter Christian movement.
>
> […]In 2010, Wallis admitted to accepting money for Sojourners from philanthropist George Soros after initially denying having done so. When conservative writer Marvin Olasky pointed this out, and that Soros also financed groups supporting abortion, atheism, and same-sex marriage, in a WORLD magazine column, Wallis said Olasky "lies for a living"; he subsequently apologized to Olasky for the comments. In 2011, Wallis acknowledged that Sojourners had received another $150,000.00 from Soros' Open Society Foundation.
>
> […]In regard to the 2011 United States budget proposal, Wallis described Congressman Paul Ryan and his congressional allies as "bullies" and "hypocrites."

Wallis just came out this month in favor of gay marriage. He is also a strong supporter of Barack Obama, who is radically pro-abortion. Some pro-lifers have argued that Barack Obama has the same views on abortion as Kermit Gosnell.

The format of the debate

- 20 minute opening speeches
- 10 minute rebuttals
- 10 minutes of discussion
- Q&A for the remainder

SUMMARY

I use italics below to denote my own observations.

Jim Wallis' opening speech:

My goal is to spark a national conversation on the "common good".

A story about my son who plays baseball.

The central goal of Christianity is to promote the "common good".

Quotes "Catholic social teaching" which values "human flourishing".

The "common good" is "human flourishing".

Is the purpose of Christianity is to make sure that everyone has enough material stuff or to preach the gospel?

When Christians go on mission trips, it's good that they focus on things like human trafficking.

Democrat John Lewis is the "conscience of the U.S. Congress".

John Lewis gets a 0% rating from the American Conservative Union in 2012.

John Lewis gets a 8% rating from the American Conservative Union in 2011.

John Lewis gets a 2.29% lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union.

Nothing is going well in Washington right now except comprehensive immigration reform.

Does he think that Christianity means giving 12-20 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship, while skilled engineers cannot even get green cards, even though there is a shortage of them? Does he think that the other people in society who earn more than they receive from the government ought to be taxed more in order to provide more services and benefits to those who earn less than they take from the government?

Jay Richards' opening speech:

Two topics: 1) what is the common good? 2) what should Christians do to promote the common good?

Catholicism defines the "common good" as "Indeed, the common good embraces the sum of those conditions of the social life whereby men, families and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection."

We have natural ends that we are supposed to be achieving and some places, like South Korea, are better for allowing that to happen.

The common good is broader and prior to any sort of political specification.

It's not the political good or what the state is supposed to do.

It's not about the communal good, as in Soviet Russia, where the communal good was above individual and familial good.

The common good is the social conditions that promote the things that we humans have in common as individuals and members of family.

The common good takes account of who we are as individuals and in associations with other individuals, e.g. – families.

Christians don't have to be doing the same things to promote the common good, e.g. – pastors, entrepreneurs, etc.

The church, as the church, has as its primary goal making disciples of all nations.

But even in that capacity, the church should be interested in more than just conversions and saving souls.

We also have to care about God's created reality including things like physics, education, etc.

How should Christians promote the common good in politics?

Question: when is coercion warranted?

In Romans 13, Paul says that the state does have power to coerce to achieve certain ends, like justice.

Most Christians think that there are some things where the state can use coercion, for example, to prevent/punish murder.

It is OK for the police to use coercive force to maintain public order and the rule of law.

But we need to ask whether other things are legitimate areas for the state to use coercive force.

We should only give the state power to coerce when there is no other way to achieve a goal.

We need to leverage the science of economics in order to know how to achieve the common good.

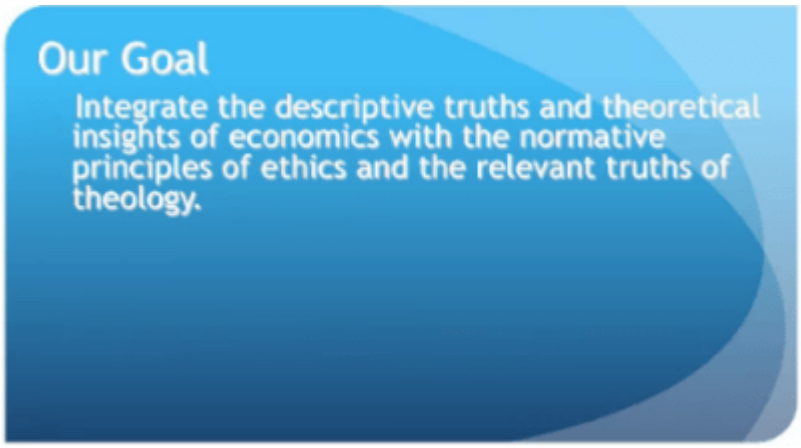

Jay Richards' main point in the debate

Henry Hazlitt: "The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups."

For example, what happens if we raise the federal minimum wage to $50. What happens next for all groups? That's what we need to ask in order to know which policies achieve the common good.

When it comes to economics a lot of things have been tried in other places and times.

We can know what works and doesn't work by studying what was tried before and in other places.

Many things are counter-intuitive – things that sound good don't work, things that sound bad do work.

Principle: "We are our brother's keeper". Christians have an obligation to care for their neighbors.

We all agree on the goal. But how do we do things that will achieve that goal?

We have to distinguish aspirations from principles and prudential judgment.

Principle: We should provide for the material needs of the poor.

Prudence: Seeing the world as it is, and acting accordingly.

Example policies: which minimum wage is best? None? $10? $20?

We decide based on seeing how different economic policies achieve the goal of helping the poor.

Jim Wallis' first rebuttal:

Jesus commanded us to “care for the poor and help to end poverty”.

Actually, Jesus thought that acknowledging him and giving him sacrificial worship was more important than giving money to the poor, see Matthew 26:6-13:

[6] While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper,

[7] a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

[8] When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. “Why this waste?” they asked.

[9] “This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.”

[10] Aware of this, Jesus said to them, “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

[11] The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me.

[12] When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.

[13] Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

It’s not clear to me whether Jim Wallis thinks that preaching is more important than redistributing wealth to address material inequality.

I like what Jesus said in a TV series, even though it’s not in the Bible when an actor playing Jesus said to “change the world”.

Jesus never said to “change the world” in the Bible. Should we be concerned that he is quoting a TV actor playing Jesus instead of Jesus.

Here is a terrific story about Bill Bright.

I love Catholic social teaching.

Quote: “All are responsible for all”.

I go to the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland every year. I spoke once at 7 AM on the 4th floor.

It’s a funny place for a Christian to be if they care about the poor – rubbing shoulders with leftist elites. He must have named a dozen high-profile people that he spoke with during the debate, as if he could win the debate by some sort of argument from name-dropping. He mentioned the Davos thing several times!

The greatest beneficiary of government actions to deal with the economic crisis was Wall Street banks.

I’m going to tell you a story about what a Washington lawyer says to Jesus.

I’ve had conversations with business leaders where I tell them to integrate moral truths.

I talk about the Good Samaritan parable.

Quote: “Do you love your undocumented neighbor?”

Quote: “Do you love your Muslim neighbor?”

Jay Richards’ first rebuttal:

Who is responsible for your own children? Who knows the most about them?

Parents should have more discretion over their children because they have more knowledge about their child and what's best for them.

The Good Samaritan doesn't show that government should confiscate wealth through taxation and redistribute it.

The Good Samaritan emphasizes voluntarily charity to help people who are not necessarily your immediate neighbor.

Some of the things we do should be for the good of other people in other countries.

But then we are back to leveraging economics to know what policies are good for those other people in other countries.

The principle of subsidiarity: if a problem can be addressed by a lower level of society (family) then we shouldn't make higher levels (government) address it.

The best place to take care of children is within the family.

Only if the family fails should wider and wider spheres get involved.

Although we want to think of the common good in a global sense, we don't want to lose sight of the fact

The financial crisis: we need to integrate moral truths, but also economic truths.

We don't want to assume policies based on intuitions, we want to check our intuitions using economic principles.

Why did we have a financial crisis in mortgages, but not in commodities futures or technology, etc.?

Greed is a contributing factor in all areas of business.

Something more was going on in the mortgage markets than just greed.

There were specific policies that caused the mortgage lending crisis.

The root cause of the problem were "affordable housing policies" that lowered lending restrictions on low income people.

The policy ended up degrading the underwriting standards on loans.

Government intruded into the market and undermined the normal ways of

People were getting massive loans with no income, no jobs, no assets and no down payment.

The federal government created a market for risk loans by guaranteeing

There was a government imposed quota on mortgage lenders such that 50% of their loans had to be given to high-risk borrowers.

That is what led to the financial crisis. Not the free market, but intrusions into the free market.

These policies were well-meaning and implemented by people from both parties. But they had bad effects.

Advice for atheists who want to appear to value reason

October 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tom Gilson writes about how an atheist professor committed the straw man fallacy, and what it means.

Excerpt:

> We need to turn to his PSU talk, wherein he speaks (after about 29:00) of "three core reasons for why one believes one's faith tradition is true.... Reason number one: Miracles. We're going to examine a few miracles."
>
> Let me pause and ask you to consider which faith-truth-convincing miracles he might want to examine and debunk. The resurrection? Healings? Visions? No, none of these. Ladies and gentlemen, for the safety of your clothing, lower your drinks. The miracles he chooses to debunk, and thereby to destroy the faith-enhancing credibility of miracles, are:

1. **Transubstantiation**: the substantial change of the Eucharist elements into the body and blood of Jesus, according to Catholic doctrine.... and
2. **Tongues**, or glossolalia.

So this atheist philosophy professor thinks that Christians argue for God's existence using transubstantiation and tongues.

Have you ever seen any Christian scholar talk about that in a debate? I haven't even seen it in blog posts, much less books or papers.

Now if I were going to give arguments for God's existence, I would offer arguments like these:

- origin of the universe
- cosmic fine-tuning
- origin of life's building blocks
- origin of biological information
- convergence
- epigenetics
- molecular machines, like the ribosome
- limits on mutation-driven change
- Cambrian explosion
- galactic habitability
- stellar habitability
- the effectiveness/applicability of mathematics to nature
- consciousness
- free will

- rationality
- objective moral values and duties
- the minimal facts case for the resurrection

Dear atheists: those are the kinds of arguments that you see in actual debates and read in actual apologetics books. And those are the arguments that need a response. But before responding to those arguments, they have to be understood properly by reading the primary sources where those arguments are laid out in a rigorous way, e.g. – *The Design Inference*. And when you respond to them, you should cite the original texts, with page numbers, to show that you understand them.

What I really find disturbing about this Boghossian fellow is how the audience reacts:

> His performance in both these lectures amounts to a parade of fallacies.
>
> Yet if you watch these two lectures through to the end, you'll find that the audiences eat it up; or many of the people do, at any rate. They're being taught by a distinguished looking university professor. They like what they're hearing. It agrees with their prejudices. And — in the role of an educator, mind you — he's leading them on with *obviously fallacious thinking.* There's something seriously wrong about that tactic.

I'm really not sure why anyone would applaud someone like Boghossian who is clearly more interested in ridicule than debate. What does this say about atheism? I mean – these people are applauding something that could be corrected by reading a short, introductory book like Lee Strobel's "Case for a Creator". Yet they don't appear to be educated enough to even do that. Worse, the atheist professor is actually encouraging them to persist in their ignorance. Either the professor hasn't read introductory books on apologetics or he just finds pleasure in hearing the sneers and jeers of the mob, as he feeds them lies and propaganda.

Here's my suspicion about atheism. I don't think that most rank and file atheists really are interested in truth at all. They are more interested puffing themselves up and in putting other people down. This Boghossian episode is not an isolated case. You can see this in action with the 1-star reviews of books like Darwin's Doubt. The negative reviewers don't reference page numbers or cite passages, because the reviewers haven't actually read the book. And they don't feel that they need to read it in order to insult it. In their view, proper atheism is about mocking – not about informed reasoning. For them, the less that is known about what the opposition really believes, the better. Should we take this forced ignorance to be a central tenet of the atheist worldview, then? What is a good name for this predilection they have for preferring stand-up comedy to rational thought?

New study: Y-chromosome Adam and mitochondrial-Eve dating tightens up

October 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mysterious Melissa brought this interesting new study to my attention. It was published in the peer-reviewed journal *Science*. It was reported on Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> More than 7 billion people live on this planet — members of a single species that originated in one place and migrated all over Earth over tens of thousands of years.
>
> But even though we all trace our family lineage to a few common ancestors, scientists still don't know exactly when and how those few ancestors started to give rise to the incredible diversity of today's population.
>
> A brand-new finding, made using advanced analysis of DNA from all over the world, sheds new light on this mystery. By studying the DNA sequence of Y chromosomes of men from many different populations, scientists have determined that their male most recent common ancestor (MRCA) lived sometime between 120,000 and 156,000 years ago.
>
> It's the first time the human ancestry has been traced back through the male line by sequencing the DNA of many entire Y chromosomes.
>
> And, it agrees reasonably well with previous findings about our female most recent common ancestor, made by studying DNA carried down through the human race's female line. Such studies used DNA from mitochrondria — structures inside cells — and placed that time of the most recent common ancestor between 99,000 and 148,000 years ago.
>
> […]**The reconciliation of the timing of "Adam" and "Eve," however, may be this study's most important immediate implication.**
>
> **"This has been a conundrum in human genetics for a long time," said Carlos D. Bustamante, PhD, a professor of genetics at Stanford and senior author of the study. "Previous research has indicated that the male MRCA lived much more recently than the female MRCA. But now our research shows that there's no discrepancy. In fact, if anything, the Y chromosome may be a bit older."**

So the new dates for Adam and Eve would allow them to actually date. Ha ha!

Now those dates are still too far in the past to satisfy an old-Earth creationist like me, but it solves that problem about them existing durring completely different dates. I've been waiting for that one to be solves for a decade! It's progress.

Simon Brace on the nature of spiritual warfare and a plea to the Church

October 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This passionate, challenging lecture has been getting shared a lot on Facebook, so I thought that I would do a summary of it.

First, you can grab the MP3 file here.

Note that this talk is given by a very conservative evangelical Christian who is speaking to Christians. So this is not intended for a non-Christian audience. However, non-Christians are free to tune in if you want to hear a really passionate, fire-breathing conservative evangelical go non-linear over the superficial turn that the evangelical church has taken. If you are familiar with J.P. Moreland's view that spiritual warfare is really about disputing speculations and falsehoods using logic and evidence, then you'll know the meaning of the term "spiritual warfare" he has in mind. When he says spiritual warfare, he means apologetics: knowledge and preparation.

I would really caution you not to listen to this if you are not passionate about defending God's honor. It will overwhelm and upset you. Having said that, this lecture reflects my convictions about the churches need to drop anti-intellectualism and take up apologetics. And not pre-suppositional apologetics, which I think is ineffective, but *evidential* apologetics. Evidential apologetics is effective, which is why everyone in the Bible used it.

About the speaker:

> **Simon Brace** is the Director of Evangelism of Southern Evangelical Seminary. Simon was born in Zimbabwe and grew up in South Africa. Simon has a construction background and has lived in a number of countries and travelled extensively. He has a MA in Apologetics and BA in Religious Studies and is currently working on an MA in Philosophy at SES. Simon leads TEAM which is the missions program of SES on local, national, and international trips. In addition, Simon has worked with Ratio Christi at SES, and has an extensive knowledge of Ratio Christi's history and operation. Simon currently resides in North Carolina with his wife Nel and children, Eva and Olivia.

I liked the second part of the lecture more than the first part, so there is less summarizing of the first part.

Topics:

- What does the New Testament say about spiritual warfare in Ephesians?
- Christian slogans about spiritual warfare sound pious, but they are mistaken
- Today, Christianity is focused on piety and zeal, not on study and knowledge
- The result is that Christianity in the West is in a state of erosion and decline
- What we are doing about spiritual warfare is not working to stop the decline

- Preaching, publishing, programs, retreats, etc. are not very useful for spiritual warfare
- Enthusiasm and passion without knowledge are not very useful for spiritual warfare
- The Church has a theoretical understanding of spiritual warfare, but no real capability
- Doesn't work: trying to make Christianity seem popular and cool
- Doesn't work: making Christian music and art that non-Christians will like
- Doesn't work: pastors trying to be relevant by having cool clothes and cool haircuts
- Doesn't work: fundamentalists getting angry about peripheral issues
- Doesn't work: not read things apart from the Bible and sound foolish when speaking in the public square
- Doesn't work: church leaders think that careful exegesis and expository preaching is a good answer to skeptics
- What works: we need to train people who are prepared and willing to defend the truth of the Christian faith
- Evangelicalism has a deep suspicion of reading things outside the Bible, so they are unable to refute anything
- Evangelicals are hyper-spiritualized and hysterical, focusing on demons, prophecy and end-times, etc.
- Evangelicals have a pagan view of using their minds to alter reality, which is irrational and superstitious
- Evangelicals like conservative celebrity preachers who do *nothing* to correct anti-intellectualism in the church
- Evangelicals are focused on their personal relationships with Jesus instead of their whole worldview
- Evangelicals focus too much on homeschooling and not enough on how to impact the secular universities
- Church programs for youth are about "strumming guitars and eating pizza once a week", not apologetics
- Evangelicals have an over-inflated view of the effectiveness of their (non-intellectual) evangelism methods
- The primary focus and primary responsibility in spiritual warfare is not dealing with supernatural evil
- The real focus and responsibility in spiritual warfare is specified in 2 Cor 10:3-5
- What we ought to be doing is defeating speculations (false ideas), using logical arguments and evidence
- Defending the faith is not memorizing Bible verses and throwing them out randomly
- Defending the faith is not just preaching the gospel
- Demolishing an argument requires understanding arguments: premises, conclusions, the laws of logic
- We should exchange our pious Bible memorizing skills and the like for a class in critical thinking
- The New Testament requires that elders be capable of *refuting* those who oppose

sound doctrine (Titus 1:9)
- It is not enough to preach a good sermon, elders have to be able to defend the Christian faith as well
- People who run conservative seminaries do not mandate that M.Div graduates study apologetics
- Famous pastors like Driscoll, Begg, etc. need to teach other pastors to emphasize apologetics in church
- People in church won't engage the culture unless they have reasons and evidence to believe Christianity is true
- We need a balance of both piety and intellectual engagement
- We need to make our evangelism rooted in the intellect in order to have an influence at the university
- Mission organizations also have a responsibility to defend the faith and not merely preach (1 Peter 3:15)

And here is his closing quote from C.S. Lewis:

> To be ignorant and simple now not to be able to meet the enemies on their own ground would be to throw down our weapons and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.

I was really humbled by this, because I sort of knew that the church was anti-intellectual, but I didn't really reflect on how everyone else in society thinks that we are anti-intellectual. It's troubling. The quickest way to make Biblical Christianity respectable again is to hit the books and defeat all comers in intellectual disputations. Are we ready to make the sacrifices to do that?

UPDATE: A friend of mine who blogs at Think Apologetics has written a post on this same issue of anti-intellectualism in the church.

U.S. Army tells troops that Christian pro-family group is a hate group

October 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Letitia the Damsel notified me about this story from Todd Starnes of Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Several dozen U.S. Army active duty and reserve troops were told last week that the American Family Association, a well-respected Christian ministry, should be classified as a domestic hate group because the group advocates for traditional family values.
>
> The briefing was held at Camp Shelby in Mississippi and listed the AFA alongside domestic hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan, Neo-Nazis, the Black Panthers and the Nation of Islam.
>
> […]"The instructor said AFA could be considered a hate group because they don't like gays," the soldier told me. "The slide was talking about how AFA refers to gays as sinners and heathens and derogatory terms."
>
> […]Later in the briefing, the soldiers were reportedly told that they could face punishment for participating in organizations that are considered hate groups.
>
> […]Earlier this year, I exposed Army briefings that classified evangelical Christians and Catholics as examples of religious extremism.
>
> Another briefing told officers to pay close attention to troops who supported groups like AFA and the Family Research Council.
>
> One officer said the two Christian ministries did not "share our Army Values."
>
> "When we see behaviors that are inconsistent with Army Values – don't just walk by – do the right thing and address the concern before it becomes a problem," the officer wrote in an email to his subordinates.
>
> […]"The American Family Association has received numerous accounts of military installations as well as law enforcement agencies using a list compiled by the **Southern Poverty Law Center**, which wrongfully identifies and defames AFA," reads a statement they sent me.

Letitia the Damsel commented on her blog about this story and the SPLC:

> This is a "Strike two!" occasion because, as Todd Starnes pointed out, this briefing by the Army is itself a dangerous hate move not unlike how the Family Research Council was also labeled by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a potential target for a truly hateful fascist to attack, which then happened. In fact, Army officers have come to see themselves as idealogues and the mechanism of the Army as a force for activism.

She quote from the Fox News article:

> One officer said the two Christian ministries did not "share our Army Values."
>
> "When we see behaviors that are inconsistent with Army Values – don't just walk by – do the right thing and address the concern before it becomes a problem," the officer wrote in an email to his subordinates.

And comments:

> The US Army has values? And it is incumbent upon the American public to conform to those "Army Values?" Call me hog-tied to the text (or paranoid!), but I'm certain that whatever Army Values exist are supposed to be reflective of the US Constitution which in no way acknowledges that one must campaign to "address concerns" of average American citizens that are "inconsistent with (so-called) Army Values."
>
> So if the Army is going to fling open that door, then I'm not paranoid, and it's safe again to trod out Hitler references to things I find smack of fascism. I ask that our government root out the Nazi dictator who compiled this briefing and jack him/her up for conspiracy to deprive the people of the AFA of their First Amendment rights and for putting them in potential physical harm.

Previously, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) labeled the Family Research Council a "hate group" because they are also pro-family and pro-marriage. A gay activist found the FRC listed as a hate group on the SPLC web site, and charged into the FRC building armed with guns. His intent was mass murder. Is that what the U.S. Army was trying to achieve by telling soldiers that the AFA is a hate group? It seems we should avoid using words to encourage people to commit acts of domestic terrorism, like the attack by the anti-FRC gay activist. I certainly never expected the U.S. Army to imitate the SPLC in demonizing pro-family groups – and at taxpayer expense. If this anti-Christian hate speech by the U.S. Army results in actual violence, can the victims then sue the U.S. Army? That seems fair to me.

Related posts

- Obama-supporter Aaron Alexis opens fire in Navy Yard gun-free zone
- Boston bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was a pot-smoker who supported Obama
- Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting

- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Zeitgeist conspiracy movie had profound impact on Jared Loughner
- Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist
- Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning
- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

Readers vote: who is to blame for this problematic marriage? The wife or the husband?

October 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Please read the excerpt from the article BEFORE you vote in the poll at the bottom of the post! Thanks.

Letitia the Damsel posted this article from the UK Daily Mail on my Facebook page. The article is written by a woman who rejects the traditional roles and responsibilities of women in marriage.

She writes:

> My husband is the kindest, most considerate man in the world. During the seven years we've been married, Ben has done most of the cooking, cleaning and ironing without ever being asked.
>
> He brings me an organic buffalo milk cappuccino every morning in bed and once spent hours making fresh syrup from rhubarb to add to my favourite champagne after I'd given birth. And yes, he works full-time.
>
> But for all he does for me, anxious to make everything in my life better, he gets a raw deal in return.
>
> I am shamefully neglectful of my wifely duties. In fact, I am the anti-wife.
>
> The trouble is that I just can't do the subservient partner thing. Ben is more likely to arrive at our home in Twickenham, South-West London, after a hard day's work and find me having a manicure or checking Facebook than slaving over a hot stove.
>
> This may make me sound selfish, but I'm just being honest. At 39, I've never ironed a single item of my husband's clothing. I rarely cook for him either. Why would I bother when he's so much better at it than I am?
>
> Last Christmas, he produced a lavish three-course lunch and booked a 15th-century cottage for our whole family to eat it in. All I did was hold out my champagne glass for him to refill while saying: 'Well done, darling.'
>
> And if you think I reward his sterling domestic efforts with treats in the bedroom, I'm afraid I fail in that department, too. Intimacy is reserved only for his birthdays – and then just the ones with a zero.
>
> I felt occasional pangs of guilt about our unusual dynamic during the first year of our marriage, but now I find it liberating. He even refers to me as the 'household manager' because I'm an expert in the art of delegation.
>
> Recently, Ben's job for an organic fruit and vegetable box delivery scheme meant he was away on business for three weeks.
>
> Before he left, I found him packing the freezer with organic ready meals and

ringing round for short-term nannies to take care of our children, Ronnie, six, and Stanley, two.

The truth is that I'm just too busy and involved in my career as a writer to be a traditional, caring wife.

I work from home and, like most self-employed people in a recession, I push myself to the limit. I set my alarm for 6am so I can squeeze in an hour of work before the school run and I often write until midnight.

My job often means being away from home during the evenings and weekends, which means the lion's share of the childcare falls to Ben. Even when I am home, I keep one eye glued to my iPhone for fear of missing a work call.

Ben bemoans my inability to achieve a work/life balance. He sees the word 'driven' as a negative, while I think I'm aspirational and ambitious. Now, I know what you're thinking – that I must earn more than Ben. But no, I don't.

He's the breadwinner and a domestic god. But my work is so all-consuming there's little of me left to go round by the time I switch off my laptop. Don't get me wrong – I love Ben very much and regard our marriage as happy. **And he could never claim breach of contract because he always knew I was a workaholic.**

[…]When we began dating in 2003, I was helping to launch a woman's magazine, which required me to be at work from 8am until 11pm.

It was Ben's touching gesture of sending boxes of Krispy Kreme doughnuts to the office that made me realise what an excellent husband he'd make.

But when, in the early throes of our relationship, he mooted the idea I might one day be a 'stay-at-home mum', I bristled. 'But my mum stayed at home for the first five years of my life,' he said.

'That's never going to happen,' I replied sharply. The matter was never raised again.

[…]It's my fault that he returns home to find no dinner and our children running amok.

But I work hard, too, and that changes everything. While I love my children deeply, wiping noses, bottoms and encrusted beans off the floor doesn't inspire me in the way my work does.

I'm too busy to share the chores. After a day of writing, I feel happy and complete; after a day with the children, I am frazzled.

After the birth of our first son, I went back to my £60,000-a-year job as deputy editor of a national magazine and put Ronnie full-time into an eye-wateringly expensive nursery.

I felt guilty about it, and working 8am to 6pm every day and barely seeing my son just compounded that guilt. But I didn't want to give up work.

> **You might think me self-obsessed, but that's a price I'm willing to pay for my happiness.**
>
> Just before the birth of our second son, I decided to leave my job and pursue a career as a writer after being offered a generous redundancy package.
>
> But instead of relaxing into my new job, I allowed work to seep into all areas of my life.
>
> That is why I ignored cripplingly painful contractions ten minutes apart and carried on writing to meet a deadline.
>
> I was back at work just two weeks after giving birth to Stanley, breast-feeding while conducting tricky phone interviews.

Now that you read the excerpt, please vote in the poll:

I'll vote and comment later tonight to say how I voted.

By the way, if you like the articles that Letitia finds, you can hear her on her Visible Conservative podcasts on Fridays. Here's the most recent one and the opening monologue transcript is here on Letitia's blog. If you're like me, and you like hearing conservative women talk passionately about issues that matter, you'll love this podcast. I never miss it.

UPDATE: I voted and my vote was to blame the man entirely. He chose this woman to marry and to mother his children. He knew she was unqualified to be a wife and mother and married her anyway. It's ALL HIS FAULT. She is completely innocent because she was bad BEFORE the marriage and he knew it.

You cannot blame a bad woman for continuing to act badly after you marry her. If she is bad before, she'll be bad after. If she has no moral standard for marriage before, then she'll have no moral standard after. She doesn't BELIEVE that she is doing anything wrong – either before or after marriage. You can't blame her for acting according to her own feminist worldview. It's the MAN who is to blame for choosing her.

The man shouldn't even be opening his mouth to complain about her after he chose her. He chose her, and he has no right now to blame her or complain about it. You can't expect traditional wife and mother behavior when you marry someone who explicitly repudiates those roles. Blame the man 100%. And what's more he is EVIL to have inflicted this on his children.

You can't go to the pet store and pass by all the cats, dogs and birds and buy an alligator then complain when you get the thing home and it bites your arms off. It's a freaking alligator, and you knew that when you bought it. It's your fault.

Brian Auten interviews Dr. Angus Menuge on philosophy of mind

October 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Click here for the interview. It's up at Apologetics 315!

Details:

> Today's interview is with Dr. Angus Menuge, Professor of Philosophy at Concordia University, and author of *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science*. He talks about his background and work, the philosophy of mind, what reason (or reasoning) is, what materialism is as a worldview, things excluded from a materialistic worldview, methodological naturalism and materialism, accounting for free will, materialistic accounts of reason, the epistemological argument from reason, the ontological argument from reason, finding the best explanation for reason, problems with methodological naturalism, implications of materialism, practical application of the argument from reason, advice for apologists, the International Academy of Apologetics, and more.

If what Dr. Menuge says in this interview is true, and I think it is, then a person who believes in materialism can neither ground free will nor rationality! So atheism wouldn't really be freethought so much as it would be… un-free… non-thought.

In case people don't want to listen to the podcast, then I've got some things for you to read below.

The ontological argument from reason

Dr. Menuge presented a paper at the real Evangelical Philosophical Society conference for students and professors of philosophy, and you can download the paper here in Word format. (here's a PDF version I made)

Here is the introduction to the paper that Dr. Menuge read at the EPS conference:

> The argument from reason is really a family of arguments to show that reasoning is incompatible with naturalism. Here, naturalism is understood as the idea that foundationally, there are only physical objects, properties and relations, and anything else reduces to, supervenes on, or emerges from that. For our purposes, one of the most important claims of naturalism is that all causation is passive, automatic, event causation (an earthquake automatically causes a tidal wave; the tidal wave responds passively): there are no agent causes, where something does not happen automatically but only because the agent exerts his active power by choosing to do it. The most famous version of the argument from reason is *epistemological*: if naturalism were true, we could not be justified in believing it. Today, I want to focus on the *ontological* argument from reason, which asserts that there cannot be reasoning in a naturalistic world, because

> reasoning requires libertarian free will, and this in turn requires a unified, enduring self with active power.
>
> The two most promising ways out of this argument are: (1) Compatibilism—even in a deterministic, naturalistic world, humans are capable of free acts of reason if their minds are responsive to rational causes; (2) Libertarian Naturalism—a self with libertarian free will emerges from the brain. I argue that neither of these moves works, and so, unless someone has a better idea, the ontological argument from reason stands.

The paper is 11 pages long, and it is helpful for those of you looking for some good discussion of one of the issues in the area of philosophy of mind.

You may also be interested in Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason, which is related to this argument. It shows that even to have the ability to think, you have to have a certain anthropology and you have to have mental faculties that are designed for reason, not survival.

Methodological naturalism

Dr. Menuge also wrote an article entitled "Is methodological materialism good for science?".

Intro:

> Should science by governed by methodological materialism? That is, should scientists assume that only undirected causes can figure in their theories and explanations? If the answer to these questions is yes, then there can be no such thing as teleological science or intelligent design. But is methodological materialism a defensible approach to science, or might it prevent scientists from discovering important truths about the natural world? In my contribution to The Waning of Materialism (Oxford University Press, 2010), edited by Robert Koons and George Bealer, I consider twelve of the most common arguments in favor of methodological materialism and show that none of them is convincing.
>
> Of these arguments, perhaps the most prevalent is the "God of the gaps" charge, according to which invoking something other than a material cause is an argument from ignorance which, like a bad script writer, cites a *deus ex machina* to save our account from difficulty. Not only materialists, but also many Christian thinkers, like Francis Collins, worry that appeal to intelligent design commits the God of the gaps fallacy.
>
> As I argue, however, not only is an inference to an intelligent cause not the same as an inference to the supernatural, it is a mistake to assume that all gap arguments are bad, or that only theists make them. If a gap argument is based solely on ignorance of what might explain some phenomenon, then indeed it is a bad argument. But there are many good gap arguments which are made both by scientific materialists and proponents of intelligent design.

So how do you make an argument like that?

> As Stephen Meyer has argued in his *Signature in the Cell*, intelligent design argues in just the same way, claiming not merely that the material categories of chance and necessity (singly or in combination) are unable to explain the complex specified information in DNA, but also that in our experience, intelligent agents are the only known causes of such information. The argument is based on what we know about causal powers, not on what we do not know about them.
>
> Since the inference is based on known causal powers, we learn that the cause is intelligent, but only further assumptions or data can tell us whether that intelligence is immanent in nature or supernatural. It is a serious mistake to confuse intelligent design with theistic science, and the argument that since some proponents of design believe that the designer is God, that is what they are claiming can be inferred from the data, is a sophomoric intensional fallacy.

If you think this is interesting, then do have a listen to the podcast. Dr. Menuge is not an ordinary academic – he is very direct. He calls materialism “a catastrophe” in the podcast!

Two girls charged with aggravated stalking after 12-year old victim commits suicide

October 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the NY Daily News.

Excerpt:

> Guadalupe Shaw, 14, and another girl were charged with felony aggravated stalking in the suicide death of 12-year-old Rebecca Sedwick, who jumped off a tower last month. Sedwick's tormentors were relentless in their bullying, police said, and Shaw even wrote a heartless message on Facebook after the girl died.
>
> […]Sedwick was bullied relentlessly for several months before she jumped to her death from a tower at a nearby abandoned concrete plant in Lakeland, the Polk County Sheriff's Office said.
>
> The 14-year-old, identified as Guadalupe Shaw, reportedly posted a coldhearted message on Facebook after Sedwick's suicide — prompting cops to arrest her.
>
> The implicating post said, "Yes ik [I know] I bullied Rebecca nd she killed her self but IDGAF [I don't give a (expletive)]."
>
> As many as 15 girls "terrorized" Sedwick for several months with messages such as "You should die" and "Why don't you go kill yourself," but Shaw and a 12-year-old girl are the only ones that have been charged so far. The sheriff's office released the name of the 12-year-old, but it is the Daily News' policy not to identify minors.
>
> "Detectives have determined that on Sept. 10, 2013, Rebecca Sedwick committed suicide by jumping from a concrete silo tower to her death, and that the malicious harassment by (the 12-year-old girl) and Shaw was likely a contributing factor in Rebecca's decision to commit suicide," the sheriff's office said in a statement.
>
> Witnesses told investigators that Shaw harassed Sedwick by calling her ugly, told her to "drink bleach and die," and suggested that she should kill herself. Shaw's animosity may have stemmed from the fact that a boyfriend of hers had previously dated Sedwick.

I always thought that only boys could be bullies, and not girls, so I find this story surprising. However, it does sort of make sense since studies have shown that women commit domestic violence at almost the same rates as men do. Let's take a look at those studies.

Studies on domestic violence

Let's see what's happening with domestic violence rates in the UK.

Excerpt:

> Data from Home Office statistical bulletins and the British Crime Survey show that men made up about 40% of domestic violence victims each year between 2004-05 and 2008-09, the last year for which figures are available. In 2006-07 men made up 43.4% of all those who had suffered partner abuse in the previous year, which rose to 45.5% in 2007-08 but fell to 37.7% in 2008-09.
>
> Similar or slightly larger numbers of men were subjected to severe force in an incident with their partner, according to the same documents. The figure stood at 48.6% in 2006-07, 48.3% the next year and 37.5% in 2008-09, Home Office statistics show.
>
> The 2008-09 bulletin states: "More than one in four women (28%) and around one in six men (16%) had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16. These figures are equivalent to an estimated 4.5 million female victims of domestic abuse and 2.6 million male victims."
>
> In addition, "6% of women and 4% of men reported having experienced domestic abuse in the past year, equivalent to an estimated one million female victims of domestic abuse and 600,000 male victims".

And the numbers from the government of Canada are the same.

Canada numbers:

> An estimated 7% of women and 6% of men in a current or previous spousal relationship encountered spousal violence during the five years up to and including 2004, according to a comprehensive new report on family violence.

So it's pretty even. Women are about as likely to commit violence as men are. And in lesbian relationships, the rate of domestic violence is extremely high, from 17% to 45%, depending on the study. I think in general, women are more violent when there is no man present, because they have more difficulty restraining their emotions and resolving disagreements with rational arguments instead of fist, feet and weapons. It would be interesting to know more about which of the girls in the Florida stalking story – predators and prey – had fathers in the home. I think that the presence of fathers would have helped everyone concerned. Fathers are a stabilizing influence in the home.

Obamacare web site hides health insurance costs until users apply for subsidies

October 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Another article from health care policy expert Avik Roy in Forbes magazine.

Excerpt:

> A growing consensus of IT experts, outside and inside the government, have figured out a principal reason why the website for Obamacare's federally-sponsored insurance exchange is crashing. Healthcare.gov forces you to create an account and enter detailed personal information before you can start shopping. This, in turn, creates a massive traffic bottleneck, as the government verifies your information and decides whether or not you're eligible for subsidies. HHS bureaucrats knew this would make the website run more slowly. But they were more afraid that letting people see the underlying cost of Obamacare's insurance plans would scare people away.
>
> "Healthcare.gov was initially going to include an option to browse before registering," report Christopher Weaver and Louise Radnofsky in the *Wall Street Journal*. "But that tool was delayed, people familiar with the situation said." Why was it delayed? "An HHS spokeswoman said the agency wanted to ensure that users were aware of their eligibility for subsidies that could help pay for coverage, *before they started seeing the prices of policies*." (Emphasis added.)
>
> As you know if you've been following this space, Obamacare's bevy of mandates, regulations, taxes, and fees drives up the cost of the insurance plans that are offered under the law's public exchanges. AManhattan Institute analysis I helped conduct found that, on average, the cheapest plan offered in a given state, under Obamacare, will be 99 percent more expensive for men, and 62 percent more expensive for women, than the cheapest plan offered under the old system. And those disparities are even wider for healthy people.
>
> That raises an obvious question. If 50 million people are uninsured today, mainly because insurance is too expensive, why is it better to make coverage even costlier?
>
> The answer is that Obamacare wasn't designed to help healthy people with average incomes get health insurance. It was designed to force those people to pay *more* for coverage, in order to subsidize insurance for people with incomes near the poverty line, and those with chronic or costly medical conditions.
>
> But the laws' supporters and enforcers don't want you to know that, because it would violate the President's incessantly repeated promise that nothing would change for the people that Obamacare doesn't directly help. If you shop for Obamacare-based coverage without knowing if you qualify for subsidies, you

> might be discouraged by the law's steep costs.
>
> So, by analyzing your income first, if you qualify for heavy subsidies, the website can advertise those subsidies to you instead of just hitting you with Obamacare's steep premiums. For example, the site could advertise plans that cost "$0″ or "$30″ instead of explaining that the plan really costs $200, and that you're getting a subsidy of $200 or $170. But you'll have to be at or near the poverty line to gain subsidies of that size; most people will either not qualify for a subsidy, or qualify for a small one that, net-net, doesn't make up for the law's cost hikes.
>
> This political objective—masking the true underlying cost of Obamacare's insurance plans—far outweighed the operational objective of making the federal website work properly. Think about it the other way around. If the "Affordable Care Act" truly did make health insurance more affordable, there would be no need to hide these prices from the public.

The plain truth of the matter is that you can't lower the costs of health care by covering more people or by covering more treatments or by regulating more doctors. All of those things don't lower the cost of health insurance – they raise it. The subsidies that the Democrats are offering are costs that are being added to the deficit. They will have to be paid by job creators and their employees through higher taxes later. Obamacare didn't solve a thing. It just adds costs and complexity. It's the equivalent of shuffling deck chairs on the Titanic.

Related posts

- How much more are people paying for health insurance under Obamacare?
- Obamacare supporters shocked that they have to pay for Obamacare
- How many people have signed up for Obamacare?
- Are House Republicans doing anything wrong by refusing to fund Obamacare?
- New study: premiums for young people to rise in all 50 states under Obamacare
- Why do so many people oppose Obamacare and why isn't Obama willing to fix it?
- Obama lied, health care died: 10 states where Obamacare killed existing health care plans
- Obamacare health insurance exchanges impose massive penalties on married couples
- Republicans introduce Obamacare alternative: American Health Care Reform Act
- Nancy Pelosi: forcing workers to work fewer hours gives them "freedom"
- Obamacare will increase average individual-market premiums by 99% for men
- Obamacare in action: 301 employers cut employee hours and/or jobs
- Surprise! New Stanford University study finds costs of Obamacare higher than estimated
- New study finds that many young people won't purchase Obamacare plans
- Blue Cross, Aetna, United, Humana opt out of Obamacare exchanges
- President Obama intervenes to exempt Congress from Obamacare

- IRS employee union opposes making Obamacare apply to themselves

Can the worldview of atheism rationally ground moral judgements?

October 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Philosopher Chad Meister takes a look at the attempts of some prominent atheists to make rational sense of morality within their worldviews.

Here is the abstract:

> Atheists often argue that they can make moral claims and live good moral lives without believing in God. Many theists agree, but the real issue is whether atheism can provide a justification for morality. A number of leading atheists currently writing on this issue are opposed to moral relativism, given its obvious and horrific ramifications, and have attempted to provide a justification for a nonrelative morality. Three such attempts are discussed in this article: Walter Sinnott-Armstrong's position that objective morality simply "is"; Richard Dawkins's position that morality is based on the selfish gene; and Michael Ruse and Edward Wilson's position that morality is an evolutionary illusion. Each of these positions, it turns out, is problematic. Sinnott-Armstrong affirms an objective morality, but affirming something and justifying it are two very different matters. Dawkins spells out his selfish gene approach by including four fundamental criteria, but his approach has virtually nothing to do with morality—with real right and wrong, good and evil. Finally, Ruse and Wilson disagree with Dawkins and maintain that belief in morality is just an adaptation put in place by evolution to further our reproductive ends. On their view, morality is simply an illusion foisted on us by our genes to get us to cooperate and to advance the species. But have they considered the ramifications of such a view? Each of these positions fails to provide the justification necessary for a universal, objective morality—the kind of morality in which good and evil are clearly understood and delineated.
>
> […]We can get to the heart of the atheist's dilemma with a graphic but true example. Some years ago serial killer Ted Bundy, who confessed to over thirty murders, was interviewed about his gruesome activities. Consider the frightening words to his victim as he describes them:
>
> *Then I learned that all moral judgments are "value judgments," that all value judgments are subjective, and that none can be proved to be either "right" or "wrong"….I discovered that to become truly free, truly unfettered, I had to become truly uninhibited. And I quickly discovered that the greatest obstacle to my freedom, the greatest block and limitation to it, consists in the insupportable "value judgment" that I was bound to respect the rights of others. I asked myself, who were these "others"? Other human beings, with human rights? Why is it more wrong to kill a human animal than any other animal, a pig or a sheep or a*

> *steer? Is your life more to you than a hog's life to a hog? Why should I be willing to sacrifice my pleasure more for the one than for the other? Surely, you would not, in this age of scientific enlightenment, declare that God or nature has marked some pleasures as "moral" or "good" and others as "immoral" or "bad"? In any case, let me assure you, my dear young lady, that there is absolutely no comparison between the pleasure I might take in eating ham and the pleasure I anticipate in raping and murdering you. That is the honest conclusion to which my education has led me—after the most conscientious examination of my spontaneous and uninhibited self.*
>
> While I am in no way accusing atheists in general of being Ted Bundy-like, the question I have for the atheist is simply this: *On what moral grounds can you provide a response to Bundy?* The atheistic options are limited. If morality has nothing to do with God, as atheists suppose, what does it have to do with? One response the atheist could offer is moral relativism, either personal or cultural. The personal moral relativist affirms that morality is an individual matter; you decide for yourself what is morally right and wrong. But on this view, what could one say to Bundy? Not much, other than "I don't like what you believe; it offends me how you brutalize women." For the personal relativist, however, who really cares (other than you) that you are offended by someone else's actions? On this view we each decide our own morality, and when my morality clashes with yours, there is no final arbiter other than perhaps that the stronger of us *forces* the other to agree. But this kind of Nietzschean "might makes right" ethic has horrific consequences, and one need only be reminded of the Nazi reign of terror to see it in full bloom. This is one reason why thoughtful atheists, such as Christopher Hitchens, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, and others don't go there.
>
> But what about cultural moral relativism—the view that moral claims are the inventions of a given culture? Most thoughtful atheists don't tread here either, and this is one reason why: If right and wrong are cultural inventions, then it would always be wrong for someone within that culture to speak out against them. If culture defines right and wrong, then who are you to challenge it? For example, to speak out against slavery in Great Britain in the seventeenth century would have been morally wrong, for it was culturally acceptable. But surely it was a morally good thing for William Wilberforce and others to strive against the prevailing currents of their time and place to abolish the slave trade. For the cultural moral relativist, all moral reformers—Wilberforce, Martin Luther King, Jr., even Jesus and Gandhi, to name a few—would be in the wrong. But who would agree with this conclusion? Thankfully, most leading atheists agree that moral relativism is doomed.

The rest of Dr. Meister's article deals with three atheistic attempts to get out of this problem.

New Oxford University study links non-family day care to anti-social behavior

October 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> Academics at Oxford University discovered that exposure to some forms of early education contributed to bad behaviour and could be linked to emotional problems.

> The study, based on an analysis of infants from almost 1,000 families, showed that the strongest influence on children came from within the home itself.
>
> Children raised in poor families with high levels of parental stress or mental health problems were most at risk of developing emotional problems by the time they started school, it emerged.
>
> The research also uncovered trends relating to children who were in formal child care — away from their parents.

> The disclosure will revive debate over the best way to raise children amid a surge in the number of under-fives enrolled in nurseries and with childminders in the past 20 years. Figures from the Department for Education show that 441,000 children under five are in day nurseries while another 272,000 are being looked after by childminders.
>
> […]In the Oxford study, researchers recruited 991 families with children aged three months. Mothers had an average age of 30.
>
> Researchers assessed children at the age of four through questionnaires about their behaviour and emotions completed by teachers and parents. They also observed care provided by mothers and observed non-parental care for at least 90 minutes for those children placed in formal childcare settings.
>
> The report, published in the journal Child: Care, Health and Development, said that "children who spent more time in group care, mainly nursery care, were more likely to have behavioural problems, particularly hyperactivity".
>
> The study, led by Prof Alan Stein, of Oxford's Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, found that "spending more time in day care centres, over the total period was a predictor of total problem scores".
>
> "Children who spent more time in day care centres were more likely to be hyperactive," it said. "Children receiving more care by childminders were more likely to have peer problems."
>
> The authors added: "The findings in relation to childminding suggest that it might

> be out of home care rather than group care that raises the risk of behavioural difficulties."
>
> The researchers also tracked other forms of early years care and found benefits to different approaches.
>
> They found that children who spent more time in pre-school playgroups – normally for a few hours a day, rather than a full-time nursery – had fewer problems.
>
> More time with a nanny in parents' own home predicted higher levels of "pro-social behaviour", showing willingness to help others, it emerged.
>
> The study said: "These findings suggest that interventions to enhance children's emotional and behavioural development might best focus on supporting families and augmenting the quality of care in the home."

A study like this will be useful when debating people with open minds, but hardcore feminists and socialists, who want women to work in order to fund bigger government, will not be moved. Because for them, it's not about evidence. It's about ideology. That's why we have to be careful about letting people like that get elected.

Related posts

- How early can you start to teach children about Christian apologetics?
- Feminist Nancy Pelosi pushes national daycare program
- How the UK government penalizes stay-at-home moms and pushes kids into daycare
- UK offers more money to working women and single mothers, nothing for stay-at-home moms
- Single mothers are better off with a $29,000 job and welfare than with a $69,000 job
- Dennis Prager offers the best concise analysis of the effects of feminism ever

An orphan who lived his whole life in foster care goes to church and asks to be adopted

October 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a very sad story that I hope will help us all to think about making better decisions that respect the needs of children. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> As soon as they pulled into the church lot, Davion changed his mind.
>
> "Miss! Hey, Miss!" he called to his caseworker, who was driving. "I don't want to do this anymore."
>
> In the back seat, he hugged the Bible someone had given him at the foster home. "You're going to be great," Connie Going said.
>
> Outside St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, she straightened his tie. Like his too-big black suit, the white tie had been donated. It zipped up around the neck, which helped. No one had ever taught Davion, 15, how to tie one.
>
> "Are you ready?" Going asked. Hanging his head, he followed her into the sanctuary.
>
> This had been his idea. He'd heard something about God helping people who help themselves. So here he was, on a Sunday in September, surrounded by strangers, taking his future into his own sweaty hands.
>
> Davion Navar Henry Only loves all of his names. He has memorized the meaning of each one: beloved, brown, ruler of the home, the one and only.
>
> But he has never had a home or felt beloved. His name is the last thing his parents gave him.
>
> He was born while his mom was in jail. He can't count all of the places he has lived.
>
> In June, Davion sat at a library computer, unfolded his birth certificate and, for the first time, searched for his mother's name. Up came her mug shot: 6-foot-1, 270 pounds — tall, big and dark, like him. Petty theft, cocaine.
>
> Next he saw the obituary: La-Dwina Ilene "Big Dust" McCloud, 55, of Clearwater, died June 5, 2013. Just a few weeks before.
>
> In church, Davion scanned the crowd. More than 300 people packed the pews. Men in bright suits, grandmoms in sequined hats, moms hugging toddlers on their laps. Everyone seemed to have a family except him.
>
> In church, Davion scanned the crowd. More than 300 people packed the pews. Men in bright suits, grandmoms in sequined hats, moms hugging toddlers on their laps. Everyone seemed to have a family except him.
>
> Davion sat beside Going, his caseworker from Eckerd, and struggled to follow the

> sermon: something about a letter Paul wrote. “He was in prison,” said the Rev. Brian Brown. “Awaiting an uncertain future … ”
>
> Sometimes Davion felt like that, holed up at Eckerd’s Carlton Manor residential group home with 12 teenage boys, all with problems. All those rules, cameras recording everything.
>
> Davion wants to play football, but there’s no one to drive him to practice. He wants to use the bathroom without having to ask someone to unlock the door.
>
> More than anything, he wants someone to tell him he matters. To understand when he begs to leave the light on.
>
> ”You may be in a dark place,” said the preacher. “But look for the joyful moments when you can praise God.”
>
> Picking at his fingers, Davion wondered what to say. And whether anyone would hear him.

It’s the saddest thing in the world for a child to not grow up with the two people who chose to engage in activities that would make him. Yet we as a society seem to be hell-bent on celebrating behaviors that cause children to be without their mothers or fathers. Or both. We push for policies that make it easier for people to have babies out of wedlock (because we are paying them to do it). We educate children to believe that premarital sex is OK, that hooking up is OK, that moral relativism is OK, that cohabitation is OK, that no fault divorce is OK, and now… that gay marriage is OK. But this isn’t what children need.

We have to look at these situations with motherless/fatherless children and decide that what we promote has some effect on this. It doesn’t happen by accident. Many of the things we support that make us feel “compassionate” are actually causing these problems. The solution is to start pushing for chastity, marriage and parenting. We need to shame behaviors and policies that deprive children of the safety and security that they obviously need. We need to name and shame the forces that cause these problems – secularism, feminism, socialism, relativism, and so on.

Does intelligent design commit the “God-of-the-gaps” fallacy?

October 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephen C. Meyer explains, with reference to his newest book “Darwin’s Doubt”. He is responding to a critical review of the book published in *Science*.

Here’s the relevant part of the review:

> **Meyer’s scientific approach is purely negative. He argues that paleontologists are unable to explain the Cambrian explosion, thus opening the door to the possibility of a designer’s intervention. This, despite his protest to the contrary, is a (sophisticated) “god of the gaps” approach, an approach that is problematic in part because future developments often provide solutions to once apparently difficult problems.**

And here’s part of Meyer’s response:

> [B]y claiming that my approach is a purely negative one based solely upon “gaps” in our knowledge or in the evolutionary account of the Cambrian explosion, Marshall implies that *Darwin’s Doubt* makes a fallacious kind of argument known to logicians as an “argument from ignorance.” Arguments from ignorance occur when evidence against a proposition X is offered as the sole (and conclusive) grounds for accepting some alternative proposition Y. Arguments from ignorance make an obvious logical error. They omit a necessary kind of premise, a premise providing positive support for the conclusion, not just negative evidence against an alternative conclusion. In an explanatory context, arguments from ignorance have the form:
>
> **Premise One:** Cause X cannot produce or explain evidence E.
>
> **Conclusion:** Therefore, cause Y produced or explains E.
>
> Critics of intelligent design often claim that the case for intelligent design commits this fallacy. They claim that design advocates use our present ignorance of any materialistic cause of specified or functional information (for example) as the sole basis for inferring an intelligent cause for the origin of such information in biological systems. For example, Michael Shermer represents the case for intelligent design as follows: “Intelligent design … argues that life is too specifically complex (complex structures like DNA) … to have evolved by natural forces. Therefore, life must have been created by. . . an intelligent designer.” In short, Shermer claims that ID proponents argue as follows:
>
> **Premise:** Materialistic causes or evolutionary mechanisms cannot produce novel biological information.

> **Conclusion:** Therefore, an intelligent cause produced specified biological information.
>
> Marshall echoes Shermer's criticism. But the inference to design as developed in *Darwin's Doubt* does not commit this fallacy.

Why not? Because it argues that the best explanation of an effect in nature – new information -is an intelligent cause, and that we are familiar with how these intelligent causes operate already.

More:

> [T]he book makes a *positive* case for intelligent design as an inference to the best explanation for the origin of the genetic (and epigenetic) information necessary to produce the first forms of animal life (as well as other features of the Cambrian animals such as the presence of genetic regulatory networks that function as integrated circuits during animal development). It advances intelligent design as the best explanation not only because many lines of evidence now cast doubt on the creative power of unguided evolutionary mechanisms, but also because of our *positive*, experience-based knowledge of the powers that intelligent agents have to produce as digital and other forms of information as well as integrated circuitry. As I argue in Chapter 18 of *Darwin's Doubt*:
>
> Intelligent agents, due to their rationality and consciousness, have demonstrated the power to produce specified or functional information in the form of linear sequence-specific arrangements of characters. Digital and alphabetic forms of information routinely arise from intelligent agents. A computer user who traces the information on a screen back to its source invariably comes to a mind — a software engineer or programmer. The information in a book or inscription ultimately derives from a writer or scribe. Our experience-based knowledge of information flow confirms that systems with large amounts of specified or functional information invariably originate from an intelligent source. The generation of functional information is "habitually associated with conscious activity." Our uniform experience confirms this obvious truth.
>
> Thus, the inadequacy of proposed materialistic evolutionary causes or mechanisms forms only part of the basis of the argument *for* intelligent design. We also *know* from broad and repeated experience that intelligent agents can and do produce information-rich systems and integrated circuitry. We have positive experience-based knowledge of a cause sufficient to generate new specified information and integrated circuitry, namely, intelligence. We are not ignorant of how information or circuitry arises. We know from experience that conscious, rational agents can create such information-rich structures and systems. To again quote information theorist Henry Quastler: "creation of new information is *habitually associated* with conscious activity." Indeed, whenever large amounts of specified or functional information are present in an artifact or

> entity whose causal story is known, invariably creative intelligence — intelligent design — played a role in the origin of that entity. Thus, when we encounter a large discontinuous increase in the functional information content of the biosphere as we do in the Cambrian explosion, we may infer — based on our *knowledge* of established cause-effect relationships — that a purposive intelligence operated in the history of life to produce the functional information necessary to generate those forms of animal life.
>
> Instead of exemplifying a fallacious form of argument in which design is inferred solely from a negative premise, the argument for intelligent design formulated in *Darwin's Doubt* takes the following form:
>
> **Premise One:** Despite a thorough search and evaluation, no materialistic causes or evolutionary mechanisms have demonstrated the power to produce large amounts of specified or functional information (or integrated circuitry).
>
> **Premise Two:** Intelligent causes have demonstrated the power to produce large amounts of specified/functional information (and integrated circuitry).
>
> **Conclusion:** Intelligent design constitutes the best, most causally adequate, explanation for the specified/functional information (and circuitry) that was necessary to produce the Cambrian animals.

I do think it's very important for Christians to make their case for God based on the *progress* of science.

If you are going to argue for God, you want to use arguments like these:

1. origin of the universe
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. origin of life building blocks
4. biological information at origin of life
5. biological information at Cambrian explosion
6. galactic fine-tuning
7. stellar fine-tuning
8. observed limits to mutation-driven change
9. mental effort studies
10. corroborated NDEs

And so on.

Each of these arguments is based on what we know about nature. They are not based on gaps in our knowledge at all. The more we do science, the more evidence we get for each argument. For example, at one point we only had redshift for the beginning of the universe (#1), but then we added light element abundance predictions and the cosmic microwave background radiation. For the cosmic fine-tuning (#2), we started with the fine-tuning of gravity, and then added more examples, like the cosmological constant. In each case, the continuous progress of science *strengthened* the need for a

Creator/Designer. The more we know from science about how nature works, the stronger the case for Christian theism gets.

It’s the atheists who are now taking refuge in the gaps and holding out speculations as a way of maintaining their atheism against the science. It’s the atheists who are hoping for aliens, multiverses, undiscovered fossils, and so on. There is no God-of-the-Gaps anymore. There’s only Atheism-of-the-Gaps.

Leftist Slate to college women: stop binge drinking to avoid being sexually assaulted

October 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Absolutely shocking common sense from the radically leftist Slate.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> A 2009 study of campus sexual assaultfound that by the time they are seniors, almost 20 percent of college women will become victims, overwhelmingly of a fellow classmate. Very few will ever report it to authorities. The same study states that more than 80 percent of campus sexual assaults involve alcohol. Frequently both the man and the woman have been drinking. The men tend to use the drinking to justify their behavior, as this survey of research on alcohol-related campus sexual assault by Antonia Abbey, professor of psychology at Wayne State University, illustrates, while for many of the women, having been drunk becomes a source of guilt and shame. Sometimes the woman is the only one drunk and runs into a particular type of shrewd—and sober—sexual predator who lurks where women drink like a lion at a watering hole. For these kinds of men, the rise of female binge drinking has made campuses a prey-rich environment. I've spoken to three recent college graduates who were the victims of such assailants, and their stories are chilling.

> Let's be totally clear: Perpetrators are the ones responsible for committing their crimes, and they should be brought to justice. But we are failing to let women know that when they render themselves defenseless, terrible things can be done to them. Young women are getting a distorted message that their right to match men drink for drink is a feminist issue. The real feminist message should be that when you lose the ability to be responsible for yourself, you drastically increase the chances that you will attract the kinds of people who, shall we say, don't have your best interest at heart. That's not blaming the victim; that's trying to prevent more victims.
>
> Experts I spoke to who wanted young women to get this information said they were aware of how loaded it has become to give warnings to women about their behavior. "I'm always feeling defensive that my main advice is: 'Protect yourself. Don't make yourself vulnerable to the point of losing your cognitive faculties,' " says Anne Coughlin, a professor at the University of Virginia School of Law, who has written on rape and teaches feminist jurisprudence. She adds that by not telling them the truth—that they are responsible for keeping their wits about them—she worries that we are "infantilizing women."
>
> The "Campus Sexual Assault Study" of 2007, undertaken for the Department of Justice, found that the popular belief that many young rape victims have been

> slipped “date rape” drugs is false. “Most sexual assaults occur after voluntary consumption of alcohol by the victim and assailant,” the report states. But the researchers noted that this crucial point is not being articulated to young and naïve women: “Despite the link between substance abuse and sexual assault it appears that few sexual assault and/or risk reduction programs address the relationship between substance use and sexual assault.” The report added, somewhat plaintively, “Students may also be unaware of the image of vulnerability projected by a visibly intoxicated individual.”
>
> “I’m not saying a woman is responsible for being sexually victimized,” saysChristopher Krebs, one of the authors of that study and others on campus sexual assault. “But when your judgment is compromised, your risk is elevated of having sexual violence perpetrated against you.”

Stuart Schneiderman surveyed feminist responses to this article.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Before you knew it, Yoffe’s example of responsible parental advice had produced a feminist freak out. From Katie Baker to Amanda Hess to Erin Gloria Ryan to Ann Friedman to Emma Gray the voices of contemporary feminism rose up to denounce Yoffe for, they seemed all to believe, blaming the victim and going easy on the male perpetrators of these heinous crimes.
>
> If I may summarize it, they seemed to be reasoning that when a woman is raped it is not her fault. True enough. Thus, any suggestion that she might have avoided placing herself in a dangerous situation can make her feel that she was at fault, and thus will impede her recovery.
>
> Yoffe was saying that she wants her daughter to do everything in her power, as an individual with free choice, to avoid being raped. Feminists believe that her message circumscribes the freedom of young women and tends to blame them when they are victims of sexual assault.
>
> Feminists want to focus the maximum of outrage against rapists. Any suggestion that a woman might have knowingly herself in harms’ way diminishes their outrage.
>
> […]True enough, none of the feminists mentioned above says that young women should go out and binge drink. Yet, they are in such high dudgeon over Yoffe’s recommendation that one would easily forgive a young woman for coming away believing that binge drinking was a way to assert her independence and her liberation.
>
> Apparently, feminists believe that liberation means that a woman should be free to do as she pleases when she pleases how she pleases and not to have to suffer any ill-effects. They fail to see that freedom for responsibility is not the same as freedom from responsibility.
>
> Worse yet, Yoffe was suggesting that women, far more than men, possess a

> specific vulnerability to sexual assault. It inheres in the biology of sex. And she was taking account of the fact that women are generally, significantly weaker then men.
>
> If you take these realities into account, you will be advising your daughter to exercise caution when imbibing alcohol. You will be telling her to act responsibly.
>
> For decades now, feminism has been telling women that they are strong and empowered. Yet, when you tell women that they are strong and powerful you are suggesting that they are invulnerable.
>
> Yoffe's feminist detractors did not specifically say it, but they must have been seriously incommoded by her willingness to accept the fact that a young woman is weaker and more vulnerable than a young man.
>
> Let us not forget that some feminists, one of them Tufts professor Nancy Bauer have publicly said that equality means matching a man drink for drink and hookup for hookup.
>
> If women are drinking more than ever it's not because they are following advice given them by men. Most young women today refuse to accept any advice from any man.
>
> While it is well known, as Yoffe documents, that women who get very drunk are more likely to be sexually assaulted, it is also true that women who choose to hook up, that is to perform consensual sexual acts with men they barely know often use alcohol as a psychic lubricant.

This is not surprising. In a previous post, I blogged about feminist professor Nancy Bauer urged women to act more like men in every way, including binge-drinking.
Look at this New York Times article by Ms. Bauer.

Excerpt:

> If there's anything that feminism has bequeathed to young women of means, it's that power is their birthright. Visit an American college campus on a Monday morning and you'll find any number of amazingly ambitious and talented young women wielding their brain power, determined not to let anything — including a relationship with some needy, dependent man — get in their way. **Come back on a party night, and you'll find many of these same girls (they stopped calling themselves "women" years ago) wielding their sexual power, dressed as provocatively as they dare, matching the guys drink for drink — and then hook-up for hook-up.**

I think that quote is a pretty good summary of what radical feminism amounts to, in practice. Women avoiding the traditional roles of wife and mother by destroying their own ability to marry and raise children with alcohol and promiscuity. This is very much the design of feminism – it is the goal. That's why they push for taxpayer-funded contraceptions and taxpayer-funded abortions. Women who choose recreational sex over

and over make lousy wives and mothers. This is what feminists want – they want marriage and at-home motherhood to disappear.

Here's Ms. Bauer's bio:

> *Nancy Bauer is associate professor and chair of philosophy at Tufts University. She is the author of "Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism," and is currently completing a new book, "How to Do Things With Pornography."*

It's very important to understand that older feminist women are deliberately pushing young women into situations where they are likely to be raped. If there were no radical feminism, there would be much less rape. Older feminist women will do and say anything to create enmity between younger women and men. It furthers their feminist agenda when young women have this deep suspicion of men – a suspicion that is confirmed by their own poor decisions with alcohol and sex. Old feminists want young women to choose men based on shallow criteria that have nothing to do with marriage, and break themselves up against them like ships on icebergs. That way, women will throw themselves into their careers instead of marriages – at least until they reach a certain age and then determine to have fatherless children. But that suits radical feminists just fine, too.

Public school teachers and Democrat politicians send their own kids to private schools

October 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Black commentator Larry Elder writes about it in Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> About 11% of all parents — nationwide, rural and urban — send their children to private schools. The numbers are much higher in urban areas. One study found that in Philadelphia a staggering 44% of public school teachers send their own kids to private schools.
>
> In Cincinnati and Chicago, 41% and 39% of public school teachers pay for a private school education for their children. In Rochester, N.Y., it's 38%, in Baltimore 35%, in San Francisco 34% and in New York-northeastern New Jersey 33%.
>
> In Los Angeles nearly 25% of public school teachers send their kids to private school versus 16% of Angelenos who do so.
>
> The 2004 study by the Fordham Institute said its findings "are apt to be embarrassing for teacher unions, considering those organizations' political animus toward assisting families to select among schools. But these results do not surprise most practicing teachers to whom we speak."
>
> "The data have shown the same basic pattern since we first happened upon them two decades ago: Urban public school teachers are more apt to send their own children to private schools than is the general public. One might say this shows how conservative teachers are. They continue doing what they've always done. Or it might indicate that they have long been discerning connoisseurs of education …
>
> "The middle class will tolerate a lot — disorder, decay and dismay, an unwholesome environment, petty crime, potholes, chicanery and rudeness. One thing, however, that middle class parents will not tolerate is bad schools for their children. To escape them, they will pay out-of-pocket or vote with their feet. That is what discerning teachers do."
>
> What about members of Congress? Where do they send their own children? A 2007 Heritage Foundation study found that 37% of representatives and 45% of senators with school-age children sent their own kids to private school.
>
> Of the members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus with school-age children, 38% sent them to private school. Of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus with school-age children, 52% sent them to private school.
>
> The ex-mayor of Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa, was asked why he didn't have his own kids in public school despite his strong advocacy of public education.

> Villaraigosa, whose wife was a public school teacher, said:
>
> “I’m doing like every parent does. I’m going to put my kids in the best school I can. My kids were in a neighborhood public school until just this year. We’ve decided to put them in a Catholic school. We’ve done that because we want our kids to have the best education they can.
>
> “If I can get that education in a public school, I’ll do it, but I won’t sacrifice (emphasis added) my children any more than I could ask you to do the same.”
>
> When he got elected president, Barack Obama and his wife made a big display of looking into Washington, D.C., public schools for his two daughters to attend. But the Obamas chose Sidwell Friends, the elite private school whose alums include Chelsea Clinton.
>
> Obama’s own mother sent her then-10-year-old to live with her parents — so he could attend Punahou Academy, the most exclusive prep school in Honolulu. In fact, from Punahou to Occidental (a private college in Los Angeles) to Columbia (where he completed college) to Harvard Law, Obama is a product of private education.
>
> So how does this square with Obama’s opposition to the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program that offered a voucher for the children of participating parents? It doesn’t.

The best way to help all children – especially poor and minority children – get ahead in life is by giving their parent(s) vouchers and letting them choose public or private schools. But Democrats can’t do that – they want their supporters in the teacher unions to have a captive audience. That way, come election time, the Democrats can count on an army of big-government supporters. It’s very important to understand that Democrats don’t want what’s best for children. They don’t want them to have a choice. They don’t want them to have a quality education. They want to bribe public school teachers to help them get elected.

John Searle and the Chinese room illustration

October 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There is a very famous thought experiment from UC Berkeley philosopher John Searle that all Christian apologists should know about. And now everyone who reads the Wall Street Journal knows about it, because of this article.

In that article, Searle is writing about the IBM computer that was programmed to play Jeopardy. People have been talking about how this Jeopardy-playing computer seems human. But Searle disagrees. And his famous Chinese room example (discussed in the article) shows why no one should be concerned about computers acting like humans.

Excerpt:

> Imagine that a person—me, for example—knows no Chinese and is locked in a room with boxes full of Chinese symbols and an instruction book written in English for manipulating the symbols. Unknown to me, the boxes are called "the database" and the instruction book is called "the program." I am called "the computer."
>
> People outside the room pass in bunches of Chinese symbols that, unknown to me, are questions. I look up in the instruction book what I am supposed to do and I give back answers in Chinese symbols.
>
> Suppose I get so good at shuffling the symbols and passing out the answers that my answers are indistinguishable from a native Chinese speaker's. I give every indication of understanding the language despite the fact that I actually don't understand a word of Chinese.
>
> And if I do not, neither does any digital computer, because no computer, qua computer, has anything I do not have. It has stocks of symbols, rules for manipulating symbols, a system that allows it to rapidly transition from zeros to ones, and the ability to process inputs and outputs. That is it. There is nothing else.

By the way, Searle is a naturalist – not a theist, not a Christian. But he does oppose postmodernism. So he isn't all bad. But let's hear from a Christian scholar who can make more sense of this for us.

Here is a link to the full article by John Searle.

Here's an article by Christian philosopher Jay Richards.

Excerpt:

> Popular discussions of AI often suggest that if you keep increasing weak AI, at some point, you'll get strong AI. That is, if you get enough computation, you'll eventually get consciousness.
>
> The reasoning goes something like this: There will be a moment at which a

computer will be indistinguishable from a human intelligent agent in a blind test. At that point, we will have intelligent, conscious machines.

This does not follow. A computer may pass the Turing test, but that doesn't mean that it will actually be a self-conscious, free agent.

The point seems obvious, but we can easily be beguiled by the way we speak of computers: We talk about computers learning, making mistakes, becoming more intelligent, and so forth. We need to remember that we are speaking metaphorically.

We can also be led astray by unexamined metaphysical assumptions. If we're just computers made of meat, and we happened to become conscious at some point, what's to stop computers from doing the same? That makes sense if you accept the premise—as many AI researchers do. If you don't accept the premise, though, you don't have to accept the conclusion.

In fact, there's no good reason to assume that consciousness and agency emerge by accident at some threshold of speed and computational power in computers. We know by introspection that we are conscious, free beings—though we really don't know how this works. So we naturally attribute consciousness to other humans. We also know generally what's going on inside a computer, since we build them, and it has nothing to do with consciousness. It's quite likely that consciousness is qualitatively different from the type of computation that we have developed in computers (as the "Chinese Room" argument, by philosopher John Searle, seems to show). Remember that, and you'll suffer less anxiety as computers become more powerful.

Even if computer technology provides accelerating returns for the foreseeable future, it doesn't follow that we'll be replacing ourselves anytime soon. AI enthusiasts often make highly simplistic assumptions about human nature and biology. Rather than marveling at the ways in which computation illuminates our understanding of the microscopic biological world, many treat biological systems as nothing but clunky, soon-to-be-obsolete conglomerations of hardware and software. Fanciful speculations about uploading ourselves onto the Internet and transcending our biology rest on these simplistic assumptions. This is a common philosophical blind spot in the AI community, but it's not a danger of AI research itself, which primarily involves programming and computers.

AI researchers often mix topics from different disciplines—biology, physics, computer science, robotics—and this causes critics to do the same. For instance, many critics worry that AI research leads inevitably to tampering with human nature. But different types of research raise different concerns. There are serious ethical questions when we're dealing with human cloning and research that destroys human embryos. But AI research in itself does not raise these concerns. It normally involves computers, machines, and programming. While all technology raises ethical issues, we should be less worried about AI

> research—which has many benign applications—than research that treats human life as a means rather than an end.

When I am playing a game on the computer, I know exactly why what I am doing is fun – I am conscious of it. But the computer has no idea what I am doing. It is just matter in motion, acting on it’s programming and the inputs I supply to it. And that’s all computers will ever do. Trust me, this is my field. I have the BS and MS in computer science, and I have studied this area. AI has applications for machine learning and search problems, but consciousness is not on the radar. You can’t get there from here.

Dennis Prager explains what feminism has achieved for women

October 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager has summarized many of my viewpoints on this blog in a tiny, tiny little article. He calls it "Four Legacies of Feminism".

Read the whole glorious thing and bask in its wisdom!

Full text:

> As we approach the 50th anniversary of the publication of Betty Friedan's feminist magnum opus, *The Feminine Mystique*, we can have a perspective on feminism that was largely unavailable heretofore.
>
> And that perspective doesn't make feminism look good. Yes, women have more opportunities to achieve career success; they are now members of most Jewish and Christian clergy; women's college sports teams are given huge amounts of money; and there are far more women in political positions of power. But the prices paid for these changes — four in particular — have been great, and outweigh the gains *for women*, let alone for men and for society.
>
> 1) The first was the feminist message to young women to have sex just as men do. There is no reason for them to lead a different sexual life than men, they were told. Just as men can have sex with any woman solely for the sake of physical pleasure, so, too, women ought to enjoy sex with any man just for the fun of it. The notion that the nature of women is to hope for at least the possibility of a long-term commitment from a man they sleep with has been dismissed as sexist nonsense.
>
> As a result, vast numbers of young American women had, and continue to have, what are called "hookups"; and for some of them it is quite possible that no psychological or emotional price has been paid. But the majority of women who are promiscuous do pay prices. One is depression. *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat recently summarized an academic study on the subject: "A young woman's likelihood of depression rose steadily as her number of partners climbed and the present stability of her sex life diminished."
>
> Long before this study, I had learned from women callers to my radio show (an hour each week — the "Male-Female Hour" — is devoted to very honest discussion of sexual and other man-woman issues) that not only did female promiscuity coincide with depression, it also often had lasting effects on women's ability to enjoy sex. Many married women told me that in order to have a normal sexual relationship with their husband, they had to work through the negative aftereffects of early promiscuity — not trusting men, feeling used, seeing sex as unrelated to love, and disdaining their husband's sexual overtures. And many

> said they still couldn't have a normal sex life with their husband.
>
> 2) The second awful legacy of feminism has been the belief among women that they could and should postpone marriage until they developed their careers. Only then should they seriously consider looking for a husband. Thus, the decade or more during which women have the best chance to attract men is spent being preoccupied with developing a career. Again, I cite woman callers to my radio show over the past 20 years who have sadly looked back at what they now, at age 40, regard as 20 wasted years. Sure, these frequently bright and talented women have a fine career. But most women are not programmed to prefer a great career to a great man and a family. They feel they were sold a bill of goods at college and by the media. And they were. It turns out that most women without a man do worse in life than fish without bicycles.
>
> 3) The third sad feminist legacy is that so many women — and men — have bought the notion that women should work outside the home that for the first time in American history, and perhaps world history, vast numbers of children are not primarily raised by their mothers or even by an extended family member. Instead they are raised for a significant part of their childhood by nannies and by workers at daycare centers. Whatever feminists may say about their only advocating choices, everyone knows the truth: Feminism regards work outside the home as more elevating, honorable, and personally productive than full-time mothering and making a home.
>
> 4) And the fourth awful legacy of feminism has been the demasculinization of men. For all of higher civilization's recorded history, becoming a man was defined overwhelmingly as taking responsibility for a family. That notion — indeed the notion of masculinity itself — is regarded by feminism as the worst of sins: patriarchy.
>
> Men need a role, or they become, as the title of George Gilder's classic book on single men describes them: *Naked Nomads*. In little more than a generation, feminism has obliterated roles. If you wonder why so many men choose not to get married, the answer lies in large part in the contemporary devaluation of the husband and of the father — of men as men, in other words. Most men want to be honored in some way — as a husband, a father, a provider, as an accomplished something; they don't want merely to be "equal partners" with a wife.
>
> In sum, thanks to feminism, very many women slept with too many men for their own happiness; postponed marriage too long to find the right man to marry; are having hired hands do much of the raising of their children; and find they are dating boy-men because manly men are so rare.
>
> Feminism exemplifies the truth of the saying, "Be careful what you wish for — you may get it."

I wish I could add something to this, but I can't because every time I think of something

to add, he says it in the next sentence.

If you like this short essay, then this medium essay arguing against feminism authored by Barbara Kay would be nice follow-up.

It might be worth forwarding these articles along to your friends. And I highly recommend books on male-female relationships and roles by George Gilder, especially "Men and Marriage".

Is there a smooth pathway from micro-evolution to macro-evolution?

October 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Luke Nix who blogs at Faithful Thinkers.

Excerpt:

> Macroevolutionary changes **are** a lot of microevolutionary changes, but they are in a specific series that follow a specific pathway. The missing premise in this argument is that the pathway from ancestor to claimed offspring (many generations down the road) is clear of obstacles.
>
> In his book, "The Edge of Evolution" Michael Behe shows that scientists have observed such an obstacle in the lab. The obstacle was **not** time, it is in the genetic pathway that must be traversed if macroevolutionary changes are to take place in reality. Since an obstacle has been observed, we now have a false premise in the argument. Since there is a false premise, the argument fails. There **is** a difference between micro- and macro-evolutionary changes. A lot of microevolutionary changes **are necessary** for macroevolution, but they **are not sufficient**. The other sufficient condition (a clear genetic pathway) still has yet to be met. Since both sufficient conditions for macroevolution have not been met, it **has not** been demonstrated. And since changes over time **has** been demonstrated, there is a need to distinguish between the two. To prevent confusion about what we know to be true and what we don't, this distinction **must** be made.
>
> There is only one way that this can be overcome by the naturalist: find a pathway that would be clear by default in nature. Notice that I have added one more piece to the missing premise above: "…clear by default in nature". I have to add that last qualification because as scientists are looking for a way to overcome this obstacle, they are introducing their own intelligence- fine-tuning the process, then "allowing nature to take its course". Their conclusion of naturalistic macroevolution will depend on a premise that is founded on intelligence. That would undermine the **whole** argument for naturalistic (macro)evolution.

This is one of the ways to show that evolution is true – by showing a pathway to macro-evolutionary change in the lab. If people expect me to believe in the grandiose claims of fully naturalistic evolution through a stepwise process, then why can't I see the pathway myself? If you make the claim that it happened, then I want to see the evidence for the claim.

Related posts

- The origin of the universe from nothing

- The fine-tuning of the cosmological constants to permit life
- The fine-tuning of the galaxy, solar system, and planet to permit life
- Origin of the building blocks in the simplest replicating cell
- Origin of biological information in the simplest replicating cell
- Sudden origins of all major body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The limits on what natural selection and random mutation can do
- Peer-reviewed paper says there is no atheistic explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Does the Cambrian explosion disprove Darwinian evolution?

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

October 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus as the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates.

For example, in his debate with Bart Ehrman, Craig was able to quote Ehrman's own writings where he agreed that all four facts were probably true.

Excerpt:

> Now in his early published work Dr. Ehrman expressed skepticism about these facts. He insisted that we cannot really affirm these facts.
>
> […]Dr. Ehrman has himself come to re-think his position on these issues. Inconsistencies in the details notwithstanding, he now recognizes that we have "solid traditions," not only for Jesus' burial, but also for the women's discovery of the empty tomb, and therefore, he says, we can conclude with "some certainty" that Jesus was in fact buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb and that three days later the tomb was found empty. 8
>
> When I discovered that Professor Ehrman had reversed himself on this question, my admiration for his honesty and scholarly objectivity shot up. Very few scholars, once they've gone into print on an issue, have the courage to re-think that issue and admit that they were wrong. Dr. Ehrman's reversal of his opinion on these matters is testimony, not merely to the force of the evidence for these four facts, but also to his determination to follow the evidence wherever it leads. What this means is that my first contention is not an issue of disagreement in tonight's debate.

So what are the criteria that historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with

other authentic material, and so forth.

It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."

In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.

What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:

(1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.

(2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.

(3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.

(4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.

(5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.

(6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.

For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.

Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the

> better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book.

Try this approach instead:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely

accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection
8. Don't let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And just keep in mind that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. You have to use that – it's the law.

Back to the minimal facts criteria. The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I've read is the one by Robert H. Stein in "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It's a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion "God raised Jesus from the dead". That whole book is really very, very good.

William Lane Craig talks about the book “Contending With Christianity’s Critics”

October 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A series of three interviews from the “Reasonable Faith” podcast about the essay collection “Contending with Christianity’s Critics: Answering New Atheists and Other Objectors”.

Here is the first MP3 file.

Topics:

- About the editor Paul Copan, (the nicest Christian apologist)
- 1: Responding to Dawkins’ argument “Who designed the designer?”
- 2: Responding to the multiverse counter to the fine-tuning argument
- 3: The argument that rationality and consciouness require theism
- 4: The evidence for humans being hard-wired for belief in God
- 5: Responding to naturalism’s claim to rationally ground morality
- 6: Responding to Dawkins’ idea that the universe looks undesigned

Here is the second MP3 file.

Topics:

- 7: The criteria that historians use to establish historical reliability
- 8: Did Jesus think that he was the Son of Man in Daniel
- 9: A time line for the resurrection of Jesus from the early sources
- 10: Responding to scholarly distortions of the historical Jesus
- 11: Responding to Bart Ehrman’s claim that the NT text is corrupted
- 12: The evidence for Jesus divine self-understanding

Here is the third MP3 file.

Topics:

- 13: The logical coherence of the concept of God
- 14: The logical coherence of the doctrine of the Trinity
- 15: The logical coherence of the doctrine of the Incarnation
- 16: The logical coherence of the doctrine of the Atonement
- 17: The logical coherence of the doctrine of the Hell
- 18: Responding to objections to God’s knowledge of the future

I have this book, and I highly recommend this book and “Passionate Conviction: Contemporary Discourses on Christian Apologetics”, along with Lee Strobel’s “Case for…” books, as the basic building blocks of an amateur apologists’s arsenal.

You may also be interested in a new book offering a detailed response to the New

Atheists, called “God Is Great, God Is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable & Responsible”.

Book review of the book “Contending with Christianity’s Critics”

October 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics 315 posted a review of the book “Contending with Christianity’s Critics“, which I discussed in posts earlier today. I wanted to excerpt a few chapter summaries for chapters that you may not find in any other apologetics book.

Here they are:

> Part 3, *The Coherence of Christian Doctrine*, begins with chapter thirteen: “The Coherence of Theism” by Charles Taliaferro and Elsa J. Marty. Here the authors seek to defend the coherence of the concept of God. They address six attributes: “necessary existence, incorporeality, essential goodness, omnipotence, omniscience, and eternity.”(26) They point out: “The attributes of God are therefore not a patchwork of arbitrary characteristics. Each one is, rather, interconnected, and together they form a coherent whole. Appreciating this helps one avoid the more crude depiction of God one finds in Dawkins’s work.”(27)
>
> Chapter fourteen: “Is the Trinity a Logical Blunder? God as Three and One” by Paul Copan covers the concept and difficulties of the Trinity. Copan discusses some common problems to avoid in our understanding of the trinity: overemphasizing threeness, overemphasizing oneness, rejecting equality.(28) He then lays out six considerations that will make the understanding the trinity clearer. Finally, Copan shows the philosophical and practical relevance of the Trinity.
>
> Chapter fifteen: “Did God Become a Jew? A Defense of the Incarnation” by Paul Copan aims “to show that the incarnation, though a mystery, is a *coherent* one.” Copan’s task: “(1) briefly review the scriptural affirmations of Jesus’ humanity and divinity, (2) highlight three important distinctions to help us understand the incarnation, and (3) examine the question of Jesus’ temptation in light of His divinity.”(29)
>
> Chapter sixteen is entitled: “Dostoyevsky, Woody Allen, and the Doctrine of Penal Substitution” by Steve L. Porter. The title refers to the two contrasting characters in the works of these men, as Porter explains:

> The difference between these two stories [*Crime and Punishment* and *Crimes and Misdemeanors*] is extremely relevant when it comes to the doctrine of penal substitution, for it seems that most of the contemporary objections to the view that Christ suffered the punitive consequences of human sin on behalf of sinners are fueled by the fact that we in the West find ourselves more in the world of Dr. Rosenthal than Raskolnikov. The doctrine of penal substitution does not make sense to many of us because, unlike Raskolnikov, punishment in general no

> longer makes sense to us.(30)

> Porter describes the goal of his essay "the first goal … is to clarify and defend the plausibility of the moral framework required to ground penal substitution." … "the second goal … is to offer an argument that penal substitution is the best explanation of why Christ voluntarily went to His death."(31) Porter sheds light on the misconceptions of our understanding of punishment, while pointing out the coherence of the doctrine as it relates to the Biblical narrative as a whole.
>
> Chapter seventeen: "Hell: Getting What's Good My Own Way" by Stewart Goetz was the most challenging for this reviewer. Not because of the difficulty of the concept so much as the angle the author takes in exploring it. Goetz discusses the doctrine of hell and the particular philosophical issues that it raises He asks questions about how hell relates to the good, free will, and choices. For Goetz, "heaven and hell must ultimately be understood in terms of how a person chooses to live his life in pursuit of what is good."(32)The author raises and explores important questions – but his responses could have been presented with more clarity.
>
> The book ends with chapter eighteen: "What Does God Know? The Problems of Open Theism" by David P. Hunt. While not addressed to atheists or non-Christians, this chapter does deal with the significant issue of the Open Theism view. This is the view that God does not have complete knowledge of the future. Hunt provides an overview of what Openists teach, followed by a critical response and survey of the scriptural data.

I think these chapters are a little off the beaten path of apologetics books, which is why you should get this book. Philosophical theology is an important part of your apologetics toolkit.

If you're looking for an even more scholarly take on some of these doctrinal and theological issues, then look no further than the recently published Oxford University Press book "Debating Christian Theism". The book features two scholarly points of view for about twenty or so issues related to Christianity. The topics range from science to philosophy to history to theology.

This is a great book to put on your desk at work for three reasons. First, it is published by Oxford University Press, and that right there has a prestige factor that will defuse the arrogant attitude that so many non-theists have from their vast experience of reading Dan Brown novels and watching the Discovery channel. Second, it features world-class scholars for each of the twenty or so topics under debate, so you can show that these issues are debated by people at the highest levels. Third, the book doesn't mark you out as being a Christian, so you can just feign neutrality when the tolerance and diversity police come by to tell you that they have to fire you for having different views than they do. This is *the* book that you need to put on your desk to get the debate started (or not) depending on who happens to ask about it.

Now, if these books look to be a bit too complicated, then I recommend this easy-to-understand introduction to Christian apologetics entitled "Is God Just a Human Invention?". That book is suitable for anyone who finished high school. It's my favorite book to buy for beginners to apologetics. Even simpler than the Lee Strobel books, if you can believe that.

Is it time to start thinking of an exit strategy for the quagmire of Obamacare?

October 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Baghdad Obama says: "No one will lose their health care plan!"
Letitia posted this article from the pro-Obama NBC News.

Excerpt:

> Health plans are sending hundreds of thousands of cancellation letters to people who buy their own coverage, frustrating some consumers who want to keep what they have and forcing others to buy more costly policies.
>
> The main reason insurers offer is that the policies fall short of what the Affordable Care Act requires starting Jan. 1. Most are ending policies sold after the law passed in March 2010. At least a few are canceling plans sold to people with pre-existing medical conditions.
>
> […][T]he cancellation notices, which began arriving in August, have shocked many consumers in light of President Barack Obama's promise that people could keep their plans if they liked them.
>
> "I don't feel like I need to change, but I have to," said Jeff Learned, a television editor in Los Angeles, who must find a new plan for his teenage daughter, who has a health condition that has required multiple surgeries.
>
> An estimated 14 million people purchase their own coverage because they don't get it through their jobs. Calls to insurers in several states showed that many have sent notices.
>
> Florida Blue, for example, is terminating about 300,000 policies, about 80 percent of its individual policies in the state. Kaiser Permanente in California has sent notices to 160,000 people – about half of its individual business in the state. Insurer Highmark in Pittsburgh is dropping about 20 percent of its individual market customers, while Independence Blue Cross, the major insurer in Philadelphia, is dropping about 45 percent.
>
> […]Some receiving cancellations say it looks like their costs will go up, despite

> studies projecting that about half of all enrollees will get income-based subsidies.
>
> Kris Malean, 56, lives outside Seattle, and has a health policy that costs $390 a month with a $2,500 deductible and a $10,000 in potential out-of-pocket costs for such things as doctor visits, drug costs or hospital care.
>
> As a replacement, Regence BlueShield is offering her a plan for $79 more a month with a deductible twice as large as what she pays now, but which limits her potential out-of-pocket costs to $6,250 a year, including the deductible.
>
> “My impression was …there would be a lot more choice, driving some of the rates down,” said Malean, who does not believe she is eligible for a subsidy.
>
> Regence spokeswoman Rachelle Cunningham said the new plans offer consumers broader benefits, which “in many cases translate into higher costs.”
>
> “The arithmetic is inescapable,” said Patrick Johnston, chief executive officer of the California Association of Health Plans. Costs must be spread, so while some consumers will see their premiums drop, others will pay more — “no matter what people in Washington say.”
>
> Health insurance experts say new prices will vary and much depends on where a person lives, their age and the type of policy they decide to buy. Some, including young people and those with skimpy or high-deductible plans, may see an increase. Others, including those with health problems or who buy coverage with higher deductibles than they have now, may see lower premiums.
>
> Blue Shield of California sent roughly 119,000 cancellation notices out in mid-September, about 60 percent of its individual business. About two-thirds of those policyholders will see rate increases in their new policies, said spokesman Steve Shivinsky.

But the media told me that Obamacare was affordable! It’s even called the Affordable Care Act. Would a bunch of doped-up leftists who dropped math in junior high school mislead me about how health insurance works? Inconceivable!

Girl smuggled into England for the purpose of organ harvesting

October 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> The first case of a child being trafficked to Britain in order to have their organs harvested has been uncovered.
>
> The unnamed girl was brought to the UK from Somalia with the intention of removing her organs and selling them on to those desperate for a transplant.
>
> Child protection charities warned that the case was unlikely to be an isolated incident as traffickers were likely to have smuggled a group of children into the country.
>
> The case emerged in a government report which showed that the number of human trafficking victims in the UK has risen by more than 50 per cent last year and reached record levels.
>
> A total of 371 children were exploited, with the majority of them being used as slaves or sexually abused. They included 95 children from Vietnam, 67 from Nigeria and 25 from China. Others hailed from Romania and Bangladesh.

> The figures also detail how 20 British girls have been victims of human trafficking. It comes after a series of court cases in which British girls were raped and exploited by gangs of Asian [i.e. – Muslim] men.
>
> Child protection charities warned last night that criminal gangs were attempting to exploit the demand for organ transplants in Britain.
>
> Bharti Patel, the chief executive of Ecpat UK, the child protection charity, said: "Traffickers are exploiting the demand for organs and the vulnerability of children. It's unlikely that a trafficker is going to take this risk and bring just one child into the UK. It is likely there was a group."
>
> According to the World Health Organisation as many as 7,000 kidneys are illegally obtained by traffickers each year around the world.
>
> While there is a black market for organs such as hearts, lungs and livers, kidneys are the most sought after organs because one can be removed from a patient without any ill effects.
>
> The process involves a number of people including the recruiter who identifies the victim, the person who arranges their transport, the medical professionals who perform the operation and the salesman who trades the organ.
>
> The government's report also found that there has been a rise in the number of

> adults trafficked to the UK, with the number of women rising by 12 per cent to 786 and the number of men by almost a third to 400. They include growing numbers of British men are being exploited for “paving or ground works” in this country or abroad.

I think that the problem of organ harvesting is an extension of the selfishness of the pro-abortion view.

Right now, we have a situation where a large number of people believe that it is OK to murder innocent unborn children so that their happiness in this world is not impacted by the needs of others. I believe that this pro-abortion position can easily be extrapolated to child-trafficking and organ-harvesting. After all, once you say that innocent unborn children can be murdered for your happiness, then what’s to prevent you from harvesting organs for less-innocent born children for your happiness? The logic of the pro-abortion view is “a grown person has more rights than an unborn person, because the grown person is bigger and stronger”. Well, a grown person is also bigger and stronger than a small born person. This is the pro-abortion view: bigger = “has more rights than”. It’s about exploiting weaker people who get in the way of your happiness.

Three reasons why scientism should be rejected

October 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scientism is the view that the only things that can be known are things that can be discovered through science. That's a very popular view, but there are at least three things wrong with it.

First, Tough Questions Answered quotes philosopher Ed Feser, who says that the enterprise of science makes assumptions that cannot be justified by science itself.

Feser writes:

> Of its very nature, scientific investigation takes for granted such assumptions as that: there is a physical world existing independently of our minds; this world is characterized by various objective patterns and regularities; our senses are at least partially reliable sources of information about this world; there are objective laws of logic and mathematics that apply to the objective world outside our minds; our cognitive powers – of concept-formation, reasoning from premises to a conclusion, and so forth – afford us a grasp of these laws and can reliably take us from evidence derived from the senses to conclusions about the physical world; the language we use can adequately express truths about these laws and about the external world; and so on and so on.

Science assumes that those things are true, it cannot discover them.

Second, scientism cannot account for things we know apart from science.

William Lane Craig explains:

> First, *scientism is too restrictive a theory of knowledge*. It would, if adopted, compel us to abandon wide swaths of what most of us take to be fields of human knowledge. Your friend admits this with regard to moral and aesthetic truths. On his view there is nothing good or evil, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly. But is it plausible to think that there are no aesthetic or moral truths? On your friend's view there's nothing wrong with torturing a little girl to death. Why should we accept such a conclusion simply because of a epistemological restriction? Isn't this a signal that we need rather to broaden the scope of our theory so as to encompass other types of knowledge? Your friend says he will treat logical and mathematical truths as merely empirical truths. Good luck! Truths like "If *p* implies *q*, and *p*, then *q*" or "2 + 2 = 4" are to all appearances necessary truths, not merely empirical generalizations.

Third, scientism is self-refuting.

William Lane Craig explains:

> Secondly, *scientism is self-refuting*. Scientism tells us that we should not believe any proposition that cannot be scientifically proven. But what about that very

> proposition itself? It cannot itself be scientifically proven. Therefore we should not believe it. Scientism thus defeats itself.

You can’t prove scientism (a theory of what we can know) using science. It refutes itself.

So, there are three reasons to reject scientism. Nothing I have said here should be taken as criticism of science, though. On the contrary – the progress of science is one of the best friends of Christian theists. We have gained a lot from the advances made by science in areas like cosmology, cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, the fossil record, and astrobiology. We love *science*. But *scientism* is false.

New study: Half of children born last year will see their parents split by age 15

October 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this post from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Children born last year are more likely than any previous generation to see their parents split up, research suggests.
>
> Nearly half will experience family breakdown, according to a report by the Marriage Foundation think tank.
>
> Its researchers estimate that 354,000 out of the 729,674 children born in England and Wales in 2012 will have parents who are separated by the time they reach the age of 15.
>
> The report also suggests that married couples are much more likely to stay together than those who are unmarried.
>
> The vast majority of children whose parents will still be together by their mid-teens will have a mother and father who are married, the report said. Only 5 per cent will have unmarried parents.
>
> Harry Benson, of the Marriage Foundation, said: 'We continually hear about divorce rates shooting up and causing the exponential rise in family breakdown, but this is demonstrably not the case.
>
> 'The percentage of marriages ending in divorce has actually fallen since 2005 to 42 per cent. For all marriages lasting over ten years, the divorce rate has barely changed since the 1960s.
>
> 'It is the declining rates of marriage which provide the only conceivable explanation of the doubling of family breakdown since the 1980s.
>
> 'Of the teenagers not living with both parents, just 32 per cent of cases involved divorce.'
>
> Last week a report by the chief inspector of schools Sir Michael Wilshaw linked social problems in Britain to bad parenting. He criticised 'hollowed-out and fragmented families' where parents suffer a 'poverty of accountability'.
>
> Sir Michael said many children were 'alienated' from their fathers, and warned of social problems resulting from 'making excuses' for bad parents.
>
> 'Some people will tell you that social breakdown is the result of material poverty – it's more than this,' he said.
>
> 'These children lack more than money: They lack parents who take responsibility for seeing them raised well. It is this poverty of accountability which costs them.
>
> 'These children suffer because they are not given clear rules or boundaries, have

> few secure or safe attachments at home, and little understanding of the difference between right and wrong behaviour.'
>
> Findings from the Centre for Social Justice have shown as many as one million children are growing up without a father.

I think that if we really want children to have what they need, then we have to take a very strong position on the tolerance and non-judgmentalism that is so popular among the social left today. Because we are tolerant and non-judgmental, 53 million unborn children are dead. Because we are tolerant and non-judgmental, a record number of children are being raised without their mother or their father (or both). Because we are tolerant and non-judgmental, children are being saddled with the costs of fixing the results of irresponsibility decisions made by adults. Because we are tolerant and non-judgmental, we have run up a $17 trillion dollar debt so that the President can congratulate himself on how generous he is by spending money that other people earned (or will have to earn).

Maybe we need to stop thinking about being liked by our peers and start thinking about doing what's right for children – born and unborn. A good first step would be to view anyone who espouses moral relativism as an evil, destructive, selfish and foolish person. When a woman brags to you about how she doesn't judge anyone, you should look at her as someone immoral who cannot see the difference between policies/choices that harm children, and policies/choices that help them. At the very least, you should never marry someone who supports redefining marriage to include no-fault divorce and same-sex marriage. You should never marry someone who supports paying people taxpayer money to have children out of wedlock.

If a person cannot see how natural marriage protects children, then don't marry them. We need to shame people who don't protect children. It doesn't matter what they *say* to you in order to sound nice. It only matters that they won't condemn things that are clearly wrong. That makes them a threat to children, and unsuitable for marriage.

New study: a divorce of a friend or close relative dramatically increases odds of divorce

October 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-leaning Pew Research.

Excerpt:

> As if married people don't have enough to worry about, a new study suggests that the divorce of a friend or close relative dramatically increases the chances that you too will divorce.
>
> A research team headed by Rose McDermott of Brown University analyzed three decades of data on marriage, divorce and remarriage collected from thousands of residents of Framingham, Massachusetts.
>
> McDermott and her colleagues found that study participants were 75% more likely to become divorced if a friend is divorced and 33% more likely to end their marriage if a friend of a friend is divorced.
>
> So divorce is contagious…and you can catch the divorce bug from your friends—even from a friend of a friend?
>
> […]Examples of social contagion run the gamut from adolescent sexual behavior to the spread of phantom diseases in a workplace. Economist Ilyana Kuziemko reported in a 2006 paper titled "Is Having Babies Contagious?" that brothers and sisters are significantly more likely to have a child soon after a sibling gives birth. A research team in Arkansas tracked how obesity appeared to spread in elementary school classrooms.
>
> […]Overall, they found that the divorce of a friend or close relative significantly increased the probability of divorce. For example, about 9% of the adult children of the 1948 study group were divorced at least once. The findings suggest that the chances of divorcing increase to approximately 16% if a friend or close family member has been divorced — an increase of 75% over the overall divorce rate. The probability of divorce rises to roughly 12% if friends and relatives of the participant's friends and relatives divorces. But the effect then vanishes, and the divorce of someone three degrees removed—a friend of a friend of a friend—does not significantly change the likelihood that a couple will separate.
>
> **"We suggest that attending to the health of one's friends' marriages might serve to support and enhance the durability of one's own relationship," they conclude. "Although the evidence we present here is limited to a single network…marriages endure within the context of communities of healthy relationships and within the context of social networks that encourage and support such unions."**
>
> Other insights from the study:

> - People in the study group who have been divorced are more likely to marry someone else who has been divorced, particularly those who re-couple relatively soon after they end their previous marriage. Compared to others, those who remarried since the last study period were four times more likely to marry a divorcee.
> - Divorced participant became less popular, in part because they may lose as friends members of their former spouse's friends network. "In addition, newly single people may be perceived as social threats by married friends who worry about marital poaching."
> - **More popular people—participants with more friends in their social network—were less likely to divorce than those with fewer friendships. Part of the reason may be that "a strong, supportive friendship network" protects a couple's marriage by "mak[ing] it easier for individuals to weather inevitable marital stresses."**

I think there's a lot of good tips in that study about how to safeguard your own marriage (or future marriage). For one thing, marry someone who has solidly married friends. Nurture the marriages of your friends. If you're like me, then you're diligent enough to teach your friends how to get married and even suggest sensible mates for them. There's nothing that annoys me more than women choosing men who can't be good protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders. Why not give them a helping hand before they make a poor decision? That's what parents should be doing, especially – minimizing the influence of culture and peers on their children and helping young people take a long-term view of marriage.

I think that the importance of peer-pressure in decision making is very widespread among young people, and especially among young women. It doesn't just work for bad things, but also for good things. I spoke to one woman recently who sounded nearly crazy with envy over her friends who were getting married and having children. Now this particular woman had excellent skills and a pretty good idea of what she wanted to achieve with a marriage. But imagine what it is like for women who have no idea how marriage works and basically just getting into a "monkey see, monkey do" situation.

The scariest thing for me is how people see movies and TV shows where things that are potentially very harmful (e.g. – the gay lifestyle, divorce, single motherhood) are made to appear normal and healthy, and so people are tempted to actually do these things. A better way to make decisions is to turn off the TV and the movies and derive a set of goals of your own. Then look to better sources of wisdom (the Bible, parents, older people, great literature, empirical studies) in order to figure out how to reach those goals.

The long war: a history of the conflict between religion and science

October 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's start with an example of a famous battle in the long war between science and religion.

Canadian science writer Denyse O'Leary writes about the history of cosmology at Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> What help has materialism been in understanding the universe's beginnings?
>
> Many in cosmology have never made any secret of their dislike of the Big Bang, the generally accepted start to our universe first suggested by Belgian priest Georges Lemaître (1894-1966).
>
> On the face of it, that is odd. The theory accounts well enough for the evidence. Nothing ever completely accounts for all the evidence, of course, because evidence is always changing a bit. But the Big Bang has enabled accurate prediction.
>
> In which case, its hostile reception might surprise you. British astronomer Fred Hoyle (1915-2001) gave the theory its name in one of his papers — as a joke. Another noted astronomer, Arthur Eddington (1882-1944), exclaimed in 1933, "I feel almost an indignation that anyone should believe in it — except myself." Why? Because "The beginning seems to present insuperable difficulties unless we agree to look on it as frankly supernatural."
>
> One team of astrophysicists (1973) opined that it "involves a certain metaphysical aspect which may be either appealing or revolting." Robert Jastrow (1925-2008), head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, initially remarked, "On both scientific and philosophical grounds, the concept of an eternal Universe seems more acceptable than the concept of a transient Universe that springs into being suddenly, and then fades slowly into darkness." And Templeton Prize winner (2011) Martin Rees recalls his mentor Dennis Sciama's dogged commitment to an eternal universe, no-Big Bang model:

> For him, as for its inventors, it had a deep philosophical appeal — the universe existed, from everlasting to everlasting, in a uniquely self-consistent state. When conflicting evidence emerged, Sciama therefore sought a loophole (even an unlikely seeming one) rather as a defense lawyer clutches at any argument to rebut the prosecution case.

> Evidence forced theorists to abandon their preferred eternal-universe model. From the mid 1940s, Hoyle attempted to disprove the theory he named. Until

> 1964, when his preferred theory, the Steady State, lost an evidence test.

Here is a a quick summary of some of the experimental evidence that emerged in the last few decades that caused naturalists to abandon the eternal universe that they loved so much when they were younger.

The importance of having a narrative

Now I want to make a very, very important point about Christianity and the progress of science. And that point is that it is very important that Christians present the evidence in exactly the way that Denyse presented it in that article – in its historical context, featuring the conflict between naturalists and the experimental evidence.

All Christians should be familiar with the following basic pieces of evidence which fit the war between science and naturalism narrative:

1. The origin of the universe
2. The cosmic fine-tuning
3. The origin of life (biological information)
4. The sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla
5. The habitability/observability correlation

When you talk about these evidences as a Christian theist to non-Christians, you have to have cultivated a genuine interest in reconciling your beliefs with science. You have to accept that there are two books that reveal God's character and attributes. The book of nature, and the book of Scripture. And you need to be flexible about getting these two books to fit together. The book of nature gives us natural theology (see Romans 1). It tells us that God is Creator and Designer. The book of Scripture tells us that God stepped into history as a man to save us by taking the punishment for our headlong rush away from God, which the Bible calls sin. Science is one way that humans can recover some of basic knowledge about God. Knowledge that is only possible because God created and designed the universe (and us) in such a way that we are capable of making discoveries, and that the universe is capable of being explored and understood.

It's very important to present these five basic evidences to non-Christians in the historical context. And here is the story you must tell: "In the beginning, there was the naturalism, and the naturalism tried to argue from ignorance that God was not Creator and God was not Designer. And then came the science, and now people have to give up their naturalism in order to not be crazy and irrational". That's the narrative you use when talking to non-Christians about science.

In the beginning was the naturalism:

1. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the universe was eternal
2. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that a life-permitting universe was as likely as a life-prohibiting universe
3. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the cell was a simple blob of jello that could spontaneously emerge in some warm pond

4. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla would be explained by subsequent fossil discoveries
5. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that there was nothing special about our galaxy, solar system, planet or moon

But then science progressed by doing experiments and making observations:

1. Scientists discovered redshift and the cosmic microwave background radiation and more!
2. Scientists discovered the fine-tuning of gravity and of the cosmological constant and more!
3. Scientists discovered protein sequencing and exposed the myth of "junk DNA" and more!
4. Scientists discovered an even shorter Cambrian explosion period and the absence of precursor fossils and more!
5. Scientists discovered galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones and more!

And now rational people – people who want to have true beliefs about reality – need to abandon a false religion (naturalism).

Now naturally, science is in a state of flux and things change. But you have to look at the trend of discoveries, and those trends are clearly going against naturalism, and in favor of Christian theism. No one is arguing for a deductive proof here, we are simply looking at the evidence we have *today* and proportioning our belief to the concrete evidence we have *today*. People who are guided by reason should not seek to construct a worldview by leveraging speculations about future discoveries and mere possibilities. We should instead believe what is more probable than not. That's what a *rational* seeker of truth ought to do. Proportion belief to probabilities based on current, concrete knowledge.

It is very important that Christians keep abreast of the progress of science, and give proper respect to science when forming our worldviews, and keep in mind what is really going on with atheism. There is a lot of loud worshiping of science by people like Dawkins and Atkins and Krauss, but if you dig into things a little, you'll find that they are actually filled with rage and enmity against what science has revealed about nature. And not just in one area, but in many, many areas.

Atheism, as a worldview, is not rooted in an honest assessment about what science tells us about reality. Atheism is rooted in a religion: naturalism. And the troubling thing we learn from looking at the history of science is that this religion of naturalism is insulated from correction from the progress of science. Nothing that science reveals about nature seems to be able to put a dent in the religion of naturalism, at least for most atheists. Their belief in naturalism is so strong that it repels all scientific evidence that falsifies it. Atheists simply don't let science inform and correct their worldview.

It falls to us Christian theists, then, to hold them accountable for their abuse and misrepresentation of science. And that means telling the story of the progress of science

accurately, and accurately calling out the religion of naturalism for what it is – *a religion rooted in blind faith and ignorance that has been repeatedly and convincingly falsified by the progress of science in the modern era*.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Concealed-carry permit holder uses legal firearm to prevent mass shooting in Arizona

October 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Letitia shared this article from Arizona Central.

Excerpt:

> A man was taken to the hospital with life-threatening injuries early Sunday morning after a shooting broke out at a Glendale house party, authorities said.
>
> Glendale police officers responded about 1:30 a.m. to a house near 51st and Olive avenues where they found a 27-year-old man who had been shot, Glendale Police Department spokeswoman Officer Tracey Breeden said. He was treated at the scene and taken to the hospital, where he remained Sunday afternoon.
>
> Investigators determined an argument started between individuals at the party and the 27-year-old, and he was asked to leave, she said. The man left for a short time, then returned with a rifle and began firing off rounds outside the house.
>
> **The man pointed the rifle at partygoers and a 39-year-old partygoer pulled out a handgun and shot the 27 year old before police arrived, Breeden said. The shooter did not try to leave and waited for officers to arrive.**
>
> The shooter has been cooperative with investigators, she said. He was questioned and released by detectives.
>
> "This is standard procedure under these type of circumstances," Breeden said. "Information and evidence detectives have gathered leads them to believe the 27-year-old was not only firing his rifle, endangering partygoers, but also pointed the weapon at other partygoers, endangering them, prior to the 39-year-old displaying a weapon and shooting the 27-year-old."

In self-defense cases, shots only connect with the suspects about 2% of the time. Most of the time, just brandishing the weapon is enough to deter the criminal. The goal is to prevent the crime, not to hurt people.

Wikipedia has a summary of the research of Dr. John Lott and his co-authors, which shows that defensive gun use is a lot more common than most people think.

Look:

> Researcher John Lott argues in both *More Guns, Less Crime* and *The Bias Against Guns* that media coverage of defensive gun use is rare, noting that in general, only shootings ending in fatalities are discussed in news stories. In *More Guns, Less Crime*, Lott writes that "[s]ince in many defensive cases a handgun is simply brandished, and no one is harmed, many defensive uses are never even reported to the police".

> Attempting to quantify this phenomenon, in the first edition of the book, published in May 1998, Lott wrote that "national surveys" suggested that "98 percent of the time that people use guns defensively, they merely have to brandish a weapon to break off an attack." The higher the rate of defensive gun uses that do not end in the attacker being killed or wounded, the easier it is to explain why defensive gun uses are not covered by the media without reference to media bias. Lott cited the figure frequently in the media, including publications like the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Los Angeles Times*.
>
> In 2002, he repeated the survey, and reported that brandishing a weapon was sufficient to stop an attack 95% of the time. Other researchers criticized his methodology, saying that his sample size of 1,015 respondents was too small for the study to be accurate and that the majority of similar studies suggest a value between 70 and 80 percent brandishment-only. Gary Kleck and Marc Gertz's 1994 estimate rises to 92 percent when brandishing and warning shots are added together.

Even the leftist MSNBC agrees that legal gun ownership reduces crime.

Excerpt:

> Americans overall are far less likely to be killed with a firearm than they were when it was much more difficult to obtain a concealed-weapons permit, according to statistics collected by the federal Centers for Disease Control. But researchers have not been able to establish a cause-and-effect relationship.

> In the 1980s and '90s, as the concealed-carry movement gained steam, Americans were killed by others with guns at the rate of about 5.66 per 100,000 population. In this decade, the rate has fallen to just over 4.07 per 100,000, a 28 percent drop. The decline follows a fivefold increase in the number of "shall-issue" and unrestricted concealed-carry states from 1986 to 2006.The highest gun homicide rate is in Washington, D.C., which has had the nation's strictest gun-control laws for years and bans concealed carry: 20.50 deaths per 100,000 population, five times the general rate. The lowest rate, 1.12, is in Utah, which has such a liberal concealed weapons policy that most American adults can get a permit to carry a gun in Utah without even visiting the state.
>
> The decline in gun homicides also comes as U.S. firearm sales are skyrocketing, according to federal background checks that are required for most gun sales. After holding stable at 8.5 to 9 million checks from 1999 to 2005, the FBI reported a surge to 10 million in 2006, 11 million in 2007, nearly 13 million in 2008 and more than 14 million last year, a 55 percent increase in just four years.

That's been confirmed by peer-reviewed, published research as well.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books

by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book. Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

If you still think that guns are somehow bad for reducing crime, why not check out a formal academic debate featuring 3 people on each side of the debate?

Related posts

- Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy paper: gun control doesn't lower murder rate
- Virginia crime rate dropping after post-Obama gun buying spree
- 72-year-old grandmother uses gun to defend her home from intruder
- Woman opens fire on gang of thugs trying to get into her home
- 21-year-old man uses legally owned firearm to defend family from three criminals
- Woman raped at gunpoint in "gun free zone" on university campus
- Man uses firearm to defend home and 2-year-old son from criminals
- Great grandmother fires at mugger with legally-owned, legally-carried handgun
- Man who doesn't believe in guns thanks gun owners for protecting him from burglar
- Man shoots robbery suspect to protect his 2-year-old son
- Woman uses gun to defend herself and her children from home intruder
- 12-year-old girl shoots home intruder in the shoulder with legally owned firearm
- Armed bystander stops stabbing outside school
- 14-year old boy uses parents' handgun to deter armed intruder
- Woman defends herself from intruder using legally-owned firearm
- Recently widowed mother uses legally owned gun to defend her child
- Pregnant woman uses her shotgun to scare burglars out of her home

New study: lesbian women twice as likely to "divorce" their partners as gay men

October 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There's a myth going around that women are fond of commitment and that men are beastly commitment-phobes. But what does science say?

Here's a new study that's been reported in the leftist UK Independent. (H/T The Elusive Wapiti)

Excerpt:

> Lesbian couples are nearly twice as likely as gay men to end a civil partnership, according to the latest government figures.

> The number of same-sex couples ending their civil unions leapt by 20 per cent last year, seven years after their introduction in 2005. Overall there were 794 dissolutions in 2012, almost 60 per cent of which were female couples, figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show.
>
> In the seven years since gay couples were able to have civil partnerships, 3.2 per cent of male unions ended in dissolution, compared to 6.1 per cent of female couples.
>
> Sociologists believe the lower rates of 'divorces' among gay men may reflect a trend of women committing sooner and having higher expectations for a relationship. Women in civil partnerships tie the knot at an average age of 37.6, compared to men, for whom the average age is 40. Erzsebet Bukodim, sociologist at the University of Oxford, said: "In heterosexual marriage the divorce rate is higher if you enter marriage at a very young age. That might be one of the reasons we're seeing this [high dissolution rate for women] in civil partnerships."
>
> Gunnar Andersson, professor of demography at Stockholm University, has found in successive studies that women in Norway, Sweden and Denmark are twice as likely to dissolve their civil partnerships than men. He said: "This reflects trends in a heterosexual marriage because women are more prone to say they want to marry – but they're also more likely to initiate a divorce. Women usually have higher demands on relationship quality, that's often been said in studies. Even if you control for age there is still a trend of more women ending partnerships than men."
>
> Previous figures show British women in heterosexual relationships are more likely to file for divorce than men. Women initiated the divorce in two thirds of cases in the UK in 2011.

The Elusive Wapiti comments on the new study:

> I used to frequent the once-defunct-now-rebooted "Family Scholars" blog ten

> years ago. In that forum, whenever I mentioned the now well-accepted fact of a 2:1 ratio of female/male initiation in divorce, I was repeatedly, reliably, and indignantly informed by the liberalists and anti-traditionalists in the crowd that the problem wasn't with women's trigger-happy dissolutive behaviors, but with straight men, whose insufferable and abusive natures all but forced their women to divorce them and take their kids, half their stuff, and 1/3 of their paycheck for 20 years. Men sucked so bad at being husbands, it was contended, that women had little choice but to kick them to the curb. They deserved all the divorce-rape they got, the bastards.
>
> So imagine my surprise to see the same ratio between female and male divorce initiation that we've observed in straights for decades now, mirrored in the homosexual community. This has gotta be bad news for the fish-bicycle set that loves to blame masculine misbehavior for, well, everything, including female-initiated divorce. Instead, we now see that when woman is paired with woman, the dissolution rate is twice that of male-male couplings, just like it is with straight couples.

Just to support his assertions, here is a quotation from p. 340 of "Handbook of Interpersonal Commitment and Relationship Stability", edited by Jeffrey M. Adams and Warren H. Jones, published by the academic press Springer in 1999:

> The differential breakup rates of married versus same-sex couples point to the role of marital institutions, but male and female couples exhibit differences in stability as well, suggesting that the influence of gender needs to be explained. With a small cross-sectional sample of 25 gay men and lesbians each, Duffy and Rusbult (1986) found that lesbians had longer relationships. But in the only two studies ever conducted with large samples of same-sex relationships (over 1,000 couples in each), consistent differences have been found between gay men and lesbians in breakup rates, both in the late 1970s and the late 1980s: Lesbian relationships, whether measured longitudinally (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983) or retrospectively (Bryant & Demian, 1994), were of shorter duration than gay male relationships. The gay men in couples surveyed by Bryant and Demian (1994) reported a mean duration of their current relationships of 6.9 years, compared to 4.9 years for lesbians (p. 104). Furthermore, though both gay men and lesbians reported spending roughly the same total amount of time in their lives in major same-sex relationships, the women reported more past relationships, suggesting that those relationships as well had been of shorter duration. Finally, there was a small but potentially meaningful difference in the proportion of lesbians (92%) as opposed to the pro-portion of gay men (96%) reporting commitment to their current partner for a lifetime or "a long time." These findings run counter to general expectations (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Eskridge, 1996) based on beliefs about women's greater desires and capabilities compared to men in creating and maintaining intimacy and connection in intimate relationships.

Lesbian couples also have the highest rates of domestic violence. Higher than gay males, and much higher than married couples.

Excerpt:

> - A study in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* examined conflict and violence in lesbian relationships. The researchers found that 90 percent of the lesbians surveyed had been recipients of one or more acts of verbal aggression from their intimate partners during the year prior to this study, with 31 percent reporting one or more incidents of physical abuse.[46]
> - In a survey of 1,099 lesbians, the *Journal of Social Service Research* found that slightly more than half of the lesbians reported that they had been abused by a female lover/partner. The researchers found that "the most frequently indicated forms of abuse were verbal/emotional/psychological abuse and combined physical-psychological abuse."[47]
> - A study of lesbian couples reported in the *Handbook of Family Development and Intervention*"indicates that 54 percent had experienced 10 or more abusive incidents, 74 percent had experienced six or more incidents, 60 percent reported a pattern to the abuse, and 71 percent said it grew worse over time."[48]

This is not even to mention the concept of "lesbian bed death", which is the frequently occurring cessation of sexual activity in lesbian relationships. A recent study on that is here.

Liberal women and fear of commitment

So what causes liberal women do break commitments more than men, whether they are straight or gay? I think there is a reason and it is gender-specific, but it can be mitigated by male leadership and influence in the relationship. And here it is: liberal women think of relationships as being more about emotions and peer-approval than about planning, hard work and results. Liberal women have a notion about marriage being something that will allow them to live happily ever after – and be approved of (or envied) by their peers. Liberal women believe that it is their partner's job to give them that, and if they don't get it, then the relationship isn't working, and can get jettisoned.

Studies have shown that liberal women have difficulty evaluating men to see if a man is suitable to perform traditional male duties in marriage. Typically, liberal women try to judge men based on how the man makes them feel. Having been raised to be feminists, they just don't believe that men have any distinct "male" capabilities that they need to evaluate. Liberal women tend to believe that they can tell a man's suitability for marriage by looking at his appearance, or by asking their liberal female friends what they think of the man. These standards are heavily influenced by the culture, as well – movies, TV, music, and so on.

Liberal women also don't generally view marriage as a long-term enterprise that has

definite goals that may differ from their own personal goals. Liberal women tend to rebel against strict moral boundaries and exclusive religious truth claims, because they restrain them from making relationships (with men or children) all about themselves. They have to be convinced to see the value of moral boundaries and religious truth claims, and they usually haven't done the work themselves to have that capability. A strong male leader who is focused on moral and religious issues can mitigate the liberal female tendency towards narcissism, but liberal women tend to avoid such men as being "too strict" or "too controlling" – even if the leadership is to make the woman grow and get better.

Any structure or plan to the relationship is viewed with suspicion because it distracts from the goals of liberal women: feeling good and having social acceptance. That's why young, unmarried liberal women marry people like Bill Clinton, John Edwards and Tiger Woods who know nothing about morality and religion. It's not rational, but the lack of moral standards and religious truth claims makes them feel safe and autonomous. And that is more important than being led and having the safety of a man who takes morality and religion seriously. One lesbian I know recently told me that discussing morality and religion objectively should not be done because people with strong views on morality and religion are "too mean".

It's up to sensible, moral, religious men to come along and civilize these young, unmarried feminist-influenced liberal women. We need to cause them to think about what marriage really is, what marriage really requires from each partner, and what children really require from marriage. We need to push the engineering approach to marriage during the courtship phase, and wean them off of the crazy emotional vain selfish view of marriage. If men don't lead liberal women during the courtship to think deeply and rationally about marriage, then liberal women will not be prepared or capable of commitment over the long-term. If a man doesn't take the time during the courtship to lead and grow a woman before the wedding, he is taking chances with his future and the future of his children. Not to mention his service to God, which will be negatively impacted by a divorce. At the very least, there will be a financial loss that cuts off charitable giving. At the worst, the potential impact that a good marriage and good Christian children have for the Kingdom will be lost.

Common atheist objections to Christianity and questions for pro-choice friends

October 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post on Well Spent Journey got 73 likes from bloggers.

Here's the first one:

> I'm writing this post primarily for my own convenience. During my online journeys to r/atheism, "freethought" blogs, and beyond, I encounter the following arguments so frequently that it seems sensible to fact-check them all at once.
>
> **The Claim:** *"Religion has been the primary cause of war and oppression throughout the history of mankind."*
>
> **The Truth:** In their comprehensive Encyclopedia of Wars, Phillips and Axelrod document the recorded history of warfare. Of the 1,763 wars presented, a mere 7% involved a religious cause. When Islam is subtracted from the equation, that number drops to 3.2%.
>
> In terms of casualties, religious wars account for only 2% of all people killed by warfare. This pales in comparison to the number of people who have been killed by secular dictators in the 20th century alone.

I'm surprised that these Internet atheists have never heard of The Black Book of Communism, published by Harvard University Press, either. 100 million deaths were caused by atheistic regimes in the last century. One Hundred Million Deaths.

Anyway, here are the other challenges in post:

- **The Claim:** *"Thanks to modern science, the days of religion are numbered. Humanity's superstitious belief in miracles and sky gods will soon be replaced by an era of atheism and rationalism."*
- **The Claim:** *"The dark ages were a time of ignorance and superstition, thanks to religion's negative influence on scientific progress."*
- **The Claim:** *"Jesus was a mythical figure. The New Testament stole most of its stories from other ancient sources."*

All are dealt with in the post on Well Spent Journey. When I look at these arguments, and compare them to our good, deductive, science-based arguments for theism, it does make me feel sorry for atheism.

Questions for pro-abortion people

This post was too short, so I thought I would link to Well Spent Journey's "Twelve Questions to Ask Your Pro-Choice Friends".

He's got a list of twelve in the post, but I like these ones because they really put the pro-abortion person on the defensive:

> 3. Pro-choice philosophers typically define the value of a human life in terms of*utility* (development of brainwaves, consciousness, etc.). If this is true, then why is it morally acceptable to sacrifice pigs and dogs for the purpose of medical/scientific research, but not human infants? Neurologically speaking, it's not at all controversial to say that pigs and dogs are in many ways "more advanced" than human infants. Yet society only accepts sacrificing the former for experimental purposes. Do you? If so, why?
>
> 4. Do you support paternal child support laws? (Consider this quote from Dr. Michael Pakaluk: *"[Suppose] that the reason the woman has sole right to decide to have an abortion is that the status of the fetus somehow depends upon how she chooses to regard it: thus, the fetus is not a child until the mother decides that it is, say, at some point later in pregnancy. But then a consequence of this is that the man, through having intercourse with the woman, does not conceive a child. Rather, he conceives only a fetus, and the fetus at some later point becomes a child, only because of the woman's deciding that it is. But then the man's role in intercourse is not a cause of a child. He brought into existence only a fetus, and it was the woman's decision to 'continue the pregnancy through term' that made it a child. But if so, it is not clear why the man should have any responsibility for the child. How could the woman bring a claim for paternity support against him? After all, he could rightly reply: 'You decided to regard the fetus as a child; so the child is your responsibility.'"*)
>
> 7. What is your position on "two-minus-one" abortions? Are they ethical? Should they be legal?
>
> 8. Many of those who identify as "pro-choice" are particularly concerned with issues of inequality and discrimination. Are discriminatory abortions (such as sex-selective abortions) legally or morally defensible? Suppose that scientists developed a prenatal test to determine whether or not one's child will be homosexual. Would you support a woman's legal right to abort her fetus solely because of his homosexuality?

By the way, I added Well Spent Journey to my blogroll. For some reason, it was not already there!

UC Berkeley paleontologist Charles Marshall's dishonest review of "Darwin's Doubt"

October 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There have been a series of Evolution News posts responding to a critical review of Darwin's Doubt, published in the journal Science. I have been keeping up with them, but when I read this post by Casey Luskin about a challenge from Charles Marshall against Meyer's book, I really felt that I had to blog about it.

You have to read this to believe it:

> In his review of *Darwin's Doubt* in the journal *Science*, UC Berkeley paleontologist Charles Marshall claims that Stephen Meyer "completely omits mention of the Early Cambrian small shelly fossils," which he claims causes Meyer "to exaggerate the apparent suddenness of the Cambrian explosion." Yet both of Marshall's claims are false. Meyer does not fail to mention the small shelly fossils and he does not exaggerate the brevity of the Cambrian explosion.
>
> In the first place, Marshall has his facts wrong. Meyer does discuss the small shelly fossils on page 425 of *Darwin's Doubt*. Meyer writes as follows:

> The Cambrian period 543 mya is marked by the appearance of small shelly fossils consisting of tubes, cones, and possibly spines and scales of larger animals. These fossils, together with trace fossils, gradually become more abundant and diverse as one moves upward in the earliest Cambrian strata (the Manykaian Stage, 543-530 mya).

> Nevertheless, although Meyer discusses the small shelly fossils, he does not treat them as a solution to the problem of the explosion of morphological novelty that arises later in in the Cambrian period. The small shelly fossils appear in the fossil record at the base of the Cambrian period about 542-543 million years ago. The main pulse of morphological innovation that Cambrian paleontologists commonly refer to as the "Cambrian explosion" first begins about 530 million years ago and then lasts about 10 years through the Tommotian and Adtabanian stages of the Cambrian period. During the first 5-6 million year stage (the Tommotian) of the explosion, between 14-16 novel phyla first appear in the fossil record. Without actually asserting that the small shelly fossils somehow explain the subsequent explosion of all these novel forms of animal life (or even that the small shelly fossils represent ancestors to all, or some, of these forms), Marshall faults Meyer for not treating them as part of the Cambrian explosion.

Now from this, you might expect that other biologists who do not believe in intelligent design think two things. One, that these fossils are important to explaining the Cambrian explosion. And two, that these fossils count as part of the Cambrian explosion – extending the period of innovation from 10 million years (at the most!) to 23 million years. In fact,

you might expect that Marshall thinks that the small, shelly fossils DO explain the Cambrian explosion, and that the Cambrian explosion DID last 23 million years, and not 10 million.

But you'd be wrong – all of this nonsense about SSF is just a mendacious smokescreen to smear Meyer:

> **For example, in a 2006 paper in *Annual Reviews of Earth and Planetary Sciences*, Marshall acknowledges that these fossils are of unclear evolutionary affinities and importance. He calls them "largely problematic fossils" that are "hard to diagnose, even at the phylum level." Figure 1 of his paper portrays them as apparently disconnected to the later radiation of Cambrian animals. This impression is reinforced in the text of his article where he notes that the small shelly fossils for the most part are "problematic" organisms of unknown classification…**

Marshall himself does not think that the SSF are an explanation for the Cambrian explosion – he only insinuated that in his review in order to smear Meyer.

In fact, other naturalists agree with Meyer (and Marshall!) that these SSFs are not part of the explanation for the explosion in new information:

> Other authorities agree that these small shelly fossils [SSFs] are of unclear evolutionary significance and affinity. In his book *On the Origin of Phyla*, James Valentine argues that the SSFs "are very difficult indeed to interpret." Valentine's 2013 book, *The Cambrian Explosion*, co-written with Douglas Erwin, notes that "many SSFs are still poorly understood." Simon Conway Morris found them so unimportant that he does not mention them in either of his authoritative books on the Cambrian explosion (*Crucible of Creation* or *Life's Solution*).

Valentine and Conway Morris are two of the top experts on the Cambrian explosion. Neither is a proponent of intelligent design.

But wait! There's still more dishonesty from Marshall!

Marshall also argues that Meyer is mistating the length of the Cambrian explosion:

> But what about the claim that *Darwin's Doubt* exaggerated the brevity of the Cambrian explosion? Should Meyer have included the appearance of the early Cambrian small shelly fossils as part of the explosion when he estimated the length of that event? Not according to a very recent paper by Marshall himself. In 2010, Marshall co-wrote with James Valentine in the journal *Evolution* (emphases added):

> By the beginning of the Cambrian Period, near 543 million years ago, a few kinds of "small shelly" fossils are found, <2mm in largest dimension. The small shellys rose to a peak in abundance and diversity during the period from 530 to 520 million years ago, when representatives of living phyla are found among them. During that same period, a *chiefly larger-bodied invertebrate fauna* of up to a

> dozen phyla, and including many soft-bodied forms, is also first represented by fossils. This geologically abrupt appearance of fossils representing *quite disparate bodyplans* of many living metazoan phyla is termed the Cambrian explosion…

> Let's unpack the construction of this paragraph, in which Marshall explains the length of the Cambrian explosion in relation to the small shelly fossils. Starting at the end of the quote, Marshall and Valentine equate "the Cambrian explosion" with the "geologically abrupt appearance of fossils representing quite disparate body plans." They further identify this period with "that same period" wherein "a chiefly larger-bodied invertebrate fauna of up to a dozen phyla, and including many soft-bodied forms, is also first represented by fossils." Marshall and Valentine also equate that period of time with "the period from 530 to 520 million years ago" and distinguish it from the earlier time in which the first small shelly fossils arose. **Thus, according to Marshall — in a co-authored technical paper written in 2010 — the Cambrian explosion does not begin with the first appearance of the small shelly fossils 543 million years ago, or during the earliest part of the Cambrian period. Rather, he and fellow paleontologist James Valentine affirm that the explosion begins about 530 million years ago and lasted to about 520 million years — a date consistent with what Valentine has written elsewhere, including in his recent book with Erwin that Marshall cites approvingly in his review of Meyer.**
>
> **Thus, by Marshall's own admission, (a) the appearance of small shelly fossils around 543 million years ago does *not* mark the beginning of the Cambrian explosion, and (b) the Cambrian explosion should be dated to 530 to 520 million years when we see the "abrupt appearance" of many disparate body plans, long after the small shellies appear. This means that Marshall has acknowledged in print that the "Cambrian explosion" itself lasted only about 10 million years — just as Meyer affirmed in *Darwin's Doubt*. Indeed, Marshall and Valentine affirm that SSFs appear long before the primary explosive radiation of Cambrian animals and they affirm a 10-million year duration for the Cambrian explosion.**

So here you have a naturalist who is so desperate to smear a proponent of intelligent design that he has to resort to outright deception – deceptions which he knows are false from his own writings!

This reminds me of how Lawrence Krauss misrepresented that e-mail from Vilenkin during his debate with William Lane Craig. Apparently, naturalists just aren't bound by the same sense of morality as theists. Should we be surprised that people who repudiate the idea of objective morality would then proceed to act dishonestly like this? In an accidental universe, anything goes – and truth is not as important as getting ahead in your career by any means necessary.

So the take away lesson for the rest of us is this: Sometimes you don’t need to understand all the scientific details exhaustively in order to know what to think about a controversial issue. You just have to spot the liar.

By the way, Dr. Meyer has some comments of his own about these small, shelly fossils in this post.

Does atheism mean “a lack of belief in God”?

October 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Excerpt:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.
>
> But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.
>
> There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position,

and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.

One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.

So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of

> atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, “So is there a God or not?”

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these “subjective atheists”?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says “I lack a belief in the gravitational force!”. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God’s existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don’t care about a person’s psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over “I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God”? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: “I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!” What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: “Wintery Knight won’t listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!”. I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that’s why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don’t *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I’m not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information

- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument

The meaning of marriage: a lecture at Google by Tim Keller

October 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Disclaimer: I have reservations about Tim Keller. I consider him to be too liberal for my tastes, especially on scientific (intelligent design) and political/economic issues. However, I think he did a good job explaining marriage in the lecture below.

Here's the the video:

Details:

> Timothy Keller visits Google's New York, NY office to discuss his book "The Meaning of Marriage." This event took place on November 14, 2011, as part of the Authors@Google series.
>
> Timothy J. Keller is an American author, speaker, preacher, and the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. He is the author of several books, including "The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism."
>
> "The Meaning of Marriage" touches on topics that all readers can relate to, starting with the role of marriage in our culture, its history and the pessimism that is often associated with it. The Kellers also discuss the feelings of and acts of love, romantic relationships, gender roles, singleness, and the role of sex in a marriage.

I saw a lot of things in his lecture that echo my own views. One point where we agree is on not just looking for traits and virtues in the other person, but in seeing how they handle conflict and solve problems with you. You have to give the other person things to do and see if they make progress and work cooperatively with you. Wes, who linked me the lecture, introduced the link by saying that this is the way that Christians should explain marriage to non-Christians. I agree, and I've added the book to my cart.

Here's an article entitled "You Never Marry the Right Person", that discusses one of the points in the lecture.

Excerpt:

> In generations past, there was far less talk about "compatibility" and finding the ideal soul-mate. Today we are looking for someone who accepts us as we are *and* fulfills our desires, and this creates an unrealistic set of expectations that frustrates both the searchers and the searched for.
>
> […]The Bible explains why the quest for compatibility seems to be so impossible. As a pastor I have spoken to thousands of couples, some working on marriage-seeking, some working on marriage-sustaining and some working on marriage-saving. I've heard them say over and over, "Love shouldn't be this hard, it should come naturally." In response I always say something like: "Why believe that?

> Would someone who wants to play professional baseball say, ‘It shouldn’t be so hard to hit a fastball’? Would someone who wants to write the greatest American novel of her generation say, ‘It shouldn’t be hard to create believable characters and compelling narrative’?” The understandable retort is: “But this is not baseball or literature. This is love. Love should just come naturally if two people are compatible, if they are truly soul-mates. “
>
> The Christian answer to this is that no two people are compatible. Duke University Ethics professor Stanley Hauerwas has famously made this point:
>
> Destructive to marriage is the self-fulfillment ethic that assumes marriage and the family are primarily institutions of personal fulfillment, necessary for us to become “whole” and happy. The assumption is that there is someone just right for us to marry and that if we look closely enough we will find the right person. This moral assumption overlooks a crucial aspect to marriage. It fails to appreciate the fact that we always marry the wrong person.We never know whom we marry; we just think we do. Or even if we first marry the right person, just give it a while and he or she will change. For marriage, being [the enormous thing it is] means we are not the same person after we have entered it. The primary challenge of marriage is learning how to love and care for the stranger to whom you find yourself married.
>
> Hauerwas gives us the first reason that no two people are compatible for marriage, namely, that marriage profoundly changes us. But there is another reason. Any two people who enter into marriage are spiritually broken by sin, which among other things means to be self-centered—living life*incurvatus in se*. As author Denis de Rougemont said, “Why should neurotic, selfish, immature people suddenly become angels when they fall in love … ?” That is why a good marriage is more painfully hard to achieve than athletic or artistic prowess. Raw, natural talent does not enable you to play baseball as a pro or write great literature without enduring discipline and enormous work. Why would it be easy to live lovingly and well with another human being in light of what is profoundly wrong within our human nature? Indeed, many people who have mastered athletics and art have failed miserably at marriage. So the biblical doctrine of sin explains why marriage—more than anything else that is good and important in this fallen world—is so painful and hard.

When you are courting, don’t worry about appearances and feelings and passion so much, because that is all subject to change over time, and those things won’t help you with the real challenges you’ll face in a marriage. Worry about whether they are the kind of person who can make commitments and love other people self-sacrificially – even if they are unlovable. In the long run, their ability to read and understand issues, to care for others and serve them, to keep promises, to be respectful and supportive, to argue respectfully and reasonably, and to solve problems constructively, will all be far more important than appearances and feelings and passion.

And let me be clear again: give them things to do that challenge them during the courtship and see how they handle being given responsibilities – giving a person hard things to do is a much better way to test a person than recreational nights out with recreational drinking, recreational dancing and recreational sex. Marriage means commitment and hard work, not recreation. And that's what you should test for – the ability to work hard at the relationship and to keep promises and commitments and to communicate reasonably and to work through difficulties fairly.

Related posts

- Courting rules: how to tell if a woman is a committed Christian
- Courting rules: how men use self-control to make relationships count for God
- Where are all the good men and why aren't men marrying?
- Are feminized churches preparing women to choose real men for husbands?
- What is the meaning and purpose of white roses?
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- How to communicate requirements to a Christian woman during courtship
- What has Michele Bachmann got that third-wave feminists haven't got?
- How Christian women can make Christian men marry without using sex appeal
- John Piper's questions to ask before you get married
- The rules for friendship and courtship between Christians
- What Christian men want from Christian women… in paintings!
- Should Christians marry non-Christians?

Study: abortion more than doubles the risk of child abuse

October 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a report from Life News about a new study out of Bowling Green State University. Excerpt:

> For decades, evidence has existed showing abortion contributes to a rise in child abuse. Now a new study by a post-abortion research institute and Bowling Green State University professors finds that women who have abortions are more likely to abuse their children.
>
> **Published in the medical journal Acta Paediatrica, the study found that women who have had abortions are 2.4 times more likely to physically abuse their children.** Pro-life advocates say it proves the need for providing women with post-abortion counseling to help deal with the emotional trauma of the abortion.
>
> Led by Priscilla Coleman, a professor at Bowling Green, researchers looked at data taken from a survey of 518 low-income women in Baltimore who were receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children and who had at least one child aged 12 years or younger.
>
> The data compared rates of child abuse and neglect among women who had experienced either an involuntary (miscarriage or stillbirth) or voluntary (induced abortion) pregnancy loss.
>
> Women who had a miscarriage or stillbirth were more likely to physically abuse their children as well, but the increase was much less significant than for women who had abortions.
>
> The authors suggested that "emotional difficulties and unresolved grief responses" from pregnancy loss, whether voluntary or involuntary, could have a negative impact on women's mental health and lead to unhealthy parenting responses.
>
> According to the Illinois-based Elliot Institute, which released information about the study's findings, prior surveys "have linked pregnancy loss to an increase in grief reactions, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, all of which can have a negative impact on parent/child relationships."
>
> The post-abortion research group also points to a 2002 study published in the Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology that found abortion has been linked to an increase in substance abuse and thoughts of suicide, which could also contribute to child abuse.
>
> The new study also found that women who had more than one miscarriage or

> stillbirth were more likely to engage in child abuse than women who had just one. However, women who had abortions were more likely to abuse their children whether they had one or more than one abortion.
>
> "Regardless of the specific mechanisms at play, maternal history of one induced abortion does appear to be a marker for increased risk of physical abuse," the authors concluded.

In legalizing abortion, we have changed the way that adults view sex and the way adults view children. Instead of thinking that sex is something that is reserved for marriage, we now think that it is OK for women to have sex for fun with men who have *no intention* and *no capability* to take on the traditional male roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. And when those irresponsible choices produce other human beings, we have taught ourselves that murder is a morally permissible option. What does it mean? It means that children have no rights. It means that we can kill things we create if they annoy us. And that attitude spills over from unborn children to born children. It is going to result in *more* child abuse, when more people accept these views about what sex is supposed to be for, and what our obligations are to children.

But this is not the only study that shows the harm that abortion does.

Life News reports on the latest studies confirming the link between abortion and breast cancer.

Excerpt:

> A newly-published study shows the highest-ever abortion-breast cancer risk for women of any previously-published study on the link between the two.
>
> A Bangladesh study published in the Journal of Dhaka Medical College on risk factors for breast cancer, led by Dr. Suraiya Jabeen, found a statistically significant 20.62-fold increased risk among women with abortion histories. The new study on the abortion-breast cancer link is by far the highest risk elevation reported among 73 published abortion-breast cancer studies.
>
> Physical inactivity, being menopause, positive family history of breast cancer and history of induced abortion were found important risk factors," the authors wrote.
>
> Professor Joel Brind, a professor at Baruch College, City University of New York who is an expert on the abortion-breast cancer link, said the reason why the risk elevation is so high is because it's "a measure of relative risk."
>
> Observing that women in Bangladesh have very traditional childbearing patterns that reduce breast cancer risk, he explained: "Almost all the women are married (97% currently married; the rest widowed) and with child by the time they are 20, and all of the kids are breastfed. Ninety percent had their first child at age 21 or younger (99% of controls did). They typically neither take contraceptive steroids nor have any abortions. Nulliparity (childlessness) or abortion before first full term pregnancy (both of which mean no breastfeeding) in a population in which breast cancer is almost unheard of, makes the relative risk very high."

> Brind continued: “Although the authors did not include a measure of their abortion link’s statistical significance, their raw data was complete enough to calculate a 95% confidence interval of 12.85-32.51, making abortion by far the strongest and most significant risk factor observed in these Bengali women. In plain English, women in this population who had any induced abortions were more than 20 times as likely to get breast cancer, compared to women with no abortions.”
>
> According to the study, additional minor reproductive factors influencing breast cancer risk included: use of oral contraceptives (1.47-fold increased risk); early first birth at or before age 21 (0.35-fold reduced risk); having two or more children (0.29-fold reduced risk); and increased number of months spent breastfeeding (0.30-fold reduced risk).

But that’s not all.

Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> A study in the Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention shows abortion increases the risk of breast cancer for women.
>
> C. Yanhua of the First Peoples’ Hospital of Kunming in Yunnan province and his colleagues found the abortion-breast cancer association after comparing data from 263 cases of breast cancer and 457 controls without the disease. Their analysis covers the years 2009-2011.
>
> The authors examined information on disease diagnosis, demographics, medical history, and reproductive characteristics of the patients involved and also looked at short menstrual cycle, old age at first live birth, never breastfeeding, history of oral contraceptive use, postmenopausal status and nulliparity to determine in abortion-breast cancer link exists.
>
> They write that “multivariate model analysis revealed the significant independent positive associations with breast cancer of shorter menstrual cycle, older age at first live birth, never breastfeeding, history of oral contraception experience, increased number of abortion, menopause status, and nulliparities.”
>
> “Number of abortion showed an increasing higher risk of breast cancer,” they added, while saying that women who had one live birth lowered their risk. “As far as women who had once a live birth, it showed decreased the risk of breast cancer compared to nulliparous.”
>
> “This study showed an increased risk of breast cancer with times of abortion. The association between abortion and risk of breast cancer in a study in China showed that the risk factors of female breast cancer included abortion times more than two (Li et al., 2006),” they continued. “Another study found that risk was raised among women reporting at least one abortion, but no trend was seen with number of abortions (Heuch et al., 2008). In a meta-analysis study, pooled

> odds ratio for number of abortions greater than and equal three was statistically significant (95%CI:1.68-5.36) (Tao et al.,2011).”
>
> “In conclusion, in this study the estrogen related risk factors of breast cancer included woman who had longer menstrual cycle, older age of first live birth, never breastfeeding, nulliparity, and number of abortions more than one. Therefore, it is recommended to women with these risk factors perform breast cancer screening tests earlier and regularly,” they said.

Previously, another study was published in Oxford University’s European Journal of Public Health, and the abstract is posted on PubMed.

Here are the results:

> With statistical controls for number of pregnancies, birth year and age at last pregnancy, the combination of induced abortion(s) and natural loss(es) was associated with more than three times higher mortality rate than only birth(s). Moderate risks were identified with only induced abortion, only natural loss and having experienced all outcomes compared with only birth(s). Risk of death was more than six times greater among women who had never been pregnant compared with those who only had birth(s). Increased risks of death were 45%, 114% and 191% for 1, 2 and 3 abortions, respectively, compared with no abortions after controlling for other reproductive outcomes and last pregnancy age. Increased risks of death were equal to 44%, 86% and 150% for 1, 2 and 3 natural losses, respectively, compared with none after including statistical controls. Finally, decreased mortality risks were observed for women who had experienced two and three or more births compared with no births.

Life Site News adds more:

> A single induced abortion increases the risk of maternal death by 45 percent compared to women with no history of abortion, according to a new study of all women of reproductive age in Denmark over a 25 year period.
>
> The study found that each additional abortion is associated with an even higher death rate. Women who had two abortions were 114 percent more likely to die during the period examined, and women had three or more abortions had a 192 percent increased risk of death.
>
> Elevated rates of death were also observed among women who experienced miscarriages, ectopic pregnancies or other natural losses. Among women with a history of multiple pregnancies, women with a history of both abortions and natural losses, but no live births, had the highest mortality rate.
>
> Women who had never been pregnant had the highest mortality rate overall.
>
> However, women with a history of successful deliveries were the least likely to die during the 25 years examined.
>
> The study is the second record linkage analysis of Danish mortality data to be

> published this month.
>
> The earlier study was limited to comparing mortality rates following only the first pregnancy outcome. It found that abortion of a first pregnancy was associated with a higher rate of death compared to death rates among women who delivered a first pregnancy. The higher death rate among women who had abortions persisted for each of the first ten years following the first pregnancy outcome.
>
> […]Dr. Reardon is the director of the Elliot Institute, which funds research related to abortion. He believes further research is needed to explore how the outcomes observed in this latest study may be influenced by abortion's impact on natural pregnancy losses. A new population study from Finland, for example, has found that abortion is associated with higher rates of preterm delivery, low birth weight delivery, and perinatal deaths in subsequent pregnancies.

And another from Life News.

Excerpt:

> A new study published in the *Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention* in February reported a very statistically significant increased risk of breast cancer for women with previous abortions as opposed to women who have never had one.
>
> The study, consisting of 1,351 women and led by researcher Ai-Ren Jiang, reported a statistically significant 1.52-fold elevation in risk for women with induced abortions and a "significant dose-response relationship between (the risk) for breast cancer and number of induced abortions," meaning the risk climbed with a higher number of previous abortions.
>
> For premenopausal women who have had abortions, the numbers were relatively small, and the observed 16% risk elevation was not statistically significant. However, for those with three or more abortions, the risk climbed to a statistically significant 1.55-fold elevation.
>
> "The results have revealed that induced abortion was related to increased risk of breast caner. Premenopausal women who had ≥3 times of induced abortion were at increased crude odds ratio (OR) (2.41, 95%CI: 1.09-5.42) and adjusted-OR (1.55, 95%CI: 1.15-5.68)," they wrote. "Postmenopausal women with a previous induced abortion were at increased crude OR (2.04, 95%CI: 1.48-2.81) and adjusted-OR (1.82, 95%CI: 1.30-2.54), and there was a significant increase trend in OR with number of induced abortions (p for trend: 0.0001)."
>
> […][A] Chinese study in 1995 by L. Bu and colleagues, including Janet Daling of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, reported a statistically significant 4.5-fold elevated risk among women with previous induced abortions who developed breast cancer at or before age 35, compared to older women (who experienced a statistically significant 2.5-fold elevated risk)

Here's another study from the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), showing that excessive consumption of alcohol is a rish factor for breast cancer.

Excerpt:

> Consumption of 3 to 6 alcoholic drinks per week is associated with a small increase in the risk of breast cancer, and consumption in both earlier and later adult life is also associated with an increased risk, according to a study in the November 2 issue of JAMA.
>
> "In many studies, higher consumption of alcohol has been associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. However, the effect of low levels of drinking as is common in the United States has not been well quantified," according to background information in the article. "In addition, the role of drinking patterns (i.e., frequency of drinking and 'binge' drinking) and consumption at different times of adult life are not well understood."
>
> Wendy Y. Chen, M.D., M.P.H., of Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, and colleagues examined the association of breast cancer with alcohol consumption during adult life, including quantity, frequency, and age at consumption. The study included 105,986 women enrolled in the Nurses' Health Study who were followed up from 1980 until 2008 with an early adult alcohol assessment and 8 updated alcohol assessments. The primary outcome the researchers measured was the risk of developing invasive breast cancer.
>
> During the follow-up period, there were 7,690 cases of invasive breast cancer diagnosed among the study participants. Analyses of data indicated that a low level of alcohol consumption (5.0 to 9.9 grams per day, equivalent to 3-6 glasses of wine per week) was modestly but statistically significantly associated with a 15 percent increased risk of breast cancer. In addition, women who consumed at least 30 grams of alcohol daily on average (at least 2 drinks per day) had a 51 percent increased risk of breast cancer compared with women who never consumed alcohol.
>
> The researchers also found that when examined separately, alcohol consumption levels at ages 18 to 40 years and after age 40 years were both strongly associated with breast cancer risk. The association with drinking in early adult life still persisted even after controlling for alcohol intake after age 40 years.
>
> Binge drinking, but not frequency of drinking, was also associated with breast cancer risk after controlling for cumulative alcohol intake.

Now let's take a look at some other factors that raise the risk of breast cancer.

Abortion and breast cancer

Many studies show a link between abortion and breast cancer.

Study 1: (September 2010)

> Based on the expression of estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2/neu (HER2), breast cancer is classified into several subtypes: luminal A (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2-), luminal B (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2+), HER2-overexpressing (ER-, PR-, and HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-, PR-, and HER2-). The aim of this case-control study is to determine reproductive factors associated with breast cancer subtypes in Chinese women. A total of 1,417 patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the First Affiliated Hospital, China Medical University, Shenyang, China between 2001 and 2009 and 1,587 matched controls without a prior breast cancer were enrolled.
>
> […]Postmenopause and spontaneous abortion were inversely associated with the risk of luminal tumors. By contrast, multiparity, family history of breast cancer and **induced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer**.

Study 2: (March 2010)

> OBJECTIVE: To explore the risk factors of breast cancer for better control and prevention of the malignancy.
>
> METHODS: The clinical data of 232 patients with pathologically established breast cancer were investigated in this 1:1 case-control study to identify the risk factors of breast cancer.
>
> RESULTS: The history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and**multiple abortions were the statistically significant risk factors of breast cancer**, while breast feeding was the protective factor.
>
> CONCLUSION: A history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and multiple abortions are all risk factors of breast cancer.

But wait, there’s more.

Birth control pills

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9) and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed childbearing was a risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

All of this research shows that abortion is bad for women, but I also should mention that abortion is always bad for the unborn child, especially sex-selection abortions, which target women more than men.

Conclusion

The total cost for breast cancer treatment, which raises medical insurance premiums (private health care) or taxes (single-payer health care), has been estimated to be between $1.8 billion and $3.8 billion dollars. In addition, the government spends billions of dollars each year on breast cancer research. All of this spending is costing taxpayers a lot of money, as people demand more and more government funding of breast cancer research and breast cancer treatment (with either private or single-payer health care).

Obamacare death spiral is already happening in states like New York and Washington

October 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Amy H. tweeted this this article from Reason, which talks about what happened to private health insurance in states that already implemented Obamacare-like policies.

Excerpt:

> Delaying the individual mandate might seem like an obvious response to the ongoing failure of the federal exchange system. But it's a rather drastic step. And, in isolation, a potentially problematic one.
>
> That's because the premiums that health insurers calculated for the exchanges this year were determined based on the assumption that the penalty for remaining uninsured would be in effect, and would encourage people to buy into the market.
>
> If you change the enrollment requirements—by, for example, ditching the mandate—while leaving the law's preexisting condition rules in place, health plan participation will likely be lower. The result, as one insurance official told NPR yesterday, is that insurers will want to change their premiums. And in this case, "change" means "raise."
>
> That's where the real trouble starts. Insurers raising prices as a result of lower than anticipated enrollment is an early step toward an insurance death spiral, in which premiums spike and enrollment figures drop until the only participants who remain in the market are very people paying very high premiums. We know because we've seen it before—in New York, Washington, and handful of other states that enacted preexisting condition regulations similar to Obamacare's but without an individual mandate.
>
> New York state's guaranteed issue and community rating rules—the two regulations that limit how insurers can charge based on health history and require them to sell policies to all comers—took effect in 1994. At the time, there were about 752,000 policyholders in the state's individual market, or about 4.7 percent of the non-Medicare population. But by 2009, according to a Manhattan Institute report by Stephen Parente and Tarren Bragdon, the state's individual market had practically disappeared, leaving just 34,000 participants, or about 0.2 percent of the non-elderly population. Individual insurance premiums, meanwhile, were among the highest in the nation—about $388 on average in 2007, compared with just $151 in California, another big Democratic-leaning state. In New York City, the annualized premium cost for individuals was more than $9,300 and more than $26,400 for a family.
>
> The result, in other words, was a combination of sky-high premiums and far fewer

> insured individuals.
>
> Around the same time that New York was overhauling its insurance market, Washington state was implementing a similar set of health plan rules. Insurers faced new regulations regarding plans sold to individuals with preexisting conditions, and the requirement that they sell to everyone. For a brief period, there was a coverage mandate, but that never went into effect. The state's individual market deteriorated. One insurer raised premiums by 78 percent in a three year period. As premiums rose, relatively healthier people left the market, and insurers were left covering a lot of very sick, very expensive individuals. In the end, many insurers simply dropped out of the market rather than lose money. According to a report on the reforms commissioned by the insurance industry, there were 19 carriers in the individual market in 1993. By 1999, there were just two—and they weren't taking new applicants.
>
> The individual market was effectively killed off by the reforms.

Why do these policies of "community rating" and "guaranteed issue" cause the death spiral?

Investors Business Daily has a look at the chain of causation.

Excerpt:

> For years, ObamaCare critics focused on its least popular feature — the mandate that everyone buy insurance — taking their fight all the way to the Supreme Court.
>
> But as ObamaCare's official launch date approaches, even its backers are beginning to admit that the law could actually create powerful incentives for millions of people and thousands of businesses to drop their coverage, despite the mandate.
>
> There is growing concern, for example, that the law's market reforms will cause a huge "rate shock," particularly for those young and healthy.
>
> **A February survey of major health insurance companies in five cities across the country found that they expect premiums for this group to climb an average 169%.**
>
> **The cause of this rate shock is simple: ObamaCare imposes what is called "community rating" on insurance companies, effectively forcing them to charge the young and healthy more so they can charge older and sicker consumers less.**
>
> The five-city survey, for example, found that while the law will jack up rates for the young, it will lower them an average 22% for older and sicker customers.
>
> At the same time, ObamaCare also forbids insurance companies from turning anyone down — a reform called "guaranteed issue" — which also will provide an incentive for some to drop coverage, knowing they can get it back any time.

> “Even with the tax penalty … some healthy people would avoid purchasing coverage until they are sick,” Howard Shapiro, director of public policy at the Alliance of Community Health Plans, told regulators .
>
> **The problem is that if the young and healthy drop coverage, the result would be what the industry calls a “death spiral.” Premiums will climb as the pool of insured gets sicker, causing still more to cancel their policies.**
>
> This is just what happened in states that imposed strict community rating and guaranteed issue reforms in the past. In fact, of the eight states that did so, most ended up either dropping the reforms or loosening the rules after they saw enrollment decline and premiums climb.

It’s very important to understand that what Obama did with his health care plan will not cause premiums to go down. On the contrary, they have gone up and they will go up.

How pro-life apologetics helps strengthen your evangelism

October 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Scott Klusendorf's Life Training Institute.

Excerpt:

> Beyond the obvious obligation we have as thinking human beings to clarify the status, and defend the value, of innocent, unborn human life, engaging in the pro-life project is also a way to make the case for the truth of Christianity in general. It stands to reason that if the scientific, philosophical, and moral arguments we offer in defense of the humanity of the unborn also happen to align exactly with the biblical notion of what it means to be a human being made "in the image of God," then the Bible might also have something to say about other things of importance.
>
> This is a point Scott makes repeatedly but it was recently driven home in a very concrete way by, of all people, a hard core atheist in the most recent issue of ***Salvo*** magazine. A secular skeptic, law school professor, renowned blogger, and mocker of deluded "Godiots," the "Raving Atheist" attended a blogger party where he serendipitously sat next to a Catholic blogger named Benjamin. As the "Raving Atheist" explains:

> At one point the conversation turned to abortion, and I asked Benjamin's opinion of the practice. I was stunned. Here was a kind, affable, and cogently reasonable human being who nonetheless believed that abortion was murder. To the limited extent I had previously considered the issue, I believed abortion to be completely acceptable, the mere disposal of a lump of cells, perhaps akin to clipping fingernails.

> This unsettling exchange spurred me to further investigate the issue on Benjamin's blog. I noticed that pro-choice Christians did not employ scientific or rational arguments but relied on a confused set of "spiritual" platitudes. More significantly, the pro-choice atheistic blogosphere also fell short in its analysis of abortion. ***The supposedly "reality-based" community either dismissed abortion as a "religious issue" or paradoxically claimed that pro-life principles were contrary to religious doctrine. Having formerly equated atheism with reason, I was slowly growing uncertain of the value of godlessness in the search for truth.***

> Though the "Raving Atheist" continued to rave, there was now a stone in his God-rejecting shoe, placed there by a reasoned defense of the pro-life view. He couldn't disconnect himself from it and later admitted that the "selfless dedication [of pro-life advocates] to their cause moved [him] deeply." Later, he

> met a woman named Ashli whose work in pregnancy care drew him to further consider the pro-life position. Soon thereafter, the "Raving Atheist" became, in part, a pro-life blogsite …

Click here to read the astonishing conclusion. Then come back here.

Back? Ok, so what did we learn from this? Well, the moral of this story is that it is *very* important for Christians to have a good understanding of moral issues like abortion and same-sex marriage so that they can talk about these issues based on what they know. When someone can stake out a *moral* position on these kinds of issues, using science and history and other hard evidence – *not just the Bible* – then it helps non-Christians to take us seriously *as thinkers*.

Unless we demonstrate the ability to reason out there in the real world – outside the church – then we are not going to be viewed as authoritative on any subject – *especially* on spiritual subjects. We really need to study up on other issues, and show that we care about the unborn (abortion issue) and children (same-sex marriage issue). We have to show that there is more to us than just doing what feels good. We have to show that we are smart and that we are willing to be unpopular in order to do the right thing. That we didn't just inherit these views from our parents, or from our culture. That we have actually thought things through more than just reading the Bible, and that it makes a difference in how we view the world, and in how we live.

And I also think that it is just as important to read about economics, because we care about the poor. Socialists don't know anything about economics. Whenever their wealth redistribution policies are tried, people get poorer and are less likely to be employed. If we really cared about the poor, we would study economics. Entrepreneurs stop hiring workers when they think that there is no profit to be made from undertaking an enterprise.

We also need to read about military and foreign policy issues, because we care about peace. Pacifists don't know anything about military affairs and terrorism. Whenever their appeasement policies are tried, wars start and innocent people die. If we really cared about preventing wars and terrorism, we would study military history, counter-terorism and foreign policy. Bad men become aggressive when they think there is no cost to bear for it.

Ignorance is never a good idea when you are trying to do good – and you can't know what is really good just by your feelings and intuitions. If you want to do good, you need to be 1) convincing and 2) effective. And that takes study. Don't choose policies based on what makes you feel good and what sounds good to others. Push for *effective* policies – what actually *does* good – and then have your arguments and evidence ready to convince people, using evidence from authorities *that they accept as non-Christians*. If you have the will to study a little, you can be passionate *and* convincing. Non-Christians respect passion and knowledge. They don't respect fideism and mysticism. They can spot a fake a mile away.

The best book to read on Christian worldview is Wayne Grudem's "Politics According to

the Bible“.

If you want to see Scott in a good debate against an ACLU spokeswoman, click here. He is also the author of the best introductory book on pro-life apologetics, entitled “The Case for Life“.

More Americans collecting welfare than working full-time

October 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Posted at Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> At the end of 2011, the last year for which data are available, some 108.6 million people received one or more means-tested government benefit programs — bureaucratese for welfare.
>
> Meanwhile, there were just 101.7 million people with full-time jobs, the Census data show, including both the private and government sectors.
>
> This is a real danger for the U.S. — the danger of dependency. Anytime more people are being paid not to work than to work, it imperils our democracy. No one votes to cut his own welfare benefits. So welfare grows.
>
> […]According to official data from the government, 46.5 million people live in poverty in the U.S. Doing the quick math, that means just 43% of all those on welfare are officially considered poor.
>
> When you add in other government programs with a check attached — Social Security, Medicare, veterans benefits, unemployment and other non-means-tested benefits — you find a whopping 151 million Americans get a check from the government other than an income-tax refund.
>
> […]A Cato Institute study in August found that welfare now pays more than minimum-wage work in 35 states. Indeed, the federal government has 126 separate programs to help low-income earners.
>
> "The current welfare system provides such a high level of benefits that it acts as a disincentive for work," the study said. "Welfare currently pays more than a minimum-wage job in 35 states, even after accounting for the Earned Income Tax Credit, and in 13 states it pays more than $15 per hour."
>
> Given all the disincentives, it seems as if the government doesn't even want people to work. But why would that be?
>
> Perhaps it's in the interest of those on the so-called progressive left — those most responsible for the uncontrolled growth of the welfare state — to keep Americans out of work and dependent on government.
>
> Sure looks that way. After all, for Democrats, dependent voters are reliable voters.

In fact, we've spent $3.7 trillion on welfare over the last 5 years.

Where did the money come from? Well, all this subsidized dependency has been going on, we have been adding 6.5 trillion to the national debt. Our national debt is now up to

$17 trillion – more than our entire Gross Domestic Product! The national debt will have to be paid back by future generations of Americans. So what we are really doing here is transferring money from children who can't vote to adults who can vote. That's what the Democrat Party is doing with all of this spending.

This program of inter-generational theft amounts to enslaving the next generation. You could even view the public schools as complicit in it, since they are teaching young people to value giving the public schools more money. It's like brainwashing a victim of abuse to believe that the abuse is normal. By the time the young people wake up and realize that they are eating grass while their "educators" dine on caviar, it will be too late. This is not surprising since the Democrats are the part of slavery, historically speaking. Maybe we need to start using rhetoric like that so that people understand what is really going on.

Washington Post and Daily Beast: Obamacare woes go beyond web site

October 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Leftist Ezra Klein writes about the Obamacare problems in the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> As Sarah Kliff and I wrote in our overview of the health-care launch's technical issues, the challenges right now can be grouped into three broad categories: problems with the consumer experience on the HealthCare.gov Web site, problems with the eligibility system, and problems with the hand-off to insurers.
>
> The problems with the Web site are the difficulties consumers are facing when they try to log on and shop for insurance coverage. These problems — error messages, site timeouts, difficulty logging in to an account — make it hard for an individual to buy coverage through the marketplace. They are the reason why some people have made upward of 20 attempts at purchasing a plan. These are the problems that are being fixed fastest and that are the least serious.
>
> The eligibility problems strike when consumers send in their information and the government's computer systems tell them whether they're eligible for Medicaid, health insurance subsidies or nothing at all. The system is returning incorrect data for many applicants — meaning they might be eligible for Medicaid and not know it, or they might think they have subsidies that will later be revoked.
>
> The insurance problems are seen by the insurance companies. Health plans are supposed to get a report when someone uses HealthCare.gov to buy their health insurance policy. Those reports are full of inaccurate data, such as the wrong address, or are being sent in duplicate. (One insurance company reported getting one of these reports, known as an "834 transmission," that said one individual had three spouses. This person was not, for the record, a polygamist.) And it's not just private insurers: The federal system is also failing to sign people up for Medicaid.

And here's moderate leftist Kirsten Powers on the leftist Daily Beast.

Excerpt:

> The Associated Press reported that "Website builders saw red flags for months." *The Washington Post* recounted, "Days before the launch of President Obama's online health insurance marketplace, government officials and contractors tested a key part of the Web site to see whether it could handle tens of thousands of consumers at the same time. It crashed after a simulation in which just a few hundred people tried to log on simultaneously. Despite the failed test, federal health officials plowed ahead." Sebelius admitted Monday that the

> website “didn’t have enough testing, specifically for high volumes, for a complicated project.”
>
> What have they been doing for the last few years? The administration has claimed that it can’t be helped that setting up an insurance exchange is so complex. Sebelius even lamented that she wished she had “five years” to finish this project. Who needs five years to build a website? This isn’t a search for the cure for cancer.
>
> In the week leading up to the launch of the exchanges, Obama assured Americansthat using the health insurance hub would be as easy as buying a plane ticket online. Apparently he wasn’t in on what was happening behind the scenes. Sebelius told CNN that the first the president heard of problems was in “the first couple of days” after the site went live October 1. If this is true, then either the president didn’t ask about the site’s capabilities or someone lied to him. If the former is true, then he has an incredible lack of imagination and curiosity. If the latter is the case, then why hasn’t anyone been fired?
>
> True to form, the Most Transparent Administration in History has not been particularly forthcoming about the problems the site faces. At first, it claimed these were just minor glitches caused by unexpectedly high traffic. The president famously compared these glitches to those that Apple has experienced in the past. He might be interested to know that Apple fired the manager responsible for the last major snafu the company encountered.
>
> Obamacare supporter Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) complained Thursday on MSNBC that the administration “[hasn’t] leveled with the United States Senate. They haven’t briefed us on what they think are the underlying problems. They were supposed to do so yesterday, and canceled the meeting.”
>
> He called for a consideration of a one-year delay of the individual mandate and demanded: “The administration needs to tell us what is going on…[they need] to level with the American people. There needs to be fuller, fairer, more straightforward, and complete accounting for what’s going on.”

It’s the most transparent administration ever! And this non-functional web site only cost $400 million taxpayer dollars. Why so much? Well it was a no-bid contract, so there were no competitive bids. Why? Because a former Princeton University classmate of Michelle Obama works for the company that got the no-bid contract.

I fully expect Obama to come out and blame George W. Bush for this. And many people will believe him, too.

Alvin Plantinga’s evolutionary argument against naturalism

October 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s the link at First Things.

Excerpt:

> Although Darwin admits he wasn’t much of an abstract thinker, he could not shake the “inward conviction” that “the Universe is not the result of chance.” Unlike many who followed after him, he appears to have intuitively understood the paradox of combining naturalism with evolutionary theory: If evolution is a non-teleological process, it undercuts our ability to trust that we can form true beliefs and convictions.
>
> To have trustworthy convictions, we have to have properly functioning noetic equipment (i.e., a brain, spinal cord, sensory apparatus, etc., that recognize reality). But can a strictly materialistic, non-teleological, evolutionary process produce such reliable equipment? The philosopher Alvin Plantinga, one of the greatest thinkers of our era, thinks the answer is “no.” Although his argument is too complex and tightly argued to be adequately summarized, the basic outline of his case shows his point to be all but incontrovertible.
>
> Plantinga claims, not that evolution is untrue, but that the truth of evolution is incompatible with the truth of naturalism. “As far as I can see, God certainly could have used Darwinian processes to create the living world and direct it as he wanted to go,” he argues. “Hence evolution as such does not imply that there is no direction in the history of life.”
>
> What does imply that life is not directed, he adds, is not evolutionary theory itself, but the theory of *unguided* evolution: the idea that “neither God nor any other person has taken a hand in guiding, directing, or orchestrating the course of evolution.” For our purposes, we’ll call this view “evolutionary naturalism.”
>
> Evolutionary naturalism assumes that our noetic equipment developed as it did because it had some survival value or reproductive advantage. Unguided evolution does not select for belief except insofar as the belief improves the chances of survival. The truth of a belief is irrelevant, as long as it produces an evolutionary advantage.

If you want to hear Plantinga giving a lecture on this same argument live on a university campus, click here.

Summary:

> In a talk given at The Veritas Forum at Oregon State University in January 1996, Professor Alvin Plantinga presents an evolutionary argument *against* naturalism.

> In a complex, but important philosophical argument, he argues that it is not rational to accept belief in naturalism and evolution, because such beliefs provide no rational basis for trusting our cognitive faculties.

I think it’s a great challenge to naturalism that we should all be aware of.

Americans choosing not to purchase Obamacare exchange plans

October 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On Fox News Sunday, Brit Hume talked about how the majority of the new enrollees are signing up for Medicaid, not Obamacare, and how young people are refusing to sign up for Obamacare plans on the exchanges.

And more discussion from the same panel:

For those who can't watch, here's an article from Fox News about how the majority of new enrollees are choosing Medicaid, not Obamacare plans.

Excerpt:

> While virtually all the ObamaCare focus is trained on the program's dysfunctional website, another problem could be emerging — in states where individuals are able to sign up, far more are enrolling in Medicaid than private plans.
>
> For now, the statistics are spotty. The Obama administration still hasn't provided figures on how many people have successfully enrolled through the federally run exchanges. Some, but not all, states have provided their own relatively up-to-date figures.
>
> But for those that have, the lopsided numbers show Medicaid is getting the lion's share of enrollees.
>
> In Washington state, more than 35,000 people have signed up for coverage since Oct. 1. Of them, just 4,500 went into private plans. Roughly 31,000 signed up for Medicaid — with coverage kicking in sometime between now and Jan. 1.
>
> The director of the state's Health Care Authority said they were "pleased by the strong response of Medicaid-eligible residents."
>
> But the imbalance — if it does not even out in the months to come — could create problems for private insurance companies which are relying on a major influx of new and healthy customers to make the system hum.
>
> "There are a lot of elements of this law that have to work, that must work — otherwise the whole thing collapses," the Cato Institute's Michael Cannon said. "They need — need — lots of healthy people to sign up for insurance through the exchanges."
>
> The fact that people are flocking to Medicaid isn't necessarily a problem — but a lack of healthy enrollees on private plans would be.
>
> The main reason the Affordable Care Act mandated that individuals buy insurance was so that private insurers would get enough young, healthy people in the system who could offset the costs of covering older and sicker patients. Otherwise, at the very least, costs will skyrocket for those in the system.

> […]The Democrat and Chronicle newspaper reports that in New York, nearly 24,000 of the 37,000 newly enrolled residents are going into Medicaid, which millions of New Yorkers are already on. Just 13,313 chose private plans.

Medicaid is fully taxpayer-funded, so this is not going to help the deficit/debt situation at all. That money will have to be borrowed and paid back by taxpayers. Making things worse is the fact that young people are not signing up to purchase the overpriced health insurance plans on Obamacare exchanges.

Excerpt:

> As Nick Gillespie and Veronique de Rugy have pointed out for *Reason* magazine, the concept of today's older generation as impoverished is simply wrong. In fact, today's seniors are far wealthier than today's young adults.
>
> Looking at rates of homeownership, 83% of elderly households own a home. Meanwhile, 36% of millennials are still living under their parents' roof. Those over 65 years of age have much lower poverty rates than most other demographic groups. Households headed by people 65 or older have 22 times the wealth of households headed by people under 35.
>
> Not only are many young people either unemployed or underemployed, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau estimates that people under 40 owe 67% of the roughly $1.4 trillion that Americans owe on school loans. That's on top of an average of several thousand dollars of credit card debt.
>
> ObamaCare forces people who can scarcely afford the extra cost to subsidize care for people who absolutely can afford to pay for their own health services.
>
> In the exchanges, a young person will have to pay an estimated $250 per month for basic insurance. Again, this cost is so high because these premiums are expected to pay for older people's healthcare costs. These costs now include covering a plethora of expensive drugs, services and procedures thanks to ObamaCare's requirements for insurance plans.

Buying plans on insurance exchanges costs money, and many young people don't have any money to spend these days. Young people have not done particularly well at finding jobs lately, especially since they have acquired precious few marketable skills in the public schools. (Most people can't get a job calling people racist and sexist and homophobic, because there are only so many journalism jobs to go around).

So what Obama has really done is promised lots of goodies to all of his supporters, but there is no one signing on to pay for it. And that's what I would expect from someone with no marketable degrees or skills who has very very limited experience working in the private sector. Many of the people in the Obama administration just haven't done anything productive in the private sector, and that lack of experience is now showing. We have elected a government that believes in making policy based on feelings, not facts.

U.S. Army: Christians and Tea Party conservatives are potential terrorists

October 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Todd Starnes from Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> Soldiers attending a pre-deployment briefing at Fort Hood say they were told that evangelical Christians and members of the Tea Party were a threat to the nation and that any soldier donating to those groups would be subjected to punishment under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.
>
> A soldier who attended the Oct. 17th briefing told me the counter-intelligence agent in charge of the meeting spent nearly a half hour discussing how evangelical Christians and groups like the American Family Association were "tearing the country apart."
>
> The soldier told me he fears reprisals and asked not to be identified. He said there was a blanket statement that donating to any groups that were considered a threat to the military and government was punishable under military regulations.
>
> "My first concern was if I was going to be in trouble going to church," the evangelical Christian soldier told me. "Can I tithe? Can I donate to Christian charities? What if I donate to a politician who is a part of the Tea Party movement?"
>
> Another soldier who attended the briefing alerted the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty. That individual's recollections of the briefing matched the soldier who reached out to me.
>
> "I was very shocked and couldn't believe what I was hearing," the soldier said. "I felt like my religious liberties, that I risk my life and sacrifice time away from family to fight for, were being taken away."
>
> And while a large portion of the briefing dealt with the threat evangelicals and the Tea Party pose to the nation, barely a word was said about Islamic extremism, the soldier said.
>
> "Our community is still healing from the act of terrorism brought on by Nidal Hasan – who really is a terrorist," the soldier said. "This is a slap in the face. "The military is supposed to defend freedom and to classify the vast majority of the military that claim to be Christian as terrorists is sick."
>
> […]The soldier said they were also told that the pro-life movement is another example of "radicalization."
>
> "They said that evangelical Christians protesting abortions are the mobilization stage and that leads to the bombing of abortion clinics," he said, recalling the

> discussion.
>
> […]But this is not the first time an Army briefing has labeled evangelicals as extremists. Last April an Army Reserve briefing classified Evangelical Christianity and Catholicism as "religious extremism."
>
> […]Two weeks ago, several dozen active duty troops at Camp Shelby in Mississippi, were told the American Family Association, a well-respected Christian ministry, should be classified as a domestic hate group because it advocates for traditional family values.

Fort Hood was the site of the attack by Muslim terrorist Major Nidal Hasan, an incident which the Democrats labeled "workplace violence". They can't call real terrorism what it is, but they cant teach that Christians and Tea Party conservatives terrorists. If you believe in natural marriage and the Constitution, then you're a terrorist. If you wage jihad against civilians then it's "workplace violence". And this stupidity is all taxpayer-funded. The U.S. Army works for us – we pay for them to teach hatred against us.

So who are the real domestic terrorists? Why don't we look at actual acts of domestic terrorism. The most recent incident of domestic terrorism is the Southern Poverty Law Center assisted attack on the Family Research Council building. The SPLC, you remember, is the group that labels pro-family groups as "hate groups". And yet I suspect that the Army is relying on the SPLC to tell them who they should be concerned about. Talk about the fox guarding the hen house!

Related posts

- Judge bars prosecution from introducing evidence of Nidal Hasan's jihadi motives
- Mark Steyn: Nidal Hasan trial shows we are not serious about national security
- Obama administration covers up political correctness that led to massacre
- Hasan's classmates knew he was a radical, but would not speak out
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism

Critical Obamacare data center crashes, affecting all 50 states

October 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What happens when you elect a President who has no experience in computer science or even in the private sector? What if the President appoints someone to lead HHS who has no experience in information technology? What happens when an administration has the least private sector experience in decades?

This:

> A data center critical for allowing uninsured Americans to buy health coverage under President Barack Obama's healthcare law went down on Sunday, the U.S. government said, in the latest problem for the "Obamacare" rollout.
>
> Verizon's Terremark operates the data center behind a federal system for determining eligibility for government subsidies to buy insurance nationwide and hosts HealthCare.gov, the website that makes insurance available in 36 of the 50 states.
>
> The data center experienced a failure on Sunday that led it to lose network connectivity, Health and Human Services Department spokeswoman Joanne Peters said.
>
> Online insurance exchanges opened on October 1 under the law to offer health insurance plans to millions of uninsured Americans. But it has been marred by technical glitches and delays as would-be customers encounter error messages and long waits, often failing to make it through the system despite repeated tries.
>
> "We are working with Terremark to get their timeline for addressing the issue," Peters said in an email. "We understand that this issue is affecting other customers in addition to HealthCare.gov, and Terremark is working (to) resolve the issue as quickly as possible."
>
> Peters said the newest glitch also affected a data services hub – an electronic traffic roundabout that connects numerous federal agencies and can verify people's identity, citizenship, and other facts.
>
> Problems with the data services hub affect customers of both HealthCare.gov and the state-run exchanges. State exchanges had been running smoothly.
>
> The verification is necessary to determine eligibility for tax credits that reduce the cost of monthly insurance premiums, a key provision of the law.
>
> […]The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services told Connecticut officials about the outage and gave no indication of when the data services hub would be functioning again, said a spokeswoman for Access Health CT, the Connecticut exchange.

> The problems with the rollout of the law have become a political liability for Obama. The White House has said Obama still has “full confidence” in HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, whose department is responsible for implementing the law. Sebelius has faced Republicans calls for her resignation.

I’m sorry but creating web sites is not the same as giving speeches with a teleprompter where you blame other people and talk about good you are at doing things that you have never done before – at any level, before. When you elect a moron with a history of drug use, you get moron quality work. I had to take a drug test and pass a background check before I could work in the information technology field for a private company, but obviously you don’t have to do that in order to be President.

Should wives refuse / deny their husbands regular sex?

October 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager features a lot of discussions about male-female relationships on his show, particularly during the male-female hour. I think this is one of the parts of his show that I really like best, because he knows what he is talking about.

He did a two part series a while back on 1) male sexuality and 2) what women should do about it within a marriage.

Part 1 is here.

Excerpt:

> It is an axiom of contemporary marital life that if a wife is not in the mood, she need not have sex with her husband. Here are some arguments why a woman who loves her husband might want to rethink this axiom.
>
> First, women need to recognize how a man understands a wife's refusal to have sex with him: A husband knows that his wife loves him first and foremost by her willingness to give her body to him. This is rarely the case for women. Few women know their husband loves them because he gives her his body (the idea sounds almost funny). This is, therefore, usually a revelation to a woman. Many women think men's natures are similar to theirs, and this is so different from a woman's nature, that few women know this about men unless told about it.
>
> This is a major reason many husbands clam up. A man whose wife frequently denies him sex will first be hurt, then sad, then angry, then quiet. And most men will never tell their wives why they have become quiet and distant. They are afraid to tell their wives. They are often made to feel ashamed of their male sexual nature, and they are humiliated (indeed emasculated) by feeling that they are reduced to having to beg for sex.
>
> When first told this about men, women generally react in one or more of five ways…

He then explains the 5 ways that women respond to this.

Here's one:

> 1. You have to be kidding. That certainly isn't my way of knowing if he loves me. There have to be deeper ways than sex for me to show my husband that I love him.

I think that this is a common mistake that liberal women make because they think that men are just hairy women. But men are not women, we are different and sex means something different to men than it does to women. In the past, *most* women understood how men are different than women, but younger women have been taught that there are

no differences between the sexes. To think any different is “sexism”.

Here’s another from the list:

> 4. You have it backwards. If he truly loved me, he wouldn’t expect sex when I’m not in the mood.

Again, this is the common mistake that many younger women today make in thinking that love is a one-way street – flowing from men and children to the woman. If men and children DON’T do what the woman wants, or if they make demands on her, then they don’t “love” her and she is justified in ignoring them.

Liberal women have been taught to believe that they are always victims or some group of oppressors, such as men and children or corporations. It makes them rebel against having to do anything for anyone else, because they don’t want to be “oppressed”. That makes them unable to accept that relationships are give-and-take, Once a commitment to love another person permanently has been made, then each person has responsibilities to provide for the needs of the other.

I actually had a conversation with a Christian woman once who said that women should not be obligated to do things that they didn’t feel like doing. I asked her if men were obligated to go to work when they didn’t feel like going. She said yes, and acted as though I were crazy for asking. I just laughed, because she didn’t even see the inconsistency. The truth is that men often don’t feel like working, but they get up and go to work anyway, whether they like it or not (in most cases). Similarly, a women should feel obligated to have sex with her husband, even if she is not in a perfect mood for it (in most cases). Sometimes, a man stays home from work, and it’s OK. And sometimes a woman says no to sex, and it’s OK. But it’s not OK to stop doing it for months and months with no good reason.

Part 2 is here.

Excerpt:

> Here are eight reasons for a woman not to allow not being in the mood for sex to determine whether she denies her husband sex.

He then explains the eight reasons.

Here’s one of them:

> 7. Many contemporary women have an almost exclusively romantic notion of sex: It should always be mutually desired and equally satisfying or one should not engage in it. Therefore, if a couple engages in sexual relations when he wants it and she does not, the act is “dehumanizing” and “mechanical.” Now, ideally, every time a husband and wife have sex, they would equally desire it and equally enjoy it. But, given the different sexual natures of men and women, this cannot always be the case. If it is romance a woman seeks — and she has every reason to seek it — it would help her to realize how much more romantic her husband and her marriage are likely to be if he is not regularly denied sex, even of the

> non-romantic variety.

Women have to engage their husbands if they expect their husbands to engage in the marriage as a husband and father. Men can't do their protector, provider and spiritual leader roles forever unless their needs are met at some point. Performance of these male duties is not free. Wives have to love their husbands in the way that men expect to be loved. That's what they vowed to do in the wedding, isn't it?

At the end of the article, Prager makes a general point about women that I think needs to be emphasized over and over and over:

> That solution is for a wife who loves her husband — if she doesn't love him, mood is not the problem — to be guided by her mind, not her mood, in deciding whether to deny her husband sex.

This problem of sex-withholding is so widespread, that it really makes me (although I am a virgin) wonder what women think that marriage is about anyway. When a woman vows to love her husband, what do they think that word really means? Why do women think that men marry? What do men want that marriage provides for them? Which of those needs are the women's responsibility to provide for? I think these are questions that men should ask women. I think women should be prepared to answer them. Men should expect that women be reading books on men and marriage, and that she has relationships with men where she is giving support, respect, affirmation, affection and approval. You can learn a lot about a woman by how she treats her father, for example.

I think that the best place to learn about the needs and feelings of husbands is in Dr. Laura's book "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands". Women can learn what (good) men need in order to function as husbands and fathers in that book. A smart man will choose a woman who has read books like that, so that she can support and affirm him as he does his husband responsibilities.

Unfortunately, many men today haven't thought through what they need from wives in a marriage. They spend their young years chasing women who are fun and sexually permissive. Every husband I asked about what they need has told me that respect, affirmation, affection and regular sex are more important than appearance and fun. Pre-marital sex, having fun, getting drunk, and going out, etc. are not the right foundation for marriage – which requires mutual self-sacrifice in order to work. Men need to be testing women during the courtship to see if women understand the differences between men and women, and whether they are prepared to handle the needs and feelings of a husband.

NBC News: “Obama administration knew millions could not keep their health insurance”

October 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

That’s the headline from the actual NBC News article.

Here’s the thesis:

> President Obama repeatedly assured Americans that after the Affordable Care Act became law, people who liked their health insurance would be able to keep it. But millions of Americans are getting or are about to get cancellation letters for their health insurance under Obamacare, say experts, and the Obama administration has known that for at least three years.

According to recent estimates, it’s 16 million. A previous estimate by CBO in 2012 said that up to 20 million could lose their employer-based coverage.

More:

> **Four sources deeply involved in the Affordable Care Act tell NBC News that 50 to 75 percent of the 14 million consumers who buy their insurance individually can expect to receive a “cancellation” letter or the equivalent over the next year because their existing policies don’t meet the standards mandated by the new health care law. One expert predicts that number could reach as high as 80 percent. And all say that many of those forced to buy pricier new policies will experience “sticker shock.”**
>
> **None of this should come as a shock to the Obama administration. The law states that policies in effect as of March 23, 2010 will be “grandfathered,” meaning consumers can keep those policies even though they don’t meet requirements of the new health care law. But the Department of Health and Human Services then wrote regulations that narrowed that provision, by saying that if any part of a policy was significantly changed since that date — the deductible, co-pay, or benefits, for example — the policy would not be grandfathered.**

It’s the HHS regulations that make it so that “grandfathered” plans cannot be kept – and those are part of this Obamacare project, because the regulations deal with how it is implemented.

More:

> Buried in Obamacare regulations from July 2010 is an estimate that because of normal turnover in the individual insurance market, “40 to 67 percent” of customers will not be able to keep their policy. And because many policies will have been changed since the key date, “the percentage of individual market

> policies losing grandfather status in a given year exceeds the 40 to 67 percent range.”
>
> That means the administration knew that more than 40 to 67 percent of those in the individual market would not be able to keep their plans, even if they liked them.
>
> Yet President Obama, who had promised in 2009, “if you like your health plan, you will be able to keep your health plan,” was still saying in 2012, “If [you] already have health insurance, you will keep your health insurance.”
>
> “This says that when they made the promise, they knew half the people in this market outright couldn’t keep what they had and then they wrote the rules so that others couldn’t make it either,” said Robert Laszewski, of Health Policy and Strategy Associates, a consultant who works for health industry firms. Laszewski estimates that 80 percent of those in the individual market will not be able to keep their current policies and will have to buy insurance that meets requirements of the new law, which generally requires a richer package of benefits than most policies today.

Obama knew, when he said those famous words, that they were not true. He’s a liar.

Texas judge rules that it is OK for Planned Parenthood to put women's lives at risk

October 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Some bad news from Life News.

Excerpt:

> A Texas judge today issued an opinion striking down two parts of a Texas pro-life law that protects women from dangerous abortions.
>
> **The judge blocked part of the law that required its doctors to have the right to admit patients to local hospitals. Texas became one of several states that require abortion doctors to have admitting privileges at local hospitals so women can be treated when they are victimized by botched abortions.**
>
> The admitting privileges statute "does not bear a rational relationship to the legitimate right of the State in preserving and promoting fetal life or a woman's health and, in any event, places a substantial obstacle in the path of a woman seeking an abortion of a nonviable fetus and is thus an undue burden to her," Yeakel wrote. "The court concludes that admitting privileges have no rational relationship to improved patient care."
>
> […]The judge also ruled that the part of the law that requires abortion businesses to follow FDA protocol, by only dispensing the dangerous RU 486 abortion drug in person, can apply except when the life or health of the mother is in danger — even though abortions routinely put women's lives and health at risk.
>
> Texas legislated in part because Planned Parenthood's off-label usage of the drug led to numerous deaths and injuries to women.

The (Republican) Attorney General of Texas will appeal the decision.

Mike Licona explains the As, Bs, Cs, Ds and Es of New Testament reliability

October 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Licona is one of my favorite Christian apologists, and here is an excellent lecture to show you why.

In the lecture, he explains why the four biographies in the New Testament should be accepted as historically accurate: (55 minutes)

(UPDATE: Video changed from Vimeo to Youtube)

Summary:

- What a Baltimore Ravens helmet teaches us about the importance of truth
- What happens to Christians when they go off to university?
- The 2007 study on attitudes of American professors to evangelical Christians
- Authors: Who wrote the gospels?
- Bias: Did the bias of the authors cause them to distort history?
- Contradictions: What about the different descriptions of events in the gospels?
- Dating: When were the gospels written?
- Eyewitnesses: Do the gospel accounts go back to eyewitness testimony?

This is basic training for Christians. They ought to show this lecture whenever new people show up, because pastors should not quote the Bible until everyone listening has this information straight.

How the Obama administration made sure people would lose their health insurance plans

October 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Patrick Brennan writes about the NBC News bombshell from yesterday in National Review.

Excerpt:

> Much derision has been heaped on White House consigliere Valerie Jarrett's tweet last night claiming that "nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans. No change is required unless insurance companies change existing plans" (this is a "FACT," she noted). There's actually a little truth to this: Technically, individual-market plans that qualify as grandfathered under the ACA are exempt from some of the law's mandates — but not all of them. As long as a grandfathered plan doesn't undergo any "material changes" after 2010, it maintains its grandfathered status, so it doesn't have to comply with all of the law's strictures as other plans do on January 1. But those material changes are almost inevitable, in large part because of the ACA — meaning the plan will almost certainly be cancelled and replaced with a more expensive, more comprehensive plan, as millions of Americans have learned and continued to learn.
>
> […][I]nsurers lose their grandfathered status if the plan has a "material change," defined as "(1) eliminating or significantly reducing benefits; (2) raising co-insurance or co-payments; (3) raising deductibles; (4) reducing employer contributions; or, (5) adding or increasing an annual limit"…

That sounds benign. It sounds as if the plans are only going to be changed if insurance companies change them voluntarily. But actually insurance companies *must* change the plans because Obamacare requires the plans to cover a whole bunch of new treatments, which will necessarily cause the plans to go up in price, as well.

Look:

> **[E]ven these grandfathered plans have to comply with a number of new Obamacare mandates — most important, they have to accept applicants regardless of preexisting conditions and charge them the same premiums, they have to eliminate lifetime-spending caps, and they have to cover dependents under 26 for free (there are other rules that also apply to grandfathered group plans). How, exactly, were health insurers supposed to comply with these new mandates (and other ways the ACA is raising costs) without raising customers' contributions in the way the law says means losing grandfathered status? Obviously, they could have chosen to raise premiums alone — but then customers who don't**

> **expect to use a lot of health care would switch to plans with higher cost-sharing, which ruins an insurance pool.**
>
> **In other words, the ACA did make it incredibly hard for insurers to continue plans for the millions of Americans who don't want comprehensive insurance — financially, insurers almost certainly had to adjust them in such a way that they would lose grandfathered status. This isn't "normal turnover in the insurance market" (though there is plenty of that in the individual market); there's a reason why an exceptionally large number of Americans are getting cancellation notices this fall.**

The bottom line is that you can't keep the vast majority of the plans that Obama said you could keep. He lied.

Newsbusters notes that the major news networks are not even talking about the NBC News revelation that the Obama administration knew that their law would cause people to lose their health care. I think the lesson here is that Democrats lie, and the media, being an extension of the Democrat Party, covers up for them. That's why the Democrats win elections.

Christina Hoff Sommers: helping boys succeed in school

October 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from the leftist Time magazine by feminist Christina Hoff Sommers. (H/T Independent Women's Forum)

Excerpt:

> Being a boy can be a serious liability in today's classroom. As a group, boys are noisy, rowdy and hard to manage. Many are messy, disorganized and won't sit still. Young male rambunctiousness, according to a recent study, leads teachers to underestimate their intellectual and academic abilities. "Girl behavior is the gold standard in schools," says psychologist Michael Thompson. "Boys are treated like defective girls."
>
> These "defective girls" are not faring well academically. Compared with girls, boys earn lower grades, win fewer honors and are less likely to go to college. One education expert has quipped that if current trends continue, the last male will graduate from college in 2068. In today's knowledge-based economy, success in the classroom has never been more crucial to a young person's life prospects. Women are adapting; men are not.
>
> Some may say, "Too bad for the boys." The ability to regulate one's impulses, sit still and pay attention are building blocks of success in school and in life. As one critic told me, the classroom is no more rigged against boys than workplaces are rigged against lazy or unfocused workers. That is absurd: unproductive workers are adults — not 5- and 6-year-old children who depend on us to learn how to become adults. If boys are restive and unfocused, we must look for ways to help them do better.

She introduces three ideas to fix the problem, and here's the third one:

> In his delightful *Boy Writers: Reclaiming their Voices*, celebrated author and writing instructor Ralph Fletcher advises teachers to consider their assignments from the point of view of boys. Too many writing teachers, he says, take the "confessional poet" as the classroom ideal. Personal narratives full of emotion and self-disclosure are prized; stories describing video games, skateboard competitions or a monster devouring a city are not.
>
> Peg Tyre's *The Trouble With Boys* illustrates the point. She tells the story of a third-grader in Southern Californianamed Justin who loved *Star Wars*, pirates, wars and weapons. An alarmed teacher summoned his parents to school to discuss a picture the 8-year-old had drawn of a sword fight — which included several decapitated heads. The teacher expressed "concern" about Justin's "values." **The father, astonished by the teacher's repugnance for a**

> **typical boy drawing, wondered if his son could ever win the approval of someone who had so little sympathy for the child's imagination.**
>
> Teachers have to come to terms with the young male spirit. As Fletcher urges, if we want boys to flourish, we are going to have to encourage their distinctive reading, writing, drawing and even joke-telling propensities. Along with personal "reflection journals," Fletcher suggests teachers permit fantasy, horror, spoofs, humor, war, conflict and, yes, even lurid sword fights.

> I**f boys are constantly subject to disapproval for their interests and enthusiasms, they are likely to become disengaged and lag further behind. Our schools need to work with, not against, the kinetic imaginations of boys to move them toward becoming educated young men.**

Dr. Sommers participated in a recent debate where she argued in favor of allowing all-male schools against a radical feminist. That page has audio and a transcript as well.

My thoughts

I do think that women need to realize that boys have to be encouraged to do the different things that boys do, if we want boys to be engaged. The good things that boys do in society are not free – they need to be encouraged and not dismissed. Playing a wargame or an adventurous boardgame with a boy is good. Firing real guns with a boy is good. Playing adventurous role-playing games with a boy is good. Going to a war museum or on a camping trip with a boy is good. Watching patriotic war movies or adventurous movies with a boy is good. Reading military history and military biographies is good. Reading classical adventure novels with a boy is good. Listening to adventurous music with a boy is good. Even watching the news with a boy is good.

Nothing is free. We have to create the boys we want, and encourage them to be aggressive, active and righteous.

Michael Licona on ancient biography and harmonizing Bible contradictions

October 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten posted the latest lecture by Dr. Michael Licona at Apologetics 315. Brian's site has the MP3 file (48 minutes, 44.5 Mb). I can make a smaller version for anyone who wants it.

Here is the video and my point-form summary.

The topic:

- Contradictions do not affect the minimum facts case for the resurrection, although they are troubling
- Most people respond to alleged contradictions by trying to harmonize them
- Most verses that appear contradictory can be harmonized successfully
- Some verses cannot be harmonized successfully without really damaging the texts
- Christians should not gloss over these few real contradictions nor pretend that they don't exist
- How should we respond to the verses that cannot easily be harmonized?

Genre considerations:

- The genre of the gospels is "ancient biography"
- Ancient biography is not the same genre as modern biography

Insignificant differences

1. Contradictions vs. Differences:

- In ancient biography, if a source mentions one person's name, it does not mean that other people were not present
- Example: one woman versus two women at the tomb, an account may only mention one woman when there are two
- That is a difference, not a contradiction

2. Time compression:

- in ancient biography, writers are allowed to leave out events in order to compress time
- Some gospels omit details (guy version) and other gospels give more details (girl version)
- For example, the cursing of the fig tree in Mark and Matthew

3. Narrative flow:

- the ancient biographer’s style was to link together events into a narrative, even if they are slightly out of order
- This means that the ordering matters less to ancient biographers than forming a coherent narrative
- For example, the prediction by Jesus that Peter would deny him

Significant differences:

1. Biography allows for portrait painting

- When people paint portraits, they sometimes use illustrations or imagery to convey the person’s character
- For example, Shakespeare adds things to his history of Julius Caesar to make it more dramatic
- For example, the genealogies in Matthew, the portrait of Jesus in the garden in John

2. Even if there are contradictions in an account it doesn’t mean that the basic facts are undermined

- For example, even if we don’t know for sure if one thief or two thieves cursed Jesus, no one doubts that he was crucified
- The basic details of the story are not affected by apparent contradictions

Then there is a period of Questions and Answers.

The scariest old time radio shows for Hallowe’en

October 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Arrrr! Lobster Pirate is pleased that it is Hallowe’en!
Here are some of the scariest old time radio shows EVER! These are MP3 files. Be careful, they are SCARY!

- The House in Cypress Canyon (Suspense)
- The Thing on the Fourble Board (Quiet, Please)
- Three Skeleton Key (Escape)
- Donovan’s Brain – part1, part 2 (Suspense)
- Sorry, Wrong Number (Suspense)
- The Country of the Blind (Escape)
- Ghost Hunt (Suspense)

The House in Cypress Canyon is the scariest one, in my opinion. If you can’t download MP3s, then you can read the transcript here.

CNN: Obama administration bullying insurance companies to not criticize Obamacare

October 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the (normally) radically leftist CNN, of all places.

Excerpt:

> White House officials have pressured insurance industry executives to keep quiet amid mounting criticism over Obamacare's rollout, insurance industry sources told CNN.
>
> **After insurance officials publicly criticized the implementation, White House staffers contacted insurers to express their displeasure, industry insiders said.**
>
> **Multiple sources declined to speak publicly about the push back because they fear retribution.**
>
> But Bob Laszewski, who heads a consulting firm for big insurance companies, did talk on the record.
>
> "The White House is exerting massive pressure on the industry, including the trade associations, to keep quiet," he said.
>
> Laszewski, who's been a vocal critic of Obamacare, said he's been asked by insurance executives to speak out because they feel defenseless against an administration that is regulating their business — and a big customer.
>
> […]Insurers, he said, warned the White House that the regulations would lead to discontinued policies.
>
> "One of the things I think is clear here is the Obama administration has no trust in anything the health insurance industry is telling them about how to run a health plan," Laszewski said.

Newsbusters has the video and transcript from CNN.

Reformation Day celebrates the supremacy of Scripture and reason in theology

October 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Ligonier Ministries web site has a summary of the event that kicked off the Reformation.

Excerpt:

> On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther tacked up 95 theses on the church door at Wittenberg. With this act, he hoped to provoke a discussion among the scholars about the abuses of the indulgences by the Roman Catholic Church. He was not trying to create a public furor by any means, but within a fortnight, these theses had spread through the country like wildfire. The last thing Luther had in mind was to start some kind of major controversy, but nevertheless major controversy did begin.
>
> From the discussions at Wittenberg, the disputations began to accelerate and escalate. Copies of the theses reached Rome and critical meetings were scheduled with the young monk. In these debates, Luther was maneuvered into proclaiming publicly that he had questions about the infallibility of church councils and also that he thought that it was possible that the pope could err. In 1520 a papal encyclical was issued which condemned Martin Luther as a heretic. Luther burned the document in a public bonfire and his defiance before the church was now a matter of record.
>
> In response, Martin Luther picked up his pen to challenge the entire penitential system of the Roman Catholic Church, which undermined in principle the free remission of sins that is ours in the gospel. By doing so, he was unswervingly advocating his commitment to *sola fide*, the doctrine of justification by faith alone.
>
> In 1521, Luther was summoned to the Imperial Diet, an authoritative meeting that involved the princes of the church, called by the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire to be held in the city of Worms in Germany. Luther was an outlaw. For him to appear at the Diet was to risk his very life; therefore, he was given safe conduct by the Emperor to attend. With a few friends, Luther traveled from Wittenberg to Worms. The eyewitnesses of that episode tell us that when Luther's little covered wagon appeared around the corner of the bend, there were lookouts posted in the church tower at Worms. All the people were agog waiting for the arrival of this notorious person. When Luther's caravan was sighted, people were throwing their hats in the air, blowing trumpets, and creating all the fanfare of the arrival of the hero. It was the 16th century answer to a ticker-tape parade.
>
> Things, however, became very solemn in a hurry because the next day he

> appeared before the Diet. His books were stacked on a table in the room, and he was asked and ordered to recant of his writings. This surprised Luther because he thought he was going to have an opportunity to defend his writings; but the only question really of any importance that was asked of him was this: "Are these your writings?" And when he said yes, they said, "Are you ready to recant of them?"
>
> Hollywood has their version of Luther standing there boldly with his fist in the air saying, "Here I stand!" and so on. But instead he dropped his chin on his chest and muttered something that nobody could understand, so they asked him to speak up. "What did you say?" He said, "May I have 24 hours to think about it." And so Luther was granted a reprieve of 24 hours to return to his room to contemplate the seriousness of this occasion.
>
> The prayer that Luther wrote in that ensuing 24-hour period was one of the most moving prayers I have ever read in my life. In that prayer, Luther cried out for God in his sense of total loneliness fearing that God had abandoned him, and proclaimed, "O Lord, I am Thine, and the cause is Thine, give me the courage to stand."
>
> And on the morrow, Luther was called once again back to the court and was told to reply to the question. He said to the Diet, "Unless I am convinced by sacred Scripture or by evident reason, I cannot recant, for my conscience is held captive by the Word of God, and to act against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me." And with that there was an instant uproar.

The Protestant Reformation emphasizes the responsibility of each person to become familiar with what the Bible teaches for themselves and to make sense of it using the laws of logic for themselves. There is an enormous focus on the individual and individual's responsibility to puzzle theology out for himself, using the tools available to him: reason, science, Scripture, history. The Reformation put forward the famous five Solas: "Sola Scriptura" (Scripture Alone); "Sola Gratia" (Grace Alone); "Sola Fide" (Faith Alone); "Solus Christus" (Christ Alone); and "Soli Deo Gloria" (To God Alone Be Glory).

My friend J.W. Wartick has a post about the effects of the Reformation on society as a whole.

Here's one of the effects: (links removed)

> Capitalism had already begun before the European Reformations, having its renewal start in Italian city states in the 12th Century (for a detailed and extremely interesting discussion of this, see Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason,* 71ff). The Reformation, however, provided a place for capitalism to flourish. John Calvin's thought touched upon nearly every contemporary problem, and one of these was usury (money lending at interest). Focusing upon the cultural context of the prohibition of usury in the Hebrew Scriptures, Calvin

> argued that his contemporary cultural context provided a way for usury to work without being necessarily wrong. Lending money in such a fashion was essential for the later development of capitalism (Alister McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 259-260).
>
> The Reformation also paved the way for a "Protestant Work Ethic." Martin Luther's notion of the "priesthood of all believers" demolished the hard distinction between the "temporal" and "spiritual" realm which dominated the thought of the church at the time. By breaking down this barrier, hard labor was elevated. It was no longer seen as an inferior life to that of monastic withdrawal; rather, any type of work could be pleasing to God (McGrath, 256-258). In contemporary churches, one can often hear about how the engineer, the retail worker, the auto worker, and the like should all utilize their skills to the glory of God. Such thinking came directly from the Reformation.

The Reformation also kick-started science, because nature held secrets about God's existence and character.

Excerpt:

> Without the Reformation, modern science would probably have developed in any event because of the ethos of rationality and the doctrine of creation conducive to it. The Reformation, however, hastened the development by criticizing scholasticism and by putting emphasis on the direct observation of nature. Luther has been called the Copernicus of theology while, on the other hand, Copernicus has been called the Luther of astronomy. Indeed, Thomas Sprat, an Anglican clergyman and an early member of the Royal Society, emphasized that there was a reformation, some would say revolution, in both philosophy and theology [3]. In natural philosophy or science, questions about nature were no longer answered primarily by quoting Aristotle and the Scholastics, but by turning to observation of and experimentation on nature itself. Similarly, after the Reformation, Protestants no longer answered questions in theology primarily by quoting scholastic philosophers and theologians, but by turning directly to the Bible. Luther interpreted Scripture by asking: what is the clear and straightforward meaning of the text? Scientists interpret nature in the simplest way using the minimum number of hypotheses.
>
> Luther believed that the world was beginning a new age, which would bring not only a reform of religion but a new appreciation of nature. In his informal "Table Talk" he said,
>
> We are at the dawn of a new era, for we are beginning to recover the knowledge of the external world that was lost through the fall of Adam. We now observe creatures properly …. But by the grace of God we already recognize in the most delicate flower the wonders of divine goodness and omnipotence [4].
>
> In the last part of this statement, Luther paraphrased the words of the Apostle

> Paul in his letter to the Romans (Rom. 1:20).
>
> Luther was open to the authentic scientific advances of his age [5]. He appreciated the mechanical inventions of his day.
>
> He accepted the use of medicine in treating disease and is quoted as having said [6],
>
> It's our Lord God who created all things and they are good. Wherefore it's permissible to use medicine, for it is a creature of God.
>
> To someone who said that it is not permissible for a Christian to use medicine, Luther replied rhetorically, "Do you eat when you are hungry?" According to Andrew White [7], this attitude of Luther made the Protestant cities of Germany more ready than others to admit anatomical investigation and dissection.
>
> Luther accepted astronomy as a science, but rejected astrology as a superstition because it cannot be confirmed by demonstration. Astrology, according to Luther, is idolatry and violates the first commandment. He was both amused and distressed by Melanchthon's interest in astrology, a belief system that was widely accepted at the time [8].

The Reformation means good economics and good science, as well as good theology.

But theology still had some growing to do.

The challenges of the Reformers led to the development of the doctrine of middle knowledge, which reconciles divine sovereignty with human freedom and responsibility, solving a major problem with Reformed theology.

A very good book on middle knowledge is "Salvation and Sovereignty" by Kenneth Heathley. Highly recommended by Paul Gould.

William Lane Craig writes on “The Feminization of Christianity”

October 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Look, here is a question on the Reasonable Faith web site from a feminist from Canada who objects to the idea of sex differences:

> Dear Dr. Craig,
>
> I have usually found your words to be a source of information and reassurance in my Christian faith, and have often sought out your writings and videos in times of doubt or questioning.
>
> So I was really disappointed, almost shocked, when I read your newsletter of April of this year in which you casually stereotypes men and women, and complain that the church is becoming increasingly feminized, and has difficulties in attracting men.
>
> Your compared the audiences at a couple of your speaking engagements to the audience from a clip of a Downton Abbey Q&A at another location – concluding that they were all men at the former and almost all women at the latter “simply because the Downton Abbey program is highly relational, which is more appealing to women, whereas my talks were principally intellectually oriented, which is more appealing to men.”
>
> I believe that you are using stereotypes here, which you justify by making a ridiculous comparison that holds zero statistical significance. Not only is your statement unreasonable, it is potentially damaging – especially when made so carelessly. Stereotypes are shortcuts in classifying people. They can, and often do, limit and distort the way we perceive others and the world. Stereotypes are a lazy way of thinking that can lead to discrimination, and their use should not be encouraged.
>
> I’m also a little disturbed by your claim regarding the feminisation of the church. What do you mean by that, and how do you support that statement?
>
> I’m curious because the church has historically been a largely male-dominated institution (sometimes criminally so), and the bible’s instructions to and about women are often difficult to swallow. If anything, the church has had difficulty in attracting women. And if we are truly seeing more women in leadership roles at the church (I have to assume this is what you meant by feminizing), I believe this is not something to fear and resist. It would be a welcome change, and has every opportunity to challenge how we think about each other – allowing us to love each other better and see each other more clearly.
>
> This newsletter called your expertise in some areas into question for me. Could you help to rebuild some of the faith I’ve lost in your words? I would very much

> appreciate it.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Alexandra (Canada)

Canadians are sooooo liberal, especially on social issues like feminism, abortion and marriage. I'm sure this woman has been influenced by feminist ideology so much that she just can't deal with the fact that men are women are very different.

Anyway, here's a snip of Dr. Craig's response:

> Third is my claim that the church is becoming increasingly feminized. What I mean by this is that church services and programs are increasingly based on emotional and relational factors that appeal more to women than to men. The problem of the church's lack of appeal to men has been recognized by men's movements like Promise Keepers and books like John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart*. Nowhere is this feminization more evident than in contemporary worship music. Someone aptly remarked that if you were to replace references to God in many praise songs with "Baby," they would sound just like romantic songs between a man and a woman! This is not true of classic hymns like "A Mighty Fortress" or "And Can It be?" Talking with young men, I find that many of them are just turned off by these touchy-feely worship services and would rather not go.
>
> We see this same feminization though relational factors in network coverage of sports, traditionally a male bastion. Coverage of Olympic Games has deliberately targeted women in order to increase viewership by the addition of personal stories about athletes' lives, rather than simply televising the events themselves. In professional sports have you noticed how in recent years television networks have engaged female reporters to go down on the field and interview baseball or football players, usually about how they *felt* about this or that? Jan and I had to laugh when, following the Broncos' recent blowout of the Ravens, the female reporter asked Peyton Manning, "Didn't you feel bad for the other team when you looked up at the scoreboard?" Uh, I don't think so!
>
> You're right that the predominance of women in Christianity is a relatively new phenomenon. It is only over the last 200 years that Christianity has become increasingly female in its demographics. I'm very worried that the church is on a course that will end in relatively few men's being active Christians.
>
> Fourth is my claim that apologetics is a key to making the church and Christian faith relevant to men once more. People think that by having sports programs or men's barbecues the church will draw in more men. But I'm convinced that the best kept secret to drawing in men is apologetics. Men need to see that Jesus of Nazareth was not only a tough guy but a smart guy. I never suspected that apologetics would have this special effect on men. I had no intention of ministering particularly to men in this ministry. But the appeal of apologetics to men is just undeniable. In my Defenders class we've got guys who don't even

> attend church but who regularly come for my lectures on Christian doctrine and apologetics. One woman in the class told me, “I don’t understand a lot of what you say. But I’m glad to come because this is the only spiritual activity that my husband will participate in with me.” Wow!

Wow, indeed. Apologetics gets men to engage more in Christianity, and the church should leverage that to bring men in. That’s a fact. So, I’m glad Dr Craig didn’t give an inch to this fact-averse feminist from Canada.

My own post critical of the feminized church can be read here. Keep in mind that this is from two months after I started blogging – very raw stuff.

By the way, Dr. Craig’s ministry Reasonable Faith has a huge matching grant again this year, so if you’re looking for a great ministry to donate to, Reasonable Faith should be on your list!

Related posts

- William Lane Craig’s advice for balancing your career with your marriage
- Marriage advice from Christian philosopher William Lane Craig
- What motivates William Lane Craig and why is he so effective?
- How Bill’s wife Jan helped him to be a success

The Economist: some problems with the peer-review process

October 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Economist, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The idea that the same experiments always get the same results, no matter who performs them, is one of the cornerstones of science's claim to objective truth. If a systematic campaign of replication does not lead to the same results, then either the original research is flawed (as the replicators claim) or the replications are (as many of the original researchers on priming contend). Either way, something is awry.
>
> It is tempting to see the priming fracas as an isolated case in an area of science—psychology—easily marginalised as soft and wayward. But irreproducibility is much more widespread. A few years ago scientists at Amgen, an American drug company, tried to replicate 53 studies that they considered landmarks in the basic science of cancer, often co-operating closely with the original researchers to ensure that their experimental technique matched the one used first time round. According to a piece they wrote last year in *Nature*, a leading scientific journal, they were able to reproduce the original results in just six. Months earlier Florian Prinz and his colleagues at Bayer HealthCare, a German pharmaceutical giant, reported in *Nature Reviews Drug Discovery*, a sister journal, that they had successfully reproduced the published results in just a quarter of 67 seminal studies.

Let's take a look at some of the problems from the article.

Problems with researcher bias:

> Other data-heavy disciplines face similar challenges. Models which can be "tuned" in many different ways give researchers more scope to perceive a pattern where none exists. According to some estimates, three-quarters of published scientific papers in the field of machine learning are bunk because of this "overfitting", says Sandy Pentland, a computer scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Problems with journal referees:

> Another experiment at the *BMJ* showed that reviewers did no better when more clearly instructed on the problems they might encounter. They also seem to get worse with experience. Charles McCulloch and Michael Callaham, of the University of California, San Francisco, looked at how 1,500 referees were rated by editors at leading journals over a 14-year period and found that 92% showed a

> slow but steady drop in their scores.
>
> As well as not spotting things they ought to spot, there is a lot that peer reviewers do not even try to check. They do not typically re-analyse the data presented from scratch, contenting themselves with a sense that the authors' analysis is properly conceived. And they cannot be expected to spot deliberate falsifications if they are carried out with a modicum of subtlety.

Problems with fraud:

> Fraud is very likely second to incompetence in generating erroneous results, though it is hard to tell for certain. Dr Fanelli has looked at 21 different surveys of academics (mostly in the biomedical sciences but also in civil engineering, chemistry and economics) carried out between 1987 and 2008. Only 2% of respondents admitted falsifying or fabricating data, but 28% of respondents claimed to know of colleagues who engaged in questionable research practices.

Problems releasing data:

> Reproducing research done by others often requires access to their original methods and data. A study published last month in*PeerJ* by Melissa Haendel, of the Oregon Health and Science University, and colleagues found that more than half of 238 biomedical papers published in 84 journals failed to identify all the resources (such as chemical reagents) necessary to reproduce the results. On data, Christine Laine, the editor of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, told the peer-review congress in Chicago that five years ago about 60% of researchers said they would share their raw data if asked; now just 45% do. Journals' growing insistence that at least some raw data be made available seems to count for little: a recent review by Dr Ioannidis which showed that only 143 of 351 randomly selected papers published in the world's 50 leading journals and covered by some data-sharing policy actually complied.

Critics of global warming have had problems getting at data before, as Nature reported here:

> Since 2002, McIntyre has repeatedly asked Phil Jones, director of CRU, for access to the HadCRU data. Although the data are made available in a processed gridded format that shows the global temperature trend, the raw station data are currently restricted to academics. While Jones has made data available to some academics, he has refused to supply McIntyre with the data. Between 24 July and 29 July of this year, CRUreceived 58 freedom of information act requests from McIntyre and people affiliated with Climate Audit. In the past month, the UK Met Office, which receives a cleaned-up version of the raw data from CRU, has received ten requests of its own.

Why would scientists hide their data? Well, recall that the Climategate scandal resulted from unauthorized release of the code used to generate the data used to promote global

warming alarmism. The leaked code showed that the scientists had been generating faked data using a “fudge factor”.

Elsewhere, leaked e-mailed from global warmists revealed that they do indeed suppress articles that are critical of global warming alarmism:

> As noted previously, the Climategate letters and documents show Jones and the Team using the peer review process to prevent publication of adverse papers, while giving softball reviews to friends and associates in situations fraught with conflict of interest. Today I’ll report on the spectacle of Jones reviewing a submission by Mann et al.
>
> Let’s recall some of the reviews of articles daring to criticize CRU or dendro:
>
> I am really sorry but I have to nag about that review – Confidentially I now need a hard and if required extensive case for rejecting (Briffa to Cook)
> …
> If published as is, this paper could really do some damage. It is also an ugly paper to review because it is rather mathematical, with a lot of Box-Jenkins stuff in it. It won’t be easy to dismiss out of hand as the math appears to be correct theoretically, (Cook to Briffa)
> …
> Recently rejected two papers (one for JGR and for GRL) from people saying CRU has it wrong over Siberia. Went to town in both reviews, hopefully successfully. (Jones to Mann)

One last quote from the Economist article. One researcher submitted a completely bogus paper to many journals, and many of them accepted it:

> John Bohannon, a biologist at Harvard, recently submitted a pseudonymous paper on the effects of a chemical derived from lichen on cancer cells to 304 journals describing themselves as using peer review. An unusual move; but it was an unusual paper, concocted wholesale and stuffed with clangers in study design, analysis and interpretation of results. Receiving this dog’s dinner from a fictitious researcher at a made up university, 157 of the journals accepted it for publication.
>
> Dr Bohannon’s sting was directed at the lower tier of academic journals. But in a classic 1998 study Fiona Godlee, editor of the prestigious *British Medical Journal*, sent an article containing eight deliberate mistakes in study design, analysis and interpretation to more than 200 of the *BMJ*’s regular reviewers. Not one picked out all the mistakes. On average, they reported fewer than two; some did not spot any.

The Economist article did not go into the problem of bias due to worldview presuppositions, though. So let me say something about that.

A while back Casey Luskin posted a list of problems with peer review.

Here was one that stuck out to me:

> **Point 5: The peer-review system is often biased against non-majority viewpoints.**
> The peer-review system is largely devoted to maintaining the *status quo*. As a new scientific theory that challenges much conventional wisdom, intelligent design faces political opposition that has nothing to do with the evidence. In one case, pro-ID biochemist Michael Behe submitted an article for publication in a scientific journal but was told it could not be published because "your unorthodox theory would have to displace something that would be extending the current paradigm." Denyse O'Leary puts it this way: "The overwhelming flaw in the traditional peer review system is that it listed so heavily toward consensus that it showed little tolerance for genuinely new findings and interpretations."

Recently, I summarized a podcast on the reviewer bias problem featuring physcist Frank Tipler. His concern in that podcast was that peer-review would suppress new ideas, even if they were correct. He gave examples of this happening. Even a paper by Albert Einstein was rejected by a peer-reviewed journal. Elsewhere, Tipler was explicitly told to remove positive references to intelligent design in order to get his papers published. Tipler's advice was for people with new ideas to bypass the peer-reviewed journal system entirely.

Speaking about the need to bypass peer-review, you might remember that the Darwinian hierarchy is not afraid to have people sanctioned if they criticize Darwinism in peer-reviewed literature.

Recall the case of Richard Sternberg.

Excerpt:

> In 2004, in my capacity as editor of The Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington, I authorized "The Origin of Biological Information and the Higher Taxonomic Categories" by Dr. Stephen Meyer to be published in the journal after passing peer-review. Because Dr. Meyer's article presented scientific evidence for intelligent design in biology, I faced retaliation, defamation, harassment, and a hostile work environment at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History that was designed to force me out as a Research Associate there. These actions were taken by federal government employees acting in concert with an outside advocacy group, the National Center for Science Education. Efforts were also made to get me fired from my job as a staff scientist at the National Center for Biotechnology Information.

So those are some of the issues to consider when thinking about the peer-review process. My view is that peer-reviewed evidence does count for something in a debate situation, but as you can see from the Economist article, it may not count for as much as it used to. I think my view of science in general has been harmed by what I saw from physicist Lawrence Krauss in his third debate with William Lane Craig. If a scientist can

misrepresent another scientist and not get fired by his employer, then I think we really need to be careful about the level of honesty in the academy.

Charles Krauthammer: what Obamacare is really about, and why Obama lied about it

November 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This column from Investors Business Daily is a must-read. It's by respected moderate conservative Charles Krauthammer. In it, he explains why Obama lied about people being able to keep their existing plans.

Krauthammer explains:

> ObamaCare renders illegal (with exceedingly narrow "grandfathered" exceptions) the continuation of any insurance plan deemed by Washington regulators not to meet their arbitrary standards for adequacy.
>
> Example: No maternity care? You are terminated.
>
> So a law designed to cover the uninsured is now throwing far more people off their insurance than it can possibly be signing up on the nonfunctioning insurance exchanges.
>
> Indeed, most of the 19 million people with individual insurance will have to find new and likely more expensive coverage. And that doesn't even include the additional millions who are sure to lose their employer-provided coverage.
>
> […]**Beyond mendacity, there is liberal paternalism, of which these forced cancellations are a classic case. We canceled your plan, explained Jay Carney, because it was substandard. We have a better idea.**
>
> **Translation: Sure, you freely chose the policy, paid for the policy, renewed the policy, liked the policy. But you're too primitive to know what you need. We do. Your policy is canceled.**
>
> **Because what you really need is what our experts have determined must be in every plan. So a couple in their 60s must buy maternity care. A teetotaler must buy substance abuse treatment. And a healthy 28-year-old with perfectly appropriate catastrophic insurance must pay for bells and whistles for which he has no use.**
>
> […]**As for subterfuge, these required bells and whistles aren't just there to festoon the health care Christmas tree with voter-pleasing freebies. The planners knew all along that if you force insurance buyers to overpay for stuff they don't need, that money can subsidize other people.**
>
> ObamaCare is the largest transfer of wealth in recent American history. But you can't say that openly lest you lose elections. So you do it by subterfuge: hidden taxes, penalties, mandates and coverage requirements that yield a surplus of overpayments.

> So that your president can promise to cover 30 million uninsured without costing the government a dime. Which from the beginning was the biggest falsehood of them all. And yet the free lunch is the essence of modern liberalism. Free mammograms, free preventative care, free contraceptives for Sandra Fluke. Come and get it.
>
> **And then when you find your policy canceled, your premium raised and your deductible outrageously increased, you've learned the real meaning of "free" in the liberal lexicon: something paid for by your neighbor — best, by subterfuge.**

That's the point I really wanted to get clear – the paternalism and the redistribution of wealth. I don't need any of the new required minimum coverages every health insurance plan must now have. It won't make my coverage "better" if I have coverage for things like pregnancies and mammograms and drug addiction counseling and contraceptives and abortions and sex changes and breast implants and in vitro fertilization and tobacco cessation. I don't need those things because I don't have that lifestyle. But I'll have to pay more for health insurance, so that other people can have those things. And those other people will be voting Democrat in 2014. That's what this is really about. The Democrats can't raise taxes to buy votes, but they buy votes in other ways – by redistributing wealth under the rubric of "health care". We often hear a lot of complaints that men don't want to marry and have children, but maybe that's because so many people keep voting to waste the money they earn on other things.

Some good news

One interesting piece of news did come out that might help to reverse this mess. Although the administration is saying now that it has no idea how many plans were sold, it turns out that this is another lie. CBS News reports that in the first three days of Obamacare being activated, less than 300 policies were sold.

Excerpt:

> For 31 days now, the Obama administration has been telling us that Americans by the millions are visiting the new health insurance website, despite all its problems.
>
> But no one in the administration has been willing to tell us how many policies have been purchased, and this may be the reason: CBS News has learned enrollments got off to an incredibly slow start.
>
> Early enrollment figures are contained in notes from twice-a-day "war room" meetings convened within the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services after the website failed on Oct. 1. They were turned over in response to a document request from the House Oversight Committee.
>
> The website launched on a Tuesday. **Publicly, the government said there were 4.7 million unique visits in the first 24 hours. But at a meeting Wednesday morning, the war room notes say "six enrollments have**

> **occurred so far.”**
>
> **They were with BlueCross BlueShield North Carolina and Kansas City, CareSource and Healthcare Service Corporation.**
>
> **By Wednesday afternoon, enrollments were up to “approximately 100.” By the end of Wednesday, the notes reflect “248 enrollments” nationwide.**
>
> **The health care exchanges need to average 39,000 enrollees a day to meet the goal of seven million by March 1.**

It doesn’t sound like they are going to make their target. If Obamacare fails fast and fails loud, then we might be able to do something about it in the 2014 elections. But we would need people to stop listening to the blaming coming from the President and stop listening to the liberal media and start thinking about what is really going on.

Can you fix fatherlessness with generous social programs and male role models?

November 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically leftist Los Angeles Times. I am not a fan of Kay Hymowitz at all, because she is a man-blamer, but this article was re-tweeted by a whole slew of pro-marriage people who I follow on Twitter, so I thought I should post something about it here.

Excerpt:

> [Boys'] high school grades and college attendance rates have remained stalled for decades. Among poor and working-class boys, the chances of climbing out of the low-end labor market — and of becoming reliable husbands and fathers — are looking worse and worse.

> This spring, MIT economist David Autor and coauthor Melanie Wasserman suggested a reason for this: the growing number of fatherless homes. Boys and young men weren't behaving rationally, they suggested, because their family situations had left them without the necessary attitudes and skills to adapt to changing social and economic conditions. Anyone interested in the plight of poor and working-class men — and, more broadly, mobility and the American dream — should hope this research, and the considerable biological and psychological evidence behind it, become part of the public debate.

> […]Autor and Wasserman cite a large study by University of Chicago sociologists Marianne Bertrand and Jessica Pan, which shows that, by fifth grade, fatherless boys were more disruptive than peers from two-parent families, and by eighth grade, they had a substantially greater likelihood of getting suspended. And justice experts have long known that juvenile facilities and adult jails overflow with sons from broken families.

This part is interesting because the data contradicts the liberal narrative:

> Liberals often assume that these kinds of social problems result from our stingy support system for single mothers and their children. Provide more maternity leave, quality daycare and healthcare, goes the thinking, and a lot of the disadvantages of single-parent homes would vanish. But the link between criminality and fatherlessness holds even in countries with lavish social welfare systems. A 2006 Finnish study of 2,700 boys, for instance, concluded that living in a non-intact family at age 8 predicted a variety of criminal offenses.

But maybe fathers can be substituted for with "male role models", like liberals say? NOPE:

> Professors Cynthia Harper and Sara McLanahan found that among boys they studied, the ones without fathers were more likely to be incarcerated, but they also found that those who lived with stepfathers were at even higher risk of incarceration than the single-mom cohort.

So fathers really do matter to boys, and they can't be replaced with money or stepfathers or live-in boyfriends. Now I asked some liberal women about children needing mothers and fathers and they replied that adults should be allowed to do anything they want, and then let children adjust. I think in those conversations we really need to be armed with evidence and work through the evidence with people who want to assert that they are an exception to the evidence because they are "good mothers" or "good fathers" and don't need a spouse to raise a child. It seems to me that if you are denying a child one parent, then you are not a good parent yourself.

We really need to hammer into the heads of grown-ups that these moral boundaries are in place for a reason – to protect children. A lot of people who support arrangements that deprive children of their biological mother or their biological father might like to *think* that they are good parents and care about children, but they don't. And it's our job to hold them accountable for harming children. Ask them: are you for no-fault divorce? are you for gay marriage? are you for single-mother welfare? And so on. If the answers come back yes, then hold them accountable for harming children. We have to be brave in order to protect children.

Does God’s omniscience conflict with human free will?

November 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s the question from Come Reason Ministries.

Excerpt:

> Hello,
>
> Christian doctrine holds that God is all knowing (1 John 3:20), and humans have free will (Deuteronomy 30:19 is my favorite example). however, at my favorite apologetics debate board, I have seen skeptics raise an objection to these points several times. the basic logic behind their arguments is this:
>
> 1. A being with free will, given two options A and B, can freely choose between A and B.
> 2. God is omniscient (all-knowing).
> 3. God knows I will choose A.
> 4. God cannot be wrong, since an omniscient being cannot have false knowledge.
> 5. From 3 and 4, I will choose A and cannot choose B.
> 6. From 1 and 5, omniscience and free will cannot co-exist.
>
> I have read many counter-arguments from apologetics sites, but they were either too technical (I couldn’t understand them), or not satisfying. so, I was wondering what would your input be on this issue?
>
> Thank you,
>
> Justin

Ever heard that one? Here’s Lenny Eposito’s answer:

> Hi Justin,
>
> Thanks for writing. This is a great question as it shows how even those who appeal to logic can have biases that blind them. Let’s examine this argument and see if it follows logically.
>
> Premises 1 and 2 in your outline above are the main premises to the argument and are not disputed. The Christian worldview argues that every human being is a free moral agent and is capable of making choices simply by exercising their will, not under compulsion or because of instinct. Also, it is a long held doctrine of Christianity that God is all-knowing. The Bible says that God knows “the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10).” For omniscience to be truly knowledgeable it must be correct knowledge, so premise number 4 is also granted.
>
> However, point number 5 is where the logic falters. Those who argue in this

> manner make the mistake of thinking that because God possesses knowledge about a specific matter, then he has influenced it. That does not follow at all. Just because God can foresee which choice you will make, it does not mean you couldn't still freely choose the other option.
>
> Let me give you an example. I have a five year old son. If I were to leave a chocolate chip cookie on the table about a hour before dinner time and my son was to walk by and see it, I know that he would pick up the cookie and eat it. I did not force him to make that decision. In fact, I don't even have to be in the room at all. I think I know my son well enough, though, to tell you that if I come back into the kitchen the cookie will be gone. His act was made completely free of my influence, but I knew what his actions would be.
>
> In examining the argument, the assumption is made in premise 3 that because God knows I will choose A somehow denies me the choice of B. That is the premise that Christianity rejects. Omniscience and free will are not incompatible and it is a non-sequitor to claim otherwise.
>
> Thank you Justin for this interesting question. I pray that you will continue to defend the gospel of our Lord and may He continue to bless you as you seek to grow in Him.

That's a great answer and should work in ordinary conversations.

More technical

J.W. Wartick maps out the arguments more fully with symbolic logic here on his Always Have A Reason blog. But I'll just excerpt the gist of it.

Excerpt:

> It is necessarily true that if God knows x will happen, then x will happen. But then if one takes these terms, God knowing x will happen only means that x will happen, not that x will happen *necessarily.* Certainly, God's foreknowledge of an event means that that event will happen, but it does *not* mean that the event could not have happened otherwise. If an event happens necessarily, that means the event could not have happened otherwise, but God's foreknowledge of an event doesn't somehow transfer necessity to the event, it only means that the event will happen. It could have been otherwise, in which case, God's knowledge would have been different.
>
> […]Perhaps I could take an example. Let's say that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow (and I do hope I will, I don't like missing classes!). God knows in advance that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow. His knowledge of this event means that it will happen, but it doesn't mean that I couldn't choose to stay in and sleep for a while, or play my new copy of Final Fantasy XIII, or do something more useless with my time. If I chose to, say, play Final Fantasy XIII (a strong temptation!), then God simply would have known that I would play FFXIII. His knowledge does not *determine* the outcome, His knowledge is simply *of the*

> *outcome*.

If we choose A, God would foreknow A. If we choose B, God would foreknow B. His foreknowledge of our choices is contingent on our making free choices.

I had to learn symbolic logic and Bayes' theorem in college for my computers science degrees, and it's pretty useful for understanding these philosophers. Philosophy is a lot like computer science, at least for analytical philosophy.

Solar energy firm leaves behind toxic mess after wasting millions in stimulus funding

November 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dad sent me this article about the Democrat energy policy from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A Colorado-based solar company that got hundreds of millions of dollars in federal loan guarantees before going belly-up didn't just empty taxpayers' wallets – it left behind a toxic mess of carcinogens, broken glass and contaminated water, according to a new report.
>
> The Abound Solar plant, which got $400 million in federal loan guarantees in 2010, when the Obama administration sought to use stimulus funds to promote green energy, filed for bankruptcy two years later. Now its Longmont, Colo., facility sits unoccupied, its 37,000 square feet littered with hazardous waste, broken glass and contaminated water. The Northern Colorado Business Report estimates it will cost up to $3.7 million to clean and repair the building so it can again be leased.
>
> "As lawyers, regulators, bankruptcy officials and the landlord spar over the case, the building lies in disrepair, too contaminated to lease," the report stated.
>
> […]One of the hazards is the presence of cadmium, a cancer-causing agent that is used to produce the film on the solar panels, the report said.
>
> […]"If a coal, oil or gas company pulled something like that the EPA would send out SWAT teams and the U.S. Marshals to track down the offenders, bankrupt or not," the center said in a report of its own.
>
> President Obama touted Abound in a July 3, 2010 announcement of a $2 billion "investment" in green energy projects.

Here's another trustworthy promise from Dear Leader:

> "The second company is Abound Solar Manufacturing, which will manufacture advanced solar panels at two new plants, creating more than 2,000 construction jobs and 1,500 permanent jobs," Obama said. "A Colorado plant is already underway, and an Indiana plant will be built in what's now an empty Chrysler factory. When fully operational, these plants will produce millions of state-of-the-art solar panels each year."
>
> But less than two years later, the company laid off half of its 400 workers, and then, in the summer of 2012, filed for bankruptcy. It became the third clean-energy company to seek bankruptcy protection after receiving a loan from the Energy Department under the economic stimulus law. California solar panel maker Solyndra and Beacon Power, a Massachusetts energy-storage firm, also

> declared bankruptcy. Solyndra received a $528 million federal loan, while Beacon Power got a $43 million loan guarantee.

Why did Abound Solar get these loans? Because they had connections in the Democrat Party – that's why.

Excerpt:

> Abound Solar further claims $260 million in private investments, part of which came from billionaire medical heiress Pat Stryker's Bohemian Companies. This is where the story gets interesting.
>
> Thanks to Independence Institute investigative reporter Todd Shepherd, we still have access to the Web page that lists Bohemian as an investor even though it does not appear on the company's current Web site. The exact amount that Stryker has given is not public at this time.
>
> […]Forbes lists medical heiress and founder of Bohemian Companies/Foundation Pat Stryker as number 331 of its top "400 Richest People in America." Worth $1.3 billion, the Fort Collins resident could single-handedly fund Abound Solar and still be well above the poverty line.
>
> While some of her fortune has gone to Abound Solar, she also has chosen to donate more than $2.2 million (probably a low figure) to Democrats and their causes over the last several election cycles. Beneficiaries include Barack Obama, one-term Congresswoman and Fort Collins resident Betsy Markey, and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar when he successfully ran for U.S. Senate in Colorado.

The Washington Examiner published e-mails showing that the White House was directly involved in granting loans.

Excerpt:

> Previously undisclosed emails made public today by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee describe multiple instances of White House pressure on career Department of Energy officials to speed up approval of government loans to clean energy firms like Solyndra and Abound Solar.
>
> President Obama is described in one of the emails as having personally approved "moving it ahead," thus reversing a prior decision by DOE career officials not to extend $2 billion in tax-funded help to AREVA, a French nuclear power company, on an Idaho project.
>
> […]In another email made public today by the House panel, Silver instructed McCrea to tell a Treasury Department official of White House support for DOE help to Abound Solar.
>
> "You better let him know that WH wants to move Abound forward. Policy will have to wait unless they have a specific policy problem with abound," Silver said in the June 25, 2010, email.
>
> Abound Solar is a Colorado-based solar panel manufacturer that had used $68

> million of a $400 million DOE loan guarantee before filing for bankruptcy earlier this year.

Obama had to pay back his friends who got him elected. He used YOUR MONEY and YOUR CHILDREN'S MONEY to do it. Doesn't that cause you any alarm? And this was done under the rubric of "stimulating" the economy.

You can see a list of other Obama administration green energy failures here.

Was the resurrection of one individual alone a widespread belief in the ancient world?

November 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why did the early church apply the word resurrection to Jesus? If they wanted to say that Jesus was alive and had triumphed over his enemies and was exalted by God, then why not say that? Why not say that he had been bodily assumed into Heaven and was now with the Father? The early proclamation that Jesus rose from the dead is a puzzle for naturalists, because it seems unexpected given what most Jews believed about the concept of resurrection. Jews didn't have any concept of an individual resurrection before the day of judgment. Resurrection was something that happened to all the righteous at the end of the world. Not to one person.

Here's a post from Tough Questions Answered to explain.

He quotes Tim Keller's "The Reason for God" so:

> The report of Jesus's resurrection would have also have been unthinkable to the Jews. Unlike the Greeks, the Jews saw the material and physical world as good. Death was not seen as liberation from the material world but as a tragedy. By Jesus's day many Jews had come to hope that some day in the future there would be a bodily resurrection of all the righteous, when God renewed the entire world and removed all suffering and death. The resurrection, however, was merely one part of the complete renewal of the whole world, according to Jewish teaching. The idea of an individual being resurrected, in the middle of history, while the rest of the world continued on burdened by sickness, decay, and death, was inconceivable.

> […]If someone had said to any first-century Jew, "So-and-so has been resurrected from the dead!" the response would be, "Are you crazy? How could that be? Has disease and death ended? Is true justice established in the world? Has the wolf lain down with the lamb? Ridiculous!" The very idea of an individual resurrection would have been as impossible to imagine to a Jew as to a Greek.

And there's more in a second post (this is Keller quoting N.T. Wright):

> Over the years, skeptics about the resurrection have proposed that the followers of Jesus may have had hallucinations, that they may have imagined him appearing to them and speaking to them. This assumes that their master's resurrection was imaginable for his Jewish followers, that it was an option in their worldview. It was not.
>
> Others have put forth the conspiracy theory, that the disciples stole the body and claimed he was alive to others. This assumes that the disciples would expect other Jews to be open to the belief that an individual could be raised from the

> dead. But none of this is possible. The people of that time would have considered a bodily resurrection to be as impossible as the people of our own time, though for different reasons.

Another reason to question whether the concept of resurrection could be applied to Jesus is because there is no expectation that the Messiah was even supposed to die, much less be resurrected.

Dr. William Lane Craig explains:

> *The original disciples believed that Jesus was risen from the dead despite almost every predisposition to the contrary.* Three aspects of the disciples' disposition following Jesus's crucifixion put a question mark behind the faith and hope they had placed in Jesus:
>
> 1. Jesus was dead, and Jews had no anticipation of a dying, much less rising, Messiah.
> 2. According to Jewish law, Jesus's execution as a criminal showed him out to be a heretic, a man literally under the curse of God.
> 3. Jewish beliefs about the afterlife precluded anyone's rising from the dead before the general, eschatological resurrection of the dead.
>
> **It is important to appreciate, with respect to the first aspect of their situation, that in Jewish expectation Messiah would conquer Israel's enemies and restore the throne of David, not be shamefully executed by them.** Jesus's ignominious execution at the hands of Rome was as decisive a disproof as anything could be to a first century Jew that Jesus was not Israel's awaited Messiah, but another failed pretender. Failed Messianic movements were nothing new in Judaism, and they left their followers with basically two alternatives: either go home or else find a new Messiah. These were no doubt hard choices, but nevertheless they were the choices one had. After surveying such failed Messianic movements before and after Jesus, N. T. Wright remarks,
>
> So far as we know, all the followers of these first century Messianic movements were fanatically committed to the cause. They, if anybody, might be expected to suffer from this blessed twentieth century disease called 'cognitive dissonance' when their expectations failed to materialize. But in no case, right across the century before Jesus and the century after him, do we hear of any Jewish group saying that their executed leader had been raised from the dead and he really was the Messiah after all.

And here's more support for the no individual resurrection point:

> Finally, Jewish hope in the resurrection of the dead was invariably a corporate and eschatological hope. The resurrection of all the righteous dead would take place after God had brought the world as we know it to an end. Surveying the

> Jewish literature, Joachim Jeremias concluded,
>
> Ancient Judaism did not know of an anticipated resurrection as an event of history. Nowhere does one find in the literature anything comparable to the resurrection of Jesus. Certainly resurrections of the dead were known, but these always concerned resuscitations, the return to the earthly life. In no place in the later Judaic literature does it concern a resurrection to d o x aas an event of history.41
>
> Even if the disciples' faith in Jesus had somehow managed to survive the crucifixion, they would at most have looked forward to their reunion with him at the final resurrection and would perhaps have preserved his tomb as a shrine, where Jesus's bones might rest until the eschatological resurrection. That was the Jewish hope.
>
> But we know that that did not happen. Despite their having most every predisposition to the contrary, it is an indisputable fact that the earliest disciples suddenly and sincerely came to believe that God had raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead.

So I hope that enough has been said there for you to realize that talking about resurrection with respect to Jesus is a *very weird thing for the early church to do* – that is, unless it actually happened.

CNN: Senate Democrats unanimously voted for rule that kills private health care plans

November 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why didn't CNN report on this in 2010, when the vote happened? Oh well, better late than never.

Excerpt:

> Senate Democrats voted unanimously three years ago to support the Obamacare rule that is largely responsible for some of the health insurance cancellation letters that are going out.
>
> In September 2010, Senate Republicans brought a resolution to the floor to block implementation of the grandfather rule, warning that it would result in canceled policies and violate President Barack Obama's promise that people could keep their insurance if they liked it.
>
> "The District of Columbia is an island surrounded by reality. Only in the District of Columbia could you get away with telling the people if you like what you have you can keep it, and then pass regulations six months later that do just the opposite and figure that people are going to ignore it. But common sense is eventually going to prevail in this town and common sense is going to have to prevail on this piece of legislation as well," Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley said at the time.
>
> "The administration's own regulations prove this is not the case. Under the grandfathering regulation, according to the White House's own economic impact analysis, as many as 69 percent of businesses will lose their grandfathered status by 2013 and be forced to buy government-approved plans," the Iowa Republican said.
>
> On a party line vote, Democrats killed the resolution, which could come back to haunt vulnerable Democrats up for re-election this year.

So those evil Republicans were actually trying to protect the American people from losing their health insurance, but the Democrats stopped them. This reminds me of when Bush was trying to regulate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac ahead of the housing crisis, and the Democrats blocked him because they claimed there was no mortgage lending crisis. Then later, they claimed that the mortgage lending crisis was caused by insufficient regulation.

Here is economist Larry Kudlow of CNBC to make sense of these policies at a higher level.

Excerpt:

> Charles Krauthammer and the *Wall Street Journal*'s Dan Henninger noted in excellent recent columns that this whole Obamacare business represents the greatest-ever expansion of the liberal entitlement-state dream. But I don't want

> that dream. And you shouldn't either.
>
> Here's what else I don't want: As a 60-something, relatively healthy person, I don't want lactation and maternity services, abortion services, speech therapy, mammograms, fertility treatments or Viagra. I don't want it. So why should I have to tear up my existing health-care plan, and then buy a plan with far more expensive premiums and deductibles, and with services I don't need or want?
>
> Why? Because Team Obama says I have to. And that's not much of a reason. It's not freedom.

It's especially not freedom for thirty-something chaste single males like me. I don't want it, I don't need it, and if you force me to pay for it for other people, then don't expect me to marry and have children, because I can't afford to pay for the wards of the welfare state and a family. It has to be one or the other. Either I keep what I earn, or the government takes what I earn. Period.

So far I am exempt from this, but my turn is coming next year, as Kudlow notes:

> Incidentally, equally punitive regulations will hit more than 90 million employer-sponsored health plans next year. It's the same problem as the individual plan. Grandfathering won't work. Moreover, replacing these plans with much more expensive products will constitute a major tax hike on the entire economy. This point shouldn't be lost as Americans worry about being kicked from their plans. Obamacare is not only anti-freedom but anti-growth.

I had not read the Daniel Henninger column linked above before, but here's a sobering snippet from that column:

> What made ObamaCare an exemplar of progressive politics and policy is precisely what has been on view this week in news stories and the Sebelius hearing. It's not that the health program was to be administered by the state or that it promised benefits to all. Liberalism did that for decades. What made it peculiarly progressive were the*mandates*. And not just the law's individual and business mandates to purchase their insurance. The essence of modern Democratic progressivism is: "You *will* participate in what we have created for you, and you *will* comply with the law's demands."
>
> […]American progressivism is politics by cramdown. Ask Jamie Dimon. Ask the coal miners the EPA is putting out of business. Ask the union workers waiting for jobs on the Keystone XL pipeline. Ask Boeing in South Carolina or the harmless tea party groups from towns no one has ever heard of that were shut down by the IRS, or the 20,000 inner-city parents and students who marched across the Brooklyn Bridge to protest obliteration of their charter schools by New York's progressive mayoral candidate, Bill de Blasio.

I had blogged before about the Charles Krauthammer column that Kudlow mentioned. Check it out if you missed it.

A basic case for the pro-life position by Scott Klusendorf

November 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you able to make a basic case for the pro-life view?

Here's a short 35-lecture by Scott Klusendorf, president of the Life Training Institute.

This is a long treatment that talks about the challenge of moral relativism and the case for the pro-life view. He does show a clip of abortion in the video to the audience.

There's also a 35-minute audio recording of Scott on the LTI web site. (H/T Apologetics 315) You can put that on your podcast player and listen to it. Listen to it a lot and soon you'll sound like Scott.

Scott also has an article posted on the LTI web site for those who don't have time for the video or the audio.

In the article makes three points:

1. **Clarify the issue**
2. **Defend your pro-life position with science and philosophy**
3. **Challenge your listeners to be intellectually honest**

Here's the second point:

> Scientifically, we know that from the earliest stages of development, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings. Leading embryology books confirm this.[2] For example, Keith L. Moore & T.V.N. Persaud write, "A zygote is the beginning of a new human being. Human development begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm … unites with a female gamete or oocyte … to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual."[3] Prior to his abortion advocacy, former Planned Parenthood President Dr. Alan Guttmacher was perplexed that anyone, much less a medical doctor, would question this. "This all seems so simple and evident that it is difficult to picture a time when it wasn't part of the common knowledge," he wrote in his book *Life in the Making*.[4]
>
> Philosophically, we can say that embryos are less developed than newborns (or, for that matter, toddlers) but this difference is not morally significant in the way abortion advocates need it to be. Consider the claim that the immediate capacity for self-awareness bestows value on human beings. Notice that this is not an argument, but an arbitrary assertion. Why is some development needed? And why is this particular degree of development (i.e., higher brain function) decisive rather than another? These are questions that abortion advocates do not adequately address.
>
> As Stephen Schwarz points out, there is no morally significant difference between

> the embryo that you once were and the adult that you are today. Differences of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not relevant such that we can say that you had no rights as an embryo but you do have rights today. Think of the acronym **SLED** as a helpful reminder of these non-essential differences:[5]
>
> **S**ize: True, embryos are smaller than newborns and adults, but why is that relevant? Do we really want to say that large people are more human than small ones? Men are generally larger than women, but that doesn't mean that they deserve more rights. Size doesn't equal value.
>
> **L**evel of development: True, embryos and fetuses are less developed than the adults they'll one day become. But again, why is this relevant? Four year-old girls are less developed than 14 year-old ones. Should older children have more rights than their younger siblings? Some people say that self-awareness makes one human. But if that is true, newborns do not qualify as valuable human beings. Six-week old infants lack the immediate capacity for performing human mental functions, as do the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, and those with Alzheimer's Disease.
>
> **E**nvironment: Where you are has no bearing on who you are. Does your value change when you cross the street or roll over in bed? If not, how can a journey of eight inches down the birth-canal suddenly change the essential nature of the unborn from non-human to human? If the unborn are not already human, merely changing their location can't make them valuable.
>
> **D**egree of Dependency: If viability makes us human, then all those who depend on insulin or kidney medication are not valuable and we may kill them. Conjoined twins who share blood type and bodily systems also have no right to life.
>
> In short, it's far more reasonable to argue that although humans differ immensely with respect to talents, accomplishments, and degrees of development, they are nonetheless equal because they share a common human nature.

That's the core of the basic pro-life case right there. There's also a good interview of Mr. Klusendorf that I blogged about.

Advanced Objections

You can learn more by reading basic pro-life apologetics… from Francis Beckwith. You might recognize Frank Beckwith as the author of "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice". He wrote that book for Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal.

Here are four essays that answer common arguments in favor of legalized abortion.

- Part I. The Appeal to Pity
- Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem

- Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?
- Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Here's an excerpt from Part II:

Excerpt:

> A woman who becomes pregnant due to an act of either rape or incest is the victim of a horribly violent and morally reprehensible crime. Although pregnancy as a result of either rape or incest is extremely rare, **[1]** there is no getting around the fact that pregnancy does occur in some instances.
>
> […]Despite its forceful appeal to our sympathies, there are several problems with this argument. First, it is not relevant to the case for abortion on demand, the position defended by the popular pro-choice movement. This position states that a woman has a **right** to have an abortion for **any** reason she prefers during the entire nine months of pregnancy, whether it be for gender-selection, convenience, or rape. **[3]** To argue for abortion on demand from the hard cases of rape and incest is like trying to argue for the elimination of traffic laws from the fact that one might have to violate some of them in rare circumstances, such as when one's spouse or child needs to be rushed to the hospital. Proving an exception does not establish a general rule.
>
> […]Fourth, this argument begs the question by assuming that the unborn is not fully human. For if the unborn is fully human, then we must weigh the relieving of the woman's mental suffering against the right-to-life of an innocent human being. **And homicide of another is never justified to relieve one of emotional distress**. Although such a judgment is indeed anguishing, we must not forget that the same innocent unborn entity that the career-oriented woman will abort in order to avoid interference with a job promotion is biologically and morally indistinguishable from the unborn entity that results from an act of rape or incest. And since abortion for career advancement cannot be justified if the unborn entity is fully human, abortion cannot be justified in the cases of rape and incest. In both cases abortion results in the death of an innocent human life. As Dr. Bernard Nathanson has written, "The unwanted pregnancy flows biologically from the sexual act, but not morally from it." **[5]**Hence, this argument, like the ones we have already covered in this series, is successful only if the unborn are not fully human.

Scott Klusendorf wrote the The Case for Life, which is the best book for beginners on the pro-life view. For those looking for advanced resources, Francis Beckwith, a professor at Baylor University, published the book Defending Life, with Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Finally, if you want to see Scott Klusendorf in a debate with a former ACLU executive, you can see it right here.

UPDATE: My friend Papa Georgio sent me a post that features THREE talks by Scott

Klusendorf. (H/T Religio-Political Talk)

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Video:10-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Objective truth in the abortion debate – a pro-life training video
- Alan Shlemon explains a classification system for pro-abortion arguments
- What is the best single book on the pro-life position?

And some posts motivating Christians and conservatives to take abortion seriously:

- Why Christians should focus on cultural issues as well as evangelism
- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion
- Are Christians too involved in politics?
- What did the early church fathers think about abortion?
- Scott Klusendorf confronts a "pro-life" nun who voted for Obama

D.C. Court of Appeals strikes down HHS abortion / birth control mandate

November 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Hill reports.

Excerpt:

> A federal appeals court on Friday struck down the birth control mandate in ObamaCare, concluding the requirement trammels religious freedom.
>
> The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals — the second most influential bench in the land behind the Supreme Court — ruled 2-1 in favor of business owners who are fighting the requirement that they provide their employees with health insurance that covers birth control.
>
> Requiring companies to cover their employees' contraception, the court ruled, is unduly burdensome for business owners who oppose birth control on religious grounds, even if they are not purchasing the contraception directly.
>
> "The burden on religious exercise does not occur at the point of contraceptive purchase; instead, it occurs when a company's owners fill the basket of goods and services that constitute a healthcare plan," Judge Janice Rogers Brown wrote on behalf of the court.
>
> Legal analysts expect the Supreme Court to ultimately pick up an appeal on the birth-control requirement and make a final decision on its constitutionality.

Hey, there's Janice Rogers Brown – she was my second favorite pick for Supreme Court justices back when Bush chose that squish John Roberts. At least Alito was a good pick. My favorite two choices would be Edith H. Jones and Janice Rogers Brown.

More from the article:

> In the meantime, Republicans in Congress have pushed for a conscience clause that would allow employers to opt out of providing contraception coverage for moral or religious reasons.
>
> The measure emerged most recently during negotiations to fund the federal government. Some House Republicans wanted to include the conscience clause in a legislative package ending the government shutdown.
>
> The split ruling against the government on Friday was the latest in a string of court cases challenging the healthcare law's mandate.
>
> Friday's ruling centered on two Catholic brothers, Francis and Philip Gilardi, who own a 400-person produce company based in Ohio.
>
> The brothers oppose contraception as part of their religion and challenged the Affordable Care Act provision requiring them to provide insurance that covers

> their employees' birth control.
>
> Refusing to abide by the letter of the law, they said, would result in a $14 million fine.
>
> "They can either abide by the sacred tenets of their faith, pay a penalty of over $14 million, and cripple the companies they have spent a lifetime building, or they become complicit in a grave moral wrong," Brown wrote.
>
> The Obama administration said that the requirement is necessary to protect women's right to decide whether and when to have children.
>
> The judges were unconvinced, however, that forcing companies to cover contraception protected that right.
>
> Brown wrote that "it is clear the government has failed to demonstrate how such a right — whether described as noninterference, privacy, or autonomy — can extend to the compelled subsidization of a woman's procreative practices."
>
> She added that denying coverage of contraception would not undermine the Affordable Care Act's requirements that health insurance provide preventative care.

It's very important that people who favor big government solutions understand that a secular government is never going to recognize the rights of Christians as they take over more and more of the private sector economy. I am in favor of real care for people who have unexpected health care costs – like rare diseases and drunk drivers. We should give every citizen a voucher to purchase insurance that protects them from conditions that are not related to their own choices. But contraceptives and abortions are not unexpected – they are deliberate choices. People should have to pay for their own choices – not shove the costs on the rest of us who don't even agree with those behaviors. You can see how far this goes in countries like Canada – which covers IVF, sex changes and abortions. And the UK, which covers IVF, sex changes and breast enlargements. Is that health care? Shouldn't we have the right to opt out of paying for that for other people?

If liberals are so keen on paying for other people's condoms and abortions, then why don't they do it with their own money? I'm chaste. Why should I have to pay for these things for other people and give up my own plans and dreams?

Related posts

- Obama administration files papers to take Hobby Lobby to Supreme Court
- House introduces new legislation to protect defenders of traditional marriage
- Robert P. George: what is religious liberty? what is conscience?
- Hobby Lobby granted temporary injunction from Obamacare abortion mandate
- Obama rejects conscience protections for military chaplains
- Department of Justice threatens to seize business from Catholics
- Republicans introduce bill to block tax on pro-life religious institutions
- UK doctors who refuse to perform sex changes can be banned from practicing

- Democrat Barbara Boxer: right to be insured trumps religious liberty
- UK midwives protest ruling forcing them to perform abortions
- Hospital told nurses: assist in abortions or lose your job
- Should Christian doctors be forced to act like atheists at work?

Doctor shortage: how Obamacare makes Americans lose their doctors

November 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mysterious Tim sent me this article from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Everyone now is clamoring about Affordable Care Act winners and losers. I am one of the losers.
>
> My grievance is not political; all my energies are directed to enjoying life and staying alive, and I have no time for politics. For almost seven years I have fought and survived stage-4 gallbladder cancer, with a five-year survival rate of less than 2% after diagnosis. I am a determined fighter and extremely lucky. But this luck may have just run out: My affordable, lifesaving medical insurance policy has been canceled effective Dec. 31.
>
> My choice is to get coverage through the government health exchange and lose access to my cancer doctors, or pay much more for insurance outside the exchange (the quotes average 40% to 50% more) for the privilege of starting over with an unfamiliar insurance company and impaired benefits.
>
> Countless hours searching for non-exchange plans have uncovered nothing that compares well with my existing coverage. But the greatest source of frustration is Covered California, the state's Affordable Care Act health-insurance exchange and, by some reports, one of the best such exchanges in the country. After four weeks of researching plans on the website, talking directly to government exchange counselors, insurance companies and medical providers, my insurance broker and I are as confused as ever. Time is running out and we still don't have a clue how to best proceed.

Here previous private health insurance plan was doing a good job of honoring her policy:

> Since March 2007 United Healthcare has paid $1.2 million to help keep me alive, and it has never once questioned any treatment or procedure recommended by my medical team. The company pays a fair price to the doctors and hospitals, on time, and is responsive to the emergency treatment requirements of late-stage cancer. Its caring people in the claims office have been readily available to talk to me and my providers.

I think that this is what Obama was talking about when he cautioned people about insurance companies that "screw you". Yeah, private companies always screw people, Obama, never the government. What does this man know about how anything actually works in the real world, anyway?

More:

> What happened to the president's promise, "You can keep your health plan"? Or to the promise that "You can keep your doctor"? Thanks to the law, I have been forced to give up a world-class health plan. The exchange would force me to give up a world-class physician.
>
> For a cancer patient, medical coverage is a matter of life and death. Take away people's ability to control their medical-coverage choices and they may die. I guess that's a highly effective way to control medical costs. Perhaps that's the point.

Another factor that is going to make this situation worse is the widespread decline in the number of doctors caused by Obamacare.

Investors Business Daily reports on a recent poll of doctors by Deloitte.

Excerpt:

> When our polling showed four years ago that doctors planned to leave the profession if the Democrats' interpretation of health care reform became law, we were ridiculed mercilessly. But, as a new poll shows, we were right.
>
> In 2009, our IBD/TIPP Poll asked 1,376 randomly chosen practicing physicians from across the country what they thought about the health care "reform" being considered at that time.
>
> It found that 45% of doctors "would consider leaving their practice or taking an early retirement" if Congress passed the plan the White House and the Democratic majority in Congress had in mind.
>
> […]But almost a year later, we were vindicated. An August 2010 Merritt Hawkins survey of 2,379 doctors conducted for the Physicians Foundation revealed that 40% of doctors said they would "retire, seek a nonclinical job in health care, or seek a job or business unrelated to health care" over the next three years as the overhaul was phased in.
>
> Those three years are up, the country has found out what's in ObamaCare, and the story remains the same.
>
> The Deloitte 2013 Survey of U.S. Physicians found that six in 10 doctors say "it is likely that many physicians will retire earlier than planned in the next one to three years" — that is, in the age of ObamaCare — "while more than half believe that physicians will retire (62%) or scale back practice hours (55%) based on how the future of medicine is changing."

The problem is that when government controls health care, they spend the money on things that will buy them more votes. People who need expensive care like this definitely do not get treated. In government-run health care, government takes control of the money being spent by individuals on actual health care in the private sector. They then redirect that money into public sector spending on "health-related" services. Instead of helping people who are really sick, government-run systems cut lose those sick people

and concentrate on buying *perfectly healthy people* things like condoms, abortions, IVF and sex changes. They spread the money around to more people in order to buy more votes. The main goal is to get the majority of people dependent on government so that they continue to vote for bigger government. The few people who need expensive health care? *They can just go die in a ditch.*

The really sick thing is when a person works their entire lives, paying into a government-run health care system, and then when it is their turn at the end to finally get some treatment, they find out that they are denied treatment, and their money has all been spent on elective treatments for favored (liberal) minority groups. I'm sorry, but you can't have treatment for prostate cancer, because we used the money we got from you to provide IVF to a professor of women's studies who spent her fertile years advocating for abortion and against marriage. We should never be letting government control health care. Never.

Does a commitment to naturalism undermine rational thought and textual meaning?

November 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. William Lane Craig had a formal debate with an atheist philosopher named Alex Rosenberg a few months back that brought up an interesting idea. Rosenberg is a strong naturalist and he suggests all kinds of counterintuitive outworkings of naturalism in his book. Dr. Craig brought up a bunch of those strange views in his debate, and I listed them out in my summary of the debate as follows:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

We are concerned with #1 and #2 in this post.

Now I was visiting my parents last week in my home town and Dad and I went to church on Sunday. He wanted to listen to some weird sing-song-voiced pastor on the drive there, but I plugged in my smartphone and we listened to these three podcasts by William Lane Craig instead.

- Arguments in the Debate "Is Faith in God Reasonable?" Part 1
- Arguments in the Debate "Is Faith in God Reasonable?" Part 2
- Arguments in the Debate "Is Faith in God Reasonable?" Part 3

Dr. Craig was explaining in part 3 (I think) about how he went on the offensive with the 8 points, and Dad asked me why Dr. Rosenberg wrote that if naturalism is true, then nothing written down is meaningful. He also wanted to know why Dr. Rosenberg would write a book if his worldview entailed that nothing written down is meaningful.

The solution has to do with Rosenberg's denial of "intentionality", which is the idea that something can be about something else. For example, I can think about what I had for breakfast today on the way to church (two apples and coffee) or I can think about the sermon today in my home church and how good it was. A naturalist believes that the whole universe is made up of pure matter alone, and matter cannot be about anything. So Rosenberg denies this common sense view of "intentionality" or "aboutness" because there is no room for it on his naturalistic / materialistic / physicalist view of reality.

Here is a post by Bill Valicella on Maverick Philosopher blog that answers Dad's questions. First, Rosenberg's own view from his book.

> A single still photograph doesn't convey movement the way a motion picture does. Watching a sequence of slightly different photos one photo per hour, or per minute, or even one every 6 seconds won't do it either. But looking at the right sequence of still pictures succeeding each other every one-twentieth of a second produces the illusion that the images in each still photo are moving. Increasing the rate enhances the illusion, though beyond a certain rate the illusion gets no better for creatures like us. But it's still an illusion. There is noting to it but the succession of still pictures. That's how movies perpetrate their illusion. The large set of still pictures is organized together in a way that produces in creatures like us the illusion that the images are moving. In creatures with different brains and eyes, ones that work faster, the trick might not work. In ones that work slower, changing the still pictures at the rate of one every hour (as in time-lapse photography) could work. But there is no movement of any of the images in any of the pictures, nor does anything move from one photo onto the next. Of course, the projector is moving, and the photons are moving, and the actors were moving. But all the movement that the movie watcher detects is in the eye of the beholder. That is why the movement is illusory.
>
> The notion that thoughts are about stuff is illusory in roughly the same way. Think of each input/output neural circuit as a single still photo. Now, put together a huge number of input/output circuits in the right way. None of them is about anything; each is just an input/output circuit firing or not. But when they act together, they "project" the illusion that there are thoughts about stuff. They do that through the behavior and the conscious experience (if any) that they produce. (Alex Rosenberg,The Atheists' Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life Without Illusions. The quotation was copied from here.)

And here is what Bill says about that:

> Rosenberg is not saying, as an emergentist might, that the synergy of sufficiently many neural circuits gives rise to genuine object-directed thoughts. He is saying something far worse, something literally nonsensical, namely, that the object-directed thought that thoughts are object-directed is an illusion. The absurdity of Rosenberg's position can be seen as follows.
>
> 1. Either the words "The notion that thoughts are about stuff is illusory" express a thought — the thought that there are no object-directed thoughts — or they do not.
> 2. If the latter, then the words are meaningless.
> 3. If the former, then the thought is either true or false.
> 4. If the thought is true, then there there are no object-directed thoughts, including the one expressed by Rosenberg's words, and so his words are

> once again meaningless.
> 5. If the thought is false, then there are object-directed thoughts, and Rosenberg's claim is false.
>
> Therefore:
>
> - Rosenberg's claim is either meaningless or false. His position is self-refuting.
>
> As for the analogy, it is perfectly hopeless, presupposing as it does genuine intrinsic intentionality. If I am watching a movie of a man running, then I am under an illusion in that there is nothing moving on the movie screen: there is just a series of stills. But the experience I am undergoing is a perfectly good experience that exhibits genuine intrinsic intentionality: it is a visual experiencing of a man running, or to be perfectly punctilious about it: a visual experiencing AS OF a man running. Whether or not the man depicted exists, as would be the case if the movie were a newsreel, the experience exists, and so cannot be illusory.
>
> To understand the analogy one must understand that there are intentional experiences, experiences that take an accusative. But if you understand that, then you ought to be able to understand that the analogy cannot be used to render intelligible how it might that it is illusory that there are intentional experiences.
>
> What alone remains of interest here is how a seemingly intelligent fellow could adopt a position so manifestly absurd. I suspect the answer is that he has stupefied himself by his blind adherence to scientistic/naturalistic ideology.

If you want to sort of double check the details, then go ahead and watch the debate or read my summary or listen to the debate audio, and then listen to Dr. Craig's three podcasts that I linked above.

I know a lot of you are thinking right now "Hey! You cheater! That's a presuppositional argument! You said they were bad!" Well, I didn't say they were bad, I said that the epistemological view of presuppositionalism was bad. Presuppositional arguments are *good.* See below for a few posts about them. Use them all you can, but use the good scientific and historical evidence, too.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones

- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument

Gay activist inside IRS leaked names of pro-marriage donors to Human Rights Campaign

November 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The American Spectator reports. (H/T Robert Stacy McCain)

Excerpt:

> Last year's illegal leak of confidential non-profit donor information by the Internal Revenue Service has been linked to a 2007 Harvard University graduate who was a member of a gay activist group within Bain and Co.
>
> IRS rules prevent congressional investigators from publicly naming the tax agency employee who leaked the information about donors to the National Organization for Marriage (NOM),Eliana Johnson of *National Review* reports, however, that the person to whom the information was leaked was former Bain and Co. employee Matthew Meisel. A 2007 graduate of Harvard, Meisel was active in an employee organization called Bain Gay and Lesbian Association for Diversity (BGLAD), Meisel's activism on behalf of gay-oriented diversity hiring programs has been trumpeted in the *Harvard Crimson* and *Yale Herald*.
>
> Johnson's *National Review* report cites investigators with the House Ways and Means Committee for how the information about donors to NOM (which opposes the legalization of same-sex marriage) was leaked from the IRS, revealing GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney's private contributions to the organization:
>
> [A]n IRS agent working in the Exempt Organizations Division — the same division that, until May, was under the direction of Lois Lerner, who retired under duress last month — leaked NOM's Schedule B to Matthew Meisel, a former employee of Bain & Company… . After he obtained NOM's donor list from the IRS employee, the committee says, Meisel then turned it over to the Human Rights Campaign. Neither Meisel nor the Human Rights Campaign returned calls seeking comment.

So what you have here is a gay activist giving information to the Human Rights Campaign. The Human Rights Campaign is a group that had previously condemned the Family Research Council as a hate group. This is the same Family Research Council that was later attacked by a convicted domestic terrorist / gay activist. After the attack, the HRC continued to denounce the FRC as a hate group.

Not the first time

Remember Private Bradley Manning, who leaked top secret military information? He was also a gay activist.

Here's the story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Bradley Manning, the prime suspect in the leaking of the Afghan war files, raged

> against his US Army employers and "society at large" on his Facebook page in the days before he allegedly downloaded thousands of secret memos, The Daily Telegraph has learnt.
>
> The US Army intelligence analyst, who is half British and went to school in Wales, appeared to sink into depression after a relationship break-up, saying he didn't "have anything left" and was "beyond frustrated".
>
> In an apparent swipe at the army, he also wrote: "Bradley Manning is not a piece of equipment," and quoted a joke about "military intelligence" being an oxymoron.
>
> Mr Manning, 22, who is currently awaiting court martial, is suspected of leaking more than 90,000 secret military documents to the Wikileaks website in a security breach which US officials claim has endangered the lives of serving soldiers and Afghan informers.
>
> […]Mr Manning, who is openly homosexual, began his gloomy postings on January 12, saying: "Bradley Manning didn't want this fight. Too much to lose, too fast."
>
> […]Pictures on Mr Manning's Facebook page include photos of him on school trips during his time in Wales and at a gay rights rally, where he is holding up a placard demanding equality on "the battlefield".

The story a detailed look at his family history, and his troubled relationship with his father after his parents divorced.

Why is this interesting?

The troubling thing about abortion activists and gay activists is how easy they find it to overrule and destroy the basic human rights of those who disagree with them about sexual morality. That's the real concern that traditional religious people have about abortion rights and gay rights activists. Some of them seem very willing to break the law and infringe on the rights of others in their crusades.

See below for some more examples of radical left-wing activists breaking laws in order to push their socially liberal agenda.

Related posts

- Two Christian preachers brutally beaten at Seattle Gay Pride Festival
- Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center

- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Gay activist Dan Savage bullies Christian teens and bashes Christianity
- Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll's Mars Hill Church
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Pro-abortion vandals: destroying pro-life display was "free speech"
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Zeitgeist conspiracy movie had profound impact on Jared Loughner
- Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning
- Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist
- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

Climate change: is global cooling the emerging consensus view of scientists?

November 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

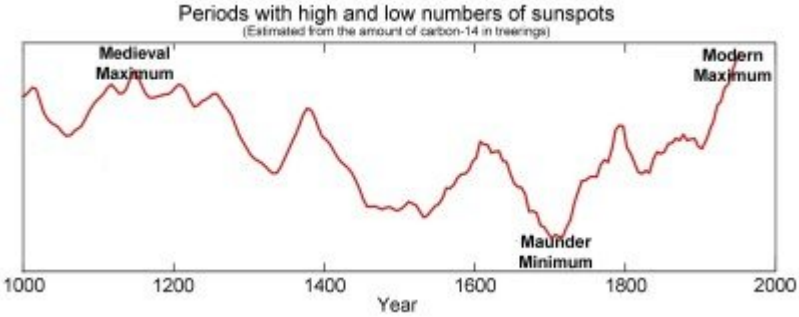

Graph of solar activity (Source: GSU.edu)
Source: Department of Geosciences, Georgia State University

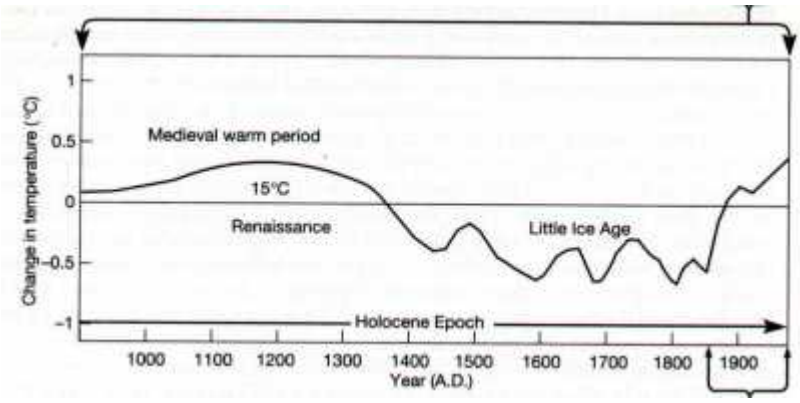

Global temperature (Source: USC.edu)
Source: Department of Earth Sciences, University of Southern California

Now, the consensus view among skeptics of global warming has generally been that naturally-occurring solar cycles are responsible for cooling and warming trends. In the medieval era, global temperatures were higher than today, and that cannot have been caused by the emission of greenhouse gases. It makes more sense to attribute that warming period to the sun than to human behaviors. If that's the case, then it's possible that solar cycles could also cause us to go into a cooling period.

Here's an article about global cooling from the Financial Post, a Canadian newspaper that is part of the National Post.

Excerpt:

> In the 1960s and 1970s, a growing scientific consensus held that the Earth was entering a period of global cooling. The CIA announced that the "Western world's leading climatologists have confirmed recent reports of detrimental global climatic change" akin to the Little Ice Age of the 17th and 18th centuries, "an era of drought, famine and political unrest in the western world." President Jimmy Carter signed the National Climate Program Act to deal with the coming global cooling crisis. Newsweek magazine published a chilling article entitled "The

> Cooling World."
>
> In the decades that followed, as temperatures rose, climate skeptics mocked the global cooling hypothesis and a new theory emerged — that Earth was in fact entering a period of global warming.
>
> Now an increasing number of scientists are swinging back to the thinking of the 1960s and 1970s. The global cooling hypothesis may have been right after all, they say. Earth may be entering a new Little Ice Age.
>
> "Real risk of a Maunder Minimum 'Little Ice Age,'" announced the BBC this week, in reporting startling findings by Professor Mike Lockwood of Reading University. "Professor Lockwood believes solar activity is now falling more rapidly than at any time in the last 10,000 years [raising the risk of a new Little Ice Age] from less than 10% just a few years ago to 25-30%," explained Paul Hudson, the BBC's climate correspondent. If Earth is spared a new Little Ice Age, a severe cooling as "occurred in the early 1800s, which also had its fair share of cold winters and poor summers, is, according to him, 'more likely than not' to happen."
>
> […]Scientists at the Climate and Environmental Physics and Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of Berne in Switzerland back up theories that support the Sun's importance in determining the climate on Earth. In a paper published this month by the American Meteorological Society, the authors demolish the claims by IPCC scientists that the Sun couldn't be responsible for major shifts in climate. In a post on her website this month, Judith Curry, Chair of the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at the Georgia Institute of Technology, all-but mocked the IPCC assertions that solar variations don't matter. Among the many studies and authorities she cited: the National Research Council's recent report, "The Effects of Solar Variability on Earth's Climate," and NASA, former home of global warming guru James Hansen.

The Daily Caller picked up on this article and added more: (H/T Letitia)

> Earlier this year, Professor Cliff Ollier of the School of Earth and Environmental Studies at the University of Western Australia presented a study that posited that the sun was a major controller of the climate.
>
> "There is a very good correlation of sunspots and climate," Ollier wrote. "Solar cycles provide a basis for prediction. Solar Cycle 24 has started and we can expect serious cooling. Many think that political decisions about climate are based on scientific predictions but what politicians get are projections based on computer models."
>
> Last year, Russian scientists also posited that from next year onward the world could expect the start of the another Little Ice Age.
>
> "After the maximum of solar cycle 24, from approximately 2014 we can expect the start of deep cooling with a Little Ice Age in 2055," wrote Habibullo Abdussamatov of the Russian Academy of Science.

> The "Little Ice Age" occurred during the 1600s when winters were harsh all across Europe. The continent-wide cold weather coincided with an inactive sun, called the Maunder solar minimum.

You're not likely to hear about the Medieval Warming Period or the Maunder minimum in public schools, but they are there in the data.

Of course, if the majority of people begin to understand that the sun is causing cycles of warming and cooling, then we don't really need government to regulate job creators and control our consumption. What would happen then? So my suspicion is that the government-funded scientific consensus will try to get us to believe that we have always been fighting against global cooling, not global warming. That way, the massive taxation and regulation of private companies and private individuals can continue.

This reminds me of Oceania's war with Eastasia or Eurasia in the famous distopian novel 1984: (description from leftist Wikipedia)

> In 1984, there is a perpetual war among Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia, the super-states which emerged from the atomic global war. "The book", *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* by Emmanuel Goldstein, explains that each state is so strong it cannot be defeated, even with the combined forces of two super-states—despite changing alliances. To hide such contradictions, history is re-written to explain that the (new) alliance always was so; the populaces accustomed to doublethink accept it. The war is not fought in Oceanian, Eurasian or Eastasian territory but in the arctic wastes and a disputed zone comprising the sea and land from Tangiers (northern Africa) to Darwin (Australia). At the start, Oceania and Eastasia are allies combatting Eurasia in northern Africa and the Malabar Coast.
>
> That alliance ends and Oceania allied with Eurasia fights Eastasia, a change which occurred during the Hate Week dedicated to creating patriotic fervour for the Party's perpetual war. The public are blind to the change; in mid-sentence an orator changes the name of the enemy from "Eurasia" to "Eastasia" without pause. When the public are enraged at noticing that the wrong flags and posters are displayed they tear them down—thus the origin of the idiom "We've always been at war with Eastasia"…

I wonder if we are coming to the point when the global warming alarmists will switch their pro-socialism narrative so that the threat we face is global cooling.

The neat thing about that article is that it's the *Canadians* who are among the most skeptical of global warming. Previously, officials in the Canadian government have been extremely critical of the man-made global warming hypothesis. Consider the comments of Conservative MP Joe Oliver and Conservative MP Peter Kent – they are all for developing energy resources and creating jobs. Canadians are practical on the issue of climate change – they would rather have jobs than feelings of moral superiority. But down here in Obamaland, there's no critical thinking at all on the issue. If you doubt global

warming, then you need to be called names, intimidated, fired or worse.

What is ENDA? The Employment Non-Discrimination Act and religious liberty

November 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are two assessments of the Democrat-sponsored ENDA legislation, the first conservative, the second libertarian.

Here's Ryan Anderson from the Heritage Foundation, a conservative D.C. think tank.

Excerpt:

> ENDA would impose liability on employers for alleged "discrimination" based not on objective employee traits but on subjective and unverifiable identities. It would create new protected classes—based on an "individual's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity"—that would expose employers to unimaginable liability. ENDA could require employment policies that undermine common sense about a host of workplace conditions, especially regarding issues surrounding gender identity.
>
> The bill defines "gender identity" as "the gender-related identity, appearance, or mannerisms…of an individual, with or without regard to the individual's designated sex at birth." In other words, it creates special rights for transgendered individuals—males who dress and act as females, and females who dress and act as males—and forbids employers from considering the consequences of such behavior in the workplace.
>
> Issues concerning gender identity are difficult. All ought to agree that young children should be protected from having to sort through questions about gender identity before an age-appropriate introduction. ENDA, however, would bar employers from making certain decisions about transgendered employees.
>
> Although ENDA includes some exemptions for religious education, it provides no protection for students in other schools who could be prematurely exposed to questions about gender identity if, for example, a male teacher returned to school identifying as a woman.
>
> Moreover, we can't deny the relevance of biological sex in many contexts. An employer would be negligent to ignore the concerns of female employees about having to share bathrooms with a biological male who identifies as female. Failing to consider these repercussions raises a host of concerns about privacy rights. But ENDA would prevent taking these concerns into account.

And here is a post from Hans Bader of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a libertarian D.C. think tank.

Meritless lawsuits that favor the plaintiff:

> ENDA would harm even businesses that hire and fire based on merit, not sexual

> orientation. It would also erode free speech in the workplace about sexual-orientation-related political and religious issues.
>
> Since ENDA is modeled on other employment laws that have produced many meritless discrimination lawsuits (through one-way fee shifting), ENDA, too, is likely to result in wasteful litigation and settlements paid out by employers that are actually innocent of discrimination (most employment discrimination claims turn out to be meritless). ENDA's attorney fee provision, Section 12, uses the same language as other federal employment laws that incorporate the *Christiansburg Garment* standard for awarding attorneys fees — a sort of "heads I win, tails you lose" scheme under which the plaintiff gets his attorneys fees paid for by the other side if he wins, but the employer has to pay its own attorneys fees even if it wins (a win at trial typically costs an employer at least $250,000). While the language of ENDA's attorney-fee provision is seemingly neutral on its face, similar provisions in other federal employment laws have consistently been interpreted by the courts as favoring plaintiffs under the Supreme Court's 1978 *Christiansburg Garment* decision. Moreover, even if the plaintiff's case is so insubstantial that the plaintiff only wins $1 at trial, the employer can still be ordered to pay tens of thousands of dollars in attorneys fees. For example, an appeals court ruling awarded $42,000 in attorneys fees to a plaintiff who suffered only $1 in damages. (*See Brandau v. Kansas*, 168 F.3d 1179 (10th Cir.1999).) These attorney fee provisions will lead to some employers paying thousands of dollars to plaintiffs just to settle weak or meritless discrimination claims.

Censoring employees who might create a "hostile environment":

> While the typical private employer has no reason to hire or fire based on sexual orientation (and few do), ENDA'sSection 4(a)(1) reaches beyond hiring and firing to vaguely defined "terms, conditions, or privileges of employment," which courts interpret as requiring certain restrictions on speech. In *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*, 477 U.S. 57 (1986), the Supreme Court interpreted the same vague "terms or conditions" language in another statute, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, as requiring employers to prohibit employee speech or conduct that creates a "hostile or offensive work environment" for women or blacks. The employer is liable for damages and attorneys fees if a court decides that it was negligent in failing to detect, prevent, or punish such speech or conduct. Such "hostile work environment" liability applies to each and every protected class covered by federal law, such as race, religion, national origin, and disability, not just gender. *See, e.g., Amirmokri v. Baltimore Gas and Electric Co.*, 60 F.3d 1126 (4th Cir. 1995) (employer was liable for national-origin based taunts and harassment by plaintiff's co-workers).
>
> If ENDA were enacted, such liability would also cover "sexual orientation"-based hostile work environments, meaning that a company would potentially be liable

> for a “hostile work environment” resulting from anti-gay things its employees say (even if those employees’ sentiments are at odds with the company’s own views or policies). Thus, to avoid liability, an employer might have to silence employees with political opinions that are perceived as anti-gay, and prevent such employees from expressing political views such as opposition to gay marriage or gays in the military that could contribute to a “hostile work environment.”

Quotas in hiring:

> It is conceivable that if ENDA is passed, a civil-rights agency could use it to pressure some employers to adopt sexual-orientation-based hiring goals or veiled quotas, notwithstanding the language of Section 4(f) of ENDA. Activists have already pressured President Obama to mandate sexual-orientation-based hiring goals for government contractors.

Bathroom privacy:

> Finally, in addition to banning sexual-orientation discrimination, ENDA also contains “transgender rights” provisions that ban discrimination based on “gender identity.” Similar prohibitions in state laws created legal headaches for some businesses.

I have to admit, I have been operating for the last decade as if this law was already in effect, since I don’t want to be singled out for reprisals by management if a law like this is enacted. If you already have a reputation as being pro-marriage and pro-chastity in your workplace and this law gets enacted, you will become a target for censorship and even termination. It would be much easier for your employer to pre-emptively fire you under some pretext than to have to get stuck with millions of dollars in legal fees and penalties for one of these “hostile work environment” lawsuits. I can envision scenarios in which people on the left will solicit your opinion openly in the workplace on controversial issues like gay marriage, etc. and then prosecute you for anything less than full affirmation and enthusiastic celebration of their views. It’s already happening in the military now.

It’s very important for Christians to consider who they talk to and what they talk about in the workplace. You might think that you have free speech rights in America, but you don’t. That is all going away now because of the gay agenda and the judicial activism in the courts. This is especially true for men who have to provide for their families. If you are going to say anything critical of the secular left, understand that they are fascists, and they will hurt you any way they can. These are not people who believe in human rights. They believe in using power to destroy anyone who offends them by mere disagreement.

What makes a planet suitable for supporting complex life?

November 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Circumstellar Habitable Zone (CHZ)

What do you need in order to have a planet that supports complex life? First, you need liquid water at the surface of the planet. But there is only a narrow range of temperatures that can support liquid water. It turns out that the size of the star that your planet orbits around has a lot to do with whether you get liquid water or not. A heavy, metal-rich star allows you to have a habitable planet far enough from the star so the planet can support liquid water on the planet's surface while still being able to spin on its axis. The zone where a planet can have liquid water at the surface is called the circumstellar habitable zone (CHZ). A metal-rich star like our Sun is very massive, which moves the habitable zone out further away from the star. If our star were smaller, we would have to orbit much closer to the star in order to have liquid water at the surface. Unfortunately, if you go too close to the star, then your planet becomes tidally locked, like the moon is tidally locked to Earth. Tidally locked planets are inhospitable to life.

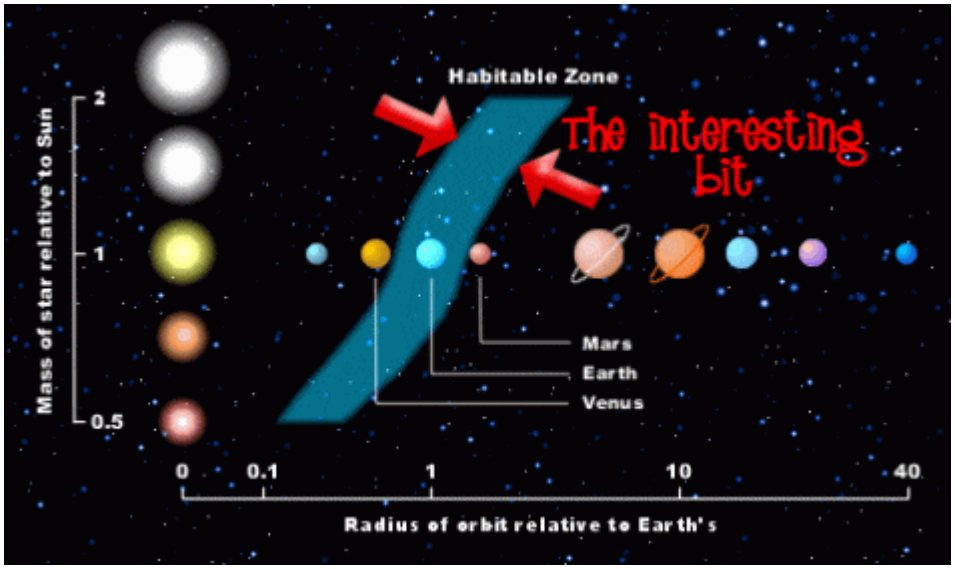

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

Here, watch a clip from The Privileged Planet: (Clip 4 of 12, full playlist here)

But there's more.

The Galactic Habitable Zone (GHZ)

So, where do you get the heavy elements you need for your heavy metal-rich star?

You have to get the heavy elements for your star from supernova explosions – explosions that occur when certain types of stars die. That's where heavy elements come from. But you can't be TOO CLOSE to the dying stars, because you will get hit by nasty radiation and explosions. So to get the heavy elements from the dying stars, your solar system needs to be in the galactic habitable zone (GHZ) – the zone where you can pickup the heavy elements you need but not get hit by radiation and explosions. The GHZ lies

between the spiral arms of a spiral galaxy. Not only do you have to be in between the arms of the spiral galaxy, but you also cannot be too close to the center of the galaxy. The center of the galaxy is too dense and you will get hit with massive radiation that will break down your life chemistry. But you also can't be too far from the center, because you won't get enough heavy elements because there are fewer dying stars the further out you go. You need to be in between the spiral arms, a medium distance from the center of the galaxy.

Like this:

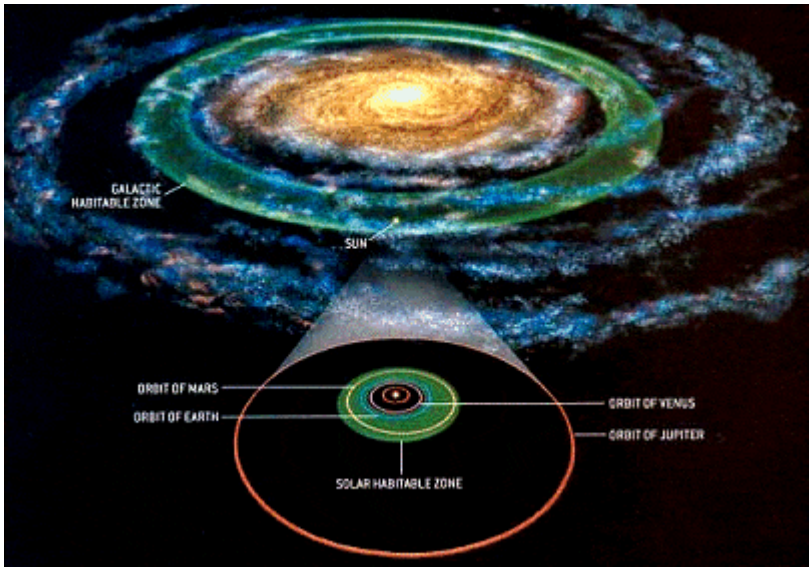

Galactic Habitable Zone and Solar Habitable Zone

Here, watch a clip from The Privileged Planet: (Clip 10 of 12, full playlist here)

The GHZ is based on a discovery made by astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez, which made the front cover of Scientific American in 2001. That's right, the cover of Scientific American. I actually stole the image above of the GHZ and CHZ (aka solar habitable zone) from his Scientific American article (linked above).

These are just a few of the things you need in order to get a planet that supports life.

Here are a few of the more well-known ones:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.

- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

By the way, you can watch a lecture with Guillermo Gonzalez explaining his ideas further. This lecture was delivered at UC Davis in 2007. That link has a link to the playlist of the lecture, a bio of the speaker, and a summary of all the topics he discussed in the lecture. An excellent place to learn the requirements for a suitable habitat for life.

Obama administration decides to exempt Obamacare from fraud prevention rules

November 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically left-wing New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The Affordable Care Act is the biggest new health care program in decades, but the Obama administration has ruled that neither the federal insurance exchange nor the federal subsidies paid to insurance companies on behalf of low-income people are "federal health care programs."
>
> The surprise decision, disclosed last week, exempts subsidized health insurance from a law that bans rebates, kickbacks, bribes and certain other financial arrangements in federal health programs, stripping law enforcement of a powerful tool used to fight fraud in other health care programs, like Medicare.
>
> The main purpose of the anti-kickback law, as described by federal courts in scores of Medicare cases, is to protect patients and taxpayers against the undue influence of money on medical decisions.
>
> Kathleen Sebelius, the secretary of health and human services, disclosed her interpretation of the law in a letter to Representative Jim McDermott, Democrat of Washington, who had asked her views. She did not explain the legal rationale for her decision, which followed a spirited debate within the administration.

It's all exempt from oversight laws:

> Most of the buyers are expected to be eligible for subsidies to make insurance more affordable. The subsidies, paid directly to insurers from the United States Treasury, start in January and are expected to total more than $1 trillion over 10 years.
>
> Ms. Sebelius said the Health and Human Services Department "does not consider" the subsidies to be federal health care programs. She reached the same conclusion with respect to federal and state exchanges, built with federal money, and with respect to "federally funded consumer assistance programs," including the counselors, known as navigators, who help people shop for insurance and enroll in coverage through the exchanges.

What could go wrong? What could go wrong if the government hires "federal consumer assistants" like ACORN workers and other "community organizers" in order to administer federal subsidies? I think it will be fine. It will all work out great.

Oh, wait. I suppose that it's *possible* that something like this might happen:

> The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) spent almost $29 million

> to cover Medicare Part D prescription drugs for 4,139 individuals “unlawfully present” in the U.S. and thus ineligible to receive federal health care benefits, according to an audit by Daniel Levinson, inspector general of the Department of Health & Human Services.
>
> […]CMS “inappropriately accepted 279,056 PDE [prescription drug event] records with unallowable gross drug costs totaling $28,990,718” between 2009 and 2011, Levinson reported. Total federal expenditures under Medicare Part D during that same two-year time period came to $227 billion.
>
> Medicare Parts A and B cover hospitalization, skilled nursing care, doctor visits, and other medical services and supplies. The IG previously reported in January that CMS had also paid $91.6 million to health care providers to cover 2,600 ineligible illegal aliens.

Now failure like this could never take place in the private sector, because companies would go out of business. But in the government, they just borrow a trillion or two more from your children and call it even. That’s why we should never let the government get involved in things that are best handled by free trades between buyers and multiple sellers who must compete with each other. Health care is not something you hand off to a monopoly. At least, not if you expect transparency, affordability and quality.

Democrats win Virginia governorship, aided by Democrat-funded Libertarian candidate

November 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

At the time of writing, it looks like the Libertarian candidate has succeeded in guaranteeing that Democrat policies will be implemented in Virginia.

Election results: (at time of writing)

- Terry McAuliffe (D) 47.4% 1,021,298 votes
- Ken Cuccinelli II (R) 46.0% 989,584 votes
- Robert Sarvis (L) 6.6% 142,338 votes

Libertarian candidates don't usually draw 7% of the vote – so what happened?

The Blaze explains in this article.

Excerpt:

> A major Democratic Party benefactor and Obama campaign bundler helped pay for professional petition circulators responsible for getting Virginia Libertarian gubernatorial candidate Robert C. Sarvis on the ballot — a move that could split conservative votes in a tight race.
>
> Campaign finance records show the Libertarian Booster PAC has made the largest independent contribution to Sarvis' campaign, helping to pay for professional petition circulators who collected signatures necessary to get Sarvis' name on Tuesday's statewide ballot.
>
> Austin, Texas, software billionaire Joe Liemandt is the Libertarian Booster PAC's major benefactor. He's also a top bundler for President Barack Obama. This revelation comes as Virginia voters head to the polls Tuesday in an election where some observers say the third-party gubernatorial candidate could be a spoiler for Republican Ken Cuccinelli.
>
> […]According to Virginia election filings posted by the Virginia Public Access Project, Liemandt contributed $150,000 of the Texas-based Libertarian Booster PAC's $229,000 revenue. The Libertarian Booster PAC reported providing $11,454 to pay for signature collection, yard signs and campaign materials for Sarvis and another $4,690 for four Libertarian candidates running for the Virginia state legislature.

I do think that it's OK to vote Libertarian when an election is not in doubt, but this election was close. Cuccinelli has an "A" rating from the NRA, but McAuliffe has an "F" rating from the NRA. He is very likely to put in stricter gun control measures in Virginia. I hope that people learn something about politics from this election. I would really like to see short and long guns banned completely in Virginia, and door-to-door confiscations by SWAT

teams. Maybe then libertarians will learn the consequences of their voting from real life.

Duke U. researcher: 129 million people will lose health insurance under Obamacare

November 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> If Obamacare is fully implemented, 68 percent of Americans with private health insurance will not be able to keep their plan, according to health care economist Christopher Conover.
>
> Conover is a research scholar in the Center for Health Policy & Inequalities Research at Duke University and an adjunct scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. In an interview with The Daily Caller, he laid out what he estimates the consequences of Obamacare's implementation will ultimately be.
>
> "Bottom line: of the 189 million Americans with private health insurance coverage, I estimate that if Obamacare is fully implemented, at least 129 million (68 percent) will not be able to keep their previous health care plan either because they already have lost or will lose that coverage by the end of 2014," he said in an email. "But of these, 'only' the 18 to 50 million will literally lose coverage, i.e., have their plans entirely taken away. This includes 9.2-15.4 million in the non-group market and 9-35 million in the employer-based market. The rest will retain their old plans but have to pay higher rates for Obamacare-mandated bells and whistles."
>
> Conover also says it is hard to imagine President Obama didn't know these statistics when he was flacking for his health care bill by promising Americans they could keep their health insurance if they liked it.
>
> "If President Obama himself believed this the first time he said it, he was poorly advised," Conover said.
>
> "The problem is that he said it at least 24 times, most of which occurred after his own rule-writers had estimated that 49-80 percent of small employer plans would have lost their grandfather status by 2013, along with 34-64 percent of large employer plans. The same rule estimated that each year 40 to 67 percent of non-group plans not already grandfathered would lose their grandfather status. Given how extensively presidential statements — especially to a joint session of Congress — are vetted and fact-checked, it is pretty inconceivable that President Obama was not aware that he was engaged in some degree of truth-twisting."

Surprise! It looks like what the Democrats wanted was to destroy private health insurance, after all. The nice thing about this is that *finally* the low-information voters who elected Obama are getting to see why it might be a good idea to get their political news from somewhere other than the Comedy Channel.

Formation of life-permitting elements carbon and oxygen is fine-tuned

November 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's review the structure of the fine-tuning argument.

The argument goes like this:

1. The fine-tuning of the universe to support life is either due to law, chance or design
2. It is not due to law or chance
3. Therefore, the fine-tuning is due to design

Here are the facts on the fine-tuning:

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, a universal solvent, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the ratios between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible values spans 70 orders of magnitude.
- The constants are *selected* by whoever creates the universe. They are not determined by physical laws. And the extreme probabilities involved required put the fine-tuning beyond the reach of chance.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Carbon is that element that can serve as a hub, and oxygen is also a vital element, since it is a component of water, which is required for life. So both carbon (the hub of large molecules) and oxygen (a building block of water) are required for complex life of any imaginable kind.

Now for the study.

Mysterious Jen, who blogs at Victory Rolls and V8s sent me this amazing article on Science Daily about a new peer-reviewed study that supports the fine-tuning argument.

Here's an excerpt:

> Life as we know it is based upon the elements of carbon and oxygen. Now a team

> of physicists, including one from North Carolina State University, is looking at the conditions necessary to the formation of those two elements in the universe. They've found that when it comes to supporting life, the universe leaves very little margin for error.
>
> Both carbon and oxygen are produced when helium burns inside of giant red stars. Carbon-12, an essential element we're all made of, can only form when three alpha particles, or helium-4 nuclei, combine in a very specific way. The key to formation is an excited state of carbon-12 known as the Hoyle state, and it has a very specific energy — measured at 379 keV (or 379,000 electron volts) above the energy of three alpha particles. Oxygen is produced by the combination of another alpha particle and carbon.
>
> NC State physicist Dean Lee and German colleagues Evgeny Epelbaum, Hermann Krebs, Timo Laehde and Ulf-G. Meissner had previously confirmed the existence and structure of the Hoyle state with a numerical lattice that allowed the researchers to simulate how protons and neutrons interact. These protons and neutrons are made up of elementary particles called quarks. The light quark mass is one of the fundamental parameters of nature, and this mass affects particles' energies.
>
> **In new lattice calculations done at the Juelich Supercomputer Centre the physicists found that just a slight variation in the light quark mass will change the energy of the Hoyle state, and this in turn would affect the production of carbon and oxygen in such a way that life as we know it wouldn't exist.**
>
> […]The researchers' findings appear in *Physical Review Letters*.

So that's the latest research that supports the fine-tuning argument. But how effective is this argument really? Is it only admitted by theists, or do atheists accept the fine-tuning as well?

Is the fine-tuning real?

Yes, it's real and it is conceded by the top-rank of atheist physicists. Let me give you a citation from the best one of all, Martin Rees. Martin Rees is an atheist and a qualified astronomer. He wrote a book called "Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape The Universe", (Basic Books: 2001). In it, he discusses 6 numbers that need to be fine-tuned in order to have a life-permitting universe.

Rees writes here:

> These six numbers constitute a 'recipe' for a universe. Moreover, the outcome is sensitive to their values: if any one of them were to be 'untuned', there would be no stars and no life. Is this tuning just a brute fact, a coincidence? Or is it the providence of a benign Creator?

There are some atheists who deny the fine-tuning, but these atheists are in firm

opposition to the progress of science. The more science has progressed, the more constants, ratios and quantities we have discovered that need to be fine-tuned. Science is going in a theistic direction. Next, let's see how atheists try to account for the fine-tuning, on atheism.

Atheistic responses to the fine-tuning argument

There are two common responses among atheists to this argument.

The first is to speculate that there are actually an infinite number of other universes that are not fine-tuned, (i.e. – the gambler's fallacy). All these other universes don't support life. We just happen to be in the one universe is fine-tuned for life. The problem is that there *is no way of directly observing these other universes and no independent evidence that they exist.*

Here is an excerpt from an article in Discover magazine, (which is hostile to theism and Christianity).

> Short of invoking a benevolent creator, many physicists see only one possible explanation: Our universe may be but one of perhaps infinitely many universes in an inconceivably vast multiverse. Most of those universes are barren, but some, like ours, have conditions suitable for life.
>
> The idea is controversial. Critics say it doesn't even qualify as a scientific theory because the existence of other universes cannot be proved or disproved. Advocates argue that, like it or not, the multiverse may well be the only viable nonreligious explanation for what is often called the "fine-tuning problem"—the baffling observation that the laws of the universe seem custom-tailored to favor the emergence of life.

The second response by atheists is that the human observers that exist today, 14 billion years after the universe was created out of nothing, actually caused the fine-tuning. This solution would mean that although humans did not exist at the time the of the big bang, they are going to be able to reach back in time at some point in the future and manually fine-tune the universe.

Here is an excerpt from and article in the New Scientist, (which is hostile to theism and Christianity).

> …maybe we should approach cosmic fine-tuning not as a problem but as a clue. Perhaps it is evidence that we somehow endow the universe with certain features by the mere act of observation… observers are creating the universe and its entire history right now. If we in some sense create the universe, it is not surprising that the universe is well suited to us.

So, there are two choices for atheists. Either an infinite number of unobservable universes that are not fine-tuned, or humans go back in time at some future point and fine-tune the beginning of the universe, billions of years in the past. I think I will prefer the design explanation to those alternatives.

Gay activist Dan Savage: abortion should be mandatory for the next 30 years

November 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist Dan Savage thinks that we should murder every single child born on the planet for the next 30 years, against the will of the parents, in every single country in the world.

The Daily Caller explains what happened. (H/T Mysterious Wes)

Excerpt:

> Self-styled anti-bullying advocate Dan Savage told a giggling and applauding audience in Australia that "abortion should be mandatory for 30 years" on Monday during a panel discussion on Christianity, marriage and sex.
>
> Savage made his remarks during a program titled "Q&A, Adventures in Democracy" broadcasted from the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall on Monday in response to the question: "Which so-called dangerous idea do you each think would have the greatest potential to change the world for the better if it were implemented?"
>
> "Population control: There's too many goddam people on the planet," Savage said as the audience burst into applause at his predictable response. "You know, I'm pro-choice. I believe that women should have a right to control their bodies. Sometimes in my darker moments, I'm anti-choice. I think abortion should be mandatory for about 30 years."
>
> Savage, creator of the "It Gets Better" viral video anti-suicide crusade on behalf of gay teens, takes a hateful, violent pro-death position toward everyone who irritates him, from unborn babies to hapless Green Party candidates standing in the way of total Democratic domination.
>
> "I wish [Republicans] were all f***ing dead," he said on liberal comedian Bill Maher's HBO show "Real Time" in 2011 during the debt-ceiling brouhaha.
>
> Back in 2006, Savage called for the barbaric murder of a Green Party candidate, angered by the threat of third-party candidates to spoil the Democratic Senate victory of Bob Casey.
>
> "Carl Romanelli should be dragged behind a pickup truck until there's nothing left but the rope," Savage told the Daily Pennsylvanian, alluding to the 1998 torture and death of hate crime victim James Byrd, Jr.
>
> Voters thinking of casting a ballot for Romanelli should be "beaten," said Savage, who had previously used the beating death of 21-year-old gay teen Matthew Shepard as blog post fodder.

Remember, this is just what he says in public. Can you imagine what his real views are?

The Obama administration is a big fan of Dan Savage:

> President Barack Obama himself supports Savage's "It Gets Better" campaign, devoting a page of WhiteHouse.gov to it as a civil rights issue.
>
> Obama appears to share Savage's view on abortion as well: During his tenure in the Illinois state legislature, Obama spoke and voted against a version of the "Born Alive Infants Protection Act," which would have made it illegal to kill a living, breathing, defenseless child that survived an abortion.

It's very important to take a close look at what gay activists say and do. Below are a couple of examples of what gay activists do.

From the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> A satellite church affiliated with controversial Seattle pastor Mark Driscoll was vandalized early Tuesday (April 24) and a group calling itself the "Angry Queers" has reportedly taken responsibility.
>
> Stained glass and other windows were broken at the Mars Hill Church, according to a post on the Facebook page of Pastor Tim Smith.
>
> "Neighbors of the church reported seeing several young adults in black masks throwing large rocks into the windows," a church news release said. "Police stated that a bank in the area was also vandalized in the same way and that they believe the vandalism was planned ahead of time, most likely by an activist group."
>
> On Tuesday, KPTV FOX 12 reported it had received an email from someone using the name "Angry Queers" and claiming responsibility.
>
> Mars Hill Portland opened last October. During the first service, protesters gathered in front of the church and yelled obscenities at worshipers to speak out against the church's stance on homosexuality.

Here's part of the e-mail written by the gay activists responsible for the attack:

> The e-mail, which is peppered with foul language, berates the Q Center, a local LGBT activist organization, for engaging in a dialogue with the Mars Hill's leadership. "What we have to say to the Q Center is this: F—K YOU, you don't represent us. You are disgusting traitors who prioritize social peace and the bourgeois aspirations of rich white cis gay people over the more pressing survival needs of more marginalized queers."
>
> "F—k dialog with people who want us dead," the e-mail read. "The only dialog we need with scum like Mars Hill is hammers through their windows."
>
> "We hope this small act of vengeance will strike some fear into the hearts of all of Mars Hill's pastors, and warm the hearts of our friends and comrades (known or unknown). It may not get better, but we can certainly get even," it concludes.

You can read about a few more examples of gay activism here and a more recent example of gay activism here.

And of course, we can't forget the prominent gay activist Floyd Corkins, who was convicted of domestic terrorism for his attack on the Family Research Council.

> The man accused of opening fire and shooting a security guard at the conservative Family Research Council headquarters last August plead guilty to three charges in a D.C. federal court Wednesday.
>
> Floyd Lee Corkins, II of Herndon, Virginia entered guilty pleas to a federal weapons charge as well as a local terrorism charge and a charge of assault with intent to kill, according to news reports.
>
> The Washington Post reports that, according to the plea agreement Corkins signed, he told FBI agents on the day of the shooting that he "intended to kill as many people as possible" and planned to "smother Chick-fil-A sandwiches in their faces."
>
> Investigators found additional magazines and 15 Chick-fil-A sandwiches in his backpack on the day of the shooting.
>
> Following the guilty plea the FRC issued a statement placing a large portion of the blame for the shooting at the feet of the liberal Southern Poverty Law Center, which had listed FRC as a hate group. FRC noted that prosecutors discovered Corkins identified his targets on the SPLC's website.
>
> "The day after Floyd Corkins came into the FRC headquarter and opened fire wounding one of our team members, I stated that while Corkins was responsible for the shooting, he had been given a license to perpetrate this act of violence by groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center which has systematically and recklessly labeled every organization with which they disagree as a 'hate group,'" FRC president Tony Perkins said in a statement, which went on to demand that SPLC stop attacking organizations that have a different opinion on gay rights.

The Human Rights Campaign, a very large and influential gay rights group favored by Democrats, joins the SPLC and the convicted domestic terrorist Floyd Corkins in condemning the FRC as a "hate group". Gay activists continued to condemn the FRC after the terrorist attack had occurred.

You can read more about the views of Floyd Corkins here, and note this:

> Corkins told the FBI he found the FRC building as his target using a "hate map" on the website of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The SPLC refuses to acknowledge any responsibility for the shooting. SPLC still lists FRC as a hate group and continues to maintain a map to FRC's office building on the SPLC website.

Now read this quotation from Dan Savage:

> Dan Savage often speaks on college campuses and on television as a liberal commentator. He often makes controversial remarks, such as saying that Family Research Council President Tony Perkins, in opposing homosexual behavior, contributes to gay suicide.
>
> On Sept. 27, 2012, Savage told a student audience at Winona State University, "[E]very dead gay kid is a victory for the Family Research Council. They argue that the gay lifestyle is sick and sinful and dangerous and they point to the suicide rate, and then they turn around and do everything in their power to make sure that suicide rate does not come down and to drive it up."
>
> "Tony Perkins sits on a pile of dead gay kids every day when he goes to work — and he calls himself a Christian," said Savage. "I don't understand how real Christians let that little f–ker get away with that."

What does the FRC do? They put out research papers showing the importance of mothers *and* fathers to children. That's what gay activists consider to be "hate". It's very important to understand what gay activists actually say. I have no doubt that if you ask gay activists like Dan Savage and Floyd Corkins whether they are tolerant people, they would say "of course we are tolerant". So you have to look for yourself at what they say, and what they do, and judge for yourself whether they are as tolerant as they want you to believe.

American health care: does it cause poor life-expectancy and high infant mortality?

November 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably one of the best health care policy experts writing today is Avik Roy, who writes for Forbes magazine.

Here is his latest column, which I think is useful for helping us all get better at debating health care policy. (H/T Matt from Well Spent Journey)

Excerpt:

> It's one of the most oft-repeated justifications for socialized medicine: Americans spend more money than other developed countries on health care, but don't live as long. If we would just hop on the European health-care bandwagon, we'd live longer and healthier lives. The only problem is it's not true.
>
> [...]If you really want to measure health outcomes, the best way to do it is at the point of medical intervention. If you have a heart attack, how long do you live in the U.S. vs. another country? If you're diagnosed with breast cancer? In 2008, a group of investigators conducted a worldwide study of cancer survival rates, called CONCORD. They looked at 5-year survival rates for breast cancer, colon and rectal cancer, and prostate cancer. I compiled their data for the U.S., Canada, Australia, Japan, and western Europe. Guess who came out number one?

Here is the raw data:

5-Year Relative Survival Rates in Various Cancers, From the CONCORD Study (2008)

Country	Breast Women	Colorectal Men	Colorectal Women	Prostate	Average
United States	83.9%	59.1%	60.2%	91.9%	**73.8%**
Canada	82.5%	55.3%	58.9%	85.1%	**70.5%**
Australia	80.7%	56.7%	58.2%	77.4%	**68.3%**
Austria	74.9%	52.7%	55.1%	86.1%	**67.2%**
Germany	75.5%	50.1%	55.0%	76.4%	**64.3%**
Sweden	82.0%	52.8%	56.2%	66.0%	**64.3%**
Netherlands	77.6%	53.6%	55.1%	69.5%	**64.0%**
Iceland	79.0%	49.5%	54.0%	69.7%	**63.1%**
Japan	81.6%	61.1%	57.3%	50.4%	**62.6%**
Finland	80.2%	52.5%	54.0%	62.9%	**62.4%**
Italy	79.5%	50.7%	52.7%	65.4%	**62.1%**
Norway	76.3%	51.1%	55.3%	63.0%	**61.4%**
Spain	77.7%	52.5%	54.7%	60.5%	**61.4%**
Ireland	69.6%	46.0%	50.0%	62.8%	**57.1%**
Portugal	72.2%	46.5%	44.7%	47.7%	**52.8%**
UK	69.7%	42.3%	44.7%	51.1%	**52.0%**
Denmark	73.6%	44.2%	47.7%	38.4%	**51.0%**
Switzerland	76.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Health care outcomes by country and type of treatment
Click here to see the larger graph.

So, what explains this?

The article continues:

> Another point worth making is that people die for other reasons than health. For example, people die because of car accidents and violent crime. A few years

> back, Robert Ohsfeldt of Texas A&M and John Schneider of the University of Iowa asked the obvious question: what happens if you remove deaths from fatal injuries from the life expectancy tables? Among the 29 members of the OECD, the U.S. vaults from 19th place to…you guessed it…first. Japan, on the same adjustment, drops from first to ninth.
>
> It's great that the Japanese eat more sushi than we do, and that they settle their arguments more peaceably. But these things don't have anything to do with socialized medicine.
>
> Finally, U.S. life-expectancy statistics are skewed by the fact that the U.S. doesn't have one health-care system, but three: Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance. (A fourth, the Obamacare exchanges, is supposed to go into effect in 2014.) As I have noted in the past, health outcomes for those on government-sponsored insurance are worse than for those on private insurance.
>
> To my knowledge, no one has attempted to segregate U.S. life-expectancy figures by insurance status. But based on the data we have, it's highly likely that those on private insurance have the best life expectancy, with Medicare patients in the middle, and the uninsured and Medicaid at the bottom.

I know that my readers who like to dig deep into economics and policy will love the links at the bottom of the article:

> For further reading on the topic of life expectancy, here are some recommendations. Harvard economist Greg Mankiw discusses some of the confounding factors with life expectancy statistics, citing this NBER study by June and Dave O'Neill comparing the U.S. and Canada. (Mankiw calls the misuse of U.S. life expectancy stats "schlocky.") Chicago economist Gary Becker makes note of the CONCORD study in this blog post. In 2009, Sam Preston and Jessica Ho of the University of Pennsylvania published a lengthy analysis of life expectancy statistics, concluding that "the low longevity ranking of the United States is not likely to be a result of a poorly functioning health care system."

The funniest thing I have found when talking to people from countries with socialized health care systems, like Canada and the UK, is that they are woefully uninformed about American health care. They literally do not know about free emergency room care, which is free for anyone regardless of insurance – including illegal aliens. They do not know about our expensive Medicaid program, which helps people who cannot afford health insurance. And our very very expensive Medicare program, which provides health care to the elderly – *including prescription drugs*. I get the feeling that foreign critics of American health care are getting their views from amateur documentaries produced by uneducated Hollywood propagandists, or maybe from TV shows on the Comedy Channel. They certainly are not getting their information from peer-reviewed studies by credentialed scholars from top universities, like the ones cited above.

I have literally spoken to Canadians who think that people in the USA without insurance

do not get treatment and just *die in the streets from stab wounds.* They don't know about the emergency room rule, or about charity care, or about Medicaid and Medicare. There is a lot of ignorance up there – wilful ignorance, in some cases. And keep in mind that the average Canadian household is paying over $11,000 a year for this substandard health care! They are paying more for less, and that's not surprising since a large chunk of the taxes that are collected for health care go to overpaid unionized bureaucrats. Naturally, when their left-wing politicians need treatment, the first place they go is to the United States, where they pay out of pocket for the better health care. But that doesn't stop them from denouncing American health care when they are talking to voters.

Higher infant mortality rates?

One of the other common arguments you hear from uninformed people outside the USA is the higher infant mortality rates argument.

Here's an article by Stanford University professor Scott Atlas to explain why the argument fails.

Excerpt:

> Virtually every national and international agency involved in statistical assessments of health status, health care, and economic development uses the infant-mortality rate — the number of infants per 1,000 live births who die before reaching the age of one — as a fundamental indicator. America's high infant-mortality rate has been repeatedly put forth as evidence "proving" the substandard performance of the U.S. health-care system.
>
> […]n a 2008 study, Joy Lawn estimated that a full three-fourths of the world's neonatal deaths are counted only through highly unreliable five-yearly retrospective household surveys, instead of being reported at the time by hospitals and health-care professionals, as in the United States. Moreover, the most premature babies — those with the highest likelihood of dying — are the least likely to be recorded in infant and neonatal mortality statistics in other countries. Compounding that difficulty, in other countries the underreporting is greatest for deaths that occur very soon after birth.
>
> […]The United States strictly adheres to the WHO definition of live birth (any infant "irrespective of the duration of the pregnancy, which . . . breathes or shows any other evidence of life . . . whether or not the umbilical cord has been cut or the placenta is attached") and uses a strictly implemented linked birth and infant-death data set. On the contrary, many other nations, including highly developed countries in Western Europe, use far less strict definitions, all of which underreport the live births of more fragile infants who soon die. As a consequence, they falsely report more favorable neonatal- and infant-mortality rates.
>
> […]Neonatal deaths are mainly associated with prematurity and low birth weight. Therefore the fact that the percentage of preterm births in the U.S. is far higher than that in all other OECD countries — 65 percent higher than in Britain, and

> more than double the rate in Ireland, Finland, and Greece — further undermines the validity of neonatal-mortality comparisons.

You can listen to a podcast with Dr. Atlas here, from the Library of Economics web site.

If you want to read more about how American health care compares with health care in socialized systems, read this article by Stanford University professor of medicine Dr. Scott Atlas. And you can get his book "In Excellent Health: Setting the Record Straight on America's Health Care" from Amazon.

How Earth-like are the 8.8 billion Earth-like planets from a recent estimate?

November 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I blogged about a few of the minimum requirements that a planet must satisfy in order to support complex life.

Here they are:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

Now what happens if we disregard all of that, and just classify an Earth-like planet as one which only has to *potentially* support liquid water at the surface? Well, you get a very high estimate of Earth-like planets.

Science journalist Denyse O'Leary responds to a recent estimate based on this questionable criterion, which placed the number of Earth-like planets at 8.8 billion.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> A current official definition of habitable planets is "in the zone around the star where liquid water could exist," but the ones discovered so far are unsuitable in many other ways.
>
> Then a new cosmology term hit the media, "super-Earths." It means "bigger than Earth," but smaller than gas giant Neptune. Super-Earths could be the most numerous type of planet, in tight orbits around their star — which is actually bad news for life.Nonetheless, some insist, they may be more attractive to life than Earth is. Indeed, the Copernican Principle allows us to assume that some are inhabited already.
>
> In reality, even the rocky exoplanets (known as of early 2013) that are Earth-sized are not Earth-like. For example, the Kepler mission's first rocky planet find

> is described as follows: “Although similar in size to Earth, its orbit lasts just 0.84 days, making it likely that the planet is a scorched, waterless world with a sea of lava on its starlit side.” As space program physicist Rob Sheldon puts it, Earth is a rocky planet but so is a solid chunk of iron at 1300 degrees orbiting a few solar radii above the star. In any event, a planet may *look* Earth-like but have a very different internal structure and atmosphere.”

David Klinghoffer notes that the study is estimating that 8.8 billion number, but the actual number of Earth-like planets *we can see* is much lower.

He writes:

> The study is supposed to be a major step forward because of its unprecedented accuracy:
>
> For the first time, scientists calculated — not estimated — what percent of stars that are just like our sun have planets similar to Earth: 22 percent, with a margin of error of plus or minus 8 percentage points.
>
> Oh! You see, they calculated. They didn’t just estimate.
>
> Because there are probably hundreds of planets missed for every one found, the study did intricate extrapolations to come up with the 22 percent figure — a calculation that outside scientists say is fair.
>
> Oh. They calculated in the sense of “extrapolating” to “come up” with a figure. In other words, they estimated. The figure of “8.8 billion stars with Earth-size planets in the habitable temperature zone” comes down a bit too when you talk about actual planets that have been observed instead of being merely conjectured and “calculated.”
>
> Scientists at a Kepler science conference Monday said they have found 833 new candidate planets with the space telescope, bringing the total of planets they’ve spotted to 3,538, but most aren’t candidates for life.
>
> **Kepler has identified only 10 planets that are about Earth’s size circling sun-like stars and are in the habitable zone, including one called Kepler 69-c.**
>
> Ah hah. So from the initial, trumpets-blaring figure of 8.8 billion we’re down more realistically to 10. Not 10 billion, just 10. Meanwhile the silence from space continues absolutely unabated.
>
> That’s the way it tends to go with stories like this, the blaring headline and the inevitable letdown.

One part of the AP press release makes the point that the estimate *does not* include all the minimum requirements for life. For example, you need an atmosphere, as I stated above. Do the estimated 8.8 billion Earth-like planets have an Earth-like atmosphere? How about an oxygen-rich atmosphere, do the 8.8 billion Earth-like planets have that?

NO:

> The next step, scientists say, is to look for atmospheres on these planets with powerful space telescopes that have yet to be launched. That would yield further clues to whether any of these planets do, in fact, harbor life.

You know, after the whole global warming hoax, you would think that these headline writers would have learned their lesson about sensationalizing wild-assed guesses in order to scare up more research money. But a lot of true-believing naturalists are just going to read the headline and not the rest of the article, and they will never know that they've been had. Again. I love experimental science, but I don't love the politicization of science.

What happens when we die?

November 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Pastor Matt has been reading again. This time it's a book on theology by Australian New Testament historian Michael Bird. In this recent blog post, Pastor Matt explains what people can expect to find after they die.

Excerpt:

> Luke 23:39-43 records the following:
>
> 39 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." 42 And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." 43 And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."
>
> Is "Paradise" heaven? Michael Bird points out in his new book Evangelical Theology (Zondervan 2013), that while the Greek word translated as "Paradise" is used to describe heaven in 2 Cor. 12:4 and Rev. 2:7 it cannot mean heaven here. Why? According to John 20:17, which records Jesus' resurrection encounter with Mary Magdalene, He had not yet "ascended to the Father".
>
> So where is "Paradise"? Most likely it is an intermediate state for the dead known by ancients as Hades (see also Acts 2:27, 31 and 1 Peter 3:19-21). So, during the three days that Jesus' body lay in the tomb, He joined the dead in Hades. But after his resurrection and ascension, He goes to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father (see Acts 7:55; Eph. 1:20-23, etc.).
>
> So do people still go to Hades? Christians don't. The Apostle Paul writes that when we die we go to be with Jesus who is in heaven (2 Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 1:20-24, etc.) but we will not stay there forever. Jesus will return to create a "new heavens and new earth" (Rev. 21) where we will dwell in eternal physical bodies like Jesus' resurrected body that cannot decay or die (see 1 Cor. 15 and 1 John 3:2). The idea that we sit on a cloud for eternity while playing a harp and wearing a diaper is from Tom & Jerry cartoons, not the Bible.
>
> What about non-Christians? The Book of Revelation still speaks of the existence of Hades (20:14) and that it will one day be thrown into hell. Thus, it is implies that non-Christians do not go directly to hell but to Hades until the final judgment of all humankind.

The rest of the post has a helpful breakdown that summarizes what the Bible teaches about life after death. Recommended.

Two things you can do to make your marriage last a lifetime

November 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The first thing is obvious: don't have sex before you're married.

Life Site News explains.

Excerpt:

> Couples who reserve sex for marriage enjoy greater stability and communication in their relationships, say researchers at Brigham Young University.
>
> A new study from the Mormon college found that those couples who waited until marriage rated their relationship stability 22 percent higher than those who started having sex in the early part of their relationship. The relationship satisfaction was 20 percent higher for those who waited, the sexual quality of the relationship was 5 percent better, and communication was 12 percent better.
>
> The study, published in the American Psychological Association's Journal of Family Psychology, involved 2,035 married individuals who participated in a popular online marital assessment called "RELATE." From the assessment's database, researchers selected a sample designed to match the demographics of the married American population. The extensive questionnaire included the question "When did you become sexual in this relationship?"
>
> Couples that became sexually involved later in their relationship – but prior to marriage – reported benefits that were about half as strong as those who waited for marriage.
>
> […]Sociologist Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas at Austin, who was not involved in the study, responded to its findings, saying that "couples who hit the honeymoon too early – that is, prioritize sex promptly at the outset of a relationship – often find their relationships underdeveloped when it comes to the qualities that make relationships stable and spouses reliable and trustworthy." Regnerus is the author of *Premarital Sex in America*, a book forthcoming from Oxford University Press.
>
> Because religious belief often plays a role for couples who choose to wait, Busby and his co-authors controlled for the influence of religious involvement in their analysis.
>
> "Regardless of religiosity, waiting helps the relationship form better communication processes, and these help improve long-term stability and relationship satisfaction," Busby said.

Second, make sure you attend church regularly after you're married.

From Citizen Link.

Excerpt:

> It’s a number that is trumpeted from the rooftops — and the pulpit: Half of marriages among Christians and non-Christians alike end in divorce.
>
> But the reality is that Christians who attend church regularly get divorced at a much lower rate.
>
> Professor Bradley Wright, a sociologist at the University of Connecticut, found that among people who identify as Christians but rarely attend church, 60 percent have been divorced. Of those who attend church regularly, 38 percent have been divorced.
>
> W. Bradford Wilcox, a leading sociologist at the University of Virginia and director of the National Marriage Project, found a nearly identical spread between “active conservative Protestants” who regularly attend church and people with no religious affiliation.
>
> Professor Scott Stanley from the University of Denver, who is working on the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative, said couples with a vibrant religious faith have more and higher levels of the qualities that marriages need to avoid divorce.
>
> “Whether young or old, male or female, low-income or not, those who said that they were more religious reported higher average levels of commitment to their partners, higher levels of marital satisfaction, less thinking and talking about divorce and lower levels of negative interaction,” he said. “These patterns held true when controlling for such important variables as income, education and age at first marriage.”

I think that young people who are serious about having a successful marriage also need to study research to find out what how to make a marraige that lasts (chastity, pre-marital counseling, church attendance, etc.). Being marriage-minded means developing those skills before the marriage, and working with your partner to the develop the skills that they will need when they take on their role in the marriage.

William Lane Craig and atheist Daniel Dennett discuss cosmology and fine-tuning

November 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This audio records a part of the Greer-Heard debate in 2007, between prominent atheist Daniel Dennett and lame theistic evolutionist Alister McGrath. Craig was one of the respondents, and this was the best part of the event. It is a little bit advanced, but I have found that if you listen to things like this over and over with your friends and family, and then try to explain it to non-Christians, you'll get it.

By the way, this is mostly original material from Craig, dated 2007, and he delivers the speech perfectly, so it's entertaining to listen to.

Craig presents three arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe:

- the contingency argument
- the kalam cosmological argument
- the teleological argument

He also discusses Dennett's published responses to these arguments.

Dennett's response to Craig's paper

Here is my snarky paraphrase of Dennett's reponse: (this is very snarky, because Dennett was just awful)

- Craig's three arguments are bulletproof, the premises are plausible, and grounded by the best cutting edge science we know today.
- I cannot find anything wrong with his arguments right now, but maybe later when I go home it will come to me what's wrong with them.
- But atheism is true even if all the evidence is against it today. I know it's true by my blind faith.
- The world is so mysterious, and all the science of today will be overturned tomorrow so that atheism will be rational again. I have blind faith that this new evidence will be discovered any minute.
- Just because the cause of the beginning of time is eternal and the cause of the beginning of space is non-physical, the cause doesn't have to be God.
- "Maybe the cause of the universe is the idea of an apple, or the square root of 7". (HE LITERALLY SAID THAT!)
- The principle of triangulation might have brought the entire physical universe into being out of nothing.
- I don't understand anything about non-physical causation, even though I cannot even speak meaningful sentences unless I have a non-physical mind that is causing my body to emit the meaningful sentences in a non-determined manner.
- Alexander Vilenkin is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat

him up good with phantom arguments.
- Alan Guth is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- This science stuff is so complicated to me – so Craig can't be right about it even though he's published about it and debated it all with the best atheists on the planet.
- If God is outside of time, then this is just deism, not theism. (This part is correct, but Craig believes that God enters into time at the moment of creation – so that it is not a deistic God)
- If deism is true, then I can still be an atheist, because a Creator and Designer of the universe is compatible with atheism.
- I'm pretty sure that Craig doesn't have any good arguments that can argue for Christianity – certainly not an historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus based on minimal facts, that he's defended against the most prominent historians on the planet in public debates and in prestigous books and research journals.

This is a very careful treatment of the arguments that Dr. Craig goes over briefly during his debates. Recommended.

Psychologist claims father is an unfit parent for refusing to yield to son's demands for fast food

November 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Psychologist Marilyn Schiller
From ABC News.

Excerpt:

> Saying no to a toddler's demands for a McDonald's meal got a father branded an inept parent, he says in a lawsuit claiming a psychologist urged a judge to curtail his parental visits over the dinner debacle.
>
> David E. Schorr says psychologist Marilyn Schiller pronounced him incapable of caring for his nearly 5-year-old son after he offered a choice — dinner anywhere but McDonald's, or no dinner at all — and let the boy choose the latter. He then took his irate son home to the boy's mother's house early from their Oct 30 dinner date, according to a defamation suit Schorr filed Tuesday.
>
> […]"Normally not a very strict father who rarely refuses his child McDonald's," Schorr put his foot down Oct. 30 "because his son had been eating too much junk food," the suit said. Schorr himself didn't immediately return a call Friday.
>
> He quickly regretted his stance when his son threw a tantrum, but he felt that giving in would reward bad behavior, so he offered the elsewhere-or-nowhere "final offer," as his court papers put it.
>
> "The child, stubborn as a mule, chose the 'no dinner' option," the suit says. And the father promptly carted the boy back to Bari Schorr's building, still trying to entice the child into changing his mind as they waited in the lobby for her to get home from work, according to the suit.
>
> Schiller told a judge the fast food flap "raises concerns about the viability" of the

> father's weekend visits with his son and asked a judge to eliminate or limit them, his lawsuit says.

The NY Post reports that the brat's mother immediately took him to McDonald's.

Excerpt:

> Adding insult to injury, he said: "My wife immediately took him to McDonalds."
>
> […]But the son apparently tattled on his dad and his wife flipped out and called the shrink, according to the suit.
>
> Schorr claims that Dr. Schiller only interviewed the child and his mother and never asked for his side of the story before telling the court she was gravely concerned about Schorr's parenting.
>
> Bari Yunis Schorr sued her husband for a divorce in 2011, just four years after they married in a lavish ceremony at the St. Regis Hotel in Manhattan.

Now does this situation happen a lot? I mean a situation where a mother goes to the feminist authoritities (psychologists/social workers/lawyers/teachers/judges) in order to overrule the father's parenting authority?

Another case from Canada

Here is a story from Canada that shows why we need to be careful about enacting compassionate, non-judgmental, feminized social policies.The more you reduce the male role and male authority in the family, the fewer men will want to take on the responsibilities of being a Dad. We need to be careful not to replace husbands and fathers with big government social programs and intrusive, anti-male courts.

Excerpt:

> A Gatineau father lost an appeal Monday after a lower court ruled last June that he had issued a too severe punishment against his 12-year-old daughter.
>
> The case involves a divorced man who says that in 2008 he caught the girl, over whom he had custody, surfing websites he had forbidden and posting "inappropriate pictures of herself" online. The girl's father told her as a consequence that she would not be allowed to go on her class' graduation trip to Quebec City, even though her mother had already given permission for her to do so.
>
> The girl then contacted a legal-aid lawyer who was involved in the parents' custody battle, who convinced the court to order that the girl be allowed to go on the trip with her class. The father appealed the decision on principle, although his daughter went on the trip in the meantime.
>
> The appeals court reportedly warned in its ruling that the case should not be seen as an open invitation for children to take legal action against their parents when grounded.
>
> The girl now lives with her mother.

You may think that this would be overturned on appeal, but the father LOST his appeal, too.

So, what the daughter, wife, prosecuting attorney and judge (all feminists?) are all telling this Dad that he can donate sperm, pay bills, and pay taxes for feminist social programs, but that he cannot PARENT his own children. He cannot have any moral authority to guide the child into becoming a man. That job is for child care workers, single mothers and public school teachers. Men need to butt out of parenting – except they can pay for all these experts through taxes, of course.

Questions:

- Does anyone care what men want from marriage and parenting, or should we just be ordered around like little boys?
- Do we really think that state coercion is going to make men be more involved with their marriages and children?

I think that marriage should allow men to express themselves as fathers, just as much as women can express themselves as mothers. Parenting should be an equally shared responsibility, and the father should have at least as much parental authority as the mother.

Compassion vs standards

Here is a pretty good article by Jewish scholar Dennis Prager that argues against compassion and for moral standards. He tells a story of a team losing a baseball game 24-7, when the scoreboard is reset to 0-0 DURING THE GAME. He then asks what beliefs would motivate this action.

> As is happening throughout America, compassion trumped all other values.
>
> Truth was the first value compassion trashed. In the name of compassion, the adults in charge decided to lie. The score was not 0-0; it was 24-7.
>
> Wisdom was the second value compassion obliterated. It is unwise to the point of imbecilic to believe that the losing boys were in any way helped by changing the score. On the contrary, they learned lessons that will hamper their ability to mature.

He lists the lessons that the winning and losing boys learned from this compassionate act, and how they will act in the future. Then he continues his list.

> Building character was the third value trumped by compassion. People build character far more through handling defeat than through winning. The human being grows up only when forced to deal with disappointment. We remain children until the day we take full responsibility for our lives.
>
> …The fourth value that compassion denied here was fairness. It is remarkable how often compassion-based liberals speak of “fairness” in formulating social policy given how unfair so many of their policies are. It was entirely unfair to the

> winning team to have their score expunged, all their work denied. But for the compassion-first crowd, the winning team is like “the rich” who earn “too much” and should therefore be penalized with a higher tax rate; the winning team scored “too many” runs to be allowed to keep them all.

The standards that are undermined by compassion can be moral standards or standards of rationality. The former is under attack from moral relativism, and the latter is under attach from postmodernism. But I guess parents don’t really care enough to teach their children about these ideas, and when the children grow up, they vote for the policies that follow from moral relativism and postmodernism: policies of the secular left.

Israel PM calls Democrats' proposed deal with Iran "a very bad deal"

November 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports.

Here's what BB Netanyahu said about a U.S. proposal on Iran's nuclear ambitions:

> "I met Secretary Kerry right before he leaves to Geneva," said Netanyahu. "I reminded him that he said that no deal is better than a bad deal. That the deal that is being discussed in Geneva right now is a bad deal. It's a very bad deal. Iran is not required to take apart even one centrifuge. But the international community is relieving sanctions on Iran for the first time after many years. Iran gets everything that it wanted at this stage and it pays nothing. And this is when Iran is under severe pressure. I urge Secretary Kerry not to rush to sign, to wait, to reconsider, to get a good deal. But this is a bad deal–a very, very bad deal. It's the deal of a century for Iran; it's a very dangerous and bad deal for peace and the international community."

Foreign Policy Initiative says that the deal will weaken sanctions against Iran.

Excerpt:

> As the United States and other world powers resume nuclear talks with Iran this week, a senior official in the Obama administration recently told reporters in Geneva that they seek a short-term interim agreement that gives Iran partial and reversible relief from U.S.-led international sanctions, with the goal of getting a package of short-term Iranian concessions that "stops Iran's nuclear program from moving forward for the first time in decades" and "potentially rolls part of it back." While this is a laudable goal, the potential package of Iranian concessions that has been discussed in the media would fail to fully freeze Iran's nuclear program, let alone roll it back.
>
> […]If it costs the United States nothing to persuade Iran to implement the rumored package of short-term Iranian nuclear concessions, then we should welcome that outcome. But while U.S. diplomats have not publicly said what they will offer in Geneva, they reportedly are considering relaxing restrictions on Iran's oil revenues held in overseas accounts and perhaps also on trade in gold and petrochemicals. Given the difficulties faced at times by the United States in getting allies and partners to support the sanctions regime against Iran's nuclear program, the Obama administration's potential forms of sanctions relief could be too dear a price to pay for the rumored package of Iranian concessions.

I was listening to the latest episode of the Weekly Standard podcast this morning and Lee Smith said the real reason that the Obama administration is doing this is to justify an

American withdrawal from the Middle East and to abandon our allies in the region – not just Israel, but Saudi Arabia as well.

The Republicans are moving to block the Democrats from lifting sanctions on Iran.

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on basic economics

November 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a podcast on basic economics from Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse.

About the speaker:

> Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D. is the founder and President of the Ruth Institute — a project of the National Organization for Marriage — which seeks to promote life-long married love to college students by creating an intellectual and social climate favorable to marriage.
>
> She is also the Senior Research Fellow in Economics at the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty.
>
> She is the author of Smart Sex: Finding Life-long Love in a Hook-up World, (2005) and Love and Economics: Why the Laissez-Faire Family Doesn't Work (2001), recently reissued in paperback, as Love and Economics: It Takes a Family to Raise a Village.
>
> Dr. Morse served as a Research Fellow for Stanford University's Hoover Institution from 1997-2005. She received her Ph.D. in economics from the University of Rochester in 1980 and spent a postdoctoral year at the University of Chicago during 1979-80. She taught economics at Yale University and George Mason University for 15 years.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- The study of economics is anti-postmodern – there is objective truth independent of what people think
- The study of economics believes in fixed principles of human nature
- Economics studies the allocation of scarce resources that have alternative uses
- Economics studies how people exchange resources
- How both people who engage in a voluntary trade always believe that they will be better off
- How both people who engage in a voluntary trade both benefit from the exchange
- How incentives motivate people to act
- Understanding supply and demand
- Understanding how "free" government services are rationed
- Understanding opportunity costs
- How prices signal producers to produce more or less, and consumers to buy or not buy
- Market-driven prices versus price controls

- The role of substitution
- The necessity of allowing failure in a free market

The requirements of economic growth:

- private property
- contracts
- the profit motive
- competition
- free trade
- entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation
- the rule of law

If you want to learn more about basic economics, I recommend picking up a book or two by Thomas Sowell – the first book I usually give away is “Intellectuals and Society”, and then next “Basic Economics”.

Dr. Robin Collins explains two kinds of cosmic fine-tuning

November 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was busy working my way through "Debating Christian Theism", a book published by Oxford University Press in August 2013. It features about 20 different topics from science, to philosophy, to history. For each topic, there is an essay by a world-class scholar in favor, and one opposed. So you get both sides of many interesting issues, at a very advanced level. The section on cosmic fine-tuning features a chapter written by Dr. Robin Collins.

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

The fine-tuning argument

Here's a short article where Collins gives TWO examples of the fine-tuning. He is very modest in his argument, merely asserting that the fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than it is with atheism.

Excerpt:

> Science is commonly thought to have undercut belief in God. As Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg famously remarked, "the more we find out about the universe, the more meaningless it all seems." Yet, the discoveries of modern physics and cosmology in the last 50 years have shown that the structure of the universe is set in an extraordinarily precise way for the existence of life; if its structure were slightly different, even by an extraordinarily small degree, life would not be possible. In many people's minds, the most straightforward explanation of this remarkable fine-tuning is some sort of divine

> purpose behind our universe.

> This fine-tuning falls into three categories: the fine-tuning of the laws of nature, the fine-tuning of the constants of physics, and the fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe. “Fine-tuning of the laws of nature” refers to the fact that if the universe did not have precisely the right combination of laws, complex intelligent life would be impossible. If there were no universal attractive force (law of gravity), for example, matter would be dispersed throughout the universe and the energy sources (such as stars) needed for life would not exist. Without the strong nuclear force that binds protons and neutrons together in the nucleus, there would not be any atoms with an atomic number greater than hydrogen, and hence no complex molecules needed for life. And without the Pauli-exclusion principle, all electrons would fall to the lowest orbital of an atom, undercutting the kind of complex chemistry that life requires.

> Some fundamental physical numbers governing the structure of the universe—called the constants of physics—also must fall into an exceedingly narrow range for life to exist. For example, many have estimated that the cosmological constant—a fundamental number that governs the expansion rate of empty space—must be precisely set to one part in 10^{120} in order for life to occur; if it were too large, the universe would have expanded too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form, and if it were too small, the universe would have collapsed back on itself. As Stephen Hawking wrote in his book A Brief History of Time, “The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life.” Finally, the initial distribution of mass energy at the time of the big bang must have an enormously special configuration for life to occur, which Cambridge University mathematical physicist Roger Penrose has calculated to be on the order of one part in $10^{10^{123}}$. This is an unimaginably small number.

I know what you’re thinking: How do we know that non-Christian scientists acknowledge the fine-tuning of gravity in the way that Collins describes?

Well, the New Scientist actually talks about the fine-tuning of the force of gravity. And they’re not Christians.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe‘s birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If

> the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Here's a very long paper by Collins on the fine-tuning argument, where he answers several objections to the argument, including the multiverse/many-universe hypothesis. I normally make fun of the multiverse, (= the Flying Spaghetti Monster), but it actually does deserve a reasonable, fair response. (Unless Jerry asks, then it's Flying Spaghetti Monster all the way).

In North Dakota, 35,000 lose their health care plan, but only 30 sign up for Obamacare

November 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know that Obama talked a lot about wanting to help people without insurance find insurance, but so far all he done is make a lot of people lost their insurance (and more to come in 2014!).

Here's a story from ABC News.

Excerpt:

> More than 35,000 customers in North Dakota face discontinued health coverage because their plans are being scrapped due to new requirements under the Affordable Care Act.
>
> The three major health insurers in North Dakota were asked to report to state regulators their enrollment figures and cancellations resulting from the health reform act, commonly known as Obamacare.
>
> The state's largest health insurer, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota, covers about 31,600 members – 17,000 in small groups and 14,600 individuals – whose insurance plans are being discontinued.
>
> That combined figure represents 8 percent of the North Dakota Blues' 400,000 membership total.
>
> […]The total number of North Dakota residents who must switch coverage is 35,585, according to the tally by the state Insurance Department.
>
> "You have almost 36,000 North Dakotans who either are or will be losing their health insurance policies, and this is after they and all Americans have been told they will be able to keep their health insurance," Insurance Commissioner Adam Hamm said Friday.

The premiums are all going up because Obamacare mandates new coverages, which people did not have on their old plans. They didn't have those coverages because they didn't need them. For example, people who weren't addicted to drugs didn't request treatments for drug addiction. But now we all have to pay for it, whether we use it or not. That makes prices go up!

More:

> Under the new requirements, deductibles for individuals or small groups are generally capped at $2,000, with an exception allowing caps of up to $5,000 for individuals and $3,000 for small groups.
>
> Total out-of-pocket expenses now cannot exceed $6,350 for an individual or $12,700 for a family.

> Nationally, estimates of the percentage of policies that will be discontinued under the new coverage requirements have ranged from 40 percent to 67 percent, Krystopolski said.
>
> In most cases, plans failed to meet the new requirements because they did not cover maternity care or because the deductibles were too high, she said.

So how many of those 35,585 people that the Democrats kicked out of their insurance plans have found new ones on the Obamacare exchanges?

Almost none:

> Besides collecting information on cancellations, Hamm's office asked the three major health insurers to report the number of enrollments under the new health insurance marketplace provided by the Affordable Care Act.
>
> As of Friday, the three insurers have logged 30 enrollments covering 37 people, a number Hamm called "concerning."

Remember that these figures only represent the effects of the *individual* mandate. Things are going to get a lot worse when the *employer* mandate takes effect in 2014. For those of us with health care through our employers, our day is coming.

Veteran’s Day re-post: Navy SEAL Michael Murphy awarded Medal of Honor

November 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Navy SEAL Michael Murphy wins Medal of Honor

For Veteran’s Day, I am re-posting one of my favorite Medal of Honor stories.

The Washington Examiner reports on the story of a brave Navy SEAL named Michael Murphy.

Excerpt:

> Engaged in a frenzied firefight and outnumbered by the Taliban, Navy Lt. Michael Murphy made a desperate decision as he and three fellow SEALs fought for their lives on a rocky mountainside in Afghanistan’s Kunar Province in 2005.
>
> In a last-ditch effort to save his team, Murphy pulled out his satellite phone, walked into a clearing to get reception and called for reinforcements as a fusillade of bullets ricocheted around him. One of the bullets hit him, but he finished the call and even signed off, “Thank you.”
>
> Then he continued the battle.
>
> Dan Murphy, the sailor’s father, said it didn’t surprise him that his slain son nicknamed “The Protector” put himself in harm’s way. Nor was he surprised that in the heat of combat his son was courteous.
>
> “That was Michael. He was cool under fire. He had the ability to process information, even under the most difficult of circumstances. That’s what made

> him such a good SEAL officer," Murphy said.
>
> A warship bearing the name of the Medal of Honor recipient will be christened Saturday — on what would have been Murphy's 35th birthday — at Bath Iron Works, where the destroyer is being built.
>
> Murphy, who was 29 when he died, graduated from Pennsylvania State University and was accepted to multiple law schools, but decided he could do more for his country as one of the Navy's elite SEALS — special forces trained to fight on sea, air and land — the same forces that killed Osama bin Laden this week in Pakistan.
>
> […]Murphy, of Patchogue, N.Y., earned his nickname after getting suspended in elementary school for fighting with bullies who tried to stuff a special-needs child into a locker and for intervening when some youths were picking on a homeless man, said Dan Murphy, a lawyer, former prosecutor and Army veteran who served in Vietnam.
>
> Maureen Murphy said he thought he was too young to take a desk job as a lawyer. Instead, he went to officer candidate school, the first step on his journey to become a SEAL officer. He was in training during the Sept. 11 attacks, which shaped his views.
>
> His view was that there are "bullies in the world and people who're oppressed in the world. And he said, 'Sometimes they have to be taken care of,'" she said.
>
> On June 28, 2005, the day he was killed, Murphy was leading a SEAL team in northeastern Afghanistan looking for the commander of a group of insurgents known as the Mountain Tigers.

What happened to Murphy?

> The Operation Red Wings reconnaissance team rappelled down from a helicopter at night and climbed through rain to a spot 10,000 feet high overlooking a village to keep a lookout. But the mission was compromised the following morning when three local goat herders happened upon their hiding spot.
>
> High in the Hindu Kush mountains, Murphy and Petty Officers Marcus Luttrell of Huntsville, Texas; Matthew Axelson of Cupertino, Calif.; and Danny Dietz of Littleton, Colo.; held a tense discussion of the rules of engagement and the fate of the three goat herders, who were being held at gunpoint.
>
> If they were Taliban sympathizers, then letting the herders go would allow them to alert the Taliban forces lurking in the area; killing them might ensure the team's safety, but there were issues of possible military charges and a media backlash, according to Luttrell, the lone survivor.
>
> Murphy, who favored letting the goat herders go, guided a discussion of military, political, safety and moral implications. A majority agreed with him.
>
> An hour after the herders were released, more than 100 Taliban armed with

> AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades opened fire, attacking from higher elevation, and maneuvering to outflank the SEALs, said Gary Williams, author of "Seal of Honor," a biography of Murphy.
>
> […]As the only survivor, Luttrell has pangs of regret for voting to go along with Murphy, his best friend; he now believes the team could've survived if the goat herders were killed.

He wasn't willing to kill unarmed civilians. That's the difference between the United States and the Muslim terrorists. It's a moral difference. Michael Murphy was a good man. He used guns and violence to protect others, and he was not willing to kill unarmed civilians.

Here are the requirements for the Army version of the Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is awarded by the President in the name of Congress to a person who, while a member of the Army, distinguishes himself or herself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. The deed performed must have been one of personal bravery or self-sacrifice so conspicuous as to clearly distinguish the individual above his comrades and must have involved risk of life. Incontestable proof of the performance of the service will be exacted and each recommendation for the award of this decoration will be considered on the standard of extraordinary merit.

I once read an entire book on Medal of Honor award winners in World War II. It's hard to read those stories, because these people who won the award did amazing acts of bravery, courage and self-sacrifice, but then most of them DIED. The stories almost always end in sadness and grief. Here's the one that really stuck with me as an example.

On a happier note, what kind of ship do you think would suit Michael Murphy?

USS Michael Murphy DDG 112 Arleigh Burke

Michael Murphy is getting a brand new Arleigh Burke guided missile destroyer! Arleigh Burke vessels have the AEGIS missile defense system and their role is to protect carrier strike groups from incoming SSMs and ASMs.

Excerpt:

> The Arleigh Burke Class destroyers are equipped with the Aegis combat system which integrates the ship's sensors and weapons systems to engage anti-ship missile threats.
>
> The Aegis system has a federated architecture with four subsystems – AN/SPY-1 multifunction radar, command and decision system (CDS), Aegis display system (ADS) and the weapon control system (WCS). The CDS receives data from ship and external sensors via satellite communications and provides command, control and threat assessment. The WCS receives engagement instruction from the CDS, selects weapons and interfaces with the weapon fire control systems.
>
> […]Lockheed Martin is developing the Aegis ballistic missile defence (BMD) capability for the Aegis combat system to engage ballistic missiles with the SM-3 missile. 15 Arleigh Burke destroyers have been fitted with the Aegis BMD system, which provides the capability for long-range surveillance, tracking and engagement of short and medium-range ballistic missiles. The system received US Navy certification for full deployment in September 2006. Work was completed on the 15 destroyers at the end of 2008 and the vessels, with three Ticonderoga cruisers, form the Aegis BMD fleet. On 30 July 2009 the Aegis BMD system was successfully tested by the US Navy on the USS Hopper (DDG 70).Aegis BMD is the main sea-based component of the US ballistic missile defence system.
>
> The weapons control systems include a SWG-1A for Harpoon, SWG-3 for Tomahawk, mk99 mod 3 missile fire control system, GWS34 mod 0 gun fire control system and mk116 mod 7 fire control system for anti-submarine systems.

Only two classes of warships that I know of have the AEGIS system. The DDG Arleigh Burke and the CG Ticonderoga.

Michael Murphy was a real hero. It makes me sad that he is gone. But his spirit will live on in the new warship that bears his name.

How the ADF kept nurses who wouldn't perform abortions from being fired

November 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In 2011, a story came out about New Jersey nurses being forced to perform abortions (or be fired). I blogged about it, but we didn't really know the details. Well, now the details have emerged and the case has finally been decided. Here's a press release from the heroic Alliance Defending Freedom, which protected the nurses involved from violating their consciences.

Excerpt:

> Promoted from that team to a supervisory position over all the nurses, the new assistant manager announced that – since she and others had to help with abortions – she saw no reason why every nurse shouldn't help. Hospital officials agreed, and passed a new, mandatory policy to make it so. The assistant manager quickly set up a training program that would give each nurse on the unit hands-on experience in how to assist with and clean up after abortions.
>
> "As long as you work here," she told the 12 nurses who openly protested, "you're going to have to do it. If you don't, you're going to be fired or transferred out."
>
> "We were all shocked," Fe says. "All these years I've been a nurse, I was never told to help kill children."
>
> But the managers remained adamant. Hospital administrators supported them.
>
> […]"Our jobs were hanging by a string," Beryl says. "We were like, 'All right. If they're going to fire all 12 of us, fine. But this is against what we believe God wants us to do.' We didn't come into this profession to do [abortions]. We told them we weren't comfortable with it and didn't feel they should force us. And if that meant our jobs, well… God was going to provide."
>
> When even their own union declined to help them, Fe wrote a letter to hospital officials saying that she and her coworkers would not participate in abortions. She passed it around for the other nurses; 15 signed it. She gave the letter to her manager, who took it to the director of nursing.. Response was swift. A meeting was called for the next day, with each of the signing nurses, the labor board, a union official, the managers, and "an expert on ethics" scheduled to be on hand.

I think so often in this world today, Christians are on the defensive when it comes to acting on their convictions. My expectation is that we will never win when we do the right thing. The other side is so strong, and we have so few conservative Christians who are intentional about studying well, earning well, and reaching positions of influence. But sometimes we do win, because there are still some Christians left who have paid the price to get the education and training that allows them to *do something* when the freedoms of Christians are threatened.

This time, it was the Alliance Defending Freedom lawyers who saved the day:

> The day of that announcement, Pastor Terry Smith, of Life Christian Church in West Orange, New Jersey, returned from a trip. A staff member told him that one of his parishioners – Fe – had called, shared what was happening at the hospital, and asked for advice. The pastor immediately phoned Len Deo, president of the New Jersey Family Policy Council.
>
> "I'll be all over this," said Deo, who hung up and called Alliance Defending Freedom. Shortly afterward, staff attorney Matt Bowman was on the phone with a local allied attorney, Demetrios Stratis, enlisting him to help defend the nurses. The two immediately called Fe.
>
> […]Amid all the tension, threats, and growing media coverage, the judge in the case stunned everyone by suddenly announcing, in a preliminary hearing, that a settlement had been reached.
>
> "We had gotten everything [the 12 nurses] requested," Stratis says. "We'd gotten the hospital to agree not to force them to perform these abortions. There would be no retaliatory measures against them, and they could feel free and sleep at night, knowing that the next day they would not have to be trained on the abortion process or help a woman kill an innocent child."
>
> "I was crying – really crying," says Lorna, who heard the news from one of the other nurses. "And very thankful. The next day, I went to work, and all of us were hugging and very happy."
>
> "Before, I used to think that some prayers won't be answered," Fe says. "Sometimes, I'd feel very hopeless. But with this case, I saw how the Lord moves… providing the resources, the people who would help us out. It just strengthened my faith. I really thank God for Alliance Defending Freedom."

Where does this desire to force people to commit murder come from? Well, it comes from the political left. In fact, the Obama administration actively opposes conscience protections for medical workers, and actively opposes conscience protections for military chaplains. This is to say nothing about the HHS mandate, which forces entire organizations and businesses to subsidize abortion-causing drugs.

I think that Christians need to be thoughtful, calculating and realistic about how we are going to deal with threats like this. Although some of us may prefer to study things that are easier, and do jobs that are comfortable, there is a real need for more of us to study hard things and do hard jobs. We need people with the right degrees in the right fields, and we need people who are good at earning and saving money. The truth is that this is the way the world works, and wisdom requires that we do what we have to do (not what we like to do) in order to be ready for the the challenges we are likely to face. The other side is certainly doing their job of getting the degrees and the money that they will use against us.

Can naturalistic theories account for the minimal facts about Jesus' resurrection?

November 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a neat post from Ichtus77 on her blog of the same name. She lists 12 facts that are admitted by the majority of New Testament scholars across the broad spectrum of worldviews, including atheistic scholars.

Excerpt:

> I am studying "the twelve facts" and want to get down what I've got so far. After the facts are displayed, we're going to turn the whole thing into a logic puzzle.
>
> Here are the 12 Facts:
>
> 1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion.
> 2. He was buried, most likely in a private tomb.
> 3. Soon afterwards the disciples were discouraged, bereaved and despondent, having lost hope.
> 4. Jesus' tomb was found empty very soon after his interment.
> 5. The disciples had experiences that they believed were the actual appearances of the risen Christ.
> 6. Due to these experiences, the disciples lives were thoroughly transformed. They were even willing to die for their belief.
> 7. The proclamation of the Resurrection took place very early, from the beginning of church history.
> 8. The disciple's public testimony and preaching of the Resurrection took place in the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus had been crucified and buried shortly before.
> 9. The gospel message centered on the preaching of the death and resurrection of Jesus.
> 10. Sunday was the primary day of worshiping and gathering.
> 11. James, the brother of Jesus and a skeptic before this time, became a follower of Jesus when he believed he also saw the risen Jesus.
> 12. Just a few years later, Paul became a believer, due to an experience that he also believed was an appearance of the risen Jesus.

These are the facts that you see admitted in debates by atheistic historians, like in the debate between James Crossley and William Lane Craig. These facts are admitted even by most atheist historians because they pass standard historical criteria, like early dating, embarrassing to the author, appears in multiple sources, and so on. Secular historians don't accept everything that the Bible says as historical, but they will give you a minimum list of facts that pass their historical tests.

The resurrection puzzle is like a Sherlock Holmes mystery. People deduce what happened from the evidence that is considered to be unimpeachable. The “minimal facts” that EVERYONE accepts. You can even see secular historians assenting to these facts in academic debates like the one I linked above.

So the approach is like this:

1) Use historical tests to get a small number of undeniable historical facts
2) Try to explain the undeniable historical facts with a hypothesis that accounts for all of them

Like Sherlock Holmes says: “…when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.”

It’s the Sherlock Holmes method of doing history.

So, Ichtus77 lists the minimal facts, and in the rest of the post she surveys the following naturalistic hypotheses to see how well they can account for the minimal facts listed above.

Here are the naturalistic theories:

- The Unknown Tomb theory
- The Wrong Tomb theory
- The Twin theory
- The Hallucination theory
- The Existential Resurrection and the Spiritual Resurrection theories
- The Disciples Stole Body theory
- The Authorities Hid Body theory
- The Swoon theory
- The Passover Plot theory

The main way that scholars argue for the resurrection is to list the minimal facts, and defend them on historical grounds, then show that there is no naturalistic hypothesis that explains them all. The naturalistic theories are impossible. Once you have eliminated them because they don’t account for the minimal facts, you are left with the resurrection hypothesis. Elementary, Watson, elementary.

Healthcare.gov enrollments fall far short of Democrat Party estimates

November 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Can a bunch of pot-smoking socialists do math? The Wall Street Journal says no.

Excerpt:

> Fewer than 50,000 people had successfully navigated the troubled federal health-care website and enrolled in private insurance plans as of last week, two people familiar with the matter said, citing internal government data.
>
> The figure is a fraction of the Obama administration's target of 500,000 enrollees for October. The early tally for the HealthCare.gov site, which launched Oct. 1, worries health insurers that are counting on higher enrollment to make their plans profitable.
>
> The administration had estimated that nearly 500,000 people would enroll in October, according to internal memos cited last week by Rep. Dave Camp (R., Mich.). An estimated seven million people nationwide were expected to gain private coverage by the end of March, when the open-enrollment period is set to end.
>
> […]So far, private health plans have received enrollment data for 40,000 to 50,000 users of the federal marketplace, the people familiar with the figures said.
>
> HHS spokeswoman Erin Shields Britt said Monday she couldn't confirm the enrollment numbers.

Meanwhile, Breitbart is reporting that new web site is up that provides about 90% of the Healthcare.gov functionality:

> Even as President Obama has issued a constant refrain of how upset he is that his Obamacare website doesn't work and promises that he's on top of the fix, three 20-year-old website designers in San Francisco made a working Obamacare website using Healthcare.gov's own code. They did it in only three days.
>
> The three web developers who created the site, HealthSherpa.com, programmed it to do much of what Healthcare.gov, the Obamacare website, is supposed to do.
>
> The enterprising young men whipped up their version of Obamacare in just days working in their off time.
>
> Unlike the Obamacare website, Ning Liang, George Kalogeropoulous and Michael Wasser's new site shows Americans the info they really want to see. Signing onto their site will show visitors healthcare plans and pricing that is available. All you do is enter your zipcode, and there it is.
>
> The three are continuing to tweak their site to give visitors even more information, too. Just after their site went live, they added a section that will help

> visitors find out if they qualify for a tax subsidy.
>
> […]The only thing the site doesn’t do is connect visitors directly to the insurance companies so that visitors can actually buy a policy.

Taxpayers spent $500 million dollars on the Healthcare.gov web site. Maybe we should have just let the private sector handle health care, instead of letting government take it over and kicking thousands of people out of their health care plans, with many millions more to come in 2014. I guess I don’t see the point of politicians, who have no demonstrated capabilities in IT project management, software design or programming, take over a private sector health system that is the envy of the world.

Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls

November 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Assault weapons vs Amazon and Ebay: socialism in practice
From the left-leaning USA Today.

Excerpt:

> Thousands of Venezuelans lined up outside the country's equivalent of Best Buy, a chain of electronics stores known as Daka, hoping for a bargain after the socialist government forced the company to charge customers "fair" prices.
>
> President Nicolás Maduro ordered a military "occupation" of the company's five stores as he continues the government's crackdown on an "economic war" it says is being waged against the country, with the help of Washington.
>
> Members of Venezuela's National Guard, some of whom carried assault rifles, kept order at the stores as bargain hunters rushed to get inside.
>
> […]Images circulating online as well as reports by local media appeared to show one Daka store in the country's central city of Valencia being looted.
>
> "I have no love for this government," said Gabriela Campo, 33, a businesswoman, hoping to take home a cut-price television and fridge. "They're doing this for nothing but political reasons, in time for December's elections."
>
> Maduro faces municipal elections on Dec. 8. His popularity has dropped significantly in recent months, with shortages of basic items such as chicken, milk and toilet paper as well as soaring inflation, at 54.3% over the past 12 months.
>
> Economists are expecting a devaluation soon after the election, likely leading to even higher inflation.

This will surely encourage more businesses to come to Venezuela to create jobs, and compete with other businesses in order to lower prices and increase quality for consumers. Oh wait, no it won't. It's just going to causes businesses to scale back, expand in other countries, and go out of business entirely – taking jobs with them.

The real face of communism

Earlier, Venezuela nationalized some oil drilling plants, as well:

> Petroleos de Venezuela SA, the state oil company, seized about $1 million worth of equipment from Superior Energy Services Inc. (SPN:US), the Houston-based company said.
>
> PDVSA expropriated two hydraulic units that were idled after the Caracas-based company missed payments, Greg Rosenstein, head of corporate development, said by phone from New Orleans. The units operated in eastern Venezuela's Anzoategui state, Associated Press reported Nov. 1.
>
> […]Under President Hugo Chavez, who died of cancer in March, Venezuela initiated a nationalization process, seizing assets from companies including Exxon Mobil Corp. (XOM:US) and ConocoPhillips. (COP:US)
>
> **Schlumberger Ltd. (SLB:US), the world's largest oil-services company, said in March it would reduce work in Venezuela because of mounting overdue payments from PDVSA.** Schlumberger subsequently reached an agreement and announced on May 24 that it would provide a $1 billion rolling credit for a joint venture in Venezuela.

That will encourage oil companies to come to Venezuela and pay royalties to the government, and give jobs to more Venezuelans. Oh wait, no it won't. It's just going to cause companies to scale back their investments, expand in other countries, stop hiring, lay off more people, and pull out of Venezuela. I'm sorry but this is standard leftist economic policy.

Are Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez very different?

Remember the last time that Venezuela seized privately-owned oil companies? They eventually had a nice explosion at the oil drilling facility, because the government doesn't know how to run a business better than the people who created that business. You can see it today here, as Obama nationalizes the health care industry and tries to substitute his own web site. He thinks he knows how to create web sites. The man who has never run so much as a lemonade stand in his entire life, and is an authority on how to read a teleprompter and play golf. You do NOT put people like this is in charge of the economy.

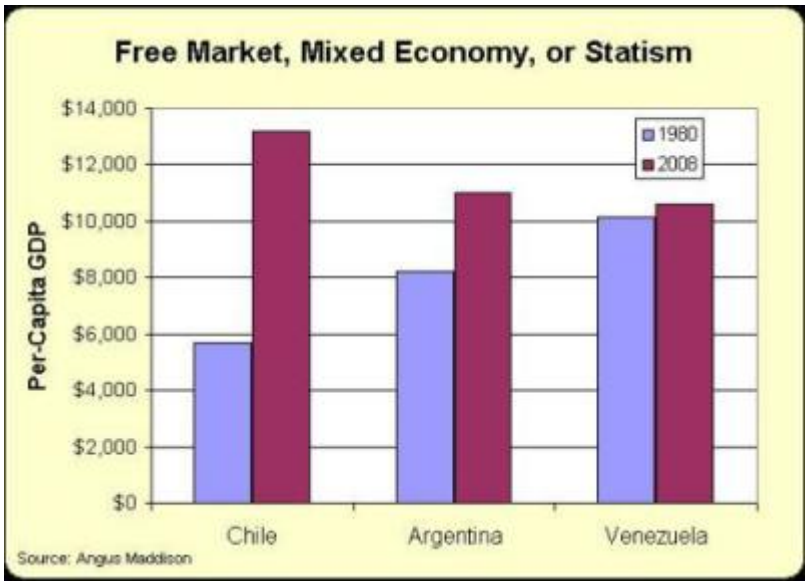

Comparing Chile to Argentina and Venezuela

The strange thing is that the economies of Chile embraced free market capitalism, free trade, private property, and the rule of law. Unlike Venezuela and Argentina, they are doing vastly better economically. Look at that chart, which I got from libertarian economist Dan Mitchell. You can't refute that, because economics is real. No one can hide from the facts.

Related posts

- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela

- What causes Colombia’s economy to grow? What causes Venezuela’s economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama’s buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Three evidential reasons why you should promote and support traditional marriage

November 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

People often question me about my strict rules of courting, according to which a man explains his plan for the marriage to the woman, and then evaluates her for the role over some period of time. The goal being to see if the woman will listen to the man's plan, grow her skills to work that plan, and then take steps to work on that plan. I advocate for no physical contact during that evaluation period so that the man is able to avoid being influenced by non-rational factors.

So why do I have this system? Well many reasons, but one the reasons is to do no harm to women or children. I have never had sex with a woman who regretted it. I have never murdered an unborn child. I have never divorced a woman. I have never been the cause of a fatherless child. It doesn't really matter to me if women pretend to be OK with premarital sex, breakups and divorce. My view is that it's not good for them and for children (unborn and born) and I am not going to inflict harm on women and children.

So that's one reason why I have this system. I would say that people who reject a rigorous, disciplined, structured view of relationships are vastly more likely cause harm to women and children (and men, in the case of no-fault divorce or false accusations of rape or false paternity claims). I guess I am open to any other system that causes less harm (although I have other reasons for choosing chastity/courting as my approach to relationships). But I don't find that my detractors want to prevent harm to others. So, I stick with what I have.

So in this post, I wanted to present a few reasons why we need to be careful to marry well, and select the right person for the job. This just reinforces why I would adopt these rules – because marriage matters, and when it comes to marriage, we don't rely on our feelings, we rely on facts and we rely on self-control.

Smoking

Here's a story from the left-leaning Globe and Mail.

Excerpt:

> Each year, Canadian taxpayers spend almost four and a half billion dollars on health care for smoking related illnesses. Governments, at all levels, have implemented policies designed to reduce tobacco consumption in the hope of lowering the excess burden placed on the health care system by smokers. So, it should be of interest to note that whether or not a person smokes has a lot to do with whether or not they are married.
>
> New research published this month, finds that Canadian men and women who are married are significantly less likely to smoke than their unmarried counterparts, and consume less alcohol as well. Divorced men and women not

> only smoke more than married men and women, but they smoke even more than unmarried men and women.
>
> Thirty-eight per cent of divorced men smoke, compared to 30 per cent of single men and 20 per cent of married men.
>
> Thirty-two per cent of divorced women smoke, compared to 26 per cent of single women and 15 per cent of married women.
>
> Husbands and wives, it seems, discourage each other from behaving in a way that is bad for their health suggesting that the more people who are married, and stay that way, the healthier we will be as a population.

You can read the abstract from the study here. It was published in the "Review of Economics of the Household" journal.

Domestic violence

Here's a publication from the Heritage Foundation think tank that shows that marriage is the safest arrangement for women and children. They use mainstream sources like the U.S. Department of Justice.

Excerpt:

> The institution that most strongly protects mothers and children from domestic abuse and violent crime is marriage. Analysis of ten years worth of findings from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has conducted since 1973, demonstrates that mothers who are or ever have been married are far less likely to suffer from violent crime than are mothers who never marry.
>
> Specifically, data from the NCVS survey show that:
>
> - **Married women with children suffer far less abuse than single mothers.** In fact, the rate of spousal, boyfriend, or domestic partner abuse is twice as high among mothers who have never been married as it is among mothers who have ever married (including those separated or divorced).
> - **Married women with children are far less likely to suffer from violent crime in general or at the hands of intimate acquaintances or strangers.** Mothers who have never married–including those who are single and living either alone or with a boyfriend and those who are cohabiting with their child's father–are more than twice as likely to be victims of violent crime than are mothers who have ever married.
>
> Other social science surveys demonstrate that marriage is the safest place for children as well. For example:
>
> - **Children of divorced or never-married mothers are six to 30 times more likely to suffer from serious child abuse** than are children raised

> by both biological parents in marriage.2
>
> Without question, marriage is the safest place for a mother and her children to live, both at home and in the larger community. Nevertheless, current government policy is either indifferent to or actively hostile to the institution of marriage. The welfare system, for example, can penalize low-income parents who decide to marry. Such hostility toward marriage is poor public policy; government instead should foster healthy and enduring marriages, which would have many benefits for mothers and children, including reducing domestic violence.

Now it's important to keep in mind that women commit domestic violence at about the same rate as men, but the Heritage Foundation paper doesn't mention men. However, I think it's reasonable to think that marriage is safer for men as well.

Poverty

Here's another publication from the Heritage Foundation that shows that marriage is better for keeping kids out of poverty.

Here's the abstract:

> *Child poverty is an ongoing national concern, but few are aware that its principal cause is the absence of married fathers in the home. Marriage remains America's strongest anti-poverty weapon, yet it continues to decline. As husbands disappear from the home, poverty and welfare dependence will increase, and children and parents will suffer as a result. Since marital decline drives up child poverty and welfare dependence, and since the poor aspire to healthy marriage but lack the norms, understanding, and skills to achieve it, it is reasonable for government to take active steps to strengthen marriage. Just as government discourages youth from dropping out of school, it should provide information that will help people to form and maintain healthy marriages and delay childbearing until they are married and economically stable. In particular, clarifying the severe shortcomings of the "child first, marriage later" philosophy to potential parents in lower-income communities should be a priority.*

Again, the paper uses mainstream from neutral sources like the U.S. Census.

Undercover video: Obamacare navigators tell applicants to lie and defraud taxpayers

November 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Secret agent James O'Keefe is once again doing the work that the liberal media won't do.

The Heritage Foundation reports.

Excerpt:

> Lie and defraud taxpayers – that's what Obamacare "navigators" are telling some Americans trying to sign up for health insurance.
>
> James O'Keefe, whose Project Veritas helped expose ACORN with an undercover investigation, has a new video focusing on Obamacare "navigators" in Texas, who received grants to provide in-person assistance to Americans signing up for Obamacare.
>
> **For example, a navigator told an undercover Project Veritas Investigator that he did not have to quit smoking to lower his health insurance premiums—she said that all he had to do was lie.**
>
> **"You lie because your premiums will be higher," said an Obamacare navigator assistant at the NUL Irving Community Center. She also admitted that she always lies on her forms.**
>
> A Project Veritas investigator also posed as a college student asking for help filling out his insurance forms. He told the navigator that he is employed by his university but also performs side jobs like cutting hair and cleaning houses. He admitted that he never included his income from side jobs when filing taxes.
>
> **"Mrs. Dorothy," an Obamacare navigator at the National Urban League, told him that he is supposed to file a percentage of that income, but she added, "Don't get yourself in trouble by declaring it now."**
>
> **She told him to file only what the government can see.**
>
> **"Because if you show more than that then you open yourself up to an audit," she said. "Because the IRS will be – has access to this information. Because that's how they determine what your eligibility is for the [HHS] grants."**
>
> **Lakisha Williams, a navigator in Dorothy's office listening in on the conversation, said to act as though it never happened. "Never report it," she said.**
>
> These examples show that Obamacare navigators are encouraging applicants to lie and defraud the government to get access to more taxpayer money. As if that weren't bad enough, Heritage's Chris Jacobs has warned that navigators could pose a security risk.

> Jacobs wrote, “Because their job involves helping Americans figure out their insurance options, navigators will often have access to sensitive personal information—bank accounts, Social Security numbers, insurance identification, and more. Yet navigators will not be required to undergo background checks, and the process for filing complaints about unscrupulous navigators remains unclear at best.”

In fact, even convicted felons are eligible to be Obamacare “navigators”. I think that this is just Obama paying off all of the “community organizers” who helped get him elected. Recall that Obama has connections to the radical leftist ACORN organization, and they were exposed for voter fraud. So this isn’t surprising at all. Obama is also connected to Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the nation, and they have also been exposed for urging people to commit crimes. This is not even to get started on Obama’s campaign fundraisers who got rewarded with tax dollars for green energy companies that later went bankrupt.

UPDATE: Republicans move fast to call for a halt to these Obamacare “navigators”, based on the video above.

Big government spending is suffocating the next generation with debt

November 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

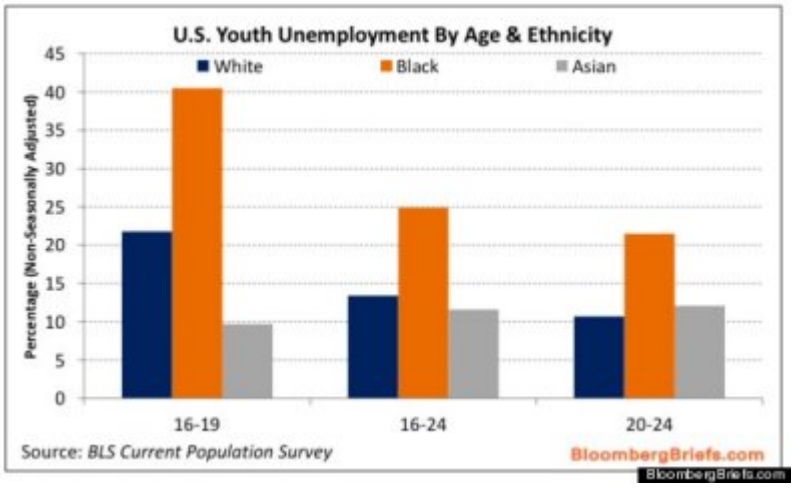

Youth unemployment by ethnicity (5/13)

Libertarian economist Veronique de Rugy writes about it in Reason magazine.

Excerpt:

> A word of caution for kids heading off to college this year: Your degree may be worth less and cost more than you think. Your job prospects will likely be grim, whether or not you get that sheepskin. Oh, and you're on the hook for trillions in federal debt racked up by your parents and grandparents.
>
> Washington has willfully ignored the looming crisis of entitlement spending, knowingly consigning young Americans to a future of crushing debt, persistent underemployment, and burdensome regulation. Politicians on both sides of the aisle share the blame.
>
> This summer, Congress made a big bipartisan show of cutting student loan rates to 3.4 percent from an already artificially low 6.8 percent. But even that seemingly helpful gesture will wind up hurting the Americans it claims to help. Federal student aid, whether in the form of grants or loans, is the main factor behind the runaway cost of higher education. Subsidies raise prices, leading to higher subsidies, which raise prices even more. This higher education bubble, like the housing bubble before it, will eventually pop. Meanwhile, large numbers of students will graduate with more debt than they would have in an unsubsidized market.
>
> And when those new, debt-laden graduates head out into the labor market with their overpriced diplomas, they may not be able to find a job. According to data provided to me by my Mercatus Center colleague, former Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) commissioner Keith Hall, fewer than half of Americans today between the ages of 18 and 25 are employed. For those in that cohort actively on

> the job market, the unemployment rate is 16 percent, versus 6 percent for job-seekers aged 25 and above.
>
> These young folks are also more likely to be long-term unemployed: While accounting for just 14 percent of the labor force, they make up 19 percent of the long-term unemployed, defined by the BLS as 27 weeks or longer.
>
> The lucky few young'uns with jobs of some kind also suffer from rampant underemployment. In a recent blog post, Diana Carew of the Progressive Policy Institute wrote: "In July 2013, just 36 percent of Americans age 16-24 not enrolled in school worked full-time, 10 percent less than in July 2007." In other words, of these 17 million young Americans, 5.6 million were working part-time, 3.2 million were unemployed, and 8.4 million were out of the labor force altogether.

I really recommend you read the rest of the article, especially if you aren't following what Obama's policies are doing to our economy. Special attention is given to the effects of Obamacare on job creation.

Just as a community service, I want to post for you young people (and your parents) a list of the majors that lead to higher paying jobs:

Top 10 highest-paid college majors

1. Petroleum Engineering: $120,000
2. Pharmacy Pharmaceutical Sciences and Administration: $105,000
3. Mathematics and Computer Science: $98,000
4. Aerospace Engineering: $87,000
5. Chemical Engineering: $86,000
6. Electrical Engineering: $85,000
7. Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering: $82,000
8. Mechanical Engineering: $80,000
9. Metallurgical Engineering: $80,000
10. Mining and Mineral Engineering: $80,000

And here are some majors that you should avoid at all costs:

1. Counseling Psychology: $29,000
2. Early Childhood Education: $36,000
3. Theology and Religious Vocations: $38,000
4. Human Services and Community Organization: $38,000
5. Social Work: $39,000
6. Drama and Theater Arts: $40,000
7. Studio Arts: $40,000
8. Communication Disorders Sciences and Service: $40,000
9. Visual and Performing Arts: $40,000
10. Health and Medical Preparatory Programs: $40,000

So young people need to be careful what they study in order to get a job that will allow them to pay off all the government debts that their teachers were busy running up. Their teachers taught them that government spending was good, but their teachers aren't going to be paying for the government spending. They are the beneficiaries of the increased government spending. The pupils are the ones who will have to work to pay for the spending on the social programs enjoyed by their teachers.

It's very important for young Christians to understand that degrees are getting more expensive, and it's important to choose a field that is going to produce a return on your investment. Not only do STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) degrees get you a job that pays, but it has other benefits. For example STEM degrees grind out every last bit of impracticality and entitlement-feeling out of you – because in a STEM program, no one cares about your "specialness". You solve problems or you fail the class. It's not a situation where you can just repeat what the professor says in order to get good grades, as is often (but not always) the case in the humanities.

William Lane Craig on the unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

November 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember that Dr. Craig used a new argument in his debate with Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia.

My notes on the debate record it thus:

> The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
>
> - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
> - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
> - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
> - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see

And now Dr. Craig has expanded on it in the Q&A section of his Reasonable Faith web site.

The question:

> Dear Dr Craig
>
> Firstly can I thank you for all your work. My faith in Christ has been enormously strengthened through studying your work in apologetics in particular and I have grown in confidence in my Christian witness.
>
> My question relates to numbers and mathematics as a whole. On the Defenders podcast you state that as God is the only self-existent, necessary being, numbers and mathematical objects, whilst being useful, don't actually exist as these too would exist necessarily and independently of God. If this is the case, how can it be that mathematics is so easily applied to the natural world? Surely if mathematics only existed in our minds, we would expect to see no correlation between it and how the physical world actually is?
>
> Michael
>
> United Kingdom

Excerpt from the answer:

> As philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng points out, for the non-theistic realist, the fact that physical reality behaves in line with the dictates of acausal mathematical entities existing beyond space and time is "a happy coincidence" (*Mathematics and Reality* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 239). Think

> about it: If, *per impossibile*, all the abstract objects in the mathematical realm were to disappear overnight, there would be no effect on the physical world. This is simply to reiterate that abstract objects are causally inert. The idea that realism somehow accounts for the applicability of mathematics "is actually very counterintuitive," muses Mark Balaguer, a philosopher of mathematics. "The idea here is that in order to believe that the physical world has the nature that empirical science assigns to it, I have to believe that there are causally inert mathematical objects, existing outside of spacetime," an idea which is inherently implausible (*Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 136).
>
> By contrast, the theistic realist can argue that God has fashioned the world on the structure of the mathematical objects. This is essentially what Plato believed. The world has mathematical structure as a result.

This argument was also made by mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley in a lecture he gave on scientific evidence for an intelligent designer. You can read an essay that covers some of the material in that lecture at Leadership University.

Excerpt:

> The physical universe is surprising in the simple mathematical form it assumes. All the basic laws of physics and fundamental relationships can be described on one side of one sheet of paper because they are so few in number and so simple in form (see table 1.1).
>
> […]It has been widely recognized for some time that nature assumes a form that is elegantly described by a relatively small number of simple, mathematical relationships, as previously noted in table 1.1. None of the various proposals presented later in this chapter to explain the complexity of the universe address this issue. Albert Einstein in a letter to a friend expressed his amazement that the universe takes such a form (Einstein 1956), saying:
>
> You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world to the degree that we may speak of such comprehensibility as a miracle or an eternal mystery. Well, a priori one should expect a chaotic world which cannot be in any way grasped through thought. . . . The kind of order created, for example, by Newton's theory of gravity is of quite a different kind. Even if the axioms of the theory are posited by a human being, the success of such an enterprise presupposes an order in the objective world of a high degree which one has no a priori right to expect. That is the "miracle" which grows increasingly persuasive with the increasing development of knowledge.
>
> Alexander Polykov (1986), one of the top physicists in Russia, commenting on the mathematical character of the universe, said: "We know that nature is described by the best of all possible mathematics because God created it." Paul Davies, an astrophysicist from England, says, "The equations of physics have in them

> incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe" (Davies 1984). Successful development of a unified field theory in the future would only add to this remarkable situation, further reducing the number of equations required to describe nature, indicating even further unity and integration in the natural phenomena than have been observed to date.

The whole paper that started this off is called "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics", and it is a must read for advanced Christian apologists. You can read the whole thing here.

UPDATE: Mysterious Tom posted this quote from David Berlinski on Facebook:

> Why should a limited and finite organ such as the human brain have the power to see into the heart of matter and mathematics? These are subjects that have nothing to do with the Darwinian business of scrabbling up the greasy pole of life. It is as if the liver, in addition to producing bile, were to demonstrate an unexpected ability to play the violin.

That's from David Berlinski's "The Devil's Delusion: Atheism and Its Scientific Pretensions", (Basic Books, 2009, p. 16-17). Dr. Berlinksi is not a Christian – he is an agnostic.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

How many people signed up for Obamacare?

November 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

NBC News reports on the number of people who have signed up for Obamacare. It's even lower than the estimate I reported earlier in the week.

Excerpt:

> In a new low point for President Barack Obama and another ding against his signature domestic achievement, only 26,000 Americans signed up for health insurance plans in the month that the federal government's troubled website has been open for business.
>
> When figures from state-run exchanges are included, more than 106,000 Americans selected plans during the Affordable Care Act's first month of open enrollment. Still, that number, combined with the administration's repeated warnings of low early-enrollment figures, won't mute the mounting political outcryfrom both sides of the aisle over the rocky rollout.
>
> […]Even the administration's Democratic allies have begun to exhibit signs of nervousness.
>
> Sen. Mary Landrieu, a Red State Democrat who's up for re-election in Louisiana next fall, has proposed a patch to Obamacare that would allow consumers to keep insurance plans threatened by cancellation. The tweak would, in essence, force Obama to make good on his once-stated promise that individuals who like their health care plan could keep it.
>
> The bill, passage of which would represent an embarrassment for Obama, has even won over some administration allies, including California Sen. Dianne Feinstein. And former President Bill Clinton, whom Obama once dubbed his "explainer in chief," didn't help the White House on Tuesday when he endorsed a similar fix.
>
> […]Throughout it all, Obama's approval ratings have plummeted to new lows, suffering from successive crises involving a Republican-led government shutdown and near-default on the national debt, and then the struggles of Healthcare.gov.

Breitbart News has more on the revolt of the Democrats who are up for election in 2014.

Excerpt:

> On CNN's The Lead, host Jake Tapper said that Democrats had refused to come on the program to discuss the abysmal Obamacare enrollment numbers released on Wednesday afternoon.
>
> Dana Bash reported, "Republicans are tripping over themselves to come out and talk." She continued, "we're not hearing from Democrats so far, the sounds of

> silence, tells you everything you need to know."
>
> Tapper confirmed that Democrats were suddenly silent: "To be completely honest, we had difficult time booking Democrats to come on after those numbers were released, to have them come on and talk about fixing the problem."

And moderate leftists Kirsten Powers and David Frum are furious that that their health care plans have been canceled, and even more furious at the White House spin on the millions of Americans who are losing their health care.

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, two prominent media personalities who support President Barack Obama's overhaul of America's health care system took to the airwaves to vent about their insurance plans which have been cancelled as a direct result of the Affordable Care Act.
>
> In an appearance on *Special Report* on Tuesday, Fox News Channel contributor and Daily Beast editorial writer Kirsten Powers lashed out at the White House – and, by extension, her Democratic cohorts – for implying that her consumer choices were poorly informed and insufficiently focused on the collective good.
>
> "My blood pressure goes up every time they say that they're protecting us from substandard health insurance plans," Powers told Bret Baier. "There is nothing to support what they're saying."
>
> "I have talked to about how I'm losing my health insurance," she continued. "If I want to keep the same health insurance, it's going to cost twice as much. There's nothing substandard about my plan."
>
> "All of the things they say that are not in my plan are in my plan," Powers lamented. "All of the things they have listed — there's no explanation for doubling my premiums other than the fact that it's subsidizing other people. They need to be honest about that."
>
> Powers, a committed Democrat, once supported the aims of the ACA, if not every mean designed to achieve a noble end. Today, it would seem, she is wavering on the virtue of that end as well.
>
> Powers is in good company. On CNN's *The Situation Room* with Wolf Blitzer on Tuesday, former Daily Beast columnist David Frum hijacked a conversation about President Bill Clinton's shocking admonition of President Barack Obama to discuss his own cancelled health plan.
>
> "I'm pulling rank," Frum informed his fellow panel guests, "because I'm one of those who has had his plan canceled."
>
> "I still have, but will not very much longer have, a plan in the District of Columbia, covered my wife and my children, which is canceled," he reported. "I can buy on the exchange a plan that will cost $200 a month more and have a higher deductible. I can't get back my old plan unless, as Ron [Brownstein] says,

> the administration drops the element of the law that requires the coverage of everybody."
>
> "That's why my coverage went up is because every insurer must now cover everybody," Frum continued. "I think President Clinton should have the honesty to defend that."

It's all falling apart, but will it be in time? I have friends who are in the individual market who are losing their health care and being offered plans with higher deductibles AND higher co-payments, that cost far more than what they had. We really need to see a push to repeal this monstrosity now before more people have to suffer from it.

Why did unmarried women prefer a Democrat candidate by 42 points in Virginia?

November 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the numbers from the recent Virginia gubernatorial election, courtesy of the leftist Washington Post.

> There were poll numbers floating around in the days leading up to the election that suggested McAuliffe would absolutely swamp Cuccinelli among female voters and, in so doing, win a convincing victory. But, according to exit polls, Cuccinelli only lost female voters by nine points — identical to the losing margin for Mitt Romney among women in Virginia in the 2012 presidential election. (Romney lost women nationally by 11 points to President Obama in 2012.)
>
> Where Cuccinelli did get swamped, however, was among non-married women where he lost by a massive 42-point(!) margin, according to preliminary exit polling. While Romney didn't fare that poorly in 2012, his 29-point loss among non-married women in Virginia was more than double his losing margin among women more broadly in the Commonwealth.
>
> Here's the two-pronged problem for Republicans: 1) They aren't winning married women by nearly enough to make up for their huge deficits among unmarried women and 2) There aren't that many more married women than single women in the electorate to make up the margins.
>
> So, the fact that married women accounted for 35 percent of the overall electorate and Cuccinelli won them by nine points was more than offset by the fact that single women comprised 18 percent of the electorate and he lost them by six touchdowns.
>
> (Worth noting: The married/unmarried divide isn't just among women. Cuccinelli won married men by six points but lost single men by 25.)

When you vote for a Democrat, you are voting for legalized abortion through all 9 months of pregnancy, gay marriage, banning guns, higher taxes and massive government spending. So how does the Democrat Party convince women to vote for those policies? Well, you can see how by looking at these official pro-Obamacare ads that are marketed to unmarried women. (H/T Amy)

OMG he's hot! Obama gives you condoms to have sex with him!
Who did this?

> Got Insurance is a project of the Thanks Obamacare campaign, created by the **Colorado Consumer Health Initiative** and **ProgressNow Colorado Education** to educate everyone about the benefits of the Affordable Care Act.

See, that man is good-looking, but he has no intention of marrying that woman. He has no STEM degree, no self-control, no earned income, and desire to raise children. But she wants to have sex with him because OMG he's hawt!!!1!, and thankfully her Obama is right there with the birth control pills and condoms to make this "work". She is so excited to have Obamacare-sex with the hot guy! And who knows, maybe he will call her the next day and ask her what her name was.

Now you might think that appealing to unmarried women like this would not work, but actually it does work. It works because this is how unmarried women see themselves. They want to binge drink. They want to prefer men based purely on appearance and fun. They don't want men who can protect, provide and lead morally and spiritually. They don't want men who are "sexist" (chivalrous) and judgmental (honorable). They want to be free to act on their feelings spontaneously and then kill unborn children who get in the way of that. And they want high-earning married men to pay for the condoms through taxes. And if things don't "work out" with the "hot guy" then they can just blame him for being a cad, and blame the alcohol they drank for making them choose that cad. It wasn't their fault, so thank socialism that taxpayers are going to pay for it.

The Democrat Party offers unmarried women free condoms and subsidized abortions, so they can more easily engage in recreational sex, and unmarried women respond to that by electing Democrats. According to exit polls, unmarried women like Sandra Fluke voted

more than 70% for Obama in 2008 and 2012. This is not my opinion, this is fact. Feminists vote Democrat, and this is feminism in action. Drink like a man. Have sex like a man. Force pro-life doctors to kill the babies. Make pro-life taxpayers pay for the abortion. That's what unmarried women are voting for – in droves.

Application for Christians

And that's what is facing marriage-minded men today when they look at unmarried women. That's an attractive woman in that photo up there. Christian leaders and pastors look at a woman like that with a college degree and a job, and they say to Christian men "you need to man up and marry that fine Christian woman!". There is almost no expectation among Christian leaders that Christian women be informed about politics, economics, apologetics, and so on. If they look good, then they must be good. And they must vote good. Except they are not and they do not.

The fact is that unmarried Christian women are often very much like unmarried non-Christian women. They believe the same. They vote the same. They watch the same TV and movies. They read the same books. They have plenty of sexual experience – if not from hook-ups, then from preferring non-Christian men to Christian men. We really need to be training unmarried Christian women to be far better at morality, politics, economics, apologetics and so on. Right now, from what I have see in the church, they are woefully inadequate for marriage. We need to look beyond the winsome appearance of Christian women, and make a right judgment about what's underneath skin level. Instead of being guided by our eyes, and accepting a bare confession of faith, we need to look deeper – for an informed Christian worldview and actions that are consistent with that worldview.

It's good for Christian men to treat unmarried women nicely, but unless they are qualified to be treated nicely, it does more harm than good. When an unmarried woman is engaging in behaviors that are destroying the lives of born and unborn children, and tearing the fabric of society with government debt, no-fault divorce and single motherhood, then the good man has to make a stand and say "What you are doing is evil." Unfortunately, many Christian leaders don't want to do that, so it's up to regular rank-and-file Christian men to do it.

Related posts

- New study: college women binge drinking more often than college men
- Study explains why college women abandon courtship for hook-ups
- What do older feminists want younger women to want?
- Dennis Prager explains what feminism has achieved for women
- How do children end up fatherless? One woman's story
- Percentage of single mothers who have never married 11 times higher than in 1960
- Rasmussen poll finds that men are more pro-life than women
- Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?

Evidence from science, philosophy and history against Mormonism

November 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It is based on several lines of evidence, and is broadly compatible with Genesis. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that although Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous

> god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell

> us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

Further study

There is a very good podcast featuring J. Warner Wallace that summarizes some other theological problems with Mormonism that I blogged about before. And if you want a nice long PDF to print out and read at lunch (which is what I did with it) you can grab this PDF by Michael Licona, entitled "Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock".

Obama vows to veto Republican "Keep Your Health Plan Act" bill

November 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Face a revolt among his own party, the President decided to delay the implementation of his own failed health care policy, until after the 2014 elections. He did this to help Democrat candidates in red states to not be thrown out for enacting a policy that will cancel the health care plans of millions of Americans. After the elections, Obamacare will take effect as planned and millions of Americans will lose their health care.

The Republicans have an alternate plan – let people keep their health care plans if they like them, just as Obama promised before he was re-elected.

Excerpt:

> House Republican leaders announced Wednesday the lower chamber will vote next week on a bill that would allow people to keep their health insurance plan if they like it.
>
> The vote hits at President Obama, who, during the debate over the Affordable Care Act, said people could keep their healthcare plans if they like them. Millions of people, however, have gotten cancelation notices because of ObamaCare's new standards.
>
> Late Wednesday afternoon, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) announced via Twitter that the bill would get a vote.
>
> The Keep Your Health Plan Act, H.R. 3350, was introduced last week by House Energy & Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-Mich.) and more than two dozen Republicans. As of Wednesday, co-sponsorship had grown to 88 members.
>
> Upton's bill authorizes insurance companies to keep offering plans that they have said need to be canceled because of ObamaCare's new insurance standards. Since early October, companies have sent out millions of notices to enrollees saying their plans will be scrapped and, in many cases, replaced by more expensive plans.
>
> "Despite the president's repeated promise of 'if you like your plan, you can keep it,' many Americans are now learning the sad reality that their current plan will no longer exist beginning on Jan. 1," Upton said last week. "Instead they are forced to purchase healthcare that they cannot afford through a system that does not even work, and that's just not fair."

The Weekly Standard reports that the Obama administration has threatened to veto the Republican "Keep Your Health Plan Act". Why? Because the true purpose of Obamacare requires that healthy people get kicked off their plans, and that they be forced to buy

more expensive plans that subsidize the treatments of less healthy people.

The chief architect of Obamacare, Jonathan Gruber, explained in a recent interview:

> "We currently have a highly discriminatory system where if you're sick, if you've been sick, if you are going to get sick, you cannot get health insurance," Gruber told host Chuck Todd. "The only way to end that discriminatory system is to bring everyone into the system and pay one fair price. That means that the genetic winners, the lottery winners, who've been paying their artificially low price because of this discrimination, now will have to pay more in return. And that, by my estimate is about 4 million people. In return, we'll have a fixed system where over 30 million people will now, for the first time, be able to access fairly priced and guaranteed health insurance." Emphases added.
>
> This is monstrous. Gruber admits that "If you like your healthcare, you can keep your healthcare" was a lie from the start. They never even intended to keep this promise, as doing so would destroy their scheme. The system Gruber describes is the intentional demolition of the private insurance industry, which bases prices on risk. He is also defining "discrimination" so far that given the chance, he would abolish capitalism and private property ownership itself.

That's why Obama has to veto the bill – because he must accomplish his goal of making everyone's life "equal" regardless of their individual choices. People who aren't addicted to drugs must be forced to subsidize the drug addiction therapies of others. People who don't have a promiscuous sex life must subsidize the promiscuous sex lives of others. People who don't need abortion-inducing drugs must subsidize the abortion-inducing drugs of others. Wealth redistribution to equalize lifestyle outcomes. If you make good decisions in life, you must be punished. If you make bad decisions in life, you must be rewarded. If you earn money and save money because you have a plan of your own for marriage and family, then what you earn and save must be taken from you and given to others who earn nothing and save nothing and have no plans for marriage and family.

Not enough time to make the changes

James Pethokoukis explains that insurance companies don't have enough time to restore the plans that Obamacare canceled. So the only real effect of Obama's announcement is to give cover to Democrats who vote against the Keep Your Health Plan Act. That was the purpose of his press conference – to stop a revolt by people in his own party.

Health insurance companies will raise rates to comply with Obamacare delay

November 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News explains how health insurance companies will respond to the last-minute attempt by Democrats to delay the implementation of Obamacare.

Excerpt:

> After President Obama unilaterally changed his health care law on Thursday, the insurance industry issued a warning.
>
> "Changing the rules after health plans have already met the requirements of the law could destabilize the market and result in higher premiums for consumers," said Karen Ignagni, president and CEO of America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP).
>
> Here's Ignagni's full statement:
>
> *Making sure consumers have secure, affordable coverage is health plans' top priority. The only reason consumers are getting notices about their current coverage changing is because the ACA requires all policies to cover a broad range of benefits that go beyond what many people choose to purchase today.*
>
> *Premiums have already been set for next year based on an assumption of when consumers will be transitioning to the new marketplace. If due to these changes fewer younger and healthier people choose to purchase coverage in the exchange, premiums will increase in the marketplace and there will be fewer choices for consumers. Additional steps must be taken to stabilize the marketplace and mitigate the adverse impact on consumers.*

A recent Weekly Standard podcast predicts that the Democrats are going to come down hard on insurance companies, and blame them for the failure of Obamacare.

Carson Weitnauer: putting atheism on the defensive

November 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article at Reasons for God that explains a few simple questions that you can ask your atheist friends.

He writes:

> Though it has been persistently marketed to us as a worldview that stands for reason and science, the truth is that the atheistic worldview is riddled with contradictions and outlandish claims. And because most secular people haven't studied why atheism is true, an excellent evangelistic strategy for you and your church is to understand these five challenges for atheism.
>
> In my experience, it is only once people realize that their own worldview doesn't work that they become interested in seeking something that does. While some would suggest you just have to wait for people to hit rock bottom, I think a more gracious and effective approach is to humbly challenge their pretense to have a sensible worldview.
>
> By God's grace, studying these five holes in the atheistic worldview can create a powerful opportunity for you and your church to share the wisdom and love of Jesus Christ.
>
> […]Because of their fundamental commitment to impersonal matter and laws, the atheist faces very difficult problems in at least five unique areas:
>
> - Consciousness
> - Free will
> - Purpose
> - Reason, including mathematics and science
> - Objective moral facts, including universal human rights and the reality of evil

Here's my favorite of the 5:

> Leading atheists such as Sam Harris dismiss free will as a matter of course. Or as Tom Clark at Naturalism.org puts it, "Judged from a scientific and logical perspective, the belief that we stand outside the causal web in any respect is an absurdity, the height of human egoism and exceptionalism."
>
> Dr. Angus Menuge, the current President of the Evangelical Philosophical Society, explains the problem: "before we can talk of being responsible for our decisions, we need an account of why those decisions belong to us. But the trouble is, on a naturalistic view, there is no entity that can plausibly own any mental states, there is simply a plurality of parallel, impersonal processes in the brain."
>
> The denial of free will logically leads to the denial of personal responsibility for

> any of our behaviors or beliefs. But if everything about “you” is determined, then “you” could not have reasonably chosen to believe what you do. If a-rational things and laws determined your neurological structure, “you” literally cannot make any decisions about what you believe or why you believe it.

This article is worth a look if you want to start a discussion with an atheist.

Humanists force school to cancel Christmas-themed charity that benefits children

November 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Letitia posted this Fox News article on Facebook.

Excerpt:

> A South Carolina charter school has canceled its annual Christmas toy drive after a group of self-described humanists complained that the project violated the U.S. Constitution and accused them of bribing children to convert to Christianity.
>
> Renee Mathews, the principal of East Point Academy in West Columbia, S.C., said the annual Operation Christmas Child project was halted because the American Humanist Association threatened to sue the school.
>
> "We received a letter saying we had to cease and desist immediately or they would take legal action against us," Mathews told me.
>
> […]Mathews said their small school had no choice.
>
> "We have a very small budget and very small legal budget. We felt that we could not risk using our school funding for classrooms and teachers to fight a court case."
>
> […]The small charter school had been participating in Operation Christmas Child for the past two years without any controversy. The program is associated with Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief and evangelism organization.
>
> For the past several weeks, students had been working with their parents to decorate shoe boxes and fill them with toys. They were supposed to deliver the boxes to the school Friday morning.
>
> Even though Operation Christmas Child is connected to an evangelical Christian ministry, Mathews said there were no religious materials included in the boxes. She also pointed out the project was voluntary, non-religious, and not tied to any graded assignments.
>
> Nevertheless, the American Humanist Association decided to intervene on behalf of a perturbed parent.

I think this story serves as a reminder to everyone that humanists are essentially bullies who want to force others to act like humanists in public. They are so sensitive about hearing different points of view that they have to resort to the power of big government in order to silence and coerce anyone who disagrees with them.

Students who voted for Obama react to losing their cheap private health care plan

November 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mysterious William sent me this story from Campus Reform.

Excerpt:

> Students at Bowie State University assailed the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on Thursday after administrators cancelled a low cost school-wide health care plan due to new regulations in the law.
>
> Many students told Campus Reform that the now cancelled plans, **which provided coverage** for just $50 per semester, were the only insurance they could afford.
>
> "I can't afford anything right now," one said. "I can't even afford my loans."
>
> "We don't have that money," said another. "We can barely afford books."
>
> Several students said that they felt they had been let down.
>
> "It's stupid and it's Obama's fault," one said. "You haven't done anything, Obama, and I'm disappointed in you."
>
> "What it was hyped up to be, was that it was supposed to solve a lot of problems and help a lot of people, and its not really doing that," said another.
>
> Many students had no idea the plans had been canceled, which was announced only in an email to their school addresses.

One of the students in the video rightly chastises Obama for not doing his homework on health care policy before putting through a law that doesn't make health care better. But honestly it's the students who haven't done their homework – at least the ones who voted for Obama in 2012. Because these things were all known at the time. I was blogging about them all the way through 2009 to election day in 2012. And not my opinions but studies showing what the impact would be on health care costs, job creation, and so on. There is no way this plan could work, and anyone who was paying attention knew that. It's sad for the students now, but maybe it's a good thing for them to learn their lesson early.

Republicans introduce bill to impeach Attorney General Eric Holder

November 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breitbart News reports.

Excerpt:

> Rep. Pete Olson (R-TX) has introduced an Articles of Impeachment resolution against Attorney General Eric Holder for his role in Operation Fast and Furious and other scandals of President Barack Obama's administration.
>
> Seven congressman have signed onto the resolution thus far in addition to Olson. They are Reps. Larry Bucshon (R-IN), Blake Farenthold (R-TX), Phil Roe (R-TN), Lynn Westmoreland (R-GA), Roger Williams (R-TX), Ted Yoho (R-FL), and Randy Weber (R-TX).
>
> The Articles of Impeachment has four different sections. The first calls for Holder's official removal because of his failure to comply with congressional subpoenas relating to Operation Fast and Furious. Holder has been voted on a bipartisan basis into both criminal and civil contempt of Congress for his failure to comply with the Fast and Furious subpoenas from House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA).
>
> The second section of the Articles of Impeachment deals with Holder's refusal to enforce the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), the Controlled Substances Act, and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986. The third section calls for Holder's impeachment on the grounds that he has refused to prosecute any IRS officials involved in the "scandal of unauthorized disclosure of tax records belonging to political donors."
>
> The fourth section of the Articles of Impeachment goes after Holder for his involvement in the targeting of reporters. Holder testified under oath on May 15, 2013, the resolution states, that he "he was neither involved in nor had heard of a potential prosecution of the press." Three days later, though, Holder's Department of Justice (DOJ) "released documents naming journalist James Rosen as a co-conspirator in an alleged violation of the Espionage Act." Holder later confirmed to Congress that he had in fact "approved a search warrant on James Rosen."

See the links below for a review of Holder's many failures.

Related posts

- Obama covers-up DOJ operation that allowed gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Republicans prepare contempt citation for AG Eric Holder over Fast and Furious
- Eric Holder wants to brainwash people against legal gun ownership

- Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent's murder
- Fast and Furious assault weapons seized from drug cartel enforcer's home
- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Federal court: Obama appointees interfered with New Black Panther prosecution
- Obama administration sues Florida for purging non-citizens from voter rolls
- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training
- Is Obama's Department of Justice enabling voter registration fraud?
- Department of Justice won't purge dead or ineligible voters from roll
- Obama's attorney general has his head in the sand on national security

Chad Meister: can atheists make sense of morality?

November 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Philosopher Chad Meister takes a look at the attempts of some prominent atheists to make rational sense of morality within their worldviews.

Here is the abstract:

> Atheists often argue that they can make moral claims and live good moral lives without believing in God. Many theists agree, but the real issue is whether atheism can provide a justification for morality. A number of leading atheists currently writing on this issue are opposed to moral relativism, given its obvious and horrific ramifications, and have attempted to provide a justification for a nonrelative morality. Three such attempts are discussed in this article: Walter Sinnott-Armstrong's position that objective morality simply "is"; Richard Dawkins's position that morality is based on the selfish gene; and Michael Ruse and Edward Wilson's position that morality is an evolutionary illusion. Each of these positions, it turns out, is problematic. Sinnott-Armstrong affirms an objective morality, but affirming something and justifying it are two very different matters. Dawkins spells out his selfish gene approach by including four fundamental criteria, but his approach has virtually nothing to do with morality—with real right and wrong, good and evil. Finally, Ruse and Wilson disagree with Dawkins and maintain that belief in morality is just an adaptation put in place by evolution to further our reproductive ends. On their view, morality is simply an illusion foisted on us by our genes to get us to cooperate and to advance the species. But have they considered the ramifications of such a view? Each of these positions fails to provide the justification necessary for a universal, objective morality—the kind of morality in which good and evil are clearly understood and delineated.
>
> […]We can get to the heart of the atheist's dilemma with a graphic but true example. Some years ago serial killer Ted Bundy, who confessed to over thirty murders, was interviewed about his gruesome activities. Consider the frightening words to his victim as he describes them:
>
> *Then I learned that all moral judgments are "value judgments," that all value judgments are subjective, and that none can be proved to be either "right" or "wrong"….I discovered that to become truly free, truly unfettered, I had to become truly uninhibited. And I quickly discovered that the greatest obstacle to my freedom, the greatest block and limitation to it, consists in the insupportable "value judgment" that I was bound to respect the rights of others. I asked myself, who were these "others"? Other human beings, with human rights? Why is it more wrong to kill a human animal than any other animal, a pig or a sheep or a steer? Is your life more to you than a hog's life to a hog? Why should I be willing to sacrifice my pleasure more for the one than for the other? Surely, you would*

not, in this age of scientific enlightenment, declare that God or nature has marked some pleasures as "moral" or "good" and others as "immoral" or "bad"? In any case, let me assure you, my dear young lady, that there is absolutely no comparison between the pleasure I might take in eating ham and the pleasure I anticipate in raping and murdering you. That is the honest conclusion to which my education has led me—after the most conscientious examination of my spontaneous and uninhibited self.

While I am in no way accusing atheists in general of being Ted Bundy-like, the question I have for the atheist is simply this: *On what moral grounds can you provide a response to Bundy?* The atheistic options are limited. If morality has nothing to do with God, as atheists suppose, what does it have to do with? One response the atheist could offer is moral relativism, either personal or cultural. The personal moral relativist affirms that morality is an individual matter; you decide for yourself what is morally right and wrong. But on this view, what could one say to Bundy? Not much, other than "I don't like what you believe; it offends me how you brutalize women." For the personal relativist, however, who really cares (other than you) that you are offended by someone else's actions? On this view we each decide our own morality, and when my morality clashes with yours, there is no final arbiter other than perhaps that the stronger of us *forces* the other to agree. But this kind of Nietzschean "might makes right" ethic has horrific consequences, and one need only be reminded of the Nazi reign of terror to see it in full bloom. This is one reason why thoughtful atheists, such as Christopher Hitchens, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, and others don't go there.

But what about cultural moral relativism—the view that moral claims are the inventions of a given culture? Most thoughtful atheists don't tread here either, and this is one reason why: If right and wrong are cultural inventions, then it would always be wrong for someone within that culture to speak out against them. If culture defines right and wrong, then who are you to challenge it? For example, to speak out against slavery in Great Britain in the seventeenth century would have been morally wrong, for it was culturally acceptable. But surely it was a morally good thing for William Wilberforce and others to strive against the prevailing currents of their time and place to abolish the slave trade. For the cultural moral relativist, all moral reformers—Wilberforce, Martin Luther King, Jr., even Jesus and Gandhi, to name a few—would be in the wrong. But who would agree with this conclusion? Thankfully, most leading atheists agree that moral relativism is doomed.

So what do they affirm? Here are three accounts that recent atheists have defended: (1) objective morality simply "is," (2) morality is based on the selfish gene, and (3) morality is an evolutionary illusion. Let's take a brief look at each of them.

Have you ever heard any of these three categories of objections? If so, click on through and see Chad Meister’s responses.

Domestic violence rates are higher for homosexual couples than for heterosexual couples

November 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-leaning Atlantic Monthly. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Data on the rates of same-sex partner abuse have only become available in recent years. Even today, many of the statistics and materials on domestic violence put out by organizations like the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Justice still focus exclusively on heterosexual relationships, and specifically heterosexual women. While the CDC does provide some resources on its website for the LGBT population, the vast majority of the information is targeted at women. Materials provided by the CDC for violence prevention and survivor empowerment prominently feature women in their statistics and photographs.
>
> In 2013, the CDC released the results of a 2010 study on victimization by sexual orientation, and admitted that "little is known about the national prevalence of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking among lesbian, gay, and bisexual women and men in the United States." The report found that bisexual women had an overwhelming prevalence of violent partners in their lives: 75 percent had been with a violent partner, as opposed to 46 percent of lesbian women and 43 percent of straight women. For bisexual men, that number was 47 percent. For gay men, it was 40 percent, and 21 percent for straight men.
>
> The most recent statistics available on same-sex intimate partner violence from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, which focuses on LGBT relationships, reported 21 incidents of intimate partner homicides in the LGBT community, the highest ever. Nearly half of them were gay men and, for the second year in a row, the majority of survivors were people of color—62 percent.
>
> In 2012, NCAVP programs around the country received 2,679 reports of intimate partner violence, a decrease of around 32 percent from 2011. However the report noted that many of the NCAVP's member organizations were operating at decreased capacity due to limiting the number of cases they were able to take. The report said that excluding data from organizations, there was actually a 29 percent increase in reports of violence from 2011 to 2012.

That article comes from a source with a very clear pro-gay-agenda bias, so let's take a look at an article from the Family Research Council to balance it out. They rely on mainstream data sources as well, like the CDC, the DOJ, the US Census, etc.

Excerpt:

> A study in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence examined conflict and violence in

> lesbian relationships. The researchers found that 90 percent of the lesbians surveyed had been recipients of one or more acts of verbal aggression from their intimate partners during the year prior to this study, with 31 percent reporting one or more incidents of physical abuse.[69]
>
> In a survey of 1,099 lesbians, the Journal of Social Service Research found that "slightly more than half of the [lesbians] reported that they had been abused by a female lover/partner. The most frequently indicated forms of abuse were verbal/emotional/psychological abuse and combined physical-psychological abuse."[70]
>
> In their book Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them: Battered Gay Men and Domestic Violence,D. Island and P. Letellier report that "the incidence of domestic violence among gay men is nearly double that in the heterosexual population."[71]
>
> […]Homosexual and lesbian relationships are far more violent than are traditional married households:
>
> The Bureau of Justice Statistics (U.S. Department of Justice) reports that married women in traditional families experience the lowest rate of violence compared with women in other types of relationships.[72]
>
> A report by the Medical Institute for Sexual Health concurred,
>
> It should be noted that most studies of family violence do not differentiate between married and unmarried partner status. Studies that do make these distinctions have found that marriage relationships tend to have the least intimate partner violence when compared to cohabiting or dating relationships.[73]

You can find more data comparing married heterosexuals to same-sex relationships in this FRC paper, which again uses mainstream data sources. Ask yourself: is this a lifestyle that you would recommend to someone you cared about? Is this is a lifestyle that we should celebrate if we are concerned about the good of others? Telling someone not to smoke cigarettes is a good thing. Telling someone not to bicycle without a helmet is a good thing. Telling someone not to get drunk and then drive a car is a good thing. When did we ever get to the point where telling people the facts about the consequences of their choices is considered a bad thing?

By the way, I have to mention this as often as possible, whenever I blog about domestic violence: women commit domestic violence at about the same rate as men.

Rates of domestic violence for men vs women

First of all, let's see what's happening with domestic violence rates in the UK, according to the UK government's own study.

Excerpt:

> Data from Home Office statistical bulletins and the British Crime Survey show

> that men made up about 40% of domestic violence victims each year between 2004-05 and 2008-09, the last year for which figures are available. In 2006-07 men made up 43.4% of all those who had suffered partner abuse in the previous year, which rose to 45.5% in 2007-08 but fell to 37.7% in 2008-09.
>
> Similar or slightly larger numbers of men were subjected to severe force in an incident with their partner, according to the same documents. The figure stood at 48.6% in 2006-07, 48.3% the next year and 37.5% in 2008-09, Home Office statistics show.

Canada numbers:

> An estimated 7% of women and 6% of men in a current or previous spousal relationship encountered spousal violence during the five years up to and including 2004, according to a comprehensive new report on family violence.

Sweden numbers:

> In two related studies, researchers surveyed 1,400 Swedes about domestic violence and found that 8 to 11 percent of men reported being victims of physical violence at the hands of their spouse in the past year.
>
> The corresponding figure for women was 8 percent.

In lesbian relationships, the rate of domestic violence is extremely high, from 17% to 45%, depending on the study. I do think that men exert a calming influence on women's emotions, helping them to channel their feelings into words and reasoned arguments. That short-circuits the tendency toward violent outbursts. That's why I urge men, if they must marry, to practice disagreeing and debating with women before the marriage is actualized. You need to find out what this other person does in a conflict situation before you commit to her for life.

You also see higher rates of violence by mothers against their own children, than with fathers. Mothers are more than twice as likely to abuse children as fathers. Biological fathers are programmed to protect children – it's the stepfathers and live-in boyfriends who harm children.

Excerpt:

> Contrary to public perception, research shows that the most likely physical abuser of a young child will be that child's mother, not a male in the household, although the mother's plight often is complicated by her relationship with a cohabiting male. Abusive mothers frequently are isolated, and lack the parental and extended family or peer support that is necessary to maintain their self-esteem and to buffer the stress of raising children.[44] Without this support, they often seek care and comfort from their children, treating these children as if they were older than they really are. When children fail to provide this support, the mother can become impatient, angry, and sometimes abusive, even when the child is only a crying infant. Others find any social stimulation from their babies

> (whether smiling or crying) to be much more irritating than normal mothers do.[45] Their abuse in turn adds to their anxiety and feelings of helplessness.[46] If the woman is a second-generation or later generation out-of-wedlock mother, or if she is a teenager, she is less likely to know what the appropriate expectations of a young child should be.
>
> […]The most likely causes of child abuse by a mother, in fact, can be traced to the violence and substance abuse present in the mother's childhood, followed by the stress and discord in her current household. This is capped by her own victimization,[52] and leads to increased illness and a hypersensitivity to the annoyances that children cause.[53] In the period between her early experience with abusing parents and her later experiences with an abusing "mate," the future abusing mother frequently becomes more aggressive and deviant, developing a hostile and rebellious way of acting. She will associate more with men of similar hostility and eventually will "marry" them, becoming an abused spouse herself.[54]

This is not politically correct to say, but it's all properly researched and foot-noted – this is the way reality is.

A recent study

Consider this recent study on domestic violence. It surveyed 2,500 students at the University of Florida.

Excerpt:

> Women are more likely than men to stalk, attack and psychologically abuse their partners, according to a University of Florida study that finds college women have a new view of the dating scene.
>
> "We're seeing women in relationships acting differently nowadays than we have in the past," said Angela Gover, a UF criminologist who led the research. "The nature of criminality has been changing for females, and this change is reflected in intimate relationships as well."
>
> In a survey of 2,500 students at UF and the University of South Carolina between August and December 2005, more than a quarter (29 percent) reported physically assaulting their dates and 22 percent reported being the victims of attacks during the past year. Thirty-two percent of women reported being the perpetrators of this violence, compared with 24 percent of men. The students took selected liberal arts and sciences courses. Forty percent were men and 60 percent were women, reflecting the gender composition of these classes.
>
> In a separate survey of 1,490 UF students, one quarter (25 percent) said they had been stalked during the past year and 7 percent reported engaging in stalking, of whom a majority (58 percent) were female.

It's very important to have an understanding of the facts when talking about domestic

violence. Trying to be too “nice” instead of telling the truth is exactly the wrong thing to do.

J. Warner Wallace: why didn't Jesus reveal scientific facts to prove his divinity?

November 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was listening to J. Warner Wallace's latest podcast and he mentioned this Cold Case Christianity post because it is getting a lot of attention.

Excerpt:

> Last Wednesday I had the opportunity to defend the reliability of the New Testament Gospels to the students of San Jose State University. Jane Pantig (the director of the local Ratio Christi chapter) invited me, and I was delighted to come. I've been working with Ratio Christi across the country to defend the Christian worldview on college campuses. If you aren't acquainted with the work of this growing apologetics movement, you really ought to familiarize yourself with Ratio Christi and find a way to support their efforts. At the end of my presentation, during the question and answer period, a polite young skeptic asked why Jesus didn't reveal scientific facts in an effort to demonstrate His Deity. Why didn't Jesus describe something well beyond the scope and knowledge of His contemporaries as a prophetic proof? He could easily have described the role of DNA, the proper organization of the Solar System, or the biological complexity of cellular structures. The questioner believed this sort of knowledge would have been persuasive to him as a 21st Century skeptic, and without it, he remained unconvinced.
>
> I thought this was a great question, and one I often receive but seldom talk about on the podcast or here on the blog. There are a number of problems with this expectation of superior anachronistic scientific wisdom…

Here's one of the problems that he mentioned in the post (there are three):

> **The Nature of the Ancient Audience**
>
> The context of Jesus' ministry and message were defined by the nature (and limitations) of this ancient audience. Sometimes it's easy for us to approach the gospels from our 21st Century perspective (bringing our desires, needs and expectations to the text), rather than examining them from the perspective of the first hearers and readers. In order to illustrate this point, imagine yourself as Jesus. You've got three years to demonstrate your Divinity to those you live with in the 1st Century. Think about what approach you might take. You could reveal yet unknown scientific facts to your audience, but would this accomplish your goal? If you describe the role of DNA or the anatomy of the solar system, how would your 1st Century audience confirm your statements? Surely claims of this nature would be unimpressive to a world without the ability to assess their veracity. In fact, any combination of such claims with other demonstrations of

> Deity would only serve to dilute the power of your message. There are ways you could establish your Deity in front of such a 1st Century audience, but obscure, esoteric claims are perhaps the least effective approach.

What do you think? Do you think that Jesus should have explained scientific things? Would that work better than what he actually did?

One of the things that this post made me think of is the use of sledgehammer apologetics by Jesus. I know a lot of people who really resent the idea of apologetics, and want us to just read the Bible to people and hope they are magically convinced by just hearing Scripture. But Jesus was not willing to do that. He didn't just express opinions or give moral teachings or recite poetry. He was in the business of making his case to people, and for evidence he used miracles.

The Sign of Jonah

Professor Clay Jones of Biola University makes the case that the use of evidence when preaching the gospel was *standard operating procedure* in the early church.

Intro:

> In 1993 I started working for Simon Greenleaf University (now Trinity Law School) which offered an M.A. in Christian apologetics (Craig Hazen was the director). Much of my job was to promote the school and although I had studied Christian apologetics since my sophomore year in high school, I decided I needed to see whether an apologetic witness had strong Biblical precedence.
>
> It does.
>
> As I poured through the Scripture I found that Jesus and the apostles preached the resurrection of Christ as the sign of the truth of Christianity.
>
> What follows are some of the passages which support the resurrection witness.

Here is my favorite verse from his massive list list of verses in favor of the evidential approach to Christian apologetics:

> Mat. 12:39-40: A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jesus is saying that the resurrection was deliberately given as a sign to unbelievers to convince them. ("The Sign of Jonah" = the resurrection)

The healing of the paralytic

Consider this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

Here's number two:

> [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know".

So, I see that God uses nature and miracles to persuade, which can be assessed using scientific (e.g. – fine-tuning) and historical methods (minimal facts case for the resurrection). I think if Jesus had explained DNA and the Big Bang to the first century people, that would not have worked as well as the kinds of things he actually did.

I really want you guys to look through the Bible and see Jesus' approach to convincing people. You should read the gospel of John to see how Jesus uses miracles to get people to believe that he was who he said he was. This is was his whole *modus operandi.* Today, none of us can do miracles on demand to convince people – at least I can't. But that's why we can use the evidence from science for miracles in nature, like the cosmic fine-tuning and the origin of biological information. And the resurrection is still a good historical argument to make, as well.

I'm going to be summarizing the podcast where Wallace mentioned this question in my 6 PM post, and I urge you to listen to it with my summary at hand. When he was talking about this question, his response made me laugh out loud at what people would think if Jesus had started explaining the fine-tuning argument or the Cambrian explosion. He's very reserved in this post, but in the podcast he is pretty funny when he role-plays how the first-century people would respond.

J. Warner Wallace: practical advice on becoming an effective one-dollar apologist

November 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

As promised, below is my summary of J. Warner Wallace's most recent Please Convince Me podcast, and my comments.

Details:

> J. Warner continues examining the Christian life in light of God's desire for all of us to become Christian Case Makers. Jim reads listener email highlighting some of the typical frustrations involved in starting an apologetics ministry and then provides a template to help you become the Case Maker you've always wanted to be. Jim also answers the question: Why Didn't Jesus Reveal Scientific Facts to Demonstrate His Deity?

You can grab the MP3 file here.

This episode is probably one of the best episodes of the Please Convince Me podcast I've ever heard, because it's practical. I like listening to the cold-case detective talk about practical things.

Summary:

- e-mail from someone trying to start an apologetics ministry for college students and facing difficulties
- the challenge of getting Christians to take an evidential approach to their faith
- tips for getting Christians exposed to apologetics materials
- there are a lot of Christians who are making a daily contribution to apologetics even with a full-time job
- Wallace himself started his apologetics ministry while working full-time
- Wallace, as an atheist, was initially skeptical of religion because he thought it was too focused on money
- His plan as an apologist was to take money right out of it – do it for free, and be self-funded
- 1 Cor 9: "But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision."
- People in ministry deserve to be supported, but Paul dispensed with that right to raise support for his ministry
- Paul self-financed his ministry in order to avoid all appearance of doing his ministry for financial gain
- Similarly, Wallace's goal of being self-financed was to avoid the appearance of doing ministry for money
- If you plan your life carefully enough in the first half, you'll have the money you need to do ministry in the second half

- Wallace wanted the liberty to pursue things without any financial need, and he achieved this by working full-time
- The problem with money is that it often causes us to not cooperate well with other people
- Ministries and churches sometimes avoid working with other people, like scholars and apologists
- They do this because they are afraid of losing their own people to these scholars and apologists
- Wallace wants to get the money out of it and be able to serve anyone with a need
- Wallace: you need to work hard in the first half of life, in order to have freedom to serve in the second half
- First area: financial preparation – you need to escape financial needs so that it doesn't restrict your passion
- Wallace married well, to a woman who was a good saver, very frugal, and not materialistic – he saved 30% of his income
- Second area: need to prepare yourself educationally for being able to teach apologetics materially
- That doesn't always mean doing the MA in apologetics, but you do have master the material – continuous learning
- Third area: try to focus on the parts of your career that might have some connection to apologetics
- You want to have experiences in your work where you learn something that can be used in your ministry
- Wallace actually made career choices to focus on evidence, case-making and teaching
- It's hard because men are naturally competitive – we focus on promotions, money and consumer goods
- It's not always the right move in your career to get promoted if it takes you away from skills related to apologetics
- Christian apologists need to not neglect to develop leadership skills and to develop influence
- He recommends a book called "Platform" by Michael Hyatt, which Doug Groothuis also recommended to me
- If you are financially independent, then if an unpaid opportunity arises, you have the freedom to take it
- You can volunteer for positions that you want to have, instead having to take what pays
- Wallace writes for Breakpoint, and he is able to dispense with the 1000-word limit that gets a fee
- Money opens up the danger of corruption, so it's another reason to just take it out of the picture
- You can be very effective in your apologetics ministry while still working full-time
- The second half is a good time to have even more freedom because your kids are

grown up
- A good wife can really help you if she is picking up the slack so that you can work on your ministry
- Jane Pantig works for Ratio Christi, an organization that promotes apologetics on campus
- Jane's model: she is in full-time ministry, with a BS in biology and an MA in apologetics (Biola)
- Jane is able to get many high-quality speakers to speak for free/cheap at San Jose State University

The rest of the podcast deals a question that was asked at the San Jose State University event that Wallace did for Ratio Christi. I blogged about it this morning. I laughed my butt off while listening to that podcast, starting at around 62:50 and on. It's pretty funny when he does the role-pay between Jesus and the people listening to him.

My comments:

The reason I wanted to post this is because I think that a lot of people feel obligated to quit their jobs and raise support because they think that you have to do apologetics full time. It's not true. Wallace explains that he worked as a cold-case detective until just recently when he took his pension. His pension is now underwriting his ministry. Similarly with me, I work a full-time job and run the blog out of my income. In addition, I probably donate a few thousand dollars each year to people who are organizing apologetics lectures, debates and conferences – events featuring speakers I like best.

This blog gets about 1 million page views per year, depending on the year (election years are better), so that's not an insignificant impact. In addition, I meet a lot of young Christians in university in different countries who want advice or mentoring, so I spend a few hours here and there mentoring them, and sometimes sending them rewards (books) for doing difficult degrees at good universities and getting good grades. My full-time job helps me to do all of these things. And before I could have a full-time job in information technology, I had to put in the time and effort to get the Bachelor and Masters degree in computer science.

So I think that Christian men especially need to be thinking about how much the apologetics enterprise of a one-dollar apologist relies on money. We really need to be thinking about that early on, in high school, and choosing to study hard things and to do well in those hard subjects. The higher-paying jobs that are more secure tend to be in fields like science, math, technology and engineering. We need to be thinking of doing these courses in high school – especially the men, but also the women – in order to be able to pay for our apologetics ministry. In addition, my decision to not marry (unless I meet a woman who can support me in my plan) gives me even more freedom to work on my ministry while working full time.

I fully approve of what Wallace said about self-financing your apologetics ministry – and supporting other apologetics ministries – in order to avoid all appearance of self-interest. In fact, I have long admired Wallace for his intentional, practical way of doing his ministry.

He doesn’t take donations, and he gives away tons of materials for free. I like that.

Doctor shortage: how Obamacare makes it harder to find a doctor

November 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Remember how Obama promised that if you liked your doctor, then you could keep your doctor? It turns out that there is more to making policies than just saying what you'd like to do in a scripted campaign speech. The truth is that some health care policies will make you lose your doctor, regardless of what the President reads off of a teleprompter. Is Obamacare one of these policies? Let's see.

Avik Roy writes about it in Forbes magazine.

Excerpt:

> On Saturday, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that, due to Obamacare's cuts to Medicare Advantage, among other factors, UnitedHealth expects its network of physicians "to be 85 percent to 90 percent of its current size by the end of 2014." The result? Some retirees enrolled in Medicare Advantage will need to find new doctors. And it's a trend that could accelerate in future years.
>
> […]Over the next ten years, Obamacare was designed to spend around $1.9 trillion on expanding health coverage to the uninsured. The law pays for this new spending with $1.2 trillion in new taxes, and $716 billion in cuts to Medicare, relative to prior law.
>
> […]**The private insurers who supply Medicare Advantage plans, like UnitedHealth and Humana, have been responding to the cuts by squeezing out inefficiencies in the way they deliver care. One obvious way to do that is to pay doctors and hospitals less—or kick out the providers who refuse to accept lower reimbursement rates.** And that's what United has done, according to the *WSJ* report from Melinda Beck.
>
> **"Doctors in at least 10 states have received termination letters, some citing 'significant changes and pressures in the health-care environment,'" writes Beck.**

Another one of my favorite health care policy experts is the ex-Canadian Sally C. Pipes, who knows all about the horrors of single-payer health care. It killed her mother! Here's what she had to say about the doctors shortage in a Forbes magazine article from earlier this year.

The first problem is that we have an aging doctor population and since we do such a poor job of educating our children (public school indoctrination centers) we aren't making any new ones:

> Right now, the United States is short some 20,000 doctors, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges. The shortage could quintuple over the

> next decade, thanks to the aging of the American population — and the aging and consequent retirement of many physicians. Nearly half of the 800,000-plus doctors in the United States are over the age of 50.

The second problem is that adding more regulations and burdensome paperwork makes a lot of people not want to be doctors any more:

> **Obamacare is further thinning the doctor corps. A Physicians Foundation survey of 13,000 doctors found that 60 percent of doctors would retire today if they could, up from 45 percent before the law passed.**

The third problem is that the government isn't reimbursing doctors as much as private insurance companies do, and it makes them refuse to take government-funded patients:

> They've long limited the number of Medicaid patients they'll treat, thanks to the program's low reimbursement rates. According to a study published in Health Affairs, only 69 percent of doctors accepted new Medicaid patients in 2011. In Florida, just 59 percent do so. And a survey by the Texas Medical Association of doctors in the Lone Star State found that 68 percent either limit or refuse to take new Medicaid patients.
>
> Medicaid pays about 60 percent as much as private insurance. For many doctors, the costs of treating someone on Medicaid are higher than what the government will pay them.
>
> These underpayments have grown worse over time, as cash-strapped states have tried to rein in spending on Medicaid. Ohio hasn't increased payments to doctors in three years; Kentucky hasn't raised them in two decades. Colorado, Nebraska, South Carolina, Arizona, Oregon, and Arizona all cut payments in 2011.
>
> By throwing nine million more people into the program without fixing this fatal flaw, Obamacare will make it even harder for Medicaid patients to find doctors.

It's not just Medicaid that's the problem, either. It's the government-controlled exchanges.

> Healthcare providers are signaling that they may turn away patients who purchase insurance through the exchanges, too.
>
> In California, for example, folks covered by Blue Shield's exchange plan will have access to about a third of its physician network. The UCLA Medical Center and its doctors are available to customers of just one plan for sale through the state exchange, Covered California. And the prestigious Cedars-Sinai Medical Center is not taking anyone with exchange insurance.

Now I know what you're thinking – why not just force doctors to work for lower wages, like a good socialist country might? Well, that actually makes the shortage worse, because people don't like to learn hard things and then work hard for little pay. And doctors work

VERY hard – it's not an easy profession to get into. That will just make all the doctors leave the country for other countries where they can be paid fairly for the work they do.

And in fact that is exactly what happened in a 100% socialized health care system in Venezuela, according to this report from the left-leaning Associated Press.

Excerpt:

> Half the public health system's doctors quit under Chavez, and half of those moved abroad, Natera said.
>
> Now, support staff is leaving, too, victim of a wage crunch as wages across the economy fail to keep up with inflation.
>
> At the Caracas blood bank, Lopez said 62 nurses have quit so far this year along with half the lab staff. It now can take donations only on weekday mornings.

I recommend reading that entire article for a glimpse of where the Democrats are trying to take us. There is not a dime's worth of difference on policy between the Democrat party and the socialist party of Venezuela, except that the socialists have been in control in Venezuela for longer, and so they are further along the road to serfdom.

In other news, the Washington D.C. insurance commissioner was fired after raising concerns about the "fix" proposed by Obama in his speech last week. That's also something that you might expect to see in a country like Venezuela. That's what happens in authoritarian socialist countries. Whistleblowers and critics just disappear.

Hillary Clinton, Huma Abedin, Elin Nordegren, Elizabeth Edwards and Maria Shriver

November 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

All of these women were cheated on, to some extent, by their spouses:

- Hillary Clinton is the wife of Bill Clinton.
- Huma Abedin is the wife of the Anthony Weiner.
- Elin Nordegren is the wife of Tiger Woods.
- Elizabeth Edwards is the wife of John Edwards.
- Maria Shriver is the wife of Arnold Schwarzenegger.

So what do they all have in common?

They all picked secular men with liberal views on social policy and they all got cheated on.

So how should women test men for marriage?

Here are some questions that the five women who chose these disgusting creeps for husbands SHOULD have asked:

1. What is the public purpose of marriage?
2. What are the expected public outcomes of a good marriage?
3. Does chastity before marriage provide any indication about a person's ability to stay faithful in a marriage?
4. What should men and women bring to a relationship so that they are able to perform expected marital behaviors?
5. Is marriage more about self-indulgence or about self-sacrifice? Can you get used to self-sacrifice by being self-indulgent?
6. If a person is pro-abortion, what do they believe about taking responsibility to avoid harming others with their poor decisions?
7. If a person is pro-same-sex marriage, what do they believe about the needs of children compared to the needs of adults?
8. If a person believes in wealth redistribution, do they have a correct understanding of working, saving and investing?
9. Does a person's superior appearance, wealth, or power determine whether they will be faithful in a marriage?
10. Can you cause your spouse to be faithful by spending a lot of money on a wedding?
11. Can you cause your spouse to be faithful by inviting famous people to your wedding?
12. Is it a good idea to choose someone to marry who your parents and elders disapprove of?
13. Is it a good idea to choose whether to have sex with someone using "the 180-

second rule”?

14. Is it a good idea to choose someone to marry in order to impress your friends (or to make them jealous)?
15. Is it a good idea to marry someone because most of your friends are getting married?
16. Is it a good idea to avoid studying the effects of divorce on children prior to marrying?
17. Can you expect a spouse to adhere to objective moral obligations without a knowledge of God’s existence, grounded on evidence?
18. Can you expect a spouse to adhere to objective moral obligations without a knowledge of God’s character, grounded on evidence?
19. Does holding a Bible for a photo-op make someone into a William Lane Craig or a Wayne Grudem?
20. Does singing praise hymns in church make someone into a William Lane Craig or a Wayne Grudem?

Those last items are to show that you really cannot have a moral standard that is binding unless there is some way that the universe ought to be, because it was designed to be a certain way by a Designer. If a person is convinced that there is a Designer who made people, it rationally grounds the idea that there is a way that humans ought to act – independently of how we may feel individually, or even in different cultures in different places and times. The more a man knows whether God exists and knows what God is like as a person – based on evidence – the more seriously that man will try to incorporate God’s personality into his decision making. A serious study of the evidence for God’s existence and character helps people to take moral obligations to others more seriously – especially when they don’t FEEL LIKE IT. That is why marriages where both spouses attend church regularly last. I can guarantee you that there are times when people don’t feel like going to church, e.g. – bad weather days. But people who attend church regularly have trained themselves to take their relationship with God more seriously than their own comfort. That is a useful prerequisite for marriage, especially if the church attendance spills into even harder things like theology, philosophy of religion, ethics and apologetics. Women need to be asking men these worldview and morality questions, and insisting on seeing the behaviors that raise the probability of having a stable marriage to a faithful man.

Basically, instead of relying on feelings and peer approval to choose a man, women need to ask men questions to find out whether they are trustworthy and equal to the tasks that men perform as husbands and fathers. I don’t think that women who were cheated on really asked questions about their chosen spouse’s worldview, and how the man’s worldview grounded moral obligations, such as the obligation NOT to cheat. It seems that today, a well-grounded worldview that grounds moral obligations is regarded by some women as being superfluous to marital stability. I guess they think that fidelity is basically random – that Elliot Spitzer is as likely to be a faithful spouse as James Dobson. They just don’t ask men to explain what they believe and why, and why any particular man can be

trusted to make moral decisions. And they shouldn't be satisfied with words – they should demand to see evidence that the man has studied these issues, written about them, debated with others about them, and acted on these convictions *personally*.

I think that women today are also giving up their responsibility to read about marriage and parenting, to read about risks and challenges that threaten stable marriages, like no-fault divorce laws and cohabitation, and to read about how important it is to stay married because of how divorce affects children. Women should not abdicate the responsibility to judge men, they should not say that "men are unpredictable", and they should not set themselves up as helpless victims. They need to keep men at arm's length, keep their wits about them and do the work of evaluating men for the roles that men play in marriage and family.

Character and knowledge count. Just because a man can put on a show for you, it doesn't mean that he is capable of producing the results of a thoughtful Christian worldview.

What does Dr. Laura say about marriage?

> "Commitment to marriage and child rearing was once viewed as the pinnacle of adulthood identity, so that women looked carefully for the "right" man for the job, and parents were consulted for opinions and blessings."
> Source: Dr. Laura Schlessinger, *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands*, page 53.

Find the right man for the job. You wouldn't resort to feelings to hire someone for your company, so why resort to feelings when it comes to picking a husband and father to your children?

Related posts

- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being
- New study finds that women choose mates based on appearance
- Should Christian men marry Democrats who claim to be Christians?
- Men should prefer women who allow moral judging and spiritual leading
- Where have all the good men gone, and why aren't men marrying?
- Do men have a responsibility not to marry feminists?
- Why do some women tolerate jerks as boyfriends?
- The dangers of sentimentality in relationships

- Is Mark Driscoll afraid to hold a woman accountable for her own choices?
- How feminism made women unsuitable for marriage and parenting
- Why Christian men should be chaste

If militant atheists could form a country, what would it look like?

November 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this story about North Korea from the UK Telegraph on Facebook, and I think it's well worth looking at, because we need to be thinking about how big government impacts our ability to do our jobs as Christians.

Excerpt:

> Christian missionaries have set up an extraordinary network of front companies – including tour agencies, bakeries, factories, farms, schools and orphanages – in order to spread the Gospel inside North Korea.
>
> For nearly two years, Kenneth Bae, a father of three and an American citizen, ran a successful travel company offering tours of North Korea.
>
> But as the 44-year-old passed through the Wonjong border crossing in November 2012, he was suddenly arrested. Convicted of "hostile acts" towards North Korea, he is currently serving 15 years in a labour camp.
>
> What exactly happened remains a mystery. Mr Bae had taken at least 15 other tour groups into North Korea without incident. However, it seems clear that his mission to spread the Christian gospel was at least one major factor that landed him in trouble.
>
> Mr Bae is not alone in using his company, Nations Tour, to evangelise inside North Korea. While precise numbers are impossible to pin down, the network of well-financed front companies, missions operating as businesses, is extensive.

> North Korea, the most hostile country in the world to organised religion, has a strong pull for a certain stripe of evangelical Christians, and the 288 sq mile "Special Economic Zone" outside the city of Rason, where Mr Bae was detained, is Ground Zero for these modern apostles.
>
> […]According to one American who once travelled with Mr Bae, but who asked to remain anonymous, their group was able to carry bibles with them into the zone. Possession of bibles by North Koreans can lead to imprisonment, torture and perhaps even death.
>
> The source said a delicate dance had played out on their arrival, with their bibles being counted by the border guards on their way in and then again when they left to make sure none had been distributed.
>
> At the final inspection, the guards even flipped through each copy to make sure no pages had been ripped out and left behind.
>
> Before arriving at the border, the 15-member group was told by Mr Bae not to discuss politics or carry out any overt proselytising. The two or three pastors

> travelling with them were not to be addressed by their titles.
>
> Once inside North Korea, they were accompanied by government minders at all times. On group hikes with these “tour guides”, the source said they sang Christian songs, but hummed key verses to avoid saying “God” out loud.
>
> “That was our way of worshipping and praising in our hearts, even if we could not say it,” the source said. “Talking about God directly, that would be asking for a death sentence.”

North Korea has an official state religion of atheism. Is that a factor in their horrible record for human rights? Well, according to the The Black Book of Communism, published by Harvard University Press, over 100 million innocent people were killed in atheistic, communist regimes like North Korea in the last century.

I have been working on a theory about what militant atheists mean when they say that religion causes a lot of wars. My theory is that they are actually talking about themselves. They mean *their* religion. They are boasting that they are number one at killing innocent people. A person can justify killing very easily if you believe that no one is watching you and no one will hold you accountable when you die for what you’ve done.

Of course there are lots of atheists in the Judeo-Christian West who live more peacefully, because they are living in a background of objective morality and human rights provided by Western religions. But in countries like North Korea, with a state religion that cannot ground free will or objective morality or human rights or judgment after death, there are fewer restraints.

Even here, we have already seen over 50 million unborn children killed since abortion became legal. And I can guarantee you that it’s not authentic Christians who are having these abortions. As a group, atheists tend to be among the most radical in favor of abortion rights. The Secular Census of 2012 found that 97% of atheists vote for abortion.

The idea of the strong killing the weak for pleasure is the law of the jungle, and it’s not surprising to me that those who think that humans are just animals would act this way with vulnerable children. If you only have 80 years to be happy in an accidental universe, then anything goes. No one is there to hold you accountable. If the weak get in your way, kill them all. That’s atheist morality. You don’t have to go to North Korea to see it.

Great news: Supreme Court declines to hear appeal of Texas ban on late-term abortions

November 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia issued an opinion today indicating the Supreme Court will not get involved in a case out of Texas that has abortion facilities there appealing a law that has closed numerous abortion clinics that can't protect women's health.
>
> In a big victory for pro-life advocates in Texas earlier this month, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned Judge Lee Yeakel of the Western District Court in Austin and restored key portions of a pro-life law in Texas that will ultimately stop abortions and could close abortion clinics. Abortion clinics appealed that decision to the Supreme Court and Justice Scalia issued a ruling today saying the high court will not get involved.
>
> "The underlying legal question — whether the new Texas statute is constitutional — is a difficult question. It is a question, I believe, that at least four members of this court will wish to consider irrespective of the 5th Circuit's ultimate decision," Justice Antonin Scalia wrote with Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito concurring. "I would maintain the status quo while the lower courts consider this difficult, sensitive, and controversial legal matter."
>
> **The justices voted 5-4 to leave Texas' pro-life provisions in place and the four Democrat-appointed pro-abortion justices all voted to overturn the pro-life measure. Justice Stephen Breyer write a dissenting opinion saying he expected the case to return to the Supreme Court.**
>
> **Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Anthony Kennedy did not join an opinion or write their own, but they sided with Scalia, Thomas and Alito.**

So the pro-life side wins, for now. All five Republican-appointed judges sided with Texas. But that decision could change if we elect another Democrat to be President and the balance of the Supreme Court changes to be more pro-abortion. For example, Hillary Clinton is almost as pro-abortion as Obama is, and she would definitely appoint pro-abortion judges.

However there was some bad news in Texas to spoil the good news:

> A grant from the Obama administration is allowing the Planned Parenthood abortion business to reopen a clinic in Texas it closed after the passage of new pro-life laws there.
>
> Planned Parenthood has closed a number of clinics after Texas Governor Rick

> Perry signed into law a bill that bans abortions after 20 weeks and holds abortion facilities accountable for higher health and safety standards. Other clinics closed after Perry signed a bill to stop taxpayer funding for the abortion giant.
>
> But now, thanks to federal funding, a Planned Parenthood clinic will reopen in Mission, Texas that has been closed for two years.

The Obama administration is the most radically pro-abortion we've ever had. They have no qualms at all about about using the tax dollars of pro-lifers to fund organizations that provide abortions.

White House and HHS were warned about Obamacare web site problems in April

November 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

NBC News reports.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration, including Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, was warned in April that there was insufficient time to complete testing before launching Healthcare.gov, according to a document released by a House committee investigating the website's botched rollout.
>
> The document, a 15-page slide show obtained by the Energy and Commerce Committee from the consulting firm McKinsey & Co., compares an ideal situation when rolling out a website such as Healthcare.gov with what developers were facing.
>
> According to the committee, the presentation was given April 4 to a group including Sebelius and Marilyn Tavenner, the administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the HHS agency responsible for the rollout.
>
> The document states that an ideal situation would be "end-to-end integrated operations and IT testing," but that the situation at the time was one with "insufficient time and scope of end-to-end testing." The document also says that a "limited initial launch" would be ideal, but that a "launch at full volume" was instead the plan.
>
> Republicans are questioning testimony Sebelius gave to the committee during a hearing two weeks after she got the briefing, when she said development of the site was "on track and on time."
>
> "At this point, our energy and resources are focused on getting it up and running, and we are on track and the contracts have been led and we are monitoring it every step along the way," Sebelius told the committee April 18. "I can tell you we are on track."
>
> **In a statement, the chairman of the committee, Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., said that Sebelius had "appeared before our committee, looked us in the eye, and repeatedly testified everything was 'on track and on time.'"**
>
> **"We now know that was not the case and the secretary was aware implementation was in trouble," he said.**

So you can put this latest Obamacare lie by HSS head Kathleen Sebelius on the pile along with the Benghazi lies and the IRS prosecution of the Tea Party lies and the gunrunning to Mexican drug cartels Fast and Furious lies. Lies, lies, lies.

In fact, CNBC is now reporting that the Obamacare web site is still not complete – it is lacking about a third of its functionality, including payment capabilities.

Excerpt:

> Another day, another big, bad black eye for HealthCare.gov.
>
> A crucial system for making payments to insurers from people who enroll in that federal Obamacare marketplace has yet to be built, a senior government IT official admitted Tuesday.
>
> The official, Henry Chao, visibly stunned Rep. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) when he said under questioning before a House subcommittee that a significant fraction of HealthCare.gov—30 to 40 percent of it—has yet to be constructed.
>
> "We still need to build the payments system to make the payments [to insurance companies] in January," testified Chao, deputy chief information officer of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the federal agency that operates HealthCare.gov.
>
> That so-called financial management tool was originally supposed to be part of HealthCare.gov when it launched Oct. 1, but officials later suspended its launch as part of their effort to get the consumer interface part of the site ready. The tool will, when it works, transmit the subsidies that the government is kicking in for many enrollees to offset the costs of their monthly premiums.

This is not a defect in existing functionality, this is *missing functionality*. This project should never have been released to Production.

As someone who has worked on electronic payments extensively, let me just tell you that this is not a simple part of a web application. Billing and payment systems are some of the most difficult parts of an insurance application, requiring in depth knowledge of the business as well as technical knowledge. So don't expect this all to be fixed with a wave of a magic want.

What are the arguments for the historicity of the empty tomb?

November 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until

> the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s. For example, the atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark some time in the 40s. (See the debate below)

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say "The President is hosting a dinner at the White House" and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the "high priest" as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus' death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point

> one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as “Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women” and “Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female.”
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus’ empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can’t prove the guard as a “minimal fact”, since it doesn’t pass the standard historical criteria.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?

November 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article about government-run health care from the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Doctors not allied with the government say many patients began dying from easily treatable illnesses when Venezuela's downward economic slide accelerated after Chavez's death from cancer in March. Doctors say it's impossible to know how many have died, and the government doesn't keep such numbers, just as it hasn't published health statistics since 2010.
>
> Almost everything needed to mend and heal is in critically short supply: needles, syringes and paraffin used in biopsies to diagnose cancer; drugs to treat it; operating room equipment; X-ray film and imaging paper; blood and the reagents needed so it can be used for transfusions.
>
> Last month, the government suspended organ donations and transplants. At least 70 percent of radiotherapy machines, precisely what Gonzalez will need once her tumor is removed, are now inoperable in a country with 19,000 cancer patients — meaning fewer than 5,000 can be treated, said Dr. Douglas Natera, president of the Venezuelan Medical Federation.
>
> […]The country's 1999 constitution guarantees free universal health care to Venezuelans, who sit on the world's largest proven oil reserves. Maduro's government insists it's complying. Yet of the country's 100 fully functioning public hospitals, nine in 10 have just 7 percent of the supplies they need, Natera said.
>
> […]Venezuela's 400 private hospitals and clinics are overburdened and strapped

> for supplies, 95 percent of which must be imported, said Dr. Carlos Rosales, president of the association that represents them.
>
> The private system has just 8,000 of the country's more than 50,000 hospital beds but treats 53 percent of the country's patients, including the 10 million public employees with health insurance. Rosales said insurers, many state-owned, are four to six months behind in payments and it is nearly impossible to meet payrolls and pay suppliers.
>
> Worse, government price caps set in July for common procedures are impossible to meet, Rosales said. For example, dialysis treatment was set at 200 bolivars ($30 at the official exchange rate and less than $4 on the black market) for a procedure that costs 5,000 bolivars to administer.
>
> […]At Maracay's 433-bed Central Hospital, mattresses are missing, broken windows go unrepaired and the cafeteria has been closed for a year. Paint peels off walls and rusty pipes lie exposed. In the halls, patients on intravenous drips lie recovering on gurneys.
>
> […]Broken anesthesia machines and battered stainless-steel instrument tables, some held together with tape, filled one of five idled operating rooms. Foul odors and water from leaky pipes continue to seep into the rooms, doctors said.
>
> In August, cancer patients protested at the eight-month mark since the hospital's two radiotherapy machines broke down. The machines remain out of order.
>
> **Half the public health system's doctors quit under Chavez, and half of those moved abroad, Natera said.**
>
> **Now, support staff is leaving, too, victim of a wage crunch as wages across the economy fail to keep up with inflation.**
>
> **At the Caracas blood bank, Lopez said 62 nurses have quit so far this year along with half the lab staff. It now can take donations only on weekday mornings.**

And here is a comment about a Chavez supporter who has been waiting for years for care: "Gonzalez says she adored Chavez for his anti-poverty programs, always voted for him and constantly applied for government benefits, though she never received any." Yes. That's what causes problems like this. Low-information voters voting for a charismatic strong man who tells them what they want to hear, and seizes wealth from the most-educated, productive citizens in order to hand it out to his supporters. But eventually, you run out of other people's money to spend, and that's where Venezuela is now. But they keep on digging their hole.

If you're a big-government sort of person, then you would love the Venezuelan health care system. Price controls make sure that doctors and hospitals don't make any money by providing care. Everyone is equal and you have to wait your turn in line whether you pay taxes or not. The only problem is that it's capitalism – not communism – which cares about the needs of consumers. In a capitalist system, consumers buy what they like, and

businesses compete with each other to lower prices and raise quality. Not so in a communist system, which forces the most talented people in the country to stop producing, or just leave the country completely.

Related posts

- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia's economy to grow? What causes Venezuela's economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama's buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Democrats introduce bill to strike down state-level restrictions on abortion

November 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Is performing an abortion no different than pulling a tooth? The idea that there isn't a difference is the basis of a new federal bill that would wipe hundreds of state abortion laws off the books–striking down everything from late-term abortion limits to health and safety regulations in many states.
>
> **The Women's Health Protection Act, introduced by Democratic Connecticut senator Richard Blumenthal, would even invalidate a law used to convict Philadelphia abortionist Kermit Gosnell earlier this year, and it could potentially force taxpayers across the country to directly fund elective abortions for Medicaid recipients.**
>
> "The basic principle is that there can be no restriction that is not also imposed on a medically comparable procedure. If they single out abortion or reproductive rights, it's going to fall foul," Blumenthal said at a November 13 press conference. Blumenthal told THE WEEKLY STANDARD following his remarks that it's "for doctors to decide" what counts as a "medically comparable" procedure.
>
> Blumenthal specifically condemned health and safety regulations requiring that an abortion "doctor have admitting privileges" at a hospital "or that the hallways in a clinic be a certain width, which has no relation to health or safety."

> Top officials at leading abortion rights organizations joined Blumenthal on November 13 in denouncing such health and safety regulations, which states like Texas and Pennsylvania passed in response to the deaths of women in abortion clinics like the one run by Gosnell in Philadelphia.
>
> […] In addition to being convicted on three counts of murder for killing infants after they had been born, Gosnell was convicted under the Abortion Control Act for successfully killing 21 infants *in utero* past Pennsylvania's gestational limit on abortion (a limit that's just two weeks later in pregnancy than the limit established recently by Texas).

Republicans have passed huge numbers of restrictions on the abortion business since the 2011, when the Tea Party was so prominent in the 2010 mid-term elections.

Life News explains:

> During 2011, state legislators set a record by approving more pro-life laws stopping and limiting abortions than any other year since Roe v. Wade in 1973. A new report issued today shows that last year, legislatures approved the second

> highest number.
>
> Although some media outlets and abortion advocates say the November presidential election marked a defeat for the pro-life movement, the number of abortions is at its lowest level nationally and states are seeing historic low abortion figures thanks in large part to state pro-life laws. **These laws — ranging from parental notification and informed consent to banning abortions later in pregnancy and cutting of taxpayer funds for abortions or the Planned Parenthood abortion business — are saving lives every day.**
>
> […]**Many of those new pro-life laws included allowing women to see an ultrasound of their unborn baby before an abortion while others included ensuring abortion facilities follow the same health and safety laws that apply to legitimate medical centers performing outpatient surgeries. In addition, laws adopted in Louisiana and Oklahoma require abortion providers to make the fetal heartbeat audible to the woman prior to an abortion. Arizona, Michigan and Virginia approved such laws on abortion clinics — that have shut down many abortion centers that fail to comply.**

Can you imagine what would happen if the Democrats controlled the House of Representatives, like they control the Senate and the White House? All these state-level protections for unborn children would be rolled back. As it stands now, I don't expect that the Republican-controlled House is going to pass this bill, but it does give you something to think about ahead of the 2014 elections.

New study finds that students who cheat prefer to work in government over private sector

November 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What's in your government?

Phys.org reports on a new study that explains what kind of people prefer to work in a government monopoly.

Excerpt:

> College students who cheated on a simple task were more likely to want government jobs, researchers from Harvard University and the University of Pennsylvania found in a study of hundreds of students in Bangalore, India.
>
> Their results, recently released as a working paper by the National Bureau of Economic Research, suggest that one of the contributing forces behind government corruption could be who gets into government work in the first place.
>
> […]Researchers ran a series of experiments with more than 600 students finishing up college in India. In one task, students had to privately roll a die and report what number they got. The higher the number, the more they would get paid. Each student rolled the die 42 times.
>
> Although researchers do not know for sure if any one student lied, they could tell whether the numbers each person reported were wildly different from what would turn up randomly – in other words, whether there were a suspiciously high number of 5s and 6s in their results.
>
> Cheating seemed to be rampant: More than a third of students had scores that fell in the top 1 percent of the predicted distribution, researchers found. Students who apparently cheated were 6.3 percent more likely to say they wanted to work in government, the researchers found.
>
> "Overall, we find that dishonest individuals – as measured by the dice task – prefer to enter government service," wrote Hanna and co-author Shing-yi Wang, an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.
>
> They added, "Importantly, we show that cheating on this task is also predictive of fraudulent behaviors by real government officials."
>
> The same test, given to a smaller set of government nurses, showed that those who appear to have cheated with the dice were also more likely to skip work. Previous studies suggest that the bulk of such absenteeism is fraudulent, Hanna said.

Aside from the armed forces, most people who go into government go there because they want to have a secure job that they cannot be fired from no matter how poorly they

perform. They want to be insulated from market forces and free trade. They don’t want to have to do a good job and please customers in order to get paid. Naturally, people who cheat on tests and lack qualifications are attracted to unionized industries like government for these reasons.

Walt Russell explains how to read the Bible effectively

November 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below I go over two posts written by Biola University New Testament professor Walt Russell. The material below is almost the same talk he gave for the Stand to Reason Masters Series in Christian Thought. His book on the subject of interpreting the Bible is called "Playing With Fire: How the Bible Ignites Change in Your Soul". I highly recommend that you read the book, so you know how to read the Bible effectively. But these four articles will teach you most of what you need to know if you don't want to buy the book.

Here is part one which talks about how postmodern relativism is at odds with discovering the original intent of an author.

Excerpt:

> Twenty-four year-old "Janet" (not her real name) was angry at my emphasis on seeking to discover authors' intentions when we read their texts. She was an evangelical Christian and a second grade teacher in a public school. She prided herself in helping her 20 students learn to love literature. She would read them a story as they gathered around her, and then ask each child, "What does the story mean to you?" She prodded them to come up with their own unique meanings. With such strong encouragement, the class of 20 would eventually have 20 different meanings for the one story. Janet sensed that I was a naysayer about such "love of literature." Pouring a little emotional gasoline on the fire, I said, "Janet, you're certainly doing your part to insure that these 7 year-olds will never recover from a radically relativistic view of meaning!" Now I had her full attention.

Here is part two which talks about the importance of knowing the genre of a text before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" — the newspaper headline virtually screams out at you. The thought of something being slain is repulsive. You're gripped by a mental image of southern India's Bengal tiger. You imagine its beautiful face, its stripes and piercing eyes. Then your image is shattered by the sudden blast of a high-powered rifle. You see the exquisite creature writhe in pain, fall gracelessly in its tracks and die. Having read no further than the headline, you feel sick, as if you've witnessed something tragic.
>
> But *should* you feel this way? The slaughter of an endangered species — especially one as magnificent as the Bengal tiger — is horrifying, no doubt. But suppose you failed to notice that the headline "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" appeared in the *sports page* of the morning paper. Clearly enough, it now refers to different

> Indians, different Tigers and a different manner of slaying than you originally thought. And is it really that tragic that the Cleveland Indians badly beat the Detroit Tigers in a major league baseball game last night? Not unless you're a long-suffering Detroit Tigers' baseball fan. But how do you now know that the headline is about baseball and not tiger-slaying in India? You look at the words "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS" and you know exactly what each word means. When you combine these words, how can they not mean exactly what you first thought they did — that *Indians slay tigers*? Answer: because their meanings are communicated (as the meanings of *all* words are) through *genres*!

Here is part three which talks about the importance of reading the context of a verse before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "Never Read a Bible Verse!" That's the title of a little booklet my friend and Christian radio personality, Gregory Koukl, has written to help people read the Bible well. What great advice. "That's right, never read a Bible verse. Instead, always read a paragraph — at least." But the current is flowing the other way in our popular sound-bite culture. Not to be left out (or left behind!), the Church has its own version of sound-bite culture: *verse-bite culture*. In verse-bite culture we take a sentence or sentence-fragment from a biblical paragraph, memorize it out of context, write it on a little card, put it on a billboard, a plaque, a rock, etc. Somehow we think that just because this little chunk of Scripture has a verse number in front of it, it was meant to be a free-standing unit of thought. Nothing could be further from the truth.
>
> Apart from the fact that chapter and verse divisions weren't added to the New Testament text until 1560 — long after the New Testament's inspired authorship — there is a more important reason for never reading just a Bible verse, and instead reading at least the paragraph that contains it.

Here is part four which talks about the importance of applying the words of the Bible to your life.

One verse that is often misinterpreted is missing from the articles, but present in the STR lecture. It's Philippians 1:6 that says "6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus". Russell says in the lecture that this promise is specifically intended for the church in Philippi, to whom Paul is writing, not necessarily to all Christians. He is giving them a promise just after directly referring to their good work in supporting him in his ministry. Some verses are just not meant for us, and the context reveals it.

Eight years ago, Obama, Biden and Reid ALL opposed the nuclear option

November 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breitbart recalls what Senate Democrats said about the nuclear option just eight years ago, when they wanted to filibuster George Bush's pro-life judicial nominees.

President Obama in 2005:

> The American people want less partisanship in this town, but everyone in this chamber knows that if the majority chooses to end the filibuster, if they choose to change the rules and put an end to democratic debate, then the fighting, the bitterness, and the gridlock will only get worse.
>
> […]These are challenges we all want to meet and problems we all want to solve, even if we do not always agree on how to do it. But if the right of free and open debate is taken away from the minority party and the millions of Americans who ask us to be their voice, I fear the partisan atmosphere in Washington will be poisoned to the point where no one will be able to agree on anything. That does not serve anybody's best interest, and it certainly is not what the patriots who founded this democracy had in mind. We owe the people who sent us here more than that. We owe them much more.

Vice President Biden in 2005:

> This is the single most significant vote any one of us will cast in my 32 years in the Senate. I suspect the Senator would agree with that. We should make no mistake. This nuclear option is ultimately an example of the arrogance of power. It is a fundamental power grab by the majority party, propelled by its extreme right and designed to change the reading of the Constitution, particularly as it relates to individual rights and property rights. It is nothing more or nothing less.

Senate Majority Leader Reid in 2005:

> The filibuster is not a scheme and it certainly isn't new. The filibuster is far from a procedural gimmick…
>
> […]It's part of the fabric of this institution we call the Senate. It was well-known in colonial legislatures before we became a country, and it's an integral part of our country's 214-year history. The first filibuster in the United States Congress happened in 1790. It was used by lawmakers from Virginia and South Carolina who were trying to prevent Philadelphia from hosting the first Congress. Since then, the filibuster has been employed hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of times. It's been employed on legislative matters, it's been employed on procedural matters relating to the president's nominations for Cabinet and sub-Cabinet posts, and it's been used on judges for all those years. One scholar

> estimates that 20 percent of the judges nominated by presidents have fallen by the wayside, most of them as a result of filibusters. Senators have used the filibuster to stand up to popular presidents, to block legislation, and, yes, even, as I've stated, to stall executive nominees. The roots of the filibuster are found in the Constitution and in our own rules.

This is the same filibuster that the Democrats used to block qualified judicial nominees like Miguel Estrada and Janice Rogers Brown. Now that the tables are turned, they want to take it away from Republicans so they can get radical left-wingers appointed to the high courts. Let this be a lesson to Republicans who want to be nice and play by the rules: don't. Because rules mean nothing to Democrats. The next time we have the House, Senate and the White House, we should enact policies to de-fund and marginalize the Democrats down to the level of the Libertarian party.

Study: abortion more than doubles the risk of child abuse

November 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a report from Life News about a new study out of Bowling Green State University. Excerpt:

> For decades, evidence has existed showing abortion contributes to a rise in child abuse. Now a new study by a post-abortion research institute and Bowling Green State University professors finds that women who have abortions are more likely to abuse their children.
>
> **Published in the medical journal Acta Paediatrica, the study found that women who have had abortions are 2.4 times more likely to physically abuse their children.** Pro-life advocates say it proves the need for providing women with post-abortion counseling to help deal with the emotional trauma of the abortion.
>
> Led by Priscilla Coleman, a professor at Bowling Green, researchers looked at data taken from a survey of 518 low-income women in Baltimore who were receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children and who had at least one child aged 12 years or younger.
>
> The data compared rates of child abuse and neglect among women who had experienced either an involuntary (miscarriage or stillbirth) or voluntary (induced abortion) pregnancy loss.
>
> Women who had a miscarriage or stillbirth were more likely to physically abuse their children as well, but the increase was much less significant than for women who had abortions.
>
> The authors suggested that "emotional difficulties and unresolved grief responses" from pregnancy loss, whether voluntary or involuntary, could have a negative impact on women's mental health and lead to unhealthy parenting responses.
>
> According to the Illinois-based Elliot Institute, which released information about the study's findings, prior surveys "have linked pregnancy loss to an increase in grief reactions, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, all of which can have a negative impact on parent/child relationships."
>
> The post-abortion research group also points to a 2002 study published in the Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology that found abortion has been linked to an increase in substance abuse and thoughts of suicide, which could also contribute to child abuse.
>
> The new study also found that women who had more than one miscarriage or

> stillbirth were more likely to engage in child abuse than women who had just one. However, women who had abortions were more likely to abuse their children whether they had one or more than one abortion.
>
> "Regardless of the specific mechanisms at play, maternal history of one induced abortion does appear to be a marker for increased risk of physical abuse," the authors concluded.

In legalizing abortion, we have changed the way that adults view sex and the way adults view children. Instead of thinking that sex is something that is reserved for marriage, we now think that it is OK for women to have sex for fun with men who have *no intention* and *no capability* to take on the traditional male roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. And when those irresponsible choices produce other human beings, we have taught ourselves that murder is a morally permissible option. What does it mean? It means that children have no rights. It means that we can kill things we create if they annoy us. And that attitude spills over from unborn children to born children. It is going to result in *more* child abuse, when more people accept these views about what sex is supposed to be for, and what our obligations are to children.

But this is not the only study that shows the harm that abortion does.

Life News reports on the latest studies confirming the link between abortion and breast cancer.

Excerpt:

> A newly-published study shows the highest-ever abortion-breast cancer risk for women of any previously-published study on the link between the two.
>
> A Bangladesh study published in the Journal of Dhaka Medical College on risk factors for breast cancer, led by Dr. Suraiya Jabeen, found a statistically significant 20.62-fold increased risk among women with abortion histories. The new study on the abortion-breast cancer link is by far the highest risk elevation reported among 73 published abortion-breast cancer studies.
>
> Physical inactivity, being menopause, positive family history of breast cancer and history of induced abortion were found important risk factors," the authors wrote.
>
> Professor Joel Brind, a professor at Baruch College, City University of New York who is an expert on the abortion-breast cancer link, said the reason why the risk elevation is so high is because it's "a measure of relative risk."
>
> Observing that women in Bangladesh have very traditional childbearing patterns that reduce breast cancer risk, he explained: "Almost all the women are married (97% currently married; the rest widowed) and with child by the time they are 20, and all of the kids are breastfed. Ninety percent had their first child at age 21 or younger (99% of controls did). They typically neither take contraceptive steroids nor have any abortions. Nulliparity (childlessness) or abortion before first full term pregnancy (both of which mean no breastfeeding) in a population in which breast cancer is almost unheard of, makes the relative risk very high."

> Brind continued: “Although the authors did not include a measure of their abortion link’s statistical significance, their raw data was complete enough to calculate a 95% confidence interval of 12.85-32.51, making abortion by far the strongest and most significant risk factor observed in these Bengali women. In plain English, women in this population who had any induced abortions were more than 20 times as likely to get breast cancer, compared to women with no abortions.”
>
> According to the study, additional minor reproductive factors influencing breast cancer risk included: use of oral contraceptives (1.47-fold increased risk); early first birth at or before age 21 (0.35-fold reduced risk); having two or more children (0.29-fold reduced risk); and increased number of months spent breastfeeding (0.30-fold reduced risk).

But that’s not all.

Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> A study in the Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention shows abortion increases the risk of breast cancer for women.
>
> C. Yanhua of the First Peoples’ Hospital of Kunming in Yunnan province and his colleagues found the abortion-breast cancer association after comparing data from 263 cases of breast cancer and 457 controls without the disease. Their analysis covers the years 2009-2011.
>
> The authors examined information on disease diagnosis, demographics, medical history, and reproductive characteristics of the patients involved and also looked at short menstrual cycle, old age at first live birth, never breastfeeding, history of oral contraceptive use, postmenopausal status and nulliparity to determine in abortion-breast cancer link exists.
>
> They write that “multivariate model analysis revealed the significant independent positive associations with breast cancer of shorter menstrual cycle, older age at first live birth, never breastfeeding, history of oral contraception experience, increased number of abortion, menopause status, and nulliparities.”
>
> “Number of abortion showed an increasing higher risk of breast cancer,” they added, while saying that women who had one live birth lowered their risk. “As far as women who had once a live birth, it showed decreased the risk of breast cancer compared to nulliparous.”
>
> “This study showed an increased risk of breast cancer with times of abortion. The association between abortion and risk of breast cancer in a study in China showed that the risk factors of female breast cancer included abortion times more than two (Li et al., 2006),” they continued. “Another study found that risk was raised among women reporting at least one abortion, but no trend was seen with number of abortions (Heuch et al., 2008). In a meta-analysis study, pooled

> odds ratio for number of abortions greater than and equal three was statistically significant (95%CI:1.68-5.36) (Tao et al.,2011).”
>
> “In conclusion, in this study the estrogen related risk factors of breast cancer included woman who had longer menstrual cycle, older age of first live birth, never breastfeeding, nulliparity, and number of abortions more than one. Therefore, it is recommended to women with these risk factors perform breast cancer screening tests earlier and regularly,” they said.

Previously, another study was published in Oxford University’s European Journal of Public Health, and the abstract is posted on PubMed.

Here are the results:

> With statistical controls for number of pregnancies, birth year and age at last pregnancy, the combination of induced abortion(s) and natural loss(es) was associated with more than three times higher mortality rate than only birth(s). Moderate risks were identified with only induced abortion, only natural loss and having experienced all outcomes compared with only birth(s). Risk of death was more than six times greater among women who had never been pregnant compared with those who only had birth(s). Increased risks of death were 45%, 114% and 191% for 1, 2 and 3 abortions, respectively, compared with no abortions after controlling for other reproductive outcomes and last pregnancy age. Increased risks of death were equal to 44%, 86% and 150% for 1, 2 and 3 natural losses, respectively, compared with none after including statistical controls. Finally, decreased mortality risks were observed for women who had experienced two and three or more births compared with no births.

Life Site News adds more:

> A single induced abortion increases the risk of maternal death by 45 percent compared to women with no history of abortion, according to a new study of all women of reproductive age in Denmark over a 25 year period.
>
> The study found that each additional abortion is associated with an even higher death rate. Women who had two abortions were 114 percent more likely to die during the period examined, and women had three or more abortions had a 192 percent increased risk of death.
>
> Elevated rates of death were also observed among women who experienced miscarriages, ectopic pregnancies or other natural losses. Among women with a history of multiple pregnancies, women with a history of both abortions and natural losses, but no live births, had the highest mortality rate.
>
> Women who had never been pregnant had the highest mortality rate overall.
>
> However, women with a history of successful deliveries were the least likely to die during the 25 years examined.
>
> The study is the second record linkage analysis of Danish mortality data to be

> published this month.
>
> The earlier study was limited to comparing mortality rates following only the first pregnancy outcome. It found that abortion of a first pregnancy was associated with a higher rate of death compared to death rates among women who delivered a first pregnancy. The higher death rate among women who had abortions persisted for each of the first ten years following the first pregnancy outcome.
>
> […]Dr. Reardon is the director of the Elliot Institute, which funds research related to abortion. He believes further research is needed to explore how the outcomes observed in this latest study may be influenced by abortion's impact on natural pregnancy losses. A new population study from Finland, for example, has found that abortion is associated with higher rates of preterm delivery, low birth weight delivery, and perinatal deaths in subsequent pregnancies.

And another from Life News.

Excerpt:

> A new study published in the *Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention* in February reported a very statistically significant increased risk of breast cancer for women with previous abortions as opposed to women who have never had one.
>
> The study, consisting of 1,351 women and led by researcher Ai-Ren Jiang, reported a statistically significant 1.52-fold elevation in risk for women with induced abortions and a "significant dose-response relationship between (the risk) for breast cancer and number of induced abortions," meaning the risk climbed with a higher number of previous abortions.
>
> For premenopausal women who have had abortions, the numbers were relatively small, and the observed 16% risk elevation was not statistically significant. However, for those with three or more abortions, the risk climbed to a statistically significant 1.55-fold elevation.
>
> "The results have revealed that induced abortion was related to increased risk of breast caner. Premenopausal women who had ≥3 times of induced abortion were at increased crude odds ratio (OR) (2.41, 95%CI: 1.09-5.42) and adjusted-OR (1.55, 95%CI: 1.15-5.68)," they wrote. "Postmenopausal women with a previous induced abortion were at increased crude OR (2.04, 95%CI: 1.48-2.81) and adjusted-OR (1.82, 95%CI: 1.30-2.54), and there was a significant increase trend in OR with number of induced abortions (p for trend: 0.0001)."
>
> […][A] Chinese study in 1995 by L. Bu and colleagues, including Janet Daling of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, reported a statistically significant 4.5-fold elevated risk among women with previous induced abortions who developed breast cancer at or before age 35, compared to older women (who experienced a statistically significant 2.5-fold elevated risk)

Here's another study from the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), showing that excessive consumption of alcohol is a rish factor for breast cancer.

Excerpt:

> Consumption of 3 to 6 alcoholic drinks per week is associated with a small increase in the risk of breast cancer, and consumption in both earlier and later adult life is also associated with an increased risk, according to a study in the November 2 issue of JAMA.
>
> "In many studies, higher consumption of alcohol has been associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. However, the effect of low levels of drinking as is common in the United States has not been well quantified," according to background information in the article. "In addition, the role of drinking patterns (i.e., frequency of drinking and 'binge' drinking) and consumption at different times of adult life are not well understood."
>
> Wendy Y. Chen, M.D., M.P.H., of Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, and colleagues examined the association of breast cancer with alcohol consumption during adult life, including quantity, frequency, and age at consumption. The study included 105,986 women enrolled in the Nurses' Health Study who were followed up from 1980 until 2008 with an early adult alcohol assessment and 8 updated alcohol assessments. The primary outcome the researchers measured was the risk of developing invasive breast cancer.
>
> During the follow-up period, there were 7,690 cases of invasive breast cancer diagnosed among the study participants. Analyses of data indicated that a low level of alcohol consumption (5.0 to 9.9 grams per day, equivalent to 3-6 glasses of wine per week) was modestly but statistically significantly associated with a 15 percent increased risk of breast cancer. In addition, women who consumed at least 30 grams of alcohol daily on average (at least 2 drinks per day) had a 51 percent increased risk of breast cancer compared with women who never consumed alcohol.
>
> The researchers also found that when examined separately, alcohol consumption levels at ages 18 to 40 years and after age 40 years were both strongly associated with breast cancer risk. The association with drinking in early adult life still persisted even after controlling for alcohol intake after age 40 years.
>
> Binge drinking, but not frequency of drinking, was also associated with breast cancer risk after controlling for cumulative alcohol intake.

Now let's take a look at some other factors that raise the risk of breast cancer.

Abortion and breast cancer

Many studies show a link between abortion and breast cancer.

Study 1: (September 2010)

> Based on the expression of estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2/neu (HER2), breast cancer is classified into several subtypes: luminal A (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2-), luminal B (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2+), HER2-overexpressing (ER-, PR-, and HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-, PR-, and HER2-). The aim of this case-control study is to determine reproductive factors associated with breast cancer subtypes in Chinese women. A total of 1,417 patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the First Affiliated Hospital, China Medical University, Shenyang, China between 2001 and 2009 and 1,587 matched controls without a prior breast cancer were enrolled.
>
> […]Postmenopause and spontaneous abortion were inversely associated with the risk of luminal tumors. By contrast, multiparity, family history of breast cancer and **induced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer**.

Study 2: (March 2010)

> OBJECTIVE: To explore the risk factors of breast cancer for better control and prevention of the malignancy.
>
> METHODS: The clinical data of 232 patients with pathologically established breast cancer were investigated in this 1:1 case-control study to identify the risk factors of breast cancer.
>
> RESULTS: The history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and**multiple abortions were the statistically significant risk factors of breast cancer**, while breast feeding was the protective factor.
>
> CONCLUSION: A history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and multiple abortions are all risk factors of breast cancer.

But wait, there’s more.

Birth control pills

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9) and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed childbearing was a risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

All of this research shows that abortion is bad for women, but I also should mention that abortion is always bad for the unborn child, especially sex-selection abortions, which target women more than men.

Conclusion

The total cost for breast cancer treatment, which raises medical insurance premiums (private health care) or taxes (single-payer health care), has been estimated to be between $1.8 billion and $3.8 billion dollars. In addition, the government spends billions of dollars each year on breast cancer research. All of this spending is costing taxpayers a lot of money, as people demand more and more government funding of breast cancer research and breast cancer treatment (with either private or single-payer health care).

UK headmistress warns parents that child's refusal to attend Muslim field trip is "racism"

November 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina send me this troubling article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Parents were ordered to send their children to a workshop on Islam or have them labelled as racist for the rest of their school career.
>
> They were sent a letter warning that the primary school pupils would have a 'racial discrimination note' put on their records if they did not go.
>
> Families were told to pay £5 per child for the Explore Islam trip next Wednesday to Staffordshire University, which would involve Year 4 and Year 6 children being shown Islamic artefacts.
>
> **Mothers and fathers were warned: 'Refusal to allow your child to attend will result in a Racial Discrimination note being attached to your child's education record, which will remain on this file throughout their school career.**
>
> **'All absences on this day will be investigated for their credibility and will only be sanctioned with a GP sick note.'**
>
> […]According to the letter sent last Wednesday, the visit is part of the National Curriculum for religious education and also reflects 'the multi-cultural community in which we live'.

You might remember that the UK is not doing too well lately with their Islamic population, judging by recent terrorist attacks and general anti-Western radicalism. But that doesn't stop them from continuing these policies.

Mark Steyn and Thomas Sowell on “the knockout game”

November 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, Mark Steyn writing in National Review. (H/T Jay Richards)

Excerpt:

> In his book *The Abolition of Man*, he writes of “men without chests” — the chest being “the indispensable liaison” between the head and the gut, between “cerebral man” and “visceral man.” In the chest beat what Lewis calls “the trained emotions.” Without them there is no honor or virtue, but only “intellect” and/or “appetite.”
>
> Speaking of appetite, have you played the “Knockout” game yet? Groups of black youths roam the streets looking for a solitary pedestrian, preferably white (hence the alternate name “polar-bearing”) but Asian or Hispanic will do. The trick is to knock him to the ground with a single punch. There’s a virtually limitless supply of targets: In New York, a 78-year-old woman was selected, and went down nice and easy, as near-octogenarian biddies tend to when sucker-punched. But, when you’re really rockin’, you can not only floor the unsuspecting sucker but kill him: That’s what happened to 46-year-old Ralph Santiago of Hoboken, N.J., whose head was slammed into an iron fence, whereupon he slumped to the sidewalk with his neck broken. And anyway the one-punch rule is flexible: In upstate New York, a 13-year-old boy socked 51-year-old Michael Daniels but with insufficient juice to down him. So his buddy threw a bonus punch, and the guy died from cerebral bleeding. Widely available video exists of almost all Knockout incidents, since the really cool thing is to have your buddies film it and upload it to YouTube. And it’s so simple to do in an age when every moronic savage has his own “smart phone.”
>
> There’s no economic motive. The 78-year-old in New York was laden with bags from department stores, but none were touched. You slug an elderly widow not for the 50 bucks in her purse but for the satisfaction of seeing her hit the pavement. In response, some commentators are calling for these attacks to be recategorized: As things stand, if white youths target a black guy it’s a hate crime, but vice versa is merely common assault. I doubt this would make very much difference. “No justification of virtue will enable a man to be virtuous,” wrote Lewis — and, likewise, no law can prevent a thug punching an old lady to the ground if the thug is minded to. “A society’s first line of defense is not the law but customs, traditions, and moral values,” wrote Professor Walter Williams a few years ago. “They include important thou-shalt-nots such as shalt not murder, shalt not steal, shalt not lie and cheat, but they also include all those courtesies one might call ladylike and gentlemanly conduct. Policemen and laws can never

> replace these restraints on personal conduct."
>
> Restraint is an unfashionable concept these day, but it is the indispensable feature of civilized society. To paraphrase my compatriot George Jonas, punching a spinster's lights out isn't wrong because it's illegal, it's illegal because it's wrong. But, in a world without restraints, what's to stop you? If a certain percentage of your population feels no moral revulsion at randomly pulverizing fellow citizens for sport, a million laws will avail you naught: The societal safety lock is off.

Let's hear from black economist Thomas Sowell about why this is not widely reported. (H/T Mysterious WGB)

Excerpt:

> The main reason for many people's surprise is that the mainstream media have usually suppressed news about the "knockout game" or about other and larger forms of similar orchestrated racial violence in dozens of cities in every region of the country. Sometimes the attacks are reported, but only as isolated attacks by unspecified "teens" or "young people" against unspecified victims, without any reference to the racial makeup of the attackers or the victims — and with no mention of racial epithets by the young hoodlums exulting in their own "achievement."
>
> Despite such pious phrases as "troubled youths," the attackers are often in a merry, festive mood. In a sustained mass attack in Milwaukee, going far beyond the dimensions of a passing "knockout game," the attackers were laughing and eating chips, as if it were a picnic.
>
> One of them observed casually, "white girl bleed a lot."
>
> […]Some in the media, as well as in politics, may think that they are trying to avoid provoking a race war by ignoring or playing down these attacks. But the way to prevent a race war is by stopping these attacks, not trying to sanitize them.
>
> If these attacks continue, and continue to grow, more and more people are going to know about them, regardless of the media or the politicians. Responsible people of all races need to support a crackdown on these attacks, which can provoke a white backlash that can escalate into a race war. But political expediency leads in the opposite direction.
>
> What is politically expedient is to do what Attorney General Eric Holder is doing — launch campaigns against schools that discipline a "disproportionate" number of black male students. New York City's newly elected liberal mayor is expected to put a stop to police "stop and frisk" policies that have reduced the murder rate to one-fourth of what it was under liberal mayors of the past.

I think that the biggest cause of crime in this society is fatherlessness, which we not only

refuse to judge on moral grounds, but which we actually subsidize with our taxpayer dollars.

Dr. Michael Tanner of the libertarian Cato Institute explains one of the causes of fatherlessness in his testimony to Congress:

> Welfare contributes to crime in several ways. First, children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. According to one study, children raised in single-parent families are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior.(3) Moreover, O'Neill found that, holding other variables constant, black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as black children from a family where the father is present. Nearly 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 percent of prison inmates.(4) Research indicates a direct correlation between crime rates and the number of single-parent families in a neighborhood.(5)
>
> As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her seminal article for The Atlantic Monthly:
>
> The relationship [between single-parent families and crime] is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family break up as the most important source of rising rates of crime.(6)
>
> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on family structure concluded that "providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women."(9)

So what can we do? We can bring back moral judgments. I think that we have to get to the point in society where we realize that all of this permissiveness about "forgiving"

people who fail to be responsible with sexuality and marriage actually does harm to society. When you refuse to pass judgment on premarital sex and divorce, and even make it financially lucrative for the people who engage in it (single mother welfare, alimony, child support) then you get more fatherless children, not less.

Although it is tempting to want to be liked for being “compassionate”, we have to look beyond our feelings and our vanity and start to think about the big picture. We need to shame people who are unchaste. We need to shame single mothers. We need to shame people who divorce and blame them for marrying badly. We need to cut off all the subsidies for people who make decisions that deprive children of their fathers. We need to stop the normalization of premarital sex that occurs in our schools. We need to shame women who choose men for sex when those men are not capable of being husbands and fathers.

Obamacare success story revised to become Obamacare failure story

November 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily explains.

Excerpt:

> The woman who got a shoutout from President Obama last month for her fan letter for ObamaCare finds out her exchange quote was a computer mistake and she doesn't qualify for a tax credit after all.
>
> In one of his famous photo-ops in the Rose Garden last Oct. 21, with an array of touted beneficiaries of the Affordable Care Act behind him, President Obama read a letter from Jessica Sanford of Federal Way, Wash., to explain why the Affordable Care Act, with all its rollout flaws, was still needed.
>
> The letter told a sad tale of a grateful single mom with a son that had ADHD.
>
> But now, like so many of ObamaCare's false promises and outright lies, the safe and secure future which Sanford thought she had found and which the president boasted of has crumbled into dust — just like that health care Potemkin village called the Affordable Care Act.
>
> As the Washington State Wire reports, the Washington state exchange and enrollment website, like its national cousin, had problems. It had told Sanford originally she and her child would get a whopping tax credit that would reduce her total premium to $169 a month for an ObamaCare "gold" plan.
>
> Then she got letters from the state telling her — just like so many others who have had their plans canceled after being told they could keep them — what she had been promised was not true.
>
> Four days after President Obama made his address, the state health exchange publicly revealed a grievous error — its tax-credit calculations were all wrong.
>
> Washington state had been submitting monthly income information to the federal data hub when it was expecting yearly data. Oops!
>
> So everyone who bought a subsidized health insurance policy through the Washington state exchange prior to Oct. 23 was being quoted too low a rate.
>
> […]Brokers had been informing the state for three weeks that the calculations were screwy but the state, like the proverbial Department of Motor Vehicles, was slow to respond. When it informed Sanford of the mistake, knocking her tax credit down to $110 a month, she went back to her broker and signed up for a "silver" plan with higher deductibles and co-pays.
>
> Then she got another letter from the state saying it had goofed a second time and she didn't qualify for a tax credit at all. Her income was, in fact, too high.

> The website had told her that her income was low enough that she could enroll her son in the state Medicaid program for children of low-income families. That was no longer true, either.
>
> Her 14-year-old son Ryan requires a special prescription medication. Without a tax credit, she had to consider the cheapest “bronze” level plans, but the deductibles are so high that she couldn’t afford to pay for her child’s prescription medication.
>
> So now Sanford faces the prospect of having no insurance at all. Not only does she not get a tax credit, but she may have to pay an IRS-imposed penalty.

That’s a bad situation, but at least no one is dying because of Obamacare. Oh wait, this 7-year old child is dying because of Obamacare. Well, I guess this is no big deal to our elite leaders. After all, what are a few lives lost in pursuit of equality? I suppose that once we switch entirely to a single payer system that little boys dying of cancer can have free contraceptives and free abortions and free in vitro fertilizations and free breast enlargements and free maternity care and free sex changes and free hormone treatments to delay puberty until they decide if they want to be girls. Isn’t that better for everyone?

John Bolton: U.S. deal with Iran is an “abject surrender”

November 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

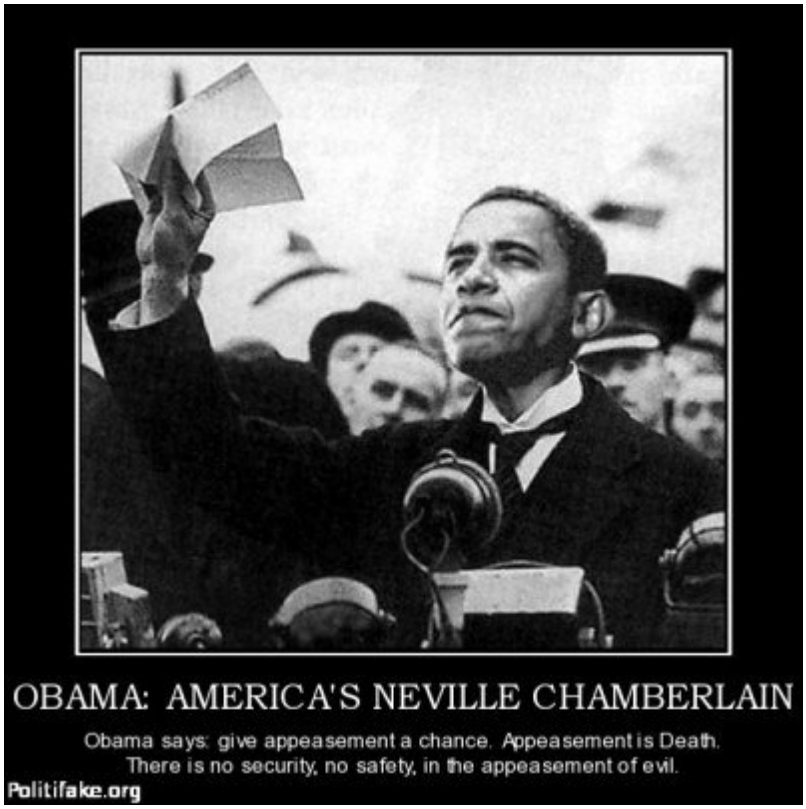

Neville Chamberlain Obama: peace in our time

The Weekly Standard featured a column by foreign policy heavyweight John Bolton.

Excerpt:

> Negotiations for an “interim” arrangement over Iran’s nuclear weapons program finally succeeded this past weekend, as Security Council foreign ministers (plus Germany) flew to Geneva to meet their Iranian counterpart. After raising expectations of a deal by first convening on November 8-10, it would have been beyond humiliating to gather again without result. So agreement was struck despite solemn incantations earlier that “no deal is better than a bad deal.”
>
> This interim agreement is badly skewed from America’s perspective. Iran retains its full capacity to enrich uranium, thus abandoning a decade of Western insistence and Security Council resolutions that Iran stop all uranium-enrichment activities. Allowing Iran to continue enriching, and despite modest (indeed, utterly inadequate) measures to prevent it from increasing its enriched-uranium stockpiles and its overall nuclear infrastructure, lays the predicate for Iran fully enjoying its “right” to enrichment in any “final” agreement. Indeed, the interim agreement itself acknowledges that a “comprehensive solution” will “involve a mutually defined enrichment program.” This is not, as the Obama administration leaked before the deal became public, a “compromise” on Iran’s claimed “right”

> to enrichment. This is abject surrender by the United States.
>
> In exchange for superficial concessions, Iran achieved three critical breakthroughs. **First, it bought time to continue all aspects of its nuclear-weapons program the agreement does not cover (centrifuge manufacturing and testing; weaponization research and fabrication; and its entire ballistic missile program). Indeed, given that the interim agreement contemplates periodic renewals, Iran may have gained all of the time it needs to achieve weaponization not of simply a handful of nuclear weapons, but of dozens or more.**
>
> Second, Iran has gained legitimacy. This central banker of international terrorism and flagrant nuclear proliferator is once again part of the international club. Much as the Syria chemical-weapons agreement buttressed Bashar al-Assad, the mullahs have escaped the political deep freezer.
>
> **Third, Iran has broken the psychological momentum and effect of the international economic sanctions. While estimates differ on Iran's precise gain, it is considerable ($7 billion is the lowest estimate), and presages much more.** Tehran correctly assessed that a mere six-months' easing of sanctions will make it extraordinarily hard for the West to reverse direction, even faced with systematic violations of Iran's nuclear pledges. Major oil-importing countries (China, India, South Korea, and others) were already chafing under U.S. sanctions, sensing President Obama had no stomach either to impose sanctions on them, or pay the domestic political price of granting further waivers.

Seven billion dollars in funding for a nation that is a known sponsor of anti-American terrorism. What kind of moron makes a deal with a regime that is on record for wanting to attack Israel with nuclear weapons? Some sort of reincarnation of Neville Chamberlain, that's who.

Previously, the Obama administration had been accuesed of leaking details of a strike plan by Israel against Iranian nuclear facilities.

From ABC News.

Excerpt:

> **Two reports today about Iran's nuclear program and the possibility of an Israeli military strike have analysts in Israel accusing the Obama administration leaking information to pressure Israel not to bomb Iran and for Iran to reach a compromise in upcoming nuclear talks.**
>
> The first report in Foreign Policy quotes anonymous American officials saying that Israel has been given access to airbases by Iran's northern neighbor Azerbaijan from which Israel could launch air strikes or at least drones and search and rescue aircraft.

> The second report from Bloomberg, based on a leaked congressional report, said that Iran's nuclear facilities are so dispersed that it is "unclear what the ultimate effect of a strike would be…" A strike could delay Iran as little as six months, a former official told the researchers.
>
> "It seems like a big campaign to prevent Israel from attacking," analyst Yoel Guzansky at the Institute for National Security Studies told ABC News. "I think the [Obama] administration is really worried Jerusalem will attack and attack soon. They're trying hard to prevent it in so many ways."
>
> […]**Thursday's reports come a week after the results of a classified war game was leaked to the New York Times which predicted that an Israeli strike could lead to a wider regional war and result in hundreds of American deaths. In a column this afternoon titled "Obama Betraying Israel?" longtime defense commentator Ron Ben-Yishai at Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper angrily denounced the leaks as a "targeted assassination campaign."**
>
> **"In recent weeks the administration shifted from persuasion efforts vis-à-vis decision-makers and Israel's public opinion to a practical, targeted assassination of potential Israeli operations in Iran," Ben-Yishai writes. "The campaign's aims are fully operational: To make it more difficult for Israeli decision-makers to order the IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] to carry out a strike, and what's even graver, to erode the IDF's capacity to launch such strike with minimal casualties."**

Maybe in the next election, Jewish-American voters will think a little more about who to vote for, in view of these facts. Or maybe it will take the actual nuclear destruction of Israel by Iran to get over their prejudices. As a supporter of peaceful democracies like Israel, I hope it doesn't come to that.

Read Theodore Dalrymple's "Life at the Bottom" online for free

November 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I want to recommend that you read a book that is available online for free.

The author is a psychiatrist in a British hospital that deals with a lot of criminals and victims of crime. So he gets to see the worldview of the "underclass" up close, and to understand how the policies of the compassionate secular left are really working at the street level. The theme of the book is that the left advances policies in order to feel good about themselves, even though the policies actually hurt the poor and vulnerable far more than they help them. And the solution of the elites is more of the same.

The whole book is available ONLINE for free! From City Journal!

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Lots more essays are here, all from City Journal.

My favorite passage

The only bad thing about reading it online is that you miss one of the best quotes from the introduction. But I'll type it out for you.

> The disastrous pattern of human relationships that exists in the underclass is also becoming common higher up the social scale. With increasing frequency I am consulted by nurses, who for the most part come from and were themselves traditionally members of (at least after Florence Nightingale) the respectable lower middle class, who have illegitimate children by men who first abuse and then abandon them. This abuse and later abandonment is usually all too predictable from the man's previous history and character; but the nurses who have been treated in this way say they refrained from making a judgment about him because it is wrong to make judgments. But if they do not make a judgment about the man with whom they are going to live and by whom they are going to have a child, about what are they ever going to make a judgment?
>
> "It just didn't work out," they say, the "it" in question being the relationship that they conceive of having an existence independent of the two people who form it, and that exerts an influence on their on their lives rather like an astral projection. Life is fate.

This is something I run into myself. I think that young people today prefer moral relativists as mates, because they are afraid of being judged and rejected by people who are too serious about religion and morality. The problem is that if you choose someone who doesn't take religion and morality seriously, then you can't rely on them to behave morally and exercise spiritual leadership when raising children. And being sexually involved with someone who doesn't take morality seriously causes a lot of damage.

An excerpt

Here's one of my favorite passages from "Tough Love", in which he describes how easily he can detect whether a particular man has violent tendencies on sight, whereas female victims of domestic violence – and even the hospital nurses – *will not* recognize the same signs.

> All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.
>
> This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious

> young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.
>
> Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.
>
> This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.
>
> Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.
>
> At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how* they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

Go read the rest!

Obamacare health plan cancellations and premium increases delayed to just after 2014 election

November 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> Republican lawmakers are pushing back hard against the Obama administration's decision to delay next year's open enrollment season for health coverage under ObamaCare until after the 2014 midterm elections.
>
> The Department of Health and Human Services announced Friday it would allow consumers to start signing up for coverage under ObamaCare on Nov. 15, 2014, a month later than originally scheduled. The change does not affect those trying to enroll this year.
>
> Congressional Republicans accused the administration of shifting the dates for political reasons, to hide a spike in 2015 premiums, though information may already be available about 2015 premiums before the elections on Nov. 4.
>
> "That means that if premiums go through the roof in the first year of ObamaCare, no one will know about it until after the election," Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, said in a statement. "This is clearly a cynical political move by the Obama administration to use extra-regulatory, by any means necessary tools to keep this program afloat and hide key information from voters."
>
> Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., accused the White House of moving next year's open enrollment date to shield Democrats up for reelection next year who supported the law.
>
> "The only American consumers this change will help are Democratic politicians who voted for Obamacare, because it delays disclosure of some of the law's most insidious effects until after the election," Alexander said in a statement.
>
> He said he plans to introduce legislation that would require insurers to provide Americans with "proper notice" of premium increases before open enrollment period on the exchanges starts.

I don't think that the Democrats are doing this to sway conservative voters, because we know what to expect from round two of Obamacare – loss of health care plans and higher premiums for those with employer-based health insurance. The delay is being done to influence *low-information voters*, i.e. Democrats. People who don't follow politics because they are too busy watching Dancing With The Stars and Oprah Winfrey. They are the ones who cannot think beyond the moment, and sway their votes because of deliberately staged events, e.g. – Al Gore kissing his wife (whom he's now divorced) just before an election. Two weeks is far beyond the time horizons of most Democrat voters.

What the Republicans should do is pass a law requiring all cancellations and premium increases be communicated before the elections and have the Democrats in the House and Senate go on record voting against it. Then they can use that in the 2014 campaigns. Uncertainty will be even more effective when dealing with independent voters who are paying attention to policy issues instead of staged photo-ops.

Obama administration betrays Christian pastor imprisoned in Iran

November 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Letitia posted this article by Jay Sekulow from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> In its quest for a "deal" with the hostile, jihadist Iranian regime, The Obama administration has thrown an American Christian, Saeed Abedini, under the bus – the latest American victim in the administration's continual, naïve (at best) quest to bargain with Islamic radicals.
>
> […]Pastor Saeed Abedini, an Idaho resident, last year received permission to enter Iran to help build an orphanage.
>
> Shortly after his arrival, Iran's radical Revolutionary Guard arrested him, threw him in one of Iran's worst prisons, and tried and convicted him on trumped-up "national security" charges – charges that had nothing to do with national security and everything to do with his Christian faith.
>
> Even after President Obama raised Pastor Saeed's case directly to the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Iran responded not by releasing Saeed but by transferring him to an even worse prison — a prison full of murderers and rapists, where his life is in danger at every moment.
>
> The Iranian regime rebuked the president of the United States, and we're now supposed to believe it's acting in good faith?
>
> President Obama is now trying to spin our stunning act of weakness as a breakthrough for peace. In fact, we were so weak that (according to the administration) that the State Department did not even raise Pastor Saeed's during the nuclear negotiations.
>
> […]Iran's record of wrongdoing is long and sordid.
>
> Beginning with the 1979-1981 hostage crisis, moving through repeated terrorist attacks – from the deadly Marine Barracks bombing in 1983, to the Kobar Towers bombing in 1996, to the direct intervention of Iran's Quds force against American forces in Iraq – and including ongoing deadly support for terrorists fighting American forces in Afghanistan, Iran has proven by its deeds and words that it is America's enemy.
>
> If Iran had released Pastor Saeed we would have at least one concrete action to give Americans confidence that this deal was anything other than a disaster. Instead, we are left with nothing but "commitments" from a regime that has proven itself committed only to killing and imprisoning Americans.
>
> To make matters even worse, we have squandered a position of strength.

> Iran was suffering under sanctions that were finally beginning to truly bite — wrecking its economy and causing deep discontent within Iraq. This was our opportunity to drive a hard bargain, to reach a deal that didn't depend solely on Iranian "commitments."
>
> But we squandered that opportunity and left an American behind.
>
> The Obama administration has betrayed Pastor Saeed.

One country that's done a good job on promoting human rights and religious liberty is Canada, because they have a Conservative government led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Here's what Canada said about the deal: (H/T Dennis Prager)

> The Canadian government was "deeply skeptical" on Sunday of Iran's agreement to temporarily freeze its nuclear program, saying Ottawa's sanctions against the regime would remain firmly in place until the new deal's words turned into actions.
>
> Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird appeared to take a stronger stance on the newly brokered deal than the United States and other allies, saying Canada would be watching Iran closely over the coming weeks and months.
>
> "We have made-in-Canada foreign policy," he told reporters on Sunday.
>
> "We think past actions best predict future actions. And Iran has defied the United Nations Security Council, it has defied the International Atomic Energy Agency. Simply put Iran has not earned the right to have the benefit of the doubt."

It's striking to me that the American government is now to the left of Canada on foreign policy – making deals with dictators that actually set back the cause of freedom and universal human rights. I would not be surprised to see a full-scale war in the Middle East because of this deal. I guess that the Obama administration is so anxious to appear as if they are doing something that they don't care if Iran nukes Israel in a few months. Because that's what's going to happen unless Israel attacks Iran first. Iran was threatening to nuke Israel as recently as last week. It's hard to interpret the Democrat treaty with Iran as anything other than their stamp of approval on that plan.

Thoughts on talking to non-Christian relatives and friends during the holidays

November 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, suppose you have a relative or friend who grew up as a Christian but now they've fallen away and they are in some sort of situation where they are in continuous rebellion against God – e.g. – regular hooking-up, cohabitation, same-sex lifestyle, etc.. Although you might not see this person regularly, you may see them during the holidays at family gatherings, so let's take some time to define goals and develop a strategy for those encounters.

I want to focus on two parts:

1. What are you trying to communicate to this person?
2. How much should you invoke Christian concepts with a non-Christian?

Let's take a look at the plan.

Respect your opponent's dignity and value

So for the first topic, I think that you need to accept the person as a person made in the image of God and therefore valuable and deserving of being treated equally. That does not mean you have to agree with them and celebrate their views when you disagree. They have equal dignity to you, but you don't have to agree that their ideas are equally correct. It means that they have value because God made them and because he cares about them and wants to be reconciled with them. Whatever you say and do cannot set back God's goal of being reconciled with them. When you speak, you don't want to push them away from God. When you act, you don't want to push them away from God. So you are striking a balance between respecting their dignity, but also not affirming them in their views. You can't affirm something that is immoral just because they will like you, because you have to think of what God wants you to say to that person. You are his ambassador and that means you do your job for him first and foremost.

Christians often talk about the slogan "hate the sin, but love the sinner", and I think that can be overused. You are obligated to love your family and your relatives. But the problem is knowing what the definition of love is. Love doesn't mean affirming whatever a person wants to do whether it is right or wrong. Love doesn't mean standing by silent while people do things when their beliefs about what they are doing are all false. To love someone means to tell them the truth, gently. And it means to be present and engaged in building them up in their relationship with God, however that might look given what stage they are at with God. Loving the sinner means investing in the sinner, and not wrecking the relationship by being unnecessarily hurtful while we can still have an influence. It's a good idea when you disagree with someone about what they are doing that you keep in mind all the ways that you have rebelled against God in the past, and continue to rebel now, and will continue to rebel. If you keep in mind your own struggles, it will be a lot

easier for you to hit the right note when discussing lifestyle with someone else!

Don't answer "demarcation questions"

I was listening to the Dennis Prager show recently and he was talking about how people on the left are not really good at rational discussion because they are not able to state the views of people who disagree with them in a way that is respectful. He cited Jewish traditions on debate and argued that real debate requires that each side is able to outline the position that the other side holds and the reasons why they hold to it. And not in an insulting, straw-man sort of way, but in a way that the person on the other side can assent and say "that is my view, and those are the reasons for my view".

People on the secular left seem to like questions that are really more like ad-hominem arguments, so that they can shut down debate. Prager's example was "you do believe the Earth is warming, don't you?" This question is designed to stop the discussion of global warming socialism by labeling you a nutcase for denying something that the questioner thinks is obvious. This is despite the fact that the IPCC has now admitted that there has been no significant warming in 15 years. They don't want to hear your evidence, they want to humiliate you and dismiss you.

The one I hear around my office is "you believe in evolution don't you?" This is how secularists in my office try to quickly dismiss me because I am not in their "tribe", so they can cut short any serious critical thinking about their presupposition of naturalism. Thinking about the progress of science and questioning their assumptions is too much work for them, which is why they resort to these "demarcation" questions. Dividing the world up into "sensible us" and "crazy them" is very important to secular leftists – they would rather be divisive, dismissive and condescending so they can keep on sinning. After all, if you're a total cretin, then they don't even have to consider whether they are mistaken or not. If you believe in a flat Earth, then they don't want to have to listen to the evidence for the Big Bang or the fine-tuning or the protein sequencing or the Cambrian explosion. They want to separate the world into black and white so that debate becomes unnecessary. Don't fall for it.

Free expression of intelligent disagreement

My goal in dealing with an ex-Christian involved in a bad lifestyle is that I want to be their friend, but they must be aware of my view. That is a condition of me being their friend. And I want an opportunity to discuss these things should they come up naturally. I don't want to be the initiator, but if the topic comes up, I want freedom to state my view, and respect to complete my thoughts and state my evidence. My goal with this person is not to give tacit approval to what they are doing by just acting like one of their normal friends and keeping my mouth shut so as not to offend them. My goal is to be present in their lives as someone who *they know for sure* disagrees with what they are doing and is intelligent and informed about his disagreement. In short, I am willing to *trade* spending time with them and doing activities with them (what they want) in order to get the freedom to *intelligently and respectfully disagree* with them about their lifestyle (what God wants me to do with them, as his ambassador to them).

Moreover, if the opportunity never arises to state and defend my disagreement with their lifestyle, then I'm going to allocate less and less time to that relationship, since God is not being allowed into the relationship. I work for God, and I want him to be a factor in everything I do. In what I say, in how I spend my time and money, and so on. When I started my first job, the atheists used to offer to discuss spiritual things with me if I had a beer with them. I agreed to that, because they knew that I would only give them what they wanted – friendship – if I got what I wanted – the opportunity to be myself and be given time to explain my beliefs and my reasons for holding them without being interrupted or mocked. They were willing to let me do this, though, because they knew what I was talking about, so that's on me to prepare to sound intelligent in order to *deserve the opportunity to be heard.* You have to decide if this person is going to allow you to be an ambassador. That is the criterion for deciding whether to have a relationship with them or not.

Should you bring up the Bible and sin?

It depends. I think if the person is claiming to be a Christian, and under the authority of the Bible on moral issues, then you should investigate how they square their views with the Bible. You might have to pull in Robert Gagnon or Scott Klusendorf or some other expert to make the case that their behavior is against the Bible. But in my view, their claiming of the Bible as support is likely to be a smokescreen. Sinful people choose their behavior first, and the Bible is not going to be relevant to their decision making once they are into the lifestyle of sin. Labeling their behavior as sin, citing Bible verses, citing Christian leaders… that's all going to be as useful as you citing a Hindu or a Mormon to convince me of an eternal universe would be. I don't care about religious opinions when it comes to the universe, because I have a prior commitment to science. A smart ambassador knows not to use authorities that are not accepted by their audience. People who are habitually sinning do not accept the Bible as an authority. You can clarify what the Bible says if they bring it up, but don't rest on the Bible to make your case.

The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in battle

So what can you do to make your case? Well, your goal is to be allowed to express your disagreement and to state your reasons for disagreeing without being silenced or sanctioned. When they give you your opportunity to speak, you need to have prepared to sound as intelligent and relevant as possible. That means that you need to hit the books before you are asked, and find the reasons and the evidence for your view first. If the issue is binge-drinking and hooking up, you need to hit the books so you can find the peer-reviewed papers to deal with that. You might talk about oxytocin to counter casual sex, or you might talk about the cohabitation-instability link, or you might talk about how children are harmed by fatherlessness, etc. The point is that you want to have the perception among non-Christian peers that you are competent and informed apart from religion – which they don't even accept. I find it amazing that Christians seem content to invoke their supposed righteousness in debates with people who don't even accept the Bible. We need to not be so insulated in our own little Bible-cliques that we are no longer able to understand how to be persuasive to people who are outside the faith. You can't

invoke superior piety (alone) as an argument to someone who isn't pious and doesn't want to be pious.

Smoking is bad for your health

Basically, you want to make a case using mainstream sources that is equivalent to the case that you might make against their smoking, if they took up smoking. Your approach should be along the lines of "you don't accept Christianity, and that's fine, because I have a million non-Christian reasons why you shouldn't be doing what you're doing, too". You want to get to the point where you can show them that it's not just a case of opinion against opinion, but a case of rebellion against evidence. Don't be afraid to encourage them to look at the long-term effects of what they are doing either.

For example, if they are in a same-sex relationship and they want to have or adopt kids later on, have them defend why it is right for them to intentionally deprive a child of a mother or a father. If they are in a cohabitating relationship and have not yet gotten pregnant, have them defend having an abortion or raising a child fatherless. It's amazing how people in these sorts of sinful lifestyles get blinded by their feelings and cannot think about what comes next. That's your job – to be the sober analyst who asks "what comes next?". And don't forget to consider whether what they are doing is not only bad for them, but bad for people around them, and society as a whole. For example, if society has to pay increased health care costs for sexually transmitted diseases or for social programs to deal with the breakdown of the family and fatherlessness.

Please leave your comments about how you are dealing with ex-Christians in rebellion in the comments, and what you think of my approach, too.

UPDATE: I got some advice from a well-known Christian apologist. His point was that if all you have is the family meal, then it's better to spend most of your time listening and just ask a few questions. That's a good defensive strategy suited to the situation you are in at a family meal.

Gay activist honored by Barack Obama charged with sex crimes with a minor

November 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From KTAR News in Arizona. (H/T Mysterious WGB)

Excerpt:

> A former LGBT youth and diversity liaison for Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton has been charged with 13 counts of sex crimes with a minor.
>
> Caleb Michael Laieski is accused of having sex with a 14-year-old boy last year. He was 17 at the time, but Arizona law said children under the age of 15 can't legally consent to sex, even with another minor.
>
> […]Laieski gained national attention in 2011 when he appeared in a documentary about bullying and discussed issues involving gay youth with both President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden.

Life Site News has some more details.

Excerpt:

> An openly homosexual teenager, who was given a position as an "adviser" to Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton and honored by President Barack Obama at a White House "gay pride" dinner, has been indicted on more than a dozen counts of sexual misconduct with a minor under the age of 15.
>
> […]Laieski rose to national prominence after he and a 35-year-old friend, Casey Cameron, sent e-mails to 5,000 Arizona schools in 2011 demanding special protections for gay students and threatening legal action if they failed to bring their policies in line with his demands. The teen then dropped out of high school, got his GED, and traveled to Washington, D.C., to lobby for the Student Non-Discrimination Act.
>
> In 2012, Laieski was given a position in Mayor Stanton's office as a "youth and diversity liaison," advising the mayor on matters of policy having to do with youth, particularly gay youth. He was an "advocate on loan," meaning his salary was funded by an outside group, called "One in Ten."
>
> According to police records, part of his job was to represent the mayor's office at local homosexual protests, which is how he got to know Wilson, who was usually assigned as the officer in charge of policing such events.
>
> […]Initially, investigators saw Laieski only as a victim in the case, but police records show that Laieski actively pressured his young friend not to tell anyone about the abuse in order to protect his rising star from being tarnished, even after the younger boy became suicidal.
>
> […]When the younger boy begged Laieski to go with him to the police, Laieski

> told him no. He said he was negotiating with Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius over a possible White House job, and he worried that if anyone found out he'd been involved in a crime, he'd lose the opportunity.
>
> […]"I have a phone call with the Secretary of HHS about me working at the White House," he added. "I am not going to allow this to get in my way. I don't think you understand that reporting this [to the police] doesn't only affect Chris [Wilson]. It defiantly [sic] would affect me as well."

I notice in the stories that there is no mention of the 14-year old having a father anywhere in his life, which would explain a lot. Fathers are the ones who normally look out for predators. Children really need women to do a better job of picking men who will commit before having sex, and stick around when the children appear, but that seems to clash with the need to be "feelings-led" that is valued to highly. Desire trumps reason, but there is a price to pay.

Related posts

- Gay activist Dan Savage: abortion should be mandatory for the next 30 years
- "Two Dads are Better Than One": pro-gay adoption ABC profile of convicted pedophile
- Two Christian preachers brutally beaten at Seattle Gay Pride Festival
- Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Gay activist Dan Savage bullies Christian teens and bashes Christianity
- Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll's Mars Hill Church
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired

FBI partners with anti-Christian hate group Southern Poverty Law Center

November 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Townhall.com. (H/T Gateway Pundit)

Excerpt:

> The magnitude of this Obama administration's "progressive" radicalism becomes more evident with each passing day. In recent months, there has been a drastic spike in acts of both anti-Christian and anti-conservative discrimination and intimidation on military bases across the country. This mounting harassment is not being carried out at the hands of regular enlisted folk but, rather, at the hands of high-ranking officials who, in their official capacity, are targeting Christian and conservative organizations and individuals in an effort to silence them.
>
> It has long been suspected that the Obama administration is using propaganda circulated by the roundly discredited Southern Poverty Law Center, or SPLC, a left-wing extremist group that, in recent years, has adopted two primary goals: 1) raising truckloads of money and 2) smearing as "domestic hate groups" dozens of mainstream Christian ministries like the Family Research Council, or FRC, and the American Family Association, or AFA.
>
> This suspicion has now been verified.
>
> The problem on military bases has gotten so bad, in fact, that the U.S. Congress is demanding answers from the Pentagon. Recently, the AFA-affiliated OneNewsNow.com newsgroup reported that "Congressman Alan Nunnelee (R-Mississippi) is 1 of 38 members of Congress signing off on a letter to the Secretary of the Army – especially about an incident last month at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, in which the Tupelo-based American Family Association was labeled in Army training material as a 'hate group.'
>
> […]I recently learned that on its official website, the FBI lists as one of its primary "hate crimes resources," the Southern Poverty Law Center.
>
> This is especially mysterious when you consider that the FBI's own verified hate crimes statistics are completely at odds with numbers put out by the SPLC in its fundraising propaganda.

You'll remember that SPLC is the hate group whose web site was used by the convicted domestic terrorist and gay activist Floyd Corkins in his recent attack on the Family Research Council building. The SPLC, the Human Rights Campaign and the convicted domestic terrorist all agree that the Family Research Council is a hate group. The FRC publishes research papers defending traditional marriage.

Life Site News explains.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Last year, a disturbed gay activist stormed into FRC's national headquarters in Washington and opened fire with a gun, injuring a security officer. The shooter specifically cited the SPLC in a videotaped admission, saying he used the SPLC's "Hate Map" to find the FRC. SPLC called accusations it was culpable for the shooting "outrageous."
>
> The shooter planned to target other socially conservative groups after attacking the FRC, but was subdued by security at the FRC headquarters.
>
> The FBI started a partnership with the SPLC in February of 2007, under former President George W. Bush.
>
> Under federal law, according to the FBI, "[a] hate crime is a traditional offense like murder, arson, or vandalism with an added element of bias….Hate itself is not a crime—and the FBI is mindful of protecting freedom of speech and other civil liberties." However, the SPLC's definition of a hate group is far more expansive than the FBI's crime definition.
>
> […]The federal government's relationship with the SPLC has increased since its 2007 collaboration, including an invitation from the Department of Justice for a SPLC co-founder to present on diversity in 2012. The military has also used the SPLC for information and data on equal opportunity.

I guess what troubles me most about all this is that the FBI is taxpayer-funded. I'm paying government employees to label me as a hater, and expose me to domestic terrorism from gay activists like Floyd Lee Corkins – all because I am a public defender of traditional marriage. So, if a gay activist like Floyd Lee Corkins uses the FBI site to link to the SPLC site and then target me for domestic terrorism, will the FBI investigate itself for causing domestic terrorism? How would that work, exactly? "We have investigated ourselves for domestic terrorism and we are guilty! Now we will put ourselves in jail."

Related posts

- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
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- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
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Is the concept of moral responsibility compatible with physicalism / materialism?

November 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 linked to this post by J. Warner Wallace.

Excerpt:

> When examining the causes for an event (such as a death) we can separate them into two categories: event causation and agent causation (prior physical events cause things to happen and free agents cause things to happen). It's important to recognize that free agents alone have the freedom to act or respond without a prior physical causal event. Physical objects, like dominoes, cannot cause themselves to fall over; they require a prior event to cause them to fall. But you and I have the ability to cause the first domino to fall as a simple matter of choice (we don't need a prior event to cause this action). You can't blame a car for running over a victim; the car is simply a physical object subject to a series of physical processes, none of which can be held morally culpable. But we *can* blame the*driver* of the car for driving the car over the victim. The driver is a free agent, and we recognize that his choices are just that: free choices. The driver is not like the car. His choice is not simply the result of a series of purely physical processes, like dominoes falling. He had the freedom to choose otherwise, and this is why we seek to arrest and prosecute him.
>
> Our recognition of the moral culpability of the driver (rather than the car) is an admission that materialism (physicalism) fails to explain who we are as humans. Consider the following argument:
>
> **No Physical System is a Free Agent**
> Physical systems are either "determined" (one event necessarily following the other) or "random"
>
> **Therefore No Physical System Has Moral Responsibility**
> Moral responsibility requires moral freedom of choice
>
> **Human Beings DO Have Moral Responsibility**
> We recognize that each of us has the responsibility *and choice* to act morally, and indeed, we seek to hold each other legally accountable for each other's free-will choices
>
> **Therefore, Human Beings Are NOT Simply Physical Systems**
> Our recognition of moral responsibility and our efforts to hold each other accountable are irrational and unwarranted if humans are merely physical systems
>
> If we, as humans, are only physical systems (merely matter), we ought to stop trying to hold each other accountable for misbehavior. In fact, there can be

> no *misbehavior* if we are only physical brains and bodies; there can only be *behavior*. Our actions have no moral content at all unless we truly have the freedom to choose and the ability to break the bondage of physical event causation.

I finally learned what the "Twinkie defense" was by reading that post. It's worth it for that reason alone.

This quote by JWW reminded me of a famous chapter in Theodore Dalrymple's famous book "Life at the Bottom", in which he explains the worldview of the lower classes in Britain. The chapter is called "The Knife Went In", and it shows how people in the underclass describe their crimes in a way that completely minimizes their own free choices and their own responsibilities.

Take a look:

> It is a mistake to suppose that all men, or at least all Englishmen, want to be free. On the contrary, if freedom entails responsibility, many of them want none of it. They would happily exchange their liberty for a modest (if illusory) security. Even those who claim to cherish their freedom are rather less enthusiastic about taking the consequences of their actions. The aim of untold millions is to be free to do exactly as they choose and for someone else to pay when things go wrong.
>
> In the past few decades, a peculiar and distinctive psychology has emerged in England. Gone are the civility, sturdy independence, and admirable stoicism that carried the English through the war years. It has been replaced by a constant whine of excuses, complaint, and special pleading. The collapse of the British character has been as swift and complete as the collapse of British power.
>
> Listening as I do every day to the accounts people give of their lives, I am struck by the very small part in them which they ascribe to their own efforts, choices, and actions. Implicitly, they disagree with Bacon's famous dictum that "chiefly the mould of a man's fortune is in his own hands." Instead, they experience themselves as putty in the hands of fate.
>
> It is instructive to listen to the language they use to describe their lives. The language of prisoners in particular teaches much about the dishonest fatalism with which people seek to explain themselves to others, especially when those others are in a position to help them in some way. As a doctor who sees patients in a prison once or twice a week, I am fascinated by prisoners' use of the passive mood and other modes of speech that are supposed to indicate their helplessness. They describe themselves as the marionettes of happenstance.
>
> Not long ago, a murderer entered my room in the prison shortly after his arrest to seek a prescription for the methadone to which he was addicted. I told him that I would prescribe a reducing dose, and that within a relatively short time my prescription would cease. I would not prescribe a maintenance dose for a man with a life sentence.

> “Yes,” he said, “it’s just my luck to be here on this charge.”
>
> Luck? He had already served a dozen prison sentences, many of them for violence, and on the night in question had carried a knife with him, which he must have known from experience that he was inclined to use. But it was the victim of the stabbing who was the real author of the killer’s action: if he hadn’t been there, he wouldn’t have been stabbed.
>
> My murderer was by no means alone in explaining his deed as due to circumstances beyond his control. As it happens, there are three stabbers (two of them unto death) at present in the prison who used precisely the same expression when describing to me what happened. “The knife went in,” they said when pressed to recover their allegedly lost memories of the deed.
>
> The knife went in—unguided by human hand, apparently. That the long-hated victims were sought out, and the knives carried to the scene of the crimes, was as nothing compared with the willpower possessed by the inanimate knives themselves, which determined the unfortunate outcome.

I wonder how much the secularism and atheism of the Britain academics has now seeped down to the lower classes and caused them to view themselves as lumps of meat or animals, rather than responsible free agents. Britain is the country of Charles Darwin and the idea of unguided Darwinian evolution. If you believe that you are an animal who evolved by accident in an accidental universe, then you don’t believe in free will, moral choices or moral obligations. The funniest thing in the world to me is how atheists go about their lives helping themselves to moral language that is not grounded by their worldview. Like parrots who have been trained to talk about the stock market. There is no realm of objective moral values and duties on atheism, so why are they using moral language and making moral judgments? On their view right and wrong are just social customs and conventions that vary by time and place, and human actions are biologically determined anyway. There are no choices. There is no responsibility.

You can read the whole Dalrymple book for free online, and I’ve linked to all the chapters in this one post.

Supreme Court will rule on Obama administration persecution of Hobby Lobby

November 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> Hobby Lobby's battle against the HHS mandate is headed to the Supreme Court, as the high court today agreed to hear its lawsuit against the controversial provision in Obamacare. The Obama administration is attempting to make it comply with the HHS mandate that compels religious companies to pay for birth control and abortion-causing drugs for their employees.
>
> However, the U.S. Supreme Court today agreed to take up *Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, a landmark case addressing the Constitutionally guaranteed rights of business owners to operate their family companies without violating their deeply held religious convictions. This is good news to the Green family, who own the store.
>
> "This is a major step for the Greens and their family businesses in an important fight for Americans' religious liberty," said Kyle Duncan, general counsel of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and lead lawyer for Hobby Lobby. "We are hopeful that the Supreme Court will clarify once and for all that religious freedom in our country should be protected for family business owners like the Greens."
>
> The Obama administration says it is confident it will prevail, saying, "We believe this requirement is lawful…and are confident the Supreme Court will agree."
>
> "My family and I are encouraged that the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to decide our case," said Mr. Green, Hobby Lobby's founder and CEO. "This legal challenge has always remained about one thing and one thing only: the right of our family businesses to live out our sincere and deeply held religious convictions as guaranteed by the law and the Constitution. Business owners should not have to choose between violating their faith and violating the law."
>
> The Supreme Court is also taking the case of the Mennonite cabinet makers forced to pay for birth control and abortion-causing drugs.

I think many people throw around the word "fascism" without really understanding what the word means. But this HHS mandate is a textbook case of fascism.

Here is the Merriam-Webster definition:

> : a way of organizing a society in which a government ruled by a dictator controls the lives of the people and in which people are not allowed to disagree with the government
>
> : very harsh control or authority

Now, right away, it should be obvious that there is no such thing as right-wing fascism. If right-wing stands for anything, it stands for free-market capitalism, free trade, private property and individual rights (e.g. – free speech, right to life, etc.). Right-wing politics means the freedom to spend what you earn on what you choose to spend it on. Because it's your money – you earned it. Fascism requires the government to control your basic liberties, including what you earn, and how you spend what you earn. That's why fascism is solely a phenomenon of the political left. Only the political left wants to tell you how much of your earnings you can keep, and how much of your earnings must be spent on things you don't need. They have all kinds of reasons why they are justified in taking your money, but all their reasons amount to the same things: their values are higher than your values. Even if you worked for the money, they know better than you do what to spend it on. And if it violates your conscience to spend it on abortion drugs, then you can either pay or go to jail. Fascism.

Related posts

- Obama administration files papers to take Hobby Lobby to Supreme Court
- House introduces new legislation to protect defenders of traditional marriage
- Robert P. George: what is religious liberty? what is conscience?
- Hobby Lobby granted temporary injunction from Obamacare abortion mandate
- Obama rejects conscience protections for military chaplains
- Department of Justice threatens to seize business from Catholics
- Republicans introduce bill to block tax on pro-life religious institutions
- UK doctors who refuse to perform sex changes can be banned from practicing
- Democrat Barbara Boxer: right to be insured trumps religious liberty
- UK midwives protest ruling forcing them to perform abortions
- Hospital told nurses: assist in abortions or lose your job
- Should Christian doctors be forced to act like atheists at work?

Gay New Jersey waitress hate crime revealed to be a hoax

November 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

NBC News reports:

Excerpt:

> After a gay server at a New Jersey restaurant said a customer denied her a tip and wrote her a hateful note on the receipt, a local family contacted NBC 4 New York and said their receipt shows they paid a tip and didn't write any such note.
>
> Dayna Morales, a former Marine and a server at Gallop Asian Bistro in Bridgewater, posted a photo on Facebook earlier this month, showing the bill with a line through the space for a tip. The photo of the receipt showed someone had written, "I'm sorry but I cannot tip because I do not agree with your lifestyle."
>
> Morales indicated in her Facebook post, and in subsequent media interviews — including with NBC 4 New York — that the customer wrote that line.
>
> But a family contacted NBC 4 New York claiming their receipt from the restaurant shows they did leave a tip, and provided what they said was a credit card statement as proof.
>
> The husband and wife, who asked to remain anonymous, showed NBC 4 New York a receipt that appeared to be printed at the same minute, on the same date, for the same $93.55 total, except with an $18 tip.
>
> They also provided a document they said was a Visa bill, which appears to indicate their card was charged for the meal plus the tip, for a total of $111.55.
>
> The couple told NBC 4 New York that they believed their receipt was used for a hoax. The wife says she is left-handed and could not have made the slash in the tip line, which she said looks to be drawn from the right.
>
> "We've never not left a tip when someone gave good service, and we would never leave a note like that," the wife said.
>
> The husband said he and his wife have both worked in restaurants and believe in the value of tipping, and noted that he didn't vote for Gov. Chris Christie because the governor doesn't support gay marriage.
>
> "Never would a message like that come from us," he said.
>
> Morales told NBC 4 New York on Monday that she was certain she did not receive a tip, and insisted the handwriting on the receipt was not hers. When asked if there had been some sort of misunderstanding, she said, "I don't know, all I know is what I've been saying."
>
> A manager and the restaurant owner insisted they had the original ticket for the $93.55 charge, but would not produce the receipt for NBC 4 New York and could

> not explain why the family's credit card was charged for more.

This is actually not the first time that the left has faked hate crimes against itself. Here is a fairly recent article by respected writer David Freddoso that catalogs over a dozen recent hate crime hoaxes by the political left.

My favorites:

> **2013:** Award-winning liberal blogger and 28-year-old University of Wyoming student Meg Lanker Simons goes on trial in October for allegedly anonymously threatening herself with rape on Facebook, then lying to police about it.
>
> **2012:** A Montana man admitted he'd made up a story about being attacked because he was gay. He was embarrassed that he'd hurt himself doing a backflip outside a Missoula bar, so he made up an attack.
>
> **2012:** Aimee Whitchurch and Kristel Conklin threatened themselves by painting their home with anti-gay graffiti and hanging a noose on their door, then reported the incident and insinuated that their neighbors were responsible. They pleaded guilty and got off the hook with 12 months' probation and community service.
>
> **2012:** Olivia McRae and Tanasia Linton, two students at Montclair State University in New Jersey, reported that racist graffiti had been scrawled on their door. Days later, they were charged with making a false report, accused of writing the message themselves.
>
> **2012:** Alexandra Pennell, a student at Central Connecticut State University, claimed to have received threatening anti-gay messages. When it was discovered she'd sent them to herself, she was expelled and barred from all state universities for five years.
>
> **2011-12:** Khalilah Ford was expelled from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside for an especially frightening hoax that reportedly prompted some students to drop out of school from fear. She circulated an anonymously penned list of black students with a threat that they'd be dead soon, including herself on the hit-list. A second student, Janet Uppman, was also expelled for writing a racial epithet on a white board as part of the hoax. Both hoaxers got off easy — they were issued tickets for $400.
>
> **2011:** UNC-Chapel Hill freshman Quinn Matney claimed to have been branded with a hot object by someone who called him an anti-gay slur. In fact, the wound was self-inflicted. When friends noticed it, he made up the story out of embarrassment to explain the injury. A friend, believing he'd actually been attacked, urged him to report it to police, and he did.
>
> **2008:** Elmhurst College student Safia Jilani claimed to have been attacked in a bathroom by a masked gunman and to have had her locker marked with a swastika, both because of her Islamic faith. At the time, her report caused a campus lockdown. She was later indicted for making a false report.
>
> **2007:** Colorado University student Alta Rae Merkling claimed to have been

> attacked by a group of men who cut an “X” into her face, shouting, “X marks the f*ggot!” She was later charged with filing a false report.
>
> **2007:** Case Western Reserve statistics Prof Ramani Sri Pilla mailed hate letters to herself and then falsely accused her co-workers to the FBI — apparently an attempt to bolster a racial discrimination lawsuit she was bringing against her university. She got six months in prison and must pay the costs of the investigation — $66,000.
>
> **2004:** Claremont Professor Kerri Dunn slashed her own tires, and broke her own windows, and vandalized her own car with anti-semitic messages. An activist who constantly inveighed against hate, she had been seen vandalizing her own car by two random people in the parking lot. She ended up being sentenced to a year in prison for insurance fraud and was forced to repay $19,000.

He provides links to all the stories exposing the hate crimes as hoaxes.

The political left is always interested in lying in order to portray themselves as helpless victims, while normal, healthy, moral people are portrayed as evil, vindictive bigots. Famous cases like the Matthew Shepard murder and the Jamie Leigh Jones rape have been revealed to be misrepresented by the political left. The reason why these tactics work is because people on the political right still care about being good and just, and so they are easily bullied into acceptance of things we disagree with, like binge drinking and promiscuity. The hoaxes are always trumpeted loudly as fact by the liberal media. The retractions come months or years later, after the elections are done.

UPDATE: Linked by Blazing Cat Fur, who linked to this list of 32 hate crime hoaxes.

Is belief in the Jesus of the Bible needed in order to be rightly related to God?

November 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good introductory lecture on the topic by Chad Gross, who blogs at Truthbomb Apologetics.

You can see the footnotes for his article on his blog.

The one criticism I have is that he seems to be quoting from John a lot, and he should have some sort of case for John being reliable. I would maybe cite the scholarly work of someone like Richard Bauckham, who thinks that John is not only based on eyewitness testimony, but was actually written by a disciple of Jesus named John. John is my favorite gospel, but skeptical NT critics critics are pretty hard on it. Of course, Chad was speaking in a church, so it's understandable why he might not take the time to do that.

For those who don't want to watch the video, here's a good thought from J. Warner Wallace at Please Convince Me.

Excerpt:

> A "just" God does justice, which means to punish or reward appropriately. In the Western tradition, we punish people for the actions they commit, but the extent of punishment is dependent also on the person's mental state, and a person's mental state is reflective of his or her beliefs. Premeditated murder is worse than manslaughter, and is punished more severely, and a hate crime is a sentencing enhancement that adds more punishment to the underlying crime. In both examples, a person's beliefs are at play: the premeditated murderer has reflected on his choices and wants the victim dead; a hate crime reflects a belief that the rights of a member of the protected group are especially unworthy of respect. So, considering a person's beliefs may well be relevant, especially if those beliefs have motivated the criminal behavior.
>
> But the challenger's mistake is even more fundamental. He is wrong to assert that people are condemned for not accepting the gospel. Christians believe that people are condemned for their sinful behavior – the "wages of sin is death" – not for what they fail to do. The quoted challenge is like saying that the sick man died of "not going to the doctor." No, the person died of a specific condition – perhaps cancer or a heart attack – which a doctor might have been able to cure. So too with eternal punishment. No one is condemned for refusing to believe in Jesus. While Jesus can – and does – provide salvation for those who seek it, there is nothing unjust about not providing salvation to those who refuse to seek it. After all, we don't normally feel obliged to help someone who has not asked for, and does not want, our assistance. So too the Creator has the right to withhold a gift – i.e. eternity spent in His presence – from those who would

> trample on the gift, and on the gift-giver.
>
> The quoted assertion also demonstrates an unspoken belief that we can impress God with our “kind” or “generous” behavior. This fails to grasp what God is – a perfect being. We cannot impress Him. What we do right we should do. We don’t drag people into court and reward them for not committing crimes. This is expected of them. They can’t commit a murder and then claim that punishment is unfair, because they had been kind and generous in the past. When a person gets his mind around the idea of what perfection entails, trying to impress a perfect Creator with our “basic goodness” no longer seems like such a good option.

If you want to hear a debate featuring exclusivists versus pluralists, I’ve got a podcast and a summary of a good debate on this issue between Chris Sinkinson and John Hick. You can’t find a more prominent pluralist than John Hick, except for maybe Paul Knitter, who is featured in a debate with Harold Netland in the new “Debating Christian Theism” book that is just out with Oxford University Press.

What was Thanksgiving Day really like in history?

November 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

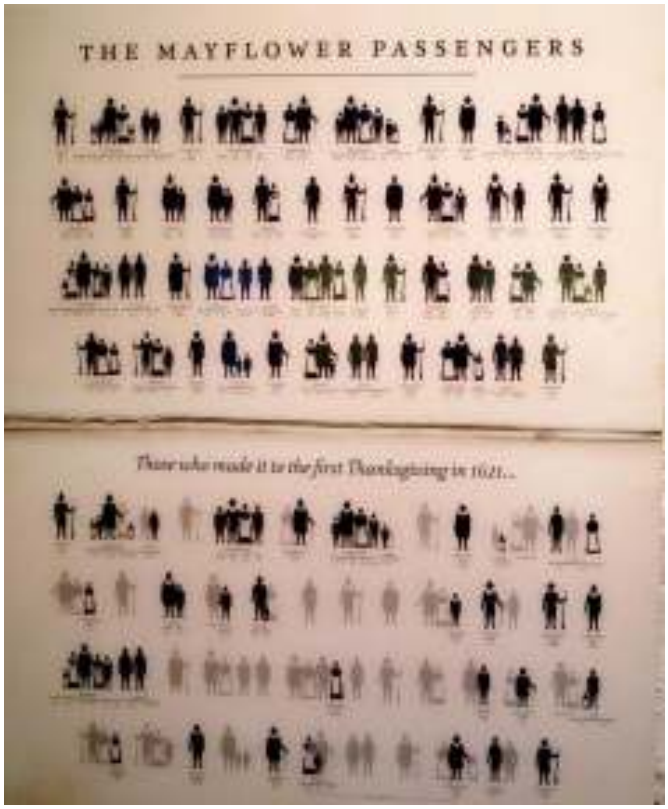

The First Thanksgiving

A mysterious Dr. J (not that Dr. J, this one is Jewish) posted this article on Facebook.

Full text:

> The major similarity between the first Jamestown settlers and the first Plymouth settlers was great human suffering.
>
> November was too late to plant crops. Many settlers died of scurvy and malnutrition during that horrible first winter. Of the 102 original *Mayflower* passengers, only 44 survived. Again like in Jamestown, the kindness of the local Native Americans saved them from a frosty death.
>
> The Pilgrims' remarkable courage was displayed the following spring. When the *Mayflower* returned to Europe, not a single Pilgrim deserted Plymouth.
>
> Massasoit, chief of the Wampanoag tribe, signed a treaty with the Pilgrams in 1621, that was never broken. As a result, the two groups enjoyed a peaceful coexistence.
> By early 1621, the Pilgrims had built crude huts and a common house on the shores of Plymouth Bay. Soon neighboring Indians began to build relations with the Pilgrims. SQUANTO, a local Indian who had been kidnapped and taken to England nearly a decade before, served as an interpreter with the local tribes. Squanto taught the Pilgrims to fertilize the soil with dried fish remains to produce a stellar corn crop.

> MASSASOIT, the chief of the nearby Wampanoags, signed a treaty of alliance with the Pilgrims in the summer. In exchange for assistance with defense against the feared Narragansett tribe, Massasoit supplemented the food supply of the Pilgrims for the first few years.
>
> The modern conception of a Pilgrim might include a man in a black hat with a buckle, but not all of the original settlers of Plymouth County fit this description. Successful colonies require successful leadership. The man to step forward in Plymouth colony wasWILLIAM BRADFORD. After the first governor elected under the Mayflower Compact perished from the harsh winter, Bradford was elected governor for the next thirty years. In May of 1621, he performed the colony's first marriage ceremony.
>
> Under Bradford's guidance, Plymouth suffered less hardship than their English compatriots in Virginia. Relations with the local natives remained relatively smooth in Plymouth and the food supply grew with each passing year.
>
> By autumn of 1621, the Pilgrims had much for which to be thankful. After the harvest, Massasoit and about ninety other Indians joined the Pilgrims for the great English tradition of HARVEST FESTIVAL. The participants celebrated for several days, dining on venison, goose, duck, turkey, fish, and of course, cornbread, the result of a bountiful corn harvest. This tradition was repeated at harvest time in the following years.
>
> It was President Lincoln who declared Thanksgiving a national celebration in 1863. The Plymouth Pilgrims simply celebrated survival, as well as the hopes of good fortune in the years that lay ahead.

This might be a good thing to read out at the Thanksgiving table if you are looking for something meaningful to read.

Study finds that attitude of gratitude has many health benefits

November 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Harvard Mental Health Newsletter.

Excerpt:

> Two psychologists, Dr. Robert A. Emmons of the University of California, Davis, and Dr. Michael E. McCullough of the University of Miami, have done much of the research on gratitude. In one study, they asked all participants to write a few sentences each week, focusing on particular topics.
>
> One group wrote about things they were grateful for that had occurred during the week. A second group wrote about daily irritations or things that had displeased them, and the third wrote about events that had affected them (with no emphasis on them being positive or negative). After 10 weeks, those who wrote about gratitude were more optimistic and felt better about their lives. Surprisingly, they also exercised more and had fewer visits to physicians than those who focused on sources of aggravation.
>
> Another leading researcher in this field, Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, tested the impact of various positive psychology interventions on 411 people, each compared with a control assignment of writing about early memories. When their week's assignment was to write and personally deliver a letter of gratitude to someone who had never been properly thanked for his or her kindness, participants immediately exhibited a huge increase in happiness scores. This impact was greater than that from any other intervention, with benefits lasting for a month.
>
> Of course, studies such as this one cannot prove cause and effect. But most of the studies published on this topic support an association between gratitude and an individual's well-being.
>
> Other studies have looked at how gratitude can improve relationships. For example, a study of couples found that individuals who took time to express gratitude for their partner not only felt more positive toward the other person but also felt more comfortable expressing concerns about their relationship.
>
> Managers who remember to say "thank you" to people who work for them may find that those employees feel motivated to work harder. Researchers at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania randomly divided university fund-raisers into two groups. One group made phone calls to solicit alumni donations in the same way they always had. The second group — assigned to work on a different day — received a pep talk from the director of annual giving, who told the fund-raisers she was grateful for their efforts. During the following

> week, the university employees who heard her message of gratitude made 50% more fund-raising calls than those who did not.

My editor Mary writes: *There is a health bonus to thankfulness but health isn't why we should be thankful. We should be thankful because we are the recipients of many good things and it is appropriate under such circumstances to express gratitude. It is also the overflow of a heart made happy by the generosity of another.*

To help us be thankful, here is a famous Thanksgiving day proclamation.

Here it is:

> PRESIDENTIAL THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATIONS
>
> 1789-1815 : George Washington, John Adams, James Madison
>
> THANKSGIVING DAY 1789
>
> BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION
>
> Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor – and Whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me "to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."
>
> Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be – That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks – for his kind care and protection of the People of this country previous to their becoming a Nation – for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his providence, which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war –for the great degree of tranquillity, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed – for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.
>
> And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions – to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually – to render our national government a blessing to all the People, by constantly being a government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly

> and faithfully executed and obeyed – to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord – To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and Us – and generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.
>
> Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.
>
> (signed) G. Washington

That’s from George Washington.

Happy Thanksgiving Day!

Peter J. Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospel narratives

November 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Peter J. Williams

This is a lecture I found from British historian Dr. Peter J. Williams.

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?

- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?
- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

You can read an interview with Peter Williams here on Between Two Worlds.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate. That link contains a link to the audio of the debate as well as my snarky summary. It's very snarky.

And Apologetics 315 also posted Peter Williams' assessment of Bart Ehrman's "Misquoting Jesus".

Peter J. Williams debates Bart Ehrman on his book "Misquoting Jesus"

November 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The audio for this Unbelievable radio show debate is available from Apologetics 315.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is the US author of the bestselling book "Misquoting Jesus" (In the UK "Whose word is it?"). He calls into question the authority of the New Testament as scribal changes over time have changed the documents.
>
> So can we trust the scripture? Bible scholar Peter Williams believes in the reliability of the New Testament and that Bart's prognosis is far too pessimistic.

This post is a re-post from 2011. I have been listening to this lecture by Peter J. Williams on "Misquoting Jesus" this week, and it reminded me to re-post this debate.

Summary of the Williams-Ehrman debate:

Note: this summary is *snarky*. If you want an accurate view of the debate, then listen to it. My summary is meant to be humorous.

Ehrman:

- I had a mystical experience in childhood and became an evangelical Christian
- I went to Moody Bible Institute, and they told me that the Bible was inerrant
- For a while, I was committed to the view that there are no mistakes in the Bible
- At Princeton, I was taught *and graded* by professors who did not accept inerrancy
- By a strange coincidence, I began to see that the Bible did have errors after all!
- We don't have the original documents written by the original authors, we only have thousands of copies
- if the words of the Bible are not completely inerrant, then none of it is historical
- if all of the words in the copies of the Bible are not identical, then none of it is historical

Williams:

- I would say the New and Old testaments are the Word of God
- We don't need to have the original Greek writings in order to believe in the authority of the Bible
- I believe in inerrancy, but doesn't mean there are no problems
- the doctrine of inerrancy has always referred to the original Greek copies, not the translations

Moderator:

- what are the main points of Misquoting Jesus?

Ehrman:

- we don't have the originals of any of the books of the New Testament
- we have copies that are much later, sometimes even centuries later!!1!
- the copies we have all differ from one another – they were changed by scribes!!1!
- we have 5000 manuscripts in the original Greek language
- there are hundreds of thousands of differences!!1!
- most of the differences don't matter
- some differences are significant for meaning or doctrine
- errors are propagated because the next scribe inherits the mistake of their source copy
- a large gap between the time of writing and the first extant copy means more errors have crept in

Williams:

- the reason we have so many variants is because the number of manuscripts is large

Angry Jesus or compassionate Jesus in Mark

Ehrman:

- most manuscripts say that Jesus was compassionate when healing a leper, but one says he was angry
- it makes a huge huge huge really really big difference if Jesus is compassionate or angry
- the whole Bible needs to be thrown out because of this one word between different in one manuscript

Williams:

- this variant is important for understanding the passage, but it has no great meaning
- the change is probably just an accident – the two words are very similar visually in Greek
- it's just an accident – it emerged in one manuscript, and it impacted a few more
- the tiny number of manuscripts that have the error are geographically isolated
- I'm pretty sure that WK prefers the angry Jesus anyway – so who cares?

Ehrman:

- no! someone changed it deliberately! it's a conspiracy! you should buy my book! it's a *big deal*!!!!!1!!1!one!!eleventy-one!

The woman caught in adultery in John

Ehrman:

- it is isn't in any of the earliest manuscripts
- this is an apocryphical story that some scribe deliberately inserted into the text
- most people don't even know about this! it's a cover-up! you need to buy my scandalous book!

Williams:

- that's right, it's a late addition by some overzealous scribe
- and it's clearly marked as such in every modern Bible translation
- the only people who don't know about this are people who don't read footnotes in their Bible
- and in any case, this isn't a loss of the original words of the New Testament – it's an addition

Grace of God or apart from God in Hebrews

Ehrman:

- well this is just a one word difference, but it makes a huge huge really really big difference!
- the words are very similar, so it's could be an accident I guess
- but it wasn't! this was a deliberate change! it's a conspiracy! it's a cover-up! scandal!
- buy my book! It's almost as good as Dan Brown!

Moderator:

- hmmmn…. I kind of like "apart from God" – why is this such a big scandal again?

Ehrman:

- you don't care? how can you not care? it has to be inerrant! or the whole thing is false!
- Moody Bible Institute says!

Williams:

- yeah Bart is always saying that every change is deliberate but it's just an accident
- the words are very similar, just a few letters are different, this is clearly an accident
- I have no problem with apart from God, or by the Grace of God
- please move on and stop screaming and running around and knocking things over

Moderator:

- but what if pastors try to use this passage in a sermon?

Williams:

- well, one word doesn't make a big different, the meaning that appears is fine for preaching
- it's only a problem for people who treat the Bible as a magic book with magical incantations
- they get mad because if one word is out of place then the whole thing doesn't work for their spell
- then they try to cast happiness spells but the spells don't work and they experience suffering
- the suffering surprises them since they think that fundamentalism should guarantee them happiness
- then they become apostates and get on TV where they look wide-eyed and talk crazy

Ehrman:

- hey! are you talking about me? a lot of people buy my books! i am a big success!
- it is very important that people don't feel bad about their sinning you know!

Is Misquoting Jesus an attack?

Williams:

- it's rhetorically imbalanced and misleading
- it tries to highlight change and instability and ignore the majority of the text that is stable
- he makes a big deal out of 5 or so verses that are different from the mainstream text
- he says that scribes deliberately changed the scriptures, but he doesn't prove that
- it's just as likely that the differences are just scribal errors made by accident

Ehrman:

- well, maybe the variants aren't a big deal, but what about one angel vs. two angels?
- that's a significant issue! significant enough for me to become an apostate – a *rich* apostate
- if one word is different because of an accident, then the whole Bible cannot be trusted
- it has to be completely inerrant, so a one word difference means the whole thing is unreliable
- we don't even know if Jesus was even named Jesus, because of one angel vs two angels!!!1!
- buy my book! you don't have to read it, just put it on your shelf, then you'll feel better about not having a relationships with God – because who's to say what God

really wants from you? Not the Bible!

UK Supreme Court rules against Christian B&B couple's conscience rights

November 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Telegraph about a recent Supreme Court decision from the UK.

Excerpt:

> The devoutly Christian owners of a Cornish hotel who refused to allow two gay men to take a double room have lost their final appeal to the Supreme Court. It ruled that Peter and Hazelmary Bull had discriminated against the couple, even though they had long operated a rule that unmarried guests had to sleep apart. One of the judges, Lady Hale, said such a case would have been unthinkable less than two decades ago, and it is a measure of how both the law and societal norms have changed that the Bulls should have found themselves in such a predicament.
>
> It is also a pity this matter was not settled amicably when the Bulls made an offer of redress; but campaigners were intent on making an example of them. The aggrieved men, Martyn Hall and Steven Preddy, who were in a civil partnership, were supported by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The Bulls were perplexed as to why the EHRC should act against them, since their right to exercise their religious beliefs was being set against that of the men not to be discriminated against on the grounds of their sexual orientation.

Dina also sent me this article from the pro-gay Spiked Online.

Excerpt:

> [A]s the systematic unequal treatment of gays has ended, so another problem has grown. One pernicious social force has been replaced by another: the willingness of the state to outlaw minority or eccentric views and behaviours. State-backed oppression has yielded to state-backed intolerance.
>
> The Bulls have been hauled before the courts and told they can no longer practise what they preach. To deny a couple the right to make a living in a manner consistent with their Christian values is draconian. The Bulls' fate is similar to that of Lillian Ladele, an Islington marriage registrar, and Gary McFarlane, a Relate counsellor, who were both sacked after declining to provide their professional services to lesbians and gays. Equality laws did for them all.
>
> The problem here is not, as it appears, merely a slap in the face to Christians. It is a slap in the face to the right of *all* individuals to act free of state control absent a compelling reason for intervention. As John Stuart Mill put it in *On Liberty* (1859): 'The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to

> others.'
>
> As if to satisfy Mill's harm principle, the Supreme Court went in search of Preddy and Hall's 'harm'. What they found was that when the Bulls' house rules were explained to Preddy and Hall, they found it 'upsetting' and 'very hurtful'. Even in the touchy-feely twenty-first century, where self-esteem is seen as so important and so fragile, this is pretty lame.
>
> The Supreme Court judge, Lady Hale, may have been aware that this 'affront to their dignity', as she put it, was not the sort of harm, in the Mill sense, that should justify the state's coercive power. She bolstered her argument by linking Preddy and Hall's hurt feelings to a bigger historical picture. 'We should not underestimate', she said, 'the continuing legacy of those centuries of discrimination, persecution even, which is still going on in many parts of the world'.

Fascism happens when the normal desire for compassion is taken out of the family context and becomes the policy of a powerful feminist welfare state. And that's when it becomes a threat to the right of individuals to make moral judgments and to exercise religious liberty.

The EHRC, you'll remember, was a project of the Labour Party of the UK, which is the socialist party in the UK. There is also a communist party called the Liberal Democrats. The striking thing is that many church-attending Christians not only vote for the Labour Party, but they also vote for the Liberal Democrats, which are even more liberal. A lot of this is because British Christians are so far to the left on economic issues that they sort of go along with the assault on their own religious liberty out of ignorance. They vote for bigger and bigger government, and then they are surprised when they actually get it.

The same thing happened in Canada with the Liberal Party and their introduction of Human Rights Commissions and Human Rights Tribunals, which criminalize offending people with free speech. The very Christians that voted for expanding government to reduce poverty were the ones who were then persecuted by the same big government they voted to create. This goes to show why we need to have better economics knowledge among Christians, because many of us are voting for left-wing parties because we think that private, voluntary charity can be replaced with government-controlled redistribution of wealth. Not only does that *not work* to reduce poverty, but in the end, we lose our liberties, too.

In the UK, you'll find a lot of Christians who think that rent control is a good thing, that price controls are a good thing, that raising minimum wage is a good thing, that tariffs on imported goods are a good thing – positions which are generally viewed as incorrect by academic economists across the ideological spectrum. That's why churches need to teach the Christian worldview, including economics. The UK church should be training Christians to undo this ignorant, patriotic confidence that UK Christians have in their welfare state. We all have a lot of work to do to educate ourselves on how the Bible applies to the real world (e.g. – economics), or else we will end up undermining our own liberties.

Additionally, I find it very frustrating that so many churches are so focused on providing emotional comfort and a sense of community to the people in the pews that they neglect to talk about these religious liberty issues. Pastors don't want to alert ordinary Christians about how dangerous it's becoming to take unpopular stands on issues like gay rights in public – it's scary and divisive and drives people away from church. You're not going to hear them trying to apply the Bible to moral issues or economic issues, etc. from the pulpit, because that spoils the "experience" and "the show" – the comfort and entertainment that people expect from church. We need to do better at helping Christians to be aware of threats to our liberties. They need to be trained to connect their faith to specific laws and policies in the real world.

New study: prayer improves self-control and emotional stability

November 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mysterious WGB posted this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Praying helps people stay in control of their emotions and behaviour, according to a new study.
>
> People turn to prayer 'as a coping response to the high demands in life' and are rewarded with increased strength and ability to resist temptation, researchers said.
>
> Previous findings have shown that when people try hard to control their emotions and thoughts, the risk of aggressive outbursts and binge drinking or eating rises.
>
> But the latest study, by German psychologists at Saarland University and the University of Mannheim, found that praying helps people maintain self-control.
>
> 'A brief period of personal prayer buffered the self-control depletion effect', wrote the team, whose findings are published in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology online.
>
> 'These results are consistent with and contribute to a growing body of work attesting to the beneficial effects of praying on self-control.'
>
> Praying has already been linked in the past to reduced levels of infidelity and alcohol consumption.

Also, I feel that I should mention this interesting study, if we are going to have a Twilight Zone post today. (H/T STR)

Excerpt:

> **Abstract**
>
> We examined whether atheists exhibit evidence of emotional arousal when they dare God to cause harm to themselves and their intimates. In Study 1, the participants (16 atheists, 13 religious individuals) read aloud 36 statements of three different types: God, offensive, and neutral. In Study 2 (N = 19 atheists), ten new stimulus statements were included in which atheists wished for negative events to occur. The atheists did not think the God statements were as unpleasant as the religious participants did in their verbal reports. However, the skin conductance level showed that asking God to do awful things was equally stressful to atheists as it was to religious people and that atheists were more affected by God statements than by wish or offensive statements. The results imply that atheists' attitudes towards God are ambivalent in that their explicit

> beliefs conflict with their affective response.

Now, I am blogging about this because it’s interesting, but I would classify this as being in the camp of near-death experiences and the Shroud of Turin. It’s interesting, but it’s not something that I would use to prove anything in a debate. Ever since I read this article from Christianity Today a while back, I’ve been sort of cautious about using prayer studies to argue for anything. Take this prayer study with a grain of salt.

New study: breast cancer rates in China skyrocketed because of one-child policy

November 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life Site News reports. (H/T WGB)

Excerpt:

> Pro-abortion advocates have relentlessly denied a link between abortion and breast cancer, but a new study has emerged from China that seems to show that such a link not only exists, but that the risk rises with each abortion a woman has.
>
> Dr. Joel Brind, professor of endocrinology at Baruch College, City University of New York and a director at the Breast Cancer Prevention Institute, called the findings a "real game changer" for deniers of the so-called ABC link.
>
> The study, titled "A meta-analysis of the association between induced abortion and breast cancer risk among Chinese females" was published this week in *Cancer Causes and Control*, a peer-reviewed international cancer journal.
>
> […]The researchers say they were initially puzzled by their findings, stating that Chinese women "historically" have had lower rates of breast cancer compared to women from western countries such as the US.
>
> They found, however, that incidences of breast cancer in China increased at an "alarming rate" over the past two decades, corresponding with the rise of the Chinese Communist Party's one-child policy.
>
> […]The overall risk of developing breast cancer among women having only one abortion increased by 44 percent.
>
> Calling it the "dose-response relationship" researchers also found that the risk of breast cancer increased as the number of abortions increased. Two abortions increased the risk by 76 percent, three by 89 percent.
>
> "In summary, the most important implication of this study is that IA was significantly associated with an increased risk of breast cancer among Chinese females, and the risk of breast cancer increases as the number of IA increases," concluded the researchers.

IA means "induced abortion".

More:

> The researchers called their findings "consistent" with those of Dr. Brind, who found in a 1996 meta-analysis that women had a 30 percent greater chance of developing breast cancer after aborting their child.

> "Not only does [the study] validate the earlier findings from 1996, but its findings are even stronger," Brind told LifeSiteNews.com.
>
> […]The Chinese research follows on the heels of two similar studies earlier this year. One study published in the *IndianJournal of Community Medicine* in May found a 6-fold greater risk of breast cancer among Indian women with a history of induced abortion when compared to the women with no such history. A similar study from Bangladesh published in the *Journal of the Dhaka Medical College*in April found that women with a history of induced abortion had a 20-fold increase in likelihood of developing breast cancer when compared to women with no such history.
>
> In a report last month, Brind called the findings of the two studies "of the sort of magnitude that has typified the link between cigarettes and lung cancer."

Here's the results and conclusion from the actual paper:

> **Results**
>
> A total of 36 articles (two cohort studies and 34 case–control studies) covering 14 provinces in China were included in this review. Compared to people without any history of IA, an increased risk of breast cancer was observed among females who had at least one IA (OR = 1.44, 95 % CI 1.29–1.59, I^2 = 82.6 %, $p < 0.001$, $n = 34$). No significant publication bias was found among the included studies (Egger test,$p = 0.176$). The risk increased to 1.76 (95 % CI 1.39–2.22) and 1.89 (95 % CI 1.40–2.55) for people who had at least two IAs and at least three IAs, respectively. Subgroup analyses showed similar results to the primary results. Meta-regression analysis of the included studies found that the association between IA and breast cancer risk attenuated with increasing percent of IA in the control group ($\beta = -0.022$,$p < 0.001$).
>
> **Conclusion**
>
> IA is significantly associated with an increased risk of breast cancer among Chinese females, and the risk of breast cancer increases as the number of IA increases. If IA were to be confirmed as a risk factor for breast cancer, high rates of IA in China may contribute to increasing breast cancer rates.

Gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "war on women", especially when you couple it with sex-selection abortion, which pro-abortion people favor. But I have to caution everyone about using studies like this as your whole case against abortion.

Pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf explains:

> First, I think it's wrong when we make how abortion impacts women our primary message. There is a place for that being a secondary message, but it should never be our primary message. Abortion is wrong not because it adversely affects women. It's primarily wrong because it intentionally takes the life of a defenseless human being. We've got to keep our focus clear on that.

I’ve summarized some of the previous studies on abortion/contraception in this recent post.

Cancer victim who alerted media about dropped health plan draws IRS audit

December 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mark Steyn at National Review reports.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> A couple of weeks back, cancer patient Bill Elliot, in a defiant appearance on Fox News, discussed the cancelation of his insurance and what he intended to do about it. He's now being audited.
>
> Insurance agent C Steven Tucker, who quaintly insists that the whimsies of the hyper-regulatory bureaucracy do not trump your legal rights, saw the interview and reached out to Mr Elliot to help him. And he's now being audited.
>
> As the Instapundit likes to remind us, Barack Obama has "joked" publicly about siccing the IRS on his enemies. With all this coincidence about, we should be grateful the President is not (yet) doing prison-rape gags.
>
> Meanwhile, IRS chief counsel William Wilkins, in his testimony to the House Oversight Committee over the agency's systemic corruption, answers "I don't recall" no fewer than 80 times. Try giving that answer to Wilkins' colleagues and see where it gets you. Few persons are fond of their tax collectors, but, from my experience, America is the only developed nation in which the mass of the population is fearful of its revenue agency. This is unbecoming to a supposedly free people.

Elliot is being audited back to 2009. Tucker is being audited all the way back to 2003.

More from The Blaze.

Excerpt:

> Appearing this week on "Rocky D" on Charleston, S.C.'s WQSC, Elliott said that after a media frenzy, his insurance company worked it out with him to allow him to keep his coverage — but there's a new hitch.
>
> **"Monday I got a certified letter, I went down and got it and it's from the IRS and they are auditing my books from 2009," Elliott said.**
> He said he didn't own a business at that time, and in fact was working for the government. He said he's paid his taxes every year and is not any kind of a tax evader.
>
> There was one more part of the notice — Elliott said that "due to federal budget cuts," the meeting between him and the IRS won't take place until April 2014.
>
> "It doesn't matter. It could've been today if they wanted it to," he said.
>
> The radio host said, "you stood up and spoke out about how Obamacare screwed

> over your insurance and probably would kill you and what's the next thing that happened? You get audited by the IRS. That is not a coincidence."
>
> "No it's not," Elliott said.
>
> **And it might not just be Elliott: C. Steven Tucker, an insurance broker who contacted Elliott after his Fox News appearance, said that after he helped assist Elliott with his coverage, the IRS "are now coming after ME all the way back to 2003."**
>
> Elliott told Kelly that he actually voted for Obama over Mitt Romney last year specifically because he liked what Obama had promised about being able to keep your doctors and your insurance plans.

People sometimes complain at me for using the word fascism, but I don't know what else to call this. What do you call it when your government goes after you for speaking out against them? I call that fascism. It's government stepping in to impose their views on individuals by force.

Look, if you want big government to make everyone "equal" by redistributing wealth and nationalizing private industry, then you're a fascist. That's where your view leads. Fascism is the normal endpoint of destroying the free enterprise system under the guise of pursuing "equality". When government takes over industries from the private sector, you are going down the road to fascism. If you don't like private property, you're a fascist. If you don't like the rule of law, you're a fascist. If you don't like free trade, you're a fascist.

New study: casual sex linked to poor mental health and suicidal thoughts

December 1, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina messaged me about this new study reported at Ohio State University, and published in the Journal of Sex Research.

Excerpt:

> A new study suggests that poor mental health and casual sex feed off each other in teens and young adults, with each one contributing to the other over time.
>
> Researchers found that teens who showed depressive symptoms were more likely than others to engage in casual sex as young adults. In addition, those who engaged in casual sex were more likely to later seriously consider suicide.
>
> "Several studies have found a link between poor mental health and casual sex, but the nature of that association has been unclear," said Sara Sandberg-Thoma, lead author of the study and a doctoral student in human sciences at The Ohio State University.
>
> "There's always been a question about which one is the cause and which is the effect. This study provides evidence that poor mental health can lead to casual sex, but also that casual sex leads to additional declines in mental health."
>
> Sandberg-Thoma conducted the study with Claire Kamp Dush, assistant professor of human sciences at Ohio State. The research was published online recently in the *Journal of Sex Research* and will appear in a future print edition.
>
> One surprising finding was that the link between casual sex and mental health was the same for both men and women.
>
> "That was unexpected because there is still this sexual double standard in society that says it is OK for men to have casual sexual relationships, but it is not OK for women," Kamp Dush said.
>
> "But these results suggest that poor mental health and casual sex are linked, whether you're a man or a woman."
>
> The study used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. Adolescents from 80 high schools and 52 middle schools were interviewed when they were in grades 7 through 12 and then again when they were aged 18 to 26.
>
> In all, this study involved about 10,000 people who were surveyed about their romantic relationship experiences across time, as well as depressive symptoms and thoughts of suicide.
>
> Overall, 29 percent of the respondents reported engaging in any casual sexual relationship. These were defined as any relationship in which the participant reported he or she was "only having sex with partner" as opposed to dating. This

> included 33 percent of men and 24 percent of women.
>
> The results showed that participants who reported serious thoughts of suicide or more depressive symptoms as teens were significantly more likely to report having casual sexual relationships when they were young adults.
>
> Casual sex, in turn, was linked to further declines in mental health. Specifically, those who had casual sex in their late teens and early 20s were significantly more likely to have serious thoughts of suicide as young adults, results showed. In fact, each additional casual sex relationship increased the odds of suicidal thoughts by 18 percent.
>
> However, casual sex in late teens and early 20s was not associated with changes in depression as a young adult.

I don't think that parents cannot rely on the schools and universities to tell their children the truth about research like this. You're more likely to get stuff like "Sex Week" at our institutions of higher education.

Here is what happens at Yale University's "Sex Week":

> Yale has a long history of hosting sex-themed events at the university that appear, on the whole, to be intended more to titillate students than to educate them. Sex Weekend is organized by students, but is overseen and approved by university administrators, who grant the use of classrooms and university facilities for the events.
>
> Numerous U.S. universities have begun to host "Sex Weeks" in recent years, a trend that was pioneered by Yale. Past events at Yale have included appearances by porn stars, live nudity, sex-toy giveaways, and screenings of a hard-core porn films, including one that reportedly depicted "fantasy rape."

And don't forget the workshops taught not by researchers, but by sex shop owners:

> The workshop was taught by Jill McDevitt, a 27-year-old "sexologist" who also owns a sex shop in West Chester, Pennsylvaina, which sells vibrators and various sex toys.
>
> She has posted videos of her educational workshops online, including one in which she demonstrates oral sex on a carrot.

So the university administration at Yale is presenting sex to students one way, but not really appealing to their minds with research studies. I think that they want to push young people to engage in premarital sex, especially hook-up sex, without telling them a thing about the consequences of doing so. Doing immoral things definitely breaks down your ability to be moral, and to make moral judgments. And that's what the left does in order to make sure that the next generation is not conservative. People who have been socialized to think that promiscuity is normal are going to have a much more difficult time transitioning into marriage and parenting. And people who are not married and not parenting typically vote for parties on the political left.If we want to do something to

counter what kids are told on university campuses during “Sex Week”, it’s up to us to use evidence from studies like the one above to make a case to them before they get the propaganda.

Is the healthcare.gov web site working?

December 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

No, still not working as of Sunday morning:

Transcript from that clip:

> GEORGE HOWELL, HOST: We know the first thing you have to do when you go to this website you have to select your state. Is that working?
>
> ALISON KOSIK, CNN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT: And what's funny is I was talking with Matt, and, yeah, that seemed to work, right, when you logged on. But then came the road blocks. So tell me about what happened, because we're getting another error message here, and it's supposed to be running smoothly. We're just not seeing that.
>
> MATT SLOANE, CNN MEDICAL PRODUCER: Yeah, so, you know, we've been trying to get into the site since October 1 on and off again. I have to say it did work a lot more smoothly this morning. I got through. I picked my state. I put in all of my information and I got through the whole process in eight minutes. And then it said my status was in progress. So I went to refresh it and I got the error message.

There was some interesting discussion of how the web site was going on Fox News Sunday – specifically, this debate between Neera Tanden and James Capretta:

The key point here is that you need to understand that when the leftist says "better health plans", they do not mean that you will keep your doctors. They are not saying you will keep your hospitals. They are not saying your deductible will be lower. They are not saying your co-payment will be lower. They are not saying that your premium will be lower. Better is not a quantifiable term, and that's why she keeps saying "better" instead of talking about specific numbers. The specific numbers show that you are going to be paying a lot more for health care, assuming you are a middle-class working American. And that's why the progressive debater says "better" instead of being specific about numbers. The numbers are not on her side, so she says "better".

Now, if you ask her what better means, I would suspect that she means that everyone can now have free condoms or free sex changes or free IVF or free drug addiction therapy or free eco-therapy for depression about global warming or something that normal people don't even want or need. That's an example of what a progressive means by "better health care".

New study: unmarried parents four times more likely to split up than married couples

December 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Unmarried parents are four times more likely to split up than those who have wed, research revealed yesterday.
>
> It also indicated that co-habiting couples with children under 16 are now responsible for the majority of family breakdowns.
>
> On average, 5.3 per cent of these relationships ended each year from 2009-12, according to the study.
>
> But among those who had taken their vows, the average rate was only 1.3 per cent, said the Marriage Foundation think-tank and university academics.
>
> The high rate of co-habiting parents in family splits comes despite these couples making up only a fifth of those with children.
>
> The figures were gathered from the findings of a £50 million state-sponsored research project, the Understanding Society survey.
>
> Over the last 20 years, it has gathered information on the progress of families and now tracks events in 40,000 homes.

I have a friend who moved in with a non-Christian guy before she became a Christian and they broke up. She told me all about it. When I was listening to her, the thought occurred to me that women and men think that co-habitation is leading to different places. And it turns out that there is some evidence to support this intuition.

Consider this fascinating article from the Atlantic, authored by marriage researcher W. Bradford Wilcox. The article discusses the variances between cohabitating men and women regarding goals and expectations.

Excerpt:

> According to a new paper from RAND by sociologists Michael Pollard and Kathleen Mullan Harris, cohabiting young adults have significantly lower levels of commitment than their married peers. This aversion to commitment is particularly prevalent among young men who live with their partners.
>
> Pollard and Harris found that the majority of cohabiting young men do not endorse the maximum indicator of relationship permanence: 52 percent of cohabiting men between ages 18 and 26 are not “almost certain” that their relationship is permanent. Moreover, a large minority (41 percent) of men report that they are not “completely committed” to their live-in girlfriends. By contrast,

> only 39 percent of cohabiting women in the same age group are not “almost certain” their relationship will go the distance, and only 26 percent say they are not “completely committed”. Not surprisingly, the figures above and below also indicate that married women *and* men are much less likely to exhibit the low levels of commitment characteristic of many cohabiting relationships today.

Women are thinking that it is going to lead to some deeper commitment from the man, but men are thinking that they are getting what they want already (sex) and that they want to avoid the higher risks of making a more formal commitment.

Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?

December 2, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is

stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this

passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The "Q" source for Matthew and Luke

Here's Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier "Q" source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Learn more

You can learn more about the early belief in the divinity of Jesus by listening to a lecture by William Lane Craig and reading the related paper, and by listening to the debate between Richard Bauckham and James Crossley on that topic. The first link contains other scholarly debates on Jesus.

Fast-food walk out ignores basic economics: minimum wage hike creates unemployment

December 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily explains what's wrong with the plan of fast-food industry workers to strike for higher wages.

Excerpt:

> Egged on by unions, fast-food workers plan to strike in dozens of U.S. cities for much higher wages. Sadly, they're being used to do something that's not in their own interests.
>
> Sensing the time is ripe, the Service Employees International Union and union-funded front groups are organizing a walkout of workers at fast-food joints in about 100 cities to protest how tough it is to live on the federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour.
>
> They'd like that nearly doubled to $15 — and not just for fast food, but retailing and other industries too.
>
> Sounds great. But even by the loopy logic of the left, this is economic insanity and would lead to greater misery, fewer jobs and fewer opportunities for all.
>
> That's not just our opinion. Economists David Neumark and William Wascher, in their comprehensive book "Minimum Wages," looked at virtually all the scholarly and statistical evidence worldwide, digging up literally dozens of studies.
>
> Their finding: Minimum wage laws almost always result in a "reduction in employment opportunities for low-skilled" employees while limiting "skill acquisition by reducing educational attainment and perhaps training, resulting in lower adult wages and earnings."
>
> And, they said, it reduces the total amount of human capital — a huge cost to society.
>
> The minimum wage is so devastating that roughly 85% of all economists in a recent survey — from both the left and the right sides of the spectrum — said they think it's a bad idea.
>
> […]The idea that working families depend on these jobs is false. Most of those working for minimum wage are young, ages 16 to 24. They live in middle-class homes with above-average household incomes.
>
> And as James Sherk of the Heritage Foundation notes, two-thirds of minimum-wage earners get a raise in their first year. This is how they learn to show up, work hard and get along with others — valuable life skills young people acquire as they begin work and the very things that will make them a success later on.
>
> A higher minimum wage would cost young workers jobs and opportunities.

> They'd be wise to ignore the unions' siren song of higher wages for nothing.

From Investors Business Daily, an article by famous economist Thomas Sowell has more on this issue.

Excerpt:

> Switzerland is one of the few modern nations without a minimum-wage law. In 2003, the Economist magazine reported: "Switzerland's unemployment neared a five-year high of 3.9% in February."
>
> In February of this year, Switzerland's unemployment rate was 3.1%. A recent issue of the Economist showed Switzerland's unemployment rate as 2.1%.
>
> Most Americans today have never seen unemployment rates that low. However, there was a time when there was no federal minimum-wage law in the United States.
>
> The last time was during the Coolidge administration, when the annual unemployment rate went as low as 1.8%. When Hong Kong was a British colony, it had no minimum-wage law. In 1991 its unemployment rate was under 2%.
>
> […]Most people in the lower income brackets are not an enduring class. Most working people in the bottom 20% in income at a given time do not stay there over time. More of them end up in the top 20% than remain behind in the bottom 20%.
>
> There is nothing mysterious about the fact that most people start off in entry-level jobs that pay much less than they will earn after they get some work experience.
>
> But when minimum-wage levels are set without regard to their initial productivity, young people are disproportionately unemployed — priced out of jobs.
>
> In European welfare states where minimum wages, and mandated job benefits to be paid for by employers, are more generous than in the United States, unemployment rates for younger workers are often 20% or higher, even when there is no recession.
>
> Unemployed young people lose not only the pay they could have earned but, at least equally important, the work experience that would enable them to earn higher rates of pay later on.
>
> Minorities, like young people, can also be priced out of jobs. In the United States, the last year in which the black unemployment rate was lower than the white unemployment rate — 1930 — was also the last year when there was no federal minimum-wage law.
>
> Inflation in the 1940s raised the pay of even unskilled workers above the minimum wage set in 1938. Economically, it was the same as if there were no minimum-wage law by the late 1940s.

> In 1948 the unemployment rate of black 16-year-old and 17-year-old males was 9.4%. This was a fraction of what it would become in even the most prosperous years from 1958 on, as the minimum wage was raised repeatedly to keep up with inflation.
>
> **A survey of American economists found that 90% of them regarded minimum-wage laws as increasing the rate of unemployment among low-skilled workers.**

Harvard University economist Greg Mankiw puts the level of opposition to minimum wage hikes at 79% among professional economists across the ideological spectrum.

Learn economics for Christmas

By the way, if you're looking for a really good drama that shows the business-owner vs union-leader conflict, I really recommend the BBC production of North and South. It's a beautiful period drama that's based on a Christian woman's novel. The author of the book wrote in the time of Charles Dickens, and he even named the book for her. It's rated 8.7/10 on IMDB. It's $19.99 on Amazon, although it sometimes goes lower than that! A great way to communicate basic economics to your liberal spouse or significant other – especially on this minimum wage issue. Oh, apparently there is a love story in it, but I didn't really pay any attention to that part of it, other than to be pleased that there was no sex or nudity at all – not even kissing! Perfect! This DVD is WK-approved. It is also Dina-approved, because she was the one who suggested it to me.

Just to give you an idea of how much I liked it, I tried watching Downton Abbey and stopped after two episodes. It's boring nonsense. But North and South I rated 9.5/10 and could not stop watching it once I started. There are no wasted scenes, no fluff at all. Everything they did worked to develop the theme of the story. How different it is from the garbage they have in theaters today! The presentation of capitalism is absolutely heroic, and yet the union side is presented sympathetically as well. Of course, if you want to read an economics book instead, then just get Thomas Sowell's "Basic Economics". One of my friends (Letitia) is actually reading that now.

George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016

December 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

I like Scott Walker because he is a man who defeats Democrats and gets things done, and I like Senator Ted Cruz because he is a brilliant debater. Both are tough conservatives. But if I had to pick one of them right now for 2016, I'd pick Scott Walker. And I'm not alone.

Here's an editorial from the St. Louis Dispatch that Dennis Prager discussed on Monday, authored by moderate conservative George Will.

Excerpt:

> In 2011, tens of thousands of government employees and others, enraged by Gov. Scott Walker's determination to break the ruinously expensive and paralyzing grip that government workers' unions had on Wisconsin, took over the Capitol building in Madison. With chanting, screaming and singing supplemented by bullhorns, bagpipes and drum circles, their cacophony shook the building that the squalor of their occupation made malodorous. They spat on Republican legislators and urinated on Walker's office door. They shouted, "This is what democracy looks like!"
>
> When they and Democratic legislators failed to prevent passage of Act 10, they tried to defeat — with a scurrilous smear campaign that backfired — an elected state Supreme Court justice. They hoped that changing the court's composition would get Walker's reforms overturned. When this failed, they tried to capture the state Senate by recalling six Republican senators. When this failed, they tried to recall Walker. On the night that failed — he won with a larger margin than he had received when elected 19 months earlier — he resisted the temptation to proclaim, "This is what democracy looks like!"
>
> […]Walker has long experience in the furnace of resistance to the looting of

> public funds by the public's employees. He was elected chief executive of heavily Democratic Milwaukee County after his predecessor collaborated with other officials in rewriting pension rules in a way that, if he had been re-elected instead of resigning, would have given him a lump-sum payment of $2.3 million and $136,000 a year for life.
>
> To fight the recall — during which opponents disrupted Walker's appearance at a Special Olympics event, and squeezed Super Glue into the locks of a school he was to visit — Walker raised more than $30 million, assembling a nationwide network of conservative donors that could come in handy if he is re-elected next year. Having become the first U.S. governor to survive a recall election, he is today serene as America's first governor to be, in effect, elected twice to a first term.

The radically leftist New Republic has this to say about Governor Walker.

Excerpt:

> Right now, the Republican Party is an increasingly factional place, divided between north and south, establishment and grassroots, Tea Party Conservatives and practical Conservatives, religious right and business, libertarians and populists.
>
> […]There's another potentially unifying mainline conservative, though, and he lurks in Madison. Scott Walker, the battle-hardened governor of Wisconsin, is the candidate that the factional candidates should fear. Not only does he seem poised to run—he released a book last week—but he possesses the tools and positions necessary to unite the traditional Republican coalition and marginalize its discontents.
>
> Walker has the irreproachable conservative credentials necessary to appease the Tea Party, and he speaks the language of the religious right. But he has the tone, temperament, and record of a capable and responsible establishment figure. That, combined with Walker's record as a reformist union-buster, will appeal to the party's donor base and appease the influential business wing. Walker's experience as an effective but conservative blue state governor makes him a credible presidential candidate, not just a vessel for the conservative message. **Equally important, his history of having faced down organized labor and beaten back a liberal recall effort is much more consistent with the sentiment of the modern Republican Party than Jeb Bush's compassionate conservatism.** Altogether, Walker has the assets to build the broad establishment support necessary for the fundraising, media attention, and organization to win the nomination. He could be a voter or a donor's first choice, not just a compromise candidate.
>
> The other mainline conservatives possess some of Walker's characteristics, but not all. He's more compelling and presidential, with more gravitas than Rubio or

> Jindal.
>
> […]But even though Walker's political skills remain an open question, there are reasons why he might be a stronger candidate on paper. For one, he's a more experienced politician—and the fact is that political skills and instincts are learned and honed under tough circumstances. By the time Walker's wins reelection—which I expect—he will have won three competitive statewide contests in a tilt-blue state, under three different circumstances. He will have done so while campaigning and governing as a conservative. There are very few politicians who can claim as much.

We need to have someone who is a non-Romney – someone who likes to fight with the Democrats, and is able to beat them.

I found this article that lists six of his accomplishments.

Here's are a couple:

> #2 He passed a killer budget. Over the summer, he signed into law a state budget thatslashed taxes as well as unnecessary spending, including a $650 million income tax cut (part of nearly $1 billion in total tax cuts), Medicaid reform (see #4), the introduction of work requirements for people on food stamps, a freeze in university tuition and limits on residential property tax increases.
>
> #3 He stands up to corruption. One of Walker's first actions as governor was to create the Commission on Government Waste, Fraud, and Abuse, which was projected to save taxpayers $300 million. He also passed a law that prevents unions from using members' dues to fund political campaigns.

I have placed his new book about his victories in Democrat-dominated Wisconsin on my wishlist. If you like politics, might be a good one for you as well.

William Lane Craig lectures against naturalism at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland

December 3, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: if you have heard Dr. Craig's arguments against naturalism before, then I recommend jumping right to the Q&A time, which starts 72 minutes in.

About Dr. William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich, Germany in 1984.

Here is the full lecture with Q&A: (2 hours)

Summary:

- Naturalism defined: the physical world (matter, space and time) is all that exists
- Dr. Craig will present 7 reasons why naturalism is false
- 1) the contingency argument
- 2) the kalam cosmological argument
- 3) the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life
- 4) the moral argument
- 5) the ontological argument
- 6) the resurrection of Jesus
- 7) religious experience

The Q&A time starts around 1:12:00.

Dr. Craig does mention an 8th argument early in the Q&A – the argument from the non-physicality of mental states (substance dualism), which is an argument that I find convincing, because a materialist conception of mind is not compatible with rationality, consciousness and moral agency. He gets a couple of questions on the moral argument

early on – one of them tries to put forward an evolutionary explanation for “moral” behaviors. There’s another question the definition of naturalism. There is a bonehead question about the non-existence of Jesus based on a Youtube movie he saw – which Craig responds to with agnostic historian Bart Ehrman’s book on that topic. There’s a question about God as the ground for morality – does morality come from his will or nature. Then there is a question about the multiverse, which came up at the physics conference Dr. Craig attended the day before. There is a good question about the Big Bang theory and the initial singularity at time t=0. Another good question about transfinite arithmetic, cardinality and set theory. One questioner asks about the resurrection argument. The questioner asks if we can use the origin of the disciples belief as an argument when other religions have people who are willing to die for their claims. One of the questioners asks about whether the laws of nature break down at 10^-43 after the beginning of the universe. There is a question about the religious experience argument, and Craig has the opportunity to give his testimony.

I thought that the questions from the Scottish students and faculty were a lot more thoughtful and respectful than at American colleges and universities. Highly recommended.

New study: parents who work nightshifts or weekends damage their children

December 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Telegraph reports on a new study.

Excerpt:

> The 24/7 economy is damaging children, a study has concluded, with youngsters more likely to suffer developmental and behavioural problems if their parents work unsociable hours.

> Children of parents who work nightshift and weekends were found to have poorer language, reading and mathematics skills and were more likely to be overweight or obese.
>
> By adolescence, they were also more likely to be depressed and to have abuse drugs and alcohol.
>
> The comprehensive review, led by Jianghong Li, a senior researcher from WZB Berlin Social Science Center, looked back at 30 years of research comparing parents' work schedules with their children's development.

> 21 out of 23 reviewed studies showed weekend and nightshifts damaged child development.
>
> Authors found that working unsociable hours: "has negative consequences for the developing child with regards to mental health and behavioural problems, cognitive development, being overweight and obesity."
>
> The impact was worse for pre-school children who were up to 35 per cent more likely to have developmental problems.

Why would parents have to work so much? Well, it might be materialism and consumerism. But it might also be caused by policies of the secular left, like high tax rates, the marriage penalty, etc. The secular left is very much against marriage and they do not like the idea that a man will be able to provide for a family and keep his wife home to raise them when they are very young.

It's not just nightshift and weekend shifts, either. Previously, I wrote about another Oxford University study on daycare that was featured in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Academics at Oxford University discovered that exposure to some forms of early education contributed to bad behaviour and could be linked to emotional problems.

> The study, based on an analysis of infants from almost 1,000 families, showed

> that the strongest influence on children came from within the home itself.
>
> Children raised in poor families with high levels of parental stress or mental health problems were most at risk of developing emotional problems by the time they started school, it emerged.
>
> The research also uncovered trends relating to children who were in formal child care — away from their parents.

> […]The report, published in the journal Child: Care, Health and Development, said that "children who spent more time in group care, mainly nursery care, were more likely to have behavioural problems, particularly hyperactivity".
>
> The study, led by Prof Alan Stein, of Oxford's Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, found that "spending more time in day care centres, over the total period was a predictor of total problem scores".
>
> "Children who spent more time in day care centres were more likely to be hyperactive," it said. "Children receiving more care by childminders were more likely to have peer problems."
>
> The authors added: "The findings in relation to childminding suggest that it might be out of home care rather than group care that raises the risk of behavioural difficulties."
>
> […]The study said: "These findings suggest that interventions to enhance children's emotional and behavioural development might best focus on supporting families and augmenting the quality of care in the home."

My point in posting these studies is to show that what what children really need in order to do well are their parents. They need time from their parents to talk to them and do activities with them. They need input and guidance from their parents. Any time you here left-wing feminist politicians talking about how we need to push to have children, especially very young children, educated by experts, you need to keep in mind that they don't have the facts to back up their idea. People who push these plans push them because they want women to behave like men and work outside the home. They also want to boost tax revenues by making bother parents work more.

Everyone knows that parents who are careful about who they marry and careful about staying married will have more successful children than those who don't marry before having kids, or who don't prepare for marriage themselves, or who don't marry someone with the skills to do their roles in the marriage. But people on the left want to reverse that – they want everyone's children to be "equal" regardless of what decisions the parents make. And they want to do this by redistributing wealth (not character) from parents who succeed to parents who fail. So when you hear this "equality" crowd talking about the need to replace incompetent parents with taxpayer-funded government bureaucrats, you need to keep studies like the ones above in mind.

Related posts

- How early can you start to teach children about Christian apologetics?
- Feminist Democrat Nancy Pelosi pushes national daycare program
- How the UK government penalizes stay-at-home moms and pushes kids into daycare
- UK offers more money to working women and single mothers, nothing for stay-at-home moms
- Single mothers are better off with a $29,000 job and welfare than with a $69,000 job
- Dennis Prager offers the best concise analysis of the effects of feminism ever

New CDC study: 62% of men who know they are HIV-positive have unprotected sex with men

December 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports on the latest numbers from the Center for Disease Control, which is a department within the U.S. Federal government.

Excerpt:

> Sixty-two percent of American men who know they are HIV positive continue to have unprotected anal sex, according to data released last week by the federal Centers for Disease Control.
>
> This data, which was published Friday, came from the federal government's National HIV Behavioral Surveillance System.
>
> The percentage of self-aware HIV-positive men who engage in unprotected anal sex has been increasing, according to the CDC. In 2005, 55 percent did so. In 2008, 57 percent did so. And, in 2011, 62 percent did so.
>
> "Unprotected anal sex is a high-risk practice for HIV infection, with receptive anal sex having the highest risk," said the CDC report. "Unprotected anal sex also places MSM at risk for other sexually transmitted infections such as syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea. Although condoms can reduce the risk for HIV transmission, they do not eliminate risk and often are not used consistently. Some MSM attempt to decrease their HIV risk by engaging in unprotected sex only with partners perceived to have the same HIV status as their own. However, this practice is risky, especially for HIV-negative MSM, because MSM with HIV might not know or disclose that they are infected and men's assumptions about the HIV status of their partners can be wrong."

Now this is going to be contained if men who have sex with men are relatively monogamous, but are they?

The Family Research Council has published a paper that links to mainstream secular sources that notes that gay men tend to have a far more loose notion of monogamy than men in heterosexual relationships.

Look:

> Lest anyone suffer the illusion that any equivalency between the sexual practices of homosexual relationships and traditional marriage exists, the statistics regarding sexual fidelity within marriage are revealing:
>
> Married couples
>
> - A nationally representative survey of 884 men and 1,288 women published in the *Journal of Sex Research* found that 77 percent of married men and 88

percent of married women had remained faithful to their marriage vows.[9]
- A 1997 national survey appearing in *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States* found that 75 percent of husbands and 85 percent of wives never had sexual relations outside of marriage.[10]

[…]Research indicates that the average male homosexual has hundreds of sex partners in his lifetime:

- The Dutch study of partnered homosexuals, which was published in the journal *AIDS*, found that men with a steady partner had an average of eight sexual partners per year.[12]
- Bell and Weinberg, in their classic study of male and female homosexuality, found that 43 percent of white male homosexuals had sex with 500 or more partners, with 28 percent having one thousand or more sex partners.[13]
- In their study of the sexual profiles of 2,583 older homosexuals published in the *Journal of Sex Research*, Paul Van de Ven et al. found that "the modal range for number of sexual partners ever [of homosexuals] was 101-500." In addition, 10.2 percent to 15.7 percent had between 501 and 1,000 partners. A further 10.2 percent to 15.7 percent reported having had more than one thousand lifetime sexual partners.[14]

Even in those homosexual relationships in which the partners consider themselves to be in a committed relationship, the meaning of "committed" or "monogamous" typically means something radically different than in heterosexual marriage.

- A Canadian study of homosexual men who had been in committed relationships lasting longer than one year found that only 25 percent of those interviewed reported being monogamous." According to study author Barry Adam, "Gay culture allows men to explore different…forms of relationships besides the monogamy coveted by heterosexuals."[16]
- The *Handbook of Family Diversity* reported a study in which "many self-described 'monogamous' couples reported an average of three to five partners in the past year. Blasband and Peplau (1985) observed a similar pattern."[17]

[…]In their *Journal of Sex Research* study of the sexual practices of older homosexual men, Paul Van de Ven et al. found that only 2.7 percent of older homosexuals had only one sexual partner in their lifetime.[19]

Now, all the footnotes in that quotation above go to mainstream sources, so it's no use complaining about the Family Research Council cataloguing them – they didn't publish those research papers, they're just citing them to make a point that everyone researching in the field already knows.

Take a closer look:

> 9. Michael W. Wiederman, “Extramarital Sex: Prevalence and Correlates in a National Survey,” ***Journal of Sex Research*** 34 (1997): 170.
>
> 10. E. O. Laumann et al., The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States (Chicago: **University of Chicago Press**, 1994): 216.
>
> 12. Maria Xiridou, et al, “The Contribution of Steady and Casual Partnerships to the Incidence of HIV Infection among Homosexual Men in Amsterdam,” ***AIDS*** 17 (2003): 1031.
>
> 13. A. P. Bell and M. S. Weinberg, *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women* (New York: **Simon and Schuster**, 1978), pp. 308, 309; See also A. P. Bell, M. S. Weinberg, and S. K. Hammersmith, *Sexual Preference*(Bloomington: **Indiana University Press**, 1981).
>
> 14. Paul Van de Ven et al., “A Comparative Demographic and Sexual Profile of Older Homosexually Active Men,” ***Journal of Sex Research*** 34 (1997): 354.
>
> 16. Ryan Lee, “Gay Couples Likely to Try Non-monogamy, Study Shows,” ***Washington Blade*** (August 22, 2003): 18.
>
> 17. David H. Demo, et al., editors, *Handbook of Family Diversity* (New York: **Oxford University Press**, 2000): 73.

It’s mostly peer-reviewed journals and academic presses. I’m counting the Washington Blade as a reputable source, even though it is only a newspaper, because it is one the nation’s leading gay newspapers, and maybe the leading gay newspaper.

So let’s get back to the study – 62% of men who know they are HIV-positive have unprotected sex with men. Now, imagine you have a gay son or a gay male friend. Given this data from the Center for Disease Control, do you think that it’s reasonable for you to encourage them in this lifestyle? Or rather, should you prefer to disagree with them, for their own good? And it’s not just for their good. The closer we move to socialized medicine, the more the costs of behaviors that are likely to make people sick are going to be shared among people who don’t even engage in those behaviors. We shouldn’t be celebrating anything that hurts people or impoverishes people. We should disagree, but in a respectful, winsome way. Not with the intent to harm, but with the intent to inform and educate.

MIT physicist explains the challenge of cosmic fine-tuning for naturalism

December 4, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the article from Harper's magazine. The MIT physicist says that the fine-tuning is real, and is best explained by positing the existence of an infinite number of universes that are not fine-tuned – the so-called multiverse.

Excerpt:

> While challenging the Platonic dream of theoretical physicists, the multiverse idea does explain one aspect of our universe that has unsettled some scientists for years: according to various calculations, if the values of some of the fundamental parameters of our universe were a little larger or a little smaller, life could not have arisen. For example, if the nuclear force were a few percentage points stronger than it actually is, then all the hydrogen atoms in the infant universe would have fused with other hydrogen atoms to make helium, and there would be no hydrogen left. No hydrogen means no water. Although we are far from certain about what conditions are necessary for life, most biologists believe that water is necessary. On the other hand, if the nuclear force were substantially weaker than what it actually is, then the complex atoms needed for biology could not hold together. As another example, if the relationship between the strengths of the gravitational force and the electromagnetic force were not close to what it is, then the cosmos would not harbor any stars that explode and spew out life-supporting chemical elements into space or any other stars that form planets. Both kinds of stars are required for the emergence of life. The strengths of the basic forces and certain other fundamental parameters in our universe appear to be "fine-tuned" to allow the existence of life. The recognition of this finetuning led British physicist Brandon Carter to articulate what he called the anthropic principle, which states that the universe must have the parameters it does because we are here to observe it. Actually, the word *anthropic*, from the Greek for "man," is a misnomer: if these fundamental parameters were much different from what they are, it is not only human beings who would not exist. No life of any kind would exist.
>
> If such conclusions are correct, the great question, of course, is *why* these fundamental parameters happen to lie within the range needed for life. Does the universe care about life? Intelligent design is one answer. Indeed, a fair number of theologians, philosophers, and even some scientists have used fine-tuning and the anthropic principle as evidence of the existence of God. For example, at the 2011 Christian Scholars' Conference at Pepperdine University, Francis Collins, a leading geneticist and director of the National Institutes of Health, said, "To get our universe, with all of its potential for complexities or any kind of potential for

> any kind of life-form, everything has to be precisely defined on this knife edge of improbability…. [Y]ou have to see the hands of a creator who set the parameters to be just so because the creator was interested in something a little more complicated than random particles."
>
> Intelligent design, however, is an answer to fine-tuning that does not appeal to most scientists. The multiverse offers another explanation. If there are countless different universes with different properties—for example, some with nuclear forces much stronger than in our universe and some with nuclear forces much weaker—then some of those universes will allow the emergence of life and some will not. Some of those universes will be dead, lifeless hulks of matter and energy, and others will permit the emergence of cells, plants and animals, minds. From the huge range of possible universes predicted by the theories, the fraction of universes with life is undoubtedly small. But that doesn't matter. We live in one of the universes that permits life because otherwise we wouldn't be here to ask the question.

I thought I was going to have to go outside this article to refute the multiverse, but Lightman is honest enough to refute it himself:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.
>
> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

The multiverse is not pure nonsense, it is theoretically possible. The problem is that the multiverse generator itself would require fine-tuning, so the multiverse doesn't get rid of the problem. And, as Lightman indicates, we have no independent experimental evidence for the existence of the multiverse in any case. Atheists just have to take it on faith, and hope that their speculations will be proved right. Meanwhile, the fine-tuning is just as easily explained by postulating God, and we have independent evidence for God's existence, like the the origin of biological information, the sudden appearance of animal body plans, the argument from consciousness, and so on. Even if the naturalists could explain the fine-tuning, they would still have a lot of explaining to do. Theism (intelligent causation) is the simplest explanation for all of the things we learn from the progress of

science.

We need to be frank about atheists and their objections to the progress of science. Within the last 100 years, we have discovered that the physical universe came into being out of nothing 15 billion years ago, and we have discovered that this one universe is fine-tuned for intelligent life. I don't think it's like that the last 100 years of scientific progress on the origins question are going to be overturned so that science once again affirms what atheists believe about the universe. Things are going the wrong way for atheists – at least with respect to science.

See it in action

To see these arguments examined in a debate with a famous atheist, simply watch the debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens, and judge which debater is willing to form his beliefs on scientific progress, and which debater is forming his beliefs *against* the science we have today, and hoping that the good science we have today based on experiments will be overturned by speculative theories at some point in the future. When you watch that debate, it becomes very clear that Christian theists are interested in conforming their beliefs to science, and atheists are very interested in speculating against what science has shown in order to maintain their current pre-scientific view. That's not what rational people ought to do when confronted with evidence.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- Near-death experiences and mental effort: evidence for the soul
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

New study: school anti-bullying programs actually increase bullying

December 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The College Fix.

Excerpt:

> Schools across the nation have implemented anti-bullying campaigns, complete with speakers, posters, slogans and more – but a recent study hailing from the University of Texas-Arlington claims such efforts may actually cause more bullying.
>
> Essentially researchers suggest anti-bullying campaigns, despite good intentions, teach students how to bully or may even plant the seed inside students who had not exhibited aggressive behavior previously.
>
> "One possible reason for this is the students who are victimizing their peers have learned the language from these anti-bullying campaigns and programs," Seokjin Jeong, an assistant professor of criminology and criminal justice at UT-Arlington and lead author of the study, said in a campus statement.
>
> Jeong did not respond to requests for comment by *The College Fix.* His research, titled "A Multilevel Examination of Peer Victimization and Bullying Preventions in Schools," was recently published in *The Journal of Criminology.*
>
> In an interview with CBS, he said his findings were a surprise – that his hypothesis going into the research was that anti-bullying programs would help curb the problem. Instead, he said he found the opposite was true, calling it "very disappointing."
>
> Today, 75 percent of schools report a violent incident to the police on a weekly basis and 25 percent of schools experience bullying on a daily basis, according to stats cited in the *Journal of Criminology.*
>
> "Our anti-bullying programs, either intervention or prevention does not work," Jeong said. "There is a possibility of negative impact from anti-bullying programs."
>
> […]The study's results state: "Surprisingly, bullying prevention had a negative effect on peer victimization. Contrary to our hypothesis, students attending schools with bullying prevention programs were more likely to have experienced peer victimization, compared to those attending schools without bullying prevention programs. It is possible that bullies have learned a variety of antibullying techniques but chose not to practice what they have learned from the program. Sometimes, bullies maintain their dominant social status among peers in school. As a result, the preventive strategies may become ineffective."

I think that the troubling thing with anti-bullying programs is that they can be abused to restrict free speech. I think that a better solution to the problem of violence in schools is the same as the problem of violence in society. We need to promote marriage and encourage people to stay married using pro-marriage tax breaks and other pro-family policies.

Here is Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to explain:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:
>
> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

People on the left claim that poverty causes crime, but they don’t look for the root cause of poverty. The root cause of poverty is the decline of marriage, which produces fatherless children. People on the left always want to solve every social problem with bigger government and more wasteful spending. But the research is pretty clear that natural marriage and the traditional family help children to behave better. When your only tool is a hammer, then every problem looks like a nail. But this problem can’t be solved from the top down, it has to be solved from the bottom up – with families.

International tests show US children lagging despite record spending on education

December 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jay Richards tweeted this article from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Since 1998, the Program for International Student Assessment, or Pisa, has ranked 15-year-old kids around the world on common reading, math and science tests. The U.S. brings up the middle—again—among 65 education systems that make up fourth-fifths of the global economy. The triennial Pisa report also shows—again—that East Asian countries like Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea produce the best outcomes.
>
> U.S. performance hasn't budged in a decade. For 2012, U.S. students placed 26th in mathematics, a bit below the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development average, and 17th in reading and 21st in science, close to the average. The U.S. slipped in all categories compared to international competitors, plunging from 11th in reading as recently as 2009.
>
> American teenagers seem especially weak in core academic subjects with high cognitive demands, such as translating concepts into solutions for real-world problems. A quarter never become proficient in math. In Shanghai and Korea, the comparable figure is 10% or fewer. Some 7% of U.S. students reached the top two scientific performance levels, compared with 17% in Finland and an amazing 27% in Shanghai. Is it tiger moms or tiger schools, or maybe both?
>
> The U.S. is way out front in one measure: per-student spending. Only Austria, Luxembourg, Norway and Switzerland spend more. Despite laying out $115,000 per head, the U.S. did no better than the Slovak Republic, which spends $53,000.
>
> Perhaps most depressingly, the data show no statistically significant U.S. achievement improvement over time. None. In an era when it pays to be thankful for small mercies, at least we're not getting worse, but America's relative standing is falling as other countries improve.
>
> […]Massachusetts has been running public schools since 1635 and today is home to some of the best performers in the nation. The state entered Pisa as if it was its own country—but students of the same age in Shanghai performed as if they had two more years of math instruction than those in the Bay State.
>
> […]**Pisa also adds another count to the bill of indictment for the Democrats who block reform to serve their teachers union patrons. Education Secretary Arne Duncan called the report "a picture of educational stagnation," but liberals are major impediments to more accountability, merit-based compensation and school-choice**

> **competition. The Justice Department has even gone so far as to sue Louisiana to block its modest voucher program, which is a moral crime against the students consigned to failing schools.**

There are a few areas of economics that I think that Christians really ought to understand, and education is one of them. We definitely need to be concerned about policies that make it harder for poor, minority students to get ahead. We keep throwing money at the unionized public school system, and we get no results. We need to think about making education more like online shopping. What makes online shopping great is choice and competition. If schools were allowed to compete with one another, then the customer would be assured of getting more quality for less money. The public school system is a monopoly, and it serves the teachers and the education bureaucrats – not the children.

Related posts

- Obama administration blocks Louisiana school voucher program
- Indiana voucher program offers hope to low-income students
- Secretary of Education rescinds previously awarded D.C. vouchers
- Arizona Supreme Court rules voucher program unconstitutional
- New study: private religious schools outperform public schools and public charter schools
- Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools
- Good news: school choice victory in Indiana, pro-life victory in North Dakota
- Atlanta public schools caught helping students to cheat on standardized tests
- Republicans in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania push school choice
- Do public school teachers want to give children a quality education?
- Sex-education video prompts mother to transfer out 7-year old daughter
- How Obama's new 2011 budget fails the poorest children in two ways
- How teacher unions lobby government to block educational reform
- What helps kids to learn? Parents, teacher unions or education bureaucrats?
- New study reveals how school choice benefits the poorest students
- Do teacher unions care about providing high quality education?
- Does the education system discriminate against boys?
- NEA lawyer explains the real goals of teacher unions: money and power
- Are teacher unions interested in helping your children to succeed in life?
- Economist Walter Williams evaluates whether teachers are earning their huge salaries
- How teacher's unions make war on charter schools

New study: religious communities have lower rates of crime

December 5, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically leftist Huffington Post, of all places.

Excerpt:

> As a crime stopper, faith may be particularly effective in setting moral norms, building social ties and investing communities with a sense of meaning and purpose, counteracting the "moral cynicism" and individualism that can foster criminal behavior, researchers Ulmer and Casey Harris of the University of Arkansas note in the latest issue of The Sociological Quarterly.
>
> Ulmer and Harris explored "Race and the Religious Contexts of Violence" in their study. They analyzed data from the U.S. Census, the Religious Congregations and Membership Study and crime reports from nearly 200 counties in New York California and Texas. All of the counties had substantial numbers of black, white and Latino residents.
>
> What they found was not only evidence that religion may exert a protective influence discouraging violent crime, but that there are also racial-ethnic differences in the role of faith communities.
>
> Consider these findings:
>
> • Black and white violence decreased significantly as the percentage rose of county residents who belonged to congregations or were regular attenders.
> • Black and Latino violence was lower in communities where residents belonged to similar types of religious institutions, indicating faith groups from similar traditions were able to exert greater influence on community values when they had a significant presence.
> • Religious homogeneity was not associated with overall rates of white violence, but further breakdowns showed communities with larger percentages of evangelicals had lower rates of white violence. Latino violence was significantly reduced in communities with large numbers of active Catholics.
> • Black violence dipped dramatically in counties with high levels of poverty, unemployment and low levels of education where large percentages of residents were active in congregations. This is a key finding, as communities with severe social and economic disadvantages are more likely to have high violent crime rates.
>
> The findings suggest that religious groups have the ability to cultivate moral attitudes "that counteract the code of the streets," Ulmer says.

The post also includes results from another study, this one featuring over 15,000 people between the ages of 18 and 28:

> Baylor researchers Sung Joon Jang and Aaron Franzen analyzed data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to examine differences in crime rates among young adults in four categories:
>
> • Religious and spiritual.
> • Spiritual but not religious.
> • Religious but not spiritual
> • Neither religious nor spiritual.
>
> Individuals who identified themselves as "religious" were less likely to be offenders.
>
> However, individuals who were "spiritual but not religious" were more prone to commit violent crime than their "religious and spiritual" counterparts and more likely to commit property crime than emerging adults who were "religious" or "neither religious nor spiritual."
>
> "Is being 'spiritual' enough to reduce criminal propensity without also being religious? Our study suggests the answer is no – at least during emerging adulthood," Jang and Franzen write in a recent issue of the journal Criminology.
>
> What both studies also suggest is that the role of religion should be considered as communities address issues of violent crime.
>
> Communities lose out when they marginalize or trivialize the potential pro-social influences of religion, Jang says.
>
> "And one of the areas where society suffers is in crime," he says

A long time ago, when I was just getting started with blogging, I wrote a series of posts that explained the minimal requirements for a robust moral system.

These were:

> 1) Objective moral values
>
> There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.
>
> 2) Objective moral duties
>
> Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the

> consequences of their disapproval?
>
> 3) Moral accountability
>
> Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?
>
> 4) Free will
>
> In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.
>
> 5) Ultimate significance
>
> Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

I argued in other posts in that series that atheism does not ground *any* of those factors, but Christian theism (and Judaic theism) ground them all. Atheists aren't going to be able to behave morally in the face of temptation when doing the right thing (assuming there is such a thing on their view) involves risk or self-sacrifice. Doing the right thing when it goes against your self-interest makes no sense on atheism – it's not rational. And the studies above lend empirical support to that claim.

New study: the presence of a father helps improves children's mental health

December 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Science Daily reports on a new study from McGill University.

Excerpt:

> New findings from the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre (RI-MUHC) show that the absence of a father during critical growth periods, leads to impaired social and behavioral abilities in adults. This research, which was conducted using mice, was published today in the journal *Cerebral Cortex.* It is the first study to link father absenteeism with social attributes and to correlate these with physical changes in the brain.
>
> […]Dr. Gobbi and her colleagues compared the social behavior and brain anatomy of mice that had been raised with both parents to those that had been raised only by their mothers. Mice raised without a father had abnormal social interactions and were more aggressive than counterparts raised with both parents. These effects were stronger for female offspring than for their brothers. Females raised without fathers also had a greater sensitivity to the stimulant drug, amphetamine.
>
> "The behavioral deficits we observed are consistent with human studies of children raised without a father," says Dr. Gobbi, who is also a psychiatrist at the MUHC. "These children have been shown to have an increased risk for deviant behavior and in particular, girls have been shown to be at risk for substance abuse. This suggests that these mice are a good model for understanding how these effects arise in humans."
>
> In pups deprived of fathers, Dr. Gobbi's team also identified defects in the mouse prefrontal cortex, a part of the brain that helps control social and cognitive activity, which is linked to the behavioral deficits.
>
> "This is the first time research findings have shown that paternal deprivation during development affects the neurobiology of the offspring," says Dr. Gobbi. These results should incite researchers to look more deeply into the role of fathers during critical stages of growth and suggest that both parents are important in children's mental health development.

This study is important because although we have a lot of data showing that fatherlessness children exhibit many problem behaviors when compared to children in married households, corelation doesn't imply causation. Now we know about the causation that is behind the corelation. It's the progress of science. It might not fit with feminist ideology, which claims that men in the home are dangerous and harmful to children. But you can't argue with science – especially not with ideology.

Let’s talk another look at some of the problems with fatherlessness.

Here is Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to explain:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:
>
> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

My next post talks about the rise of women-perpetrated domestic violence in the UK. Maybe the increase in fatherlessness in the UK is to blame for women becoming more violence? And what causes fatherlessness? Well, the main driver of it is social programs

that literally pay women welfare money to have children before they are married. Maybe we should stop doing that, because that seems to be causing children to become more violent – especially the next generation of women, as we'll see in tomorrow's article. In the meantime, I would just urge men to be very very careful about getting involved with women who grew up without a father. It's something you need to account for.

In UK, more married men suffer abuse from their spouse than married women

December 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina send me this disturbing article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> The latest findings from the British Crime Survey reveal that 17 men were killed by their partners in England and Wales last year.
>
> Forty per cent of reported domestic abuse victims were male (although this includes assaults by male relatives and partners).
>
> Incredibly, if these figures are to be believed, more married men suffered abuse at the hands of their spouse than married women (2.3 per cent of married men were recorded to have complained about domestic abuse compared with 1.8 per cent of married women).
>
> Of course, it is easy to blame women's increased violence on their emancipation: they move more in men's worlds, earning and competing with as much aggression and vigour as their as male colleagues.
>
> They're drinking more, too: figures from the Office of National Statistics show that women are fast catching men up in the alcohol stakes. The proportion of women consuming more than the recommended limit of 14 units a week has grown by a fifth in a decade.
>
> 'Domestic abuse against men is one of Britain's last remaining taboos, but every year our helpline is seeing at least a 25 per cent increase in the number of men seeking help,' says Mark Brooks, chairman of Mankind, a charity for male victims.

Other Western countries have similar numbers to the UK numbers.

Canada numbers:

> An estimated 7% of women and 6% of men in a current or previous spousal relationship encountered spousal violence during the five years up to and including 2004, according to a comprehensive new report on family violence.

Sweden numbers:

> In two related studies, researchers surveyed 1,400 Swedes about domestic violence and found that 8 to 11 percent of men reported being victims of physical violence at the hands of their spouse in the past year.
>
> The corresponding figure for women was 8 percent.

Something to thing about for you young men – make sure you test your candidates to see if they have tempers. I do find it strange that here in the United States we have a

“Violence Against Women Act” but no “Violence Against Men Act”. From this, I deduce that the politicians of both parties don’t care about male victims of domestic violence, in general.

Stephen C. Meyer debates Charles Marshall on the Cambrian explosion

December 6, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a summary of recent podcast of Unbelievable between intelligent design proponent Stephen C. Meyer and UC Berkeley evolutionary biologist Charles Marshall. Dr. Marshall had previously reviewed Dr. meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt" in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal "Science".

Details:

> Stephen C Meyer is the world's leading Intelligent Design proponent. His new book Darwin's Doubt claims that the Cambrian fossil record, which saw an "explosion" of new life forms in a short space of time, is evidence for ID.
>
> Evolutionary biologist Charles Marshall of the University of California, Berkeley has written a critical review of the book. He debates Meyer on whether Darwinian evolution can explain the diversity of life in the Cambrian rocks.
>
> For Meyer & Darwin's Doubt http://www.darwinsdoubt.com/
>
> For Charles Marshall's reviewhttp://www.sciencemag.org/content/341/6152/1344.1.full

You can get the MP3 file here.

The brief summary this time is not provided by me, it's from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> This past weekend Britain's Premier radio network broadcast a debate between Stephen Meyer and UC Berkeley paleontologist Charles Marshall, recorded at the beginning of November. As David Klinghoffer noted yesterday, the subject of the debate was Meyer's book *Darwin's Doubt*. Yes, that's the same Charles Marshall who reviewed *Darwin's Doubt* in *Science* back in September. See here for our multiple responses.
>
> It was an excellent debate, with both participants offering important insights and good arguments, though in my opinion Meyer unquestionably had the better of it, especially concerning the key scientific question of the origin of the information necessary to build the Cambrian animals. Nevertheless, both parties came to the table ready to engage in serious, thoughtful, and civil discussion about the core issues raised in *Darwin's Doubt*, and we commend Marshall not only for participating, but for focusing his critique of the book on the central scientific issues, something other critics have conspicuously failed to do.
>
> The debate was consequently both constructive and civil. Both parties complimented, as well as critiqued, the work of the other. Marshall, for example, described the first third of *Darwin's Doubt* — the section that discusses the

> Cambrian and Precambrian fossil record, Marshall's own area of principle expertise — as "good scholarship." He also said it "looks like good science" and that Meyer "writes well," and that he (Marshall) "really enjoyed reading"*Darwin's Doubt*. Meyer, for his, part expressed his admiration for Marshall's many scientific papers in paleontology and noted that he had been looking forward to the conversation because he and Marshall clearly "shared a passion for the same subject," despite their different perspectives. Of course, Marshall is not pro-ID and both men expressed spirited disagreements, but they did so in a mostly respectful way that made the debate all the more interesting and engaging to listen to.

I was very impressed with Dr. Marshall's performance during the debate, although he did try to poison the well a bit against ID at the beginning, and he got nasty at the end. It's amazing how Dr. Meyer was able to get him to stop it with the politics and get serious, just by sticking to the science. Even when Marshall got insulting at the end, it was still valuable to see how the other side has to abandon rational argument and scientific evidence once they see that they can't win on the merits. It's "Inherit the Wind" in reverse.

Evolution News also posted a more complete guide to the debate in this post, and I recommend that you read that post before listening to the debate if you are not familiar with the science.

This is a great debate, and you definitely ought to listen to it. I hope I've posted enough here to convince you. If you haven't yet bought "Signature in the Cell" and "Darwin's Doubt", then I urge you to get them, although they are intermediate/advanced level books. The two books are the state of the art in intelligent design research, good enough to be debated with a University of California, Berkeley professor of biology. Dr. Meyer is the real deal, and if you want to be convincing on these important scientific issues, you need to learn the scientific evidence from his books.

If you are not a regular reader of the Evolution News blog, you really should be. It's also a good idea to subscribe to the Intelligent Design: The Future podcast.

Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sex and sexuality at Harvard University

December 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Dr. Morse delivers a talk based on her book "Smart Sex" at Harvard University.

The MP3 file is here. (30 Mb)

Topics:

- the hook-up culture and its effects on men and women
- cohabitation and its effect on marriage stability
- balancing marriage, family and career
- single motherhood by choice and IVF
- donor-conceived children
- modern sex: a sterile, recreation activity
- the real purposes of sex: procreation and spousal unity
- the hormone oxytocin: when it is secreted and what it does
- the hormone vassopressin: when it is secreted and what it does
- the sexual revolution and the commoditization of sex
- the consumer view of sex vs the organic view of sex
- fatherlessness and multi-partner fertility
- how the "sex-without-relationship" view harms children

52 minutes of lecture, 33 minutes of Q&A from the Harvard students. The Q&A is worth listening to – the first question is from a gay student, and Dr. Morse pulls a William Lane Craig to defeat her objection. It was awesome! I never get tired of listening to her talk, and especially on the topics of marriage and family. She is a debater, as well (see below).

And just so everyone knows, the Wintery Knight is pro-chastity and pro-marriage. I believe in chastity and I am chaste. I recommend chastity to men who are contemplating a stable, effective marriage. The research shows that you will have a better marriage by being chaste before marriage.

Related posts

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Israel boosts navy with two guided missile destroyers from Germany

December 7, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Big story from the Jerusalem Post.

Excerpt:

> Germany has agreed to sell Israel two destroyers in exchange for one billion euros, AFP reported on Saturday, citing a report in German daily Bild.
>
> According to the report, the torpedo-laden destroyers are intended to provide protection for Israel's natural gas installations.

I suspect that the primary role of these vessels will be to intercept surface-to-surface missiles and air-to-surface missiles. Israel's submarine force does not have this capability – they are primarily built for missile strike capability. Now why do you think that Israel is choosing to equip naval vessels with these capabilities? It's to convey a clear message to her enemies: "even if you are able to strike our mainland and destroy our land-based missile defense system (Iron Dome) we will still have a naval-based air defense capability".

This is a great deterrent against Israel's enemies. It's a second layer of defense to Israel's Iron Dome system, which is tested and ready to shoot down incoming missiles. In addition to this missile-defense capability, these DDGs also offer surface-to-surface strike capability, but I can't say what that would be without knowing what model they got. My suspicion is that they are older FFG Bremen class, which are being decommissioned and replaced by newer models. But they could also be FFG Brandenburg class, which are newer, but also scheduled for upgrades already. I wouldn't call either of those "destroyers" though – they displace only about 3,600 tonnes each.

So could they be these 5,800 tonne vessels?

F124 Saschen class guided missile frigate (FFG)
Germany doesn't have any real destroyers, although their new FFG Saschen class are as big as destroyers. If Israel somehow managed to get Saschen class FFGs, then I would really be thrilled and impressed. Those things are awesome and they excel at the air defense role. I noticed that the "file photos" being used in news releases *were* of FFG Saschen class vessels. But I just can't believe that, it would be so awesome. That would explain why they are being called "destroyers" in the press stories. One can hope! If anyone knows, please tell me.

UPDATE: I did get some feedback through a friend of a friend who is an expert in missile defense, and here is his response:

> Good for Israel. The article is mainly correct. I would say it is wrong on three points. One, Iron Dome will not assist in defending against TBMs or longer range missiles…Israel has other systems for that. Two, the DDGs are not meant to provide BMD if Iron Dome is destroyed. Sea based BMD can allow layered defense against ballistic missiles. Ballistic missiles require multiple interceptors to give a high probability of kill. Three, that being said, none of the Frigates mentioned possess a BMD cape. The Netherlands is working on a BMD cape for a ship they use that is similar to the Saschen class. The Dutch however, have a seafaring history and a navy that is more advanced than the Deutsch.

BMD means Ballistic Missile Defense, and TBM means Tactical Ballistic Missile.

And another SSK Dolphin submarine, too

And more good news from YNet News.

Excerpt:

> Earlier this year, a significant deal between Germany and the Israeli security establishment was completed, as the Germans handed a fifth Dolphin-class submarine to Israel. The handover was marked in an official ceremony in Germany's city of Kiel.
>
> The vessel is considered one of the most advanced submarines in the world and is the most expensive war vessel the Defense Ministry has procured for the IDF. The diesel-powered submarines are widely regarded as an Israeli vanguard against foes like Iran. In total, Israel has purchased six Dolphin submarines from Germany.

There are two kinds of submarines that are used today: attack submarines, which are armed with torpedoes and anti-ship missiles, and ballistic missile submarines, which are armed with heavier missiles that can travel further. Although the SSK Dolphin class is an attack submarine on paper, my suspicion is that Israel will refit them to have long-range missile strike capability, including nuclear guided missiles. And in fact after doing a search, I found an article that confirmed my hopes.

Take a look at this article from NTI, a global security think tank based in Washington.

Excerpt:

> As previous conflicts involving Israel began with naval blockades, Israel views its submarine force as critical to national security. Israel's submarines are also intended to exercise sea control over the Eastern Mediterranean and secure sea lines of communication; Israel is dependent on imports of grain, crude oil, and raw materials. [4] There has been consistent speculation that Israel's submarines could be refitted to carry missiles armed with nuclear weapons in order for the country to maintain a survivable second-strike option. Acknowledging Israel's lack of strategic depth, officials have asserted that only submarines can provide a secure weapons platform in the future. [5]
>
> The arming of Israel's submarines has received a great deal of attention. While HDW has stated that Israel's Dolphin-class submarines were equipped with weapon systems similar to those installed on other diesel-electric submarines, various sources have alleged that upon their arrival in Israel, the submarines were modified, and fitted with cruise missiles armed with nuclear warheads. [6] The three initial Dolphin-class submarines were designed in accordance with Israeli demands, and include a "wet and dry" compartment for special operations, as well as four 650mm torpedo tubes, which could be used for Swimmer Delivery Vehicles (SDVs). [7] The German Defense Ministry has stated that these larger tubes were intended to fire Harpoons; upon delivery to Israel, liners were to be fitted to decrease the diameter of the tubes to accommodate the 533mm Harpoon containers. However, the Dolphin-class is equipped with six 533mm torpedo tubes as well, which are capable of launching Harpoons. [8] It seems possible, therefore, that the 650mm tubes might have been designed to accommodate indigenously built, long-range SLCMs.The German government has stated that it does not have information on whether Israel installed different equipment on the submarines after delivery, although former German officials have acknowledged that they assumed that Israel intended to equip the submarines with nuclear weapons. [9]
>
> Some reports suggest that Israel has adapted Harpoon cruise missiles, which have a range of 130 kilometers, to carry an indigenously developed nuclear warhead and guidance system, though other experts argue that such modifications to a Harpoon missile are not feasible. [10] Others believe that Israel has developed an indigenous cruise missile with a range of 320 kilometers that could be a version of Rafael Armament Development Authority's Popeye turbo cruise missile. [11] Still others believe that the missile may be a version of the Gabriel 4LR produced by Israel Aircraft Industries, which could be launched in 533mm torpedo tubes similar to the Harpoon. [12] Such speculation was further fueled by an unconfirmed test of a nuclear-capable, submarine-launched cruise missile (SLCM) in the Indian Ocean in 2000. Some reports claimed targets 1,500 kilometers away were hit. [13] Such a range, however, implies an entirely new type of missile. [14] In June 2002, former State Department and Pentagon

> officials confirmed that the U.S. Navy observed Israeli missile tests in the Indian Ocean in 2000, and that the Dolphin-class vessels have been fitted with nuclear-capable cruise missiles of a new design. [15] However, the Israeli Defense Forces have consistently denied any such missile tests. [16]
>
> […]The new boats will be equipped with 650mm torpedo tubes—again leading to much speculation that the Israelis intend to outfit the submarines with nuclear-armed cruise missiles.

These submarines are designed to protect Israel's supply lines in the Mediterranean Sea, and also to give them retaliation capabilities in the event of a large-scale missile strike. Iran and her allies will have a tough time detecting these submarines and destroying them – the subs have an extremely quiet propulsion system and can operate submerged for up to a week. These six submarines are a deterrent against any nation that would try to attack Israel, because they know that there is no hope for them to destroy all of their strike capability in the initial strike against Israel's land-based assets. Israel could also depend on ground-based missile launchers,some of which might be mobile, and their airborne strike platform.

This is an application of the principal of peace through strength – the stronger a nation's military, the less likely they are to be attacked, and the more capable they are of protecting their allies. The article above notes that the Clinton administration (Democrats) refused to sell Israel Tomahawk cruise missiles, which have a very long range. That's too bad. If I were in charge, I would sell those to Israel in a split-second.

It really is a terrible thing for the United States to be disarming thanks to Democrat policies, because all this does is encourage our enemies to strike us, and encourage our allies to abandon our alliances and ally with stronger nations. I hope that we are able to elect a Republican soon who will restore our lost military strength.

Scientists troubled by lack of simple explanation for our life-permitting moon

December 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This entire article from Evolution News is a must-read. It talks about a recent paper by a naturalist named Robin Canup which appeared in Nature, the most prestigious peer-reviewed science journal.

So, there's too much to quote here. I'll grab a few snippets to give you the gist of it, then you click through and read the whole thing.

The moon is important for the existence of a life permitting planet:

> Canup knows our moon is important for life:
>
> The Moon is more than just a familiar sight in our skies. It **dictates conditions on Earth.** The Moon is large enough **to stabilize our planet's rotation**, holding Earth's polar axis steady to within a few degrees. **Without it, the current Earth's tilt would vary chaotically by tens of degrees.** Such large variations**might not preclude life, but would lead to a vastly different climate.**

The moon requires an improbable sequence of events:

> Canup states that "No current impact model stands out as more compelling than the rest." All are equally improbable, in other words. Indeed, they are:
>
> **It remains troubling** that **all** of the current impact models invoke a process after the impact to **effectively erase a primary outcome** of the event — either by changing the disk's composition through mixing for the canonical impact, or by changing Earth's spin rate for the high-angular-momentum narratives.
>
> **Sequences of events do occur in nature, and yet we strive to avoid such complexity in our models. We seek the simplest possible solution**, as a matter of **scientific aesthetics** and because **simple solutions are often more probable**. As the **number of steps increases,** the **likelihood** of a particular sequence **decreases**. Current impact models are **more complex and seem less probable** than the **original** giant-impact concept.

This is a good challenge to naturalism, but it lends support to one part of the habitability argument.

Previously, I blogged about a few of the minimum requirements that a planet must satisfy in order to support complex life.

Here they are:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy

- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it’s too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it’s too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet’s rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

This is a good argument, so if you want to learn more about it, get the “The Privileged Planet” DVD, or the book of the same name.

The kalam cosmological argument defended in a peer-reviewed science journal

December 8, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the peer-reviewed article. It appears in a scientific journal focused on astrophysics.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

Here's an excerpt in which the author, Dr. William Lane Craig, explains the Big Bang cosmology:

> The monumental significance of the Friedman-Lemaitre model lay in its historization of the universe. As one commentator has remarked, up to this time the idea of the expansion of the universe "was absolutely beyond comprehension. Throughout all of human history the universe was regarded as fixed and immutable and the idea that it might actually be changing was inconceivable."{8} But if the Friedman-Lemaitre model were correct, the universe could no longer be adequately treated as a static entity existing, in effect, timelessly. Rather the universe has a history, and time will not be matter of indifference for our investigation of the cosmos. In 1929 Edwin Hubble's measurements of the red-shift in the optical spectra of light from distant galaxies,{9} which was taken to indicate a universal recessional motion of the light sources in the line of sight, provided a dramatic verification of the Friedman-Lemaitre model. Incredibly, what Hubble had discovered was the isotropic expansion of the universe predicted by Friedman and Lemaitre. It marked a veritable turning point in the history of science. "Of all the great predictions that

> science has ever made over the centuries," exclaims John Wheeler, "was there ever one greater than this, to predict, and predict correctly, and predict against all expectation a phenomenon so fantastic as the expansion of the universe?"{10}
>
> As a GTR-based theory, the Friedman-Lemaitre model does not describe the expansion of the material content of the universe into a pre-existing, empty, Newtonian space, but rather the expansion of space itself. This has the astonishing implication that as one reverses the expansion and extrapolates back in time, space-time curvature becomes progressively greater until one finally arrives at a singular state at which space-time curvature becomes infinite. This state therefore constitutes an edge or boundary to space-time itself. P. C. W. Davies comments,
>
> > An initial cosmological singularity . . . forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity. . . . On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.{11}
>
> The popular expression "Big Bang," originally a derisive term coined by Fred Hoyle to characterize the beginning of the universe predicted by the Friedman-Lemaitre model, is thus potentially misleading, since the expansion cannot be visualized from the outside (there being no "outside," just as there is no "before" with respect to the Big Bang).{12}
>
> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"{13}
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Every theist should be able to understand and defend this argument. It is a scientific refutation of materialism, and it is supported by six lines of scientific evidence – all of which emerged as science has progressed.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe

3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

Those are the scientific discoveries that have led us to the beginning of the universe, which support's Dr. Craig's argument.

Here's a re-cap of the three main evidences for the Big Bang cosmology from Caltech. (Numbers 2, 3 and 5 from the list above)

Excerpt:

> Until the early 1900s, most people had assumed that the universe was fixed in size. New possibilities opened up in 1915, when Einstein formulated his famous general relativity theory that describes the nature of space, time, and gravity. This theory allows for expansion or contraction of the fabric of space. In 1917, astronomer Willem de Sitter applied this theory to the entire universe and boldly went on to show that the universe could be expanding. Aleksandr Friedmann, a mathematician, reached the same conclusion in a more general way in 1922, as did Georges Lemaître, a cosmologist and a Jesuit, in 1927. This step was revolutionary since the accepted view at the time was that the universe was static in size. Tracing back this expanding universe, Lemaître imagined all matter initially contained in a tiny universe and then exploding. These thoughts introduced amazing new possibilities for the universe, but were independent of observation at that time.
>
> **Why Do We Think the Big Bang Happened?**
>
> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

The article goes into detail about each of these three evidences.

This is the kind of evidence I expect all Christian theists to be using when discussing the question of whether God exists. Scientific evidence. When talking to non-Christians, we first need to show that we understand science, because science is a reliable and

respected way of getting knowledge about the universe. Non-Christians do not accept the Bible, but they do accept science, so we begin evangelism with science. Science (experimental, testable, repeatable science) should set limits on what anyone can believe – including non-Christians, who might otherwise not be inclined to listen to Bible verses and theology.

The Big Bang is not compatible with atheism

According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by the atheistic worldview.

You should definitely print out both articles and get familiar with the arguments and the evidence. I have tried this argument out on atheists, and the response I usually get is that scientific discoveries will soon emerge that falsifies all of these six scientific discoveries. That sounds more like faith than reason to me. And we have to make it clear to others who are still deciding that there is a conflict between science and religion. Just not the one they're expecting. Let's make our decisions about what to believe based on what science is telling us today. Let's hold accountable people who want to have a worldview that is based on speculations.

Why is the unemployment rate for young people so high?

December 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A few of the policies that are causing the problem are explained in this article from the American Enterprise Institute. I have highlighted the policies that discourage employers in the snippet I excerpted below.

Excerpt:

> If Washington is serious about helping this vulnerable population, it should focus on increasing workers' take home pay and lowering the business employment costs. Conventional wisdom preaches increasing minimum wages. But a far more effective policy would be to simply exempt younger workers and their employers from paying taxes related to their employment.
>
> People in the workforce typically get their start when they are young – beginning with some entry level job where they learn basic job skills, develop effective work habits, and earn a modest wage. This important first step gives them a chance at earning wages and achieving a level of success that facilitates advance up the economic ladder. Work habits and skills are generally learned early in life or unfortunately for too many, not learned at all.
>
> The long term damage caused by this lack of employment is very large. Income mobility has declined. The sad fact is the probability of people at the bottom moving up the income ladder is lower than it was 20 and 30 years ago. Many studies have demonstrated that three factors determine most of the difference between those who start in poverty and stay there and those who don't – finishing high school; avoiding becoming a teenage parent, and getting a full-time job. Those who do all three have only a 2 percent chance of living in poverty and a 75 percent chance of joining the middle class.
>
> Many economists and social scientists have suggested both demand and supply reasons why youth unemployment is so high. On the demand side, the national safety net – Food Stamps, Earned Income Tax, welfare and subsidy programs of all kinds – substantially reduce the relative benefit of working. In other words, the wage premium for working versus taking advantage of benefit programs on an after-tax basis is simply too small to encourage many people to work.
>
> If a young person enters the work force at the minimum wage, he grosses $7.25 per hour. From this, in a place like Los Angeles, he pays federal and state income taxes and Medicare and Social Security payroll taxes which total $1.11. So, out of the $7.25 earned, he keeps just over $6. If he is single and without children, he won't qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or food stamps.
>
> **On the supply side, the cost of employing young people is high relative**

> **to their economic contribution to potential employers. An entry-level employee costs his employer much more than $7.25. In addition to his wages, the employer also pays Social Security and Medicare taxes, plus unemployment insurance, that add on an average of 92 cents. So today, the new employee costs the business $8.13 per hour, of which the young employee keeps only three-quarters.**
>
> **This cost will increase further when the Affordable Care Act kicks in. Beginning in 2015, if the employer has more than 50 employees, he will have to provide health insurance for full-time workers or pay a $2,000 fine – which comes to $.96 per hour. That will make an abysmal employment situation even worse.**
>
> Overall, public policy ought to be aimed at encouraging businesses to create entry level jobs. Perversely, attempts to increase the minimum wage and institute so-called living wages would do the exact opposite. If government wanted to help create a permanent economic underclass, it would implement exactly the policies that are in place. All of us who want people to enjoy earned success ought to be outraged at these government policies.

This is important, because very often the policies proposed by people on the left are not designed to solve the problem. Thomas Sowell argues that the real purpose of leftist policies is for leftist leaders to feel self-important by getting applause from those who are economically ignorant. They push policies that *sound good* but that *don't actually work.*

The good news is that young people are waking up. According to a Harvard University survey, 57% of young adults now disapprove of Obamacare. Even they are starting to think about what is happening to them. Maybe they can avoid the slavery that awaits them under the Democrat's massive program of intergenerational theft, but I'm not optimistic. They have really short attention spans, and you don't learn the fundamentals of economics on Instagram and Pinterest.

UK woman stops man from seeing their daughter for 12 YEARS

December 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this trouble article from the UK Daily Mail, that serves as a warning to men about getting involved with the wrong woman in a feminist welfare state.

Excerpt:

> A father yesterday spoke of his anguish over an extraordinary £100,000 12-year court battle for the right to see his daughter.
>
> The man, described as 'irreproachable' by a senior judge, has endured years of legal fighting with his ex-partner, who has refused to allow contact between him and their 14-year-old daughter.
>
> Incredibly, the family courts have made 82 orders that he be allowed to see the girl, known only as M. But none was enforced by a system which senior judges agreed had 'failed the whole family'.
>
> […]The Court of Appeal three months ago ordered that the case be resolved, saying the teenager's childhood had been 'irredeemably marred' by years of litigation.
>
> Lord Justice McFarlane, presenting a written judgment, said the mother had 'doggedly refused to allow M to develop and maintain a relationship with her father without any good reason'.
>
> He quoted the findings of a child psychiatrist, who said: 'The mother appears to want an unhealthy exclusive relationship with M. The mother hides her opposition to contact behind her daughter's stated "wishes and feelings".'
>
> But the father, a 61-year-old professional who cannot be named, has now been told the legal process faces more months of delays as the family courts seek expert advice.
>
> […]The father – who, unlike the child's mother, cannot claim legal aid – estimates he has spent more than £100,000 in legal costs trying to see his daughter.
>
> He said: 'It is financially penalistic, as a private individual, to fight for your rights through the family courts.'

I can't imagine what that would be like. I put a lot of effort into my mentoring relationships. My only pet lives with my parents, and I try to see him on Skype every night. He can't be moved, because he is so old. I can't imagine what I would do if the mother of my children took the children away from me. I'm not surprised at all that this man spent six figures trying to get access to parent his daughter. And I don't need to tell you that intentionally depriving a child of a relationship with her father is nothing less than child abuse. Yet that's what the system allows.

Now just to get this out of the way, I fully blame the man for this. There are plenty of clues in the article about bad decisions he made in choosing that woman. A smart man doesn't choose a woman who thinks that cohabitation is OK, and that having an out-of-wedlock child is OK. And when you take 10 years of a woman's life and then don't commit, she will do anything and everything she can to get revenge on you.

Men seem to be woefully oblivious to these laws affect them until it's too late. Maybe we need to be a bit more aware and politically engaged to keep these things from happening to us? These anti-male courts didn't come out of nowhere. The UK is well-known for its anti-male government. A lot of men voted the Labour Party and Harriet Harman into power. A lot of men voted for EHRCs, too. We need to be smarter when it's election time, and vote for smaller government, lower taxes, and less regulation. That's the only way to stop the state from doing this.

For young men, I recommend that you read Stephen Baskerville's "Taken Into Custody" before you get married. Find out from research what a woman does that makes her more likely to divorce you, and avoid those things. Some women have seen what the state does to men, or they've read about it, and they mind even have taken action to oppose it. That's the kind of woman you're looking for. The ones who don't blame men for everything, but who are aware of the situation that men are facing under these laws and policies and are determined to act against it with their marriage and family.

Jay Richards: eight common myths about wealth, poverty and free enterprise

December 9, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you read Jay Richards' book "Money, Greed and God?" Because if you haven't, he's written a series of articles that summarize the main points of the book.

The index post is here.

Here are the posts in the series:

- Part 1: The Eight Most Common Myths about Wealth, Poverty, and Free Enterprise
- Part 2: Can't We Build A Just Society?
- Part 3: The Piety Myth
- Part 4: The Myth of the Zero Sum Game
- Part 5: Is Wealth Created or Transferred?
- Part 6: Is Free Enterprise Based on Greed?
- Part 7: Hasn't Christianity Always Opposed Free Enterprise?
- Part 8: Does Free Enterprise Lead to An Ugly Consumerist Culture?
- Part 9: Will We Use Up All Our Resources?
- Part 10: Are Markets An Example of Providence?

Parts 4 and 5 are my favorites. It's so hard to choose one to excerpt, but I must. I will choose… Part 4.

Here's the problem:

> **Myth #3: The Zero Sum Game Myth – believing that trade requires a winner and a loser.**
>
> One reason people believe this myth is because they misunderstand how economic value is determined. Economic thinkers with views as diverse as Adam Smith and Karl Marx believed economic value was determined by the labor theory of value. This theory stipulates that the cost to produce an object determines its economic value.
>
> According to this theory, if you build a house that costs you $500,000 to build, that house is worth $500,000. But what if no one can or wants to buy the house? Then what is it worth?
>
> Medieval church scholars put forth a very different theory, one derived from human nature: economic value is in the eye of the beholder. The economic value of an object is determined by how much someone is willing to give up to get that object. This is the subjective theory of value.

And here's an example of how to avoid the problem:

> How you determine economic value affects whether you view free enterprise as a

> zero-sum game, or a win-win game in which both participants benefit.
>
> Let's return to the example of the $500,000 house. As the developer of the house, you hire workers to build the house. You then sell it for more than $500,000. According to the labor theory of value, you have taken more than the good is actually worth. You've exploited the buyer and your workers by taking this surplus value. You win, they lose.
>
> Yet this situation looks different according to the subjective theory of value. Here, everybody wins. You market and sell the house for more than it cost to produce, but not more than customers will freely pay. The buyer is not forced to pay a cost he doesn't agree to. You are rewarded for your entrepreneurial effort. Your workers benefit, because you paid them the wages they agreed to when you hired them.
>
> This illustration brings up a couple important points about free enterprise that are often overlooked:
>
> **1. Free exchange is a win-win game**.
>
> In win-win games, some players may end up better off than others, but everyone ends up better off than they were at the beginning. As the developer, you might make more than your workers. Yet the workers determined they would be better off by freely exchanging their labor for wages, than if they didn't have the job at all.
>
> A free market doesn't guarantee that everyone wins in every competition. Rather, it allows many more win-win encounters than any other alternative.
>
> **2. The game is win-win because of rules set-up beforehand.**
>
> A free market is *not* a free-for-all in which everybody can do what they want. Any exchange must be free on both sides. Rule of law, contracts, and property rights are needed to ensure exchanges are conducted rightly. As the developer of the house, you'd be held accountable if you broke your contract and failed to pay workers what you promised.
>
> An exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game.

On this view, what you really need to fear as a consumer is government intervention that restricts your choices in the marketplace.

Free trade in the real world

This is not a theoretical problem, either. Millions of people in the Ukraine are protesting against Vladimir Putin and his restrictive Russian policies in order to get more economic freedom by signing a free trade deal with the European Union.

Rick Pearcey posted about it on the Pearcey Report:

> France24.com reports:
>
> Hundreds of thousands of protesters swarmed Ukraine's capital Kiev on Sunday,

> where the country's opposition leaders urged them to continue heaping pressure on President Viktor Yanukovich to sack his government and abandon plans for closer ties with Russia.
>
> Many of the demonstrators who gathered at the city's central Independence Square are furious with the government over its decision to back out of a historic agreement with the European Union in favour of a possible trade deal with Russia, Ukraine's Soviet-era ruler.
>
> The protest . . . is just the latest sign of mounting tensions in Ukraine over the past two weeks, raising fears over the country's political and economic stability.

That's a real crisis: freedom-loving people fighting for their right to be prosperous by adopting the economic policies that produce wealth.

If you care about poverty, it's often tempting to think that it can only be solved one way – by transferring wealth from the rich to the poor. But that is a very mistaken view, as any economist will tell you. The right way to create prosperity is by creating laws and policies that unleash individual creativity. Letting individuals create innovative products and services, letting them keep what they earn, making sure that the law doesn't punish entrepreneurs – that incentivizes wealth creation. Fixing poverty does not mean transferring wealth, it means giving people more freedom to create wealth on their own. Free trade between nations is an important way that we encourage people to create better products and services that what they have available in their own countries.

Economists agree on the benefits of free trade

Who could possibly disagree with free trade? Well, many people on the left do. They favor imposing restrictions on free trade. For example, people on the left favor making those who import goods pay tariffs, which makes it harder to trade with other nations. People on the left want to pass rent control laws to block landlords and tenants from trading more freely. People on the left want to pass minimum wage laws that block employers and workers from trading wages for labor more freely. But economists generally don't agree with any of restrictions on free trade. In fact, *even across the ideological spectrum*, the majority of economists view free trade as a wealth creating policy, and restrictions on free trade as a wealth destroying policy.

Harvard economist Greg Mankiw explains what most professional economists agree on.

Excerpt:

> Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:
>
> 1. **A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)**
> 2. **Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)**
> 3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)

> 4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
> 5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
> 6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
> 7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
> 8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
> 9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
> 10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
> 11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
> 12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
> 13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
> 14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

Now when you are talking to a Democrat, you are talking to someone who disagrees with most or all of those common sense economic policies. For example, Obama's backers in the labor movement inevitably endorse higher import tariffs, which discourage free trade between countries. No economist supports these tariffs on imports, because history has shown (e.g. – Smoot-Hawley Act) that tariffs destroy economic growth and reduce wealth creation. And that's what I mean when I talk about economic illiteracy – I mean ignoring what we know from economics and our own experience with bad policies when we make policy.

Democrat economic policies don't work because they are making policies that are based on economic myths. We know that these myths are myths because of economics is a mathematical science, and because we have tried good and bad policies in different times and places. We have calculations and we have experience to know what works and what doesn't work. If you want to help the poor, you have to respect what economists know about how wealth is created. The solution is not to "spread the wealth around", it's to encourage people to create more wealth by inventing things that people freely choose to buy.

New CBO study: top 40% of earners paid 106.2% of net income taxes collected

December 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports on a new study by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

Excerpt:

> The top 40 percent of households by before-tax income actually paid 106.2 percent of the nation's net income taxes in 2010, according to a new study by the Congressional Budget Office.
>
> At the same time, households in the bottom 40 percent took in an average of $18,950 in what the CBO called "government transfers" in 2010.
>
> Taxpayers in the top 40 percent of households were able to pay more than 100 percent of net federal income taxes in 2010 because Americans in the bottom 40 percent actually paid negative income taxes, according to the CBO study entitled, "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2010."
>
> […]When the the negative 9.1 percent in federal income taxes paid by those in the bottom 40 percent is subtracted from the 109.1 percent paid by those in the top 60 percent, federal tax revenues net out to an even 100 percent.
>
> […]The households in the bottom 40 percent of income—which on average paid negative federal income taxes—were on average receiving many thousands of dollars in what the report calls "government transfers." These transfers included, among other things, benefits from unemployment insurance, Medicare and Social Security, as well as from means-tested programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps), and Medicaid.
>
> "Government transfers increase income in all groups, but those increases, both in dollars and as a percentage of market income, are larger for groups with lower market income," says the report.
>
> According to the CBO, households in the bottom quintile received an average of $22,700 in government transfers in 2010 (including $14,300 in payments from Medicare and Social Security and $8,500 in payments from other government programs); and households in the second quintile received an average of $15,200 in government transfers (including $10,300 in payments from Medicare and Social Security and $4,900 from other government programs).

Now I have been reading articles like this one in National Review by James Pethokoukis, which talk about Obama's rhetoric about "income inequality". And I think that when the President goes on a rant about how much he wants to fix "income inequality", you have to keep in mind what he is actually fixing. He thinks the people who earn the most need to be taxed *more* and he thinks that the people who earn the least need to be given *more*

benefits. That’s what he is trying to fix.

Americans shocked by high deductibles of Obamacare health plans

December 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal reports.

Excerpt:

> As enrollment picks up on the HealthCare.gov website, many people with modest incomes are encountering a troubling element of the federal health law: deductibles so steep they may not be able to afford the portion of medical expenses that insurance doesn't cover.
>
> The average individual deductible for what is called a bronze plan on the exchange—the lowest-priced coverage—is $5,081 a year, according to a new report on insurance offerings in 34 of the 36 states that rely on the federally run online marketplace.
>
> That is 42% higher than the average deductible of $3,589 for an individually purchased plan in 2013 before much of the federal law took effect, according to HealthPocket Inc., a company that compares health-insurance plans for consumers. A deductible is the annual amount people must spend on health care before their insurer starts making payments.
>
> […]That means some sick or injured people may avoid treatment so they don't rack up high bills their insurance won't cover, according to consumer activists, insurance brokers and public-policy analysts—subverting one of the health law's goals, which is to ensure more people receive needed health care. Hospitals, meantime, are bracing for a rise in unpaid bills from bronze-plan policyholders, said industry officials and public-policy analysts.

How high are the deductibles? The article says that "Total out-of-pocket expenses under bronze plans are capped at an annual $6,350 for individuals and $12,700 for families of four".

Is the government really helping people with a plan that has that high of a deductible?

More:

> "They're seeing sticker shock" in transitioning to the more-comprehensive coverage, and "once they start to use the policy, they will see a second sticker shock" of high deductibles, said Jamie Court, president of public-interest group Consumer Watchdog in California.
>
> **For example, the patient's typical share of the cost of having a baby through normal delivery—$6,150, according to one insurer's estimate—would be almost entirely an out-of-pocket expense for a person holding a bronze policy with the average $5,081 deductible.**

> “The anger is going to grow, because people are really stretched to buy these policies, then they’re going to have to reach into their pocket for another five grand before it does anything for them,” Mr. Court said.
>
> […]**The average insured American spent $1,241 on out-of-pocket health-care expenses in 2012, according to Truven Health Analytics Inc., which analyzed medical claims from employers.**

This article from the radically leftist New York Times explains that the Obamcare web site did not even DISPLAY the deductibles to the people who were shopping for plans.

Excerpt:

> For months, the Obama administration has heralded the low premiums of medical insurance policies on sale in the insurance exchanges created by the new health law. But as consumers dig into the details, they are finding that the deductibles and other out-of-pocket costs are often much higher than what is typical in employer-sponsored health plans.
>
> Until now, it was almost impossible for people using the federal health care website to see the deductible amounts, which consumers pay before coverage kicks in. But federal officials finally relented last week and added a “window shopping” feature that displays data on deductibles.
>
> […]In El Paso, Tex., for example, for a husband and wife both age 35, one of the cheapest plans on the federal exchange, offered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield, has a premium less than $300 a month, but the annual deductible is more than $12,000. For a 45-year-old couple seeking insurance on the federal exchange in Saginaw, Mich., a policy with a premium of $515 a month has a deductible of $10,000.
>
> In Santa Cruz, Calif., where the exchange is run by the state, Robert Aaron, a self-employed 56-year-old engineer, said he was looking for a low-cost plan. The best one he could find had a premium of $488 a month. But the annual deductible was $5,000, and that, he said, “sounds really high.”

My guess is that most of the people who have been buying plans would have been comparison shopping based on the premium. They have no idea about this high deductible. So what they’ve really signed up for is to pay $300 a month or so for what amounts to no health care coverage whatsoever – they will probably not reach the limit of the deductible. Is it any wonder that the Democrats voted to exempt themselves (and their political allies) from their own health care policy?

Walter Bradley: three scientific evidences that point to a designed universe

December 10, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor.

Here's a bio:

> Walter Bradley (B.S., Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin) is Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He comes to Baylor from Texas A&M University where he helped develop a nationally recognized program in polymeric composite materials. At Texas A&M, he served as director of the Polymer Technology Center for 10 years and as Department Head of Mechanical Engineering, a department of 67 professors that was ranked as high as 12th nationally during his tenure. Bradley has authored over 150 refereed research publications including book chapters, articles in archival journals such as the Journal of Material Science, Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites, Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials, Journal of Composites Technology and Research, Composite Science and Technology, Journal of Metals, Polymer Engineering and Science, and Journal of Materials Science, and refereed conference proceedings.
>
> Dr. Bradley has secured over $5.0 million in research funding from NSF grants (15 yrs.), AFOSR (10 years), NASA grants (10 years), and DOE (3 years). He has also received research grants or contracts from many Fortune 500 companies, including Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, 3M, Shell, Exxon, Boeing, and Phillips.
>
> He co-authored The Mystery of Life Origin: Reassessing Current Theories and has written 10 book chapters dealing with various faith science issues, a topic on which he speaks widely.
>
> He has received 5 research awards at Texas A&M University and 1 national research award. He has also received two teaching awards. He is an Elected Fellow of the American Society for Materials and the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the largest organization of Christians in Science and Technology in the world. He is President elect of the ASA and will serve his term in 2008.

You can read more about his recent research in this article from Science Daily.

Below, I analyze a lecture entitled “Is There Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer?”. Dr. Bradley explains how the progress of science has made the idea of a Creator and Designer of the universe more acceptable than ever before.

The MP3 file is here.

Evidence #1: The design of the universe

1. The correspondence of natural phenomena to mathematical law

- All observations of physical phenomena in the universe, such as throwing a ball up in the air, are described by a few simple, elegant mathematical equations.

2. The fine-tuning of physical constants and rations between constants in order to provide a life-permitting universe

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants and ratios: (there are more examples in the lecture)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would NOT be able to build up the nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.
- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living

beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – "carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can't be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

3. Fine-tuning to allow a habitable planet

- A number of factors must be fine-tuned in order to have a planet that supports life
- Initial estimates predicted abundant life in the universe, but revised estimates now predict that life is almost certainly unique in the galaxy, and probably unique in the universe.
- Even though there are lots of stars in the universe, the odds are against *any* of them supporting complex life.
- Here are just a few of the minimal requirements for habitability: must be a single star solar system, in order to support stable planetary orbits, the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to have liquid water at the surface, the planet must sufficient mass in order to retain an atmosphere, etc.

The best non-theistic response to this argument is to postulate a multiverse, but that is very speculative and there is no experimental evidence that supports it.

Evidence #2: The origin of the universe

1. The progress of science has shown that the entire physical universe came into being out of nothing (= "the big bang"). It also shows that the cause of this creation event is non-physical and non-temporal. The cause is *supernatural*.

- Atheism prefers an eternal universe, to get around the problem of a Creator having to create the universe.
- Discovery #1: Observations of galaxies moving away from one another confirms that the universe expanded from a single point.
- Discovery #2: Measurements of the cosmic background radiation confirms that the universe exploding into being.
- Discovery #3: Predictions of elemental abundances prove that the universe is not eternal.
- Discovery #4:The atheism-friendly steady-state model and oscillating model were both falsified by the evidence.

- And there were other discoveries as well, mentioned in the lecture.

The best non-theistic response to this argument is to postulate a hyper-universe outside of ours, but that is very speculative and there is no experimental evidence that supports it.

Evidence #3: The origin of life

1. The progress of science has shown that the simplest living organism contains huge amounts of biological information, similar to the Java code I write all day at work. This is a problem for atheists, because the sequence of instructions in a living system has to come together all at once, it cannot have evolved by mutation and selection – because there was no replication in place prior to the formation of that first living system!

- Living systems must support certain minimum life functions: processing energy, storing information, and replicating.
- There needs to be a certain amount of complexity in the living system that can perform these minimum functions.
- But on atheism, the living system needs to be simple enough to form by accident in a pre-biotic soup, and in a reasonable amount of time.
- The minimal functionality in a living system is a achieved by DNA, RNA and enzymes. DNA and RNA are composed of sequences of proteins, which are in turn composed of sequences of amino acids.

Consider the problems of building a chain of 100 amino acids

- The amino acids must be left-handed only, but left and right kinds are equally abundant in nature. How do you sort out the right-handed ones?
- The amino acids must be bound together using peptide bonds. How do you prevent other types of bonds?
- Each link of the amino acid chain needs to be carefully chosen such that the completed chain with fold up into a protein. How do you choose the correct amino acid for each link from the pool of 20 different kinds found in living systems?
- In every case, a human or other intelligence could solve these problems by doing what intelligent agents do best: *making choices.*
- But who is there to make the choices on atheism?

The best current non-theistic response to this is to speculate that aliens may have seeded the Earth with life at some point in the past.

The problem of the origin of life is not a problem of chemistry, it is a problem of engineering. Every part of car functionality can be understood and described using the laws of physics and chemistry. But an intelligence is still needed in order to assemble the components into a system that has the minimal requirements for a functioning vehicle.

10-year-old suspended for shooting imaginary arrow, threatened with expulsion

December 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> On Wednesday, the Rutherford Institute announced it has come to the defense of a 10-year-old boy who was suspended under a school zero tolerance policy for shooting an imaginary "arrow" at a fellow classmate, using nothing more than his hands and his imagination.
>
> Additionally, Rutherford Institute says the student has been threatened with expulsion for his make-believe actions, which were a response to another student "shooting" an imaginary gun at him:
>
> "Johnny Jones, a fifth grader at South Eastern Middle School, was suspended for a day and threatened with expulsion under the school's weapons policy after playfully using his hands to draw the bowstrings on a pretend 'bow' and 'shoot' an arrow at a classmate who had held his folder like an imaginary gun and 'shot' at Johnny. In coming to Jones' defense, Rutherford Institute attorneys have asked Rona Kaufmann, Superintendent of the South Eastern School District in Fawn Grove, Pennsylvania, to rescind the suspension and remove all references to the incident from Jones' permanent school record."

Reason #26,956 to not send your children (especially boys) to public school.

Six ways for women to stamp out the risk of divorce

December 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal Huffington Post, of all places.

First, here's the list of skills for women to develop to avoid divorce:

- Skill #1: Do at Least Three Things a Day for Your Own Pleasure
- Skill #2: Relinquish Control of People You Can't Control
- Skill #3: Receive Gifts, Compliments and Help Graciously
- Skill #4: Respect The Man You Chose
- Skill #5: Express Gratitude Three Times Daily
- Skill #6: Strive to be Vulnerable

And here's the detail on one that I think is the most important:

> Skill #4: Respect The Man You Chose
>
> Being respectful will resurrect the man you fell in love with. You're too smart to have married a dumb guy, so if he seems dumb now, it's because you're focused on his shortcomings. It's not that you made a mistake in marrying him, it's that you've been *focused* on his mistakes *since* you married him. A man who feels respected by the woman who knows him best also feels self-respect, which is far more attractive than cowering and hostility.
>
> Lack of respect causes more divorces than cheating does because for men, respect is like oxygen. They need it more than sex. Respect means that you don't dismiss, criticize, contradict or try to teach him anything. Of course he won't do things the same way you do; for that, you could have just married yourself. But with your respect, he will once again do the things that amazed and delighted you to begin with — so much so that you married him.

And here's the detail on the one that I think is the most neglected:

> Skill #6: Strive to be Vulnerable
>
> Intimacy and vulnerability are directly connected. If you want intimacy, then you'll need to take the risk of admitting that you're lonely, embarrassed or hurt. This is not the same as weakness; it actually requires great strength.
>
> When you're vulnerable you don't care about being right, you're just open and trusting enough to say "I miss you" instead of "you never spend time with me." It means you simply say, "ouch!" when he's insensitive instead of retaliating. That vulnerability completely changes the way he responds to you.
>
> Vulnerability is not only attractive, it's the only way to get to that incredible feeling of being loved just the way you are by someone who knows you well. There's nothing like the joy of intimacy that results from vulnerability. It really is

> worth dropping the burden of being an efficient, overscheduled superwoman to have it.

Before I get started, a piece of advice for men. I really, really recommend that single men take the time to read ALL the comments by the women underneath that post before they even think about getting married. It's important for single men to realize that your old-fashioned ideas about marriage and what women should do in a marriage are often not accepted by modern women – even modern *Christian* women. Most churches don't emphasize the things in the list above, because they are trying to make women feel good, and not to tell them what needs doing and how to do it. When you read the comments by women blaming men and attacking the 6 points, that will help you to see what you should be looking for, so you know how to make sound judgments about who to marry and whether to marry at all.

Right. Let's begin with the 6 points.

From that list above, the ones I have personally encountered are #1, #3, #4, #5 and #6.

For #1, many unmarried women think that relationships are more about being happy than achieving things. If the woman gets into a relationship for happiness, and is not happy, then she may blame the man for failing to make her happy. The solution is to have a more realistic balance between happiness and self-sacrificial service. An unmarried women should focus on finding out what the man's plans and goals are, and why he needs her. She has to focus on showing him that she wants to be informed and engaged in helping him. That is the best way for her to learn how to balance the need for happiness with the need to handle her relationship obligations (to children, as well as her spouse). Another way to lower the need for happiness provided by the man is for the woman to have her own interests. For example, my favorite single woman likes to spend time in the evening decompressing with stuff like cross-stitching, reading, playing with her cat, etc. before we do stuff together. She has her own sources of happiness and that means that I am not overburdened every day as the sole source of happiness. That can be overwhelming on days where she is stressed out from work.

For #3 and #5, I have to tell a funny story about what I have been doing lately with my favorite single woman. I have been busy trying to get her to tell me all about what her life is like from day to day and then buying her small things to help her out with her daily struggles. For example, I bought her an ice scraper so that she wouldn't have to scrape ice off her windshield with her gloves. I bought her kitchen shears so that she wouldn't have to fuss with raw chicken. I got her a new corded hand-vacuum for Christmas because she had to lug her heavy one up and down the stairs to clean them. Why am I fussing so much about this woman? Because she is the most grateful woman I know. Whenever I do anything for her, she tells everyone about it and I hear about how helpful I've been every time she uses whatever I bought her. Women, get it clear: men prefer to help grateful women.

For #4, I think the scariest thing for a woman is thinking that she will have to respect a bad men, even when he is bad. But women like that are looking at marriage wrong. The

respect is *non-negotiable*. You will respect your husband or you will be cheated on or divorced. So with that in mind, *choose a man who you do respect*. That's the solution – test the men carefully and effectively and choose one who is easy to respect and then marry that man. Make the respectability of the man the main criteria. The time to make the decision is before the marriage, because divorce is out of the question. And women really need to work at this, in my experience, because they typically let feelings dominate their decision-making, instead of being practical about finding the right man to do the work that men do in a marriage. The appearance of the man tends to be their only criteria, these days. Instead of choosing on appearances, women should test men out during the courtship to see if they like the way he leads, persuades and makes decisions. Instead of letting feelings and peer-approval decide, just think of what a man does and prefer men who can do those things.

For #6, I think that women really need to realize the power of vulnerability. My view, which is controversial, is that the reason why women are focusing so much on their appearance and sexuality is because feminism has made it illegal for them to attract men with traditional femininity. Vulnerability, trust, modesty, nurturing, care, concern, attention, support, etc. are all viewed by unmarried women as prohibited by feminism – even though they work on men very well. Men treat women nicely when they see how sensitive women are to good treatment and bad treatment. Men are motivated by the desire to make a difference and to be appreciated by a woman who needs them. Women need to practice being vulnerable, and to protect their ability to *be vulnerable* by avoiding premarital sex and messy breakups. Women need to learn to control their feelings and not batter themselves up on a sequence of men who are not ready for marriage. The most common thing I am seeing with women these days, including Christian women, is that their ability to trust a man, and to let a good man lead them, have been completely wrecked because they've dashed themselves to pieces over and over on men who looked good and impressed their friends, but who were not qualified for marriage. Marriage, for a man, is a faithful, life-long self-sacrificial commitment to provide for and serve a spouse and to train up children. *Pick the right man for that job.*

How do you get a Christian man to marry you?

December 11, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a Bible verse that explains the number one thing that men are looking for from a potential wife.

Ephesians 5:21-33:

[21] Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

[22] Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

[23] For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

[24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

[25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

[26] to make her holy,cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

[27] and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

[28] In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

[29] After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—

[30] for we are members of his body.

[31] "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

[32] This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

[33] However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, **and the wife must respect her husband.**

The Bible sometimes sets out rules and goals for expected behaviors, which become moral obligations for anyone for follows Christ. It is up to us to convince ourselves through study that the Bible has authority to speak to us. And it is also up to us to decide the most effective way to achieve the goals that the Bible sets out. This post proposes some tips for women who want to learn how to respect men, based on my experiences of what makes me feel respected as a man. I think this is beneficial for single women, as well, because it allows them to arouse the interest of a man *by performing good actions*.

Things that women can do to make men feel respected

Here are some things that signal "respect" to me.

1. Listen

The first thing that really works is listening. I really feel respected when a woman listens

to me explain my thoughts and feelings. This is especially true when I am talking about my work and my work day. When it comes to my work, I feel respected when a woman listens to me explain what I am doing at work. The more she understands software engineering (what I do for money), the more supported I will feel. I like it when a woman is nearby when I am working, and asking about my progress. I know Dr. Craig also talks to his wife about his work as well. I feel a lot better making sacrifices (studying hard things, working weekends, volunteering at work) when those sacrifices are understood, encouraged and supported. That's why I think that women need take care to have a broad understanding of the way the world works, and never drop out of quantitative subjects like math, science, engineering and technology. The more you know about what a man is talking about, the better. Knowing more about politics, economics, science, etc. is always a good thing for women. I think that women definitely need to work full time for at least a couple of years to develop a sympathetic understanding of what men do in an office in order to provide for a family.

2. Plan

Another area that is important to talk about is my plan. I like it when I can tell a woman the specific experiences that I had that cause me to have the plan that I have. For example, my struggles getting apologetics into the churches that I've attended have really soured me on church leaders. Another thing I like to talk about are the Christian scholars who are my role models, and how I try to emulate them, and I want my children to emulate them, too. One lady I was speaking to has been studying areas that I care about on her own through books, lectures and debates and then going out into the world and engaging with the people around her. Sometimes just a few people, and sometimes with large groups. Recently she told me that she would like to start a group in her church to study useful books with them. This made me feel very respected. My goals matter to her, and she is trying to help with them on her own initiative, and with her own strategies. Note that women who want to respect men may find that it is useful to learn certain skills in order to be more effective at helping men with their plans. For example, she might study science apologetics and then engage her co-workers and friends with scientific arguments for Christian theism. She should find out what areas matter to him with respect to serving God and then come alongside him and help him. I have a homeschooling mom friend who is busy doing a degree in nursing, which is a very useful skill set to have. Her children are able to see her struggling with hard subjects like chemistry, and that is good for them to see. It's valuable to a man to have a wife who has practical skills and who can shepherd the children through school and into careers. This same lady is reading Thomas Sowell's Basic Economics, as well.

3. Roles

A final area that is important is my roles as a man. According to the Bible, men are supposed to be the main provider for their families. So, I made the decision early in my life to prefer work to academics – so I have actually been earning money since the time I was 12 years old. My grades were As (and some Bs), but I was always working part-time, and in the summers. The money I earned went straight into investments, so that I would

be able to afford two degrees in computer science (BS and MS) and have a nest egg saved for marriage. I had $9,000 before undergraduate school and $16,000 after, with no debts and a current model year used car. I chose computer science over English literature, because I knew that computer science was a more reliable way to earn a living. Marriages run more smoothly when money isn't a concern, so I did these things in order to make sure that the money to run the marriage would be there.

I think that women should *prefer men who take the provider obligation seriously*. I feel very respected when a woman takes the time to ask me about my education, research, work history, and investments. Our culture today doesn't value men taking their provider roles seriously. Instead, many women prefer *attractive, entertaining* men over men who can provide. I see a lot of Christian women going after men who don't have the ability to finance a marriage. That is disrespectful of the provider role, and I believe it stems from the desire to not acknowledge male leadership. I believe that some women (ones who struggle with trust issues) prefer men who don't earn a lot of money, so that the man will not have the authority in the home that comes from the provider role. But when a woman chooses a man with an inadequate education and resume, it also makes it much harder for her to respect him, which is what a man needs a woman to do.

To respect a man acting as a provider also requires voting for policies that support a man's ability to work (e.g. – less regulation on business, lower corporate taxes) to keep what he earns (lower income tax, lower inflation) and to spend it the way he sees fit (privatization of health care, education, etc.) – and these issues need to be studied, not checked off on a checklist as "we agree". Studying economics and politics in depth, and being political active, are ways for women to respect men in their provider role by promoting policies that help him to perform that provider role. Women should not be supporting policies that promote the redistribution of wealth via taxes. Women should not vote to reward irresponsibility and dependence, either. It is disrespectful to the man's provider role to vote for leftist fiscal policy. If you want big government, then you get men who can't afford to marry. Women need to vote for laws and policies that create more of the hard-working, high-earning men they want to marry.

The provider role is not the only role a man plays, he also has to be experienced at leading others on moral and spiritual issues. In order to evaluate a man's ability in these areas, women must study these exact same issues so that they are able to prefer evaluate a man's ability in these areas. Christianity is not a checkbox. Bible reading and church attendance alone do not train a man to engage a secular culture on moral and spiritual issues. Bible reading and church attendance alone do not enable a man to intelligently apply the Bible to areas like economics and foreign policy, either. Yet economics and foreign policy issues do affect families (e.g. Obamacare or border security) , and that's why men need to be tested to see if they know those things. Marriage requires certain behaviors from men, and those behaviors require knowledge and experience. It's just like picking a man for a job in a workplace. In order to pick well, you need to know what the job is and what it requires.

Study: brain of child neglected by mother is smaller and underdeveloped

December 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Here is the scan:

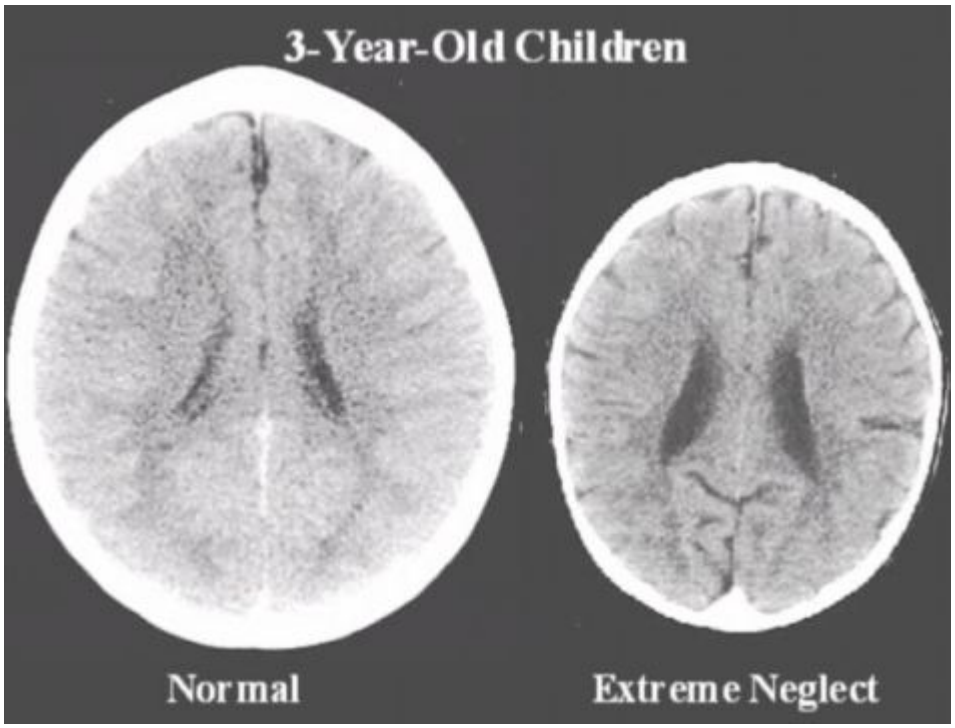

Brain scans of 3-year old children: normal vs neglected

Excerpt:

> Both of these images are brain scans of a two three-year-old children, but the brain on the left is considerably larger, has fewer spots and less dark areas, compared to the one on the right.
>
> According to neurologists this sizeable difference has one primary cause – the way each child was treated by their mothers.
>
> The child with the larger and more fully developed brain was looked after by its mother – she was constantly responsive to her baby, reported The Sunday Telegraph.
>
> But the child with the shrunken brain was the victim of severe neglect and abuse.
>
> According to research reported by the newspaper, the brain on the right worryingly lacks some of the most fundamental areas present in the image on the left.
>
> The consequences of these deficits are pronounced – the child on the left with the larger brain will be more intelligent and more likely to develop the social ability to empathise with others.
>
> But in contrast, the child with the shrunken brain will be more likely to become

> addicted to drugs and involved in violent crimes, much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on state benefits.
>
> The child is also more likely to develop mental and other serious health problems.
>
> Professor Allan Schore, of UCLA, told The Sunday Telegraph that if a baby is not treated properly in the first two years of life, it can have a fundamental impact on development.
>
> He pointed out that the genes for several aspects of brain function, including intelligence, cannot function.
>
> […]The study correlates with research released earlier this year that found that children who are given love and affection from their mothers early in life are smarter with a better ability to learn.
>
> The study by child psychiatrists and neuroscientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, found school-aged children whose mothers nurtured them early in life have brains with a larger hippocampus, a key structure important to learning, memory and response to stress.
>
> The research was the first to show that changes in this critical region of children's brain anatomy are linked to a mother's nurturing, Neurosciencenews.com reports.
>
> The research is published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Early Edition.
>
> Lead author Joan L. Luby, MD, professor of child psychiatry, said the study reinforces how important nurturing parents are to a child's development.

I have a very good feminist non-Christian friend who sometimes comments here. I once asked her about marriage and she said that her skills would be wasting on raising children. I explained to her my view that a mother needs to stay at home with the children, and that is more important work. I expect my future wife to read all kinds of books on child care and to give the child attention, nutrition, exercise and play so that the child will grow up to be an effective Christian. Maybe I need to be clear. I am not going to spend hundreds of thousands per child with just any woman. I need a woman who can produce influential and effective Christians who will engage in the public square. And we do not entrust that job to just anyone – we want a Michele Bachmann or a Jennifer Roback Morse. Professional women who are willing to be stay-at-home moms when it's necessary to do that.

I expect the woman I marry (if I marry) to have a college degree, and preferably a graduate degree, and a couple of years of employment. Then she has to stay home and invest in those children through the first five years at least. After that she can stay home or work as much as she thinks is beneficial to the family goals of impacting the university, the church and the public square – as well as continuing to raise those children. It's not a waste of her talent to make the next William Lane Craig, the next Marsha Blackburn, the

next Doug Axe, or the next Edith Jones.

Lydia McGrew: we need an army of tentmakers

December 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lydia McGrew has a post up at What's Wrong With the World blog that is just excellent. (H/T Apologetics315)

Excerpt:

> Apologetics is wonderful and incredibly important. It's a wonderful thing that a revival of specifically evidentialist apologetics is happening in the United States and even, to some extent, in the Anglophone world at large.
>
> Unfortunately, this revival of interest in apologetics and in being Christian philosophers is coming at a very bad time, economically. Even if you are a genius, your chances in 2013 and following of getting a stable job by the route of going to graduate school in philosophy (or almost any area of the humanities) are pretty darned slim. If you're not a genius, fuhgetaboutit. Nor were there ever all that many jobs in philosophy. It was always an iffy proposition, but it's much worse now than it was even twenty years ago.
>
> As for starting ministries, a poor economy makes it extremely hard to do that, too, because people don't have as much disposable income to donate. Moreover, even in a more robust economy, if all the eager young apologists were to flock to start apologetics and/or campus ministries, they would be competing among themselves for a finite number of available dollars from donors. So that's not the best idea either.
>
> Let me speak very bluntly here: In my opinion, God doesn't need a whole raft of impractical idealists out there getting themselves into debt or half starving (or really starving) with no idea of how in the world they are ever going to support even themselves, much less a family, out at the other end of their education. That just burdens the church with a large number of able-bodied but needy Christians who are in a seemingly unending stage of transition, "getting an education for the kingdom" or "hoping to do work for the kingdom" without a viable plan in mind or any fiscal light at the end of the tunnel.
>
> Instead, I believe that we need an army of tentmakers. If you have a job or a marketable skill, for heaven's sake (literally), don't quit that job and join the ranks of starving students. Keep your day job, but enrich your mind and prepare yourself to answer people's questions about Christianity by studying on your own time. If you have entrepreneurial abilities and the capital, start a business. That will support not only yourself but others you employ, and if successful, you will have more money to give to Christian ministries.
>
> But even if you aren't the entrepreneurial type or don't have that opportunity, at least make sure (to the extent that one can in today's world) that you can pay the rent and put food on your own table as well as supporting whatever number

> of additional people you plan to take on. (In other words, if you are a guy who would like to get married and have children, bear that in mind.) This will inevitably mean spending time at all that distasteful stuff like networking and making a resume. Bookish types don't enjoy that stuff, because it seems bogus, but it can't be helped. It will undoubtedly mean, for most people, not being full-time students beyond the undergraduate level, especially not in the humanities, not trying to become full-time academics as a life work, and not going into full-time ministry, even if you would ideally like to do one or more of those three things.
>
> In the end, if we can have this army of tentmakers, there will be (Lord willing) money to allow some people to work in full-time ministry. But it's going to be quite a small proportion of those who are interested or would ideally like to do so.
>
> […]Inevitably, the course of action I am suggesting will mean a bifurcation for many between their day job and what they are most passionately interested in. So be it. Indeed, so it has ever been in the world. What proportion of people at any moment in human history have been blessed enough to spend most of their time working on what they are most passionately interested in? The question answers itself. So I think that bifurcation has to be accepted by a great many people and that doing so will lead to what I might call a healthier "Christian economy" among committed Christians than what we could otherwise end up with.

So let's see her advice in bullet-point form:

- The job market for philosophers is very bad
- A bad economy means less support money is available
- It's important to have a plan to fund your ministry
- Leverage your full-time job to fund your ministry

I often find that when I talk to Christians, there is this sort of hyper-spiritualized way of deciding what to do. People read the Bible, which is good, but then they don't tend to also look at things like economics, science and public policy. The Bible doesn't say much about what to study or what job to get, but there is an example of Paul working at tent-making in order to fund his ministry. So there is precedent for the idea of learning a trade and working to earn enough money to support our families, our ministry and even other people's ministries. I think we have an obligation to take the Bible seriously when it tells us what we can do to please God, but coming up with a plan to please God most effectively is our job. We have to make the plans to serve God. Our plans must be within the bounds of Biblical morality, but they should also reflect our knowledge of how the world really works, too. We'll be more successful with a good plan and some hard work.

Be sure and listen to the podcast by J. Warner Wallace on this issue, and read my comments too (same post).

Can atheists be moral? Sean McDowell and James Corbett debate

December 12, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I got the audio for this debate from Apologetics 315, linked below.

Here is the MP3 file.

Sean's case is similar to the one I make, but he only has 3 minimal requirements for morality.

First, he explains the difference between objective and subjective truth claims, and points out that statements of a moral nature are meaningless unless morality is objective. Then he states 3 things that are needed in order to ground objective morality.

1. an objective moral standard
2. free will
3. objective moral value of humans

The question of the foundations of morality is without a doubt the easiest issue for beginning apologists to discuss with their neighbor. If you're new, then you need to *at least* listen to his opening speech. He's an excellent speaker, and his rebuttals are very, very smooth. The citations of atheist philosophers like Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, e.g. – to show that "religious" wars had *nothing* to do with religion, really hurt his opponent. He seems to cite prominent atheists like Thomas Nagel, Richard Taylor, Michael Shermer, etc., constantly in order to get support for his assertions. That took preparation. McDowell was very calm in this debate. It's very hard to stay calm when someone is disagreeing with you in front of a crowd, but McDowell did a great job at that. He also seemed to be really prepared, because his rebuttals were crisp and concise.

For those of you who want to understand how these things work, listen to the debate. There is a period of cross-examination if you like that sort of thing. I do!

Judge Jean Boyd gives no jail time to drunk driver who murdered four people

December 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

State District Judge Jean Boyd

Here's the story from CBS News.

Excerpt:

> A Texas teenager killed four people while driving drunk in June. Prosecutors pushed for a 20-year sentence, but a judge sentenced the teen to 10 years probation and no jail time.
>
> […]A psychologist testified for the defense that the teen was a product of something he called "affluenza." He meant [Ethan] Couch doesn't link bad behavior with consequences because his parents taught him that wealth buys privilege.
>
> **That psychologist cited one instance when Couch, then 15, was caught in a parked pickup with a naked 14-year-old girl who was passed out. Couch was never punished, the psychologist said. He also testified the teenager was allowed to drink at a very young age and began driving at 13.**
>
> Investigators said surveillance tape showed Couch and his friends stealing beer from a Walmart store in June.
>
> After leaving a party, police said Couch had his pickup going nearly 70 mph in a 40 mph zone. About 400 yards down the street, he slammed into Holly and Shelby Boyles, who had stopped to help Breanna Mitchell fix a flat tire.
>
> Youth Pastor Brian Jennings was driving by and had also stopped to help. All of them were killed. Couch was charged with four counts of intoxication

> manslaughter and tried as a juvenile.
>
> […]Boyles said the verdict doesn't give victims' family the justice they need for closure.
>
> "My immediate reaction is I'm back to week one," he said. "We have accomplished nothing here. My healing process is out the window."

You can read more about State District Judge Jean Boyd here. I can't believe that this woman is a judge in *Texas*, of all places.

I was listening to Dennis Prager talk about this at lunch on Thursday, and I wanted to relay two points that came up. First, Prager noted that the judge was a woman, and that women tend to focus more on compassion and non-judgmentalism than men. Men tend to focus more on justice and moral standards. Men tend to believe that punishing evil harshly is the right thing to do because it deters future crimes. Men also tend to believe that punishing evil sends a message to the rest of society about what is wrong, which deters future crimes. What message does this judge's sentence send to 16-year-old boys? It says "you can kill four innocent people and injure a fifth and get off Scot-free".

Second, a caller to the show said that if the murderer is deemed not responsible because of what his parents did to him, then why are the parents not being punished for it? That's a good question, and it prompts me to think about what real justice in the case might look like. Here is what real justice would look like, from someone who is not affected by the crime. First, disbar the judge so that she cannot practice law in Texas. Second, give the murderer the 20-year sentence sought by the prosecution. Third, confiscate every penny of the assets of the parents, and distribute it to the families of the victims. That is not lenient, but it would be *restitution*, which ought to be one of the functions of the law.

Michigan House and Senate Republicans pass Abortion Insurance Opt-Out Act

December 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news from Michigan, delivered by Live Action.

Excerpt:

> [On Wednesday,] Michigan won an important pro-life victory.
>
> It started this summer when over 315,000 registered voters, representing every county in Michigan, signed the NO Taxes for Abortion Insurance Petition, making it clear that the people of Michigan do not believe abortion is health care and we do not want to pay for it.
>
> On December 11th, both the Michigan House and Senate passed this petition as the Abortion Insurance Opt-Out Act, with the House voting 62-47 and the Senate voting 27-11. According to this act, elective abortion will no longer be a standard benefit in health plans. Abortion coverage will only be available by purchasing a separate rider. This act also ensures that our tax dollars and insurance premiums will not go toward funding abortions.
>
> Because the Abortion Insurance Opt-Out Act was initiated by citizens, as allowed by the Michigan Constitution, it does not require the governor's signature to become law.
>
> […]The Affordable Care Act requires all the states to have health care exchanges (also called marketplaces) available by 2014. The ACA allows states to exclude abortion as a covered benefit in these insurance exchanges through legislation like the Abortion Insurance Opt-Out Act. **Michigan is the 24th state to exclude abortion coverage from its insurance plans through this provision.**

But not everyone was pleased. HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius was not pleased. And when questioned by Republicans about whether they could see the list of plans that do not support abortion, she declined to provide that list.'

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> Although Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said on Oct. 30 that she would provide Congress with a list of the Obamacare plans in the federal health exchange that do not cover abortion, she has yet to do so and, testifying on Dec. 11, backed away from that pledge and urged consumers to just look at the plan benefits on the exchange website.
>
> At the Oct. 30 hearing before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce , Rep. John Shimkus (R-Ill.) asked Seblius, "Can you provide for the committee the list of insurers in the federal exchange who do not offer, as part of their package,

> abortion coverage?”
>
> During a somewhat heated back-and-forth, Sebelis said, “I think we can do that, sir,” and added, “I know that is the plan, I will get that information to you.”
>
> Yet during a Dec. 11 House subcommittee hearing, Sebelius declined to say whether she would provide the list requested and instead urged lawmakers and consumers to just look at the benefits package for each plan on the Obamacare exchange websites.
>
> At Wednesday’s hearing, Rep. Shimkus said, “Madam Secretary, you promised last time you were here that you would provide me a national list of those who cover and those who do not cover abortion and abortion services. We have yet to receive that list.”
>
> […]In an earlier, fractious exchange with Sebelius, Rep. Shimkus expressed frustration, saying, “This is why we’re frustrated, because we just don’t get the truth out of you.”

Oh those Democrats. Always trying to make us pay for abortions even if we are pro-life.

What is the best argument against intelligent design?

December 13, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article on Evolution News which summarizes how opponents of intelligent design behave when confronted with intelligent design.

Here's the executive summary:

> The outline of the story is now, sadly, a familiar one. Professor wants to discuss intelligent design (ID). Intolerant atheists throw a fit. College quickly capitulates to the demands of the atheists. Professor is censored.
>
> The scenario played out again this past semester in Amarillo, Texas. I'll give the identities of the parties involved in just a moment, but for now, let's note some twists unique to the situation. According to internal communications, campus administrators feared that disgruntled atheists would *stage a "disruption"* if the ID class went forward. The atheist leader got so "intense" in arguing for Darwinian evolution over intelligent design that college staff called the police on him, apparently potentially concerned over their own safety. And get this: the intolerant atheists call themselves the "*Freethought Oasis*." You can't make this stuff up.

And the punchline:

> All told, in various e-mails [Freethought Oasis leader] Farren and his group were described as:
>
> - "VERY intense"
> - "obsessive"
> - "fanatical"
> - "aggressive," "verbally aggressive," and showing "aggressiveness"
> - "I don't know where the free thought comes in though, seems more like the lack of"
> - looking for a "fight"
> - showing a "desire to kill the class"
> - "representing a group of people, was disturbed by the class and **indicated his intent to enroll students who might potentially create a disruptive environment in the classroom**. — a 'protest' if you will"
> - "disruptives"
>
> That's a pretty telling list of words that came from multiple people in the [Amarillo College] administration.

The article documents all the things that anti-intelligent design people do. They celebrate

successful bullying, and they don’t want to engage different ideas with reasons and evidence. Even if you are not a scientist, it’s very easy to get an idea of whether intelligent design is true or not by watching how opponents of intelligent design conduct themselves. How far do you think atheists would go to silence people who disagreed with them? In an atheistic universe, there is no design for how humans ought to behave. There are no human rights that need to be respected. Anything is permitted in an accidental universe.

Stephen C. Meyer debates Peter D. Ward on intelligent design and evolution

December 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The speakers

Stephen C. Meyer is director of the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture (CSC) and a founder both of the intelligent design movement and of the CSC, intelligent design's primary intellectual and scientific headquarters. Dr. Meyer is a Cambridge University-trained philosopher of science, the author of peer-reviewed publications in technical, scientific, philosophical and other books and journals. His signal contribution to ID theory is given most fully in *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, published by HarperOne in June 2009.

Graduating from Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington, in 1981 with a degree in physics and earth science, he later became a geophysicist with Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) in Dallas, Texas. From 1981 to 1985, he worked for ARCO in digital signal processing and seismic survey interpretation. As a Rotary International Scholar, he received his training in the history and philosophy of science at Cambridge University, earning a PhD in 1991. His thesis offered a methodological interpretation of origin-of-life research.

Peter D. Ward, Ph.D., is a paleontologist and professor in the Departments of Geology and Biology at the University of Washington in Seattle. He also serves as an adjunct professor of zoology and astronomy. His research specialties include the Cretaceous–Tertiary extinction event and mass extinctions generally. His books include the best-selling "Rare Earth: Why Complex Life Is Uncommon in the Universe" (co-author Donald Brownlee, 2000), "Under a Green Sky: Global Warming, the Mass Extinctions of the Past, and What They Can Tell Us About Our Future" (2007), and "The Medea Hypothesis: Is Life on Earth Ultimately Self-Destructive?" (2009).

The debate

Here's the video of the debate:

The debate itself starts at around 8:19, after all the moderators have spoken.

The debate is focused on disagreements about scientific evidence.

Even though Peter Ward is an atheist, he has co-written a fabulous book that I own and have read called "Rare Earth: Why Complex Life is Uncommon in the Universe". I really recommend getting this book, as it is a great book by two non-theists on the habitability argument. It's sort of a secular precursor to Jay Richards' and Guillermo Gonzalez's "The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos is Designed for Discovery". The habitability argument is a really neglected argument, but it's a good one.

William Lane Craig appears on Fox News to discuss Christian apologetics

December 14, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

And to go with that 8.5 minute clip, there is this opinion piece on Fox News authored by Dr. Craig.

Excerpt:

> For atheists, Christmas is a religious sham. For if God does not exist, then obviously Jesus' birth cannot represent the incarnation of God in human history, which Christians celebrate at this time of year.
>
> However, most atheists, in my experience, have no good reasons for their disbelief. Rather they've learned to simply repeat the slogan, "There's no good evidence for God's existence!"
>
> In the case of a Christian who has no good reasons for what he believes, this slogan serves as an effective conversation-stopper. But if we have good reasons for our beliefs, then this slogan serves rather as a conversation-starter.
>
> The atheist who merely repeats this slogan after having been presented with arguments for God's existence makes an empty assertion.
>
> So what reasons might be given in defense of Christian theism? In my publications and oral debates with some of the world's most notable atheists, I've defended the following five reasons why God exists…

What follows is a concise statement of Dr. Craig five favorite arguments. I noticed that this opinion piece was in the "most popular" list on the Fox News web site. I think it's a good thing to share because it's so compact.

How the presence and quality of fathers affects belief in God

December 15, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article by Paul Copan which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own*rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of François-Marie Arouet.
> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his

> autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence, but there is also statistical evidence. Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is

> regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an enormously difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others. If you want your child to be religious and moral, you have to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he makes, he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading.

A child's relationship with God begins before he/she is even born. It begins with his/her mother's ability to control herself and choose the right man for the job of being a father. Note that superficial qualities like "deep voice", "broad shoulders", "expensive shoes", "likes dogs" and "makes me laugh" have no bearing on a man's ability to commit and lead on moral/spiritual issues. Christians don't really do a good job of showing the practical consequences of bad choices to women in the church. The ones I talk to impress

on me how “unpredictable” men are, so that they are justified in choosing one that they like based on tingles, and hoping it will work out. We should be telling women that poor choices with men are wrong, and it leads to fatherlessness and abortion.

New York Democrats object to having their wealth redistributed by Obamacare

December 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically leftist New York Times, of all places. (H/T Just One Minute via Ari)

Here's the problem:

> Many in New York's professional and cultural elite have long supported President Obama's health care plan. But now, to their surprise, thousands of writers, opera singers, music teachers, photographers, doctors, lawyers and others are learning that their health insurance plans are being canceled and they may have to pay more to get comparable coverage, if they can find it.
>
> They are part of an unusual, informal health insurance system that has developed in New York, in which independent practitioners were able to get lower insurance rates through group plans, typically set up by their professional associations or chambers of commerce. That allowed them to avoid the sky-high rates in New York's individual insurance market, historically among the most expensive in the country.
>
> But under the Affordable Care Act, they will be treated as individuals, responsible for their own insurance policies. For many of them, that is likely to mean they will no longer have access to a wide network of doctors and a range of plans tailored to their needs. And many of them are finding that if they want to keep their premiums from rising, they will have to accept higher deductible and co-pay costs or inferior coverage.

And here's the yummy, yummy schadenfreude:

> "I couldn't sleep because of it," said Barbara Meinwald, a solo practitioner lawyer in Manhattan.
>
> Ms. Meinwald, 61, has been paying $10,000 a year for her insurance through the New York City Bar. A broker told her that a new temporary plan with fewer doctors would cost $5,000 more, after factoring in the cost of her medications.
>
> Ms. Meinwald also looked on the state's health insurance exchange. But she said she found that those plans did not have a good choice of doctors, and that it was hard to even find out who the doctors were, and which hospitals were covered. "It's like you're blindfolded and you're told that you have to buy something," she said.
>
> […]"We are the Obama people," said Camille Sweeney, a New York writer and member of the Authors Guild. Her insurance is being canceled, and she is dismayed that neither her pediatrician nor her general practitioner appears to be on the exchange plans. What to do has become a hot topic on Facebook and at

> dinner parties frequented by her fellow writers and artists.
>
> "I'm for it," she said. "But what is the reality of it?"

Man, I love the taste of the liberal tears on a cold Monday morning. It tastes like… victory (in 2014). What is the reality of it? Maybe if you stopped reading the New York Times, you would know the reality of it.

Well why are healthy people with $10,000 New York policies losing their coverage? Did those policies not provide free contraceptives? Not at all:

> The predicament is similar to that of millions of Americans who discovered this fall that their existing policies were being canceled because of the Affordable Care Act.
>
> **[…]But while those policies, by and large, had been canceled because they did not meet the law's requirements for minimum coverage, many of the New York policies being canceled meet and often exceed the standards, brokers say. The rationale for disqualifying those policies, said Larry Levitt, a health policy expert at the Kaiser Family Foundation, was to prevent associations from selling insurance to healthy members who are needed to keep the new health exchanges financially viable.**
>
> **Siphoning those people, Mr. Levitt said, would leave the pool of health exchange customers "smaller and disproportionately sicker," and would drive up rates.**

I must have written over a 100 posts warning people about the effects of Obamacare from 2009 to November of 2012, and no Democrats would listen to me. Well, now they know what conservatives knew before the 2012 election. And just wait until the employer mandate hits and drives 129 million people of their existing health care plans by the end of 2014.

Related posts

- Americans shocked by high deductibles of Obamacare health plans
- Cancer victim who alerted media about dropped health plan draws IRS audit
- Obamacare success story revised to become Obamacare failure story
- White House and HHS were warned about Obamacare web site problems in April
- Doctor shortage: how Obamacare makes it harder to find a doctor
- Students who voted for Obama react to losing their cheap private health care plan
- Health insurance companies will raise rates to comply with Obamacare delay
- Obama vows to veto Republican "Keep Your Health Plan Act" bill
- How many people signed up for Obamacare?
- Undercover video: Obamacare navigators tell applicants to lie and defraud taxpayers
- Healthcare.gov enrollments fall far short of Democrat Party estimates
- Obama administration decides to exempt Obamacare from fraud prevention rules

- CNN: Obama administration bullying insurance companies to not criticize Obamacare
- How the Obama administration made sure people would lose their health insurance plans
- NBC News: “Obama administration knew millions could not keep their health insurance”
- Obamacare supporters shocked that they have to pay for Obamacare
- New study: premiums for young people to rise in all 50 states under Obamacare
- Obamacare health insurance exchanges impose massive penalties on married couples
- Nancy Pelosi: forcing workers to work fewer hours gives them “freedom”
- Obamacare will increase average individual-market premiums by 99% for men
- Obamacare in action: 301 employers cut employee hours and/or jobs
- New Stanford University study finds costs of Obamacare higher than estimated
- President Obama intervenes to exempt Congress from Obamacare
- IRS employee union opposes making Obamacare apply to themselves

Women selling their own virgin daughters into sex slavery in Cambodia

December 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Nancy P. just posted this article from CNN on Facebook. I am working from home today while sick, so I'll leave it to you to reflect on this horror story.

Excerpt:

> When a poor family in Cambodia fell afoul of loan sharks, the mother asked her youngest daughter to take a job. But not just any job.
>
> The girl, Kieu, was taken to a hospital and examined by a doctor, who issued her a "certificate of virginity." She was then delivered to a hotel, where a man raped her for two days.
>
> Kieu was 12 years old.
>
> "I did not know what the job was," says Kieu, now 14 and living in a safehouse. She says she returned home from the experience "very heartbroken." But her ordeal was not over.
>
> After the sale of her virginity, her mother had Kieu taken to a brothel where, she says, "they held me like I was in prison."
>
> She was kept there for three days, raped by three to six men a day. When she returned home, her mother sent her away for stints in two other brothels, including one 400 kilometers away on the Thai border. When she learned her mother was planning to sell her again, this time for a six-month stretch, she realized she needed to flee her home.
>
> "Selling my daughter was heartbreaking, but what can I say?" says Kieu's mother, Neoung, in an interview with a CNN crew that travelled to Phnom Penh to hear her story.
>
> […]Kieu's relative, Sephak, who lives nearby, is another survivor. (CNN is naming the victims in this case at the request of the girls themselves, as they want to speak out against the practice of child sex trafficking.)
>
> Sephak was 13 when she was taken to a hospital, issued a certificate confirming her virginity, and delivered to a Chinese man in a Phnom Penh hotel room. She was returned after three nights. Sephak says her mother was paid $800.
>
> "When I had sex with him, I felt empty inside. I hurt and I felt very weak," she says. "It was very difficult. I thought about why I was doing this and why my mom did this to me." After her return, her mother began pressuring her daughter to work in a brothel.
>
> […]Not far away from Sephak's family home, connected to the shore via a haphazard walkway of planks that dip beneath the water with each footfall, is the

> houseboat where Toha grew up.
>
> The second of eight children, none of whom attend school, Toha was sold for sex by her mother when she was 14. The transaction followed the same routine: medical certificate, hotel, rape.
>
> About two weeks after she returned to Svay Pak, she says, the man who had bought her virginity began calling, requesting to see her again. Her mother urged her to go. The pressure drove her to despair.
>
> "I went to the bathroom and cut my arms. I cut my wrists because I wanted to kill myself," Toha says. A friend broke down the door to the bathroom and came to her aid.
>
> […]**On her houseboat, as squalls of rain lash the river, Toha's mother Ngao sits barefoot before the television taking pride of place in the main living area, and expresses similar regrets. On the wall hangs a row of digitally enhanced portraits of her husband and eight children. They are dressed in smart suits and dresses, superimposed before an array of fantasy backdrops: an expensive motorcycle, a tropical beach, an American-style McMansion.**
>
> Life with so many children is hard, she says, so she asked her daughter to go with the men.
>
> She would not do the same again, she says, as she now has access to better support; Agape International Missions offers interest-free loan refinancing to get families out of the debt trap, and factory jobs for rescued daughters and their mothers.

"Toha's mother Ngao sits barefoot before the television". Televeision? I have no words for this selfishness. Eight children? I don't have any children, and have not even had any sex! This catastrophe is a result of the decisions of that wife and husband. If you live in a poor country, you have to have self-control about sex. It's not too much to ask, I'm doing it myself, for goodness' sake. Agape International Missions sounds curiously like a Christian charity organization. I'm not surprised.

People sometimes ask me why people become atheists, and I think I can understand why the people who did this to their daughter, and the men who raped her, would not want to be held accountable by a just and Holy God in the afterlife. After all, if atheism is true, then the people who wronged this young woman won't be held accountable. On atheism, right and wrong are just cultural conventions that vary by time and place. If you can get away with doing these things in your society, because it's not forbidden or because you are clever and strong enough to not get caught, then there is nothing stopping you from doing that. If you feel like not doing it, fine. If you feel like doing it, fine. Other humans are just random collections of atoms coughed up accidentally by evolution in an accidental universe. They have no human rights, because there are no such things in a materialistic universe. Atheists who speak about morality are writing checks that will bounce when cashed against their worldview. They can't help themselves to notions that

are not rationally grounded by their worldview, and we should hold them accountable.

That's the scary thing about atheists. They have no way to condemn what's going on here, because this is normal in that society. They think that raping little children is not objectively wrong. It is OK in some times and places, and not OK in others. There is no standard that exists objectively that they can appeal to to say how humans ought to behave. They look at something like this story and think to themselves "that might be OK for you in your society, but it's not OK for me. But I will have an abortion though, because that's ok for me when and where I am". I can't believe that there are people in the world who look around at things like this and cannot apprehend the objective moral law, but maybe, like the people who hurt that girl, they have reasons for not wanting to acknowledge it. I can guarantee you this. Neither that woman, nor her husband, nor the men who raped her want to see God in the face when they die. For them, this life is all there is, of necessity. Scary.

According to one page I looked at, 95% of Cambodians are Theravada Buddhists, which is atheistic. This place is an atheist paradise. This is what the Freedom From Religion Foundation dreams about. Funny that they don't move there and stop suing Christians for putting up nativity scenes here.

Video, audio and summary of Wiliam Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

December 16, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

And if you like my summary, check out another summary by J.W. Wartick.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have

a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It’s not just that the settings are unlikely, it’s that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a “herd morality” that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved “herd morality”. However, people do experience objective moral values, and

these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims

are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it’s not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn’t hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time “prior to” the universe’s beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It’s possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It’s also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a

sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology

removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

EPA climate change expert defrauded government of nearly $1 million in salary and benefits

December 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From NBC News.

Excerpt:

> The EPA's highest-paid employee and a leading expert on climate change deserves to go to prison for at least 30 months for lying to his bosses and saying he was a CIA spy working in Pakistan so he could avoid doing his real job, say federal prosecutors.
>
> John C. Beale, who pled guilty in September to bilking the government out of nearly $1 million in salary and other benefits over a decade, will be sentenced in a Washington, D.C., federal court on Wednesday. In a newly filed sentencing memo, prosecutors said that his lies were a "crime of massive proportion" that were "offensive" to those who actually do dangerous work for the CIA.
>
> […]Until he retired in April after learning he was under federal investigation, Beale, an NYU grad with a masters from Princeton, was earning a salary and bonuses of $206,000 a year, making him the highest paid official at the EPA. He earned more money than Gina McCarthy, the agency's administrator and, for years, his immediate boss, according to agency documents.
>
> In September, Beale, who served as a "senior policy adviser" in the agency's Office of Air and Radiation, pled guilty to defrauding the U.S. government out of nearly $900,000 since 2000. Beale perpetrated his fraud largely by failing to show up at the EPA for months at a time, including one 18-month stretch starting in June 2011 when he did "absolutely no work," as Kern, Beale's lawyer, acknowledged in his court filing.
>
> **To explain his long absences, Beale told agency officials — including McCarthy — that he was engaged in intelligence work for the CIA, either at agency headquarters or in Pakistan. At one point he claimed to be urgently needed in Pakistan because the Taliban was torturing his CIA replacement, according to Sullivan.**
>
> **"Due to recent events that you have probably read about, I am in Pakistan," he wrote McCarthy in a Dec. 18, 2010 email. "Got the call Thurs and left Fri. Hope to be back for Christmas ….Ho, ho, ho."**
>
> **In fact, Beale had no relationship with the CIA at all. Sullivan, the EPA investigator, said he confirmed Beale didn't even have a security clearance. He spent much of the time he was purportedly working for the CIA at his Northern Virginia home riding bikes, doing housework and reading books, or at a vacation house on Cape Cod.**

> “He’s never been to Langley (the CIA’s Virginia headquarters),” said Sullivan. “The CIA has no record of him ever walking through the door.”
>
> Nor was that Beale’s only deception, according to court documents. In 2008, Beale didn’t show up at the EPA for six months, telling his boss that he was part of a special multi-agency election-year project relating to “candidate security.” He billed the government $57,000 for five trips to California that were made purely “for personal reasons,” his lawyer acknowledged. (His parents lived there.) He also claimed to be suffering from malaria that he got while serving in Vietnam. According to his lawyer’s filing, he didn’t have malaria and never served in Vietnam. He told the story to EPA officials so he could get special handicap parking at a garage near EPA headquarters.

To really eliminate this kind of fraud, waste and corruption, the best thing to do is to shrink government. If they didn’t have the money to pay people like Beale, then this wouldn’t have happened. The public sector is always spending other people’s money – taxpayer money. Never their own money. No public sector employee will be as careful about how they are spending taxpayer money as they would be if it were their own money, or their private company’s money. In the business world, if you do something like this, you go under. Fast. Because you have competitors who are happy to capitalize on your mistakes. No business can survive million dollar losses like this for long. The government can, because it just borrows more from your children.

New study: parents of daughters more likely to become conservative

December 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's take a look at the study from the left-leaning Pew Research.

Excerpt:

> Two sociologists have found that parents who have daughters are more inclined to support the GOP and turn a cold shoulder to Democrats.
>
> In newly published findings that challenge earlier research, Dalton Conley of New York University and Emily Rauscher of the University of Kansas found that having more daughters than sons and having a daughter first "significantly reduces the likelihood of Democratic identification and significantly increases the strength of Republican Party identification."
>
> Not only is the daughter effect statistically significant, it's substantively large. They found that overall, "compared to those with no daughters, parents with all daughters are 14% less likely to identify as a Democrat….[and] 11% more likely to identify as a Republican than parents with no daughters," they write in the journal Sociological Forum.
>
> The daughters effect is considerably stronger among better educated and wealthier parents, they find. But among those farther down the socioeconomic ladder, it weakens to statistical insignificance.
>
> Their startling conclusions are based on data collected two decades ago from 661 respondents with biological children interviewed for the 1994 General Social Survey conducted by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center. Even though this national trend study has been administered regularly since 1972, the 1994 survey is the only one that included questions about the sex and birth order of a respondent's biological children. (Surveys typically measure only whether a respondent has any children, including step-children and adopted children.)
>
> […]But why would having a daughter cause parents to become more Republican? The authors speculate that men and women might want more socially conservative policies when they have daughters and thus be more attracted to the GOP.

Ross Douthat wrote a column on Sunday in the ultra-leftist New York Times where he took a stab at explaining these findings.

Excerpt:

> But let me make a more limited, more personal argument on the subject. The next round of research may "prove" something completely different about

daughters and voting behavior. But as a father of girls and a parent whose adult social set still overlaps with the unmarried, I do have a sense of where a daughter-inspired conservatism *might* come from, whatever political form it takes.

It comes from thinking about their future happiness, and about a young man named Nathaniel P.

This character, Nate to his friends, doesn't technically exist: He's the protagonist in Adelle Waldman's recent novel of young-Brooklynite manners, "The Love Affairs of Nathaniel P."

But his type does exist, in multitudinous forms, wherever successful young people congregate, socialize, pair off. He's not the worst sort of guy by any means — not a toxic bachelor or an obnoxious pick-up artist. He's well intentioned, sensitive, mildly idealistic. Yet he's also a source of immense misery — both short-term and potentially lifelong — for the young women in his circle.

"Contrary to what these women seemed to think," Waldman writes of Nathaniel P.'s flings and semi-steady girlfriends, "he was not indifferent to their unhappiness. And yet he seemed, in spite of himself, to provoke it."

He provokes it by taking advantage of a social landscape in which sex has been decoupled from marriage but biology hasn't been abolished, which means women still operate on a shorter time horizon for crucial life choices — marriage, kids — than do men. In this landscape, what Nate wants — sex, and the validation that comes with being wanted — he reliably gets. But what his lovers want, increasingly, as their cohort grows older — a more permanent commitment — he can afford to persistently withhold, feeling guilty but not *that* guilty about doing so.

Waldman's portrait of Nate's romantic life is sympathetic enough to have earned her fan mail from young men. But it's precisely because Nate is sympathetic rather than toxic that the "Nathaniel P." phenomenon — or what Rebecca Traister has dubbed "the scourge of indecisive men" — is a hard problem to escape. Indeed, it seems like one of the hidden taproots of well-educated women's work-life-balance angst, and one of the plausible explanations for declining female happiness in a world of expanded female opportunity.

And lurking in Waldman's novel, as in many portraits of the dating scene (ahem, Lena Dunham, ahem), is a kind of moral traditionalism that dare not speak its name — or that can be spoken of only in half-jest, as when the novelist Benjamin Kunkel told Traister that the solution was "some sort of a sexual strike against just such men."

Because Kunkel is right: **One obvious solution to the Nathaniel P. problem is a romantic culture in which more is required of young men before the women in their lives will sleep with them.**

To the extent that parents tend to see the next generation's world through their

> children's eyes, that's an insight that's more immediately available through daughters than through sons.

Does what he says ring true for you?

When I reflect on the women I know today, I find that they many fight against having to do things that are good if they don't feel like doing them. Even simple things like reading a good book or playing a game together or watching a debate or saving money or paying off their debt is met with skepticism and rebellion. And what ends up happening is that rather than do what I would like them to do (which is often for their own good, and nothing for my benefit), they instead procrastinate and then blow small things out of all proportion as a way of trying to rationalize why they didn't do it. It's very difficult, in my experience, to get women to do even good things – like read a Lee Strobel book. They just rebel in most cases, because they don't want to do anything that isn't fun, no matter how good it is. It's so hard to lead them.

So women are really struggling today with letting men lead them, even when the men are leading them in a good direction. I suspect that it's because most women tend to get involved with men too early and destroy their ability to trust men with these failed relationships with men who are not even close to being ready for marriage. So how does a woman get attention from men if she doesn't trust men to lead her? Well, she gives him sex. And what does the man learn from getting sex without having to first be seen by her as trustworthy? He learns not to work hard to appear to be worthy of trust. Specifically, he learns not to bother doing well in school, or doing well in work, or saving money, or being conservative on moral issues, or good at apologetics, or good at mentoring others, or giving some of what he earns to charity. There is no need to appear to be a good trustworthy person – he gets the sex without having to be. He's not being measured for fit with any role, he's just handed sex on a platter.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley: Did Jesus rise from the dead?

December 17, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence. He's also done debates with Richard Bauckham and Michael Bird. You have to respect him for getting out there and defending his views in public.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is

missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history

- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates

invented legendaryt story-telling
- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and

resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should

prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Why did the Colorado shooting only last 80 seconds? Answer: ARMED GUARD

December 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Only the Christian Science Monitor reported this part about the armed guard. (H/T IJReview)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> As they investigate the latest school shooting in the United States – Friday at Arapahoe High School in Centennial, Colo. – one thing is clear to law enforcement officials there: The presence of an armed deputy sheriff on regular duty at the school was the key factor in preventing more deaths and injuries.
>
> As soon as he heard the first of five gunshots, that officer and the two school administrators he was talking to raced toward the commotion shouting their presence and ordering students and staff to follow the school's lock-down protocol.
>
> As a result, Arapahoe County Sheriff Grayson Robinson said at a briefing Saturday afternoon, the heavily-armed shooter realized he was about to be confronted by an armed officer, and he took his own life.
>
> "We believe that that action was absolutely critical to the fact that we didn't have more deaths and injuries," Sheriff Robinson said. The whole episode – from the time the shooter entered the school until he shot himself – lasted just one minute and 20 seconds.

I didn't find any other mainstream sources that mentioned the ARMED GUARD. CNN mentioned deputy sheriff, but they couldn't bring themselves to say that he was armed. The way the article was written, merely running towards the shooter was enough to stop him from killing people.

Karl Pierson was a pro-abortion, anti-gun, anti-war socialist Democrat

December 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In other news, the shooter was a self-proclaimed socialist, as reported by the Denver Post.

Excerpt:

> **Pierson's parents divorced in late 2011, according to court records.** The divorce was finalized in August 2012.
>
> Thomas Conrad, who had an economics class with Pierson, described him as very opinionated.
>
> "He was exuberant, I guess," Conrad said. "A lot of people picked on him, but it didn't seem to bother him."
>
> **In one Facebook post, Pierson attacks the philosophies of economist Adam Smith, who through his invisible-hand theory pushed the notion that the free market was self-regulating. In another post, he describes himself as "Keynesian."**
>
> "I was wondering to all the neoclassicals and neoliberals, why isn't the market correcting itself?" he wrote. "If the invisible hand is so strong, shouldn't it be able to overpower regulations?"
>
> **Pierson also appears to mock Republicans on another Facebook post, writing "you republicans are so cute" and posting an image that reads: "The Republican Party: Health Care: Let 'em Die, Climate Change: Let 'em Die, Gun Violence: Let 'em Die, Women's Rights: Let 'em Die, More War: Let 'em Die. Is this really the side you want to be on?"**
>
> Carl Schmidt and Brendon Mendelson, both seniors at Arapahoe High, knew Pierson. They said he had political views that were "outside the mainstream," but they did not elaborate.

That might explain why the mainstream media in general didn't want to get into his motivations too much. Makes their own ideology look bad. It's hard for them to report on these things accurately, isn't it? Can't report on the armed guard. That makes self-defense look viable. Can't report on the socialism, because that makes Democrats look bad. Let's just say nothing and hope people think that he was a Tea Party person. That's journalism! Whatever fits, they print.

In fact, these shooters are almost always secularists, leftists or secular leftists. See below for past stories.

Related posts

- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- Zeitgeist conspiracy movie had profound impact on Jared Loughner
- Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist
- Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning
- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

Want to stop school shootings? Then strengthen the institution of marriage

December 18, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am sort of lukewarm on W. Bradford Wilcox, because I think he's a moderate to left person, but this article in National Review is pretty good.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Another shooting, another son of divorce. From Adam Lanza, who killed 26 children and adults a year ago at Sandy Hook School in Newtown, Conn., to Karl Pierson, who shot a teenage girl and killed himself this past Friday at Arapahoe High in Centennial, Colo., one common and largely unremarked thread tying together most of the school shooters that have struck the nation in the last year is that they came from homes marked by divorce or an absent father. From shootings at MIT (i.e., the Tsarnaev brothers) to the University of Central Florida to the Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy in Decatur, Ga., nearly every shooting over the last year in Wikipedia's "list of U.S. school attacks" involved a young man whose parents divorced or never married in the first place.
>
> […]The social scientific evidence about the connection between violence and broken homes could not be clearer. My own research suggests that boys living in single mother homes are almost twice as likely to end up delinquent compared to boys who enjoy good relationships with their father. Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson has written that "Family structure is one of the strongest, if not the strongest, predictor of variations in urban violence across cities in the United States." His views are echoed by the eminent criminologists Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi, who have written that "such family measures as the percentage of the population divorced, the percentage of households headed by women, and the percentage of unattached individuals in the community are among the most powerful predictors of crime rates."
>
> Why is fatherlessness such a big deal for our boys (almost all of these incidents involve boys)? Putting the argument positively, sociologist David Popenoe notesthat "fathers are important to their sons as role models. They are important for maintaining authority and discipline. And they are important in helping their sons to develop both self-control and feelings of empathy toward others, character traits that are found to be lacking in violent youth." Boys, then, who did not grow up with an engaged, attentive, and firm father are more vulnerable to getting swept up in the Sturm und Drang of adolescence and young adulthood, and in the worst possible way.

In previous posts, I have argued that it is women who need to be thinking about how children need fathers, and to be more careful about evaluating and selecting men who

can do the jobs that men do in marriage. Protecting, providing, moral/spiritual leading.

It probably would also be a good idea to roll back policies that weaken and redefine marriage. I don’t just mean same-sex marriage. I mean no-fault divorce, and the normalization of premarital sex. Basically, anything that weakens the stability of marriage and the male-female fit inherent in marriage ought to be shamed and opposed. Children need mothers and fathers. We shouldn’t be promoting or subsidizing any behavior or lifestyle that encourages people to have children (on purpose or accidentally) outside of a carefully-considered marriage relationship.

Kenosis and the doctrine of the Incarnation in Philippians 2:5-11

December 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's almost Christmas, so it's time to see what the Bible says about who Jesus was and what it tells us about the character of God.

Here are the relevant verses in Phil 2:5-11 [NASB]:

> [5] Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
>
> [6] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
>
> [7] but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.
>
> [8] Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by
> becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
>
> [9] For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
>
> [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
>
> [11] and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Here's respected New Testament scholar Ben Witherington to help us make sense of it:

> Incarnation refers to the choices and acts of a pre-existent divine being, namely the Son of God, that the Son took in order to become a human being. He took on flesh, and became fully, truly human without ceasing to be fully, truly divine. Divinity is not something Jesus acquired later in life, or even after his death and resurrection. According to the theology of Incarnation he had always been the divine Son of God, even before he became Jesus, a human being. Strictly speaking the name Jesus only applies to a human being. It is the name the Son of God acquired once he became a human being in the womb of Mary, a name which he maintains to this day as he continues to be a human being.
>
> […]When I try and explain the incarnation to my students I deliberately choose to use the phrase divine condescension. What do I mean by this? Put another way, if there is going to be a corporate merger between a divine being and a human nature, then the divine side of the equation must necessarily limit itself, take on certain limitations, in order to be truly and fully human. The next question is…. what does it mean to be fully human? It means to have limitations of time and space and knowledge and power, and of course being mortal. Jesus exhibited all these traits. He was even tempted like us in every respect, but he avoided sin.

> What we should deduce from this is sinning is not a necessary part of being truly human. Yes, it is a trait of all fallen humans, but no, it is not how God made us in the first place. It is not necessary to sin in order to be truly or fully human.
>
> […]While the hymn is clear that the Son was 'in very nature God' at the same time he chose before he became human not to take advantage of his divine prerogatives. What were those? I call them the omnis– omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence.
>
> […]And here I think is what Paul is driving at when he says 'have this mind in yourselves that was also in Christ Jesus'. It says that he 'humbled himself'. Now contrary to what the world may think humility has nothing to do with feelings of low self-esteem. It has nothing to do with feelings of low self-worth. If Jesus is the model of true humility, it can't have anything to do with those things, because Jesus surely was the one person who walked this earth who did not have such feelings, did not have an identity crisis, and so on. Humility is the posture of a strong person who steps down to serve others, as Jesus did.

This IVP commentary on Bible Gateway talks more about what this "divine condescension" means to us, using that passage from Philippians:

> Christ's selflessness for the sake of others expressed itself in his emptying himself by taking the "form" of a slave. Historically, far too much has been made of the verb "emptied himself," as though in becoming incarnate he literally "emptied himself" of something. However, just as*harpagmos* requires no object for Christ to "seize" but rather points to what is the opposite of God's character, so Christ did not empty himself of anything; he simply "emptied himself," poured himself out, as it were. In keeping with Paul's ordinary usage, this is metaphor, pure and simple. What modifies it is expressed in the phrase that follows; he "poured himself out by taking on the 'form' of a slave."
>
> Elsewhere this verb regularly means to become powerless or to be emptied of significance (hence the NIV's *made himself nothing;* cf. KJV, "made himself of no reputation"). Here it stands in direct antithesis to the "empty glory" of verse 3 and functions in the same way as the metaphorical "he became poor" in 2 Corinthians 8:9. Thus, as in the "not" side of this clause (v. 6b), we are still dealing with the character of God as revealed in the mindset and resulting activity of the Son of God. The concern is with divine selflessness: God is not an acquisitive being, grasping and seizing, but self-giving for the sake of others.

I think it's important to be clear that Jesus didn't give up anything of his divine attributes by becoming a man. Rather, he added a human nature to his divine nature. The humility is because he came to serve others.

I think that it is important for us to emphasize the doctrine of the Incarnation at Christmas, in order to correct the grasping and seizing that is so widespread. The really interesting thing about Christmas is the Incarnation, and what it tells us about God and

us. It tells us that we have value, because Jesus loved us. But it also says that following Jesus means being humble and being a servant to others. It means pouring yourself out to others in order to serve them. And these obligations are not metaphorical – they are rooted in the historical facts. This is the way the world is as a matter of fact, although certainly we have freedom to rebel against it.

For those looking for defenses to the doctrine of the Incarnation, you can find a chapter on it by Paul Copan in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". That's for intermediate readers. For advanced readers you can look for a chapter in "The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology", edited by Charles Taliaferro and Chad Meister, and published by Cambridge University Press. I just bought that latter book for one of the graduate students I sponsor. I know that Thomas V. Morris also has a couple of books out there on the Incarnation – one for intermediate readers and one for advanced readers. The latter book is published by Cornell University Press.

Senate Democrats choose illegal immigrant welfare over veteran pensions

December 19, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> Senate Republicans were unable to stop military pension cuts when Senate Democrats blocked a vote on an amendment to prevent the cuts by closing a welfare loophole for illegal immigrants Tuesday evening.
>
> The two-year budget deal brokered by Senate Budget Committee Chairwoman Patty Murray and House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, would cut military pensions by $6 billion over ten years, leaving some Senate Republicans scrambling to stop the cuts.
>
> "Removing this unbalanced treatment of our military retirees ought to be one of the key actions we should take before this legislation moves forward. In fact, greater savings than this can be achieved by passing a legislative fix recommended by the Inspector General of the U.S. Treasury that would stop the IRS from improperly providing tax credits to illegal aliens," Alabama Republican Jeff Sessions said Monday, announcing his co-sponsorship of Mississippi Republican Sen. Roger Wicker's amendment to restore the military retirement benefits Monday.
>
> Additionally, the Alabama Republican offered his own amendment to restore the cuts by targeting a child tax credit loophole that illegal immigrants have used to unlawfully obtain welfare benefits.
>
> **In 2011, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration found that "individuals who are not authorized to work in the United States" and therefore did not have a valid Social Security number were still able to obtain billions in Additional Child Tax Credits by filing returns with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number.**
>
> **Specifically the Internal Revenue Service watchdog found that unauthorized individuals received $4.2 billion refundable credits in Processing Year 2010.**
>
> Tuesday evening, Sessions attempted to force Majority Leader Harry Reid allow amendments the budget agreement.
>
> Sessions hoped to attach his amendment to the deal — which would have closed the loophole by requiring a Social Security number to claim the refundable portion of the child tax credit and restore military retirement benefits.
>
> Sessions' motion failed on a 46 to 54 party-line vote, with North Carolina Sen. Kay Hagan crossing the aisle as the lone Democrat to vote with the Republicans.

I am really not sure how it is possible to prefer giving $4.2 billion of refundable tax credits to illegal immigrants to funding the pensions of veterans. How could anyone think that was a good idea?

Why doesn't God give us more evidence of his existence?

December 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard someone say that if God existed, he would give us more evidence? This is called the "hiddenness of God" argument. It's also known as the argument from "rational non-belief".

Basically the argument is something like this:

1. God is all powerful
2. God is all loving
3. God wants all people to know about him
4. Some people don't know about him
5. Therefore, there is no God.

You may hear have heard this argument before, when talking to atheists, or in debates, like in William Lane Craig's debate with Theodore Drange, (audio, video).

Basically, the atheist is saying that he's looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that's logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden when our eternal destination depends on our knowledge of his existence.

What reason could God have for remaining hidden?

Dr. Michael Murray, a brilliant professor of philosophy at Franklin & Marshall College, has found a reason for God to remain hidden.

His paper on divine hiddenness is here:
"Coercion and the Hiddenness of God", American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us. Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him. God places a higher value on people having the free will to respond to him, and if he shows too much of himself he takes away their free choice to respond to him, because once he is too overt about his existence, people will just feel obligated to belief in him in order to avoid being punished.

But believing in God just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants for us. If it is too obvious to us that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and behave morally out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out of interest *in him*, just like we might try to get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is

actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God's veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don't seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to reach out to us and draw us to him. But I do think that we are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist's argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. In order to derive a contradiction, God MUST NOT have any possible reason to remain hidden. If he has a reason for remaining hidden that is consistent with his goodness, then the argument will not go through.

When Murray offers a possible reason for God to remain hidden in order to allow people to freely respond to him, then the argument is defeated. God wants people to respond to him freely so that there is a genuine love relationship – not coercion by overt threat of damnation. To rescue the argument, the atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free choice of his creatures to reject him.

More of Michael Murray's work

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007). The book chapter from the Cambridge book is here. The book chapter from the Routledge book is here.

Michael Murray's papers are really fun to read, because he uses hilarious examples. I should mention that I disagree with his view that God's work of introducing biological information in living creatures has to be front-loaded.

Here's more terrific stuff from Dr. Murray:

- "Who's Afraid of Religion?", Inaugural Lecture delivered March 30, 2006. Franklin and Marshall College.
- "Seek and You Will Find", in God and the Philosophers. Thomas Morris, editor. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1994.

Is there any evidence of God's existence?

Yes, just watch this lecture by Dr. William Lane Craig. It contains 5 reasons why God exists and 3 reasons why it matters.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information

- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Charles Krauthammer writes the column of the year on Obamacare

December 20, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: I am on Christmas blogging hours now, so we are only going to have posts at 10 AM and 4 PM till January 6th! Sorry for the interruption in service.

This Washington Post editorial might be the editorial of the year, so please read the whole thing.

Excerpt:

> Obamacare was sold as simply a refinement of the current system, retaining competition among independent insurers but making things more efficient, fair and generous. Free contraceptives for Sandra Fluke. Free mammograms and checkups for you and me. Free (or subsidized) insurance for some 30 million uninsured. And, *mirabile dictu*, not costing the government a dime.
>
> In fact, Obamacare is a full-scale federal takeover. The keep-your-plan-if-you-like-your-plan ruse was a way of saying to the millions of Americans who had insurance and liked what they had: Don't worry. You'll be left unmolested. For you, everything goes on as before.
>
> That was a fraud from the very beginning. The law was designed to throw people off their private plans and into government-run exchanges where they would be made to overpay — forced to purchase government-mandated services they don't need — as a way to subsidize others. (That's how you get to the ostensible free lunch.)
>
> It wasn't until the first cancellation notices went out in late 2013 that the deception began to be understood. And felt. Six million Americans with private insurance have just lost it. And that's just the beginning. By the Department of Health and Human Services' own estimates, about 75 million Americans would have plans that their employers would have the right to cancel. And millions of middle-class workers who will migrate to the exchanges and don't qualify for government subsidies will see their premiums, deductibles and co-pays go up.
>
> […]Look what happened just last week. Health and Human Services unilaterally and without warning changed coverage deadlines and guidelines. It asked insurers to start covering people on Jan. 1 even if they signed up as late as the day before and even if they hadn't paid their premiums. And is "strongly encouraging" them to pay during the transition for doctor visits and medicines *not* covered in their current plans (if covered in the patient's previous — canceled — plan).
>
> On what authority does a Cabinet secretary tell private companies to pay for services not in their plans and cover people not on their rolls? Where in

> Obamacare's 2,500 pages are such high-handed dictates authorized? Does anyone even ask? The bill itself is simply taken as a kind of blanket warrant for HHS to run, regulate and control the whole insurance system.
>
> Remember the uproar over forcing religious institutions to provide contraception coverage? The president's "fix" was a new regulation ordering insurers to provide these services for free. Apart from the fact that this transparent ruse does nothing to resolve the underlying issue of conscience — God sees — by what right does the government order private companies to provide free services for anyone?

Previously, I blogged about a Duke University health care policy expert's estimate that it was going to be 129 million. I blogged about these problems from 2010 to now, study after study, maybe one post a month. No one listened. But these things were known. We knew that government was going to destroy a private health care system that was number one in the world for patient outcomes. Now everyone knows what conservatives were warning about in 2010.

The last column by Charles Krauthammer was also really good. It's about how Obama had never realized how bad government is at doing things when compared to the private sector.

Eric Metaxas interviews Stephen C. Meyer on his book “Darwin’s Doubt”

December 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Just watched this Friday night, and it’s a very good discussion that starts with the 5 basic questions you need to understand before you can understand intelligent design.

Here are the first 5 questions:

- What is intelligent design?
- What are the three meanings of the word evolution?
- Is Darwinian evolution compatible with intelligent design?
- Is intelligent design science?
- What is biological information and where is it found?

There are many more questions covered, and Eric Metaxas is a very witty interviewer. I laughed out loud many times. There is a period of question and answer at the end. Those were some of the most intelligent questions I have ever seen from a lay audience.

Obama administration issues permits to wind energy companies to kill rare birds

December 21, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review.

Excerpt:

> We have to kill eagles in order to save them.
>
> That's now the official policy of the U.S. Interior Department. On Friday, the agency announced that it would grant some wind-energy companies permits that will allow them to kill or injure bald and golden eagles for up to 30 years without penalty.
>
> The move is an unprecedented gift to the wind-energy industry, which has been lobbying for the 30-year permit for several years. Shortly after the deal was announced, the wind-energy lobby issued a statement that would make George Orwell proud. An official with the American Wind Energy Association declared that this "is not a program to kill eagles." It is, he claimed, "about conservation."
>
> Well then. We can now rest easy. Big Wind is saving eagles by getting permits to kill them.
>
> Dozens of environmental groups, including the American Bird Conservancy, the Conservation Law Center, and the National Audubon Society, opposed the deal. Under the headline "Interior Dept. Rule Greenlights Eagle Slaughter at Wind Farms," Audubon issued a statement calling it "a stunningly bad move" and quoting the group's president and CEO, David Yarnold: "Instead of balancing the need for conservation and renewable energy, Interior wrote the wind industry a blank check." He called it "outrageous" that "the government is sanctioning the killing of America's symbol, the Bald Eagle."
>
> […]On September 11, some of the top raptor biologists at the Fish and Wildlife Service issued a report that found that the number of documented eagle kills by wind turbines has increased dramatically over the past few years, rising from two in 2007 to 24 in 2011. In all, some 85 eagles have been killed by wind turbines since 1997. And that figure is "an absolute minimum," Joel Pagel, the lead author of the report, recently told me. Among the carcasses: six bald eagles.
>
> In an interview shortly after the publication of his findings in the *Journal of Raptor Research*, Pagel told me that he and his colleagues have since documented additional eagle kills by wind turbines in Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and North Dakota. He refused to give a number but said "it's quite a few." There are now 14 states where the problem has been identified, he said, adding that more than half of the eagle carcasses have been found "incidentally" — that is, by people not out looking for them. And so the total of dead eagles is likely far higher than

> what Pagel and his colleagues are reporting.

As someone who loves birds of all kinds and who has owned different species of parrots for the last 25 years, I am outraged by the Obama administration's war on birds. Birds are among the most intelligent animals, and many species are capable of forming bonds with humans in ways that most other animals cannot. We should not be subsidizing "green" energy projects that result in the killing of rare birds. Although global warming theory is now widely recognized as being contrary to observations, the need to protect endangered species is real.

Mark Steyn on the intolerance of the gay activism movement

December 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina found this article in by the Canadian national treasure in National Review.

Excerpt:

> *Duck Dynasty*'s Phil Robertson, in his career-detonating interview with *GQ*, gave a rather thoughtful vernacular exegesis of the Bible's line on sin, while carefully insisting that he and other Christians are obligated to love all sinners and leave it to the Almighty to adjudicate the competing charms of drunkards, fornicators, and homosexuals. Nevertheless, GLAAD — "the gatekeepers of politically correct gayness" as the (gay) novelist Bret Easton Ellis sneered — saw their opportunity and seized it. By taking out TV's leading cable star, they would teach an important lesson *pour encourager les autres*— that espousing conventional Christian morality, even off-air, is incompatible with American celebrity.
>
> Some of my comrades, who really should know better, wonder why, instead of insisting Robertson be defenestrated, GLAAD wouldn't rather "start a conversation." But, if you don't need to, why bother? Most Christian opponents of gay marriage oppose gay marriage; they don't oppose the right of gays to advocate it. Yet thug groups like GLAAD increasingly oppose the right of Christians even to argue their corner. It's quicker and more effective to silence them.
>
> **As Christian bakers ordered to provide wedding cakes for gay nuptials and many others well understand, America's much-vaunted "freedom of religion" is dwindling down to something you can exercise behind closed doors in the privacy of your own abode or at a specialist venue for those of such tastes for an hour or so on Sunday morning, but when you enter the public square you have to leave your faith back home hanging in the closet.** Yet even this reductive consolation is not permitted to Robertson: GLAAD spokesgay Wilson Cruz declared that "Phil and his family claim to be Christian, but Phil's lies about an entire community fly in the face of what true Christians believe." Robertson was quoting the New Testament, but hey, what do those guys know? In today's America, land of the Obamacare Pajama Boy, Jesus is basically Nightshirt Boy, a fey non-judgmental dweeb who's cool with whatever. What GLAAD is attempting would be called, were it applied to any other identity group, "cultural appropriation."

Make no mistake about this. There is a totalitarian impulse in the gay agenda. Their morality-free view of sexuality is not compatible with the Judeo-Christian values that ground Western civilization. It's not OK with them that you disagree with them. They are

up for using any and all means necessary up to and including violence (as we saw in the domestic terrorism attack against the Family Research Council). Their goal is to stop you for publicly defending marriage. They are at war with the idea that anyone can use their freedom of speech to tell them that what they are doing is wrong.

UPDATE: Mark Steyn follows up here with more examples of gay activists bullying their critics.

Dan Barker debates Casey Luskin on academic freedom on the Michael Medved show

December 22, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Michael Medved show is a national radio show broadcast out of Seattle, Washington. According to Talkers magazine, he has the fifth largest radio audience. He has a regular weekly segment on science and culture featuring scholars from the Discovery Institute.

This is a re-post from earlier this year (June)

The MP3 file is available for download. (38 minutes)

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, the CSC's Casey Luskin and atheist Dan Barker of the Freedom From Religion Foundation debate academic freedom and free speech on the Medved Show. This debate was inspired by the ongoing case of Professor Eric Hedin, a physicist at Ball State University who is being threatened by the Freedom From Religion Foundation for favorably portraying intelligent design in the classroom.
>
> ***[…]****Each week, leading fellows from Discovery Institute will join Michael Medved to talk about the intersection of science and culture. Listen in live online or on your local Medved station, or stay tuned at ID the Future for the weekly podcast.*

Topics: (note that I am paraphrasing Dan Barker for the sake of humor, and he will probably sue me, since that is his entire contribution to the search for truth in this debate)

- Michael Medved: untenured Ball State University professor Eric Hedin is under fire for teaching both sides of intelligent design in a college course
- Dan Barker: this complaint against professor Hedin came to our attention from Jerry Coyne not from students of Professor Hedin
- Dan Barker: professors are not allowed to question the presuppositions atheism, materialism, naturalism in the physics classroom
- Dan Barker: this is a science course and you cannot question the religion of naturalism in class or else it's teaching religion
- Dan Barker: we need to use the power of the courts to stifle any dissent from of my religion (naturalism)
- Dan Barker: the classroom of a university is not the proper place for students to inquire about both sides of scientific disputes
- Dan Barker: even if students are paying their money and choosing this course of their own free will, they can't be allowed to hear both sides
- Casey Luskin: this course is not a science course, it is open to non-science students
- Casey Luskin: the course evaluations from students of all majors is overwhelmingly

positive
- Casey Luskin: the course features people on both sides
- Casey Luskin: the course features brilliant scholars like Lennox and Penrose, both from Oxford University
- Casey Luskin: the course features opponents of intelligent design like Francis Collins and Karl Gilberson
- Casey Luskin: the course features non-Christians like Lee Spetner, Paul Davies, Roger Penrose and Gerald Schroeder
- Dan Barker: (taking over the host) you cannot study scientists like Francis Collins who mapped the human genome, that is "creationism"
- Michael Medved: academic freedom allows professors to put a slant on what they are teaching
- Dan Barker: if the professor's slant is against my religion of naturalism, then I have to put them in jail and inquisition them
- Dan Barker: you cannot teach science like the Big Bang and fine-tuning as if it is science because it contradicts naturalism
- Casey Luskin: Even radical atheist PZ Myers says that professors have the right to academic freedom
- Dan Barker: I'll burn that creationist at the stake, too! And smash his filthy microscopes and telescopes!
- Michael Medved: Casey, would you use state power to fire a professor who disagreed with you because you were offended?
- Casey Luskin: no, I had to take tons of courses from professors who had a slant against my views and I learned a lot from different views
- Dan Barker: you will address me as the Holy Father, please! Every professor who disagrees with my religion must burn!
- Casey Luskin: Barker has no idea what is going on in the class, he never attended it
- Casey Luskin: The atheists students who took his class gave him high ratings and said he graded fairly
- Dan Barker: I don't have to look through the telescope to know the Earth is flat – Hedin is a traitor! Off with his head!
- Dan Barker: Creationist PZ Myers is wrong, and I'll burn him at the stake for creationist heresy against my Holy Church!
- Dan Barker: Oxford professors like John Lennox are creationists because his Big Bang religion is grounded on experimental data like the cosmic background radiation, the hydrogen/helium abundances and the redshifting of light from distant galaxies
- Dan Barker: I have a degree in Religion and I write hymns, which makes me smarter than John Lennox since he is a "creationist"
- Dan Barker: I haven't published any scientific research myself, but I have written some atheist praise hymns, so I am qualified to burn the heretics!
- Michael Medved: The course is taught by someone with a PhD in Physics, and the syllabus says that it investigates science and religion

- Michael Medved: Why is it wrong to investigate the science that questions philosophical assumptions like naturalism and materialism?
- Casey Luskin: The syllabus features amazing readings from all the latest science relevant to that question from both sides
- Michael Medved: What will Ball State U do to the professor?
- Casey Luskin: So far no action from Ball State U, but people need to sign the petition to protect the professor
- Michael Medved: Isn't academic freedom being applied inconsistently here?
- Casey Luskin: Yes and science is supposed to move forward by disagreement and debate
- Casey Luskin: How confident can intelligent design censors really be if their contribution to the debate is coercion and intimidation?
- Michael Luskin: Is Dan Barker right to say that Oxford professor John Lennox is a "creationist"?
- Casey Luskin: Creationism starts with the Bible, but intelligent design starts with scientific data

And there is a period of questions from the callers. This episode features a debate, so it is not to be missed.

You can see more about Dan Barker's educational background:

> Dan became a teenage evangelist at age 15. At 16 he was choir librarian for faith-healer Kathryn Kuhlman's Los Angeles appearances. He received a degree in Religion from Azusa Pacific University and was ordained to the ministry by the Standard Community Church, California, in 1975.
>
> […]Dan preached for 19 years. He maintained an ongoing touring musical ministry, including eight years of full-time, cross-country evangelism. An accomplished pianist, record producer, arranger and songwriter, he worked with Christian music companies such as Manna Music and Word Music. For a few years, Dan wrote and produced the annual "Mini Musicale" for Gospel Light Publications' Vacation Bible School curriculum.

I'm not sure if Dan Barker has the right background for disputing whether intelligent design belongs in a classroom or not. Remember, the bulk of his life was spent writing and singing feel-g0od, happy-clappy songs. In his debates with Christians, it's quite clear that he is totally unequipped to assess scientific evidence from the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, or habitability. It's just not his thing, and I don't think that musicians have what it takes to understand those arguments enough to feel comfortable using the courts to suppress people with actual PhDs in science.

You can read more about my opinion about how Dan Barker arrived at his atheism through a mistaken view of the Christian life.

I subscribe to the ID the Future podcast, and I really recommend that you do as well!

Previous entries

- Episode one: Stephen C. Meyer on Thomas Nagel and intelligent design
- Episode two: Stephen C. Meyer on Richard Dawkins and the Cambrian explosion
- Episode three: John G. West discusses Darwinism and the value of human life
- Episode four: Stephen C. Meyer and John Lennox discuss human exceptionalism
- Episode five: Jay Richards and Stephen C. Meyer discuss scientific consensus

Gay activists pressure comedian Bob Newhart to cancel show for Catholic group

December 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mark Steyn's previous column, which I blogged about, drew a response from the National Review editor who urged Mr. Steyn not to upset gay activists by being "derogatory" and "puerile" in our defense of free speech. Mark Steyn replied to him, and in that reply he linked to this article from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Famed comedian Bob Newhart has canceled a headline show at a conference for Catholic business leaders after a homosexual activist group ran a campaign portraying the organizers as "anti-gay."
>
> After learning of the 84-year-old comedian's scheduled appearance at the Legatus Summit in Orlando on February 6, the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) began urging him last week to back out.
>
> […]The homosexual activist group launched the campaign in a December 12 post titled "Bob Newhart, don't become the next Kirk Cameron!"
>
> […]"Personally, I'm choosing to believe that he just doesn't know and that this booking is the result of bad advice," wrote author Jeremy Hooper, GLAAD's special projects consultant. "GLAAD is reaching out to Mr. Newhart's representatives to let them know how, exactly, an appearance at this event will come across to LGBT people and allied voices."
>
> "I am hoping that I am right, and Mr. Newhart doesn't want to go down that path," he added. "He can still express his Catholic faith in a way more consistent with the rest of American Catholics, by loving and supporting his LGBT friends and family. GLAAD is urging him to do the right thing."

Isn't that nice that the gay activists are going to allow Catholics express their moral convictions in a way that is consistent with their gay agenda? When Jesus said that marriage is between a man and a woman in Mark 10, he was just being being a hateful bigot. GLAAD could have straightened Jesus right out with a little intimidation, shaming and coercion. Then he would have been a lot better as a religious figure. Fortunately, the helpful gay activists at GLAAD are here to straighten out the rest of us today. By any means necessary, because it's for our own good to have correct views on what the Bible teaches about sin.

I was talking to a friend about this whole Mark Steyn dust-up and I think my core conviction on this issue is this. When I sin, I don't run around using threats, vandalism and violence in order to force others to celebrate and participate in my sinning. When I sin, I call it a sin and I don't use worldly power to force others to affirm my sin. I don't ask people to subsidize my sinning and pay for my medical bills. I don't demand that people

who disagree with my sinning to be fired from their jobs. I don’t vandalize people’s churches and businesses. And I don’t commit acts of domestic terrorism, like the gay activist Floyd Lee Corkins did.

Stephen Baskerville: five myths about no-fault divorce

December 23, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Catholic News Agency.

Introduction:

> Almost four decades after the "no-fault" divorce revolution began in California, misconceptions abound. Even the many books about divorce, including myriad self-help manuals, are full of inaccurate and misleading information. No public debate preceded the introduction of no-fault divorce laws in the 1970s, and no debate has taken place since.
>
> Yet divorce-on-demand is exacting a devastating toll on our children, our social order, our economy, and even our constitutional rights. A recent study estimates the financial cost of divorce to taxpayers at $112 billion annually. Recent demands to legitimize same-sex marriage almost certainly follow from the divorce revolution, since gay activists readily acknowledge that they only desire to marry under the loosened terms that have resulted from the new divorce laws. Divorce also contributes to a dangerous increase in the power of the state over private life.

Here are the five myths about no-fault divorce:

- No-fault divorce permitted divorce by mutual consent, thus making divorce less acrimonious
- We cannot force people to remain married and should not try
- No-fault divorce has led men to abandon their wives and children
- When couples cannot agree or cooperate about matters like how the children should be raised, a judge must decide according to "the best interest of the child"
- Divorce must be made easy because of domestic violence

And the details about number three:

> Myth 3: No-fault divorce has led men to abandon their wives and children.
>
> Fact: This does happen (wives more often than children), but it is greatly exaggerated. The vast majority of no-fault divorces — especially those involving children — are filed by wives. In fact, as Judy Parejko, author of Stolen Vows, has shown, the no-fault revolution was engineered largely by feminist lawyers, with the cooperation of the bar associations, as part of the sexual revolution. Overwhelmingly, it has served to separate large numbers of children from their fathers. Sometimes the genders are reversed, so that fathers take children from mothers. But either way, the main effect of no-fault is to make children weapons and pawns to gain power through the courts, not the "abandonment" of them by

> either parent.

Al Mohler wrote about the history of no-fault divorce a while back, and I think it's worth reviewing why we have this lousy law.

> The story behind America's love affair with no-fault divorce is a sad and instructive tale. As Baskerville documents, no-fault divorce laws emerged in the United States during the 1970s and quickly spread across the nation. Even though only nine states had no-fault divorce laws in 1977, by 1995, every state had legalized no-fault divorce.
>
> Behind all this is an ideological revolution driven by feminism and facilitated by this society's embrace of autonomous individualism. Baskerville argues that divorce "became the most devastating weapon in the arsenal of feminism, because it creates millions of gender battles on the most personal level." As far back as 1947, the National Association of Women Lawyers [NAWL] was pushing for what we now know as no-fault divorce. More recently, NAWL claims credit for the divorce revolution, describing it as "the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken."
>
> The feminists and NAWL were not working alone, of course. Baskerville explains that the American Bar Association "persuaded the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws [NCCUSL] to produce the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act." Eventually, this led to a revolution in law and convulsions in society at large. This legal revolution effectively drove a stake into the heart of marriage itself, with inevitable consequences. In effect, no-fault divorce has become the catalyst for one of the most destructive cultural shifts in human history. Now, no-fault divorce is championed by many governments in the name of human rights, and America's divorce revolution is spreading around the world under the banner of "liberation."

And note that Democrats oppose any effort to reform laws that make it easy to break up marriages:

> A basic dishonesty on the question of divorce pervades our political culture. Baskerville cites Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm as referring to divorce as a couple's "private decision." Granholm's comments came as she vetoed a bill intended to reform divorce law in her state. The danger and dishonesty of referring to divorce as a couple's "private decision" is evident in the fact that this supposedly private decision imposes a reality, not only on the couple, but also on children and the larger society. Indeed, the "private decision" is really not made by a couple at all–but only by any spouse demanding a divorce.

So, no-fault was pushed by two groups: feminists and trial lawyers.

There's a lot of talk these days about gay marriage and how it undermines marital norms and normalizes raising children without either their biological father or biological mother.

But before there was gay marriage, there was no-fault divorce, which deprives children of their biological father. There is no provision for no-fault divorce in the Bible, so it seems to me that Christians should be against frivolous divorce just like we are against same-sex marriage.

Did Jesus really teach that it is wrong to judge others?

December 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great post by Matt at MandM on an often misunderstood verse.

Here's the passage in question, Matthew 7:1-5:

[1]"Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

[2]For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

[3]"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

[4]How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

[5]You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Most people only quote the first verse, but they don't look at the rest of the verses that come after.

Here's what Matt has to say about those other verses:

> The phrase translated in the NIV as, "do not judge, or you too will be judged," was originally written by Matthew in Koine (a Greek dialect). The Interlinear Bible gives the literal translation here as, "do not judge that you be judged." In other words, do not judge others *in a way that leads one to put oneself under judgement.*
>
> […]One is not to judge in a way that brings judgment on oneself. The reason for this ("for") is that the standard one uses to judge others is the standard that one's own behaviour will be measured by. Jesus goes on to illustrate, with a sarcastic example, precisely what he is talking about; a person who nit-picks or censures the minor faults of others (taking the speck out of their brothers eye) who ignores the serious, grave, moral faults in their own life (the log in one's own eye). His point is that such faults actually blind the person's ability to be able to make competent moral judgments. This suggests that Jesus is focusing on a certain type of judging and not the making of judgments *per se*.
>
> In fact, the conclusion that Jesus does not mean to condemn *all* judging of others is evident from the proceeding sentences in the above quote. Rather than engaging in the kind of judgment Jesus has condemned one should "first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." In other words one should try to rectify the serious moral flaws in one's own life precisely so one *can* assist others with theirs. One

> needs to avoid hypocrisy in order to make constructive and effective moral judgments about others. This would make no sense if Jesus meant to condemn *all* judging by this passage.

This is something I actually try to do, and it's easy. Before you open your mouth to judge someone, you have to look at your own life and make sure that you don't do the thing you're condeming.

I try not to say anything about individual people at all, but just talk about behaviors in general that are harmful. I don't ask people if they do any of those behaviors. If they try to tell me about their bad behaviors, I tell them that their personal lives are not up for discussion, unless they explicitly ask me to comment on their specific case. So, instead of saying "you're bad!", I say "this behavior is bad and here's why". And I make sure I don't DO that behavior before I declare it as immoral!

I hear this challenge about Christians being too judgmental all the time from non-Christians. If you do, too, then you should definitely click through to MandM and read the whole thing. There's a logical element, a common sense element and a hermeneutical element to this problem, and all are discussed by Matt. He's a sharp guy, you're bound to learn something new that you can use.

http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%207:1-6&version=NIV

Is the story of the woman being stoned for adultery in John 7-8 authentic?

December 24, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the leading conservative New Testament scholar Daniel Wallace to explain. Excerpt:

> One hundred and forty years ago, conservative biblical scholar and Dean of Canterbury, Henry Alford, advocated a new translation to replace the King James Bible. One of his reasons was the inferior textual basis of the KJV. Alford argued that "a translator of Holy Scripture must be…ready to sacrifice the choicest text, and the plainest proof of doctrine, if the words are not those of what he is constrained in his conscience to receive as God's testimony." He was speaking about the Trinitarian formula found in the KJV rendering of 1 John 5:7–8. Twenty years later, two Cambridge scholars came to the firm conclusion that John 7:53–8:11 also was not part of the original text of scripture. But Westcott and Hort's view has not had nearly the impact that Alford's did.
>
> For a long time, biblical scholars have recognized the poor textual credentials of the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11). The evidence against its authenticity is overwhelming: The earliest manuscripts with substantial portions of John's Gospel (P66 and P75) lack these verses. They skip from John 7:52to 8:12. The oldest large codices of the Bible also lack these verses: codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both from the fourth century, are normally considered to be the most important biblical manuscripts of the NT extant today. Neither of them has these verses. Codex Alexandrinus, from the fifth century, lacks several leaves in the middle of John. But because of the consistency of the letter size, width of lines, and lines per page, the evidence is conclusive that this manuscript also lacked the *pericope adulterae*. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, also from the fifth century, apparently lacked these verses as well (it is similar to Alexandrinus in that some leaves are missing). **The earliest extant manuscript to have these verses is codex Bezae, an eccentric text once in the possession of Theodore Beza. He gave this manuscript to the University of Cambridge in 1581 as a gift, telling the school that he was confident that the scholars there would be able to figure out its significance.** He washed his hands of the document. Bezae is indeed the most eccentric NT manuscript extant today, yet it is the chief representative of the Western text-type (the text-form that became dominant in Rome and the Latin West).
>
> **When P66, P75, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus agree, their combined testimony is overwhelmingly strong that a particular reading is not authentic. But it is not only the early Greek manuscripts that lack this text. The great majority of Greek manuscripts through the first eight**

> **centuries lack this pericope. And except for Bezae (or codex D), virtually all of the most important Greek witnesses through the first eight centuries do not have the verses. Of the three most important early versions of the New Testament (Coptic, Latin, Syriac), two of them lack the story in their earliest and best witnesses. The Latin alone has the story in its best early witnesses.**
>
> Even patristic writers seemed to overlook this text. Bruce Metzger, arguably the greatest textual critic of the twentieth century, argued that "No Greek Church Father prior to Euthymius Zigabenus (twelfth century) comments on the passage, and Euthymius declares that the accurate copies of the Gospel do not contain it" (*Textual Commentary*, 2nd ed., *loc. cit.*).
>
> It is an important point to note that although the story of the woman caught in adultery is found in most of our printed Bibles today, the evidence suggests that the majority of Bibles during the first eight centuries of the Christian faith did not contain the story. Externally, most scholars would say that the evidence for it not being an authentic part of John's Gospel is rock solid.
>
> But textual criticism is not based on external evidence alone; there is also the internal evidence to consider. This is comprised of two parts: *intrinsic evidence* has to do with what an author is likely to have written;*transcriptional evidence* has to do with how and why a scribe would have changed the text.
>
> Intrinsically, the vocabulary, syntax, and style look far more like Luke than they do John. There is almost nothing in these twelve verses that has a Johannine flavor. And transcriptionally, scribes were almost always prone to add material rather than omit it—especially a big block of text such as this, rich in its description of Jesus' mercy. One of the remarkable things about this passage, in fact, is that it is found in multiple locations. Most manuscripts that have it place it in its now traditional location: between John 7:52 and 8:12. But an entire family of manuscripts has the passage at the end of Luke 21, while another family places it at the end of John's Gospel. Other manuscripts place it at the end of Luke or in various places in John 7.
>
> The *pericope adulterae* has all the earmarks of a pericope that was looking for a home. It took up permanent residence, in the ninth century, in the middle of the fourth gospel.

Wallace teaches at the ultra-conservative fundamentalist Dallas Theological Seminary, and is the foremost evangelical manuscript expert in the world.

Why is this important? I think it is important because this story is very prominent for a great many Christians, especially Christian women, who use this to justify a variety of positions that are inconsistent with the rest of the Bible. These Christians *do not like the idea of anyone being judged* and so they are naturally inclined to blow this disputed passage into an entire theology that repudiates making moral judgments on such things as capital punishment. In fact, in another post, I was accused of being the equivalent of

one of the people who wanted to stone the woman taken for adultery because I oppose fornication and single motherhood. That's how far this has gone, where some Christians, especially Christian feminists, have leveraged this passage to redefine the Bible so that women are no longer responsible to the Bible's moral rules and can never be blamed for acting irresponsibly.

Is WK a big liberal?

As this debate between Peter Williams and Bart Ehrman shows, there are only TWO disputed passages in the entire NT that are theologically significant. The long ending of Mark and this adultery passage. A good case can be made for the long ending of Mark, but it's best not to assume it in a debate. The adultery passage is difficult to defend as authentic. Dr. Wallace talks about both passages in this Parchment & Pen article (reclaimingthemind.org). Wallace has also debated Bart Ehrman in the Greer-Heard Forum. What that debate showed is that the New Testament text is actually quite reliable except for those two passages, but it's important to be honest about the two places that are not well supported.

The other other NT passages that are a concern are the earthquake passage and the guard story in Matthew. I think that the earthquake is apocalyptic language and the guard is more likely historical than not.

For a closer look at what the Bible says about capital punishment, look here.

What is the meaning and significance of Christmas for Christians?

December 25, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s the time of year when we explain what Christianity is about.

God exists

Basically, we know from a variety of scientific arguments that the universe was created and fine-tuned for life by an intelligent agent that existed causally prior to the beginning of the universe, because this agent brought the universe into being. Our purpose as humans is to enter into a two-way loving relationship with this Creator/Designer of the universe. This is the only way that we can ultimately be happy and fulfilled.

We avoid God

Now, when you look at human experience, none of us is interested in finding out about the character of this Creator/Designer, because we are afraid that if we find out too much about him then we will have our freedom to do as we please constrained by the demands of a relationship with an all-powerful, all-good being. Just knowing that such a person exists and has a character distinct from our own is enough to cause us to flee from him so that we can stay autonomous from the obligations of the moral law that he expects us to follow.

Christians believe that this universal desire to avoid an all-powerful, all-good God who will judge us is a result of bad behaviors inherited by us from the very first rebellion against God by our ancestors. Ever since that rebellion, the capability for relating to God has been lost, because we no longer have the ability to stop our rebellion against God. Christians call the first rebellion of our ancestors “The Fall of Man”.

What does this rebellion look like for us today? Well, we want to do whatever we want, in

order to be happy, and to ignore God's demands. We want to have happy feelings, including security, community and being morally good, all without a relationship with God. We want to acquire and rearrange matter for our selfish ends without acknowledging and honoring the Creator/Designer of that matter. And, of course, we would like other people to affirm, voluntarily or involuntarily, that our rebellion against God is really the height of moral goodness.

Additionally, some people imagine that God, if he exists at all, must desire our happiness. And of course when their needs are not met by this invented God, then they become even more bitter at God, and eventually decide that God could not really exist since their selfish needs are not being met by him. It never seems to occur to us humans that some pain and suffering may be permitted by God in order to turn our attention away from pleasure and security in this life, and back towards a relationship with him.

This is the mess we find ourselves in. This propensity for turning away from God and trying to pursue selfish happiness and security apart from a relationship with God is what the Bible calls "sin". Every single one of us deserves severe punishment for refusing to pursue a genuine two-way love relationship with the God who is there. That is the mess we are in before Jesus appears to address this problem.

Jesus saves the day

I cannot say much about *how* Jesus solves the problem of rebellion against God, because that is really the story of Easter, and today we are dealing with the story of Christmas. But I can say that the solution to the problem requires that God step into history to communicate with his creatures and to perform actions in order to be reconciled with them. That is the message of Christmas: God is stepping into history to do something to end our rebellion. Easter is the story of *what he does*.

This is talked about in the Bible in John 1, for example.

John 1:1-5:

[1]In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[2]He was with God in the beginning.

[3]Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

[4]In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

[5]The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

You can substitute the word "Word" there for *Logos*, which really means *logic* or *reason* or *wisdom.* This is a person with a divine nature, identified with the eternal being of God, who exists causally prior to the creation of the universe, who is going to take on an additional human nature, including a human body. (Christians believe that there is one divine "what" being and three divine "who" persons). Software engineers, you can think of Jesus having two natures as multiple inheritance in C++.

And it continues in John 1:10-14:

[10]He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not

recognize him.

[11]He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

[12]Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

[13]children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

[14]The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Here the word grace doesn't mean like a graceful ballet dancer. It means an instance of mercy received from a superior. A person (a "who") identified with the divine being (a "what") has decided to make us a top-down offer of mercy.

The same message of God stepping into history is found in the Christmas carols that people sing at Christmas.

Christmas carols

Here's the best one, "O, Holy Night", and it says:

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining.
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

When we were in rebellion, we had lost our most valuable capacity – the capacity of being in a direct relationship with God. And if the newborn baby Jesus can accomplish his mission (and he did), then we are going to regain that capacity for a direct relationship with God.

Now look at "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", which one of my favorites:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

Basically, as I often say, there are only two kinds of people in the world. There are people who are willing to respond to the offer of a relationship with God, with all the little sacrifices and compromises that a relationship entails, and then there are people who are not willing to respond. For the people who are willing to respond, the appearance of Jesus is the best thing that could possibly happen, because now we are finally going to have a chance to deal directly with God, face-to-face, to find out what he is like, and change ourselves to be more like him, with his help.

And that is why people celebrate Christmas. It's the anniversary of the birth of Jesus. It is the story of God stepping into history to be reconciled with his rebellious creatures. It's the story of the divine *Logos* subjecting himself to the life of a creature in order to rescue us from our sinful, self-destructive rebellion. This love for undeserving creatures is above

and beyond the call of duty. We didn’t love him, but instead he loved us first, and he loved us enough to come down here and suffer with us so that we could be reconciled with God.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Number of states with white Christmas highest in 11 years

December 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Those humming the words to "White Christmas" got their wish big-time as snow covered more than half the lower 48 states as of mid-December, putting snowless winters on the pile of failed climate predictions.
>
> More than half of the continental U.S. had snow cover as of Dec. 15, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the most in 11 years. That exposes as worthless the predictions of the climate scammers of snowless winters as far as the eye can see. In 2006, by comparison, snow covered just 12% of these states.
>
> […]We recall the prediction in 2000 by Dr. David Viner, a senior research scientist at the climatic research unit (CRU) of the University of East Anglia, that winter snowfall would become "a very rare and exciting event" and claiming, "Children just aren't going to know what snow is."
>
> Of course, we all remember that researchers with the CRU at East Anglia were responsible for omitting climate data with the purpose, according to uncovered email, to "hide the decline" in global temperatures.
>
> The temperatures that have flatlined over the last 15 years can no longer be hidden, and neither can the whir of snowblowers all across America this Christmas, as state after state gets hit with bitter cold and snow.
>
> Using computer models seemingly based on that old computer adage "garbage in, garbage out," models that cannot even predict the past, the climate Chicken Littles are prone to predict snowless winters, glacier-free Himalayas and an ice-free North Pole. Polar bears would drown and Santa would have no place to land.
>
> In his Dec. 10, 2007, "Earth has a fever" speech as he accepted his Nobel Prize, climate extremist Al Gore mentioned a prophecy of doom by U.S. climate scientist Wieslaw Maslowski.
>
> Maslowski said the Arctic's summer ice could "completely disappear" by 2013 due to global warming arising from carbon emissions. He was off by only a little. The Arctic had 920,000 square miles of ice more than it had in 2012, the largest year-to-year increase on record.
>
> German scientists Carl-Otto Weiss and Horst-Joachim Luedecke of the European Institute for Climate and Energy reported recently that two naturally occurring cycles would combine to lower global temperatures this century and that temperature levels would decline to levels similar to the "little ice age" of 1870.

I’m not sure how the lefties are going to spin this news, but I’m pretty sure that the only solution to our ongoing “climate crisis” is going to be more government control of corporations and individuals. It always is.

What we voted for: new Obamacare taxes coming in 2014

December 26, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The New York Post reports.

Excerpt:

> The cost of President Obama's massive health-care law will hit Americans in 2014 as new taxes pile up on their insurance premiums and on their income-tax bills.
>
> Most insurers aren't advertising the ObamaCare taxes that are added on to premiums, opting instead to discretely pass them on to customers while quietly lobbying lawmakers for a break.
>
> But one insurance company, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama, laid bare the taxes on its bills with a separate line item for "Affordable Care Act Fees and Taxes."
>
> The new taxes on one customer's bill added up to $23.14 a month, or $277.68 annually, according to Kaiser Health News. It boosted the monthly premium from $322.26 to $345.40 for that individual.
>
> The new taxes and fees include a 2 percent levy on every health plan, which is expected to net about $8 billion for the government in 2014 and increase to $14.3 billion in 2018.
>
> There's also a $2 fee per policy that goes into a new medical-research trust fund called the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute.
>
> Insurers pay a 3.5 percent user fee to sell medical plans on the HealthCare.gov Web site.
>
> […]Americans also will pay hidden taxes, such as the 2.3 percent medical-device tax that will inflate the cost of items such as pacemakers, stents and prosthetic limbs.
>
> Those with high out-of-pocket medical expenses also will get smaller income-tax deductions.
>
> Americans are currently allowed to deduct expenses that exceed 7.5 percent of their annual income. The threshold jumps to 10 percent under ObamaCare, costing taxpayers about $15 billion over 10 years.
>
> Then there's the new Medicare tax.
>
> Under ObamaCare, individual tax filers earning more than $200,000 and families earning more than $250,000 will pay an added 0.9 percent Medicare surtax on top of the existing 1.45 percent Medicare payroll tax. They'll also pay an extra 3.8 percent Medicare tax on unearned income, such as investment dividends, rental income and capital gains.

Right now, Obama is furiously trying to re-write the law by arbitrary executive decisions. But all this does is remove the amount of money being paid into the system, while keeping the amount being spent the same. What will be the end result of a massive shortfall in funding for Obamacare? As Byron York argues, the end result of will be that the Democrats bail out health care insurance companies to keep them from going bankrupt.

Transcript:

COLBY: What do you think about these bailouts of insurance companies, as well? Could that happen?

YORK: It absolutely will happen –

COLBY: Will happen?!

YORK: As a matter of fact, it's written into the law. There's something called "risk corridors," which basically ensure that if an insurance company ends up paying a lot more in benefits than it takes in in premiums, then the federal government will bail it out — it will make it good. And it looks like we are entering a situation — certainly in the first month of January — where the insurance companies will be in that situation. And they'e not going to take the losses. It will be the taxpayer who makes up for those losses.

Do you think that raising the debt from $8.5 trillion to $17 trillion was irresponsible? Then wait until the government has to bail out all their left-wing cronies in the health insurance industry.

One thing is for sure – the Republicans will be running on Obamacare in 2014:

New Hampshire:

Minnesota:

This money that is being *wasted* due to socialist incompetence doesn't come from government workers or politicians – they don't earn any money of their own. The money comes from government *borrowing from your children*. Honestly, I if I had children, I might be tempted to leave this country, especially if I wanted to have lots of them. This really isn't the place for a big family any more.

The importance of the traditional family for income mobility

December 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Barone writes about a new report on the family by Nick Schultz of the American Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> [I]t is an uncomfortable truth that children of divorce and children with unmarried parents tend to do much worse in life than children of two-parent families.
>
> (I'll leave aside the sensitive issue of children of same-sex marriages, since these haven't existed in a non-stigmatized atmosphere long enough to produce measurable results.)
>
> As Schulz points out, that uncomfortable truth is not controversial among social scientists. It is affirmed by undoubted liberals such as Harvard's David Ellwood and Christopher Jencks.
>
> Growing up outside a two-parent family means not just lower incomes and less social mobility, Schulz argues.
>
> It also reduces human capital — "the knowledge, education, habits, will power — all the internal stuff that is largely intangible a person has that helps produce an income."
>
> While children are born with certain innate capacities, those capacities can be broadened or narrowed by their upbringing.
>
> The numbers indicate that single or divorced parents — however caring and dedicated — are unable, on average, to broaden those capacities as much as married parents can.
>
> These differences have sharp implications for upward mobility.
>
> **Schulz points to an Economic Mobility Project analysis showing that, among children who start off in the bottom third of the income distribution, only 26% with divorced parents move up, compared to 42% born to unmarried mothers (who may marry later, of course) and 50% who grow up with two married parents.**
>
> All this matters more than it used to because two-parent families are much more uncommon than they used to be. In 1960 about three-fourths of Americans 18 and over were married. In 2011, less than half were.

Now, you might say to yourself "what exactly have the secular left down to improve the income mobility of the poor by promoting marriage?" And the answer would be that the left promotes premarital sex for people who are not even ready for marriage, made contraceptives taxpayer-funded, subsidized the largest provider of abortions with

hundreds of millions of dollars, promoted the first redefinition of marriage through their feminism and trial lawyer lobbying groups, and now redefined marriage to mean either no biological father or no biological mother. Barack Obama himself has praised every other kind of non-traditional family arrangement as being equal to the traditional family. That's the sort of nonsense that passes for wisdom on the morally relativistic left. They just don't like the idea that there are moral rules that apply to sexual activity.

The left isn't really interested in income mobility. They talk about it as if it's a problem, but their "solutions" to the problem actually make the problem *worse*.

Can prayer, Bible reading, church-singing and charismatic preaching stop Katy Perry's apostasy?

December 27, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I received an e-mail from a woman who was telling me to drop my list of 10 worldview questions and just look for a wife who reads the Bible and has feelings about Jesus.

She wrote:

> My suggestion to you is to consider a top-down approach. Just pray for God to send you your wife and pray that you recognize her immediately. You don't seem like you really want to remain single…and your children are missing out on having you as their dad. Marriage is for children, remember? I know several young ladies who know their Scripture and who love Jesus but who, I don't think, would pass your test because, in my perception, they aren't cerebral enough.

I get this e-mail a lot, especially from women who have married non-Christians or who are divorced. Now the whole point of the list of 10 questions is to detect women who are not going to help me to produce effective, influential Christian children. If I am going to spend north of $100,000 per child + tuition, then I expect to get some sort of return on that investment for God. That money doesn't earn itself, and it needs to be well-spent serving God.

It's my wife's job to help me to do that. My goal in choosing a wife is to find a helper to make the relationship serve God. Otherwise, it's better for God if I give that money that I worked very hard to earn directly to effective Christian scholars. I don't have money to burn "playing house" with someone who is guided by her feelings. I can just give the money to Reasonable Faith or Discovery Institute instead.

Let's take a look at two parents who aimed at nothing and hit it with their daughter. The two parents run a ministry that is based around passionate preaching, prayer and Bible verses.

Excerpt:

> The Lord spoke to Arise International Conference host Mary Hudson to encourage women to reach their full destiny in Jesus Christ. He wants women to rise up as trailblazers, to think outside the box and be bold in Him, of course putting God first, your husband second and then your family!
>
> Mary's ministry of Arise! International holds annual women's empowerment and leadership conferences in Hawaii, Belgium, Colombia, France, Switzerland, Denmark and the USA. The river of glory is rising and we must flow with it.
>
> 2012 promises to be a break-through year to Arise! in who you are in Christ. Lean on Him for direction, don't look to man. Knowing the signs of the times and hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit will be vital to being at the right place at the

> right time to reap the harvest of souls coming into the Kingdom.
>
> Pray about being a part of Arise! this coming year. It just may be the meeting that propels you into the next level for your life. Remember, you are equipped with everything you need to fulfill your purpose. God's assignments reveal your abilities and your capabilities, and He will provide both the potential and the provision to meet every assignment.
>
> We call you blessed and highly favored!

I noticed that their "book store" offers nonsense books like this:

Keith Hudson "Looking and Seeing":

> Like this disciplined athlete, you need to learn how to look beyond your present situation and keep your eye on His Presence. God is ready to display His glory in your life as well in these last days, but it is going to take boldness for you to take the mask off and look at people and situations the way God sees them, not how man looks at them. What may stand in front of you may look too big for you to grasp; that what you see now is the way it's always going to be. Or you look at the dream God has given you and think, "there is no way I can ever accomplish this with my resources at my age…" That is the moment you have to flip the switch from looking to seeing.

Mary Hudson "Smart Bombs":

> Smart Bombs is a book which will show you practically and with true life examples how to take God's Word and let it explode strongholds in your life. When you read the Bible, He quickens particular passages or verses to your heart. You know it is God talking to you about your situation. Or when you receive a prophetic word, you sense in your heart this is speaking to you. But what do you do with these words when they bear witness with you? Let them fade away and disappear off of your memory? No, Smart Bombs shows you how to go on the offense with the anointed word of God, how to demolish strongholds and take back everything the enemy has stolen from you.
>
> This easy read is a must for anyone who is looking for clarity on their destiny.

Keith Hudson "The Cry":

> The Cry will reignite you with new fire. Christians lose their passion when they let go of their zeal for God. We come into prayer meetings and we are so polished and perfected. But the Lord wants to hear the cry of your heart. The church has lost its cry: God is about to restore it. Why did the thirty people gathered for the Azusa Street revival have such a move of the spirit of God in their day? Because they had a cry in their hearts and in their prayers. The Cry will release a desperate longing in you for Gods intervention in your life. It goes way beyond your natural thinking into a spiritual hunger from your innermost being. When

> everything else has failed, a desperate cry touches the heart of God.

Now do you think that someone who reads books like that will produce the same kind of children as parents who read William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer, Jay Richards, and Michael Licona? Of course not. Because the Hudson books are fluff and the books by real Christian scholars are not fluff.

Now let's read an article from Christian Post about what sort of child the fluff approach produces. (H/T Mysterious Chris S.)

Excerpt:

> Katy Perry, the 29-year-old singer and songwriter, is revealing that while she prays she no longer identifies with Christianity.
>
> "I don't believe in a heaven or a hell, or an old man sitting on a throne. I believe in a higher power bigger than me because that keeps me accountable," she told Marie Claire magazine recently. "Accountability is rare to find, especially with people like myself, because nobody wants to tell you something you don't want to hear."
>
> Perry, who took the Billboard charts by storm with her hit song "I Kissed a Girl" in 2008, told Marie Claire that she no longer considers herself a Christian despite being raised by Christian ministers.
>
> "I'm not Buddhist, I'm not Hindu, I'm not Christian, but I still feel like I have a deep connection with God. I pray all the time – for self-control, for humility," she told Marie Claire. "There's a lot of gratitude in it. Just saying 'thank you' sometimes is better than asking for things."
>
> Despite her decision to perform music that may seem controversial to the Christian community, the chart-topping singer has never shied away from crediting the Christian church for giving her a start as a performer.
>
> "The atmosphere I grew up in was 100 percent Christian," Perry said her "Part of Me: 3D" movie which was released last year. "I started singing in the church, I never really had another plan."

Their daughter is writing songs to promote homosexuality to young people. That's their legacy. The legacy of spiritual gifts, God opening doors of mysticism and charismatic anti-intellectualism. That's what they are going to present to God as their spiritual legacy. I noticed that Mary Hudson is now calling her daughter's celebrity divorce after one year of marriage a "gift from God". Her daughter married a heroin-addicted leftist non-Christian – but he was *hawt*. Tall, dark, handsome and a famous comedian, too.

The list of questions I use when courting helps me to avoid marrying a woman like Katy Perry's mother. She could not answer any of my questions. None of them. And what's more, she doesn't want to answer them. She wants to live her whole life without learning how to answer them. She wants to stick with her Bible, her singing, her feelings, her passionate oratory and her crowds of gullible people. I will not marry a woman like that. It

produces disaster and failure. It produces anti-Christian children.

In fact, you can’t succeed at anything worthwhile in life using the Keith and Mary Hudson approach to parenting. You can’t do a thing with that approach. Not writing software, not fixing cars, not making investments, not sending a rocket to the moon, not even evangelizing an apostate daughter. You do not want to be a Christian man who pumps 30 years of hard labor into a family that produces apostate children. If you are going to spend the money, then make sure you get the results.

Veterans Administration blocks cards from children that mention Christmas

December 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Todd Starnes has the story over at Fox News.

Excerpt:

> The national commander of the American Legion is demanding answers from the Veterans Administration after hospitals in three states placed restrictions on Christian volunteers, including a group of schoolchildren who were told they could only perform Christmas carols from a government-approved list.
>
> “Every Christmas, every religious holiday, Christians are more and more often targeted for censorship and restriction at VA facilities,” American Legion National Commander Daniel Dellinger said. “Veterans in these hospitals fought to protect such freedoms.”
>
> In Iowa City, American Legion members were told they could not hand out presents to veterans if the wrapping paper said Merry Christmas.
>
> In Augusta, Ga., the VA told a group of students from a Christian school that they could not sing religious-themed Christmas carols. Instead, the students were presented with a list of government-approved, secular songs.
>
> And in Dallas, the VA hospital refused to allow children to distribute Christmas cards to patients because the cards included phrases like “Merry Christmas” and “God Bless You.”
>
> […]On Monday morning boys and girls from Grace Academy in Prosper, Tex., were planning on hand delivering the cards to the wounded veterans. Math teacher Susan Chapman called the hospital to make final arrangements and that’s when she learned there was a problem.
>
> “I told him my students made cards, we’d like to bring them down for the veterans,” Chapman told MyFoxDFW.com. “And he said, ‘That’s great. We’re thrilled to have them, except the only thing is, we can’t accept anything that says ‘Merry Christmas’ or ‘God bless you’ or any scriptural references because of all the red tape.'”

This is just another story that shows that the Obama administration is hostile to Judeo-Christian values, especially when they are expressed in the military.

A primer for social conservatives who want to argue for their views with economics

December 28, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Somehow I missed this editorial from Ross Douthat, which appeared in the radically leftist New York Times. He responds to the charge that conservatives don't make economic arguments for their socially conservative views, even though the data is there to support such arguments. What he writes is a pretty good primer on evidential arguments for social conservatives. My regular readers will recognize some of the names he mentions from previous posts on this blog.

Excerpt:

> Here are a few (of many) possible answers. The first is that social conservatives actually *do* make such arguments, even if the phrase "negative externalities" isn't deployed with quite the frequency Caplan would like. Look at any prominent document on changing family structures, for instance, from The Moynihan Report down through Barbara Dafoe Whitehead's famous "Dan Quayle Was Right" to the "marriage gap" arguments of today, and you'll find an intense focus on the socioeconomic costs of the trends the writers are describing and/or deploring. Indeed, the entire corpus of socially-conservative intellectual efforts, from 1970s-era neoconservatives like Richard John Neuhaus and James Q. Wilson down to the present era, is shot through with arguments that are, if not purely economic, at least heavily informed by economic questions.
>
> Right now, whether you're reading Jonathan Last on demography or Kay Hymowitz on young manhood or Brad Wilcox on marriage and middle America or Mark Regnerus on the market for premarital sex, the case for social conservatism is reliably — perhaps even *too* reliably, I fear, in some of my own work — framed in the language of costs and benefits, mobility and opportunity, education and income and life outcomes. (And likewise on issues that fall within the socially-conservative penumbra, like immigration, crime, and drugs.)
>
> But note that very few of the writers and intellectuals I've just mentioned are practicing economists: They're political scientists, sociologists, journalists, and so forth. (Arguably the most influential socially-conservative champion of free market economics in the last generation, Michael Novak, earned degrees in theology and philosophy, not economics itself.)

In a previous NYT piece, he had also linked to a new 2014 study from the Journal of Sexual Research which showed how delaying sexual activity improves relationship quality and stability.

Abstract:

> While recent studies have suggested that the timing of sexual initiation within a

> couple’s romantic relationship has important associations with later relationship success, few studies have examined how such timing is associated with relationship quality among unmarried couples. Using a sample of 10,932 individuals in unmarried, romantic relationships, we examined how four sexual-timing patterns (i.e., having sex prior to dating, initiating sex on the first date or shortly after, having sex after a few weeks of dating, and sexual abstinence) were associated with relationship satisfaction, stability, and communication in dating relationships. **Results suggested that waiting to initiate sexual intimacy in unmarried relationships was generally associated with positive outcomes. This effect was strongly moderated by relationship length, with individuals who reported early sexual initiation reporting increasingly lower outcomes in relationships of longer than two years.**

That’s nothing new, but it shows that research falsifies the standard leftist/feminist narrative about recreational sex being normal and healthy. The sexual revolution is very much an idealistic flight from reality. Reality is generally more conservative than the leftists present in their sterile classrooms and popular culture entertainment. You’re not going to see the conclusions of mainstream research reflected in a feminist university professor’s angry rhetoric, or in TV shows and movies written by privileged radicals who have made all the wrong choices in life.

Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for God at UT Dallas 2013

December 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mysterious Chris S. posted this and I have provided a summary of the lecture below.

About Michael Strauss:

His full biography is here. (I removed his links from my excerpt text below)

Excerpt:

> I had an interest in science and theology, so in 1977 I chose to go to Biola University where I could study both subjects in detail. I thoroughly enjoyed college and participated in intramural sports, was elected to student government, served as a resident assistant, competed in forensics, and studied a lot. As I neared college graduation my dual interest continued so I applied to seminary and to graduate school. After graduating *summa cum laude* from Biola, I decided to pursue a graduate degree in physics at UCLA.
>
> During my first few years of graduate school, I developed an increased interest in quantum mechanics and subatomic physics and decided to do research in a field that dealt with these subjects. I joined a High Energy Physics experimental group doing research at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to actively participate in research at SLAC. I graduated in 1988 with my Ph.D in High Energy Physics (a.k.a. Elementary Particle Physics). If you would like to know more about High Energy Physics, the Particle Data Group at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory has a very nice interactive adventure that teaches you all about the subject. My research advisor was professor Charles Buchanan and my disertation was titled "A Study of Lambda Polarization and Phi Spin Alignment in Electron-Positron Annihilation at 29 GeV as a Probe of Color Field Behavior."
>
> After graduation, I accepted a post-doctoral research position with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I continued to do research at SLAC where I joined the SLD experiment. My research interests centered on the SLD silicon pixel vertex detector. I wrote most of the offline software for this device, and did physics analysis which used the vertex detector, including tagging *b* quark events for flavor specific QCD (Quantum Chromodynamics) analysis. In the seven years I was employed by UMASS, I only spent 3 days on the Amherst campus. The rest of the time was spent in California.
>
> […]In August 1995, I accepted a job as an Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of Oklahoma (OU) in Norman, Oklahoma. The University of Oklahoma has a vibrant high energy physics research group involved in experiments at the Fermi National Accelerator Center (Fermilab), and CERN. I joined the DØ

> experiment at Fermilab where I continue to do research in elementary particle physics. As a member of the DØ collaboration I have made contributions to the testing of silicon sensors for the upgraded vertex detector, to the track finding algorithms, to a measurement of the photon production cross section which probes the gluon content of protons, and to other QCD measurements. I am currently studying properties of*B* mesons that contain a *b*-quark, the production cross section of jets coming from quarks and gluons, and other QCD analyses. At CERN, I am a collaborator on the ATLAS detector.
>
> I received tenure in 2001 and was promoted to the rank of Professor in the summer of 2010. Most of the time at OU I have taught introductory physics classes to physics majors, engineers, and life science majors. In these classes I have used a number of interactive techniques to facilitate student participation and learning. I have been privileged to win a few awards for my teaching. In 1999, the Associated Students selected me as the Outstanding Professor in the College of Arts and Science, and in 2000 I was awarded the BP AMOCO Foundation Good Teaching Award. In 2002, I was given the Regents Award for Superior Teaching. I received the Carlisle Mabrey and Lurine Mabrey Presidential Professorship in 2006 which is given to "faculty members who excel in all their professional activities and who relate those activities to the students they teach and mentor."

He seems to have done a fine job of integrating his faith with a solid career in physics research. It would be nice if we were churning out more Christian scholars who are experts in experimental science.

Note: there is a period of 19 minutes of Q&A at the end of the lecture.

The lecture:

Summary:

It used to be true that most of the great scientists were believers in God
But now science has advanced and we have better instruments – is it still true?
Today, many people believe that science has shows that the universe and Earth are not special
We used to believe that the Earth was the center of the universe, and Darwin showed we are not designed
The problem with this view is that it is based on old science, not modern science
Three topics: origin of the universe, fine-tuning of the universe, the Rare Earth hypothesis

Experimental evidence for the origin of the universe:

- #1: Hubble discovered that the universe expands because of redshifting of light from distant galaxies
- #2: Measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation show the universe had a beginnning
- #3: Measurements of the light element (hydrogen and helium) abundances confirm

an origin of the universe
- The best explanation for an absolute origin of space, time, matter and energy is a supernatural cause

Experimental evidence for the design of the universe:

- #1: The amount of matter: a bit less = no stars and galaxies, a bit more = universe recollapses
- #2: The strong force: a bit more = only hydrogen, a bit more = little or no hydrogen
- #3: Carbon resonance level: a bit higher = no carbon, a bit lower = no carbon

Experimental evidence for galactic, stellar and planetary habitability:

- #1: Galaxy: produces high number of heavy elements and low radiation
- #2: Star: long stable lifetime, burns bright, bachelor star, third generation star (10 billion years must elapsed),
- #3: Planet: mass of planet, stable orbit, liquid water, tectonic activity, tilt, moon

Naturalistic explanations:

- Humans evolve to the point where they reach back in time and create finely-tuned universe
- Eternally existing multiverse

Hawking and Mlodinow response to Rare Earth:

- There are lots of planets so one must support life
- Odds of a planet that supports life are low even with 10^22 planets

Hawking and Mlodinow proposal of M-theory multiverse:

- There is no experimental evidence for M-theory being true
- M-theory is not testable now and is not likely to be testable in the future
- But science is about making testable predictions, not about blind speculation

Hawking and Mlodinow no-boundary proposal:

- This theory requires the laws of physics to exist prior to the universe
- But where do you get laws of physics before there is any physical world?
- There is no experimental evidence for no-boundary proposal
- All the evidence we have now (redshift, CMBR, H-He abundances) is for Big Bang

What science has revealed provide abundant evidence for a transcendent Creator and Designer

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

New Yale University Press book: fertility rates are in decline worldwide

December 29, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw this article about a new Yale University Press book on demographics, posted at Yale University's web site.

Excerpt:

> It's no surprise that the world's population is at an all-time high – exceeding 7 billion – although many might not know that it increased by 5 billion during the past century alone, rising from less than 2 billion in 1914. And many people would be surprised – even shocked – to know that over the past three decades, fertility rates have plummeted in many parts of the world, including China, Japan and even significant regions of India.
>
> These Asian giants have not been alone. In much of Europe, North America, East Asia and elsewhere, the average number of children born to women during the course of their childbearing years has fallen to unprecedentedly low levels.
>
> Our new book, *The Global Spread of Fertility Decline: Population, Fear, and Uncertainty* (Yale University Press, 2013) analyzes these trends and the demographic, political and economic consequences and uncertainties as low fertility has become a global phenomenon. Like other facets of globalization, low fertility rates are by no means universal: High fertility persists in sub-Saharan Africa and in parts of the Middle East, but elsewhere low fertility is more the rule than the exception. These underlying trends in childbearing mean that in the near future the rate of population growth both in Europe and Asia are likely to decline. The world is not on a path of unrestrained demographic growth, as some believe. People all over the world have hit the brakes.

It's strange because a lot of people on the secular left are worried about overpopulation, which is one of the factors causing them to push for abortion. I guess I shouldn't be surprised that the same people who are worried about overpopulation in the teeth of declining fertility rates are the ones who are worried about global warming even though there has been no significant warming for the last 17 years.

Something to think about when people on the secular left claim to be "reality-based". The universe is eternal, aliens seeded the Earth with life, the planet is burning to a crisp, fatherless children do as well as children of married couples, you can keep your health care plan, you can keep your doctor, and… fertility rates are too high. I think we need to change our perception of people on the left to reflect how deluded they really are.

Does the last-minute Obamacare exemption fix anything?

December 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my favorite writers on health care policy is Michael F. Cannon of the libertarian Cato Institute. He has an article in Forbes magazine that I think is a good level-set for the Obamacare changes that are happening in 2014 and beyond.

He writes:

> […]President Obama announced, just days before the deadline for purchasing coverage with a January 1 effective date, that he would offer a categorical "hardship exemption" from the individual mandate to anyone who had their insurance cancelled due to ObamaCare.
>
> […]If these folks choose not to buy health insurance, they will not face a penalty. They will also have the option to buy, "if it is available in your area," the lower-cost catastrophic coverage that ObamaCare otherwise offers only to people under age 30, or who receive the separate "unaffordability" exemption from the mandate.
>
> The obvious purpose of this policy is to give political cover to Senate Democrats who must face the voters next year, and are no doubt afraid of attack ads like this one.
>
> […]Yet this exemption may not be of much value to those who qualify, and is likely to create more problems for ObamaCare supporters than it solves.
>
> The people who qualify for this exemption don't actually want it. They want health insurance. They had affordable coverage, until ObamaCare took it away from them, and that's what they still want now. Sebelius boasts that ObamaCare's catastrophic plans cost 20 percent less than other ObamaCare plans, but don't confuse that with affordable coverage. The Manhattan Institute's Avik Roy — who is now the opinion editor for the sprawling Forbes empire – notes that ObamaCare's catastrophic plans can still cost twice as much as what was previously available on the individual market.
>
> But even if they like their catastrophic plan, they can't keep it. Sebelius has complete control over the duration of the exemptions, which she has described as a "temporary" step "to smooth [consumers'] transition" to enrollment in Exchange plans. So in a matter of months, Obama will violate his "if you like your health plan" pledge *again* by kicking these folks out of their catastrophic plans. They will get *another* cancellation letter tossing them into the Exchanges. Their premiums will surge *again*. They may lose their doctor *again*.
>
> The exemption means insurers will suffer losses this year, and rates will be higher next year, for all ObamaCare plans.

> The president argued before the Supreme Court that ObamaCare's regulatory scheme cannot work with out the individual mandate. Yet he has now exempted millions of the very people he most needs to comply with it. This exemption siphons good risks out of the Exchanges and destabilizes the risk pools for both the standard ObamaCare plans and the catastrophic plans. Participating carriers set the rates for their Exchange plans with the expectation that these folks would be purchasing bronze, silver, gold, and platinum plans through the Exchanges. **But the healthiest members of this now-exempt group are the most likely to go uninsured or purchase a catastrophic plan. So Obama's blanket exemption makes those risk pools older and sicker.**
>
> **This blanket exemption also destabilizes the risk pools for the catastrophic plans. It opens those pools to lots of people over age 30, who have higher health expenses than people under age 30, and whom the insurers were not expecting to buy catastrophic plans when they set those rates.**

So the effect of this is going to be to raise rates temporarily, because the insurers companies are not getting the younger, healthy people they need to make the rates as low as they originally calculated. They are going to lose a ton of money because the Democrats are changing the rules at the last minute. They people who have coverage are going to be the ones who make all the claims, and the people who normally don't make claims are now exempt, temporarily – until the 2014 elections. This is going to be a huge hit to the health insurance companies.

As I noted before, the Democrats are going to have to bail out the insurance companies in order to account for the losses. It's actually in the Obamacare law already, as David Freddoso explained. But will the Democrats use money from their political party to pay for their mistakes? Hell no – they will borrow it from your children, which is what they are so good at doing. There is a cost for electing incompetent people, and it's going to continue to rise until the fools are voted out.

Woman who slept with 18 guys shocked that no one wants to marry her

December 30, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

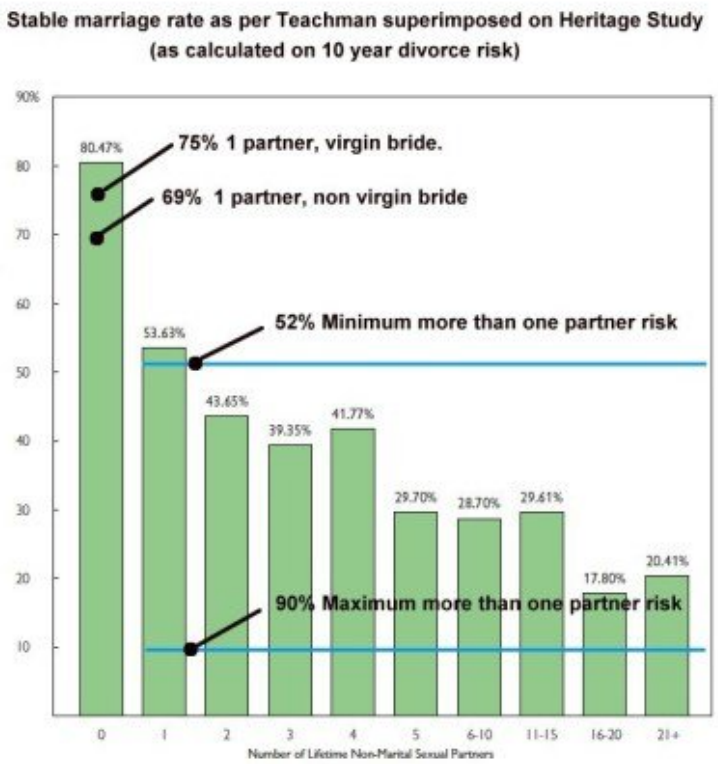

Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
Sunshine Mary linked to a post from Reddit by a 32-year old "progressive" woman who is surprised that 15 years of sleeping around with 18 different guys is not attractive to marriage-minded men.

Excerpt:

> My parents are first generation immigrants. I have a younger brother and younger sister. In my family I was always the rebellious one; I would often challenge my parents. My family was very strict, when it came to dating and my siblings usually fell in line. However, I would challenge that norm.
>
> My brother and sister were very repressed with their sexualities as a result, while I lost my virginity at 17 to my then boyfriend. While my brother and followed the traditional Indian path. My brother ended up not having any sexual contact with a girl until he got married at 25 (arranged marriage) and now they have a child together. My sister (too never kissed a boy) has recently gotten married too at 24 with an Indian boy she met at our Temple (both parents approved).
>
> I live in LA, a city where both men and woman tend to marry a bit later in life, and yet I still spent the last years of my 20's feeling that somehow, I'd messed up. I had followed the wrong trail and thus, my "important-life-moments" timeline was off. Even with my more progressive friends it began slowly at first, when I

> was 27 … an engagement post on Facebook, an invite to a wedding—it was happening. People I knew were beginning the next stage of life and saying "I do."
>
> Throughout my whole life I never really dated any Indian guys; I exclusively dated white guys. However now I realize more than ever that the guys I dated never really took me seriously. They never really viewed me as someone they would eventually marry. I was always just some exotic fun. This part was definitely a realization that has hurt me to the core. I didn't actually do it to spite Indian men or anything like that. I did what a lot of my white female friends did; I thought I was the same as them, but that could be farther from the truth. Most white guys I ran into wanted white wives.
>
> I am now 32, and seems like everyone in my family has lapped me. I too want a family a marriage. However, now my chance of finding someone is gone. At my age getting an arranged marriage or finding another Indian man to marry me is out of the question. Majority of Indian guys usually get married pretty early. Often either to another Indian girl they meet here, or they go back to India for an arranged marriage. My parents have tried signing me up for a matrimony site, but of the guys I'd meet they would be turned off by my history (drink/eat meat/not a virgin).
>
> […]Most of my relationships have been long term I have only been with 18 guys and I have been sexually active since I was 17 years old.

She has only had steady sexual relationships with 18 guys in 15 years! That's not a lot. Is it?

Let's see what Sunshine Mary says first:

> However, the more I think about it, the more it seems to me that articles like hers are a *good* thing simply because they expose the lie. Feminists have sold young women a bill of goods, that they can live like men, work like men, have sex like men, and then turn back into women when they feel like it. We laugh at a woman like this sometimes and make fun of her and say, "Didn't she know that she'd end up like this?"
>
> No, she *didn't* know that. That's because when you are 17 years old, you don't know much, especially in this culture of extended adolescence. And when you have been told from a very young age that, as a girl, it is your destiny to Have It All exactly When You Want It, I'm sure it is very baffling to find yourself in your thirties with no husband and none in sight, with the dawning realization that your job and lonely apartment are not nearly as fulfilling as being a wife and mother would have been.
>
> […]Personally, I feel no joy in this woman's pain. I don't think a White Knight should ride in to save her because I think she should suffer the natural consequences of her decisions so that other young women may see and learn from her errors, but I take no pleasure in the fact that she will have this lot in life.

> However, what most of us don't seem to understand is that **young women make the terrible choices that they are making because they are told from an early age that these are actually *good* choices.** Some girls are able to resist that message, which saturates every aspect of the media and schools, but most girls aren't, and they don't develop the necessary wisdom until it is too late.

Emphasis hers. And now my turn.

Let me tell you what awaits a man who marries a woman like that, who spent her 20s hooking up with hot guys who had no interest in marriage and no demonstrated ability to protect, provide and lead on moral/spiritual issues. She will have convinced herself that she is more attractive than she really is, and be constantly comparing a less-attractive husband to these other hot guys. I therefore do not recommend that any man marry this woman as she is now. What men need in marriage is respect, affection, affirmation and approval. A woman like her needs to work on building up her ability to trust and encourage men by choosing good men and supporting them chastely and unselfishly. That is the only way to fix this, if it even can be fixed.

I know that women will be surprised by this, but men can tell if you are a virgin or not based on how much you trust and encourage them in their plans. If you are constantly putting them down, calling them names, and making excuses for why you don't have to care about their needs and feelings, then that's just your past promiscuity showing itself. Virgins with good relationships with their fathers don't put men down like that – they build men up. My recommendation for women who realize that they are making bad choices with men and being negative about the men they choose is to look in the mirror and acknowledge that *they are the problem.* The solution, then, is to find a good man and work hard at being submissive and supportive, but chastely.

In the church

My friend Ari, who is married with lots of kids, sent me a related article from Vox Day, about how church women are making choices about during their 20s and 30s.

Vox writes:

> Women increasingly expect churches and church functions to be places of freedom from "unwanted" interactions. Translated, this means women expect unattractive men to know their place and not to ask women out or otherwise talk to them at church. They expect men either to avoid them completely, or to be eunuchs, existing to serve them. There have been reports in the manosphere of women actually complaining to pastors about "unattractive" men asking them out at church. It is as if women expect pastors and church staff to punish and rebuke men for "sexual harassment" at churches, merely because in a social situation they acted like men and pursued someone/something they wanted. Of course, none of this applies to attractive men, who are never the subject of complaint or sanction no matter what they do.

A friend of mine who has an engineering degree from MIT and a very high-paying job replied to that with this:

> Heh. Sad, but good insight about the desexualized church. When I was single, I very friendly (not sexually — was very discerning and had very high standards) and some women found that very disconcerting. I was even had my behavior likened as "sexual harassment" at one point, so I asked if there were things like pelvic thrusts, hands in pockets pointing the wrong way, things that I said that were inappropriate. No, the answer came back. It was just that I was friendly. (Besides, I couldn't see any of the women as date-material … one or two from what I could discern were nominally Christian, as in, one thought it would be cool to find a husband at a church but would take home guys.)
>
> So I stated: I merely say hi and ask how the person is and if the person doesn't want to talk, I don't push the conversation. I am merely being pleasant especially to people I know. The answer came back that a certain group of women wanted me to just ignore them, not even wave, say hi, or acknowledge their existence. Really? Jesus died so we could just ignore each other? I mostly gaped … and wondered about John 13:34-35.
>
> I was told "this was an unachievable ideal, don't even try." Now, who is still worshiping and still there? Not this group of women!

I think this problem of women wasting their lives on men who are attractive and entertaining, but not marriage-capable, is even more serious when it comes to the church, because I think there is a temptation that women have to be very secular in their standard for men, and yet the church affirms them by making it seem that their feelings are actually God speaking to them about which man to like. Every objection about the man's unsuitability for marriage is met with "but he has a good heart for Jesus and he works hard". Heart for Jesus = never read so much as a C.S. Lewis book in his life.

Where does the standard come from? Well it comes from TV, movies, music and pop culture. That's where they learn what kind of man to like, and it's reinforced by their peers. There is no effort to look at what a Christian man does in a marriage and then choose a man who is showing he can do that. A woman should always choose a man who gives her the tingles, because the tingles are the voice of God telling her that he is opening doors and providing signs for her to prefer the agnostic psychology student who lives in his parents' basement and is 3 years younger than she is. But he is *hawt*, and the Holy Spirit told her to spend her 20s pining away for him. Her friends would be so envious, because he looks like that guy on "Mad Men".

What motivates William Lane Craig and why is he so effective?

December 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Nathan Schneider, who wrote a balanced profile of Dr. Craig for the Chronicle of Higher Education a few weeks back, has written an even more in-depth profile of Christianity's ablest defender.

Here's the introduction:

> Nobody—or just about nobody, depending on whom you ask—beats William Lane Craig in a debate about the existence of God, or the resurrection of Jesus, or any topic of that sort. During their debate at Notre Dame in April of last year, New Atheist author Sam Harris referred to Craig as "the one Christian apologist who seems to have put the fear of God into many of my fellow atheists."
>
> Over the course of working on my book about how people search for proof of God's existence, I had the chance to spend a generous amount of time with Craig, both in the Atlanta area where he lives and at Biola University, an evangelical school on the outskirts of Los Angeles, where he teaches a few weeks out of the year. For the book, I've gotten to write about ideas like his "kalam cosmological argument," one of the most-cited ideas of its generation in philosophy of religion, which fuses medieval Muslims with modern cosmology. I also tell of his entrepreneurial savvy in turning the Evangelical Philosophical Society into an academic organization that moonlights as a slick-as-a-banana apologetics platform for changing hearts like yours and mine. But none of that quite captures the man's role as a sage and exemplar, in which he renders something like the upbuilding service Oprah provides to home-bound American women, except that his acolytes are the precocious set among conservative, evangelical, young-adult males. He makes me almost wish I were that kind of conservative evangelical myself—which is, to him, the point.
>
> Craig dresses impeccably and professorially, often with a buttoned shirt and a patterned blazer, sweater, or sweater-vest. His dimples hint at a basic innocence that can be startling when it pokes through the frontage of logic. I find in Craig the decency associated with an era I am too young to be nostalgic for, and which I've been taught to imagine was imperialistic, sexist, homophobic, narrow-minded, or otherwise regressive. His rationalizations of certain parts of the Hebrew Bible can sound like he's okay with genocide. Yet none of these accusations quite sticks to him; none is even comprehensible in the cosmic snow-globe within which he expertly thinks his way through life, whose sole and constant storyline is bringing more and more souls to a saving knowledge of the one true Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
>
> I live in a different snow-globe from Craig's. Nevertheless, I've gained a lot from

> the lessons I learned with him, and from his carefully crafted advice, and from his answers to my questions. ("I may not answer, but you can ask!" he once warned.) They've improved my productivity, and my relationship with loved ones, and my physical fitness. It would be selfish if I did not pass some of these lessons on, in synthesized and practicable form, to you.

The article covers 7 points about Dr. Craig:

1. **Do Everything Like It's a Ministry**
2. **Make a Covenant with Your Wife**
3. **Organize the Day**
4. **Turn Weakness into Strength**
5. **Be Prepared**
6. **Remember That Time Is Everything—and Nothing**
7. **Love God and Authority**

And here's one that I found fascinating, being single myself:

> **3. Organize the Day**
>
> There was a time, says Craig, when he began to worry he was losing his knack for philosophy. "Honey," he remembers telling Jan, "I don't know what's the matter with me. I just can't seem to concentrate anymore. I used to be able to study all day long, and there was no problem, and now I find I just can't concentrate anymore. My mind wanders, and I'm tired." He was tempted to despair.
>
> "No, no, don't be ridiculous!" she told him. "You just need to organize your day."
>
> As usual, she was right. She put him on a new schedule: starting the workday with the hardest philosophical work in the morning, then lighter material, like his writing for popular audiences, after lunch. He doesn't look at his email until late afternoon, "when my brain is really fried." (For fear of being bombarded with mail, he doesn't even share his email address with his graduate students.) Soon after trying this regime, he regained his philosophical powers completely.
>
> The couple's life together, at home in the suburbs of Atlanta, is a picture of (a certain kind of) teamwork. Craig wakes up each morning at 5:30, and begins the day with devotional time, reading from the Church Fathers and the New Testament in Greek, and then he prays for the spread of the gospel in some benighted part of the world, with the help of the *Operation World* handbook. Soon, Jan is up. They have coffee together (which he dislikes, but recommends for the health and social benefits), after which he goes down to the weight room for an hour of exercise. By the time he reemerges, she has a hot breakfast ready and waiting—sometimes as elaborate, he says, as ham and eggs and pumpkin waffles with whipped cream and strawberries. ("She's a fabulous cook.") He'll return downstairs for an intensive morning of scholarship, and reemerge for the hot lunch Jan has prepared. Then, he's back downstairs for the lighter work of the

> afternoon, culminating in emails, which he responds to in longhand and she has often been the one to type out and send, since his rare neuromuscular disease—more on that in a moment—renders him unable to type. Between meals and typing sessions, Jan plays the stock market. Before long dinner is ready, and they eat, and spend the evening together, watching TV and drinking red wine (which he also dislikes, but also recommends for the health and social benefits).
>
> "She's not an intellectual herself," Craig says of his wife, "but she appreciates the value of what I do, and that's what matters." One would hope that this is true, because she has typed out all of his papers, books, and both doctoral dissertations. Would that we all had such devoted help, though it may be untenable in the present economic climate for those scholars among us unable to garner five-figure speaking fees. We can at least hold off on our email for a few hours—which I have since done, to enormous benefit.

It's very interesting to read this because it's got lots of positive and negative points. On the one hand, he finds Dr. Craig's conservative beliefs and exclusive positions difficult to accept. On the other hand, he has to admit that Dr. Craig really believes what he says he believes, and he's very good at persuading others. He's done his homework. I think the biggest problem that a person has with accepting Christianity is re-orienting the will. Another big problem is being willing to be disapproved of by non-Christians. Even if they can't beat you, the pressure to compromise and please others makes many people shy away from Christianity.

This new profile of Dr. Craig is getting tons of likes and shares on Facebook, so give it a look. Be sure and share it on Facebook and tweet it, too.

Related posts

- Dr. Craig explains the role that his wife played in his ministry
- Dr. Craig offers marriage advice to Christians

Arthur Brooks: earning your own success through work makes you happy

December 31, 2013 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Earned success means defining your future as you see fit and achieving that success on the basis of merit and hard work. It allows you to measure your life's "profit" however you want, be it in money, making beautiful music, or helping people learn English. Earned success is at the root of American exceptionalism.
>
> The link between earned success and life satisfaction is well established by researchers. The University of Chicago's General Social Survey, for example, reveals that people who say they feel "very successful" or "completely successful" in their work lives are twice as likely to say they are very happy than people who feel "somewhat successful." It doesn't matter if they earn more or less income; the differences persist.
>
> The opposite of earned success is "learned helplessness," a term coined by Martin Seligman, the eminent psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania. It refers to what happens if rewards and punishments are not tied to merit: People simply give up and stop trying to succeed.
>
> During experiments, Mr. Seligman observed that when people realized they were powerless to influence their circumstances, they would become depressed and had difficulty performing even ordinary tasks. In an interview in the New York Times, Mr. Seligman said: "We found that even when good things occurred that weren't earned, like nickels coming out of slot machines, it did not increase people's well-being. It produced helplessness. People gave up and became passive."
>
> Learned helplessness was what my wife and I observed then, and still do today, in social-democratic Spain. The recession, rigid labor markets, and excessive welfare spending have pushed unemployment to 24.4%, with youth joblessness over 50%. Nearly half of adults under 35 live with their parents. Unable to earn their success, Spaniards fight to keep unearned government benefits.
>
> Meanwhile, their collective happiness—already relatively low—has withered. According to the nonprofit World Values Survey, 20% of Spaniards said they were "very happy" about their lives in 1981. This fell to 14% by 2007, even before the economic downturn.
>
> That trajectory should be a cautionary tale to Americans who are watching the U.S. government careen toward a system that is every bit as socially democratic as Spain's.

> Government spending as a percentage of GDP in America is about 36%—roughly the same as in Spain. The Congressional Budget Office tells us it will reach 50% by 2038. The Tax Foundation reports that almost 70% of Americans take more out of the tax system than they pay into it. Meanwhile, politicians foment social division on the basis of income inequality, instead of attempting to improve mobility and opportunity through education reform, pro-growth policies, and an entrepreneur-friendly economy.
>
> These trends do not mean we are doomed to repeat Spain's unhappy fate. But our system of earned success will not defend itself.

What I find most interesting is that the people who vote for Obama don't even realize how they are making themselves more and more unhappy by being more and more dependent on government. It's the bluest states that have seen the lowest income growth, the lowest job growth, lower home prices, and the highest unemployment. All of this talk about taxing the rich and spreading the wealth around through bigger and more intrusive government *hasn't worked*.

More government means less prosperity, and less prosperity means fewer jobs, and fewer jobs means *less happiness*. Punishing your successful neighbor and borrowing huge amounts of money from the next generation of Americans does not create jobs. And without a job, you're not going to be happy.

We need to have a public policy that recognizes that human beings are spiritual creatures, and we aren't happy unless we chart our own course and earn our own success instead of depending on government to take it from someone else and hand it to us.

SCOTUS Justice grants stay for some from Obamacare pro-abortion mandate

January 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from NBC News reports on a development in some of the cases being brought by Christian organizations against the Obama administration.

Excerpt:

> Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor granted a last-ditch plea from Catholic groups Tuesday night to block a birth control mandate in the new health care law for religious organizations, just hours before it was to have gone into effect.
>
> Sotomayor issued the stay at the request of an order of Catholic nuns in Colorado, part of a larger effort by Catholic-affiliated groups from around the nation to halt provisions of the Affordable Care Act that require companies — regardless of religious beliefs — to provide contraceptives and other abortion-inducing drugs to their employees.
>
> The groups wanted the mandate halted while the court considers a legal challenge, brought by the for-profit company Hobby Lobby, arguing that the requirement violates their religious liberties.
>
> In June, the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver waived millions of dollars of fines against Hobby Lobby and a subsidiary, Mardel Christian Stores, which refused to comply with the mandate, writing that the companies were likely to win their claim that requiring for-profit companies to pay for birth control was a violation of religious protections.
>
> The motion for a stay went to Sotomayor as the justice with oversight for the 10th Circuit. She gave the government until Friday to respond.
>
> "Tomorrow, a regulatory mandate will expose numerous Catholic organizations to draconian fines unless they abandon their religious convictions and take actions that facilitate access to abortion-inducing products, contraceptives, sterilization, and related education and counseling for their employees," the groups said in their request for a stay Tuesday.

The mandate requires companies run by Christians to provide their employees coverage for drugs that can cause abortions by preventing the implantation of a fertilized egg.

The big case that everyone is watching is the Hobby Lobby case, and they were granted a stay from a federal court back in July of 2013. Their case is headed to the U.S. Supreme Court, where the government will argue that Christians should be forced to subsidize abortion, in violation of their consciences.

Greg Ganssle explains the problems of evil and suffering

January 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found these three videos on Apologetics 315. They are each about 5 minutes long.

Here's the first one:

Description:

> Part 1 of a trilogy. Greg lays out a classic argument that God does not exist, called 'The Problem of Evil'. He distinguishes two versions of that argument, which are sometimes called 'the deductive' and 'the evidential' version. He goes into some details on the deductive version.

And the second one:

Description:

> Part 2 of a trilogy. Here, Greg gives a response to the deductive version of the Problem of Evil on behalf of someone who believes that God exists. In thinking about this response, we need to think about whether God can make contradictions true, and whether God can have good reasons for allowing bad things to happen.

And the third one:

Description:

> Part 3 of a trilogy. Greg considers the evidential version of the Problem of Evil, and gives a response on behalf of someone who believes that God exists. This involves considering whether God might have a good reason to allow bad things to happen.

This is very practical and you won't find a shorter introduction to the problem of evil than these videos. When things go wrong as they sometimes will in your life it's very important to understand that we shouldn't be surprised by suffering and evil.

Probably the most important thing to understand about evil and suffering is that God is not our cosmic butler. It's not his job to provide happiness for his human pets. You would never get the idea from the Bible that God is interested in making people feel happy, especially if they ignore him and his moral laws. Everything God does with people is meant to make them know him better and serve him better, and many things that happen to us that don't make us happy, but they do give us the opportunity to either grow towards God or away from him.

If the story of Jesus tells us anything, it tells us that you can be morally perfect and still get whammed while you learn how to be obedient to God. Being good is no guarantee of happiness. Doing God's will is no guarantee of happiness. There just is no guarantee of

happiness, no matter how righteous you are. But what there is for us is a promise that God works through evil and suffering in order to make those who respond to his leading as much like his Son Jesus as they can be. And that has to be enough for us. We have to learn how to trust God through suffering. Knowing the logic of the problems of evil and suffering can help us to develop that trust.

See the links below for more.

Related posts

- Why would a good God allow people to suffer?
- William Lane Craig lectures on the evidential problem of evil
- William Lane Craig lectures on the logical problem of evil
- If God has a reason for allowing evil and suffering, should we know what it is?
- Why does God allow his creatures to suffer?
- Frank Turek: can God bring good effects out of evil events?

Scientists go to Antarctic to prove global warming, get trapped in ice

January 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> In an event chock-full of bitterly cold irony, perhaps even Al Gore has noticed that multiple icebreakers couldn't free a boat stuck in Antarctic ice that global warming was supposed to have melted.
>
> Few of the media reports on the plight of the Russian-flagged research vessel MV Akademik Schokalskiy have noted the irony of a ship full of climate scientists getting stuck in an Antarctic ice sheet so thick that early attempts at breaking through the ice to free them were failures.
>
> "We're stuck in our own experiment," the Australasian Antarctic Expedition said in a statement. "We came to Antarctica to study how one of the biggest icebergs in the world has altered the system by trapping ice. We … are now ourselves trapped by ice surrounding our ship."
>
> In a statement only climate-change die-hards could make, the group said, "Sea ice is disappearing due to climate change, but here ice is building up."
>
> A Chinese icebreaker was unable to reach the ship, and another vessel, the Australian icebreaker Aurora Australis, got within 10 nautical miles of the stranded ship but couldn't see it through a driving blizzard and had to turn back to open water, Fox News reported.
>
> A makeshift helicopter pad on the ice sheet was being readied for a helicopter rescue.
>
> […]Expedition leader Chris Turney, a professor of climate change at Australia's University of New South Wales, dismissed the irony of their situation, claiming the ice they were trapped in was old ice likely formed from an iceberg that broke away years ago, and proves nothing.

The rest of the article contains a brief listing of the facts on global warming and ice extents:

> Antarctic sea ice has grown to a record-large extent for a second straight year.
>
> A review of the Icesat satellite data from 1992 to 2008 showed a net gain in ice mass in Antarctica — not a decline.
>
> In 2013, the ice reached 19.51 million square kilometers, according to the National Snow and Ice Data Center website.
>
> That number topped the record-high level set in 2012 of 19.48 million square

> kilometers. The Australasian Antarctic Expedition has now found itself trapped in some of that ice as its leaders try to explain away the ice's presence.
>
> Dr. Don J. Easterbrook, a professor of geology at Western Washington University, points out that the East Antarctic sheet, which contains about 90% of the world's fresh water, is not melting, but expanding.

That, together with the 16 years of no significant warming, should be enough to finish off the global warming hypothesis. It would be nice if the government had to refund all the money to the taxpayers that they spend on this ridiculous enviro-mythology, but somehow, I think that the money is gone for good. The only way to stop government waste on pseudo-science is to shrink government.

Gang-raped teen burned to death in India, corrupt police try to cover it up

January 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of India

From the UK Daily Mail. Excerpt:

> The body of a gang-raped teenager who was burned to death after her attackers threatened her family was 'hijacked' by police who attempted to forcibly cremate it, reports today suggest. The girl, 16, was gang-raped in October in Madhyamgram, near Calcutta, by a group of six men – who are believed to have links with West Bengal's ruling party, the Trinamool Congress. They again attacked her the following day as she returned from reporting the crime to police with her father, it is claimed. The group were arrested – but the teen and her family say they received a series of threats from the men. The alleged threats included one saying the girl's taxi-driver father would be killed if she continued to pursue charges. The family's landlord, who is reportedly related to one of the gang, allegedly told them they must leave their one-bedroom property also. On the morning of her death, two friends of the accused allegedly visited the girl's home and verbally abused the girl. The teen victim was set alight on December 23 and died from her injuries on New Year's Eve. Doctors said the victim – who had 40 per cent burns – had suffered severe damage to her throat and face, making it difficult for her to breathe. Earlier reports suggested the victim had committed suicide – a story that initially came from police – but today it was revealed the girl said two men poured kerosene over her and burned her before

> she died. Doctors have also said the girl was pregnant when she died. Reports today suggest police ‘hijacked’ the hearse carrying the girl’s body and attempted to have it cremated despite the family’s wishes to wait to give her a proper funeral. On Tuesday evening police are alleged to have intercepted the hearse, which was travelling from RG Kar Hospital to a mortuary. They took it to a crematorium where the body remained for three hours, it is claimed. Officers are then said to have gone to the home of the bereaved family at around 2am and threatened to break down the door if they did not give them the death certificate needed for the cremation. The girl’s father refused, but officers allegedly tormented the family all night. In a letter written to Govenor M K Narayanan the father said: ‘The superintendent of police and other officers reached our house in the dead of the night and asked us to open the door.

I think it’s very important in cases like this to let them break down the door so that there is evidence of what they did. They will not want to do anything like that, because it can be photographed. It leaves a trace.

The fact that this went right up to the superintendent of police just chills my blood. Imagine living in a country like India where people who gang-rape and murder a child can go to the police and get support in covering it up because of corruption and connections.

I remember my Indian co-workers telling me how surprised they were not to have to bribe American police officers when they got pulled over for speeding. I think there is something to that. In Judeo-Christian America, we still believe that God is watching what we do, by and large. So we tend to do the right thing, especially conservatives. But Hinduism and Islam seem not to have the same requirement.

Even if religion played no role in this, the culture as a whole seems to condone corruption to the level where you cannot expect basic honesty like you can in Western countries. I have heard horrifying stories about what it is like to be a woman and ride on public transportation in India. For the Islamic religion, there seems to be an epidemic of gang rape and sex-trafficking going on in Western countries from Muslim men. The idea of chastity for men seems to be more of a Judeo-Christian value.

How to increase the number of adoptions in America

January 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from National Review that argues that there is far more demand for children to adopt than there is supply of children to adopt for certain specific reasons.

The article mentions how legalized abortion and pro-eugenic attitudes contribute to diminishing the supply of children via abortion, but then it discusses another reason for reduced supply which I found horrifying. Apparently leftist social workers think that it is a bad idea for white parents to adopt black children, and would prefer those black children grow up in foster care.

Look:

> Most of the parents waiting to adopt are white; most of the children awaiting adoption are not. Parents' attitudes toward transracial adoption have become much more liberal since the 1970s, but the racial attitudes of social workers, those sometimes pitiless gatekeepers on the adoption pilgrimage, have hardened. A study published by the academic journal *Child Welfare* found that 43 percent of the caseworkers responsible for the longest-waiting black children in New York State expressed hostility toward transracial adoption. Federal law prohibits the use of racial criteria in adoption placement, but ethnic considerations have seeped into the system: **The number of transracial adoptions executed each year remains tiny despite the willingness of the majority of couples to adopt a child of a different race.** About 8 percent of all adoptions are transracial or cross-cultural — and that number includes international adoptions, commonly from Asia and South America. **Professor Judy Fenster of Adelphi University finds that black social workers are particularly inimical to the prospect of cross-racial adoption. It seems that the matchmakers at the heart of the adoption system are part of the problem.**
>
> **Transracial adoption is a volcanically touchy issue — the National Association of Black Social Workers has deployed weapons-grade rhetoric characterizing the practice as "cultural genocide." That ideology has had predictable consequences: Black children spend more time in foster care than others, and in general have less luck in finding permanent adoptive homes.** The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994, a legacy of the late senator Howard Metzenbaum, forbade the use of race as the decisive factor in making adoption-placement decisions, but the language of the statute left those politically opposed to transracial adoptions with room for much mischievous maneuvering. Would-be adoptive parents were disqualified for expressing political opinions at odds with social workers' preferences.
>
> […]In one case, a white couple who had hoped to adopt a severely disabled black

> girl in 1994 were disqualified on political grounds — specifically that they expressed a desire to raise their children to be “colorblind” — and on racial grounds, specifically that they lived in Alaska, which was judged to be superabundantly Caucasian. The couple had raised other severely disabled children of various ethnic backgrounds but they were rejected in favor of a single woman who expressed the “correct” racial attitudes — and who ended up declining to adopt the child, precisely because of her disabilities. The girl in question suffered from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and from Russell-Silver Syndrome, a form of dwarfism associated with, among other things, gastrointestinal difficulties, a triangular face, and asymmetrical body growth. It is difficult to imagine that her most pressing challenge in life was going to be the relative scarcity of black neighbors in Fairbanks.

So, it’s very important to think about the rhetoric of the left on children’s rights and welfare. On the one hand, they talk about wanting to help children. On the other hand, the policies they embrace seem to promote child murder, child abuse, child neglect and child poverty. On the one hand, the secular left is very much in favor of killing children with abortion, or depriving them of fathers with single mother welfare, or depriving them of bio-moms or bio-dads with gay marriage. On the other hand, they are actually working against letting these children be adopted, so much that American parents have to go to other countries to find children to adopt. And even that process is very difficult.

When will we get to the point where we can look at leftists and just flat out say that although they might have good intentions, their policies don’t achieve good results. Maybe a little more compassion for children is needed.

My experiences with Christian women in church and campus ministries

January 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend of mine sent me some horror stories from his time dealing with single Christian women during seminary, and I thought I would write something about the horror stories from my experiences with single Christian women in campus ministries during my BS and MS programs, and in several evangelical churches that I attended in my 20s.

The biggest problem I've had with unmarried Christian women in college and in church is that it is impossible to impress them by being a competent, effective Christian man. Every skill and ability that seems to me to be useful and effective for the kingdom (or for marriage) seems to cut no ice with them. I had women in my youth group, in IVCF and in Campus Crusade have told me that being an engineer is bad, being chaste is bad, not drinking is bad, talking too much about apologetics is bad, and especially trying to get them to learn apologetics – that was really, *really* bad. They hated that. And forget trying to talk to them about abortion and homosexuality. They were very proud to be non-judgmental. It was a badge of honor, saying "I don't judge" as if they were saying "I am good person".

Everything that you might think makes sense for a man to be skilled at from a marriage point of view is viewed as creepy and weird by these church/campus-club unmarried Christian women, in my experience. I am a colored guy, so I always put their messed up standards down to the fact that I was colored and therefore was not allowed to talk to them, period. I was also surprised to see how little the command to "love your neighbor" was implemented by the unmarried Christian women. Here I was, struggling through a tough engineering program, and obviously coming from an unchurched background, yet these woman never had a supportive word for me. My interests in theology and apologetics and moral issues and politics were viewed by them with suspicion.

In retrospect, I would say the biggest argument against God's existence I ever faced was the complete disconnect between what these women professed and how they treated others.

There was one exception. When I was a teen, I had an older college student mentor me and she helped me pick up my grades – especially in English. She eventually fell away from her faith (she was a cradle Catholic). But other than her, I basically was in my mid-30s before I met a Christian woman who had any respect for me because of the things that I could do as a Christian. And that was after over a decade of donations, organizing, training, mentoring, apologetics, etc. By that time, I had my BS and MS and a boatload of savings, and yet up till then, no unmarried Christian woman had ever given me the time of day. I was sort of stuck looking to white Christian women for validation, because most colored girls are liberal. But what I found is that they had no standard in their worldview that I could be graded against favorably, other than physical appearance.

That was the scariest thing for me, to find out that there was no worldview there that distinguished between William Lane Craig and Jim Wallis, for example. There was just the outward appearance – that was the sole criterion that unmarried Christian women were using to decide whether a man had value or not. And their agenda for men was never a mentoring/discipling agenda. It was the standard secular boyfriend agenda. And very often, they chose standard secular boyfriends for that agenda. I later found out that they found men with definite moral positions and definite apologetics ability *intimidating*. Any man with fixed, entrenched positions – either about truth or moral issues – *frightened* them.

Even now, I find this such a weird thing, because in my own life, I act as a mentor to younger Christians regardless of their appearance or other such criteria. Mentoring other Christians is what Christians ought to be doing! I mentor about a dozen promising young Christians (women and men) in different countries. On a given night, you'll find me reading something they asked me to read, sending them links to evidence to help them argue, proof-reading their essays, buying them books, hearing about their school assignments, picking their elective courses, or ordering them not to take the summer off and to work instead, etc. Right now, I have two of my experienced pro-life friends helping one of them take over a pro-life club at a university. Another of my friends who does Internet consulting is helping another friend start his web site. And so on, with me or my friends mentoring other Christians just for the sake of honoring that command to love others upward. It doesn't even matter how great the person is right now, because we mentor Christians at all levels of ability. No one is left out, and no oneis turned down.

But this idea that other Christians have value simply because they are Christians was NOWHERE to be found among unmarried Christian women when I was in university and in my 20s. It's totally foreign to them that Christianity imposes those mentoring/discipling obligations on them, regardless of appearances. They are feelings-driven, not obligation-driven. They are concerned with their own agenda, and not looking to God to see what he wants them to do for their fellow Christians.

I was always the same Wintery Knight back them as I am today, just at an earlier stage of development, and yet no unmarried Christian women in the church or in a campus Christian ministry gave me so much as an affirming glance while I was working out my plans. In fact, church women often stood in the way of things I tried to do, like bring in professors to speak at IVCF or show William Lane Craig debates at Campus Crusade. Focusing on evidential issues was deemed "too divisive". It was prayer walks, hymn sings and testimonies by postmodern relativists every week. I learned not to count on unmarried Christian women for support of any kind for the things I was trying to do. No matter how good the things I wanted to do were, they always had a reason why I shouldn't be allowed to do them.

I am always surprised when I meet a woman and she wants me to read the Bible, or read a book, or do anything like that. (That actually happened to me again last week!) I've had a handful of women do that to me in my whole life. Unmarried Christian women are, in my experience, running a very secular playbook, making decisions about how to treat

others from their feelings. And then if you question them about it, they attribute their feelings to the work of the Holy Spirit. You don't really see how bad it is until you hear them tell you that God told them to move in with the atheist guy, etc. It's striking to me how far the Holy-Spirit-wrapping of their feelings goes, and yet they don't see a problem with it. I think the answer to this problem is that we really need to help women to think through their worldview and think about how to act on Christian convictions with other people, and men in particular, and men who are committed to building the Kingdom *effectively and intelligently* above all others.

New study: women who take oral contraceptives have a higher risk of getting breast cancer

January 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Times of India.

Excerpt:

> Women who take oral contraceptives regularly are at a higher risk of developing breast cancer compared to others, shows a study by AIIMS doctors. Breast cancer risk was found to be 9.5 times more in women with a history of consuming such pills. Early menstruation cycle, late marriage and lower duration of breastfeeding were the other major factors responsible for the disease among Indians, according to the study published in the latest issue of the Indian Journal of Cancer.

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> The study was conducted on 640 women, of which 320 were breast cancer patients. “We found long-term use of oral contraceptive pills (OCP) higher among those suffering from breast cancer-11.9%-compared to healthy individuals-1.2%,” said Dr Umesh Kapil, a professor at the public health nutrition unit, AIIMS. He said breast cancer is caused by repeated exposure of breast cells to circulating ovarian hormones, and long-term use of OCPs, which contain estrogen and progesterone, may be increasing this risk by causing hormonal imbalance.
>
> The study mostly had women who used OCPs for birth control. Emergency contraceptives, popularly called morning-after pills, were not included.

This is not the first study, nor even the second study, to confirm this link.

Birth control pills

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9) and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed childbearing was a risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

When people talk about a war on women, maybe they should be thinking about this practice of promoting behaviors to women that make them sick. And eventually, we all have to pay for the increased costs of health care when we encourage people to do things that make them sick. We should not be promoting birth control to young women in order to enable them to have recreational sex. It’s not worth the harm it causes them.

New study: women who have induced abortions more likely to get breast cancer

January 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

New study is up here at the National Institutes of Health web site.

Life News reported on the study here.

Excerpt:

> A new study of women from India shows women who get an induced abortion are 626% more likely to have breast cancer compared with women who carry their pregnancies to term and have the baby.The study found women more likely to have breast cancer had "higher number of abortions."
>
> This study follows closely after a bombshell meta-analysis of breast cancer studies found a 44% increased risk of contracting breast cancer for women who had abortions.
>
> "History of abortion was also found to be positively associated with the risk of breast cancer with 6.26 times higher risk in women having a history of abortion," they concluded.
>
> The doctors conducting the new study are based at the Department of Gastroenterology and Human Nutrition Unit, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi, India. Their report, published in the Indian Journal of Cancer confirms what previous studies have shown, namely that an abortion weakens the breast's muscle tissue in a way that makes it more susceptible to cancer.

> "However, the cases had a significantly higher number of abortions (61.3%) as compared to the controls (16.3%)," they wrote. "History of abortion was also found to be positively associated with the risk of breast cancer with 6.26 times higher risk in women having a history of abortion. The history of abortions was found to be significantly higher in breast cancer cases as compared to controls, with the Relative Risk (RR) = 6.26 in women having a history of abortion."

This is not the first study to confirm a link between abortion and breast cancer.

Abortion and breast cancer

Many studies show a link between abortion and breast cancer.

Study 1: (September 2010)

> Based on the expression of estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2/neu (HER2), breast cancer is classified into several subtypes: luminal A (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2-), luminal B (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2+), HER2-overexpressing (ER-, PR-, and HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-, PR-, and HER2-).

> The aim of this case-control study is to determine reproductive factors associated with breast cancer subtypes in Chinese women. A total of 1,417 patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the First Affiliated Hospital, China Medical University, Shenyang, China between 2001 and 2009 and 1,587 matched controls without a prior breast cancer were enrolled.
>
> […]Postmenopause and spontaneous abortion were inversely associated with the risk of luminal tumors. By contrast, multiparity, family history of breast cancer and **induced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer**.

Study 2: (March 2010)

> OBJECTIVE: To explore the risk factors of breast cancer for better control and prevention of the malignancy.
>
> METHODS: The clinical data of 232 patients with pathologically established breast cancer were investigated in this 1:1 case-control study to identify the risk factors of breast cancer.
>
> RESULTS: The history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and**multiple abortions were the statistically significant risk factors of breast cancer**, while breast feeding was the protective factor.
>
> CONCLUSION: A history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and multiple abortions are all risk factors of breast cancer.

And more recently, I blogged about a very recent study from China which concluded thus:

> IA is significantly associated with an increased risk of breast cancer among Chinese females, and the risk of breast cancer increases as the number of IA increases. If IA were to be confirmed as a risk factor for breast cancer, high rates of IA in China may contribute to increasing breast cancer rates.

IA is, of course, induced abortion.

William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech

January 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can grab the MP3 file of the lecture, or read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

If you want to show this lecture and Q&A to your apologetics group, you can find the DVD here.

You can also read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor.

William Lane Craig lectures on the postmodern challenge to theism

January 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a lecture entitled “Are there Objective Truths About God?”, philosopher William Lane Craig responds to postmodern challenges to the idea of truth, and specifically to the idea that religion is about objective truth.

Here’s the link to a page containing the lecture audio. (H/T Be Thinking)

The MP3 file is here.

So what questions does Bill answer in the lecture?

What is a self-refuting statement?

The main concept in the lecture is self-refutation. A self-refuting sentence is a sentence that, if true, makes itself false or meaningless. For example, suppose someone said to you: “there are no sentences longer than 5 words” then that would be self-refuting since it falsifies itself. Bill argues that objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God are all self-refuting.

What is truth?

Craig holds that “truth” is a property of a proposition such that a proposition is true if it corresponds to the external world. For example, if I claim that there is a crocodile in your closet and we find a crocodile in your closet, then my statement was true. If there is no crocodile in your closet then my statement was false. The real objective world out there is what makes propositional claims true or false – these are not claims about an individual’s preferences, they are claims about the world. Bill is concerned with truth claims about God that are objective – whether there are propositions about God that are true regardless of what anyone thinks.

Are there objective truths about God?

Bill discusses 3 objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God. Each objection seeks to make religion subjective, (true for each person, like food preferences or clothing fashion).

Objection #1:The Challenge of Verificationism

The first challenge is that religious claims cannot be verified using the 5 senses, and therefore religious statements are objectively meaningless.

Consider the statement “Only propositions that can be verified with the 5 senses are meaningful”. That statement cannot be verified with the 5 senses. If the statement is true, it makes itself meaningless. It’s self-refuting.

Objection #2: The Challenge of Mystical Anti-Realism

The second challenge is that religious claims, and claims about God, are neither true nor false.

Consider the statement “Propositions about God cannot be true or false”. Craig asks – why should we accept that? Any reason given would have to assert something about God that is true or false, and those reasons would contradict the original statement. For example, “God is too great to be grasped by human categories of thought” is a proposition about God that the speaker thinks is true, which contradicts the original assertion.

Objection #3: The Challenge of Radical Pluralism

The third challenge is that each person invents an entire reality of their own, and that there is no mind-independent objective world shared by individuals.

Consider the statement “There is no objective reality shared by all individuals”. That statement is a statement that applies to all individuals, regardless of what they think. It’s self-refuting.

Conclusion

Craig ends the lecture by arguing that it is OK for Christians to think that other people’s views are false. It does not follow that just because someone thinks other people’s views are wrong that they am going to mistreat other people. In fact, in Christianity it is objectively true that it is good for Christians to love their enemies. It is objectively true that all human beings have value, because human beings are made by God. So even if Christians disagree with others, they still treat them well, because they think that there are moral truths that they have to conform to.

My thoughts

Sometimes, non-Christians think that it is dangerous to hold beliefs too strongly. But I think what really matters is the content of the belief – some beliefs are false and some are true – you want to believe the true beliefs as strongly as you can, as long as the evidence warrants it. In Christianity, I am absolutely obligated to treat people with whom I disagree with respect and gentleness (1 Pet 3:15-16). The more convinced I am about *that* belief, the *better* my opponents will be treated. A *stronger* belief in Christianity means *more* tolerance for those who disagree.

Why do non-Christians get so offended when Christians claim to be right about there being only one way to be rightly related to God? Well, for many it’s because their worldview is a personal preference, and they feel uncomfortable having to defend it rationally and evidentially. Christianity is different – we are used to having to defend our truth claims using evidence, because that is the core of the religion, and the example of the founder and his closest followers.

For most people, religion is just their cultural preference – like cooking style, or favorite sport, or clothing style. That’s why they respond to your truth claims with name-calling like “you’re intolerant” and “you’re judgemental” and “you’re arrogant”. These are just shorthand ways of saying, “I’m offended that you think that what you believe is true and you think that what I believe is false”. They would never say that in a math classroom or a chemistry lab, where truth matters. But because they are coming to the discussion with the presupposition that religion is like clothing and diet preferences, they take everything

personally instead of treating religion as something objective, just like any other area of knowledge.

This problem of being offended by truth claims is especially common with people who are raised to think that their religion is a racial, national or cultural identity. They haven't thought anything through, or considered any alternatives, and they think that if you tell them they are wrong *on matters of fact* that somehow this amounts to some sort of racism, intolerance or prejudice. You make factual claims, and they hear discrimination. But that's not how Christians think of religion – we only care if it's true or not – just like we care whether the claims of history or science are true or not. For many non-Christians, religion is not about truth at all but about personal preferences – and they cannot understand why Christians say that they have to go to Hell for having the wrong personal preferences. You have to *tell them* that religion is about truth, and that people displease God because they don't know what is true, and they don't want to know what is true. Then they understand why you are disagreeing with them and you can have a conversation about what is true.

The seven fatal flaws of moral relativism

January 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Moral relativism is the view that moral values and moral duties do not exist in reality, but only exist as opinions in people's minds. When you ask a moral relativism where the belief that stealing is wrong comes wrong, he may tell you that it is his opinion, or that it is the opinion of most people in his society. But he cannot tell you that stealing is wrong independent of what people think, because morality (on moral relativism) is just personal preference.

So what's wrong with it?

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Australian site Faith Interface.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like "It's wrong to push your own morality on others". This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don't let them make any moral statements without asking them first to ground morality on their worldview. And that's because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can't answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people's personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It's all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be "it depends". It depends on the person who is speaking because it's a subjective claim, not an objective

claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

The whole point of atheism is to pursue pleasure without the bonds of morality – there is no other reason to do anything on atheism except for the pleasure it gives you. You do fashionable things to feel good getting praise from your neighbors, and you do unfashionable things in private to make yourself feel good and you hope that no one who is powerful enough to hold you accountable ever finds out. There’s no way you were made to be.

Global warming alarmists alarmed by potentially record-setting cold temperatures today

January 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Icy, snow-covered roads and high winds made travel treacherous Sunday from the Dakotas and Michigan to Missouri as much of the nation braced for the next winter wallop: a dangerous cold that could break records.
>
> A whirlpool of frigid, dense air known as a "polar vortex" was expected to suppress temperatures in more than half of the continental U.S. starting into Monday and Tuesday, with wind chill warnings stretching from Montana to Alabama.
>
> […]The forecast is extreme: 25 below zero in Fargo, N.D., minus 31 in International Falls, Minn., and minus 15 in Indianapolis and Chicago. Wind chills — what it feels like outside when high winds are factored into the temperature — could drop into the minus 50s and 60s. Northeastern Montana was warned of wind chills up to 59 below zero.
>
> "It's just a dangerous cold," said National Weather Service meteorologist Butch Dye in Missouri.
>
> Several Midwestern states received up to a foot of new snow Sunday. Five to 9 inches fell in the Chicago area by Sunday afternoon, St. Louis area had about a foot of snow and northern Indiana had at least 8 inches. Central Illinois braced for 8 to 10 inches, and southern Michigan could see up to 15 inches.
>
> Officials closed several Illinois roadways because of drifting snow and warned residents to stay inside. Roads in the Midwest were particularly dangerous, and officials in Missouri said it was too cold for rock salt to be very effective.
>
> Authorities also urged people to check on elderly and disabled relatives and neighbors.
>
> In Chicago, temperatures were expected to bottom out around minus 15 overnight, likely setting a daily record, National Weather Service meteorologist Ed Fenelon said. Earlier Sunday, temperatures sank to minus 20 and colder in northern Minnesota and Grand Forks, N.D.
>
> The conditions were expected to be so harsh that Chicago public school officials canceled classes for Monday.
>
> It hasn't been this cold for almost two decades in many parts of the country. Frostbite and hypothermia can set in quickly at 15 to 30 below zero.
>
> […] In New York City, a plane from Toronto landed at Kennedy International

> Airport and then slid into snow on a taxiway. No one was hurt, though the airport temporarily suspended operations because of icy runways.
>
> About 1,200 flights had been cancelled Sunday at O'Hare and Midway international airports in Chicago, aviation officials said, and there also were cancellations at Logan International Airport in Boston and Tennessee's Memphis and Nashville international airports.
>
> School was called off Monday for the entire state of Minnesota, as well as cities and districts in Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana and Iowa, among others. Chicago officials said school would be in session for the nation's third-largest district, though absences would be excused.
>
> Southern states are bracing for possible record temperatures, too, with single-digit highs expected Tuesday in Georgia and Alabama.
>
> Temperatures are expected to dip into the 30s in parts of Florida on Tuesday. But Florida Citrus Mutual spokesman Andrew Meadows said it must be at 28 degrees or lower four hours straight for fruit to freeze badly.
>
> In western Kentucky, which could see 1 to 3 inches of snow, Smithland farmer David Nickell moved extra hay to the field and his animals out of the wind. He'd also stocked up on batteries and gas and loaded up the pantry and freezer. The 2009 ice storm that paralyzed the state and knocked out power to hundreds of thousands of people is fresh in his mind.

By the way, if you see long icicles forming on the edge of your roof, that is a potential hazard. So be careful about that. I would not stand under that and knock them down, it's safer to poke at them from a window instead, but make sure no one is underneath when you do!

Can you have an apologetics ministry and still hold down a full-time job?

January 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace is passionate about encouraging Christians to keep their day jobs and do their apologetics ministry without financial constraints. He did it, and it worked for him. He has just posted a list of people who have full-time vocations with a part-time apologetics ministry.

He writes:

> The Christian community is experiencing an apologetics "renaissance", and this resurgence of interest in Christian Case Making is being driven by an unexpected group of "tent-making" Christian Case Makers. Like the Apostle Paul, these avocational apologists draw their income from "conventional" careers (Paul was described as a tent-maker inActs 18:1-3) as they evangelize, preach, make a case or serve. I'm proud to be a member of this growing group of "One Dollar Apologists". In this post, I'd like to bring your attention to many of the tent-making Case Makers having an impact in our world today. If you are interested in apologetics, you've undoubtedly visited many of the websites I've collected here. In fact, you may not have realized these resources were being provided by people who are working in vocations similar to your own. As you scan this list of tent-making apologetics websites, take note of the variety of occupations held by the men and women behind the scenes…

I checked out the list to see what all the bloggers I read do in their day jobs, and was pleased to see a number of people in the list who are in science, technology and engineering fields. That's what I do, and I think it's the best thing to do. So for the rest of this post I want to give some reasons why people who want to be tent-maker case-makers should consider a STEM degree and a STEM job. (STEM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Math).

Why you should prefer a STEM degree

I always recommend that people prefer STEM degrees when they want to do a "tent-maker" model of apologetics ministry, for five reasons:

1. Doing a STEM degree will make you miserable and give you nightmares for life, and nothing you do after you do a STEM degree can ever be as bad as sitting in a lab all night trying to get something to work that doesn't want to work. Not even changing diapers. It's good to get you to accept that life is hard, that your feelings don't matter to anyone and that you can't have your way all the time.

2. Doing a STEM degree will give you a lot of money for your ministry, so much that you can even give some away to other ministries. Yesterday, I sent $150 to a Ratio Christi chapter that I like and $300 to another apologetics ministry that I like. And that's not a

problem because a STEM job typically pays better than average.

3. Doing a STEM degree will help you to pay back any student loans you take out, which is a big problem these days because the economy is lousy for young graduates.

4. Doing a STEM degree will shield you from a lot of the pressure you might face from the secularists and leftists who dominate the university classroom, because there just isn't time to talk about politics much in those classes. The only time I ever got any trouble was my machine learning / search algorithms course in graduate school.

5. Doing a STEM degree will give you an advantage in credibility when discussing apologetics. I think that atheists are more impressed when we have some experience with a demanding job in some practical field. I don't know about you, but I don't find arguments like "the argument from fantasy literature" and "the argument from desire" persuasive coming from artsy people who don't know how to do anything practical for money in the real world.

If you are a woman and want to be a stay-at-home mom, that is excellent, but a STEM degree is still for you! I think it's useful for everyone. I have a friend who is busy doing her nursing degree part-time and she is a stay-at-home mom, and some of my favorite women apologists (Letitia Wong and Melissa Travis) have science backgrounds.

The best degrees for a tent-maker

If you are just picking a STEM field, then here is a list of the majors that lead to higher paying jobs, although other jobs might even help you to study apologetics, like being a police detective.

Top 10 highest-paid college majors

1. Petroleum Engineering: $120,000
2. Pharmacy Pharmaceutical Sciences and Administration: $105,000
3. Mathematics and Computer Science: $98,000
4. Aerospace Engineering: $87,000
5. Chemical Engineering: $86,000
6. Electrical Engineering: $85,000
7. Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering: $82,000
8. Mechanical Engineering: $80,000
9. Metallurgical Engineering: $80,000
10. Mining and Mineral Engineering: $80,000

And here are some majors that you should avoid at all costs:

1. Counseling Psychology: $29,000
2. Early Childhood Education: $36,000
3. Theology and Religious Vocations: $38,000
4. Human Services and Community Organization: $38,000
5. Social Work: $39,000
6. Drama and Theater Arts: $40,000

7. Studio Arts: $40,000
8. Communication Disorders Sciences and Service: $40,000
9. Visual and Performing Arts: $40,000
10. Health and Medical Preparatory Programs: $40,000

If you’re not going to do a STEM degree, then a trade degree in the right area can be just as good. The main thing is to be able to do work, preferably in the private sector, that is valuable enough to someone else that they are willing to pay you for it. I think in this economy, it is particularly reckless to be doing a PhD in the humanities, unless you are already retired and fully-funded from your previous work.

Related posts

J. Warner Wallace: practical advice on becoming an effective one-dollar apologist

Republican chairman delays annual meeting to let GOP leaders attend March for Life

January 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> In an unprecedented show of opposition to abortion, Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus is delaying the start of the party's annual winter meeting so he and other committee members can join the March for Life on the Mall, The Washington Times has learned.
>
> Mr. Priebus, a plain-spoken Greek Orthodox lawyer from Wisconsin, will join members of his party's national committee and thousands of other abortion opponents in the annual right-to-life march scheduled for Jan. 22, the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision that declared abortion a constitutional right.
>
> "I saw that there was a real interest among a significant portion of our members to attend and support the Rally for Life," Mr. Priebus said in an email to The Times. "This is a core principle of our party. It was natural for me to support our members and our principles."
>
> Mr. Priebus, in his second term as elected chairman of the Republican National Committee, chose to delay the start of the four-day winter meeting of the GOP governing body, also scheduled in Washington, to allow himself and RNC members to attend the march. The delay is unprecedented for a major U.S. political party, several state Republican Party chairmen and other RNC members said in telephone interviews.
>
> Mr. Priebus also decided that the RNC will charter a bus to and from the march for those among the RNC's 168 members who wish to attend, he said.

The Republican Party is the pro-life party, and it doesn't see to be a side issue for them. They seem to really be into it, and I know that at the state level, a lot of Republican-dominated legislatures have passed laws to restrict abortion and cut off taxpayer-funding of abortion. Although the Republicans are taking this stand on principle, I think that it will work out well for them at the polls in the November mid-term elections.

Can a Christian woman divorce her husband if she is really, really unhappy?

January 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, the topic for this post is whether it's OK to get divorced.

I noticed a lot of people getting divorced these days in the church, and trying to justify why they are allowed to divorce and why they should be allowed to pursue remarriage. So I'm first going to quote from an article from Focus on the Family by Amy Tracy.

She writes:

> God is very clear, however, that He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). He also says, "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matthew 19:6). According to the New Testament, there are two justifications for divorce: infidelity (Matthew 5:32) and desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15).

Now, I had always taken the rule of Dr. Laura for this. She says that you can get divorced for adultery and abandonment (as above), but she allows allows for physical abuse and drug addiction. But it looks like the Bible is more strict than Dr. Laura, even.

Now with that Biblical standard in mind, take a look at this post about a woman who professes to be a Christian who is divorcing her husband for unhappiness, which I found on Sunshine Mary's blog.

Look:

> So how are we to understand women like Jenny Erickson, and the many other Christian women like her, who claim that despite thousands of years of Christian and Jewish tradition, despite the clear commands in Scripture not to separate from one's husband, despite the commandments against adultery, nevertheless the Lord God Himself has made a special exemption *just for her?* Because He wants her to be happy, so if she needs to be a faithless woman who breaks her vows and becomes an adulteress, then hey it's all good?
>
> […]After secretly filing for divorce from her husband, Mrs. Erickson's pastor caught wind of the situation and attempted to discuss it with her. When she refused, the pastor went to her husband about the situation. Mrs. Erickson has since railed against her soon-to-be ex-husband and her now ex-Pastor because they actually had the nerve to call what she was doing a *sin* – which, according to the Bible, is *is.* Let's read through a few quotes from Mrs. Erickson:
>
> > Thankfully, my faith in God is stronger than my fear of men, and I feel like **I'm finally getting right with Him** again after years of wandering in the wilderness.

[…]Here are a few more things that Mrs. Erickson claims:

> It's odd and strangely freeing to not know exactly where I'm going to be a year from now. I've always been the girl with The Plan. The Plan has changed every now and then, because hey, life requires adaptation, but right now there is No Plan other than love my girls like crazy, work hard enough to pay the bills, and **rely totally and fully on God.** I'm sure His Plan is better than My Plan anyway.

and

> I needed a time-out for my marriage — possibly a permanent one. *But* ***every person that tells me I'm going against God's will by separating from my husband drives me further away from wanting to reconcile with him*****.**
>
> Details aren't needed. Leif is the father of my amazing children, and I want nothing more than to be his friend again someday, regardless of what happens in our marriage. But things have been very broken between us for a very long time, and **it took every ounce of courage I had to take the step that went against everything my religious culture told me but somehow I knew God was telling me was right.**

and

> To be told that this beautiful, wonderful thing I have learned exists in my soul, this thing that gives me the strength to flip my life over when nothing else has worked, this thing that **has made me braver than I thought possible, and made me rely on God more than I ever have in my entire life … *to be told that this is a perversion of His plan for me?***

These points must confuse a lot of women because I have heard these rationalizations used by many Christian women who are leaving or have left their husbands. Therefore, allow me to clear up the confusion that seems to be rampant (but it really isn't confusion, it is willful disobedience), lest any of my sisters in Christ are considering following Mrs. Erickson's example.

God's plan for you will never include violating anything written in the Bible.

If you hear a voice whispering in your ear, *Here's the plan; what I want you to do is…* and the plan includes going against clear commandments in God's Word, then **it is not God who is speaking to you.** God's plan for your life, sister, never includes *you* filing for divorce. Not ever, not under any circumstances, no matter what your husband has or has not done, no matter what you want, no matter what would make you happy.

So, I think we need to be really careful with spousal candidates who claim to be Christian – we need to make sure that they really are comfortable with being led and with the authority of the Bible to overrule their feelings. In fact, you can check to see if a person takes their faith seriously just by trying to lead them to take the Bible seriously. You just have to read the Bible and think about how to live it out in a marriage, and then talk to your spousal candidate about what you've discovered. You want to present to them your plans and your reasons for those plans, and explain what you need them to do in order to make the plan work. This is a great way to see if they know what marriage is really about and how they feel about what's expected of them if they marry YOU.

Sometimes, it's really obvious that the person is not a good candidate for marriage. If you tell them your plans and then complain about arrogance, ego and how your questions would turn off any woman, then you are dealing with someone who is going to divorce you. And they might have already divorced someone else – like Erickson. The name calling in response to you trying to to make the Bible have authority over the roles that you each play in the marriage is a sure sign of impending divorce. Basically, you have to beware of anyone who is feelings-driven instead of Scripture-driven and detect them early. There are things to do in a marriage that need to be done whether anyone feels like it or not. You can't be married to someone who responds to rational discussion about plans and duties with verbal abuse.

William Lane Craig and Paul Helm discuss Calvinism and Molinism on the Unbelievable radio show

January 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to this excellent discussion between Dr. William Lane Craig and Oxford University Calvinist philosopher Dr. Paul Helm. I think this is a useful discussion in general because atheists often bring up problems with Calvinism as objections to Christianity in general, such as:

- If God exists, then he controls everything and I don't have free will
- If God knows the future, then I don't have free will
- If God controls everything, then I am not responsible for my sinning
- If God has to choose me to be saved, then I am not responsible for my damnation

Details:

> If God ordains the future, can humans have free will? Are people predestined for salvation? And what does the Bible say on the matter? William Lane Craig is a Christian philosopher and leading proponent of Molinism, a view of divine sovereignty that seeks to reconcile God's fore-ordination with human free will. Paul Helm is a leading Calvin Scholar. He defends the view that God predestines the future, limiting human freedom.
>
> MP3 of this show: http://media.premier.org.uk/unbelievable/molinism%20full%20show-1.mp3
>
> For William Lane Craig: http://www.reasonablefaith.org
>
> For Paul Helm: http://paulhelmsdeep.blogspot.co.uk/

I was surprised because my Calvinist friend Dina thought that Dr. Helm won this debate, but I thought that Dr. Craig won. So without further ado, here is the snark-free summary of the discussion. I also sent the summary to Dina to make sure that it was reasonably fair and accurate. She said it was biased, but she was predestined to say that. Anyway, there's a commentary on the debate over at Michael's Theology blog.

UPDATE: Remington has a podcast review in parts. Part 1 is here.

Summary:

JB: Has Lewis had any impact on your apologetics?

Craig: Not as a scholar, but more as a model of a scholar who leaves a legacy through his published work

JB: How did you become interested in Calvinism?

Helm: Starting from childhood, and lately writing more on Calvinism from a philosophical point of view

JB: How do you view God’s sovereignty?

Helm: Strong view of divine sovereignty, God is sovereign over all events, but that doesn’t mean that they are determined by him

JB: What is Calvin’s legacy?

Helm: He amplified an existing concept of predestination, and wrote on many other topics

JB: What is Molinism?

Craig: Molina affirms divine sovereignty as Paul Helm does, but he also affirms libertarian free will

Craig: Every event that occurs happens by God’s will or by God’s permission

JB: What about open theism?

Craig: Paul and I both oppose open theism

JB: How does Molinism reconcile human free will and divine sovereignty

Craig: God has knowledge of what would happen under any set of circumstances

Craig: God has knowledge of everything that COULD happen, and he has knowledge of everything that WILL happen

Craig: God knows what each person freely choose to do in any set of circumstances and he can place people in times and places where he is able to achieve his ends without violating creaturely freedom and creaturely responsibility

JB: How does this apply to the issue of salvation?

Craig: The circumstances in which God puts a person includes God leading people to him and he foreknows who will respond to his leading

Craig: God has ordered the world in such a way that he foreknows the exact people who will free respond to his leading if he puts them in certain circumstances

JB: Does God want to save the maximum of people?

Craig: My own view is that God does order the world in such a way that the maximum number of people will respond to God’s drawing them to himself

JB: Is the Molinist view gaining ground?

Craig: Yes, Calvinists and open theists are both moving towards it, and Molinism is the dominant view among philosophical theologians

JB: Why has Molinism not convinced you?

Helm: It’s an unnecessary theory, God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge covers what middle knowledge covers

Helm: Calvinism has a stronger view of sin, such that God has to act unilaterally and irrestibly to save them

JB: Are creatures free on your view?

Helm: My view of free will is weaker than Craig’s view of free will

Craig: For the Calvinist, grace is irresistible, but for the Molinist, grace is effective when it

is met with a response from the creature

Craig: The Bible affirms the strong view of free will, when it says that in certain circumstances people can freely choose to do other than they do

Helm: But if a person is in circumstances X and they are free, then why don't they choose something that isn't what God can foresee

Craig: In identical circumstances, a person has the freedom to choose, and God doesn't determine what they choose, he just foreknows what they choose

Helm: How can God foreknow what people will freely do if people have this strong view of freedom that allows them to do anything? God would not know what people can freely do if they really are free

Craig: God has knowledge of what his creatures would freely do in any set of circumstances, he has knowledge of subjunctive statements

Craig: The Scripture is filled with statements that show that God has this knowledge of what people would do in other circumstances (e.g. – 2 Cor 2:8)

Helm: I am not denying that the Bible is full of subjunctive statements, but if humans have real libertarian free will, then God cannot know what they will do

Craig: I think God does preordain everything, Molinism has a strong sense of divine sovereignty BUT the foreordaining is done with the knowledge of what humans would do in any circumstances, so that what God ordains achieves his ends, but without violating creaturely free will

Craig: I take at face value the passages of the Bible where it says that God wants all persons to be saved

Craig: When the Bible says that God wants ALL persons to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), the Bible means that God wants ALL persons to be saved

Craig: So either universalism is true OR there is something that stops all from being saved outside of God

Craig: the something that prevents all from being saved is creaturely free will

Helm: Most people don't have the opportunity to hear the gospel, so God doesn't want all to be saved

Helm: People can still be responsible for what God "fore-ordains"

JB: Can a person really be responsible for wickedness if they didn't freely choose it?

Helm: Even though God is the only one who can act unilaterally to make save people, the people who act wickedly are still responsible

Craig: Molinism provides an answer to the problem of why not all people have heard the gospel, because by using middle knowledge he is able to know who would respond to the gospel if they heard it and he places those people in the times and places where they will hear it

Craig: That solution means that NO ONE is lost because they have not heard the gospel

Craig: There is Biblical support for (Acts 17:27) God choosing the times and places where people will live SO THAT they will be led by him and be able to respond to his leading

JB: Is God the author of sin, on Calvinism?

Craig: If Calvinists define providence to mean causal determinism, then he is the cause of every effect including human actions, and he is the one who causes people to sin

Craig: This view (determinism) impugns the character of God

Helm: I don't think that sovereignty requires determinism

Helm: God has mysterious resources – which I cannot specify – that reconcile his sovereignty with human responsibility for wickedness

JB: But if God is the cause of people doing wrong things, then how can they be responsible for it?

Helm: Well, humans do cause their own actions

Craig: Helm is right to say that God has resources to reconcile God's sovereignty with free will and human responsibility, and that resource is not an unknown mystery, it's middle knowledge

Craig: I can affirm everything in the Westminster Confession except for the one clause where they expressly repudiate middle knowledge as the mechanism for reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

Helm: Well, Calvinists have a strong view of sin so that humans cannot respond to God's leading

Craig: Yes, and that's why humans need prevenient grace in order to respond to him

Craig: God has to take the initiative and draw people to himself or they cannot be saved, but that grace is resistible, and that's what the Bible teaches (Acts 7:51), so humans are still responsible if they resist God

Helm: My view of grace is that it is monergistic and irrestible, it is a unilateral action on the part of God, like pulling someone out of an icy pond which they can't get out of

JB: If humans freely choose to respond to God's drawing and leading, does that diminish grace?

Helm: Many are called but few are chosen

Craig: Molinism does not require synergism – which is the idea that humans are partly responsible for their salvation

Craig: In Eph 2:8, Scripture is clear that faith opposite to works, and responding to God's drawing is not meritorious

JB: So receiving a gift is not meritorious?

Craig: It's the passive acceptance of what someone else has done for you

Helm: But doesn't this mean that you can lose your salvation, because you can accept and resist the gift of salvation?

Craig: That's a separate question that Christians can differ on, but if the Holy Spirit

indwells a person and seals them, then that would argue for the view that salvation cannot be revoked

JB: Doesn't Romans 8 teach Calvinism pretty clearly?

Helm: This is called the "golden chain", and it does support Calvinism

Craig: Actually, this text is no problem for Molinists because the first link in the chain is foreknowledge, which, if it incorporates middle knowledge, is no problem for Molinists

Craig: What God is electing in Romans 8 is a specific group of people that he knows in advance of creating the universe will freely respond to his drawing them to him

Craig: In Acts 4:27-28, it is talking about God's foreknowledge, which involves and incorporates knowledge of what any individual would freely choose if placed in those circumstances

JB: If God actualizes a set plan with set circumstances for everyone, isn't that very similar to Calvinism?

Craig: Yes! It's a strong statement of divine sovereignty

Helm: Foreknowledge doesn't mean that God knows what people would do, it's just refering to God "knowing his own mind" about what he wants to do

JB: How do you respond to the fairness of God unilaterally and specifically choosing some people for salvation and choosing other people for damnation (because he refuses to act unilaterally for them)?

Helm: God ordinarily bypasses other people in the Bible, like when he chooses the Jews as his chosen people

Craig: The problem with that is that the Bible clearly teaches that God has a genuine will that all will be saved and he makes a genuine offer of salvation to all people

Craig: Also, just being a Jew and a member of the chosen people doesn't mean you were saved, because some Jews rebelled against God

Craig: And there were also people outside of the Jewish people who were righteous and in a relationship with God, like Job

Helm: "the fabric of our faith" depends on God's choice and his not-choice, it is fundamental to the Bible and to God's character, and choosing them "effectively" (irrestibly and unilaterally)

Helm: The idea of God considering "possible worlds", some of which are feasible and not feasible, with conflicts between the wills of free creatures in different circumstances, and then actualizing one world that achieve these ends is very messy

Craig: Some worlds may not feasible for God to create, for example a world in which everyone is saved – it is logically possible, but may not be feasible

Craig: God will not exercise any divine coercion to force people to go to Heaven against their own will

Helm: If God chooses a world because it is feasible, then he doesn't love me directly, he

is choosing a world, not individuals

Craig: Well, when God actualizes a world, he specifically knows which individuals will be saved within that world, but without disrespecting free will

Craig: The world isn't primary, the individuals are primary

Helm: I think that middle knowledge can he included in God's natural knowledge and free knowledge

Craig: The knowledge of what people would do in different circumstances is based on the freedom of the individuals

JB: Make your conclusions!

Craig: Molinism is a Biblical model for reconciling divine sovereignty with human freedom

Helm: It is intellectually mystifying to introduce this strong view of human freedom and it is not Biblical

Federal judge rules Chicago's ban on gun sales unconstitutional

January 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

From Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A federal judge on Monday overturned Chicago's ban on the sale and transfer of firearms, ruling that the city's ordinances aimed at reducing gun violence are unconstitutional.
>
> U.S. District Judge Edmond E. Chang said in his ruling that while the government has a duty to protect its citizens, it's also obligated to protect constitutional rights, including the right to keep and bear arms for self-defense. However, Chang said he would temporarily stay the effects of his ruling, meaning the ordinances can stand while the city decides whether to appeal.
>
> The decision is just the latest to attack what were some of the toughest gun-control laws in the nation. In 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Chicago's long-standing gun ban. And last year, Illinois legislators were forced by a federal appeals court to adopt a law allowing residents to carry concealed weapons in Illinois, the only state that still banned the practice. The resulting state law largely stripped city and officials of surrounding Cook County of their authority to regulate guns, which especially irked officials in Chicago, where residents had to apply for concealed-carry permits through the police chief.
>
> […]Chang wrote that the nation's third-largest city "goes too far in outright banning legal buyers and legal dealers from engaging in lawful acquisitions and lawful sales of firearms, and at the same time the evidence does not support that the complete ban sufficiently furthers the purposes that the ordinance tries to serve."

> Chicago last year had more homicides than any city in the nation. City officials have long acknowledged the ban on gun sales has been weakened due to the legal sale of guns in some surrounding suburbs and states.

Chicago has one of the highest crime rates in the United States, if not the highest of all. The only rival might be Washington, D.C., which is also extremely opposed to self-defense against criminals.

A quick refresher on why people own guns

People own guns so that they deter criminals and reduce the crime rate in their communities. The more guns there are in the hands of law-abiding citizens, the lower the crime rate goes, because criminals don't like being shot at by their crime victims.

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were

> devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people.

A more recent study – from 2014

A new study that was in the news just last week confirms these findings. Newsmax reported on it.

Excerpt:

> A recent study showing a reverse correlation between concealed weapons and murder rates has renewed the contentious national debate about the effect of gun controls on violent crime.
>
> Reason magazine reported last week on economist Mark Gius' study of gun controls, published in the journal Applied Economics Letters showing states with restrictions on concealed weapons had higher gun-related murder rates than other states.
>
> The study looked at the effects on murder rates of both state-level assault weapons bans and concealed weapons restrictions from 1980 to 2009.
>
> […]The findings come as A 2007 study has been also getting a new look from those who dispute gun control efforts aimed at stemming gun violence, Boston magazine reported last summer.
>
> In research first published in Harvard's Journal of Public Law and Policy, criminologists Don Kates and Gary Mauser looked at the correlation between gun laws and death rates.
>
> "International evidence and comparisons have long been offered as proof of the mantra that more guns mean more deaths and that fewer guns, therefore, mean fewer deaths," the pair wrote in their introduction. "Unfortunately, such discussions [have] all too often been afflicted by misconceptions and factual error and focus on comparisons that are unrepresentative."
>
> The pair found "correlations that nations with stringent gun controls tend to have much higher murder rates than nations that allow guns."

It’s not a reasonable position to think that disarming law-abiding citizens will reduce crime rates. The evidence is against it.

Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?

January 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the comments, an atheist was arguing that atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians, so I thought I would re-post this USA Today article from 2011 about that.

Excerpt:

> It's been proclaimed from pulpits and blogs for years — Christians divorce as much as everyone else in America.
>
> But some scholars and family activists are questioning the oft-cited statistics, saying Christians who attend church regularly are more likely to remain wed.
>
> "It's a useful myth," said Bradley Wright, a University of Connecticut sociologist who recently wrote "Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites … and Other Lies You've Been Told."
>
> "Because if a pastor wants to preach about how Christians should take their marriages more seriously, he or she can trot out this statistic to get them to listen to him or her."
>
> The various findings on religion and divorce hinge on what kind of Christians are being discussed.
>
> Wright combed through the General Social Survey, a vast demographic study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and found that Christians, like adherents of other religions, have a divorce rate of about 42%. The rate among religiously unaffiliated Americans is 50%.
>
> When Wright examined the statistics on evangelicals, he found worship attendance has a big influence on the numbers. Six in 10 evangelicals who never attend had been divorced or separated, compared to just 38% of weekly attendees.
>
> […]Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there's been some confusion.
>
> "You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees," he said.
>
> **Wilcox's analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.

> “There’s something about being a nominal ‘Christian’ that is linked to a lot of negative outcomes when it comes to family life,” Wilcox said.

Here’s a quote from an Oklahoma State University study that confirms the Wright and Wilcox conclusions:

> History of Divorce and Religious Involvement
>
> Those who say they are more religious are less likely, not more, to have already experienced divorce. Likewise, those who report more frequent attendance at religious services were significantly less likely to have been divorced. This pattern of findings held using various analytic techniques that test which variables differentiate persons who have been divorced from persons who have not been divorced, while controlling for other variables that might affect the interpretation of the data, such as age, age of first marriage, income, and gender. When both the global rating of religiousness and the item assessing fiequency of attendance at religious services are entered into the same analysis, the attendance item remains significantly associated with divorce history but the global religiousness item does not. This suggests that a key aspect of how religious faith affects marital relationships may be through involvement with a community of faith.

So, please do bookmark this information for the next time you hear an atheist make this argument. Obviously, you can’t expect people who are not serious about their religion to be bound by the moral duties imposed by that religion. People who attend church regularly are probably more serious about their religion, and also probably more informed about what their holy book says. If their holy book is the Bible, then there are few options for divorce.

An article from Focus on the Family by Amy Tracy explains when divorce is allowed according to the Bible.

> God is very clear, however, that He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). He also says, “So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate” (Matthew 19:6). According to the New Testament, there are two justifications for divorce: infidelity (Matthew 5:32) and desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15).

So divorce is not something a Bible believing Christian can do for frivolous reasons, unless he wants to be in rebellion against God.

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

January 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (30 MB)

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the

first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

UPDATE: There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

German judge rules refuses to give homeschooling parents custody of their children

January 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA).

Excerpt:

> Following a hearing on December 18, 2013, in Darmstadt, Germany, Family Court Judge Marcus Malkmus slammed the door on the Wunderlich family's emigration hopes. Lawyers for Dirk, Petra, and their children had asked the judge to return legal custody to the parents because they have complied with court orders that the children go to school and because they wish to move to France where homeschooling is legal.
>
> In August 2013 the four Wunderlich children were seized in a raid by 20 police officers and social workers simply because they were being homeschooled, an activity that is illegal in Germany. After an international outcry, the children were returned three weeks later on the condition that the parents send them to public school. Testing conducted on the children during their stay in a group home indicated that they were well adjusted, social, and academically proficient.
>
> In Malkmus's written order, (an unofficial English translation is available here) he compared homeschooling to a straitjacket for children. While acknowledging that the Wunderlich children were well cared for and did not have educational deficiencies, he refused to return legal custody to the parents.
>
> He said it was necessary to keep the Wunderlich children in German public schools to make sure that they were integrated into society. If they were allowed to be homeschooled in Germany or anywhere else, the consequences might be that "the children would grow up in a parallel society without having learned to be integrated or to have a dialogue with those who think differently and facing them in the sense of practicing tolerance." Malkmus also wrote that homeschooling creates "concrete endangerment to the wellbeing of the child."
>
> […]HSLDA Director of International Affairs Michael Donnelly, who is coordinating HSLDA's work on behalf of the Wunderlichs, said, "This is a disgraceful court decision. The German constitution and multiple international treaties guarantee the Wunderlichs' right to leave their country. It's one thing to disagree with homeschooling and enforce the law, but to prevent an otherwise loving and caring family from leaving because of homeschooling is a monumental violation of basic human rights. Judge Malkmus has effectively imprisoned the Wunderlichs in Germany over their intention to homeschool. It's the kind of thing that you would expect from a communist bureaucrat in the former Soviet Union, not a modern German court of law."

So, my advice for homeschoolers is that when you are raising your children, you must understand that the secular left is opposed to homeschooling because they think that government-run schools can educate your children better than you can. If you find that the public schools are not doing a good job of educating your children, then you have no right to pull them out of school, like former Presidential candidate Michele Bachmann did when her children were stuck in an underperforming school. You don't have a right to raise MIT professors like this one, who was homeschooled. Why is that?

It's because the government is supported by teachers unions, and the more teachers there are, the more dues are paid to the unions, and the more political contributions the teacher unions make to the party that supports bigger government. It doesn't matter if your children are learning that the universe is eternal (Carl Sagan), that global warming is real (Al Gore), that premarital sex is a good preparation for marriage (Alfred Kinsey), and so on. You don't have a right to good education, you have an obligation to pay enormous sums of money to the public schools so that your children can underperform Korean students at math and science.

Does God’s omniscience conflict with human free will?

January 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s the setup for the question, from Come Reason ministries.

Excerpt:

> Hello,
>
> Christian doctrine holds that God is all knowing (1 John 3:20), and humans have free will (Deuteronomy 30:19 is my favorite example). however, at my favorite apologetics debate board, I have seen skeptics raise an objection to these points several times. the basic logic behind their arguments is this:
>
> 1. A being with free will, given two options A and B, can freely choose between A and B.
> 2. God is omniscient (all-knowing).
> 3. God knows I will choose A.
> 4. God cannot be wrong, since an omniscient being cannot have false knowledge.
> 5. From 3 and 4, I will choose A and cannot choose B.
> 6. From 1 and 5, omniscience and free will cannot co-exist.
>
> I have read many counter-arguments from apologetics sites, but they were either too technical (I couldn’t understand them), or not satisfying. so, I was wondering what would your input be on this issue?
>
> Thank you,
>
> Justin

Ever heard that one? Here’s Lenny Eposito’s answer:

> Hi Justin,
>
> Thanks for writing. This is a great question as it shows how even those who appeal to logic can have biases that blind them. Let’s examine this argument and see if it follows logically.
>
> Premises 1 and 2 in your outline above are the main premises to the argument and are not disputed. The Christian worldview argues that every human being is a free moral agent and is capable of making choices simply by exercising their will, not under compulsion or because of instinct. Also, it is a long held doctrine of Christianity that God is all-knowing. The Bible says that God knows “the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10).” For omniscience to be truly knowledgeable it must be correct knowledge, so premise number 4 is also granted.
>
> However, point number 5 is where the logic falters. Those who argue in this

> manner make the mistake of thinking that because God possesses knowledge about a specific matter, then he has influenced it. That does not follow at all. Just because God can foresee which choice you will make, it does not mean you couldn't still freely choose the other option.
>
> Let me give you an example. I have a five year old son. If I were to leave a chocolate chip cookie on the table about a hour before dinner time and my son was to walk by and see it, I know that he would pick up the cookie and eat it. I did not force him to make that decision. In fact, I don't even have to be in the room at all. I think I know my son well enough, though, to tell you that if I come back into the kitchen the cookie will be gone. His act was made completely free of my influence, but I knew what his actions would be.
>
> In examining the argument, the assumption is made in premise 3 that because God knows I will choose A somehow denies me the choice of B. That is the premise that Christianity rejects. Omniscience and free will are not incompatible and it is a non-sequitor to claim otherwise.
>
> Thank you Justin for this interesting question. I pray that you will continue to defend the gospel of our Lord and may He continue to bless you as you seek to grow in Him.

That's a great answer and should work in ordinary conversations.

More technical

J.W. Wartick maps out the arguments more fully with symbolic logic here on his Always Have A Reason blog. But I'll just excerpt the gist of it.

Excerpt:

> It is necessarily true that if God knows x will happen, then x will happen. But then if one takes these terms, God knowing x will happen only means that x will happen, not that x will happen *necessarily.* Certainly, God's foreknowledge of an event means that that event will happen, but it does *not* mean that the event could not have happened otherwise. If an event happens necessarily, that means the event could not have happened otherwise, but God's foreknowledge of an event doesn't somehow transfer necessity to the event, it only means that the event will happen. It could have been otherwise, in which case, God's knowledge would have been different.
>
> […]Perhaps I could take an example. Let's say that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow (and I do hope I will, I don't like missing classes!). God knows in advance that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow. His knowledge of this event means that it will happen, but it doesn't mean that I couldn't choose to stay in and sleep for a while, or play my new copy of Final Fantasy XIII, or do something more useless with my time. If I chose to, say, play Final Fantasy XIII (a strong temptation!), then God simply would have known that I would play FFXIII. His knowledge does not *determine* the outcome, His knowledge is simply *of the*

> *outcome*.

If we choose A, God would foreknow A. If we choose B, God would foreknow B. His foreknowledge of our choices is contingent on our making free choices.

I had to learn symbolic logic and Bayes' theorem in college for my computers science degrees, and it's pretty useful for understanding these philosophers. Philosophy is a lot like computer science, at least for analytical philosophy.

UPDATE: Here's another one from Sam Harper. I would click through just to read his funny author profile.

Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong? Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral?

January 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: For a Christian response to the complaint that the Bible doesn't condemn slavery, see this article and this article for slavery in the Old Testament, and this article for slavery in the New Testament. These are all by Christian philosopher Paul Copan. You can watch a lecture with Paul Copan on the slavery challenge here, and buy a book where he answers the challenge in more detail. There is also a good debate on whether the Bible condones slavery here, featuring David Instone-Brewer and Robert Price. My post is not a formal logical essay on this issue, it is more that I am outraged that atheists, who cannot even rationally ground objective morality, insist on criticizing the morality of the Bible. I think that atheists who are serious about finding the truth about these issues should check out those links, if they are interested in getting to the truth of these matters.

In other posts, I've argued that without an objective moral standard of what is right and wrong, any judgments about right and wrong are just individual opinions. So, when an atheist says slavery is wrong, what he really means is that he thinks slavery is wrong *for him*, in the same way that he thinks that,say, that chocolate ice cream is right *for him*. He isn't saying what is wrong *objectively*, because on atheism there are no objective moral rules or duties. He is speaking for himself: "I wouldn't own a slave, just like I wouldn't eat broccoli – because it's yucky!". But he has no rational argument against other people owning slaves in other times and places, because their justification for owning slaves is the same as his justification for not owning slaves : personal preference.

So do atheists oppose slavery? Do they believe in an objective human right to liberty? Well, there are no objective human rights of any kind on atheism. Human beings are just accidents in an accidental universe, and collections of atoms do not mysteriously accrue "rights". There is no natural right to liberty on atheism. Now consider abortion, which is arguably very similar to slavery. Most atheists do favor abortion in this time and place. Like slavery, abortion declares an entire class of weaker people as non-persons in order to justify preserving their own happiness and prosperity by means of violence. That's exactly what slavery does, except abortion is worse than slavery, because you actually kill the person you are declaring as a non-person instead of just imprisoning them.

So how many atheists have this pro-abortion view that it is OK to declare unborn children as non-persons so they can kill them?

Well, according to Gallup, the "non-religious" are the group most likely to support abortion. In fact, 68% favor legalized abortion, compared to only 19% who oppose it.

Take a look at the Gallup poll data from 2012:

Americans' Abortion Views, by Education and Religion

With respect to the abortion issue, would you consider yourself to be pro-choice or pro-life?

	"Pro-choice"	"Pro-life"
	%	%
National adults	41	50
No religion	68	19
Catholic	38	54
Protestant/Other Christian	33	57
Postgraduate	58	37
College graduate only	45	53
Some college	41	49
High school graduate or less	33	53

May 3-6, 2012

GALLUP

Most atheists are OK with the strong killing the weak

The Gallup numbers might actually be low, because “No religion” might include people who are spiritual, but not religious. But what about atheists alone?

As a group, atheists tend to be among the most radical supporters of legalized abortion. The Secular Census of 2012 found that 97% of atheists vote for abortion. There are almost no pro-life atheists. Why is it that atheists look at unborn children and think it’s OK to kill them? Well, let’s see what atheists scholars think about morality, and we’ll find out why they think abortion is OK.

Atheist scholars think morality is nonsense

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin’s views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That’s the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Source: http://www.arn.org/docs/orpages/or161/161main.htm

Atheists Michael Ruse says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I

> appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory.(Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

Atheist Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

Let's take a closer look at Richard Dawkins.

Richard Dawkins and morality

Here's how far Dawkins takes his view that there is no evil and no good:

Richard Dawkins explains morality on atheism
But wait! He goes even further than mere abortion:

So, looking at Dawkins, what kind of ethic can you get from Darwinism and atheism? Survival of the fittest. The strong kill the weak.

Richard Dawkins even advocates for adultery.

Now atheists may feign morality in order to get along with other people in a society that is still anchored in Judeo-Christian values, but they tend to vote for liberal social policies, and they oppose political action by those who still hold to objective morality. So what they are working toward, generally, is less and less influence in politics by those who favor objective human rights, objective moral values and objective moral duties.

So do atheists oppose slavery, or don't they?

I actually don't think that atheists think slavery is morally wrong, although they might personally not want to own slaves in this time and place because slavery is illegal – thanks to Judeo-Christian values. But in other areas, like abortion, we can see that atheists are willing to use violence against the weak to augment their happiness and prosperity. Unborn babies are weak, like slaves. Atheists are willing to kill the weak unborn babies who stop them from pursuing pleasure and prosperity. I don't see how they would have any objections to enslaving other people if they had the strength to do so. In fact, unjust imprisonment and forced labor are happening in atheistic North Korea right now.

But do you know who does oppose slavery enough to do something about it?

Dinesh D'Souza explains:

> Slavery was mostly eradicated from Western civilization–then called Christendom–between the fourth and the tenth century. The Greco-Roman institution of slavery gave way to serfdom. Now serfdom has its problems but at least the serf is not a "human tool" and cannot be bought and sold like property. So slavery was ended twice in Western civilization, first in the medieval era and then again in the modern era.
>
> In the American South, Christianity proved to be the solace of the oppressed. As historian Eugene Genovese documents in Roll, Jordan, Roll, when black slaves sought to find dignity during the dark night of slavery, they didn't turn to Marcus Aurelius or David Hume; they turned to the Bible. When they sought hope and inspiration for liberation, they found it not in Voltaire or D'Holbach but in the Book of Exodus.
>
> The anti-slavery movements led by Wilberforce in England and abolitionists in America were dominated by Christians. These believers reasoned that since we are all created equal in the eyes of God, no one has the right to rule another without consent. This is the moral basis not only of anti-slavery but also of democracy.

And, in fact, you can see Christians pushing the culture hard against abortion today, just as we did with slavery. Defending the weak is what we do. Meanwhile, most atheists think that an unborn child has as much of a right to legal protection as a cockroach.

UPDATE: I don't know what's was wrong with my brain yesterday but I totally forgot to mention the growth of the national debt under Pelosi/Reid/Obama. The Democrats have more than doubled the national debt to $17 trillion so that those who are older and more wealthy can increase their own standard of living and make their weaker children (born and unborn) pay for it. So now we have it for certain. Most atheists do in fact believe in slavery, since atheists are one of the most reliable voting groups for the Democrat Party.

UPDATE: I have to put in this caveat to this post from commenter George Yancey:

> Great post Wintery. I do have to make one correction as a social scientist although I agree with your philosophical arguments. Stating that 97 percent of all atheists vote to support abortion is a little misleading. I have no doubt that atheists are more likely to support abortion than Christians however, merely voting for liberal politicians – who are the ones more likely to support abortion – does not mean that a person supports abortion. They may support that politician for a lot of other reasons rather than abortion. For example, a lot of African-Americans support liberal politicians but not abortion. So I suspect that the 97 percent is too high of a figure to use to indicate atheists support of abortion.

DOJ selects Democrat donor to head investigation of IRS corruption

January 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> The Justice Department selected an avowed political supporter of President Obama to lead the criminal probe into the IRS targeting of tea party groups, according to top Republicans who said Wednesday that the move has ruined the entire investigation.
>
> **House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Darrell E. Issa, California Republican, and regulatory affairs subcommittee Chairman Jim Jordan, Ohio Republican, said they have discovered that the head of the investigation is Barbara Kay Bosserman, a trial lawyer in the Justice Department who donated more than $6,000 to Mr. Obama's 2008 and 2012 campaigns, as well as several hundred dollars to the national Democratic Party.**
>
> "The department has created a startling conflict of interest," Mr. Issa andMr. Jordan said in a letter sent Wednesday and reviewed by The Washington Times. "It is unbelievable that the department would choose such an individual to examine the federal government's systematic targeting and harassment of organizations opposed to the president's policies."
>
> The Internal Revenue Service's internal auditor revealed in May that the agency had been inappropriately targeting and blocking applications for tax-exempt status from tea party and conservative-leaning groups. In the immediate aftermath, Mr. Obama promised that the FBI and the Justice Department would investigate whether the IRS broke any laws.
>
> Eight months later, the investigation has not produced any public findings, and Mr. Issa says the FBI and Justice Department have stonewalled his efforts to find out what's going on.
>
> Ms. Bosserman didn't respond to an email seeking comment.

Don't worry, everything will be fine. We can trust big government to investigate itself properly.

Related Posts

- New York Times: Democrats knew about IRS scandal 5 months before the 2012 election
- The IRS abuse of power scandal started from the top
- IRS exchanged confidential taxpayer information with White House

- DOJ won’t prosecute government officials for unauthorized access of tax records
- Treasury Dept. IG: IRS targeted 292 Tea Party groups but only 6 progressive groups
- New study: IRS targeting of Tea Party conservatives had significant effect on 2012 election
- Human Rights Campaign refuses to reveal name of IRS leaker
- Phone call recording of IRS agent reveals anti-Christian, anti free speech bias
- Obama’s deputy campaign manager Stephanie Cutter met with IRS chief at the White House
- Cincinnati IRS employee: Washington told us to target the Tea Party
- IRS chief visited White House a reported 118 times from 2010 to 2011
- IRS fascist Lois Lerner pleads the fifth to avoid transparency and accountability
- A closer look at one of the conservatives persecuted by the IRS
- Obama met with anti-Tea Party IRS Union boss one day before the IRS persecutions began
- The IRS abuse of power scandal started from the top
- IRS official who targeted Tea Party groups now a director in Obamacare administration
- IRS audited the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association after they ran pro-marriage ads
- IRS gave confidential documents from conservative groups to liberal group ProPublica
- IRS apologizes for flagging conservative groups for audits in 2012 election year

Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?

January 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture by New York University professor Paul Vitz to explain a connection between atheism and fatherlessness:

Here's an article by Paul Copan (related to the lecture) which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own*rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all*.[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of Francois-Marie Arouet.
> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.

> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence of a psychological explanation for atheism, but there is also statistical evidence.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will

> become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an enormously difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary.

By the way, isn't it interesting to note that Barack Obama also grew up fatherless and has issues with God and morality.

UPDATE: Ed Babinski has some corrections for my list. He writes in a comment:

> 1) Voltaire was not an atheist but a deist who rejected claims of the Bible's inspiration, like Paine. Voltaire's aphorism, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him," far from being the cynical remark it is often taken for, it was meant as a retort to the atheistic clique of d'Holbach, Grimm, and others.
>
> 2) David Hume's religious views remain uncertain. He never said he was an atheist. A gentle skeptic suits him more.

> 3) Bertrand Russell was an agnostic.

Stephen C. Meyer and Keith Fox debate intelligent design and evolution

January 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable" podcast.

Details:

> Stephen Meyer is a leading proponent of Intelligent Design who directs the Centre for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. His most recent book "Signature in the Cell" claims to show that the DNA code is the product of intelligent mind, not naturalistic processes. Keith Fox is Professor of Biochemistry at Southampton University. He chairs the UK Christians in Science network but disagrees strongly with ID. They debate how life could have originated and whether design is allowed as an explanation in science.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary: (stuff in italics is my snarky paraphrase)

Meyer:

- background and how he got interested in intelligent design
- his research focus is on the origin of life – the first replicator
- summarizes the history of origin of life studies
- authored the book "Signature in the Cell"
- the DNA enigma: where did the information in DNA come from?
- naturalistic explanations of the DNA information have failed
- but intelligent agents are known to be able to produce information
- the best explanation of the information in DNA is that an intelligent agent authored it
- Meyer's book was named by atheist philosopher of science Thomas Nagel as a Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year in 2010
- why is design so controversial? Many people think that Darwin explained why nature appears design
- the Darwinian view is that nature can create the appearance of design using mutation and selection
- however, Darwinian mechanisms cannot explain the origin of the first living cell, it assumes replication, and the origin of life is about where the first replicator comes from

Fox:

- Meyer's argument is not about the evolution of life after the first cell
- Meyer's case for design is about the origin of life

- naturalists do not know a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- there are a number of naturalistic hypotheses for the origin of life, like the RNA-first hypothesis
- maybe in a few years one of them will turn out to be correct
- what intelligent design is arguing from a gap in our current naturalistic knowledge to infer that God intervened in nature

Meyer:

- that's not what intelligent design is at all
- the approach ID theorists use is the inference to best explanation
- you evaluate all explanations, non-intelligent causes and intelligent causes
- you prefer the best possible explanation
- we know that minds are capable of producing information just like the information we find in DNA

Fox:

- living cells replicate, so they have the ability to introduce mutations as they replicate and then some of those mutations can be selected
- so maybe the process of replicating that living cells do created the first living cell
- maybe the first living cell created itself, X brought X into being, self-creation, what's irrational about that?

Meyer:

- the issue is the origin of life – where did the first living cell come from?
- you cannot appeal to the operations that a living cell can perform to explain the origin of the first living cell
- there was no first living cell operating before the first living cell
- there was no replication, mutation or selection before the first living cell
- in fact, in my book I show that there is no known naturalistic mechanism that is able to produce the information needed for the first living cell
- *nothing can create itself, that is self-contradictory*

Fox:

- Well, you are just saying that because something is complex that God did it

Meyer:

- Sadly, no. What I actually said needed to be explained was the information, not complexity
- And we know from software engineering that the process of adding information to code is performed by programmers
- in the absence of any adequate naturalistic explanation for information, we are

justified in taking the explanation that we are familiar with – namely, intelligent agency – based on our uniform, universal experience of what causes information

Fox:

- well, maybe we can appeal to the mutation and selection in existing living cells to explain the origin of the first living cell
- maybe there were living cells before the first living cell, and then these other living cells created the first living cell

Meyer:

- we can't keep invoking mutation and selection when those processes are not operating prior to the origin of the first living cell

Fox:

- well maybe some bare-bones self-replication molecule was a precursor to the first living cell

Meyer:

- even to generate very limited replicator would require a large amount of information
- the argument I am making is – where does the evolution come from?

Fox:

- well, maybe we will think of an explanation for information that is naturalistic in 20 years
- we've thought of explanations to things that were NOT information before
- so maybe we will be able to think of something to explain information based on our ability to explain NOT information before

Moderator: Change topics: the Dover decision

Meyer:

- the Discovery Institute opposed the policy that causes the trial
- the wording of the statute was poor
- the judge was completely wrong in his decision
- young earth creationists used the phrase "intelligent design" to cover their agenda
- intelligent design is an inference using the normal methods of science

Fox:

- intelligent design is a science stopper because it stops looking for a naturalistic explanation
- everything in nature must have a naturalistic explanation
- everything has to be explained using matter and time and chance

- it just has to be that way!!!!

Meyer:

- well, what luck would you have explaining an effect like Mt. Rushmore?
- can you explain that using matter,time and chance?
- Mt. Rushmore was the product of intelligence, not wind and erosion
- similarly, there is information in the cell, and we know that intelligence causes information

Fox:

- So you are saying that we don't understand and therefore an intelligence is necessary?

Meyer:

- no I am saying we DO understand and we are making an inference based on that understanding
- you are the one who is insisting on a material explanation because you pre-suppose materialism
- we know that minds have causal powers, and we can infer mind as an explanation from information

Fox:

- well nature is a seamless chain of material causes and effects

Meyer:

- agents can act without violating the laws of nature
- even humans can act as intelligent agents to create information in books, and they don't violate the laws of nature
- intelligent causes are real, and they explain effects in nature

Fox:

- you're trying to impose on science something to do with meaning and purpose

Meyer:

- no that's not what we're doing, we're inferring from from the fact that we ourselves are known causes of information to the fact that an intelligence cause is the best explanation for information in the cell

Fox:

- *but I am a materialist*, I need a materialist explanation

Meyer:

- mind IS an answer to the how question
- we infer to mind in many other scientific disciplines, like cryptography, archaeology, etc.
- a materialist might accuse an archaeologist of engaging in a “scribe-of-the-gaps” argument, but the best explanation of an artifact with information is a scribe
- we are inferring that mind is the cause from the nature of the effect: information

Moderator: is it appropriate to call DNA “information”
Fox:

- well DNA is just a molecular polymer, any reference to information is just by analogy

Meyer:

- DNA is a molecular polymer, but it also exhibits the property of specified complexity
- the arrangement of bases, which function as machine instructions in a software program, for performings task in the cell
- we have observed that the property of specified complexity always comes from an intelligence

Fox:

- well, maybe there are other sequences that would work, so maybe it’s really not uncommon to develop functioning sequences by chance alone, without an intelligence

Meyer:

- you can measure how precise the functional specificity is in DNA and proteins

Moderator: is Shannon information the same as functional information
Meyer:

- Shannon information refers to the sequences of digits or symbols that do not necessarily have any function, i.e. – a four character string QSZX has as much Shannon information as WORD. However, only the latter is functional against the pattern of the English language. There are arrangements of DNA bases and amino acids that have the same number of symbols/characters as a functional sequence would have, but they have no biological function – they do not exhibit specified complexity

Fox:

- Well, maybe there are lots and lots of sequences of DNA and proteins so that it is fairly easy to get a functional one by chance

Meyer:

- DNA sequences that are functional are extremely rare, protein sequences are even more rare
- this is not my opinion, this is what the research shows – functional protein sequences are rare

Fox:

- well maybe there are other functional sequences that are occur before the first functional sequence that are precursors to the first functional sequence
- maybe there are billions of years of replication, mutation and selection before the first replication, mutation and selection

Meyer:

- you can't get to the first selectable functional sequence by appealing to precursor selectable functional sequences – there are no selectable functional sequences before the FIRST one
- you have to get the first selectable functional sequence by chance alone, because there is nothing to mutate or select before the first replicator
- the chance hypothesis has been rejected because the minimal amount of information for the simplest replicator is too high to get by chance alone, given the resources, including time, that are available

Moderator: *Keith are you confident that naturalism will be able to substantiate these naturalism-of-the-gap speculations that you offer in response to Meyer's actual science that we have today?*

Fox:

- well, it is hard to know for sure because it was just a fluke event
- but there's nothing irrational or unscientific or miraculous about it – the fluke would have a material explanation
- there is nothing that we can detect that would implicate God, my speculations about a fluke which I cannot observe or measure or test would all be compatible with an atheistic worldview that omits God as a causal entity

Meyer:

- where are those material processes that could account for this fluke then?
- the whole point of this argument is that the information in DNA transcends the material components in the sequence
- it's the arrangement of the material parts/letters/characters/symbols/instructions that needs to be explained

Fox:

- Well, I just have a different philosophy of science that rules out intelligent causation a priori

Meyer:

- Yes, that's the difference between us – you pre-suppose that all explanations of natural phenomena must exclude intelligent causes

There is a bit more where Meyer talks about how parts of the cell are implementations of various design patterns (Gang of Four design patterns) that are used by software architects who design software.

Find more posts on Stephen C. Meyer here.

Only 74,000 jobs added in December, lowest in 3 years

January 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

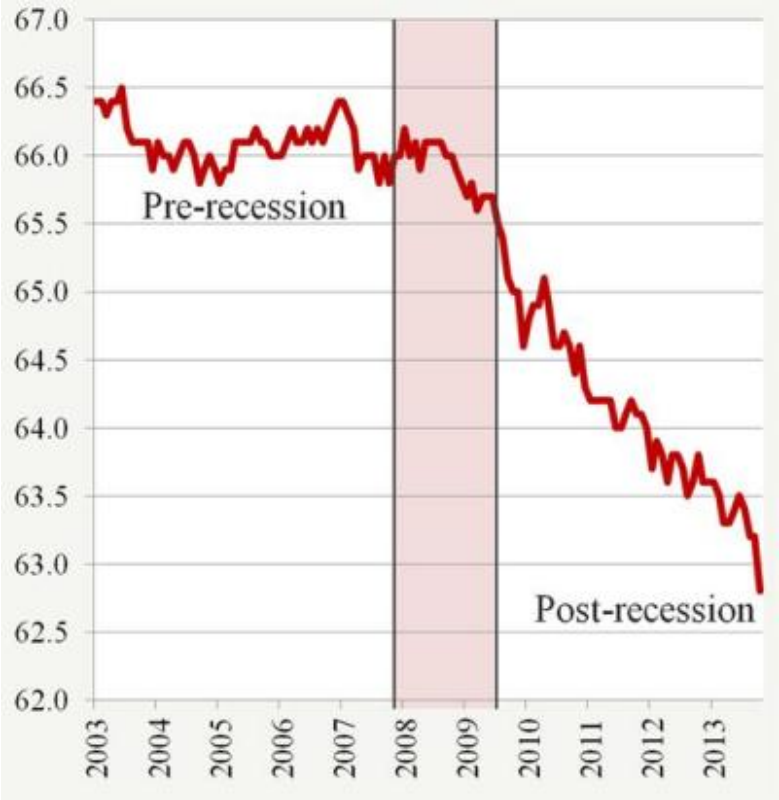

Labor Force Participation down to 62.8%

CNS News reports on the disappointing job numbers.

Excerpt:

> The economy added only 74,000 non-farm jobs in December, the fewest in three years. Yet the unemployment rate dropped 0.3 points to 6.7 percent — the first time in 60 months it has dropped below 7 percent, the Labor Department announced on Friday.
>
> With so few jobs added, the jobless rate still went down because people stopped looking for work.
>
> The Bureau of Labor Statistics says the number of unemployed persons declined by 490,000 to 10.4 million in December, indicating that many of them dropped out of the labor force.
>
> The government counts people as unemployed only if they are actively searching for work.
>
> […]In 2013, job growth averaged 182,000 per month, about the same as in 2012, when it averaged 183,000 a month.

I am thinking about whether the Obama administration has done anything in the last 5 years to create any jobs. I know they could have suspended the employer portion of

payroll taxes. They didn’t do that. They could have allowed the Keystone XL pipeline. They didn’t do that. They could have repealed Obamacare so that employers didn’t have to reduce worker hours to avoid having to pay penalties. They didn’t do that. They could have stopped borrowing over a trillion dollars a year. They didn’t do that.

So I am just wondering what exactly this government has done to create jobs. I know the economy is resilient, and some jobs get created every month, no matter what. But I would like someone to tell me how this government has encouraged the private sector to hire more workers. I think if they had done anything to specifically address jobs, then I would know about it.

J. Warner Wallace: important differences between Christianity and Mormonism

January 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a podcast featuring J. Warner Wallace that I listened to twice on a recent road trip. This is an after action report from Wallace's recent missions trip to Utah to evangelize Mormons.

The MP3 file is here. (74 minutes)

Topics:

- Mormons disagree with Christians about the nature of God, Jesus and salvation
- The differences are so dramatic that the two religions are completely different views
- Mormons try to portray themselves as a denomination of Christianity
- The Utah missions trip: how Christians were trained to engage with Mormons
- Mormonism is a works-based religion – you earn your way to eternal life by doing works
- In Christianity, eternal life is a free gift from God to anyone who accepts Jesus as their leader and redeemer
- Mormons believe that doctrines can change from generation to generation (progressive revelation)
- Mormons commonly make the case for a works-based theology by appealing to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount
- Mormons believe that you have to be perfect in order to get "exalted" eternal life
- Christians are perfect because Jesus has paid the price of our rebellion against God
- Christians: Jesus' sacrifice pays for anything evil that we have done and could do
- Christians are made perfect because Jesus' perfection is applied to them
- Christians are not practically perfect, but they are perfect by accepting that the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross
- God credits righteousness to Christians because Jesus has already died to pay off the punishment for their sins
- The good works that Christians do are a voluntary response to this free gift of salvation
- The good works do not secure a Christian's salvation, they are the natural outworking of accepting the gift of salvation
- The Mormon view of the afterlife is different from the Christian view
- The best Mormon afterlife ("exaltation") requires continued righteousness to the end of one's natural life
- This is not compatible with Christian teaching about salvation being by grace and not by doing good works (Gal 3:10-14)
- Mormons can never know whether they are saved or not until the day they die
- Christians can be sure of their salvation from the moment they accept Jesus as their

leader and redeemer
- The Bible is clear that we can know whether we are saved or not (John 5:9-14)
- It is inconsistent for Mormons to claim to be Christians and then try to convert Christians to Mormonism
- The reason why Mormons go door to door is because they think Christians are wrong
- The Mormon view of Jesus is nothing like the Christian view of Christ (from the Bible)
- Mormonism is polytheistic, whereas Christianity is monotheistic
- Mormon "gods" are just beings who have a human nature who were "exalted" for doing good works
- When debating Mormons, they will try to argue that Mormonism is true because it results in good works
- The Biblical standard for a good prophet is to see whether his prophecies come true
- The Mormon view is that Joseph Smith is reliable because he did good works
- But good works are not a good way to test truth claims – a person could be "good" and still say false things
- A good question to ask Mormons: is the Book of Mormon ancient? It claims to be ancient, but is it?
- They may try to answer this question by appealing to fideism: praying for confirmation by burning bosom
- But this is not a question that can be assessed by subjective feelings (just pray about it)
- This is a question that needs to be assessed by historians using historical evidence
- There is no historical or archaeological support for the claims in the Book of Mormon
- In contrast, we have direct eyewitness testimony about the life of Jesus in the New Testament
- We have fragments of NT manuscripts dating back to first century so we know that the New Testament is ancient

Previously, I posted my refutation of Mormonism which used two evidential arguments. And J.W. Wartick has posted two philosophical arguments against Mormonism as well.

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

January 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Mark D. Linville: can evolution rationally ground the concept of a moral obligation?

January 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard an atheist tell you that naturalistic evolution is an answer to the moral argument? I have. And I found a good reply to this challenge in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". The chapter that responds to the challenge is authored by Dr. Mark D. Linville. It is only 13 pages long. I have a link to the PDF at the bottom of this post.

First, a bit about the author:

> Blog: The Tavern at the End of the World
> Current positions:
>
> - PhD Research Fellow
> - Tutoring Fellow in Philosophy
>
> Education:
>
> - PhD in Philosophy with a minor in South Asian Studies and a specialization in Philosophy of Religion, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy of Religion, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
> - MA in Theology, Cincinnati Christian Seminary
> - BA in Biblical Studies, Florida Christian College

Here is his thesis of the essay:

> Darwin's account of the origins of human morality is at once elegant, ingenious, and, I shall argue, woefully inadequate. In particular, that account, on its standard interpretation, does not explain morality, but, rather, explains it away . We learn from Darwin not how there could be objective moral facts, but how we could have come to believe—perhaps erroneously—that there are.
>
> Further, the naturalist, who does not believe that there is such a personal being as God, is in principle committed to Darwinism, including a Darwinian account of the basic contours of human moral psychology. I'll use the term evolutionary naturalism to refer to this combination of naturalism and Darwinism. And so the naturalist is saddled with a view that explains morality away. Whatever reason we have for believing in moral facts is also a reason for thinking naturalism is false. I conclude the essay with a brief account of a theistic conception of morality, and argue that the theist is in a better position to affirm the objectivity of morality.

And here’s a sample to get your attention:

> But even if we are assured that a “normal” person will be prompted by the social instincts and that those instincts are typically flanked and reinforced by a set of moral emotions, we still do not have a truly normative account of moral obligation. There is nothing in Darwin’s own account to indicate that the ensuing sense of guilt—a guilty feeling—is indicative of actual moral guilt resulting from the violation of an objective moral law. The revenge taken by one’s own conscience amounts to a sort of second-order propensity to feel a certain way given one’s past relation to conflicting first-order propensities (e.g., the father’s impulse to save his child versus his impulse to save himself). Unless we import normative considerations from some other source, it seems that, whether it is a first or second-order inclination,one’s being prompted by it is more readily understood as a descriptive feature of one’s own psychology than material for a normative assessment of one’s behavior or character. And, assuming that there is anything to this observation, an ascent into even higher levels of propensities (“I feel guilty for not having felt guilty for not being remorseful over not obeying my social instincts…”) introduces nothing of normative import. Suppose you encounter a man who neither feels the pull of social, paternal or familial instincts nor is in the least bit concerned over his apparent lack of conscience. What, from a strictly Darwinian perspective, can one say to him that is of any serious moral import? “You are not moved to action by the impulses that move most of us.” Right. So?
>
> The problem afflicts contemporary construals of an evolutionary account of human morality. Consider Michael Shermer’s explanation for the evolution of a moral sense—the “science of good and evil.” He explains,
>
> By a moral sense, I mean a moral feeling or emotion generated by actions. For example, positive emotions such as righteousness and pride are experienced as the psychological feeling of doing “good.” These moral emotions likely evolved out of behaviors that were reinforced as being good either for the individual or for the group.2
>
> Shermer goes on to compare such moral emotions to other emotions and sensations that are universally experienced, such as hunger and the sexual urge. He then addresses the question of moral motivation.
>
> In this evolutionary theory of morality, asking “Why should we be moral?” is like asking “Why should we be hungry?” or “Why should we be horny?” For that matter, we could ask, “Why should we be jealous?” or “Why should we fall in love?” The answer is that it is as much a part of human nature to be moral as it is to be hungry, horny, jealous, and in love.3
>
> Thus, according to Shermer, given an evolutionary account, such a question is simply a non-starter. Moral motivation is a given as it is wired in as one of our basic drives. Of course, one might point out that Shermer’s “moral emotions”

> often do need encouragement in a way that, say, “horniness,” does not. More importantly, Shermer apparently fails to notice that if asking “Why should I be moral?” is like asking, “Why should I be horny?” then asserting, “You ought to be moral” is like asserting, “You ought to be horny.” As goes the interrogative, so goes the imperative. But if the latter seems out of place, then, on Shermer’s view, so is the former.
>
> One might thus observe that if morality is anything at all, it is irreducibly normative in nature. But the Darwinian account winds up reducing morality to descriptive features of human psychology. Like the libido, either the moral sense is present and active or it is not. If it is, then we might expect one to behave accordingly. If not, why, then, as a famous blues man once put it, “the boogie woogie just ain’t in me.” And so the resulting “morality” is that in name only.
>
> **In light of such considerations, it is tempting to conclude with C. S. Lewis that, if the naturalist remembered his philosophy out of school, he would recognize that any claim to the effect that “I ought” is on a par with “I itch,” in that it is nothing more than a descriptive piece of autobiography with no essential reference to any actual obligations.**

When it comes to morality, we are not interested in mere descriptions of behavior. We want to know about prescriptions of behavior, and whether why we should care about following those prescriptions. We are interested in what grounds our sense of moral obligation in reality. What underwrites our sense of moral obligation? If it is just rooted in feelings, then why should we obey our moral sense when obeying it goes against out self-interest? Feelings are subjective things, and doing the right thing in a real objective state of affairs requires more than just feelings. There has to be a real objective state of affairs that makes it rational for us to do the right thing, even when the right thing is against our own self-interest. That’s what morality is – objective moral obligations *overriding* subjective feelings. I wouldn’t trust someone to be moral if it were just based on their feelings.

The PDF is right here for downloading, with the permission of the author.

Walmart’s health care plans are cheaper and offer more coverage than Obamacare plans

January 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Washington Examiner takes a look at the numbers.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Walmart offers its employees two standard plans, a Health Reimbursement Account and an alternative it calls “HRA High” that costs more out of employees’ pockets but has lower deductibles. Blue Cross Blue Shield manages both plans nationally.
>
> Also offered is a Health Savings Account plan that includes high deductibles but allows tax-free dollars to be used for coverage.
>
> For a monthly premium as low as roughly $40, an individual who is a Walmart HRA plan enrollee can obtain full-service coverage through a Blue Cross Blue Shield preferred provider organization. A family can get coverage for about $160 per month.
>
> Unlike Obamacare, there are no income eligibility requirements. Age and gender do not alter premium rates. The company plan is the same for all of Walmart’s 1.1 million enrolled employees and their dependents, from its cashiers to its CEO.
>
> **A Journal of the American Medical Association analysis from September showed that unsubsidized Obamacare enrollees will face monthly premiums that are five to nine times higher than Walmart premiums.**
>
> **JAMA found the unsubsidized premium for a nonsmoking gouple age 60 can cost $1,365 per month versus the Walmart cost of about $134 for the same couple.**
>
> **The medical journal reported a 30-year-old smoker would pay up to $428 per month, in contrast to roughly $70 each month for a Walmart employee.**
>
> **A family of four could pay a $962 premium, but the same Walmart family member would pay about $160.**
>
> Low premiums are not the only distinguishing feature of the Walmart plan. The retailer’s employees can use eight of the country’s most prestigious medical facilities, including the Mayo Clinic, Pennsylvania’s Geisinger Medical Center and the Cleveland Clinic.
>
> At these institutions, which Walmart calls “Centers of Excellence,” Walmart employees and their dependents can get free heart or spinal surgery. They can also get free knee and hip replacements at four hospitals nationwide.
>
> Many top-rated Walmart hospitals — such as the Mayo and Cleveland clinics —

> are left out of most Obamacare exchange plans.
>
> But the real difference between Obamacare and Walmart can be seen in the levels of day-to-day access to doctors and hospitals.
>
> **Robert Slayton, a practicing Chicago independent insurance agent for 11 years and the former president of the Illinois State Association of Health Underwriters, described to the *Examiner* the differences between Walmart and Obamacare provider networks.**
>
> **Slayton said the BlueChoice exchange network for President Obama's hometown has very limited hospital participation. "In downtown Chicago, the key is the number of hospitals: 28," he said.**
>
> **"Now we're going to the national network — this is what the Walmart network would most likely be — and you have 54 hospitals. That's a big difference," he said.**
>
> […]**Slayton said the gap between doctor availability in Chicago under the Obamacare and Walmart plans is dramatic.**
>
> **"You will notice there are 9,837 doctors [under Obamacare]. But the larger network is 24,904 doctors. Huge, huge difference," he said.**
>
> Walmart also offers a free preventive health plan that mirrors the Obamacare plan. Its employees can take advantage of a wide range of free exams and counseling, including screenings for colorectal cancer, cervical cancer, chlamydia, diabetes, depression and special counseling for diet and obesity.
>
> Their children can get more than 20 free preventive services, ranging including screenings for genetic disorders, autism and developmental problems to obesity, lead poisoning exposure and tuberculosis. There are also 12 free vaccinations, and free hearing and vision testing.
>
> Walmart employees pay as little as $4 for a 30-day supply of generic drugs and only $10 for eye exams through a separate vision plan.

And Wal-Mart didn't need to waste $600 million of taxpayer money on the web site. See why we need to led the private sector handle these things? Obamacare sucks, and that's why the Democrats voted to exempt themselves and all their staff from it.

Did Jesus exist? Agnostic historian Bart Ehrman debates Infidel Guy

January 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I find atheism a bit of a quirky worldview because a significant group of the more militant atheists seem to be willing to believe in weird things that are obviously false. Even things that are denied by the majority of scholars. And sometimes things denied by ALL scholars. And yet as long as they can make fun of people and tell jokes about it, they are very happy to go on believing things that are obviously false, and congratulate themselves on how clever they are.

Believe in my atheists delusions or I'll insult you!

Anyhoo, here is an interesting case in point, in which "The Infidel Guy", who thinks that Jesus never existed, confronts skeptical historian Bart Ehrman. Bart Ehrman lets the true believing jihadi know that the world really is round and that leprechauns most certainly do not exist.

When I look at atheists, I do see a lot of belief without evidence, and I suspect that they are just projecting their childish Santa Claus epistemology on Christians. Atheists believe weird things. They deny the Big Bang cosmology, and believe that the universe is eternal (Secular Humanifest Manifesto I). They believe you can explain the origin of life by appealing to unobservable aliens (Richard Dawkins). They think that morality doesn't exist (Jerry Coyne). They think that cosmic fine-tuning is not real (Victor Stenger). They think that it is morally permissible for a society to murder unwanted 5-year olds (P.Z. Myers). The ice caps will be melted by 2014 (Al Gore). The majority DNA is non-coding "junk" (John Timmer). The universe popped into being, uncaused out of nothing (Lawrence Krauss). And so on. Don't even get me started on the multiverse! Oh my. Talk about believing things without evidence just because you want to believe them.

The most powerful argument against Christianity

You know, the most powerful argument that radical atheists can press against the reliability of the New Testament reports about Jesus' empty tomb and post-mortem appearances is their own gullibility. What they should do in a debate is stand up and say

“look at me! I believe Jesus never existed! I am batsh*t crazy!! Bleh bleh bleh! (Dances the robot) And if I am this crazy, then maybe the early Christians were as good at believing weird things as I am!” That is an argument that could cause any Christian to quake in fear.

That is actually the strongest argument against Christianity in my view – the widespread delusions of the radical “New Atheist” community. If a group of people can be that credulous, then maybe the early Christians were that credulous as well? If people can invent an alternate Easter Bunny / Santa Claus reality when it suits their desires, then maybe the early church could do the same. Maybe humans are as credulous, in general, as these radical atheists are and just make things up. Maybe we are all just believing what is comfortable for us against the evidence, like the Infidel Guy and his buddies.

Now, I realize that there is a large group of non-radical atheists who are just not convinced by the evidence for theism and Christianity, and for those moderate atheists, we should prepare a defense for them, because they are still open to being convinced by arguments and evidence. Many of them may have grown up in the church, listening to anti-intellectual sermons and never getting answers to their questions. That’s fine, and we should be respectful and thoughtful with them. But I am just saying that there is another group of radical atheists out there who are just interested in deluding themselves, and we needn’t be impressed by them.

Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger's critique of cosmic fine-tuning

January 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Victor Stenger is a famous "Internet Infidel" atheist, but what makes him different is that he is has a PhD in physics. He wrote a book published by the atheist publisher Prometheus Press where he explains why he thinks that the universe is not fine-tuned for embodied sentient life.

An Australian physicist named Luke Barnes decided to write a response to his book, and the response is summarized (without the math!) on Uncommon Descent. Barnes has a PhD in Astronomy from Cambridge. He did postdoctoral research in Switzerland at the Institute for Astonomy, and now he is doing more postdoctoral research at the University of Sydney . The response that he wrote does not talk about God, or explanations of why the fine-tuning happened. I have no idea where his convictions are on any of that, because his response just talks about the fine-tuning itself from a scientific point of view.

Here's how Uncommon Descent explains Barnes' response.

Summary:

> Professor Victor Stenger is an American particle physicist and a noted atheist, who popularized the phrase, "Science flies you to the moon. Religion flies you into buildings". Professor Stenger is also the author of several books, including his recent best-seller, The Fallacy of Fine-Tuning: How the Universe is Not Designed for Humanity (Prometheus Books, 2011). Stenger's latest book has been received with great acclaim by atheists: "Stenger has demolished the fine-tuning proponents," writes one enthusiastic Amazon reviewer, adding that the book tells us "how science is able to demonstrate the non-existence of god."
>
> Well, it seems that the great Stenger has finally met his match. Dr. Luke A. Barnes, a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute for Astronomy, ETH Zurich, Switzerland, has written a scathing critique of Stenger's book. I've read refutations in my time, but I have to say, *this one is devastating.*
>
> In his paper, Dr. Barnes takes care to avoid drawing any metaphysical conclusions from the fact of fine-tuning. He has no religious axe to grind. His main concern is simply to establish that the fine-tuning of the universe is real, contrary to the claims of Professor Stenger, who asserts that all of the alleged examples of fine-tuning in our universe can be explained without the need for a multiverse.
>
> Dr. Barnes' ARXIV paper, The Fine-Tuning of the Universe for Intelligent Life (Version 1, December 21, 2011), is available online, and I shall be quoting from it below. Since the paper is quite technical at times, I've omitted mathematical equations and kept the references to physical parameters to a

> minimum, since I simply wish to give readers an *overview* of what Dr. Barnes perceives as the key flaws in Professor Stenger's book.

First, the abstract:

> The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life has received a great deal of attention in recent years, both in the philosophical and scientific literature. The claim is that in the space of possible physical laws, parameters and initial conditions, the set that permits the evolution of intelligent life is very small. I present here a review of the scientific literature, outlining cases of fine-tuning in the classic works of Carter, Carr and Rees, and Barrow and Tipler, as well as more recent work. **To sharpen the discussion, the role of the antagonist will be played by Victor Stenger's recent book *The Fallacy of Fine-Tuning: Why the Universe is Not Designed for Us*.** Stenger claims that all known fine-tuning cases can be explained without the need for a multiverse. Many of Stenger's claims will be found to be highly problematic. We will touch on such issues as the logical necessity of the laws of nature; objectivity, invariance and symmetry; theoretical physics and possible universes; entropy in cosmology; cosmic inflation and initial conditions; galaxy formation; the cosmological constant; stars and their formation; the properties of elementary particles and their effect on chemistry and the macroscopic world; the origin of mass; grand unified theories; and the dimensionality of space and time. I also provide an assessment of the multiverse, noting the significant challenges that it must face. **I do not attempt to defend any conclusion based on the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life.** This paper can be viewed as a critique of Stenger's book, or read independently.

Here's a quote that I wanted to put out there from the paper about how widely accepted fine-tuning is among scientists:

> There are a great many scientists, of varying religious persuasions, who accept that the universe is fine-tuned for life, e.g. Barrow, Carr, Carter, Davies, Dawkins, Deutsch, Ellis, Greene, Guth, Harrison, Hawking, Linde, Page, Penrose, Polkinghorne, Rees, Sandage, Smolin, Susskind, Tegmark, Tipler, Vilenkin, Weinberg, Wheeler, Wilczek. They differ, of course, on what conclusion we should draw from this fact. Stenger, on the other hand, claims that the universe is not fine-tuned.

That is a very diverse list. I know that Sandage, Ellis, Page, Tipler and Polkinghorne are theists. But I also know that Weinberg, Rees, Hawking, Greene, and Dawkins are atheists. So scientists all across the spectrum of worldview admit that the fine-tuning is real.

Now, let's look at Barnes' paper and see why Victor Stenger disagrees with the view of those scientists.

1) Stenger doesn't show why the entropy at the beginning of the universe isn't a case of

fine-tuning:

> **Entropy**
>
> We turn now to cosmology. **The problem of the apparently low entropy of the universe is one of the oldest problems of cosmology.** The fact that the entropy of the universe is not at its theoretical maximum, coupled with the fact that entropy cannot decrease, means that the universe must have started in a very special, low entropy state. (p. 23)
>
> Let's return to Stenger's proposed solution… Stenger takes it for granted that the universe is homogeneous and isotropic. We can see this also in his use of the Friedmann equation, which assumes that space-time is homogeneous and isotropic. Not surprisingly, once homogeneity and isotropy have been assumed, Stenger finds that the solution to the entropy problem is remarkably easy.
>
> **We conclude that Stenger has not only failed to solve the entropy problem; he has failed to comprehend it.** He has presented the problem itself as its solution. Homogeneous, isotropic expansion cannot solve the entropy problem – it is the entropy problem. Stenger's assertion that "the universe starts out with maximum entropy or complete disorder" is false. A homogeneous, isotropic spacetime is an incredibly low entropy state. **Penrose (1989) warned of precisely this brand of failed solution two decades ago.**.. (p. 26)

2) Stenger responds to calculations showing the need for fine-tuning by speculating that future calculations will overturn the ones we have now:

> **The Cosmological Constant, Lambda**
>
> The cosmological constant problem is described in the textbook of Burgess & Moore (2006) as "arguably the most severe theoretical problem in high-energy physics today, as measured by both the difference between observations and theoretical predictions, and by the lack of convincing theoretical ideas which address it". A well-understood and well-tested theory of fundamental physics (Quantum Field Theory – QFT) predicts contributions to the vacuum energy of the universe that are [approx.] 10^120 times greater than the observed total value. Stenger's reply is guided by the following principle:
>
> Any calculation that disagrees with the data by 50 or 120 orders of magnitude is simply wrong and should not be taken seriously. We just have to await the correct calculation. [FOFT p. 219]
>
> This seems indistinguishable from reasoning that the calculation must be wrong since otherwise the cosmological constant would have to be fine-tuned. One could not hope for a more perfect example of begging the question. **More importantly, there is a misunderstanding in Stenger's account of the cosmological constant problem.** The problem is not that physicists have made an incorrect prediction. We can use the term *dark energy* for any form of energy that causes the expansion of the universe to accelerate, including a

> "bare" cosmological constant (see Barnes et al., 2005, for an introduction to dark energy). Cosmological observations constrain the total dark energy. QFT [quantum field theory – VJT] allows us to calculate a number of contributions to the total dark energy from matter fields in the universe. Each of these contributions turns out to be 10^120 times larger than the total. There is no direct theory-vs.-observation contradiction as one is calculating and measuring different things. **The fine-tuning problem is that these different independent contributions, including perhaps some that we don't know about, manage to cancel each other to such an alarming, life-permitting degree.** This is not a straightforward case of Popperian falsification. (pp. 34-35)

3) Stenger doesn't consider the full range of values when deciding if something is fine-tuned or not:

> **Protons, Neutrons, Electrons**
>
> We turn now to the relative masses of the three most important particles in our universe: the proton, neutron and electron, from which atoms are made. Consider first the ratio of the electron to the proton mass, … of which Stenger says: "…we can argue that the electron mass is going to be much smaller than the proton mass in any universe even remotely like ours." [FOFT p. 164] (p. 50)
>
> The fact that Stenger is comparing the electron mass in our universe with the electron mass in universes "like ours" is all the evidence one needs to conclude that **Stenger doesn't understand fine-tuning.** The fact that universes like ours turn out to be rather similar to our universe isn't particularly enlightening. (p. 50)
>
> Finally, and most importantly, note carefully Stenger's conclusion. He states that no fine-tuning is needed for the neutron-proton mass difference in our universe to be approximately equal to the up quark-down quark mass difference in our universe. **Stenger has compared our universe with our universe and found no evidence of fine-tuning. There is no discussion of the life-permitting range**, no discussion of the possible range of [mass(neutron) – mass(proton)] (or its relation to the possible range of [mass(down quark) – mass(up quark)], and thus no relevance to fine-tuning whatsoever. (p. 51)

Those are just a few of the examples in the paper, highlighted in the Uncommon Descent article (emphasis theirs).

UPDATE: Commenter Eugene advises me that Barnes' paper has now been published in a peer-reviewed journal. The journal is published by Cambridge University.

Wisconsin judge defends free speech rights of conservative groups against Democrat fascists

January 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker
From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Chalk up a big victory for the First Amendment. On Friday a Wisconsin judge struck a major blow for free political speech when he quashed subpoenas to conservative groups and ordered the return of property to the targets of a so-called John Doe campaign-finance probe.
>
> John Doe probes operate much like grand juries, allowing prosecutors to issue subpoenas and conduct searches while gag orders require the targets to keep quiet. We wrote about the kitchen-sink subpoenas and morning raids by special prosecutor Francis Schmitz that targeted dozens of conservative groups that participated in the battle to recall Republican Governor Scott Walker ("Wisconsin Political Speech Raid," Nov. 16, 2013).
>
> Now we learn that Judge Gregory A. Peterson ruled on Friday that at least some of those subpoenas were improper. They "do not show probable cause that the moving parties committed any violations of the campaign finance laws," he wrote. His opinion remains under seal but we obtained a copy.
>
> The quashed subpoenas were sent to Friends of Scott Walker, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce Inc., the Wisconsin Club for Growth, and Citizens for a Strong America, as well as their officers and directors. Judge Peterson's order doesn't apply to other subpoena targets, but they can presumably get the same result if they file a motion with the judge and have a similar factual basis.
>
> […]**"There is no evidence of express advocacy" and therefore "the subpoenas fail to show probable cause that a crime was committed," Judge Peterson wrote. Even "the State is not claiming that any of the**

> **independent organizations expressly advocated" for the election of Mr. Walker or his opponent, he added. Instead they did "issue advocacy," which focuses on specific political issues.**
>
> **This means that prosecutors essentially invented without evidence the possibility of criminal behavior to justify the subpoenas and their thuggish tactics. At least three targets had their homes raided at dawn, with police turning over belongings, seizing computers and files, and even barring phone calls.**
>
> **The judge's order vindicates our suspicion that the John Doe probe is a political operation intended to shut up Mr. Walker's allies as he seeks re-election this year. No one has taken public credit for appointing the special prosecutor, but we know the probe began in the office of Milwaukee County Assistant District Attorney Bruce Landgraf.**

Charlie Sykes, the famous Wisconsin-based radio talk show host, had more to say about it on Right Wisconsin.

He writes:

> The IRS scandal — which is ongoing — is *not* that Tea Party groups may have engaged in political activities; it is the abuse of government power to target, harass, and intimidate political opponents. It involves singling out conservative Tea Party groups for special scrutiny and harassment if they sought tax exempt status.
>
> But that pales next to the Doe, which targeted dozens of conservative groups and individuals and subjected them to *criminal* investigations. Prosecutors cast a breathtakingly wide net –- 29 separate groups, including Wisconsin Club for Growth, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC), the League of American Voters, Wisconsin Family Action, Americans for Prosperity, American Crossroads, and the Republican Governors Association, along with other innocent bystanders.
>
> **In the IRS scandal, Tea Party groups were threatened with the denial of tax exempt status and subject to legal and financial inconvenience. In Wisconsin, conservatives were threatened with imprisonment.**
>
> […]**The anti-Walker probe included raiding the homes of targeted activists, seizing their private correspondence, phones, and computers – including the computers, phones, and emails of their spouses and other family members. Under the Doe's draconian gag orders, conservatives subjected to such raids were threatened with imprisonment if they spoke about it. And because the probe was secret, the prosecutors could not be held accountable for their conduct.**
>
> […]So, what is the motivation/agenda behind the witch-hunt? The office of Milwaukee Democrat district attorney, John Chisolm, presided over a three-year-old long John Doe aimed at Scott Walker that resulted in charges only against a

> handful of functionaries. Dozens of members of Chisholm's office signed Walker recall petitions; the chief investigator had a recall sign in his front yard, and some of Chisolm's aides reportedly were panting at the prospect of charging Walker himself. Their disappointment has been palpable.
>
> Sources describe deputies Bruce Landgraf and David Robles as particularly vindictive and aggressive in pursuing the new probe.

I just finished reading Governor Scott Walker's new book about his effort to limit public sector unions in Wisconsin, and their (failed) effort to recall him. I believe this man has what it takes to be President one day. I believe in experience, and Walker is getting a lot of experience passing bold, innovative reforms as governor of Wisconsin. He could. Go. All. The. Way.

Related posts

- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Kenosha teachers vote to de-certify their teacher union, 63 – 37
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- What is a "right-to-work" law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues
- Democrat lawmakers flee state to avoid voting on spending cuts

Bailout for health insurers? Less than 25% of Obamacare sign-ups under age 34

January 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal reports.

Excerpt:

> One-third of health plan enrollees in new insurance marketplaces are 55 or older, the Obama administration said Monday, a figure that insurers said makes the pool older than they would need to sustain their coverage at current premiums.

> Administration officials said they are pushing to enroll more young people before a March 31 deadline for most people to get coverage for this year, and some cushions built into the law mean it won't necessarily face trouble right away even if the 2014 pool of enrollees skews older.
>
> Still, the release of the data, showing for the first time the age breakdown of people who had signed up for coverage through December, highlighted the challenge in persuading younger people who may not have a pressing need for health coverage to sign up for policies that can cost about $200 a month before subsidies.
>
> "This is concerning to us that we're seeing this portion come in so old," said Marty Anderson, marketing director for the Wisconsin-based Security Health Plan, which serves rural counties in the state.
>
> **Just under a quarter of the roughly 2.2 million people who signed up for private plans nationwide by Dec. 28 were between the ages of 18 and 34, while one-third were in the 55-to-64 range, just short of the age at which most qualify for Medicare, the federal government program for the elderly.**
>
> […]Under the 2010 Affordable Care Act, consumers no longer pay premiums based on their health risks. To prevent a sharp rise in premiums in 2015 and beyond, carriers say they need strong enrollment from younger people who are likely to be healthier. That would balance out the bills racked up by sicker and older people.
>
> […]"There's no way to spin it: Youth enrollment has been a bust so far," said Brendan Buck, a spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner (R., Ohio). "When they see that Obamacare offers high costs for limited access to doctors—if the enrollment goes through at all—it's no surprise that young people aren't rushing to sign up."

So who is going to be on the hook when the insurance companies take far higher losses than the Democrats estimated?

YOU ARE. The Weekly Standard explains why in this article.

Excerpt:

> Robert Laszewski—a prominent consultant to health insurance companies—recently wrote in a remarkably candid blog post that, while Obamacare is almost certain to cause insurance costs to skyrocket even higher than it already has, "insurers won't be losing a lot of sleep over it." How can this be? Because insurance companies won't bear the cost of their own losses—at least not more than about a quarter of them. The other three-quarters will be borne by American taxpayers.
>
> […]As Laszewski explains, Obamacare contains a "Reinsurance Program that caps big claim costs for insurers (individual plans only)." He writes that "in 2014, 80% of individual costs between $45,000 and $250,000 are paid by the government [read: by taxpayers], for example."
>
> **In other words, insurance purchased through Obamacare's government-run exchanges isn't even full-fledged private insurance; rather, it's a sort of private-public hybrid. Private insurance companies pay for costs below $45,000, then taxpayers generously pick up the tab—a tab that their president hasn't ever bothered to tell them he has opened up on their behalf—for four-fifths of the next $200,000-plus worth of costs. In this way, and so many others, Obamacare takes a major step toward the government monopoly over American medicine ("single payer") that liberals drool about in their sleep.**
>
> Laszewski adds, "The reinsurance program has done and will continue to do what it was intended to do; help attract and keep more carriers in Obamacare than might have otherwise come." Thus, Obamacare is being aided by having taxpayers subsidize big insurance companies' business expenses. (Who could ever have guessed that big government and big business might be natural allies?)
>
> **But, amazingly, it doesn't stop there. Laszewski writes that Obamacare also contains a "Risk Corridor Program that limits overall losses for insurers." So insurers not only don't have to pay out all of their costs; they also don't have to swallow all of their losses.**
>
> Laszewski explains that if an insurance company expects its costs in a given year to be X, and those costs end up being more than X plus 2 percent, taxpayers will come to that insurance company's rescue—thanks to Obamacare. In fact, once an insurance company covers that initial 2 percent in unexpected costs, taxpayers will cover at least 80 percent of any additional costs the insurer accrues.

Does this sound familiar? Yes – this is exactly what caused the mortgage lending crisis and bailout in 2008. Democrats were very anxious to guarantee the bad loans of

mortgage lenders with taxpayer money supplied through Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. And they are doing it again with health insurers. (And they'll do it again with student loans, just wait)

The best way to stop this madness is by electing Republicans in the 2014 mid-term elections. And then electing a conservative as President in 2016. Evict the children from the White House and Congress.

The 50 worst countries for anti-Christian persecution

January 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kirsten Powers explains in the leftist Daily Beast, of all places.

Excerpt:

> In their annual report of the worst 50 countries for Christian persecution, Open Doors found that Christian martyr deaths around the globe doubled in 2013. Their report documented 2,123 killings, compared with 1,201 in 2012. In Syria alone, there were 1,213 such deaths last year. In addition to losing their lives, Christians around the world continue to suffer discrimination, imprisonment, harassment, sexual assaults, and expulsion from countries merely for practicing their faith.
>
> **Once again, the worst persecutor of Christians is North Korea, where an estimated 50,000 to 70,000 followers of Jesus are suffering in prison camps for "crimes" such as owning a Bible, going to church, or sharing their faith. In November 2013, it was reported that 80 prisoners were publicly executed, many for possessing Bibles. Last year, North Korea sentenced an American missionary, Kenneth Bae to 15 years of hard labor in a prison camp.**
>
> […]**It's chilling to imagine worse treatment than what the average North Korean prisoner has reported, including a mother forced to drown her own baby in a bucket, and tales of subsisting on nothing more than rats and insects. According to first-hand accounts from former prisoners reported by Amnesty International, "every former inmate at one camp had witnessed a public execution, one child was held for eight months in a cube-like cell so small he couldn't move his body and an estimated 40% of inmates die from malnutrition."**
>
> Syria, ranked as the third-worst country by Open Doors, has devolved in the last year to a horror show for Christians. The Hudson Institute's Nina Shea noted in December 2013 a message she received from a contact in Syria who reported, "Kidnapping, killings, ransom, rape . . . 2013 is a tragedy for Christians in Syria. All Syrians have endured great suffering and distress. The Christians, however, often had to pay with their lives for their faith. Our bishops and nuns have been kidnapped, our political leader killed by torture. After our Christian villages have been occupied, our churches have been destroyed and even mass graves were found in Saddad. [T]he Islamists have put [to] the Christians the alternative: Islam or death. Why [is] the West just watching?"
>
> Some of the most harrowing stories about how Christians are persecuted have come from the African country of Eritrea, which Open Doors lists as the twelfth worst country in the world for Christian persecution. In his 2013 book, The Global

> War on Christians, reporter John L. Allen Jr., writes that in Eritrea, Christians are sent to the Me'eter military camp and prison, which he describes as a "concentration camp for Christians." It is believed to house thousands being punished for their religious beliefs.
>
> Prisoners are packed into 40'x38' metal shipping containers, normally used for transporting cargo. It is so cramped that it's impossible to lie down and difficult even to find a place to sit. "The metal exacerbates the desert temperatures, which means bone chilling cold at night and wilting heat during the day….believed to reach 115 degrees Fahrenheit or higher," Allen writes. One former inmate…described [it] as "giant ovens baking people alive." Prisoners are given next to nothing to drink so "they sometimes end up drinking their own scant sweat and urine to stay alive." The prisoners are tortured, sexually abused, and have no contact with the outside world. One survivor of the prison described witnessing a fellow female inmate "who had been beaten so badly her uterus was actually hanging outside her body. The survivor desperately tried to push the uterus back in" but couldn't prevent the inmate's excruciating death.

Lately, I've been blogging quite a lot about the difference between the Judeo-Christian morality and atheist morality. Christians have a objective standard to condemn what is going on in these other countries. Christians believe in human rights. Christians believe in religious liberty. Christians are grieved when we hear about these crimes being committed against followers of Jesus. On the Judeo-Christian view, every human being is made to be in a relationship with God – a relationship that lasts into eternity. That means that when Christians see someone in distress, we are rationally compelled to try to try to help them. In fact, the earliest Christians used to take in abandoned babies, because of that reasoning. If Christianity is true, then what these people are doing to persecute Christians for their beliefs is really wrong.

But on atheism, you can't condemn violence against Christians in other countries as wrong:

> **Rule #1: Relativists Can't Accuse Others of Wrong-Doing**
>
> Relativism makes it impossible to criticize the behavior of others, because relativism ultimately denies that there is such a thing as wrong- doing. In other words, if you believe that morality is a matter of personal definition, then you can't ever again judge the actions of others. Relativists can't even object on moral grounds to racism. After all, what sense can be made of the judgment "apartheid is wrong" when spoken by someone who doesn't believe in right and wrong? What justification is there to intervene? Certainly not human rights, for there are no such things as rights. Relativism is the ultimate pro-choice position because it accepts every personal choice—even the choice to be racist.

And that's why in the secular mainstream media, crimes like this are seldom talked about. Secularists have no basis to condemn these actions, they would rather crusade for

late-term abortion and same-sex marriage, which is nothing but the celebration of the selfishness of adults at the expense of children.

If you would like to the difference that Christianity makes when dealing with a real threat of danger, then click through to this National Review article, which talks about Christians living in Syria.

Transcripts show that top U.S. military officials briefed Obama on Benghazi terrorist attack

January 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily reports.

Excerpt:

> Newly declassified transcripts show top defense officials who briefed Obama on the day of the Benghazi attack described it as a terrorist attack and told the president so, yet he pushed a false narrative about a video.
>
> Just as the new book by former Defense Secretary Bob Gates confirmed what many believed, that President Obama was a politically motivated commander-in-chief who had no faith in an Afghan surge he put 30,000 Americans in harm's way to execute, transcripts of congressional testimony by military leaders confirm that President Obama knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack before he went to bed to rest for a Las Vegas fundraising trip.
>
> Fox News reporter James Rosen examined 450 pages of declassified testimony given by senior Pentagon officials in closed-door hearings held last year by Congress. In those hearings, Gen. Carter Ham, who at the time headed Africom, the Defense Department combat command with jurisdiction over Libya, testified that he learned about the assault on the consulate compound within 15 minutes of its start, at 9:42 p.m. Libya time, from the Africom Command Center.
>
> Ham said he immediately contacted Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Martin Dempsey to say he was coming down the hall at the Pentagon to meet with him.
>
> "I told him what I knew. We immediately walked upstairs to meet with Secretary Panetta," Ham testified, adding "they had the basic information as they headed across for the meeting at the White House."
>
> Rep. Brad Wenstrup, R-Ohio, an Iraq war veteran and Army reserve officer, asked 29-year Army veteran Ham what he told Panetta and Dempsey. "As a military person, I am concerned that someone in the military would be advising that this was a demonstration. I would hope that our military leadership would be advising that this was a terrorist attack," Wenstrup said.
>
> Ham responded that "there was some preliminary discussion about, you know, maybe there was a demonstration. But I think at the command, I personally and I think the command very quickly got to the point that this was not a demonstration, this was a terrorist attack" and that was the "nature of the conversation" Ham had with Panetta and Dempsey moments before their 30-minute meeting with President Obama.
>
> This confirms Panetta's testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee in February of last year that it was he who told the president "there was an

> apparent attack going on in Benghazi."
>
> "Secretary Panetta, do you believe that unequivocally at that time we knew that this was a terrorist attack?" asked Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla.
>
> "There was no question in my mind that this was a terrorist attack," Panetta replied.
>
> **Despite a briefing by Dempsey and Panetta that it was a terrorist attack, President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton would trumpet the false narrative that four Americans were murdered due to an inflammatory video — something Obama would repeat six times before the U.N. General Assembly and U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice would say on five Sunday talk shows five days after the terrorist attack.**
>
> **It is a disgrace that the only person ever jailed for the Benghazi attack was the maker of that irrelevant video. The terrorists got away with it.**

The terrorists got away with it, because the Obama administration didn't bother to conduct an investigation, or hold anyone accountable. And now we know why – because the person who should have been fired was Barack Obama. He should have been fired in the 2012 election. This whole Benghazi cover-up was just another case of "if you like your doctor, you can keep him" and "if you like your health care plan, you can keep it". The wonder was that the American people were stupid enough to believe that someone with no experience of any kind at running anything could do a good job as President.

And don't count on the mainstream media to investigate these stories. They are Democrats. This was their Watergate, and they covered it up.

Related posts

- Benghazi liar Susan Rice to be appointed National Security Adviser by grateful Obama
- Released e-mails show that State Department edited terrorism out of talking points
- Obama: editing of talking points to cover-up of Benghazi terrorist attack is a "sideshow"
- BBC News covers whistle-blower testimony: "After Benghazi revelations, heads will roll"
- ABC News: State Department scrubbed terrorism details from Benghazi talking points
- What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack "from the get-go"
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA's account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource

for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama’s Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama’s Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama’s security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

FBI declines to prosecute IRS for targeting Tea Party groups ahead of 2012 election

January 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily reports.

Excerpt:

> The FBI says it won't prosecute anyone at the IRS for its admitted targeting of the president's political foes. This just as the agency claims the law is no longer its main mission. So it's a political goon squad now.
>
> According to a leak to the Wall Street Journal, the Federal Bureau of Investigation "didn't find the kind of political bias or 'enemy hunting' that would amount to a violation of criminal law." And so, nobody was likely to be prosecuted for the most blatant politicization of a federal agency within memory.
>
> All the Bureau found was a "mismanaged" agency that enforced rules "it didn't understand." In other words, nothing to see here, move along.
>
> That's strange stuff for an agency whose most implicated regulator, Lois Lerner, invoked her Fifth Amendment rights against self incrimination in congressional testimony last year. That she came to congressional attention was only because of her calculated announcement that the IRS had in fact targeted Tea Party groups for special scrutiny — that's right, admitted to breaking the law — in a preemptive attempt to paint her abuse of power as a customer service problem.
>
> Her minions lied that it was only the work of low-level bureaucratic bumblers in Cincinnati. And after that sleazy string of favors that coincidentally benefited her president, she was permitted to retire on a full pension.
>
> The reality is, the acts reeked of political targeting, the most illegal of acts, a corrupt use of government power, and a worthy target of checks and balances provided by the FBI in the name of law and order.
>
> But for some reason, the FBI has neither interviewed the Tea Party activists targeted for intrusive scrutiny, nor has it noticed anything amiss in light of the White House's rabid attacks on Tea Party activists. It hasn't noticed the Tea Party's demonstrable political strength in its large gatherings during the most intense period of its political targeting, nor noted the president's record of "joking" about investigating political opponents.
>
> And it hasn't picked up the clue from the Center for Responsive Politics showing that IRS employees donated to Obama's campaign by more than 2 to 1 over Tea Party-tied Republicans — let alone that the prosecutor chosen by the president to look into this case is a fat-cat donor to Obama.

I was lying in bed at 2:30 AM reading Twitter tweets when I came across this one and I

just lay there thinking about this story before getting up to blog about it. And I thought to myself… I used to respect the FBI. I used to believe that they were different from the crooks at the State Department or Health and Human Services or the Environmental Protection Agency. I used to believe that they were the good guys. And now I see that they are just as corrupt as any secret police would be in any fascist state.

This is not the first time that the FBI has disappointed me, either:

- FBI partners with anti-Christian hate group Southern Poverty Law Center
- Why has New York City been able to avoid another terrorist attack?
- Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?
- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training

Maybe the big pay increases and benefits that Obama gave all his supporters in the public sector unions were enough to buy off every last bit of honor and decency that used to be in the FBI.

Related Posts

- DOJ selects Democrat donor to head investigation of IRS corruption
- New York Times: Democrats knew about IRS scandal 5 months before the 2012 election
- The IRS abuse of power scandal started from the top
- IRS exchanged confidential taxpayer information with White House
- DOJ won't prosecute government officials for unauthorized access of tax records
- Treasury Dept. IG: IRS targeted 292 Tea Party groups but only 6 progressive groups
- New study: IRS targeting of Tea Party conservatives had significant effect on 2012 election
- Human Rights Campaign refuses to reveal name of IRS leaker
- Phone call recording of IRS agent reveals anti-Christian, anti free speech bias
- Obama's deputy campaign manager Stephanie Cutter met with IRS chief at the White House
- Cincinnati IRS employee: Washington told us to target the Tea Party
- IRS chief visited White House a reported 118 times from 2010 to 2011
- IRS fascist Lois Lerner pleads the fifth to avoid transparency and accountability
- A closer look at one of the conservatives persecuted by the IRS
- Obama met with anti-Tea Party IRS Union boss one day before the IRS persecutions began
- The IRS abuse of power scandal started from the top
- IRS official who targeted Tea Party groups now a director in Obamacare administration
- IRS audited the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association after they ran pro-marriage ads
- IRS gave confidential documents from conservative groups to liberal

group ProPublica
- IRS apologizes for flagging conservative groups for audits in 2012 election year

Guerilla skepticism on Wikipedia: how should Christians and conservatives respond?

January 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Messianic Drew urges us to watch the first 27 minutes of this lecture featuring skeptic and anti-paranormalist Susan Gerbic. He wants us to see how skeptics are monitoring and policing wikipedia entries to give it a skeptical bias.

Here is Gerbic's thesis:

> We use Wikipedia to shape the public's view of paranormal topics. We already know that shouting and belittling believers is not the way to go about changing minds. Guerilla skepticism is the act of inserting well-documented well-cited information into Wikipedia. We still follow all of Wikipedia's guidelines. We are also trying to improve the history of the scientific skeptical movement and document it. It allows editors to edit from home without being confrontational with people.

The Messianic Drew wrote about the lecture on his blog.

Excerpt:

> Gerbic is absolutely right. People generally trust Wikipedia, and do not view it with the same degree of scrutiny with which someone would view an atheist website.
>
> If you are a rising Christian apologist, but don't have the time, money, or experience to publish in professional journals or debate atheists on stage, that's fine. The Internet is a great place to conduct apologetics. Instead of wasting your time arguing on message boards or social media (like Facebook), why not learn to edit Wikipedia? It costs nothing but time, and it reaches an audience far more open-minded than anyone you will debate online. Remember that people trust Wikipedia as a reliable source of information, something not lost on Gerbic.
>
> Gerbic's tactics have worked due to organization. Wikipedia has mobs of tens of thousands of editors. Gerbic's group is a small, but highly focused army of 90 editors, and it has changed the face of Wikipedia's paranormal pages, as well as its pages on famous skeptics, creationism, and evolution. As far as I know, there is not one single Christian apologetics organization that focuses on Wikipedia. Not one. Zilch. Zip. Zero. This needs to be fixed.

He has a whole bunch of ideas on how Christians can get on this, and he has examples of what the skeptics have been doing (before and after edits) on specific pages.

Now Drew was telling me about this video and his idea last night, and I had two objections. First, I told him that Wikipedia is a cesspool of secularism and leftism that is policed by thuggish fascists. I got this impression by reading about Wikipedia's

suppression about intelligent design on the Evolution News blog. Second, I told him that no one respects Wikipedia as a source. I never use Wikipedia as a source for anything, I prefer to link to the peer-reviewed journal articles or to reputable news sources.

Drew came back with two responses that have swayed me back from opposition to indifference. First, he said that like it or not, people do use Wikipedia to get basic information about things they are interested in. Google search even displays information from Wikipedia entries in the searches. Second, he pointed out specific edits that he had made to specific pages that were not deleted, even after a few days. And these were impressive edits, linking to sources critical of skeptics and skeptical ideas.

We were discussing this on Facebook, and many people started off by objecting to Drew's plan to have Christians (and conservatives could also do this) systematically monitor and edit Wikipedia pages. A band of Wikipologists, if you will. I know that J. Warner Wallace tweeted his post, and Mike Licona both posted it on their Facebook pages. So I wanted to ask my readers: do you think that Christians should imitate these guerilla tactics on Wikipedia? Why or why not?

If you want to get involved with this, message me on Facebook, by the way.

Ryan T. Anderson defends marriage at Indiana House Judiciary Committee hearing

January 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(the video is 11 minutes long)

The Heritage Foundation reports.

Excerpt:

> Ryan T. Anderson, the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation, testified before the Indiana House Judiciary Committee yesterday on their proposed constitutional amendment to define marriage as the union of a man and woman.
>
> The controversial bill, which would place the amendment on the state ballot and give citizens the right to vote about such an important matter, spurred a three-hour heated debate full of testimonies from both supporters and opponents.
>
> Anderson, co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "*What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*" which Justice Samuel Alito cited twice in his dissenting opinion in the Supreme Court case involving the Defense of Marriage Act, began his testimony by explaining what marriage is and why marriage matters. According to Anderson, the collapse of marriage over the past 50 years is directly tied to the over-expanded welfare state of the country, and lack of male figureheads in families.
>
> "If the biggest social problem we face right now in the United States is absentee dads," Anderson said, "How will we insist that dads are essential when the law redefines marriage to make fathers optional?"

The full testimony is here at the Public Discourse, and here is one part of it:

> Part of this is based on the reality that there's no such thing as parenting in the abstract: there's mothering, and there's fathering. Men and women bring different gifts to the parenting enterprise. Rutgers sociologist Professor David Popenoe writes, "the burden of social science evidence supports the idea that gender-differentiated parenting is important for human development and the contribution of fathers to childrearing is unique and irreplaceable." He then concludes:
>
> We should disavow the notion that mommies can make good daddies, just as we should the popular notion that daddies can make good mommies. The two sexes are different to the core and each is necessary—culturally and biologically—for the optimal development of a human being.
>
> This is why so many states continue to define marriage as the union of a man and a woman, many doing so by amending their constitutions.

> So why does marriage matter for public policy? Perhaps there is no better way to analyze this than by looking to our own president, President Barack Obama. Allow me to quote him:
>
> We know the statistics: that children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime, nine times more likely to drop out of school, and twenty times more likely to end up in prison. They are more likely to have behavioral problems or run away from home, or become teenage parents themselves. And the foundations of our community are weaker because of it.
>
> There is a host of social science evidence. We go through the litany and cite the studies in our book, but President Obama sums it up pretty well. We've seen in the past fifty years, since the war on poverty began, that the family has collapsed. At one point in America, virtually every child was given the gift of a married mother and father. Today, 40 percent of all Americans, 50 percent of Hispanics, and 70 percent of African Americans are born to single moms—and the consequences for those children are quite serious.
>
> The state's interest in marriage is not that it cares about my love life, or your love life, or anyone's love life just for the sake of romance. The state's interest in marriage is ensuring that those kids have fathers who are involved in their lives.

People who are honest in recognizing that fathers matter cannot press for a redefinition of marriage that makes fathers optional. Any policy that normalizes and celebrates gender-interchangeability is bad for children, and we should be favoring the rights of children over the selfishness of adults in our laws and policies. Period.

The rest of the article is a nice short summary of the case for traditional marriage. It addresses social issues like religious liberty, but it also addresses fiscal issues like the costs of social programs.

An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview

January 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you love to listen to the Please Convince Me podcast, as I do, then you know that in a recent episode, J. Warner Wallace mentioned a blog post on an atheistic blog that clearly delineated the implications of an atheistic worldview. He promised he was going to write about it and link to the post, and he has now done so.

Here is the whole the whole thing that the atheist posted:

> "[To] all my Atheist friends.
>
> Let us stop sugar coating it. I know, it's hard to come out and be blunt with the friendly Theists who frequent sites like this. However in your efforts to "play nice" and "be civil" you actually do them a great disservice.
>
> We are Atheists. We believe that the Universe is a great uncaused, random accident. All life in the Universe past and future are the results of random chance acting on itself. While we acknowledge concepts like morality, politeness, civility seem to exist, we know they do not. Our highly evolved brains imagine that these things have a cause or a use, and they have in the past, they've allowed life to continue on this planet for a short blip of time. But make no mistake: all our dreams, loves, opinions, and desires are figments of our primordial imagination. They are fleeting electrical signals that fire across our synapses for a moment in time. They served some purpose in the past. They got us here. That's it. All human achievement and plans for the future are the result of some ancient, evolved brain and accompanying chemical reactions that once served a survival purpose. Ex: I'll marry and nurture children because my genes demand reproduction, I'll create because creativity served a survival advantage to my ancient ape ancestors, I'll build cities and laws because this allowed my ape grandfather time and peace to reproduce and protect his genes. My only directive is to obey my genes. Eat, sleep, reproduce, die. That is our bible.
>
> We deride the Theists for having created myths and holy books. We imagine ourselves superior. But we too imagine there are reasons to obey laws, be polite, protect the weak etc. Rubbish. We are nurturing a new religion, one where we imagine that such conventions have any basis in reality. Have they allowed life to exist? Absolutely. But who cares? Outside of my greedy little gene's need to reproduce, there is nothing in my world that stops me from killing you and reproducing with your wife. Only the fear that I might be incarcerated and thus be deprived of the opportunity to do the same with the next guy's wife stops me. Some of my Atheist friends have fooled themselves into acting like the general population. They live in suburban homes, drive Toyota Camrys, attend school plays. But underneath they know the truth. They are a bag of DNA whose only

> purpose is to make more of themselves. So be nice if you want. Be involved, have polite conversations, be a model citizen. Just be aware that while technically an Atheist, you are an inferior one. You're just a little bit less evolved, that's all. When you are ready to join me, let me know, I'll be reproducing with your wife.
>
> I know it's not PC to speak so bluntly about the ramifications of our beliefs, but in our discussions with Theists we sometimes tip toe around what we really know to be factual. Maybe it's time we Atheists were a little more truthful and let the chips fall where they may. At least that's what my genes are telling me to say."

In his post, Wallace comments on the statement above, but for more, you should listen to the podcast.

This fellow is essentially expanding on what Richard Dawkins has said about atheism:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

And Cornell University atheist William Provine agrees: (this is taken from his debate with Phillip E. Johnson)

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

And what about Florida State University atheist Michael Ruse:

> "The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory." (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

I see a lot of atheists these days thinking that they can help themselves to a robust notion of consciousness, to real libertarian free will, to objective moral values and duties, to objective human rights, and to objective meaning in life, without giving credit to theism. It's not rational to do this. As Frank Turek said on the latest episode of "Cross Examined", atheists have to sit in God's lap to slap his face. We should be calling them out on it. I think it's particularly important not to let atheists utter a word of moral judgment on any topic, since they cannot ground an objective standard that allows them to make statements of morality. Further, I think that they should have every immorality ever committed presented to them, and then they should be told "your worldview does not allow you to condemn this as wrong". They can't praise anything as right, either. This is not to say that we should go all presuppositional on them, but if the opportunity arises to point out how they are borrowing from theism in order to attack it, we should do that *in addition* to presenting good scientific and historical evidence.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss in North Carolina: Does God Exist?

January 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Would you like to hear a debate featuring the least intelligent atheist ever? Well, this is a good candidate.

The full transcript of the debate is here at the Reasonable Faith web site.

Audio of the William Lane Craig vs. Lawrence Krauss debate at North Carolina State University has now been posted at Apologetics 315. The people who recorded it did not do a good job, though.

And I also posted some background information on Craig's arguments.

And now for one of my snarkiest summaries, which is fitting for Lawrence Krauss. A less snarky summary is at J.W. Wartick's blog. And if you want to see a summary of a debate with a smart atheist, then here is the Craig-Millican debate summary.

William Lane Craig's case

William Lane Craig made 5 arguments for the existence of God:

- the contingency argument
- theargument from the origin of the universe (kalam)
- the argument from cosmic fine-tuning
- the moral argument
- the argument from the miracle of the resurrection

These arguments went unrefuted during the debate.

Lawrence Krauss's case

Lawrence Krauss made the following arguments in his first speech:

- Dr. Craig is a professional debater
- Dr. Craig is not a scientist
- Dr. Craig is a philosopher
- Disproving God's is a waste of my valuable time
- Dr. Craig has the burden of proof to show evidence
- My job is not to present any evidence
- I think that "extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence" is a nice slogan, but I have no evidence for it
- I don't like that God doesn't appear on Youtube, therefore he doesn't exist
- I don't like that God didn't appear to humans until recently, therefore he doesn't exist
- I don't like that the stars didn't come together to spell "I am here", therefore God doesn't exist

- Dr. Craig has to supply extraordinary evidence, because my favorite slogan says he has to
- Dr. Craig talks about logic, but the universe is not logical
- Dr. Craig doesn't have any arguments, just things he doesn't like
- Dr. Craig doesn't like infinity, and that's why he believes in the Big Bang cosmology
- Dr. Craig doesn't like chance, and that's why he believes in cosmic fine-tuning
- Dr. Craig doesn't like rape, and that's why he believes in the ontological foundations of morality
- If people believe in logic, then they can't do science
- The things that science discovers contradict the laws of logic
- For example, Dr. Craig doesn't like infinity, so he believes in the experimental measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation
- For example, Dr. Craig doesn't like chance, so he believes in the fine-tuning of the gravitational constant for the formation of stable stars
- Quantum mechanics shows that the universe is stranger than you think, therefore all of Craig's arguments are false
- My t-shirt says 2 + 2 = 5, therefore all of Craig's arguments are false
- Atheism may look ridiculous, but it's true, and if you don't like it, too bad – because the universe is very strange
- Accidents happen all the time, so that explains the cosmic fine-tuning
- We all have to convince ourselves of 10 impossible things before breakfast, and atheism is impossible, so you need to convince yourself of it
- I don't know about the Big Bang, so Dr. Craig cannot use the Big Bang to to prove the universe began to exist
- I don't know about the cosmic fine-tuning, so Dr. Craig cannot use the fine-tuning of cosmological constants to prove the fine-tuning
- I don't know anything about science, so Dr. Craig cannot use science in his arguments
- Dr. Craig says that the universe is contingent because it began to exist 13.7 billion years ago based on the state-of-the-art scientific evidence for the Big Bang creation out of nothing from 1) red-shift of light from distant galaxies, 2) cosmic microwave background radiation, 3) helium-hydrogen abundances, 4) experimental confirmation of general relativity, 5) the second law of thermodynamics, 6) radioactive element abundances, etc., but how does he know that? I don't know that
- It's fine not to know the answer to scientific questions like whether the universe began to exist, it's more exciting
- Thinking that the universe began to exist based on 6 pieces of scientific evidence is the "God-of-the-Gaps" fallacy, it's intellectual laziness
- But all kidding aside, the universe actually did begin to exist 13.72 billion years ago, exactly like Craig says in his argument
- I could argue that God created the universe 4.5 seconds ago with all of us sitting believing that we heard Dr. Craig, and how could you prove me wrong? It's not falsifiable

- Universes can spontaneously appear out of nothing, and in fact they have to appear out of nothing
- *Nothing is unstable*, and space and time can come into existence out of nothing, so that's not a problem
- Our universe could have appeared out of a multiverse, an unobservable, untestable multiverse that I have no way of observing or testing
- The universe is not fine-tuned for life, and no scientist says so, especially not Martin Rees, the atheist Astronomer Royal, and every other scientist
- What if God decided that rape was OK, would it be OK? God can change his moral nature arbitrarily, can't he?

Here are the arguments in Krauss' second speech:

- We don't understand the beginning of the universe
- We don't understand whether the universe had a cause
- Steven Weinberg says that science makes it possible to be an atheist, so therefore the universe didn't begin and didn't have a cause
- It's just intellectual laziness to say that the universe came into being 13.7 billion years ago, and that things that come into being of nothing have a cause
- Dr. Craig is an expert on nothing, ha ha ha!
- There are multiple versions of nothing, there's nothing, and then there is something, which is also nothing if I want it to be
- There was no space, there was no time, and then the space create the empty space
- I'm going to give Dr. Craig a break
- At least in the nothing there were laws like *F=ma*, and those laws created the empty space, because *descriptions of matter that does not even exist yet* can create space out of nothing
- Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin are good friends of mine and I talk to them all the time, unlike Dr. Craig
- Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin don't mention God in their scientific papers, therefore the universe didn't begin and didn't have a cause
- Maybe there is a multiverse that cannot be observed or tested? And my unscientific speculations are a refutation of Craig's scientific evidence for the fine-tuning
- Dr. Craig just doesn't like my speculations about the unobservable, untestable multiverse, and that's why he believes in the Big Bang cosmology
- And if you let me speculate about an unobservable, untestable multiverse, then maybe the inanimate invisible universes reproduce and compete for food and mutate like animals and then there is natural selection so that the finely-tuned universes survive and now we're in one!
- My cool animation of blue goo mutating proves that the multiverse is real! Empty space is not empty!
- Darwinism, which is a theory about the origin of species, explains the cosmic fine-tuning that occurred at the moment of creation

- The unobservable, untestable multiverse universes all have different laws, I believe
- We don't know what the right answer is, but we are willing to look at any possibility, as long as the possibilities we look at are not supernatural possibilities
- The discovery of the origin of the universe could be an accident, I don't know if the universe began to exist or not, maybe all the six scientific evidences are wrong because if I don't like the evidence we have, so I'll just wait for new evidence to overturn the evidence we have which I don't like
- Maybe there are other forms of life that are unobservable and untestable that are compatible with a universe that has no stable stars, no planets, no elements heavier than hydrogen, no hydrogen, no carbon, etc.

Here are the arguments in Krauss' third speech:

- Dr. Craig is stupid
- Why should we even care about Dr. Craig's arguments and evidence, we can just count the number of scientists who are atheists and decide whether God exists that way – I decided everything based on what my teachers told me to believe
- I actually know general relativity, not like Dr. Craig who co-wrote a book on general relativity published by Oxford University Press
- What quantum mechanics shows is that virtual particles come into being in a quantum vacuum, and then go out of existence almost immediately – and that is exactly like how a 13.7 billion year old universe came into being in a quantum vacuum, and we're going to disappear *very soon*
- Space and the laws of physics can be created, possibly, if you accept my speculations about an unobservable, untestable multiverse
- I don't like the God of the Old Testament, therefore he doesn't exist
- Groups of people can decide what they think is good and evil, like the Nazis and slave-owners did, and then that becomes good for them in that time and place, and that's what I mean by morality
- Here's something I studied that wasn't fine-tuned, therefore there is no fine-tuning of the universe
- Not knowing things is really exciting! Dr. Craig is not really exciting because he knows things – phooey!

Here are the arguments in Krauss' fourth speech:

- If you will just grant me an observable, untestable multiverse, then there must be some universe where intelligent life exists
- Infinite numbers of things exist everywhere in nature, you can see lots of infinite collections of things, like jelly beans and bumblebees and invisible pink unicorns
- I don't like the fine-tuning, but if my speculations about the multiverse are proven true, then I won't have to learn to live with the fine-tuning
- Inflation, the rapid expansion of the universe which occurs at some time after the the origin of the universe (t = 0), explains the absolute origin of time, space, matter

and energy out of nothing that occurred at t = 0
- Physical processes that develop subsequent to the creation of the universe at t > 0 can explain the fine-tuning of quantities that are set at t = 0
- Morality is just a bunch of arbitrary conventions decided by groups of people in different times and places by an accidental process of biological and social evolution, but *that* practice over there by *those* people is *objectively* wrong!
- 1 Cor 15:3-7, which most scholars, even atheists like James Crossley, admit is dated to within 3 years of the death of Jesus, is actually dated to 50 years after the death of Jesus
- The historical case for the resurrection made by people like N.T. Wright in their multi-volume academic works is on par with the story of Mohammed ascending to Heaven on a horse

If you liked this, please check out my snarky summary of Christopher Hitchens' speeches in the Craig-Hitchens debate.

New study: Obama's proposed minimum wage hike could destroy 1 million jobs

January 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

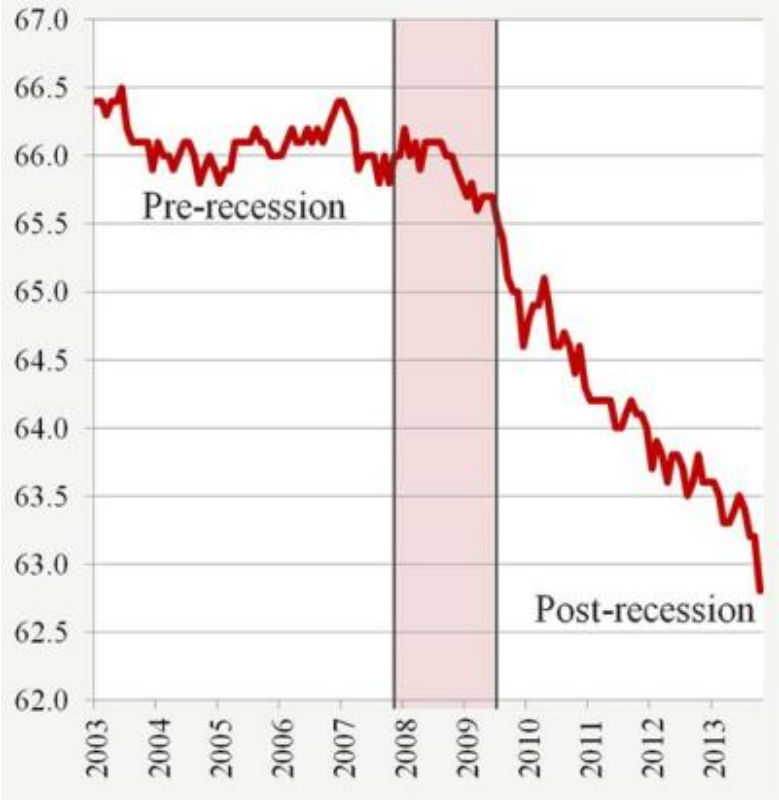

Labor Force Participation down to 62.8%
From the Daily Caller. (H/T Conway)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration's proposal to raise the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour could result in as many 1,084,000 jobs eliminated from the work force, according to a new study conducted by the Employment Policies Institute (EPI)
>
> "No amount of denial by the president and his political allies — and no number of 'studies' published by biased researchers — can change the fact that minimum wage hikes eliminate jobs for low-skill and entry-level employees. Non-partisan economists have agreed on this consensus for decades, and the laws of economics haven't changed," Michael Saltsman, research director at EPI, said in a statement.
>
> He offered an alternative to the president's plan: "Instead of raising small businesses' labor costs and creating more barriers to entry-level employment, the president and the Senate should focus on policies that help reduce poverty and create jobs."
>
> The study was released in the wake of an expected vote on a Senate bill that aims to raise the federal minimum wage from the current $7.25 an hour to

> $10.10 an hour — a nearly 40 percent increase.
>
> Many Democrats argue that increasing the federal minimum will reduce poverty without having an adverse effect on unemployment.
>
> EPI's report, which used analysis from economists at Miami and Trinity University, reached a different conclusion.
>
> Researchers used recently updated Census Bureau data from 2012 and 2013 to calculate how each individual state would be impacted by the proposed wage hikes. As a lump sum, Americans would see a loss of at least 360,000 jobs, and perhaps even over one million if hourly wages are increased to $10.10.
>
> The number of job losses would be the most dramatic in large states, such as California and Texas. Economists found that California could lose as many as 100,016 jobs and Texas could see up to 128,617 jobs disappear from its economy.

This article from Investors Business Daily, written by the famous economist Thomas Sowell has more on the effects of raising the minimum wage.

Excerpt:

> Switzerland is one of the few modern nations without a minimum-wage law. In 2003, the Economist magazine reported: "Switzerland's unemployment neared a five-year high of 3.9% in February."
>
> In February of this year, Switzerland's unemployment rate was 3.1%. A recent issue of the Economist showed Switzerland's unemployment rate as 2.1%.
>
> Most Americans today have never seen unemployment rates that low. However, there was a time when there was no federal minimum-wage law in the United States.
>
> The last time was during the Coolidge administration, when the annual unemployment rate went as low as 1.8%. When Hong Kong was a British colony, it had no minimum-wage law. In 1991 its unemployment rate was under 2%.
>
> […]Most people in the lower income brackets are not an enduring class. Most working people in the bottom 20% in income at a given time do not stay there over time. More of them end up in the top 20% than remain behind in the bottom 20%.
>
> There is nothing mysterious about the fact that most people start off in entry-level jobs that pay much less than they will earn after they get some work experience.
>
> But when minimum-wage levels are set without regard to their initial productivity, young people are disproportionately unemployed — priced out of jobs.
>
> In European welfare states where minimum wages, and mandated job benefits to be paid for by employers, are more generous than in the United States,

> unemployment rates for younger workers are often 20% or higher, even when there is no recession.
>
> Unemployed young people lose not only the pay they could have earned but, at least equally important, the work experience that would enable them to earn higher rates of pay later on.
>
> Minorities, like young people, can also be priced out of jobs. In the United States, the last year in which the black unemployment rate was lower than the white unemployment rate — 1930 — was also the last year when there was no federal minimum-wage law.
>
> Inflation in the 1940s raised the pay of even unskilled workers above the minimum wage set in 1938. Economically, it was the same as if there were no minimum-wage law by the late 1940s.
>
> In 1948 the unemployment rate of black 16-year-old and 17-year-old males was 9.4%. This was a fraction of what it would become in even the most prosperous years from 1958 on, as the minimum wage was raised repeatedly to keep up with inflation.
>
> **A survey of American economists found that 90% of them regarded minimum-wage laws as increasing the rate of unemployment among low-skilled workers.**

Harvard University economist Greg Mankiw puts the level of opposition to minimum wage hikes at 79% among professional economists across the ideological spectrum.

Is giving to charity more rational for religious people or atheists?

January 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, let's take a look at the numbers with this article by Arthur Brooks, published by the Hoover Institute at Stanford University.

Excerpt:

> How do religious and secular people vary in their charitable behavior? To answer this, I turn to data collected expressly to explore patterns in American civic life. The *Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey* (SCCBS) was undertaken in 2000 by researchers at universities throughout the United States and the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. The data consist of nearly 30,000 observations drawn from 50 communities across the United States and ask individuals about their "civic behavior," including their giving and volunteering during the year preceding the survey.
>
> From these data, I have constructed two measures of religious participation. First, the group I refer to as "religious" are the respondents that report attending religious services every week or more often. This is 33 percent of the sample. Second, the group I call "secular" report attending religious services less than a few times per year or explicitly say they have no religion. These people are 26 percent of the sample (implying that those who practice their religion occasionally make up 41 percent of the sample). The SCCBS asked respondents whether and how much they gave and volunteered to "religious causes" or "non-religious charities" over the previous 12 months. Across the whole population, 81 percent gave, while 57 percent volunteered.
>
> **The differences in charity between secular and religious people are dramatic. Religious people are 25 percentage points more likely than secularists to donate money (91 percent to 66 percent) and 23 points more likely to volunteer time (67 percent to 44 percent). And, consistent with the findings of other writers, these data show that practicing a religion is more important than the actual religion itself in predicting charitable behavior. For example, among those who attend worship services regularly, 92 percent of Protestants give charitably, compared with 91 percent of Catholics, 91 percent of Jews, and 89 percent from other religions.**
>
> Socioeconomically, the religious and secular groups are similar in some ways and different in others. For example, there is little difference between the groups in income (both have average household incomes around $49,000) or education level (20 percent of each group holds a college degree). On the other hand, the secular group is disproportionately male (49 percent to 32 percent), unmarried

> (58 percent to 40 percent), and young (42 to 49 years old, on average). In addition, the SCCBS data show that religion and secularism break down on ideological lines: Religious people are 38 percentage points more likely to say they are conservative than to say they are liberal (57 percent to 19 percent). In contrast, secular people are 13 points more likely to say they are liberal than to say they are conservative (42 percent to 29 percent).
>
> It is possible, of course, that the charity differences between secular and religious people are due to these nonreligious socioeconomic differences. To investigate this possibility, I used a statistical procedure called probit regression to examine the role of religious practice in isolation from all other relevant demographic characteristics: political beliefs, income (and hence, indirectly, the tax incentives for giving), education level, gender, age, race, marital status, and area of residence. **The data show that if two people — one religious and the other secular — are identical in every other way, the secular person is 23 percentage points less likely to give than the religious person and 26 points less likely to volunteer.**

Honestly, I've always struggled to understand how giving to charity could be rational, on atheism. If you are only alive for 80 years, and the purpose of your life is to be happy, then the only reason I can think of to give anything away to anyone is because it makes you feel happier or more respected or something. Maybe because you like thinking of yourself as moral, or maybe because you want to be seen as moral, or maybe because you want a tax deduction, or maybe something else. But if this is the only life you are ever going to have, and people are just collections of atoms, then why care about what anyone is doing? We're all just accidents anyway, on atheism, and we're going to die out eventually. One set of atoms giving some atoms to another set of atoms, and then in the end all the atoms get scattered: who cares?

Here's something interesting I found about the leaders of the two political parties in this country.

Excerpt:

> In 2009, the Obamas gave 5.9 percent of their income to charity, about the same as they gave in 2006 and 2007. In the eight years before he became president, Obama gave an average of 3.5 percent of his income to charity, upping that to 6.5 percent in 2008.
>
> The Obamas' charitable giving is equally divided between "hope" and "change."
>
> George W. Bush gave away more than 10 percent of his income each year he was president, as he did before becoming president.
>
> Thus, in 2005, Obama gave about the same dollar amount to charity as President George Bush did, on an income of $1.7 million — more than twice as much as President Bush's $735,180. Again in 2006, Bush gave more to charity than Obama on an income one-third smaller than Obama's.

> In the decade before Joe Biden became vice president, the Bidens gave a total — all 10 years combined — of $3,690 to charity, or 0.2 percent of their income. They gave in a decade what most Americans in their tax bracket give in an average year, or about one row of hair plugs.
>
> Of course, even in Biden's stingiest years, he gave more to charity than Sen. John Kerry did in 1995, which was a big fat goose egg. Kerry did, however, spend half a million dollars on a 17th-century Dutch seascape painting that year, as Peter Schweizer reports in his 2008 book, "Makers and Takers."
>
> To be fair, 1995 was an off-year for Kerry's charitable giving. The year before, he gave $2,039 to charity, and the year before that a staggering $175.
>
> He also dropped a $5 bill in the Salvation Army pail and almost didn't ask for change.
>
> In 1998, Al Gore gave $353 to charity — about a day's take for a lemonade stand in his neighborhood. That was 10 percent of the national average for charitable giving by people in the $100,000-$200,000 income bracket. Gore was at the very top of that bracket, with an income of $197,729.
>
> When Sen. Ted Kennedy released his tax returns to run for president in the '70s, they showed that Kennedy gave a bare 1 percent of his income to charity — or, as Schweizer says, "about as much as Kennedy claimed as a write-off on his 50-foot sailing sloop Curragh." (Cash tips to bartenders and cocktail waitresses are not considered charitable donations.)
>
> The Democratic base gives to charity as their betters do. At the same income, a single mother on welfare is seven times less likely to give to charity than a working poor family that attends religious services.
>
> In 2006 and 2007, John McCain, who files separately from his rich wife, gave 27.3 percent and 28.6 percent of his income to charity.
>
> In 2005, Vice President Cheney gave 77 percent of his income to charity. He also shot a lawyer in the face, which I think should count for something.
>
> In a single year, Schweizer reports, Rush Limbaugh "gave $109,716 to 'various individuals in need of assistance mainly due to family illnesses,' $52,898 to 'children's case management organizations,' including 'various programs to benefit families in need,' $35,100 for 'Alzheimer's community care — day care for families in need,' and $40,951 for air conditioning units and heaters delivered to troops in Iraq."

The Democrats are the non-religious party, the Republicans are the religious party. The Democrats are also the talking party, as you can see, and the Republicans are the doing party.

By the way, Arthur Brooks eventually turned this research into a book called "Who Really Cares?", and it's a good response to atheists when they tell you that they can be moral without God. If it doesn't make sense to be moral, then atheists aren't going to do it. You

can read more about that book here.

My conversation with a leftist friend about basic economics and rent control

January 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My conversation with a leftist friend about "Basic Economics: A Common Sense Guide to the Economy, 4th Edition", by Thomas Sowell.

Him: I remember why I stopped reading that book when you asked me to read it.

Me: Why did you stop reading it?

Him: Because of the chapter on rent control.

Me: Chapter 3 is the chapter on price controls. It talks about rent control.

Him: I expect an economist to present both sides of rent control. He has to present the arguments for and against rent control.

Me: There are not two sides to rent control. There is only one side to rent control. He chose that because it is a clear cut example of the problems caused by price controls. Economists universally condemn rent control, across the ideological spectrum.

Him: No they don't.

Me: The chair of the Department of Economics at Harvard University, Greg Mankiw, reports in his economics textbook that 93% of professional economists agree that rent control reduces housing supply and housing quality. It is the most agreed upon position among economists across the ideological spectrum, number one in his list of facts on which professional economists agree. And obviously they have reasons for agreeing on that, specifically the experience of trying rent control policies in different times and places. It has always failed.

Him: Somebody must like rent control, because they have it in New York city.

Me: Politicians and low-information voters support rent control. It makes politicians feel good, and it gets them elected, too – if the voters are economically illiterate enough, as they are in New York city.

Him: But what about global warming then? Isn't the consensus against you there?

Me: There has been no global warming in the last 17 years, according to the New York Times. They were reporting on findings by the UN IPCC in 2013.

Him: The UN never said that. The New York Times never wrote that.

Me: Yes, they did. And I have the sources I can send them to you.

Him: I'll bet you do. (walks away in a huff)

This is the relevant quote from the Greg Mankiw post from his survey of economists that appears in his textbook:

1. **A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)**

2. Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)
3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
12. A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)
13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

And this is the relevant quote from the New York Times article, dated September 2013:

> The global warming crowd has a problem. For all of its warnings, and despite a steady escalation of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere, the planet's average surface temperature has remained pretty much the same for the last 15 years.
>
> As you might guess, skeptics of warming were in full attack mode as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change gathered in Sweden this week to approve its latest findings about our warming planet. The skeptics argue that this recent plateau illustrates what they always knew — that complex global climate models have no predictive capability and that, therefore, there is no proof of global warming, human-caused or not.

The author of the NYT article (a leftist) goes on to attempt to explain he is not concerned by the 17 year period of no significant warming, but the point is that the 17 year (not 15 year) period of no significant warming is A FACT acknowledged by the UN IPCC that has to be explained by those who believe in catastrophic man-made global warming. The IPCC may not like the temperature measurements, but those facts are not in doubt. The global warming crowd might make predictions about the future, but they made predictions about the past before, and we now know for a fact that those predictions (polar ice caps

melting, Himalayans melting, significant global warming, etc.) were FALSE. They have been falsified by evidence, and that's not in doubt.

Economic illiteracy is the problem

When people on the left voted for Barack Obama in 2012, they did not *know based on evidence* that they could keep their doctors and keep their health plans and that insurance premiums would drop $2500. They did not know it because the *economic studies contradicted Obama's words*. They even believed Obama when he said that the Benghazi incident was caused by a Youtube video. Obama-supporters had *a sincere belief* in the words of his passionate speeches. They were impressed by the visuals of him talking to large crowds of young people. They believed him because they had feelings about him. And voting for him made them have good feelings *about themselves.* They felt that they were going to achieve good things by voting for this good man. They meant well, but they did not know. They did not have evidence.

Before the 2012 election, people on the right pointed to evidence from studies (like this one) showing that Obama was lying, but his supporters were apparently not interested in economic studies. They want to preserve the feelings of being good people. They want to preserve the belief that you can embrace policies that sound good, and that words that sound good will necessarily lead to good results for people who are at a disadvantage. I don't question the motives of people on the left – they mean well. But meaning well doesn't produce good results without knowledge of economics. In economics, policies that sound appealing to well-meaning liberals (rent control, tariffs, protectionism, minimum wage, trillion-dollar deficits) actually produce bad results for poor people. And we know this for a fact from our *experience across different times and places*.

If we can get people to accept the authority of our observations of policy experimentation in different times and places *over and above their feelings and intuitions*, then we can save this country.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

January 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Excerpt:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.
>
> But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.
>
> There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position,

and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.

One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.

So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of

> atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, “So is there a God or not?”

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these “subjective atheists”?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says “I lack a belief in the gravitational force!”. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God’s existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don’t care about a person’s psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over “I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God”? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: “I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!” What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: “Wintery Knight won’t listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!”. I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that’s why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don’t *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I’m not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Related posts

- Is giving to charity more rational for religious people or atheists?
- An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview
- Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?
- Did Jesus exist? Agnostic historian Bart Ehrman debates Infidel Guy

- Is the Bible’s definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?
- Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong? Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral?
- Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?
- William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech
- Can atheists be moral? Sean McDowell and James Corbett debate
- If militant atheists could form a country, what would it look like?
- Chad Meister: can atheists make sense of morality?

Atheist cosmologist Sean Carroll to debate with Hans Halvorson and William Lane Craig

January 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The first one will be held at California Institute of Technology on January 23, 2014 at 7:30 PM in Baxter Lecture Hall.

Speakers:

> **Hans Halvorson**
> Professor of Philosophy and Associate Professor of Mathematics, Princeton University
> Hans Halvorson received his bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Calvin College, going on to receive master's degrees in mathematics and philosophy and his Ph.D. in philosophy from Pittsburgh. He has taught at Princeton since 2001 and was promoted to full faculty in the philosophy department in 2010.
>
> Halvorson's research focus is category theory and the philosophy of physics, but he also specializes in philosophical logic, philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of religion, and philosophy of science.

> **Sean Carroll**
> Senior Research Associate, Physics and Astrophysics, California Institute of Technology

> Sean Carroll is a physicist at the California Institute of Technology. He received his Ph.D. in 1993 from Harvard University. His research focuses on theoretical physics and cosmology, especially the origin and constituents of the universe. He has contributed to models of interactions between dark matter, dark energy, and ordinary matter; alternative theories of gravity; and violations of fundamental symmetries. Carroll is the author of The Particle at the End of the Universe, From Eternity to Here: The Quest for the Ultimate Theory of Time, and Spacetime and Geometry: An Introduction to General Relativity. He has been awarded fellowships by the Sloan Foundation, Packard Foundation, and the American Physical Society, as well as the MIT Graduate Student Council Teaching Award and the Villanova University Arts and Sciences Alumni Medallion. Carroll has appeared on TV shows such as The Colbert Report and Through the Wormhole with Morgan Freeman, and frequently serves as a science consultant for film and television. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, writer Jennifer Ouellette.

The topic for that one is: "Metaphysics: An atheist and a Christian discuss physics and cosmology".

Greer-Heard Forum on God and cosmology

The second one will be held at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary on February

21-22, 2014. The topic is “God and cosmology”.

The speakers for that one will be well known to regular readers. The main event will be William Lane Craig vs Sean Carroll.

The respondents are Alex Rosenberg, Robin Collins, Tim Maudlin and James Sinclair. I’ve featured Robin Collins before here for his work on fine-tuning.

I recognize Collins and Sinclair as Christians, and Rosenberg is a thorough-going atheist. You might remember him from his debate with William Lane Craig, which I summarized here. Sean Carroll is the co-author of one of the no-beginning theoretical cosmologies that Lawrence Krauss appealed to in his debate with Craig in Australia, which I summarized here.

Dr. Craig’s podcasts on Sean Carroll

If you want to listen to something about Sean Carroll, William Lane Craig did some podcasts about him a while back.

He also replied to a question about Carroll and cosmology in his Q&A section.

I thought this part was interesting:

> Finally, I’m disappointed that Carroll cannot find it in himself to have a collegial discussion of these important questions but feels the need to resort to snide, personal attacks in his closing paragraph. His unfamiliarity with my work is evident in his remark that I do not cite the relevant, original, scientific papers (despite my quoting the Vilenkin-Mithani paper in the very podcast to which he is responding), as well as the popular works of physicists (where they often feel freer to express what they take to be the philosophical and theological implications of their work). His condescension is especially awkward in light of his own missteps in correctly characterizing the BGV Theorem. Carroll will pardon us, I hope, for our scepticism about his counting himself among the ranks of the open-minded.

This should be a great debate!

Related posts

- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss in North Carolina: Does God Exist?
- Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger’s critique of cosmic fine-tuning
- Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for God at UT Dallas 2013
- Video, audio and summary of Wiliam Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate
- The kalam cosmological argument defended in a peer-reviewed science journal
- Does a commitment to naturalism undermine rational thought and textual meaning?
- William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?
- William Lane Craig posts full Vilenkin e-mail misrepresented by Krauss in their debate
- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia: Does God Exist?

- William Lane Craig Alex Rosenberg debate: Does God Exist? Video, MP3 audio and summary
- William Lane Craig lectures on naturalistic alternatives to the Big Bang
- William Lane Craig debates Peter Millican: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary
- William Lane Craig debates Peter Atkins: Does God Exist?
- The cosmological argument and the new BGV theorem

United Nations climate chief explains the real motive of global warming alarmism

January 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I've documented many problems with global warming, and I've also noted that contrary to the predictions of the global warming socialists, we have had no significant warming in 17 years and Arctic ice is at a 35-year high. If global warmists are trying to convince us of something that is true, then they will have to show us better evidence for their views. A lot of us have given up on global warming as science, especially after the whole Climategate scandal, where it was proved that scientists at the University of East Anglia sent e-mails showing how they were trying to "hide the decline" in temperatures and suppress scientific articles critical of their theories.

My good friend Letitia posted this Daily Caller article, which discusses a possible motive for pushing a theory that is in conflict with the evidence we have.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> United Nations climate chief Christiana Figueres said that democracy is a poor political system for fighting global warming. Communist China, she says, is the best model.
>
> China may be the world's top emitter of carbon dioxide and struggling with major pollution problems of their own, but the country is "doing it right" when it comes to fighting global warming says Figueres.
>
> "They actually want to breathe air that they don't have to look at," she said. "They're not doing this because they want to save the planet. They're doing it because it's in their national interest."
>
> Figueres added that the deep partisan divide in the U.S. Congress is "very detrimental" to passing any sort of legislation to fight global warming. The Chinese Communist Party, on the other hand, can push key policies and reforms all on its own. The country's national legislature largely enforces the decisions made by the party's Central Committee and other executive offices.
>
> Communism was responsible for the deaths of about 94 million people in China, the Soviet Union, North Korea, Afghanistan and Eastern Europe in the 20th Century. China alone was responsible for 65 million of those deaths under communist rule.
>
> Environmentalists often hail China as a model for fighting global warming, since they are a "leader" in renewable energy. The country set a goal of getting 15 percent of its power from renewable sources by 2020. In 2012, China got 9 percent of its power from renewables — the U.S. by contrast got 11 percent in 2012.
>
> However, the country still gets 90 percent of its power from fossil fuels, mostly

> from coal. In fact, Chinese coal demand is expected to explode as the country continues to develop. China has approved 100 million metric tons of new coal production capacity in 2013 as part of the government's plan to bring 860 million metric tons of coal production online by 2015.
>
> China has publicly made big efforts to clean up its environment. The country's booming industrial apparatus has caused so much pollution that the skies have been darkened over major cities and the air quality has heavily deteriorated.
>
> The Wall Street Journal notes that China's air quality was so bad that about "1.2 million people died prematurely in China in 2010 as a result of air pollution" and Chinese government figures show that "lung cancer is now the leading cause of death from malignant tumors. Many of those dying are nonsmokers."
>
> The Soviet bloc's environmental track record was similarly dismal.

Letitia also posted this USA Today article from last Thursday to show you just how far off base this UN communist is.

Excerpt:

> Beijing's skyscrapers receded into a dense gray smog Thursday as the capital saw the season's first wave of extremely dangerous pollution, with the concentration of toxic small particles registering more than two dozen times the level considered safe.
>
> […]The city's air quality is often poor, especially in winter when stagnant weather patterns combine with an increase in coal-burning to exacerbate other forms of pollution and create periods of heavy smog for days at a time. But the readings early Thursday for particles of PM2.5 pollution marked the first ones of the season above 500 micrograms per cubic meter.
>
> The density of PM2.5 was about 350 to 500 micrograms Thursday midmorning, though the air started to clear in the afternoon. It had reached as high as 671 at 4 a.m. at a monitoring post at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. That is about 26 times as high as the 25 micrograms considered safe by the World Health Organization, and was the highest reading since January 2013.

It seems tha the global warmists are very fond of big government, such as we find in the (mostly) communist China. This is not surprising since many of them receive government money (e.g. – Solyndra) if a global warmist President gets elected. In my experience talking to people about global warming, I am generally able to win the debate about the science, but then they explain to me that we must promote global warming alarmism because we need the public to do something about overpopulation and natural resource depletion. The comments of the UN woman seems to indicate that the something they want is bigger government, which can be used to nudge people away from having more children and restrict their use of natural resources.

So I think we need to be careful when science is being misused to support an ideology,

especially one that is obviously false. (Global birth rates are dropping below replacement and shale oil reserves are abundant)

Having said all that, I want to reiterate that science itself is a great thing, and I support it. If it wasn't for real science, Christian theists would not have the argument from the origin of the universe, the argument from the origin of life, the cosmic fine-tuning, the Cambrian explosion, molecular machines, galactic habitability, stellar habitability, planetary habitability, and so on. We also would not have many good things that make us freer, more prosperous and more healthy. Science is a good thing. But hijacking science to serve a power-hungry ideology (or just greed) is not a good thing. I oppose it.

Questions for proponents of government-controlled redistribution of wealth

January 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

George Mason University economist Donald Boudreaux wrote a couple of articles asking people who complain about income inequality whether their solution of letting government redistribute wealth from some people to others makes sense. After he is done asking his questions, I am going to complain a little about what it is like to study hard things and do hard work

In the first article, he asked a series of questions to the wealth redistributers.

Here were a few that caught my eye:

> Do you teach your children to envy what other children have? Do you encourage your children to form gangs with their playmates to "redistribute" toys away from richer kids on the schoolyard toward kids not so rich? If not, what reason have you to suppose that envy and "redistribution" become acceptable when carried out on a large scale by government?
>
> Suppose that Jones chooses a career as a poet. Jones treasures the time he spends walking in the woods and strolling city streets in leisurely reflection; his reflections lead him to write poetry critical of capitalist materialism. Working as a poet, Jones earns $20,000 annually. Smith chooses a career as an emergency-room physician. She works an average of 60 hours weekly and seldom takes a vacation. Her annual salary is $400,000. Is this "distribution" of income unfair? Is Smith responsible for Jones' relatively low salary? Does Smith owe Jones money? If so, how much? And what is the formula you use to determine Smith's debt to Jones?
>
> While Dr. Smith earns more money than does poet Jones, poet Jones earns more leisure than does Dr. Smith. Do you believe leisure has value to those who possess it? If so, are you disturbed by the inequality of leisure that separates leisure-rich Jones from leisure-poor Smith? Do you advocate policies to "redistribute" leisure from Jones to Smith — say, by forcing Jones to wash Smith's dinner dishes or to chauffeur Smith to and from work? If not, why not?

In the second article, he had even more questions for the wealth redistributers.

Here are the two that I liked best:

> When you describe growing income inequality in the United States, you typically look only at the incomes of the rich before they pay taxes and at the incomes of the poor before they receive noncash transfers from government such as food stamps, Medicare and Medicaid. You also ignore noncash transfers that the poor receive from private charities. Why? If you're trying to determine whether or not more income redistribution is warranted, doesn't it make more sense to look at

> income differences after the rich have paid their taxes and after the poor have received all of their benefits from government and private sources?
>
> Do you not share Thomas Sowell's concern that efforts to "de-concentrate" incomes among the people require concentrating power among the politicians? Asked differently, if you worry that abuses of power are encouraged by concentrations of income, shouldn't you worry even more that abuses of power are encouraged by concentrations of power?

Mark Perry of AEI saw this column, and he had two more questions.

> Many extremely wealthy people (movie stars, celebrities like Oprah, businessmen like Warren Buffet, filmmaker Michael Moore, and Robert Reich for example) who are in America's "top 1%" by income (some are easily in the top 1/0 of 1%), often complain about income and wealth inequality in America. And yet these wealthy individuals rarely take any direct actions themselves that could reduce income inequality immediately, e.g. giving away a majority of their multi-million dollar annual salaries and unburdening themselves of millions of dollars of their wealth (stocks, real estate, cars, airplanes, etc.) and living on a modest, but still very comfortable incomes of say, $200,000 per year. Isn't it inconsistent that most of these individuals hoard a majority of their income and wealth to live lavishly without taking immediate steps to redistribute their largess to those less fortunate and reduce the income/wealth inequality they complain about? If not, why?
>
> Many Americans express great concern about income inequality in the United States, but seem relatively unconcerned about global income inequality. For example, nearly half of the world's richest 1% of people live in the U.S., and the threshold required to make it into that elite group is only $34,000 per person, according to World Bank economist Branko Milanovic. Is it inconsistent for an American making $34,000 to complain about the incomes and wealth of the top 1% in the United States and yet show no concern for the fact that he himself is in the top 1% of the world's population based on income? Many Americans making $34,000 and above support income redistribution schemes (e.g. raising taxes on the top 1%) to reduce income inequality in America. Because they are themselves in the top 1% of the world's population by income, shouldn't these Americans also support redistribution of income and wealth from themselves (the world's top 1%) to dirt-poor countries like Zimbabwe? If not, why not?

One quick point about who pays taxes in this country as it is now.

CNS News reports on a study by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

Excerpt:

> The top 40 percent of households by before-tax income actually paid 106.2 percent of the nation's net income taxes in 2010, according to a new study by

> the Congressional Budget Office.
>
> At the same time, households in the bottom 40 percent took in an average of $18,950 in what the CBO called “government transfers” in 2010.
>
> Taxpayers in the top 40 percent of households were able to pay more than 100 percent of net federal income taxes in 2010 because Americans in the bottom 40 percent actually paid negative income taxes, according to the CBO study entitled, “The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2010.”

This is where the money comes from for all our lavish social programs, which I do not even use.

My choices

I remember growing up as the son of poor immigrants and having to struggle to do well in school. When I was growing up, I didn’t learn to ride bicycle until very late. We didn’t have a car to drive anywhere. We had a black and white TV. We took public transportation to go anywhere. I remember that we used to eat macaroni and cheese with sliced hot dogs quite a lot. We went to a sit-down restaurant for dinner less than five times as a family. I always took school very seriously from the beginning, and I remember having conflicts with the popular students, who were having more fun than me because they had more wealth and more friends and they did more expensive things for fun. I chose not to drop math, even though I struggled with it more than English and computer science. I remember my friends buying Apple IIe and Commodore 64 computers, and I didn’t have any video game system much less a computer. I would go over to their houses and play games at their houses. I never had a summer off. I was always in summer school or working, and that working summers continued through my undergraduate degree.

When the time came to go to college, I chose computer science. Some of the courses I took during that time were so hard that I cried. I had not been well-prepared for college in high school, it was a big stretch for me. I remember failing a test in second year calculus, the first test I ever failed. I can remember doing calculus problems and crying about how hard it was, and my Dad looking on wondering if he had made the right decision when he snudged me toward computer science, when I wanted to do something easy like English. But I graduated with a 3.4 GPA, and went on to graduate school, where I finished with a 3.9 GPA. I chose to do both of my degrees locally, and lived at home. I never went out drinking or to a club or anything like that. The school I chose was not the best, but I saved money, and graduating with a few thousand dollars in the bank was important to me. I didn’t want to go into debt in order to learn how to program a computer.

When I graduated, I started working in a different city, and I remember that my apartment had firebrats, which is a kind of insect infestation. I chose a modest apartment because I wanted to save money. I saved most of what I earned because I anticipated that I would soon be married and starting a family. During my career to this day, I have seen politicians express their desire to take what I earn and give it to people who were born in this country, but who made different decisions from me. Some of them dropped

out of high school. Some of them had sex before marriage. Some of them drank alcohol. Some of them smoked. Some of them dropped math. Some of them chased women. Some of them drank and smoked and did drugs. Some of them went on expensive trips. Some of them went to movie theaters and bought popcorn. But I never saw these people in the computer lab at 3 AM trying to help me with my assignments. I never saw these people show up to work weekends when I was working 70-hour weeks in a startup company trying to build sweat equity.

Somehow, people in government, at all levels, have decided that I don't deserve to keep what I earn. They have decided that other people can get subsidies, but I have to pay full price. I walk into the grocery store and see people buying better food than me, and paying with food stamps. I am paying for my groceries and paying for theirs, too. Somehow, a significant number of people in our society have decided that I should not be allowed to keep what I earn, buy the things I want, and live my life the way that I planned to live it. My earned income is my freedom to express myself, and the politicians have decided that I am allowed to get up and go to work to earn the money, but that I am not allowed to express myself using my earned income. They get to take the money I earned and express their views, instead.

To learn more about why income inequality is not something for government to solve, read this article from the American Enterprise Institute.

A popular reason why people leave Christianity: disappointment with God

January 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Part 2 of a brilliant series by Bradley Wright. This time he explains how people leave Christianity because they expect God to meet their needs and he doesn't.

Excerpt:

> In a study of religious deconversion, we analyzed 50 on-line testimonies posted by former Christians, and in these testimonies we found four general explanations for deconversion. The first explanation, which I wrote about last week, regarded intellectual and theological concerns about the Christian faith. The second, which I elaborate here, regards a failed relationship with God. Almost half (22 of 50) of the writers expressed sentiments that in some way God had failed them by His not doing what they thought He should.
>
> God's perceived failure took various forms, most of which fall under the general heading of "unanswered prayers."
>
> One way that people felt that God had failed them happened when He did not respond to requests for help during difficult times. A young man raised in a Baptist church epitomized this feeling of failure when he wrote about God not answering his prayers about family difficulties. He wrote: "The first time I questioned the faith was when my grandmother shriveled up in front of me for 6 month's due to cancer. I was 13 & my mother & father [were] getting a divorce. My father told me I should have been aborted. I prayed to God but nothing fails like prayers."

So you can see here where people have this expectation that it is God's job to give them good health. But is that anywhere in the Bible? Is it God's job to make us healthy so that we can have a happy life, even if we are busy spending that happy life ignoring him and not knowing his character. When you ask a serious Christian what it is like to be a Christian, we will tell you that what God is about is NOT making us healthy or happy, but instead giving us time and peace to study him, to make plans to serve him, to execute those plans, and to have (sometimes unhappy) experiences that cause our sympathies to change as we feel what God feels. In short, life is about getting closer to him, and suffering and sickness is one of the tools God uses in order to get us to know him as he is and to participate in the relationship.

> Likewise, a woman raised in a Methodist household described her step-father as "cruel and abusive" to her, and she could not understand why "if God loves me, why won't he protect me instead of letting this happen to me?"

I think the reason why God allows suffering like this is to create people who take his rules

about sexual morality seriously. When I was growing up I had front-row seats to the divorces of many of my friends. I remember vividly talking to children who cried to me about how they felt when their mothers invited new men into the house after the divorce. Pain and suffering like this is a reminder to us that the moral law is real, that God expects us to follow it in order to prevent harm. One of the reasons why I am chaste is because I listen to the stories of men whose girlfriends aborted their babies, the stories of women who cohabitated and then were betrayed, the stories of the children of divorces. And from this I learn that morality is real and it matters.

> In a variation of this theme, some deconverts lamented God's inactivity amidst spiritual difficulties. A man in his forties, a former elder at a charismatic church, wrote: "In my own life, no matter how much I submitted to 'God' and prayed in faith, 'sin' never seemed to leave me. Well, what's the point of being 'saved' if you aren't delivered from 'sin'?"

This is why accurate theology matters. No serious Christian thinks that you stop sinning after you become a Christian, and no serious Christian thinks that prayer alone is a solution to sin. To stop sinning, you need to engage more than the spirit, you need to engage the mind. Most people want to spiritualize things because prayer is easier than study. But if you want to stop sinning, the best way is a combination of prayer and study. If you want to stop premarital sex, study how premarital sex affects STD infection, risk of divorce, future marital stability, oxytocin, quality of marriage, and so on. Study the risks of divorce. That's how you stop sinning. Some people want to dumb Christianity down to the level of superstition then they complain that it doesn't work. But Christianity is better when you learn more and work harder.

> A former Southern Baptist described the various good things that God failed to give him: "God promises me a lot in the bible and he's not come through. Ask and it shall be given. Follow me and I will bless you. I promise you life and promise abundance. Man should not be alone. I have a plan for you. Give tithe and I will reward you. All broken promises. This god lacks clarification. This god lacks faith in me. He wants my faith. I want his too."

Do you know what I expect from God after reading the Bible? I expect what Jesus got: pain and suffering during obedience. What kind of simpleton reads the Bible and thinks that it is about getting goodies from God? That is NOWHERE in the Bible. It's projecting Santa Claus onto God and that isn't going to work – God has other plans for us, and those plans involve work and pain. People become Christians because they want to be like Jesus, and they understand that Jesus was not having fun. He was doing a job, and he wasn't happy or appreciated.

> Other writers took a different approach to God's failures. They too sought God's help, but when they did not receive it, they simply concluded that God did not exist. A former member of an Assemblies of God church explicitly linked unanswered prayers and the existence of God: "How many humble and totally

> selfless prayers offered up to and ignored by the imaginary skydaddy does it take for the average person to finally throw in the towel and say [God doesn't exist]!!!!" His answer: "Too damn many."

It's so strange to me that people think that the best way to see God interfere is to pray. The way I see God working in my life is when I go home and listen to some debate about the problem of evil, and then the next day some atheist asks me out to lunch to talk about why God allows evil. Maybe instead of doing easy things, we should actually invest in our relationship with God and then see if he responds by giving us work to do. Maybe a relationship with God is about serving him, and the joy is about seeing him reward those efforts by working with us and through us. Maybe God has more for us than just entertainment.

> Still others sought a tangible sign of God's presence. A former Pentecostal exclaimed: "There were many nights while in bed I would ask God to show me the truth, or give me some type of sign to show that he or she existed. These prayers would never be answered. So I would just go on with my life having doubts." Likewise, a former Baptist missionary wrote: "I've begged God to show himself to me and put an end to my inner torture. So far it hasn't happened and the only thing I know for sure is that I have unanswered questions."

I think this paragraph is interesting, since I consider things like church, praying and singing hymns to be less practical when compared with practical and difficult things like chastity, apologetics, charity, studying hard things, getting a good job, committing to caring for others who have special needs, etc. If you want to feel the presence of God, then do the right thing and take the punishment for doing it. That's what Christianity is really about.

The example of Dan Barker

I've actually written about this before in the context of Dan Barker, a charismatic fundamentalist praise hymn singer and writer who expected God to validate all of his irresponsible ministry decisions. Eventually, he fell away from the church because he had this ludicrous Santa Claus caricature of God that didn't match reality. Dan Barker is the complete opposite of everything I consider a manly Christian to be. He is the polar opposite of what I recommend to men when I recommend that they study math, science, engineering and technology, avoid music, singing and dancing, and prefer apologetics and conservative politics over speaking in tongues and apocalyptic fiction. This man, when he was a "Christian", was the complete opposite of the WK Christian man model. Men should be practical.

I think that Christians should protect themselves from the Dan Barker outcome by being aware of how emotional experiences and praise hymns warp your view of God. God is a person, and he has a goal for you – to know him. To achieve that goal, it may not be effective to just give you everything you want. It may be the case that God has to allow you to experience some suffering, to form your character and to bring your goals in line

with his character. Children have to grow up, and shielding them from pain and responsibility doesn’t allow them to grow up.

Federal court approves taxpayer-funded sex change for man convicted of murdering his wife

January 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> A federal judge on Tuesday ordered state prison officials to provide taxpayer-funded sex-reassignment surgery to a transgender inmate serving life in prison for murder.
>
> […]Kosilek was born male but has received hormone treatments and now lives as a woman in an all-male prison. Robert Kosilek was convicted of murder in the killing of his wife in 1990.
>
> U.S. District Judge Mark Wolf is believed to be the first federal judge to order prison officials to provide sex-reassignment surgery for a transgender inmate.
>
> Kosilek first sued the Massachusetts Department of Correction 12 years ago. Two years later, Wolf ruled that Kosilek was entitled to treatment for gender-identity disorder but stopped short of ordering surgery. Kosilek sued again in 2005, arguing that the surgery is a medical necessity.
>
> In his ruling Tuesday, Wolf found that surgery is the "only adequate treatment" for Kosilek's "serious medical need."
>
> "The court finds that there is no less intrusive means to correct the prolonged violation of Kosilek's Eighth Amendment right to adequate medical care," Wolf wrote in his 126-page ruling.
>
> […]In a telephone interview last year with The Associated Press, Kosilek said the surgery is a medical necessity, not a frivolous desire to change his appearance.
>
> "Everybody has the right to have their health care needs met, whether they are in prison or out on the streets," Kosilek said. "People in the prisons who have bad hearts, hips or knees have surgery to repair those things. My medical needs are no less important or more important than the person in the cell next to me."
>
> […]Kosilek's lawsuit has become fodder for radio talk shows and lawmakers who say the state should not be forced to pay for a convicted murderer's sex-change operation — which can cost up to $20,000 — especially since many insurance companies reject the surgery as elective.

The Boston Globe had this to say:

> Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders issued a statement hailing the ruling.
>
> "Like the district court before it, the First Circuit has affirmed that constitutional rights belong to everyone," said Jenifer Levi, director of GLAD's Transgender

> Rights Project. “The Appeals Court affirmed that the District Court properly found that Michelle Kosilek needed this lifesaving medical care. If she needed treatment for cancer or heart disease, this case would never have wound up in court. If we are to call ourselves a civilized society, there is a baseline of care that has to be provided to all prisoners, including prisoners who are transgender.”

The man is now 64 years old. He *strangled* his wife to death in 1990.

My personal opinion on this man is that he should have been executed by the state a few minutes after he was convicted.

Sarcastic WK

We have a lot of people in this country who are very compassionate handing out other people’s money. They don’t like discipline, judging or obedience to the law. They keep on voting for bigger government and more government spending to enable people avoid the consequences of their own actions. They believe that nothing we do is our fault, because we are all victims. They believe that nothing you earn is really yours, because everyone just gets up and does what they like every day.

If a musician gets up and does what he likes and a surgeon wakes up and does what he likes, why should they be paid differently? Work is meant to be fun and fulfilling, so we should resdistribute wealth from the surgeon to the musician, so they can both have sex changes, if they want them. People need money for free condoms, or a free abortion, or free breast implants, or free IVF, or free sex changes, or free health care for STDs. We should just take money from people who have it and give the other people whatever they want.

That’s why I go to work, you know, so that I can pay the government elected by the compassionate, non-judgmental people to give convicted murderers sex changes. It’s not like I need the money I earned for anything, like funding opportunities for Christians scholars to defend God’s reputation. At one point, I planned to get married and have children, too. What a waste of money my plans are – the government is right to take my money and use it on “compassion”. And when we have single payer health care, sex changes will be free for everyone, just like in Ontario, Canada and the UK. In the UK, you can even get breast implants for “free”. Isn’t that more compassionate and non-judgmental?

Don Johnson: six reasons why people reject Christianity

January 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post on practical evangelism by Christian scholar Don Johnson.

His list of reasons why people often reject Christianity:

1. Christians behaving badly
2. Disappointment with God
3. Weak or absent father
4. Social pressure
5. Cost of discipleship
6. Immorality (especially sexual immorality)

And here's the detail on #6:

> Of all the motivations and reasons for skepticism that I encounter, immorality is easily the most common. In particular, sexual sin seems to be the largest single factor driving disbelief in our culture. Brant Hanson calls sex "The Big But" because he so often hears this from unbelievers: "'I like Jesus, BUT…' and the 'but' is usually followed, one way or the other, with an objection about the Bible and… sex. People think something's deeply messed-up with a belief system that says two consenting, unmarried adults should refrain from sex." In other words, people simply do not want to follow the Christian teaching that sexual intercourse should take place only between and man and woman who are married, so they throw the whole religion out.
>
> The easiest way to justify sin is to deny that there is a creator to provide reality with a nature, thereby denying that there is any inherent order and purpose in the universe.
>
> Aldous Huxley admitted that this is a common reason for skepticism:
>
> I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently I assumed that it had none and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption…. Those who detect no meaning in the world generally do so because, for one reason or another, it suits their books that the world should be meaningless. …
>
> For myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was …liberation from … a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom…. There was one admirably simple method in our political and erotic revolt: We could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever. Similar tactics had been adopted during

> the eighteenth century and for the same reasons. (Ends and Means, 270-273)
>
> Indeed, similar tactics have been used extensively up to the present day. If you are looking for two great resources that document the extent to which the work of the world's "great" atheistic thinkers has been "calculated to justify or minimize the shame of their own debauchery," (Spiegel, 72) I recommend *Intellectuals* by Paul Johnson and *Degenerate Moderns: Modernity as Rationalized Sexual Misbehavior* by E. Michael Jones. The bottom line is that these skeptical scholars didn't reach their conclusions by following the evidence where it led. They didn't "discover" that the world was meaningless and then proceed to live accordingly. They lived sinful lives (usually involving some type of sexual deviancy) and then produced theories that justified their actions.

It's important to understand that an atheist is not identical to a Christian, except not religious. There is something else going on in their minds when they reject very obvious evidences like the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability arguments, etc. The something else that is going on is hinted at when you look at atheist attitudes to abortion. According to a recent survey of atheists, 97% of them were pro-abortion!

What kind of person likes abortion? The kind of person who wants to be sexually active with no consequences, even if it means taking someone else's life. The desire to do as they please and retreat from obligations to others is the key. Now dispensing with God and his obligations is not an unreasonable view if there is no evidence for God, but it does provide a motive for people to not look for that evidence if happiness is their main goal. When I discuss these issues with atheists, I find that no work has been done to read anything. Not even debates, where there are two sides. They don't want to hear the case for Christian theism, and they work hard to avoid stumbling across it by accident, too.

Tough Questions Answered has a quote from Christian philosopher Paul Moser that I think is relevant:

> It would be a strange, defective God who didn't pose a serious cosmic authority problem for humans. Part of the status of being God, after all, is that God has a unique authority, or lordship, over humans. Since we humans aren't God, the true God would have authority over us and would seek to correct our profoundly selfish ways.

So we're not dealing with unbiased truth-seekers here. The goal might not always be sex, but let's be honest. Who wants to have to spend time reading the Bible, praying, going to church and reading thick books by Stephen C. Meyer, Michael Licona and Hugh Ross so that we can answer questions? No one. Who wants to give up premarital sex so that we can create a stable marriage for children so they can grow up in a safe place where knowing God is natural and easy? No one. We just don't want to have to do stuff for God, even if it's good stuff. We don't want to have build a life that is a testament to God's existence and character, especially if it means that other people will think that we are

weird and maybe even a bit mean. We want to do what we want to do instead, and be liked by other people.

That's the real challenge of Christianity: setting aside what you wanted to do, and letting God be your customer, instead. You'd be surprised how many Christians aren't comfortable with the idea of serving God and being viewed in a bad way by non-Christians. They aren't OK with the self-sacrifice, and they are really not OK with the social disapproval. It's hard to be chaste, and to be known to be chaste by your peers, for example. Much easier to just give in and do what everyone else is doing.

UPDATE: Just as I was about to turn in for the night, with all my blogging for the next day done, I found this quote by the older devil Screwtape, from C.S. Lewis' "The Screwtape Letters": (H/T Tim McGrew)

> You must have often wondered why the enemy [God] does not make more use of his power to be sensibly present to human souls in any degree he chooses and at any moment. But you now see that the irresistible and the indisputable are the two weapons which the very nature of his scheme forbids him to use. Merely to over-ride a human will (as his felt presence in any but the faintest and most mitigated degree would certainly do) would be for him useless. He cannot ravish. He can only woo. For his ignoble idea is to eat the cake and have it; the creatures are to be one with him, but yet themselves; merely to cancel them, or assimilate them, will not serve…. Sooner or later he withdraws, if not in fact, at least from their conscious experience, all supports and incentives. He leaves the creature to stand up on its own legs—to carry out from the will alone duties which have lost all relish…. He cannot "tempt" to virtue as we do to vice. He wants them to learn to walk and must therefore take away his hand…. Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.
>
> — Uncle Screwtape, in The Screwtape Letters

I'm not a big fan of Lewis, but I think he is onto something there. That's really what the Christian life is like, and no wonder more people don't choose it. Who wants to do your duty for God, as part of a relationship with him, in a universe that seems so unfair? It's a tall order, and most people prefer to do their own thing instead of building something nice for God with their lives.

What is the purpose of capital punishment? Does it deter crime?

January 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why do some people support the death penalty? Because research conducted by multiple teams of scholars at multiple universities have shown that the death penalty deters crime.

Excerpt:

> "Science does really draw a conclusion. It did. There is no question about it," said Naci Mocan, an economics professor at the University of Colorado at Denver. "The conclusion is there is a deterrent effect."
>
> A 2003 study he co-authored, and a 2006 study that re-examined the data, found that each execution results in five fewer homicides, and commuting a death sentence means five more homicides. "The results are robust, they don't really go away," he said. "I oppose the death penalty. But my results show that the death penalty (deters) — what am I going to do, hide them?"
>
> Statistical studies like his are among a dozen papers since 2001 that capital punishment has deterrent effects. They all explore the same basic theory — if the cost of something (be it the purchase of an apple or the act of killing someone) becomes too high, people will change their behavior (forego apples or shy from murder).

And specifically:

> • Each execution deters an average of 18 murders, according to a 2003 nationwide study by professors at Emory University. (Other studies have estimated the deterred murders per execution at three, five and 14).
>
> • The Illinois moratorium on executions in 2000 led to 150 additional homicides over four years following, according to a 2006 study by professors at the University of Houston.
>
> • Speeding up executions would strengthen the deterrent effect. For every 2.75 years cut from time spent on death row, one murder would be prevented, according to a 2004 study by an Emory University professor.

In case anyone is wondering what sort of crimes are deterred by the death penalty, you can read this graphic description of a recent death-penalty crime.

What sort of crimes are eligible for the death penalty?

Here's an example of a death-penalty eligible crime from the Hartford Courant. (WARNING: graphic!)

Excerpt:

> A Superior Court jury today sentenced Steven Hayes to death for the murders of Jennifer Hawke-Petit and her daughters, Hayley and Michaela, during a seven-hour home invasion, robbery and arson at their Cheshire home in July 2007.
>
> Outside the courthouse after the verdicts, Hawke-Petit's father, the Rev. Richard Hawke, said "There are some people who do not deserve to live in God's world."
>
> Asked what he had in his heart, Dr. William Petit Jr. struggled with his answer. "….Probably many of you have kids," he said, pausing to choke back tears. "Michaela was an 11-year-old little girl…tortured and killed in her own bedroom, surrounded by her stuffed animals…."
>
> Petit then talked about his daughter Hayley's bright future and her strength and the children that his wife, Jennifer, helped.
>
> "So, I was really thinking of the tremendous loss" during the verdict, Petit said, adding that he was pleased with it, but "mostly I was sad for the loss we have all suffered."
>
> Asked if he thought there'd be closure now, Petit said, "There's never closure. There's a hole…. with jagged edges…that may smooth out with time, but the hole in your heart and the hole in your soul" remains.
>
> "This isn't about revenge," Petit said. "Vengeance belongs to the Lord. This is about justice."
>
> […]The jury sentenced Hayes to death on six counts: killing Hawke-Petit and Michaela and Hayley in the course of a single action; killing a child under the age of 16; killing Hawke-Petit in the course of a kidnapping; killing Hayley in the course of a kidnapping; killing Michaela in the course of a kidnapping; and killing Hawke-Petit in the course of a sexual assault.
>
> […]Hayes, 47, of Winsted, was convicted Oct. 5 of breaking into the Petit home, beating Petit, tying up and torturing the family as Hayes and another man ransacked the home for cash and valuables and tortured the family for seven hours. Testimony during Hayes' trial showed that at one point in the break-in, Hayes forced Hawke-Petit to go to the bank to withdraw money. During that time, according to testimony, Komisarjevsky sexually assaulted Michaela Petit, 11.
>
> When Hawke-Petit and Hayes returned from the bank, Hayes raped and strangled Hawke-Petit. The house was doused with gasoline and set on fire as the intruders fled, testimony showed. Hayley, 17, and Michaela died of smoke inhalation.
>
> […]Prosecutors used the words of Hayes' younger brother Matthew to counter testimony that home-invasion crime was an aberration in Hayes otherwise troubled but basically nonviolent life.
>
> Matthew Hayes portrayed his brother as a conniving, sadistic, violent thief who saw Matthew take countless beatings from his brutal father for Steven Hayes' misdeeds. At one point, Steven Hayes held a gun to Matthew's head, according to the statement, which was given to state police after the home invasion.

> Examples of Hayes' sadistic behavior toward his brother included hooking Matthew to the garage door by his belt and raising the door up and down, and holding Matthew's hand to a red-hot burner. Matthew said his brother's life of crime was not a result of bad parenting or poor childhood. He said Hayes never learned to take responsibility for his actions.

Sometimes, I think that we have stopped judging others *because* we do not want to be judged *ourselves*. We hope that by not judging anyone, that we will somehow escape being judged by anyone – especially by God himself. The opposition to punishing the guilty is, I think, really just a way of expressing our desire to do away with the idea that we will finally face judgment.We seem to be able to ignore the victim's needs and act as if the criminal is the victim. We act as if deterring a crime with punishment has no impact on the decision making of people who are considering whether to commit the crime. But crime isn't some random action – criminals do consider what will happen to them if they are caught. We send potential killers a message by being willing to punish the ones we catch. But if we treat them like victims, then others watching are not going to be deterred from committing crimes.

Does the Bible support capital punishment?

January 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Llet's take a look at what the Bible says in general about capital punishment, using this lecture featuring eminent theologian Wayne Grudem.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

A PDF sermon outline is here.

Topics:

- Genesis 9:5: to whom does this passage apply?
- What makes murder such a serious offense?
- Romans 13:3-4: what does this verse mean?
- Capital punishment is a contrast to taking personal vengeance
- Redistribution on behalf of the victim is the main reason for CP
- Deterrence of future crimes to protect the public is another reason
- The purpose of retribution assumes individual responsibility
- Retribution is more acceptable if you believe in the concepts of good and evil
- Retribution is less acceptable if you accept that "society is to blame"
- Secular Europe and liberal US states do no have the death penalty
- Conservative states that believe in good and evil and individual responsibility do have it
- Moral relativists are unlikely to support the death penalty
- Christians who oppose the death penalty say that it has a sinful motive (revenge)
- Revelations 6:9 has Christian martyrs calling for God to punish their murderers
- So this argues that the desire for justice is not motivated by sinful motives

- Colossians 3:25 God provides justice for wrongs in this life
- 1 Pet 2:23 The example of Jesus is to give up personal vengeance
- Romans 12:17-21 Personal vengeance on people who wrong you is not acceptable

The second half of the lecture is Q&A, and the questions are good.

You can find more talks by Wayne Grudem here.

What about the woman caught in adultery?

Some people like to bring up the woman caught in adultery as proof that Jesus opposed capital punishment. But that passage of the Bible was added much later after the canon was decided.

Daniel B. Wallace is an eminent New Testament scholar who also teaches at Dallas Theological Seminary, an extremely conservative seminary.

About Dr. Wallace:

> Dr. Daniel B. Wallace
>
> - Professor of New Testament Studies
> - B.A., Biola University, 1975; Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; Ph.D., 1995.

> Dr. Wallace influences students across the country through his textbook on intermediate Greek grammar. It is used in more than two-thirds of the nation's schools that teach that subject. He is the senior New Testament editor of the *NET Bible* and coeditor of the *NET-Nestle Greek-English diglot*. Recently his scholarship has shifted from syntactical and text-critical issues to more specific work in John, Mark, and nascent Christology. However he still works extensively in textual criticism, and has founded The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, an institute with an initial purpose to preserve Scripture by taking digital photographs of all known Greek New Testament manuscripts. His postdoctoral work includes work on Greek grammar at Tyndale House in Cambridge and textual criticism studies at the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster.

And Dr. Wallace writes about the passage in John on Bible.org.

Excerpt:

> One hundred and forty years ago, conservative biblical scholar and Dean of Canterbury, Henry Alford, advocated a new translation to replace the King James Bible. One of his reasons was the inferior textual basis of the KJV. Alford argued that "a translator of Holy Scripture must be…ready to sacrifice the choicest text, and the plainest proof of doctrine, if the words are not those of what he is constrained in his conscience to receive as God's testimony." He was speaking about the Trinitarian formula found in the KJV rendering of 1 John 5:7–8. Twenty

years later, two Cambridge scholars came to the firm conclusion that John 7:53–8:11 also was not part of the original text of scripture. But Westcott and Hort's view has not had nearly the impact that Alford's did.

For a long time, biblical scholars have recognized the poor textual credentials of the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11). The evidence against its authenticity is overwhelming: The earliest manuscripts with substantial portions of John's Gospel (P66 and P75) lack these verses. They skip from John 7:52 to 8:12. The oldest large codices of the Bible also lack these verses: codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both from the fourth century, are normally considered to be the most important biblical manuscripts of the NT extant today. Neither of them has these verses. Codex Alexandrinus, from the fifth century, lacks several leaves in the middle of John. But because of the consistency of the letter size, width of lines, and lines per page, the evidence is conclusive that this manuscript also lacked the *pericope adulterae*. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, also from the fifth century, apparently lacked these verses as well (it is similar to Alexandrinus in that some leaves are missing).The earliest extant manuscript to have these verses is codex Bezae, an eccentric text once in the possession of Theodore Beza. He gave this manuscript to the University of Cambridge in 1581 as a gift, telling the school that he was confident that the scholars there would be able to figure out its significance. He washed his hands of the document. Bezae is indeed the most eccentric NT manuscript extant today, yet it is the chief representative of the Western text-type (the text-form that became dominant in Rome and the Latin West).

When P66, P75, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus agree, their combined testimony is overwhelmingly strong that a particular reading is not authentic. But it is not only the early Greek manuscripts that lack this text. The great majority of Greek manuscripts through the first eight centuries lack this pericope. And except for Bezae (or codex D), virtually all of the most important Greek witnesses through the first eight centuries do not have the verses. Of the three most important early versions of the New Testament (Coptic, Latin, Syriac), two of them lack the story in their earliest and best witnesses. The Latin alone has the story in its best early witnesses.

[…]It is an important point to note that although the story of the woman caught in adultery is found in most of our printed Bibles today, the evidence suggests that the majority of Bibles during the first eight centuries of the Christian faith did not contain the story. Externally, most scholars would say that the evidence for it not being an authentic part of John's Gospel is rock solid.But textual criticism is not based on external evidence alone; there is also the internal evidence to consider. This is comprised of two parts: *intrinsic evidence* has to do with what an author is likely to have written; *transcriptional evidence* has to do with how and why a scribe would have changed the text.

Intrinsically, the vocabulary, syntax, and style look far more like Luke than they

> do John. There is almost nothing in these twelve verses that has a Johannine flavor. And transcriptionally, scribes were almost always prone to add material rather than omit it—especially a big block of text such as this, rich in its description of Jesus' mercy. One of the remarkable things about this passage, in fact, is that it is found in multiple locations. Most manuscripts that have it place it in its now traditional location: between John 7:52 and 8:12. But an entire family of manuscripts has the passage at the end of Luke 21, while another family places it at the end of John's Gospel. Other manuscripts place it at the end of Luke or in various places in John 7.
>
> The *pericope adulterae* has all the earmarks of a pericope that was looking for a home. It took up permanent residence, in the ninth century, in the middle of the fourth gospel.

So when you take a closer look at the issue, the Bible is very solid on being in favor of capital punishment for serious crimes. I think people who take the Bible seriously should take this view as well. If you go outside the Bible, well, then you might come up with a different view.

Wendy Davis divorced her second husband one day after he paid off her student loans

January 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wendy Davis: Feminist champion and independent woman

So, it turns out that Wendy Davis has been misleading or even lying about her background for political ends.

Here are the facts from the Dallas Morning News. (H/T Letitia)

Excerpt:

> Wendy Davis has made her personal story of struggle and success a centerpiece of her campaign to become the first Democrat elected governor of Texas in almost a quarter-century.
>
> While her state Senate filibuster last year captured national attention, it is her biography — a divorced teenage mother living in a trailer who earned her way to Harvard and political achievement — that her team is using to attract voters and boost fundraising.

Was she a divorced teenaged mother? Not quite:

> **She was 17 and still in high school when she moved in with her boyfriend, a construction worker named Frank Underwood. She got pregnant, married and "some time between [age] 19 and 20 was when Frank and I separated," she said.**
>
> Davis remained in the mobile home a few months, then moved in with her mother before getting her own apartment. She got custody of her daughter, Amber, and Underwood was ordered to pay child support.
>
> Under terms of the divorce, he got a boat, the mobile home and the responsibility for the mortgage on it. She got a 3-year-old Pontiac Grand Prix, a 1972 Firebird and a 1967 Chevy pickup. Davis was 21.

I don't think that moving in with a construction worker at that age shows good judgment – it puts possible children at risk of divorce.

More:

> A single mother working two jobs, she met Jeff Davis, a lawyer 13 years older than her, married him and had a second daughter.
>
> […]After they married, when she was 24, they moved into a historic home in the Mistletoe Heights neighborhood of Fort Worth.
>
> […]**When she was accepted to Harvard Law School, Jeff Davis cashed in his 401(k) account and eventually took out a loan to pay for her final year there.**
>
> […]The daughters, then 8 and 2, remained with Jeff Davis in Fort Worth while Wendy Davis was at Harvard.
>
> […]**Jeff Davis said that was right around the time the final payment on their Harvard Law School loan was due. "It was ironic," he said. "I made the last payment, and it was the next day she left."**
>
> […]**In his initial divorce filing, Jeff Davis said the marriage had failed, citing adultery on her part and conflicts that the couple could not overcome.** The final court decree makes no mention of infidelity, granting the divorce solely "on the ground of insupportability."
>
> […]A former colleague and political supporter who worked closely with Davis when she was on the council said the body's work was very time-consuming.
>
> "Wendy is tremendously ambitious," he said, speaking only on condition of anonymity in order to give what he called an honest assessment. "She's not going to let family or raising children or anything else get in her way."

The Daily Caller says that she "relinquished custody" of the children after the divorce.

So, she had a man 13 years her senior pay for half her undergraduate degree, and her time at Harvard Law School, and then when the last student loan payment was made, she divorced him and *abandoned her own children.* You definitely don't want to elect a person whose desire to be perceived in a positive way by others causes her *to lie* about herself, to make herself appear as a victim when the truth is that she was a gold-digger and a bad mother. Truth-telling is important, and especially important for a governor.

So here is my point about all of this. *What did people expect from this woman?* Do people really think that someone who stands up and advocates the outright murder/infanticide of unborn children after 20 weeks could be relied on to tell the truth? Would she be a good wife? Would she be a good mother? Or are people so taken in by her attractive appearance that they invent in their minds a completely fictional world where pink running shoes and blonde hair are all that matter in assessing a person's character?

Abortion is a way of killing people you created by your own decisions. These people are weaker than you. They are depending on you to take responsibility for what you did, and

to choose who you have sex with wisely. But you are killing them anyway, in order to stop them from taking your money and time. It's possible for someone like Wendy Davis to look glamorous and pretty on the outside and be evil and selfish on the inside. That doesn't mean that she is irredeemable, but it does mean that she would make a *lousy* governor.

Good leaders should care about other people, and especially children, and even more so their own children who were created because of their choice of man and choice of activity with that man. Good leaders take responsibility for what they do, and they honor moral obligations to others. Caring for others requires good decision-making and planning. You can't break all the moral rules and choose men poorly, and then expect your children to get what they need. Life isn't that unpredictable – there is a need for humility and wisdom. Ambition doesn't cure selfishness, it just masks it.

Wendy Davis responds

Wendy Davis has responded to these revelations by melting down on Twitter, which reflects poorly on her leadership ability, and then criticizing her opponent because he hasn't "walked a day in her shoes", which is some sort of back-handed attack on his disability – he is a paraplegic. She also implied that he doesn't know what it is to struggle with difficulties in life. The man is *paralyzed,* for God's sake.

Additionally, the Houston Chronicle reports that her campaign is trying to hush up her ex-husband from telling more about what really happened. (H/T Legal Insurrection via Letitia)

Excerpt:

> *"They've asked me not to talk to reporters," Jeff said.* He is anyway, because: "If she runs, the scrutiny on her will be extraordinary. She needs to deal with it in a constructive way. She needs to take control of the message. … My goal in all this, I think, is just try and protect the kids as much as I can."

Now this should be the end of her campaign, but seriously, I wonder whether all of this crap is just going to cause her supporters to double down on voting for her "victimhood". I would not be surprised, because we re-elected Obama. Every criticism of his policies (like this study by a Duke U. researcher) was dismissed as "racism", and people actually believed that.

Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann

I just want to remind everyone how two conservative women, who are decidely pro-life and NON-VICTIMS, were *mercilessly attacked* by the left-wing media. I mean Sarah Palin and Michele Bachmann, the latter of whom was my top candidate for President in 2012. I wrote about 50 posts about Michele starting from before she even announced her candidacy for President to when she dropped out of the 2012 race. If you are going to pick someone to lead, pick someone with a good marriage and 24 foster kids. Someone who also *quit her job to homeschool her kids when they were struggling in school*.

I'm sure that Michele and her husband had stresses and strains in their marriage, but

they never divorced, either. Women can be great leaders, if they are trustworthy and moral. Michele Bachmann would be a *fine* President. Palin also seemed to have this calm, responsible demeanor. She took *a lot* of hits, and never melted down like Hillary Clinton and Wendy Davis have. That's what you're looking for in a leader. But the mainstream press wanted nothing to do with those women leaders, because they were *pro-life,* and that was the difference.

Should welfare be paid to able-bodied Americans indefinitely? Is dependency good for people?

January 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Nancy P. posted this article from the Heritage Foundation, and I thought it would make a good blog post.

Excerpt:

> Food stamp rolls have been growing rapidly. But what many may not realize is that participation among able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) has been skyrocketing compared to the total number of participants. That's just one reason Congress should reform the food stamp program in the farm bill now under consideration. In just four years, the number of able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) on the food stamp rolls skyrocketed by over 2 million. While overall food stamp use grew by 53 percent between Fiscal Year 2007 and Fiscal Year 2010 (from about 26 million to nearly 40 million), it more than doubled among able-bodied adults without dependents during this time–from 1.7 million to 3.9 million–an increase of roughly 127 percent. Food stamp spending today is roughly $80 billion, double what it was in Fiscal Year 2008.
>
> […]While the recession no doubt plays into the increases in food stamp participation, policy loopholes have opened the doors to boost growth as well In his 2009 stimulus bill, Obama allowed states to waive the modest ABAWD work provision (which says that after 3 months ABAWDs must work or perform some type of work activity for 20 hours per week to remain on food stamps).
>
> With the work waivers in place, ABAWDs can stay on food stamps for an unlimited amount of time without working or preparing for work. Without a work requirement it is difficult to ensure food stamps are not going to those who could otherwise work. A work requirement acts as a gatekeeper: those who really need assistance can still get it, while those who may not really need it will be deterred, thus targeting resources to the truly needy. It also encourages individuals to move towards work, and it can provide job training and other employment help.
>
> Self-sufficiency for able-bodied adults should be the goal of any sound welfare policy. Unfortunately, most of the government's 80-plus welfare programs–including food stamps–aren't focused in this direction.
>
> Helping those in need means helping them rise above government dependence. Unfortunately, self-sufficiency seems to be kicked to the bottom of the list all too often when it comes to reforming the nation's broken welfare system. It's time for Congress to realize that helping individuals means a hand-up, not merely a handout.

A long time ago, there was a reasonable, temporary safety net that was available to

people who were in real need of relief. But now it seems as if the government is spending alot of money on these programs, and often to people who are not trying to get out of their dependency situation on their own.

Here is what I do not want to have happen:

1. Government confiscates the earnings of job creators and employees through taxation
2. Government keeps some fraction of the money for their salaries, benefits and pensions
3. Government gives some of the money to Planned Parenthood and Solyndra
4. Government gives some money to people who are likely to vote for them
5. The people who get the money vote for bigger government, and are discouraged from working
6. The children of the people who are dependent on government see a bad example of dependency

It seems to me that if you look in the Bible, there is no support for government-controlled redistribution of wealth as a cure for "poverty". There is support there for industry and business, and voluntary charity. Most of the poverty in the USA is, in my opinion, either caused by government policies or caused by individual decisions, like dropping out of school or having children before marriage. This is a wealthy country, and people are very generous with charity. They would be even more generous if government were more limited so that they could keep more of their own money for charity. I think the problem with the left is that they think that people don't give to charity, since they don't, and must be forced to pay taxes. But we on the right are not like you. I would rather give away twice as much as I pay in taxes rather than pay what I pay in taxes. I love charity, and the only thing stopping me from giving away more is taxes.

This previous post about earned success references a Wall Street Journal article written by Arthur Brooks (president of the American Enterprise Institute) is also relevant, I think.

Does the Bible teach government-controlled wealth redistribution to help the poor?

January 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eric from Ratio Christi posted an essay by famous Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland entitled "A Biblical Case for Limited Government".

About the author:

> I am the Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University in La Mirada, California. I have four earned degrees: a B.S. in chemistry from the University of Missouri, a Th.M. in theology from Dallas Theological Seminary, an M. A. in philosophy from the University of California-Riverside, and a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Southern California.

Here's the intro from the essay:

> In what follows, I shall argue that, when properly interpreted, biblical teaching implies a minimal government with a specific function to be mentioned shortly. I will begin by describing the three-way worldview struggle in our country and explain why two of those worldviews have a vested interest in big government. I will then present a biblical methodology for getting at scriptural teaching about the state. I will apply that methodology to support the claim that Israel's ethical policies in the Old Testament are better analogies for the church/covenant community than for the government, and in this context I will clarify the role that "defining terms of address" plays in my discussion. I will then distinguish negative and positive rights and argue that the best texts for unpacking biblical teaching about the state are two: four key New Testament texts and the obligations placed on pagan nations by the Old Testament prophets. I will try to show that these key texts depict the state as a protector of negative rights and not a provider of positive rights. Thus the scriptures support a limited view of government and its function.
>
> Next, I will turn to a description of the decisive feature of New Testament ethics in general, and Jesus's ethics in particular, namely, virtue ethics with voluntary adherence to the love commands. I will show that, given this ethic, the state may be able to show mercy, but it cannot show compassion due to both the nature of the state and the nature of compassion. I will close with a brief treatment of the importance of Natural Moral Law in the state's fulfilling of its God-given role so as to avoid a theocracy. And I will examine the charge that commitment to the Natural Moral Law makes one an intolerant bigot.

And here's the best part:

> [W]e need to make a distinction between positive and negative rights. A positive

> right is a right to have something given to the right-holder. If Smith has a positive right to X, say to health care, then the state has an obligation to give X to Smith. In general, positive rights and duties are correlative. That is, if someone has a positive right to something, then a duty is placed on others to provide that right to that person (or class of persons). Thus the state has the moral right to impose on citizens the duty to provide that right to the right-holder. A negative right to X is a right to be protected from harm while one seeks to get X on one's own. If Smith has a negative right to X, say to health care, then the state has an obligation to protect Smith from discrimination and unfair treatment in his attempt to get X on his own. We learn much if we approach key biblical texts about the state armed with the distinction between positive and negative rights.

Then he brings up the Romans 13 passage that Wayne Grudem mentioned yesterday in the post on the Bible and capital punishment, which talks about how the state can punish evildoers.

More:

> A second feature of the Romans 13 text is that it seems to depict the state as the protector of individuals from harm due to negative-rights violations (and as the praiser of those who do not engage in such law-breaking behavior) rather than as the provider of positive rights. In the preceding context (Romans 12:17-21), the issue in focus is someone who has had evil done against him, i.e., has had his negative rights violated. The passage makes clear that in such a case, the individual is not to take revenge and repay evil with evil. This would most naturally raise a question of criminal justice, viz., will the person have to pay for what he/she did to me in this age? Romans 13:1-7 answers that question in the affirmative by stating that such justice is precisely the purpose of the state. Moreover, in the verses that follow Romans 13:1-7 (verses 8-10) the focus is on showing compassion and love to one another, a topic mentioned in Romans 12:20 in the context of providing things (food and drink) for one who has harmed you. Now while compassion, love, and providing for others are mentioned just before and after Romans 13:1-7, it is significant that these topics fall from sight when the nature and function of the state is in view. A good explanation for this is that the state is not to be in the business of showing compassion (for more on this, see below) or providing positive rights for others. That is an individual moral responsibility. No, the state is the protector of negative rights.
>
> […]By contrast with the voluntary nature of compassion and genuine ethical action, the state is coercive and forces conformity to its dictates. The coercive approach works well when the state is protecting negative rights, but it raises an ethical problem if the state tries to provide positive rights. While the state can show mercy—it bears the sword and can refrain from using it—the state cannot show compassion. As an individual, a representative of the state can

> have compassion in his heart as he gives to the poor; but this compassion is exhibited by him qua individual and not qua representative of the state. The state's care for the poor is coercive since it redistributes wealth by force. It takes from some and gives to others, all by the force of law. Such actions count for very little in God's eyes because they do not reflect the features of Jesus's ethic identified above. And because Jesus was not a utilitarian, even if such actions accomplish good ends, the end does not justify the means. In a biblical ethic, helping the poor by the coercive power of the state is of little ethical value. If I am right about this, then it follows that when the state steps outside its role of protecting the violation of negative rights, the state will be incompetent and less effective than private or charitable alternatives.

And J.P. Moreland is right about it. This is a great essay and it helped me to understand how to talk about these issues. I think you should print this out and read it. Send it to everyone, especially young people who seem to be so confused about the free market system.

You can grab the PDF here from the Institute for Faith, Work and Economics (IFWE). It's only 11 pages long, without footnotes. It took me only 15 minutes to read it.

Sweden turning to capitalism as money for government spending runs out

January 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I hear a lot of people in my office predicting doom and gloom for the United States. Rubbish. The worst that's going to happen is that we have the kind of slow economy that France has, and that will only last until we run out of money to borrow.

Yahoo News explains what happens when socialists run out of money.

Excerpt:

> The Nordic model, known for high taxes and its cradle-to-grave welfare system, is getting a radical makeover as nations find themselves cash-strapped.
>
> […]In the wake of a banking crisis in the early nineties, Stockholm scrapped housing subsidies, reformed the pension system and slashed the healthcare budget.

> A voucher-based system that allows for-profit schools to compete with state schools was introduced, and has drawn attention from right-wing politicians elsewhere, including Britain's Conservative Party.
>
> In 2006, conservative Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt's government accelerated the pace of reform, tightening the criteria for unemployment benefits and sick pay while lowering taxes.
>
> Income tax in Sweden is now lower than in France, Belgium and Denmark, and public spending as a share of GDP has declined from a record 71.0 percent in 1993 to 53.3 percent last year.

Just so you know, his numbers might be out of date.

The latest Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom says this:

> The top individual income tax rate is 57 percent, and the top corporate tax rate has been cut to 22 percent. Other taxes include a value-added tax (VAT) and a capital gains tax. The overall tax burden is 44.5 percent of GDP. Public expenditures make up about half of GDP, and public debt is below 40 percent of GDP. The government is attempting to expand investment in infrastructure and research while reining in welfare spending.

The United States had this:

> The top individual income tax rate has risen to 39.6 percent, and the top corporate tax rate remains at 35 percent. Other taxes include a capital gains tax and excise taxes. The payroll tax holiday expired at the beginning of 2013. The overall tax burden amounts to 25.1 percent of gross domestic income. General government expenditures are slightly over 40 percent of GDP. Total public debt

> equals over 100 percent of the size of the economy.

So we are actually *worse* than Sweden now, in terms of government spending as a percent of GDP.

Denmark, too

More from the Yahoo News article:

> If Sweden is the Nordic country to have gone the furthest in shrinking its welfare state, Denmark has moved the fastest.
>
> When her Social Democratic government took power in 2011, there was little to suggest Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt would make any dramatic changes to the country's cherished welfare state — funded by the world's highest tax burden.
>
> After a centre-right government had raised the retirement age and reduced the unemployment benefits period from four to two years, "Gucci Helle" — as she is known among her detractors — went on to cut corporate taxes to 22 percent from 25 percent.
>
> Other reforms have included requiring young people on benefits to undertake training, and withdrawing student aid to those taking too long to finish their studies.
>
> Denmark has been spurred into action by a persistently sluggish economy since a housing bubble imploded in 2007, leading to anaemic household spending.
>
> But among Danes there is also a sense that the welfare state was ballooning out of control.
>
> In 2011, a TV report aiming to show what life was like for the poor in Denmark visited the home of a single mother on benefits, whose disposable income turned out to be 15,728 kroner (2,107 euros, $2,860) per month.
>
> "Poor Carina", as she was later nicknamed, sparked a national debate on the level of unemployment benefits, with one pollster crediting her with fuelling a rise in the number of people who felt benefits were too high.

It would be nice if we had journalists who could do a story like that.

A different article from a Swedish newspaper called The Local has more on the new Sweden.

Excerpt:

> One in ten Swedes now has private health insurance, often through their employers, with some recipients stating it makes business sense to be seen quickly rather than languish in national health care queues.
> More than half a million Swedes now have private health insurance, showed a new review from industry organization Swedish Insurance (Svensk Försäkring). In eight out of ten cases, the person's employer had offered them the private

> insurance deal.
>
> “It’s quicker to get a colleague back to work if you have an operation in two weeks’ time rather than having to wait for a year,” privately insured Anna Norlander told Sveriges Radio on Friday. “It’s terrible that I, as a young person, don’t feel I can trust the health care system to take care of me.”
>
> The insurance plan guarantees that she can see a specialist within four working days, and get a time for surgery, if needed, within 15.

I used to make fun of Sweden for being so socialist, but then I started to read more about them on Reason.com and from the Cato Institute (two libertarian sites) and my mind changed. These new articles confirm for me that Sweden is improving their economy by embracing the free market system and rejecting socialism. Obviously, there is more to do, but the trend is good, and the results cannot be questioned. What could the United States do if we acted more like Sweden? It seems like just as they are moving away from government control of health care, we are moving towards it! We are embracing old ideas, and we need something new.

I am still worried about the European countries because of the breakdown of the family, the disrespect of marraige and the low fertility rates. But still, this is a good sign for those of us who are worrying that we need to cheer up. This is how socialism ends. We’ll get there.

Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms

January 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation. (H/T Tom)

Excerpt:

> Weakening marital norms and severing the connection of marriage with responsible procreation are the admitted goals of many prominent advocates of redefining marriage. E. J. Graff celebrates the fact that redefining marriage would change the "institution's message" so that it would "ever after stand for sexual choice, for cutting the link between sex and diapers." Enacting same-sex marriage, she argues, "does more than just fit; it announces that marriage has changed shape."[3]
>
> Andrew Sullivan says that marriage has become "primarily a way in which two adults affirm their emotional commitment to one another."[4]
>
> **The Norm of Monogamy.** New York University Professor Judith Stacey has expressed hope that redefining marriage would give marriage "varied, creative and adaptive contours," leading some to "question the dyadic limitations of Western marriage and seek…small group marriages."[5] In their statement "Beyond Same-Sex Marriage," more than 300 "LGBT and allied" scholars and advocates call for legal recognition of sexual relationships involving more than two partners.[6]
>
> University of Calgary Professor Elizabeth Brake thinks that justice requires using legal recognition to "denormalize[] heterosexual monogamy as a way of life" and "rectif[y] past discrimination against homosexuals, bisexuals, polygamists, and care networks." She supports "minimal marriage" in which "individuals can have legal marital relationships with more than one person, reciprocally or asymmetrically, themselves determining the sex and number of parties, the type of relationship involved, and which rights and responsibilities to exchange with each."[7]
>
> In 2009, *Newsweek* reported that the United States already had over 500,000 polyamorous households.[8] The author concluded:
>
> [P]erhaps the practice is more natural than we think: a response to the challenges of monogamous relationships, whose shortcomings…are clear.… [C]an one person really satisfy every need? Polyamorists think the answer is obvious—and that it's only a matter of time before the monogamous world sees there's more than one way to live and love.[9]
>
> A 2012 article in *New York Magazine* introduced Americans to "throuple," a new term akin to a "couple," but with three people whose "throuplehood is more or

less a permanent domestic arrangement. The three men work together, raise dogs together, sleep together, miss one another…and, in general, exemplify a modern, adult relationship. Except that there are three of them."[10]

The Norm of Exclusivity. Andrew Sullivan, who has extolled the "spirituality" of "anonymous sex," also thinks that the "openness" of same-sex unions could enhance the bonds of husbands and wives:

[A]mong gay male relationships, the openness of the contract makes it more likely to survive than many heterosexual bonds…. [T]here is more likely to be greater understanding of the need for extramarital outlets between two men than between a man and a woman…. [S]omething of the gay relationship's necessary honesty, its flexibility, and its equality could undoubtedly help strengthen and inform many heterosexual bonds.[11]

"Openness" and "flexibility" are Sullivan's euphemisms for sexual infidelity. Similarly, in a *New York Times Magazine* profile, gay activist Dan Savage encourages spouses to adopt "a more flexible attitude" about allowing each other to seek sex outside their marriage.[12] *The New York Times* recently reported on a study finding that exclusivity was not the norm among gay partners: "'With straight people, it's called affairs or cheating,' said Colleen Hoff, the study's principal investigator, 'but with gay people it does not have such negative connotations.'"[13]

Leading Advocates of Redefining Marriage Celebrate That It Will Weaken Marriage

Some advocates of redefining marriage embrace the goal of weakening the institution of marriage *in these very terms*. "[Former President George W.] Bush is correct," says Victoria Brownworth, "when he states that allowing same-sex couples to marry will weaken the institution of marriage…. It most certainly will do so, and that will make marriage a far better concept than it previously has been."[14]Professor Ellen Willis celebrates the fact that "conferring the legitimacy of marriage on homosexual relations will introduce an implicit revolt against the institution into its very heart."[15]

Michelangelo Signorile urges same-sex couples to "demand the right to marry not as a way of adhering to society's moral codes but rather to debunk a myth and radically alter an archaic institution."[16]Same-sex couples should, he says, "fight for same-sex marriage and its benefits and then, once granted, redefine the institution of marriage completely, because the most subversive action lesbians and gay men can undertake…is to transform the notion of 'family' entirely."[17]

It is no surprise that there is already evidence of this occurring. A federal judge in Utah allowed a legal challenge to anti-bigamy laws.[18] A bill that would allow a child to have three legal parents passed both houses of the California state legislature in 2012 before it was vetoed by the governor, who claimed he wanted

> “to take more time to consider all of the implications of this change.”[19]

It’s very important to understand that the typical gay relationship between males is not going to conform to the lifelong, exclusive commitment that heterosexual marriage involves. You can read about the numbers right here on this paper from the Family Research Council, which collects together evidence from secular sources, such as the U.S. Census and peer-reviewed research.

Take a look:

> Research indicates that the average male homosexual has hundreds of sex partners in his lifetime:
>
> ▪ The Dutch study of partnered homosexuals, which was published in the journal *AIDS*, found that men with a steady partner had an average of eight sexual partners per year.[12]
>
> ▪ Bell and Weinberg, in their classic study of male and female homosexuality, found that 43 percent of white male homosexuals had sex with 500 or more partners, with 28 percent having one thousand or more sex partners.[13]
>
> ▪ In their study of the sexual profiles of 2,583 older homosexuals published in the *Journal of Sex Research*, Paul Van de Ven et al. found that “the modal range for number of sexual partners ever [of homosexuals] was 101-500.” In addition, 10.2 percent to 15.7 percent had between 501 and 1,000 partners. A further 10.2 percent to 15.7 percent reported having had more than one thousand lifetime sexual partners.[14]
>
> ▪ A survey conducted by the homosexual magazine *Genre* found that 24 percent of the respondents said they had had more than one hundred sexual partners in their lifetime. The magazine noted that several respondents suggested including a category of those who had more than one thousand sexual partners.[15]
>
> […]Even in those homosexual relationships in which the partners consider themselves to be in a committed relationship, the meaning of “committed” or “monogamous” typically means something radically different than in heterosexual marriage.
>
> ▪ A Canadian study of homosexual men who had been in committed relationships lasting longer than one year found that only 25 percent of those interviewed reported being monogamous.” According to study author Barry Adam, “Gay culture allows men to explore different…forms of relationships besides the monogamy coveted by heterosexuals.”[16]
>
> ▪ The *Handbook of Family Diversity* reported a study in which “many self-described ‘monogamous’ couples reported an average of three to five partners in the past year. Blasband and Peplau (1985) observed a similar pattern.”[17]
>
> ▪ In *The Male Couple*, authors David P. McWhirter and Andrew M. Mattison reported that, in a study of 156 males in homosexual relationships lasting from

> one to thirty-seven years:
>
> Only seven couples have a totally exclusive sexual relationship, and these men all have been together for less than five years. Stated another way, all couples with a relationship lasting more than five years have incorporated some provision for outside sexual activity in their relationships.[18]

Are we ready to call that marriage? Isn't it bad enough that we already have undermined the permanence and stability of marriage with no-fault divorce laws and giving benefits to common-law couples? Don't you think that these factors will undermine stability, the same way that infidelity undermines heterosexual relationships?

But marriage is a particular thing. It's permanent. It's exclusive. It's not based on feelings and desires. The purpose of marriage is to recognize and encourage people to constrain and bound their sexual activity for the benefit of society. We want to encourage parents to bond together permanently and exclusively, so that the bond is stable. We should be encouraging people to be chaste before marriage, to make good decisions about who to marry, to reward marriages that last, and to make it harder to get out of a marriage. Especially one with children.

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalistic alternatives to the Big Bang

January 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture, which was given in 2004 at the University of Colorado, Boulder. A very liberal university!

This lecture might be a little advanced for beginners, but if you stretch your mind first, you shouldn't tear anything. (Note: standard disclaimers apply if you do tear something!)

The description of the video states:

> This is quite simply one of the best lectures William Lane Craig (a philosopher of science) has given. Craig explores the origins of the universe. He argues for a beginning of the universe, while refuting scientific models like the Steady State Theory, the Oscillating Theory, Quantum Vacuum Fluctuation Model, Chaotic Inflationary Theory, Quantum Gravity Theory, String Theory, M-Theory and Cyclic Ekpyrotic Theory.

And here is the description of the lecture from Reasonable Faith:

> A Templeton Foundation lecture at the University of Colorado, Boulder, laying out the case from contemporary cosmology for the beginning of the universe and its theological implications. Includes a lengthy Q & A period which features previous critics and debate opponents of Dr. Craig who were in attendance, including Michael Tooley, Victor Stenger, and Arnold Guminski.

Craig has previously debated famous atheists Stenger and Tooley previously. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A time of this lecture. Imagine – having laid out your entire case to two people who have debated you before and who know your arguments well. What did they ask Craig, and how did he respond?

The scientific evidence

The Big Bang cosmology that Dr. Craig presents is the standard model for how the universe came into being. It is a theory based on six lines of experimental evidence.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe
3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

If you are looking for some detail on these evidences, here's a re-cap of the three main

evidences for the Big Bang cosmology from Caltech. (Numbers 2, 3 and 5 from the list above)

Excerpt:

> Until the early 1900s, most people had assumed that the universe was fixed in size. New possibilities opened up in 1915, when Einstein formulated his famous general relativity theory that describes the nature of space, time, and gravity. This theory allows for expansion or contraction of the fabric of space. In 1917, astronomer Willem de Sitter applied this theory to the entire universe and boldly went on to show that the universe could be expanding. Aleksandr Friedmann, a mathematician, reached the same conclusion in a more general way in 1922, as did Georges Lemaître, a cosmologist and a Jesuit, in 1927. This step was revolutionary since the accepted view at the time was that the universe was static in size. Tracing back this expanding universe, Lemaître imagined all matter initially contained in a tiny universe and then exploding. These thoughts introduced amazing new possibilities for the universe, but were independent of observation at that time.
>
> **Why Do We Think the Big Bang Happened?**
>
> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

It's probably a good idea to be familiar with these if you are presenting this argument, because experimental science is a reliable way of knowing about reality.

Published research paper

This lecture by Dr. Craig is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Here's the peer-reviewed article that the lecture is based on.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the

> ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

If you want something to post on your Twitter or Facebook that is much shorter than this lecture, then you should check out this quick 4-minute explanation of the kalam argument.

Only 11% of new Obamacare enrollees were previously uninsured

January 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Early signals suggest the majority of the 2.2 million people who sought to enroll in private insurance through new marketplaces through Dec. 28 were previously covered elsewhere, raising questions about how swiftly this part of the health overhaul will be able to make a significant dent in the number of uninsured.
>
> Insurers, brokers and consultants estimate at least two-thirds of those consumers previously bought their own coverage or were enrolled in employer-backed plans.
>
> The data, based on surveys of enrollees, are preliminary. But insurers say the tally of newly insured consumers is falling short of their expectations, a worrying trend for an industry looking to the law to expand the ranks of its customers.
>
> About 48 million Americans were uninsured in 2012. The health law is expected to cut 25 million from that total by expanding state-run Medicaid programs and the pool of privately insured people who buy through state marketplaces, also called exchanges.
>
> Only 11% of consumers who bought new coverage under the law were previously uninsured, according to a McKinsey & Co. survey of consumers thought to be eligible for the health-law marketplaces. The result is based on a sampling of 4,563 consumers performed between November and January, of whom 389 had enrolled in new insurance.
>
> One reason for people declining to purchase plans was affordability. That was cited by 52% of those who had shopped for a new plan but not purchased one in McKinsey's most recent sampling, performed in January. Another common problem was technical challenges in buying the plans, which 30% mentioned.

I thought that the point of Obamacare was to reduce the number of uninsured Americans. Well, I guess if you know 129 million people out of their current insurance, and some of those people who are now uninsured will be obligated by law to buy Obamacare health care plans, then that counts as reducing the uninsured, right? I mean – they were uninsured when you knocked them out of their current health plan, right? It makes sense. Like me robbing you of $500 and then giving you $50 back. Good deal, right?

Previously, the Wall Street Journal reported on how the number of young people enrolling was WAY below estimates, which will increase the losses of the private insurance companies.

Excerpt:

> **Just under a quarter of the roughly 2.2 million people who signed up for private plans nationwide by Dec. 28 were between the ages of 18 and 34, while one-third were in the 55-to-64 range, just short of the age at which most qualify for Medicare, the federal government program for the elderly.**

> […]Under the 2010 Affordable Care Act, consumers no longer pay premiums based on their health risks. To prevent a sharp rise in premiums in 2015 and beyond, carriers say they need strong enrollment from younger people who are likely to be healthier. That would balance out the bills racked up by sicker and older people.
>
> […]"There's no way to spin it: Youth enrollment has been a bust so far," said Brendan Buck, a spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner (R., Ohio). "When they see that Obamacare offers high costs for limited access to doctors—if the enrollment goes through at all—it's no surprise that young people aren't rushing to sign up."

Previously, I blogged about a study that showed that young people have to pay are much higher than pre-Obamacare health plans. That's why fewer of them are enrolling than the Democrats expected. If the insurance companies take losses on this shortfall, then they will need to be bailed out by the government – and the Obamacare bill provides for this bailout. As it stands right now, Moody's has downgraded health insurance companies from stable to negative.

New study: teen pot use could hurt brain and memory

January 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

NBC News reports.

Excerpt:

> Teenage pot smokers could be damaging brain structures critical to memory and reasoning, according to new research that found changes in the brains of heavy users.
>
> Research released Monday in the journal Schizophrenia Bulletin showed the brains of young heavy marijuana users were altered in so-called sub-cortical regions — primitive structures that are part of the memory and reasoning circuits. And young people with such alterations performed worse on memory tests than non-using controls, despite the fact that the heavy users had not indulged for more than two years, on average, before the testing.
>
> "We see that adolescents are at a very vulnerable stage neurodevelopmentally," said Matthew Smith, who led the research team at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago. "And if you throw stuff into the brain that's not supposed to be there, there are long-term implications for their development."
>
> The portion of people ages 12 to 17 who used marijuana during the past month fell to 9.5 percent last year from almost 12 percent in 2002, according to the latest figures from the government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. But that still represents millions of adolescents and teenagers — and the legalization of marijuana has raised the specter that underage people will have easier access.
>
> Adults who smoked pot regularly as teens were shown to have "neuropsychological decline" and "more cognitive problems" than non-users in a study last year in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS). This was true even if users stopped using long before the study.

I think these papers are useful when talking to young people about drugs. You don't want it to be a situation where you are ordering them around based on nothing more than YOUR needs and YOUR beliefs. Then it turns into a head-butting contest, and you can't watch them all the time. A better alternative is to produce the studies that show the real effects and then ask them what they have on their side. If they are going to rebel anyway, at least you have tried to persuade them rather than control them, and that's good parenting.

Related Posts

- New study finds connection between early use of marijuana and mental illness
- New study: marijuana use by teens is linked to permanent brain abnormalities
- New study: smoking marijuana raises risk of having a stroke
- New study: smoking marijuana/cannabis permanently lowers IQ
- Should we legalize drugs and prostitution like Ron Paul wants?

Do pro-lifers have to adopt unwanted children in order to have standing to oppose abortion?

January 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This was sent to me by my friend Robb. The caller asks Greg whether he has ever taken in any foster children, since he is pro-life. She apparently thinks that Greg cannot be pro-life unless Greg is willing to adopt every crisis pregnancy child who is allowed to be born.

This is the greatest amount of ass-kicking that has ever been accomplished in 10 minutes. I have never heard Greg Koukl lose his temper, but he is clearly a little annoyed with the caller.

Study confirms that predictions about junk DNA by materialists are false

January 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's see what Darwinian evolutionists predict about junk DNA, before we look at what the experiments show.

Here's biologist John Timmer to explain the orthodox Darwinian view of DNA from 2007:

> Personally, I fall into the "it's all junk" end of the spectrum. If almost all of these sequences are not conserved by evolution, and we haven't found a function for any of them yet, it's hard to see how the "none of it's junk" view can be maintained. There's also an absence of support for the intervening view, again because of a lack of evidence for actual utility. The genomes of closely related species have revealed very few genes added from non-coding DNA, and all of the structural RNA we've found has very specific sequence requirements. The all-junk view, in contrast, is consistent with current data.

Got that? According to Darwinists, DNA is almost entirely junk – this is what is consistent with the view that creatures have evolved through a process of random mutation and selection. The estimates that I've seen from evolutionary biologists range from 95% to 99% junk. Now let's compare the religion with science, and separate mythology from reality.

Now let's compare that with intelligent design theorist William Dembski's view of "junk" DNA, from 1998:

> Even if we have a reliable criterion for detecting design, and even if that criterion tells us that biological systems are designed, it seems that determining a biological system to be designed is akin to shrugging our shoulders and saying God did it. The fear is that admitting design as an explanation will stifle scientific inquiry, that scientists will stop investigating difficult problems because they have a sufficient explanation already.
>
> But design is not a science stopper. Indeed, design can foster inquiry where traditional evolutionary approaches obstruct it. Consider the term "junk DNA." Implicit in this term is the view that because the genome of an organism has been cobbled together through a long, undirected evolutionary process, the genome is a patchwork of which only limited portions are essential to the organism. **Thus on an evolutionary view we expect a lot of useless DNA. If, on the other hand, organisms are designed, we expect DNA, as much as possible, to exhibit function. And indeed, the most recent findings suggest that designating DNA as "junk" merely cloaks our current lack of knowledge about function… Design encourages scientists to look for function where evolution discourages it.**

Now let's look at the experimental evidence and see whose prediction was proven right by the progress of science.

Science Daily reports on a recent study that confirms the previous study that falsified Darwinian predictions about junk DNA.

Excerpt:

> Researchers from the Gene and Stem Cell Therapy Program at Sydney's Centenary Institute have confirmed that, far from being "junk," the 97 per cent of human DNA that does not encode instructions for making proteins can play a significant role in controlling cell development.
>
> […]Using the latest gene sequencing techniques and sophisticated computer analysis, a research group led by Professor John Rasko AO and including Centenary's Head of Bioinformatics, Dr William Ritchie, has shown how particular white blood cells use non-coding DNA to regulate the activity of a group of genes that determines their shape and function. The work is published today in the scientific journal*Cell*.
>
> "This discovery, involving what was previously referred to as "junk," opens up a new level of gene expression control that could also play a role in the development of many other tissue types," Rasko says. "Our observations were quite surprising and they open entirely new avenues for potential treatments in diverse diseases including cancers and leukemias."

Now, this is yet another falsification of Darwinism, to go with the other papers that I keep posting about new research that falsifies Darwinism. How many papers do we need to falsify Darwinism? I think if you are in an argument over Darwinism, and you produce these articles, then you win, so long as the other person cannot produce anything. It's also a good idea to couple these pieces of evidence with a positive case for intelligent causes operating during the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion.

Michael Ruse debates Stephen C. Meyer on intelligent design and evolution on NPR

January 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Details: (from NPR web site)

> About one third of Americans believe in intelligent design, according to a recent Gallup poll. That's the idea that humans evolved over time from lesser life forms – with the process guided by God. It's added a new dimension to the old debate over where humans come from and raised serious concern in the scientific world about mixing faith with science.
>
> - Stephen C. Meyer, author of Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design
> - Michael Ruse, Director of the History and Philosophy of Science Program at Florida State University

The MP3 file is here. (28 minutes)

The following summary is rated S for Slightly Snarky. Reader discretion is advised.

Topics:

- Moderator: (to Meyer) define creationism, evolution, and intelligent design
- Meyer: creationism is based on an interpretation of the Bible
- Meyer: evolution is an unguided process of mutation and selection that produces organisms
- Meyer: intelligent design is the idea that the best explanation for certain features of life
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Where do you disagree?
- Ruse: Intelligent design is similar to creationism, but I won't say how exactly
- Meyer: ID is a good explanation for the sudden origin of animal body plans in the Cambrian era
- Moderator: (to Meyer) Is the designer God? Is the designer the Christian God?
- Meyer: No, ID theory is an inference that is rooted in scientific evidence, not in a religious text
- Meyer: ID can be inferred from the origin of biological information and from molecular machines
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Where do you disagree?
- Ruse: Meyer is disingenuous because ID requires the designer to be God
- Meyer: The biological evidence for intelligent design by itself does not implicate God
- Meyer: The fine-tuning of the cosmos is intelligent design in physics, and that *would* require God
- Moderator: (to Meyer) Explain what the Cambrian explosion is

- Meyer: sudden origin of 36 body plans in 10 million years 530 million years ago
- Moderator: So you think that 36 body plans in 10 million years is too sudden for Darwinian mechanisms to produce?
- Meyer: Yes, for two reasons. One, there are no precursors prior to the start of the explosion in complexity
- Meyer: And two, the complexity of animal life includes code, circuitry, hierarchies – best explained by a designer
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Is it a problem for you?
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that denies that the Ediacaran fauna are precursors to the Cambrian animals
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that denies that microfossils are precursors to the Cambrian animals
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that denies that animal complexity goes from simple to complex in the fossil record
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that shows that the Cambrian explosion took place over a few million years
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that shows that there were complex organ types at the start of the Cambrian explosion
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that denies that we already have a materialist explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Ruse: everything is solved! nothing to see here! (folds arms and beams) I trust that my unsupported assertions have relieved your doubts, yes?
- Moderator: Is intelligent design undermined by more recent science?
- Meyer: no, there is an absence of precursor fossils in the period before the Cambrian explosion
- Meyer: there are other things that make the problem even worse for naturalism, like information from epigenetics
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Answer that
- Ruse: He is just pulling out passages out of context because he is a creationist!
- Moderator: The leftist New Yorker reviewer Gareth Cook says that the Cambrian explosion took tens of millions of years
- Meyer: Actually, the peer-reviewed science is clear that the standard date is at most 10 million nears
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Deny the mainstream date
- Ruse: Well, Prothero says no! Ho ho ho! (folds arms) He just says it. No it’s not published in peer-reviewed research
- Ruse: We know so much more than Darwin did, how could the progress of science disprove my materialist pre-supposition? It’s unpossible!
- Moderator: (to Meyer) Isn’t ID pseudo-science?
- Meyer: If we limit ourselves to materialist explanations only, then we cannot infer intelligence when we see artifacts like the Rosetta Stone
- Meyer: wind and erosion is not an adequate explanation for certain systems – systems that are rich in information

- Meyer: the best explanation is the explanation that relies on known causes – we know that intelligence produces information
- Moderator: (to Meyer) so the intelligence is the best explanation of systems that have information?
- Meyer: yes, think about software code – the best explanation of new computer instructions is an intelligence
- Meyer: we have uniform and repeated experience of intelligence bringing new information into being, and new animals need new information
- Moderator: (to Ruse) must science only work with natural explanations?
- Ruse: intelligent design is religion! Ho ho ho ho! (folds arms)
- Ruse: there is no a priori way of ruling out supernatural causes in order to explain nature
- Ruse: We don't need to introduce supernatural causes to explain information in living systems or in software code
- Ruse: Steve is asking me to explain the Cambrian explosion, but why does he want me to explain that?
- Ruse: How did anything start to fly? How did whales come? There, those questions explain the Cambrian explosion naturalistically
- Ruse: Steve's answer to explain new information is to bring in miracles, like when he said that new computer code requires God
- Ruse: inferring intelligence as an explanation for information like the computer code is religion! God! Creationism! Prayer in schools!
- Ruse: we have to keep looking for naturalistic explanations for the Big Bang, the DNA, the fine-tuning, the Cambrian fossils, etc.
- Ruse: we are never justified in inferring an intelligence to explain information, because that would deny my religion of materialism
- Moderator: (to Ruse) what are the requirements for a theory to be scientific?
- Ruse: any explanation has to be naturalistic, because I am an atheist and that's my religion, and we can't go against my religion
- Ruse: it's "really stupid" to infer God as the explanation of the creation of the entire physical universe or the cosmic fine-tuning
- Moderator: (to Meyer) why is intelligent design so popular when we have court cases saying it is not science?
- Meyer: the Discovery Institute does not have an agenda to teach intelligent design in public schools
- Meyer: intelligent design is about inferring intelligence as a causal explanation for information in living systems, and elsewhere
- Moderator: (to Ruse) are evolutionists unwilling to entertain the possibility of intelligence being the best explanation?
- Ruse: scientists have to make sure that that all their explanations don't go outside of the materialist reservation
- Ruse: intelligent design is evangelical Christianity dressed up to look like science, the Dover judge said so

- Ruse: Meyer is disingenuous! Ho ho ho ho ho! (folds arms contentedly)
- Meyer: first, judges don't decide science, evidence decides science
- Meyer: the Dover people made a mistake by trying to go to the courts to get things into the schools
- Meyer: intelligent design is about research, writing books and papers based on what we learn from science
- Moderator: (to Ruse) is intelligent design dangerous?
- Ruse: yes, intelligent design is about politics, it's not about cosmic fine-tuning, origin of life, molecular machines or Cambrian explosion
- Ruse: intelligent design is about abstinence, prayer in schools, burdening women with unwanted babies and male-female marriage
- Ruse: my reason for opposing ID is the socially conservative agenda which emerges from protein folding probability calculations
- Ruse: I don't want to be drafted to fight in Vietnam, I don't want them to take away my drugs, etc. so that's why I believe Darwinism
- Moderator: (to Meyer) why do you want to take abortion away, you meany?
- Meyer: actually, intelligent design is about science, and in any case National Review gave my book a bad review
- Moderator: (to Ruse) are science and religion in conflict?
- Ruse: well religion can just abstain from making any claims about the physical world, and just stick to subjective nonsense – that's fair
- Moderator: (to Meyer) isn't all opposition to evolution rooted in fundamentalist religion?
- Meyer: you can believe in Darwinism and be a theist, but the real reason for doubting Darwinism is the scientific evidence, not religion

Tell me how you think Dr. Meyer did in the comments. I think that Ruse is a Darwinist because he views it as a way to push people away from the conservative morality and politics. But he's a nice guy, and I appreciate him debating the issue. Things are tough right now for his side.

Looking for some inspiration? Here's an interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker

January 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

This interview was conducted by John Hawkins, who runs Right Wing News.

Here's a quick summary of why Scott Walker is famous – he stood up to the public sector unions:

> Q. Outside of Wisconsin you are most famous for taking on the unions in your state; briefly tell us what you did legislatively and what the impact of it has been on the state.
>
> A. The easiest way to explain it is we had a choice. In the past the big union bosses had been in charge of both state and local government. We made a change that ultimately put the hard working taxpayers back in charge and by that, what I mean is under the old system of collective bargaining, not only the state but local governments had to abide by union contracts that many times were run contrary to the best interest of the taxpayers and to the people they newly elected. So we came in early 2011, we faced a big budget deficit, $3.6 billion per capita, one of the biggest in the country — and we knew to balance our budget we weren't going to raise taxes, we weren't going to do massive layoffs, we weren't going to cut things like Medicaid. Instead we put in place these long-term structure reforms that put the power back in the hands of, again, of the hard working taxpayers.
>
> **By pulling back on collective bargaining we empowered local governments, school districts, counties, cities, towns, villages, and the state to go out and control and not only get things like reasonable pension and healthcare contributions which were nowhere in line with the private sector, but they got to change work rules and everything else as part of running a government. We went from a $3.6 billion budget deficit to today we finished our fiscal year off with just shy of a**

> **$760 million surplus. We cut taxes a billion and a half and an unemployment rate that was once 9.2% is now 6.3% — so we've had some positive results and we're going to keep on that path.**

What Scott Walker is famous for is that he passes laws that work so well that even in one of the bluest states, he can win elections. Why is that? It's because if your policies are good, you will get good results. And people recognize good results regardless of their party identification. If you couple good results with sincerity and honesty, then you can win over a lot of independents and even some conservative Democrats.

And this is the part that made me the happiest to read:

> Q. In your book you encourage Republicans to do something important that the GOP, much to its detriment, has gotten out of the habit of doing. You said we should champion the vulnerable. Talk a little bit about that, talk about why that's important for Republicans to do.
>
> A. Yeah, one of the things that frustrates me so much in the Presidential election is I thought there was a tremendous lost opportunity — and obviously the clearest example of that was when Republican nominees talked about the 47% and also in a similar conversation talked about not worrying about the poor because the poor had a safety net. That really, truly doesn't match where I'm at. I don't think it matches with people like Ronald Reagan who was a great inspiration for me as a kid. I went back in the book and talked about how Reagan in 1980 at the National Convention in Detroit in his acceptance speech talked about things like saying if you're living in poverty, we want to lift you out. If you're living in despair, we want to be hope, but that hope isn't based on more government. It's based on empowering people with the skills and the talents and the abilities that they need to go out and control their own lives and so I think the message is really simple, I believe, and I think this was the missed opportunity. I believe the president and his allies in Washington in particular measure success in government by how many people are dependent on government, by how many people are on Medicaid, by how many people are on food stamps, by how many people are on unemployment. That's why they want to extend unemployment benefits. They want more people signed up, more people dependent. I think we as Republicans should measure success by just the opposite — by how many people are no longer dependent on the government, not because we've got to be careful to articulate this correctly, not because we don't care about people or because we want to push people out to the streets, but because we understand that true freedom and prosperity don't come from the mighty hand of the government. It comes from empowering the people to control their own lives and their own destiny. One example that I give in the book that I've talked about before is we made a change in food stamps that said if you want to get food stamps, if you don't have kids, you're an adult in our state and you want to get food stamps, you've either got to be working part-time or you've got to be in one

> of my employment training programs, and I said it's simple.
>
> I don't want to make it harder to get government assistance. I want to make it easier to get a job and we've got to show people. **I think any of us who either have our own households or who have friends who have sons or daughters who are in their 20's, they're at college and at some point you say to your son or daughter eventually in their best interest, "Hey, it's time to move out of the house. It's time to get your own job and your own place." That's not about being heartless and cold. That's just the opposite. It's about you love your kids so much you want to get them out and help them get on their own two feet so they can have the pride that comes from work in controlling their own destiny.**

Now, recently there was post on Politico about 10 people who should give the Republican response to the state of the union address (SOTU), and Walker was in the top spot. I heard about this list on Dennis Prager's show, and it came up again on Michael Medved's show. Now I think Prager is more of a principled conservative, and Medved is more of a pragmatic moderate. And yet they both thought that Walker should do the response. I think that Republicans across the spectrum are realizing that we need to pick someone competent in order to be different from the Democrats.

During the Christmas vacation, I read governor Walker's new book, which was a Christmas present from my friend ECM. If you want to learn more about governor Walker, I recommend picking that up. I actually got the audio version, and it's read by governor Walker himself.

Related posts

- Wisconsin judge defends free speech rights of conservative groups against Democrat censors
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Kenosha teachers vote to de-certify their teacher union, 63 – 37
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- What is a "right-to-work" law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues
- Democrat lawmakers flee state to avoid voting on spending cuts

A closer look at the journey to atheism of Nathan Pratt

January 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a deconversion testimony by an atheist on Prayson Daniel's blog, and I thought it might be useful to take a look at it.

But first, I want to recap some reasons why people think that God exists.

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

In addition to these arguments for theism, Christians would make be some sort of minimal facts case for the resurrection, one that leverages the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. And some sort of case for the early belief that Jesus was divine.

In addition to those positive evidences, there would be informed defenses to other questions like the problem of evil, the problem of suffering, religious pluralism, the hiddenness of God, materialist conceptions of mind, consciousness and neuroscience, the justice of eternal damnation, sovereignty and free will, the doctrine of the Incarnation, the doctrine of the Trinity, and so on.

I listed these out so that you can see how many of these positive arguments and defenses that he wrestles with in his deconversion testimony, which is linked below.

So here is the deconversion testimony.

And here are some revealing snippets, under headings.

Legalist upbringing

" Being baptists things were pretty legalistic growing up."

Anti-intellectual parents

His parents tell him: "This is the bible and its truth can't be debated. It is what it is."

Piety rather than apologetics

"Most of my young life I was "that" religious kid. You know him. He's awkward looking

with coke bottle glasses and horrendous hair and triple hand me down clothes. I told random kids on the bus that I would pray for them and would be mocked in return."

Peer disapproval

"I told random kids on the bus that I would pray for them and would be mocked in return. One time I even got jumped while fishing and once they started punching me I didn't even fight back, "turn the other cheek" was being said in my mind over and over. I got the crap kicked out of me and several months of ridicule at school over getting such a beating.

I think the most embarrassing time for me was in 8th grade science class when one kid started calling me a "bible beater" while the teacher was out of the room. He then got the entire class to mock and laugh at me. It wasn't fun. In fact, it sucked."

Deconversion prior to serious study of the evidence

"I think it was around 9th grade that my apathy for religion and god really started to set it. Being honest with myself I didn't want to be the kid that got mocked anymore."

Ineffective church leadership

"We'd laugh at our peers that were so moved by the message told by the church leaders… Everything I was seeing my peers do could easily be chalked up to a group or mob mentality. A psychological effect of emotions."

I agree with him about this one, the church generally does nothing to form a Christian worldview, even though they have years and years to do it. And they are quite proud of this "focus on the gospel", even as kids drop Christianity as soon as they hear intellectual objections to it in college.

Self-focus / autonomy

"The fact that our purpose of living was the blow smoke up the skirt of a god that will damn us to hell."

Theological determinism

"The thought that a god with a plan can't/won't/doesn't listen to your prayers because if your prayer isn't in line with his plan then it goes unheard or unanswered."

Bible difficulties

"God set up Adam and Eve for failure in the Garden of Eden. If he really didn't want us to "fall from grace" then the tree never would have been there. He would've stopped the serpent from deceiving Adam and Eve. He would've equipped Adam and Eve with the knowledge of deceit so they could recognize when they're being lied to."

God's job is to make us happy and healthy

"God would have either have had a direct hand in creating hell or allowing satan to create it with his knowledge. God created the rules by which people go to hell. He damns billions of people there. Is that love? Is that moral? Is that just?"

Accuracate knowledge of God's character and historical actions are less important than "being good"

“Anne Frank, a Jew, is in hell because she didn’t recognize Jesus as the Son of God, but Ted Bundy, a serial rapist and murderer, is in heaven because he accepted Jesus into his heart before dying on death row. Is that fair? Is that love? Is that moral? Is that just?”

Emotional problem of evil

His brother was killed in a motorcycle accident, and his view is that it’s God’s job to keep everyone alive and happy. So this guy is reading the story of Jesus and he is saying something like this to himself when he reads the Bible, “see, the founder of Christianity has all his needs met by God and he is happy all the time, and everyone likes him and he never, ever has anything bad happen to him that isn’t his fault”. The problem of evil is one of the most responded-to problems in Christian apologetics. He didn’t cite anyone who has responded to it.

Ignorance of how the Bible defines faith

“Faith is believing in something without evidence.”

So he doesn’t even know what the definition of faith is, according to the Biblical use of the term, where faith is trusting in something you know to be true because of the evidence, e.g. – because of the resurrection, say. That was Jesus’ model of getting people to have faith in him, but apparently you can attend church and come up with a different, postmodern notion of what the word means. A definition that is pleasing to all the people in church who are there for emotional comfort, and not for truth and knowledge. His definition of faith is more like the atheist definition of faith, like they say “I have faith in the multiverse” or “I have faith in aliens seeding the Earth with life” or “I have faith that God has no morally sufficient reason for permitting this instance of apparently gratuitous evil”. Atheists project their own irrational epistemology onto Christians.

Unfamiliarity with Christian scholarship

“After I realized that my friends and church leaders had no good responses to anything I was saying I started searching for good apologist books on the internet. A good book about a good reason for belief. I can’t effectively relay my shock at turning up nothing worth the paper it was printed on.”

The purpose of life is to feel happy

“I’d heard through a friend that an old acquaintance from our youth group was now an agnostic… His reply was straight forward in that he’d realized that he’d gained nothing from trying to understand, follow and love god. Since it was bringing nothing positive to his life he left it behind. He shared that we’re all trained as kids in church that we have a god shaped hole in our hearts, but that it wasn’t true. Here he was, 11 years after leaving christianity, at the happiest and most content point of his life. He told me it was okay to doubt.”

Reads simplistic books by atheists

“That book that would ultimately be one of the most revolutionary books in my life was “50 Reasons People Give for Believing in a God.””

This book is a caricature of the reasons why people believe in God. I searched for the

names of top Christian apologists, and there were none. No William Lane Craig, Hugh Ross, Gary Habermas, Michael Licona, Stephen C. Meyer, Mike Behe, etc. I took a look at the 50 arguments. They were generally re-phrasings of this “I’m stupid, so I’ll believe Christianity because it makes me happy”.

I clicked on the few that I thought might cite Christian scholars, but no Christian scholars were cited. For the chapter on “fine-tuning”, the author cited Ray Comfort. And his banana argument. In a chapter on fine-tuning. The chapter on intelligent design did not cite a single scholar, pro or con. ID was not even defined.

My conclusion

Well, I’ll leave the rest of his post to you. I did a quick search on the author’s blog for “William Lane Craig”, just to see, and found nothing. Then I did a search for “intelligent design”, and found nothing. Then I did a search for “minimal facts” and found nothing. His post on his journey to atheism is here. And let this testimony be a lesson to you parents and church leaders not to fail other Christians the way this guy’s parents and church leaders failed him. You should read the comments on his post, as well.

William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

January 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Craig's famous minimal facts case for the resurrection has been posted at the Christian Apologetics Alliance. He presents 4 facts admitted by the majority of New Testament historians, and then he supplies multiple pieces of evidence for each fact.

Here are the four facts:

- FACT #1: *After his crucifixion, Jesus was buried in a tomb by Joseph of Arimathea.*
- FACT #2: *On the Sunday following the crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by a group of his women followers.*
- FACT #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.*
- FACT #4: *The original disciples believed that Jesus was risen from the dead despite their having every predisposition to the contrary.*

Here's the detail on fact #3, the post-mortem appearances.

> FACT #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.*
>
> This is a fact which is almost universally acknowledged among New Testament scholars, for the following reasons:
>
> 1. The list of eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection appearances which is quoted by Paul in I Cor. 15. 5-7 guarantees that such appearances occurred. These included appearances to Peter (Cephas), the Twelve, the 500 brethren, and James.
>
> 2. The appearance traditions in the gospels provide multiple, independent attestation of these appearances. This is one of the most important marks of historicity. The appearance to Peter is independently attested by Luke, and the appearance to the Twelve by Luke and John. We also have independent witness to Galilean appearances in Mark, Matthew, and John, as well as to the women in Matthew and John.
>
> 3. Certain appearances have earmarks of historicity. For example, we have good evidence from the gospels that neither James nor any of Jesus' younger brothers believed in him during his lifetime. There is no reason to think that the early church would generate fictitious stories concerning the unbelief of Jesus' family had they been faithful followers all along. But it is indisputable that James and his brothers did become active Christian believers following Jesus' death. James was considered an apostle and eventually rose to the position of leadership of the

> Jerusalem church. According to the first century Jewish historian Josephus, James was martyred for his faith in Christ in the late AD 60s. Now most of us have brothers. What would it take to convince you that your brother is the Lord, such that you would be ready to die for that belief? Can there be any doubt that this remarkable transformation in Jesus' younger brother took place because, in Paul's words, "then he appeared to James"?
>
> Even Gert Ludemann, the leading German critic of the resurrection, himself admits, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus' death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."3

Yes, Gerd Ludemann is actually an atheist new Testament historian, and he has even debated Dr. Craig on the resurrection – not once, but *twice*. That's the kind of evidence Dr. Craig uses in his case. Not just what your pastor will give you, but what atheists will give you. We need to learn to debate like that.

Scientists discover that tides affect a planet’s habitability

January 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

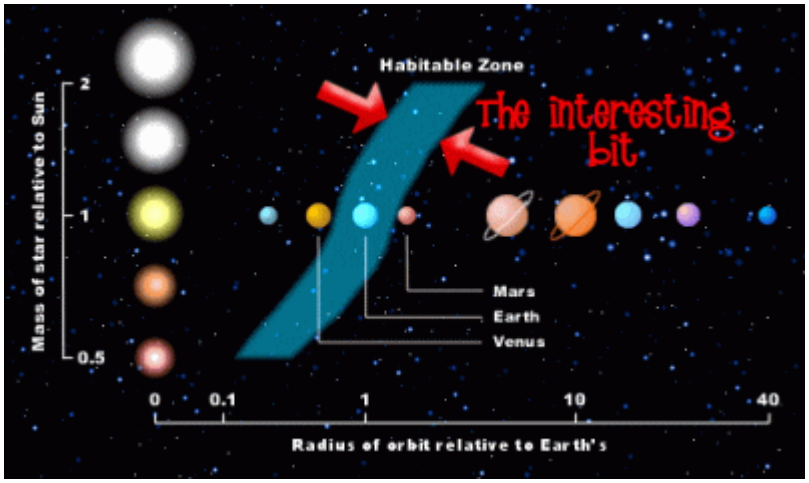

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

Science Daily reports on a new factor that affects planetary habitability: tides. Specifically, tides can affect the surface temperature of a planet, which has to be within a certain range in order to support liquid water – a requirement for life of any conceivable kind.

Excerpt:

> Tides can render the so-called “habitable zone” around low-mass stars uninhabitable. This is the main result of a recently published study by a team of astronomers led by René Heller of the Astrophysical Institute Potsdam.
>
> […]Until now, the two main drivers thought to determine a planet’s temperature were the distance to the central star and the composition of the planet’s atmosphere. By studying the tides caused by low-mass stars on their potential earth-like companions, Heller and his colleagues have concluded that tidal effects modify the traditional concept of the habitable zone.
>
> Heller deduced this from three different effects. Firstly, tides can cause the axis of a planet`s rotation to become perpendicular to its orbit in just a few million years. In comparison, Earth’s axis of rotation is inclined by 23.5 degrees — an effect which causes our seasons. Owing to this effect, there would be no seasonal variation on such Earth-like planets in the habitable zone of low-mass stars. These planets would have huge temperature differences between their poles, which would be in perpetual deep freeze, and their hot equators which in the long run would evaporate any atmosphere. This temperature difference would cause extreme winds and storms.
>
> The second effect of these tides would be to heat up the exoplanet, similar to the tidal heating of Io, a moon of Jupiter that shows global vulcanism.

> Finally, tides can cause the rotational period of the planet (the planet's "day") to synchronize with the orbital period (the planet's "year"). This situation is identical to the Earth-moon setup: the moon only shows Earth one face, the other side being known as "the dark side of the moon." As a result one half of the exoplanet receives extreme radiation from the star while the other half freezes in eternal darkness.
>
> The habitable zone around low-mass stars is therefore not very comfortable — it may even be uninhabitable.

Here is my previous post on the factors needed for a habitable planet. Now we just have one more. I actually find this article sort of odd, because my understanding of stars was that only high-mass stars could support life at all. This is because if the mass of the planet was too low, the habitable zone wouldbe very close to the star. Being too close to the star causes tidal locking, which means that the planet doesn't spin on its axis at all, and the same side faces the star. This is a life killer.

This astrophysicist who teaches at the University of Wisconsin explains it better than me.

Excerpt:

> Higher-mass stars tend to be larger and luminous than their lower-mass counterparts. Therefore, their habitable zones are situated further out. In addition, however, their HZs are much broader. As an illustration,
>
> - a 0.2 solar-mass star's HZ extends from 0.1 to 0.2 AU
> - a 1.0 solar-mass star's HZ extends from 1 to 2 AU
> - a 40 solar-mass star's HZ extends from 350 to 600 AU
>
> On these grounds, it would seem that high-mass starts are the best candidates for finding planets within a habitable zone. However, these stars emit most of their radiation in the far ultraviolet (FUV), which can be highly damaging to life, and also contributes to photodissociation and the loss of water. Furthermore, the lifetimes of these stars is so short (around 10 million years) that there is not enough time for life to begin.
>
> **Very low mass stars have the longest lifetimes of all, but their HZs are very close in and very narrow. Therefore, the chances of a planet being formed within the HZ are small. Additionally, even if a planet did form within the HZ, it would become tidally locked, so that the same hemisphere always faced the star. Even though liquid water might exist on such a planet, the climactic conditions would probably be too severe to permit life.**
>
> In between the high- and low-mass stars lie those like our own Sun, which make up about 15% percent of the stars in the galaxy. These have reasonably-broad HZs, do not suffer from FUV irradiation, and have lifetimes of the order of 10 billion years. Therefore, they are the best candidates for harbouring planets

> where life might be able to begin.

This guy is just someone I found through a web search. He has a support-the-unions-sticker on his web page, so he's a liberal crackpot. But he makes my point, anyway, so that's good enough for me.

Maybe the new discovery is talking about this now, but I already knew about the tides and habitability, because I watched The Privileged Planet DVD. Actually that whole video is online, and the clip that talks about the habitable zone and water is linked in this blog post I wrote before.

William Lane Craig vs Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God's existence

January 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has done in my opinion. (The other two are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates) This one doesn't seem to get a lot of play on the Internet: there's no video, transcript or anything. But it is a great debate, and on a problem we are all concerned about: the problem of evil and suffering. One other thing – Sinnott-Armstrong is also a very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics.

The MP3 file is here.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

- If God exists, gratuitous does not exist.
- *God exists*
- Therefore, gratuitous does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists:

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

Wisconsin governor Walker's reforms hit the left in their wallets

January 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper is mean

First, let's talk about Stephen Harper. I sometimes blog about conservative Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper, who Dennis Prager calls "the leader of the free world". He has a record of putting into place laws that cut off the ability of the left to get campaign funding without consent from the people supplying the money.

Here's an article from Canada's National Post.

Excerpt:

> While the political showdown making news this month has pitted Prime Minister Stephen Harper against Senator Mike Duffy, a more important battle is shaping up for the 2015 election. It's between the Conservative Party and organized labour — as evidenced by the resolutions the party will be debating at its policy convention in Calgary this week.
>
> Proposals include allowing secret ballots during strikes, banning the use of dues for political purposes, requiring increased financial disclosure by unions, and passing right-to-work legislation. The resolutions are moved by electoral district associations in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, and together represent what appears to be the largest block of resolutions on any one theme.
>
> Why the focus on organized labour, and why now? In part, it's ideological. While small-c conservatives respect freedom of association, they also respect the freedom not to associate. The labour movement's rules — particularly the RAND formula, which obliges workers in unionized workplaces to join whether they want to or not — restricts workers' freedom of choice. Unions also spend dues on

> causes that workers may not support, and demand workers follow their direction on strike action, even if workers may be opposed or not be able to afford the loss in pay.
>
> […]The Conservatives have pledged to balance the federal budget by the time they go to the polls. One of the elements of their plan is downsizing government, which pits them directly against the Public Service Alliance of Canada. For two years now, PSAC has been fighting against Conservative cuts to the bureaucracy and the party's policy of reduction by attrition. PSAC's rallies and campaigns, however, have done nothing to dent the Tories' resolve (long overdue, considering that they substantially grew the size of the bureaucracy during the early years of their mandate). Curtailing PSAC's power and voice would help the Tories achieve their downsizing goals for both the short and long term.

Back in 2006, Stephen Harper banned political contributions from corporations and unions. Nasty! And he's not done yet, according to this article. It's good to win, and win, and win again. I am tired of conservatives losing, even in other countries.

Governor Scott Walker

Now when I look around at the Republican Party, I rarely see the same will to do effective things that will cripple the left financially. It's like Republicans don't want to offend people, especially journalists. They want to be liked at cocktail parties.

But there is one Republican who is fine with being hated by his enemies, and he is getting a lot of attention from conservatives ahead of the 2016 election.

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker is also mean

Here's the story from the Associated Press.

Excerpt:

> The 2011 state law that all but ended collective bargaining for most public workers has hit Wisconsin's second largest union particularly hard.
>
> The latest tax documents available show combined income of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) dropped 45 percent in 2012 _ the first full year of the law, according to The Capital Times.

> In 2011, the four councils that make up the state organization reported a combined income of $14.9 million. In 2012 that dropped to $8.3 million. Dues revenue dropped 40 percent to $7.1 million.
>
> Walker and supporters of the law said it was a way to help local governments reduce the costs of employee benefits, but the legislation also included measures aimed at financially weakening unions by ending automatic dues deductions.
>
> The union's Council 40 executive director, Rick Badger, says that while the declines in revenue stemming from the law were expected, he has been encouraged by the number of workers who have continued to pay voluntary dues.
>
> "In fact, what (the law's) architects might find surprising is our resilience," he wrote in an email. He said thousands of "front-line workers are remaining engaged in fighting for their rights despite heavy-handed political attempts to silence them."
>
> While public unions no longer enjoy the official bargaining power that they exercised in recent decades, he said many public workers continue to value their presence as advocates for their rights and welfare.
>
> AFSCME is second only to the Wisconsin Education Association Council, or WEAC, in members in Wisconsin. It has long been a powerful player in state politics, funneling money directly to campaigns and running independent television ads in support of pro-labor candidates, as well as providing a legion of employees and member volunteers who made sure their union brethren voted on Election Day.
>
> The law has also hit other big unions in the state. For instance, WEAC, the state's largest teachers union, saw its revenue drop from $26 million in 2011 to $20 million in 2012.

This is definitely someone we conservatives need to look at in 2016. He has had to face the left in a blue-ish state, and he won.

During the Christmas vacation, I read governor Walker's new book, which was a Christmas present from my friend ECM. If you want to learn more about governor Walker, I recommend picking that up. I actually got the audio version, and it's read by governor Walker himself.

Related posts

- An interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
- Wisconsin judge defends free speech rights of conservative groups against Democrat censors
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Kenosha teachers vote to de-certify their teacher union, 63 – 37
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill

- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- What is a "right-to-work" law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues
- Democrat lawmakers flee state to avoid voting on spending cuts

How the research of Jeffrey M. Schwartz on mindfulness confirms free will

January 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a summary of the research of UCLA professor Jeffrey Schwartz which appeared in First Things.

Excerpt:

> Schwartz provides a nonmaterialist interpretation of neuroscience and argues that this interpretation is more compelling than the standard materialist interpretation. He arrived at this position as a psychiatrist specializing in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). OCD sufferers recognize obsessive-compulsive thoughts and urges as separate from their intrinsic selves. For instance, after a few washings, the compulsive hand-washer realizes that his hands are clean and yet feels driven to keep washing them. It was reflection on this difference between the obvious truth (the hands are clean) and the irrational doubts (they might still be dirty) that prompted Schwartz to reassess the philosophical underpinnings of neuroscience.
>
> From brain scans, Schwartz found that certain regions in the brain of OCD patients (the caudate nucleus in particular) exhibited abnormal patterns of activity. By itself this finding is consistent with a materialist view of mind (if, as materialism requires, the brain enables the mind, then abnormal patterns of brain activity are likely to be correlated with dysfunctional mental states). Nonetheless, having found abnormal patterns of brain activity, Schwartz then had OCD patients engage in intensive mental effort through what he called relabeling, reattributing, refocusing, and revaluing (the 4 Rs). In the case of compulsive hand-washing, this involved a patient acknowledging that his hands were in fact clean (relabeling); attributing anxieties and doubts about his hands being dirty to a misfunctioning brain (reattributing); directing his thoughts and actions away from handwashing and toward productive ends (refocusing); and, lastly, understanding at a deep level the senselessness of OCD messages (revaluing).
>
> **Schwartz documents not only that patients who undertook this therapy experienced considerable relief from OCD symptoms, but also that their brain scans indicated a lasting realignment of brain-activity patterns.** Thus, without any intervention directly affecting their brains, OCD patients were able to reorganize their brains by intentionally modifying their thoughts and behaviors. The important point for Schwartz here is not simply that modified thoughts and behaviors permanently altered patterns of brain activity, but that such modifications resulted from, as he calls it, "mindful attention"-conscious and purposive thoughts or actions in which the agent adopts the stance of a detached

> observer.

So mind-brain interaction is not a one-way street. Everyone knows that you can alter your consciousness, beliefs, moods, sensations, etc. by changing your brain. But it turns out that you can also will to focus your thoughts on certain things in order to change your brain chemistry. So the causation is not just bottom-up, but top-down.

Now mindfulness therapies – which are documented in the research papers published by Schwartz (like this one and this one and this one)- assume the existence of *free will*. Naturalists don't like these scientific publications because naturalists don't believe in free will, as the famous naturalist philosopher Alex Rosenberg explained in his debate with William Lane Craig.

This post from Uncommon Descent explains the naturalist conundrum. (H/T J. Warner Wallace tweet)

Excerpt:

> The issue, for Schwartz, turns on whether or not there is such a thing as free will. The assumption of free will is critical to mindfulness therapies *for practical purposes*.
>
> Philosophies and religions have various opinions about ultimate free will. **The therapist must ask, is my patient capable of carrying out a program that requires that he choose to focus his attention on A and not B? In practice, this turns out to be true for many patients, which makes the therapy useful. There is neuroscience evidence for brain reorganization as a result, showing that it is not merely an imagined effect.**
>
> **Now, if someone wishes to claim, as many outspoken advocates of Darwinian evolution have, for example, that free will is impossible, the only thing that a mindfulness therapist can say is, go away. Either they are mistaken or the research results from mindfulness therapies are.**

By the way, if you like this topic, and want a resource to show your friends, be sure and get a hold of the debate on mind vs. brain between Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Michael Shermer.

J. Warner Wallace: why are you a Christian?

January 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace ask this question of a bunch of young people he trained, and he posted some of the responses.

Excerpt:

> Last week I had the opportunity to train a group of high school students in preparation for an upcoming Berkeley Missions trip. These students will spend the next eight weeks learning about the evidence supporting the Christian worldview and examining many of the most popular objections to Christianity. Since we were very early in the process, I began by asking the students to tell me why they were Christians in the first place.
>
> …[W]hen I asked the students to tell me why *they* were Christians, I didn't get a single evidential response. Most had difficulty answering the question at all, and those who did sounded like members of the Mormon Church.
>
> I didn't know a lot of Christians growing up; I was surrounded by atheists and Mormon family members. I have six fantastic half-brothers and sisters who were raised in the LDS (Latter Day Saints) Church. Many are still committed to Mormonism and happy to share their faith. But if you ask them why they are believers, you'll get many of the same answers I received with the high school students in the Berkeley training. "I prayed about it and God confirmed it was true," "I have a relationship with God and I feel His presence," "I had a strong experience that changed my life," "I just know it is true," "I was raised in the Church and I've never had a reason to question it; God has always been a part of my life," "I know it's true because my life is very different now." These are all great responses and I want to be careful not to minimize the importance or validity of experiential evidence. But when I heard these kinds of answers offered as justification by the Christian students in our group, I asked them: "Do you believe Mormonism is true?" Many of these students had already been on the Utah Missions trip, so they understood the dramatic difference between the claims of Mormonism and the claims of Christianity. They all confirmed they did not believe Mormonism was true and immediately recognized the problem with their responses.

Since he mentioned Mormonism, I'll just link to my post on Mormonism that offers 3 reasons to think that Mormonism is false. The first reason is scientific, the second is historical, and the third is philosophical.

But Wallace's post made me think that it was a good for me to explain that it is OK for people to critically evaluate a worldview – any worldview – by using evidence. It's important because a lot of Christians who believe that religion is about believing sincerely in things without evidence are going to have a hard time knowing why apparently moral,

definitely sincere people in other religions are going to Hell, apparently just for the small crime of getting a few questions wrong on a theology quiz. The real answer to the question "Why am I a Christian?" is "because of the evidence". And the real answer to the question "Why I am not some other religion?" is "because of the evidence". Let's take a look.

Here are a couple of worldviews that can be easily falsified with evidence.

Falsifying a religion using science

Consider this argument:

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

Atheism also requires an eternal universe, according the Secular Humanist Manifesto:

> FIRST: Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

One of the eternal models of the universe favored by atheists was proposed by Carl Sagan:

> [I]nformation from our universe would not trickle into that next one and, from our vantage point, such an oscillating cosmology is as definitive and depressing an end as the expansion that never stops" (Sagan, Carl (1979), "Will It All End in a Fireball?" *Science Digest*, 86[3]:13-14, September, pp 13-14)

Again, this atheist cosmology, like the Hindu cosmology, is falsified by the evidence – both theoretical and experimental. Now, lots of people believed Carl Sagan, but the progress of science proved that his atheism was wrong. His whole cosmology was wrong. That's a pretty big mistake to make, but that's what you get when you invent a self-serving worldview that goes against the progress of science.

Falsifying a religion using history

Consider this argument:

1. To be a Muslim, you must believe that the Koran is without error.

2. The Koran claims that Jesus did not die on a cross. (Qur'an, 4: 157-158)
3. The crucifixion of Jesus is undisputed among non-Muslim historians, including atheist historians.
4. Therefore, it is not rational for me to become a Muslim.

I'm going to support the premise that Jesus was crucified by citing historians from all backgrounds.

Consider some quotes from the (mostly) non-Christian scholars below:

> "Jesus' death as a consequence of crucifixion is indisputable." Gert Lüdemann
>
> "That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be." J.D. Crossan
>
> "The passion of Jesus is part of history." Geza Vermes
>
> Jesus' death by crucifixion is "historically certain". Pinchas Lapide
>
> "The single most solid fact about Jesus' life is his death: he was executed by the Roman prefect Pilate, on or around Passover, in the manner Rome reserved particularly for political insurrectionists, namely, crucifixion." Paula Fredriksen
>
> "The support for the mode of his death, its agents, and perhaps its co-agents, is overwhelming: Jesus faced a trial before his death, was condemned, and was executed by crucifixion." L.T. Johnson
>
> "One of the most certain facts of history is that Jesus was crucified on orders of the Roman prefect of Judea, Ponitus Pilate." Bart Ehrman

That's 7 famous historians: 3 atheists, 3 Jews and 1 moderate Catholic. The atheists, Ludemann, Crossan and Ehrman, have all debated against the resurrection of Jesus with William Lane Craig. Johnson is the moderate Catholic, the rest are Jewish historians. The Koran was written in the 7th century. That is why no professional historian accepts the Koran as more authoritative than the many earlier Christian and non-Christian sources for the crucifixion story. Many of the sources for the crucifixion are dated to the 1st century. The Koran is simply too far after the events to be reliable history, especially since it often contradicts earlier sources, both Christian and non-Christian.

Notice how my criticisms of these religions are very much different than what you hear from atheists. My evidence is specific and scholarly. I'm not claiming that these religions are false because it conflicts with my personal preferences. That would be a very stupid way of arguing against a religion. What you have to do is find a claim that is central to the religion and then falsify it using evidence that is incontrovertible. No one cares if you think the universe is too vast. No one cares if you think the eye is badly designed. That's just an opinion. That's a personal preference. Even moral claims are personal preferences on atheism. God isn't bound by any one person's preferences. To falsify a worldview, you have to find clear evidence that is at odds with a core claim of that religion.

Christopher Hitchens is a good example of someone who uses his feelings and personal preferences to make an emotional case against theism, for example. I sort of consider him to be more of a comedian than a scholar, but rank-and-file atheists really go for him.

He didn't do very well in his debate with William Lane Craig, that's for sure. He is trying to disprove a worldview the wrong way – with snarky opinions. That's not the way to get to the truth.

Conclusion

So, the point here is that it's not that Hindus and Muslims are bad people, and it's not that they are unhappy people. It's that they have *false beliefs.* And it's the falseness of their beliefs that is important to God. It's not God's purpose that we are *sincere* in our beliefs, regardless of whether they are true. It's not God's purpose that we feel *happy* and *content*. It's not God's purpose that we are *liked by others*. God's purpose for us is that we have true beliefs about him, his existence, and what he has done in history, and the spiritual meaning of what he's done. And he expects a proper response to knowing the truth about him in the way we live our lives, too. The truth comes first, then the actions.

A sincere Hindu or Muslim or Mormon or atheist may be very adept at complying with the moral standards of their families and communities. They may feel very confident in the meaningfulness of their plans and achievements in this world. They may feel that they have lived a good life, one that they are happy about. They may have friends and family who affirm the goodness of their beliefs and actions. But in the end, that is not the purpose of life – we don't decide what we are here to do, since we didn't choose to be here. Someone else made us for a purpose. We didn't create and design this universe.

I think people who spend their entire lives in a non-Christian religion or no religion obviously invent a story for themselves that makes them feel comfortable. The real question that everyone has to answer is "is it true?". And for that, we look to the evidence. We do not look to our feelings. We do not look to our friends. We do not look to our family. We do not look to customs and traditions. We look to the evidence and we fashion and proportion our beliefs to the evidence.

Liberal feminist Hanna Rosin debunks the 77 percent pay for women myth

January 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the far-left Slate, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The official Bureau of Labor Department statistics show that the median earnings of full-time female workers is 77 percent of the median earnings of full-time male workers. But that is very different than "77 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men." The latter gives the impression that a man and a woman standing next to each other doing the same job for the same number of hours get paid different salaries. That's not at all the case. "Full time" officially means 35 hours, but men work more hours than women. That's the first problem: We could be comparing men working 40 hours to women working 35.

> How to get a more accurate measure? First, instead of comparing annual wages, start by comparing average weekly wages. This is considered a slightly more accurate measure because it eliminates variables like time off during the year or annual bonuses (and yes, men get higher bonuses, but let's shelve that for a moment in our quest for a pure wage gap number). By this measure, women earn 81 percent of what men earn, although it varies widely by race. African-American women, for example, earn 94 percent of what African-American men earn in a typical week. Then, when you restrict the comparison to men and women working 40 hours a week, the gap narrows to 87 percent.

> But we're still not close to measuring women "doing the same work as men." For that, we'd have to adjust for many other factors that go into determining salary. Economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn did that in a recent paper, "The Gender Pay Gap.”."They first accounted for education and experience. That didn't shift the gap very much, because women generally have at least as much and usually more education than men, and since the 1980s they have been gaining the experience. The fact that men are more likely to be in unions and have their salaries protected accounts for about 4 percent of the gap. The big differences are in occupation and industry. Women congregate in different professions than men do, and the largely male professions tend to be higher-paying. If you account for those differences, and then compare a woman and a man doing the same job, the pay gap narrows to 91 percent. So, you could accurately say in that Obama ad that, "women get paid 91 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men."

I believe that the remainder of the gap can be accounted for by looking at

other *voluntary* factors that differentiate men and women.

The Heritage Foundation says that a recent study puts the number at 95 cents per dollar.

Excerpt:

> Women are more likely than men to work in industries with more flexible schedules. Women are also more likely to spend time outside the labor force to care for children. These choices have benefits, but they also reduce pay—for both men and women. When economists control for such factors, they find the gender gap largely disappears.
>
> A 2009 study commissioned by the Department of Labor found that after controlling for occupation, experience, and other choices, women earn 95 percent as much as men do. In 2005, June O'Neil, the former director of the Congressional Budget Office, found that "There is no gender gap in wages among men and women with similar family roles." Different choices—not discrimination—account for different employment and wage outcomes.

A popular article by Carrie Lukas in the Wall Street Journal agrees.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Labor's Time Use survey shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. One would expect that someone who works 9% more would also earn more. This one fact alone accounts for more than a third of the wage gap.
>
> […]Recent studies have shown that the wage gap shrinks—or even reverses—when relevant factors are taken into account and comparisons are made between men and women in similar circumstances. In a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30, the research firm Reach Advisors found that women earned an average of 8% more than their male counterparts. Given that women are outpacing men in educational attainment, and that our economy is increasingly geared toward knowledge-based jobs, it makes sense that women's earnings are going up compared to men's.

When women make different choices about education and labor that are more like what men choose, they earn just as much or more than men. What does it mean that people on the left keep pushing pseudo-science on us to try to punish men and reward women? Why are men so awful that they need to be denigrated like this? And how will men respond to social expectations when they have to face being told that they are "bad"? It seems to me that putting men down is going to lower their level of engagement.

Minimum wage: doing what feels good doesn't produce good results

January 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

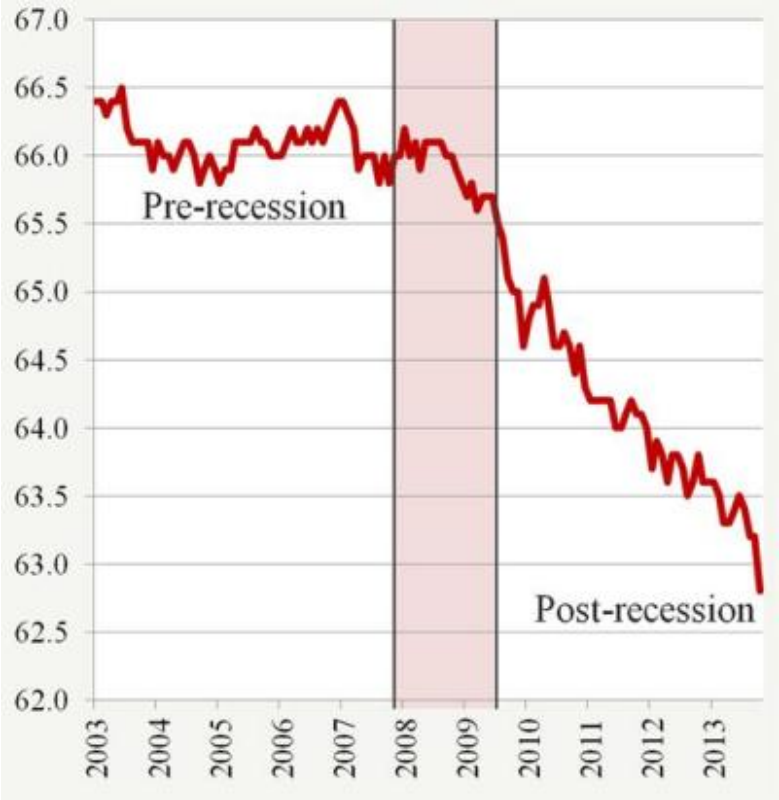

Labor Force Participation down to 62.8%
Will Obama's plan to raise minimum wage help people?

From the Daily Caller. (H/T Conway)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration's proposal to raise the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour could result in as many 1,084,000 jobs eliminated from the work force, according to a new study conducted by the Employment Policies Institute (EPI)
>
> "No amount of denial by the president and his political allies — and no number of 'studies' published by biased researchers — can change the fact that minimum wage hikes eliminate jobs for low-skill and entry-level employees. Non-partisan economists have agreed on this consensus for decades, and the laws of economics haven't changed," Michael Saltsman, research director at EPI, said in a statement.
>
> He offered an alternative to the president's plan: "Instead of raising small businesses' labor costs and creating more barriers to entry-level employment, the president and the Senate should focus on policies that help reduce poverty and create jobs."
>
> The study was released in the wake of an expected vote on a Senate bill that

> aims to raise the federal minimum wage from the current $7.25 an hour to $10.10 an hour — a nearly 40 percent increase.
>
> Many Democrats argue that increasing the federal minimum will reduce poverty without having an adverse effect on unemployment.
>
> EPI's report, which used analysis from economists at Miami and Trinity University, reached a different conclusion.
>
> Researchers used recently updated Census Bureau data from 2012 and 2013 to calculate how each individual state would be impacted by the proposed wage hikes. As a lump sum, Americans would see a loss of at least 360,000 jobs, and perhaps even over one million if hourly wages are increased to $10.10.
>
> The number of job losses would be the most dramatic in large states, such as California and Texas. Economists found that California could lose as many as 100,016 jobs and Texas could see up to 128,617 jobs disappear from its economy.

But's it's not just this proposal that is the problem, it's his past policies.

After FIVE YEARS of Obamanomics, we still have a record 100 MILLION people still out of work from when he became President. There has been NO RECOVERY since the housing bubble, which was caused by the Democrats in Congress. Policies like raising the minimum wage only make that worse, although it sounds great to Obama's low information supporters.

Minimum wage raises cause higher unemployment

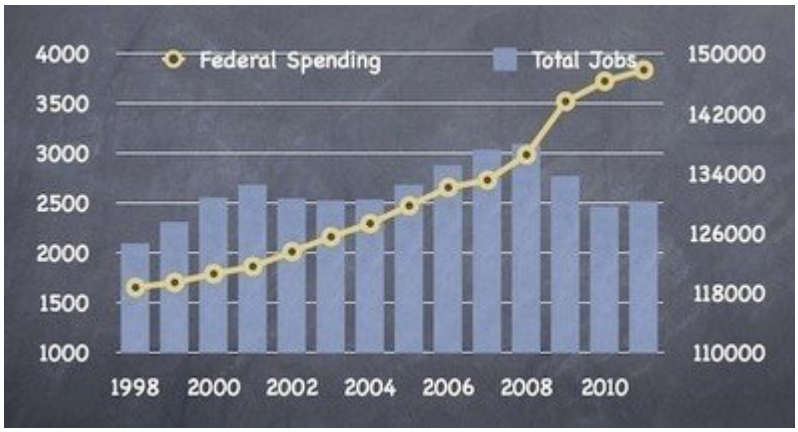

Government Spending Vs Jobs
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> How amusing to watch Democrats wring their hands over what they can do to get businesses to create jobs, when one of the biggest job killers is the minimum wage they keep hiking.
>
> Recall that it was Democrats who raised the federal wage floor a whopping $2.10 an hour in the middle of the recession. The record 41% increase has led to record unemployment among young people, especially black teens.

> Congress started ratcheting up the minimum wage from $5.15 an hour in mid-2007, arguing it would help abate poverty. But retailers looking to slash costs eliminated low-skilled, entry-level jobs rather than pay the mandated increases.
>
> Now 1.5 million fewer teens are working. Last year's unemployment rate for workers ages 16 to 19 shot up to 26% from 2007's 15%.
>
> As for black teens, their joblessness soared to a record 43% after the final raise to $7.25 took effect in mid-2009. It helped put more than half of young black men out of work — a first.
>
> The president proposes cranking the minimum wage even higher to $9.50. Then he wants to raise it every year thereafter as a "living wage" indexed to inflation.

Yes, this is the problem that happens when you elect someone who knows nothing whatsoever about economics. And when I say nothing, I mean he is in disagreement with virtually all economists *across the ideological spectrum*.

A large majority of economists agree

Moderate economist Gregory Mankiw of Harvard University lists the policies that are accepted by virtually all economists.

Here's Greg's list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:

1. A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)
2. Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)
3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)

14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

You can find out more about how raising the minimum wage increases unemployment, especially for young people and minorities, from this comprehensive, 50-year, government study.

This is why it is important for voters to understand economics. When you raise the price of labor, fewer employers will purchase labor. Supply and demand. This is so basic, that I am surprised that someone as educated as Obama doesn't understand it. It's probably because he has virtually no experience working in the private sector.

Global warming causing accidents and deaths in the South, thousands stranded

January 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Leftist CNN explains the results of global warming.

Excerpt:

> Chicago saw a record low of minus 16 (minus 27 C) on Monday. The day's high was minus 11, with a windchill of minus 34. It's part of an Arctic blast that plunged deep into the central United States on Monday, leaving Nashville, Tennessee, 40 degrees colder than Albany, New York; Memphis 20 degrees colder than Anchorage, Alaska; and Atlanta colder than Moscow — Russia or Idaho, take your pick.
>
> The bitter cold that a "polar vortex" is pushing into much of the United States is not just another winter storm. It's the coldest in 20 years in many areas. The South was downright balmy compared to the Great Lakes region, where temperatures hovered in the negative 20s — before wind chill, which dropped temps to the negative 40s and in places like Minneapolis.
>
> […]Authorities have blamed a total of 15 deaths on the cold so far, 11 of them from traffic accidents.
>
> But the the death of an Indianapolis woman found in her backyard early Monday "is believed to be weather-related," police spokesman Kendale Adams told CNN. A man in Wisconsin died of hypothermia, and an elderly woman with Alzheimer's disease who wandered away from her home in New York state was found dead in the snowy woods about 100 yards away, authorities there said.
>
> In addition, hypothermia was a contributing factor in the death of a patient at University Hospitals Case Medical Center in Cleveland, hospital spokesman George Stamatis told CNN.
>
> […]The deep freeze has also snarled air traffic across the country, with more than 3,800 flights canceled by Monday evening, according to flightaware.com.

More leftist CNN:

> A winter storm that paralyzed the South churned up the Eastern Seaboard Tuesday, threatening heavy snowfalls and more misery for the Northeast.
>
> The Southern storm left a trail of treacherous conditions from Arkansas to the Atlantic, closing schools and government offices and contributing to the traffic deaths of at least three people.
>
> Southern states were crippled — covered in sheets of ice that formed on roads, pavements, cars and atop the crunchy snow.
>
> Meanwhile, with memories still fresh of a monster Christmas weekend storm,

> Northern states again braced for heavy accumulations of snow and potential blizzard conditions. The National Weather Service predicted 4 to 8 inches of snow in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, area, 4 inches or more in northern New Jersey and 2 to 6 inches in southern Delaware from Tuesday afternoon into Wednesday morning.
>
> It will be all snow as well for the Interstate 95 corridor Tuesday night and Wednesday, with 8 to 12 inches predicted for the New York City area and between 12 to 16 inches in Boston, Massachusetts. The National Weather Service issued a blizzard warning for coastal Massachusetts, including Boston, on Tuesday night.
>
> New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo activated the state's emergency management plan in an effort, he said, to ensure resources and equipment are positioned to clear roadways and respond to the approaching storm.
>
> Officials declared a "weather emergency" and advised motorists to stay off the roads. The move restricts parking and allows authorities to remove vehicles that block roadways or impede snow plows.
>
> […]The city of Philadelphia declared a snow emergency Tuesday night, while public schools in Boston will be closed Wednesday because of the predicted snowfall.
>
> At least 30 states were under some sort of winter storm watch or warning Tuesday, and states of emergencies were declared in Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia and the Carolinas. Florida is currently the only U.S. state with no snow, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Snow emergencies and record low temperatures, all caused by high carbon emissions and global warming.

Expert predicts 20 yeas of global cooling

Why is this happening after we have spent billions on trying to stop the global warming that all the leftists predicted?

CNS News explains what comes next:

> Dr. Don Easterbrook – a climate scientist and glacier expert from Washington State who correctly predicted back in 2000 that the Earth was entering a cooling phase – says to expect colder temperatures for at least the next two decades.
>
> Easterbrook's predictions were "right on the money" seven years before Al Gore and the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for warning that the Earth was facing catastrophic warming caused by rising levels of carbon dioxide, which Gore called a "planetary emergency."
>
> "When we check their projections against what actually happened in that time interval, they're not even close. They're off by a full degree in one decade, which

> is huge. That's more than the entire amount of warming we've had in the past century. So their models have failed just miserably, nowhere near close. And maybe it's luck, who knows, but mine have been right on the button," Easterbrook told CNSNews.com.
>
> "For the next 20 years, I predict global cooling of about 3/10ths of a degree Fahrenheit, as opposed to the one-degree warming predicted by the IPCC," said Easterbrook, professor emeritus of geology at Western Washington University and author of 150 scientific journal articles and 10 books, including "Evidence Based Climate Science," which was published in 2011. (See EasterbrookL coming-century-predictions.pdf)
>
> In contrast, Gore and the IPCC's computer models predicted "a big increase" in global warming by as much as one degree per decade. But the climate models used by the IPCC have proved to be wrong, with many places in Europe and North America now experiencing record-breaking cold.
>
> Easterbrook noted that his 20-year prediction was the "mildest" one of four possible scenarios, all of which involve lower temperatures, and added that only time will tell whether the Earth continues to cool slightly or plunges into another Little Ice Age as it did between 1650 and 1790.
>
> **"There's no way to tell 'til you get there," he told CNSNews.com. But he lamented the fact that governments worldwide have already spent a trillion dollars fighting the wrong threat.**

We really should be listening to people who made predictions that have been proven right – not people who are just looking for grant money and political power.

The real motivation of global warming alarmism is socialism

My good friend Letitia posted this Daily Caller article, which discusses a possible motive for pushing a theory that is in conflict with the evidence we have.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> United Nations climate chief Christiana Figueres said that democracy is a poor political system for fighting global warming. Communist China, she says, is the best model.
>
> China may be the world's top emitter of carbon dioxide and struggling with major pollution problems of their own, but the country is "doing it right" when it comes to fighting global warming says Figueres.

That's what all this nonsense is really about.

We have had no statistically significant warming in 17 years, and now we have record cold, with predictions now of 20 years of global cooling. What is really driving this counter-factual mythology is socialism. It certainly isn't science.

Related posts

- Global warming: antarctic sea ice extents hits 35-year record high
- IPCC report: simulations drastically overestimated global warming
- UK scientists predict global cooling after record Arctic ice growth
- New York Times: no global warming in the last 15 years, despite CO2 increase
- Another failed prediction for global warming: fewer extreme weather events
- Global warming: Scotland hit by blizzards, road closures and 8 inches of snow
- New EPA report: natural gas prodution is even cleaner than previously thought
- Reuters: scientists struggling to explain 15 years of global cooling
- Report: biofuels raise the cost of gas for little environmental benefit
- Global warming in the UK: coldest March in 50 years, winter extending into spring
- Democrat senator Barbara Boxer introduces carbon tax legislation
- New study: Earth was warmer 1000 years ago, during Medieval Warming Period
- New study: there has been no global warming since 1997
- New study finds that cosmic rays and the sun cause global warming
- Global warmist Phil Jones admits there’s been no global warming since 1995
- Chairman of UN’s IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s

House Republicans pass “No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act”: Obama vows veto

January 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’m Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this bill

From The Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> The House voted Tuesday night to pass Congressman Chris Smith’s (R-N.J.) No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, which expands bans on federal funding of abortions and requires that the Obamacare insurance exchanges clearly describe which plans cover abortion.
>
> The act forbids Obamacare insurance subsidies from being used toward plans that cover abortion. It would make the Hyde Amendment, a 1976 law that prohibited Medicaid from funding abortions, a permanent fixture of national law. It also disqualifies abortion payments from tax benefits. The bill provides for exceptions in cases of rape, incest, and endangerment of the life of the mother.
>
> In the past, multiple polls have shown that Americans disapprove of public funding for abortion.
>
> The bill also mandates “prominent display” of abortion coverage in all plans offered on the new insurance exchanges, and disclosure of any surcharges that apply to abortion procedures.
>
> […]White House aides have already suggested that they would recommend

> vetoing the bill, should it pass both chambers of Congress.

CNS News reports that the Obama administration handed $540 million taxpayer dollars to Planned Parenthood in FY 2013.

Excerpt:

> Planned Parenthood's net revenue increased 5% to total of $1.21 billion in its organizational fiscal year ending on June 30, 2013, according to its newAnnual Report 2012-2013, and about 45% of that revenue–$540.6 million–was provided by taxpayer-funded government health services grants.
>
> In the same report, Planned Parenthood said that in the year that ended on Sept. 30, 2012 it did 327,166 abortions.
>
> Clinics in Iowa, Arkansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Montana and New Hampshire also received $655,192 in grants from the Department of Health and Human Services to serve as Obamacare "navigators," as CNSNews.com reported earlier.
>
> The 2012-2013 Planned Parenthood report states on its second page, "We are the most effective advocate in the country for policies that protect access to safe and legal abortion and advance women's health, actively lobbying in every state legislature …."
>
> Planned Parenthood's affiliates spent $26 million on public policy this past year, while the national office spent $31.3 million on building "advocacy capacity."
>
> Planned Parenthood lobbied heavily for the Affordable Care Act's mandatory contraception coverage, and the ACA, or Obamacare, is celebrated throughout the annual report as "a historic advance for women's health."

Planned Parenthood is the largest provider of abortions in the USA.

Now even if you were a pro-choice person, it seems to me that you should be in favor of this bill to ban taxpayer-funding of abortion. After all, if you're "pro-choice" then you should have to pay for your own choices. If you look at it from a pro-life view, it's like I am being forced to pay you to murder babies. Or from a slavery analogy, I am being forced to buy you slaves. If I have an objection to something you are choosing to do, then I shouldn't have to pay for it. That sounds like common sense, but as you can see, the Democrats are opposed to it. They have no problems at all stealing from my earnings in order to subsidize acts that violate my conscience.

However, in states where the Democrats are not in control, these laws to ban taxpayer-funding of abortion do get passed.

Consider this story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer on Friday signed into law a bill to cut off Planned Parenthood's access to taxpayer money funneled through the state for non-abortion services.

> Arizona already bars use of public money for abortions except to save the life of the mother, but anti-abortion legislators and other supporters of the bill have said the broader prohibition is needed to make sure that no public money indirectly supports abortion services.
>
> “This is a common sense law that tightens existing state regulations and closes loopholes in order to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not used to fund abortions, whether directly or indirectly,” said Brewer, a Republican. “By signing this measure into law, I stand with the majority of Americans who oppose the use of taxpayer funds for abortion.”
>
> Arizona has said a funding ban would interrupt its preventive health care and family planning services for nearly 20,000 women served by the organization’s clinics. The organization has said it will consider a legal challenge.
>
> The measure targeting funding for Planned Parenthood for non-abortion services was one of several approved by Arizona’s Republican-led Legislature related to contentious reproductive health care issues during a 116-day session that ended Thursday. Brewer is a Republican.
>
> Other approved Arizona bills include one generally banning abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy, which Brewer has already signed, and one loosening a state law that generally requires health care plans to cover contraception.

So the bottom line is, if you don’t want to pay for someone else’s “choices”, then vote Republican. And remember, whatever you tax, you get less of. Whatever you subsidize, you get more of.

Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds

January 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(Podcast uploaded, with permission, by ReligioPolitical Talk)

This podcast is a must-listen. Please take the time to download this podcast and listen to it. I guarantee that you will love this podcast. I even recommended it to my *Dad* and I almost never do that.

Details:

> In this podcast, J. Warner examines the evidence for the existence of the mind (and inferentially, the soul) as he looks at six classic philosophical arguments. Jim also briefly discusses Thomas Nagel's book, Mind and Cosmos and discusses the limitations of physicalism.

The MP3 file is here. (67 MB, 72 minutes)

Topics:

- Atheist Thomas Nagel's latest book "Mind and Cosmos" makes the case that materialism cannot account for the evidence of mental phenomena
- Nagel writes in this recent New York Times article that materialism cannot account for the reality of consciousness, meaning, intention and purpose
- Quote from the Nagel article:

> Even though the theistic outlook, in some versions, is consistent with the available scientific evidence, I don't believe it, and am drawn instead to a naturalistic, though non-materialist, alternative. Mind, I suspect, is not an inexplicable accident or a divine and anomalous gift but a basic aspect of nature that we will not understand until we transcend the built-in limits of contemporary scientific orthodoxy.

- When looking at this question, it's important to not have our conclusions pre-determined by presupposing materialism or atheism
- If your mind/soul doesn't exist and you are a purely physical being then that is a defeater for Christianity, so we need to respond
- Traditionally, Christians have been committed to a view of human nature called "dualism" – human beings are souls who *have* bodies
- The best way* to argue for the existence of the soul is using philosophical arguments

The case:

- The law of identity says that if A = B' if A and B have the exact same properties

- If A = the mind and B = the brain, then is A identical to B?
- Wallace will present 6 arguments to show that A is not identical to B because they have different properties

Not everyone of the arguments below might make sense to you, but you will probably find one or two that strike you as correct. Some of the points are more illustrative than persuasive, like #2. However, I do find #3, #5 and #6 persuasive.

1) First-person access to mental properties

- Thought experiment: Imagine your dream car, and picture it clearly in your mind
- If we invited an artist to come and sketch out your dream car, then we could see your dream car's shape on paper
- This concept of your dream car is not something that people can see by looking at your brain structure
- Physical properties can be physically accessed, but the properties of your dream care and privately accessed

2) Our experience of consciousness implies that we are not our bodies

- Common sense notion of personhood is that we own our bodies, but we are not our bodies

3) Persistent self-identity through time

- Thought experiment: replacing a new car with an old car one piece at a time
- When you change even the smallest part of a physical object, it changes the identity of that object
- Similarly, your body is undergoing changes constantly over time
- Every cell in your body is different from the body you had 10 years ago
- Even your brain cells undergo changes (see this from New Scientist – WK)
- If you are the same person you were 10 years ago, then you are not your physical body

4) Mental properties cannot be measured like physical objects

- Physical objects can be measured (e.g. – use physical measurements to measure weight, size, etc.)
- Mental properties cannot be measured

5) Intentionality or About-ness

- Mental entities can refer to realities that are physical, something outside of themselves
- A tree is not about anything, it just is a physical object
- But you can have thoughts about the tree out there in the garden that needs water

6) Free will and personal responsibility

- If humans are purely physical, then all our actions are determined by sensory inputs and genetic programming
- Biological determinism is not compatible with free will, and free will is required for personal responsibility
- Our experience of moral choices and moral responsibility requires free will, and free will requires minds/souls

He spends the last 10 minutes of the podcast responding to naturalistic objections to the mind/soul hypothesis.

*Now in the podcast, Wallace does say that scientific evidence is not the best kind of evidence to use when discussing this issue of body/soul and mind/brain. But I did blog yesterday about two pieces of evidence that I think are relevant to this discussion: corroborated near-death experiences and mental effort.

You might remember that Dr. Craig brought up the issue of substance dualism, and the argument from intentionality ("aboutness"), in his debate with the naturalist philosopher Alex Rosenberg, so this argument about dualism is battle-ready. You can add it to your list of arguments for Christian theism along with all the other arguments like the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, stellar habitability, galactic habitability, irreducible complexity, molecular machines, the Cambrian explosion, the moral argument, the resurrection, biological convergence, and so on.

Stephen C. Meyer: does the Big Bang cosmology support atheism or theism?

January 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the 66-minute video featuring Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, who holds the Ph.D in philosophy of science from Cambridge University, and other degrees in the hard sciences. (H/T UK Apologetics)

The lecture starts really, really slowly. You can just fast-forward to the 12 minute mark, or you might die of boredom.

Topics:

- Up until the the last 100 years or so, everyone agreed that the universe was eternal
- This is at odds with the traditional Christian view that God created the universe
- Materialism, the view that matter is all there is, requires eternally existing matter
- Discovery #1: Hubble discovers that the universe is expanding (redshift observation)
- The expanding universe was resisted by proponents of the eternal universe, like Einstein
- Some naturalists even proposed speculative static models like the steady-state model
- However, not of the speculative models fit with observations and experimental results
- Discovery #2: Penzias and Wilson discover the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Measurements of this background radiation confirmed a prediction of the Big Bang theory
- The steady-state theory was falsified of by the discovery of this background radiation
- The oscillating model was proposed to prevent the need for an absolute beginning
- But the oscillating model is not eternal, it loses energy on each "bounce"
- A paper by Alan Guth and Marc Sher from 1982 proved that our universe will not bounce
- In addition, experiments reveal that the universe will expand forever, and not contract
- The beginning of the universe is more at home in a theistic worldview than an atheistic one
- The beginning of the universe fits in well with the Bible, e.g. – Genesis 1, Titus 1, etc.

In case you are wondering about what the evidence is for the Big Bang, here are 3 of the evidences that are most commonly offered:

> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

This is a good article to send to atheists who are not comfortable with what the progress of science has revealed about the beginning of the universe, and of time itself. If you look in agnostic astronomer Robert Jastrow's book "God and the Astronomers" (2nd edition), you'll find 6 evidences.

By the way, Dr. Meyer also does a great job of explaining the problem of proteins, DNA and the origin of life in this lecture. And you can hear him defend his views in this debate podcast with Keith Fox and in this debate podcast with Peter Atkins. He does a great job in these debates.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Six things you have to believe to be a Christian

January 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the article on the Stand to Reason web site, written by Greg Koukl.

Excerpt:

> The six essential doctrines would be: the Trinity, the deity and humanity of Christ, the bodily resurrection, man's fallenness and guilt, salvation by grace through faith by the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, and belief that Jesus is the Messiah. And you have a seventh doctrine that strikes me as a functional necessity, that is the ultimate authority of Scripture without which none of the other truths can be affirmed or asserted with confidence.
>
> By the way, it's really important that people know these doctrines because many Christians are quite kind-hearted and they end up not being very careful about drawing distinctions between truth and falsity because they don't want to disagree. I understand that. But if you were really kind-hearted then you would be honest and straight-forward with people about the demands of the gospel on their lives. The demand of the gospel is that you believe particular things to be true. It's not just a matter of mere belief, as if these are just some incidental details of theology that you might happen to be mistaken about. And if you just happen to be mistaken, why should you go to hell because of that?
>
> You don't go to hell because you just happen to mistake a doctrine. You go to hell because you have broken God's law. It is very critical to understand that. God only judges guilty people. People get judged by God not because they mess up on their theology but because they are guilty. People who are guilty get condemned. That's it. There is a way to get around that but you've to know a couple of particular things that are true before you can take advantage of the forgiveness God offers. That's where the essential doctrines come in.

He's writing from a Calvinist perspective, which I don't entirely agree with. But I don't see anything wrong in that minimal list. Sometimes, it's a good thing for us to focus on the essentials. There are lots of Christian denominations, and they disagree on many minor things, but on the major things, they are in agreement. And that's a good thing, too.

How good are the atheistic arguments of Christopher Hitchens?

January 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that I would go over an opening statement from a previous debate featuring Christopher Hitchens to find out what atheists are like in debates. I used his opening speech from his debate with Frank Turek. The audio from that debate is here, at Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 site.

Now the important thing to remember about a generic debate on whether GOD EXISTS is that there should be no mention of any particular God, such as the Christian God, and no mention of the history of any particular religion. All arguments that assume specific theological or moral doctrines or specific religious history are *irrelevant* to a debate on generic theism.

The question being debated is: does a God who created and designed the universe, who has all the traditional properties of God, such as omniscience, omnipotence, omni-benevolence, etc. exist? That is the question being debated in a "Does God Exist?" debate.

Frank Turek's case for theism:

Frank Turek made 4 *relevant* arguments for theism, each of which *alone* would support his conclusion, that God exists:

- the origin of time, space, matter and energy out of nothing
- the fine-tuning of the physical constants to support the minimum requirements for life of any kind
- the origin of the biological information in the first self-replicating organism
- objective, prescriptive moral rules need to be grounded by the designer of the universe

And he also listed 4 features of the universe that are more consistent with theism than atheism (= materialism).

- non-material minds that allow rationality that would be impossible on materialism/determinism
- the mathematical structure of the universe and its intelligibility to the scientific method
- free will, which is required for moral responsibility and moral choices, requires a non-material mind/soul
- our first person experience of consciousness is best explained by a non-material mind/soul

Hitchens' case against theism

To counter, Hitchens has to argue against God using arguments in one of two forms:

1. The concept of God is logically self-contradictory
2. An *objective* feature of the world is inconsistent with the attributes of God

The claim that God does not exist is a claim to know something about God, namely, that he does not exist. This claim requires the speaker to bear a burden of proof. In a debate on "Does God Exist?", Hitchens must *deny* that God exists. Let me be clear: Hitchens must defeat the arguments for the claim that God exists, and then defend the claim that God does not exist, and support that claim using arguments and evidence.

Hitchens makes 2 basic claims:

- There are no good reasons to believe that theism is true
- There are good reasons to believe atheism is true

So far so good. But what are his good reasons for atheism?

1. I personally don't like Christianity, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: I personally don't like Catholicism getting rid of limbo
   – Premise: I personally don't like Hell
   – Premise: I personally don't like some episodes in church history
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
2. The plurality of religions means that no religious claims can be correct, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: There are lots of religions
   – Premise: The religions all disagree in their truth claims about the external world
   – Conclusion: No religion's claims can be correct, therefore God doesn't exist
3. I believe in one less God than you, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: You disbelieve in every God I do, except one
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
4. Religious people are stupid and evil, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Religious people are ignorant
   – Premise: Religious people are fearful
   – Premise: Religious people are servile
   – Premise: Religious people are masochistic
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
5. Evolution explains how life progressed from single cell to today's bio-diversity, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Modern theists like Turek believe in Paley's argument, and argued it in this debate
   – Premise: Paley's argument was refuted by evolution
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
6. God wouldn't have made the universe this way, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: If God exists, then he would have made the universe my way

– Premise: The heat death of the universe wasn't done my way
– Premise: The extinction of species wasn't done my way
– Premise: The size of the universe wasn't done my way
– Premise: The amount of open space wasn't done my way
– Premise: The large number of stars wasn't done my way
– Premise: The age of the universe wasn't done my way
– Conclusion: God doesn't exist

7. Religion makes people do things that I don't like, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Some religions do suicide bombing
   – Premise: Some religions do child abuse
   – Premise: Some religions do genital mutilation
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
8. If you speak a sentence, I can repeat the same words as you said, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Anything that you say is good, I can say is good too
   – Premise: Anything that you say is bad, I can say is bad too
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
9. Atheists are morally superior to religious people, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: I act in a way that is consistent with my personal, arbitrary moral preferences
   – Premise: You don't act in a way that is consistent with my personal, arbitrary moral preferences
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
10. If I believe in God, I would have to submit to an authority
    – Premise: If I believe in God, then I can't do whatever I want
    – Premise: But I want to do whatever I want
    – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
11. I don't like certain Christian doctrines, therefore arguments for God from science fail and therefore God doesn't exist
    – Premise: I don't like the atonement
    – Premise: I don't like the virgin birth
    – Premise: I don't like the incarnation
    – Premise: I don't like original sin
    – Premise: I don't like the resurrection
    – Conclusion: Arguments that are built on recent discoveries from the progress of science like the big bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, etc. are incorrect, and therefore God doesn't exist

General comments about Hitchens' case:

- The form of *all* of these arguments is *logically invalid*. The conclusions do not follow from the premises using the laws of logic, such as modus ponens and modus tollens.
- Hitchens cannot complain about morality because he has no foundation for objective

moral facts. What he is really expressing is that he personally does not like such-and-such a state of affairs, based on his own arbitrary personal preferences, and the arbitrary social customs that evolved in the place and time that he finds himself in. On atheism, "morality" is just describing what people do – either individually or as groups living in different times and places. There is no objective right and wrong, and no objective way we ought to be. All statements are *subjective.* They describe what the speaker personally likes and dislikes. Just like taste in foods or taste in dress – which varies by individually, and is influenced by time and place ARBITRARILY.

Specific comments about each argument:

- Argument 1 tries to disprove God by arguing from Hitchens' personal preferences about specific Christian doctrines. Christian doctrines are irrelevant to a debate about generic theism. And there is no reason why God should be bound by the personal, subjective preferences of one man. In fact, the concept of God entails that his unchanging nature is the standard of good and evil. So, this argument doesn't disprove God, it's just a statement of personal, subjective preference.
- Argument 2: Just because there are different truth claims made by different groups, doesn't mean no one is correct. Mormons believe that matter existed eternally, and Jews believe it was created out of nothing. The big bang theory shows that the Mormons are wrong and the Jews are right.
- Argument 3: First of all, the debate is a about a generic Creator and Designer, not any particular religious conception of God. So the argument is irrelevant. Moreover, Christians reject Zeus, for example, because Zeus is supposed to exist in time and space, and therefore could not be the cause of the beginning of time and space.
- Argument 4: This is just the ad hominem fallacy. Hitchens is attacking the character of the theist, but that doesn't show theism is false.
- Argument 5: This argument can be granted for the sake of argument, even though it's debatable. The point is that it is irrelevant, since it doesn't refute any of Turek's actual scientific arguments like the big bang, the fine-tuning of the physical constants, the origin of information in the simplest living cell.
- Argument 6: Again, there is no reason to think that God should be bound by Hitchens' personal opinion of how God should operate.
- Argument 7: This is the ad hominem fallacy again. The good behavior of religious believers is not a premise in any of Turek's FOUR arguments for theism. Therefore, Hitchens' point is irrelevant to the debate.
- Argument 8: The fact that the atheist can parrot moral claims is not the issue. Being able to speak English words is not what grounds objective, prescriptive morality. The issue is the ontology of moral rules, the requirement of free will in order to have moral responsibility and moral choices, ultimate significance of moral actions, and the rationality of self-sacrificial moral actions.
- Argument 9: This is just the ad hominem fallacy again.

- Argument 10: This is not argument so much as it reveals that the real reason Hitchens is an atheist is emotional. One might even say infantile.
- Argument 11: Again, these specific Christian doctrines are irrelevant to a debate about generic theism. And Hitchen's subjective, personal preferences about Christian doctrine certainly do not undermine the objective scientific support for the premises in Turek's 3 scientific arguments.

So Frank Turek talked about facts in the external world, and Christopher Hitchens mistakenly thought that his opinions and preferences about what he would do if he were God were interesting to us. They might be interesting to his psychiatrist, but they are not interesting to us.

Dr. Robin Collins explains two kinds of cosmic fine-tuning

January 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was busy working my way through "Debating Christian Theism", a book published by Oxford University Press in August 2013. It features about 20 different topics from science, to philosophy, to history. For each topic, there is an essay by a world-class scholar in favor, and one opposed. So you get both sides of many interesting issues, at a very advanced level. The section on cosmic fine-tuning features a chapter written by Dr. Robin Collins.

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

The fine-tuning argument

Here's a short article where Collins gives TWO examples of the fine-tuning. He is very modest in his argument, merely asserting that the fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than it is with atheism.

Excerpt:

> Science is commonly thought to have undercut belief in God. As Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg famously remarked, "the more we find out about the universe, the more meaningless it all seems." Yet, the discoveries of modern physics and cosmology in the last 50 years have shown that the structure of the universe is set in an extraordinarily precise way for the existence of life; if its structure were slightly different, even by an extraordinarily small degree, life would not be possible. In many people's minds, the most straightforward explanation of this remarkable fine-tuning is some sort of divine

> purpose behind our universe.

> This fine-tuning falls into three categories: the fine-tuning of the laws of nature, the fine-tuning of the constants of physics, and the fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe. “Fine-tuning of the laws of nature” refers to the fact that if the universe did not have precisely the right combination of laws, complex intelligent life would be impossible. If there were no universal attractive force (law of gravity), for example, matter would be dispersed throughout the universe and the energy sources (such as stars) needed for life would not exist. Without the strong nuclear force that binds protons and neutrons together in the nucleus, there would not be any atoms with an atomic number greater than hydrogen, and hence no complex molecules needed for life. And without the Pauli-exclusion principle, all electrons would fall to the lowest orbital of an atom, undercutting the kind of complex chemistry that life requires.

> Some fundamental physical numbers governing the structure of the universe—called the constants of physics—also must fall into an exceedingly narrow range for life to exist. For example, many have estimated that the cosmological constant—a fundamental number that governs the expansion rate of empty space—must be precisely set to one part in 10^{120} in order for life to occur; if it were too large, the universe would have expanded too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form, and if it were too small, the universe would have collapsed back on itself. As Stephen Hawking wrote in his book A Brief History of Time, “The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life.” Finally, the initial distribution of mass energy at the time of the big bang must have an enormously special configuration for life to occur, which Cambridge University mathematical physicist Roger Penrose has calculated to be on the order of one part in $10^{10^{123}}$. This is an unimaginably small number.

I know what you’re thinking: How do we know that non-Christian scientists acknowledge the fine-tuning of gravity in the way that Collins describes?

Well, the New Scientist actually talks about the fine-tuning of the force of gravity. And they’re not Christians.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe‘s birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If

> the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Here's a very long paper by Collins on the fine-tuning argument, where he answers several objections to the argument, including the multiverse/many-universe hypothesis. I normally make fun of the multiverse, (= the Flying Spaghetti Monster), but it actually does deserve a reasonable, fair response. (Unless Jerry asks, then it's Flying Spaghetti Monster all the way).

Graduate students with non-STEM degrees increasingly dependent on welfare programs

February 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Excerpt:

> Melissa Bruninga-Matteau, a medieval-history Ph.D. and adjunct professor who gets food stamps: "I've been able to make enough to live on. Until now."
>
> "I am not a welfare queen," says Melissa Bruninga-Matteau.
>
> That's how she feels compelled to start a conversation about how she, a white woman with a Ph.D. in medieval history and an adjunct professor, came to rely on food stamps and Medicaid. **Ms. Bruninga-Matteau, a 43-year-old single mother** who teaches two humanities courses at Yavapai College, in Prescott, Ariz., says the stereotype of the people receiving such aid does not reflect reality. Recipients include growing numbers of people like her, the highly educated, whose advanced degrees have not insulated them from financial hardship.
>
> "I find it horrifying that someone who stands in front of college classes and teaches is on welfare," she says.
>
> Ms. Bruninga-Matteau grew up in an upper-middle class family in Montana that valued hard work and saw educational achievement as the pathway to a successful career and a prosperous life. She entered graduate school at the University of California at Irvine in 2002, idealistic about landing a tenure-track job in her field. She never imagined that she'd end up trying to eke out a living, teaching college for poverty wages, with no benefits or job security.
>
> Ms. Bruninga-Matteau always wanted to teach. She started working as an adjunct in graduate school. This semester she is working 20 hours each week, prepping, teaching, advising, and grading papers for two courses at Yavapai, a community college with campuses in Chino Valley, Clarkdale, Prescott, Prescott Valley, and Sedona. Her take-home pay is $900 a month, of which $750 goes to rent. Each week, she spends $40 on gas to get her to the campus; she lives 43 miles away, where housing is cheaper.
>
> **Ms. Bruninga-Matteau does not blame Yavapai College for her situation but rather the "systematic defunding of higher education."** In Arizona last year, Gov. Jan Brewer, a Republican, signed a budget that cut the state's allocation to Yavapai's operating budget from $4.3-million to $900,000, which represented a 7.6 percent reduction in the college's operating budget. The cut led to an 18,000-hour reduction in the use of part-time faculty like Ms. Bruninga-Matteau.
>
> "The media gives us this image that people who are on public assistance are

> dropouts, on drugs or alcohol, and are irresponsible," she says. **"I'm not irresponsible. I'm highly educated.** I have a whole lot of skills besides knowing about medieval history, and I've had other jobs. I've never made a lot of money, but I've been able to make enough to live on. Until now."

She's irresponsible, because she expects the people who choose to study rather difficult and unpleasant subjects like nursing and computer science and economics to pay for her lifestyle through taxation and "higher education funding". I do think it's important to point out that the main driver of higher tuition is increasing government funding of education, and that this increasing funding of higher education is nothing but corporate welfare.

Excerpt:

> The most obvious way that colleges might capture federal student aid is by raising tuition. Research to date has been inconclusive, but Stephanie Riegg Cellini of George Washington University and Claudia Goldin of Harvard have provided compelling new analysis. Cellini and Goldin looked at for-profit colleges, utilizing the key distinction that only some for-profit schools are eligible for federal aid. Riegg and Goldin find that that aid-eligible institutions "charge much higher tuition … across all states, samples, and specifications," even when controlling for the content and quality of courses. The 75 percent difference in tuition between aid-eligible and ineligible for-profit colleges — an amount comparable to average per-student federal assistance — suggests that "institutions may indeed raise tuition to capture the maximum grant aid available."

Here are some of the comments that I posted in a Facebook discussion about the CHE story:

> I know that some may disagree with me, but this is why people need to focus on STEM fields and stay away from artsy stuff and Ph.Ds in general. We are in a recession. Trade school and STEM degrees only until things improve.
>
> Also, no single motherhood by choice. Get married before you have children, and make sure you vet the husband carefully for his ability to protect, provide, commit and lead on moral and spiritual issues. This woman is not a victim. She chose her life, and the rest of us are paying for it. Nice tattoos by the way – that will really help when she's looking for a job.
>
> I am actually better at English than computer science, but I find myself with a BS and MS in computer science. We don't get to do what we like. We do what we have to in order to be effective as Christians. According to the Bible, men have an obligation to not engage in premarital sex, and to marry before having children, and to provide for their families, or they have denied the faith. I would like to have studied English, but the Bible says no way.
>
> I have no problem with people who can make a career out of the arts, like a

> Robert George or a William Lane Craig. But you can't just go crazy. And I think men have a lot less freedom than women to choose their major, we have the obligation to be providers and we have to be selected by women based on whether we can fulfill that role (among other roles).
>
> Women have more freedom because they are not saddled with the provider role like men are. However, I think that the times now are different than before. There is more discrimination against conservatives on campus in non-STEM fields and fewer non-STEM jobs in a competitive global economy. The safest fields are things like petroleum engineering, software engineering, etc.
>
> If [people who major in the humanities] can make a living and support a family without relying on government-controlled redistribution of wealth, then I salute and encourage you. If you rely on the government, know that this money is being taken away from those who are doing things they don't like at all in order to be independent and self-reliant. It is never good to be dependent on government. That money comes from people like me.

In response to an artsy challenger:

> I am happy to be scorned by those who make poor choices so long as I can have my money back from them so that I can pursue my dreams. I didn't see any of these artsy people in the lab at 4 AM completing their operating system class assignments, nor do I see them here working overtime on the weekend in the office. They can say anything and feel anything they want, and write plays and poetry all about their feelings, too. Just give me the money I earned back first. It's not their money. They have no right to it.

One person asked why I was "always winter, never Christmas", and I replied:

> It is Christmas for the Christians who I send books and DVDs to, as well as for the Christian scholars I support, and the Christian conferences, debates and lectures I underwrite across the world. Unfortunately, every dollar taken from me is a dollar less for that Ph.D tuition of a Christian debater, a dollar less for the flight of that Christian apologetics speaker, a dollar less for that textbook for that Christian biology student, and a dollar less for the flowers being sent to that post-abortive woman who I counseled who is now in law school. I have a need for the money I earn, and when it's sent to Planned Parenthood to pay for abortions by the government, my plan to serve God suffers. And finally, should I ever get married, I would like my wife to have the option of staying home with the children and even homeschooling them. That costs money. Somehow, I feel that given the choice between my homeschooling wife and the public school unions, the government will choose to give my money to the unions. Just a hunch.

I'm not Santa Claus – I have goals for the money I earn.

I think that people should go into the humanities when they are serious about making a

career of it and can get the highest grades. But if they are coasting and only getting Bs and Cs and not paying attention in class, then drop out and go to trade school. Don't complain later when you can't find a job. STEM careers pay the most.

15 top-earning degrees

1	Petroleum engineering	$83,121
2	Chemical engineering	$64,902
3	Mining engineering	$64,404
4	Computer engineering	$61,738
5	Computer science	$61,407
6	Electrical engineering	$60,125
7	Mechanical engineering	$58,766
8	Industrial engineering	$58,358
9	Systems engineering	$57,438
10	Engineering technology	$56,447
11	Actuarial science	$56,320
12	Aeronautical engineering	$56,311
13	Agricultural engineering	$54,352
14	Biomedical engineering	$54,158
15	Construction management	$53,199

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND EMPLOYERS

Top-earning degrees / college majors

Here's my previous post on the woman who accumulated $185,000 of student debt studying the humanities and is likewise demanding handouts and claiming not to be responsible.

Christina Hoff Sommers: how to make school better for boys

February 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christina Hoff Sommers

One of the most troubling things I see in the modern church is the tendency of church people and pastors to blame men for not being more aggressive about marrying. Often, the blame is placed on men. Men are told that we need to do better in school, work harder at work, and that we need to be more aggressive about courting and marrying. Very often, you hear the slogan "man up" directed at men, and we are told to stop playing video games and looking at porn and grow up.

The first thing to note is that marriage is much less attractive to men these days. First, the value proposition of marriage changed – especially the problem of no-fault divorce and divorce courts. The economic situation facing men has changed as well – the economy is poor, but the debt is very very high. Those are two important factors.

Another problem is fatherlessness, which is caused by welfare incentives. A lot of the behavior of young men is based on whether there is a father present in the home. The fact of the matter is that single motherhood by choice has become commonplace, and the aggravating factor for this trend is support for welfare. Welfare is bad for two reasons. First, it encourages women to raise children without a father. Boys raised without a father are not as likely to pursue courtship and marriage as boys raised with a father, because fatherlessness harms a boy's ability to learn to do the things needed for marriage.

Another problem is the availability of pre-marital sex. When a man can get sex without marriage, then he doesn't feel the same desire to get married.

So there are a few examples of things that we can change to nudge men toward marriage. Just speaking slogans like "man up" to men doesn't really address these

problems.

But in this post, I want to look at a problem that I haven't even mentioned yet – the problem of schools that don't produce men who can provide for a family.

Education Reform

Here is Christian equity-feminist Christina Hoff Sommers of the American Enterprise Institute to do that, writing in the left-leaning Atlantic about this problem.

Excerpt:

> Women in the United States now earn 62 percent of associate's degrees, 57 percent of bachelor's degrees, 60 percent of master's degrees, and 52 percent of doctorates.
>
> […]Boys in *all* ethnic groups and social classes are far less likely than their sisters to feel connected to school, to earn good grades, or to have high academic aspirations. A recent working paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research documents a remarkable trend among high-achieving students: In the 1980s, nearly the same number of top male and female high school students said they planned to pursue a postgraduate degree (13 percent of boys and 15 percent of girls). By the 2000s, 27 percent of girls expressed that ambition, compared with 16 percent of boys. During the same period, the gap between girls and boys earning mostly A's nearly doubled—from three to five percentage points.

I was a minority boy before I became a minority man – look at this:

> This gap in education engagement has dire economic consequences for boys. A 2011 Brookings Institution report quantifies the economic decline of the median male: For men ages 25 to 64 with no high school diploma, median annual earnings have declined 66 percent since 1969; for men with only a high school diploma, wages declined by 47 percent. Millions of male workers, say the Brookings authors, have been "unhitched from the engine of growth." The College Board delivered this disturbing message in a 2011 report about Hispanic and African-American boys and young adults: "Nearly half of young men of color age 15 to 24 who graduate from high school will end up unemployed, incarcerated or dead." Working-class white boys are faring only slightly better. When economist Andrew Sum and his colleagues at the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University examined gender disparities in the Boston Public Schools, they found that for the class of 2007, among blacks and Hispanics, there were 186 females for every 100 males attending a four-year college or university. For white students: 153 females to every 100 males.

Is this a U.S. – only problem? No. The problem exists in many places. But Dr. Sommers lists some of the initiatives those other countries are taking – trying to understand why boys are different and what needs to be done differently in order to get them to engage

and succeed. But we are not doing anything here. Why not?

Well, first – let's see what works:

> In a rare example of the academic establishment taking note of boys' trouble in school, the Harvard Graduate School of Education recently published a major study, Pathways to Prosperity, that highlights the "yawning gender gap" in education favoring women: "Our system… clearly does not work well for many, especially young men." The authors call for a national revival of vocational education in secondary schools. They cite several existing programs that could serve as a model for national reform, including the Massachusetts system, sometimes called the "Cadillac of Career Training Education."
>
> Massachusetts has a network of 26 academically rigorous vocational-technical high schools serving 27,000 male and female students. Students in magnet schools such as Worcester Technical, Madison Park Technical Vocational, and Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical take traditional academic courses but spend half their time apprenticing in a field of their choice. These include computer repair, telecommunications networking, carpentry, early childhood education, plumbing, heating, refrigeration, and cosmetology. As*Pathways* reports, these schools have some of the state's highest graduation and college matriculation rates, and close to 96 percent pass the states' rigorous high-stakes graduation test.
>
> Blackstone Valley Tech in Upton, Massachusetts, should be studied by anyone looking for solutions to the boy problem. It is working wonders with girls (who comprise 44 percent of the student body), but its success with boys is astonishing. According to a white paper on vocational education by the Commonwealth's Pioneer Institute, "One in four Valley Technical students enter their freshman year with a fourth-grade reading level." The school immerses these students in an intense, individualized remediation program until they read proficiently at grade level. These potentially disaffected students put up with remediation as well as a full load of college preparatory courses (including honors and Advanced Placement classes), because otherwise they could not spend half the semester apprenticing in diesel mechanics, computer repair, or automotive engineering.
>
> In former times, vocational high schools were often dumping grounds for low achievers. Today, in Massachusetts, they are launching pads into the middle class.

Who could possibly be opposed to turning boys into marriage-minded men? Look:

> Recent research shows that enrollment in high school vocational programs has dramatic effects on students' likelihood of graduating from high school—*especially boys*. But efforts to engage more boys in career and technical programs face a formidable challenge. In a series of scathing reports, the

> National Council on Women and Girls Education (NCWGE—a 38-year-old consortium that today includes heavy hitters such the AAUW, the National Women's Law Center, the ACLU, NOW, the Ms. Foundation, and the National Education Association) has condemned high school vocational training schools as hotbeds of "sex segregation."
>
> Because of decades of successful lobbying by NCWGE groups, high school and college career and technical training programs face government sanctions and loss of funds if they fail to recruit *and graduate* sufficient numbers of female students into "non-traditional" fields. Over the years, untold millions of state and federal dollars have been devoted to recruiting and retaining young women into fields like pipefitting, automotive repair, construction, drywall installing, manufacturing, and refrigeration mechanics. But according to *Statchat*, a University of Virginia workforce blog, these efforts at vocational equity "haven't had much of an impact." Despite an unfathomable number of girl-focused programs and interventions, "technical and manual occupations tend to be dominated by men, patterns that have held steady for many years."
>
> In March 2013 NCWGE released a report urging the need to fight even harder against "barriers girls and women face in entering nontraditional fields." Among its nine key recommendations to Congress: more federal funding and challenge grants to help states close the gender gaps in career and technical education (CTE); mandate every state to install a CTE gender equity coordinator; and impose harsher punishments on states that fail to meet "performance measures" –i.e. gender quotas.
>
> Instead of spending millions of dollars attempting to transform aspiring cosmetologists into welders, education officials should concentrate on helping young people, male and female, enter careers that interest them. And right now, boys are the underserved population requiring attention.

So. We know what works to make boys into marriage-ready men. And now we know who is standing in the way. What I'd like to see from the man-up crowd, especially the man-up crowd in the church, is a serious assessment of the research on this issue and some action.

But this is what we get from Mark Driscoll: (whom I almost always agree with)

> The number one consumer of online pornography is 12- to 17-year-old boys. What that means is he's home eating junk food, drinking Monster energy drinks, downloading porn, masturbating and screwing around with his friends. That really doesn't prepare you for responsible adulthood. That's a really sad picture, especially if you're a single gal hoping to get married someday. You're like: "Seriously, that's the candidate pool? You've got to be kidding me." **That's why 41 percent of births right now are to unmarried women. A lot of women have decided: "I'm never going to find a guy who is actually dependable and responsible to have a life with. So I'll just get a career and have a**

> **baby and just intentionally be a single mother because there are no guys worth spending life with.”**

We really need better leadership – informed leadership – on these issues from prominent pastors. They need to start to read some research (e.g. – what Dr. Sommers presented) on these issues. Maybe pastors need to affirm the *traditional* view of the Bible on sexual morality, and then take on the root cause of the disengaged boys problem: feminism in the schools. We don’t want to take on these problems in a superficial way and then actually make the problem *worse* by making excuses for views of sexuality that are unBiblical.

By the way, you should subscribe to the AEI podcast, which is on my list of favorite podcasts. And Dr. Sommers has a new edition of her classic book defending young men. If you have ever wondered what is going wrong with men, that book is required reading. It is required reading for anyone who wants to comment on this issue, in fact.

Two famous near-death experiences: Pam Reynolds and Maria's tennis shoe

February 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Mario Beuregard writes about out of body experiences and near death experiences in the leftist Salon.com, of all places.

NDE number one:

> Pam was brought into the operating room at 7:15 a.m., she was given general anesthesia, and she quickly lost conscious awareness. At this point, Spetzler and his team of more than 20 physicians, nurses, and technicians went to work. They lubricated Pam's eyes to prevent drying, and taped them shut. They attached EEG electrodes to monitor the electrical activity of her cerebral cortex. They inserted small, molded speakers into her ears and secured them with gauze and tape. The speakers would emit repeated 100-decibel clicks—approximately the noise produced by a speeding express train—eliminating outside sounds and measuring the activity of her brainstem.
>
> At 8:40 a.m., the tray of surgical instruments was uncovered, and Robert Spetzler began cutting through Pam's skull with a special surgical saw that produced a noise similar to a dental drill. At this moment, Pam later said, she felt herself "pop" out of her body and hover above it, watching as doctors worked on her body.

> Although she no longer had use of her eyes and ears, she described her observations in terms of her senses and perceptions. "I thought the way they had my head shaved was very peculiar," she said. "I expected them to take all of the hair, but they did not." She also described the Midas Rex bone saw ("The saw thing that I hated the sound of looked like an electric toothbrush and it had a dent in it … ") and the dental-drill sound it made with considerable accuracy.
>
> Meanwhile, Spetzler was removing the outermost membrane of Pamela's brain, cutting it open with scissors. At about the same time, a female cardiac surgeon was attempting to locate the femoral artery in Pam's right groin. Remarkably, Pam later claimed to remember a female voice saying, "We have a problem. Her arteries are too small." And then a male voice: "Try the other side." Medical records confirm this conversation, yet Pam could not have heard them.

I like the second one even better than the first.

NDE number two:

> Maria was a migrant worker who had a severe heart attack while visiting friends in Seattle. She was rushed to Harborview Hospital and placed in the coronary care unit. A few days later, she had a cardiac arrest but was rapidly resuscitated.

> The following day, Clark visited her. Maria told Clark that during her cardiac arrest she was able to look down from the ceiling and watch the medical team at work on her body. At one point in this experience, said Maria, she found herself outside the hospital and spotted a tennis shoe on the ledge of the north side of the third floor of the building. She was able to provide several details regarding its appearance, including the observations that one of its laces was stuck underneath the heel and that the little toe area was worn. Maria wanted to know for sure whether she had "really" seen that shoe, and she begged Clark to try to locate it.
>
> Quite skeptical, Clark went to the location described by Maria—and found the tennis shoe. From the window of her hospital room, the details that Maria had recounted could not be discerned. But upon retrieval of the shoe, Clark confirmed Maria's observations. "The only way she could have had such a perspective," said Clark, "was if she had been floating right outside and at very close range to the tennis shoe. I retrieved the shoe and brought it back to Maria; it was very concrete evidence for me."
>
> This case is particularly impressive given that during cardiac arrest, the flow of blood to the brain is interrupted. When this happens, the brain's electrical activity (as measured with EEG) disappears after 10 to 20 seconds. In this state, a patient is deeply comatose. Because the brain structures mediating higher mental functions are severely impaired, such patients are expected to have no clear and lucid mental experiences that will be remembered. Nonetheless, studies conducted in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and United States have revealed that approximately 15 percent of cardiac arrest survivors do report some recollection from the time when they were clinically dead. These studies indicate that consciousness, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings can be experienced during a period when the brain shows no measurable activity.

Here's the author bio:

> Mario Beauregard is associate research professor at the Departments of Psychology and Radiology and the Neuroscience Research Center at the University of Montreal. He is the coauthor of "The Spiritual Brain" and more than one hundred publications in neuroscience, psychology and psychiatry.

It's a helpful article, and one you might want to share or tweet to get a discussion started.

In previous posts, I have listed six arguments for non-physical minds, and also blogged about peer-reviewed scientific evidence on how consciousness changes brain chemistry through mental effort.

How well are Democrat economic policies working in Venezuela and Argentina?

February 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez very different?

I have been reflecting sorrowfully on some of the outright lies spoken by the President in his recent State of the Union address. I am thinking specifically of lies that are almost universally rejected by economists across the ideological spectrum – lies so obvious that you would have to be an illiterate peasant living in a village in Venezuela or Argentina in order to believe it.

Three of his lies stand out – the minimum wage lie, the global warming lie and women pay gap lie. Each of these lies is as false as saying that the Sun goes around the Earth, or that the Earth is flat. What bothers me is not that the President spoke them, because I expect someone with no scientific background and no private sector experience to say things that are not true. But what bothers me is that the American electorate is now incapable of identifying such obvious lies.

Let's take a look at this article from the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> On aisle seven, among the diapers and fabric softener, the socialist dreams of the late Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez looked as ragged as the toilet paper display.
>
> Employees at the Excelsior Gama supermarket had set out a load of extra-soft six-roll packs so large that it nearly blocked the aisle. To stock the shelves with it would have been pointless. Soon word spread that the long-awaited rolls had arrived, and despite a government-imposed limit of one package per person, the checkout lines stretched all the way to the decimated dairy case in the back of the store.

> […]Pathetic, in a country with the world's largest petroleum reserves and oil prices at nearly $95 a barrel, yet unable to supply basic goods because of its crumbling local currency and a shortage of U.S. dollars.
>
> […]Nearly a year after Chávez's death of complications from cancer at age 58, his handpicked successor, Nicolás Maduro, is struggling to contain food shortages, spiraling inflation and rampant crime.
>
> The arrival of basic staples such as cooking oil, chicken, flour or milk brings Venezuelans running to supermarkets and touches off surreal mob scenes, even as the government imposes price caps and rationing to prevent hoarding.
>
> Maduro squeaked past opposition candidate Henrique Capriles in April's presidential election, and Maduro's United Socialist Party won enough races in Dec. 8 local elections to push back against perceptions that Chávez loyalists were deserting him. Just before the vote, with television cameras rolling, he sent soldiers into an appliance store accused of price gouging and ordered huge markdowns on televisions and microwaves. Apparently it gave his party a final boost at the polls.

There's not a dime worth of difference in terms of vision between the Democrats in the USA and the socialists in Venezuela. The same people who think that sending armed troops to nationalize industry in Venezuela are nationalizing health care in this country right now. We will eventually see the same lines for health care that form in Canada and the UK. When you tax, regulate, and even attack those who provide services and products, you get shortages. Period. And yet big government redistribution of wealth seems to be winning over low-information voters in Venezuela and in the United States.

Are Barack Obama and Cristina Kirchner very different?

Venezuela has 56% currency inflation right now thanks to "stimulus" spending, but that is not the only place where Democrat policies are in force. Consider this article from the leftist Guardian about Argentina, where Democrat "stimulus" spending policies have led

to rising prices of consumer goods.

Excerpt:

> Every morning around 8am, the stern-faced cabinet chief Jorge Capitanich stands behind a podium at the Casa Rosada presidential palace for a televised verbal blast at the perceived enemies of the "victorious decade" presided over by the current president and her husband, the late Nestor Kirchner. Without naming them, Capitanich lashes out against the "visible and invisible" politicians, labour representatives, businessmen and journalists he blames for the sudden collapse of the peso and the explosive price increases that followed the forced devaluation.
>
> Argentina's economic earthquake has placed a huge question mark over the political future of the stateswoman so powerful she is referred to as Queen Cristina by both the opposition press and her supporters. In the past week, Capitanich has attempted to pin the price lurch on faceless foreign speculators, whom he accuses of a "strategy of domination" to gain control of Argentina's oil and freshwater reserves, pandering to the widespread belief here, often underlined by the president in her speeches, that "vultures" of the leading industrial countries harbour secret plans to siphon off natural reserves from this resource-rich South American nation.
>
> Capitanich has also blamed "anti-patriotic" farmers and large retailers, allegedly in league with independent, corruption-probing journalists, of fuelling price rises by "generating psychological action of permanent destabilisation" against Fernández de Kirchner.
>
> But critics of the government point to inept administration and populist spending by a government that considers itself to be leading a revolution against Argentina's erstwhile oligarchy.

Just like Obama, the socialists in Argentina are always looking to blame others for the problems they cause with their own policies. The problem is never bad policies that attack job creating businesses, it's always a lack of loyalty and patriotism. We are disloyal to our economically-illiterate elites who only want to help us, they say. Leftist economic policies can work if we just believe in the leader, they say. And many ignorant peasants believe that, even when the failure is right in front of them.

Not just in Venezuela and Argentina

Of course in America, we have a different kind of policy failure. We have Obamacare. Conservatives warned the public about it for years, but our peasants went ahead and voted for it anyway when we re-elected a know-nothing in 2012. He said that we could keep our health care plans and that we could keep our doctors. He said he would reduce the cost of health care. And we believed him. We believed him because the uneducated stand-up comedians we watched on the Comedy Channel made us believe him.

Take a look at the peasants realizing that not every piece of happy talk read from a

teleprompter by a celebrity is automatically true:

Human Events explains the story behind that video.

Excerpt:

> All of Barack Obama's phony rhetoric about how wonderfully the Affordable Care Act is chugging along means less than nothing compared to the cold reality that awaited the employees of a Pennsylvania company, as a local news station captured their stunned reactions to ObamaCare price hikes in real time.
>
> […][They] learned they'd be facing premium hikes of over 30 percent, with higher deductibles. Even their co-payments for doctor visits have doubled. And the numbers hitting these good people aren't as bad as the premiums and deductibles slamming into other ObamaCare victims around the country. The great second wave of damage in the larger group insurance market is about to get under way.
>
> "I don't know how President Obama thinks he's helping us," one employee sighs, "because we can't afford this, we can't afford to pay these co-pays, to pay these deductibles on what we're making."
>
> Another repeats the sarcastic but accurate observation made by ObamaCare critics since day one: "there's nothing affordable" about the Affordable Care Act. It is observed that average people can't just cough up three hundred dollars a month, because that's a big chunk of a rent check or mortgage payment. One shell-shocked woman, looking at a $400 monthly premium increase *plus* a $4000 deductible, confesses she has no idea how she's going to pay it.
>
> […]Needless to say, none of these people will be invited to come on stage with President Obama and talk about their ACA experiences. They're learning the hard way that political control of an industry means distant commissars picking winners and losers. You can do everything right and still get socked by the biggest middle-class tax increase in history, because the imperial President and his court have decided other people need lower premiums, and you must be squeezed to pay for it.

We have a generation of people who have been educated to value rhetoric from celebrities over the Constitution and sound economics in general. We must not think that we can be as ignorant as South American peasants now and avoid the consequences of that ignorance. We need to turn off the TV and pick up the Thomas Sowell book.

Related posts

- How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?
- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia's economy to grow? What causes Venezuela's economy to shrink?

- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama’s buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Famous gay activist pleads guilty to child pornography charges

February 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the San Francisco Chronicle. (H/T Robert S. McCain via First Street Journal)

Excerpt:

> Veteran gay rights advocate and former San Francisco Human Rights Commission staffer Larry Brinkin pleaded guilty Tuesday to possessing child pornography.
>
> Brinkin, 67, changed his plea in a deal with the district attorney's office that will result in a sentencing recommendation of six months in county jail, six months of home detention, five years of probation and lifetime registration as a sex offender.
>
> Brinkin, who worked as a senior contract compliance officer with the rights commission until his 2010 retirement, was arrested in June 2012. Authorities said e-mail attachments were found on his America Online subscriber's account that contained images of toddlers engaged in sex acts with men.
>
> Prosecutors originally charged him with six felony counts of possessing and distributing child pornography, but dropped all but one felony count of possession as part of the plea bargain.
>
> Brinkin must undergo sex offender therapy and is banned from working with kids, contacting a juvenile without parental consent, and living with someone responsible for a child without disclosing his offender status.
>
> During his 22-year tenure at the rights commission, Brinkin helped craft the city's Equal Benefits Ordinance, which became a national model for workplace equality for gays and lesbians. When he retired, the Board of Supervisors declared the week of Feb. 1, 2010, as Larry Brinkin Week.
>
> Brinkin, who appeared in court with his husband, has been out on $240,000 bail since September 2012. He is scheduled to return for sentencing on March 5, and to surrender into custody at a later date.

He's going to keep his pension, though:

> Knox said he did not believe Brinkin's city pension would be affected by the plea because his conviction doesn't fall under "moral turpitude." Under Proposition C, approved by voters in 2008, a city employee convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude – usually theft, fraud or a breach of the public trust – cannot collect employer-funded retirement benefits.

This is the public sector after all.

Previously, I blogged about a case of two gay men who had adopted a boy from Russia for the purpose of creating child pornography using him. I'm not sure if this is the Australian connection mentioned in the article, but it would make sense. The trouble we have today is that we are so interested in talking about love, love, love, that we have no will to say anything to protect children. When it comes to the selfishness of adults, anything goes, whether it be divorce, single motherhood or anything. We just don't care about kids, and we mask our indifference by talking about "love" and "not judging". It's very important to understand that there are real victims from all of this "love" and "not judging", and it's not as benign as it looks on the surface.

Other cases

The NY Daily News reports on another similar case, and links to CBS News and the Hartford Courant.

Excerpt:

> The case of a same-sex Connecticut couple accused of repeatedly raping and abusing two of their nine adopted boys is headed for trial.
>
> Married couple George Harasz and Douglas Wirth of Glastonbury were supposed to be sentenced Friday in Hartford Superior Court under a plea deal, but instead withdrew from their agreement with prosecutors. The men had already pleaded no contest in January to one felony count each of risk of injury to a minor — a reduction from even more serious charges related to sexual assault.
>
> […]Harasz and Wirth adopted nine children — three sets of male siblings — beginning in 2000, and ran a home-based dog breeding business called The Puppy Guy.
>
> The couple was arrested in November 2011 following a police and state investigation of sex-abuse allegations. The children were removed from the home.
>
> Police said two boys, ages 5 and 15, accused Harasz of sexually assaulting them. Harasz was initially facing first-degree sexual assault and other charges, while Wirth had been charged with third-degree sexual assault of the 15-year-old boy.
>
> Their arrest warrants claimed the couple not only sexually and physically abused the children, but also forced them to sleep in closets.
>
> […]One of the victims who spoke during the court hearing said sexual assault began when he was 6.
>
> "They took turns raping me over and over," he said.

Now, a lot of these rape accusations turn out to be false, so we don't really know if anyone is guilty until the trial concludes. But I've posted before about other trials that did conclude, so that you know that these things are in fact happening. I had blogged previously about the Duke University official who was offering his 5-year-old adopted son for sex on the Internet, not to mention the famous Jerry Sandusky case and the case

where the head of a gay youth organization was running a child sex ring.

Comments are going to be strictly moderated for this post.

What are the historical arguments for the empty tomb narrative?

February 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until

> the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

A few quotes from atheist historians not from Dr. Craig's article: (thanks to Eric of Ratio Christi OSU)

> Michael Goulder (Atheist NT Prof. at Birmingham) "…it goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion." ["The Baseless Fabric of a Vision," in Gavin D'Costa, editor, Resurrection Reconsidered (Oxford, 1996), 48.]
>
> Gerd Lüdemann (Atheist Prof of NT at Göttingen): "…the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus…not later than three years… the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE." [The Resurrection of Jesus, trans. by Bowden (Fortress, 1994), 171-72.]
>
> Robert Funk (Non-Christian scholar, founder of the Jesus Seminar): "…The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30 C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." [Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, The Acts of Jesus, 466.]

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s. For example, the atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark some time in the 40s. (See the debate below)

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source

> must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say “The President is hosting a dinner at the White House” and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the “high priest” as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus’ death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

So we are dealing with very early sources for the empty tomb.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as “Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women” and “Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female.”
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus’ empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to

> explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist

February 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me news of Saturday’s episode of Unbelievable, which features Lawrence Krauss, who debated William Lane Craig. Krauss’ book was also reviewed in the New York Times.

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

> Lawrence Krauss is a Cosmologist at Arizona State University who describes himself as an “anti-theist”. His latest book “A Universe From Nothing” has received both acclaim and criticism for its attempt to answer the question “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Debating the issue with Krauss is Rodney Holder, Course director at the Faraday Institute, Cambridge. An astrophysicist and priest by background. In a lively exchange they debate whether Krauss’ “nothing” is “nothing”, fine tuning and multiverses, scientific knowledge, miracles and the usefulness of theology and philosophy.

This debate is quite entertaining, and do not be intimidated if your don’t understand science. You can understand pretty easily who is arguing based on facts and who is speculating about unobservable, untestable entities. At one point, Krauss actually denies that there is any fine-tuning in the universe, so please see this link to refute that claim as well as this podcast which explains some examples of fine-tuning. Krauss gets a bit angry at the beginning, but calms down.

Quotation marks are for direct quotes, italics is for made-up snark. See below the summary for more posts that are related to this one.

Summary of the discussion: (picked up at 9:30 when they start talking about the book)

Brierley:

- explain your theory of how the universe can come into being from nothing

Krauss:

- the nothing that preceded the universe is “no space, no time, no universe”
- theists say that God is responsible for creating the universe out of this nothing
- but the laws of nature can create the universe uncaused out of nothing

Holder:

- Krauss sometimes writes that the nothing is really a quantum vacuum, but that is

not nothing
- He even acknowledges in his book that a quantum vacuum is not nothing
- He thinks that the nothing has properties, even though it has no being
- It has the property of being unstable
- It has the property of being acted on by quantum fields
- It has the property of being acted on by gravity

Krauss:

- But nothing can have the potential to do things inside it
- For example suppose you have an electron, *which is not nothing*
- If it jumps from one level to another, it emits light
- There was no potential for the light in the electron, but it was there as part of atomic structure

Holder:

- But in cases like that, there is something physical that has the potential

Krauss:

- Well, how did God makes the universe then if it had no potential?

Holder:

- God existed, and the potential for creating the universe in himself

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times

Krauss:

- It was written by a philosopher, so I dismissed it

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the Scientific American

Krauss:

- These book reviewers have not even read my book!

Krauss:

- Science will be able to figure out how to make something from nothing in the future
- We are even now speculating about interesting questions, like is there a multiverse?

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times
- The author of the review claims that you equivocate on the term “nothing”
- In order to get things to pop into being, you have to make “nothing” mean “something”
- Reviewer: none of Krauss’ theories explain how something can come from actual nothingness

Krauss:

- In physics, something and nothing are not that different
- The reviewer doesn’t understand the physics
- He doesn’t understand quantum field theory
- You could call a quantum vacuum “nothing”, *(this is the vacuum fluctuation model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*
- Maybe there is an eternally existing multiverse that we can’t observe or test scientifically
- Maybe it has laws that we don’t know about which allow our universe to pop into being
- Maybe this popping into being is uncaused
- (alarmed) Who made God? Who made God?

Holder:

- God is eternal and necessary

Krauss:

- (interrupting, angry) What does it mean for something to be necessary?

Holder:

- Basically, you have to decide whether there is more evidence that the necessary being God or a multiverse

Brierley:

- So Dr. Krauss are you willing to say that the universe is a brute fact, in some sense, and requires no explanation

Krauss:

- (angry) Religious people are stupid because they just assume brute facts, *not like me and my unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry) Religious people are against the progress of science, they don’t want to figure out how things work

Brierley:

- But isn't it possible that naturalists can be opposed to the progress of science?
- What about the way the Fred Hoyle opposed the Big Bang because he wanted an eternal universe

Krauss:

- (angry) But naturalists like me let the facts determine our beliefs, *like the facts about the eternal unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry, shouting) Philosophers are stupid, they know nothing!

=== Break ===

Brierley:

- Do you see any evidence of purpose in the universe?

Krauss:

- Well maybe I would believe if the stars lined up to spell out a message from God

Brierley:

- Actually no, that wouldn't be evidence for God on your multiverse view
- if there an infinite number of universes existing for an infinite amount of time, then anything can happen no matter how unlikely it is
- therefore, no evidence could convince you that God exists, since the unobservable, untestable, eternal multiverse can make anything it wants

Krauss:

- That's a true statement, *and very convenient for atheists who don't want to be accountable to God, don't you think?*

Brierley:

- Back to the multiverse, how does it solve the fine-tuning?

Krauss:

- "We have no idea if the universe is fine-tuned for life", *even though the atheist Martin Rees who endorsed Krauss' book wrote his own book about the fine-tuning of the universe called "Just Six Numbers"*
- Inflationary theory does suggest a way to create multiple universes, *(this is the chaotic inflationary model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*

Brierley:

- But this theory is still very much a hypothesis, isn't it? We can't observe *or test* this hypothesis can we?

Krauss:

- "No, and that is really important to state"
- "I'm an empiricist, so if you can't falsify it and if you can't test it then it's not science"
- In my book, I speculate about a way that we could test the multiverse theory

Holder:

- Yes, in principle, the multiverse would be scientific if you could test it through other theories like inflationary theory
- There are a lot of speculations about multiverse theory, but no evidence from predictions that were validated in the lab

Krauss:

- "I agree completely with everything you just said"

Brierley:

- Roger Penrose agrees with Holder that the multiverse theory is too speculative
- (To Holder) Isn't the multiverse theory better than positing a completely different kind of being, which is God?

Holder:

- The multiverse theory is extremely speculative
- Even if the multiverse were true, you would still need to explain the multiverse

Krauss:

- People don't oppose my book because it's full of self-contradictory speculations
- People oppose my book because they are stupid and ignorant

Holder:

- There are things that exist that science cannot measure, like objective morality
- It's possible to give explanations for moral behavior by appealing to evolution
- But that does not ground self-sacrificial morality, such as what occurs in the Christian life

Brierley:

- Dawkins says there is no purpose or morality in in the universe, do you agree?

Krauss:

- “There is certainly no evidence of any of that”

Brierley:

- In the book, you talk about how we live in a special time in the universe’s history to be able to do science, *(i.e. – The Privileged Planet hypothesis)*
- You also write about how all the discoveries were are making will not be communicated to anyone in other places in the universe
- So what is the meaning of doing science on your view? And why are you sad at the knowledge that will not be available to people in the future?
- Are you longing for some kind of purpose?

Krauss:

- No, I just get enjoyment from studying the universe with science to gain understanding

Holder:

- What do you make of Einstein’s statement about the unexpected comprehensibility of the universe
- Theists would say that this is because God wanted us to study and understand and gain knowledge

Krauss:

- “It is remarkable that the universe is comprehensible”

Brierley:

- Why is the universe comprehensible?

Krauss:

- Well, maybe the universe just has to be that way

Brierley:

- What do you make of the heat death of the universe, when all life in the universe will die out?

Krauss:

- That’s the way the universe is

=== BREAK ===
Krauss:

- I wouldn't want to live in a universe where there was a God
- God is a cosmic Saddam Hussein
- "Religious people turn their minds off" and believe in God for consolation

Holder:

- First, Jesus is the revelation of God and he is no Saddam Hussein
- Second, the Christian life is anything but easy, we are facing some persecution already in the UK
- Third, there is also the problem of being accountable to God when we die
- It's very much like science – Christianity is the way it is, not the way we want it to be

Krauss:

- "If you don't believe in him, you don't get any of the benefits, so you have to believe"
- "And then if you've done something wrong, you're going to be judged for it"
- "So I don't want to be judged by God, I want to be… that's the bottom line"

Holder:

- Well, Jesus has died to pay the price for those things we've done wrong
- Although we will have to face the charges for what we've done, believers will ultimately be forgiven

UPDATE: Peter Sean Bradley note that Krauss is now walking back his rhetoric in response to criticisms from people like atheist John Horgan.

Related posts

- Ed Feser takes on Lawrence Krauss and Victor Stenger
- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?
- Lawrence Krauss debates "A Universe From Nothing" with an astrophysicist
- William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?
- Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument
- Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger's critique of cosmic fine-tuning
- A review of Lawrence Krauss' book "A Universe From Nothing"

UK survey: nearly 60% of working moms would cut their work hours if they could afford to

February 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this UK Daily Mail article that made me think about how women vote.

Excerpt:

> More than a third of working mothers would like to give up their jobs completely and stay at home with their children, a major Government survey has found.
>
> It showed that millions of mothers of young children who go out to work do so only because they need to work to pay the bills.
>
> The research for the Department for Education found that, far from being anxious to get out of their homes and into employment, the great majority of mothers are only reluctant workers.
>
> Nearly six out of ten of all working mothers would cut down their hours to spend more time with their families if they could afford to, it said.
>
> The yearning among mothers to leave their jobs and look after their children instead is even more pronounced among the highest achieving women, the survey indicated.
>
> More than two-thirds of those in senior and middle management roles would spend fewer hours in the office and devote more time to their children if they had enough money, it said.
>
> […]Yesterday's survey also undermines the claims that prejudice and discrimination against women in male-dominated companies is the reason why women are heavily outnumbered in the boardroom.
>
> Rather, it suggests that many women who could get to the top in business choose instead to put their children before their careers.

The problem is that when government gives people free stuff, people who work have to work more to pay for it. And the strangest thing is that even though women seem to want to stay home with their kids (which is good), when it comes time to vote, they actually vote NOT to stay home with their kids. How? By growing the size of government, which results in higher taxes. To find out what women really think about staying home with their kids, we can look at how they vote.

Women voted 56-44 for more government spending in 2012

CNN reports on how women voted in the 2012 election:

> **According to CNN's exit polls, 55% of women and 45% of men voted for Obama and 44% of women and 52% of men voted for Romney. That level of female support for the president made an especially big impact in swing states like Ohio where the gender breakdown mirrored the national figures.**
>
> […]There are some indications that social issues directly impacting women might have helped sway votes in some states.
>
> Tuesday's early exit polls showed 51% of Missouri voters said they believed abortion should be legal all or most of the time. Of those voters, exit polls showed 76% supported Democratic incumbent Claire McCaskill, who won Tuesday night, while 19% voted for Akin.
>
> Forty-seven percent of Missouri's voters said abortion should be illegal. Exit polls showed Akin netted 67% of this group's votes while 27% of people who think abortion should be illegal supported McCaskill.
>
> **But much more than social issues, pocketbook economic issues most concerned women voters, exit polling showed.**
>
> **"Women like all voters felt the economics were most important," Swers said. "Women tend to be more supportive of government spending… than men are … so they were less responsive to Romney in that way and more responsive to Obama's message on empathy and helping the middle class."**

Gallup reported that the gender gap in the 2012 election was actually 20 points. That was the largest ever measured in a Presidential election. The actual vote for Obama among women, according to Gallup, was **56-44**.

Women are also more pro-abortion more than men
Here is a peer-reviewed research paper that shows the problem that we need to warn women about, so that they vote smarter.

The abstract reads:

> This paper examines the growth of government during this century as a result of giving women the right to vote. Using cross-sectional time-series data for 1870–1940, we examine state government expenditures and revenue as well as voting by U.S. House and Senate state delegations and the passage of a wide range of different state laws. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue and more liberal voting patterns for federal representatives, and these effects continued growing over time as more women took advantage of the franchise. Contrary to many recent suggestions, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s, and it helps explain why American government started growing when it did.

When people vote for government to do more for everyone else, then men who work have to pay more in taxes.

Women vote for higher taxes, so they have to work more
If women want to stay home with their children more, then they need to vote for their husbands (present or future) to pay less in taxes when they work. That means voting for smaller government, more liberty and more personal responsibility. Until women get to

the point of connecting their future plans (marriage and parenting) for their lives with their current voting, this situation is not going to change. Marriages run on money. It’s no good to urge men to “man-up” and then take away their ability to provide by taxing more of their earnings to pay for Sandra Fluke’s birth control pills and abortions. Keep the money in the family, and then you can stay home with the kids more.

Three logical prerequisites for biological evolution to work

February 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Biologist, blogger and super-mom Lindsay has written a post that explains what supporters of Darwinian mechanisms have to prove in order to explain the origin and diversity of life.

Here are the three things that Darwinists must demonstrate:

1. **It is possible to add biological information.**
2. **There are more upward steps than downward steps (or at least a way to get more upward steps than downward steps at least some of the time).**
3. **There does exist a gradual genetic pathway that can be climbed in tiny, incremental steps.**

So first of all, the main two arguments for intelligent design and against naturalism are the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion. Both involve massive infusions of new biological information. So Lindsay is right to focus on whether Darwinism can add new biological information. But I wanted to focus on number three, because I really think that her post is about the burden of proof on Darwinists more than it is about *our* burden of proof. And we do need to get used to asking Darwinists for the evidence for their view.

Take a look at the detail on number three:

> In order for evolution to be true, not only does information have to be added over time, but each successive change must occur in a living organism and it must be conserved by being passed on to offspring. Thus, the change cannot kill the organism or seriously disable it, or the change will not be passed on. This must be the case for EVERY step in the entire evolutionary sequence, no matter how small. At every step you must have a functional organism. Thus, the changes must be gradual enough that the tiny upward steps (if they exist) can achieve each new level without killing or disabling the organism. To use a simplistic analogy, if one tries to change from one word to another by changing one letter at a time (cat to cot to dot to dog, for example), there must, at every step, be an actual word that can be reached by changing one letter. In the Mount Improbable analogy, this means that there can be no upward jumps in the trail. If the maximum possible upward step is 6 inches, then there can be no 6 foot cliffs along the trail, or even 7 inch steps. If ever there is a step which requires more information than unguided evolution can provide, then evolution is falsified in that instance. It cannot account for the change in information if that is the case.

Now I have never seen a gradual genetic pathway from one body plan to another in any peer-reviewed paper. I am talking about from one phyla to another. What I need to see to

believe in the ability of Darwinian mechanisms to drive change from one body plan to another is that sequence of changes at the genetic level. And I don't just need to see the steps, I need to see the probabilities of getting the correct sequence of changes at the genetic level within the time available *by chance.* That's what Darwinists assert in their theory – that's what they need to prove. Talking about how one creature looks like another creature is irrelevant. My car looks like my Dads car, because we drive the same model, but different model years – and both cars are designed.

When people ask our side for evidence for our claims, we are able to produce the evidence to substantiate our claims, e.g. – cosmic fine-tuning factors or protein sequencing probabilities. I would like to see the other side do the same, and not just tell me a story.

If you are looking to understand what the other side has to prove, and in a concise way, read her post.

Mike Licona lectures on historical methods and the New Testament

February 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a quick overview of Michael Licona's latest book on the resurrection, entitled "The Resurrection of Jesus".

60 minutes of lecture, 20 minutes of Q&A.

Summary:

- Dr. Licona's background and education
- The definition of history and philosophy of history
- Postmodern approaches to history
- Historical bedrock: facts that are historically demonstrable
- Historical criterion 1: Explanatory scope
- Historical criterion 2: Explanatory power
- Historical criterion 3: Plausibility
- Historical criterion 4: Ad Hoc / Speculation / non-evidenced assumptions
- Inference to the best explanation
- Investigating miracle claims: is it possible? How?
- Objection of James D.G. Dunn
- Objection of Bart Ehrman
- New Testament sources: Gospels and Paul's letters
- The Gnostic gospels: are they good sources?
- The minimal facts
- The hallucination hypothesis
- The best explanation

While watching this lecture, it struck what good preparation it was for understanding debates. This lecture is more about historical methods, but if you're interested in Mike's minimal facts case for the resurrection, here's a video on that:

This is the case he uses in his debates with Richard Carrier, Dale Allison, Bart Ehrman, etc.

Mike Licona's ministry is here: Risen Jesus, and I noticed that the most popular article on the site is on the comological argument, which is not surprising at all, since he co-edited a book on 50 evidences for God from many differences with William Dembski. He likes evidence from every discipline you can think of, and then some.

If you are looking for a good book to read on the resurrection of Jesus, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

State department: not building the Keystone XL pipeline could increase greenhouse gas emissions

February 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Not building the 875-mile Keystone XL Pipeline could result in the release of up to 42 percent more greenhouse gases than would be released by building it, according to the State Department.
>
> Not building the pipeline "is unlikely to significantly impact the rate of extraction in the [Canadian] oil sands or the continued demand for heavy crude oil at refineries in the United States," the department noted in a long-awaited environmental report released January 31st.
>
> But the "No Build" option is likely to result in an increased number of oil spills, six more deaths annually, and up to 42 percent higher greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the State Department concluded.
>
> The proposed 36-inch pipeline would transport 830,000 barrels of crude oil each day from western Canada through the Bakken oil fields of Montana and South Dakota before connecting to an existing pipeline in Nebraska on its way to Gulf Coast refineries.
>
> The project will create an estimated 42,100 jobs and add $3.4 billion to the U.S. economy.

This report follows last week's report showing that the pipeline would have no major environmental impact.

Excerpt:

> The long-delayed Keystone XL oil pipeline cleared a major hurdle toward approval Friday, a serious blow to environmentalists' hopes that President Barack Obama will block the controversial project running more than 1,000 miles from Canada through the heart of the U.S.
>
> The State Department reported no major environmental objections to the proposed $7 billion pipeline, which has become a symbol of the political debate over climate change. Republicans and some oil- and gas-producing states in the U.S. — as well as Canada's minister of natural resources — cheered the report, but it further rankled environmentalists already at odds with Obama and his energy policy.

Now the State Department is one of the most liberal departments in the government. Unfortunately, this has not appeased the great climate science experts in Hollywood, who donate so much money to Democrat election campaigns. So long as the money keeps

flowing from the high school drop-out celebrities, don't expect this pipeline to get built. For the Democrats, it's all about staying in power.

Related Posts

- State Department report finds that Keystone XL pipeline is safe for the environment
- Fracking propels North Dakota to 3.2% unemployment rate
- Ten ways that the Obama administration could lower gas prices right now
- The ten worst energy policies of the Obama administration
- Is Obama telling the truth about U.S. oil reserves?
- Production of oil, gas and coal on federal lands sinks to 9-year low
- Did Obama really create jobs with his green energy and stimulus programs?
- In Canada, a revolt against global warming socialism creates an economic boom
- Obama pleases environmental lobby by killing Keystone XL pipeline

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

February 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am re-posting this because people are searching for something on the Ken Ham vs Bill Nye debate. You can read a review of the Ham-Nye debate on J. W. Wartick's blog. Another good review is from Evolution News, written by Casey Luskin of the Discovery Institute. In the meantime, your time would be more profitably spent listening to this debate.

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to MP3 file)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> His new book "The Edge of Evolution" takes his conclusions further, arguing that the Darwinian processes of random mutation and natural selection are incapable of producing the variation and complexity we see in most of life.
>
> So can we conclude that life was intelligently designed by a creator?
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

I get the impression that Fox learned everything he knows about ID by reading Darwinists.

The MP3 file is here.

The summary below is rated VERY SNARKY.

Summary

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism

- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program
- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent
- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do

maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true
- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not

repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to

the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms

can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah
- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet 9 from Outer Space!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren’t going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

Stephen C. Meyer and Keith Fox debate intelligent design and evolution

February 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am re-posting this because people are searching for something on the Ken Ham vs Bill Nye debate. You can read a review of the Ham-Nye debate on J. W. Wartick's blog. Another good review is from Evolution News, written by Casey Luskin of the Discovery Institute. In the meantime, your time would be more profitably spent listening to this debate.

From Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable" podcast.

Details:

> Stephen Meyer is a leading proponent of Intelligent Design who directs the Centre for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. His most recent book "Signature in the Cell" claims to show that the DNA code is the product of intelligent mind, not naturalistic processes. Keith Fox is Professor of Biochemistry at Southampton University. He chairs the UK Christians in Science network but disagrees strongly with ID. They debate how life could have originated and whether design is allowed as an explanation in science.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary: (stuff in italics is my snarky paraphrase)

Meyer:

- background and how he got interested in intelligent design
- his research focus is on the origin of life – the first replicator
- summarizes the history of origin of life studies
- authored the book "Signature in the Cell"
- the DNA enigma: where did the information in DNA come from?
- naturalistic explanations of the DNA information have failed
- but intelligent agents are known to be able to produce information
- the best explanation of the information in DNA is that an intelligent agent authored it
- Meyer's book was named by atheist philosopher of science Thomas Nagel as a Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year in 2010
- why is design so controversial? Many people think that Darwin explained why nature appears design
- the Darwinian view is that nature can create the appearance of design using mutation and selection
- however, Darwinian mechanisms cannot explain the origin of the first living cell, it assumes replication, and the origin of life is about where the first replicator comes

from

Fox:

- Meyer's argument is not about the evolution of life after the first cell
- Meyer's case for design is about the origin of life
- naturalists do not know a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- there are a number of naturalistic hypotheses for the origin of life, like the RNA-first hypothesis
- maybe in a few years one of them will turn out to be correct
- what intelligent design is arguing from a gap in our current naturalistic knowledge to infer that God intervened in nature

Meyer:

- that's not what intelligent design is at all
- the approach ID theorists use is the inference to best explanation
- you evaluate all explanations, non-intelligent causes and intelligent causes
- you prefer the best possible explanation
- we know that minds are capable of producing information just like the information we find in DNA

Fox:

- living cells replicate, so they have the ability to introduce mutations as they replicate and then some of those mutations can be selected
- so maybe the process of replicating that living cells do created the first living cell
- maybe the first living cell created itself, X brought X into being, self-creation, what's irrational about that?

Meyer:

- the issue is the origin of life – where did the first living cell come from?
- you cannot appeal to the operations that a living cell can perform to explain the origin of the first living cell
- there was no first living cell operating before the first living cell
- there was no replication, mutation or selection before the first living cell
- in fact, in my book I show that there is no known naturalistic mechanism that is able to produce the information needed for the first living cell
- *nothing can create itself, that is self-contradictory*

Fox:

- Well, you are just saying that because something is complex that God did it

Meyer:

- Sadly, no. What I actually said needed to be explained was the information, not complexity
- And we know from software engineering that the process of adding information to code is performed by programmers
- in the absence of any adequate naturalistic explanation for information, we are justified in taking the explanation that we are familiar with – namely, intelligent agency – based on our uniform, universal experience of what causes information

Fox:

- well, maybe we can appeal to the mutation and selection in existing living cells to explain the origin of the first living cell
- maybe there were living cells before the first living cell, and then these other living cells created the first living cell

Meyer:

- we can't keep invoking mutation and selection when those processes are not operating prior to the origin of the first living cell

Fox:

- well maybe some bare-bones self-replication molecule was a precursor to the first living cell

Meyer:

- even to generate very limited replicator would require a large amount of information
- the argument I am making is – where does the evolution come from?

Fox:

- well, maybe we will think of an explanation for information that is naturalistic in 20 years
- we've thought of explanations to things that were NOT information before
- so maybe we will be able to think of something to explain information based on our ability to explain NOT information before

Moderator: Change topics: the Dover decision

Meyer:

- the Discovery Institute opposed the policy that causes the trial
- the wording of the statute was poor
- the judge was completely wrong in his decision
- young earth creationists used the phrase "intelligent design" to cover their agenda
- intelligent design is an inference using the normal methods of science

Fox:

- intelligent design is a science stopper because it stops looking for a naturalistic explanation
- everything in nature must have a naturalistic explanation
- everything has to be explained using matter and time and chance
- it just has to be that way!!!!

Meyer:

- well, what luck would you have explaining an effect like Mt. Rushmore?
- can you explain that using matter,time and chance?
- Mt. Rushmore was the product of intelligence, not wind and erosion
- similarly, there is information in the cell, and we know that intelligence causes information

Fox:

- So you are saying that we don't understand and therefore an intelligence is necessary?

Meyer:

- no I am saying we DO understand and we are making an inference based on that understanding
- you are the one who is insisting on a material explanation because you pre-suppose materialism
- we know that minds have causal powers, and we can infer mind as an explanation from information

Fox:

- well nature is a seamless chain of material causes and effects

Meyer:

- agents can act without violating the laws of nature
- even humans can act as intelligent agents to create information in books, and they don't violate the laws of nature
- intelligent causes are real, and they explain effects in nature

Fox:

- you're trying to impose on science something to do with meaning and purpose

Meyer:

- no that's not what we're doing, we're inferring from from the fact that we ourselves

are known causes of information to the fact that an intelligence cause is the best explanation for information in the cell

Fox:

- *but I am a materialist*, I need a materialist explanation

Meyer:

- mind IS an answer to the how question
- we infer to mind in many other scientific disciplines, like cryptography, archaeology, etc.
- a materialist might accuse an archaeologist of engaging in a “scribe-of-the-gaps” argument, but the best explanation of an artifact with information is a scribe
- we are inferring that mind is the cause from the nature of the effect: information

Moderator: is it appropriate to call DNA “information”
Fox:

- well DNA is just a molecular polymer, any reference to information is just by analogy

Meyer:

- DNA is a molecular polymer, but it also exhibits the property of specified complexity
- the arrangement of bases, which function as machine instructions in a software program, for performings task in the cell
- we have observed that the property of specified complexity always comes from an intelligence

Fox:

- well, maybe there are other sequences that would work, so maybe it’s really not uncommon to develop functioning sequences by chance alone, without an intelligence

Meyer:

- you can measure how precise the functional specificity is in DNA and proteins

Moderator: is Shannon information the same as functional information
Meyer:

- Shannon information refers to the sequences of digits or symbols that do not necessarily have any function, i.e. – a four character string QSZX has as much Shannon information as WORD. However, only the latter is functional against the pattern of the English language. There are arrangements of DNA bases and amino acids that have the same number of symbols/characters as a functional sequence would have, but they have no biological function – they do not exhibit specified

complexity

Fox:

- Well, maybe there are lots and lots of sequences of DNA and proteins so that it is fairly easy to get a functional one by chance

Meyer:

- DNA sequences that are functional are extremely rare, protein sequences are even more rare
- this is not my opinion, this is what the research shows – functional protein sequences are rare

Fox:

- well maybe there are other functional sequences that are occur before the first functional sequence that are precursors to the first functional sequence
- maybe there are billions of years of replication, mutation and selection before the first replication, mutation and selection

Meyer:

- you can't get to the first selectable functional sequence by appealing to precursor selectable functional sequences – there are no selectable functional sequences before the FIRST one
- you have to get the first selectable functional sequence by chance alone, because there is nothing to mutate or select before the first replicator
- the chance hypothesis has been rejected because the minimal amount of information for the simplest replicator is too high to get by chance alone, given the resources, including time, that are available

Moderator: *Keith are you confident that naturalism will be able to substantiate these naturalism-of-the-gap speculations that you offer in response to Meyer's actual science that we have today?*

Fox:

- well, it is hard to know for sure because it was just a fluke event
- but there's nothing irrational or unscientific or miraculous about it – the fluke would have a material explanation
- there is nothing that we can detect that would implicate God, my speculations about a fluke which I cannot observe or measure or test would all be compatible with an atheistic worldview that omits God as a causal entity

Meyer:

- where are those material processes that could account for this fluke then?
- the whole point of this argument is that the information in DNA transcends the material components in the sequence
- it's the arrangement of the material parts/letters/characters/symbols/instructions that needs to be explained

Fox:

- Well, I just have a different philosophy of science that rules out intelligent causation a priori

Meyer:

- Yes, that's the difference between us – you pre-suppose that all explanations of natural phenomena must exclude intelligent causes

There is a bit more where Meyer talks about how parts of the cell are implementations of various design patterns (Gang of Four design patterns) that are used by software architects who design software.

Find more posts on Stephen C. Meyer here.

Can the negative effects of fatherlessness be attributed to other factors, like poverty?

February 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Here's a blog post from the Institute for Family Studies to answer that question.

Introduction:

> Growing up without a father—whether that's due to divorce, a nonmarital birth, or a father's death—is associated with a host of negative effects. But given that children from low-income families, for instance, are more likely to live apart from their father in the first place, it can be hard to tell to what extent an absent father *causes* the problems that father absence is associated with, and to what extent other factors related to both family structure and child outcomes (like household income) are to blame.
>
> Researchers Sara McLanahan, Laura Tach, and Daniel Schneider published a paper last year on exactly this problem. They reviewed 47 studies that used a variety of methods designed to uncover the causal effects of father absence, such as lagged dependent variable models, natural experiments, and individual fixed effects models.

Here's one of the findings:

> Labor Force: McLanahan and her colleagues found few studies on how father absence affects children's employment and income in adulthood. The handful of analyses they did find are not entirely comparable; however, some of their findings were consistent. "Divorce was associated with lower levels of employment" in two studies, and in two other studies there were "higher levels of labor force inactivity among those who experienced divorce in early childhood." In a fifth study, growing up with stepparents and with a single divorced mother had negative effects on occupational status, while growing up with a single widowed mother was not a disadvantage relative to growing up with

> stably married parents.

Here is Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to add some more evidence for this view.

He writes:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. **In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.**
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:
>
> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

Yesterday, on the Dennis Prager show, Dennis was discussing this article and this article during the male – female hour. He made the point that children raised by single mothers and divorced mothers don't have the experience of growing up and seeing their mother *love her husband* and *act like a wife towards him.* No government program can provide that. It is important that boys and girls have that experience of seeing a woman love her husband, and seeing a man love his wife. Of seeing them in a committed, stable, purposeful relationship, trying to provide for and raise their children.

Today, a lot of women are watching Hollywood movies and TV shows where men are portrayed in a very negative way, e.g. – Mad Men. These shows are often written by people on the hard left – radical feminists and/or gay activists. A girl growing up in this environment is just not going to have access to a positive view of how men and women get along in a marriage, making them less marry-able. Less safe to marry. That example of man and wife would act as a counter to Hollywood, but too many boys and girls are growing up without it.

So what's the take-home lesson? The take-home lesson is that we need to be more careful about choosing partners and having children. It's probably a good idea to be less driven by emotions, peer approval and hormones, and more driven by rational thought and studies. Choose wisely, and test well.

J. Warner Wallace: influence the culture by encouraging young Christians

February 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Cold Case Christianity blog.

Excerpt:

> I came to faith at the age of 35. I didn't have a deep relationship with any Christians at the time, and I had no strong Christian influences in my life. Without a mentor or role model, I felt like I had to work through the evidence and claims of Christianity on my own. Many years later however, as I was preparing to write my own book and start a modest journey as a public Case Maker, members of the apologetics community surrounded me with support and encouragement. While I wasn't much younger than any of them (and was, in fact, older than some), they recognized I was the "new kid" on the block and surprised me with their generosity, wisdom and assistance. I was humbled by the response, and began to look at my own sphere of influence, searching for young men and women I could encourage in a similar way.
>
> Those of us who hope to influence the culture for Christ typically think of our own efforts to communicate and reach the world. What can I write today? What can I say? How can I effectively use the internet to promote and defend the Christian worldview? Like others, I'm guilty of viewing my influence through the narrow lens of my own efforts. As a guy who started this season in my 50's however, I've come to realize the limits of my own impact and the role I can play as an encourager. My questions are starting to change: Who can I inspire as a young Christian Case Maker? What small piece of wisdom can I provide to someone who is a few steps behind me in this journey? How can I impact the younger generation of Christian Case Makers? I know I won't be writing and speaking 30 years from now, but there are men and women out there who will be. What can I do to make them even more effective?

I wanted to add to what he wrote and tell you a little bit about what I do. Through my blog, I have been able to meet young people in high school and college who are making decisions about what to study and where to work. I'm been able to help people in some specific ways:

- helping them to know what to read/listen to/watch in order to build up their worldview
- helping them learn how to debate with skeptics
- helping them to decide between college and trade school
- helping them to choose the right major
- encouraging them to work in the summer instead of taking time off

- helping them get funding for apologetics events that they organize
- rewarding them for doing well in school or work
- listening to the conflicts with teachers and professors
- helping them make plans for their lives
- helping them make good decisions with the opposite sex
- spending time playing games with them or just talking
- asking them about their classes, assignments and tests

It’s always rewarding to seem them studying hard subjects, getting good grades, entering competitions and getting summer/full-time jobs. I like to give rewards to people who do try to grow their skills and produce results. It can be small stuff like games or books, or bigger stuff, like sponsoring an apologetics event that they’ve organized. Sometimes I can get a young person connected with a mentor. For example, one young lady wanted to start a pro-life club, and I was able to connect her with someone who started a large pro-life organization and the office manager from that large pro-life organization. I also provided her with some helpful pro-life books. It’s important that we not understimate how much good it does to try to be supportive when young people want to grow their skills and take on challenges.

I think that mentoring young people is especially for those of us who are not married with children. We typically have more disposable income and time than married people do, especially married people with children. Not only is it good for them to get the advice from someone more experienced, but it also gives you parenting practice, and that’s something that you can talk about in a courting situation. This is the kind of thing that signals to a candidate spouse that you are going to be interested in mentoring them, and in raising effective Christian children. The most challenging thing about doing this is that you really have to think about how to please God with your mentoring, and that means that you have to put yourself second a lot of the time. It’s good for singles to learn how to do that.

Jason Lisle debates Hugh Ross on the age of the Earth

February 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am re-posting this because people are searching for something on the Ken Ham vs Bill Nye debate. You can read a review of the Ham-Nye debate on J. W. Wartick's blog. Another good review is from Evolution News, written by Casey Luskin of the Discovery Institute. In the meantime, your time would be more profitably spent listening to this debate.

I found this radio debate about the age of the Earth on the Apologetics 315 Twitter feed.

Speakers:

Jason Lisle

Dr. Lisle graduated *summa cum laude* from Ohio Wesleyan University where he double-majored in physics and astronomy, and minored in mathematics. He did graduate work at the University of Colorado where he earned a Master's degree and a Ph.D. in Astrophysics. While there, Dr Lisle used the SOHO spacecraft to investigate motions on the surface of the sun as well as solar magnetism and subsurface weather. His thesis was entitled "Probing the Dynamics of Solar Supergranulation and its Interaction with Magnetism." Among other things, he discovered a previously unknown polar alignment of supergranules (solar convection cells), and discovered evidence of solar giant cells. He has also authored a number of papers in both secular and creation literature.

Hugh Ross

At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver's Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or "quasars," some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

So both have impeccable scientific credentials.

The MP3 file is here. (This is the updated version that Brian Auten fixed to remove the commercials!)

I don't always agree with Frank Pastore, (only 95%), but he knows the topic of the debate back to front, and guides the discussion in an incredibly useful, accurate way. This is a fine debate to listen to! You will learn a lot. And you will have fun learning.

The Bible and the early church fathers

Jason Lisle

- we take Genesis literally

- the starting point of YEC is Scripture
- the plain meaning of Scripture is that the earth was made in 6 24-hour days
- science has to be interpreted in a way that fits a plain reading of Genesis 1
- the evidence for an old universe and old Earth must be rejected a priori

Hugh Ross

- we take Genesis literally
- the Hebrew word for day (yom) can mean 24 hours or a long period of time
- there are multiple creation accounts in the Bible
- interpreting yom as long periods of time harmonizes all the accounts
- the Bible says that the seventh day is not even ended
- we believe in a literal Adam and Eve living thousands of years ago

Jason Lisle

- there's only 1 account of creation in the Bible: Genesis
- the normal view in church history is 6 24-hour days
- there are some early church fathers who that the days are long
- the other places where creation is discussed are not real accounts

Hugh Ross

- the early church did not spend a lot of time talking about the age of the Earth
- there is not unanimous agreement about the age of the Earth
- there is no definitive statement on the age of the Earth until Isaac Newton
- Newton strongly favored an old earth, hundreds of years before Darwin
- there are other creation accounts, Job 38-39
- Pslam 104 is a creation account

Jason Lisle

- a Psalm is not written in the genre of historical narrative
- Psalm 104 is not a creation account – it talks about ships, etc
- it's talking about the modern era, not a creation account

The evidence from science

Hugh Ross

- both of us believe in an absolute beginning of time, space and matter
- both of us believe that space is expanding now
- stars form as matter coalesces during the expansion of the universe
- star formation requires a universe aged on the order of billions of years

Jason Lisle

- if you pre-suppose my interpretation of Genesis, then the universe is young

Hugh Ross

- the speed of the expansion of the universe proves an old universe
- the light emitted from the oldest stars also proves an old universe

Jason Lisle

- if you pre-suppose my interpretation of Genesis, then the universe is young

Was the universe made with the appearance of age

Jason Lisle

- any evidence for an old universe is wrong
- stars didn't form gradually, they were created by God instantly
- stars have the appearance of age, but they're actually young

Hugh Ross

- God doesn't lie in the Bible or in the book of nature
- Scientists can look back in time by looking further out into the universe
- Because light takes a long time to travel to the Earth, we can see the past
- we can see a time when there were no stars yet
- stars formed slowly over time, not instantaneously
- we have photos of the universe before stars and after stars
- we can see a history of the universe by looking closer and further away

Does nature provide us with knowledge about creation?

They discuss Psalm 19 now, so here's Psalm 19:1-5:

[1] The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

[2] Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

[3] There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

[4] Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

[5] which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

Jason Lisle

- nature isn't a book
- nature doesn't provide knowledge about God
- Psalm 19 doesn't say that nature communicates to us
- **verse 3 says "There is no speech nor language"**

Hugh Ross

- **If you read all of verse 3, it says the exact opposite of what you just said it says**
- Verse 1: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands”
- Verse 2: “Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.”
- Verse 3: “There is no speech or language **where their voice is not heard.**“
- Verse 4: “Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

Jason Lisle

- You can’t take the Bible literally all the time

How important is the age of the Earth?

Hugh Ross

- it’s a non-essential because it has nothing to do with salvation or inerrancy
- both sides of the debate affirm the same views of salvation and inerrancy
- professional scientists have multiple lines of evidence saying the universe is old
- the only reason it matters is that young earth creationism is a barrier to faith
- if you have to deny science to be a Christian, then it stops people from being saved
- young earth opposition to science has been used by secularists to marginalize Christianity

Jason Lisle

- there was no death in the Garden of Eden, animal or human, before the Fall
- the Bible says that death was a consequence of Adam’s sin
- so there was no death before the Fall, according to the Bible
- old earth people believe in death before the Fall

Consider Romans 5:12:

[12]Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Hugh Ross

- Romans 5:12 says that Adam’s sin caused death to come **to all men**
- old earth people believe that only animal death existed before the Fall, not human death
- plant and animal death existed before the Fall – Adam and Eve were eating!

Jason Lisle

- I interpret the Bible to say that plants aren't living creatures

What about dinosaurs, the Flood, and Noah's ark?

Jason Lisle

- dinosaurs were created on the 6th day
- dinosaurs lived alongside humans and were vegetarians before the Fall
- dinosaurs were on the Ark – they're not that big – just take baby dinosaurs
- it's a global flood

Hugh Ross

- dinosaurs were created on the 5th day
- they were extinct before before humans ever appeared
- nobody in history ever wrote about dinosaurs until 200 years ago
- it's a local flood

Will global warming alarmism undermine the authority of science?

February 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must read article from Forbes magazine about a new paper in an Australian journal by Garth Paltridge. Dr. Paltridge is an Australian atmospheric physicist who holds a BSc from the University of Queensland, a PhD from University of Melbourne and a DSc from the University of Queensland.

The article introduces the author and his thesis:

> Will the overselling of climate change lead to a new scientific dark age? That's the question being posed in the latest issue of an Australian literary journal,*Quadrant*, by Garth Paltridge, one of the world's most respected atmospheric scientists.
>
> Paltridge was a Chief Research Scientist with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO). The latter is Australia's equivalent of the National Science Foundation, our massive Federal Laboratory network, and all the governmental agency science branches rolled into one.
>
> Paltridge lays out the well-known uncertainties in climate forecasting. These include our inability to properly simulate clouds that are anything like what we see in the real world, the embarrassing lack of average surface warming now in its 17th year, and the fumbling (and contradictory) attempts to explain it away.

Paltridge writes:

> "The trap was fully sprung when many of the world's major national academies of science (such as the Royal Society in the UK, the National Academy of Sciences in the USA and the Australian Academy of Science) persuaded themselves to issue reports giving support to the conclusions of the IPCC [the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change]. The reports were touted as national assessments that were supposedly independent of the IPCC and of each other, but of necessity were compiled with the assistance of, and in some cases at the behest of, many of the scientists involved in the IPCC international machinations. In effect, the academies, which are the most prestigious of the institutions of science, formally nailed their colours to the mast of the politically correct.
>
> […]"In the light of all this, we have at least to consider the possibility that the scientific establishment behind the global warming issue has been drawn into the trap of seriously overstating the climate problem—or, what is much the same thing, of seriously understating the uncertainties associated with the climate problem—in its effort to promote the cause. It is a particularly nasty trap in the context of science, because it risks destroying, perhaps for centuries to come,

> the unique and hard-won reputation for honesty which is the basis of society's respect for scientific endeavour."

None of this is a surprise to Christian apologists, because we've been through this before with Darwinism. Yes, it really can happen that science is hijacked by religious people who want to support their ideologies. Science is wonderful, but it's not immune to being abused.

Forbes also posted an excellent long article re-capping how climate scientists manipulated data in order to prove what they wanted to prove. This article takes about the Climategate scandal, which is useful to show how far these scientists will go.

State of Utah lists 15 consequences to redefining marriage in appellate brief

February 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from National Review.

Excerpt:

> In an historic opening brief filed yesterday before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, the state of Utah identified at least 15 consequences of redefining marriage to include same-sex couples. You can read the full text, which justifies more fully why each of these reasons are valid.

Here are some of their reasons:

> 1. "First, as many commentators have observed, because procreation is an inherently gendered affair, redefining marriage in genderless terms would break the critical conceptual link between marriage and procreation. . . . Given the manifest ills of fatherless parenting, the State has a compelling interest in sending a powerful message to women that, whenever possible, marriage to the fathers of their children is very important to the welfare of those children and to society itself."
>
> 5. "Fifth, and most obviously, a genderless definition of marriage would likely increase the number of children being raised by same-sex parents. That could happen because the couple decides to raise together an existing child of one of the partners. Or it could result from the conception of a new child through surrogacy or sperm-donation. Either way, such children will not benefit from the State's preferred mother-father parenting model; often they will have no way of knowing even the identity of both biological parents. And recent evidence on same-sex parenting, while not conclusive, indicates that same-sex parenting arrangements are less effective than married biological mothers and fathers in producing positive outcomes in the lives of their children.
>
> 8. "[The] correlation between genderless marriage and lower birthrates. . . . It is also striking that fertility and birthrates tend to be markedly lower in nations and states that have embraced same-sex marriage."
>
> 12. "Governments would likely be pressured—and perhaps agree—to revoke the tax-exempt status of churches or other non-profit religious organizations that refuse on religious grounds to recognize same-sex marriages or to provide benefits to same-sex couples on the same terms as husband-wife couples."
>
> 13. "Governments would likely be pressured—and perhaps agree—to investigate, prosecute and punish people in wedding-related businesses for refusing on religious conscience grounds to assist with same-sex weddings."

> 14. “Government licensing agencies would likely be pressured—and perhaps agree—to investigate and punish counselors for refusing on religious conscience grounds to counsel same-sex married couples on the same terms as heterosexual couples.”
>
> 15. “Religion-based conflicts between public schools and parents would likely increase as children are taught about sexuality and marriage in ways that contravene parents’ and students’ deeply held religious beliefs.”

These reasons are all of interest to the state, but what about the other social consequences of redefining marriage?

Ryan T. Anderson wrote about that a while back.

Excerpt:

> **The Norm of Monogamy.** New York University Professor Judith Stacey has expressed hope that redefining marriage would give marriage “varied, creative and adaptive contours,” leading some to “question the dyadic limitations of Western marriage and seek…small group marriages.”[5] In their statement “Beyond Same-Sex Marriage,” more than 300 “LGBT and allied” scholars and advocates call for legal recognition of sexual relationships involving more than two partners.[6]
>
> University of Calgary Professor Elizabeth Brake thinks that justice requires using legal recognition to “denormalize[] heterosexual monogamy as a way of life” and “rectif[y] past discrimination against homosexuals, bisexuals, polygamists, and care networks.” She supports “minimal marriage” in which “individuals can have legal marital relationships with more than one person, reciprocally or asymmetrically, themselves determining the sex and number of parties, the type of relationship involved, and which rights and responsibilities to exchange with each.”[7]

And:

> **The Norm of Exclusivity.** Andrew Sullivan, who has extolled the “spirituality” of “anonymous sex,” also thinks that the “openness” of same-sex unions could enhance the bonds of husbands and wives:
>
> [A]mong gay male relationships, the openness of the contract makes it more likely to survive than many heterosexual bonds…. [T]here is more likely to be greater understanding of the need for extramarital outlets between two men than between a man and a woman…. [S]omething of the gay relationship’s necessary honesty, its flexibility, and its equality could undoubtedly help strengthen and inform many heterosexual bonds.[11]
>
> “Openness” and “flexibility” are Sullivan’s euphemisms for sexual infidelity. Similarly, in a *New York Times Magazine* profile, gay activist Dan Savage encourages spouses to adopt “a more flexible attitude” about allowing each

> other to seek sex outside their marriage.[12] *The New York Times* recently reported on a study finding that exclusivity was not the norm among gay partners: "'With straight people, it's called affairs or cheating,' said Colleen Hoff, the study's principal investigator, 'but with gay people it does not have such negative connotations.'"[13]

We really need to think about the consequences of these decisions before we jump into them. The last time we redefined marriage, it was no-fault divorce. That worked out great for selfish adults who wanted to make marriage about their own happiness and feelings, but it didn't work out well for the children who were impacted.

N.T. Wright lectures on the resurrection of Jesus: did Jesus rise from the dead?

February 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's a video of his case for the resurrection:

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable* apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an invented exaltation was already available to do the job.
3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.
5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have

invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

South Carolina Republicans introduce bill to ban abortions after 19 weeks

February 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Sacramento Bee reports.

Excerpt:

> Abortion opponents hope a proposed law banning the procedure in South Carolina beyond the 19th week of pregnancy ends up before the U.S. Supreme Court.
>
> The legislation, co-sponsored by 34 Republicans, asserts that a fetus can feel pain at 20 weeks old. Doctors who disregard the ban could be charged with a felony.
>
> Rep. Wendy Nanney, the main sponsor, said as a mother of five children, she wants to protect children from pain.
>
> "That's what a mother does," said Nanney, R-Greenville. Asked whether a mother should decide based on her situation, she added, "I think the child is the most important thing, and the fact it feels pain is very important to me."
>
> Doctors with the South Carolina chapter of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists said the bill's supporters are looking only at studies that support their conclusion, while other reviews have found a fetus does not feel pain before 24 weeks. The doctors point to lethal or serious fetal problems that often aren't diagnosed, or at least can't be confirmed, before 20 weeks.
>
> "Once the diagnosis is confirmed, many couples need additional time to make a well-informed and careful decision," reads the joint statement signed by three doctors.
>
> The proposed ban provides an exception only when the mother's life is in danger, and in such a case, the doctor must end the pregnancy in a way that gives the fetus the best chance for survival. Asked why she made no exception for rape or incest victims, Nanney said those pregnancies are normally aborted before 20 weeks.

This bill would be similar to the one that Texas Republicans passed. Texas and South Carolina are deep red states, so if you're looking for abortion to be reduced, then that's where it's going to happen. About a dozen states have passed bans on abortion at 20 weeks.

Chairwoman of Tea Party group targeted by IRS, ATF, FBI: “I refuse to be intimidated”

February 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Real Clear Politics has the transcript.

Snips:

> Nearly two decades of running our small business, my husband and I never dealt with any government agency, outside of filing our annual tax returns. We had never been audited, we had never been investigated, but all that changed upon submitting applications for the non-profit statuses of True the Vote and King Street Patriots. Since that filing in 2010, my private businesses, my nonprofit organizations, and family have been subjected to more than 15 instances of audit or inquiry by federal agencies.
>
> In 2011, my personal and business tax returns were audited by the Internal Revenue Service, each audit going back for a number of years.
>
> In 2012, my business was subjected to inspection by OSHA, on a select occasion when neither my husband nor I were present, and though the agency wrote that it found nothing serious or significant, it still issued fines in excess of $20,000.
>
> In 2012 and again in 2013 the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms conducted comprehensive audits at my place business.
>
> Beginning in 2010, the FBI contacted my nonprofit organization on six separate occasions – wanting to cull through membership manifests in conjunction with domestic terrorism cases. They eventually dropped all matters and have now redacted nearly all my files.
>
> All of these incursions into my affairs began after filing applications for tax-exemption. There is no other remarkable event, no other reason, to explain away how for decades I went unnoticed, but now find myself on the receiving end of interagency coordination into and against all facets of my life, both public and private.
>
> Bear in mind, distinguished ladies and gentlemen of this sub-committee, these events were occuring while the IRS was subjecting me to multiple rounds of abusive inquiries, with requests to provide every Facebook and Twitter entry I’d every posted, questions about my political aspirations, and demands to know the names of every group I’d ever made presentations to, the content of what I’d said, and where I intended to speak for the coming year. The answers to these sorts of questions are not of interest to the typical IRS analyst, but they are of great interest to a political machine that puts its own survival above the civil liberties of any private citizen.

The whole video and transcript is worth a look.

What has been the response of the Democrats to these facts? Well, Obama has picked one of his campaign donors to investigate. And Obama insisted in a recent interview that there was not "a smidgen of corruption" in his autocratic socialist regime.

Obama blamed Fox News and said there was not even a smidgen of corruption. In other words, shut up because I am doing this for your own good, you peasants. Believe my lies, because I am your King.

Remember, Obama won the 2012 election in part through intimidation and persecution of these conservative groups, especially the ones like True the Vote that sought to prevent rampant voter fraud by Democrat voters.

It reminds me of a quotation from C.S. Lewis:

> If we are to be mothered, mother must know best. . . . In every age the men who want us under their thumb, if they have any sense, will put forward the particular pretension which the hopes and fears of that age render most potent. They 'cash in.' It has been magic, it has been Christianity. Now it will certainly be science. . . . Let us not be deceived by phrases about 'Man taking charge of his own destiny.' All that can really happen is that some men will take charge of the destiny of others. . . . **The more completely we are planned the more powerful they will be.**
>
> . . . .
>
> Of all tyrannies, a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience. They may be more likely to go to Heaven yet at the same time likelier to make a Hell of earth. Their very kindness stings with intolerable insult. To be 'cured' against one's will and cured of states which we may not regard as disease is to be put on a level of those who have not yet reached the age of reason or those who never will; to be classed with infants, imbeciles, and domestic animals.
>
> —**C. S. Lewis**, *God in the Dock*

Democrats stand for the complete planning of everyone's lives according to their own secular leftist values, and they want to grow government in order to achieve that control over society.

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What criteria do historians use to determine the facts about the historical Jesus?

February 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus as the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. But why? Well it turns out that historians from all worldviews tend to use the same historical methods to determine facts, and that's why they agree on the facts that pass their historical tests.

For example, consider William Lane Craig. In his debates on the resurrection, he argues that the burial of Jesus, his empty tomb (post-mortem), the post-mortem appearances, and the early church's use of the word "resurrection" to describe what happened to him are all minimal facts.

For example, in his debate with Bart Ehrman, Craig was able to quote Ehrman's own writings where he agreed that all four facts were probably true.

Excerpt:

> Now in his early published work Dr. Ehrman expressed skepticism about these facts. He insisted that we cann , Apologetics, Authenticity, Bart Ehrman, Bible, Criteria, Dissimilarity, Early Attestation, Embarrassment, Enemy Attestation, Historical Jesus, Historical Methods, History, Hypothesis, Jesus, Minimal Facts, Multiple Attestation, New Testament, Resurrection, Resurrection of Jesus, William Lane Craigot really affirm these facts.
>
> […]Dr. Ehrman has himself come to re-think his position on these issues. Inconsistencies in the details notwithstanding, he now recognizes that we have "solid traditions," not only for Jesus' burial, but also for the women's discovery of the empty tomb, and therefore, he says, we can conclude with "some certainty" that Jesus was in fact buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb and that three days later the tomb was found empty. 8
>
> When I discovered that Professor Ehrman had reversed himself on this question, my admiration for his honesty and scholarly objectivity shot up. Very few scholars, once they've gone into print on an issue, have the courage to re-think that issue and admit that they were wrong. Dr. Ehrman's reversal of his opinion on these matters is testimony, not merely to the force of the evidence for these four facts, but also to his determination to follow the evidence wherever it leads. What this means is that my first contention is not an issue of disagreement in tonight's debate.

These minimal facts are accepted because they pass the tests that historians bring to ancient texts. So what are the criteria that historians use to derive a list of minimal facts

about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."
>
> In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> (1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
>
> (2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
>
> (3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
>
> (4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
>
> (5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.

> (6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.
>
> Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book.

Try this approach instead:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection
8. Don't let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And just keep in mind that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. You have to use that!

Back to the minimal facts criteria. The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I've read is the one by Robert H. Stein in "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It's a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion "God raised Jesus from the dead". That whole book is really very, very good.

What historical evidence is there to support the post-mortem appearances of Jesus?

February 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi Ohio State University has a *great* post up about the post-mortem appearances of Jesus.

The post contains:

- a list of the post-mortem resurrection appearances
- quotations by skeptical historians about those appearances
- alternative naturalistic explanations of the appearances
- responses to those naturalistic explanations

Although there is a lot of research that went into the post, it's not very long to read. The majority of scholars accept the appearances, because they appear in *so many different sources* and because some of those sources are very early, especially Paul's statement of the early Christian creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, which is from about 1-3 years after Jesus was executed by the Romans. Eric's post lists out some of the skeptical scholars who the appearances, and you can see how they allude to the historical criteria that they are using. (If you want to sort of double-check the details, I blogged about how historians investigate ancient sources before)

Let's take a look at some of the names you might recognize:

> **E.P. Sanders:**
>
> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. "I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: 'I saw him first!' 'No! I did.' Paul's tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus' followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions." "Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the 'resurrection': the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it."[1]
>
> **Bart Ehrman:**
>
> It is a historical fact that some of Jesus' followers came to believe that he had been raised from the dead soon after his execution. We know some of these believers by name; one of them, the apostle Paul, claims quite plainly to have

> seen Jesus alive after his death. Thus, for the historian, Christianity begins after the death of Jesus, not with the resurrection itself, but with the belief in the resurrection.[2]
>
> **Ehrman also says:**
>
> We can say with complete certainty that some of his disciples at some later time insisted that . . . he soon appeared to them, convincing them that he had been raised from the dead.[3]
>
> **Ehrman also goes onto say:**
>
> Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus' resurrection, since this is a matter of public record.[4]
>
> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don't doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don't have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don't think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19).[5]
>
> **Marcus Borg**
>
> The historical ground of Easter is very simple: the followers of Jesus, both then and now, continued to experience Jesus as a living reality after his death. In the early Christian community, these experiences included visions or apparitions of Jesus. [8]

The references to Paul are because of the early creed he records in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, and his conversations with the other eyewitnesses in Galatians. Eric has another post where he goes over that early creed, and it is something that every Christian should know about. It's really kind of surprising that you never hear a sermon on that early creed in church, where they generally sort of assume that you believe everything in the Bible on faith. But skeptical historians don't believe in the post-mortem appearances by faith – they believe it (in part) because of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

If you want to see a Christian scholar make the case for the resurrection appearances in a debate, then here is a post I wrote with the video, audio and summary of the William Lane Craig vs James Crossley debate on the resurrection.

Why do atheists like Dan Barker abandon their faith?

February 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unbelievable's latest radio show featured a discussion with former Christian Dan Barker, the founder and co-President of the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

I thought that I would make some general comments about why I think that many people leave the Christian faith, and what you should be careful of in order to avoid following in Dan Barker's footsteps, specifically.

Basically, there are four major reasons why people leave Christianity.

1. They want to do something immoral with impunity. This type of person wants to do something immoral that is forbidden by Christianity, like pre-marital sex. They dump Christianity in order to feel better about seeking happiness in this life, apart from God and his moral duties.
2. They want to pursue happiness in irresponsible ways. This type of person thinks that God's job is to save them when they act irresponsibly while pursuing happiness. When God disappoints them by not giving them what they want in order to be happy, they leave the faith.
3. They want to be loved by people, not by God. This type of person thinks that Christianity is a tool that they can use to become popular. When they first try to articulate the gospel in public, they find that people don't like them as much, and they feel bad about offending people with exclusive truth claims that they cannot back up using logic and evidence. So, they water down Christianity to get along with atheists, liberal Christians and other religions. Finally, they jettison Christianity completely and focus on making everyone feel good about whatever they believe.
4. They don't want to learn to defend their faith. This type of person is asked questions by skeptics that they cannot answer. Usually this happens when people go to university after growing up in the shelter of the Church. The questions and peer pressure make them feel stupid. Rather than investigate Christianity to see if it's true and to prepare to defend it in public, they dump it so they can be thought of as part of the "smart" crowd.

Now listen to the discussion and see if you can identify some of these factors from Barker's own carefully-prepared words. He is trying very hard to make himself look honest and moderate, because he wants Christians to be sympathetic with his story and his motives for leaving Christianity. But I think that there is enough in his statements to construct a different hypothesis of why he left Christianity.

I've grouped the data by risk factor. (These are not his *exact* views)

Non-rational, emotional approach to Christianity

- he was raised in a devout Christian family where he probably wouldn't have faced skeptical questions
- he converted to Christianity at age 15 as a result of a religious experience, not a serious investigation
- his idea of God was probably idealized and uninformed, e.g. – a loving God who wants us to be happy
- he wandered around from church to church preaching, with no fixed address or source of income
- he earned money by collecting "love offerings" from churches where he performed his music
- he wrote Christian songs and Christian musicals, but nothing substantive on apologetics and theology
- he worked in three churches known for being anti-intellectual and fundamentalist
- there's no evidence that of any deep study of philosophy, science and history during this time

Desire to gain acceptance from non-Christians

- he began to notice that some people were uncomfortable with sin and Hell
- he began to avoid preaching about sin and Hell in order to make these people comfortable
- he watered-down the gospel to focus on helping people to be happy in this life
- his manic approach to Christian ministry was challenged by the "real life" needs of his growing family
- he met liberal pastors while performing his music in their churches
- he found it difficult to disagree with them because they seemed to be "good" people
- he watered down his message further in order to appeal to people across the theological spectrum

Ignorance of Christian apologetics

- he began to think that if there are many different views of religion, then no view can be correct
- he was not intellectually capable of using logic and evidence to test these competing claims to see which was true
- he decided to instead re-interpret Christian truth claims as non-rational opinions, so they could all be "valid"
- he became a theological liberal, abandoning theism for an impersonal "ground of being"
- he embraced religious pluralism, the view that all religions are non-rational and make no testable truth claims
- he began to see God as a "metaphor" whose purpose is to make people have a sense of meaning and purpose
- he jettisoned God completely and focused more on helping people find meaning and

morality apart from God
- seems to think that religion is about having a “great life”, and felt that you can have a “great life” without religion
- seems to think that religion is about being “good”, and felt that you can be “good” without religion
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them what to do instead of letting them do anything they want
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them what is true, instead of letting them believe whatever they want
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them that God will hold them accountable for their beliefs and actions

So what do I think happened?

I think he abandoned his faith because he wanted people to like him and because he needed to be invited to liberal churches in order to make money to pay for the “real life” needs of his family.

He seems to have thought that Christianity is about having his needs met and being liked by others. I think he wanted to feel good and to make people feel good with his preaching and singing. He seems to have become aware that the exclusive claims of Christianity made other people feel offended, so he cut them out. He hadn’t studied philosophy, science or history so that he would have been able to demonstrate to other people whether what he was saying was true. It’s hard to offend people when you don’t really know whether your claims are true or not, and when you don’t know how to demonstrate whether they are true or not.

I also think money was a factor. It seems to me that it would have hurt his career and reduced his invitations from liberal churches if he had kept up teaching biblical Christianity. In order to appeal to a wider audience, (like many Christian singers do – e.g. – Amy Grant, Jars of Clay, etc.), he would have felt pressured to water down the unpleasant parts of his preaching and singing. Lacking apologetics skill, he instead abandoned his message. He needed to account for his family’s needs and “real life”, and exclusive truth claims and Hell-talk would probably have reduced his ability to do that. It seems to me that he should have scaled back his extreme schedule of preaching and singing, and instead gotten a steady job so that he could afford “real life” and a family without being pressured into altering his message.

Life isn’t a fairy tale. God isn’t there to reward risky behavior. We need to be more shrewd about financial matters so that we have the ability to *not care* about what people think of us. Look at this blog. I work all day as a senior software engineer with two degrees in computer science so that I can refuse donations. I save most of what I make in case a tragedy strikes. Since I am financially secure, I can say what I think, and disregard anyone who wants me to change my message because they are offended. Becoming a Christian isn’t a license to behave irrationally and immaturely with money. For some people, (like William Lane Craig), stepping out in faith works. But if it doesn’t work, it’s

better to retreat and re-trench, rather than to compromise your message for money.

Barker didn't seem to make any effort to deal intellectually with typical challenges like the existence of Hell and religious pluralism. He just wanted to be liked by people instead of being liked by God. He seemed to have thought that being a Christian would make him happy and that other people would all respond to him and like him without having to do any work to explain why Christianity is true. But that's not Biblical. When the singing and preaching is over, you still have to know how to give an answer to non-Christians. But Barker couldn't give an answer – not one that allowed him to retain his beliefs. He had not prepared a defense.

What does Dan Barker think about Christianity today?

Many atheists today are interested in eradicating public expressions of Christian beliefs in the public square, because they hate Christianity and believe that Christians should not be allowed to make them feel bad by exercising their rights of free speech. Is Dan Barker one of these militant atheists?

Well, take a look at this video, in which he objects to a nativity scene and demands that an atheistic denunciation of theism be posted alongside it. In the video, Barker explains that the nativity scene is *hate speech*, and that the baby Jesus is a *dictator*. He seems to be totally oblivious to the the idea that if Christianity is *true,* then it doesn't matter whether it's mean and exclusive. And this seems to me to have been his problem all along, from the day of his "conversion".

So the real question is this: is it true? Barker seems to be much more interested in asking "is it nice?" and "will it make me happy?".

How premarital sex damages a woman's ability to be in a relationship

February 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Nancy P. linked this article from the radically leftist New York Times to me. I was pleasantly surprised how much I agreed with it.

Excerpt:

> I recently overhead two students talking in a dining hall at the university where I teach. "Yeah, I might get married, too," one confided. "But not until I'm at least 30 and have a career." Then she grinned. "Until then? I'm going to party it up."
>
> This young woman was practically following a script. An increasing number of studies show that many millennials want to marry — someday.
>
> Generation Y is postponing marriage until, on average, age 29 for men and 27 for women. College-educated millennials in particular view it as a "capstone" to their lives rather than as a "cornerstone," according to a report whose sponsors include the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia.
>
> Yet for all of their future designs on marriage, many of them may not get there. Their romance operandi — hooking up and hanging out — flouts the golden rule of what makes marriages and love work: emotional vulnerability.
>
> […]Research led by the social psychologist Sara H. Konrath at the University of Michigan has shown that college students' self-described levels of empathy have declined since 1980, especially so in the past 10 years, as quantifiable levels of self-esteem and narcissism have skyrocketed. Add to this the hypercompetitive reflex that hooking up triggers (the peer pressure to take part in the hookup culture and then to be first to unhook) and the noncommittal mind-set that hanging out breeds. The result is a generation that's terrified of and clueless about the A B C's of romantic intimacy.
>
> In "The End of Sex: How Hookup Culture Is Leaving a Generation Unhappy, Sexually Unfulfilled, and Confused About Intimacy," Donna Freitas chronicles the ways in which this trend is creating the first generation in history that has no idea how to court a potential partner, let alone find the language to do so.
>
> If this fear of vulnerability began and ended with mere bumbling attempts at courtship, then all of this might seem harmless, charming even. But so much more is at stake.
>
> During class discussions, my students often admit to hoping that relationships will simply unfold through hooking up. "After all," one student recently said, "nobody wants to have The Talk," the dreaded confrontation that clarifies romantic hopes and expectations. "You come off as too needy."
>
> This fear sets up the dicey precedent Dr. Brown warns us about: Dodging

> vulnerability cheats us of the chance to not just create intimacy but also to make relationships work.
>
> Then there's the emotional fallout of hooking up. This kind of sexual intimacy inevitably leads to becoming "emotionally empty," writes Dr. Freitas. "In gearing themselves up for sex, they must at the same time drain themselves of feeling."
>
> This dynamic is about more than simply quelling nerves with "liquid courage" at college parties or clubs. It's about swallowing back emotions that are perceived as annoying obstacles. And this can start a dangerous cycle.
>
> "We cannot selectively numb emotions," writes Dr. Brown. "When we numb the painful emotions, we also numb the positive emotions."

I've personally observed women who had sexual histories firsthand, during my college years as an undergraduate student and graduate student. I noticed that it caused them some trouble when they were trying to see a relationship through to marriage. The more a woman chooses men purely for looks rather than husband-qualities, the more likely she is to see a bad side of men. You don't see the good side of men when you hook up with men who are willing to have sex before marriage. If women have enough of these bad experiences with men, it gets very hard for women to continue to invest in relationships and to serve and care for men. The very things that men are looking for from women – support, empathy, understanding, trust, vulnerability – disappear from the woman, and she is left trying to get a man to commit to her using her sex appeal alone. What a scary thought. What kind of man can you land with sex alone? Not the kind that makes a good husband and father, that's for sure.

What does the hook-up culture teach women? It teaches them to work on their educations and careers first. It teaches them to choose the best-looking men. It teaches them to worry more about what their friends will think than about what a man does in a marriage. It teaches them to turn off their emotions for fear of getting hurt. It teaches them that offering recreational sex to a man is the way to get male attention and engagement. In the old days, before feminism, women couldn't even use sexuality to impress a man. Everything had to be done the old-fashioned way. You would hear phrases like "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach". Women would look at men who were good husband candidates and think about getting their attention by cooking and helping and caring. That's all gone now, and many women aren't even cultivating domestic skills. Domestic skills are still very much sought after by men, although sometimes they can't articulate their needs very well.

I asked a friend of mine who had experience dating a woman who had a sexual past about this post, and he said that past sexual relationships with good-looking, non-committal men has the same effect on women that pornography has on men. He said that it changes their expectations, so that they become more and more fixated on the man's appearance, and less and less concerned about his ability to do husband and father tasks. Another man who also has a lot of sexual experience told me that the effect of hook-up sex on women's perception of men would be even stronger than the effect of

pornography on men. Hooking-up with men for status and fun causes a change in how women evaluate men. After all, if a wedding cermemony guarantees you “happily ever after” then why not just try to make a relationship “work out” by jumping right into bed and see if easy access to recreational sex makes the man see the value of long-term, exclusive commitment and self-sacrifice.

So we have a situation where women are not looking at what a man does in a family – working, discovering the truth, setting moral boundaries, helping others to be related to God. Instead, women are trained by the hook-up culture to think about appearances and how a good looking man will make others think about her in her social group. It seems to me to be as counterproductive as if a man were choosing computer based on how the case looked on the outside, rather than the performance and cost of the parts on the inside of the case. It makes no sense. Speaking as a man, I have a list of things that I am looking for from a woman, because I have specific goals that I want marriage to achieve. A woman’s decision and ability to hook-up with me tells me nothing about her ability to perform the tasks I need her to perform in a marriage. The antidote to the strains and stress of marriage and parenting cannot be found in a hook-up, or even in a woman’s career. That’s not going to help a husband the way a husband needs to be helped.

Dr. Michael Egnor discusses the logical implications of atheism

February 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are four podcasts in this series of talks between Casey Luskin and Michael Egnor.

About Dr. Egnor:

> *Dr. Michael Egnor is a Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery at The State University of New York at Stony Brook, where he specializes in Pediatric Neuroscience. An award-winning neurosurgeon and a widely-published researcher, Dr. Egnor writes regularly at* Evolution News & Views.

Podcast one details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, brain surgeon and ID blogger Michael Egnor talks with CSC Research Coordinator Casey Luskin about his internet debates with Jerry Coyne and the trends and dynamics he sees in the ID/evolution blogosphere. Dr. Egnor also speaks briefly on the evidence he sees for intelligent design in the brain.

The first MP3 file is here.

Podcast two details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Dr. Michael Egnor and Casey Luskin continue their conversation, speaking on Dr. Egnor's recent experience in an online debate on free will with evolutionary biologist Dr. Jerry Coyne. Listen in as Dr. Egnor explains why the argument against free will is self-refuting and shows how determinism as a theory in physics is dead.

The second MP3 file is here.

Podcast three details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, hear more of Dr. Michael Egnor and Casey Luskin's discussion on free will. If there is no free will, and humans are merely following our chemical instructions, than how can we recognize evil and good? Tune in as Dr. Egnor explores the societal and political consequences of denying free will.

The third MP3 file is here.

Podcast four details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Dr. Michael Egnor is on the show again to talk more about his recent debates with atheist evolutionary biologist Dr. Jerry Coyne. Listen in as Egnor and Research Coordinator Casey Luskin discuss recent efforts that Jerry Coyne has made against open discourse on intelligent design and

> evolution, looking at two recent incidents of censorship at Ball State University and the LA County Museum of Natural History.

The fourth MP3 file is here.

American Spectator praises Australia's bold new conservative leader

February 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tony Abbott, Prime Minister of Australia

Well, I think we can get some encouragement from this article from the American Spectator.

Let's take a look at his policies and appointments:

> On economic policy, his government has moved in the opposite direction of those who favor Dodd-Frank-like behemoth approaches to the financial industry. Instead it's opted to simplify regulation. As the minister responsible for the reform bluntly pointed out, "no amount of legislation will ever be a guarantee against another Storm Financial." Indeed it's often excessive regulation that creates opportunities for financial shenanigans by industry insiders.
>
> Regarding the welfare state, Abbott's minister for Social Security, Kevin Andrews (another conservative politician-thinker), has announced a major overhaul of a welfare system that was starting to drift in a distinctly European-direction. Predictably the left are up in arms. But so too are those rent-seeking Australian businesses who now find themselves dealing with a government uninterested in subsidizing them. That's nothing, however, to the fury that greeted Abbott's disbanding of the climate-change bureaucracy established by the preceding Labor government.
>
> […]The first sign of Abbott's seriousness about obstructing the left's long march

> through the institutions was his government's appointment of the policy-director of the center-right Institute of Public Affairs to the nation's Human Rights Commission. This was widely seen as the beginning of an effort to re-balance an organization long criticized as monolithically left-wing. Since then Abbott has indicated that major changes are coming to the ABC: Australia's government-funded institutional — and ideological — equivalent of the BBC.
>
> […]Along the same lines, Abbott's education minister, Christopher Pyne, has initiated a review of the national curriculum implemented by the previous government. A moment's glance at the curriculum's treatment of history soon illustrates the extent to which it seeks to downplay Australia's indisputably Western heritage. In the words of Sydney's Cardinal George Pell, "Europe, Britain and the United States are mentioned 76 times, while Asia is referred to on more than 200 occasions." This disparity is odd because although Australia is certainly in Asia, no objective observer could say that Australia is "of" Asia. Moreover, while Australian students learn about "Gaia" and other deep-green fantasies in grade 9, many Australian universities find they need to put the same students through remedial English classes once they begin college.
>
> Then there are Abbott's initial steps on the international stage. Take, for instance, his recent remarks at Davos. Much of the address was devoted to pushing a strong free trade agenda and insisting that governments should let business do what it does best: promote lasting economic growth. "After all," Abbott said, "government doesn't create wealth; people do, when they run profitable businesses."
>
> In the same speech, however, Abbott made the conservative point that economic prosperity and freedom can't be sustained in a value-neutral world. Nor did Abbott shy away from relentlessly pressing one of the most important moral arguments for free trade articulated long ago by Adam Smith: that economic freedom, combined with the right institutions, radically reduces poverty faster than any other approach. "No country," Abbott added, "has ever taxed or subsidized its way to prosperity."
>
> All in all, the address added up to a solid integration of sound economics with conservative principles. That's what makes Abbott different from, say, Canada's Stephen Harper or Spain's Mariano Rajoy. Abbott happily engages in the indispensable task of moral suasion in favor of conservative positions. What's more, he's quite good at it. With his rare combination of plain-speaking and intellectual substance, Abbott makes conservative ideas sound, well, reasonable to the average voter.

Now, I personally thought that prime minister Stephen Harper of Canada was the best leader of any nation out there, but I had not been following Australian politics as much as I should be, and now I think I'll give the crown to Abbott. He seems to have a good fusionist view that integrates economic policy and social policy, and that makes him

better than Harper, in my view. I would like to see Abbott flex his muscles on foreign policy, as well. Something to look forward to.

“The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands” is required reading for women who want to marry

February 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Valentine’s Day is approaching fast, so I thought I would post something about the best book you can read on love and marriage.

Sue Bohlin of Probe Ministries read “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands“, and her assessment is here.

Excerpt:

> Talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written a book that is improving thousands of marriages: *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands.*{1} We need this book because millions of wives either don’t know how to love their husbands wisely and well, or they’re too self-centered to see it as important. Dr. Laura credits this dismal condition to forty years of feminist philosophy, “with its condemnation of just about everything male as evil, stupid, and oppressive, and the denigration of female and male roles in families.”{2} While the women’s movement certainly had a hand to play in the disintegration of relationships and the family, I believe the core cause is our sinful self-centeredness, just as the Bible says.{3}
>
> Which is why we need help, and God instructs older women to train younger women to love their husband and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.{4} *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* is a great resource for learning these important values and skills.

She talks about men’s needs for direct communication, respect, appreciation, support, and sex.

And ends with this:

> I can’t recommend *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* highly enough. In fact, I gave a copy to my new daughter-in-law! Let me close with one more piece of wisdom from Dr. Laura: “[M]en are simple creatures who come from a woman, are nurtured and brought up by a woman, and yearn for the continued love, admiration and approval of a woman. . . Women need to better appreciate the magnitude of their power and influence over men, and not misuse or abuse it.”{25}

Sue is the husband of famous Christian scholar Ray Bohlin, PhD, and they’ve been married for a very long time.

And here’s another summary of the book that I found.

Full text:

Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written another book that deserves a place on the best seller list with six of her other books, such as Ten Stupid Things Women Do to Mess Up Their Lives and Ten Stupid Things Men Do to Mess Up Their Lives. The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands, from this unmarried man's perspective, is an excellent manual for women on how to get want they want from men and marriage and, generally, how to be happy. Dr. Laura makes a number of important, practical points, based on her experience in private practice, from advising her radio callers, and from literally hundreds of letters and emails she received from men and women while she was writing the book. Here are the points that struck this writer, together with commentary:

1. **Men Need Women, and This Need Gives Women Huge Influence**. Dr. Laura states the point as follows: "[M]en are simple creatures who come from a woman, are nurtured and brought up by a woman, and yearn for the continued love, admiration, and approval from a woman." Women have great power and influence over men, and wives in particular have tremendous power over their husbands. How they use this power essentially controls the relationship, because women are the masters of most relationships and marriages. That's why Dr. Laura says that she probably won't write The Proper Care and Feeding of Wives: wives already have most of the power and their marriages depend, for the most part, on them.

2. **Women Err in Favoring Children Over Husband**. A friend once told this writer that once a woman has children, her husband is relegated to the moral equivalence of a piece of furniture. How sad if this is true in many marriages. Here's how Dr. Laura puts it: "Once wives became mothers, they had no time to be wives. The men would even compliment their wives on being great mothers, but expressed considerable pain over not being shown love, affection, or sexual interest. The typical reply from a wife challenged with this was 'I only have time to take care of one person, and our child is that person. I'm just too tired for you.' This puts fathers in the ugly and uncomfortable position of feeling competitive with and resentful of their children, whom they love so much."

3. **Men and Women Are Different**. That men and women are deeply different ought not to be notable, but for the fact that it is so often challenged today. Dr. Laura says that society tries to make both men and women "unisex." But men are happiest being men, and women are happiest being women, with few exceptions. The differences start to manifest themselves very early. In one study Dr. Laura mentions, a barrier was placed between 1 year-old babies and their mothers. What did the little boys do? They attempted to get around the barrier or knock it down. The little girls? They cried until their mothers' picked them up. Men tend to respond to things physically, women verbally. In fact, the two sexes are just right for each other.

4. **Not Every Thought and Feeling Needs to be Said**. Women tend to be so verbal, so expressive, that they can tire out men easily unless they exercise some restraint. Dr. Laura reports that wives generally overwhelm their husbands with communication. “Husbands imagine (so foolishly) that their wives are telling them something they actually need to know because they’re supposed to do something about it. Otherwise, men can’t imagine why the ‘communication’ is happening at all. It confuses them, frustrates them, and their response is to turn off. That’s when they unfairly become labeled insensitive.” Husbands and fiances are not girlfriends or psychologists, and women who want attention should adjust their communication style accordingly when speaking with them.

5. **Men Are Not Mind-Readers**. Most men are not very intuitive compared to most women. Many women “get caught up in the absurdly romanticized notion that ‘if he loved me, he’d just know what I’m thinking, what I’d like, what he should say.'” If a woman wants her man to do something, she should just ask him plainly, without nagging, and show appreciation when he does it. To act otherwise, as many women do, shows arrogance and lack of respect for the husband’s difference, and it leads to unhappiness in the marriage and in the family.

6. **Man Is an Embodied Soul**. No, Dr. Laura didn’t put it that way; “embodied soul” is a Catholic concept. But that concept is what underlies her discussion of how important it is to a man that his wife try to keep up her appearance. What does it mean that we are embodied souls? It means that our bodies are integral parts of who we are. We are not just souls. Our bodies are not like clothing that we can take on or off. There was no time during which we had only souls and not bodies, and in eternity as well we will have bodies. It is through our bodies, in fact, that we communicate to our loved ones and to the rest of the world. One thinks of the beautiful line from the old Anglican marriage rite: bride and groom pledge to each other “with my body I thee worship.” It is ironic, but in many cases men–sex-crazed pigs in the minds of many women–actually have a truer understanding of the beauty of the body and the meaning of the marital embrace than their wives do. “Objectification” may come as much or more from the woman’s side as from the husband’s if the woman sees her own body as being separate from rather than an integral part of herself. Dr. Laura writes: “In reading all the letters from men, I was struck by their depth of senstivity about the issue of women’s appearance. It wasn’t an impersonal, animal reaction (as it is with women the men don’t personally know), it was a deeply personal one. The wife’s comfort with and appreciation of her own body and femininity, and her willingness to share that with her husband, actually fed his sense of well-being, his feeling of being loved as a husband and valued as a ‘man.'”

7. **Infidelity by Omission**. Brides and grooms make a number of vows, not only of sexual fidelity. Marital vows include and imply words like love, honor, protect,

> and care for. “[W]hen one breaches those vows by neglect, is that also not a form of infidelity? Perhaps we should start looking at the act of intentionally depriving a spouse of legitimate needs as infidelity, too, because it stems from being unfaithful to the intent of the vows.”

> 8. **In the Bedroom**. To her credit, Dr. Laura gives due place to the importance for marriage of the marital act: “The bedroom is the foundation of marriage and family.” St. Josemaria Escriva, founder of Opus Dei, that supposedly conservative institution within the Church, put it this way: “The marriage bed is an altar.” Enough said?

> 9. **Women Should Appreciate Men’s Masculinity**. Dr. Laura relates a trip she made recently to a swimming pool. A mom and a dad were wading with their infant child. Mom held the child against her chest, cooed to him, and swooped him up and down. She passed the baby to dad. He turned the baby’s face outward and swooshed him forward and up into the air. “Mom equals protection and nurturance. Dad equals autonomy and adventure. It is the perfect balance that helps produce a functional, secure human being.” Too many women, though, act like Alice Kramdens, constantly belitting their husbands, shooting down their aspirations, treating them like children. Dr. Laura writes: “When a wife treats her man like he’s one of her children, when she puts him down or thwarts his need for autonomy, adventure, risk, competition, challenge, and conquest, she ends up with a sullen, unooperative, unloving, hostile lump.”

> 10. **Thou Shalt Not Covet**. Dr. Laura contributes a novel (to this writer) and insightful contemporary application of the commandment, “thou shal not covet.” Specifically, she understands it as a rebuke to people who want it all, especially feminists. “Perhaps the feminist notions about women having power if they do it all has obstructed too many women’s ability to realize that in real life we all make choices, and that the true joy and meaning of life is not in how many things we have or do, but in the sacrifice and commitment we make to others within the context of the choices we’ve made. The Tenth Commandment, about coveting, reminds us that none of us can have everything there is nor everything we want. Without enjoying and appreciating our gifts and blessings, we create a hell on earth for ourselves and for those who love us.”

PCF Husbands is the best basic book on marriage. Easy to read, tons of wisdom. It’s a great book for women to read to find out what men really want from a wife. Marriage can be a beautiful thing if both people go into the relationship with the view that each person has to put in 100% effort to make it work. Understanding a man’s needs helps a woman to put in her 100%. It would be hard to take care of a parrot or some other strange creature if you didn’t know anything about what their needs and habits were. This book explains a lot of what women need to know about men.

Dr. George Yancey lectures on anti-Christian bias in academia, and beyond

February 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My good friend Wes posted this 28-minute lecture.

If you watch 5 minutes, then you'll definitely stay and watch the whole thing. It's fascinating.

Details:

> Join Dr. George Yancey in an in depth discussion of the bias taking place within academia against religion in general, but more specifically Christianity. Within the discussion Dr.Yancey uses brief explanations of his previous book, Compromising Scholarship and many other excerpts of his past research as well as his forthcoming research to give us a new viewpoint on academia and religion.

I found a quick description of Dr. Yancey's work in this New York Times article from July 2011.

It says:

> Republican scholars are more likely than Democrats to end up working outside academia,as documented by Daniel Klein, an economist at George Mason University. Dr. Klein, who calls himself a classical liberal (a k a libertarian), says that the university promotes groupthink because its system of "departmental majoritarianism" empowers the dominant faction to keep hiring like-minded colleagues. And when a faculty committee is looking to hire or award tenure, political ideology seems to make a difference, according to a "collegiality survey" conducted by George Yancey.
>
> Dr. Yancey, a professor of sociology at the University of North Texas, asked more than 400 sociologists which nonacademic factors might influence their willingness to vote for hiring a new colleague. You might expect professors to at least *claim* to be immune to bias in academic hiring decisions.
>
> But as Dr. Yancey reports in his new book, "Compromising Scholarship: Religious and Political Bias in American Higher Education," more than a quarter of the sociologists said they would be swayed favorably toward a Democrat or an A.C.L.U. member and unfavorably toward a Republican. About 40 percent said they would be less inclined to vote for hiring someone who belonged to the National Rifle Association or who was an evangelical. Similar results were obtained in a subsequent survey of professors in other social sciences and the humanities.
>
> Dr. Yancey, who describes himself as a political independent with traditional Christian beliefs and progressive social values, advises nonliberal graduate

> students to be discreet during job interviews. “The information in this research,” he wrote, “indicates that revealing one’s political and religious conservatism will, on average, negatively influence about half of the search committee one is attempting to impress.”
>
> Dr. Yancey’s research was a survey, not a field experiment, so it’s impossible to know how many of those academics who confessed to hypothetical bias would let it sway an actual decision. Perhaps they’d try to behave as impartially as the directors of graduate studies in Dr. Gross’s experiment.

The lecture is a real eye-opener. It turns out that in academia, you are likely to be viewed the same way as blacks were viewed by slave-owners, and Jews were viewed by Nazis. Stereotypes, ignorance and hatred abound.

We have a lot of work to do to correct these perceptions, and unfortunately nothing that Christians see and hear in church is likely to change this. Until we get serious about prodding our young people to think and achieve, this is what people on the secular left will think of us. Not because they really are smarter, but because we are not capable of pointing out the nonsense on their side of the aisle, e.g. – eternal universes, aliens seeding the Earth with life, fatherlessness is good for children, and so on. If we don’t study the evidence, then their stupidity will rule the day, and they are the ones who are entrenched in academia.

Heather McDonald: Campus sexual assault crisis is based on a fiction

February 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article by Heather McDonald from City Journal, the journal of the moderate, centrist Manhattan Institute. (H/T Dennis Prager)

Excerpt:

> In the last few weeks… the White House has… created a new federal task force to "protect [college] students from sexual assault."
>
> […]The materials accompanying the new sexual-assault task force recycle the usual feminist claims about campus rape: an "estimated 1 in 5 women is sexually assaulted at college," proclaims a White House press release. Such an assault rate would represent a crime wave unprecedented in civilized history. By comparison, the 2012 rape rate in New Orleans and its immediately surrounding parishes was .0234 percent; the rate for all violent crimes in New Orleans in 2012 was .48 percent. According to the White House Council on Women and Girls, "survivors" of this alleged campus sexual-assault epidemic "often" experience a life of depression, chronic pain, diabetes, anxiety, eating disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder.
>
> And yet, the crazed push on the part of mothers (and fathers) to get their daughters into this maelstrom of predation begins earlier and earlier each year. Parents in Manhattan pay tutors $200 an hour to prep their tots for the elite nursery school admissions tests, all with an eye to college. These are many of the same baby-boomer parents who refuse to vaccinate their children or feed them genetically modified foods based on wholly speculative risks. If the college experience were in fact the tsunami of violence that the feminists proclaim, leading to widespread emotional dysfunction—a dysfunction nowhere in evidence among increasingly dominant female college graduates—there would have been a stampede to create single-sex schools where girls could study in safety. Instead, college applications from girls rise each year, and the chance of admission at selective campuses drops further under the press of eager petitioners. At Yale alone, the target of an Obama administration Title IX probe into alleged indifference to rampant sexual assault, applications rose from 13,000 in 1996 to 27,000 in 2011. Somehow, word about Yale's "unsafe" environment for girls is not getting out. Imagine, by contrast, that one in five college girls would merely have their iPhones stolen at knifepoint at some point during her college career. A wave of preventive strategies would have emerged, but nothing comparable has arisen in response to the alleged rape crisis.
>
> And that's because the one-in-five number is wholly deceptive, based on the strategic phrasing of questions and the exquisite parsing of definitions. In the

> 1986 *Ms.* survey that sparked the campus-rape industry, 73 percent of respondents whom the study characterized as rape victims said that they hadn't been raped when asked the question directly. Forty-two percent of these supposed victims had intercourse again with their alleged assailants—an inconceivable behavior in the case of actual rape.
>
> **The reality on campuses is not a rape epidemic but a culture of drunken hook-ups with zero normative checks on promiscuous behavior.**

It's important to understand that many women who regret recreational hook-up sex afterwards deliberately choose to get drunk at parties so that they can hook-up with guys. Check out the words of some college students from this study of relationships on campus published by the Institute for American Values.

Excerpt:

> A notable feature of hook ups is that they almost always occur when both participants are drinking or drunk.
>
> A Rutgers University student observed, "You always hear people say, oh my gosh, I was so drunk, I hooked up with so and so…" Perhaps not surprisingly, many noted that being drunk helped to loosen one's inhibitions and make it easier to hook up. A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up. A Yale University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up." A New York University student observed, "[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking."
>
> A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."
>
> Other women observed that being drunk gives a woman license to act sexually interested in public in ways that would not be tolerated if she were sober. For instance, a University of Michigan student said, "Girls are actually allowed to be a lot more sexual when they are drunk…"
>
> A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."
>
> Some reported that drinking had led them to do things they later regretted. A University of Virginia student said, "My last random hook up was last October and it was bad. I was drunk and I just regretted it very much."

This is actually the new feminist-approved way of landing a husband, because traditional courting is sexist. Don't believe me, believe feminist academics writing in the New York Times.

Excerpt:

> If there's anything that feminism has bequeathed to young women of means, it's that power is their birthright. Visit an American college campus on a Monday morning and you'll find any number of amazingly ambitious and talented young women wielding their brain power, determined not to let anything — including a relationship with some needy, dependent man — get in their way. Come back on a party night, and you'll find many of these same girls (they stopped calling themselves "women" years ago) wielding their sexual power, dressed as provocatively as they dare, matching the guys drink for drink — and then hook-up for hook-up.

So let's review the rules for relationships according to feminism. Man sets time for date? Sexist! Man arrives in car to pick you up? Sexist! Man brings you flowers to be put in a vase? Sexist! Man talks to your father first to get the ground rules? Sexist! Man takes you to a sit-down restaurant and asks you questions about marriage? Sexist! Man drops you off at home and gets a wave goodbye? Sexist! But do you know what feminists do approve of? 1) Getting drunk. 2) Hooking-up. 3) Crying rape (when the guy doesn't call back). And this is the problem that Obama is trying to solve. It's a problem *created* by the people of his ideological bent.

And why do we have hooking up instead of courting?

It's because feminists know *perfectly well* that when a woman gets used and abused over and over by the kind of good-looking scum that she meets at parties, then she is less likely to get married, less capable of staying married, less likely to put family (husbands and kids!) over her career. And that's exactly what they want young women to do. When you tell young women that men have no special roles as {protector, provider, moral leader, spiritual leader}, then you are setting them up for failure. They need boundaries in order to avoid the bad men, and choose the good ones – the marriage-capable ones. But if your goal is to make women avoid marriage, then hook-ups and binge drinking are in, while chastity and chivalry are out.

Women have been told by music, movies, culture, peers, feminists, etc. that there is a certain kind of man that they should prefer, and a certain way to get their attention. Maybe women need a dose of logical thinking so that they can connect their method of choosing a man to their end goal. If they want marriage and children, then the way to get it is NOT by following the lead of Hollywood celebrities and bitter feminist academics.

David Brooks on young people's rejection of American values

February 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He voted for Obamacare, and he got it

I normally don't read David Brooks anymore since his slide to the left, but Dennis Prager mentioned this article from the radically leftist New York Times, and I thought it was worth a look.

Excerpt:

> When foreign visitors used to describe American culture, they generally settled on different versions of one trait: energy. Whether driven by crass motivations or spiritual ones, Americans, visitors agreed, worked more frantically, moved more and switched jobs more than just about anybody else on earth.
>
> That's changing. In the past 60 years, for example, Americans have become steadily less mobile. In 1950, 20 percent of Americans moved in a given year. Now, it's around 12 percent. In the 1950s and 1960s, people lived in the same house for an average of five years; now people live in the same house for an average of 8.6 years. When it comes to geographic mobility, we are now at historic lows, no more mobile than people in Denmark or Finland.

Why is that? Here is his hypothesis:

> [A] big factor here is a loss in self-confidence. It takes faith to move. You are putting yourself through temporary expense and hardship because you have faith that over the long run you will slingshot forward. Many highly educated people, who are still moving in high numbers, have that long-term faith. Less-educated people often do not.
>
> One of the oddities of the mobility that does exist is that people are not moving to low-unemployment/high-income areas. Instead they are moving to lower-income areas with cheap housing. That is to say, they are less likely to endure temporary housing hardship for the sake of future opportunity. They are more likely to move to places that offer immediate comfort even if the long-term

> income prospects are lower.
>
> This loss of faith is evident in other areas of life. Fertility rates, a good marker of confidence, are down. Even accounting for cyclical changes, people are less likely to voluntarily vacate a job in search of a better one. Only 46 percent of white Americans believe they have a good chance of improving their standard of living, the lowest levels in the history of the General Social Survey.
>
> [Leftist] Peter Beinart wrote a fascinating piece for [Leftist] National Journal, arguing that Americans used to have much more faith in capitalism, a classless society, America's role in the world and organized religion than people from Europe. But now American attitudes resemble European attitudes, and when you just look at young people, American exceptionalism is basically gone.
>
> Fifty percent of Americans over 65 believe America stands above all others as the greatest nation on earth. Only 27 percent of Americans ages 18 to 29 believe that. As late as 2003, Americans were more likely than Italians, Brits and Germans to say the "free market economy is the best system on which to base the future of the world." By 2010, they were slightly less likely than those Europeans to embrace capitalism.
>
> Thirty years ago, a vast majority of Americans identified as members of the middle class. But since 1988, the percentage of Americans who call themselves members of the "have-nots" has doubled. Today's young people are more likely to believe success is a matter of luck, not effort, than earlier generations.

The funny thing about this story is that the young people themselves are voting for the very things that are destroying their hopes and dreams. They vote for the Democrat Party, the champions of social liberalism and fiscal liberalism.

What do young people need to get ahead? They need a stable family with a mother and father. Young people vote for the pro-no-fault-divorce Democrat Party. They vote for the pro-gay-marriage Democrat Party. They vote to call any family arrangement marriage, and any collection of people with kids a family. They are the ones who are the strongest opponents of the nuclear family that used to be the norm in America. Maybe they are doing it out of ignorance, but they are still responsible – they are voting for it. They are voting for more adult selfishness, and they are the victims of it.

What else to young people need to get ahead? They need a good education and a job. What do they vote for? They vote for the Democrat Party. The party that opposes school choice. The party of teacher unions. They party that undermines free market capitalism with taxes, regulations and nationalization of the private sector. They vote for judicial activism instead of the rule of law. They vote for redistribution of wealth instead of private property. And what's more they are anti-corporations! Who exactly do they expect to work for? They keep voting for more and more government spending on adults, and they are the ones who are going to be stuck with the bill.

This will go on until the United States ends up like France and Greece, when there is no more money left to borrow, and then it will stop. But one thing is for sure – these young

people will never have the standard of living their grandparents had. Either you believe in America, and what America represents, or you devolve into Greece, and live at home, unemployed, with your parents for your whole life.

Ryan J. Bell's year of atheism testimony shows need for apologetics

February 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you interested in knowing how to avoid losing your Christian faith? Well, an episode of the Unbelievable show will give you some clues.

But before we go to the podcast, I want to recap some reasons why people think that God exists.

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

In addition to these arguments for theism, Christians should be able to make a minimal facts case for the resurrection, one that leverages the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. And some sort of case for the belief that Jesus was divine using only the earliest sources.

In addition to those positive evidences, there would be informed defenses to other questions like the problem of evil, the problem of suffering, religious pluralism, the hiddenness of God, materialist conceptions of mind, consciousness and neuroscience, the justice of eternal damnation,sovereignty and free will, the doctrine of the Incarnation, the doctrine of the Trinity, and so on.

I listed these out so that you can see how many of these positive arguments and defenses that he wrestles with in his deconversion testimony.

The podcast

Details:

> Ryan J Bell is a former pastor who has decided to try being an atheist for a year.
> He explains why and interacts with New Zealand apologist Matt Flannagan.

The MP3 file is here. (We only care about the first 45 minutes)

Matt Flanagan and Justin Brierley do a great job in this debate getting the real issues on

the table, although you have to wait until about 20 minutes in. Quick note about Bell. He has a BA in Pastoral Ministry, an MDiv, and a doctorate in Missional Organization. Now I have a suspicion of people with a background like that – my view is that they are more likely to be impractical and/or insulated from real life.

I also noticed that his politics are liberal, and that he is featured on the web site of GLAAD, a gay rights organization, for supporting gay marriage. Why do people support same-sex marriage? I think the most common reason is because they care more about the needs of adults than they care about the needs of children for a mother and a father. That's where this guy is coming from – he is a people-pleaser, not someone who promotes the needs of children over the needs of adults.

Summary:

At the start of the podcast, we learn that Bell was in the Seventh Day Adventist church, which is strongly invested in young-Earth creationism. Depending on how strict his young Earth view was, this closes off many of the best arguments for theism from science, such as the cosmological argument, the cosmic fine-tuning argument, the stellar habitability argument, the galactic habitability argument, the Cambrian explosion argument, and even the origin of life argument (to a degree). These are the arguments that make theism *non-negotiable*.

When he started his journey to atheism, he says that he was reading a book called "Religion Without God" by Ronald Dworkin.I was curious to see what view of faith was embraced by this book. Would it be the Biblical view of faith, trust based on evidence? Or the atheist view of faith, belief without evidence? I found an excerpt from the book in the New York Times, which said this:

> In the special case of value, however, faith means something more, because our convictions about value are emotional commitments as well and, whatever tests of coherence and internal support they survive, they must feel right in an emotional way as well. They must have a grip on one's whole personality. Theologians often say that religious faith is a sui generis experience of conviction. Rudolf Otto, in his markedly influential book, *The Idea of the Holy*, called the experience "numinous" and said it was a kind of "faith-knowledge." I mean to suggest that convictions of value are also complex, sui generis, emotional experiences. As we will see… when scientists confront the unimaginable vastness of space and the astounding complexity of atomic particles they have an emotional reaction that matches Otto's description surprisingly well. Indeed many of them use the very term "numinous" to describe what they feel. They find the universe awe-inspiring and deserving of a kind of emotional response that at least borders on trembling.

The excerpt quotes William James, who reduces religion to non-rational emotional experiences. I don't know about you, but I don't think that view of faith is Biblical at all. Biblical faith is rooted in evidence. So clearly, what is important to this Dworkin is not objective evidence, it's feelings. And this is what Bell was reading. He was not reading

academic books like "Debating Christian Theism" to get the best arguments pro-and-con. He was looking for something that "resonated" with his feelings.

His journey was prompted by a female Episcopal priest friend who was asked by an atheist "what difference does religion make in my life?". So, the framework of his investigation is set by a question that is not focused on truth, but is instead focused on emotions and life enhancement. Now Christianity might be a real stinker of a worldview for life enhancement, and the Bible warns us not to expect a bed of roses in this life. Christianity is not engineered to make you feel good or to make people like you, especially people like female Episcopal priests and GLAAD.

When talking about atheism, he is not concerned with whether atheism is logically consistent or consistent with objective evidence. He is concerned by whether atheists can have the experience of being moral without God. He sees an atheist who has moral preferences and seems like a good person by our arbitrary social standards, and he finds that as "valid" as religion. He is judging worldviews by whether people have their needs met, not by truth.

He says that as a pastor, his method of evangelizing atheists was to encourage them to "try on faith" "go through the motions" "participate in social justice outreach events", etc. His goal was that they would "step into the stream of the Christian narrative and discover that it held value and meaning to them, and find that they actually believed it". So his method of recommending Christianity to others has nothing to do with logic, evidence or truth. He is offering Christianity as life enhancement – not knowledge but a "narrative" – a story. If it makes you feel good, and it makes people like you, then you can "believe" it. He says that he was "a Christian by practice, a Christian by tradition". Not a Christian by truth. Not a Christian by knowledge. He just picked a flavor of ice cream that tasted right to him, one that pleased his parents, friends and community. And now he has new friends and a new community, and he wants to please them and feel good about himself in this new situation.

He says that the Christian worldview is "a way of approaching reality" and "creating meaning" and "identifying meaning in the experiences we have". And he says that there are "other ways of experiencing meaning". He talks a lot about his correspondence with people and reading atheists, but nothing about reading Christian scholars who deal with evidence, like William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer or Mike Licona.

Literal, literal quote: (23:35) "Well I think the only access we have to the question of God's existence or not is how we feel. I mean there's no falsifiable data that says God either exists or doesn't exist. It's all within the realm of our personal experience". "If living as though God exists makes you happy and comforts you, then by all means, go for it". This attitude is so popular in our churches today, and where does it end? In atheism. I had a fundamentalist woman telling me just last night how this feelings mysticism approach was the right approach to faith, and that the head knowledge approach was bad and offensive.

I'm going to cut off my summary there, but the podcast goes on for 45 minutes. Matt

Flannagan is brilliant, and went far beyond what I wanted to say to this guy, but in such a winsome way. I recommend listening to the whole thing, and be clear where this fideistic nonsense ends – in atheism.

My thoughts

This podcast is a great warning against two views: 1) faith is belief without evidence and 2) religion not about truth, but about life enhancement. Three other related stories might also help: the story of Dan Barker, the story of Nathan Pratt and the story of Katy Perry. I think the Christian life requires a commitment to truth above all. If you think that you can get by as a Christian relying on hymn singing, church attending, mysticism and emotional experiences, you have another thing coming. This is a different time and a different place than 50 years ago, when that sort of naivete and emotionalism might have been safe. Now we have many challenges – some intellectual and some not. To stand in this environment, it's going to take a little more than piety and emotions.

People today are very much looking for religion to meet their needs. And this is not just in terms of internal feelings, but also peer approval and mystical coincidences. They expect God to give them happy feelings. They expect God to give them peer approval. They expect God to make every crazy unBiblical, unwise selfish plan they invent "work out" by miracle. They feel very constrained by planning and moral boundaries, believing in a "God of love" who is primarily concerned with their desires and feelings, not with rules and duties. Nothing in the Bible supports the idea that a relationship with God is for the purpose of making us feel happy and comfortable. When people realize that they will be happier in this life without having to care what God thinks, they will drop their faith, and there are plenty of non-Christians to cheer them on when they do it.

I would say to all of you reading that if the opinions of others causes you to stumble then meditate on the following passage: 1 Cor 4:1-4 too. There is only one person's opinion that matters, ultimately.

Global warming killing people with ice and snow in North Carolina

February 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is ManBearPig to blame for global warming?

President Barack Obama, you need to stop golfing and fix the global warming! Radically leftist CNN reluctantly reports.

Excerpt:

> Get off the roads, and stay off.
>
> That was the message in Georgia and the Carolinas as a snow and ice storm swept through Wednesday, bringing some of the Southeast's most populous cities to a standstill.
>
> The warnings came as freezing rain brought heavy ice accumulations from Atlanta to Charlotte. Across a large swath of the South, hundreds of thousands of people were without power and thousands of flights were canceled.
>
> Calling ice the biggest enemy, Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal declared a state of emergency. School districts canceled classes and government offices were shuttered in an attempt to avoid a repeat of the traffic paralysis caused by a storm last month.
>
> Up to three-quarters of an inch of ice was expected to accumulate in Atlanta and up to 10 inches of snow and sleet were expected in Raleigh and Charlotte, making travel treacherous.
>
> Also in the storm's path were Virginia and Washington, with much of the Northeast to follow.
>
> All federal offices in the nation's capital were ordered closed, and thousands of employees were being told to stay home, according to the Office of Personnel

> Management.
>
> […]More than 600,000 customers were without power in the Southeast, power companies told CNN. About 180,000 were Georgia Power Co. customers, the utility said.
>
> South Carolina was the hardest hit, with about 220,000 customers without electricity, while Wilmington, North Carolina, accounted for more than 58,000 outages.
>
> The utilities said Wednesday morning they expect those numbers to rise over the next 24 hours.
>
> Georgia Power, the state's largest utility, warned that hundreds of thousands could be without electricity for days.
>
> […]At least 10 deaths have been blamed on the weather, including a 55-year-old man who was killed in a head-on collision in Virginia, authorities said. Two people were killed in Georgia, and two died in North Carolina, they said.
>
> In Texas, three people died when an ambulance driver lost control on an icy patch of road outside of Carlsbad, the state Department of Public Safety said. A patient, a paramedic and another passenger were pronounced dead at the scene.
>
> In Mississippi, authorities blamed the storm for two traffic deaths.

Meanwhile, former NASA climate scientist finds that 95% of global warming predictions have failed when measured against actual global temperatures.

The Daily Caller reports:

> Environmentalists and Democrats often cite a "97 percent" consensus among climate scientists about global warming. But they never cite estimates that 95 percent of climate models predicting global temperature rises have been wrong.
>
> Former NASA scientist Dr. Roy Spencer says that climate models used by government agencies to create policies "have failed miserably." Spencer analyzed 90 climate models against surface temperature and satellite temperature data, and found that more than 95 percent of the models "have over-forecast the warming trend since 1979, whether we use their own surface temperature dataset (HadCRUT4), or our satellite dataset of lower tropospheric temperatures (UAH)."
>
> […]Climate scientists have been baffled by the 17-year pause in global warming. At least eight explanations have been offered to explain the lapse in warming, including declining solar activity and natural climate cycles.

We are spending millions and even billions trying to stop this global warming, but clearly, we aren't doing enough. We need to borrow even more money from our children, otherwise they will be burned to cinders when the Earth turns into Hell.

Related posts

- Global warming causing accidents and deaths in the South, thousands stranded
- Global warming: antarctic sea ice extents hits 35-year record high
- IPCC report: simulations drastically overestimated global warming
- UK scientists predict global cooling after record Arctic ice growth
- New York Times: no global warming in the last 15 years, despite CO2 increase
- Another failed prediction for global warming: fewer extreme weather events
- Global warming: Scotland hit by blizzards, road closures and 8 inches of snow
- New EPA report: natural gas prodution is even cleaner than previously thought
- Reuters: scientists struggling to explain 15 years of global cooling
- Report: biofuels raise the cost of gas for little environmental benefit
- Global warming in the UK: coldest March in 50 years, winter extending into spring
- Democrat senator Barbara Boxer introduces carbon tax legislation
- New study: Earth was warmer 1000 years ago, during Medieval Warming Period
- New study: there has been no global warming since 1997
- New study finds that cosmic rays and the sun cause global warming
- Global warmist Phil Jones admits there’s been no global warming since 1995
- Chairman of UN’s IPCC used bogus claims to grab global warming cash
- Does global warming increase the frequency of hurricanes?
- Canadian government finds polar bear population up 163% since mid-1980s

Studies show that egalitarian marriage results in less sex

February 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the ultra-leftist New York Times, of all places. (H/T Dennis Prager)

Most of the article is standard leftist boilerplate, but check this out:

> Today, according to census data, in 64 percent of U.S. marriages with children under 18, both husband and wife work. There's more gender-fluidity when it comes to who brings in the money, who does the laundry and dishes, who drives the car pool and braids the kids' hair, even who owns the home. A vast majority of adults under 30 in this country say that this is a good thing, according to a Pew Research Center survey: They aspire to what's known in the social sciences as an egalitarian marriage, meaning that both spouses work and take care of the house and that the relationship is built on equal power, shared interests and friendship. But the very qualities that lead to greater emotional satisfaction in peer marriages, as one sociologist calls them, may be having an unexpectedly negative impact on these couples' sex lives.
>
> **A study called "Egalitarianism, Housework and Sexual Frequency in Marriage," which appeared in The American Sociological Review last year, surprised many, precisely because it went against the logical assumption that as marriages improve by becoming more equal, the sex in these marriages will improve, too. Instead, it found that when men did certain kinds of chores around the house, couples had less sex. Specifically, if men did all of what the researchers characterized as feminine chores like folding laundry, cooking or vacuuming — the kinds of things many women say they want their husbands to do — then couples had sex 1.5 fewer times per month than those with husbands who did what were considered masculine chores, like taking out the trash or fixing the car. It wasn't just the frequency that was affected, either — at least for the wives. The more traditional the division of labor, meaning the greater the husband's share of masculine chores compared with feminine ones, the greater his wife's reported sexual satisfaction.**
>
> […][Study co-author] Brines believes the quandary many couples find themselves in comes down to this: "The less gender differentiation, the less sexual desire." In other words, in an attempt to be gender-neutral, we may have become gender-neutered.
>
> […]The chores study seems to show that women do want their husbands to help out — just in gender-specific ways. Couples in which the husband did plenty of traditionally male chores reported a 17.5 percent higher frequency of sexual

> intercourse than those in which the husband did none.
>
> […]When I asked Esther Perel, a couples therapist whose book, "Mating in Captivity," addresses the issue of desire in marriage, about the role sexual scripts play in egalitarian partnerships, she explained it like this: "Egalitarian marriage takes the values of a good social system — consensus-building and consent — and assumes you can bring these rules into the bedroom. But the values that make for good social relationships are not necessarily the same ones that drive lust." In fact, she continued, "most of us get turned on at night by the very things that we'll demonstrate against during the day."

Now let's leave that new study, and review an older study.

Egalitarianism inroduces a risk of divorce

Here is a related story about a Norwegian study that finds that egalitarian marriages have a higher risk of divorce.

Excerpt:

> Couples who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a Norwegian study sure to get tongues wagging has shown.
>
> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled Equality in the Home, said.
>
> Researchers found no, or very little, cause-and-effect. Rather, they saw in the correlation a sign of "modern" attitudes.
>
> "Modern couples are just that, both in the way they divide up the chores and in their perception of marriage" as being less sacred, Mr Hansen said, stressing it was all about values.
>
> "In these modern couples, women also have a high level of education and a well-paid job, which makes them less dependent on their spouse financially. They can manage much easier if they divorce," he said.
>
> There were only some marginal aspects where researchers said there may be cause-and-effect.
>
> "Maybe it's sometimes seen as a good thing to have very clear roles with lots of clarity … where one person is not stepping on the other's toes," Mr Hansen suggested.
>
> "There could be less quarrels, since you can easily get into squabbles if both have the same roles and one has the feeling that the other is not pulling his or her own weight," he added.

I think that this article is basically correct – men like having clearly defined roles. A man

has the traditional roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. He has the responsibility to lead in those areas. He doesn't want to have the woman's role, he doesn't want to be forced to perform it. Complementarianism is the rational view, the view that leads to happier and more stable marriages. That's not my opinion, that's a fact. Men and women maybe be equal in importance and value, but they are not interchangeable. They are not identical.

Now, anyone who denies the facts has to do better than 1) introduce the bare possibility that all the studies are wrong and 2) claim that their own marriage refutes what the studies say and 3) sex isn't that important anyway for the stability of the marriage, 4) a higher risk of divorce isn't that bad for the stability of the marriage. The facts are what they are and the wise man proportions his beliefs to the evidence. Complementarianism is supported by evidence. Egalitarianism is just ideology.

Egalitarian marriage does not make women happier

Elusive Wapiti writes about in this blog post.

Excerpt:

> Norwegian researchers confirm and extend Brad Wilcox and Steven Nock's research suggesting that egalitarianism sets couples up to fail:
>
> "What we've seen is that sharing equal responsibility for work in the home doesn't necessarily contribute to contentment," said Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled "Equality in the Home".
>
> The lack of correlation between equality at home and quality of life was surprising, the researcher said. "One would think that break-ups would occur more often in families with less equality at home, but our statistics show the opposite," he said.
>
> The figures clearly show that "the more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," he went on. The reasons, Mr Hansen said, lay only partially with the chores themselves. "Maybe it's sometimes seen as a good thing to have very clear roles with lots of clarity … where one person is not stepping on the other's toes," he suggested. "There could be less quarrels, since you can easily get into squabbles if both have the same roles and one has the feeling that the other is not pulling his or her own weight."

See, Wilcox's view is this:

> The companionate theory of marriage suggests that egalitarianism in practice and belief leads to higher marital quality for wives and higher levels of positive emotion work on the part of husbands. Our analysis of women's marital quality and men's marital emotion work provides little evidence in support of this theory. Rather, in examining women's marital quality and men's emotional investments in marriage, we find that dyadic commitment to institutional ideals about marriage and women's contentment with the division of household tasks

> are more critical. We also show that men's marital emotion work is a very important determinant of women's marital quality. We conclude by noting that her marriage is happiest when it combines elements of the new and old: that is, gender equity and normative commitment to the institution of marriage.

His full study from 2006 is here.

Now some people think that if men are not forced to do women's chores, it will somehow lead to domestic abuse. What do studies say about that?

Domestic violence more likely in two income couples

From Psych Central.

Excerpt:

> Intimate partner violence is two times more likely to occur in two income households, compared to those where only one partner works, according to a new study.
>
> Conducted by Sam Houston State University researchers Cortney A. Franklin, Ph.D., and doctoral student Tasha A. Menaker and supported by the Crime Victims' Institute, the study looked at the impact of education levels and employment among heterosexual partners as it relates to domestic violence.
>
> While the researchers found that differences in education levels appeared to have little influence, when both partners were working, intimate partner violence increased.
>
> **"When both male and females were employed, the odds of victimization were more than two times higher than when the male was the only breadwinner in the partnership, lending support to the idea that female employment may challenge male authority and power in a relationship," said the researchers.**
>
> The study was based on telephone interviews with 303 women who identified themselves as either currently or recently in a serious romantic relationship.
>
> […]The study found that more than 60 percent of women in two-income couples reported victimization, while only 30 percent of women reported victimization in cases when only the male partner was employed.
>
> […]The study is scheduled to be published in the journal *Violence Against Women.*

Now let's see if women in church have their views informed by studies, or not.

Church women have it exactly backwards

For further reading, check out this excellent post from Sunshine Mary. I am including this for life application.

Excerpt:

> My husband and I attend a large Protestant church of the superfunrockband

> denomination. On Wednesday evenings, our church holds small group Bible studies, and HHG and I attend the one for married couples. We meet in a large room and split into small groups, each group with its own table and leader.
>
> This past week was rough because the topic was sex. I just could not believe that all the things we joke about Christians saying were *actually said.* For example, one young woman actually used the *women-are-like-a-crockpot* crock of crap. This is not true, in case anyone has not figured it out yet. It does not take a woman, Christian or otherwise, eight hours to become sexually aroused. The idea that a man needs to spend eight hours giving her tender kisses, helping with the laundry, telling her how much he loves her, and bringing her flowers just to turn her on is wrong. She may like all those things very much, they may be nice things to do, but they *will not make her sexually aroused.* Why do Christian women keep telling men this? It's like we've all succumbed to mass delusion.
>
> Unbelievably, another woman told the group how hot it is when her husband does the dishes and plays with the kids. She actually *said that as a serious comment,* and all the other ladies laughed and nodded.
>
> […]I could no longer stand it, so I whipped out my iPad and looked up a recent study, refuting her blue pill bull pucky…
>
> […]For the entire evening, it was the same old yip yap about helping with the housework, making sure your wife feels loved enough, making her feel safe, blah blah blah. None of this is good advice for generating attraction, of course, although it wasn't surprising.
>
> Why do Christian women perpetuate these myths about attraction, thereby assuring themselves and their husbands a frustrating sex life? It's certainly not Biblical. We could be really jaded and say they are just lying, but I don't think that is the reason.
>
> It's more that we hear this over and over again – that we want men who are always tender, gentle, and sensitive, that we need a deep emotional connection, lots of intimate conversation, and plenty of sweet romance before we can feel sexual attraction. This advice is pervasive: it's on every Christian website, in our movies, magazines, sermons, and books, and thus we just come to believe it.

You would think that these studies would destroy feminist myths, but a lot of what goes on in churches is never checked against the data. Maybe we should start, though. And note that this is a case where the Bible and the data are once again in perfect harmony — in the sense that both claim that the sexes really are different. It's the church's embrace of radical feminism that's wrong.

Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas

February 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The lecture: (from 2013)

Note: there is a period of 19 minutes of Q&A at the end of the lecture.

About the speaker:

His full biography is here. (I removed his links from my excerpt text below)

Excerpt:

> I had an interest in science and theology, so in 1977 I chose to go to Biola University where I could study both subjects in detail. I thoroughly enjoyed college and participated in intramural sports, was elected to student government, served as a resident assistant, competed in forensics, and studied a lot. As I neared college graduation my dual interest continued so I applied to seminary and to graduate school. After graduating *summa cum laude* from Biola, I decided to pursue a graduate degree in physics at UCLA.
>
> During my first few years of graduate school, I developed an increased interest in quantum mechanics and subatomic physics and decided to do research in a field that dealt with these subjects. I joined a High Energy Physics experimental group doing research at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to actively participate in research at SLAC. I graduated in 1988 with my Ph.D in High Energy Physics (a.k.a. Elementary Particle Physics). If you would like to know more about High Energy Physics, the Particle Data Group at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory has a very nice interactive adventure that teaches you all about the subject. My research advisor was professor Charles Buchanan and my disertation was titled "A Study of Lambda Polarization and Phi Spin Alignment in Electron-Positron Annihilation at 29 GeV as a Probe of Color Field Behavior."
>
> After graduation, I accepted a post-doctoral research position with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I continued to do research at SLAC where I joined the SLD experiment. My research interests centered on the SLD silicon pixel vertex detector. I wrote most of the offline software for this device, and did physics analysis which used the vertex detector, including tagging *b* quark events for flavor specific QCD (Quantum Chromodynamics) analysis. In the seven years I was employed by UMASS, I only spent 3 days on the Amherst campus. The rest of the time was spent in California.
>
> […]In August 1995, I accepted a job as an Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of Oklahoma (OU) in Norman, Oklahoma. The University of Oklahoma has a vibrant high energy physics research group involved in experiments at the

> Fermi National Accelerator Center (Fermilab), and CERN. I joined the DØ experiment at Fermilab where I continue to do research in elementary particle physics. As a member of the DØ collaboration I have made contributions to the testing of silicon sensors for the upgraded vertex detector, to the track finding algorithms, to a measurement of the photon production cross section which probes the gluon content of protons, and to other QCD measurements. I am currently studying properties of*B* mesons that contain a *b*-quark, the production cross section of jets coming from quarks and gluons, and other QCD analyses. At CERN, I am a collaborator on the ATLAS detector.
>
> I received tenure in 2001 and was promoted to the rank of Professor in the summer of 2010. Most of the time at OU I have taught introductory physics classes to physics majors, engineers, and life science majors. In these classes I have used a number of interactive techniques to facilitate student participation and learning. I have been privileged to win a few awards for my teaching. In 1999, the Associated Students selected me as the Outstanding Professor in the College of Arts and Science, and in 2000 I was awarded the BP AMOCO Foundation Good Teaching Award. In 2002, I was given the Regents Award for Superior Teaching. I received the Carlisle Mabrey and Lurine Mabrey Presidential Professorship in 2006 which is given to "faculty members who excel in all their professional activities and who relate those activities to the students they teach and mentor."

He seems to have done a fine job of integrating his faith with a solid career in physics research.

Summary:

- It used to be true that most of the great scientists were believers in God
- But now science has advanced and we have better instruments – is it still true?
- Today, many people believe that science has shows that the universe and Earth are not special
- We used to believe that the Earth was the center of the universe, and Darwin showed we are not designed
- The problem with this view is that it is based on old science, not modern science
- Three topics: origin of the universe, fine-tuning of the universe, the Rare Earth hypothesis

Experimental evidence for the origin of the universe:

- #1: Hubble discovered that the universe expands because of redshifting of light from distant galaxies
- #2: Measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation show the universe had a beginnning
- #3: Measurements of the light element (hydrogen and helium) abundances confirm

an origin of the universe
- The best explanation for an absolute origin of space, time, matter and energy is a supernatural cause

Experimental evidence for the design of the universe:

- #1: The amount of matter: a bit less = no stars and galaxies, a bit more = universe recollapses
- #2: The strong force: a bit more = only hydrogen, a bit more = little or no hydrogen
- #3: Carbon resonance level: a bit higher = no carbon, a bit lower = no carbon

Experimental evidence for galactic, stellar and planetary habitability:

- #1: Galaxy: produces high number of heavy elements and low radiation
- #2: Star: long stable lifetime, burns bright, bachelor star, third generation star (10 billion years must elapsed),
- #3: Planet: mass of planet, stable orbit, liquid water, tectonic activity, tilt, moon

Naturalistic explanations:

- Humans evolve to the point where they reach back in time and create finely-tuned universe
- Eternally existing multiverse

Hawking and Mlodinow response to Rare Earth:

- There are lots of planets so one must support life
- Odds of a planet that supports life are low even with 10^22 planets

Hawking and Mlodinow proposal of M-theory multiverse:

- There is no experimental evidence for M-theory being true
- M-theory is not testable now and is not likely to be testable in the future
- But science is about making testable predictions, not about blind speculation

Hawking and Mlodinow no-boundary proposal:

- This theory requires the laws of physics to exist prior to the universe
- But where do you get laws of physics before there is any physical world?
- There is no experimental evidence for no-boundary proposal
- All the evidence we have now (redshift, CMBR, H-He abundances) is for Big Bang

What science has revealed provide abundant evidence for a transcendent Creator and Designer

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Not a smidgen: 100% of 501(c)(4) groups audited by the IRS were conservative

February 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal reports.

Excerpt:

> A Republican House committee chairman said the Internal Revenue Service targeted tax-exempt conservative groups for audits, widening the scope of GOP ire over the agency's oversight of political activities.
>
> House Democrats pushed back, saying Republicans were seeking to use the IRS controversy to score political points with their conservative base in an election year.
>
> The IRS has been under scrutiny since an inspector general's report last May found that the agency had targeted conservative groups for lengthy and heavy-handed review of their applications to become tax-exempt organizations under section 501(c) 4 of the tax code. The controversy led to significant management shakeups at the IRS and generated a slew of congressional investigations, some of which are still going on.
>
> On Tuesday, House Ways and Means Chairman Dave Camp (R., Mich.) said his committee's continuing investigation has found that the IRS also singled out established conservative tax-exempt groups for audits.
>
> "We now know that the IRS targeted not only right-leaning applicants, but also right-leaning groups that were already operating as 501(c)(4)s," Mr. Camp said in a statement. "At Washington, DC's direction, dozens of groups operating as 501(c)(4)s were flagged for IRS surveillance, including monitoring of the groups' activities, websites and any other publicly available information. Of these groups, 83% were right-leaning. And of the groups the IRS selected for audit, 100% were right-leaning."

Obama says there is not a smidgen of corruption here. Do you agree?

Related Posts

- Chairwoman of Tea Party group targeted by IRS, ATF, FBI: "I refuse to be intimidated"
- DOJ selects Democrat donor to head investigation of IRS corruption
- New York Times: Democrats knew about IRS scandal 5 months before the 2012 election
- The IRS abuse of power scandal started from the top
- IRS exchanged confidential taxpayer information with White House
- DOJ won't prosecute government officials for unauthorized access of tax records

- Treasury Dept. IG: IRS targeted 292 Tea Party groups but only 6 progressive groups
- New study: IRS targeting of Tea Party conservatives had significant effect on 2012 election
- Human Rights Campaign refuses to reveal name of IRS leaker
- Phone call recording of IRS agent reveals anti-Christian, anti free speech bias
- Obama's deputy campaign manager Stephanie Cutter met with IRS chief at the White House
- Cincinnati IRS employee: Washington told us to target the Tea Party
- IRS chief visited White House a reported 118 times from 2010 to 2011
- IRS fascist Lois Lerner pleads the fifth to avoid transparency and accountability
- A closer look at one of the conservatives persecuted by the IRS
- Obama met with anti-Tea Party IRS Union boss one day before the IRS persecutions began
- The IRS abuse of power scandal started from the top
- IRS official who targeted Tea Party groups now a director in Obamacare administration
- IRS audited the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association after they ran pro-marriage ads
- IRS gave confidential documents from conservative groups to liberal group ProPublica
- IRS apologizes for flagging conservative groups for audits in 2012 election year

Treasury Department threatens private companies for responding to Obamacare incentives

February 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily reports on how the Treasury Department is threatening private companies who lay off employees because of the costs imposed on them by Obamacare.

Excerpt:

> In what may be considered an ObamaCare loyalty oath, the Treasury Department orders employers to attest that any employee layoffs are not due to its imposed costs under penalty of perjury.
>
> The first rule of business is to stay in business, something which is accomplished by doing what government is incapable of doing — controlling costs and making a profit by giving customers a product or service they need or want.
>
> ObamaCare is obviously a product neither business nor the individual wants, so coercion is necessary under penalty of law.
>
> Enforced by the Internal Revenue Service, individuals must enroll in government-approved plans or be fined.
>
> Individuals are not allowed, despite presidential promises, to keep the plans and doctors they like and can afford.
>
> Instead, they must accept plans they don't like and can't afford, some getting subsidies extracted from other taxpayers or China. They must grin and bear their reduced health care choices and higher costs.
>
> Even though ObamaCare's employer mandate has once again been illegally and unconstitutionally extended by the president who would be king, business still faces ObamaCare's punitive cost increases down the road and its own form of government coercion.
>
> Layoffs are an unfortunate but sometimes necessary means for a business to control costs and stay in business.
>
> On Monday, a Treasury Department unconcerned with the necessities of the free market said that businesses will need to "certify" that they are not shedding full-time workers simply to avoid the mandate and its costs.
>
> Officials said employers will be told to sign a "self-attestation" on their tax forms affirming this, under penalty of perjury.

What happens when a government passes regulations that make it harder for employers to lay off workers if they are forced to? Well, companies stop hiring workers, and expand their operations elsewhere. That's exactly what has happened in countries like France, where the government makes it nearly impossible to get rid of workers, even when circumstances warrant it. So the net effect of policies that reduce the freedom to hire/fire

as needed is to raise unemployment.

Here's the economist Aparna Mathur of the American Enterprise Institute to explain.

Excerpt:

> Labor market regulations often take the form of employment protection rules that govern the hiring and firing of workers. These were originally introduced to enhance workers' welfare; for instance, by reducing unfair dismissals. The same provisions that protect employees, however, translate into cost for employers, leading an employer to think twice (at least) before hiring a new employee.
>
> Theoretical economic models have shown that, in general, the effect of such laws is to reduce job flows (broadly, the sum of jobs created and jobs destroyed). In my paper, I show that these reduced job flows could have negative effects on investments in education because they reduce the expected returns on a job search; and they lower the value of education as a signaling device.
>
> Under rigid labor market regulations, employers have a stronger disincentive to create new jobs, so there are fewer available jobs on the market. As a result, one's likelihood of earning a productive wage is reduced. Moreover, firings under a system of strong labor market regulations are less frequent than they would be otherwise, so even workers with jobs expect to face fewer opportunities to search for re-employment. As a result, they will have less use of education as a signaling device to secure their next job.
>
> With flexible labor markets and higher job mobility, these conditions are reversed. Job flows are higher, leading to more vacancies per unemployed worker. This yields a higher expected return on a job search for educated workers since the likelihood of finding a job is higher. Further, workers are either fired or they quit more frequently (i.e., job destruction is higher), leading to a greater use (or need) of education as a signaling device.
>
> Put simply, imagine a developing country with rigid labor markets leading to few vacancies. For a low-income worker, the cost of getting educated may outweigh the prospective benefits since the likelihood of finding a job in this scenario is fairly low. On the other hand, for the same worker, if the likelihood of finding a job goes up when labor market restrictions are removed, the incentive to invest in education may be higher since the returns to investing in this costly activity are higher. Countries such as France, Germany, and Italy, which consistently have strict labor regulations, would do well to heed these results (see figure). It is also true in general that developing countries have stricter labor regulations than the OECD economies.

All these regulations sound so good, but we have to think beyond stage one in order to see the real results of the happy-sounding speeches. These things are understood by economists, but we didn't elect an economist.

Upcoming Greer-Heard forum on cosmology, featuring Sean Carroll and William Lane Craig

February 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(Video: William Lane Craig debates the fine-tuning argument with Duke University philosopher Alex Rosenberg)

Christian Post reports on what promises to be one of the best debates in William Lane Craig's career.

Excerpt:

> The debate over God's existence heats up next week as leading physicist and atheist Sean Carroll is pitted against William Lane Craig, a top theologian and philosopher, to discuss their views about philosophy, cosmology, and the role of God and the cosmos.
>
> The two experts will debate on Feb. 21 under the theme "God and Cosmology: The Existence of God in Light of Modern Cosmology." Organizers announced Wednesday that the event will be held at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary as part of a Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum in Faith and Culture Weekend Conference. Modern cosmology is dominated by the Big Bang theory, which attempts to bring together observational astronomy and particle physics.
>
> "Though Carroll is as fiercely anti-theistic as other cosmologists I have debated, he differs in being philosophically informed and civil in demeanor," Craig wrote in a statement about the event.
>
> Craig is a philosopher, professor, author and founder of ReasonableFaith.org, a web-based ministry "whose purpose is to provide, in the public arena, an intelligent and articulate perspective about the existence of God." He has debated some of the most notable atheists, including the late Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, and, most recently, Lawrence Krauss. Some 250,000 people have watched the Craig-Krauss dialogues since they took place last August in Australia.
>
> Over the years, Craig has developed "Eight Reasons for God." These form his case for theism, showing that God is the best explanation for why anything exists at all; the origin of the universe; the application of mathematics to the physical world; the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life; intentional states of consciousness in the world; objective moral values and duties in the world; the historical facts concerning Jesus' resurrection; and personal experience of God.
>
> Sean Carroll is a physicist at the California Institute of Technology. His research focuses on theoretical physics and cosmology, especially the origin and constituents of the universe. He has contributed to models of interaction between dark matter, dark energy, and ordinary matter; alternative theories of gravity;

> and violations of fundamental symmetries. He has appeared on TV shows including "The Colbert Report" and Through the Wormhole with Morgan Freeman, and frequently serves as a science consultant for film and television. He is the author of several books including the upcoming *The Particle at the End of the Universe*.
>
> Each has selected two commentators to round out the discussion, philosophers Tim Maudlin and Alex Rosenberg on Carroll's tag team and philosopher Robin Collins and physicist James Sinclair on Craig's. A follow-up discussion is planned for that Saturday.
>
> "I selected the physicist James Sinclair, with whom I co-authored the article on the kalam cosmological argument in the Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology, and Robin Collins, who is writing what will be the definitive book on the fine-tuning of the universe," said Craig. "Carroll and I will be afforded the opportunity to give brief responses to each of their papers.
>
> "There will also be opportunity for audience interaction with all the participants. Not only will the entire proceedings be video-recorded, but the transcript of the debate, papers, and responses will be published by Fortress Press. So this promises to be a very substantive and important engagement. It will also be live-streamed on the Internet, so you can join in if you'd like."

The post includes a link to the live stream, which is provided by Tactical Faith.

Dr. Carroll's blog post about the debate

Dr. Carroll posted about this upcoming debate on his blog, and it seems like he is is going to be a fine opponent for Dr. Craig.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Next month I'll be doing something related, although under quite different circumstances. On February 21 I'll be debating William Lane Craig at the Greer-Heard Forum, an event sponsored by the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. It will actually be a two-day event; a debate between Craig and me on Friday night, and follow-ups on Saturday from other speakers — Tim Maudlin and Alex Rosenberg for Team Naturalism, Robin Collins and James Sinclair for Team Theism.
>
> […]William Lane Craig (or WLC as we call him in the business) is of course a very well-known figure, largely for his many public debates, on theism/atheism as well as on various other specific theological issues. As far as debating goes: he's very good at it! If his debates were being judged by a panel of experts as in an intercollegiate debate tournament, he would have a very good record indeed. This has led many people to conclude that atheists just shouldn't debate him at all, or at least not until they have devoted 10,000 hours to learning how to be a good debater.
>
> Daniel Dennett warned me that, as soon as word got out that I would be debating

> WLC, I would be deluged with opinions and unsolicited advice. Which is great! Always happy to hear other perspectives, although I don't promise to actually follow any of the advice. I won't reproduce the various emails I've received, but here are a few very different perspectives online: Jerry Coyne, Luke Barnes (and another), and Wintery Knight. (WK is relatively restrained, but others predict "pummelings," presumably for me.)

Dr. Carroll explained his goals for the event:

> Just so we're clear: my goal here is not to win the debate. It is to say things that are true and understandable, and establish a reasonable case for naturalism, especially focusing on issues related to cosmology. I will prepare, of course, but I'm not going to watch hours of previous debates, nor buy a small library of books so that I may anticipate all of WLC's possible responses to my arguments. I have a day job, and frankly I'd rather spend my time thinking about quantum cosmology than about the cosmological argument for God's existence. If this event were the Final Contest to Establish the One True Worldview, I might drop everything to focus on it. But it's not; it's an opportunity to make my point of view a little clearer to a group of people who don't already agree with me.

Recently, Dr. Carroll debated Christian philosopher Hans Halvorson, who is a professor at Princeton University, and Hugh Ross was in attendance. In a podcast, Dr. Ross said that Carroll was a gentleman, and it was a good debate, although he wanted Halvorson to disagree with Carroll more. (You can watch the "debate" here, although it really wasn't a debate because Halvorson didn't engage Carroll for the most part). Reasons to Believe has since pulled the podcast. However, I was able to find it, (I am a software engineer!), and I've posted it here. I have no idea why they pulled it, because it was a good review. If you want a good introduction to the issues they'll be debating from a particle physicist, check out this recent lecture by Dr. Michael Strauss.

The two duelists choose their seconds

My understanding is that Dr. Carroll has already made one mistake. He selected Alex Rosenberg (see video above) as a respondent. Dr. Rosenberg is not a good spokesman for naturalism, and in his debate with Dr. Craig, he did very poorly. A better wingman would have been someone like Graham Oppy or Quentin Smith. Dr. Carroll's other choice (Tim Maudlin) looks solid, though.

On Dr. Craig's side, he's chosen Robin Collins and James Sinclair. Collins recently had a chapter in "Debating Christian Theism" (Oxford University Press, 2013) and Collins and Sinclair both had chapters in "The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology" (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). Collins is an engaging public speaker, and I featured a lecture by him on the fine-tuning argument in this post.

Please pray that God would reach out to Dr. Carroll and for other non-theists listening to the debate so they can see that there are good reasons for them to rethink their views about God.

Dr. Luke Barnes previews the debate

If you would like to read some comments from an accomplished cosmologist, check out these posts (post one, post two, post three, post four) on Dr. Luke Barnes' Letters to Nature blog. You might remember him because I wrote about his paper critical of atheist physicist Victor Stenger in this blog post. Note that Barnes' paper has now been published in a peer-reviewed journal. The journal is published by Cambridge University.

Conservative Party of Canada on track to deliver budget surplus in 2015

February 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper (Conservative Party)

Story from Yahoo News about the results delivered by the Conservative Party of Canada.

Note: To understand the numbers in the article, simply multiple the numbers by 10 to compare with American numbers – Canada's economy is about 1/10 the size of ours. For example, our GDP is $15.7 trillion and theirs is $1.8 trillion. Our national debt is $17 trillion, while their's is $1.2 trillion.

Excerpt:

> Canada's Conservative government looks set to comfortably balance its books in 2015 or even sooner, its latest budget showed on Tuesday, with cuts in spending on the public service more than offsetting a series of modest new expenditures.
>
> The low-key spending plan leaves Prime Minister Stephen Harper well-positioned to offer tax breaks and other initiatives in the runup to an election scheduled for October next year.
>
> "Some people will say this budget is boring," Finance Minister Jim Flaherty told reporters ahead of the budget speech. "Boring is good."
>
> The budget shows a deficit of C$2.9 billion ($2.63 billion)in the 2014-15 fiscal year, up from the previous estimate of C$5.5 billion. That balance includes a C$3 billion contingency fund, which in fact reveals an underlying surplus that year.
>
> Flaherty acknowledged the budget would be narrowly balanced this coming year without the contingency fund, but said he preferred to have a "nice clean surplus next year".

> The government estimates a bigger-than-expected C$6.4 billion surplus in 2015-16. In the year ending March 31 of this year, the deficit is pegged at C$16.6 billion.
>
> […]Flaherty, who is 64 and battling a rare skin disease, has staked his reputation on eliminating Canada' small deficit, equivalent to about 1 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), and restoring the reputation the country had before the global financial crisis as having the strongest fiscal record in the Group of Seven major economies.
>
> Germany is currently the only G7 country running a surplus, but Canada's ratio of debt to GDP is substantially less and it is one of a handful of countries with a triple-A rating from rating agencies.

Canada is beating us in debt to GDP:

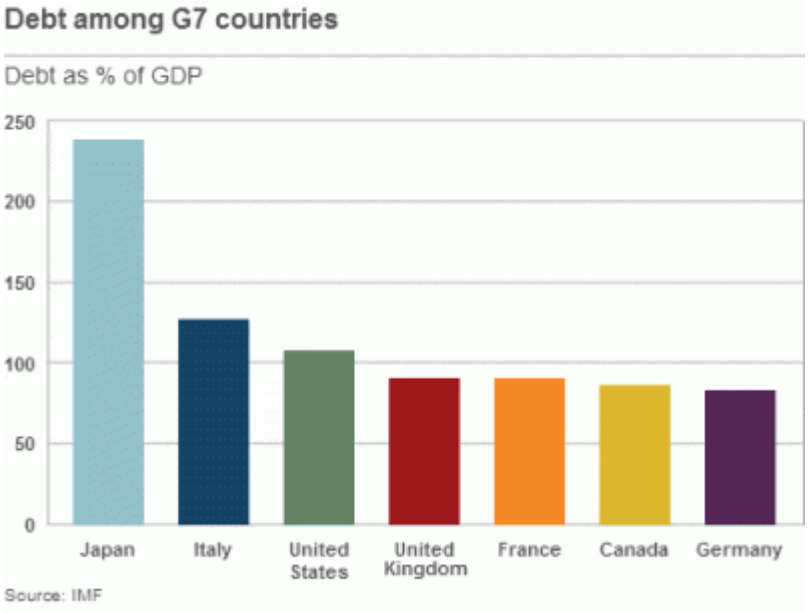

G7 % Debt to GDP as of 2012 (lower is better)

Canada is beating us in economic growth:

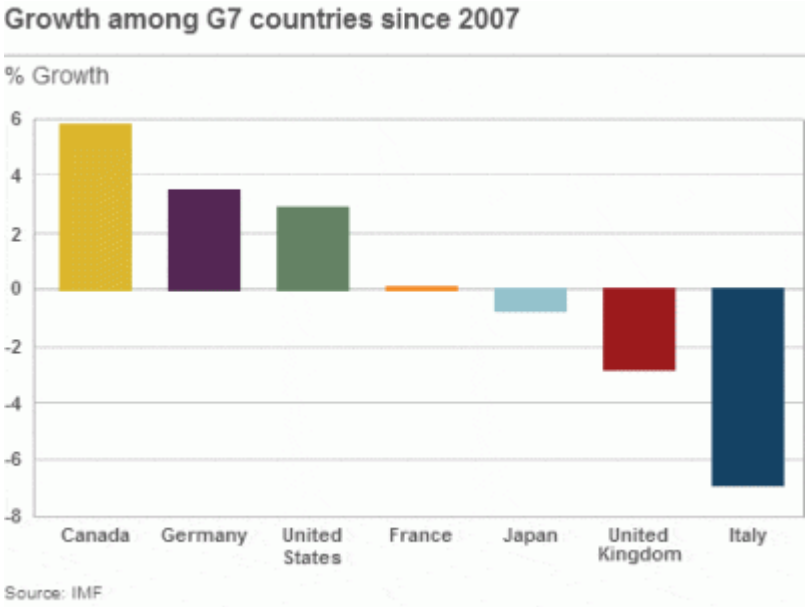

G7 % GDP growth from 2007 to 2012 (higher is better)

Source: BBC Business

The next Canadian election is in 2015. I know that the Liberal Party is currently leading in the polls, but I found some good news. The Canadians just redistricted after their census, and there are 30 new electoral districts. If the same turnout occurs in 2015 which occurred in the 2011 election, then the Conservative Party of Canada would get 22 out of 30 of those new seats. However, I am concerned. I want Harper to keep his majority, as he and Tony Abbott (Australia) are two bright conservative stars who show people what conservatives can do.

Christians embracing premarital sex, despite increased risk of divorce

February 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've posted before about how premarital sex wrecks the stability of marriages by making divorce more likely. And I wanted to begin this post by showing that this is not a controversial point in the research.

Here another good study on relationship tempo and relationship quality.

Abstract:

> *Rapid sexual involvement may have adverse long-term implications for relationship quality. This study examined the tempo of sexual intimacy and subsequent relationship quality in a sample of married and cohabiting men and women. Data come from the Marital and Relationship Survey, which provides information on nearly 600 low- to moderate-income couples living with minor children. Over one third of respondents became sexually involved within the first month of the relationship. Bivariate results suggested that delaying sexual involvement was associated with higher relationship quality across several dimensions. The multivariate results indicated that the speed of entry into sexual relationships was negatively associated with marital quality, but only among women. The association between relationship tempo and relationship quality was largely driven by cohabitation. Cohabiting may result in poorer quality relationship because rapid sexual involvement early in the romantic relationship is associated with entrance into shared living.*

The authors are from Cornell University and University of Wisconsin – Madison. Hardly bastions of conservatism! This is not complicated, this is black and white.

Here's another recent study that shows that if a woman has more than her husband as a premarital sex partner, her risk of divorce increases.

His findings:

> Using nationally representative data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, I estimate the association between intimate premarital relationships (premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) and subsequent marital dissolution. I extend previous research by considering relationship histories pertaining to both premarital sex and premarital cohabitation. I find that premarital sex or premarital cohabitation that is limited to a woman's husband is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption. **However, women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship have an increased risk of marital dissolution.**

Here's another study that makes it even more clear.

Findings:

> Data from the 1988 US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) were utilized to assess the impact of premarital sexual activity on subsequent marital stability. **Among white NSFG subjects first married in 1965-85, virgin brides were significantly less to have become separated or divorced (25%) than women who had not been virgins at marriage (35%).**
>
> **[…]The lower risk of divorce on the part of white women with no premarital sexual experience persisted even after numerous intervening and background variables were controlled.**

This study supports what the Bible says about chastity and premarital sex:

> 1 Cor. 7:8-9:
>
> 8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to stay single as I am.
>
> 9 But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.
>
> The idea of "burning" here has to do with sexual desire. Here Paul tells all unmarried people that if they cannot control their sexual desires, they need to get married. Why? Because Paul assumes that one cannot fulfill this sexual desire outside of the marital bed. While Paul would love for them to remain single (1 Cor. 7:7), he believes that sex outside of marriage is a destructive sin and *cannot* be used as a gratifying release of our sexual passions.

Now despite studies supporting the Biblical prohibition on premarital sex, Christians are actually embracing it. Why is that? Well, church pastors are very, very set in the idea that the Bible is *assumed* to be inerrant in church, and they feel that supporting what the Bible says with actual evidence is "putting evidence at the same level as the Bible". That's their approach – don't confirm the Bible with evidence, just tell people to *assume* that the Bible is true, and tell them to believe it, in the face of mounting culture pressure, secular policies and a resurgence of atheism.

Take a look at this review by a pious pastor of a recent apologetics book, if you don't believe me.

Excerpt:

> *Cold-Case Christianity* places far too much emphasis on the role of extrabiblical sources. No doubt there is a legitimate role for biblical archaeology and extrabiblical writing from antiquity. Christianity is, after all, a faith firmly rooted in human history. But there is a grave danger when truth is suspended because of an apparent lack of corroboration from extrabiblical sources. And Wallace, I'm afraid, wanders too close to this dark side of apologetics.
>
> All of chapter 12, for instance, is devoted to proving the Gospels have external

> corroborative evidence—"evidence that are independent of the Gospel documents yet verify the claims of the text" (183). Wallace then addresses the historicity of the pool of Bethesda and makes another worrying statement: "For many years, there was no evidence for such a place outside of John's Gospel. Because Christianity makes historical claims, archaeology ought to be a tool we can use to see *if these claims are, in fact, true*" (201-202, emphasis added).
>
> In other words, Wallace seems to suggest we cannot affirm the truth of the Gospel accounts without the stamp of approval from archaeology and other extrabiblical sources. Such reasoning is dangerous, not least because it cannot affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. But also, it places the final court of appeal in the realm of extrabiblical sources rather than of God's all-sufficient, all-powerful Word.

So does the approach of Bible-thumping church pastors work? Are young people really convinced by proclamations and assertions, piously expressed?

Majority of Christians embrace premarital sex

Consider this article that Dina tweeted from the Christian Post.

Excerpt:

> [A] new Christian Mingle study suggests that it is increasingly commonplace for Christians to sleep together outside of a marital context.
>
> In a survey of 716 Christians released in January, only 11 percent said they save sex exclusively for marriage. Instead, 60 percent said they would be willing to have sex without any strings attached, while 23 percent said they would have to be "in love." Five percent said they would wait to get engaged.
>
> This data supports a 2011 Relevant Magazine poll that revealed that 80 percent of "young, unmarried Christians have had sex" and that "two-thirds have been sexually active in the last year."
>
> While the findings of a 2012 National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and Grey Matter Research poll did not show outcomes as high as the two previous polls, according to its research, 44 percent of unmarried evangelicals between ages 18-29 said that they had sex, including 25 percent who said they had had sex in the last three months.

You know, if just invoking the Bible piously, and asserting that it's without error, were enough, then that's what you'd see people like William Lane Craig doing in debates at the top universities when he faces off against atheists. But he doesn't do that. Dr. Craig appeals to evidence outside the Bible in order to explain why the Bible ought to be respected when we make our decisions. There is no such thing as pious fideism when you are in front of a crowd of students at a major secular university. And young people, no matter how "nice" they behave in church, are not going to behave like Christians outside of church – especially when they get to an alcohol-soaked, sex-saturated university

campus. They need reasons and evidence to support the claims they read in the Bible before they get challenged.

We need to train pastors who understand how to construct an argument and how to support arguments with evidence. Because when the kids get to college, they are going to face a tsunami of propaganda from the pro-sexual-immmorality crowd. (WARNING: that link describes what happens during “Sex Week” on college campuses. Reader discretion is advised!) They need to be able to explain their views using something other than praise songs and Bible verse memorization, or they are going to fall away under peer pressure and shaming by secular leftist professors. And they need to have that information BEFORE they make the decisions that ruin their ability to commit.

By the way, another great book on the topic of premarital sex is “Hooked: New Science on How Casual Sex is Affecting Our Children” by Joe S. McIlhaney Jr., M.D. and Freda McKissic Bush, M.D. Again – look at the research and be persuaded, and be persuasive with others. Don’t be like these pastors who think that praise hymns and charismatic preaching are enough to make young people do the right thing, because it’s not working. It’s not working.

Jerry Coyne presents the strongest argument for Darwinian evolution

February 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What is the strongest argument for Darwinian evolution? This podcast explains the best way to persuade an intelligent design theorist to accept Darwinian evolution.

Details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, David Klinghoffer announces Discovery Institute's 2013 Censor of the Year award. Listen in as Klinghoffer explains why we've chosen to recognize University of Chicago biologist Jerry Coyne, out of several promising nominees, for his success in choking off free speech on intelligent design and evolution.

The MP3 file is here.

The story behind this powerful argument is described in this post from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Let me make clear at the outset: In naming University of Chicago biologist Jerry Coyne as "Censor of the Year," we at the Center for Science & Culture are not bestowing an honor. While the idea of giving out a "prize" for something so malignant as censorship may sound like a lark, it's not. As CSC associate director John West points out, "This is very serious business. Censorship retards the search for truth and hurts innocent people."
>
> And says Dr. West, "Among die-hard defenders of evolutionary orthodoxy, it's now standard operating procedure." **This is how the scientific "consensus" against Darwin skeptics and intelligent-design advocates is maintained — by fear.**
>
> The "award" will be distributed this Wednesday, February 12, for Darwin Day.
>
> Coyne was pivotal in stampeding Ball State University president Jo Ann Gora to issue a campus-wide gag order on teaching about intelligent design in science classrooms. This involved intimidating and silencing a young Ball State physicist, Eric Hedin. That's censorship. But something that really stands out about Coyne's effort is the power differential between himself and his victim.
>
> Here's Coyne, comfortable as could be in what sure sounds like an easy yet highly prestigious position at the University of Chicago. His workload is evidently so light that he has time to blog at *Why Evolution Is True* what seems like around the clock about frivolous pet topics. While he's ostensibly a scientist, his main passion is bashing religion. Coyne is protected by tenure. He's safe.
>
> On the other hand we have Eric Hedin, at a state school, Ball State in Indiana, with considerably less cachet. Hedin is actively publishing in his field, unlike

> Coyne, but he is not tenured, and so his professional future is really on the line. His prospects are now far more fragile, thanks to Professor Jerry Coyne. Frittering away time blogging about cute animals and posting cartoons insulting various religions — as Coyne does — was not, I'm fairly sure, something that Dr. Hedin would have felt free to do if he was (highly unlikely) inclined to do it.
>
> So we have the powerful, prestigious and above all *safe* Jerry Coyne, swooping in from the next state to rile up Hedin's employers, Ball State's administration. Why? Because Hedin included a bibliography in an interdisciplinary class that listed some books that were favorable to intelligent design (and others that were critical of it).
>
> Coyne was not only successful in shutting down Hedin, and getting intelligent design shut down on the campus as a whole. **He was also a bully, exploiting the difference in power to tyrannize and dominate a vulnerable younger scholar.**

This is the best argument for Darwinism that I have ever heard: believe it, or we'll destroy your academic career. I think that works on most Darwin skeptics.

By the way, if you're headed to the secular university, keep in mind that some departments don't handle diversity well. If you disagree with evolutionary biologists, they don't try to convince you. They just end your career. It's that simple. Keep your views to yourself as long as you can. If you're going to publicly question the 150-year-old theory of evolution, then do it with an alias.

Can you forgive someone who isn't sorry for what they did?

February 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kevin Lewis, a professor of Theology and Law at the conservative Biola University, was asked this question:

> Recently, I was reading Dr. Kenneth Bailey's Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes (IVP press 2008). When commenting on Matthew 6:12-13, he writes,
>
> "It is a common human assumption that the violator of the rights of others must ask for forgiveness before the wronged party can be expected to accept the apology and grant forgiveness…But Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when when there is no confession of guilt… There is a voice from the cross that echoes across history to all saying 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' Neither Pilate nor the high priest nor the centurion offered any apology to Jesus, yet he prayed for divine forgiveness…(p.125)"

And here's his response in full, copied with permission from his Facebook note:

> Regarding Bailey's comments on Matthew 6:12, he errs by not considering the theological context of this statement and fails to consider any implied biblical conditions for forgiveness inherent in the statement. The text simply does not mean what he says it means. He is reading too much into the statement.
> Bailey states, "Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when there is no confession of guilt…"
>
> Bailey errs. Here, Jesus is giving a model for prayer commensurate with the way His Kingdom works. Jesus teaches them to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." This is a statement of the objective, "forgiveness," without a discussion of any express or implied conditions to accomplish the objective. It is also a statement of the proper attitude of the Christian, that is, that we must have a demeanor of being willing to forgive, just as God was willing to forgive us. Bailey's assertion that there is no "confession of guilt" or repentance is merely an unwarranted assumption.
>
> Moreover, the use of "as" (Grk. hos) in the passage introduces a comparison between the way we forgive and the way God forgives. This comparative phraseology is employed elsewhere on the subject of forgiveness. For example, Ephesians 4:32 states that we should be "forgiving each other just as God in Christ also has forgiven" us. Here, the comparative "just as" (Grk. kathos) is employed and indicates our forgiveness is to be just like God's forgiveness of us, which flows from a loving disposition. So in the same manner that God forgives, we must forgive. We are to be "imitators of God" (Eph. 5:1). See also Matthew

5:48 and Luke 6:36 for exhortations to imitate God.

To ascertain whether the Scriptures describe any conditions for forgiveness, one must search elsewhere in the Scriptures for comment. This is the nature of systematic theology. We need to examine what the entire Bible says on a given topic, such as forgiveness. And the Bible contains ample support for the notion that there are conditions for forgiveness.

First, regarding God and His forgiveness, it is undisputed in orthodox Christian theology that God does not forgive everyone. The doctrine of Hell is a sufficient proof of the lack of universal forgiveness by God.

Next, it is clear that God does not forgive without repentance. This doctrine is taught in a number of texts. For example, in Luke 13:3 Jesus says, “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” In Mark 1:15 John the Baptist commands that we must “repent and believe the Gospel.” The connection between repentance and forgiveness of sins (i.e. “salvation”) is seen throughout the Scriptures. For example, in Acts 2:38 repentance is directly connected as a condition for the remission of sins. For additional examples of this connection see Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30-31; Romans 2:4-5; II Corinthians 7:10; II Tim. 2:25-26.

So since we are to be imitators of God and forgive in the same way God forgives, we would expect the Scriptures to be consistent, stating that the condition of repentance is required to be fulfilled before believers are required to forgive each other’s sins. It does.

Jesus stated in Luke 17:3, “If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.” Here, the meaning is clear. The word “if” (Grk. ean) introduces the condition for a rebuke and for granting forgiveness. If (subjunctive) a person sins, we must (imperative) rebuke him, and if (subjunctive) he repents, we must (imperative) forgive him. This is as clear a statement as you will find on the subject. Forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance—and this is one of the same criteria that God requires before He forgives sin.

This principle of permitting believers to withhold forgiveness unless the condition of repentance is satisfied is also explicitly seen in Matthew 18:15-17. Compared with the Luke 17:3 text above, the situation is the same. If a brother sins, reprove him; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. Here, the word “reprove” is used rather than “rebuke” and the word “listen” is employed rather than “repent,” but the meaning is virtually identical to Luke 17:3. What we see in Matthew 18 is an escalation of the issue and the result if the person fails to repent (i.e. “listen”). If the person fails to repent, we are to shun him in all appropriate ways (v. 17).

These passages in Luke and Matthew give us the connection between sin, rebuke, repentance and forgiveness. Other biblical texts that merely mention “forgiveness” as a concept or an objective do not necessarily proffer every

aspect of the doctrine of forgiveness. As such, they must be read in light of the clear conditions expressed in other passages.

Finally, I would make the case that it is harmful to a person to forgive him without requiring repentance. As seen above, the Bible is clear that sin requires a rebuke. Ignoring sin teaches sinners that sin does not bring consequences. This is harmful to their souls. Continuing to have the benefit of a righteous relationship with another and yet remain in sin against that person results in fostering a habituation of sinful inclinations in their soul, which God says brings about suffering and death.

Moreover, since the ultimate purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation, it is meaningless and harmful to forgive when no reconciliation may be had with the sinner. We cannot “walk together” in a biblical manner in righteous peace when the unrepentant sinner walks in unrighteousness. Necessarily, there is a conflict and a want of shalom. Their soul is headed in a different direction than the believer’s soul; they are walking away from God and we cannot have fellowship with darkness. God has no intimate fellowship with unrepentant people, and that is the model for Christians as well (See Matt. 18).

Regarding personal anger issues commonly raised by Christian psychologists, these types of psychologists unbiblically make unconditional forgiveness a part of therapy. By contrast, however, if a counselee will not forgive after the offending party has truly repented, the counselee sins, and this kind of unforgiveness may be one of the causes of his or her problems. But this is a separate issue from universal and unconditional forgiveness raised above.

Human beings in the image of God may be angry in appropriate ways (Eph.4:26, 31). There is a time to love and a time to hate (Ecclesiastes 3:8). The notion that Christians cannot ever hate, be angry, or lack forgiveness is an unbiblical concept. God Himself is eternally angry with sin, but He is certainly not a psychological basket case. He loves, hates, and is angry in appropriate ways. Our task as believers is to imitate this. Be angry with and hate sin appropriately (Rom. 12:9) and love what good appropriately. For example, righteous anger can evolve beyond the biblical limits to become malice, slander, and bitterness while, to give another example, an appropriate love of food can evolve beyond the biblical limits into gluttony.

Psychological problems arise from many issues other than lack of forgiveness. For example, a lack of trust in God that He has a particular instance of evil under His sovereign control can cause undue anxiety in one’s life. Also, if a counselee’s self worth is grounded in the shifting sand of how others treat him (i.e., badly) rather than being grounded in the fact that he is a divine image bearer and inherently valuable no matter how badly anyone treats him, he will likely fall into anxiety, depression, and other sorts of psychological maladies. Changing the biblical doctrine of forgiveness will not truly help a counselee. It only makes it

> worse.
>
> Soli Deo Gloria

I agree with Kevin, and I think it is a helpful tool for people to insist on seeing some sort of repentance and restitution from someone who wrongs you before you trust them again. If they are not even sorry for what they've done, and they refuse to explain why what they did is wrong, then they can't be forgiven, and you can't trust them again.

New study: three or more hours of TV per day harms children's development

February 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Toddlers who watch three hours of TV a day may end up educationally stunted, physically weak and prone to bullying, a study has revealed.
>
> Researchers have found that after two hours of viewing, every extra hour of TV has the potential to harm a child's development, both physically and socially.
>
> This includes poorer vocabulary, maths skills and attention in class, victimisation by classmates and poor physical prowess at nursery.
>
> The study looked at 1,997 boys and girls aged 29 months whose parents reported their television viewing behaviour as part of the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development.
>
> The researchers found that if a child watched up to two hours and 52 minutes of TV, they were unlikely to suffer any negative effects.
>
> […]The study was published in the journal Paediatric Research.

I actually made the decision to give up TV about 8 years back and stick with my computer and a high speed connection instead. One of my reasons was to avoid handing money to the people who create TV programs, because those people do not agree with my values in the vast majority of cases. Why would I give them money to present their worldview to me, when I cannot get a hearing from them?

Life Site News explains the problem.

Excerpt:

> Ipsos MediaCT, a global market research company, have just released a study…
>
> According to the report, 18 percent of Americans between the ages of 13 and 64 said that television has directly contributed to their increasing support for same-sex "marriage."
>
> That's nearly double the number (10 percent) who reported television had increased their opposition to marriage redefinition.
>
> "Based on this data, I think we can conclude that TV has, at least in part, moved the needle of public opinion to see same-sex marriage in a positive way," Ben Spergel, Senior Vice President and Head of TV Insights at Ipsos MediaCT said in a statement.
>
> "With everything from higher profile portrayals of gay characters, to celebrity support of gay marriage, to last year's groundbreaking endorsement by President

> Obama, we are seeing a shift in our culture that is being influenced by popular culture," he said.
>
> Last month, liberal writer Andrew O'Hehir wrote an article for *Salon* crediting the American movement toward homosexual acceptance to television shows like "Will and Grace,""Roseanne," "The Real World," "Ellen DeGeneres," "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," "Modern Family," and "Glee."
>
> "From 'Soap' to Ellen DeGeneres to Richard Hatch on 'Survivor' to the macho male couple who won season 4 of 'The Amazing Race,'" O'Hehir wrote, "televisual images of sexual diversity have gradually moved away from victimology and 'gay best friend' stereotypes toward a 'normalizing vision'of LGBT culture."
>
> "While the startling public shift on gay marriage – something few people of my generation, straight or gay, thought they'd ever see — is not solely the product of TV, it represents the ultimate fulfillment of TV's vision of sexual equality," O'Hehir added.
>
> Support for same-sex "marriage" is on the rise in the United States. Recent polls show more than half of Americans support redefining marriage to include homosexual couples, and several states now allow gay nuptials in defiance of federal law.

So that's one reason. Why would I voluntarily give money to people who are working against what I believe?

Secondly, I particularly don't like the "passive" feel of television. If I liked mysteries, I would rather solve one than watch one being solved. If I liked sports, I'd rather play sports or play a video game with a friend of sports, than watch millionaires play sports. If I liked military history, I'd rather play a military simulation than watch a documentary. I think that I learn a lot more by doing than by seeing.

The Democrat agenda – reducing self-sufficiency and increasing dependency

February 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two articles, both from Investors Business Daily.

The first explains how Obamacare encourages people to stop working or reduce their work hours in order to get more benefits from the government.

Charles Krauthammer explains:

> First, the Congressional Budget Office triples its estimate of the drop in the workforce resulting from the disincentive introduced by ObamaCare's insurance subsidies: 2 million by 2017, 2.3 million by 2021.
>
> Democratic talking points gamely defend this as a good thing because these jobs are being given up voluntarily. Nancy Pelosi spoke lyrically about how ObamaCare subsidies will allow people to leave unfulfilling jobs to pursue their passions:
>
> "Think of an economy where people could be an artist or a photographer or a writer without worrying about keeping their day job in order to have health insurance."
>
> […]Pelosi's vision is equally idyllic except for one thing: The taxes of the American factory worker — grinding away dutifully at his repetitive mind-numbing job — will be subsidizing the voluntary unemployment of the artiste in search of his muse. A rather paradoxical position for the party that poses as tribune of the working man.
>
> […]In the reductio ad absurdum of entitlement liberalism, Jay Carney was similarly enthusiastic about this ObamaCare-induced job loss. Why, ObamaCare creates the "opportunity" that "allows families in America to make a decision about how they will work, and if they will work."
>
> If they will work? Pre-Obama, people always had the right to quit work to tend full time to the study of butterflies. It's a free country. The twist in the new liberal dispensation is that the butterfly guy is to be subsidized by the taxes of people who actually work.
>
> In the traditional opportunity society, government provides the tools — education, training and various incentives — to achieve the dignity of work and its promise of self-improvement and social mobility.
>
> In the new opportunity society, you are given the opportunity for idleness while living parasitically off everyone else. Why those everyone elses should remain at their jobs — hey! I wanna dance, too! — is a puzzle Carney has yet to explain.

So, if you are working, you are going to be taxed more to pay for the leisure (or laziness)

of your fellow citizens. And why must the Democrats do this? In order to continue to win elections by getting the votes of people who want you to work harder and longer so that they don't have to work.

So how much are we paying people to not work or to work less?

Major Welfare Programs, 2012

Medicaid	$296 bil
Unemployment Insurance	$126
Disability	$124
Food Stamps	$75
Supplemental Security Income	$60
Earned Income Tax Credit	$56
Pell Grants	$41
Section 8 housing/rental assistance	$28
Drug Benefits	$23
Education for Disadvantaged	$14
School Lunches	$10
S-CHIP	$9
Head Start	$8
TANF Cash Aid	$7

Sources: Congressional Research Service, Congressional Budget Office

Major welfare programs as of 2012

Again, Investors Business Daily explains.

Excerpt:

> In 2011, the latest year for which we have complete spending data, federal outlays on all means-tested welfare programs targeted for the poor hit $746 billion, according to an analysis by the Congressional Research Service.
>
> But this doesn't include two of the fastest-growing taxpayer-funded cash subsidies: unemployment insurance and disability, which are not based on one's income level, so are not considered anti-poverty programs. That's another $250 billion a year. All told, federal income transfer programs (not including Social Security and Medicare) have hit $1 trillion.
>
> Adding state spending, the Senate Budget Committee found another $257 billion spent each year. The welfare state is now larger than the GDP of 175 of the 190 wealthiest countries.
>
> Astoundingly, if all this spending were simply sent in the form of a check to every household in America living below the poverty level, we could raise each of these family's incomes not just above the poverty line, but double that level, according to Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation. Every poor family of four could have a cash income of $44,000 a year — which in most countries would be princely.
>
> Most Americans probably have no idea how expansive the welfare state is. That's because the cost is disguised by more than 80 separate means-tested programs counted by the CRS, including cash benefits, health care, social services, food, child care, training, and housing and utility subsidies. They often have

> overlapping and uncoordinated missions. This explains the vast duplication of effort, with at least 12 programs offering food and nutrition, 18 offering housing assistance, nine offering vocational training, and so on.
>
> In all, just over 100 million Americans now get some form of welfare-based government benefit. This does not include Medicare or Social Security. Obama's economics team thinks the more the better, because these are programs that "stimulate" the economy.
>
> Oh, and by the way: These numbers do not include the ObamaCare expansion of Medicaid, which could add 20 million to the rolls over time. Obama boasts of 5 million more Americans now being eligible for Medicaid under ObamaCare, as if that's an applause line.

That only leaves the question of who is paying for all this vote-buying today. Well, the money is being borrowed and added to the national debt. And who is going to pay for that? Your children. Especially if you bothered to get married before having children, because those are the children most likely to get the high-paying jobs that our slavemasters in government love to redistribute.

A simple case for the pro-life position by Scott Klusendorf

February 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you able to make a basic case for the pro-life view?

Here's a short 38-lecture by Scott Klusendorf, president of the Life Training Institute.

This is a long treatment that talks about the challenge of moral relativism and the case for the pro-life view. He does show a clip of abortion in the video to the audience.

There's also a 35-minute audio recording of Scott on the LTI web site. (H/T Apologetics 315) You can put that on your podcast player and listen to it. Listen to it a lot and soon you'll sound like Scott.

Scott also has an article posted on the LTI web site for those who don't have time for the video or the audio.

In the article makes three points:

1. **Clarify the issue**
2. **Defend your pro-life position with science and philosophy**
3. **Challenge your listeners to be intellectually honest**

Here's the second point:

> Scientifically, we know that from the earliest stages of development, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings. Leading embryology books confirm this.[2] For example, Keith L. Moore & T.V.N. Persaud write, "A zygote is the beginning of a new human being. Human development begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm … unites with a female gamete or oocyte … to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual."[3] Prior to his abortion advocacy, former Planned Parenthood President Dr. Alan Guttmacher was perplexed that anyone, much less a medical doctor, would question this. "This all seems so simple and evident that it is difficult to picture a time when it wasn't part of the common knowledge," he wrote in his book *Life in the Making*.[4]
>
> Philosophically, we can say that embryos are less developed than newborns (or, for that matter, toddlers) but this difference is not morally significant in the way abortion advocates need it to be. Consider the claim that the immediate capacity for self-awareness bestows value on human beings. Notice that this is not an argument, but an arbitrary assertion. Why is some development needed? And why is this particular degree of development (i.e., higher brain function) decisive rather than another? These are questions that abortion advocates do not adequately address.
>
> As Stephen Schwarz points out, there is no morally significant difference between

> the embryo that you once were and the adult that you are today. Differences of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not relevant such that we can say that you had no rights as an embryo but you do have rights today. Think of the acronym **SLED** as a helpful reminder of these non-essential differences:[5]
>
> **S**ize: True, embryos are smaller than newborns and adults, but why is that relevant? Do we really want to say that large people are more human than small ones? Men are generally larger than women, but that doesn't mean that they deserve more rights. Size doesn't equal value.
>
> **L**evel of development: True, embryos and fetuses are less developed than the adults they'll one day become. But again, why is this relevant? Four year-old girls are less developed than 14 year-old ones. Should older children have more rights than their younger siblings? Some people say that self-awareness makes one human. But if that is true, newborns do not qualify as valuable human beings. Six-week old infants lack the immediate capacity for performing human mental functions, as do the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, and those with Alzheimer's Disease.
>
> **E**nvironment: Where you are has no bearing on who you are. Does your value change when you cross the street or roll over in bed? If not, how can a journey of eight inches down the birth-canal suddenly change the essential nature of the unborn from non-human to human? If the unborn are not already human, merely changing their location can't make them valuable.
>
> **D**egree of Dependency: If viability makes us human, then all those who depend on insulin or kidney medication are not valuable and we may kill them. Conjoined twins who share blood type and bodily systems also have no right to life.
>
> In short, it's far more reasonable to argue that although humans differ immensely with respect to talents, accomplishments, and degrees of development, they are nonetheless equal because they share a common human nature.

That's the core of the basic pro-life case right there. There's also a good interview of Mr. Klusendorf that I blogged about.

Advanced Objections

You can learn more by reading basic pro-life apologetics… from Francis Beckwith. You might recognize Frank Beckwith as the author of "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice". He wrote that book for Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal.

Here are four essays that answer common arguments in favor of legalized abortion.

- Part I. The Appeal to Pity
- Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem

- Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?
- Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Here's an excerpt from Part II:

Excerpt:

> A woman who becomes pregnant due to an act of either rape or incest is the victim of a horribly violent and morally reprehensible crime. Although pregnancy as a result of either rape or incest is extremely rare, **[1]** there is no getting around the fact that pregnancy does occur in some instances.
>
> […]Despite its forceful appeal to our sympathies, there are several problems with this argument. First, it is not relevant to the case for abortion on demand, the position defended by the popular pro-choice movement. This position states that a woman has a **right** to have an abortion for **any** reason she prefers during the entire nine months of pregnancy, whether it be for gender-selection, convenience, or rape. **[3]** To argue for abortion on demand from the hard cases of rape and incest is like trying to argue for the elimination of traffic laws from the fact that one might have to violate some of them in rare circumstances, such as when one's spouse or child needs to be rushed to the hospital. Proving an exception does not establish a general rule.
>
> […]Fourth, this argument begs the question by assuming that the unborn is not fully human. For if the unborn is fully human, then we must weigh the relieving of the woman's mental suffering against the right-to-life of an innocent human being. **And homicide of another is never justified to relieve one of emotional distress**. Although such a judgment is indeed anguishing, we must not forget that the same innocent unborn entity that the career-oriented woman will abort in order to avoid interference with a job promotion is biologically and morally indistinguishable from the unborn entity that results from an act of rape or incest. And since abortion for career advancement cannot be justified if the unborn entity is fully human, abortion cannot be justified in the cases of rape and incest. In both cases abortion results in the death of an innocent human life. As Dr. Bernard Nathanson has written, "The unwanted pregnancy flows biologically from the sexual act, but not morally from it." **[5]**Hence, this argument, like the ones we have already covered in this series, is successful only if the unborn are not fully human.

Scott Klusendorf wrote the The Case for Life, which is the best book for beginners on the pro-life view. For those looking for advanced resources, Francis Beckwith, a professor at Baylor University, published the book Defending Life, with Cambridge University Press, 2007.

I found a very polished hour-long talk by Scott on Youtube. That talk was delivered to students and faculty at Furman University.

Finally, if you want to see Scott Klusendorf in a debate with a former ACLU executive, you

can see it right here.

My friend Papa Georgio sent me a post that features THREE talks by Scott Klusendorf. (H/T Religio-Political Talk)

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Video:10-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Objective truth in the abortion debate – a pro-life training video
- Alan Shlemon explains a classification system for pro-abortion arguments
- What is the best single book on the pro-life position?

And some posts motivating Christians and conservatives to take abortion seriously:

- Why Christians should focus on cultural issues as well as evangelism
- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion
- Are Christians too involved in politics?
- What did the early church fathers think about abortion?
- Scott Klusendorf confronts a "pro-life" nun who voted for Obama

Are liberals or conservatives more likely to believe in weird things?

February 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist Washington Post, of all places. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> A belief in astrology is surprisingly widespread in modern America. The National Science Foundation recently released a report reviewing scientific knowledge and attitudes. As noted by Chris Mooney at Mother Jones, perhaps NSF's most striking finding was an increase in the belief in astrology from 32 percent in 2006 and 35 percent in 2010 to 45 percent in 2012.
>
> At the Demography of Diversity Project at Northwestern University, we took the same astrology data from the General Social Survey that NSF used and broke it down further by political party and liberal-conservative orientation. The results can be found in a brief report that I put up at the Social Science Research Network: "Who Believes That Astrology is Scientific?"

Here are the top 3 groups:

> 1. Conservative Democrats
>
> In the 2012 General Social Survey, 56.9 percent of conservative Democrats believe that astrology is very or sort of scientific, while only 43.1 percent believe that it is not scientific at all. This support for astrology is the highest among 15 overlapping political groups.
>
> 2. Moderate Democrats
>
> The political group that is second most likely to believe in astrology is moderate Democrats. A majority of them — 52.0 percent — think that astrology is at least sort of scientific.
>
> 3. Democrats (overall)
>
> Although liberal Democrats are insignificantly less likely than average to believe in astrology (43.5 percent), the difference is not enough to offset the beliefs of moderate and conservative Democrats. Thus, Democrats overall are in the third position, with nearly half (49.1 percent) believing in astrology.

The surprising thing is that no Republicans appear in the top 7 groups.

Pew Research

I blogged a Pew Research survey before.

Excerpt:

> **Among both evangelical and mainline Protestants, those who attend**

> **church weekly express much lower levels of belief in reincarnation, yoga, the existence of spiritual energy in physical things and astrology compared with those who attend religious services less often.**
>
> […]Older people (those over age 65) consistently express lower levels of acceptance of these kinds of beliefs compared with younger people. **These beliefs are more common among Democrats and independents than Republicans and are more widely held by liberals and moderates than conservatives.**
>
> […]**Evangelical Protestants are the group least likely to say they have felt in touch with a dead person (20%).**
>
> […]Compared with those with a college degree, more Americans with a high school education or less report having felt in touch with a dead person (32% vs. 24%) and having seen a ghost (21% vs. 13%). However, Americans with less education are no more inclined to have consulted a fortuneteller than are Americans with a college education (13% vs. 17%). **Conservatives and Republicans report fewer experiences than liberals or Democrats communicating with the dead, seeing ghosts and consulting fortunetellers or psychics.**

It's not just Pew, it's Gallup, too.

Gallup survey

And here is a Wall Street Journal article about the Gallup survey entitled "Look Who's Irrational Now".

Excerpt:

> "What Americans Really Believe," a comprehensive new study released by Baylor University yesterday, shows that traditional Christian religion greatly decreases belief in everything from the efficacy of palm readers to the usefulness of astrology. It also shows that the irreligious and the members of more liberal Protestant denominations, far from being resistant to superstition, tend to be much more likely to believe in the paranormal and in pseudoscience than evangelical Christians.
>
> The Gallup Organization, under contract to Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion, asked American adults a series of questions to gauge credulity.
>
> […]The answers were added up to create an index of belief in occult and the paranormal. While 31% of people who never worship expressed strong belief in these things, only 8% of people who attend a house of worship more than once a week did.

And it's not just spiritual superstition, it's economics, too.

Zogby survey

And of course, Republicans are more informed on economic issues than Democrats, and

even Independents. The Wall Street Journal explains.

Excerpt:

> Who is better informed about the policy choices facing the country—liberals, conservatives or libertarians? According to a Zogby International survey that I write about in the May issue of Econ Journal Watch, the answer is unequivocal: The left flunks Econ 101.
>
> Zogby researcher Zeljka Buturovic and I considered the 4,835 respondents' (all American adults) answers to eight survey questions about basic economics.

The first question was "Restrictions on housing development make housing less affordable." The right answer there is agree, because any time you restrict supply while demand is high, you create a shortage, causing prices to go up.

Here are the others:

> The other questions were: 1) Mandatory licensing of professional services increases the prices of those services (unenlightened answer: disagree). 2) Overall, the standard of living is higher today than it was 30 years ago (unenlightened answer: disagree). 3) Rent control leads to housing shortages (unenlightened answer: disagree). 4) A company with the largest market share is a monopoly (unenlightened answer: agree). 5) Third World workers working for American companies overseas are being exploited (unenlightened answer: agree). 6) Free trade leads to unemployment (unenlightened answer: agree). 7) Minimum wage laws raise unemployment (unenlightened answer: disagree).

And the results:

> How did the six ideological groups do overall? Here they are, best to worst, with an average number of incorrect responses from 0 to 8: Very conservative, 1.30; Libertarian, 1.38; Conservative, 1.67; Moderate, 3.67; Liberal, 4.69; Progressive/very liberal, 5.26.

To be conservative means to understand the world as it is, and how it really works. We don't believe in superstitious nonsense like astrology and socialism.

New study: scientists and the general public similar in religious practices

February 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rice University reports on a new study conducted by sociologist Elaine Howard Ecklund.

Excerpt:

> The public's view that science and religion can't work in collaboration is a misconception that stunts progress, according to a new survey of more than 10,000 Americans, scientists and evangelical Protestants. The study by Rice University also found that scientists and the general public are surprisingly similar in their religious practices.
>
> The study, "Religious Understandings of Science (RUS)," was conducted by sociologist Elaine Howard Ecklund and presented today in Chicago during the annual American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) conference. Ecklund is the Autrey Professor of Sociology and director of Rice's Religion and Public Life Program.
>
> "We found that nearly 50 percent of evangelicals believe that science and religion can work together and support one another," Ecklund said. "That's in contrast to the fact that only 38 percent of Americans feel that science and religion can work in collaboration."
>
> The study also found that 18 percent of scientists attended weekly religious services, compared with 20 percent of the general U.S. population; 15 percent consider themselves very religious (versus 19 percent of the general U.S. population); 13.5 percent read religious texts weekly (compared with 17 percent of the U.S. population); and 19 percent pray several times a day (versus 26 percent of the U.S. population).
>
> […]RUS is the largest study of American views on religion and science.

What would be interesting is to find out what specific arguments scientists who believe in God would appeal to, and which specific arguments scientists who don't believe in God would appeal to.

You can see Ecklund's book about her research here on the Oxford University Press web site. You can also buy the book here from Amazon.com.

And here is a related lecture from Cambridge University featuring Dr. Ecklund.

Peter J. Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospel narratives

February 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Peter J. Williams

Greg West of The Poached Egg tweeted this lecture featuring Peter D. Williams yesterday, and I'm posting it today with a summary below.

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?

- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?
- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

You can read an interview with Peter Williams here on Between Two Worlds.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate. That link contains a link to the audio of the debate as well as my snarky summary. It's very snarky.

And Apologetics 315 also posted Peter Williams' assessment of Bart Ehrman's "Misquoting Jesus".

CBO report: Obama's proposed minimum-wage increase could kill 500,000 jobs

February 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Three stories from Investors Business Daily, and one of them is about the dreaded stagflation.

First one, on the CBO report.

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, the Congressional Budget Office made another blockbuster pronouncement, this one concluding that the White House minimum wage hike to $10.10 an hour really does kill jobs.
>
> The $10.10 option, when fully implemented, "would reduce total employment by about 500,000 workers, or 0.3%," CBO says. Job losses could be as high as 1 million.
>
> This followed last week's CBO calculation that the impact of ObamaCare on the labor market will be about 2 million fewer workers over time, due to higher costs on employers and employees of mandated coverage and the availability of subsidized insurance to nonworkers.

Second article, about how the Democrats seem to be trying to create dependency in order to buy votes from people who cannot pay their own way.

Excerpt:

> January's labor report confirmed yet another month with over 100 million Americans not working. In fact, more than 100 million Americans have not been working in Obama's workers' paradise for all of 2012 and 2013, a unique achievement in American history.
>
> […]How has Obama managed to "liberate" so many workers from work? Through Social Security disability, which has increased by more than 21%, extending "unemployment" benefits to two years and by eliminating work requirements as a condition of receiving federal benefits.
>
> The number of Americans on food stamps has soared by 50% under Obama to close to 50 million, largely because work requirements, asset checks and other restraints on abuse have been relaxed. Indeed, more than twice as many more Americans have gotten food stamps under Obama than have gotten jobs. Under ObamaCare, the same transformation is now under way for Medicaid.
>
> Today, federal and state taxpayers pay a trillion dollars every year to the lowest 20% on the income ladder basically not to work. Under Obama total welfare spending has doubled since 2008. (Note that the administration is suing the state

> of Louisiana to turn over the names of everyone on welfare, precisely for Obama's voter-turnout database.)
>
> […]CBO estimates that the slower economic growth from this reduced labor supply will mean $1.4 trillion less in federal tax revenue over the next 10 years. So ObamaCare will increase the deficit after all.

Third article, explaining that the failed policies of the Democrats have been tried before – by Carter.

Excerpt:

> Since the Obama "recovery" started 4-1/2 years ago, inflation appears to have been relatively tame, with core prices climbing just 7% from June 2009 to December 2013.
>
> But as CBS News discovered when it looked a little closer, the overall number is deceptive. In fact, it found food prices soaring.
>
> The official inflation data confirm this. Overall, food prices are up 9% since June 2009, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. And the cost of many staples is skyrocketing. Pork prices have climbed 14%; poultry is up 12%; eggs, 27%; milk, 20%.
>
> Meanwhile, energy prices have climbed 18% during the recovery, and the price of gasoline is up a whopping 31.5%. Then there's college tuition, up 23%.
>
> At the same time, wages aren't budging. In fact, measured in real terms, the median household income is 4% below where it was four-1/2 years ago. And while the official unemployment rate is down, that's due to millions quitting the workforce altogether.
>
> Yes, the economy has created 6.6 million jobs since June 2009. But the ranks of those not in the labor force climbed nearly 11 million, driving the labor force participation rate down from 65.7% to today's 63% — a level not seen since 1978.

You might remember from the Carter era that stagflation was the name given to describe a period of slow or stagnant economic growth, low labor force participation and high prices (inflation). The only solution to this is to raise interest rates, which is very painful. But the longer we keep interest rates low, and keep government spending high, and keep taxing and regulating businesses into oblivion, the worst the medicine is going to be when we are forced to take it.

What do men want from a marriage?

February 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, my friend Curby sent me this article from a very conservative Calvinist blog. It talks about one of the things that men want from a marriage. I thought I would post it here, and affirm its truth, so that all my feminist readers can have steam shoot out of their ears.

Excerpt:

> Men are created different than women. And man's priorities, deep in his very being, are very different from the woman's priorities.
>
> [...]The family was created to be an institution, and that institution has a *purpose* and *function* in God's order for the things: to expand the dominion of God's people over the whole world (Gen. 1:27-28). The purpose and function were first given to the man, and he is supposed to be the chief carrier and executive of that function. And just as the woman was uniquely designed and gifted to discern and understand the issues of relationships, the man was uniquely designed and gifted to fulfill the purpose of taking dominion over the earth. **The father's and the husband's position of the man is not primarily focused on relationships – that's what he was given a wife for. That responsibility is given to man to ensure that his family fulfills its purpose in the plan of God in conquering the earth. Man's very being is *outward*-oriented, not inward-oriented. His interests would be in work and war, not in feelings and relationships.** While women also have their part in business (Prov. 31) and war (Judges 4), by creation ordinance it is man's realm and sphere of responsibility and authority.
>
> And therefore a church that preaches only relationships and no purpose, will tend to attract mostly women, not men. **And when the family is preached as mostly relationships but the purpose and the functions of the family are not preached, men influenced by that preaching won't be interested in having families.** That's just the created nature of things.

Men feel obligated to do something that is going to please God. And relationships and feelings are not the something they are trying to do:

> The Bible has little to say about a "relationship with Jesus." In fact, Jesus Himself speaks about a personal relationship between Him and His disciples only in two places, and He gives a very simple explanation of what a personal relationship with Him is: obedience to His will. In Matt. 12:46-50 He explains how one gets to be a member of Jesus's family: "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." And then again, in John 15:14, "You are My friends if you do what I command you." There is no special theology

> of "personal relationship with Jesus" in the Bible; that personal relationship is very simple: do what He commands. It is not based on emotions or feelings. It is based on the self-conscious commitment to do what He commands.
>
> But what He commands is given in the whole Bible. And it starts with the Dominion Mandate for man and his family to fill the earth, and subdue it. And this means that there is purpose and calling to man as a father and husband to work, fight, educate, care, build, lay foundations, protect, conquer, establish. **There is a purpose to man's life. And that purpose is matched by the inclination in the heart of man to do these things. A man's heart is thrilled by the possibility to work and conquer. And when the family is presented to him not as an institution of dominion – that is, an institution for work and conquering – but only as a place for "relationships," he won't get excited about it. He will leave the church and find another place to work and conquer.**

So let me say something about this, and please don't be offended. My views do go against the popular view of marriage today.

If I were to get married it would be to a woman who understood that my purpose in working from age 20 to age 60 is not primarily to provide a her with feelings and relationships and peer approval.

My purpose in marrying is to make the marriage promote the things that God likes, and oppose the things that God doesn't like.

In my case that means:

- impacting the university with apologetics and conservatism
- impacting the church with apologetics and conservatism
- impacting the public square to promote policies that enable Christian living
- producing as many effective, influential children as I can afford to raise

So if I were courting a woman interested in marrying me, then that would be my time to persuade her that the areas I want to work on are important and suited to our skills. I would not be trying to impress her with my ability to please her, but I would be trying to convince her that we could do better for God as a pair than as two singles. And she would have the opportunity to listen to and improve our plans and decide whether to sign with me or not. No one is forcing her to marry me, she gets to choose if she thinks that my plan to make the marriage serve God is acceptable to her. We would look in the Bible together and then look at the culture and decide what areas needed our efforts and what would be the best way for us to impact those areas.

That's what I mean when I say that men ought to lead in a marriage. I mean that men should have a plan for making the marriage serve God in a practical way. He needs a wife in order to help him man execute his plan to serve God, especially if the plan involves children and other relationships with people outside the home. I do think it is a good idea for a woman to get a degree and have some experience in the workplace before she

marries.

Now what shall I do if no woman accepts this idea that marriage is about negotiating a plan and then achieving it for God's benefit?

Well, that is fine with me. Although I budgeted for a stay-at-home wife and tuition for four PhD-credentialed children, if I cannot find such a woman, then I should take my earnings (after taxes) and spend them on Christian scholars instead. And I should use some of that money on blogging and other related activities that I can do myself. At least that way, I am going to get some sort of a return on my earnings for my client (God). So far, I've run into a lot of kickback because the single women I've approached want to sort of wing it, and make their feelings and their relationships the goal of the marriage. But that's not my plan, and that's not what I'm prepared to sacrifice for.

Moreover, I would just add that any woman who accepts her husband's plan as her own, and develops the skills necessary to help him, is going to have more love than she can handle. The experience of being listened to, understood, respected and assisted by a woman produces lots of affection, devotion, protectiveness and desire from a man. Think of it this way. Very few people in this world care about what we are trying to do for God, except potentially our wives, if we choose wisely. Right now, the environment is very much against the plans of Christian men. The experience of having a woman help a Christian man to execute his plan is Earth-shaking for him. After so many years of struggling to do everything himself for God, suddenly another human being comes along who can understand what he is trying to achieve and can freely choose help him to achieve the things he cares so much about. That is what a man really needs from a woman. Respect for his deepest aspiration – to serve God and to make his life count for the Kingdom.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, MP3 audio and summary

February 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below, please find my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

Brian Auten has posted the MP3 audio of the debate at Apologetics 315.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary from tonight (February 1st, 2013).

If you like the summary below, please friend me on Facebook and/or follow me on Twitter.

Summary of the debate

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don’t know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates
- You didn’t need to come out on this cold night
- Craig’s arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn’t listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don’t require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that “every effect requires a cause”
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can’t see
- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig's three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism

5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said. Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means

everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Are green energy sources like solar power and wind power good for the environment?

February 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Green energy harms wildlife, especially birds

Investors Business Daily explains how green energy hurts birds, even rare, endangered species of birds.

Excerpt:

> What do you call an energy source that consumes vast tracks of open land and fries birds that cross its path? If you're the president, you call it "safe," "reliable," "green" and worthy of massive taxpayer subsidies.
>
> That, at least, is the case with the Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating Station that covers a vast area of desert outside Las Vegas and, thanks to the generous support of the Obama administration, has officially opened.
>
> The plant points hundreds of thousands of mirrors at three towers to boil turbine-spinning water. But the heat rays aren't very friendly to the area's birds, including falcons, hawks, warblers and sparrows that have shown up dead near the towers.
>
> One of the inconvenient truths that global warming fanatics and renewable energy purists try to ignore is that wind and solar energy are not so environmentally friendly. At least, not if you care about wildlife and land preservation.
>
> First, these energy sources are massive land hogs. Ivanpah requires more than 5 square miles of mirrors to produce enough electricity to light 140,000 homes. It would take roughly 3,600 Ivanpahs to supply all the country's electricity needs, with mirrors covering New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, Rhode Island and a chunk of Massachusetts combined.
>
> Wind power is hardly much better. According to the Nature Conservancy, it takes 30 times the land for windmills to produce as much electricity as a nuclear power plant.

> And their turbines amount to bird Cuisinarts. To keep wind farms spinning, the Obama administration recently issued permits letting them kill protected bald and golden eagles for 30 years, provided they take some steps to mitigate the slaughter.

People who friend me on Facebook know that I love birds very much and I keep them as pets – they are my favorite animal. So this just gives me another reason to be disgusted with the policies of the secular left. When you add this wholesale slaughter of birds to the fact that we could be creating many more new jobs by investing in traditional sources of energy at home, it makes me even more angry.

Obama silent as Venezuelan government violently represses democratic opposition

February 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Socialism in Venezuela
From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> Thousands of supporters and opponents of Venezuela's socialist government have taken to the streets this past week. Initiated by student groups, the protestors are voicing their grievances against soaring crime rates, high inflation, a shortage of basic goods, and a lack of political and economic freedom.
>
> All the while, the Obama Administration has been relatively silent. The occasional press release from the State Department uses the same recycled lines of "deep concern" that we've come to expect from an indifferent Administration. Not even the expulsion of three U.S. diplomats Sunday evening could elicit a stronger statement.
>
> So far, three people have been killed and hundreds have been arrested and tortured. Some even disappeared thanks to government security forces. Videos, pictures, and eyewitness testimony blame the governing regime for the deaths of two of the victims. Armed with automatic weapons, tear gas, grenades and even tanks, the military and police are using all means to silence the democratic opposition.
>
> Much like the Arab Spring, demonstrators have taken to social media—mainly Twitter—to relay information to the international community.
>
> Yet a few days into the demonstrations, the Venezuelan government shut down Twitter and one of the last private cable broadcasters, Colombia's NTN24. The government has even called for the arrest of leading opposition figurehead Leopoldo Lopez.

> At the helm of this sinking ship is Venezuela's leader, Nicolas Maduro. The former union leader and bus driver-turned-ordained president, he was handpicked by his successor Hugo Chavez.

Meanwhile on Wednesday, CNS News reported on the latest developments.

Excerpt:

> Violent clashes flared up across Venezuela on Wednesday as the nation waited to learn what charges jailed opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez will face for organizing mass protests that have breathed new life into the movement challenging socialist rule in the oil-rich nation.
>
> […]There was no immediate word on whether there were any new casualties, after a week of demonstrations and clashes that have resulted in at least six deaths and more than 100 injuries.
>
> […]The president also said he would take harsh measures in Tachira, an opposition stronghold on the western border with Colombia where there have been fierce clashes between National Guard troops and opposition protesters. Maduro said he is prepared to declare a "state of exception," a form of martial law.
>
> "If I have to decree a state of exception for Tachira and send in the tanks, I am ready to do it," he said.
>
> […][I]n Valencia, the third largest city… National Guard troops fired rubber bullets and unknown gunman on motorcycles fired live rounds at protesters. Genesis Carmona, a 22-year-old university student who had been Miss Tourism 2013 for the state of Carabobo, was struck in the head and killed by a bullet, a death that reverberated in a country that prizes beauty queens.

You can always count on big government socialists to resort to violence when their communist policies fail.

Related posts

- How well are Democrat economic policies working in Venezuela and Argentina?
- How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?
- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia's economy to grow? What causes Venezuela's economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama's buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela

- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Does a commitment to naturalism undermine rational thought and textual meaning?

February 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. William Lane Craig had a formal debate with an atheist philosopher named Alex Rosenberg a few months back that brought up an interesting idea. Rosenberg is a strong naturalist and he suggests all kinds of counterintuitive outworkings of naturalism in his book. Dr. Craig brought up a bunch of those strange views in his debate, and I listed them out in my summary of the debate as follows:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

We are concerned with #1 and #2 in this post.

Now I was visiting my parents last week in my home town and Dad and I went to church on Sunday. He wanted to listen to some weird sing-song-voiced pastor on the drive there, but I plugged in my smartphone and we listened to these three podcasts by William Lane Craig instead.

- Arguments in the Debate "Is Faith in God Reasonable?" Part 1
- Arguments in the Debate "Is Faith in God Reasonable?" Part 2
- Arguments in the Debate "Is Faith in God Reasonable?" Part 3

Dr. Craig was explaining in part 3 (I think) about how he went on the offensive with the 8 points. One point caught my attention. Craig said that if naturalism is true, then nothing written down is meaningful. He also wanted to know why Dr. Rosenberg would write a book if his worldview entailed that nothing written down is meaningful.

The solution has to do with Rosenberg's denial of "intentionality", which is the idea that something can be about something else. For example, I can think about what I had for breakfast today on the way to church (two apples and coffee) or I can think about the sermon today in my home church and how good it was. A naturalist believes that the whole universe is made up of pure matter alone, and matter cannot be about anything. So Rosenberg denies this common sense view of "intentionality" or "aboutness" because there is no room for it on his naturalistic / materialistic / physicalist view of reality.

Here is a post by Bill Valicella on Maverick Philosopher blog that answers Dad's questions. First, Rosenberg's own view from his book.

> A single still photograph doesn't convey movement the way a motion picture does. Watching a sequence of slightly different photos one photo per hour, or per minute, or even one every 6 seconds won't do it either. But looking at the right sequence of still pictures succeeding each other every one-twentieth of a second produces the illusion that the images in each still photo are moving. Increasing the rate enhances the illusion, though beyond a certain rate the illusion gets no better for creatures like us. But it's still an illusion. There is noting to it but the succession of still pictures. That's how movies perpetrate their illusion. The large set of still pictures is organized together in a way that produces in creatures like us the illusion that the images are moving. In creatures with different brains and eyes, ones that work faster, the trick might not work. In ones that work slower, changing the still pictures at the rate of one every hour (as in time-lapse photography) could work. But there is no movement of any of the images in any of the pictures, nor does anything move from one photo onto the next. Of course, the projector is moving, and the photons are moving, and the actors were moving. But all the movement that the movie watcher detects is in the eye of the beholder. That is why the movement is illusory.
>
> The notion that thoughts are about stuff is illusory in roughly the same way. Think of each input/output neural circuit as a single still photo. Now, put together a huge number of input/output circuits in the right way. None of them is about anything; each is just an input/output circuit firing or not. But when they act together, they "project" the illusion that there are thoughts about stuff. They do that through the behavior and the conscious experience (if any) that they produce. (Alex Rosenberg,The Atheists' Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life Without Illusions. The quotation was copied from here.)

And here is what Bill V. says about that:

> Rosenberg is not saying, as an emergentist might, that the synergy of sufficiently many neural circuits gives rise to genuine object-directed thoughts. He is saying something far worse, something literally nonsensical, namely, that the object-directed thought that thoughts are object-directed is an illusion. The absurdity of Rosenberg's position can be seen as follows.
>
> 1. Either the words "The notion that thoughts are about stuff is illusory" express a thought — the thought that there are no object-directed thoughts — or they do not.
> 2. If the latter, then the words are meaningless.
> 3. If the former, then the thought is either true or false.
> 4. If the thought is true, then there there are no object-directed thoughts, including the one expressed by Rosenberg's words, and so his words are

> once again meaningless.
> 5. If the thought is false, then there are object-directed thoughts, and Rosenberg's claim is false.
>
> Therefore:
>
> - Rosenberg's claim is either meaningless or false. His position is self-refuting.
>
> As for the analogy, it is perfectly hopeless, presupposing as it does genuine intrinsic intentionality. If I am watching a movie of a man running, then I am under an illusion in that there is nothing moving on the movie screen: there is just a series of stills. But the experience I am undergoing is a perfectly good experience that exhibits genuine intrinsic intentionality: it is a visual experiencing of a man running, or to be perfectly punctilious about it: a visual experiencing AS OF a man running. Whether or not the man depicted exists, as would be the case if the movie were a newsreel, the experience exists, and so cannot be illusory.
>
> To understand the analogy one must understand that there are intentional experiences, experiences that take an accusative. But if you understand that, then you ought to be able to understand that the analogy cannot be used to render intelligible how it might that it is illusory that there are intentional experiences.
>
> What alone remains of interest here is how a seemingly intelligent fellow could adopt a position so manifestly absurd. I suspect the answer is that he has stupefied himself by his blind adherence to scientistic/naturalistic ideology.

If you want to sort of double check the details, then go ahead and watch the debate or read my summary or listen to the debate audio, and then listen to Dr. Craig's three podcasts that I linked above.

I know a lot of you are thinking right now "Hey! You cheater! That's a presuppositional argument! You said they were bad!" Well, I didn't say they were bad, I said that the epistemological view of presuppositionalism was bad. Presuppositional arguments are *good.* See below for a few posts about them. Use them all you can, but use the good scientific and historical evidence, too.

Anti-government protesters shot to death by pro-Yanukovych gunmen in Ukraine

February 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> Security forces fired on masses of antigovernment demonstrators in Kiev on Thursday in a drastic escalation of the three-month-old crisis that left dozens dead and Ukraine reeling from the most lethal day of violence since Soviet times.
>
> The shootings followed a quickly shattered truce, with enraged protesters parading dozens of captured police officers through Kiev's central square. Despite a frenzy of East-West diplomacy and negotiations, there was little sign that tensions were easing.
>
> President Viktor F. Yanukovych lost at least a dozen political allies, including the mayor of the capital, who resigned from his governing Party of Regions to protest the bloodshed. Mr. Yanukovych conferred with three foreign ministers from the European Union who had come to press for a compromise solution, practically within sight of the main conflict zone in downtown Kiev.
>
> The sights of bullet-riddled bodies slumped amid smoldering debris, some of them shot in the head, and screaming medics carrying the dead and wounded to emergency clinics, including one in a hotel lobby, shocked the country and the world. The opposition said that at least 70 and as many as 100 people had been killed, while municipal authorities put the day's death toll at 39.
>
> […]Sviatoslav Khanenko, a lawmaker and a head of the medical service of the National Resistance Headquarters, said by telephone that about 70 people had been killed and more than 1,000 had been wounded. Some news reports said 100 people had been killed.
>
> The death tolls could not be corroborated. But even at the lower casualty numbers reported by Kiev's municipal health authorities, Thursday was the most lethal day in Ukraine since independence from the Soviet Union more than 22 years ago.

Negotiations are underway, but no deal has been reached:

> The foreign ministers of Germany, Poland and France met with Mr. Yanukovych for more than four hours on Thursday, and then announced that they would stay in Kiev overnight to continue their discussions. "Ahead of us is a night of heavy negotiations," Marcin Wojciechowski, a spokesman for the Polish foreign minister, Radoslaw Sikorski, wrote on Twitter.
>
> After the initial round of meetings, the Polish prime minister, Donald Tusk, said at

> a news conference in Warsaw that there were some indications that Mr. Yanukovych would be willing to schedule earlier parliamentary and presidential elections, something he had previously resisted. The presidential elections are scheduled for March 2015.

The great fear now is that the pro-Russia government will declare a "state of emergency", which would mean the deployment of the army and more killing of innocent protesters.

The protests were started by the pro-Russia President's refusal to sign a free trade deal with the European Union. A free trade deal would displease his Russian masters, even it would help lift Ukraine out of poverty.

As usual, conservative Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper is leading the way.

Excerpt:

> Canada is expanding a travel ban on senior members of the Ukrainian government and imposing economic sanctions on President Viktor Yanukovych, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced in an emailed statement Thursday.
>
> "Canada continues to be outraged by the ongoing violence in Ukraine," Harper said in the statement.
>
> "Our government has responded by introducing a travel ban on the regime's senior leaders and announcing medical aid to assist the protesters in their time of need."
>
> Ukrainian citizens, Harper said, "must be allowed to exercise their democratic right to peaceful protest without being subjected to deadly force and appalling brutality."
>
> The government is expanding travel restrictions originally announced on Jan. 28 and imposing economic sanctions on the Yanukovych regime and its supporters, the news release said.
>
> The travel ban means the officials sanctioned won't be allowed into Canada.
>
> "You are not welcome in Canada and we will continue to take strong action until the violence against the people of Ukraine has stopped and democracy has been restored," Citizenship and Immigration Minister Chris Alexander said at a press conference to announce the sanctions.
>
> […]The economic sanctions are to "freeze any assets in Canada belonging to senior Ukrainian government officials," according to a release from Harper's office.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State John Kerry gave a speech asserting that global warming is as big a threat to the world as terrorism.

Ready for the Craig-Carroll debate? review the BGV theorem and quantum tunneling

February 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: My brief summary of the Craig-Carroll debate is now posted. I may do a longer one next week if they release audio/video. Otherwise, the short summary will be it.

In the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican, William Lane Craig presented the arguments for theism, including his standard Kalam cosmological argument which asserts that the universe had a beginning. The atheist, Peter Millican, raised several objections to the notion of a beginning to the universe. But Craig was able to establish the beginning of the universe by appealing to something called the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem. This theorem is new – but it is worth learning about.

First, let's review Craig's cosmological argument:

> A1) The origin of the universe
>
> 1. The universe began to exist.
> 2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
> 3. The universe has a transcendent cause.
>
> The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.
>
> There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.
>
> The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past.
>
> Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.
>
> The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

So he appealed to the Bord-Guth-Vilenkin theorem right from the start in order to guarantee a space-time boundary in the past – i.e., a beginning of the universe, which is his premise 1.

Ok, now let's take a look at some videos on this theorem.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem, explained

From the Craig-Millican debate:

The BGV theorem also came up in the Craig-Krauss debate:

See my summary of the Craig-Krauss debate for more. I also wrote about after the debate, where it was shown that Krauss misrepresented the BGV theory to favor naturalism. So that's why we all need to be familiar with what it says and how it is misrepresented by naturalists in debates. That will prepare us to understand what is happening in tonight's debate.

I also expect quantum tunneling to come up in tonight's debate, and here is a clip from Dr. Craig's first debate with Lawrence Krauss at North Carolina State University.

Further study

If you would like to read a nice LONG article about Craig's cosmological argument, just check this post I wrote a while back. And it even contains a nice peer-reviewed paper that Craig wrote for an Astrophysics journal – and the abstract is *online* on Springer.

William Lane Craig: must the cause of the universe be a person?

February 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am posting this to prepare everyone for tonight's debate between Sean Carroll and William Lane Craig. The cause of the universe is sure to come up in tonight's debate, which is at 7 PM Central, 8 PM Eastern time!

I expect Dr. Carroll to raise many objections to the kalam cosmological argument in tonight's debate. One that will come up for sure is the objection that the cause of the universe need not be a person (i.e. – the cause need not be personal).

Here's a post from my friend Fred Woodbridge, who blogs at IFCONFIG blog, where he quotes from Dr. Craig's book "Reasonable Faith". The quote contains three arguments for why the cause of the universe must be personal.

Quote:

> **First**, as Richard Swinburne points out [in *The Existence of God]*, there are two types of causal explanation: scientific explanations in terms of laws and initial conditions and personal explanations in terms of agents and their volitions. For example, if I come into the kitchen and find the kettle boiling, and I ask Jan, "Why is the kettle boiling?" she might answer, "The heat of the flame is being conducted via the copper bottom of the kettle to the water, increasing the kinetic energy of the water molecules, such that they vibrate so violently that they break the surface tension of the water and are thrown off in the form of steam." Or she might say, "I put it on to make a cup of tea. Would you like some?" The first provides a scientific explanation, the second a personal explanation. Each is a perfectly legitimate form of explanation; indeed, in certain contexts it would be wholly inappropriate to give one rather than the other. Now a first state of the universe cannot have a scientific explanation, since there is nothing before it, and therefore it cannot be accounted for in terms of laws operating on initial conditions. It can only be accounted for in terms of an agent and his volitions, a personal explanation.
>
> **Second**, the personhood of the cause of the universe is implied by its timelessness and immateriality. The only entities we know of which can possess such properties are either minds or abstract objects, like numbers. But abstract objects do not stand in causal relations. Indeed, their acausal nature is definitive for abstract objects; that is why we call them abstract. Numbers, for example, cannot cause anything. Therefore, the transcendent cause of the origin of the universe must be of the order of mind.
>
> **Third**, this same conclusion is also implied by the fact that we have in this case the origin of a temporal effect from a timeless cause. We've concluded that the beginning of the universe was the effect of a first cause. By the nature of the

case, that cause cannot have any beginning of its existence or any prior cause. Nor can there have been any changes in this cause, either in its nature or operations, prior
to the beginning of the universe. It just exists changelessly without beginning, and a finite time ago it brought the universe into existence. Now this is exceedingly odd. The cause is in some sense eternal and yet the effect which it produced is not eternal but began to exist a finite time ago. How can this be? If the necessary and sufficient conditions for the production of the effect are eternal, then why isn't the effect eternal? How can all the causal conditions sufficient for the production of the effect be changelessly existent and yet the effect not also be existent along with the cause? How can the cause exist without the effect?

One might say that the cause came to exist or changed in some way just prior to the first event. But then the cause's beginning or changing would be the first event, and we must ask all over again for its cause. And this cannot go on forever, for we know that a beginningless series of events cannot exist. There must be an absolutely first event, before which there was no change, no previous event. We know that this first event must have been caused. The question is: How can a first event come to exist if the cause of that event exists changelessly and eternally? Why isn't the effect co-eternal with its cause?

To illustrate: Let's say the cause of water's freezing is subzero temperatures. If the temperature were eternally below zero degrees Centigrade, then any water around would be eternally frozen. If the cause exists eternally, the effect must also exist eternally. But this seems to imply that if the cause of the universe existed eternally, the universe would also have existed eternally. And this we know to be false.

One way to see the difficulty is by reflecting on the different types of causal relations. In event/event causation, one event causes another. For example, the brick's striking the window pane causes the pane to shatter. This kind of causal relation clearly involves a beginning of the effect in time, since it is a relation between events which occur at specific times. In state/state causation one state of affairs causes another state of affairs to exist. For example, the water's having a certain surface tension is the cause of the wood's floating on the water. In this sort of causal relation, the effect need not have a beginning: the wood could theoretically be floating eternally on the water. If the wood begins to float on the water, then this will be a case of event/event causation: the wood's beginning to float is the result of its being thrown into the water. Now the difficulty that arises in the case of the cause of the beginning of the universe is that we seem to have a peculiar case of state/event causation: the cause is a timeless state but the effect is an event that occurred at a specific moment in the finite past. Such state/event causation doesn't seem to make sense, since a state sufficient for the existence of its effect should have a state as its effect.

> There seems to be only one way out of this dilemma, and that is to say that the cause of the universe's beginning is a personal agent who freely chooses to create a universe in time. Philosophers call this type of causation "agent causation," and because the agent is free, he can initiate new effects by freely bringing about conditions which were not previously present. For example, a man sitting changelessly from eternity could freely will to stand up; thus, a temporal effect arises from an eternally existing agent. Similarly, a finite time ago a Creator endowed with free will could have freely brought the world into being at that moment. In this way, the Creator could exist changelessly and eternally but choose to create the world in time. By "choose" one need not mean that the Creator changes his mind about the decision to create, but that he freely and eternally intends to create a world with a beginning. By exercising his causal power, he therefore brings it about that a world with a beginning comes to exist. So the cause is eternal, but the effect is not. In this way, then, it is possible for the temporal universe to have come to exist from an eternal cause: through the free will of a personal Creator.
>
> On the basis of a conceptual analysis of the conclusion implied by the kalām cosmological argument, we may therefore infer that a personal Creator of the universe exists, who is uncaused, beginningless, changeless, immaterial, timeless, spaceless, and unimaginably powerful. This, as Thomas Aquinas was wont to remark, is what everybody means by "God."

I'm sure that Dr. Carroll will raise many other objections to the kalam argument. If Dr. Carroll is clever, he might also object that the notion of timeless person is incoherent, that the notion of an unembodied mind is incoherent, that we don't know that non-physical minds can cause effects in the physical world, that matter can't come into being out of nothing, that even if effects in the physical universe have causes that doesn't mean the universe as a whole has to have a cause, and that the notion of causation doesn't make sense unless time has already started. But these are objections that Dr. Craig answered in his debate with Peter Millican, so they shouldn't phase him.

Tactical Faith will live-stream the responses to the Craig-Carroll debate on Saturday

February 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The schedule of events for Saturday is on the Greer-Heard web site.

Saturday, Feb. 22nd, 2014 schedule: (ALL TIMES CENTRAL)

9:00 a.m. Tim Maudlin, ”Cosmology, Theology and Meaning”

10:00 a.m. Robin Collins, “God and the Fine-tuning of the Universe for Discovery”

11:00 a.m. Lunch (New Orleans Style Red Beans & Rice) Cafeteria

12:30 p.m. Alex Rosenberg, “How Physics Fakes Design, and Makes Things Difficult for Theism”

1:30 p.m. James Sinclair, “Cosmology and Cosmologists Within the ‘Does God Exist’ Question”

2:30 p.m. Concluding Comments from Sean Carroll and William Lane Craig

For Eastern times, add an hour.

Click here for the the live-stream. Note: You have to click on this link and go back to the main page each time a response ends, because the youtube link is different for each response.

Is there a recording?

I do have a recording of last night’s debates, but I’m not posting it unless I get permission.

Quick thoughts on the debate:

Carroll was as good of a speaker as Craig in terms of style. Very easy to listen to, very quick on his feet, very civil. There was no clear winner on style.

It was difficult to assess the truth value of scientific points being made, especially for the layperson. I explained a few of them in my posts earlier this week, but I think laypeople might struggle with them if they are hearing about these things for the first time.

A couple of Craig’s slides: (click for larger images)

Slide 1 of 2:

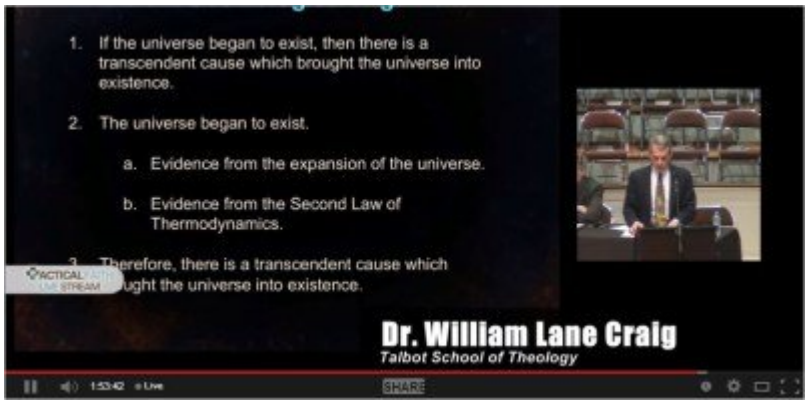

Dr. Craig slide #1 of 2
Slide 2 of 2:

Dr. Craig slide #2 of 2

Quick summary: (this is not complete, because I couldn't get everything they were saying noted)

Dr. Craig defended two arguments: 1) the kalam cosmological argument and the fine-tuning argument.

Dr. Craig supported the origin of the universe with 1) the expansion of the universe and 2) the second law of thermodynamics.

Dr. Craig said that the BGV theorem supports a beginning for the universe.

Dr. Craig said that the consensus of scientists did not accept Carroll's naturalistic cosmology, quoting Stephen Hawking in support.

Dr. Craig said that multiverse models fall victim to the Boltzmann brain problem, where we should observe Boltzmann brains coming into existence and then phasing out again far more probably than embodied minds. But we observe embodied minds, and no Boltzmann brains.

Dr. Carroll said that science cannot study metaphysical questions.

Dr. Carroll said that science is about making models that may or may not be consistent with the experimental data.

Dr. Carroll said that the BGV theorem does not support a beginning for the universe.

Dr. Carroll proposed 17 alternative cosmologies, but did not provide a shred of scientific evidence for any of them, the way that Craig did for the standard model.

Dr. Carroll refuted Dr. Craig's citation of Stephen Hawking, and Craig yielded the point.

Dr. Carroll speculated that science might progress to the point where the fine-tuning can be explained without an intelligent cause, and he gave an example of where that happened (inflation).

Dr. Craig argued that all 17 of the models suggested by Carroll either conflicted with evidence, had serious problems or did require a beginning.

Dr. Craig argued that Carroll's own model required a beginning.

Dr. Craig argued that Carroll's own model fell victim to the Boltzmann brain problem.

Dr. Craig argued that Carroll's own model violated the second law of thermodynamics.

Dr. Craig re-stated his point that the baby universe spawning in Carroll's model was speculative and incomplete, and cited Christopher Weaver's work.

Dr. Carroll denied that things that pop into being out of nothing require a transcendent cause.

Dr. Carroll reiterated that science can only make naturalistic models, and that he did not have to answer questions about ultimate causes.

Dr. Carroll showed a photo of Alan Guth expressing his opinion that the universe is "probably" eternal. No evidence was given for this assertion.

Dr. Carroll said that the fine-tuning was not done in an optimal way, because one fine-tuned value was lower than it needed to be, and it should be exactly what it needed to be if God did it.

Dr. Carroll said that a finely-tuned universe is more probably in naturalism than in theism, because God can do anything he wants and doesn't need a fine-tuned universe.

Dr. Carroll said he would stop defending his model now, and would instead defend Aguirre-Gratton.

Dr. Craig gave three reasons why the universe popping into being out of nothing requires a transcendent cause.

First, he said that nothing cannot cause anything to happen, because nothing is nothing.

Second, he said that if things pop into being out of nothing, then why don't we see it happening all the time with other things.

Third, he said that we have no reason to dismiss the causal principle, especially when it is the basis of scientific inquiry and has been so fruitful in the progress of science.

Dr. Craig reiterated that baby universes in Carroll's model would be dominated by Boltzmann brains, and we don't observe that.

Dr. Craig said that even on the quantum gravity models that Carroll mentioned, there would still be a beginning.

Dr. Carroll said that Craig mustn't say "popped into being" but instead that "there was a first moment of time".

Dr. Carroll said that his model does indeed violate the second law of thermodynamics "YES!".

At this point Carroll stopped talking about the topic of the debate and started expressing personal opinions about religion. It's funny how often atheists do this in debates.

Dr. Carroll said that most theists don't believe in God because of cosmology, but because of community and feelings.

Dr. Carroll said that science had learned a lot in the last 2000 years, so theism was false.

Dr. Carroll said that most philosophers don't think that God exists, so theism was false.

Dr. Carroll said microscopes and telescopes were absent 2000 years ago, so theism was

false.

Dr. Carroll said that religion should be about community and feelings, not about what is true.

Conclusion:

My conclusion was that Carroll lost because he is just satisfied to throw theories out and not to argue that they are true by citing evidence. Carroll never seemed to be interested in finding out what is true, but instead he just wanted to tell a story that didn't include God, and assert that by Occam's Razor, his story was a better explanation. I am not impressed with theoretical speculations, although the layperson might be. I kept waiting for him to respond to Craig's points about how his model was falsified by experimental evidence and observations, e.g. – the Boltzmann brains or the baby universe generation, and he never cited the evidence I wanted him to cite. Craig did have some evidence for his views, but he could have been stronger in making his case. He could have shown the e-mail from Vilenkin that stated that he had understood the BGV theorem, and was using it correctly, for example.

For me the winning side comes down to evidence. The standard model is the standard model because of scientific evidence. Until that evidence is overturned, then speculative models are of no interest to anyone who is evidence-driven. Speculations are not science. A philosophical presupposition of metaphysical naturalism is not science.

The nice thing is that Robin Collins, one of Craig's respondents, went deep into the science of the fine-tuning, especially on one of my favorite data points, the cosmic microwave background radiation. The paper he presented is now posted on his web site (H/T Christian Apologetics Alliance). I posted about the CMBR before in my post about particle physicist Michael Strauss lecture on cosmology and fine-tuning at Stanford University and the his more recent lecture at the University of Texas. Note that Strauss is an experimental physicist, not a theoretical physicist like Carroll.

Unfortunately, naturalistic respondent Tim Maudlin said nothing at all of value, choosing to use his time to speak about the evils of the coal industry and the threat of global warming, despite the fact that the IPCC says there has been no significant global warming in the past 17 years.

The last two respondents have started speaking. I'm expecting the philosopher Alex Rosenberg to stay away from the science, and then we'll hear from the experimental scientist James Sinclair. Rosenberg spoke on Darwinian evoloution being incompatible with theism, and it was interesting, but off topic for this debate. James Sinclair is speaking now, and is giving a technical paper on cosmology.

I may be posting a more accurate summary sometime next week, especially if they release either the audio or the video. If not, this will be it.

UPDATE: here's another review by Randy Everist of Possible Worlds blog. He explains the back-and-forth over Boltzmann brains and the BGV theorem in more detail.

Craig Hazen explains why Christianity is different from other religions

February 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A 28-minute lecture delivered at Biola University.

Topics:

- Christianity is different from other religions for several reasons
- Christianity is testable using objective evidence
- you can offer objective evidence for and against it
- compare that to Zen Buddhism, for example, which is about subjective experiences
- Buddhism is subjective, you can't test it objectively
- Christianity can be tested using the historical method
- if Jesus did not rise from the dead, Christianity is false
- Christianity is set up for inquiry
- You can know whether the resurrection happened using historical methods
- "faith" in Christianity is not belief without arguments and evidence
- the Bible presents it's claims about God as testable and public

This was very fun to watch.

UPDATE: Here's a related post at the Simpson blog.

Eight tips for talking to non-Christians about Christianity

February 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Stand to Reason – some excellent tactical advice from a master apologist.

Here's the setup:

> I overheard a conversation on the airplane coming back from my vacation in Wisconsin. A Christian gentleman was vigorously sharing his faith with a gentleman in the seat directly behind me. There are some things we can learn, both good and bad, from what I overheard and take his effort—which was a good one—and channel it in a little bit more constructive direction.
>
> So I am going to give you eight points of application.

And here are my favorites from his list:

> **3. Try to stay away from religious language, terminology, and religious affect.** This person was very religious in his whole approach. I think this is hard for us as Christians because we are brought up in a Christian environment and it's natural for us to talk this way, but it sounds weird to people outside of that environment. I think there are a lot of people who may be, in principle, interested in a bona fide, genuine relationship with God through Jesus Christ but who are not interested in the Christian religion as they perceive it. This is where I think a lot of the emergent guys have a legitimate bone to pick with Evangelicalism. Let's try not to sound like Bible-thumping fundamentalists if we can avoid it, even if that's what we are, because there's no need to sound that way if it puts people off. Find another way to communicate the message. Just talk in a straightforward manner. Be conscious of using religious language the other person may not understand or may think is strange. Avoid all of that so they can hear the message you're trying to communicate.
>
> **4. Focus on the truth, not personal benefits of Christianity.** I appreciated the gentleman's approach in that he kept talking about truth. One person he was talking to said he liked reincarnation. The Christian man said that even if he liked reincarnation that that didn't make it true if it's not true. Liking something is not going to change reality. That's a great point. He was focusing on the truth claims of Jesus. He wasn't giving a bunch of promises. He wasn't saying, "Jesus is my ice cream. He's a great flavor. Try him to see if you like him, too." Or, "Try Jesus because he'll make your life so wonderful." Focus on truth and not personal benefits.
>
> **5. Give evidence.** This gentleman was giving all kinds of evidence for his seatmates to consider. Good for him! You should too. You know why? Because people in the Bible did, too. Jesus, Paul, Peter, all the Apostles. If you look at the

> details of how they communicated their faith they gave evidence for the truth of what they were saying about Jesus. In fact, if you want to get the content of the Gospel, one of the most famous passages for the articulation of the Gospel is the beginning of 1 Corinthian 15. Paul gives all kinds of evidence. It's all right there as he is explaining the Gospel. We see that all through the New Testament. So give evidences. It's appropriate. People do respond to that even in a postmodern age.

I remember that I was once working in Chicago, and after a particular good apologetics discussion with a team of engineers, I apologized to them all for being so exclusive and a fundamentalist. These guys all had MS and PhD degrees in computer science from top schools like Stanford, Purdue, U of I, NIU and Northwestern. They said "you're not a fundamentalist". And I said, "but I am ultra-conservative in my theology!". And they said "That's ok – as long as you have considered different points of view and you have objective evidence, then somehow it doesn't sound fundamentalist".

I think that's something that we need to work on. When Christianity is about truth, it's open to investigation using public evidence. At work, I have explained the structure of DNA molecules in the office and had people rolling their chairs out of their cubicles to come and see me draw amino acid chains on a white board, and calculate the probabilities with a calculator. You can be a fundamentalist, without sounding like a fundamentalist. You just have to focus on public, testable evidence.

Look here:

Make religion about truth – not personal preferences. They respect that way of talking – as long as you bring the science and the history.

William Lane Craig lectures on failure in the Christian life

February 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this audio on Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 web site.

Here is the MP3 file.

And here is my summary.

Intro:

- the topic of failure is not one that is often discussed by Christians
- failure #1: failure in the Christian life which is the result of sin
- failure #2: when a Christian is defeated while trying to serve God
- the consequences for failure #1 can be worse for the Christian
- the consequences for failure #2 can be worse for the world as whole
- how is it possible for a person to fail when they are obeying God? (#2)
- how can it be that God can call someone to a task then let them fail?
- failure is not persecution – persecution is normal for Christians
- failure is not trials – testing is normal for Christians to grow

Bill's failure:

- Bill had submitted all the coursework for his second doctoral degree
- but he had to pass a comprehensive oral examination
- he failed to pass the comprehensive exam
- Bill and Jan and his supporters had all prayed for him to pass
- how could God allow this to happen?

Solution to the problem:

- God's will for us may be that we fail at the things we try in life
- there are things that God may teach us through failure
- Bill learned that human relationships are more important than careers
- we need to realize that "success" in life is not worldly success
- true success is getting to know God well during your life
- and failure may be the best way to get to know God well
- it may even be possible to fail to know God while achieving a lot
- the real measure of a man is loving God and loving your fellow man

Practical:

- give thanks to God regardless of your circumstances
- try to learn from your failure
- never give up

The ending of Bill's story:

- Bill spent an entire year preparing for a re-take of his exam
- Bill was awarded his second doctorate "magna cum laude" (with great distinction)
- Bill learned that American students are not well prepared for exams
- the year of studying remedied his inadequate American education
- in retrospect, he is thankful for the failure – he learned more

If you like this, you should pick up Craig's book "Hard Questions, Real Answers", which has a chapter on this problem. And here is a similar lecture that Dr. Craig gave at his home church in Atlanta on the same topic. I'm not posting this because I've had a catastrophic failure or anything. But I think in this economy, I am seeing a lot of my plans dashed and I am being forced to circle the wagons a little and take fewer risks. I am being forced to aim for smaller goals, and plan for future difficulties. It does bother me that I can't comfortably take risks to achieve the best goals that I want to achieve. But I have to play the hand I'm dealt, and do what looks doable right now. Some of my friends are having the same problem of having to recalculate what is probable and what is possible.

Has Christianity held back the progress of science? What about Galileo?

February 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, here's an article from the peer-reviewed journal Nature, probably the best peer-reviewed journal on science in the world.

The article is written by James Hannam. He has a PhD in the History and Philosophy of Science from the University of Cambridge and is the author of The Genesis of Science: How the Christian Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution (published in the UK as God's Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of Modern Science).

Excerpt:

> Few topics are as open to misunderstanding as the relationship between faith and reason. The ongoing clash of creationism with evolution obscures the fact that Christianity has actually had a far more positive role to play in the history of science than commonly believed. Indeed, many of the alleged examples of religion holding back scientific progress turn out to be bogus. For instance, the Church has never taught that the Earth is flat and, in the Middle Ages, no one thought so anyway. Popes haven't tried to ban zero, human dissection or lightening rods, let alone excommunicate Halley's Comet. No one, I am pleased to say, was ever burnt at the stake for scientific ideas. Yet, all these stories are still regularly trotted out as examples of clerical intransigence in the face of scientific progress.
>
> Admittedly, Galileo was put on trial for claiming it is a fact that the Earth goes around the sun, rather than just a hypothesis as the Catholic Church demanded. Still, historians have found that even his trial was as much a case of papal egotism as scientific conservatism. It hardly deserves to overshadow all the support that the Church has given to scientific investigation over the centuries.
>
> That support took several forms. One was simply financial. Until the French Revolution, the Catholic Church was the leading sponsor of scientific research. Starting in the Middle Ages, it paid for priests, monks and friars to study at the universities. The church even insisted that science and mathematics should be a compulsory part of the syllabus. And after some debate, it accepted that Greek and Arabic natural philosophy were essential tools for defending the faith. By the seventeenth century, the Jesuit order had become the leading scientific organisation in Europe, publishing thousands of papers and spreading new discoveries around the world. The cathedrals themselves were designed to double up as astronomical observatories to allow ever more accurate determination of the calendar. And of course, modern genetics was founded by a future abbot growing peas in the monastic garden.
>
> But religious support for science took deeper forms as well. It was only during the

> nineteenth century that science began to have any practical applications. Technology had ploughed its own furrow up until the 1830s when the German chemical industry started to employ their first PhDs. Before then, the only reason to study science was curiosity or religious piety. Christians believed that God created the universe and ordained the laws of nature. To study the natural world was to admire the work of God. This could be a religious duty and inspire science when there were few other reasons to bother with it. It was faith that led Copernicus to reject the ugly Ptolemaic universe; that drove Johannes Kepler to discover the constitution of the solar system; and that convinced James Clerk Maxwell he could reduce electromagnetism to a set of equations so elegant they take the breathe away.
>
> Given that the Church has not been an enemy to science, it is less surprising to find that the era which was most dominated by Christian faith, the Middle Ages, was a time of innovation and progress. Inventions like the mechanical clock, glasses, printing and accountancy all burst onto the scene in the late medieval period. In the field of physics, scholars have now found medieval theories about accelerated motion, the rotation of the earth and inertia embedded in the works of Copernicus and Galileo. Even the so-called "dark ages" from 500AD to 1000AD were actually a time of advance after the trough that followed the fall of Rome. Agricultural productivity soared with the use of heavy ploughs, horse collars, crop rotation and watermills, leading to a rapid increase in population.

I hope this will set the record straight – Judeo-Christian monotheism created the enterprise of experimental science.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Can gay marriage proponents tolerate religious liberty?

February 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article by Ryan T. Anderson explains the problem in National Review.

Excerpt:

> For years now, a central argument of those in favor of same-sex marriage has been that all Americans should be free to live and love how they choose. But does that freedom require the government to coerce those who disagree into celebrating same-sex relationships?
>
> A growing number of incidents show that the redefinition of marriage and state policies on sexual orientation have created a climate of intolerance and intimidation for citizens who believe that marriage is the union of a man and a woman and that sexual relations are properly reserved for marriage. Now comes government coercion and discrimination. Laws that create special privileges based on sexual orientation and gender identity are being used to trump fundamental civil liberties such as freedom of speech and the free exercise of religion.

Let's see specific examples:

> In addition to the well-known examples of Christian adoption and foster-care agencies that have been forced to stop providing those services because they object to placing children in same-sex households, the examples below show how government has penalized citizens trying to run their businesses in accordance with their beliefs.
>
> […]The case of Elaine Huguenin and her husband, Jon, is perhaps the best-known example of violations of religious liberty at the state level… the Huguenins run Elane Photography, a small business in Albuquerque, N.M. In 2006, the couple declined a request to photograph a same-sex commitment ceremony…
>
> […]Elane Photography didn't refuse to take pictures of gay and lesbian individuals, but it did refuse to photograph a ceremony that ran counter to the owners' belief that marriage is the union of a man and a woman (a belief that New Mexico law endorses). Other photographers in the Albuquerque area were more than happy to photograph the event.
>
> But in 2008, the New Mexico Human Rights Commission ruled that the Huguenins, by declining to use their artistic and expressive skills to communicate what what occurred at the ceremony, had discriminated based on sexual orientation. The commission ordered them to pay $6,637.94 in attorneys' fees. The ruling cited New Mexico's human-rights law, which prohibits discrimination in "public accommodations" (that is, "any establishment that provides or offers its

> services . . . or goods to the public”) based on race, religion, and sexual orientation — among other protected classes.

And another:

> In early 2013, two women, Rachel Cryer and Laurel Bowman, asked the Oregon bakery Sweet Cakes by Melissa to bake a wedding cake for their same-sex commitment ceremony. Although bakery owners Melissa and Aaron Klein consistently had served all customers on a regular basis, they asserted that this request would have required them to facilitate and celebrate a same-sex relationship — which would violate their religious belief that marriage is the union of one man and one woman. (Oregon law defines marriage in the same way.)
>
> Soon afterward, Cryer and Bowman filed a complaint under the Oregon Equality Act of 2007, which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. During an investigation by Oregon’s Bureau of Labor and Industries, bureau official Brad Avakian commented: “The goal is to rehabilitate. For those who do violate the law, we want them to learn from that experience and have a good, successful business in Oregon.”
>
> In January, the agency issued a ruling that held that the Kleins violated Oregon’s sexual-orientation law when they declined to bake the cake.
>
> Melissa and Aaron Klein faced increasing ridicule for their unwillingness to violate their beliefs. Sweet Cakes by Melissa came under threats, vicious protests, and boycotts. The Kleins, who have five children, reportedly received hundreds of phone calls and letters, including death threats to the family. Fearing for their safety, the Kleins decided to close the doors of their small business in September 2013 and operate from an in-home bakery. In the meantime, the family still has to deal with the Labor Commission’s conclusion that they violated Oregon’s law. The case is likely to proceed to an administrative law judge.

And another:

> A similar situation occurred when a judge in Colorado — a state that in 2006 constitutionally defined marriage as the union of a man and a woman — decided that Jack Phillips, owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop, violated the law when he declined to bake a cake for a same-sex wedding reception.
>
> In 2012, a same-sex couple received a marriage license in Massachusetts and asked Phillips to bake a cake for a reception back home in Denver. On the basis of his faith, Phillips declined to create a wedding cake: “I don’t feel like I should participate in their wedding, and when I do a cake, I feel like I am participating in the ceremony or the event or the celebration that the cake is for.” The couple obtained a wedding cake, one with rainbow-colored filling, from another local bakery.
>
> The American Civil Liberties Union filed a complaint against Masterpiece

> Cakeshop with the state, alleging violations of Colorado's public-accommodation law. Administrative Law Judge Robert N. Spencer ruled against the bakery on December 6, 2013, concluding that Phillips violated the law by refusing service to the two men "because of their sexual orientation."
>
> Phillips objected to this characterization and responded that that he would happily sell the couple his baked goods for any number of occasions, but baking a wedding cake would force him to express something that he does not believe, violating his freedom to run his business in step with his faith.

And another:

> On March 1, 2013, longtime customers Roger Ingersoll and Curt Freed met with Arlene's Flowers and Gifts shop owner Barronelle Stutzman to request that she arrange the flowers for their same-sex wedding ceremony. Washington State had redefined marriage the previous year. Stutzman respondedthat she could not accept the job because of her "relationship with Jesus Christ" and her belief that marriage is between one man and one woman.
>
> Acting on a complaint filed by the two men, Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson filed suit against Stutzman, contending that she had violated the state's sexual-orientation law. Ferguson seeks a $2,000 fine and a court order forcing Barronelle to violate her conscience by using her artistic talents to celebrate a same-sex relationship.

The situation is so bad, that Arizona has had to pass a law to protect the religious liberty of people who don't want to celebrate gay marriage, a law which is universally opposed by our leftist mainstream media.

So how did we come to this? Well, I think when the debate over gay rights started, many Christians were happy to let gay people live how they wanted to and love who they wanted to and have ceremonies in churches that would have them. But now we are seeing that the gay agenda is much more about redefining marriage for everyone, and compelling assent to the new definition of marriage by force. What is striking to me is how easy secularists find it to strip religious people of their rights using the power of government when it suits them. And to go after their children in the public schools, too, at taxpayer expense. Even these state-run persecutions of Christians in "Human Rights Commissions" is at taxpayer expense. Christians are paying secularists in the government to punish them for being faithful Christians.

Let's just weigh the damage in these cases. On the one hand, you have gay couples who are told no, feel bad, and then find another business to do what they want. On the other hand, you have the government dragging Christians into court, excoriating them, fining them thousands of dollars, making them apologize and them forcing them to violate their consciences or close their businesses. Who is being intolerant here? Who is forcing their view on others and forcing them to act against their core beliefs?

You would think that we would have learned the lessons of the 20th century – not to

discriminate against people because of their religion, not to use the power of the state to force people to act against their consciences. But sadly, we have not learned that lesson. The very people who cry “tolerance” are the ones doing it, too.

Do men need respect from women, or can they perform their male roles without it?

February 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From reading previous posts on Matt Walsh's popular blog where he writes about male-female relationships. I got the impression that he was writing too much about how to blame men, and not enough about the policies and practices that provide incentives for men to underperform, e.g. – mostly female teachers, unfair divorce laws, stimulus spending geared towards women, etc. So imagine my surprise when I came across this article about men and their need for respect.

First, look at this excerpt. This is what I would have written to criticize Matt Walsh, but he writes it himself:

> I've discussed at length how men should treat women. I've written about the lessons I plan to teach my son; lessons about how he should love, honor, respect, serve, and protect the women in his life. Indeed, men need to respect women, and we, as men, are far from perfect in that regard.
>
> Those posts — the ones where I call on us men to improve the way we treat women — tend to be very popular. They're popular when I write them or when anyone writes them. Proclaim that women, mothers, and wives should be respected, and a chorus will shout 'amen.' Every day on Facebook brings us another viral post excoriating men and supporting women. I've written a few of them myself.
>
> But I've noticed that the corollary – a message about the respect women must give men, a message challenging wives and encouraging husbands – isn't quite so palatable for many people. Disrespect for men has become standard practice. That scene I witnessed was sad but unremarkable; we've all watched that kind of thing play out a thousand times over. Men are disrespected by their wives – they're disrespected publicly, they're disrespected privately, they're disrespected and then told that they have no right to be upset about it because they aren't worthy of respect in the first place.

Let me tell you, as a blogger who chooses to primarily focus on holding *women* accountable in relationships, I know that it is much less popular than placing demands on *men*. Believe me, I have the hate mail to prove it. It is automatic, even with some Christian women, that any attempt to suggest a moral obligation that women have to men or children is met with denial, deflection or rationalization. "But what about men's responsibilities to women?"

So Matt is concerned that men are hearing too many negative messages, and not getting enough respect from their wives.

He writes:

> These cultural messages aren't harmful because they hurt my manly feelings; they're harmful because of what they do to young girls. Society tells our daughters that men are boorish dolts who need to be herded like goats and lectured like school boys. Then they grow up and enter into marriage wholly unprepared and unwilling to accept the Biblical notion that "wives should submit to their husbands" because "the husband is the head of the wife." [Ephesians 5]
>
> It is a fatal problem, because the one thing that is consistently withheld from men and husbands — respect — is the one thing we need the most.
>
> Yes, *need*. We need respect, and that need is so deeply ingrained that a marriage cannot possibly survive if the man is deprived of it.
>
> Often, people will say that a husband should only be respected if he "earns" it. *This attitude is precisely the problem*. A wife ought to respect her husband because he is her husband, just as he ought to love and honor her because she is his wife. Your husband might "deserve" it when you mock him, berate him, belittle him, and nag him, but you don't marry someone in order to give them what they deserve. In marriage, you give them what you've promised them, even when they aren't holding up their end of the bargain.

OK really, one last quote from Matt:

> Respect is our language. If it isn't said with respect, we can't hear it. This is why nagging is ineffective and self defeating. This is why statements made in sarcastic tones, or with rolling eyes, will never be received well. We have a filter in our brains, and a statement made in disrespect will be filtered out like the poison it is.
>
> Men are notoriously reluctant to share feelings or display vulnerability. Many times, we keep those inner thoughts locked away — our feelings guarded and hidden — because we know we are not respected. A man will never be vulnerable to someone who doesn't respect him. Never.
>
> A man isn't satisfied or content if he isn't respected. If he can't find respect where he is, he will seek it somewhere else. This can have disastrous implications for a relationship, but it applies in other areas of life as well. A man is much more likely to stay in a low paying job, a physically demanding job, a dangerous job, or a tedious job, than a job where he isn't respected.
>
> I'm only emphasizing this because I think it might actually be news to some people. Society does not permit men to be vocal about their need for respect, so the need is often ignored.

What I've found in speaking to women about this is that all the married and divorced women know about this need that men have. And by and large, they agree with it, too. But that is much rarer among single women, which is why men need to be ready to explain their needs and feelings, and give women opportunities to practice giving men

respect, especially when men are trying to practice their male roles.

Let's take a quick look at the Bible, because that's always a good thing to do when you want the truth about these things.

Ephesians 5:22-33:

22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;

29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church,

30 because we are members of His body.

31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.

Some women get scared by that, but they shouldn't be, because you get to pick your husband, so just pick someone whose leadership you actually respect.

And now for my opinion about this topic.

To start, remember that men are supposed to be good at the following roles:

- protecting (men spot threats to people, truth and goodness and attack we those threats)
- providing (men get STEM degrees, and we save money so we can share with others)
- moral leader (men read books to know how to make a secular case for pro-life and pro-marriage)
- spiritual leader (men read books to know how to use secular evidence to defend their faith)

If a woman sees a man – any man – working away at these tasks, that's the time to

practice respecting him.

Here are some practical ideas on how to show a man respect, grouped in two sections.

Respect specific to the man's core beliefs and life plan

- Find out what goals he is trying to achieve
- Find out what steps he has taken already
- Find out what steps he plans to take
- Find out what obstacles are in his way
- Tell your friends and family about what he is doing
- Independently read books, watch lectures, etc. to learn about the problem area
- Independently solve problems related to his goal in your own life, and tell him about it
- Monitor his progress and supply encouragement and rewards appropriately
- Take care of peripheral tasks so he can concentrate on his main focus
- Attend a training event or conference related to the problem he is trying to solve
- Arrange a training event or conference related to the problem he is trying to solve at the church or university
- Invite friends over, and try to show them something related to what he cares about to get a discussion started

Respect for men in general

- Let him solve problems, especially through his male talents: providing, protecting, leading
- When you are in public, talk about what he is trying to achieve
- When you are in public, talk about what you are doing to help him to other people
- Learn to do the "wind-down" activities that he likes, and do it with him
- Try to do co-operative activities with him
- Explain how you feel about something that you need him to do, before and after he does it
- Explain the mechanics of tasks you do that are difficult (he will buy you something to make it easier)
- Try to learn about things that men like so you can talk to them about those things (e.g. – politics, theology, etc.)
- Give him time to achieve things at work if he needs to do that
- Be frugal with money (men feel really disrespected if their money is wasted)
- Try to read stories about ordinary men, police, soldiers being brave, so you understand why men sometimes use force (and guns) in order to defeat evil and protect others

If you're married now, then you can just tailor this list by talking to your husband. It might be hard because men typically 1) can't express their feelings, and 2) can't recommend solutions. Some of that problem can be fixed by being very careful not to do or say

anything that will make the man think that he will be hurt by you if he confesses his feelings and needs. That is a nightmare for a man. Ask whether your husband feels respected, and ask for specific things you can do to make him feel respected. I always recommend that the first step be to investigate what he does that you don't do, and find out the mechanics of it. Finding out opens opportunities to help.

If you are single now, and don't even know any good men, you can still respect good men by making decisions now to study things that are helpful to good men. Instead of studying radicalized subject areas in school like social work and English, study a useful STEM field, like nursing or engineering or chemistry or economics, etc. Having to deal with difficult, math-oriented subjects is very good for anyone's character, because it prepares you for the real difficulty of life, so you can be disciplined, detail-oriented and outward-focused. Non-STEM fields don't pay much because they are not hard. Studying something hard in school helps a woman to become accustomed to having to work hard, and helps her to critical of politicians who promise goodies to people on the backs of private-sector workers.

In addition, women ought to prefer to get a private sector job in a STEM field or business field, if possible. Or better yet run her own business in a STEM field. That will help her to really be understanding and sympathetic to what men are facing in the workplace. If a woman understands the difficulty of what a man does by having done it herself, it makes a man feel respected.

Four ways that the progress of science conflicts with naturalistic speculations

February 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When people ask me whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism, I offer the following four basic pieces of scientific evidence that are more compatible with theism than atheism.

Here are the four pieces of evidence best explained by a Creator/Designer:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the biological information in the first replicator (origin of life)
4. the sudden origin of all of the different body plans in the fossil record (Cambrian explosion)

And I point to specific examples of recent discoveries that confirm those four arguments. Here are just a few of them:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (From an article from Caltech)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning to allow the existence of conscious, embodied life (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)
4. Evidence showing that Ediacaran fauna are not precursors to the Cambrian fossils, (from the journal Nature)

Atheists will typically reply to the recent scientific discoveries that overturned their speculations like this:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause
2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes
4. Maybe we will find a seamless chain of fossils that explain how the Cambrian explosion occurred slowly, over a long period time

Ever heard any of these responses?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the four responses of atheists to the experimental data.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
>
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>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear

> to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.
>
> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities."
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have

no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. There is no evidence for a multiverse, but there is evidence for fine-tuning. TONS OF IT.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can't make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can't make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth's interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into

meaningful words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them.

4) The best candidate to explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian era fossils was the Ediacaran fauna, but those are now recognized as not being precursors to the Cambrian fossils.

Science Daily reports on a paper from the peer-reviewed journal Science:

> Evidence of the single-celled ancestors of animals, dating from the interval in Earth's history just before multicellular animals appeared, has been discovered in 570 million-year-old rocks from South China by researchers from the University of Bristol, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Paul Scherrer Institut and the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.
>
> […]This X-ray microscopy revealed that the fossils had features that multicellular embryos do not, and this led the researchers to the conclusion that the fossils were neither animals nor embryos but rather the reproductive spore bodies of single-celled ancestors of animals.
>
> Professor Philip Donoghue said: "We were very surprised by our results — we've been convinced for so long that these fossils represented the embryos of the earliest animals — much of what has been written about the fossils for the last ten years is flat wrong. Our colleagues are not going to like the result."
>
> Professor Stefan Bengtson said: "These fossils force us to rethink our ideas of how animals learned to make large bodies out of cells."

The trend is that there is no evolutionary explanation for the body plans that emerged in the Cambrian era. If you want to make the claim that "evolution did it", then you have to produce the data *today*. Not speculations about the future. The data we have today says no to naturalism. The only way to affirm naturalistic explanations for the evidence we have is *by faith*. But rational people know that we need to minimize our leaps of faith, and go with the simplest and most reasonable explanation – an intelligence is the best explanation responsible for rapid generation of biological information.

Conclusion

I do think it's important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see way too much G. K. Chesterton, Francis Chan and other untestable, ineffective jibber-jabber. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it's too hard. It's not too hard. Everyone can understand "Who Made God?" by Edgar Andrews – start with that! Then get Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". That's more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works. You don't want to be anti-science and pro-speculation like atheists are. I recommend reading Uncommon Descent and Evolution News every day for a start.

Obama administration report: 65% of small firms face Obamacare premium hikes

February 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Released into a news black hole last Friday, an official Obama administration report finds that ObamaCare will push premiums up for two-thirds of small businesses. Cross off another ObamaCare promise.
>
> The report came from the actuary for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services — which means it's from the administration's official ObamaCare number cruncher.
>
> What it found was that 65% of small businesses that offer insurance will likely see their premiums rise thanks to ObamaCare. That translates into higher insurance costs for 11 million workers.
>
> The reason? These companies generally employ younger, healthier workers and so had been paying lower-than-average rates.
>
> But since ObamaCare bans insurance companies from considering health when setting premiums, these companies will get hit with higher costs.
>
> "We are estimating that 65% of small firms are expected to experience increases in their premium rates," the report said, "while the remaining 35% are anticipated to have rate reductions."
>
> The report doesn't say how big these hikes will be, but we have good reason to believe the extra costs will be significant.
>
> One study, for example, found that 63% of small employers in Wisconsin will see premiums jump 15% because of ObamaCare. A separate study found that 89% of small companies in Maine would see rate hikes of 12% on average.
>
> Another, by consulting firm Oliver Wyman, concluded that ObamaCare would push up small group premiums nationwide 20%.

Is this how the bill was sold to us by the Obama administration and their supporters in the mainstream media?

No:

> In 2009, Obama promised small businesses that his plan would "make the coverage that you're currently providing more affordable." Later he said it would drive small-business premiums down by 4% in its first year, and as much as 25% by 2016.
>
> As recently as last summer, Pelosi was proclaiming that "if you're a small

> business … it lowers costs," while Waxman said the law would make "high-quality healthy insurance more affordable and more widely available for small businesses."
>
> Notice that nowhere — either before or after ObamaCare passed — did any Democrat say anything about two-thirds of small businesses paying more for health coverage so the lucky one-third could get rate cuts.

Next time you hear a big government liberal promising you goodies at no cost, keep in mind their record. They are making policy from emotions, not from mathematics. They believe that they are lying to you for your own good. Their goal is not to tell the truth at all. And don't rely on the left-wing journalism crowd to hold them accountable, they flunked math too.

Should you marry someone who promises you that “there will be no divorce”?

February 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was having a chat with a friend of mine who just got out of a serious relationship and I was trying to pick his brain to find out everything about the woman he was intending to marry so I could see why things went wrong. He told me that she had told him over and over that “there would be no divorce” and that he found that very convincing, despite very obvious warning signs in the area of respect (which I wrote about yesterday).

Well. I was very surprised to hear this, and so I asked him whether he thought it was enough that this woman told him that “three will be no divorce”. He said yes. This woman had experienced the divorce of her own parents and she was resolved (by act of will) never to let that happen to her. He found that acceptable, but I didn’t because I know the numbers on this, and I know that children of divorced parents are more likely to divorce themselves. So the pain of divorce is no deterrent here.

So should we believe that people can avoid a divorce just by saying they will? I told him no. And for an example, I offered a thought experiment. I said to imagine two runners on a track who are charged with completing 10 laps. One runner is a Navy SEAL like Mike Murphy, who has been trained to run miles and miles carrying a 60 pound load. In the mountains. The other is a 300-lb couch potato whose idea of exercise is reaching for the TV remote control. Suppose I ask both runners: do you intend to finish the 10 laps? Should I believe them if they both say yes?

Look, marriage is like building a house. People can say whatever they want about their prospects for success, but the will doesn’t decide here. You have to certain skills, you have to have a certain amount of money, you have to have a plan, you have to be able to read blueprints, you have to be able to hire specialists, you understand the differences between materials, etc. When you think about it, no long-term enterprise can be accomplished by act of will. Piano recitals, math exams, investing for retirement… nothing can be done by sheer act of will.

Now with that being said, let’s take a look at an example.

An example

I found this article in the Wall Street Journal way back in 2011, but it fits my conversation with my friend.

The author, Susan Gregory Thomas, lists some of the mistakes she made that led her to get a divorce in her first marriage.

This is the first thing I saw that caught my eye:

> “Whatever happens, we’re never going to get divorced.” Over the course of 16 years, I said that often to my husband, especially after our children were born.

So she is trying to express an intention here, repeatedly, to her husband. I think the point here is that she did have good intentions but as we shall see that was not enough to prevent the divorce. That's a warning to others that good intentions are not enough.

Here is the second thing:

> I believed that I had married my best friend as fervently as I believed that I'd never get divorced. No marital scenario, I told myself, could become so bleak or hopeless as to compel me to embed my children in the torture of a split family. And I wasn't the only one with strong personal reasons to make this commitment.

I noticed that a lot of people seem to think that being compatible is very important to marriage. But I don't think that it is the most important thing. For example, you would not expect two cocaine addicts or two gambling addicts, etc. to have a stable marriage. I think marriage is more like a job interview where there are specific things that each person has to be able to do in order to make it work. So again, she's giving a warning to others that compatibility is not a guarantee of marriage success.

And there's more:

> My husband and I were as obvious as points on a graph in a Generation X marriage study. We were together for nearly eight years before we got married, and even though statistics show that divorce rates are 48% higher for those who have lived together previously, we paid no heed.
>
> We also paid no heed to his Catholic parents, who comprised one of the rare reassuringly unified couples I'd ever met, when they warned us that we should wait until we were married to live together. As they put it, being pals and roommates is different from being husband and wife. How bizarrely old-fashioned and sexist! We didn't need anything so naïve or retro as "marriage." Please. We were best friends.
>
> Sociologists, anthropologists and other cultural observers tell us that members of Generation X are more emotionally invested in our spouses than previous generations were. We are best friends; our marriages are genuine partnerships. Many studies have found that Generation X family men help around the house a good deal more than their forefathers. We depend on each other and work together.

So here I am seeing that she rejected sex roles, parental advice, or the moral guidelines of Christianity. Again, she is discussing some of the factors that I at least think contribute to divorce. I think that she is right to highlight the fact that she was wrong to disregard the statistics on cohabitation.

So here are some of the mistakes:

- reject advice from parents
- avoid chastity

- cohabitate for EIGHT YEARS
- embrace feminism, reject complementarian sex roles
- thinking that good intentions would overcome every challenge

So, what does the research show works to have a stable marriage?

- chastity
- rejection of feminism
- regular church attendance
- parental involvement in the courting
- parents of both spouses married
- no previous divorces

Guess what? You can't break all the rules and still succeed by sheer force of will. If you break all the rules like that woman in the story, you can't have a working marriage. Not without repudiating everything you believed, and taking steps to undo all the damage from everything you've done. You can't keep all the bad beliefs and bad habits you've built up and marry them to a marriage that will stand the test of time.

A good marriage is an enterprise, and it requires that your character be changed to fit the requirements. There is no way to short-circuit the preparation / selection processes by act of will. And just because your friends are getting married, that's no reason for you to rush into it unprepared. The best way to prepare for marriage is pick people of the opposite sex and practice marriage behaviors (e.g. – listening, helping) with them – even with people you don't intend to marry. Take an interest in their lives and practice denying yourself to help them with their problems. That's better than making idle promises you're not able to keep. And this works the same for men and for women. Both people need to get this right.

What is the Arizona religious liberty law really about?

February 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National Review explains what the proposed law is designed to do.

Excerpt:

> In response to a number of lawsuits in which such providers of wedding-related services as bakers and photographers have been threatened with conscription into participating in same-sex ceremonies to which they object on religious grounds, Arizona's state legislature has adopted a law under which businesses that decline to provide such services will enjoy protection.
>
> It is perhaps unfortunate that it has come to this, but organized homosexuality, a phenomenon that is more about progressive pieties than gay rights per se, remains on the permanent offensive in the culture wars. Live-and-let-live is a creed that the gay lobby specifically rejects: The owner of the Masterpiece Cakeshop in Colorado was threatened with a year in jail for declining to bake a cake for a same-sex wedding. New Mexico photographer Elaine Huguenin was similarly threatened for declining to photograph a same-sex wedding. **It is worth noting that neither the baker nor the photographer categorically refuses services to homosexuals; birthday cakes and portrait photography were both on the menu. The business owners specifically objected to participating in a civic/religious ceremony that violated their own consciences.**
>
> And the so-called liberals answer: "To hell with your consciences."
>
> In T. H. White's *The Once and Future King*, the nature of totalitarianism is captured in the motto "Everything not forbidden is compulsory." Gay marriage has made the sprint from forbidden to compulsory in record time; the day before yesterday, a homosexual marriage was a legal impossibility — and today it is a crime to sit one out.
>
> Gay Americans, like many members of minority groups, are poorly served by their self-styled leadership. Like feminists and union bosses, the leaders of the nation's gay organizations suffer from oppression envy, likening their situation to that of black Americans — as though having to find a gay-friendly wedding planner (pro tip: try swinging a dead cat) were the moral equivalent of having spent centuries in slavery and systematic oppression under Jim Crow. Their goal is not toleration or even equal rights but official victim-group status under law and in civil society, allowing them to use the courts and other means of official coercion to impose their own values upon those who hold different values.
>
> Which is to say, what is regrettable here is not Arizona's law but the

> machinations that have made it necessary. It seems unlikely that those religious bakers and photographers were chosen at random, or that their antagonists will stop until such diversity of opinion as exists about the subject of gay marriage has been put under legal discipline.

That's a very short and sweet explanation of the law, and what led up to it.

On the one hand, we have a citizen who is *offended* at being refused a product or a service. The remedy is for them to go next door and get the product or service from someone else. Is that hard? On the other side of the case are Christians with a Constitutional right to religious liberty. Apparently, it is now OK for people to trample on Constitutional rights if they feel offended and have to go next door for something they want.

Look at it another way. Whose is forcing their values on whom? If the gay couple has to leave the store and go somewhere else, are they being forced by the state through trials and punishments to accept the traditional definition of marriage? Hell no. But Christians who are dragged in front of courts, forced to pay legal fees for both parties, forced to apologize, force to pay fines, and forced to participate in something they oppose *are* having someone else's views forced on them. It used to be that the gay activists talked about tolerance. Where is their tolerance now? Where is their rainbow of diversity now? It's very important to understand that the people on the gay rights side do not recognize Constitutional rights, and they are not tolerant of other people's views. And they are willing to use the power of the government to force people to celebrate their sexuality.

Coalition of African American Pastors: impeach Attorney General Holder

February 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's see what Eric Holder is doing with respect to gay marriage.

CNS News explains.

Excerpt:

> State attorneys-general who refuse to defend state laws banning same-sex marriage won't face any objection from the nation's top law enforcement official. In fact, Attorney General Eric Holder will applaud them.
>
> According to Holder, "decisions at any level not to defend individual laws must be exceedingly rare. They must be reserved only for exceptional – truly exceptional – circumstances.'
>
> He said that state laws banning same-sex marriage rise to that "truly exceptional" standard — because they do not "advance the values that once led our forebears to declare unequivocally that all are created equal and entitled to equal opportunity."
>
> Holder told a gathering of state attorneys-general at the Justice Department that they are sworn, not just to win cases, "but to see that justice is done" and to "seize the opportunities that are before us."
>
> The legal system exists, he said, not just to settle disputes and punish wrong-doers, "but to answer the really fundamental questions about fairness and about equality that have always determined who we are and who we aspire to be, both as a nation and as a people."
>
> Holder explained that those "really fundamental questions' prompted him and President Obama to decide in early 2011 that Justice Department attorneys would no longer defend the constitutionality of the federal Defense of Marriage Act.
>
> Holder said he and Obama were "motivated by the strong belief that all measures that distinguish among people based on their sexual orientation must be subjected to a heightened standard of scrutiny…and therefore this measure (DOMA) was unconstitutional discrimination."

But a group of black pastors are not taking this lying down.

CNS News explains.

Excerpt:

> A coalition of black pastors announced on Tuesday at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. that they are launching a campaign to gather one million

> signatures on a petition calling for the impeachment of Attorney General Eric Holder for violating his oath of office by trying "to coerce states to fall in line with the same-sex 'marriage' agenda."
>
> "President Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder have turned their backs on the values the American people hold dear, values particularly cherished in the black community: values like marriage, which should be strengthened and promoted, rather than weakened and undermined," says a statement by the Coalition of African American Pastors that has been posted online with their impeachment petition.
>
> "Our nation calls for the building up of a healthier marriage culture; instead, our elected leaders are bent on destroying marriage, remaking it as a genderless institution and reorienting it to be all about the desires of adults rather than the needs of children," says the coalition.
>
> "In pursuing this intention, the president and his administration are trampling the rule of law. Attorney General Holder in particular has used the influence of his office and role as the chief law enforcement figure in our nation to try to coerce states to fall in line with the same-sex 'marriage' agenda," says the coaltion. Millions of voters in 30 states have voted to defend marriage as the union of one man and one woman, but Attorney General Holder is attempting single-handedly to throw those votes away!
>
> "For abandoning the oath he swore in taking office and his duty to defend the common good, Attorney General Holder should be impeached by Congress," says the coalition. "CAAP is calling on all men and women of good will to sign the following petition urging Congress to take action against the Attorney General's lawlessness today!"

I am happy this sort of bold leadership from black pastors. Although 94% of black Protestants voted for Obama in 2008, and thus for gay marriage, at least there is a remnant of courageous black Protestant leaders who are still under the authority of the Bible. It makes me wonder why their defense of traditional marriage is not shared by 94% of their flocks – at least in the ballot box (where it counts). There must be some huge gulf between Protestant leaders and the laity.

Marco Rubio’s speech exposing the horrors of socialism in Cuba and Venezuela

February 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s an article from the Miami Herald about a recent 15-minute speech by Republican Senator Marco Rubio.

Excerpt:

> The U.S. senator from Florida had listened patiently to Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa speak favorably about his recent trip to Cuba, all the while omitting any real references to the oppression of the totalitarian government there.
>
> To Rubio, like many Cuban exiles and their descendants, it was too much to bear.
>
> “Let me tell you what the Cubans are really good at,” Rubio said Monday when he took to the Senate floor. “What they are really good at is repression … They have exported repression in real time, in our hemisphere, right now.”
>
> […]For 14 minutes and 16 seconds, Rubio gave the best oration of his political career, speaking largely off the top of his head and with only the barest of notes. Rubio sometimes dripped with sarcasm or simmered with indignation as he made the case to Congress that the United States needs to continue Cuba sanctions and punish Venezuela.

That’s what the speech was about.

Here are some of the details from the speech:

> As an aide flipped through over-sized photos of Venezuelan protests, Rubio ticked off the struggles of living in the country, the horrors of its citizens dying and being jailed at the hands of its government.
>
> “This gentleman here is the former mayor of a municipality in Caracas. His name is Leopoldo Lopez,” Rubio said. “And this is the National Guard of Venezuela pulling him into an armored truck last week. You know why? Because he’s protesting against the government.”
>
> Then came the next photograph, a picture of a young woman being driven off on a motorcycle.
>
> “This is Genesis Carmona,” Rubio said. “They shot her in the head. She died last week.”
>
> Rubio continued: “Let me show you the next slide. Here’s a demonstrator detained by police. Look how they drag him through the streets. This is in Caracas, Venezuela.”
>
> Rubio also took issue with a recent survey, cited by Harkin, that indicated a thaw in American and Floridian perceptions of relations with Cuba.

> “He cited a poll, ‘More Americans want normal relations with Cuba.’ So do I — a democratic and free Cuba,” Rubio said.
>
> “But you want us to reach out and develop friendly relationships with a serial violator of human rights, who supports what’s going on in Venezuela and every other atrocity on the planet? On issue after issue, they are always on the side of the tyrants. Look it up,” Rubio said. “And this is who we should be opening up to? Why don’t they change? Why doesn’t the Cuban government change? Why doesn’t the Venezuelan government change?”
>
> Rubio said that, just as the United States has sanctions against North Korea and Syria — allies of Cuba — it should keep pressuring the governments in Havana and Caracas.
>
> And he disagreed with the notion that the embargo hurts the Cuban people. Instead, he said, it’s the totalitarian-socialist government that’s to blame for problems in Cuba — As well as in “oil-rich” Venezuela.
>
> “We don’t have an embargo against Venezuela,” he said. “They have a shortage of toilet paper and tooth paste. Why? Because they are incompetent. Because communism doesn’t work. They look more and more like Cuba economically and politically every single day.”
>
> Rubio repeated that last line elsewhere in his speech:
>
> “They look more and more like Cuba economically and politically every single day. What’s the first thing the Venezuelan government did when these broke out? They shut off access to Twitter and Facebook and the Internet. They ran CNN out of there. They closed down the only Colombian station. Years before, they had closed down all the independent media outlets that criticized the government.
>
> “Where did they learn that from? From Cuba. And yet we have to listen to what a paradise Cuba is.”

I am not a fan of Marco Rubio anymore as a candidate for VP or President, nor am I a fan of Paul Ryan. Both have made mistakes that rule them out as conservatives. However, this speech should be seen by all, especially by Americans who do not appreciate how different like is in countries that are further along the socialist road to serfdom. But we’re getting there.

What should gay activists do instead of using government to force their morality on Christians?

February 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an excellent post from Michael Graham, a talk show host in New England, of all places.

Excerpt:

> I know, I know—Arizona's "Religious Freedom Restoration Act" is the greatest act of human evil since Pol Pot's killing fields. So even suggesting that maybe—just *maybe*—the Arizona legislature has a point puts me on the same side of history as Hitler, Stalin and Robin Thicke.
>
> But indulge me for a moment and consider how this would actually work:
>
> A guy is at his print shop in Tempe. In walks a customer (good) who wants to give him money (even better!) to print thousands of fliers for the upcoming LGBTQ "Whip And Chain Exchange" at a local sex shop.
>
> The printer—who has bills to pay—obviously wants to say "yes." The reason EVERY business owner opens a business is to say "yes."
>
> But the guy is also serious about his religious beliefs. He sincerely believes that his faith is the most important aspect of his life. So he opened a business to care for his family, but he goes to church/synagogue/mosque because he needs to care his soul.
>
> So he says "Uh, I appreciate the business but I'm really not comfortable being part of this event you're having. Would you mind asking another printer? I'll even recommend a few…"
>
> Now, at this point what do you think should happen? Forget the law—what is the right thing for the parties involved to do?
>
> To me the answer seems obvious: the LGBT folks should roll their eyes and say "whatever, man" and take their money somewhere else. I wouldn't mind if they said something snarky like "Dude—it's your loss," or "Can we leave you a copy in case you'd like a free spanking?"
>
> Their integrity is in place. So is the religiously-devout business owner's. Why isn't that the ideal outcome?
>
> Oh, that's right—because nobody gets to scream "I'm a victim! I'm a victim!" And nobody gets to bully the person of faith.
>
> And so instead what liberals and gay activists want is for the religiously devout printer, or baker, or wedding-band singer to be forced to participate—at gunpoint—in an event that violates their religious beliefs.
>
> They want government agents to show up at the print shop or florist shop and

> order the owner to get to work. Force them to supply their labor for an event.
>
> Seriously? That's really what you want? Because if you do—that's sick.
>
> Why do you care so much that some small business owner doesn't support same-sex marriage? Why isn't the jerk in this story the gay activist who doesn't do what any decent straight/gay/bi/animal-friendly person would do and just take their business somewhere else?

The whole thing is worth reading. You might recognize Michael Graham as the interviewer on the Weekly Standard podcasts, which I highly recommend. The Weekly Standard itself posted an article on Wednesday that mentioned a letter to Governor Jan Brewer signed by 11 law professors who urged Brewer to *read the bill* and to see that the purpose of the bill was to protect Christians from having to participate closely in activities that were incompatible with their religious beliefs. The lawyers claimed that popular criticisms of the bill were "deeply misleading" and the bill was "egregiously misrepresented" by critics.

By the way, I noted that the National Football League and Major League Baseball were both opposed to the Arizona bill. Apple and American Airlines also opposed religious liberty. Please spend your money wisely. I never give these companies my money, and neither should you – if you can help it. Apple in particular is one of the most anti-Christian companies out there.

Boko Haram Muslims murder 59 unarmed Christian students in Nigeria

February 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I did a search for this story, but the mainstream media stories from sources like the UK Guardian neglected to mention that the victims were Christians. But I finally found one that mentioned that the victims were Christians, in an Israeli news site called Arutz Sheva.

Excerpt:

> Islamist terrorists murdered 59 middle school students in a pre-dawn attack Tuesday on a northeast Nigerian boarding school, authorities said.
>
> The terrorists, thought to be from barbaric Islamist organization Boko Haram, set a locked hostel on fire, before shooting and slitting the throats of those who tried to climb out the windows. Some were burned alive, as most of the school was burned to the ground.
>
> The attackers also reportedly hurled explosives into student residential buildings, sprayed gunfire into rooms and hacked a number students to death.
>
> "Some of the students' bodies were burned to ashes," police commissioner Sanusi Rufai said of the attack on the federal government college of Buni Yadi, a secondary school in Yobe state, near the state's capital city of Damaturu.
>
> Bala Ajiya, an official at the Specialist Hospital Damaturu, said the death toll, originally set at 29, had risen to 59. "Fresh bodies have been brought in. More bodies were discovered in the bush after the students who had escaped with bullet wounds died from their injuries," he said.
>
> A senior medical source at the Sani Abacha Specialist Hospital in Yobe's capital Damaturu said the gunmen only targeted male students – all teenage boys – and that female students were spared. Teachers at the school said the gunmen gathered the female students together before telling them to go away and get married, and to abandon their education.
>
> Tuesday's attack brings the toll from killings blamed on Boko Haram to more than 300 this month alone.
>
> […]The name Boko Haram means "Western education is sin." The group aims is to replace Nigeria's political leadership and establish a new state under Islamic sharia law.

The article also listed some other recent attacks:

> In January, Islamist terrorists used explosives and heavy guns in an atrocious double-pronged attack that killed at least 100 civilians in Nigeria's northeast on Sunday. One attack took place in the village of Kawuri in Borno state, and the

> other targeted worshippers during a Christian church service in Adamawa state.
>
> Last September, 40 students were killed at an agricultural college during another night-time raid. massacring at least 50 students, in the latest attack by Islamist terrorists in the region.
>
> Boko Haram has also reportedly been kidnapping Christian women from rural areas and forcing them to convert under threats of death. The women are then kept as slaves and child brides – and forced to help the terrorists kill innocent Nigerians.

Other than that, only UPI.com mentioned that Boko Haram normally targets Christian schools and churches:

> Boko Haram is a militant Islamic group that has a history of committing violent attacks on Christian schools and churches in Nigeria.

I was listening to Hugh Hewitt on Monday or Tuesday night and he was asking some journalist from Mediaite why the mainstream media was ignoring this story. The journalist never answered. But I think the reason is obvious. Journalists are opposed to the Christian positions on social issues, because it cramps their pursuit of pleasure. So they would never portray Christians as victims, lest the public at large begin to have sympathy for Christianity. Christians always have to be portrayed as the villains by the mainstream media, in much the same way that Jews were in Nazi Germany.

For more on the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria, click here for a good article from Baptist Press.

Was Stalin an atheist? Is atheism or communism responsible for mass murders?

February 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at what Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s. The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

Let's see more from a peer-reviewed journal article authored by Crispin Paine of the University College, London:

> Atheist propaganda and the struggle against religion began immediately after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917. While social change would, under Marxist theory, bring religion to disappear, Leninists argued that the Party should actively help to eradicate religion as a vital step in creating 'New Soviet Man'. The energy with which the Party struggled against religion, though, varied considerably from time to time and from place to place, as did its hostility to particular faith groups. The 1920s saw the closure of innumerable churches and synagogues (and to a lesser extent mosques) and the active persecution of clergy and harassment of believers. From 1930, though, Stalin introduced a less aggressive approach, and wartime support for the government earned for the Russian Orthodox Church, at least, a level of toleration which lasted until Stalin's death. Under Khrushchev antireligious efforts resumed, if spasmodically, and they lasted until the end of the Soviet Union.

An article from the pro-communism Marxist.com web site says this about Stalin:

> During the ultra-left period of forcible collectivisation and the Five Year Plan in Four an attempt was made to liquidate the Church and its influence by government decree. Starting in 1929 churches were forcibly closed and priests arrested and exiled all over the Soviet Union. The celebrated Shrine of the Iberian Virgin in Moscow – esteemed by believers to be the "holiest" in all Russia was demolished – Stalin and his Government were not afraid of strengthening

> religious fanaticism by wounding the feelings of believers as Lenin and Trotsky had been! Religion, they believed, could be liquidated, like the kulak, by a stroke of the pen. The Society of Militant Atheists, under Stalin's orders, issued on May 15th 1932, the "Five Year Plan of Atheism" – by May 1st 1937, such as the "Plan", "not a single house of prayer shall remain in the territory of the USSR, and the very concept of God must be banished from the Soviet Union as a survival of the Middle Ages and an instrument for the oppression of the working masses."!

Now, if all you read were atheist web sites, you'd think that Stalin loved religion and wasn't opposed to Christianity at all. An atheist I know told me that Stalin was a Christian because that's what he was as a child at one point. Funny sort of way to carry out your Christian faith, isn't it? If you read atheist web sites, you'd expect Stalin to have had the career of a William Lane Craig or a J.P. Moreland. And yet in the fever swamp of atheist web sites, this is what they tell themselves. They believe it because they want to believe it. They have to believe it, in order to keep God at bay.

Now, if you were going to pick a hero of the Christian faith, you'd probably pick a real fundamentalist like William Wilberforce, who freed the slaves – because of his evangelical Christian convictions. Wilberforce took Christianity seriously – he believed every verse of the Bible, he tried to convert people to his faith, and he pushed his faith on others by passing laws. He was the worst nightmare of atheism – a politically active Evangelical Christian.

But who is a great atheist who was politically active? When I think of a great atheist, someone who really did the most to oppose the "lie" of God's existence, I think of Josef Stalin. So what kind of morality can we expect from someone who takes the message of Richard Dawkins and Dan Barker seriously and has the political power to really do something about it?

The Ukraine Famine

Take a look at this UK Daily Mail article about a great achievement of the atheist Josef Stalin, which occurred in 1932-1933.

Excerpt:

> Now, 75 years after one of the great forgotten crimes of modern times, Stalin's man-made famine of 1932/3, the former Soviet republic of Ukraine is asking the world to classify it as a genocide.
>
> The Ukrainians call it the Holodomor – the Hunger.
>
> Millions starved as Soviet troops and secret policemen raided their villages, stole the harvest and all the food in villagers' homes.
>
> They dropped dead in the streets, lay dying and rotting in their houses, and some women became so desperate for food that they ate their own children.
>
> If they managed to fend off starvation, they were deported and shot in their

> hundreds of thousands.
>
> So terrible was the famine that Igor Yukhnovsky, director of the Institute of National Memory, the Ukrainian institution researching the Holodomor, believes **as many as nine million may have died.**
>
> […]Between four and five million died in Ukraine, a million died in Kazakhstan and another million in the north Caucasus and the Volga.
>
> By 1933, 5.7 million households – somewhere between ten million and 15 million people – had vanished. They had been deported, shot or died of starvation.

This is what follows when you believe that the universe is an accident, that there is no objective good and evil, that human beings are just animals, that no God will hold us accountable, and that human beings are not made in the image of God for the purpose of freely choosing to come into a relationship with him. The Ukrainian famine is an action that came from a man whose worldview was *passionate atheism.*

Atheism today

You might think that today's atheists are much different than Josef Stalin, but understand that according to a recent survey of atheists conducted by atheists, 97% of atheists are pro-abortion. How many people have been killed by abortion? 56 million in the United States alone. Atheists in a society like ours, founded on Judeo-Christian values, are obviously going to live a lot better than Stalin. For one thing, they don't have the power that Stalin had to eradicate theism, although you can see Stalinism in the anti-Christian activities of groups like the Freedom From Religion Foundation. But take away the Judeo-Christian foundations of this society, and what would you see atheists doing?

Remember the words of Richard Dawkins:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

Now, having said that, I readily admit that many atheists adopt Judeo-Christian values if their society is saturated with them, but they are acting better than their worldview

requires. They are acting *inconsistently* with what atheism really teaches. It’s good for us that they do, but for how long?

All the Arizone SB 1062 bill did was allow religious liberty to be raised as a defense

February 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard posted a letter by a group of law professors from various universities, including Harvard and Stanford, to explain what the Arizona religious liberty bill did. It turns out that all the Arizona bill did was specify how religious liberty protections apply within the state, using a federal standard that was already passed nearly unanimously by Congress during the presidency of *Bill Clinton*.

Here's what the professors said about the Arizona bill:

> The federal government and eighteen states have Religious Freedom Restoration Acts (RFRAs). Another twelve or thirteen states interpret their state constitutions to provide similar protections. These laws enact a uniform standard to be interpreted and applied to individual cases by courts. They say that before the government can burden a person's religious exercise, the government has to show a compelling justification.

> That standard makes sense. We should not punish people for practicing their religions unless we have a very good reason. **Arizona has had a RFRA for nearly fifteen years now; the federal government has had one since 1993; and RFRA's standard was the constitutional standard for the entire country from 1963 to 1990.** There have been relatively few cases; if you knew little about the Arizona RFRA until the current controversy, that is because it has had no disruptive effect in Arizona. Few people had heard of the federal RFRA before the current litigation over contraception and the Affordable Care Act.
>
> **SB1062 would amend the Arizona RFRA to address two ambiguities that have been the subject of litigation under other RFRAs. It would provide that people are covered when state or local government requires them to violate their religion in the conduct of their business, and it would provide that people are covered when sued by a private citizen invoking state or local law to demand that they violate their religion.**
>
> ***But nothing in the amendment would say who wins in either of these cases.*** The person invoking RFRA would still have to prove that he had a sincere religious belief and that state or local government was imposing a substantial burden on his exercise of that religious belief. And the government, or the person on the other side of the lawsuit, could still show that compliance with the law was necessary to serve a compelling government interest. As a business gets bigger and more impersonal, courts will become more skeptical about claims of substantial burden on the owner's exercise of religion. And as a business gets

> bigger, the government's claim of compelling interest will become stronger.

So basically, businesses have the same religious liberty right as individuals AND individuals can use religious liberty as a defense in a civil suit. That's it. No one is being licensed to discriminate indiscriminately. The bill did not say that the defense could be used in every case, it just said that religious liberty could be used by businesses as a defense (more likely to be accepted by small businesses), and that religious liberty could be used as a defense in civil suits. Whether the defense would be effective would still be decided by the courts.

Even the libertarian Cato Institute's Ilya Shapiro, who favors gay marriage, thought the bill was FINE:

> Even though I'm for marriage equality – next week I'll be filing a brief supporting the challenge to the marriage laws of Oklahoma and Utah in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit – I have no problem with Arizona's SB 1062.
>
> SB 1062 does nothing more than align state law with the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (which passed the House unanimously, the Senate 97-3, and was signed by President Clinton in 1993). That is, no government action can "substantially burden" religious exercise unless the government uses "the least restrictive means" to further a "compelling interest." This doesn't mean that people can "do whatever they want" – laws against murder would still trump religious human sacrifice – but it would prevent the government from forcing people to violate their religion if that can at all be avoided. Moreover, there's no mention of sexual orientation (or any other class or category).
>
> The prototypical scenario that SB 1062 is meant to prevent is the case of the New Mexicowedding photographer who was fined for declining to work a same-sex commitment ceremony. This photographer doesn't refuse to provide services to gay clients, but felt that she couldn't participate in the celebration of a gay wedding. There's also the Oregon bakerythat closed rather than having to provide wedding cakes for same-sex ceremonies. Why should these people be forced to engage in activity that violates their religious beliefs?

That's a libertarian speaking, there, and they are not social conservatives.

An article tweeted by Ryan T. Anderson from The Federalist asserts that the real lesson of the loss for religious liberty in Arizona is how easily the Republican Party will capitulate to pressure even when the truth is on their side. They just don't care about religious liberty enough to defend it.

Greenpeace co-founder Patrick Moore testifies to Congress about global warming

February 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily has a story to go with the 5-minute testimony.

Excerpt:

> A Greenpeace co-founder testified in Congress on Tuesday about global warming. What he said is hardly what anyone would expect.
>
> Patrick Moore came off as a raving denier.
>
> "There is no scientific proof that human emissions of carbon dioxide are the dominant cause of the minor warming of the Earth's atmosphere over the past 100 years," said Moore, who was testifying before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight.
>
> "If there were such a proof, it would be written down for all to see. No actual proof, as it is understood in science, exists."
>
> Moore is somewhat famous for leaving Greenpeace, a large environmentalist organization that grew from a small activist group he belonged to in 1971 while earning his doctorate in ecology. He quit in 1986 because it had become too political and strayed away from the science he believed was its institutional strength.
>
> Moore didn't hold back in his Senate appearance. He quickly zeroed in on the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and strongly scolded it for claiming there is a "95-100% probability" that man "has been the dominant cause of" global warming. Those numbers, he said, have been invented.
>
> He also characterized the IPCC's reliance on computer models as futile; told senators that history "fundamentally contradicts the certainty that human-caused CO2 emissions are the main cause of global warming"; and noted that "during the Greenhouse Ages," a period that precedes our fossil-fuel burning civilization, "there was no ice on either pole and all the land was tropical and subtropical from pole to pole."
>
> Moore further crossed the line of accepted climate change discourse when he insisted "that a warmer temperature than today's would be far better than a cooler one" and reminded lawmakers "that we are not capable, with our limited knowledge, of predicting which way" temperatures "will go next."

To with that testimony, here's an article from Forbes magazine (Feb 2013) about the real scientific consensus on global warming.

Excerpt:

> Don't look now, but maybe a scientific consensus exists concerning global

> warming after all. Only 36 percent of geoscientists and engineers believe that humans are creating a global warming crisis, according to a survey reported in the peer-reviewed *Organization Studies*. By contrast, a strong majority of the 1,077 respondents believe that nature is the primary cause of recent global warming and/or that future global warming will not be a very serious problem.
>
> The survey results show geoscientists (also known as earth scientists) and engineers hold similar views as meteorologists. Two recent surveys of meteorologists (summarized here and here) revealed similar skepticism of alarmist global warming claims.
>
> According to the newly published survey of geoscientists and engineers, merely 36 percent of respondents fit the "Comply with Kyoto" model. The scientists in this group "express the strong belief that climate change is happening, that it is not a normal cycle of nature, and humans are the main or central cause."

I have been listening to Hugh Hewitt's radio show a lot in the evenings to keep up with Russian troop movements near Ukraine, because I frankly think that the dictator Putin has been eyeing our defense cuts and licking his chops at our diplomatic weakness. When Putin hears our Secretary of State go out there and declare that a major threat to national security is global warming, that doesn't exactly discourage him from aggression.

It's junk science. It conflicts with observations. It's pushed by scientists to get more grant money. It's pushed by socialists to get more control. Period.

Apprenticeship programs help boys develop maturity and job skills

February 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you have boys, or if you know any, then this article in the left-leaning Atlantic is a must-read for you.

Excerpt:

> Young men are more likely to drop out of high school and are less likely to aspire to college than their female peers. Young men who are poor, live in a city, and are black or Latino are at even higher risk of unemployment and unplanned teen fatherhood than their peers in other demographics. As men's earnings have stagnated, marriage has declined. It's a vicious cycle: Being unmarried weakens men's commitment to the work force, but a stagnation in earnings is contributing to the decline in marriage.
>
> Robert Lerman—an economist at American University and fellow at the Urban Institute, a nonpartisan economic and social policy research center in Washington, D.C.—has a solution. He believes bringing apprentice-based learning to America's schools would both raise earnings and give young men the skills they need to be good husbands and fathers. Put boys in a real-world situation outside the classroom, with skilled adults as mentors, Lerman says, and students have a chance to engage in on-the-job training in a wide range of fields from baking to boat-building, farming to architecture, public health to civil engineering. This is learning in context and it's what young men (and women) crave: It feels immediate and real. It is not isolated or abstract; it is refreshingly relevant, and it is taking place in real time, in real space, and among adults who take young people seriously. Youth apprenticeship has an immediacy that engages students who have trouble paying attention in class; instead, they are being given the time and the means to develop genuine mastery in a given field. At the very same time, they are cultivating skills—such as how to communicate effectively, problem-solve, work in teams, and maintain a positive attitude—that help them be reliable partners to their spouses and present, stable fathers to their children.
>
> "If we teach everything entirely in a classroom context, we're not going to be as effective—even when it comes to academics," Lerman tells me. "The reality is that people learn best—whether it's cognitive or technical skills or even how to get along with others—*in context*."

Although skill-based training is in decline, the article convincingly show how boys learn better when their education includes real-world skills and real-world behaviors.

Here's just one snippet:

> Robert Halpern, a professor of education at the Erikson Institute in Chicago, whose research focuses on after-school programs for poor children and their families, argues that the best schooling for adolescent developmental needs goes beyond the classroom. During a 30-month investigation of one afterschool apprenticeship program, After School Matters in Chicago, Halpern found that participating youth, who attend the program a mere three afternoons a week for one school year, became more flexible thinkers and undertook tasks with more care. The youngsters learned to persevere and understand the value of working through problems. They became more self-responsible and more patient. Notably, their public behavior changed; they became "more mature, more appropriately assertive," Halpern explains in his book *The Means to Grow Up: Reinventing Apprenticeship as a Developmental Support in Adolescence*. These are all skills that serve young people well when they enter the workforce, and when they start families of their own.
>
> These apprenticeships, according to Halpern, gave youth "a sense of different ways of being an adult, what it means to be passionate about a discipline, and what it takes to become good at thinking." Not only were students learning actively rather than passively for the first time in their lives, the experience enabled many of them to begin to overcome years of thinking of themselves as subpar learners. In so doing, their experiences opened up a future that would otherwise have remained closed, and influenced them at a critical time in their lives. These "very specific learning and work experiences leave a deep imprint on still malleable selves."

You need to read the whole thing if this is relevant to you. It's no use complaining about "man up" and other nonsense. The real causes of male decline are systemic. Find the policies that work and implement them. Throw out the failed ideology of feminism from the classroom and do what works for our young men.

Russia launches armed invasion of Crimea region of Ukraine

March 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> Russian troops moved into Crimea Friday, U.S. officials told Fox News, prompting Ukraine to accuse Russia of an "armed invasion."
>
> At the White House, President Obama said the U.S. government is "deeply concerned" by reports of Russian "military movements" and warned any violation of Ukraine's sovereignty would be "deeply destabilizing."
>
> "There will be costs" for any military intervention, he said, without specifying what those costs might be.
>
> U.S. officials told Fox News they see "evidence of air and maritime movement into and out of Crimea by Russian forces" although the Pentagon declined to officially "characterize" the movement.
>
> Agence France Press quoted a top Ukranian official as saying Russian aircraft carrying nearly 2,000 suspected troops have landed at a military air base near the regional capital of the restive Crimean peninsula.
>
> "Thirteen Russian aircraft landed at the airport of Gvardeyskoye (near Simferopol) with 150 people in each one," Sergiy Kunitsyn, the Ukrainian president's special representative in Crimea, told the local ATR television channel, according to AFP. He accused Russia of an "armed invasion."
>
> The new developments prompted Ukraine to accuse Russia of a "military invasion and occupation" — a claim that brought an alarming new dimension to the crisis.
>
> [Republican] Mike Rogers, chairman of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, issued a statement late Friday saying, "It appears that the Russian military now controls the Crimean peninsula. This aggression is a threat not only to Ukraine, but to regional peace and stability. Russia's latest action is yet another indicator that Vladimir Putin's hegemonic ambitions threaten U.S. interests and allies around the world."

Why would Russia be so bold about landing troops in the Ukraine? Well, what have they learned about Obama?

Obama mocked the idea that Russia was our enemy

Remember when Obama said this about Romney?

"The 1980s are calling to ask for their foreign policy back" Obama told Romney, in one debate. And this lack of seriousness about Russia caused Obama to bungle the European missile defense deal with Russia, such that Obama basically gave away the store.

The radically leftist UK Guardian explains in this September 2009 article:

> Barack Obama has abandoned the controversial Pentagon plan to build a missile defence system inEurope that had long soured relations with Russia.
>
> In one of the sharpest breaks yet with the policies of the Bush administration, Obama said the new approach would offer "stronger, swifter and smarter" defence for the US and its allies. He said it would focus on the threat posed by Iran's short- and medium-range missiles, rather than its intercontinental nuclear capabilities.
>
> Obama announced the reversal officially at a news conference today. "This new approach will provide capabilities sooner, build on proven systems to offer greater defences to the threat of attack than the 2007 European missile defence programme," he said.
>
> He phoned the leaders of Poland and the Czech Republic last night to tell them he had dropped plans to site missile interceptors and a radar station in their respective countries. Russia had furiously opposed the project, claiming it targeted Moscow's nuclear arsenal.

Here is the former director of the CIA James Woolsey, who served in the Clinton administration:

> President Barack Obama's administration recently threatened to veto the defense budget, citing "serious concerns" over provisions that limit the U.S. missile defense know-how that the White House is permitted to share with Moscow. This is the sort of information that Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, in his earlier days, would have assigned his spies to steal. Through its single-minded pursuit of "resetting" relations with Russia, the Obama administration may simply be willing to hand over this information and, in doing so, weaken U.S. national security.
>
> Only two days after issuing the veto threat — and as Obama tried to warm Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to U.S. missile defense plans at the G-8 Summit in Deauville, France — the House of Representatives passed the defense bill. It included the provision that the president's team finds so offensive: Section 1228 requires that no funds can be used to provide the Russian Federation with sensitive U.S. missile defense technology.
>
> […]They're right to be concerned. Tehran is thumbing its nose at Washington and doubling down on its missile program. The director of national intelligence, James Clapper, told a congressional panel in March that Iran "would likely choose missile delivery as its preferred method of delivering a nuclear weapon" and that the Islamic Republic "continues to expand the scale, reach and sophistication of its ballistic missile forces, many of which are inherently capable of carrying a nuclear payload."
>
> Russian assistance has contributed to the progress made by Iran's nuclear and

> missile programs. Should the United States share critical information about its missile defenses with the Russians, a Russian entity — official or otherwise — could pass that information along to Tehran, enabling the Iranians to capitalize on the weaknesses in the U.S. system.
>
> Nevertheless, the Obama administration continues to demonstrate its penchant for bargaining away missile defense, and the United States is not currently developing and deploying missile defense technology at the rate and quantity the threat demands.

Here is the leftist Washington Post in March 2013:

> The Pentagon is canceling the planned fourth phase of an anti-missile system that had been scheduled for deployment in Poland in 2022. The SM3 IIb missile was significant for two reasons: It was the only interceptor planned for the Europe-based system that could have defended the United States against an attack from Iran; and it was the component of the system most decried by Russia, which claimed that it could be used against its intercontinental missiles.
>
> As it did when it canceled a previous European missile plan in 2009, the administration insisted that its decision had nothing to do with Russia or its objections. The phase-four missile was dropped, officials said, because Congress had cut some of its funding, meaning it could not have been completed in the next decade, even while the timeline of possible ICBM threats is shortening. Officials say the money can be better spent on deploying more interceptors in the United States and improving their components. As proof that Moscow has not been appeased, the White House pointed to statements by Russian officials saying they are still unsatisfied with U.S. missile defense plans and continue to demand binding legal assurances that the system can't be aimed at Russia.

What do you think that Putin learned from Obama's continuous appeasement and withdrawal from Europe? Well, he learned the same lesson that Hitler learned by watching the naive pacifists who opposed him – he learned that you can bully great nations if they are lead by weaklings. And that is what caused World War II – the refusal of peaceful nations to check the aggression of a tyrant early.

What has Obama been telling Russia?

Here he is with Medvedyev:

The best way to avoid war is to make aggressors understand that there is a cost for aggression. Obama's many foreign policy blunders – failing to help the Iranian pro-democracy forces, failing to speak out for Georgia, failing to be tough with Russia, failing to help the right people in Syria – have made it clear to Putin that aggression will go unpunished. When Democrats re-elected this man in 2012, we basically abandoned freedom-loving countries like Ukraine to the Russian tyrant. But did Democrat voters care? Of course not. They were thinking of the 1 trillion dollars of government checks that would be handed out to them in exchange for re-electing Obama. Foreign policy and the

peace of the free world was the last thing on their minds.

Take a half-hour and watch this Discovery Institute documentary on environmental extremism

March 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It runs for 31 minutes.

Description:

> Are humans the enemy? Should pigs and peas have constitutional rights? The War on Humans is a 31-minute documentary that critiques growing efforts to disparage the value of humans in the name of saving the planet. The documentary investigates the views of anti-human activists who want to grant legal rights to animals, plants, and "Mother Earth," and who want to reduce the human population by up to 90%. The video features Discovery Institute Senior Fellow Wesley J. Smith, author of a companion e-book with the same title.

Fascinating!

Podcasts

And there are some podcasts to go with it for those who like podcasts:

Podcast 1:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, hear from bioethicist Wesley J. Smith as he talks about his new book *The War on Humans*, also adapted as a documentary film. In this first podcast of the series, Smith discusses what makes humans unique among the creatures of the earth, and why it matters: "Universal human rights are at stake. The intrinsic dignity of human life is at stake. The understanding of our unique place in the world, both in terms of or value and in terms of obligation, they are at stake." Listen in!

The MP3 is here.

Podcast 2:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, hear from bioethicist Wesley J. Smith as he continues his conversation on his new book *The War on Humans*, also adapted as a documentary film. In this second podcast of the series, you'll hear about how the conservation movement turned into an anti-human movement, and how this affects humans, especially in the developing world and in marginalized people groups.

The MP3 is here.

Podcast 3:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, hear from bioethicist Wesley J. Smith as he continues his conversation on his new book *The War on Humans*, also adapted as

> a documentary film. In this third podcast of the series, you'll hear about the legal movement to establish legal rights for animals, and even plants. Smith examines the meaning of the term "personhood" and its implications for human rights.

The MP3 is here.

A recent story about eco-terrorism was in the news.

Physicist Victor Stenger debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

March 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate took place on March 1, 2010 at Oregon State University.

In this debate, Victor Stenger does affirm his belief that the universe could be eternal in his second rebuttal (1:02:30), thus denying the standard Big Bang cosmology. He also denies the law of conservation of energy and asserts that something can come from nothing in his concluding speech (1:33:50). He also caused the audience to start laughing when he said that Jesus was not moral and supported slavery. There is almost no snark in this summary. Instead, I quoted Dr. Stenger *verbatim* in many places. I still think that it is very entertaining even without the snarky paraphrasing.

The debate includes 30 minutes of Q&A with the students.

Here is the MP3 file for the audio.

Here's the video of the debate:

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

- The ontological argument
- The contingency argument
- The cosmological argument
- The moral argument
- The resurrection of Jesus (3-fact version)
- Religious experience

Dr. Stenger's opening speech:

- There is no scientific evidence for God's existence in the textbooks
- There is no scientific evidence for God acting in the universe
- God doesn't talk to people and tell them things they couldn't possibly know
- The Bible says that the Earth is flat, etc.
- There is no scientific evidence that God answers prayers
- God doesn't exist because people who believe in him are ignorant
- Human life is not optimally designed and appears to be the result of a blind, ad hoc evolutionary process
- The beginning of the universe is not ordered (low entropy) but random and chaotic
- It's theoretically possible that quantum tunneling explains the origin of the universe
- The laws of physics are not objectively real, they are "our inventions"
- Regarding the beginning of the universe, the explanation is that something came from nothing*
- Nothing* isn't really nothing, it is "the total chaos that we project existed just before the big bang"

- If something has no structure, then “it is as much nothing as nothing can be”
- Consciousness is explainable solely on the basis of material processes
- There are well-informed, rational non-believers in the world and God would not allow that

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

Stenger’s argument that there is no objective evidence for God’s existence:

- First, it is not required that God rely only on objective evidence in order to draw people to himself (Alvin Plantinga)
- Second, God is not required to provide evidence to everyone, only to the people who he knows would respond to him
- Third, Craig gave lots of objective evidence, from science, history and philosophy
- Stenger asks for certain evidence (answered prayers, prophecy, etc.), but Craig presented the evidence we have

Stenger’s argument that the balance of energy is zero so “nothing” exists:

- if you have the same amount of assets and liabilities, it doesn’t mean that nothing exists – your assets and liabilities exist
- Christopher Isham says that there needs to be a cause to create the positive and negative energy even if they balance
- the quantum gravity model contradicts observations
- the vacuum is not the same as nothing, it contains energy and matter
- the BVG theorem proves that *any* universe that is expanding must have a beginning

Stenger’s argument that mental operations can be reduced to physical operations:

- mental properties are not reducible to physical properties
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with self-identity over time
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with thoughts about other things
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with free will
- substance dualism (mind/body dualism) is a better explanation for our mental experience
- God is a soul without a body

Dr. Stenger’s first rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- Craig’s premise is “everything has a cause”, but quantum mechanics has causeless events
- There are speculative theories about how something could have come into being uncaused out of nothing
- “I don’t know of a single working cosmologist today who believes there was a singularity prior to the Big Bang”

- “If there wasn’t a singularity then there’s no basis for arguing that time began at that point”
- “There’s no reason from cosmology that we know of that the universe can’t be eternal”
- “When I talk about an eternal universe, I mean a universe that has no beginning or end”
- The Hartle-Hawking model doesn’t have a beginning
- “There was no violation of energy conservation by having a universe coming from nothing”
- “The universe *could have* come from a previous universe for example or even just from a region of chaos”
- The paper by Vilenkin is counteracted by other papers (he doesn’t specify which ones)

Craig’s moral argument:

- Dr. Craig is arguing from ignorance
- But morality can be decided by humanity just like governments pass laws, and that’s objective
- Dr. Craig has too little respect for the human intellect
- I don’t need to tell me that slavery is wrong
- The Bible supports slavery
- Atheists can behave as good as theists
- Morality just evolved naturally as an aid to survival

Craig’s resurrection argument:

- No Roman historians wrote about the execution of Jesus but none of them did
- The empty tomb is doubtful because it is only mentioned in the gospels, not by Paul
- John Dominic Crossan says there was no empty tomb
- Christianity only survived because the Roman empire thought that they were useful

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- There is no reason to prefer an indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics
- Dr. Stenger himself wrote that deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics are possible
- The vacuum in quantum mechanics is not nothing
- The quantum vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal
- The cosmological argument does not require a singularity
- The Hartle-Hawking model is from 1983
- Hawking says that there is a beginning of space and time *after* that model
- The Hartle-Hawking model *does still have a beginning of time* – the model is not

eternal
- The BVG theorem that requires a beginning for expanding universes is widely accepted among cosmologists

Craig's moral argument:

- Stenger redefined objective to mean that most people agree with it – but that's not what objective means
- Objective means right and wrong whether anyone accepts it or not
- Richard Dawkins himself says that on atheism there is "no evil and no good" – why is he wrong?
- Even Dr. Stenger says that morality is the same as passing laws – it's arbitrary and varies by time and place
- But on his view, right and wrong are the same as deciding which side of the road to drive on
- But somethings really are right and some things are really wrong

Craig's resurrection argument:

- Josephus is a Roman historian and he wrote about Jesus, for example
- There were four biographies of Jesus are the best sources for his life
- The scholars that Stenger mentioned are on the radical fringe

Dr. Stenger's second rebuttal:

Knowledge and the burden of proof:

- Dr. Craig has to bear the burden of proof, not me – because his claim is more "extravagant"
- "I don't have to prove that a God was not necessary to create the universe"
- "I don't have to prove that a God did not design the universe and life"
- "I don't have to prove that the universe did not have a beginning"
- "I don't have to prove that God did not provide us with our moral sense"
- There are a lot of books written about how morality evolved naturally
- "I don't have to prove that the events surrounding the supposed resurrection of Jesus did not take place"
- Bart Ehrman says that the gospels are generally unreliable (Note: Ehrman accepts all 3 of Craig's minimal facts)
- Just because people are willing to die for a cause, does not make their leader God, e.g. – the Emperor of Japan

Aesthetic concerns about the universe:

- I don't like dark matter and I wouldn't have made the universe with dark matter
- I don't like the doctrine of penal substitution
- I don't like the doctrine of original sin

- I don’t like the heat death of the universe

Dr. Craig’s conclusion:

The case for atheism:

- Dr. Stenger had two arguments and he has to support his premises
- Dr. Craig addressed his two arguments and each premise and Dr. Stenger never came back on it

The contingency argument:

- Dr. Stenger has dropped the refutation of this argument

The cosmological argument:

- The theoretical vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal

The moral argument:

- He asserts that things are wrong, but there is no grounding for that to be objective on atheism

The resurrection of Jesus:

- There are surveys of scholars on the empty tomb and 75% of them agree with it
- Bart Ehrman agrees with all 3 of the minimal facts that Dr. Craig presented
- Ehrman’s objection to the resurrection is not historical: he’s an atheist – he thinks miracles are impossible

Religious experience:

- No response from Dr. Stenger

Dr. Stenger’s conclusion

The cosmological argument:

- “I argued that we have very good physical reasons to understand how something can come from nothing”
- “There is a natural tendency in the universe… to go from.. simpler thing to the more complicated thing”
- The transition from a vapor to a liquid to ice shows how something could come from nothing
- “It cannot be proven that the universe had a beginning”

The moral argument:

- Objective morality, which is independent of what people think, could be developed

based on what people think
- “Jesus himself was not a tremendously moral person… he had no particular regard for the poor… he certainly supported slavery… he was for the subjugation of women” (audience laughter)

The resurrection argument:

- Bart Ehrman says that the majority of the gospels are unreliable

Religious experience:

- I don’t see any evidence that there is anything more to religious experience than just stuff in their heads

God’s purpose of the world should be to make people feel happy:

- God could have made people feel happier
- God could have made people not die
- God could could have made the universe smaller: it’s too big
- God could have made it possible for humans to live anywhere “even in space”

Arthur Brooks: why is the American public shifting from optimism to envy?

March 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

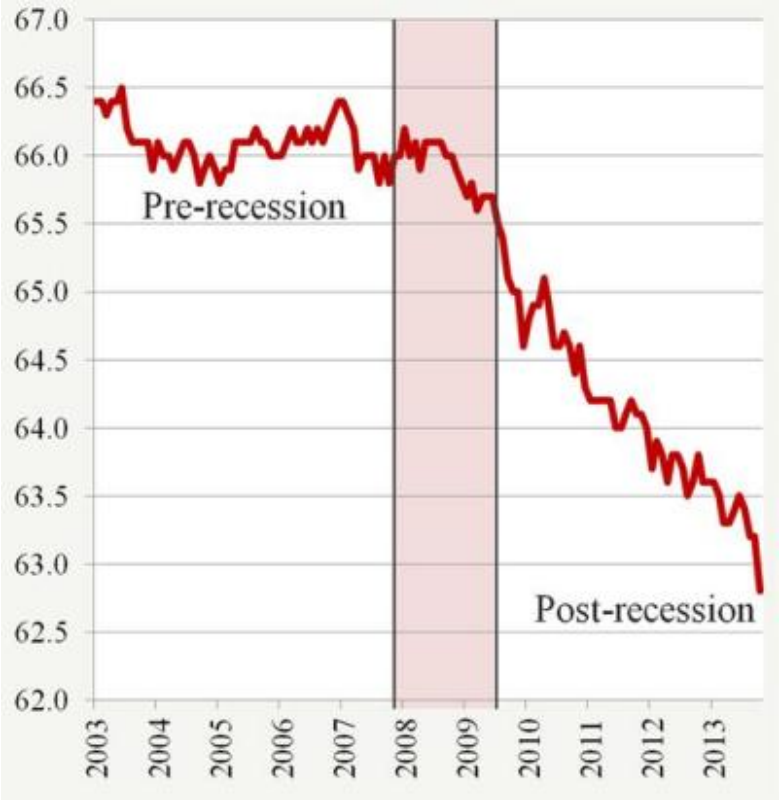

Labor Force Participation down to 62.8%

An editorial by Arthur Brooks appeared today in the leftist New York Times. His topic is the shift from optimism to envy, why it is happening, and whether envy makes us happier than optimism.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> The Irish singer Bono once described a difference between America and his native land. "In the United States," he explained, "you look at the guy that lives in the mansion on the hill, and you think, you know, one day, if I work really hard, I could live in that mansion. In Ireland, people look up at the guy in the mansion on the hill and go, one day, I'm going to get that bastard."
>
> […]Unsurprisingly, psychologists have found that envy pushes down life satisfaction and depresses well-being. Envy is positively correlated with depression and neuroticism, and the hostility it breeds may actually make us sick. Recent work suggests that envy can help explain our complicated relationship with social media: it often leads to destructive "social comparison," which decreases happiness. To understand this, just picture yourself scrolling through your ex's wedding photos.
>
> My own data analysis confirms a strong link between economic envy and unhappiness. In 2008, Gallup asked a large sample of Americans whether they

> were “angry that others have more than they deserve.” People who strongly disagreed with that statement — who were not envious, in other words — were almost five times more likely to say they were “very happy” about their lives than people who strongly agreed. Even after I controlled for income, education, age, family status, religion and politics, this pattern persisted.
>
> It’s safe to conclude that a national shift toward envy would be toxic for American culture.
>
> Unfortunately, in the wake of the Great Recession, such a shift may well be underway, given the increasing anxiety about income inequality and rising sympathy for income redistribution. According to data from the General Social Survey, the percentage of Americans who feel strongly that “government ought to reduce the income differences between the rich and the poor” is at its highest since the 1970s. In January, 43 percent of Americans told the Pew Research Center that government should do “a lot” to “reduce the gap between the rich and everyone else.”
>
> Why the shift? The root cause of increasing envy is a belief that opportunity is in decline. According to a 2007 poll on inequality and civic engagement by the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, just 30 percent of people who believe that everyone has the opportunity to succeed describe income inequality as “a serious problem.” But among people who feel that “only some” Americans have a shot at success, fully 70 percent say inequality is a major concern.
>
> People who believe that hard work brings success do not begrudge others their prosperity. But if the game looks rigged, envy and a desire for redistribution will follow.
>
> This is the direction we’re heading. According to Pew, the percentage of Americans who feel that “most people who want to get ahead” can do so through hard work has dropped by 14 points since about 2000. As recently as 2007, Gallup found that 70 percent were satisfied with their opportunities to get ahead by working hard; only 29 percent were dissatisfied. Today, that gap has shrunk to 54 percent satisfied, and 45 percent dissatisfied. In just a few years, we have gone from seeing our economy as a real meritocracy to viewing it as something closer to a coin flip.

There is a good lesson in this for people who want what is best for the poor. Simply receiving money from others is not going to make poor people happy. What we need to focus on is providing the poorest people with opportunities. For example, we need to reduce barriers that employers face to hire them, and we need to make the school system focus more on skill-building and less on indoctrination in leftist ideology.

Democrats like to give lots of speeches on income inequality, stoking the fires of envy, while doing nothing to help people learn useful skills in school and to help employers hire people more easily, setting them on the path of lifelong independence. For example,

Democrats oppose school choice, as when they killed the D.C. voucher program that helped poor black students. Less school choice helps public schools to be insulated from competition, so that they can focus on what they want (bigger government, so they get paid more) rather than what parents want (bad teachers fired, students to learn useful skills, more male teachers in the classroom, a focus on vocational skills rather than ideology). Just this past week, the ultra-leftist mayor of New York city kicked charter schools out of the city. Why? Because if children learn useful skills in better schools, then they will be less dependent on government, and less responsive to "envy rhetoric".

Democrats also passed Obamacare, which punishes businesses with taxes if they allow part-time workers to work for more than 30 hours a week. Many jobs were lost because of this, and many people are now struggling to pay higher premiums for plans with higher deductibles and co-pays. Now the Democrats are talking about raising the minimum wage, which is going to put even more pressure on employers to lay off workers, because they can't afford to pay them more for the same work. For Democrats, this is all to the good, though. Because if the poor don't have jobs, or can't work enough hours, they start to see the economic game as "rigged" and they are more responsive to "envy rhetoric".

What we need to see is that it's not the Democrats' objective to help people find jobs. They gain when people become more envious, like in European countries, and start to vote to grow the size and power of government to redistribute wealth. Speeches about income inequality never have the goal of giving people jobs. None of Obama's policies aim to do that. That's why he won't build the Keystone XL pipeline, or boost domestic energy development here at home. Instead, they want to extend unemployment benefits and pass the costs on to the next generation. Their goal is to get you unemployed or on disability or on welfare, so that you will vote for the government to continue to take your neighbor's money. That manufactured envy is what keeps the Democrats in power.

In 2008, Sarah Palin predicted that if Barack Obama were elected, Russia would invade Ukraine

March 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Radically leftist CNN reports. (H/T Letitia)

Excerpt:

> In 2008, when she was the GOP vice presidential nominee, Palin questioned in a speech whether then-Sen. Barack Obama would have the foreign policy credentials to handle a scenario in which Russian President Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine.
>
> "After the Russian army invaded the nation of Georgia, Senator Obama's reaction was one of indecision and moral equivalence – the kind of response that would only encourage Russia's Putin to invade Ukraine next," she said in Reno, Nevada on October 21, 2008.
>
> The former Alaska governor was happy to highlight her prediction on Friday and scold those who criticized her 2008 comments.
>
> […]On Facebook, Palin continued to explain how she anticipated a growing crisis between Russia and Ukraine, where there has now been an uncontested arrival of Russian military forces by air at a Russian base in Ukraine's Crimea region. They are believed to be Russian land forces, according to a U.S. assessment.

Now let's review the events that caused Putin to believe that Obama would do nothing to stop his aggression.

Why is Russia so aggressive?

Russia learned from repeated failures by Obama that there would be no price to pay for aggression.

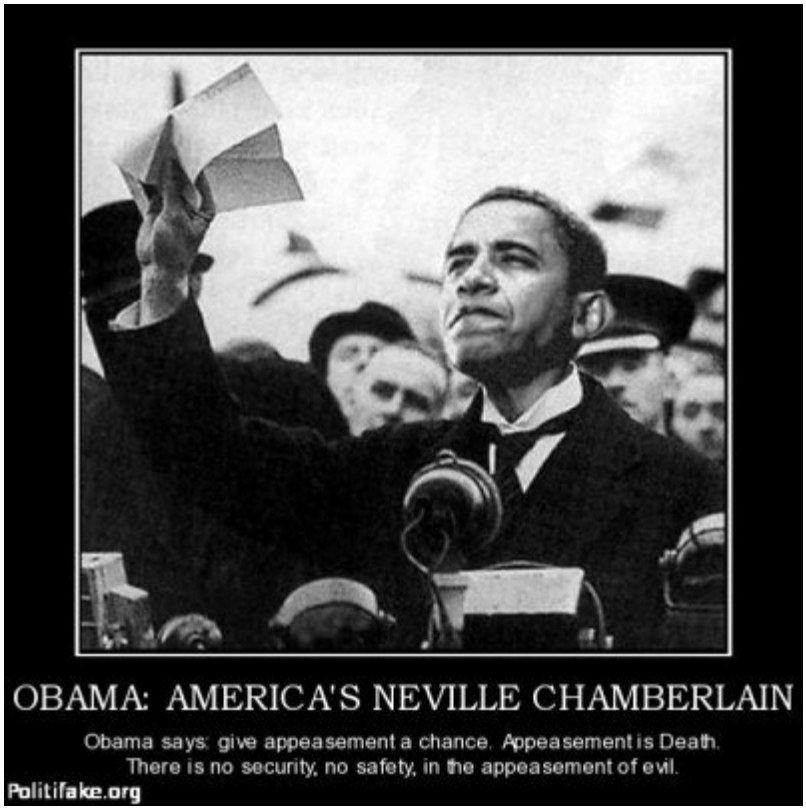

Neville Chamberlain Obama: peace in our time
Let's make a list of failures, just off the top of my head.

- Scrapping the Bush missile defense plan
- Skip national security meetings on Russia
- Skip Presidential daily briefings (PDBs)
- Making deal to allow Iran's nuclear program to continue
- Leaking details of Israel's strike plan against Iran
- Favoring terrorist rights over national security
- Cutting production of the F-22 Raptor
- Cutting the military budget in 2009
- Cutting the Pentagon budget in 2012
- Cutting the military budget in 2014
- Prosecutions of counter-terrorism experts
- Lying about a Youtube video to cover-up Benghazi
- Mocking Romney for thinking that Russia is our enemy
- Promising Russian president Medvedev he would be more "flexible" after his re-election

Investors Business Daily documents more of Obama's 5 years of foreign policy weakness.

Even the leftist Washington Post agrees

That's not just me saying that, it's the radically leftist Washington Post!

Excerpt: (links removed)

> For five years, President Obama has led a foreign policy based more on how he thinks the world should operate than on reality. It was a world in which "the tide

> of war is receding" and the United States could, without much risk, radically reduce the size of its armed forces. Other leaders, in this vision, would behave rationally and in the interest of their people and the world. Invasions, brute force, great-power games and shifting alliances — these were things of the past. Secretary of State John F. Kerry displayed this mindset on ABC's "This Week" Sunday when he said, of Russia's invasion of neighboring Ukraine, "It's a 19th century act in the 21st century."
>
> That's a nice thought, and we all know what he means. A country's standing is no longer measured in throw-weight or battalions. The world is too interconnected to break into blocs. A small country that plugs into cyberspace can deliver more prosperity to its people (think Singapore or Estonia) than a giant with natural resources and standing armies.
>
> Unfortunately, Russian President Vladimir Putin has not received the memo on 21st-century behavior. Neither has China's president, Xi Jinping, who is engaging in gunboat diplomacy against Japan and the weaker nations of Southeast Asia. Syrian president Bashar al-Assad is waging a very 20th-century war against his own people, sending helicopters to drop exploding barrels full of screws, nails and other shrapnel onto apartment buildings where families cower in basements. These men will not be deterred by the disapproval of their peers, the weight of world opinion or even disinvestment by Silicon Valley companies. They are concerned primarily with maintaining their holds on power.
>
> […]The urge to pull back — to concentrate on what Mr. Obama calls "nation-building at home" — is nothing new, as former ambassador Stephen Sestanovich recounts in his illuminating history of U.S. foreign policy, "Maximalist." There were similar retrenchments after the Korea and Vietnam wars and when the Soviet Union crumbled. But the United States discovered each time that the world became a more dangerous place without its leadership and that disorder in the world could threaten U.S. prosperity.
>
> […]**Military strength, trustworthiness as an ally, staying power in difficult corners of the world such as Afghanistan — these still matter, much as we might wish they did not. While the United States has been retrenching, the tide of democracy in the world, which once seemed inexorable, has been receding. In the long run, that's harmful to U.S. national security, too.**
>
> As Mr. Putin ponders whether to advance further — into eastern Ukraine, say — he will measure the seriousness of U.S. and allied actions, not their statements. China, pondering its next steps in the East China Sea, will do the same. Sadly, that's the nature of the century we're living in.

Everyone admits that Obama's weakness has caused these foreign policy problems. We elected someone who wants our influence abroad to decline. The people who elected him just did not understand foreign policy and national security concerns, and now Ukrainians

are going to pay with their freedom, and possibly with their lives, because of our inability to project power abroad. This is the high cost of isolationism for our peace-loving, pro-democracy, pro-capitalism allies.

What should we do now?

Speaking of Politico, they published an 8-point plan for responding to Putin's invasion of Ukraine, authored by moderate Republican Senator Marco Rubio.

Here are numbers two, seven and eight:

> Second, President Obama should dispatch Secretary of State John Kerry and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to Kiev to show U.S. support for Ukraine's transitional government, and urge our allies in the European Union and NATO to send representatives there as well. The United States should convene an emergency meeting of NATO to develop a strong united response from the trans-Atlantic alliance. And we should send high-level delegations to our allies in Central and Eastern Europe to reinforce the fact that we are standing by them. As part of this work with our allies, we should develop a series of economic and security assurance measures to help the transitional government in Kiev remain stable and carry out a democratic transition.
>
> […]Seventh, the Obama administration should immediately add more Russian officials to the Magnitsky list, which places travel bans and other sanctions on them – something President Obama failed to do in December. Living in Miami, I have seen in recent years the wave of Russian tourists coming to our city and state to spend money and buy property. Many are government officials or allies whose wealth stems from allegiance to Putin, and we should limit their ability to travel here.
>
> Finally, in the Senate, Majority Leader Harry Reid should immediately halt his effort to force a Senate vote on Rose Gottemoeller next week to be under secretary of state for arms control and international security. As I, Sens. John Cornyn and Jim Risch said yesterday, we shouldn't even be thinking about arms-control negotiations with Russia anytime soon. And especially not negotiations led by a State Department official, such as Ms. Gottemoeller, who has tried to play down and potentially kept information from Congress and our allies about Russian violations of arms-control agreements.

But we have no reason to expect that Obama will do *any* of these things. Why? Because the real enemy we face is *global warming*.

John Kerry: global warming is "a weapon of mass destruction"

Meanwhile, John Kerry gave a speech in which he asserted that among the biggest threats to national security was global warming – "the world's most fearsome weapon of mass destruction".

I fully expect Kerry to blame global warming for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The Obama administration has already blamed our record cold temperatures on global warming. 17

years without significant warming, according to the UN IPCC, and yet that’s what our government is focused on. Behold, the superstition and credulity of the secular left.

Tonight at 8 PM Eastern: live-streaming of William Lane Craig on the Kalam Cosmological argument

March 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Craig is speaking on the kalam cosmological argument on Monday night at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

There will be a live-stream here.

Details:

> What happened at the beginning of time? Dr. William Lane Craig will be using science and philosophy to pain a picture of what happened, and discuss how the implications should rule our lives. Dr. Craig is considered one of the world's experts on this topic, so you won't want to miss it! Door open at 8!

Time: Monday, March 3, 2014 at 8:00 pm to 9:30 pm EST

Here's what Dr. Craig said about this event on Facebook:

> Monday night I speak at Georgia Tech on the kalam cosmological argument. **I plan to expand on things said in the Carroll debate.**

Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/events/1469808433242091/

The Craig-Carroll debate

If you missed the Carroll debate, you can watch the video here:

That's the debate, here's the concluding remarks:

And here's my short review, which contains a link to another review as well.

Ryan T. Anderson: what is marriage? why does it matter?

March 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude others
- It's meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can't say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and

permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Related posts

- Ryan Anderson explains how gay marriage is already infringing on religious liberty
- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson debates gay marriage with S.E. Cupp on the Blaze
- Ryan T. Anderson explains marriage to Piers Morgan and Suze Orman
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Frank Turek: is "equality" the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults "co-parenting" children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

Obama administration wins court battle to have Christian homeschooling family deported

March 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Todd Starnes at Fox News does the best job of covering the religious liberty issue, and here is his latest story.

Excerpt:

> Uwe and Hannelore Romeike came to the United States in 2008 seeking political asylum. They fled their German homeland in the face of religious persecution for homeschooling their children.
>
> They wanted to live in a country where they could raise their children in accordance with their Christian beliefs.
>
> The Romeikes were initially given asylum, but the Obama administration objected – claiming that German laws that outlaw homeschooling do not constitute persecution.
>
> […]"I think this is a part of the Obama administration's overall campaign to crush religious freedom in this country," said Michael Farris, chairman of the Home School Legal Defense Association. His organization is representing family.
>
> "The Obama administration's attitude toward religious freedom, particularly religious freedom for Christians is shocking," he told me in an exclusive telephone interview. "I have little doubt that if this family had been of some other faith that the decision would have never been appealed in the first place. They would have let this family stay."
>
> Had the family stayed in Germany, where homeschooling is illegal, they would have faced the prospect of losing their children. Like the Pilgrims, they fled their homeland yearning for a place where they could be free.
>
> Farris said the religious bias perpetrated by the Obama administration is "palpable."
>
> "It's a denial of the essence of America," he said. "The Pilgrims left England to go to Holland to seek religious freedom. They came here to seek religious freedom and parental rights for their children. Had this administration been waiting at Plymouth Rock, they would've told the Pilgrims to go back home."

But the United States has become hostile to people coming here to have religious liberty. But there is one group that is allowed to stay – no questions asked.

Excerpt:

> Building on pro-gay policies put in place by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, President Obama today ordered overseas federal agencies to fight local anti-gay

> violence and provide asylum to homosexuals seeking protection.
>
> Obama said, “I am deeply concerned by the violence and discrimination targeting LGBT persons around the world — whether it is passing laws that criminalize LGBT status, beating citizens simply for joining peaceful LGBT pride celebrations, or killing men, women, and children for their perceived sexual orientation.”
>
> His order was immediately praised by the Human Rights Campaign, the nation’s top lobby for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders. “The Obama administration has made a tremendous difference in the lives of LGBT people in the United States and this new strategy helps to extend that presidential leadership across the globe,” said HRC President Joe Solmonese.
>
> “There is no question that the administration’s record of advancing equality for LGBT people has been enhanced by the leadership of Secretary Clinton who consistently underscores the simple truth that LGBT rights are human rights.”
>
> A key element of the president’s memo to federal agencies would open up the United States to asylum seekers who are gay. “Those LGBT persons who seek refuge from violence and persecution face daunting challenges,” said Obama in his memo. “In order to improve protection for LGBT refugees and asylum seekers at all stages of displacement, the Departments of State and Homeland Security shall enhance their ongoing efforts to ensure that LGBT refugees and asylum seekers have equal access to protection and assistance, particularly in countries of first asylum.
>
> “In addition, the Departments of State, Justice, and Homeland Security shall ensure appropriate training is in place so that relevant Federal Government personnel and key partners can effectively address the protection of LGBT refugees and asylum seekers, including by providing to them adequate assistance and ensuring that the federal government has the ability to identify and expedite resettlement of highly vulnerable persons with urgent protection needs.”

Here’s an example of how Obama welcomes some people, even as he rejects others.

Imagine being deported back to a country that you know will take your children from you. That’s what the Obama administration did to this family. That’s how much they believe in religious liberty.

What should the United States do now to punish Russia for invading Ukraine?

March 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

FairTaxNancy tweeted this list of seven responses for Obama to choose from Fox News columnist K. T. McFarland.

Here are some:

> **First:** I will reverse my decision to halt the missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic. America will go ahead as originally planned and build the missile shield, but an accelerated basis. That means U.S. military personal will be working alongside Polish and Czech military to construct and operate the systems. The missile shield is designed to protect Europe from Iranian missiles, but you get the point. Uniformed U.S. military will soon be stationed near the Russian border.
>
> **Second:** I will reverse course on the defense budget. Your defense minister just announced Russia is negotiating basing rights in seven nations around the world. He also said you were rebuilding old Soviet era military bases in central Asia. Your parliament has just voted unanimously to invade Ukraine. In light of that, this is no time for my Secretary of Defense to announce we're gutting our military.
>
> **Fifth:** I will send a trade delegation to Poland and other countries in Central Europe to explore ways of helping them use fracking technologies to develop their own gas reserves. Chevron and Shell have already signed a $13 billion deal with Ukraine. I expect others to follow.
>
> At the same time I will throw roadblocks in front of any American energy company that seeks to develop your eastern Siberian fields. Your existing oil fields in western Siberia have, maybe, a decade left. You need our technology to develop new ones. You're not getting it.

Investors Business Daily had another list of seven energy policies that would deter Russia from aggression.

Here are some:

> **2. America should expand fracking.** The U.S. is enjoying an energy renaissance, thanks to fracking, horizontal drilling and other technological advances.
>
> But almost all of the gains in oil and natural gas production have been on private lands. Obama should move to open up public lands to energy exploration.
>
> **3. Promote LNG [Liquid Natural Gas] exports.** LNG facilities are expensive

> to build. But the biggest obstacle is regulatory. The U.S. requires approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, as well as an export license from the Energy Department. DOE licenses can take months, with the last four permits taking more than two years. It can take five years before an Energy Department OK turns into real exports. The Obama administration should work to streamline the regulatory process.
>
> More LNG exports will bring down the price of natural gas worldwide. Many European LNG import facilities have been idle or running at low capacity. Exporters are sending shipments to Asia, where prices are even higher than Europe.
>
> LNG exports will further reduce America's trade deficit. Some argue that the U.S. should keep natural gas at home to give America an energy advantage. Chemical firms in particular want cheap natgas for fuel and as a raw material. But if domestic natgas prices rise, it should encourage more production. Shale output can be ramped up or down relatively quickly.
>
> **4. Allow U.S. petroleum exports.** America has banned petroleum exports since the Arab oil boycotts of the 1970s. But with the U.S. poised to be the world's No. 1 producer, whatever logic the prohibition once had is long gone.
>
> The ban helps keep a wide gap between U.S. light sweet crude vs. London-based Brent — $6.28 a barrel as of Monday.
>
> An export ban hurts U.S. producers and discourages output. It mostly benefits refineries, which are ramping up exports of refined fuels — at the global price.
>
> Lifting the export ban in particular would have speedy impact on global crude prices, dealing a quick hit to Putin's pocketbook.
>
> **5. OK Keystone XL pipeline.** There are many reasons to back the Keystone XL pipeline from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. It would create thousands of jobs, lower oil prices and reduce the risk of crude-by-rail accidents. The oil is going to be produced anyway, which even the Obama administration admits.

That would hit Putin in his pocketbook, and show him that we are serious about deterring future aggression.

And finally, in yesterday's post on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, I linked to an article with 8 responses, written by moderate Republican Senator Marco Rubio.

He had eight recommendations, and here are three of them:

> Second, President Obama should dispatch Secretary of State John Kerry and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to Kiev to show U.S. support for Ukraine's transitional government, and urge our allies in the European Union and NATO to send representatives there as well. The United States should convene an emergency meeting of NATO to develop a strong united response from the trans-Atlantic alliance. And we should send high-level delegations to our allies in Central and Eastern Europe to reinforce the fact that we are standing by them. As

> part of this work with our allies, we should develop a series of economic and security assurance measures to help the transitional government in Kiev remain stable and carry out a democratic transition.
>
> […]Seventh, the Obama administration should immediately add more Russian officials to the Magnitsky list, which places travel bans and other sanctions on them – something President Obama failed to do in December. Living in Miami, I have seen in recent years the wave of Russian tourists coming to our city and state to spend money and buy property. Many are government officials or allies whose wealth stems from allegiance to Putin, and we should limit their ability to travel here.
>
> Finally, in the Senate, Majority Leader Harry Reid should immediately halt his effort to force a Senate vote on Rose Gottemoeller next week to be under secretary of state for arms control and international security. As I, Sens. John Cornyn and Jim Risch said yesterday, we shouldn't even be thinking about arms-control negotiations with Russia anytime soon. And especially not negotiations led by a State Department official, such as Ms. Gottemoeller, who has tried to play down and potentially kept information from Congress and our allies about Russian violations of arms-control agreements.

So there are three lists of things that we could do, if we as a nation were serious about protecting democracies from tyrants. In the 1991 Gulf War, America landed an entire army to kick Saddam Hussein out of peaceful Kuwait. But does Obama have the balls for that? I don't even think he'll do one thing from the three lists I presented above. He is not that kind of man. He just doesn't care.

William Lane Craig: Christians are idling in intellectual neutral

March 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video is 40 minutes long.

The full transcript is available here on the Reasonable Faith web site. (H/T Think Apologetics)

Excerpt:

> No one has issued a more forceful challenge to Christians to become intellectually engaged than did Charles Malik, former Lebanese ambassador to the United States, in his address at the dedication of the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois. Malik emphasized that as Christians we face two tasks in our evangelism: saving the soul and saving the mind, that is to say, not only converting people spiritually, but converting them intellectually as well. And the Church is lagging dangerously behind with regard to this second task. Our churches are filled with people who are spiritually born again, but who still think like non-Christians. Mark his words well:
>
> I must be frank with you: the greatest danger confronting American evangelical Christianity is the danger of anti-intellectualism. The mind in its greatest and deepest reaches is not cared for enough. But intellectual nurture cannot take place apart from profound immersion for a period of years in the history of thought and the spirit. People who are in a hurry to get out of the university and start earning money or serving the church or preaching the gospel have no idea of the infinite value of spending years of leisure conversing with the greatest minds and souls of the past, ripening and sharpening and enlarging their powers of thinking. The result is that the arena of creative thinking is vacated and abdicated to the enemy.
>
> Malik went on to say:
>
> It will take a different spirit altogether to overcome this great danger of anti-intellectualism. For example, I say this different spirit, so far as philosophy alone—the most important domain for thought and intellect—is concerned, must see the tremendous value of spending an entire year doing nothing but poring intensely over the *Republic* or the *Sophist* of Plato, or two years over the *Metaphysics* or the *Ethics* of Aristotle, or three years over the *City of God* of Augustine. But if a start is made now on a crash program in this and other domains, it will take at least a century to catch up with the Harvards and Tübingens and the Sorbonnes—and by then where will these universities be?
>
> What Malik clearly saw is the strategic position occupied by the university in shaping Western thought and culture. Indeed, the single most important

> institution shaping Western society is the university. It is at the university that our future political leaders, our journalists, our lawyers, our teachers, our scientists, our business executives, our artists, will be trained. It is at the university that they will formulate or, more likely, simply absorb the worldview that will shape their lives. And since these are the opinion-makers and leaders who shape our culture, the worldview that they imbibe at the university will be the one that shapes our culture.

And:

> The great Princeton theologian J. Gresham Machen warned on the eve of the Fundamentalist Controversy that if the Church loses the intellectual battle in one generation, then evangelism would become immeasurably more difficult in the next:
>
> False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. Under such circumstances, what God desires us to do is to destroy the obstacle at its root.
>
> The root of the obstacle is to be found in the university, and it is there that it must be attacked. Unfortunately, Machen's warning went unheeded, and biblical Christianity retreated into the intellectual closets of Fundamentalism, from which it has only recently begun to re-emerge. The war is not yet lost, and it is one which we must not lose: souls of men and women hang in the balance.

This lecture is an excellent opportunity for us all to ask ourselves: what are we doing to influence the university? Do you have a plan?

Many of the strongest people who are now opposed to Christianity raised in two-parent Christian homes, and went to church for a decade before going off to the university. I'm thinking especially of people like Tim Gill, in Colorado. At university (and even increasingly in high school) they turned away from Christianity. All their peers and the adults could not answer their questions. As adults, they were able to get money, power and influence. Many of them are using it against Christ and his kingdom – kicking away the ladder that they climbed to success on. Why is this? Unfortunately, many of us are not willing to do what works – pick up the Lee Strobel books and read them. Especially "The Case for a Creator".

Global warming alert: Washington, D.C. breaks 141-year-old cold record

March 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The leftist Washington Post reports.

Excerpt:

> Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport broke a 141-year-old record low temperature, reaching 4 degrees. The National Weather Service said the low reached early Tuesday broke a 5-degree record set on the day in 1873. It was also a record low for the month of March. Dulles International Airport – also outside Washington – tied a 1993 record for the month at -1 degree.
>
> Both airports broke record lows two days in a row.
>
> Schools and government offices along the East Coast were closed Tuesday or delayed opening. Virginia State Police said slickened roads were factors in three traffic deaths. And authorities in Maryland's Prince George's County said a 60-year-old woman died after shoveling snow there.

Global warming is to blame for these record cold temperatures. But wait, Washington wasn't the only one victimized by the global warming monster.

On Monday, leftist Reuters reports that the cold was all up and down the East coast.

Excerpt:

> A deadly winter storm hit the U.S. East Coast on Monday with freezing rain, snow and near-record cold, cancelling about 2,700 flights, shutting down Washington and closing schools and local governments.
>
> The latest in a series of weather systems to pummel the winter-weary eastern United States, the storm dumped about 4 inches on the U.S. capital by early afternoon as it swept from the Mississippi Valley to the Atlantic coast, the National Weather Service said.
>
> Brian Hurley, a weather service meteorologist, said temperatures would be about 30 degrees Fahrenheit (15 degrees Celsius) below normal as a cold front settled in from Great Plains to the Atlantic coast.
>
> "It's really, really cold, temperatures dropping into the teens (Fahrenheit, minus-7 to minus-10 Celsius) and the normal highs are around 50 (10C) at this point," he said.
>
> At least four weather-related traffic deaths in Texas, Oklahoma and Tennessee were blamed on the wide-ranging storm over the weekend.

And on Tuesday, leftist Reuters reported that the cold had spread westward.

Excerpt:

> The eastern and central United States were plunged into a deep freeze on Tuesday, with record low temperatures in the wake of a deadly storm expected to moderate in coming days.
>
> The late-winter storm left behind frigid temperatures after pushing freezing rain, sleet and snow from the Mississippi Valley to the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.
>
> Temperatures this week will be “below average east of the Rockies, as it has been for a good part of the winter,” said Bob Oravec, a National Weather Service meteorologist in College Park, Maryland.
>
> The icy front sent the mercury plunging to minus 1F (minus 18C) at Washington Dulles International Airport, tying a monthly record, the weather service said.
>
> Baltimore; Scranton, Pennsylvania; Morgantown, West Virginia; Zanesville, Ohio; and Flint, Michigan all set or tied record lows.
>
> The latest in a series of arctic weather systems to grip the winter-weary eastern United States, the cold front stretched from the Canadian border to southern Texas, where freezing rain was forecast.
>
> […]The storm was blamed for at least six deaths, most of them from traffic accidents on slippery roads. A woman in Bowie, Maryland, died on Monday from a likely heart attack after shoveling snow, a spokesman for the Prince George’s County fire department said.
>
> About 730 U.S. flights were canceled and about 2,700 delayed on Tuesday in the wake of the bad weather, according to airline tracking site FlightAware.com. About 8,000 flights were canceled or delayed on Monday.

Those people were not killed by record cold temperatures, they were killed by the global warming monster!!1! They were caught up in a fiery explosion caused by cowboy capitalism and insufficient government spending on science education. We need more grant money for a study to find out why you believe your own eyes, rather than the dire warnings of greedy scientists and their power-hungry socialist masters in government.

Americans using student loans to pay for living expenses

March 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

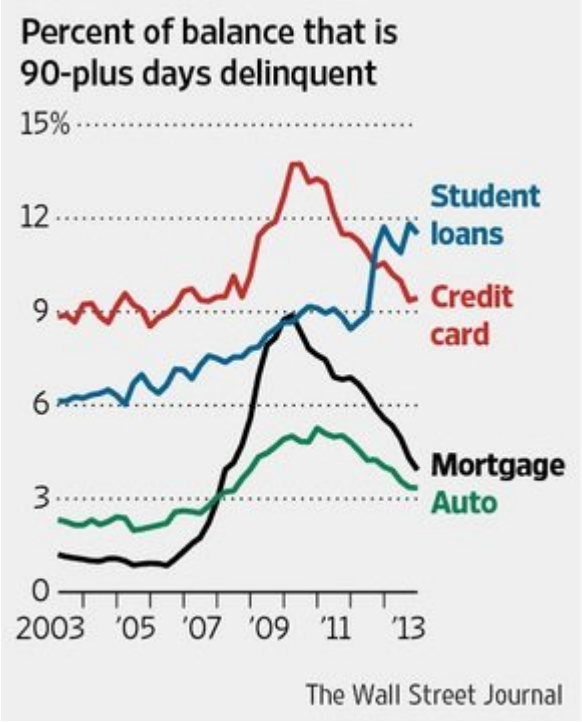

Student Loan Bubble

The Wall Street Journal reports on the $1.1 trillion of student loan debt.

Excerpt:

> Some Americans caught in the weak job market are lining up for federal student aid, not for education that boosts their employment prospects but for the chance to take out low-cost loans, sometimes with little intention of getting a degree.
>
> […]A number of factors are behind the growth in student debt. The soft jobs recovery and the emphasis on education have driven people to attain more schooling. But borrowing thousands in low-rate student loans—which cover tuition, textbooks and a vague category known as living expenses, a figure determined by each individual school—also can be easier than getting a bank loan. **The government performs no credit checks for most student loans.**
>
> College officials and federal watchdogs can't say exactly how much of the U.S.'s swelling $1.1 trillion in student-loan debt has gone to living expenses. But data and government reports indicate the phenomenon is real. The Education Department's inspector general warned last month that the rise of online education has led more students to borrow excessively for personal expenses. Its report said that among online programs at eight universities and colleges, non-education expenses such as rent, transportation and "miscellaneous" items made up more than half the costs covered by student aid.

> The report also found the schools disbursed an average of $5,285 in loans each to more than 42,000 students who didn't log any credits at the time. **The report pointed to possible factors such as fraud in addition to cases of people enrolling without serious intentions of getting a degree.**
>
> Capella Education Co., which runs online schools, examined student costs and debt at institutions public and private in Minnesota and concluded that **between a quarter and three-quarters of loans taken out by students were for non-education expenses**. At one of Capella's master's programs, the typical graduate left with about $30,200 in student debt even though tuition, fees and book costs totaled roughly $18,800. Borrowers are prohibited under federal law, except in rare instances, from discharging student debt through bankruptcy.
>
> The share of student borrowers taking out the maximum amount of loans—$12,500 a year for undergraduates—has risen since the recession. In the 2011-12 academic year, federal Education Department data show, 68% of all undergraduate borrowers hit the annual loan ceiling, up from 60% in 2008.
>
> Research suggests a fair chunk of that is going to non-education expenses. In 2011-12, about a quarter of student borrowers took out loans that exceeded their tuition, after grants, by $2,500, according to research by Mark Kantrowitz, a higher-education analyst and publisher of the education site Edvisors.com.
>
> Some students say they intend to get a degree but must borrow as much as possible because they can't find decent-paying jobs to cover day-to-day expenses.

Here are some examples of how this is working out:

> Tommie Matherne, **a 32-year-old married father of five** in Billings, Mont., has been going to school since 2010, when he realized the $10 an hour he was making as a **mall security guard** wasn't covering his family's expenses. **He uses roughly $2,000 in student loans each year to stock his fridge and catch up on bills. His wife is a stay-at-home mother who also gets loans to take online courses.**
>
> "We've been taking whatever we can for student loans every year, taking whatever we have left over and using it to **stock up the freezer** just so we have a couple extra months where we don't have to worry about food," says Mr. Matherne, **who owes $51,600 in federal loans.**
>
> Some students end up going deeper into debt. Early last year, when Denna Merritt lost her long-term unemployment benefits, the 49-year-old Indianapolis woman enrolled part-time at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh's online program, aiming for a degree in graphic design. She took out $15,000 in federal loans, $2,800 of which went to catch up on **unpaid bills, including utilities, health-insurance premiums and cable.**
>
> Mr. Selent, of Fort Lauderdale, knows he is getting himself deeper in a hole but

> prefers that to the alternative of making minimum wage. In his 20s, he earned a bachelor's degree in communications from a local for-profit school but couldn't find a job in the field after graduating and began falling behind on his student-loan bills. **He is now taking courses for a degree in theater so he can become an actor.**
>
> Meanwhile, federal loans allow him to cover any needs that arise during the semester. Says Mr. Selent: "It keeps me from falling apart."

Wow. Communications and Theatre. Do you think a private bank would have given him money to do a degree in theater? I don't think so. A private banker might give a loan to someone trying to get a STEM degree, like computer science or nursing, but not for *theater*. So how did the theater major get the loan, then, if no sane private sector banker would give it to him?

This article from the Heritage Foundation think tank explains how he got the money.

Excerpt:

> The Obama Administration's overreach into the student loan industry has been wide-sweeping. In what *The Wall Street Journal* deemed "that other government takeover," a provision buried deep in Obamacare **effectively nationalized the student loan industry** by ending government subsidies to private lenders and putting the federal government in charge of originating and servicing federally backed student loans.
>
> The Obamacare provision came in addition to the Administration's decision in 2011—made through executive order—to forgive student loan debt after 20 years. And it comes in addition to the Administration's gainful employment regulations restricting access to student loans for students attending for-profit institutions.
>
> But the current debate's origins are in separate legislation passed in 2007 whereby the federal government set interest rates on student loans artificially low, cutting the rates in half temporarily for four years. Now that the interest rates are set to increase, President Obama is pressing Congress to keep rates low.

So the Democrats are repeating the mortgage lending recession they caused in 2008 by again transferring risk away from private banks and onto the backs of the taxpayers. Anybody can get a loan for anything, whether it be basket-weaving or women's studies or… *theater.*

It's just more vote-buying from the Democrat party

The government is giving away these loans to students, no questions asked, in order to *buy their votes*. These are the students who cheered when Obama promised that they could stay on their parents' insurance plans until they were 26. The Democrats get the moocher vote, and the students get their loans forgiven in 20 years. Everybody wins –

except that the next generation of Americans gets stuck with the bill for this vote buying scheme.

Daughter sues parents for private school and college tuition

March 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When reading this story from leftist CNN, I think it's possible to decide who is lying and who is telling the truth based on whether the claims can be verified. Not every claim made by each side can be verified, but I am inclined to belief *entirely* the side that makes testable claims.

Excerpt:

> A high school senior's lawsuit against her mother and father for financial support and college tuition hit a hurdle Tuesday when a New Jersey judge denied the teenager's request for immediate financial assistance from the parents.
>
> Rachel Canning, 18, alleges in her lawsuit that her parents forced her out of their Lincoln Park, New Jersey home, and that she is unable to support herself financially. The lawsuit asks that her parents pay the remaining tuition for her last semester at her private high school, pay her current living and transportation expenses, commit to paying her college tuition and pay her legal fees for the suit she filed against her parents.
>
> Her parents say she left home because she didn't want to obey their rules.

Here are the daughter's claims:

> Canning, an honor student and cheerleader at Morris Catholic High School in Denville, says in court documents she had to leave her parents' home because of emotional and psychological mistreatment, alleging, among other things, that her mother called her "fat" and "porky" and that her father threatened to beat her.
>
> "I have been subjected to severe verbal and physical abuse by my mother and father," Canning wrote in a court certification. "I am not willingly and voluntarily leaving a reasonable situation at home to make my own decisions. I had to leave to end the abuse."

Here are some facts not in dispute:

> Canning left her parents' home at the end of last October. **After spending two nights at her boyfriend's home**, she moved into the home of her friend in a nearby town, where she has been staying ever since, according to court documents written by the parents' attorney.

And here are her parent's claims:

> Canning's parents, Sean and Elizabeth Canning, claim that allegations of abuse

> are completely unfounded.
>
> "We were always her support team, cheering her on or defending her whenever she had a problem," wrote Elizabeth Canning in a court certification. She claims that her daughter was never forced out of the family's home, but rather "took it upon herself to run away so that she could live her life without any parental supervision and without any rules."
>
> **Canning was suspended from school for truancy last October, according to court documents filed by her parents' attorney, Laurie Rush-Masuret. Her parents told the teen that she could no longer see her boyfriend, who was also suspended from school.** Car and phone privileges were also taken away. Once she learned of the punishment, **Canning cut school again** and then decided to run away, her father said in court documents.
>
> Once she left home, her parents notified Morris Catholic High School that they would no longer pay for their daughter's tuition, the documents state.

Now it seems to me that her parents are now on record making testable claims in court documents – claims that can be verified. Why would they do that if they knew those claims were not true? So I'm inclined to believe them, and I'm glad that this woman's mother is sticking by her man in this fight. That is not always the case when daughters sue fathers.

So, I'm going to assume that the parents are telling the truth. But even if they aren't, do you think that it's *normal* for a child to sue her parents for disciplining her? I find it astonishing that a child could be so stupid as to prefer her boyfriend and her friends' parents to her own parents. Doesn't she know that long after the boyfriend and the other couple are gone, that her parents will still be there for her? What they've provided her with already in terms of sending her to a private school shows me that they must care about her. Parents don't shell out money for private schools unless they have some interest in their child's success.

So I guess I'm shocked by this story, and I'm wondering what young women are coming to when they do things like this. They seem to be so rebellious, making wrong decisions and then turning to abortion, social programs and no-fault divorce to get out of their own poor choices. It really is scary. Speaking as a man, the fact that this trial even *happened* makes me not want to bother with marriage and children. Don't people realize how it looks to men when they see things like this? No man is working and saving up for marriage to be treated like this. We don't get married to have MORE rebellion and disorder.

By the way, I had to search several stories to find the details about the suspensions and the boyfriend, and CNN was the only source that had it. Color me surprised.

UPDATE: A lot more on what the daughter did to drive the parents crazy in the UK Daily Mail.

What kinds of anti-poverty programs really work?

March 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christians ought to be concerned about poverty. Is there a way to help the poor without making them dependent on the government?

Yes! In this article, the American Enterprise Institute discusses a great program called the Doe Fund, which is run in New York City.

Excerpt:

> […][F]or more than 25 years, the organization run by George and Harriet McDonald has helped homeless men. The program they run is based on a clear contract between the shelter managers and the homeless men. "You get up every day and go to work and stay drug free-and we will pay you and house you and feed you. It's as simple as that," Mr. McDonald said at his shelter on 155th street in Harlem. Doe Fund facilities are funded by revenue generation from their maintenance and cleaning business, government funding for homeless services, and private donations. The breakdown is roughly one-third each.
>
> Anyone who enters one of the four Doe Fund facilities in New York City is handed a paper entitled: "Some of the Rules that You Will hear ALL the time." Among the regulations are Rule No. 4: No standing or loitering in front of the building at any time of the day. Rule No. 10: You must not drink or drug while you are in the program. Rule No. 11: No cellular phones are allowed while you are working.
>
> In return for a roof over their heads and a salary, residents of the Doe Fund shelters clean and maintain commercial strips all over New York City-real jobs, with real demands and shifts that start at 6 a.m. The Doe Fund crews add an extra touch not provided by the sanitation and park employees of New York City, and every day workers face real customers who include not only local business groups who pay for their services but also residents and pedestrians who benefit from the improved quality of life.
>
> Hourly wages start at $8.15, which gives shelter residents a chance to save, as room and board are provided. Some men accumulate as much as $5,000 while they are in the six- to nine-month program.
>
> According to the McDonalds, over the past three years 57% of the men who completed the six-month program got jobs at an average wage of $10.86 an hour. And 65% of those retained the job for at least six months. A 2010 Harvard University evaluation found similar results. For a program that works with homeless men, many of whom have served prison sentences, those are solid results.
>
> In addition to a strong work and drug-free requirement (enforced by random drug tests), the Doe Fund also requires the men who are fathers to provide financial support to their children and to identify themselves to the city's child-support

> enforcement office to be sure they comply with their child-support orders.
>
> **What is important about the Doe Fund is that it explicitly links aid with a strong enforcement of the rules.** Doe Fund managers enforce the rules by restricting noncompliant residents to the shelter, reducing benefits or referring them to another city shelter where these opportunities are not offered. The Doe Fund is not alone in its approach-there are similar setups across the country, but in most such programs it's still rare to tie behavior to consequences.

Now, this is the kind of anti-poverty program that I support. It's not just handing out money with no strings attached. It's easing people into the work force in a structured environment. I think that deep down, poor people really want to work, and this program is exactly how we should be getting them started at that.

But there is one thing that might hurt this program, and the article mentions it. Can you guess what it is? Look at the hourly wages these entry-level workers are being paid.

Here's what it is:

> It is troubling that at the same time the president has announced a new focus on helping young minority men, one of his administration's top legislative priorities is a substantial hike in the federal minimum wage-a mandate on employers that is likely to reduce job opportunities for the very young men the president wants to help with My Brother's Keeper.

If we really wanted to help the poor, we should be LOWERING the minimum wage, and then maybe the government can make up the difference. I would much rather have the government subsidizing work by topping off lower salaries than subsidizing bad behaviors.

New study: methodology used by Southern Poverty Law Center to detect “hate groups” is flawed

March 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from the Christian Post reports on a new study published by Dr. George Yancey, a professor of sociology at the University of North Texas.

Excerpt:

> The Southern Poverty Law Center’s “Hatewatch” fails to use objective criteria in determining which organizations should be labeled a “hate group,” George Yancey, professor of sociology at the University of North Texas, finds in a new study, “Watching the Watchers: The Neglect of Academic Analysis of Progressive Groups,” published in the January issue of the journal *Academic Questions*.
>
> SPLC’s list dubiously lists Family Research Council as a hate group while ignoring anti-Christian groups that use similar rhetoric, which demonstrates that the list is more about mobilizing liberals than providing an objective source for hate groups, Yancey argues. SPLC has escaped critical analysis of its work in academia because of a liberal bias among academicians, the study additionally claims.
>
> SPLC’s Hatewatch has become the definitive guide among some scholars, authors and media organizations to what is, or is not, a “hate group.” Conservatives have long criticized the list for labeling social conservative organizations, such as Family Research Council, as hate groups.
>
> […]According to SPLC, Yancey explains, FRC is a hate group because it intentionally makes hateful and untrue statements about the LGBT community, which can lead to violence even though FRC does not engage in violent actions. (Yancey noted the irony that while SPLC does not cite any examples of FRC-inspired violence, SPLC’s Hatewatch actually did incite violence in the case of Floyd Corkins.) To support this contention, SPLC notes that FRC reports on studies showing that the child molestation rate is higher among gays and same-sex parenting harms children, and quotes FRC President Tony Perkins saying that LGBT activists seek to “persuade kids that homosexuality is okay and actually to recruit them into that lifestyle.”
>
> If this is the standard for labeling an organization a hate group, Yancey says, then the anti-Christian MRFF should also be on the list.
>
> In a Huffington Post blog, Michael Weinstein, founder of MRFF, claimed that Christians will be responsible for ushering in “a blood-drenched, draconian era of persecutions, naturalistic militarism and superstitious theocracy.” And Weinstein has written books claiming that Christians are willing to use mass murder to bring about their goals.
>
> “In these few comments Weinstein has violated some of the same norms SPLC

> used to designate FRC as a hate group. Weinstein is promoting a myth of Christian violence not substantiated by previous research and has attributed motives to conservative Christians that he cannot document," Yancey contends.
>
> Yancey does not argue that MRFF should be on Hatewatch, or that FRC should be off Hatewatch. Rather, he argues that if Hatewatch is to be an objective source for labeling hate groups, both groups should either be on the list or off the list.
>
> One possible explanation for why SPLC does not include anti-Christian groups on Hatewatch, Yancey speculates, is that Hatewatch is a tool for mobilizing liberals, rather than an objective source of hate groups.
>
> "As our society became more politically partisan, SPLC cemented its position as speaking for those with progressive political and social attitudes. Rather than developing into an objective clearinghouse for the identification of hatred – no matter where the source of that hatred may develop – SPLC has become a useful organization for progressives to legitimate their battle against conservatives. Since conservative Christians are categorized as opponents there is little, if any, incentive for SPLC to recognize hateful expressions against Christians, because doing so actually works against the social vested interest of the group," he wrote.
>
> Yancey's analysis of SPLC, though, is in service of a larger point. There is not enough critical analysis of liberal groups in academia, he argues, because too many in academia share the viewpoint of liberal groups.
>
> "This is a critique of the social biases within academia that preclude critical analysis of progressive social groups," Yancey wrote. "Such neglect serves academics with progressive, secular perspectives by allowing progressive, secular social groups to make claims of truth and objectivity. Such claims enhance the social power of these progressives. But this neglect damages any real scientific attempt to assess social and political factors in our society. Scrutiny directed at conservative and religious groups – and they should be scrutinized – while progressive organizations are given a pass creates a distorted understanding of reality. In doing this, social science scholars replace an objective examination of our society with a biased approach serving progressive social and political interests."

Keep in mind that the SPLC materials are being used by government agencies, including the FBI and the U.S. Army.

You might remember that I blogged before about George Yancey's work on liberal bias in academia.

Related posts

- FBI partners with anti-Christian Southern Poverty Law Center
- U.S. Army: Christians and Tea Party conservatives are potential terrorists
- U.S. Army tells troops that Christian pro-family group is a hate group
- Department of Defense training manual labels Founding Fathers as "extremists"

- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue “hate” rhetoric

Darwinist and atheist P.Z. Myers thinks that origin of life is part of evolution

March 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace tweeted this post by vjtorley from Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> On a deeper level, however, the skeptics' attempt to divorce to the theory of evolution from the origin of life is fundamentally flawed. "Says who?", you ask. Says evolutionary biologist PZ Myers, that's who – in his 2008 post, 15 misconceptions about evolution. Myers was responding to a list of common myths about Darwin's theory of evolution, drawn up by Listverse founder Jamie Frater. For the most part, Professor Myers thought Frater's post was excellent, but on a couple of points, he differed sharply with Frater's responses to these myths about evolution. Frater had argued that evolution doesn't deal with the origin of life, but PZ Myers argued that this compartmentalization of the two issues was tantamount to "cheating":

> [Myth] #15 is also a pet peeve [of mine]: "Evolution is a theory about the origin of life" is presented as false. **It is not. I know many people like to recite the mantra that "abiogenesis is not evolution," but it's a cop-out.** Evolution is about a plurality of natural mechanisms that generate diversity. It includes molecular biases towards certain solutions and chance events that set up potential change as well as selection that refines existing variation. Abiogenesis research proposes similar principles that led to early chemical evolution. **Tossing that work into a special-case ghetto that exempts you from explaining it is cheating, and ignores the fact that life *is* chemistry.** That creationists don't understand that either is not a reason for us to avoid it.

> Well, there you have it. If you accept that "life *is* chemistry," as any card-carrying materialist surely does, then you cannot honestly maintain that the evolution of life should be studied in isolation from the question of how it originated.

Myers is wrong about a lot, but this time he is right on the money.

Darwinists who are trying to avoid putting forward a naturalistic theory for the origin of life better think again. In order to affirm that naturalistic mechanisms can account for the diversity of life, you do have to explain the origin of life. If that is the place where an intelligent cause is needed to explain the information, then that's enough to cast doubt on naturalism. There has to be a seamless chain of cause and effect for naturalism to be true. Any discontinuity, whether it be the creation event or the origin of life, is lethal to naturalism.

The Economist: SB 1062 was a reasonable protection of religious liberty

March 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a case for tolerance of religious liberty from a gay writer in the Economist.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Doing that seems to me to have been point of laws like Arizona's strangely controversial SB 1062, which was vetoed last week by Jan Brewer, Arizona's governor. Douglas Laycock, a professor of law at the University of Virginia, recently noted that the thrust of the bill was simply to refine existing state and federal religious-freedom protections. "These laws", Mr Laycock writes, "enact a uniform standard—substantial burden and compelling interest—to be interpreted and applied to individual cases by courts. They rest on the sound premise that we should not punish people for practicing their religion unless we have a very good reason". The point of SB 1062 in particular was to clarify "that people are covered when state or local government requires them to violate their religion in the conduct of their business, and that people are covered when sued by a private citizen invoking state or local law to demand that they violate their religion." Mr Laycock goes on to emphasise, and this is very important:
>
> *But nothing in the amendment would have said who wins in either of these cases.* SB1062 did not say that businesses can discriminate for religious reasons. It said that business people could assert a claim or defense under RFRA, … that they would have to prove a substantial burden on a sincere religious practice, that the government or the person suing them would then have the burden of proof on compelling government interest, and that the state courts in Arizona would make the final decision.
>
> It is incorrect to claim, as my colleague did last week, that SB 1062 was "in effect, an exemption from anti-discrimination laws for the pious". It was not. It was an attempt to calibrate the law so that worthy new legal rights don't infringe on worthy old ones. If forcing conservative Christian photographers to shoot gay weddings can be shown to promote a "compelling interest" of the state, and if the photographer fails to show that doing so would place a "substantial burden" on her sincere religious beliefs, then refusing to work a gay weddings would remain a violation of existing anti-discrimination law. That seems reasonable to me. As Mr Laycock says, "we should not punish people for practicing their religion unless we have a very good reason". When we *do* have a very good reason, we can go right ahead.

It's important to understand that many gay people are either 1) not in favor of gay marriage or 2) not in favor of forcing Christians to affirm gay marriage. The Economist is a

socially liberal, fiscally moderate publication. So I am especially glad to see an article defending religious liberty and tolerance of Christians *here*. Of all places. I think a lot of people are going to read that and realize that it’s worse to take away the religious liberty of Christians to not participate in activities they oppose, than for gay couples to simple go next door and get the product or service they want.

I also think that this article goes to show you how reasonable SB 1062 was as legislation.

Should you go see Darren Aronofsky's movie "Noah"?

March 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a review of the draft screenplay from Christian screenwriter Brian Godawa.

Excerpt:

> As a screenwriter of films like To End All Wars and Alleged which deal with faith, and as the author of a novel called Noah Primeval about what led up to the Great Flood, I am especially conscious of issues relating to the intersection of Hollywood and the Bible and I've been keeping tabs on a film that lives at that intersection, a film called Noah, written by Darren Aronofsky and Ari Handel. I've also watched with great anticipation as a post-Passion of The Christ Hollywood tries to come to grips with how to reach the massive faith-friendly audience and I'm concerned about the phenomenon that I see, which is films being developed for that audience by people who don't understand it and are thus destined to fail. Then when they do fail, as expected, smug Hollywood executives declare "See, that audience doesn't really exist." I don't want that to keep happening. I want films to be properly developed so that they can succeed. It is in that spirit that I offer my analysis of Aronofsky and Handel's Noah script. I believe that it's never too late to right a ship that is heading in the wrong direction.
>
> Having got a chance to read an undated version of the script for Noah I want to warn you. If you were expecting a Biblically faithful retelling of the story of the greatest mariner in history and a tale of redemption and obedience to God you'll be sorely disappointed. Noah paints the primeval world of Genesis 6 as scorched arid desert, dry cracked earth, and a gray gloomy sky that gives no rain – and all this, caused by man's "disrespect" for the environment. In short, an anachronistic doomsday scenario of ancient global warming.

And here's an article by Jewish conservative Ben Shapiro on CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Meanwhile, Hollywood prepared to drop a new blockbuster based on the biblical story of Noah. The film, directed by Darren Aronofsky, centers on the story of the biblical character who built an ark after God warned him that humanity would be destroyed thanks to its sexual immorality and violent transgressions. The Hollywood version of the story, however, has God punishing humanity not for actual sin, but for overpopulation and global warming — an odd set of sins, given God's express commandments in Genesis 1:28 to "be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it."
>
> […]In a world in which consumerism is the greatest of all sins, America is the greatest of all sinners, which, of course, is the point of the anti-consumerist

> critique from the left: to target America. Global warming represents the latest apocalyptic consequence threatened by the leftist gods for the great iniquity of buying things, developing products, and competing in the global marketplace. And America must be called to heel by the great preachers in Washington, D.C., and Hollywood.

It’s very rare for me to recommend that people go see a movie made by Hollywood leftists, and I give this movie the same treatment. Do not spend your money on this movie. Do not give your money to the people who made this movie.

Physicist Frank Tipler on the usefulness of refereed journals, then and now

March 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I really enjoyed this episode of the ID the Future podcast.

Description:

> Is the only good science peer-reviewed science? Are there other avenues to present important scientific work? On this episode of **ID The Future**, Professor of Mathematics Dr. Frank Tipler discusses the pros and cons of peer review and refereed journals. More than fifty peer-reviewed papers discussing intelligent design have been published, but critics of the theory still proclaim a lack of peer-reviewed work as an argument. Listen in as Tipler shows how things have changed with the peer review process and what we can do about it.

About the speaker:

> Frank Tipler was born and raised in Andalusia, Alabama. His first science project was a letter written in kindergarten to Werner von Braun, whose plans to launch the first earth satellite were then being publicized. Von Braun's secretary replied, regretting he had no rocket fuel for Tipler as requested. By age five, he knew he wanted to be an astrophysicist. But he's always been a polymath, reading widely across disciplines and into the history of science and theology. After graduating from MIT and the University of Maryland, he did postdoctoral work at Oxford and Berkeley, before arriving at Tulane in 1981.

Whenever William Lance Craig often cites a book by two physicists named "Barrow and Tipler" called "The Anthropic Cosmological Principle" (Oxford University Press, 1988) in his debates to support the fine-tuning argument. This Tipler is that Tipler! Dr. Tipler is a master of the physics of cosmology and fine-tuning. However, I definitely disagree with him on some of his ideas.

The MP3 file is here. (17 minutes)

Topics:

- the changing nature of refereed journals and peer-review
- previously, the refereed journals were more about communication
- now, ideas are not taken seriously unless they are published in these journals
- the problem is that referees can be motivated by ideological concerns
- before, an obscure patent official named Einstein submitted a physics paper and it was published
- now, an uncredited person would not be able to have a brilliant paper published like that
- today, there are so many scientists that many more papers are submitted

- although it restricts BAD ideas, it can also end up censoring NEW ideas
- the problem is that any really brilliant idea has to go against the prevailing consensus
- peer-review may actually be holding back the progress of science by censoring NEW ideas
- some referees are motivated to censor ideas that undercut their reputation and prestige
- Dr. Tipler was told to remove references to intelligent design before one of his papers would be published
- how scientists with NEW ideas can bypass the system of refereed journals when they are censored
- peer-review has value when it finds errors, but not when it suppresses new ideas

I think this one is a must listen. As much as I like peer-reviewed research, it's important to acknowledge the limitations. I think if you're going into a debate, you definitely want to be the one with the peer-reviewed evidence. Let the other guy be the one making assertions and stating his preferences and opinions. But that doesn't mean that the peer-review process can't be improved – I think that it can be improved.

Here is a listing of some recent peer-reviewed publications related to intelligent design.

Study: children of same-sex couples do less well than those of married couples

March 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Public Discourse reports on a recent study out of Canada.

Excerpt:

> A new academic study based on the Canadian census suggests that a married mom and dad matter for children. Children of same-sex coupled households do not fare as well.
>
> There is a new and significant piece of evidence in the social science debate about gay parenting and the unique contributions that mothers and fathers make to their children's flourishing. A study published last week in the journal *Review of the Economics of the Household*—analyzing data from a very large, population-based sample—reveals that the children of gay and lesbian couples are only about 65 percent as likely to have graduated from high school as the children of married, opposite-sex couples. And gender matters, too: girls are more apt to struggle than boys, with daughters of gay parents displaying dramatically low graduation rates.
>
> Unlike US-based studies, this one evaluates a 20 percent sample of the Canadian census, where same-sex couples have had access to all taxation and government benefits since 1997 and to marriage since 2005.
>
> While in the US Census same-sex households have to be guessed at based on the gender and number of self-reported heads-of-household, young adults in the Canadian census were asked, "Are you the child of a male or female same-sex married or common law couple?" While study author and economist Douglas Allen noted that very many children in Canada who live with a gay or lesbian parent are actually living with a single mother—a finding consonant with that detected in the 2012 New Family Structures Study—he was able to isolate and analyze hundreds of children living with a gay or lesbian *couple* (either married or in a "common law" relationship akin to cohabitation).
>
> So the study is able to compare—side by side—the young-adult children of same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples, as well as children growing up in single-parent homes and other types of households. Three key findings stood out to Allen:
>
> children of married opposite-sex families have a high graduation rate compared to the others; children of lesbian families have a very low graduation rate compared to the others; and the other four types [common law, gay, single mother, single father] are similar to each other and lie in between the married/lesbian extremes.

> Employing regression models and series of control variables, Allen concludes that the substandard performance *cannot* be attributed to lower school attendance or the more modest education of gay or lesbian parents. Indeed, same-sex parents were characterized by higher levels of education, and their children were more likely to be enrolled in school than even those of married, opposite-sex couples. And yet their children are notably more likely to lag in finishing their own schooling.
>
> […]The truly unique aspect of Allen's study, however, may be its ability to distinguish gender-specific effects of same-sex households on children. He writes:
>
> the particular gender mix of a same-sex household has a dramatic difference in the association with child graduation. Consider the case of girls. . . . Regardless of the controls and whether or not girls are currently living in a gay or lesbian household, the odds of graduating from high school are considerably lower than any other household type. Indeed, girls living in gay households are only 15 percent as likely to graduate compared to girls from opposite sex married homes.
>
> Thus although the children of same-sex couples fare worse overall, the disparity is unequally shared, but is instead based on the combination of the gender of child and gender of parents. Boys fare better—that is, they're more likely to have finished high school—in gay households than in lesbian households. For girls, the opposite is true. Thus the study undermines not only claims about "no differences" but also assertions that moms and dads are interchangeable. *They're not*.

With a little digging, I found the abstract of the study:

> Almost all studies of same-sex parenting have concluded there is "no difference" in a range of outcome measures for children who live in a household with same-sex parents compared to children living with married opposite-sex parents. Recently, some work based on the US census has suggested otherwise, but those studies have considerable drawbacks. Here, a 20% sample of the 2006 Canada census is used to identify self-reported children living with same-sex parents, and to examine the association of household type with children's high school graduation rates. This large random sample allows for control of parental marital status, distinguishes between gay and lesbian families, and is large enough to evaluate differences in gender between parents and children. Children living with gay and lesbian families in 2006 were about 65 % as likely to graduate compared to children living in opposite sex marriage families. Daughters of same-sex parents do considerably worse than sons.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington. A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more

shorter times). That's not good for children either. Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships have much higher rates of domestic violence. That's not good for children either. So we have three reasons to think that normalizing gay relationships as "marriage" would not be good for children.

The reason I am posting this is because I want people to understand why social conservatives like me propose these laws defining and promoting marriage. We do favor natural marriage for the same reason that we oppose no-fault divorce, and for the same reason why we oppose welfare for single mothers (it encourages single motherhood). We don't want to encourage people to deprive children of their mother or their father. We look at the research, and we decide that children need their mother and father. Given the choice between the needs of the child and restraining the freedom of the adults, we prefer the child's need for her mother and father. It's not just arbitrary rules, there is a reason behind the rules.

But children are not commodities. They have certain needs right out of the box. Adults should NOT be thinking about how to duct-tape a child onto any old relationship that doesn't offer the same safety and stability that opposite sex marriage offers. We should be passing laws to strengthen marriage in order to protect children, not to weaken it. Libertarians don't want to do that, because they want adults to be free to do as they please, at the expense of children. Libertarians think that the adults should be able to negotiate private contracts and have no obligations to any children who are present, or who may be present later.

Related posts

- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

New study: oral contraceptives linked to higher risk of multiple sclerosis

March 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ECM sent me this article from Fox News about the new study.

Excerpt:

> In a new study, researchers found an increased risk of multiple sclerosis (MS) among women who have taken oral contraceptives. However, the findings do not mean women should stop using birth control, the researchers say.
>
> Utilizing membership data from Kaiser Permanente Southern California, researchers analyzed the health records of 305 women aged 14 to 48 who were diagnosed with MS or its precursor, clinically isolated syndrome (CIS), between 2008 and 2011. They looked at the women's birth control use up to three years prior to the onset of MS symptoms
>
> Overall, researchers found a 30 percent increased risk of developing MS amongst women who had at least three months of oral contraceptive use, compared to a control group of 3,050 women who did not have MS. They found that 29.2 percent of women with MS used birth control before their diagnoses, while 23 percent of women in the healthy control group used birth control– showing an increased risk with higher use of the drug, study author Dr. Kerstin Hellwig, a post-doctoral research fellow at Kaiser Permanente Southern California, told FoxNews.com.
>
> Additionally, for women who did not currently use an oral contraceptive but had in some time in the three years prior to being diagnosed, there was also a slightly higher risk.
>
> Multiple sclerosis is an autoimmune disease affecting the central nervous system. The causes are unclear, but experts believe genetics, environmental hazards and smoking are all possible factors. The condition normally develops between ages 20 and 40, Hellwig said.
>
> Researchers say use of birth control is not a firmly established cause for MS, but they do see a link.
>
> "It's not clear what role [hormones] play in the development of the disease, but it's clear that two to three times more women than men have MS," Hellwig said.

Previously, I blogged about studies on abortion and breast cancer.

Abortion and breast cancer

New study is up here at the National Institutes of Health web site.

Life News reported on the study here.

Excerpt:

> A new study of women from India shows women who get an induced abortion are 626% more likely to have breast cancer compared with women who carry their pregnancies to term and have the baby.The study found women more likely to have breast cancer had “higher number of abortions.”
>
> This study follows closely after a bombshell meta-analysis of breast cancer studies found a 44% increased risk of contracting breast cancer for women who had abortions.
>
> “History of abortion was also found to be positively associated with the risk of breast cancer with 6.26 times higher risk in women having a history of abortion,” they concluded.
>
> The doctors conducting the new study are based at the Department of Gastroenterology and Human Nutrition Unit, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi, India. Their report, published in the Indian Journal of Cancer confirms what previous studies have shown, namely that an abortion weakens the breast’s muscle tissue in a way that makes it more susceptible to cancer.

> “However, the cases had a significantly higher number of abortions (61.3%) as compared to the controls (16.3%),” they wrote. “History of abortion was also found to be positively associated with the risk of breast cancer with 6.26 times higher risk in women having a history of abortion. The history of abortions was found to be significantly higher in breast cancer cases as compared to controls, with the Relative Risk (RR) = 6.26 in women having a history of abortion.”

This is not the first study to confirm a link between abortion and breast cancer.

Abortion and breast cancer

Many studies show a link between abortion and breast cancer.

Study 1: (September 2010)

> Based on the expression of estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2/neu (HER2), breast cancer is classified into several subtypes: luminal A (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2-), luminal B (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2+), HER2-overexpressing (ER-, PR-, and HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-, PR-, and HER2-). The aim of this case-control study is to determine reproductive factors associated with breast cancer subtypes in Chinese women. A total of 1,417 patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the First Affiliated Hospital, China Medical University, Shenyang, China between 2001 and 2009 and 1,587 matched controls without a prior breast cancer were enrolled.
>
> […]Postmenopause and spontaneous abortion were inversely associated with the risk of luminal tumors. By contrast, multiparity, family history of breast cancer and **induced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer**.

Study 2: (March 2010)

> OBJECTIVE: To explore the risk factors of breast cancer for better control and prevention of the malignancy.
>
> METHODS: The clinical data of 232 patients with pathologically established breast cancer were investigated in this 1:1 case-control study to identify the risk factors of breast cancer.
>
> RESULTS: The history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and**multiple abortions were the statistically significant risk factors of breast cancer**, while breast feeding was the protective factor.
>
> CONCLUSION: A history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and multiple abortions are all risk factors of breast cancer.

And more recently, I blogged about a very recent study from China which concluded thus:

> IA is significantly associated with an increased risk of breast cancer among Chinese females, and the risk of breast cancer increases as the number of IA increases. If IA were to be confirmed as a risk factor for breast cancer, high rates of IA in China may contribute to increasing breast cancer rates.

IA is, of course, induced abortion.

J. Warner Wallace: science and the Bible agree on creation of the universe

March 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I always recommend that Christians who want to make a positive case for Christian theism begin with the evidence that caused scientists to accept that the universe had a beginning. I don't recommend stating the kalam argument, or any Bible verses, or any philosophical arguments. Instead, I recommend that they tell the story of how the evidence that led up to the discovery of the Big Bang cosmology was discovered. Who made the discoveries of the evidence, what was the evidence, when was it discovered, and how was it discovered.

Here's Wallace's post on it.

Excerpt:

> **The Second Law of Thermodynamics**
>
> This law (also known as the Law of Increased Entropy) recognizes the following: While the quantity of energy within a closed, isolated system (like the Universe) remains the same, the amount of usable energy deteriorates gradually over time. "Usable energy is inevitably used for productivity, growth and repair. In the process, usable energy is converted into unusable energy. Thus, usable energy is irretrievably lost in the form of unusable energy."
>
> Many of us have played with wind-up toys over the years. After toys of this nature are wound, there is a limited period of time in which we can enjoy them. Within a few seconds, wind-up toys slow down and stop; they run out of energy. Imagine walking into an empty room and discovering a wind-up toy sitting on the floor, still operating (unwinding). The discovery of this toy (and the fact it is still in the process of unwinding), would raise two reasonable inferences: (1) the toy was recently wound at a fixed point in the not-too-distant past, and (2) there was an adequate cause responsible for the initial winding. In other words, you would start looking for the "winder" somewhere in the room, given the fact the toy was still in the process of unwinding. We happen to be living in a "wind-up" universe slowly losing its usable energy. If the universe had no beginning and was infinitely old, why would there be any usable energy still available to us? The fact there is still usable energy in the universe points to a beginning in which the universe was tightly wound, and causes us to look for the cause responsible for such winding.
>
> **The Expansion of the Universe**
>
> Over the years, a number of scientists have calculated or observed the expansion of the universe. In 1905, Albert Einstein developed the Special Theory of Relativity involving measurements of length, velocity and time from moving observers. These equations led to the now famous E = mc2 equation, which

describes how matter and energy can be converted from one form to another. In 1915, by applying relativity to Newtonian physics, Einstein derived the equations of general relativity which describe the relationships between gravity, the speed of light, mass, and other factors in regard to the universe as a whole. His work was consistent with an expanding universe. While this conclusion was initially troubling to Einstein, other mathematicians and scientists were coming to the same conclusion.

Alexander Friedman, a Russian mathematician working in the 1920's with Einstein's theories, used the mathematics to prove the universe is expanding. His work was being paralleled at the time by astronomers in Belgium who independently came to the same conclusion. An astronomer named Vesto Slipher presented findings at an obscure astronomy meeting in 1914 which showed that several 'nebulae' were receding away from the earth. A graduate student named Edwin Hubble was in attendance and realized the implications. Hubble later proved that these nebulae were actually galaxies, composed of billions of stars. In 1929 he proposed the law of red shifts. Galaxies which are moving away from the earth demonstrate emission spectra with bands shifted toward the red end of the spectrum, and Hubble observed these distant galaxies demonstrated this red shift phenomena. In essence, he proved by observation the universe is indeed expanding.

Our universe is expanding like a balloon. Imagine individual galaxies drawn on the balloon's surface. As the edge of the balloon expands, the edge galaxies move away from center and away from each other. This is what we are seeing in our universe today. If we could go back in time and reverse the process ("deflate the balloon"), we would eventually arrive at an initial point of convergence. Once again, the science demonstrates our universe had a beginning.

The Radiation Echo

In 1964, two American physicists and radio astronomers, Arno Allan Penzias and Robert Woodrow Wilson, happened upon an important discovery. They were unable to eliminate the radio signal "noise" from their large antenna at the Bell Telephone Laboratories in New Jersey, regardless of where in the universe they tried to point their instrument. As a result, they began to consult with colleagues to determine the cause of this background noise. Phillip James Edwin Peebles, a physicist and theoretical cosmologist at Princeton University, suggested the noise might not be from the antenna at all. Instead, he proposed they might be detecting the residual "background radiation" caused when the universe first came into being. Penzias and Wilson pursued this line of investigation and confirmed Peebles' suspicions. Numerous additional experiments and observations have since established the existence of cosmic background radiation (culminating in data from the Cosmic Background Explorer satellite launched in 1989). For many scientists, this discovery solidified their belief the universe had a beginning at a fixed point in the past.

Wallace gets these evidences from a book by famous agnostic astornomer Robert Jastrow, former head of the NASA Goddard Space Institute. The book is called “God and the Astronomers”. I have the second edition.

Wallace is working on a new book. Not much is known about it, but based on photos of the books he is reading, it’s something to do with cosmology. If he can write a book for Christians that’s as easy to read as his “Cold Case Christianity”, then we are really going to gain some ground in the culture. The more Christians understand the science of cosmology, the more likely the culture as a whole is going to be to respect the Creator and Designer of the universe.

Republicans advancing pro-life legislation in red and purple states

March 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> As the media debate the reason abortions declined over the last few years, pro-life voices say the record number of new laws restricting abortion played a role. The year 2014 is already shaping up to follow the trend of substantial pro-life legislation.
>
> **Arizona**
>
> Abortion facilities will no longer receive advance notice of state inspections, if the governor signs a proposed law. The state House of Representatives passed the measure, allowing unannounced health inspections of abortion facilities, by a vote of 34-22.
>
> **Florida**
>
> A woman tricked into ingesting an abortion-inducing drug that killed her child wants legislators to make sure that never happens to another woman. Remee Jo Lee testified that, unless lawmakers pass a new statute, Florida will have no state ordinance punishing offenders who harm women the way her boyfriend hurt her, physically and emotionally. “I’m still here but a big part of me is missing,” Lee told the House Judicial Committee. “I miss my baby every single day.” The committee passed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act 13-3 on Monday. It would allow prosecutors the discretion to try a criminal for a separate murder if he kills an unborn child, even if he did not know the woman was pregnant.
>
> **Oklahoma**
>
> The Oklahoma House passed a bill requiring abortionists to have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of their office, by a vote of 73-9. Similar measures have closed nine abortion facilities in neighboring Texas, as well as other states where admitting privileges were allowed to be enacted. The Senate must now pass the bill.
>
> **West Virginia**
>
> Abortion restrictions inched closer to acceptance in the Mountaineer State, as the state Senate Health and Human Resources Committee approved a ban on abortions at 20 weeks. Delegate Joe Ellington, a pro-life OB/GYN and Republican, said the bill actually goes into effect 20 weeks from conception, not the way most medical specialists count weeks. Therefore, it should really be viewed as a ban on abortion after 22 weeks of pregnancy. Violators could be fined $4,000. The bill then passed the Judiciary Committee. It will now go to the full state Senate for a

> vote.
>
> **Missouri**
>
> Women in Missouri may have more time to consider whether abortion is the right decision for them. The state House passed a bill to increase the waiting period for an abortion from 24 hours to 72 hours by a 115-37 vote on Wednesday. Nine Democrats joined the chamber's Republican majority. It must pass the chamber a second time. However, Senate Democrats launched a filibuster against the Senate version of the bill on Wednesday.

More good news from a different Life Site News article.

Excerpt:

> The ever-decreasing number of abortion clinics continues its decline with the announcement of the closing of abortion clinics in Texas, Florida, and California.
>
> Whole Women's Health announced this week that its surgical abortion clinics in McAllen and Beaumont have permanently closed due to the new law passed last year that requires abortion facilities to meet minimum safety requirements, including hiring only abortionists that maintain local hospital privileges. The McAllen location had "temporarily" closed in January.
>
> Operation Rescue had lodged complaints about the Whole Women's Health clinics in McAllen, Beaumont, and Austin after discovering they were improperly dumping "identifiable" aborted baby remains a during an undercover investigation in 2011. This led the Austin and McAllen locations to be heavily fined.
>
> In addition, the North Florida Women's Health & Counseling Service in Tallahassee has announced in public notices that it will be closing permanently on March 31. That surgical abortion clinic has operated continuously since 1981.
>
> Surgical abortion clinics are not the only ones closing. Planned Parenthood's office in Sunnyvale, California, which offered only medication abortions (RU-486) shut down in January.
>
> "We are on track to see another great year. Every time an abortion clinic closes, lives are saved because women have a greater opportunity to seek other means of coping with the challenges they face. This is great news for women and their babies," said Troy Newman, President of Operation Rescue.
>
> Also out of business for good is Lester Minto's Reproductive Services in Harlington, Texas. Minto stopped abortions in November due to the new Texas law, but continued to see abortion patients who had taken abortion pills procured in Mexico or other locations. This week he announced onMSNBC's Rachel Maddow Show that he has closed his clinic permanently and is selling his building.
>
> Minto's clinic joins real estate market along with the former New Women All Women abortion building in Birmingham, Alabama, which was put up for sale this

> week.
>
> So far in 2014, seven surgical abortion clinics in four states have announced closure with one abortion pill clinic closing. Those states are California, Florida, Texas, and Iowa.

It seems like such a strange thing to me that some people get up and go to work, and their job is killing unborn children for money. But I guess that's why we Republicans have to pass these laws. It's a good signal to people that they need to be more careful about the consequences of their own behaviors. Basically, Republicans are saying to people that your freedom to do as you please ends when you brush up against someone else's freedom, no matter how small that other person might be. At least in some states, there are people looking out for the protection of those little unborn people. Sometimes, it seems to me as if the whole world is going away from morality and personal responsibility, but then I look at this legislation and I think "at least somebody is doing something right".

By the way, Life Site News also had a good article about how the Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus is putting a stronger emphasis on pro-life voters. I think he's probably making the case to pro-lifers that this issue matters to Republicans and that they are advancing legislation to do something to protect unborn children from adult who want to skip out on their responsibilities.

Obama to Ukraine: if you like your Crimea, you can keep your Crimea

March 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephen F. Hayes explains (in the Weekly Standard) how screwed we really are with the Democrats running our foreign policy.

Excerpt:

> **On February 23, five days before Russia invaded Ukraine, National Security Adviser Susan Rice appeared on *Meet the Press* and shrugged off suggestions that Russia was preparing any kind of military intervention**: "It's in nobody's interest to see violence returned and the situation escalate." A return to a "Cold War construct" isn't necessary, Rice insisted, because such thinking "is long out of date" and "doesn't reflect the realities of the 21st century." Even if Vladimir Putin sees the world this way, Rice argued, it is "not in the United States' interests" to do so.

Wow, I'm shocked that the Youtube video caused Benghazi liar didn't see the invasion of Ukraine coming.

But it's not just her:

> On February 28, Russian troops poured into Ukraine. As they did, Secretary of State John Kerry spoke to Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, his Russian counterpart. Kerry briefed reporters after their talk, plainly unaware of the developments on the ground. **Kerry said that Russia wants to help Ukraine with its economic problems.** Lavrov had told him "that they are prepared to be engaged and be involved in helping to deal with the economic transition that needs to take place at this point."
>
> Hours later, television screens across the world displayed images of Russian soldiers infiltrating Crimea and Russian artillery rolling through Sevastopol. **Obama administration officials told CNN's Barbara Starr that the incursion was not "an invasion" but an "uncontested arrival" and that this distinction was "key" to understanding the new developments.**

Oh yes! Just like Hitler was helping out Poland with their economic problems.

Why is this happening? Well, a better question would be, why didn't it happen sooner:

> **For five years, the Obama administration has chosen to see the world as they wish it to be, not as it is. In this fantasy world, the attack in Fort Hood is "workplace violence." The Christmas Day bomber is an "isolated extremist." The attempted bombing in Times Square is a "one-off" attack. The attacks in Benghazi are a "spontaneous" reaction to a YouTube video. Al Qaeda is on the run. Bashar al-Assad is a**

> **“reformer.” The Iranian regime can be sweet-talked out of its nuclear weapons program. And Vladimir Putin is a new, post-Cold War Russian leader.**

This foreign policy failure didn’t come from nowhere. There’s a whole list of failures that made Putin believe that the Democrats are weak on foreign policy.

Look:

- Scrapping the Bush missile defense plan
- Skip national security meetings on Russia
- Skip Presidential daily briefings (PDBs)
- Making deal to allow Iran’s nuclear program to continue
- Leaking details of Israel’s strike plan against Iran
- Favoring terrorist rights over national security
- Cutting production of the F-22 Raptor
- Cutting the military budget in 2009
- Cutting the Pentagon budget in 2012
- Cutting the military budget in 2014
- Prosecutions of counter-terrorism experts
- Lying about a Youtube video to cover-up Benghazi
- Mocking Romney for thinking that Russia is our enemy
- Promising Russian president Medvedev he would be more “flexible” after his re-election

Let me be clear. When Obama halted the scheduled missile defense shield in Europe, that was the end of Ukrainian sovereignty. We have to understand that Democrats are not just totally inept at fiscal policy and on social issues. They are also horrible at foreign policy. How many screw-ups must we witness before we understand that these people are not serious, and we shouldn’t be electing them?

Why does atheist historian Gerd Ludemann accept the post-mortem experiences of the risen Jesus?

March 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig explains why even atheist historians like Gerd Ludemann accept that the earliest followers of Jesus had experiences in which Jesus appeared to them as resurrected Lord.

Excerpt:

> Fact #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead*. This is a fact which is almost universally acknowledged among New Testament scholars, for the following reasons:
>
> 1. The list of eyewitnesses to Jesus's resurrection appearances which is quoted by Paul in I Cor. 15. 5-7 guarantees that such appearances occurred.
>
> 2. The appearance traditions in the gospels provide multiple, independent attestation of such appearances.
>
> With respect to the first supporting line of evidence, it is universally accepted on the basis of the early date of Paul's tradition as well as the apostle's personal acquaintance with many of the people listed that the disciples did experience postmortem appearances of Christ. Among the witnesses of the resurrection appearances were Peter, the immediate circle of the disciples known as "the Twelve," a gathering of 500 Christian believers (many of whom Paul evidently knew, since he was aware that some had died by the time of his writing), Jesus's younger brother James, and a wider group of apostles. "Finally," says Paul, "as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me" (I Cor. 15.8).
>
> The second supporting line of evidence appeals again to the criterion of multiple attestation. The Gospels independently attest to postmortem appearances of Jesus, even to some of the same appearances found in Paul's list. Wolfgang Trilling explains,
>
> From the list in I Cor. 15 the particular reports of the Gospels are now to be interpreted. Here may be of help what we said about Jesus's miracles. It is impossible to 'prove' historically a particular miracle. But the totality of the miracle reports permits no reasonable doubt that Jesus in fact performed 'miracles.' That holds analogously for the appearance reports. It is not possible to secure historically the particular event. But the totality of the appearance reports permits no reasonable doubt that Jesus in fact bore witness to himself in such a way.38
>
> The appearance to Peter is independently attested by Paul and Luke (I Cor. 15.5; Lk. 24.34), the appearance to the Twelve by Paul, Luke, and John (I Cor.

> 15.5; Lk. 24:36-43; Jn. 20.19-20), the appearance to the women disciples by Matthew and John (Mt. 28.9-10; Jn. 20.11-17), and appearances to the disciples in Galilee by Mark, Matthew, and John (Mk. 16.7; Mt. 28. 16-17; Jn. 21). Taken sequentially, the appearances follow the pattern of Jerusalem-Galilee-Jerusalem, matching the festival pilgrimages of the disciples as they returned to Galilee following the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread and traveled again to Jerusalem two months later for Pentecost.
>
> Lüdemann himself concludes, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus's death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."39 Thus, we are in basic agreement that following Jesus's crucifixion various individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Christ alive from the dead. The real bone of contention will be how these experiences are best to be explained.

Triablogue notes that most historians accept these post-mortem experiences of the risen Jesus:

> In their 2004 book, Gary Habermas and Michael Licona mention five facts accepted by the large majority of scholars:
>
> 1. Jesus died by crucifixion.
> 2. Jesus' disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them.
> 3. The church persecutor Paul was suddenly changed.
> 4. The skeptic James, brother of Jesus, was suddenly changed.
> 5. The tomb was empty.
>
> Habermas and Licona write:
>
> "On the state of Resurrection studies today, I (Habermas) recently completed an overview of more than 1,400 sources on the resurrection of Jesus published since 1975. I studied and catalogued about 650 of these texts in English, German, and French. Some of the results of this study are certainly intriguing. For example, perhaps no fact is more widely recognized than that early Christian believers had real experiences that they thought were appearances of the risen Jesus. A critic may claim that what they saw were hallucinations or visions, but he does not deny that they actually experienced something….roughly 75 percent of scholars on the subject accept the empty tomb as a historical fact." (The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2004], pp. 60, 70)
>
> Habermas and Licona explain that even "the majority of nonbelieving scholars" (p. 149) accept such facts, not just Christian scholars. And even many professing Christian scholars are Christian in name, but reject much of what Christians have traditionally believed. Skeptics sometimes suggest that a scholarly consensus on facts related to Jesus' resurrection isn't of much significance, because so many of the scholars are Christians, but *traditional* Christians make up only a small

> percentage of scholarship.

When talking about the appearances, the challenge is always to make the move from "through they saw" to "they actually saw". In chapter 6 of their introductory book on the resurrection of Jesus, "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus", Mike Licona and Gary Habermas give some reasons why the post-mortem appearances of Jesus were not hallucinations. First, they argue that hallucinations are had by individuals, not groups. Second, they argue that the hallucination hypothesis leaves the empty tomb unexplained. It also doesn't explain the appearances to skeptical James and antagonistic Paul. Finally, the appearance narratives are too varied to be hallucinations, i.e. – individuals, groups, friends, enemies, different times and different places.

If you want to read a scholarly response to the hallucination hypothesis, it's right in the article by Dr. Craig that I was quoting from above. He assesses the hallucination hypothesis as put forward by atheist scholar Gerd Ludemann against the standard criteria for judging multiple competing historical explanations. It's too much to quote here, but click through and read it when you can. If you want to see a good summary of the arguments for the empty tomb, go right here.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

Reasonable Faith podcast: the real consequences of atheism

March 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you love to listen to the Please Convince Me podcast, as I do, then you know that in a recent episode, J. Warner Wallace mentioned a blog post on an atheistic blog that clearly delineated the implications of an atheistic worldview. He promised he was going to write about it and link to the post, and he has now done so.

The latest episode of Reasonable Faith discusses the post mentioned in the episode.

Details:

> An atheist blogger gets brutally honest about his view and tells other atheists to quit fooling themselves!

The MP3 file is here on the Reasonable Faith web site. (23 minutes)

Kevin Harris (KH) and William Lane Craig: (WLC) discuss this post on the Wintery Knight blog.

Summary:

- KH: New Atheists always try to portray themselves as having meaningful lives, and good without God
- WLC: Exactly, they would say you don't nee God to do positive things, so God makes no difference
- KH: but what happens when an atheist explains the real consequences of atheism?

KH then reads a quote by an atheist blogger:

> "[To] all my Atheist friends.
>
> Let us stop sugar coating it. I know, it's hard to come out and be blunt with the friendly Theists who frequent sites like this. However in your efforts to "play nice" and "be civil" you actually do them a great disservice.
>
> We are Atheists. We believe that the Universe is a great uncaused, random accident. All life in the Universe past and future are the results of random chance acting on itself. While we acknowledge concepts like morality, politeness, civility seem to exist, we know they do not. Our highly evolved brains imagine that these things have a cause or a use, and they have in the past, they've allowed life to continue on this planet for a short blip of time. But make no mistake: all our dreams, loves, opinions, and desires are figments of our primordial imagination. They are fleeting electrical signals that fire across our synapses for a moment in time. They served some purpose in the past. They got us here. That's it. All human achievement and plans for the future are the result of some ancient, evolved brain and accompanying chemical reactions that once served a survival

> purpose. Ex: I'll marry and nurture children because my genes demand reproduction, I'll create because creativity served a survival advantage to my ancient ape ancestors, I'll build cities and laws because this allowed my ape grandfather time and peace to reproduce and protect his genes. My only directive is to obey my genes. Eat, sleep, reproduce, die. That is our bible.
>
> We deride the Theists for having created myths and holy books. We imagine ourselves superior. But we too imagine there are reasons to obey laws, be polite, protect the weak etc. Rubbish. We are nurturing a new religion, one where we imagine that such conventions have any basis in reality. Have they allowed life to exist? Absolutely. But who cares? Outside of my greedy little gene's need to reproduce, there is nothing in my world that stops me from killing you and reproducing with your wife. Only the fear that I might be incarcerated and thus be deprived of the opportunity to do the same with the next guy's wife stops me. Some of my Atheist friends have fooled themselves into acting like the general population. They live in suburban homes, drive Toyota Camrys, attend school plays. But underneath they know the truth. They are a bag of DNA whose only purpose is to make more of themselves. So be nice if you want. Be involved, have polite conversations, be a model citizen. Just be aware that while technically an Atheist, you are an inferior one. You're just a little bit less evolved, that's all. When you are ready to join me, let me know, I'll be reproducing with your wife.
>
> I know it's not PC to speak so bluntly about the ramifications of our beliefs, but in our discussions with Theists we sometimes tip toe around what we really know to be factual. Maybe it's time we Atheists were a little more truthful and let the chips fall where they may. At least that's what my genes are telling me to say."

Back to the summary:

- WLC: this quote explains that on naturalism, moral values and duties are just the by products of biological evolution
- WLC: he is deriding other atheists who put on a civil facade, and that the superior atheist is the one who acts openly like an atheist
- KH: he wants atheists to stop acting like Christians (being outwardly nice)
- WLC: there is no evidence for atheism presented in the quote, so why should he think that morality and meaning are illusory
- WLC: he is saying that morality is not real because our beliefs form by Darwinian evolution
- WLC: even if those beliefs formed that way, that doesn't mean that our moral judgments are not true (genetic fallacy)
- KH: the moral judgments are only false if naturalism is true, and he didn't defend that
- WLC: if objective moral values and duties exist, then naturalism is false

KH quotes Richard Dawkins:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.

More:

- WLC: yes, that's his view, but what reason is there to accept the naturalism that requires all that?
- KH: yet he pushes various moral judgments
- WLC: yes, in his book, he pushes a bunch of moral judgments in his book, all of which are invalid on naturalism?
- KH: he wants humans to choose to show pity, even though nature is pitiless
- WLC: he thinks that these altruistic behaviors can emerge because humans are sociable beings
- WLC: but this "herd morality" is just an evolved convention, there are not objective moral truths

KH quotes Will Provine:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

More:

- WLC: it's his naturalism that is causing him to say that, theistic evolution is compatible with morality
- WLC: naturalism is what conflicts with objective morality, science doesn't invalidate objective morality
- KH: atheists deny objective meaning, but atheists can invent subjective meanings and purposes
- WLC: yes, but these invented subjective meanings and purposes are illusory
- WLC: I don't think that anyone can live happily by think

KH quotes Michael Ruse:

> "The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological

> adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory."

- WLC: again, science is neutral against morality, it's the philosophy of naturalism that is inconsistent with objective morality
- KH: just because theists and atheists get along, it's still important to remind atheists of the consequences of their view
- WLC: I do that in my work on the absurdity of life without God, and in the moral argument for God's existence
- WLC: I love it when they say things like this, because it supports the first premise in Craig's moral argument
- KH: even if the evidence were 50-50, why would atheists lean towards the meaningless view
- WLC: yes, if the evidence is 50-50, then people ought to prefer life, significance and moral value
- KH: you're not saying that people ought to the believe that in theism because it's more palatable to us
- WLC: right, I am saying that naturalism should be rejected on the evidence, including our experience of moral values

If you like this podcast, the RSS feed for the Reasonable Faith podcast is here. I subscribe to it. If you liked the post they were discussing, please click here and share and/or tweet it.

Thomas Sowell: is the political left really concerned about helping minorities?

March 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Thomas Sowell

Do people who talk about race the most actually favor policies to help minorities? Thomas Sowell writes about it in Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> If anyone wanted to pick a time and place where the political left's avowed concern for minorities was definitively exposed as a fraud, it would be now — and the place would be New York City, where far left Mayor Bill de Blasio has launched an attack on charter schools, cutting their funding, among other things.
>
> These schools have given thousands of low-income minority children their only shot at a decent education, which often means their only shot at a decent life. Last year 82% of the students at a charter school called Success Academy passed citywide mathematics exams, compared to 30% of the students in the city as a whole.
>
> Why would anybody who has any concern at all about minority young people — or even common decency — want to destroy what progress has already been made?
>
> One big reason, of course, is the teachers' union, one of de Blasio's biggest supporters.
>
> But it may be more than that. For many of the true believers on the left, their ideology overrides any concern about the actual fate of flesh-and-blood human

> beings.
>
> Something similar happened on the West Coast last year. The American Indian Model Schools in Oakland have been ranked among the top schools in the nation, based on their students' test scores.
>
> This is, again, a special achievement for minority students who need all the help they can get.
>
> But, last spring, the California State Board of Education announced plans to shut this school down!
>
> Why? The excuse given was that there had been suspicious financial dealings by the former — repeat, former — head of the institution. If this was the real reason, then all they had to do was indict the former head and let a court decide if he was guilty or innocent.
>
> There was no reason to make anyone else suffer, much less the students. But the education establishment's decision was to refuse to let the school open last fall. Fortunately a court stopped this hasty shutdown.
>
> These are not just isolated local incidents. The Obama administration has cut spending for charter schools in the District of Columbia and its Justice Department has intervened to try to stop the state of Louisiana from expanding its charter schools.
>
> Why such hostility to schools that have succeeded in educating minority students, where so many others have failed?
>
> Some of the opposition to charter schools has been sheer crass politics. The teachers' unions see charter schools as a threat to their members' jobs, and politicians respond to the money and the votes that teachers' unions can provide.
>
> The net result is that public schools are often run as if their main function is to provide jobs to teachers. Whether the children get a decent education is secondary, at best.
>
> In various parts of the country, educators who have succeeded in raising the educational level of minority children to the national average — or above — have faced hostility, harassment or have even been driven out of their schools.
>
> Not all charter schools are successful, of course, but the ones that are completely undermine the excuses for failure in the public school system as a whole. That is why teachers' unions hate them, as a threat not only to their members' jobs but a threat to the whole range of frauds and fetishes in the educational system.
>
> The autonomy of charter schools is also a threat to the powers that be, who want to impose their own vision on the schools, regardless of what the parents want.

This story reminds me of another story of people on the left blocking poor minority children from better schools, in order to protect the jobs of underperforming unionized

teachers.

The Heritage Foundation explains how the Department of Justice, in a Democrat administration, hurts the poorest minority students.

Excerpt:

> *On August 22, 2013, the United States Department of Justice filed a motion in federal court to stop Louisiana from issuing school vouchers to low-income children in numerous school districts. DOJ is basing the suit on decades-old desegregation orders that treat Louisiana as if it were the same state it was nearly 40 years ago—something that the United States Supreme Court recently rejected in the case of Shelby County v. Holder. Ironically, DOJ's action will prevent low-income and minority students from accessing the successful Louisiana school choice program, which empowers children, underserved in their assigned public schools, to attend schools of choice that match their learning needs. Vague, open-ended, and stale court orders should not be used to prevent educational innovation and opportunity.*

Vouchers are a way of helping poor, minority students to get a quality education by letting them choose to attend better schools – any school the parents choose. But school choice is a thorn in the side of the public school unions who support the political left, because it allows poor, minority child to escape underperforming schools. Poor, minority students don't help Democrats to get elected, but public school teachers *do*. And that's why the administration sides with them against the children. On the other side of the aisle, it's the *conservatives* who push for more school choice, and better education for poor and minority students.

But education policy is only one area where minorities are harmed by leftist policies. Minimum wage is another obvious choice.

Let's take a look at the data and see how minorities are affected by leftist policies.

Excerpt:

> Battles are brewing in New York, California, Minnesota and the nation's capital over hiking minimum wages, with Democrats having the votes to ram through hikes in all four cases.
>
> These politicians are claiming the moral high ground, saying it will help the poorest in our communities. Don't be fooled.
>
> Hiking the minimum wage hurts — not helps — the lowest-paid workers, especially young black men. A 10% hike in the minimum wage causes a 2.5% drop in employment among young white men without a high school diploma and a staggering 6.5% drop among young black men without that degree.
>
> Young black males get clobbered three times as hard because they tend to work in the fast-food and restaurant industries, where any increase in labor costs produces layoffs.

> […]Only 5% of American workers earn the federal minimum, according to the latest government data, compared with 13% in 1979. Minimum wage workers are largely first-time workers. They are learning what all of us learn on our first job: to be prompt, dress appropriately, do what the boss asks and be reliable.
>
> First-time workers face the biggest risk of being priced out of the job market by a minimum wage hike. They aren't worth much to an employer when they start working. They don't have the skills.
>
> When the government increases the minimum wage, it's more expensive to hire first-timers. According to David Neumark and J.M. Salas, University of California economists, and William Wascher of the Federal Reserve Board, "minimum wages tend to reduce employment among teenagers."
>
> […]All teens are harmed, but black male teenagers are hit hardest by minimum wage hikes, according to a 2011 study by labor economists David Macpherson and William Evans. Unemployment among young black males is currently 29%, double the rate for young white males.
>
> Macpherson and Evans found the reason is that one out of three young black men without a high school diploma works in the restaurant/fast-food industry, where profit margins are thin. Any labor-cost hikes compel these businesses to cut their workforce.

The truth of the matter is that the real minimum wage is zero. In order to help minority young people find jobs, we should strengthen the institution of marriage, encourage people to get married and stay married, lower taxes on businesses, lower regulations on businesses, and so on. But strangely, the people who talk the most about helping the poor and poor minorities in particular are all opposed to that. The Democrats won't even build the Keystone XL pipeline or expedite other energy development initiatives to create good paying jobs. So don't believe that people who talk the most about poverty actually have the right answers about how to solve it. After all, the Obama administration talked a lot about health care, but clearly the people who lost their doctors, lost their health care, or are paying more for less health care, do not now believe that Obamacare was the answer to the health care problem.

If you're looking for a good recent study on the minimum wage and minority youth, take a look at this study from the Employment Policies Institute. More studies here in a previous post on this blog.

Should government get out of the marriage business?

March 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Dina sent me three articles by Jennifer Roback Morse, post on The Public Discourse. The articles answer the charge from social liberals and libertarians that we should "get the government out of marriage".

Here's the first article which talks about how government will still be involved in marriage, even if we get rid of the traditional definition of marriage, because of the need for dispute resolution in private marriage contracts. She uses no-fault divorce as an example showing how it was sold as a way to get government out of the divorce business. But by making divorce easier by making it require no reason, it increased the number of disputes and the need for more government to resolve these disputes.

Here's the second article which talks about how the government will have to expand to resolve conflicts over decisions about who counts as a parent and who gets parental rights. With traditional marriage, identifying who the parents are is easy. But with private marriage contracts where the parties are not the biological parents, there is a need for the state to step in and assign parental rights.

Here's the third article which talks about how marriage is necessary in order to defend the needs and rights of the child at a time when they cannot enter into contracts and be parties to legal disputes.

The third article was my favorite, so here is an excerpt from it:

> The fact of childhood dependence raises a whole series of questions. How do we get from a position of helpless dependence and complete self-centeredness, to a position of independence and respect for others? Are our views of the child somehow related to the foundations of a free society? And, to ask a question that may sound like heresy to libertarian ears: Do the needs of children place legitimate demands and limitations on the behavior of adults?
>
> I came to the conclusion that a free society needs adults who can control themselves, and who have consciences. A free society needs people who can use their freedom, without bothering other people too much. We need to respect the

> rights of others, keep our promises, and restrain ourselves from taking advantage of others.
>
> We learn to do these things inside the family, by being in a relationship with our parents. We can see this by looking at attachment- disordered children and failure-to-thrive children from orphanages and foster care. These children have their material needs met, for food, clothing, and medical care. But they are not held, or loved, or looked at. They simply do not develop properly, without mothers and fathers taking personal care of them. Some of them never develop consciences. But a child without a conscience becomes a real problem: this is exactly the type of child who does whatever he can get away with. A free society can't handle very many people like that, and still function.
>
> In other words I asked, "Do the needs of society place constraints on how we treat children?" But even this analysis still views the child from society's perspective. It is about time we look at it from the child's point of view, and ask a different kind of question. *What is owed to the child*?
>
> **Children are entitled to a relationship with both of their parents. They are entitled to know who they are and where they came from. Therefore children have a legitimate interest in the stability of their parents' union, since that is ordinarily how kids have relationships with both parents. If Mom and Dad are quarreling, or if they live on opposite sides of the country, the child's connection with one or both of them is seriously impaired.**
>
> **But children cannot defend their rights themselves. Nor is it adequate to intervene after the fact, after harm already has been done. Children's relational and identity rights must be protected proactively.**
>
> **Marriage is society's institutional structure for protecting these legitimate rights and interests of children.**

I recommend taking a look at all three articles and becoming familiar with the arguments in case you have to explain why marriage matters and why we should not change it. I think it is important to read these articles and to be clear that to be a libertarian doctrine does not protect the right of a child to have a relationship with both his or her parents. Nor does libertarianism promote the idea that parents ought to stick together for their children.

The purpose of marriage is to make adults make careful commitments, and restrain their desires and feelings, so that children will have a stable environment with their biological parents. We do make exceptions, but we should not celebrate exceptions and we should not subsidize exceptions. It's not fair to children to have to grow up without a mother or father just so that they adults can make poor, emotional decisions and have fun.

Is there any science in the new “Cosmos” series, or is it all naturalistic religion?

March 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed a couple of reviews of this television series, produced by an atheist producer of cartoons.

The first review comes from J. W. Wartick.

Multiverse:

> The universe is actually so huge that we can’t actually observe the entire thing because there is more beyond what we can see. But “many… suspect” that our universe is but one in an extremely huge number of actual individual universes (here shown as little bubbles spreading out continually over the screen).

Origin of life:

> The origin of life “evolved” through biochemical evolution.

J.W. comments:

> The depiction of the multiverse with little-to-no qualification was alarming, for there is much debate over whether there even is such a multiverse, and if there is, to what extent it may be called a multiverse. The portrayal within this episode was essentially a fictitious account being passed off without qualification as something a lot of people believe. The wording used was that “many… suspect” there is such a universe. Well yes, that may be true, but to what extent can we test for these other universes? What models predict them and why? I am uninterested in how many people hold to a belief; I am interested in whether that belief is true.
>
> […][T]he brief snippet used to explore the origin of life: “biochemical evolution” was astonishingly insufficient. I’m sure we’ll get into that in the next episode, but the origin of life is one of the great unsolved mysteries within science and to just hand wave and say “biochemical evolution” is, well, notable to say the least.

I agree with Wartick. What I am looking for is the story of how scientists experimented, observed and tested in order to find out about the universe. I’m not interested in people working theoretical physics who presupposed naturalism at age 14 because their Sunday School teacher was mean to them. Presupposing a philosophy of naturalism is just religion. I want to see the science. Here are my responses to the multiverse speculation and the origin of life speculation.

The series quote Carl Sagan at the beginning, but he a person who let his religion of naturalism lead him away from the scientific evidence for a beginning. Instead of accepting the standard Big Bang model, which implies a transcendent Creator, Sagan

chose to embrace a faith-based eternal oscillating model of the universe, which tries to avoid a Creator. I wrote about the problems with Sagan's naturalistic speculative cosmology in this post.

Now let's see Casey Luskin's review on Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> During the first episode, Tyson devotes lengthy segments to promoting the old tale that religion is at war science, and strongly promotes the idea that religion opposes intellectual advancement. He tells the story of the 16th-century astronomer cultist philosopher Giordano Bruno, who he says lived in a time without "freedom of speech" or "separation of church and state," and thus fell into the clutches of the "thought police" of the Inquisition for disagreeing with the church's geocentric views. Never mind that his show made it appear that President Obama endorsed Sagan-style materialism, but I digress… Of course the main religious authority of that time was the Catholic Church, and the program shows angry priests with evil-sounding British accents dressed in full religious garb throwing Bruno out on the street, and eventually burning him at the stake.
>
> Just to make sure that other Christians who aren't Catholic also understand their religions too hinder scientific progress, Tyson goes out of his way to point out that Bruno was opposed by "Calvinists in Switzerland," and "Lutherans in Germany," including the great protestant reformer Martin Luther himself. He never mentions that Protestants aren't the ones who burned Bruno at the stake, nor does he ever mention that most of the founders of modern science were Christians. But I digress…
>
> It's a lengthy scene, all to highlight some of the darkest chapters of Christianity in Europe. But the entire retelling of Bruno's fate lasts a good portion of the first episode's hour. Why make the religious persecution of scientists some four hundred years ago a major focus of a widely publicized television series that is ostensibly about promoting science?

Luskin took issue with the idea that religious people hold science back. On the contrary, religious Christians were largely responsible for the birth of modern science. Luskin also reports on over a dozen cases where naturalists have suppressed critical thinking about whether science disproves the religion of naturalism.

Here's are a few:

> A congressional subcommittee staff investigation found that biologist Richard Sternberg experienced retaliation by his co-workers and superiors at the Smithsonian, including transfer to a hostile supervisor, removal of his name placard from his door, deprivation of workspace, subjection to work requirements not imposed on others, restriction of specimen access, and loss of his keys, because he allowed a pro-ID article to be published in a biology journal.
>
> In 2005, over 120 faculty members at Iowa State University (ISU) signed a

> petition denouncing ID and calling on "**all faculty members** to … reject efforts to portray Intelligent Design as science." These efforts were significant not just because they opposed academic freedom by demanding conformity among faculty to reject ID, but because they focused on creating a hostile environment for pro-ID astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez, co-author of *The Privileged Planet*, who was denied tenure at ISU in 2006 due to his support for ID. Both public and private statements exposed through public records requests revealed that members of ISU's department in physics and astronomy voted against Gonzalez's tenure due to his support for ID.
>
> In 1993, San Francisco State University biology professor Dean Kenyon was forced to stop teaching introductory biology because he was informing students that scientists had doubts about materialist theories of the origin of life.
>
> In 2005, pro-ID adjunct biology professor Caroline Crocker lost her job at George Mason University after teaching students about both the evidence for and against evolution in the classroom, and mentioning ID as a possible alternative to Darwinism. While her former employer maintains that it simply chose not to renew her contract, she was specifically told she would be "disciplined" for teaching students about the scientific controversy over evolution.

> In 2013, Ball State University (BSU) President Jo Ann Gora issued a speech codedeclaring that "intelligent design is not appropriate content for science courses" at BSU, after atheist activists from the Freedom from Religion Foundation charged that a "Boundaries of Science" course taught by a well-liked physics professor (Eric Hedin) was violating the Constitution by favorably discussing intelligent design.

You can read more about the problems with Carl Sagan's religion-driven rejection of experimental science in this post by Phillip E. Johnson. For a better take on cosmology with more evidence and less religion, check out this lecture by particle physicist Michael Strauss. I think you'll find that science is better when it's done by a practicing experimental scientist, and not by the creator of cartoons like "Family Guy".

UPDATE: On the Christian Apologetics Alliance blog, Dr. Tim McGrew wrote that the portrayal of Bruno had even more inaccuracies. Isn't it amazing that that a cartoonist can get something filled with myths and misrepresentations to be televised? And many people will believe it, too, just like many people accepted the (now-discredited) oscillating model of Carl Sagan. I still have atheists proposing this to me when I present the standard model to them. That's the hazard of having a TV-driven worldview, I guess. A worldview based on Star Trek.

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker cuts taxes again, expects $1 billion surplus in 2015

March 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker (Republican)
Walker has actually cut taxes three times in less than a year.

I know what you're thinking, (if you're a Democrat). You're thinking "how can a governor cut taxes three times and have a surplus?".

When the government cuts taxes, people in the private sector who either create jobs or work at jobs get to keep more of their own money. They either spend or invest their money. Spending money is OK, but the magic really happens when people invest money. Even something as simple as putting money into a savings account can achieve magic, because banks lend that money to job creating businesses. What is the magic? The magic is that when people invest or save their money, the money makes its way to job-creating individuals and businesses, so that they can develop new products and services. For example, if Samsung keeps more of it's own money, it can hire more and better employees to to develop the S5 smartphone – a new product that performs better than the previous S4 model, even though it will probably cost less than the previous S4 model.

What happens when consumers can get *more* functionality for *less* money? It means that they can do more in their own lives using the better products and services, but also means that they have more money to save or spend somewhere else. So what really drives the economy is not government handing out food stamps or government giving money to companies linked to their campaign fundraisers (e.g. – Solyndra). What really drives the economy is the *private sector.* That's where new innovative products and services are made. When you thinking of government, you should think of the people with degrees in Marxist studies and women's studies who take money *away* from Samsung, so they have less money to innovate with. Government takes money from Samsung and gives it to Brigham and Women's hospital to study why lesbians are often overweight. (It's purely a coincidence that this is where Obama's Surgeon General nominee Vivek Murphy works, and purely a coincidence that he founded "Doctors for America" to market

Obamacare to the voters).

When you keep the money in the private sector, you get new products and services that people actually want to buy. The more money that businesses keep, the more they higher workers, and the more the state collects in payroll and income taxes. The more that consumers spend to buy better products and services, the more the state collects in sales tax. The key to economic growth is to have businesses produce *better products* for *less money.* When consumers can do more and have more money left over, there is economic growth, which boosts tax revenues. Government rarely spends money as efficiently and effectively as job creators and workers can.

With that in mind, let's see what happened when Governor Scott Walker cut taxes and let job creators and workers *keep more of their own money.*

The ultra-leftist Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel reluctantly reports.

Excerpt:

> Senate Republicans Tuesday narrowly passed Gov. Scott Walker's $541 million tax cut proposal in a vote that guaranteed the cuts will become law.
>
> The tax decreases — the third round of cuts by Republicans in less than a year — passed 17-15 with GOP Sen. Dale Schultz of Richland Center joining all Democrats in voting against the proposal. The proposal now goes to the Assembly, which passed a different version of the tax cuts last month with two Democrats joining all Republicans in supporting it.
>
> With growing tax collections now expected to give the state a $1billion budget surplus in June 2015, Walker's bill will cut property and income taxes for families and businesses, and zero out all income taxes for manufacturers in the state.
>
> GOP lawmakers and Walker will use the windfall for the state as an occasion to trim overall state spending slightly for the next three years rather than increase it.
>
> […]Also Tuesday, the Senate voted unanimously to pass a second bill to increase spending on worker training by $35.4 million through June 2015.
>
> […]Under Walker's bill, the average income tax filer would receive a tax cut of $46 in April 2015 and the typical homeowner would save $131 over the existing law on this December's bills, according to the Legislature's nonpartisan budget office.
>
> Also, the governor has separately had his administration alter income tax withholding rates so workers have less taken out of each paycheck — about $520 a year for a married couple making a total of $80,000 a year — starting in April.
>
> "The more money that we give back to the taxpayers, the more money they can spend or save as they wish and the more our economy will grow," said Sen. Alberta Darling (R-River Hills), co-chairwoman of the Legislature's budget committee.

> The bill would also lower income taxes for factory and farm owners by $36.8 million over the current two-year budget and $91.3 million over the following two years.
>
> GOP supporters of this manufacturing tax cut in the bill see it as fuel for one of the state's main economic engines.

Now the nice thing about Walker is that he is no Wall Street Republican. The man has been *plowing* money into worker re-training programs and manufacturing, which is exactly how you draw votes from working Democrats. Working Democrats tend to prefer working to collecting welfare, so Walker is out there competing for their votes by making sure that everyone who wants a job can get a job, and that those jobs pay well. Walker knows that if he can cut taxes on manufacturing, that it will cause manufacturers in his state to hire more people in order to develop cheaper and better products. That's going to cause them to invest more in his state, and some manufacturers will even leave other Democrat-run states (e.g. – Illinois) to move to Wisconsin.

When Democrats were running Wisconsin, they created a huge $3.6 billion dollar deficit that Walker inherited. Everything has been turned around under Scott Walker, but neighboring states like Illinois continue to decline. What a resume this guy is going to have in 2016 when he runs for President. Walker bet the farm on his pro-growth policies in a blue state, and guess what? He is reaping the rewards. He knows what he is doing, and the left *can't stand him.* All he does is win.

Missouri down to just one abortion business after Planned Parenthood closes

March 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news from Life News.

But first, a pretty good introduction to the abortion business:

> The abortion business can be very lucrative. Planned Parenthood alone brings in over $150 millionfrom abortion revenues – as much as half of its patient charges. Planned Parenthood destroys over 330,000 unborn children every year, an abortion every 95 seconds, at roughly $468 per abortion. The abortion giant has increased its market share of abortion commerce every year for over 3 decades.
>
> But what has made abortion so profitable has been its constitutionally privileged status and the business model that status has enabled. Unlike virtually any other medical procedure, abortion has been deemed a protected right. This has allowed Planned Parenthood and its industry competitors to resist regulation that other medical services accept as the cost of safely doing business. And by calling on their political friends in high places (and Planned Parenthood spends millions to keep them in those places) abortion sellers are able to secure political protection from rules that would protect their patients but undercut their bottom line.
>
> Abortion businesses are thus rarely inspected and are often constructed such that women are endangered in an emergency situation. When they are inspected, the inspectors find gross health and safety violations. And as the Gosnell case demonstrates, even their shortcuts on construction can leave women endangered in an emergency situation. Planned Parenthood has also adopted a business plan that has doctors from another state (or country in some cases) fly in, perform dozens of abortions in one day, and then fly back home – leaving the woman with no relationship with the doctor and no opportunity for the doctor to assist in her care in case of complications.

Now the good news – Republicans have been busy passing regulations on this abortion clinics:

> **In Missouri, Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys Steven Aden and Dale Schowengerdt successfully defended the state's health and safety regulations of abortion clinics in two challenges in state and federal court. Our friends at 40 Days for Life and others continued to bear witness outside Missouri's four abortion clinics.**
>
> **These four were reduced to two over the next few years as providers found their abortion businesses were unprofitable and retired or closed their doors. Then, just last week we received word that, unable to**

> **comply with those reasonable health and safety standards, the Columbia, Missouri Planned Parenthood has now lost its license and closed its doors. This leaves only one licensed abortionist operating in Missouri, a Planned Parenthood franchise in St. Louis.**

More good news from Alabama, this time:

> In Alabama, ADF Allied Attorney Trenton Garmon successfully defended the rights of sidewalk counselors to peacefully pray outside a Birmingham abortion facility. As a result, those sidewalk counselors were there to witness an ambulance transporting an injured woman to a hospital. They reported this to the state health department which investigated and found numerous health and safety violations, resulting in the closure of that abortion facility. This week we learned that the abortionist who owns the facility has given up and placed the building up for sale.

Isn’t that interesting? Rather than comply with the regulations, they choose to shut down. It’s not about providing a service, is it? It’s about the money. And if complying with regulations costs money, then the abortionists just stop providing the service.

Does the Bible teach the universe was created?

March 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace has a new post up and he lists a *ton* of Bible verses that talk about the beginning of the universe.

I'm going to pick out some of the best ones – ones that will scare the stuffing out of you.

Be amazed:

Colossians 1:16-17
For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Hebrews 11:3
By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

John 1:3
All things came into being through Him [Jesus], and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

1 Corinthians 2:7
No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

Isaiah 45:12
"It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hands and I ordained all their host."

All things were created? Time had a beginning? The universe is expanding? Wow, that's all stuff that naturalists hate – they want their eternal, steady-state universe back. Too bad that's been falsified by the hydrogen-helium abundance observations. Oh well, I guess they can still believe it if they want to. Now if you're an atheist, you don't like what the Bible has to say about the origin of the universe, especially since all the experimental science we have today agrees with the Bible. So atheists aren't just angry at God, they're angry at science, too.

The latest Please Convince Me podcast

By the way, J. Warner Wallace's latest 64-minute podcast on the scientific evidence for the creation of the universe was a must-listen. He re-caps the experimental evidence that we have for a cosmic beginning, and highlights the names of the scientists, the dates of the discoveries, the experiments that were run, and the results that were obtained. He also evaluates naturalistic alternatives to the standard model, and explains what's wrong with each one.

If you're into science, then you will love this podcast.

Women’s studies professor accused of assaulting peaceful pro-life demonstrators

March 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mireille Miller-Young (on the right)
From The College Fix.

Excerpt:

> A department of feminist studies professor has been accused of going berserk after coming across a campus prolife demonstration that used extremely graphic displays, leading a small mob of students to chant “tear down the sign” before grabbing one of the signs, storming off with it, then allegedly engaging in an altercation with a 16-year-old prolife protestor who had followed the educator to retrieve it.
>
> Much of the scuffle was recorded on a smartphone by the 16-year-old, Thrin Short. The yet-to-be-released video is now in the custody of Santa Barbara law enforcement officials, who are investigating the March 4 incident.
>
> The professor at the heart of the controversy is Mireille Miller-Young, an associate professor whose area of emphasis is black cultural studies, pornography and sex work, according to her faculty webpage. She could not be reached for comment Tuesday by *The College Fix.*
>
> The confrontation took place at the coastal, public university’s “free speech” area, a heavily traversed part of the quad.
>
> The roughly 3-feet by 5-feet displays included images of aborted fetuses, as well as diagrams detailing the abortion process and other “educational” information, according to Kristina Garza, a spokeswoman for 16-year-old Thrin. Garza heads up campus outreach for the nonprofit, Riverside-based Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust – a group that had trained the Short sisters and other

> students on how to conduct campus antiabortion events.
>
> […]According to Garza, when Miller-Young came across the prolife demonstration, the professor started yelling at the protestors, saying abortion is a woman's right. Then things got uglier, as the scholar allegedly enticed about 15 students to begin shouting "tear down the sign, tear down the sign" at the group, which consisted of 12 young women and one young man, Garza said.
>
> […]As the prolife demonstrators tried to engage students one-on-one in conversation during a lull in the chanting, that's when Miller-Young allegedly grabbed one of their signs and stormed off, followed by two UCSB students, Garza said, adding Thrin followed the threesome with her older sister, Joan, in tow and calling 9-1-1.

The pro-life students have posted their account of the events:

> The parade weaved through two buildings and entered an elevator in the third. Thrin attempted to get on the elevator with them, but Young blocked the doorway. Thrin stuck her foot in the door, but Young pushed it out with her foot. Tenaciously, Thrin put it back. This happened several times as Thrin pleaded with the students to not get involved. "The police are on their way," she told them …
>
> **Suddenly Young reached out and pushed 16 year old Thrin. "Don't touch me!" Thrin cried, startled. Young's long fingernails scratched Thrin's arm. Young pushed Thrin twice more and each time Thrin kept the door from closing with her arm. Finally, Young got out of the elevator, and tried to pull Thrin away from the elevator door. Thrin held onto the elevator with her other hand, the one holding the camera. Realizing that students were trying to take the camera out of her hand, Thrin let go of the elevator.**
>
> **The elevator doors closed. Professor Young let go of Thrin, leaving several scratches on her arms, and got on another elevator.** Then the police arrived. The police did not seem overly concerned about the incident until they saw the video and realized how violent the professor had been. Police identified the assailant and found the remains of the sign – it had been destroyed. UC Santa Barbara police are completing their report …

Something similar happened last year at DePaul University.

Excerpt:

> The head of a conservative student organization at DePaul University has been sanctioned by the university and could be expelled after he released the names of vandals who destroyed a pro-life flag display.
>
> Kristopher Del Campo, the chairman of the Young Americans for Freedom chapter, was found guilty by the university on two counts – "Disorderly, Violent, Intimidating or Dangerous Behavior to Self or Others" and "Judicial Process

> Compliance."
>
> DePaul University did not return calls seeking comment.
>
> Last January Del Campo and other pro-life students received permission from the university to erect a pro-life display featuring 500 flags. **Vandals later destroyed the display – stuffing a number of the flags into trash cans.**
>
> The university's public safety department launched an investigation and eventually identified 13 students who confessed to the crime. Those names were then released by the university to Del Campo.
>
> On Feb. 5 the national Young Americans for Freedom organization posted the names of the vandals on their website. The posting generated negative comments directed at the vandals – and the university held Del Campo responsible.
>
> Three days later, Del Campo was informed that he had violated DePaul's Code of Student Responsibility. He was formally charged ten days later.

Here's another example of the tolerant left, from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> A group of youths arrested and charged with vandalizing a Kentucky pro-life campus display said that destroying the display was an expression of their "right to free speech."
>
> Pro-life leaders of Northern Right to Life at Northern Kentucky University (NKU) say they first set up the display on Monday morning. It consisted of tiny onesies hanging on a line with red "X" taped onto every fourth outfit to symbolize a life lost to abortion. The display included a sign explaining its significance and citing the Guttmacher Institute.
>
> But after the display was torn down twice within the first two days, members of the pro-life group began taking night shifts to watch for the vandals. On Friday morning around 1am, they say they spotted four young men beginning to cut down the line and throwing the clothing, which was to be donated to needy local children, in the trash.
>
> […]Both Piron and the Kentucky Post report that the three suspects police caught – Travis Black, Steven White and Montez Jenkins Copeland – have been charged with Criminal Mischief.
>
> "Though the vandals don't think they deserve to be faced with consequences, we at NRTL believe that it's important for people to understand that they cannot just rip down a display simply because they disagree with its message," said Piron.
>
> **A fourth suspect who had turned himself in, Kyle Pickett, agreed with pro-lifers that they had a right to display the clothing as free speech – but justified the vandalism as equally protected.**
>
> **"Tearing it down was expressing our right to free speech," he said,**

> **according to the Post.**

I think the troubling thing about these stories is that pro-abortion radicals are moving beyond mere disagreement and into coercion, threats, vandalism and violence. I guess we shouldn't be surprised that they would attack grown-ups. They advocate for killing babies, after all. That's even worse.

Related posts

- Two Christian preachers brutally beaten at Seattle Gay Pride Festival
- Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged
- Pro-abortion vandals: destroying pro-life display was "free speech"
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

Democrats want government social workers to visit children starting “at birth”

March 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Will America be a better and freer country three decades from now if the children who turn four in this decade spend most of their waking hours with members of a government teachers union rather than with their moms?
>
> President Barack Obama’s vision of America, not surprisingly, starts with very young children spending their time in the custody of government employees.
>
> “I believe we should start teaching our kids at the earliest ages,” Obama said last week.
>
> When he used the word “we” here, Obama was not talking about Michelle and himself, he was talking about the government. When he used the words “our kids,” he was not talking about his own children — who attend the most expensive private school in Washington, D.C. — he was talking about other people’s children and grandchildren.
>
> […]Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius explained at the National Press Club last April — at a lectern shared with American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten — that Obama’s vision for federal involvement in the lives of very young children does not stop with 4-year-olds.
>
> Obama’s budget calls for HHS to spend $15 billion over 10 years to fund an Obamacare provision called the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. An HHS budget document says this program will send government-funded “nurses, social workers, and other professionals” into people’s homes to “improve parenting skills.”
>
> “I think that there still needs to be great understanding of what the president has put on the table is really a birth-to-five proposal, recognizing that you can’t start at 4-year-olds,” Sebelius said at the National Press Club.
>
> **“We really need to start at birth,” said Sebelius.** “**So, there will be an enhancement of home-visiting**, which we know is an evidence-based strategy that helps people be good parents from the onset, helps the first and best teacher a child will ever have learn important skills.
>
> […]Obama, and his allies in government, advocate policies that violate the natural law and destroy human lives. They advocate, for example, the deliberate killing of innocent human lives through abortion (and, in Obama’s case, through intentionally neglecting-to-death born children who have survived abortions). They advocate destroying the family by redefining it to include, so far, carnal

> relationships between people of the same sex — thus denying that children have a God-given right to a mother and father.
>
> Sebelius has been Obama's chief agent in attacking the First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion. At this very moment, she is fighting in federal court to force Catholic schools in Washington, D.C., to secure health coverage for their faculty and staff that would provide abortion-inducing drugs in direct and unambiguous violation not only of the inalterable teachings of the Catholic Church but also in direct and unambiguous violation of the inalienable God-given right to life expressly recognized in the founding document of this nation.
>
> For each of the last five years, according to the CDC, at least 40 percent of the babies born in the United States were born to unmarried mothers. As recently as 1980, it was only 18.4 percent.
>
> Obama's vision of a government that "educates" babies aims at forming the characters of the tragically increasing number of children born illegitimately in the United States — and as many other children as his programs can reach.
>
> His strategic aim is to make them allies in his cause.

I don't think that strangers in government can do as good of a job as my future wife and I can do. And I don't like having to pay them to try. Big government secularists seem to have a deep suspicion of parents, and they seem to want to get the children away from them as quickly as possible, especially the fathers. Fathers are bad, I guess, because we teach children about God and about morality, and we teach them to be practical and independent. These are things that a secular leftist government does not like. But they do like to take money from fathers. And mothers too, if they can get it. None of this taking of money and then using it to influence your children is voluntary either. The whole idea that government will be interfering with my family, should I choose to start one, is really upsetting to me. Why don't they raise their families with their own money, and leave me to raise mine with my money? What gives them the right to push their views on my children, paid for with my salary?

Brian Auten interviews Dr. Angus Menuge on philosophy of mind

March 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Click here for the interview. It's up at Apologetics 315!

Details:

> Today's interview is with Dr. Angus Menuge, Professor of Philosophy at Concordia University, and author of *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science*. He talks about his background and work, the philosophy of mind, what reason (or reasoning) is, what materialism is as a worldview, things excluded from a materialistic worldview, methodological naturalism and materialism, accounting for free will, materialistic accounts of reason, the epistemological argument from reason, the ontological argument from reason, finding the best explanation for reason, problems with methodological naturalism, implications of materialism, practical application of the argument from reason, advice for apologists, the International Academy of Apologetics, and more.

If what Dr. Menuge says in this interview is true, and I think it is, then a person who believes in materialism can neither ground free will nor rationality! So atheism wouldn't really be freethought so much as it would be… un-free… non-thought.

In case people don't want to listen to the podcast, then I've got some things for you to read below.

The ontological argument from reason

Dr. Menuge presented a paper at the real Evangelical Philosophical Society conference for students and professors of philosophy, and you can download the paper here in Word format. (here's a PDF version I made)

Here is the introduction to the paper that Dr. Menuge read at the EPS conference:

> The argument from reason is really a family of arguments to show that reasoning is incompatible with naturalism. Here, naturalism is understood as the idea that foundationally, there are only physical objects, properties and relations, and anything else reduces to, supervenes on, or emerges from that. For our purposes, one of the most important claims of naturalism is that all causation is passive, automatic, event causation (an earthquake automatically causes a tidal wave; the tidal wave responds passively): there are no agent causes, where something does not happen automatically but only because the agent exerts his active power by choosing to do it. The most famous version of the argument from reason is *epistemological*: if naturalism were true, we could not be justified in believing it. Today, I want to focus on the *ontological* argument from reason, which asserts that there cannot be reasoning in a naturalistic world, because

> reasoning requires libertarian free will, and this in turn requires a unified, enduring self with active power.
>
> The two most promising ways out of this argument are: (1) Compatibilism—even in a deterministic, naturalistic world, humans are capable of free acts of reason if their minds are responsive to rational causes; (2) Libertarian Naturalism—a self with libertarian free will emerges from the brain. I argue that neither of these moves works, and so, unless someone has a better idea, the ontological argument from reason stands.

The paper is 11 pages long, and it is helpful for those of you looking for some good discussion of one of the issues in the area of philosophy of mind.

You may also be interested in Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason, which is related to this argument. It shows that even to have the ability to think, you have to have a certain anthropology and you have to have mental faculties that are designed for reason, not survival.

Methodological naturalism

Dr. Menuge also wrote an article entitled "Is methodological materialism good for science?".

Intro:

> Should science by governed by methodological materialism? That is, should scientists assume that only undirected causes can figure in their theories and explanations? If the answer to these questions is yes, then there can be no such thing as teleological science or intelligent design. But is methodological materialism a defensible approach to science, or might it prevent scientists from discovering important truths about the natural world? In my contribution to The Waning of Materialism (Oxford University Press, 2010), edited by Robert Koons and George Bealer, I consider twelve of the most common arguments in favor of methodological materialism and show that none of them is convincing.
>
> Of these arguments, perhaps the most prevalent is the "God of the gaps" charge, according to which invoking something other than a material cause is an argument from ignorance which, like a bad script writer, cites a *deus ex machina* to save our account from difficulty. Not only materialists, but also many Christian thinkers, like Francis Collins, worry that appeal to intelligent design commits the God of the gaps fallacy.
>
> As I argue, however, not only is an inference to an intelligent cause not the same as an inference to the supernatural, it is a mistake to assume that all gap arguments are bad, or that only theists make them. If a gap argument is based solely on ignorance of what might explain some phenomenon, then indeed it is a bad argument. But there are many good gap arguments which are made both by scientific materialists and proponents of intelligent design.

So how do you make an argument like that?

> As Stephen Meyer has argued in his *Signature in the Cell*, intelligent design argues in just the same way, claiming not merely that the material categories of chance and necessity (singly or in combination) are unable to explain the complex specified information in DNA, but also that in our experience, intelligent agents are the only known causes of such information. The argument is based on what we know about causal powers, not on what we do not know about them.
>
> Since the inference is based on known causal powers, we learn that the cause is intelligent, but only further assumptions or data can tell us whether that intelligence is immanent in nature or supernatural. It is a serious mistake to confuse intelligent design with theistic science, and the argument that since some proponents of design believe that the designer is God, that is what they are claiming can be inferred from the data, is a sophomoric intensional fallacy.

If you think this is interesting, then do have a listen to the podcast. Dr. Menuge is not an ordinary academic – he is very direct. He calls materialism “a catastrophe” in the podcast!

Obamacare enrollment of young adults about 50 percent below target

March 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you remember, Obamacare works by forcing young people (especially young men) to pay for care they don't need and won't use. This lowers the costs of health care for younger women and especially for older, sicker people. The target is 2.7 million enrollments of people from age 18-34. But are young people signing up for this plan in numbers like that?

Investors Business Daily has the answer.

Excerpt:

> Data through five months of the open-enrollment period show that slightly fewer than 10% of eligible 18- to 34-year-olds have signed up for coverage. Among young men, roughly 1 in 12 has signed up.
>
> The Kaiser Family Foundation puts the ObamaCare-eligible population at 28.6 million, with 40%, or about 11.4 million, in the 18-to-34 age group.
>
> Compared to the size of the potential market, the first-year target of 7 million enrollees, including about 2.8 million young adults, was relatively modest.
>
> Yet it's now clear that the initial target is well out of reach. The Avalere Health consultancy projected that sign-ups — paid and unpaid — will end March at around 5.4 million.
>
> Through February, not quite 1.1 million young adults had selected an exchange plan. Among this group, the male-female breakdown was about 45% vs. 55%. That matters because women at child-rearing age are more likely to run up big medical bills.
>
> **In February, 268,000 18- to 34-year-olds signed up, so a decent upsurge in March could lift the total close to 1.4 million.** But that's before winnowing out the people who don't pay.
>
> **Anecdotal reports from a handful of states and large insurers now point to a paid rate of about 85%, possibly lower.**
>
> **While that could improve before the March 31 deadline, there's reason to suspect that the paid percentage might lag among young adults, since they are showing more reticence about signing up in the first place.**
>
> **Once the unpaid group is subtracted, it appears likely that young-adult enrollees will fall at least 50% below the first-year target The White House had initially set that target at 2.7 million.**
>
> […]The age mix is important because the exchanges charge younger people

> higher premiums relative to pre-ObamaCare individual market insurance, so that older people can be charged less without negating insurer profits.
>
> If young adults make up just 25% of the ObamaCare exchange population, it would wipe out much, but not all, of the 3% to 4% profit margin insurers typically allow for in setting premiums, Kaiser Family Foundation experts figure.
>
> Yet that calculation assumes the health status of those who do sign up is about average. In general, an insured pool comprising a smaller share of the eligible group raises concern that the covered group will be costlier than average.

So they are expecting 2.7 million, but even with a late surge of enrollments, they are only going to get 1.4 million young people. That's bad for Democrats, but I am happy that young men are not signing up for this law. They have nothing to gain from it. Maybe this whole mess will be worth it if young men understand that big government rides on the backs of young men. They are expected to pay the taxes, but without getting any of the benefits. Sex changes? IVF? Maternity? Well woman exam? Birth control pills? We don't use that. We don't mind paying for that for our wives, but we don't want to pay for it for complete strangers.

Matt Walsh: boys are experiencing at least as many challenges as girls

March 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Matt Walsh is annoyed that the problems of our young men are being minimized by a feminist culture.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Boys — particularly boys in public school – are most assuredly NOT encouraged to be opinionated, assertive, loud, boisterous, or confident. Do you know what happens to boys like that?
>
> We punish them.
>
> We label them.
>
> We medicate them.
>
> Their opinions and their personalities aren't just discouraged – they're chemically obliterated.
>
> According to the CDC, more than 20 percent of 14-year-old boys have been diagnosed with ADHD at some point in their lifetime. *Twenty percent*.
>
> Boys are 125 percent more likely to be stuck with the ADHD label than girls, and *127 percent* more likely to be medicated for it.
>
> I suppose we can chalk this up to a mental disorder that mysteriously discriminates based on sex, or we could contemplate the possibility that we have turned boyhood into a disease. Overall, young males are almost twice as likely to be deemed "learning disabled." Could boys really be this inherently flawed, or is the system itself flawed?
>
> Whether or not a boy manages to exhibit the "correct" personality traits and narrowly avoid a psychiatric diagnosis, he has a much greater chance of being expelled or suspended from school. In fact, boys make up about 70 percent of the suspensions from grades K – 12. They're also five times more likely to be expelled from pre-school.
>
> And it's not just that young males tend to "misbehave" more; it's that we've defined "misbehavior" in a way that unfairly targets them. The news is rife with stories of kids suspended or expelled or arrested for making a pretend gun with their fingers, or a Poptart, or a keychain, or a pencil.
>
> These are healthy and normal games of imagination and fantasy — games that boys, not girls, usually play — and we've literally made a criminal matter out of it.
>
> Boys are frequently kicked out of school and sent hurtling on a path towards delinquency and failure, even for minor instances of physical aggression. Does it

> make sense to treat a kid like a dangerous psychopath just because he got into a minor shoving match or — horror of horrors — a fist fight? This is how boys often express their aggression. Girls express it in more damaging and traumatizing ways. They spread gossip and rumors, they shun and ostracize other girls, and these acts can reverberate through a child's life much further and deeper than getting pushed into a locker or punched in the nose.
>
> But typical male aggression leads to expulsion, while typical female aggression usually leads to, at most, a stern lecture from the guidance counselor. To make matters worse, we've banned and outlawed the healthier outlets for a boy's energy and rambunctiousness. Schools have increasingly prohibited tag, and kickball, and dodgeball , and football.
>
> Of course, the plight of the American male is far more serious and tragic than a ruined recess.
>
> Feeling abandoned, angry, hateful, and confused, guys are about 4 times more likely to kill themselves than girls. It's true that females attempt suicide at a higher rate, but males are at an exponentially greater risk of completing the horrible deed.
>
> And the story doesn't end there. While (if) these boys grow into men, it is much more probable that they will become alcoholics and drug addicts.
>
> Everyone knows that men are infinitely more likely to go to prison, but did you know they even receive longer sentences for the same crimes? Indeed, women convicted on the same charges are twice as likely to avoid incarceration altogether.
>
> Is this what you call "male privilege"?
>
> Privileged to be drugged as a child, expelled from school as a teenager, and incarcerated as an adult? Privileged to bad grades, a psychiatric diagnosis, and an early death?

I have blogged about some of the things he mentioned in the post, like the gun play and the longer prison sentences. But I think the post as a whole is very useful for people who think that young men are doing fine, and we need to keep focusing on young women. We need to focus more on young men, because in general, they really are falling behind, and they are not going to be able to fulfill the expectations that society places on them unless we identify the root causes for their decline.

Congressman Trey Gowdy holds Obama accountable for lawlessness and abuse of power

March 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[youtube.com=http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qw0AsBanu-o]
Rep. Trey Gowdy took Obama to task for his lawless behavior in a speech that drew a standing ovation. The Blaze reported on the speech, and I'll quote some it here for those who cannot watch the 5-minute video above.

Excerpt:

> Ignoring President Barack Obama's veto threat, **the House voted on Wednesday for a bill that would expedite congressional lawsuits against the chief executive for failure to enforce federal laws.**
>
> The vote was 233-181 in the Republican-led House as GOP lawmakers excoriated Obama for multiple changes to his 4-year-old health care law, steps he's taken to allow young immigrants to remain in the United States and the administration's resistance to defend the federal law banning gay marriage.
>
> Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., sponsor of the ENFORCE the Law Act, delivered a fiery speech and read a series of statements by Obama when he was an Illinois senator in which he warned of the encroachment of the executive on the powers of the other branches of government.
>
> "How does going from being a senator to a president rewrite the Constitution?" Gowdy asked. "What's different from when he was a senator? Mr. Speaker, I don't think there's an amendment to the Constitution that I've missed. I try to keep up with those with regularity."
>
> Gowdy went on to argue that "process matters" in law enforcement, noting that evidence gathered with a legitimate search warrant is thrown out if an officer so much as accidentally checks the wrong box on the application.
>
> "Even though he was well-intended, even though he had good motivations, even though he got the evidence — because process matters," he added.
>
> "We all swore an allegiance to the same document that the president swears allegiance to, to faithfully execute the law," Gowdy continued. "If a president does not faithfully execute the law… what are our remedies?"
>
> He then argued that Congress should do exactly what then-Sen. Obama suggested before he was president of the United States: "To go to the Supreme Court and have the Supreme Court say once and for all: 'We don't pass suggestions in this body. … We don't pass ideas — we pass laws. And we expect them to be faithfully executed."

I understand that in a lot of banana republics, the Supreme Ruler does whatever he

pleases. But this is America. We have Constitution and separation of powers. Changing laws after they are passed for political reasons (mid-term elections) is not legal. Candidate Obama would never have done this, but President Obama does it all the time.

Pro-marriage event at Stanford University deemed "hate speech", denied funding

March 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The College Fix.

Excerpt:

> An upcoming conference organized by Stanford University's Anscombe Society called "Communicating Values: Marriage, Family & the Media" has been dubbed "hate speech" by the college's graduate-level student government, which refused to allow any of its student fee-funded budget to support the event.
>
> The Anscombe Society is a conservative student group centered around traditional marriage and family values; **it also encourages chastity**, and tackles subjects such as sexual integrity and pornography.
>
> According to the minutes of the student government meeting on March 5, a large group of angry students attended to protest the conference and its request for funding.
>
> […]Ultimately, the Graduate Student Council refused a $600 funding request: "With a vote of 10 for, 2 against, and 2 abstaining, the funding to Anscombe Society has been retracted by the GSC," the minutes stated. What's more, the *Stanford Daily* reports that the undergraduate student government also denied the Stanford Anscombe Society a $5,000 funding request last week.
>
> According to the Anscombe Society's website, the event aims to "help university students and young adults to promote the values of marriage, family, and sexual integrity to the broader popular culture. Featuring speakers at the forefront of this effort, the conference will allow students to network with other individuals who are willing to engage in intellectual and civil discourse about the issues of marriage, family, and sexual integrity."

These days it seems as if college students have moved away from the traditional view of marriage in more ways than just the male-female formulation. They think that male-female marriage is too restrictive because marriage should be about being happy and being in love, not about complementary sexes. Marriage should last as long as love-feelings and happy-feelings last, it's not about commitment and self-sacrifice and the responsibilities of parenting. Now, the marriage means happily ever after – it means that if you have a wedding, then you are guaranteed happiness, without having any self-sacrificial responsibilities to spouses or children. It means that you can continue to be selfish, and that somehow, you and the other person will be able to keep the relationship going by just living like you're each still single. Your spouse is there to make you happy. Your children are there to make you happy. There is nothing that marriage teaches you, because there is no design for it other than to produce happy feelings.

My view is that people who are rejecting the old definition of marriage, and the old responsibilities of husbands and wives in marriage, will never be able to produce a lasting, loving marriage. Either the challenges and responsibilities of marriage and parenting excite you, or you won't have a real marriage that lasts. If you are going into the the thing with the attitude that there are no rules and responsibilities, and that it's all about you and your feelings, you will fail. You can have a wedding, but it's not going to magically produce a permanent, exclusive, life-giving union. Marriage is a specification, and you can't magically implement the specification with a big wedding, any more than you save enough for retirement by winning the lottery. There is a right way to do it and a wrong way. Smashing all the rules is the wrong way.

How far will global warming alarmists go to destroy critics like Mark Steyn?

March 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A post from Free Think U tells you everything you need to know about whether global warming is based in evidence or intimidation.

Excerpt:

> The critical point in this campaign is a defamation lawsuit by global warming promoter Michael Mann against Mark Steyn, National Review, and the Competitive Enterprise Institute.
>
> […] Consider the specific argument Mann is making, as summed up in the report I linked to above.
>
> "In the articles, Mann says in his lawsuit, the think tank and the publication ignored more than half a dozen investigations that found no scientific wrongdoing, focusing almost exclusively on the Penn State inquiry in order to call him a fraud. CEI also mentioned the National Academy of Science's investigation, but dismissed those findings by saying the body had obtained information from Penn State, meaning the inquiry was 'not truly independent.' The basis mentioned by CEI to call the Penn State investigation a whitewash was stating it had only interviewed Mann, and 'seemingly ignored the content of the emails.'"
>
> Even more ominous, the DC Superior Court, which let the suit proceed, embraced this reasoning in its ruling.
>
> "The CEI Defendants' persistence despite the EPA and other investigative bodies' conclusion that Plaintiff's work is accurate (or that there is no evidence of data manipulation) is equal to a blatant disregard for the falsity of their statements."
>
> In other words, Steyn's evaluation of Mann's scientific claims can be legally suppressed because Steyn dares to question the conclusions of established scientific institutions connected to the government. On this basis, the DC Superior Court arrives at the preposterous conclusion that it is a violation of Mann's rights to "question his intellect and reasoning." That's an awfully nice prerogative to be granted by government: an exemption against any challenge to your reasoning.
>
> […]Mann is attempting to install himself as a kind of American Lysenko. Trofim Lysenko was the Soviet scientist who ingratiated himself to Joseph Stalin and got his crackpot theories on genetics installed as official dogma, effectively killing the study of biology in the Soviet Union. Under Lysenko, the state had an established and official scientific doctrine, and you risked persecution if you questioned it. Mann's libel suit is an attempt to establish that same principle here.
>
> Mann has recently declared himself to be both a scientist and a political activist.

> But in attempting to intimidate his critics and suppress free debate on global warming, he is violating the fundamental rules of both science and politics. If it is a sin to doubt, then there is no science. If it is a crime to dissent, then there is no politics.

In one way I think the tactics of censors in general are interesting because they show us how Darwinism came to be accepted as “science” despite the back that it is at odds with the evidence from origin of life studies and the Cambrian explosion, not to mention molecular machinery in the cell. The science doesn’t matter if the government and the courts make it illegal to question the dogma.

Another reason never to write under your real name. Use an alias, because these people don’t play games. They will go after you in your work place and destroy your ability to earn a living. Don’t make it easy for them.

Two families fighting for their religious liberty at the Supreme Court

March 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation reports on the cases that will determine how far the Democrats can go to undermine religious liberty.

Excerpt:

> In less than two weeks, the Supreme Court will hear arguments in cases challenging an Obamacare mandate that is trampling on religious freedom. The Hahn family and the Green family will be at the Court on March 25 asking for respect of their religious liberty and the freedom to continue offering their employees generous health plans.
>
> Let's meet these families and what they're fighting for.
>
> A Christian Mennonite family, the Hahns have run Conestoga Wood Specialties near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, for nearly 50 years. A second-generation family business, Conestoga employs almost 1,000 individuals to produce quality wood products.
>
> The Hahns have always run their family business in accordance with their faith, including offering an employee health plan that aligns with their values. Under the mandate, however, Conestoga Wood could face fines of up to $95,000 *per day* for sticking to their deeply held beliefs and not complying with the mandate.
>
> Speaking of their fight for religious freedom at the Supreme Court, Conestoga president Anthony Hahn explains the magnitude of their case: "It's not really only for Conestoga; we're taking a stand for other businesses as well. This is a religious liberty issue that is concerning to us. We feel that the government has gone too far in too many instances."

And number two:

> "We believe that the principles that are taught scripturally are what we should operate our lives by, so that naturally flows over into the business," explains Steve Green, president of Hobby Lobby, an arts-and-crafts retailer.
>
> Headquartered in Oklahoma City, Hobby Lobby has grown from one 300-square-foot garage to over 500 stores in 41 states employing more than 16,000 individuals.
>
> The Greens' faith is integral to how they operate their family business. Hobby Lobby storesclose on Sundays and are open only 66 hours a week so that their employees can spend more time with their families. The family's faith influences not only the way they care for employees but their investment in

> communities through partnerships with numerous Christian ministries.
>
> Yet under the Obamacare mandate, the government is forcing families like the Greens to violate those beliefs by funding coverage of potentially life-ending drugs and devices or face crippling fines—up to $1.3 million per day in the case of Hobby Lobby. Even if the business is forced to drop employee health care coverage to avoid the mandate, it would still face a fine of $2,000 per employee per year.

There are other victims as well, but these are the two that I am watching. The Obama administration just recently established in the courts that parents have no human right to homeschool their children. Now there will be a fight to see if government can force Christians to violate their consciences in their business operations. We should all be watching and praying about this, and thinking about what we can do to protect our values.

This year, 70% of all government spending will be direct payments to individuals

March 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily reports.

Excerpt:

> Buried deep in a section of President Obama's budget, released this week, is an eye-opening fact: This year, 70% of all the money the federal government spends will be in the form of direct payments to individuals, an all-time high.
>
> In effect, the government has become primarily a massive money-transfer machine, taking $2.6 trillion from some and handing it back out to others. These government transfers now account for 15% of GDP, another all-time high. In 1991, direct payments accounted for less than half the budget and 10% of GDP.
>
> What's more, the cost of these direct payments is exploding. Even after adjusting for inflation, they've shot up 29% under Obama.
>
> Where do these checks go? The biggest chunk, 38.6%, goes to pay health bills, either through Medicare, Medicaid or ObamaCare. A third goes out in the form of Social Security checks. Only 21% goes toward poverty programs — or "income security" as it's labeled in the budget — and a mere 5% ends up in the hands of veterans.

So a lot of the money is not even going for poverty! More:

> Instead, a surprisingly large amount of federal money is handed out to wealthy Americans through Social Security, Medicare, farm subsidies, unemployment benefits, conservation programs, disaster payments and other programs.
>
> An IBD analysis found that the richest 1% of Americans, in fact, receive roughly $10 billion each year in federal checks.
>
> Outgoing Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., who exposed these vast payment programs available to the rich, said "this reverse Robin Hood-style of wealth distribution is an intentional effort to get all Americans bought into a system where everyone appears to benefit."

Why is this bad? It's because government only spends the money that it collects from other individuals and businesses. They should be spending that money on government responsibilities like roads, the military and foreign policy. Not redistributing wealth to particular people. That just makes a certain segment of the population dependent on government and makes them more likely to vote for bigger government. Government is notoriously terrible at knowing who is really in need of help. Plus, private charities are more likely to push poor people in the direction of independence and responsibility.

Government basically says, “here’s the money, and keep doing whatever you’re doing because we don’t have a plan for you to get out of poverty”.

We don’t want to be the kind of country that punishes people for working or for starting businesses, but it seems like that is the direction we are heading in.

Democrat who has served 38 years in Congress down 14 points in latest poll

March 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Barone reports on it in the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Here's an astonishing poll: David Freddoso at Conservative Intelligence Briefing links to a report by the Washington Post's Aaron Blake that West Virginia 3rd district incumbent Rep. Nick Rahall trails Republican challenger state Sen. Evan Jenkins by a 54-percent to 40-percent margin. The poll was conducted by the Tarrance Group, a Republican firm which, like several Democratic and other Republican firms, has had a good record for reliability over the years.
>
> This is astonishing for several reasons. Rahall, first elected in 1976, is now the seventh most senior member of the House, with three of the more senior members retiring (John Dingell, Henry Waxman, George Miller) and another with a serious primary challenge (Charlie Rangel). Moreover, his district in southern West Virginia has historically been very Democratic; in its previous boundaries it voted for Walter Mondale overRonald Reagan in 1984. Rahall won in 1976 by 46 percent to 37 percent over Ken Hechler, his predecessor in the seat, who after losing a Democratic primary for governor ran as a write-in candidate; the Republican nominee received only 18 percent of the vote. From 1978 to 2008, Rahall was re-elected with at least 64 percent of the vote, except in 1990 when he beat Republican Marianne Brewster by only 52 percent to 48 percent.
>
> But this is coal country, and Rahall's margins have gone down after President Obama was elected president. In 2010, Rahall won by a reduced margin of 56 percent to 44 percent, and in 2012, his margin was only 54 percent to 46 percent. Obama's unpopularity surely cost him: John McCain carried the district within its then-boundaries by a 56-percent to 42-percent margin in 2008, and Mitt Romney carried the current district 65 percent to 33 percent in 2012. Rahall is ranking Democrat on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and was Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee when Democrats had a majority in the House; these are committee positions of importance to a mountainous coal district, but apparently they are not enough to help him now.

So, this time the culprit isn't Obama's terrible health care policy, it's Obama's terrible energy policy. Remember, the Environmental Protection Agency basically banned construction on all future coal plants which cost a lot of jobs. Not only that, but coal plants have been closing because of Democrat energy policies. Lastly, restrictions on coal production by Democrats have made energy prices go up, especially in the South. So people who are connected to the coal industry in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, etc.

should really be thinking a second time about supporting the Democrats in 2014 – and 2016, too.

Democrats in California want to pass laws to penalize Asians

March 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Basically, the Democrats in California want to pass an affirmative action bill, which would penalize overachievers. Asians tend to outperform other races in academics, so they are always the losers when academic criteria are minimized in favor of racial criteria for college admissions.

Here's an article from National Review, sent to me by Letitia.

Excerpt:

> The California state legislature was on the verge of approving a referendum to restore the consideration of race and ethnicity in admissions to state universities.
>
> […]What both sides of the bimodal Asian immigration population have in common is that their children do uncommonly well in school. They are represented in California's much-admired universities in far larger numbers than their share of the population would suggest: Asians compose 14 percent of California's population but 37 percent of the undergraduates at its state universities. They make up about 40 percent of the students at UCLA, 43 percent of the students at Berkeley, half the students at UC San Diego, and more than half of the students at UC Irvine. A relatively small minority, they compose the largest single ethnic group on California university campuses (at least as California defines "ethnic group").
>
> […]Liberals talk a great deal of mindless rot about what they like to call "privilege," the supposedly omnipresent advantages that accrue to the white, the male, the heterosexual, those whose sense of self is more or less congruent with their biological genitals, etc. But it is worth keeping in mind that progressive social-engineering programs such as the use of racial criteria in university admissions do not hurt only hurt well-off white people sporting penises. (Not that we should shortchange the interests of well-off white penis-sporters.) They also hurt poor people and immigrants, in this case a group of immigrants that we as a country should count ourselves lucky to have. It is important to remember why race-based admissions are such an important issue for progressives: The Left lives in the public schools, which do a terrible job of teaching black, Hispanic, and poor students, who consequently show up in embarrassingly small proportions at elite institutions. Asian students, on the other hand, do a tremendous amount of work outside of school, spending ten times as much time as non-Asian students do on organized non-school activities ranging from music lessons to tutoring to test-preparation courses. That is true across the economic spectrum: Working-class Asian immigrant families in Queens send their children to tutoring sessions and piano lessons at a much higher rate than does the non-Asian population,

> even though the relative financial sacrifices necessary for them to do so are heavy.
>
> For that, California's professional race hustlers, and their allies across the country, would see them punished.

So, here is another case where the party that talks a lot about racism and race is actually the one that is opposed to Asians getting ahead. My view is that if Asians have the strong families that produce high achievers, then let them be 40% of the students at the university. Maybe then people of other races will get the message that they need to focus more on raising children who can compete. Follow the rules and you won't be poor: finish high school, get jobs, get married, have children, don't get divorced. If you follow those rules, you will not be poor, and your children will outperform you.

Bible study: on the importance of truth in religion

March 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting passage of the Bible. What do you all think the practical value of this passage is?

[1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

[2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

[3] he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

[4] Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

[6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

[7] Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[8] Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

[9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

[10] The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

[11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

[12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king."

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him."

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

[27] Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

[29] "As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

[30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

This passage is interesting to me because it shows the kind of attitude that God answers. The King in this passage was tired of hearing man-made stories from his servants – stories that were undoubtedly influenced by the servants desire to survive the King's wrath. The servants would only have told the King things that were vague and happy, so that they could never be proved wrong or found to be judgmental or offensive. But the King was tired of that. He wanted someone with authority to tell him the truth about the way the world was.

In the rest of the chapter, Daniel interprets the dream, and concludes by saying this: "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.". The King replies: "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

I think it is is going to be difficult for Christians living today to be able to tell people their dreams like that. But what we can do is talk about God's miracles as revealed by science and history. We can study astrophysics, biochemistry and history and we can explain what God did in creating and fine-tuning the universe for life, in sequencing amino acids into functioning proteins, in creating brand new body plans in the Cambrian explosion, in raising Jesus from the dead as a matter of historical record, and so on. We have to show how great God is to people who do not even think he exists, and without assuming that they believe in the Bible.

There are still people out there like the King who are looking for someone who can speak to them with authority. All it takes from us is a little studying, and we can be like Daniel, too. But we have to know what God has done from science and history, and speak with authority about how we can know that God has acted *supernaturally*. Authority to speak comes from having knowledge about what we are talking about, and knowledge comes from studying and debating with people we disagree with. Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer in the God of Israel, but he was still interested in truth. That won't always be the case, but it is the case for some people.

New discovery confirms Big Bang, and is direct evidence for cosmic inflation

March 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Space-time ripples left over from the Big Bang have been picked up for the first time by Harvard scientists.

> Astrophysicists have been hunting for 'primordial gravitational waves' since they were predicted by Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity in 1916.
>
> Today, after days of rumour and speculation, scientists from the Harvard-Smithsonian Centre announced they had recorded the first direct evidence of gravitational waves rippling through the infant universe.
>
> "The implications for this detection stagger the mind," said project leader Jamie Bock. "We are measuring a signal that comes from the dawn of time."

> Our universe burst into existence 13.8 billion years ago. Fractions of a second later, space and time were created, expanding exponentially in an episode known as 'inflation'.
>
> It was theorized that inflation should also produce gravitational waves – ripples in space-time which spread throughout the universe.
>
> "Think of the ripples you see when you throw a stone into a pond," said Professor Martin Hendry of the department of Physics and Astronomy at the Univesity of Glasgow.
>
> "But these aren't ripples on the surface of the water, they are gravitational waves emitted billions of years ago, rippling through the fabric of space and time itself, in the universe's earliest moments.
>
> "We always suspected they were still washing about but we haven't been able to detect them.
>
> […]The signal was found using a specialised telescope called Bicep (Background Imaging of Cosmic Extragalactic Polarization) at the South Pole.
>
> It scans the sky at microwave frequencies, where it picks up light energy from slightly after the Big Bang – around 380,000 years later. Scientists have been searching for tiny ripples in this light which would show it is being slightly stretched by gravitational waves.

We have had a string of solid, recent scientific discoveries that support the idea that the universe came into existence at some point in the finite past, as follows:

- Einstein's theory of general relativity, and the scientific confirmation of its accuracy
- measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation
- red-shifting of light from galaxies moving away from us
- radioactive element abundance predictions (from supernovae)
- helium/hydrogen abundance predictions (nuclear fusion)
- star formation and stellar lifecycle theories
- the second law of thermodynamics

This new discovery is building on #2 above – the cosmic microwave background radiation.

What came into being at the moment of creation?

As the article states, space was created and time began at the first moment.

1. There was no space causally prior to the universe beginning to exist
2. There was no time causally prior to the universe beginning to exist
3. There was no matter causally prior to the universe beginning to exist

All of these things *began to exist* at the first moment.

What can we infer about the cause?

So, space, time, and matter began to exist. What could have caused them to begin to exist?

1. Whatever causes the universe to appear is not inside of space, because there *was no space* causally prior to the creation event. The cause must therefore be non-physical, because physical things exist in space.
2. Whatever causes the universe to appear is not bound by time (temporal). It *never began to exist.* There was no passage of time causally prior to the big bang, so the cause of the universe did not *come into being.* The cause existed *eternally*.
3. And the cause is not material. All the matter in the universe came into being at the first moment. Whatever caused the universe to begin to exist cannot have been matter, because there was no matter causally prior to the big bang.

So what could the cause be? Dr. William Lane Craig notes that we are only familiar with *two kinds* of non-material realities:

1. Abstract objects, like numbers, sets and mathematical relations
2. Minds, like your own mind

Now, abstract objects don't cause of any effects in nature. But we are very familiar with the causal capabilities of our own minds – just raise your own arm and see! So, by process of elimination, we are left with a mind as the cause of the universe. As Sherlock Holmes says, "*When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.*"

This cause created the entire physical universe. The cause of this event is

therefore *supernatural, b*ecause it brings nature into being and is not inside of nature itself. The cause of the universe violates the law of conservation of matter is therefore a miracle. And when we do our science, we find evidence of it.

Christianity and the doctrines of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism

March 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you familiar with the differences between *exclusivism, inclusivism* and *pluralism?* This article from Leadership University explains all three of them.

Here's exclusivism:

> The following is a succinct explanation of the central characters and ideas behind each position. The exclusivist position has been the dominant position of the church as a whole through much of its history until the Enlightenment. Major representatives include Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Hendrick Kraemer, D.A. Carson, William Lane Craig, and R. Douglas Geivett.
>
> Key to this position is the understanding of God's general and special revelations. God is manifested through creation (general revelation), but Man has responded by freely going against this revelation and, thus, stands guilty before a holy God. However, God has demonstrated a reconciliatory mercy through His word and deed, fulfilled completely in Jesus Christ. The historical person of Jesus, then, is the unique, final, decisive, and normative self-revelation of God to Man (special revelation). Exclusivists believe that Jesus Christ is the sole criterion by which all religions, including Christianity, should be understood and evaluated. Calvin Shenk explains:
>
> > Christ did not come just to make a contribution to the religious storehouse of knowledge. The revelation which he brought is the ultimate standard. Since in Christ alone is salvation and truth, many religious paths do not adequately reflect the way of God and do not lead to truth and life. Jesus is not, therefore, just the greatest lord among other lords. There is no other lord besides him.
>
> Specific texts often employed by exclusivists include Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 3:11; and 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

And inclusivism:

> Inclusivism is a blanket term to characterize a sort of "middle way" between exclusivism and pluralism. Most prominent within mainline Protestantism and post-Vatican II Catholicism, its notable proponents (in one formor another) include Karl Rahner, Raimundo Panikkar and Stanley Samartha, and Hans Kung. Evangelical theologians such as Clark Pinnock, Norman Anderson, and John Sanders have also identified themselves with this position. Herein, the agnosticism associated with the latter option above is replaced with outright optimism. Christian salvation is not confined to the historical or geographic

> extent special revelation has spread, rather it must be available to all cultures, irrespective of age or geography.Salvation is still posited wholly in Christ and his salvific work. Specific knowledge of this work, however, is not necessary for the effect (i.e., salvation) to apply to those within a different religious culture who have responded to the general revelation available. Once again, Shenk explains:
>
> > Inclusivists want to avoid monopolizing the gospel of redemption. They acknowledge the possibility of salvation outside of Christian faith or outside the walls of the visible church, but the agent of such salvation is Christ, and the revelation in Jesus is definitive and normative for assessing that salvation. Jesus Christ is believed to be the center, and other ways are evaluated by how they relate to him. Other religions are not just a preparation for Christ, but Christ is actually present in them.
>
> The fundamental differences between exclusivism and inclusivism… are the nature and the content of "saving faith." The former emphasizes explicit faith while the latter points to an implicit faith.

And pluralism:

> Finally, there is the pluralist position. This is undoubtedly the most difficult of the three to define in any general sense. The spectrum of pluralistic thought is as wide as it is long. The focusof this particular study will examine the contributions of its key figures: Paul Knitter, John Hick, and Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Just as in the previous positions, the interpretative range within just these three individuals varies. It is fitting, however, to focus primarily on them since they are the most vocal and influential figures espousing pluralism today.
>
> Hick and Knitter argue the case for pluralism on the following grounds: (1) ethically, it is the only way to promote justice in an intolerant world; (2) in terms of the "ineffability of religious experience," so no religion can claim an absolutist stance; and (3) through the understanding that historical and cultural contexts must be the filter for any absolute religious claim. Hick has argued that all world religions attempt to relate to the unknowable Ultimate Reality (or, the Real), but because of their various cultural and historical contexts these attempts are all naturally different. Hence the various conceptions of the Real and the salvation(s) sought. The common soteriological goal, toward which all religions strive, though, is rooted in the desire to transcend self-centeredness and, in turn, encounter a new (unexplainable) experience with the Real. But, he emphatically emphasizes the fact that there is "no public evidence that any one religion is soteriologically unique or superior to others and thus has closer access to Ultimate Reality."
>
> Therefore, with pluralism, Christ is no more definitive or normative than any religious figure or concept. Or, as Andrew Kirk explains, "Rather than confessing that Jesus Christ is the one Lord over all, this view asserts that the one Lord who

> has manifested himself in other names is also known as Jesus." By "crossing the Rubicon," as Hick and Knitter illustrate, Christians are encouraged to abandon any claim of Christian uniqueness and the possibility of absolute revelation, accepting the fact that the Christian faith is one among many options.

Now maybe you didn't know this, but Roman Catholics seem to have taken a turn away from exclusivism and towards inclusivism in the last century.

So, I thought I would post a rebuttal to the Roman Catholic embrace of inclusivism from one of my favorite Christian apologists, Greg Koukl.

Excerpt:

> There are some issues of Christianity that are intra-Nicene, intramural discussions between believers, in which I think a charitable person can easily see how another Christian can hold a different view because there are things that are difficult to understand in Scripture. For instance, though I'm Reformed in my soteriology, my understanding of salvation–I'm a Calvinist–I am sympathetic to an Arminian perspective because I can see how they, in lines of reasoning from the New Testament and verses themselves from the New Testament, can come to their view. So, though I would disagree, and I think they're mistaken, I understand how they can see it.But there are other positions that I cannot understand because there is no New Testament evidence in favor of it, and, to the contrary, almost to a word, as the New Testament touches the issue, it says quite the opposite.
>
> Earlier this week, I was honored, flattered, and, frankly, humbled to have a very unique opportunity on Monday to address an audience of about 150 Jewish people that were in the midst of Jewish High Holy Day services–morning services, evening services–at kind of a pause time in the afternoon, in which my host and I and another guest had a discussion about Jews and Christians. The three of us were on the panel: my host, Dennis Prager, a man I have a tremendous admiration and affection for, and Greg Coiro, a Roman Catholic priest and a professional friend. I've known both of these men over 20 years and have been in many discussions, both in private and public on the air with Dennis and Greg Coiro.
>
> It was in this opportunity that, in a sense, the ancient quarrel of sorts, theologically, was revisited, that I've had in the past many years ago when we were talking about this in interfaith dialogues. This difference of opinion is a historically new development in Roman Catholicism that stunned me when I first encountered it in the early days of being on Religion on the Line in the late eighties, a radio panel Dennis Prager hosted for many years. The priests on the panel uniformly held the conviction, informed by Vatican II, that Jews don't have to believe in Jesus in order to receive the benefits of Jesus' salvation. This is a view called "inclusivism." It's not the same as pluralism, but in my view, it seems to have the same impact: "Yes, Jesus is necessary for salvation, but you don't

> have to believe in Jesus to benefit from Jesus."
>
> Now, at this afternoon panel recently, the very first question that came up was whether trust in Jesus is necessary for salvation. "Greg, do you believe that? Do Protestants believe that?" I answered, "Yes, I believe that. And no, not all Protestants believe that. But let me try to explain it to you in a way that doesn't sound so stark. Let me try to give it some perspective." I explained that it wasn't as if God was up there looking down at a bunch of religious clubs and prefers some over others. He used to prefer the Jewish club and now He prefers the Christian club. It may sound that way to many when this doctrine of Christianity is put forward: Jesus is the only way of salvation; you must believe in Jesus in order to benefit from what Jesus did.

Talk about Daniel in the lions' den. Anyway, click through and read the whole article to get an idea of how to make your stand for exclusivism in difficult places.

For a general article defending the Christian doctrine of exclusivism, check out this article by William Lane Craig. One of my favorites, from way way back to when I was an undergraduate.

And, if you would like to listen to a debate on pluralism, then here is a debate featuring pluralist John Hick.

Profiles of women in apologetics: Letitia Wong

March 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Letitia Wong
Article in the Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Letitia Wong is a busy woman.
>
> She is a devoted mother of two, a responsibility that she takes very seriously. She also writes a Christian Apologetics blog, "Talitha, Koum!"
>
> At Missouri Baptist University in St. Louis; she directs a student chapter which is devoted to providing those students with resources for defending the Christian worldview against cultural and intellectual challenges. In addition to helping college students, she also helps teenagers with apologetics through a local organization called Faith Ascent Ministries.
>
> Letitia is a cohost of a weekly radio program – named TRU-Life Fridays Radio – which focuses on educating and promoting the defense of a healthy ethic of human life.
>
> […]Letitia is well-qualified in her specific focus on the defense of life, having studied Health Sciences at Purdue and Medical Technology at Arizona State. Letitia's unique capacity to uphold the Christian worldview does not stop here, though:

This quotation from Letitia was what caused me to link to her profile:

> "For as long as I can remember, critics have accused Christianity as a legalistic religion that is anti-woman among other things. This seems to demand that Christian women come to the forefront to proclaim that Woman was created as the completion to humankind. How appropriate, then, that women engage and

> complete the argument for the validity and veracity of the Christian faith. Plus, women who can communicate well and teach other women make the disciplines used in apologetics so much more accessible so that more women can become involved.
>
> "I have many times heard women disparage apologetics study, questioning its relevance, worried that it causes people to complicate faith or be combative. I want to shift this perspective. **Women tend to invest heavily in their children's education and spiritual and worldview formation. However, they also tend to disconnect at the most crucial point in this investment, the point at which the Christian worldview relies heavily on sound reasoning about philosophical and theological matters. The need to follow through is key to bringing the heart and the mind together to apply all the knowledge of their education (history, science, and the humanities) to be able to have and share an integrated Christian worldview. Apologetics study completes what women begin in earnest in properly educating their children, and I believe what is beneficial for children is likewise beneficial for women.** Apologetics bridges the gap between knowledge and application. Knowledge and application together are the key to communication of truth to a world that is skeptical about the claims of Christianity."

I have always felt concerned because I meet many women who are not interested in apologetics, and especially not the evidential kind that Letitia likes. I really love the way that she has thought through her responsibilities as wife and mother, and realized that apologetics is needed for her to do her jobs. I know that she has been involved with organizing apologetics conferences, her pro-life podcast, and her blog. So clearly, she has a need to be good at defending her faith. I think that's the right way to become interested in apologetics – you want to be able to talk to people about these things, and have an influence. That means having the knowledge, so that you are leading others, not just expressing your opinions.

Man signs up for Obamacare and goes into debt $50,000 paying for treatment

March 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Washington Free Beacon.

Excerpt:

> Cancer patient Tony Angran has quite the fighting spirit: he is battling Stage 3 cancer and trying desperately to find funds to pay for his new Obamacare plan.
>
> Angran… was diagnosed with stage 3 cancer of the esophagus had insurance, but due to a previous heart condition, the insurance did not cover the treatments he needed for his cancer. He was notified of his insurance plan's limitations just moments before receiving life-saving chemotherapy.
>
> "One of the workers came and said, 'I need to talk to you,' and so I went and talked to her and she says, 'We found out that your insurance does not include chemo,'" Angran told WHO-IA.
>
> Over the past two months, the Angrans have depleted their savings account and accrued $50,000 in debt to pay for his treatments.
>
> They signed up for Obamacare in hopes of finding better, less expensive coverage, but have been dismayed with the price of the health insurance offered by the exchange. It will cost them more than $800 a month.
>
> The insurance plan they enrolled in will not begin for another two weeks, leaving them essentially hanging by a thread.
>
> Tony Angran has since lost the ability to swallow, now eating through a feeding tube, and he is no longer able to take his necessary heart medicine.
>
> A Pastor, Angran has dedicated his life to the services others and has shown compassion through his ministry. He says that Obamacare, which promises to alleviate the financial burden associated with health insurance and aims to provide quality care for Americans, lacks compassion.
>
> "I'm sitting here with Stage 3 Esophageal Cancer, and they're taking me to the finance person and saying, 'How are you going to pay for this?'" he said.
>
> The Angrans have until the start of April to pay $7000- their copay under their new Obamacare health insurance plan.

Meanwhile, Democrat Senate majority leader Harry Reid says that all of these horror stories are untrue.

Catholic school being pressured by government to teach that all religions are equal

March 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christian Post reports on a story out of Quebec, the most liberal province in Canada. (H/T Reasonable Faith)

Excerpt:

> The Canadian Supreme Court is set to decide whether teachers at private religious schools in the province of Quebec will be allowed to share their faith with students, in a case concerning a Catholic high school that is being forced to teach students in an ethics and religious course that all religions are the same.
>
> "It is the same thought process that has been the genesis for prohibitions on blasphemy in other jurisdictions. The whole idea behind blasphemy laws in some parts of the world is that you don't want to offend different religions, and so what they (the Quebec government) do is argue that they promote tolerance and understanding, but rather they want to control what is said," Gerald Chipeur, Q.C., of the Canadian firm Miller Thompson LLP, told The Christian Post in a phone interview on Wednesday.
>
> Chipeur is one of 2,300 attorneys allied with Alliance Defending Freedom, a nonprofit legal organization that filed a brief on Monday with the Canadian Supreme Court in defense of Loyola High School, the Jesuit Roman Catholic school in question.
>
> The Catholic high school has argued that it does not object to teaching the 2008 government-mandated ethics and religion course, which is required to be taught in all private and public schools, but asked to be allowed to teach the course in good conscience. **The problem they found with the course was that it insisted that all religions, including Wicca and pagan rites, are equally valid. The government has also prohibited teachers from expressing preference for any one faith.**

That's why Christians need to take an interest in politics, and push for the policies that work for Christian families. I know several excellent Christian parents who do send their kids to public schools, and you never know when that might be your only option financially. It doesn't make sense to think that things will always be as good as they are now for Christians. You need to understand that there are groups out there who are not happy with the things we tell our kids, not happy with the way we spend family money, not happy with the fact that married families do better than single mothers. They have their own agenda, and we should have one of our own, too.

Do people go to Hell just because they don't accept Jesus?

March 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From J. Warner Wallace at Please Convince Me. (Link is now down, I can't find it anywhere else)

Excerpt:

> A "just" God does justice, which means to punish or reward appropriately. In the Western tradition, we punish people for the actions they commit, but the extent of punishment is dependent also on the person's mental state, and a person's mental state is reflective of his or her beliefs. Premeditated murder is worse than manslaughter, and is punished more severely, and a hate crime is a sentencing enhancement that adds more punishment to the underlying crime. In both examples, a person's beliefs are at play: the premeditated murderer has reflected on his choices and wants the victim dead; a hate crime reflects a belief that the rights of a member of the protected group are especially unworthy of respect. So, considering a person's beliefs may well be relevant, especially if those beliefs have motivated the criminal behavior.
>
> But the challenger's mistake is even more fundamental. He is wrong to assert that people are condemned for not accepting the gospel. Christians believe that people are condemned for their sinful behavior – the "wages of sin is death" – not for what they fail to do. The quoted challenge is like saying that the sick man died of "not going to the doctor." No, the person died of a specific condition – perhaps cancer or a heart attack – which a doctor might have been able to cure. So too with eternal punishment. No one is condemned for refusing to believe in Jesus. While Jesus can – and does – provide salvation for those who seek it, there is nothing unjust about not providing salvation to those who refuse to seek it. After all, we don't normally feel obliged to help someone who has not asked for, and does not want, our assistance. So too the Creator has the right to withhold a gift – i.e. eternity spent in His presence – from those who would trample on the gift, and on the gift-giver.
>
> The quoted assertion also demonstrates an unspoken belief that we can impress God with our "kind" or "generous" behavior. This fails to grasp what God is – a perfect being. We cannot impress Him. What we do right we should do. We don't drag people into court and reward them for not committing crimes. This is expected of them. They can't commit a murder and then claim that punishment is unfair, because they had been kind and generous in the past. When a person gets his mind around the idea of what perfection entails, trying to impress a perfect Creator with our "basic goodness" no longer seems like such a good option.

Here's a related answer from CARM. This one answers the question about degrees of punishment in Hell.

Excerpt:

> Yes, there are different degrees of punishment in hell.
>
> […]But, not all people are equally bad. Though all deserve damnation because all are sinners, different people have committed different degrees of sin.
>
> - Mt. 11:20-22, "Then He began to reproach the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 "Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you…I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you."
> - Luke 12:47-48, "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."
> - John 19:11, "Jesus answered [Pilate], 'You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin.' "
> - Heb. 10:29, "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?"
>
> So, if Jesus speaks of greater condemnation for Chorazin and Bethsaida than Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 11:21-22), one slave received more punishment than another (Luke 12:47-48), the one who delivered Jesus to Pilate has the greater sin (John 19:11), and a more severe punishment is reserved for those who trample underfoot the Son of God, then does not greater sin mean that greater punishment will also happen in hell? Yes it does.

Not only are there degrees of punishment in Hell, but there are degrees of reward in Heaven, based on what you do on Earth and what strengths you start out with.

Philippians 4:10-18:

[10] I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

[11] I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever

the circumstances.

[12] I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

[13] I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

[14] Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

[15] Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;

[16] for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

[17] Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.

[18] I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Everyone who believes in Jesus gets salvation, but your experience in Heaven will be different based on what you do while you are alive. And that's also the answer to another common question – about deathbed conversions. Both deathbed converts and William Lane Craig will get the same experience of being in the presence of God, but there are completely different levels of reward. One person has an empty account, and the other person has huge massive amounts of virtuous action on deposit. But I think the real reason that Christians are trying to do good things here on Earth is that they like God, and they want to be his friend. They want to work on the relationship, even if it means a little self-denial, and a little sacrifice. We all have things that we would rather be doing for ourselves, but sometimes we have to things that work – things that are effective – for someone else. My values are not his values. Sometimes it is good to do something based on what He values. I don't always have to get my way, because then it wouldn't be a real relationship.

I enjoy thinking about Bible puzzles like this… so often in church we just make Christianity a checklist of things that we are supposed to believe somehow, by brute force willpower. I think reflecting on these problems, asking questions, and making sense of them on our own, is a much better approach.

New study: 39 percent of private employers will cut workers if minimum wage is raised

March 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports on a study that should make Obama change his mind about his plan to raise minimum wage.

Excerpt:

> Thirty-eight percent of America's private employers say they will lay off workers if Congress agrees to raise the minimum wage to $10.10, according to a new survey by the nation's largest privately held staffing firm.
>
> Fifty-four percent of employers who are paying their workers the current minimum wage of $7.25 per hour say they would reduce hiring, while 65 percent say they would raise prices on their goods and services to offset the bumps in pay.
>
> Of the 1,213 business and human resources professionals surveyed by Express Employment Professionals last month – which include whose who pay their employees the minimum wage as well as those who do not – 19 percent say they'd fire workers, 39 percent would reduce hiring and 51 percent would raise prices on their services to make up the salary costs.
>
> "As with any such policy change, there are upsides and downsides. But based on this survey, there's no denying that raising the minimum wage will result in layoffs, reduced hiring, and higher prices at a large chunk of American companies," Bob Funk, CEO of Express and the former chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas, said. "How severe will those effects be? That remains to be seen, but policymakers will certainly want to be mindful of this reality as they legislate."
>
> Last month, the Congressional Budget Office released a report that said that while raising the country's minimum wage might boost the incomes of millions of Americans, it would simultaneously mean hundreds of thousands of fewer workers.
>
> According to the CBO, a graduated boost in the minimum wage to $10.10 by 2016 would lead to an estimated decline in employment of 500,000 workers by the second half of that year.

Although wages might go up for millions of workers, businesses would have to charge more for whatever they were selling. So really, it's just redistribution of wealth, except for the massive layoffs.

My worry about these dumb policies is like Obamacare and minimum wage hikes is that people see bad things happening and blame businesses rather than bad policies. I think we need to be studying economics to explain what is really happening to people, so that

when they have a chance to vote, they vote smart.

Wisconsin House passes Scott Walker's tax cut bill, headed to governor's desk

March 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker: All He Does Is Win

The leftist Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel reluctantly reports on another victor for Governor Scott Walker.

Excerpt:

> Gov. Scott Walker's $541 million tax cut proposal ended its trek through the Legislature on Tuesday with a final vote in the Assembly, clearing the way for the governor to sign it by next week.
>
> The Assembly voted, 61-35, in support of the bill, with three Democrats joining all Republicans in favor of the proposal. It now goes to the Republican governor for his approval.
>
> "That's exactly what taxpayers want — giving their money back to them rather than keep their dollars here in Madison," Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester) said, urging lawmakers, "Let's give it back."
>
> […]With growing tax collections now expected to give the state a $1 billion budget surplus in June 2015, Walker's tax proposal will cut property and income taxes for families and businesses, and zero out all income taxes for manufacturers in the state.
>
> Though the state's tax revenues are increasing, GOP lawmakers and Walker will use that growth as an occasion to trim overall state spending slightly for the next three years rather than increase it.
>
> Rep. Jim Steineke (R-Kaukauna), a Realtor, said the state's property taxes are a considerable barrier to people buying a home and staying in it into their old age.
>
> "What we're doing today does move us back in the right direction, lowering the

> property tax," he said.
>
> […]Under Walker's bill, the average income tax filer would receive a tax cut of $46 in April 2015 and the typical homeowner would save $131 over the existing law on this December's bills, according to the Legislature's nonpartisan budget office.
>
> Also, the governor has separately had his administration alter income tax withholding rates so workers have less taken out of each paycheck — about $520 a year for a married couple making a total of $80,000 a year — starting in April.
>
> The bill also would lower income taxes for factory and farm owners by $36.8 million over the current two-year budget and $91.3 million over the following two years.
>
> GOP supporters of the manufacturing tax cut in the bill see it as fuel for one of the state's main economic engines. Democratic opponents see it as a giveaway with a dubious payback to some of the richest people in the state, averaging about $800 for roughly 30,000 tax filers in 2015.

The Christian Post had a story about Scott Walker as well.

Excerpt:

> A Wisconsin-based atheist organization has demanded that that Governor Scott Walker remove a posting on the social media website Twitter that is religious in nature.
>
> The Freedom From Religion Foundation stated Tuesday that they took exception to Walker's official account, including a tweet posted Sunday that simply read, "Philippians 4:13."
>
> As rendered by the New King James Version, Philippians 4:13 states, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
>
> On Sunday, Walker tweeted "Phillipians 4:13" on the @GovWalker twitter handle. This is noted as being the "Official Twitter Account of the 45th Governor of the State of Wisconsin, Scott Walker." Walker has another twitter handle, @ScottWalker.
>
> The @GovWalker tweet of the verse citation received as of Tuesday evening 52 retweets and 76 favorites. It also received diverse responses from other Twitter accounts.

As of Wednesday, the tweet was still up. So I re-tweeted it and favorited it.

I think that in 2016 we should be looking at candidates who will take the fight to the Democrats. We don't need another Mitt Romney. I want to see a candidate who sticks his neck out for what he believes in and comes out on top. Real accomplishments, this time. Not rhetoric. Why do we always have to care what our opponents think of us? Why not just beat them up and then be magnanimous in victory? If he runs for President on the platform of zeroing out manufacturing income tax, he will win. Every union worker will

vote for him.

During the Christmas vacation, I read governor Walker's new book, which was a Christmas present from my friend ECM. If you want to learn more about governor Walker, I recommend picking that up. I actually got the audio version, and it's read by governor Walker himself.

Related posts

- Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker cuts taxes again, expects $1 billion surplus in 2015
- Wisconsin governor Walker's reforms hit the left in their wallets
- An interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
- Wisconsin judge defends free speech rights of conservative groups against Democrat censors
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Kenosha teachers vote to de-certify their teacher union, 63 – 37
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- What is a "right-to-work" law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues
- Democrat lawmakers flee state to avoid voting on spending cuts

Are Christians responsible for making plans and making good decisions?

March 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful post on decision making and the will of God posted on Neil's blog. Neil links to another post where someone is trying to figure out what God wants him to do.

Excerpt:

> **Really short version:** Aside from direct and clear personal revelation from God, you don't have access to his sovereign will when making decisions. Therefore you must look at other factors. **If it isn't moral, don't do it. If it is moral but not wise, don't do it. If it is moral and wise, then use your personal preferences.**
>
> Using this model you can end up with a wise and biblical decision, but you have avoided the traps of the "God told me to ____" routine. People who run around saying that God told them this and that convey a super-spirituality that can leave less mature believers wondering if they really have a relationship with God (i.e., "God doesn't tell me every little thing to do, so maybe I don't really know him.").

He has a helpful picture posted as well:

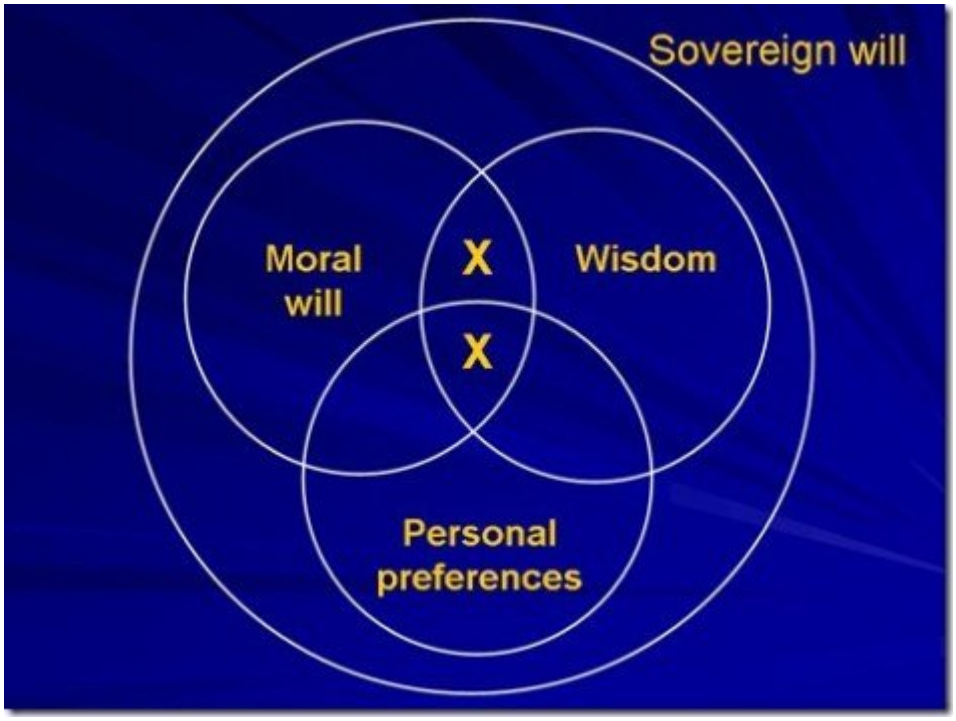

This is actually a very important topic for me, because I like making plans and making good decisions. I like being the quarterback or squad leader of my own life. I like to pick objectives and then make plans to achieve them. (Nothing too exotic, just simple stuff like saving money or reading more books)

Actually, I really oppose the idea that God has a magical fairy tale will for each person that will make them happy and fulfilled. For me, life isn't like that. I don't expect God to

lead me along like a child at a scavenger hunt. I expect to survey the battlefield where I am and then *do something* to make a difference. There are lots of things you can do that will please God. Should you focus on your career and sponsor apologetics conferences? Or should you use your spare time preparing Sunday school lessons? *There are lots of good things you could do to please God*. Your job is to pick the one that will be the most effective. It doesn't matter if it makes you happy, it only matters if it's effective and if you are good at it.

Who is Rifleman Dodd?

A while back, I was busily working my way through the U.S. Marine Corps Official Reading List, and I came across a book by C.S. Forester called *Rifleman Dodd*, or alternatively titled *Death to the French*. It's a work of historical fiction that takes place during the Napoleonic wars. The story is about a British marksman named Dodd, who is cut off from his own lines during a withdrawal maneuver. He is subsequently left to fend for himself behind enemy lines. An ordinary man might be full of despair and forget about his mission entirely. But Dodd is no ordinary man. Not only does he find a way to survive by finding food to eat, water to drink and places to sleep, but he also tries to remember his orders and to think about what he can do to advance the cause of his General, the Duke of Wellington.

Here's an excerpt from a gritty book review:

> It's about a green-coated British infantry rifleman in the Napoleonic Wars, an age when rifles were a novelty and most of the army was red-coated and carried muskets. Private Matthew Dodd gets separated from his regiment during a retreat and finds himself stranded behind enemy (French) lines in Portugal. With the occasional aid of some natives, but mostly on his own, he harasses the French with his rifle and tries to prevent them from building a bridge across the Tagus River. It's a remarkable tale of survival and solitary achievement, of a rank-and-file soldier who lives by his wits and slowly learns to make plans without orders, and shows leadership qualities and a knowledge of warfare.

I think we're in the same situation as Dodd.

There is no point in us looking for breadcrumb trails to happiness at this point. That's not the point of Christianity. The point of Christianity is friendship with God, imitation of Christ, honoring moral obligations, self-sacrificial love for your neighbor (and even your enemies!), and dedication to the truth – whether anyone else likes you or not. It's not supposed to make you happy, and it's not necessarily going to be a normal life like everyone else has. Things may not work out the way you'd like them to.

We seem to be making such a big deal about compassion and forgiveness in the Christian life these days – such a big emphasis on our feelings. Almost like we have forgotten that we have obligations to our friend – and his objectives. A relationship doesn't mean that one person completely disregards the character and goals of the other person and then is automatically granted forgiveness whenever they want it. That's not a friendship – that's

using someone else for your own ends. Maybe it’s time to remember what this is all about.

Court rules university violated conservative professor's freedom of speech

March 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Campus Reform.

Excerpt:

> A jury has concluded that the University of North Carolina-Wilmington retaliated against one of its professors for his outspoken conservative views.
>
> The battle for his First Amendment rights is finally over for Mike Adams, a criminology professor who asserted the university denied him a promotion to full professor in 2006 because of his conversion to Christianity and subsequent vocal conservatism.
>
> Today, a jury in a U.S. District Court in Greenville, N.C., agreed.
>
> "We are just grateful that the jury saw what we've long known what was the case, that Dr. Adams was an incredible scholar," Alliance Defending Freedom(ADF) attorney Travis Barham, who represents Adams, told *Campus Reform*.
>
> "This is an incredibly important victory for the First Amendment," Barham said. "To be able to speak freely without retaliation is a principle that should be a reality on campus and the jurors reassured that."
>
> The university hired Adams in 1993; at the time, he was a self-described atheist. After his conversion to Christianity in 2000, Adams adjusted his political and social views and spoke publicly on conservatism, including through his column at Townhall.com. From then on, Adams was subjected to "intrusive investigations" and "baseless accusations" according to an ADF press release.
>
> "They retaliated against me for exercising my First Amendment rights in my column and other outlets," Adams told *Campus Reform* after the trial. "I'm unbelievably thrilled [at the verdict]."
>
> The case was originally filed in April 2007 and the trial was granted by a federal court last year.

Well done, Alliance Defending Freedom! And congratulations, Mike Adams, for the win! There's probably no conservative professor in the United States who is more hated than Mike Adams.

However, there is definitely a warning for conservatives here. If you are thinking that the university campus is fair to Christians and conservatives, you really need to re-think that. On the modern secular leftist campus, you can expect to have your views ridiculed and attacked, not just by the professors, but by the students, too. After a little indoctrination, the students are just as likely to ridicule and attack you as the professors are. It's not a

place for free speech and rational discussion, especially outside the sciences. Young Christians and conservatives headed to the university – BEWARE.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

March 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus as the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates.

For example, in his debate with Bart Ehrman, Craig was able to quote Ehrman's own writings where he agreed that all four facts were probably true.

Excerpt:

> Now in his early published work Dr. Ehrman expressed skepticism about these facts. He insisted that we cannot really affirm these facts.
>
> […]Dr. Ehrman has himself come to re-think his position on these issues. Inconsistencies in the details notwithstanding, he now recognizes that we have "solid traditions," not only for Jesus' burial, but also for the women's discovery of the empty tomb, and therefore, he says, we can conclude with "some certainty" that Jesus was in fact buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb and that three days later the tomb was found empty.
>
> When I discovered that Professor Ehrman had reversed himself on this question, my admiration for his honesty and scholarly objectivity shot up. Very few scholars, once they've gone into print on an issue, have the courage to re-think that issue and admit that they were wrong. Dr. Ehrman's reversal of his opinion on these matters is testimony, not merely to the force of the evidence for these four facts, but also to his determination to follow the evidence wherever it leads. What this means is that my first contention is not an issue of disagreement in tonight's debate.

So what are the criteria that historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with

other authentic material, and so forth.

It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."

In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.

What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:

(1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.

(2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.

(3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.

(4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.

(5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.

(6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.

For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.

Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the

> better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book.

Try this approach instead:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely

accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection
8. Don't let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And just keep in mind that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. You have to use that – it's the law.

Back to the minimal facts criteria. The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I've read is the one by Robert H. Stein in "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It's a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion "God raised Jesus from the dead". That whole book is really very, very good.

1 Corinthians 15: the earliest source for the basic facts about the life of Jesus

March 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the creed – which is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8:

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Almost all historians accept this creed as dating back to within 5 years of the death of Jesus. But why?

Here's a great article from Eric Chabot, director of Ratio Christi Apologetics Alliance, The Ohio State University to explain why.

Excerpt:

> The late Orthodox Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide was so impressed by the creed of 1 Cor. 15, that he concluded that this "formula of faith may be considered as a statement of eyewitnesses." (5)
>
> Paul's usage of the rabbinic terminology "passed on" and "received" is seen in the creed of 1 Cor. 15:3-8:
>
> "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born."
>
> There is an interesting parallel to Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 15:3-8 in the works of Josephus. Josephus says the following about the Pharisees.
>
> "I want to explain here that the Pharisees passed on to the people certain ordinances from a succession of fathers, which are not written down in the law of Moses. For this reason the party of the Sadducees dismisses these ordinances, averaging that one need only recognize the written ordinances, whereas those from the tradition of the fathers need not be observed." (6)
>
> As Richard Bauckham notes, "the important point for our purposes is that

Josephus uses the language of “passing on” tradition for the transmission from one teacher to another and also for the transmission from the Pharisees to the people.”(7)

Bauckham notes in his book Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony that the Greek word for “eyewitness” (autoptai), does not have forensic meaning, and in that sense the English word “eyewitnesses” with its suggestion of a metaphor from the law courts, is a little misleading. The autoptai are simply firsthand observers of those events. Bauckham has followed the work of Samuel Byrskog in arguing that while the Gospels though in some ways are a very distinctive form of historiography, they share broadly in the attitude to eyewitness testimony that was common among historians in the Greco-Roman period. These historians valued above all reports of firsthand experience of the events they recounted.

Best of all was for the historian to have been himself a participant in the events (direct autopsy). Failing that (and no historian was present at all the events he need to recount, not least because some would be simultaneous), they sought informants who could speak from firsthand knowledge and whom they could interview (indirect autopsy).” In other words, Byrskog defines “autopsy,” as a visual means of gathering data about a certain object and can include means that are either direct (being an eyewitness) or indirect (access to eyewitnesses).

Byrskog also claims that such autopsy is arguably used by Paul (1 Cor.9:1; 15:5–8; Gal. 1:16), Luke (Acts 1:21–22; 10:39–41) and John (19:35; 21:24; 1 John 1:1–4).

While the word “received” (a rabbinical term) can also be used in the New Testament of receiving a message or body of instruction or doctrine (1 Cor.11:23; 15:1, 3; Gal. 1:9, 12 [2x], Col 2:6; 1 Thess 2:13; 4:1; 2 Thess 3:6), it also means means “to receive from another.” This entails that Paul received this information from someone else at an even earlier date. 1 Corinthians is dated 50-55 A.D. Since Jesus was crucified in 30-33 A.D. the letter is only 20-25 years after the death of Jesus. But the actual creed here in 1 Cor. 15 was received by Paul much earlier than 55 A.D.

[…]Even the co-founder Jesus Seminar member John Dominic Crossan, writes:

“Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that “I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received.” The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he “went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days” (11).

This comment by Crossan makes sense because within the creed Paul calls Peter by his Aramic name, Cephas. Hence, if this tradition originated in the Aramaic language, the two locations that people spoke Aramaic were Galilee and Judea.

> (12) The Greek term “historeo” is translated as “to visit” or “to interview.” (13) Hence, Paul’s purpose of the trip was probably designed to affirm the resurrection story with Peter who had been an actual eyewitness to the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:5).

I know what you’re thinking. You’re thinking “Hey WK, isn’t John Dominic Crossan that wacky liberal atheist who is on the far-left fringe of historical Jesus scholarship? So wacky, that he actually thought that Secret Gospel of Mark was *real*, instead of just being a hoax?” Yes, that’s the nutty John Dominic Crossan I mean. The very one.

Here’s a bit more about this early creed from Gary Habermas.

Quote:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: “However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul’s.”[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul’s own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: “It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition.”[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]
>
> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul’s use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which

Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]

Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]

Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.

(3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]

These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.

(4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his

> firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

That’s how solid this early creed is – even atheists like Crossan and Ludemann accept it as historically reliable. It’s historical bedrock, as Michael Licona likes to say. This is the stuff that *everyone* accepts – across the ideological spectrum!

A Harvard University student explains how evidence changed her mind about God

March 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a must-read article about the effectiveness of apologetics on college campuses in Christianity Today. (H/T Sanjay M.)

Excerpt:

> I don't know when I first became a skeptic. It must have been around age 4, when my mother found me arguing with another child at a birthday party: "But how do you know what the Bible says is true?" By age 11, my atheism was so widely known in my middle school that a Christian boy threatened to come to my house and "shoot all the atheists." My Christian friends in high school avoided talking to me about religion because they anticipated that I would tear down their poorly constructed arguments. And I did.
>
> As I set off in 2008 to begin my freshman year studying government at Harvard (whose motto is *Veritas*, "Truth"), I could never have expected the change that awaited me.
>
> It was a brisk November when I met John Joseph Porter. Our conversations initially revolved around conservative politics, but soon gravitated toward religion. He wrote an essay for the *Ichthus*, Harvard's Christian journal, defending God's existence. I critiqued it. On campus, we'd argue into the wee hours; when apart, we'd take our arguments to e-mail. Never before had I met a Christian who could respond to my most basic philosophical questions: How does one understand the Bible's contradictions? Could an omnipotent God make a stone he could not lift? What about the Euthyphro dilemma: Is something good because God declared it so, or does God merely identify the good? To someone like me, with no Christian background, resorting to an answer like "It takes faith" could only be intellectual cowardice. Joseph didn't do that.
>
> And he did something else: He prodded me on how inconsistent I was as an atheist who nonetheless believed in right and wrong as objective, universal categories. Defenseless, I decided to take a seminar on meta-ethics. After all, atheists had been developing ethical systems for 200-some years. In what I now see as providential, my atheist professor assigned a paper by C. S. Lewis that resolved the Euthyphro dilemma, declaring, "God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God."
>
> Joseph also pushed me on the origins of the universe. I had always believed in the Big Bang. But I was blissfully unaware that the man who first proposed it, Georges Lemaître, was a Catholic priest. And I'd happily ignored the rabbit trail of a problem of what *caused* the Big Bang, and what *caused* that cause, and so on.

> By Valentine's Day, I began to believe in God. There was no intellectual shame in being a deist, after all, as I joined the respectable ranks of Thomas Jefferson and other Founding Fathers.
>
> I wouldn't stay a deist for long. A Catholic friend gave me J. Budziszewski's book Ask Me Anything, which included the Christian teaching that "love is a commitment of the will to the true good of the other person." This theme—of love as sacrifice for true good—struck me. The Cross no longer seemed a grotesque symbol of divine sadism, but a remarkable act of love. And Christianity began to look less strangely mythical and more cosmically beautiful.

Now, I'm going to get into a lot of trouble for saying this, but I think that if you are a Christian and you are in a secular university, then you really need to have put in the effort to study the areas of science, history and philosophy that are relevant to the Christian faith. This is regardless of your personal abilities or field of study. We must all make an effort regardless of how comfortable we are with things that are hard for us to learn.

Granted, most atheists are not interested in truth, because they tend to jettison truth whenever it conflicts with their personal autonomy – their desire to seek pleasure apart from moral constraints. But there is another kind of atheist. This kind of atheist is honest, open-minded, and they just have never encountered any good reasons or evidence to think that God exists and that Jesus is anything other than a man. There are a lot of atheists like that who are just waiting to hear some decent evidence. Our job is to prepare for them and then engage them, if they are willing to be engaged.

I think that definition of love she cited – self-sacrifice for the true good of another person – is important. I don't think that ordinary Christians like you or me spends time on apologetics because we "like" it. I know lots of Christians who are in tough, expensive academic programs trying to get the skills they need to defend truth in areas that matter. They do this because they know that there are people out there who are interested in truth, and who are willing to re-prioritize their lives if the truth is made clear to them. We need to be willing to serve God by doing hard things that work.

Courage under fire: Ronald Speirs and Easy Company at the Battle of Foy

March 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I try to occasionally post something that shows a particularly brave action from some time and place in military history. For example, I previously wrote about Medal of Honor winner Michael Murphy in 2011. Last year, his story was told more widely in the movie "Lone Survivor", which I recommend to everyone. Today I want to highlight another hero: Ronald Speirs.

It is January 1945 and the famous "Screaming Eagles", the 101st Airborne division, are about to turn the tide of the Battle of the Bulge in Bastogne.

Let's read about the Battle of Foy courtesy of a scenario description from the wargame "Flames of War". (Note: LMG = light machine gun, in this case, a .30 caliber machine gun)

Excerpt:

> E or 'Easy' Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, like the rest of the division, was ordered on to the attack on 9 January 1945 as part of a general offensive to drive back the Germans from Bastogne. In the following days the 506th Regiment, along with the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, cleared the forests around the town of Foy and pushed the Germans out. Their next objective was to take Foy to allow the 11th Armored Division to attack from Foy across the fields northeast towards Noville.
>
> […]At 0900 hours on 13 January Easy Company attacked along the western edge of Foy, along the road. The new year had brought heavy snow and the it blanketed the ground and had reduced temperatures to well below zero. 2nd Battalion commander, Captain Dick Winters, had two section of LMGs deployed on the edge of the woods facing Foy to give Easy Company covering fire while they crossed the 250 yards of open field between the forest and Foy's buildings. There were just a few scattered trees and haystacks to give cover. As Easy Company advance the covering fire did its job, limiting the fire on the paratroopers to sporadic rifle shots. The approach on Foy made good pace under the cover of the LMG fire, but about 75 yards out from the edge of the village the skirmish line halted and the paratroopers hunkered down in the snow. Captain Winters stared in disbelief, wondering what was going on.
>
> Lieutenant Dike, who was commanding Easy Company, had been overwhelmed with indecision. It became obvious to Winters that Dike didn't know what he was doing, or had had a failure of confidence. His immediate impulse was to take command himself, but he noticed Lieutenant Ronald Speirs, a capable platoon commander from D Company, standing nearby. Winters ordered Speirs to take command of Easy Company and get the attack moving again. What Speirs did

> next amazed many of the paratroopers who witnessed it.
>
> **On receiving his orders from Winters, Speirs immediately ran at full speed down to where Dike and his HQ had taken cover behind a haystack and told Dike his orders, 'I'm here to take over'. After quickly being told of the situation by the NCOs he ran off towards Foy. The men of Easy Company immediately followed. On reaching the outskirt buildings of Foy, Speirs immediately sought to link up with I Company of 3rd Battalion who, despite only having 25 men, were supporting the attack from the other flank of Foy. He set off running again, through the German lines, to find I Company's commander. After consulting with its commander, Captain Gene Brown, he turned around and dashed back through Foy and the surprised Germans. Through all this the enemy fired on him with machine-guns, rifles and guns, but not a single shot hit its mark.**

Now with all that said, watch the two clips below, and pay close attention the faces of the men under Lieutenant Dike, and then later under Lieutenant Speirs. Pay close attention to how Speirs' courage inspires the men under him to also be courageous. Especially First Sergeant Lipton, who later risks his own life to draw fire from a German sniper so that Shifty Powers can prevent any other troops from being killed by the sniper.

The two clips are from "Band of Brothers", the episode entitled "The Breaking Point". There is some coarse language, but no sexual language in it. Really, if you are squeamish, do not watch it. However, if you can handle it, then buy the whole DVD set. It will inspire you, and help you to do things that you didn't think were possible. If you really want to understand the men of E Company, you can read a book by Stephen E. Ambrose called *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York, 1992).

Low resolution clip, includes briefing at the beginning

This video is lower resolution, but show Winters reflecting on how Lipton had asked him not to let Dike lead the attack the night before, and also Winters carefully explaining to Dike that the American attack has to *keep moving* or they will get pinned down by machine guns and zeroed-in by mortars and destroyed.

I like that one because it shows the briefing, but the next clip is in 720HD.

High resolution clip, does not include briefing

This is a higher resolution version that is only 8.5 minutes long, but doesn't have the briefing.

If you listen closely when Speirs explains what everyone is going to do, you can here one of the NCOs say "thank God" as he pats the other on the back.

Leadership

To be a good military leader, you have to know many things. A knowledge of strategy and tactics, a knowledge of military history, the ability to see the battlefield, knowledge of

your opponent, knowledge of weapons, and so on. But surely the greatest of these is courage. As Von Clausewitz says in his famous book “On War”, “War is the province of danger, and therefore courage above all things is the first quality of a warrior.” Nothing inspires troops like a commander who is willing to take on the same risks that he asks his troops to take.

Take a look at this article from the Ivey School of Business journal, which talks about the characteristics of Canadian generals in Afghanistan.

Excerpt:

A leader must be in front of subordinates. This takes courage. Leadership from the front encapsulates the adage, *never ask a subordinate to do something that you, the leader, wouldn’t do*. In Afghanistan, the leader must not only be in front, but he or she must *be seen* to be in front. Subordinates seek this reassurance from their leaders at all levels. Though they may be tentative, leaders must demonstrate character and moral strength. Their credibility is inextricably dependent on their ability to do so.. During his frequent visits to Afghanistan, former Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Rick Hillier, made a point of visiting troops that were situated in some of the most IED-laden areas of the Canadian sector. Through his demonstrated courage, he inspired leaders of all levels. “If the CDS goes there, so can I” was the resulting mindset. The current CDS, General Walt Natynczyk, has successfully continued this practice.

[…]All leaders need courage. It is the lynchpin of effective leadership. No one respects a wimp who will buy in to any idea no matter how inane it might be. Courage is having the strength of character to persist and hold on to ideas in the face of opposition. Here, I’m not restricting my treatment of courage as it relates to fear. It’s also about strength of character and devotion to causes and ideas.

As Christians, we have a leader who led by example. We all need to learn to not be so concerned with looking out for ourselves and our happiness first, but to instead be willing to take risks and sacrifice ourselves to do the right thing. We Christians should all be courageous, because we are led by a courageous leader.

That doesn’t necessarily mean going halfway across the world, it can mean reaching out to someone right there next to you who needs your help and support. Maybe that person has been running on an empty tank for a long time, but still trying to do the right thing. You never know when the opportunity to do something amazing will arise, but you won’t take it if you keep thinking of how you might get hurt. You have to reconcile yourself that you are not here to avoid every possible kind of suffering. It doesn’t mean that you take unnecessary risks, but it does mean *not letting fear stop you from doing the right thing*.

Now get out there and take that attack on in.

American Physical Society appoints panel to re-evaluate global warming predictions

March 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Climate change "deniers," as global warm-mongers call those who think empirical evidence is more reliable than computer models, may soon count among their number a 50,000-strong body of physicists.
>
> At the risk of being accused of embracing what alarmists call the flat-earth view of climate change, the American Physical Society has appointed a balanced, six-person committee to review its stance on so-called climate change that includes three distinguished skeptics: Judith Curry, John Christy and Richard Lindzen. Their credentials are impressive.
>
> Christy is director of the Earth System Science Center at the University of Alabama, Huntsville, and was a lead author of the 2001 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
>
> Curry is a professor and chairwoman of the School of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences at the Georgia Institute of Technology.
>
> Lindzen, an Alfred P. Sloan professor of meteorology at MIT from 1983 to 2013, is currently a distinguished senior fellow in the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute.
>
> A question the American Physical Society panel will address is one we ask repeatedly: Why wasn't the current global temperature stasis, with no discernible change in the past 15 years, not predicted by any of the climate models used by the IPCC, part of the United Nations?
>
> The APS announcement lists among its questions to be answered: "How long must the stasis persist before there would be a firm declaration of a problem with the models?"
>
> In a nod to the likelihood that nature, not man, calls the shots, another APS audit question asks the panel: "What do you see as the likelihood of solar influences beyond TSI (total solar irradiance)? Is it coincidence that the stasis has occurred during the weakest solar cycle (i.e., sunspot activity) in about a century?"
>
> The other three American Physical Society members, reports Quadrant Online, maintain that climate change is real, disaster is imminent and man is at fault. They are long-time IPCC stalwart Ben Santer (who in 1996 drafted, in suspicious circumstances, the original IPCC mantra about a "discernible" influence of man-made CO2 on climate), IPCC lead author and modeler William Collins, and atmospheric physicist Isaac Held.

> The APS, to its credit, is addressing the chasm between computer models that cannot even predict the past and actual observations suggesting that warming is on hold and largely influenced by natural factors.

If I were picking three people to represent the skeptical side, I would have picked the three they chose, with Tim Ball, Roy Spencer and Fred Singer as my alternates. I've always believed that people who go into physics are far more driven by the data than in other areas of science, especially evolutionary biology and paleontology. After all, these are the same guys that went along with the Big Bang cosmology that ruined the eternal universe that was required by the religion of naturalism. But they didn't care, and now a cosmology that repudiates naturalism is dominant. So, once again, the physics researchers are leading the way out of a quagmire of blind faith.

Summary of the William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate: Does God Exist?

March 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I got word today that there was an agnostic philosophy student at Dr. Craig's "Defenders" class today who read this summary of the Craig-Hitchens debate and said it was "perfectly on the money" according to my source. I have not re-posted this summary since 2009, when the debate happened, so I thought I would re-post it today.

Here is the video of the debate has been posted:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang
– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities

– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws
– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection
– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument

– evolution disproves paley’s argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn’t have done it that way
– god wouldn’t have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus
– god wouldn’t have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that’s a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that’s a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that’s a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don’t support life, that’s a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that’s a bad design

3. hitchens’ burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can’t prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig’s scientific arguments don’t go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don’t prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don’t prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn’t be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig’s evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can’t use the progress of science
– it’s too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god’s existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn’t forming his view based on evidence
– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don’t believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you've got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God
– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH's evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH's argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn't need to be efficient

CH's argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH's argument that Craig's scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH's argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn't need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH's citation of Craig's book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true
– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH's rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH's rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning

– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH's argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed
– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them
– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that's a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven't even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn't prove christianity is true

– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they're growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn't improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do
– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn't need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that's why people act morally
– it's degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don't know why, because i can't ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don't hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don't believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don't agree

WC moral argument: it's not epistemology it's the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument <signal loss>
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument

– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing
– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection <signal loss>
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history
– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:

– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it's just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that's not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek. You can also watch or listen to a *preview debate* that was held in Dallas recently between Craig, Hitchens, Lee Strobel and some other people. Biola University philosopher Doug Geivett's review is here. He attended the debate.

Woman gets $36,000 medical bill because hospital not covered by Obamacare gold plan

March 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From KOMO News.

Excerpt:

> Alex Szablya just wants the best health care she can get for her children. So she got a gold plan, the highest level possible with the Washington Health Benefit Exchange. She picked a plan with Lifewise, an affiliate of Premera Blue Cross.
>
> In early March, her 16-year old daughter had a medical emergency. Alex drove her to the nearest hospital, which was Seattle Children's. Alex says doctors there felt her daughter's situation was so dire she needed to be admitted to the hospital immediately. She was there for nine days.
>
> Then came news that her stay, which involved specialized mental health care for adolescents, was going to cost $36,000 and her insurance would only pay for half because Seattle Children's was considered on out-of-network facility.
>
> She thought by going for the highest premium PPO gold level coverage offered the state exchange, a majority of the bill would have been covered.
>
> "I'm paying a premium for that and I'm willing to pay that premium, but I expect to get services that are not so limited by the insurance companies," she said.
>
> She's not alone. Seattle Children's says its treated more than 125 patients who are not covered by policies offered by the exchange. In October, the hospital filed suit against the Office of the Insurance Commissioner, claiming the state office failed to ensure adequate network coverage in plans from its biggest providers like Premera Blue Cross.
>
> "Because Seattle Children's was not included in the major plans, children coming for care here were going to be denied care and in fact that's what we are seeing," said Dr. Sandy Melzer, senior vice president and chief strategy officer for Seattle Children's.
>
> Alex says Lifewise offered similar alternative care at other hospitals but it required traveling a three hour drive to Yakima or a two hour trip and ferry ride to Bremerton. Children's is a five minute car ride from her north Seattle home.
>
> "This limited network is preventing me to get the specialty services that my children and I need in this community," Aex said. She's now facing an $18,000 hospital bill she wasn't prepared for.

Here's a sketch from Chris Rock (whom I can't stand) explaining the Obamacare Gold Plan:

Well, I don't see why this is a problem, because the Obamacare Gold Plan covers all the

birth control pills that she could possibly need, and at *any* hospital. It's Sandra Fluke approved! Why isn't this greedy reactionary Seattle woman thanking Obama for saving her from all those worthless private health care plans that existed before Obamacare? After all, the only reason that Obama lied to us about lowering premiums, keeping our doctors and our health plans is because those old private insurance plans were garbage compared to the Robitussin Gold Plan.

Please can we elect someone who understands health care policy in 2016?

Leader of gay student group: disagreeing with us makes us kill ourselves

March 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest from Life Site News about Stanford's University's attempt to suppress a pro-natural-marriage group's campus event.

Excerpt:

> At a recent GSC meeting, SAS co-president Judy Romea reminded student leaders that not only is the SAS not "anti-gay," it stood "in solidarity" with homosexual groups against the controversial Westboro Baptist Church when it held a protest on campus.
>
> But that wasn't enough for campus gay activist groups, who turned out en masse for the same GSC meeting to demand that funding for the event be pulled.
>
> "Their viewpoint kills people," Jeffrey Cohen, vice president of GradQ, a homosexual advocacy group for graduate students, told the GSC. "There's a lot of research published in top psychology journals that have looked at university environments, both positive and negative. An event such as this would be a negative event, [and] in schools that have negative events there is a statistically significant increase in suicide." He said the last time a pro-marriage speaker visited the campus, someone told him "they wanted to kill themselves."
>
> Cohen said he was especially "bothered by the idea that their conference is trying to create better ways to deliver [the pro-marriage] message. … The idea that they are learning how to deliver their message scares [me]." Cohen suggested SAS cancel its conference and instead hold a joint event with GradQ in which gay activists would have a chance to promote their message too.
>
> Ben Holston, chair of the undergraduate senate, also threw his weight behind the gay groups. "This is an event that hurts the Stanford community," Holston said. "To express a belief that, for some reason this event is not discriminatory, is completely off-base. This event as it stands, given the speakers, and given that they have said the event is supposed to 'promote one-man one-woman [marriage],' which promotes stripping away rights of people in this room, is unacceptable on Stanford's campus." He urged the GSC to withdraw its funding for the conference.

Now I'm chaste, and a virgin, so I was just imagining what it would be like for me at Yale during Sex Week, when my student fees (hypothetically) would be used to bring in sex addicts to instruct college students that my view is sick and twisted and that binge drinking and premarital promiscuity is morally praiseworthy. Does anyone here seriously think that I would threaten to commit suicide unless people who disagreed with my chastity and virginity stopped disagreeing with me? No. A sex addict's disapproval of my

chastity and virginity doesn't make me want to commit suicide, *because I am not insane.* I'm also *not engaged in immoral behavior* by being chaste and remaining a virgin. Criticism of me for being moral doesn't bother me – that's *your* problem if you disagree with morality.

If you tell me that what I'm doing is wrong, I've got piles of papers in peer-reviewed journals showing me that for my plans – life-long married love and influential Christian children raised by a stay-at-home mom – chastity is the best plan. But it doesn't bother me if you disagree with me, and I'm not going to attack your place of work with guns, vandalize your church, or force you to lose your job – because I'm not a gay activist. I don't care that you disagree with me, because I believe that there is a right to free speech and no right to force you to celebrate and fund my sexual orientation.

That gay activist sounded insane, but I don't think that most gay people agree with him.

Look:

> Ben, a graduate student in neuroscience, told the GSC that even though he is homosexual, he believes the SAS should be able to access the same student funding as any other group.
>
> "What bothers [me] the most is that in the name of tolerance, we are silencing and taking away support from a view that we don't agree with," Ben said. "These views are out there, we should listen to them. I totally disagree with these people, but we need to hear what they have to say. We need to hear SAS."

Now there is a gay person I can tolerate – because he tolerates me.

New study: fruit fly DNA reveals unexpected complexity

March 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> You know about ENCODE, the project that found 80 percent or more of the human genome is transcribed and appears functional. Now, along comes modENCODE: the ENCODE project for model organisms. Results from the fruit fly are in, and Indiana University shares the surprises (for evolutionary theory, that is): "Study of complete RNA collection of fruit fly uncovers unprecedented complexity."
>
> The paper shows that the *Drosophila* genome is **far more complex than previously suspected** and suggests that the **same will be true of the genomes of other higher organisms**. The paper also reports a number of **novel, particular results**: that a small set of genes used in the nervous system are responsible for a disproportionate level of complexity; that long regulatory and so-called **"antisense" RNAs are especially prominent during gonadal development**; that **"splicing factors" (proteins that control the maturation of RNAs by splicing) are themselves spliced in complex ways**; and that the*Drosophila* transcriptome undergoes large and interesting changes in response to environmental stresses. (Emphasis added.)
>
> Ten of the 41 researchers from 11 universities working on modENCODE came from IU. They found many genes transcribed only under stress, such as exposure to heat, cold, and toxins. "In total, 5,249 transcript models for 811 genes were revealed only under perturbed conditions," they said. As if the "junk DNA" myth needed any more pounding, the lead author testifies:
>
> "As usual in science, we've answered a number of questions and raised even more. For example, we identified **1,468 new genes, of which 536 were found to reside in previously uncharacterized gene-free zones.**"

The post on Evolution News also talks about another study from the University of Vienna on the genome of the sea anemone. Their genome was way more complex than expected, too.

So what is the best explanation for all this specified complexity that enables biological function?

Evolution News explains:

> Intelligent design… knows how to explain the observations. Whenever we see a complex, functioning system (like a rollout of a software system), we know

> intelligence played a role in its origin. We also know that intelligence can explain multiple, independent instantiations of similar systems. We *never* see, however, complex, networked systems arising *de novo* by unguided natural processes.

Yes. In the company I work for, we have a release of functional code every month (at least). These explanation for the increase in specified complexity in our applications is that busy little software engineers have been carefully sequencing characters into lines of Java code, for purpose. No rational person believes that you can get huge increases in specified complexity by random chance. Code is code is code. It all requires a coder, just like the Big Bang requires a Big Bang.

Feminist professor who attacked pro-lifer charged with theft, battery and vandalism

March 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Update on the story from last week, courtesy of The College Fix.

Excerpt:

> *The College Fix* reported on March 12 that department of feminist studies professor Mireille Miller-Young, whose research emphasis is black studies, pornography, and sex work, had been caught on camera assaulting a 16-year-old student, Thrin Short.
>
> Miller-Young led a small mob that approached a group of pro-life demonstrators who were holding signs. The mob chanted "tear down the sign." Miller-Young then grabbed one of the signs and stormed off with it, eventually engaging in a physical altercation with 16-year-old Short, one of the pro-life demonstrators, when Short tried to retrieve the stolen sign.
>
> The confrontation took place in the university's designated "free speech area."
>
> The 3 by 5 foot sign contained graphic images of aborted fetuses as well as statistics and facts about abortion. The scuffle left the 16-year-old Short with visible scars and scratches on her arms.
>
> […]**Late last week, Santa Barbara officials announced that Miller-Young is being prosecuted for misdemeanor theft, battery, and vandalism in connection with her assault on Ms. Short.**
>
> Short says Miller-Young pushed her at least three times, stole her sign, then grabbed and attempted to restrain her while others made off with the sign.
>
> Short's father told *Fox News* that he hopes the prosecution of Miller-Young will serve as a lesson for those who seek to halt free speech on campus. "She was free to engage in a rational dialogue with them," Mr. Short said. "Instead, she chose to bully them, steal and destroy their property, and hit and scratch my daughter."
>
> "I think the goal of this prosecution should be to set a good example for her students, one that will not only deter her from repeating this conduct, but will also deter those who approve of her actions from imitating her appalling behavior," Mr. Short added.

This sort of stuff happens all the time, by the way. Sometimes the pro-abortion people run over signs:

And sometimes, they try to run over people.

And sometimes, they actually shoot people.

I have some friends in the pro-life movement, and I'm familiar with some of the horrors

they have to endure. If you reason that people who are willing to kill innocent unborn babies are fine with committing lesser crimes against less innocent people, you'd be right. I think we should all agree that whatever you do in your life, you shouldn't be taking innocent human lives in order to avoid having to take responsibility for your own actions. That's just wrong.

Police rule that racist graffiti on dorm door is a fake hate crime

March 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The College Fix.

Excerpt:

> The Grand Valley State University student who found racist graffiti on her dorm room door's whiteboard in mid-February is the same person who put it there, police have determined.
>
> […]"When the incident was initially brought to the campus's attention, several organizations and groups were highly alarmed, prompting assemblies, discussions in the classroom and a university-wide alert to the situation," according to the Michigan-based college's student newspaper, the *Grand Valley Lanthorn.*
>
> Turns out, the incident joins the long and growing list of campus hate-crime hoaxes across the nation.
>
> "The person believed to be responsible for the drawing and language written on the dry erase board is a Grand Valley student and the owner of the message board," stated Grand Valley Police Department Chief Renee Freeman on Friday. "The incident has had a disruptive impact on the community and as a result, the student has been referred to the Dean of Students for a student code violation. University policy does not permit the release of his/her name."
>
> […]Despite this development, a university-wide "Teach-In" prompted by bias incidents on campus is still set to take place at Grand Valley State on Wednesday, the *Lanthorn* reports, adding "the day-long event will feature student and faculty presentations about preventing discrimination and oppression on GVSU's campuses."

The College Fix article links to another half-dozen recent fake hate crimes.

Sometimes, I wonder if these college kids are learning anything useful at college. They learn how to be victims, how to censor others, how to complain and whine and blame. But I wonder if they are learning anything that they can use to serve others – like in a real job. They sure are paying a lot of tuition to learn how to call other people "racist", "sexist", "homophobe" and "Islamophobe". And they can do it because the government is loaning them taxpayer dollars to do it.

World Vision endorses same-sex marriage, denies Biblical definition of marriage

March 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I frankly don't care to link to any source on this story other than Al Mohler and Franklin Graham. Lapsed Christian organizations and secular news sources are celebrating this decision, but they will have nothing valuable to say to anyone who takes the Bible seriously as an authority on moral issues. Even though I keep posting secular evidence and research to confirm what the Bible teaches, I still get my moral positions *from the Bible*. Clearly, this is not the case with organizations like World Vision any more.

Al Mohler first, on what happened:

> The headline in the news story by *Christianity Today* made the issue easy enough to understand — "World Vision: Why We're Hiring Gay Christians in Same-Sex Marriages."
>
> As the magazine reported, "World Vision's American branch will no longer require its more than 1,100 employees to restrict their sexual activity to marriage between one man and one woman."
>
> World Vision U.S. President Richard Stearns announced the change in a letter to World Vision staff. The organization, one of the largest humanitarian organizations in the world, "will continue to expect abstinence before marriage and fidelity within marriage for all staff," Stearns said. He then added that "since World Vision is a multi-denominational organization that welcomes employees from more than 50 denominations, and since a number of these denominations in recent years have sanctioned same-sex marriage for Christians, the board—in keeping with our practice of deferring to church authority in the lives of our staff, and desiring to treat all of our employees equally—chose to adjust our policy." That led to the key change Stearns was then to announce: "Thus, the board has modified our Employee Standards of Conduct to allow a Christian in a legal same-sex marriage to be employed at World Vision."

Stearns basically claimed that the Bible is not clear on whether gay marriage is permissible. No theologians were cited, no Bible passages were references. He merely said that disagreement among denominations means that there is no right answer. Before continuing with Mohler, let me just point out the relevant quotation from the Bible.

Matthew 19:3-6: [NASB]

3 *Some* Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for any reason at all?"

4 And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning made them male and female,

5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his

wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

So Richard Stearns either *doesn't believe that Jesus said that* OR *he believes that Jesus was wrong, and therefore fallible*. It's one or the other.

Now, more from Al Mohler:

> Richard Stearns has every right to try to make his case, but these arguments are pathetically inadequate. Far more than that, his arguments reveal basic issues that every Christian ministry, organization, church, and denomination will have to face — and soon.
>
> The distinction between an "operational arm" of the church and a "theological arm" is a fatal misreading of reality. World Vision claims a Christian identity, claims to serve the kingdom of Christ, and claims a theological rationale for its much-needed ministries to the poor and distressed. It cannot surrender theological responsibility when convenient and then claim a Christian identity and a theological mandate for ministry.
>
> Add to this the fact that World Vision claims not to have compromised the authority of Scripture, even as its U.S. president basically throws the Bible into a pit of confusion by suggesting that the Bible is not sufficiently clear on the question of the morality of same-sex sexuality. Stearns insists that he is not compromising biblical authority even as he undermines confidence that the church can understand and trust what the Bible reveals about same-sex sexuality.
>
> The policy shift points back to a basic problem with World Vision's understanding of the church. No organization can serve on behalf of churches across the vast theological and moral spectrum that would include clearly evangelical denominations, on the one hand, and liberal denominations such as the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Episcopal Church, and the United Church of Christ, on the other. That might work if World Vision were selling church furniture, but not when the mission of the organization claims a biblical mandate.
>
> Furthermore, it is ridiculous to argue that World Vision is not taking sides on the issue. The objective fact is that World Vision will now employ openly-gay employees involved in openly homosexual relationships. There is no rational sense in claiming that this represents neutrality.
>
> […]Writing to the Corinthian Christians, the Apostle Paul stated: "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." [1 Corinthians 6:9-10]
>
> The leader of World Vision U.S. now claims that the Bible is not sufficiently clear

> on the sinfulness of same-sex sexuality and relationships, but he also claims a "mission of building the kingdom." The Apostle Paul makes homosexuality a kingdom issue, and he does so in the clearest of terms.
>
> Of course, Paul's point is not that homosexuals are uniquely sinful, but that all of us are sinners in need of the grace and mercy of God that come to us in the gift of salvation. Thanks be to God, Paul follows those words with these: "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." [1 Corinthians 6:11]
>
> The worst aspect of the World Vision U.S. policy shift is the fact that it will mislead the world about the reality of sin and the urgent need of salvation. Willingly recognizing same-sex marriage and validating openly homosexual employees in their homosexuality is a grave and tragic act that confirms sinners in their sin — and that is an act that violates the gospel of Christ.

Now my comments. Be aware that I wrote the stuff below in 20 minutes and was very agitated and upset when I wrote it – it may be revised when I calm down.

My thoughts

I have a long-standing policy of NEVER, EVER, EVER giving money to Christian organizations who do anything except apologetics. I am willing to give money to groups who do pro-life apologetics and pro-marriage apologetics. I am open to giving money to Christian organizations who put forward good economic policy and good foreign policy, too, like the Heritage Foundation or the Family Research Council. But I think the safest thing to do is to take your money and give it to groups like Reasonable Faith, Ratio Christi, Faith Beyond Belief, Stand to Reason, Please Convince Me, Cross Examined, Reasons to Believe, etc. I just sent $300 to Ratio Christi for an event yesterday. So generosity is not the issue – stewardship is.

Apologetics groups are the SAFEST groups to give money to, because they are the ones who are guided by *truth.* World Vision and other "works-based" groups, including some missionary groups are some of the WORST places to put your money if you care about theological accuracy. People don't get into apologetics in order to feel good or be liked, they go into it to discover truth and defend truth. We are hard-core in this business. So again, if you want to be a good steward of your money, put your money into apologists who are active in research, active on the university campus, and actively engaged for the truth of Christianity.

I realize I am being controversial here, but trust me on this. There is something different about people who go out and study philosophy, history and science and then get into debates with people. There is something inside them that is resistant to the spirit of the age, which is secularism, postmodernism and moral relativism. A lot of non-apologists think that God is primarily interested in making people good, and making them do good things here on Earth. And that's what leads to the apostasy that you see in groups like World Vision – this focus on doing good, rather than on having true beliefs first, then

doing good second.

What does the Bible say is most important?

Look at the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:36-40: [NASB]

> 36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"
>
> 37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'
>
> 38 This is the first and greatest commandment.
>
> 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'
>
> 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

If people settle on a false set of beliefs about whether God exists and whether Jesus is Lord and Savior, it doesn't matter how nice they are to other people – that's not what God is looking for, primarily. Everyone has to answer the question that Jesus asked of Peter in Luke 18. "Who do you say that I am?"

Is World Vision right to focus on the poor rather than Biblical Christianity?

Matthew 26:6-11: [NASB]

6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, at the home of Simon the leper,

7 a woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, and she poured it on His head as He reclined *at the table*.

8 But the disciples were indignant when they saw *this*, and said, "Why this waste?

9 For this *perfume* might have been sold for a high price and *the money* given to the poor."

10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a good deed to Me.

11 For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me.

So the real issue in this life is not being nice to people. That is a good thing, it's not the main thing. The main thing is Jesus. Not a single verse in the Bible declares homosexuality to be anything other than a sin. By claiming that Christianity is somehow compatible with homosexuality, World Vision has *ceased to be a Christian organization*. My warning to you is to not focus so much on helping the poor at the expense of having true beliefs about God and Christ, and making those true beliefs known to others. We are here for just a few years and our purpose is not a worldly purpose. Our purpose is also not to feel good nor to be seen by others as kind, tolerant and compassionate. Be generous in your horizontal relationships, but not at the expense of that *crucial vertical relationship.*

UPDATE: My friend Neil wrote to me and suggested that I endorse giving to the poor directly, and I do endorse that. That respects the repeated Biblical commands to care for the poor, without getting in the mess described above.

Court awards permanent custody of girl to Mass. Department of Children and Families

March 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow. I'm not sure if you all have been following this story, but just when you think that it has to end, the insanity just keeps on going.

The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> A juvenile court judge issued a ruling Tuesday giving the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families "permanent" custody of Justina Pelletier. Any future decision to return the 15-year-old to her parents is now solely up to the agency.
>
> Judge Joseph Johnston ruled in response to a motion from Pelletier's court-appointed lawyer and her parents' lawyers, Linda and Lou Pelletier of West Hartford Conn., which called for "conditional custody" of their daughter, reports The Boston Globe.
>
> She has been in the custody of the state since February, 2013, when DCF removed her from her parents care. They have been aggressively demanding custody of Justina since then, and the case has gained national attention.
>
> Justina Pelletier was being treated for mitochondrial disease, a genetic disorder that affects muscle tissue, by doctors at Tufts Medical Center early last year. She was admitted to Boston Children's Hospital when she came down with the flu. Doctors at BCH disagreed with the Tufts doctors and diagnosed her with somatoform disorder, a mental illness.
>
> Her parents rejected the new diagnosis and attempted to move her back to Tufts, when BCH notified the state it suspected the parents of medical abuse. The Massachussetts Department of Children and Families took emergency custody of Pelletier in February.
>
> She has remained in their custody since then, spending most of her time in a psychiatric ward, and allowed one supervised hour a week to see her parents, reported The Boston Globe. She was moved to a residential facility a few months ago, but continues to be treated as an outpatient.
>
> […]Yesterday, AllVoices reported Justina's visits with her parents are now supervised by armed guards.

So, basically, if you have a child in Massachusetts, that child can be kidnapped by the state government indefinitely. Note to self: never have children in Democrat-dominated state.

Why is the left trying to force moral and religious people to fund their immorality?

March 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article by Kevin Williamson on National Review was pretty popular, and it explains my great fear about marrying and starting a family in a society run by secular leftists.

Excerpt:

> I make a pretty poor puritan, though perhaps someday I'll make a better one. I object to abortion as violence, including abortion actuated via relatively bloodless chemical means, and believe that it should be prohibited as a matter of humane principle. The use of actual contraceptives, such as condoms, and the question of what combinations of consenting adults do what with whom — by which I mean maintaining joint bank accounts and sharing dental plans, of course — may be of acute interest to the bishops but are not properly matters of prohibition by the federal government, the purpose of which is to protect property, thus enabling Americans to organize their lives as they will, rather than to move citizens about like chessmen on the theory that it does so for their benefit. There is not much that I would have be illegal — but any civilized society requires a great deal of breathing room between *forbidden* and *compulsory*.
>
> The Left would not have it that way: **Homosexual behavior is not to be tolerated, or homosexual unions recognized under law — rather, homosexuality is to constitute a special class of blessedness, and the failure to celebrate it is to be a sin, which in the liberal mind must be identical to a crime. It is not enough for religious conservatives, such as the ones who own Hobby Lobby, to tolerate the legal sale and use of things such as the so-called morning-after pill — rather, they are expected to provide them at their own expense. Abortions are not to be legal, but legal and funded by the general community, with those funds extracted at gunpoint if necessary.**
>
> This is not merely, or even mainly, a question of economics. A monthly dose of emergency contraception (which seems like a lot) paid entirely out-of-pocket would run less than the typical cell-phone bill. One does not suspect that Americans would find it very difficult to locate gay-friendly firms in the wedding-planning business. The typical first-trimester abortion costs less than an entry-level iPad — hardly an insurmountable economic barrier for a procedure that is, if we take the pro-choice side at their word, absolutely fundamental to a woman's health and happiness.
>
> The economics are incidental. The point is not to ensure that we all pay, but that we are all involved.
>
> The Left may be morally illiterate, but it is not blind. The effects of the

> pathologically delusional tendency that once styled itself “the sexual revolution” are everywhere to be seen. In the 1960s and 1970s, our cultural discourse was dominated by the benefits side of that revolution’s ledger; since then, we’ve had sufficient time to have a good long look at the cost side, too, and the tradeoffs are more severe than our bell-bottomed Aquarian prophets had predicted. It reads like an Old Testament genealogy: Sexual chaos begat family chaos, family chaos begat social chaos, social chaos begat economic chaos, economic chaos begat political chaos. And so the generations unfold. The relevant political reality is that those costs and benefits are not distributed equally: The benefits of license accrue mainly to the well-off and educated, who have the resources to make the most of their enjoyment of them; the costs accrue mainly to the poor, who cannot afford to live, economically or morally, beyond their means. Kate Moss can afford to be a single mother in her $20 million London townhouse. Not everybody can. Our so-called liberals find themselves in the queasy position of having created a moral culture that has destroyed millions of lives and many communities among the very disadvantaged people they claim to care most about, but they are incapable of criticizing a culture of license that none of them can imagine living without, even if they themselves are square as houses in their sexual habits.
>
> The result of that is, if not guilt, at least a nagging awareness that this all turns out to be a great deal more morally complex than our liberationist-latitudinarian forebears had imagined. The way to assuage the collective liberal conscience is to institutionalize and normalize liberal social preferences: There is nobody to be blamed for social anarchy if that’s just the way things are. And if everybody is involved — as taxpayers or as employers providing health insurance — then everybody is implicated. They are a little like those addicts who are uncomfortable in the social presence of abstainers, taking that abstention as a rebuke, whether it is intended as one or not. In the United Kingdom, the government-run hospitals are burning the corpses of aborted children for heat, and we are all expected to get cozy by the fire.
>
> **The Hobby Lobby case is in part about private property and whether we are to have it. If we hold capital only at the sufferance of the politico-sexual whims of those who hold power, then we do not really hold capital at all — we only rent property from our rulers, serfs in the world’s most sophisticated fiefdom. The property right is the fundamental right upon which all other political rights have their foundation. But there is a separate question — the right of conscience, which is, at minimum, the right not to be implicated, to at least stand apart from that which is no longer forbidden but is not yet, as of Tuesday morning, compulsory.**

Right now, a large amount of my income is being taken from me by a secular leftist government that is busy spending it on things that are absolutely against my conscience,

my morality and my religion. They are content to do this for the reason Williamson stated – to implicate me in their failed social vision, even as they see it destroying the lives of millions of poor Americans. Why must I be forced to pay for this? Why must I be forced to celebrate and affirm secular leftist moral views?

Every time we have an election in this country, a large portion of the voting public chooses to vote for “compassion”, by which they mean taking the money I earned to pay for *my plan*, and handing that money to a secular, socialist government to hand out as they implement *their plan*. Does anyone care about individual freedom and conscience any more? I don’t want to be involved in evil. I don’t want government to force me to be involved in evil. I do not get up every morning to work so that women can have free abortions. I do not want to be forced by courts to celebrate gay marriage. I do not want to subsidize government-run schools to indoctrinate my children against everything that I hold dear.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley: Did Jesus rise from the dead?

March 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence. He's also done debates with Richard Bauckham and Michael Bird. You have to respect him for getting out there and defending his views in public.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is

missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history

- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates

invented legendaryt story-telling
- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and

resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should

prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

J. Warner Wallace: how can you trust Christianity if you haven't tested all the alternatives?

March 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I heard Wallace talking about this on one of his recent podcasts, and it's nice to see it in an article that I can blog on.

Here's the objection:

> I've had the privilege to speak on university campuses across the country, making a case for the reliability of the New Testament Gospels and the truth of the Christian Worldview (I'll be at Rutgers next Monday night). One of the most common questions asked in the Q and A is something similar to: "Have you taken the time to apply the same approach with all the other religious worldviews?" Sometimes people ask this question because they are curious about how well other ancient religious claims (or alleged eyewitness accounts) hold up under investigative scrutiny. But many times this question is followed by a more pointed objection: "How can you trust Christianity is true if you haven't examined all the alternatives?"

Here's the answer:

> In every criminal trial, the investigators and prosecutors are obligated to present the evidence related to *one* defendant. While the burden of proof lies with the prosecutorial team, the prosecution is not required to have examined *every* possible alternative suspect. If I am investigating a case in which the suspect was initially described as a white male, 25 to 35 years of age with brown hair, the potential suspect pool in Los Angeles County would be quite large; there may be hundreds of thousands fitting this description. As I make the affirmative case related to one of the men in this large group, I'm under no obligation to make the case against the others. In fact, when the jury evaluates the case and decides whether the defendant is guilty, they will do so without *any* consideration of the alternatives. If the evidence is strong enough to reasonably infer the defendant's involvement, the jury will make a confident decision, even though many, many alternatives were left unexamined.

When an LAPD homicide detective can use his professional experience to answer a very relevant apologetics question, it's a good thing.

Now for a general point about investigating religions. You can make a cut to rule out many of the main religious alternatives just by using cosmology. Of the major world religions, only Christianity, Judaism and Islam affirm a beginning of the universe, and time itself. So it's not a very difficult thing to take those three live options and move on to a historical analysis. Islam is out because its holy book has obvious historical mistakes, like denying the crucifixion of Jesus in Surah 4:157. So you're left with two live alternatives,

and that dilemma can be decided by selecting the best explanation for the minimal facts surrounding Jesus' resurrection. There are minimal facts, and there is a best explanation of those minimal facts.

The real issue is whether people are willing to put in the effort in the investigation, and be bound by what they discover. If they decide up front that their lifestyle / career / social standing / etc. cannot be impacted by their findings, then the whole thing becomes moot.

Six bad arguments against religious liberty from the SCOTUS Hobby Lobby hearing

March 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Federalist. (H/T Jay Richards)

Here are the 6 arguments:

1. A Government Surtax On Religious Exercise Is Totally Acceptable
2. The Mandate Isn't Really A Mandate
3. This Is Just A Sneaky Way To Undo The Civil Rights Act
4. Corporations Can Have A Racial Identity, Just Not A Religious One
5. Don't Start A Business If You Want The Government To Respect Your Religious Rights
6. Abortifacients Aren't Really Abortifacients

I want to highlight two of these.

First, number 1 makes clear that the Obama administration thinks that you should have to pay a tax in order to follow your conscience. Obama explained that very well in his campaign speeches. If you have a business, you didn't build that. The government made that happen, and so they have a right to tell you how to run your business.

Here's #1:

> During her questioning of Hobby Lobby's lead attorney, Justice Sonia Sotomayor appeared to endorse the concept of a religion surtax. Sotomayor's rationale was that rather than providing health coverage that included abortifacient coverage, companies could refuse outright to provide any health insurance at all, thereby getting around the mandate.
>
> But isn't there another choice nobody talks about, which is paying the tax, which is a lot less than a penalty and a lot less than — than the cost of health insurance at all? These employers could choose not to give health insurance and pay not that high a penalty – not that high a tax.
>
> Given that the American Revolution started in large part due to a tax on stamps, it seems odd that the Founders would have agreed that citizens should be forced to pay a tax for the privilege of not doing things that might lead to the eternal damnation of their souls. At any rate, Chief Justice John Roberts interjected, and noted that Hobby Lobby's owners believed they had a religious duty to provide health coverage to their employees. As a result, they would be forced to violate their beliefs no matter what: providing abortifacient coverage would be a violation, as would a failure to provide any health insurance coverage at all.

Number 4 is also interesting. The Democrats basically argued that although companies can be regarded by the law as Black-owned or Hispanic-owned, they cannot be regarded

as Christian-owned. A Black-owned company can complain about racial discrimination, but a Christian-owned company can't complain about religious discrimination. So corporations can have a race, but not a religion.

Here's #4:

> Corporations are people, my friend, just as long as they're not religious people. That's the essence of one argument offered by Verrilli. A major issue in the case is whether a for-profit company or corporation even has standing to sue under RFRA, or whether that right is granted only to individuals or non-profits. The Obama administration has argued that for-profit companies do not have standing. That argument led Roberts to ask the following:
>
> CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that's a question of State corporate law. It's not a question of who can bring an action under RFRA.
>
> Could I just raise — eight courts of appeals, every court of appeal to have looked at the situation have held that Corporations can bring racial discrimination claims as corporations.
>
> Now, does the government have a position on whether corporations have a race?
>
> GENERAL VERRILLI: Yes. We think those are correct and that this situation is different.
>
> CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So that — so that a corporation does have a race for purposes of discrimination laws.
>
> "So the person — the corporation can bring as a person a claim of racial discrimination[?]" Roberts asked.
>
> "That's correct, but not exercise of religion," Verrilli replied.

My opinion of this Hobby Lobby case is that the government's real aim is to force Christian churches, groups and businesses to offer abortion as another service in a health insurance plan. They have no respect for religious liberty or conscience. They just want to make sure that no Christian can judge because we would all be complicit in the mass murder of millions of unborn children. There would be no one on the outside who could claim to stand in judgment over the pro-abortion people. That's why it's so important to make evil taxpayer-funded. That normalizes it and removes the stigma from the people who take advantage of it. "The whole society paid for this, so I don't need to feel guilty about it – it's normal".

Related posts

- Supreme Court will rule on Obama administration persecution of Hobby Lobby
- Obama administration files papers to take Hobby Lobby to Supreme Court
- House introduces new legislation to protect defenders of traditional marriage
- Robert P. George: what is religious liberty? what is conscience?
- Hobby Lobby granted temporary injunction from Obamacare abortion mandate
- Obama rejects conscience protections for military chaplains

- Department of Justice threatens to seize business from Catholics
- Republicans introduce bill to block tax on pro-life religious institutions
- UK doctors who refuse to perform sex changes can be banned from practicing
- Democrat Barbara Boxer: right to be insured trumps religious liberty
- UK midwives protest ruling forcing them to perform abortions
- Hospital told nurses: assist in abortions or lose your job
- Should Christian doctors be forced to act like atheists at work?

Rob Bowman reviews new book that refutes Bart Ehrman's "How Jesus Became God"

March 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A very good, but very long, review of skeptical historian Bart Ehrman's new book. It's written by Rob Bowman, co-author of "Putting Jesus in his Place".

Here are some of the really bad mistakes made by Bart Ehrman, according to the review.

#2: Ehrman thinks that Jesus didn't think he was the "Son of Man" figure from Daniel:

> A second notable weakness in Ehrman's theory is his claim that Jesus expected to fill the role of the Messiah but not of the Son of Man. This interpretation gets its initial plausibility from the fact that Jesus routinely referred to the Son of Man in the third person. However, even in most of the Synoptic Son of Man sayings, it is quite clear in the immediate context that Jesus is referring to himself (Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 12:8; 16:13; 17:22-23; 20:18-19, 28; 26:2, 24, 45; Mark 2:10; 8:31; 9:31; 10:33; 14:21, 41; Luke 5:24; 7:34; 9:22, 44, 58; 19:10; 22:22, 48). The Messiah and the Son of Man are both understood as eschatological figures that receive an eternal kingdom on behalf of God's people; it is simply not plausible that Jesus, who used the title Son of Man incessantly and rarely used the title Messiah or Christ, claimed to be the latter but not the former.

#3: Ehrman can't explain the early church's proclamation that Jesus was divine:

> Ehrman's main thesis on its face appears completely lacking in credibility. According to Ehrman, whereas Jesus did not view himself as anything more than a man and did not expect to become anything more than a glorious earthly king, within a few weeks or months of Jesus' death his original followers were sincerely proclaiming that Jesus was a divine figure ruling over all creation at God's right hand in heaven. Keep in mind that in Ehrman's mind, Jesus did not rise from the dead and did not actually speak to his disciples after his death. Nor does Ehrman suggest that the disciples thought Jesus had made these stupendous claims about himself during his appearances to them. Rather, Ehrman credits the disciples with *inferring* these things about Jesus by interpreting their visionary experiences in the light of the apocalyptic worldview he had taught them before his death (205-206). What all this means is that Ehrman's view requires that Jesus' original disciples, who had walked all over Galilee and Judea with him and listened to him teach for hours on end, simply discounted Jesus' own self-image as nothing more than the future human Messiah.

#4: Ehrman denies the burial of Jesus, which makes him one of a handful of ancient historians who do:

> To make his theory work, Ehrman has abandoned his earlier view that the burial

> of Jesus in a tomb just outside Jerusalem was historically likely. He now accepts something like John Dominic Crossan's view that Jesus received no decent burial at all. In a way, denying the tomb is a smart move on Ehrman's part. As long as he acknowledged both the tomb and the appearances, he remained vulnerable to the vise grip of the historical argument for the Resurrection. Accept the empty tomb and discount the appearances, and you can postulate that the body was moved or stolen or lost. Accept the appearances and reject the empty tomb, and you can speculate that the disciples had hallucinations or "bereavement visions." Accept both the empty tomb and the appearances and you have to come up with a blatantly *ad hoc* explanation like Greg Cavin's identical-twin theory (what William Lane Craig mischievously labeled "the Dave theory") or strain credulity by accepting two unrelated explanations for the evidence (e.g., the body was stolen *and* the disciples had hallucinations). So Ehrman, who knows he cannot deny that at least some of the disciples had experiences in which they thought they saw Jesus alive from the dead, has gone the more sensible skeptical route and questioned the burial in the tomb. But this move, while sensible enough from his agnostic perspective, lands him in evidential hot water, because the evidence that the Gospels are telling the truth about the empty tomb is very good.

#5: Ehrman discounts Paul's resurrection appearance, which he speaks about in 1 Cor 15:

> Ehrman's attempts to explain the appearances of Jesus naturalistically ignore entirely the testimony of the apostle Paul that Jesus had appeared to him when Paul was still a persecutor of Christians. Ehrman quietly omits any mention of Paul's experience throughout his treatment of the resurrection appearances in the fifth chapter of his book. Then, having finished with the subject of Jesus' resurrection, at the beginning of chapter 6 Ehrman says only that Paul, after converting to faith in Jesus, "later *claimed* that this was because he had had a vision of Jesus alive, long after his death" (214, emphasis added). That is all he says—and it is difficult even to take his statement seriously. That Paul sincerely thought he had a vision of the risen Christ is really beyond debate. That fact is a stubborn datum that Ehrman failed to incorporate into his account of the origins of the Christian movement.

The post mentions a new book out that challenges Ehrman's book, and describes all of the responses to Ehrman's views. It is edited by well-known Australian scholar Michael F. Bird, whom I have blogged about before.

Here's one snippet:

> Craig Evans's treatment on the burial of Jesus is the stand-out chapter of the book. Evans rightly criticizes Ehrman's argument from silence regarding the omission of the name of Joseph of Arimathea from the pre-Pauline confession of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 (90-91). Evans shows, against Ehrman, that rabbinical and Qumran texts attest to the Sanhedrin

> taking responsibility for the burial of executed criminals (80-81, 88-89). This means that the supposed discrepancy between Acts 13:29 and the Gospel accounts of Jesus' burial (even Luke's account!) evaporates. Evans is especially in his element when he documents painstakingly from both literary and archaeological evidence that burial in a tomb was not, as Ehrman had argued at length, inconsistent with Roman policies and practices regarding criminals who were crucified (73-80, 83-86). This chapter alone is worth the price of the book.

You really can't deny the burial – it's in 1 Cor 15:3-7, and that's early eyewitness testimony. I really am not sure what has gone wrong with Bart. You can't say the things he says in this book and maintain your respect as a historian, in my opinion. His views are fringe, and worse, they are in conflict with evidence that is undeniable, historically speaking. He's reaching, because something other than history is making him reach.

Here's a video about the new book, featuring Craig Evans:

He talks about the evidence for the burial. That video is 20 minutes, but worth watching. If you want to get a full treatment of the divinity of Jesus, then click here and buy Robert M. Bowman Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), for $1.99 (Kindle edition).

You can also view a debate on Youtube between William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman here. (Transcript here)

Why does God allow so much natural evil from earthquakes?

March 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi shared this video with me, which features chemist Fazale Rana.

The video runs under 4 minutes:

Basically, there was an atheist who challenged the idea that nature is designed because there are things in nature which cause suffering, like earthquakes and volcanoes.

Now the first thing to note is that atheists commonly think that God's job is to make humans happy. If he doesn't make humans feel happy – regardless of their knowledge of him and relationship with him – then he is a big failure. Many atheists think that, it is one of the most common reasons why people become atheists. But of course anyone who reads the Bible and reads the story of Jesus knows that the purpose of life on God's view is for humans to know him and to be disciples of a *suffering* Messiah who sacrifices himself in order to obey God the Father. So that's the first thing to say – purpose of life *not* happiness, but knowledge of God and being a disciple of Jesus. This may involve all kinds of suffering, and that's to be expected.

Second, there is a response to the problem of evil based on the necessity of natural laws. The argument goes that you can't have genuine morality without a predictable, knowable system of natural laws.

But I want to talk about something different in this post. In the video, Dr. Rana thinks that many of the things that cause suffering in the natural world are actually necessary for life to exist at all. He provides the example of plate tectonics in his video above, and I want to take that one and add to it the example of heavy element production and the stellar lifecycle. These are both from a book called "Rare Earth", which is written by two non-Christians – Peter Ward and Donald Brownlee, but I'll link to web sites to make the case.

Plate tectonics.

Here's an article from Reasons to Believe by Dr. David Rogstad, who has a PhD in physics from Caltech – the top school for experimental science. The article not only goes over the basic plate tectonics to carbonate-silicate cycle connection, but it adds a newer discovery to boot.

Excerpt:

> Earthquakes are a byproduct of plate tectonics, a theory in geology developed in recent years for explaining motions near the surface of the Earth. One of the benefits from plate tectonics is that Earth maintains the right levels of carbon dioxide (CO_2) in the atmosphere to compensate for the Sun's increasing luminosity. This is accomplished by what is called the carbonate-silicate cycle. CO_2 is removed from the atmosphere through weathering. The weathered

> products are eventually drawn into the Earth's interior via plate tectonics. Processes inside the Earth's interior release the CO_2 back into the atmosphere via volcanoes. While all aspects of this mechanism are not yet fully understood, it has been instrumental in providing a stable environment for life on the Earth for billions of years.
>
> New research provides yet another component that appears fine-tuned for life. In a letter in the September 27, 2007 issue of Nature together with a corresponding news release from the University of Bonn, Arno Rohrbach and his colleagues have discussed another mechanism similar to the carbonate-silicate cycle. It also depends on plate tectonics but, in this case, the mechanism controls the amount of oxygen on the surface of the Earth.
>
> Oxygen becomes bound up in various oxides which are then drawn into the Earth's interior, where various processes result in its being incorporated into an exotic mineral called majorite. The results reported in this letter established that majorite functions as a kind of "reservoir" for oxygen, and when the majorite ascends nearer to the surface of the Earth it breaks down and releases its oxygen. Some of this oxygen also binds with hydrogen released from the interior of the Earth to form water. The authors have referred to the whole process as an "oxygen elevator."
>
> They go on to say that "without the 'oxygen elevator' in its mantle the Earth would probably be a barren planet hostile to life. According to our findings, planets below a certain size hardly have any chance of forming a stable atmosphere with a high water content."
>
> This research confirms the existence of one more finely tuned mechanism that depends on plate tectonics and contributes to an environment that can support life. It also gives humans one more reason to be appreciative rather than dismayed when we experience an earthquake that breaks some precious possessions beyond repair.

Astronomer Dr. Hugh Ross who has a PhD in Astronomy from the University of Toronto and did a 5-year post-doctoral work at Caltech, adds to this with another discovery.

Excerpt:

> In the December 2007 issue of *Astrobiology* Stanford University geophysicists Norman H. Sleep and Mark D. Zoback note that the higher tectonic activity during Earth's early history could have played a key role in cycling critically important nutrients and energy sources for life. The production of numerous small faults in the brittle primordial crust released trapped nutrients. Such faults could also release pockets of methane gas and molecular hydrogen. The methane and hydrogen could then provide crucial energy sources for nonphotosynthetic life. Finally, the production of faults could bring water to otherwise arid habitats, such as rocks far below Earth's surface.

> Faulting, generated by active and widespread tectonics, allowed a youthful Earth to support diverse and abundant life. This enhanced diversity and abundance of life quickly transformed Earth's surface into an environment safe for advanced life. Also, the buildup of biodeposits for the support of human civilization occurred more rapidly due to active tectonics.
>
> The more rapid preparation of Earth for humanity is critical. Without such rapid preparation, humans could not come upon the terrestrial scene before the Sun's increasing luminosity would make their presence impossible (due to excessive heat).

So that's the science behind earthquakes. So that's a brief look at why we need plate tectonics for life, and we just have to buck up and take the earthquakes with it. It's not God's job to give us happiness and health. That's not his plan. People who complain about earthquakes have to show how God could get the life-permitting effects of earthquakes without wrecking his ability to succeed in his plan to make people know him and follow him. But how can an atheist do that? They can't. I think that people just need to realize that humans are not in charge here and we have to live with that. We have to accept that we didn't make the universe, and we don't get to decide what purpose it has. God decides.

On to star formation.

Star formation

Atheists often complain that the universe is too big or too old (which is actually the same thing, since the more time passes, the more it expands). The fact of the matter is that life appeared the earliest it could appear – we needed the universe to be a certain age before it could support life.

Dr. Hugh Ross explains in this article.

Excerpt:

> The second parameter of the universe to be measured was its age. For many decades astronomers and others have wondered why, given God exists, He would wait so many billions of years to make life. Why did He not do it right away? The answer is that, given the laws and constants of physics God chose to create, it takes about ten to twelve billion years just to fuse enough heavy elements in the nuclear furnaces of several generations of giant stars to make life chemistry possible.
>
> Life could not happen any earlier in the universe than it did on Earth. Nor could it happen much later. As the universe ages, stars like the sun located in the right part of the galaxy for life (see chapter 15) and in a stable nuclear burning phase become increasingly rare. If the universe were just a few billion years older, such stars would no longer exist.

The Rare Earth book explains the details on p. 40-4:

> The trick for getting from helium to the generation of planets, and ultimately to life, was the formation of carbon, the key element for the success of life and for the production of heavy elements in stars. Carbon could not form in the early moments following the Big Bang, because the density of the expanding mass was too low for the necessary collisions to occur. Carbon formation had to await the creation of giant red stars, whose dense interiors are massive enough to allow such collisions. Because stars become red giants only in the last 10% of their lifetimes (when they have used up much of the hydrogen in their cores), there was no carbon in the Universe for hundreds of millions to several billion years after the Big Bang—and hence no life as we know it for that interval of time.
>
> […]The sequence of element production in the Big Bang and in stars provided not only the elements necessary for the formation of Earth and the other terrestrial planets but also all of the elements critical for life—those actually needed to form living organisms and their habitats.

> […]The processes that occurred during the billions of years of Earth's "prehistory" when its elements were produced are generally well understood. Elements are produced within stars; some are released back into space and are recycled into and out of generations of new stars. When the sun and its planets formed, they were just a random sampling of this generated and reprocessed material. Nevertheless, it is believed that the "cosmic abundance" mix of the chemical elements—the elemental composition of the sun—is representative of the building material of most stars and planets, with the major variation being the ratio of hydrogen to heavy elements.
>
> […]Many stars are similar in composition, but there is variation, mainly in the abundance of the heavier Earth-forming elements relative to hydrogen and helium. The sun is in fact somewhat peculiar in that it contains about 25% more heavy elements than typical nearby stars of similar mass. In extremely old stars, the abundance of heavy elements, may be as low as a thousandth of that in the sun. Abundance of heavy elements is roughly correlated with age. As time passed, the heavy-element content of the Universe as a whole increased, so newly formed stars are on the average more "enriched" in heavy elements than older ones.
>
> […]The matter produced in the Big Bang was enriched in heavier elements by cycling in and out of stars. Like biological entities, stars form, evolve, and die. In the process of their death, stars ultimately become compact objects such as white dwarfs, neutron stars, or even black holes. On their evolutionary paths to these ends, they eject matter back into space, where it is recycled and further enriched in heavy elements. New stars rise from the ashes of the old. This is why we say that each of the individual atoms in Earth and in all of its creatures—including us—has occupied the interior of at least a few different stars.

What he’s saying is that heavy elements are created gradually because of the star formation lifecycle. The first generation of stars are metal-poor. The next generation of stars is better. And so on until we get to stars that can support life by providing a steady, stable amount of energy – as well as other benefits like planets with an atmosphere. Our planet is 4.5 billion years old, and the universe is about 14 billion years old. Simple life appears about 4 billion years ago on Earth. That means we got life practically immediately, given that we had to develop the heavy elements needed to make a life-supporting star, a life-supporting planet and our physical bodies.

Appeals court upholds Texas' tough pro-life laws

March 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Texas Right to Life. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> A panel of three judges in the US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit released its ruling upholding HB2, Texas' Pro-Life law, which took full effect in October of last year. The opinion affirms the constitutionality of the legislation passed last summer and rejects Planned Parenthood's argument that HB2 places an "undue burden" upon abortionists, abortion facilities, and women seeking abortion.
>
> The court upheld sections of the law that require abortionists hold admitting privileges at a nearby hospital, and that the dangerous RU-486 abortion drug be administered according to FDA procedure. The judges wrote,
>
> "The district court held that parts of both provisions were unconstitutional and granted, in substantial part, the requested injunctive relief. A motions panel of this court granted a stay pending appeal, and the Supreme Court upheld the stay. We conclude that both of the challenged provisions are constitutional and, therefore, reverse and render judgment, with one exception, for the State."
>
> There is a minor caveat to the ruling, abortionists who have applied for admitting privileges prior to the law going into effect, but have not yet received a reply from local hospitals may continue to commit abortions until their applications for privileges are officially denied.
>
> The court asserted that higher standards for an abortionist are, in fact, justified,
>
> "During these proceedings, Planned Parenthood conceded that at least 210 women in Texas annually must be hospitalized after seeking an abortion. Witnesses on both sides further testified that some of the women who are hospitalized after an abortion have complications that require an Ob/Gyn specialist's treatment."
>
> This is the third time recently that this Court of Appeals has upheld Pro-Life policies attacked by abortion advocates. The same court upheld Texas' 2011 Sonogram Law and a policy that kept the abortion business Planned Parenthood out of the taxpayer-funded Women's Health Program.

The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals has my absolute favorite judge, Edith Hollan Jones. If I were President, that's who I would choose, and then Janice Rogers Brown if I had two picks. Well, it might not ever happen, but a guy can dream… about Supreme Court picks.

At the beginning of the month, there was a story on Life News about how these laws are closing abortion clinics.

Excerpt:

> The Dallas Morning News is reporting that the last two abortion clinics outside of big Texas cities will close Thursday because they can't meet the restrictions placed on facilities under the state's new abortion law.
>
> Whole Woman's Health in Beaumont and McAllen will close after providing abortions in the areas for a decade. Amy Hagstrom Miller, president of Whole Woman's Health, which operated five abortion clinics before the law went into effect, said the provision requiring physicians to have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of the clinic was proving the most problematic.
>
> Miller said hospitals near her McAllen clinic refused to grant her physicians' applications for privileges. Some hospitals in the area require their privileged physicians to live nearby. Others require a current physician to co-sign applications for privileges, which many are unwilling to do for fear of being targeted or stigmatized.
>
> In Beaumont, one 75-year-old physician secured privileges, but a second one could not, Miller said.

In addition to that Texas news, there is also a story this morning from National Right to Life about the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals has allowed Kansas to suspending taxpayer-funding of Planned Parenthood pending resolution of a court challenge. (H/T J.W. Wartick tweet) So there is more good news!

A closer look at the Islamization of schools in the UK

March 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a story from the UK Telegraph that should concern us all. (H/T Dennis Prager)

The news story:

> The Birmingham school at the centre of an alleged campaign of "Islamisation" by Muslim radicals is to be placed in "special measures" by the Government's education watchdog in a move that could see its head teacher and governors removed.

> Park View, previously rated "outstanding" by Ofsted, will be downgraded to "inadequate", the lowest possible score, in the category of leadership and management, senior education sources said.
>
> This enables Ofsted to place the school in special measures, allowing the watchdog, if it wishes, to remove the school's entire leadership.

> The move, described as "seismic" by senior educational sources, follows a highly unusual two Ofsted inspections in the past three weeks at the school, the alleged victim of a campaign by Islamists called a "Trojan Horse" to remove secular head teachers and install Islamic practices in Birmingham state schools.

So why does the government have to step in?

Here's why:

> The disclosure comes as parents and school governors and staff describe in detail how the campaign has destabilised and undermined successful schools.
>
> In extensive interviews with *The Sunday Telegraph*, more than a dozen sources disclosed how children at one supposedly non-religious primary school, Oldknow, were led in anti-Christian chanting by one of their teachers at assembly.
>
> The school also conducts weekly Friday prayers, has organised at least three school trips to Mecca subsidised from public funds, and requires all pupils to learn Arabic — almost unheard of at a primary school.
>
> It also runs its own madrassah, or religious school. Oldknow's highly successful non-Muslim head teacher has been driven from her post for resisting this "Islamising agenda", this newspaper has learnt.
>
> The head of another successful primary school, Springfield, received death threats, had his car tyres slashed and is under "non-stop attack" by radical governors, according to parents, other governors and staff at the school.

And more:

> Last year Mr da Costa recruited a new deputy head, Jahangir Akbar, from a

> Muslim faith school in Leicester. Soon afterwards, Jahangir's younger brother, Khalil, was recruited as assistant head. No other candidates were interviewed for either position and the assistant headship was not even advertised, staff said. Jahangir Akbar is another colleague of Tahir Alam's and has worked with him in the Association of Muslim Schools, of which Mr Alam is vice-chairman.
>
> "Oldknow's pupils are mostly but not entirely Muslim and it was always an equal-opportunity school," said one former member of staff. "But then all of a sudden there were Jummah [Friday] prayers, and going to Saudi Arabia on government money, and the Arabic, and blatant belittling of Christianity."
>
> Hardline teachers were recruited who would "sow the seed of religion in every lesson," said one source. "Some of the teachers told pupils that music was sinful in Islam and the children started to refuse to do music, even though it is compulsory in the National Curriculum. It is incredibly difficult when your own colleagues undermine your efforts to give the children a balanced education."
>
> Matters came to a head, three separate sources said, last December when all the normal Christmas activity, including a tree, cards and the pantomime, was cancelled because it was considered un-Islamic, and the school's Arabic teacher, Asif Khan, delivered an assembly "ridiculing" Christian beliefs. "It was like a rally," said one person present. "He was leading them in chants of, 'Do we believe in Christmas? No! Do we give out Christmas cards? No! The seven days of Christmas, they [Christians] can't even count!'

The UK was under Labour Party rule for a long time, and under the Labour Party, huge numbers of unskilled immigrants from Muslim countries were let into the country in the name of multiculturalism. The Labour Party is gone from office now, but the damage is still being felt today. Under Labour rule, the country seems to have taken a turn towards moral relativism and radical feminism, so that people seem to be terrified of making moral judgments or standing up to a centralized, powerful government. Even many Christians in the UK seem to struggle with holding to conservative morality and theology, and they even vote for the Labour Party and worse, the Liberal Democrats. There just seems to be a suspicion of individual liberty and personal responsibility that has weakened the country so that it is a shadow of its former self.

Did the divinity of Jesus emerge slowly after many years of embellishments?

March 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is

stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this

passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The "Q" source for Matthew and Luke

Here's Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier "Q" source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Learn more

You can learn more about the early belief in the divinity of Jesus by listening to a lecture by William Lane Craig and reading the related paper, and by listening to the debate between Richard Bauckham and James Crossley on that topic. The first link contains other scholarly debates on Jesus.

Hypocrisy on the left: do the actions of liberals match their words?

March 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Funny video from American Power Blog.

That's one case, but are leftists always hypocrites?

Do As I Say Not As I Do

I had a long drive on the way to my parents' house for Christmas and I decided to listen to the audio book version of Peter Schweizer's 2004 book "Do As I Say Not As I Do". In that book, he profiles a number of leftist public figures, and he discovers that leftists don't practice what they preach, because even they know that leftist ideas *don't actually work*. I really recommend the book, so let's take a closer look at it and you'll see why you should read it, too.

Here's a 32 minute 2011 lecture about the book:

And here's an interview with the author from FrontPage magazine.

Excerpt:

> **FrontPage:** Give us some of the best examples of the gulf between some liberals' social criticisms and the ingredients of their private lives. Give us some insights, for instance, into the likes of Noam Chomsky, Michael Moore, Cornel West, Hillary Clinton, Ted Kennedy and Barbra Streisand.
>
> **Schweizer:** Looking for liberal hypocrisy is, as they say in the military, a target-rich environment. Noam Chomsky, for example, has attacked wealthy Americans who set up trusts to avoid paying inheritance taxes. But this self-professed "radical socialist" has a tax attorney and did the very same thing. (When I asked him about this hypocrisy he said it was okay because he and has family have been working on behalf of suffering people all these years.)

> Michael Moore's hypocrisy is pathological. He has said numerous times that he doesn't own a single share of stock and that capitalism is not acceptable "on any level." And yet, I found that, according to tax returns filed with the IRS, he has owned shares in Halliburton, numerous oil companies, defense contractors and other multinationals through a tax shelter. When it comes he race he's also wildly hypocritical. He says that Americans who happen to live in largely white neighbhorhoods do so because they are "racists." But he lives in Central Lake, Michigan, which according to the U.S. Census has more than 2,500 residents and not a single black person in the entire town.
>
> Cornel West has numerous times condemned middle class blacks that abandon the "chocolate cities" for the "vanilla suburbs" but guess what, his flavour of choice is vanilla, too.

> Ted Kennedy likes to pose as the Robin Hood of the Senate, forcing wealthy Americans to pay their taxes to help the poor. But I discovered that Kennedys record of actually paying taxes is horrible. Tax the inheritance tax. He says that Americans should pay 49% to the IRS when they die in the name of "social justice." But according to public records, the Kennedys have almost completely avoided contributing to "social justice" by placing their assets in trusts that are located overseas. The Kennedys, over the past thirty years, have paid less than 1% in inheritance taxes on more than $300 million. Ted Kennedy, like Hillary Clinton and George Soros, loves higher taxes. On other people.

And:

> **FrontPage:** Why do you think people are drawn to leftist ideals and what kind of people are they? Self-contempt appears to be a common ingredient, no?
>
> **Schweizer:** Yes, self-contempt is a big part of it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great German pastor who stood up to Hitler, wrote a book about "cheap grace." Liberals are guilty of cheap grace in the political sense. They feel guilty and their form of penance is embracing the destructive ideas of the progressive faith. But it's cheap grace because as I show it the book, they don't actually change the way they live. I think that the religious comparison makes sense because in many respects the modern day left represents a religious movement. They are motivated by a sense of sin, guilt, and the need for salvation and absolution in the political sense. Socialism offers salvation to them. Of course, they don't actually plan to live like socialists.

I would really recommend taking a look at this book. It's similar to Paul Johnson's "Intellectuals" if you've ever read that, but it's better.

Review of evidential apologetics book by pastor shows where church needs to improve

March 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are basically two views of faith in Christianity.

The first view of faith is the Biblical view of faith as active trust in propositions we know to be true, because we have reasons and evidence to believe those propositions. This view is not only rooted in the Bible, but it extends through Augustine and Aquinas to the present day. I have written about this view of faith before, and quoted many theologians in support of it. I also showed how people in the Bible use miracles as a sign in order to convince skeptics. For example, Peter appealing to the resurrection in Acts 2. The Bible teaches that faith is active trusting based on evidence.

The second view is blind faith. This view is nowhere in the Bible, and this view asserts that becoming a Christian is a leap-of-faith in the dark against all the evidence. This view not only minimizes evidence, but it actually opposes presenting evidence to unbelievers and skeptics in the way that the Bible teaches. This view is nowhere in the Bible, and it was not the method used by Jesus or his followers. It is an unBiblical way of viewing faith, but it is very popular in some circles of Christianity. It is also popular among atheists, because this is what many Christian leaders and pastors tell them that faith is. Why would these Christian leaders reject the plain teaching of the Scripture on faith, and adopt a man-made view of evangelism that opposes the use of evidence?

Well, I have an idea why, based on my experiences trying to get apologetics into the church and university. Suppose a pastor or campus group leader wants to avoid having to learn physics and cosmology, or the minimum facts case for the resurrection, or how to respond to apparently gratuitous suffering, or the problem of religious pluralism. Suppose he thinks that Christianity, if it is about anything, is about his feeling happy and comfortable with a minimum of effort and work. So, he diligently avoids reading apologetics, because learning evidence is hard work. He avoids watching debates on God’s existence and the resurrection, because this is hard work. He avoids conversations with people who do study these things, and implies that there is something wrong with them for studying these things. He endeavors to conceal his laziness and ignorance and cowardice from his flock with much pious God-talk and fervent praise-hymn-singing.

Eventually, some member of his church asks him to go for lunch with an actual non-Christian family member. The pastor agrees and when he meets the unbelieving family member, he has nothing at all to say about typical challenges that unbelievers face. He has no knowledge of evolution, the problem of evil, the hiddenness of God, or the hallucination theory. He has never read a single atheist, and never read a single piece of evidence to refute them from Christian scholars. He lacks humility, refusing to admit that other Christian scholars may know more than he does because they have studied other areas. Needless to say, he fails to defend God’s reputation to the non-Christian. What will

he say to the members of his flock about his failure? How will he justify his obstinate refusal to do what everyone else in the Bible does when confronting non-believers?

Well, consider this review of a recent book that defends the Gospels and the historicity of the resurrection by one such fideist pastor.

He writes:

> There are, however, two significant shortcomings to the book.
>
> First, *Cold-Case Christianity* places far too much emphasis on the role of extrabiblical sources. No doubt there is a legitimate role for biblical archaeology and extrabiblical writing from antiquity. Christianity is, after all, a faith firmly rooted in human history. But there is a grave danger when truth is suspended because of an apparent lack of corroboration from extrabiblical sources. And Wallace, I'm afraid, wanders too close to this dark side of apologetics.
>
> All of chapter 12, for instance, is devoted to proving the Gospels have external corroborative evidence—"evidence that are independent of the Gospel documents yet verify the claims of the text" (183). Wallace then addresses the historicity of the pool of Bethesda and makes another worrying statement: "For many years, there was no evidence for such a place outside of John's Gospel. Because Christianity makes historical claims, archaeology ought to be a tool we can use to see *if these claims are, in fact, true*" (201-202, emphasis added).
>
> In other words, Wallace seems to suggest we cannot affirm the truth of the Gospel accounts without the stamp of approval from archaeology and other extrabiblical sources. Such reasoning is dangerous, not least because it cannot affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. But also, it places the final court of appeal in the realm of extrabiblical sources rather than of God's all-sufficient, all-powerful Word.

That is a textbook definition of fideism – that belief is somehow more pious and praiseworthy the less evidence we have. And the best way to have less evidence is to study nothing at all, but to just make a leap-of-faith in the dark. Of course, a leap-of-faith can land you anywhere – Islam, Mormonism. Presumably this pastor is like the Mormons who eschew all evidence and prefer to detect the truth of Mormonism by "the burning of the bosom" which happens when people read the all-sufficient, all-powerful Book of Mormon. His view of faith is identical to theirs, and 180 degrees opposed to the Bible. He has made his leap-of-faith, and that leap-of-faith is not accountable to arguments and evidence. His faith is private and personal, based on his own feelings. He considers it blasphemous to have to demonstrate what he believes to those who disagree with him. Where is this in the Bible? It's nowhere. But it is everywhere in anti-intellectual Christian circles.

There is a good response to this blind-faith pastor on Deeper Waters. Much less angry than my response.

Excerpt:

> The dark side of apologetics? Did I somehow step into a Star Wars universe?
>
> Yes. How horrible to show that the Bible is backed up by sources outside of it. How terrible to show that these events did not happen in a vacuum. Thankfully, no one in the Bible took this approach.
>
> Except for the fact that when the gospel was being preached, there were no gospels per se and there were no epistles. Paul told Agrippa that the events done weren't done in a corner. In other words, investigate the claims for yourself! The early testimony was eyewitness testimony. Sources like Tacitus and others show the eyewitnesses were right! This was not done in a corner! This was done out in the open! Archaeology helps us confirm the biblical writings and shows that unlike the pagan myths, these events were rooted in a place and time. Is there some danger that our faith will be destroyed by outside sources?
>
> It really becomes a fideistic approach. If your worldview is true, you should have no problem putting it to the strictest scrutiny. If it is not, then you will have a problem. No Christian should fear further research into what they believe. No Christian should have a problem with extra-biblical sources. Now I do agree there is a problem with stating that EVERYTHING must be backed extra-biblically. I think this is a prejudice we too often have where nothing in the Bible can be considered historical unless it's verified somewhere else. A gospel account alone could count as a historical claim itself that can be investigated, and indeed is in NT scholarship, but where we can get extra-biblical evidence, I'm all for it.
>
> […]Christianity is a faith that is rooted in evidences so we should be able to use evidences to demonstrate it. I have often been told by those of the presuppositional bent that the approach is used all the time in the Bible. The problem is I can't find one. I get told passages like "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Yes. It is. Wisdom refers to godly living. It doesn't refer to confirming the gospel to be true. When I look at the apostles in every case, I see them pointing to evidences.

I think that Christians are much better off following the example of authentic Christian pastors like R.C. Sproul, who, in a conference on evangelism, invited Dr. Stephen C. Meyer to present multiple lines of evidence from mainstream science to establish the existence of God. The only reason not to take this approach is laziness, which leads to ignorance, which leads to cowardice. And failure. It is pastors like Pastor Bungle above who are responsible for the great falling away from Christianity that we are seeing when we look at young people. Pastors who pride themselves in refusing to connecting the Bible to the real world, with evidence and with policy analysis, are causing young people to abandon the faith.

FBI removes Southern Poverty Law Center from hate crime resource list

March 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breitbart reports.

Excerpt:

> Christian groups are celebrating with the news that the Federal Bureau of Investigation appears to have scrubbed the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) from its hate crimes webpage, where the controversial group was listed as a resource and referred to as a partner in public outreach.
>
> […]**In the fall of 2012, Floyd Lee Corkins, armed with a loaded semi-automatic pistol and 100 rounds of ammunition, entered FRC headquarters not far from FBI headquarters in downtown Washington, D.C. Corkins shot the front desk security guard and tried to gain entrance to the upper floors where he intended to kill FRC employees. Though wounded, the front desk security guard subdued Corkins, who became the first person ever convicted under the Washington, D.C., domestic terrorism law. Corkins said he got the idea of killing FRC employees from reading the SPLC hate list and made use of a map of the FRC office found on the SPLC website.**

You'll recall that Corkins was a gay activist who volunteered for gay causes.

More:

> SPLC has come under severe criticism from the left and the right in recent years.
>
> Writing in the left-wing website Counterpunch, Alexander Coburn called SPLC founder Morris Dees "king of the hate business." Coburn wrote, "Ever since 1971, U.S. Postal Service mailbags have bulged with Dees' fundraising letters, scaring dollars out of the pockets of trembling liberals aghast at his lurid depictions of hate-sodden America, in dire need of legal confrontation by the SPLC." In fact, so prolific is Dees at direct mail that he is in the Direct Marketing Association Hall of Fame.
>
> Writing at the Harper's Magazine blog in 2007, Ken Silverstein said, "What [the SPLC] does best… is to raise obscene amounts of money by hyping fears about the power of [right-wing fringe] groups; hence the SPLC has become the nation's richest 'civil rights' organization."
>
> A critical analysis published recently by Professor George Yancey of North Texas University concluded that SPLC targets only those groups its leaders disagree with politically while leaving liberal groups who use extreme language alone.
>
> A 2013 article in Foreign Policy concluded that SPLC exaggerates the hate crimes

> threat, saying SPLC is not an “objective purveyor of data,” instead calling them “anti-hate activists” and suggesting that their reports need to be “weighed more carefully by news outlets that cover their pronouncements.”

I think that the Democrats are doing this because it is an election year, and they don’t want people to know that their government department (the FBI) was connected to the SPLC. Especially in light of the domestic terrorism conviction of Floyd Corkins. The U.S. Army is still partnering with SPLC, so there is still work for us to do in publicizing the issue.

It would be nice if we could get to the point where gay activists accept that others disagree with them on sexual morality and the nature of marriage, and stop calling it “hate” when it’s disagreement. It would also be nice if gay activists didn’t try to break into think tanks and shoot people. I think the word for refraining from doing that is “tolerance”.

Related posts

- New study: methodology used by Southern Poverty Law Center to detect “hate groups” is flawed
- FBI partners with anti-Christian Southern Poverty Law Center
- U.S. Army: Christians and Tea Party conservatives are potential terrorists
- U.S. Army tells troops that Christian pro-family group is a hate group
- Department of Defense training manual labels Founding Fathers as “extremists”
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue “hate” rhetoric

Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?

March 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the comments, an atheist was arguing that atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians, so I thought I would re-post this USA Today article from 2011 about that.

Excerpt:

> It's been proclaimed from pulpits and blogs for years — Christians divorce as much as everyone else in America.
>
> But some scholars and family activists are questioning the oft-cited statistics, saying Christians who attend church regularly are more likely to remain wed.
>
> "It's a useful myth," said Bradley Wright, a University of Connecticut sociologist who recently wrote "Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites … and Other Lies You've Been Told."
>
> "Because if a pastor wants to preach about how Christians should take their marriages more seriously, he or she can trot out this statistic to get them to listen to him or her."
>
> The various findings on religion and divorce hinge on what kind of Christians are being discussed.
>
> Wright combed through the General Social Survey, a vast demographic study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and found that Christians, like adherents of other religions, have a divorce rate of about 42%. The rate among religiously unaffiliated Americans is 50%.
>
> When Wright examined the statistics on evangelicals, he found worship attendance has a big influence on the numbers. Six in 10 evangelicals who never attend had been divorced or separated, compared to just 38% of weekly attendees.
>
> […]Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there's been some confusion.
>
> "You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees," he said.
>
> **Wilcox's analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.

> "There's something about being a nominal 'Christian' that is linked to a lot of negative outcomes when it comes to family life," Wilcox said.

Here's a quote from an Oklahoma State University study that confirms the Wright and Wilcox conclusions:

> History of Divorce and Religious Involvement
>
> Those who say they are more religious are less likely, not more, to have already experienced divorce. Likewise, those who report more frequent attendance at religious services were significantly less likely to have been divorced. This pattern of findings held using various analytic techniques that test which variables differentiate persons who have been divorced from persons who have not been divorced, while controlling for other variables that might affect the interpretation of the data, such as age, age of first marriage, income, and gender. When both the global rating of religiousness and the item assessing fiequency of attendance at religious services are entered into the same analysis, the attendance item remains significantly associated with divorce history but the global religiousness item does not. This suggests that a key aspect of how religious faith affects marital relationships may be through involvement with a community of faith.

So, please do bookmark this information for the next time you hear an atheist make this argument. Obviously, you can't expect people who are not serious about their religion to be bound by the moral duties imposed by that religion. People who attend church regularly are probably more serious about their religion, and also probably more informed about what their holy book says. If their holy book is the Bible, then there are few options for divorce.

An article from Focus on the Family by Amy Tracy explains when divorce is allowed according to the Bible.

> God is very clear, however, that He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). He also says, "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matthew 19:6). According to the New Testament, there are two justifications for divorce: infidelity (Matthew 5:32) and desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15).

So divorce is not something a Bible believing Christian can do for frivolous reasons, unless he wants to be in rebellion against God.

The future of marriage in the church

In my own case, I learned about chastity and sobriety and courting *outside* the church, and in my case that means that I am still a virgin, that I don't drink more than a beer a year, and that when I like a girl, I court her. I do think that people in the church are generally more moral than people outside the church, but that's more because of convention rather than conviction. I don't think it's going to last, in other words – it's

more like a hangover. Church is not the place where reasons and evidence are given that help people to resist peer pressure when they enter hostile environments, like the university. And often, parents are too busy working to understand the issues and communicate them to their children.

I've never been in a church where they explained the hormones that are released during sex that cause you to bond to the person you're having sex with. You would have to look in books or listen to lectures in order to understand the problem with having sex with someone you are not committed to – how it causes you to hold back your emotions for fear of a break-up. The church doesn't have much to say about the social effects of single motherhood by choice or the effects of gay parenting on children. Nor do they have any positive vision to offer men about how they can serve God by marrying carefully.

Christians who participate in a church community will adopt some of these values, especially if they stay clear of popular culture, the university, etc. Especially if they don't work in a very secular environment, like a high-tech company or in Hollywood. But unless Christian communities get serious about grounding their values in evidence, I wouldn't expect this situation to go on, and you can already see young people falling away from church in record numbers when they get to university as a result of this refusal to engage. We're doing well *now*, but we should move to secure our gains.

Is there such a thing as a pro-life Democrat?

March 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports on a troubling story.

Excerpt:

> Democratic Governor Earl Ray Tomblin, who describes himself as pro-life and campaigned as a pro-life candidate, has vetoed a bill that would ban abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy.
>
> […]"West Virginia's Pain-Capable Fetus Protection Act protects children from abortion beginning at 20 weeks fetal age, based on scientific evidence that by this stage of development the child would experience excruciating pain. Arizona's law, as its name implies, focused on protecting the health and safety of the mother," Balch explained.
>
> […]The states that have passed Pain-Capable bills include Nebraska, Kansas, Idaho, Oklahoma, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Arkansas, North Dakota, and Texas. The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (H.R. 1797) passed the U.S. House of Representatives on June 18, 2013, by 228-196. All three members of the West Virginia congressional delegation voted for that bill.
>
> A National Right to Life Committee poll found that 63 percent of Americans, and 70 percent of women, support a ban on post-fetal pain abortion. The same poll also found that American women, by an overwhelming majority of 62-27 percent, would be more likely to vote for lawmakers who support this bill.

Now it seems to me that a ban on abortion after 20 weeks is a no-brainer, sort of like banning sex-selection abortions or banning race-selection abortions. Those are moderate positions that everyone can agree on, and yet this so-called pro-life governor wouldn't sign the bill. Is that an exception to the way that Democrats usually do business?

Note the first time

But this is not the first time that Democrats have claimed to be pro-life when they actually voted pro-abortion.

Excerpt:

> It became apparent on Tuesday that former Congressman Bart Stupak (D-MI) is suffering from a bout of "voter's remorse." In March of 2010, he and a coalition of pro-life democrats made an eleventh-hour decision to vote in favor of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), with the justification that an executive order—to be issued by President Obama—would ensure that existing restrictions on federal funding for abortion would apply to the ACA.
>
> What a difference nearly 2 ½ years makes. Mr. Stupak, who in March 2010 expressed unwavering confidence in the "'ironclad' commitment" he

> received “from the president that no taxpayer dollars will be used to pay for abortions,” is now singing a different tune about the ACA, or at least its implementation.
>
> In a Democrats for Life panel during the Democratic National Convention, Stupak expressed his disapproval of the “HHS mandate,” which requires most private insurance plans to cover life-ending drugs and devices, and requires nearly all employers to offer (and pay for) the plans to their employees or pay a stiff penalty.
>
> Mr. Stupak remarked, “I am perplexed and disappointed that, having negotiated the Executive Order with the President, not only does that HHS mandate violate the Executive Order but it also violates statutory law . . . . I think it is illegal.”
>
> Similarly, in November of 2011 former Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper (D-PA), a member of Stupak’s coalition, claimed that she “would have never voted for the final version of the bill if [she] expected the Obama Administration to force Catholic hospitals and Catholic Colleges and Universities to pay for contraception.” She argued that she and her colleagues “worked hard to prevent abortion funding in health care and to include clear conscience protections for those with moral objections to abortion and contraceptive devices that cause abortion.”

Bart’s “perplexed and disappointed”. He said that in September 2012. Before the election.

But after the election, in 2013, he said that he “did not regret” his vote for the abortion mandate in Obamacare.

So the moral of this story is simple. If you don’t like killing unborn babies, and you don’t want it on your conscience, don’t vote for so-called “pro-life” Democrats. They campaign pro-life and then vote pro-abortion.

Matt Walsh urges everyone to avoid the “Noah” movie

March 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This movie review on Matt Walsh’s blog should save you some money.

He writes:

> On Friday, my wife and I had a very rare date night.
>
> Naturally, we decided to spend it being pummeled by the blaring condescension of the most insipid, absurd, unimaginative, clumsily contrived piece of anti-Christian filmmaking to come along since, well, probably just last week.
>
> […]*Noah* is a major Hollywood blockbuster, made by an atheist director best known for his previous flick where a mentally disturbed lesbian ballerina goes insane and bleeds to death on stage. Already, a critical person might be slightly concerned about his handling of the Bible, considering what he just did to the ballet.
>
> These concerns grew from suspicion to reality before it was even released, when the man himself came out publicly and professed *Noah* to be both an environmentalist propaganda piece, and the “least Biblical” Bible film ever made.
>
> He wasn’t lying.
>
> But he forgot to mention that it’s also a terrible film.

Matt continues the review by through the movie and explaining the worldview they are trying to push in it. You have to read the whole post if you want the details, but the summary is that this movie has nothing at all to do with the Biblical story of Noah. It’s something that could have been made by animal rights activists and global warming alarmists.

Here is the conclusion:

> I’ve heard the movie compared to *Titanic* and *Gladiator*. Personally, I’d say it’s more of a cross between *Mutiny on the Bounty* and *The Shining*. Only far less coherent than any of them.
>
> I’ve also heard some “Christian leaders” endorse this steaming pile of heretical horse manure. I’m tempted to accuse them of being cowardly, dumb, or dishonest, but I’ll just give them the benefit of the doubt and assume they slept through the most troubling parts — like the part at the beginning, and the end, and all of the parts in between.
>
> It’s true that it might be a bit difficult to discern the “message” in a film so filled with explosions (the Bad Guys have bazookas, naturally), monsters, and infanticide, but any supposed Christian “leader” ought to try a little harder. Pay a little closer attention. If you do, you’ll see a tale that entirely perverts the nature

> of God, while flipping sin and immorality on its head.
>
> Aside from a brief glimpse of something that appeared to be either rape or cannibalism, wickedness is portrayed as mostly a matter of eating meat and mining the earth for resources. Noah — a righteous man in the Bible — is stripped of his righteousness in favor of obsessiveness. God is stripped of any characteristics at all, apart from vindictiveness.
>
> It's not that 'Noah' strays from the text — of course it does, the actual text is only a few pages long — it's that the movie completely and utterly distorts the message and meaning of the original story.

If you are thinking about watching this movie, I urge you to reconsider. That money would be better spent on something else. Really, anything else would be better. It's a fine movie for people who like to see Bible stories butchered by atheists who are pushing an Earth-First environut agenda, but it's not a good movie for believing Jews and Christians. When an atheist director claims to have made "the least Biblical film ever made", you should believe him.

This is an issue of stewardship – why would you give your money to someone who hates your worldview, when there is no possible purpose for it other than entertainment? Be a good steward of your money and don't hand it to people who are tearing up your religion. There are plenty of better things to do with it than hand it to people who are opposed to the God of the Bible. You don't have to watch a movie just because it's new and a lot of money was spent making it.

Fred Sanders reviews a book that makes the case for the deity of Christ

March 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

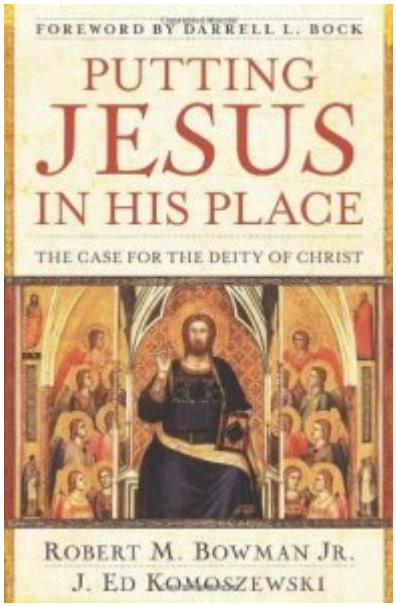

Putting Jesus in His Place

From Touchstone magazine, a review of "Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ" by Biola University professor Fred Sanders.

Excerpt:

> The case as perceived by scholars for the deity of Christ is stronger now than it has been for a long time, and those who went through seminary more than a decade ago should take a moment to update their notes. Though the New Testament is clear about the deity of Christ, generations of modern critical scholars have picked away at the standard proofs. Here a verse, there a verse, the arguments that Christians have always relied on to demonstrate that the New Testament teaches that Jesus is God have been rendered dubious.
>
> Putting Jesus in His Place does not simply reclaim those lost passages, revisit the standard debates, and bolster the old arguments (though in many cases it does that, and persuasively); it publicizes new arguments for demonstrating the deity of Christ, which have previously been available only to scholars.
>
> The authors are ideal popularizers, each with one foot in the library and one in the local church. Robert Bowman is manager of apologetics and interfaith evangelism for the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board, while Ed Komoszewski is the founder of the educational ministry Christus Nexus and a director of Reclaiming the Mind Ministries.
>
> To help readers remember the arguments, they organize the book around the acronym "HANDS," arguing that Jesus shares God's Honor, Attributes, Names, Deeds, and Seat. The text breezes along in straightforward, popular prose—it

> paraphrases the Nicene homoousios as “Jesus: The Right Stuff,” for example, and explains pre-existence as being “Older Than Dirt—Literally!”—with more technical matters referred to the endnotes.

If you are looking to make a case for the divinity of Jesus, you should go to the earliest sources, and try to see if Jesus has a divine self-understanding, whether he is acting in the place of God.

The book is basically one-stop shopping at a popular level for the best scholarly arguments:

> Jesus didn’t so much verbalize his claim to deity, for example; he enacted it. The people of God were waiting for the Lord to show up in person to bring reconciliation; Jesus walked among men, healing, forgiving, and doing everything that God was supposed to do. When, on occasion, he also claimed to be more than a prophet, his claim made sense because it put into words what he was doing in the flesh.
>
> Jesus does what God does. This is the foundation for his claim to deity. N. T. Wright has recently helped his readers see this with his massive narrative arguments, and Bowman and Komoszewski boil a lot of Wright down to a manageable size.
>
> […]Readers alert to the scholarly scene will recognize that the authors reproduce at an accessible level the arguments of Richard Bauckham (particularly in God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament) and Larry Hurtado (in Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity), among others. (Bauckham and Hurtado are among the book’s many endorsers.)

Wright, Bauckham and Hurtado are three of the leading historical Jesus scholars in the world. I got the book because I wanted to know about the latest research from these experts – but without having to comb through an academic book!

I have some good news, too. The book is on sale in the Kindle edition for under $2 for a limited time. If you don’t have a single book on the divinity of Jesus, you cannot go wrong with this book. It’s good to have one book on this issue, because it comes up a lot in conversations with skeptics. You see annoying documentaries all the time claiming that Jesus was initially viewed as just a man, and then was embellished into a divine figure later. This book helps you to answer that objection.

Democrats freed nearly 68,000 illegal aliens with criminal convictions in 2013

April 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The federal government let nearly 68,000 illegal aliens with criminal records go free in 2013. When it's law and order vs. future votes for Democrats, we all know which wins under this administration.
>
> A new study from Washington's Center For Immigration Studies (CIS) found that the Obama administration in 2013 released 67,879 illegal aliens who had been convicted of a criminal offense — 35% of the total number of the aliens with criminal convictions encountered by law enforcement.
>
> The vast majority, the CIS report said, were due to "the Obama administration's prosecutorial discretion policies, not because the aliens were not deportable."
>
> So much for President Obama's claim last June that "today, deportation of criminals is at its highest level ever" because "we focused our enforcement efforts on criminals who are here illegally and who are endangering our communities."
>
> […]How can our government let so many criminals go instead of deporting them, as the law demands?
>
> "Eleven million people living in the shadows, I believe, are already American citizens," Vice President Joseph Biden told the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.
>
> And the repeat crimes so many of these illegals with criminal records will commit against Americans is a perfectly acceptable price to pay, apparently, to win millions of new Democratic votes Obama's aggressive, lawless open-door immigration policies in the years ahead.

Here's an example of one of the people that Joe Biden believes is already an American citizen from National Review.

Excerpt:

> Meet 27-year-old Julio Miguel Blanco-Garcia. An illegal alien from Guatemala, he has lived and worked in Fairfax County, Va., for at least eleven years. The region is a notorious "sanctuary" for immigration lawbreakers where elected officials and big business look the other way in exchange for cheap labor and cheap votes.
>
> When he wasn't working illegally as a construction worker in the government-fueled Boomtown 'burb or getting himself high on drugs, Blanco-Garcia was building up a lengthy rap sheet. According to Fairfax County court records cited

> by the Fairfax City Patch.com, Blanco-Garcia has been arrested for:
>
> - Public swearing/intoxication in March 2010.
> - Petit larceny in September 2011.
> - Concealment/price alteration of merchandise in April 2012.
>
> With the feds granting blanket amnesty waivers by administrative fiat and refusing to fix the deportation abyss, coupled with brazen "don't ask, don't tell" sanctuary policies by local officials, Blanco-Garcia managed to escape detention and deportation for more than a decade. In December 2012, the Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force (which includes U.S. Marshals staff, Fairfax County police, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and D.C. fugitive-operations officers) finally caught up with Blanco-Garcia. They detained him after determining "that he was in violation of U.S. immigration law."
>
> But it was too late for 19-year-old college freshman Vanessa Pham. In July 2010, the bubbly art student's decision to be a Good Samaritan to open-borders beneficiary Blanco-Garcia cost Pham her life. After getting her nails done at a Fairfax Plaza salon, she encountered the illegal alien and his infant daughter in the parking lot. Blanco-Garcia was strung out on $400 worth of PCP.
>
> According to prosecutors, he asked Pham to take him to the hospital. She let the man and his baby into her car. When Pham took a wrong turn, Blanco-Garcia turned on her — stabbing her more than a dozen times with a knife he was carrying. She veered into a ditch; he coldly wiped her blood off of his hands with a baby wipe and clambered out of the sunroof with the child.
>
> Cops found the blade of the murder weapon, with the killer's DNA, under Pham's seat. But for nearly three years, her friends and family agonized as the DNA remained unidentified and the case unsolved. The investigative break? Illegal-alien Blanco-Garcia continued his criminal havoc — surprise, surprise — and attempted to steal several bottles of champagne from a local grocery store. He was convicted of larceny in April 2012. By December, law enforcement had tied his fingerprints to Pham's murder. Blanco-Garcia's trial begins next week.
>
> True to form, the whitewash media have ignored Blanco-Garcia's immigration status and the public-policy implications of our government's systemic, bipartisan refusal to enforce the laws already on the books. The *Washington Post* (which employed illegal-alien reporter turned amnesty activist Jose Antonio Vargas for years and glorified the amnesty mob marches in 2006 and 2007) conveniently failed to mention Blanco-Garcia's illegal-alien status. Some crimes are more equal than others.

Here's another case where an illegal alien murdered an 18-year-old after he was offered a ride home by the victim. Again, the mainstream media ignored the story.

Which political party is more interested in protecting taxpaying citizens from criminals? Well, it's not the Democrats, that's for sure. On the one hand, they want to disarm law-

abiding citizens. On the other hand they want to be lenient with illegal aliens who commit crimes against law-abiding citizens. It seems to me that government should exist to *prevent* crimes – not to grant favors to groups that they know will vote for their agenda.

Just to be clear, I favor more skilled immigration and faster naturalization of skilled immigrants who come here legally, pay their own way for some long period of time (10 years, cumulative?) and do not break the law in that time. But that's not what the Democrats are promoting here, they want the criminals to stay. Even if it means that innocent taxpayers have to die for their political plans.

College official ridicules pro-life demonstrator who was attacked by feminist professor

April 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What kind of people are in charge of universities that preach diversity and tolerance?

The College Fix explains.

Excerpt:

> *The College Fix* previously reported the attack on a pro-life student at the University of California, Santa Barbara. A feminist professor attacked a teenage demonstrator, and the episode was caught on video.
>
> Now, a statement released by UCSB vice-chancellor, Michael D. Young, shortly after the incident, has come to our attention. In the statement, which was released to students on March 19, Young ridicules pro-life demonstrators, calling them "evangelical types," "self-proclaimed prophets," and "anti-abortion crusaders."
>
> The peaceful pro-life demonstrators were subjected to an unprovoked attack by feminist studies professor, Mireille Miller-Young. But the vice chancellor insults the demonstrators as "proselytizers hawking intolerance" and peddlers of "fear," "hate," "intolerance," and "discord" at UCSB.
>
> Nowhere in the memo does vice-chancellor Young condemn the violent actions of his faculty member, Professor Miller-Young, which left the arms of a 16-year old girl covered with scars and abrasions.
>
> Instead, the vice-chancellor praises himself as one known for fighting on behalf of "tolerance." He touts his long record of speaking at "anti-hate events" and officiating at a "Queer wedding." Contrast that to the pro-life demonstrators who, the vice-chancellor says, come "wrapped in intolerance and extremism."
>
> With no apparent sense of irony, vice-chancellor Young reiterates his strong commitment to free speech. He directs all his criticism toward the pro-life demonstrators, and none toward the intolerant, hateful and violent liberals who attacked them.
>
> Apparently, "intolerance" at UCSB has a special meaning–and it covers any point of view that falls outside the extreme liberal groupthink of academia. If you are pro-life, you are considered intolerant. If you hold traditional religious views you are intolerant. On the other hand, if you physically attack a pro-life student, you are probably considered a noble and excellent person who simply took the struggle for good a little too far.
>
> […]In view of all the events of the past few weeks, one can reasonably come away with no other conclusion but that the strongholds of intolerance at UCSB have little to do with so-called "evangelical types," upon home UCSB's Michael D.

> Young seeks to place blame. Instead, at UCSB, intolerance thrives among feminist professors and senior administrators who believe that, ultimately, a liberal-progressive point of view and intent justifies any action, even, as in this case, a physical attack. Or, at least, it shields the liberal who carries out that attack from any criticism.
>
> All the criticism, as usual, is reserved for those who dare to hold pro-life views, and who dare to utter those views aloud.

I post this to show parents exactly what is waiting for their children at college. You are paying tens of thousands of dollars for sociopaths to indoctrinate your children in secularism and leftism. Not just that, but the university is also affirming of a very promiscuous sexual environment, which goes beyond ridicule into peer-pressure. If you are sending your kids in unprepared, keep in mind that the people running the show are much like Michael D. Young, and they are not shy about making sure that your kids turn out just like him.

Gallup polls show that men are more pro-life and more pro-marriage than women

April 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: in this post, I will be addressing the views of young, unmarried women, who tend to be more liberal than married women. Married women are not being targeted in this post, because their views tend to be more pro-life and pro-marriage.

First, abortion. The latest Gallup poll shows that men are far more pro-life than women. Men are strongly pro-life by a margin of 8 points, 50-42. Women are more pro-abortion by a margin of 1 point, 47-46.

Second, marriage. Polls show that men are far more pro-marriage than women.

Excerpt:

> A new national poll points towards a gender gap over same-sex marriage.
>
> According to new numbers released Monday morning from Gallup, 50% of Americans say same-sex marriages should be legal. But break it down by gender, and 56% of women say same-sex couples should be legally allowed to marry, but only 42% of men feel the same way.

In addition, exit polls from the 2008 and 2012 elections revealed that about 70-80 percent of young, unmarried women voted for Obama, whose views on abortion are somewhere to the left of Kermit Gosnell. And Obama supports gay marriage. Men are more likely to vote conservative than young, unmarried women, especially married men.

Now some of you may find this data about men being good very surprising. According to many people these days, all young men do is look at porn, order in pizza and leave the boxes scattered around, play video games, binge drink, live in their parents' basement, underperform at school, and fail to find jobs so they can man up and marry these pro-abortion, pro-gay marriage women. None of this bad performance is caused by institutionalized feminism, or the effects of feminism on the family. It's all just bad, bad men being bad – so were are told. But somehow, despite reports that all men are losers, they seem to have better views on abortion and marriage than women.

What does it mean?

Think about what it means that a young, unmarried woman is pro-abortion.

Being pro-abortion means that a men and women should be allowed to have recreational sex before marriage, and then if a baby is conceived, then they should be able to terminate that unwanted pregnancy, and send taxpayers the bill. Pro-life doctors and nurses who don't want to perform the procedure must be forced to do it, lest the selfish grown-ups feel offended. Pro-life organizations who don't want to offer abortion-inducing drugs as part of their medical insurance must be forced to provide it, lest the selfish grown-ups feel offended. Pro-life taxpayers who don't want to pay for the recreational sex

risks of others must be forced to pay for them, lest the selfish grown-ups feel offended.

Now suppose a man is considering marriage to a young, unmarried woman. It's likely that she supports abortion, given what polls show and what exit polls show. Now if a woman thinks that it is OK to kill an innocent unborn child in order to avoid being burdened with that child's needs, even though she consented to the recreational sex that produced that child, then should the man marry her? I think that a man should not marry such a woman. After all, if a woman is willing to kill a baby in order to protect her happiness, then she will certainly divorce her husband to do the same. Husbands are much less innocent than babies.

Now think about what it means that a young, unmarried woman is pro-gay marriage.

Being pro-gay marriage means that two men and two women should be able to adopt children away from one or both of their biological parents and raise them. Churches who don't want to perform the wedding ceremonies must be forced to perform the wedding ceremonies, lest the selfish grown-ups feel offended. Christian companies that don't want to treat gay couples as married must be forced to treat gay couples as married, lest the selfish grown-ups feel offended. Christian taxpayers who don't want to pay for the next generation of children to be indoctrinated to believe that marriage can be between two men or two women must be forced to pay for government to indoctrinate children to believe in redefined marriage, lest the selfish grown-ups feel offended.

Now suppose a man is considering marriage to a young, unmarried woman. It's likely that she supports gay marriage, given what the polls show and what exit polls show. Now if a woman thinks that it's OK to deprive a child of a mother or of a father and expose children to a notion of marriage that deprives them of stability, sexual faithfulness and permanence, then should the man marry her? I think that a man should not marry such a woman. After all, if a woman is willing to deprive a child of a mother or a father and of the interaction between a man and a woman cooperating in marriage, then she will certainly be willing to deprive any children she has with him of his presence, since she already believes that fathers are expendable and that the selfishness of adults trumps the needs of children.

The way forward

What can we do to fix young, unmarried women so that they are more pro-life and more pro-marriage, like men already are? Well, men are pro-life and pro-marriage because we read pro-life and pro-marriage books and because we watch debates on abortion and marriage. Men like to focus on things like logical arguments and scientific research. Men like to see pictures of the different development stages of unborn babies and read research papers about how same-sex marriage harms children and how welfare policies encourage women to have babies out of wedlock. Men are not inclined to decide moral views based on feelings, peer opinions and popular culture. In order to make young, unmarried women more pro-life and more pro-marriage, we should try to introduce them to more books and debates and scientific evidence, so that their views will change based on what is true, not based on feelings and peer pressure and cultural trends.

Mark D. Linville: does Darwinian evolution make morality rational?

April 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard an atheist tell you that naturalistic evolution is an answer to the moral argument? I have. And I found a good reply to this challenge in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". The chapter that responds to the challenge is authored by Dr. Mark D. Linville. It is only 13 pages long. I have a link to the PDF at the bottom of this post.

First, a bit about the author:

> Blog: The Tavern at the End of the World
> Current positions:
>
> - PhD Research Fellow
> - Tutoring Fellow in Philosophy
>
> Education:
>
> - PhD in Philosophy with a minor in South Asian Studies and a specialization in Philosophy of Religion, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy of Religion, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
> - MA in Theology, Cincinnati Christian Seminary
> - BA in Biblical Studies, Florida Christian College

Here is his thesis of the essay:

> Darwin's account of the origins of human morality is at once elegant, ingenious, and, I shall argue, woefully inadequate. In particular, that account, on its standard interpretation, does not explain morality, but, rather, explains it away . We learn from Darwin not how there could be objective moral facts, but how we could have come to believe—perhaps erroneously—that there are.
>
> Further, the naturalist, who does not believe that there is such a personal being as God, is in principle committed to Darwinism, including a Darwinian account of the basic contours of human moral psychology. I'll use the term evolutionary naturalism to refer to this combination of naturalism and Darwinism. And so the naturalist is saddled with a view that explains morality away. Whatever reason we have for believing in moral facts is also a reason for thinking naturalism is false. I conclude the essay with a brief account of a theistic conception of morality, and argue that the theist is in a better position to affirm the objectivity of morality.

And here’s a sample to get your attention:

> But even if we are assured that a “normal” person will be prompted by the social instincts and that those instincts are typically flanked and reinforced by a set of moral emotions, we still do not have a truly normative account of moral obligation. There is nothing in Darwin’s own account to indicate that the ensuing sense of guilt—a guilty feeling—is indicative of actual moral guilt resulting from the violation of an objective moral law. The revenge taken by one’s own conscience amounts to a sort of second-order propensity to feel a certain way given one’s past relation to conflicting first-order propensities (e.g., the father’s impulse to save his child versus his impulse to save himself). Unless we import normative considerations from some other source, it seems that, whether it is a first or second-order inclination,one’s being prompted by it is more readily understood as a descriptive feature of one’s own psychology than material for a normative assessment of one’s behavior or character. And, assuming that there is anything to this observation, an ascent into even higher levels of propensities (“I feel guilty for not having felt guilty for not being remorseful over not obeying my social instincts…”) introduces nothing of normative import. Suppose you encounter a man who neither feels the pull of social, paternal or familial instincts nor is in the least bit concerned over his apparent lack of conscience. What, from a strictly Darwinian perspective, can one say to him that is of any serious moral import? “You are not moved to action by the impulses that move most of us.” Right. So?
>
> The problem afflicts contemporary construals of an evolutionary account of human morality. Consider Michael Shermer’s explanation for the evolution of a moral sense—the “science of good and evil.” He explains,
>
> By a moral sense, I mean a moral feeling or emotion generated by actions. For example, positive emotions such as righteousness and pride are experienced as the psychological feeling of doing “good.” These moral emotions likely evolved out of behaviors that were reinforced as being good either for the individual or for the group.2
>
> Shermer goes on to compare such moral emotions to other emotions and sensations that are universally experienced, such as hunger and the sexual urge. He then addresses the question of moral motivation.
>
> In this evolutionary theory of morality, asking “Why should we be moral?” is like asking “Why should we be hungry?” or “Why should we be horny?” For that matter, we could ask, “Why should we be jealous?” or “Why should we fall in love?” The answer is that it is as much a part of human nature to be moral as it is to be hungry, horny, jealous, and in love.3
>
> Thus, according to Shermer, given an evolutionary account, such a question is simply a non-starter. Moral motivation is a given as it is wired in as one of our basic drives. Of course, one might point out that Shermer’s “moral emotions”

> often do need encouragement in a way that, say, “horniness,” does not. More importantly, Shermer apparently fails to notice that if asking “Why should I be moral?” is like asking, “Why should I be horny?” then asserting, “You ought to be moral” is like asserting, “You ought to be horny.” As goes the interrogative, so goes the imperative. But if the latter seems out of place, then, on Shermer’s view, so is the former.
>
> One might thus observe that if morality is anything at all, it is irreducibly normative in nature. But the Darwinian account winds up reducing morality to descriptive features of human psychology. Like the libido, either the moral sense is present and active or it is not. If it is, then we might expect one to behave accordingly. If not, why, then, as a famous blues man once put it, “the boogie woogie just ain’t in me.” And so the resulting “morality” is that in name only.
>
> **In light of such considerations, it is tempting to conclude with C. S. Lewis that, if the naturalist remembered his philosophy out of school, he would recognize that any claim to the effect that “I ought” is on a par with “I itch,” in that it is nothing more than a descriptive piece of autobiography with no essential reference to any actual obligations.**

When it comes to morality, we are not interested in mere descriptions of behavior. We want to know about prescriptions of behavior, and whether why we should care about following those prescriptions. We are interested in what grounds our sense of moral obligation in reality. What underwrites our sense of moral obligation? If it is just rooted in feelings, then why should we obey our moral sense when obeying it goes against out self-interest? Feelings are subjective things, and doing the right thing in a real objective state of affairs requires more than just feelings. There has to be a real objective state of affairs that makes it rational for us to do the right thing, even when the right thing is against our own self-interest. That’s what morality is – objective moral obligations *overriding* subjective feelings. I wouldn’t trust someone to be moral if it were just based on their feelings.

The PDF is right here for downloading, with the permission of the author.

University of South Carolina Upstate teaching students to be lesbians with taxpayer money

April 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Campus Reform, a story that shows what awaits your children when they get to university.

Excerpt:

> An upcoming LGBTQ seminar at the University of South Carolina Upstate (USCU) will teach students How to Be a Lesbian in 10 Days or Less and will focus on LGBTQ cultural mores.
>
> According to the school's website, theater artist Leigh Hendrix will perform her one-woman show, **How to Be a Lesbian in 10 Days or Less**, to kick off the sixth Bodies of Knowledge Symposium and Conference.
>
> The show is a one-hour performance that follows Butchy McDyke, a motivational speaker and expert lesbian, as she "deftly guides her captive audience in an exploration of self-discovery and first love, coming out, lesbian sex, queer politics, and a really important Reba McEntire song."
>
> Hendrix encourages her audience to shout "I'm a big 'ol dyke!" in a show that is "one part instructional seminar, one part personal story, and one party wacky performance art."
>
> The symposium is funded by outside grants as well as university funds according to Dr. Lisa Johnson, the Director of the **Center for Women's & Gender Studies at USCU**.
>
> Dr. Johnson declined to discuss what percentage of the funding was coming from the university.
>
> "Until you call and ask how much money has been spent on heterosexual literature, I'm not going to answer that question," Johnson told *Campus Reform*.
>
> Earlier this month, the South Carolina House of Representatives voted to cut almost $70,000 in funding for two public universities, including $17,142 from USCU, over literature containing gay themes.

This is what your tax dollars are funding. Every time you vote for more "compassion", you are giving money to a government that *pays* leftists on campus to teach your children to vote against your American values. And your kids are not just hearing the indoctrination from professors, but the whole environment at university is set up to promote the overthrow of traditional moral values. They have organizations, like this Center for Women's & Gender Studies that promote the anti-marriage, anti-child views of the sexually-permissive left.

If you want a positive outcome for your children at college, then you need to be more

careful about what they are learning in college. And you need to be more careful about preparing them for what they encounter. If you can’t explain to them how traditional marriage differs from the gay lifestyle in terms of sex addiction, domestic violence, sexually-transmitted diseases, health care costs, suicide risks, relationship duration, etc. then your kids surely don’t know what the difference is either. They will never hear it from anyone but you. No one else has any incentive to tell them about these things except you.

An exchange on purpose from one of William Lane Craig's early debates

April 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The full transcript of this 1991 debate is here on the Reasonable Faith site. Keep in mind that this is young William Lane Craig against old, experienced Kai Nielsen.

Nevertheless, here is an exchange I wanted to highlight.

William Lane Craig:

The chief purpose of life is not happiness per se*, but the knowledge of God.* One reason the problem of evil seems so puzzling is that we tend to think that the goal of human life is happiness in this world. But on the Christian view this is false. Man's end is not happiness as such, but the knowledge of God–which in the end will bring true and everlasting human fulfillment. Many evils occur in life which seem utterly pointless with respect to producing human happiness, but they may not be unjustified with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Innocent human suffering provides an occasion for deeper dependency and trust in God, either on the part of the sufferer or perhaps those around him. Whether God's purpose is achieved through our suffering all depends on how we freely respond.

Kai Nielsen:

The first thing you should come to recognize is that there can be purposes *in* life that are perfectly intact even if there is no purpose *to* life. If there is no God or *telos* of any sort, there is no purpose to life; you weren't made for a purpose. But even if you weren't made for a purpose, you could find plenty of purposes in life, things worth doing and having and believing and struggling for. Some religious people will say, "That's all right for little individual small purposes, but you can't have any overarching purpose in life without belief in God. You can little, fairly trivial things, but no really deep and pervading conception of a purpose in life without God." But that's not true. There are many atheists who have had such overarching purposes. They've fought relentlessly "the plague" (to use Camus' metaphor). They've sought to lessen the sum total of human suffering, of human degradation, of blighted hopes; they've positively sought to bring about a world with more happiness in it and more understanding of each other–more human flourishing, more human solidarity, a brotherhood and sisterhood. They've sought, in short, to bring about a classless, raceless, genderless world. Those big purposes – overarching purposes in life – are perfectly available to anyone who is an atheist as well as to someone who is a theist. I don't deny that believers haven't done that, but you don't *need* God to have either small purposes in life or an overarching purpose in life.

William Lane Craig:

First of all, I have never denied that you can have *subjective* purposes in life, but what I *am* arguing is that there is no *objective* basis to assume the moral worth of your purpose in life on an atheistic view. All purposes in life you choose are morally equal–whether you

want to live a life as a doctor caring for the poor or choose instead to be a Ferdinand Marcos. There's no objective basis for assessing the moral worth of those purposes.

Kai Nielsen:

He says that I don't meet his objection that moral purposes *in* life all are perfectly arbitrary without God. I don't see the slightest reason for that. Some of them are arbitrary if they are silly and thoughtless purposes. Some purposes, if they are integrated, carefully thought-out, related to everything else we know, reflective (where human beings work through long traditions, including working with Christian traditions, in which you put together everything you know and think carefully about these purposes), are perfectly objective. And they are the only kind you can give much sense to.

You'll note that what counts as a good purpose on Kai's view is not objective. Every purpose that he mentioned (e.g. – genderless world) was meaningful *to him*. But do these purposes have any significance, ultimately?

Consider the heat death of the universe:

> The 'heat-death' of the universe is when the universe has reached a state of maximum entropy. This happens when all available energy (such as from a hot source) has moved to places of less energy (such as a colder source). Once this has happened, no more work can be extracted from the universe. Since heat ceases to flow, no more work can be acquired from heat transfer. This same kind of equilibrium state will also happen with all other forms of energy (mechanical, electrical, etc.). **Since no more work can be extracted from the universe at that point, it is effectively dead, especially for the purposes of humankind.**

This is how the universe ends, on atheism. No purpose achieved by any atheist matters, ultimately – the end destination is the same. Humans are going to die out individually and collectively on atheism, nothing anyone does to affect anyone else is going to change a thing. Nothing atheists do matters.

Atheists like to make much of this life being all they have, and to live it to the fullest, etc. But nothing ultimately matters if atheism is true, because the end result of the universe is the same. Nothing they do matters to them, because they're dead. Nothing they do matters to anyone else, because we're all dead. It will be as if we never existed or did anything, one way or the other.

In Christian theism, however, what you do in this life has ultimate meaning beyond our earthly lives. What you choose affects your afterlife. What you do with others affects their afterlife. Plans made with respect to that objective goal of knowing God do stand the test of time. They matter, even if they don't feel good now. If your actions help to turn someone towards God or away from God, it makes a huge difference. A difference that lasts.

Muslims drag 25-year-old Coptic Christian woman from her car and murder her

April 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Eyewitnesses have given a harrowing account of the murder in Cairo of a young Coptic Christian woman, hauled out of her car and beaten and stabbed to death by a Muslim mob, apparently targeted because of a cross hanging from her rear-view mirror.
>
> The incident occurred in the Cairo suburb of Ain Shams after mosque prayer services on Friday, when police clashed with Muslim Brotherhood supporters angered by army chief Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's decision to run for president.
>
> An eyewitness appearing on "90 minutes," a program on the al-Mehwar satellite network, said 25-year-old Mary Sameh George was attacked in her car near a church, where she planned to deliver medicine to an ill and elderly woman.
>
> Protestors climbed onto her car, collapsing the roof, then hauled her from the vehicle, beating and mauling her – to the extent, he said, that portions of her scalp were torn off. She was stabbed multiple times, her throat was slit and when she was dead, the mob torched her car.
>
> One Coptic outlet said that according to the health ministry, the young woman had been stabbed at least a dozen times.
>
> The death of Mary Sameh George received little coverage in Egyptian newspapers.

Keep in mind that the Muslim Brotherhood was supported by the Obama administration.

Here's a story from David Limbaugh about those two women who were imprisoned in Iran in 2009 for their Christian faith. (H/T Frank Turek)

Excerpt:

> On Sunday, two remarkable Christian women, Maryam Rostampour and Marziyeh Amirizadeh, spoke at our church, describing their harrowing tale of imprisonment by the Iranian regime because of their Christian faith.
>
> Both were raised in Muslim homes in Iran but never embraced Islam. As young adults, they became Christians and met each other while studying theology in Turkey in 2005. When they returned to Iran, they began evangelizing together for several years, covertly distributing Bibles to some 20,000 people and starting two secret house churches. In March 2009, they were arrested in Tehran for promoting Christianity, which is punishable by death.

> The regime officially charged them with apostasy, anti-government activity and blasphemy, and they were sentenced to execution by hanging. Before being cleared of all charges and released in 2009 as a result of worldwide prayer and international pressure, they endured 259 days in Evin prison. Thereafter, they moved to the United States and wrote a book together describing their horrendous experiences, "Captive in Iran."
>
> In Evin, which is notorious "for torturing, raping and executing innocent people," they experienced brutal and humiliating treatment, poisoning and illness. They each endured solitary confinement and were interrogated once a week for eight or nine hours at a time. All the while, whether together or separated, they prayed for each other.
>
> The first week, they were horrified and prayed to be released. But soon, they came to see their presence in prison as an *opportunity* to witness to other prisoners, many of whom were prostitutes and addicts and "so hopeless and sad." Maryam and Marziyeh prayed for them and saw God work in their lives as they cried and confessed their sins. It became "like a church for us," said Marziyeh.
>
> […]**At any time, they could have secured their own release by simply renouncing their Christian faith, but they each emphatically refused, saying, "We will never renounce our faith." Marziyeh told one Muslim prisoner who said they were "silly" for not renouncing their faith: "Our insistence on our faith is not out of stubbornness. … I have lived with God for many years. … He is my all. We are inseparable. My life has no value without him. I love God so much that denying him would be denying my own existence. How could I ever deny something that is in every cell of my body? I would rather spend the rest of my life in prison if that's what it takes to stay close to him. I would rather be killed than kill the spirit of Christ within me."**

I blogged about them way back in July of 2009. Nice to see that there is a happy ending here, but not without costs.

Most young Christians that I speak to who come from a church background seem to have this idea that all religions are basically the same because the main goal of religions is to make people "nice". Well. Maybe instead of having their heads stuck up their butts, they should be reading stories like this to inform themselves about the real differences between Christianity and Islam in places other than their safe Western suburbs. The content of the beliefs matter, and the contents of beliefs are different between religions. Christians would rather be killed than deny their faith, and Muslims would rather kill and imprison others who have a different faith. It's not the same thing, is it?

Media declines to report on pro-gun control Democrat arrested for arms smuggling

April 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Glenn Reynolds writes about it in USA Today, and makes the point about media bias.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> It sounds like something out of a Hollywood thriller: Anti-terrorist politician actually running guns to terrorists. But that's precisely what's been charged in California, although with a final plot twist that Hollywood would never imagine.
>
> California State senator (and, until last week, candidate for secretary of state) Leland Yee was well-known as an anti-gun activist. Then, last week, he was indicted for, yes, conspiring to smuggle guns and rocket launchers between mobsters and terrorists in exchange for massive bribes. Some highlights, as excerpted by *San Francisco* Magazine.
>
> Yee told an FBI agent that, in exchange for $2 million in cash, he'd fill a shopping list of weapons, which he took personal responsibility for delivering, according to the indictment. He also allegedly "masterminded" a complex scheme bring illegal weapons into the country, agreeing to "facilitate" a meeting with an illegal arms dealer to arrange for the weapons to be imported via Newark, N.J. In arranging all of this, the indictment said, Yee relied on connections with Filipino terrorist groups who could supply "heavy" weapons, including the Muslim terrorists of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Yee allegedly noted that the Muslim terrorists had no reservations about kidnapping, extortion and murder.
>
> This all sounds like news. You've got charges of huge bribes, rampant hypocrisy, illegal weapons and even a connection with foreign terrorists — and from a leading politician in an important state.
>
> But — and here's the part Hollywood would miss — outside of local media like *San Francisco* magazine, the coverage was surprisingly muted.*The New York Times* buried the story as a one-paragraph Associated Press report on page A21, with the bland dog-bites-man headline, "California: State Senator Accused of Corruption." This even though Yee was suspended, along with two others, from the California state senate in light of the indictment.
>
> CNN, home (also until last week) of Piers Morgan, whom Yee had praised for his anti-gun activism, didn't report the story at all.

Is this surprising? Not really. After all, the Democrats are currently being investigated for smuggling assault weapons to Mexican drug cartels – weapons that were used to murder at least one Border Patrol officer. Handing guns to criminals and terrorists is normal Democrat behavior – they even shipped tanks and F-16 fighters to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. When the Democrats say "gun control" they mean no guns for the

good guys. Plenty of guns for the bad guys, and at taxpayer expense. Yes, they really are this crazy. And the media, of course, largely ignores it.

Let's take a look at the peer-reviewed studies.

Peer-reviewed academic studies of media bias

Let's take a look at peer-reviewed academic studies of media bias, and see if they confirm or falsify what Pew Research found.

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs.

> 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

And more from a study reported by NBC News.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

Those are the facts.

New study: the effects of declining marriage rates and lower salaries for men

April 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's remember that Obama's massive trillion dollar stimulus program was designed to help women, not men, even though men had a higher unemployment rate than women when it was enacted.

Christina Hoff Sommers explained it in the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> A "man-cession." That's what some economists are starting to call it. Of the 5.7 million jobs Americans lost between December 2007 and May 2009, nearly 80 percent had been held by men. Mark Perry, an economist at the University of Michigan, characterizes the recession as a "downturn" for women but a "catastrophe" for men.
>
> Men are bearing the brunt of the current economic crisis because they predominate in manufacturing and construction, the hardest-hit sectors, which have lost more than 3 million jobs since December 2007. Women, by contrast, are a majority in recession-resistant fields such as education and health care, which gained 588,000 jobs during the same period. Rescuing hundreds of thousands of unemployed crane operators, welders, production line managers, and machine setters was never going to be easy. But the concerted opposition of several powerful women's groups has made it all but impossible. Consider what just happened with the $787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.
>
> […]The National Organization for Women (NOW), the Feminist Majority, the Institute for Women's Policy Research, and the National Women's Law Center soon joined the battle against the supposedly sexist bailout of men's jobs. At the suggestion of a staffer to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, NOW president Kim Gandy canvassed for a female equivalent of the "testosterone-laden 'shovel-ready' " terminology. ("Apron-ready" was broached but rejected.) Christina Romer, the highly regarded economist President Obama chose to chair his Council of Economic Advisers, would later say of her entrance on the political stage, "The very first email I got . . . was from a women's group saying 'We don't want this stimulus package to just create jobs for burly men.' "
>
> […]Our incoming president did what many sensible men do when confronted by a chorus of female complaint: He changed his plan. He added health, education, and other human infrastructure components to the proposal. And he tasked Christina Romer and Jared Bernstein, Joseph Biden's chief economist, with preparing an extraordinary report that calculated not only the number of jobs the plan would likely create, but the gender composition of the various employment

> sectors and the division of largess between women and men.
>
> Romer and Bernstein delivered "The Job Impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan" on January 10. They estimated that "the total number of created jobs likely to go to women is roughly 42 percent." Lest anyone miss the point, they added that since women had held only 20 percent of the jobs lost in the recession, the stimulus package now "skews job creation somewhat towards women."

But in the lower quintiles, women can do a lot better for themselves and their children by getting married before having children. The second income makes a big difference. But what if men's incomes go down, and their unemployment rate goes up?

The left-leaning Atlantic explains how it works.

Excerpt:

> The good news, trumpeted in *Women's Work,*the latest report from the Pew Economic Mobility Project, is that dramatic increases in women's labor-force participation have boosted the "financial security and mobility" of millions of families across America since 1970. The bad news is that growing economic opportunities for women have not translated into more family income for poor and working-class families at the lower end of the income ladder.
>
> […]What accounts for the paradox that women's income is rising across the board yet family income is falling for the bottom 40 percent of families? Mainly, to paraphrase [feminist] Hanna Rosin, the end of marriage and men in working-class and poor communities across the nation, coupled with the fact that maternal labor-force participation has plateaued since the 1990s. That is, a dramatic retreat from marriage, declines in men's employment and income, and a leveling off of maternal labor-force participation have all combined to limit the income available to lower-income families, and to offset the increases in women's income documented in this new report.
>
> […]One reason that lower-income families are losing economic ground is that gains in women's income have been offset by declines in marriage among the poor and working class. As the figure below indicates, more than half of these families are headed by just one parent—typically a single mother. Lacking the income of two parents, or the income of a father, these single-parent families are much less likely to reap the benefits of increases in income that have accrued to today's working women.
>
> […]Another major factor holding back families financially in the bottom 40 percent are declines in men's income. Consistent with Rosin's thesis, which argues that many men in the United States are seeing their economic fortunes erode, the graph below indicates that men's personal income has fallen across most groups, but particularly among working-class and poor men. So, one more reason that family income has declined for poor and working-class families is that

> husbands and boyfriends have less dough to put on the table than they once did. This is particularly important because, even today, as the Pew report notes, men's wage rates in couple-headed families are almost "twice as important as those of their female partners for boosting family income."

So if you want to help poor women, here are two things that you should do. First, you should help men get better educations so they can get good-paying jobs, even at the low end of the job market. Second, we should be encouraging women to marry in order to get that second income (or only income, if it's high enough) in order to help make ends meet. Unfortunately, the Democrats are opposed to both.

William Lane Craig explains the moral argument to Georgia Tech students and faculty

April 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can grab the MP3 file of the lecture, or read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video. The essay is for Christians already familiar with basic apologetics.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

If you want to show this lecture and Q&A to your apologetics group, you can find the DVD here.

You can also read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor.

No self-defense at Fort Hood: another shooting in another gun-free zone

April 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily explain why it happened twice in the same place.

Excerpt:

> Another tragedy at Fort Hood is compounded by the absurdity of well-trained and disciplined soldiers told to "shelter in place" until the police arrive.
>
> [..]It is… a grim echo of its predecessor, which was an act of terrorism called "workplace violence." And to this day, the commander in chief calls Maj. Nidal Hasan's Nov. 5, 2009, rampage in which 13 were murdered and 32 wounded "workplace violence."
>
> In that tragedy, Hasan, a self-proclaimed "Soldier of Allah," shouted "Allahu Akhbar" and opened fire on dozens of U.S. civilians and soldiers who were unarmed and unable to fire back. Then, as now and in the Sept. 16, 2013, mass shooting at the Washington Navy Yard, military personnel trained to defend themselves were unable to do so and had to wait until the police arrived.
>
> […]Because of the nonsensical policy, terrorists or the mentally unstable would face more return fire if they began shooting at a Texas Wal-Mart than they would face at Fort Hood, home of the heavily armed and feared 1st Cavalry Division. During the second attack in five years at Fort Hood, soldiers were again forced to run from a violent and armed perpetrator.

I would say that there would not even *be* any attacks at Fort Hood if people were allowed to concealed carry their own firearms. Who the heck would be stupid enough to start shooting an an army post if the people there could actually carry weapons?

This article from National Review shows that multiple-victim public shootings are common in gun-free zones.

Excerpt:

> Gun-free zones have been the most popular response to previous mass killings. But many law-enforcement officials say they are actually counterproductive. "Guns are already banned in schools. That is why the shootings happen in schools. A school is a 'helpless-victim zone,'" says Richard Mack, a former Arizona sheriff. "Preventing any adult at a school from having access to a firearm eliminates any chance the killer can be stopped in time to prevent a rampage," Jim Kouri, the public-information officer of the National Association of Chiefs of Police, told me earlier this year at the time of the Aurora, Colo., Batman-movie shooting. Indeed, there have been many instances — from the high-school shooting by Luke Woodham in Mississippi, to the New Life Church shooting in

> Colorado Springs, Colo. — where a killer has been stopped after someone got a gun from a parked car or elsewhere and confronted the shooter.
>
> Economists John Lott and William Landes conducted a groundbreaking study in 1999, and found that a common theme of mass shootings is that they occur in places where guns are banned and killers know everyone will be unarmed, such as shopping malls and schools.
>
> I spoke with Lott after the Newtown shooting, and he confirmed that nothing has changed to alter his findings. He noted that the Aurora shooter, who killed twelve people earlier this year, had a choice of seven movie theaters that were showing the Batman movie he was obsessed with. All were within a 20-minute drive of his home. The Cinemark Theater the killer ultimately chose wasn't the closest, but it was the only one that posted signs saying it banned concealed handguns carried by law-abiding individuals. All of the other theaters allowed the approximately 4 percent of Colorado adults who have a concealed-handgun permit to enter with their weapons.
>
> "Disarming law-abiding citizens leaves them as sitting ducks," Lott told me. "A couple hundred people were in the Cinemark Theater when the killer arrived. There is an extremely high probability that one or more of them would have had a legal concealed handgun with him if they had not been banned."
>
> Lott offers a final damning statistic: "With just one single exception, the attack on congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson in 2011, every public shooting since at least 1950 in the U.S. in which more than three people have been killed has taken place where citizens are not allowed to carry guns."
>
> There is no evidence that private holders of concealed-carry permits (which are either easy to obtain or not even required in more than 40 states) are any more irresponsible with firearms than the police. According to a 2005 to 2007 study by researchers at the University of Wisconsin and Bowling Green State University, police nationwide were convicted of firearms violations at least at a 0.002 percent annual rate. That's about the same rate as holders of carry permits in the states with "shall issue" laws.

Here's Dr. John R. Lott to explain why gun-free zones should really be called "helpless victim zones".

Excerpt:

> Contrary to public perception, Western Europe, most of whose countries have much tougher gun laws than the United States, has experienced many of the worst multiple-victim public shootings. Particularly telling, all the multiple-victim public shootings in Western Europe have occurred in places where civilians are not permitted to carry guns. The same is true in the United States: All the public shootings in which more than three people have been killed have occurred in places where civilians may not legally bring guns.

> Look at recent history. Where have the worst K–12 school shootings occurred? Nearly all of them in Europe. The very worst one occurred in a high school in Erfurt, Germany, in 2002, where 18 were killed. The second-worst took place in Dunblane, Scotland, in 1996, where 16 kindergartners and their teacher were killed. The third-worst, with 15 dead, happened in Winnenden, Germany. The fourth-worst was in the U.S. — Columbine High School in 1999, leaving 13 dead. The fifth-worst, with eleven murdered, occurred in Emsdetten, Germany.
>
> It may be a surprise to those who believe in gun control that Germany was home to three of the five worst attacks. Though not quite as tight as the U.K.'s regulations, Germany's gun-control laws are some of the most restrictive in Europe. German gun licenses are valid for only three years, and to obtain one, the person must demonstrate such hard-to-define characteristics as trustworthiness, and must also convince authorities that he needs a gun. This is on top of prohibitions on gun ownership for those with mental disorders, drug or alcohol addictions, violent or aggressive tendencies, or felony convictions.
>
> The phenomenon is not limited to school attacks. Multiple-victim public shootings in general appear to be at least as common in Western Europe as they are here.

Dr. Lott then lists about two dozen incidents – all occurring in gun free zones.

Mozilla claims to be inclusive but forces pro-marriage CEO Brendan Eich to step down

April 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from Townhall by Guy Benson is a must-read.

Excerpt:

> Eich is out on his ear for the unpardonable sin of subscribing to a moral and political belief so mean-spirited and close-minded that it was shared by President Obama back when the fateful contribution was made. (Obama was never actually against gay marriage, but it was his public stance for awhile). Indeed, a majority of California voters endorsed Proposition 8 that year, including substantial majorities of Hispanics and African-Americans. When Eich's private beliefs recently came to light, online petitioners demanded that he either renounce them or be fired. Think about that. "Renounce your beliefs and agree with us, *or else*" is not a sentence that should be uttered lightly, if ever, in a free society. Scalp collected, and message received. They didn't even seriously allege — let alone try to prove — that Eich's tenure as CEO would be marked by discrimination in any way. It was his mere presence that was intolerable.
> An appeal to reason from one of Eich's gay colleagues evidently fell on deaf ears:
>
> Mozilla's Education Lead Christie Koehler, **who is gay**, also defended the company in a blog post, despite stressing that she was "disappointed" to learn that Eich had made donations in support of Prop 8. "Certainly it would be problematic if Brendan's behavior within Mozilla was explicitly discriminatory … I haven't personally seen this (although to be clear, I was not part of Brendan's reporting structure until today)," she wrote. "**To the contrary, over the years I have watched Brendan be an ally in many areas and bring clarity and leadership when needed**."
>
> Ah, but who needs "clarity and leadership" in a CEO when there are ideological conformity tests to satisfy? Upon Eich's departure, Mozilla issued a statement expressing their support of "free speech and equality," with no apparent trace of irony. Gay rights organization GLAAD was even less self-aware in its official response:
>
> Mozilla's strong statement in favor of equality today reflects where corporate America is: **inclusive, safe, and welcoming to all.**
>
> Inclusive and welcoming to all…unless you're a hateful "bigot" who disagrees with us on the definition of marriage — in which case, get the hell out.

[UPDATE: Link to PJ Tatler story removed, and title of this post changed]

Let's take a look at one case of fascism in detail.

Frank Turek, too

You might remember that this happened to well-known Christian apologist Frank Turek when he spoke at Cisco.

Excerpt:

> In 2008, Dr. Turek was hired by Cisco to design and conduct a leadership and teambuilding program for about fifty managers with your Remote Operations Services team. The program took about a year to conduct, during which he also conducted similar sessions for another business unit within Cisco. That training earned such high marks that in 2010 he was asked to design a similar program for about 200 managers within Global Technical Services. Ten separate eight-hour sessions were scheduled.
>
> The morning after completing the seventh session earlier this year, a manager in that session —who was one of the better students in that class—phoned in a complaint. It had nothing to do with content of the course or how it was conducted. In fact, the manager commented that the course was "excellent" as did most who participated. His complaint regarded Dr. Turek's political and religious views that were never mentioned during class, but that the manager learned by "googling" Dr. Turek after class.
>
> The manager identified himself as gay and was upset that Dr. Turek had written this book providing evidence that maintaining our current marriage laws would be best for the country. Although the manager didn't read the book, he said that the author's view was inconsistent with "Cisco values" and could not be tolerated. (Dr. Turek is aware of this because he was in the room when his call came in.) The manager then contacted an experienced HR professional at Cisco who had Dr. Turek fired that day without ever speaking to him. The HR professional also commended the manager for "outing" Dr. Turek.
>
> This firing had nothing to do with course content—the program earned very high marks from participants. It had nothing to do with budget constraints—the original contract was paid in full recently. A man was fired simply because of his personal political and religious beliefs—beliefs that are undoubtedly shared by thousands of your very large and diverse workforce.

When I meet people at lectures, debates and conferences, the first question they ask me is why I have an alias. This case explains why. It's much harder to get a job or a promotion when people on the secular left can just search the Internet for all your views and rule you out – or have you fired. It doesn't matter if you are using peer-reviewed data to make your case, as I do. They don't care about facts, they just want you to stop disagreeing with them and start celebrating their views.

You absolutely have to have an alias if you are a man who expects to provide for a family. And don't take chances – save everything you make for that day when they find out who you really are, so you can go down fighting.

New study: Noah's ark could float with two of each of 35,000 species

April 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Australian Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> The students from the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Leicester who came to this conclusion used the dimensions for the boat that were given in the Bible.
>
> In the book of Genesis, Noah is commanded to build an ark which is 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high to house himself, his family and two of every species of animal.
>
> For the study, the students settled on a cubit being 48.2cm long and found the ark could support the weight of 2.5 million sheep. The university said that previous research suggested there were approximately 35,000 species of animals in Noah's time.
>
> The students said it was not clear if all the animals would actually be able to fit on board. But if they did, the boat would still float.
>
> Student Thomas Morris, 22, said: "You don't think of the Bible necessarily as a scientifically accurate source of information, so I guess we were quite surprised when we discovered it would work. We're not proving that it's true, but the concept would definitely work."
>
> The full paper, *The animals float two by two, hurrah*!, was published in a peer-reviewed student journal.
>
> Research lead Oliver Youle, 22, explained the science behind the study.
>
> "Every object when immersed in a liquid has an upwards force acting against it — a buoyancy force; it also has a weight acting downwards — a downwards force, and in order for it to float, these two forces need to be equal."
>
> His colleague Benjamin Jordan added: "Using the dimensions of the ark and the density of the water, we were able to calculate its buoyancy force, which, according to Archimedes' principle, is equal to the weight of the volume of fluid the object displaces. This meant we were then able to estimate the total mass the ark could support before the gravitational weight would overcome the buoyancy force, causing the ark to sink, which we calculated as 50.54x106kg."

Good news for us who accept the flood story as historical, and I do. And it's nice to see scientists taking a look at these things in the Bible to see if they are true. Most people these days seem to sort of assume that everything in the Bible is just figurative metaphors. Well, sometimes the genre is not historical… and sometimes it is. It depends

on the book. One thing is for sure – if the Bible is not true, then it’s of no value. The point of it is not to read it for comfort or community. The purpose of it is to tell us who God is and what he’s done.

Please don’t get into a young-Earth vs Old-Earth dispute in the comments.

Christians in China form human shield around church after demolition threat

April 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Thousands of Chinese Christians have mounted an extraordinary, round-the-clock defence of a church in a city known as the 'Jerusalem of the East' after Communist Party officials threatened to bulldoze their place of worship.

> In an episode that underlines the fierce and long-standing friction between **China's** officially atheist Communist Party and its rapidly growing Christian congregation, Bible-carrying believers this week flocked to the Sanjiang church in Wenzhou hoping to protect it from the bulldozers.
>
> Their 24-hour guard began earlier this week when a demolition notice was plastered onto the newly-constructed church which worshippers say cost around 30 million yuan (£2.91 million) and almost six years to build.
>
> Officials claimed the church had been built illegally and used red paint to daub the words: "Demolish" and "Illegal construction" onto its towering facade.

> The threat triggered a furious reaction in Wenzhou, a booming port city known for its vibrant Christian community, said to be China's largest.
>
> Hundreds of people, including elderly and in some cases disabled women, have now occupied the church to prevent demolition teams moving in.
>
> […]Wenzhou, a wealthy coastal city around 230 miles south of Shanghai in Zhejiang province, has around seven million residents. Local Christians claim as many as 15 per cent of them are church goers, the majority Protestant.

Some of the comments made by the Chinese Christians are quite moving. I was encouraged that Christians on the other side of the planet were willing to risk their lives to defend their church. I prayed about the Christian church in China on Friday night. I hope that God is watching over them.

Cold Case Christianity podcast talks about lack of authenticity in the church

April 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On Saturday, I got a chance to listen to the latest episode of the Cold Case Christianity podcast, and the whole thing was solid. This is one you definitely do not want to miss. I wanted to summarize the first topic of three because it's something that's been coming up a lot lately, but topics 2 and 3 are worth listening to, as well.

You can grab the MP3 file here.

Topic #1: Why are young people leaving church?

- problem: not convinced Christianity is true
- problem: apparent conflict with science
- problem: unanswered questions
- problem: difficulties inside the church
- problem: the church's (correct) position on same-sex marriage

Jim's claim: if people do not think that the Bible is accurate and divinely inspired, then they are going to be tempted to pick and choose what to believe and what not to believe

Jim reads a blog post from a young lady who attends church, and here are *her* top problems with the church:

1. you can't ask questions
2. you can't voice your doubts
3. you can't explain your struggles
4. you can't confess your sins
5. you can't confide your fears

And she wants the leadership to be real and open about these things as well.

Wallace says that there here are two main problems that teens run into at college:

1. intellectual skepticism
2. selfish desires, especially in sexual areas

It's aggravated by the hostile university setting (skeptical professors), and a culture of drinking and sex.

The university culture is offering you a worldview that makes your selfish desires more permissible and normal. Unless people have a compelling reason not to reject that, they won't reject it. It's the path of least resistance to conform to the expectations of your peers and professors. Our aim should be to provide young people with evidence before they face the skepticism in college.

Another major problem facing young people is the Christian position on homosexuality

and gay marriage. Christian teachings on sexuality in general are viewed with suspicion, and these things are not discussed or debated in the church. One way to respond to this is to defend the reliability of Scripture. (Note: I think another way to respond is to give *secular reasons* for what the Bible teaches, and to help young people link their decisions about sexuality with their larger life plan).

Topic 2 was about objective vs cultural moral standards, and topic 3 was about whether different denominations differ in essentials or in peripheral issues.

My thoughts on topic #1

This week I've been spending time with a younger Christian discussing apologetics with her and we have had some different life experiences and she sometimes asks me to explain what happened. So I've been telling about some of the problems I had trying to map what the Bible says onto real life. I'm not going to post them here, but there were definitely problems dealing with my parents, my peers in school, my co-workers and church people. I kept trying to do good things, like trying to talk about my faith at work, and sometimes, very unexpected things happened to me. So telling about these struggles does convey the sort of seriousness that I think is lacking in the church environment.

So my point here is this. If you are dealing with young people, it might be a good idea to not gloss over these problems and keep everything at the surface level. Talk to them about what a Christian life should look like and the struggles you had trying to live it out. Talk to them about their plans, and how different decisions are going to affect those plans. Talk to them about their grades. Talk to them about their future profession. Talk to them about apologetics. Talk to them about politics and economics, so they know how to vote for their futures. Basically, they should have the idea that you are interested in whether Christianity is true or not, and that you are interested in them make some sort of plan to serve God and making the decisions they need to get there. You should tell young people your plan and how you are funding it and working on it, in order to prod them to make their own plan.

So if the problem is perceived lack of authenticity, then the solution is to talk to young people like grown ups and give them insight. This is my plan to serve God. This is my plan for my marriage. This is why I think Christianity is true. This is what I want my kids to end up like. This is what I want my wife to do. This is how I intend to fund all this. These are the laws/public policies that help/hurt my plan. These are the problems and struggles I've had implementing my plan. Here is an area where my sinfulness is really messing up my plan. When I talk to other Christians, we talk about these issues relevant to my plan.

It's this kind of frank talk about what you are trying to do (and what role self-control plays in your plans) that helps young people to get serious about their beliefs. Don't reduce the whole religion to rituals and feelings – it's a mistake.

Mary Eberstadt: why Christians should promote policies that strengthen marriage

April 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting post about a new book by Mary Eberstadt. The post is written by historian Benjamin Wiker.

Excerpt:

> As the West has become increasingly secularized, the loss of faith has coincided with the destruction of the natural family. The sexual revolution, higher and higher rates of divorce, cohabitation, same-sex marriage—all have combined to make life-long man-woman marital unions an increasing rarity.
>
> Clearly, the rejection of God has led to a rejection, or radical redefinition, of the family.
>
> But in her *How the West Really Lost God*, Mary Eberstadt bids her readers to look at things from the other end as well. The "decline of the natural family" in the West is not only the effect of the loss of faith, but the cause as well: "the ongoing deterioration of the natural family has both accompanied and accelerated the deterioration in the West of Christian belief."
>
> Briefly put, "family decline…helps to power religious decline."
>
> One affects the other because the two go together, argues Eberstadt, like the spiral ladder of the double helix. The fortunes of family and faith correlate, and causation goes both ways. Across the board, regardless of social status or income, the religious tend to have more children than the secular-minded. And the more children a couple has, the more likely they are to go to church.
>
> But that means, of course, that those who are most secular are least likely to have children, and those who are unmarried and/or have no children are least likely to be religious.
>
> That correlation explains the precipitous decline in the birth rate for the most secularized countries of Europe, but allows us to see it in a new light. It is not just that secularization has led to plummeting birth rates in Europe. *Europe's demographic collapse is actually speeding up its secularization*.
>
> This is not a correlation that exists only in recent history. The French Revolution gave the West the first self-consciously secular government at the end of the 1700s, and one of its first revolutionary acts was to liberalize its marriage laws. But what people may not realize, was that France was the first country in Europe to experience a decline in fertility rates within marriage, and an increase in cohabitation and illegitimacy, decades *before* the French Revolution. In the early 1700s, over a half century before the Revolution, illegitimacy was only at 1%, but by the storming of the Bastille, which ushered in the Revolution, France's

> illegitimacy rate had climbed to 20% overall, with a 30% rate in the boiling pot of Paris. The French Revolution's successful attack on Christianity, and the consequent secularization of France, was, in part, the result of the prior erosion of the family.
>
> We see the same pattern in the UK, argues Eberstadt. "In Britain…the decline in births started a century later [than in France] at the very height of Victorian England,…Bit by bit…the same family trends already established in France—fewer births, more divorces, more out-of-wedlock births—also began reshaping the world of Britain. By our own time, over half of all children in Britain are born to unmarried people, and the fertility rate stands at 1.91 children per woman." Not surprisingly, Britain's churches are, like those of France, largely empty.
>
> In the Scandinavian countries, like Sweden, where marriage rates are lowest, and divorce, cohabitation, and single-family households, and out-of-wedlock births are the highest, we find the greatest degree of secularization.
>
> The obvious lesson we must draw, says Eberstadt, is "Vibrant families and vibrant religion go hand in hand."
>
> America is no exception. On the positive side, the baby boom after World War II brought with it a kind of "boom" in religious practice in the US.
>
> But the negative side of the correlation between family and faith is now more evident. Eberstadt quotes the findings of sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, "The recent history of American religion illuminates what amounts to a sociological law: The fortunes of American religion rise with the fortunes of the intact, married family."

Now here's the part that I think is interesting. When you walk into a church, you will find very little, if any, education about the kinds of policies that cause marriages to actually not happen or actually break up. The trouble is that most pastors are so focused on reading the Bible, and only the Bible, that they have no idea what sorts of policies and incentives cause people to not marry or to not stay married. In order to know that, they would have to be reading outside the Bible, in the scientific literature, and then communicating that knowledge to their flocks to get them to make better decisions and to vote more intelligently.

I think that we need to read more widely in order to know how to reach our goals (promoting marriage, in this case) in a practical way. What can we say to people to show them how to get to marriage? What decisions should they be making now, in order to be ready for marriage later? What policies should we be supporting to nudge people towards marriage? What policies should we be against that make it easier for people to dispense with marriage?

Democrat “Champion for Change” indicted for immigration fraud

April 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bonnie M. Youn

Story from Breitbart News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> An amnesty advocate that President Barack Obama’s White House publicly promoted as part of its “Champion of Change” series has been indicted in federal court on charges of fraud.
>
> Bonnie M. Youn, who Obama’s White House touts on its website as “a recognized Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) community leader in Georgia,” was indicted on three criminal charge counts in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia Atlanta Division on April 1, according to publicly filed court documents.
>
> The first indictment count alleges Youn committed perjury with regard to an alien illegally in the United States. The second indictment count alleges that Youn violated a federal immigration law that prohibits bringing illegal aliens into the United States and harboring them, alleging she did so “for the purpose of commercial advantage and private financial gain.” The third indictment count alleges Youn illegally tampered with witness testimony, specifically alleging she influenced the illegal alien—whose identity is kept anonymous in the indictment—to provide false information about employment in the United States to federal agents.
>
> The indictment, signed by U.S. Attorney Sally Quillian Yates and two Assistant U.S. Attorneys, indicates that Youn’s alleged illegal activity began “on or about February 9, 2009,” just as President Obama took office at the beginning of his

> first term and before she was honored by the White House. The third indictment count says that the alleged witness tampering began on or about August 15, 2011.
>
> An arrest warrant was filed for Youn Tuesday.
>
> […]According to a press release from the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), Youn received the White House honor from President Obama in late March 2013. “Today, the White House honored 10 individuals with the Cesar Chavez Champions of Change Award,” the press release, dated March 26, 2013, reads. “Among the 10 honorees is Bonnie M. Youn, who is a member of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA).”

One of the things that really bothers me about the Obama administration’s fascination with amnesty is that people think that they are for immigrants. As far as I can tell, the Obama administration has done nothing to streamline the legal immigration process for immigrants who pay taxes and stay out of trouble with the law. Concern for skilled immigrants is typically something that Republicans champion. Skilled immigrants are not a concern for Democrats, because they pay taxes, and are therefore more likely to favor lower taxes and limited and government than illegal immigrants.

Theistic evolutionists and the two-platoon strategy

April 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What should we make of theistic evolutionists telling us that you can *believe* in God, while still *knowing* that matter, law and chance explain the full development of all of life?

Consider this quotation from Phillip E. Johnson.

Quote:

> The National Academy's way of dealing with the religious implications of evolution is akin to the two-platoon system in American football. When the leading figures of evolutionary science feel free to say what they really believe, writers such as Edward O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Carl Sagan, Steven Pinker, Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Lewontin and others state the "God is dead" thesis aggressively, invoking the authority of science to silence any theistic protest. That is the offensive platoon, and the National Academy never raises any objection to its promoting this worldview.
>
> At other times, however, the scientific elite has to protect the teaching of the "fact of evolution" from objections by religious conservatives who know what the offensive platoon is saying and who argue that the science educators are insinuating a worldview that goes far beyond the data. When the objectors are too numerous or influential to be ignored, the defensive platoon takes the field. That is when we read those spin-doctored reassurances saying that many scientists are religious (in some sense), that science does not claim to have proved that God does not exist (but merely that he does not affect the natural world), and that science and religion are separate realms which should never be mixed (unless it is the materialists who are doing the mixing). Once the defensive platoon has done its job it leaves the field, and the offensive platoon goes right back to telling the public that science has shown that "God" is permanently out of business. (The Wedge of Truth, IVP 2000, pp. 88-89).

So what naturalistic scientists believe is that God didn't do anything to create the diversity of life – that nature does all of its own creating. In fact, it doesn't matter if the best naturalistic explanation is improbable or implausible – scientists *must* bitterly cling to materialistic explanations of natural phenomena.

The problem for these scientists is that they are taxpayer-funded, and religious people don't like paying to have scientists shoehorn reality into a pre-supposed naturalistic framework. Sometimes, religious people get annoyed about being told that sparking gases can create functional proteins. And sometimes, religious people get annoyed about being told that the universe oscillates eternally despite observations that falsify that speculative theory. And sometimes, religious people get annoyed about being told that there are as yet undiscovered fossilized precusors to the Cambrian era fossils.

Naturalists think that opposition to these lame naturalistic theories only ever be

religiously-motivated. They cannot accept that people might question their naturalistic just-so stories on scientific grounds. So what do the naturalists do when faced with scientifically-motivated dissent that *they think* is religiously motivated? Well, they trot out "religious" scientists. These "religious" scientists claim to have a deep personal faith in God, and a belief in miracles. But these religious scientists believe that what actually happened is that law, matter and chance did all the creating of life. This is the "second platoon". They are sent out to mislead the public by talking about their personal faith, and what God could and couldn't do, and how evolutionists can believe in God without any evidence of intelligent causes in the history of life. The one question they most want to avoid is whether science, done in the ordinary naturalistic way, can discover evidence of intelligent agency in the history of the development of life.

Now, take a look at this article by Jay Richards. He cites some theistic evolutionists.

Excerpt:

> Biologist Ken Miller:
>
> For his part, [Ken] Miller, a biologist, has no qualms about telling us what *God* would do: "And in Catholicism, he said, God **wouldn't** micromanage that way. 'Surely he **can** set things up without having to violate his own laws.'"
>
> I am unaware of any tenet of Catholic theology that requires God not to micromanage. It is, however, a tenet of deism.

Got that? What really happened is that God didn't do anything. How does he know that? From the science? No. Because he assumes naturalism. Oh, it's true that he *says* that God is lurking somewhere behind the material processes that created life. But God's agency is *undetectable* by the methods of science. And he is hoping that you will accept his subjective pious God-talk as proof that a fundamentally atheistic reality is somehow reconcilable with a robust conception of theism.

More from Richards:

> Then we get Stephen Barr offering his private definition of "chance."

> It **is possible** to **believe** simultaneously in a world that is shaped by chance and one following a divine plan. "God is in charge and there's a lot of accident," said Barr, also a Catholic. "It's all part of a plan. . . . God **may have** known where every molecule was going to move."

What does Barr really believe? He believes that what science shows is that nature created life without any interference by an intelligent agent. Barr then offers believers his subjective pious God-talk to reassure them that evolution is compatible with religion. He has a *personal belief* – NOT BASED ON SCIENCE – that the material processes that created all of life are "all part of a plan". He cannot demonstrate that from science – it's his *faith commitment*. And more speculations: "God may have known…". He can't demonstrate that God did know anything *from science*. He is just offering a personal opinion about what God "could have" done. The purpose of these subjective opinions is to

appease those who ask questions about what natural mechanisms can really create. Can natural causes really account for the development of functional proteins? Never mind that – look at my shiny spiritual-sounding testimony!

That's theistic evolution. What really happened is that no intelligent causes are needed to explain life. What they say is "God could" and "God might" and "I believe" and "I attend this church" and "I received a Christian award" and "I believe in miracles too". None of these religious opinions and speculations are scientifically knowable – they are just opinions, speculations and biographical trivia. Atheists and theistic evolutions agree on what science shows about the diversity of life – *intelligent causes didn't do anything*.

The quickest way to disarm a theistic evolutionist is to refuse to talk about religion or God, and to ask them to show you the naturalistic explanation of the Big Bang. And the naturalistic explanation of the fine-tuning. And the naturalistic explanation of the origin of life. And the naturalistic explanation of the Cambrian explosion. And so on. Focus on the science – don't let them turn the conversation to their personal beliefs, or to the Bible, or to religion, or to philosophy. Ask them what they can show in the lab. If naturalistic mechanisms can do all the creating they say it can do, let's see the demonstration in the lab.

Bruce Gordon: problems with inflationary multiverse cosmologies

April 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evolution News. Dr. Bruce Gordon reflects on whether the new BICEP2 results offer any support for the multiverse.

First, quick review of the Big Bang so we're clear on the challenge that poses for naturalism:

> Now, Big Bang theory has its theoretical basis in general relativity, which predicts that the universe is spatiotemporally expanding in the future direction and thus would be contracting if we were to reverse the direction of time. As Roger Penrose and Stephen Hawking showed in the late 1960s, no matter which general-relativistic model of our universe is chosen, this contraction leads to a beginning point in the finite past — a singularity, to use the technical term — from which not just matter and energy, but spacetime itself, emerged. This coming into existence of the universe from *nothing* (no space, no time, no matter, no energy, and hence no physical laws either) is what is known as the Big Bang. It is, as the agnostic astronomer Robert Jastrow once observed, startling evidence for the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. He famously put it this way:
>
> For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason [editorial aside: Jastrow might better have said "faith in the sufficiency of materialist explanations" because the inference from the *ex nihilo* generation of the universe to a transcendent intelligent cause is eminently reasonable], the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountain of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.
>
> This having been established, as the physicist George Gamow demonstrated in 1948, one of the predictions of Big Bang theory is the existence of gravitational ripples and cosmic background radiation (CBR) that are an "echo of Creation," as it were, throughout the whole observable universe. This cosmic background electromagnetic radiation was discovered in 1965 by Robert Wilson and Arno Penzias, a discovery for which they were awarded the Nobel Prize. In this regard, the alleged detection of gravitational waves would serve as further confirmation of the correctness of Einstein's theory of general relativity and of the nature of the Big Bang itself. If corroborated by the scientific community, it would be a hugely important discovery, not just because of the evidence it provides for gravitational waves, but also because of the way this discovery is linked to another theory, namely, inflationary cosmology.

Inflationary cosmology is an enhancement to the standard Big Bang cosmology, and

some models of inflationary theory can create additional universes. Some people are hoping that this will address the fine-tuning argument.

But Dr. Gordon is having none of that:

> Of course, the inflationary mechanism is often regarded as generative of an unending and rapid succession of universes with the idea that, if enough universes are produced by such means, the improbabilities just mentioned don't matter. Several things need to be said about this "inflationary multiverse" proposal:
>
> **(1) First of all, as pointed out by one of the physicists involved in the BICEP2 project, Kent Irwin at Stanford University, the BICEP2 results do *not* address the truth or falsity of inflationary *multiverse* theories.**
>
> (2) Secondly, attempting to swamp the improbabilities intrinsic to inflation by multiplying the number of universes it generates to the point of compensation has consequences that undermine scientific rationality. In a materialist multiverse resting on the hypothesis of an undirected and irreducibly probabilistic quantum inflationary mechanism that lacks any principle of sufficient material causality, *anything* can happen for *no* reason at all. What is more, quantum-mechanically speaking, everything that can happen, no matter how improbable, does happen, and it happens with unlimited frequency. In this environment we can have no confidence that the future will resemble the past in a way that legitimates uniformitarian assumptions and the very inductive inferences that make science possible. In short, taken seriously, the inflationary multiverse proposal completely undermines scientific rationality.
>
> (3) Thirdly, at least two paradoxes result from the inflationary multiverse proposal that suggest our place in such a multiverse must be very special: the "Boltzmann Brain Paradox" and the "Youngness Paradox." In brief, if the inflationary mechanism is autonomously operative in a way that generates a multiverse, then with probability indistinguishable from one (i.e., virtual necessity) the typical observer in such a multiverse is an evanescent thermal fluctuation with memories of a past that never existed (a Boltzmann brain) rather than an observer of the sort we take ourselves to be. Alternatively, by a second measure, post-inflationary universes should overwhelmingly have *just* been formed, which means that our existence in an old universe like our own has a probability that is effectively zero (i.e., it's nigh impossible). So if our universe existed as part of such a multiverse, it would not be at all typical, but rather infinitely improbable (fine-tuned) with respect to its age and compatibility with stable life-forms.
>
> **(4) Fourthly, a mechanism that generates universes *ad infinitum* must have stable characteristics that constrain its operation if it is to avoid breaking down and sputtering to a halt. In short, universe-generators have finely tuned design parameters that themselves require**

> **explanation. So postulating a universe-generator to explain away the appearance of first-order design in a single universe does not obviate the inference to design, it merely bumps it up to the next level. Avoiding an infinite regress of explanatory demands leads to the recognition of actual design terminating in an Intelligence that transcends spacetime, matter and energy, and which, existing *timelessly* logically prior to creating any universe or multiverse, must also therefore exist *necessarily*, and therefore require no further explanation of its own existence.**
>
> **(5) Fifthly and finally, as demonstrated by Arvind Borde, Alan Guth, and Alexander Vilenkin in 2003 (see further reading suggestions below), any inflationary multiverse has a beginning in the finite past: while inflationary models can, in theory, be eternal into the future, it is mathematically impossible for them to be eternal into the past. This means that the inflationary multiverse entails creation *ex nihilo* in precisely the same manner as the Big Bang. The universe thus manifests dependence on a transcendent reality in respect of its origin, but what is more, in virtue of the manifest absence of sufficient material causation in many aspects of its persistence as a quantum-mechanical phenomenon, the material universe also manifests dependence on a transcendent reality in respect of its operation (for an extended argument to this effect, see my article on quantum-theoretic challenges to philosophical naturalism referenced in the suggested readings).**
>
> What all of this reveals, of course, is that it's intelligent design all the way through and all the way down and that theophobic scientific materialists, once they get past knee-jerk denials, must come to terms with what is, for them, a worldview-defeating fact.

The Boltzmann Brain paradox in point 3) came up as a problem with inflationary multiverse cosmologies in the recent Craig-Carroll debate.

I bolded part 4) because as Dr. Robin Collins has argued before, the multiverse-generation mechanism does not get rid of the fine-tuning, it just pushes it up one level. And I bolded part 5) because Dr. Gordon is alluding to the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) theorem there, which always comes up in debates on cosmology. The theory applies to inflationary cosmologies: they still require an absolute beginning. These are serious problems that we should not gloss over when people push a speculative model like the multiverse in order to escape the fine-tuning argument.

I always thought of Dr. Gordon as kind of a moderate Canadian guy, but I love that last line, don't you? :) Don't fear the reaper, naturalists.

Stephen Moore: how environmentalist restrictions are killing energy sector jobs

April 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Heritage Foundation.

Excerpt:

> […][I]f you visit the drilling sites in Williston, N.D., you discover an amazing phenomenon: At night, this little energy town of fewer than 30,000 people lights up like Manhattan on New Year's Eve. All these lights are flares burning off the natural gas that was drilled that day. Why on earth would the drillers do that? Because they want oil, which sells at $100 a barrel, as opposed to natural gas, which is now so abundant that it's cheap.
>
> But why don't they sell the natural gas too? Because they don't have the pipeline capacity to bring it to the markets where it's needed. So they are burning off an energy source, without capturing the power. What a waste.
>
> **The pipelines aren't getting built, simply because the government isn't *letting* them get built. It has been an eye-opening experience to watch liberals block an infrastructure project — the Keystone XL pipeline — that two of three Americans (and even a plurality of Democrats) support. Pew had an amazing poll last month reporting that just about every demographic group in America supports the Keystone pipeline, except for Democrats with Ph.D.s and Democrats who earn more than $100,000.**
>
> But this problem goes well beyond the Keystone pipeline. We need to build in America a national network of pipelines from coast to coast, much as Eisenhower built the interstate highway system. Unlike the highways, the private sector will gladly build the pipelines; they just need the permits. And Uncle Sam won't give them out.
>
> We are talking about a lot of jobs here — and really high-paying, often union, jobs. Welders and pipe fitters and construction workers and truckers earn $70,000 or more — well above the median salary in America.
>
> But the environmentalists hate pipelines because they encourage drilling, and drilling is bad because it kills windmills, er, the planet. The enviros have been running a campaign in Washington to keep the oil and gas in the ground. And if you can't transport it, why drill it? These activists are the same sort of people who opposed the Great Alaska Pipeline back in the 1970s. Can you imagine how much we'd be in hock to the Saudis these days if we'd listened to their loopy advice back then?
>
> And since they won't allow pipelines, we use trains and trucks — which

> is *much* worse for the environment than building the pipelines. Remember the rail crash several weeks ago with massive explosions? Thank the Sierra Club.

Meanwhile, in Canada, where the Conservative Party is firmly opposed to global warming nonsense, the government has decided to build pipelines from Alberta to the West *and* East coasts.

Excerpt:

> Foreign Minister John Baird said Sunday he's sure there will be a pipeline from Alberta's oilsands to the Pacific coast.
>
> Without mentioning the Northern Gateway specifically, Baird sounded confident when discussing pipelines on Fox News on Sunday morning.
>
> Asked for his thoughts on recent comments from former U.S. energy secretary Spencer Abraham, who expressed doubt President Barack Obama will approve the Keystone XL pipeline, Baird said Canada's energy resources are vast and that he expects a decision from the president within two months.
>
> "Listen, we want to get this project approved," he said on the U.S. network. "We want to work with our American friends, our partners in freedom and liberty.
>
> **"At the same time there will be pipelines going to the Pacific coast and even reverse pipelines going to the Atlantic so we can diversify our markets."**

I expect that Republicans will be making a big deal of the jobs that could be created if we the government were giving out the appropriate energy production permits and approving the Keystone Pipeline. I think people will be responsive to a message like that when Obamacare kicks in for employer-provided health care and employers start to cut jobs. I know the Democrats are happy right now keeping everyone on unemployment payments, but eventually, that money is going to run out. It might not be tomorrow, but it's coming one day.

Benghazi hearings: CIA director altered talking points from “attack” to “demonstration”

April 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal, a summary on the Benghazi congressional hearings.

Excerpt:

> Last week’s encounter between former acting CIA Director Michael Morell and the House Permanent Subcommittee on Intelligence may have brought us a bit closer to the truth of how four Americans came to be killed at the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, on Sept. 11, 2012, and how their countrymen came to be lied to about it. But the progress toward truth was probably not made in a way that Mr. Morell intended. The encounter on Capitol Hill also made clear that the forum that will take us all the way to the truth must be something other than a congressional hearing.
>
> […]Critics of the government’s performance on Benghazi have charged that Mr. Morell’s revisions principally although not exclusively involved changing the description of the violence and its perpetrators, and removing the suggestion that they might have had ties to a terrorist organization. These changes, it is argued, enabled Susan Rice, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations at the time, to promote the discredited and since abandoned narrative that the violence was a reaction to an anti-Muslim YouTube video produced by a probationer in Los Angeles.
>
> The acting CIA director’s changes to the talking points did indeed enable the blame-it-on-the-video fiction, which served the interest of a president seeking re-election based in part on having put al Qaeda on the run, although in fairness it is not clear that was Mr. Morell’s motive. Thus he edited out a description of the warnings that the CIA had provided to the State Department of earlier terrorist attacks on the British embassy and on the Red Cross that caused them to withdraw their personnel, and a description of an attack that blew a hole in the U.S.’s own installation—events that might have suggested that Sept. 11, 2012, was not an isolated event.

Morell believed “analysts” who are desk employees, and disregarded statements of the station chief, who was on the scene, and in contact with the eyewitnesses:

> **He substituted “demonstration” for “attack” despite the direct statement by the CIA’s Libya station chief in Tripoli that there was no demonstration;** Mr. Morell changed “terrorist” to “extremist.” **His explanation is that he relied on the CIA’s analysts, who he said had comprehensive information available to them, rather than on the CIA’s station chief, who relied on the testimony of eyewitnesses who arrived soon after the**

> **attack started.**
>
> The directorate of intelligence functions according to a protocol whose rigidity we more often associate with the military. **So analysts whose deductions put them at odds with those on the scene wouldn't have considered, and apparently didn't consider, simply ringing up those on the scene and getting their input. To the contrary, analysts deal only with information that comes in the prescribed way. The CIA station chief's communication to headquarters came in an email and did not get circulated within the intelligence community as it would have if it had been contained in a cable.**

There was plenty of information disconfirming his "demonstration" lie:

> There was, as it happens, other information available. A private company, Agincourt Solutions, had followed the Twitter, Facebook and other social media in the vicinity of the U.S. installation attacked in Benghazi. The company found no evidence of a "demonstration." There were video cameras trained on the front gate of the consulate that showed no demonstration. Days before the attack, al Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahiri had been calling for an attack to avenge the death of Abu Yahya al-Libi, a senior al Qaeda member who was, as his name suggests, a Libyan. And Sept. 11 is a date of highly symbolic value to people who set great store by symbols.
>
> The last two data points were certainly available to the CIA analysts, and the camera feed should have been. But all this was discounted, apparently in favor of their consensus view that the attack at Benghazi had started with a demonstration that drew inspiration from violence inflicted on the U.S. Embassy in Cairo—allegedly as part of a protest against the video.

Both Obama and Clinton blamed the Youtube video for a "demonstration", and denied that there was a terrorist attack:

> Mr. Obama and Mrs. Clinton told the grieving families that the producer of the video would feel the weight of the law. It was one promise they kept: Nakoula Basseley Nakoula was arrested in the middle of the night in the glare of TV lights for a probation violation—the only arrest thus far growing out of the Benghazi attack, even though the identity and whereabouts of the principal suspects, one of whom is an alumnus of Guantanamo Bay, have long been known.

The Obama administration blamed the Youtube video in order to win the 2012 election. They were afraid if the real story came out, people would know that they had screwed by underestimating the threat and ignoring the warning signs and the requests for additional security. Democrats can't do national security – they just give speeches about spending taxpayer money.

Related posts

- Transcripts show that top U.S. military officials briefed Obama on Benghazi terrorist attack
- Benghazi liar Susan Rice to be appointed National Security Adviser by grateful Obama
- Released e-mails show that State Department edited terrorism out of talking points
- Obama: editing of talking points to cover-up of Benghazi terrorist attack is a “sideshow”
- BBC News covers whistle-blower testimony: “After Benghazi revelations, heads will roll”
- ABC News: State Department scrubbed terrorism details from Benghazi talking points
- What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack “from the get-go”
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA’s account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama’s Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama’s Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama’s security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

Pastor Matt discusses his past experiences as an atheist – part 1

April 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Don't worry, he was an atheist then, and now he's pastor Matt, thanks to God's grace.

This post Pastor Matt talks about why he was once an atheist.

Excerpt:

> I am sometimes asked, by both skeptics and believers alike, why I was once an atheist and what convinced me to become a Christian. I will answer the latter in another post but let me deal with the former now.
>
> I am a "PK" or "preacher's kid." My father served as the founding pastor of the largest church in southern Ohio. It is a non-denominational, evangelical congregation that grew very quickly.
>
> As a PK, I was privy to a lot of "inside information" and it was not encouraging. I learned men and women who sang hymns with passion and shouted "Amen!" with gusto during the sermon were cheating on their spouse or on their taxes.
>
> By the time I was a teenager I understood why those who called themselves Christians lived secret lives–they wanted to believe but really didn't. I understood because I became one of them.
>
> I was an active member of an '80′s evangelical youth group. So, I rocked out to Stryper, had comedian Pat Hurley tapes and volunteered for the children's ministry, which consisted of videotaping episodes of Superbook and The Flying House for the kids. However, I actually seriously doubted if God even existed.
>
> I was struggling with the normal sins of a teenager and begged for help in prayer. I also petitioned God on a regular basis to feel His presence but that didn't happen either.
>
> I eventually came to the conclusion that Christianity simply didn't work. I declared myself an atheist at age fifteen and remained an unbeliever for the next ten years.
>
> I ran away from home at age fifteen as well eventually making my way to Hollywood. During those days I partied like it was 1999 (until 1997) and like Aldous Huxley is quoted as saying decades before, I came to not even want God to be real because even the possibility interfered with my desire to create my own morality.

Christianity is not something where you just profess it and suddenly you are automatically perfect. You get the gift of eternal life immediately by faith in Christ, but becoming more like Christ takes time. It's easier to act consistently with the teachings of Christ if you have *spent the time* studying, practicing and growing as a Christian. You

shouldn't expect perfect behavior on day one – that is crazy. You should expect that as your beliefs become more solid, then your outward actions will change naturally. And often what you hear at home and in the church is not the best for finding truth through investigation and debate.

It would be terrible to have to put out "good" actions when you never settled the questions of what is true and how are we going to apply what is true in our own decisions. Sometimes, I think that young Christians face too much pressure to appear to be perfect when no one has been willing to help them work through the grounding for the behaviors they are expected to display. And I think a lot of the behaviors they are expected to display are either not important or not Biblical. Behaving like a Christian should be natural – it should proceed from free inquiry, not dogmatism.

Now I'm skipping a lot, but here is his advice for people who were in his situation:

> I'll get to my conversion later but keep in mind: (1) just because a person attends a church, even if they are a PK, that he or she truly comprehends the Gospel because I didn't a full understanding; (2) pastors need to constantly remind their parishioners that sin is easy and living for Christ is difficult because believers are part of a cosmic struggle; (3) the spiritual disciplines are invaluable especially so for young people; and (4) there are many solid arguments for the existence of God and few for materialism and all Christians deserve to know them.

I've spent some time mentoring young Christians who had fallen away for some period of time, and I always make a point of asking them why. Their answer is usually something like this: "I knew that what I was doing was wrong, but I didn't care because no one else cared." The first thing to do with a person who is rebelling is to get in there and start to ask them questions and get involved in helping them to succeed in their lives. People do bad things because they feel that no one cares. So you better start caring for these young people, whether they are smart, dumb, pretty, ugly, poor, rich, popular, unpopular – it doesn't matter. They all have souls, and they were all made to know God. Get in there and be real with them before they make a mess of their lives.

Pastor Matt discusses his past experiences as an atheist – part 2

April 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's another post from Pastor Matt that I think offers some more helpful insight into how we should approach young people with Christianity. The point of this post is that relationships matter.

Excerpt:

> When I was attending North Hollywood High in the fall of 1990, there was a kid in one of my classes who often followed me on my walk home to my apartment off of Magnolia Boulevard. He did the Four Spiritual Laws and Roman Road presentation. He spoke about he and his family's faith in Jesus and wanted to know if I would come with them to church. But he never asked a single question about me personally. I always declined his invitations and eventually he moved on to someone else.
>
> […]Looking back, I had a very fuzzy understanding of the Gospel. I (and I think many people who call themselves Christians) are what theologians call "semi-Pelagians." I believed anyone could come to the altar but if they wanted to continue to be welcomed in the pews, they had to clean up their act and do so almost overnight. The culture of Christianity at large appeared to me to be that if you came to faith and continued to struggle with lust, a foul mouth or whatnot then there was just something wrong with you. I felt the church was more about behavior modification than grace.
>
> I needed someone who I knew loved me to sit down with me long before all of these problems arose, look me in the eye and tell me how easy and how difficult it is to be a Christian. I needed someone cared for me to unpack 2 Corinthians 5:21 and point out that by being "in Christ" I would be judged by Christ's perfect life instead of my own. I needed to know that the faith is not about "keeping the rules" but about doing things and not doing certain things to show my love and gratitude to God for what He did for me. I needed to be able to read the Bible, especially the Old Testament, in a way that always pointed to Jesus Christ. I needed to understand that God has graciously given us the spiritual disciplines of fasting, prayer, serving the poor, worship, etc. to help me grow. I needed to hear that all Christians struggle with sin and will, to a certain degree, until they go to be with the Lord or He returns to be with us.
>
> I needed good theology, good spiritual practices, good apologetics and good relationships. I needed knowledge and it needed to come from someone who I knew loved me even though I was thoroughly unlovable. You can't just leave this to the church staff because they do not have to time to meet with everyone and people with a chip on their shoulder about the church (like I had) feel like they

> are just doing it as part of their job. All young people in the church, especially the “troubled kids” need this. It is a lot of work but anyone’s eternity is worth it, isn’t it?

I think that I do my best work away from the blog when I take on atheists or new Christians or Christians who want to grow one on one and focus on them for long periods of time. Sometimes, it’s talking to them on Skype. Sometimes, it’s rewards for doing well in school or in their Christian lives. But all the best work is done one on one. That’s when you really get a chance to get to know people and to care about them.

I think the most important thing you can tell a young Christian is to focus less on mere following of the rules. I always ask them more about making a plan for their lives that achieves something amazing for God’s kingdom, while still not breaking any of the rules. The following the rules is not the key thing to focus on. The key thing here is your relationship with God. So you should find out what needs doing, and just do it. If it’s intelligent design research, then do it. If it’s finding early NT manuscripts, then do it. If it’s working for the ADF defending religious liberty at the Supreme Court, then do it. If it’s becoming a Christian professor at a secular university, then do it. If it’s debating an atheist cosmologist, then do it. If it’s promoting the free market system which alleviates poverty, then do it. If it’s protecting democratic countries from aggression by being a soldier, then do it. Stop making Christianity a dull prison, and start making it a blank canvas for a masterpiece.

Darrell Issa: e-mails suggest Democrat congressman prompted IRS to target conservative group

April 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Katie Pavlich reports on Townhall.com.

Excerpt:

> New IRS emails released by the House Oversight Committee show staff working for Democratic Ranking Member Elijah Cummings communicated with the IRS multiple times between 2012 and 2013 about voter fraud prevention group True the Vote. True the Vote was targeted by the IRS after applying for tax exempt status more than two years ago. Further, information shows the IRS and Cummings' staff asked for nearly identical information from True the Vote President Catherine Engelbrecht about her organization, indicating coordination and improper sharing of confidential taxpayer information.
>
> Chairman of the House Oversight Committee Darrell Issa, along with five Subcommittee Chairmen are demanding Cummings provide an explanation for the staff inquiries to the IRS about True the Vote and for his denial that his staff ever contacted the IRS about the group.
>
> "Although you have previously denied that your staff made inquiries to the IRS about conservative organization True the Vote that may have led to additional agency scrutiny, communication records between your staff and IRS officials – which you did not disclose to Majority Members or staff – indicates otherwise," the letter to Cummings states. "As the Committee is scheduled to consider a resolution holding Ms. Lerner, a participant in responding to your communications that you failed to disclose, in contempt of Congress, you have an obligation to fully explain your staff's undisclosed contacts with the IRS."

But there's more – Cummings DENIED that he had contacted the IRS before:

> Up until this point, Rep. Cummings has denied his staff ever contacted the IRS about True the Vote and their activities during Oversight hearings. In fact, on February 6, 2014 during a Subcommittee hearing where Engelbrecht testified, Cummings vehemently denied having any contact or coordination in targeting True the Vote when attorney Cleta Mitchell, who is representing the group, indicated staff on the Committee had been involved in communication with the IRS. This was the exchange:

> Ms. Mitchell: We want to get to the bottom of how these coincidences happened, and we're going to try to figure out whether any – if there was any staff of this committee that might have been involved in putting True the Vote on the radar screen of some of these Federal agencies. We don't know that, but we – we're

> going to do everything we can do to try to get to the bottom of how did this all happen.
>
> Mr. Cummings. Will the gentleman yield?
>
> Mr. Meadows. Yes.
>
> Mr. Cummings. I want to thank the gentleman for his courtesy. **What she just said is absolutely incorrect and not true.**

> After the hearing, Engelbrecht filed an ethics complaint against Cummings for his targeting and intimidation of her organization.

By the way, I did not blog a story that came out a couple of days ago that showed that contrary to the lies spread by the liberal media, not one single liberal/progressive group was targeted by the IRS.

Related Posts

- DOJ selects Democrat donor to head investigation of IRS corruption
- New York Times: Democrats knew about IRS scandal 5 months before the 2012 election
- The IRS abuse of power scandal started from the top
- IRS exchanged confidential taxpayer information with White House
- DOJ won't prosecute government officials for unauthorized access of tax records
- Treasury Dept. IG: IRS targeted 292 Tea Party groups but only 6 progressive groups
- New study: IRS targeting of Tea Party conservatives had significant effect on 2012 election
- Phone call recording of IRS agent reveals anti-Christian, anti free speech bias
- Obama's deputy campaign manager Stephanie Cutter met with IRS chief at the White House
- Cincinnati IRS employee: Washington told us to target the Tea Party
- IRS chief visited White House a reported 118 times from 2010 to 2011
- IRS fascist Lois Lerner pleads the fifth to avoid transparency and accountability
- A closer look at one of the conservatives persecuted by the IRS
- Obama met with anti-Tea Party IRS Union boss one day before the IRS persecutions began
- The IRS abuse of power scandal started from the top
- IRS official who targeted Tea Party groups now a director in Obamacare administration
- IRS audited the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association after they ran pro-marriage ads
- IRS gave confidential documents from conservative groups to liberal group ProPublica
- IRS apologizes for flagging conservative groups for audits in 2012 election year

Good news: Christian conservative professor wins discrimination case

April 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the ACLJ.

Excerpt:

> Late last month a federal jury in North Carolina found that the University of North Carolina-Wilmington retaliated against conservative Christian professor Mike Adams when the university denied him a promotion to full professor. Rather than evaluating his work on the merits, the university denied his promotion in a process that was chock-full of deception, discrimination, and disorder.
>
> The jury's verdict was for liability only, with the judge to determine the lawful remedy. This afternoon, the judge ruled – holding that Dr. Adams was entitled to receive the promotion he was wrongly denied, the pay increase he was entitled to, and back pay to compensate him for lost income.
>
> This ruling sends a message to public universities: academic freedom isn't just for the Left, it's a constitutional right for all professors — even Christian conservatives.
>
> The ACLJ represents Dr. Adams, along with Alliance Defending Freedom Attorney Travis Barham.
>
> This is not the ACLJ's only case in defense of conservative professors' rights to academic freedom. We've also filed suit against officials at UCLA after they fired longtime Professor James Enstrom for blowing th whistle on junk environmental science and academic fraud.
>
> The battles continue, and we remain committed to defending our fundamental freedoms – on campus and off.

Here is the bio for Barham:

> Travis Barham serves as litigation staff counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom at its Regional Service Center in Georgia, where he litigates to preserve religious freedom and freedom of speech on college and university campuses across the nation. Barham joined Alliance Defending Freedom in 2006 and is a member of the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Courts of Appeal for the 4th, 7th and 11th Circuits, and the state of Arizona. He is also admitted to federal district courts in Arizona, Indiana, Michigan, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. Barham has practiced law since 2006 and earned his J.D. from Washington and Lee University School of Law, where he graduated summa cum laude.

David French is no longer with ADF and is now with ACLJ. He has his JD from Harvard Law School, and taught at Cornell Law School, too.

The Alliance Defending Freedom is my favorite legal group for defending religious liberty. They seem to have a lot of lawyers with degrees from top universities. It’s encouraging for me to see Christians work so hard to be able to make a difference for us all. The ADF is also defending Hobby Lobby at the Supreme Court, and doing a great job by all accounts!

Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?

April 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture by New York University professor Paul Vitz to explain a connection between atheism and fatherlessness:

Here's an article by Paul Copan (related to the lecture) which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own*rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all*.[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of Francois-Marie Arouet.
> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.

> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Here are some corrections to the list:

1) Voltaire was not an atheist but a deist who rejected claims of the Bible's inspiration, like Paine. Voltaire's aphorism, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him," far from being the cynical remark it is often taken for, it was meant as a retort to the atheistic clique of d'Holbach, Grimm, and others.

2) David Hume's religious views remain uncertain. He never said he was an atheist. A gentle skeptic suits him more.

3) Bertrand Russell was an agnostic.

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence of a psychological explanation for atheism, but there is also statistical evidence.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or

> absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an enormously difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary.

By the way, isn't it interesting to note that Barack Obama also grew up fatherless and has

issues with God and morality.

New study casts doubt on deep sea hydrothermal vents scenario

April 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> One of the greatest mysteries facing humans is how life originated on Earth. Scientists have determined approximately *when* life began (roughly 3.8 billion years ago), but there is still intense debate about exactly *how* life began. One possibility — that simple metabolic reactions emerged near ancient seafloor hot springs, enabling the leap from a non-living to a living world — has grown in popularity in the last two decades.
>
> […]A central figure in this hypothesis is a simple sulfur-containing carbon compound called "methanethiol" — a supposed geologic precursor of the Acetyl-CoA enzyme present in many organisms, including humans. Scientists suspected methanethiol could have been the "starter dough" from which all life emerged.
>
> The question Reeves and his colleagues set out to test was whether methanethiol — a critical precursor of life — could form at modern day vent sites by purely chemical means without the involvement of life. Could methanethiol be the bridge between a chemical, non-living world and the first microbial life on the planet?
>
> […]Instead of an abundance of methanethiol, the data they collected in the hydrogen-rich environments showed very little was present. "We actually found that it doesn't matter how much hydrogen you have in black smoker fluids, you don't seem to be making a lot of methanethiol where you should be making a lot of it," Reeves says. Surprisingly, in the low-hydrogen environments, where much less should form, the research actually found more methanethiol than they had predicted, contradicting the original idea of how methanethiol forms. **Overall, this means that jump-starting proto-metabolic reactions in hydrogen-rich early Earth hydrothermal systems through carbon-sulfur chemistry would likely have been much harder than many had assumed.**

When I talk to naturalists, I often hear how it is not possible to claim that intelligence can be the cause of anything in nature. They claim that the progress of science has shown that we will discover a natural cause for everything. But for several areas of nature (origin of the universe, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, etc.) where each new discovery makes a naturalistic solution *less likely.*

For a full evaluation of naturalistic scenarios for the origin of life, you can look at "Signature in the Cell" by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer.

J.P. Moreland lectures on “Love Your God With All Your Mind”

April 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

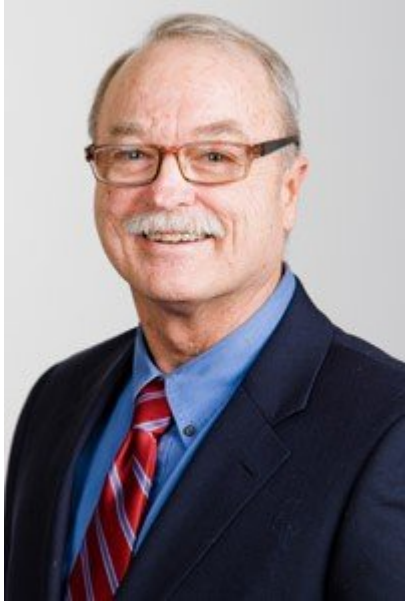

Dr. J.P. Moreland

If I had to pick a few lectures that really changed my life, then this lecture by J.P. Moreland would definitely be on that list.

The MP3 file.

Topics:

- How J.P. Moreland become a Christian
- How evangelism drove his efforts to answer skeptics
- How can evangelicals be so numerous, and yet have so little influence?
- When did the church stop being able to out-think her critics?
- How studying and thinking can be a way of worshiping God
- Romans 12:1-2 – what does this passage mean?
- Are your beliefs under the control of your will?
- Can you “try” to believe something by an act of will?
- If not, then how can you change your beliefs?
- Changing your mind is the only way to change your life
- Matthew 22:37 – what is this passage saying?
- How can you love God by using your intellect?
- How can you defend God’s honor, when it is called into question?
- In a debate, should you quote sources that your opponent doesn’t accept?
- Should you only study the Bible, or should you study rival worldviews?
- 1 Pet 3:15 – what does this passage mean?
- If you knew you were going to be in a debate, what should you do?
- How can you be bold in witnessing? Where does boldness come from?

- What should the church do to make bold evangelists?
- 2 Cor 10:5 – what is this passage talking about?
- The passage talks about destroying fortresses – what are the fortresses?
- List of some of the speculations that we are supposed to be destroying
- What does the phrase “spiritual warfare” really mean?

And here is a longer version of the same lecture (MP3) presented to an audience of university students and faculty.

By the way, the title of his lecture comes from a book that he wrote, which is now in its second edition.

Liberal feminist Hanna Rosin debunks the 77 percent pay for women myth

April 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the far-left Slate, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The official Bureau of Labor Department statistics show that the median earnings of full-time female workers is 77 percent of the median earnings of full-time male workers. But that is very different than "77 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men." The latter gives the impression that a man and a woman standing next to each other doing the same job for the same number of hours get paid different salaries. That's not at all the case. "Full time" officially means 35 hours, but men work more hours than women. That's the first problem: We could be comparing men working 40 hours to women working 35.

> How to get a more accurate measure? First, instead of comparing annual wages, start by comparing average weekly wages. This is considered a slightly more accurate measure because it eliminates variables like time off during the year or annual bonuses (and yes, men get higher bonuses, but let's shelve that for a moment in our quest for a pure wage gap number). By this measure, women earn 81 percent of what men earn, although it varies widely by race. African-American women, for example, earn 94 percent of what African-American men earn in a typical week. Then, when you restrict the comparison to men and women working 40 hours a week, the gap narrows to 87 percent.

> But we're still not close to measuring women "doing the same work as men." For that, we'd have to adjust for many other factors that go into determining salary. Economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn did that in a recent paper, "The Gender Pay Gap.”."They first accounted for education and experience. That didn't shift the gap very much, because women generally have at least as much and usually more education than men, and since the 1980s they have been gaining the experience. The fact that men are more likely to be in unions and have their salaries protected accounts for about 4 percent of the gap. The big differences are in occupation and industry. Women congregate in different professions than men do, and the largely male professions tend to be higher-paying. If you account for those differences, and then compare a woman and a man doing the same job, the pay gap narrows to 91 percent. So, you could accurately say in that Obama ad that, "women get paid 91 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men."

I believe that the remainder of the gap can be accounted for by looking at

other *voluntary* factors that differentiate men and women.

The Heritage Foundation says that a recent study puts the number at 95 cents per dollar.

Excerpt:

> Women are more likely than men to work in industries with more flexible schedules. Women are also more likely to spend time outside the labor force to care for children. These choices have benefits, but they also reduce pay—for both men and women. When economists control for such factors, they find the gender gap largely disappears.
>
> A 2009 study commissioned by the Department of Labor found that after controlling for occupation, experience, and other choices, women earn 95 percent as much as men do. In 2005, June O'Neil, the former director of the Congressional Budget Office, found that "There is no gender gap in wages among men and women with similar family roles." Different choices—not discrimination—account for different employment and wage outcomes.

A popular article by Carrie Lukas in the Wall Street Journal agrees.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Labor's Time Use survey shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. One would expect that someone who works 9% more would also earn more. This one fact alone accounts for more than a third of the wage gap.
>
> […]Recent studies have shown that the wage gap shrinks—or even reverses—when relevant factors are taken into account and comparisons are made between men and women in similar circumstances. In a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30, the research firm Reach Advisors found that women earned an average of 8% more than their male counterparts. Given that women are outpacing men in educational attainment, and that our economy is increasingly geared toward knowledge-based jobs, it makes sense that women's earnings are going up compared to men's.

When women make different choices about education and labor that are more like what men choose, they earn just as much or more than men. What does it mean that people on the left keep pushing pseudo-science on us to try to punish men and reward women? Why are men so awful that they need to be denigrated like this? And how will men respond to social expectations when they have to face being told that they are "bad"? It seems to me that putting men down is going to lower their level of engagement.

Jay Richards: eight common myths about wealth, poverty and the free market

April 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you read Jay Richards' book "Money, Greed and God?" Because if you haven't, he's written a series of articles that summarize the main points of the book.

The index post is here.

Here are the posts in the series:

- Part 1: The Eight Most Common Myths about Wealth, Poverty, and Free Enterprise
- Part 2: Can't We Build A Just Society?
- Part 3: The Piety Myth
- Part 4: The Myth of the Zero Sum Game
- Part 5: Is Wealth Created or Transferred?
- Part 6: Is Free Enterprise Based on Greed?
- Part 7: Hasn't Christianity Always Opposed Free Enterprise?
- Part 8: Does Free Enterprise Lead to An Ugly Consumerist Culture?
- Part 9: Will We Use Up All Our Resources?
- Part 10: Are Markets An Example of Providence?

Parts 4 and 5 are my favorites. It's so hard to choose one to excerpt, but I must. I will choose… Part 4.

Here's the problem:

> **Myth #3: The Zero Sum Game Myth – believing that trade requires a winner and a loser.**
>
> One reason people believe this myth is because they misunderstand how economic value is determined. Economic thinkers with views as diverse as Adam Smith and Karl Marx believed economic value was determined by the labor theory of value. This theory stipulates that the cost to produce an object determines its economic value.
>
> According to this theory, if you build a house that costs you $500,000 to build, that house is worth $500,000. But what if no one can or wants to buy the house? Then what is it worth?
>
> Medieval church scholars put forth a very different theory, one derived from human nature: economic value is in the eye of the beholder. The economic value of an object is determined by how much someone is willing to give up to get that object. This is the subjective theory of value.

And here's an example of how to avoid the problem:

> How you determine economic value affects whether you view free enterprise as a

> zero-sum game, or a win-win game in which both participants benefit.
>
> Let's return to the example of the $500,000 house. As the developer of the house, you hire workers to build the house. You then sell it for more than $500,000. According to the labor theory of value, you have taken more than the good is actually worth. You've exploited the buyer and your workers by taking this surplus value. You win, they lose.
>
> Yet this situation looks different according to the subjective theory of value. Here, everybody wins. You market and sell the house for more than it cost to produce, but not more than customers will freely pay. The buyer is not forced to pay a cost he doesn't agree to. You are rewarded for your entrepreneurial effort. Your workers benefit, because you paid them the wages they agreed to when you hired them.
>
> This illustration brings up a couple important points about free enterprise that are often overlooked:
>
> **1. Free exchange is a win-win game**.
>
> In win-win games, some players may end up better off than others, but everyone ends up better off than they were at the beginning. As the developer, you might make more than your workers. Yet the workers determined they would be better off by freely exchanging their labor for wages, than if they didn't have the job at all.
>
> A free market doesn't guarantee that everyone wins in every competition. Rather, it allows many more win-win encounters than any other alternative.
>
> **2. The game is win-win because of rules set-up beforehand.**
>
> A free market is *not* a free-for-all in which everybody can do what they want. Any exchange must be free on both sides. Rule of law, contracts, and property rights are needed to ensure exchanges are conducted rightly. As the developer of the house, you'd be held accountable if you broke your contract and failed to pay workers what you promised.
>
> An exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game.

On this view, what you really need to fear as a consumer is government intervention that restricts your choices in the marketplace.

Free trade in the real world

This is not a theoretical problem, either. Millions of people in the Ukraine are protesting against Vladimir Putin and his restrictive Russian policies in order to get more economic freedom by signing a free trade deal with the European Union.

Rick Pearcey posted about it on the Pearcey Report:

> France24.com reports:
>
> Hundreds of thousands of protesters swarmed Ukraine's capital Kiev on Sunday,

> where the country's opposition leaders urged them to continue heaping pressure on President Viktor Yanukovich to sack his government and abandon plans for closer ties with Russia.
>
> Many of the demonstrators who gathered at the city's central Independence Square are furious with the government over its decision to back out of a historic agreement with the European Union in favour of a possible trade deal with Russia, Ukraine's Soviet-era ruler.
>
> The protest . . . is just the latest sign of mounting tensions in Ukraine over the past two weeks, raising fears over the country's political and economic stability.

That's a real crisis: freedom-loving people fighting for their right to be prosperous by adopting the economic policies that produce wealth.

If you care about poverty, it's often tempting to think that it can only be solved one way – by transferring wealth from the rich to the poor. But that is a very mistaken view, as any economist will tell you. The right way to create prosperity is by creating laws and policies that unleash individual creativity. Letting individuals create innovative products and services, letting them keep what they earn, making sure that the law doesn't punish entrepreneurs – that incentivizes wealth creation. Fixing poverty does not mean transferring wealth, it means giving people more freedom to create wealth on their own. Free trade between nations is an important way that we encourage people to create better products and services that what they have available in their own countries.

Economists agree on the benefits of free trade

Who could possibly disagree with free trade? Well, many people on the left do. They favor imposing restrictions on free trade. For example, people on the left favor making those who import goods pay tariffs, which makes it harder to trade with other nations. People on the left want to pass rent control laws to block landlords and tenants from trading more freely. People on the left want to pass minimum wage laws that block employers and workers from trading wages for labor more freely. But economists generally don't agree with any of restrictions on free trade. In fact, *even across the ideological spectrum*, the majority of economists view free trade as a wealth creating policy, and restrictions on free trade as a wealth destroying policy.

Harvard economist Greg Mankiw explains what most professional economists agree on.

Excerpt:

> Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:
>
> 1. **A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)**
> 2. **Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)**
> 3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)

> 4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
> 5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
> 6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
> 7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
> 8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
> 9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
> 10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
> 11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
> 12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
> 13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
> 14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

Now when you are talking to a Democrat, you are talking to someone who disagrees with most or all of those common sense economic policies. For example, Obama's backers in the labor movement inevitably endorse higher import tariffs, which discourage free trade between countries. No economist supports these tariffs on imports, because history has shown (e.g. – Smoot-Hawley Act) that tariffs destroy economic growth and reduce wealth creation. And that's what I mean when I talk about economic illiteracy – I mean ignoring what we know from economics and our own experience with bad policies when we make policy.

Democrat economic policies don't work because they are making policies that are based on economic myths. We know that these myths are myths because of economics is a mathematical science, and because we have tried good and bad policies in different times and places. We have calculations and we have experience to know what works and what doesn't work. If you want to help the poor, you have to respect what economists know about how wealth is created. The solution is not to "spread the wealth around", it's to encourage people to create more wealth by inventing things that people freely choose to buy.

Is the text of the Bible we have today different from the originals?

April 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's introduce New Testament scholar Daniel B. Wallace:

> Daniel B. Wallace, Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary
>
> B.A., Biola University, 1975; Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; Ph.D., 1995.
>
> Dr. Wallace influences students across the country through his textbook on intermediate Greek grammar. It has become the standard textbook in the English-speaking world on that subject. He is a member of the Society of New Testament Studies, the Institute for Biblical Research, the Society of Biblical Literature, and the Evangelical Theological Society.
>
> […]He has been a consultant on four different Bible translations.
>
> […] He works extensively in textual criticism, and has founded The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (csntm.org), an institute with an initial purpose of preserving Scripture by taking digital photographs of all known Greek New Testament manuscripts.
>
> […]His postdoctoral work includes work on Greek grammar at Tyndale House in Cambridge, textual criticism studies at the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster, and the Universität Tübingen, Germany.

Eric Chabot, who blogs at Think Apologetics, found this interview that addresses the charge you often hear about how you can't get back to the original New Testament documents.

It talks about:

- textual criticism
- number of New Testament manuscripts
- earliest New Testament manuscripts
- the number and impact of textual variants
- responding to the "telephone game" objection
- responding to the scribes tampered with the text objection

And here is an article by Dr. Wallace that corrects other misconceptions about the transmission and translation of the Testament.

He lists five in particular:

- *Myth 1: The Bible has been translated so many times we can't possibly get back to*

the original.
- *Myth 2: Words in red indicate the exact words spoken by Jesus of Nazareth.*
- *Myth 3: Heretics have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 4: Orthodox scribes have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 5: The deity of Christ was invented by emperor Constantine.*

Finally, a quote from skeptical historian Bart Ehrman, as reproduced in this post on the Christian Apologetics Alliance blog:

> The curious thing about Bart Ehrman is that the views he articulates in his popular-level work are not the same as those he espouses in his professional/scholarly publications. Indeed, readers may find this curious and very telling quotation, taken from the appendix (p. 252) of Misquoting Jesus, of interest:
>
> "Bruce Metzger is one of the great scholars of modern times, and I dedicated the book to him because he was both my inspiration for going into textual criticism and the person who trained me in the field. I have nothing but respect and admiration for him. And even though we may disagree on important religious questions – he is a firmly committed Christian and I am not – we are in complete agreement on a number of very important historical and textual questions. If he and I were put in a room and asked to hammer out a consensus statement on what we think the original text of the New Testament probably looked like, there would be very few points of disagreement – maybe one or two dozen places out of many thousands. **The position I argue for in 'Misquoting Jesus' does not actually stand at odds with Prof. Metzger's position that the essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament.**" [Emphasis added]

Finally, I think that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls shows us that religious texts don't change as much as we think they do over time.

Look:

> The Dead Sea Scrolls play a crucial role in assessing the accurate preservation of the Old Testament. With its hundreds of manuscripts from every book except Esther, detailed comparisons can be made with more recent texts.
>
> The Old Testament that we use today is translated from what is called the Masoretic Text. The Masoretes were Jewish scholars who between A.D. 500 and 950 gave the Old Testament the form that we use today. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947, the oldest Hebrew text of the Old Testament was the Masoretic Aleppo Codex which dates to A.D. 935.{5}
>
> With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now had manuscripts that predated the Masoretic Text by about one thousand years. Scholars were anxious to see how the Dead Sea documents would match up with the Masoretic Text. If a significant amount of differences were found, we could conclude that our Old

> Testament Text had not been well preserved. Critics, along with religious groups such as Muslims and Mormons, often make the claim that the present day Old Testament has been corrupted and is not well preserved. According to these religious groups, this would explain the contradictions between the Old Testament and their religious teachings.
>
> After years of careful study, it has been concluded that the Dead Sea Scrolls give substantial confirmation that our Old Testament has been accurately preserved. The scrolls were found to be almost identical with the Masoretic text. Hebrew Scholar Millar Burrows writes, “It is a matter of wonder that through something like one thousand years the text underwent so little alteration. As I said in my first article on the scroll, ‘Herein lies its chief importance, supporting the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition.'”{6}
>
> A significant comparison study was conducted with the Isaiah Scroll written around 100 B.C. that was found among the Dead Sea documents and the book of Isaiah found in the Masoretic text. After much research, scholars found that the two texts were practically identical. Most variants were minor spelling differences, and none affected the meaning of the text.
>
> One of the most respected Old Testament scholars, the late Gleason Archer, examined the two Isaiah scrolls found in Cave 1 and wrote, “Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”{7}
>
> **Despite the thousand year gap, scholars found the Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls to be nearly identical. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide valuable evidence that the Old Testament had been accurately and carefully preserved.**

I hope that this post will help those who think that we can’t get back to the text of the original New Testament documents.

Sharyl Attkisson on Fox News describing White House harassment of journalists

April 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You'll remember that Sharyl Attkisson used to work at CBS News, and did the best investigative journalism on the Obama administration's"Fast and Furious" gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels, and then again on the CIA cover-up of the Obama administration's foreign policy weakness in the Benghazi massacre. I always disliked her as a journalist when she was attacking the Bush administration so effectively, but I've sort of realized that she just thinks that it's her job to attack and expose whoever is in power. But whereas the Bush administration never did anything to her, the Obama administration is different.

The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> Former CBS reporter Sharyl Attkisson accused the White House of running an unprecedented pressure campaign against journalists, claiming they are pursuing a "particularly aggressive, well-organized" strategy "designed to have some kind of a chilling effect" on the American press.
>
> Attkisson spoke with Fox News' Howard Kurtz on Sunday about her early departure from CBS and her battles with the Obama administration for access to information. An investigative reporter who covered White House bugbears like Benghazi and Fast and Furious, she left CBS before her contract expired because she felt network executives inappropriately shot down her stories.
>
> But in her conversation with Kurtz, Attkission made it clear that she ultimately blames the Obama administration itself for her bosses' timidity.
>
> "I think any journalist who has been covering Washington for a few years would agree… that there is pressure coming to bear on journalists for just doing their job in ways that have never come to bear before," she began.
>
> "There have always been tensions, there have always been calls from the White House — under any administration, I assume — when they don't like a particular story," she admitted. "But it is particularly aggressive under the Obama administration, and I think it's a campaign that's very well organized and designed to have sort of a chilling effect."
>
> "And to some degree," she continued, "has been somewhat successful in getting broadcast producers who don't really want to deal with the headache of it. Why put on the controversial stories that we are going to have to fight people on when we can fill the broadcast with other perfectly decent stories that don't ruffle the same feathers?"
>
> The reporter claimed she and her bosses both received direct pushback from the

> White House, including phone calls and emails pressuring them to change or retract stories.

Newsbusters has more:

> Kurtz asked how Attkisson feels about the charge of liberal bias leading to soft coverage of Obama. “The press in general seems to be very shy about challenging this administration, as if it’s making some sort of political statement, rather than just doing our job as watchdogs,” Attkisson said.
>
> ATTKISSON: I didn’t run into that same kind of sentiment [at CBS] as I did in the Obama administration when I covered the Bush administration very aggressively, on its secrecy and lack of Freedom of Information responses, and its poor management of the Food and Drug Administration and the national laboratories, the Halliburton-Iraq questions of fraud. I mean, there was one thing after another. The bait-and-switch of TARP, the bank bailout program. All of those stories under Bush were met with a good reception. There were different managers as well, but no one accused me of being a mouthpiece for the liberals at that time.

I’m surprised that the communist Democrat Party would suppress freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of the press. Communists have never done that before in history, have they? They never put in place disastrous plans and then had to cover it all up by suppressing journalists. And they certainly never did it in the Soviet Union, Cambodia, Vietnam, and everywhere else communism’s been tried. Whenever government government gets really, really big, we should expect individual liberties to increase. Right?

The Jesus-wife source is dated to eight-century Egypt: could it be authentic?

April 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace tweeted this post from Al Mohler, which talks about the scholarly review of a recent discovery.

Excerpt:

> Last week, the *Harvard Theological Review* released a much-delayed series of articles on the fragment. After a series of investigations undertaken by diverse scholars, the general judgment claimed by Professor King is that the fragment probably is not a forgery — or at least that it dates back to ancient times. The analysis suggested that the fragment dated from about four centuries later than Professor King had first suggested. This would place the fragment, if authentic, in the context of eighth-century Egypt — hundreds of years after the New Testament was written and completed.
>
> The language used by the national media in reporting the story this time reveals the lack of confidence now placed in the fragment. The *Boston Globe* reported that the tests "have turned up no evidence of modern forgery," but the reporter had to acknowledge that at least one of the scholars writing in the *Harvard Theological Review* insisted that the fragment is not only a forgery, but an amateurish effort. *The New York Times* ran a story that featured a headline announcing that the fragment "is more likely ancient than fake." Note the uncertainty evident even in the headline.
>
> In her major article released last week, Professor King defended the fragment's authenticity, but acknowledged that — all previous sensationalism aside — "It is not entirely clear, however, how many women are referred to [in the fragment], who they are, precisely what is being said about them, or what larger issues are under consideration."
>
> This is a very different message than was sent back in 2012. Professor King now acknowledges that all the references to females in the fragment might be "deployed metaphorically as figures of the Church, or heavenly Wisdom, or symbolically/typologically as brides of Christ or even mothers." In other words, the fragment might not even conflict with Christian orthodoxy.
>
> The most declarative article in the *Harvard Theological Review*, however, dismisses the entire fragment as a modern forgery. Professor Leo Depuydt of Brown University argues that the fragment's authenticity is "out of the question." He points to several factors, including the fact that a set of typographical errors in the fragment matches a set of errors in an online edition of the "Gospel of Thomas," an ancient Gnostic text. Depuydt put the chances of coincidence with respect to these errors as one in a trillion. Depuydt states that he "has not the

> slightest doubt that the document is a forgery, and not a very good one at that."
>
> Taken as a whole, the issue of the *Harvard Theological Review* released last week includes some scholars who stalwartly defend the fragment as authentic, some who argue that there is no convincing proof that it is a forgery, and at least one who argues that the case for authenticity is laughable.

Previously when I blogged about this I noted that like sensational fiction writer Dan Brown, Karen King is a feminist, and anxious to insert women into more prominent roles in Christian history.

Mohler picked up on it too:

> The larger background includes the fact that Professor King has devoted much of her scholarly career to making a case that the early church falsely constructed an orthodox understanding of Jesus that minimized the role of women. Back in 2003 she released *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle*, in which she argued that at least some ancient texts pointed to Mary Magdalene as an apostle. In 2012 she told the writer for *Smithsonian*: "You're talking to someone who's trying to integrate a whole set of 'heretical' literature into the standard history."
>
> Professor King, along with others such as Professor Elaine Pagels of Princeton University, reject traditional Christianity and have turned time and again to ancient Gnostic documents, such as were found in 1945 in Nag Hammadi in Egypt, to argue that early Christianity marginalized some theological voices and standardized doctrinal orthodoxy in order to maintain doctrinal purity.

I think this is why media outlets, who are sympathetic with this goal, would trumpet an eighth century discovery over the 1st century gospels. Let me be clear. Nothing from the eight century can be considered authentic if it contradicts multiple, independent first century sources. The only thing driving the media frenzy on this discovery is feminism, pure and simple.

I just want to say that I don't always agree with Al Mohler, especially on marriage and men's rights issues, where I think his exegesis of the Bible is overly influenced by liberal feminism. So to have him agreeing with me on King's "scholarship" is a good thing.

Astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on intelligent design and habitability

April 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The 5 video clips that make up the full lecture.

The playlist for all 5 clips is here.

About the speaker

> Guillermo Gonzalez is an Associate Professor of Physics at Grove City College. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington and has received fellowships, grants and awards from such institutions as NASA, the University of Washington, the Templeton Foundation, Sigma Xi (scientific research society) and the National Science Foundation.

Learn more about the speaker here.

The lecture

Here's part 1 of 5:

And the rest are here:

- Part 2 of 5
- Part 3 of 5
- Part 4 of 5
- Part 5 of 5

Topics:

- What is the Copernican Principle?
- Is the Earth's suitability for hosting life rare in the universe?
- Does the Earth have to be the center of the universe to be special?
- How similar to the Earth does a planet have to be to support life?
- What is the definition of life?
- What are the three minimal requirements for life of any kind?
- Requirement 1: A molecule that can store information (carbon)
- Requirement 2: A medium in which chemicals can interact (liquid water)
- Requirement 3: A diverse set of chemical elements
- What is the best environment for life to exist?
- Our place in the solar system: the circumstellar habitable zone
- Our place in the galaxy: the galactic habitable zones
- Our time in the universe's history: the cosmic habitable age
- Other habitability requirements (e.g. – metal-rich star, massive moon, etc.)

- The orchestration needed to create a habitable planet
- How different factors depend on one another through time
- How tweaking one factor can adversely affect other factors
- How many possible places are there in the universe where life could emerge?
- Given these probabilistic resources, should we expect that there is life elsewhere?
- How to calculate probabilities using the “Product Rule”
- Can we infer that there is a Designer just because life is rare? Or do we need more?

The corelation between habitability and measurability.

- Are the habitable places in the universe also the best places to do science?
- Do the factors that make Earth habitable also make it good for doing science?
- Some places and times in the history of the universe are more habitable than others
- Those exact places and times also allow us to make scientific discoveries
- Observing solar eclipses and structure of our star, the Sun
- Observing stars and galaxies
- Observing the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Observing the acceleration of the universe caused by dark matter and energy
- Observing the abundances of light elements like helium of hydrogen
- These observations support the big bang and fine-tuning arguments for God’s existence
- It is exactly like placing observatories on the tops of mountains
- There are observers existing in the best places to observe things
- This is EXACTLY how the universe has been *designed for making scientific discoveries*

This lecture was delivered by Guillermo Gonzalez in 2007 at the University of California at Davis.

American corporations are expanding outside the United States to avoid high taxes

April 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Walgreen, America's venerable drug-store chain, is thinking the unthinkable: relocating to Europe. Not because it sees growth and opportunity there, but because of onerous taxes here in the U.S. It's an ominous trend.
>
> The Financial Times of London calls it "one of the largest tax inversions ever." That is, a company seeking to avoid punitive taxes in one market by moving to another.
>
> No doubt the FT is right. And after its recent $16 billion takeover of Swiss-based Alliance Boots, it would be easy for Walgreen to remake itself as a Swiss company.
>
> If it did, the Democratic Party's liberals would no doubt call Walgreen unpatriotic for wanting to lessen its tax burden. In fact, they are responsible for an economic environment so hostile to capital and investment that companies now find it intolerable.
>
> […]According to an analysis by UBS, Walgreen's U.S. tax rate is 37.5% — compared with Alliance Boots' rate in Europe of about 20%. That's a huge gap, worth billions of dollars a year.
>
> But it's even worse than that. A recent OECD study says the "integrated tax rate" — taxes on capital and income — for U.S. companies is a nightmarish 67.8% vs. 43.7% for the OECD.
>
> Many companies facing steep tax rates and insane regulations in the U.S. have had enough. They're keeping their profits overseas. Last week, Senate Finance Committee chief Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat, reported U.S. corporations now hold $2.1 trillion in earnings in overseas accounts — a massive amount, roughly equal to 12% of U.S. gross domestic product.
>
> A total of 547 companies — including Apple, GE, Microsoft and Pfizer — have dramatically expanded their so-called foreign indefinitely reinvested earnings overseas, which let them avoid the punishing rates here at home.
>
> […]Not only are taxes too high, but also new laws such as Dodd-Frank and ObamaCare, a vast expansion of regulation, debt and the size of government, the federal takeover of entire industries, the bullying of Wall Street and demonization of CEOs, and forced CO2 cuts that will hammer manufacturers have made this the least pro-free market U.S. government in generations.

If you make it harder for businesses here to do business (higher taxes and burdensome regulations), then they will expand abroad instead, and in some cases, they will just move completely. How does that help create jobs here? It doesn’t.

Study finds that gay parents are more likely to raise gay kids

April 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A peer-reviewed study about gay parents raising gay kids in AOL News.

Excerpt:

> Walter Schumm knows what he's about to do is unpopular: publish a study arguing that gay parents are more likely to raise gay children than straight parents. But the Kansas State University family studies professor has a detailed analysis that past almost aggressively ideological researchers never had.
>
> […]His study on sexual orientation, out next month, says that gay and lesbian parents are far more likely to have children who become gay. "I'm trying to prove that it's not 100 percent genetic," Schumm tells AOL News.
>
> His study is a meta-analysis of existing work. First, Schumm extrapolated data from 10 books on gay parenting… [and] skewed his data so that only self-identified gay and lesbian children would be labeled as such.
>
> This is important because sometimes Schumm would come across a passage of children of gay parents who said they were "adamant about not declaring their sexual orientation at all." These people would be labeled straight, even though the passage's implication was that they were gay.
>
> Schumm concluded that children of lesbian parents identified themselves as gay 31 percent of the time; children of gay men had gay children 19 percent of the time, and children of a lesbian mother and gay father had at least one gay child 25 percent of the time.
>
> Furthermore, when the study restricted the results so that they included only children in their 20s — presumably after they'd been able to work out any adolescent confusion or experimentation — 58 percent of the children of lesbians called themselves gay, and 33 percent of the children of gay men called themselves gay. (About 5 to 10 percent of the children of straight parents call themselves gay, Schumm says.)
>
> Schumm next went macro, poring over an anthropological study of various cultures' acceptance of homosexuality. He found that when communities welcome gays and lesbians, "89 percent feature higher rates of homosexual behavior."
>
> Finally, Schumm looked at the existing academic studies… In all there are 26 such studies. Schumm ran the numbers from them and concluded that, surprisingly, 20 percent of the kids of gay parents were gay themselves. When children only 17 or older were included in the analysis, 28 percent were gay.

Here's the paper entitled "Children of homosexuals more apt to be homosexuals?". It appeared in the Journal of Biosocial Science.

Abstract:

> Ten narrative studies involving family histories of 262 children of gay fathers and lesbian mothers were evaluated statistically in response to Morrison's (2007) concerns about Cameron's (2006) research that had involved three narrative studies. Despite numerous attempts to bias the results in favour of the null hypothesis and allowing for up to 20 (of 63, 32%) coding errors, Cameron's (2006) hypothesis that gay and lesbian parents would be more likely to have gay, lesbian, bisexual or unsure (of sexual orientation) sons and daughters was confirmed. Percentages of children of gay and lesbian parents who adopted non-heterosexual identities ranged between 16% and 57%, with odds ratios of 1.7 to 12.1, depending on the mix of child and parent genders. Daughters of lesbian mothers were most likely (33% to 57%; odds ratios from 4.5 to 12.1) to report non-heterosexual identities. Data from ethnographic sources and from previous studies on gay and lesbian parenting were re-examined and found to support the hypothesis that social and parental influences may influence the expression of non-heterosexual identities and/or behaviour. Thus, evidence is presented from three different sources, contrary to most previous scientific opinion, even most previous scientific consensus, that suggests intergenerational transfer of sexual orientation can occur at statistically significant and substantial rates, especially for female parents or female children. In some analyses for sons, intergenerational transfer was not significant. Further research is needed with respect to pathways by which intergenerational transfer of sexual orientation may occur. The results confirm an evolving tendency among scholars to cite the possibility of some degree of intergenerational crossover of sexual orientation.

Please exercise caution when commenting, we do not want to be Brendan Eich'd by the Obama administration.

Jay Richards: How to end poverty in 10 tough steps

April 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Stand to Reason's Amy Hall blogged about a new lecture by Jay Richards, a Christian expert in economics. Amy linked to this post by Justin Taylor which summarizes the talk (above).

Summary:

1. Establish and maintain the rule of law.
2. Focus the jurisdiction of government on maintaining the rule of law, and limit its jurisdiction over the economy and the institutions of civil society.
3. Implement a formal property system with consistent and accessible means for securing a clear title to property one owns.
4. Encourage economic freedom: Allow people to trade goods and services unencumbered by tariffs, subsidies, price controls, undue regulation, and restrictive immigration policies.
5. Encourage stable families and other important private institutions that mediate between the individual and the state.
6. Encourage belief in the truth that the universe is purposeful and makes sense.
7. Encourage the right cultural mores—orientation to the future and the belief that progress but not utopia is possible in this life; willingness to save and delay gratification; willingness to risk, to respect the rights and property of others, to be diligent, to be thrifty.
8. Instill a proper understanding of the nature of wealth and poverty—that wealth is created, that free trade is win-win, that risk is essential to enterprise, that trade-offs are unavoidable, that the success of others need not come at your expense, and that you can pursue legitimate self-interest and the common good at the same time.
9. Focus on your comparative advantage rather than protecting what used to be your competitive advantage.
10. Work hard.

I'm currently working my way through Money, Greed and God with a friend, and we are going through it chapter by chapter. If you don't have the book, it's a perfect introduction to economics and how it relates to the Christian worldview. I always encourage Christians to move beyond good intentions to good results by studying economics. We are supposed to be helping the poor, but how should we do it? Economics is the science that allows us to understand which policies we should support to do that.

Obama-appointed judge orders Ohio to recognize out-of-state same-sex marriages

April 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Toledo Blade.

Excerpt:

> Ohio must recognize same-sex marriages legally performed elsewhere despite the state's own ban on such marriages in its constitution, a federal judge in Cincinnati officially ruled today.
>
> Attorney General Mike DeWine has said he will appeal the decision as he already has another by U.S. District Judge Timothy Black that required the state to recognize same-sex marriages on death certificates.
>
> The latest ruling, promised by Judge Black more than a week ago, does not mean that same-sex couples may be wed in Ohio. But it strikes a blow against another portion of the constitutional amendment Ohioans adopted in 2004 that prohibits government from extending rights approximating those of marriage to same-sex and unmarried couples.
>
> The case before Judge Black initially dealt solely with the issue of having the names of same-sex couples legally married in another state on the birth certificates of children born here. But Judge Black, a 2010 appointee by President Obama, went a step further by ordering the state to recognize all such marriages performed legally.
>
> […]The case was brought by four couples married in California, New York, and Massachusetts who have had or soon expect to have children in Ohio. Three are female couples in which one spouse was impregnated through artificial insemination while the fourth is a male couple who adopted a child born here.
>
> […]Ohio is just one of a number of states with same-sex marriage cases in the appeals pipeline with at least one likely to work its way up to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Christian News Network reported on the Obama-appointee's previous related decision.

Excerpt:

> As previously reported, Black similarly issued a ruling in December that required state officials to recognize same-sex "marriages" on death certificates. He rejected the state's sovereignty argument at that time as well.
>
> […]Consequently, Rep. John Becker (R-Union Township), a born-again Christian, is seeking to have Black impeached as he believes that the judge is rather trampling the state and federal constitutions.

> “[Judge Black] persists in allowing his personal political bias to supersede jurisprudence,” he wrote in a recent statement.
>
> Becker has submitted an impeachment resolution to the state assembly, but it has not yet come up for a hearing.

I wonder if the many people who claimed to believe in traditional marriage yet voted for Obama will stop voting for Democrats? One can hope that will be the case, now that *everyone* can see what people like me were warning about before the election. We warned back then, but were told that our concerns were silly and that Obama was just as much a Christian as George W. Bush. Now we know different. And so many people still claim to be pro-life and pro-marriage while voting for the most pro-abortion and anti-marriage President we have ever had. I suppose in 2016, they’ll vote for Democrats again, and be *shocked* when the Democrats push even more for expansions abortion and gay rights. When will we learn?

Islamists kidnap 100 schoolgirls who face living hell as sex slaves

April 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the New York Post. (H/T Answering Muslims)

Excerpt:

> Heavily armed Islamic extremists abducted at least 100 female students from a school in northeast Nigeria before dawn Tuesday, but some of the teens managed to escape from the back of an open truck, officials said.
>
> The tragedy came one day after a bombing killed more than 70 people in the city of Abuja.
>
> The girls were seized after midnight from a school in Chibok, on the edge of the Sambisa Forest, an insurgent hideout, said Borno state police commissioner Tanko Lawan.
>
> Gunmen killed a soldier and police officer guarding the school, then took off with at least 100 students, a State Security Service official said.
>
> Witnesses said the gunmen arrived in trucks and motorcycles and may have grabbed as many as 200 girls.
>
> […]Islamic extremists have been abducting girls to use as cooks and sex slaves.
>
> Insurgents from the Boko Haram terrorist network are blamed for attacks that have killed more than 1,500 people this year.
>
> […]Boko Haram is also accused of Monday morning's explosion at a busy bus station in Nigeria's capital that killed at least 75 people and wounded 141.

Answering Muslims notes that the Qur'an allows Muslims to take captured women as sex slaves. It's a far cry from the courtly love of Christians, isn't it?

Boko Haram is, of course, an Islamic terrorist group. But don't tell the Obama administration that, it's "workplace violence caused by a Youtube video" if you ask them.

New study: regular churchgoers and married people most satisfied with their love life

April 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from Science Daily was tweeted by Fazale Rana of Reasons to Believe.

Excerpt:

> Regular churchgoers, married people or those who enjoy harmonious social ties are most satisfied with their love life. This also goes for people who are currently in love or who experience the commitment and sexual desire of their partners, says Félix Neto and Maria da Conceição Pinto of the Universidade do Porto in Portugal. Their findings, published in an article in Springer's journal *Applied Research in Quality of Life,* look at the influences on love life satisfaction throughout one's adult life.

> The researchers associate love with the desire to enter into, maintain, or expand a close, connected, and ongoing relationship with another person. In turn, love life satisfaction is a purely subjective, overall measurement of someone's actual enjoyment of love. To investigate the factors that influence this across various age groups, 1,284 adult Portuguese women and men ranging between 18 and 90 years old were asked to evaluate and weigh specific facets of their own love lives by using the Satisfaction With Love Life Scale.
>
> […]**While education does not impact a person's love life satisfaction, religious involvement does. The finding that believers and regular churchgoers are positive about their love lives is in line with previous studies that associate religious involvement with better mental health and greater satisfaction with life and sexual relationships in general.**

Previously, I blogged about a study reported in USA Today, which showed that people who attend church have lower divorce rates than those who don't attend church.

Excerpt:

> It's been proclaimed from pulpits and blogs for years — Christians divorce as much as everyone else in America.
>
> But some scholars and family activists are questioning the oft-cited statistics, saying Christians who attend church regularly are more likely to remain wed.
>
> […]The various findings on religion and divorce hinge on what kind of Christians are being discussed.
>
> **Wright combed through the General Social Survey, a vast demographic study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and found that Christians, like adherents of other religions, have a divorce rate of about 42%. The rate among**

> **religiously unaffiliated Americans is 50%.**
>
> **When Wright examined the statistics on evangelicals, he found worship attendance has a big influence on the numbers. Six in 10 evangelicals who never attend had been divorced or separated, compared to just 38% of weekly attendees.**
>
> […]Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there's been some confusion.
>
> "You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees," he said.
>
> **Wilcox's analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.
>
> "There's something about being a nominal 'Christian' that is linked to a lot of negative outcomes when it comes to family life," Wilcox said.

Whenever I talk to atheists about marital satisfaction and marital stability, they always tell me these myths about how atheists divorce less and are happier in their marriages than religious people. But when I ask them for studies, they don't have any, or they start to talk about the Discovery Channel or Star Trek or something. It's like they believe things without any evidence at all. Meanwhile, one also has to note that atheists have much lower rates of marriage than church-attending believers.

Now clearly, there are going to be atheists with great marriages that never break up. But individual cases do not overturn peer-reviewed research studies. The fact is that marriage is an institution that is soaked through with moral values and moral obligations. If you think that morality is just arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place, as is logically consistent with atheism, then the odds are that you won't be able to stay married for long – if you even get married at all.

New study: even casual use of marijuana / cannabis alters brain

April 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reported by the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Experimenting with cannabis on a casual basis damages the brain permanently, research has found.

> It is far from being a “safe” drug and no one under the age of 30 should ever use it, experts said.
>
> People who had only used cannabis once or twice a week for a matter of months were found to have changes in the brain that govern emotion, motivation and addiction.
>
> Researchers from Harvard Medical School in America carried out detailed 3D scans on the brains of students who used cannabis casually and were not addicted and compared them with those who had never used it.

> Two major sections of the brain were found to be affected.
>
> The scientists found that the more cannabis the 40 subjects had used, the greater the abnormalities.
>
> Around 10 million people in Britain, almost a third of the population, have used illegal drugs, with cannabis the most popular. The research author, Dr Hans Breiter, professor of psychiatry and behavioural sciences at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, said: “This study raises a strong challenge to the idea that casual marijuana use isn’t associated with bad consequences. Some people only used marijuana to get high once or twice a week.
>
> “People think a little recreational use shouldn’t cause a problem, if someone is doing OK with work or school. Our data directly says this is not the case.
>
> […]Mark Winstanley, chief executive of Rethink Mental Illness, said: “For too long cannabis has been seen as a safe drug, but as this study suggests, it can have a really serious impact on your mental health.
>
> “Research also shows that when people smoke cannabis before the age of 15, it quadruples their chance of developing psychosis. But very few people are aware of the risks involved.”

I troubled by this study because I know people who act as if smoking marijuana were as much a right as free speech.

What I would really like to see is that people who insist on engaging in irresponsible

behaviors then go on bear the consequences of that behavior. The problem is that it's not only these people who are affected, it's the innocent people around them. There are the innocent victims of car accidents or theft or the children who suffer because their parents want to "alter their brains". Those are the people I am worried about.

Related Posts

- New study: teen pot use could hurt brain and memory
- New study finds connection between early use of marijuana and mental illness
- New study: marijuana use by teens is linked to permanent brain abnormalities
- New study: smoking marijuana raises risk of having a stroke
- New study: smoking marijuana/cannabis permanently lowers IQ
- Should we legalize drugs and prostitution like Ron Paul wants?

How early are the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity?

April 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a great post from Tough Questions Answered.

The post describes evidence for the Incarnation and the Trinity in the writings of Ignatius, who was the third Bishop of Antioch from 70 AD to 107 AD.

Here's the raw quote from Ignatius' "Epistle to the Ephesians":

> But our Physician is the only true God, the Father and Begetter of the only-begotten Son. We have also as a Physician the Lord our God, Jesus the Christ, the only-begotten Son and Word, before time began, but who afterwards became also man, of Mary the virgin. For "the Word was made flesh." Being incorporeal, He was in a body; being impassible, He was in a passible body; being immortal, He was in a mortal body; being life, He became subject to corruption, that He might free our souls from death and corruption, and heal them, and might restore them to health, when they were diseased with ungodliness and wicked lusts.

And TQA discusses the passage:

> There are several aspects of this passage which demonstrate that Saint Ignatius held beliefs consistent with the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Dual Nature of Christ. First, he refers to two separate Persons, God the Father and Jesus Christ, yet he calls both of them God.
>
> […]Second, Ignatius refers to Jesus Christ as begotten "before time began". This is almost word for word identical to the Nicene Creed, which says, "I believe in. . . one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. . ." Some today claim that the Early Church believed Christ's being "begotten" of the Father was in relation to His birth from Mary (specifically, this is an LDS claim). However, Ignatius' comment here demonstrates that the Early Church's understanding of Christ's nature as "only-begotten" was a relationship with the Father that was "before time began" and has nothing to do with His earthly incarnation. It is interesting to note that the Greek word translated as "only-begotten" both here and in the New Testament is "monogenes". Monogenes literally means "one of a kind," and to the Church Fathers it connoted Christ being of the same nature as the Father. . . something that was entirely unique to Him.
>
> In addition to calling Christ God and claiming Him to be the "only-begotten" of the Father "before time began", Ignatius tells us that "afterwards" Christ "became man". Ignatius then goes on to point out some aspects that Christ's becoming man added to His nature. He says that although Christ

> was incorporeal, He was in a body; although He was impassible, He was in a passible body; although He was immortal, He was in a mortal body; although He was life, He became subject to corruption. These differing aspects of Christ's nature, aspects that are polar opposites to one another, speak to Christ having two natures, one as God and one as man, and demonstrate that Saint Ignatius understood Christ in this manner. As God, Christ was incorporeal, impassible, immortal, and life itself. However, as man He was corporeal, passible, mortal, and subject to corruption.

Now I think you can pull the Incarnation and the Trinity right out the Bible, but it's still nice to see such a prominent church father writing about it decades after the events.

J. Warner Wallace: Leading people to Christ requires good leadership

April 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest episode of the Cold Case Christianity podcast is a must-listen, especially from about 9:20 to 30:33. I listened to it twice, and shared it with a friend who I am mentoring. She liked it as well, and it caused both of us to think deeply.

You can grab the MP3 file here. (39 MB)

Here is is his summary:

> In this podcast, J. Warner talks about the importance of leadership for those of us who hope to share the truth about Jesus. When most of us think about evangelism, we think of the importance of apologetics or understanding how to articulate the Gospel. We often overlook the role of good leadership. But if you hope to lead someone to Christ, you'll need to become a good leader.

Topics:

- Excellence at what you do is the *minimum requirement* for being a good leader, but it's not enough
- First thing: you need to have the respect of the people you are trying to lead (e.g. – good character, courage, concern for others, etc.)
- Second thing: you need to gain the trust of the people you are trying to lead, and that means performing consistently over time
- Third thing: you need to gain a hearing from the people you are trying to lead, but that means being willing to speak to them, too
- An example of good leadership: Jim's father leading everyone to a cabin in the woods

The key insight I pulled out of this is that in order to lead someone, you have to gain their respect, gain their trust, and gain their ear. The podcast features a very practical application of the principles he describes.

William Lane Craig explains the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement

April 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably one of the most common questions that you hear from people who don't fully understand Christianity is this question: "why did Jesus have to die?". The answer that most Christians seem to hold to is that 1) humans are rebelling against God, 2) Humans deserve punishment for their rebellion, 3) Humans cannot escape the punishment for their rebellion on their own, 4) Jesus was punished in the place of the rebellious humans, 5) Those who accept this sacrifice are forgiven for their rebelling.

Are humans rebellious?

Some people think that humans are not really rebellious at all, but it's actually easy to see. You can see it just by looking at how people spend their time. Some of us have no time for God at all, and instead try to fill our lives with material possessions and experiences in order to have happy feelings. Some of us embrace just the parts of God that make us feel happy, like church and singing and feelings of comfort, while avoiding the hard parts of that vertical relationship; reading, thinking and disagreeing with people who don't believe the truth about God. And so on.

This condition of being in rebellion is universal, and all of us are guilty of breaking the law at some point. All of us deserve to be separated from God's goodness and love. Even if we wanted to stop rebelling, we would not be able to make up for the times where we do rebel by being good at other times, any more than we could get out of a speeding ticket by appealing to the times when we drove at the speed limit, (something that I never do, in any case).

This is not to say that all sinners are punished equally – the degree of punishment is proportional to the sins a person commits. However, the standard is perfection. And worse than that, the most important moral obligation is a *vertical* moral obligation. You can't satisfy the demands of the moral law just by making your neighbor happy, while treating God like a pariah. The first commandment is to love God, the second is to love your neighbor. Even loving your neighbor requires you to tell your neighbor the truth – not just to make them feel good. The *vertical* relationship is more important than the *horizontal* one, and we've all screwed up the vertical relationship. We all don't want God to be there, telling us what's best for us, interfering with our fun. We don't want to relate to a loving God if it means having to care what he thinks about anything that we are doing.

Who is going to pay for our rebellion?

The Christian answer to the problem of our rebellion is that Jesus takes the punishment we deserve in our place.

However, I've noticed that on some atheist blogs, they don't like the idea that someone else can take our punishment for us to exonerate us for crimes that we've committed. So

I'll quote from this post by the great William Lane Craig, to respond to that objection. Excerpt:

> The central problem of the Penal Theory is, as you point out, understanding how punishing a person other than the perpetrator of the wrong can meet the demands of justice. Indeed, we might even say that it would be wrong to punish some innocent person for the crimes I commit!
>
> It seems to me, however, that in other aspects of human life we do recognize this practice. I remember once sharing the Gospel with a businessman. When I explained that Christ had died to pay the penalty for our sins, he responded, "Oh, yes, that's imputation." I was stunned, as I never expected this theological concept to be familiar to this non-Christian businessman. When I asked him how he came to be familiar with this idea, he replied, "Oh, we use imputation all the time in the insurance business." He explained to me that certain sorts of insurance policy are written so that, for example, if someone else drives my car and gets in an accident, the responsibility is imputed to me rather than to the driver. Even though the driver behaved recklessly, I am the one held liable; it is just as if I had done it.
>
> Now this is parallel to substitutionary atonement. Normally I would be liable for the misdeeds I have done. But through my faith in Christ, I am, as it were, covered by his divine insurance policy, whereby he assumes the liability for my actions. My sin is imputed to him, and he pays its penalty. The demands of justice are fulfilled, just as they are in mundane affairs in which someone pays the penalty for something imputed to him. This is as literal a transaction as those that transpire regularly in the insurance industry.

So, it turns out that the doctrine of substitionary atonement is not as mysterious or as objectionable as everyone seems to think it is.

Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sex and sexuality at Harvard University

April 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Dr. Morse delivers a talk based on her book "Smart Sex" at Harvard University.

The MP3 file is here. (30 Mb)

Topics:

- the hook-up culture and its effects on men and women
- cohabitation and its effect on marriage stability
- balancing marriage, family and career
- single motherhood by choice and IVF
- donor-conceived children
- modern sex: a sterile, recreation activity
- the real purposes of sex: procreation and spousal unity
- the hormone oxytocin: when it is secreted and what it does
- the hormone vassopressin: when it is secreted and what it does
- the sexual revolution and the commoditization of sex
- the consumer view of sex vs the organic view of sex
- fatherlessness and multi-partner fertility
- how the "sex-without-relationship" view harms children

52 minutes of lecture, 33 minutes of Q&A from the Harvard students. The Q&A is worth listening to – the first question is from a gay student, and Dr. Morse pulls a William Lane Craig to defeat her objection. It was awesome! I never get tired of listening to her talk, and especially on the topics of marriage and family.

William Lane Craig offers advice to Christians considering marriage

April 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post is a 3 in one: one lecture, one question and answer, and another lecture – all on different topics. My friend Neil S. requested this so I'm posting it.

I got this lecture from the Reasonable Faith web site.

Dr. William Lane Craig is the top living Christian apologist and debater in the world today, and has 2 Masters degrees and 2 Ph.Ds. He also has scores of academic publications including books from Oxford University Press, etc.

The MP3 file is here. (14.5 Mb, about 41 minutes)

Topics:

- the stresses of ministry on marriages
- the Christian position on divorce
- balancing marriage with academic pursuits
- the importance of marrying the right person
- Dr. Craig's politically incorrect advice for choosing a spouse
- Advice for men: Marry someone who believes in you and who supports you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be the kind of person who can commit to being a helper and supporter
- Advice for men: Beware of the career woman who will put their career over supporting you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be careful about marrying if you think that your goals are more important than your husband's goals
- Advice: Don't try to find the right person *for you* but instead focus on learning about marriage and preparing for marriage
- Advice: Flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, love and peace
- Advice: God intends for sex to be within the bounds of marriage, so you need to guard yourself against unchastity
- Advice for men: be careful what images and movies you see with the goal of keeping your chastity
- Advice: your highest responsibility after your relationship with God is your spouse, and your studies are third
- Advice: it's better to drop classes or give up your graduate studies entirely rather than destroy your marriage
- Advice for women: understand that you have to work at the marriage in order to help your man finish his studies
- Advice: set aside a period of the day for communicating and bonding with your

spouse
- Advice: cultivate the ability to talk with your spouse on a personal level, and maintain eye contact
- Advice for men: do not break eye contact with your wife, and also hold her hand when communicating
- Advice: do not be embarrassed to seek out a marriage counselor, but make it a good counselor
- Advice: don't just be doing stuff for your mate, but also be vulnerable and transparent with your mate
- How your relationship with your wife helps you with your relationship with God
- How do you handle the rebellion of children without being overbearing and authoritarian?

There is a period of Q&A at the end. There is another piece of advice that comes out in the Q&A for women: take an interest in your spouse's work even if you don't care about it, and ask him about it every day and try to understand it. Go to the man's workplace and see what he does. Go to his presentations. Get involved in the man's ministry and help him in practical ways. Another piece of advice is to not paper over the differences – it's good to argue, because it means that problems are being confronted and worked through. Husbands should have a good male friend to talk to, and wives should have a good female friend to talk to.

I like how Dr. Craig has thought about how to have a successful marriage, how to choose the right woman, and how to love his wife. I like how he calls out men on the chastity thing. I think that chastity is more important for men than for women, because it's the men who take the lead in choosing and pursuing the right woman for their plan.

Secondly, here is my previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for married couples, where he gives 5 points of advice for married couples.

Here are the main pieces of advice Dr. Craig gives:

1. *Resolve that there will be no divorce*
2. *Delay having children*
3. *Confront problems honestly*
4. *Seek marital counseling*
5. *Take steps to build intimacy in your relationship*

And here's the controversial one (#2):

> 2. *Delay having children.* The first years of marriage are difficult enough on their own without introducing the complication of children. Once children come, the wife's attention is necessarily diverted, and huge stresses come upon you both. Spend the first several years of marriage getting to know each other, working through your issues, having fun together, and enjoying that intimate love relationship between just the two of you. Jan and I waited ten years before having

> our first child Charity, which allowed me the finish graduate school, get our feet on the ground financially, establish some roots, and enjoy and build our love relationship until we were really ready to take on the responsibilities of parenthood. The qualifier here is that if the wife desperately wants children now, then the husband should accede to her wish to become a mother, rather than withhold that from her. Her verdict should be decisive. But if you both can agree to wait, things will probably be much easier.

Third and finally, here is a previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for choosing a good spouse, with illustrations from his own marriage.

For example, Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

If you want to hear another Christian husband talk about how his wife supports him, listen to this lecture called "Giants in the Land" with Dr. Walter Bradley. It's actually my favorite lecture. I also really like his testimony lecture. If you're looking for guidance, these are some of the people I would recommend.

Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman debate the resurrection of Jesus

April 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Unbelievable radio show.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is well known as a US New Testament Scholar who lost his Christian faith and now questions many core precepts of Christianity, including the Resurrection of Jesus. When Mike Licona had doubts he devoted himself to investigating the evidence and became convinced that Jesus resurrection is the only rational explanation for the facts.
>
> They debate key historical facts about the resurrection – are the letters of Paul that report the resurrection and the Gospel accounts trustworthy or theologised and changed with time? What about apparent contradictions between the Gospels? Does the consensus of scholars count as evidence, or is there a Christian bias? Can a miracle count as an explanation for historical data?

The MP3 file is here.

Snarky summary of the radio debate: (items with * are my made-up paraphrases/clarifications)

This has got to be one of my silliest summaries, but Ehrman makes me so annoyed.

Ehrman:
– my new book is about forgeries in the ancient world
– some books were falsely attributed to prominent Christian figures
– there are mistakes in the Bible
– there are mistakes in the resurrection narratives
– the defeat of inerrancy led to his conversion to liberal Christianity
– the problem of evil and suffering caused him to become a non-Christian

Licona:
– there are minimal facts that are agreed to by a broad spectrum of scholars
– the minimal facts are accepted because they pass standard historical criteria
– Fact 1: Jesus died by crucifixion
– Fact 2: Individuals and groups had visions of Jesus after his death
– Fact 3: Paul, a skeptic and an enemy, had an appearance of Jesus that converted him
– these facts are agreed to atheist scholars, liberal scholars, etc.
– virtually 100% of scholars agree with these three facts
– there is no naturalistic explanation of these three facts
– therefore, the best explanation of these three facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Ehrman:

– all historians would accept these three facts, except for maybe the group appearances
– the death of Jesus is irrelevant to the resurrection
– the second and third point can be collapsed together
– so really there is only one fact

Moderator:
– the crucifixion is relevant because Muslims don't admit that fact
– the crucifixion important because it establishes a resurrection, not a resuscitation

Ehrman:
– well, if the point is that he died, then yes, this does require a resurrection

Licona:
– the crucifixion refutes Muslims who deny that Jesus died
– the crucifixion refutes the apparent death theory (swoon theory)
– the death is required for a bodily resurrection
– it's important to know what facts most scholars, regardless of worldview, agree on
– it's important to emphasize that Licona is working from historical bedrock facts
– the resurrection is the best explanation for the historical bedrock facts

Ehrman:
– you are trying to list 3 things, but really it is just one thing – the appearances
– and not ALL scholars agree that the group visions occurred

Licona:
– name one prominent scholar who denies the group appearances

Ehrman:
– the radically leftist atheist nutcase John Dominic Crossan denies the group appearances
* Crossan is so far on the left that I look like a nutcase for even citing him
* Crossan believes in the Secret Gospel of Mark, which is a hoax – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan believes that the synoptics are LATER than gnostic forged gospels – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan presupposes atheism, so he cannot admit to miracle stories as a pre-supposition – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan pre-supposes religious pluralism, so he cannot allow any exclusive claims Christians make – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan is a good historian, it's just that he is so far to the left that no one – NO ONE – agrees with his all of crazy theories
* I think it is a good idea to cite historians who pre-suppose atheism and political correctness before they sit down to do history

Licona:
– let me explain why most scholars accept the individual and group post-mortem appearances
– the best source for the appearances is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 15:3-8
– Paul himself had an appearance of Jesus after Jesus' death
– Paul received this material from a source very soon after the appearances – within 1-3

years
– we know that Paul met with Jesus disciples multiple times prior to writing
– Paul probably received it from Peter and James, who were themselves eyewitnesses

Moderator:
– this early dating presumably rules out legend

Licona:
– well legends CAN start quickly
– it does show that Paul was an eyewitness
– it does show that Paul was in contact with reliable eyewitnesses

Ehrman:
– 1 Corinthians is written around 55 AD, twenty-five years after Jesus died
– it is not implausible that Paul got the creed from the disciples, who were eyewitnesses
– but you don't need a long time for legends to emerge, so that is a possibility

Licona:
– only about 3% of people could read and write back them
– instead, people had enormous capacity for memorization
– the Pharisees were particularly good at memorization
– Jews were very serious about passing along traditions accurately
– Paul, a prominent Pharisee, would have been capable of passing on early creeds accurately
– Paul, in 1 Cor 7, shows that he is willing to separate his opinions from authentic tradition
– Paul had an opportunity in 1 Cor 7 to put words into Jesus' mouth, but he wouldn't do it

Ehrman:
– cultural anthropologists show that things do get changed in some oral cultures
– in these oral cultures, it is assumed that the story teller will change the story
– only in written cultures are they careful to avoid changing the story
– in the New Testament, you can compare the same story in two different gospels, there are differences

Licona:
– Ehrman is right that the gospel writers pick and choose things from the oral tradition that they want to include in their gospels
– different oral tradition transmission schemes have more or less embellishment
– african tribes embellish more, rabbinic teaching embellishes less
* Jesus' followers would have viewed him as a rabbi, and been careful about adding to his teachings
– Paul, an eyewitness, probably received the creed in 1 Cor 15 from other eyewitnesses
– Paul speaks about going twice to Jerusalem in Galatians
– he is meeting with Peter and James to check his facts

Ehrman:
– when you look at Mark and John, there are lots of differences in the narrative

Licona:

– I agree that the gospels have differences, but the oral tradition is likely fixed

Ehrman:
– but Mark and John have different sayings
– why doesn't Mark have the same explicit high Christology that John has?

Licona:
– first, John is trying to weave the oral tradition into a compelling story
– and second, when you look in Mark, the high Christology is there in the Son of Man sayings
– the apocalyptic Son of Man is in Mark, and everywhere in the New Testament

Ehrman:
– the "apocalyptic Son of Man" isn't in John

Licona:
– what about in John 9 with the man who was born blind

Ehrman:
– where is the apocalyptic part?

Licona:
– the healed man worships Jesus because he is the Son of Man
– that links to the apocalypic passages in the Old Testament

Moderator:
– what about the differences between the gospels?

Ehrman:
* well, now is the time for me to set up an inerrantist straw man and then knock it down!
* who was at the empty tomb: one angel or two angels? we don't know, so the whole Bible is false!
* I used to be an inerrantist, so one minor difference is enough for me to dump the whole Bible
* I'll kill you, you stupid straw man! I hate you, Moody Bible Institute! You lied to me!

Licona:
– many of these problems can be solved by realizing that the gospel writers compress time
– the stories don't have to list ALL the characters in every scene
– you don't have to force the Bible to meet some sort of wooden chronology
– the main thing is that the events happened, not that the descriptions match word for word across sources

Ehrman:
– you can't infer a miracle from history, David Hume says so
* extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, David Hume says so
* no I don't know what begging the question is, I'm not a philosopher
* no I don't remember when Bill Craig kicked my ass on this Hume objection in our debate
– the New Testament gospels contradict each other at every point, they are not reliable at

all!
* they cannot even agree what Jesus' name is! There are 1 trillion variants of Jesus' name!
* "one angel vs two angels" proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point
* my expansive list of FOUR theologically insignificant variants proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point

Licona:
– um, the gospels agree on the central narrative and disagree on the peripherals
– and they agree on the minimal facts I presented, even if they disagree about the number of angels

Ehrman:
* they have to agree on everything and be inerrant! The Moody Straw Man Bible Institute says so!
* I really really really need to have the number of angels be the same, or Jesus didn't die on the cross

Licona:
– but you don't deny any of the three minimal facts I presented (crucifixion, appearances, Paul)

Ehrman:
– well, I don't know if the group appearances occurred – maybe they did
– i think Jesus died on the cross, and I think that people said they saw him alive afterward

Licona:
– if you deny the minimal facts, then you are outside the majority of scholars

Ehrman:
– the majority of scholars who agree to the minimal facts you presented are Christians
* Gerd Ludemann is an atheist Christian
* James Crossley is an atheist Christian
* Hector Avalos is an atheist Christian
* the majority of the atheist scholars are all Christians!
– VIRTUALLY EVERYBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IS A CHRISTIAN!!! (Yes, he said that)

Licona:
– you really think so?

Ehrman
– you name one non-Christian in the SBL

Licona:
– (incredulous) um, John Dominic Crossan is an atheist

Ehrman:
– but he CLAIMS TO BE A CHRISTIAN so that means HE IS A CHRISTIAN
* all you have to do to be a Christian is claim to be one

* you can even deny the existence of God and the divinity of Christ and still be one, you bigot!

Licona:
– would Jesus or the apostles recognize a Christian as being someone who doubts God's existence

Ehrman:
– my view is that Jesus and the apostles would not recognize evangelical Christians as Christians
* a non-theist can be a Christian just by claiming to be one, but evangelical Christians are not Christians even if they claim to be Christians
– Christians can't record accurate history about the resurrection because they are biased

Licona:
– on your view, if a person is a Christian then he can't write about the evidence for the resurrection
– so then similarly, you would not allow Jews to write about the historicity of the Holocaust
– because you think that if people have an interest in what they are recording then they can't be objective
– but you have to consider the evidence we have, taking the biases of the sources into account

Ehrman:
– but the only people who believe in the resurrection are Christians!

Licona:
– well, people can consider the evidence for the resurrection as non-Christians
– and then if they accept it they can become Christians

Moderator:
– what about your bias? you don't believe in God – doesn't that pre-supposition affect how you do history?

Ehrman:
– well, I presuppose naturalism, so I can't admit to anything in history that implicates supernatural causes
* no I have never heard of the arguments for the Big Bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, limits on mutations creating information, habitability and so on – I never heard about that stuff from my atheist university professors and even if I had I would have been expelled for talking about it because that would make people feel bad about their sinning

Licona:
– so it's not bias you are concerned about, it's that you don't want history to contradict your untested religion of naturalism?
– why not just do the history without pre-suppositions to gather the minimal facts and then see what the best explanation is?

Ehrman:
* well God is out of bounds as an explanation because I could not have got my PhD if I mentioned God
* I really needed my smart atheist professors to like me and give me good grades so God is RIGHT OUT
* ideas like a real God and moral laws and Hell makes my atheist professors uncomfortable and that means low grades for me
* I'm not really interested in butting heads with professors – it's easier to just agree with them and move on to selling books to the gullible
* My books are much more sensational than Dan Brown books, so please buy lots of them!

Licona:
– what if the historical evidence is good enough to show that Jesus rose from the dead?

Ehrman:
– well I would not call someone rising from the dead a miracle – I would call it weird
* I also think that the Big Bang is "weird" but that doesn't prove that God created the universe out of nothing
* if it's a miracle then I'm going to have to not sin, and maybe even go to Hell, and we can't have that

Licona:
– well, you accept the three minimal facts
– what if we try all the naturalistic explanations for those three facts and there are problems with all of them?
– what if the resurrection is the best explanation for the three minimal facts?

Ehrman:
– but I want to arbitrarily rule God put because I want to pre-suppose naturalism
– there is not historical reason I have to rule put supernatural explanations a priori

Licona:
– I think you are struggling with the theological implications of a historical conclusion

Ehrman:
– well when you do theology, you have to avoid grounding your theology on science or history
– theology has to be completely made up or it's not good theology

Licona:
– I think you are letting your dislike of the implications of the resurrection determine your historical conclusions
– you have to use historical methods to gather the minimal facts that every scholar accepts, regardless of worldview
– then you weigh ALL the hypotheses, natural and supernatural, that could account for these minimal facts
– then you choose the hypothesis that best explains the minimal facts

Are you speaking Christianese to non-Christians? Here are ten translations to use instead

April 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this article by J. Warner Wallace in Pastor Matt's "Three Things You Need to Read This Week" round-up.

First, the list of Christianese: (not his term)

- **#1. "God has put you (or something) on my heart. / God told me."**
- **#2. "Be 'born again.' / Have a spiritual rebirth."**
- **#3. "You need to come to repentance. / Experience a conversion."**
- **#4. "Deal with your sin."**
- **#5. "Invite Jesus into your heart."**
- **#6. "Make Jesus the Lord of your life."**
- **#7. "Have faith."**
- **#8. "Be saved."**
- **#9. "Be washed by the blood of the Lamb."**
- **#10. "Be Sanctified."**
- **Bonus Expression #11. "Enjoy fellowship."**

This article is pretty funny, but it ought to be because I think we really need to shame church Christians when they talk like this.

Here's the one I liked best:

> **#5. "Invite Jesus into your heart."**
> You mean like a boyfriend? What exactly does that mean to have "Jesus in my heart?" I'm not an emotional kind of guy, so please don't ask me to sing songs or hold hands with Jesus, especially in public. Do I have to emasculate myself to become a Christian? If so, thanks for reminding me why I'm not a Christian.
>
> **Try this instead**: "When we admit our imperfections, believe Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our mistakes, and accept His sacrifice, we can start a new relationship with God."

LOL! Oh my gosh it's a wonder that any rough men become Christians after what they find in church.

He concludes:

> I understand the importance of our theologically rich Christian language, and as a Christian I often use similar words when talking with Christians. But when I'm talking with unbelievers, I try to think about how I used to hear and interpret these words before I became a Christian. How do I share what I believe? I take the time to translate important Christian concepts for those who might be willing

> to entertain the ideas if only I was willing to speak their language.

I have been mentoring a friend lately in Christian apologetics, and one of the things I've been doing related to this is to have lunches with all of my non-Christian co-workers so that we could have some *real* non-Christians to talk about. And then afterwards, I send her the after action reports so she can see how I was able to turn the conversation to the things we are studying. There is almost no Christianese during these lunch meetings, because I am talking to non-Christians. On Friday, I had lunch with a Muslim-raised atheist from India, and naturally we were talking about Easter and other stuff like the Protestant Reformation. But I didn't use any weird terminology with him. I am used to that, because my whole family is non-Christian.

I think that there is a real need for churches to train Christians in how to bring up topics that are of interest to Christians in public. The approach I've always taken is to have a broad worldview, including areas like economics and policy, so that I wouldn't just sit there silent while other people are talking. You have to show that you have knowledge in real-world areas before anyone will listen to you about other things. That's my approach anyway. You really have to establish your credentials before you start to speak about spiritual things.

Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical souls

April 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(Podcast uploaded, with permission, by ReligioPolitical Talk)

This podcast is a must-listen. Please take the time to download this podcast and listen to it. I guarantee that you will love this podcast. I even recommended it to my *Dad* and I almost never do that.

Details:

> In this podcast, J. Warner examines the evidence for the existence of the mind (and inferentially, the soul) as he looks at six classic philosophical arguments. Jim also briefly discusses Thomas Nagel's book, Mind and Cosmos and discusses the limitations of physicalism.

The MP3 file is here. (67 MB, 72 minutes)

Topics:

- Atheist Thomas Nagel's latest book "Mind and Cosmos" makes the case that materialism cannot account for the evidence of mental phenomena
- Nagel writes in this recent New York Times article that materialism cannot account for the reality of consciousness, meaning, intention and purpose
- Quote from the Nagel article:

> Even though the theistic outlook, in some versions, is consistent with the available scientific evidence, I don't believe it, and am drawn instead to a naturalistic, though non-materialist, alternative. Mind, I suspect, is not an inexplicable accident or a divine and anomalous gift but a basic aspect of nature that we will not understand until we transcend the built-in limits of contemporary scientific orthodoxy.

- When looking at this question, it's important to not have our conclusions pre-determined by presupposing materialism or atheism
- If your mind/soul doesn't exist and you are a purely physical being then that is a defeater for Christianity, so we need to respond
- Traditionally, Christians have been committed to a view of human nature called "dualism" – human beings are souls who *have* bodies
- The best way* to argue for the existence of the soul is using philosophical arguments

The case:

- The law of identity says that if A = B' if A and B have the exact same properties

- If A = the mind and B = the brain, then is A identical to B?
- Wallace will present 6 arguments to show that A is not identical to B because they have different properties

Not everyone of the arguments below might make sense to you, but you will probably find one or two that strike you as correct. Some of the points are more illustrative than persuasive, like #2. However, I do find #3, #5 and #6 persuasive.

1) First-person access to mental properties

- Thought experiment: Imagine your dream car, and picture it clearly in your mind
- If we invited an artist to come and sketch out your dream car, then we could see your dream car's shape on paper
- This concept of your dream car is not something that people can see by looking at your brain structure
- Physical properties can be physically accessed, but the properties of your dream care and privately accessed

2) Our experience of consciousness implies that we are not our bodies

- Common sense notion of personhood is that we own our bodies, but we are not our bodies

3) Persistent self-identity through time

- Thought experiment: replacing a new car with an old car one piece at a time
- When you change even the smallest part of a physical object, it changes the identity of that object
- Similarly, your body is undergoing changes constantly over time
- Every cell in your body is different from the body you had 10 years ago
- Even your brain cells undergo changes (see this from New Scientist – WK)
- If you are the same person you were 10 years ago, then you are not your physical body

4) Mental properties cannot be measured like physical objects

- Physical objects can be measured (e.g. – use physical measurements to measure weight, size, etc.)
- Mental properties cannot be measured

5) Intentionality or About-ness

- Mental entities can refer to realities that are physical, something outside of themselves
- A tree is not about anything, it just is a physical object
- But you can have thoughts about the tree out there in the garden that needs water

6) Free will and personal responsibility

- If humans are purely physical, then all our actions are determined by sensory inputs and genetic programming
- Biological determinism is not compatible with free will, and free will is required for personal responsibility
- Our experience of moral choices and moral responsibility requires free will, and free will requires minds/souls

He spends the last 10 minutes of the podcast responding to naturalistic objections to the mind/soul hypothesis.

*Now in the podcast, Wallace does say that scientific evidence is not the best kind of evidence to use when discussing this issue of body/soul and mind/brain. But I did blog yesterday about two pieces of evidence that I think are relevant to this discussion: corroborated near-death experiences and mental effort.

You might remember that Dr. Craig brought up the issue of substance dualism, and the argument from intentionality ("aboutness"), in his debate with the naturalist philosopher Alex Rosenberg, so this argument about dualism is battle-ready. You can add it to your list of arguments for Christian theism along with all the other arguments like the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, stellar habitability, galactic habitability, irreducible complexity, molecular machines, the Cambrian explosion, the moral argument, the resurrection, biological convergence, and so on.

What does the concept of resurrection mean to Jewish theologians?

April 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a helpful post from Eric Chabot talks about this and other interesting topics related to the resurrection.

Excerpt:

> **Where do we see resurrection in the Hebrew Bible?**
>
> As just stated, belief in a resurrection of persons from the dead are seen in eight passages: (Job 19:26; Ps. 17:15; 49:15; 73:24; Is. 26:19; 53:10; Dn. 12:2;12:13). The resurrection terminology is seen in two places (Ezek. 37:1-14; Hos. 6:2) to show a national and spiritual restoration brought about by the return from the exile. As far as the nature of the future bodily resurrection, it may involve a corpse or the receipt of a material body comparable to the present physical body (Job 19:26; Is. 26:19), or it may be a matter of transformation (Dn. 12:2-3 and perhaps 12:13); or glorification after reanimation, in the case of the righteous.
>
> As far as the function of the resurrection, it may be personal vindication (Is. 26:16; 53:10-12). Resurrection may also have a function in relation to reward or punishment (Dn. 12:2; 12:13), an assumption to heaven and enriched fellowship with God (Ps. 49:15; 73:24,26), or preface to the beatific vision of God (Ps. 17:15 and possibly Job 19:26). (1)
>
> The Greek word for resurrection is "anatasis" which means "a raising up" or "rising." There are resuscitations in the Tanakh such as the example of Elijah and Elisha raising a person from death (1 Kings 17-23; 2 Kings 4:34-35). While these figures may have been raised in a resurrection sense, they were not raised immortal in the same way Jesus was.
>
> **Extra-Biblical Passages on Resurrection**
>
> There are also extra-biblical passages that speak about the resurrection (Enoch 92:2; 4 Ezra 7:32; Enoch 91:10; 2 Maccabees 7:9; 14; 28-29). Even the The Messiah Apocalypse, which is dated between 100 and 80 B.C.E mentions resurrection: "He [God] frees the captives, makes the blind see, and makes the bent over stand straight…for he will heal the sick, revive the dead, and give good news to the humble and the poor he will satisfy, the abandoned he will lead, and the hungry he will make rich." (2)
>
> In the Rabbinical literature there are explicit teachings on the resurrection. It says in the Mishnah 10.1, it says, "All Israelites have a share in the world to come; … and these are they that have no share in the world to come: he that says that there is no resurrection of the dead prescribed in the Law." Moses Maimonides, a Jewish rabbi and a medieval Jewish philosopher who has forever

> influenced the Jewish and non-Jewish world said:
>
> ” The resurrection of the dead is one of the cardinal principles established by Moses our teacher. A person who does not believe this principle has no real religion, certainly not Judaism. However, resurrection is for the righteous. This is the earning of the statement in Breshit Rabbah, which declares: “the creative power of rain is both for the righteous and the wicked, but the resurrection of the dead is only for the righteous.” Our sages taught the wicked are called dead even when they are still alive; the righteous are alive even when they are dead” (Bab. Talmud Brakhot 18 b).
>
> 3 points are made here: 1. Resurrection is a cardinal principle taught in the Torah which all Jews must believe 2. It is for the righteous alone 3. All men must die and their bodies decompose. (3)

It’s important to understand that the concept of resurrection had a meaning before Christianity ever started. And it’s interesting to ask why the early Christians applied the notion of resurrection to Jesus. What is the best explanation for their decision to do such a strange thing? Why not just give up on him and deny that he was the Messiah when he was killed by the Romans?

Nancy Pelosi’s brother-in-law gets $737M of taxpayers’ money to build solar plant

April 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Nancy Pelosi is facing accusations of cronyism after a solar energy project, which her brother-in-law has a stake in, landed a $737 million loan guarantee from the Department of Energy, despite the growing Solyndra scandal.
>
> The massive loan agreement is raising new concerns about the use of taxpayers’ money as vast sums are invested in technology similar to that of the doomed energy project.
>
> The investment has intensified the debate over the effectiveness of solar energy as a major power source.
>
> The SolarReserve project is backed by an energy investment fund where the Minority Leader’s brother-in-law Ronald Pelosi is second in command.
>
> PCG Clean Energy & Technology Fund (East) LLC is listed as one of the investors in the project that has been given the staggering loan, which even dwarfs that given to failed company Solyndra.
>
> Other investors include one of the major investors in Solyndra, which is run by one of the directors of Solyndra.
>
> Steve Mitchell, who served on the board of directors at the bankrupt energy company, is also managing director of Argonaut Private Equity, which has invested in the latest project.
>
> Since Solyndra has filed for bankruptcy has been asked to testify about the goings on at the firm by two members of the House and ‘asked to provide documents to Congress’.
>
> […]The project approval came as part of $1 billion in new loans to green energy companies yesterday.

Did they learn anything from Solyndra? No:

> ‘The administration’s flagship project Solyndra is bankrupt and being investigated by the FBI, the promised jobs never materialised, and now the Department of Energy is preparing to rush out nearly $5 billion in loans in the final 48 hours before stimulus funds expire — that’s nearly $105 million every hour that must be finalised until the deadline,’ said Florida representative Cliff Stearns, who is chairman of the investigations subcommittee of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Since Nancy Pelosi took over federal spending in January 2007, the national debt has increased from $8.5 trillion to about $17.5 trillion. That’s NINE TRILLION dollars in new spending. And much of it just handed off to the people and groups who got the Democrats elected 2008 and 2012.

Those who complain about “income inequality” should not ignore single motherhood

April 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Wall Street Journal of all places.

Excerpt:

> The two-parent family has declined rapidly in recent decades. In 1960, more than 76% of African-Americans and nearly 97% of whites were born to married couples. Today the percentage is 30% for blacks and 70% for whites. The out-of-wedlock birthrate for Hispanics surpassed 50% in 2006. This trend, coupled with high divorce rates, means that roughly 25% of American children now live in single-parent homes, twice the percentage in Europe (12%). Roughly a third of American children live apart from their fathers.
>
> Does it matter? Yes, it does.
>
> […]In an essay for the Institute for Family Studies last December, called “Even for Rich Kids, Marriage Matters,” University of Virginia sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox reported that children in high-income households who experienced family breakups don’t fare as well emotionally, psychologically, educationally or, in the end, economically as their two-parent-family peers.
>
> Abuse, behavioral problems and psychological issues of all kinds, such as developmental behavior problems or concentration issues, are less common for children of married couples than for cohabiting or single parents, according to a 2003 Centers for Disease Control study of children’s health. The causal pathways are about as clear as those from smoking to cancer.
>
> More than 20% of children in single-parent families live in poverty long-term, compared with 2% of those raised in two-parent families, according to education-policy analyst Mitch Pearlstein’s 2011 book “From Family Collapse to America’s Decline.” The poverty rate would be 25% lower if today’s family structure resembled that of 1970, according to the 2009 report “Creating an Opportunity Society” from Brookings Institution analysts Ron Haskins and Isabel Sawhill. A 2006 article in the journal Demography by Penn State sociologist Molly Martin estimates that 41% of the economic inequality created between 1976-2000 was the result of changed family structure.
>
> Earlier this year, a team of researchers led by Harvard economist Raj Chetty reported that communities with a high percentage of single-parent families are less likely to experience upward mobility. The researchers’ report—”Where Is the Land of Opportunity?”—received considerable media attention. Yet mainstream news outlets tended to ignore the study’s message about family structure, focusing instead on variables with far less statistical impact, such as residential

> segregation.

So where does single motherhood by choice come from? The libertarian Cato Institute explains:

> [T]he evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on family structure concluded that "providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women."(9)
>
> […]Until teenage girls, particularly those living in relative poverty, can be made to see real consequences from pregnancy, it will be impossible to gain control over the problem of out-of- wedlock births. By disguising those consequences, welfare makes it easier for these girls to make the decisions that will lead to unwed motherhood.

So, if the Democrats opposed income inequality, they would oppose single motherhood by choice, and they would oppose the welfare that causes single motherhood by choice.

But of course the Democrats oppose none of those things, and they have worked to undermine the 1996 Welfare Reform bill while at the same time expanding the welfare payments that make single motherhood easier.

China on course to become ‘world’s most Christian nation’ within 15 years

April 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Officially, the People’s Republic of China is an atheist country but that is changing fast as many of its 1.3 billion citizens seek meaning and spiritual comfort that neither communism nor capitalism seem to have supplied.
>
> Christian congregations in particular have skyrocketed since churches began reopening when Chairman Mao’s death in 1976 signalled the end of the Cultural Revolution.
>
> Less than four decades later, some believe China is now poised to become not just the world’s number one economy but also its most numerous Christian nation.
>
> “By my calculations China is destined to become the largest Christian country in the world very soon,” said Fenggang Yang, a professor of sociology at Purdue University and author of Religion in China: Survival and Revival under Communist Rule.
>
> “It is going to be less than a generation. Not many people are prepared for this dramatic change.”
>
> China’s Protestant community, which had just one million members in 1949, has already overtaken those of countries more commonly associated with an evangelical boom. In 2010 there were more than 58 million Protestants in China compared to 40 million in Brazil and 36 million in South Africa, according to the Pew Research Centre’s Forum on Religion and Public Life.
>
> Prof Yang, a leading expert on religion in China, believes that number will swell to around 160 million by 2025. That would likely put China ahead even of the United States, which **had around 159 million Protestants in 2010 but whose congregations are in decline**.
>
> By 2030, China’s total Christian population, including Catholics, would exceed 247 million, placing it above Mexico, Brazil and the United States as the largest Christian congregation in the world, he predicted.
>
> “Mao thought he could eliminate religion. He thought he had accomplished this,” Prof Yang said. “It’s ironic – they didn’t. They actually failed completely.”

Previously, I had blogged about how the Christians in China were rebelling against the Chinese authorities to prevent them from demolishing their churches. It’s not a perfect country at all, but at least there is some good news there.

Josie Cunningham case shows real reasons some women choose abortion

April 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mirror reports.

Excerpt:

> Wannabe celebrity Josie Cunningham last night confessed the chance of appearing on TV's Big Brother was worth more than her unborn child's life.
>
> Puffing on a cigarette and rubbing her baby bump, the controversial model and call girl – who will have her abortion at a clinic this week – said: "I'm finally on the verge of becoming famous and I'm not going to ruin it now.
>
> "An abortion will further my career. This time next year I won't have a baby. Instead, I'll be famous, driving a bright pink Range Rover and buying a big house. Nothing will get in my way."
>
> Josie, 23, is already 18 weeks pregnant by either an escort agency client or a Premier League footballer.
>
> […]Josie – who caused outrage in 2013 when she demanded a £4,800 boob job on the NHS to become a glamour model – said: "Channel 5 were keen to shortlist me then they found out I was pregnant.

She's used to taking money from the NHS:

> "Suddenly I was pregnant and I could get free dental work on the NHS, so I got a tooth straightened for cosmetic reasons, and it all seemed great.
>
> […]"It's not ideal situation and I wish I had never fallen pregnant. I'm not on the Pill and in December the condom split when I was sleeping with a client.
>
> "Then I had sex with a footballer and didn't use contraception at all. I'd known him for years and we'd had sex before. I didn't even think about the morning after pill."
>
> The footballer and the client – who is a high-flying surgeon – both offered to support Josie financially if she had the baby. But she said no.
>
> So the footballer agreed to pay for the abortion at a London private clinic.
>
> […]Josie – already mum to boys Harley, six, and Frankie, three – said: "I've had five miscarriages so the one good thing about the pregnancy is that it has shown me I can still carry beyond 12 weeks.
>
> "I'm a good mum but this is something I have wanted for so long. I can't give up my big break for anything."

Later in the article, she is quoted saying that she is "a good mother" in spite of the fact that she is "still smoking up to 10 cigarettes a day and drinking" with an unborn child

whom she intends to murder.

Daniel Rodger, who writes at the LTI blog, thinks he knows why this sort of thing is happening more often.

Excerpt:

> The way in which Josie talks about her unborn child as if they are something disposable and fickle exposes how successful the dehumanising of the unborn has been in the UK. The maternal relationship is now seen as something tentative and conditional. The unborn must meet societies standards of normalcy before they are allowed to continue their existence, that is providing they come at the right time.
>
> Francis Schaeffer once said that the two values of middle-class America were affluence and personal peace and I think they're also applicable in the UK, and you can see these values reflected in Josies' reasoning. By affluence Schaeffer meant the acquisition of things and more things, that's why Josie wants her pink Range Rover and big house, if her unborn baby gets in her way to achieving those ends (utilitarian reasoning) its the unborn baby who loses. Personal peace simply means wanting your own lifestyle undisturbed regardless of the effects on others and in this case the unborn functions as a disturbance to her personal peace.

Abortion is definitely very much at home in a secular worldview where it's OK for the strong to mistreat the weak. I would suggest that we all examine ourselves and decide whether our own personal affluence and happiness is more important than someone else's life – and especially of our own children's life. That little child didn't ask to be made by that woman, but her decision to have sex did make him, and now she is responsible. Single motherhood is a terrible thing, but it's a worse thing to kill a child. The best policy is to not have sex until both people are ready to welcome a child into the world.

Large-scale UK study confirms the importance of fathers to children

April 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A father's love is as important to a child's emotional development as a mother's, a large-scale study has confirmed.
>
> Examining the cases of more than 10,000 sons and daughters revealed how a cold or distant father can damage a child's life, sometimes for decades to come.
>
> The review of 36 studies from around the world concluded that his love is at least as important to youngsters as that of their mothers.
>
> Researcher Professor Ronald Rohner said that fatherly love is key to development and hopes his findings will motivate more men to become involved in caring for their offspring.
>
> 'In the US, Great Britain and Europe, we have assumed for the past 300 years that all children need for normal healthy development is a loving relationship with their mother,' he said.
>
> 'And that dads are there as support for the mother and to support the family financially but are not required for the healthy development of the children.
>
> 'But that belief is fundamentally wrong. We have to start getting away from that idea and realise the dad's influence is as great, and sometimes greater, than the mother's.'
>
> His conclusions came after he examined data from studies in which children and adults were asked how loving their parents were.
>
> Questions included if they were made to feel wanted or needed, if their parents went out of their way to hurt their feelings and if they felt loved.
>
> Those taking part also answered questions about their personality. These ranged from 'I think about fighting or being mean' to 'I think the world is a good, happy place'.
>
> Tallying the results showed that those rejected in childhood felt more anxious and insecure as well as hostile and aggressive.
>
> Many of the problems carried over into adulthood, reported the study published in the journal Personality and Social Psychology Review.
>
> Crucially, a father's love was often just as important as a mother's. In some cases, it was even more so. One reason for this may be that rejection is more painful when it comes from the parent the child regards as more powerful or respected.

You can read more about how fatherlessness damages children here.

I think the first question we should ask the people who want to redefine marriage is this: “which parent to do you think that a child can do without? the mother or the father?”. We must do everything we can as a society to keep both of a child’s natural parents in the home while the child grows up. If we really care about children, then we should prefer to meet their needs, even if the grown-ups have to be a bit more responsible in their decision making. if the conflict is between innocent children and selfish grown-ups, then the children should win.

We need laws and policies that promote traditional marriage, not laws and policies that break it down and destroy it. Repealing no-fault divorce, lowering subsidies for single motherhood, and making shared parenting the default position, would all help solve the problem. Policies like school choice and lower corporate tax rates helps men to be able to perform in their role as provider. We have to be practical and ask: “what makes men capable of marriage and parenting?” If we want strong fathers, then it makes sense to ask how to make fatherhood more reasonable: what do men need in order to do what we want them to do?

Christians should be especially concerned about the presence of fathers, given the evidence I blogged about before showing how the presence of quality fathers is essential for passing Christian beliefs on to children. Churches need to ask themselves tough questions: Are we teaching women how to choose men based on practical concerns and proven abilities in our churches? And are we doing a good job of attracting men to churches by promoting the masculine, practical aspects of Christianity that men like – like science, apologetics debates, economics and foreign policy?

Survey: Christian mothers value family over their relationship with Jesus

April 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My deist friend ECM sent me this shocking article from Church for Men blog. Please read, then read my comments below.

Excerpt:

> When forced to choose their top priority in life, Christian women overwhelmingly pick family over faith, according to a survey from Barna Research. Five times more women chose "being a mother or parent" than chose "being a follower of Christ," as their most important role in life.
>
> These stunning survey results give us a clue as to why Christianity is so rapidly changing into a family-centered faith; why Christian culture is feminizing; and why the gender gap in many denominations continues to grow.
>
> The researchers wrote:
>
> [Women's] spiritual lives are rarely their most important source of identity. That role is taken up by the strong priority Christian women place on family.
>
> The preeminence of family was most overt for Christian women when it came to naming the highest priority in their lives. More than half (53%) says their highest priority in life is family. By contrast, only one third as many women (16%) rate faith as their top priority, which is less than the cumulative total of women who say their health (9%), career performance (5%) or comfortable lifestyle (5%) are top on their list of life objectives.
>
> Despite the characterization of women as intricately connected to their peers, only 3% of Christian women say their friends are their top priority, equal to those who place finances (2%) and leisure (1%) at the top.
>
> Women's sense of identity very closely follows their priorities, with 62% of women saying their most important role in life is as a mother or parent. Jesus came next: 13% of Christian women believe their most important role in life is as a follower of Christ. In third place is their role as wife (11%).
>
> Any other roles women identify with came in at similarly low rankings and far below that of a parent, including that of employee or executive (3%), that of church member (2%) and that of friend or neighbor (2%). American citizen, teacher and caregiver all rank with one percent each.
>
> The researchers continue:
>
> Perhaps not surprisingly given where they place their identity, Christian women also point to family-related objectives as their most important goal in life. Raising their children well is the highest goal for Christian women (36%). While, roughly one quarter of Christian women identify faith-oriented goals as most important

> (26%).
>
> Though women consider themselves family-driven, their marriages may be suffering from a lack of intentionality: only 2% of Christian women say their most important goal in life is to enhance their relationship with their significant other. Marriage comes in below several other goals, including health (6%), career (5%), lifestyle (4%), personal growth (4%), morality (4%) and financial objectives (3%). Only goals related to personal appearance, relationships outside the home and travel come in lower than marital goals.

And I will include one paragraph from the author of the post:

> While the Bible certainly endorses interpersonal harmony, Scripture is not chock-full of happy relationship advice. When Jesus spoke of relationships he usually predicted their demise (Matt. 10:34-35), or promised rewards for people who abandoned their loved ones (Luke 18:29-30). God takes no delight in dysfunctional relationships, but neither did he send his son so you could be at peace with your kids.

I have to quote that because I rebelled against both my parents in order to become an evangelical Protestant. First one in the family.

Now I have something to say about this survey data.

I get a lot of flak for my 10 courting questions that are designed to evaluate a woman's worldview prior to any commitment being made. Men and women alike often tell me to lower my standards. The idea that the marriage is supposed to serve God has no traction with most young evangelicals today. Everything is about emotions and appearances and peer approval and complying with the secular culture. You choose a person who will improve your self-esteem and impress your friends. Who cares what their worldview is? The main things in life are happiness, health and wealth, right?

The 10 courting questions are designed to help a Christian man make sure that his wife is going to support him in serving God and making the relationship count for God. They are also designed to make sure that his wife will do everything possible to guarantee that his children remain Christians throughout their lives. The simple fact of the matter is that men are away at work most of the time doing stuff to make money. The man's wife is the one who is going to be at home doing the more important work of making sure that his children learn about God, and can resist the culture.

The danger you want to avoid is a situation where your wife is not able to explain to the children how Christianity is rooted in reason and evidence. Your wife needs to be informed and passionate about Christian apologetics, public knowledge related to the Christian worldview and public policies that affect the execution of a Christian life plan. If she divorces Christianity from truth, then she will not be able to answer the questions of your children, or deal with their doubts, or anticipate threats to their faith (e.g. – the pluralism/relativism at the university), or help them to resist secular popular culture, or explain non-Biblical reasons for various Christian views now unpopular with the culture,

e.g. – premarital sex, gay marriage, global warming socialism. And so on.

If your children are raised to think that Christianity is an arbitrary set of rules that cannot be debated or questioned, all in the name of family happiness and respectability, then as soon as they get to university, they will rebel. So the first priority can never be "family" – the first priority has to be truth. Christianity is not a tool to achieve happiness in the home, or respectability with the neighbors. Having family as a priority can cause questions and doubts about Christian truth claims to be swept under the rug. That works for a while, but as soon as the kids hit university, they will drop their Christian faith like a hot potato. A better idea is to focus more on truth and open discussion, and let all the doubts and questions and discomfort about being different come out in the open while the kids are growing up.

Christian men, choose your wife wisely. She has to be a thinker. She has to be a fighter. And you have to lead her during the courtship to take Christian worldview and apologetics seriously.

UPDATE: This survey made me think of this phone call – listen carefully to the mother's response to her son's atheism: "How dare you embarrass the family, what will the neighbors think?". Have a listen – does this response ring true to you?

It's all about family (and how the family is perceived in the community), and nothing about truth. Nothing about knowledge.

UPDATE: Got an anonymous response from a husband:

> I recently read your post on women choosing family over faith and I fear that I may have a wife that falls into that category. We got married when I was a very young Christian and while I am maturing in my faith, I see little to no passion or growth in her to follow after Christ (though she goes to church with me, prays multiple times a day and sings praise songs often). I have tried to gently lead her to a more intimate relationship with Christ, but nothing I do seems to help much.

He wanted advice for men in this situation, but that would be another post for another time. In the meantime, bring it up during the courting, and expect to every wife candidate demonstrate initiative and interest in bringing apologetics into the church and university – as well as mentoring co-workers and neighbors.

Canada surpasses USA to lead the world in median income after taxes

April 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The American middle class, long the most affluent in the world, has lost that distinction.
>
> While the wealthiest Americans are outpacing many of their global peers, a New York Times analysis shows that across the lower- and middle-income tiers, citizens of other advanced countries have received considerably larger raises over the last three decades.
>
> After-tax middle-class incomes in Canada — substantially behind in 2000 — now appear to be higher than in the United States. The poor in much of Europe earn more than poor Americans.
>
> The numbers, based on surveys conducted over the past 35 years, offer some of the most detailed publicly available comparisons for different income groups in different countries over time. They suggest that most American families are paying a steep price for high and rising income inequality.
>
> Although economic growth in the United States continues to be as strong as in many other countries, or stronger, a small percentage of American households is fully benefiting from it. Median income in Canada pulled into a tie with median United States income in 2010 and has most likely surpassed it since then. Median incomes in Western European countries still trail those in the United States, but the gap in several — including Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden — is much smaller than it was a decade ago.
>
> In European countries hit hardest by recent financial crises, such as Greece and Portugal, incomes have of course fallen sharply in recent years.
>
> […]The struggles of the poor in the United States are even starker than those of the middle class. A family at the 20th percentile of the income distribution in this country makes significantly less money than a similar family in Canada, Sweden, Norway, Finland or the Netherlands. Thirty-five years ago, the reverse was true.

Thanks Obama! Canada is doing very well with their conservative prime minister, but things are not so good down here.

New study: Teens with involved fathers more likely to graduate from college

April 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article by W. Bradford Wilcox from the American Enterprise Institute.

Excerpt:

> Family scholars from sociologist Sara McLanahan to psychologist Ross Parke have long observed that fathers typically play an important role in advancing the welfare of their children.[2] Focusing on the impact of family structure, McLanahan has found that, compared to children from single-parent homes, children who live with both their mother and father have significantly lower rates of nonmarital childbearing and incarceration and higher rates of high school and college graduation.[3] Examining the extent and style of paternal involvement, Parke notes, for instance, that engaged fathers play an important role in "helping sons and daughters achieve independent and distinct identities" and that this independence often translates into educational and occupational success.[4]
>
> Likewise, a US Department of Education study found that among children living with both biological parents, those with highly involved fathers were 42 percent more likely to earn As and 33 percent less likely to be held back a year in school than children whose dads had low levels of involvement.[5] But little research has examined the association between paternal involvement per se and college graduation.
>
> I investigated that association by using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), a study of a nationally representative sample of adolescents who were in grades 7–12 in the 1994–95 school year.[6] The Add Health data indicate that young adults who had involved fathers when they were in high school are significantly more likely to graduate from college.
>
> […]Compared to teens who reported that their fathers were not involved, teens with involved fathers were 98 percent more likely to graduate from college, and teens with very involved fathers were 105 percent more likely to graduate from college (see figure 1, which adjusts for socioeconomic background).[7] Clearly, young women and men with more engaged fathers are more likely to acquire a college diploma than their peers without such a father.

I would think that fathers are helpful for keeping children out of trouble, warning them away from threats, helping them to do their homework and get jobs, and showing them the value of work and frugality. I think that in general, fathers have a concern that their children will not be able to provide for themselves and will starve. They tend to try to push their kids into harder subject areas that pay more, instead of letting the kids decide what makes them happy. And it's good for kids that fathers do those roles – it makes a

difference.

Videos from the Tactical Faith Resurrection Weekend 2014

April 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

All 9 videos from the Tactical Faith conference last weekend have now been posted on Youtube:

- "What was the crucifixion like?" – Mike Licona 48:21
- "The New Testament: Text, Translation, Canon" – Mike Licona 46:51
- Logos Bible Software presentation – Greg Monette 17:13
- "The Burial of Jesus" – Greg Monette 49:08
- "iWitness: Evangelism and the Cross" – Doug Powell 42:14
- "Why are there differences in the gospels?" – Mike Licona 1:06:38
- Shroud of Turin – Dave Glander 52:58
- "Resurrection: A Creedal Defense" – Shawn White 50:37
- "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" – Mike Licona 39:13

Here's the last one in that list, which I watched and liked:

A very impressive line-up of scholars from Tactical Faith.

DOJ announces plan to release prisoners convicted of drug offenses

April 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> The Justice Department moved Wednesday to significantly expand the number of people eligible for clemency, issuing new guidelines allowing certain prisoners who already have served at least 10 years behind bars to apply for release.
>
> The initiative is part of a broader Obama administration effort to ease sentences for nonviolent drug offenders.
>
> […]DOJ leaders… argue that the new clemency changes are meant to address inconsistencies in sentences over time. The announcement is aimed primarily at drug prisoners, especially those sentenced under old guidelines that resulted in significantly harsher penalties for people caught with crack cocaine than for those who possessed the powder form of the drug. But it also applies to federal inmates imprisoned for other crimes, provided they meet the same criteria for clemency.

Keep in mind that this is the same DOJ that oversaw the sale of assault weapons to Mexican drug cartels. At least one of which was later used to kill a Border Patrol officer. So no one should be surprised where they come down when the rights of the law-abiding conflict with the rights of criminals.

It would be nice if criminals who are released would only commit future crimes against the people who are making the decision to release them. But unfortunately that's not what happens. Instead, the people who are released will go to the poorest communities and commit more crimes there. It's the poorest people who have to bear the consequences for this "compassion".

Everyone celebrate diversity: three married lesbians set to raise fatherless children

April 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this UK Daily Mail article about three Massachusetts (where else?) lesbians.

Excerpt:

> The world's only 'married' lesbian threesome are expecting their first child.
>
> Doll, Kitten and Brynn, from Massachusetts, were joined together in a marriage-style ceremony last August and are expecting a daughter in July.
>
> Kitten, 27, is pregnant after undergoing IVF treatment using an anonymous sperm donor, and the trioeventually plan to have three children – one for each of them.
>
> […]Doll, Kitten and Brynn Young married in a ceremony in August 2013, when each of their fathers walked them down the aisle. All three women wore white wedding gowns and exchanged rings.

All three of the women will be so happy, and what's the harm? Children don't need fathers. Well, maybe they do, since that's what the research says. BUT who cares what children need? They are just objects to amuse the adults anyway, am I right? Of course I am. I'm sure that child, when he grows up, is going to be so thankful to these women for her conception by anonymous sperm donor. That's not going to cause any problems at all, will it? Young women do so well without fathers.

J. Warner Wallace's surprising advice to stop apostasy among young Christians

April 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace has posted his recommended plan to halt the exodus of young Christians from Christianity during college.

It's all up at Cold Case Christianity.

Excerpt:

> In my last post, I summarized the studies and publications that describe the flight of young people from the Church. A compelling cumulative circumstantial case can be made to support the fact that young college aged Christians are walking away from Christianity in record numbers. What can we do about it? What *can* be done? Whenever people ask me this question, I always say the same thing. STOP TEACHING YOUNG CHRISTIANS. Just stop it. Whatever Christendom is doing in its effort to teach it's young, the effort appears to largely be a failure. In fact, Ken Ham (in his book, *Already Gone:Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do To Stop It*) found that young Christians who faithfully attended Bible classes were actually more likely to question the authority of Scripture, more likely to defend the legality of abortion, same-sex marriage, and premarital sex, and more likely to leave the church! What's going on here? I think I know. It's time to stop teaching our young people; it's time to start training them.
>
> There's a difference between teaching and training. Training is teaching in preparation for a battle. Boxers train for upcoming fights. In fact, boxers are sometimes known to get fat and lazy until the next fight is scheduled. Once the date has been signed, fighters begin to train in earnest. Why? Because they know that they are going to eventually get in the ring and face an aggressive opponent. We train when we know we are about to encounter a battle. Imagine for a moment that you are enrolled in an algebra class. If the teacher assured you that you would never, ever be required to take a test, and that you would pass the class regardless of your level of understanding, how hard do you think you would study? How deeply do you think you would come to understand the material? How committed do you think you would be to the material?
>
> […]Years ago, as a youth pastor, I started taking annual trips to Salt Lake City and Berkeley. Why? I was scheduling theological and philosophical battles to help prepare my young Christians for the larger looming battle they would someday face on their own. If you want to teach your young people theology, there is no better method than to put them in direct contact with people who believe in a very sophisticated heresy. Mormons use the same terminology as Christians but deny the basic tenants of our faith. In order to dialogue with Mormons effectively, we first have to understand what *we* believe. When we train young people in

> preparation for an evangelism trip to Salt Lake City, we give meaning and purpose to the content of our teaching. In a similar way, our evangelistic trips to Berkeley (where we contact notable atheist speakers and atheist groups on campus) require us to prepare ourselves to answer the myriad of atheistic objections we will inevitably encounter. Once again, the content of our teaching in preparation for this trip takes on purpose and meaning when we know the level of our understanding will eventually be tested.

Read the whole thing. Wallace has experience working with young people, and lecturing on apologetics here at home and abroad. He understands young people because he has had to deal with them. Even if you don't agree with them, it's an interesting view. Would the church really turn away from being inward-focused and rooted in blind faith and emotional singing, and re-invent their approach so that it takes the other side seriously?

By the way, this is something I like to use in my mentoring of young people and in courting women as well. If I am trying to choose someone to work on, my first questions are always about what they do for a living, what they've studied, who in their lives is a non-Christian. I am always looking for people who have some opposition to Christianity in their lives, because it's those people who have a motivation to learn. I am always surprised how naive pastors and worship leaders and youth pastors are about the opposition to Christianity in the world. They seem to be in their own little happy bubbles, never coming out to deal with people who disagree with them. I think the problem is that they often think that Christianity is not about truth but about feelings, and so no work needs to be done to defend any truth claims.

Ontario Law Society bans graduates of Christian university from practicing law

April 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political map of Canada

The government-run leftist CBC reports. (H/T Kevin)

Excerpt:

> The Law Society of Upper Canada has voted 28 to 21 against the accreditation of Trinity Western University's proposed new law school in B.C.
>
> The vote means graduates from the B.C. university would not be able to practise in Ontario.
>
> "Benchers took this issue very seriously, and did not find it easy to reach a decision," said the Law Society of Upper Canada's treasurer, in a written statement.
>
> "As members of the legal profession, we recognize the entrenched values of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and Ontario's Human Rights Code, including the right of equality and the right to freedom of religion, and the foundational nature of those rights to our democracy."
>
> Trinity Western University students must sign a strict Christian covenant governing behaviour, including abstaining from sexual intimacy "that violates the sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman."
>
> Critics say the covenant essentially bans anyone in a gay relationship from enrolling in the school.
>
> Earlier this month, the West Coast Legal Education Action Fund, a non-profit

> organization founded to ensure women’s equality rights under the law, argued against the university law school’s accreditation in B.C.

It’s important to note that Canada was one of the first countries to legalize same-sex marriage, so they are a sort of crystal ball for us to see what happens when a country does that. In my opinion, when people say “I am for same-sex marriage”, what they really mean is that if you disagree with them on that, then you need to be forced to agree with them, or else. That is what happens when the definition of marriage in society changes and dissent becomes a crime. Just ask Frank Turek or Brendan Eich how tolerant the gay left is of different views.

Marrying a non-Christian: does the Bible allow it?

April 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think that the best way to answer the question, “should I marry a non-Christian?”, is to ask whether it makes any difference if your spouse is on board with your plans for your ministry and with your marriage. So let’s take a look at a case where someone famous who chose a Christian wife, and we’ll see how much that decision affected his ministry and his marriage.

I want to draw your attention to a talk on “Vision in Life” given by Dr. William Lane Craig. Dr. Craig is the ablest defender of the Christian faith operating today. He has done formal academic debates with all of the best known atheists on major university campuses in front of *thousands* of university students. This list of atheists and agnostics includes people like Christopher Hitchens and Victor Stenger. The Hitchens debate took place in an auditorium filled with 5000 students, and many thousands more were watching at churches all over the world. How did Dr. Craig get these opportunities to evangelize on secular university campuses?

Well, he owes a lot of his success to his amazing wife Jan, as we shall see in the summary of his talk on that topic.

The MP3 file is here. (32 minutes)

This talk was Dr. Craig’s chapel address to Biola University students, and he is introduced by his son, John, a Biola University grad.

In the talk, it becomes clear that Bill’s wife Jan plays an *enormous* role in his success. Indeed, you will see that if it were not for her, he never would have gotten *either* of his doctorates, or even his second Masters degree. Why was she so supportive of his plans? Because she had the same broad goal of evangelism through scholarship. Let’s see how she encouraged him.

Here is a quotation that occurs about 11 minutes into the talk, as Bill describes the completion of his Bachelor’s degree at Wheaton:

> And it was at Wheaton that my vision began to focus on presenting the gospel in the context of giving an intellectual defense of the faith, to appeal not only to the heart but also to the head, as well. And so I determined that I would go on to seminary for further training.
>
> But, my senior year, in chapel, we heard a speaker who challenged us, before going on to further education, to take a couple of years out, and to wring out the sponge, so to speak, that had been soaking up all that knowledge, and to work with university students while we were still about the same age.
>
> And so I joined the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for 2 years, and was assigned to Northern Illinois University. And that was where I met my wife Jan. She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota where she had come to

> faith in Christ. And she had a similar vision for her life of evangelism and discipleship.
>
> And as we worked at NIU together, she with gals and I with the guys, leading students to Christ and discipling them to walk with the Lord, we fell in love. And we decided that we would be more effective if we joined forces and became a team.

It is at this point in the talk where Bill begins to explain just how Jan molded him into the lean, mean debating machine that travels the world striking terror into the hearts of atheists.

Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

In an article on his web site, he talks about how Jan encouraged him to do his first Ph.D:

> As graduation from Trinity neared, Jan and I were sitting one evening at the supper table in our little campus apartment, talking about what to do after graduation. Neither of us had any clear leading or inclination of what we should do next.
>
> So Jan said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really like to do next?"
>
> I replied, "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to England and do a doctorate under John Hick."
>
> "Who's he?" she asked.
>
> "Oh, he's this famous British philosopher who's written extensively on arguments for the existence of God," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a cosmological argument for God's existence."
>
> But it hardly seemed a realistic idea.

> The next evening at supper Jan handed me a slip of paper with John Hick's address on it. "I went to the library today and found out that he's at the University of Birmingham in England," she said. "Why don't you write him a letter and ask him if you can do a doctoral thesis under him on the cosmological argument?"
>
> What a woman! So I did, and to our amazement and delight Professor Hick wrote back saying he'd be very pleased to supervise my doctoral work on that subject. So it was an open door!

And in the same article, he explains how Jan encouraged him to get his second Ph.D:

> As Jan and I neared the completion of my doctoral studies in Birmingham, our future path was again unclear to us. I had sent out a number of applications for teaching positions in philosophy at American universities but had received no bites. We didn't know what to do.
>
> I remember it like yesterday. We were sitting at the supper table in our little house outside Birmingham, and Jan suddenly said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really *like* to do next?"
>
> I laughed because I remembered how the Lord had used her question to guide us in the past. I had no trouble answering the question. "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to Germany and study under Wolfhart Pannenberg."
>
> "Who's he?"
>
> "Oh, he's this famous German theologian who's defended the resurrection of Christ historically," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus."
>
> Our conversation drifted to other subjects, but Jan later told me that my remark had just lit a fire under her. The next day while I was at the university, she slipped away to the library and began to research grants-in-aid for study at German universities. Most of the leads proved to be defunct or otherwise inapplicable to our situation. But there were two grants she found that were possibilities. You can imagine how surprised I was when she sprung them on me!

Both of these Ph.D experiences are also described in the talk. And the talk concludes as follows:

> I am so thankful to be married to a woman who is tremendously resourceful, tremendously talented and energetic, who could have pursued an independent career in any number of areas, but instead, she has chose to wed her aspirations to mine, and to make it her goal to make me the most effective person I can be, for Christ. And she has been like my right arm in ministry over these many years. And it is a tremendous privilege to be a team with a person like that.
>
> And you young men, I would encourage you, if you marry, to find a gal who

> shares your vision, not some independent vision, but who is interested in aligning herself with you, and pursuing together a common vision and goal that will draw you [together], so that you will avoid the growing separateness that so often creeps into marriages.

And now you know the rest of Bill's story. *The person you marry will have an enormous influence on the impact you will have for Christ and his Kingdom.* It is up to you to decide whether that influence is going to be positive or negative, by deciding if you will marry, and if you do marry, by deciding whom you will marry. If you marry a non-Christian, you cannot expect to achieve the same things for God as you can with someone who accepts your core convictions and is willing to sacrifice their happiness so that God can be made happier.

You may also be interested in this talk given by William Lane Craig, entitled "Healthy Relationships" (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008) (audio here) In that talk, he offers advice to Christians who want to have a marriage that is consistent with their Christian faith.

Can a person be a committed Christian while ignoring apologetics?

April 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I would like to describe a situation that arises frequently that concerns me. The situation I describe below brings out a flaw I see in the way that rank-and-file Christians respond to criticisms of Christianity in the public square.

Here is the situation

Eve is busy programming away at her desk, rushing to check in her unit tests so she can spend her lunch hour reading the latest Stephenie Meyer novel, or check on the schedule for her local sports team, "the Vicariouses" (she has tickets for Thursday). Suddenly Eve hears Alice talking to Bob on the other side of her cubicle. She stops typing to listen to the following unencrypted conversation.

Alice: I was watching a documentary on the Discovery Channel last night that said that the universe has always existed, so there is no God!

Bob: I was watching a documentary on PBS last night showing simulations of how the first life started on Earth! God didn't do it!

Alice: I saw "Inherit the Spin" on the weekend! The only reason people oppose evolution is because of the Bible! Not because of science!

Bob: I'm going to see "The Va Dinci Code" this weekend! It says that the Gospels are unreliable and that Jesus didn't even die on the cross!

Alice: I just bought the latest Dichard Rawkins book "Christians Should Be Fed to Lions and the Bible Should Be Burned"!

Bob: I will read that as soon as I finish Histopher Chritchens' book "Why God is the Evilest, Stupidest Person in the World"!

Eve double-majored in business and computer science at the Indian Institute of Technology, and has an MBA from the London School of Economics. She has spent a ton of time, effort and money studying very difficult subjects for her job, and she even publishes research papers. She works full-time and runs her own business part-time, and teaches night classes for a well-known university. She earns about 200K per year. She lives in a huge house, drives an expensive car, and goes on vacation abroad to all the best vacation spots.

Eve thinks she is a Christian. She has attended church since childhood, her husband is a church elder and she sings in the church choir. She reads the Bible and prays every night, because it helps her to get sleepy before bed. She gives lots of money to the poor. She teaches Sunday school to very small children. She has even read all of the Narnia novels *five times*! She even has a calendar filled with nature scenes and itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny Bible verses posted on her office wall at work! Judging from all of these facts, you might expect Eve to get in on that conversation with Alice and Bob, and set them

straight.

But she won't. Why not?

Why won't Eve stand?

I am wondering if anyone can explain to me why it is that most church Christians are not able or not willing to make a public defense when God's reputation is called into question. It seems to me that there are two bad effects that follow from Eve's unwillingness to stand up and invite Alice and Bob to lunch so that she can address their questions and concerns.

1. God's reputation is being trashed by Alice and Bob on the basis of lies they've swallowed from pop culture. These lies about God's existence and character could be easily corrected with a minimal amount of study, which Eve is capable of – she is a genius and has amazing entrepreneurial skills. If someone said similar lies about her husband or children, she *would* speak up, but she won't speak up for God.
2. Alice and Bob are bound for Hell unless someone cares enough to correct their mistaken beliefs, which, along with their sinfulness, is what is keeping them from a relationship with God that would go on in Heaven. If Eve's husband or children were mistakenly about to drink poison thinking it was Aspirin, then Eve *would* speak up. But to save her co-workers from Hell, she won't speak up.

Eve is capable of studying to defend the faith, because of her great success in other areas where so much time and effort were required to master difficult material. So why has she not applied herself to answering public challenges to her Christian faith from her professors, teachers, actors, the media, politicians, scientists, historians, etc.? She's heard these questions about God's existence and character all through high school and into university and then now in her career. Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says to prepare a defense? Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says to acknowledge God before men? Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says that all authentic believers in Jesus will suffer a little for their faith?

It seems to me that if she did spend some time studying, and then made her defense to her co-workers, then two good things would follow:

1. Eve would be demonstrating her love for God and her friendship with God by protecting his reputation when it is called into question by unbelievers in public settings. That's what friends do – if Eve wanted to be God's friend, she would care that no one believed lies about him and told lies about him in public settings.
2. Eve would be demonstrating her love for her neighbor if she was able to correct some of these false beliefs, such as that the universe is eternal, or that a historical case cannot be made for the resurrection, or that evil is not compatible with theism. It's important for Alice and Bob to know that Christianity is not stupid.

So why is it that Eve is able to go to church for 20 years, sing in the choir, read the Bible, read the Narnia stories, pray on her knees, and yet still be unwilling to do the best thing

for God and the best thing for her neighbor?

Questions for my readers

Can anyone help me to understand why Christians are willing to accept this? Why is this not being addressed by churches?

Do you have an experience where a Christian group stifled apologetics? Tell me about that, and why do you think they would do that, in view of the situation I outlined above? My experience is that atheists (as much as I tease them) are FAR more interested in apologetics than church Christians – they are the ones who borrow books and debates, and try to get their atheist wives to go to church after they becomes interested in going to church. Why is that?

I'm not saying we all have to be geniuses. I am just saying that we should put as much effort into learning apologetics as we put into learning school stuff and work stuff.

Note: I picked these names because there is a running gag in computer network security where these names are used to describe the actors. Eve is the eavesdropping hacker, get it?

520 million year old shrimp heart is more complex than those of today

April 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the straight story on the scientific discovery, as reported in Bioscience Technology. Excerpt:

> 520 million years ago, the first known animal heart was formed.
>
> It was the heart of an ancient shrimp, and quite a heart it was. For it, and its vascular system, have been found to be more complex than that of modern shrimp, researchers reported in a recent *Nature Communications*. Its cardiovascular system was apparently one of evolution's first templates for modern cardiovascular systems. Significant streamlining has occurred since.
>
> The find comes on the heels of an equally important one by the same group: that of a stunningly intact nervous system from the same breed of primordial shrimp: *Fuxianhuia protensa.*
>
> "This is only the second case of the description of a cardiovascular system in a Cambrian arthropod, the first one being that of the inch-long *Marrella* from Burgess Shale," emailed Diego Garcia-Bellido of the University of Adelaide, who co-discovered that first arthropod while at the University of Cambridge. Garcia-Bellido was not involved in the new study. "This new finding of a cardiovascular system in a larger animal (*Fuxianhuia* is about two to three times as large, thus more detail), together with a fantastically preserved, and very complex, nervous system, unknown in *Marrella*, and the gut, make it probably the most complete arthropod internal anatomy known in the fossil record."
>
> The main conclusion drawn, said Garcia-Bellido: "The level of complexity of the *Fuxianhuia* was extremely high, considering that we are studying some of the oldest animals on Earth."

Now, if you're like me, you're skeptical that soft tissues can be preserved in the fossil record, but:

> Said the paleontologist via email: "As we know, most soft tissue of animals tends to decay away once the animals died, so often only the hard parts of animal body (bones, shells, teeth, etc.) are preserved in fossils. However, under very exceptional circumstances, soft tissue and anatomical organ system can also be preserved in fossils."

Keep in mind that 520 mya is right after the Cambrian explosion that intelligent design people like me love to talk about. I mean you are going from single-celled life to complex organ types in a few million years. Fine if you are an ID proponent, but devastating if you are a Darwinian naturalist.

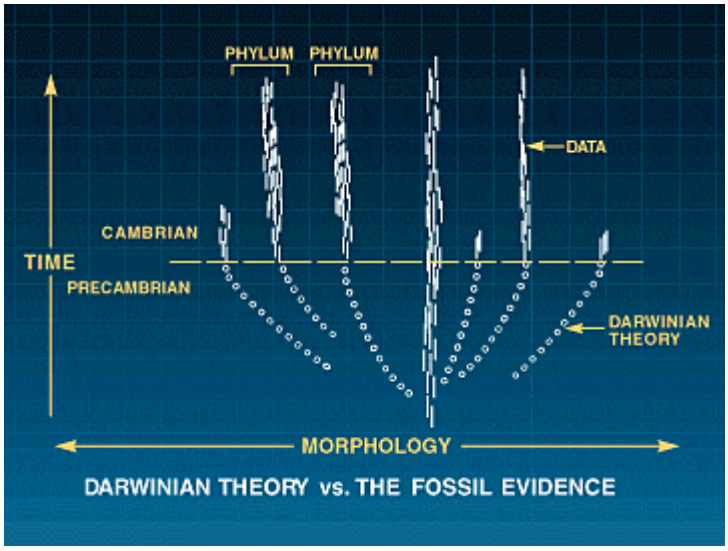

The Cambrian Explosion: the origin of phyla

If you are a naturalist, then you need the fossil record to go from simple to complex. The trouble is that all the simple to complex in that image is pure speculation at this point – and not for lack of trying, either.

You know, I am writing this on Saturday night, and in a happier world, this discovery would be discussed tomorrow in every Christian church in the land. This is the kind of data that Christians should be familiar with to check the presupposition of naturalism which is lethal to rational thought. If only we were more focused on truth than on signing and feelings in church. If only we were not so scared of traditional dating of fossils. Maybe then we would be getting somewhere in the culture wars.

Dr. William Lane Craig answers a question about homosexuality and the Bible

April 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The question is "why should anyone care about Paul's view on homosexuality, since Paul never met Jesus?"

Here is the answer:

Dr. Craig's answer is two-fold. First, he said that Jesus was a Jew and had the same views on this question as Jews normally did. Second, he cited Jesus' teaching about marriage being the union of one man and one woman in Mark 10:7-9 and Matthew 19:5. I heard this same verse presented when I was listening to the "It takes a Family" 2013 lectures, in the lecture by Dr. Robert Gagnon, who is an expert on what Jesus says about homosexuality.

Here are the relevant links, if you want to get yourself ready:

- "Jesus and Marriage" ~ Dr. Robert Gagnon @ ITAF '13
- Jesus and Marriage Q&A ~ Dr. Robert Gagnon @ ITAF '13
- "Paul and Homosexual Practice" ~ Dr. Robert Gagnon @ ITAF '13
- "Paul and Homosexual Practice" Q&A ~ Dr. Robert Gagnon @ ITAF '13

I think the important thing about Dr. Craig's answer is that we have to be ready for tough questions like this and to have an answer. That's what it means to be an apologist. To prepare in advance, not to wait until you are asked to think about it for the first time.

J. Warner Wallace recently wrote a post about what it takes to be a Christian apologist.

He had 3 points:

> **Accept Your Identification**
> Peter tells us in 1 Peter 3:15 that *all* of us have a duty to be ever-ready to make the case for our hope in Jesus. This isn't an option reserved for a few well-trained professionals; all of us, regardless of position or vocation, are tasked with this honor. As I wrote in *Cold Case Christianity*, when we, as Christians, live without embracing this aspect of our identity, we are living an *abbreviated* Christian life. The sooner you accept this aspect of your Christian character and identify yourself as an apologist, the more likely you are going to take it seriously. Start calling yourself a Christian Case Maker ("apologist") today.
>
> **Accept Your Obligation**
> Although every Christian is called to be a Case Maker, some are definitely better than others. Once you begin to identify yourself in this way, you'll sense your own inadequacies as you engage others. As a result, you'll likely begin to train yourself (formally or informally) to meet the challenge. You may find yourself in a certification or advanced education program, but you may not. Some of the best

> and most effective apologists are not formally trained in apologetics. The two best-selling apologetics authors in America, Josh McDowell and Lee Strobel, have no formal training in the area of apologetics or philosophy. It's clear, however, that both of these men take their obligation as Christian Case Makers seriously and have studied their worldview and practiced their craft.
>
> **Accept Your Location**
> While many of us would love to leave our "day jobs" to work as vocational apologists, let me encourage you to stay wherever God has already placed you. I am a "one dollar apologist"; a Christian Case Maker who still derives 90% of my income from my career as a detective. I have always equated my life as a Christian with my life as a Christian Case Maker. For this reason, I could no more call myself a vocational Christian apologist than I could call myself a vocational Christian. God has given me this set of investigative skills so I can share them with others, and He's placed me in this career, at this time and place, as part of the larger Christian family.

I don't think anyone sees the battlefield as well as J. Warner Wallace does. This is where we need to be.

Study: the early Earth's atmosphere contained oxygen

April 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a paper published in the prestigious peer-reviewed science journal *Nature*, entitled "The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere". This paper is significant because it undermines naturalistic scenarios for the origin of life.

Evolution News explains what the paper is about.

Excerpt:

> A recent *Nature* publication reports a new technique for measuring the oxygen levels in Earth's atmosphere some 4.4 billion years ago. The authors found that by studying cerium oxidation states in zircon, a compound formed from volcanic magma, they could ascertain the oxidation levels in the early earth. Their findings suggest that the early Earth's oxygen levels were very close to current levels.
>
> […]Miller and Urey conducted experiments to show that under certain atmospheric conditions and with the right kind of electrical charge, several amino acids could form from inorganic compounds such as methane, ammonia, and water. Several experiments have been done using various inorganic starting materials, all yielding a few amino acids; however, one key aspect of all of these experiments was the lack of oxygen.
>
> If the atmosphere has oxygen (or other oxidants) in it, then it is an oxidizing atmosphere. If the atmosphere lacks oxygen, then it is either inert or a reducing atmosphere. Think of a metal that has been left outside, maybe a piece of iron. That metal will eventually rust. Rusting is the result of the metal being oxidized. With organic reactions, such as the ones that produce amino acids, it is very important that no oxygen be present, or it will quench the reaction. Scientists, therefore, concluded that the early Earth must have been a reducing environment when life first formed (or the building blocks of life first formed) because that was the best environment for producing amino acids. The atmosphere eventually accumulated oxygen, but life did not form in an oxidative environment.
>
> The problem with this hypothesis is that it is based on the assumption that organic life must have formed from inorganic materials. That is why the early Earth must have been a reducing atmosphere. Research has been accumulating for more than thirty years, however, suggesting that the early Earth likely did have oxygen present.
>
> […]Their findings not only showed that oxygen was present in the early Earth atmosphere, something that has been shown in other studies, but that oxygen

> was present as early as 4.4 billion years ago. This takes the window of time available for life to have begun, by an origin-of-life scenario like the RNA-first world, and reduces it to an incredibly short amount of time. Several factors need to coincide in order for nucleotides or amino acids to form from purely naturalistic circumstances (chance and chemistry). The specific conditions required already made purely naturalist origin-of-life scenarios highly unlikely. Drastically reducing the amount of time available, adding that to the other conditions needing to be fulfilled, makes the RNA world hypothesis or a Miller-Urey-like synthesis of amino acids simply impossible.

So here's where we stand. If you are a materialist, then you need a reducing environment on the early Earth in order to get organic building blocks (amino acids) from inorganic materials. However, the production of these organic building blocks (amino acids) *requires* that the early Earth atmosphere be oxygen-free. And the problem with this new research, which confirms previous research, is that the early Earth contained huge amounts of oxygen – the same amount of oxygen as we have today. This is lethal to naturalistic scenarios for creating the building blocks of life on the Earth's surface.

Other problems

If you would like to read a helpful overview of the problems with a naturalistic scenario for the origin of life, check out this article by Casey Luskin.

Excerpt:

> The "origin of life" (OOL) is best described as the chemical and physical processes that brought into existence the first self-replicating molecule. It differs from the "evolution of life" because Darwinian evolution employs mutation and natural selection to change organisms, which requires reproduction. Since there was no reproduction before the first life, no "mutation – selection" mechanism was operating to build complexity. Hence, OOL theories cannot rely upon natural selection to increase complexity and must create the first life using only the laws of chemistry and physics.
>
> There are so many problems with purely natural explanations for the chemical origin of life on earth that many scientists have already abandoned all hopes that life had a natural origin on earth. Skeptical scientists include Francis Crick (solved the 3-dimensional structure of DNA) and Fred Hoyle (famous British cosmologist and mathematician), who, in an attempt to retain their atheistic worldviews, then propose outrageously untestable cosmological models or easily falsifiable extra-terrestrial-origin-of-life / panspermia scenarios which still do not account for the natural origin of life. So drastic is the evidence that Scientific American editor John Horgan wrote, "[i]f I were a creationist, I would cease attacking the theory of evolution … and focus instead on the origin of life. This is by far the weakest strut of the chassis of modern biology."[3]

The article goes over the standard problems with naturalistic scenarios of the origin of

life: wrong atmosphere, harmful UV radiation, interfering cross-reactions, oxygen levels, meteorite impacts, chirality, etc.

Most people who are talking about intelligent design at the origin of life talk about the information problem – how do you get the amino acids to form proteins and how do you get nucleotide bases to code for amino acids? But the starting point for solving the sequencing problem is the construction of the amino acids – there has to be a plausible naturalistic scenario to form them.

The downside of the soul mate / fairy tale view of relationships

April 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do relationships take work (e.g. – killing orcs together) to build?
Astonishing article from the leftist Huffington Post, of all places. (links removed)

Excerpt:

> As millennial women, we were groomed for a white knight fantasy. From childhood favorites such as *Snow White* to adult rom-com staples such as *How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days* or *Sleepless in Seattle*, the media perpetuates a romantic storyline in which compatibility and lasting romance is something effortless, built on chance, sustained by good looks, fun dates and electric sexual chemistry. These story lines shape our expectations for romantic happiness. It is not enough to find someone with whom we are mostly compatible, who would make a good parent, with whom we could learn and grow wrinkly; now, we expect a perfect fit and an easy, instantaneous "connection." In short, we want a soul mate. But it is this desire for a soul mate that is actually the undoing of our happy ending.
>
> A "soul mate" is defined as one who is ideally suited to us, perfectly completes us, one with whom the relationship feels easy and natural. With them, a relationship is just "meant to be"… A survey of young adults conducted by the National Marriage Project found that while 84% of young adults report finding a marriage partner "very important," a full 94% of young adults say they would like to marry a soul mate, and 73% of people ages 18 – 29 believe that there is a soul mate out there for them.

Wow. That doesn't sound like a good approach to me. My approach has always been to pick the girl who was most willing to learn new things. And then to explain to her my vision for marriage and see if I could get her to work independently on that plan before I married her. I don't favor this soul mate approach at all.

Does the "soul mate" approach work?

> We heard that those who get married later and possess a college degree have fewer divorces and more stable marriages. So we spend our twenties trying to find ourselves through travel, accumulating degrees and building a career. Marriage will be the capstone of our achievements, and nothing less than tying the knot with a soul mate will suffice. But the tragic irony is that soul mate thinking makes us increasingly likely to divorce. A study of 1,400 married men and women shows that people who hold soul mate orientations are 150% more likely to end up divorced than those who do not.
>
> **The widespread cultural belief in "soul mate ideology" undermines our chances at happiness because it makes us passive receivers of idyllic romantic expectations. Further, it fosters self-centeredness; one rarely longs to be a soul mate for someone *else*, which would require effort. For this reason, believing in soul mates is one of the most dis-empowering belief systems we can adopt. As millennials, we pride ourselves on actively pursuing the life we want to live, rather than simply accepting whatever hand we are dealt. We are innovative, passionate, proactive and not afraid to take risks. Yet, there is a disconnect when it comes to our desire for lasting love. Though there are prospects around us, we forgo taking the concrete steps needed to build happy compatible relationships because we do not "feel a spark." We are passively waiting on the sidelines for love to "happen," and then wonder why it is so difficult.**

I've always felt that the soul mate approach was like the evil villain in opposition to my noble plan-based approach. My approach is to pick a woman who wants to learn and work hard. Explain your marriage plan to her, and how your marriage plan serves God. My marriage plan accomplishes four goals, for example. 1) Influence the university with apologetics, 2) influence the church with apologetics, 3) provide a model of a good marriage to people in the community, including co-workers, college students and neighbors, and 4) raise effective, influential children who will have an impact for God. Now if you are a Christian woman raised in a church that affirms the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage with this "God has a wonderful plan for your life" stuff, then a specific, non-emotional plan from a man is the last thing you want to hear about.

Their solution is for people to work at compatibility:

> Compatibility is something co-created through intentionality and conscious choice. It involves mutual sacrifice, effort and commitment for the sake of the other's benefit. A recent study found that of the couples who demonstrate above average daily generosity, 50% of them report being "very happy" in marriage; among the low generosity scores, only 14% can say the same. As studies indicate, selflessness is required to create mutual compatibility. It is not instantaneous, nor does it usually begin with true love's kiss.
>
> We both know from experience that there are some you naturally connect with

> and others you do not. This is not a call towards forced attraction or companionship. But, our romantic futures should not be placed in the hands of blind chance. It is time we roll up our sleeves and shift our expectations from unattainable perfection to realistic romance, one that accounts for imperfection. We must understand that work in a relationship is a necessary key to success, rather than an indication of imminent failure. We will be letting go of a tired plot line that sets us up for disappointment and embracing an active role in our own unique story.
>
> How refreshing to know that we do not have to be perfect to be lovable, and that our romantic success is not solely dependent on finding the “right” fit, but instead built through cultivating daily moments of generosity, sacrifice and conscious coupling.

So in my case, I am looking for a woman who listens to the plan, develops the skills for the plan and then independently engages in activities to achieve the goals of the plan. In the past, I have had women listen to the plan carefully, including my motivations and experiences that caused me to choose this plan. And they have been willing to read books, listen to lectures, watch debates, to gain the skills needed to make a difference. And they have even engaged independently with activities like public speaking, teaching classes, and so forth. But none of the women who had done that accepted the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage. They all wanted to hear a good plan, learn useful skills and then get to work. Big difference.

William Lane Craig discusses reason and faith with university students

April 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an interview of Dr. William Lane Craig before college students at the University of Central Florida. (95 minutes)

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (33 MB)

Questions from the interviewer: (40 minutes)

- What started you on his journey of studying faith and reason?
- How would you define the word "faith"?
- Are faith and reason compatible? How are they related?
- How can reasonable faith help us to avoid the two extremes of superstition and nihilism?
- Who makes the best arguments against the Christian faith?
- Why are angry atheists like Dawkins and Hitchens more well known than better-informed academic atheists?
- Does the Bible require Christians to give the unbeliever reasons for their faith?
- How does faith spur Christians to think carefully about the big questions in life?
- Should the American church prod churchgoers to develop their minds so they can engage the secular culture?
- When talking about Christianity intellectually, is there a risk of neglecting the experience of being a Christian?
- Which Christian apologist has shaped your thinking the most?
- Which Christian philosopher has shaped your thinking the most?
- Does the confidence that comes from apologetics undermine humility and reverence?
- If you had to sketch out a 5 minute case for Christianity, what would you present?
- Can non-Christians use their reason to arrive at truth?
- Are there cases where atheists must affirm irrational things in order to remain atheists?
- Can the universe have existed eternal, so that there is no need to explain who created it?
- Even if you persuade someone that Christianity is true, does that mean they will live it out?

There is also a long period of questions, many of them hostile, from the audience of students (55 minutes).

- Haven't you said nasty things about some atheists? Aren't you a meany?
- What do you make of the presuppositional approach to apologetics?
- Can a person stop being a Christian because of the chances that happen to them as

they age?
- Why did God wait so long after humans appeared to reveal himself to people through Jesus?
- Can a person be saved by faith without have any intellectual assent to truth?
- How do you find time for regular things like marriage when you have to study and speak so much?
- How would you respond to Zeitgeist and parallels to Christianity in Greek/Roman mythology?
- Do Christians have to assume that the Bible is inerrant and inspired in order to evangelize?
- If the universe has a beginning, then why doesn't God have a beginning?
- Can you name some philosophical resources on abstract objects, Platonism and nominalism?
- How can you know that Christianity more right than other religions?
- Should we respond to the problem of evil by saying that our moral notions are different from God's?
- Define the A and B theories of time. Explain how they relate to the kalam cosmological argument.
- How can Christians claim that their view is true in the face of so many world religions?
- What is the role of emotions in Christian belief and thought?
- Can evolution be reconciled with Christian beliefs and the Bible?
- When witnessing person-to-person, should you balance apologetics with personal testimony?
- Is there a good analogy for the trinity that can help people to understand it? [Note: HE HAS ONE!]
- How can Christians reconcile God's omniscience, God's sovereignty and human free will?

This is a nice introductory lecture that is sure to get Christians to become interested in apologetics. As you watch or listen to it, imagine what the world would be like if *every* Christian could answer the questions of skeptical college students and professors like Dr. Craig. What would non-Christians think about Christianity if *every* Christian had studied these issues like Dr. Craig? Why aren't we making an effort to study these things *so that* we can answer these questions?

It is really fun to see him fielding the questions from the skeptical university students. My favorite question was from the physics student who sounds really foreign, (at 1:19:00), then you realize that he is a Christian. I do think that Dr. Craig went a little far in accommodating evolution, but I put that down to the venue, and not wanting to get into a peripheral issue. I'm also surprised that no one asked him why God allows humans to suffer and commit acts of evil.

If you are looking for a good basic book on apologetics, then I would choose "Is God Just a

Human Invention?" by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow. And you can even be part of a reading group that Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 just announced, that I will be participating in. We will all be reading the book together, chapter by chapter, and lots of people will be available to answer your questions.

Who is William Lane Craig?

About William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

William Lane Craig is, without a doubt, the top living defender of Christianity. He has debated all of the most famous atheists, including Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, etc. as well as academic atheists like Quentin Smith, Peter Millican, etc. if you search this blog, you'll find many debates posted here, sometimes even with snarky summaries.

Toyota moves thousands of jobs from socialist California to capitalist Texas

April 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

California is a liberal hell of regulations and high taxes. So, a story like this one from the ultra-leftist Los Angeles Times should come as no surprise. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Toyota Motor Corp. plans to move large numbers of jobs from its sales and marketing headquarters in Torrance to suburban Dallas, according to a person familiar with the automaker's plans.

> The move, creating a new North American headquarters, would put management of Toyota's U.S. business close to where it builds most cars for this market.
>
> North American Chief Executive Jim Lentz is expected to brief employees Monday, said the person, who was not authorized to speak publicly. Toyota declined to detail its plans. About 5,300 people work at Toyota's Torrance complex. It is unclear how many workers will be asked to move to Texas. The move is expected to take several years.
>
> [T]oday, about 75% of the Toyota branded vehicles sold in the U.S. are built in America — many of them at plants in Texas, Mississippi and Kentucky.

Why is this happening? Here's why:

> Frank Scotto, Torrance's mayor, said he had no warning of Toyota's decision. He said he did know that the automaker planned a corporate announcement for Monday.
>
> "When any major corporation is courted by another state, it's very difficult to combat that," Scotto said. "We don't have the tools we need to keep major corporations here."
>
> **The mayor said businesses bear higher costs in California for workers' compensation and liability insurance, among other expenses.**
>
> "A company can easily see where it would benefit by relocating someplace else," Scotto said.

Think that this is an exception? Think again:

> Occidental Petroleum Corp. said in February that it was relocating from Los Angeles to Houston, making it one of around 60 companies that have moved to Texas since July 2012, according to Texas Gov. Rick Perry.
>
> Perry last month visited California to recruit companies. The group Americans for Economic Freedom also recently launched a $300,000 advertising campaign in

> which Perry contends 50 California companies have plans to expand or relocate in Texas because it offers a better business climate.
>
> Like these other companies, Toyota could also save money in an environment of lower business taxes, real estate prices and cost of living.
>
> […]Toyota isn't the first automaker to leave Southern California. In late 2005, Nissan announced it was moving its North American headquarters from Gardena to Franklin, Tenn., just outside of Nashville. About 550 employees left for Tennessee; an additional 750 left jobs at Nissan to stay in Southern California.
>
> "The costs of doing business in Southern California are much higher than the costs of doing business in Tennessee," Nissan Chief Executive Carlos Ghosn said at the time. He cited cheaper real estate and lower business taxes as key reasons for the move.

I know a lot of people like to write books about how bad companies like Wal-Mart and Exxon Mobil are. Young people have been trained to believe that we should raise corporate taxes, raise the minimum wage and burden businesses with other costs, like health coverage for condoms. That's what young people learn in school from government employees. But in the real world, companies respond to incentives.

China’s atheist government demolishes Christian church

April 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Demolition teams began destroying parts of a Chinese church that has become a symbol of resistance to the Communist Party’s draconian clutch on religion, activists and witnesses said on Monday.

> Sanjiang church in Wenzhou, a wealthy coastal city known as the “Jerusalem of the East”, made headlines earlier this month when thousands of Christians formed a human shield around its entrance after plans for its demolition were announced.
>
> Church members accused Communist leaders in Zhejiang province of ordering an anti-church crackdown and claimed there were plans to completely or partially demolish at least 10 places of worship.
>
> Officials rejected those accusations, alleging the church had violated building codes.

> After mounting their high-profile occupation in early April, many protesters withdrew from Sanjiang church after its leaders appeared to have negotiated a compromise with the government.
>
> However, that deal appears to have broken down in recent days with reports that some church leaders and worshippers had been harassed and detained by security agents and officials.
>
> On Monday morning demolition teams began tearing down parts of the church in Wenzhou, a city around 230 miles south of Shanghai that has one of the country’s largest congregations.
>
> […]In a recent interview Fenggang Yang, a leading expert on religion in China, said he believed the Asian country could overtake Brazil, Mexico and the United States to become the world’s most numerous Christian congregation by 2030.
>
> However, Prof. Yang warned that Chinese Christians should brace themselves for growing interference as the Communist Party fought to stunt the Church’s growth.

This is the same church that I blogged about before where Christians were blocking bulldozers with their bodies. It is interesting to see how atheists get on when they are dominant and in control of government. In an accidental universe, who’s to say what is right and wrong? And certainly there is no right to religious liberty or free exercise of

religion.

Income inequality: men who work full-time earn less than 40 years ago

April 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The real median income of American men who work full-time, year-round peaked forty years ago in 1973, according to data published by the U.S. Census Bureau.
>
> In 1973, median earnings for men who worked full-time, year-round were $51,670 in inflation-adjusted 2012 dollars. The median earnings of men who work full-time year-round have never been that high again.
>
> […]Ny "earnings," the Census Bureau means money someone earns as an employee, which "includes wages, salary, armed forces pay, commissions, tips, piece-rate payments, and cash bonuses earned, before deductions are made for items such as taxes, bonds, pensions, and union dues." It also includes "net income" from self-employment.

And in another CNS News article, we learn something worse.

Excerpt:

> In 20 percent of American families in 2013, according to new data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), not one member of the family worked.
>
> A family, as defined by the BLS, is a group of two or more people who live together and who are related by birth, adoption or marriage. In 2013, there were 80,445,000 families in the United States and in 16,127,000—or 20 percent–no one had a job.

The most troubling thing about these two findings for me is that I believe that a man's authority to lead in the home comes from his special role as provider. It is because he works to fund the family operations that the wife and kids respect him. But what if we have policies that are more focused on making women work, and men's salaries decline or go to zero? Well, in that household, it will be a lot more difficult for men to lead on moral and spiritual issues. Men should work, and they should earn enough to provide for a family.

E-mails: Susan Rice prepped to lie about Benghazi by White House

April 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Newly obtained emails on Benghazi show then-U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice was coached by a key White House aide to lie and ignore the facts known and reported on the ground to make the administration look good.
>
> The fish rots from the head, as the saying goes, and no further proof is needed than a Sept. 14, 2012, email from Ben Rhodes, an assistant to the president and deputy national security adviser for strategic communications, contained in more than 100 pages of documents released by Judicial Watch and obtained in a Freedom of Information Act request.
>
> That email, with the subject line: "RE: PREP Call with Susan: Saturday at 4:00 p.m. ET," was sent to other key White House staffers such as then-Communications Director David Plouffe and Press Secretary Jay Carney the day before now-National Security Adviser Susan Rice made her whirlwind tour on five Sunday news show appearances to specifically and emphatically blame an Internet video for the Sept. 11, 2012, attack on the American diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya, in which U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other nationals were killed.
>
> **One of the goals listed in the emails was the need for Rice "to underscore that these protests are rooted in an Internet video, and not a broader failure or policy." She was also to "reinforce the President and Administration's strength and steadiness in dealing with difficult challenges." Her job was not to tell the truth, but to put lipstick on the Obama administration's Benghazi pig.**
>
> The documents include a Sept. 12, 2012, email from Payton Knopf, a former deputy spokesman at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, in which Knopf informs Rice that senior officials had already dubbed the Benghazi attack "complex" and planned in advance. Yet Rice would still insist on her TV tour that the Benghazi terrorist attacks were "spontaneous."
>
> In early April, former deputy CIA director Michael Morell, who was heavily involved in editing the now infamous talking points, told lawmakers it was Rice, on the Sunday shows, who linked the video to the Benghazi attack and that the video was not part of the CIA analysis.
>
> The Rhodes email was not part of the 100 pages of emails released by the administration last May, and we can see why. As we noted at the time, that email

> package showed a successive pattern of edits with White House involvement designed to remove any hint of terrorist involvement to fit the administration's campaign narrative that the war on terror was over and won.
>
> Those emails show that Rhodes and National Security Council spokesman Tommy Vietor were alerted that the intelligence community was drafting talking points that as late as 3:04 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 14, still included references to extremists tied to al-Qaida and an "attack."
>
> The terms "al-Qaida" and "attack" were stripped out by 4:42 p.m., and shortly afterward Vietor thanked colleagues for revisions and said they would be vetted "here," as in the White House. He then forwarded "edits" from John Brennan, the current CIA chief who then was a White House counterterrorism adviser.
>
> **In a White House meeting on Saturday morning, Sept. 15, the CIA, at the direction of the State Department and White House, drafted the final version of the talking points from which all references to al-Qaida and security warnings in Benghazi before the attack were deleted.**
>
> The question of how the video story was concocted out of whole cloth, by whom and why, and why it was trumpeted by Rice, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and President Obama himself with such fervor at the United Nations has remained unanswered until now.

I was talking to my Dad on Skype when this came out, and I told him about it. He said "that's it for Hillary Clinton". But I really wonder about that. After all, we knew a lot of things about Obama's past before he was elected – like his votes against a born alive infant protection bill. But that didn't stop people from voting for him. I am not sure if truth still matters to the American people. In a different time, this cover-up by the White House would be an impeachable offense. But all of his scandals – IRS targeting Tea Party groups, Fast & Furious gunrunning to drug cartels, NSA wire-tapping, Benghazi cover-up, etc. – seem to have just rolled off him.

Related posts

- Benghazi hearings: CIA director altered talking points from "attack" to "demonstration"
- Transcripts show that top U.S. military officials briefed Obama on Benghazi terrorist attack
- Benghazi liar Susan Rice to be appointed National Security Adviser by grateful Obama
- Released e-mails show that State Department edited terrorism out of talking points
- Obama: editing of talking points to cover-up of Benghazi terrorist attack is a "sideshow"
- BBC News covers whistle-blower testimony: "After Benghazi revelations, heads will roll"
- ABC News: State Department scrubbed terrorism details from Benghazi

talking points
- What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack “from the get-go”
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA’s account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama’s Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama’s Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama’s security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

UK woman who had 4 abortions breaks silence to warn other women

April 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> A 23-year-old London woman has opened up to the BBC about the four abortions she had between the ages of 18 and 22, in the hopes that she will convince other young women to think twice before having their own abortions.
>
> "Lisa," a pseudonym given by the BBC, had her first abortion at 18, her second at 21, and two more abortions at 22. At 20, she became pregnant but decided to keep the baby, and is now raising her one surviving daughter.
>
> Lisa told the BBC she believes abortion is morally wrong, but had the abortions anyway because she couldn't bear the thought of having four children, each with a different father.
>
> "I was really careless. I can't blame anyone else," Lisa told the BBC. "I should have been more responsible, because I've killed a life now. And it wasn't that baby's fault."
>
> Lisa said that she was terrified the first time she went to have an abortionist end her baby's life, but that time and repetition changed her and made her more callous.
>
> "It does get easier with the more you have," she told the BBC. "I know that sounds really bad, but that is just how it is."
>
> She said that by sharing her own experience of being changed by abortion, she hoped to convince other women to make better choices.
>
> **"I thought that if I could tell my story, maybe young women would think twice about having sex without contraception, or sleeping with guys they don't really know," Lisa said. "I want to tell other women that abortions aren't just something you should do. It could change your life."**

"Lisa" also warns about the effectiveness of contraceptions:

> Even though Lisa echoes the abortion industry line about contraceptives preventing abortion, she admits she was using contraception during each and every one of her conceptions – everything from the pill to semi-permanent solutions like the IUD.
>
> "I've tried the pill, the patch, the injection, the coil and the implant. And they didn't work," Lisa said. "I bled continuously while I was on them. And the coil

> gave me pains, so I had to take that out after a month."
>
> She added, "No one wants to keep on having terminations – so I have tried different methods of contraception but they don't seem to work for me."
>
> Lisa is far from alone. A telephone study of former clients by the Marie Stopes UK abortionist group found that 57 percent of those who sought repeat abortions were active users of contraception who nonetheless became pregnant anyway.
>
> "Our research shows all sorts of women of all ages can experience repeat unwanted pregnancy," Genevieve Edwards, Marie Stopes UK's director of policy, told the BBC. "In the past we've failed to tackle this, because we didn't want to stigmatize women."
>
> Edwards admits that contraceptives, particularly the short-term kind, are not as effective as many people think, and when they fail, many women look to abortion as a backup plan.

I guess in my own case, I stay clear of premarital sex for personal reasons but also because I do not want to be responsible for killing another human being *just because I was looking for a good time*. I think that the possible risks outweigh the pleasure I might gain. It's important for me to foresee the consequences of my choices and avoid harming others.

Why are young evangelicals reluctant to defend Biblical Christianity in public?

April 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting post by Mark Tooley in the American Spectator.

Excerpt:

> A new generation of evangelical elites is imploring evangelicals to step back from the culture wars. Mostly they want to escape polarizing strong stances on same-sex marriage and abortion, and perhaps also contentious church-state issues, like the Obamacare contraceptive mandate.
>
> Purportedly the evangelical church is failing to reach young, upwardly mobile professionals because evangelicals, who now broadly comprise perhaps one third of all Americans, are seen as reactionary and hateful. On their college campuses, at their coffee shops, and in their yoga classes, among other venues, some outspoken hip young evangelicals want a new public image for their faith.
>
> […]A popular young evangelical blogger echoing Merritt's theme is Rachel Evans, who conveniently grew up in the Tennessee small town famous for the Scopes Monkey Trial. Her 2010 book was *Evolving in Monkey Town: How a Girl Who Knew All the Answers Learned to Ask the Questions.* "We are tired of the culture wars," she explained in a recent interview. "We are tired of politics." Lamenting the church's preoccupation with "shame and guilt," she urged evangelicals to reconsider their opposition to same-sex unions.

The post has a nice history of how evangelicals have always been involved in moral and political issues, and it's worth reading. But I want to make a different point below.

Compartmentalization of faith

What's at the root of this movement to back away from moral issues? Here's what I think is the problem. When you advocate for moral causes like protecting the unborn, or school choice, or freeing the slaves, a bunch of people are not going to like you. Christians in the time of Jesus knew that being bold about their Christian convictions would make a lot of people think bad things about them – they expected it. But young evangelicals have gotten the idea that being a Christian should not involve any sort of unhappiness and unpopularity. They wouldn't have learned this from the Bible, because the Bible emphasizes suffering and unpopularity as part of the normal Christian life. It is their experience of church (and the hedonistic culture around them) that is likely to reinforce that view.

What young evangelicals learn in many churches is that religion is something that is centered on the Bible and the church building – it is not something that flows into real life. They learn that you can't find out anything about God from the Big Bang, the DNA, the fossil record, or even from the peer-reviewed research on abortion, divorce, or gay

marriage. They learn from the Bible that helping the poor is good, but then they never pick up an economic textbook to see *which economic system really helps the poor.* What you learn about in church is that religion is private and has no connection to reality whatsoever. This fits in with their view that Christianity should make them happy, because they've learned that it doesn't involve any studying to connect the Bible to the real world.

What follows from having a view that Christianity only lives in the Bible and church, and not out there in the real world of telescopes and microscopes? Well, most young evangelicals interpret what their pastor is telling them as "our flavor of ice cream" or "our cultural preference". They don't link Christianity to the real world, they don't think that it's true for everyone. They think that you just accept what the Bible says on faith, and that's all. No reasons can be given to non-Christians outside of just asking them to accept the Bible. Younger evangelicals believe that there are no facts that confirm or disprove Christianity – it's just a blind belief. Young evangelicals think that their faith doesn't have to be complemented with careful study of how things work in the real world.

What is the result of this anti-intellectual compartmentalization of faith? The result is that young evangelicals will balk at the idea of telling someone that they are going to Hell if they don't believe in Jesus. They will balk at the idea that feminism is to blame for the destruction of the family. They will balk at the idea that the best way to help the poor is to push for free market capitalism. They will balk at the idea that it is wrong to kill unborn children. They will balk at the idea that disarmament and pacifism embolden terrorists and tyrants to attack peace-loving people. They will balk at the idea that traditional marriage is better for society and children. They will balk at the idea that man-made catastrophic global warming is not supported by science. *They lack courage to take Biblical positions, because they first lack knowledge*. They don't know how to make the case using evidence that their opponents will accept – mainstream evidence from publicly accessible sources.

Christianity is a knowledge tradition

If the purpose of religion is to have happy feelings and be liked, then studying the real world to find out whether the Bible is true is bad religion. If religion is divorced from reality, then it's just a personal preference influenced by how a person was raised. No young evangelical is going to lift a finger to take bold moral stands if they think their worldview is just one option among many – like the flavors of ice cream in the frozen section of the grocery store. They have to know that what they are saying is true – then they will be bold. An example: there was a time when people believed that God did not create the first living cell, because it was just a simple lump of protoplasm that could easily come about by accident. Now we know better, and we can boldly make the case for intelligent design based on hard evidence – if we put in the time to study the evidence.

And it is the same for everything – from theological claims, to moral claims, to social claims, to economic claims, to foreign policy claims. It doesn't matter if people call you names when you have the facts to support unpopular claims, *and that's why public,*

authentic Christianity is built on knowledge of facts. Non-Christians being offended by your claims doesn’t change the way the world is.

House Committee: only 67 percent of Obamacare enrollees have paid premiums

May 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> Only two-thirds of the eight million enrollees into new health insurance plans as mandated by the Affordable Care Act have paid their first month's premium as of April 15, according to a report from the House Energy and Commerce committee.
>
> Here's an excerpt from the committee's statement:
>
> Data provided to the committee by every insurance provider in the health care law's Federally Facilitated Marketplace (FFM) shows that, as of April 15, 2014, only 67 percent of individuals and families that had selected a health plan in the federally facilitated marketplace had paid their first month's premium and therefore completed the enrollment process. Nationwide, only 25 percent of paid enrollees are ages 18 to 34. The Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations today invited the leaders of some of the nation's largest insurance providers and their trade groups to testify at a hearing, "PPACA Enrollment and the Insurance Industry," on Wednesday, May 7, 2014, at 10:15 a.m. in room 2123 Rayburn House Office Building.
>
> House Energy and Commerce Committee members sent letters requesting specific enrollment data, including the number of individuals who have paid their first month's premium and demographic breakdowns. The committee has compiled the data that provides a snapshot of the true enrollment picture as of April 15, 2014, after the official end of the open enrollment period. Due to the administration's repeated and unilateral extensions and changes, as well as the fact that many insurers have reported that individuals will still have time to pay their first month's premium, the committee plans to ask the insurers in the federally facilitated marketplace to provide an enrollment update by May 20, 2014.

Now, remember when Obama went out in front of the eager mainstream media and bragged about how 8 million people signed up? Not one journalist asked him how many people had actually paid for a health care plan. And now we know the truth. But how many of the low-information voters who vote Democrat will read a story like this? They may be struggling with the new health care law, but they'll think that it's working for most people because of the mainstream media and the 8-million enrollments claim.

How do doctors feel about the federal government's regulation of their profession?

May 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the Wall Street Journal, a doctor speaks out about government control of health care. Excerpt:

> In my 23 years as a practicing physician, I've learned that the only thing that matters is the doctor-patient relationship. How we interact and treat our patients is the practice of medicine. I acknowledge that there is a problem with the rising cost of health care, but there is also a problem when the individual physician in the trenches does not have a voice in the debate and is being told what to do and how to do it.
>
> […]The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services dictates that we must use an electronic health record (EHR) or be penalized with lower reimbursements in the future. There are "meaningful use" criteria whereby the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services tells us as physicians what we need to include in the electronic health record or we will not be subsidized the cost of converting to the electronic system and we will be penalized by lower reimbursements. Across the country, doctors waste precious time filling in unnecessary electronic-record fields just to satisfy a regulatory measure. I personally spend two hours a day dictating and documenting electronic health records just so I can be paid and not face a government audit. Is that the best use of time for a highly trained surgical specialist?
>
> This is not a unique complaint. A study commissioned by the American Medical Association last year and conducted by the RAND Corp. found that "Poor EHR usability, time-consuming data entry, interference with face-to-face patient care, inefficient and less fulfilling work content, inability to exchange health information between EHR products, and degradation of clinical documentation were prominent sources of professional dissatisfaction."
>
> In addition to the burden of mandated electronic-record entry, doctors also face board recertification in the various medical specialties that has become time-consuming, expensive, imposing and a convenient method for our specialty societies and boards to make money.
>
> Meanwhile, our Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements have significantly declined, let alone kept up with inflation. In orthopedic surgery, for example, Medicare reimbursement for a total knee replacement decreased by about 68% between 1992 and 2010, based on the value of 1992 dollars. How can this be? Don't doctors have control over what they charge for their services? For the most part, no. Our medical documentation is pored over and insurers and government

> then determine the appropriate level of reimbursement.
>
> I don’t know about other physicians but I am tired—tired of the mandates, tired of outside interference, tired of anything that unnecessarily interferes with the way I practice medicine. No other profession would put up with this kind of scrutiny and coercion from outside forces. The legal profession would not. The labor unions would not. We as physicians continue to plod along and take care of our patients while those on the outside continue to intrude and interfere with the practice of medicine.
>
> We could change the paradigm. We could as a group elect not to take any insurance, not to accept Medicare—many doctors are already taking these steps—and not to roll over time and time again. We have let nearly everyone trespass on the practice of medicine. Are we better for it? Has it improved quality? Do we have more of a voice at the table or less? Are we as physicians happier or more disgruntled then two years ago? Five years ago? Ten years ago?

Doctors certainly provide a lot more value to me than unions, lawyers and government workers of all sorts. I wish we had more doctors, and fewer unions, lawyers and government workers. Anything that doctors can do to push back against their tormentors would be welcome in my opinion.

>

J. P. Moreland explains the meaning of happiness in the Christian worldview

May 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From happiness expert and Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland.

Excerpt:

> According to ancient thought, happiness is a life well lived, a life that manifests wisdom, kindness and goodness. For the ancients, the happy life — the life we should dream about — is a life of virtue and character. Not only did Plato, Aristotle, the Church Fathers and medieval theologians embrace this definition, but Moses, Solomon and (most importantly) Jesus did, too. Sadly their understanding is widely displaced by the contemporary understanding of happiness defined as pleasure and satisfaction, a subjective emotional state associated with fleeting, egocentric feelings.
>
> Consider the differences:

Contemporary Understanding	**Classical Understanding**
Happiness is:	Happiness is:
1. Pleasure and satisfaction	**1.** Virtue and character
2. An intense feeling	**2.** A settled tone
3. Dependent on external circumstances	**3.** Depends on internal state; springs from within
4. Transitory and fleeting	**4.** Fixed and stable
5. Addictive and enslaving	**5.** Empowering and liberating
6. Irrelevant to one's identity, doesn't color the rest of life and creates false/empty self	**6.** Integrated with one's identity, colors rest of life and creates true/fulfilled self
7. Achieved by self-absorbed narcissism; success produces a celebrity	**7.** Achieved by self-denying apprenticeship to Jesus; success produces a hero

> How can we be certain Jesus is inviting us to a classical understanding of happiness in Matthew 16:24-26? He isn't talking about going to heaven rather than hell, nor is He telling his followers how to avoid premature death. Where Matthew writes, "what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits *his soul*" (emphasis added), Luke clarifies Jesus' teaching by replacing "his soul" with the word "himself" (Luke 9:25). The issue is finding one's self vs. losing one's self. More specifically, to find one's self is to find out how life *ought* to look like and learn to live that way; it's to become like Jesus, with character that manifests the fruit of the Spirit and the radical nature of Kingdom living; it's to find out God's purposes for one's life and to fulfill those purposes in a Christ-honoring way.

I like that “success produces a hero”. Who doesn’t want to be a hero? I certainly do.

In one of his lectures, Dr. Moreland says, and I quote: “Happiness is the freedom to do what we ought to do”. That’s right. When a person is free to comply with God’s design for human flourishing, then he/she is happy. My biggest source of unhappiness is the feeling that I cannot be who I want to be as a Christian. It’s getting even worse when I think about how the government is now using force to prevent me from spending what I earn the way I want, and saying what I want about the issues of the day, regardless of who is offended. I am becoming increasingly thankful for the time I spend with other dedicated Christians. That’s when I can be myself and not worry about what anyone is going to think of me. This is no small source of happiness.

GOP senators introduce bill to arm Ukraine

May 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great news in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Frustrated with President Barack Obama's reaction to Russian action in Ukraine, a group of Republican senators said Wednesday they will introduce legislation outlining a more muscular response.
>
> "What we've seen from the administration is a lot of rhetoric," Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, the top Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, said on the Senate floor Wednesday morning. The White House has been dealing "with the situation after something bad has already occurred," he said.
>
> […]The GOP senators' bill would map out a more assertive plan for keeping Russian President Vladimir Putin in check, Mr. Corker said, including by implementing new sanctions on Russian banks, energy companies and a major Russian arms dealer.
>
> Some of the sanctions would go into effect immediately, while others would kick in if Russian armed forces cross further into Ukraine or if Russia further annexes any new area. The goal is "so that we actually do something that affects the Russian economy until such a time that they pull those troops from the border," Mr. Corker said.
>
> The bill also seeks to build support for NATO allies by requiring Mr. Obama to increase support for the armed forces of Poland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia and facilitate access to military equipment for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. Up to $100 million of direct military assistance to Ukraine would also be authorized, including anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons and small arms.
>
> The White House did not have an immediate response to the GOP bill.

It's too much of a provocation to send American troops into Ukraine, but arming the Ukrainians will do a lot do deter Russian aggression. It will certainly do a lot more to deter the Russians from taking more ground than "mobilizing the international community" or sending food. Food doesn't stop Russian tanks, and it doesn't shoot down Russian aircraft.

Is there any evidence for Jesus outside the New Testament?

May 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Cold Case Christianity blog.

I'll excerpt a few of them:

Tacitus (56-120AD):

Cornelius Tacitus was known for his analysis and examination of historical documents and is among the most trusted of ancient historians. He was a senator under Emperor Vespasian and was also proconsul of Asia. In his "Annals' of 116AD, he describes Emperor Nero's response to the great fire in Rome and Nero's claim that the Christians were to blame:

"Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular."

In this account, Tacitus confirms several historical elements of the Biblical narrative: *Jesus lived in Judea, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and had followers who were persecuted for their faith in Christ.*

Pliny the Younger (61-113AD):

Early Christians were also described in early, non-Christian history. Pliny the Younger, in a letter to the Roman emperor Trajan, describes the lifestyles of early Christians:

"They (the Christians) were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food—but food of an ordinary and innocent kind."

This early description of the first Christians documents several facts: *the first Christians believed Jesus was GOD, the first Christians upheld a high moral code, and these early followers met regularly to worship Jesus.*

Suetonius (69-140AD):

Suetonius was a Roman historian and annalist of the Imperial House under the Emperor Hadrian. His writings about Christians describe their treatment under the Emperor Claudius (41-54AD):

"Because the Jews at Rome caused constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus

(Christ), he (Claudius) expelled them from the city (Rome).” (Life of Claudius, 25:4)

This expulsion took place in 49AD, and in another work, Suetonius wrote about the fire which destroyed Rome in 64 A.D. under the reign of Nero. Nero blamed the Christians for this fire and he punished Christians severely as a result:

“Nero inflicted punishment on the Christians, a sect given to a new and mischievous religious belief.” (Lives of the Caesars, 26.2)

There is much we can learn from Suetonius as it is related to the life of early Christians. From this account, we know Jesus had an immediate impact on His followers: *They were committed to their belief Jesus was God and withstood the torment and punishment of the Roman Empire. Jesus had a curious and immediate impact on His followers, empowering them to die courageously for what they knew to be true.*

Click here to read the rest.

Pastor Matt: What happens when you die?

May 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post is from Pastor Matt's blog.

Excerpt:

> Michael Bird breaks it all down as follows:
>
> 1. Prior to Christ's ascension, all who died descended to Sheol/Hades, which was divided into two parts, one for the wicked and one for the righteous.
>
> 2. At Christ's ascension, he went into heaven and took with him all of the saints in the paradisal part of Sheol/Hades, while the wicked remain in Sheol/Hades, waiting for judgment.
>
> 3. Upon death new covenant believers go to be with Christ in heaven ahead of the general resurrection, while the wicked descend to Sheol/Hades waiting for judgment.
>
> 4. Eventually Sheol/Hades will be thrown into hell and all believers will share in the new heavens and new earth.
>
> See Evangelical Theology p. 323.

I've featured some debates with Michael Bird before, he is a famous evangelical historian.

It's important to understand that the Christian view of humans is that we have a material part and a non-material part. When you die, the material part goes into a tomb. The non-material part goes on to be with God, until the day when you get a new resurrection body.

Earlier, I blogged about some philosophical arguments for the existence of souls and some scientific evidence for the existence of souls, and it's worth looking over in order to move beyond mere opinions. Like it or not, this is the way we are! Not just bodies, but souls.

Is it “brilliant” to accumulate $185,000 of debt studying the humanities?

May 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Des Moines Register, an article by Ms. Rehha Basu.

Excerpt:

> Sixteen years ago, Patricia (P.J.) Johnston of Des Moines made the front page of this paper for collecting her diploma from Drake University at just 19. “Johnston was reading books on French existentialism while others her age were still buying comic books,” wrote reporter Tom Alex of the young woman who majored in religion and philosophy, dabbled in music and astronomy and found time to take part in online discussions on the Bible.
>
> **“I think I’m probably meant to be an academic,” Johnston was quoted as saying. And she has been, getting a master’s in one institution, going to seminary at another, doing field research in India in her area of interest — Indian Catholicism — and currently working toward a Ph.D in religious studies at the University of Iowa.**
>
> President Barack Obama came through Johnston’s university on Wednesday, where he said there is no greater predictor of success than a good education. “This country has always made a commitment to put a good education within the reach of everybody who’s willing to work for it,” Obama said. “That’s part of what made us special. … That’s a commitment that we need to reaffirm today.”
>
> He talked about the untenable debt that’s limiting options for today’s college-goers — $25,000 on average — because tuition and fees have more than doubled since they were born.
>
> Johnston didn’t get to hear him since she was teaching a class on Buddhism. But she knows a lot about educational debt. **She has $185,000 in student loans to repay.**
>
> As it is, she sleeps on her office floor on the days she has to be in Iowa City, **riding the Greyhound bus in from Des Moines**. She helps support her mother with the approximately $16,000 she earns as a teaching assistant. But she is in danger of dropping out before getting her doctorate because she has hit her limit on loans, and most likely won’t be able to get a teaching assistant position next year because of cuts in undergraduate programs.
>
> If that happens, she wrote me, she would be this far along, “facing the job market in my mid-30s with no marketable job skills of any kind.”
>
> **Johnston grew up on welfare and other forms of public assistance. Her divorced mother was unable to hold down a job for reasons that were never diagnosed. Johnston got through college with scholarships,**

> **grants, some help from her late grandmother, and only $18,000 in debt.**

Student loans should not be connected to the government as they are now – they should be privatized. That way, taxpayers are not stuck with the bill if the person cannot make a career out of what they are studing. What is this person doing going abroad in India? What is she doing riding on Grayhounds? It makes no sense. If she had to go to a for-profit bank, then she would never get a student loan, because they know they would never get the money back. We have to have a system where people pay their own way, so that they can't take risks with anyone else's money but their own (or their loan guarantor's). No taxpayer money should be available to them, and no taxpayer money should be given to subsidize universities, either – it just raises the cost of tuition. Once the number of students applying to the humanities is reduced because no loans are available, then tuition will come down for those who *really intend to make a go of it.*

I think a lot of the problem here comes from growing up without a father. Fathers teach their children to be practical because they worry more than mothers about the children not being able to be independent and fend for themselves.

UPDATE: The Captain comments on this story here.

UPDATE: This is from the woman's Facebook page:

> I have never asked anybody to pay my student loan debt for me, and I will pay it down someday, even if I have to eat ramen noodles for the rest of my life. I was willing to undertake my studies at any cost and at any degree of personal risk because I believe in God and I am convinced that I am doing what God is calling me to do. If you read the New Testament, you will find a great deal about how people are called to give up everything they own – houses and wealth and family and respectibility and everything else – to do whatever it is that God calls them to do. I am not brave and no longer optimistic, but I have tried to take God at his word.
>
> I am not financing education entirely through student loan debt. I held work study jobs as an undergraduate, and have usually held some kind of on-campus employment. I have been a TA for the university for the last seven years. The fact is, government support of higher education is down and the cost of tuition has outpaced salaries to such a great degree in this country that virtually nobody is able to afford an education on their own wages without taking on a substantial burden of student loan debt. The vast majority of the anecdotes to the contrary concern degrees earned twenty or thirty years ago, before major structural changes in the financing of higher education – in the post-war years, government funding allowed the vast majority of expense for education to be met through Pell grants and scholarships, making it possible for many people to work themselves through school. That hasn't been possible for most people in most degree programs for at least thirty years, and these nostalgic memories of an entirely different time and set of circumstances are not doing the debate on

> higher education financing in this country any good at all.
>
> I am not a “professional student” nor am I taking an especially long time to pursue my degree – this is simply how long humanities education takes. http://chronicle.com/article/In-Humanities-10-Years-May/16231
>
> If you only see value in STEM disciplines, I probably will not convince you that humanities education is valuable. There used to be a sense in this country that certain things had value and meaning in their own right, not simply because they produced nice technological gadgets or made bundles of money for businesses. Even conservatives such as Allan Bloom used to realize that it impoverishes us spiritually when we turn away from the humanities, the cultural legacy of Western society. Would that their political descendants had as much grace or wisdom.

She’s not being forced into this course of action. She’s choosing it deliberately, and she wants other people to pay to make her impractical flight from reality financially sound.

William Lane Craig asks: should Christians embrace postmodernism?

May 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a short clip:

Dr. Craig thinks that Christianity does a lot better when it is commended to others using logic and evidence. He thinks that postmodernism undermines logic and evidence.

Sean McDowell has more on what this means for Christians:

> In Postmodern Youth Ministry, for example, Tony Jones argues that postmodernity is the most important culture shift of the past 500 years, upending our theology, philosophy, epistemology (how we know things), and church practice. It is an "earthquake that has changed the landscape of academia and is currently rocking Western culture." (p. 11). Thus, to be relevant in ministry today, according to Jones and other postmodernists, we must shed our modern tendencies and embrace the postmodern shift.
>
> For the longest time I simply accepted that we inhabit a postmodern world and that we must completely transform our approach to ministry to be effective today. But that all changed when I had the opportunity of hearing philosopher William Lane Craig speak at an apologetics conference not too long ago. "This sort of [postmodern] thinking," says Craig, "is guilty of a disastrous misdiagnosis of contemporary culture." ("God is Not Dead Yet," Christianity Today, July 2008, p. 26). He argues that the idea that we live in a postmodern world is a myth. This may strike you as awfully bold. How can he make such a claim?
>
> For one thing, says Craig, postmodernism is unlivable and contradictory: "Nobody is a postmodernist when it comes to reading the labels on a medicine bottle versus a box of rat poison. If you've got a headache, you'd better believe that texts have objective meaning!" (Reasonable Faith, 2008, p. 18) Craig speaks to tens of thousands of (mostly non-Christian) college students around the world every year and his conclusion is that we live in a cultural milieu that is deeply modernist. Reason, logic, and evidence are as important today as ever (although he's careful not to overstate their importance, too).
>
> Postmodernism and Apologetics
>
> But this is not all Craig has to say! In the introduction to Reasonable Faith, Craig provocatively claims, "Indeed, I think that getting people to believe that we live in a postmodern culture is one of the craftiest deceptions that Satan has yet devised" (p. 18). Accordingly, we ought to stop emphasizing argumentation and apologetics and just share our narrative. Craig develops this idea further:
>
> And so Satan deceives us into voluntarily laying aside our best weapons of logic and evidence, thereby ensuring unawares modernism's triumph over us. If we

> adopt this suicidal course of action, the consequences for the church in the next generation will be catastrophic. Christianity will be reduced to but another voice in a cacophony of competing voices, each sharing its own narrative and none commending itself as the objective truth about reality, while scientific naturalism shapes our culture's view of how the world really is (p. 18-19).
>
> **In a personal email, Craig relayed to me that he believes postmodernism is largely being propagated in our church by misguided youth pastors.** While he meant the comment more to elicit a smile than to be taken as a stab in the back, I can't help but wonder if he is right.
>
> If our culture were so profoundly postmodernist, why have the "New Atheists," as Wired magazine dubbed them, been so influential? Popular writers such as Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and Richard Dawkins have recently written bestselling books attacking the scientific, historic, and philosophical credibility of religion in general and Christianity in particular. Their writings have wreaked havoc on many unprepared Christians. If our culture were postmodern their challenges should have fallen on deaf ears.

This is my experience as well. When I was an undergraduate student, I attended IVCF and the woman running it (Jill) was a feminist who pushed postmodernism and feminism hard. Every week brought another testimony emphasizing love and forgiveness while minimizing or denying theology, science, history and logic. She turned down all the efforts of the men to bring in professors to speak about the cosmological argument or the resurrection, etc.. It was testimonies and prayer walks and praise hymns every week. When I questioned the people she chose to give their testimonies (mostly women), I found that none had any reasons for thinking that what they were talking about really was true. As a consequence of that, they were soft on doctrine – regularly throwing out Bible verses that did "resonate" with their "intuitions". The same thing happened to me again with Campus Crusade as a graduate student. Personal testimonies of changed lives, divorced from any search for truth, every week.

One girl in particular that I knew at that time named Kerry was fond of bashing the laws of logic and the use of evidence. When I questioned her about it, she cited the influence of a charismatic youth pastor named Drew. A little more probing revealed that she denied the reality of Hell, and was a universalist. She eventually married a friend of mine and to this day has never read a single book on apologetics all the way through. Her beliefs are very much focused on the here and now, making friends and feeling good about herself. She never shook the habit of dismissing any argument, no matter how well-supported, that contradicted her intuitions.

Wall Street Journal: how the “Jesus wife” hoax fell apart

May 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Christian Apologetics Alliance tweeted this story from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> In September 2012, Harvard Divinity School professor Karen King announced the discovery of a Coptic (ancient Egyptian) gospel text on a papyrus fragment that contained the phrase “Jesus said to them, ‘My wife . . .’ ” The world took notice. The possibility that Jesus was married would prompt a radical reconsideration of the New Testament and biblical scholarship.
>
> Yet now it appears almost certain that the Jesus-was-married story line was divorced from reality. On April 24, Christian Askeland—a Coptic specialist at Indiana Wesleyan University and my colleague at the Green Scholars Initiative—revealed that the “Gospel of Jesus’ Wife,” as the fragment is known, was a match for a papyrus fragment that is clearly a forgery.
>
> Almost from the moment Ms. King made her announcement two years ago, critics attacked the Gospel of Jesus’ Wife as a forgery. One line of criticism said that the fragment had been sloppily reworked from a 2002 online PDF of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas and even repeated a typographical error.
>
> […]Then last week the story began to crumble faster than an ancient papyrus exposed in the windy Sudan. Mr. Askeland found, among the online links that Harvard used as part of its publicity push, images of another fragment, of the Gospel of John, that turned out to share many similarities—including the handwriting, ink and writing instrument used—with the “wife” fragment. The Gospel of John text, he discovered, had been directly copied from a 1924 publication.
>
> “Two factors immediately indicated that this was a forgery,” Mr. Askeland tells me. “First, the fragment shared the same line breaks as the 1924 publication. Second, the fragment contained a peculiar dialect of Coptic called Lycopolitan, which fell out of use during or before the sixth century.” Ms. King had done two radiometric tests, he noted, and “concluded that the papyrus plants used for this fragment had been harvested in the seventh to ninth centuries.” In other words, the fragment that came from the same material as the “Jesus’ wife” fragment was written in a dialect that didn’t exist when the papyrus it appears on was made.
>
> Mark Goodacre, a New Testament professor and Coptic expert at Duke University, wrote on his NT Blog on April 25 about the Gospel of John discovery: “It is beyond reasonable doubt that this is a fake, and this conclusion means that

> the Jesus' Wife Fragment is a fake too." Alin Suciu, a research associate at the University of Hamburg and a Coptic manuscript specialist, wrote online on April 26: "Given that the evidence of the forgery is now overwhelming, I consider the polemic surrounding the Gospel of Jesus' Wife papyrus over."

Tim McGrew linked to this interview featuring one of the scholars who provided the "smoking gun".

Excerpt:

> ### Why do you consider it to be a forgery?
>
> **Askeland:** Essentially all specialists in ancient Egyptian material culture concluded that the so-called 'Gospel of Jesus's Wife' was a forgery back in 2012. Francis Watson, Alin Suciu, Hugo Lundhaug and Andrew Bernhard all contributed to a web-based discussion, which explained a string of grammatical anomalies in the fragment, appealing to an internet-based PDF of the Gospel of Thomas (the only surviving version of the Gospel of Thomas is in the Coptic language). With *The Gospel of Jesus's Wife* the forger had cut and pasted sections from the Gospel of Thomas, and in doing so created several grammatically impossible phrases. In particular, the forger unwittingly included a typo, which marked the particular source. The idea that both texts could include the exact same typographical error (and this kind of typographical error) is statistically highly improbable. Although the peculiarities of the scribal hand, which had no parallel among other ancient manuscripts, were damning enough, the textual source theory essentially settled the issue.

And:

> ### What is your key insight? Why have you been credited with finding 'the smoking gun'?
>
> **Askeland:** I remember sitting at my desk in Tyndale House one day in 2010, finishing my dissertation on the Coptic versions of John, and encountering an old note concerning *Codex Qau*, the main Lycopolitan witness to John's gospel; Lycopolitan is a dialect of Coptic. This manuscript was kept down the street at the Cambridge University Library, to which I went immediately. Fast-forward to the present. Remember, *The Gospel of Jesus's Wife* was one of several fragments which were announced by Karen King. There was also in this group of fragments a fragment of the Gospel of John in Coptic. Just recently, when I gazed upon Karen King's Coptic John fragment, what I saw was immediately clear. Not only were the writing tool, ink and hand exactly the same as those of the *Gospel of Jesus's Wife* fragment, but also the method of composition was the same. As I looked at Karen King's Gospel of John fragment, I finally saw that it was clearly copied (by the forger) from Herbert Thompson's 1924 edition of *Codex Qau*.

> Indeed, the Gospel of John fragment had exactly the same line breaks as *Codex Qau* – a statistical improbability if it were genuine.

This is not the first time that fake manuscripts have surfaced that promote left-wing politics. Morton Smith, a homosexual, passed of a forged gospel called the "Secret Gospel of Mark" which promoted a homosexual view of Jesus. This 20th century hoax was accepted by the gullible mainstream media, until it was disproved as a forgery in the peer-reviewed literature, and in academic books. The Secret Gospel of Mark is so debunked that even Robert M. Price, who is on the far left fringe of New Testament scholarship, rejects it.

It should be noted that Karen King is a member of the liberal naturalistic Jesus Seminar. They presuppose atheism and their politics are hard left – that's what they assume before they begin doing scholarship. Karen King specializes in "women's roles in the church" and Gnosticism. I expect that she would be very happy if this Jesus-had-a-wife fragment were used to bash traditional notions of women's roles in the church. And so would her allies in the secular leftist media.

Psychologist recommends Darwinian storytelling to suppress design intuitions

May 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Amy Hall of Stand to Reason linked to this post by David Klinghoffer on Evolution News. Excerpt:

> The *Wall Street Journal* salutes the research of Boston University psychologist Deborah Kelemen. She has discovered that it's possible with Darwinian storytelling to *suppress* common sense in children of the kind that leads them to recognize artifacts of intelligent design in nature.
>
> The *Journal* notes that quite apart from religious instruction, kids are primed to see life as reflecting "intentional design." It's intuitive. The corrective is to catch them at an early age and train them to see things in a Darwinian light.

> By elementary-school age, children start to invoke an ultimate God-like designer to explain the complexity of the world around them — even children brought up as atheists. Kids aged 6 to 10 have developed their own coherent "folk biological" theories. …
>
> Dr. Kelemen and her colleagues thought that they might be able to get young children to understand the mechanism of natural selection before the alternative intentional-design theory had become too entrenched. They gave 5- to 8-year-olds 10-page picture books that illustrated an example of natural selection. The "pilosas," for example, are fictional mammals who eat insects. Some of them had thick trunks, and some had thin ones. A sudden change in the climate drove the insects into narrow underground tunnels. The thin-trunked pilosas could still eat the insects, but the ones with thick trunks died. So the next generation all had thin trunks.
>
> Before the children heard the story, the experimenters asked them to explain why a different group of fictional animals had a particular trait. Most of the children gave explanations based on intentional design. But after the children heard the story, they answered similar questions very differently: They had genuinely begun to understand evolution by natural selection. That understanding persisted when the experimenters went back three months later.
>
> One picture book, of course, won't solve all the problems of science education. But these results do suggest that simple story books like these could be powerful intellectual tools. The secret may be to reach children with the right theory before the wrong one is too firmly in place.

> There are a number of interesting points here. First, that the example of natural selection is fictional. The mammalian order Pilosa (anteaters and sloths) is real, but "pilosas" are not. Second, it is decidedly in the micro-evolutionary realm — a

> kind of evolution that no one disputes, certainly not advocates of the theory of intelligent design. There's no reason to think that the "pilosas" are on their way to true speciation, of the kind that evolutionary theory is really challenged to account for, any more than Darwin's finches. The extrapolation from such a trivial thing into the origin of all species and all biological complexity by unguided natural processes is a cheat.
>
> Most enlightening is that Dr. Kelemen and her colleagues would, to begin with, seek to talk children out of their intuitive response. Among ID researchers, the approach would be to *test* that intuition, objectively weighing the empirical evidence without preconceptions. Dr. Kelemen would "suppress" it: her own word!

The abstract of her research publication calls the Darwinian storytelling "interventions".

I do think it's important for parents to counter what these educators are interested in doing to their children.

First, it's important for parents to consider whether teachers are paid for their work (by parents who use privates schools) or whether their salary is coming from the government (parents are forced by law to pay taxes for government-run "public" schools), which has other purposes for children than parents have. Second, it's important for parents to decide how they intend to explain to their children the difference between macroevolution and microevolution, lest naturalistic educators use evidence for microevolution as a way of persuading children to accept macroevolution. Third, parents have to decide how to teach their children about the the standard cosmology, cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion – each of which is lethal to naturalism, and each of which is more rooted in experimental science than clumsy storytelling. Unfortunately, the good evidence that modern science offers is largely unknown to most parents, who still trust teachers to teach children truth and practical skills.

I do think it's important for parents to have some sort of plan for dealing with this, and money to fund their plan. The BU professor is obviously not capable of winning an argument about Darwinism with a grown-up with a good knowledge of the facts, but that's not her purpose. She is a psychologist in Boston – it's unlikely she is familiar with actual experimental science related to origins. She's not interested in debating William Lane Craig or Stephen C. Meyer – *she's never even heard of them*. She doesn't want to talk about the details of experimental science with someone who has an awareness of it, she just wants to pass her own religion (naturalism) on to your children when they are too young to know how to resist her. And I'm sure that she'd like the assistance of a secular government to accomplish that. And believe me, there are powerful people who are very interested in helping her, and in making sure that no parent can stop her from indoctrinating their children.

How the green movement makes war on jobs and the poorest Americans

May 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article by Stephen Moore from Investors Business Daily is important, because it shows that there is a cost to environmentalist advocacy.

Excerpt:

> Last month we saw firsthand one impact of Big Green on our economy with the White House announcement that the Keystone XL pipeline won't be built for at least six more months.
>
> Ten thousand blue collar jobs, almost all paying more than $50,000 a year, down the drain.
>
> It's a project that polls show almost all Americans want, except for the deep-pocketed green elite in Hollywood, Silicon Valley and Wall Street.
>
> Then the Los Angeles Times recently warned that electricity prices could be driven upward in California and other states due in part to renewable energy mandates that cause electric power shortages and spike prices paid by homeowners.
>
> Meanwhile, around the country, from Seattle to Bangor, Maine, property owners are locked into fights with green groups preventing people from building on their land in responsible and productive ways.
>
> Out West, the Endangered Species Act has become an Endanger the Oil and Gas Industry Act, as energy companies confront higher regulatory hurdles and bans on development on potentially tens of millions of acres.
>
> Whole communities that depend on natural resource development are being wiped out.
>
> Big Green is already fast at work wiping out America's coal industry, with entire mining towns nearly shut down in states like Kentucky and West Virginia, thanks to the left's war on coal. These are small towns where the median household income is often less than $40,000 a year. Liberals used to pretend to care about these people.
>
> […]In fact, the environmental movement's entire agenda — stop fracking, stop coal development, stop pipelines, stop nuclear energy, stop drilling on federal lands, require expensive "renewable energy," enact cap-and-trade schemes, impose carbon taxes, and on and on — victimize poor and middle-class Americans the most. Rich donors to the Sierra Club get hardly a scratch from these policies to save the planet.

If you ask most Americans whether they are more worried about global warming or

having a job, they'll say having a job is more important. Paying less for electricity is more important. Paying less for gas for their car is more important. The only people who don't care are the rich. But not just any rich – the Hollywood rich. The people who have no idea how the economy works. If only young people and the middle class could realize what the real price tag is for all this fine environmentalist rhetoric. Maybe we should be telling them how environmental policies affect their day-to-day lives.

Boehner announces select committee to investigate the Benghazi cover-up

May 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> South Carolina Republican congressman Trey Gowdy claimed he has evidence of "a systematic, intentional decision to withhold certain documents from Congress" about the Benghazi attacks and alleged White House cover-up.
>
> Gowdy spoke with Fox News' Greta van Susteren about Speaker of the House John Boehner's Friday decision to form a select committee on Benghazi. The congressman explained that the committee will allow a more complete investigation into the issue, unburdened by the jurisdictional restraints that often plague other committees.
>
> "If you want to have Greg Hicks and the station chief from Tripoli and Hillary Clinton all sitting at the same table, you need to have a committee that has the power to do that," Gowdy said. "And a select committee would have that power."
>
> Gowdy — widely viewed as a frontrunner to chair the new committee — later told Susteren he supports Congress' subpoena of Secretary of State John Kerry in order to get documents they have long awaited from the State Department.
>
> He then added he has proof that documents relating to Benghazi and the alleged Obama administration cover-up have been deliberately withheld from Congress.
>
> "Well, I have evidence that not only are they hiding it, there is an intent to hide it," he claimed. "I can't disclose that evidence yet, but I have evidence that there was a systematic, intentional decision to withhold certain documents from Congress."

And guess what? Boehner has now announced the formation of a special committee. And Gowdy is one of the candidates to lead it.

Excerpt:

> House Republicans moved on two fronts Friday to dig for answers on Benghazi, with Speaker John Boehner announcing a special committee to investigate and a key panel subpoenaing Secretary of State John Kerry to testify.
>
> In a significant shift, Boehner announced that the House will vote on establishing a select committee to investigate, on the heels of newly released emails that raised additional questions about the White House's response.
>
> […]The committee is expected to be bipartisan, and Fox News is told Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., is among those being considered to lead it.

Gowdy should be picked to lead it. It is a former prosecutor and he knows how to cut through the baloney.

In addition, Darrell Issa has sub-poena'd John Kerry to explain why documents the GOP has requested have not been received:

> On the heels of those documents, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee also announced Friday that it has issued the subpoena for Kerry to testify at a May 21 hearing. The chairman of that committee has accused the administration of hiding records following an earlier subpoena.
>
> "The State Department's response to the congressional investigation of the Benghazi attack has shown a disturbing disregard for the Department's legal obligations to Congress," Chairman Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., wrote in a letter to Kerry.
>
> He added: "Compliance with a subpoena for documents is not a game. Because your Department is failing to meet its legal obligations, I am issuing a new subpoena to compel you to appear before the Committee to answer questions about your agency's response to the congressional investigation of the Benghazi attack."

So we are going to finally get some answers. This recent shift from Boehner comes as a result of the e-mails that surfaced last week, implicating the White House in the Benghazi cover-up. I would like to know exactly who was responsible for inventing the YouTube video story.

Related posts

- E-mails: Susan Rice prepped to lie about Benghazi by White House
- Benghazi hearings: CIA director altered talking points from "attack" to "demonstration"
- Transcripts show that top U.S. military officials briefed Obama on Benghazi terrorist attack
- Benghazi liar Susan Rice to be appointed National Security Adviser by grateful Obama
- Released e-mails show that State Department edited terrorism out of talking points
- Obama: editing of talking points to cover-up of Benghazi terrorist attack is a "sideshow"
- BBC News covers whistle-blower testimony: "After Benghazi revelations, heads will roll"
- ABC News: State Department scrubbed terrorism details from Benghazi talking points
- What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack "from the get-go"

- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Hysterical Hillary Clinton shrieks out her victimhood over Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi security officials on the ground contradict CIA's account
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

First openly gay Episcopal bishop to divorce same-sex partner

May 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an Associated Press article, so it is extremely liberal and sympathetic to the gay bishop. (H/T Tom)

Excerpt:

> The first openly gay Episcopal bishop, who became a symbol for gay rights far beyond the church while deeply dividing the world's Anglicans, plans to divorce his husband.
>
> […]Robinson, 66, had been married to a woman and had two children before he and his wife divorced. He and Andrew had been partners for more than a decade when Robinson was elected to lead the New Hampshire Diocese. The two men were joined in a 2008 civil union in New Hampshire, which became a legal marriage when the state recognized gay marriage two years later.
>
> […]Robinson was… widely celebrated as a pioneer for gay rights, became an advocate for gay marriage and was the subject of several books and a documentary about Christianity, the Bible and same-sex relationships. He delivered the benediction at the opening 2009 inaugural event for President Barack Obama and, after retirement, became a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, a Democratic think tank with close ties to the White House.

The interesting thing about this is that although Americans have been fed a steady diet of propaganda from Hollywood to make us think that gay relationships are stable, the reality is that they are NOT stable.

Let's take a look at the data

Consider this post from The Public Discourse which explains that there are few stable, long-lived gay relationships – even the ones with children.

Excerpt:

> The [NFSS] study found that the children who were raised by a gay or lesbian parent as little as 15 years ago were usually conceived within a heterosexual marriage, which then underwent divorce or separation, leaving the child with a single parent. That parent then had at least one same-sex romantic relationship, sometimes outside of the child's home, sometimes within it. **To be more specific, among the respondents who said their mother had a same-sex romantic relationship, a minority, 23%, said they had spent at least three years living in the same household with both their mother and her romantic partner. Only 2 out of the 15,000 screened spent a span of 18 years with the same two mothers. Among those who said their father**

> **had had a same-sex relationship, 1.1% of children reported spending at least three years together with both men.**
>
> This strongly suggests that the parents' same-sex relationships were often short-lived, a finding consistent with the broader research on elevated levels of instability among same-sex romantic partners. For example, a recent 2012 study of same-sex couples in Great Britain finds that gay and lesbian cohabiting couples are more likely to separate than heterosexual couples. A 2006 study of same sex marriages in Norway and Sweden found that "divorce risk levels are considerably higher in same-sex marriages" such that Swedish lesbian couples are more than three times as likely to divorce as heterosexual couples, and Swedish gay couples are 1.35 times more likely to divorce (net of controls). Timothy Biblarz and Judith Stacey, two of the most outspoken advocates for same-sex marriage in the U.S. academy, acknowledge that there is more instability among lesbian parents.
>
> **Therefore, while critics of the NFSS have faulted it for lacking comparisons between children of IBFs and the children of committed and intact gay or lesbian couples, this was attempted, but was not feasible. Despite drawing from a large, representative sample of the U.S. population, and despite using screening tactics designed to boost the number of respondents who reported having had a parent in a same-sex relationship, a very small segment reported having been parented by the same two women or two men for a minimum of three years. Although there is much speculation that today there are large numbers of same-sex couples in the U.S. who are providing a stable, long-term parenting relationship for their children, *no studies* based upon large, random samples of the U.S. population have been published that show this to be true, and the above-cited studies of different nations show that on average, same-sex couple relationships are more short-lived than those of opposite-sex couples.**

I think this is an important point to make – and it's consistent with the research from previous studies. The bottom line is that gay marriage is another step on the path towards making marriage about the needs and feelings of adults. In natural marriage, parents are concerned about how breaking up will affect their children – so thy have a reason to stay together and work conflicts out. The needs of the adults are secondary to the needs of the children. But in gay marriage, there is no such constraint. The children are not related biologically to both partners, and so that protection is not in place.

Public school teacher bans Bible reading in her class

May 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBS local news.

Excerpt:

> A Broward County boy said he was banned from reading "The Good Book" during free-reading time in school. The boy and his father have hired an attorney, calling this a violation of the boy's Constitutional rights. Meanwhile, the Broward County School District says this is all a big misunderstanding.
>
> "I first started reading a little bit (of the Bible,)" says Rubeo. "Little by little, it started becoming my favorite book to read.
>
> Giovanni Rubeo says the Bible was given to him as a gift from his church, Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale, over Christmas.
>
> The Park Lakes Elementary fifth grader said he started reading it during free-reading time in his first-period class. That's when the boy's attorney claims his teacher, Swornia Thomas, stepped in.
>
> Rubeo's attorney shared a voicemail the teacher left for Giovanni's dad.
>
> "Good morning, Mr. Rubeo," says a woman. "Giovanni called you because I asked him to. I noticed that he had a book, a religious book, in the classroom. He's not permitted to read those books in my classroom. He said if I told him to put it away, you said not to do that. So please give me a call. I need to have some understanding on direction to him about the book he's reading opposed to the curriculum for public school. Ms. S. Thomas. Thank you. Have a wonderful day. Bye, bye."
>
> Giovanni and his lawyer claim Giovanni was told on multiple occasions that he couldn't read the Bible during free-reading time.
>
> […]The district wouldn't comment on what, if any, consequences the teacher might face. Giovanni says there has been no free-reading time, recently, so he hasn't been reading his Bible at school.
>
> CBS4′s Gaby Fleischman stopped by Mrs. Thomas' home. Her husband told us she was not there and asked: "What the [expletive] do you want?"
>
> Gaby responded that we want to speak to Mrs. Thomas' to hear her side of the story.
>
> "She ain't got nothing to say to you, she ain't got nothing to say," responded her husband. "Get me on camera, get the [expletive] out of my yard."

Note that this student's parents (and all of you reading) pay taxes to fund these public schools. Public school teachers are unionized, and they support bigger government and higher taxes. We are funding a system that is hostile to our beliefs. The only way to fix

this is to detach the money from the public school and put it in the hands of the parents, who can then decide which school they would like to partner with – or maybe no school at all, in the case of homeschooling. That's the fastest way to end the bullying of Christians and conservatives that goes on in public schools. Attach the money to the parent, and suddenly these public school teachers will remember who their customers are.

Casey Luskin: useful resources to have when debating intelligent design

May 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Casey Luskin replies to an e-mail at Evolution News from someone seeking help defending ID.

There are 6 questions asked:

> 1) Can you give me half a dozen (or more) examples of where ID or Creationists have been intimidated for their views? Whether they were fired, threat of firing, demoted, sued, threat of suit, or publicly humiliated by the Scientific Community and/or Atheist and/or ACLU. In cases of a firing, I would much appreciate examples where a lawsuit ensued because that tends to shows the serious nature of the offense…
>
> 2) Can you provide half a dozen (or more) examples where any scientists who publicly raised a challenge to evolution or evolution theory was also intimidated? I would appreciate it, if you could provide a few examples of people who actually supported evolution who then realized their research tended to disprove evolution. You can also provide a few examples where those in academia were intimidated.
>
> 3) Can you tell me how many states now have laws that protect teachers in allowing them to give both evidence supporting evolution as well as evidence disproving evolution? I would especially appreciate examples where the evolutionists or ACLU attempted to block those legislative attempts.
>
> 4) Can you give me examples of where evolutionists tried to deceive the public or scientific community?
>
> 5) *** As I've read and researched, there has never been an example of "evolution" actually occurring; yet Wikipedia makes the bold statement that implies there are examples and then lists bacteria as one…
>
> "Typically, observable instances of evolution are examples of microevolution; for example, bacterial strains that have antibiotic resistance…."
>
> I believe I recently read that in fact bacteria haven't been observed "evolving" and that evolutionists themselves note this is a real challenge, because they should be able to make it change but it never does. It simply reverts back. Isn't it true that bacteria, as referenced in Wikipedia, aren't evolving but are simply developing an immunity to the antibiotics?
>
> 6) Lastly, can you give me four or five major things that disprove evolution….

Do those sound useful to you? If so, click through, and bookmark the page for later. You might also find this video lecture by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer an excellent introduction to

intelligent design in the origin of life.

Pastor Matt: Christian apologists should care about the loss of religious liberty

May 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Pastor Matt Rawlings' blog. First he summarizes a couple of religious liberty cases – Brendan Eich and Elane Photography.

Excerpt:

> […][F]ew seemed to pause and ask about the ramifications of a nation incrementally losing the religious freedom it has long enjoyed. I would argue this is an issue that committed Christian thinkers should take very seriously.
>
> First of all, the loss of religious freedom (along with the growth of centralized government) is historically dangerous for all people. The loss of one freedom often serves as the domino for the loss of others. We are a people called to love our neighbors (Matt. 22:37-40) and standing by while persecution may be inching toward many certainly does not count.
>
> Second, some have argued that if we lose our freedom it will help the church grow or at least "separate the men from the boys." This is a romantic notion that persecution is good for the church but it too is a failure to love our neighbors and is not entirely accurate. For example, see Acts 9:31, which reads, "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers." Moreover, great revivals like the First and Second Great Awakening and the immediate post World War II boom took place in times of religious freedom.
>
> Third, true rational discourse in true marketplace of ideas depends on true religious freedom. One cannot arbitrarily exclude certain ideas from public debate because it strikes certain segments of the culture as offensive. If any person believes that open dialogue is a key to truth then that person should fight for any voice to have his or her say.

I'll skip to his conclusion:

> So, we need to graciously and intelligently contend for our freedom by supporting Christian legal groups like Alliance Defending Freedom and, of course praying for God's continued grace. We also need to train ourselves in public and practical apologetics including why it is that traditional marriage is good for a country (and it is). In the meantime, be sure to go to Speak Up Church and gather resources on how to help protect your church from the current attacks on religious freedom.

Read the whole thing. This is a great post, and one you ought to click through and read.

Now before my remarks, I wanted to produce the biography of one of the ADF lawyers I heard in a recent podcast.

Douglas Napier bio:

> Douglas H. Napier serves as Senior Vice-President-Legal for Alliance Defending Freedom at its headquarters in Scottsdale, Arizona, where he leads a litigation team of approximately 40 attorneys and legal support staff at offices in District of Colombia, Arizona, Kansas, California, Georgia, and Tennessee. Before joining Alliance Defending Freedom in 2007, Napier practiced civil trial law in Iowa for 16 years. He earned his J.D. from the University of Iowa College, with distinction, and is a fellow of the Iowa Academy of Trial Lawyers. Napier is admitted to the bar in Iowa, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa, and the U.S. Supreme Court, and has been admitted pro hac vice to several federal courts across the nation.

I'm glad that some Christians are making the plans to get these law degrees that allow them to do something about threats like this.

My thoughts

When I posted this on Facebook earlier on Monday, I was surprised to see a bunch of people posting Bible verses and talking about how persecution might not be such a bad thing. And this always annoys me, because I wonder if these people really understand what persecution looks like, in different times and places. It looks like murder, torture, imprisonment, fines, trials, sickness, disease, loneliness and despair. It's not something you wish for. It's certainly not something you want for others. We have a threat to religious liberty. That threat should be met with law degrees from prestigious universities – and life plans that allow you to get those degrees. We need to be making life plans to either get the degrees that can counter the threat, or to support those (financially) who are getting them or who already have them. I'm in the latter group.

Father arrested for challenging public school on assigned book containing graphic sex

May 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Blaze.

Excerpt:

> A New Hampshire parent was arrested at a Monday night school board meeting after he voiced outrage his ninth grade daughter was assigned a book that contains a page detailing a graphic sexual encounter.
>
> Gilford school officials claim the book, “Nineteen Minutes” by Jodi Picoult, contains important themes about a school shooting. But some parents believe a scene described in the book is inappropriate for their children.
>
> According to WCVB-TV, the book contains a graphic description of rough sex between two teenagers, which parents were unaware of until the book had already been distributed to their kids.
>
> “I was shocked when I read the passage and not much shocks me anymore,” William Baer told EAG News. “My wife was stunned by the increasingly graphic nature of the sexual content of the scene and the imagery it evoked.”
>
> He went to the school board meeting to express his objections.
>
> “It’s absurd,” he told the school board.
>
> “Sir, would you please be respectful of the other people?” a school board member responded.
>
> “Like you’re respectful of my daughter, right? And my children?” he countered.
>
> A police officer then arrived at the scene, instructing Baer to leave with him.
>
> “You are going to arrest me because I violated the two-minute rule?” the father said. “I guess you are going to have to arrest me.”
>
> **Moments later, Baer was escorted outside and placed in handcuffs. According to WMUR-TV, he was charged with disorderly conduct because he did not immediately leave when asked by an officer.**

When it comes to public schools indoctrinating your children, parents are the enemy. The teachers have a leftist agenda, and parents just get in the way.

New study: only 7% of journalists are Republicans

May 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story in the left-wing Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> A majority of American journalists identify themselves as political independents although among those who choose a side Democrats outnumber Republicans four to one, according to a new study of the media conducted by two Indiana University professors.
>
> Write Lars Wilnat and David Weaver, professors of journalism at Indiana, of their findings:

> Compared with 2002, the percentage of full-time U.S. journalists who claim to be Democrats has dropped 8 percentage points in 2013 to about 28 percent, moving this figure closer to the overall population percentage of 30 percent, according to a December 12-15, 2013, ABC News/Washington Post national poll of 1,005 adults. This is the lowest percentage of journalists saying they are Democrats since 1971. An even larger drop was observed among journalists who said they were Republicans in 2013 (7.1 percent) than in 2002 (18 percent), but the 2013 figure is still notably lower than the percentage of U.S. adults who identified with the Republican Party (24 percent according to the poll mentioned above).
>
> Over the last several decades, three things have happened: 1) The number of Democratic-identifying reporters increased steadily prior to a significant drop in the latest survey 2) The number of Republicans has steadily shrunk with that number dipping into single digits for the first time ever in the new survey c) more and more reporters are identifying as independents. What seems to be happening — at least in the last decade – -is that journalists are leaving both parties, finding themselves more comfortable as unaffiliateds.

I wonder if people really realize how left-wing the mainstream media is – it's really just an extension of the Democrat party. And this study isn't an outlier, either.

Let's take a look at some other peer-reviewed studies on media bias.

Peer-reviewed academic studies of media bias

Let's take a look at peer-reviewed academic studies of media bias, and see if they confirm or falsify what Pew Research found.

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.

> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

And more from a study reported by NBC News.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004

> through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

Those are the facts.

Liberal feminist celebrates decline of traditional marriage norms

May 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from the radically left-wing New Republic by Helen Croydon, in which she explains why marital norms have got to go.

She needs to keep her freedom and fulfill her different needs at different times:

> […]I… would rather retain my single status with a few rewarding lovers to fulfill different needs at different times of my life. Relationships can be a nice addition to contentment but they no longer have to be the main ingredient.

Science shows that we're all just monkeys anyway:

> Liberal social attitudes mean monogamy for the sake of it is but a moral trinket. Fine if you're in the early throes of romantic love and only have eyes for each other. I've been there many times and what a wonderful feeling it is. But it's no secret that romantic infatuation doesn't last. In fact anthropologists now distinguish between different states of attraction. There is romantic love, where you are flooded with dopamine, get the butterflies and want to spend every moment together. Then there is attachment, where you are flooded with the hormone oxytocin and feel a deep sense of trust, familiarity and love for your partner but little passion. In the former you probably find monogamy agreeable. I certainly do. By the time you've been together for long enough to not close the bathroom door to trim your toenails, you're likely to find your eyes and fantasies wander occasionally. But of course you will rein them in because the modern conventions of relationships dictate that's what you should do.

A lot of people are doing it, so that makes it morally permissible:

> There are now 3.5 million people over the age of 45 living alone in the UK, an increase of more than 50 percent since the mid-1990s. Domestic conveniences like vacuum cleaners, modern compact apartments and supermarket deliveries make it all very easy. In researching my book I interviewed married couples who live apart. One couple were on the verge of separating when they rented the house next door as a trial separation. Without the domestic minutiae overshadowing their "romantic" relationship, they thrived, so they made it permanent. The wife told me in glee: "I can invite people back and have parties. I could never do that before because he's such a miserable anti-social thing." So common is this new trend that the Office for National Statistics has created a term for it—LAT (living apart together). It estimates there are currently two million LAT couples in the UK. More people choose to live alone because they can.

This is the part that is really interesting:

> **If you think life-long commitment is still needed to start a family, a replacement for that has been found too. Earlier this month it was reported that the number of single women seeking artificial insemination with a sperm donor has doubled in five years. This is more significant if you consider that as late as the 1950s single motherhood was deplored so much that they could be locked away in a mental asylum.**

So she's saying "lots of people are having fatherless children, so that makes it right". This is how liberal feminists decide. You don't have to look at studies to see what fatherlessness does to a child – you just have to see if your friends will judge you for it. If they don't judge you, then you're fine to do anything you want.

And now I'm going to tell you exactly why this woman wrote this article. She wrote it because she made poor choices with men, and now she is trying to get younger women to make the same poor choices, so she doesn't feel alone in their failure. That's the whole point of this. Don't judge me. Don't disapprove of me. I didn't hurt anyone. I didn't do anything wrong. Everything is going exactly as planned. I'm a big success, and my married friends who have children are not any better than me. I can have children any time I want. My career is as fulfilling as a family. Everyone is cheating on everyone anyway, so why even try?

This is not a safe woman to marry.

House Republicans vote to hold Lois Lerner in contempt of Congress

May 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBS News.

Excerpt:

> The Republican-led House voted Wednesday to hold former Internal Revenue Service official Lois Lerner in contempt of Congress for refusing to answer questions related to the agency's undue scrutiny of certain tax-exempt groups.
>
> The vote to hold Lerner in contempt of Congress was 231-187, with all Republicans voting in favor and all but a few Democrats voting against.
>
> It's now up to a local U.S. attorney to consider criminal charges against Lerner. The Justice Department, however, has ignored past contempt charges against executive branch officials, including contempt charges against Attorney General Eric Holder.
>
> […]Republicans maintain they are determined to get to the bottom of the scandal and find out why IRS officials, starting in 2010, unfairly targeted groups for their political activity.
>
> […]In addition to holding Lerner in contempt, the House also voted 250-168 to approve a resolution calling on Holder to appoint a special counsel to investigate the IRS targeting.

According to Hot Air, "Lerner could face fines up to $100,000 and even a up to a year of jail time".

In other news, Trey Gowdy, who is heading the new select committee on Benghazi, is kicking some serious ass.

Transcript fragment:

> **MEGYN KELLY**: I know you said you intend to subpoena her, that you want her to appear before your committee. However, and I say this respectfully, the last time she appeared before Congress what we had was a series of speeches from the lawmakers, without that many probing questions. I hear that from my viewers often when we look back on those hearings. What would be different this time?
>
> **TREY GOWDY**: Well, what will be different is I'm not necessarily committing to hearing. I'm committing to the getting the answers and may be in the form of a deposition, which, as you know, Megyn, as a very good attorney, which you once were, that is the route that is most conducive with eliciting the truth. It's not five minutes of pounding your chest in a committee room. It's a deposition.
>
> **MEGYN KELLY**: Can she get out of that?

> **TREY GOWDY**: Well, if she can get out of a subpoena, she can get out of it. But I don't send invitations to cocktail parties. We're going to send subpoenas and we're going to expect her to comply and if you don't comply, she'll suffer the same panoply of consequences that any of your viewers who don't comply with a subpoena would suffer.

I was hoping they were going to pick him to lead the committee, and I believe we are finally going to get some answers on this scandal.

Homeschooled sixteen-year-old graduates college and high school in the same week

May 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ABC News:

CBS News:

CBS local news reports on this amazing story.

Full text:

> It's that time of year when students all across the country will be celebrating high school and college graduations. One South Florida girl will get a diploma from both in the same week and she is only 16-years old.
>
> Grace Bush already has her bachelor's degree from college but she doesn't have a high school diploma yet.
>
> "It's kind of weird that I graduated college before high school," said Grace Bush.
>
> The teen from Hollywood earned her bachelor's degree in criminal justice Friday morning from Florida Atlantic University.
>
> She did it with a 3.8 grade point average and completed the four-year degree in just three years.
>
> "I started when I was 13 at Broward College and I also took my classes throughout the summer, so I was able to finish it before four years," said Grace Bush.
>
> The institution's dual enrollment program allows high performing high school students to earn credit for the same courses towards their college degree and save thousands of dollars in tuition at the same time.
>
> Grace's parents wanted their nine children to earn college credit in high school because they can't afford to send all of their kids to college. **Their mother, who home schooled all the kids** knew early on, Grace had a knack for learning.
>
> "At two years old, she was already reading and I was totally shocked," said Grace's mother, Gisla Bush.
>
> Grace is the third oldest in the Bush family.
>
> "My two older sisters are doing it and I'm the third to do it. My oldest sister already graduated and my second oldest sister is graduating in the summer," said Grace Bush.
>
> The new college graduate said she'll be pursuing a master's degree this fall, and then going to law school.
>
> "I would eventually like to become chief justice of the United States," said Grace Bush.

> During her spare time she plays the flute in two orchestras and that keeps her busy but she says she will finally take a little break during the summer.
>
> "To study for the LSAT, so I can get as high a score as possible, so hopefully I can get a full ride into a good school, law school," said Grace Bush.

Looking at the two videos above, I saw several interesting things. This young lady did not attend public school, she was home-schooled. She had a father who was proud of her and believed in her, which affects the graduation rates of children according to a recent study. She was filmed speaking in her home in front of a little plaque with a verse from the Bible.

Related posts

- Obama administration wins court battle to have Christian homeschooling family deported
- German judge rules refuses to give homeschooling parents custody of their children
- International tests show US children lagging despite record spending on education
- Police invade home of homeschooling family and seize four children
- Report: growth in homeschooling is outpacing new public school enrollments
- Obama administration wins appeal to deport German homeschooling family
- Alabama homeschooling family sends 6 kids to college – by age 12!
- U.S. Department of Justice arguing that homeschooling is not a right
- Chicago teacher strike: average pay $71K, 80% of 8th graders not proficient at math
- A look at homeschooling and alternatives to college

Another example of convergence found in human and squid eye genes

May 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We have to start this post with the definition of convergence in biology.

> In evolutionary biology, convergent evolution is the process whereby organisms not closely related (not monophyletic), independently evolve similar traits as a result of having to adapt to similar environments or ecological niches.
>
> It is the opposite of divergent evolution, where related species evolve different traits.
>
> On a molecular level, this can happen due to random mutation unrelated to adaptive changes; see long branch attraction. In cultural evolution, convergent evolution is the development of similar cultural adaptations to similar environmental conditions by different peoples with different ancestral cultures. An example of convergent evolution is the similar nature of the flight/wings of insects, birds, pterosaurs, and bats.
>
> All four serve the same function and are similar in structure, but each evolved independently.

With that being said, here is an article from Real Clear Science with me. (H/T Melissa from Science, Faith and Reason)

Excerpt:

> Eyes and wings are among the most stunning innovations evolution has created. Remarkably these features have evolved multiple times in different lineages of animals. For instance, the avian ancestors of birds and the mammalian ancestors of bats both evolved wings independently, in an example of convergent evolution. The same happened for the eyes of squid and humans. Exactly how such convergent evolution arises is not always clear.
>
> In a new study, published in *Nature Scientific Reports*, researchers have found that, **despite belonging to completely different lineages, humans and squid evolved through tweaks to the same gene.**
>
> Like all organs, the eye is the product of many genes working together. The majority of those genes provide information about how to make part of the eye. For example, one gene provides information to construct a light-sensitive pigment. Another gene provides information to make a lens.
>
> Most of the genes involved in making the eye read like a parts list – this gene makes this, and that gene makes that. But some genes orchestrate the construction of the eye. Rather than providing instructions to make an eye part, these genes provide information about where and when parts need to be

> constructed and assembled. In keeping with their role in controlling the process of eye formation, these genes are called “master control genes”.
>
> The most important of master control genes implicated in making eyes is called *Pax6*. The ancestral *Pax6* gene probably orchestrated the formation of a very simple eye – merely a collection of light-sensing cells working together to inform a primitive organism of when it was out in the open versus in the dark, or in the shade.
>
> **Today the legacy of that early *Pax6* gene lives on in an incredible diversity of organisms, from birds and bees, to shellfish and whales, from squid to you and me. This means the *Pax6* gene predates the evolutionary diversification of these lineages – during the Cambrian period, some 500m years ago.**

I asked Melissa if this was another example of “convergence”, and she said it was. That’s because the gene is present in animals that DO NOT SHARE A COMMON ANCESTOR. In short, this is exactly identical to the case where a computer programmer reuses the same library of functions in two completely different programs. For example, using the Apache CXF web service library to create two completely different REST-like web services with two completely different clients. (Which is what I am doing at work right now!).

This example of convergence makes no sense on naturalistic evolution – you can evolve the same gene so many times in animals with no common ancestry. It screams out design. See the related posts below for more examples of convergence, and remember that the more we know about science, the more difficult the problem becomes for a naturalist.

Related posts

- Convergence detected in the genetic structure of bats and dolphins
- How biological convergence falsifies Darwinian evolution
- Science Daily reports on genetic convergence in bats and whales
- What kinds of predictions does intelligent design make?
- Is universal common ancestry based on established facts?

Six ways for women to stamp out the risk of divorce

May 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal Huffington Post, of all places.

First, here's the list of skills for women to develop to avoid divorce:

- Skill #1: Do at Least Three Things a Day for Your Own Pleasure
- Skill #2: Relinquish Control of People You Can't Control
- Skill #3: Receive Gifts, Compliments and Help Graciously
- Skill #4: Respect The Man You Chose
- Skill #5: Express Gratitude Three Times Daily
- Skill #6: Strive to be Vulnerable

And here's the detail on one that I think is the most important:

> Skill #4: Respect The Man You Chose
>
> Being respectful will resurrect the man you fell in love with. You're too smart to have married a dumb guy, so if he seems dumb now, it's because you're focused on his shortcomings. It's not that you made a mistake in marrying him, it's that you've been *focused* on his mistakes *since* you married him. A man who feels respected by the woman who knows him best also feels self-respect, which is far more attractive than cowering and hostility.
>
> Lack of respect causes more divorces than cheating does because for men, respect is like oxygen. They need it more than sex. Respect means that you don't dismiss, criticize, contradict or try to teach him anything. Of course he won't do things the same way you do; for that, you could have just married yourself. But with your respect, he will once again do the things that amazed and delighted you to begin with — so much so that you married him.

And here's the detail on the one that I think is the most neglected:

> Skill #6: Strive to be Vulnerable
>
> Intimacy and vulnerability are directly connected. If you want intimacy, then you'll need to take the risk of admitting that you're lonely, embarrassed or hurt. This is not the same as weakness; it actually requires great strength.
>
> When you're vulnerable you don't care about being right, you're just open and trusting enough to say "I miss you" instead of "you never spend time with me." It means you simply say, "ouch!" when he's insensitive instead of retaliating. That vulnerability completely changes the way he responds to you.
>
> Vulnerability is not only attractive, it's the only way to get to that incredible feeling of being loved just the way you are by someone who knows you well. There's nothing like the joy of intimacy that results from vulnerability. It really is

> worth dropping the burden of being an efficient, overscheduled superwoman to have it.

Before I get started, a piece of advice for men. I really, really recommend that single men take the time to read ALL the comments by the women underneath that post before they even think about getting married. It's important for single men to realize that your old-fashioned ideas about marriage and what women should do in a marriage are often not accepted by modern women – even modern *Christian* women. Most churches don't emphasize the things in the list above, because they are trying to make women feel good, and not to tell them what needs doing and how to do it. When you read the comments by women blaming men and attacking the 6 points, that will help you to see what you should be looking for, so you know how to make sound judgments about who to marry and whether to marry at all.

Right. Let's begin with the 6 points.

From that list above, the ones I have personally encountered are #1, #3, #4, #5 and #6.

For #1, many unmarried women think that relationships are more about being happy than achieving things. If the woman gets into a relationship for happiness, and is not happy, then she may blame the man for failing to make her happy. The solution is to have a more realistic balance between happiness and self-sacrificial service. An unmarried women should focus on finding out what the man's plans and goals are, and why he needs her. She has to focus on showing him that she wants to be informed and engaged in helping him. That is the best way for her to learn how to balance the need for happiness with the need to handle her relationship obligations (to children, as well as her spouse). Another way to lower the need for happiness provided by the man is for the woman to have her own interests. For example, my favorite single woman likes to spend time in the evening decompressing with stuff like cross-stitching, reading, playing with her cat, etc. before we do stuff together. She has her own sources of happiness and that means that I am not overburdened every day as the sole source of happiness. That can be overwhelming on days where she is stressed out from work.

For #3 and #5, I have to tell a funny story about what I have been doing lately with my favorite single woman. I have been busy trying to get her to tell me all about what her life is like from day to day and then buying her small things to help her out with her daily struggles. For example, I bought her an ice scraper so that she wouldn't have to scrape ice off her windshield with her gloves. I bought her kitchen shears so that she wouldn't have to fuss with raw chicken. I got her a new corded hand-vacuum for Christmas because she had to lug her heavy one up and down the stairs to clean them. Why am I fussing so much about this woman? Because she is the most grateful woman I know. Whenever I do anything for her, she tells everyone about it and I hear about how helpful I've been every time she uses whatever I bought her. Women, get it clear: men prefer to help grateful women.

For #4, I think the scariest thing for a woman is thinking that she will have to respect a bad men, even when he is bad. But women like that are looking at marriage wrong. The

respect is *non-negotiable*. You will respect your husband or you will be cheated on or divorced. So with that in mind, *choose a man who you do respect*. That's the solution – test the men carefully and effectively and choose one who is easy to respect and then marry that man. Make the respectability of the man the main criteria. The time to make the decision is before the marriage, because divorce is out of the question. And women really need to work at this, in my experience, because they typically let feelings dominate their decision-making, instead of being practical about finding the right man to do the work that men do in a marriage. The appearance of the man tends to be their only criteria, these days. Instead of choosing on appearances, women should test men out during the courtship to see if they like the way he leads, persuades and makes decisions. Instead of letting feelings and peer-approval decide, just think of what a man does and prefer men who can do those things.

For #6, I think that women really need to realize the power of vulnerability. My view, which is controversial, is that the reason why women are focusing so much on their appearance and sexuality is because feminism has made it illegal for them to attract men with traditional femininity. Vulnerability, trust, modesty, nurturing, care, concern, attention, support, etc. are all viewed by unmarried women as prohibited by feminism – even though they work on men very well. Men treat women nicely when they see how sensitive women are to good treatment and bad treatment. Men are motivated by the desire to make a difference and to be appreciated by a woman who needs them. Women need to practice being vulnerable, and to protect their ability to *be vulnerable* by avoiding premarital sex and messy breakups. Women need to learn to control their feelings and not batter themselves up on a sequence of men who are not ready for marriage. The most common thing I am seeing with women these days, including Christian women, is that their ability to trust a man, and to let a good man lead them, have been completely wrecked because they've dashed themselves to pieces over and over on men who looked good and impressed their friends, but who were not qualified for marriage. Marriage, for a man, is a faithful, life-long self-sacrificial commitment to provide for and serve a spouse and to train up children. *Pick the right man for that job.*

John Lennox and Paul Davies discuss aliens and the origin of life

May 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An amazing debate about the origin of life and the cosmic fine-tuning between a Christian and a materialist agnostic. John Lennox is AWESOME in this debate, and he only talks for a tiny part of the debate. He's very gracious, and focused the discussion on the areas that we care about. Paul Davies is an EXCELLENT scientist and well aware of what Christians believe. This is a great debate, very easy to listen to. Justin, the moderator, does a great job controlling a fantastic discussion.

The MP3 file is here.

Details

What does it take for life to get going in our universe? Is there intelligence in the stars or right under our nose? Renowned astrophysicist Paul Davies chats to Oxford Professor of Mathematics John Lennox.

A popular science author, Davies is also the Chair of the SETI post detection task force. His latest book "The Eerie Silence" which marks SETI's 50th anniversary examines the likelihood of the universe producing life elsewhere.

John Lennox is a Christian Mathematician and philosopher. He is the author of "God's Undertaker: has science buried God?" and has debated Richard Dawkins on several occasions.

Davies' work on the fine tuning of the universe for life has been sympathetic to theism. In this programme Lennox challenges Davies to look to design not just in cosmology but in the cell. They also chat about what the discovery of ET would mean for Christian theology.

Summary

Justin:

- Is there meaning in the universe?

Paul:

- We have no evidence for or against intelligent life elsewhere in the universe
- The vastness of the universe makes me think there is life elsewhere
- Humans are capable of observing and understanding the universe
- It seems the universe has the ability to create observers to understand it
- If one species has this ability, then we should expect others to do it

John:

- The fact that we can observe the universe and do science has cosmic significance

- Our rare habitable planet and our ability to do science is suggestive of purpose
- So science itself points to an extra-terrestrial intelligence: GOD
- The complexity of life and consciousness itself points away from atheism
- Monotheism gave birth to science
- Human minds capable of doing science are not compatible with atheistic materialism

Justin:

- Why do you say that either we are the only life or there are many different kinds of life?

Paul:

- There are lots of factors that have to be met to have a site for simple life
- These are related to the fine-tuning of cosmic constants, e.g. gravitational force
- But there are also factors that have to be met for originating intelligent life
- Things like convergence, self-organization, etc.
- So the cosmic requirements and evolutionary requirements are different
- Darwinian evolution doesn't solve the problem of the origin of life
- 50 years ago, skepticism about alien life existing anywhere was excessive
- Today, credulity about alien life exiting everywhere is excessive
- The naturalist is searching for a process that creates life easily

John:

- Paul agrees that there is no theory for a naturalistic origin of life
- This is fatal for the idea that life can emerge elsewhere in the universe
- We have not discovered any law that produces life without an intelligence
- Consider the method used by SETI used to detect an alien intelligence
- Why can't this method be applied to the origin of life on Earth?
- Why can't an intelligence created specified complexity (functional information)?
- Why can't an intelligence created epigenetics and protein folding?

Paul:

- Darwinian evolution can add new biological information after life begins

John:

- Darwinian evolution assumes a mutating replicating life form to act on

Paul:

- You can't generate specified complexity by using physical laws
- You can't generate specified complexity by chance

- At this point we are guessing as to how life might have formed

John:

- Why do we have to rule out an intelligent cause a priori
- If you can recognize an intelligence in outer space, why not in living systems?

Paul:

- I don't mind the word "intelligence", it's the word "signal"
- I oppose the idea that God or aliens manipulated physical stuff to create life
- It's an "ugly explanation and very unappealing both theologically and scientifically"
- I prefer the idea that the universe has processes to self-organize and create complexity
- When it comes to supernatural meddling by God, "I don't want that"
- If I were God, I would create the universe so that I would not have to intervene
- I think God would be more clever if he did not have to intervene
- My preferences about what is "clever" determines what scientific conclusions are allowed

John:

- Humans already have experience with their non-material minds to move atoms (matter)
- If God is a mind, then there is no reason why he cannot move atoms (matter)

Paul:

- My mind is physical, so are you saying that God is physical?
- If God intervenes in the universe, then what is he doing now?

John:

- There is a distinction between acts of creation and providential upholding the universe
- God is also speaking to people and drawing humans toward him
- God is spirit, not material

Paul:

- How can a non-physical entity cause effects on the physical world?

John:

- What science reveals that there is information needed for the origin of life
- Information requires an intelligence to create it, just as with human who write books
- That's not God of the gaps – it's an inference based on what we know today

Paul:

- We may be able to explain the origin of life later, using matter, law and chance
- What you're saying is that God tinkers with the genome
- If you say that God intervened once, then he intervenes all the time, everywhere!
- I don't want a God who tinkers in the genome
- if God could intervene in the universe that would remove its intelligibility

John:

- Look at the cover of this book – when I read words, I infer an intelligence
- There are bad gaps that the progress of science closes
- There are good gaps that science opens, showing the need for intelligence
- On the one hand, you say we have no theory of the origin of life
- On the other hand, you know that an intelligent designer wasn't involved
- If we don't know how life began, why do you rule God out a priori?

Paul:

- What scientists want to do is to explain the universe without involving God
- naturalists want to use science to discover only materialist explanations
- The purpose of SETI is to prove that there is other life in the universe
- This would then show that there is a naturalistic way of making life
- I agree that information in living systems is real hard to explain materialistically
- I believe in the power of emergence
- We might discover laws that prove that complexity can emerge without intelligence
- The discovery of alien life would help to show that no intelligence is needed to make life

Justin:

- What sort of cosmic fine-tuning is needed at the Big Bang for life to occur?

Paul:

- It's true that the universe appears extremely fine-tuned for life to exist
- The typical answer from naturalists is that there is a multiverse
- But the multiverse "falls far short" of providing a good answer to the fine-tuning
- It's irrational to appeal to massive numbers of unseen universes to explain fine-tuning
- The design and purpose seen in the universe may be due to God or it may be emergent

John:

- The fine-tuning is real and the multiverse is a desperate attempt to evade the

creator
- Sir Martin Rees (an atheist) says he “prefers” the multiverse to a designer
- Scientists are not supposed to prefer anything except what is true

Justin:

- Would the discovery of aliens hurt Christianity, because of the belief in the uniqueness of humans?

Paul:

- Christians believe that Jesus came to save HUMANS specifically, not animals or aliens
- If we were to discover intelligent aliens, it would challenge traditional religions
- What will God do with alien races? Multiple incarnations? Or just preach the gospel to them?

John:

- We don’t know if the aliens exist, first of all – it’s speculative
- The Bible teaches that humans bear the image of God
- We just don’t know whether alien species are also made in God’s image

Why should a man refuse a woman's offer of casual sex?

May 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been having some conversations recently with a good male friend of mine who is not a Christian. I like to talk to him about women because we disagree about women, and Lord knows I love to disagree with people. Anyway, he's read my rules for chastity, courtship, etc., and he considers them, and me, quite weird. He is coming from the position of having a *great deal* of sexual experience with women, whereas I strictly avoid sexual activity for a variety of reasons. And what we disagree about is this: I think it's wrong to have casual sex with women who offer themselves to a man before marriage, and he thinks it's permissible as long as he warns them that the relationship is going nowhere afterwards.

First, let me talk about where we agree. Both of us agree that most women today have lost the art of making a man like them without using sex appeal. We are in broad agreement that the right way for a woman to make a man like her is by being feminine. And we agree on what that means – showing the ability to be a wife and mother. If a woman talks to a man about his day at work, studies hard things to be more skilled, listens to his life plan, and tries to contribute to the causes he cares about, then he will like her (because he needs her and appreciates her). Also, it's important that she have a plan of her own that he can help with, and she should let him help. Men like to give gifts to women, and we like to see how our gifts help women grow.

Now where do we disagree? Well, I think it's a bad idea for a man to submit to casual sex with a woman who is unable or unwilling to set boundaries and have a Christian goal for the relationship. I think that casual sex is an inappropriate technique that a woman uses to make a man love her without demonstrating that she really understands him or wants to help him. Sometimes this is done inadvertently because the woman has never learned how to deal with men appropriately, but sometimes it's done deliberately in order to get attention without have to care about or help the man.

Here are three reasons why men should not accept an offer of casual sex:

Reduced courting capability

A lot of men spend a lot of time and money and the best years of their lives pursuing a lot of different women for sexual gratification. But the pursuit of casual sex takes away from the goal of having a helpful wife and effective Christian children, (e.g. – children like Stephen C. Meyer, Jay Richards or WLC). It takes up time and resources that are better spent on building up teachable responsive girl friends. Chasing non-marriageable women also detracts from learning apologetics and theology, which are needed in order to impress the tiny minority of women who want a man who can be an involved, nurturing provider and mentor. There is no way to assess a woman's fitness for marriage and mothering through casual sex. It has no value whatsoever when it comes to courting,

because it removes the self-control needed for objective evaluation. Casual sex doesn't show women that you can lead your future children, either.

Reduced vulnerability and romantic capability

I would not be able have sex and break up with that person without suffering serious emotional damage. I subscribe to the velcro theory of sexuality – the more you attach and separate, the less well you can attach the next time. I simply do not believe that men who do intimate physical things with women can be as vulnerable and susceptible as when they remain chaste. Casual sex kills the man's ability to love a woman as if he has never been hurt before. If you want to be a knight, you have to be capable of chivalry and romance. If a man has casual sex with enough women, he will likely develop a low opinion of of the trustworthiness, wife-capability and mother-capability of women. He becomes cynical and predatorial. The binge-drinking hook-up culture does not build up faith in the opposite sex.

Causes women to doubt God's existence

Every woman was made for a relationship with God. When a woman uses sex to try to get a man to pay attention to her, to love her and to commit to her long-term, it usually fails, causing her pain and suffering. Sex doesn't make a man who doesn't want to marry suddenly want to marry. Without a Christian worldview, the woman may not realize how to tell a good man from a bad man, and how to drive a relationship through to marriage. If a woman has sex with enough men, she may develop a low opinion of the goodness and reliability of men. She may think that she is handling men correctly and that the relationship should work out. But the trauma from failed relationships with unreliable men can cause her to suffer emotionally, and even to doubt God's existence or goodness. Christian men should therefore avoid casual sex so that they don't push women away from relationships with God. Don't be part of a process that drags women away from God. We need women to serve God, and we are not so long on resources that we can just throw them away to the other side. Every single one counts.

Conclusion

Now I haven't actually experienced this problem of women throwing themselves at me to make me "love" them, but if someone finally did offer me drunken hook-up sex, I hope that I would remember my little list.

But I might also remember something else.

Consider this passage from "A Man For All Seasons", a play by Robert Bolt. The lead character Sir Thomas More has refused to compromise with King Henry VIII over the legality of divorce, and now the King wants to have his head chopped off. More's daughter Meg tries to convince to take the oath supporting the divorce in order to save his own life.

Meg: Then say the words of the oath and in your heart think otherwise.

More: What is an oath then, but words we say to God? Listen, Meg.
When a man takes an oath, he's holding his own self in his own hands… …like water.

And if he opens his fingers then, he needn't hope to find himself again.
Some men aren't capable of this, but I'd be loathed to think your father one of them.

That's how men should try to be with their chastity. I agree that it is almost impossible not to see things and to think things that are unchaste – but I am talking about *doing* something unchaste. Men need to avoid that, at least. The problem is that men don't realize what they are giving up by being unchaste, because they don't study these issues to know the costs, the lost capabilities to love unselfishly, or the virtues that give them honor with God. No one tells us. Instead of reading "A Man for All Seasons" or "The Faerie Queene", we pick our role models off the bottom shelf of Hollywood or other crap in the culture. The schools are no help at all, most parents are busy, and the church just orders people around without any arguments or evidence. We are on our own, and by the time we realize who we want to be to a woman, we are often already in a hole.

But my main point is that even if there wasn't a woman left in the world who believed in chastity, courting, marriage and family, that would still not be a justification for a Christian man to give up on his ideal of chastity. It's better to be a hero and be alone than to make peace with the world as it is. Go down fighting, never give in just to fit in.

An apologetics reading plan for beginners

May 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Would you like to have as much fun defending your faith as the Wintery Knight does?

Here is a post from Apologetics 315 that lists 10 basic apologetics books for brand new Christian apologists – and they are in a sensible order, too.

Here are my favorite 4:

> 2. ***The Case for a Creator*** by Lee Strobel
>
> This book is just as readable as *The Case for Christ*, but this one delves into the evidence for the Creator. Another thing that makes this good reading for the beginner is this: whatever areas you find particularly interesting can be pursued further by reading the sources interviewed in the book.
>
> 6. ***Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*** by Greg Koukl
>
> Information without application results in stagnation when it comes to apologetics. That's why it's time for a good dose of *Tactics*, which will train you not only to *use* apologetic content in everyday life, but it will also *train* you to be a better, more critical thinker. This is another "must read" book, and mastering its contents early in your apologetic studies will put feet to your faith.
>
> 7. ***The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*** by Mike Licona & Gary Habermas
>
> The resurrection of Jesus is central to Christianity. This book equips you to understand and defend the resurrection from an historical perspective. Not only does the book have useful diagrams, summaries, and an accessible style, but it also comes with a CD-ROM with interactive software for teaching you the material. This is an essential book for the apologist.
>
> 8. ***Is God Just a Human Invention? And Seventeen Other Questions Raised by the New Atheists*** by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow
>
> Now it's time to look at some of the most common objections that have come against Christianity since the rise of the new atheism. There's no better book at dealing with these in a concise yet dense way, while providing additional reading suggestions and introducing some of the key apologists that deal with these questions. If you really want to master this material, consider taking part in the Read Along project for this book.

I've read 8 of them, and I have given 6 of them to my Dad (he's just an ordinary Dad) and he really liked all 6. These are meant for all ages.

I have been giving away books like this to friends, and even to potential Mrs. Wintery Knights, for many years. And what I've found in that time is that Christians have a very different experience in their relationships with God when they are prepared to defend his

existence and character in public. Instead of treating Christianity as a private set of beliefs which are mainly for feeling happy and getting along with family at holidays, they instead treat Christianity as *true*, and they have very interesting discussions with their friends about many topics related to Christianity. Instead of being frightened to speak up, they become bold and confident – that's what happens when Christians study and prepare.

Jesus doesn't want his followers to feel intimidated by non-Christians and non-Christian culture. He doesn't want us hiding what we believe. When we take the time to read books like this, it becomes possible for us to get into conversations that turn our relationships with God through Christ into a public activity. Instead of just taking, taking, taking from God, now we are in a position to give back. If you ask any experienced apologist, they will tell you what it feels like to work through questions with a non-Christian. It is a way of feeling closer to God, and a way of being faithful in our two-way friendship with him. You do not want to miss out on that experience – it is an important part of being a Christian.

Click here for the full list and Brian's mini-reviews.

My disagreements with a trendy, hip pastor on missions and witnessing

May 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So I am visiting my parents and my pet bird today in the city I grew up in, and I went to church as usual. The church in my hometown just got a new senior pastor who is one of those hip, trendy pastors. So far, my friends and I who attend this church have some concerns about him.

So the pastor two points in this sermon today: 1) we should be concerned with world missions and 2) we should be "witnessing" in non-cognitive ways. You'll see what he means by these in a minute.

Missions

Now to be fair to the pastor, I don't really know his full philosophy on missions. He was giving a sermon, and he had time for one example. His example of missions was that "wealthy" Christians in the West should give money to groups like World Vision that provide for the immediate physical needs of poor people in other countries. So his target for evangelism is not a wealthy Western professional who lives next door to him and isn't impressed with food. His target for evangelism is someone who is starving in another country, who is at a disadvantage when it comes to education and poverty. And his preferred missionary is not someone who has studied to know how to persuade using knowledge, it's someone nice and kind who is bringing food to starving people and then presenting the gospel to them through an interpreter as they eat the food.

Witnessing

The example the pastor gave for witnessing to non-Christians was to pray with them. He said that there would be less room for "hate" (his actual word) if Christians spent more time praying with non-Christians. The first thing I thought of when he said this was Mormon missionaries establishing the truth of their religion with people by praying for a "burning in the bosom". Regarding his mention of "hate", he didn't mention gay marriage specifically, but I think that is the most reasonable context for the word "hate" in this culture. If we prayed with people and started caring for them and being nice to them (no mention of sin and repentance, note), then our "hate" for them would decrease.

So I want to make some basic points about what was said and what was left out.

Truth

At no point in this sermon or any any other sermon I have seen delivered by this pastor has the issue of how we know truth, or how we demonstrate that something is true, ever been addressed. I have not ever heard this pastor give a sermon on how he knows that God exists, how he knows that the Bible is reliable, and how he knows who Jesus is.

Persuasion

I was very careful today to pay attention to how the pastor was getting the audience on

board with what he is saying. And I think I've hit on his method of persuading. It's not to make arguments and to supply evidence, or even to quote the Bible in context. He relied a lot on hipness and emotional resonance with his audience. I think he expects us to accept what he is saying because he is able to 1) share illustrations from his life experiences (farming, this time), or 2) name rock bands like "Cold Play". So his approach is more like "I'm just like you, so you should believe what I'm telling you".

Evangelism

His two strategies for evangelism above seemed to be 1) giving money to Christian groups who can then travel to other countries to discuss Christianity with people who are receiving gifts from them and 2) offering to pray with non-Christians. I do not think that merely expressing theological opinions and then handing someone food or clothing is a good strategy for evangelism. I think it is permissible, it's just not the way I see it being done in the Bible. I realize that there are going to be cases where someone accepts Jesus on the basis of this sort of evangelism, and in the best case, they might even go on to become a great Christian scholar who understands the truth of these matters so well that they can present it to non-Christians with authority. That would be the ideal case. But I think when I read the New Testament, the appeal to non-Christians in evangelism is an appeal to truth, based on the historical event of the resurrection, for example. I asked a friend of mine who knows the Bible well, about whether giving charity to people is ever a method of evangelism, and he said he couldn't think of any. His preference for this evangelism-by-charity makes me wonder about people who have non-Christians living right next to them in the West, or even in secular Europe, who nevertheless choose to go to places where they can use the leverage of financial goods to get into conversations with people about spiritual things. It's easy to go to a foreign country and talk to someone uneducated who can't challenge you because they want the food you brought. It's harder to evangelize your neighbor who is an atheist and a medical doctor – you would have to read books, and demonstrate the truth of things. Maybe that's why so many people prefer the former to the latter – it's easier.

His second method of evangelism (praying with non-Christians) seems to me to be impractical. It seems to me that it would work on people who do not have questions, and who are looking to decide theological / spiritual claims by their emotions. Prayer is not able to establish the historical fact of the resurrection in a debate situation, for example. You should pray before and after making a case for the resurrection, but you should at least know how to make the case for the resurrection to a non-Christian. Again, I am not familiar with a case in the New Testament in which a non-Christian, non-theist was ever approached with prayer alone. I know that Paul reasons from the Scriptures with people (Acts 16-17), and Peter appeals to the resurrection (Acts 2). His approach is more like what Mormons do, because they can't demonstrate truth using arguments and facts. If this guy can only use Mormon techniques, that's disturbing – like he has reduced Christianity to a flavor of ice cream that you either like or not, depending on your feelings or whether people are nice to you. Prayer is not used to demonstrate the truth of anything in any other context in real-life. Why is he trying to use it with Christianity? Is

Christianity not the same as any other area of knowledge?

Economics

Now, I sense that this pastor has a concern for the poor, and I agree with him that charity is Biblical, and even that we can give money to big organizations like World Vision to help the poor in other countries, (although I don't like World Vision). But I think where I get annoyed is that this is his only stated method of helping the poor. But I prefer a different method of helping the poor, namely the method that you see in countries like Hong Kong or Chile. That method is free market capitalism. And all you need to do to push that method is to sit with an economics book, learn what policies drive economic growth, and then push them in the public square. I'm being frank here. I think it can be demonstrated that foreign aid, for example, accomplishes little or nothing to help the poor, and often hurts the poor. What we need to do is to trade with these countries, promote economic growth in these countries, in the same sustainable, organic way that growth occurred in countries like Hong Kong and Chile. But what I get from this pastor is a kind of naive "Michael Moore" anti-corporation vibe. I think I can say without being proved wrong that we will never here any presentation from him that addresses the need to learn economics in order to promote the policies that will drive organic, sustainable economic growth in these counties, (e.g. – micro-loans, free trade, etc.). I do think it's important to give to charity, though.

Advice for this pastor

If he read this post, then my advice to this pastor would be to take a two-pronged approach. If his concern is evangelism, then I recommend that he speak to some non-Christians in *this* country, and then when he sees that they have questions about God's existence, gay marriage, the resurrection, abortion, sexual ethics, religious pluralism, miracles, evolution, creation, the reliability of the NT documents, etc., then he can do something different than Mormons do – he can embrace apologetics. Then he will be able to do missionary work right here in the West, with the educated professionals that God providentially placed right next door to him and right next door to his flock, too. Also, instead of worrying about how much we "hate" others, maybe he can offer Christians some advice on how to explain and defend religious liberty, which is under attack from the very groups he implies, in my opinion, that we are "hating" Also, it might be good for him to bash McDonald's chicken nuggets less, and to defend the unborn more, in his sermons.

Second, if his other concern is to help the poor, then I recommend that he focus on promoting economic growth and individual charity. I think the big problem I have with this guy is that everything he says is so childish and simplistic. I agree we should want to help the poor, and that we should be charitable. But I think that when you are talking about poverty in other countries, then we should do everything possible. And everything possible certainly includes becoming educated about economics and the policies that are known to lift poor nations out of poverty. This is what people who are really interested in solving the problem would focus on. If you're going to talk about poverty, then talk about

it based on knowledge. Don’t leave it at a kindergarten level.

State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton

May 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily takes a look at Hillary's record.

Excerpt:

> When the Global Terrorism Database of the University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism compiled its list of terrorist organizations and ranked them by the number of their terror acts in 2012, Afghanistan's Taliban came in first. Boko Haram was not far behind.
>
> The world's attention is now focused on the kidnapping of some 300 girls from the Chibok Government Girls Secondary School in Lagos, Nigeria.
>
> "I abducted your girls," a man claiming to be Abubakar Shekau, the group's leader, said in a video seen by the Guardian newspaper. "I will sell them in the market, by Allah. I will sell them off and marry them off. There is a market for selling humans."
>
> Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has joined the campaign to free the girls, expressing her concern in a May 4 tweet with the hashtag "BringBackOurGirls." On Wednesday, she called the abduction "abominable" and "criminal."
>
> "It's an act of terrorism," she said, "and it really merits the fullest response possible, first and foremost from the government of Nigeria."
>
> Yet for two years, the State Department refused to acknowledge the growing threat and barbarism of Boko Haram. As Josh Rogin at The Daily Beast reports, the Clinton State Department "refused to place Boko Haram on the list of foreign terrorist organizations in 2011" after the group bombed the United Nations headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria.
>
> "The one thing she could have done, the one tool she had at her disposal, she didn't use. And nobody can say she wasn't urged to do it. It's gross hypocrisy," wrote Rogin, quoting a former senior U.S. official who was involved in the debate.
>
> It's been reported that the State Department was urged to act by the CIA, the FBI and yes, even the Justice Department. Not until November 2013 — 10 months after Clinton left State — did the U.S. finally list Boko Haram as a terrorist group after another round of church bombings.
>
> In June 2012, Gen. Carter Ham, chief of U.S. Africa Command and the man who could have directed a Benghazi rescue attempt if so ordered, warned that Boko Haram provided a "safe haven" for al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (northern Africa) and was likely sharing explosives and funds with the group.
>
> Yet Clinton's State Department, as in the case of Benghazi, was unmoved by

> warnings of terrorist activity.
>
> Rep. Patrick Meehan, R-Pa., chairman of the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence, was one of many members of Congress who wrote “letter after letter” to the State Department since 2011 demanding action on Boko Haram.
>
> “We lost two years of increased scrutiny,” Meehan says, noting that the response he got from the administration was eerily familiar to statements made about Benghazi. “They were saying al-Qaida was on the run, and our argument was contrary to that. It has metastasized and it is actually in many ways a growing threat, and this is a stark example of that.”

So, you might be thinking what I’m thinking right now… what was Hillary focused on when she was Secretary of State?

The American Spectator explains, in this 2011 article.

Excerpt:

> In an address earlier this week in Geneva, Hillary announced that the imposition of the gay agenda on foreign governments now forms “a priority of our foreign policy.”
>
> […]”In our embassies, our diplomats are raising concerns about specific cases and laws, and working with a range of partners to strengthen human rights protections for all,” she said. “In Washington, we have created a task force at the State Department to support and coordinate this work. And in the coming months, we will provide every embassy with a toolkit to help improve their efforts. And we have created a program that offers emergency support to defenders of human rights for LGBT people.”
>
> The American taxpayer will also have to pay for a gay rights propaganda fund Hillary has set up:
>
> “I am also pleased to announce that we are launching a new Global Equality Fund that will support the work of civil society organizations working on these issues around the world. This fund will help them record facts so they can target their advocacy, learn how to use the law as a tool, manage their budgets, train their staffs, and forge partnerships with women’s organizations and other human rights groups. We have committed more than $3 million to start this fund, and we have hope that others will join us in supporting it.”
>
> Thus will the State Department make the world safe for sex-change operations and gay marriage.

What’s more important? Gay rights, or Boko Haram? Hillary had two years to decide, and we know what her answer was.

Greg Koukl explains how to be a consistent moral relativist

May 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The absolute easiest way to get into a good apologetics conversation with someone is to ask them what makes something right or wrong on their view.

Just ask the person you want to engage two questions:

1. Is it it wrong to treat people badly just because of their skin color?
2. What makes it wrong?

Now, as I see it, there are only 3 possible answers to this question.

1. I personally prefer not to do that – it is wrong *for me.*
2. Our culture has evolved a set of customs that apply for us in this time and place, and that set of customs says that members of the society ought not to do that. It is wrong *for us, here and now.*
3. Humans are designed to act in a certain way, and part of that design is that we ought not to do that. Acting in line with our design allows us to flourish, (Aristotle's *eudaimonia*).

Response #1, is called "moral relativism". Response #2 is called "cultural relativism". Response #3 is my view: moral realism. I believe in a hierarchy of moral absolutes that exist objectively, because they are part of God's design for us and the universe.

I wanted to go over a paper by Greg Koukl from Stand to Reason, in which he critiques moral relativism. His paper is called "Seven Things You Can't Do as a Moral Relativist". First, let's see the list of seven things.

1. You can't make moral judgments about other people's moral choices
2. You can't complain about God allowing evil and suffering
3. You can't blame people or praise people for their moral choices
4. You can't claim that any situation is unfair or unjust
5. You can't improve your morality
6. You can't have meaningful discussions about morality
7. You can't promote the obligation to be tolerant

You'll have to read the paper to see how he argues for these, but I wanted to say a brief word about number 1.

> **Rule #1: Relativists Can't Accuse Others of Wrong-Doing**
>
> Relativism makes it impossible to criticize the behavior of others, because relativism ultimately denies that there is such a thing as wrong- doing. In other words, if you believe that morality is a matter of personal definition, then you

> can’t ever again judge the actions of others. Relativists can’t even object on moral grounds to racism. After all, what sense can be made of the judgment “apartheid is wrong” when spoken by someone who doesn’t believe in right and wrong? What justification is there to intervene? Certainly not human rights, for there are no such things as rights. Relativism is the ultimate pro-choice position because it accepts every personal choice—even the choice to be racist.

In moral relativism, what you ought to do is totally up to you. Morality is just like a lunch buffet – you pick what you like based on your personal preferences.

I remember one particular discussion I had with a non-Christian co-worker. Both she and her live-in boyfriend were moral relativists. They were fighting because she was angry about his not having (or wanting) a job, and he was angry because when he asked her for space, she immediately ran out and cheated on him.

What’s interesting is that both of these people chose the other in order to escape being judged themselves. I think this happens a lot in relationships today. Both people don’t want to be judged by the other person, but they both want to the other person to treat them well and to honor moral obligations. Isn’t that interesting? I don’t think that you can have something like marriage work when neither person takes moral obligations to the other person seriously.

Christian philosopher (Craig) vs atheist scientist (Atkins) debate: Does God Exist?

May 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics 315 posted the video of a debate from the Reasonable Faith speaking tour in the UK:

This is a must-see debate. It was extremely fun to watch.

Details:

> On Wednesday 26th October 2011 William Lane Craig debated Peter Atkins on the topic: *Does God Exist?* This debate took place at the University of Manchester as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig. The debate was chaired by Christopher Whitehead, Head of Chemistry School at the University. Post-debate discussion was moderated by Peter S Williams, Philosopher in Residence at the Damaris Trust, UK.

Dr. William Lane Craig:

> **William Lane Craig** (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich in 1984.

Dr. Peter Atkins:

> **Peter William Atkins** (born 10 August 1940) is a British chemist and former Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Lincoln College. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.
>
> Atkins studied chemistry at the University of Leicester, obtaining a bachelor's

> degree in chemistry, and – in 1964 – a PhD for research into electron spin resonance spectroscopy, and other aspects of theoretical chemistry. Atkins then took a postdoctoral position at the UCLA as aHarkness Fellow of the Commonwealth fund. He returned to Oxford in 1965 as fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, and lecturer in physical chemistry (later, professor of physical chemistry).

You can get the audio of the debate here, along with links to their previous debate from 1998. This debate is accessible and understandable to novice-level Christians.

I am happy when debates like this come out. I have friends who are Christians who doubt the importance of apologetics in evangelism, because they don't think that apologists can prove anything or win arguments. I have friends who are skeptical of using arguments that assume a 14-billion year old universe, because they think that the Big Bang is compatible with atheism (!). I have friends who think that philosophical arguments have no persuasive force. I have friends who think that nothing can be proven from history, beyond a reasonable doubt. I have co-workers who ask me whether anyone wins these debates. I think that this debate answers all of those questions.

This debate clearly shows why Christians should not shy away from studying science, philosophy and history. We will not discover anything that harms Christian theism by thinking logically and by looking at the evidence. To the contrary, it is the atheist who makes war on the progress of science, and who is forced to resist the clear experimental evidence, and to resort to baseless speculations and blind faith. If you want to see a good debate with an intelligent atheist, I recommend watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican instead. But if you want to see a really, really overwhelming defeat for atheism, watch this debate. It is very clear at the end of this debate why Richard Dawkins refused to debate William Lane Craig at Oxford.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING SPEECHES

I only had time to summarize the first two speeches. Keep in mind that Dr. Craig always shines in his rebuttals, and this debate is no different. So you'll want to watch those rebuttals. Dr. Atkins *literally* says in this debate in his first rebuttal "There was nothing here originally. There is nothing here now. But it is an interesting form of nothing which seems to be something." And the audience laughs nervously. This debate is like that. You will see a clear winner and clear loser in this debate. This fight is decided by knockout.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

1. the origin of the universe
2. the moral argument
3. the resurrection of Jesus

Peter Atkins opening speech:

1. Dr. Craig is stupid, lazy and evil:
– Dr. Craig's arguments are old: from the 11th century! Old arguments can't be true
– Dr. Craig is just asserting that "God did it" because he is lazy

– Dr. Craig feels pressured to agree with the theistic majority
– Dr. Craig needs a psychological crutch to comfort him
– Dr. Craig is fearful of death
– Dr. Craig is just wishing for an eternal life of bliss
– Dr. Craig is driven by his heart, and not by his head

2. Origin of the universe:
– Maybe the universe is eternal and has no beginning – we don't know
– Maybe mommy universes can give birth to daughter universes
– It is naive to think that a cause is needed to cause the creation of the universe from nothing
– Science is just about to show how it is possible that something appears out of nothing without cause
– Some scientists have already begun to speculate about about how something can come into being out of nothing
– Maybe nothing is not really nothing, but it is actually something
– It would be admitting defeat to say that God created the universe out of nothing

3. Fine-Tuning:
– It could be the case that the fundamental constants are not variable
– It could be the case that the fine-tuning of the cosmic constants is a happy accident
– It could be the case that there are billions of billions of unobservable universes that are not fine tuned
– It could be the case that the cosmic constants in these billions and billions of unobservable universes are all random so that some are fine-tuned
– Anyone who infers that an intelligence is the best explanation of a finely-tuned set of life-permitting cosmic constants is lazy

4. Purpose:
– Philosophers and theologians are stupid
– I don't think that there is purpose in the universe
– I think that the universe is more grand if there is no purpose, so there is no purpose

5. Miracles:
– I don't think that miracles happen
– The resurrection is a fabrication
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't exist
– It could be the case that Jesus wasn't really crucified
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't really die after being crucified
– It could be the case that the disciples stole his body
– It could be the case that the women went to the wrong hole in the ground
– the gospels are political propaganda written long after the events they are reporting on

6. Theodicy:
– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing humans to perform actions that result in suffering

– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing nature to cause suffering

7. Morality:

– customs and conventions emerges arbitrarily in different times and places based on an awareness of the consequences of actions, as well as various anecdotes and experiences

– these customs and conventions are decided based on the goal for survival, in much the same way as politeness and manners emerge for decorum and to avoid offense

– it is childish to presume that there is an umpire God who decides moral values and duties

8. Religious believers are stupid, lazy and evil:

– the notion of God has arisen because people are stupid and want to be comforted

– there are no arguments or evidences for belief in God

– people who believe in God do not think, but instead take refuge in incomprehensible nonsense

NFL player fined and banned from team activities for disapproving of homosexuality

May 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Miami Herald.

Excerpt:

> The Dolphins swiftly and publicly reprimanded Don Jones late Sunday for his Twitter remarks critical of Michael Sam, fining him and barring him from team activities until he undergoes sensitivity training.
>
> In a statement released by the team, Jones apologized for tweeting "omg" and "horrible" after seeing Sam sharing a celebratory kiss with his partner on national TV Saturday evening. Sam had just been drafted by the St. Louis Rams in the seventh round, becoming the first openly gay player selected by an NFL team.

> […]Although the Dolphins did not disclose the amount of the fine, the fact that they made the punishment public was significant. Dolphins coach Joe Philbin rarely discusses internal discipline with reporters but made it a point to condemn Jones' words on official team letterhead Sunday night."We were disappointed to read Don's tweets during the NFL Draft," Philbin said. "They were inappropriate and unacceptable, and we regret the negative impact these comments had on such an important weekend for the NFL. We met with Don [Sunday] about respect, discrimination and judgment. These comments are not consistent with the values and standards of our program. We will continue to emphasize and educate our players that these statements will not be tolerated."

So, if you are Tim Tebow, everyone can insult you and make fun of you for being a Christian and for being chaste before marriage. But if you're gay, then no one can even disagree with you on sexual issues.

This is why I have an alias. I am very conscious of the fact that the way I earn a living is something that the other side would love to take away from me. If anyone who did not tolerate my statements on certain controversial issues ever found out who I was or where I worked, I'd be out of a job. I am happy to say what I think about controversial issues, (not with tweets, but by citing studies), while I can still do it. But I have no doubt that the secular left will one day make it their business to find out who disagrees with them on matters like sexual ethics, and make sure we are properly corrected about our bad ideas. They seem to have tremendous difficulty letting other people have different views than they do, and not punishing them for those different views. "These statements will not be tolerated" the coach says.

New CDC study: children raised by mom and dad experience fewer traumatic events

May 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Christian Post.

Excerpt:

> Children who are not raised by both of their biological mother and father are more likely to have experienced traumatic events, according to a report released Thursday by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
>
> Children in foster care had, by far, the worst outcomes. Those raised by one biological family member and those living with relatives fell between those with two biological parents and no biological parents. Adopted children were not included in the sample.
>
> The study looked at nine adverse experiences: 1) divorce or separation of parents or guardians, 2) death of a parent or guardian, 3) incarceration of a parent or guardian, 4) lived with someone who was mentally ill, suicidal or severely depressed, 5) lived with someone who had an alcohol or drug problem, 6) witnessed violence in the household, 7) was the victim of violence or witnessed violence in the neighborhood, 8) suffered racial discrimination, and 9) caregiver had often found it hard to get by on the family's income.
>
> Seventy percent of children raised by their biological mother and father had no adverse family experiences compared to only 21.7 percent of those raised by one biological parent and 18.7 percent of those raised by no biological parents.
>
> […]The data comes from the 2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health, a nationally representative phone survey of households with children. 95,677 interviews were conducted for the survey.

There seems to be a conflict in our society now between the traditionalists, who favor chastity, courtship and natural marriage, and the "anything goes" secular relativists. The secular relativists seem to be winning, but at what cost? The data seems to be pretty clear – when you lift moral restrictions on the sexual behaviors of adults, then children suffer. We should be more articulate in saying how children are affected whenever these discussions come up.

CDC report: syphilis resurgence among gay men a “major public health concern”

May 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breitbart reports on a new CDC study.

Excerpt:

> The sometimes-deadly disease syphilis is exploding in the United States, with most of the increase since 1995 among men who have sex with men (MSM), according to a new report from the Atlanta-based Center for Disease Control (CDC).
>
> As recently as 2000, researchers believed the total elimination of syphilis was within reach. The recent dramatic increases in infections, coupled with the observation that syphilis closely tracks with other diseases like AIDS, have the medical and scientific community deeply concerned. The CDC report considers “the increase in syphilis among MSM is a major public health concern.”
>
> According to the report, “During 2005-2013, the number of primary and secondary syphilis cases reported each year in the United States nearly doubled, from 8,724 to 16,663; the annual rate increased from 2.9 to 5.3 cases per 100,000 population.”
>
> The report also says that “men contributed an increasing proportion of cases, accounting for 91.1% of all primary and secondary syphilis cases in 2013.” Most of the increases came from men who have sex with men, which were responsible for 77% of cases in 2009 but 83.9% in 2012, what the report calls “the vast majority of male… syphilis cases.”
>
> The report warns that the numbers in the new report are likely far less than the true number because only 34 states and the District of Columbia fully report sex of sex partners.
>
> The report raises a particular concern about what it calls “co-infection rates.” “There are reported rates of 50%-70% HIV co-infection among MSM infected with primary or secondary syphilis…”

I really recommend reading that whole post, there are some really striking pieces of data in it.

When we are discussing what to promote and what to disagree with, this CDC data should be on the table. And remember, the closer we move to the single-payer system desired by the political left, the more people who don’t engage in risky behaviors will be taxed to pay for those that do choose to engage in risky behaviors. It’s fine for those who are not ambitious, but if you expect to earn enough to support a family, then you might find it’s much harder than it used to be before we were celebrating things the sexual revolution, which goes far beyond the problems the CDC outlined, into the costs of no-fault divorce,

fatherlessness, etc.

We really ought not be celebrating the homosexual lifestyle / orientation. We should be treating this like smoking or obesity, if we really cared about the health of people with these same-sex attractions. It’s possible to express disagreement and to tell the truth about risks and consequences without hurting anyone’s feelings. I like to know what will happen to me if I make certain choices. It’s good to have the facts before you decide what to do.

McDonald’s prepares for minimum wage hike by hiring 7,000 touch-screen cashiers

May 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNet reports.

Excerpt:

> “Welcome to McDonald’s . My name is HAL 9000. May I take your order?”
>
> McDonalds recently went on a hiring binge in the U.S., adding 62,000 employees to its roster. The hiring picture doesn’t look quite so rosy for Europe, where the fast food chain is drafting 7,000 touch-screen kiosks to handle cashiering duties.
>
> The move is designed to boost efficiency and make ordering more convenient for customers. In an interview with the Financial Times, McDonald’s Europe President Steve Easterbrook notes that the new system will also open up a goldmine of data. McDonald’s could potentially track every Big Mac, McNugget, and large shake you order. A calorie account tally at the end of the year could be a real shocker.
>
> The touch screens will only accept debit or credit cards, adding to the slow death knell of cash and coins. This all goes along with an overall revamp of McDonald’s restaurants worldwide aimed at projecting a modern image as opposed to the old-fashioned golden arches with a slightly creepy (to my taste anyway) clown guy hanging around the french fries.
>
> This puts McDonald’s one step closer to opening up its first Alphaville location. At least our new computer overlords will be nice enough to serve us a Filet-o-Fish. Maybe they’ll even throw in an iPadwith the Happy Meal one of these days.

I hope the people who lose their jobs to automation voted for Obama, because I would hate to think that a conservative would have to suffer from these policies.

Dennis Prager: why the left doesn’t care about bad economic news

May 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This was posted last night on Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Almost everywhere the left is in control — in California, for example — the economic news is awful. But this has no effect on the ruling Democrats, the Los Angeles Times editorial page, New York Times economics columnist Paul Krugman or others on the left.
>
> There is one overriding philosophical reason and one political reason for this.

He lists a number of the economic problems in California – a state that is controlled top to bottom by Democrats.

Why doesn’t it bother Democrats that economies decline when they are in control?

He writes:

> Why do these state-crushing economic statistics — nearly every one of which is the result of left-wing policies — have no effect on California’s Democrats, the Los Angeles Times editorial page, New York Times economics columnist Paul Krugman or almost anyone else on the left?
>
> The answer is that they don’t care.
>
> Yes, of course, as individuals with a heart, most people, right and left, care about people losing their jobs.
>
> But in terms of what matters to the left and the policies they pursue, they don’t care. The left and the political party it controls do not care if their policies force companies to leave the state (or the country).
>
> They don’t care about the coming high inflation caused by quantitative easing (printing money) — Krugman calls it the inflation obsession — or the job-depressing effects of high taxes or energy prices that hurt the middle class or compelling businesses to leave.
>
> They don’t care because the left is not interested in prosperity; the left is interested in inequality and in the environment.
>
> Furthermore, the worse the economic situation, the more voters are likely to vote Democrat. The worse the economic situation, the greater the number of people receiving government assistance; the greater the number of people receiving government assistance, the greater the number of people who will vote Democrat.
>
> Therefore, both philosophically and politically, the left has no reason to be

> troubled by bad economic news. And it isn't. It is troubled by inequality and carbon emissions.

He could have done the same analysis in Detroit, where Democrats govern unopposed by Republicans, and have for years.

The main problem of the left is "inequality". If they put in place policies that make everyone earn minimum wage, regardless of what they do, that would be a great victory for them. If the price of prosperity is "economic inequality", then so much the worse for prosperity. If you tax people who produce more value than a minimum wage worker so that they make the same as a minimum wage worker, you can forget about the kinds of businesses that produce cars, computers and appliances. People invent these things and start businesses in order to make a profit. That's why they spend their savings and take the risk to start a business. But if everything they earn is taxed away, then we will have to do without new products and services. This is understood in the private sector, but not by the government, nor by the low-information voters who vote for bigger government.

We have to stop allowing the Left to pain themselves as saints because they talk about the poor. What they don't like about the poor is the rich. If everyone were poor, they wouldn't talk about the poor – because everyone would be equal. That's their goal.

Former abortion clinic owner: we created demand for abortion by pushing sex education

May 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> "How do you sell an abortion? In the US it's very simple: You do it through sex education," former abortion clinic owner Carol Everett told participants at the Rose Dinner following the National March for Life on Thursday in Ottawa.
>
> Everett, who ran a chain of four abortion clinics in Texas from 1977-1983 — where an estimated 35,000 unborn children were aborted before her dramatic conversion and departure from the industry — told about 430 participants at the dinner that she had a goal of becoming a millionaire by selling abortions to teenage girls.
>
> "We had a goal of 3-5 abortions from every girl between the ages of 13 and 18, because we all work on a straight commission inside the abortion industry," she said. With every customer, Everett became a little richer.
>
> But in order to reach her financial goal, Everett said she first had to create a "market for abortions." That meant convincing young people from the earliest age possible to see sexuality in an entirely different way than previous generations.
>
> "We started in kindergarten. In kindergarten you put the children in a circle and you go around the room and you ask them all the same question: 'What do your parents call your private parts?'"
>
> "You know and I know that every family in this room has a different name for the private parts. So by the time you reach the third or fourth child it is clear to those children that parents simply do not know what they have. But we did. We said: 'Boys this is what you have and girls this is what you have and don't be ashamed of your private parts.'"
>
> Everett explained how sex education at the earliest ages aimed at eroding in the children what she called "natural modesty." Everything was calculated to "separate the children from their values and their parents."
>
> […]"My goal was to get them sexually active on a low dose birth control pill that we knew they would get pregnant on. How do you do that? You give them a low dose birth control pill that, in order to provide any level of protection, has to be taken accurately at the same time every single day. And you know and I know, there's not a teen in the world who does everything the same time every day."
>
> Everett said that a girl on the pill who thought she was 'safe' typically had sex more frequently than those not on the pill.

> “That pill did not work, and we could accomplish our goal of 3-5 abortions between the ages of 13 and 18,” she said.

Something to think about if you send your children to public schools.

Republican National Committee adopts resolution to ban all third-trimester abortions

May 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> The Republican National Committee approved today a resolution supporting all federal, state and local legislation to stop abortion after 20 weeks, more than halfway through pregnancy.
>
> […]Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the national pro-life group the Susan B. Anthony List praised the RNC saying:
>
> "Americans are united in their support for commonsense legislation to stop abortion more than halfway through pregnancy. We thank the Republican committeemen and women for affirming all efforts to end barbaric late abortions nationwide and urge Democrats to do the same. In state legislatures across the county, Democrats are bucking pressure from their national leaders to support this compassionate legislation that is already popular with their constituents."
>
> This week Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) circulated a letter signed by more than 30 U.S. Senators including Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), urging him to bring the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act for a floor vote.
>
> "A federal law is long overdue," continued Dannenfelser. "The United States is only one of seven countries to allow abortion on demand at such a late stage of pregnancy. The U.S. Senate should follow the RNC's lead and go on record on this important issue."
>
> Author and chief sponsor of the resolution RNC Committeewoman Ellen Barrosse said:
>
> "The Republican Party is proudly pro-life and this resolution shows our support for this straightforward, simple pro-life initiative. Children capable of feeling intense pain, as well as their mothers, should be protected from abortion at such a very late stage of gestation.

Still all political parties are the same? On the pro-life issue, Republicans are united. It's a good reason for social conservatives to vote for them at election time.

New study: Asian students outperform whites because they work harder

May 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Science, one of the top peer-reviewed journals. (H/T Nancy P.)

Excerpt:

> When it comes to academic achievement, Asian-Americans outclass every other ethnic group, with more than half over age 25 holding a bachelor's degree—well above the national average of 28%. To find what gives Asian-Americans a leg up, a team of sociologists scoured two long-term surveys covering more than 5000 U.S. Asian and white students. After crunching test scores, GPAs, teacher evaluations, and social factors such as immigration status, the team reports a simple explanation online today in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*: Asian-American students work harder.
>
> The team found that students from all Asian ethnic groups put greater importance on effort than on natural ability. This outlook, the team argues, causes students to respond to challenges by trying harder and has a greater impact on Asian-Americans' academic achievement than does cognitive ability or socioeconomic status. However, the team says Asian-American students reported lower self-esteem, more conflict with their parents, and less time spent with friends compared with their white peers. The team suspects the high academic expectations or their "outsider" status in American society could be to blame.

You know, a lot of people blame racism when some minorities underperform at school. But if that were so, then why aren't Asians affected? The answer is that underperforming at school has nothing to do with race or racism. It's all about strong marriages, strong families and hard work. Discipline.

The soft bigotry of low expectations

In other news, judges at a debate tournament gave the first prize to two black students who used vulgar language in their speeches.

The College Fix reports.

Excerpt:

> This year's debate question centered on the Presidential War Powers. But Towson, reports The Atlantic, took a different approach:
>
> On March 24, 2014, at the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) Championships at Indiana University, two Towson University students, Ameena Ruffin and Korey Johnson, became the first African-American women to win a national college debate tournament, for which the resolution asked whether the U.S. president's war powers should be restricted.

> Rather than address the resolution straight on, Ruffin and Johnson, along with other teams of African-Americans, attacked its premise. The more pressing issue, they argued, is how the U.S. government is at war with poor black communities.
>
> And how did Towson plead its case? Here's a censored excerpt provided by Pundit Press:
>
> They say the n*****s always already qu***, that's exactly the point! It means the impact is that the that the is the impact term, uh, to the afraid, uh, the, that it is a case term to the affirmative because, we, uh, we're saying that qu*** bodies are not able to survive the necessarily means of the body. Uh, uh, the n***** is not able to survive.
>
> Perhaps I am missing the finer nuances of college debate, but assuming I understand cross-examination debate correctly, this form of incoherent chaos is unacceptable, unprofessional, and in many ways, nonsensical.

For the record, I'm not white. I'm writing about this as one of those overperforming brown-skinned people.

Is belief in the Jesus of the Bible needed in order to be rightly related to God?

May 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good introductory lecture on the topic by Chad Gross, who blogs at Truthbomb Apologetics.

You can see the footnotes for his article on his blog.

The one criticism I have is that he seems to be quoting from John a lot, and he should have some sort of case for John being reliable. I would maybe cite the scholarly work of someone like Richard Bauckham, who thinks that John is not only based on eyewitness testimony, but was actually written by a disciple of Jesus named John. John is my favorite gospel, but skeptical NT critics critics are pretty hard on it. Of course, Chad was speaking in a church, so it's understandable why he might not take the time to do that.

For those who don't want to watch the video, here's a good thought from J. Warner Wallace at Please Convince Me.

Excerpt:

> A "just" God does justice, which means to punish or reward appropriately. In the Western tradition, we punish people for the actions they commit, but the extent of punishment is dependent also on the person's mental state, and a person's mental state is reflective of his or her beliefs. Premeditated murder is worse than manslaughter, and is punished more severely, and a hate crime is a sentencing enhancement that adds more punishment to the underlying crime. In both examples, a person's beliefs are at play: the premeditated murderer has reflected on his choices and wants the victim dead; a hate crime reflects a belief that the rights of a member of the protected group are especially unworthy of respect. So, considering a person's beliefs may well be relevant, especially if those beliefs have motivated the criminal behavior.
>
> But the challenger's mistake is even more fundamental. He is wrong to assert that people are condemned for not accepting the gospel. Christians believe that people are condemned for their sinful behavior – the "wages of sin is death" – not for what they fail to do. The quoted challenge is like saying that the sick man died of "not going to the doctor." No, the person died of a specific condition – perhaps cancer or a heart attack – which a doctor might have been able to cure. So too with eternal punishment. No one is condemned for refusing to believe in Jesus. While Jesus can – and does – provide salvation for those who seek it, there is nothing unjust about not providing salvation to those who refuse to seek it. After all, we don't normally feel obliged to help someone who has not asked for, and does not want, our assistance. So too the Creator has the right to withhold a gift – i.e. eternity spent in His presence – from those who would

> trample on the gift, and on the gift-giver.
>
> The quoted assertion also demonstrates an unspoken belief that we can impress God with our “kind” or “generous” behavior. This fails to grasp what God is – a perfect being. We cannot impress Him. What we do right we should do. We don’t drag people into court and reward them for not committing crimes. This is expected of them. They can’t commit a murder and then claim that punishment is unfair, because they had been kind and generous in the past. When a person gets his mind around the idea of what perfection entails, trying to impress a perfect Creator with our “basic goodness” no longer seems like such a good option.

If you want to hear a debate featuring exclusivists versus pluralists, I’ve got a podcast and a summary of a good debate on this issue between Chris Sinkinson and John Hick. You can’t find a more prominent pluralist than John Hick, except for maybe Paul Knitter, who is featured in a debate with Harold Netland in the new “Debating Christian Theism” book that is just out with Oxford University Press.

Christian child care worker fired after being harassed by lesbian co-worker

May 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> A Christian nursery worker is taking her former employers to court claiming she was sacked for her beliefs after refusing to read stories about gay couples to children.

> Sarah Mbuyi says she was dismissed due to religious discrimination, having also been accused of "harassing" a lesbian colleague to whom she gave a Bible when she was recovering from an accident.

> The case, lodged at an employment tribunal, comes amid growing concerns among some Christians that religious beliefs are being "outlawed" in the workplace. A Christian group backing the case says it is an example of believers being "robbed" of the freedom to express views.
>
> […]Miss Mbuyi, 30, who lives in north London, carries a Bible. She started work for Newpark Childcare, a London-based group of four nurseries, last April, before being taken on full-time in one of the schools in September.
>
> The same month a lesbian worker also joined the nursery, in Shepherd's Bush, west London. After discovering that Miss Mbuyi was Christian she repeatedly asked her about her beliefs, the tribunal will be told.
>
> Miss Mbuyi, now working at another nursery, will claim her colleague sought to provoke her. In December the co-worker spent time in hospital having had an accident at work and Miss Mbuyi gave her a Bible on her return.
>
> The present, Miss Mbuyi says, was as a result of the interest she had shown in her faith. It was received well, she insists.
>
> The following month, however, Miss Mbuyi, a Belgian national who came to Britain six years ago, says her colleague told her she had received abuse about her sexuality from religious people in the past.
>
> During the discussion, Miss Mbuyi says she told the woman that "if I tell you that God is OK with that I am lying to you".
>
> At a disciplinary meeting, her employers accused Miss Mbuyi of "harassing" her co-worker, saying such behaviour amounted to "gross misconduct". The co-worker could not be reached for comment.

Already, we see workers in particular fields like nursing and child care being grilled by their co-workers and supervisors about their beliefs. Mandatory sensitivity training has

been the rule in much of corporate America. It’s getting to the point where you can’t even be a Christian and keep your beliefs to yourself, as in the Brendan Eich or Frank Turek terminations. Even if you say nothing at all at the office, gay activists are apparently digging through your private life to dig up dirt on you in order to force you into celebrating their lifestyle. OR ELSE.

When I started this blog in 2009, I always knew that there would come a time with the immoral secular left would figure out who I was and make me unemployable. I have tried to keep clear of them so I could use the freedom I still have to make a difference for what I believe. But I have no doubt that the goal of the secular leftists is to make impossible to both be a Christian and earn a living.

This is something we need to fight now, while there is still time. It’s not just our religious liberty that is on the line – it’s everyone’s religious liberty. What I would really like to see is for the church to get serious about motivating all the people in church to see these threats and then be thoughtful about what they are studying in school, and where they are going to work. It’s important for us to study hard things and earn a lot of money so we can find back effectively against these threats. Not everyone can do hard degrees and make a lot of money, but everyone who can should. And everyone should be focused like a laser beam on these threats. We are not facing a threat from the poor, so we should not be focusing our main effort on helping the poor. We are facing a threat from the secular elites – that’s where the battle lies here and now.

Pentagon provides sex-change to traitor, as war veterans die waiting for treatment

May 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily reports.

Excerpt:

> The Pentagon tries to transfer convicted national security leaker Bradley Manning to a civilian prison to treat a gender disorder while veterans suffer and die waiting in vain on phony Veterans Administration lists.
>
> Or should we say Pvt. Chelsea Manning, the name chosen by the convicted leaker of sensitive classified documents to anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks. Manning has asked for hormone therapy and to be able to live as a woman and the Pentagon is trying to help.
>
> Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel last month gave the Army approval to try to work out a transfer plan with the Federal Bureau of Prisons, which, unlike the Defense Department, does provide such treatment to inmates, two Pentagon officials not authorized to speak on the record told the CBS affiliate in Washington, D.C.
>
> The name change from Bradley to Chelsea was approved last month by a Leavenworth County District Judge, a request the Pentagon did not oppose.
>
> Manning has been diagnosed by military doctors multiple times, including last fall after arriving at the Fort Leavenworth, Kan., prison,with gender dysphoria, the sense of being a woman in a man's body.
>
> […]Meanwhile, the medical needs of veterans who have not betrayed their country but rather served it honorably fall victim to wait-list fraud in at least seven Veterans Administration facilities around the country, a very real scandal that has reached President Obama's home state of Illinois at the Hines VA Medical Center just outside his hometown of Chicago.
>
> Germaine Clarno, a VA social worker and employee representative in Chicago, told CBS News that at the Illinois facility there were multiple secret waiting lists designed to hide the fact that veterans were not receiving timely medical care and sometimes not at all.
>
> Clarno says the purpose of the lists was "to make numbers look better for their own recognition and for bonuses."
>
> Her story mirrors those at other VA facilities, including the one in Phoenix, where Dr. Sam Foote revealed the scandal in which up to 40 veterans may have died. Sally Barnes-Breen told Sen. John McCain at a recent town hall meeting how her 71-year-old father-in-law, a Navy veteran, died while awaiting an appointment at the Phoenix VA. Thomas Francis Breen had bladder cancer and died Nov. 30.
>
> This neglect has apparently been going on for some time. As Betsy McCaughey

> has written in these pages, on Jan. 30, it was disclosed that at least 19 veterans at VA facilities in Columbia, S.C., and Augusta, Ga., died in 2010 and 2011 because they were forced to wait too long for colonoscopies and endoscopies that could have diagnosed their cancers while they were still treatable.

Wow. So Bradley Manning leaks information that cost American lives and undermined our national security, and he gets a sex change while in prison. Meanwhile, war veterans die while waiting for treatment in VA hospitals. I guess this is what we should expect when we elect anti-Americans to run our government. Heck, the Democrats probably believe that they are doing the right thing by preferring traitors to veterans.

This is what my taxpayer money is going for – not to help wounded vets who protected me by risking their lives for me, but to provide traitors with sex changes. It’s appalling. I have less freedom to pursue my dreams with the money I earned, because a traitor needs a sex change.

Pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf discusses pro-life apologetics

May 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you know that the pro-life issue is an area where you can learn arguments and use evidence to be persuasive? Here's a podcast that shows you how.

Details:

> Scott Klusendorf, President of Life Training Institute, is a pro-life rockstar. Listen in as host Brian Fisher attempts to unsuccessfully "stump the apologist" with some of the most difficult pro-abortion questions of our day.

The MP3 file is here. (36 minutes)

Questions:

- How did Scott get interested in the abortion issue?
- Do you need a special calling in order to learn how to defend the unborn?
- What is the history of the pro-life movement, and how have they shifted tactics?
- What is moral relativism? How is it relevant to the abortion debate?
- Why is moral relativism so widely accepted?
- How do you deal with someone who says abortion is wrong, but she has no choice?
- How do you deal with the rape and incest exceptions argument?
- What about unborn children who are not "viable"?
- But isn't the foetus part of the woman's body?
- Abortion is necessary to reduce poverty, crime, overpopulation, etc.

It's Friday night, and listening to a smart pro-lifer is awesome. His answer to the abortion is necessary to alleviate poverty is just awesome – the man is widely read outside his field.

New study: a single episode of binge drinking can adversely affect health

May 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An interesting discovery in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal PLOS ONE, reported by Science Daily. (H/T William B.)

Excerpt:

> It only takes one time. That's the message of a new study by scientists at the University of Massachusetts Medical School on binge drinking. Their research found that a single episode of binge drinking can have significant negative health effects resulting in bacteria leaking from the gut, leading to increased levels of toxins in the blood. Published online in *PLOS ONE*, the study showed that these bacterial toxins, called endotoxins, caused the body to produce immune cells involved in fever, inflammation, and tissue destruction.

> "We found that a single alcohol binge can elicit an immune response, potentially impacting the health of an otherwise healthy individual," said lead author Gyongyi Szabo, MD, PhD, professor of medicine, vice chair of the Department of Medicine and associate dean for clinical and translational sciences at UMMS. "Our observations suggest that an alcohol binge is more dangerous than previously thought."
>
> Binge drinking is defined by National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) as a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08g/dL or above. For a typical adult, this corresponds with consuming five or more drinks for men, or four or more drinks for women, in about two hours, depending on body weight.
>
> Binge drinking is known to pose safety risks associated with car crashes and injuries. Over the long term, binge drinking can damage the liver and other organs, but this [study] is key evidence that a single alcohol binge can cause damaging health effects such as bacterial leakage from the gut into the blood stream, according to a statement released by George Koob, PhD, director of the NIAAA.

I've never been drunk, thank goodness – mostly because I like putting money into bank accounts more than giving it to other people for entertainment related products and services. Scheming works better with money, and I love to scheme and plan and achieve. Not only that, but drunkenness is forbidden in Gal 5:21 and Eph 5:18. So there is the Bible and the stewardship of money. Two good reasons to not drink excessively.

I made my way through high school and college without drinking once (except maybe Kahlua with milk, or something like that, at holidays with the family, I don't remember).

My first beer was when I graduated and had my first full-time job. It was the height of the dot-com bubble, we all had good jobs and were making money. So when we went out as a team, I had one beer with the team, and then they would feel comfortable talking to me about spiritual things. Since then, I've averaged about a beer a year. It's just not something I can afford to spend money on regularly. You don't get rich by spending money, and we all ought to be very worried about our future prosperity, at this point, given what's going on in Washington.

I think my bigger concern though is that with non-Christians, I don't let my guard down. I am always "on duty" and ready to answer their questions. Can't afford to do anything that is going to compromise my ability to reason well and make good decisions in front of them. I know enough people who have had alcoholic parents or been harmed by alcohol that I find it easy to just avoid it completely. The tragedy of drunk driving is one of the things that really pushed me away from alcohol entirely when I was younger. The idea that some drunk person can kill or seriously injure an innocent person doesn't sit well with me.

Narendra Modi (BJP) election win good for Indian economy, but scary for Christian minority

May 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of India – Modi was the leader in Gujarat state
From Asia News.

Excerpt:

> "The electoral result, declared so far, indicates a landslide win for the BJP, which should propel the stock markets to new heights," said Clifton Desilva, director of Altina Securities Pvt Ltd, as he spoke to *AsiaNews* about India's election results and the BJP victory.
>
> According to the latest projections, Modi's party has 277 seats out of 543. The BJP and its coalition partners together now hold 336 seats. However, "Now that the BJP is likely to attain a sweeping mandate it does not have to depend on allies as was the case with the UPA government," Desilva said. The UPA or United Progressive Alliance was the Indian Congress Party-led coalition that lost the election.
>
> What is more, the BJP "has the reputation of being a business-oriented party," Desilva noted. Thus, "all the big reforms that the UPA could not implement it is hoped that the BJP will implement them. [. . .] In fact the last five to six years we have seen the stock market sliding to new lows with the GDP [growth] slipping from 9.5 per cent to 4.5 per cent".
>
> Under a BJP administration, "it is expected that the investment cycle, which was

> stalled for various reasons, will get a kick start." As a result, "projects worth over Rs 6 trillion (US$ 100 billion) that were stalled are likely to be revived, which will have a positive impact on reviving the growth of the Indian economy", especially in terms of infrastructure, capital goods and banking sectors.
>
> As soon as the BJP victory appeared to be a foregone conclusion, foreign governments rushed to congratulate the new leader.

But, Religious Freedom Coalition reports a concern.

Excerpt:

> Advocacy officials say policies of the influential Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has contributed to an atmosphere of hatred towards Christians. The BJP is the ruling party in three of the five Indian states with laws that forbid forced religious conversions.
>
> The legislation is frequently used to shut down churches or intimidate Christians who speak about their faith, according to rights activists.
>
> The party has proposed stiffer penalties in one of those states, Madhya Pradesh, India's second-largest.
>
> Narendra Modi, chief minister of Gujarat, another BJP-ruled state with anti-conversion laws on the books, is "the poster child for India's failure to punish the violent," said Katrina Lantos Swett, vice chairwoman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and Commissioner Mary Ann Glendon in a joint November opinion column.
>
> While under BJP rule, Karnataka state had the country's highest rate of attacks against Christians from 2010 through 2012, according to Christian estimates.
>
> […]National parliamentary elections are scheduled for May, and Narendra Modi is the BJP's candidate for prime minister.
>
> Hindu militants have expressed anger over the spread of Christianity in India, a predominantly Hindu nation of over 1 billion people.
>
> In a reaction, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) made clear it was closely monitoring the situation saying it had urged believers to "Pray for God's protection over all Christians living in Andhra Pradesh" especially "for pastors and Christian workers…that they would continue to place their trust in the Lord and engage in missions in spite of the present situation."
>
> It was also important to "Pray that the Lord would grant repentance to those who are instigating violence against Christians," stressed the WEA, which claims to represent some 600 million evangelical Christians in 128 countries.

I want India to do well, and Modi's pro-business record in Gujarat cannot be questioned. However, I am worried about his Hindu Nationalism and the price that Christians might pay for evangelizing, which is a normal part of the Christian faith. Hinduism is a non-cognitive religion, so they are not used to arguments and evidence. It's a

community/family/culture thing. So they don’t understand how a person can evangelize except by non-cognitive means, e.g. – bribes. I am worried especially for the Dalits and other low-caste Indians in this environment.

Please pray for Christians in India. Do it now.

Just the thing to fix our 0.1% GDP growth: a massive hike to electricity prices

May 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist Poitico.

Excerpt:

> The EPA will launch the most dramatic anti-pollution regulation in a generation early next month, a sweeping crackdown on carbon that offers President Barack Obama his last real shot at a legacy on climate change — while causing significant political peril for red-state Democrats.
>
> The move could produce a dramatic makeover of the power industry, shifting it away from coal-burning plants toward natural gas, solar and wind. While this is the big move environmentalists have been yearning for, it also has major political implications in November for a president already under fire for what the GOP is branding a job-killing "War on Coal," and promises to be an election issue in energy-producing states such as West Virginia, Kentucky and Louisiana.
>
> […]But for coal country, the rule is yet another indignity for an industry already facing a wave of power plant shutdowns amid hostile market forces and a series of separate EPA air regulations. Coal-state Democrats like West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin have joined the criticism, echoing industry warnings that the fossil fuel was crucial to keeping the lights on in much of the U.S. during this past brutal winter.
>
> "You have another polar vortex next year, how many people will lose their lives?" Manchin asked at a POLITICO energy policy forum Tuesday.
>
> […]It's not just the coal industry that's losing sleep over the rule. Manufacturers and industries like oil refining have been eyeing the power plant regulations as the starting gun for a process that will eventually lead to greenhouse gas limits for a wide variety of businesses.
>
> "These regulations could reduce the diversity of our energy supply, increase electricity and compliance costs for American businesses and shrink our competitiveness," said Ross Eisenberg, vice president for energy and resources policy at the National Association of Manufacturers. "We can't sit by silently while that happens."

The EPA's rule proposal is supposed to go live on June 2nd. Plenty of time for people in red and purple states to decide whether they prefer gay marriage to low electricity bills. I would say that the chances of the Republicans taking the Senate now is up near 75%.

An excerpt from Dr. Laura's "The Proper Care and Feeding of Marriage"

May 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from chapter 1 of the book "The Proper Care and Feeding of Marriage".

Is there really ever such a thing as a perfect marriage? The answer to that question is, "YES." I know you're stunned. Stay with me here: "perfect" doesn't mean that everything goes right, or your way for that matter, or that you're feeling romantically perky all the time. There are just too many unpredictable events, challenges, and tragedies in life for any of us to feel content and satisfied for any prolonged period of time. Yet, even in the midst of misery, you can still feel and believe that your marriage is perfect if you have the right attitude; and I don't mean that you think positively – I do mean that you think outwardly. When you do so, married life becomes perfect no matter what difficulties you're going through.

I took a call from Michelle, a seventeen-year-old high-school student, which will clarify:

Michelle: Hi, Dr. Laura! It's a pleasure to speak with you. My question is this: this Saturday is my boyfriend's and mine senior prom. As it turns out, we have a conflict because it is also his championship lacrosse game, at the same time as the dance. He has told me that I could decide which one we should do.

Dr L: Really? So, what's your decision?

Michelle: Well, personally, I want to go to the prom because it's our senior prom and it's our last dance together, it's meaningful, you know? But it's also his major opportunity because scouts will be at this game for college recruitment. So, for him the best choice would be for the game but I want to go to prom… selfishly.

Dr L: Do you love him?

Michelle: Of course. Yes.

Dr L: Do you imagine you're going to marry him? I'm asking you that because I just want to know the depth of your compassion and caring for him.

Michelle: I can see it. I can definitely see it working, but I'm only seventeen… Yes, I care for him a lot.

Dr L: Well then, I guess he's going to his lacrosse tournament.

Michelle: (sounding deflated) Okay.

Dr L: **Because that's what we do when we're in love – we give them gifts… that doesn't mean you go to the store and buy something. It means you give up something that's very important to you to give them something that's very important to them.** O'Henry wrote a short story called, The Gift of the Magi. There was a young couple, very poor, married, and very much in love with each other. Christmas is coming and there is no money to buy gifts for one another. Her prized possession was her long, lovely hair which she had grown since childhood. His prized possession was his solid

gold pocket watch – an heirloom, passed down from generation to generation.

Come Christmas morning, she hands her beloved a package. It is a solid gold chain for his pocket watch. He hands his beloved a package. It is a bejeweled comb to hold her beautiful hair in a bun on top of her head. They both cried with joy… even though… he no longer had the pocket watch, as he had sold it to buy her the jeweled comb… and she no longer had long hair, as she had sold it to buy him the gold chain.

Neither could use the gift the other had given them from a store – but look at the gift they truly got from the other.

Michelle: WOW!

Dr L: So, when you love somebody you give them what they really need – and your boyfriend needs you to be supportive of the fact that this game is important to his college career – for scholarships. If you do get married, you'll be dancing together for the rest of your lives.

Michelle: That's true. Well, I guess he'll be playing this game and I'll be sitting on the sidelines cheering.

Dr L: Good for you! That's the kind of woman a man should marry.

Michelle: Thank you so much, Dr. Laura.

Oh, wait a minute, friends! The story does not end there. A few days later I received this email from Michelle:

"A few days ago I called in with a dilemma I had with prom because my boyfriend's championship lacrosse game (with college scouts) was the same night. You told me the story of the Gift of the Magi, and that if you really loved someone you would be willing to give up whatever was most important to you – which for me was the prom. I took your advice and called up my boyfriend telling him that we would be going to his lacrosse game instead of senior prom. He explained to me that he knew I would decide to go to his game, so he went ahead and bought our prom tickets so we would go to the prom.

So, basically, I was willing to give up senior prom for him, and he was willing to give up what was most important to him, his championship game – proving the story of the Gift of the Magi…

But hold on! The story gets better! Yesterday we found out that because of some unknown factor, his championship game was changed from 7 o'clock to 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Is this a God thing? I think so! Now we not only get to go to prom and his lacrosse game, but we have the knowledge that we are both willing to sacrifice what is most important to us because our love is stronger.

I know that I am only 17, but I think I found a keeper!! Thank you so much for your wonderful advice to let my MAN know how important he is to me. This experience not only made me grow as a person, but is strengthening our relationship as well."

Now, dear friends, even some seventeen year olds can understand the beauty and meaning of having somebody care enough about you to put themselves aside for you – that beats every prom and game imaginable. And when you are living this scenario, no

matter what grunge is going on in your life, your marriage is PERFECT!

Emphasis mine. The point of getting married is to give self-sacrificially to someone else. Just like Jesus.

Here is my previous post on her earlier book, The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands.

Recommended books on marriage

A friend of mine is getting married soon, and he asked me for books that he should read. I said he should read “The Five Love Languages” by Gary Chapman and “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands”. He had read both of those, so he got the audio book of Tim Keller’s “The Meaning of Marriage”. I am not a Tim Keller fan, but that book is really good, so I got it as well!

I started an FB thread on this topic and we got these books:

- Reforming Marriage by Douglas Wilson
- Theology of the Body for Beginners by Christoper West
- Boundaries by Henry Cloud and John Townsend
- Boundaries in Marriage by Henry Cloud and John Townsend
- The Fruit of Her Hands by Nancy Wilson
- The Act of Marriage by Tim and Bev Lahaye
- Love and Respect by Emerson Eggerichs
- Sacred Marriage by Gary Thomas
- The Four Loves by C.S. Lewis
- The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work by John Gottman
- Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts by Lee and Leslie Parrott
- What Did You Expect? by Paul Tripp

Leave your recommendation for him in the comments.

Higher education spending produced no improvement on standardized tests

May 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

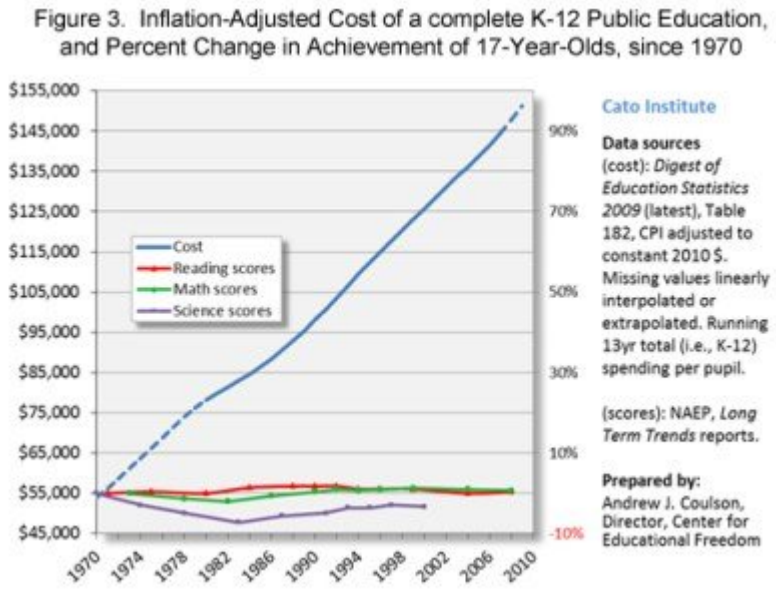

Education spending has tripled since 1970

The Heritage Foundation reports.

Excerpt:

> The U.S. Department of Education recently released the 2013 results of math and reading achievement for 12th graders on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. It's hard to say what's been achieved.
>
> According to the NAEP—a standardized test often referred to as the nation's "report card"—just 26 percent of the country's 12th graders are proficient in math. Only 38 percent are proficient in reading. Those numbers are entirely unchanged since 2009, when the NAEP was last administered.
>
> Notably, reading achievement was significantly *higher* overall in 1992 when the NAEP exam was first administered in reading. Forty percent of students were proficient in reading in 1992. The new NAEP scores confirm the outcomes found on the NAEP long-term-trend assessment, which has assessed reading achievement since 1971 and math achievement since 1973. Twelfth graders today perform no better in reading than high school seniors of the early 1970s.

So is spending on education the same today as it was in the 1970s?

Let's see:

> Since the 1970s alone, inflation-adjusted federal per-pupil spending (part of the goal of which was to narrow achievement gaps) has nearly tripled.
>
> The behemoth federal Department of Education filters all of this taxpayer money through more than 100 federal education programs, many of which are

> duplicative, most of which are ineffective. It’s no surprise then that this administration’s policies, which seem designed to increase program count and spending, haven’t moved the needle on achievement either.

The article has a graph showing that the biggest reason for this increase in costs is “Non-Teaching Staff”. I think that might be a problem. Maybe the task of education should be pushed down to the states or even local governments, where they can be more responsive to the needs of the customers?

“Sex without love isn’t worth it” 18-year old UK student defends his virginity

May 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this article from the UK Daily Mail. I don’t really have much sympathy for student, since my rule is NO SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE, and I’m twice his age and still a virgin. Still, the article had some interesting things in it.

Excerpt:

> A teenager at one of the country’s most prestigious private schools has outed himself as a virgin and is encouraging his classmates to employ the same restraint to avoid getting their hearts broken.
>
> Phin Lyman, 18, a sixth former at Wellington College, Berkshire, wrote an article in his school magazine warning peers that ‘casual sex never works in the long term’.
>
> Mr Lyman – a pupil at the £30,000-per year school which counts author Sebastian Faulks and broadcaster Peter Snow among its alumni – described sex as ‘the glue’ which connects two people ‘physically and emotionally’.

And now the interesting parts:

> The pupil’s comment comes just days after it emerged nearly one in ten students at British universities admit they first had sex at the age of 14 or younger.
>
> The shocking survey of more than 6,000 students at 100 universities, carried out by Student Beans, found nine per cent of students admitted they lost their virginity before they reached their 15th birthday, with two per cent saying they had sex before they turned 14.
>
> By the time they reached 16 – the legal age of consent – that figure had risen to almost one in four.
>
> The survey also found that more than half have had unprotected sex while 61 per cent used camera phones to send explicit pictures or videos of themselves to partners, known as ‘sexting’.
>
> After starting university, more than half admitted to having one-night stands and six per cent said they had already had more than 20 partners. Just eight per cent said they were still virgins.
>
> Norman Wells from the Family Education Trust, which promotes traditional moral values, said: ‘The survey underlines the failure of contraceptive-based sex education to prepare young people for lifelong marriages.
>
> ‘Contrary to the claims of those who assert that marriage is an outdated institution, the overwhelming majority of students expect to get married, with

> only six per cent saying they do not wish to marry.
>
> ‘Yet the casual attitudes towards sex suggested by high levels of one night stands and multiple sexual partners indicate that students are ignorant of the character qualities they will need.’
>
> Meanwhile, the latest figures from the NHS published in 2011 show 27 per cent of men aged between 15 and 24 had not had sex, compared with 22 per cent in 2001.
>
> Those who admitted drinking alcohol in the previous week had also dropped by a quarter in that same ten-year period.
>
> Of those aged 11 to 15, one in eight said they had drunk the week before, according to the 2011 NHS figures.

In my case, I am concerned about sex simply because I more interested in love, romance and a lifelong commitment. I believe that one of the best (and most risky) ways for me to make an impact for God would be to have a marriage that can be used as a base of operations from impacting the public square. A married couple united in purpose is able to work together to impact the church and the university, and raise influential and effective children. But to do that the bond has to be tight. I believe that refraining from premarital sex is my way of giving my future wife the gift of security in the marriage. Whatever happens, she will always know that I am not the kind of person who thinks that sexual activity is an appropriate form of communication between people who do not know each other, are not committed to each other, are not committed to their children and do not share a common purpose of serving God over the long-term.

I have no regrets about not being married yet, because you can train hard, save a lot of money and do a lot of good as a single person. But my chastity expresses the hope that one day the right girl will come along to know me and my plan, and want to participate in it in a self-sacrificial, submissive way. Until then, I’ll keep serving God in a disciplined, focused way and keep waiting for her to commit to me.

The meaning of marriage: a lecture at Google by Tim Keller

May 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Disclaimer: I have reservations about Tim Keller. I consider him to be too liberal for my tastes, especially on scientific (intelligent design) and political/economic issues. However, I think he did a good job explaining marriage in the lecture below.

Here's the the video:

Details:

> Timothy Keller visits Google's New York, NY office to discuss his book "The Meaning of Marriage." This event took place on November 14, 2011, as part of the Authors@Google series.
>
> Timothy J. Keller is an American author, speaker, preacher, and the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. He is the author of several books, including "The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism."
>
> "The Meaning of Marriage" touches on topics that all readers can relate to, starting with the role of marriage in our culture, its history and the pessimism that is often associated with it. The Kellers also discuss the feelings of and acts of love, romantic relationships, gender roles, singleness, and the role of sex in a marriage.

I saw a lot of things in his lecture that echo my own views. One point where we agree is on not just looking for traits and virtues in the other person, but in seeing how they handle conflict and solve problems with you. You have to give the other person things to do and see if they make progress and work cooperatively with you. Wes, who linked me the lecture, introduced the link by saying that this is the way that Christians should explain marriage to non-Christians. I agree, and I've added the book to my cart.

Here's an article entitled "You Never Marry the Right Person", that discusses one of the points in the lecture.

Excerpt:

> In generations past, there was far less talk about "compatibility" and finding the ideal soul-mate. Today we are looking for someone who accepts us as we are *and* fulfills our desires, and this creates an unrealistic set of expectations that frustrates both the searchers and the searched for.
>
> […]The Bible explains why the quest for compatibility seems to be so impossible. As a pastor I have spoken to thousands of couples, some working on marriage-seeking, some working on marriage-sustaining and some working on marriage-saving. I've heard them say over and over, "Love shouldn't be this hard, it should come naturally." In response I always say something like: "Why believe that?

> Would someone who wants to play professional baseball say, ‘It shouldn’t be so hard to hit a fastball’? Would someone who wants to write the greatest American novel of her generation say, ‘It shouldn’t be hard to create believable characters and compelling narrative’?” The understandable retort is: “But this is not baseball or literature. This is love. Love should just come naturally if two people are compatible, if they are truly soul-mates. “
>
> The Christian answer to this is that no two people are compatible. Duke University Ethics professor Stanley Hauerwas has famously made this point:
>
> Destructive to marriage is the self-fulfillment ethic that assumes marriage and the family are primarily institutions of personal fulfillment, necessary for us to become “whole” and happy. The assumption is that there is someone just right for us to marry and that if we look closely enough we will find the right person. This moral assumption overlooks a crucial aspect to marriage. It fails to appreciate the fact that we always marry the wrong person.We never know whom we marry; we just think we do. Or even if we first marry the right person, just give it a while and he or she will change. For marriage, being [the enormous thing it is] means we are not the same person after we have entered it. The primary challenge of marriage is learning how to love and care for the stranger to whom you find yourself married.
>
> Hauerwas gives us the first reason that no two people are compatible for marriage, namely, that marriage profoundly changes us. But there is another reason. Any two people who enter into marriage are spiritually broken by sin, which among other things means to be self-centered—living life*incurvatus in se*. As author Denis de Rougemont said, “Why should neurotic, selfish, immature people suddenly become angels when they fall in love … ?” That is why a good marriage is more painfully hard to achieve than athletic or artistic prowess. Raw, natural talent does not enable you to play baseball as a pro or write great literature without enduring discipline and enormous work. Why would it be easy to live lovingly and well with another human being in light of what is profoundly wrong within our human nature? Indeed, many people who have mastered athletics and art have failed miserably at marriage. So the biblical doctrine of sin explains why marriage—more than anything else that is good and important in this fallen world—is so painful and hard.

When you are courting, don’t worry about appearances and feelings and passion so much, because that is all subject to change over time, and those things won’t help you with the real challenges you’ll face in a marriage. Worry about whether they are the kind of person who can make commitments and love other people self-sacrificially – even if they are unlovable. In the long run, their ability to read and understand issues, to care for others and serve them, to keep promises, to be respectful and supportive, to argue respectfully and reasonably, and to solve problems constructively, will all be far more important than appearances and feelings and passion.

And let me be clear again: give them things to do that challenge them during the courtship and see how they handle being given responsibilities – giving a person hard things to do is a much better way to test a person than recreational nights out with recreational drinking, recreational dancing and recreational sex. Marriage means commitment and hard work, not recreation. And that's what you should test for – the ability to work hard at the relationship and to keep promises and commitments and to communicate reasonably and to work through difficulties fairly.

Democrats refusing to comply with Freedom of Information Act requests

May 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Katie Pavlich at Townhall breaks the story.

Excerpt:

> On May 21, 2013 the National Republican Senatorial Committee sent the IRS a Freedom of Information Act request asking for "any and all documents or records, including but not limited to electronic documents, e-mails, paper documents, photographs (electronic or hard copy), or audio files," related to correspondence from January 1, 2009 and May 21, 2013 between thirteen different Democrat members of Congress and top IRS officials.
>
> […]Since that request was received by the IRS nearly one year ago, IRS Tax Law Specialists Robert Thomas and Denise Higley have asked for more time to fulfill the request six times.
>
> "I am responding to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated May 21, 2013, and received in our office on May 30, 2013," Higley wrote in a letter to NRSC Attorney Megan Sowards last year. "I am unable to send the information requested by June 27, 2013, which is the 20 business day period allowed by law. I apologize for any inconvenience this delay may cause."
>
> Thomas and Higley have sent six letters with the same language and different dates to Sowards requesting more time to locate information in order to fulfill the FOIA request. Most recently, the IRS has asked for a deadline of August 1, 2014 to produce information.
>
> Earlier this week Judicial Watch released documents showing Democratic Michigan Senator Carl Levin was in contact with former Deputy IRS Commissioner Steven Miller repeatedly throughout 2012 and was working with the agency on how conservative groups, specifically those working against his reelection, could be targeted through IRS rules and regulations. Last month we learned the staff of Ranking Member of the House Oversight Committee Elijah Cummings had been in touch with the IRS about voter fraud prevention group True the Vote, despite direct denials from Cummings any contact with the IRS had ever occurred.

I think that the Democrat cover-up of this IRS scandal is so egregious, and their refusal to be accountable to harmful, that the only solution is to abolish/dismantle the IRS and go with a flat tax or fair tax system. Government agencies are not supposed to be politicized like this, and if they are, then they need to go.

College of the Ozarks offers students tuition-free degrees – if they work part-time

May 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the Wall Street Journal has been the #1 editorial for much of the last four days.

Excerpt:

> Looking for the biggest bargain in higher education? I think I found it in this rural Missouri town, 40 miles south of Springfield, nestled in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains. The school is College of the Ozarks, and it operates on an education model that could overturn the perverse method of financing college education that is turning this generation of young adults into a permanent debtor class.
>
> At this college the tuition is nowhere near the $150,000 to $200,000 for a four-year degree that the elite top-tier universities are charging. At College of the Ozarks, tuition is free. That's right. The school's nearly 1,400 students don't pay a dime in tuition during their time there.
>
> So what's the catch? All the college's students—without exception—pay for their education by working 15 hours a week on campus. The jobs are plentiful because this school—just a few miles from Branson, a popular tourist destination—operates its own mill, a power plant, fire station, four-star restaurant and lodge, museum and dairy farm.
>
> Some students from low-income homes also spend 12 weeks of summer on campus working to cover their room and board. Part of the students' grade point average is determined by how they do on the job and those who shirk their work duties are tossed out. The jobs range from campus security to cooking and cleaning hotel rooms, tending the hundreds of cattle, building new dorms and buildings, to operating the power plant.
>
> […]"We don't do debt here," [School President Jerry C.] Davis says. "The kids graduate debt free and the school is debt free too." Operating expenses are paid out of a $400 million endowment. Seeing the success of College of the Ozarks, one wonders why presidents of schools with far bigger endowments don't use them to make their colleges more affordable. This is one of the great derelictions of duty of college trustees as they allow universities to become massive storehouses of wealth as tuitions rise year after year.
>
> In an era when patriotism on progressive college campuses is uncool or even denigrated as endorsing American imperialism, College of the Ozarks actually offers what it calls a "patriotic education." "There's value in teaching kids about the sacrifices previous generations have made," Mr. Davis says. "Kids should know there are things worth fighting for."

> He says a dozen or so students will be taking a pilgrimage to Normandy in June to commemorate the 70-year anniversary of D-Day and the former College of the Ozarks students buried there. Amazingly, four of the school's graduates served as generals in the U.S. military during the Vietnam War.
>
> […]Nearly 90% of graduates land jobs—an impressive figure, given the economy's slow-motion recovery.
>
> "If I were an employer, I'd take our graduates over those at most any other schools," says Mr. Davis. "The kids at these East Coast colleges strike me as being a little spoiled. Our graduates don't expect to come into the company as the CEO." But they certainly join a company knowing the value of work.

I am always encouraging young people to steer themselves to STEM degrees, and away from debt. If you did a STEM degree at College of the Ozarks, then you would really have a leg up on life. It's not a good time now to follow your heart and do what you like. Now is the time to dig in and do what you have to do to pay your own way later on. It's going to get a lot harder to have even the same standard of living as what your parents had.

Is it possible to have a civil, productive debate about abortion?

May 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw this post on Josh Brahm's blog and had to blog on it. It shows the kind of relationship that leads to a changed mind.

Excerpt:

> I want to bring relational apologetics to the pro-life movement. I've written and spoken previously about my dear friend Deanna Young. I'd encourage you to check out one of those two links to get the beginning of the story that I'm going to continue here. I'm so excited to tell you why Deanna now calls herself pro-life.
>
> In case you didn't click either of those links, Deanna was a pro-choice, atheist lesbian in Canada who befriended me in February 2013, through a YouTube message. Deanna was one of the most intelligent pro-choice bloggers I'd ever read. We exchanged nearly 120 philosophical emails, then started Skyping together.
>
> I'm eager to share with you how my relationship with Deanna has progressed and the ways that her thinking has changed, but there's a danger in this. It's possible that some people would read this and interpret it as me telling you about a project of mine. It's very important to me that you know that Deanna is not an object to me, a mind to be changed so that I can get another notch on my pro-life belt.
>
> I have no shame in telling you that I love Deanna.
>
> […]When I say that I love Deanna, I mean what Jason Lepojärvi means when he defined love this way:
>
> Love says that it is good that you exist and insofar as I am able I will contribute to your happiness, your existence, your flourishing.
>
> Some of my pro-choice friends have not changed their thinking about abortion very much, but Deanna has. I want to share with you some of the changes in her thinking. Don't read these as the reasons I'm friends with Deanna. Deanna will always be my friend, regardless of her views on abortion, her religion or her sexuality.
>
> […]Deanna would tell you that two things were necessary conditions for her conversion: rigorous philosophical arguments and a loving friendship with someone on the other side. The intellectual arguments were very important. I haven't written very much about our initial email exchanges yet, but we got very philosophical, going back and forth on issues like bodily rights arguments, rape, the concept of intrinsic human value, concepts of harm and taking away the dignity of people in temporary comas, moral objectivism, utilitarianism, stem cell

> research, the “after-birth abortion” paper, and the use of graphic pictures.
>
> It was through those lengthy emails that Deanna and I first became close. And after Deanna believed that most of her philosophical arguments had been defeated by better arguments, she completed her conversion upon realizing that a pro-life person loved her, even while she was an actively pro-choice blogger. I took my cue from Jesus, who, while I was yet a sinner, loved me anyway, and adopted me. (Romans 5:8.)

In the rest of the article he talks about their conversations about various arguments like the Judith Jarvis Thomson violinist argument.

I don’t think this would work with just any pro-choice person, you would need someone smart to argue her view strongly and have it answered strongly. I think when you get two smart people together for a long period of time, and there is mutual respect being built up, that’s when changing a person’s mind becomes possible.

I believe in one-on-one mentoring of people who are engaged in finding the truth about the issues that divide us. But I don’t know if I would be brave enough to form a loving friendship with someone so far on the other side. I would like to be able to do that, but it’s just really scary unless you are sure the other person can tolerate your honest views. I do believe in his definition of love, but it’s hard to find someone same who is very different from me. I think it’s easier with men than women, for a man.

Activist judge Jones strikes down traditional marriage in Pennsylvania

May 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The leftist New York Times celebrates the decision by a judge to overturn the will of the people.

Excerpt:

> Continuing a rush of rulings that have struck down marriage limits across the country, a federal judge in Pennsylvania on Tuesday declared the state's ban on same-sex marriage to be unconstitutional.
>
> "We are a better people than what these laws represent, and it is time to discard them into the ash heap of history," wrote Judge John E. Jones III of Federal District Court in a decision posted on Tuesday afternoon.
>
> Pennsylvania is the last of the Northeast states with a ban on same-sex marriage, and if Tuesday's ruling is not successfully challenged, it will become the 19th state to permit gay and lesbian couples to marry.
>
> […]**In the last few months, judges have struck down marriage limits in several states: Arkansas, Idaho, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia and, on Monday,Oregon. Courts elsewhere have said that states must recognize same-sex marriages performed outside their borders.**
>
> In most of the cases, courts have delayed the carrying out of the rulings until appeals can be argued in federal circuit courts and, perhaps, the Supreme Court. But in Oregon, state officials said they would not appeal, and the opening of marriage to same-sex couples appeared to be settled.

Yes, it seems like activist judges are overturning the will of the people in lots of states, and liberals are so happy with this new method of deciding what the laws will be.

You might remember Judge Jones as the judge who decided the Dover ID case by copying almost verbatim from a briefing prepared by the ACLU:

> The key section of the widely-noted court decision on intelligent design issued a year ago on December 20 was copied nearly verbatim from a document written by ACLU lawyers, according to a study released today by scholars affiliated with the Discovery Institute.
>
> "Judge John Jones copied verbatim or virtually verbatim 90.9% of his 6,004-word section on whether intelligent design is science from the ACLU's proposed 'Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law' submitted to him nearly a month before his ruling," said Dr. John West, Vice President for Public Policy and Legal Affairs at Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture.

> “Ironically, Judge Jones has been hailed as ‘an outstanding thinker’ for his ‘masterful’ ruling, and even honored by Time magazine as one of the world’s ‘most influential people’ in the category of ‘scientists and thinkers,’” said West. “But Jones’ analysis of the scientific status of intelligent design contains virtually nothing written by Jones himself. This finding seriously undercuts the credibility of a central part of the ruling.”
>
> **The study notes that, while judges routinely make use of proposed findings of fact, “the extent to which Judge Jones simply copied the language submitted to him by the ACLU is stunning. For all practical purposes, Jones allowed ACLU attorneys to write nearly the entire section of his opinion analyzing whether intelligent design is science. As a result, this central part of Judge Jones’ ruling reflected essentially no original deliberative activity or independent examination of the record on Jones’ part.”**
>
> Jones’ copying was so uncritical that he even reprinted a number of factual errors originally made by ACLU attorneys.
>
> For example, Jones claimed that biochemist Michael Behe, when asked about articles purporting to explain the evolution of the immune system, responded that the articles were “not ‘good enough.’” Behe actually said the exact opposite: “it’s not that they aren’t good enough. It’s simply that they are addressed to a different subject.” Jones’ misrepresentation of Behe came directly from the ACLU’s “Findings of Fact.”
>
> Again copying from the ACLU, Jones insisted that “ID is not supported by any peer-reviewed… publications.” But, in fact, the court record contained evidence of several such publications.

I guess these scientific discussions are too complicated for a judge to decide, so he just copied his answer from a group of atheist lawyers. And that was good (for him), because he was able to receive an award from an atheistic group later on for his fine copying skills. Judging is hard work, it’s better to just decide what you want to be true beforehand and then copy reasons for your decision from other people. Then collect an award with the time you save by not having to think too hard. And if you have more time left over from not thinking for yourself, then you can compose insults to mock the people who believe that children deserve a mother and father.

Paul Copan explains some responses to postmodernism

May 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Four articles from Paul Copan over at the UK site "BeThinking". Each article responds to a different slogan that you might hear if you're dealing with non-Christians on the street.

"That's just your interpretation!"

Some of his possible responses:

- Gently ask, 'Do you mean that your interpretation should be preferred over mine? If so, I'd like to know why you have chosen your interpretation over mine. You must have a good reason.'
- Remind your friend that you are willing to give reasons for your position and that you are not simply taking a particular viewpoint arbitrarily.
- Try to discern if people toss out this slogan because they don't like your interpretation. Remind them that there are many truths we have to accept even if we don't like them.
- 'There are no facts, only interpretations' is a statement that is presented as a fact. If it is just an interpretation, then there is no reason to take it seriously.

More responses are here.

"You Christians are intolerant!"

Some of his possible responses:

- If you say that the Christian view is bad because it is exclusive, then you are also at that exact moment doing the very thing that you are saying is bad. You have to be exclusive to say that something is bad, since you exclude it from being good by calling it bad.
- There is a difference, a clear difference between tolerance and truth. They are often confused. We should hold to what we believe with integrity but also support the rights of others to disagree with our viewpoint.
- Sincerely believing something doesn't make it true. You can be sincere, but sincerely wrong. If I get onto a plane and sincerely believe that it won't crash then it does, then my sincerity is quite hopeless. It won't change the facts. Our beliefs, regardless of how deeply they are held, have no effect on reality.

More responses are here.

"That's true for you, but not for me!"

Some of his possible responses:

- If my belief is only true for *me*, then why isn't your belief only true for you? Aren't

you saying you want me to believe the same thing you do?
- You say that no belief is true for everyone, but you want everyone to believe what you do.
- You're making universal claims that relativism is *true* and absolutism is *false*. You can't in the same breath say, 'Nothing is universally true' *and* 'My view is universally true.' Relativism falsifies itself. It claims there is *one* position that is true – *relativism!*

More responses are here.

"If you were born in India, you'd be a Hindu!"

Some of his possible responses:

- Just because there are many different religious answers and systems doesn't automatically mean pluralism is correct.
- If we are culturally conditioned regarding our religious beliefs, then why should the religious pluralist think his view is *less* arbitrary or conditioned than the exclusivist's?
- If the Christian needs to justify Christianity's claims, the pluralist's views need just as much substantiation.

More responses are here.

And a bonus: "How do you know you're not wrong?".

William Lane Craig lectures on the postmodern challenge to belief in God

May 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a lecture entitled “Are there Objective Truths About God?”, philosopher William Lane Craig responds to postmodern challenges to the idea of truth, and specifically to the idea that religion is about objective truth.

Here’s the link to a page containing the lecture audio. (H/T Be Thinking)

The MP3 file is here.

So what questions does Bill answer in the lecture?

What is a self-refuting statement?

The main concept in the lecture is self-refutation. A self-refuting sentence is a sentence that, if true, makes itself false or meaningless. For example, suppose someone said to you: “there are no sentences longer than 5 words” then that would be self-refuting since it falsifies itself. Bill argues that objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God are all self-refuting.

What is truth?

Craig holds that “truth” is a property of a proposition such that a proposition is true if it corresponds to the external world. For example, if I claim that there is a crocodile in your closet and we find a crocodile in your closet, then my statement was true. If there is no crocodile in your closet then my statement was false. The real objective world out there is what makes propositional claims true or false – these are not claims about an individual’s preferences, they are claims about the world. Bill is concerned with truth claims about God that are objective – whether there are propositions about God that are true regardless of what anyone thinks.

Are there objective truths about God?

Bill discusses 3 objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God. Each objection seeks to make religion subjective, (true for each person, like food preferences or clothing fashion).

Objection #1:The Challenge of Verificationism

The first challenge is that religious claims cannot be verified using the 5 senses, and therefore religious statements are objectively meaningless.

Consider the statement “Only propositions that can be verified with the 5 senses are meaningful”. That statement cannot be verified with the 5 senses. If the statement is true, it makes itself meaningless. It’s self-refuting.

Objection #2: The Challenge of Mystical Anti-Realism

The second challenge is that religious claims, and claims about God, are neither true nor false.

Consider the statement “Propositions about God cannot be true or false”. Craig asks – why should we accept that? Any reason given would have to assert something about God that is true or false, and those reasons would contradict the original statement. For example, “God is too great to be grasped by human categories of thought” is a proposition about God that the speaker thinks is true, which contradicts the original assertion.

Objection #3: The Challenge of Radical Pluralism

The third challenge is that each person invents an entire reality of their own, and that there is no mind-independent objective world shared by individuals.

Consider the statement “There is no objective reality shared by all individuals”. That statement is a statement that applies to all individuals, regardless of what they think. It’s self-refuting.

Conclusion

Craig ends the lecture by arguing that it is OK for Christians to think that other people’s views are false. It does not follow that just because someone thinks other people’s views are wrong that they am going to mistreat other people. In fact, in Christianity it is objectively true that it is good for Christians to love their enemies. It is objectively true that all human beings have value, because human beings are made by God. So even if Christians disagree with others, they still treat them well, because they think that there are moral truths that they have to conform to.

My thoughts

Sometimes, non-Christians think that it is dangerous to hold beliefs too strongly. But I think what really matters is the content of the belief – some beliefs are false and some are true – you want to believe the true beliefs as strongly as you can, as long as the evidence warrants it. In Christianity, I am absolutely obligated to treat people with whom I disagree with respect and gentleness (1 Pet 3:15-16). The more convinced I am about *that* belief, the *better* my opponents will be treated. A *stronger* belief in Christianity means *more* tolerance for those who disagree.

Why do non-Christians get so offended when Christians claim to be right about there being only one way to be rightly related to God? Well, for many it’s because their worldview is a personal preference, and they feel uncomfortable having to defend it rationally and evidentially. Christianity is different – we are used to having to defend our truth claims using evidence, because that is the core of the religion, and the example of the founder and his closest followers.

For most people, religion is just their cultural preference – like cooking style, or favorite sport, or clothing style. That’s why they respond to your truth claims with name-calling like “you’re intolerant” and “you’re judgemental” and “you’re arrogant”. These are just shorthand ways of saying, “I’m offended that you think that what you believe is true and you think that what I believe is false”. They would never say that in a math classroom or a chemistry lab, where truth matters. But because they are coming to the discussion with the presupposition that religion is like clothing and diet preferences, they take everything

personally instead of treating religion as something objective, just like any other area of knowledge.

This problem of being offended by truth claims is especially common with people who are raised to think that their religion is a racial, national or cultural identity. They haven't thought anything through, or considered any alternatives, and they think that if you tell them they are wrong *on matters of fact* that somehow this amounts to some sort of racism, intolerance or prejudice. You make factual claims, and they hear discrimination. But that's not how Christians think of religion – we only care if it's true or not – just like we care whether the claims of history or science are true or not. For many non-Christians, religion is not about truth at all but about personal preferences – and they cannot understand why Christians say that they have to go to Hell for having the wrong personal preferences. You have to *tell them* that religion is about truth, and that people displease God because they don't know what is true, and they don't want to know what is true. Then they understand why you are disagreeing with them and you can have a conversation about what is true.

Would Hollywood environmentalists take Middle East oil profits to oppose fracking?

May 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, before you answer, you can watch this new video from Project Veritas.

And read this article from the liberal Hollywood Reporter about the sting.

Excerpt:

> James O'Keefe says he duped Ed Begley Jr. and Mariel Hemingway into agreeing to get involved with an anti-fracking movie while hiding that its funding comes from Middle Eastern oil interests.
>
> Journalist James O'Keefe, known for his controversial undercover sting operations aimed usually at liberals — is set to unveil at the Cannes Film Festival on Wednesday the first of a group of videos that he says will reveal hypocrisy among Hollywood environmentalists.
> In the video, obtained exclusively by The Hollywood Reporter and embedded below, actors Ed Begley Jr. and Mariel Hemingway are duped by a man named "Muhammad," who is looking to make an anti-fracking movie while hiding that its funding is coming from Middle Eastern oil interests.

> Muhammad, accompanied by a man pretending to be an ad executive, seemingly has the two actors agreeing to participate in the scheme, even after he acknowledges that his goal is to keep America from becoming energy independent. The meeting, which appears to have been secretly recorded, took place a few months ago at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

> But the real target of the sting operation appears to be Josh and Rebecca Tickell, a husband and wife team known for their environmental movies, such as 2008's Fuel, which won an award at Sundance and was later screened at the White House for members of President Obama's administration.
>
> Begley tells THR that if it looks like he's agreeing with faux Muhammad about anything, it's because the Tickells asked him to be polite so that they'd get their funding for a movie they're making calledFracked, a film that will argue a technique for extracting natural gas called fracking is bad for the environment. Also, Begley says that he is hard of hearing and couldn't understand everything Muhammad was saying.
>
> The video also includes some audio from phone conversations between the fake Muhammad's representatives and the Tickells. "We're confident that we can keep this zip-locked. You know, tight. Tight. Air-tight forever," Josh Tickell is heard saying. "If we don't protect who is kind of funding this thing … if we have to disclose that or that becomes a necessary part of it, the whole enterprise will

> not work."
>
> Rebecca Tickell adds: "Because if people think the film is funded by Middle Eastern oil it will, it will not have that credibility," and Josh Tickell says, "It's money, so in that sense we have no moral issue."

I always marvel at how liberals in Hollywood were able to get so much money from Americans at a time when we were a much more conservative, Christian nation. When you give money to Hollywood, you have to understand that you are transferring wealth to immoral, anti-American people. Is your entertainment worth that? How will you explain that to God when he asks you about your stewardship of what he entrusted you with? Your money is your voice in a culture war. Don't let someone else speak for you.

I watch maybe one movie a year in the theaters, and I don't have a TV, cable, or Netflix. If I buy anything, it will be some DVD like the BBC's "North and South" or the complete "Danger Man" with Patrick McGoohan. Why would I give some of the most immoral people in the world my money? How does that help?

Three cases where liberal tinkering with sexual ethics and marriage hurt children

May 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post by "Jane Galt" on Right Wing News highlights three cases where social liberals change the cultural rules around sex and marriage, and it ended up back-firing to hurt children. I will talk about one case below.

The case I want to talk about is the case of changing welfare laws.

Excerpt:

> To sketch a brief history of welfare, it emerged in the nineteenth century as "Widows and orphans pensions", which were paid by the state to destitute families whose breadwinner had passed away. They were often not available to blacks; they were *never* available to unwed mothers. Though public services expanded in the first half of the twentieth century, that mentality was very much the same: public services were about supporting unfortunate *families*, not unwed mothers. Unwed mothers could not, in most cases, obtain welfare; they were not allowed in public housing (which was supposed to be–and was–a way station for young, struggling families on the way to homeownership, not a permanent abode); they were otherwise discriminated against by social services. The help you could expect from society was a home for wayward girls, in which you would give birth and then put the baby up for adoption.
>
> […]Now, in the late fifties, a debate began over whether to extend benefits to the unmarried. **It was unfair to stigmatise unwed mothers.** Why shouldn't they be able to avail themselves of the benefits available to other citizens? The brutal societal prejudice against illegitimacy was old fashioned, bigoted, irrational.
>
> But if you give unmarried mothers money, said the critics, you will get more unmarried mothers.
>
> *"Ridiculous"*, said the proponents of the change. "B*eing an unmarried mother is a brutal, thankless task. What kind of idiot would have a baby out of wedlock just because the state was willing to give her paltry welfare benefits?"*
>
> People do all sorts of idiotic things, said the critics. If you pay for something, you usually get more of it.
>
> *"C'mon"* said the activists. "*That's just silly. I just can't imagine anyone deciding to get pregnant out of wedlock simply because there are welfare benefits available."*
>
> Oooops.
>
> Of course, change didn't happen overnight. But the marginal cases did have children out of wedlock, which made it more acceptable for the next marginal case to do so. Meanwhile, women who wanted to get married essentially found

> themselves in competition for young men with women who were willing to have sex, and bear children, without forcing the men to take any responsibility. This is a pretty attractive proposition for most young men. So despite the fact that the sixties brought us the biggest advance in birth control *ever*, illegitimacy exploded. In the early 1960s, a black illegitimacy rate of roughly 25 percent caused Daniel Patrick Moynihan to write a tract warning of a crisis in "the negro family" (a tract for which he was eviscerated by many of those selfsame activists.)
>
> By 1990, that rate was over 70 percent. This, despite the fact that the inner city, where the illegitimacy problem was biggest, only accounts for a fraction of the black population.
>
> But in that inner city, marriage had been *destroyed*. It had literally ceased to exist in any meaningful way.

So what went wrong? Why did people with some good intentions achieve such bad results?

This went wrong:

> Why would a woman choose such a hard road? It seemed self-evident that the only unwed mothers claiming benefits would be the ones pushed there by terrible circumstance.
>
> This argument is compelling and logical. I would never become an unwed welfare mother, even if benefits were a great deal higher than they are now. It seems crazy to even suggest that one would bear a child out of wedlock for $567 a month. Indeed, to this day, I find the reformist side much more persuasive than the conservative side, except for one thing, which is that the conservatives turned out to be right. In fact, they turned out to be even more right than they suspected; they were predicting upticks in illegitimacy that were much more modest than what actually occurred–they expected marriage rates to suffer, not collapse.
>
> How did people go so badly wrong? Well, to start with, they fell into the basic fallacy that economists are so well acquainted with: they thought about themselves instead of the marginal case. For another, they completely failed to realise that each additional illegitimate birth would, in effect, slightly destigmatise the next one. They assigned men very little agency, failing to predict that women willing to forgo marriage would essentially become unwelcome competition for women who weren't, and that as the numbers changed, that competition might push the marriage market towards unwelcome outcomes. They failed to forsee the confounding effect that the birth control pill would have on sexual mores.
>
> But I think the core problems are two. The first is that they looked only at individuals, and took instititutions as a given. That is, they looked at all the

> cultural pressure to marry, and assumed that that would be a countervailing force powerful enough to overcome the new financial incentives for out-of-wedlock births. They failed to see the institution as dynamic. It wasn't a simple matter of two forces: cultural pressure to marry, financial freedom not to, arrayed against eachother; those forces had a complex interplay, and when you changed one, you changed the other.
>
> The second is that they didn't assign any cultural reason for, or value to, the stigma on illegitimacy. They saw it as an outmoded vestige of a repressive Victorial values system, based on an unnatural fear of sexuality. But the stigma attached to unwed motherhood has quite logical, and important, foundations: having a child without a husband is bad for children, and bad for mothers, and thus bad for the rest of us. So our culture made it very costly for the mother to do. Lower the cost, and you raise the incidence. As an economist would say, incentives matter.

Incentives matter. We don't want to encourage people to do harmful, costly things and hurt children in the name of "compassion".

But let's get back to the bigger issue.

When you hear a person arguing for "compassion" for people who make immoral decisions, you should understand that they are arguing that moral boundaries on costly behavior be lifted. The costs that result from bad behavior are shifted from those who sin to those who don't. The compassion crowd likes to cite one or two cases where someone is a genuine victim – but that is not the issue. The issue is the general case, and the incentives created that cause people on the margins to change their behavior. The word compassion should really be understood to mean "the act of saying that wrong is right, and covering up the damage for wrong actions with someone else's money, taken from them by force". That's compassion, and it is celebrated in the feminized church as *very* Biblical. It's nothing of the kind. This is not about judging people, it's about helping people to avoid making mistakes that impoverish us all and harm the most vulnerable among us. We should not be encouraging irresponsible, selfish, immoral behavior and calling it "compassion".

Marriage is a good thing that protects children, who are very much in need of protection. We shouldn't be messing with it just so that we grown-ups can do things that make us feel good. Children are more important, because they are more vulnerable.

Darrell Bock interviews the leaders of Princeton's largest Christian campus group

May 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I really like this really nice 31-minute video podcast because it echoes the problems I hear from young people who lost their faith after going off to college. This is definitely something that is on my mind and part of my life-plan – the troubles that college students face on campus when trying to live out authentic Christian lives.

Details:

> In this episode, Dr. Darrell Bock, Matt Bennett and Tim Adhikari discuss cultural engagement on college campuses, focusing on the ministry of Christian Union and intellectual challenges facing Christian students at Princeton University.
>
> 00:13 The growth of Christian Union?s ministry at Princeton
> 05:13 The importance of Christian students connecting each other
> 07:22 Advice for parents and pastors preparing students to enter college
> 11:27 Introducing students to challenges before they arrive on campus
> 14:32 Key challenges: Sexual ethics, Historical Jesus and the Resurrection
> 15:52 What is the nature of the "Faith buster" course at Princeton?
> 21:56 Religious Pluralism and the New Atheism at Princeton
> 25:51 Personal autonomy and sexual pressures at Princeton

The key point is that students need to land in a Christian group at campus where they can work out the issues they will face. And the second point is for parents to ENSURE that the kids are prepared for the questions and pressures they will face in college. Probably one of the most important things to prepare a child with is a vision for their own marriage and how to get there. Not just "the Bible says" but a serious engagement with the research on the hook-up culture, divorce, fatherlessness, homosexuality and so on. It's not *just* apologetics. It's the whole worldview – including things like climate change, economics, and so on.

Jay Richards: why should Christians learn about economics?

May 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s a good basic introduction to the free enterprise system by Dr. Jay Richards:

In this lecture, Dr. Richards covers the following topics:

- the piety myth – thinking that good intentions matter more than good results
- the greed myth – thinking that capitalism is about greed instead of about innovation and serving others
- the zero sum game myth – thinking that voluntary exchanges between buyers and sellers result in win-lose outcomes
- the materialist myth – thinking that there is only a set amount of wealth to be divided by competition

It turns out that the best system for lifting the poor out of poverty – by work or charity – is the economic system that creates wealth through human ingenuity and hard work. That system is the free enterprise system.

Libertarian blogger endorses Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker in 2016

May 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

Here's the post from Liberty Without Apologies blog. (H/T Well Spent Journey)

Excerpt:

> I believe Scott Walker is the best possible candidate for the Republican 2016 election. I have believed this since before I moved to Wisconsin, and living here has solidified that belief.
>
> I understand that Rand Paul is by far the most popular candidate for libertarians. I lived in Kentucky during Rand Paul's primary fight against McConnell toady Trey Greyson, although I stayed home, as he was dominating in the polls. I did vote for him for Senate. I'm proud of my former Senator (I have since moved to Wisconsin, which has a conservative Tea Partier and a Marxist lesbian in the Senate) and think he's doing a fine job.

He lists five reasons why he likes Walker.

Here are the first three:

> 1. Competence matters as much as ideology. I remember when Democrats enthusiastically elected a charismatic, ideological liberal with almost no real experience running anything. He then proceeded to screw up one of the most important left-wing issues so badly that Democrats barely even want to say the word "healthcare" anymore, let alone make you extravagant promises about it. Obama's self-defeating hubris is the only reason we have a chance in 2016. If Obamacare had been a smartly devised system of creeping bribes like Medicare was, the fight would be over. Ideologically, I like Rand Paul, but I have simply no reason whatsoever to believe he would be a competent executive. He's a risky unknown, and the Presidency is too important. If he turns out to be incompetent, four years of an incompetent executive ensures the liberty movement will be

> finished for years as a voice in the Republican Party and in American politics as a whole. **Scott Walker's proven he can establish the kind of record that makes limited government more popular, not less. We're not talking about Chris Christie's progressive Republicanism. We're talking about a guy whose signature accomplishments are cutting off public employee unions and balancing the budget.**
>
> 2. Institutions matter. **If there's one thing that characterizes Scott Walker's tenure as governor, it's disarming, defanging, and throttling institutions that serve as the source and foundation of left-wing power. We don't just need someone who likes capitalism and freedom in the White House. We need someone who understands how the institution of government has been turned into a tool for destroying the right and creating reliable, government-worshiping, Democrat voters. I know Scott Walker understands this, because he's made it central to his agenda while governor. And I know he doesn't just understand it, he knows how to do it.**
>
> 3. The federal bureaucracy has metastasized. Scott Walker has an army of boring, pudgy, bespectacled guys quietly doing everything they can to undermine and confound the progressive agenda at state bureaucracies. He knows who to get the right people doing the grunt work of reforming government. **The greatest enemies a Republican President will face are the permanent employees in executive branch agencies, not Congressional Democrats. The petty functionaries that weaponized the IRS are smart, they are vicious, and they will fight. I know Walker knows they need to be fought, and I know that he knows how to win, because he's winning his fights here in Wisconsin.** I'd have more faith in Rand Paul if he'd been the governor of Kentucky and successfully fought the public school establishment or something, but he hasn't been, so I don't have it. Making speeches on the Senate floor is important, but it's not the same as going through the laborious grind of cleaning out a bureaucracy that's metastasized and is feeding on the body politic. Paul is probably more ideologically libertarian than Walker, but Walker's won as many battles against government as you could hope to get out of any governor.

I think that in 2016 we should be looking at candidates who will take the fight to the Democrats. We don't need another Mitt Romney. I want to see a candidate who sticks his neck out for what he believes in and comes out on top. Real accomplishments, this time. Not rhetoric. Why do we always have to care what our opponents think of us? Why not just beat them up and then be magnanimous in victory? If he runs for President on the platform of zeroing out manufacturing income tax, he will win. Every union worker will vote for him.

During the Christmas vacation, I read governor Walker's new book, which was a

Christmas present from my friend ECM. If you want to learn more about governor Walker, I recommend picking that up. I actually got the audio version, and it's read by governor Walker himself.

Frankly, there is only one person running in 2016 right now who destroys government, and it's Walker. I want to see them out of a job, or with their salaries and benefits chopped. No mercy. Walker is the man who can do it, because he's done it. Over and over and over again.

Related posts

- Wisconsin House passes Scott Walker's tax cut bill, headed to governor's desk
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- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues
- Democrat lawmakers flee state to avoid voting on spending cuts

Should pro-marriage activists give up in the face of judicial activism?

May 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from Ryan T. Anderson in National Review provides leadership.

Excerpt:

> In the short run, the legal battle over the definition of marriage may be an uphill struggle. But in the long run, those who defend marriage as the union of a man and woman will prove to be prophetic. First, because when people do hear a compelling case for marriage, they respond accordingly. And second, because the logic of marriage redefinition ultimately leads to the dissolution of marriage into nothing more than a social mess of consenting adult love of manifold sizes and shapes.
>
> Those who defend — and live out — the truth about marriage should redouble their efforts to witness to the truth about marriage while there is still time to steer clear of that chaos. Here are six ways to do that.

I just chose one way of his six ways to quote in this post.

Here is way #3: make the case for marriage:

> These religious-liberty protections are more likely to be respected if the underlying view about marriage is at least understood. Much of the opposition to Arizona's recent religious-liberty legislation wasn't directed at religious liberty per se but at misunderstood — sadly, at times intentionally misrepresented — concerns about being forced to celebrate same-sex relationships as marriages.
>
> We will be most successful in protecting our rights to free speech, contract, association, and exercise of religion if we also make the reasonable case for marriage. Even if the Court or political powers force the redefinition of marriage, much of the future hinges on public opinion.
>
> The key question is whether those who favor marriage redefinition will view — and thus treat — their dissenting fellow citizens as, in the words of Justice Scalia, "enemies of the human race," or instead treat us as they do the pro-life movement. While liberal elites disagree with the pro-life position, they can at least understand it. And they can understand why a pro-life citizen holds the views she does and why government thus shouldn't coerce citizens into performing or subsidizing abortions.
>
> We therefore must do the work to make our fellow citizens at least understand why we believe what we do about marriage. Even if they continue steadfast in their convictions, they may at least see the reasonableness of ours. For too many of our neighbors, our beliefs about marriage are equated with the late Fred

Phelps of Westboro Baptist infamy. If he's the only voice they've heard on the issue, it's hard to blame them. We must work harder so that they hear our voices.

All of us must be engaged in making the case for marriage. Roughly two years ago, Sherif Girgis, Robby George, and I finished working on the book that Alito cited, *What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*. In that book we argued that there were two competing views of *what marriage is* that were in play in our national debates, and we made a philosophical argument that the conjugal view of marriage was correct, and the revisionist view false.

The *conjugal* view of marriage, we argued, has long informed the law — along with the literature, art, philosophy, religion, and social practice — of our civilization. So understood, marriage is a comprehensive union. It unites spouses at all levels of their being: hearts, minds, and bodies, where man and woman form a two-in-one-flesh union. It is based on the anthropological truth that men and women are distinct and complementary, on the biological fact that reproduction requires a man and a woman, and on the sociological reality that children benefit from having a mother and a father. As the act that unites spouses can also create new life, marriage is especially apt for procreation and family life. Uniting spouses in these all-encompassing ways, marriage calls for all-encompassing commitment: permanent and exclusive.

The state cares about marriage because of marriage's connection with children and its ability to unite children with their mother and father. After all, whenever a baby is born, there is always a mother nearby: That is a fact of reproductive biology. The question for law and culture is whether a father will be involved in the life of that child and, if so, for how long. Marriage increases the odds that a man will be committed both to the children that he helps create and to the woman with whom he does so. Marriage, rightly understood, brings together the two halves of humanity (male and female) in a monogamous relationship. Husband and wife pledge to each other to be faithful by vows of permanence and exclusivity. Marriage provides children with a relationship with the man and the woman who made them.

The *revisionist* view, on the other hand, has informed certain marriage-policy changes of the past several decades and is embodied in much of Hollywood's productions. On the revisionist understanding, marriage is essentially an emotional union, accompanied by any consensual sexual activity the partners may desire. Such romantic unions are seen as valuable while the emotion lasts. The revisionist view informs some male-female bonds, not just same-sex ones, as both involve intense emotional bonding, so both can (on this view) make a marriage.

But comprehensive union, we argue, is something only a man and woman can form. For this reason, enacting same-sex marriage would not expand the institution of marriage, but redefine it. Finishing what policies like “no-fault” divorce began, and thus entrenching them, it would finally replace the conjugal view with the revisionist emotion-based account. This would multiply the marriage revolution’s moral and cultural spoils, and make them harder than ever to recover.

Most Americans are unaware that there are two competing visions of marriage on offer in this debate, but my experience on dozens of college campuses during the past year suggests there is hope here. On almost every campus I visited, including such elite law schools as Stanford and NYU, students came up to me afterward to say that they had never heard a rational case for marriage. Christians would say that they always knew marriage was between a man and a woman, but never knew how to defend it as a policy and legal matter — that they knew what the Bible revealed and the church taught, but lacked a vocabulary for articulating what God had written on the heart. Now they could better explain how faith and reason went together; how theology and philosophy, the Bible and social science all pointed to the same truth.

Reassuring these students is crucially important. Simply preventing those who do affirm that marriage is the union of a man and a woman from internalizing doubt, from cowering in shame in the face of aggressive opposition, or ultimately from caving is essential.

So, too, is helping those who haven’t made up their minds see that this is a debate with competing reasonable positions. Some are genuinely on the fence, and we should do what we can to keep them from coming down on the wrong side. Indeed, my co-authors and I have received dozens of notes over the past year from people who decided to come down on the right side because of some aspect of our case for marriage.

While we may not be able to convert the committed advocates for same-sex marriage, we should seek to soften their resolve to eliminate us from polite society. Indeed, on campus after campus, students who identified as liberal would admit that this was the first time they had heard a rational case for marriage. They would tell me that they respected the argument — and frequently weren’t sure why it was wrong, even when they continued to insist that it was wrong. Winning over these students so that they will at least respect our religious-liberty rights is essential. We do that, in part, by explaining the reasons for our beliefs about marriage.

And yet there are naysayers who claim that rational arguments never convince anyone. There is something perverse in conservatives’ thinking that ideas have

> consequences but that good ideas can’t persuade. They can, if only we are willing to present them in a winsome manner. In the long run truth wins out.

It’s a long post, but if you are serious about doing something on this issue, then it’s worth a read. Anderson is one of the most articulate, prolific defenders of marriage operating today.

Chris Sinkinson debates John Hick on religious pluralism and salvation

May 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Looks like Justin Brierley on the Unbelievable radio show found a pastor with a Ph.D in philosophy, and he can really whip some ass. And that's a good thing, because he is taking on one of the two leading proponents of religious pluralism, in my opinion, (the other being Paul Knitter).

The players:

> John Hick is a noted philosopher and theologian who is a proponent of a pluralist view of religion – that there is one light (God) but many lampshades (religious expressions).
>
> Chris Sinkinson is a pastor and Bible tutor who has critiqued Hick's work. He says that pluralism empties Christianity of any content and in its own way disrespects other religions more than his own exclusivist stance.

The MP3 file is here.

Justin does a great job as moderator of this debate. He said what I was thinking of saying a number of times during the debate.

Anyway, here is my snarky summary. I creatively paraphrase some of the things that Hick says to make it more clear. And funny.

—-

Hick:
– had an experience looking at the buildings of other religions
– other religions have buildings, so all religions are equal
– I spent some time in the East, and met nice Eastern people
– since Eastern people are nice that means all religions are equal

Justin:
– isn't Jesus' claim to be the exclusive path to salvation offensive?

Sinkinson:
– all religions that are exclusive and have to deal with religious pluralism
– even John Hick writes polemically in favor of his own view
– even John Hick thinks that religions that are exclusive are false

Justin:
– what about the blind man and the elephant?
– the story seems to say that other people have a partial grasp?
– but the story-teller himself has the privileged view
– so isn't the religious pluralist just as arrogant as exclusivists?

Hick:

– well, it’s not arrogant to claim to have the right answer
– Jesus never made the claim to be God incarnate
– Jesus never made the claim to be the exclusive path to God
– historians don’t think that John’s gospel is reliable because it is late
– the proclamation of exclusivity was added by evangelists much later

Sinkinson:
– the historians who doubt the high Christology are radical skeptics
– the mainstream of historical scholarship accepts a high Christology
– the EARLIEST history about Jesus has the highest Christology

Hick:
– the moderate scholars do think Jesus was divine but that he didn’t think he was divine
– the phrase “Son of God” was used to describe any remarkable person
– only later did the early church turn the generic term into “God the Son”

Sinkinson:
– there is reflection on Jesus’ identity and developments, but not invention
– Jesus and his followers were in trouble precisely for linking him to deity
– why else would Jesus get into trouble and get crucified?

Hick:
– the Romans crucified him because people were saying he was the Messiah
– but the Messiah was not identified as being divine, but political
– and that’s why the Romans crucified him

Justin:
– do you (Sinkinson) think that people in other religions can be saved?

Sinkinson:
– the traditional view is exclusivism
– the other world religions are logically contradictory with Christianity
– you have to respect their differences – they are not the same as Christianity
– exclusivists allow that people can be saved by responding to natural theology
– and there are also other cases where non-Christians are saved, like old testament saints and babies who die in infancy

Hick:
– but people’s religions are based on where they are born
– so it’s not fair for God to expect people to be saved in one religion only

Sinkinson:
– the plurality of religions grouped by location doesn’t make christianity false
– that would be the genetic fallacy – rejecting an idea because of its origin
– the real question to consider is whether it is true
– and even the objection assumes that God is a God of love, who should be fair
– but how do you know that God is loving? that is an exclusive view
– how can the “blob” ultimate of religious pluralism be “loving” and “fair”

Hick:

– the ultimate reality is loving or not loving depending on each person's religion

Sinkinson:
– but some religions and theistic and some are atheistic
– how can those God exist and not exist?

Hick:
– God is beyond everyone's understanding, except mine
– God is beyond all definitions, except mine
– God is beyond all human understanding, except mine
– i'm not contradicting myself, it's a mystery! a mystery!
– as long as you don't look to closely, they're all the same!
– allow me to tell you about God, which no one can do but me

Justin:
– doesn't your religious pluralism mean that Christianity is false?

Hick:
– well, Christianity can't be true, because it disagrees with other religions
– Christianity can't falsify other religions, that would be mean to them
– other religions are just as "profound" as Christianity – and that's what matters – not whether a religion makes true claims
– some religions are older than Christianity, that means they can't be disagreed with
– we can't let Christianity be true, because then some people will feel bad
– if people feel bad, then they don't like me and then I feel bad
– if there's one thing I know about the unknowable ultimate reality, it's that it wants me to be liked by lots of people

Sinkinson:
– your view seems to be agnosticism – that nothing can be known about the "ultimate real"
– if we can't express in words what God is like, then why are you saying what God is like?

Hick:
– the indescribable ultimate is described (falsely, but interestingly) by various tradition

Sinkinson:
– does the "ultimate real" exist?

Hick:
– no

Justin:
– are all the exclusive religions wrong, and only you are right?

Hick:
– all propositions about God in all the religions are false
– the experience of being deluded and having feelings about your delusions is "valid" in all religions
– all religions are equally good ways to believe false things and to have feelings about

your false beliefs
– only my propositions about God are true
– everyone who disagrees with me is wrong

Sinkinson:
– so all the propositions of all the religions are wrong
– but all the experiences and feelings are “right”

Hick:
– yes
– all propositions about God are humanly constructed, and so false
– except mine – mine are true!

Sinkinson:
– so everything distinctive about Christianity are literally false?

Hick:
– yes, Christian doctrines are all false
– because if they were true, other religions would be false, and they would feel bad
– and we can’t have that, because everyone has to like me
– only things that don’t offend people in other religions can be true

Sinkinson:
– so do we have to then treat all religions as non-propositional?

Hick:
– well just don’t ask people about the content of their beliefs
– just treat their religion as non-cognitive rituals, feelings and experiences
– don’t inquire too deeply into it, because all religions are all nonsense
– i’m very respectful and tolerant of different religions!

Sinkinson:
– but Muslims, for example, think their religion is making truth claims

Hick:
– but there can be tolerance as long as you treat religions as non-propositional nonsense

Sinkinson:
– um, I have a higher respect for religions than you do
– I actually consider that the claims of other religions could be true
– I think that other religions make truth claims and not nonsense claims

Hick:
– well they are all useful because they are all false
– I don’t emphasize beliefs, I emphasize living, experiences and feelings
– as long as everyone accepts my view and rejects their religion, we’ll all be tolerant

Justin:
– erm, isn’t that an exclusive claim?
– you’re trying to say that your view of what religion is is right, and everyone else is wrong

Hick:
– I'm not arrogant, I just think that all the religions of the worlds are false
– only my statements about religion are true – everyone else is wrong
– I'm tolerant, and Christians are arrogant

Justin:
– but you think Sinkinson's view is wrong
– why should we accept your view and deny his view?

Hick:
– His view of salvation is false, and mine is true

Sinkinson:
– you use words with set meanings, but you mean completely different things
– when I say salvation, I mean deliverance from sins through Jesus

Hick:
– I get to decide what salvation means for everyone, you intolerant bigot

Sinkinson:
– but that word has a specific meaning that has held true in all of Christian history
– but what you mean by salvation is people having subjective delusions that are not true

Hick:
– I don't like using the word salvation

Sinkinson:
– but you just used it!
– and you think that it is present in different world religions, but it isn't

Hick:
– God is unknowable and indescribable
– God isn't a wrathful God though
– and the Christian description of God is false
– Evangelical Christians are mean
– I had experiences with people of other faiths
– and these experiences taught me that religions that think that the universe is eternal are true
– as long as you reduce religion to behaviors and not truth, then religions are all good at producing behaviors
– if you just treat all religions as clothing fashion and food customs, they are all valid
– the main point of religion is for people to agree on cultural conventions and stick to them
– never mind the propositional statements of religions… who cares about truth? not me!
– but Christianity is definitely false

Sinkinson:
– the Judeo-Christian God is different – he reveals himself to humans
– he is distinct from the other religions

– he is personal, and is loving but also angry at sin

Hick:
– But God isn’t a person, and he isn’t a non-person
– I can’t say what he is – I’ll offend someone if I say anything at all!
– except Christians – I can offend them because they are arrogant bigots
– I’m also very spiritual – I meditate on my breathing

Sinkinson:
– you can’t assess a religion by the experiences that people have
– people who have weird experiences do all kinds of evil things
– so the real question has to be about truth – is the New Testament reliable?, etc.

William Lane Craig: churches should focus on apologetics to attract more men

May 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Triablogue quoted this passage from William Lane Craig's April 2013 newsletter, which made me very excited and happy.

Here it is:

> One overwhelming impression of these engagements is the way in which the intellectual defense of Christian faith attracts men. Both at Texas A&M and again at Miami every single student who got up to ask a question was a guy! I wondered if the girls are just shy. But then I remembered a lengthy clip Jan and I watched of cast members of Downton Abbey doing a Q&A with an audience in New York. Almost every person who came to the microphone at that event was a woman! It wasn't until late into the evening that a man finally asked a question, which was remarked by all the cast members. Why the difference between that session and the ones I experienced?—simply because the Downton Abbey program is highly relational, which is more appealing to women, whereas my talks were principally intellectually oriented, which is more appealing to men.
>
> Churches have difficulty attracting men, and the church is becoming increasingly feminized. I believe that apologetics is a key to attracting large numbers of men (as well as women) to church and to Christ. By presenting rational arguments and historical evidences for the truth of the Gospel, by appealing to the mind as well as the heart, we can bring a great influx of men into the Kingdom. I'm so pleased that the church in Canada seems to be awakening to this challenge! I'm convinced that we have the opportunity to revolutionize Western Christianity by reclaiming our intellectual heritage.

I could tell you many, many stories of what it was like for me being shut down by churches who were overly sensitive to the desires of women. In college, I and the other male students had *every attempt* to bring in scholars to lecture or debate *shut down* by female leadership. Every single week it was prayer walks, testimonies, hymn sings… over and over. Eventually, the more manly Christians just quit going. Later on, I witnessed apologetics being shut down in the church from the top down and from the bottom up, as well.

I remember one week an excited male friend invited me to his church because his male pastor was giving sermons using Hugh Ross and Gerald Shroeder books. He was trying to tie in the existence of God to cosmology. Well, I showed up the next Sunday to hear, and was disappointed. I could tell that the pastor wanted to go back to that subject, but he never really did. Later on, we found out that a female parishioner had complained that too much science and evidence had ruined her experience of feeling good and being

comforted.

I could go on and on and on telling stories like this. To this day, I cannot stand being in a church unless that church has organized things like apologetic training classes, public lectures, public debates or public conferences. But that's the minority of churches. The fact is that churches are attended far more by women than by men, and pastors are catering to women more than men. Not only will apologetics not be mentioned, but elements of feminism will creep into doctrine (egalitarianism) and all political issues will be avoided. Church has become a place to have good feelings, and it is far divorced from anything like evidence or politics which might be viewed as judgmental and divisive.

Commenters on Triablogue think that Dr. Craig will draw flak for his comment, but he's not going to draw flak from mature Christians. What he said is correct. Mature Christians are right behind him on this point. Christian men who have tried to act to defend God's reputation in public know that there is something wrong in the churches. And eventually, men just tune out of church because we know that there is nothing there for us. If women want men to come back to church, then they have to change the church away from what it is now.

William Lane Craig on the feminization of Christianity

May 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Look, here is a question on the Reasonable Faith web site from a feminist from Canada who objects to the idea of sex differences:

> Dear Dr. Craig,
>
> I have usually found your words to be a source of information and reassurance in my Christian faith, and have often sought out your writings and videos in times of doubt or questioning.
>
> So I was really disappointed, almost shocked, when I read your newsletter of April of this year in which you casually stereotypes men and women, and complain that the church is becoming increasingly feminized, and has difficulties in attracting men.
>
> Your compared the audiences at a couple of your speaking engagements to the audience from a clip of a Downton Abbey Q&A at another location – concluding that they were all men at the former and almost all women at the latter "simply because the Downton Abbey program is highly relational, which is more appealing to women, whereas my talks were principally intellectually oriented, which is more appealing to men."
>
> I believe that you are using stereotypes here, which you justify by making a ridiculous comparison that holds zero statistical significance. Not only is your statement unreasonable, it is potentially damaging – especially when made so carelessly. Stereotypes are shortcuts in classifying people. They can, and often do, limit and distort the way we perceive others and the world. Stereotypes are a lazy way of thinking that can lead to discrimination, and their use should not be encouraged.
>
> I'm also a little disturbed by your claim regarding the feminisation of the church. What do you mean by that, and how do you support that statement?
>
> I'm curious because the church has historically been a largely male-dominated institution (sometimes criminally so), and the bible's instructions to and about women are often difficult to swallow. If anything, the church has had difficulty in attracting women. And if we are truly seeing more women in leadership roles at the church (I have to assume this is what you meant by feminizing), I believe this is not something to fear and resist. It would be a welcome change, and has every opportunity to challenge how we think about each other – allowing us to love each other better and see each other more clearly.
>
> This newsletter called your expertise in some areas into question for me. Could you help to rebuild some of the faith I've lost in your words? I would very much

> appreciate it.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Alexandra (Canada)

Canadians are sooooo liberal, especially on social issues like feminism, abortion and marriage. I'm sure this woman has been influenced by feminist ideology so much that she just can't deal with the fact that men are women are very different.

Anyway, here's a snip of Dr. Craig's response:

> Third is my claim that the church is becoming increasingly feminized. What I mean by this is that church services and programs are increasingly based on emotional and relational factors that appeal more to women than to men. The problem of the church's lack of appeal to men has been recognized by men's movements like Promise Keepers and books like John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart*. Nowhere is this feminization more evident than in contemporary worship music. Someone aptly remarked that if you were to replace references to God in many praise songs with "Baby," they would sound just like romantic songs between a man and a woman! This is not true of classic hymns like "A Mighty Fortress" or "And Can It be?" Talking with young men, I find that many of them are just turned off by these touchy-feely worship services and would rather not go.
>
> We see this same feminization though relational factors in network coverage of sports, traditionally a male bastion. Coverage of Olympic Games has deliberately targeted women in order to increase viewership by the addition of personal stories about athletes' lives, rather than simply televising the events themselves. In professional sports have you noticed how in recent years television networks have engaged female reporters to go down on the field and interview baseball or football players, usually about how they *felt* about this or that? Jan and I had to laugh when, following the Broncos' recent blowout of the Ravens, the female reporter asked Peyton Manning, "Didn't you feel bad for the other team when you looked up at the scoreboard?" Uh, I don't think so!
>
> You're right that the predominance of women in Christianity is a relatively new phenomenon. It is only over the last 200 years that Christianity has become increasingly female in its demographics. I'm very worried that the church is on a course that will end in relatively few men's being active Christians.
>
> Fourth is my claim that apologetics is a key to making the church and Christian faith relevant to men once more. People think that by having sports programs or men's barbecues the church will draw in more men. But I'm convinced that the best kept secret to drawing in men is apologetics. Men need to see that Jesus of Nazareth was not only a tough guy but a smart guy. I never suspected that apologetics would have this special effect on men. I had no intention of ministering particularly to men in this ministry. But the appeal of apologetics to men is just undeniable. In my Defenders class we've got guys who don't even

> attend church but who regularly come for my lectures on Christian doctrine and apologetics. One woman in the class told me, “I don’t understand a lot of what you say. But I’m glad to come because this is the only spiritual activity that my husband will participate in with me.” Wow!

Wow, indeed. Apologetics gets men to engage more in Christianity, and the church should leverage that to bring men in. That’s a fact. So, I’m glad Dr Craig didn’t give an inch to this fact-averse feminist from Canada.

My own post critical of the feminized church can be read here. Keep in mind that this is from two months after I started blogging – very raw stuff.

Related posts

- William Lane Craig’s advice for balancing your career with your marriage
- Marriage advice from Christian philosopher William Lane Craig
- What motivates William Lane Craig and why is he so effective?
- How Bill’s wife Jan helped him to be a success

Christian woman tells Congress how Boko Haram murdered her father and brother

May 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the International Business Times. (H/T David Wood)

Excerpt:

> Her father and brother were martyrs for the Christian faith, a Nigerian girl who survived the Boko Haram slaughter of her family told members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Wednesday. Deborah Peter, 15, recounted surviving a 2011 attack on her hometown by Boko Haram terrorists.
>
> Peter is from Chibok, the northeast Nigerian town where close to 300 schoolgirls were taken captive in April by Boko Haram. She told U.S. House lawmakers how her brother and father were shot in front of her and the attackers put her between their dead bodies, threatening to kill her if she did not keep quiet.

There is a link to her statement before Congress, where you get the details:

> "At 7:30 p.m., three men knocked on the door. My brother answered the door because he recognized one of the men as a Muslim in our community. The men asked where my dad was and I told them that he was in the shower.
>
> The men waited. After three minutes, they went into the bathroom and dragged my dad into the main room. They said that my dad was wasting their time and that they did not have time to wait on him.
> The men told my dad that he should deny his Christian faith. My dad told them that he would not deny his faith. They said that if he did not deny his faith they were going to kill him. My dad refused, saying that Jesus said whoever acknowledges Him in front of man, He will acknowledge in front of God; and whoever denies Him in front of man, He will deny in front of God in heaven.
> My dad said that he would rather die than go to hellfire. After he told the men that, the men shot him three times in his chest.
>
> My brother was in shock. He started demanding, 'What did my dad do to you? Why did you shoot him?'
> The men told him to be quiet or else they were going to shoot him too. Then, the men discussed whether they should kill my brother. One of the Boko Harams said they should kill Caleb, my brother. The second man said that he was just a boy and that he was too young to kill. But the third man said that they should make an exception in this case because Caleb will only grow up to be a Christian pastor. Caleb asked me to plead with them for his life but they told me to shut up or they would kill me too.
>
> The leader agreed that they should kill him and shot my brother two times. My

> dad had still been breathing but when he saw them shoot Caleb, he died.

Now previously, the Obama administration had actually *blocked* the designation of Boko Haram as a terrorist group. Not just blocked, but fought hard to block, according to the leftist Daily Beast.

Look:

> The State Department under Hillary Clinton fought hard against placing the al Qaeda-linked militant group Boko Haram on its official list of foreign terrorist organizations for two years. And now, lawmakers and former U.S. officials are saying that the decision may have hampered the American government's ability to confront the Nigerian group that shocked the world by abducting hundreds of innocent girls.
>
> […]What Clinton didn't mention was that her own State Department refused to place Boko Haram on the list of foreign terrorist organizations in 2011, after the group bombed the U.N. headquarters in Abuja. The refusal came despite the urging of the Justice Department, the FBI, the CIA, and over a dozen senators and congressmen.
>
> "The one thing she could have done, the one tool she had at her disposal, she didn't use. And nobody can say she wasn't urged to do it. It's gross hypocrisy," said a former senior U.S. official who was involved in the debate. "The FBI, the CIA, and the Justice Department really wanted Boko Haram designated, they wanted the authorities that would provide to go after them, and they voiced that repeatedly to elected officials."
>
> In May 2012, then-Justice Department official Lisa Monaco (now at the White House) wrote to the State Department to urge Clinton to designate Boko Haram as a terrorist organization. The following month, Gen. Carter Ham, the chief of U.S. Africa Command, said that Boko Haram "are likely sharing funds, training, and explosive materials" with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. And yet, Hillary Clinton's State Department still declined to place Boko Haram on its official terrorist roster.

I guess Hillary was too busy pushing gay rights and abortion to notice threats of terrorism.

Previously, president Obama has spoken out in favor of Islam, as the Hindustan Times reported.

Excerpt:

> Islam is a great religion but there is a need to isolate those who have distorted its vision, US President Barack Obama told a gathering of college students, in Mumbai on Sunday.
>
> "Well, the phrase jehad has a lot of meanings within Islam. It is subject to lot of different interpretations. But I will say that first Islam is one of the world's great

> religions and over a billion people practice Islam," Obama said at the packed forecourt of St. Xavier's College here.

You can read more about the great religion of peace in this story of a woman who is 8 months pregnant and shackled in a jail cell for the crime of being a Christian.

Her imprisonment is happening because of the Muslim government of Sudan. This pregnant Christian woman is scheduled to be executed by the Sudanese government for not being a Muslim, which they think she ought to be. I honestly do not understand how you can look at a pregnant woman who has a husband and another child and want to take her life. Just because she has different beliefs than you do. To me, it's not possible to do that, morally speaking. But to the mainstream adherents of the religion of peace in the Sudanese government, it somehow makes a lot of sense.

Are biological fathers or unrelated men more dangerous for children?

May 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the Weekly Standard answers the question.

Excerpt:

> A March 1996 study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics contains some interesting findings that indicate just how widespread the problem may be. In a nationally representative survey of state prisoners jailed for assaults against or murders of children, fully one-half of respondents reported the victim was a friend, acquaintance, or relative other than offspring. (All but 3 percent of those who committed violent crimes against children were men.) A close relationship between victim and victimizer is also suggested by the fact that three-quarters of all the crimes occurred in either the perpetrator's home or the victim's.
>
> A 1994 paper published in the Journal of Comparative Family Studies looked at 32,000 documented cases of child abuse. Of the victims, only 28 percent lived with both biological parents (far fewer than the 68 percent of all children who live with both parents); 44 percent lived with their mother only (as do 25 percent of all children); and 18 percent lived with their mother and an unrelated adult (double the 9 percent of all children who live with their mother and an unrelated adult).
>
> These findings mirror a 1993 British study by the Family Education Trust, which meticulously explored the relationship between family structure and child abuse. Using data on documented cases of abuse in Britain between 1982 and 1988, the report found a high correlation between child abuse and the marital status of the parents.
>
> Specifically, the British study found that the incidence of abuse was an astounding 33 times higher in homes where the mother was cohabiting with an unrelated boyfriend than in stable nuclear families. Even when the boyfriend was the children's biological father, the chances of abuse were twice as high.
>
> These findings are consonant with those published a year earlier by Leslie Margolin of the University of Iowa in the journal Child Abuse and Neglect. Prof. Margolin found that boyfriends were 27 times more likely than natural parents to abuse a child. The next-riskiest group, siblings, were only twice as likely as parents to abuse a child.
>
> More recently, a report by Dr. Michael Stiffman presented at the latest meeting of the American Academy of Pediatrics, in October, studied the 175 Missouri children under the age of 5 who were murdered between 1992 and 1994. It found that the risk of a child's dying at the hands of an adult living in the child's own

> household was eight times higher if the adult was biologically unrelated.
>
> The Heritage Foundation's Patrick Fagan discovered that the number of child-abuse cases appeared to rise in the 1980s along with the general societal acceptance of cohabitation before, or instead of, marriage. That runs counter to the radical-feminist view, which holds that marriage is an oppressive male institution of which violence is an integral feature. If that were true, then child abuse and domestic violence should have decreased along with the rise in cohabitation.
>
> Heritage also found that in the case of very poor children (those in households earning less than $ 15,000 per year), 75 percent lived in a household where the biological father was absent. And 50 percent of adults with less than a high-school education lived in cohabitation arrangements. "This mix — poverty, lack of education, children, and cohabitation — is an incubator for violence," Fagan says.
>
> Why, then, do we ignore the problem? Fagan has a theory: "It is extremely politically incorrect to suggest that living together might not be the best living arrangement."

The moral of the story is that it is a lot safer for children if we promote marriage as a way of attaching mothers and fathers to their children. Fathers who have a biological connection to children are a lot less likely to harm them. And a lot of social problems like child poverty, promiscuity and violence cannot be solved by replacing a father with a check from the government. We need to support fathers by empowering them in their traditional roles. Let the men lead.

Why celebrate Memorial Day? Why is Memorial Day important?

May 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Arlington National Cemetary

What is Memorial Day? It's the day that we remember all those brave men and women who have sacrificed to protect our liberties and our lives so that we could be safe from harm.

This video may help you to understand.

From Hot Air, a quote from Ronald Reagan.

> Memorial Day is an occasion of special importance to all Americans, because it is a day sacred to the memory of all those Americans who made the supreme sacrifice for the liberties we enjoy. We will never forget or fail to honor these heroes to whom we owe so much. We honor them best when we resolve to cherish and defend the liberties for which they gave their lives. Let us resolve to do all in our power to assure the survival and the success of liberty so that our children and their children for generations to come can live in an America in which freedom's light continues to shine.
>
> The Congress, in establishing Memorial Day, called for it to be a day of tribute to America's fallen, and also a day of national prayer for lasting peace. This Nation has always sought true peace. We seek it still. Our goal is peace in which the highest aspirations of our people, and people everywhere, are secure: peace with freedom, with justice, and with opportunity for human development. This is the permanent peace for which we pray, not only for ourselves but for all generations.
>
> The defense of peace, like the defense of liberty, requires more than lip service. It requires vigilance, military strength, and the willingness to take risks and to

> make sacrifices. The surest guarantor of both peace and liberty is our unflinching resolve to defend that which has been purchased for us by our fallen heroes.
>
> On Memorial Day, let us pray for peace — not only for ourselves, but for all those who seek freedom and justice.

And check some of my Medal of Honor posts:

- Navy SEAL Michael Murphy awarded Medal of Honor
- How Sal Giunta earned a Medal of Honor and lived to tell about it
- What can Christians learn from Rob Miller's Medal of Honor story?

I am listening to this podcast from the Heritage Foundation about the origin and meaning of Memorial Day.

God bless our soldiers, airmen and sailors!

For more reading, why not check out some of the military bloggers?

- BlackFive
- Mudville Gazette
- Froggy Ruminations
- Michael Yon
- Bill Roggio
- Adventures of Chester

If you want to help out our troops, you can send them things through Soldier's Angels.

Does the Bible say that you should forgive someone who does not repent?

May 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kevin Lewis, a professor of Theology and Law at the conservative Biola University, was asked this question:

> Recently, I was reading Dr. Kenneth Bailey's "Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes" (IVP press 2008). When commenting on Matthew 6:12-13, he writes,
>
> "It is a common human assumption that the violator of the rights of others must ask for forgiveness before the wronged party can be expected to accept the apology and grant forgiveness…But Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when when there is no confession of guilt… There is a voice from the cross that echoes across history to all saying 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' Neither Pilate nor the high priest nor the centurion offered any apology to Jesus, yet he prayed for divine forgiveness…(p.125)"

And here's his response in full, copied with permission from his Facebook note:

> Regarding Bailey's comments on Matthew 6:12, he errs by not considering the theological context of this statement and fails to consider any implied biblical conditions for forgiveness inherent in the statement. The text simply does not mean what he says it means. He is reading too much into the statement.
> Bailey states, "Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when there is no confession of guilt…"
>
> Bailey errs. Here, Jesus is giving a model for prayer commensurate with the way His Kingdom works. Jesus teaches them to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." This is a statement of the objective, "forgiveness," without a discussion of any express or implied conditions to accomplish the objective. It is also a statement of the proper attitude of the Christian, that is, that we must have a demeanor of being willing to forgive, just as God was willing to forgive us. Bailey's assertion that there is no "confession of guilt" or repentance is merely an unwarranted assumption.
>
> Moreover, the use of "as" (Grk. hos) in the passage introduces a comparison between the way we forgive and the way God forgives. This comparative phraseology is employed elsewhere on the subject of forgiveness. For example, Ephesians 4:32 states that we should be "forgiving each other just as God in Christ also has forgiven" us. Here, the comparative "just as" (Grk. kathos) is employed and indicates our forgiveness is to be just like God's forgiveness of us, which flows from a loving disposition. So in the same manner that God forgives, we must forgive. We are to be "imitators of God" (Eph. 5:1). See also Matthew

5:48 and Luke 6:36 for exhortations to imitate God.

To ascertain whether the Scriptures describe any conditions for forgiveness, one must search elsewhere in the Scriptures for comment. This is the nature of systematic theology. We need to examine what the entire Bible says on a given topic, such as forgiveness. And the Bible contains ample support for the notion that there are conditions for forgiveness.

First, regarding God and His forgiveness, it is undisputed in orthodox Christian theology that God does not forgive everyone. The doctrine of Hell is a sufficient proof of the lack of universal forgiveness by God.

Next, it is clear that God does not forgive without repentance. This doctrine is taught in a number of texts. For example, in Luke 13:3 Jesus says, “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” In Mark 1:15 John the Baptist commands that we must “repent and believe the Gospel.” The connection between repentance and forgiveness of sins (i.e. “salvation”) is seen throughout the Scriptures. For example, in Acts 2:38 repentance is directly connected as a condition for the remission of sins. For additional examples of this connection see Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30-31; Romans 2:4-5; II Corinthians 7:10; II Tim. 2:25-26.

So since we are to be imitators of God and forgive in the same way God forgives, we would expect the Scriptures to be consistent, stating that the condition of repentance is required to be fulfilled before believers are required to forgive each other’s sins. It does.

Jesus stated in Luke 17:3, “If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.” Here, the meaning is clear. The word “if” (Grk. ean) introduces the condition for a rebuke and for granting forgiveness. If (subjunctive) a person sins, we must (imperative) rebuke him, and if (subjunctive) he repents, we must (imperative) forgive him. This is as clear a statement as you will find on the subject. Forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance—and this is one of the same criteria that God requires before He forgives sin.

This principle of permitting believers to withhold forgiveness unless the condition of repentance is satisfied is also explicitly seen in Matthew 18:15-17. Compared with the Luke 17:3 text above, the situation is the same. If a brother sins, reprove him; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. Here, the word “reprove” is used rather than “rebuke” and the word “listen” is employed rather than “repent,” but the meaning is virtually identical to Luke 17:3. What we see in Matthew 18 is an escalation of the issue and the result if the person fails to repent (i.e. “listen”). If the person fails to repent, we are to shun him in all appropriate ways (v. 17).

These passages in Luke and Matthew give us the connection between sin, rebuke, repentance and forgiveness. Other biblical texts that merely mention “forgiveness” as a concept or an objective do not necessarily proffer every

aspect of the doctrine of forgiveness. As such, they must be read in light of the clear conditions expressed in other passages.

Finally, I would make the case that it is harmful to a person to forgive him without requiring repentance. As seen above, the Bible is clear that sin requires a rebuke. Ignoring sin teaches sinners that sin does not bring consequences. This is harmful to their souls. Continuing to have the benefit of a righteous relationship with another and yet remain in sin against that person results in fostering a habituation of sinful inclinations in their soul, which God says brings about suffering and death.

Moreover, since the ultimate purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation, it is meaningless and harmful to forgive when no reconciliation may be had with the sinner. We cannot “walk together” in a biblical manner in righteous peace when the unrepentant sinner walks in unrighteousness. Necessarily, there is a conflict and a want of shalom. Their soul is headed in a different direction than the believer’s soul; they are walking away from God and we cannot have fellowship with darkness. God has no intimate fellowship with unrepentant people, and that is the model for Christians as well (See Matt. 18).

Regarding personal anger issues commonly raised by Christian psychologists, these types of psychologists unbiblically make unconditional forgiveness a part of therapy. By contrast, however, if a counselee will not forgive after the offending party has truly repented, the counselee sins, and this kind of unforgiveness may be one of the causes of his or her problems. But this is a separate issue from universal and unconditional forgiveness raised above.

Human beings in the image of God may be angry in appropriate ways (Eph.4:26, 31). There is a time to love and a time to hate (Ecclesiastes 3:8). The notion that Christians cannot ever hate, be angry, or lack forgiveness is an unbiblical concept. God Himself is eternally angry with sin, but He is certainly not a psychological basket case. He loves, hates, and is angry in appropriate ways. Our task as believers is to imitate this. Be angry with and hate sin appropriately (Rom. 12:9) and love what good appropriately. For example, righteous anger can evolve beyond the biblical limits to become malice, slander, and bitterness while, to give another example, an appropriate love of food can evolve beyond the biblical limits into gluttony.

Psychological problems arise from many issues other than lack of forgiveness. For example, a lack of trust in God that He has a particular instance of evil under His sovereign control can cause undue anxiety in one’s life. Also, if a counselee’s self worth is grounded in the shifting sand of how others treat him (i.e., badly) rather than being grounded in the fact that he is a divine image bearer and inherently valuable no matter how badly anyone treats him, he will likely fall into anxiety, depression, and other sorts of psychological maladies. Changing the biblical doctrine of forgiveness will not truly help a counselee. It only makes it

> worse.
>
> Soli Deo Gloria

I agree with Kevin, and I think it is a helpful tool for people to insist on seeing some sort of repentance and restitution from someone who wrongs you before you trust them again. If they are not even sorry for what they've done, and they refuse to explain why what they did is wrong, then they can't be forgiven, and you can't trust them again.

I think this is the key passage – Luke 17:3-4:

Luke 17:3-4:

3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

That's Jesus speaking, there.

Also, I was having a debate with someone who disagrees with all this, and while debating with her, I thought of another example.

Luke 18:9-14:

9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

13 But the tax collector,standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So again, no forgiveness without repentance.

Forgiveness is what happens when someone who is sinned against treats the sinner as if he had never sinned. It is not on the balance sheet. It is not brought to mind. It is not held against them in the future. The forgiver trusts the sinner again as if the previous sin had never happened.

In divine (vertical) forgiveness, there is no forgiveness without repentance. There are Bible verses above to show that.

My argument is twofold. First, there is a clear teaching of Jesus explaining the sequence of sin and forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness, between humans (Luke 17:3). The verses cited by the forgive without repentance crowd don't show the mechanics of how to forgive, they are making the point that if you want God to forgive you, you should forgive others. The parable in Luke 18:9-14 affirms this again – repentance always

precedes forgiveness.

Second, we have an obligation to imitate God, and that means imitating the way he forgives those who sin against him. When I raise that with the unconditional forgiveness crowd, they want to insist that there is a difference, that the word “forgive” means different things. I’m not convinced.

Finally, I do think that forgiving someone is obligatory if they sincerely repent, and even if they screw up again and again. So long as the repentance is sincere, (like if there is restitution and a genuine effort to show an understanding how the sin affected the wronged party in writing), then forgiveness should be automatic. Depending on how bad the sin is, there maybe be more to do than just say “I’m sorry”. If the repentance is genuine, then I think the person who is sinned against must forgive, if they expect to be forgiven by God for the things they repent of.

UPDATE: Alan E. Kurschner comments (below) and I reproduce it here:

> Hi Wintery,
>
> Thanks for your article. I have a couple of comments.
>
> Luke 23:34a is often a trump card for the unconditional forgiveness crowd. However, there is serious textual doubt to its originality. I will have a forthcoming journal article on this textual variant, but you can read a synopsis of the argument that I made here:
>
> http://www.aomin.org/aoblog/index.php/2013/03/16/from-the-lips-of-jesus-or-a-scribal-hand-father-forgive-them-for-they-do-not-know-what-they-are-doing-2/
>
> I do not know if Lewis is aware of this textual variant. I would encourage him to look into it.
>
> Second, on Matt 6:15, this is what I have to say. Notice the then-clause: “neither will your Father forgive your sins.” This would require universalism on the Father’s part according to the unconditional interpretation given the first half: “But if you do not forgive others their sins.” Since everyone has wronged the Father is the Father required to forgive everyone even if they are not seeking forgiveness?
>
> I hope that helps,
>
> Alan K.

How to apologize effectively: responsibility, restitution, repentance

May 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I guess everyone already knows about Gary Chapman and his 5 Love Languages. But have you heard of his 5 Love Languages of apologies?

Here's a re-cap of his five languages of apologies.

Here are the two that I want to emphasize:

Apology Language #3: Making Restitution

In the public arena, our emphasis upon restitution is based upon our sense of justice. The one who commits the crime should pay for the wrongdoing. In contrast, in the private sphere of family and other close relationships, our desire for restitution is almost always based upon our need for love. After being hurt deeply, we need the reassurance that the person who hurt us still loves us.

"How could they love me and do that?" is the question that lingers in our minds. The words "I'm sorry; I was wrong" may not be enough.

For some people, restitution is their primary apology language. For them the statement, "It is not right for me to have treated you that way," must be followed with "What can I do to show you that I still care about you?" Without this effort at restitution, this person will question the sincerity of the apology. They will continue to feel unloved even though you may have said, "I am sorry; I was wrong." They wait for the reassurance that you genuinely love them.

The question, then, is how do we make restitution in the most effective way? Since the heart of restitution is reassuring the spouse or family member that you genuinely love him or her, it is essential to express restitution in the love language of the other person.

[…]If restitution is the primary apology language of an individual, then this becomes the most important part of the apology. "I'm sorry; I was wrong" will never be taken as sincere if these words are not accompanied by a sincere effort at restitution. They wait for the assurance that you still genuinely love them. Without your effort to make amends, the apology will not have the desired results of forgiveness.

Apology Language #4: Genuinely Repenting

The word repentance means "to turn around" or "to change one's mind." In the context of an apology, it means that an individual realizes that his or her present behavior is destructive. The person regrets the pain he or she is causing the other person, and he chooses to change his behavior.

Without genuine repentance, the other languages of apology may fall on deaf ears. What people who've been hurt want to know is, "Do you intend to change, or will this happen again next week?"

How then do we speak the language of repentance?

> - **It begins with an expression of intent to change.** When we share our intention to change with the person we have offended, we are communicating to them what is going on inside of us. They get a glimpse of our heart—and this often is the language that convinces them we mean what we say.
> - **The second step down the road of repentance is developing a plan for implementing change.**Often apologies fail to be successful in restoring the relationship because there is no plan for making positive change.
> - **The third step down the road of repentance is implementing the plan.** Following through with the plan gives evidence to the offended party that your apology was sincere.

Most people do not expect perfection after an apology, but they do expect to see effort.

Thus, expressing your desire to change and coming up with a plan is an extremely important part of an apology to this person. Inviting the offended person to help you come up with a plan for change is perhaps the best way to effectively show repentance.

I think this is somewhat useful, but I wanted to add some of my own thoughts to make it more practical.

Here are some practical tips that I recommend to someone who has done something morally wrong and who wants to apologize.

To fix the problem you need more than talk

To me, the only thing that needs an apology is breaking a moral rule – you can't beat someone up for just making a mistake. Whenever someone breaks a moral rule with me, like disrespecting me or being selfish, then I pick out a book for them to read and ask them to read it and then write something about how what they learned in the book applies to what they did to me. I don't pick very long books! But I do this for a very important reason.

The very important reason is that I don't trust people who just agree with me. I don't trust people's words. If someone is really sorry about something, then I want them to read something that describes the moral rule that they broke, and to be willing to listen to the feelings of the person they harmed by breaking that rule. That goes a long way in my mind.

HIV/AIDS researcher fired for accurate but politically incorrect testimony

May 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Legal Insurrection provides the background.

Excerpt:

> The background is that the Belize Supreme Court is considering a court case seeking to overturn Section 53 of the criminal code, which bans some forms of homosexual behavior, specifically male-on-male sodomy. Argument was held in May 2013 but there has been no decision as of this writing.
>
> The highly charged nature of the case pits a coalition of international gay rights activists against some Christian churches and groups.
>
> Enter Dr. Brendan Bain, who retired as a Professor in 2013 from the University of West Indies. While still a professor, in 2012 Dr. Bain submitted testimony in the form of an Expert Report in the case (embedded in full at the bottom of this post).
>
> […]The general thesis of the Expert Report was as follows, in part:

> This report shows that the relative risk of contracting HIV is significantly higher among men who have sex with other men (MSM) in Belize than in the general population. This is also true in several other countries for which data are available, including countries that have repealed the law that criminalizes anal sex and countries where the law still applies.

So did the report contain false information? No.

From the Jamaica Observer.

Excerpt:

> The National AIDS Committee (NAC) early Thursday issued a statement saying that "it takes no issue with, and has no objection to the actual content of the report of Professor Brendan Bain to the Court in Belize".
>
> Bain was fired from his post as director of the Regional Co-ordinating Unit of the Caribbean HIV/AIDS Regional Training Network (CHART) by the University of the West Indies for statements regarding men who have sex with men that he made as an expert witness in a Belize court case.
>
> But according to the NAC, "there is nothing in that report which is contrary to, or offensive to the work of the National AIDS Committee."
>
> The NAC is a non- government organisation established in 1988 "to facilitate multi-sectoral collaboration to reduce the negative impact of HIV/AIDS on the Jamaican society and promote an informed, supportive and caring environment

> that empowers persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS."
>
> […]In his report, Professor Bain highlighted for the court that homosexual men were at higher risk of contracting HIV and other sexual transmitted infections and that a supportive environment is needed at the community and governmental levels to enable high risk groups to access and practice safe sex.

What's wrong with saying that men who have sex with men are at a higher risk of contracting HIV / AIDS? It's not politically correct, so he had to go.

I'm sure his numbers were similar to those of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), which makes the same point about men who have sex with men.

CDC numbers were also recently reported in the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> Teens and young adults now account for more than a quarter of the new cases of HIV identified in the United States annually, and a clear majority of those cases involve young gay or bisexual men, the federal government said in a major new survey Tuesday.
>
> Of the nearly 48,000 new HIV cases identified in the United States in 2010, the latest year for which complete data are available, more than 12,000 involved teens and young adults, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found in its latest report.
>
> About 72 percent of these new HIV cases in younger adults occurred in young men who are gay or bisexual, according to the CDC report.
>
> […]According to the CDC figures, black youths accounted for the largest share of new HIV cases, with Hispanic youths and white youths accounting for about 20 percent each.
>
> About 1.1 million people are estimated to be living with HIV in the United States. Some 47,129 new HIV cases were identified in 2010.
>
> The CDC's new report, "Vital Signs: HIV Infection, Testing, Risk Behaviors Among Youths, United States," estimated that youths aged 13 to 24 accounted for 12,200, or 26 percent, of new HIV infections in 2010.
>
> Of these new cases, 7,000 were among black youths, 2,390 were among Hispanics, and 2,380 were among whites.
>
> About 8,800 cases were attributed to male-to-male sexual contact.
>
> HIV/AIDS is incurable, and an estimated 17,774 people with AIDS died in 2009. Some 619,000 persons have died of AIDS in the United States since the epidemic began in the early 1980s, according to the CDC.

I'm really not sure why people who insist on suppressing numbers like this think they are doing good. If something is dangerous, the good thing to do is to tell other people the danger. Not to fire people who tell other people the danger. That's wrong.

J. Warner Wallace: I am not a Christian because it works for me

May 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a must-read post from Cold-Case Christianity author J. Warner Wallace.

Excerpt:

> Life on this side of my decision hasn't always been easy. It's been nearly seventeen years since I first trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. I still struggle to submit my prideful will to what God would call me to do. Christianity is not easy. It doesn't always "work" for me. There are times when I think it would be easier to do it the old way; easier to cut a corner or take a short cut. There are many times when doing the right thing means doing the most difficult thing possible. There are also times when it seems like non-Christians have it easier, or seem to be "winning". It's in times like these that I have to remind myself that I'm not a Christian because it serves my own selfish purposes. I'm not a Christian because it "works" for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn't always been easy.
>
> I'm a Christian because it is true. I'm a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I'm a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative.

I think this is important. There are people who I know who claim to be Christian, but they are clearly believing that God is a mystical force who arranges everything in their lives in order to make them happy. They are not Christians because it's true, but because of things like comfort and community. But people ought to become Christians because they think it's true. Truth doesn't necessarily make you happy, though. Truth can impose intellectual obligations and moral obligations on you. Seeing God as he really is doesn't help us to "win" at life, as the culture defines winning.

Winning in Christianity doesn't mean making lots of money, or being famous, or winning human competitions, or being approved of by lots of people. Winning for a Christian might involve things like building relationships with people and leading them to know that God exists and who Jesus is. That has no cash value, and it's not going to make you famous. Actually, it will probably cost you money and time, and make you unpopular with a lot of people.

The Bible doesn't promise that people who become Christians will be happier. Actually, it promises that Christians will suffer for doing the right things. Their autonomy will suffer, as they sacrifice their own interests and happiness in order to make God happy, by serving his interests. Christianity isn't something you add on to your before-God life in order to achieve your before-God goals. When you become a Christian, you get a new set of goals, based on God's character and his design for you. And although you might be

very successful in the world as part of serving God, there is no guarantee of that. Christianity is not life enhancement.

Tim McGrew debates Peter "Bogo the Clown" Boghossian on the definition of faith

May 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have tried very hard to avoid writing about Peter Boghossian because I kept hoping that someone would speak to him and set him straight before he went too far.

Basically, when you listen to the debate, below, you'll find that Boghossian redefines the word faith so that it basically means "stupidity", and then he tries to get people of faith to accept that they are stupid according to his new definition of faith. The new definition is not found in any dictionary, and it's not used commonly, either.

Anyway, here are the details:

> This Week on Unbelievable : Peter Boghossian vs Tim McGrew – debate on 'A Manual For Creating Atheists"
>
> Peter Boghossian teaches philosophy and is the author of 'A Manual for Creating Atheists'. He believes that faith is a 'false epistemology' (way of knowing things) and even describes it as a 'virus of the mind'. Tim McGrew is a Christian philosophy professor specialising in epistemology. He contests Boghossian's definition of faith and debates the merits of his recent book. To cast your vote on the definition of faith visit www.facebook.com/unbelievablejb.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics: (I reserve the right to satirize Bogo in this – he is a clown after all. Listen to the audio if you want his exact words)

- PB: My book tries to avoid the "obfuscations" of reputable, credentialed Christian scholars and discusses faith at my intellectual level
- PB: The goal of the book is to help people abandon the dictionary definition of the word "faith" and accept the definition I invented
- TM: Defining the word "faith" in the wrong way is not the right way to start an authentic, respectful conversation
- TM: Faith does not mean "pretending to know things you don't know" – that is not a standard definition
- TM: the only people who accept your definition of faith are you and the people who follow you online
- TM: your whole book is predicated on on a wrong definition of faith
- PB: that is my definition of faith based on my experience of talking to lots of people
- TM: He says this is how billions of people define faith – but not in my experience, maybe satirists like Ambrose Bierce and Mark Twain do
- TM: Your definition of faith is not in the Oxford English Dictionary and that definition is based on common usage of the word faith

- TM: The New Testament definition of faith “pistis” means trust
- PB: There are 50-100 people who use the term that way, and only in academia
- TM: How about “The Good Atheist” who interviewed you? He is not an academic or a theist, but he didn’t accept your definition
- PB: You are “extraordinarily isolated” from the real definition of faith
- TM: Faith is not belief without evidence, it is trust based on at least some evidence
- PB: Christian leaders use the word according my definition, I won’t name any or quote any, though
- JB: So you are basically saying that Christians are lying when they express their faith, since they know what they are saying isn’t true but they say it anyway
- PB: What percentage of Christians use the word faith to mean “belief without evidence”
- TM: Well below 1%. It may be the case that their evidence is not very good, but they do rest their beliefs on evidence
- TM: Faith is trusting, holding to, and acting on what one has good reasons to believe is true in the face of difficulties
- PB: That’s not what people mean by faith, they mean my definition
- JB: What do you mean when you say that faith is a “virus of the mind”, and a “mental illness”? School programs to remove faith?
- PB: Think about how atheists feel when they are told they will go Hell
- PB: Christians are hurting people, so that means they have a mental disorder that needs to be cured in a systematic way
- PB: Faith is an epistemic virus that hijacks the reasoning process

At that point I quit summarizing, because it became clear to me that he was delusional and not worth paying attention to.

He is clearly not aware of how even basic Christian apologetics books that are bestsellers cover evidences like the Big Bang, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, galactic habitability, stellar habitability, New Testament reliability, historical Jesus, philosophical arguments for theism, and so on. This is the bottom-shelf of Christian apologetics, widely read by rank-and-file Christians, but Bogo the Clown seems to be completely unaware of it. He needs to get out more and talk to people outside his little clique of atheist comedians. Maybe Bogo the Clown needs to pick up a serious book like “Debating Christian Theism” and read it before he opens his mouth on topics he knows nothing about. But he is an excellent clown – I laughed at him. He did make me laugh.

But that’s not all. As, I explained before, the concept of faith presented in the Bible agrees with what Dr. McGrew said – faith is trust based on evidence. That is the Biblical view.

And finally, this:

John 10:37-38: [NASB]

37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;

38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

The words of Jesus – he is saying: believe me because of the evidence I provide from miracles that you can see with your own eyes. Period. End of discussion.

So Bogo the Clown's view of faith is nowhere except in his own mind. Not in the apologetics literature. Not in the writings of any reputable Christian scholar. Not in the Bible. Not in the words of Jesus. It's enough to make me think that this talk about "mental disorders" and "viruses of the mind" is just self-descriptive. Maybe a cry for help from a sick, delusional mind.

Vote in the poll

Please vote in this poll:

You can see Justin Brierley's poll here, which basically shows that almost no one accepts Boghossian's view of faith, except his own crowd. I think their view of faith is largely projection. They are describing their own views, but attributing them to people like McGrew, who can just wipe the floor with them in a debate, without even breaking a sweat.

Disgusting: Pakistani woman murdered just for marrying the man she loved

May 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From ABC News, a story to chill you and anger you.

Excerpt:

> A pregnant woman was stoned to death Tuesday by her own family outside a courthouse in the Pakistani city of Lahore for marrying the man she loved.
>
> The woman was killed while on her way to court to contest an abduction case her family had filed against her husband. Her father was promptly arrested on murder charges, police investigator Rana Mujahid said, adding that police were working to apprehend all those who participated in this "heinous crime."
>
> Arranged marriages are the norm among conservative Pakistanis, and hundreds of women are murdered every year in so-called honor killings carried out by husbands or relatives as a punishment for alleged adultery or other illicit sexual behavior.
>
> Stonings in public settings, however, are extremely rare. Tuesday's attack took place in front of a crowd of onlookers in broad daylight. The courthouse is located on a main downtown thoroughfare.
>
> A police officer, Naseem Butt, identified the slain woman as Farzana Parveen, 25, and said she had married Mohammad Iqbal, 45, against her family's wishes after being engaged to him for years.
>
> Her father, Mohammad Azeem, had filed an abduction case against Iqbal, which the couple was contesting, said her lawyer, Mustafa Kharal. He said she was three months pregnant.
>
> Nearly 20 members of Parveen's extended family, including her father and brothers, had waited outside the building that houses the high court of Lahore. As the couple walked up to the main gate, the relatives fired shots in the air and tried to snatch her from Iqbal, her lawyer said.
>
> When she resisted, her father, brothers and other relatives started beating her, eventually pelting her with bricks from a nearby construction site, according to Mujahid and Iqbal, the slain woman's husband.

One of these days I am going to write a post contrasting the Christian view of courtship and marriage, where the man has to PROVE that he is trained and ready to love the woman, provide for her needs and raise the children to be moral and spiritual, and the Islamic view.

Meanwhile, there was this horrible story about the pregnant woman in Sudan who is in chains in jail just because she is a Christian, not a Muslim.

Excerpt:

> A doctor who is facing execution in Sudan for marrying a Christian gave birth to a baby girl in prison today.
>
> Meriam Ibrahim, who has spent the past four months shackled to the floor in a disease-ridden jail, gave birth five days early.
>
> The baby was born in the hospital wing at Omdurman Federal Women's Prison in North Khartoum and is said to be healthy.
>
> Speaking exclusively to MailOnline, her lawyer Mohaned Mustafa Elnour said: 'This is some good news in what has been a terrible ordeal for Meriam.
>
> 'I am planning to visit her with her husband Daniel later today. I think they are going to call the baby Maya.'
>
> Meriam, 27, was sentenced to death by hanging earlier this month after being found guilty of converting from Islam to Christianity and marrying a Christian man, U.S. citizen Daniel Wani, who lives in Manchester, New Hampshire.
>
> She will receive 100 lashes before she is executed – sometime in the next two years.
>
> Before the birth, Meriam made the defiant claim that she would rather die than give up her faith.
>
> In a heart-wrenching conversation with her husband during a rare prison visit, Meriam told him: 'If they want to execute me then they should go ahead and do it because I'm not going to change my faith.'
>
> An Islamic Sharia judge said she could be spared the death penalty if she publicly renounced her faith and becomes a Muslim once more.
>
> Meriam insists she has always been a Christian and told her husband she could not 'pretend to be a Muslim' just to spare her life.

Another areas where Christianity is in sharp contrast to Islam is the area of evangelism. We don't have to respond to people changing their minds, because in Christianity, the truth stands clear from error. Each person should decide for themselves – there is no compulsion in Christianity. But Islam is conversion by the sword, or by the threat of the sword.

Robin Collins explains two kinds of cosmic fine-tuning

May 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was busy working my way through "Debating Christian Theism", a book published by Oxford University Press in August 2013. It features about 20 different topics from science, to philosophy, to history. For each topic, there is an essay by a world-class scholar in favor, and one opposed. So you get both sides of many interesting issues, at a very advanced level. The section on cosmic fine-tuning features a chapter written by Dr. Robin Collins.

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

The fine-tuning argument

Here's a short article where Collins gives TWO examples of the fine-tuning. He is very modest in his argument, merely asserting that the fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than it is with atheism.

Excerpt:

> Science is commonly thought to have undercut belief in God. As Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg famously remarked, "the more we find out about the universe, the more meaningless it all seems." Yet, the discoveries of modern physics and cosmology in the last 50 years have shown that the structure of the universe is set in an extraordinarily precise way for the existence of life; if its structure were slightly different, even by an extraordinarily small degree, life would not be possible. In many people's minds, the most straightforward explanation of this remarkable fine-tuning is some sort of divine

> purpose behind our universe.

> This fine-tuning falls into three categories: the fine-tuning of the laws of nature, the fine-tuning of the constants of physics, and the fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe. “Fine-tuning of the laws of nature” refers to the fact that if the universe did not have precisely the right combination of laws, complex intelligent life would be impossible. If there were no universal attractive force (law of gravity), for example, matter would be dispersed throughout the universe and the energy sources (such as stars) needed for life would not exist. Without the strong nuclear force that binds protons and neutrons together in the nucleus, there would not be any atoms with an atomic number greater than hydrogen, and hence no complex molecules needed for life. And without the Pauli-exclusion principle, all electrons would fall to the lowest orbital of an atom, undercutting the kind of complex chemistry that life requires.

> Some fundamental physical numbers governing the structure of the universe—called the constants of physics—also must fall into an exceedingly narrow range for life to exist. For example, many have estimated that the cosmological constant—a fundamental number that governs the expansion rate of empty space—must be precisely set to one part in 10^{120} in order for life to occur; if it were too large, the universe would have expanded too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form, and if it were too small, the universe would have collapsed back on itself. As Stephen Hawking wrote in his book A Brief History of Time, “The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life.” Finally, the initial distribution of mass energy at the time of the big bang must have an enormously special configuration for life to occur, which Cambridge University mathematical physicist Roger Penrose has calculated to be on the order of one part in $10^{10^{123}}$. This is an unimaginably small number.

I know what you’re thinking: How do we know that non-Christian scientists acknowledge the fine-tuning of gravity in the way that Collins describes?

Well, the New Scientist actually talks about the fine-tuning of the force of gravity. And they’re not Christians.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe‘s birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If

> the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Here's a very long paper by Collins on the fine-tuning argument, where he answers several objections to the argument, including the multiverse/many-universe hypothesis. I normally make fun of the multiverse, (= the Flying Spaghetti Monster), but it actually does deserve a reasonable, fair response. (Unless Jerry asks, then it's Flying Spaghetti Monster all the way).

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

May 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Since I made you listen to the Bogo the Clown debate yesterday, I thought today we should hear from an intelligent atheist instead.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It’s not just that the settings are unlikely, it’s that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a “herd morality” that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this

evolved “herd morality”. However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God’s existence by pointing to the “evil” in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God’s existence.

Dr. Millican’s opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it

leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It's possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It's also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans

believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just

happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties

that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

VA socialized medicine: bonuses awarded as customers died on waiting lists

May 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the private sector, bonuses are paid to people who can offer customers the best products and services at the lowest price. That's how a firm like Apple or Amazon makes a profit. By pleasing customers. But government-run firms make money a different way – by killing customers.

Stephen Moore explains in Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The Veterans Affairs Department health care scandal has deepened in recent days, with new revelations of incompetent management and misplaced spending priorities, including millions of dollars paid out in bonuses at the very hospitals where services were the worst.
>
> […]Freedom of Information Act requests by Illinois-based watchdog group Open the Books reveal that the VA spent millions on bonuses during the last three years at Hines.
>
> Worse, in 2013, only about one-in-four of Hines' 4,230 employees were those providing the actual primary care: doctors (309) or nurses (about 800), Open the Books found.
>
> Five veterans died waiting for care at Hines.
>
> As far back as 1999, the VA had found systemic quality-of-care problems at Hines with little done to correct them. A VA study concluded that "Hines has the most inefficient physical plant for inpatient care and the most significant compliance issues with patient privacy."
>
> In 2005, a VA study rated Chicago the worst regional office in the country. Now the man in charge at Hines, Murawsky, has been elevated to oversight of the entire VA system.

Democrats have been trying to say that the problem is that they were not able to spend even more money, because the national debt at 17.5 trillion is not high enough.

Moore notes that the problem is misspending:

> The revelations of bonuses suggest that misspending may be the biggest problem.
>
> The VA's own budget numbers indicate a more-than doubling of the agency's expenditures to $57 billion from $28 billion since 2003. The patient load is up only about one-third over the decade.
>
> So the VA has more money than ever per patient, even after adjusting for

> inflation.
>
> As far as mismanagement, the problem of "performance" bonuses at the VA appears to have been systemic. An Open the Books investigation has found:
>
> - One in five employees at the Phoenix VA received bonuses in 2013, with some receiving extra pay of $5,000 or more. The total bonus payouts were $337,885.
> - As many as 40 veterans may have died awaiting care at this hospital system and about 1,300 waited more than six months for care.
> - In 2013, Phoenix VA Director Sharon Helman received the No. 1 bonus out of 3,170 employees (at Phoenix): $9,345. The number of avoidable deaths was higher than at nearly any other hospital.
> - In Chicago, $1 billion in salaries were supplemented with $4 million in bonuses over a three-year period.
> - At the seven most troubled VA facilities, almost $9 million in bonuses were paid out to 13,000 employees.

This might remind you of the National Health Service's "Liverpool Care Pathway" program, in which doctors were awarded bonuses for freeing up hospital beds by transferring patients to terminal care.

Paul Krugman approves

Supporters of more government-run health care like Paul Krugman had previously praised the VA system as "huge policy success story, which offers important lessons for future health reform."

Ben Shapiro has a full quote from Krugman:

> Paul Krugman in 2011 wrote of the VA's "huge success story":
>
> > Multiple surveys have found the VHA providing better care than most Americans receive, even as the agency has held cost increases well below those facing Medicare and private insurers…the VHA is an integrated system, which provides health care as well as paying for it. So it's free from the perverse incentives created when doctors and hospitals profit from expensive tests and procedures, whether or not those procedures actually make medical sense.
>
> > Krugman added, "Yes, this is 'socialized medicine'…But it works, and suggests what it will take to solve the troubles of US health care more broadly."

This is what people on the left wanted. The VA system is even WORSE than single-payer. At least in a single-payer system, only the payment is government-run. But the VA system is *completely* government-run. And the outcomes we are seeing in the system is exactly what you would expect when the people running the system are paid *regardless of whether the customer is served*. Or whether the customer even lives! At least in the private sector system, you have to serve the customer to make money – otherwise they

will take their money to a competitor. Not so in the VA system, and that’s the problem. They don’t have to make a profit to survive, so they don’t care about winning business from customers in a competitive market.

Catholic doctors in the UK advised to emigrate

May 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Tablet. (H/T Jay Richards)

Excerpt:

> Catholic doctors who follow church teaching on sexual ethics cannot work as gynaecologists in Britain, the Catholic Medical Association (CMA) conference was told.
>
> Charlie O'Donnell, a consultant in emergency and intensive care medicine, said the best advice he could give to an "orthodox" Catholic wishing to specialise in obstetrics and gynaecology would be to "emigrate".
>
> Dr O'Donnell told the conference at Ealing Abbey, west London, on 17 May that a Catholic training to be a consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology would soon find he or she had conscientious objections to such tasks as prescribing artificial contraceptives, giving unmarried couples fertility treatment or Viagra to gay couples.
>
> He said that supervising consultants do not have the backup to allow trainees to opt out if they have moral objections to such work. However, conscientious objection to abortion is allowed because of specific provision in the 1967 Abortion Act.
>
> "To be a sound Catholic regarding sexual ethics it is not possible to train as a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist but this is not because of discrimination against Catholics. There is a total conflict of culture of what is good sex, a dichotomy of belief between what we as Christians believe is good overall for the individual and what secular society believes," said Dr O'Donnell.
>
> Last week the president of the CMA, Dr Robert Hardie sought clarification concerning reports that doctors and nurses with conscientious objections would be barred from obtaining a diploma from the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Health (FSRH). Medical staff normally need the diploma to work in sexual and reproductive healthcare.

The Catholic Church is an interesting case. Although some Catholics are economically conservative, by and large Catholics tend to vote for bigger government, higher taxes and more regulations. Many now think that the point of their religion is to help the poor, and there is generally less emphasis on truth, theology and apologetics than in Protestantism. Well, what happens when lay Catholics begin to think their faith is about spreading the wealth around? They vote for secular politicians who promise to do that. As the secular government grows larger and larger, there is less room for faith commitments in the public square. The very Catholics who voted for Labour and the Liberal Democrats to "help the poor" are the ones running into problems now. I wonder if they have learned

their lesson.

Maine demands that pro-marriage group reveal donor names

May 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ABC News reports.

Excerpt:

> Maine's ethics panel fined a national anti-gay marriage group more than $50,000 on Wednesday and ordered it to reveal the donors who backed its efforts to repeal the state's gay marriage law.
>
> The Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices found that the National Organization for Marriage violated campaign finance laws by failing to properly register as a ballot question committee and file financial reports in the 2009 referendum that struck down gay marriage. Same-sex unions were legalized by voters in 2012.
>
> The commission also ruled that the organization must file a campaign finance report, which would force it to disclose the names of its donors. The National Organization for Marriage has fought for years to keep its donor list secret, saying doing so would put its contributors at risk for harassment and intimidation.
>
> […]"We didn't create a scheme, we tried to follow the law," Brian Brown, president of the Washington, D.C.-based organization, told the four-member panel on Wednesday.
>
> Brown, who served as executive director of the National Organization for Marriage in 2009, was one of three members of the committee that led the Stand for Marriage Maine PAC.
>
> Commissioners said his dual role and the fact that the national group controlled a majority of the PAC's funds was problematic for its argument that the funds weren't raised to influence the Maine campaign.
>
> The group says that it's being targeted because of its stance on gay marriage and that groups on the other side of the issue — such as the Human Rights Campaign — followed the same guidelines.
>
> State investigators said that its examination of the National Organization for Marriage actions was brought by a specific complaint and that the organization could have sought a similar investigation into the Human Rights Campaign.
>
> John Eastman, a National Organization for Marriage lawyer, said that it intends to file a complaint against HRC in addition to filing an appeal.

The Human Rights Campaign mentioned in the article called the Family Research Council a "hate group". The FRC was the target of an act of domestic terrorism by a gay

activist who also thought that the Family Research Council was a “hate group”. The Human Rights Campaign was also implicated in the IRS leak of NOM donors.

What will gay activists do with the list of donor names? Ask Brendan Eich what they will do with it.

Republican governor Mary Fallin signs incremental pro-life law in Oklahoma

May 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin (R)

A story from Life Site News on one of my favorite Republican governors!

Excerpt:

> Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin signed the nation's newest admitting privileges law for abortion doctors on Wednesday.
>
> The law, which passed the state Senate 34-9 and the state House 60-8, specifies that while abortions are being performed, abortion facilities must have a physician on its premises with admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles.
>
> The law also requires the State Board of Health to create equipment, training, and other standards for abortion clinics. Clinics must also report any injured abortion patients to the Board of Health and "appropriate licensing and regulatory boards" in writing, as well as if any "born-alive" children are injured.
>
> For abortion clinic owners, violations of the Board of Health's standards bear legal and financial burdens. "The operation of an unlicensed facility will be considered a felony, and any reckless violation of the measure or its standards will be considered a felony. Any violation of the measure may result in a civil penalty or a fine not to exceed $25,000," the law states.
>
> […]Fallin's administration has overseen passage of numerous pro-life laws, including two restricting the use of RU-486. Her state joins nearby Texas and Missouri in requiring the admitting privileges. Similar laws have been enacted in Kansas, North Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah, and have been blocked in Alabama, Mississippi, and Wisconsin while courts hear challenges. Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal is expected to sign a similar law this week.
>
> The Texas law has been particularly successful in closing abortion clinics, with at least one-third of the state's abortion centers closing since the law was enacted.

Hard to say right now which state, Oklahoma or Texas, is doing a better job at reducing the number of abortions and protecting women who choose to abort. Every time you cut into the profits that people collect for killing babies, fewer people are going to want to do it. Republicans have been doing a good job since 2010 of really slamming out tons and tons of pro-life bills – at least in red states. It's not surprising to me that clinics are closing in these states and the number of abortions is going down as a result. It's not as profitable as it used to be.

Now if we could just win a presidential election and cut off the flow of taxpayer dollars to Planned Parenthood, we'd see a lot fewer abortions.

Millenials voted for Obama and now they'll have to live with less than their parents

May 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Moderate conservative George Will writes about in Investors Business Daily. This is a good review of what's happening in the economy.

Excerpt:

> The reason why unemployment fell by four-tenths of a point (to 6.3%) in April while growth stalled is that 806,000 people left the labor force.
>
> The labor-force participation rate fell by four-tenths of a point to a level reached in 1978, which was during the Carter-era stagflation and early in the surge of women into the workforce.
>
> There are about 14.5 million more Americans than before the recession but nearly 300,000 fewer jobs, and household income remains below the pre-recession peak.
>
> […]The more than $1.1 trillion of student loan debt — the fastest-growing debt category, larger than credit-card or auto-loan debt — is restraining consumption, as is the retirement of baby boomers. In 2012, more than 70% of college graduates had student loan debts averaging about $30,000.
>
> This commencement season's diploma recipients enter an economy where more than 40% of recent graduates are either unemployed or in jobs that do not require a college degree. This is understandable, given that 44% of the job growth since the recession ended has been in food services, retail clerking or other low-wage jobs.
>
> In April, the number of persons under 25 in the workforce declined by 484,000. Unsurprisingly, almost one in three (31%) persons 18 to 34 are living with their parents, including 25% who have jobs.
>
> […]There is, however, something new under the sun. The Pew Research Center reports that Americans 25 to 32 — "millennials" — constitute the first age cohort since World War II with higher unemployment or a greater portion living in poverty than their parents at this age.

Now it's not just that the young people are having trouble paying off their loans and leaving the nest, it's that they also are going to inherit a debit that has more than doubled since they elected Obama the first time. This is serious, now. If you are a young person, you'd better have a plan to be borrowing as little as possible, working as much as possible, saving as much as possible, and studying only what can get you a job. Things have changed since the time of your parents. You will have to work harder to achieve less. You voted for it.

Bible study: the importance of truth in religion

May 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting passage of the Bible. What do you all think the practical value of this passage is?

[1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

[2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

[3] he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

[4] Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

[6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

[7] Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[8] Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

[9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

[10] The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

[11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

[12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king."

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him."

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

[27] Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

[29] "As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

[30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

This passage is interesting to me because it shows the kind of attitude that God answers. The King in this passage was tired of hearing man-made stories from his servants – stories that were undoubtedly influenced by the servants desire to survive the King's wrath. The servants would only have told the King things that were vague and happy, so that they could never be proved wrong or found to be judgmental or offensive. But the King was tired of that. He wanted someone with authority to tell him the truth about the way the world was.

In the rest of the chapter, Daniel interprets the dream, and concludes by saying this: "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.". The King replies: "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

I think it is is going to be difficult for Christians living today to be able to tell people their dreams like that. But what we can do is talk about God's miracles as revealed by science and history. We can study astrophysics, biochemistry and history and we can explain what God did in creating and fine-tuning the universe for life, in sequencing amino acids into functioning proteins, in creating brand new body plans in the Cambrian explosion, in raising Jesus from the dead as a matter of historical record, and so on. We have to show how great God is to people who do not even think he exists, and without assuming that they believe in the Bible.

There are still people out there like the King who are looking for someone who can speak to them with authority. All it takes from us is a little studying, and we can be like Daniel, too. But we have to know what God has done from science and history, and speak with authority about how we can know that God has acted *supernaturally*. Authority to speak comes from having knowledge about what we are talking about, and knowledge comes from studying and debating with people we disagree with. Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer in the God of Israel, but he was still interested in truth. That won't always be the case, but it is the case for some people.

What are Christian men looking for in a woman?

May 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a Bible verse that explains the number one thing that men are looking for from a potential wife.

Ephesians 5:21-33:

[21] Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

[22] Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

[23] For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

[24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

[25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

[26] to make her holy,cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

[27] and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

[28] In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

[29] After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—

[30] for we are members of his body.

[31] "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

[32] This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

[33] However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, **and the wife must respect her husband.**

The Bible sometimes sets out rules and goals for expected behaviors, which become moral obligations for anyone for follows Christ. It is up to us to convince ourselves through study that the Bible has authority to speak to us. And it is also up to us to decide the most effective way to achieve the goals that the Bible sets out. This post proposes some tips for women who want to learn how to respect men, based on my experiences of what makes me feel respected as a man. I think this is beneficial for single women, as well, because it allows them to arouse the interest of a man *by performing good actions*.

Things that women can do to make men feel respected

Here are some things that signal "respect" to me.

1. Listen

The first thing that really works is listening. I really feel respected when a woman listens

to me explain my thoughts and feelings. This is especially true when I am talking about my work and my work day. When it comes to my work, I feel respected when a woman listens to me explain what I am doing at work. The more she understands software engineering (what I do for money), the more supported I will feel. I like it when a woman is nearby when I am working, and asking about my progress. I know Dr. Craig also talks to his wife about his work as well. I feel a lot better making sacrifices (studying hard things, working weekends, volunteering at work) when those sacrifices are understood, encouraged and supported. That's why I think that women need take care to have a broad understanding of the way the world works, and never drop out of quantitative subjects like math, science, engineering and technology. The more you know about what a man is talking about, the better. Knowing more about politics, economics, science, etc. is always a good thing for women. I think that women definitely need to work full time for at least a couple of years to develop a sympathetic understanding of what men do in an office in order to provide for a family.

2. Plan

Another area that is important to talk about is my plan. I like it when I can tell a woman the specific experiences that I had that cause me to have the plan that I have. For example, my struggles getting apologetics into the churches that I've attended have really soured me on church leaders. Another thing I like to talk about are the Christian scholars who are my role models, and how I try to emulate them, and I want my children to emulate them, too. One lady I was speaking to has been studying areas that I care about on her own through books, lectures and debates and then going out into the world and engaging with the people around her. Sometimes just a few people, and sometimes with large groups. Recently she told me that she would like to start a group in her church to study useful books with them. This made me feel very respected. My goals matter to her, and she is trying to help with them on her own initiative, and with her own strategies. Note that women who want to respect men may find that it is useful to learn certain skills in order to be more effective at helping men with their plans. For example, she might study science apologetics and then engage her co-workers and friends with scientific arguments for Christian theism. She should find out what areas matter to him with respect to serving God and then come alongside him and help him. I have a homeschooling mom friend who is busy doing a degree in nursing, which is a very useful skill set to have. Her children are able to see her struggling with hard subjects like chemistry, and that is good for them to see. It's valuable to a man to have a wife who has practical skills and who can shepherd the children through school and into careers. This same lady is reading Thomas Sowell's Basic Economics, as well.

3. Roles

A final area that is important is my roles as a man. According to the Bible, men are supposed to be the main provider for their families. So, I made the decision early in my life to prefer work to academics – so I have actually been earning money since the time I was 12 years old. My grades were As (and some Bs), but I was always working part-time, and in the summers. The money I earned went straight into investments, so that I would

be able to afford two degrees in computer science (BS and MS) and have a nest egg saved for marriage. I had $9,000 before undergraduate school and $16,000 after, with no debts and a current model year used car. I chose computer science over English literature, because I knew that computer science was a more reliable way to earn a living. Marriages run more smoothly when money isn't a concern, so I did these things in order to make sure that the money to run the marriage would be there.

I think that women should *prefer men who take the provider obligation seriously*. I feel very respected when a woman takes the time to ask me about my education, research, work history, and investments. Our culture today doesn't value men taking their provider roles seriously. Instead, many women prefer *attractive, entertaining* men over men who can provide. I see a lot of Christian women going after men who don't have the ability to finance a marriage. That is disrespectful of the provider role, and I believe it stems from the desire to not acknowledge male leadership. I believe that some women (ones who struggle with trust issues) prefer men who don't earn a lot of money, so that the man will not have the authority in the home that comes from the provider role. But when a woman chooses a man with an inadequate education and resume, it also makes it much harder for her to respect him, which is what a man needs a woman to do.

To respect a man acting as a provider also requires voting for policies that support a man's ability to work (e.g. – less regulation on business, lower corporate taxes) to keep what he earns (lower income tax, lower inflation) and to spend it the way he sees fit (privatization of health care, education, etc.) – and these issues need to be studied, not checked off on a checklist as "we agree". Studying economics and politics in depth, and being political active, are ways for women to respect men in their provider role by promoting policies that help him to perform that provider role. Women should not be supporting policies that promote the redistribution of wealth via taxes. Women should not vote to reward irresponsibility and dependence, either. It is disrespectful to the man's provider role to vote for leftist fiscal policy. If you want big government, then you get men who can't afford to marry. Women need to vote for laws and policies that create more of the hard-working, high-earning men they want to marry.

The provider role is not the only role a man plays, he also has to be experienced at leading others on moral and spiritual issues. In order to evaluate a man's ability in these areas, women must study these exact same issues so that they are able to prefer evaluate a man's ability in these areas. Christianity is not a checkbox. Bible reading and church attendance alone do not train a man to engage a secular culture on moral and spiritual issues. Bible reading and church attendance alone do not enable a man to intelligently apply the Bible to areas like economics and foreign policy, either. Yet economics and foreign policy issues do affect families (e.g. Obamacare or border security) , and that's why men need to be tested to see if they know those things. Marriage requires certain behaviors from men, and those behaviors require knowledge and experience. It's just like picking a man for a job in a workplace. In order to pick well, you need to know what the job is and what it requires.

Stephen C. Meyer debates Peter D. Ward on intelligent design and evolution

May 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The speakers

Stephen C. Meyer is director of the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture (CSC) and a founder both of the intelligent design movement and of the CSC, intelligent design's primary intellectual and scientific headquarters. Dr. Meyer is a Cambridge University-trained philosopher of science, the author of peer-reviewed publications in technical, scientific, philosophical and other books and journals. His signal contribution to ID theory is given most fully in *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, published by HarperOne in June 2009.

Graduating from Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington, in 1981 with a degree in physics and earth science, he later became a geophysicist with Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) in Dallas, Texas. From 1981 to 1985, he worked for ARCO in digital signal processing and seismic survey interpretation. As a Rotary International Scholar, he received his training in the history and philosophy of science at Cambridge University, earning a PhD in 1991. His thesis offered a methodological interpretation of origin-of-life research.

Peter D. Ward, Ph.D., is a paleontologist and professor in the Departments of Geology and Biology at the University of Washington in Seattle. He also serves as an adjunct professor of zoology and astronomy. His research specialties include the Cretaceous–Tertiary extinction event and mass extinctions generally. His books include the best-selling "Rare Earth: Why Complex Life Is Uncommon in the Universe" (co-author Donald Brownlee, 2000), "Under a Green Sky: Global Warming, the Mass Extinctions of the Past, and What They Can Tell Us About Our Future" (2007), and "The Medea Hypothesis: Is Life on Earth Ultimately Self-Destructive?" (2009).

The debate

Here's the video of the debate:

The debate itself starts at around 8:19, after all the moderators have spoken.

The debate is focused on disagreements about scientific evidence.

Even though Peter Ward is an atheist, he has co-written a fabulous book that I own and have read called "Rare Earth: Why Complex Life is Uncommon in the Universe". I really recommend getting this book, as it is a great book by two non-theists on the habitability argument. It's sort of a secular precursor to Jay Richards' and Guillermo Gonzalez's "The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos is Designed for Discovery". The habitability argument is a really neglected argument, but it's a good one.

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

June 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas

June 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The lecture: (from 2013)

Note: there is a period of 19 minutes of Q&A at the end of the lecture.

About the speaker:

His full biography is here. (I removed his links from my excerpt text below)

Excerpt:

> I had an interest in science and theology, so in 1977 I chose to go to Biola University where I could study both subjects in detail. I thoroughly enjoyed college and participated in intramural sports, was elected to student government, served as a resident assistant, competed in forensics, and studied a lot. As I neared college graduation my dual interest continued so I applied to seminary and to graduate school. After graduating *summa cum laude* from Biola, I decided to pursue a graduate degree in physics at UCLA.
>
> During my first few years of graduate school, I developed an increased interest in quantum mechanics and subatomic physics and decided to do research in a field that dealt with these subjects. I joined a High Energy Physics experimental group doing research at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to actively participate in research at SLAC. I graduated in 1988 with my Ph.D in High Energy Physics (a.k.a. Elementary Particle Physics). If you would like to know more about High Energy Physics, the Particle Data Group at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory has a very nice interactive adventure that teaches you all about the subject. My research advisor was professor Charles Buchanan and my disertation was titled "A Study of Lambda Polarization and Phi Spin Alignment in Electron-Positron Annihilation at 29 GeV as a Probe of Color Field Behavior."
>
> After graduation, I accepted a post-doctoral research position with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I continued to do research at SLAC where I joined the SLD experiment. My research interests centered on the SLD silicon pixel vertex detector. I wrote most of the offline software for this device, and did physics analysis which used the vertex detector, including tagging *b* quark events for flavor specific QCD (Quantum Chromodynamics) analysis. In the seven years I was employed by UMASS, I only spent 3 days on the Amherst campus. The rest of the time was spent in California.
>
> […]In August 1995, I accepted a job as an Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of Oklahoma (OU) in Norman, Oklahoma. The University of Oklahoma has a vibrant high energy physics research group involved in experiments at the

> Fermi National Accelerator Center (Fermilab), and CERN. I joined the DØ experiment at Fermilab where I continue to do research in elementary particle physics. As a member of the DØ collaboration I have made contributions to the testing of silicon sensors for the upgraded vertex detector, to the track finding algorithms, to a measurement of the photon production cross section which probes the gluon content of protons, and to other QCD measurements. I am currently studying properties of*B* mesons that contain a *b*-quark, the production cross section of jets coming from quarks and gluons, and other QCD analyses. At CERN, I am a collaborator on the ATLAS detector.
>
> I received tenure in 2001 and was promoted to the rank of Professor in the summer of 2010. Most of the time at OU I have taught introductory physics classes to physics majors, engineers, and life science majors. In these classes I have used a number of interactive techniques to facilitate student participation and learning. I have been privileged to win a few awards for my teaching. In 1999, the Associated Students selected me as the Outstanding Professor in the College of Arts and Science, and in 2000 I was awarded the BP AMOCO Foundation Good Teaching Award. In 2002, I was given the Regents Award for Superior Teaching. I received the Carlisle Mabrey and Lurine Mabrey Presidential Professorship in 2006 which is given to "faculty members who excel in all their professional activities and who relate those activities to the students they teach and mentor."

He seems to have done a fine job of integrating his faith with a solid career in physics research.

Summary:

- It used to be true that most of the great scientists were believers in God
- But now science has advanced and we have better instruments – is it still true?
- Today, many people believe that science has shows that the universe and Earth are not special
- We used to believe that the Earth was the center of the universe, and Darwin showed we are not designed
- The problem with this view is that it is based on old science, not modern science
- Three topics: origin of the universe, fine-tuning of the universe, the Rare Earth hypothesis

Experimental evidence for the origin of the universe:

- #1: Hubble discovered that the universe expands because of redshifting of light from distant galaxies
- #2: Measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation show the universe had a beginnning
- #3: Measurements of the light element (hydrogen and helium) abundances confirm

an origin of the universe
- The best explanation for an absolute origin of space, time, matter and energy is a supernatural cause

Experimental evidence for the design of the universe:

- #1: The amount of matter: a bit less = no stars and galaxies, a bit more = universe recollapses
- #2: The strong force: a bit more = only hydrogen, a bit more = little or no hydrogen
- #3: Carbon resonance level: a bit higher = no carbon, a bit lower = no carbon

Experimental evidence for galactic, stellar and planetary habitability:

- #1: Galaxy: produces high number of heavy elements and low radiation
- #2: Star: long stable lifetime, burns bright, bachelor star, third generation star (10 billion years must elapsed),
- #3: Planet: mass of planet, stable orbit, liquid water, tectonic activity, tilt, moon

Naturalistic explanations:

- Humans evolve to the point where they reach back in time and create finely-tuned universe
- Eternally existing multiverse

Hawking and Mlodinow response to Rare Earth:

- There are lots of planets so one must support life
- Odds of a planet that supports life are low even with 10^22 planets

Hawking and Mlodinow proposal of M-theory multiverse:

- There is no experimental evidence for M-theory being true
- M-theory is not testable now and is not likely to be testable in the future
- But science is about making testable predictions, not about blind speculation

Hawking and Mlodinow no-boundary proposal:

- This theory requires the laws of physics to exist prior to the universe
- But where do you get laws of physics before there is any physical world?
- There is no experimental evidence for no-boundary proposal
- All the evidence we have now (redshift, CMBR, H-He abundances) is for Big Bang

What science has revealed provide abundant evidence for a transcendent Creator and Designer

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

EPA proposes 30% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions

June 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal reports.

Excerpt:

> The Environmental Protection Agency will propose a draft rule on Monday seeking a 30% reduction in carbon-dioxide emissions by 2030 from existing power plants based on emission levels from 2005, according to two people who have been briefed on the rule, setting in motion the main piece of President Barack Obama's climate-change agenda.
>
> The rule, scheduled to be completed one year from now, will give flexibility to the states, which must implement the rules and submit compliance plans to EPA by June 2016. States can decide how to meet the reductions, including joining or creating new cap-and-trade programs, deploying more renewable energy or ramping up energy-efficiency technologies.
>
> Each state will have different percent reduction standards, and the national average will be 25% by 2020 and 30% by 2030, these people said.
>
> The proposed rule will regulate carbon emissions from hundreds of fossil-fuel power plants across the U.S., including about 600 coal plants, which will be hit hardest by the standard.
>
> "EPA will release its proposed carbon pollution reduction rule on Monday," EPA spokesman Tom Reynolds said. "Until then the agency will not comment on any information that may or may not be in the proposal."

So let's work out what follows next. If emissions are cut, then production will be reduced. It's a law of economics that when supply goes down, and demand stays the same, then prices will rise. Either that or the power plants will have to become more efficient, which also costs more money. Are you ready for higher electricity prices?

Update: Republicans say EPA regulation will up to 800, 000 jobs.

Why does God let people suffer? Why is there so much evil in the world?

June 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just wanted to draw your attention to this 4 page essay by Joe Manzari, which is the best darn summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen. The problem of evil is an objection to the existence of God based on the presence of evil or suffering in the world. The arguments basically infer that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then there should not *be* any evil or suffering.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An exampel of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omnipotent being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God

> can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order for the character of humans to develop through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to show* that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that premise 2 is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil that we observe more compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.

Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life. And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.

2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   We humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. Part of knowing God is knowing what he designed us to do – to love him and to love others. And so, the less we know about God, the more we stray from his design for our lives.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.
(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That’s right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again. More on this argument for God’s existence *from evil* here.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I’ve been through… but then, that’s why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

For more on the problem of evil, listen to this lecture by Douglas Geivett, professor of philosophy at Biola University. Then you *must listen* to this debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (with summary by me). Another debate transcript is here, with William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen. Here’s a book debate between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, published by Oxford University Press, 2004.

Philip E. Johnson lectures on science, evolution and religion

June 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this fun lecture by the grandfather of the big-tent intelligent design movement, Berkeley law professor Philip E. Johnson.

I'll bet you guys have all heard of him, but you've never heard him speak, right? Well, I was a young man, I used to listen to Phil's lectures and his debates with Eugenie Scott quite a bit. This is one of my favorite lectures. Very easy to understand, and boilerplate for anything else in the origins debate. This is a great lecture – funny, engaging and useful. You will definitely listen to this lecture several times if you listen to it once.

The MP3 is here. (91 minutes, 62 megabytes)

The Inherit the Wind stereotype

- Many people get their understanding of origins by watching movies like "Inherit the Wind" (or reading science fiction)
- The actual events of the Scopes trial are nothing like what the movie portrays
- The law forbidding the teaching of evolution was symbolic, not meant to be enforced
- The actual Scopes trial was a publicity stunt to attract attention to Dayton, TN to bring business to the town
- The ACLU advertised for a teacher who would be willing to be sued
- They found a substitute physical education teacher who would be willing to "break" the law
- The movie is nothing like the actual events the movie is a morality play
- The religious people are evil and stupid and ignorant and bigoted
- The scientists and lawyers are all intelligent, romantic, and honest seekers of the truth
- The religious people think that the Bible trumps science and science is not as reliable as the Bible
- The movie argues that the reason why there is ANY dissent to evolution is because of Biblical fundamentalism
- The movie presents the idea that there are no scientific problems with evolution
- The movie says that ONLY Biblical fundamentalists who believe in 6 day, 24-hour creation doubt evolution
- The movie says that Biblical fundamentalism are close-minded, and not open to scientific truth
- The movie says that people who read the Bible as making factual claims are misinterpreting the Bible
- The movie says that smart people read the Bible for comfort and feelings and arbitrary values, not for truth

Guided evolution and methodological naturalism

- What scientists mean by evolution is that fully naturalistic, unguided, materialistic mechanisms caused the diversity of life
- Scientists do not allow that God had any real objective effect on how life was created
- Scientists think that nature did all the creating, and any mention of God is unnecessary opinion – God didn't DO ANYTHING
- Scientists operate with one overriding rule – you can only explain the physical world with physical and material causes
- Scientists DO NOT allow that God could have done anything detectable by the sciences
- Scientists WILL NOT consider the idea that natural, material processes might be INSUFFICIENT for explaining everything in nature
- You cannot even ask the question about whether natural laws, matter and chance can explain something in nature
- Intelligent causes can NEVER be the explanation for anything in nature, and you can't even test experimentally to check that
- Scientists ASSUME that everything can be explained with natural laws, matter and chance – no questioning of natural causes is allowed
- Where no natural explanation of a natural phenomenon is available, scientists SPECULATE about undiscovered natural explanations
- The assumption of naturalistic sufficiency is called "methodological naturalism"
- To question the assumptions that natural is all there is, and that nature has to do its own creating, makes you an "enemy of science"
- But Johnson says that *naturalists* are the enemies of science, because they are like the Biblical fundamentalists
- Naturalists have a presumption that prevents them from being willing to follow the evidence where it is leading
- Experiments are not even needed, because the presumption of naturalism overrides any experimental finding that falsifies the sufficiency of natural causes to explain some natural phenomenon

What can natural selection and mutation actually do?

- what evolution has actually been observed to do is explain changing populations of moths and finches
- finches with smaller or larger beaks are observed to have differential survival rates when there are droughts or floods
- no new body plan or new organ type has been observed to emerge from these environmental pressures
- the only kind of evolution that has been observed is evolution *within types* – no new genetic instructions are created

- in textbooks, only confirming examples are presented – but what is required is a broad pattern of gradual development of species
- if you look at the fossil record, what you see in most cases is variation within types based on changing environments
- the real question is: can natural law and chance *be observed* to be doing any creating of body plans and organ types?

What kind of effect requires an intelligent cause?

- the thing to be explained in the history of life is the functional information sequences
- you need to have a sequence of symbols or characters that is sufficiently long
- your long sequence of characters has to be sequenced in the right order to have biological function
- the only thing that can create long sequences of functional information is an intelligent cause
- intelligent design people accept micro-evolution – changes within types – because that's been observed
- the real thing to be explained is the first living cell's functional information, and the creation of new functional information

Critical response

The next 15 minutes of the lecture contain a critical response from a philosophy professor who thinks that there have been no developments in design arguments since Aquinas and Paley. He basically confirms the stereotypes that Johnson outlined in the first part of the lecture. I recommend listening to this to see what opposition to intelligent design really looks like. It's not concerned with answering scientific questions – they want to talk about God, the Bible and Noah's ark. It's our job to get people like this critic to focus on the science.

Here's my snarky rendition of what he said:

1) Don't take the Bible literally, even if the genre is literal.

- all opposition to evolution is based on an ignorant, fundamentalist, literal reading of the Bible
- the Bible really doesn't communicate anything about the way the world really is
- the Bible is just meant to suggest certain opinions and experiences which you may find fetching, or not, depending on your feelings and community
- if Christians would just interpret the Bible as myths and opinions on par with other personal preferences, then evolution is no threat to religious belief

2) As long as you treat the design argument as divorced from evidence, it's not very effective

- the latest and best version of the design argument is the old Paley argument which

involves no experimental data, so I'll critique that
- this 200-year old argument which doesn't rely on science has serious problems, and unnamed Christians agree with me!
- Christians should NOT try to prove God's existence using evidence from the natural world (as Romans 1 says), and in fact it's "Pelagianism" to even try
- Christians should divorce their faith from logic and evidence even though the Bible presents faith as being rooted in reason and evidence
- Christians should not tie their faith to the science of today, because science is always changing and the theism-friendly evidence of today might be overturned tomorrow
- It's a good idea for me to critique the arguments of 1000-year old people who did not know anything about the cosmic fine-tuning argument – that's fair!
- I find it very useful to tell people that the argument from design is false without mentioning any design arguments from DNA or cosmic fine-tuning
- We need to assume that the natural world is explainable using only natural causes before we look at any evidence
- We should assume that natural causes create all life, and then rule out all experimental evidence for intelligent causes that we have today
- As long as you accept that God is a personal opinion that has nothing to do with reality, then you can do science
- The non-Christian process theologian Teilhard de Chardin accepts evolution, and therefore so should you
- Remember when theists said God caused thunder because he was bowling in the clouds and then we found out he didn't? Yeah well – maybe tomorrow we'll find out that functional sequences of amino acids and proteins have natural causes! What would you do then?

3) What the Bible really says is that you should be a political liberal

Q&A time

The lecture concludes with 13 minutes of questions.

Obama trades five senior Taliban commanders for an American soldier who deserted

June 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports on a prisoner exchange that only a traitor could approve of.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration is facing mounting questions about the controversial prisoner swap that freed Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl from jihadists in Pakistan in exchange for the transfer and ultimate release of five senior Taliban commanders previously held in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
>
> Lawmakers are questioning the wisdom and legality of the move. Intelligence officials are expressing deep concerns about its ramifications. And those who served with Bergdahl—or took risks in the efforts to rescue him—are directly challenging the Obama administration's characterization of the former captive and his actions.
>
> In an appearance on ABC's *This Week* on Sunday, National Security Adviser Susan Rice claimed that Bergdahl "wasn't simply a hostage, he was an American prisoner of war, taken on the battlefield." She added: "He served the United States with honor and distinction."
>
> "That's not true," says Specialist Cody Full, who served in the same platoon as Bergdahl, and whose tweets over the weekend as @CodyFNfootball offered an early firsthand account of Bergdahl's departure. "He was not a hero. What he did was not honorable. He knowingly deserted and put thousands of people in danger because he did. We swore to an oath and we upheld ours. He did not."
>
> "He walked off—and 'walked off' is a nice way to put it," says Specialist Josh Cornelison, the medic in Bergdahl's platoon. "He was accounted for late that afternoon. He very specifically planned to walk out in the middle of the night."
>
> "He was a deserter," says Specialist Full. "There's no question in the minds of anyone in our platoon."

But Susan Rice says this 5 for 1 trade is a good deal. Should we take her word over the word of the soldiers who served with Bergdahl? I think we shouldn't, because we know she lied about the Benghazi terrorist attack being a "protest" caused by a Youtube video.

The Washington Times points out that other soldiers lost their lives trying to search for the deserter.

Excerpt:

> At least six soldiers died while searching for Sgt. Bowe Bergdhal in hostile Taliban territory when he went missing in Afghanistan five years ago.
>
> And now, those who served with those six say Mr. Bergdhal is at fault for their

> deaths because he abandoned his military post, the New York Post reported.
>
> “I was pissed off then and I am even more so now with everything going on,” said former Sgt. Matt Vierkant, a member of Mr. Bergdahl’s platoon, to CNN. “Bowe Bergdahl deserted during a time of war and his fellow Americans lost their lives searching for him.”

I think the release of 5 Taliban commanders is probably going to cost even more American lives than the 6 already lost. But judging from the administration’s actions with the VA scandal and Benghazi, we seem to be more concerned with helping our enemies than with helping our own soldiers and diplomats. And I’m sure on the left they would think that this was a good thing, somehow. I don’t think it’s a good thing.

Are bad or sub-optimal designs in nature supportive of atheism?

June 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Engineer Bill Pratt explains why "bad design" is not supportive of atheism at Tough Questions Answered.

Excerpt:

> The other day I heard an atheist say that the fact that he sees poor design in the natural world leads him to the conclusion that the Christian God does not exist. Here is the argument:
>
> 1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent creator God would create orga nisms that have optimal design.
> 2. Organisms have features that are sub-optimal.
> 3. Therefore, God either did not create these organisms or is not omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent.
>
> There are several things wrong with this argument, but I want to focus on premise 2 – *organisms have features that are sub-optimal*.
>
> I am an electrical engineer who has been designing integrated circuits (IC) for 20 years, either personally or through managing other engineers. I am extremely familiar with IC design. Over the years, I have often heard young engineers, who did not design a particular IC, criticize the design of that IC by saying it is sub-optimal, that they could do a better job. I have then seen these same engineers eat crow when they finally talk to the original designer and discover the *constraints* that original engineer was under when he designed the IC and the *purposes* for which he designed the IC.
>
> It is *impossible* to judge a design as optimal or sub-optimal without knowing the *purposes of the designer* and without knowing the *constraints* the designer faced during the design. Young engineers just assume that they know both when they look at somebody else's design. After being embarrassed a few times, they usually drop this approach and gain some humility.

Engineers know that designs are always a balance between competing NFRs – non-functional requirements. Many of the the NFRs are often opposed to each other, like speed and memory. If you want something fast, it often requires more memory. If you want something cheap, you sacrifice memory and your program runs slower because there is more disk access.

Even more than that, atheists assume that if God designed organisms, then he should have designed it for our benefit – to make us happy, healthy and long-lived. But that is not God's purpose for making us. He doesn't want us to be happy (apart from him), he

wants us to know him. And there is nothing to say that designs that are “bad” for happiness are also bad for knowing God.

Can atheists have meaning and purpose in life?

June 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post about it from Aaron Brake, writing on Please Convince Me blog.

Excerpt:

> The question of God's existence is the most important question we can seek to answer. If God does not exist and we do not survive the death of our bodies, life is ultimately absurd. J.P. Moreland provides an illustration which helps bring this truth home:
>
> Suppose I invited you over to my house to play a game of Monopoly. When you arrive I announce that the game is going to be a bit different. Before us is the Monopoly board, a set of jacks, a coin, the television remote, and a refrigerator in the corner of the room. I grant you the first turn, and puzzlingly, inform you that you may do anything you want: fill the board with hotels, throw the coin in the air, toss a few jacks, fix a sandwich, or turn on the television. You respond by putting hotels all over the board and smugly sit back as I take my turn. I respond by dumping the board upside down and tossing the coin in the air. Somewhat annoyed, you right the board and replenish it with hotels. I turn on the television and dump the board over again.
>
> Now it wouldn't take too many cycles of this nonsense to recognize that it didn't really matter what you did with your turn, and here's why. There is no goal, no purpose to the game we are playing. Our successive turns form a series of one meaningless event after another. Why? Because if the game as a whole has no purpose, the individual moves within the game are pointless. Conversely, only a game's actual purpose according to its inventor can give the individual moves significance.[1]
>
> As Moreland articulates, if the game of Monopoly as a whole has no purpose, the individual moves within the game have no meaning or value. The only way your moves within the game of Monopoly have significance is if you discover the purpose of the game and you align yourself with that purpose.
>
> As it is with Monopoly, so it is with life. Like the game of Monopoly, the only way our individual lives have any ultimate meaning or value is if life has purpose behind it, and real purpose requires both God and life after death.

My experience with atheists is that they are not really concerned about letting their life be accountable to facts. In atheism, the desire for happiness comes first, and the facts have to be massaged to justify it. For example, if there is a fine-tuning argument, they invent the multiverse. If there is a cosmological argument, they invent the eternal universe. If the origin of life is a problem, they invent aliens to seed the Earth with life. If the resurrection is a problem, then Jesus never existed. The main thing is that no God is

there to suggest any other purpose to the atheist than what he wants to do himself. Brake explains:

> Some atheists object at this point: "But I *do* have purpose in life. I *do* have meaning." In a 2010 debate entitled "*Does the Universe Have a Purpose*?" skeptic Michael Shermer offers four things that allow people to feel more happy, fulfilled, and purposeful in life, regardless of whether or not God exists:[7]
>
> 1. Deep love and family commitment
> 2. Meaningful work and career
> 3. Social and political involvement
> 4. A sense of transcendency
>
> Later in the debate, Shermer goes on to say,
>
> Don't you think even if there isn't a God that you should find some purpose?…Maybe there's a God, maybe there's not. Either way, don't you think you ought to roll up your sleeves and see if you can figure out some useful things to do to give yourself purpose outside of God? Don't you think that's worthwhile?…Shouldn't I be doing these nice things for other people? Shouldn't I be finding love and commitment to somebody, a meaningful career, helping my social community and being involved in politics, trying to transcend myself and do something outside of myself? Shouldn't I be doing those things anyway?
>
> But notice that Shermer here completely misses the point, which is this: if there is no God, then there is no ultimate, *objective* meaning, value, and purpose in life. Sure, you can create *subjective* meaning and purpose if you so desire. You can live for any personal, *subjective* cause or reason that makes you happy. You can even do *nice* things regardless of whether or not God exists. But Shermer offers no account or explanation as to *why* if there is no God any of these things are *objectively* good, or why any of these things are *objectively* meaningful, valuable or purposeful, or why we should pursue *these* ends as opposed to others that may make us more fulfilled and happy. In the end, it makes no difference, objectively speaking, whether or not you pursue these goals or not because in the end, everything winds up the same anyway: you die, I die, the universe dies, and that's just all there is to it. Christian theist William Lane Craig offered this rejoinder both to Shermer and Richard Dawkins in the debate:
>
> There has been a major shift in the last two speeches in this debate. Did you see what it was? We've argued tonight first of all that if God does not exist, then the universe has no purpose. Our atheist colleagues admit that. But now what they've been claiming is, "But look, we can construct a purpose for our lives," in Richard Dawkins' words, or in Michael Shermer's words, "We can develop ways to make us *feel* better, *feeling like* we have a purpose." Now you see this just is to say that we can *pretend* that the universe exists for some purpose, and this is just make-believe. This is the subjective *illusion* of purpose, but there is on this

> view no *objective*purpose for the universe. And we of course would never deny that you can't develop *subjective* purposes for your life. The point is on atheism they're all illusory…But you cannot live as though your life were purposeless and meaninglessness and therefore you adopt subjective *illusions* of purpose to make your live livable. And that's why I think atheism is not only irrational, it is profoundly unlivable. You cannot live consistently and purposefully within the context of an atheistic worldview.

The problem with atheism is that they can't prefer Stalin's purpose to William Wilberforce's purpose, on their view, because people just choose their own purpose and everyone's purpose is as valid as anyone else's. On their view, BOTH Stalin and Wilberforce's purposes are equally rational to choose because the criterion for choosing is happiness and satisfaction in this life. An atheist can claim that such and such is "meaningful" or "good", to try to sound reasonable in front of a Judeo-Christian crowd. But the problem is that on their view, any purpose that anyone might choose for themselves is equally justified because they are all SUBJECTIVE. If there are no rules to the game, then any arbitrary choice of how to play it is as justified as any other.

What you find when talking to atheists is that they tend to very much favor the rights of the strong over responsibilities to the weak. You won't find too many atheists in favor of chastity, right to life or natural marriage. Chastity, right to life and natural marriage exist to provide children (who are less powerful) with what they need, at the expense of selfish adults. How would you ground that in an atheistic universe. Give up my sexual rights for some weak child? No way. What Shermer says sounds so good until you think it through a little more and realize that he is pushing for relativism.

Court forces baker to make gay wedding cakes and undergo sensitivity training

June 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Todd Starnes covers the story at Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A family owned bakery has been ordered to make wedding cakes for gay couples and guarantee that its staff be given comprehensive training on Colorado's anti-discrimination laws after the state's Civil Rights Commission determined the Christian baker violated the law by refusing to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex couple.
>
> Jack Phillips, the owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop, in Lakewood, Colorado was directed to change his store policies immediately and force his staff to attend the training sessions. For the next two years, Phillips will also be required to submit quarterly reports to the commission to confirm that he has not turned away customers based on their sexual orientation.
>
> […]Nicolle Martin, an attorney with Alliance Defending Freedom, called the ruling Orwellian and said they are considering an appeal.
>
> "They are turning people of faith into religious refugees," Martin told me. "Is this the society that we want to live in – where people of faith are driven out of business?"
>
> Martin said it was "truly frightening" that Phillips will be forced to submit quarterly reports to the government disclosing whether he turned away any wedding cake business.
> "There will be some reporting requirements so that Jack can demonstrate that he doesn't exercise his belief system anymore – that he has divested himself of his beliefs," she said.
> He will also be required to create new policies and procedures for his staff.
>
> "We consider this reporting to be aimed at rehabilitating Jack so that he has the right thoughts," Martin said. "That's offensive to everything America stands for."
>
> Phillips, who is celebrating his 40th year in business this week, told me he's not going to create any new policies.
>
> "My old ones are pretty adequate as far as I'm concerned," he said. "I don't plan on giving up my faith and changing because of that."
>
> The controversy started in 2012 when a gay couple asked Phillips to make their wedding cake. Phillips politely declined, saying he could not make a cake promoting a same-sex ceremony because of his faith. He offered to make them any other baked item they wanted.
>
> Charlie Craig and David Mullins filed a complaint with the Colorado Civil Rights

> Commission alleging they were discriminated against because of their sexual orientation. For the record, same-sex marriage is against the law in Colorado.
>
> The commission affirmed a civil court's ruling that the bakery cannot discriminate against persons in a public place based on sexual orientation.
>
> "You can have your beliefs, but you can't hurt other people at the same time," Commission Chairwoman Katina Banks told The Denver Channel.
>
> ACLU attorney Amanda Goad, who heads up the organization's LBGT group, heralded the ruling.
>
> "Religious freedom is undoubtedly an important American value, but so is the right to be treated equally under the law free from discrimination," she said in a statement.
>
> […]"Jack doesn't turn people away," Martin told me. "There are just some events that he won't lend his artistry to."
>
> […]Martin said the Alliance Defending Freedom will "continue to stand with Jack against overreach and tyranny by the state."
>
> "Jack has gone out on a limb and taken this stand – and not capitulated to the government's demands," she said. "That speaks volumes about him."
>
> And should the highest court in the land force Jack to do the bidding of homosexuals?
>
> "There's civil disobedience," Phillips told me. "We'll see what happens. I'm not giving up my faith. Too many people have died for this faith to give it up that easily."
>
> Meanwhile, the bullying tactics of the militant gay rights community have not hampered the bakery's bottom line. They've gotten so much business from the sales of cookies and brownies, they've temporarily stopped making wedding cakes.
>
> "Obey Christ rather than worry about what man can do to you," Phillips said.
>
> There you have it, folks. In Colorado, you can't have your cake and religious beliefs, too.

The most alarming thing that I see in the culture is the astonishing speed at which religious liberty is being crushed by the government in order to force everyone to promote gay rights. I don't mind that people have a different sexuality than I do, but I don't want to be forced to participate in a celebration of it.

Midwife refused employment because she refuses to perform abortions

June 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News has the story.

Excerpt:

> Ruth Nordstrom of Scandinavian Human Rights Lawyers, reports that a lawsuit has been filed against the Swedish Government on the right to freedom of conscience and religion for a midwife who has been refused employment because of her conscientious objection to abortion.
>
> Jönköping County Council's decisions constitute an interference with the exercise of Mrs. Ellinor Grimmarks right to freedom of conscience and religion under the European Convention on Human Rights, says Ruth Nordstrom, Legal Counsel and President of Scandinavian Human Rights Lawyers. – The County Council has supported the withdrawals of offered job positions as a midwife at three different hospitals, and set up an obligation to perform abortions as a condition for employment as a midwife. This is a requirement that puts persons of a certain religion or other beliefs in a discriminatory position.
>
> […]Roger Kiska, Senior Legal Counsel, Alliance Defending Freedom Europe, says "in a civil society, in this day and age, it is shocking that we are denying one of the most fundamental of human rights, the right to conscience. A society has truly lost its way when it excludes someone from the healthcare profession merely because they want to bring human life into the world rather than destroying it. We are confident that the Swedish courts will rule in Mrs. Grimmark's favour, in favour of decency, and in favour of human rights."

Meanwhile, in the UK, this UK Daily Mail article from Dina.

Excerpt:

> Midwives have been given the green light to take the main role in performing abortions.
>
> New Department of Health rules say for the first time that midwives and nurses may 'participate in the termination'. The controversial guidelines were last night condemned by MPs and anti-abortion campaigners.
>
> Crossbench peer Lord Alton said: 'It is particularly perverse that midwives, who do the beautiful work of helping babies into the world, will now be called upon to end the lives of children they might otherwise work to save.'
>
> […]Under previous guidelines, midwives and nurses could undertake 'certain actions' in helping to terminate unwanted pregnancies.
>
> But the new rules go much further and state clearly that a 'nurse or midwife may

> administer the drugs used for medical abortions'.
>
> […]Dr Michael Scott, a consultant psychologist and critic of abortion law, believes the new guidance is designed to free up funds in the NHS. 'Nurses would be cheaper than doctors,' he said. 'One can see that from a purely economic point of view, the Government is moving in that direction.'
>
> Dr Tony Cole, chairman of the Medical Ethics Alliance, added: 'Midwifery is one of the most life-enhancing fields in the whole of medicine and to ask midwives to carry out these death sentences is obscene. It is a betrayal of what midwives are for.'

It will be interesting to see if the UK follows Sweden in forcing midwives to perform abortions or lose their jobs, rather than just "allowing" them to perform them. I think it will quickly go from permission, to pressure, to mandatory assistance – or else.

J. Warner Wallace explains and defends the doctrine of Hell in five podcasts

June 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Straight talk on the doctrine of Hell from cold case homicide detective J. Warner Wallace.

Number 1:

> *In the wake of Rob Bell's new book, "Love Wins," many people are beginning to question the nature and existence of Hell and how exactly God decides who must go there. For many,* the idea that our temporal, finite sin on earth should deserve an eternal punishment of infinite torment in hell is ridiculously inequitable. Why would God torture infinitely those who have only sinned finitely? *Jim addresses this objection and answers listener email.*
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 2:

> *A loving God would never create a place like Hell, would He? Any God that would send people to a place of punishment and torment is unloving by definition, right? In this podcast, Jim responds to these foundational objections to the existence of Hell. In addition, Jim comments on the Harris / Craig debate and answers listener email related to hearing God's voice.*
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 3:

> *In this podcast, Jim answers the objection that God would send people like Gandhi to Hell (simply because they are not Christians) alongside people like Hitler (who have committed unspeakable atrocities). How can a reasonable and just God be the source of such inequitable punishment? Also Jim answers listener email related to the power of prayer, the importance of evidential apologetics and the grounding for objective morality.*
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 4:

> Isn't it unfair for God to penalize people who are otherwise good, just because they haven't heard about Jesus? A good God would not send good people to Hell. Jim responds to this objection and answers listener email related to the Craig/Harris debate, pre-existing mythologies that are similar to Jesus, and the difficult, exclusive nature of "election".
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 5:

> If God is all-loving, why doesn't he "reform" people rather than simply "punish" them in Hell? Skeptics sometimes argue that a God who simply punishes his children in Hell is a sadistic and vengeful God, unworthy of our worship. Jim responds to this objection and answers listener email related to the nature of "election", the evidence for "annihilationism", and a political quote related to same sex marriage.
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Good listening to help you defend a doctrine that is very unpopular with people who think God should be their cosmic butler.

Army told soldiers who served with Bergdahl told to lie about his desertion

June 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Left-wing Mediaite reports.

Excerpt:

> In an appearance on Fox & Friends on Wednesday, retired Army Spc. Josh Fuller, a soldier who served with Sgt. Bowe Bergdahlsince 2008, said that the military informed him and other soldiers that the "narrative" they should maintain is that Bergdahl was captured by the Taliban rather than that he intentionally left his base. When asked if he believed he was told not to "tell the truth" about Bergdahl by military authorities, Fuller said that he did.
>
> "The sentiment that everybody knew was that he walked off the base in the middle of the night, left all his gear there, and went – just walked off the post," Fuller said. "So, we had all known that it was — that he had deserted his post, and there was never anything about him getting captured or POW until a little while later whenever it came down from the chain of command that we needed to keep quiet and not say anything."
>
> "We're going with the narrative that he was captured," Fuller said of the military's position on Bergdahl's alleged desertion.
>
> "So, they basically told you not to tell the truth," Fox host Brian Kilmeade said.
>
> "Yes, sir," Fuller replied.
>
> Fuller concluded by corroborating the claims of Bergdahl's former team leader, Sgt. Evan Buetow,who told CNN on Tuesday that the Taliban's attacks became more directed after Bergdahl was captured.
>
> "The ambushes we use, the certain tactics we use, the Taliban was picking up on those things," Fuller said. "You could tell it was from somebody on the inside that had that info."

Wow. So we gave away five Taliban commanders not just for a deserter, but for a traitor. Is this supposed to make us safer?

What do fathers contribute to the development of their children?

June 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this article from the New York Post.

Excerpt:

> Fathers, it turns out, contribute far more to their children than many of us realize.
>
> Those contributions begin during pregnancy, before fathers and their children have even met. Studies show that the death rate of infants whose fathers were not around during pregnancy is nearly four times that of those with engaged dads. And depression in fathers during their partners' pregnancies — which is more common than most people realize — can increase the child's lifelong risk of depression.
>
> After birth, children whose fathers play with them, read to them, take them on outings, and care for them have fewer behavioral problems during their early school years. And they have a lower risk of delinquency or criminal behavior as adolescents.
>
> Some of fathers' contributions are surprising. One might guess, for example, that mothers have more influence than fathers on their children's language development. Despite the growing number of women in the workforce, mothers still spend more time with children in many families than fathers do.
>
> But that turns out not to be the case. Lynne Vernon-Feagans of the University of North Carolina, who studies language development, has found that when it comes to vocabulary, fathers matter more than mothers.
>
> In middle-class families, she found that parents' overall level of education — and the quality of child care — were both related to children's language development. But fathers made unique contributions to children's language development that went beyond the contributions of education and child care.
>
> When fathers used more words with their children during play, children had more advanced language skills a year later. And that is likely also linked with later success in school.
>
> And when Vernon-Feagans looked at poor families, she found much the same thing. She visited families when a child was 6 months old, 15 months old and 3 years old. She found that fathers' education and their use of vocabulary when reading picture books to their children at 6 months of age were significantly related to the children's expressiveness at 15 months and use of advanced language at age 3.
>
> This held true no matter what the mother's educational level was or how she spoke to the children.

> “I do think our children see it as very special when they do book reading with their fathers,” Vernon-Feagans says. “They may listen more and acquire language in a special way.”
>
> Several studies suggest that fathers also have a powerful influence on their daughters’ sexual behavior during adolescence.
>
> This became clear in 2011 when Frayser High School in Memphis, Tenn., attracted national attention for its high pregnancy rate: About one in five of its female students was either pregnant or had recently given birth.
>
> One local official blamed the high pregnancy rate on television shows such as MTV’s “16 and Pregnant” and “Teen Mom.” The official worried that these shows were encouraging Frayser’s female students to have unprotected sex earlier and more often.
>
> That explanation seemed to make sense. But when psychologist Sarah E. Hill of Texas Christian University examined the situation, she noticed another striking fact: One in four households was headed by a single mother. Studies have revealed “a robust association between father absence — both physical and psychological — and accelerated reproductive development and sexual risk-taking in daughters,” she wrote.
>
> The fathers’ absence in so many families was likely more important than what their daughters watched on television.
>
> These are just a few of the many, many studies in recent years that have demonstrated a powerful link between fathers and their children.

It’s a good summary of the research. We all know that research clearly shows that single motherhood is bad for children, generally. The harm is different depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl, but both sexes are harmed by father absence. So then why do we think that same-sex marriage will be good for children? Either the child will be lacking their biological mother or father. In the case of two lesbians, the child they raise will be facing all the problems described in the research on children raised without their fathers. Why is it a good thing to screw over children just so that adults can be more free to be selfish and destructive?

Ronald Reagan's 40th anniversary D-Day speech: the boys of Pointe du Hoc

June 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

June 6, 1944 D-Day Normandy Invasion Map

It's June 6th, today, and it's the anniversary of D-Day: the Allied invasion of northern France – the beginning of the end of World War 2. One of the most pivotal events of that day was the assault on German gun emplacements by members of the Army Rangers at a fortified position called "Pointe du Hoc".

President Ronald Reagan recognized the soldiers who attacked Pointe du Hoc back in 1984:

You can read the full transcript of that speech here.

Ronald Reagan also made the case for gratitude and vigilance:

Here's the hymn that starts to play at the end:

The Boys of Pointe du Hoc

Here's a summary of the Pointe du Hoc mission:

> [Lt. Col. James Earl] Rudder took part in the D-Day landings as Commanding Officer of the United States Army's 2nd Ranger Battalion. His U.S. Army Rangers stormed the beach at Pointe du Hoc and, under constant enemy fire, scaled 100-foot (30 meter) cliffs to reach and destroy German gun batteries. The battalion's casualty rate for this perilous mission was greater than 50 percent. Rudder himself was wounded twice during the course of the fighting. In spite of this, they dug in and fought off German counter-attacks for two days until relieved. He and his men helped to successfully establish a beachhead for the Allied forces.

You can watch a three-clip documentary on it, too: part 1, part 2, part 3.

Although initially, the Rangers did not find the guns where they had expected them, they did find them further back behind the cliffs and destroyed them there, removing a threat to the forces that would be landing later.

What does D-Day mean to Christians in particular?

A Christian friend asked me what she should be thinking about when I sent her one of the videos above, and so I wrote her this to explain why I sent her the video:

> To make you close your eyes and think in a more practical way about what it means for someone to sacrifice their lives to save you, of course. What it means to look up cliffs at machine guns, barbed wire and mortars raining death on you and to take a rope in your hands and to climb up a sheer cliff, under heavy fire, in order to save generations yet unborn and freedom itself.
>
> To think about a concrete example helps us to be able to appreciate what Christ did for us in giving his life for us so that we could be free of sin, as well.
>
> This is the insight that drives my entire interest in war and military history, in fact.
>
> What does this mean: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
>
> The more you know about D-Day, the more fearful what Jesus did appears, and the more you can be grateful.
>
> Bullets and shrapnel are scary… and so are nails and lashes. Why on Earth would anyone endure either for me? And what should my response be to it?
>
> I think it is helpful to explain Christianity to those who are not yet Christian, and for Christians to fully appreciate what Christianity is all about.
>
> We were in peril. And now we have been saved. But at a cost.

I think that it's important for Christians to look to history, art, poetry and music to help them to reflect and comprehend the sacrifice that Christ made for us in dying on the cross to protect us from peril. What must the cross have looked like to Jesus? It must have been something like what the Omaha beach looked like to the Americans landing in Normandy. Jesus saw whips, thorns and nails, and the heroes of Normandy saw 88 mm AT guns, 81 mm mortars and MG42 machine guns. How should you feel about people who face death on your behalf? Think about it.

Darwinist Karl Giberson uses photo-shopped image of baby with tail in evolution debate

June 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Evolution News reports.

Excerpt:

> OK, if there was any doubt that Karl Giberson's tailed-baby photo is a Photoshop creation, that doubt is now dispelled. I emailed the creator of the image, photographer Larry Dunstan, to make sure I hadn't misunderstood. Yes, confirmed the helpful and candid Mr. Dunstan, it was created with Photoshop using a photo of a tail-free two-week-old baby. The tail is not genuine. It was generated by a computer, not by, as Giberson thought, a "gene for tails."
>
> The reader who found the source image on the Internet for me, over at Science Photo Library, works in graphic design and 3D modeling. Says reader Ryan, what made him leery was "the lack of shadow from the tail," and the "framing and composition," which don't match what you'd expect from "a photo intended to document a mutation."
>
> Right. Casey and I had that same gut reaction, but it's good to have our response confirmed by professionals — again.
>
> […]Why do I keep harping on this? Only because human origins is an ultimate question and using human "tails" as evidence for common descent is a mainstay of Darwin defenders.
>
> Theistic evolutionist Dr. Giberson is noted for having criticized and broken with other Evangelical Christians over issues having to do with, according to his characterization, intellectual and scientific integrity. See his book *The Anointed: Evangelical Truth in a Secular Age*.
>
> Is Giberson right to be up on a high horse that way? I'm not a Christian so I don't have his personal stake in the question. But Giberson, after complaining that my querying his use of this photo was "ad hominem" — which it obviously isn't — characterizes me (and Casey Luskin) in a way that clearly is ad hominem.

Lest you think I am tricking you about this being used as evidence for evolution, here is Giberson in the Daily Beast reflecting on his debate performance.

Excerpt:

> I showed pictures of otherwise healthy humans who had been born with webbed feet and tails. I asked the challenging question: "Why does the human genome contain instructions for the production of features we don't use?" The scientific explanation is that we inherited these instructions from our tailed ancestors but the instructions for producing them have been shut off in our genomes, which is

> why Shallow Hal is the only person most people know who has a tail. **Sometimes the "ignore these genes" message gets lost in fetal development, however, and babies are born with perfectly formed, even functional tails.**

Is he right about any of this?

Evolution News explains that he is not:

> For now, here's a crucial fact: **even such so-called "tails" aren't anything like those found in tailed mammals. That is for the simple reason that *"true tails" in humans entirely lack vertebrae — or any kind of bone, cartilage, notochord, or spinal cord.*** As the aforementioned paper in the *Journal of Neurosurgery* explains:
>
> In all reported cases, the vestigial human tail lacks bone, cartilage, notochord, and spinal cord. It is unique in this feature.[2]
>
> Other prominent medical research journals agree:
>
> - A 2013 paper in the *Journal of Child Neurology* states: "**True tails are boneless**, midline protrusion usually attached to the skin of the sacrococcygeal region and capable of spontaneous or reflex motion. They consist of normal skin, connective tissue, muscle, vessels, and nerves and are covered by skin. **Bone, cartilage, notochord, and spinal cord are lacking**."[3]
> - A paper from the *Journal of Pediatric Surgery* states: "**The human vestigial tail lacks bone, cartilage, notochord, and spinal cord**. It contains a central core of mature fatty tissue divided into small lobules by thin fibrous septa. Small blood vessels and nerve fibers are scattered throughout. Bundles of striated muscle fibers, sometimes degenerated, tend to aggregate in the center."[4]
> - An article in the *British Journal of Neurosurgery* explains: "A true tail in humans is vestigial and **never contains vertebrae in contrast to other vertebrate animals**."[5]
> - Most striking of all, perhaps, are the words of a famous paper on tails in *The New England Journal of Medicine*: "When the caudal appendage is critically examined, however, it is evident that **there are major morphologic differences between the caudal appendage and the tails of other vertebrates**. First of all, the caudal appendage does not contain even rudimentary vertebral structures. There are no well-documented cases of caudal appendages containing caudal vertebrae or an increased number of vertebrae in the medical literature, and **there is no zoological precedent for a vertebral tail without caudal vertebrae**."[6]
> - Finally, an article in *Human Pathology* explains: "**In humans a true tail, is vestigial, however, and never contains vertebrae. … Bona-fide**

> **cases of human tails containing bone have not been documented**."[7]
>
> These observations certainly don't make it sound like humans can have "perfectly formed, even functional tails." In fact, it's difficult to argue that any tail could be called "bona fide" if it isn't "bone-fied."

Where did Giberson find the image? In the humor magazine "Cracked". That's… chutzpah. I wonder if he used Dilbert comics as evidence in his PhD thesis?

Standard Operating Procedure

I think it's a bad idea to use images from humor magazines as evidence for your point of view, but I think it's par for the course with Darwinists, who are still using things like Haeckel's embryos in science textbooks as evidence of evolution.

Who says? One of the top peer-reviewed science journals "Science":

> Using modern techniques, a British researcher has photographed embryos like those pictured in the famous, century-old drawings by Ernst Haeckel–proving that Haeckel's images were falsified. Haeckel once admitted to his peers that he doctored the drawings, but that confession was forgotten.

Still used in textbooks, though. It's "fake, but accurate".

Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist

June 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me news of Saturday’s episode of Unbelievable, which features Lawrence Krauss, who debated William Lane Craig. Krauss’ book was also reviewed in the New York Times.

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

> Lawrence Krauss is a Cosmologist at Arizona State University who describes himself as an “anti-theist”. His latest book “A Universe From Nothing” has received both acclaim and criticism for its attempt to answer the question “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Debating the issue with Krauss is Rodney Holder, Course director at the Faraday Institute, Cambridge. An astrophysicist and priest by background. In a lively exchange they debate whether Krauss’ “nothing” is “nothing”, fine tuning and multiverses, scientific knowledge, miracles and the usefulness of theology and philosophy.

This debate is quite entertaining, and do not be intimidated if your don’t understand science. You can understand pretty easily who is arguing based on facts and who is speculating about unobservable, untestable entities. At one point, Krauss actually denies that there is any fine-tuning in the universe, so please see this link to refute that claim as well as this podcast which explains some examples of fine-tuning. Krauss gets a bit angry at the beginning, but calms down.

Quotation marks are for direct quotes, italics is for made-up snark. See below the summary for more posts that are related to this one.

Summary of the discussion: (picked up at 9:30 when they start talking about the book)

Brierley:

- explain your theory of how the universe can come into being from nothing

Krauss:

- the nothing that preceded the universe is “no space, no time, no universe”
- theists say that God is responsible for creating the universe out of this nothing
- but the laws of nature can create the universe uncaused out of nothing

Holder:

- Krauss sometimes writes that the nothing is really a quantum vacuum, but that is

not nothing
- He even acknowledges in his book that a quantum vacuum is not nothing
- He thinks that the nothing has properties, even though it has no being
- It has the property of being unstable
- It has the property of being acted on by quantum fields
- It has the property of being acted on by gravity

Krauss:

- But nothing can have the potential to do things inside it
- For example suppose you have an electron, *which is not nothing*
- If it jumps from one level to another, it emits light
- There was no potential for the light in the electron, but it was there as part of atomic structure

Holder:

- But in cases like that, there is something physical that has the potential

Krauss:

- Well, how did God makes the universe then if it had no potential?

Holder:

- God existed, and the potential for creating the universe in himself

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times

Krauss:

- It was written by a philosopher, so I dismissed it

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the Scientific American

Krauss:

- These book reviewers have not even read my book!

Krauss:

- Science will be able to figure out how to make something from nothing in the future
- We are even now speculating about interesting questions, like is there a multiverse?

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times
- The author of the review claims that you equivocate on the term “nothing”
- In order to get things to pop into being, you have to make “nothing” mean “something”
- Reviewer: none of Krauss’ theories explain how something can come from actual nothingness

Krauss:

- In physics, something and nothing are not that different
- The reviewer doesn’t understand the physics
- He doesn’t understand quantum field theory
- You could call a quantum vacuum “nothing”, *(this is the vacuum fluctuation model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*
- Maybe there is an eternally existing multiverse that we can’t observe or test scientifically
- Maybe it has laws that we don’t know about which allow our universe to pop into being
- Maybe this popping into being is uncaused
- (alarmed) Who made God? Who made God?

Holder:

- God is eternal and necessary

Krauss:

- (interrupting, angry) What does it mean for something to be necessary?

Holder:

- Basically, you have to decide whether there is more evidence that the necessary being God or a multiverse

Brierley:

- So Dr. Krauss are you willing to say that the universe is a brute fact, in some sense, and requires no explanation

Krauss:

- (angry) Religious people are stupid because they just assume brute facts, *not like me and my unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry) Religious people are against the progress of science, they don’t want to figure out how things work

Brierley:

- But isn't it possible that naturalists can be opposed to the progress of science?
- What about the way the Fred Hoyle opposed the Big Bang because he wanted an eternal universe

Krauss:

- (angry) But naturalists like me let the facts determine our beliefs, *like the facts about the eternal unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry, shouting) Philosophers are stupid, they know nothing!

=== Break ===

Brierley:

- Do you see any evidence of purpose in the universe?

Krauss:

- Well maybe I would believe if the stars lined up to spell out a message from God

Brierley:

- Actually no, that wouldn't be evidence for God on your multiverse view
- if there an infinite number of universes existing for an infinite amount of time, then anything can happen no matter how unlikely it is
- therefore, no evidence could convince you that God exists, since the unobservable, untestable, eternal multiverse can make anything it wants

Krauss:

- That's a true statement, *and very convenient for atheists who don't want to be accountable to God, don't you think?*

Brierley:

- Back to the multiverse, how does it solve the fine-tuning?

Krauss:

- "We have no idea if the universe is fine-tuned for life", *even though the atheist Martin Rees who endorsed Krauss' book wrote his own book about the fine-tuning of the universe called "Just Six Numbers"*
- Inflationary theory does suggest a way to create multiple universes, *(this is the chaotic inflationary model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*

Brierley:

- But this theory is still very much a hypothesis, isn't it? We can't observe *or test* this hypothesis can we?

Krauss:

- "No, and that is really important to state"
- "I'm an empiricist, so if you can't falsify it and if you can't test it then it's not science"
- In my book, I speculate about a way that we could test the multiverse theory

Holder:

- Yes, in principle, the multiverse would be scientific if you could test it through other theories like inflationary theory
- There are a lot of speculations about multiverse theory, but no evidence from predictions that were validated in the lab

Krauss:

- "I agree completely with everything you just said"

Brierley:

- Roger Penrose agrees with Holder that the multiverse theory is too speculative
- (To Holder) Isn't the multiverse theory better than positing a completely different kind of being, which is God?

Holder:

- The multiverse theory is extremely speculative
- Even if the multiverse were true, you would still need to explain the multiverse

Krauss:

- People don't oppose my book because it's full of self-contradictory speculations
- People oppose my book because they are stupid and ignorant

Holder:

- There are things that exist that science cannot measure, like objective morality
- It's possible to give explanations for moral behavior by appealing to evolution
- But that does not ground self-sacrificial morality, such as what occurs in the Christian life

Brierley:

- Dawkins says there is no purpose or morality in in the universe, do you agree?

Krauss:

- “There is certainly no evidence of any of that”

Brierley:

- In the book, you talk about how we live in a special time in the universe’s history to be able to do science, *(i.e. – The Privileged Planet hypothesis)*
- You also write about how all the discoveries were are making will not be communicated to anyone in other places in the universe
- So what is the meaning of doing science on your view? And why are you sad at the knowledge that will not be available to people in the future?
- Are you longing for some kind of purpose?

Krauss:

- No, I just get enjoyment from studying the universe with science to gain understanding

Holder:

- What do you make of Einstein’s statement about the unexpected comprehensibility of the universe
- Theists would say that this is because God wanted us to study and understand and gain knowledge

Krauss:

- “It is remarkable that the universe is comprehensible”

Brierley:

- Why is the universe comprehensible?

Krauss:

- Well, maybe the universe just has to be that way

Brierley:

- What do you make of the heat death of the universe, when all life in the universe will die out?

Krauss:

- That’s the way the universe is

=== BREAK ===
Krauss:

- I wouldn't want to live in a universe where there was a God
- God is a cosmic Saddam Hussein
- "Religious people turn their minds off" and believe in God for consolation

Holder:

- First, Jesus is the revelation of God and he is no Saddam Hussein
- Second, the Christian life is anything but easy, we are facing some persecution already in the UK
- Third, there is also the problem of being accountable to God when we die
- It's very much like science – Christianity is the way it is, not the way we want it to be

Krauss:

- "If you don't believe in him, you don't get any of the benefits, so you have to believe"
- "And then if you've done something wrong, you're going to be judged for it"
- "So I don't want to be judged by God, I want to be… that's the bottom line"

Holder:

- Well, Jesus has died to pay the price for those things we've done wrong
- Although we will have to face the charges for what we've done, believers will ultimately be forgiven

UPDATE: Peter Sean Bradley note that Krauss is now walking back his rhetoric in response to criticisms from people like atheist John Horgan.

Evangelical student wins free speech case against Thomas Nelson Community College

June 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Campus Reform has the story:

> Virginia taxpayers are footing a $25,000 bill after a public community college stopped a student from preaching on campus.
>
> According to Christian Parks, who identifies as an evangelical Christian, campus police officers at Thomas Nelson Community College stopped him from preaching in a central courtyard on **two separate occasions last semester**. Campus police cited a policy from 1968 which said that only organizations which were recognized by the college would be allowed to demonstrate on campus. These groups would also be restricted to designated areas.
>
> However, last week in a U.S. District Court, a judge ruled that the Virginia Community College System designates outdoor areas on campus as "venues for free expression," thus ruling in favor of Parks. The 23 community college campuses that make up the system are therefore not allowed to place limits on free speech.
>
> The Virginia Community College System will have to pay $1 in nominal damages and $24,999 in legal fees to the **Alliance Defending Freedom** (ADF), a Christian conservative nonprofit organization, which **sued Thomas Nelson Community College** on Parks's behalf.
>
> "Students at 23 community college campuses have greater free speech," Travis Barham, the lawyer on the case, told *Campus Reform*. "Because one student took a stand at Thomas Nelson [Community College], students at 23 difference campuses have greater free speech as a result."
>
> According to Barham, the Virginia Community College System served as a prime example of colleges and college systems should work to make their policies better benefit students.
>
> "The folks at Virginia Community College System really serve as a model of what colleges should do," Barham said, praising the system for having "pleasant and fruitful" conversations with ADF.
>
> The lawsuit, filed in March, took only three months to resolve.

Alliance Defending Freedom is where you turn for help when you face free speech violations on campus.

Does holding to liberal social views automatically make you tolerant?

June 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

WARNING: This post contains strong language taken from actual messages sent by angry people. Reader discretion is advised.

I just want to quote some of the insults and death threats that social conservative Matt Walsh received. (H/T Melissa)

Excerpt:

To my leftwing friends:

Last night, someone sent me an email threatening to murder me because they disagree with my opinions. It read, in part:

*"F*ck you… I will find a way to kill you. Make no god d*mn mistake, you filth."*

Concise. Eloquent. And now on file with the state police.

After I reported the threat to law enforcement, I didn't pay it much mind. But then, a few minutes ago, I received this message from someone else:

"Matt, you are so filled with hate in everything you write. You are part of the reason why conservative teabaggers in this country are nothing but hate mongers and bigots. Do you want to know why I'm a "liberal"? ***Because liberals know how to make a point without being hateful and spiteful***."(Emphasis mine).

I laughed quite heartily when I read that. Perfect timing. Mere hours after someone called me 'filth' and announced their plan to end my existence all because of my beliefs, I'm informed that these are precisely the people who 'know how to make a point without being hateful and spiteful.'

At first I dismissed this claim and concluded, as I often do, that the person who said it couldn't possibly be serious. Does he really not notice the hate and hostility pouring like sewage out of his own ideological camp? Does he really think that hate is somehow a 'conservative' thing? No, I thought. Nobody is that oblivious.

Actually, kids on college campuses are being educated in such a one-sided way so that this kind of philosophical fail is not only common but almost universal. Brendan Eich lost his job for making a tiny pro-marriage donation. Pro-abortion terrorists vandalize pro-life displays in the name of "free speech". Sometimes the pro-abortion activists go as far as assaulting you. Sometimes the gay activists just try to murder you outright – *with guns*. Many people on the left have been indoctrinated to believe this sort of intolerance of others is logically consistent and even virtuous. They shout down any attempt to engage them with any view that is not their own.

More Matt:

*"Matt, f*ck you. I seriously hope you die."*

*F*ck you and your entire website you f*cking douche. I have known I am transgender for a long time… You are very sick in the head and I hope you rot in hell. I will pray Lucifer himself finds you.*

"Hey f*ck you. Die. That's all."

"You're a f*cking bigot piece of sh*t…"

"I've decided that I'm going to block any friend who reposts your trash on Facebook. You are the worst human being on the planet and the world would be better if you weren't part of it."

"Dear Matt, you're horrible. Kill yourself."

"Oh, like you don't already know you're a piece of sh*t. F*ck you."

"Matt, I saw a Tweet that said you're a flaming bag of dogsh*t on the doorstep of the internet. I thought it was great but kind of insulting to dog sh*t."

"Matt, shut the f*ck up with your hate and homophobia. You are the biggest assh*le I've ever seen. Go crawl into a f*cking hole somewhere and die."

"Anytime someone retweets or shares your posts I die a little inside. Your like a cancer on the internet. You're an embarrassment bro. Seriously, you're the worst."

Look, see? Hatred.

Loathing, despising, detesting, hating.

Not just hatred of my ideas or my actions, but hatred of me personally. A boiling, ungodly rage. A yearning to see me burn in Hell for all eternity. Malicious feelings targeted at me, the human being. A desire to see me dead, hurt, dehumanized. A wish to kill me because of my ideology.

Hatred. Let me assure you that it is a huge problem in the liberal ranks. I experience it everyday. Before you spend another minute lamenting the perceived 'hatred' of conservative bloggers and media personalities, I suggest you look into your own souls. I have seen and felt the cold, stinging hatred that lives there, and it is surely the nastiest and most brutal sort.

Personally, I think that this is part and parcel of the embrace of secularism. Look, let's call a spade a spade. If you think there is no God, then you can't ground morality rationally, you can't ground moral duties rationally, you can't ground human rights rationally, you can't ground human dignity rationally. Your purpose in life is to have a good time. If someone tells you that you are doing wrong and harming others, then there are no restraints – within the worldview of atheism – on what you can do to stop them from even disapproving of your selfish, destructive behavior.

Matt offers this conclusion about his real motives for standing tall for traditional moral boundaries:

> Sometimes I get very angry at the legions of progressive nihilists who stand as staunch advocates for some of the greatest evils mankind has ever witnessed (like abortion, for instance), but beyond anger I always feel pity. I believe that

> you'll destroy yourself with your philosophy before you destroy anyone else, and I sincerely wish for you to avoid that fate.
>
> If I truly think that my views are correct, and that the rejection of neo-liberal cultural dogma will lead you to greater joy and fulfillment in life, ultimately bringing you out of the darkness and into the light of truth, why would I try to help you in that process if I hated you?
>
> I wouldn't. I'd let you drown and die. I'd watch and relish the sight.
>
> That's how a hateful person would handle the situation. He'd keep his opinions to himself. He wouldn't bother. He'd let society run headfirst over the cliff, and he wouldn't care as long as he personally remains standing at the top. The real hateful conservatives and Christians are the ones who say nothing. They see the same truth that I do, and that so many others do, yet they have no interest in opening anyone else's eyes to it. In fact, they are examples of something worse than hate: indifference.
>
> […]Indeed, just because someone voices a disagreement with you doesn't mean they hate you. Often, it means the exact opposite.

What we are seeing now is the resurgence of a worldview of selfishness that will lead to barbarism against the weak. You can see it in the acceptance of abortion, no-fault divorce, gay marriage, and so on. There is no reason to think that it will slow down unless those of us who have *rationally grounded* beliefs in human rights and objective morality speak out now, while there is still time. This is not a game for the timid, though, so buckle up. Innocent lives, born and unborn, are depending on you to *succeed*. When you go out to defend the truth, make sure you've prepared your arguments and evidence with excellence, at the highest level. Make sure there is love for your enemy in in your heart and the sounds of your prayers for them still echoing around you.

UPDATE: I recognize that there are some secular pro-life people. Here is a good post from Secular Pro-Life. (H/T Well Spent Journey) But they are in the minority – most secularists support abortion, which is, I think just morally and rationally indefensible. If moral goodness means anything, it means protecting the weak from selfish destructiveness. We have to give up our hedonism for the benefit of little defenseless children in the womb. That's just Morality 101. If you can go all the way, and not engage in sexual activity that puts unborn children at risk, do that. I'm a virgin, and I value love and romance above recreational sex. Follow me.

Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral? Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong?

June 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: For a Christian response to the complaint that the Bible doesn't condemn slavery, see this article and this article for slavery in the Old Testament, and this article for slavery in the New Testament. These are all by Christian philosopher Paul Copan. You can watch a lecture with Paul Copan on the slavery challenge here, and buy a book where he answers the challenge in more detail. There is also a good debate on whether the Bible condones slavery here, featuring David Instone-Brewer and Robert Price. My post is not a formal logical essay on this issue, it is more that I am outraged that atheists, who cannot even rationally ground objective morality, insist on criticizing the morality of the Bible. I think that atheists who are serious about finding the truth about these issues should check out those links, if they are interested in getting to the truth of these matters.

In other posts, I've argued that without an objective moral standard of what is right and wrong, any judgments about right and wrong are just individual opinions. So, when an atheist says slavery is wrong, what he really means is that he thinks slavery is wrong *for him*, in the same way that he thinks that,say, that chocolate ice cream is right *for him*. He isn't saying what is wrong *objectively*, because on atheism there are no objective moral rules or duties. He is speaking for himself: "I wouldn't own a slave, just like I wouldn't eat broccoli – because it's yucky!". But he has no rational argument against other people owning slaves in other times and places, because their justification for owning slaves is the same as his justification for not owning slaves : personal preference.

So do atheists oppose slavery? Do they believe in an objective human right to liberty? Well, there are no objective human rights of any kind on atheism. Human beings are just accidents in an accidental universe, and collections of atoms do not mysteriously accrue "rights". There is no natural right to liberty on atheism. Now consider abortion, which is arguably very similar to slavery. Most atheists do favor abortion in this time and place. Like slavery, abortion declares an entire class of weaker people as non-persons in order to justify preserving their own happiness and prosperity by means of violence. That's exactly what slavery does, except abortion is worse than slavery, because you actually kill the person you are declaring as a non-person instead of just imprisoning them.

So how many atheists have this pro-abortion view that it is OK to declare unborn children as non-persons so they can kill them?

Well, according to Gallup, the "non-religious" are the group most likely to support abortion. In fact, 68% favor legalized abortion, compared to only 19% who oppose it.

Take a look at the Gallup poll data from 2012:

Americans' Abortion Views, by Education and Religion

With respect to the abortion issue, would you consider yourself to be pro-choice or pro-life?

	"Pro-choice"	"Pro-life"
	%	%
National adults	41	50
No religion	68	19
Catholic	38	54
Protestant/Other Christian	33	57
Postgraduate	58	37
College graduate only	45	53
Some college	41	49
High school graduate or less	33	53

May 3-6, 2012

GALLUP

Most atheists are OK with the strong killing the weak

The Gallup numbers might actually be low, because "No religion" might include people who are spiritual, but not religious. But what about atheists alone?

As a group, atheists tend to be among the most radical supporters of legalized abortion. The Secular Census of 2012 found that 97% of atheists vote for abortion. There are almost no pro-life atheists. Why is it that atheists look at unborn children and think it's OK to kill them? Well, let's see what atheists scholars think about morality, and we'll find out why they think abortion is OK.

Atheist scholars think morality is nonsense

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Source: http://www.arn.org/docs/orpages/or161/161main.htm

Atheists Michael Ruse says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I

> appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory.(Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

Atheist Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

Let's take a closer look at Richard Dawkins.

Richard Dawkins and morality

Here's how far Dawkins takes his view that there is no evil and no good:

Richard Dawkins explains morality on atheism
But wait! He goes even further than mere abortion:

So, looking at Dawkins, what kind of ethic can you get from Darwinism and atheism? Survival of the fittest. The strong kill the weak.

Richard Dawkins even advocates for adultery.

Now atheists may feign morality in order to get along with other people in a society that is still anchored in Judeo-Christian values, but they tend to vote for liberal social policies, and they oppose political action by those who still hold to objective morality. So what they are working toward, generally, is less and less influence in politics by those who favor objective human rights, objective moral values and objective moral duties.

So do atheists oppose slavery, or don't they?

I actually don't think that atheists think slavery is morally wrong, although they might personally not want to own slaves in this time and place because slavery is illegal – thanks to Judeo-Christian values. But in other areas, like abortion, we can see that atheists are willing to use violence against the weak to augment their happiness and prosperity. Unborn babies are weak, like slaves. Atheists are willing to kill the weak unborn babies who stop them from pursuing pleasure and prosperity. I don't see how they would have any objections to enslaving other people if they had the strength to do so. In fact, unjust imprisonment and forced labor are happening in atheistic North Korea right now.

But do you know who does oppose slavery enough to do something about it?

Dinesh D'Souza explains:

> Slavery was mostly eradicated from Western civilization–then called Christendom–between the fourth and the tenth century. The Greco-Roman institution of slavery gave way to serfdom. Now serfdom has its problems but at least the serf is not a "human tool" and cannot be bought and sold like property. So slavery was ended twice in Western civilization, first in the medieval era and then again in the modern era.
>
> In the American South, Christianity proved to be the solace of the oppressed. As historian Eugene Genovese documents in Roll, Jordan, Roll, when black slaves sought to find dignity during the dark night of slavery, they didn't turn to Marcus Aurelius or David Hume; they turned to the Bible. When they sought hope and inspiration for liberation, they found it not in Voltaire or D'Holbach but in the Book of Exodus.
>
> The anti-slavery movements led by Wilberforce in England and abolitionists in America were dominated by Christians. These believers reasoned that since we are all created equal in the eyes of God, no one has the right to rule another without consent. This is the moral basis not only of anti-slavery but also of democracy.

And, in fact, you can see Christians pushing the culture hard against abortion today, just as we did with slavery. Defending the weak is what we do. Meanwhile, most atheists think that an unborn child has as much of a right to legal protection as a cockroach.

Is cohabitation a better way to prepare for marriage than courting?

June 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Matt from Well Spent Journey sent me this assessment of cohabitation from the liberal New York Times.

Excerpt:

> AT 32, one of my clients (I'll call her Jennifer) had a lavish wine-country wedding. By then, Jennifer and her boyfriend had lived together for more than four years. The event was attended by the couple's friends, families and two dogs.
>
> When Jennifer started therapy with me less than a year later, she was looking for a divorce lawyer. "I spent more time planning my wedding than I spent happily married," she sobbed. Most disheartening to Jennifer was that she'd tried to do everything right. "My parents got married young so, of course, they got divorced. We lived together! How did this happen?"
>
> Cohabitation in the United States has increased by more than 1,500 percent in the past half century. In 1960, about 450,000 unmarried couples lived together. Now the number is more than 7.5 million. The majority of young adults in their 20s will live with a romantic partner at least once, and more than half of all marriages will be preceded by cohabitation. This shift has been attributed to the sexual revolution and the availability of birth control, and in our current economy, sharing the bills makes cohabiting appealing. But when you talk to people in their 20s, you also hear about something else: cohabitation as prophylaxis.
>
> In a nationwide survey conducted in 2001 by the National Marriage Project, then at Rutgers and now at the University of Virginia, nearly half of 20-somethings agreed with the statement, "You would only marry someone if he or she agreed to live together with you first, so that you could find out whether you really get along." About two-thirds said they believed that moving in together before marriage was a good way to avoid divorce.

That's a nice idea – wanting protection against divorce. But I think these hopeful attitudes that young people have about cohabitation and the utility / harmlessness of premarital sex, is so much whistling past the graveyard. The fact is that cohabitation does not improve marital stability. Young people believe it because they want to believe it. Let's look at the evidence to see why.

Cohabitation is a bad idea because what it says is that sex is not to be confined to marriage, but it is instead for recreational purposes outside of marriage. If men and women cannot demonstrate that they are capable of self-control prior to marrying by functioning in a relationship based on commitment and not based on pleasure, then they

are not qualified for marriage. Cohabitation is associated with *higher risks of divorce* because it works to undermine the need for quality communication during courting and the need for commitment that is based on discipline, instead of pleasure.

Research has shown that pre-marital chastity produces more stable and higher quality marriages. And that's because chastity helps people to focus on *conversations and obligations* instead of the *recreational sex* which clouds the judgment and glosses over the seriousness of marriage. Premarital sex rushes the relationship to the point where it is harder to break it off because of the sunk costs of sex and the pain of the break-up. Courtship is the time to discuss the things that break up marriages, like finances and division of labor. It is also the time to demonstrate self-control and fidelity.

More:

> Couples who cohabit before marriage (and especially before an engagement or an otherwise clear commitment) tend to be less satisfied with their marriages — and more likely to divorce — than couples who do not. These negative outcomes are called the cohabitation effect.
>
> Researchers originally attributed the cohabitation effect to selection, or the idea that cohabitors were less conventional about marriage and thus more open to divorce. As cohabitation has become a norm, however, studies have shown that the effect is not entirely explained by individual characteristics like religion, education or politics. Research suggests that at least some of the risks may lie in cohabitation itself.
>
> As Jennifer and I worked to answer her question, "How did this happen?" we talked about how she and her boyfriend went from dating to cohabiting. Her response was consistent with studies reporting that most couples say it "just happened."
>
> "We were sleeping over at each other's places all the time," she said. "We liked to be together, so it was cheaper and more convenient. It was a quick decision but if it didn't work out there was a quick exit."
>
> She was talking about what researchers call "sliding, not deciding." Moving from dating to sleeping over to sleeping over a lot to cohabitation can be a gradual slope, one not marked by rings or ceremonies or sometimes even a conversation. Couples bypass talking about why they want to live together and what it will mean.

The problem with young people today is that they want marriage as "a blissful state where I will get whatever I want without having to do anything, and where I am free from the consequences of my own selfishness". They don't want marriage as commitment, moral obligations, serving others and self-sacrifice. By avoiding conversations about who will do what, and what needs doing, they can fool themselves by thinking that happy sex and happy drinking and happy dancing will naturally turn into happy marriage. But marriage isn't about feeling happy, it's about being a sinful person who now has to learn

to love another sinful person and has to train and lead selfish, rebellious children so they are able to serve God and others.

If you asked me, I would tell you that courting is protection against a bad marriage. And the aim of courting is to interview the other person so that you can see whether they understand the demands of the marriage and whether they can perform their duties to their spouse and children. In particular, men should investigate whether the woman has prepared (or is willing to prepare now) to perform her roles as wife and mother, and women should investigate whether the man has prepared to perform his roles as protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader (or is willing to prepare now). Courting is not designed to be fun, although it can be fun. It is not meant to make people feel happy, it is mean to prepare them for marriage. And this is because you cannot translate fun and happy into marriage, because marriage is about well-defined roles, self-sacrifice and commitment. Marriage is about following through for the other person, whether you get what you want or not.

And that’s why I encourage men to very gently and subtly guide the relationship in a way that will allow both the woman and himself to practice their expected marital duties, see how they feel about their duties and get better at being able to perform them.

New study: relationship problems, not family rejection, leading cause of higher gay suicides

June 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life Site News reports.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> While many assume that family rejection is the leading cause of depression among LBGTI individuals, a new study has found that in fact the problem appears to stem predominantly from the higher incidence of relationship problems among homosexuals.
>
> Dr. Delaney Skerrett led a team of researchers from the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP) in studying suicides in Queensland. He found that a leading cause of suicide among "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex" (LGBTI) people is stress from their romantic partners.
>
> "We tend to assume that the psychological distress LGBTI people are often going through is due to family rejection. But it seems that's not so much the case. The conflict seems to be largely related to relationship problems, with partners," Dr. Skerrett said.
>
> In fact, he said, "The numbers are telling us there's a general acceptance at the family level," something he said is "great" and "really heartening!"
>
> Instead, the study, which was published on April 2 in *Asia Pacific Psychiatry*, found that "LGBT individuals experienced relationship problems more often" than heterosexuals, "with relationship conflict also being more frequent than in non-LGBT cases."
>
> That confirms previous studies finding that homosexuals also face higher rates of intimate partner violence than heterosexuals. A 2007 study in the *Journal of Urban Health*, which is published by the New York Academy of Medicine, found that 32 percent of homosexuals have been abused by at least one partner during their lifetime.
>
> The researchers with AISRAP also found that a higher percentage of homosexuals took their lives of despondency, rather than other psychological illnesses. While one-eighth of all Queensland suicide victims had been diagnosed with a psychosis that impaired their judgment, Skerrett reports "there were no such diagnoses among LGBT individuals." The conclusion adds to the consensus that depression disproportionately besets active homosexuals.

Previously, I blogged about a gay activist who thought that disagreement with gay rights caused gays to commit suicide. I wonder what he would do with a study like this? I also blogged previously about the "epidemic" of domestic violence among gays, and the

article I linked to for that was from the left-leaning Atlantic Monthly.

But there's more to say – let's look at an individual case now, which will put some meat on the bones of the studies.

Here's an article from the liberal New York Times.

Here's the set up:

> BOB BERGERON was so relentlessly cheery that people sometimes found it off-putting. If you ran into him at the David Barton Gym on West 23rd Street, where he worked out nearly ever morning at 7, and you complained about the rain, he would smile and say you'd be better off focusing on a problem you could fix.
>
> That's how Mr. Bergeron was as a therapist as well, always upbeat, somewhat less focused on getting to the root of his clients' feelings than altering behavior patterns that were detrimental to them: therapy from the outside-in.
>
> Over the last decade, he built a thriving private practice, treating well-to-do gay men for everything from anxiety to coping with H.I.V. Mr. Bergeron had also begun work as a motivational speaker, giving talks at gay and lesbian centers in Los Angeles and Chicago. In February, Magnus Books, a publisher specializing in gay literature, was scheduled to print a self-help guide he had written, "The Right Side of Forty: The Complete Guide to Happiness for Gay Men at Midlife and Beyond."
>
> It was a topic he knew something about. Having come out as gay in the mid-1980s, Mr. Bergeron, 49, had witnessed the worst years of the AIDS epidemic and emerged on the other side. He had also seen how few public examples there were of gay men growing older gracefully.
>
> He resolved to rewrite the script, and provide a toolbox for better living.
>
> "I've got a concise picture of what being over 40 is about and it's a great perspective filled with happiness, feeling sexy, possessing comfort relating to other men and taking good care of ourselves," Mr. Bergeron said on his Web site. "This picture will get you results that flourish long-term."
>
> But right around New Year's Eve, something went horribly wrong. On Jan. 5, Mr. Bergeron was found dead in his apartment, the result of a suicide that has left his family, his friends and his clients shocked and heartbroken as they attempt to figure out how he could have been so helpful to others and so unable to find help himself.

Look:

> To his friends, Mr. Bergeron maintained a positive tone. He went on vacation, dated some, visited museums.
>
> Still, he privately expressed misgivings about what the future held. Olivier Van Doorne, a patient of Mr. Bergeron and the creative director of SelectNY, a fashion advertising firm, recalled Mr. Bergeron telling him that every gay man peaks at

> one point in his life.
>
> “He said a number of times: ‘I peaked when I was 30 or 35. I was super-successful, everyone looked at me, and I felt extremely cool in my sexuality.’ ”
>
> Mr. Siegel, the therapist who supervised Mr. Bergeron in the early days of his career, said: “Bob was a very beautiful younger man, and we talked a lot about how that shapes and creates a life. The thesis of his book is based very much on his own personal experience with that. And the book also emphasized what to do when you’re not attractive or you no longer have the appeal you once had. The idea was to transcend that and expand your sexual possibilities.”

And:

> With the book about to be printed, Mr. Bergeron became convinced that he’d written too much about the shame and isolation involved with hooking up online; that people weren’t even really doing that anymore, now that phone apps like Grindr and Scruff had come along.
>
> His book, he felt, had become antiquated before it even came out.
>
> […]Though some of his friends, Mr. Rappaport among them, wondered whether drugs were involved, leading to a crash Mr. Bergeron did not anticipate, the suicide seemed to have been carried out with methodical precision. On an island in the kitchen, Mr. Bergeron had meticulously laid out his papers. There was a pile of folders with detailed instructions on top about whom to call regarding his finances and his mortgage. Across from that he placed the title page of his book, on which he also wrote his suicide note. In it he told Mr. Sackheim and Mr. Rappaport that he loved them and his family, but that he was “done.”
>
> As his father remembered it, Mr. Bergeron also wrote, “It’s a lie based on bad information.”
>
> An arrow pointed up to the name of the book.
>
> The inference was clear. As Mr. Bergeron saw it at the end of his life, the only right side of 40 was the side that came before it.

I think that the problem is that in the gay lifestyle, you have a typically male emphasis on physical appearance, sex and pleasure. There is none of the moderating influence of women, which tends to push men into commitments, responsibility and stability.

If you really love a person, then you don’t tell them that the dangerous thing they want to do is not dangerous. That’s not love. It’s easier for you to approve of them and be liked by everyone, but it’s not love.

Walt Russell explains how to read the Bible effectively

June 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walt Russell's book on the subject of interpreting the Bible is called "Playing With Fire: How the Bible Ignites Change in Your Soul". I like that book, but I found four articles that summarize the main points of the book so people can understand how to read the Bible at a high livel.

Here is part one which talks about how postmodern relativism is at odds with discovering the original intent of an author.

Excerpt:

> Twenty-four year-old "Janet" (not her real name) was angry at my emphasis on seeking to discover authors' intentions when we read their texts. She was an evangelical Christian and a second grade teacher in a public school. She prided herself in helping her 20 students learn to love literature. She would read them a story as they gathered around her, and then ask each child, "What does the story mean to you?" She prodded them to come up with their own unique meanings. With such strong encouragement, the class of 20 would eventually have 20 different meanings for the one story. Janet sensed that I was a naysayer about such "love of literature." Pouring a little emotional gasoline on the fire, I said, "Janet, you're certainly doing your part to insure that these 7 year-olds will never recover from a radically relativistic view of meaning!" Now I had her full attention.

Here is part two which talks about the importance of knowing the genre of a text before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" — the newspaper headline virtually screams out at you. The thought of something being slain is repulsive. You're gripped by a mental image of southern India's Bengal tiger. You imagine its beautiful face, its stripes and piercing eyes. Then your image is shattered by the sudden blast of a high-powered rifle. You see the exquisite creature writhe in pain, fall gracelessly in its tracks and die. Having read no further than the headline, you feel sick, as if you've witnessed something tragic.
>
> But *should* you feel this way? The slaughter of an endangered species — especially one as magnificent as the Bengal tiger — is horrifying, no doubt. But suppose you failed to notice that the headline "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" appeared in the *sports page* of the morning paper. Clearly enough, it now refers to different Indians, different Tigers and a different manner of slaying than you originally thought. And is it really that tragic that the Cleveland Indians badly beat the

> Detroit Tigers in a major league baseball game last night? Not unless you're a long-suffering Detroit Tigers' baseball fan. But how do you now know that the headline is about baseball and not tiger-slaying in India? You look at the words "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS" and you know exactly what each word means. When you combine these words, how can they not mean exactly what you first thought they did — that *Indians slay tigers*? Answer: because their meanings are communicated (as the meanings of *all* words are) through *genres*!

Here is part three which talks about the importance of reading the context of a verse before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "Never Read a Bible Verse!" That's the title of a little booklet my friend and Christian radio personality, Gregory Koukl, has written to help people read the Bible well. What great advice. "That's right, never read a Bible verse. Instead, always read a paragraph — at least." But the current is flowing the other way in our popular sound-bite culture. Not to be left out (or left behind!), the Church has its own version of sound-bite culture: *verse-bite culture*. In verse-bite culture we take a sentence or sentence-fragment from a biblical paragraph, memorize it out of context, write it on a little card, put it on a billboard, a plaque, a rock, etc. Somehow we think that just because this little chunk of Scripture has a verse number in front of it, it was meant to be a free-standing unit of thought. Nothing could be further from the truth.
>
> Apart from the fact that chapter and verse divisions weren't added to the New Testament text until 1560 — long after the New Testament's inspired authorship — there is a more important reason for never reading just a Bible verse, and instead reading at least the paragraph that contains it.

Here is part four which talks about the importance of applying the words of the Bible to your life.

One verse that is often misinterpreted is missing from the articles, but present in the STR lecture. It's Philippians 1:6 that says "6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus". Russell says in the lecture that this promise is specifically intended for the church in Philippi, to whom Paul is writing, not necessarily to all Christians. He is giving them a promise just after directly referring to their good work in supporting him in his ministry. Some verses are just not meant for us, and the context reveals it.

The Weekly Standard podcasts on Democrats' terrorists for traitor swap

June 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to these 4 podcasts on the weekend, and I thought there was a lot in there that I had not heard in the news. The Weekly Standard is my favorite political podcast.

June 2nd:

THE WEEKLY STANDARD Podcast with senior writer Stephen F. Hayes on Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who was recently traded for five Taliban prisoners from terrorist captivity.

The MP3 file is here.

June 3rd:

THE WEEKLY STANDARD Podcast with Thomas Joscelyn, Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and frequent contributor on why the Bergdahl swap is a terrible deal for American Security.

The MP3 file is here.

June 4th:

THE WEEKLY STANDARD Podcast with editor William Kristol on the Obama administration's changing explanations of the Bergdahl prisoner swap.

The MP3 file is here.

June 6th:

THE WEEKLY STANDARD Podcast with senior writer Stephen F. Hayes on Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who was recently traded for five Taliban prisoners from terrorist captivity.

The MP3 file is here.

June 9th:

The WEEKLY STANDARD podcast with senior writer Stephen F. Hayes on his recent story about how many White House statements about the Bergdahl/Taliban 5 swap have been contradicted either by facts or by testimony.

The MP3 file is here.

I recommend listening to all of them. The VA scandal was bad, because it was basically the Democrats killing off wounded soldiers. But the release of these 5 terrorist commanders goes beyond that – endangering our men and women in the military and just encouraging our enemies to kidnap more Americans and bargain with them. If you want the bad guys to stop being bad, you kill them. You don't reward them. That just makes them act more badly.

J. Warner Wallace's experience as a youth pastor

June 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you are a regular listener to Wallace's podcast, as I am, you'll have heard him talk about his experience as a youth pastor before. But if not, give this article a read.

Excerpt:

> My first year as a youth pastor was a challenging year of self-evaluation. When I was initially offered the job, I wasn't sure I could lead or teach high-schoolers; I'd been working with younger students and my own children were not yet teenagers. But I was ambitious and eager, so I accepted the position. I spent several months trying to decide what the teaching focus should be for my group. I surveyed some of the key seniors who had been in the ministry to see what they thought. We ended up doing a series on James and Ecclesiastes, and most of my energy that first year was expended on designing the Sunday service. I was concerned about "relevance" and spent a lot of time trying to understand how to communicate to this age group. I thought *experience* was as important as *content*. Actually, I thought experience was *more important* than content. My students got their money's worth every Sunday. It was a musical, visual smorgasbord of video, images, interactive eclecticism and burning candles. It was ridiculous.
>
> At the end of the first school year I could tell something was amiss. Most of my key seniors seemed disconnected and disinterested. I got through that first summer and the first semester of the next school year, striving continually to capture the imagination and attention of my student congregation. At Christmas break that year I had an epiphany. One of my key seniors from the prior year returned from Sonoma State where she had been attending her first year as a College freshman and announced to her parents that she was no longer a Christian. I got the call from her mother. I met with this student and she told me about her new life as an atheist. While I was frustrated and didn't seem to be able to persuade her otherwise, I also wondered if she was the exception or the rule. I did some research on my other graduating seniors from the prior year. All but one had left Christianity, and they were only in their first semester as freshmen!

Don't worry – the post has a happy ending. I wish more Christian leaders would allow themselves to accept that what they are doing now – avoiding apologetics because it is "divisive" and "prideful" – would learn from J. Warner Wallace. We need this. It works. What we are doing with young people now is *not working*.

Kevin DeYoung's article opposing gay marriage has broad appeal

June 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

In my own secular case against gay marriage from a while back, I argued for 3 points:

- same-sex marriage is bad for liberty, especially religious liberty
- same-sex marriage is bad for children
- same-sex marriage is bad for public health

My hope when I wrote that was that pastors and other Christian leaders would learn to argue for what the Bible says by using evidence from *outside* the Bible, so that they would be able to appeal to *more* people instead of only appealing to the minority of people who accept the Bible. I think that Christians who argue for their views by citing the Bible only will only be convincing to people who already accept the Bible. But there is not a majority of people who do accept the Bible as an authority, so I think that pastors have to make another plan. They need to argue using the Bible to those who accept the Bible, and without the Bible to those who don't accept it.

Now with that said, take a look at this article by pastor Kevin DeYoung that Dina sent me. It's from earlier this week. The article makes the same exact three points as I made in my article last year. Let's take a look at how Kevin does that.

My first point was liberty, especially religious liberty. He writes:

> [I]n the long run, the triumph of gay marriage (should it triumph as a cultural and legal reality) will mean the restriction of freedoms for millions of Americans.
>
> This will happen in obvious ways at first–by ostracizing those who disagree, by bullying with political correctness, and by trampling on religious liberty. Surely, Christians must realize that no matter how many caveats we issue, not matter how much we nuance our stance, no matter how much we encourage or show compassion for homosexuals, it will not be enough to ward off the charges of

> hatred and homophobia.
>
> [G]ay marriage will challenge our freedoms in others way too. It's not just Evangelicals, traditional Catholics, and Mormons who will be threatened. Once the government gains new powers, it rarely relinquishes them. There will be a soft tyranny that grows as the power of the state increases, a growth that is intrinsic to the notion of gay marriage itself.

My second point was bad for children. He writes:

> [T]he state has an interest in promoting the familial arrangement which has a mother and a father raising the children that came from their union. The state has been in the marriage business for the common good and for the well-being of the society it is supposed to protect. Kids do better with a mom and a dad. Communities do better when husbands and wives stay together. Hundreds of studies confirm both of these statements (though we all can think of individual exceptions I'm sure). Gay marriage assumes that marriage is re-definable and the moving parts replaceable.

My third point was bad for public health. He writes:

> The unspoken secret, however, is that homosexual behavior is not harmless. Homosexuals are at a far greater risk for diseases like syphilis, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, gonorrhea, HPV, and gay bowel syndrome. The high rate of these diseases is due both to widespread promiscuity in the gay community and the nature of anal and oral intercourse itself. Homosexual relationships are usually portrayed as a slight variation on the traditional "norm" of husband-wife monogamy. But monogamy is much less common among homosexual relationships, and even for those who value monogamy the definition of fidelity is much looser.

He also talks about the definition of marriage, and more.

I've criticized pastors before for dealing with social issues by only citing the Bible, like John Piper does. That approach won't work on enough people to change society, because not enough people consider the Bible to be an authority in their decision-making. We have to use evidence from outside the Bible – like Wayne Grudem does in his "Politics According to the Bible".

I think that pastor Kevin's article is quality work, because it follows the pattern of taking an all-of-the-above approach to persuasion. He uses all means to persuade so that he might win some over to his side. I hope that many more pastors will do the same thing on this issue of marriage and other issues – even fiscal issues. Fiscal issues do have an impact on moral issues – think of how abortion subsidies and single mother welfare lower the penalties of recreational premarital sex. We can do this, we just have to do what works, instead of what makes us feel "holier-than-thou".

Has Christianity held back the progress of science? What about Galileo?

June 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, here's an article from the peer-reviewed journal Nature, probably the best peer-reviewed journal on science in the world.

The article is written by James Hannam. He has a PhD in the History and Philosophy of Science from the University of Cambridge and is the author of The Genesis of Science: How the Christian Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution (published in the UK as God's Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of Modern Science).

Excerpt:

> Few topics are as open to misunderstanding as the relationship between faith and reason. The ongoing clash of creationism with evolution obscures the fact that Christianity has actually had a far more positive role to play in the history of science than commonly believed. Indeed, many of the alleged examples of religion holding back scientific progress turn out to be bogus. For instance, the Church has never taught that the Earth is flat and, in the Middle Ages, no one thought so anyway. Popes haven't tried to ban zero, human dissection or lightening rods, let alone excommunicate Halley's Comet. No one, I am pleased to say, was ever burnt at the stake for scientific ideas. Yet, all these stories are still regularly trotted out as examples of clerical intransigence in the face of scientific progress.
>
> Admittedly, Galileo was put on trial for claiming it is a fact that the Earth goes around the sun, rather than just a hypothesis as the Catholic Church demanded. Still, historians have found that even his trial was as much a case of papal egotism as scientific conservatism. It hardly deserves to overshadow all the support that the Church has given to scientific investigation over the centuries.
>
> That support took several forms. One was simply financial. Until the French Revolution, the Catholic Church was the leading sponsor of scientific research. Starting in the Middle Ages, it paid for priests, monks and friars to study at the universities. The church even insisted that science and mathematics should be a compulsory part of the syllabus. And after some debate, it accepted that Greek and Arabic natural philosophy were essential tools for defending the faith. By the seventeenth century, the Jesuit order had become the leading scientific organisation in Europe, publishing thousands of papers and spreading new discoveries around the world. The cathedrals themselves were designed to double up as astronomical observatories to allow ever more accurate determination of the calendar. And of course, modern genetics was founded by a future abbot growing peas in the monastic garden.
>
> But religious support for science took deeper forms as well. It was only during the

> nineteenth century that science began to have any practical applications. Technology had ploughed its own furrow up until the 1830s when the German chemical industry started to employ their first PhDs. Before then, the only reason to study science was curiosity or religious piety. Christians believed that God created the universe and ordained the laws of nature. To study the natural world was to admire the work of God. This could be a religious duty and inspire science when there were few other reasons to bother with it. It was faith that led Copernicus to reject the ugly Ptolemaic universe; that drove Johannes Kepler to discover the constitution of the solar system; and that convinced James Clerk Maxwell he could reduce electromagnetism to a set of equations so elegant they take the breathe away.
>
> Given that the Church has not been an enemy to science, it is less surprising to find that the era which was most dominated by Christian faith, the Middle Ages, was a time of innovation and progress. Inventions like the mechanical clock, glasses, printing and accountancy all burst onto the scene in the late medieval period. In the field of physics, scholars have now found medieval theories about accelerated motion, the rotation of the earth and inertia embedded in the works of Copernicus and Galileo. Even the so-called "dark ages" from 500AD to 1000AD were actually a time of advance after the trough that followed the fall of Rome. Agricultural productivity soared with the use of heavy ploughs, horse collars, crop rotation and watermills, leading to a rapid increase in population.

I hope this will set the record straight – Judeo-Christian monotheism created the enterprise of experimental science.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Bowdoin College bans Christian student groups on campus

June 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the radically leftist New York Times. (H/T Nancy P.)

Excerpt:

> For 40 years, evangelicals at Bowdoin College have gathered periodically to study the Bible together, to pray and to worship. They are a tiny minority on the liberal arts college campus, but they have been a part of the school's community, gathering in the chapel, the dining center, the dorms.
>
> After this summer, the Bowdoin Christian Fellowship will no longer be recognized by the college. Already, the college has disabled the electronic key cards of the group's longtime volunteer advisers.
>
> In a collision between religious freedom and antidiscrimination policies, the student group, and its advisers, have refused to agree to the college's demand that any student, regardless of his or her religious beliefs, should be able to run for election as a leader of any group, including the Christian association.
>
> Similar conflicts are playing out on a handful of campuses around the country, driven by the universities' desire to rid their campuses of bias, particularly against gay men and lesbians, but also, in the eyes of evangelicals, fueled by a discomfort in academia with conservative forms of Christianity. The universities have been emboldened to regulate religious groups by a Supreme Court ruling in 2010 that found it was constitutional for a public law school in California to deny recognition to a Christian student group that excluded gays.
>
> At Cal State, the nation's largest university system with nearly 450,000 students on 23 campuses, the chancellor is preparing this summer to withdraw official recognition from evangelical groups that are refusing to pledge not to discriminate on the basis of religion in the selection of their leaders. And at Vanderbilt, more than a dozen groups, most of them evangelical but one of them Catholic, have already lost their official standing over the same issue; one Christian group balked after a university official asked the students to cut the words "personal commitment to Jesus Christ" from their list of qualifications for leadership.
>
> […]The evangelical groups say they, too, welcome anyone to participate in their activities, including gay men and lesbians, as well as nonbelievers, seekers and adherents of other faiths. But they insist that, in choosing leaders, who often oversee Bible study and prayer services, it is only reasonable that they be allowed to require some basic Christian faith — in most cases, an explicit agreement that Jesus was divine and rose from the dead, and often an implicit

> expectation that unmarried student leaders, gay or straight, will abstain from sex.
>
> “It would compromise our ability to be who we are as Christians if we can’t hold our leaders to some sort of doctrinal standard,” said Zackary Suhr, 23, who has just graduated from Bowdoin, where he was a leader of the Bowdoin Christian Fellowship.
>
> The consequences for evangelical groups that refuse to agree to the nondiscrimination policies, and therefore lose their official standing, vary by campus. The students can still meet informally on campus, but in most cases their groups lose access to student activity fee money as well as first claim to low-cost or free university spaces for meetings and worship; they also lose access to standard on-campus recruiting tools, such as activities fairs and bulletin boards, and may lose the right to use the universities’ names.

Not sure how you are supposed to have a Christian student group, if the leaders don’t accept the authority of the Bible. But maybe that’s a feature, not a bug, from the point of view of these secular administrators and their allies in the judiciary. The really sad thing about this is that Christian taxpayers are paying these secular authorities to curtail their basic rights. It’s only open season on Bible-believing Christians.

How likely is it for blind forces to sequence a functional protein by chance?

June 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How likely is it that you could swish together amino acids randomly and come up with a sequence that would fold up into a functional protein?

Evolution News reports on research performed by Doug Axe at Cambridge University, and published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Molecular Biology.

Excerpt:

> Doug Axe's research likewise studies genes that it turns out show great evidence of design. Axe studied the sensitivities of protein function to mutations. In these "mutational sensitivity" tests, Dr. Axe mutated certain amino acids in various proteins, or studied the differences between similar proteins, to see how mutations or changes affected their ability to function properly.[10] He found that protein function was highly sensitive to mutation, and that proteins are not very tolerant to changes in their amino acid sequences. In other words, when you mutate, tweak, or change these proteins slightly, they stopped working. In one of his papers, he thus concludes that "functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences," and that functional protein folds "may be as low as 1 in 10^77."[11] The extreme unlikelihood of finding functional proteins has important implications for intelligent design.

Just so you know, those footnotes say this:

> [10.] Douglas D. Axe, "Estimating the Prevalence of Protein Sequences Adopting Functional Enzyme Folds," *Journal of Molecular Biology*, 1-21 (2004); Douglas D. Axe, "Extreme Functional Sensitivity to Conservative Amino Acid Changes on Enzyme Exteriors," *Journal of Molecular Biology*, Vol. 301:585-595 (2000).
>
> [11.] Douglas D. Axe, "Estimating the Prevalence of Protein Sequences Adopting Functional Enzyme Folds," *Journal of Molecular Biology*, 1-21 (2004).

And remember, you need a lot more than just 1 protein in order to create even the simplest living system. Can you generate that many proteins in the short time between when the Earth cools and the first living cells appear? Even if we spot the naturalist a prebiotic soup as big as the universe, and try to make sequences as fast as possible, it's unlikely to generate even one protein in the time before first life appears.

Here's Doug Axe to explain his research:

If you are building a protein for the FIRST TIME, you have to get it right all at once – not by building up to it gradually using supposed Darwinian mechanisms. That's because there is no replication before you have the first replicator. The first replicator cannot rely on explanations that require replication to already be in place.

St. Louis couple uses guns to defend their daughter against two criminals

June 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Blaze explains who no one in the mainstream media (or the White House) seems to understand: Guns Save Lives.

Excerpt:

> Two armed criminals reportedly put a gun to a 17-year-old girl's head on Monday night as she was outside retrieving something from a car. The man, whose intentions still aren't entirely clear, then ordered the teenager to take them into her house — a decision that would prove to have deadly consequences.
>
> Peering out the window of the St. Louis home were the girl's mother and father, each prepared to protect their daughter with deadly force. There was also a 5-year-old boy in the house, though his relationship to the family wasn't known on Tuesday.
>
> The girl's father, a 34-year-old man, reportedly observed the men walking towards his home while holding a gun to his daughter's head, a sight that no father ever wants to see. He quickly retrieved his firearm and his wife did the same.
>
> The brave dad then confronted the two criminals and opened fire, hitting both suspects with accurate shots. The girl's mother also fired off some rounds, but failed to hit either suspect.
>
> One of the men was reportedly pronounced dead at the scene while the second suspect escaped only to later be arrested after calling his brother to take him to the hospital because he had been shot.
>
> "Police identify the suspect who was killed as 31-year-old Terrell Johnson from north St. Louis,"KTVI-TV reports. "The second suspect- a 33-year-old man- is hospitalized in critical but stable condition with gunshot wounds to his chest and both thighs. Police say he will face charges."
>
> No one other than the suspected criminals were injured in the incident.

So, now might be a good time to review the science on guns and self-defense.

A quick refresher on why people own guns

People own guns so that they deter criminals and reduce the crime rate in their communities. The more guns there are in the hands of law-abiding citizens, the lower the crime rate goes, because criminals don't like being shot at by their crime victims.

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people.

A more recent study – from 2014

A new study that was in the news just last week confirms these findings. Newsmax reported on it.

Excerpt:

> A recent study showing a reverse correlation between concealed weapons and murder rates has renewed the contentious national debate about the effect of gun controls on violent crime.
>
> Reason magazine reported last week on economist Mark Gius' study of gun controls, published in the journal Applied Economics Letters showing states with restrictions on concealed weapons had higher gun-related murder rates than other states.
>
> The study looked at the effects on murder rates of both state-level assault weapons bans and concealed weapons restrictions from 1980 to 2009.
>
> […]The findings come as A 2007 study has been also getting a new look from those who dispute gun control efforts aimed at stemming gun violence, Boston magazine reported last summer.
>
> In research first published in Harvard's Journal of Public Law and Policy, criminologists Don Kates and Gary Mauser looked at the correlation between gun laws and death rates.
>
> "International evidence and comparisons have long been offered as proof of the mantra that more guns mean more deaths and that fewer guns, therefore, mean fewer deaths," the pair wrote in their introduction. "Unfortunately, such discussions [have] all too often been afflicted by misconceptions and factual error and focus on comparisons that are unrepresentative."
>
> The pair found "correlations that nations with stringent gun controls tend to have much higher murder rates than nations that allow guns."

It's not a reasonable position to think that disarming law-abiding citizens will reduce crime rates. The evidence is against it.

Don’t like violence against women and children? Then you should promote marriage

June 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brad Wilcox writes about what research shows about marriage and domestic violence, in the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Married women are notably safer than their unmarried peers, and girls raised in a home with their married father are markedly less likely to be abused or assaulted than children living without their own father.
>
> Start with the threat that girls face from men. One of the most comprehensive portraits of sexual and physical abuse of girls (and boys) comes from the Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect. As the figure above indicates, children are more likely to be abused when they do not live in a home with their married father. What’s more: girls and boys are significantly more likely to be abused when they are living in a cohabiting household with an unrelated adult—usually their mother’s boyfriend. Indeed, the report notes that “only 0.7 per 1,000 children living with two married biological parents were sexually abused, compared to 12.1 per 1,000 children living with a single parent who had an unmarried partner.” The results from this federal study are consistent with academic research (see here and here, as well) that indicates that “girls who are victimized are … more likely to have lived without their natural fathers,” and that the risk is especially high when a boyfriend or stepfather is in the picture.
>
> The risk of physical abuse also increases when a child lives without her father, once again, particularly when an unrelated boyfriend is in the home. A 2005 study published in *Pediatrics* found that “[c]hildren residing in households with unrelated adults were nearly 50 times as likely to die of inflicted injuries than children residing with 2 biological parents.”
>
> Women are also safer in married homes. As the figure above (derived from a recent Department of Justice study) indicates, married women are the least likely to be victimized by an intimate partner. They are also less likelyto be the victims of violent crime in general. Overall, another U.S. Department of Justice study found that never-married women are nearly four times more likely to be victims of violent crime, compared to married women. The bottom line is that married women are less likely to be raped, assaulted, or robbed than their unmarried peers.
>
> What’s going on here? Why are women safer when married and children safer when living with their married biological parents? For girls, the research tells us that marriage provides a measure of stability and commitment to the adults’

> relationship, that married biological fathers are more likely to be attentive and engaged with their children because they expect the relationship to be enduring. As a consequence, unrelated males are less likely to have sustained interaction with children of the family when dad has a day-in-day-out presence in the home. More generally, the “emotional support and the supervision” that engaged fathers provide to their children can limit their vulnerability to potential predators, as David Finkelhor, director of the University of New Hampshire Crimes Against Children Research Center, has observed.

To see the graphs, just click the link above back to the original article.

Stephen C. Meyer: does the Big Bang cosmology support the existence of God?

June 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the 66-minute video featuring Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, who holds the Ph.D in philosophy of science from Cambridge University, and other degrees in the hard sciences.

The lecture starts really, really slowly. You can just fast-forward to the 12 minute mark, or you might die of boredom.

Topics:

- Up until the the last 100 years or so, everyone agreed that the universe was eternal
- This is at odds with the traditional Christian view that God created the universe
- Materialism, the view that matter is all there is, requires eternally existing matter
- Discovery #1: Hubble discovers that the universe is expanding (redshift observation)
- The expanding universe was resisted by proponents of the eternal universe, like Einstein
- Some naturalists even proposed speculative static models like the steady-state model
- However, not of the speculative models fit with observations and experimental results
- Discovery #2: Penzias and Wilson discover the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Measurements of this background radiation confirmed a prediction of the Big Bang theory
- The steady-state theory was falsified of by the discovery of this background radiation
- The oscillating model was proposed to prevent the need for an absolute beginning
- But the oscillating model is not eternal, it loses energy on each "bounce"
- A paper by Alan Guth and Marc Sher from 1982 proved that our universe will not bounce
- In addition, experiments reveal that the universe will expand forever, and not contract
- The beginning of the universe is more at home in a theistic worldview than an atheistic one
- The beginning of the universe fits in well with the Bible, e.g. – Genesis 1, Titus 1, etc.

In case you are wondering about what the evidence is for the Big Bang, here are 3 of the evidences that are most commonly offered:

> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to

> become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

This is a good article to send to atheists who are not comfortable with what the progress of science has revealed about the beginning of the universe, and of time itself. If you look in agnostic astronomer Robert Jastrow's book "God and the Astronomers" (2nd edition), you'll find 6 evidences.

By the way, Dr. Meyer also does a great job of explaining the problem of proteins, DNA and the origin of life in this lecture. And you can hear him defend his views in this debate podcast with Keith Fox and in this debate podcast with Peter Atkins. He does a great job in these debates.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

After Obama's retreat of U.S. armed forces, Iraq plunges into bloody civil war

June 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In 2008 and 2012, Americans voted for a "fundamental transformation" of our peace through strength foreign policy. And we got it. What does it look like?

ABC News reports:

> Hundreds of Iraqi men, women and children crammed into vehicles have fled their homes, fearing clashes, kidnapping and rape after Islamic militants seized large swaths of northern Iraq.
>
> The families and fleeing soldiers who arrived Thursday at a checkpoint at the northern frontier of this largely autonomous Kurdish region in Iraq were among some half-million people who have fled their homes since Monday, according to a U.N. estimate.
>
> Workers were busily extending the Khazer checkpoint in the frontier area known as Kalak, where displaced women hungrily munched on sandwiches distributed by aid workers and soldiers rushed to process people.
>
> The exodus began after fighters of the al-Qaida breakaway group, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, seized the northern city of Mosul in a stunning assault Monday. Since then, the militants have moved southward toward the capital, Baghdad, in the biggest crisis to face Iraq in years.
>
> "Masked men came to our house and they threatened us: 'We will get to you.' So we fled," said Abed, a laborer who abandoned his home on the edge of Mosul Thursday. "They kidnapped other people. They took away some people for interrogation."
>
> The young man said rumors were quickly spreading that Islamic State fighters — as well as masked bandits taking advantage of the chaos — were seizing young women for rape or forced marriage.

It looks like a civil war.

More from the Wall Street Journal:

> The Sunni insurgents' lightning offensive in the past three days has sparked the biggest crisis Iraq has faced since it plunged into sectarian violence following the U.S.-led invasion in 2003.
>
> ISIS overran Tikrit, the birthplace of former dictator Saddam Hussein, on Wednesday. But early Thursday government forces fought back, said Ali Muhammad, an official in Sunni-dominated Salah Al Din province, where the city is located.
>
> […]The group aims to set up a state in a continuous stretch of territory from

> Sunni-dominated Anbar province in Iraq to Raqqa province in northeast Syria. Since capturing Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul, on Tuesday it has advanced south along the Tigris River toward Baghdad.
>
> In another indication of the increasingly sectarian contours of Iraq's turmoil, ISIS on Thursday issued a threat against Baghdad as well as Karbala and Najaf. The latter two cities, along with Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia, are considered sacred to Shiites, who make up 60% of Iraq's population.
>
> […]U.S.-armed and trained Iraqi security forces put up almost no fight throughout the militants' rout, witnesses said.

Who is to blame for this? Did it all happen by accident?

The UK Telegraph explains:

> The takeover of large swathes of Iraq by Islamist militants should be seen as a damning indictment of Obama's ill-judged decision to abandon the country to its fate so early in his presidency.
>
> Throughout his tenure at the White House Mr Obama has made much political capital out of his claim to be an anti-war president: the man who brought America's decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan to an end.
>
> But in his desperation to distance himself from the Bush administration, Mr Obama made no real effort to understand the implications of authorising a wholesale American withdrawal from Iraq three years ago.
>
> There were many Americans – including many prominent Democrats – who took the view that, after the terrible cost that the US had paid for ridding the country of Saddam Hussein and establishing Iraq's first democratic constitution, the White House owed it to the American people to make sure Iraq continued to develop as a functioning democratic state.
>
> But for that to happen, Washington needed to make a commitment to maintain a residual military presence in Baghdad to ensure that Nouri al-Maliki's government did not renege on his commitment to reconcile his political differences with the country's Kurdish and Sunni minorities.
>
> But after Mr Obama lost patience with Mr al-Maliki, and ordered a unilateral withdrawal of American forces three years ago, Mr al-Maliki felt he was no longer under any obligation to honour his commitments. Instead, he cultivated deeper ties with neighbouring Iran, thereby further inflaming Sunni tribal leaders who felt increasingly disfranchised in post-Saddam Iraq.
>
> The result is the current crisis, which has seen the radical Islamist group, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), seize control of large areas of the country, including Mosul – the country's second largest city – and Saddam's hometown of Tikrit.

For a more pessimistic commentary on these events, see this Investors Business Daily

editorial, which tries to predict where this will all end. It’s not a good prediction, if you like freedom and peace.

DCF social workers reverse their support for kidnapping of Justina Pelletier

June 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports.

Excerpt:

> A Connecticut teenager is closer to being returned to her parents after the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families decided she was better off in the care of her family than the state.
>
> The final decision now rests with Judge Joseph Johnston who gave the state permanent custody of Justina Pelletier in March.
>
> The move came after a highly publicized battle involving differing diagnoses from doctors at Boston Children's Hospital and Tufts Medical Center and allegations of medical child abuse against her parents.
>
> The 16-year-old made an impassioned plea to go home earlier this week, and DCF has removed its longstanding opposition to the idea. DCF now claims that Lou and Linda Pelletier have met the conditions asked of them in order to get their child back.
>
> They will all now be looking to see if the judge agrees.
>
> […]The Pelletiers' trying ordeal began 16 months ago when they submitted their daughter for evaluation at Tufts University hospital.
>
> Justina's case has gained attention after a diagnostic dispute between her doctors at Tufts Medical Center and at Boston Children's Hospital over whether her deteriorating condition was primarily a physical or a psychiatric problem.
>
> She was being treated at Tufts for more than a year for mitochondrial disease, a group of genetic disorders that affect how cells produce energy, often causing problems with the gut, brain, muscles, and heart.
>
> However, doctors at Children's hospital took a different view and concluded that her physical symptoms were primarily caused by psychological disorders.
>
> After the conflicting diagnosis, doctors allegedly gave Justina's parents the bewildering and heart-breaking news that they wouldn't be able to take their daughter home.
>
> Justina's parents refused to accept that her condition was psychological in nature and tried to discharge her and bringing her back to Tufts.
>
> Speaking of the moment their daughter was taken away from her, the teenager's mother said: "They came in, and they said we cannot take Justina out of the hospital.
>
> 'They called DCF (Department for Children and Families).

> ‘They said Justina had ‘somatoform disorder,’ a form of mental illness that is characterized by physical symptoms.’
>
> Linda and Lou Pelletier were escorted out of the hospital by security, and within the short space of four days they had lost custody of their beloved daughter.

In my previous post on this story, I noted that parental visits were conducted *under armed guard*. That’s what the state did to these parents.

I hope we will see a close to this story soon. I would like to see DCF social workers and the medical personnel at the Boston Children’s Hospital charged and tried in a criminal court for what they did. Maybe the charges could be something like child abuse or kidnapping. I hope that the people who made the decisions that took the girl away from her parents will see significant jail time. Then parents might start to have faith in their hospitals and social workers – which they are paying for. But then again, this is Massachusetts. It’s probably too much to hope for common sense there.

New book “Counting to God” discusses seven arguments against atheism from science

June 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Evolution News has a summary of the book – they recommend it.

Excerpt:

> A lot of books — many of them very good — have been written about the debate over intelligent design. But rarely does one come along that combines a compelling story of the author’s personal journey to faith with a well-written, comprehensive, easy-to-read presentation of the scientific evidence. Lee Strobel’s 2004 *Case for a Creator* comes to mind, but that is now ten years old and it’s never too soon for an update. As a result, I’m pleased to recommend an outstanding new book: *Counting to God: A Personal Journey through Science to Belief*, by Douglas Ell.
>
> Doug Ell is an attorney in Washington, D.C., with an undergraduate degree in math and physics from MIT, and a master’s degree from the University of Maryland in theoretical math. You’ll have to read the book to learn Doug’s entire story. He was born into a religious home, but by the time he started college, he had drifted away from his upbringing, which he came to see as outdated superstition. As an undergraduate student, he embraced scientism — the view that scientific investigation is the only means of discovering real truth. Sometime later, however, Doug was introduced to the scientific theory of intelligent design, and everything began to change.
>
> *Counting to God* tells Doug’s story, but it also recounts key lines of evidence that support the theory of intelligent design and challenge materialist explanations of cosmic and biological origins. Ell presents what he calls the “seven wonders” of science of the new millennium:
>
> - The universe had a beginning, and a first cause, some 14 billion years ago.
> - The universe is finely tuned for life.
> - The complexity of life could not arise through unguided processes.
> - DNA contains information and biological machines.
> - New species appear suddenly in the fossil record.
> - Earth is a special planet, uniquely suited to life.
> - Quantum physics points to a reality outside of space and time.
>
> Ell surveys the evidence in each of these areas, discussing other intriguing topics along the way, including the multiverse, junk DNA, irreducible complexity, orphan genes, and near-death experiences.

I think we’ve discussed all seven of those arguments on this blog before, depending on

what he means by them.

The hardcover is a lot more expensive than the Kindle edition, but I felt that this was one book I wanted to put on my desk. So I took a chance and ordered it. I hope it's as good as this review says it is!

William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia: Does God Exist?

June 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video from the third debate from Dr. William Lane Craig's speaking tour in Australia.

Format:

- William Lane Craig (15 min)
- Lawrence Krauss (15 min, but was actually 21:40)
- Moderated discussion
- Question and answer

Dr. Graham Oppy, the moderator, is a well-known atheist philosopher. He let Dr. Krauss speak for 21 minutes and 40 seconds, which is why my summary of Krauss is so long.

The video:

Summary

After careful consideration, I decided not to be snarky at all in this summary. What you read below is what happened. There may be some small mistakes, but I will fix those if people tell me about them. I also included some quotes and timestamps for the more striking things that Dr. Krauss said.

The debate itself starts at 4:50 with Dr. Craig's opening speech. He does use slides to show the structure of his arguments.

Dr. Craig's opening speech. (4:50)

1. The kalam cosmological argument:
    - God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe
    - The Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem supports the absolute beginning of the universe
    - Even if our universe is part of a multiverse, the multiverse itself would have to have an absolute beginning
    - Speculative cosmologies try to challenge the Big Bang theory, but none of them – even if true – can establish that the past is eternal
    - Only two types of things could explain the origin of spece, time, matter and energy – either abstract objects or minds
    - Abstract objects do not cause effects, but minds do cause effects (we do it ourselves)
    - A mind is the best explanation for the origin of the universe
2. The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
    - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature

    - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
    - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
    - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see
3. The cosmic fine-tuning for the existence of intelligent life
    - There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) cosmological constants and 2) quantities
    - These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life
    - There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design
    - Law is rejected because they are put in at the beginning or matter – they don't emerge from matter
    - Chance must be rejected, because they odds are just too long unless you appeal to a world-ensemble
    - We do not observe what the world ensemble hypothesis predicts that we should observe
    - Design is the best explanation for finely-tuned constants and quantities
4. The existence of objective moral values and duties
    - Our experience of morality (values and duties) is that it is objectively real and incumbent on us
    - When someone goes into a classroom and shoots at innocent children, that is objectively wrong
    - On naturalism, moral values and moral duties do not exist – they are conventional and variable by time and place
    - The best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties is that God exists
5. The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus
    - There are three widely-accepted facts that are best explained by the resurrection hypothesis
    - 1) the empty tomb, 2) the post-mortem appearances, 3) the early church's belief in the resurrection
    - Naturalistic attempts to explain these 3 boilerplate facts fail
    - The best explanation of the 3 minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead
6. The immediate experience of God
    - Belief in God is a "properly basic" belief – rational even without arguments because of experience of God

Dr. Krauss' opening speech. (21:12)

Slides: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

1. Religious pluralism I

    - There have been lots of different gods created by people through history
    - We've gotten rid of all of them by understanding how the universe works by doing science
    - Religion is just stories, and the stories are inconsistent with how the universe works
2. Progress of naturalistic science I
    - Newtonian physics refutes the idea that angels push planets around
    - Darwinian evolution refutes design arguments, including the one that Dr. Craig presented (24:10)
    - Biochemistry hasn't explained how life originated, but we will have the solution soon
    - Physics shows us that matter can be created and destroyed without need a God
    - Physics shows us that universes can be created and destroyed "no problem"
3. Religious pluralism II
    - Since we have been able to disprove all the gods we've invented, why hang on to the last one
    - It's unlikely that the God that Dr. Craig presented exists, because we disproved all the others he didn't present
4. Hiddenness of God
    - There is a complete lack of evidence for the other 999 gods, so how likely is it that the God Dr. Craig presented exists
5. Religious pluralism III
    - There are inconsistencies between various religions, so therefore there can be no religion that is right
6. Progress of naturalistic science II
    - Peasants had a very low level of knowledge about the world and they believed in God
    - But our level of knowledge has increased over time, so we shouldn't believe in God now
    - Peasants thought that the Earth orbited the Sun, but this is now known to be false
    - The Scriptures said that the Earth orbited the Sun, but now we know that's false from science
7. Christianity plagiarizes from other religions I
    - There is nothing new or special about Jesus
    - He's just as unpleasant as all the other gods
    - Everything particular to Jesus occurs in other religions
8. Catholics are inconsistent about what they believe
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in transubstantiation
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in the virgin birth
9. The resurrection is copied from many other religions
    - Dionysus, Osiris, etc.

10. There is no evidence for the resurrection
    - The stories about Jesus were written “decades or hundreds of years after the fact”
    - The stories are inconsistent with each other
    - Dr. Craig tells me that historical Jesus scholars all accept that the resurrection happened
    - That’s like saying that all alien abductions experts agree that alien abductions happened
    - It’s unreasonable to think that the resurrection happened because no one saw it happen
    - I accept that people reported on appearances, but hallucination theory can explain that
11. The timeline for the creation and incarnation are all wrong
    - The creation, planet formation, hominids, incarnation, etc. all take place in the wrong times
    - If God knew what he was doing, he would done everything at better times to be more efficient
12. David Hume’s argument against miracles is sound
    - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – nothing wrong with this argument
    - Miracles are really just coincidences
    - Catholic apparitions at Lourdes disprove the historical argument that Dr. Craig made for the resurrection
13. God is petty and jealous
    - God shouldn’t demand that we trust him, esteem him and consider his character when we make decisions
    - The atoning death of Jesus for the sins of the world also makes no sense
14. Belief is based on geography
    - What you believe is clearly correlated with where you are born
    - There is even an Islamic clone of Dr. Craig who “uses the exact same arguments” that he does to prove Islam
    - Belief in God is decreasing in the Internet-accessible world
15. Science can develop morals without God
    - Reason is able to guide our actions to be moral
    - Morality evolves over time, so there is no objective morality
    - Catholicism teaches things that are immoral
    - Some things are prohibited by biological revulsion, such as incest
    - But if a brother and sister have sex using condoms “is that morally wrong? I can’t say it is frankly” (37:24)
16. Dr. Craig is irrational
    - “I came here convinced based on my past interactions and his writing that Dr. Craig was a dishonest Charlatan”
    - “Any argument that validates God is reasonable to him”

    - “And any argument against it is not only unreasonable but wrong and worth distorting”
    - “Because it must be wrong – he’s decided the answer in advance”
17. Dr. Craig is immoral
    - Dr. Craig thinks it is OK for God to command that Canaanite children are killed
    - “So in fact if they were Canaanite children in that schoolroom that he talked about then it would be OK”
    - It’s not reasonable to justify genocide in that way, but Dr. Craig is willing to go to those lengths
18. The cause of the origin of the space time universe need not be God
    - Dr. Craig says that if there is an explanation for the origin or space, time, matter and energy it must be God
    - But it could just as easily be turtles or Zeus
19. Dr. Craig misrepresents the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem
    - Alexander Vilenkin wrote me an e-mail that says that the theorem doesn’t work in all cases
    - “Dr. Craig is so convinced that these arguments must be true that he won’t listen to the fact that they’re not”
20. Darwinian evolution explains the fine-tuning
    - “Life was fine tuned – we got rid of it with Darwin”
    - Mutation and natural selection explain the cosmic fine-tuning argument that Dr. Craig presented
21. Suboptimal design disproves the fine-tuning argument
    - “We get back aches” therefore “This argument that [the universe] is fine-tuned for life is nonsense”
22. William Lane Craig can be proven to exhibit homosexual behavior using logical arguments
    - Look, you can construct arguments that are clearly wrong
    - Premise 1: “All mammals exhibit homosexual behavior”
    - Premise 2: “William Lane Craig is a mammal”
    - Seems to be saying that logical arguments can prove false things “it’s nonsense”
23. Dr. Craig distorted a podcast that some group made on pain receptors
    - Dr. Craig’s faith is so strong that it causes him to distort what this group said

Discussion: (44:35)

I will not be summarizing everything that was said, just a few main points.

The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the

universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can't even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don't work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don't have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON'T KNOW!!!!!!!" (raising his voice)
- Craig: I'm not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"
- Craig: "I wonder what you deleted from the original letter"
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "I just told you!"
- Craig: "Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) 'You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is

highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.'
- Craig: "That's Vilenkin."
- Krauss: "In this paper, that's absolutely right"
- Krauss: But it's ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it's unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: "Isn't it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?"
- Krauss: "No"
- Craig: "Well, can you give us one then"
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) "In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong"
- Krauss: "You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it's hard"
- Craig: "Right"

I noticed that a huge number of atheist web sites are taking the Vilenkin quote that Krauss used out of context, like this one and this one. There are probably a lot more of them like that, which I think is interesting. That's why we have these debates, I guess. To set the record straight about who accuses people of being dishonest, and who is actually dishonest.

Fine-tuning:

- Krauss tried to argue that he had explained the fine-tuning with the Higgs particle, but Dr. Craig said that only applied to the cosmological constant, not all the other examples of fine-tuning. Krauss said that it wasn't impressive that this universe permitted life and that "It would have been much more surprising if we evolved in a universe in which we couldn't live". Krauss argued the fine-tuning was only for "Life like us". But Dr. Craig explained that the fine-tuning is what allows us to have the basics of any kind of life, like slow-burning stars, chemical diversity, etc. – things that are required for basic minimal life functions in any living system. Craig said that he was working with the current physical laws of this universe (F = ma, etc.) and that he was looking at what changed if we changed those even slightly. Krauss tried to say that if he changed things like the mass of particles then the strength of forces would change. (But the forces aren't laws!) Krauss argued that the cosmological constant would be even better for life if it was zero, and Craig said that the life permitting range did include zero, but that the range of life-permitting values was narrow.

Jesus' existence:

- Craig reponded to the mystery religions charge, the charge that the evidence for the minimal facts is too late/too weak, the charge that grief visions explained the evidence better, and Hume's argument against miracles. Craig brought up the early

creed from 1 Cor 15:3-7 and explained to Krauss that it was 5 years after the events, and that Jewish standards of oral transmission were strong enough to ensure that the creed was reliable, and most of the eyewitnesses would still have been alive.

Audience Q and A: (1:21:09)

The first topic is the grounding of morality. Krauss agrees that there is no objective morality and no objective moral oughts. He also said that that standards of behavior are arbitrary, and that they change over time and they are adopted for promoting social order. Dr. Craig pressed the point that science itself would collapse without ethical values. It assumes them, but cannot ground them.

The next topic was free will. Krauss is a determinist. Craig asked him how he could reconcile moral responsibility with determinism.

The next topic was the effectiveness of mathematics. Krauss didn't have an explanation for it and didn't think it needed one. Then they got into whether the Genesis has been verified by science and whether it is meant to be taken literally.

The next topic was whether philosophy makes any progress. Craig gave the example of verificationism being rejected as too narrow, and self-refuting. Krauss: "I'm going to come to the defense of philosophy for the first time". Craig: "That's amazing!" Krauss said that science provides new knowledge. Craig said there were some things that could be known apart from science.

Islamic terrorist group taking over northern Iraq scores $425 million from bank

June 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The leftist Washington Post reports.

Excerpt:

> Of the many stunning revelations to emerge out of the wreckage of Mosul on Wednesday — 500,000 fleeing residents, thousands of freed prisoners, unconfirmed reports of "mass beheadings" — the one that may have the most lasting impact as Iraq descends into a possible civil war is that the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria just got extremely rich.
>
> As insurgents rolled past the largest city in northern Iraq, an oil hub at the vital intersection of Syria, Iraq and Turkey, and into Tikrit, several gunmen stopped at Mosul's central bank. An incredible amount of cash was reportedly on hand, and the group made off with 500 billion Iraqi dinars — $425 million.
>
> The provincial governor of Nineveh, Atheel al-Nujaifi, said that the radical Islamists had lifted additional millions from numerous banks across Mosul, as well as a "large quantity of gold bullion," according to the International Business Times, which called ISIS the "World's Richest Terror Force."
>
> […]The Taliban, the New York Times reported, had a one-time annual operating budget of somewhere between $70 million and $400 million. Hezbollah was working with between $200 million and $500 million. FARC in Colombia had annual revenues of $80 million to $350 million. Al-Shabab in Somalia had between $70 million and $100 million socked away. **And Al-Qaeda, meanwhile, was working with a $30 million operating budget at the time of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, according to the Council on Foreign Relations.**
>
> […]For a terrorist group that operates more and more like a de facto state governing a huge swath of land spilling across Syria and Iraq, the potential impact could be huge. By nearly every measure, Iraq is embroiled in civil war. With lightning speed, not deterred by Iraqi soldiers running scared, the insurgency on Wednesday moved within 70 miles of Baghdad, which analysts say is "definitely vulnerable," according to The Washington Post's Liz Sly and Loveday Morris.
>
> […]Complicating that call to action, however, is ISIS's money. It will "buy a whole lot of Jihad," regional analyst Brown Moses wrote on Twitter. "For example, with $425 million, ISIS could pay 60,000 fighters around $600 a month for a year."

Regarding the beheadings, we have this from the leftist Washington Post.

> The first thing you hear is the music. It lilts and sways. Then you see the Islamist militants. They're knocking at a policeman's door. It's the middle of the night, but the cop soon answers. He's blindfolded and cuffed. They take him to the bedroom. And then, reports say, they decapitate him with a knife.
>
> Another video captures militants with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) herding hundreds of boys and Iraqi soldiers down a highway to an unknown fate. "Repent," ISIS told inhabitants of its newly conquered territory on Thursday. "But anyone who insists upon apostasy faces death."
>
> […]The stories, the videos, the acts of unfathomable brutality have become a defining aspect of ISIS, which controls a nation-size tract of land and has now pushed Iraq to the precipice of dissolution. Its adherents kill with such abandon that even the leader of al-Qaeda has disavowed them. "Clearly, [leader Ayman] al-Zawahiri believes that ISIS is a liability to the al-Qaeda brand," Aaron Zelin, who analyzes jihadist movements for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, told The Washington Post's Liz Sly earlier this year.
>
> But in terms of impact, the acts of terror have been wildly successful. From beheadings to summary executions to amputations to crucifixions, the terrorist group has become the most feared organization in the Middle East. That fear, evidenced in fleeing Iraqi soldiers and 500,000 Mosul residents, has played a vital role in the group's march toward Baghdad. In many cases, police and soldiers literally ran, shedding their uniforms as they went, abandoning large caches of weapons.

So now we know what happens next after the U.S. military pulls out of the Middle East. A civil war happens. Terrorists steal hundreds of millions of dollars. Innocent people are directly targeted by terrorists who seize power by brutal violence. That's what the anti-war movement wanted, and that's what we've got.

Basically, this is going to end with Syria AND Iraq under the control of Iran. That's not good for the Middle East, and it's not good for us either. Iran has been sponsoring terrorist attacks against our forces abroad (Quds force operating in Iraq), and even here at home (the ambassador assassination attempt in New York). We need a foreign policy that recognizes evil as evil, instead of focusing on exporting abortion and gay marriage. Foreign policy is about

How fathers teach children to work hard and believe in God

June 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good article for Father's Day from Arthur Brooks in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The data confirm that hard work is correlated with well-being. The University of Michigan's Panel Study of Income Dynamics polls thousands of American families, and its 2009 results show that people who feel good about themselves work more than those who don't. It asks how often the respondents felt so sad that nothing could cheer them up. My analysis of the study showed that people who felt that way "none of the time" worked 10 percent more hours per week than those who felt that way "most of the time." This holds true when we eliminate people who worked zero hours, so it is not merely that unemployed people are miserable. This doesn't prove that extra work hours chase away sadness, but it weakens any argument that the cure for the blues is a French workweek.
>
> So vocation is crucial to leading a satisfying life. Who teaches this truth to children? Many traditions emphasize the role of fathers. Jesus defended himself to the Pharisees for working on the Sabbath by saying, "my Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." And the Talmud instructs us, "For a man not to teach his son a trade or profession is equivalent to teaching him to steal."
>
> The best way for a father to teach this is by example. This explains why a child's ability to grow up to be a productive adult is so strongly predicted by the presence of a working father in the home. The Princeton sociologist Sara McLanahan has for decades studied what happens to sons and daughters when their fathers are absent. She finds that after controlling for demographics, children in fatherless families are roughly twice as likely to drop out of high school as kids in intact homes. Even after controlling for student talent via standardized test scores, a sharp decline in grades and attendance persists. And young men who grow up without a father are 1.5 times more likely to be idle — that is, neither in the work force nor in school — than those with a father in the home. And this brings us to a particularly serious issue this Father's Day: Our growing national jobs deficit. In 1953, just 14 percent of adult American men were neither working nor seeking work. Today, that rate has more than doubled, to 30 percent. And this doesn't only reflect an aging population with more retired men: Just after World War II, 8 percent of noninstitutionalized males ages 25 to 54 were not working. Today, 17 percent of that same group of men are idle.

So fathers are important for teaching children to work, which is how they become independent and able to share with others in need. That's valuable. And that was certainly true for me – my father took me to work all the time and on weekends even. And when I was in high school, he encouraged me to work in the summers and take a job in the evenings year-round. Looking back, this is definitely one the things that went right in my story.

But there's more that fathers can do. Take a look at this statistical evidence on fathers and religious belief of children.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If

> his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an enormously difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary.

You can learn even more about the importance of fathers by looking at these statistics on fatherlessness.

An atheist explains the implications of adopting an atheistic worldview

June 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you love to listen to the Please Convince Me podcast, as I do, then you know that in a recent episode, J. Warner Wallace mentioned a blog post on an atheistic blog that clearly delineated the implications of an atheistic worldview. He promised he was going to write about it and link to the post, and he has now done so.

Here is the whole the whole thing that the atheist posted:

> "[To] all my Atheist friends.
>
> Let us stop sugar coating it. I know, it's hard to come out and be blunt with the friendly Theists who frequent sites like this. However in your efforts to "play nice" and "be civil" you actually do them a great disservice.
>
> We are Atheists. We believe that the Universe is a great uncaused, random accident. All life in the Universe past and future are the results of random chance acting on itself. While we acknowledge concepts like morality, politeness, civility seem to exist, we know they do not. Our highly evolved brains imagine that these things have a cause or a use, and they have in the past, they've allowed life to continue on this planet for a short blip of time. But make no mistake: all our dreams, loves, opinions, and desires are figments of our primordial imagination. They are fleeting electrical signals that fire across our synapses for a moment in time. They served some purpose in the past. They got us here. That's it. All human achievement and plans for the future are the result of some ancient, evolved brain and accompanying chemical reactions that once served a survival purpose. Ex: I'll marry and nurture children because my genes demand reproduction, I'll create because creativity served a survival advantage to my ancient ape ancestors, I'll build cities and laws because this allowed my ape grandfather time and peace to reproduce and protect his genes. My only directive is to obey my genes. Eat, sleep, reproduce, die. That is our bible.
>
> We deride the Theists for having created myths and holy books. We imagine ourselves superior. But we too imagine there are reasons to obey laws, be polite, protect the weak etc. Rubbish. We are nurturing a new religion, one where we imagine that such conventions have any basis in reality. Have they allowed life to exist? Absolutely. But who cares? Outside of my greedy little gene's need to reproduce, there is nothing in my world that stops me from killing you and reproducing with your wife. Only the fear that I might be incarcerated and thus be deprived of the opportunity to do the same with the next guy's wife stops me. Some of my Atheist friends have fooled themselves into acting like the general population. They live in suburban homes, drive Toyota Camrys, attend school plays. But underneath they know the truth. They are a bag of DNA whose only

> purpose is to make more of themselves. So be nice if you want. Be involved, have polite conversations, be a model citizen. Just be aware that while technically an Atheist, you are an inferior one. You're just a little bit less evolved, that's all. When you are ready to join me, let me know, I'll be reproducing with your wife.
>
> I know it's not PC to speak so bluntly about the ramifications of our beliefs, but in our discussions with Theists we sometimes tip toe around what we really know to be factual. Maybe it's time we Atheists were a little more truthful and let the chips fall where they may. At least that's what my genes are telling me to say."

In his post, Wallace comments on the statement above, but for more, you should listen to the podcast.

This fellow is essentially expanding on what Richard Dawkins has said about atheism:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

And Cornell University atheist William Provine agrees: (this is taken from his debate with Phillip E. Johnson)

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

And what about Florida State University atheist Michael Ruse:

> "The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory." (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

I see a lot of atheists these days thinking that they can help themselves to a robust notion of consciousness, to real libertarian free will, to objective moral values and duties, to objective human rights, and to objective meaning in life, without giving credit to theism. It's not rational to do this. As Frank Turek said on the latest episode of "Cross Examined", atheists have to sit in God's lap to slap his face. We should be calling them out on it. I think it's particularly important not to let atheists utter a word of moral judgment on any topic, since they cannot ground an objective standard that allows them to make statements of morality. Further, I think that they should have every immorality ever committed presented to them, and then they should be told "your worldview does not allow you to condemn this as wrong". They can't praise anything as right, either. This is not to say that we should go all presuppositional on them, but if the opportunity arises to point out how they are borrowing from theism in order to attack it, we should do that *in addition* to presenting good scientific and historical evidence.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

After a year of stalling, IRS blames loss of e-mails on “hard drive crash”

June 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

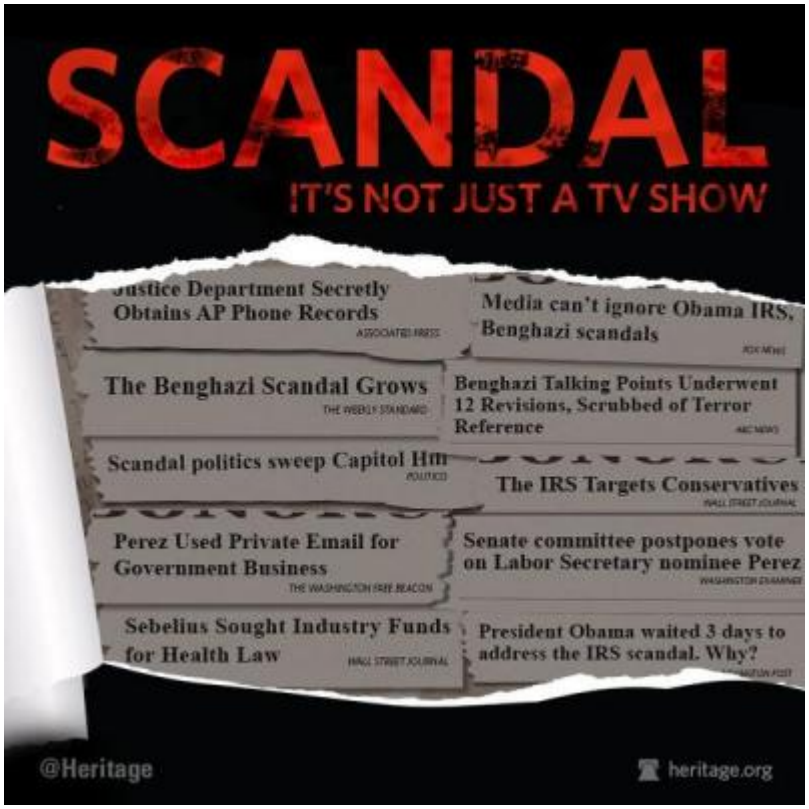

Most ethical administration in history not a smidgeon of corruption

Sharryl Atkisson (formerly of CBS News) is has questions for the IRS about lost e-mails..

Excerpt:

> According to the House Ways and Means Committee, the IRS reports having “lost” former IRS manager Lois Lerner’s emails to and from other IRS employees sent between January of 2009 and April of 2011 due to a ‘computer crash.’
>
> In light of the disclosure, these are some of the logical requests that should be made of the IRS:
>
> - Please provide a timeline of the crash and documentation covering when it was first discovered and by whom; when, how and by whom it was learned that materials were lost; the official documentation reporting the crash and federal data loss; documentation reflecting all attempts to recover the materials; and the remediation records documenting the fix. This material should include the names of all officials and technicians involved, as well as all internal communications about the matter.
> - Please provide all documents and emails that refer to the crash from the time that it happened through the IRS’ disclosure to Congress Friday that it had occurred.

> - Please provide the documents that show the computer crash and lost data were appropriately reported to the required entities including any contractor servicing the IRS. If the incident was not reported, please explain why.
> - Please provide a list summarizing what other data was irretrievably lost in the computer crash. If the loss involved any personal data, was the loss disclosed to those impacted? If not, why?
> - Please provide documentation reflecting any security analyses done to assess the impact of the crash and lost materials. If such analyses were not performed, why not?
> - Please provide documentation showing the steps taken to recover the material, and the names of all technicians who attempted the recovery.
> - **Please explain why redundancies required for federal systems were either not used or were not effective in restoring the lost materials, and provide documentation showing how this shortfall has been remediated.**
> - Please provide any documents reflecting an investigation into how the crash resulted in the irretrievable loss of federal data and what factors were found to be responsible for the existence of this situation.
> - I would also ask for those who discovered and reported the crash to testify under oath, as well as any officials who reported the materials as having been irretrievably lost.
>
> The Committee had requested the Lerner emails as part of its investigation into to the targeting of conservative non-profits by the IRS. The Obama administration has denied any corruption or intentional wrongdoing. Lerner took the Fifth when asked to testify to Congress. The House of Representatives subsequently held her in contempt. The lost materials are said to include any communications that may have occurred between Lerner and outside agencies or groups such as the White House, the Treasury Department, the Department of Justice, the Federal Elections Commission and the offices of Democrats.
>
> House and Ways Committee Chairman Dave Camp (R-Mich.) says that along with providing news of the emails that have been lost, the IRS suggested in the same letter to Congress that it end its investigation.

The leftist Washington Post explains that the Democrats' excuse of "computer crash" makes no sense, since e-mails are not stored on individual computers, but on servers that are protected from disasters.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> On Friday afternoon, the IRS apparently informed the House Ways and Means Committee that it cannot produce any e-mail correspondence from January 2009 to April 2011 between Lois Lerner and anyone outside the IRS – e.g., the White

> House, the Department of Justice, the FEC or Democratic congressional offices. According to the IRS, these 28 months of e-mails were wiped out by a "computer crash."
>
> Here is the commissioner of the IRS, testifying before Congress in March that the e-mails of employees such as Lerner are "stored in servers." Here is a PowerLine post arguing that the "computer crash" excuse is "implausible to anyone who understands how email systems work." And here is House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp (R-Mich.) calling for "an immediate investigation and forensic audit by Department of Justice as well as the Inspector General."

The IRS is blaming a "hard drive" crash for the loss – as it the e-mails were stored on Lois Lerner's computer. But as an IT professional with 15 years experience, this is a joke – on the order of the blaming of a terrorist attack on a Youtube video.

In enterprise IT systems, critical data (including e-mails) are replicated across multiple server clusters in multiple geographic locations. Large companies typically have disaster recovery exercises in order to ensure that even catastrophic situations will not result in data loss. You would think that the Democrats could have come up with a better story to cover up who was responsible for the persecution of Tea Party groups in order to win the 2012 election, but alas, no. We truly have been governed by clowns since January 2009.

Are you training your replacement?

June 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw this post on Pastor Matt's blog (H/T Truthbomb Apologetics), in which he talked about how William Lane Craig, the foremost Christian evangelist today, was inspiring a generation of young Christians to study hard subjects and to have an influence.

Pastor Matt then describes his own efforts with the Alliance Defense Fund, where he serves as Director of Development.

He writes:

> My primary job is to serve the Christian legal ministry Alliance Defending Freedom. Other than winning approximately 80% of our cases, we have committed to training the next generation of Christian lawyers (yes, there is such a thing). Alliance Defending Freedom (or ADF) instituted The Blackstone Legal Fellowship to impact future generations. We pick the top Christian law students from across the country, train them and place them in a paid internship with attorneys already fighting everyday for life, marriage and religious liberty across the globe. The results have been tremendous. After all, think about the impact an Ivy League law student committed to following Christ would have if properly trained in Constitutional law and given real world experience in defending the 1st Amendment? Such students go on to become federal law clerks, U.S Attorneys and federal judges.
>
> The Blackstone program inspired me to think about applying the same to rising Christian apologists. After all, if we lost significant ground in the culture war because we ceded academia to the left, what would happen if we identified the best and brightest committed Christians studying philosophy or science and helped them to rise to the top of their fields via a training program including internships and networking opportunities?
>
> For example, let's say a grad student at Houston Baptist University or the Talbot School of Theology has been accepted to study philosophy of science at Cambridge or physics at Cal Tech. Wouldn't it make a difference if he or she were given a chance over their summer break to spend time learning about the latest in New Testament studies from N.T. Wright and intelligent design from Stephen Meyer followed by a paid internship with the Discovery Institute or RZIM? Then think of the possibilities of linking all of these men and women through an online network and regular get togethers where they could support one another through prayer and commenting on each others' writings. The benefits could be not only better writing but friendships that help avoid unnecessary divisions as well as maintaining the momentum Dr. Craig and others have initiated.

I'm definitely a huge fan of the ADF and Blackstone Legal Fellowship, but I have my own

plan to train my replacements.

For some time now, I have been getting to know young Christians who want to make a difference for Christ and his Kingdom, and I have been encouraging them. Sometimes, that encouragement means sending money, sometimes it means sending books, sometimes it means sending care and encouragement, sometimes it means picking college courses and sometimes it means helping with homework or technical issues. Sometimes it means listening as they get through a bad break-up or deal with doubts. Sometimes it means giving them advice on courting and marriage. It could mean anything – but the goal is to build them up to have an influence.

I am a single man and have been careful to study difficult subjects and move around as necessary to find good-paying work. That leaves me in a position where I am able to spend my free time caring for these younger Christians as they grow their skills, build their resumes and get their ministries set up. I expect them all to surpass me in their achievements and influence. So although I have been able to escape my upbringing and reach some measure of success, my hope for them is that they will reach even higher than I was able to. But that’s not going to happen unless they have a vision for their lives and are supplied in order to reach their goals.

So, do you have a plan to develop influential and effective Christians who will replace you?

William Lane Craig posts full Vilenkin e-mail misrepresented by Krauss in their debate

June 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, Dr. Craig posted the e-mail from Vilenkin to Krauss, which Krauss used in his debate with Craig, with the parts Krauss omitted in bold:

> Hi Lawrence,
>
> Any theorem is only as good as its assumptions. The BGV theorem says that if the universe is on average expanding along a given worldline, this worldline cannot be infinite to the past.
>
> A possible loophole is that there might be an epoch of contraction prior to the expansion. Models of this sort have been discussed by Aguirre & Gratton and by Carroll & Chen. **They had to assume though that the minimum of entropy was reached at the bounce and offered no mechanism to enforce this condition. It seems to me that it is essentially equivalent to a beginning.**
>
> **On the other hand,** Jaume Garriga and I are now exploring a picture of the multiverse where the BGV theorem may not apply. In bubbles of negative vacuum energy, expansion is followed by cocntraction, **and it is usually assumed that this ends in a big crunch singularity.** However, it is conceivable (and many people think likely) that singularities will be resolved in the theory of quantum gravity, so the internal collapse of the bubbles will be followed by an expansion. In this scenario, **a typical worldline will go through a succession of expanding and contracting regions, and** it is not at all clear that the BGV assumption (expansion on average) will be satisfied.
>
> **I suspect that the theorem can be extended to this case, maybe with some additional assumptions. But** of course there is no such thing as absolute certainty in science, especially in matters like the creation of the universe. Note for example that the BGV theorem uses a classical picture of spacetime. In the regime where gravity becomes essentially quantum, we may not even know the right questions to ask.
>
> Alex

Now recall that Krauss excuses the selective editing of the e-mail in the debate by saying that it was “too technical” to include. Judge for yourself if the omitted lines are “too technical” or whether they were omitted in order to mislead people about the evidence for the beginning of the universe.

Dr. Craig comments:

> Whoa! That puts a very different face on the matter, doesn’t it? Why didn’t

> Krauss read the sentence, “It seems to me that it is essentially equivalent to a beginning”? Because it was too technical? Is this the transparency, honesty, and forthrightness that Krauss extols? (By the way, Vilenkin’s criticism of these models is the same one that Vilenkin makes in his Cambridge paper: far from showing an eternal past, these models actually feature a universe with a common beginning point for two arrows of time.)
>
> And why did Krauss delete Vilenkin’s caveat that the BGV theorem can, in his estimation, be extended to cover the case of an expanding and contracting model such as Garriga and Vilenkin are exploring? And why delete the remark that such a model is usually assumed to be incorrect? It’s evident that Vilenkin’s email was selectively edited to give it the spin Krauss wanted.

Some people told me that they thought that Dr. Craig needed to be a little less gracious with Krauss in the debate, but that comment takes Krauss on directly. Too bad most of the people who watch the debate will never know unless they see the original e-mail from Vilenkin that Craig posted.

Dr. Craig then wrote to Dr. Vilenkin about this misrepresentation and here is part of the reply:

> The Aguirre-Gratton model can avoide singularities by postulating a small “initial” closed universe and then allowing it to evolve in both directions of time. I put “initial” in quotation marks, because Aguirre and Gratton do not think of it that way. But this model requires that a very special condition is enforced at some moment in the history of the universe. At that moment, the universe should be very small and have very low entropy. Aguirre and Gratton do not specify a physical mechanism that could enforce such a condition.
>
> Carroll and Chen claim that the universe did not have to be small at that special moment. But in my recent paper I show that in this case singularities are unavoidable.
>
> […]I think you represented what I wrote about the BGV theorem in my papers and to you personally very accurately.

Now I don’t want anyone to get the idea that all atheists are like Krauss. I distinctly remember another atheist named Anthony Flew debating Dr. Craig and a questioner from the audience asked him why not prefer speculative cosmologies like the eternally oscillating model. Dr. Flew (unlike Dr. Krauss) was honest – he said that we have to accept the science we have today based on the evidence we have today. Dr. Krauss is not willing to accept the science we have today and the evidence we have today. That’s the difference. This is a failing of Dr. Krauss’ will and intellect. He simply cannot bring himself to accept what science has shown, if it impacts his autonomy in any way. He would rather mislead himself and others with speculations rather than face reality.

Watch the whole debate – see for yourself

I’ll re-state the relevant part of my Craig-Krauss debate summary below. The summary

has the full video.

The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can't even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don't work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don't have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON'T KNOW!!!!!!!" (raising his voice)
- Craig: I'm not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"

- Craig: “I wonder what you deleted from the original letter”
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) “I just told you!”
- Craig: “Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) ‘You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.’
- Craig: “That’s Vilenkin.”
- Krauss: “In this paper, that’s absolutely right”
- Krauss: But it’s ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it’s unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: “Isn’t it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?”
- Krauss: “No”
- Craig: “Well, can you give us one then”
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) “In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong”
- Krauss: “You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it’s hard”
- Craig: “Right”

Krauss accused Dr. Craig of misrepresenting science many times in his three Australia debates, but now we know the truth about who misrepresented science.

UPDATE: This whole episode made me think of a lecture by famous physicist Richard Feynman.

Excerpt:

> The first principle is that you must not fool yourself–and you are the easiest person to fool. So you have to be very careful about that. After you’ve not fooled yourself, it’s easy not to fool other scientists. You just have to be honest in a conventional way after that.
>
> I would like to add something that’s not essential to the science, but something I kind of believe, which is that you should not fool the layman when you’re talking as a scientist. I am not trying to tell you what to do about cheating on your wife, or fooling your girlfriend, or something like that, when you’re not trying to be a scientist, but just trying to be an ordinary human being. We’ll leave those problems up to you and your rabbi. I’m talking about a specific, extra type of integrity that is not lying, but bending over backwards to show how you are maybe wrong, that you ought to have when acting as a scientist. And this is our responsibility as scientists, certainly to other scientists, and I think to laymen.

Now given what Krauss did in the debate, it seems to me that he is not in agreement with

Feynman.

UPDATE: Dr. Craig reports that Dr. Krauss refused to let the organizers live-stream the three Australia debates, as well as refusing to let the Australian Broadcasting Corporation live-broadcast the three debates.

Psychiatrist Paul McHugh explains the troubles with transgender activism

June 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> The transgendered suffer a disorder of "assumption" like those in other disorders familiar to psychiatrists. With the transgendered, the disordered assumption is that the individual differs from what seems given in nature—namely one's maleness or femaleness. Other kinds of disordered assumptions are held by those who suffer from anorexia and bulimia nervosa, where the assumption that departs from physical reality is the belief by the dangerously thin that they are overweight.
>
> With body dysmorphic disorder, an often socially crippling condition, the individual is consumed by the assumption "I'm ugly." These disorders occur in subjects who have come to believe that some of their psycho-social conflicts or problems will be resolved if they can change the way that they appear to others. Such ideas work like ruling passions in their subjects' minds and tend to be accompanied by a solipsistic argument.
>
> For the transgendered, this argument holds that one's feeling of "gender" is a conscious, subjective sense that, being in one's mind, cannot be questioned by others. The individual often seeks not just society's tolerance of this "personal truth" but affirmation of it. Here rests the support for "transgender equality," the demands for government payment for medical and surgical treatments, and for access to all sex-based public roles and privileges.
>
> With this argument, advocates for the transgendered have persuaded several states—including California, New Jersey and Massachusetts—to pass laws barring psychiatrists, even with parental permission, from striving to restore natural gender feelings to a transgender minor. That government can intrude into parents' rights to seek help in guiding their children indicates how powerful these advocates have become.
>
> How to respond? Psychiatrists obviously must challenge the solipsistic concept that what is in the mind cannot be questioned. Disorders of consciousness, after all, represent psychiatry's domain; declaring them off-limits would eliminate the field. Many will recall how, in the 1990s, an accusation of parental sex abuse of children was deemed unquestionable by the solipsists of the "recovered memory" craze.
>
> You won't hear it from those championing transgender equality, but controlled and follow-up studies reveal fundamental problems with this movement. When

> children who reported transgender feelings were tracked without medical or surgical treatment at both Vanderbilt University and London's Portman Clinic, 70%-80% of them spontaneously lost those feelings. Some 25% did have persisting feelings; what differentiates those individuals remains to be discerned.
>
> We at Johns Hopkins University—which in the 1960s was the first American medical center to venture into "sex-reassignment surgery"—launched a study in the 1970s comparing the outcomes of transgendered people who had the surgery with the outcomes of those who did not. Most of the surgically treated patients described themselves as "satisfied" by the results, but their subsequent psycho-social adjustments were no better than those who didn't have the surgery. And so at Hopkins we stopped doing sex-reassignment surgery, since producing a "satisfied" but still troubled patient seemed an inadequate reason for surgically amputating normal organs.
>
> It now appears that our long-ago decision was a wise one. A 2011 study at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden produced the most illuminating results yet regarding the transgendered, evidence that should give advocates pause. The long-term study—up to 30 years—followed 324 people who had sex-reassignment surgery. The study revealed that beginning about 10 years after having the surgery, the transgendered began to experience increasing mental difficulties. Most shockingly, their suicide mortality rose almost 20-fold above the comparable nontransgender population. This disturbing result has as yet no explanation but probably reflects the growing sense of isolation reported by the aging transgendered after surgery. The high suicide rate certainly challenges the surgery prescription.

We seem to have this popular idea in our culture now that the loving thing to do in every case is to just affirm whatever anyone feels like doing. Want to have sex-reassignment surgery? No problem. Want to be surgically altered to look like a cat? No problem. Want to have an amputation because you don't like your arm? No problem. Want to have taxpayer-provided heroine injected by nurses? No problem. Want to adopt a lifestyle that involves having risky sex with hundreds of unprotected partners? We'll wave a rainbow flag for you. Want to get drunk and have sex before you (and they) have even graduated high school? Here are free condoms and free abortions to fix anything that might go wrong.

The really, really bad thing that we must never, ever do, apparently, is to tell someone "it's wrong".

I am really struggling to understand why telling people NOT to do things that are bad for them is a bad thing. I set boundaries on myself to keep myself out of trouble. Why can't I let other people know what they are? Why do I have to pay taxes so that other people can afford to do risky and/or immoral things that I would never do?

Study: most couples who stick it out through an unhappy period return to happiness

June 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article is by Mona Charen, and the study is by the Institute for American Values. It's an older article, but I was reading a book that mentioned the study, so I thought I would blog on it.

Excerpt:

> Now, the Institute for American Values (www.americanvalues.org) has released a new study with some intriguing data about the effects of divorce on the unhappy couples themselves. It seems that another great myth is about to tumble – the myth that at least divorce makes unhappily married adults happier.

> According to the survey, conducted by a team of family researchers, unhappily married adults who divorced were no happier five years after the divorce than were equally unhappy couples who remained together. And two-thirds of unhappily married people who remained married reported marriages that were happy five years later. Even among those who had rated their marriages as "very unhappy," nearly 80 percent said they were happily married five years later. These were not bored or dissatisfied whiners. They had endured serious problems, including alcoholism, infidelity, verbal abuse, emotional neglect, depression, illness, and work and money troubles.
>
> Even more surprising, unhappy spouses who divorced actually showed slightly more depressive symptoms five years later than those who didn't. (They did, however, report more personal growth.) And – make of this what you will – the divorced sample reported a good deal more alcohol consumption than the married group.
>
> […]**The data show that if a couple is unhappy, the chances of their being happily married five years hence are 64 percent if they stay together but only 19 percent if they divorce and remarry. (The authors acknowledge that five years is a relatively short period and many divorced people will eventually remarry, some happily.)**
>
> How did the unhappy couples turn their lives around? The study found three principal techniques. The first was endurance. Many couples do not so much solve their problems as transcend them. By taking one day at a time and pushing through their difficulties, many couples found that time itself often improved matters. Moreover, these couples maintained a negative view of the effects of divorce. "The grass is always greener," explained one husband, "but it's Astroturf."
>
> Others were more aggressive. Those the researchers labeled the "marital work

> ethic" types tackled their problems by arranging for more private time with one another, seeking counseling (from clergy or professionals), receiving help from in-laws or other relatives, or in some cases, threatening divorce or consulting a divorce lawyer.
>
> In the third category were the "personal happiness seekers" who found other ways to improve their overall contentment even if they could not markedly improve their marital happiness.
>
> Certainly the survey found some marriages that were impossible to save and some divorced couples who were happier than those who had remained married. That is as one would expect.
>
> **But the most telling aspect of this research is the light it sheds on the importance of the attitude toward marriage. Those who enter marriage with a dim (some might say accurate) view of divorce and a strong religious or other motivation for avoiding it are not only less likely to divorce; they are also less likely to be unhappy. That is the arresting news here. We've known that commitment was good for the children of such marriages. We've known that commitment was good for society. But until now, it was not clear that commitment actually made married couples themselves more likely to be happy.**

I think the last point is a good point. Right now, a lot of young people are choosing mates based on superficial criteria (looks, money, popularity). The purpose of marriage is, in their opinion, to be happy. And their spouse's job is to make them happy. That's their view of marriage. But this ignores the realities of what marriage is about. Marriage is not a contract, it's a covenant. People who marry ought to be getting into it because they want the responsibility of loving another sinner in close quarters. It's not about feelings and life enhancement.

Two new studies: fewer employers respond to resumes that mention religious affiliation

June 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The article about the studies appeared in Religion News Service.

Excerpt:

> Recent college grads, take note: Mentioning a campus religion group on your resume — particularly a Muslim club — may lead to significantly fewer job opportunities.
>
> Two new sociology studies find new graduates who included a religious mention on a resume were much less likely to hear back from potential employers.
>
> The studies used fictitious resumes — with bland names that signaled no particular race or ethnicity. These were sent to employers who posted on the CareerBuilder website to fill entry-level job openings in sales, information technology and other fields suitable for first jobs out of college.
>
> The researchers tested seven religious categories including: Roman Catholic, evangelical Christian, atheist, Jewish, Muslim, pagan, and one faith they just made up, "Wallonian," to see what would happen compared to people who made no faith reference.
>
> Fewer employers called back the "Wallonians," as well as the others, reacting to "a fear of the unknown," said University of Connecticut sociology professor Michael Wallace who led the studies.
>
> In the South, where researchers sent 3,200 resumes, those with a religious mention got 29 percent fewer email responses and 33 percent fewer phone calls than otherwise identical resumes with no faith ties according to the study, released by the Southern Sociological Society on their Social Currents site.
>
> Muslims faced the sharpest discrimination with 38 percent fewer emails and 54 percent fewer phone calls to the voice mailboxes set up by the researchers.
>
> In New England, 6,400 applications were sent to 1,600 job postings by employers. But applications mentioning any religious tie were 24 percent less likely to get a phone call, according to the study published in Research in Social Stratification and Mobility.
>
> Again, Muslims bore the brunt of discrimination, receiving 32 percent fewer emails and 48 percent fewer phone calls. Catholics were 29 percent less likely to get a call and pagans were 27 percent less likely — slightly better than the "Wallonian" applicants.

Fascinating. I think that there is something in American society that is frightened by

people who have definite views on theological truths and moral truths. We don’t mind if you have these opinions as a personal preference, for your own life enhancement, but don’t bring it up in public as if it were real for everyone else.Why is that?

Well – I think it’s because people have these experience with religion being presented to them as children in *non-cognitive* ways. As a result of having it forced on them when they are young, they get uncomfortable with it. Once children get that perception that religion is a bunch of rules and regulations, they don’t have the same curiosity or tolerance for it. Some of them might even have had discusions with people who were all passion and no reason / evidence. People who would not give it a rest. Nobody wants to have a co-worker who has strong views about things, but cannot discuss it rationally when it’s appropriate to do so.

IRS required BY LAW to store hard copies of all e-mails they claim to have lost

June 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> The Internal Revenue Service is required by federal law to keep records of all agency emails and to print out hard copies of the emails to make sure they get saved in the event of a computer glitch.
>
> The IRS recently claimed that it lost 24,000 of 67,000 emails that ex-official Lois Lerner sent between 2009 and 2011, due to a computer crash. The IRS, which agreed to turn over all of Lerner's emails to the House Committee on Ways and Means, specifically lost emails Lerner sent to other Obama administration agencies and the White House. Lerner is a major figure in the targeting scandal that has hit the IRS.
>
> […]The IRS's own definition of the Federal Records Act makes clear that emails must be saved and documented, according to an instructional page for employees on the IRS website.
>
> "The Federal Records Act applies to email records just as it does to records you create using other media," according to the IRS. "Emails are records when they are: Created or received in the transaction of agency business; Appropriate for preservation as evidence of the government's function and activities; or Valuable because of the information they contain."
>
> "If you create or receive email messages during the course of your daily work, you are responsible for ensuring that you manage them properly," according to the IRS. "The Treasury Department's current email policy requires emails and attachments that meet the definition of a federal record be added to the organization's files by printing them (including the essential transmission data) and filing them with related paper records. If transmission and receipt data are not printed by the email system, annotate the paper copy."
>
> "Please note that maintaining a copy of an email or its attachments within the IRS email MS Outlook application does not meet the requirements of maintaining an official record," the IRS stated. "Therefore, print and file email and its attachments if they are either permanent records or if they relate to a specific case."
>
> Losing all evidence of agency emails, therefore, is a violation of federal law.

So if the e-mails are not found, then it's a violation of federal law, and there will have to be an investigation, and charges will have to be laid against the guilty parties. Although you would never know it from the mainstream media, our beloved socialist government is

acting more like on organized crime syndicate. It’s gangster government, as Michele Bachmann used to say.

New study: apoptosis is unchanged from Cambrian fossils to modern humans

June 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Darwinian theory predicts that animals and animal subsystems all start of very small, and they get more and more complex as time passes, due to mutation and selection. That's the theory. But is it true?

Here's a striking article from Evolution News about a new PNAS peer-reviewed publication.

Excerpt:

> Science progresses when investigators boldly question assumptions. Look at the assumption that a group of scientists questioned: Darwinian evolution. Eight scientists from San Diego State University, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute published a bombshell in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*:
>
> The **Precambrian explosion** [they mean the Cambrian explosion] led to the rapid appearance of most major animal phyla alive today. **It has been argued that the complexity of life has steadily increased since that event. Here we challenge this hypothesis through the characterization of apoptosis in reef-building corals, representatives of some of the earliest animals**. Bioinformatic analysis reveals that **all of the major components of the death receptor pathway are present in coral with high-predicted structural conservation with *Homo sapiens*.** (Emphasis added.)
>
> Apoptosis is "programmed cell death." When a cell becomes unstable or diseased, genetic algorithms kill it in an orderly way, to prevent further harm to the organism. Specialized enzymes (especially the TNF superfamilies) switch on the program, setting locked-up destroyers called caspases loose in the cell.
>
> […]Corals have many of the same TNF enzymes that humans do. This got the team wondering:
>
> The TNF receptor-ligand superfamilies (TNFRSF/TNFSF) are central mediators of the death receptor pathway, and the predicted proteome of *Acropora digitifera* contains more putative coral TNFRSF members than any organism described thus far, including humans. This **high abundance of TNFRSF members**, as well as the predicted **structural conservation** of other death receptor signaling proteins, **led us to wonder what would happen if corals were exposed to a member of the human TNFSF** (HuTNFα).
>
> In a series of experiments, they inserted coral enzymes into human cells. The human cells died. Then they ran the reciprocal experiment, putting human TNF enzymes into coral, and its cells died too. Even the bleaching process was seen

> using human enzymes. The agents of death were perfectly interchangeable, despite 550 million years for evolution to have increased the complexity of the system.
>
> […]This is evidence against Darwinian evolution on both sides of the coin: it shows no evolutionary “progress” despite all that time, and it shows a complex system appearing abruptly right at the beginning of complex animal origins.

So you get the complexity right at the beginning, and it doesn’t change in 550 million years. It doesn’t fit with the Darwinian predictions.

My experiences with Christian women in church and campus ministries

June 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend of mine sent me some horror stories from his time dealing with single Christian women during seminary, and I thought I would write something about the horror stories from my experiences with single Christian women in campus ministries during my BS and MS programs, and in several evangelical churches that I attended in my 20s.

The biggest problem I've had with unmarried Christian women in college and in church is that it is impossible to impress them by being a competent, effective Christian man. Every skill and ability that seems to me to be useful and effective for the kingdom (or for marriage) seems to cut no ice with them. I had women in my youth group, in IVCF and in Campus Crusade have told me that being an engineer is bad, being chaste is bad, not drinking is bad, talking too much about apologetics is bad, and especially trying to get them to learn apologetics – that was really, *really* bad. They hated that. And forget trying to talk to them about abortion and homosexuality. They were very proud to be non-judgmental. It was a badge of honor, saying "I don't judge" as if they were saying "I am good person".

Everything that you might think makes sense for a man to be skilled at from a marriage point of view is viewed as creepy and weird by these church/campus-club unmarried Christian women, in my experience. I am a colored guy, so I always put their messed up standards down to the fact that I was colored and therefore was not allowed to talk to them, period. I was also surprised to see how little the command to "love your neighbor" was implemented by the unmarried Christian women. Here I was, struggling through a tough engineering program, and obviously coming from an unchurched background, yet these woman never had a supportive word for me. My interests in theology and apologetics and moral issues and politics were viewed by them with suspicion.

In retrospect, I would say the biggest argument against God's existence I ever faced was the complete disconnect between what these women professed and how they treated others.

There was one exception. When I was a teen, I had an older college student mentor me and she helped me pick up my grades – especially in English. She eventually fell away from her faith (she was a cradle Catholic). But other than her, I basically was in my mid-30s before I met a Christian woman who had any respect for me because of the things that I could do as a Christian. And that was after over a decade of donations, organizing, training, mentoring, apologetics, etc. By that time, I had my BS and MS and a boatload of savings, and yet up till then, no unmarried Christian woman had ever given me the time of day. I was sort of stuck looking to white Christian women for validation, because most colored girls are liberal. But what I found is that they had no standard in their worldview that I could be graded against favorably, other than physical appearance.

That was the scariest thing for me, to find out that there was no worldview there that distinguished between William Lane Craig and Jim Wallis, for example. There was just the outward appearance – that was the sole criterion that unmarried Christian women were using to decide whether a man had value or not. And their agenda for men was never a mentoring/discipling agenda. It was the standard secular boyfriend agenda. And very often, they chose standard secular boyfriends for that agenda. I later found out that they found men with definite moral positions and definite apologetics ability *intimidating*. Any man with fixed, entrenched positions – either about truth or moral issues – *frightened* them.

Even now, I find this such a weird thing, because in my own life, I act as a mentor to younger Christians regardless of their appearance or other such criteria. Mentoring other Christians is what Christians ought to be doing! I mentor about a dozen promising young Christians (women and men) in different countries. On a given night, you'll find me reading something they asked me to read, sending them links to evidence to help them argue, proof-reading their essays, buying them books, hearing about their school assignments, picking their elective courses, or ordering them not to take the summer off and to work instead, etc. Right now, I have two of my experienced pro-life friends helping one of them take over a pro-life club at a university. Another of my friends who does Internet consulting is helping another friend start his web site. And so on, with me or my friends mentoring other Christians just for the sake of honoring that command to love others upward. It doesn't even matter how great the person is right now, because we mentor Christians at all levels of ability. No one is left out, and no oneis turned down.

But this idea that other Christians have value simply because they are Christians was NOWHERE to be found among unmarried Christian women when I was in university and in my 20s. It's totally foreign to them that Christianity imposes those mentoring/discipling obligations on them, regardless of appearances. They are feelings-driven, not obligation-driven. They are concerned with their own agenda, and not looking to God to see what he wants them to do for their fellow Christians.

I was always the same Wintery Knight back them as I am today, just at an earlier stage of development, and yet no unmarried Christian women in the church or in a campus Christian ministry gave me so much as an affirming glance while I was working out my plans. In fact, church women often stood in the way of things I tried to do, like bring in professors to speak at IVCF or show William Lane Craig debates at Campus Crusade. Focusing on evidential issues was deemed "too divisive". It was prayer walks, hymn sings and testimonies by postmodern relativists every week. I learned not to count on unmarried Christian women for support of any kind for the things I was trying to do. No matter how good the things I wanted to do were, they always had a reason why I shouldn't be allowed to do them.

I am always surprised when I meet a woman and she wants me to read the Bible, or read a book, or do anything like that. (That actually happened to me again last week!) I've had a handful of women do that to me in my whole life. Unmarried Christian women are, in my experience, running a very secular playbook, making decisions about how to treat

others from their feelings. And then if you question them about it, they attribute their feelings to the work of the Holy Spirit. You don't really see how bad it is until you hear them tell you that God told them to move in with the atheist guy, etc. It's striking to me how far the Holy-Spirit-wrapping of their feelings goes, and yet they don't see a problem with it. I think the answer to this problem is that we really need to help women to think through their worldview and think about how to act on Christian convictions with other people, and men in particular, and men who are committed to building the Kingdom *effectively and intelligently* above all others.

Young people who voted for Obama are holding fewer and fewer jobs

June 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

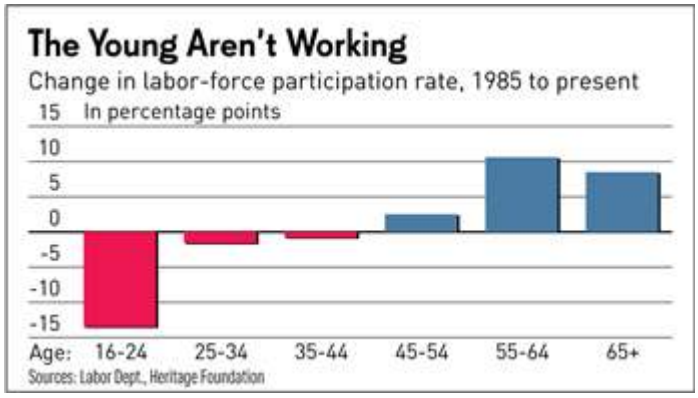

Youth labor force participation

Stephen Moore writes about Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Economists are scratching their heads trying to figure out a puzzle in this recovery: Why are young people not working? People retiring at age 60 or even 55 in a weak economy is easy to understand. But at 25?
>
> The percentage of adult Americans who are working or looking for work now stands at 62.8%, a 36-year low and down more than 3 percentage points since late 2007, according to the Labor Department's May employment report.
>
> This is fairly well-known. What isn't so well-known is that a major reason for the decline is that fewer and fewer young people are holding jobs. This exit from the workforce by the young is counter to the conventional wisdom or the Obama administration's official line.
>
> The White House claims the workforce is contracting because more baby boomers are retiring. There's some truth to that. About 10,000 boomers retire every day of the workweek, so that's clearly depressing the labor market. Since 2009, 7 million Americans have reached official retirement age. The problem will get worse in the years to come as nearly 80 million boomers hit age 65.
>
> But that trend tells only part of the story. The chart above shows the real problem: The largest decline in workforce participation has been those under 25.
>
> […]We do no favors to the young by teaching them that they can consume or have a good time without first earning the money they spend.

I think young people are often brainwashed at a young age to think that bashing the free enterprise system and voting for socialism isn't going to take away their jobs. But if you vote to tax and regulate the businesses who may employ you later, you'll find that they are too busy groaning under the strain of big government to employ you.

If young people were serious about getting jobs, they'd be voting to cut subsidies on universities to lower tuition costs, to lower corporate taxes, to cut environmental regulations, to repeal Obamacare, and so on. They would be more concerned that schools teach them actual skills instead of politically correct views, and so they would be voting for school choice and for right-to-work laws, to weaken the teacher unions who are not accountable to them. They should be voting against the minimum wage hikes that will price them out of an all-important first job. They should be voting against the (more than) doubling of the national debt in the 5.5 years under Obama. Job offers are not just there independent of the legal and economic environment. And just reaching a certain age doesn't mean that you are qualified for a job.

Why does the Bible place restrictions on sex outside of marriage?

June 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Evidence Unseen.

Excerpt:

> God created marriage to be between one man and one woman. God created us with gender ("male and female" Gen. 1:27), and he designed it so we would "leave our father and mother" (Gen. 2:24—both singular) and become "one" with our spouse. Sex outside of this context goes beyond (or against) God's design. Jesus affirms God's original design for sex by quoting these two passages in Matthew 19, and Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 to affirm God's design for marriage as well (1 Cor. 6:16).
>
> By contrast, the NT speaks against all other forms of sexuality as *porneia*. This is the Greek root from which we get our modern term "porn." Paul writes about *porneia* often and with the strongest possible terms. Thus this isn't simply a NT *teaching*, but rather, a NT*emphasis*:
>
> (1 Cor. 6:13) The body is not for immorality [porneia].
>
> (1 Cor. 6:18) Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.
>
> (Gal. 5:19) Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality.
>
> (Eph. 5:3) But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.
>
> (1 Thess. 4:3) For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality.
>
> As those who know Christ, God's will is to change us into people who have control over our sexuality, yet expressing ourselves regularly and pleasurably in marriage (1 Cor. 7:2). Resisting God's design will depreciate your life. One author rightly said, "Nobody ever broke the law of God. You break yourself against the law of God… You don't break the law of gravity. You break your neck."[1] **Of course, God completely forgives believers for our sins (Rom. 8:1), but he doesn't protect us from their *consequences* (Gal. 6:7; Heb. 12:14-17). When we live apart from our Creator's design, we will expect to see negative effects in our lives.**

I can certainly vouch for the fact that premarital sex and especially cohabitation does enormous damage to a woman's ability to be trusting and vulnerable. I find trust and vulnerability very attractive, but the women I know who have mashed themselves up with

failed sexual relationships have a greatly diminished capacity for trust and vulnerability.

More:

> Secular researchers have noted the ways in which fornication and cohabitation affect us in negative ways. Melina Bersamin (Department of Child Development—California State University) writes,
>
> College students who had recently engaged in casual sex reported lower levels of self-esteem, life-satisfaction, and happiness compared to those students who had not had casual sex in the past 30 days… College students who had recently engaged in casual sex reported higher levels of general anxiety, social anxiety, and depression compared to college students who had not had recent casual sex.[2]
>
> One study found that having sexual intercourse with someone only once or having sexual intercourse with someone known for less than 24 hours was significantly associated with feelings of sexual regret (Eshbaugh & Gute, 2008). Both men and women report sexual regret, albeit for different reasons, following casual sex encounters (Fisher et al., 2012). Feelings of sexual regret, and feelings of regret in general, have been linked to poor psychological out- comes, such as lower life satisfaction, loss of self-worth, depression, and physical health problems.[3]
>
> Likewise, Robert Durant notes that "adolescents who were sexually active had significantly higher depression scores than nonsexually active subjects." He adds that depression was "positively correlated with the number of partners in the previous 3 months." He also points out that having a strong sense of "purpose in life" was "significantly negatively correlated with… the number of sexual partners in the previous 3 months."[4] In other words, people that sleep around are not happier, but sadder. Moreover, people who feel that they have a purpose to their lives don't feel the strong sense to sleep around.

It's a question of prudence. If you want to be able to offer your future spouse trust and vulnerability, then you don't engage in premarital sex, and especially not in cohabitation. Cohabitation basically means you give everything to a person who doesn't commit to you. When it ends, your trust and vulnerability take a major hit, and you may never recover full function in that capacity. You basically just end up giving less of yourself the next time to the next person, and they are cheated out of the trust and vulnerability they deserve.

More studies:

> Hall and Zhao (from the University of Western Ontario) studied 8,177 individuals who were ever-married. They write, "Premarital cohabitors in Canada have over twice the risk of divorce in any year of marriage when compared with noncohabitors."[13]
>
> Manning (et al.) writes, "Over 50% of cohabiting unions in the US, whether or not

> they are eventually legalized by marriage, end by separation within five years compared to roughly 20% for marriages.”[14]
>
> Daniel Lichter and Zhenchao Qian (from Cornell University and The Ohio State University) write, “If serial cohabitors married, divorce rates were very high—more than twice as high as for women who cohabited only with their eventual husbands.”[15]

I think I know why cohabitation causes this higher risk of divorce. When a person cohabitates with another person and gives them *everything* (including their bodies) and the relationship fails, it makes them much more distrustful and paranoid when dealing with the next person they may like. They become unable to take the other person’s needs seriously and care for them because they are so worried about being hurt after giving up a lot to other people. If the distrustful person senses that they are holding back from the other person, they will often blame the other person for making demands on them – perhaps by imputing false motives to them, in order to justify not having to give anything back. In my experience as a chaste man, I have always felt like I was clear emotionally to give everything in each new relationship, and what I’ve found is that I have been able to easily trust each new person even after a break-up with the previous person. Break-ups don’t hurt much if you don’t get physical, and you’re more likely to stay friends with the person as well.

The really annoying thing about this is that premarital sex is so widespread that most people seem to have had it before their brains are even functioning enough to know what they really want out of life. So, instead of working backwards from the demands of marriage in order to know who to have a relationship with, they are choosing based on appearances and peer-approval far before marriage is even a possibility. By the time they get to an age where they are aware of what kind of woman or man marriage requires, they are already damaged to the point where they cannot give themselves to someone who is a good match. That’s the problem with having sex with someone when you are young – you don’t know what marriage is about, so you don’t know what to look for. It’s especially bad for women, who give away their peak sexual years (teens and 20s) to men who then want nothing to do with them. They’ve been used for sex without commitment by men who were good-looking, but not *good*.

Christian band member convicted in murder plot was actually an atheist

June 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Christian News Network.

Excerpt:

> A so-called Christian heavy metal band whose frontman was convicted of attempting to hire a hitman to murder his estranged wife has admitted that it duped fans into believing that they were Christian in order to sell their music.
>
> "Truthfully, I was an atheist," Tim Lambesis, the lead singer and founder of As I Lay Dying told the*Alternative Press* in a recent interview. "I actually wasn't the first guy in As I Lay Dying to stop being a Christian. In fact, I think I was the third. The two who remained kind of stopped talking about it, and then I'm pretty sure they dropped it, too."
>
> The publication noted that his wife, Meggan, had likewise divulged in divorce papers that Lambesis had become an atheist. Lambesis, in admitting his atheism, outlined that he turned away from Christianity as he majored in religious studies while attending college through a long distance program.
>
> […]And one sin led to another, turning his renunciation of Christ into justification for his actions.
>
> **"The first time I cheated on my wife, my interpretation of morality was now convenient for me," Lambesis explained. "I felt less guilty if I decided, "Well, marriage isn't a real thing, because Christianity isn't real. God isn't real. Therefore, marriage is just a stupid piece of paper with the government."**
>
> But he continued to profess to be a Christian, as did others in the band, in order to sell records to Christian music fans.
>
> […]**He said that during his tenure with As I Lay Dying, he realized that a number of bands that professed to be Christians were faking their faith just as he was.**
>
> **"We toured with more 'Christian bands' who actually aren't Christians than bands that are," Lambesis stated. "In 12 years of touring with As I Lay Dying, I would say maybe one in 10 Christian bands we toured with were actually Christian bands."**

This is why my heroes in the faith are not athletes and artists. It's possible for athletes and artists to be as solid in their faith as a J. Warner Wallace or a Tim McGrew, but scoring points on a sports field or singing songs on a stage is no guarantee of that. Biblical faith is about knowledge – justified true belief. Nothing about sports or music

helps you to know whether your beliefs are true. Period.

Justina Pelletier's family promises to sue Massachusetts for kidnapping their daughter

June 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> The family of Justina Pelletier, the teenage girl at the center of a national parental rights dispute, vows to pursue legal action against the state of Massachusetts for what they say was essentially an abduction of their daughter.
>
> Earlier this week, Massachusetts Juvenile Court Judge Joseph Johnston signed the order for Justina to go home following a 16-month dispute between her family and state officials. Lou Pelletier said in a text message, "This battle has been finally won. The WAR will not be won until we stop this from happening to ALL CHILDREN!!"
>
> Pelletier, said, "It's an unbelievably emotional day… I'm still shellshocked. It has been 16 months of torture, but finally justice is being done."
>
> The first order of business for the family is to get Justina well and evaluate her after her treatment, or lack therof, by state officials. In her sixteen months under the "care" of the state, Justina Pelletier's health deteriorated from being a vibrant figure skater to being confined to a wheelchair, unable to walk on her own.Pelletier says his daughter has "no feeling at all below her hips" and is now confined to a wheelchair.
>
> In a picture, right, her father is shown having to carry her into their home.
>
> Next, they are considering legal action. The Pelletiers are pursuing legal action against the Massachusetts officials who took custody of Justina.

According to the Hartford Courant:

> Pelletier said he plans to pursue legal and legislative action against the Massachusetts officials who took custody of Justina.
>
> "This is just the beginning," Pelletier said. "There's going to be a Justina law," because hospitals are "taking kids, using DCF to be their little wingman. I'm going to be the guy that's going to change that."

If you haven't been following the kidnapping story, the Courant article is a GREAT summary of everything.

I would like to see them sue Massachusetts and maybe score one for parents who are tired of having their parental autonomy and authority undermined by fascists. Taxpayer-funded fascists, no less. The Pelletier family *paid* for the DCF and the judge to do this to them.

Can you imagine that parents are *paying* fascists to *torture* their own child so that she has *permanent* disabilities? It’s incredible, but that’s what it means to pay taxes to a secular government – you’re paying for things that you would never spend your own earned money on if you had the choice. And they think they are doing you a favor – providing you with a service. Because you are too stupid to know how to parent your own child. Throw them all in jail, throw away the key.

Surprise! In this post, I actually agree that men should “man up” – in one respect

June 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I hope I don’t get my Christian manosphere credentials revoked, and I’m going to try very hard to explain why I am linking to this post by Matt Walsh below, in a disclaimers section.

But first, this:

It went from courting, to dating, to hanging out. Sometimes even hanging out reeks of too much commitment, in which case ‘talking’ can be used. And if talking sounds too serious, maybe we’ll start hearing ‘vicinitizing.’ That’s a word I just made up, and it means that you and your female friend are often in the same vicinity, but it doesn’t get all intense by insinuating that you’re actually in that general location together on purpose.

When did men become so afraid to make a commitment, to take the lead, to say what they want, to make long term plans, to set goals, to pursue, to talk about the future?

We are devolving into primates, losing the ability to even discuss our own behavior using words and sentences. The average single American man is now relegated to grunts and shrugs and ‘whatevers’ and ‘you knows’ when pressed to have a conversation about his dating habits. Or his vicinity habits. Or his whatever habits, because whatever, you know?

‘Hanging out’ is how we describe what we do with our buddies. Is that what you want? Do you want that beautiful woman to be your buddy? Or would you ideally prefer it if you could distinguish between your relationship with her and your relationship with your friend Steve?

And this, I really love this:

Then, one day, I met Alissa. She was looking for a grown man, and I was sick of playing games. We were both exhausted. So do you know what we did very early in our relationship?

We defined our terms.

We made our goals clear.

We were open with each other.

We spoke about the future.

We used words like ‘marriage.’

We were clear and convicted and purpose driven. I had ambitions for our relationship. *Ambitions*. I, like, had an idea about what I was doing and why I was doing it. Can you believe it? I was in it *for a reason*. I wanted it to *become something*.

See, I’d been floating like aimless debris through an ocean of cloudy intentions and half-heartedness, until I grew up and realized that romance isn’t a game, and most women aren’t frivolous bimbos. They want men who know what they want and aren’t afraid to

verbalize it. **And if they don't want that, then they aren't worth your energy. Get out now. If she still wants to pretend she's in tenth grade, let her live that fantasy with someone else.**

With Alissa, things were pretty clear from the get-go. We had a relationship. A real, live relationship. A few months into it, I proposed. Some people wait longer, which is fine. We're all on our own schedule. **But I promise you, despite popular sentiments, it doesn't take a decade and a half to figure things out.**

And finally this – I could not agree more, (but see my disclaimer below):

No matter what anyone does, or says, or thinks; no matter what we tell ourselves; no matter what society insists, romantic relationships are always serious business. Call it what you want — hanging out, talking, dating — there's a woman's heart involved in it. That means you have a responsibility, alright? You have a duty as a human being, as an adult, as a man.

She's making herself vulnerable to you. You need to honor that, protect it. And if you aren't looking for anything but cheap sex and another trophy of sexual conquest to hang on the wall in your studio apartment, then you need to protect her from yourself, because you'll be bringing nothing but disappointment and chaos into her life.

Listen, there's a lot of joy and love you're missing out on when you spend years tumbling like a ball of weeds from one opaque hang out session to another. I know this from experience.

If you're hanging out with a woman and you feel like you might be into her,*tell her*. Call her on the phone. Take her out on a date. Say the words: "I'd like to take you out." No ambiguity. Plan the date yourself. Women want you to be decisive. Lose the whole "so waddaya wanna do tonight?" schtick. Take charge. Pick her up at 7. Pay for the meal. Have a conversation with her. Go mini golfing or something. Go *somewhere*. Open the door for her. Put your phone away. Open up to her. Share your ideas, your dreams, your fears. Get to know her. Pursue her. *Pursue her*. Invest yourself in the process, as scary and unsure as it may seem. Take a risk, gentlemen. Go out on a limb for once. Be purposeful. Be desirable. Be a man.

You wouldn't go into a job interview and tell the interviewer that you aren't sure if you want the job, and you don't want to even talk about the job because it freaks you out and gives you a tummy ache, would you? So don't do that to the women you're dating, or hanging out with, or talking to, or whatever.

In the old days, they called it courting. It was a lot like dating, but with more of a point and less confusion. Maybe we should get back to that strategy.

Just this week, I was shown an e-mail from a man who has been very serious about a woman who has just swept him off his feet. He really likes her and has been very clear about his feelings for her. His long term goal for his relationship with her is marriage, and she knows that. He has been encouraging her to grow her skills and to pursue her dreams. BUT this is what she wrote to him in the e-mail I saw "**Do not talk about**

marriage, or love. This makes me uncomfortable." This is after 3 months! THREE MONTHS!

I was talking about marriage with one girl I was interested in on the FIRST meeting. And in the second meeting, she brought up John Piper's questions for couples considering marriage – it didn't bother me one bit. I was happy to have something serious to talk about with her. Just to check this out, I asked two of my co-workers what they thought. The first moved in with his girlfriend after a month, and married her within a year – they've now been married 19 years. The second was picking out engagement rings after a month of meeting his wife, was engaged 9 months later, and he's been married to her for 29 years.

I agree with Matt that IF men are interested in a woman, THEN they should state their goals and talk about the future with her. But if the woman is very spontaneous, emotional, fun-loving, etc. and only wants to talk about surfing, skydiving, etc., then a man can't be blamed for not bringing up marriage in that case.

Disclaimer

I want to be clear that this admonition to man up does not take away from anything that I've said about marriage being very, very dangerous for men. The fact of the matter is that marriage does not mean what it used to mean before feminism. To just give one quick example, no-fault divorce and anti-male divorce courts make marriage a really risky decision for a man. 70% of divorces are initiated by women, and they get full custody 90% of the time – with the child support and alimony. So I think that as long as we are talking about women who are politically conservative, into apologetics, frugal, chaste and a graduate of a STEM degree program, then men should be clear and direct and make the woman feel desired and safe. Otherwise… just stay clear of them.

Jennifer Roback Morse lectures to the Blackstone Legal Fellowship

June 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Two lectures from the great Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse. One of my favorite scholars to listen to, and a great debater, as well.

Lecture one: Love and Economics

(June 13, 2014) Dr J traveled to Phoenix to participate in Alliance Defending Freedom's Blackstone Legal Fellowship, where she gave two talks. This is the first one, "Love and Economics," on what marriage is and why we need it–stay tuned for the next one!

The MP3 file is here.

Lecture two: Defending Marriage

(June 13, 2014) Dr J traveled to Phoenix to participate in Alliance Defending Freedom's Blackstone Legal Fellowship, where she gave two talks. This is the second one, "Defending Marriage," on why marriage matters and what has happened and will happen as it gets more and more redefined by the progress of the sexual revolution.

The MP3 file is here.

I was listening to these late at night, and when she said "you know Catholics aren't good with Bible verses" at the beginning of lecture two, I howled with laughter. I'm sure the property manager is going to let me know not to howl with laughter after midnight. Oh well – it was hilarious. She is Catholic. I howled again when made a comment about chaste people over the age of 30, like me. It's just FUN to listen to, but these are serious subjects.

Greg Koukl debates Michael Shermer on God, atheism, meaning and morality

June 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The full transcript of a debate between Michael Shermer, editor of Skeptic magazine, and Greg Koukl, president of Stand to Reason. This debate occurred on Hugh Hewitt's radio show, and was moderated by Hugh Hewitt.

HH = Hugh Hewitt
GK = Greg Koukl
MS = Michael Shermer

Here is a 32-page PDF with the full debate transcript.

And here's an excerpt:

GK: Right. Actually, the big question here, Hugh, is whether it's possible to be good without God. Now I'm not talking about whether it's possible to be good without a belief in God. I certainly think that's possible, but be good without God. And the answer to that question hinges entirely on precisely what you mean by good. And so I was going to give an illustration. So a man drags a young girl into the alley, he sexually abuses her, strangles here, and tosses her into the dustbin. Is that act wrong? Now I think everybody listening is going to admit it is wrong. But here is the real question. What do we mean when we say that that act of rape and abuse and murder is wrong? Are we describing the action itself, the object? Are we saying that the object, the rape, the murder, has a quality of being wrong, and therefore, wherever that rape goes, the wrongness follows it, just like your height, 6' 2", or whatever it is, is an objective quality of you. Wherever you go, your height follows you in the same way. Does the wrongness follow the rape? Well, if it's a quality of the rape, if it's an objective quality of the rape, then it does. And it doesn't matter what people think about it, or what cultures decides, or what your evolutionary conditioning is. The rape is still wrong. The other alternative is that you're not talking about the rape. You're talking about yourself. You're talking about your genetic conditioning. You're talking about your culture's decision about that kind of thing. And if that's the case, then the truth of the wrongness of the rape is simply in the individual or the subject. And this is why philosophers distinguish between ethical objectivism and ethical subjectivism. Now there's lots of different subjectivisms in ethics. But simply put, if you're an ethical subjectivist, you're a relativist. And actual ethics don't exist. Ethics are an illusion. If you conclude that ethics are an illusion, there's lots of different ways to explain it. Michael's written a really great book, I think, called The Science Of Good And Evil. I've read most of it, and it's well written, and it's very compelling. But it's a description about how the illusion of ethics has taken place. If you want to go that route, you're welcome to go that route. But what you can't do is you can't then talk about morality as if it's objective when your explanations are subjective. So this is a problem that I think all atheists, including Michael, have to solve. Are ethics objective or relative?

And if they're relative, then how can we make moral judgments that are meaningful on other people?

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Wow, let's just get right into it. Well, I don't think it's quite so black and white. That is to say I think there are provisional moral truths that exist whether there's a God or not. In other words, it's wrong, morally, absolutely morally wrong to rape and murder. And that would be true whether there was a God or not. In other words, if…is God saying that it's wrong because it's really wrong, and He's instructing us in his Holy Scripture that it's wrong? Or is it only wrong because He said so? And if it turned out there wasn't a God, would that make it okay? And my answer is no, it really is wrong, whether God says it's wrong or not. That is to say I think it really exists, a real, moral standard like that. Why? Well, because first, you could ask the person who is being affected, we should always ask the moral recipient of the act, how do you feel about being raped or murdered or stolen from or lied to. And the moral actor will tell you, it doesn't matter whether, if I could use a current example, I haven't any idea if Tiger Woods and his wife are religious or not. But you can just ask his wife whether it was morally right or wrong, and she'll tell you. It doesn't matter whether there's a God or not. It's wrong. And so that's the first principle. Just ask. Ask the moral recipient of whether it's right or wrong. But I think Greg's after something deeper, that is to say is there something even deeper still behind the moral actor's feelings about how they're treated. And the answer is yes, I think so. We're a social species. We don't live in isolation. We live as members of a group. And as such, there's no possible way our group could survive, be cohesive, be a unit of any kind of solidarity against other groups, or against a harsh environment. If there were too much violations of social norms, that is if there were constant lying and cheating and raping and murdering, there's no way a social group could hang together. And as such, as we all know, we're very tribal. We're tribal against other groups, but within our groups, we're very pro-social, altruistic, cooperative. We have a good and evil in our nature. So to this extent, I find myself interesting often in agreement with my conservative friends on most of the things they consider morally, moral truths. That is, we share the same moral values, even though I come at it from a different perspective.

HH: Greg?

GK: Yeah, I'm actually not after something deeper here, Michael. At least to start out the discussion, I'm trying to be as simple and clear and precise as possible, because it's very easy to weave together a bunch of things that sound persuasive, but turn out to be different things. Like for example, Darwinian evolution, which is a materialistic process, and here I mean the blind watchmaker thesis, the neo-Darwinian synthesis, natural selection working on mutations, and a kind of a cultural evolution that Michael has just referred to as we work together as a group to survive as a group. Those are two entirely different things. One is materialistic, Darwinian, the other one is intelligent design, quite frankly, where the group gets together and makes some determinations to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What I'm trying to do is to be able to answer the question that came up initially, is God necessary for morality, which Michael denies. It's

to say well, what is it that morality, that we're trying to describe? It is either objective, and therefore an immaterial obligation that applies to certain behaviors, or it is subjective. The things that Michael described were variously subjective, evolutionary elements, subjective cultural elements, but then he affirmed that we all have good and evil in our nature, or an awareness of that. I agree with that entirely. We all are aware of those things. That's why even if we don't believe in God, we can still know morality and follow it. The question is what accounts for real, genuine objective morality?

HH: One minute to the break, Michael Shermer.

MS: I'm not arguing for cultural evolution. I'm actually arguing as part of our, what you described as materialistic, natural selection, Darwinian evolution, that it's not enough to just pretend or fake being a good group member. You actually have to believe it, feel it, and live it. So what I'm arguing is that natural selected certain moral sentiments, as Adam Smith called them, moral feelings, an actual empathy, Adam Smith talked about, we actually empathize with somebody else, we can put ourselves into their shoes and feel their pain, I'm arguing that's very real. It's every bit as real a part of our evolutionary heritage as our eyes and our hands.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, you were saying that evolutionary biology has produced a real morality.

MS: Yeah, I think really, Adam Smith had it right in his very first book, The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, long before Darwin, that we actually have in our biological nature, our human nature, the capacity to feel other people's pain. He called it empathy, we think of it often either as empathy or sympathy. That is, we really do connect to other people. A lot of good research on this now, brain scans, you can show somebody a little video of somebody they know, or have feelings for, getting pricked with a pin, and the same areas of their brain light up, the pain receptors, as in the person getting the pin prick. In other words, we have an evolved tendency to really be deeply, emotionally connected to our fellow group members. And that's why I say groups like World Vision, where you want to adopt a child, it doesn't help to show a picture of 10,000 starving African kids. What does affect us is one child, a picture of one child with a little biography. That's how you get people to adopt a child to donate. The reason for that is because essentially they're tricking the brain, our brains into making that stranger an honorary family member, an honorary within group member, which is why I argue that free trade is one of the best ways of defusing normal tribal tensions between people. It makes them honorary friends, honorary members. Well, what's going on there is we're tricking the brain into sort of this evolutionary rule of thumb – be nice to people that are like you and that are related to you, and that you know, and that are fellow group members, and don't do what our natural tendency is, is to be tribal and xenophobic against those other guys. And free trade is one of the best things you can do for that. So I'm arguing that's actually tapping something deep within us.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, basically, I agree with Mike completely here. We do have this tendency, and it seems to be universal among humankind. The question is, what is that tendency, actually? And what is the best way to explain it? And I see like a handful of significant problems with using evolution to explain morality. The first one is that evolution is a materialistic process. And here, I'm going back to an original point, and I don't want people to lose it. There is no way that you can take molecules, and reorganize them in any fashion, over any length of time, and have pop out of the mixture an objective moral principle that's immaterial, and that applies to human beings. All you're going to get is a reorganization of the molecules. And what they can produce, and this is what Mike has done in his book, and he mentioned just s few moments ago, they can produce sentiments. They can produce feelings. They can produce behavior. But this leads us to the second problem of using evolution to explain morality, is that morality is more than sentiments, feelings and behavior. Morality entails things like motive and intention. I mean, you could have a guy walk into a garage, walk out with a hose, and is that wrong? Well, it depends. Is it his hose or somebody else's hose? Did he intend to take the other person's hose? Is he borrowing the hose? So we can see here are elements that are part of the moral thing that needs to be explained, that are immaterial, and therefore the Darwinian explanation can't even in principle go there. It can't do that job. But here's the worst problem. Regardless of what our sentiments happen to be regarding moral actions, we can feel good or feel bad or whatever, the problem is that morality is prescriptive, not merely descriptive. That is it tells us not just what we did, but what we ought to have done in the past, and what we ought to do in the future. That is not something that any Darwinian mechanism can describe, because nothing about my biology can inveigh upon me to act a certain way for moral reasons in the future. It doesn't tell me why I should be good tomorrow. This is a huge difference between these two views, the descriptive and the prescriptive. Prescriptive is part of morality, and can't even, in principle, be explained by an evolutionary materialistic system.

HH: Michael Shermer, I'll give you a start on that. We have about 45 seconds to the break, so you may want to…we'll come back after the break and pick up. But what's your start to that?

MS: Well, the start would be that again, let's not think of evolution just as nature red and tooth and claw, and it's nasty, brutish and short, but that in fact, we have this whole other social evolution. And I'm not talking about cultural evolution where we consciously make decisions, but subconsciously, because it's in part of our nature to actually, seriously, deeply feel for other people and their actions, and the consequences of our actions, so that we actually have a sense of right and wrong that we're born with, but then culture taps into and tweaks, one way or the other.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, Greg had made the argument that the Darwinian model simply cannot explain immaterial concepts like morality, that there's just no way you can rearrange the molecules to get there. You're saying well, yes you

can.

MS: Yeah, I think so, because if we think of morality as another suite of emotions that are involved with other people's behaviors, the consequences of our actions, how we feel about them, how people feel about us when we do these things, that's as every bit as important a biological part of our nature as anything else we talk about. So let's take a real simple emotion. When you're hungry, nobody does any calculations about the caloric input/output ratios of eating an apple versus an ice cream, although now it's posted on the walls for us to see. But we just feel hungry, and we feel hungry for certain kinds of foods. The feeling of hunger is a proxy for something else. Evolution's done the calculating for us. You need food, so we're going to, your hypothalamus is going to secrete these certain chemicals that causes your stomach to rumble and so on. When you're attracted to somebody else, a member of the opposite sex, nobody does the calculation by, let's say, a man finds a woman attractive who has a .67 hip to waist ratio, and an hourglass figure, although that is pretty much universal. Nobody walks about with calipers taking measurements of who they're going to want to date or ask out. You just look around, and you just go wow, I really find this woman attractive. It's a feeling you have, okay? So those are kind of simple emotions, but sliding up the scale, the moral emotions are really no different. When I lie to somebody, I've violated a social norm, and they respond in a very angry, hostile way. So those emotions that we both share, guilt, shame, anger, disgust, involved a social relationship that whether it was a norm violation, those are the kinds of emotions that are just like hunger and sexual attraction that are built into us by nature, by evolution. Or, if you wish, this is how God created the moral sentiments, just like He created everything else in the universe, through a process of nature. I think that's equally reasonable to argue. So I don't see that it has to be an atheistic viewpoint versus a theistic viewpoint to get to our moral sentiments. Why couldn't God have used evolution to create the moral sentiments as I've described them?

GK: Yeah, well, you don't actually believe that, I know, Mike, so this is kind of like adding God to the soup, you know, if it makes people feel better. But the basic argument is that evolution all by itself can do the trick. And I think if your listeners are listening carefully, what they're going to hear is Mike has just described, and if I'm being unfair to your assessment here, let me know, Mike, that moral feelings are simply that. They are sophisticated emotions that do some work for us for survival, and even on a group level. Now there's a name for this. It's called emotivism. A.J. Ayer, the famous atheist, offered this description of morality. It's a relativistic scheme of morality. Morality doesn't actually exist, Ayer argued. There is no objective right or wrong. Rape isn't wrong itself. What happens is, we have feelings about it, and we express it in moral language, but rape isn't really wrong. So your listeners are going to have to ask themselves the questions. When they just survey their own moral senses, and we all have access to this, do we want to believe that scientists have figured out that really what we're doing is feeling sophisticated, complicated emotions, and that the emotions are in us, and we are not seeing anything about the action? Or does it seem like rape is wrong? Look, when I say rape is wrong, I'm talking about the rape. When I say liver is awful, I'm talking about me.

I'm talking about my own tastes and preferences. It's interesting, as Michael has given his explanation, though, that he's doing, and I don't know if you are aware of this, Michael, but you're doing the very thing that I kind of warned against. You give a description of the foundations of morality that turn out to be relativistic, but then there's a smuggling of a more objectivistic morality in the back door, like when Michael says you don't have to do what your nature tells you to do, in other words, what you've been programmed by evolution to do. You can kind of rise above that. Well, now we're talking about a morality that isn't dictated by evolution, but a morality that we can employ through our acts of will, to rise above this kind of brutish evolutionary morality. And that sounds suspiciously like the very thing that I'm talking about here.

MS: But I don't mean, there's nothing to rise above by itself. Yes, we have to say rise above our tribal instincts to be xenophobic when we meet somebody who's a stranger, who's different from us. We all struggle against that, particularly in a black and white America, where there's always been this underlying tension. Indeed, so culture helps us do that – education, travel, diversity of exposure to different people. That makes you a little more tolerant. Okay, but I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about is tapping into the good part of our nature, the fact that in addition to that xenophobic tribalism we have, we also have this other side that almost never gets discussed in evolutionary…even in evolutionary circles, you'll still hear evolutionary biologists talking about, in a way that Huxley did, and Herbert Spencer did in Darwin's own time, that we have to somehow struggle mightily against our genes to overcome that nasty tendency we have to want to rape, kill, pillage and destroy. Well no, actually, we have this whole other side that's just as genetically programmed into our nature. And the point of culture – education, politics, economics and so on, is to tap into the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said.

GK: Okay, here's the question I have for you, Michael, then. You've identified that really, we have good and we have bad. That's part of, under your terms, that's part of our genetic nature, and we can choose to tap into what you call the good side. Why ever should we do such a thing if there is not a higher standard that directs our action to the better side, your words, than the bad side, your words, if really, ultimately, they are both the result of a genetic evolution, and from outside terms, neither is better than the other. Why should we do that, Michael?

MS: Yeah, well I don't see how entering God into the equation changes that problem at all.

GK: Well, that's the next step. What I'm trying to show is that the should comes from the outside, and if we can demonstrate that, then we can ask…

Read the rest by click here to get the PDF.

A simple explanation of middle knowledge by Dr. Craig Blomberg

June 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is from Denver Seminary, where Dr. Blomberg and Dr. Groothuis both teach.

Excerpt:

> Middle knowledge is a proposed solution to predestination vs. free will, to divine sovereignty and human responsibility, going all the way back to the medieval Jesuit priest Molina (so sometimes it's also called Molinism).
>
> Classic Calvinists, properly concerned to safeguard divine sovereignty, have typically rejected any theological system that bases God's predestining activity on the basis merely of his foreknowledge of how humans will respond to the gospel, because they're convinced that makes human free choice the ultimate determiner. Romans 8:29, of course, *does*base predestination on God's foreknowledge, but the Calvinist typically argues that the Greek *prōginoskō* ("foreknow") there begins already to shade over into the idea of election because in the Old Testament the Hebrew *yādā'* ("know") often appears roughly synonymous with "choose." That would explain why Paul doesn't say just that those whom God foreknew he also predestined, which could be seen as tautologous, but "predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son."
>
> Classic Arminians and Wesleyans, properly concerned to safeguard human freedom and accountability, have typically rejected any theological system that bases God's predestining activity on the basis merely of his gratuitous election, because they're convinced that makes human free choice ultimately a chimera. They often point out that *prōginoskō* is not the same verb as just *ginoskō* (which the LXX uses to translate *yādā'* and that in Greek it most commonly means simple knowledge in advance. Thus predestination *is* based on God's foreknowledge.
>
> Middle knowledge argues for both! If open theism in recent years has diminished divine omniscience more than orthodoxy has classically permitted, middle knowledge magnifies or expands God's omniscience beyond what most people have thought about. But it makes good sense: middle knowledge claims that God's perfect, infinite knowledge must be able to know not only what sentient creatures *will* freely choose in all situations in their lives but what everyone *would* do in every possible situation that they could confront. Even more magnificently, divine and unlimited knowledge must be able to discern what all possibly created beings would do in all possible situations (or, as philosophers like to say, all possible worlds).
>
> So far so good, I hope. Now here's the rub. Because there will only ever have been a finite number of humans created before God brings this world as we know

> it to an end, that means there remain countless uncreated beings that he could have chosen to create but didn't. So God's very choice to create you and me and not various other people he could have is an act of his sovereign election utterly prior to our existence. Calvinists should be happy. But it is based on knowing what we will and would do in all actual and all possible situations. Arminians should be happy. Thus, William Lane Craig in *The Only Wise God* defends this view from a libertarian Arminian perspective; Alvin Plantinga in a chapel talk at Denver Seminary years ago did the same from a libertarian Calvinist perspective, and Terrance Tiessen in *Providence and Prayer* does so from a compatibilist Calvinist perspective.

Middle Knowledge shows what is going on under the hood of classical Calvinism, which affirms both the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Middle knowledge explains how God can achieve both goals simultaneously.

The apostle Paul has this to say in Acts 17:22-31:

> 22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.
> 23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ' N D ' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.
> 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;
> 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;
> 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, **having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,**
> **27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;**
> 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'
> 29 "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.
> 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,
> 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

In this research paper, Craig explains in detail what middle knowledge is, and how it works to resolve problems, like "what about those who have never heard of Jesus?" and "how can we reconcile divine sovereignty and human freedom and responsibility?" Highly recommended tool for your tool chest.

Ohio governor John Kasich signs legislation to crack down on sex-trafficking

June 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Cleveland.com, a story about Ohio's Republican governor.

Excerpt:

> Gov. John Kasich intends to sign wide-ranging legislation on Friday morning designed to crack down on sex trafficking in Ohio.
>
> House Bill 130, which passed the legislature unanimously, increases penalties for those who solicit minors or the developmentally disabled, strengthens protections for victims, and makes it easier to prosecute human traffickers.
>
> The state estimates that each year an estimated 1,078 Ohio children become victims of human trafficking and 3,016 more are at risk for exploitation.
>
> Under the bill, which will take effect immediately, buying sex from a 16- or 17-year-old will now be a fifth-degree felony instead of a misdemeanor. Soliciting a younger child will be a third-degree felony, punishable by up to five years in prison.
>
> The measure also terminates parental rights for those who have trafficked their children and prohibits sex ads that depict a minor or are for a massage parlor.
>
> Kasich will sign the bill at 11 a.m. at the Ohio Department of Transportation headquarters in Columbus. Northeast Media Group staff writer Jeremy Pelzer will cover the event live in the comments section below.

I'm really not sure who could look at a child and think anything other than "this little human is made to know God, love God and love other people, so I will act in a way that helps them to do that, and does not not pull them away from that". We're not supposed to be hurting children, because children's needs are more important than adult selfishness.

You know this story reminds me of one to the reasons why I am for marriage. I think that when a child is born into a home where his or her mother and father are presented and united in their obligation to love that child, then things like this do not happen. Sex-trafficking is something that happens to children who do not have a stable, loving environment to grow up in. But what are we doing to restrain ourselves to make sure that we do the things that we need to do to wrap sex in a layer of responsibility? Responsible sex doesn't mean "safe" sex. It means sex that is contained inside the boundaries of a marriage and that any children who are produced are not seen as commodities, but as gifts that we are responsible for.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

June 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (30 MB)

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the

first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

UPDATE: There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

A friend of mine is learning apologetics, here's what she is using to learn

June 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The woman I am mentoring the most energetically in apologetics sent me this list of resources below. I was so impressed by how disciplined she is that I wanted to post it.

This is what she does every day:

- William Lane Craig's Defenders podcasts (1 or 2 a day)
- Bible in a year (a few chapters as per the schedule)
- Read/listen through 6 chapters of the Bible, 20 times
- Is God Just a Human Invention? by Morrow and McDowell (a few chapters per day)
- True U DVDs (all 3 volumes) by Focus on the Family (one episode per day)
- Knowing God by J. I. Packer (one chapter per day)
- Knowledge of the Holy by A. W. Tozer (one chapter per day)
- Signature in the Cell by Stephen C. Meyer (one chapter per day)

In addition to that, she is on chapter 3 of Scott Klusendorf's "The Case for Life". We are also working our way through "Money, Greed and God" by Jay W. Richards, we are on chapter 4 there.

She has books, podcasts, and DVD lectures in there. I also got her some debates on DVD to see what the other side can say. I got her the Lennox-Dawkins debate from the Oxford Museum of Natural History and the Craig-Hitchens debate at Biola University.

When we started out, I was trying to go over the chapters with her to get her started, but now she is busy learning these things on her own. I didn't even know about most of this stuff that is on her list.

So here are some points I want to make about this.

1. I think it's good for Christians to study hard subjects and get good jobs so they have money to spend on books, lectures and DVDs. Not only can you loan out books and show DVDs to groups, but you when you get the resources for yourself, you can learn from them and share what you learn with anyone who is interested. They'll be more interested in hearing it from you than reading a whole book anyway.
2. I also think it's good for Christians to be like this woman. She is interested in apologetics because she had a co-worker who asked her a lot of questions. She decided to answer his questions rather than to attack him personally for his unbelief, or punt to faith not needing reasons or evidence. So she started to look for answers on her own, and then I came along to guide her search, provide materials and practice with her.
3. She is shy and not used to speaking up or disagreeing with others. So we are spending time discussing these materials and also debating issues. When we

> discuss a chapter, I highlight the three parts that are the most useful and relevant for debates, and try to show her the structure of the argument. She learns better when we discuss the material and when we practice debating it. I ask her – what would you say if I said this to you? And she answers. Role-play is good for learning apologetics.

So those are my three points.

I would just urge you all to be on the lookout for people who are smart and want to learn more about how to give an answer to anyone who asks them for a reason for their hope. If you are looking for a mentor, then pray that God will send you a mentor. If you want to be a mentor, pray that God will send you someone to mentor.

How do you respond to the conquests and wars in the Old Testament?

June 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Joe Coder has an article about it on his web site.

Here's his overview:

> In the Old Testament are the military campaigns of Israel inconsistent with being led by a just and loving God, and inconsistent with his own commands? Here, I would like to make the case for consistency and justness.
>
> 1. **The nations of Canaan were evil, harming others, and needed to be stopped.** They had carried out incest with children/grandchildren and performed child sacrifice by fire. (Lev 18:6-30, Deut 12:31, Deut 18:9-10, Psalm 106:35, 37-38) They launched unprovoked attacks on Israel (Ex 17:8-9, Num 21:1, Num 21:2-23, 33) and even guerrilla attacks against Israel's "stragglers in the rear of the march when you were exhausted and tired." (Deut 25:18)
>
> **2. Warfare language was likely rhetorical.** There are five reasons to support the rhetorical nature of languge such as "completely destroy" (Hebrew תחרימו, literally "ban") in Deut 20:17. It likely meant a destruction of armed soldiers, buildings, and religious icons.
>
> 1. Semitic language professor and NIV, NAB, and ESV bible translator Richard Hess argues that Hebrew "ban" is "stereotypical for describing all the inhabitants of a town or region, without predisposing the reader to assume anything further about their ages or even their genders" and "need not require that there really were children, senior citizens, or women there who were put to death" even when followed by the terms "men and women" (Joshua 8:25) or "young and old" (Joshua 8:25).
> 2. In Israel's destruction of enemies we see phrases like "left no survivor" and "utterly destroyed all who breathed" (Joshua 10:40, Judges 1:8). But in Joshua 21:12-13 the author has no problem telling us these people were still there afterward: "if you ever turn away and make alliances with these nations that remain near you… God will no longer drive out these nations". In 1 Sam 15:3-4 Israel was to "strike down the Amalekites. Destroy everything that they have. Don't spare them. Put them to death–man, woman, child, infant, ox, sheep, camel, and donkey alike." In 15:8 Saul "executed all Agag's people" and Agag himself was killed in 15:33. But later in 1 Sam 27:8 we're told they're still there and " had been living in that land for a long time". Hundreds of years later in Esther 3:1 we're even told Haman was an Agagite, a descendant of the Amalekite king Agag.
> 3. Most verses on the subject speak of "driving out" and "disposessing" the

> land rather than language suggestive of genocide. E.g. Num 33:51-53, in "the land of Canaan, you must drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images, all their molten images, and demolish their high places. You must dispossess the inhabitants of the land and live in it, for I have given you the land to possess it." It's the same story in Lev 18:25, Num 23:31-32, Deut 6:19, 9:4, 18:12, Joshua 3:10, and 23:9.
>
> 4. Jer 4:20 suggests inhabitants fled before armies arrived: "At the sound of the horseman and bowman every city flees; They go into the thickets and climb among the rocks"
> 5. Deut 7:22 specifically says that Israel was forbidden to "destroy them all at once" and instead they would be expelled "little by little".
>
> So either all of these verses contradict one another, or the conquest language was rhetorical.
>
> **3. Many of the "cities" were probably military outposts.** For example with Jericho and Ai, Richard Hess argues there are no references to noncombatants (apart from Rahab), no archaeological evidence of non-millitary use, the term melek (Hebrew מלכי) for "king" of the cities often meant mean a military leader in Canaan (e.g. in Joshua 2:2), they were located at defensive positions, and Jericho and Ai weren't described as a large city as Gibeon and Hazor explicitly were.
>
> **4. A just God requires wrath.** It's not possible to have a God who is just but not wrathful–otherwise wrongdoers continue unabated. Paranormal investigator James Randi wrote in Skeptic Magazine, "I accuse the Christian god of murder by allowing the Holocaust to take place" yet Dawkins and Hitchens condemn God for judgment against the Canaanites. Which is it? Ultimately the the problem is we view death as the ultimate judgment, when in the theological context of the bible it's only a graduation to what's next with accountability for what we've done with what we were given.

The four points are developed with links for support. If you get this a question a lot, it's a good resource to bookmark.

IRS e-mail backups destroyed shortly after targeting of conservatives was discovered

June 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily reports.

Excerpt:

> The IRS canceled a contract with an email storage contractor weeks after Lois Lerner reported lost personal files and before other IRS officials had their hard drives crash as Tea Party-targeting investigations began.
>
> Timing is everything, the saying goes, and sometimes the timing of events is also very curious, as in the case of the lost emails of Lerner and at least six other officials at the very same time the IRS canceled its contract to back up and preserve those emails as required by federal law.

So the IRS did at one time have back-ups of the e-mails. And they seem to have admitted it in Congressional Testimony:

> Perhaps this is what IRS Commissioner John Koskinen was referring to when in March testimony before the House Oversight Committee he assured Rep. Jason Chaffetz that the reason requested emails were difficult to provide was that IRS emails "get taken off and stored in servers."
>
> Later we would be told that the emails were lost forever and, as we noted, Koskinen was lying in March, when he said they were somewhere, or in June, when he said they were nowhere to be found. Let us ponder another possibility: that the emails were taken off and stored in Sonasoft servers, emails that would be deleted when the IRS contract for their storage ended. They were not lost, but, in effect, deliberately destroyed.
>
> […]Sonasoft's fiscal 2011 contract with the IRS ended Aug. 31, 2011. Eight days later, and about a month after Lerner's computer allegedly crashed, the IRS officially severed its relationship with Sonasoft.
>
> Three months later, IRS official Nikole Flax, who visited the White House more than 30 times, had her computer crash with a similar loss of critical emails, something that afflicted at least half-a-dozen IRS officials in a chain of events that defies logic and the smell test.

You can kind of form a hypothesis of who ordered the hit on the conservative groups by seeing whose e-mails are being deleted and who they were talking to. If I had to bet on it, I'd say that the order to persecute the conservative groups came from the White House, perhaps from the community organizer Barack Obama himself.

George Will has a good column up in the leftist Washington Post about how the Republicans can respond to Obama's decision to act outside the rule of law.

Are same-sex unions the same as heterosexual married unions?

June 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've written before about the differences between same-sex unions and opposite sex married couples.

Here's a post from Canon and Culture on the same topic by social scientist Glenn Stanton.

He finds two differences.

First, instability:

> [T]he research is strong and numerous enough that a recent and very provocative *Atlantic* cover story on what straights could learn from gay marriage couldn't ignore it. Liza Mundy, the article's author, doesn't appear to have a conservative bone in her body, yet she is fair and straight-up honest with the research on the nature of committed same-sex relationships.
>
> […]Mundy explains that studies have found "higher dissolution rates among same-sex couples" in Scandinavia – one of the world's most gay-friendly cultures — than married heterosexual couples. This study, published in *Demography*, found that even though same-sex couples enter their legal unions at older ages — a marker related to greater relational stability – male same-sex marriages break up at twice the rate of heterosexual marriages. And the break-up rate for lesbians? A stunning 77% higher than the same-sex male unions! When controlling for possible confounding factors, the "risk of divorce for female partnerships actually is more than twice than that for male unions."
>
> […]A study of two generations of British couples (one born 1958, the other 1970) in same-sex cohabiting, opposite-sex cohabiting and opposite-sex marriage relationships found the same-sex relationships dramatically more likely to break up than the opposite-sex cohabiting and married relationships.

According to that British study, only 25% of same-sex co-habitating couples are intact after 8 years. The stability number for married couples after 8 years is 82%. That's a big difference.

But there's more:

> Other studies – conducted by celebrated lesbian scholars – find notable instability in lesbian homes, even those with children. The current National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study (NLLFS) found "a significant difference" in family dissolution rates when comparing lesbian with mother/father headed families, 56% and 36% respectively. (p. 1201)
>
> Another research study by two celebrated gay-friendly scholars, highlights a major comparative study between hetero and lesbian homes where, in the 5-year

> period of the study, 6 of the 14 lesbian mother-headed homes had broken up compared to only 5 of the 38 mom/dad headed homes. (p. 11) These scholars creatively explains that this stability imbalance is likely due to the "high standards lesbians bring to their intimate unions…" (p.12)

Ever heard of lesbian bed death?

> And Mundy points something else predictable in lesbian relationships. In fact, its consistency has earned it a name in the LGBT community: *lesbian bed death*. Seriously. This is the truth that sexual interest and frequency in many long-term lesbian relationships tends to decline considerably and even die over the years.

Usually, in relationships, men tend to be the ones who want more frequent sex. What happens when you have no aggressors and two gatekeepers? Lesbian bed death.

Next up, something common in male homosexual relationships: infidelity.

Stanton writes:

> A noted 2010 study on non-monogamy in long-term gay relationships by two gay-affirming scholars — the Couples Study — observes in their report's first sentence: "…non-monogamous relationships are very common in the gay community…" Their data showed that of the non-monogamous, long-term couples in their study, 42 percent made an arrangement for outside-sexual relationships within the first three months of the relationship's beginning and by the end of the first year, that number increased to 49 percent. At the seventh anniversary mark, an additional 24 percent of gay couples adopted such agreements. So such agreements are increasingly made as these relationships grow longer.
>
> The *Atlantic* piece is notes this as well; explaining that after the AIDS crisis, "gay male couples are more monogamous than they used to be, but not nearly to the same degree as other kinds of couples." One study Mundy cites asked those in various relationships whether they had any agreed-upon rules permitting extra-curricular activities. The differences were astonishing. Only 4% of male/female couples had them compared to 40% of gay men in legally recognized unions and 49% in long-term cohabiting unions.
>
> Another widely respected investigation, found that only a third of gay couples had monogamous agreements and truly honored them with no outside sex. In fact, it found that in the openly nonmonogamous gay relationships, the frequency of extra-dyadic sex from its start ranged from 2 to a whopping 2,500 separate incidents. The median was a remarkable 41.5 extracurricular incidents since the relationship's beginning. Frequency in the last year was startling was well, ranging from 0 to 350 occurrences of outside sex, with a median of 8 incidences in the last twelve months. Even those who pledged true monogamy, the range was from 1 to 63 "slip-ups" with a median of 5. Five "slip-ups" are not slip-ups. The corresponding numbers for men in heterosexual marriages are microscopic

> in comparison.

So what does all this mean?

It means that if you are interested in a definition of marriage that involves stability and marital fidelity, then you shouldn't be in favor of legalizing gay marriage. When you open up the term marriage to include relationships that seem to be very unstable and/or very unfaithful, you change the definition of marriage. Marriage means life-long married love. If we just turn around and call any association of adults "marriage", then we are losing the distinctiveness of marriage in the process. Think about it. We did the same thing in the previous redefinition of marriage (no-fault divorce) which attacked the permanence of marriage. Marriage has a specific meaning and we should not be redefining it every few years for the benefit of selfish adults.

Kevin DeYoung: five questions for Christians who support same-sex marriage

June 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The five questions are in this TGC post.

The list:

1. On what basis do you still insist that marriage must be monogamous?
2. Will you maintain the same biblical sexual ethic in the church now that you think the church should solemnize gay marriages?
3. Are you prepared to say moms and dads are interchangeable?
4. What will you say about anal intercourse?
5. How have all Christians at all times and in all places interpreted the Bible so wrongly for so long?

I want to focus on questions 3 and 4, because they show that the same-sex marriage side is not "nice". They are not taking their position in order to promote goodness.

Take a look:

> 3. Are you prepared to say moms and dads are interchangeable?
>
> It is a safe assumption that those in favor of gay marriage are likely to support gay and lesbian couples adopting children or giving birth to children through artificial insemination. What is sanctioned, therefore, is a family unit where children grow up de facto without one birth parent. This means not simply that some children, through the unfortunate circumstances of life, may grow up without a mom and dad, but that the church will positively bless and encourage the family type that will deprive children of either a mother or a father. So are mothers indispensable? Is another dad the same as a mom? No matter how many decent, capable homosexual couples we may know, are we confident that as a general rule there is nothing significant to be gained by growing up with a mother and a father?
>
> 4. What will you say about anal intercourse?
>
> The answer is probably "nothing." But if you feel strongly about the dangers of tobacco or fuss over the negative affects of carbs, cholesterol, gmo's, sugar, gluten, trans fats, and hydrogenated soybean oil may have on your health, how can you not speak out about the serious risks associated with male-male intercourse. How is it loving to celebrate what we know to be a singularly unhealthy lifestyle? According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, the risk of anal cancer increases 4000 percent among those who engage in anal intercourse. Anal sex increases the risk of a long list of health problems, including "rectal prolapse, perforation that can go septic, chlamydia, cyrptosporidosis,

> giardiasis, genital herpes, genital warts, isosporiasis, microsporidiosis, gonorrhea, viral hepatitis B and C, and syphilis" (quoted in Reilly, 55). And this is to say nothing of the higher rates of HIV and other health concerns with disproportionate affects on the homosexual community.

Read the whole thing.

IRS pays $50,000 for leaking names of pro-marriage donors to gay activist group

June 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Two years after activists for same-sex marriage obtained the confidential tax return and donor list of a national group opposed to redefining marriage, the Internal Revenue Service has admitted wrongdoing and agreed to settle the resulting lawsuit.
>
> The Daily Signal has learned that, under a consent judgment today, the IRS agreed to pay $50,000 in damages to the National Organization for Marriage as a result of the unlawful release of the confidential information to a gay rights group, the Human Rights Campaign, that is NOM's chief political rival.
>
> "Congress made the disclosure of confidential tax return information a serious matter for a reason," NOM Chairman John D. Eastman told The Daily Signal. "We're delighted that the IRS has now been held accountable for the illegal disclosure of our list of major donors from our tax return."

The have the background to this story as well:

> In February 2012, the Human Rights Campaign posted on its web site NOM's 2008 tax return and the names and contact information of the marriage group's major donors, including soon-to-be Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney. That information then was published by the Huffington Post and other liberal-leaning news sites.
>
> HRC's president at the time, Joe Solmonese, was tapped that same month as a national co-chairman of President Barack Obama's re-election campaign.
>
> […]HRC is among organizations and activists advocating same-sex marriage that routinely describe NOM as a "hate group" or "anti-gay" for making the case for preserving marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

The Human Rights Campaign is a group that had previously condemned the Family Research Council as a hate group. This is the same Family Research Council that was later attacked by a convicted domestic terrorist / gay activist. After the attack, the HRC continued to denounce the FRC as a hate group. This is the group that Obama hires out of.

Shouldn't there be criminal charges for whoever leaked the donor names to the gay activists? There should be, but…:

> Unauthorized disclosure of confidential tax information is a felony offense that

> can result in five years in prison, but the Department of Justice did not bring criminal charges.

The Department of Justice did not press charges because they are on the same team as the leakers.

Pastor Matt is picking the best books of the year…

June 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's one from a recent blog post that I just bought for my good friend Dina, and she is really liking it.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Qureshi's book Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus: A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity (Zondervan 2014) is a compelling and necessary read for every committed Christian. Nabeel, a medical doctor with masters degrees in religion and apologetics, has penned an apologetic, spiritual autobiography that is as much an intellectual challenge as an emotional roller coaster, which is a rare feat.
>
> Querishi was raised in a loving, muslim family with a father that served faithfully in the U.S. Navy. His family sacrificed to send him to fine universities and challenged him to think critically. He befriended a committed Christian who had a series of graceful evangelistic discussions over many years. His friend eventually introduced him to scholars Mike Licona and Gary Habermas who helped plant intellectual seeds that would eventually sprout into a faith that is shaking pillars around the world.

Look at this endorsement:

> My story, however, is nothing compared to the one presented in "Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus." Dr. Qureshi's life is so well told that I found myself sneaking pages at every opportunity whether it be standing in line at the grocery store or waiting on that mysterious person who inexplicably spends ten minutes pounding buttons at the ATM (are they trying to take out a second mortgage on their house?). I have even bought copies to give away to friends, which is something I have only done with Grek Koukl's Tactics, Lee Strobel's Case for a Creator and Det. J. Warner Wallace's Cold-Case Christianity.
>
> Dr. Qureshi, who now works for Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, has written the book that is easily the best of the year so far. It is also a fine example of the power of combining story (a potent tool with postmoderns) with strong arguments. I highly recommend it. Do yourself a favor and pick up a copy ASAP.

By the way, the woman I am currently mentoring in apologetics *loves* Nabeel's book and she even went to see him lecture. I was able to find her a DVD of Nabeel lecturing at Georgia Tech – you can get it here. I was also able to find the same lecture at Georgia Tech, apparently, on YouTube.

I've heard nothing but rave reviews of Nabeel's book from people who have read it. It's especially good for people who like biographies.

IRS Lois Lerner pushed to have Republican senator Chuck Grassley audited

June 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the web site of the House Ways and Means Committee.

Full text:

> Washington, DC – Today, Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp (R-MI) announced the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) targeting of conservative individuals includes a sitting United States Senator. According to emails reviewed by the Committee under its Section 6103 authority, which allows the Committee to review confidential taxpayer information, Lois Lerner sought to have Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) referred for IRS examination.
>
> "We have seen a lot of unbelievable things in this investigation, but the fact that Lois Lerner attempted to initiate an apparently baseless IRS examination against a sitting Republican United States Senator is shocking," said Camp. "At every turn, Lerner was using the IRS as a tool for political purposes in defiance of taxpayer rights. We may never know the full extent of the abuse since the IRS conveniently lost two years of Lerner emails, not to mention those of other key figures in this scandal. The fact that DOJ refuses to investigate the IRS's abuses or appoint a special counsel demonstrates, yet again, this Administration's unwillingness to uphold the rule of law."
>
> **Background:**
> While the Ways and Means Committee investigation into Lerner's involvement in the potential Grassley examination is ongoing, documents show that Lerner received an invitation to a speaking event that was intended for Senator Grassley. Instead of forwarding the invitation to Grassley's office, Lerner immediately suggested to others in her office that the issue should be referred for examination. The Committee was able to investigate this information through its authority under Section 6103 of the tax code. A waiver was signed by Senator Grassley and his wife in order to make this information public.

And there is good news about the corruption at the IRS – the news is reaching the American public.

The Daily Signal reports:

> Americans are running out of faith in the Internal Revenue Service.
>
> Seventy-six percent believe that the "lost" Lois Lerner emails were deliberately destroyed, according to a Fox News poll. Only 12 percent believe the destruction resulted as an accident.
>
> This skepticism crossed party lines. A whopping 90 percent of Republicans doubt

> the IRS's most recent claims, as do 74 percent of independents and 63 percent of Democrats.
>
> There remains desire for congressional action. Seventy-four percent feel that lawmakers should continue investigating the IRS's targeting of conservative groups "until someone is held accountable."
>
> Americans are also dubious about President Barack Obama's claims that he first learned about the scandal through the media, with just 31 percent believing this to be true.
>
> This poll surveyed 1,018 adults at random and has a margin of error of plus-or-minus three percentage points.

And finally, this, which I posted previously, but it's SO GOOD:

Now that's effective cross-examination.

Advice for Christian parents from a woman who left Christianity at university

June 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Beyond Teachable Moments blog – a great blog for Christian parents who want to raise effective, influential children.

Intro:

> I recently had the opportunity to meet an intelligent young Christian woman who is proactively learning how to discuss her faith in a secular society.
>
> Why is she so dedicated to doing this? **Because her Christian upbringing had completely failed to prepare her for the challenges of secularism, religious pluralism and atheism at university.**
>
> This young woman grew up in close-knit, loving Christian home. She faithfully attended church. She was enrolled in a Christian school that taught subjects such as apologetics, hermeneutics, inductive Bible study and managing relationships. Her parents cared about her spiritual formation.
>
> And yet, this is how she describes her university experience:
>
> "Although I was still living at home during the beginning of my freshman year, university was traumatic at best. I went from a class of 15 in a small Christian school, to 30,000 people at a public university.
>
> The most troubling thing was the amount of differing beliefs and worldviews I encountered, from professors and other students. At the time I thought they had much better arguments than I did for the validity of their views."
>
> Added to her challenge was the fact that her faith was borrowed, not her own.
>
> "I can honestly and sadly say that as I started my freshman year at age 19, my faith was very much borrowed. It was a set of rules to adhere too. Although I was well aware of the concept of a relationship with Jesus Christ, I did not have it. I was entrenched in the notion of conforming to what people wanted me to do in order to escape condemnation and judgment."
>
> "My faith at the university was non-existent. If you asked me what I believed I would say Christian, but I did not back that up with any action whatsoever."
>
> As a mom of two young boys, the top-of-mind question I had for her was: what did she wish she'd known before she went to university?

The rest of the post is her response, but I wanted to quote this part, because it reminds me of what Pastor Matt Rawlings posted about his own loss of faith a while back.

The mysterious Christian woman says this:

> **Don't use me to make you look good in front of other people at church, I**

> **can see straight through that.** It does not feel good and drives me far away. What matters is what is going on inside, not what is projected. Looking perfect and going through the motions does nothing. The very basis for Christianity is what is going on in the heart. Only by letting Jesus work in your heart can actions follow with true authenticity.

And here's what Pastor Matt said:

> Looking back, I had a very fuzzy understanding of the Gospel. I (and I think many people who call themselves Christians) are what theologians call "semi-Pelagians." I believed anyone could come to the altar but if they wanted to continue to be welcomed in the pews, they had to clean up their act and do so almost overnight. The culture of Christianity at large appeared to me to be that if you came to faith and continued to struggle with lust, a foul mouth or whatnot then there was just something wrong with you. I felt the church was more about behavior modification than grace.
>
> I needed someone who I knew loved me to sit down with me long before all of these problems arose, look me in the eye and tell me how easy and how difficult it is to be a Christian. I needed someone cared for me to unpack 2 Corinthians 5:21 and point out that by being "in Christ" I would be judged by Christ's perfect life instead of my own. I needed to know that the faith is not about "keeping the rules" but about doing things and not doing certain things to show my love and gratitude to God for what He did for me. I needed to be able to read the Bible, especially the Old Testament, in a way that always pointed to Jesus Christ. I needed to understand that God has graciously given us the spiritual disciplines of fasting, prayer, serving the poor, worship, etc. to help me grow. I needed to hear that all Christians struggle with sin and will, to a certain degree, until they go to be with the Lord or He returns to be with us.
>
> I needed good theology, good spiritual practices, good apologetics and good relationships. I needed knowledge and it needed to come from someone who I knew loved me even though I was thoroughly unlovable. You can't just leave this to the church staff because they do not have to time to meet with everyone and people with a chip on their shoulder about the church (like I had) feel like they are just doing it as part of their job. All young people in the church, especially the "troubled kids" need this. It is a lot of work but anyone's eternity is worth it, isn't it?

As J.P. Moreland has pointed out, your beliefs are not something that you form by sheer acts of will. You cannot will to believe things. Your beliefs form naturally through study, and then outward actions come from those beliefs. You cannot focus on the outward actions of your children – you have to focus on the beliefs inside. And know that those beliefs are not formed by habit, singing, church attendance or any other non-cognitive approaches. Beliefs form *through a careful study of the evidence on BOTH SIDES.* The first thing that Christian parents should be showing their kids is debates with both sides

represented. That shows them that there is more to a worldview than just being bullied into it by raising your voice at them.

Christian parents, take note. Don't be focused on making your child behave nicely on the outside and making it impossible for them to talk about temptations and doubts. Christianity comes from the inside – from the mind. You need to be helping them form a worldview that has been tested and approved by them, before they ever set foot on a university campus. The Christian faith is not adopted by habit or tradition, it is adopted by transferring knowledge and discussing opposing views openly and honestly.

Don't be like this mother who is only focused on externals – what family and friends think of her:

The good news is that atheism is not generally adopted because of logic or evidence. That means that a little bit evidence for God's existence goes a long way against *no evidence*. A little bit evidence for the reliability of the Bible goes a long way against *no evidence*. A little bit of the minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus goes a long way against *no evidence*. It's very important that when your children get to university that they find a conflict between *some* evidence and *no evidence*. At that point, it becomes their choice to decide what to do, and it could go either way. You don't have to make them William Lane Craig before they get to university, for example. But they should have at least read his popular-level essays and books, heard his podcasts, and seen him debate.

Peer pressure on a secular university is powerful – but if you've taught your children to value *truth* over popularity, vanity, selfishness and immorality, then you've done your job. Lots of people fall away from Christianity in university because of the hostile environment. Some fall away because they want to be approved of by their peers, some because they just want to be seen as tolerant or smart, some because they want to get good grades from liberal professors, some because they want to have a good time, etc. That's not your concern. Your concern is to demonstrate your love of truth, and communicate to them a sober assessment of the evidence pro and con on ultimate issues. After that, it's up to them.

The best explanation for the design of bird wings is intelligent design

June 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A great post from Evolution News about my favorite animals in the whole world – BIRDS!

Excerpt:

> How hard can it be to make a flexible wing flap for an airplane? Almost all aircraft today use rigid wings with rigid landing flaps. They work, but they waste fuel. German engineers embarked on a mission to reduce kerosene consumption by 6%: "integrating flexible landing devices into aircraft wings is one step towards that target," a news item from Fraunhofer says. They've named the project SARISTU, for Smart Intelligent Aircraft Structures.
>
> Birds are way ahead of them:
>
> While birds are able to position their feathers to suit the airflow, aircraft wing components have so far only been rigid. As the name suggests, landing flaps at the trailing edge of the wing are extended for landing. This flap, too, is rigid, its movement being limited to rotation around an axis. This is set to change in the SARISTU project. "Landing flaps should one day be able to adjust to the air flow and so enhance the aerodynamics of the aircraft," explains Martin Schüller, researcher at the Fraunhofer Institute for Electronic Nano Systems ENAS in Chemnitz. (Emphasis added.)
>
> What are some of the challenges in building a flexible wing?
>
> 1. Knowing where to flex: The flap can't be flexible all over, or it would be hard to control. The designers made "five hard and three soft zones, enclosed within a silicon skin cover extending over the top."
> 2. Finding stretchy skin: When the soft zone moves, the skin of the aircraft has to stretch with it. "The mechanism that allows the landing flap to change shape **can only function if the skin of the landing flap can be stretched as it moves**, a **problem** tackled by researchers from the Fraunhofer Institute for Manufacturing Technology and **Advanced Materials**IFAM in Bremen."
> 3. Covering the air gap: "**Any gap** between the flap and the fixed aircraft wing**would cancel out any positive effect**," the article notes. "This led us to develop an **elastic connecting element,** and this work already covers everything from the **chemical makeup** to the **process technology** and**manufacture** of the component," an engineer says.
> 4. Designing the material to tolerances: "The **mechanism** sits underneath the soft zones, the areas that are most distended. While the **novel design is noteworthy**, it is the **material** itself that stands out, since the flexible

> parts are made of elastomeric foam that **retain their elasticity** even at**temperatures** ranging from minus 55 to 80 degrees Celsius."
>
> No feathers, but it's a start. The team showed off their prototype at the ILA Berlin Air Show in May. Apparently it was not quite ready for takeoff:
>
> When the prototype takes off for the first time it will benefit from a development known as SARISTU, a deformable wing which is currently the subject of intensive research by Fraunhofer Gesellschaft. In future the landing flaps will be designed to adapt in flight to the air flow conditions, thereby always ensuring the best possible aerodynamics.
>
> We celebrate this advance, but you know where we're going. Birds had it all figured out long ago: the right shape, the right material, the control of airflow, and much more. As Dr. Timothy Standish says in the film Flight: The Genius of Birds, "Feathers do a number of jobs remarkably well." They are individually controllable, they flex, they insulate, they save on weight, and they can handle the temperature requirements of avian flight. That's just a partial list achievements in powered flight that surpass anything man has yet designed.

If you want to get hold of that DVD on "Flight" that they mentioned, it's right here on Amazon.com. I highly recommend it.

I also highly recommend owning birds – because if you work really hard at caring for one for a long time, they might grow to trust you. There is nothing quite like a tiny little bird trusting you enough to let you gently pull open his or her wing for a closer look at how it works:

Awww! Cockatiel lets a trusted friend see under her wing

There's more to birds than just well-designed wings. There's a well-designed *heart* in there, too! That might even be *more amazing* than the design of the wing. It is to me.

Note: although this post does not provide a rigorous case for intelligent design, that can be found by looking at the work of Stephen C. Meyer on the origin of life and on the Cambrian explosion. The books that demonstrate the superiority of the intelligent design hypothesis are "Signature in the Cell" and "Darwin's Doubt". If you'd like to see a good popular-level presentation of intelligent design related to the origin of life, click here for a

lecture.

Supreme Court rules that pro-lifers have free speech right at abortion clinics

June 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From USA Today.

Excerpt:

> Abortion remains an issue that divides the Supreme Court, but the justices had less disagreement Thursday in defending the free speech rights of abortion opponents.
>
> The court ruled unanimously that Massachusetts went too far — literally — when it created 35-foot buffer zones around abortion clinics to keep demonstrators away from patients.
>
> The decision united Chief Justice John Roberts and the court's four liberals, who said the distance improperly removed demonstrators from public sidewalks and spaces. The other conservative justices would have issued a more sweeping verdict, striking down the ban on grounds that it targets abortion opponents' specific point of view.
>
> "Petitioners wish to converse with their fellow citizens about an important subject on the public streets and sidewalks — sites that have hosted discussions about the issues of the day throughout history," Roberts wrote. Though the state has an interest in public safety, it "pursued those interests by the extreme step of closing a substantial portion of a traditional public forum to all speakers."
>
> […]The court's other four conservative justices agreed with the verdict in the Massachusetts case but would have gone further by striking down the law as one that illegally targets abortion opponents.
>
> "It is clear on the face of the Massachusetts law that it discriminates based on viewpoint," Justice Samuel Alito wrote. "Speech in favor of the clinic and its work by employees and agents is permitted; speech criticizing the clinic and its work is a crime. This is blatant viewpoint discrimination."

The article has a reactions from a Planned Parenthood spokeswoman. She was against the ruling.

North Carolina passes bill to prohibit discrimination against religious and political groups

June 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Campus Reform.

Excerpt:

> The North Carolina House passed a measure last week to prohibit university administrators from denying facilities, funding, or recognition to political or religious groups on the basis that they are exclusionary.
>
> The bill came in response to Christian groups that have been stripped of their student organization status because they did not allow students with other beliefs to become leaders in their organization.
>
> The bill, which has now been passed by both chambers of the North Carolina legislature, awaits Governor Pat McCrory's (R) signature.
>
> "Our society is engaged in an ongoing cultural battle," said Rep. Bert Jones (R), the bill's primary sponsor. "There is a war on God…Unfortunately these efforts have been extended to our campuses."
>
> […]"We need to make clear that just because a student decides to attend our public schools and universities … that does not somehow mean that the student forfeits his rights to the university. This bill also recognizes that there is an important difference between education and indoctrination coercion," Jones said.
>
> The bill passed the North Carolina House of Representatives by a vote of 78-37 last Wednesday. **All 37 votes against the bill were cast by Democrats.**

Lest you think that universities are not really doing this to Christian and conservative clubs, here is an example.

From the radically leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> For 40 years, evangelicals at Bowdoin College have gathered periodically to study the Bible together, to pray and to worship. They are a tiny minority on the liberal arts college campus, but they have been a part of the school's community, gathering in the chapel, the dining center, the dorms.
>
> After this summer, the Bowdoin Christian Fellowship will no longer be recognized by the college. Already, the college has disabled the electronic key cards of the group's longtime volunteer advisers.
>
> In a collision between religious freedom and antidiscrimination policies, the student group, and its advisers, have refused to agree to the college's demand that any student, regardless of his or her religious beliefs, should be able to run

> for election as a leader of any group, including the Christian association.
>
> Similar conflicts are playing out on a handful of campuses around the country, driven by the universities' desire to rid their campuses of bias, particularly against gay men and lesbians, but also, in the eyes of evangelicals, fueled by a discomfort in academia with conservative forms of Christianity. The universities have been emboldened to regulate religious groups by a Supreme Court ruling in 2010 that found it was constitutional for a public law school in California to deny recognition to a Christian student group that excluded gays.
>
> At Cal State, the nation's largest university system with nearly 450,000 students on 23 campuses, the chancellor is preparing this summer to withdraw official recognition from evangelical groups that are refusing to pledge not to discriminate on the basis of religion in the selection of their leaders. And at Vanderbilt, more than a dozen groups, most of them evangelical but one of them Catholic, have already lost their official standing over the same issue; one Christian group balked after a university official asked the students to cut the words "personal commitment to Jesus Christ" from their list of qualifications for leadership.
>
> […]The consequences for evangelical groups that refuse to agree to the nondiscrimination policies, and therefore lose their official standing, vary by campus. The students can still meet informally on campus, but in most cases their groups lose access to student activity fee money as well as first claim to low-cost or free university spaces for meetings and worship; they also lose access to standard on-campus recruiting tools, such as activities fairs and bulletin boards, and may lose the right to use the universities' names.

So if you agree with the secular and liberal elites, you can form a club. But if you disagree with them, you can't. Either way, you pay them your money.

You may also find this column by conservative professor Mike Adams to be of interest. He replies to a concerned parent who wants to know how bad secularism and leftism really are on campus.

Michael Brown discusses his upcoming debate on homosexuality with Matthew Vines

June 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An interview with Dr. Michael Brown from Charisma News.

Intro:

> Dr. Michael Brown is author of *Can You Be Gay and Christian? Responding With Love and Truth to Questions About Homosexuality* and host of the nationally syndicated talk radio show *The Line of Fire* on the Salem Radio Network. He is also president of FIRE School of Ministry and director of the Coalition of Conscience. And on June 28, he'll be directly debating Matthew Vines on Moody Radio's program "Up for Debate."
>
> Matthew Vines has recently become the face of the current "gay Christian" movement, publishing *God and the Gay Christian* after his speech advocating Christian acceptance of homosexuality went viral in 2012.

Here's a part I liked:

> **You have stated publicly that homosexual sin is a central, gospel issue. In my own life, I've known at least one person who has turned their back on the gospel because of the Bible's stance on homosexuality and used Vines' material to justify that decision. What words would you have for someone who has rejected Christianity over this issue?**
>
> Actually, what drew me into the this issue was the impact of homosexual activism on our society, but the more I talked with those who identify as LGBT and the more I read their stories—especially those who professed to be followers of Jesus—the more my heart broke for them.
>
> So, it's very painful to hear about your friend's experience, but we'll be hearing it more and more in the coming days. The problem is when I start with "me" and then go to the Word, I will be deceived; if I start with God and then go to "me," I'll find truth and freedom. Everyone needs to give himself or herself to Jesus unconditionally to be a disciple, and in doing so, we find the path to life. But if we say, "This is who I am, and God must satisfy my needs," then we will create a new and alien faith.
>
> **What first prompted you to have an open debate with Vines?**
>
> To be perfectly clear, I've always been willing to have civil, public debates on any controversial issues of the faith that I'm focused on, which is why I've been debating rabbis for decades as a Jewish follower of Jesus. So, I've been open to debating Matthew or any other qualified representative of the "gay Christian" position for many years, and I'm pleased to have this opportunity through Moody

> Radio.
>
> In fact, if Matthew feels that the one-hour radio format doesn't allow us sufficient time to plumb the issues in sufficient depth, as a follow up to this radio debate, I'd love to help set up a formal, multi-hour debate where he could be joined by an academic colleague like Dr. James Brownson and I would be joined by Dr. James White, and we could spend a few hours together, in public, and recorded for the world to see on YouTube.
>
> I feel that events like this radio debate and other types of fair, moderated debates can only advance the cause of truth.
>
> **What do you want this debate to accomplish?**
>
> By God's grace, I want listeners to realize that there is zero scriptural support for the idea that God ever blesses or approves of committed, same-sex relationships, that homosexual practice is always sinful in His sight, that there is really no debate at all in term of what the Bible says. At the same time, I want listeners to realize how deeply God loves LGBT people, how Jesus shed the same blood for them and offers the same salvation to them, and how following Jesus unconditionally is the path to life and freedom.

I like Dr. Brown – he's a good advocate for the cause of Christian morality.

Previously, I blogged about a debate between Michael Brown and Eric Smaw. There's a video and summaries of the opening speeches in that post.

White House review of VA finds “corrosive culture” to blame for poor patient care

June 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal reports.

Excerpt:

> A White House review of the VA health system points to a culture that has degraded the timely delivery of care and requires a restructuring to improve transparency and accountability.
>
> Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan Gibson and Rob Nabors, White House deputy chief of staff, told President Barack Obama on Friday that significant further action was needed to address systemic problems.
>
> Six weeks after the president dispatched Mr. Nabors to assess problems within the VA, the president’s aide outlined a long list of issues affecting access to timely care at VA medical facilities.
>
> Mr. Nabors’s work is the latest in a series of reviews and reports issued in the past two months, including those from the VA’s independent inspector general, the Office of the Special Counsel and the VA itself. The new report found what Mr. Nabors described as a “corrosive culture” that affects employee performance and patient care. He added that the Veterans Health Administration structure has “impeded appropriate management, supervision and oversight.”
>
> **The review also found that the VA’s goal for scheduling many medical appointments within 14 days is “arbitrary, ill-defined and misunderstood.” That goal had been set in 2011. The VA recently eliminated that 14-day target.**
>
> Mr. Gibson praised the report. “We know that unacceptable, systemic problems and cultural issues within our health system prevent veterans from receiving timely care,” he said in a statement.
>
> The White House has scrambled to respond to evidence of widespread mismanagement within the VA and to fill a growing number of vacancies in top posts. **An internal assessment also revealed improper appointment-scheduling procedures and efforts to hide long wait times across the VA health system.**

Another interim report from the VA inspector general confirms that:

> The VA’s independent inspector general office has said it would likely issue in August its full report on its sweeping review of the department. An interim report, issued just days before Mr. Shinseki’s resignation, showed problems throughout the VA. They included employees tinkering with official patient appointment wait

> times to make them seem much shorter than the actual times veterans were having to wait.

In case you were wondering why this is all happening in the VA health care system and not in the private health care system, it's because the VA is 100% pure government-run health care, as health care expert Avik Roy explains in Forbes magazine. The VA is not scandal is not some sort of aberration from government-run health care. Long wait times and patient deaths are *essential* to government run health care, in practice.

Matthew Vines and Michael Brown debate homosexuality and the Bible on Moody radio

June 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The audio of the Matthew Vines vs Michael Brown debate is streamed here on the Moody site.

Details:

> Can you be gay and Christian? Matthew Vines says you can and he's created a viral video and best-selling book defending his view. This Saturday on Up for Debate, Vines joins host Julie Roys to debate author and leading evangelical apologist, Dr. Michael Brown. Is gay monogamy an option for Christians? Is it unloving to reject gay marriage? Listen and join the discussion this Saturday at 8 a.m. Central Time on Up for Debate!
>
> **Matthew Vines**
>
> Matthew Vines is an advocate for the acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people within Christian communities and in society at large. Living in Wichita, Kansas, Matthew attended Harvard University from 2008 to 2010. He then took a leave of absence in order to research the Bible and homosexuality and work toward LGBT inclusion in the church. In March 2012, Matthew delivered a speech at a church in his hometown about the Bible and homosexuality, calling for acceptance of gay Christians and their marriage relationships. Since then, the video of the speech has been seen more than 500,000 times on YouTube, and it was featured inThe New York Times and The Christian Post. In 2013, Matthew launched The Reformation Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to training LGBT Christians and their allies to reform church teaching on sexual orientation and gender identity. Matthew's book,God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships, is in stores now.
>
> **Dr. Michael Brown**
>
> Michael Brown holds a Ph.D. from New York University in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures and is the author of 25 books, most recently Can You Be Gay and Christian? He has served as a visiting or adjunct professor at seven leading seminaries, and contributed to numerous scholarly publications, including the Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religion and the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. He hosts the nationally syndicated talk radio program The Line of Fire and the TV show Answering Your Toughest Questions, and he has been active in teaching, preaching, and debating since 1973, committed to seeing a Jesus-based moral and cultural revolution.

Summary key: Julie Roys (JR), Matthew Vines (MV), Michael Brown (MB)

Summary:

Opening speeches:

- JR: Why should Christians be open to reinterpreting the Bible on homosexuality?
- MV: Consider the lives and testimonies of gay Christians. Here is my personal story.
- MV: According to the Bible, a person with same-sex attractions would have to embrace lifelong celibacy. I refuse to do that.
- MV: There are 6 passages in the Bible that are relevant to the goodness of homosexuality. All are negative.
- MV: None of these passages address gay relationships that are “long-term” and “faithful” that are based on “commitment” and “love”.
- JR: You say that it is “damaging” for Christians to disagree with you views, is that true?
- MV: Yes. One of my friends declared his homosexuality and he did not feel safe to come home. He felt pain because Christians disagreed with him.
- MV: You cannot ask a person with same-sex attractions to be celibate, it causes too much harm to ask gays to abstain from sexual relationships.
- JR: Respond to Matthew.
- MB: The Bible only permits heterosexual sexuality and in every case condemns homosexual acts.
- MB: Matthew is taking his sexual preferences and activities as given, and reinterpreting the Bible to fit it.
- MB: Genesis talks about women being made to help men, and to fulfill God’s commandment to procreate and fill the Earth.
- MB: The Bible speaks about the complementarity of the sexes when talking about how two become one in marriage.
- MB: I am very sensitive to the stories of people who are gay who experience discrimination as “gay Christians”.
- MB: You can feel sad for people who have two conflicting commitments, but that doesn’t mean we should redefine what the Bible says.
- JR: Stop talking, we have a break.

JR takes a caller for the next topic:

- Caller 1: I had same-sex attractions and I was able to change my sexuality.
- JR: Matthew, respond to that.
- MV: Alan Chambers of Exodus International says that 99.9% of people he worked with had not changed their gay orientation.
- MV: Lifelong celibacy is not acceptable to gays, so the Bible must be reinterpreted to suit gays.
- MB: Matthew thinks that God himself did not understand the concept of sexual orientation and inadvertently hurt gays because of his lack of knowledge.
- MB: There is a solution in the Bible for people who cannot be celibate, and that

solution is heterosexual marriage
- MB: If a person is only attracted to pre-teen girls, do we then have to re-write the Bible to affirm that so they won't be "harmed"?
- MB: Alan Chambers was speaking for his own group, and his statement does not account for the fact that thousands of people DO change.
- JR: What about the Jones/Yarhouse study that found that 38% of reparative therapy subjects were successful in changing or chastity?
- MV: (no response to the question)
- MV: (to Brown) do you accept that the Bible forces gays to live out lifelong celibacy

Another break, then Brown replies:

- MB: Yes. But change is possible.
- MV: Do you know of any Christian who acknowledged that this was the consequence of the Bible's teaching for gays?
- MB: Paul's explanation that the options for ALL Christians are 1) celibacy or 2) heterosexual marriage. For 2000 years.
- MV: Paul (in Romans 1) is talking about people who are not "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships.
- MV: Paul was not aware of "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships at the time he wrote his prohibitions in Romans 1.
- JR: How do you know that fixed sexual orientation is true? And that the Biblical authors would written different things if they knew?
- JR: Are there any references in the first century to "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships?
- MB: Yes, in my book I quote prominent historian N. T. Wright who documents that those relationships were known.
- MB: Matthew's view requires that God did not know about sexual orientation when ordaining the Bible's content.
- MB: Leviticus 18 is for all people, for all time. This was not just for the Jews, this was for everyone.
- MV: I am not saying that Paul was wrong because he was ignorant.
- MV: Paul was writing in a context where "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships were unknown.
- MV: NT Wright does not cite first century texts, he cites a problematic 4th century text.
- MV: Absence of 1st-century references to "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships means that God did not intend to prohibit them.
- MB: Whenever the Bible speaks about homosexuality, it is opposed to it – Old Testament and New Testament.

Another break, then the conclusion:

- JR: Respond to the Leviticus prohibition, which prohibits homosexuality for everyone,

for all time.
- MV: It is a universal prohibition on male same-sex intercourse, but it does not apply to Christians.
- MV: For example, Leviticus prohibits sex during a woman's menstrual period. And Christians are not bound by that.
- MV: What is the reason for this prohibition of male-male sex in Leviticus? It's not affirm the complementarity of the sexual act.
- MV: The Bible prohibits male-male sex because it is written for a patriarchal culture.
- MV: In a patriarchal culture, women are viewed as inferior. That's why the Bible prohibits a man from taking the woman's role in sex.
- MB: The prohibition in Leviticus is a universal prohibition against male-male sex, applicable in all times and places.
- MB: Homosexual sex is a violation of the divine order.
- MB: We can see already the consequences of normalizing this: gay marriage, and supports for polygamy and polyamory.
- MV: So the earliest reference there is to a "long-term", "faithful" gay relationship is a 4th century text.
- MV: But that gay relationship is not like modern gay relationships.

I have a few comments about Vines' points below.

My comments:

Even heterosexuals who have not married are called upon to embrace lifelong celibacy. I am in my 30s and am a virgin because I have not married. I wouldn't seek to reinrepret the Bible to allow premarital sex just because what I am doing is difficult. I would rather just do what the Bible says than reinterpret it to suit me. And it's just as hard for me to be chaste as it would be for him to be. In short, it's a character issue. He takes his right to recreational sex as non-negotiable, and reinterprets the Bible to suit. I take the Bible as non-negotiable, and comply with it regardless of whether it seems to make me less happy. With respect to the purposes of God for me in this world, my happiness is expendable. If I don't find someone to marry, I'm going to be "afflicted" with the lifelong celibacy that Vines seems to think is torture, but let me tell you – God is happy with the contributions I am making for him, and if I have to be chaste through my whole life, I am 100% fine with that. I serve the King. And not the reverse.

Notice that he talks about "long-term" but not permanent relationships, and "faithful" but not exclusive. This is important because the statistics show that gay relationships (depending on whether it is female-female or male-male) are prone to instability and/or infidelity. I just blogged on that recently, with reference to the *published research* on the subject. Vines is talking about a situation that does not obtain in the real world – according to the data. Gay relationships do not normally value permanence and exclusivity in the way that opposite-sex marriage relationships do, especially where the couple regularly attends church. The divorce rate and infidelity rate for religious couples is *far below* the rates for gay couples, depending on the sexes involved. Vines is

committed to the idea that marriage is about feelings, e.g. – "love", but that's not the public purpose of marriage. Marriage is not about love, it's about complementarity of the sexes and providing for the needs of children. We have published studies like this one showing that there are negative impacts to children who are raised by gay couples, which dovetails with studies showing that children need a mother and that children need a father. We should not normalize any relationship that exposes children to harm. We should prefer to inconvenience adults than to harm children.

Matthew Vines made an argument that Christians have to stop saying that homosexuality is wrong, because it makes gay people feel excluded. I wrote previously about the argument that gay activists use where they say "if you don't agree with me and celebrate me and affirm me, then I'll commit suicide". In that post, I quoted a prominent gay activist who made exactly that argument. I don't find the threats to self-destruction to be a convincing argument *for the truth* of the view that gay marriage being the same as heterosexual marriage. In fact, this is confirmed by a recent study which showed that features of gay relationships themselves, and not social disapproval, is to blame for high rates of suicide in the gay community.

Vines seems to want to argue that the context in which the Bible authors were writing did not allow them to address the problem of gays in "long-term", "faithful" relationships. Well, we have already seen that statistically speaking, those relationships are in the minority. One British study mentioned in the post I linked to above found that only 25% of gay couples were intact after 8 years. The number is 82% for heterosexual marriages, and that *doesn't* filter by couples who abstain from premarital sex and who attend church regularly. If you add those two criteria, the number is going to be well above 82% in my opinion. Studies show that premarital chastity and church attendance *vastly* improve the stability and quality of marriages.

In addition, Vines is trying to argue that 1) the Bible authors were not aware of "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships and 2) their failure to explicitly disqualify these "long-term", "stable" gay sexual relationships means that the Bible actually condones them. A friend of mine pointed out that this is a textbook case of the argument from silence, where someone asserts that because something is not explicitly condemned, then it must be OK. Carried through to its logical end, that would mean that things like identity theft are OK, because they are not mentioned explicitly. Brown asserted that there was a blanket prohibition on homosexual acts. He is arguing from what we know. Vines says that "long-term", "faithful" homosexual relationships are not mentioned, and are therefore OK. He is arguing from what we don't know. And he is trying to reverse the burden of proof so that he doesn't have to show evidence for his view. Brown wouldn't take the bait. The fact of the matter is that no one for the last 2000 years of church history have taken Vines' view. Every single Christian before Vines, who were closer to Jesus' teachings than Vines, understood the verses that Brown cited to be providing a blanket prohibition on homosexual sex acts. If Vines wants to claim that the Bible condones what he wants it to condone, he has to produce some positive evidence from the text or from church history or church fathers. He has *nothing* to support his case that

could convince anyone that this is what Christians have believed, and ought to believe.

Finally, if you are looking for another debate, I blogged about a debate between Michael Brown and Eric Smaw. There's a video and summaries of the opening speeches in that post.

William Lane Craig's Defenders class now live-streamed every Sunday at 11:30 AM Eastern

June 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw this post up on Pastor Matt's blog.

He writes:

> William Lane Craig's ministry has been grace upon grace to me. He is one of the apologists whose work saved my faith from the relativistic emergent church fog in which I wandered for several years as a young Christian (you can more about that here).
>
> However, it is not just Dr. Craig's books and debates that have blessed my Christian life and ministry but his podcasts are also outstanding. I subscribe to both his Reasonable Faith and Defenders podcast. The former is conversational in style and often features Dr. Craig answering the questions of both believers and skeptics alike. The latter is a regular Sunday school class Dr. Craig teaches on theology and apologetics.
>
> Now the Defenders class is going to be live streamed from the church he attends every Sunday morning at 11:30 a.m. EST. You can watch here. The time may be bad for many of you on the east coast (I'll be preaching tomorrow at that time) but perfect for those in Europe and the west coast. Also, you can watch or listen to archived classes at Reasonable Faith.

There was a recent episode of the Reasonable Faith podcast in which Kevin Harris and William Lane Craig talked about the live-streaming of the Defenders class.

Details:

> Every church should have a class like this! Dr. Craig's 'Defenders' class gets to the meat of the Christian life and worldview. Now, there's breaking news concerning the class!

Here's a snip from the transcript that explains what Defenders is all about:

> *Dr. Craig:* We believe strongly that every Christian believer needs to be exercising his spiritual gifts in the context of the local church. There are no lone rangers in Christianity. We are part of a local body. God has gifted the church in ways that we serve and help one another. So, having a gift in the area of teaching, it would be natural for me to teach an adult Sunday School class. I thought, "Well, what might I teach on?" I didn't want to teach a course on straight apologetics. I think that would be spiritually unhealthy, just week after week to be dealing with apologetic arguments.
>
> *Kevin Harris:* Why?

Dr. Craig: Because they would not be getting any biblical input or knowledge.

Kevin Harris: You mean directly from the Scriptures?

Dr. Craig: Exactly. There would not be biblical input and teaching. So it seemed to me that it would be better for my students if I were to teach a survey of Christian doctrine. What I discovered during my doctoral studies in Germany is that when you do a survey of the body of Christian doctrine there simply naturally arises at various points along the way issues of apologetic significance that can then be addressed in passing. So, for example, if you are talking about the Doctrine of God, naturally the question will arise, "What reason is there to believe that God exists?" So you can do a sort of excursus on arguments for the existence of God. Or if you are doing Doctrine of Creation, the question will naturally arise, "How does the Christian doctrine of creation comport with what contemporary biology tells us about the evolution of biological complexity on earth?" So that will be an area, again, that you will want to address with a view toward producing what I call a synoptic Christian theology; that is to say, a theology which is integrated with the best knowledge that secular disciplines have to tell us about the world. An integrated worldview that gives a Christian perspective on science, on the arts, on literature, on history, and so forth.

So based upon my studies in Germany, I developed this survey of the whole body of Christian doctrine, or systematic theology, starting with the Doctrine of Revelation (that is to say, how does God reveal himself to us) going right up through the Doctrine of the Last Things (that is to say, the return of Christ and the final state of man into eternity), and then in between the rest of basic Christian doctrine.

Kevin Harris: You've done a series on the Doctrine of the Trinity, the Doctrine of Christ, fascinating things. Probably one of the more popular ones you did was a whole series (12 to 15 sessions) of Creation and Evolution.

Dr. Craig: Yes, that was an excursus under the Doctrine of Creation. Having given a theological understanding of creation, then how does that integrate with what we learn about the created biosphere from science?

Kevin Harris: Just a personal aside, the times that I've been in the class, it is really fun because these are the people who don't realize that you are "The WLC," they just know you as the carpenter's son who lives among them. *[laughter]* You are just Bill! But some do come to the class and seek you out because of your work, but then you've got a bunch of other people who . . .

Dr. Craig: What has happened, Kevin, is initially I just started teaching this adult Sunday School class, and we just had a handful of folks who would come. People who were interested in learning about Christian doctrine. But as Reasonable Faith developed, we began to record these classes and then to put them on the website so that they could be available as podcasts. That has been a great joy to see how people from all around the world are accessing these podcasts and

> listening to them.
>
> *Kevin Harris:* Your class asks questions. You pass the microphone around so the questions could be heard.
>
> *Dr. Craig:* That's right. One of the things that we do in the class is provide ample time for discussion. We don't have any schedule to get through. Whether we cover a lot of material in a lesson, or just a little bit of material, doesn't matter because we just continue the next Sunday wherever we happen to leave off. So the pace at which we move will be very much dictated by the people in the class and the questions that they have.
>
> One of the things that we do in the Defenders class is to encourage open exploration and questioning. So when I cover a subject, I will typically give a range of views that are present in Christian theology, very often associated with particular Christian confessions. For example, I'll say, "Here is what Catholics believe about this doctrine. Here is the Lutheran perspective. Here is what Reformed theologians say. Here is what Baptist or Methodist theologians believe." And we look at a range of options, and then give some word of assessment about them. I think folks appreciate not being put into a cage, but presented with a range of options and then being allowed to decide for themselves which one best represents the most coherent and biblically faithful view of the subject that we are discussing.
>
> *Kevin Harris:* These podcasts of the Defenders class appear at ReasonableFaith.org every Monday. So people look forward to that time when they go on, along with the new Reasonable Faith podcast. So you get Defenders and the Reasonable Faith podcasts.

You can click here to listen to it. (20 minutes)

I like his survey of opinions approach. The best sermon I ever heard was on ordinances and sacraments, and the pastor did a survey of the different views and what reasons they had to hold it. My ears perked up – you never hear anything like that in church, usually. But in the Defenders class, you hear it *every week.*

Now the lady I am mentoring most listens to this podcast – she is listening fro the beginning because they are all online now. She is getting better at apologetics every day, and I suspect that the Defenders class has a lot to do with that. She is listening to the 20 podcasts from Series 1 of the Defenders podcast. They are now on Series 2. If you like your theology done with philosophical and historical rigor, you'll find it here – this is theology you can talk to a non-Christian about.

I'm sure that some people who read my blog think that church is boring, impractical and irrelevant to the real work of being a Christian. I have sympathy with you, because I used to be you – until my friend Dina encouraged me to attend church more regularly, and made me a cross-stitch (*it took her a LONG time to make!*) that I couldn't refuse. Now I try to attend church and I do believe that it adds value to what I do as a Christian operator and agent, although my church does not know who I am and they do not use

any of my skills. I think some of you were just like I used to be, and have had nothing but bad experiences in the church. I am not minimizing the bad experiences that serious people have in unserious churches, but eventually I do want you to go to a good church and learn something and share what you know with others. But if you still cannot bring yourself to go to church YET, then consider that this Defenders class is the corrective to the bad experiences you have had in church. You are not going to find any anti-intellectualism, feminization, postmodernism, moral relativism, etc. in this class. You will actually learn something useful in this class. Every week you are going to take home something useful that makes you better at know who God is and how to act on that knowledge in practical ways. Take a look and see for yourself what goes on!

Finally, here is a list with links to all my favorite podcasts.

Study shows that children of divorce twice as likely to have a stroke

June 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Science Daily reports on a peer-reviewed Canadian study that links an increased risk of stroke to divorce.

Excerpt:

> "We were very surprised that the association between parental divorce and stroke remained so strong even after we had adjusted for smoking, obesity, exercise and alcohol consumption," said [study leader Esme] Fuller-Thomson.
>
> […]Of the 13,134 total study respondents, 10.4 percent had experienced parental divorce during their childhood, and 1.9 percent reported that they had been diagnosed with a stroke at some point in their lives. When adjusting for age, race and gender, the odds of stroke were approximately 2.2 times higher for those who had experienced parental divorce.
>
> When other risk factors — including socioeconomic status, health behaviors, mental health, and other adverse childhood experiences — were controlled in a logistic regression analysis, the odds ratio of stroke for those who had experienced parental divorce remained significantly elevated.

One of the reasons that we have so much divorce is because feminists and trial lawyers lobbied to relax divorce laws – this was the first redefinition of marriage. In this redefinition, we lost the stability and permanence of marriage. Now marriage just means a temporary relationship for people to have feelings of being "happy" and "in love". It never used to mean that – it used to mean a promise to love another person regardless of how you felt.

Look at this article from Focus on the Family by Amy Tracy.

She writes:

> God is very clear, however, that He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). He also says, "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matthew 19:6). According to the New Testament, there are two justifications for divorce: infidelity (Matthew 5:32) and desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15).

Now, I had always taken the rule of Dr. Laura for this. She says that you can get divorced for adultery and abandonment (as above), but she allows allows for physical abuse and drug addiction. But it looks like the Bible is more strict than Dr. Laura, even.

Look at these old-fashioned wedding vows – they reflected the view that marriage was permanent, and that it was meant to persist through hardships and trials:

> _____, I love you. I prayed that God would lead me to his choice. I praise Him that tonight His will is being fulfilled. Through the pressures of the present and uncertainties of the future I promise my faithfulness, to follow you through all of life's experiences as you follow God, that together we may grow in the likeness of Christ and our home be a praise to Him.
>
> _____, I give you this ring, wear it with love and joy. I choose you to be my husband: to have and to hold, from this day forward. For better, for worse, for richer for poorer; in sickness and in health; to have and to cherish, as long as we both shall live. And hereto, I pledge you my faithfulness to show to you the same kind of love as Christ showed the Church when He died for her, and to love you as a part of myself because in His sight we shall be one.
>
> I love you, _____, and I thank the Lord for the love that has bound our hearts and lives together in spiritual fellowship of marriage. I will love, honor, cherish and obey you always. As we enter upon the privileges and joys of life's most holy relationship and begin together the great adventure of building a Christian home, I will look to you as head of our home as I have looked to Christ as Head of the Church. I will love you in sickness as in health, in poverty as in wealth, in sorrow as in joy, and will be true to you by God's grace, trusting in Him, so long as we both shall live.

The reason we cry when we read those vows (well, at least I do) is because we know that loving someone as an obligation is an enormous responsibility and sacrifice of our own selfish needs. That's what marriage USED to mean, before no-fault divorce laws. But today people on the left and the right seem to be perfectly fine with them! Even many "Christians" seem to be fine with them.

I also noticed that Stephen Baskerville has an article on no-fault divorce up in the American Conservative. (Note: I do not endorse paleo-conservatism)

Excerpt:

> First: Marriage exists primarily to cement the father to the family. This fact is politically incorrect but undeniable. The breakdown of marriage produces widespread fatherlessness, not motherlessness. As Margaret Mead pointed out long ago—yes, leftist Margaret Mead was correct about this—motherhood is a biological certainty whereas fatherhood is socially constructed. The father is the weakest link in the family bond, and without the institution of marriage he is easily discarded.
>
> […]The notion that marriage exists for love or "to express and safeguard an emotional union of adults," as one proponent puts it, is cant. Many loving and emotional human relationships do not involve marriage. Even the conservative argument that marriage exists to rear children is too imprecise: marriage creates fatherhood. No marriage, no fathers.
>
> […]Here is the second unpleasant truth: homosexuals did not destroy marriage,

> heterosexuals did. The demand for same-sex marriage is a symptom, not a cause, of the deterioration of marriage. By far the most direct threat to the family is heterosexual divorce. “Commentators miss the point when they oppose homosexual marriage on the grounds that it would undermine traditional understandings of marriage,” writes family scholar Bryce Christensen. “It is only because traditional understandings of marriage have already been severely undermined that homosexuals are now laying claim to it.”
>
> [..]Thus the third inconvenient fact: divorce is a political problem. It is not a private matter, and it does not come from impersonal forces of moral and cultural decay. It is driven by complex and lucrative government machinery operating in our names and funded by our taxes. It is imposed upon unwilling people, whose children, homes, and property may be confiscated. It generates the social ills that rationalize almost all domestic government spending. And it is promoted ideologically by the same sexual radicals who now champion same-sex marriage. Homosexuals may be correct that heterosexuals destroyed marriage, but the heterosexuals were their fellow sexual ideologues.
>
> Conservatives have completely misunderstood the significance of the divorce revolution. While they lament mass divorce, they refuse to confront its politics. Maggie Gallagher attributes this silence to “political cowardice”: “Opposing gay marriage or gays in the military is for Republicans an easy, juicy, risk-free issue,” she wrote in 1996. “The message [is] that at all costs we should keep divorce off the political agenda.”
>
> No American politician of national stature has seriously challenged unilateral divorce. “Democrats did not want to anger their large constituency among women who saw easy divorce as a hard-won freedom and prerogative,” writes Barbara Dafoe Whitehead. “Republicans did not want to alienate their upscale constituents or their libertarian wing, both of whom tended to favor easy divorce, nor did they want to call attention to the divorces among their own leadership.”

If we social conservatives care about children, then we need to be opposed to no-fault divorce. We need to be more careful about who we choose to marry, and not choose mates because of “chemistry” or “hotness” or because our friends approve of them based on arbitrary cultural standards. There are defined roles for the participants to a marriage, and there is a design for marriage, and there are specific tasks that need to get done. Marriage is a job, and it requires skills to execute difficult tasks that are morally obligatory. It’s not about immature selfish adults pursuing happiness at the expense of their children. It’s not about feelings. It’s not about sentimentality. It’s not about fun.

Divorce causes damage to the health and well-being of children, resulting in behaviors that will give us less liberty (greater intervention of government) and higher taxes (for social welfare programs) later on. There are consequences to selfishness and irresponsibility in relationships. Other people do not exist to entertain you. Relationships are not a form of recreational activity. At least they should not be for Christians. For

Christians, the goal of relationships is to get the other person to have a closer relationship with God and to be equipped to serve God better. If children are the result, then the same obligation applies to them. That is the purpose of relationships in Christianity.

Christian NHS worker charged with “bullying” for praying for Muslim co-worker

June 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph. (H/T Well Spent Journey)

Excerpt:

> A Christian health worker has begun a legal challenge after being disciplined by the NHS for praying with a Muslim colleague.

> Victoria Wasteney, a senior occupational therapist in one of the country’s most racially diverse areas, was also accused of bullying the colleague after giving her a book about a Muslim woman who converts to Christianity.
>
> In addition, senior managers told Miss Wasteney that it was inappropriate to invite the woman to a community sports day organised by her church.
>
> The complaints led to Miss Wasteney being suspended on full pay for nine months.
>
> Three charges were upheld against the 37-year-old Christian at an internal disciplinary hearing in February and five charges were found to be unsubstantiated. She had to accept a final written warning at work which will remain on her records for 12 months, as well as accept a range of other requirements designed to stop her discussing her faith and beliefs with colleagues.

> Miss Wasteney said she was challenging her employers in court because political correctness in the NHS was stifling ordinary conversations about faith.
>
> […]The young Muslim woman was appointed as a newly qualified occupational therapist in a team of 30 managed by Miss Wasteney at East London NHS Foundation Trust.

I do not recommend speaking to Muslims about anything other than work at work, because of cases. If you want to say something, come home and blog what you want to say under an alias. We are not in the same world we were in 50 years ago. The things we used to do then are no longer safe. You can still have an impact, you just have to be smarter about how you do it.

Why Mark Steyn isn't keeping a list of donors to his legal defense fund

June 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Mark Steyn's blog. He explains why he cannot issue receipts for donations, because he refuses to disclose donors to the IRS.

Excerpt:

> Six months ago, I fell out with *National Review* and decided to go it alone in climate fraud Michael E Mann's defamation suit against us for mocking his "global warming" hockey stick.
>
> […][E]ver since our suggestion that you might like to help out in this manner, we've had a steady stream of emails from readers explaining that this is all well and good but it's taxable income and what I really need to do is set up a 501(c)3 or 501(c)4 or 501(c)87 or some such as a vehicle for this campaign.
>
> To which the answer is: well, we certainly considered the possibility, and a few years ago I might have entertained the notion. But not anymore. The National Organization for Marriage, which was founded to protect the pre-revisionist definition of marriage, is, in its various arms, both a 501(c)3 and a 501(c)4. As such, its tax returns are publicly available, but not its donor lists. Nevertheless, it is obliged to report its donors on Schedule B to the Internal Revenue Service. Someone at the IRS leaked the donor lists to a man called Matthew Meisel, a gay activist in Boston. Meisel in turn passed it on to the gay group Human Rights Campaign (whose president was a national co-chair of the Obama re-election campaign), and HRC in turn published the list of donors, which was subsequently re-published by The Huffington Post.
>
> There's no secret about why they'd do such a thing. As we know, if you disagree with progressive orthodoxy, you have no right to host a cable-TV home-decor show or give a commencement address at an American university or be a beauty-queen contestant. But that's not enough for these groups. If you're not a public figure, if you're just a Californian who puts up a yard sign or a bumper sticker on Proposition Eight, your car will be keyed and your house defaced. And likewise, if you slip a check in the mail for a modest sum, it is necessary that you also be made an example of. Brandon Eich, Richard Raddon and Scott Eckern all lost prominent positions as chief executives because of their donations. But Marjorie Christoffersen, a 67-year-old Mormon who works in the El Coyote restaurant in Los Angeles, was forced to quit because she wrote a $100 check in support of Proposition Eight.
>
> So, when it comes to the leaking of donor lists, we're not dealing with anything "theoretically" or "potentially" "troubling". These guys act on this information,

> and act hard, and they are willing to destroy your life for a hundred bucks.

I had a conversation like this with a friend of mine who works for a large, effective non-profit recently. I have a rule that says that I do not donate money to non-profits that will put me on a donor list and then submit that donor list to the IRS. I have had this rule since Obama came into office. The rule is there because of the problems Mark Steyn describes above. I need to not be persecuted by the government in order to do my job as a Christian. Why take chances?

Supreme Court rules in favor of religious liberty and against labor unions

July 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News first, on the Hobby Lobby religious liberty vs abortion subsidies case.

Excerpt:

> The Supreme Court ruled today that the Christian-run Hobby Lobby doesn't have to obey the HHS mandate that is a part of Obamacare that requires businesses to pay for abortion causing drugs in their employee health care plans.
>
> The Obama administration was attempting to make Hobby Lobby and thousands of pro-life businesses and organizations comply with the HHS mandate that compels religious companies to pay for birth control and abortion-causing drugs for their employees. However, the U.S. Supreme Court today issued a favorable ruling in *Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, a landmark case addressing the Constitutionally guaranteed rights of business owners to operate their family companies without violating their deeply held religious convictions.
>
> Writing for the 5-4 majority, Justice Samuel Alito handed down the decision for the high court, saying, "The Supreme Court holds government can't require closely held corporations with religious owners to provide contraception coverage."
>
> The court ruled that the contraception mandate violated the Religious Freedom and Restoration Act, a 1993 law and it held that the mandate "substantially burdens the exercise of religion" and that HHS didn't use the "least restrictive means" to promote this government interest, tests required by RFRA.
>
> "HHS's contraception mandate substantially burdens the exercise of religion," the decision reads, adding that the "decision concerns only the contraceptive mandate and should not be understood to mean that all insurance mandates." The opinion said the "plain terms of Religious Freedom Restoration Act" are "perfectly clear."
>
> "If the owners comply with the HHS mandate, they believe they will be facilitating abortions, and if they do not comply, they will pay a very heavy price — as much as $1.3 million per day, or about $475 million per year, in the case of one of the companies," the opinion reads. "If these consequences do not amount to a substantial burden, it is hard to see what would."
>
> […]The Hobby Lobby decision only applies to companies, including Conestoga Wood Specialties, which had a companion case pending before the Supreme Court. Non-profit groups like Priests for Life and Little Sisters are still waiting for a ruling about their right to opt out of the mandate.
>
> […]Americans "don't give up their rights to religious freedom just because they

> open a family-run business," Lori Windham, senior counsel for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which represented Hobby Lobby. **"**This is a landmark decision for religious freedom. The Supreme Court recognized that Americans do not lose their religious freedom when they run a family business."
>
> Barbara Green, co-founder of Hobby Lobby, also responded: "Our family is overjoyed by the Supreme Court's decision. Today the nation's highest court has re-affirmed the vital importance of religious liberty as one of our country's founding principles. The Court's decision is a victory, not just for our family business, but for all who seek to live out their faith. We are grateful to God and to those who have supported us on this difficult journey."

You can read the reactions from people on the left on Twitter, in which they threaten to burn Hobby Lobby stores to the ground. Note that Hobby Lobby is only objecting to covering 4 out of 20 prescribed contraceptives required by Obamacare, just the ones that can *cause abortions*. They don't want to pay money to other people to make it cheaper for them to kill unborn children. Makes sense, right? Not to the left.

And now the second decision, which was reported on in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Home-based care workers in Illinois aren't full-fledged public employees so they can't be forced to pay dues to a union they don't want to join, a divided Supreme Court said. But the limited ruling stopped short of barring organized labor from collecting fees from government workers who object to union representation.
>
> The court, in a 5-4 opinion by Justice Samuel Alito, said the aides weren't full public employees even though they are paid by the state with Medicaid funds. Because of that status, the workers—often family members of the disabled—couldn't be required to pay what are known as agency fees to a public-sector union that provides them representation.
>
> Justice Alito said requiring mandatory union fees violated the First Amendment rights of aides who didn't want to join or support the union. Monday's ruling split along ideological lines, with conservative justices in the majority and liberal justices in the dissent.
>
> **The high court avoided the broadest possible ruling in the case, declining a request by the challengers to limit the ability of public-sector unions to collect fees from all workers who decline to join labor unions. Labor lawyers said that while unions dodged that bullet in Monday's ruling, they may not be able to in the future. The ruling "sets the table for more challenges to agency fees down the road. And this fact will not make unions sleep any easier," said Michael Lotito, a labor lawyer at Littler Mendelson P.C.**
>
> […]The National Right To Work Legal Defense Foundation, an antiunion group in Springfield, Va., sued on behalf of eight Medicaid-paid aides, some of whom are

> covered by the SEIU agreement, saying the Illinois arrangement had forced parents and other relatives taking care of disabled people into union associations they didn't want. The foundation said Monday's ruling would free "thousands of home-care providers from unwanted union control."

And lastly, somehow I missed a third good Supreme Court decision, which *unanimously* sided with the the pro-life Susan B. Anthony list. That decision came out in mid-June.

Was early Earth a good place to create the building blocks of life?

July 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

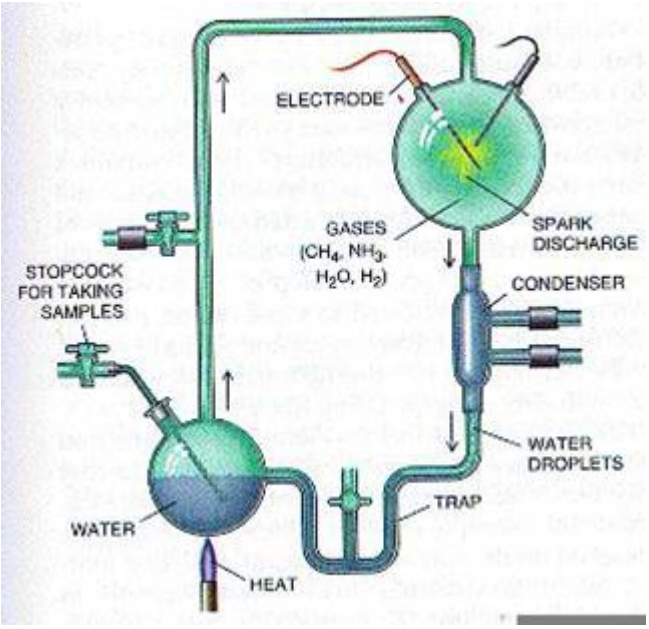

The Miller-Urey experiments

Biochemist Dr. Fazale Rana of Reasons to Believe offers some evidence.

Excerpt:

> Today, the Miller-Urey experiment is considered to be irrelevant to the origin-of-life question. Current understanding of the composition of early Earth's atmosphere differs significantly from the gas mix used by Miller. Most planetary scientists now think that the Earth's primeval atmosphere consisted of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and water vapor. Laboratory experiments indicate that this gas mixture is incapable of yielding organic materials in Miller-Urey-type experiments.
>
> In May 2003 origin-of-life researchers Jeffrey Bada and Antonio Lazcano, long-time associates of Miller, wrote an essay for Science (May 2, 2003, pp. 745-746)commemorating the 50-year anniversary of the publication of Miller's initial results.They pointed out that the Miller-Urey experiment has historical significance, but not scientific importance in contemporary origin-of-life thought. Bada and Lazcano wrote:
>
> Is the "prebiotic soup" theory a reasonable explanation for the emergence of life? Contemporary geoscientists tend to doubt that the primitive atmosphere had the highly reducing composition used by Miller in 1953.
>
> In his book Biogenesis, origin-of-life researcher Noam Lahav passes similar judgment:
>
> The prebiotic conditions assumed by Miller and Urey were essentially those of a

> reducing atmosphere. Under slightly reducing conditions, the Miller-Urey reaction does not produce amino acids, nor does it produce the chemicals that may serve as the predecessors of other important biopolymer building blocks. Thus, by challenging the assumption of a reducing atmosphere, we challenge the very existence of the "prebiotic soup", with its richness of biologically important organic compounds.
>
> For many people, the generation of amino acids from simple chemical compounds thought to be present in early Earth's atmosphere meant that life could originate all on its own without the need for a Creator. Work done on the early planetary conditions of Earth in the intervening decades between Miller's famous experiment and his death, however, have invalidated this famous experiment and its support for an evolutionary explanation for life's origin, in spite of what textbooks report.

The IDEA Center has a nice summary of origin-of-life research that explains why scientists no longer accept the idea that the building blocks of life can be formed by sparking the gasses that were present on the early Earth.

Miler and Urey used the wrong gasses:

> Miller's experiment requires a reducing methane and ammonia atmosphere, however geochemical evidence says the atmosphere was hydrogen, water, and carbon dioxide (non-reducing). The only amino acid produced in a such an atmosphere is glycine (and only when the hydrogen content is unreasonably high), and could not form the necessary building blocks of life.

Miller and Urey didn't account for UV of molecular instability:

> Not only would UV radiation destroy any molecules that were made, but their own short lifespans would also greatly limit their numbers. For example, at 100ºC (boiling point of water), the half lives of the nucleic acids Adenine and Guanine are 1 year, uracil is 12 years, and cytozine is 19 days (nucleic acids and other important proteins such as chlorophyll and hemoglobin have never been synthesized in origin-of-life type experiments).

Miller and Urey didn't account for molecular oxygen:

> We all have know ozone in the upper atmosphere protects life from harmful UV radiation. However, ozone is composed of oxygen which is the very gas that Stanley Miller-type experiments avoided, for it prevents the synthesis of organic molecules like the ones obtained from the experiments! Pre-biotic synthesis is in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. The chemistry does not work if there is oxygen because the atmosphere would be non-reducing, but if there is no UV-light-blocking oxygen (i.e. ozone – O_3) in the atmosphere, the amino acids would be quickly destroyed by extremely high amounts of UV light (which would have been 100 times stronger than today on the early earth).This

> radiation could destroy methane within a few tens of years, and atmospheric ammonia within 30,000 years.

And there were three other problems too:

> At best the processes would likely create a dilute “thin soup,” destroyed by meteorite impacts every 10 million years. This severely limits the time available to create pre-biotic chemicals and allow for the OOL.

> Chemically speaking, life uses only “left-handed” (“L”) amino acids and “right-handed” (“R)” genetic molecules. This is called “chirality,” and any account of the origin of life must somehow explain the origin of chirality. Nearly all chemical reactions produce “racemic” mixtures–mixtures with products that are 50% L and 50% R.

Two more problems are not mentioned in the article. A non-peptide bond anywhere in the chain will ruin the chain. You need around 200 amino acids to make a protein. If any of the bonds is not a peptide bond, the chain will not work in a living system. Additionally, the article does not mention the need for the experimenter to *intervene* in order to prevent interfering cross-reactions that would prevent the amino acids from forming.

Does the free market work to reduce poverty?

July 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Walter Williams
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> There has never been a purely free market economic system, just as there has never been a purely communist system. However, we can rank economies and see whether ones that are closer to the free market end of the economic spectrum are better than ones that are closer to the communist end.
>
> Let's try it.
>
> First, list countries according to whether they are closer to the free market or the communist end of the economic spectrum. Then rank countries according to per capita gross domestic product. Finally, rank countries according to Freedom House's "Freedom in the World" report.
>
> People who live in countries closer to the free market end of the economic spectrum have far greater income than people who live in countries toward the communist end — and enjoy far greater human rights protection.
>
> According to the 2012 "Economic Freedom of the World" report by James Gwartney, Robert Lawson and Joshua Hall, nations ranking in the top quartile with regard to economic freedom had average per capita GDP of $37,691 in 2010 compared with $5,188 for those in the bottom quartile.
>
> In the freest nations, the average income of the poorest 10% of their populations was $11,382. In the least free nations, it was $1,209.
>
> Remarkably, the average income of the poorest 10% in the economically freer nations is more than twice the average of those in the least free nations.
>
> Free market benefits aren't only measured in dollars and cents.
>
> Life expectancy is 79.5 years in the freest nations and 61.6 years in the least

> free.
>
> Political and civil liberties are considerably greater in the economically free nations than in unfree nations.
>
> Leftists might argue that the free market doesn't help the poor. That argument can't even pass the smell test.
>
> Imagine that you are an unborn spirit and God condemned you to a life of poverty but gave you a choice of the country in which to be poor. Which country would you choose?
>
> To help with your choice, here are facts provided by Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield in their report "Understanding Poverty in the United States: Surprising Facts About America's Poor."
>
> - Eighty percent of American poor households have air conditioning.
> - Nearly three-fourths have a car or truck, and 31% have two or more.
> - Almost two-thirds have cable or satellite TV.
> - Half have one or more computers.
> - Forty-two percent own their homes.
> - The average poor American has more living space than the typical non-poor person in Sweden, France and the U.K. Ninety-six percent of poor parents stated that their children were never hungry; in other words, they could afford food.
>
> The bottom line is that there is little or no material poverty in the U.S.
>
> At the time of our nation's birth, we were poor, but we established an institutional structure of free markets and limited government and became rich.

This might be a good article send along to people who want to bash our free-market system. It's easy for them to make assertions that we have to do this or that policy to redistribute wealth. But the real solution to helping the poor is not to take from one and give to another, it's to put into place a system that causes wealth to be created for all. That's what happened in the United States, and you can see how it happened in other capitalist economies like Chile, Hong Kong and Singapore. Capitalism turns poor nations into rich nations.

How involved fathers improve the mental health of their daughters

July 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this article in Scientific American via tweet from Stand to Reason.

Excerpt:

> In a series of studies beginning in 1999, he found that when girls had a warm relationship with their fathers and spent a lot of time with them in the first five to seven years of their lives, they had a reduced risk of early puberty, early initiation of sex and teen pregnancy. As Ellis continued this work, however, he became increasingly frustrated. Clearly, the association between fathers and daughters was profound. Yet he could not determine whether the parental behavior *caused* the consequences he was seeing in the daughters. An alternative was that girls who begin puberty early and engage in risky sexual behavior do so because they inherited certain genes from their parents. Fathers might pass on genes linked to infidelity to their daughters, in whom they could be associated with risky sexual behavior and early puberty. Or something else in the family's environment could be responsible for the changes in their daughters.
>
> Ellis came up with an innovative way to pose the question. He considered families in which divorced parents had two daughters separated by at least five years in age. When the parents divorced, the older sister would have had five more years with a father's consistent presence than the younger sister. If father absence causes early puberty and risky behavior, then the younger daughter should show more of that behavior than her older sibling. Also, genes or the family's environment would not confuse the results, because those would be the same for both daughters. It was close to a naturally occurring experiment, Ellis realized.
>
> Ellis recruited families with two daughters. Some were families in which the parents divorced; others were intact, to be used as a control group. He wanted to answer two questions: Was the age at which girls had their first menstrual period affected by the length of time they spent with a father in the house? And did that age vary depending on how their fathers behaved? The second question was added because fathers with a history of violence, depression, drug abuse or incarceration can affect children's development.
>
> Ellis's suspicions were confirmed. **Younger sisters in divorced families had their first periods an average of 11 months earlier than their older sisters—but only in homes in which the men behaved badly as fathers. "We were surprised to get as big an effect as we did," Ellis told me. The conclusion was that growing up with emotionally or physically distant fathers in early to middle childhood could be "a key life transition" that**

> **alters sexual development.**
>
> The next step Ellis took was to look at whether these circumstances could affect the involvement of girls in risky sexual behavior. This time he turned to Craigslist, a classified advertising Web site, and posted announcements in several cities that began, “SISTERS WANTED!” The criteria were very specific: he was looking for families with two sisters at least four years apart in age and currently between the ages of 18 and 36. He limited his search to families in which the birth parents separated or divorced when the younger sister was younger than 14 years. Ellis and his colleagues were able to recruit 101 pairs of sisters, some from families in which the parents had divorced and, using a different ad, some whose parents had not.
>
> **This time the researchers found that risky sexual behavior was not related to how long daughters lived with their fathers but to what the fathers did in the time they spent with their daughters. “Girls who grew up with a high-quality father—who spent more time as a high-investing father—showed the lowest level of risky sexual behavior,” Ellis said. “Their younger sisters, who had less time with him, tended to show the highest level of risky sexual behavior.”**

And a bit later:

> Ronald P. Rohner of the University of Connecticut has spent some years looking at the consequences for children and teenagers of being either accepted or rejected by their parents. He thinks that parental acceptance influences important aspects of personality. Children who are accepted by their parents are independent and emotionally stable, have strong self-esteem and hold a positive worldview. Those who feel they were rejected show the opposite—hostility, feelings of inadequacy, instability and a negative worldview.
>
> Rohner analyzed data from 36 studies on parental acceptance and rejection and found that they supported his theory. Both maternal and paternal acceptance were associated with these personality characteristics: A father’s love and acceptance are, in this regard, at least as important as a mother’s love and acceptance. That is not necessarily good news for fathers—it increases the demands on them to get this right. “The great emphasis on mothers and mothering in America has led to an inappropriate tendency to blame mothers for children’s behavior problems and maladjustment when, in fact, fathers are often more implicated than mothers in the development of problems such as these,” Rohner says.
>
> **Empathy is another characteristic that we hope teenagers will develop, and fathers seem to have a surprisingly important role here, too. Richard Koestner, a psychologist at McGill University, looked back at 75 men and women who had been part of a study at Yale University in the 1950s, when they were children. When Koestner and his colleagues**

> **examined all the factors in the children's lives that might have affected how empathetic they became as adults, one factor dwarfed all others—how much time their fathers spent with them. "We were amazed to find that how affectionate parents were with their children made no difference in empathy," Koestner says. "And we were astounded at how strong the father's influence was."**
>
> Melanie Horn Mallers, a psychologist at California State University, Fullerton, also found that sons who have fond memories of their fathers were more able to handle the day-to-day stresses of adulthood. Around the same time, a team at the University of Toronto put adults in a functional MRI scanner to assess their reactions to their parents' faces. Mothers' faces elicited more activity in several parts of the brain, including some associated with face processing. The faces of fathers, in contrast, elicited activity in the caudate, a structure associated with feelings of love.

So how do we avoid damaging our children? Well, we choose to have sex with people who are capable of long-term stability and commitment. And how do we do that? *We test them before we have sex with them.*

My approach to dating and courting has always been an engineer's approach. A project manager's approach. I am used to working with teams to deliver bug-free software that will exist in an enterprise environment. There, the software will have to survive unexpected disasters, peak usage and other challenges. If we are serious about avoiding harm to children, we should drop emotional/spiritual approaches to dating and courtship and stick with interview questions and performing tasks (tests). Marriage should be like software engineering projects – at least we know how to deliver quality software on time and on budget. The lazy, emotional hedonistic approach doesn't work. It doesn't work in relationships. It doesn't work in engineering.

Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less

July 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Buddy breathing

I have been getting into disagreements with the woman I am mentoring in apologetics, where she has been telling me that accurate assessments of my strengths are "proud" and that I need to be more humble. So I thought I would explain what I take humility to mean.

Here's something from J. I. Packer:

> "Being humble is not a matter of pretending to be worthless, but is a form of realism, not only regarding the real badness of one's sins and stupidities and the real depth of one's dependence on God's grace, **but also regarding the real range of one's abilities. Humble believers know what they can and cannot do. They note both their gifts and their limitations, and so are able to avoid both the unfaithfulness of letting their God-given powers lie fallow and the foolhardiness of biting off more than they can chew."**
>
> — J.I. Packer, "A Passion for Faithfulness: Wisdom From the Book of Nehemiah"

I think I can give an example here. Ever since I was young, I have wanted to do the PhD in computer science and become a Christian professor. I already have the BS and MS and I have been working in industry full-time for over 10 years. The money is there to do the PhD in computer science five times over, but I have not done it because I am not sure that I have what it takes to be a researcher. Sometimes people ask me what I studied and what I do for a living. I am accurate about my degrees, my resume and my savings, and what I am doing and can do with my resources. But I am also accurate in saying that doing a PhD takes a whole different level of commitment and sacrifice. And I am humble enough to know that it is beyond me, at least at this time. I lack the support to do it. God

hasn't given me a mentor or a wife. So I am humble about not "biting off more than I can chew". That is real humility. But trying to pretend I don't have any skills, haven't made any good decisions, or that I am lousy with money *is not humility.*

Here's her most favorite theologian, A. W. Tozer:

> **"The meek man is not a human mouse afflicted with a sense of his own inferiority. Rather he may be in his moral life as bold as a lion and as strong as Samson**; but he has stopped being fooled about himself. He has accepted God's estimate of his own life. He knows he is as weak and as helpless as God has declared him to be, **but paradoxically, he knows at the same time that he is of more importance than angels.** In himself, nothing; **in God, everything.** That is his motto. He knows well that the world will never see him as God sees him and he has stopped caring."
>
> — A. W. Tozer, "The Pursuit of God"

So let's talk about some cases where I feel I am humble, but my apologetics mentoree doesn't see it.

I know that there were things that I wanted, and things that I wanted to do in this life. Getting married early was one of them, and keeping chaste as my 20s passed by has been hard. I really wanted to be married by now and to have children and a home. If you are looking for some sort of evidence of humility in a person, that is a good place to look: how far has this person been willing to go along with God's purposes and rules, even when it meant not fulfilling their own needs and goals? Humility means not thinking of your own goals and needs. It means following the rules even when you know you aren't being fulfilled. Although I have the resources to just grab for happiness, I won't break God's rules to do it.

Let's get specific with that. There are lots of things that I would like to do for fun that cost money – like learning how to fly a plane, or buying an even faster car than I have now, or taking scuba diving lessons. For some people, it might be surfing, hang-gliding or skydiving. These entertainments cost money, but that money could just as easily be donated to a Ratio Christi event or a Faith Beyond Belief event. That's humility – putting God's needs above your own needs in stewardship of resources. Even though you have a right to be happy with what you earn, you can humble yourself and share and go without thrills and entertainment. I almost never spend money on entertainments. The argument "but you only live once, you have to experience this now" means nothing to me. I like to stay home.

Humility also comes into play when deciding what I should do with my life. I think all of us would like to be William Lane Craig or Stephen C. Meyer or Jay Richards or Michael Licona. Standing up on stage, smashing atheism into the floor with both hands. I would love to be that. To do that, though, I would have to go back to school and spend tens of thousands of dollars on PhDs, and then write books and papers. That would eat up the savings that I need for a family. Then I could be famous and awesome, like my heroes.

But I choose not to sacrifice tens of thousands of dollars on my dream, when my money and the money of other Christians who might support me could be better used for God's Kingdom by the more skilled scholars who already exist. Maybe there is someone getting a PhD in Biochemistry who I could help out instead, just by keeping my job and doing with a little less entertainment. Humility means being content with your part in the Kingdom, and not trying to be something you're not. Letting other people have the spotlight, while you just quietly help them from the shadows. It takes real faith in God to be that humble… to work in secret, and to depend *entirely* on Him for your accolades.

So how to be more humble? One good way is to sit down with someone you trust and confess things that you have done wrong, or things that you failed at. That's what I do with her, and it helps to remind me of my limitations. I try to confess my failures in achieving the things that I wanted to achieve all the time. I recommend that to everyone. It's not hard for me, I think a lot about my failures. The missed opportunities, the things I never got to do. Sometimes, you can have the best of intentions, and things just don't work out. It's good to confide in someone else when that happens. So if there is someone who you would like to be more humble, maybe the best thing to do is to ask them about their mistakes and regrets, and then just listen to them. That will work.

Clinton book publisher shipped 1 million copies, but only 160,000 copies sold

July 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton addresses Planned Parenthood
From the leftist Huffington Post.

Excerpt:

> If books can make presidencies — and Barack Obama proved they can– then hold the talk about the inevitability of Hillary Clinton.
>
> The Huffington Post has learned that new survey figures show sales of her foreign policy memoir, *Hard Choices*, are falling fast.
>
> According to authoritative numbers from Bookscan, which monitors sales at 80 percent of bookstores nationwide, retail sales of *Hard Choices* plummeted another 50 percent in the third week — down to 26,190 from 48,200 the week before and 85,900 the first week of publication.
>
> Books whose sales drop off by half in successive weeks generally don't become blockbusters, which could be a problem — a big one — for Clinton's publisher, Simon & Schuster.
>
> S&S reportedly shipped 1 million copies of the book to stores and is said to have paid Clinton an advance approaching $14 million. At the current rate, it would take many months to sell the million copies — an unlikely prospect according to industry sources.
>
> "It looks like they are going to be pulping a lot of paper," said a top industry source, who declined to be quoted by name because of the sensitivity of the matter in the industry. A Simon & Schuster spokesman declined immediate comment.

Total sales are only 160,000, according to the leftist Washington Post.

I think this probably has to do with her much publicized comments about being "poor",

despite having millions of dollars. The flagging book sales is good news for us who want Hillary to be the nominee for the Democrats in 2016.

Learning about the importance of courage from the Bible

July 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are some of my favorite verses from the Bible on the topic of courage.

> "In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you…"
> (1 Pet 4:4)
>
> "But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled…"
> (1 Pet 3:14)

And a longer one:

> 1 This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed.
>
> 2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.
>
> 3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.
>
> 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.
>
> 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.
>
> (1 Cor 4:1-5)

Or this one:

> 12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.
>
> 13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.
>
> 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.
>
> (1 Cor 4:12-14)

Or this one:

> [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.
>
> [17] If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand.
>
> [18] But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”
>
> (Dan 3:16-18)

So often we have this very repressed view of Christianity as happiness, politeness and cleanliness. We don’t want to offend anyone, or to be disliked by anyone, or to make anyone feel bad about not knowing God and not living in a way that respects him.

Here’s John Piper explaining the importance of being “thick-skinned”:

> One thing is for sure: if you begin to lead others you will be criticized. No one will be a significant spiritual leader if his aim is to please others and seek their approval. Paul said in Galatians 1:10, “Am I seeking the favor of men or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men I should not be a servant of Christ.” Spiritual leaders do not seek the praises of men, they seek to please God. Dr. Carl Lundquist, former President of Bethel College and Seminary, said in his final report to the Baptist General Conference that there was hardly one of the 28 years in which he served the Conference that he was not actively opposed by many people.
>
> If criticism disables us, we will never make it as spiritual leaders. I don’t mean that we must be the kind of people who don’t feel hurt, but rather that we must not be wiped out by the hurt. We must be able to say with Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:8, “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.” We will feel the criticism but we will not be incapacitated by it. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:16, “We do not lose heart.”
>
> Leaders must be able to digest depression because they will eat plenty of it. There will be many days when the temptation is very strong to quit because of unappreciative people. Criticism is one of Satan’s favorite weapons to try to get

> effective Christian leaders to throw in the towel.

And here is C.S. Lewis writing about courage:

> "Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means, at the point of highest reality. A chastity or honesty or mercy which yields to danger will be chaste or honest or merciful only on conditions. Pilate was merciful till it became risky."
>
> *– from "The Screwtape Letters" by C.S. Lewis*

In my life, I have had to say things like this: "I'm really sorry that you don't like me. I'm really sorry that my decision to honor God makes you uncomfortable. But I'm not going to change for you. I'm OK with being the underdog. I don't have to be happy right now. I don't need you to approve of what I am doing."

It makes me laugh that people think I care what they think of me just because I don't act against my conscience to approve of their sinning. I've thought through my views, and seen the evidence from peer-reviewed publications, and debated with people who disagree with me and I've won. I couldn't care less about their desire for me to approve their reckless, selfish behavior. I interpret their desire for approval as weakness and I scorn their weakness. If they were right, they wouldn't need my approval.

Every Christian comes to a point where the things we hoped that God would do for us do not happen, when our former allies fall away from us, when the people entrusted with caring for us failed in their obligations… at that point we have to decide what we are going to do with God. I think Psalm 27 is an excellent thing for people to read who are in that situation. It's my favorite Psalm – I used to read it when my life was very difficult. And if things got difficult again, that's where I'd go for comfort.

By the way, Christians should have an eye out for other Christians who are in distress while striving mightily for the Lord. Act self-sacrificially in a way that you strengthen their relationship with God in Christ. Make plans to support that person, and carry them out. Instead of reducing support for Christians to just private devotions, prayer and Bible reading, you ought to act to give them support that is calculated to solve the problem. That could involve the use of money, spending time, expending effort, resolving intellectual challenges, defeating a challenger in a discussion for them, writing them with advice… anything. Really, we need to stop turning inward when another Christian is in distress. Know what the Bible says first, pray second, then take action to solve the problem. Use your mind to think of what will get the job done. That is the goal, isn't it?

You may enjoy listening to this lecture entitled "Giants in the Land", by Dr. Walter Bradley. It talks about courage, and I would say that it is the lecture that best prepared me to not care what people would think of me. There's a Bible study in the lecture, so have your Bible ready.

William Lane Craig and Paul Helm discuss Calvinism and Molinism on the Unbelievable radio show

July 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to this excellent discussion between Dr. William Lane Craig and Oxford University Calvinist philosopher Dr. Paul Helm. I think this is a useful discussion in general because atheists often bring up problems with Calvinism as objections to Christianity in general, such as:

- If God exists, then he controls everything and I don't have free will
- If God knows the future, then I don't have free will
- If God controls everything, then I am not responsible for my sinning
- If God has to choose me to be saved, then I am not responsible for my damnation

Details:

> If God ordains the future, can humans have free will? Are people predestined for salvation? And what does the Bible say on the matter? William Lane Craig is a Christian philosopher and leading proponent of Molinism, a view of divine sovereignty that seeks to reconcile God's fore-ordination with human free will. Paul Helm is a leading Calvin Scholar. He defends the view that God predestines the future, limiting human freedom.
>
> MP3 of this show: http://cfvod.kaltura.com/pd/p/618072/sp/61807200/serveFlavor/entryId/1_jn0bdo52/v/1/flavorId/1_q9dnsiua/name/a.mp3
>
> For William Lane Craig: http://www.reasonablefaith.org
>
> For Paul Helm: http://paulhelmsdeep.blogspot.co.uk/

I was surprised because my Calvinist friend Dina thought that Dr. Helm won this debate, but I thought that Dr. Craig won. So without further ado, here is the snark-free summary of the discussion. I also sent the summary to Dina to make sure that it was reasonably fair and accurate. She said it was biased, but she was predestined to say that. Anyway, there's a commentary on the debate over at Michael's Theology blog.

UPDATE: Remington has a podcast review in parts. Part 1 is here.

Summary:

JB: Has Lewis had any impact on your apologetics?

Craig: Not as a scholar, but more as a model of a scholar who leaves a legacy through his published work

JB: How did you become interested in Calvinism?

Helm: Starting from childhood, and lately writing more on Calvinism from a philosophical point of view

JB: How do you view God’s sovereignty?

Helm: Strong view of divine sovereignty, God is sovereign over all events, but that doesn’t mean that they are determined by him

JB: What is Calvin’s legacy?

Helm: He amplified an existing concept of predestination, and wrote on many other topics

JB: What is Molinism?

Craig: Molina affirms divine sovereignty as Paul Helm does, but he also affirms libertarian free will

Craig: Every event that occurs happens by God’s will or by God’s permission

JB: What about open theism?

Craig: Paul and I both oppose open theism

JB: How does Molinism reconcile human free will and divine sovereignty

Craig: God has knowledge of what would happen under any set of circumstances

Craig: God has knowledge of everything that COULD happen, and he has knowledge of everything that WILL happen

Craig: God knows what each person freely choose to do in any set of circumstances and he can place people in times and places where he is able to achieve his ends without violating creaturely freedom and creaturely responsibility

JB: How does this apply to the issue of salvation?

Craig: The circumstances in which God puts a person includes God leading people to him and he foreknows who will respond to his leading

Craig: God has ordered the world in such a way that he foreknows the exact people who will free respond to his leading if he puts them in certain circumstances

JB: Does God want to save the maximum of people?

Craig: My own view is that God does order the world in such a way that the maximum number of people will respond to God’s drawing them to himself

JB: Is the Molinist view gaining ground?

Craig: Yes, Calvinists and open theists are both moving towards it, and Molinism is the dominant view among philosophical theologians

JB: Why has Molinism not convinced you?

Helm: It’s an unnecessary theory, God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge covers what middle knowledge covers

Helm: Calvinism has a stronger view of sin, such that God has to act unilaterally and irrestibly to save them

JB: Are creatures free on your view?

Helm: My view of free will is weaker than Craig’s view of free will

Craig: For the Calvinist, grace is irresistible, but for the Molinist, grace is effective when it

is met with a response from the creature

Craig: The Bible affirms the strong view of free will, when it says that in certain circumstances people can freely choose to do other than they do

Helm: But if a person is in circumstances X and they are free, then why don't they choose something that isn't what God can foresee

Craig: In identical circumstances, a person has the freedom to choose, and God doesn't determine what they choose, he just foreknows what they choose

Helm: How can God foreknow what people will freely do if people have this strong view of freedom that allows them to do anything? God would not know what people can freely do if they really are free

Craig: God has knowledge of what his creatures would freely do in any set of circumstances, he has knowledge of subjunctive statements

Craig: The Scripture is filled with statements that show that God has this knowledge of what people would do in other circumstances (e.g. – 2 Cor 2:8)

Helm: I am not denying that the Bible is full of subjunctive statements, but if humans have real libertarian free will, then God cannot know what they will do

Craig: I think God does preordain everything, Molinism has a strong sense of divine sovereignty BUT the foreordaining is done with the knowledge of what humans would do in any circumstances, so that what God ordains achieves his ends, but without violating creaturely free will

Craig: I take at face value the passages of the Bible where it says that God wants all persons to be saved

Craig: When the Bible says that God wants ALL persons to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), the Bible means that God wants ALL persons to be saved

Craig: So either universalism is true OR there is something that stops all from being saved outside of God

Craig: the something that prevents all from being saved is creaturely free will

Helm: Most people don't have the opportunity to hear the gospel, so God doesn't want all to be saved

Helm: People can still be responsible for what God "fore-ordains"

JB: Can a person really be responsible for wickedness if they didn't freely choose it?

Helm: Even though God is the only one who can act unilaterally to make save people, the people who act wickedly are still responsible

Craig: Molinism provides an answer to the problem of why not all people have heard the gospel, because by using middle knowledge he is able to know who would respond to the gospel if they heard it and he places those people in the times and places where they will hear it

Craig: That solution means that NO ONE is lost because they have not heard the gospel

Craig: There is Biblical support for (Acts 17:27) God choosing the times and places where people will live SO THAT they will be led by him and be able to respond to his leading

JB: Is God the author of sin, on Calvinism?

Craig: If Calvinists define providence to mean causal determinism, then he is the cause of every effect including human actions, and he is the one who causes people to sin

Craig: This view (determinism) impugns the character of God

Helm: I don't think that sovereignty requires determinism

Helm: God has mysterious resources – which I cannot specify – that reconcile his sovereignty with human responsibility for wickedness

JB: But if God is the cause of people doing wrong things, then how can they be responsible for it?

Helm: Well, humans do cause their own actions

Craig: Helm is right to say that God has resources to reconcile God's sovereignty with free will and human responsibility, and that resource is not an unknown mystery, it's middle knowledge

Craig: I can affirm everything in the Westminster Confession except for the one clause where they expressly repudiate middle knowledge as the mechanism for reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

Helm: Well, Calvinists have a strong view of sin so that humans cannot respond to God's leading

Craig: Yes, and that's why humans need prevenient grace in order to respond to him

Craig: God has to take the initiative and draw people to himself or they cannot be saved, but that grace is resistible, and that's what the Bible teaches (Acts 7:51), so humans are still responsible if they resist God

Helm: My view of grace is that it is monergistic and irrestible, it is a unilateral action on the part of God, like pulling someone out of an icy pond which they can't get out of

JB: If humans freely choose to respond to God's drawing and leading, does that diminish grace?

Helm: Many are called but few are chosen

Craig: Molinism does not require synergism – which is the idea that humans are partly responsible for their salvation

Craig: In Eph 2:8, Scripture is clear that faith opposite to works, and responding to God's drawing is not meritorious

JB: So receiving a gift is not meritorious?

Craig: It's the passive acceptance of what someone else has done for you

Helm: But doesn't this mean that you can lose your salvation, because you can accept and resist the gift of salvation?

Craig: That's a separate question that Christians can differ on, but if the Holy Spirit

indwells a person and seals them, then that would argue for the view that salvation cannot be revoked

JB: Doesn't Romans 8 teach Calvinism pretty clearly?

Helm: This is called the "golden chain", and it does support Calvinism

Craig: Actually, this text is no problem for Molinists because the first link in the chain is foreknowledge, which, if it incorporates middle knowledge, is no problem for Molinists

Craig: What God is electing in Romans 8 is a specific group of people that he knows in advance of creating the universe will freely respond to his drawing them to him

Craig: In Acts 4:27-28, it is talking about God's foreknowledge, which involves and incorporates knowledge of what any individual would freely choose if placed in those circumstances

JB: If God actualizes a set plan with set circumstances for everyone, isn't that very similar to Calvinism?

Craig: Yes! It's a strong statement of divine sovereignty

Helm: Foreknowledge doesn't mean that God knows what people would do, it's just refering to God "knowing his own mind" about what he wants to do

JB: How do you respond to the fairness of God unilaterally and specifically choosing some people for salvation and choosing other people for damnation (because he refuses to act unilaterally for them)?

Helm: God ordinarily bypasses other people in the Bible, like when he chooses the Jews as his chosen people

Craig: The problem with that is that the Bible clearly teaches that God has a genuine will that all will be saved and he makes a genuine offer of salvation to all people

Craig: Also, just being a Jew and a member of the chosen people doesn't mean you were saved, because some Jews rebelled against God

Craig: And there were also people outside of the Jewish people who were righteous and in a relationship with God, like Job

Helm: "the fabric of our faith" depends on God's choice and his not-choice, it is fundamental to the Bible and to God's character, and choosing them "effectively" (irrestibly and unilaterally)

Helm: The idea of God considering "possible worlds", some of which are feasible and not feasible, with conflicts between the wills of free creatures in different circumstances, and then actualizing one world that achieve these ends is very messy

Craig: Some worlds may not feasible for God to create, for example a world in which everyone is saved – it is logically possible, but may not be feasible

Craig: God will not exercise any divine coercion to force people to go to Heaven against their own will

Helm: If God chooses a world because it is feasible, then he doesn't love me directly, he

is choosing a world, not individuals

Craig: Well, when God actualizes a world, he specifically knows which individuals will be saved within that world, but without disrespecting free will

Craig: The world isn't primary, the individuals are primary

Helm: I think that middle knowledge can he included in God's natural knowledge and free knowledge

Craig: The knowledge of what people would do in different circumstances is based on the freedom of the individuals

JB: Make your conclusions!

Craig: Molinism is a Biblical model for reconciling divine sovereignty with human freedom

Helm: It is intellectually mystifying to introduce this strong view of human freedom and it is not Biblical

Happy Independence Day 2014!

July 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

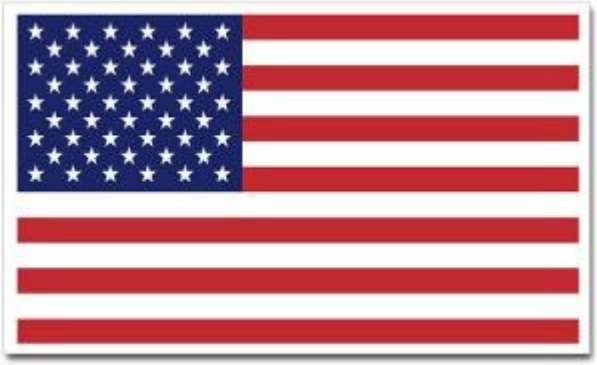

The Stars and Stripes

The Declaration of Independence

Here's the complete text of the Declaration of Independence here.

The best book to read about the Revolutionary War is David McCullough's "1776", which I highly recommend. The audio book version is awesome.

George Washington and the American Revolution

Washington Crossing the Delaware

To really understand the founding of the United States, you should read about the story of Washington crossing the Delaware. At this point in the Revolutionary War, the British commanders had achieved a stunning series of victories against the Americans. They had even sent word home to the King that the war was over, and that the Americans would be forced to surrender. But Washington did not give up. He attacked the British forces and took them by surprise – and he won the Battle of Trenton! That was the turning point of the war. There almost *never was* a United States of America – that's how close the revolution came to failing.

Ronald Reagan vision of America

Ronald Reagan

Here is a portion of Ronald Reagan's farewell speech:

Excerpt:

> I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind it was a tall proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace, a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity, and if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That's how I saw it, and see it still.
>
> And how stand the city on this winter night? More prosperous, more secure, and happier than it was eight years ago. But more than that; after two hundred years, two centuries, she still stands strong and true on the granite ridge, and her glow has held steady no matter what storm. And she's still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home.

This is no ordinary nation. But we need to be vigilant to make sure we don't drift away from the vision of the Founders.

United States Air Force
The Star Spangled Banner

Lyrics:

“Oh, say can you see by the dawn’s early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight’s last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,
O’er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket’s red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe’s haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o’er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning’s first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
‘Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle’s confusion,
A home and a country should leave us no more!
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps’ pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war’s desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav’n rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: “In God is our trust.”
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!”

America the Beautiful

Lyrics:

“O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee

And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare of freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife.
Who more than self their country loved
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for halcyon skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the enameled plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till souls wax fair as earth and air
And music-hearted sea!

O beautiful for pilgrims feet,
Whose stem impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till paths be wrought through

wilds of thought
By pilgrim foot and knee!

O beautiful for glory-tale
Of liberating strife
When once and twice,
for man's avail
Men lavished precious life!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till selfish gain no longer stain
The banner of the free!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till nobler men keep once again
Thy whiter jubilee!"

Here is my favorite version of America the Beautiful, sung by Ray Charles.

Remember to be grateful for the Founding Fathers, and other patriots, who risked everything for liberty in the Revolutionary war. Be grateful to those men and women still fighting abroad to keep those freedoms safe from evil. And most of all, be grateful to God that America is still the beacon of liberty.

Happy Independence Day!

Obama’s open border policy introduces risk of viral outbreak, infectious diseases

July 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Doctors and nurses at an alien detention camp are threatened with arrest if they talk about the risk of contagion from the influx of unaccompanied children into the U.S. Give us your poor, your tired, your infected.
>
> Last weekend, at least two confirmed cases of the swine flu virus were detected in minors being held in two separate detainment facilities in South Texas, a stark reminder that the conditions created by President Obama’s orchestrated invasion of the U.S. are ripe for viral outbreaks that jeopardize the health of American citizens.
>
> It was reported last week that at least one swine flu diagnosis cropped up at the makeshift immigrant-processing center at the Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. As reported by Fox News’ Todd Starnes, doctors and nurses working there were threatened with arrest if they talked about the appalling conditions and the health risks posed by such stopgap encampments.
>
> Workers guarded by a security force from the Baptist Family & Children’s Services, which was hired by the Department of Health and Human Services to run the Lackland Camp, said their cellphones and other communication devices were taken from them.
>
> “There were several of us who wanted to talk about the camps, but the agents made it clear we would be arrested,” a psychiatric counselor told Starnes.
>
> “We were under orders not to say anything.”
>
> But there’s much to talk about, and the administration is not telling us about the humanitarian crisis of its own making.
>
> “Most of the border minors are being kept in overcrowded facilities ridden with poor hygiene,” Dr. Elizabeth Lee Vliet, a preventive medicine specialist with practices in Tucson and Dallas, told Breitbart News last week, adding, “this is the ideal condition for a viral outbreak.”
>
> […]One worker told Starnes that children in the camp had measles, scabies, chicken pox and strep throat. Her concern was that the children had already been transported to Lackland from somewhere else. These unaccompanied minors are also being disbursed among the general population into the hands of adult relatives who are illegal aliens themselves.
>
> […]Border Patrol agents in Murietta, Calif., are testing positive for tuberculosis. Hand and foot disease, and Chagas, a tropical parasitic disease, both previously

> eradicated from the area, are on the rise. The possibility also exists in these conditions for diseases such as dengue and the Ebola virus to hit the U.S., considering that among the influx are illegals from Central and South America, the Middle East and even West Africa.

Is Obama to blame for this? He sure is.

> Republicans also have said the surge in families with children and children traveling alone shows the Obama administration has not done enough to secure the border and can't be trusted to carry out enhanced border security should Congress pass a comprehensive immigration bill that also offers legal status to undocumented immigrants.
>
> The Republican-controlled House Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction on immigration issues, has scheduled a June 25 hearing titled "An Administration-made Disaster: The South Texas Border Surge of Unaccompanied Alien Minors."
>
> "Word has gotten out around the world about President Obama's lax immigration enforcement policies and it has encouraged more individuals to come to the United States illegally," the committee said in a message posted Monday on its official Facebook page.
>
> Other prominent Republicans have taken Obama to task for not making it clear that the incoming immigrants will have to return to their countries of origin.
>
> "It's the result of the president sending the message that if you can get here and you are a young person, you can stay," Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., told *The Arizona Republic*. "The president has got to openly say that if you come here illegally, you can't stay. And until he does that, you're going to see this flood of young people, which is absolutely unacceptable."
>
> Rep. Matt Salmon, R-Ariz., on Friday visited the Nogales detention facility, which he described as makeshift and reminiscent of the sort of emergency shelter the Federal Emergency Management Agency might erect after a natural disaster. He said he was barred from taking photos of the children, who he said were kept in cagelike chain-link enclosed spaces.
>
> "I lay this all at the president's feet," said Salmon, who is chairman of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere. "It's anything but compassionate to have a policy that seems to welcome people to cross over the desert and risk rape and loss of life and dehydration. … If President Obama really cares about families and children, then he should make it really clear that there is no amnesty here, and if you come, you will be immediately deported. That's the only deterrent, because the waves are going to keep coming unless we clarify that."

My biggest concerns about the border have always national security, violent criminal activity by illegals and the strain on the social services (education, emergency room health care, etc.) caused by people who don't pay into the system, but only make

withdrawals from it. I’d never even thought about this risk of communicable diseases.The Democrats favor lax immigration policies because they know that the children of naturalized illegal immigrants will be citizens, and are almost guaranteed to vote Democrat because they are the party of big government and dependency. Lax immigration policies make sense to Democrats, it’s how they increase their pool of support for bigger government.

Three ways that generosity makes sense in the Christian worldview

July 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm planning to be study Philippians today with the woman I am mentoring in apologetics, so I thought I would post something about generosity and sharing.

First, let's look at a few passages from the Bible that show the importance of sharing generously with others. I also want to emphasize the need to work and to not be a burden to others, and to emphasize that the goal of sharing with others is to *build them up*.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-11: (Paul speaking)

10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

Acts 20:32-35: (Paul speaking)

32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

33 I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes.

34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me.

35 In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said,'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Philippians 4:14-18: (Paul speaking)

14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction.

15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

16 for even in Thessalonica you sent *a gift* more than once for my needs.

17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

Luke 21:1-4: (Jesus speaking)

1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury.

2 And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins.

3 And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all *of them*;

4 for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."

So in an effort to keep this post small, I'm going to be brief. And practical.

Make as much money as you can

The first point I want to make is that it is impossible to share with anyone else unless you have your own financial house in order. Don't borrow money. Don't ask for money. Study hard things (STEM and useful trades) so that you always have work and are always earning money. In the 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11 passage, we learn that able-bodied people need to be working. That is a practical pre-condition of sharing with others. The more money you make the more you have to share. If you want to advance the gospel and build up others, money is absolutely vital. Don't study crap subjects in school, don't take useless jobs, don't neglect the need to build a gapless resume of increasingly more challenging work, don't get tied down by worldly goods and recreational dating early – so you can finish your education as much as you can. Be practical – charitable giving doesn't come from nowhere. It comes from a person who is ordered and disciplined. Unless you are some sort of skilled Christian scholar, don't be flying all over the world willy-nilly on expensive mission trips, either – there is plenty of work to do right where God planted you. Be a good steward of your money, and the donations of other Christians.

Partnering with others for the gospel

The second point I want to contrast is the giving I prefer with the giving I do not prefer. The giving I prefer is to give to another Christian who I know personally who is involved in ministry that advances the gospel by arguing for the truth of the gospel using apologetics. So, I like to give to groups like Ratio Christi and to Christian scholars who have ministries or who are doing useful degrees. My goal is to spread the gospel in the only way it can be spread – by demonstrating the truth of it using arguments and evidence. I do not give money to anti-poverty groups like World Vision or to unskilled missionaries who just want an extended vacation in order to satisfy some childhood fancy animated by pride and/or vanity. When I give money to another Christian, my goal is to partner with them, not to feel good about myself. I am trying to get something done for the Lord, not to feel better or to make people think I am nice or to "balance the books" with God (which is heretical).

Building your rewards in Heaven

The third point I want to make is to emphasize that this is not a pointless exercise. Everyone who is a Christian accepts that reconciliation with God is achieved not by human efforts to be good, but by acknowledging and conforming your life to a free gift that was offered by Jesus Christ. Christ died in order to pay the penalty for every individual person's rebellion against God the Father. That atoning death is the basis for our reconciliation with God, and our eternal life with him. However, the passage in Philippians makes clear that our experience of Heaven after we have been saved by grace is affected by what we do here and now. So often, what you hear in church is do this, do that, and there is never any rationality to it, no emphasis on long-term planning

or wisdom in decision-making. It's all just ad hoc emotivism. But I am telling you something different today. You have a few years on Earth to understand the example of Christ, to follow him, and share in his sufferings as you imitate his obedience. You better have some sort of plan to produce a return on God's investment in you, and it has to be a good plan. Not one that makes you feel good, but one that is likely to achieve results. Plan your charitable giving like your life were an episode of Mission Impossible, and focus on outcomes, not feelings. That doesn't mean that results are the measure of success, because that's God's job. But it does mean that you should prefer the Thomas Sowell approach to the Disney Princess approach.

The soul-making theodicy

The fourth point I want to make is that one of the reasons why God allows evil and suffering in this world is to allow us the opportunity to be active partners with him in demonstrating the love of Christ to others. God's goal for us is *not* to make us safe and happy. God's goal for us is to get us to freely enter into and sustain a relationship with him – a relationship that includes an accurate knowledge of who he is, and a free response of love and obedience to him. With respect to that goal, God is fully justified in permitting all kinds of evil and suffering, which in turn provide opportunities for us to 1) enter in to his plan of love and redemption for others and 2) demonstrate his character to the watching world through our actions as his agents. The situation is identical to what parents do in allowing their children to be hurt while learning – God holds back from annihilating some evil and suffering so that we have an opportunity to step into the breach. This advances our relationships with him through shared purpose and shared experiences. This is *fellowship with God* – not just reading devotional, pious-sounding bilge, but active partnering and dangerous action in some non-trivial enterprise. Give him your best – the same best you bring to your work or anything else in your life that really matters.

Jerry Walls lectures on objections to Reformed theology (Calvinism)

July 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

WARNING: This lecture is a very sharp and pointed critique of Calvinist theology. Viewer discretion is advised.

In Protestant Christianity, there is a division between people who accept Calvinist doctrines and those who don't. Both groups think that the other group are genuine Christians, but the debate has more to do with the human free will, human responsibility and who God loves.

About Dr. Jerry Walls:

- BA in Religion and Philosophy, Houghton College
- MDiv, Princeton Seminary
- STM, Yale Divinity School
- PhD in Philosophy, Notre Dame

He is a professor at Houston Baptist University. You can find a more detailed profile here.

Dr. Walls is Protestant (like me). He is a substance dualist (like me). And he believes in a real eternal Hell (like me). And he is very, very assertive. Definitely no confidence problems here. And you're not going to have a problem keeping your attention on this lecture!

Note that I do not agree with or endorse Dr. Walls on all of his views.

Here's the lecture: (64 minutes)

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- What are the main doctrines of Calvinism? (TULIP)
- A look at the Westminster Confession
- The nature of freedom and free will
- Calvinist doctrine of freedom: compatibilism
- The implications of compatibilism
- Who determines what each person will desire on Calvinism?
- Who does God love on Calvinism?
- The law of non-contradiction
- Does God make a genuine offer of salvation to all people on Calvinism?
- Does God love "the elect" differently than the "non-elect" on Calvinism?

He quotes at least a half-dozen Calvinist theologians in this lecture, including John Piper, J.I. Packer and D.A. Carson. And he also mentions 3 videos at the end of the lecture where he goes over specific Bible verses that seem to support Calvinism (part 4, part 5, part

6 are the ones he mentioned).

This lecture is very strong stuff, and I think that he could have been nicer when presenting it, but he hit on every single objection that I have to Calvinism, and he worked through my reasoning too! So I really liked that he validated all of my concerns about Calvinism. I'm not as bothered about the problems with Calvinism as he is, though. I don't think it's a big divisive issue. I almost always read Calvinist theologians when I am reading theology. I just conjoin Calvinism with middle knowledge and resistible grace, and it's fine. Calvinists are some of the best theologians, they are just wrong on the things he discusses in his lecture.

You may also be interested in these debates on salvation between a Calvinist and a non-Calvinist.

Love another Christian just because of the fellowship of the gospel

July 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was studying Philippians yesterday with the lady I am mentoring in apologetics. Philippians is my favorite book of the Bible. We studied Philippians 1, and used D. A. Carson's "Basics for Believers" commentary.

Here is the part I want to talk about today:

Philippians 1:1-11:

> 1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:
>
> 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> 3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> 4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> 5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> 6 *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> **7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.**
>
> 8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
>
> 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Now just read that and reflect on how passionate, and even *unstable and emotional* Paul sounds about this love he has for this church. Ask yourself this: what is the basis for these feelings? Read it again, and write your answer down. I'll tell you mine in a minute.

Now here is D. A. Carson.

He writes:

> As often in his letters, Paul begins with a warm expression of thanks to God for something in the lives of his readers. Here the grounds of his thanksgiving to God are three in number, though all three are tied to the same theme.

The first is their faithful memory of him. The NIV reads, “I thank my God every time I remember you” (1: 3). But others suggest “I thank my God every time you remember me,” or something similar. The original is ambiguous. For reasons I shall not go into, I think Paul is referring to their remembrance of him. Later on he will thank the Philippians for remembering him so warmly that they sent funds to support him in his ministry. **But here the vision is broader: he perceives that their interest in him is a reflection of their continued commitment to the gospel, and that is why he thanks God for them.**

The point becomes explicit in the second cause of his thanksgiving: “In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now . . .” (1: 4– 5). Their “partnership in the gospel” injects joy into Paul’s prayers of thanksgiving: “I always pray with joy,” he writes. The word rendered “partnership” is more commonly translated “fellowship” in the New Testament. What precisely does the word mean? In common use “fellowship” has become somewhat debased. If you invite a pagan neighbor to your home for a cup of tea, it is friendship; if you invite a Christian neighbor, it is fellowship. If you attend a meeting at church and leave as soon as it is over, you have participated in a service; if you stay for coffee afterward, you have enjoyed some fellowship. In modern use, then, fellowship has come to mean something like warm friendship with believers.

In the first century, however, the word commonly had commercial overtones. If John and Harry buy a boat and start a fishing business, they have entered into a fellowship, a partnership. Intriguingly, even in the New Testament the word is often tied to financial matters. Thus, when the Macedonian Christians send money to help the poor Christians in Jerusalem, they are entering into fellowship with them (Rom. 15: 26).

The heart of true fellowship is self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision. Both John and Harry put their savings into the fishing boat. Now they share the vision that will put the fledgling company on its feet. Christian fellowship, then, is self-sacrificing conformity to the gospel. There may be overtones of warmth and intimacy, but the heart of the matter is this shared vision of what is of transcendent importance, a vision that calls forth our commitment. So when Paul gives thanks, with joy, because of the Philippians’ “partnership in the gospel” or “fellowship in the gospel,” he is thanking God that these brothers and sisters in Christ— from the moment of their conversion (“ from the first day until now,” Paul writes)— rolled up their sleeves and got involved in the advance of the gospel. They continued their witness in Philippi, they persevered in their prayers for Paul, they sent money to support him in his ministry— all testifying to their shared vision of the importance and priority of the gospel. That is more than enough reason for thanking God.

> [..]Implicitly, such an apostolic stance asks us what gives us our greatest joy. Is it personal success? Some victory for our children? Acquisition of material things? "I have no greater joy," John writes, "than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." Paul reflects exactly the same attitude. Paul adds, "It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart . . ." (Phil. 1: 7). Probably this was written against the background of Stoic influence that was cautious about whole-life commitments, especially if they involved the "passions." Be cool; do not be vulnerable; do not get hurt. But that was not Paul's way. "It is right for me to feel this way about all of you," Paul insists, regardless of what the contemporary culture says. "I have you in my heart": my whole life and thought are bound up with you.

More:

> So strongly does he want the Philippians to recognize his devotion to them that Paul puts himself under an oath: "God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus" (1: 8). The significance of the oath is not that without it he might lie. Rather, he puts himself under an oath so that the Philippians might feel the passion of his truthfulness, in exactly the same way that God puts himself under an oath in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There the point is not that otherwise God might lie, but that God wants to be believed (Heb. 7: 20– 25). So Paul: God is my witness "how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus."
>
> Here is no mere professionalism. Nor is this an act, a bit of showmanship to "turn them on" to the apostle. Rather, it is something that repeatedly bubbles through Paul's arguments. It recurs, for example, in chapter 4: "Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!" (4: 1).
>
> **Both from Paul's example and from that of the Philippians, then, we must learn this first point: the fellowship of the gospel, the partnership of the gospel, must be put at the center of our relationships with other believers. That is the burden of these opening verses. Paul does not commend them for the fine times they had shared watching games in the arena. He doesn't mention their literature discussion groups or the excellent meals they had, although undoubtedly they had enjoyed some fine times together. What lies at the center of all his ties with them, doubtless including meals and discussion, is this passion for the gospel, this partnership in the gospel.**
>
> What ties us together? What do we talk about when we meet, even after a church service? Mere civilities? The weather? Sports? Our careers and our children? Our aches and pains? None of these topics should be excluded from the conversation of Christians, of course. In sharing all of life, these things will inevitably come up. But what must tie us together as Christians is this passion for the gospel, this

> fellowship in the gospel. On the face of it, nothing else is strong enough to hold together the extraordinary diversity of people who constitute many churches: men and women, young and old, blue collar and white, healthy and ill, fit and flabby, different races, different incomes, different levels of education, different personalities. What holds us together? It is the gospel, the good news that in Jesus, God himself has reconciled us to himself. This brings about a precious God-centeredness that we share with other believers.

Does what Carson writes make you think of the Lord of the Rings book 1? ("The Fellowship of the Ring") It sounds like Christians are supposed to band together in common purpose in order to complete a quest. They are not supposed to just be hanging out to pass the time. There is planning. There is cooperation. There is danger. There is achievement. There is adventure. I think that he loves the church in Philippi because they have entered into this fellowship of the gospel with him.

More:

> Already in verse 4 Paul has insisted that whenever he prays for the Philippians, he does so with joy and thanksgiving. Now he gives us the content of his prayers for them: "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ— to the glory and praise of God" (1: 9– 11).
>
> […]Second, what Paul has in mind is not mere sentimentalism or the rush of pleasure spawned, for example, by a large conference. "I pray," Paul writes, "that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight." The kind of love that Paul has in mind is the love that becomes more knowledgeable. Of course, Paul is not thinking of just any kind of knowledge. He is not hoping they will learn more and more about nuclear physics or sea turtles. He has in mind the knowledge of God; he wants them to enjoy insight into God's words and ways, and thus to know how to live in light of them.
>
> […]**Third, for Paul this prayer has a further end in view. He lifts these petitions to God, he tells the Philippians, "so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ" (1: 10). Clearly, Paul does not want the Philippian believers to be satisfied with mediocrity. He cannot be satisfied, in a fallen world, with the status quo. He wants these believers to move on, to become more and more discerning, proving in their own experience "what is best." He wants them to pursue what is best in the knowledge of God, what is best in their relationships with other believers, what is best in joyful obedience. For ultimately what he wants from them is perfection: he prays that they "may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ."**

Now for my thoughts.

I want all of you reading this to do one thing for me. I want you to completely abandon the criteria you are currently using for who you will be friends with and adopt Paul's criteria. I want you to put your gospel-related activities at the center of your life. Do not neglect your other practical duties like making money and saving money and so on, but when it comes to your passion, where you take risks, where your long-term goals are – I want you to put the gospel at the center. And I do not mean mere proclamation of simple statements, I mean apologetics and Christian worldview – including politics, economics, etc.

Now, that's not my main point. My main point is that I further want you to stop choosing who you will associate with based on worldly criteria. I want you to think about the people around you who are the most willing to put the gospel first and I want you to take up those people as friends. I want you to talk to them, to share with them, to encourage them, to confide in them, to listen to their confessions and to generally love them in the traditional ways that Christians love, e.g. – 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. You need to fellowship with them – invest in their enterprises, and let them invest in yours, too. This is *real love* according to the Bible.

We need to stop looking at other people on the surface level – age, skin color, wealth, clothes, etc. – and start to dig deeper underneath to find out where each person stands with respect to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our criteria should not be present ability. We should choose those with desire, intensity, and willingness to learn *hard things*. The first person you should invest in is the person who wants to learn to defend their faith to non-Christians using the best available evidence. If that person can demonstrate their desire to do grow in knowledge and depth of insight, you should be spending your time, money and effort with that person *first*.

Three debates on divine sovereignty, predestination and free will

July 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The two views being debated below are Calvinism and simple foreknowledge. Calvinism is the view that God unilaterally predetermines a selected group of individuals who will know him – the "elect". Foreknowledge is the view that God draws people to him who he foreknows will freely respond to his overtures and come to know him. What does the Bible teach about these issues?

The Calvinist debater is Dr. James White:

> James White is the director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, a Christian apologetics organization based in Phoenix, Arizona. He is a professor, having taught Greek, Systematic Theology, and various topics in the field of apologetics. He has authored or contributed to more than twenty books, including *The King James Only Controversy*, *The Forgotten Trinity*, *The Potter's Freedom*, and *The God Who Justifies*. He is an accomplished debater, having engaged in more than one-hundred moderated, public debates with leading proponents of Roman Catholicism, Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mormonism, as well as critics such as Bart Ehrman, John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, and John Shelby Spong. He is an elder of the Phoenix Reformed Baptist Church, has been married to Kelli for more than twenty-eight years, and has two children, Joshua and Summer.

The Foreknowledge debater is Dr. Michael Brown:

> Michael L. Brown holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and has served as a visiting or adjunct professor at Southern Evangelical Seminary, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary (Charlotte), Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Fuller Theological Seminary, Denver Theological Seminary, the King's Seminary, and Regent University School of Divinity. He has contributed numerous articles to scholarly publications, including the Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religion and the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Dr. Brown is the author of twenty books, including, Our Hands Are Stained with Blood: The Tragic Story of the "Church" and the Jewish People, which has been translated into more than twelve languages, the highly-acclaimed five-volume series, Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, a commentary on Jeremiah (part of the revised edition of the Expositor's Bible Commentary), and several books on revival and Jesus revolution.

Now, let's get ready to rumble!

First debate

A nice friendly debate that introduces the topic. This is the best debate for casual

listeners and non-Christians.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- Introduction to Calvinist James White and some of his 90 debates
- What is Calvinism and why is it important?
- Does God love all people the same way in Calvinism?
- Does God desire the salvation of all people in Calvinism?
- Is the offer of salvation to all people a genuine offer on Calvinism?
- Does Calvinism diminish or augment God's sovereignty?
- Can God accomplish his will by permitting evil creaturely actions?
- Did Jesus die only for the "chosen", or for the possibility of salvation for all?
- Does a person's responding to God's offer of savaltion detract from Gods glory?
- Does our ability to resist God's grace mean that we are "stronger" than God?

There is a little static in the audio for a few seconds every time they come back from a break, but nothing major.

Second debate, on specific passages in the Bible

Same two guys, but this time they tackle the meaning of specific Bible passages.

The MP3 file is here.

The passages being disputed:

- John 6
- Romans 8, 9
- Ephesians 1

Each person gets 8 minutes to exegete the text, followed by 4 minutes of cross-examination by the other debater, followed by 3 minute conclusions by each debater. These texts were chosen by the Calvinist debater.

Third debate, on specific passages in the Bible

Same two guys, but this time they tackle the meaning of specific Bible passages.

The MP3 file is here.

The passages being disputed:

- Luke 13:34-35 (Deuteronomy 5:28-29)
- Ezekiel 18:21-32 (Jeremiah 3:19-20; Ezekiel 22:30-31)
- 1 John 2:1-2 (2 Pet 2:1).

Each person gets 8 minutes to exegete the text, followed by 4 minutes of cross-examination by the other debater, followed by 3 minute conclusions by each debater. These texts were chosen by the foreknowledge debater.

Three thoughts on forgiveness and reconciliation in Luke 15

July 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For the final post in the series of five on Bible study / theology that I've been writing for the lady I am mentoring in apologetics, I decided to focus on a very interesting, distinctive feature of Christian theology. The Bible passage for this post is in Luke 15.

Luke 15:1-10:

> 1 Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him.
>
> 2 Both the Pharisees and the scribes *began* to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."
>
> 3 So He told them this parable, saying,
>
> 4 "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?
>
> 5 When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.
>
> 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'
>
> 7 I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.
>
> 8 "Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?
>
> 9 When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!'
>
> 10 In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

And now we go to C.S. Lewis for this quote:

> "It may be possible for each [person] to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbor. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would strongly be tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some

> degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another…. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal…. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption."
>
> — C.S. Lewis "The Weight of Glory"

And then there is this from the biography of J. Warner Wallace:

> J. Warner Wallace was an atheist for 35 years. He was passionate in his opposition to Christianity, and he enjoyed debating his Christian friends. In debating his friends, J. Warner seldom found them prepared to defend what they believed. He became a Police Officer and eventually advanced to Detective. Along the way, he developed a healthy respect for the role of evidence in discerning truth, and his profession gave him ample opportunity to press into action what he had learned about the nature and power of evidence. Throughout all of this, he remained an "angry atheist", hostile to Christianity and largely dismissive of Christians.
>
> When J. Warner took time to be honest with himself, he had to admit that he never took the time to examine the evidence for the Christian Worldview without the bias and presupposition of naturalism. He never gave the case for Christianity a fair shake. When he finally examined the evidence fairly, he found it difficult to deny, especially if he hoped to retain his respect for the way evidence is utilized to determine truth. J. Warner found the evidence for Christianity to be convincing.
>
> J. Warner founded PleaseConvinceMe.com as a transparent resource that tracks his own spiritual journey. From angry atheist, to skeptic, to believer, to seminarian, to pastor, to author and podcaster, his journey has been assisted by his experience as a Detective. J. Warner wrote, "Cold-Case Christianity" with a desire to share those experiences with you, It's J. Warner's hope that his own efforts to detect and articulate the truth will help you to become a better Christian Case Maker.

In a recent podcast, I heard Wallace mention that he is now an adjunct professor in the apologetics program at Biola University. Adjunct professor.

And this from the biography of the fighting pastor, Pastor Matt Rawlings:

> Matt Rawlings is a Teaching Pastor at Christ's Community Church in Portsmouth, OH and State Director of Development for a Christian legal ministry.
>
> Matt has been married since 1998 to Emily Bennington and they have a son, Jackson who was born in 2003.

> Matt is a prodigal preacher's kid who ran away from home at 15, ended up in Hollywood at 17 where, among other things, he directed music videos for Latin MTV. He returned to his home town of Portsmouth, OH in 1991 and after a wasted year of college, he entered politics (which is just Hollywood for ugly people). Matt worked for 2 Congressional campaigns and spent 2 years working on Capitol Hill as a legislative aide during the "Gingrich Years" of 1995-1997.
>
> It was during this time that Matt was diagnosed with cancer and was saved. After graduating from Shawnee State University in 1998 with a B.A. in History, Matt studied New Testament Greek at Kentucky Christian University and then the Graduate School of Theology at Abilene Christian University where he earned a Master of Divinity.
>
> Matt then graduated from Cornell Law School in 2004 while pastoring a small church in Ithaca, New York. After a few years working in a large corporate law firm in West Virginia while serving as an interim pastor for small churches, Matt became a Teaching Pastor at Christ's Community Church in 2006. He then helped launch and lead Revolution, a Gen-X & Gen-Y ministry from 2008 to 2013.
>
> Matt earned a certificate in apologetics from BIOLA University. He also launched Free Seminary to train lay Christians to become disciple makers. When Matt isn't preaching or teaching, he is hanging out with his family or reading theology or detective novels, watching old movies or listening to really loud music.

Pastor Matt spent a period of time as an atheist, and he wrote about it candidly in several posts on his blog. But look at him now.

So here's what I want to say about all this.

The first point I want to make is that it's important to understand what human beings are in Christianity. We are not just lumps of meat who evolved by accident in an eternal, undesigned universe. Every single one of us is made in the image of God. We are embodied minds. When we die, our body stops working, but the mind/soul survives. God loves each of us equally and wants us all to come to know him and to have eternal life with him. Those who resist his loving but non-coercive drawing of us to him will spend eternity separated from him. Our lives do not end at the grave. Every single person you speak to was made to live on beyond the grave. And every moment you spend with them, (as a Christian operator, working as God's ambassador), is leading them to one eternal destination or another. It's part of God's plan for your santification that you participate in leading other people to Christ, and building them up once they've been led to Christ.

The second point I want to make is that you can know precisely nothing about what a person can accomplish for God from their present state of rebellion against God. Wallace and Rawlings were bold and determined atheists. To every prim and proper church Christian looking on then, they must have looked as if they would never come to faith in Christ, and certainly that they would never make contributions to the Kingdom like the ones they have. It would have been exactly the wrong thing to do, at that time, to count them out and to refuse to engage them. I meet Christians all the time who are regular

church-attenders and Bible-readers who I ask to engage with me to grow some of these lost-sheep or newly-found sheep, and I am so surprised to hear the pride in their voice as they dismiss these people as lost causes. *Don't do that!* You are not in a position to know what these people are capable of. And I can guarantee you that God hasn't given you so many people to mentor that you can just be cavalier about throwing some of them out that you deem to be unworthy of your time. Be careful about having *your* sins forgiven and then refusing to forgive *someone else's* sins. If someone needs your mentoring, you better put in the same effort that God put into rescuing you. God uses people to save other people, and God help the "Christian" who makes excuses for not being faithful when they are called. This is not optional.

The third point I want to make is that in the real world, we have to understand what works in order to convince someone to become a Christian or to return to the faith. Christianity is a truth-centered faith. It has certain propositions that must be affirmed as true. In order for those propositions to be *affirmed as true*, they have to be *demonstrated to be true*. The way the founder of the religion did this is by providing miracles to authenticate his claims, (just read the gospel of John). Jesus offered these miracles to unbelievers as evidence for them to then freely choose to believe his statements about himself. Here in this time and place, it falls to us to use logical arguments and evidence from nature and history to prove out these same propositions to unbelievers. If you want to be the one who is able to leave the 99 found sheep and save the 1 lost sheep, then you study apologetics and invest in relationships with people. If you want to be the one who is able to leave the 9 silver coins and save the 1 lost silver coin, then you study apologetics and invest in relationships with people. Christianity is an evidential faith. If you want to share your faith with the lost, you have to study the evidence for it.

Universities raise tuition while paying hundreds of thousands to Hillary Clinton to speak

July 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A shocking story from the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> At least eight universities, including four public institutions, have paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for Hillary Rodham Clinton to speak on their campuses over the past year, sparking a backlash from some student groups and teachers at a time of austerity in higher education.
>
> In one previously undisclosed transaction, the University of Connecticut — which just raised tuition by 6.5 percent — paid $251,250 from a donor fund for Clinton to speak on campus in April. Other examples include $300,000 to speak at the University of California at Los Angeles in March and $225,000 for a speech scheduled for October at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.
>
> The potential 2016 Democratic presidential candidate also has been paid for speeches at the University at Buffalo, Colgate University and Hamilton College in New York, as well as Simmons College in Boston and the University of Miami in Florida.
>
> Officials at those five schools refused to say what they paid Clinton. But if she earned her standard fee of $200,000 or more, that would mean she took in at least $1.8 million in speaking income from universities in the past nine months.
>
> Since stepping down as secretary of state in early 2013, Clinton has given dozens of paid speeches to industry conventions and Wall Street banks. But Clinton's acceptance of high fees for university visits has drawn particularly sharp criticism, with some students and academic officials saying the expenditures are a poor use of funds at a time of steep tuition hikes and budget cuts across higher education.
>
> At UNLV, where officials have agreed to raise tuition by 17 percent over the next four years, student government leaders wrote a letter to Clinton last week asking her to return the planned $225,000 fee to the university. If she does not, they say, they intend to protest her visit.
>
> "The students are outraged about this," said Elias Benjelloun, UNLV's student body president. "When you see reckless spending, it just belittles the sacrifices students are consistently asked to make. I'm not an accountant or economist, so I can't put a price tag on how much we should be paying her, but I think she should come for free."
>
> Clinton's spokesman, Nick Merrill, declined to comment on the UNLV students' request.

Oh, but don’t be concerned by this. You see, once this story broke, Hillary decided to give all the money away! To a non-profit! A non-profit run by her and her husband. Problem solved, Democrat-style.

Amy Hall: why is there outrage over the Hobby Lobby ruling?

July 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's staff apologist Amy Hall over on the Stand to Reason blog.

Excerpt:

> I've come across two articles with particularly good, concise insight on what is going on here. The first is from Paul Horwitz:
>
> The first source of controversy is the collapse of a national consensus on a key element of religious liberty: accommodation. Throughout American history, there has been widespread agreement that in our religiously diverse and widely devout country, it is good for the government to accommodate religious exercise. We have disagreed about particular accommodations (may a Muslim police officer wear a beard, despite police department policy?), and especially about whether religious accommodations should be ordered by judges or crafted by legislators. But we have generally agreed that our nation benefits when we help rather than burden those with religious obligations. That consensus seems, quite suddenly, to have evaporated.
>
> […]The second article, by Julian Sanchez, gets to what I fear is at the heart of the anger:
>
> [T]he outraged reaction to the ruling ought to seem a bit puzzling. If what you are fundamentally concerned about is whether women have access to no-copay contraception, then there's no obvious reason to invest such deep significance in the precise accounting details of the mechanism by which it is provided….
>
> The outrage *does* make sense, of course, if what one fundamentally cares about—or at least, additionally cares about—is the *symbolic speech act embedded in the compulsion itself*. In other words, if the purpose of the mandate is not merely to achieve a certain practical result, but to declare the qualms of believers with religious objections so utterly underserving of respect that they may be forced to act against their convictions *regardless of whether this makes any real difference to the outcome*. And something like that does indeed seem to be lurking just beneath—if not *at*—the surface of many reactions. The ruling seems to provoke anger, not because it will result in women having to pay more for birth control (as it won't), but at least in part because it fails to send the appropriate cultural signal. Or, at any rate, because it allows religious *employers* to continue sending the wrong cultural signal—disapproval of certain forms of contraception—when sending that signal does not impede the achievement of the government's ends in any way.
>
> Personally, I have no sympathy whatever with the substantive moral views

> of *Hobby Lobby*'s owners. But I'm dismayed at how many friends who style themselves "liberals," even recognizing the ruling will make no immediate difference in employee access to contraception, seem to regard it as an appalling betrayal that the Court refused to license what amounts to purely symbolic compulsion of people with retrograde ideas. If we accept that the exemption here makes no functional difference to whether people are covered, however, that's the only rationale left for insisting on direct purchase of coverage by employers—and not, I had thought, a *legitimate* rationale for government coercion in a liberal democracy.
>
> That's troubling.

I think the reason for this is simple – people of faith have allowed the centers of influence in our society to be ceded to the secular left. When a person goes through their entire undergraduate and graduate education being taught by secular leftists, they don't have a whole lot of tolerance for people who think that nature shows evidence of a Creator/Designer. As far as they know, the universe is eternal, it never came into being out of nothing. The "design" in the universe is an accident – if the constants of physics were altered slightly, we'd just have green skin. The origin of life has been solved by Darwin, and the fossil record shows the gradual emergence of all the phyla over 4 billion years – one every few hundred million years, say. And then someone who thinks all that goes and sits on the Supreme Court and has to make sense of "religious liberty" when it conflicts with their desire to impose their social agenda – recreational sex on demand. I am surprised we even got this narrow 5-4 victory. And I don't think the next generation of Americans will be this conservative about protecting religious liberty – they think it's nonsense.

Five Bible studies on practical aspects of Christian living

July 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wrote 5 posts last week from Wednesday to Sunday, and I wanted to link to each post in the series and give everyone a chance to read them, since many of you would have been out for the long weekend.

Here are the 5 posts:

1. Humility
2. Courage
3. Generosity
4. Love
5. Forgiveness

Different people said different that different posts were better, but here is something from the love one.

Excerpt:

D. A. Carson writes:

> Both from Paul's example and from that of the Philippians, then, we must learn this first point: the fellowship of the gospel, the partnership of the gospel, must be put at the center of our relationships with other believers. That is the burden of these opening verses. Paul does not commend them for the fine times they had shared watching games in the arena. He doesn't mention their literature discussion groups or the excellent meals they had, although undoubtedly they had enjoyed some fine times together. What lies at the center of all his ties with them, doubtless including meals and discussion, is this passion for the gospel, this partnership in the gospel.

And I comment:

> My main point is that I further want you to stop choosing who you will associate with based on worldly criteria. I want you to think about the people around you who are the most willing to put the gospel first and I want you to take up those people as friends. I want you to talk to them, to share with them, to encourage them, to confide in them, to listen to their confessions and to generally love them in the traditional ways that Christians love, e.g. – 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. You need to fellowship with them – invest in their enterprises, and let them invest in yours, too. This is *real love* according to the Bible.

It's such a different definition of love to what is out there in the culture today. I hope you all like these posts.

New study: college freshmen reading lists contain no conservative books

July 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lots of leftist books, though. Here's the post about the study from The College Fix.

Excerpt:

> Young America's Foundation has surveyed the required reading programs for incoming college freshmen nationwide and found that, over the past three years, none of the colleges have assigned a conservative-leaning book.
>
> None of them.
>
> Young America's Foundation surveyed the top 50 schools as noted by *Forbes*, and "found that many of the 'required' books only offered left-wing perspectives on topics such as race, feminism, socialism, inequality, and wealth redistribution."
>
> […]"Young America's Foundation believes young people should be exposed to a true liberal education-one that includes both liberal and conservative ideas, but there appears to be no balance in these readings that are required by colleges and universities," YAF states. "From the moment students enroll in college through graduation day, they are exposed to liberal themes-and few, if any, will read a conservative book or heard from a conservative professor."

That's not all, check this out from National Review.

Excerpt:

> Although it has barely registered yet in our public debates, the teaching of American history in our high schools has just been seized in what a few sharp-eyed critics rightly call a "curricular coup." The College Board, the private company that creates the SAT test and the various Advance Placement tests, has issued a new set of guidelines that is about to turn the teaching of American history into exactly the sort of grievance-based pedagogy that D'Souza decries in his film.
>
> Leftist academics have finally figured out a way to circumvent state and local control over America's schools and effectively impose progressive political indoctrination on the entire country. Once the AP U.S. History test demands blame-America-first answers, public and private schools alike will be forced to construct an American history curriculum that "teaches to the test."
>
> Up until the last few months, the College Board has provided high school teachers with only a brief topical outline for the AP U.S. History test. The brevity of this outline has permitted states, school districts, and teachers across the country to approach American history in their own way. Now, however, the

> College Board has created a lengthy and detailed “framework” for their AP U.S. History test. That framework effectively forces teachers to adopt an ideologically left-leaning approach to American history, heavily emphasizing our country’s failings while giving short shrift to our founding principles.

If you’re going to send your kids to college, try to keep them in a STEM field. If not STEM, then trade school. Non-STEM programs are just swimming in left-wing propaganda. You don’t went to go 30K into debt just to pay for brainwashing by narrow-minded academics.

New study: cohabitation more likely to dissolve, less likely to lead to marriage

July 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

All I have on this is the abstract, but if someone can send me the study, I'd love to see the results section.

Abstract:

> Cohabitation is now the modal first union for young adults, and most marriages are preceded by cohabitation even as fewer cohabitations transition to marriage. These contrasting trends may be due to compositional shifts among cohabiting unions, which are increasingly heterogeneous in terms of cohabitation order, engagement, and the presence of children, as well as across socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. The author constructs 5-year cohabitation cohorts for 18- to 34-year-olds from the 2002 and 2006–2010 cycles of the National Survey of Family Growth (n = 17,890 premarital cohabitations) to examine the outcomes of cohabitations over time. Compared to earlier cohabitations, those formed after 1995 were more likely to dissolve, and those formed after 2000 were less likely to transition to marriage even after accounting for the compositional shifts among individuals in cohabiting unions. Higher instability and decreased chances of marriage occurred among both engaged and non-engaged individuals, suggesting society-wide changes in cohabitation over time.

Evidence Unseen has collected some of the other studies together.

Excerpt

> Hall and Zhao (from the University of Western Ontario) studied 8,177 individuals who were ever-married. They write, "Premarital cohabitors in Canada have over twice the risk of divorce in any year of marriage when compared with noncohabitors."[13]
>
> Manning (et al.) writes, "Over 50% of cohabiting unions in the US, whether or not they are eventually legalized by marriage, end by separation within five years compared to roughly 20% for marriages."[14]
>
> Daniel Lichter and Zhenchao Qian (from Cornell University and The Ohio State University) write, "If serial cohabitors married, divorce rates were very high—more than twice as high as for women who cohabited only with their eventual husbands."[15]

And finally, there's this study from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Couples who reserve sex for marriage enjoy greater stability and communication

> in their relationships, say researchers at Brigham Young University.
>
> A new study from the Mormon college found that those couples who waited until marriage rated their relationship stability 22 percent higher than those who started having sex in the early part of their relationship. The relationship satisfaction was 20 percent higher for those who waited, the sexual quality of the relationship was 5 percent better, and communication was 12 percent better.
>
> The study, published in the American Psychological Association's Journal of Family Psychology, involved 2,035 married individuals who participated in a popular online marital assessment called "RELATE." From the assessment's database, researchers selected a sample designed to match the demographics of the married American population. The extensive questionnaire included the question "When did you become sexual in this relationship?"
>
> Couples that became sexually involved later in their relationship – but prior to marriage – reported benefits that were about half as strong as those who waited for marriage.
>
> […]Sociologist Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas at Austin, who was not involved in the study, responded to its findings, saying that "couples who hit the honeymoon too early – that is, prioritize sex promptly at the outset of a relationship – often find their relationships underdeveloped when it comes to the qualities that make relationships stable and spouses reliable and trustworthy." Regnerus is the author of *Premarital Sex in America*, a book forthcoming from Oxford University Press.
>
> Because religious belief often plays a role for couples who choose to wait, Busby and his co-authors controlled for the influence of religious involvement in their analysis.
>
> "Regardless of religiosity, waiting helps the relationship form better communication processes, and these help improve long-term stability and relationship satisfaction," Busby said.

Young men and women growing up really need to be informed by their parents what they are going to want to be doing long term, and what they should be doing today to accomplish those goals. Young people benefit greatly from the guidance of older and wiser people, but in defining goals and defining the steps to reach those goals. To be a convincing parent, you have to be convinced yourself. And to be convinced yourself, you need to be seen as having knowledge, not just opinions, but knowledge. Having the right peer-reviewed papers at hand will help you to be a better parent.

Apologetics in the gospel of John: evidential or presuppositional?

July 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am reading John for the woman I am mentoring in apologetics, and it's slow going. But the most frequent thing I list in my "three points" e-mails to her is Jesus' constant use of miracles as evidence to authenticate his claims about himself.

Here's a post by Eric Chabot on the Think Apologetics blog. (H/T J. Warner Wallace tweet)

Intro:

> Apologetics is a branch of Christian theology that helps give reasons for the truthfulness of the Christian faith/worldview. The word "Apologia" means "to give reasons, make a legal defense" (Acts 26:2; 2 Tim. 4:16; 1 Pet 3:15). The apostles approach to spreading the message of the Gospel is characterized by such terms as "apologeomai/apologia" which means "to give reasons, make a legal defense" (Acts 26:2; 2 Tim. 4:16; 1 Pet 3:15); "dialegomai" which means "to reason, speak boldly" (Acts 17:2; 17; 18:4; 19:8), "peíthō" which means to persuade, argue persuasively" (Acts 18:4; 19:8), and "bebaioō " which means "to confirm, establish," (Phil 1:7; Heb. 2:3). (1)
>
> The Gospel of John records: "This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true" (John 21:24).

In this post, I will highlight some of the different ways John utilizes apologetics in his testimony of who Jesus is.

Excerpt:

> **The Works of Jesus**
>
> "Works" are directly related to the miracles of Jesus (Jn. 5:20; 36;10:25; 32-28; 14:10-12; 15:24) and is synonymous with "signs." Interestingly enough, when Jesus speaks of miracles and he calls them "works" he doesn't refer to Exod. 4:1-9, but to Num. 16:28, "Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all **these works**, and that it has not been of my own accord." For example:
>
> Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. ***The works*** that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me" (John 10:25).
>
> If I am not doing ***the works*** of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe *the works,* that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." (John 10:37-38).
>
> But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, ***the very works*** that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me (John 5: 36)
>
> "Sign"(*sēmeion*) is used seventy-seven times (forty-eight times in the Gospels).

> As far as the “signs’ Jesus does, 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 42:18; 61:1). In John’s Gospel, Jesus performs three “signs,” at the beginning of his ministry; the water turned into wine at Cana at Galilee (2:1-12), the healing of the son of the royal official at **Capernaum** (4:46-64), and catching of the fish in the sea of Galilee (21:1-14). The link between the first two signs in Jn 2:12 while the link between the last two are seen in Jn 7:1, 3-4, 6, 9. Jesus follows the pattern of Moses in that he reveals himself as the new Moses because Moses also had to perform three “signs” so that he could be recognized by his brothers as truly being sent by God (Exod 4: 1-9). In the exchange between Nicodemus said to Jesus, Nicodemus said, We know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous *signs* you are doing if God were not with him” (John 3:2)

I really recommend reading this post, and see if you agree with me about the gospel of John. I don’t see how anyone could read this gospel and come away with the impression that Christianity is in any way a faith that denigrates reason and evidence. The whole book is a litany of evidence presented to unbelievers. If you are dealing with unbelievers, and you’re Jesus, you’re using evidence.

Major Democrat donor Costco relents from plan to pull bestselling conservative book

July 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

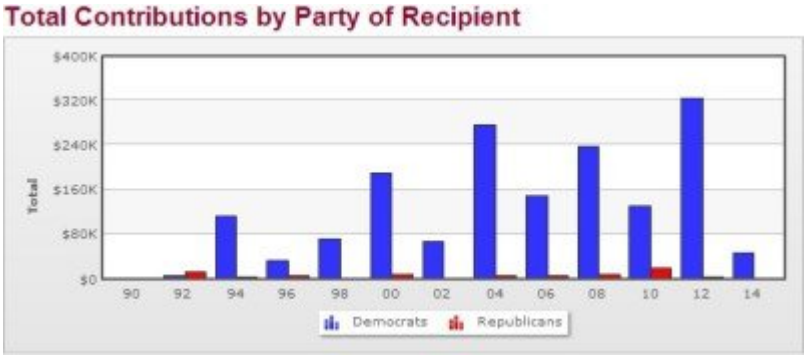

Costco donations by year
Source: Open Secrets

Story from NewsMax.

Excerpt:

> Thousands of Costco shoppers took to the wholesaler's **Facebook** page threatening to drop their store memberships after the retailer pulled copies of Dinesh D'Souza's newest anti-Obama book from its shelves, but a company official insists the decision was financial, not political.
>
> And the reaction got almost immediate results as the company announced it would put D'Souza's book, "**America: Imagine a World Without Her,**" back on its shelves, despite, what it says are poor sales.
>
> "Costco is not a book store. Our book shelf space is very limited," read a statement posted shortly after 8 p.m. on Tuesday. "We exercise discipline in the best utilization of that limited space based solely on what our members are buying. We can't carry every title that our members are interested in reading. We are constantly monitoring book sales, and make decisions to pull books off the shelves frequently based on sales volume to make room for other titles. Politics or controversy over content do not influence our decisions."
>
> The statement, signed by "Dave," went on to say the movie had renewed interest in the book causing "brisk sales at locations still in stock."
>
> "Therefore, we have made the decision to reorder the book," added Dave.

Customers were not impressed – even after the decision to censor the book was reversed:

> "By refusing to sell an anti-Obama book, you come across as a bunch of self-censoring fascists," added Shobhna Kapoor.
>
> Even after the decision, anger at the company was still showing on the Facebook page. "Your (sic) full of baloney," wrote Linda Marie Hamlet. "The book is high on the best seller list. If you think we believe your twist then you need to look at all

> the comments and those including me who are pulling our membership. Costly move for you, Costco!!!”
>
> And “Jean Marie” wrote, “Until CEO Jim, the Democrat, acknowledges the error OR resigns, I’ll not spend the $9200 that I spent in 2013 at Costco. Also, sold my Costco stock today and advise others to do the same. It ran up today on short covering.”

At the time of writing, the book was ranked so on Amazon.com:

Average Customer Review: ★★★★½ (183 customer reviews)
Amazon Best Sellers Rank: #1 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)
#1 in Books > History > **World**
#1 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > **Commentary & Opinion**
#1 in Books > History > Americas > **United States**

Book pulled from Costco for low sales
Pulled due to low sales? I don’t think so. So why was it pulled?

Obama has been a great friend to Costco, “Costco Wholesale seems to lean to the Democratic side: Co-founders Jeff Brotman and Jim Sinegal held fundraisers for President Obama at their Eastside homes…”. FYI, I never shop at Costco. This story just supports that decision.

Apologetics isn't just for other people, it helps you avoid false views, too

July 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Cold Case Christianity blog.

Excerpt:

> I am an evidentialist. Most people I meet assume I take this approach because of my background as adetective, but while my investigative experience definitely plays a role in my perspective as a Christian, my family structure is the real reason I'm a committed evidentialist. I was raised in a family dominated by atheists and Mormons. My chief role model, my father, has always been a non-believer; his wife of the past forty-five years has been a committed Mormon. My six half-brothers and half-sisters were all raised as Mormons, and when one of them saw my growing interest in studying the Bible critically, she encouraged me to take a similar look at the Book of Mormon. Not knowing one from the other, I was willing to investigate both *simultaneously*. I used the same four part investigative template to test the New Testament Gospel authors and the author of the Book of Mormon (Joseph Smith). This analytical template provided me with *confidence* in the Gospels even as it *destroyed my confidence* in the Book of Mormon. As a result, I became a *Christian* at the same time I became a*Not-Mormon*. This dual experience of *becoming* and *not-becoming* had a powerful impact on the way I've looked at Christianity and the claims of competing theological systems in the years since my conversion. It is the reason why I'm an evidentialist.
>
> In the early months of my life as a Christian, I found myself continually comparing Christianity with Mormonism. When Christians offered a religious experience as confirmation of the truth of Christianity, for example, I quickly compared this to the claims of my Mormon family. The experiences of my family clearly did not lead them to the truth. When Christians told me I needed to presuppose the *authority* of the Bible before I could assess the *truth* of the Bible, I quickly compared this approach to my Mormon brothers and sisters. The efforts of my family to presuppose the authority of the Book of Mormon clearly did not lead them to the truth. When Christians defended what they believed with an approach lacking evidential strength, I quickly compared this with the defenses offered by my Mormon family. The non-evidentialism of my family clearly failed to lead them to the truth. At every turn, I recognized the important role of evidence in distinguishing truth from fiction. Evidentialism not only *lead me* to Christianity, it *protected me* from Mormonism.

Wallace talked about this more in a recent episode of his podcast.

I was talking to a woman recently about science apologetics, showing her how atheists used to believe things that have now been disproved by evidence. For example, the original secular humanist manifesto I said that the universe is “self-existent”.

Look:

> Today man’s larger understanding of the universe, his scientific achievements, and deeper appreciation of brotherhood, have created a situation which requires a new statement of the means and purposes of religion. Such a vital, fearless, and frank religion capable of furnishing adequate social goals and personal satisfactions may appear to many people as a complete break with the past. While this age does owe a vast debt to the traditional religions, it is none the less obvious that any religion that can hope to be a synthesizing and dynamic force for today must be shaped for the needs of this age. To establish such a religion is a major necessity of the present. It is a responsibility which rests upon this generation. We therefore affirm the following:
>
> FIRST: Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

That’s what they believed. But then science happened, and now we know better. Evidence of redshift from the farthest galaxies, to light element abundances, to the cosmic microwave background radiation, and more, provide evidence that the universe came into being. Matter, energy, space and time all had a beginning. Whatever caused the creation of the natural world has to be *supernatural.* We should let evidence like that protect us from believing false worldviews.

Apologetics 315 interviews Dr. Phil Fernandes on apologetic preaching

July 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On SermonAudio.com, I found some excellent lectures from Dr. Phil Fernandes. I find it it very easy to listen to this guy. And here's Brian Auten to interview him on apologetic preaching – the inclusion of apologetics in regular Sunday preaching.

The MP3 file is here.

Description:

> Today's interview is with Phil Fernandes, president of the Institute of Biblical Defense, and the pastor of Trinity Bible Fellowship in Silverdale, Washington. He talks about apologetic preaching, how to incorporate apologetics training into the local church, evangelism, common objections to apologetics, encouragement and advice to pastors, audio/video resources, and more.
>
> Phil's books include:
>
> - *Hijacking the Historical Jesus*
> - *The Atheist Delusion*
> - *Seven Great Apologists*
> - *Contend Earnestly for the Faith: A Survey of Christian Apologetics*

This interview is awesome, especially in the second half. Here's a sample: "It's not my job as a pastor to meet people's felt needs". Awesomeness.

I like this Dr. Phil. He's very very practical and his preaching is informed by encounters with people who disagree with him. Sometimes I get the idea that pastors aren't really talking to people outside their church, but not this guy. He's grounded.

New study: most younger evangelicals hold to Biblical views on sexual issues

July 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This National Review article says that evangelical Protestants, which is the most conservative kind of Christian there is, are sticking with the Bible's teachings on sex.

Excerpt:

> The research, to be fully released in September, was introduced in Mark Regnerus's presentation "Sex in America: Sociological Trends in American Sexuality," unveiled at a recent gathering of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission's leadership summit. According to Regnerus, when compared with the general population and with their non-observant peers, churchgoing Evangelical Christians are retaining orthodox views on Biblical sexuality, despite the shifts in broader American culture.
>
> Regnerus surveyed 15,378 persons between the ages of 18 and 60, but he focuses in particular on respondents under 40. Significantly, Regnerus did the important work of differentiating between those who identify merely verbally with a particular religious tradition and those who actually attend church weekly. A political poll that didn't differentiate between likely and unlikely voters wouldn't be an accurate representation of the electorate, and for the same reasons, a survey should distinguish between someone who says "Catholic" or "Baptist" when asked for a religious identity and someone who actually shows up in the pews.
>
> While support for same-sex marriage characterized a solid majority of those identifying as atheists, agnostics, liberal Catholics, and liberal Protestants, only 11 percent of young Evangelicals actively expressed support for same-sex marriage.
>
> Approximately 6 percent of religiously active Evangelicals expressed support for abortion rights, while over 70 percent of their non-believing peer group said they believed in abortion rights.
>
> While a large cross-section of all Americans believe in marriage's importance, Regnerus found that, for example, Evangelicals are less likely than most to perceive marriage as "outdated."
>
> Evangelical Christians were also drastically less likely to believe that cohabitation is a good idea. While upward of 70 percent of those who claim no religious affiliation or those who are "spiritual but not religious" agree that cohabitation is acceptable, approximately 5 percent of Evangelicals agreed that cohabitation is acceptable. "While left-leaning Evangelicals have received considerable media attention lately, it pays to survey the masses and see just what's going on," says

> Regnerus. “These data suggest that while a modest minority of Evangelicals under 40 profess what we might call more sexually liberal attitudes, it’s not a significant minority. Minorities can be vocal. Survey data help us understand just how large or small they really are.”

I am glad that I am an evangelical Protestant Christian. Wherever the battle lines in the culture war are drawn, you can always count on us to be there.

Mark Regnerus debunks new biased Australian gay parenting study

July 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In The Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> You will not, however, witness very many scholarly misgivings about a new published study analyzing data from the Australian Study of Child Health in Same-Sex Families (ACHESS), even though I've just offered a close analogy of its sampling and comparative strategy. I do not bear ill will toward the research team; data collection is no simple task. I won't impugn the motivations of the author and his collaborators. Those vary widely, and everyone has his own. I don't care about the source of the funding. But the study deserves some critical commentary.
>
> The authors declare that the "study aims to describe the physical, mental and social wellbeing of Australian children with same-sex attracted parents, and the impact that stigma has on them." They conclude that "children with same-sex attracted parents score higher than population samples on a number of parent-reported measures of child health." The study has generated headlines such as this one from the *Washington Post*: "Children of same-sex couples happier and healthier than peers, research shows."
>
> But we cannot learn this from the ACHESS study, because of these two sentences in the study's methodology section:
>
> The convenience sample was recruited using online and traditional recruitment techniques, accessing same-sex attracted parents through news media, community events and community groups. Three hundred and ninety eligible parents contacted the researchers…
>
> The ACHESS's interim report, issued just under two years ago, foreshadowed the positive conclusions of the recently-published article—in the same journal, no less—and had more to say about its sampling approach:
>
> Initial recruitment will . . . include advertisements and media releases in gay and lesbian press, flyers at gay and lesbian social and support groups, and investigator attendance at gay and lesbian community events . . . Primarily recruitment will be through emails posted on gay and lesbian community email lists aimed at same-sex parenting. This will include, but not be limited to, Gay Dads Australia and the Rainbow Families Council of Victoria.
>
> I don't know if there's any other way to say this than to suggest that… this is not the way to build a sense of *average* same-sex households with children. To compare the results from such an unusual sample with that of a population-

> based sample of everyone else is just suspect science. And I may be putting that too mildly.

This is not the first time a study has been biased, in fact the American Psychological Association even promotes these biased studies.

Here's the abstract from a study published in the peer-reviewed journal "Social Science Research".

Abstract:

> In 2005, the American Psychological Association (APA) issued an official brief on lesbian and gay parenting. This brief included the assertion: "Not a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents" (p. 15). The present article closely examines this assertion and the 59 published studies cited by the APA to support it. Seven central questions address: (1) homogeneous sampling, (2) absence of comparison groups, (3) comparison group characteristics, (4) contradictory data, (5) the limited scope of children's outcomes studied, (6) paucity of long-term outcome data, and (7) lack of APA-urged statistical power. The conclusion is that strong assertions, including those made by the APA, were not empirically warranted. Recommendations for future research are offered.

And some the findings:

- 26 of 59 APA studies on same-sex parenting had no heterosexual comparison groups.
- In comparison studies, single mothers were often used as the hetero comparison group.
- No comparison study had the statistical power required to detect a small effect size.
- Definitive claims were not substantiated by the 59 published studies.

In comparison to these bad studies, we've had the other studies showing the harm that gay parenting does to children, as well as studies showing that children raised without a mother or raised without a father do worse than children raised with both their parents.

Nick Peters wants to see the church focus more on apologetics

July 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post by Nick Peters is a very passionate argument that the church needs to re-order its priorities.

Excerpt:

> Readers of this blog probably know by now that I quite like the church that Allie and I have found. I get a sermon that is intellectually satisfying while touching the heart as well. I wish I could say that this was the norm when it came to churches, but alas, I cannot. Too many churches have the congregations just getting some pablum so they can go home and at the end of the day feel good about themselves.
>
> Christians. Take a look at the culture around you. Does it look like we're really making an impact? Does it look like the church is being salt and light in this world?
>
> If not, then why should we go to church and feel good about ourselves? If we are not obeying the Great Commmission, then we should be looking at ourselves with shame.
>
> I have in fact reached the point where I want to go up to pastors and say to them "Please tell me why I should believe that Jesus rose from the dead." There are two answers that are unacceptable for this one. Now there could be variants on how these answers are said but the answers are still the same.
>
> "The Holy Spirit tells me that Jesus rose from the dead."
>
> "The Inerrant Word of God says Jesus rose from the dead."
>
> What's the problem with both of these? In the long run, they both beg the question. You say the Holy Spirit tells you this? Fine. The Holy Spirit also apparently tells Mormons that the Book of Mormon is from God and that Joseph Smith is a true prophet. Do you believe that? Why should I think what you're experiencing is the Holy Spirit and not something else? You could say "Well if you experience it, you know who it is." Don't you think the Mormons would say the exact same thing?
>
> What about the latter? Now I do hold to inerrancy, but I hold to inerrancy as a conclusion and not a presupposition. You want to claim your holy book is the final authority. Fine. Muslims do the exact same thing. Why is it that I should believe what you say about your holy book but I should not believe what the Muslims say about theirs?
>
> If all you have is your own subjective viewpoint for defending the resurrection, you will not last when opposition comes your way. When I meet pastors like this

> now I have a simple wish to make of them. “Get out of the pulpit. We’re in a war and we don’t need people like you dragging us down. Give your office to someone who deserves it.”
>
> […]The problem is not that the church cannot win battles. The problem is that the church rarely shows up.
>
> I have too often seen churches deny the need for apologetics training. I will go to churches regularly and offer them to come and work with them. It will be of no charge to them whatsoever! I would be delighted just to teach. 99% of the time the answer is that they don’t really need something like that. I always leave a church like that realizing the pastor is just deluding himself. As one of my mentors once told me “The pastor will call you back when his son comes home from college and announces he’s abandoned his faith.”
>
> When we encounter those who abandon their faith, it is normally for foolish reasons. Also, it can be because too much emphasis was placed on a secondary doctrine instead of a primary, the resurrection of Jesus. The two biggest offenders in this category are young-earth creationism and inerrancy. In both cases, when someone finds a reason why these are called into question and they no longer believe them, everything else crumbles like a house of cards. If inerrancy or young-earth creationism are made the foundation for the Christian faith, we are setting ourselves up to fail.

I used to belong to a church that preached the gospel, but didn’t emphasize apologetics much. I thought that the preaching was good, but I got the impression that the sermons were not really geared towards helping Christians to make a case God’s existence or the resurrection of Jesus. They sort of assumed that the Bible was true and just quoted it in lieu of arguments and evidence. It was considered very pious to “argue” in this way – although strangely, they never argued from the Bible in any other area of knowledge. I think this “assume the Bible is inerrant” approach works great when evangelizing conservative Christians, but not so great on anyone else. You could attend that church your whole life and never know the first thing about how to defend Christianity to a non-believer. Even though this is exactly what the early Christians did, as Triablogue noted earlier this week. Anyone who is interested in knowing why the churches are like this should read Eric Chabot’s post on why churches don’t teach apologetics.

Yale University Press book: fertility rates are in decline worldwide

July 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw this article about a Yale University Press book on demographics, posted at Yale University's web site.

Excerpt:

> It's no surprise that the world's population is at an all-time high – exceeding 7 billion – although many might not know that it increased by 5 billion during the past century alone, rising from less than 2 billion in 1914. And many people would be surprised – even shocked – to know that over the past three decades, fertility rates have plummeted in many parts of the world, including China, Japan and even significant regions of India.
>
> These Asian giants have not been alone. In much of Europe, North America, East Asia and elsewhere, the average number of children born to women during the course of their childbearing years has fallen to unprecedentedly low levels.
>
> Our new book, *The Global Spread of Fertility Decline: Population, Fear, and Uncertainty* (Yale University Press, 2013) analyzes these trends and the demographic, political and economic consequences and uncertainties as low fertility has become a global phenomenon. Like other facets of globalization, low fertility rates are by no means universal: High fertility persists in sub-Saharan Africa and in parts of the Middle East, but elsewhere low fertility is more the rule than the exception. These underlying trends in childbearing mean that in the near future the rate of population growth both in Europe and Asia are likely to decline. The world is not on a path of unrestrained demographic growth, as some believe. People all over the world have hit the brakes.

It's strange because a lot of people on the secular left are worried about overpopulation, which is one of the factors causing them to push for abortion – and even subsidized abortion.

Does the Christian life require unpopularity and self-sacrifice?

July 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post on Eric Chabot's Think Apologetics blog made me think of someone I've been talking to about her life plan. He lists out the components of the gospel in long-form, then asks whether millenials are hearing that in church.

Excerpt:

> What Gospel are millennials hearing? The "Jesus will meet all my needs" Gospel?
>
> **To summarize "The Kerygma" of the early Christian community:**
>
> 1. The promises by God made in the Hebrew Bible/The Old Testament have now been revealed with **the coming of Jesus the Messiah** (Acts 2:30;3;19;24,10:43; 26:6-7;22).
>
> 2. **Jesus** was anointed by God at his baptism (Acts 10:38).
>
> 3. **Jesus** began his ministry at Galilee after his baptism (Acts 10:37).
>
> 4. **Jesus** conducted a beneficent ministry, doing good and performing mighty works by the power of God (Acts 2:22; 10:38).
>
> 5. **The Messiah** was crucified according to the plan of God (Acts 2:23).
>
> 6. **He was raised from the dead and appeared to his disciples** (Acts 2:24; 31-32; 3:15-26;10:40-41;17:31;26:23).
>
> 7. **Jesus was exalted and given the name "Lord"** (Acts 2:25-29;33-36;3:13;10:36).
>
> 8. **He gave the Holy Spirit to form the new community of God** (Acts 1:8;2;14-18;33,38-39;10:44-47).
>
> 9. **He will come again for judgment and the restoration of all things** (Acts 3:20-21;10:42; 17:31).
>
> 10. All who hear the message should repent and be baptized because of **the finished work of Jesus** (Acts 2:21;38;3:19;10:43, 17-48; 17:30, 26:20).
>
> Conclusion: If millennials are hearing a Gospel that doesn't mention any of these points, they aren't hearing the Gospel at all!
>
> […]Churches need to emphasize that we are called to be servants. Hence, we are looking for Servants! And this means there will be self denial. And he (Jesus) said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.– Luke 9:23.
>
> Do you know what this mean to its original hearers? The cross may be viewed as a symbol of love. But when we look at the first century context, to a Jewish person the cross was not a badge of honor but instead a sign of rejection and

> embarrassment. In other words, the cross meant misunderstanding, rejection by others, ridicule, etc. In other words, to take up our cross is death to our own reputations, our honor and how we are perceived by others.
>
> **In a world that wants instant results, self- sacrifice is tough sell. Part of the problem is that churches preach a Gospel that promises that Jesus will fix all our problems. And when things get tough, many people bail out. A long-term commitment to our Lord which involves self denial (Luke 9:23) is hard to swallow for millennials who have been told The American Dream is the way of happiness.**

I think we need to warn young people that just being willing to serve God does not reward bad planning. I know people in full-time ministry now who are facing a very challenging environment with fewer and fewer donations. It's important not to bite off more than you can chew, and then blame God for not following through.

I think in my own life, I've probably been too defensive, but I still think I've been able to score points while on defense. I never believed that I could make risky decisions and then have God automatically bail me out. I just tried to serve the best I could, within the bounds of prudence and frugality. I guess I am trying to say that I can easily see how being overly ambitious could end badly, and I would hate to see someone bail out on God because they incorrectly thought that he would reward sincere desires with happiness. In the real world, what produces results is good planning and accurate budgets. Count the cost.

Friday night movie: Decision Before Dawn (1951)

July 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For Friday night, I thought I'd re-post a movie I like a lot.

IMDB rating: [7.5/10]

Description:

> WWII is entering its last phase: Germany is in ruins, but does not yield. The US army lacks crucial knowledge about the German units operating on the opposite side of the Rhine, and decides to send two German prisoners to gather information. The scheme is risky: the Gestapo retains a terribly efficient network to identify and capture spies and deserters. Moreover, it is not clear that "Tiger", who does not mind any dirty work as long as the price is right, and war-weary "Happy", who might be easily betrayed by his feelings, are dependable agents. After Tiger and another American agent are successfully infiltrated, Happy is parachuted in Bavaria. His duty: find out the whereabouts of a powerful German armored unit moving towards the western front.

Happy Friday!

Is Mormonism supported by evidence from science, philosophy and history?

July 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It is based on several lines of evidence, and is broadly compatible with Genesis. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that although Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous

> god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell

> us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

Further study

There is a very good podcast featuring J. Warner Wallace that summarizes some other theological problems with Mormonism that I blogged about before. And if you want a nice long PDF to print out and read at lunch (which is what I did with it) you can grab this PDF by Michael Licona, entitled "Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock".

Is the peer-review system objective and reliable?

July 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I argue, if what I am arguing can be supported by peer-reviewed literature, then I always appeal to peer-reviewed literature. But there are problems coming out with this system.

Look at this article from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Darwinists have had to back off considerably from the once-confident assertion that peer review in science journals constitutes, as Jerry Coyne put it in 2005 in *The New Republic*, the "gold standard for modern scientific achievement." The whole institution of peer review is so besmirched now as to arouse, not even amusement anymore, but something more like pity.
>
> In the same article, Coyne maintained that it was precisely by "By that standard" that advocates of the theory of intelligent design "have failed miserably." You mean by the standard of what is now revealed as the intellectual and scientific equivalent of insider trading? Or more like racketeering and simple fraud.
>
> The existence of a blog like *Retraction Watch* is, in this respect, a sign of the times, a measure of the extent to which science publishing has fallen into derision. Their post from a couple of days ago, on a "peer review and citation ring at the *Journal of Vibration and Control*," has been widely reported, including the retraction of 60 papers from that journal. Sixty!
>
> "This one deserves a 'wow,'" observes author Ivan Oransky. Indeed. The cat is really out of the bag.
>
> *Slate*:
>
> It may not be entirely fair to liken a "peer review and citation ring" to the academic version of an extortion ring, but there's certainly fraud involved in both. *Retraction Watch*, a blog dedicated to chronicling which academic papers have been withdrawn, is reporting that SAGE Publishing, a group that puts out numerous peer-reviewed journals, is retracting 60 papers from its *Journal of Vibration and Control* after an internal investigation uncovered extensive evidence of severe peer-review fraud.
>
> Apparently researcher Peter Chen, formerly of National Pingtung University of Education in Taiwan, made multiple submission and reviewer accounts — possibly along with other researchers at his institution or elsewhere — so that he could influence the peer review system. When Chen or someone else from the ring submitted a paper, the group could manipulate who reviewed the research, and on at least one occasion Chen served as his own reviewer.

Previously, I blogged about the problems in the peer-review process, linking to an article

from The Economist and to a podcast featuring Tulane University physicist Frank Tipler.

I'm still going to argue peer-reviewed evidence if I have it, but if some is used against me, I'll have to take a closer look.

Should illegal immigrant children from Latin America be treated the same as those from Canada and Mexico?

July 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Charles Krauhammer in the Mercury News.

Excerpt:

> As is his wont, President Obama is treating the border crisis — more than 50,000 unaccompanied children crossing illegally — as a public relations problem. Where to photo op and where not. He still hasn't enunciated a policy. He may not even have one.
>
> […]These kids are being flown or bused to family members around the country and told to then show up for deportation hearings. Why show up? Why not just stay where they'll get superior schooling, superior health care, superior everything? As a result, only 3 percent are being repatriated, to cite an internal Border Patrol memo.
>
> Repatriate them? How stone-hearted, you say. After what they've been through? To those dismal conditions back home?
>
> By that standard, with a sea of endemic suffering on every continent, we should have no immigration laws. Deny entry to no needy person.
>
> But we do. We must. We choose. And immediate deportation is exactly what happens to illegal immigrants, children or otherwise, from Mexico and Canada. By what moral logic should there be a Central American exception?

And:

> Stopping this wave is not complicated. A serious president would go to Congress tomorrow proposing a change in the law, simply mandating that Central American kids get the same treatment as Mexican kids, i.e., be subject to immediate repatriation.
>
> Then do so under the most humane conditions. Buses with every amenity. Kids accompanied by nurses and social workers and interpreters and everything they need on board. But going home.
>
> One thing is certain. When the first convoys begin rolling from town to town across Central America, the influx will stop.
>
> When he began taking heat for his laxness and indecisiveness, Obama said he would seek statutory authority for eliminating the Central American loophole. Yet when he presented his $3.7 billion emergency package on Tuesday, it included no such proposal.

> Without that, tens of thousands of kids will stay. Tens of thousands more will come.
>
> Why do they come? The administration pretends it’s because of violence and poverty.
>
> Nonsense. When has there not been violence and poverty in Central America? Yet this wave of children has doubled in size in the past two years and is projected to double again by October. The new variable is Obama’s unilateral (and lawless) June 2012 order essentially legalizing hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants who came here as children.
>
> Message received in Central America. True, this executive order doesn’t apply to those who came after June 15, 2007. But the fact remains that children coming across now are overwhelmingly likely to stay.

Do you know what would be interesting? I think it would be interesting if the people who feel that having the government giving money to the poor had their current net worth and future earnings confiscated to pay for the $17.5 trillion national debt that we have now. The rest of us who prefer to use the money we earn for other priorities, like apologetics and Christian ministry, can continue to oppose wasteful spending. I wonder how many of the do-gooders would take that offer? Let them pull their children out of high-priced universities and sell their expensive suburban homes to pay for the things their mouths speak about.

I have my own life to live. I don’t see the politicians sitting next to me at work helping me earn my salary. Why don’t they spend their own money on the things they care about, and leave me to spend mine on the things I care about? I don’t get up to go to work every day for secular socialist priorities.

How does each side of the Israel-Hamas conflict treat civilians?

July 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You can learn everything you need to know about the Middle East conflict from this short video by Dennis Prager:

Now Israel is having about 80% of their country targeted by rocket attacks right now, and the attacks are designed to deliberately kill civilians. These are not military strikes designed to avoid civilian casualties, they are terrorist attacks designed to inflict civilian casualties.

Here is an article from leftist CNN that makes the point about Israel, Hamas and civilians.

Excerpt:

> Israeli forces dropped leaflets in northern Gaza on Sunday to warn residents to move away from Hamas sites to avoid military strikes.
>
> The warning came as the death toll in Gaza reached 168, with more than 1,100 people injured, the Gaza Health Ministry said.
>
> About 70% of the fatalities were civilians, of which 30% — 27 people — were children, said Chris Gunness, spokesman for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, which said the figures came from the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
>
> Israel said its forces have struck 1,320 "terror targets" across Gaza, including 735 concealed rocket launchers.
>
> Israel has used its Iron Dome defense system against many of the more than 800 rockets fired from Gaza into Israel, the military said. Two more were intercepted Sunday over the Tel Aviv metropolitan area.
>
> […]**Video on Hamas-run television showed a Hamas spokesman urging people to serve as human shields, CNN's Jake Tapper reported Thursday.**
>
> […]**Hamas, the Palestinian militant group that controls Gaza, regularly uses sites and facilities populated by civilians.**
>
> "The leadership of Hamas and the other organizations has chosen — at a time when they are using the population of Gaza as human shields — to hide under ground, to flee abroad and to deliberately put civilians in the line of fire," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a Cabinet meeting Sunday.
>
> "This is the entire difference between us and Hamas — we are using defensive systems against missiles to protect the residents of Israel, and they are using the residents of Gaza to protect arsenals of missiles. Nothing better underscores the difference in this campaign. Israel is a democracy that is fighting — in a

> legitimate and focused manner — against unbridled terrorists," he said.
>
> […]Throughout the conflict, Israel has warned Gaza residents of upcoming attacks targeting militants and terrorist infrastructure. On Twitter on Sunday, the IDF posted: "To warn civilians of an impending strike, the IDF drops leaflets, makes personalized phone calls & sends SMSes. How many militaries do that?"
>
> "Sirens heard across (Israel). Gaza terrorists are firing barrages of rockets. Israel is under attack," the IDF posted, with a photo asking "What would you do?"
>
> […]In leaflets dropped Sunday, the IDF warned residents that it intends "to attack terrorists and terror infrastructures." The leaflets list areas that will be targeted. "Israel is currently attacking, and will continue to attack, every area from which rockets are being launched at its territory."
>
> The leaflets told residents which roads were safe to take and gave a time frame. "The IDF is not interested in hurting you or your family members. These operations are limited and short. Whoever does not adhere to these instructions and does not vacate their house immediately is subjecting their lives and the lives of their children and family to danger," the leaflet said.
>
> The Israeli military said it also drops empty shells on roofs, an operation it calls "roof knocking," to alert civilians that airstrikes are imminent.
>
> The goal of the airstrikes, the military said, is to get Hamas militants to stop firing rockets into Israel.

Meanwhile, Israel spent a ton of money on the "Iron Dome" missile defense system in order to protect Jewish *and Arab* residents of Israel.

So, I hope this is enough to explain to people that there is no moral equivalence between Israel and terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. If you are *targeting civilians deliberately*, you are a terrorist. It's wrong, and only one side does it. Period.

I also want to point out that I have no religious reason for backing Israel against Hamas and Hezbollah in this conflict. I don't like Israel's anti-evangelism laws. But compared to the alternatives, they are the most pro-Western democracy in the area, and that's why I support them. It's strictly foreign policy and moral concerns. I am opposed to terrorism and to wage war against it, we need allies in the theater. Israel is always going to be looking out for Israel, not us, but they are a strong ally and we need to be encouraging them for that reason.

Brisbane gets coldest temperature in 103 years, Antarctic ice extents at record high

July 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Australian.

Excerpt:

> If you are lucky enough to be reading this from the comfort of your blankets, it might be best to stay there, as Brisbane has hit its coldest temperatures in 103 years.

> Not since July 28 1911 has Brisbane felt this cold, getting down to a brisk 2.6C at 6.41am.
>
> At 7am, it inched up to 3.3C.
>
> Matt Bass, meteorologist from BOM, said the region was well below our average temperatures.
>
> "If it felt cold, that's because it was, breaking that record is pretty phenomenal for Brisbane," Bass said.
>
> "The average for this time of year is 12C, so Brisbane was about 9C below average, it is pretty impressive really, to have the coldest morning in 103 years is a big record."

And from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> The levels of Antarctic sea-ice last week hit an all-time high – confounding climate change computer models which say it should be in decline.
>
> America's National Snow And Ice Data Center, which is funded by Nasa, revealed that ice around the southern continent covers about 16million sq km, more than 2.1 million more than is usual for the time of year.
>
> It is by far the highest level since satellite observations on which the figures depend began in 1979.
>
> In statistical terms, the extent of the ice cover is hugely significant.
>
> It represents the latest stage in a trend that started ten years ago, and means that an area the size of Greenland, which would normally be open water, is now frozen.
>
> **The Antarctic surge is so big that overall, although Arctic ice has decreased, the frozen area around both poles is one million square kilometres more than the long-term average.**
>
> In its authoritative Fifth Assessment Report released last year, the UN

> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change admitted that the computer models on which scientists base their projections say Antarctic ice should be in decline, not increasing.
>
> The report said: 'There is low confidence in the scientific understanding of the observed increase in Antarctic sea ice extent since 1979, due to… incomplete and competing scientific explanations for the causes of change.'

So what about those climate simulations? Well… the UK Telegraph reports on that. Excerpt:

> When future generations try to understand how the world got carried away around the end of the 20th century by the panic over global warming, few things will amaze them more than the part played in stoking up the scare by the fiddling of official temperature data. There was already much evidence of this seven years ago, when I was writing my history of the scare, The Real Global Warming Disaster. But now another damning example has been uncovered by Steven Goddard's US blog Real Science, showing how shamelessly manipulated has been one of the world's most influential climate records, the graph of US surface temperature records published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

> Goddard shows how, in recent years, NOAA's US Historical Climatology Network (USHCN) has been "adjusting" its record by replacing real temperatures with data "fabricated" by computer models. The effect of this has been to downgrade earlier temperatures and to exaggerate those from recent decades, to give the impression that the Earth has been warming up much more than is justified by the actual data. In several posts headed "Data tampering at USHCN/GISS", Goddard compares the currently published temperature graphs with those based only on temperatures measured at the time. These show that the US has actually been cooling since the Thirties, the hottest decade on record; whereas the latest graph, nearly half of it based on "fabricated" data, shows it to have been warming at a rate equivalent to more than 3 degrees centigrade per century.

I wonder if taxpayers will get back the billions of dollars we wasted funding this flat-Earth theory? It was just junk science. Researchers adopted it to get grant money, governments adopted it to get more control of businesses and individual consumption. That's it. It was just Santa Claus mythology.

Health savings accounts promote personal responsibility and lower health care costs

July 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An Investors Business Daily editorial by famous surgeon and conservative, Ben Carson.

Excerpt:

> Health savings accounts can be funded in a variety of different ways and give people total control of where, how and with whom they wish to spend their health care dollars. Most people will want to get the biggest bang for the buck and will independently seek out both value and quality.
>
> That, in turn, will bring all aspects of medicine into the free-market economic model, thus automatically having an ameliorating effect on pricing transparency and quality of outcomes.
>
> Many corporations and communities already have very positive experiences with HSAs. Those experiences could be further enhanced by allowing family members to shift the money in their accounts among themselves.
>
> For instance, if a family member was $500 short for a procedure or test, another family member could provide the money by authorizing its deduction from his account. This provides a whole other level of flexibility to the concept of health savings.
>
> The overwhelming majority of encounters with the medical world could be handled through this type of system, eliminating bureaucratic delays and frustration.
>
> Under ObamaCare's many rules, the amount of money allowed to be managed through health savings accounts is severely restricted. Perhaps that is because the crafters of this gigantic, bureaucratic monstrosity realized that a well-functioning savings system would be easy to understand, much less expensive and give people control of their own health care.
>
> It would also eliminate two-tiered systems of health care, making every patient equally desirable from a business perspective. There should be no limit to the money that can be contributed to and managed in an account. Money unspent at year-end should simply accumulate without penalty.
>
> If accounts are established at the time of birth, they will be even more potent, because the vast majority of people will not experience catastrophic or major medical events until well into adulthood. By that time, a great deal of money will have accumulated.
>
> Since bridge or catastrophic insurance will not be drawn upon for routine medical expenses, its costs will plummet, very much like homeowners insurance, which costs vastly less when there is a high deductible.

> Somehow over the past few decades, we as a society have wandered away from the concept of using health insurance only for major medical issues and paying for routine service ourselves. This is largely responsible for the tremendous spike in medical costs. By using HSAs, we can return to a semblance of rational thinking.

I think it’s important for us to be aware that increased government control of health care is not the only approach to reducing health care costs. In fact, my view is that health care costs have been rising precisely because the government has been so involved in controlling the health care industry.

New study lends support to Michael Behe's "Edge of Evolution" hypothesis

July 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Behe writes about a new study from PNAS in Evolution News. (H/T Think Apologetics)

Excerpt:

> A recent paper in *PNAS* confirms a key inference I made in 2007 in *The Edge of Evolution*. Summers *et al.* conclude that "the minimum requirement for (low) [chloroquine] transport activity … is two mutations." This is the first of three posts on the topic.
>
> […]A major point of the book was that if evolution has to skip even one baby step to attain a beneficial state (that is, if even one intermediate in a long and relentlessly detailed evolutionary pathway is detrimental or unhelpful), then the probability of reaching that state decreases exponentially. After discussing a medically important example (see below), I argued that the evolution of many protein interactions would fall into the skip-step category, that multi-protein complexes in the cell were beyond the reach of Darwinian evolution, and that design extended very deeply into life.
>
> However, at the time the book's chief, concrete example — the need for multiple, specific changes in a particular malarial protein (called PfCRT) for the development of resistance to chloroquine — was an inference, not yet an experimentally confirmed fact. It was really an excellent, obvious inference, because resistance to chloroquine arises much, much less frequently than to other drugs. For example, resistance to the antimalarial drug atovaquone develops spontaneously in every third patient, but to chloroquine only in approximately every billionth one. About PfCRT I wrote, "Since two particular amino acid changes [out of four to eight total changes] occur in almost all of these cases [of chloroquine resistance in the wild], they may both be required for the primary activity by which the protein confers resistance." The result would be that "the likelihood of a particular [malarial] cell having the several necessary changes would be much, much less than the case [for atovaquone] where it needed to change only one amino acid. That factor seems to be the secret of why chloroquine was an effective drug for decades." Still, the deduction hadn't yet been nailed down in the lab.
>
> **Now it has, thanks to Summers *et al.* 2014. It took them years to get their results because they had to painstakingly develop a suitable test system where the malarial protein could be both effectively deployed and closely monitored for its relevant activity — the ability to pump chloroquine across a cell membrane, which rids the parasite of the drug.**

> **Using clever experimental techniques they artificially mutated the protein in all the ways that nature has, plus in ways that produced previously unseen intermediates. One of their conclusions is that a minimum of two specific mutations are indeed required for the protein to be able to transport chloroquine.**

I think when we are discussing evolution, we at least have to ask the Darwnian side to bear their burden of proof. If you're saying that mutations can lead to improvements, then we need to see examples. And the examples have to have mutations that are likely to occur.

You can listen to a recent episode of the ID the Future podcast where Casey Luskin and Michael Behe went into more details about the new discovery.

Seven things that Christians should know about Paul

July 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a great post by Eric Chabot over at Think Apologetics.

His list:

1. Paul was educated
2. Paul as an active persecutor
3. Paul's Antagonism Towards the Early Messianic Movement
4. Paul's Encounter with the Risen Messiah
5. Paul's Letters: Primary and Secondary Sources
6. Paul's use of oral tradition terminology
7. Why do Paul's Letters Matter?

I think everyone is going to look at 4 and 6 and immediately think of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. So I'm going to pick out #2, which mentioned in Galatians, since I was just reading that and making notes.

Here's what Eric says:

> **2. Paul as an active persecutor**
>
> The language Paul uses in his pre-revelatory encounter with the risen Lord shows how antagonistic he was towards the messianic movement. In Gal. 1:13-15, Paul uses terms such as "persecute" and "destroy" to describe his efforts to put and end to the spread of the early faith. We see here:
>
> Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him (Stephen) to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. (Acts 8: 1-3).
>
> Furthermore, Luke summarizes Paul's persecution of the early Messianic community.
>
> I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities. (Acts 26:10-11).

This makes his conversion inexplicable – unless he really got the personal appearance from Jesus that he claimed to have received. His status as persecutor of the church and then leader of the church is not denied – even by skeptical historians. The practical

application of this for us is to never count out someone on the other side. The person who is the most antagonistic can make the biggest contribution.

Paul is awesome. If you doubt me, just read Ephesians 5. God used this man mightily to tell us amazing things about himself. Don’t miss out!

Mike Licona explains the As, Bs, Cs, Ds and Es of New Testament reliability

July 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Licona is one of my favorite Christian apologists, and here is an excellent lecture to show you why.

In the lecture, he explains why the four biographies in the New Testament should be accepted as historically accurate: (55 minutes)

Summary:

- What a Baltimore Ravens helmet teaches us about the importance of truth
- What happens to Christians when they go off to university?
- The 2007 study on attitudes of American professors to evangelical Christians
- Authors: Who wrote the gospels?
- Bias: Did the bias of the authors cause them to distort history?
- Contradictions: What about the different descriptions of events in the gospels?
- Dating: When were the gospels written?
- Eyewitnesses: Do the gospel accounts go back to eyewitness testimony?

This is basic training for Christians. They ought to show this lecture whenever new people show up, because pastors should not quote the Bible until everyone listening has this information straight.

CBO report: Social Security to be bankrupt by 2030

July 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Full text, because this matters:

> The $2.8 trillion Social Security Trust Fund is on track to be totally spent by 2030, the Congressional Budget Office said Tuesday.
>
> That's one year earlier than projected in 2013 and a decade earlier than the CBO estimated as recently as 2011.
>
> The CBO delivered the warning in a gloomy long-term budget outlook that shows federal debt reaching 106% of GDP in 25 years, up from 74% now.
>
> The rising debt would come despite revenue rising by 1.8 percent as share of GDP (from 17.6% to 19.4%)from 2014 to 2039 and despite spending other than health entitlements, Social Security and debt service shrinking by 2.5% of GDP (9.3% to 6.8%).
>
> The challenge: Health care spending will rise by 3.1 percent of GDP (4.9% to 8%) and Social Security 1.4 points of GDP (4.9% to 6.3%), which will in turn push interest on the debt up to 4.7% of GDP from 1.3%.
>
> Social Security's cliff, now just 16 years away, is one that Washington would be crazy to approach. At that point, incoming revenue would be enough to pay less than 75% of scheduled benefits for all beneficiaries, whether just reaching retirement or 100 years old.
>
> Up until the point of exhaustion, the trust fund provides legal authority — though no resources — for the government to pay all benefits despite Social Security's burgeoning cash-flow deficit, which the CBO expects to reach $320 billion in 2024 alone.
>
> The rapid deterioration in Social Security's finances has a number of contributing factors. The drawn-out recovery from the deep recession and the extended period of low interest rates have sapped revenue and lowered the interest that Treasury pays to the trust fund based on program surpluses from 1984 to 2009.
>
> On top of that, the CBO expects the underinvestment and long-term unemployment associated with the less-than-stellar recovery to have a lasting impact, boosting the natural rate of unemployment.
>
> In February, the CBO significantly reined in its economic optimism, slashing its projection of the total amount of wages and salaries over the 2015-2023 period by about $3.2 trillion, or 3.6%.
>
> Among the factors that the budget scorekeeper cited was ObamaCare's work-diminishing effect, which the CBO now estimates to be three times as large as it supposed in 2010.

> The CBO said that ObamaCare would reduce employment by 2 million full-time-equivalent workers in 2017, rising to 2.5 million in 2014.
>
> This reduction would result in a decline in aggregate employee compensation averaging 1% from 2017 through 2024, or $1.05 trillion.
>
> An IBD analysis pegged the revenue hit to Social Security from ObamaCare work disincentives at about $120 billion through 2024.
>
> The reduced payroll-tax contributions into Social Security would, over time, result in modestly lower benefits for those who choose less work, but the cost savings from reduced benefits would offset only a portion of the lost revenue.
>
> The nature of Affordable Care Act subsidies — they rise as income falls and decline as income rises — will make work "less attractive" by "creating an implicit tax on additional earnings," the CBO said.
>
> The work disincentive will lead some people to choose to work less, in part because subsidized health care will enable them to get by with less work.
>
> In addition, the CBO expects ObamaCare to depress wages for lower earners when employers, over time, pass along the cost of the law's employer-insurance mandate by holding back on wage increases. Lower wages, in turn, will provide another reason for some people to opt for less work, the CBO says.
>
> While the CBO expects compensation to be lower "almost entirely" because people will choose to supply less work, the CBO also expects that some employers "will respond to the penalty by hiring fewer people at or just above the minimum wage."
>
> Another important factor clouding Social Security's future: A greater share of earnings goes to those with income above the maximum subject to payroll taxes ($117,000 in 2014).
>
> As a result, while rising longevity and the retirement of baby boomers will make benefits grow faster than the economy, Social Security's tax revenue is expected only to keep pace with economic growth.

Look. I think there's practical wisdom in this CBO report for Christians. We have to take into account data like this when making our life plans. And it's not only Social Security we need to be scared of, Medicare is even MORE insolvent than Social Security. If you are under 40, *these programs are not going to be there for you*. You have to make other plans. You can't be running your life plan as if these threats do not exist, because they do. Now I want to talk about how a defensive plan can be better than an offensive plan.

The neutral zone trap

Think of ice hockey and the neutral zone trap defense:

> The defending team sets up so four players-usually both wings and both defense-remain in the neutral zone, while the center forechecks into the offensive zone. The center's job is to block the passing lanes from the puck carrier, forcing him to

> carry the puck forward into the neutral zone. Once the puck carrier reaches the neutral zone, the center stays toward the center of the ice, forcing the puck carrier along the boards. Two of the other defending team's players collapse in on the puck carrier, forcing him to dump the puck into their zone, forcing a turnover.

This plan allowed the New Jersey Devils to win the Stanley Cup against the high-powered Detroit Red Wings in 1995:

> The following season, shortened by 34 games because of a lockout ordered by NHL owners, the Devils entered the playoffs as the No. 8 seed in the conference, with only a 22-18-8 record. In the West, the Detroit Red Wings looked invincible, cruising to the Stanley Cup Finals behind a galaxy of offensive stars.
>
> But that's when Lemaire went to work, putting his Devils through daily lessons in the trap, preaching constantly about being in the right defensive position at all times. It was hard, but it worked. The Devils upset three higher seeded Eastern teams to get to the Stanley Cup Finals, but remained prohibitive underdogs against the Red Wings.
>
> Many predicted a sweep – and that's what happened. What nobody predicted was that it would be the Devils who did the sweeping, thanks to a stifling trap that limited Detroit to seven goals in four games.
>
> "They frustrated the heck out of us," former Red Wings defenseman Mike Ramsey told the St. Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press. "You weren't trying to beat one guy. You were trying to beat four. They had enough talent and size where they didn't have to play that way. But they knew what they were doing. Every player was on the same page."
>
> When coaches across the NHL saw how Lemaire was able to totally shut down such a great offensive team, the trap began to be copied by almost everyone. Roger Neilson had implemented a form of the trap with the expansion Florida Panthers from 1993-95, and his successor, Doug MacLean, took it even further. The neutral zone became almost impossible to navigate against the Panthers in the 1996 playoffs, and Florida suddenly found itself in the Stanley Cup Finals against the offensive-minded Avalanche. Criticized by the media about the trap, MacLean responded, **"I like boring"**.

Yes, and he likes *winning*,too. Sometimes people who appear to be risk-averse seem "scared" to others… but what matters is the scoreboard.

I hate to see young people making life plans while ignoring real life obstacles. The national debt, the demographic crisis, fertility (for women), etc. are real problems. Let's take these threats into account when we are planning our lives. It's just unwise to think that we can do whatever we want and then count on God to bail us out. We need to be practical. We live in challenging times, and we need to have prosperity and stability in order to protect our faith from external threats which are so often the root of despair and

apostasy. The score on the scoreboard is not related to who took the biggest chances and felt the most excitement, it’s related to who actually scored. I feel excited when I win.

Survey finds conservative and religious students feel discriminated against

July 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Campus Reform.

Excerpt:

> Students with different political ideologies and religious beliefs feel the most discriminated on campus, according to a survey conducted by the University of Colorado.
>
> The study, taken by students, faculty and staff, was designed to measure if students were feeling unsafe or discriminated against while attending the university.
>
> The social climate survey—conducted on all four of UC's campuses—asked participants to share their key demographics, such as religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, race, political party and political philosophy. They were then asked if they ever felt discriminated against or unsafe because of those identities.
>
> The results revealed that 68 percent of students felt their campus was an overall inclusive and respectful environment. However, there were still students who reported that they felt discriminated against, and were intimidated when it came to voicing their opinions in class.
>
> Of those who hesitated to voice their opinions, 23 percent said it was due to their political philosophy while 22.1 percent referenced their religious or spiritual beliefs. Political affiliation, such as political parties, was the third highest group who feared speaking with 19.1 percent.
>
> […]Faculty at UC were not politically diverse according to the findings of the survey. Nearly 59 percent of total faculty described themselves as liberal while only 12.9 percent said they were conservative. At the Boulder campus, fewer than six percent of the faculty are Republicans.

This is what liberals call "celebrating diversity". They are all about creating an "open environment" that fosters "critical thinking". If you're going to college, stick with STEM subjects. Don't put your face in the toilet of non-STEM programs.

CDC: Gay population is 2.3%, but young Americans believe it’s 30%

July 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Newsbusters reports.

Excerpt:

> A new comprehensive study by the CDC with over 33,000 participants has confirmed earlier estimates; less than 3 percent of the U.S. population self-identifies as gay, lesbian or bisexual. Earlier, much smaller-scale surveys have put that number at 4 percent.
>
> The National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), published July 15 by the CDC, was the first large-scale study of it’s kind. Data was collected from the Census Bureau, as The Washington Post reported, and 33,557 adults between the ages of 18 and 64 participated in the study, which included in-person interviews as well as follow-up phone questions.
>
> The NHIS study found that, while 96.6 percent of adults identified as “straight”, 1.6 percent identified as gay or lesbian, and 0.7 percent called themselves bisexual. 1.1 percent responded “I don’t know” or said they were “something else” not listed.
>
> That sure doesn’t sound like society according to Hollywood, or the news media, which have young Americans convinced 30 percent of the population is gay.

This is why it’s important to be skeptical of the liberal media and Hollywood. So many false ideas floating around in the popular culture, and yet most Americans think they are very well informed. Especially the young ones. They may not have skills, but they have great confidence. The public schools taught them self-esteem, if nothing else.

Senate Democrats new bill allows Gosnell-style abortion clinics in all 50 states

July 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

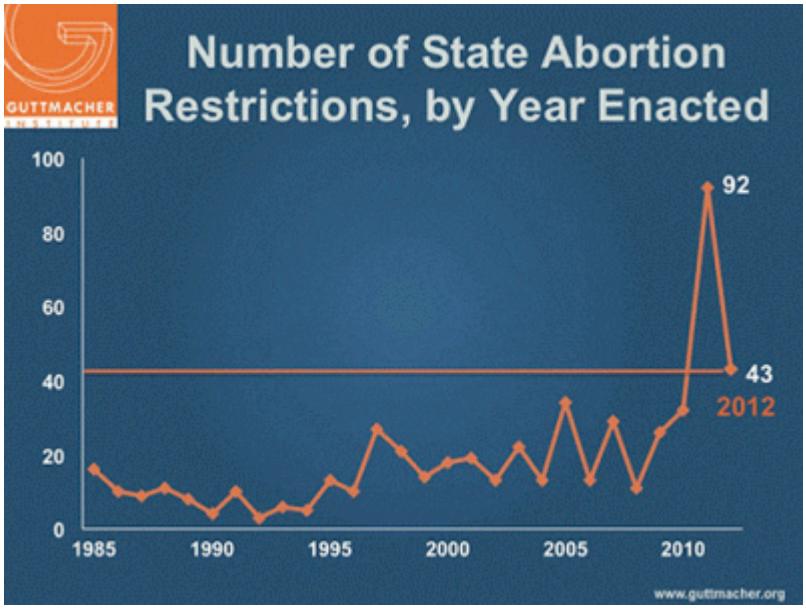

New state-level pro-life laws (by year)
From National Review.

Excerpt:

> Readers will recall, though they will not enjoy it, the details of Dr. Gosnell's case, the transcript of which reads like the screenplay for a Rob Zombie horror flick: the illegal abortions; the newborns who survived botched abortion attempts only to have their spinal cords severed with scissors; the obscenely unhygienic conditions, with free-ranging cats using the clinic as an open-air litter box; the dead patient and subsequent manslaughter conviction; and, finally, the murder convictions. The Gosnell gore-fest was a direct consequence of the elevation of abortion to divine office: Neither the local authorities in Democrat-dominated Philadelphia nor the Democrat-dominated statewide bureaucracies in Pennsylvania were much inclined to exercise basic oversight of abortion clinics. Even after a woman died under Dr. Gosnell's knife, there was little interest in investigating his practice: It took allegations of illegal prescription-drug use and the piqued interest of the DEA to put Gosnell on the radar.
>
> Senator Blumenthal proposes to apply the Philadelphia model to the nation at large. Under his bill, states would have effectively no power even to ensure that abortions are performed by licensed physicians — surely the most minimal standard of medical responsibility that there is. Laws covering grisly late-term abortions would be forcibly overturned and fetal viability would be redefined according to the subjective whim of the abortionist. While the Democrats are bemoaning a fictitious war on women, their bill would provide federal protection

> to sex-selective abortions — the barbaric practice under which generations of girls have been decimated in such backward jurisdictions as China and Azerbaijan, a practice *The Economist* describes as "gendercide." Laws restricting taxpayer funding of abortion would be overturned. Laws protecting the consciences of physicians who choose not to perform abortions would be overturned.

Senate Democrats are also engaged in other pro-abortion activities, though – like trying to force Christian-owned businesses to pay for abortion-causing drugs.

Excerpt:

> Senate Democrats today lost their bid to approve legislation to "overturn" the Supreme Court's decision protecting Hobby Lobby and other companies from being forced to comply with the HHS mandate that compels them to pay for abortion-causing drugs for their employees.
>
> Republicans were able to sustain their filibuster against the bill and prevailed on a 56-43 vote, with Democrats voting to move to a vote on the pro-abortion bill and almost all Republicans uniting to vote against it.
>
> […]The legislation Democrats wanted approved would change the Religious Freedom and Restoration Act in a way that would force companies to pay for birth control, contraception and those abortion-causing drugs.
>
> Senators Mark Udall (D-Colo.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.), both abortion advocates, are behind the new legislation and they said, "The Protect Women's Health from Corporate Interference Act would ban employers from refusing to provide health coverage — including contraceptive coverage — guaranteed to their employees and dependents under federal law."

I am always surprised when Christians vote for Democrats. I don't see how a Christian could vote for a party that elevates abortion to the level of a sacrament, and diminishes the rights of conscience and religious liberty. What kind of religious person could vote for extremists like this?

New study: ancient Cambrian-era fossils have similar brains to animals today

July 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

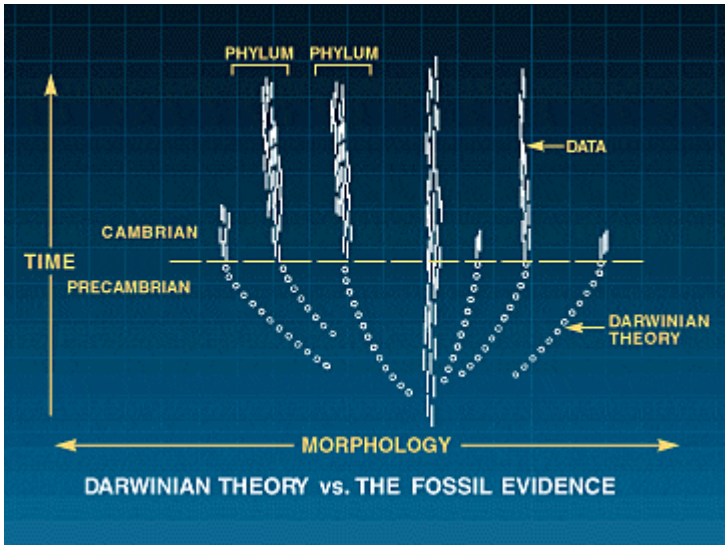

Cambrian Explosion

Dr. Fazale Rana of Reasons to Believe tweeted this – from the prestigious journal Nature!

Excerpt:

> One could be forgiven for mistaking anomalocaridids for creatures from another world. The spade-shaped predators, which lived in the seas during the Cambrian — the geological era stretching from 541 million to 485 million years ago — had eyes that protruded from stalks and a pair of giant appendages on the sides of their mouths. **But three stunningly well-preserved fossils found in China now show that the anomalocaridid brain was wired much like that of modern creatures called velvet worms, or onychophorans.**
>
> Both anomalocaridids and onychophorans belong to the arthropods, the group of invertebrates that includes spiders and insects and whose brain structures come in three main types. Two of those were already known to be very ancient, and the new fossils, described today in *Nature*, suggest that the third type — the neural architecture found in onychophorans — **also has changed little over more than half a billion years of evolution.**
>
> Named *Lyrarapax unguispinus*, the three fossils reveal creatures that — at 8 centimetres long — are on the small side for anomalocaridids, some of which are thought to have been as long as 2 to 3 metres. But the fossils' segmented bodies and frontal appendages are pure anomalocaridid, says Nicholas Strausfeld, a neuroscientist at the University of Arizona in Tucson, who co-led the study.
>
> What really grabbed Strausfeld's attention was the creature's brain, preserved flattened like a pressed flower: "I said, 'Holy s**t, that's an onychophoran brain!'" he recalls. The animal's frontal appendages are connected to nerve bundles, or

> ganglia, in front of optic nerves. Both the ganglia and the optic nerves lead to a segmented brain. The layout is an uncanny match to the wiring of the velvet worm's brain, Strausfeld says: "It's completely unlike anything else in any other arthropod."

The fossil record is pretty simple at a high-level. Single-celled organisms from the cooling of the Earth to the Cambrian explosion. All the phyla come in 5-10 million years in the Cambrian explosion – maybe less. No new phyla emerge after that. Does that look like naturalistic Darwinian evolution to you?

How to prepare your kids for the pressure to be "cool"

July 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a post from Pastor Matt Rawlings' blog.

Excerpt:

> […]When any eighteen year old walks on to a secular university (or even many so-called "Christian" ones) they immediately feel pressure. When a "cool professor" emerges trashing everything the eighteen year old has been taught by his or her parents to hold dear, the pressure intensifies. If the eighteen year old dares to speak up, the professor will often ridicule the poor kid like a seasoned stand-up comic dealing with a heckler. The other eighteen year old kids raised in Christian homes will see (or hear about it) and will feel even more pressure to conform.

Here is his recommendation:

> We need to continue to train our kids in apologetics but we also need to prepare them spiritually for the battle they will face on college campuses. They need to know how to engage the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, etc. They also need to be connected with a community that will have their back. I would not advise anyone to attend a secular university without making sure there is a strong Christian campus presence. For example, I live in the Buckeye state and many of the young people I know want to attend Ohio State University (excuse me, The Ohio State University). I always remind them to check out strong nearby churches like Xenos and groups like Ratio Christi led by the fearless Eric Chabot.
>
> Everybody wants to be liked and everyone has a desire to fit in. The pressure to be accepted is even stronger when a person is younger. We need to train our young people to be apologists but we also need to recognize basic human nature including our ability to justify our behavior such as ignoring their training in order to sit at the cool kids' table. We need to train and prayerfully prepare. Let's get to work.

Pastor Matt had a quote from an article by Paul Vitz in his post, and I found the article. It's on Leadership University, which is the web site that got me through college with my faith intact.

Here's a bit of it:

> I am not going into this to bore you with parts of my life story, but to note that through reflection on my own experience it is now clear to me that my reasons for becoming and for remaining an atheist-skeptic from about age 18 to 38 were superficial, irrational, and largely without intellectual or moral integrity.

> Furthermore, I am convinced that my motives were, and still are, commonplace today among intellectuals, especially social scientists.
>
> […]An important influence on me in my youth was a significant social unease. I was somewhat embarrassed to be from the Midwest, for it seemed terribly dull, narrow, and provincial. There was certainly nothing romantic or impressive about being from Cincinnati, Ohio and from a vague mixed German-English-Swiss background. Terribly middle class. Further, besides escape from a dull, and according to me unworthy, socially embarrassing past, I wanted to take part in, in fact to be comfortable in, the new, exciting, even glamorous, secular world into which I was moving. I am sure that similar motives have strongly influenced the lives of countless upwardly mobile young people in the last two centuries. Consider Voltaire, who moved into the glittery, aristocratic, sophisticated world of Paris, and who always felt embarrassed about his provincial and nonaristocratic origin; or the Jewish ghettos that so many assimilating Jews have fled, or the latest young arrival in New York, embarrassed about his fundamentalist parents. This kind of socialization pressure has pushed many away from belief in God and all that this belief is associated with for them.
>
> I remember a small seminar in graduate school where almost every member there at some time expressed this kind of embarrassment and response to the pressures of socialization into "modern life." One student was trying to escape his Southern Baptist background, another a small town Mormon environment, a third was trying to get out of a very Jewish Brooklyn ghetto, and the fourth was me.
>
> […]Another major reason for my wanting to become an atheist was that I desired to be accepted by the powerful and influential scientists in the field of psychology. In particular, I wanted to be accepted by my professors in graduate school. As a graduate student I was thoroughly socialized by the specific "culture" of academic research psychology. My professors at Stanford, however much they might disagree on psychological theory, were, as far as I could tell, united in only two things-their intense personal career ambition and their rejection of religion. As the psalmist says, ". . . The man greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord. In the pride of his countenance the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 10:3-4).
>
> In this environment, just as I had learned how to dress like a college student by putting on the right clothes, I also learned to "think" like a proper psychologist by putting on the right-that is, atheistic-ideas and attitudes.

I blogged about Paul Vitz before. If you have not seen his lecture on the Psychology of Atheism, you really should watch it.

Natasha Crain at Christian Mom Thoughts had some practical advice for dealing with this, and in a minute I'll give you my advice, because this peer-pressure thing was *never* a problem for me.

Excerpt:

> […]I do believe there are things we can do to help *lessen our kids' concern* about coolness:
>
> - **Make sure they have Christian friends.** No, not just the kids they interact with each Sunday at church. Please don't assume your kids' "church friends" are a primary influence just because they rub elbows each week (and don't assume that church friends are truly *Christian* friends). Look at who they spend time with on their own. Meaningful peer relationships with other believers make a big difference.
> - **Give them perspective.** By and large, the most well-grounded Christian kids I've encountered have been heavily involved in service. When kids have built houses in Mexico, served their local homeless, or come to the aid of disaster victims, they are more likely to have a level-headed perspective on why the perceived "coolness" of their beliefs doesn't matter. Faith becomes a living, breathing part of their identity.
> - **Be a family that is comfortable living counter-culturally.** In the book *Revolutionary Parenting*, George Barna analyzed years of research data to determine what common factors exist in the child-rearing efforts of parents whose children remained strong in their faith into their adult years (he calls these kids "spiritual champions"). One major finding was this: *"Parents are more likely to raise spiritual champions if they accept the fact that from day one their parenting efforts will stray from the norm and will put them at odds with parents who are pursuing a more conventional approach."* When kids are raised in a home where they become comfortable living differently than the world around them, they are prepared to carry that confidence into adulthood.
> - **Give them Christian heros and role models.** Our kids need to know that the world is filled with amazing people who love the Lord: athletes, scientists, missionaries, actors, writers, government leaders, business owners…the list goes on. Wherever your child's interests lie, introduce them to Christian role models in that area and the stories of how they're making a difference for God's kingdom.

Now my turn. Peer-pressure wasn't a problem for me growing up. We were poor, so we had much more immediate problems! But I had an answer to the problem of being different from the other kids – I was going to grow up faster than they did and be more mature by *out-earning* them. I always tried to be working at least one job, and I worked summers too – kept it up through high school and my undergraduate degree. That was my plan. So that's my recommendation to young people. Get yourself the best job you can get as young as you can. Never let a summer go by when you are not working to

earn money.

I also recommend listening to this Veritas Forum lecture called "Giants in the Land", by the famous professor of mechanical engineering, Dr. Walter Bradley. My favorite lecture of all time. When you are young and it occurs to you that you are not like other people, it's a wonderful thing to have the words of Dr. Bradley in your mind. Here is my favorite part- he says: "Sometimes we protect our reputation too hard. And what we really need is to get our reputation absolutely destroyed so we don't worry about it any more… On the other side of a very ruined reputation is real freedom… to do what God wants you to do… It's the ripping the reputation off that's a little hard, right? But once it's gone, it's gone. And then you have real freedom."

I value my freedom and I know that caring what people think of me takes my freedom away! I really recommend that young people read or watch the French "Cyrano de Bergerac" (1990) (or the older black-and-white version) to learn the value of being who you are. If you are being good, you don't have to care what people think of you – although you may need an alias now, since people on the secular left have gotten so intolerant. You can be yourself and be a hero. And that's something. That's a lot!

Obama rejects subpoena that would force top aide to testify in corruption probe

July 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Business Insider reports.

Excerpt:

> White House adviser David Simas will not comply with House Oversight Committee Chair Darrell Issa's (R-California) subpoena to testify before the committee on Wednesday, White House counsel Neil Eggleston wrote in a letter to Issa late Tuesday.
>
> The White House had urged Issa to drop his subpoena, offering to brief him on the role of the administration's political affairs office, of which Simas is the director. Issa has been conducting an investigation into the office for what he claims are possible violations of the Hatch Act, related to whether the administration is using taxpayer dollars for political purposes.
>
> Issa refused to lift the subpoena on Tuesday, despite a lengthy briefing Tuesday from White House staff that Issa did not attend. Issa said later in a statement it would be important to get on-the-record answers from Simas at the hearing.
>
> Eggleston sent back a letter informing him Simas was "immune" from appearing before the Oversight Committee. Eggleston said the subpoena would "threaten the longstanding interests of the Executive Branch in preserving the president's independence and autonomy." Eggleston also wrote to Issa that it was "regrettable" he had chosen ton continue to pursue the subpoena instead of working privately with the White House to resolve his questions about oversight.

Well, that's one way to cover up a scandal – just give your top aides immunity from the law. If they can't be forced to testify, then the truth will never come out.

A must-read series of posts on cosmic fine-tuning by Allen Hainline

July 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are four posts in the series, so far. I think Allen might be done, so I'm going to link to all four and snip something I like from each one.

The first post is on whether the fine-tuning is real, and whether a multiverse explains the fine-tuning so that there is no need for a cosmic Designer.

I just have to choose this quote from the atheist Stephen Hawking on the fine-tuning:

> The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life. For example, if the electric charge of the electron had been only slightly different, stars would have been unable to burn hydrogen and helium, or else they would not have exploded. It seems clear that there are relatively few ranges of values for the numbers [i.e. the constants of nature] that would allow for development of any form of intelligent life.

And from Luke Barnes, who I've mentioned before on this blog:

> In my years of researching this topic, I'm amazed at how few scientists who have studied the fine-tuning details disagree with this core claim that the subset of life-permitting physics is a tiny fraction among possibilities. Since Luke Barnes is a top researcher on this topic, consider his input on the level of acceptance of the fine-tuning claim: *"I've published a review of the scientific literature, 200+ papers, and I can only think of a handful that oppose this conclusion, and piles and piles that support it.*[3]*"*

And on the multiverse as a way to escape the fine-tuning:

> The key issue though is that for the multiverse to be an adequate explanation for the fine-tuning it requires the conjunction of several hypotheses for which we lack *any* empirical evidence:
>
> 1. A universe-generating mechanism that generates a plethora of universes
> 2. That this mechanism doesn't itself require fine-tuning
> 3. The many-worlds interpretation of quantum physics
> 4. The ability to *widely* vary constants in those universes. If you think that it's a foregone conclusion that String Theory/M-Theory[8] will come to the rescue in this area, you should watch this video clip by Oxford physicist Roger Penrose where he exclaims that "it's not even a theory … it's a collection of hopes".
>
> Occam's razor therefore does seem to favor design over the multiverse. When

> one accounts for the extensive problems in affirming premise 2 and how these multiverse theories make predictions incompatible with our universe, the hypothesis that God designed the physics of the universe to bring about life is more plausible.

Here's the second post, where he explains the fine-tuning argument philosophically, and gives an example of one of the constants that has to be fine-tuned in order to support complex, embodied intelligence of any kind.

The cosmological constant:

> The inference to design will be more easily recognized if we shed some light as to the specialness of the required values. Consider the size of the bull's eye and wall based on just 1 parameter – the cosmological constant. There is a natural range for possible values for this constant because there are known contributions that are 10^{120}times larger than the overall net value. (There is a near perfect but inexact cancellation of contributions accurate to 120 decimal places). Let's use the most conservative numbers in the physics literature that indicate a fine-tuning to 1 part in 10^{53}. If the cosmological constant, which governs the expansion rate of the universe, had been larger than its current value by this tiny fraction, then the universe would have expanded so fast that no stars or planets would have formed and therefore no life. If the value were smaller by this amount then the universe would have rapidly collapsed before the universe cooled sufficiently to allow for stable information storage which is required by any self-replicating system such as life.

In the third post, he responds to objections to the fine-tuning argument. One objection you hear from atheists who don't understand the science is that any selection of constants and quantities is as likely as any other, so our life-permitting set is just random. Now, first off, there are only 10 to the 80 atoms in the visible universe, so if the cosmological constant is fine-tuned to 1 in 10 to the 120, it's not rational to say "it just happened randomly".

But here is Allen's response:

> However, the assumption that any set of constants is just as likely as any other is the very thing that we want to know. Starting off with that as an *assumption* begs the question against design. As Luke Barnes articulates in this excellent podcast dealing with responses to the fine-tuning claim, suppose we're playing poker and every time I deal I get a royal flush. If this continues to happen, you become increasingly convinced that I'm likely to be cheating. If I responded to an accusation of cheating by just saying "well any set of 5 cards is just as likely as any other so you can't accuse me of cheating" you would be rational to reject this explanation. The question is not "how likely is any set of 5 cards?" but rather "how likely is it I'm cheating if I just dealt myself 10 straight royal flushes?" This question accounts for the possibility that I'm cheating which

> would almost certainly be true in this scenario. So the right fine-question is "given the fine-tuning evidence, how likely is it that the constants were set at random?" The values for physical constants conform to a very particular pattern – that which supports life. The fact that we have so many finely-tuned constants makes it unlikely that they were all set at random (at least in the single universe scenario and I've already shown some of the problems/challenges in multiverse explanations.)

Every 5-card hand that you draw is equally unlikely, but the royal flush is the highest hand in the game and *always wins.* Every hand you draw is unlikely, but whatever you draw is overwhelmingly likely to not be a royal flush.

Finally, the fourth post deals with the objection that the constants and quantities could not have been other than they are.

He quotes physicist John Barrow giving 5 reasons why the constants can vary, and then this:

> Even if the constants and laws of physics couldn't vary, there is even more reason to think that there were many physically possible sets of initial conditions. Paul Davies states this emphatically:
>
> "Even if the laws of physics were unique, it doesn't follow that the physical universe itself is unique…the laws of physics must be augmented by cosmic initial conditions…there is nothing in present ideas about 'laws of initial conditions' remotely to suggest that their consistency with the laws of physics would imply uniqueness. Far from it…it seems, then, that the physical universe does not have to be the way it is: it could have been otherwise.[4]"
>
> John A. Wheeler agrees: "Never has physics come up with a way to tell with what initial conditions the universe was started off. On nothing is physics clearer than what is not physics."

The constants and quantities are not determined by physics. They were *selected* by whoever created nature in the first place.

So that's the series. I noticed that he kept linking to this Common Sense Atheism podcast featuring famous cosmologist Luke Barnes. I grabbed it to listen this weekend, and you might want to get it, too. It's over an hour. It seems like it is one stop shopping to understand common objections to the fine-tuning argument, and how strong each one is.

Friday night movie: Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)

July 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie in English, but black and white:

IMDB rating: [7.6/10]

Or if you are brave, you can watch the newer, color (1990) French-language version, with subtitles.

IMDB rating: [7.6/10]

Description:

> Cyrano de Bergerac is a Parisian poet and swashbuckler with a large nose of which he is self-conscious, but pretends to be proud of. He is madly in love with his "friendly cousin" (they were not actually related as cousins), the beautiful Roxane; however, he does not believe she will requite his love because he considers himself physically unattractive. Soon, he finds that Roxane has become infatuated with Christian de Neuvillette, a dashing new recruit to the Cadets de Gascogne, the military unit of which Cyrano is the captain. Christian however, despite his good looks, is tongue-tied when speaking with women. Seeing an opportunity to vicariously declare his love for Roxane, he decides to aid Christian, who does not know how to court a woman and gain her love.

Gascony (*Gasgogne* in French) is the south-west of France, and Normandy is in the north of France. Cyrano and the other cadets are from Gascony, but Christian is from Normandy.

This movie is very special to me, because I share many of the character traits and experiences of Cyrano. In fact, whenever I want to explain myself to a woman, I show her this movie and highlight certain parts. Like me, Cyrano has a distant relationship with his mother, and no sisters. Like me, his favorite color is white. For him, it symbolizes independence. For me, it symbolizes independence and also chastity, fidelity and secrecy. He wears a white plume in his hat, symbolizing his independence.

At one point in the movie, Cyrano is shown to be fond of making enemies rather than friends, because he resents the way that people are constantly trying to make friends and trying to make people like them. I have that same view. I get very annoyed with Christians who hide their convictions about truth and morality in public in order to be liked by others. In fact, I think that the two biggest challenges to being a Christian are the expectation that if God is real, then he will make you happy and the expectation that following Jesus will make people like you. It's much better if Christians expect to not be happy and to not be liked – that's the normal Christian life. Many Christians fall away from their faith because they feel that God should make them happy and that people should like them.

I wish that everyone watching the movie could understand French, because Cyrano

always speaks in rhymes in the French. He is asked by someone how he expects to survive after he has offended some fool who is protected by a powerful nobleman. Does Cyrano have a powerful protector? His reply: “No, I have no patron… but a patroness” while putting his hand on his sword. In other productions of the play, like this one, he draws his sword.

Cyrano is also very lonely, and finds women very mysterious, and therefore very desirable. But he has a long nose, so he feels that he has no hope with them, and he doesn’t even try.

Look:

> CYRANO:
> Look well at me–then tell me, with what hope
> This vile protuberance can inspire my heart!
> I do not lull me with illusions–yet
> At times I’m weak: in evening hours dim
> I enter some fair pleasance, perfumed sweet;
> With my poor ugly devil of a nose
> I scent spring’s essence–in the silver rays
> I see some knight–a lady on his arm,
> And think ‘To saunter thus ‘neath the moonshine,
> I were fain to have my lady, too, beside!’
> Thought soars to ecstasy. . . O sudden fall!
> –The shadow of my profile on the wall!

If you watch the 1990 version of the movie with subtitles, you can at least hear the rhymes – everything he says rhymes. French is a beautiful language. Here’s the play in French and in English for those who prefer to read rather than watch. If you read the play, you get more details but you lose the swordfights. Cyrano is the best swordsman in Paris, and not afraid to use his sword to make a point, so to speak.

Happy Friday!

Cosmos series promotes naturalism by distorting the history of science

July 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Casey Luskin posted this in The Blaze.

Excerpt:

> The host is astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson who believes "God is an ever-receding pocket of scientific ignorance." Executive producers include comedian Seth MacFarlane, who expresses his desire to be "vocal about the advancement of knowledge over faith," and Star Trek writer Brannon Braga, who says "religion sucks" and admits he "longs for" the day when "religion is vanquished."
>
> With Tyson himself admitting we must view "'Cosmos' not as a documentary about science," the series barely hides its ambitions to bring Sagan's materialistic views to a new generation.
>
> […]But have its creators pushed the agenda too far? "Cosmos" faced sharp criticism—from leading evolutionists—for inventing stories about religious persecution of scientists while whitewashing religion's positive historical influence on science.
>
> The first episode portrayed the 16th century scientist Giordano Bruno being burned at the stake by Catholic priests for teaching that the Earth orbits the Sun. The problem? Bruno wasn't a scientist and he wasn't persecuted for his heliocentric views. Of course Bruno's persecution was tragic, but the church killed him for promoting the occult worship of Egyptian deities and other quirky theological beliefs.
>
> Throughout the series, Tyson repeats this theme that religion opposes scientific advancement, whitewashing the chorus of historians who believe that religion had a positive influence on science.
>
> As prominent historian Ronald Numbers argues, "[t]he greatest myth in the history of science and religion holds that they have been in a state of constant conflict." One scholar at the staunchly pro-evolution National Center for Science Education even blasted "Cosmos" for its "slipshod history of science" and "antireligious bias."

Numbers is not a theist – he is secular, so that's an interesting quote.

The story also notes that Barack Obama endorses the series,and that's not surprising to me. As I've argued before, the man is an atheist. This series is defending his religion.

Does Jesus use hyperbole to make a point?

July 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Hank Hanegraaf's Christian Research Institute web site.

Excerpt:

> I want to pay particular attention to Jesus' statement in Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."
>
> One way to misinterpret this verse is to take it literally. Cults often operate on the premise that the statement is literally true — that it pits loyalty to the group against love for family. In doing so, they attempt to distance followers from family members who might make them fall away.
>
> Critics of Christianity in turn point to the verse in order to denigrate the Christian faith. An atheist, for example, quotes the verse as "a perfect illustration of how a cult operates. Sort of makes you wonder about all those conservative religionists that preach 'traditional family values!'"
>
> […]It is obvious that a literal interpretation of Jesus' statement leads to disastrous results; but what is the alternative to interpreting it literally? The only viable option is to regard the statement as being a *hyperbole* — a conscious exaggeration that expresses truth in a nonliteral manner.
>
> It apparently is not easy for people to label a statement as being a hyperbole. On the surface, it may seem to signal a lack of faith when we do not take the great promises of Scripture at face value. After all, "all things are possible with God" (Mark 10:27). Interpreting hyperbolic statements literally, however, lands us in much greater difficulties than interpreting them figuratively does.
>
> […]Elton Trueblood shows in his book *The Humor of Christ* that the most distinctive feature of Jesus' discourses is their use of exaggeration — the preposterous overstatement in the mode of "our conventional Texas story, which no one believes literally, but which everyone remembers." G. K. Chesterton notes that "Christ had even a literary style of his own.…The diction used by Christ is quite curiously gigantesque; it is full of camels leaping through needles and mountains hurled into the sea."
>
> This is, in fact, accurate; for example: "When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" (Matt. 6:3); "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God" (Matt. 19:24); The kingdom of God "is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches" (Luke 13:19).

The rest of the article is worth reading – the author talks about how hyperbole works in

the Bible and how to recognize it.

I thought this was important to highlight since I love to exaggerate for effect, and now we know that it’s ok that I do. It’s a teaching tool that is useful for emphasizing a point.

What happens to people who have never heard the gospel when they die?

July 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the most difficult questions for Christians to answer, especially when posed by adherents of other religions, is the question of what happens to those who have never heard of Jesus? In this post, I will explain how progress in the field of philosophy of religion has given us a possible (and Biblical) solution to this thorny question.

First, Christianity teaches that humans are in a natural state of rebellion against God. We don't want to know about him, and we don't want him to have any say in what we are doing. We just want to appropriate all the gifts he's given us, do whatever we want with them, and then have eternal bliss after we die. We want to do whatever we want and then be forgiven, later.

Along comes Jesus, who, through his sinless life and his death on the cross, heals that rift of rebellion between an all-good God and rebellious man. Now we have a real understanding of the fact that God is real, that he has power over death, and that he has very specific ideas on what we should be doing. If we accept Jesus' atoning sacrifice and follow his teachings, we can avoid the penalty of our rebellion.

The only problem is that in order to appropriate that free gift of reconciliation, people need to actually *know* about Jesus. And there are some people in the world who have not even *heard* of him. Is it fair that these other people will be sent to eternal separation from God, just because they happened to be born in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Enter William Lane Craig to save the day. His solution is that God orders the world in such a way that anyone who would freely choose to acknowledge Jesus and appropriate his teachings in their decision-making *will* be given eternal life. God knows in advance who would respond, and chooses their time and place of birth, and he supplies them with the amount of evidence they need.

And this agrees with what the Bible teaches. The apostle Paul says this in his apologetic on Mars Hill in Acts 17:22-31:

> 22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.
> 23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ' N D ' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.
> 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;
> 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;
> 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, **having determined their appointed times and the boundaries**

> **of their habitation,**
> **27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;**
> 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’
> 29 “Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.
> 30 “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,
> 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

In this research paper, Craig explains in detail how God foreknows how people will choose in every set of circumstances, and how God uses that knowledge to get everyone where they need to be *without violating their free will.* God wants the best for everybody, and has ordered to whole universe in order to give each of us our best opportunity for eternal life.

Here is a summary of the what is in his paper:

> The conviction of the New Testament writers was that there is no salvation apart from Jesus. This orthodox doctrine is widely rejected today because God’s condemnation of persons in other world religions seems incompatible with various attributes of God.
>
> Analysis reveals the real problem to involve certain counterfactuals of freedom, *e.g.*, why did not God create a world in which all people would freely believe in Christ and be saved? Such questions presuppose that God possesses middle knowledge. But it can be shown that no inconsistency exists between God’s having middle knowledge and certain persons’ being damned; on the contrary, it can be positively shown that these two notions are compatible.

Go read this paper and equip yourself to answer this common question!

Is it possible to preach the gospel without using words?

July 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good article that answers the question.

Excerpt:

> Francis of Assisi is said to have said, "Preach the gospel at all times; when necessary, use words."
>
> This saying is carted out whenever someone wants to suggest that Christians *talk about* the gospel too much, and *live* the gospel too little. Fair enough—that can be a problem. Much of the rhetorical power of the quotation comes from the assumption that Francis not only said it but lived it.
>
> The problem is that he did not say it. Nor did he live it. And those two contra-facts tell us something about the spirit of our age.
>
> Let's commit a little history (let me un-humbly draw on some chapters from my biography of St. Francis).
>
> First, no biography written within the first 200 years of his death contains the saying. It's not likely that a pithy quote like this would have been missed by his earliest disciples.
>
> Second, in his day, Francis was known as much for his preaching as for his lifestyle.
>
> He began preaching early in his ministry, first in the Assisi church of Saint George, in which he had gone to school as a child, and later in the cathedral of Saint Rufinus. He usually preached on Sundays, spending Saturday evenings devoted to prayer and meditation reflecting on what he would say to the people the next day.
>
> […]Another early biography talked about how his preaching was received: "His words were neither hollow nor ridiculous, but filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, penetrating the marrow of the heart, so that listeners were turned to great amazement."
>
> As a result, he quickly gained followers, and it wasn't long before he told his most devoted adherents to preach as well.

The article goes on to explain where this trend of not preaching using words comes from, and whether it matches the example of Jesus in the New Testament writings. Here's a Bible passage that seems to rule out the idea that the gospel can be "preached" without "words".

Romans 10:14-15:

14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe

in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!”

Christianity is a worldview, and as a worldview, it is committed to certain propositions being true. You can’t communicate the truth of claims like “Jesus rose from the dead” by being nice to someone. You have to appeal to historical evidence.

Massachusetts town goes after Christian college over sexual morality

July 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Salem, MA Mayor Kimberley Driscoll
From Campus Reform.

Excerpt:

> The town of Salem, Mass., has pitted itself against Gordon College after the president of the private Christian school added his name to a public letter to President Obama asking for a religious exemption from a planned federal mandate.
>
> The expected executive order would force any organization receiving federal funds, including religiously based organizations, to hire people whose sexual conduct may not fall in line with their beliefs. Gordon says the mandate would be an "infringement on religious liberty" and "the rights of faith-based institutions to establish a set of standards and expectations for their community."
>
> Gordon's statement of faith and conduct defines marriage as the "lifelong one-flesh union of one man and one woman." It also clarifies that the school is against "homosexual acts," not "same-sex orientation," and claims that it expects its students and faculty to "refrain from any sexual intercourse—heterosexual or homosexual; premarital or extramarital—outside of the marriage covenant."
>
> "Signing the letter was in keeping with our decades-old conviction that, as an explicitly Christian institution, Gordon should set the conduct expectations for members of our community," Gordon College President Michael Lindsay said in a statement. "Nothing has changed in our position."
>
> […]It was Lindsay's signature that prompted Salem Mayor Kimberly Driscoll to publicly chastise the school, calling the small Christian college's longstanding policies of expressly forbidding homosexual practices "offensive" in a statement released by the city. Driscoll went on to say that the city was revoking its

> contract with the college over the management of the city's Old Town Hall facility.
>
> "While I respect your rights to embed religious values on a private college campus, religious freedom does not afford you the right to impose those beliefs upon others and cannot be extended into a publicly owned facility or any management contract or a publicly owned facility, like Old Town Hall," she said.

So the mayor has decided that she should punish Christians because they have beliefs that are different than hers. She is forcing her beliefs on Lindsay, and if he then agreed with her, she would remove the punishment. Isn't it amazing how secular people are able to accuse others of doing something that they are doing themselves, and their heads don't explode from the illogic?

New study: self-control more likely to lead to happiness than indulgence

July 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the liberal New York magazine of all places.

Excerpt:

> It's tempting to pity the people who go to bed early, who are very careful with their money, who eat kale. So much self-denial! Is that any way to live? Actually — yes, suggests some recent research, which will be published in next month's *Journal of Personality*. People with higher self-control also tend to lead happier lives.
>
> Giving into life's little temptations feels pretty great in the moment, but even the smallest sabotages to your long-term goals can add up, subsequently wreaking some emotional havoc over time. "The cost to those indulgences are large, and the costs that are incurred from turning down the indulgences and turning one's back on tempting options are really not so big compared to the cost that come about from over-indulging," Kathleen Vohs, a University of Minnesota marketing professor and one of the study's co-authors, explained to Science of Us.
>
> Vohs and her colleagues did a series of three studies to reach their conclusions: In the first, they gave 414 adults an online survey. A second study involved loaner Blackberries for all 288 adult participants, who were sent seven texts a day asking whether they'd experienced a desire to have or do something, how they reacted to the desire, and how happy they were currently feeling. And for the last study, 234 adults were given that survey measuring self-control; they then identified their top three goals, and told the researchers how strictly their actions in the past week were in keeping with those goals — and how happy they were with their effort.
>
> In all three studies, the researchers found a link between self-control and happiness. The findings may be correlational and self-reported (which can always mean people may exaggerate the good stuff and minimize the bad), but the results still feel very true to life. "For me, I've actually found it to be quite an eye-opener," Vohs said. "Because the lesson that should be taken away from this paper is that the best way for people to live healthy and happy lives is to avoid temptations in the first place." Happiness is about more than living in the moment; it's important to keep the future in mind, too.

I want to relate this to the topic of how Christians decide on what they are going to do with their lives to serve God. Which approach is better – self-control or no self-control?

Look at this post by a male reader of The Thinking Housewife blog.

Excerpt:

> Since I wrote you last, I have decided to sign up for a few online dating sites, mostly out of curiosity. I could not imagine finding a serious mate on, say, *OKCupid,* but anything is possible. In poring over many hundreds of profiles in the past few days, a few things stand out to me.
>
> - I have not seen any woman make her desire for children, or even marriage, the central focus of her profile. Even though I filter profiles based on the "wants kids?" question (which is, surprisingly, often answered "yes"), nothing in the written profile suggests it is important to them. (This is occasionally not the case for Asian women)
> - The emphasis is instead on career, activities, hobbies, favourite movies/books/music, travel, and political inclinations (always to the left, sometimes the feminist left)
> - The surpreme goal of women my age appears to be to start an NGO in a Third World country.
> - Every woman my age has read *Eat, Pray, Love*.
> - Most are doing (or have done) advanced degrees, often in education or healthcare.
> - It is rare that a woman expresses interest in cooking, though most express interest in restaurants and food.
> - I have never seen a woman mention that she desires a good home, a place to call her own, or that she is otherwise domestically inclined.
>
> I suspect these line up with your readers' experiences too. That said, it may be that women view these traits as being desired by men, and they may be at odds with more deeply held needs.

In fact, The Thinking Housewife says these characteristics are also common in Christian circles:

> Right now, in this country, there are many children growing up in single-mother homes. Growing up without a father and with a mother who is usually not at home and who may bring strange men into your life is a desolating experience that has been proven to damage many people. I have a friend who is a teacher in a white working-class neighborhood. Many of the children there are growing up in homes of never-married or divorced mothers. These children are hungry for attention and love. Their situation portends further social chaos. Do you think the young Evangelical women you mention would brag about helping these white children? Would volunteer work with them have the same cachet?
>
> I suggest to you that it would not.
>
> I understand that people in Third World countries are materially *poorer* than these white children I mention. But in the Christian view, the immaterial is foremost and the*spiritual conditions* of these white children are nothing less than dire and probably worse than that of most children in the Third World. They are

> being raised by nihilistic popular culture.
>
> […]Christianity will not flourish in the Third World if it is dying in the West. We need these idealistic women to do their work at home, and that work includes becoming wives and mothers themselves.
>
> The idealism of these women is not wrong, but the direction it has taken *is*. Volunteering in the Third World has become a status symbol for Christians.

In the past, I've offered Dan Barker as an example of someone who lost his faith because of this emotional "God will save me no matter how irrational my plan is" view. I think we need to exercise self-control when deciding how to make an impact for Christ. The plan that is quick and immediate may not be the best over the long-term.

Report: UK woman had four abortions before age 16 – the age of consent

July 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A British schoolgirl had four abortions before her 16th birthday, new figures today revealed.
>
> The unnamed teenager, who underwent her fourth termination in 2012, is among more than 200 under-16s to have had repeat abortions in the past three years.
>
> Shockingly, a further five of these girls had three abortions
>
> It comes amid concern that terminations are being used by teenagers as an alternative form of contraception.
>
> In 2011, a total of 84 under-16s had abortions for a second time or more, according to the Department of Health figures obtained by The Sun.
>
> The total rose to 89 out of 2,925 under-16s to have abortions in 2012, but fell to 68 of 2,538 girls last year.
>
> Last night, Norman Wells, of the Family Education Trust, said too many teenagers were having sex without thinking about the consequences.
>
> 'Too many are being taught that they have a right to sex without consequences and are free to dispose of any unborn child that threatens their lifestyle,' he said.
>
> Last year, 185,331 British women of all age groups had terminations. Of these, 50 were treated for a staggering nine abortions of more.

This is a good story to send to the safe, legal and rare crowd. How exactly do you make something *rare* when you make it safe, legal and free? When you force other people to subsidize it.

Western media silent as Muslims eject Christians from Mosul

July 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The fanatical Islamist group torches an 1,800-year-old church built before the founding of Islam and forces the Christian residents of Mosul to convert, pay a tax, leave or face execution.
>
> […]A photo released by Ammon News on Saturday showed a 1,800-year-old church that was set on fire by ISIL militants in Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city.
>
> It was part of a campaign against Christians there, and the destruction of their property was reminiscent of Nazi Germany's Kristallnacht, often referred to as the "Night of Broken Glass," a series of violent anti-Jewish pogroms that took place on November 9 and 10, 1938.
>
> Thousands of Christians in Mosul began fleeing the city after ISIL issued an ultimatum on Friday to Iraqi Christians living in Mosul that by Saturday at noon (5 a.m. ET), they must convert to Islam, pay a fine or face "death by the sword."
>
> […]On Monday, normally payday for municipal workers in Mosul, state workers were ordered not to pay the Christian employees. ISIL also forbade food to be distributed to Christian or Shiite families.
>
> One state employee told the Arabic news outlet Ankawa that he was "warned that if he gives rations to Christians and Shiites, he will be charged and prosecuted according to Shariah law."
>
> From Nigeria to Egypt to Afghanistan and back, this story of Christian persecution continues without much notice from the White House.

The big question for me is, why isn't this a big story in the mainstream media? I guess the victims are wrong. If it was trees or polar bears, then there would be a story. But it's Christians, so there's no story.

What is the “unforgiveable sin” in Mark 3 and Matthew 12?

July 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Take a look at these two puzzling passages from the New Testament.

Mark 3:28-29:

[28] Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter,

[29] but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

Matthew 12:30-32:

[30] “Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

[31] And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

[32] Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

What can it mean?

Well, here’s a post by Dr. Paul Gould to shed some light on it.

Excerpt:

> Taken in isolation, it is hard to make sense of this passage—how is it that all kinds of sins can be forgiven but one sin will not be forgiven? What is going on here? Well, here is a principle of sound biblical interpretation:
>
> Principle #1: I*n order to correctly understand a passage, we must always look at it within its context.*
>
> And what is the passages context? The broader context can be found in Matthew 12:22-32. In this broader context we read of Jesus performing a miracle (he performs an exorcism and heals a blind and mute man), we read of the crowd’s amazement and wonderment over the identity of Jesus (“Could this be the Son of David?”), we find the slanderous (and murderous) charge of the Pharisees, and we find Jesus’ response to the Pharisees charge (both his reasoned response to their explicit charge that he drives out demons by Satan’s power as well as his warning to the Pharisees if they continue to attribute to Satan what is in fact the work of God’s Spirit).
>
> After looking at this passage in context, we find that the “unforgivable sin” is (basically) attributing what is in fact the work of God’s Spirit to His ultimate enemy, Satan.
>
> Fair enough, you say, but there are other problems passages that talk about the unforgivable sin—Hebrews 6, 1 John 5, and Hebrews 10 come to mind. What

> about those passages? Well, here is our second principle of biblical interpretation:
>
> Principle #2: *Always interpret unclear passages in light of the clear teachings of Scripture (as a whole)*.
>
> And what is the clear teaching of Scripture related to sin and forgiveness? It is this:
>
> **Forgiveness of sins is a consequence of man's repentance, and repentance is a consequence of the activity of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. So in the end, it seems that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is nothing more or less than the unrelenting rejection of His advances.**

So, the only unforgiveable sin is the sin of deliberately rejecting God's efforts to draw you into a saving relationship with him. What does this mean for you? It means that if you are a Christian and you believe the essentials of the faith, then you aren't going to be able to lose your salvation by performing sinful actions. You can't sin your way out of God's forgiveness, because if you accept Jesus' death as payment for your sins, then it covers all your sins. I do think that the Bible is very clear that you can lose your salvation by "the unrelenting rejection" of God's advances. But that's not a description of any Christians, it's a description of someone who does not believe in Jesus.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

July 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Excerpt:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.
>
> But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.
>
> There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position,

and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.

One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.

So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of

> atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, “So is there a God or not?”

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these “subjective atheists”?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says “I lack a belief in the gravitational force!”. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God’s existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don’t care about a person’s psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over “I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God”? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: “I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!” What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: “Wintery Knight won’t listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!”. I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that’s why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don’t *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I’m not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Related posts

- Is giving to charity more rational for religious people or atheists?
- An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview
- Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?
- Did Jesus exist? Agnostic historian Bart Ehrman debates Infidel Guy

- Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?
- Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong? Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral?
- Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?
- William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech
- Can atheists be moral? Sean McDowell and James Corbett debate
- If militant atheists could form a country, what would it look like?
- Chad Meister: can atheists make sense of morality?

Welfare cash used to purchase marijuana in Colorado

July 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National Review has the story.

Excerpt:

> For the past six months, welfare beneficiaries in Colorado have repeatedly withdrawn their cash benefits at marijuana retailers and dispensaries, according to a new analysis by National Review Online. Such apparent abuses have caught the eye of Colorado's executive and legislative powers alike, and the state has launched an effort to curb them.
>
> At least 259 times in the first six months of legalized recreational marijuana in Colorado, beneficiaries used their electronic-benefit transfer (EBT) cards to access public assistance at weed retailers and dispensaries, withdrawing a total of $23,608.53 in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash, NRO's examination found.
>
> In 2012, the latest fiscal year available, Colorado used $124 million in TANF money from the federal government, according to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. Withdrawals at marijuana establishments represented only a tiny fraction of the more than 500,000 total EBT transactions that have occurred since recreational weed became legal in Colorado on January 1. And it's impossible to determine how much of that welfare money actually was used to buy pot, given that cash benefits are fungible and some of these establishments also sell groceries.
>
> Nevertheless, welfare withdrawals at weed stores are coming under increasing scrutiny, and Colorado's legislators and bureaucrats are beginning an effort to restrict abuses.
>
> […]**Last session, some Colorado legislators attempted to pass a bill banning TANF withdrawals at marijuana establishments, but Democrats blocked it.** The state's Republicans did succeed, however, in passing a budget amendment that would preclude such use. Because of a legislative technicality, however, the amendment "doesn't have the power and teeth behind it that a statute does," says Colorado Springs representative Dan Nordberg, one of the key proponents of the ban. Republican lawmakers plan to re-introduce stronger legislation next session.

Democrats are *in favor* of having welfare money be used for marijuana. Imagine that.

Oxford University Press book asks: does religion cause violence?

July 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J.W. Wartick posted a review of a book called "The Myth of Religious Violence", and written by Dr. William T. Cavanaugh.

Let's take a look at some of the review.

Here, J.W. quotes from the book:

> The story goes that, after the Protestant Reformation divided Christendom along religious lines, Catholics and Protestants began killing each other for holding to different doctrines. The wars of religion… demonstrated to the West the inherent danger of public religion. The solution to the problem lay in the rise of the modern state, in which religious loyalties were marginalized and the state secured a monopoly on the means of violence…
>
> This story is more than just a prominent example of the myth of religious violence. It has a foundational importance for the secular West, because it explains the origin of its way of life and its system of governance. It is a creation myth for modernity (123).

Then writes this:

> Following the lines of thinking of Voltaire, John Locke, and others, Cavanaugh argues that the myth of religious violence is perpetuated in order to marginalize that which is considered religious and give rise to the nation-state. According to this myth, "All theological religions are to be tolerated, provided they do not interfere with the obligations of citizens to the state…" (129). The myth is that religion is divisive and that they "fight over doctrines or 'religious creeds'" so that "the state steps in to make peace" (130).
>
> Cavanaugh shows that this myth is indeed false. The "wars of religion" had any number of motivating factors. The use of this story is not so much to tell a truth as it is a means by which to legitimize the nation-state. He argues towards these conclusions by showing that many "wars of religion" were in fact wars of economy, wars of power structures, and the like. He notes four primary factors for this myth to work: that combatants were motivated by religious difference, that the primary cause of war was religion, that religious causes are analytically separable from political, economic, and social causes at the time of the wars, and that the rise of the modern state was not a cause of the wars (141-142). He then analyzes each of these in turn based upon the historical record and shows that these all fail to account for the actual history of the "wars of religion." In fact, the opposite is true in each case (142-177).
>
> "We must conclude that the myth of the wars of religion is finally incredible,

> which is to say, false” (177).

> […]Perhaps the most challenging and paradigm-shifting portion of the book is that which focuses upon the uses of the myth of religious violence. Cavanaugh argues that the myth is so perpetuated because of its usefulness.

Cavanaugh has his BA from the University of Notre Dame, his MA from Cambridge University, and his PhD from Duke University. Do the secularists have anything to stack up against someone with his credentials?

If militant atheists formed their own country, what would it look like?

July 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a story about North Korea from the UK Telegraph about a government run by atheists, for atheists.

Excerpt:

> Christian missionaries have set up an extraordinary network of front companies – including tour agencies, bakeries, factories, farms, schools and orphanages – in order to spread the Gospel inside North Korea.
>
> For nearly two years, Kenneth Bae, a father of three and an American citizen, ran a successful travel company offering tours of North Korea.
>
> But as the 44-year-old passed through the Wonjong border crossing in November 2012, he was suddenly arrested. Convicted of "hostile acts" towards North Korea, he is currently serving 15 years in a labour camp.
>
> What exactly happened remains a mystery. Mr Bae had taken at least 15 other tour groups into North Korea without incident. However, it seems clear that his mission to spread the Christian gospel was at least one major factor that landed him in trouble.
>
> Mr Bae is not alone in using his company, Nations Tour, to evangelise inside North Korea. While precise numbers are impossible to pin down, the network of well-financed front companies, missions operating as businesses, is extensive.

> North Korea, the most hostile country in the world to organised religion, has a strong pull for a certain stripe of evangelical Christians, and the 288 sq mile "Special Economic Zone" outside the city of Rason, where Mr Bae was detained, is Ground Zero for these modern apostles.
>
> […]According to one American who once travelled with Mr Bae, but who asked to remain anonymous, their group was able to carry bibles with them into the zone. Possession of bibles by North Koreans can lead to imprisonment, torture and perhaps even death.
>
> The source said a delicate dance had played out on their arrival, with their bibles being counted by the border guards on their way in and then again when they left to make sure none had been distributed.
>
> At the final inspection, the guards even flipped through each copy to make sure no pages had been ripped out and left behind.
>
> Before arriving at the border, the 15-member group was told by Mr Bae not to discuss politics or carry out any overt proselytising. The two or three pastors travelling with them were not to be addressed by their titles.

> Once inside North Korea, they were accompanied by government minders at all times. On group hikes with these "tour guides", the source said they sang Christian songs, but hummed key verses to avoid saying "God" out loud.
>
> "That was our way of worshipping and praising in our hearts, even if we could not say it," the source said. "Talking about God directly, that would be asking for a death sentence."

This is the dream of militant groups like the Freedom From Religion Foundation. North Korea has an official state religion of atheism. Is that a factor in their horrible record for human rights? Well, according to the The Black Book of Communism, published by Harvard University Press, over 100 million innocent people were killed in atheistic, communist regimes like North Korea in the last century.

I have been working on a theory about what militant atheists mean when they say that religion causes a lot of wars. My theory is that they are actually talking about themselves. They mean *their* religion. They are boasting that they are number one at killing innocent people. A person can justify killing very easily if you believe that no one is watching you and no one will hold you accountable when you die for what you've done.

Of course there are lots of atheists in the Judeo-Christian West who live more peacefully, because they are living in a background of objective morality and human rights provided by Western religions. But in countries like North Korea, with a state religion that cannot ground free will or objective morality or human rights or judgment after death, there are fewer restraints.

Even here, we have already seen over 50 million unborn children killed since abortion became legal. And I can guarantee you that it's not authentic Christians who are having these abortions. As a group, atheists tend to be among the most radical in favor of abortion rights. The Secular Census of 2012 found that 97% of atheists vote for abortion.

The idea of the strong killing the weak for pleasure is the law of the jungle, and it's not surprising to me that those who think that humans are just animals would act this way with vulnerable children. If you only have 80 years to be happy in an accidental universe, then anything goes. No one is there to hold you accountable. If the weak get in your way, kill them all. That's atheist morality. You don't have to go to North Korea to see it.

Pro-Hamas rioters burn Jewish businesses and attack a synagogue

July 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Huffington Post UK. (H/T Bree)

Excerpt:

> France's politicians and community leaders have criticised the "intolerable" violence against Paris' Jewish community, after a pro-Palestinian rally led to the vandalizing and looting of Jewish businesses and the burning of cars.
>
> It is the third time in a week where pro-Palestinian activists have clashed with the city's Jewish residents. On Sunday, locals reported chats of "Gas the Jews" and "Kill the Jews", as rioters attacked businesses in the Sarcelles district, known as "little Jerusalem".
>
> […]Eighteen people were arrested for attacks on shops, including a kosher supermarket, a Jewish-owned chemist and a funeral home. Rioters, who carried batons and threw petrol bombs according to eyewitnesses, were yards from the synagogue when they were driven back by riot police who used tear gas.
>
> "They were shouting: 'Death to Jews,' and 'Slit Jews' throats'," David, a Jewish sound engineer told The Times. "It took us back to 1938."
>
> "We called our town 'Little Jerusalem' because we felt at home here," Laetitia, a longtime Sarcelles resident, told France 24. "We were safe, there were never any problems. And I just wasn't expecting anything like this. We are very shocked, really very shocked."
>
> Roger Cuikerman, head of the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France told Radio France International: "They are not screaming, 'Death to the Israelis' on the streets of Paris. They are screaming, "Death to the Jews." The community was not just scared, but "anguished."
>
> The government had banned a demonstration planned in Paris for Saturday, but posters were seen around the area which said "Come equipped with hammers, fire extinguishers and batons" and promised a "raid on the Jewish district".
>
> France has around half a million Jews, the biggest population in Europe, and around five million Muslims.

This story is an absolute outrage. I do not like it when any group is intimidated with violence, just for their beliefs. It should get a stiff response from the government, but they are very liberal.

UPDATE: Lydia posted this story about Muslims rioting in Calgary, the most conservative city in Canada. Canada had unrestricted immigration for many years under the Liberal Party, which was oddly enough supported by most Jewish voters. Now they are reaping

the whirlwind of their own choices.

Bad planning and expecting rescues from God makes Christians less effective

July 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Normally I would post a study, but I'm going to make an exception and post this bit of fiction instead.

I found the story and adapted it:

> A terrible storm came into a town and local officials sent out an emergency warning that the riverbanks would soon overflow and flood the nearby homes. They ordered everyone in the town to evacuate immediately.
>
> A faithful Christian woman heard the warning and decided to stay, saying to herself, "I will trust God and if I am in danger, then God will send a divine miracle to save me."
>
> Her neighbor came by her house and said to her, "I'm leaving and there is room for you in my car, please come with me!" But the woman declined his offer. "I have faith that God will save me."
>
> As the woman stood on her porch watching the water rise up the steps, a man in a canoe paddled by and called to her, "Hurry and come into my canoe, the waters are rising quickly!" But the woman again said, "No thanks, God will save me."
>
> The floodwaters rose higher pouring water into her living room and the woman had to retreat to the second floor. A police motorboat came by and the policeman saw her at the window. "I will come up and rescue you!" he shouted. But the woman refused, waving him off saying, "Use your time to save someone else! I have faith that God will save me!"
>
> The flood waters rose higher and higher and the woman had to climb up to her rooftop.
>
> A helicopter spotted her and dropped a rope ladder. A rescue officer came down the ladder and he pleaded with the woman, "Grab my hand and I will pull you up!" But the woman STILL refused, folding her arms tightly to her body. "No thank you! God will save me!"
>
> Shortly after, the house broke up and the floodwaters swept the woman away and she drowned.
>
> When in Heaven, the woman stood before God and asked, "I put all of my faith in You. Why didn't You come and save me?"
>
> And He said, "Daughter, I sent you a warning. I sent you a car. I sent you a canoe. I sent you a motorboat. I sent you a helicopter. What more were you looking for?"

If you are looking for God to help you to do something, don't neglect the fact that God sometimes sends people to do his work, so that they can partner with him and experience him while doing his work. I think the lesson from this made-up story is that it's good to not make plans that are risky and reckless, and therefore unlikely to work.

Look at this passage from the Bible.

Matthew 4:5-7:

[5] Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,

[6] and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written,

'He will command His angels concerning You';

and

'On *their* hands they will bear You up,
So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'"

[7] Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

I think what I would say is that you should make plans that are likely to work without God, and then pray for it to work extra well, with his help. Don't make a plan that will only work if you get a miracle, that would be putting God to the test. God is not honored by lousy plans that fail and make people of faith look like idiots. We have to appear as if we know what we are doing, and it is easier to love and lead others if we have our own life in order, first. For example, you can't share with others if you own nothing.

Now I've actually done stupid things that were unlikely to work myself a few times. But I have found a good way to avoid doing this. If you surround yourself with good advisors, then they will tell you not to do stupid things, or they will tell you how to do something else that achieves the same result. It's good to have advisors and good to let them know what you are planning to do so they can tell you not to do it. It works great.

There is another good post to read if you like this post, it's on decision making and the will of God.

What does the new Guzzo study tell us about the instability of cohabitation?

July 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I blogged about a new study on cohabitation earlier in the month, but I only had the abstract. Now more details are out, from Family-Studies.org.

First, some context:

> In a new paper, Bowling Green State University sociologist Karen Guzzo analyzes how the odds of cohabitation leading to either getting married or breaking up have changed over the years. Before getting to her findings, let's review some of the cohabitation trends she highlights in her report (based on prior studies).
>
> 1. The majority of people in their 30s have lived with someone outside of marriage.
> 2. Cohabitation, rather than marriage, is now the more common form of first union.
> 3. Fewer marriages than in the past start out with the couple having intentions to marry.
> 4. People are more likely than ever to cohabit with multiple partners in succession—what I have called "CohabiDating."
> 5. More children than ever before are born to cohabiting couples, and this explains most of the rise in the number of children being born out of wedlock.
>
> Guzzo notes, as have others, that cohabiting has become a normative experience in the romantic and sexual lives of young adults. As young adults put off marriage until later in life, cohabitation has inhabited much of the space that used to be made up of married couples. I think this dramatic change in how relationships form matters for at least two reasons. First, many cohabiting couples have children, but they are less likely than married couples to have planned to have children and they are much less likely to remain together after having children… Second, most people want lasting love in life, and most people still intend to accomplish that in marriage.

Here is the main finding of the new paper:

> To simplify and summarize, what Guzzo found is that the increasing diversity in the types of cohabitation and cohabiters does not explain much about why things are so different from the past when it comes to increased odds that cohabiting couples will break up or not marry. **Rather, on average, all types of cohabiting couples have become more likely than in the past to break up or not transition into marriage.**

> Here’s a quote from her paper (pg. 834):
>
> Relative to cohabitations formed between 1990 and 1994, cohabitations formed from 1995–1999, 2000–2004, and 2005 and later were 13%, 49%, and 87%, respectively, more likely to dissolve than remain intact. The lower risk of marriage over remaining intact occurred only for the last two cohabitation cohorts (2000–2004 and 2005 and later), which were about 18% and 31% less likely to marry than remain intact, respectively.
>
> Moving in together is becoming less and less likely to lead to having a future together. That’s not to say that all cohabiters are in the same boat regarding their destination. Those who are engaged (or have clear plans to marry) before moving in together are far more likely to eventually marry—but as Guzzo shows, even they are becoming less likely to do so. Related to this, my colleagues and I have shown, in numerous studies, that couples with clear plans to marry before cohabiting, along with those who marry without cohabiting, tend to have happier marriages and lower odds of divorce than those who move in together before having a clearly settled commitment to the future in marriage. (We believe this is largely because, while cohabiting unions obviously break up often, they are harder to break off than dating relationships because it becomes harder to move out and move on. So some people get stuck in a relationship they would otherwise have not remained in.)
>
> […]Cohabitation is fundamentally ambiguous. In fact, that is part—but just part—of why I believe it has become so popular. Sure, there are many cohabiting couples for whom living together was understood as a step-up in commitment, but, on average, research shows it is not associated with an increase in dedication to one’s partner.

So those are the findings from the latest study. You can find more studies on cohabitation linked here in my previous post on this topic.

Muslim mother threatens to murder daughter who was raped by Mullah

July 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist New York Times, of all places. This story happened in Afghanistan. (H/T Nancy)

Excerpt:

> It was bad enough that the alleged rape took place in the sanctity of a mosque, and that the accused man was a mullah who invoked the familiar defense that it had been consensual sex.
>
> But the victim was only 10 years old. And there was more: The authorities said her family members openly planned to carry out an "honor killing" in the case — against the young girl.
>
> […]This past week, the awful matter became even worse. On Tuesday, local policemen removed the girl from the shelter that had given her refuge and returned her to her family, despite complaints from women's activists that she was likely to be killed.
>
> […]The accused mullah, Mohammad Amin, was arrested and confessed to having sex with the girl after Quran recitation classes at the mosque on May 1, but claimed that he thought the girl was older and that she responded to his advances.
>
> The girl's own testimony, and medical evidence, supported a rape so violent that it caused a fistula, or a break in the wall between the vagina and rectum, according to the police and the official bill of indictment. She bled so profusely after the attack that she was at one point in danger of losing her life because of a delay in getting medical care.
>
> After the two women's officials began speaking out about the case, they started receiving threatening calls from mullahs — some of them Taliban, others on the government side — and from arbakai, or pro-government militiamen. One of their claims was that the girl was actually 17, and thus of marriageable age, not 10.
>
> Photographs of the girl… clearly show a pre-pubescent child, and the doctor said the girl weighed only 40 pounds. Few Afghans have birth records, and many do not know their precise ages. But the girl's mother said she was 10, and a forensic examination in the hospital agreed, saying she had not yet started menstruating or developing secondary sexual characteristics.
>
> […]In the hospital room, the doctor found the girl's mother holding her child's hand, and both were weeping. "My daughter, may dust and soil protect you now," Dr. Sarwari quoted the mother as saying. "We will make you a bed of dust and soil. We will send you to the cemetery where you will be safe."

> […]The doctor took the girl away to the shelter. Afterward, Dr. Sarwari and several women's affairs officials were threatened by the girl's family, and by other mullahs. "They call me and curse me, and threaten to kill me and my family, and say they know where I live," Dr. Sarwari said. "They say, once your American husbands leave Afghanistan, we will do what we want to you." (Her husband is an Afghan doctor and war veteran.)

I think there is a lesson in this for all the "anti-war" people who think that we should not be acting to restrain radical Islam in the Middle East. What would a libertarian or a leftist say to this woman? The answer is they have nothing to say. There are strategic reasons for us to have troops deployed in the Middle East – to restrain Iran for one. But when we pull out, we are saying that we don't care about these atrocities. The only way to do something is to be present on the scene and armed.

Ohio State University core class teaches that atheists are smarter than Christians

July 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Campus Reform.

Excerpt:

> Ohio State University (OSU) class has apparently determined another fundamental difference between Christians and atheists: their IQ points.
>
> An online quiz from the school's Psychology 1100 class, provided to *Campus Reform* via tip, asked students to pick which scenario they found most likely given that "Theo has an IQ of 100 and Aine has an IQ of 125."
>
> The correct answer? "Aine is an atheist, while Theo is a Christian."
>
> According to a student in the class who wished to remain anonymous, the question was a part of an online homework quiz. Students were required to complete a certain amount of quizzes throughout the course but were encouraged to finish all of them in order to prep for the final exam.
>
> "I understand that colleges have a liberal spin on things so it didn't surprise me to see the question, which is a sad thing," the student told *Campus Reform* in a phone interview. "But how can you really measure which religion has a higher IQ?"
>
> Psychology 1100 is a general education requirement class which can primarily be taught by an undergraduate teacher's assistant.
>
> […]Dr. Mike Adams, an outspoken conservative Christian professor at the University of North Carolina, said "every group is protected from offensive speech on campus except for conservative Christians."

The university is a challenging problem for Christians who want to make a difference. On the one hand, it's definitely a center of influence where many young people come to learn how the world works. On the other hand, if you are a conservative Christian, you will be attacked there. It would be nice if Christians could somehow influence the university, helping young people to find or keep their relationship with God in Christ. But I don't think it's a priority for most Christians. Ratio Christi does a good job, and I like to sponsor their events. We lose a lot of young people who are raised in Christian homes at the university.

Friday night movie: Midway (1976)

July 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

Description:

> The Battle of Midway, fought over and near the tiny U.S. mid-Pacific base at Midway atoll, represents the strategic high water mark of Japan's Pacific Ocean war. Prior to this action, Japan possessed general naval superiority over the United States and could usually choose where and when to attack. After Midway, the two opposing fleets were essentially equals, and the United States soon took the offensive.
>
> Japanese Combined Fleet commander Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto moved on Midway in an effort to draw out and destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet's aircraft carrier striking forces, which had embarassed the Japanese Navy in the mid-April Doolittle Raid on Japan's home islands and at the Battle of Coral Sea in early May. He planned to quickly knock down Midway's defenses, follow up with an invasion of the atoll's two small islands and establish a Japanese air base there. He expected the U.S. carriers to come out and fight, but to arrive too late to save Midway and in insufficient strength to avoid defeat by his own well-tested carrier air power.
>
> Yamamoto's intended surprise was thwarted by superior American communications intelligence, which deduced his scheme well before battle was joined. This allowed Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the U.S. Pacific Fleet commander, to establish an ambush by having his carriers ready and waiting for the Japanese. On 4 June 1942, in the second of the Pacific War's great carrier battles, the trap was sprung. The perserverance, sacrifice and skill of U.S. Navy aviators, plus a great deal of good luck on the American side, cost Japan four irreplaceable fleet carriers, while only one of the three U.S. carriers present was lost.

IMDB rating: [6.7/10]

Battle map:

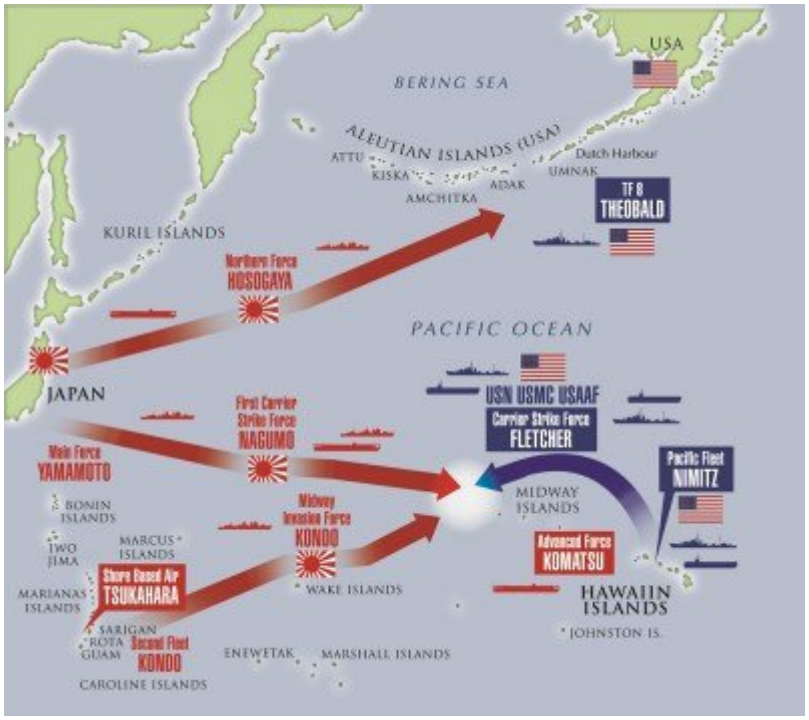

Battle of Midway Map (click for larger image)
Image found here:

http://www.warfaremagazine.co.uk/articles/The-Battle-of-Midway/41

Happy Friday!

Dennis Prager explains what feminism has achieved for women

July 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager has summarized many of my viewpoints on this blog in a tiny, tiny little article. He calls it "Four Legacies of Feminism".

Read the whole glorious thing and bask in its wisdom!

Full text:

> As we approach the 50th anniversary of the publication of Betty Friedan's feminist magnum opus, *The Feminine Mystique*, we can have a perspective on feminism that was largely unavailable heretofore.
>
> And that perspective doesn't make feminism look good. Yes, women have more opportunities to achieve career success; they are now members of most Jewish and Christian clergy; women's college sports teams are given huge amounts of money; and there are far more women in political positions of power. But the prices paid for these changes — four in particular — have been great, and outweigh the gains *for women*, let alone for men and for society.
>
> 1) The first was the feminist message to young women to have sex just as men do. There is no reason for them to lead a different sexual life than men, they were told. Just as men can have sex with any woman solely for the sake of physical pleasure, so, too, women ought to enjoy sex with any man just for the fun of it. The notion that the nature of women is to hope for at least the possibility of a long-term commitment from a man they sleep with has been dismissed as sexist nonsense.
>
> As a result, vast numbers of young American women had, and continue to have, what are called "hookups"; and for some of them it is quite possible that no psychological or emotional price has been paid. But the majority of women who are promiscuous do pay prices. One is depression. *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat recently summarized an academic study on the subject: "A young woman's likelihood of depression rose steadily as her number of partners climbed and the present stability of her sex life diminished."
>
> Long before this study, I had learned from women callers to my radio show (an hour each week — the "Male-Female Hour" — is devoted to very honest discussion of sexual and other man-woman issues) that not only did female promiscuity coincide with depression, it also often had lasting effects on women's ability to enjoy sex. Many married women told me that in order to have a normal sexual relationship with their husband, they had to work through the negative aftereffects of early promiscuity — not trusting men, feeling used, seeing sex as unrelated to love, and disdaining their husband's sexual overtures. And many

> said they still couldn't have a normal sex life with their husband.
>
> 2) The second awful legacy of feminism has been the belief among women that they could and should postpone marriage until they developed their careers. Only then should they seriously consider looking for a husband. Thus, the decade or more during which women have the best chance to attract men is spent being preoccupied with developing a career. Again, I cite woman callers to my radio show over the past 20 years who have sadly looked back at what they now, at age 40, regard as 20 wasted years. Sure, these frequently bright and talented women have a fine career. But most women are not programmed to prefer a great career to a great man and a family. They feel they were sold a bill of goods at college and by the media. And they were. It turns out that most women without a man do worse in life than fish without bicycles.
>
> 3) The third sad feminist legacy is that so many women — and men — have bought the notion that women should work outside the home that for the first time in American history, and perhaps world history, vast numbers of children are not primarily raised by their mothers or even by an extended family member. Instead they are raised for a significant part of their childhood by nannies and by workers at daycare centers. Whatever feminists may say about their only advocating choices, everyone knows the truth: Feminism regards work outside the home as more elevating, honorable, and personally productive than full-time mothering and making a home.
>
> 4) And the fourth awful legacy of feminism has been the demasculinization of men. For all of higher civilization's recorded history, becoming a man was defined overwhelmingly as taking responsibility for a family. That notion — indeed the notion of masculinity itself — is regarded by feminism as the worst of sins: patriarchy.
>
> Men need a role, or they become, as the title of George Gilder's classic book on single men describes them: *Naked Nomads*. In little more than a generation, feminism has obliterated roles. If you wonder why so many men choose not to get married, the answer lies in large part in the contemporary devaluation of the husband and of the father — of men as men, in other words. Most men want to be honored in some way — as a husband, a father, a provider, as an accomplished something; they don't want merely to be "equal partners" with a wife.
>
> In sum, thanks to feminism, very many women slept with too many men for their own happiness; postponed marriage too long to find the right man to marry; are having hired hands do much of the raising of their children; and find they are dating boy-men because manly men are so rare.
>
> Feminism exemplifies the truth of the saying, "Be careful what you wish for — you may get it."

I wish I could add something to this, but I can't because every time I think of something

to add, he says it in the next sentence.

If you like this short essay, then this medium essay arguing against feminism authored by Barbara Kay would be nice follow-up.

It might be worth forwarding these articles along to your friends. And I highly recommend books on male-female relationships and roles by George Gilder, especially "Men and Marriage".

Finding God’s will for our lives

July 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’m stealing from Amy Hall, who blogged at Stand to Reason.

Excerpt:

> Chandler Vannoy wrote about “What We Get Wrong about ‘Finding God’s Will,’” and it’s always a good time to be reminded of this:
>
> The phrase we have all heard…is we need to find God’s will for our life. And for the past 21 years, I thought I had to keep praying for God to open my eyes to the will he had laid out for me. That if I just kept searching long enough and hard enough, I would know exactly what I was supposed to do in the future.
>
> But Kevin DeYoung blew up this idea for me while I was reading his book *Just Do Something*….
>
> In the beginning of the book, DeYoung says, “We should stop thinking of God’s will like a corn maze, or a tight-rope, or a bull’s eye, or a choose-your-own-adventure novel.” This rocked my world. I always thought that if I made a wrong decision or took a wrong turn, I would be removed from God’s plan.
>
> But what he is saying here is that we are free from the burden of trying to discover God’s will ahead of time. It is not a maze for us to perfectly navigate in order to reach our end goal, but instead, God desires for us to trust Him with all of the twists and turns.
>
> Yes, God is sovereign over my life. Yes, He has specific plans for my future, but He does not expect me to find out the details of His plan before I get there. So this whole idea of finding God’s will for my life has been me searching for something God does not want to reveal.
>
> The answer for making good decisions is to learn wisdom from the words God has already given us, and to rest in the knowledge that God has guaranteed that all things work together for the good of making us more like Christ (Romans 8:28-29). Even if a wise decision leads to unforeseen difficulties, that doesn’t mean it was the “wrong” one. In fact, difficulties are the most powerful tool God regularly uses to shape us.

I think this is good advice for everyone.

Here’s a wonderful post on decision making and the will of God posted on Neil’s blog. Neil links to another post where someone is trying to figure out what God wants him to do.

Excerpt:

> **Really short version:** Aside from direct and clear personal revelation from God, you don’t have access to his sovereign will when making decisions. Therefore you must look at other factors. **If it isn’t moral, don’t do it. If it is moral**

> **but not wise, don't do it. If it is moral and wise, then use your personal preferences.**
>
> Using this model you can end up with a wise and biblical decision, but you have avoided the traps of the "God told me to ____" routine. People who run around saying that God told them this and that convey a super-spirituality that can leave less mature believers wondering if they really have a relationship with God (i.e., "God doesn't tell me every little thing to do, so maybe I don't really know him.").

He has a helpful picture posted as well:

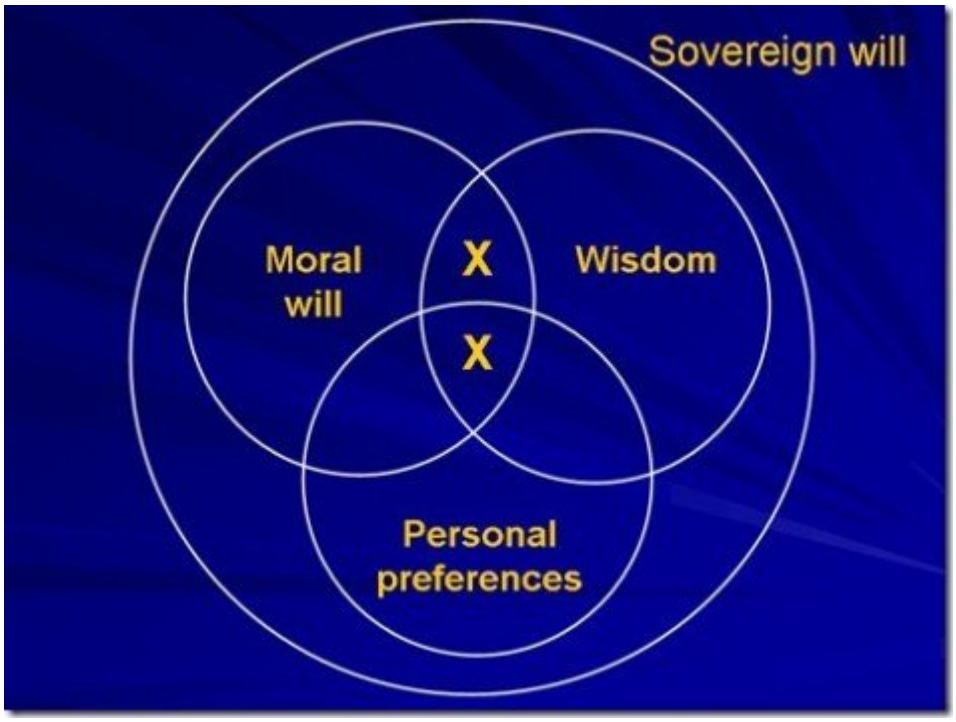

This is actually a very important topic for me, because I like making plans and making good decisions. I like being the quarterback or squad leader of my own life. I like to pick objectives and then make plans to achieve them. (Nothing too exotic, just simple stuff like saving money or reading more books)

Actually, I really oppose the idea that God has a magical fairy tale will for each person that will make them happy and fulfilled. For me, life isn't like that. I don't expect God to lead me along like a child at a scavenger hunt. I expect to survey the battlefield where I am and then *do something* to make a difference. There are lots of things you can do that will please God. Should you focus on your career and sponsor apologetics conferences? Or should you use your spare time preparing Sunday school lessons? *There are lots of good things you could do to please God*. Your job is to pick the one that will be the most effective. It doesn't matter if it makes you happy, it only matters if it's effective and if you are good at it.

Who is Rifleman Dodd?

A while back, I was busily working my way through the U.S. Marine Corps Official Reading List, and I came across a book by C.S. Forester called *Rifleman Dodd*, or alternatively titled *Death to the French*. It's a work of historical fiction that takes place during the

Napoleonic wars. The story is about a British marksman named Dodd, who is cut off from his own lines during a withdrawal maneuver. He is subsequently left to fend for himself behind enemy lines. An ordinary man might be full of despair and forget about his mission entirely. But Dodd is no ordinary man. Not only does he find a way to survive by finding food to eat, water to drink and places to sleep, but he also tries to remember his orders and to think about what he can do to advance the cause of his General, the Duke of Wellington.

Here's an excerpt from a gritty book review:

> It's about a green-coated British infantry rifleman in the Napoleonic Wars, an age when rifles were a novelty and most of the army was red-coated and carried muskets. Private Matthew Dodd gets separated from his regiment during a retreat and finds himself stranded behind enemy (French) lines in Portugal. With the occasional aid of some natives, but mostly on his own, he harasses the French with his rifle and tries to prevent them from building a bridge across the Tagus River. It's a remarkable tale of survival and solitary achievement, of a rank-and-file soldier who lives by his wits and slowly learns to make plans without orders, and shows leadership qualities and a knowledge of warfare.

I think we're in the same situation as Dodd.

There is no point in us looking for breadcrumb trails to happiness at this point. That's not the point of Christianity. The point of Christianity is friendship with God, imitation of Christ, honoring moral obligations, self-sacrificial love for your neighbor (and even your enemies!), and dedication to the truth – whether anyone else likes you or not. It's not supposed to make you happy, and it's not necessarily going to be a normal life like everyone else has. Things may not work out the way you'd like them to.

We seem to be making such a big deal about compassion and forgiveness in the Christian life these days – such a big emphasis on our feelings. Almost like we have forgotten that we have obligations to our friend – and his objectives. A relationship doesn't mean that one person completely disregards the character and goals of the other person and then is automatically granted forgiveness whenever they want it. That's not a friendship – that's using someone else for your own ends. Maybe it's time to remember what this is all about.

William Lane Craig and atheist Daniel Dennett discuss cosmology and fine-tuning

July 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This audio records a part of the Greer-Heard debate in 2007, between prominent atheist Daniel Dennett and lame theistic evolutionist Alister McGrath. Craig was one of the respondents, and this was the best part of the event. It is a little bit advanced, but I have found that if you listen to things like this over and over with your friends and family, and then try to explain it to non-Christians, you'll get it.

By the way, this is mostly original material from Craig, dated 2007, and he delivers the speech perfectly, so it's entertaining to listen to.

Craig presents three arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe:

- the contingency argument
- the kalam cosmological argument
- the teleological argument

He also discusses Dennett's published responses to these arguments.

Dennett's response to Craig's paper

Here is my snarky paraphrase of Dennett's reponse: (this is very snarky, because Dennett was just awful)

- Craig's three arguments are bulletproof, the premises are plausible, and grounded by the best cutting edge science we know today.
- I cannot find anything wrong with his arguments right now, but maybe later when I go home it will come to me what's wrong with them.
- But atheism is true even if all the evidence is against it today. I know it's true by my blind faith.
- The world is so mysterious, and all the science of today will be overturned tomorrow so that atheism will be rational again. I have blind faith that this new evidence will be discovered any minute.
- Just because the cause of the beginning of time is eternal and the cause of the beginning of space is non-physical, the cause doesn't have to be God.
- "Maybe the cause of the universe is the idea of an apple, or the square root of 7". (HE LITERALLY SAID THAT!)
- The principle of triangulation might have brought the entire physical universe into being out of nothing.
- I don't understand anything about non-physical causation, even though I cannot even speak meaningful sentences unless I have a non-physical mind that is causing my body to emit the meaningful sentences in a non-determined manner.
- Alexander Vilenkin is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat

him up good with phantom arguments.
- Alan Guth is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- This science stuff is so complicated to me – so Craig can't be right about it even though he's published about it and debated it all with the best atheists on the planet.
- If God is outside of time, then this is just deism, not theism. (This part is correct, but Craig believes that God enters into time at the moment of creation – so that it is not a deistic God)
- If deism is true, then I can still be an atheist, because a Creator and Designer of the universe is compatible with atheism.
- I'm pretty sure that Craig doesn't have any good arguments that can argue for Christianity – certainly not an historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus based on minimal facts, that he's defended against the most prominent historians on the planet in public debates and in prestigous books and research journals.

This is a very careful treatment of the arguments that Dr. Craig goes over briefly during his debates. Recommended.

Physicist George Ellis interviewed by science writer John Horgan in Scientific American

July 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm mentioned George Ellis on this blog before, specifically on his doubts about the speculative multiverse cosmology.

Here he is interviewed in Scientific American. (H/T Think Apologetics)

Intro:

> Biologist Rupert Sheldrake, whom I interviewed in my last post, wasn't the only fascinating scientist I hung out with recently at Howthelightgetsin, a festival hosted by the Institute of Arts & Ideas. I also befriended George F. R. Ellis, the physicist-mathematician-cosmologist, an authority on the Big Bang and other cosmic mysteries. Ellis and I hit it off initially because we share some—how shall I put it?—concerns about the direction of physics, but I soon discovered that his interests range far beyond physics. He has published papers and books not only on physics and cosmology (including the 1973 classic *The Large-Scale Structure of Space-Time*, co-authored with Stephen Hawking) but also on philosophy, complexity theory, neuroscience, education and even low-income housing. (See his website, and his terrific 2011 critique of multiverse theories in *Scientific American*.) A native of South Africa, Ellis is professor emeritus at the University of Cape Town, where he taught for decades, and has also held positions at Cambridge, the University of Texas, the Fermi Institute and other institutions around the globe.

Awesome:

> ***Horgan: Lawrence Krauss, in A Universe from Nothing, claims that physics has basically solved the mystery of why there is something rather than nothing. Do you agree?***
>
> Ellis: Certainly not. He is presenting untested speculative theories of how things came into existence out of a pre-existing complex of entities, including variational principles, quantum field theory, specific symmetry groups, a bubbling vacuum, all the components of the standard model of particle physics, and so on. He does not explain in what way these entities could have pre-existed the coming into being of the universe, why they should have existed at all, or why they should have had the form they did. And he gives no experimental or observational process whereby we could test these vivid speculations of the supposed universe-generation mechanism. How indeed can you test what existed before the universe existed? You can't.
>
> Thus what he is presenting is not tested science. It's a philosophical speculation, which he apparently believes is so compelling he does not have to give any

> specification of evidence that would confirm it is true. Well, you can't get any evidence about what existed before space and time came into being. Above all he believes that these mathematically based speculations solve thousand year old philosophical conundrums, without seriously engaging those philosophical issues. The belief that all of reality can be fully comprehended in terms of physics and the equations of physics is a fantasy. As pointed out so well by Eddington in his Gifford lectures, they are partial and incomplete representations of physical, biological, psychological, and social reality.
>
> And above all Krauss does not address why the laws of physics exist, why they have the form they have, or in what kind of manifestation they existed before the universe existed (which he must believe if he believes they brought the universe into existence). Who or what dreamt up symmetry principles, Lagrangians, specific symmetry groups, gauge theories, and so on? He does not begin to answer these questions.
>
> It's very ironic when he says philosophy is bunk and then himself engages in this kind of attempt at philosophy. It seems that science education should include some basic modules on Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hume, and the other great philosophers, as well as writings of more recent philosophers such as Tim Maudlin and David Albert.

He likes fine-tuning, but not multiverse and string theory:

> ***Horgan: Are you a fan of multiverse theories? String theory? The anthropic principle?***
>
> No (may be true but unproveable, much too much untestable speculation about existence of infinities of entities, ill defined and untestable probability measures), no (too much speculative introduction of very complex unseeable entities, treats gravity just like any other force), yes (however one responds to it, it's a real question that deserves consideration). Fine tuning of fundamental physics parameters is required in order that we can exist. Examining this issue has led to many very interesting studies.
>
> ***Horgan: Physicist Sean Carroll has argued that falsifiability is overrated as a criterion for judging whether theories should be taken seriously. Do you agree?***
>
> Ellis: This is a major step backwards to before the evidence-based scientific revolution initiated by Galileo and Newton. The basic idea is that our speculative theories, extrapolating into the unknown and into untestable areas from well-tested areas of physics, are so good they have to be true. History proves that is the path to delusion: just because you have a good theory does not prove it is true. The other defence is that there is no other game in town. But there may not be any such game.
>
> Scientists should strongly resist such an attack on the very foundations of its own

> success. Luckily it is a very small subset of scientists who are making this proposal.

Free will is real:

> ***Horgan: In some of your writings, you warn against excessive determinism in physics, and science. Could you summarize your concerns?***
>
> Many scientists are strong reductionists who believe that physics alone determines outcomes in the real world, This is demonstrably untrue – for example the computer on which I am writing this could not possibly have come into being through the agency of physics alone.
>
> The issue is that these scientists are focusing on some strands in the web of causation that actually exist, and ignoring others that are demonstrably there – such as ideas in our minds, or algorithms embodied in computer programs. These demonstrably act in a top-down way to cause physical effects in the real world. All these processes and actual outcomes are contextually dependent, and this allows the effectiveness of processes such as adaptive selection that are the key to the emergence of genuine complexity.
>
> As I stated above, mathematical equations only represent part of reality, and should not be confused with reality. A specific related issue: there is a group of people out there writing papers based on the idea that physics is a computational process. But a physical law is not an algorithm. So who chooses the computational strategy and the algorithms that realise a specific physical law? (Finite elements perhaps?) What language is it written in? (Does Nature use Java or C++? What machine code is used?) Where is the CPU? What is used for memory, and in what way are read and write commands executed? Additionally if it's a computation, how does Nature avoid the halting problem? It's all a very bad analogy that does not work.
>
> ***Horgan: Einstein, in the following quote, seemed to doubt free will: "If the moon, in the act of completing its eternal way around the Earth, were gifted with self-consciousness, it would feel thoroughly convinced that it was traveling its way of its own accord…. So would a Being, endowed with higher insight and more perfect intelligence, watching man and his doings, smile about man's illusion that he was acting according to his own free will." Do you believe in free will?***
>
> Ellis: Yes. Einstein is perpetuating the belief that all causation is bottom up. This simply is not the case, as I can demonstrate with many examples from sociology, neuroscience, physiology, epigenetics, engineering, and physics. Furthermore if Einstein did not have free will in some meaningful sense, then he could not have been responsible for the theory of relativity – it would have been a product of lower level processes but not of an intelligent mind choosing between possible

> options.
>
> I find it very hard to believe this to be the case – indeed it does not seem to make any sense. Physicists should pay attention to Aristotle's four forms of causation – if they have the free will to decide what they are doing. If they don't, then why waste time talking to them? They are then not responsible for what they say.

Sometimes, you have to just point out that a speculation is a speculation, and that we do not prefer speculations over experimental results. The data we have is consistent with an origin of the universe out of nothing, and the best explanation of this effect is a *supernatural* cause. Period.

IRS makes deal with militant atheist group to monitor sermon content

July 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> The next time your pastor delivers a pro-life sermon or urges the congregation to stand up for pro-life values in the political or public arena, he could be taken to task by the IRS.
>
> Alliance Defending Freedom asked the Internal Revenue Service Tuesday to release all documents related to its recent decision to settle a lawsuit with an atheist group that claims the IRS has adopted new protocols and procedures for the investigation of churches.
>
> ADF submitted the Freedom of Information Act request after learning of the IRS's agreement with Freedom From Religion Foundation in a press release the group issued on July 17 concerning its lawsuit *Freedom From Religion Foundation v. Koskinen*, which accused the agency of failing to investigate churches the way the atheist group would like.
>
> "Secrecy breeds mistrust, and the IRS should know this in light of its recent scandals involving the investigation of conservative groups," said ADF Litigation Counsel Christiana Holcomb. "We are asking the IRS to disclose the new protocols and procedures it apparently adopted for determining whether to investigate churches. What it intends to do to churches must be brought into the light of day."
>
> […]According to the Freedom From Religion Foundation press release, "The IRS has now resolved the signature authority issue necessary to initiate church examinations. The IRS also has adopted procedures for reviewing, evaluating and determining whether to initiate church investigations."

I wonder what FFRF would do if they were more powerful?

Maybe something like this what Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the

> Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

It’s not Christians who do use government to stifle dissent – it’s atheists.

New York Times reporter urges “ruthless” elimination of dissent from gay agenda

July 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National Review talks about a very striking tweet from a leftist New York Times reporter. (This is why I call them “leftist”)

Excerpt:

> Last night, *New York Times* reporter Josh Barro tweeted out a disturbing message: “Anti-LGBT attitudes are terrible for people in all sorts of communities. They linger and oppress, and we need to stamp them out, ruthlessly.”
>
> This is rather shocking. Barro is no angry blogger writing manifestos in his basement. He is a respected reporter from a prestigious newspaper that prides itself on equanimity in the face of heated debate. Yet he seems, by any reasonable measure, to be fomenting a campaign to rout out all dissenters from the sexual revolution.
>
> […]Barro’s sexual fundamentalism wants any dissent marginalized and he’s not reluctant to admit that. This attitude, which is emblematic of the increasing intolerance in many sectors of culture towards those with traditional beliefs about sexuality, penalizes citizens for their beliefs. What we see playing out, once more, is that for liberalism to take root, it must take root by authoritarian impulse where the lies of the sexual revolution, to be cemented, must be enforced through acts of social and legal coercion.

And the National Review article reminds us of the last attempt to “ruthlessly” “stamp out” traditional views on gay marriage, by convicted domestic terrorist Floyd Lee Corkins:

> Consider the real-world actions against the Family Research Council (FRC), when a shooter in 2012 broke into its building with the intent of murdering staffers. How did this come about? The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) labeled FRC a “hate group.” The shooter, who wounded and would have killed a brave security guard, confessed that he was influenced by the materials posted on the SPLC’s website. Similarly, Barro’s words give license to those who would seek to disparage people with traditional beliefs about sexuality. Even if Barro doesn’t actually want violence to occur, his rhetoric could help incite it.

This is why I have an alias. Because when are dealing with people who celebrate sin, anything is possible. An alias won’t protect you forever, but it’s essential if you intend to disagree with fascists like Josh Barro.

I think people should be very careful about letting their real views out to people on the secular left. There is no morality there to stop them from doing anything. When God is dismissed from a person’s worldview, anything is possible. Anything. If you took a poll

among Democrats asking whether people should be fired from their jobs for believing in traditional marriage, like Brendan Eich, I have no doubt that they would affirm that he should be. This is the mainstream view now, and as you can see, people on the left are rapidly approaching the view of the anti-FRC domestic terrorist. Stamp them out ruthlessly. And with no awareness of what he’s really said, because that’s what’s really in his heart.

In California, 95% of professor's donations goes to Democrats

July 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The College Fix.

Excerpt:

> With midterm elections looming, an analysis of professors' recent campaign contributions to California lawmakers found that about 95 percent of their donations went to Democratic politicians.
>
> Dozens of scholars have donated nearly $200,000 to a variety of Democratic representatives, while Republican politicians only netted about $9,000 from scholars, Federal Election Commission records show.
>
> In effect, contributions by professors to Democrat lawmakers outweigh donations to Republican ones by 22 to 1, according to the *The College Fix* analysis.
>
> The analysis used figures listed on the Federal Election Commission website from January 2013 through 2014 spring filings. Both Political Action Committee and individual campaign contributions were included in the data. Only donors with occupations listed as "professor" were included in the tally.
>
> The survey looked at all 53 U.S. congressional representatives in California as well as its two U.S. Senators, 40 of whom are Democrat and 15 are Republican.
>
> The California lawmaker who appears a favorite among professors is House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) Pelosi's Victory Fund PAC garnered the largest dollar amount in donations from professors by far at $50,500.

When people go to university, so often they think, I'll just study whatever I want. But I think given the bias of most professors, a better plan is to focus on studying something in the STEM fields, especially math, engineering and computer science, where you wouldn't be as exposed to the bias of these professors. Even if the professors are biased, there is not much they can do to inject their bias into a STEM course. It's something to think about – and STEM degrees pay better, too.

Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage

July 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A must-read long paper from the Heritage Foundation. It's a great concise presentation of the reasons why the United States should not redefine marriage. (H/T A tweet from Ryan T. Anderson)

Abstract:

> *Marriage is based on the truth that men and women are complementary, the biological fact that reproduction depends on a man and a woman, and the reality that children need a mother and a father. Redefining marriage does not simply expand the existing understanding of marriage; it rejects these truths. Marriage is society's least restrictive means of ensuring the well-being of children. By encouraging the norms of marriage—monogamy, sexual exclusivity, and permanence—the state strengthens civil society and reduces its own role. The future of this country depends on the future of marriage. The future of marriage depends on citizens understanding what it is and why it matters and demanding that government policies support, not undermine, true marriage.*

Excerpt:

> Supporters of redefinition use the following analogy: Laws defining marriage as a union of a man and a woman are unjust—fail to treat people equally—exactly like laws that prevented interracial marriage. Yet such appeals beg the question of what is essential to marriage. They assume exactly what is in dispute: that gender is as irrelevant as race in state recognition of marriage. However, race has nothing to with marriage, and racist laws kept the races apart. Marriage has everything to do with men and women, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers and children, and that is why principle-based policy has defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman.
>
> Marriage must be color-blind, but it cannot be gender-blind. The color of two people's skin has nothing to do with what kind of marital bond they have. However, the sexual difference between a man and a woman is central to what marriage is. Men and women regardless of their race can unite in marriage, and children regardless of their race need moms and dads. To acknowledge such facts requires an understanding of what, at an essential level, makes a marriage.

And a bit later:

> If the law taught a falsehood about marriage, it would make it harder for people to live out the norms of marriage because marital norms make no sense, as matters of principle, if marriage is just intense emotional feeling. No reason of

> principle requires an emotional union to be permanent or limited to two persons, much less sexually exclusive. Nor should it be inherently oriented to family life and shaped by its demands. This does not mean that a couple could not decide to live out these norms where temperament or taste so motivated them, just that there is no reason of principle to demand that they do so. Legally enshrining this alternate view of marriage would undermine the norms whose link to the common good is the basis for state recognition of marriage in the first place.
>
> Insofar as society weakens the rational foundation for marriage norms, fewer people would live them out, and fewer people would reap the benefits of the marriage institution. This would affect not only spouses, but also the well-being of their children. The concern is not so much that a handful of gay or lesbian couples would be raising children, but that it would be very difficult for the law to send a message that *fathers matter* when it has redefined marriage to make *fathers optional*.

And one last one:

> In fact, much of this is already occurring. Heritage Foundation Visiting Fellow Thomas Messner has documented multiple instances in which redefining marriage has already become a nightmare for religious liberty.[48] If marriage is redefined to include same-sex relationships, then those who continue to believe the truth about marriage—that it is by nature a union of a man and a woman—would face three different types of threats to their liberty: the administrative state, nondiscrimination law, and private actors in a culture that is now hostile to traditional views.[49]
>
> After Massachusetts redefined marriage to include same-sex relationships, Catholic Charities of Boston was forced to discontinue its adoption services rather than place children with same-sex couples against its principles.[50] Massachusetts public schools began teaching grade-school students about same-sex marriage, defending their decision because they are "committed to teaching about the world they live in, and in Massachusetts same-sex marriage is legal." A Massachusetts appellate court ruled that parents have no right to exempt their children from these classes.[51]
>
> The New Mexico Human Rights Commission prosecuted a photographer for declining to photograph a same-sex "commitment ceremony." Doctors in California were successfully sued for declining to perform an artificial insemination on a woman in a same-sex relationship. Owners of a bed and breakfast in Illinois who declined to rent their facility for a same-sex civil union ceremony and reception were sued for violating the state nondiscrimination law. A Georgia counselor was fired after she referred someone in a same-sex relationship to another counselor.[52] In fact, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty reports that "over 350 separate state anti-discrimination provisions would likely be triggered by recognition of same-sex marriage."[53]

This article is long and comprehensive. It will take some time to read. It's includes logical arguments as well as empirical evidence from research – with footnotes. I really recommend taking a look at the article. Even if it takes a long time to read, it will definitely expand your mind to think about why we had a definition of marriage in the first place, and what we would lose by changing that definition. When you debate people who want to redefine marriage, it's very important to appeal to logical arguments and evidence from studies. Get the conversation away from emotions and instead introduce facts and arguments.

You can get an even longer treatment in the new book by Ryan T. Anderson and his co-authors Sherif Girgis and Robert P. George. This is *the* book to get on the marriage issue.

Related posts

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- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

July 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude others
- It's meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can't say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and

permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

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Man brings 12-year-old rape victim to three abortion clinics, none report him

July 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> According to the group Life Dynamics out of Texas who just published a shocking report on how sexual pedophiles use abortion to cover their rapes, one rape victim was taken to three – yes three clinics who, according to Life Dynamics, failed to report the abuse.
>
> As Life Dynamics reports, according to court documents, 40 year-old Joseph Coles (pictured right), began having sex with his stepdaughter when she was 10-years-old.
>
> At 12, the stepdaughter became pregnant and her mother took her to the Cleveland Surgi-Center abortion clinic. The abortion was botched and the girl almost died from internal hemorrhaging.
>
> Although not noted in the Life Dynamics report, this blogger discovered that Cleveland Surgi-Center is a National Abortion Federation (NAF) abortion clinic which claims to have funding available. Wonder if they helped pay for this victim's abortion?
>
> Life Dynamics points out that given that the assaults on the child resumed afterward, it is clear the clinic did not file a report.
>
> Following the abortion, Coles persuaded the girl's mother to put her on birth control; however, in 2004 the child again became pregnant by Coles and was taken to Planned Parenthood in Shaker Heights.
>
> There she refused to submit to the abortion at that time but relented three days later and was taken to the Preterm Abortion Clinic in Cleveland.
>
> As before, it is evident no report was made by either Planned Parenthood or Preterm since the assaults on the child resumed after the second abortion.
>
> In June of the following year, police were made aware of the situation and Coles was arrested.

Oh, we are dealing with really ethical people, here, in these abortion clinics. I don't think they need to be regulated at all, we should just let them operate freely. Look how well that worked with Gosnell.

Christians: the world’s most persecuted people

July 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this article from the leftist UK Independent.

Excerpt:

> Most people in the West would be surprised by the answer to the question: who are the most persecuted people in the world? According to the International Society for Human Rights, a secular group with members in 38 states worldwide, 80 per cent of all acts of religious discrimination in the world today are directed at Christians.
>
> The Centre for the Study of Global Christianity in the United States estimates that 100,000 Christians now die every year, targeted because of their faith – that is 11 every hour. The Pew Research Center says that hostility to religion reached a new high in 2012, when Christians faced some form of discrimination in 139 countries, almost three-quarters of the world’s nations.
>
> All this seems counter-intuitive here in the West where the history of Christianity has been one of cultural dominance and control ever since the Emperor Constantine converted and made the Roman Empire Christian in the 4th century AD.
>
> Yet the plain fact is that Christians are languishing in jail for blasphemy in Pakistan, and churches are burned and worshippers regularly slaughtered in Nigeria and Egypt, which has recently seen its worst anti-Christian violence in seven centuries.
>
> The most violent anti-Christian pogrom of the early 21st century saw as many as 500 Christians hacked to death by machete-wielding Hindu radicals in Orissa, India, with thousands more injured and 50,000 made homeless. In Burma, Chin and Karen Christians are routinely subjected to imprisonment, torture, forced labour and murder.
>
> Persecution is increasing in China; and in North Korea a quarter of the country’s Christians live in forced labour camps after refusing to join the national cult of the state’s founder, Kim Il-Sung. Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and the Maldives all feature in the 10 worst places to be a Christian.

You don’t hear much in the media about this, and our foreign seems to be in retreat against radical Islam under this President.

Oh wait, Obama did have this to say:

> On Sunday, President Obama and First Lady Michelle released a statement thanking Muslim Americans for their many “achievements and contributions… to building the very fabric of our nation and strengthening the core of our

> democracy.”
>
> The comments were made to mark the celebration of Eid-al-Fitr, a time of spiritual renewal for Muslims which comes at the end of the month-long fast of Ramadan. The Obamas said in their statement that Eid “celebrates the common values that unite us in our humanity” and “welcomed their commitment to giving back to their communities.” The International Business Times reports that during Eid, Muslims join in Islamic prayer, while saying “Allahu Akbar,” or “God is Great,” and feasting.
>
> The statement further reads that the administration “wishes Muslims in the United States and around the world a blessed and joyous celebration.” The letter ended with salutation of “Eid Mubarak,” which roughly means “blessed celebration.”

I’m sure that many Muslims are law abiding, but maybe he could have urged them not to be so… violent. I’m asking too much, aren’t I?

New e-mails: IRS official Lois Lerner called conservatives “a**holes” and “terrorists”

July 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Full text:

> A newly discovered email exchange from Lois Lerner’s official IRS email account “directly demonstrates Ms. Lerner’s deep animus towards conservatives, which she refers to as ‘—holes,'” House Ways and Means Committee Chair Dave Camp wrote in a letterto Attorney General Eric Holder on Wednesday.
>
> In that Nov. 9, 2012 email, Lerner further suggests that conservatives will ruin the country: “So we don’t need to worry about alien teRrorists (sic). It’s our own crazies that will take us down,” she wrote.
>
> Camp (R-Mich.) told Holder the email “shows that Ms. Lerner’s mistreatment of conservative groups was driven by her personal hostility toward conservatives.”
>
> Camp said he also has discovered that Lerner used her personal email to conduct official business,including confidential tax return information, and he once again urged the Justice Department to ramp up its investigation:
>
> “While the Committee has not seen any evidence of a serious investigation by your Department, it is my sincere hope that in light of this new, strong evidence that you immediately begin aggressively investigating this matter or appoint a special counsel.”
>
> Camp warned that failure to do so “will only further erode public trust” in the Internal Revenue Service and the Justice Department.
>
> Ways and Means is one of three congressional committees investigating the way the IRS, during Lerner’s tenure, handled groups seeking tax-exempt status. The IRS admits that conservative groups were singled out for inappropriate scrutiny and delay before the 2012 election.

But of course all the e-mails showing the direct intent to use government to persecute conservatives have been “lost”, as Newsbusters recalls:

> The committee released a partial transcript of an interview it conducted last week with IRS Deputy Associate Chief Counsel Tom Kane, who reported the computer problems. When asked how many others might be having this problem, Kane said it was “less than 20.”
>
> The IRS has told the House that several more IRS workers have experienced a computer crash, including some who worked with former IRS official Lois Lerner. Among that number are a few who worked closely at the IRS division dealing with tax-exempt organizations, which Lerner headed. Lerner has since become the

> prime target of Republican investigators, although the GOP has been hindered by the supposed loss of her emails.
>
> According to the committee, another IRS official who suffered computer problems is Justin Lowe, a technical adviser to the commissioner of Tax-Exempt and Government Entities.
>
> Another is David Fish, an adviser to Lois Lerner. Andy Megosh was also named; he is a manager of Exempt Organizations Guidance.

Has the mainstream media done a good job of reporting on all this?

No:

> The saga of Lois Lerner's missing emails took a bunch of twists and turns this past week, but you wouldn't know that if you only got your news from the Big Three (ABC, CBS, NBC) networks. On July 21, it was reported that even more IRS officials had their hard drives crash on them, including employees who "routinely corresponded" with Lerner. What a coincidence! On that same day it was revealed that a top IRS official was uncertain if backup tapes of Lerner's lost emails still existed. The next day the story changed again when it was reported that Lerner's hard drive was only "scratched" and the data was recoverable.
>
> Then on July 23 the head of the IRS testified that the back up tapes had finally been discovered but stressed he does not "how they found them" or "whether there's anything on them or not." So how many of these intriguing nuggets were reported on any of the network evening or morning shows last week?
>
> Zero.
>
> The last time the IRS story was mentioned on the Big Three nets was almost a week ago on the July 19 *CBS This Morning*. The last time ABC offered an IRS story was on the July 17 *Good Morning America*. And you have to go all the way back to last month (June 24 *Today* show) to find the last time NBC touched the scandal.
>
> And the Lerner missing email story didn't exactly heat up coverage of the IRS targeting controversy. Since the story first broke over a month ago on June 13 there have been a total of just 18 stories (CBS 10, NBC 5, ABC 3) on the IRS scandal through the morning of July 28.

I always find it a mystery when I go to the gym and see people watching something other than Fox News for news. Do they actually think that these mainstream leftist networks show news?

Stephen Baskerville: five myths about no-fault divorce

July 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Catholic News Agency.

Introduction:

> Almost four decades after the "no-fault" divorce revolution began in California, misconceptions abound. Even the many books about divorce, including myriad self-help manuals, are full of inaccurate and misleading information. No public debate preceded the introduction of no-fault divorce laws in the 1970s, and no debate has taken place since.
>
> Yet divorce-on-demand is exacting a devastating toll on our children, our social order, our economy, and even our constitutional rights. A recent study estimates the financial cost of divorce to taxpayers at $112 billion annually. Recent demands to legitimize same-sex marriage almost certainly follow from the divorce revolution, since gay activists readily acknowledge that they only desire to marry under the loosened terms that have resulted from the new divorce laws. Divorce also contributes to a dangerous increase in the power of the state over private life.

Here are the five myths about no-fault divorce:

- No-fault divorce permitted divorce by mutual consent, thus making divorce less acrimonious
- We cannot force people to remain married and should not try
- No-fault divorce has led men to abandon their wives and children
- When couples cannot agree or cooperate about matters like how the children should be raised, a judge must decide according to "the best interest of the child"
- Divorce must be made easy because of domestic violence

And the details about number three:

> Myth 3: No-fault divorce has led men to abandon their wives and children.
>
> Fact: This does happen (wives more often than children), but it is greatly exaggerated. The vast majority of no-fault divorces — especially those involving children — are filed by wives. In fact, as Judy Parejko, author of Stolen Vows, has shown, the no-fault revolution was engineered largely by feminist lawyers, with the cooperation of the bar associations, as part of the sexual revolution. Overwhelmingly, it has served to separate large numbers of children from their fathers. Sometimes the genders are reversed, so that fathers take children from mothers. But either way, the main effect of no-fault is to make children weapons and pawns to gain power through the courts, not the "abandonment" of them by

> either parent.

Al Mohler wrote about the history of no-fault divorce a while back, and I think it's worth reviewing why we have this lousy law.

> The story behind America's love affair with no-fault divorce is a sad and instructive tale. As Baskerville documents, no-fault divorce laws emerged in the United States during the 1970s and quickly spread across the nation. Even though only nine states had no-fault divorce laws in 1977, by 1995, every state had legalized no-fault divorce.
>
> Behind all this is an ideological revolution driven by feminism and facilitated by this society's embrace of autonomous individualism. Baskerville argues that divorce "became the most devastating weapon in the arsenal of feminism, because it creates millions of gender battles on the most personal level." As far back as 1947, the National Association of Women Lawyers [NAWL] was pushing for what we now know as no-fault divorce. More recently, NAWL claims credit for the divorce revolution, describing it as "the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken."
>
> The feminists and NAWL were not working alone, of course. Baskerville explains that the American Bar Association "persuaded the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws [NCCUSL] to produce the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act." Eventually, this led to a revolution in law and convulsions in society at large. This legal revolution effectively drove a stake into the heart of marriage itself, with inevitable consequences. In effect, no-fault divorce has become the catalyst for one of the most destructive cultural shifts in human history. Now, no-fault divorce is championed by many governments in the name of human rights, and America's divorce revolution is spreading around the world under the banner of "liberation."

And note that Democrats oppose any effort to reform laws that make it easy to break up marriages:

> A basic dishonesty on the question of divorce pervades our political culture. Baskerville cites Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm as referring to divorce as a couple's "private decision." Granholm's comments came as she vetoed a bill intended to reform divorce law in her state. The danger and dishonesty of referring to divorce as a couple's "private decision" is evident in the fact that this supposedly private decision imposes a reality, not only on the couple, but also on children and the larger society. Indeed, the "private decision" is really not made by a couple at all–but only by any spouse demanding a divorce.

So, no-fault was pushed by two groups: feminists and trial lawyers.

There's a lot of talk these days about gay marriage and how it undermines marital norms and normalizes raising children without either their biological father or biological mother.

But before there was gay marriage, there was no-fault divorce, which deprives children of their biological father. There is no provision for no-fault divorce in the Bible, so it seems to me that Christians should be against frivolous divorce just like we are against same-sex marriage.

Judge orders DOJ to release Fast and Furious documents blocked by Obama

August 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Katie Pavlich reports on it for Townhall.com.

Excerpt:

> Thanks to a Freedom of Information Act Lawsuit pursued against the Department of Justice by government watchdog Judicial Watch, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia has ruled documents being withheld from Congress under President Obama's claim of executive privilege must be turned over. Obama made the claim on the same day Attorney General Eric Holder was voted in criminal and civil contempt of Congress in June 2012.
>
> "This order forces the Obama DOJ, for the first time, to provide a detailed listing of all documents that it has withheld from Congress and the American people for years about the deadly Fast and Furious gun running scandal," Judicial Watch released in a statement.
>
> The FOIA lawsuit has been ongoing for 16-months and is now proceeding after a lengthy delay. The Justice Department originally asked the court for an indefinite hold on a FOIA request from Judicial Watch, citing executive privilege and an ongoing investigation. That indefinite hold request was shot down more than a year ago.
>
> The documentation DOJ is required to now turn over is a "Vaughn index" of "all requested Fast and Furious materials from a June 2012 Judicial Watch FOIA request."

> A Vaughn index must: (1) identify each document withheld; (2) state the statutory exemption claimed; and (3) explain how disclosure would damage the interests protected by the claimed exemption." In ordering the DOJ to provide Judicial Watch the Vaughn index, the Court ruled, "In this circuit, when an agency is withholding documents under exemption claims, courts require that the agency provide a Vaughn index so that the FOIA requester – at a distinct informational disadvantage – may test the agency's claims."

> "Once again, Judicial Watch has beat Congress to the punch in getting key information about another Obama scandal – this time, the Fast and Furious outrage," Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton said in a statement. "A federal court has ordered the Obama administration to produce information that could, for the first time, provide specific details who in the administration is responsible for Fast and Furious lies to Congress and the American people. This is a battle that put Eric Holder in contempt of Congress, saw Nixonian assertions of executive privilege by Barack Obama, and a hapless Congress in face of all this

> lawlessness. Finally, we may get some accountability for Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry and the countless others murdered as a result of the insanely reckless Obama administration program."

Unfortunately, this is coming too late for Obama's 2012 re-election contest, and the mainstream media is unlikely to report it, just like they failed to report the IRS scandal. But if we all share this story, it will help people to realize how lawless and corrupt this administration really is. It's gangster government, as Michele Bachmann said. The crooks are in charge.

Related posts

- Obama campaign contributor and gun control advocate ran Fast and Furious
- Obama covers-up DOJ operation that allowed gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Republicans prepare contempt citation for AG Eric Holder over Fast and Furious
- Eric Holder wants to brainwash people against legal gun ownership
- Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent's murder
- Eric Holder testifies on Fast and Furious gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Fast and Furious assault weapons seized from drug cartel enforcer's home
- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Border patrol agent equipped with BEAN BAGS shot dead by illegal alien
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference

Samaritan’s Purse physician contracts Ebola while serving in Liberia

August 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Kent Brantly

Here’s the story from the Samaritan’s Purse web site.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Kent Brantly and Nancy Writebol are in stable but grave condition. Dr. Brantly took a slight turn for the worse overnight. But even as he battles to survive Ebola, he received a remarkable gift from a patient he had helped to save.
>
> “Dr. Brantly received a unit of blood from a 14-year-old boy who had survived Ebola because of Dr. Brantly’s care,” Samaritan’s Purse President Franklin Graham said. “The young boy and his family wanted to be able to help the doctor that saved his life.”
>
> […]Dr. Brantly, a family practice physician, was serving in Liberia through our post-residency program before joining the medical team responding to the Ebola crisis. His wife and two children had been living with him in Liberia but flew home to the U.S. before he started showing any signs of illness.
>
> Last week, Dr. Brantly recognized that he had symptoms associated with Ebola, and immediately isolated himself.
>
> […]The deadly disease, which causes massive internal bleeding and has a mortality rate of 60 to 90 percent in most situations, has claimed more than 725 lives.
>
> […]“There’s an incredible level of braveness in Kent,” Robert Earley, president and CEO of JPS Health Network, told the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. “You don’t meet people like this every day.”

Yahoo News has more about this fine man:

> Even from his own sickbed in Africa, American physician Kent Brantly continues

> putting the well-being of others before his own.
>
> Brantly, a medical missionary in West Africa, and fellow American Nancy Writebol both contracted Ebola last weekend. They spent the past several days under quarantine and are struggling to survive.
>
> On Wednesday, an experimental serum arrived in Monrovia, Liberia, but there was only enough dosage for one patient.
>
> “Dr. Brantly asked that it be given to Nancy Writebol,” said Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan’s Purse, the Christian humanitarian organization Brantly is working for.
>
> Late Thursday, officials at Emory University Hospital near the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta confirmed that one of the two aid workers will soon be brought to a special high-security ward there. The name of the patient was not revealed.
>
> Brantly’s gesture of letting Writebol have the serum fits the description of selflessness and sacrifice the 33-year-old’s family back in the U.S. has given.
>
> “Kent prepared himself to be a lifetime medical missionary,” his mother, Jan Brantly, told The Associated Press on Monday. “His heart is in Africa.”
>
> After the merciful move for Writebol, a local family made its own offering to Brantly.

If you are a person who prays, say a prayer for this brave Christian man.

Friday night movie: 13 Rue Madeleine (1946)

August 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s tonight’s movie:

Description:

> During World War II, Charles Stevenson Gibson, a St. Louis attorney with an extensive background in international affairs, is chosen by President Roosevelt to organize the secret activities of a new Intelligence Corps. Gibson, in turn, selects Robert Sharkey, a widely traveled, multi-lingual scholar who served with distinction in World War I, to administer the complex training program.
>
> Selected groups of volunteers report to Washington for rigorous training before assignment overseas. In 1944, the candidates selected for the 77th group include Suzanne de Beaumont, a French citizen who became stranded in the U.S. when France fell, and whose husband is an artillery officer in the French army. Jeff Lassiter, the son of an American consul, educated in Geneva and Oxford and recruited from the Officers’ Training School at the University of California at Los Angeles, and Bill O’Connell, a Rutgers graduate and former employee of the foreign department of a major bank, are also chosen.
>
> At a secluded country estate, the twenty-two candidates are given two weeks of intensive testing to see if they qualify for further training. Gibson tells Sharkey he knows that one of the candidates is a German agent and Sharkey is assigned to identify him.

IMDB rating: [7.0/10]

Here’s a spy image which is pretty cool, too:

A mysterious spy lurks at night

Happy Friday!

Doctor shoots man who opened fire on hospital staff

August 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've bolded the interesting parts of the story, which is from USA Today.

Excerpt:

> A psychiatric outpatient opened fire Thursday inside a psychiatrist's office at a hospital near Philadelphia, killing his caseworker and slightly wounding the doctor, who shot the gunman with his personal firearm, authorities said.
>
> The suspect, Richard Plotts, of Upper Darby, Pa., was reported in critical condition after the shooting at 2:20 p.m. in an office at the Mercy Wellness Center of Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital in Darby, Delaware County District Attorney Jack Whelan said at an evening news conference.
>
> The unidentified 52-year-old doctor shot Plotts three times and suffered a graze wound when the suspect returned fire, Whelan said at an evening news conference. Two guns were recovered.
>
> […]Whelan said Plotts, who has a history of unspecified psychiatric problems, and his caseworker arrived at the doctor's third-floor office about 2 p.m., Whalen said. Soon after, another staffer heard a loud argument and opened the door to find the suspect pointing a gun at the doctor. The worker then closed the door and call 911.
>
> Minutes later, gunfire erupted.
>
> […]Plotts, described as being in his mid-30s, was in surgery at the Hospital at the University of Pennsylvania. He was shot twice in the torso and once in an arm.
>
> […]**A sign tells visitors to the wellness center to check weapons at the front, a medical technician told *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.**
>
> Hospital policy allows only on-duty law enforcement officers to carry weapons on campus, a Mercy Health System spokeswoman told the Associated Press.

So there was a "gun-free zone" sign. That didn't stop the crazy person from coming in with a gun. And thankfully, it didn't stop the DOCTOR from having a licensed concealed-carry firearm. But what if the doctor didn't have a firearm? Well, then he'd be dead. The police would NEVER have got there in time to save him. And who knows how many more people the crazy person would have shot? I think this story shows the reason why law-abiding people need to own and carry firearms. When seconds count, the police are just minutes away.

William Lane Craig assesses the credibility of the Rapture doctrine

August 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the Christian Post. (H/T Pastor Matt's round-up)

Excerpt:

> Several months before "Left Behind" opens in theaters, a prominent Christian philosopher is reminding the American church that the movie's claims about the rapture are false.
>
> "This doctrine is not really found in the book of Revelation. If you read the book of Revelation, you won't find any mention of the rapture there," said William Craig, a Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology and Professor of Philosophy at Houston Baptist University.
>
> Instead, Craig says, the idea of the rapture comes from a "misinterpretation of 1 and 2 Thessalonians where Paul is describing the coming of the Lord and resurrection of the dead, which will occur at His coming."
>
> "If you compare what Paul says there to what Jesus says about the End Times, Paul uses the same vocabulary, the same phraseology. I think it's very plausible that Paul is talking about the same event that Jesus predicted, namely the visible coming of the Son of Man at the end of human history to usher in his kingdom," said Craig. "But proponents of the rapture view, say that Paul is not at all talking about the second coming of the Christ there. What he's really talking about is this invisible preliminary secret return of Christ to snatch believers out of the world before the great tribulation occurs. I think there's no textual warrant for that at all."
>
> According to Craig, the rapture became a popular theory about the End Times due to the influence of the Scofield Reference Bible, which was published in the early 20th century and promulgated John Darby's mid-18th century's views on the rapture. Later, Christian institutions, among them Dallas Theological Seminary, and churches began teaching the validity of the rapture.
>
> "A good many Bible-believing Christians absorbed this view as their mother's milk as it were and have never thought to question its Biblical credentials," said Craig.

I have no opinion on end times doctrines, although people always ask me. I don't know and I don't care. I don't know and don't care about the rapture, especially. And what's more, I think that thinking about the exact timing and events of the end of the world is a waste of our time – it has no value whatsoever.

I wish that the Christian church put every second of time they put into reading or thinking about end times issues into science apologetics instead. I think that we would be in a

much different position culturally if we spent more time thinking about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion than we spend reading Christian fiction and worrying about the end of the world. And I think it’s better for God if we do that, although it might be less “fun” for us.

Let’s leave the fiction reading to the atheists.

Nancy Pelosi House meltdown: chases GOP congressman Tom Marino

August 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From ABC News.

Excerpt:

> In an unusual breach of decorum, even for the divided Congress, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi chased Rep. Tom Marino across the House floor, taking offense at comments by the Pennsylvania Republican during debate on the border funding bill Friday night.
>
> "We don't have law and order," Marino began as he wrapped up his comments on the border supplemental. "My colleagues on the other side don't want to do anything about it."
>
> "You know something that I find quite interesting about the other side? Under the leadership of the former Speaker [Pelosi], and under the leadership of their former leader [Rep. Steny Hoyer], when in 2009 and 2010, they had the House, the Senate and the White House, and they knew this problem existed," he continued. "They didn't have the strength to go after it back then. But now are trying to make a political issue out of it now."
>
> Off-mic, Pelosi then approached Marino, crossing the aisle in view of cameras, and apparently challenged Marino's assertion that Democrats did not do anything about the issue when they had majority control.
>
> "Yes it is true," Marino replied directly to Pelosi, who was House speaker in those years. "I did the research on it. You might want to try it. You might want to try it, Madam Leader. Do the research on it. Do the research. I did it. That's one thing that you don't do."
>
> Marino then urged lawmakers to support the border supplemental "because apparently I hit the right nerve."
>
> After Marino concluded his remarks and as many Republicans applauded their colleague, Pelosi crossed the chamber again in view of cameras, enraged, pointing and sticking her finger at Marino.
>
> She then followed Marino up a Republican aisle, gesturing and arguing with him. Lawmakers on the GOP side gathered in dismay as one spoke out to tell the chair that the House was not in order, in an effort to halt the bickering.
>
> Pelosi finally relented after Republicans tried to get between Pelosi and Marino, and she returned to the Democratic side of the chamber. The House then promptly voted to approve the $694 million border supplemental, 223-189.

Although Pelosi has put out the story that Marino had apologized to her, his chief of staff

is saying that never happened:

> But Marino's chief of staff, Bill Tighe, stressed that Marino did not apologize to Pelosi, and will not apologize.
>
> **"[Rep. Marino] did not apologize to Leader Pelosi and does not intend to do so as he has nothing to apologize for. She was entirely out of line in approaching him while he was recognized and delivering remarks on the Floor," Tighe wrote in an email. "Her staff's comment in your story about her accepting his apology in simply not true."**

Fox News reported that "House chamber security was seen walking through the chamber". Wow! She really could not handle him saying things that are pretty obvious. The Democrats had the House, Senate and White House for two years. They could have done anything. It's undeniable.

The loss of pastoral credibility

August 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eric Chabot of Think Apologetics posted this on Facebook.

It's a medium-length read. I want to highlight one problem – the problem of pastors never showing their work.

Excerpt:

> Around this point, it can start to dawn on one that many church leaders have only been trained in forms of discourse such as the sermon and, to a much lesser extent, the essay. Both forms privilege a single voice—their voice—and don't provide a natural space for response, questioning, and challenge. Their opinions have been assumed to be superior to opposing viewpoints, but have never been demonstrated to be so. While they may have spoken or written about opposing voices, they are quite unaccustomed to speaking or writing to them (not to mention listening to or being cross-examined by them). There are benefits to the fact that the sermon is a form of discourse that doesn't invite interruption or talking back, but not when this is the *only* form of discourse its practitioners are adept in.
>
> Many church leaders have been raised and trained in ideologically homogenous cultures or contexts that discouraged oppositional discourse. Many have been protected from hostile perspectives that might unsettle their faith. Throughout, their theological opinions and voices have been given a privileged status, immune from challenge. Nominal challenges could be brushed off by a reassertion of the monologue. They were safe to speak about and habitually misrepresent other voices to their hearers and readers, without needing to worry about those voices ever enjoying the power to answer them back. Many of the more widely read members of their congregations may have had an inkling of the weakness of their positions in the past: the Internet just makes it more apparent.
>
> A system is only as effective as its weakest component in a particular operation. The same is true of the human mind and the communities formed around thinkers. Where the capacity of agonistic reasoning is lacking, all else can be compromised. If one's opinion has never been subjected to and tried by rigorous cross-examination, it probably isn't worth much. If one lacks the capacity to keep a level head when one's views are challenged, one's voice will be of limited use in most real world situations, where dialogue and dispute is the norm and where we have to think in conversation with people who disagree with us.
>
> The teachers of the Church provide the members of the Church with a model for their own thinking. The teacher of the Church does not just teach others *what* to believe, but also *how* to believe, and the process by which one arrives at a theological position. This is one reason why it is crucial that teachers 'show their

> working' on a regular basis. When teaching from a biblical text, for instance, the teacher isn't just teaching the meaning of that particular text, but how Scripture should be approached and interpreted more generally. An essential part of the teaching that the members of any church need is that of dealing with opposing viewpoints. One way or another, every church provides such teaching. However, the lesson conveyed in all too many churches is that opposing voices are to be dismissed, ignored, or 'answered' with a reactive reassertion of the dogmatic line, rather than a reasoned response.

This is probably the biggest thing that annoys me about church. Being talked at by somebody who never explains why they believe what they believe, and who never answers criticisms to what they believe. They don't want to show their work. I really don't like that. Being forced to sit still and silent while someone else talks.

In math class, you don't get any marks for just writing the correct answer to a non-trivial problems. You have to show the steps that led to your answer. I think talking about why we believe, though, can be agitating to some people who are there in church to be comforted and to have feelings and emotions. So that's probably why pastors don't show their work, because it disrupts the comfort / happiness vibe. Still though, I think it would be a good idea for us (and I mean me, too!) to get better at hearing voices on the other side. The way I usually do this is by watching debates and reading debate books. I like there to be two sides interacting. I get annoyed when there is only one side. That's why I prefer reading evidential apologetics to philosophical theology and I prefer philosophical theology to devotional reading (A.W. Tozer and G. K. Chesterton are the worst things to read in my view, and most men I know can't stand reading them). The more testable something is, the easier it is on me. I don't like to be preached at about things that can't be tested. It annoys me, even if I agree with it.

Meriam Ibrahim arrives in US after escaping imprisonment for her Christian faith

August 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> A Sudanese woman who faced the death penalty for refusing to recant her Christian faith has arrived in New Hampshire, ready to begin a new life.
>
> Meriam Ibrahim, her husband and the couple's two children arrived Thursday night at Manchester-Boston Regional Airport, where they were greeted by a throng of supporters from the city's Sudanese community before getting into an SUV and leaving the airport, the New Hampshire Union Leader reports.
>
> "Thank you so much," her husband, Daniel Wani, told reporters. "I am so relieved."
>
> Ibrahim, who met Pope Francis at the Vatican last week after fleeing the U.S. embassy in Khartoum, did not speak.
>
> Her brother-in-law, Gabriel Wani, said Ibrahim has been granted asylum by the United States and will soon meet with U.S. State Department officials.
>
> Daniel Wani, a U.S. citizen since 2005, met Ibrahim on a trip to Sudan in 2011. He traveled to the war-torn African country last year to arrange for his wife and child to move to New Hampshire.
>
> Ibrahim had been sentenced to death over charges of apostasy. Her father was Muslim, and her mother was an Orthodox Christian. She married Wani, a Christian from southern Sudan, in 2011. Muslim women in Sudan are prohibited from marrying non-Muslims. By law, children must follow their father's religion.
>
> Sudan initially blocked Ibrahim from leaving the country even after its highest court overturned her death sentence in June.

That's good news. I find it interesting that she chose New Hampshire, the live-free-or-die state. She certainly made her choice to live according to her own conscience or die in the attempt. She's a hero. Thank God there was a happy ending this time.

New study: the longer people live under socialism, the less moral they become

August 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Values and Capitalism blog. (H/T Amy Hall tweet)

Excerpt:

> The longer people live under socialism, the more their value system erodes. So concludes a recent study of 259 Germans randomly picked to play a simple dice game.
>
> Researchers from the University of Munich and Duke University asked participants to throw a die 40 times and write each result down on a piece of paper. Those with the highest totals received winnings of up to $8. The twist was that each participant had to commit to picking the top or bottom number before rolling the die. They didn't have to tell anyone beforehand which side they favored, giving them the opportunity to lie when they saw which way the die had turned up.
>
> If no one had cheated, there should have been a roughly equal assortment of rolls from one to six. Instead, when researchers studied the results, they saw disproportionately more high rolls than low. Players were saying they'd picked in advance more fours, fives, and sixes than should have been possible. In short, many were cheating.
>
> Participants were then asked their age and the part of Germany where they'd lived throughout their lives. Some had spent years behind the Iron Curtain, while others had only known life in a unified Germany. When researchers placed the results of the die rolls next to where and when the participants had been born, they came to a stark conclusion.
>
> Those who hailed from socialist East Germany were twice as likely to cheat as those who'd grown up in West Germany under capitalism. Time also played a factor, for the longer a participant had lived in a socialist system the greater their likelihood for being dishonest. Those who'd lived for 20 years or more in East Germany were 65 percent more likely to cheat than their West German counterparts. And the ill-effect of socialism lingered in people's values long after its demise. Those born in the east after the fall of the Berlin Wall still showed a greater propensity for cheating than their western counterparts.

You can kind of see how socialism works by look at how Obama is taking the country away from capitalism here at home. When the basics of a capitalist economy decline, it's less attractive to try to make your own fortune, and more attractive to look to government to give you someone else's money.

The study offers some reasons for their findings:

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Interesting to note that under Obama's leadership, fewer people are starting businesses than in previous administrations.

Breitbart explains:

> Startup businesses represent the heart of the American economy, but a new report by the Hudson Institute shows the rate of startup jobs during the last two years has been at a record low.
>
> According to the report, Under President George H.W. Bush, who essentially won Ronald Reagan's third term, there were 11.3 startup jobs per 1000 Americans. Under President Bill Clinton, there were 11.2. Under George W. Bush, there were 10.8. But under President Barack Obama, there have been 7.8 startup jobs per 1000 Americans.
>
> The study "documents a disturbing weakness in startup job creation," but "does not explain the cause of decline," even though "there is anecdotal evidence that the U.S. policy environment has become inadvertently hostile to entrepreneurial employment."

You can't argue with those numbers. Higher taxes and more regulations are not good for business.

Stephen C. Meyer discusses his book “Darwin’s Doubt” on the Michael Medved show

August 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The new paperback edition of Darwin’s Doubt is now out (June 2014), and has a new epilogue responding to criticisms of the hardcover first edition. If you don’t have the book, now’s the time to grab it.

Here is a radio interview that Dr. Meyer did about the book, courtesy of the Intelligent Design: The Future podcast.

The MP3 file is available for download. (38 minutes)

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, the Michael Medved Show welcomes Dr. Stephen Meyer to talk about his new bestselling book, *Darwin’s Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design*. Listen in as Meyer and Medved discuss the mysteries of the Cambrian explosion and why this phenomenon continues to stump Darwinian evolutionists.
>
> *Each week, leading fellows from Discovery Institute will join Michael Medved to talk about the intersection of science and culture. Listen in live online or on your local Medved station, or stay tuned at ID the Future for the weekly podcast.*

Topics:

- Darwinism offers a materialistic account of where humans and animals came from, but is that all human beings are?
- Darwin was the first to have doubt about his theory of evolution because of the sudden origin if many different animal forms in the Cambrian era
- The book is about the sudden origin of these animal forms and more generally about how much information is needed to make an animal genome
- An animal is not just the form or the organs it is also the information to make new proteins and the instructions to make proteins are in the DNA
- At least 20 new phyla appear suddenly in the Cambrian fossils and the question is what is capable of creating all of that new information
- Mathematicians and computer scientists are especially likely to doubt evolution as a way of making new features because they know that random changes to the code base of an application are more likely to break things and degrade performance
- Naturalists have tried to explain the Cambrian explosion as being a case of the transitional fossils being not yet discovered
- The consensus of science at this time is that there is no known naturalistic explanation for the sudden origin of these animal types
- Caller: how abrupt are we talking about for the introduction of these new animal

forms?

- Meyer: We can calculate the amount of time that is needed to generate change, and the period of time that is needed to generate new forms of life exceeds the time available
- Caller: is it possible that meteors, asteroids and comets could transport biological components to the Earth to shorten the development time?
- Meyer: that's related to my first book on the origin of the first living cell "Signature in the Cell", and that life-from-space hypothesis would only get you building blocks, but not the bio-molecules that have the building blocks sequences – it's the difference between a pile of Scrabble letters and a Shakespearean play – it's the arranging of the components that is the problem
- Medved: The book has a lot of endorsements from scientists who are working at good universities and institutions
- Meyer: the strange thing about exploring the limits of evolution is that you can cite mainstream papers to criticize the Darwinian mechanisms, and then the proponents of Darwinism just assert that no criticism of Darwinian evolution is allowed
- Caller Greg: are you saying that all the phyla came in during the Cambrian explosion?
- Meyer: No, of the 26 phyla that we see in the fossil record, 20 come in during the Cambrian explosion
- Caller Greg: But there are some sponges that existed before the Cambrian explosion, so maybe all the Cambrian phyla came from sponges?
- Meyer: There are 3 phyla present in the pre-Cambrian but they are not ancestral to the 20 Cambrian phyla, the sponges are very simple – 6-10 cell types, arthropods have 60-90 cell types – you can't go from sponges to compound eyes in just 5-10 million years
- Meyer: even the sponges in the pre-Cambrian appear abrutly at the end of the pre-Cambrian
- Caller Greg: but there are complex worms in the Pre-Cambrian as well, and maybe those are ancestral to the 20 new phyla that appear suddenly in the Cambrian explosion
- Caller Greg: what you're saying is that we scientists don't understand what happened so an intelligence did it
- Meyer: No, what I am saying is that the Cambrian explosion involves massive amounts of new biological information, and none of the naturalistic Darwinian mechanisms can create that much new information in that short of the time
- Caller Greg: it's magic!
- Meyer: there are two points in the development of life forms where intelligence is needed: the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion, and this is because of the new information that is being added
- Caller Greg: new information is added by Hox Gene duplication
- Caller: don't we have to look a bit more at epistemology when discussing these issues?

- Meyer: Yes, we have to highlight that many people reject intelligent design because of a pre-supposition of naturalism that prevents them from seeing that intelligence explains anything regardless of the evidence
- Caller: well if you define evolution as change over time, then evolution happened, and who cares about the details like the origin of life and Cambrian explosion?
- Meyer: well there are many definitions of evolution: 1) change over time, 2) universal common ancestry, 3) undirected random process can explain the origin of life and the explosion of new animal forms in the fossil record
- Meyer: I accept 1) and I am skeptical of 2) and 3)

You can read more about caller Greg and Hox gene duplication at Evolution News.

UK NHS creates taxpayer-funded sperm bank for lesbians and single mothers

August 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young UK socialists rejoice over Maggie Thatcher's death
From the UK Daily Mail. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> Britain is to get its first NHS-funded national sperm bank to make it easier for lesbian couples and single women to have children.
>
> For as little as £300 – less than half the cost of the service at a private clinic – they will be able to search an online database and choose an anonymous donor on the basis of his ethnicity, height, profession and even hobbies.
>
> The bank, which is due to open in October, will then send out that donor's sperm to a clinic of the client's choice for use in trying for a baby.
>
> Heterosexual couples will also be able to benefit, but the move – funded by the Department of Health – is largely designed to meet the increasing demand from thousands of women who want to start a family without having a relationship with a man.
>
> […]The National Sperm Bank will be based at Birmingham Women's NHS Foundation Trust, which currently runs an existing NHS fertility clinic and recruits sperm donors from the local population.
>
> Funded by a £77,000 Government grant, the bank will be run by the National Gamete Donation Trust (NGDT) which this year received an additional £120,000 of public money to organise egg and sperm donation.
>
> Over the next three years the NGDT aims to recruit at least 1,000 men and collect sufficient donations for the sperm bank to meet demand.

> **Laura Witjens, NGDT chief executive, said: 'There are people who are medically infertile or practically infertile – they want to use donation services in the UK but can't do so because there isn't enough donated sperm.**
>
> **'The [demand from] same-sex couples and single women has grown exponentially. It's become more socially acceptable to say, I haven't found a guy yet, don't want to wait for him, still want a child.'**
>
> **She added: 'The aim is that we will have enough surplus sperm so that we will be able to set up a service for people like single women and same-sex couples.'**

Keep in mind that in the UK, the NHS allows free IVF already – including for lesbian couples and single mothers.

Excerpt:

> **Five thousand fatherless children have been born to lesbian couples and single mothers following fertility treatment in the past decade, the Daily Mail can reveal.**
>
> **The figure emerged on the day that it was announced that lesbians and older women are due to get free IVF on the taxpayer.**
>
> Women aged 40 to 42 will qualify for state-funded fertility treatment for the first time, according to the guidelines from the health spending watchdog NICE. Previously, the watchdog did not recommend IVF on the NHS for the over-39s.
>
> And – despite fears the cash-strapped health service cannot afford extra burdens – women in same-sex relationships with proven infertility will also be able to get free IVF. Up until now, lesbian couples have had to pay privately for such treatment.
>
> […]**The requirement that fertility doctors consider a child's need for a male role model before giving IVF treatment or facilitating insemination was axed.**
>
> **It was felt that the law discriminated against singletons and lesbian couples. Since that year, the total number of babies created without a father has almost quadrupled from 312 to 1,124.**

I know that my friends in the UK are very proud of their health care system, but for those of us who are free market capitalists, we understand that whatever the government nationalizes will be used to buy votes. And that's exactly what's happened in the NHS. In the free market system, people have to PAY for health care, and that means that they don't get frivolous goodies that have nothing to do with health care. But in the UK, health care isn't about health care – it's about buying votes. So old people who need medical treatment die waiting for it, but young women can get free breast enlargements, nose jobs and tummy tucks.

The UK Daily Mail explains:

> **Women are persuading doctors to perform free cosmetic surgery on the NHS by exaggerating their unhappiness with their looks.**
>
> **New research reveals that surgeons are being cajoled into offering patients thousands of pounds worth of treatment they do not need. It exposes the lengths to which some women go to persuade surgeons to operate on them for nothing – using ploys such as unflattering make-up and clothing.**
>
> **Among the operations being offered free are tummy tucks, breast implants and nose jobs.**
>
> Today surgeons claim the soaring demand for cosmetic surgery on the NHS is putting a huge strain on resources. They say many patients are placing doctors in an impossible position by refusing to accept they cannot have free surgery.
>
> […]Top 10 operations
>
> Most requested cosmetic surgery on the NHS:
>
> 1: Tummy tucks
>
> 2: Mole removal
>
> 3: Breast enhancement
>
> 4: Scar removal
>
> 5: Nose job
>
> 6: Breast reduction
>
> 7: Acne scar removal
>
> 8: Correcting breast asymmetry
>
> 9: Ear pinned back
>
> 10: Removal of bags under eyes

Why is this happening? Because when government takes over areas of the private economy, it becomes about buying votes from voters want free goodies paid for by their neighbors. It's not just cosmetic surgery – abortions are taxpayer-funded in the NHS as well. And not just one abortion, but *multiple abortions*. It's perfect and there are no losers. Except for the people being aborted, the people who pay into the system and die waiting for surgery, the men who have to pay taxes and force their wives to work to make ends meet and the fatherless children raised by lesbians and single mothers. Oh, and of course sex-change operations are free in the UK, as are sex-selection abortions. This is what socialized "medicine" really looks like. As you can tell, the social programs seem to be especially targeted to women voters. It especially rewards those who are irresponsible and reckless.

Do you favor government taking over health care in the United States? Then you better know what you are asking for.

Woman who had sex with 18 different men shocked that men don't want to marry her

August 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

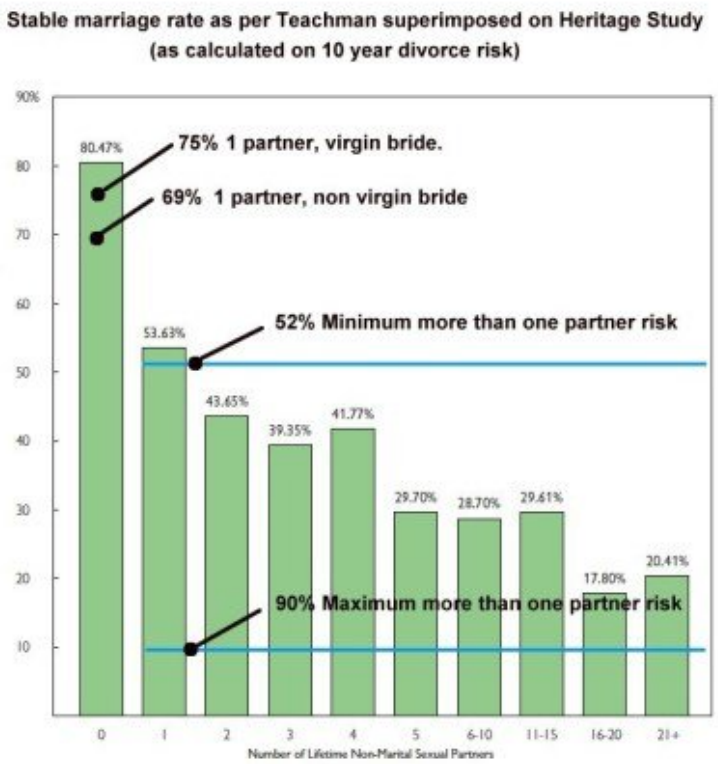

Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
Sunshine Mary linked to a post from Reddit by a 32-year old "progressive" woman who is surprised that 15 years of sleeping around with 18 different guys is not attractive to marriage-minded men.

Excerpt:

> My parents are first generation immigrants. I have a younger brother and younger sister. In my family I was always the rebellious one; I would often challenge my parents. My family was very strict, when it came to dating and my siblings usually fell in line. However, I would challenge that norm.
>
> My brother and sister were very repressed with their sexualities as a result, while I lost my virginity at 17 to my then boyfriend. While my brother and followed the traditional Indian path. My brother ended up not having any sexual contact with a girl until he got married at 25 (arranged marriage) and now they have a child together. My sister (too never kissed a boy) has recently gotten married too at 24 with an Indian boy she met at our Temple (both parents approved).
>
> I live in LA, a city where both men and woman tend to marry a bit later in life, and yet I still spent the last years of my 20's feeling that somehow, I'd messed up. I had followed the wrong trail and thus, my "important-life-moments" timeline was off. Even with my more progressive friends it began slowly at first, when I

> was 27 … an engagement post on Facebook, an invite to a wedding—it was happening. People I knew were beginning the next stage of life and saying "I do."
>
> Throughout my whole life I never really dated any Indian guys; I exclusively dated white guys. However now I realize more than ever that the guys I dated never really took me seriously. They never really viewed me as someone they would eventually marry. I was always just some exotic fun. This part was definitely a realization that has hurt me to the core. I didn't actually do it to spite Indian men or anything like that. I did what a lot of my white female friends did; I thought I was the same as them, but that could be farther from the truth. Most white guys I ran into wanted white wives.
>
> I am now 32, and seems like everyone in my family has lapped me. I too want a family a marriage. However, now my chance of finding someone is gone. At my age getting an arranged marriage or finding another Indian man to marry me is out of the question. Majority of Indian guys usually get married pretty early. Often either to another Indian girl they meet here, or they go back to India for an arranged marriage. My parents have tried signing me up for a matrimony site, but of the guys I'd meet they would be turned off by my history (drink/eat meat/not a virgin).
>
> […]Most of my relationships have been long term I have only been with 18 guys and I have been sexually active since I was 17 years old.

She has only had steady sexual relationships with 18 guys in 15 years! That's not a lot. Is it?

Let's see what Sunshine Mary says first:

> However, the more I think about it, the more it seems to me that articles like hers are a *good* thing simply because they expose the lie. Feminists have sold young women a bill of goods, that they can live like men, work like men, have sex like men, and then turn back into women when they feel like it. We laugh at a woman like this sometimes and make fun of her and say, "Didn't she know that she'd end up like this?"
>
> No, she *didn't* know that. That's because when you are 17 years old, you don't know much, especially in this culture of extended adolescence. And when you have been told from a very young age that, as a girl, it is your destiny to Have It All exactly When You Want It, I'm sure it is very baffling to find yourself in your thirties with no husband and none in sight, with the dawning realization that your job and lonely apartment are not nearly as fulfilling as being a wife and mother would have been.
>
> […]Personally, I feel no joy in this woman's pain. I don't think a White Knight should ride in to save her because I think she should suffer the natural consequences of her decisions so that other young women may see and learn from her errors, but I take no pleasure in the fact that she will have this lot in life.

> However, what most of us don't seem to understand is that **young women make the terrible choices that they are making because they are told from an early age that these are actually *good* choices.** Some girls are able to resist that message, which saturates every aspect of the media and schools, but most girls aren't, and they don't develop the necessary wisdom until it is too late.

Emphasis hers. And now my turn.

Let me tell you what I think awaits a man who marries a woman like that, who spent her 20s hooking up with hot guys who had no interest in marriage and no demonstrated ability to protect, provide and lead on moral/spiritual issues. She will have convinced herself that she is more attractive than she really is because in her mind she deserves a man as attractive as these men. What other criteria is there for a man? It's all appearances. I therefore do not recommend that any man marry this woman as she is now. What men need in marriage is respect, affection, affirmation and approval. A woman with a background like this will not have the trust and vulnerability that a marriage-minded man wants. The only way to fix this shattered trust is a long period of chastity. She must choose to form relationships with good protector / provider / moral leader / spiritual leader men and to support those men. That is the only way to fix the damage of promiscuity, if it even can be fixed.

A man can sense how trusting and vulnerable a woman is by how much she trusts and encourages him in his plans. If a woman is constantly putting him down, calling him names, and making excuses for why she doesn't have to care about his needs and feelings, then that's just her past promiscuity showing itself. Virgins with good relationships with their fathers don't put men down like that – they choose good men who are doing good things and they build them up. My recommendation for women who realize that they are making bad choices with men and being negative about the men they choose is to look in the mirror and acknowledge that *they are the problem.* The solution, then, is to find a good man and work hard at being submissive and supportive, but chastely. Stop choosing men with motorcycles. Stop choosing atheists. Stop choosing drunkards. Stop choosing men who are pro-abortion and pro-gay-marriage. Stop choosing men who want bigger government. Just stop it.

That's the advice I would give this woman. Choose men who can do the work that men do in a marriage. Find out what a man's plan is. Build the skills he needs for his plan. Marry him.

New study: hobbit fossil re-classified as modern human

August 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Phys.org, a sober revision about a fossil discovery that received a lot of attention when it was announced. (H/T Lindsay)

Excerpt:

> In October 2004, excavation of fragmentary skeletal remains from the island of Flores in Indonesia yielded what was called "the most important find in human evolution for 100 years." Its discoverers dubbed the find *Homo floresiensis*, a name suggesting a previously unknown species of human.
>
> Now detailed reanalysis by an international team of researchers including Robert B. Eckhardt, professor of developmental genetics and evolution at Penn State, Maciej Henneberg, professor of anatomy and pathology at the University of Adelaide, and Kenneth Hsü, a Chinese geologist and paleoclimatologist, suggests that the single specimen on which the new designation depends, known as LB1, does not represent a new species. Instead, it is the skeleton of a developmentally abnormal human and, according to the researchers, contains important features most consistent with a diagnosis of Down syndrome.
>
> "The skeletal sample from Liang Bua cave contains fragmentary remains of several individuals," Eckhardt said. "LB1 has the only skull and thigh bones in the entire sample."
>
> No substantial new bone discoveries have been made in the cave since the finding of LB1.
>
> Initial descriptions of *Homo floresiensis* focused on LB1's unusual anatomical characteristics: a cranial volume reported as only 380 milliliters (23.2 cubic inches), suggesting a brain less than one third the size of an average modern human's and short thigh bones, which were used to reconstruct a creature standing 1.06 meters (about 3.5 feet tall). Although LB1 lived only 15,000 years ago, comparisons were made to earlier hominins, including *Homo erectus* and *Australopithecus*. Other traits were characterized as unique and therefore indicative of a new species.
>
> A thorough reexamination of the available evidence in the context of clinical studies, the researchers said, suggests a different explanation.
>
> The researchers report their findings in two papers published today (Aug. 4) in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

So, it used to be a hobbit, but further study shows it's a modern human.

Let's take a look at what the atheist naturalist Darwinists on talkorgins.org think it is.

They write:

> Modern humans arrived on Flores between 55,000 and 35,000 years ago, and presumably interacted with *floresiensis*, though there is no evidence of this at Liang Bua. However **Indonesian folklore** tells of creatures called Ebu Gogo which were small, inarticulate, and walked with an odd gait. This sounds remarkably suggestive of *floresiensis*, but it could easily be coincidence – if *floresiensis* had been found in Ireland, we'd possibly be wondering if they were **leprechauns**.
>
> […]Some creationists are predicting that [further studies] will show *floresiensis* to be modern humans, but if, as Brown et al. believe, they descended from *Homo erectus*, the mtDNA of *floresiensis* should be even more different from modern humans than the Neandertals were.

Talk Origins Dot Org. Folklore. Leprechauns. Star Trek.

UPDATE: Evolution News has more, and it's even worse than I implied here.

Are amnesty supporters willing to house illegal immigrants?

August 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Freedom Outpost.

Excerpt:

> Dan Joseph of MRC TV visited Oldtown Alexandria, Virgina, whose demographics are largely liberal, and asked residents to sign a petition supporting bringing illegal immigrant children to their city.
>
> The ones who agreed were also asked to sign another petition agreeing to house an illegal immigrant child in their own home or apartment.
>
> As you can imagine, their ideology did not go over well with their practice.
>
> There were several people that were not interested in the first petition, though there were several who were.
>
> When it came to the second petition, there didn't seem to be anyone that wanted to take in illegal aliens.
>
> One of the funnier spots was around the 1:20 mark where Dan said that the illegals didn't eat that much, but "were members of gangs." That was not convincing enough to house any of them according to the young woman who signed the first petition.
>
> One gentleman who signed the first petition was asked to house an illegal alien and he said, "No, no, I live at home with mom."
>
> One lady said that "in spirit" she agreed with the petition, but that it was "a little too vague." You think? At least she was attempting to think, though I don't know about that whole "spirit" thing.
>
> Not one of the people that signed the petition, which would cost them an enormous amount in tax dollars, were willing to take care of one of the illegals coming across the border…. *not one*!

That's one case of liberal hypocrisy.

Here's another one:

There's two. Are there any more?

Do As I Say Not As I Do

I had a long drive on the way to my parents' house for Christmas and I decided to listen to the audio book version of Peter Schweizer's 2004 book "Do As I Say Not As I Do". In that book, he profiles a number of leftist public figures, and he discovers that leftists don't practice what they preach, because even they know that leftist ideas *don't actually work*. I really recommend the book, so let's take a closer look at it and you'll see why you

should read it, too.

Here's a 32 minute 2011 lecture about the book:

And here's an interview with the author from FrontPage magazine.

Excerpt:

> **FrontPage:** Give us some of the best examples of the gulf between some liberals' social criticisms and the ingredients of their private lives. Give us some insights, for instance, into the likes of Noam Chomsky, Michael Moore, Cornel West, Hillary Clinton, Ted Kennedy and Barbra Streisand.
>
> **Schweizer:** Looking for liberal hypocrisy is, as they say in the military, a target-rich environment. Noam Chomsky, for example, has attacked wealthy Americans who set up trusts to avoid paying inheritance taxes. But this self-professed "radical socialist" has a tax attorney and did the very same thing. (When I asked him about this hypocrisy he said it was okay because he and has family have been working on behalf of suffering people all these years.)

> Michael Moore's hypocrisy is pathological. He has said numerous times that he doesn't own a single share of stock and that capitalism is not acceptable "on any level." And yet, I found that, according to tax returns filed with the IRS, he has owned shares in Halliburton, numerous oil companies, defense contractors and other multinationals through a tax shelter. When it comes he race he's also wildly hypocritical. He says that Americans who happen to live in largely white neighbhorhoods do so because they are "racists." But he lives in Central Lake, Michigan, which according to the U.S. Census has more than 2,500 residents and not a single black person in the entire town.
>
> Cornel West has numerous times condemned middle class blacks that abandon the "chocolate cities" for the "vanilla suburbs" but guess what, his flavour of choice is vanilla, too.
>
> Ted Kennedy likes to pose as the Robin Hood of the Senate, forcing wealthy Americans to pay their taxes to help the poor. But I discovered that Kennedys record of actually paying taxes is horrible. Tax the inheritance tax. He says that Americans should pay 49% to the IRS when they die in the name of "social justice." But according to public records, the Kennedys have almost completely avoided contributing to "social justice" by placing their assets in trusts that are located overseas. The Kennedys, over the past thirty years, have paid less than 1% in inheritance taxes on more than $300 million. Ted Kennedy, like Hillary Clinton and George Soros, loves higher taxes. On other people.

And:

> **FrontPage:** Why do you think people are drawn to leftist ideals and what kind of people are they? Self-contempt appears to be a common ingredient, no?
>
> **Schweizer:** Yes, self-contempt is a big part of it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great

> German pastor who stood up to Hitler, wrote a book about “cheap grace.” Liberals are guilty of cheap grace in the political sense. They feel guilty and their form of penance is embracing the destructive ideas of the progressive faith. But it’s cheap grace because as I show it the book, they don’t actually change the way they live. I think that the religious comparison makes sense because in many respects the modern day left represents a religious movement. They are motivated by a sense of sin, guilt, and the need for salvation and absolution in the political sense. Socialism offers salvation to them. Of course, they don’t actually plan to live like socialists.

I would really recommend taking a look at this book. It’s similar to Paul Johnson’s “Intellectuals” if you’ve ever read that, but it’s better.

Don Johnson: six reasons why people reject Christianity

August 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post on practical evangelism by Christian scholar Don Johnson.

His list of reasons why people often reject Christianity:

1. Christians behaving badly
2. Disappointment with God
3. Weak or absent father
4. Social pressure
5. Cost of discipleship
6. Immorality (especially sexual immorality)

And here's the detail on #6:

> Of all the motivations and reasons for skepticism that I encounter, immorality is easily the most common. In particular, sexual sin seems to be the largest single factor driving disbelief in our culture. Brant Hanson calls sex "The Big But" because he so often hears this from unbelievers: "'I like Jesus, BUT…' and the 'but' is usually followed, one way or the other, with an objection about the Bible and… sex. People think something's deeply messed-up with a belief system that says two consenting, unmarried adults should refrain from sex." In other words, people simply do not want to follow the Christian teaching that sexual intercourse should take place only between and man and woman who are married, so they throw the whole religion out.
>
> The easiest way to justify sin is to deny that there is a creator to provide reality with a nature, thereby denying that there is any inherent order and purpose in the universe.
>
> Aldous Huxley admitted that this is a common reason for skepticism:
>
> I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently I assumed that it had none and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption…. Those who detect no meaning in the world generally do so because, for one reason or another, it suits their books that the world should be meaningless. …
>
> For myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was …liberation from … a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom…. There was one admirably simple method in our political and erotic revolt: We could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever. Similar tactics had been adopted during

> the eighteenth century and for the same reasons. (Ends and Means, 270-273)
>
> Indeed, similar tactics have been used extensively up to the present day. If you are looking for two great resources that document the extent to which the work of the world's "great" atheistic thinkers has been "calculated to justify or minimize the shame of their own debauchery," (Spiegel, 72) I recommend *Intellectuals* by Paul Johnson and *Degenerate Moderns: Modernity as Rationalized Sexual Misbehavior* by E. Michael Jones. The bottom line is that these skeptical scholars didn't reach their conclusions by following the evidence where it led. They didn't "discover" that the world was meaningless and then proceed to live accordingly. They lived sinful lives (usually involving some type of sexual deviancy) and then produced theories that justified their actions.

It's important to understand that an atheist is not identical to a Christian, except not religious. There is something else going on in their minds when they reject very obvious evidences like the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability arguments, etc. The something else that is going on is hinted at when you look at atheist attitudes to abortion. According to a recent survey of atheists, 97% of them were pro-abortion!

What kind of person likes abortion? The kind of person who wants to be sexually active with no consequences, even if it means taking someone else's life. The desire to do as they please and retreat from obligations to others is the key. Now dispensing with God and his obligations is not an unreasonable view if there is no evidence for God, but it does provide a motive for people to not look for that evidence if happiness is their main goal. When I discuss these issues with atheists, I find that no work has been done to read anything. Not even debates, where there are two sides. They don't want to hear the case for Christian theism, and they work hard to avoid stumbling across it by accident, too.

God and the cosmic authority problem

Tough Questions Answered has a quote from Christian philosopher Paul Moser that I think is relevant:

> It would be a strange, defective God who didn't pose a serious cosmic authority problem for humans. Part of the status of being God, after all, is that God has a unique authority, or lordship, over humans. Since we humans aren't God, the true God would have authority over us and would seek to correct our profoundly selfish ways.

So we're not dealing with unbiased truth-seekers here. The goal might not always be sex, but let's be honest. Who wants to have to spend time reading the Bible, praying, going to church and reading thick books by Stephen C. Meyer, Michael Licona and Hugh Ross so that we can answer questions? No one. Who wants to give up premarital sex so that we can create a stable marriage for children so they can grow up in a safe place where knowing God is natural and easy? No one. We just don't want to have to do stuff for God, even if it's good stuff. We don't want to have build a life that is a testament to God's

existence and character, especially if it means that other people will think that we are weird and maybe even a bit mean. We want to do what we want to do instead, and be liked by other people.

That's the real challenge of Christianity: setting aside what you wanted to do, and letting God be your customer, instead. You'd be surprised how many Christians aren't comfortable with the idea of serving God and being viewed in a bad way by non-Christians. They aren't OK with the self-sacrifice, and they are really not OK with the social disapproval. It's hard to be chaste, and to be known to be chaste by your peers, for example. Much easier to just give in and do what everyone else is doing.

Let's illustrate with C.S. Lewis

And here's a relevant quote from C.S. Lewis' "The Screwtape Letters" to illustrate:

> You must have often wondered why the enemy [God] does not make more use of his power to be sensibly present to human souls in any degree he chooses and at any moment. But you now see that the irresistible and the indisputable are the two weapons which the very nature of his scheme forbids him to use. Merely to over-ride a human will (as his felt presence in any but the faintest and most mitigated degree would certainly do) would be for him useless. He cannot ravish. He can only woo. For his ignoble idea is to eat the cake and have it; the creatures are to be one with him, but yet themselves; merely to cancel them, or assimilate them, will not serve.... Sooner or later he withdraws, if not in fact, at least from their conscious experience, all supports and incentives. He leaves the creature to stand up on its own legs—to carry out from the will alone duties which have lost all relish.... He cannot "tempt" to virtue as we do to vice. He wants them to learn to walk and must therefore take away his hand.... Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.
>
> — Uncle Screwtape, in The Screwtape Letters

I'm not a big fan of Lewis, but I think he is onto something there. That's really what the Christian life is like, and no wonder more people don't choose it. Who wants to do your duty for God, as part of a relationship with him, in a universe that seems so unfair? It's a tall order, and most people prefer to do their own thing instead of building something nice for God with their lives.

Dartmouth College won't allow female student who is being stalked to arm herself

August 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports on a story that shows you where the real war on women is. (H/T Lindsay)

Excerpt:

> A 20-year-old Dartmouth student says she may have to give up her Ivy League dream and drop out of school because the prestigious college won't allow her to carry a gun — to protect herself against a predator.
>
> Taylor Woolrich, a junior, says Dartmouth administrators told her they won't let her carry a gun on campus, even though she lives in fear of a man who has been stalking her since she was a high school student in San Diego.
>
> "It's absolutely unfair," Woolrich said about her attempts to have the school make an exception to its weapons ban. "It's one of the hardest things I've had to deal with."
>
> Woolrich was 16 years old and working in a San Diego café when she says a man came in to buy coffee and then kept returning throughout the day, staring at her for long periods of time and trying to flirt with her. The man, 67-year-old Richard Bennett, kept this up for days, she says, even sitting outside the store for an entire day and then following her home, demanding that she talk to him and saying he was "trying to protect her."
>
> She filed a restraining order, but it did little to keep Bennett away. Woolrich says he constantly harassed her during her first two years at Dartmouth, stalking her on social media and sending messages in which he "promised" to fly across the country to see her at college.
>
> "I thought they were empty threats, but when I came home from school last summer, he was at my front door within eight hours of my plane landing," she said. "That's when I realized how serious it was."
>
> **Woolrich and her family called the police, and Bennett was arrested. A search of his car uncovered a slip noose, a knife, gloves and other items.**

And:

> But Dartmouth administrators told her she was "absolutely not" allowed to carry a weapon on campus. She says she tried to plead her case and was told to speak with several campus officials, all of whom provided little to no help.
>
> "There's no option. There's no one to go to. They don't want to hear my case," she said.

> Many colleges across the country have banned guns on campus to prevent mass shootings and accidental shootings by irresponsible or inebriated students. But the pro-gun rights Crime Prevention Research Center, in a study published on Monday, said there have been no reported problems or issues with college-age permit holders on campuses in the nine states – Colorado, Florida,Wisconsin, Utah, Pennsylvania,Oregon, Mississippi, Kansas and Idaho – whose laws mandate that students and others be permitted to carry concealed handguns on public college grounds.
>
> "There's this fear about the possibility of students causing problems, but people talk about these things without actual examples," the center's president, John Lott, told FoxNews.com. "By far, the safest course of action is to carry a gun for protection, especially for female victims."
>
> "[Woolrich] has legitimate concern," he added. "There's only so much a restraining order can do."

Nothing to be concerned about, say the Darmouth College administrators. After all, we wouldn't want anyone to be shot. Guns are so bad! But I've noticed that some people agree with the Dartmouth administrators, and think that it's better for this woman to be raped and murdered, than for her to wave a handgun around to ward off her attacker. Now I disagree with these people, and I think that women should be *encouraged* to own guns, because they typically have less upper body strength than men, and guns equalize that. If anyone should be carrying a gun for self-defense, it's a woman.

Let me explain again how gun ownership deters criminals from committing crimes, by appealing to academic studies.

A quick refresher on why people own guns

People own guns so that they deter criminals and reduce the crime rate in their communities. The more guns there are in the hands of law-abiding citizens, the lower the crime rate goes, because criminals don't like being shot at by their crime victims.

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and

> Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people.

A more recent study – from 2014

A new study that was in the news confirms these findings. Newsmax reported on it.

Excerpt:

> A recent study showing a reverse correlation between concealed weapons and murder rates has renewed the contentious national debate about the effect of gun controls on violent crime.
>
> Reason magazine reported last week on economist Mark Gius' study of gun controls, published in the journal Applied Economics Letters showing states with restrictions on concealed weapons had higher gun-related murder rates than other states.

> The study looked at the effects on murder rates of both state-level assault weapons bans and concealed weapons restrictions from 1980 to 2009.
>
> […]The findings come as A 2007 study has been also getting a new look from those who dispute gun control efforts aimed at stemming gun violence, Boston magazine reported last summer.
>
> In research first published in Harvard's Journal of Public Law and Policy, criminologists Don Kates and Gary Mauser looked at the correlation between gun laws and death rates.
>
> "International evidence and comparisons have long been offered as proof of the mantra that more guns mean more deaths and that fewer guns, therefore, mean fewer deaths," the pair wrote in their introduction. "Unfortunately, such discussions [have] all too often been afflicted by misconceptions and factual error and focus on comparisons that are unrepresentative."
>
> The pair found "correlations that nations with stringent gun controls tend to have much higher murder rates than nations that allow guns."

It's not a reasonable position to think that disarming law-abiding citizens will reduce crime rates. The evidence is against it.

New study: relationships where babies are born before the marriage happens are more unstable

August 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Family Studies.

Excerpt:

> New research on the marital prospects of single mothers published in the August issue of the journal *Demography* has good and bad news… The good news is that biological father marriages are more enduring than stepfather marriages. In other words, saying yes to her daughter's father means that she is more likely to stay married than if she had said yes to someone else. The bad news is that even though she opted for the better bet, the odds are still stacked against her marriage lasting.
>
> […]"Among marriages that involved a black mother and a biological father," she found, "20% had dissolved within five years, and 47% had dissolved within 10 years."

Age and education of the mother did not do much to improve those odds.

More:

> […][V]ery few personal characteristics affected the divorce risk of women of any race in the study. Their husbands' characteristics didn't matter, either. Even though factors like age and education have been shown to matter quite a bit for ten-year divorce rates overall, they didn't make a difference among the women that Gibson-Davis studied: those who gave birth outside of marriage.
>
> […]By showing that a single mother is most likely to marry her child's biological father shortly after giving birth, and that such a marriage is less likely to end in divorce than marriage to another man, Gibson-Davis has provided some limited, encouraging evidence to those championing marriage promotion programs. Nevertheless, she correctly stresses that much work remains for those seeking to encourage single mothers to marry because enduring unions are relatively rare, even among biological parents. I have one window showing me why that is true. There are many others. The bottom line is that post-birth marriages are likely to be more difficult and less stable than others, and strengthening them is indeed an uphill battle.

If you're like me, and you're not having sex until you get married, now you know why. The old ways are best. Besides, when you take sex off the table, how the heck do you get a woman to like you? How does a woman get a man to like her? Oh, I have an idea. Men and women could think about how to show love for each other and how to help each other. Imagine that. That's the way people used to have relationships. You actually had to

put the work in then, and talk about things, instead of just jumping into bed after getting drunk with someone “hawt” that you just met at a party.

Did your science textbook teach that peppered moths prove evolution?

August 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post by Jonathan Wells at Evolution News, which re-caps the history of the peppered moths experiment.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> The peppered moth story is familiar — even overly familiar — to most readers of ENV, so I will summarize it only briefly here. Before the industrial revolution, most peppered moths in England were light-colored; but after tree trunks around cities were darkened by pollution, a dark-colored ("melanic") variety became much more common (a phenomenon known as "industrial melanism"). In the 1950s, British physician Bernard Kettlewell performed some experiments that seemed to show that the proportion of melanic moths had increased because they were better camouflaged on darkened tree trunks and thus less likely to be eaten by predatory birds.
>
> Kettlewell's evidence soon became the classic textbook demonstration of natural selection in action — commonly illustrated with photos of peppered moths resting on light- and dark-colored tree trunks.
>
> By the 1990s, however, biologists had discovered several discrepancies in the classic story– not the least of which was that peppered moths in the wild do not usually rest on tree trunks. Most of the textbook photos had been staged.
>
> In the 2000s the story began disappearing from the textbooks. British biologist Michael Majerus then did some studies that he felt supported the camouflage-predation explanation. But before he died of cancer in 2009, he only managed to publish a report of his study in the Darwin lobby's in-house magazine *Evolution: Education and Outreach*. Now four other British biologists have presented his results posthumously in the Royal Society's peer-reviewed *Biology Letters*. In an accompanying supplement, the authors presented their version of what they call "the peppered moth debacle." And a debacle it certainly is, but not in the way they think.
>
> According to Charles Darwin, natural selection has been "the most important" factor in the descent with modification of all living things from one or a few common ancestors, yet he had no actual evidence for it. All he could offer in *The Origin of Species* were "one or two imaginary illustrations." It wasn't until almost a century later that Kettlewell seemed to provide "Darwin's missing evidence" by marking and releasing light- and dark-colored moths in polluted and unpolluted woodlands and recovering some of them the next day. Consistent with the camouflage-predation explanation, the proportion of better-camouflaged moths

> increased between their release and recapture.
>
> Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, however, researchers reported various problems with the camouflage-predation explanation, and in 1998 University of Massachusetts biologist Theodore Sargent and two colleagues published an article in volume 30 of *Evolutionary Biology* concluding "there is little persuasive evidence, in the form of rigorous and replicated observations and experiments, to support this explanation at the present time." (p. 318)
>
> The same year, Michael Majerus published a book in which he concluded that evidence gathered in the forty years since Kettlewell's work showed that "the basic peppered moth story is wrong, inaccurate, or incomplete, with respect to most of the story's component parts." (p. 116) In a review of Majerus's book published in *Nature*, University of Chicago evolutionary biologist Jerry Coyne wrote: "From time to time, evolutionists re-examine a classic experimental study and find, to their horror, that it is flawed or downright wrong." According to Coyne, the fact that peppered moths in the wild rarely rest on tree trunks "alone invalidates Kettlewell's release-and-recapture experiments, as moths were released by placing them directly onto tree trunks."
>
> In 1999, I published an article in *The Scientist* summarizing these and other criticisms of the peppered moth story, and in 2000 I included a chapter on peppered moths in my book *Icons of Evolution*. Then, in 2002, journalist Judith Hooper published a book about the controversy titled *Of Moths and Men*. Hooper accused Kettlewell of fraud, though I never did; my criticism was directed primarily at textbook writers who ignored problems with the story and continued to use staged photos even after they were known to misrepresent natural conditions.

Jonathan has actually written about a number of misleading things that you may mind in Biology textbooks.

Here are the sections in his book "Icons of Evolution":

- The Miller-Urey Experiment
- Darwin's Tree of Life
- Homology in Vertebrate Limbs
- Haeckel's Embroys
- Archaeopteryx–The Missing Link
- Peppered Moths
- Darwin's Finches
- Four-Winged Fruit Flies
- Fossil Horses and Directed Evolution
- From Ape to Human: The Ultimate Icon

Dr. Wells holds a Ph.D in Molecular and Cell Biology from the University of California at Berkeley.

What to do about Iraq: arm the Kurds and start air strikes against ISIS

August 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> Iraqi militants seized control Thursday of the country's largest Christian city — reportedly telling its residents to leave, convert or die — while members of another religious minority remained trapped on a mountain without enough food or water, circumstances that fueled calls for the U.S. and U.N. to get more involved.
>
> […]The takeover in Qaraqoush is the latest in a basket of foreign policy crises testing the Obama administration. Secretary of State John Kerry dropped into Afghanistan unannounced Thursday to meet with feuding presidential candidates, on the heels of a U.S. general's murder at an army training post — while the White House plots its next move in a tense chess match over Ukraine with Russian President Vladimir Putin.
>
> Meanwhile, one U.S. lawmaker is warning that the latest developments in Iraq could become a "genocide," as the Islamic State (IS) — the militant group formerly known as ISIS — continues its march through the north, imposing its brand of Islam on Christians and other minorities.
>
> "Genocide is taking place before our eyes — and on your watch — in Iraq," Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va., wrote in a letter earlier this week to Obama.
>
> […]In the latest development, IS militants overran a cluster of predominantly Christian villages alongside the country's semi-autonomous Kurdish region,

> sending tens of thousands of civilians and Kurdish fighters fleeing from the area, according to several priests in northern Iraq.
>
> The capture of Qaraqoush, Iraq's biggest Christian city, and at least four other nearby hamlets, brings the group to the very edge of the Iraqi Kurdish territory and its regional capital, Irbil.
>
> The Islamic State has already seized large chunks of northern and western Iraq in a blitz offensive in June, including Iraq's second-largest city of Mosul. The onslaught has pushed Iraq into its worst crisis since the 2011 withdrawal of U.S. troops.
>
> Last week, the Islamic State also seized the northwestern town of Sinjar, forcing tens of thousands of people from the ancient Yazidi minority to flee into the mountains and the Kurdish region.
>
> According to the U.N., between 35,000 and 50,000 fled to nearby Mount Sinjar and other areas, "reportedly surrounded by ISIS armed elements" and lacking water and other aid.
>
> The Washington Post detailed dire circumstances, reporting Thursday that thousands of families hiding on Mount Sinjar are desperate for help and that Iraqi government airdrops of aid are not sufficient.

CNN had some of the details of what ISIS is doing to Christians. (H/T WGB)

Excerpt:

> If you're following the news about ISIS, which now calls itself the Islamic State, you might think you've mistakenly clicked on a historical story about barbarians from millennia ago.
>
> In a matter of months, the group seized territory in both Iraq and Syria and declared an Islamic caliphate, celebrating its own shocking slaughter along the way.
>
> "I don't see any attention from the rest of the world," a member of the Yazidi minority in Iraq told the New Yorker. "In one day, they killed more than two thousand Yazidi in Sinjar, and the whole world says, 'Save Gaza, save Gaza.'"
>
> In Syria, the group hoisted some of its victims severed heads on poles. One of the latest videos of the savagery shows a Christian man forced to his knees, surrounded by masked militants, identified in the video as members of ISIS. They force the man at gunpoint to "convert" to Islam. Then, the group beheads him.

The solution is, of course, to immediately provide the Kurds with relief supplies and to begin air strikes against ISIS.

And CNN says as much:

> "The world now faces two urgent challenges: to prevent the genocide of the Yazidis and to stop ISIS from continuing to conquer swaths of the Middle East,"

> global affairs columnist Frida Ghitis wrote on CNN.com. “Bombing ISIS positions would help save the Yazidis, but supporting the Kurds is key to success on both counts.”
>
> The Iraqi Kurdish army, known as the Peshmerga, has fought ISIS but is “outgunned,” partly because the Iraqi army dropped its weapons “and fled when ISIS rolled in from Syria and captured Mosul,” Ghitis says.
>
> Ghitis wants the United States to help arm the Kurds against ISIS.
>
> […]Filkins notes that Iraq has begun air strikes aimed at helping the Kurds — but, he says, “the Iraqi Army has proved itself utterly ineffectual in combating ISIS.”

The New Yorker has a very good story about a pro-US Iraqi who had to flee Sinjar, a city seized by ISIS.

I remember during the war, which I supported wholeheartedly, the anti-war/isolationist left kept crying for us to have an “exit strategy”. And this is exactly what they meant. They wanted this to happen. They voted for this to happen. You cannot influence the world for good when you pull out of a war, and back away from evils, evils like radical Islam. We caused this, by refusing to stay the course in Afghanistan and Iraq – this is the “exit strategy” of the anti-war left: genocide against minorities by Muslim terrorists. We needed to stay and finish the job.

One other thing. In a situation like this, it’s not Code Pink or some other anti-war group that you call on to solve the problem. Air drops of food and water will be performed by the military. And that’s why we research weapons and fund a defense budget. A lot of people like to talk about problems in the world – especially on the left. But when it comes time to solve them, it often requires the work of brave men, armed and ready for battle.

I would recommend checking out The Weekly Standard podcast to get the real story on this, it’s my favorite political podcast and they have had wall-to-wall foreign policy for the last little while. You won’t have to wait long for them to post an episode, but it’s not up yet as of now (Thursday night).

Should women who get pregnant after premarital sex expect the men to marry them?

August 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Adams on abortion: click for larger image.

Professor Mike S. Adams is pro-life, but he posted something on Facebook that I must disagree with.

He posted this:

> Over 80% of post-abortive women said they would have had the baby if the guy had been supportive. Five guys find out their girl is pregnant: The first two pressure abortion, the third walks away or was never present, the fourth sticks around for 80 to 120 days, and the fifth steps up totally. This not a woman's problem. It is a lack-of-manhood problem.

Mike has about 5000 friends, and 44 of them liked it. I would think that most of these people would call themselves pro-life conservatives. But I don't think what he posted promotes the pro-life cause.

I replied to him with this:

> Mike I could not disagree more. It's a woman's problem unless it is rape, since the woman consents to sex with a man she is not married to. In fact, the cause of abortion is YOUR opinion – namely, the opinion that women should not be obligated to be chaste or to think rationally about who they are having sex with. There is a path to marriage that goes through courtship, and that path has a name: self-control. Stop enabling the poor choices of women, because we have to stop the murder of unborn children.

Many of Mike's friends supported him. So I wrote this:

> Wow. I had no idea that so many of Mike's friends think that the Bible is a pack of lies when it says that fornication is morally wrong. I guess you guys aren't Christians then, since you feel so free and easy about revising the Bible when you feel like it.
>
> If fornication is wrong, it's wrong for women AND men. And you don't fornicate and then expect happy outcomes from it. There is a word for a person who sins and then expects a good outcome. A FOOL.

Then Mike replied to me:

> Sorry Wintery. Where I come from the man leads and is, therefore, responsible.

I replied to that with this:

> Mike, I agree with male leading – IF the man is a Christian. But the men that these women chose are not Christians. And you can't expect men to act morally unless they have a theistic framework that grounds morality.
>
> Women should not be told, by you and others, that they can choose to have sex with immoral men and then expect the immoral men to act morally. That is just enabling abortion by justifying a lack of prudence and wisdom. Instead, we should be holding women accountable to choose men who WILL control themselves.
>
> We should not be supporting the fantasy view of love that says that recreational sex magically leads men to commit to protect, provide and lead women for life. That view is neither wise nor Biblical. On the contrary, recreational sex leads men to NOT commit. Women have to learn how to select men, to evaluate them for marriage, and to make them prove themselves. We need to tell men AND women that sex before marriage is morally wrong. And we need to be convincing by showing them how recreational sex does not lead to stable marriages, and puts children, unborn and born, in harm's way. Telling the truth about the danger of premarital sex is the best way to stop the killing of unborn children.
>
> Here's an example to make the point. We do not blame bears for mauling campers. Bears are bears, and they were bears before the campers showed up in their cave. We ought to blame the camper for choosing to wander off the trail and into the bear's den in order to PET THE BEAR. Wild bears may eat free food that is offered to them, but they are not going to let you pet them and hug them. Women, like campers, need to be responsible. They need to choose the right man for marriage. They need to exercise self control. They need to make the man prove his ability to commit and support a family BEFORE they have sex with him. No one hires an employee without understanding what job they need done and then making sure that the candidate they choose can do the job. And that's what we need to tell women.

Obviously, I was a little upset when I wrote that, but I hope it wasn't *too* bad.

So what's the point I was trying to make by being critical of Mike? I think the problem we have today is that men who are pro-life are unwilling to hold women accountable for their own poor decisions about sex and marriage. Basically, conservative and/or Christian men think that women don't need to think through what choices are most likely to avoid abortion and most likely to achieve marriage. These men give tacit approval to the popular trend of trying to achieve marriage through premarital sex (or cohabitation), when the research shows that these behaviors do not result in long-lasting stable marriages. In fact, sex out of wedlock is a good way to get into a situation where an

abortion will occur.

In my view, Mike is inadvertently *encouraging* women to get into the situations where they will be pressured to abort by reinforcing the idea that there is nothing wrong with their plan to achieve marriage by having premarital sex (or cohabitating), and then *expecting* men to respond to their pregnancy by MARRYING them. Mike seems to be telling women that it is normal for them to expect that marriage will follow from premarital sex with men who have not been vetted for the roles of provider, protector and leader As if marriage is natural for men who don't even have jobs and who are surrounded by women willing to have sex with them on the first date. Any man who will have recreational premarital sex with a woman is exactly the kind of person who *will not* commit to lifelong providing and fidelity – he is having sex before marriage because he wants recreation, without the commitment and self-sacrifice that marriage requires. Rationally speaking, it makes no sense for men to buy the cow, and to keep buying the cow with 40 years of labor, when they can get the milk for free. And that's what we need to tell women – think with your minds, not with your emotions.

Here is an interesting statistic from Relevant Magazine:

> [A] recent study reveals that 88 percent of unmarried young adults (ages 18-29) are having sex. The same study, conducted by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, reveals the number doesn't drop much among Christians. Of those surveyed who self-identify as "evangelical," 80 percent say they have had sex.
>
> […]In addition to having premarital sex, an alarming number of unmarried Christians are getting pregnant. Among unmarried evangelical women between the ages of 18 and 29, 30 percent have experienced a pregnancy (a number that's actually 1 percent higher than among those who don't claim to be evangelical).
>
> According to the Guttmacher Institute, nearly half of all pregnancies in America are unintended. And of those, 40 percent end in abortion. More than 1 million abortions occur in the United States each year. **But perhaps the most disturbing statistic for the Church: 65 percent of the women obtaining abortions identify themselves as either Protestant or Catholic (37 percent Protestant and 28 percent Catholic). That's 650,000 abortions obtained by Christians every year.**

Christian women are not told that premarital sex is wrong by many Christians and conservatives – and out of that refusal by "Christians" and "conservatives" to take a stand, we get 650,000 abortions per year. We need to have more courage to tell women to be more self-controlled and responsible when they choose who to have sex with, and when to have sex. We need to tell women to make good decisions that lead to stable marriages. We need to tell women to study these issues and to support policies that produce strong, moral men who are willing to marry – for example, by reforming education so that our schools produce men who can find jobs, perhaps by having more

male teachers in the classroom. We need to tell women to support policies that make marriage more friendly for men, like abolishing no-fault divorce, and promoting shared parenting. Christians in particular need to counteract the views of love and romance that are prevalent in popular culture with a view of relationships built around chastity and love. Although many people today are uncomfortable with moral absolutes and moral judgments, it would be a good be a good idea for women to promote these things, so that the men they are choosing from are more moral.

In the end, I agree with Mike S. Adams in one respect. Abortion *may* be caused by a lack of manhood problem. Only the lack of manhood doesn't come from the men that women choose to have premarital sex with. The lack of manhood comes from men who refuse to hold women accountable for their own free foolish decisions that put unborn children in harm's way. In addition to the abortion problem that results from those foolish decisions, there is also the explosion in out-of-wedlock births to weigh in the balance. Again, the more people tell women that they should expect men who engage in recreational sex to commit to marriage after premarital sex (or cohabitation), the more fatherlessness we get.

Friday night movie: Five Fingers (1952)

August 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB rating: [7.8/10]

And rated 100% at Rotten Tomatoes, and 90% liked it.

Here's the 1952 review from the New York Times:

> Those who may fear that the old days of silken spy films are as dead as the gone days of diamond tiaras and princely diplomacy can now settle back in the comfort and the tingling satisfaction to be had from Twentieth Century Fox "Five Fingers," which arrived at the Roxy yesterday. For here, in this literate entertainment Joseph L. Mankiewicz has made with a cast that might well have been recruited at an embassy function in pre-war Berlin, is as dandy an espionage thriller as ever went through the polished hands of a Grahame Greene or an Alfred Hitchcock—or for that matter, an E. P. Oppenheim.
>
> And what's more, added to the relish of this spicy adventure that is played in a particularly suave and crafty manner by James Mason in the central spy role is the fact that the story of it is almost a literal account of a fantastic piece of spy work that was accomplished in Ankara, Turkey, in 1944. That story has since been recounted by a former attaché of the German Embassy there in a book called "Operation Cicero." It is this book by L. C. Moyzisch upon which the film is based.

And unlike modern movies, the twist ending at the end actually made sense of the biggest unanswered question I had while watching it.

Happy Friday!

Did your science textbook teach that embryo drawings prove evolution?

August 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jonathan Wells, a biologist with Ph.Ds from Yale and UC Berkeley, writes about one example of fake evidence here:

> Charles Darwin thought that "by far the strongest" evidence that humans and fish are descended from a common ancestor was the striking similarity of their early embryos. According to Darwin, the fact that "the embryos of the most distinct species belonging to the same class are closely similar, but become, when fully developed, widely dissimilar… reveals community of descent." [2] To illustrate this, German Darwinist Ernst Haeckel made some drawings in the 1860s to show that the embryos of vertebrates (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals) look almost identical in their earliest stages.
>
> But Haeckel faked his drawings. Not only do they distort vertebrate embryos by making them appear more similar than they really are (in a way that Stephen Jay Gould wrote "can only be called fraudulent" [3]), but they also omit classes and stages that do not fit Darwin's theory. *Most significantly, Haeckel omitted the earliest stages, in which vertebrate embryos are strikingly different from each other.* The stage he portrayed as the first is actually midway through development. Yet according to Darwin's logic, early *dis*-similarities do *not* provide evidence for common ancestry.
>
> Haeckel used his faked drawings to support not only Darwinian evolution, but also his own "Biogenetic Law," which stated that embryos pass through the adult stages of their ancestors in the process of development.
>
> …Haeckel's drawings were exposed as fakes by his own contemporaries, and his Biogenetic Law was thoroughly discredited by 20th century biologists. It is now generally acknowledged that early embryos never resemble the adults of their supposed ancestors. A modern version of recapitulation claims that early embryos resemble the *embryos* of their ancestors, but since fossil embryos are extremely rare, this claim is little more than speculation based on the assumption that Darwin's theory is true.

Now the standard response from Darwinists: *no textbooks are still using the fraudulent embryo images*.

You can see the actual faked pictures from the modern textbooks here. These textbooks were being produced as late as 2004, even though the fraud was detected in the 1800s! Is this the vaunted self-correction of science, or science being twisted to support social and political goals?

And this excerpt from that article is interesting:

> Some Darwinists continue to deny that there has been any misuse of Haeckel in recent times. If that is the case, why did Stephen Jay Gould attack how textbooks use Haeckel in 2000? Gould wrote: “We should… not be surprised that Haeckel’s drawings entered nineteenth-century textbooks. But we do, I think, have the right to be **both astonished and ashamed by the century of mindless recycling that has led to the persistence of these drawings in a large number, if not a majority, of modern textbooks!**” (emphasis added) Similarly, in 1997, the leading embryologist Michael K. Richardson lamented in the journal *Anatomy and Embyology*that “Another point to emerge from this study is the**considerable inaccuracy of Haeckel’s famous figures**. These drawings are **still widely reproduced in textbooks** and review articles, and continue to exert a significant influence on the development of ideas in this field.” (emphases added)

Finally, here is a link to the peer-reviewed journal Science, where there is an article talking about the fraudulent embryo drawings.

If this is what you were taught that convinced you of evolution, better take another look at the facts. You’ve been had.

Wayne Grudem debates Richard Glover on the Bible, poverty and foreign aid

August 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A great episode of the Unbelievable podcast. This is a great debate. I really enjoyed it. All three speakers were excellent putting forward their points. It's nice to hear an American voice, a British voice and an Australian voice debating an important issue. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Details:

> Wayne Grudem is a theologian known for his conservative approach to both doctrine and economics. His new book "The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution" (co-authored with economist Barry Asmus) makes the case that pouring aid into developing countries is a failed strategy. Grudem debates whether the Bible supports free market, capitalist economics with Australian economist and theologian Richard Glover who wrote a critique of the book for the Australian Bible Society.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

Grudem:

- The Bible speaks to all of life, including economics, stewardship, government
- The study of economics helps us to understand how to take care of the poor
- My job is to apply the teachings of the Bible to all of life

Brierley:

- What's your thesis in the book?

Grudem:

- A good system is one where the poor have the opportunity to earn and save from their labor
- Book is a response to a Kenyan couple Grudem met at a London conference on business and Christianity
- Book is not concerned with how individuals and groups can do charity to help the poor
- Our church already does that and we support individuals and groups doing charity
- The book is concerned with how should nations be transformed in order to grow economically
- What should the laws, policies and cultural beliefs of a nation be in order for it to not be poor?

- The book lists factors that have moved nations from poverty to prosperity in different times and places
- The thesis of the book is this: government should set their people free to be able to produce more
- We advocate freedom in economics: freedom to work, freedom to save, freedom to start businesses
- We believe that this free enterprise view is consistent with the Bible in a number of places
- E.g. – private property is good for prosperity (thou shall not steal) but forbidden by communism

Brierley:

- What about the church sharing in communities in Acts 2 and Acts 4?

Grudem:

- That is not redistribution of wealth among individuals and businesses by a secular government
- Those passages showed that there was voluntary sharing among Christians, which is not communism

Brierley:

- What's wrong with Grudem's book?

Glover:

- The book emphasizes the Bible and the goal is to help the poor in poor countries
- Criticism 1: the book doesn't engage with non-free-market perspectives on economics
- Criticism 2: the book doesn't survey all that the Bible says about economics

Brierly:

- For 1) what is one of the views that is not considered?

Glover:

- Jeffrey Sachs says that nations need a leg up before they can grow economically
- Ha-Joon Chang says that free enterprise was not how the wealthy nations became wealthy

Grudem:

- We do engage with other points of view, especially Jeffrey Sachs in the book
- The trouble with leftist views on economic development is that it does not work in

practice
- NO COUNTRY has even been lifted out of poverty by foreign aid
- He says we don't cite enough from the wisdom literature: we have 64 citations in the index
- He says we don't cite enough from the gospels: we have 42 citations in the index
- He says we don't cite enough from the epistles: we cite 22 of 27 epistles in the index
- Some economists won't criticize cultural and moral values that hurt prosperity
- As Christians, we think that moral and cultural values are part of the problem that needs solving

Brierley:

- What about foreign aid?

Grudem:

- Foreign aid doesn't help: a lot of the money goes into government and rulers can be corrupt
- Instead of encouraging people to start businesses, it tells people to go into government to get aid money
- Economists (lists 3) are saying that foreign aid entrenches corrupt government in power, does no good

Brierley:

- If it's not working, should we keep doing it?

Glover:

- When there is an immediate need, we should do it, even if it is not a long-term solution: we need both

Brierley:

- Should we stop foreign aid completely?

Grudem:

- Voluntary charitable giving from individuals and churches to help poor countries is good
- Me and my co-author are both active on our church board that helps poor countries with urgent needs
- Food and doctors are urgent needs, and we should help, but it doesn't lift countries out of poverty
- We need a long-term solution that helps poor countries produce their own food and

doctors
- We are criticizing 1) government to government aid and 2) IMF/World bank to government aid
- We have had pushback because 500,000 people make a living from this foreign aid industry
- No country has ever been lifted out of poverty into sustainable prosperity
- That's the definition of insanity: continuing to do the same thing that has never worked

Brierley:

- Does the Bible support free enterprise as a way of creating sustainable prosperity?

Glover:

- When I said the Bible was absent from his book, absent was a bad choice of words
- But the hundreds of references he listed were not dealth with *in depth*
- In the Scriptures, God is the one who provides (e.g. – in Ephesians, Sermon on the Mount)
- The Bible is less focused on his people making money, and more focus on sharing basics, like food
- Secular governments should just take it from people who have food and give it to hungry people
- In 2 Cor 8-9, Paul talks about voluntary sharing so everyone will be equal

Brierley:

- Does 2 Cor 8-9 undermine the free enterprise system you champion in the book?

Grudem:

- The sharing in the Bible solves cases of urgent need, it does not lift countries from poverty to sustainable prosperity
- Some older translations say "equality" in 2 Cor 8:13-14, but newer translations (e.g. – ESV) say "fairness"
- The Greek word is translated as "fairly" the only other place it appears in the NT (Col 4:1), in every translation
- God uses the means of human work and productivity to provide (daily bread is baked, doesn't just fall from Heaven)
- In general, there's no provision in Scripture for a person to be dependent on donations for their entire lives
- God promises Israel fields and mountains to tend and mine, but prosperity is from work, not depending on others

Brierley:

- Does the Bible support this focus on work?

Grudem:

- Working is highly praised in Scripture, (lists Bible passages that favor work over dependency)
- Countries that were exposed to this notion of work and productivity have been more prosperous

Glover:

- Jeffrey Sachs and other development economists don't say you can be prosperous through dependence
- They say that it is a necessary part of leading to nations out of poverty into poverty

Grudem:

- It's never worked. What nation has become prosperous through foreign aid?

Glover:

- There are lots of nations, especially in Africa, where foreign aid has helped lift them out of poverty

Grudem:

- Name one country in Africa where foreign aud has lifted them out of poverty into sustainable prosperity

Glover:

- I can't think of one right now.

Grudem:

- Our book contains a map of Africa and we looked at every nation's per capita income
- No nation has been able to rise out of poverty through dependence on foreign aid
- The only close one is Botswana, but they have abundant freedoms, Christian morals, less corrupt government
- So Botswana is the best case and they became prosperous through becoming productive, not foreign aid

Brierley:

- Is he right to say that charity is a short-term solution, but that it's not good long-term for prosperity?

Glover:

- Yes, and work is a very important focus in the Scriptures as he says.
- But since the Fall work has been much harder, and may not have the outcomes that we would like

Grudem:

- I also believe in emergency aid for when catastrophies happen, like floods and famines
- But dependence on foreign aid enriches corrupt rulers and does not create the productivity that leads to sustained prosperity

Brierley:

- Can foreign aid be used to give poor nations a leg up on becoming prosperous?

Grudem:

- Dambisa Moyo, Oxford-educated economist from Zambia, says stop the aid, it's doing more harm than good
- Jeffrey Sachs' view is that foreign aid hasn't worked yet, but just keep trying a bit more
- What works: limited government, rule of law, fair courts, documented property rights, low taxes, stable currency
- People are creative and want to work, we just have to get government out of the way and let people work, earn and save

Brierley:

- Is this free enterprise system supported by the Bible?

Glover:

- The wealthy nations of the world did not become wealthy through productive work and free enterprise policies
- Ha-Joon Chang: free enterprise policies have never brought a country from poverty to wealth
- E.g. – wealth is created through tariffs (not by innovating and by economic freedom?)

Grudem:

- I've read Ha-Joon Chang's book, and his examples are very selective and limited
- Index of Economic Freedom: the freest countries are the most prosperous, the least free countries are the most poor

- When you look at macro data, instead of very selective examples, the free enterprise system is best for prosperity

Glover:

- The book doesn’t do enough to engage with leftist economists (he doesn’t say which ones)
- Just because nations who are free are rich, doesn’t mean freedom causes productivity
- There are parts of the Bible that doesn’t support the free enterprise system (he names none)

Grudem:

- The Bible is focused on work not dependency, and charity not government redistribution
- The best way to help the poor in other countries is by encouraging work and productivity

When the U.S. military retreats: ISIS beheading Christian kids and kidnapping sex slaves

August 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News has the story, I doubt the rest of the anti-war leftist news media will cover this story – because they caused it. They wanted it. They lobbied for it.

Excerpt:

> Hundreds of women from the Yazidi religious minority have been taken captive by Sunni militants with "vicious plans," an Iraqi official said Friday, further underscoring the dire plight of Iraq's minorities at the hands of the Islamic State group.
>
> Kamil Amin, the spokesman for Iraq's Human Rights Ministry, said hundreds of Yazidi women below the age of 35 are being held in schools in Iraq's second largest city, Mosul. He said the ministry learned of the captives from their families.
>
> "We think that the terrorists by now consider them slaves and they have vicious plans for them," Amin told The Associated Press. "We think that these women are going to be used in demeaning ways by those terrorists to satisfy their animalistic urges in a way that contradicts all the human and Islamic values."
>
> The U.S. has confirmed that the Islamic State group has kidnapped and imprisoned Yazidi women so that they can be sold or married off to extremist fighters, said a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the information came from classified intelligence reports. There was no solid estimate of the number of women victimized, the official said.
>
> Tens of thousands of Yazidis fled when the Islamic State group earlier this month captured the northern Iraqi town of Sinjar, near the Syrian border. The Yazidis practice an ancient religion that the Sunni Muslim radicals consider heretical.
>
> The extremist group's capture of a string of towns and villages in the north has sent minority communities fleeing for their lives. The Islamic state views Yazidis and Shiite Muslims as apostates, and has demanded Christians either convert to Islam or pay a special tax.
>
> About 50,000 Yazidis — half of them children, according to U.N. figures — fled to the mountains outside Sinjar where many of them remain, trapped and running out of food and water. Late Thursday, the U.S. military cargo jets dropped humanitarian aid to the mountains.
>
> Amin's comments were the first Iraqi government confirmation that some women were being held by the group. On Tuesday, Yazidi lawmaker Vian Dakheel made an emotional plea in parliament to the Iraqi government to save the Yazidi people, saying the "women have been sold in a slavery market."

> President Obama said the humanitarian airdrops were made at the request of the Iraqi government as the Islamic State militant group tightened its grip on northern Iraq. In his remarks late Thursday, he mentioned "chilling reports" of fighters with the group "rounding up families, conducting mass executions, and enslaving Yazidi women."

And beheading Christian children, reports CNS News.

Excerpt:

> "Christianity in Mosul is dead, and a Christian holocaust is in our midst," said Mark Arabo, a Californian businessman and Chaldean-American leader. In an interview with CNN's Jonathan Mann, he called what's happening in Iraq a "Christian genocide" and said "children are being beheaded, mothers are being raped and killed, and fathers are being hung."
>
> "Right now, three thousand Christians are in Iraq fleeing to neighboring cities," he told Mann. Arabo is calling on the international community to follow France's lead and offer the Christians of Iraq asylum.
>
> "You're startling me with the severity of what you're describing," the CNN host said. "You said they are — ***beheading children***?"
>
> "They are systematically beheading children," Arabo repeated slowly. "And mothers and fathers. The world hasn't seen an evil like this for generations."
>
> "There's actually a park in Mosul where they actually beheaded children and put their heads on a stick… this is crimes against humanity. They are doing the most horrendous, the most heart-breaking crimes that you can think of."

Meanwhile, Secretary of State John Kerry was seen giving speeches critical of global warming. Priorities. We needed to pull out of Iraq after Bush won the war because we had to focus our government on more important things, like global warming.

I lay these tragedies at the feet of anyone who wanted to retreat from Iraq and Afghanistan. This is what happens when American forces retreat from fighting evil. And make no mistake, these terrorists will be back in America, and this time, they'll have money they seized from Iraqi banks and Stinger missiles they seized from Iraqi forces. And they'll walk right across our southern border with those missiles, too.

I would recommend checking out The Weekly Standard podcast to get the real story on this, it's my favorite political podcast and they have had wall-to-wall foreign policy for the last little while. Bill Kristol has just posted an episode on ISIS.

Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral? Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong?

August 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: For a Christian response to the complaint that the Bible doesn't condemn slavery, see this article and this article for slavery in the Old Testament, and this article for slavery in the New Testament. These are all by Christian philosopher Paul Copan. You can watch a lecture with Paul Copan on the slavery challenge here, and buy a book where he answers the challenge in more detail. There is also a good debate on whether the Bible condones slavery here, featuring David Instone-Brewer and Robert Price. My post is not a formal logical essay on this issue, it is more that I am outraged that atheists, who cannot even rationally ground objective morality, insist on criticizing the morality of the Bible. I think that atheists who are serious about finding the truth about these issues should check out those links, if they are interested in getting to the truth of these matters.

In other posts, I've argued that without an objective moral standard of what is right and wrong, any judgments about right and wrong are just individual opinions. So, when an atheist says slavery is wrong, what he really means is that he thinks slavery is wrong *for him*, in the same way that he thinks that,say, that chocolate ice cream is right *for him*. He isn't saying what is wrong *objectively*, because on atheism there are no objective moral rules or duties. He is speaking for himself: "I wouldn't own a slave, just like I wouldn't eat broccoli – because it's yucky!". But he has no rational argument against other people owning slaves in other times and places, because their justification for owning slaves is the same as his justification for not owning slaves : personal preference.

So do atheists oppose slavery? Do they believe in an objective human right to liberty? Well, there are no objective human rights of any kind on atheism. Human beings are just accidents in an accidental universe, and collections of atoms do not mysteriously accrue "rights". There is no natural right to liberty on atheism. Now consider abortion, which is arguably very similar to slavery. Most atheists do favor abortion in this time and place. Like slavery, abortion declares an entire class of weaker people as non-persons in order to justify preserving their own happiness and prosperity by means of violence. That's exactly what slavery does, except abortion is worse than slavery, because you actually kill the person you are declaring as a non-person instead of just imprisoning them.

So how many atheists have this pro-abortion view that it is OK to declare unborn children as non-persons so they can kill them?

Well, according to Gallup, the "non-religious" are the group most likely to support abortion. In fact, 68% favor legalized abortion, compared to only 19% who oppose it.

Take a look at the Gallup poll data from 2012:

Americans' Abortion Views, by Education and Religion

With respect to the abortion issue, would you consider yourself to be pro-choice or pro-life?

	"Pro-choice"	"Pro-life"
	%	%
National adults	41	50
No religion	68	19
Catholic	38	54
Protestant/Other Christian	33	57
Postgraduate	58	37
College graduate only	45	53
Some college	41	49
High school graduate or less	33	53

May 3-6, 2012

GALLUP

Most atheists are OK with the strong killing the weak

The Gallup numbers might actually be low, because “No religion” might include people who are spiritual, but not religious. But what about atheists alone?

As a group, atheists tend to be among the most radical supporters of legalized abortion. The Secular Census of 2012 found that 97% of atheists vote for abortion. There are almost no pro-life atheists. Why is it that atheists look at unborn children and think it’s OK to kill them? Well, let’s see what atheists scholars think about morality, and we’ll find out why they think abortion is OK.

Atheist scholars think morality is nonsense

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin’s views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That’s the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Source: http://www.arn.org/docs/orpages/or161/161main.htm

Atheists Michael Ruse says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I

> appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory.(Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

Atheist Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

Let's take a closer look at Richard Dawkins.

Richard Dawkins and morality

Here's how far Dawkins takes his view that there is no evil and no good:

Richard Dawkins explains morality on atheism
But wait! He goes even further than mere abortion:

So, looking at Dawkins, what kind of ethic can you get from Darwinism and atheism? Survival of the fittest. The strong kill the weak.

Richard Dawkins even advocates for adultery.

Now atheists may feign morality in order to get along with other people in a society that is still anchored in Judeo-Christian values, but they tend to vote for liberal social policies, and they oppose political action by those who still hold to objective morality. So what they are working toward, generally, is less and less influence in politics by those who favor objective human rights, objective moral values and objective moral duties.

So do atheists oppose slavery, or don't they?

I actually don't think that atheists think slavery is morally wrong, although they might personally not want to own slaves in this time and place because slavery is illegal – thanks to Judeo-Christian values. But in other areas, like abortion, we can see that atheists are willing to use violence against the weak to augment their happiness and prosperity. Unborn babies are weak, like slaves. Atheists are willing to kill the weak unborn babies who stop them from pursuing pleasure and prosperity. I don't see how they would have any objections to enslaving other people if they had the strength to do so. In fact, unjust imprisonment and forced labor are happening in atheistic North Korea right now.

But do you know who does oppose slavery enough to do something about it?

Dinesh D'Souza explains:

> Slavery was mostly eradicated from Western civilization–then called Christendom–between the fourth and the tenth century. The Greco-Roman institution of slavery gave way to serfdom. Now serfdom has its problems but at least the serf is not a "human tool" and cannot be bought and sold like property. So slavery was ended twice in Western civilization, first in the medieval era and then again in the modern era.
>
> In the American South, Christianity proved to be the solace of the oppressed. As historian Eugene Genovese documents in Roll, Jordan, Roll, when black slaves sought to find dignity during the dark night of slavery, they didn't turn to Marcus Aurelius or David Hume; they turned to the Bible. When they sought hope and inspiration for liberation, they found it not in Voltaire or D'Holbach but in the Book of Exodus.
>
> The anti-slavery movements led by Wilberforce in England and abolitionists in America were dominated by Christians. These believers reasoned that since we are all created equal in the eyes of God, no one has the right to rule another without consent. This is the moral basis not only of anti-slavery but also of democracy.

And, in fact, you can see Christians pushing the culture hard against abortion today, just as we did with slavery. Defending the weak is what we do. Meanwhile, most atheists think that an unborn child has as much of a right to legal protection as a cockroach.

Conservatives and Christians taking campus discrimination / censorship cases to court

August 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

And they are winning – as The College Fix reports.

Excerpt:

> They've been ordered not to hand out copies of the U.S. Constitution. They've been denied promotions because of their faith. They've been forced to help pay for abortion-inducing birth control. They've been judged solely by the color of their skin.
>
> And they're fighting back. *And they're winning.*
>
> Conservative and Christian students and professors who have been denied free speech or faced discrimination and religious persecution because of their beliefs have recently enjoyed a string of courthouse victories in what's amounting to something of a banner year for such causes.
>
> There's been at least six big legal wins in as many months.

Here's one of the six that surprised me:

> Last month, the high court gave the evangelical Wheaton College the injunction it wanted against the Affordable Care Act's contraception mandate, setting a national precedent on the matter.
>
> Wheaton was among dozens of Christian and Catholic universities to file suit against the federal mandate, saying they should not be forced to pay for birth control if it violates their religious beliefs. Now the White House is writing new regulations to allow for such exemptions.

Consider Alan Sears and the pro-religious-liberty law firm "Alliance Defending Freedom". ADF is one of the groups who defends the rights of students on campus.

I found a profile of Alan in this Breitbart article.

It says:

> Alan Sears is a committed Christian attorney who served in the Reagan administration, including in the Justice Department, who became increasingly concerned about the ACLU and its leftist allies' success at sterilizing American life of every reference to God, faith, and biblical values. After returning to the private sector, he was recruited by more than thirty Christian leaders to start an organization that would build a nationwide network to fight for religious freedom, the sanctity of life, the importance of marriage, and the rights of parents. The Alliance Defense Fund thus began in 1994.
>
> Fifty years ago, references to faith were widespread in American life, where

> public prayers were common and official communications and presidential speeches would frequently cite the Bible or Christian belief, and such things were not controversial. Now the ACLU and far left has succeeded in giving us so many years of sterile secularism that it has become the new baseline. Many local school boards that once had to be sued by the ACLU to ban singing Christmas carols at a properly named Christmas Concert are now quite content to ban those carols on their own, and to order the concert renamed a Winter Concert.
>
> Now the pendulum is swinging the other way. Instead of an ACLU lawyer suing that school on behalf of some militant atheist parent, now an ADF lawyer is suing the school for telling a Christian student that she cannot draw a picture of Jesus when she's asked to draw someone who is important to her.
>
> Headquartered in Scottsdale, Arizona, Sears has built an organization that is every bit an equal to the ACLU. Its staff of roughly 200 employees includes dozens of lawyers, who coordinate the efforts of over 2,200 "allied attorneys" nationwide, in almost every state of the Union and more than a dozen countries around the globe. To date, these lawyers have contributed an astounding $141 million in pro bono legal work (yes, that means free of charge) to people and organizations involved in legal fights on ADF's issues. These attorneys become part of the Alliance upon completing ADF's weeklong legal training conference. (Full disclosure: I have attended this training academy twice—once as a lawyer in their legal track and once as a journalist in their media informational track.)
>
> ADF also makes grants to support lawyers and scholars for their work on behalf of those issues of faith, life, marriage, and families. And its Blackstone Legal Fellowship program takes over 100 promising law students every year and treats them to nine weeks of excellent food and accommodations over the summer in exchange for spending their days in lectures and seminars on natural law, government, philosophy, and learning key legal doctrines, followed by six weeks of "field work," to equip them for lifelong service of ADF's mission-related issues in whatever field they end up pursuing in their career.

Something to think about if you are a young person. It's a tough thing to make it through secular law school with your faith intact, but if you can, the benefits to all of us can be huge. It's a high-risk, high-reward option for talented young Christians and conservatives to pursue.

Are churchgoing people who accept same-sex marriage really Christians?

August 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a bit of research from Mark Regnerus to shed some light on what else they believe. (H/T Chris)

Excerpt:

> Churchgoing Christians who support same-sex marriage are more likely to think pornography, cohabitation, hook-ups, adultery, polyamory, and abortion are acceptable. And it's reasonable to expect continued change in more permissive directions.

> As mainline Protestant denominations increasingly accept the ordination of gay clergy and publicly affirm same-sex unions, the sociologist in me wishes to understand what this development means for people in those denominations. I'm not talking about subtle linguistic shifts. While the difference between speaking of marriage as a "civil contract between a woman and a man" and as "a unique commitment between two people" is obvious to those who pay attention to church documents, the impact of such changes on congregants' attitudes and internalized paradigms—their hearts, I suppose—is seldom considered.
>
> What is the sexual and relational morality of Christians who accept the moral legitimacy of same-sex marriages? Some questions naturally arise. Does adultery mean the same thing for both same-sex and opposite-sex unions? Does it make sense to speak of premarital sex in such a context? Historically, the fear of pregnancy was enough to scare many love-struck Christians into taking things slow, but same-sex pregnancies are an accomplishment, not an accident, and most Christians use contraception now anyway.
>
> Integrating homosexual relationships into Christian moral systems is not simple, and has ramifications for how heterosexual relationships are understood, too. What exactly do pro-same-sex-marriage Christians think about sex and relationships in general?

So he's done some research on this, and here's a snip:

> To do this, I rely on the *Relationships in America* survey, a data collection project I oversaw that interviewed 15,738 Americans, ages 18-60, in early 2014. It's a population-based sample, meaning that its results are nationally representative. The survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with these seven statements:
>
> 1. Viewing pornographic material is OK.

> 2. It is a good idea for couples considering marriage to live together in order to decide whether or not they get along well enough to be married to one another.
> 3. It is OK for two people to get together for sex and not necessarily expect anything further.
> 4. If a couple has children, they should stay married *unless* there is physical or emotional abuse.
> 5. It is sometimes permissible for a married person to have sex with someone other than his/her spouse.
> 6. It is OK for three or more consenting adults to live together in a sexual/romantic relationship.
> 7. I support abortion rights.
>
> There is more to sexual and relationship morality than just these seven items, to be sure, but they do offer us a glimpse into how people perceive various practices and relationships. In order to ensure this is not just an exercise in documenting the attitudes of Christians "in name only," I've restricted the analysis to churchgoing Christians—here defined as those who report they attend religious services at least three times a month and who self-identified with some sort of Christian affiliation. And I've restricted the analysis to those who report a position either for or against same-sex marriage. (I've excluded the one-in-four who reported they are undecided.)
>
> […]The table above displays the share of each group who either "agree" or "strongly agree" with the seven statements listed above. **At a glance, there is a pretty obvious fissure between Christians who do and do not oppose same-sex marriage. More than seven times as many of the latter think pornography is OK. Three times as many back cohabiting as a good idea, six times as many are OK with no-strings-attached sex, five times as many think adultery could be permissible, thirteen times as many have no issue with polyamorous relationships, and six times as many support abortion rights. The closest the two come together is over the wisdom of a married couple staying together at all costs (except in cases of abuse).**
>
> Churchgoing Christians who support same-sex marriage look very much like the country as a whole—the population average (visible in the third column). That answers my original question. What would a pro-SSM Christian sexual morality look like? The national average—the norm—that's what.

Click on through for the rest of it.

As a Christian man, my view is that all sex outside of marriage is wrong. When you hear a church-going person talk about changing the definition of marriage and turning a blind eye to cohabitation. divorce, etc. it's important to understand that they are just flat out rejecting the no sex outside marriage view. We now have a view of sex in culture that

“love makes it right”. And now even “marriage is for anyone who loves someone else”. It’s baloney. That’s not the Christian view, and these church-going people ought to know better.

New study: sub-optimal / poor design of the eye / retina isn't really

August 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think this "sub-optimal" argument against a Designer is stupid, because designs are always trade-offs between different quality goals, but just to put this one to bed, here is Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Now a new paper in *Nature Communications*, "Müller cells separate between wavelengths to improve day vision with minimal effect upon night vision," has expanded upon this research, further showing the eye's optimal design. According to the paper, Müller cells not only act as optical fibers to direct incoming light through the optic nerve, but are fine-tuned to specific wavelengths to ensure that light reaches the proper retinal cells. From the Abstract:
>
> Vision starts with the absorption of light by the retinal photoreceptors — cones and rods. However, due to the 'inverted' structure of the retina, the incident light must propagate through reflecting and scattering cellular layers before reaching the photoreceptors. It has been recently suggested that Müller cells function as optical fibres in the retina, transferring light illuminating the retinal surface onto the cone photoreceptors. Here we show that Müller cells are wavelength-dependent wave-guides, concentrating the green-red part of the visible spectrum onto cones and allowing the blue-purple part to leak onto nearby rods. This phenomenon is observed in the isolated retina and explained by a computational model, for the guinea pig and the human parafoveal retina. Therefore, light propagation by Müller cells through the retina can be considered as an integral part of the first step in the visual process, increasing photon absorption by cones while minimally affecting rod-mediated vision.
>
> (Amichai M. Labin, Shadi K. Safuri, Erez N. Ribak, and Ido Perlman, "Müller cells separate between wavelengths to improve day vision with minimal effect upon night vision," *Nature Communications*, DOI: 10.1038/ncomms5319 (July 8, 2014).)
>
> The paper presents Müller cells as a direct answer to the view that the vertebrate eye has a suboptimal wiring:
>
> [T]he mammalian retina and the peripheral retina of humans and primates are organized in a seemingly reverse order with respect to the light path. This arrangement places the photoreceptors, responsible for light absorption, as the last cells in the path of light, rather than the first. Therefore, the incident light must propagate through five reflecting and scattering layers of cell bodies and neural processes before reaching the photoreceptors. This 'inverted' retinal structure is expected to cause blurring of the image and reduction in the photon

> flux reaching the photoreceptors, thus reducing their sensitivity. It has been recently reported that retinal Müller cells act as light guides serving to transfer light across the retina, from the vitreo-retinal border towards the photoreceptors.

Bookmark it because this is the kind of silly objection to design that they hear on the Discovery Channel, PBS, etc.

Arizona Planned Parenthood clinic failed to report rapist

August 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> A pro-life legal group is calling for a state investigation of an Arizona Planned Parenthood abortion clinic that allowed teen girls to be victimized by statutory rape because it failed to properly report a rapist.
>
> Planned Parenthood abortion clinics have come under fire countless times over the years for not reporting cases of statutory rape to authorities as required by state law. Earlier this year, in Arizona, officials says the abortion giant failed again to provide the proper report to authorities about a victim of a young man who is a serial rapist.
>
> **Not only did Planned Parenthood intentionally fail to report the rape but, in so doing, it allowed the rapist to rape as many as 18 or more teenage girls, authorities say, making it so the abortion company is partially responsible for victimizing them as well.**
>
> In this case, documents obtained from the Pinal County Sheriff's Office allege a counselor at a health clinic intentionally withheld information about an alleged rape from law enforcement personnel, months before others came forward to stop a Poston Butte High School student from attacking more teenagers.
>
> Tyler Kost, 18, is accused of raping or molesting at least 18 girls, most of them fellow classmates at Poston Butte High School. He is being held without bond in the Pinal County jail.
>
> In forensic interviews with Sheriff's Office sex crime detectives, a girl who says she became pregnant after Kost raped her last year visited a Planned Parenthood clinic with her mother on New Year's Eve. According to the report, her mom told the staffer about the sexual assault during the visit.
>
> "The counselor intentionally miscoded the assault as a consensual encounter," the PCSO report states. "The counselor told them that they did not want the hassle of having to report the assault to law enforcement as they were a mandatory reporter."
>
> That's a violation of Arizona law, which requires all suspected sexual abuse incidents be reported to law enforcement.
>
> Last week, Alliance Defending Freedom filed a complaint with the Arizona Department of Health Services that asks the agency to investigate a Tempe Planned Parenthood facility under a new state law that empowers such investigations.

> “Planned Parenthood’s main concern should be the safety of young girls, not the size of its profit margin,” said ADF Legal Counsel Natalie Decker. “Sadly, this is not an exception, and Planned Parenthood is abusing more than just taxpayer dollars. Their complicity in placing young girls at the mercy of adult male sexual predators can’t be ignored, nor should it be allowed to continue.”

Planned Parenthood’s new slogan should be “It’s not worth the hassle to prevent rapes”.

William Lane Craig vs Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God's existence

August 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has done in my opinion. (The other two are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates) This one doesn't seem to get a lot of play on the Internet: there's no video, transcript or anything. But it is a great debate, and on a problem we are all concerned about: the problem of evil and suffering. One other thing – Sinnott-Armstrong is also a very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics.

The MP3 file is here.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

- If God exists, gratuitous does not exist.
- *God exists*
- Therefore, gratuitous does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists:

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

What is pre-suppositionalism? What is presuppositional apologetics?

August 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Messianic Drew has a post up where he explains seven reasons, and I'll add a still more important reason below.

His introduction:

> While most Christians will agree that there is a need to defend the faith, many will not realize that there is a debate regarding methodologies. This paper will address the various apologetics methods, and then analyze before critiquing the relatively new method of presuppositionalism. While this method has a lot to offer from a practical apologetics standpoint, it cannot be held rationally as a worldview. This paper will give seven reasons why this is the case.
>
> Before addressing presuppositionalism, an introduction to other apologetic methodologies is in order. The main form of apologetics used historically is called Classical Apologetics. Under this method, the apologist gives arguments for the existence of God, and then proceeds to develop Christian evidences for the Christian worldview. Arguments like the moral argument, and other reason-based argumentation tend to dominate this method.
>
> If classical apologetics is a two-step method, evidentialism is a one-step method. The evidentialist will usually forego rationalistic argumentation and will simply bring out evidences for the Christian worldview. The method of Gary Habermas is an example of evidentialism.
>
> Those methods as well as presuppositionalism are the main methods of apologetics. There are others as well, such as fideism, which tells people to just believe without argument. Polemical apologetics seeks to attack other worldviews. There are cumulative case methods of apologetics, where two worldviews face off for which one better answers life's deepest questions. There is also eclectic apologetics, which seeks to borrow methods from other schools of apologetics depending on the need.
>
> This brings the discussion to presuppositionalism, which seeks to examine the underlying assumptions of any worldview. In short, presuppositionalism states that one's foundational views are the only truly relevant factor in discussing worldviews. The founder of modern presuppositionalism is Cornelius van Til.

Here are his 7 points:

1. Presuppositionalism is circular reasoning
2. Presuppositionalism minimizes common grace
3. Presuppositionalism confuses ontological priority with epistemic priority

4. Presuppositionalism presupposes a highly controversial theory of knowledge
5. Presuppositionalism often forgets that Christianity is, at least in principle, falsifiable
6. Van Til's apologetic might not even be Christian, but may be merely theistic
7. Presuppositionalism faces the problem of incommensurability

And here is #6 in detail:

> John Johnson gives a devastating critique as to why Van Til's system is wholly inadequate when addressing other faiths, such as Islam. Van Til argues from Romans 1:18-21 that non-Christians suppress the truth, and that a presuppositional technique is necessary. However, this section of the Bible deals with knowledge of God, but not theological issues about the Trinity, Jesus, salvation by grace through faith alone, etc. [12] Instead, it only says that unbelievers are without excuse for denying monotheism. Paul reinforces this in Acts 17, when he talks about the statue to an unknown God. Paul deals with the Athenians on their own ground.
>
> A more practical example is what I call Artscroll Judaism. This is a fundamentalist sect of Orthodox Judaism, with its own think tanks which can give you an answer to anything. Anyone who is willing to take the leap into the system will find it every bit as coherent as one would find the Reformed Christian view.
>
> John Warwick Montgomery gives a fable about a conversation between two presuppositionalists from two different religions: the Shadok religion, and the Gibi religion.
>
> Shadok: You will never discover the truth, for instead of subordinating yourself to revelational truth (The Shadok Bible) you sinfully insist on maintaining the autonomy of your fallen intellect.
>
> Gibi: Quite the contrary. [He repeats the same assertion substituting the Gibi Bible for the Shadok Bible.] And I say this not on the basis of my sinful ego but because I have been elected by the Gibi God.
>
> Shadok: Wrong again! [He repeats the exact same claim, substituting Shadok Election for Gibi Election.] Moreover, the sovereign election of which I am the unworthy recipient has been the very work of God the Shadok Holy Spirit. And all of this is clearly taught in the self-validating Scripture of our people, which, I should not have to reiterate, derives from the true God and not from sinful, alledgedly autonomous man.
>
> Gibi: How dare you invert everything. [He laboriously repeats the preceding argument, substituting Gibi election, the Gibi Holy Spirit, and the Gibi Bible.]
>
> Shadok: Absurd! This is the inevitable result of your colored glasses.
>
> Gibi: It is you who have the glasses cemented to your face. Mine have been transparent through sovereign grace and Gibi election, as proclaimed by the Gibi God's word.

> Shadok: Your religion is but the inevitable byproduct of sin—a tragic effort at self-justification through idolatry. Let's see what the Shadok God really says about his word.
>
> Gibi: I will not listen to your alleged "facts." Unless you start with the truth, you have no business interpreting facts at all. Let me help you by interpreting facts revelationally.
>
> Shadok: Of course you will not listen to the proper interpretation of facts. Blinded by your sin, you catch each fact as you would a ball—and then you throw it into a bottomless pit.
>
> Gibi: That's what you do with what I say—a clear proof of your hopeless, pseudo-autonomous condition. May the Gibi God help you.
>
> Shadok: May the Shadok God help you![13]
>
> As Montgomery notes, this encounter is hopeless, since neither side can appeal to neutral facts to solve the dispute. Both sides are reduced to chest-thumping, loud assertion, and empty fideism.

It's funny but it's true! This is presuppositionalism in action. It's arguing without appealing to any facts.

And here is my eighth point from my post on presuppositionalism.

Excerpt:

> My view of presuppositional apologetics is that is as a system, it is circular reasoning. It assumes Christianity in order to prove Christianity. But there is an even worse problem with it. It's not a Biblical way of doing apologetics. It's man's way of doing apologetics, not God's. I think that the best way to understand Van Til's apologetics is by saying that it really just a sermon disguised as apologetics. The problem is that Van Til's sermon has no basis in the Bible. Wherever he is getting his view from, it's not from the Bible. When I look the Bible, I don't see any Biblical support for the view that pre-suppositional apologetics is the *only approved way* of defending the faith. Instead, the standard method seems to be evidentialism.
>
> In Romans 1, Paul writes that people can learn about God's existence from the natural world.
>
> Romans 1:18-23:
>
> 18The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,
>
> 19since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.
>
> 20For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

[21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[22]Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

[23]and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

And in Acts, Peter appeals to eyewitness testimony for the resurrection, and Jesus' miracles.

Acts 2:22-24, and 36:

[22]"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[23]This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

[24]But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

And finally from the same chapter:

[36]"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Professor Clay Jones of Biola University makes the case that the use of evidence when preaching the gospel was *standard operating procedure* in the early church. (H/T Apologetics 315)

Intro:

In 1993 I started working for Simon Greenleaf University (now Trinity Law School) which offered an M.A. in Christian apologetics (Craig Hazen was the director). Much of my job was to promote the school and although I had studied Christian apologetics since my sophomore year in high school, I decided I needed to see whether an apologetic witness had strong Biblical precedence.

It does.

As I poured through the Scripture I found that Jesus and the apostles preached the resurrection of Christ as the sign of the truth of Christianity.

What follows are some of the passages which support the resurrection witness.

Here is my favorite verse from his massive list list of verses in favor of the evidential approach to Christian apologetics:

Mat. 12:39-40: A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jesus is saying that the resurrection was deliberately given as a sign to

> unbelievers to convince them. ("The Sign of Jonah" = the resurrection)
>
> So, I see that God uses nature and miracles to persuade, which can be assessed using scientific and historical methods. Can anyone find me a clear statement in the Bible that states that only pre-suppositional arguments should be used? I could be wrong, and I am willing to be proven wrong. I think we should use the Biblical method of apologetics, not the fallen man's method of apologetics.

Presuppositional arguments, like the ontological argument from reason or the epistemological argument from reason are good. Presuppositionalism as a system is not good. It's good to learn presuppositional arguments, but as part of a quiver of arguments – not in isolation.

By the way, Eric Chabot posted a fascinating discussion between presuppositionalist James White and Richard Howe on this topic, where the point about how presupositionalism cannot prove Christianity in particular came up.

Presuppositionalism is not a Christian methodology. It's neither Biblical, nor can it be used to prove Christianity. It's man's system of apologetics, not God's.

UPDATE: David Haines posted a couple of criticisms of presuppositionalism here.

UPDATE: A rebuttal to the first of Messianic Drew's points is here.

If you want to annoy the left, then raise your children to be like Texas senator Ted Cruz

August 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Republican senator Ted Cruz

Here's a profile in National Review of my one of my favorite senators.

Excerpt:

> The party's highest-profile Texans, George W. Bush and Rick Perry, tended to match inarticulateness with cowboy swagger and lend themselves to mockery as intellectual lightweights. Bush went to Yale and Harvard Business School, yet no one naturally thinks of him as an Ivy Leaguer. The two Lone Star State governors played into the Left's stereotypes so nicely that if they didn't exist, the *New York Times* editorial board would have had to invent them.
>
> Cruz is different — a Princeton and Harvard man who not only matriculated at those fine institutions but excelled at them. Champion debater at Princeton. Magna cum laude graduate at Harvard. Supreme Court clerkship, on the way to Texas solicitor general and dozens of cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.
>
> Cruz is from the intellectual elite, but not of it, a tea-party conservative whose politics are considered gauche at best at the storied universities where he studied. He is, to borrow the words of the 2008 H.W. Brands biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt, a traitor to his class.
>
> Democrats and liberal pundits would surely dislike Cruz no matter where he went to school, but his pedigree adds an element of shocked disbelief to the disdain. "Princeton and Harvard should be disgraced," former Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell exclaimed on MSNBC, as if graduating a constitutionalist conservative who rises to national prominence is a violation of the schools' mission

> statements.
>
> […]In a *Washington Post* column a year ago, Dana Milbank noted Cruz's schooling and concluded that his tea-party politics must be a put-on, that he is, underneath it all, an "intellectually curious, liberal-arts conservative." Note the insulting assumption that an interest in books and ideas immunizes someone from a certain kind of conservative politics.
>
> **One of the Left's deepest prejudices is that its opponents are stupid, and Cruz tramples on it. At hearings, Cruz has the prosecutorial instincts of a . . . Harvard-trained lawyer. Watching Attorney General Eric Holder try to fend off Cruz's questioning on the administration's drone policy a few months ago was like seeing a mouse cornered by a very large cat.**
>
> Cruz hasn't played by the Senate rules that freshmen should initially be seen and not heard. In fact, he joined the upper chamber with all the subtlety of a SWAT team knocking down a drug suspect's front door.
>
> For people who care about such things — almost all of them are senators — this is an unforgivable offense. At another hearing, as Cruz says that the highest commitment of senators should be to the Constitution, another senator can be heard muttering that he doesn't like being lectured. Chairman Pat Leahy (probably the mutterer) eventually cuts him off and informs him he hasn't been in the Senate very long.
>
> Cruz lacks all defensiveness about his positions, another source of annoyance to his opponents, who are used to donning the mantle of both intellectual and moral superiority.

And here's a quick review of where Ted Cruz came from:

> Rafael Cruz, the father of Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, invigorated the crowd during tonight's FreedomWorks Free the People event.
>
> Describing his own personal journey escaping Cuba and working hard to build a life for himself in the U.S., the elder Cruz noted comparisons that he believes exist between Fidel Castro's governance and President Barack Obama's executive actions.
>
> Upon rising to power, he said that Castro, like Obama, spoke about hope and change. While the message sounded good at the time, it didn't take long for socialism to take root in his home country. And he paid the price.
>
> For his part in the revolution — one that many originally assumed would yield a more vibrant country — Cruz was punished while in Cuba.
>
> "I was in prison," he said. "I was tortured, but by the grace of God I was able to leave Cuba on a student VISA and came to the greatest country on the face of the earth."

> Cruz described his efforts working as a dishwasher in America and paying his own way through the University of Texas. From there, he built a life for himself — one that was filled with experiences that caused him to greatly appreciate the country that had given him so much.
>
> His plight in Cuba colored his American experience
>
> "You can't understand a loss of rights unless you've experienced it," Cruz told TheBlaze following the speech.
>
> His unique perspective leaves Cruz with the ability, he argues, to see the troubling signs surrounding socialism. Young people in America today, he told TheBlaze, take for granted the rights and privileges that the U.S. has afforded them.

Fascinating.

Now people always complain when I say that I am trying to find a wife with the background, education, experience and temperment to raise effective, influential children. I have a whole list of influential people I want to clone, in fact. I want a William Lane Craig, a Wayne Grudem, a Michael Licona, a Guillermo Gonzales, an Ann Gauger, a Jennifer Roback Morse, a Scott Klusendorf, a Mark Regnerus, and… a Ted Cruz. And I've saved the money to be able to get at least a few of those, too. The truth is that I had some of the experiences that Cruz's father had, and if he can make a Ted Cruz, then so should I be able to. They have to come from somewhere!

Now of course it's hard to guarantee outcomes when it comes to raising children, but there are some things you can prepare for. You can study things you hate that are hard, and save your money for Ph.D tuition. You can go to grad school yourself and publish research. You can look for a wife who shows the ability to nurture people so that they get better and rise higher. And maybe, you might just raise the next Ted Cruz. I think the old adage "if you aim at nothing, then you will surely hit it" is a good saying for marriage. If you are going to put hundreds of thousands of dollars and decades of your life into a marriage, then you should aim at something. You might hit it. You're not just there to make another person feel good – you're there to make the marriage serve God. Raising influential, effective children is *one way* of doing that. But it doesn't happen by accident. And it isn't necessarily going to be "fun".

Do pastors have a responsibility to know apologetics?

August 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest episode of the Reasonable Faith podcast was all about a post done by Pastor Matt Rawlings. The post talked about how churches train children to become atheists.

Pastor Matt offered 6 points in his post:

- **Reason #1 – Churches seem overprotective.**
- **Reason #2 – Teens' and twentysomethings' experience of Christianity is shallow.**
- **Reason #3 – Churches come across as antagonistic to science.**
- **Reason #4 – Young Christians' church experiences related to sexuality are often simplistic, judgmental.**
- **Reason #5 – They wrestle with the exclusive nature of Christianity.**
- **Reason #6 – The church feels unfriendly to those who doubt.**

In his post Pastor Matt said this:

> Too many churches do in fact present a shallow faith that skips doctrine and apologetics for "how to…" sermons that are little more than self-help talks with scripture sprinkled over them. The refusal to learn theology and how to defend the faith as well as to spend the time thinking about how to present them in a clear and winsome manner is at the heart of all four of the valid objections by young people to the evangelical church. Pastors must simply take this responsibility seriously and put in the time and effort. There is no other answer.
>
> […]Det. J. Warner Wallace has argued that we have to T.R.A.I.N. Christian students rather than teach them but I think we need to train all of our fellow Christians (and he would agree). Training is harder than teaching. We need to remember that it takes at least seven times for the average person today to hear something before they retain it. Also, most people do not truly understand something until they put it into practice. Thus, pastors must be trained in order train congregations to truly be lay theologians and apologists. The pastors must then challenge the congregation to use their skills reach out to the lost and help each other. And all of those trained must all help to look after the young to insure they know their faith so well that they do not fall for the poor arguments for atheism. This means pastors must implement rigorous programs for the people God has entrusted to them.

Pastor Matt lays the blame squarely on pastors for at least some of the problem. And I agree with him. But Dr. Craig asserted in his podcast that pastors should not be responsible to learn apologetics, because they were too busy with all the other duties

that pastors have to do. He gave some examples, but they were things like weddings, counseling children about drugs and marriage counseling.

So what I wanted to say about this is that Pastor Matt is right and Dr. Craig is wrong. A pastor should have at least put in the time to learn apologetics so that he is able to inject it into his sermon, where appropriate, and point people to where they can find answers when asked. It seems to me that if you are going to get up there and preach about a bunch of things, then you'd better know at least a little about why those things are true. And it can't just be "because the Bible says so" or because "that's just how I was raised". Respect for the truth claims of Christianity has to come from the top, even if the pastor leverages the skills of people in the church to address different issues in more detail.

Pastor Matt responded to Dr. Craig in this post.

Excerpt:

> The biggest disagreement I have with Dr. Craig is that he argues pastors are too busy to be trained in apologetics. As a pastor and the son of a pastor, I strongly differ! Unfortunately, what I have witnessed (and heard from several seasoned pastors of very large churches) is that too many pastors are in fact lazy. I have heard from half a dozen leaders of churches of more than 10,000 that they cannot find young seminary grads who will put in even 40 solid hours a week! Those statements may ruffle a few feathers and certainly there are hard-working, if not overworked pastors out there but they are apparently few and far between.
>
> Also, pastors often try to do things they shouldn't do. As a lawyer who used to defend churches, ministers often get into trouble for counseling those with serious issues that are beyond their training and experience. A person with addiction issues needs something like Celebrate Recovery, a person with emotional problems needs a licensed professional counselor. Ministers need to recognize their limits and engage in areas that they can and must address instead of those that are already well covered by other trained professionals.
>
> But to be fair to Dr. Craig, I think he may have misunderstood what I mean by training. I don't mean a pastor has to earn a master's degree or doctorate in apologetics or philosophy. There are many short but effective training programs out there such as his own Defenders class, the distance certificate from BIOLA, Frank Turek's short but intense CrossExamined program (that I am attending this week), etc.
>
> I agree with Dr. Craig that we should train layman to create an apologetics team in our churches (see this post) but the pastor has to take the lead. No pastor can expect his or her church to do what he or she is not willing to do. If the pastor doesn't evangelize, the church won't. If the pastor is not studying the Bible carefully, the church won't. Also, any pastor working in today's post-Christian culture must know how to meet the challenges of said culture. It is just part of the gig. So, every minister should seek some type of solid apologetics training

> and commit to regular study on the subject as well as subscribe to certain podcasts such as Reasonable Faith.

I wanted to add that I didn't agree with any of the other points where Dr. Craig disagreed with Pastor Matt. It was really surprising to me, but I think Pastor Matt is right across the board. Leadership starts from the top – how are you supposed to be able to assess different people's requests to teach apologetics or bring in speakers if you are not comfortable discerning what is good and what isn't yourself? If the pastor is going to be making those kinds of decisions, then he has to understand apologetics to some degree. Maybe not with formal training, but as much as a typical blogger like me would. Also, don't you find it weird – the idea that a pastor can get up there and preach on things to people and not be able to show anyone some reasons why these things are true? Christians have to be ready to give an answer, and that answer cannot just be "because the Bible says so".

Obama’s unemployment: 11,472,000 Americans left the workforce since January 2009

August 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> 11.4 million Americans age 16 and over have left the workforce since President Obama took office in January 2009, according to data released today from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).
>
> In July 2014, there were 92,001,000 Americans, 16 and over, who were classified as “not in the labor force,” meaning they not only did not have a job, but they didn’t actively seek one in the last four weeks.
>
> This number has increased by 11,472,000 since January 2009, when the number of Americans not in the labor force was 80,529,000.
>
> The number of Americans not in the labor force dropped slightly in July, down 119,000 from the 92,120,000 Americans not in the labor force in June.
>
> The participation rate, which measures the percentage of the civilian non-institutional population that participated in the labor force by either having a job or actively seeking one, increased from 62.8 percent in June to 62.9 percent in July.
>
> In July, the number of unemployed Americans increased by 197,000 (from 9,474,000 in June to 9,671,000 in July), meaning they did not have a job even though they were actively seeking one.
>
> While the number of unemployed increased in July, so did the number of employed Americans: In June, there were 146,221,000 employed Americans, and that number climbed to 146,352,000 in July, a one-month increase of 131,000.

By contrast, George W. Bush created 8.1 million jobs after his 2003 tax cut.

Excerpt:

> Obama and other critics of Bush’s tax cuts argue that they did little to boost economic growth or jobs. But they tend to start their count when Bush signed the first tax cut bill into law in mid-2001.
>
> The problem is that much of that tax plan — including reductions to most of the income tax brackets — wasn’t scheduled to take full effect until 2006.
>
> Bush’s second tax cut, signed in May 2003, accelerated those tax cuts, letting them kick in retroactively to the beginning of that year. The 2003 law also cut taxes on capital gains and dividends.
>
> It turns out that the month after Bush signed that 2003 law, jobs and the

> economy finally started growing again.
>
> From June 2003 to December 2007, the economy added 8.1 million jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The unemployment rate fell to 5% from 6.3%. Real GDP growth averaged close to 3% in the four-plus years after that, and the budget deficit fell steadily from 2004 to 2007.
>
> And despite Obama's claim, Bush's policies did not increase income inequality. In fact, inequality was the same when Bush left office as when he came in, according to theCensus Bureau. A study by University of California economist Emmanuel Saez found that inequality has climbed much faster under Obama.
>
> What's more, the rich ended up paying a larger chunk of the federal income tax burden after Bush's tax cuts went into effect, with the share paid by the top 1% rising to 40% by 2007, up from 37% the year before Bush took office, according to IRS data.
>
> The Congressional Budget Office, meanwhile, found that the federal income tax was more progressive in 2007 than it was back in 1979.

Recall that these tax cuts didn't cost us a thing – the 2007 deficit was $160 billion dollars, which was down from the previous year. Economic growth *raised* tax revenues.

When you let job creators keep more of their own money, they create jobs. When you tax and regulate job creators more, you destroy jobs. You can't argue with the Bureau of Labor Statistics numbers. These are the official numbers and they show that Obama failed where Bush succeeded.

Obama’s debt: federal debt up over 7 TRILLION dollars since January 2009

August 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News has the story.

Excerpt:

> The total federal debt of the U.S. government has now increased more than $7 trillion during the slightly more than five and a half years Barack Obama has been president.
>
> That is more than the debt increased under all U.S. presidents from George Washington through Bill Clinton combined, and it is more debt than was accumulated in the first 227 years of this nation’s existence–from 1776 through 2003.
>
> The total federal debt first passed the $7-trillion mark on Jan. 15, 2004, after President George W. Bush had been in office almost three years.
>
> […]The $7,060,259,674,497.51 in new debt that the federal government has taken on during Obama’s presidency equals $61,341.82 per household.
>
> The median household income in the United States in 2012 (the latest year estimated) was $51,017. Thus, President Obama has increased the federal debt by more than the typical household’s annual income.

I sometimes get annoyed by the fact that the stock market hasn’t tanked under Obama in the last 6 years, but there is a reason why. The reason is that he has borrowed and spent SEVEN TRILLION dollars. This makes the lack of economic growth caused by his anti-business policies, e.g. – Obamacare, look less harmful than they are. If you were in debt 30,000 and borrowed another 20,000 and started buying cars and taking vacations, you’d look pretty good. That’s basically what this President did. We look OK, but only because he borrowed $7 trillion from the next generation of Americans.

Did Jesus teach that it is wrong to judge other people?

August 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great post by Matt at MandM on an often misunderstood verse.

Here's the passage in question, Matthew 7:1-5:

[1]"Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

[2]For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

[3]"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

[4]How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

[5]You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Most people only quote the first verse, but they don't look at the rest of the verses that come after.

Here's what Matt has to say about those other verses:

> The phrase translated in the NIV as, "do not judge, or you too will be judged," was originally written by Matthew in Koine (a Greek dialect). The Interlinear Bible gives the literal translation here as, "do not judge that you be judged." In other words, do not judge others *in a way that leads one to put oneself under judgement.*
>
> […]One is not to judge in a way that brings judgment on oneself. The reason for this ("for") is that the standard one uses to judge others is the standard that one's own behaviour will be measured by. Jesus goes on to illustrate, with a sarcastic example, precisely what he is talking about; a person who nit-picks or censures the minor faults of others (taking the speck out of their brothers eye) who ignores the serious, grave, moral faults in their own life (the log in one's own eye). His point is that such faults actually blind the person's ability to be able to make competent moral judgments. This suggests that Jesus is focusing on a certain type of judging and not the making of judgments *per se*.
>
> In fact, the conclusion that Jesus does not mean to condemn *all* judging of others is evident from the proceeding sentences in the above quote. Rather than engaging in the kind of judgment Jesus has condemned one should "first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." In other words one should try to rectify the serious moral flaws in one's own life precisely so one *can* assist others with theirs. One

> needs to avoid hypocrisy in order to make constructive and effective moral judgments about others. This would make no sense if Jesus meant to condemn *all* judging by this passage.

Judging happens all the time but it can be much easier for a person to accept if you do the judging in a professional way. After all, teachers tell students all the time that they are wrong, but these judgments are accepted because teachers know what they are talking about. If you are going to make a judgement, then try to do it in the way that an expert does.

This is an apologetics blog, so I feel that I should say that when you are trying to talk to someone about apologetics, then **don't** talk about their personal lives at all. Just talk about what is true in the real world, or about moral choices in general. I've noticed that people get really mad when I say that some behavior is wrong because the Bible says it, so I don't do usually that. But I've noticed that most are open to hearing the evidence for why a behavior is wrong, for example the harm caused by unwed motherhood to children. People are more likely to listen to you if you stay away from judging their personal situation.

Second piece of advice: if you are going to talk about right and wrong, start by showing someone that just because there are differences of opinion on an issue, it doesn't mean no one is right. If morality comes up as the topic, then I find it easier to first explain that just because people disagree, it doesn't mean no one is right. What I like to do for this is to bring up something that is affirmed by one religion and denied by another, like whether the universe had a beginning. Jews (for example) affirm a beginning of the universe, Mormons deny a beginning of the universe. Who is right? We have to look to science to decide it. Once we've decided it, someone is going to be right, and someone is going to be wrong. You want to get them to see that telling someone they are wrong doesn't make you a villain. In our case, if the universe had a beginning, and you tell a Mormon why you think it did using science, it's no defense against you for them to call you "intolerant" for using evidence to show you are right. Sometimes people can be wrong, and they need to tolerate when others tell them they are wrong, even if they don't agree.

Jonathan Morrow talks about that second point here:

> However, true tolerance is usually not what people have in mind when they say people should be free to believe in whatever God (or no god at all) they want to. Here is the simple, but profound point to grasp—merely believing something doesn't make it true. Put differently, people are entitled to their own beliefs, but not their own truth. Belief is not what ultimately matters—truth is. Our believing something is true doesn't make it true. ***The Bible isn't true simply because I have faith.*** Truth is what corresponds to reality—telling it like it is.

No point of view is correct just because someone believes it. Beliefs are made true if they correspond to reality. And it's not "intolerant" to "judge" truth claims that don't

correspond to reality as false.

Finally, you want to get the other person to see that saying someone is wrong isn't a bad thing – especially if their being wrong is going to get them into trouble. Suppose you tell someone "don't take a nap on the railroad tracks" because they've been doing that. This is a good thing to do. It helps them to not get run over by a train. You're not forcing them into anything, you're just giving them information that they can use or not. It's up to them to believe you or not, but they shouldn't try to shut you down by saying "don't judge me".

New study: couples that delay sexual activity experience higher quality relationships

August 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Relationship stability, quality, communication, satisfaction

From Family Studies, news about TWO new studies.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> [T]wo recently published studies call into question the validity of testing sexual chemistry early in dating.
>
> My colleagues and I published the first study a few years ago in the American Psychological Association's *Journal of Family Psychology*. This study involved a national sample of 2,035 married individuals who participated in the popular online couple assessment survey called "RELATE." **We found that the longer a dating couple waits to have sex, the better their relationship is after marriage. In fact, couples who wait until marriage to have sex report higher relationship satisfaction (20% higher), better communication patterns (12% better), less consideration of divorce (22% lower), and better sexual quality (15% better) than those who started having sex early in their dating (see Figure 2). For couples in between—those that became sexually involved later in their dating, but prior to marriage—the benefits were about half as strong.**
>
> […]These patterns were statistically significant even when controlling for a variety of other variables such as respondents' number of prior sexual partners, education levels, religiosity, and relationship length.
>
> **The second study, by Sharon Sassler and her colleagues at Cornell University, also found that rapid sexual involvement has adverse long-term implications for relationship quality.** Using data from the Marital and Relationship Survey, which provides information on nearly 600 low- to moderate-income couples living with minor children, their study examined the tempo of sexual intimacy and subsequent relationship quality in a sample of married and cohabiting men and women. Their analyses also suggest that delaying sexual involvement is associated with higher relationship quality across several

> dimensions.
>
> They discovered that the negative association between sexual timing and relationship quality is largely driven by a link between early sex and cohabitation. Specifically, sexual involvement early in a romantic relationship is associated with an increased likelihood of moving more quickly into living together, which in turn is associated with lower relationship quality. This finding supports Norval Glenn's hypothesis that sexual involvement may lead to unhealthy emotional entanglements that make ending a bad relationship difficult. As Sassler and her colleagues concluded, "Adequate time is required for romantic relationships to develop in a healthy way. In contrast, relationships that move too quickly, without adequate discussion of the goals and long-term desires of each partner, may be insufficiently committed and therefore result in relationship distress, especially if one partner is more committed than the other" (p. 710).

The rest of the post talks about two reasons why this works: improved partner selection and prioritizing communication and commitment.

That's two studies, and there's a third. Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail about a new study showing the importance of chastity for relationship quality and stability.

Excerpt:

> New couples who jump into bed together on the first date do not last as long in relationships as those who wait a new study has revealed.
>
> Using a sample of almost 11,000 unmarried people, Brigham Young University discovered a direct correlation between the length and strength of a partnership and the amount of time they took to have first have sex.
>
> **The study showed that those who waited to initiate sexual intimacy were found to have longer and more positive outcomes in their relationships while those who couldn't help themselves reported that their dalliances struggled to last more than two years.**
>
> 'Results suggested that waiting to initiate sexual intimacy in unmarried relationships was generally associated with positive outcomes,' said the report authored published by the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health.
>
> 'This effect was strongly moderated by relationship length, with individuals who reported early sexual initiation reporting increasingly lower outcomes in relationships of longer than two years.'
>
> The study examined four sexual-timing patterns: Having sex prior to dating, initiating sex on the first date or shortly after, having sex after a few weeks of dating, and sexual abstinence.
>
> Each one of these fields yielded different results in relationship satisfaction,

> stability and communication in dating situations.

Here's another recent study that shows that if a woman has more than her husband as a premarital sex partner, her risk of divorce increases.

His findings:

> Using nationally representative data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, I estimate the association between intimate premarital relationships (premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) and subsequent marital dissolution. I extend previous research by considering relationship histories pertaining to both premarital sex and premarital cohabitation. I find that premarital sex or premarital cohabitation that is limited to a woman's husband is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption.**However, women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship have an increased risk of marital dissolution.**

Here's another study that makes it even more clear.

Findings:

> Data from the 1988 US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) were utilized to assess the impact of premarital sexual activity on subsequent marital stability. **Among white NSFG subjects first married in 1965-85, virgin brides were significantly less to have become separated or divorced (25%) than women who had not been virgins at marriage (35%).**
>
> **[…]The lower risk of divorce on the part of white women with no premarital sexual experience persisted even after numerous intervening and background variables were controlled.**

This study supports what the Bible says about chastity and premarital sex:

> 1 Cor. 7:8-9:
>
> 8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to stay single as I am.
>
> 9 But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.
>
> The idea of "burning" here has to do with sexual desire. Here Paul tells all unmarried people that if they cannot control their sexual desires, they need to get married. Why? Because Paul assumes that one cannot fulfill this sexual desire outside of the marital bed. While Paul would love for them to remain single (1 Cor. 7:7), he believes that sex outside of marriage is a destructive sin and *cannot* be used as a gratifying release of our sexual passions.

Although young people like to complain about "manipulation" and "controlling" when they are approached with facts, presenting evidence is really the only way to persuade them. Although they may respond with anecdotes to refute studies, studies are important

because they represent LOTS of data points, not just one or two cherry-picked cases. Hit them with the evidence before they make the wrong decisions.

Apologetics helps young men to resist being shamed by their secular peers

August 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A post by Nick Peters about young people and apologetics, at the Christian Apologetics Alliance blog.

Excerpt:

> Now picture a teenage youth who is a Christian. Is he on the outs with his peers in any way? Well if he's a good and observant Christian, he'll be a virgin (since most teenagers in high school aren't married). Will that lead to any shame to his peers? Yep. Especially since they consider "getting laid" to be a rite of passage and a sign that you are a real man or woman.
>
> So what happens with a boy who's seventeen and can drive and who is with the guys who are talking about their sexual exploits and the guy has nothing to contribute? If he is asked why he's not "getting some" he replies that he is a Christian. Is that going to win him any friends? Nope. His "friends" there will most likely mock him for believing in antiquated ideas that science has disproven and tell him he needs to get with the times. Result? The young man is shamed.
>
> Now imagine instead if he's told the latter part about how his ideas are antiquated and instead, he's able to make a rational case for the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Do you think he'll be able to be shamed the same way? Sure, his friends can still mock him, but he can take the mockery as a sign that they cannot answer his arguments. The young boy has honor then, rather than shame. He might not be sleeping around, but he can hold his head high knowing he can stand up against his peers.
>
> […]No one wants to be embarrassed, and that includes youth, but if our young people think they can do something that none of their peers can do, it will help them to have that honor that they seek, and there is nothing wrong with seeking honor. Remember the parable where Christ told us to take a lowly position at a banquet so our host would say, "Move up to a better place" and we would be honored? He was saying that that is the proper way to receive honor. Don't just go out and try to grab it. Let it be given to you.
>
> There are many things that a young person can be ashamed of, but if they're intellectually unprepared, being a Christian is something that they may be shamed for. In the face of temptation, they need a reason to be obedient rather than just, "The church says so" or "Mom and Dad say so." Neither of those will be seen as honorable positions. They need to know for themselves why it is that they hold the stance that they do. If they are waiting until marriage, they need to know why. If they believe a man rose from the dead, they need to know why.

> That youth are eating this stuff up should tell us something. Youth don't want to be shamed in the eyes of their contemporaries. They won't mind holding a different position as long as they can defend that position. If they cannot, then the tide of social pressure could be enough to get them to abandon that and if their emotions and wills start acting against Christianity, it is only a matter of time until the intellect follows.

That excerpt is basically a summary of my life – that's how I started out as a teen – with apologetics. I've been a Christian the whole time in between then and now. I think many parents and churches are wondering how it is that you get a young man to stand up to the culture and peer pressure. The answer is apologetics, and I think integrating Christianity with every other area of knowledge helps as well. Winning arguments over and over is an excellent way to build a suit of armor against temptation and peer pressure.

And in speaking to young people who were raised as Christians then fell away, the common denominator is that they were uncomfortable claiming to be Christians in a secular environment. We have to have a plan to help our young people deal with pluralism and peer pressure. Apologetics is the best answer I can think of.

Friday night movie: Sink the Bismarck! (1960)

August 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.2/10]

Description:

> In 1939, the Nazi Germany's largest and most powerful battleship, *Bismarck*, is launched in a ceremony at Hamburg with Adolf Hitler attending. The launching of the hull is seen as the beginning of an era of German sea power. Two years later, in 1941,British convoys are being ravaged by U-boats and surface raider attacks which cut off supplies which Britain needs to continue the war. In May, British intelligence discovers the *Bismarck* and the heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen* are about to break into theNorth Atlantic to attack convoys.
>
> The man assigned to coordinate the hunt is the Admiralty's chief of operations, Captain Jonathan Shepard (Kenneth More), who has been distraught over the death of his wife in an air raid and the sinking of his ship by German ships commanded by Admiral Günther Lütjens (Karel Štěpánek). Upon receiving his new post, Shepard discovers Lütjens is the fleet commander on the *Bismarck*. Shepard's experience of conflict with the German Navy and his understanding of Lütjens allow him to predict the*Bismarck*'s movements. Shepard is aggressive to his staff but comes increasingly to rely on the coolness and skill of his assistant, WREN Second Officer Anne Davis (Dana Wynter).

Below are the combatants.

The German battleship Bismarck:

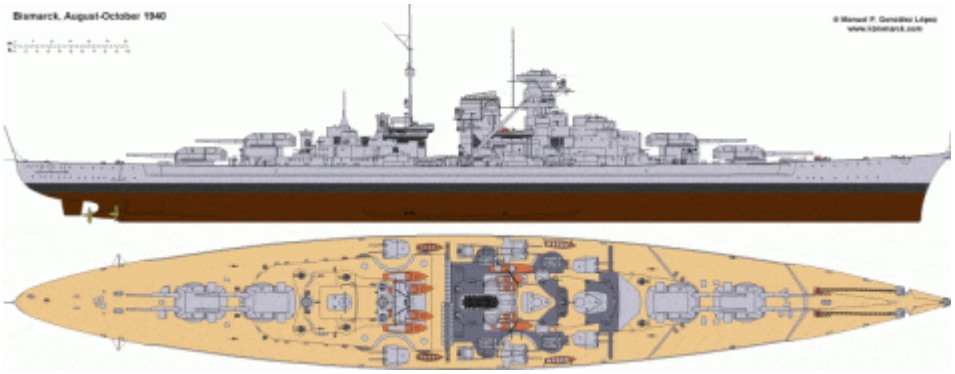

The Bismarck (click for larger image)

The aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal:

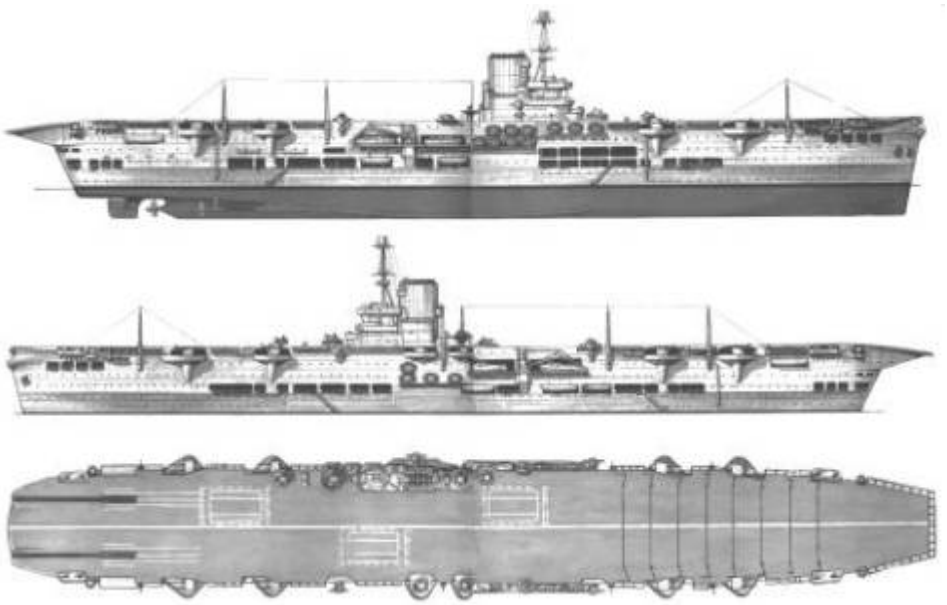

HMS Ark Royal (click for larger image)

I think this battle signaled the end of battleships as the best naval unit.

So why did battleships become extinct? Well, you can get a lot more range and striking power out of several squadrons of bombers and torpedo bombers than you can out of 16 or even 18 inch guns. In fact, you'll see the torpedo bombers of the HMS Ark Royal face off against the Bismarck in the movie. Today, naval warfare is conducted with surface-to-surface missiles like the Tomahawk and the SS-N-27 Sizzler, etc. as well as air-to-surface missiles fired from land and carrier based strike aircraft. The range of these missiles is far greater than the range of the deck guns on any battleship. However, there is work being done on rail guns which may force a return to conventional deck guns, especially for operations like shore bombardments where you want to use cheaper munitions!

Happy Friday!

On wargames, history and heroes: “this story shall the good man teach his son”

August 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Memoir ’44: Pegasus Bridge setup

Reposting this old post because Dina and I spent Friday night playing games again! And this is one of my favorite posts. Last night was Portal 2 and Orcs Must Die! 2.

Last night, I played through the Pegasus Bridge scenario from the Memoir ’44 wargame with Dina a few times. We actually played the online version of the game, using Steam. She was very gracious to play a wargame with me, which I don’t think is necessarily the first thing on most women’s lists of things to do on a Thursday night! I appreciated her agreeing to learn how to play and then playing with me several times. I think that Christians need to plan and execute more “together” activities like that – activities that involve interaction, co-operation, communication and engagement. We try to avoid doing things where we are both spectators. Playing wargames is not the only thing we do – we also do Bible study and cooking lessons (for me), for example.

Anyway, the point of this post is to express the deeper meaning behind playing wargames. I think that it is important to recognize and celebrate those who have demonstrated good character, whether it be now, or in the past. I think that it is important for us to search out the best role models ourselves, so that they will influence the way we act in our own lives. The second world war was a clear example of good versus evil. Anyone on the Allied side who demonstrated bravery and courage should be celebrated for safeguarding the security, liberty and prosperity that we enjoy today. In the case of Pegasus bridge, the hero is Major John Howard of the British paratroops.

Here is a quick re-cap of his exploits that day from the New York Times:

> Maj. John Howard, the commander of glider-borne British infantrymen who seized the strategically vital Pegasus Bridge in the first battle of the D-Day invasion of Normandy, died Wednesday in a hospital in Surrey, England. He was 86 and had lived in Burford, near Oxford.

> Under cover of night on June 6, 1944, six gliders carrying 181 officers and men of the Second Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry landed on the eastern flank of a 60-mile invasion front on the northern coast of France. The regiment had a heritage going back to the battles of Bunker Hill and New Orleans, to Waterloo and to World War I. Now its soldiers were in the vanguard of the invasion of Hitler's Europe.
>
> Major Howard's D Company was ordered to seize two bridges, one over the Caen Canal and the other spanning the parallel Orne River. If the Germans held on to those bridges, panzer units could move across them in a counterattack isolating 10,000 British paratroopers jumping behind the British invasion beach known as Sword, where infantry forces would arrive at daybreak. And Major Howard's men sought to strike swiftly to prevent the Germans from blowing up the bridges if they were overwhelmed; the British needed those bridges to resupply their airborne units.
>
> [image]British Halifax bombers towed the gliders over the English Channel, then cut them loose.

> Major Howard's lead glider landed at 12:16 A.M., only 50 yards from the Caen Canal bridge, but the glider's nose collapsed on impact, knocking everybody aboard unconscious for a few seconds. The soldiers quickly emerged, and over the next five minutes the men directly under Major Howard killed the surprised German defenders.
>
> The nearby Orne River bridge was captured by other troops in Major Howard's unit, and soon the words "Ham and Jam," signifying mission accomplished, were radioed to the airborne.
>
> Two British soldiers were killed and 14 wounded in the operation.
>
> Over the next 12 hours, British paratroopers and commandos reinforced Major Howard's men, and British forces were able to move toward the city of Caen, their flank having been protected by the capture of the bridges.
>
> On July 16, Major Howard received the Distinguished Service Order, Britain's second-highest award for valor. On the 10th anniversary of D-Day, he received the Croix de Guerre Avec Palme from the French Government, which had renamed the Caen Canal span Pegasus Bridge, for the flying horse symbolizing the British airborne. The road crossing the bridge was later renamed Esplanade Major John Howard.

Why is this important? Well, it's important to think on the things that are excellent. There are so many things in the culture that are not excellent that we are confronted with every day. We have to make it our business to do things together where goodness is celebrated. Especially when manly virtues like courage are celebrated. We don't do that much anymore. And I think there's a connection between wargames and Christian apologetics that we need to *deliberately* encourage.

Here's an excellent passage from Shakespeare's "Henry V" that makes the point:

> This day is called the feast of Crispian:
> He that outlives this day and comes safe home,
> Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,
> And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
> He that shall live this day, and see old age,
> Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
> And say, 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'
> Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
> And say, 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
> Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
> But he'll remember with advantages
> What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
> Familiar in his mouth as household words,
> Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
> Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
> Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.
> **This story shall the good man teach his son;**
> And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
> From this day to the ending of the world,
> But we in it shall be rememberèd;
> We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
> For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
> Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile
> This day shall gentle his condition:
> And gentlemen in England, now a-bed
> Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
> And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
> That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day. (4.3.43)

This is from the famous speech in which King Henry charges his men to fight well before the famous Battle of Agincourt.

You can read more about the history of the British Airborne division and Pegasus bridge. The famous historian of the second world war Stephen E. Ambrose also wrote a history of the Pegasus bridge battle, called "Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944". You won't find many military historians better than Stephen E. Ambrose!

You might be surprised how many men are interested in military history and wargames, precisely because men instinctively look up to men like John Howard who embody qualities like bravery and courage. We have a dearth of moral character in this society. And we don't do much to teach young men about manly virtues, even in the church. I think that it is important for us to think of creative ways for us to present good character to our young men. Young women should also learn about good character, because they

must separate out the good men from the bad when they are courting.

Thanks to Dina for helping me to edit this post!

Ohio late-term abortion clinic closed for failure to comply with regulations

August 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this decision

From Life News.

Excerpt:

> An Ohio judge issued a ruling today ordering a late-term abortion practitioner to close his abortion facility.
>
> Previously, Ohio passed a law requiring that all ambulatory surgical centers must be licensed by the state and, in 1999, it came to the attention of the Ohio Health Department that abortion clinics were not in compliance with the law, having never applied for licensing. The OHD began the process of insuring that all abortion clinics came into compliance.
>
> Haskell (pictured below right), a nationally-known late-term abortionist who helped develop the now outlawed Partial-Birth Abortion procedure, has fought with the state for years and he sued the Ohio Department of Health this month for ordering his Sharonville abortion facility to close because it does not meet the minimum medical safety standards in Ohio law.
>
> […]Officials with Ohio Right to Life also applauded the decision.
>
> "Shutting down Haskell's facility is a long-sought victory for the pro-life movement," said Stephanie Ranade Krider, executive director of Ohio Right to

> Life. “As the self-proclaimed ‘poster child’ of partial birth abortion, Martin Haskell has endangered southwest Ohio children for the last 30 years. We are hopeful that this will be the final order that puts Haskell out of business in Sharonville.”
>
> “This decision is about common-sense, as evidenced by the non-partisan nature of this ruling,” said Krider. “We are grateful to the Ohio Department of Health and the office of Attorney General Mike DeWine, but we are also grateful to Judge Metz, a Democrat, for ensuring that abortionists aren’t skirting basic health and safety regulations.”

Although the Democrat made the right decision in this case, we have to keep in mind that Senate Democrats want to pass a law to strike down ALL state and local restrictions on abortion. If you vote for a Democrat, this is what you are voting for – unregulated abortion through all nine months of pregnancy.

I also hope this news story is a lesson those pro-lifers who are opposed to incremental measures that fall short of an immediate, full abolition of abortion. We have to pursue an incremental approach – that’s what works.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

August 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus as the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates.

For example, in his debate with Bart Ehrman, Craig was able to quote Ehrman's own writings where he agreed that all four facts were probably true.

Excerpt:

> Now in his early published work Dr. Ehrman expressed skepticism about these facts. He insisted that we cannot really affirm these facts.
>
> […]Dr. Ehrman has himself come to re-think his position on these issues. Inconsistencies in the details notwithstanding, he now recognizes that we have "solid traditions," not only for Jesus' burial, but also for the women's discovery of the empty tomb, and therefore, he says, we can conclude with "some certainty" that Jesus was in fact buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb and that three days later the tomb was found empty.
>
> When I discovered that Professor Ehrman had reversed himself on this question, my admiration for his honesty and scholarly objectivity shot up. Very few scholars, once they've gone into print on an issue, have the courage to re-think that issue and admit that they were wrong. Dr. Ehrman's reversal of his opinion on these matters is testimony, not merely to the force of the evidence for these four facts, but also to his determination to follow the evidence wherever it leads. What this means is that my first contention is not an issue of disagreement in tonight's debate.

So what are the criteria that historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with

other authentic material, and so forth.

It is somewhat misleading to call these “criteria,” for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called “Indications of Authenticity” or “Signs of Credibility.”

In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus’ life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.

What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:

(1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.

(2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.

(3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.

(4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.

(5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.

(6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.

For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, “The ‘Criteria’ for Authenticity,” in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.

Notice that these “criteria” do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus’ life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same “criteria” are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur’an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the

> better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book.

Try this approach instead:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely

accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection
8. Don't let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And just keep in mind that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. You have to use that – it's the law.

Back to the minimal facts criteria. The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I've read is the one by Robert H. Stein in "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It's a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion "God raised Jesus from the dead". That whole book is really very, very good.

Robert George: United States has a moral obligation to stop the genocide in Iraq

August 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this Christian Post article via a blog post on Think Apologetics. Robert George is one of the best (if not the best) respected Christian ethicists operating today. So it's interesting to see what he thinks we ought to do in Iraq.

Excerpt:

> Robert P. George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University, started a petition calling on President Barack Obama, Congress and the international community to destroy ISIS as a fighting force.
>
> In a Thursday video phone interview with The Christian Post (see below), George said he thought the petition was needed because ISIS, also called ISIL or the Islamic State, is committing genocide, similar to what happened in Rwanda in 1994. The United States did nothing to prevent the Rwandan genocide, and that was a mistake that should not happen again, he argued.
>
> The signers of the petition, available at iraqrescue.org, include Democrats, Republicans and independents; conservatives, liberals and moderates; and various religious traditions.
>
> Among the signers are Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission; Ben Carson, retired Johns Hopkins neurosurgeon; Edward Whelan, president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center; Eric Metaxas, an Evangelical author and public speaker; and Nina Shea, director of the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom. (Affiliations are provided for identification only. They are not signing as representatives of the institutions they work for.) At the time of this publication, the petition had over 3,800 signatures.
>
> "Nothing short of the destruction of ISIS/ISIL as a fighting force will provide long-term protection of victims," the petition reads in part.
>
> The United States "doesn't have any real moral choice," George said. It is "our moral obligation" to stop the genocide. George does not believe the assistance necessarily requires American ground forces. Rather, the United States can contribute with air strikes, intelligence, and strategic support for the Kurdish forces and religious minorities who are being targeted by ISIS.

I think it's very important for us to speak out to our neighbors about this, because in watching the mainstream media cover this, they just want this issue to go away. They know that Obama withdrew our forces in Iraq and set up the conditions that led to this genocide. So it's up to us to keep the pressure on. Eric's post on Think Apologetics has some ideas about what to do.

Who were the Jesus Seminar? Should anyone have taken them seriously?

August 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Was having a conversation Sunday evening with the woman I am mentoring and she brought up the Jesus Seminar – a small group of naturalistic, pluralistic academics. Apparently, someone's child went to college, heard about them, and lost their faith because of their writings. I wanted to find a good article for her on this, and since Dr. William Lane Craig has debated most of the leading scholars in the Jesus seminar, (e.g. – John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, Roy Hoover, Gerd Ludemann, Robert Price, John Shelby Spong, etc.), I chose an article by Dr. Craig. I also link to two debates that Dr. Craig did with Jesus Seminar people below.

First a short video (4 minutes):

If you can't watch anything long, then watch that.

Here is the article, on the Reasonable Faith web site.

Intro:

> In 1985 a prominent New Testament scholar named Robert Funk founded a think tank in Southern California which he called the Jesus Seminar. The ostensible purpose of the Seminar was to uncover the historical person Jesus of Nazareth using the best methods of scientific, biblical criticism. In Funk's view the historical Jesus has been overlaid by Christian legend, myth, and metaphysics and thus scarcely resembled the Christ figure presented in the gospels and worshipped by the Church today. The goal of the Seminar is to strip away these layers and to recover the authentic Jesus who really lived and taught.

Excerpt:

> The number one presupposition of the Seminar is *antisupernaturalism* or more simply, *naturalism.*Naturalism is the view that every event in the world has a natural cause. There are no events with supernatural causes. In other words, miracles cannot happen.
>
> Now this presupposition constitutes an absolute watershed for the study of the gospels. If you presuppose naturalism, then things like the incarnation, the Virgin Birth, Jesus' miracles, and his resurrection go out the window before you even sit down at the table to look at the evidence. As supernatural events, they *cannot* be historical. But if you are at least open to supernaturalism, then these events can't be ruled out in advance. You have to be open to looking honestly at the evidence that they occurred.
>
> […][T]he second presupposition which I wanted to discuss, namely, sceptical critics presuppose that our most primary sources for the life of Jesus are not the

> Gospels, but rather writings outside the New Testament, specifically the socalled apocryphal gospels. These are gospels forged under the apostles' names, like the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Philip, and so forth. These extrabiblical writings are said to be the key to correctly reconstructing the historical Jesus.

In addition to that, there seems to be a third presupposition – radical religious pluralism. John Dominic Crossan closed his opening speech in his debate with Dr. Craig with this:

> When I look a Buddhist friend in the face, I cannot say with integrity, "Our story about Jesus' virginal birth is true and factual. Your story that when the Buddha came out of his mother's womb, he was walking, talking, teaching and preaching (which I must admit is even better than our story)—that's a myth. We have the truth; you have a lie." I don't think that can be said any longer, for our insistence that our faith is a fact and that others' faith is a lie is, I think, a cancer that eats at the heart of Christianity.

But of course, he thinks that *all* miracle claims are lies, because of his supernaturalism. What he is really trying to do here is redefine these claims so they are not truth claims at all, but personal preference claims.

But the main point is that the co-chair of the Jesus Seminar pre-supposes that nothing that Christianity claims that offends people in other religions can be true. Before he sits down to look at the evidence. I'm not saying that these guys can't do history, I'm saying that the real debate with these guys should not be about history. The real debate should be about their presuppositions. We should work to defeat their pre-supposition naturalism with good scientific arguments like the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability-discoverability argument, etc. And we should work to defeat their pre-supposition of pluralism by just asking them to defend it, and maybe point out that a person's being offended by some claim about reality being true does not make that claim false. Logic requires that people who make claims that are made false by reality are *wrong* and no amount of crying and sobbing can change that.

The second article in the series that Dr. Craig mentioned in the article I linked above is a generic article on the evidence for the historical Jesus. If you have not read a case for the resurrection of Jesus, then read it, too. Or you can check out this lecture by Dr. Craig on the Jesus Seminar and the historical Jesus:

If you want to see a good debate between Dr. Craig and Marcus Borg, here it is:

Dr. Borg is one of the more respected Jesus Seminar people, and a really nice guy. But also, a really wrong guy.

The key thing to know about them is that they presuppose naturalism (miracles never happen) and radical pluralism (no exclusivist religion can be correct, because that would make people in the other religions feel bad). The presuppositions are key to understanding the "historical work" of the Jesus Seminar.

Group behind indictment of Governor Rick Perry got 500K donation from George Soros

August 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from Commentary magazine, which talks about how Democrats are trying to smear Republicans with fake charges.

Excerpt:

> On April 13, 2013, Rosemary Lehmberg was pulled over for dangerous driving. She was found with an open bottle of vodka in the car, which is against the law, and her blood-alcohol level was .239 percent. (The legal limit is .08 percent. As a rule of thumb, at .1 you're happy, at .2 you're drunk, at .3 you're passed out, and at .4 you're dead. In other words, to use the technical term, she was blotto.) Taken to the police station, she was abusive and uncooperative to the point of being put in handcuffs and leg irons. She pled guilty to DWI and was sentenced to 45 days in jail and a $4000 fine. She served 20 days. Her license was suspended for 180 days.
>
> This sort of thing happens every night in every city in the country. What made this unusual was that Lehmberg is the district attorney of Travis County, Texas, which is the county where Austin, the state capital, is located. That gives the district attorney of Travis County a lot of power to investigate public corruption. Indeed she heads the state's Public Corruption unit.
>
> Governor Rick Perry, not unreasonably, thought she had disgraced herself and should resign her office. She refused. To force her out, he threatened to veto the appropriation for the Public Corruption unit and, when she stilled refused, vetoed it.
>
> For this the governor was indicted by a special prosecutor on two felony counts that, in theory, could send him to jail for the rest of his life.
>
> […]This is about as blatantly a political indictment as can be imagined. Jonathan Chait, no fan of Rick Perry, calls it unbelievably ridiculous. Even David Axelrod called the indictment "pretty sketchy." Indeed the blow back from left, right, and center is so intense that Perry may well be the first public official to actually gain political clout from being indicted.

So now, if a governor vetoes a bill, it's life imprisonment. In Texas.

But who brought this charge? A shadowy group called "Texans for Public Justice":

> Sometimes it seems like there isn't a single political issue that a Soros-funded group isn't involved in. Texans for Public Justice, one of the groups behind Rick Perry's indictment charges, is part of a "progressive" coalition that has received $500,000 from liberal billionaire George Soros.

> […]According to an Open Society Institute press release, OSI has given $500,000 to help form a coalition that "could change the way the progressive community engages public policy in Texas." Besides Texans for Public Justice, this coalition includes Texans Together, the Sierra Club, Texas Legal Services, La Fe Policy Research and Education Center, Public Citizen, and the Center for Public Policy.

This kind of judicial persecution of conservative politicians seems to happen a lot in Texas, though.

Remember Tom Delay?

> Former House majority leader Tom DeLay on Monday sharply criticized the local prosecutor's office that indicted both him and more recently fellow Texas Republican Gov. Rick Perry, calling it a "vendetta" and another example of the "criminalization of politics."
>
> In an interview with FoxNews.com, DeLay attacked nearly every aspect of the prosecution's case against Perry — suggesting it was political retribution for the governor's attempt to remove a county district attorney with a criminal record and a "conspiracy" likely traceable to Washington Democrats.
>
> "There is no doubt [the case] is politically motivated," the former House majority leader said. "Once again, the district attorney of Travis County presented a case, not unlike mine, that was very weak, if it was a case at all. … It's a conspiracy to use the legal system to politicize politics."
>
> DeLay was indicted in 2005 by a Travis County grand jury for allegedly conspiring to break election laws several years earlier in a case that involved charges of money laundering.
>
> He was convicted in January 2011 and sentenced to three years in prison. But he was allowed free on bail while appealing his conviction. The Texas Court of Appeals ruled in Sept. 2013 that the evidence in the case was "legally insufficient" to sustain the convictions and DeLay was formally acquitted.

It seems a slam dunk that Perry will be acquitted, too. But where does he go to get his reputation back before the 2016 election? Or is the legal system just there for leftists to use in order to criminalize people who disagree with them on policy?

47 of 73 federal Inspectors General protesting Obama administration obstruction of justice

August 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> In an unprecedented letter, a majority of the federal government's inspectors general (IGs) claim that the Obama administration is obstructing their investigations into government mismanagement and corruption. So much for President Obama's claim that his would be the most transparent administration in history.
>
> And it truly IS unprecedented. Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, says "there has never been a letter even with a dozen IGs complaining" about such obstruction by an administration. The fact that the Justice Department's IG, Michael Horowitz, also signed on is particularly revealing. After all, it is the duty of senior executive officers like Eric Holder to advise subordinate officials that they are obligated to cooperate with the IGs of their agencies.
>
> On Aug. 5, 47 of the federal government's 73 inspectors general, **many of whom were appointed by President Obama**, sent their letter to Issa, Sen. Thomas Carper (D-Del.), and the ranking members of the House Oversight and Government Reform and Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committees — essentially pleading with Congress to help the IGs do their jobs uncovering waste, mismanagement, fraud, and corruption within their respective agencies.
>
> In the letter, the IGs complain about the "serious limitations on access to records that have recently impeded the work" of IGs at the Peace Corps, the EPA, and the Department of Justice. Administration lawyers have construed laws related to privilege in "a manner that would override the express authorization contained in the IG Act" and seriously impede the "ability [of the IGs] to conduct our work thoroughly, independently, and in a timely manner."
>
> According to the letter, the Justice Department withheld "essential records" in three different reviews, despite the fact that such records had been produced for the DOJ IG "in many prior reviews without objection." Michael Horowitz eventually got access to the files, it seems, but not because Department officials realized they were misinterpreting the IG law in withholding access. No, Horowitz got the records only after DOJ leadership decided that "the three reviews were of assistance to the Department of Justice's leadership."
>
> In other words, Attorney General Eric Holder and his political subordinates only

> gave the IG access to these records because they decided there was nothing in them that would prove embarrassing.

It’s the most transparent administration in history, just read the IRS e-mails that were deleted and you’ll see that there is no abuse of power at all.

New $2.2 billion solar plant kills one bird every two minutes

August 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist Washington Post: (H/T Barbara)

> Workers at a state-of-the-art solar plant in the Mojave Desert have a name for birds that fly through the plant's concentrated sun rays — "streamers," for the smoke plume that comes from birds that ignite in midair.
>
> Federal wildlife investigators who visited the BrightSource Energy plant last year and watched as birds burned and fell, reporting an average of one "streamer" every two minutes, are urging California officials to halt the operator's application to build a still-bigger version.
>
> The investigators want the halt until the full extent of the deaths can be assessed. Estimates per year now range from a low of about a thousand by BrightSource to 28,000 by an expert for the Center for Biological Diversity environmental group.
>
> […]Federal wildlife officials said Ivanpah might act as a "mega-trap" for wildlife, with the bright light of the plant attracting insects, which in turn attract insect-eating birds that fly to their death in the intensely focused light rays.
>
> Federal and state biologists call the number of deaths significant, based on sightings of birds getting singed and falling, and on retrieval of carcasses with feathers charred too severely for flight.

The Associated Press had this to say this about wind power:

> The Obama administration said Friday it will allow some companies to kill or injure bald and golden eagles for up to 30 years without penalty, an effort to spur development and investment in green energy while balancing its environmental consequences.
>
> The change, requested by the wind energy industry, will provide legal protection for the lifespan of wind farms and other projects for which companies obtain a permit and make efforts to avoid killing the birds. An investigation by The Associated Press earlier this year documented the illegal killing of eagles around wind farms, the Obama administration's reluctance to prosecute such cases and its willingness to help keep the scope of the eagle deaths secret. The White House has championed wind power, a pollution-free energy intended to ease global warming, as a cornerstone of President Barack Obama's energy plan.

If it were up to me, I would just stick with clean natural gas and fracking, and build the Keystone XL pipeline. That would create a lot of jobs, and without wasting taxpayer money to reward Obama's rich campaign donors who often own these green energy

companies. But then I guess the White House would reply “but then who will kill all the endangered bird species unless we pay people to do it?”.

UK social policies undermine work and family while rewarding hedonism and sloth

August 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this article by Jill Kirby from the UK Daily Mail, which helps to show how government can punish good behavior, and reward destructive behavior – simply by transferring wealth.

Look:

> Over recent decades, the British state has been engaged in a huge social experiment in which traditional family structures and moral values have been deliberately undermined by official policy.
>
> In the name of progress, hard work and self-reliance have been punished through excessive taxation, while irresponsibility and idleness have been rewarded through unconditional welfare payments.
>
> The destructive consequences of this approach are now becoming ever more apparent.
>
> Britain now has a huge underclass of benefit-dependent, dysfunctional families who know far more about crime, drugs and alcohol than the world of work. Figures published yesterday revealed there are half a million problem households who, in total, cost taxpayers more than £30 billion a year through the colossal burden they impose on the welfare state, police forces and social services.
>
> The scale of this social disaster is much worse than previously estimated. A Government study in 2011 reported there were around 120,000 troubled families — four times fewer than was revealed this week.
>
> The cost is not just financial. With their self-centredness and disdain for the bonds that glue together civilised society, many of these families also bring misery to their neighbourhoods.
>
> […]When social reformer Sir William Beveridge first proposed the creation of the modern social security system in 1942, he explicitly stated that benefits should to be based on contributions through taxes and national insurance, otherwise they would simply discourage people from working and taking responsibility for their families.
>
> But his contributory principle has long since disappeared, and we now have a 'something for nothing' system where those who give the least to society receive the most. **Indeed, according to one official calculation, every 'problem household' costs the taxpayer at least £75,000 — which is more than three times average earnings.**
>
> **So we have the grotesque situation where people who try to do the right thing — who go to work and bring their children up in a stable**

> **family — are punished twice over: first through the punitive income tax rates which contribute to paying for the welfare state, and second, through subsidising again the dysfunctional families that are produced by unconditional social security.**
>
> **If the Government was serious about dealing with the problem, it would have the courage to introduce proper welfare sanctions to end the incentives to fecklessness. It would also provide real support through the tax system for the institution of marriage.**
>
> **Sadly, the Coalition has done nothing to reverse the bias of the fiscal system against married couples, whereby married families are ruthlessly penalised by withdrawal of tax allowances and benefits, whereas support is lavished on lone parents.**

And the cycle continues, because children of “lone parents” are going to be far less likely, on average, to be able to be net contributors in the society – to pay in more than they take out. It sounds so nice to redistribute wealth from people who have something to people who don’t, until you have too few people doing the right things, and too many people doing the wrong things. What happens then? I think that the responsible, hard working people will either leave the UK or curtail their productive activities. What else do you do when the government punishes you for your success and rewards other people for failure?

New study: 50 percent of divorced people wish they had never ended their marriage

August 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The study was reported in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> The decision to divorce is always going to be difficult, and for many there can be good reason to end a marriage.
>
> Yet, 50 per cent of divorcees have regrets about their break-up, a study revealed. Researchers found that after the dust settled, 54 per cent experienced second thoughts about whether they had made the right decision, with many realising they miss or still love their ex-partner.
>
> For some, the regrets have been so severe that 42 per cent have had moments where they considered giving their relationship another go, with a large percentage actually making the effort to try again and 21 per cent of those still together now.
>
> […]A spokesman for the survey, who asked 2,000 UK men and women that have either divorced or called time on a long-term relationship of more than five years, says: 'Getting divorced is a huge step for any relationship, and sometimes, the words 'I want a divorce' can be said in the heat of an argument.
>
> But once you calm down and really think about things, many realise it's the last thing they want, but by then, you can feel it's too late to take it back.
>
> And even if you don't regret it immediately, dealing with the aftermath of a break-up can lead to more second thoughts. But it's great to see some have managed to talk about their regrets and give things another go.'
>
> The study found one in five said the regrets started straight away, with another 19 per cent having second thoughts within a week of saying the D-word.
>
> ### TOP TEN REASONS FOR REGRETTING A DIVORCE
>
> 1. Missing an ex-partner
> 2. Feeling like a failure
> 3. Still being in love with an ex-partner
> 4. Realising they were being unreasonable
> 5. Feeling lonely
> 6. Discovering the grass isn't always greener
> 7. An ex-partner finding someone new
> 8. Realising they are not better off on their own
> 9. Damaging the relationship with their children

> 10. Children's lives being affected
>
> But for some, it took longer with more than one in ten admitting it took a year or more for them to wish they hadn't left their partner.
>
> Others admitted they wished they could take things back when the divorce officially came through. Especially when they have worked to divide their assets or started telling people they were calling it quits.

This study fits together well with another study that I blogged about before.

The article is by Mona Charen, and the study is by the Institute for American Values. It's an older article, but I was reading a book that mentioned the study, so I thought I would blog on it.

Excerpt:

> Now, the Institute for American Values (www.americanvalues.org) has released a new study with some intriguing data about the effects of divorce on the unhappy couples themselves. It seems that another great myth is about to tumble – the myth that at least divorce makes unhappily married adults happier.

> According to the survey, conducted by a team of family researchers, unhappily married adults who divorced were no happier five years after the divorce than were equally unhappy couples who remained together. And two-thirds of unhappily married people who remained married reported marriages that were happy five years later. Even among those who had rated their marriages as "very unhappy," nearly 80 percent said they were happily married five years later. These were not bored or dissatisfied whiners. They had endured serious problems, including alcoholism, infidelity, verbal abuse, emotional neglect, depression, illness, and work and money troubles.
>
> Even more surprising, unhappy spouses who divorced actually showed slightly more depressive symptoms five years later than those who didn't. (They did, however, report more personal growth.) And – make of this what you will – the divorced sample reported a good deal more alcohol consumption than the married group.
>
> […]**The data show that if a couple is unhappy, the chances of their being happily married five years hence are 64 percent if they stay together but only 19 percent if they divorce and remarry. (The authors acknowledge that five years is a relatively short period and many divorced people will eventually remarry, some happily.)**
>
> How did the unhappy couples turn their lives around? The study found three principal techniques. The first was endurance. Many couples do not so much solve their problems as transcend them. By taking one day at a time and pushing through their difficulties, many couples found that time itself often improved matters. Moreover, these couples maintained a negative view of the effects of

> divorce. “The grass is always greener,” explained one husband, “but it’s Astroturf.”
>
> Others were more aggressive. Those the researchers labeled the “marital work ethic” types tackled their problems by arranging for more private time with one another, seeking counseling (from clergy or professionals), receiving help from in-laws or other relatives, or in some cases, threatening divorce or consulting a divorce lawyer.
>
> In the third category were the “personal happiness seekers” who found other ways to improve their overall contentment even if they could not markedly improve their marital happiness.
>
> Certainly the survey found some marriages that were impossible to save and some divorced couples who were happier than those who had remained married. That is as one would expect.
>
> **But the most telling aspect of this research is the light it sheds on the importance of the attitude toward marriage. Those who enter marriage with a dim (some might say accurate) view of divorce and a strong religious or other motivation for avoiding it are not only less likely to divorce; they are also less likely to be unhappy. That is the arresting news here. We’ve known that commitment was good for the children of such marriages. We’ve known that commitment was good for society. But until now, it was not clear that commitment actually made married couples themselves more likely to be happy.**

I think the last point is a good point. Right now, a lot of young people are choosing mates based on superficial criteria (looks, money, popularity). The purpose of marriage is, in their opinion, to be happy. And their spouse’s job is to make them happy. That’s their view of marriage. But this ignores the realities of what marriage is about. Marriage is not a contract, it’s a covenant. People who marry ought to be getting into it because they want the responsibility of loving another sinner in close quarters. It’s not about feelings and life enhancement. The most important thing to look for in a spouse is their ability to love self-sacrificially and to make and sustain long-term commitments. Both of these capabilities are damaged the more a person goes through painful serial break-ups, because people become unable to trust and instead withhold love and commitment for their own safety.

In Canada, goose eggs are protected, but unborn children can be killed through all 9 months

August 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eagle eggs are protected, unborn babies are not

From Life News a story not about eagle eggs, but about goose eggs – in Canada.

Excerpt:

> Though majestic in flight, [geese] have become a nuisance in recent years, and with a birth rate hovering around 5 goslings per year, new methods of population control are being explored.
>
> One such method is egg addling.
>
> This practice, which is detailed on Environment Canada's website as well as The Humane Society of the United States, is a process whereby geese eggs are gently removed from the nest, coated in vegetable oil and then returned to the nest. The purpose of the oil is to prevent the embryo from developing any further. Essentially, it blocks the transfer of oxygen and other gases through the shell.
>
> The reason this practice is highly successful is because the female goose will continue laying on the eggs for a lengthy period not realizing they will never hatch. Alternatively, if the eggs are removed and destroyed, she simply will lay more eggs nearby and nullify any attempt to decrease the population. In both the United States and Canada, anyone wishing to engage in the practise of egg addling must first retain a permit from authorities.
>
> **One of the steps in the process of addling is to place the eggs in a**

> **bucket of water. If the egg sinks it is considered humane to coat it with oil. On the other hand, if the egg floats it is understood to be past 14 days of incubation which means the embryo is now viable and it would be inhumane to kill it. Regardless of your views of Canada geese, it is understandable there are some guidelines on when and how their pre-born goslings can be killed.**
>
> Juxtapose these regulations with the complete lack thereof when it comes to unwanted humans. The contrast is difficult to ignore. We have rules based on compassion to prevent people from killing a viable pre-born gosling, but no rules whatsoever when it comes to people killing unwanted pre-born people.
>
> In Canada there are multiple ways to legally end the lives of viable fetuses; some of which are barbaric and cruel. In 2010 there were over 10,000 abortions past 13 weeks gestation in our country. These pre-born children suffered through the inhumane procedure of being torn limb by limb from their mother's womb. Almost every other civilized nation and the vast majority of European countries provide fetal protection after 13 weeks gestation. Is this because these countries are paternalistic and oppressive? No, it's because they care about human rights.

Canada is a very secular country, so their abortion law is very much in favor of allowing the strong to kill the weak legally through all nine months of pregnancy. Canada has no federal law governing abortion.

Keep in mind that abortion in Canada is 100% taxpayer-funded. Everyone who pays taxes there is indirectly forced to take part in this practice.

Report: Negative impacts from the legalization of marijuana in Colorado

August 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Signal reports on a new peer-reviewed study.

Excerpt:

> A published academic peer-reviewed study and another thorough study set to be released next Monday show:
>
> - An increase in marijuana-related traffic fatalities in Colorado since 2009
> - An increase in marijuana-related traffic fatalities in Colorado compared to non-"medical marijuana" states since 2009
> - Alcohol-related fatalities remained the same
>
> […]Marijuana was in essence legalized in Colorado in 2009, when the state commercialized the sale of so-called "medical marijuana." By commercializing the sale, and thus consumption of marijuana across the state, the state saw a large increase in use by its citizens, and citizens from other states, so-called pot tourists.
>
> In other words, 2009 was a pivotal year for Colorado and its' drivers.
>
> In the three years prior to 2009 (2006-2008), Colorado averaged 35 drivers per year who tested positive for marijuana in fatal accidents.
>
> In the three years after 2009 (2010-2012), Colorado averaged 57.3 drivers per year who tested positive for marijuana use in fatal accidents—a 64 percent increase over the pre-2009 numbers.

Here's the results from the abstract of the paper:

> **RESULTS:**
>
> In Colorado, since mid-2009 when medical marijuana became commercially available and prevalent, the trend became positive in the proportion of drivers in a fatal motor vehicle crash who were marijuana-positive (change in trend, 2.16 (0.45), $p<0.0001$); in contrast, no significant changes were seen in NMMS. For both Colorado and NMMS, no significant changes were seen in the proportion of drivers in a fatal motor vehicle crash who were alcohol-impaired.

And now here is another report that explains some of the other effects of legalizing marijuana.

Excerpt:

> According to the new report by the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug

> Trafficking Area entitled "The Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado: The Impact," the impact of legalized marijuana in Colorado has resulted in:
>
> 1. The majority of DUI drug arrests involve marijuana and 25 to 40 percent were marijuana alone.
> 2. In 2012, 10.47 percent of Colorado youth ages 12 to 17 were considered current marijuana users compared to 7.55 percent nationally. Colorado ranked fourth in the nation, and was 39 percent higher than the national average.
> 3. Drug-related student suspensions/expulsions increased 32 percent from school years 2008-09 through 2012-13, the vast majority were for marijuana violations.
> 4. In 2012, 26.81 percent of college age students were considered current marijuana users compared to 18.89 percent nationally, which ranks Colorado third in the nation and 42 percent above the national average.
> 5. In 2013, 48.4 percent of Denver adult arrestees tested positive for marijuana, which is a 16 percent increase from 2008.
> 6. From 2011 through 2013 there was a 57 percent increase in marijuana-related emergency room visits.
> 7. Hospitalizations related to marijuana has increased 82 percent since 2008.
>
> The report includes other data about the negative effect of legalizing marijuana in Colorado, including marijuana-related exposure to children, treatment, the flood of marijuana in and out of Colorado, the dangers of pot extraction labs and other disturbing factual trends.

Part of me thinks that posting this is futile. Sensible people will not be surprised by it, but the libertarians and Democrats who think that legalized pot is wonderful are probably so brain-damaged already that they won't care what studies say at all. Marijuana is dangerous and addictive. We shouldn't legalize it, and we shouldn't normalize it.

Related posts

- Welfare cash used to purchase marijuana in Colorado
- New study: even casual use of marijuana / cannabis alters brain
- New study: teen pot use could hurt brain and memory
- New study finds connection between early use of marijuana and mental illness
- New study: marijuana use by teens is linked to permanent brain abnormalities
- New study: smoking marijuana raises risk of having a stroke
- New study: smoking marijuana/cannabis permanently lowers IQ
- Should we legalize drugs and prostitution like Ron Paul wants?

Host a same-sex wedding on your property or pay a $13,000 fine

August 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Should the government be able to coerce a family farm into hosting a same-sex wedding?
>
> In a free society, the answer is no. Family farms should be free to operate in accordance with the beliefs and values of their owners. Government shouldn't be able to fine citizens for acting in the market according to their own—rather than the government's—values, unless there is a compelling government interest being pursued in the least restrictive way possible.
>
> But the New York State Division of Human Rights doesn't see things this way. On August 8, it fined Cynthia and Robert Gifford $13,000 for acting on their belief that marriage is the union of a man and woman and thus declining to rent out their family farm for a same-sex wedding celebration. The Human Rights Commission ruled that "the nature and circumstances of the [Giffords's] violation of the Human Rights Law also warrants a penalty."
>
> […]Here's the back story. In 2012, Melissa Erwin and Jennie McCarthy contacted the Giffords to rent the family's barn for their same-sex wedding ceremony and reception. Cynthia Gifford responded that she and her husband would have to decline their request as they felt they could not in good conscience host a same-sex wedding ceremony at their home. The Giffords live on the second and third floor of the barn and, when they host weddings on the first floor, they open part of the second floor as a bridal suite.
>
> […][The Giffords] do not object to gay or lesbian customers attending the fall festivals, or going berry picking, or doing any of the other activities that the farm facilitates. The Giffords' only objection is to being forced to abide by the government's views on sexuality and host a same-sex *wedding*. The Human Rights Commission has now declared this historic belief about marriage to be "discrimination."
>
> The Giffords must pay a $1,500 mental anguish fine to each of the women and pay $10,000 in civil damages penalty to New York State. If they can't pay in 60 days, a nine percent interest rate will be added to that total. Like Jack Phillips of Masterpiece Cakeshop, the Giffords must also institute anti-discriminationre-education classes and procedures for their staff.

How would gay marriage affect your marriage? Well, you would have to go to court, be found guilty, be re-educated, pay the gay people you offended, and then pay the

government for punishing you. And remember, you're already paying for the government to prosecute you for your views on marriage every time you pay taxes. We pay the salaries of our own executioners. How did it come to this?

Well, may I suggest that Christian pastors who drive a wedge of separation between the Christian faith and public knowledge are to blame. What I find in church is that pastors preach the same shallow gospel sermon every week, week in and week out. Everything is assumed to be true without examination, no alternatives or critical viewpoints are presented and defeated, and nothing in the sermon is ever connected to evidence in the real world. There is no emphasis on defining the Christian worldview, or on criticizing other worldviews like postmodernism, naturalism, pluralism or relativism. It's all mystical privatized fundamentalist anti-intellectual emotional piety.

The net result of this is that when Christians go out into the world, they are not equipped to discern the dangers posed by non-Christian ideologies, and they often vote for the very policies that later come back to destroy them – because secular leftists make their policies sound so *nice*. Who could be against "affordable health care" – until you realize that you're going to be paying for someone else's abortion drugs. Maybe pastors need to do a better job of connecting the Bible to real world knowledge and policies so that we don't just retreat from the field and let secular leftists rule over us.

109,631,000 Americans collect welfare, more than full-time year-round workers

August 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> 109,631,000 Americans lived in households that received benefits from one or more federally funded "means-tested programs" — also known as welfare — as of the fourth quarter of 2012, according to data released Tuesday by the Census Bureau.
>
> The Census Bureau has not yet reported how many were on welfare in 2013 or the first two quarters of 2014.
>
> But the 109,631,000 living in households taking federal welfare benefits as of the end of 2012, according to the Census Bureau, equaled 35.4 percent of all 309,467,000 people living in the United States at that time.
>
> […]What did taxpayers give to the 109,631,000 — the 35.4 percent of the nation — getting welfare benefits at the end of 2012?
>
> 82,679,000 of the welfare-takers lived in households where people were on Medicaid, said the Census Bureau. 51,471,000 were in households on food stamps. 22,526,000 were in the Women, Infants and Children program. 20,355,000 were in household on Supplemental Security Income. 13,267,000 lived in public housing or got housing subsidies. 5,442,000 got Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. 4,517,000 received other forms of federal cash assistance.
>
> […]**In 2012, according to the Census Bureau, there were 103,087,000 full-time year-round workers in the United States (including 16,606,000 full-time year-round government workers). Thus, the welfare-takers outnumbered full-time year-round workers by 6,544,000.**

Democrats tell us that we need to raise taxes on those who work in order to spread the wealth around. But I submit that there is too much redistribution of wealth going on already, and we need to stop it. We are not sending the right message to people about the importance of working and earning with this much taxing and welfare spending.

Not just aborting babies with Down's syndrome – Dawkins supports infanticide

August 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

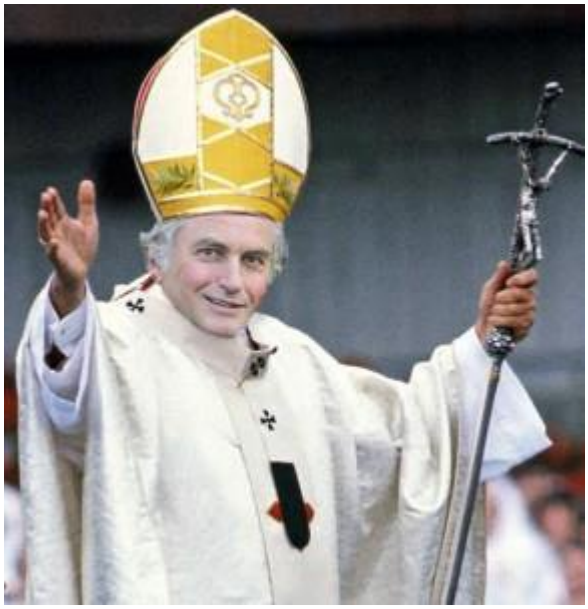

Listen up you atheists, the Pope has spoken

The UK Telegraph reports on the latest Dawkins blunder.

Excerpt:

> Richard Dawkins, the atheist writer, has claimed it is "immoral" to allow unborn babies with Down's syndrome to live.
>
> The Oxford professor posted a message on Twitter saying would-be parents who learn their child has the condition have an ethical responsibility to "abort it and try again".
>
> His comments were dismissed by charities and prompted fury online from opponents but he insisted his stance was "very civilised" because foetuses do not have "human feelings".
>
> He claimed that the important question in the abortion debate is not "is it 'human'?" but "can it suffer?" and insisted that people have no right to object to abortion if they eat meat.
>
> […]Anti-abortion campaigners describe the practice of aborting foetuses on physical grounds as a form of "eugenics".
>
> But Prof Dawkins strongly defended its as simply standard practice and ridiculed his critics as portraying him as "a horrid monster".
>
> The row erupted during a debate on Twitter about calls for further changes to Ireland's abortion laws in the wake of the case of a rape victim who was forced to carry the child until she could deliver by caesarean section.

> One participant said they would suffer a real ethical dilemma if they were carrying a child with the condition.
>
> **Prof Dawkins replied: “Abort it and try again. It would be immoral to bring it into the world if you have the choice.”**
>
> Another pointed to recent figures asking: “994 human beings with Down’s Syndrome deliberately killed before birth in England and Wales in 2012 – is that civilised?”
>
> He responded: “Yes, it is very civilised. These are foetuses, diagnosed before they have human feelings.”

I’m really not sure why anyone is surprised by this. Dawkins is an atheist and as such, he has no rational grounding for objective moral values and duties. He also does not have any rational grounding for free will, which is required for making moral choices and bearing moral responsibility. To an atheist, what people ought to do is decided by conventions and customs that vary by time and place. There is no objective moral standard for the way humans ought to be. Dawkins is an evolutionist. He believes in survival of the fittest. The unfit should die – if necessary, directly at the hands of the fit.

Listen to what he writes in his book:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won’t find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.
>
> –Richard Dawkins, (River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

I’m not misrepresenting him – the man is a very consistent atheist, and there is no room for morality on atheism. It’s not rationally grounded.

Here’s how far Dawkins takes his view that there is no evil and no good:

Richard Dawkins explains morality on atheism
But wait!

He goes even further than mere abortion – he also supports infanticide:

Richard Dawkins even advocates for adultery. So I’m really not sure why people are so fascinated by atheism, when this is the kind of person it produces.I am not saying that every atheist is going to treat morality as all personal preference and social convention. Just the ones who really understand it, and are consistent with it. Real atheists don’t have any rational grounding for morality in their worldview. This man has 1 million twitter followers. He is their spokesman because he reflects their views.

And finally, in the past, Dawkins has expressed that his goal is to destroy Christianity. Is this the same kind of destruction of Christianity that his fellow atheist Stalin wanted? Given Dawkins views on murdering innocent unborn and born children, I think we can infer what he means by “destroy Christianity”.

By the way, Nick Peters has also written about Dawkins’ comments, and I stole the image of Pope Dawkins from his post.

Friday night movie: Saboteur (1942)

August 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.3/10]

IMDB median rating: [7/10]

Description:

> Aircraft factory worker Barry Kane is accused of starting a fire at a Glendale, California airplane plant during World War II, an act of sabotage that killed his friend Mason. Kane believes the real culprit is a man named Fry who handed him a fire extinguisher filled with gasoline during the fire. When the investigators find no one named "Fry" on the list of plant workers, they assume Kane is guilty.

This one is directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

Happy Friday!

Pastor Matt: How apologetics saved my faith

August 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a must-read post from Pastor Matt Rawlings whose reading list I wrote about before.

Excerpt:

> I became a Christian at 24 after a cancer diagnosis. I had been an atheist for 10 years but came to God in desperation. I left Capitol Hill (and politics altogether) to learn about Christianity. I attended what many believed was a conservative seminary but had slowly slipped into liberalism by the time I arrived in 1999. I was sold on "higher criticism" (or a skeptical approach to the historicity and inerrency of Scripture) and joined the then growing "Emergent Church" movement. Within a few years, I was where Rob Bell is now–a soft universalist with a condescending attitude toward conservatives. Yet, I was also spiritually dead and was struggling with depression. I was quickly headed back to the atheism I had thought I had left behind while praying for my life.
>
> During this time of personal struggle, my wife and I were helping a small church in Charleston, West Virginia. When an elder learned my wife had a degree in micro-biology and had helped overseen a science program at Cornell, he asked her to meet with the youth group and answer their questions about science and the faith. In preparation, she picked up the book The Case for a Creator by Lee Strobel (Zondervan 2005). She devoured the book and went on and on about wonderful it was and how I had to read it. I resisted as the cover struck me as "fundamentalist nonsense." Yet, she persisted and it became clear that either I was going to read the book or spend a few nights on the couch!
>
> I opened the book with a bad attitude. After all, my seminary professors had told me that "apologetics is dead!" and that "Generation-X and -Y desired experience not 'answers.'" I was even more resistant when I saw the first few chapters take on evolution. I was convinced Genesis 1-11 was all myth, Darwin had been proven correct and that only nutters questioned it. But after reading Strobel's interaction with Dr. Jonathan Wells and Dr. Stephen C. Meyer of the Discovery Institute, I realized I had no real counter argument to intelligent design.

Read the rest.

The Case for a Creator is one of my favorite apologetics books. I have read it once, but I've listened to the audio version TEN TIMES. This book more than any other is the perfect introduction to science apologetics for beginners. I really recommend the audio book as a companion to the print version.

When I read this post by Pastor Matt, I felt that his faith was not just castles built in the sky. A lot of pastors basically start by assuming (without any evidence) that the Bible is correct in everything it says, and then they start lecturing everyone else about what the

Bible says without ever having done a moment of investigation into the evidence for or against what they are preaching about. They've never read anyone who disagrees with them, and they don't know how to explain what they believe to anyone outside the church walls. I have to tell you that this is one of the *the most uncomfortable feelings* to have when you are not yet a Christian. You are in a building filled with people who don't know whether what they believe is true. You are being lectured by a man who typically has no idea how to show others that what he is talking about is true, except for appealing to feelings. I don't know about you, but that really makes me uncomfortable. I trust people more when I know they are good at something practical, like mechanical engineering, medicine, automobile mechanics, weight-lifting, nutrition or cooking. When you read outside the Bible, it's basically treating Christianity like it's a real area of knowledge. That makes me interested, because it means we are talking about something real, not just a personal preference or a subjective experience or a community custom.

Pastor Matt is different. He's read tons of stuff outside the Bible, and he's not presupposing anything when he preaches about God and Jesus. He's got informed beliefs about this stuff. He's authentic. And you can see the strength of his convictions by looking at what he's read. He talks about his faith like we might talk about our professions. We have convictions about what we do that creates value for others because *we know how to do it*. When a pastor reads a lot on logic, philosophy, history and science, then he is able to know whether what he says he believes is really true or not *out there in the real world*. When I listen to my pastor and look at our church book store, I get very disappointed. It makes me wonder why I can't go to a church like Pastor Matt's church. Wouldn't that be great? I would really fly out of bed on Sunday morning if I thought "what is he going to teach on this morning, that I can use at work on Monday morning?" I am always interested in hearing what someone else *knows*. I am one of those people who is always asking the dentist, the doctor, the mechanic, and the food preparers "how did you do that?" I even got the recipe for the cilantro-lime rice that Chipotle makes by asking the woman who was making my burrito bowl. How did you do it? I want to know how you know.

I have a good friend of mine right now who is going through a tough time with her church. She keeps telling me that Sunday school is very emotional, and clearly designed to comfort people and make them feel "gooey" (her word). This is a woman who is on fire academically and is making tons of money in a summer job in her field. She just got a new scholarship, too. She keeps thinking that Sunday school is supposed to be the time to learn about difficult things and practical things. It's causing her to really get bored with church and even to look for a new church. I think a lot of young people are tired of being entertained in church, and they would like to get their minds on some real knowledge about God and what he's done in history and in nature. I'll bet that Pastor Matt doesn't have any problems packing his church with young people. Young people can tell when someone really knows what they are talking about, the same way that a dentist knows about teeth, or that a tax preparer knows about tax laws.

Walter Williams: where is the outrage over black-on-black crimes?

August 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams

A recent editorial by George Mason University professor of economics Walter Williams.

Excerpt:

> Each year, roughly 7,000 blacks are murdered. Ninety-four percent of the time, the murderer is another black person.
>
> According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1976 and 2011, there were 279,384 black murder victims. Using the 94-percent figure means that 262,621 were murdered by other blacks.
>
> Though blacks are 13 percent of the nation's population, they account for more than 50 percent of homicide victims. Nationally, the black homicide victimization rate is six times that of whites, and in some cities, it's 22 times that of whites.
>
> Coupled with being most of the nation's homicide victims, blacks are most of the victims of violent personal crimes, such as assault and robbery.
>
> The magnitude of this tragic mayhem can be viewed in another light. According to a Tuskegee Institute study, between 1882 and 1968, 3,446 blacks were lynched at the hands of whites. Black fatalities during the Korean War (3,075), Vietnam War (7,243) and all wars since 1980 (8,197) come to 18,515, a number that pales in comparison with black loss of life at home.
>
> It's a tragic commentary to be able to say that young black males have a greater chance of reaching maturity on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan than on the streets of Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Oakland, Newark and other cities.

You might remember that the NAACP just recently came out for gay marriage. Do they have their priorities straight?

Is Sam Harris successful at rationally grounding objective moral values and duties?

August 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just wanted to put out a few snips from this layperson-level article on the Reasonable Faith web site. The article is about atheist scholar Sam Harris, and his attempt to provide a basis for morality on atheism.

Here's the Harris project:

> The question then is, what is the best foundation for the existence of objective moral values and duties? What grounds them? What makes certain actions good or evil, right or wrong? Traditionally, God has been the highest Good (*summum bonum*) and His commandments constitutive of our moral duties. But if God does not exist, what foundation remains for objective moral values and duties?

Dr. Craig is able to show why Harris' attempt to ground the objective moral value of humans in "human flourishing" fails, by using the law of identity to show that Harris' rule doesn't account for the possibility that those who do evil could *possibly* flourish and be happy. If Harris is right that objective morality is *identical* to human flourishing, then it cannot even be *possible* that this be the case. This can be a bit confusing to non-philosophers, though, so I'll focus on Dr. Craig's argument against Harris' attempt to ground objective moral duties.

Dr. Craig writes:

> That takes us to a second question: Does atheism provide a sound foundation for objective moral duties? Duty has to do with moral obligation and prohibition, what I ought or ought not to do. Here reviewers of *The Moral Landscape* have been merciless in pounding Harris' attempt to provide a naturalistic account of moral obligation. Two problems stand out.
>
> **First:** Natural science tells us only what *is*, not what *ought* to be, the case. As philosopher Jerry Fodor has written, "Science is about facts, not norms; it might tell us how we are, but it wouldn't tell us what is wrong with how we are." In particular it cannot tell us that we have a moral obligation to take actions that are conducive to human flourishing.
>
> So if there is no God, what foundation remains for objective moral duties? On the naturalistic view, human beings are just animals, and animals have no moral obligations to one another. When a lion kills a zebra, it kills the zebra, but it does not *murder* the zebra. When a great white shark forcibly copulates with a female, it forcibly copulates with her but it does not *rape* her — for there is no moral dimension to these actions. They are neither prohibited nor obligatory.
>
> So if God does not exist, why think we have any moral obligations to do anything? Who or what imposes these moral duties on us? Where do they come

> from? It is hard to see why they would be anything more than a subjective impression ingrained into us by societal and parental conditioning.

So we might *feel* morally obligated to do something, maybe what our herd expects of us in this time and place we live in. But on atheism those feelings are arbitrary. After all, societies have evolved where feelings of obligation are felt by people to perform suicide bombings against civilians. On atheism, those feelings are as valid and grounded as any other "duties" because they emerge from the same process in other times and places. Obligations change between time and place – they are not objectively real. But that means that our moral duties are not objective, they are arbitrary – if atheism is true. The same "socio-biological evolution" is generating opposite moral duties in different times and places. This is not "objective".

And the second objection is even more lethal:

> **Second:** "ought" implies "can." A person is not morally responsible for an action he is unable to avoid. For example, if somebody shoves you into another person, you are not to blame for bumping into this person. You had no choice. But Harris believes that *all* of our actions are causally determined and that there is no free will. Harris rejects not only libertarian accounts of freedom but also compatibilistic accounts of freedom. But if there is no free will, no one is morally responsible for anything. In the end, Harris admits this, though it's tucked away in his endnotes. Moral responsibility, he says, "is a social construct," not an objective reality: "in neuroscientific terms no person is more or less responsible than any other" for the actions they perform. His thoroughgoing determinism spells the end of any hope or possibility of objective moral duties on his worldview because we have no control over what we do.
>
> Harris recognizes that "determinism really does threaten free will and responsibility as we intuitively understand them." But not to worry! "*The illusion of free will is itself an illusion*." The point, I take it, is that we do not really have the illusion of free will. Not only is such a claim patently false phenomenologically, as any of us can attest, but it is also irrelevant. The fact remains that whether we experience the illusion of free will or not, on Harris' view we are thoroughly determined in all that we think and do and can therefore have no moral responsibilities.

On Harris' view, human beings are computers made out of meat. But if you cannot freely make moral choices, then you cannot choose to perform moral duties or not. What is amazing to me is why he wants to deny free will in the first place. He is surely very well aware of his own experience of free will, and his own consciousness, for that matter. Before we even start to look at evidences like the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, etc. we have evidence within ourselves that naturalism is false. I mean – has no one ever loved this man enough to point out the self-deception to him? I know people want to believe that no one will hold them accountable for their selfish, immoral actions, but surely some logical contradictions are so obvious

that the atheist has to step back from it and say “enough! I am not going to commit intellectual suicide”.

Pew survey: evangelical Christians least likely to believe superstitious nonsense

August 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Pew Research survey is here.

They are trying to see which groups believe in superstitions and new age mysticism.

Here are the parts that I found interesting:

Beliefs of Demographic, Political and Religious Groups

	% who believe in...					
	%	%	%	%	%	
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Female	38	37	37	38	8	1,141
White	31	32	34	32	4	1,927
Black	34	31	30	39	39	62
Hispanic	39	33	37	39	36	43
18-29	36	31	31	30	8	372
30-49	39	36	38	36	9	293
50-64	36	30	39	33	6	297
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Democrat	30	31	30	31	9	528
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	37	39	39	30	9	303
[illegible]	33	30	39	30	7	414
[illegible]	30	8	30	31	6	1,039
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	34	34	37	34	0	403
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Black Protestant	39	30	8	39	32	82
Catholic	38	37	39	39	7	437
[illegible]	39	34	34	39	2	338
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Unaffiliated	39	38	30	39	2	303
[illegible]						

Click for full image.

Supernatural Experiences

	[illegible]	[illegible]	Fortune	[illegible]
	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]

> […]The answers were added up to create an index of belief in occult and the paranormal. While 31% of people who never worship expressed strong belief in these things, only 8% of people who attend a house of worship more than once a week did.
>
> Even among Christians, there were disparities. While 36% of those belonging to the United Church of Christ, Sen. Barack Obama's former denomination, expressed strong beliefs in the paranormal, only 14% of those belonging to the Assemblies of God, Sarah Palin's former denomination, did. In fact, the more traditional and evangelical the respondent, the less likely he was to believe in, for instance, the possibility of communicating with people who are dead.

When I think of the "weird" things that evangelical Christians believe, I think of the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life and the sudden origin of animal body plans in the Cambrian. All of this is superstition to an atheist, and yet all of it is rooted in mainstream science. Not just that, but they've grown stronger as science has progressed. I can accept the fact that an atheist may be ignorant of the science that defeats his atheism, but that's something that has to be remedied with more studying of the evidence, not less. If you generate a worldview by 1) your desire to dispense with moral judgment and/or 2) your desire to prefer Star Trek and Star Wars to mainstream science, then *of course* you are going to have an irrational worldview. I'm not saying that all atheists do this, surely someone like Peter Millican does not. But for rank-and-file Dawkins acolytes, I think this is pretty accurate, and it's why we get the survey results that we do.

Middle East charities pay bounties to the families of Muslim suicide bombers

August 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is what "work" looks like for terrorists

The amazing Sharyl Attkisson writes about it in The Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> For the first time, startling details are being made public about the millions of dollars funneled from Middle East charities to Islamic terrorists and their families.
>
> The money was used to reward terrorists and their families after attacks on Israelis and U.S. nationals visiting Israel between 2000 and 2005 during the second intifada or Palestinian uprising.
>
> The evidence was presented today in a landmark case in New York federal court. Three hundred U.S. nationals claim Arab Bank knowingly provided financial services to terrorists and their financiers in violation of the U.S. anti-terrorism law. Arab Bank contends it did not knowingly serve terrorists.
>
> Bank documents reveal an elaborate system for which Amman, Jordan-based Arab Bank served as the center point. Some Israelis refer to the bank as the "Grand Central Station of terrorist financing."
>
> For example, bank documents allegedly show that a dozen Middle Eastern charities with links to the terrorist group Hamas and other radical Islamic groups transferred $32 million to Arab Bank during the second intifada. The money was

> then allegedly paid out to families of suicide bombers and other Palestinians who engaged in acts of terrorism against Jews.
>
> An additional charity, the Saudi Committee for the Support of the Intifada al Quds, sent nearly $100 million through Arab Bank. The plaintiff's analysis of bank records indicates $32 million of it ended up being distributed as cash payments to martyrs and their families, including the families of suicide bombers, and the rest was distributed to other Hamas-controlled charities.
>
> According to evidence presented by the plaintiffs today, based on bank documents, families of suicide bombers received a $5,300 payment, or about four times the average annual Palestinian income at the time of $1,600. If a martyr was wounded but not killed, he received $2,655. If a martyr was arrested and jailed, the family received $1,325. The recipients simply showed up at an Arab Bank branch, presented identification, and received the cash.

I would like to see some of our leaders in the West get serious about this money-laundering problem. But one thing is clear – if anyone is wondering which side of this conflict is good and which side is evil, then this should make it pretty clear. The side that offers rewards for intentionally targeting and murdering civilians (not the military, but civilian targets!) is the evil side.

Denominations that liberalized Christianity's teachings on sex are in decline

August 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Alexander Grisworld writes about all the denominations that liberalized their teachings on sex, in The Federalist.

Excerpt:

> **The Episcopal Church**
>
> In 2003, Gene Robinson became the first openly gay, noncelibate man to be consecrated as a bishop of the Episcopal Church. In the wake of his consecration, entire dioceses severed ties with the Episcopal Church, eventually creating the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA). But the Episcopal Church continued to liberalize its sexual teachings, lifting a moratorium on any more gay bishops in 2006 and creating a "blessing ceremony" for gay couples in 2009.

> In 2002, the number of baptized U.S. members of the Episcopal Church stood at 2.32 million. By 2012, that number had fallen to 1.89 million, a decline of 18.4 percent. Meanwhile, attendance has fallen even more steeply. Average Sunday attendance in its U.S. churches was 846,000 in 2002, but had fallen 24.4 percent by 2012 to only 640,000. Other signs of congregational liveliness have fallen even further. Baptisms have fallen by 39.6 percent, and marriages have fallen by 44.9 percent.

> As for the ACNA? It's seen its membership rise by 13 percent and its Sunday attendance rise by 16 percent in the past five years. Since 2009, the ACNA has planted 488 new congregations. In 2012, the entire Episcopal Church managed to plant four new churches.

> **The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America**
>
> The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) was formed in 1987, when three Lutheran denominations merged to create the largest Lutheran church in America. For most of its history, gay men and women were permitted to be pastors, so long as they remained celibate. But in a narrow vote at its 2009 Churchwide Assembly, ordination was extended to gay men and women in "committed monogamous relationships." In addition, the Assembly passed an amendment allowing churches "to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships."

> From ELCA's formation in 1987 to 2009, the average decrease in membership each year was only 0.62 percent. But after the liberalization of the ELCA's stance on sexuality, membership declined a whopping 5.95 percent in 2010 and 4.98

percent in 2011. Since 2009, more than 600 congregations abandoned the denomination, with almost two-thirds joining conservative Lutheran denominations like the North American Lutheran Church and Lutheran Churches in Ministry for Christ.

By the end of 2012, ELCA had lost 12.3 percent of its members in three years—nearly 600,000 people. If the present rate of defections holds steady, ELCA will cease to exist in less than two decades.

The United Church of Christ

The United Church of Christ (UCC) has long had a reputation for unfettered liberalism, sometimes bordering on the radical. In 2008, for example, the pastor of the largest UCC congregations in the country was one Rev. Jeremiah Wright. The UCC's tendency for pushing traditional boundaries has led to unquestionably positive developments (such as the first African-American pastor as early as 1785) and the unquestionably silly (such as the first hymnal that refuses to call Jesus male). Needless to say, in 2005 UCC became the first U.S. mainline Protestant denomination to support same-sex marriage, and has been an outspoken voice in the gay marriage debate ever since.

While UCC has been bleeding members for decades, its decline rapidly acceleratedafter the gay marriage vote. Since 2005, UCC has lost 250,000 members, a decline of 20.4 percent over seven years. While an average of 39 congregations left UCC annually from 1990 to 2004, more than 350 congregations departed in the following three years. The UCC's own pension board called the 2000's decline "the worst decade among 25 reporting Protestant denominations," and admitted that "…the rate of decline is accelerating."

2013 marked a particularly grim milestone for the denomination, as membership finally fell below one million. If the post-2005 rate in membership losses doesn't taper out, the denomination will cease to exist in 30 years.

The Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

The Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (PCUSA) was flirting with loosening its sexual standards as early as its 2006 General Assembly, when it voted to allow ordination boards to essentially overlook clergy marriage standards if a candidate "adhere[s] to the essentials of the Reformed faith." By 2010, the General Assembly had passed an amendment to remove all clerical standards of sexual behavior entirely. This year's General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to change their Book of Order to redefine marriage as a civil contract between "two people" and to allow ministers to perform same-sex marriages where legal.

Hopefully by now, you can see where this is all headed. In 2006, 2.2 million

> people were members of PCUSA, a number that dropped 22.4 percent to 1.85 million by 2013. PCUSA's decline accelerated significantly after approving the ordination of non-celibate gay and lesbian clergy in mid-2011, which led to the creation of an alternative denomination in 2012 called ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. Over 100,000 members left the PCUSA in 2012 alone.

> Once again, if post-2006 trends continue, the denomination will cease to exist by 2037.

Why is this?

I think it's because when a person says that the plain meaning of Scripture is no longer authoritative in our lives simply because it interferes with our seeking of pleasure, that *is* the ballgame. When it comes to ethics, any serious Christian is going to look to the Bible to be the guide on God's character and our duties to him that come out of being in relationship with him. If I have girlfriend, and we go out to a restaurant, I cannot spend the entire time hitting on the waitress and staring at every other girl in the room. Similarly, when a person claims to be a Christian, and be in a relationship with God, it's a two-way relationship, and our actions have got to respect God as he is. God has a design for male-female relationships – a design for love, marriage and sex. If we just decide that we don't have to care about who he is when we make these decisions about love, marriage and sex, then the relationship with him is over. It's all about us, then. And if it's all about us, then why get up and go to church at all?

The question that decides what side we are on is this: are there two people in this relationship? Do I have to care about that other person, or do I just project my feelings and desires onto them so they are just a projection of me? In my relationship with God, I know God is different than me. And I know what God is like from reading the Bible and seeing what God has done in the past. In particular, I can clearly see what Jesus has done in history. I know that God is not like me, and that he has other things he values than what I value. I know that what he wants for me is better for me in the long run than the things that seem so important to me now. Being in a relationship means that you have to listen to that other person and think about how to respect them in your decision-making. Once you put your own happiness above the things the other person cares about, it's over.

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life by J. P. Moreland

August 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this essay on After All, but it looks like their site is not working well, so I'm just going to steal it and post it here, in case it disappears completely. This is one of my favorite short essays on utilitarianism, and it's a wonder that the thing can't stay up somewhere. Well, it will have a home here now. I'd be surprised to see anyone else be this awesome in a measly 1000 words as Dr. Moreland is below.

—-

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life

What Is Utilitarianism?

Utilitarianism (also called consequentialism) is a moral theory developed and refined in the modern world by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). It can be defined as follows:

> *An action or moral rule is right if and only if it maximizes the amount of nonmoral good produced in the consequences that result from doing that act or following that rule compared with other acts or rules open to the agent.*

By focusing on three features of utilitarianism, we can clarify this definition.

(1) Utilitarian theories of value.

What is a nonmoral good? Utilitarians deny that there are any moral actions or rules that are intrinsically right or wrong. But they do believe in objective values that are nonmoral.

Hedonistic utilitarians say that the only intrinsic good is pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Quantitative hedonists (Bentham) say that the amount of pleasure and pain is the only thing that matters in deciding between two courses of action, I should do the one that produces the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain (measured by factors like the duration and intensity of the pleasure). Qualitative hedonists (Mill) say that pleasure is the only intrinsic good, but the type of pleasure is what is important, not the amount. They would rank pleasures that come from reading, art, and friendship as more valuable than those that come from, say, a full stomach.

Pluralistic utilitarians say there are a number of things that have intrinsic, nonmoral value: pleasure, friendship, health, knowledge, freedom, peace, security, and so forth. For pluralists, it is not just the pleasure that comes from friendship that has value but also friendship itself.

Currently, the most popular utilitarian view of value is subjective preference utilitarianism. This position says it is presumptuous and impossible to specify things that

have intrinsic nonmoral worth. So, they claim, intrinsic value ought to be defined as that which each individual subjectively desires or wants, provided these do not harm others. Unfortunately, this view collapses into moral relativism.

(2) Utilitarians and maximizing utility.

Utilitarians use the term utility to stand for whatever good they are seeking to produce as consequences of a moral action (e.g., “pleasure” for the hedonist, “satisfaction of subjective preference” for others). They see morality in a means-to-ends way. The sole value of a moral action or rule is the utility of its consequences. Moral action should maximize utility. This can be interpreted in different ways, but many utilitarians embrace the following: the correct moral action or rule is the one that produces the greatest amount of utility for the greatest number of people.

(3) Two forms of utilitarianism: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.

According to act utilitarianism, an act is right if and only if no other act available maximizes utility more than the act in question. Here, each new moral situation is evaluated on its own, and moral rules like “don’t steal” or “don’t break promises” are secondary The moral agent must weigh available alternatives and choose the one that produces the best consequences. Rule utilitarianism says that correct moral actions are done in keeping with correct moral rules, However, no moral rule is intrinsically right or wrong. Rather, a correct moral rule is one that would maximize utility if most people followed it as opposed to following an alternative rule. Here, alternative rules (e.g., “don’t lie” vs. “don’t lie unless doing so would enhance friendship”) are compared for their consequences, not specific actions.

What Is Wrong with Utilitarianism?

Several objections show the inadequacy of utilitarianism as a normative moral theory.

First, utilitarianism can be used to justify actions that are clearly immoral. Consider the case of a severely deformed fetus. The child is certain to live a brief, albeit painless life. He or she will make no contribution to society. Society, however, will bear great expense. Doctors and other caregivers will invest time, emotion, and effort in adding mere hours to the baby’s life. The parents will know and love the child only long enough to be heartbroken at the inevitable loss. An abortion negates all those “utility” losses. There is no positive utility lost. Many of the same costs are involved in the care of the terminally ill elderly. They too may suffer no pain, but they may offer no benefit to society. In balancing positives and negatives, and excluding from the equation the objective sacredness of all human life, we arrive at morally repugnant decisions. Here deontological and virtue ethics steer us clear of what is easier to what is right.

Second, in a similar way, utilitarianism denies the existence of supererogatory acts. These are acts of moral heroism that are not morally obligatory but are still praiseworthy.

Examples would be giving 75 percent of your income to the poor or throwing yourself on a bomb to save a stranger. Consider the bomb example. You have two choices — throwing yourself on the bomb or not doing so. Each choice would have consequences and, according to utilitarianism, you are morally obligated to do one or the other depending on which option maximized utility. Thus, there is no room for acts that go beyond the call of morality.

Third, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of human rights and human dignity. If enslaving a minority of people, say by a lottery, would produce the greatest good for the greatest number, or if conceiving children only to harvest their parts would do the same, then these could he justified in a utilitarian scheme. But enslavement and abortion violate individual rights and treat people as a means to an end, not as creatures with intrinsic dignity as human beings. If acts of abortion, active euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and so forth maximize utility, then they are morally obligatory for the utilitarian. But any moral system that makes abortion and suicide morally obligatory is surely flawed.

Finally, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of motives and character. We should praise good motives and seek good character because such motives and character are intrinsically valuable. But utilitarianism implies that the only reason we should praise good motives instead of bad ones, or seek good character instead of bad character, is because such acts would maximize utility. But this has the cart before the horse. We should praise good motives and blame bad ones because they are good or bad, not because such acts of praising and blaming produce good consequences.

In sum, it should be clear that utilitarianism is an inadequate moral theory. Unfortunately, ours is a pragmatic culture and utilitarianism is on the rise. But for those of us who follow Christ, a combination of virtue and deontological ethics is a more adequate view of common sense morality found in natural law and of the moral vision contained in the Bible.

Universities limiting student employment to comply with Obamacare

August 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, they are certainly getting what they voted for – but good.

Campus Reform has the story.

Excerpt:

> Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) is restricting student work because of compliance issues associated with the Affordable Care Act (ACA), commonly known as Obamacare.
>
> **In an email last week, MTSU President Sidney McPhee explained that "due to our interpretation of the reporting requirements of ACA," graduate assistants, adjunct faculty members, and resident assistants are barred from working on-campus jobs that exceed 29 hours of work per week.**
>
> Now, they cannot take on multiple campus jobs.
>
> "[E]ffective beginning with the fall semester, we will no longer allow part-time employees, or those receiving monthly stipends from the university, to accept multiple work assignments on campus," the email stated.
>
> McPhee noted that violations of the law "could add up as high as $6 million" in penalties.
>
> The *Daily News Journal* reports that graduate assistants are now restricted from picking up research work funded through grants to the university.
>
> […]As *Campus Reform* previously reported, the University of Kansas has reduced the number of hours student employees can work from 30 hours per week to 20, a move to ensure compliance with the ACA.
>
> "The revised [KU] policy seeks to balance the necessity for students to make academic progress while managing potential fiscal liabilities with ACA," Diane Goddard, KU vice provost for administration and finance wrote in an email early this month.
>
> […]Since 2012, at least 111 colleges and universities have limited adjunct professor course loads, capped student employment hours, or reduced hours for part-time faculty according to a list compiled by *Investor's Business Daily*.

Advice for college students: next time you vote, don't pay so much attention to what your liberal professors tell you about big, bad conservatives. Do your own research, make up your own mind. Think about what is best for you – ask yourself who is paying for all these happy-sounding promises that you hear from the left. We've borrowed 7 trillion dollars since Obama took office. You're paying for it, so stop adding to it.

Can a Christian woman divorce her husband if she is really, really unhappy?

August 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, the topic for this post is whether it's OK to get divorced.

I noticed a lot of people getting divorced these days in the church, and trying to justify why they are allowed to divorce and why they should be allowed to pursue remarriage. So I'm first going to quote from an article from Focus on the Family by Amy Tracy.

She writes:

> God is very clear, however, that He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). He also says, "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matthew 19:6). According to the New Testament, there are two justifications for divorce: infidelity (Matthew 5:32) and desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15).

Now, I had always taken the rule of Dr. Laura for this. She says that you can get divorced for adultery and abandonment (as above), but she allows allows for physical abuse and drug addiction. But it looks like the Bible is more strict than Dr. Laura, even.

Now with that Biblical standard in mind, take a look at this post about a woman who professes to be a Christian who is divorcing her husband for unhappiness, which I found on Sunshine Mary's blog.

Look:

> So how are we to understand women like Jenny Erickson, and the many other Christian women like her, who claim that despite thousands of years of Christian and Jewish tradition, despite the clear commands in Scripture not to separate from one's husband, despite the commandments against adultery, nevertheless the Lord God Himself has made a special exemption *just for her?* Because He wants her to be happy, so if she needs to be a faithless woman who breaks her vows and becomes an adulteress, then hey it's all good?
>
> […]After secretly filing for divorce from her husband, Mrs. Erickson's pastor caught wind of the situation and attempted to discuss it with her. When she refused, the pastor went to her husband about the situation. Mrs. Erickson has since railed against her soon-to-be ex-husband and her now ex-Pastor because they actually had the nerve to call what she was doing a *sin* – which, according to the Bible, is *is.* Let's read through a few quotes from Mrs. Erickson:
>
> > Thankfully, my faith in God is stronger than my fear of men, and I feel like **I'm finally getting right with Him** again after years of wandering in the wilderness.

[…]Here are a few more things that Mrs. Erickson claims:

> It's odd and strangely freeing to not know exactly where I'm going to be a year from now. I've always been the girl with The Plan. The Plan has changed every now and then, because hey, life requires adaptation, but right now there is No Plan other than love my girls like crazy, work hard enough to pay the bills, and **rely totally and fully on God.** I'm sure His Plan is better than My Plan anyway.

and

> I needed a time-out for my marriage — possibly a permanent one. *But* ***every person that tells me I'm going against God's will by separating from my husband drives me further away from wanting to reconcile with him*****.**
>
> Details aren't needed. Leif is the father of my amazing children, and I want nothing more than to be his friend again someday, regardless of what happens in our marriage. But things have been very broken between us for a very long time, and **it took every ounce of courage I had to take the step that went against everything my religious culture told me but somehow I knew God was telling me was right.**

and

> To be told that this beautiful, wonderful thing I have learned exists in my soul, this thing that gives me the strength to flip my life over when nothing else has worked, this thing that **has made me braver than I thought possible, and made me rely on God more than I ever have in my entire life … *to be told that this is a perversion of His plan for me?***

These points must confuse a lot of women because I have heard these rationalizations used by many Christian women who are leaving or have left their husbands. Therefore, allow me to clear up the confusion that seems to be rampant (but it really isn't confusion, it is willful disobedience), lest any of my sisters in Christ are considering following Mrs. Erickson's example.

God's plan for you will never include violating anything written in the Bible.

If you hear a voice whispering in your ear, *Here's the plan; what I want you to do is…* and the plan includes going against clear commandments in God's Word, then **it is not God who is speaking to you.** God's plan for your life, sister, never includes *you* filing for divorce. Not ever, not under any circumstances, no matter what your husband has or has not done, no matter what you want, no matter what would make you happy.

So, I think we (men) need to be really careful with spousal candidates (women) who claim to be Christian – we need to make sure that they really are comfortable with being led and with the authority of the Bible to overrule their feelings. In fact, you can check to see if a person takes their faith seriously just by trying to lead them to take the Bible seriously. You just have to read the Bible and think about how to live it out in a marriage, and then talk to your spousal candidate about what you've discovered. You want to present to them your plans and your reasons for those plans, and explain what you need them to do in order to make the plan work. This is a great way to see if they know what marriage is really about and how they feel about what's expected of them if they marry YOU.

What does the Bible say about capital punishment?

August 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: This post has a twin post which talks about the evidence against capital punishment from science.

First, let's take a look at what the Bible says in general about capital punishment, using this lecture featuring eminent theologian Wayne Grudem.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

A PDF sermon outline is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?
- what did God say to Noah about CP?
- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?
- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?

- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?
- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?
- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the "whole life ethic" and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

You can find more talks by Wayne Grudem here.

What about the woman caught in adultery?

Some people like to bring up the woman caught in adultery as proof that Jesus opposed capital punishment. But that passage of the Bible was added much later after the canon was decided.

Daniel B. Wallace is an eminent New Testament scholar who also teaches at Dallas Theological Seminary, an extremely conservative seminary.

About Dr. Wallace:

> Dr. Daniel B. Wallace
>
> - Professor of New Testament Studies
> - B.A., Biola University, 1975; Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; Ph.D., 1995.

> Dr. Wallace influences students across the country through his textbook on intermediate Greek grammar. It is used in more than two-thirds of the nation's schools that teach that subject. He is the senior New Testament editor of the *NET Bible* and coeditor of the *NET-Nestle Greek-English diglot*. Recently his scholarship has shifted from syntactical and text-critical issues to more specific work in John, Mark, and nascent Christology. However he still works extensively in textual criticism, and has founded The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, an institute with an initial purpose to preserve Scripture by taking digital photographs of all known Greek New Testament manuscripts. His postdoctoral work includes work on Greek grammar at Tyndale House in Cambridge and textual criticism studies at the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster.

And Dr. Wallace writes about the passage in John on Bible.org.

Excerpt:

> One hundred and forty years ago, conservative biblical scholar and Dean of

Canterbury, Henry Alford, advocated a new translation to replace the King James Bible. One of his reasons was the inferior textual basis of the KJV. Alford argued that “a translator of Holy Scripture must be…ready to sacrifice the choicest text, and the plainest proof of doctrine, if the words are not those of what he is constrained in his conscience to receive as God’s testimony.” He was speaking about the Trinitarian formula found in the KJV rendering of 1 John 5:7–8. Twenty years later, two Cambridge scholars came to the firm conclusion that John 7:53–8:11 also was not part of the original text of scripture. But Westcott and Hort’s view has not had nearly the impact that Alford’s did.

For a long time, biblical scholars have recognized the poor textual credentials of the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11). The evidence against its authenticity is overwhelming: The earliest manuscripts with substantial portions of John’s Gospel (P66 and P75) lack these verses. They skip from John 7:52 to 8:12. The oldest large codices of the Bible also lack these verses: codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both from the fourth century, are normally considered to be the most important biblical manuscripts of the NT extant today. Neither of them has these verses. Codex Alexandrinus, from the fifth century, lacks several leaves in the middle of John. But because of the consistency of the letter size, width of lines, and lines per page, the evidence is conclusive that this manuscript also lacked the *pericope adulterae*. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, also from the fifth century, apparently lacked these verses as well (it is similar to Alexandrinus in that some leaves are missing).The earliest extant manuscript to have these verses is codex Bezae, an eccentric text once in the possession of Theodore Beza. He gave this manuscript to the University of Cambridge in 1581 as a gift, telling the school that he was confident that the scholars there would be able to figure out its significance. He washed his hands of the document. Bezae is indeed the most eccentric NT manuscript extant today, yet it is the chief representative of the Western text-type (the text-form that became dominant in Rome and the Latin West).

When P66, P75, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus agree, their combined testimony is overwhelmingly strong that a particular reading is not authentic. But it is not only the early Greek manuscripts that lack this text. The great majority of Greek manuscripts through the first eight centuries lack this pericope. And except for Bezae (or codex D), virtually all of the most important Greek witnesses through the first eight centuries do not have the verses. Of the three most important early versions of the New Testament (Coptic, Latin, Syriac), two of them lack the story in their earliest and best witnesses. The Latin alone has the story in its best early witnesses.

[…]It is an important point to note that although the story of the woman caught in adultery is found in most of our printed Bibles today, the evidence suggests that the majority of Bibles during the first eight centuries of the Christian faith did not contain the story. Externally, most scholars would say that the evidence for it

> not being an authentic part of John's Gospel is rock solid.But textual criticism is not based on external evidence alone; there is also the internal evidence to consider. This is comprised of two parts: *intrinsic evidence* has to do with what an author is likely to have written; *transcriptional evidence* has to do with how and why a scribe would have changed the text.
>
> Intrinsically, the vocabulary, syntax, and style look far more like Luke than they do John. There is almost nothing in these twelve verses that has a Johannine flavor. And transcriptionally, scribes were almost always prone to add material rather than omit it—especially a big block of text such as this, rich in its description of Jesus' mercy. One of the remarkable things about this passage, in fact, is that it is found in multiple locations. Most manuscripts that have it place it in its now traditional location: between John 7:52 and 8:12. But an entire family of manuscripts has the passage at the end of Luke 21, while another family places it at the end of John's Gospel. Other manuscripts place it at the end of Luke or in various places in John 7.
>
> The *pericope adulterae* has all the earmarks of a pericope that was looking for a home. It took up permanent residence, in the ninth century, in the middle of the fourth gospel.

As this debate between Peter Williams and Bart Ehrman shows, there are only TWO disputed passages in the entire NT that are theologically significant. The long ending of Mark and this adultery passage. A good case can be made for the long ending of Mark, but it's best not to assume it in a debate. The adultery passage is practically impossible to defend as authentic. Dr. Wallace talks about both passages in this Parchment & Pen article. Wallace has also debated Bart Ehrman in the Greer-Heard Forum. What that debate showed is that the New Testament text is actually quite reliable except for those two passages, but it's important to be honest about the two places that are not well supported.

A simple case for the pro-life position by Scott Klusendorf

August 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you able to make a basic case for the pro-life view?

Here's a short 38-lecture by Scott Klusendorf, president of the Life Training Institute.

This is a long treatment that talks about the challenge of moral relativism and the case for the pro-life view. He does show a clip of abortion in the video to the audience.

There's also a 35-minute audio recording of Scott on the LTI web site. (H/T Apologetics 315) You can put that on your podcast player and listen to it. Listen to it a lot and soon you'll sound like Scott.

Scott also has an article posted on the LTI web site for those who don't have time for the video or the audio.

In the article makes three points:

1. **Clarify the issue**
2. **Defend your pro-life position with science and philosophy**
3. **Challenge your listeners to be intellectually honest**

Here's the second point:

> Scientifically, we know that from the earliest stages of development, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings. Leading embryology books confirm this.[2] For example, Keith L. Moore & T.V.N. Persaud write, "A zygote is the beginning of a new human being. Human development begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm … unites with a female gamete or oocyte … to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual."[3] Prior to his abortion advocacy, former Planned Parenthood President Dr. Alan Guttmacher was perplexed that anyone, much less a medical doctor, would question this. "This all seems so simple and evident that it is difficult to picture a time when it wasn't part of the common knowledge," he wrote in his book *Life in the Making*.[4]
>
> Philosophically, we can say that embryos are less developed than newborns (or, for that matter, toddlers) but this difference is not morally significant in the way abortion advocates need it to be. Consider the claim that the immediate capacity for self-awareness bestows value on human beings. Notice that this is not an argument, but an arbitrary assertion. Why is some development needed? And why is this particular degree of development (i.e., higher brain function) decisive rather than another? These are questions that abortion advocates do not adequately address.
>
> As Stephen Schwarz points out, there is no morally significant difference between

> the embryo that you once were and the adult that you are today. Differences of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not relevant such that we can say that you had no rights as an embryo but you do have rights today. Think of the acronym **SLED** as a helpful reminder of these non-essential differences:[5]
>
> **S**ize: True, embryos are smaller than newborns and adults, but why is that relevant? Do we really want to say that large people are more human than small ones? Men are generally larger than women, but that doesn't mean that they deserve more rights. Size doesn't equal value.
>
> **L**evel of development: True, embryos and fetuses are less developed than the adults they'll one day become. But again, why is this relevant? Four year-old girls are less developed than 14 year-old ones. Should older children have more rights than their younger siblings? Some people say that self-awareness makes one human. But if that is true, newborns do not qualify as valuable human beings. Six-week old infants lack the immediate capacity for performing human mental functions, as do the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, and those with Alzheimer's Disease.
>
> **E**nvironment: Where you are has no bearing on who you are. Does your value change when you cross the street or roll over in bed? If not, how can a journey of eight inches down the birth-canal suddenly change the essential nature of the unborn from non-human to human? If the unborn are not already human, merely changing their location can't make them valuable.
>
> **D**egree of Dependency: If viability makes us human, then all those who depend on insulin or kidney medication are not valuable and we may kill them. Conjoined twins who share blood type and bodily systems also have no right to life.
>
> In short, it's far more reasonable to argue that although humans differ immensely with respect to talents, accomplishments, and degrees of development, they are nonetheless equal because they share a common human nature.

That's the core of the basic pro-life case right there. There's also a good interview of Mr. Klusendorf that I blogged about.

Advanced Objections

You can learn more by reading basic pro-life apologetics… from Francis Beckwith. You might recognize Frank Beckwith as the author of "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice". He wrote that book for Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal.

Here are four essays that answer common arguments in favor of legalized abortion.

- Part I. The Appeal to Pity
- Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem

- Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?
- Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Here's an excerpt from Part II:

Excerpt:

> A woman who becomes pregnant due to an act of either rape or incest is the victim of a horribly violent and morally reprehensible crime. Although pregnancy as a result of either rape or incest is extremely rare, **[1]** there is no getting around the fact that pregnancy does occur in some instances.
>
> […]Despite its forceful appeal to our sympathies, there are several problems with this argument. First, it is not relevant to the case for abortion on demand, the position defended by the popular pro-choice movement. This position states that a woman has a **right** to have an abortion for **any** reason she prefers during the entire nine months of pregnancy, whether it be for gender-selection, convenience, or rape. **[3]** To argue for abortion on demand from the hard cases of rape and incest is like trying to argue for the elimination of traffic laws from the fact that one might have to violate some of them in rare circumstances, such as when one's spouse or child needs to be rushed to the hospital. Proving an exception does not establish a general rule.
>
> […]Fourth, this argument begs the question by assuming that the unborn is not fully human. For if the unborn is fully human, then we must weigh the relieving of the woman's mental suffering against the right-to-life of an innocent human being. **And homicide of another is never justified to relieve one of emotional distress**. Although such a judgment is indeed anguishing, we must not forget that the same innocent unborn entity that the career-oriented woman will abort in order to avoid interference with a job promotion is biologically and morally indistinguishable from the unborn entity that results from an act of rape or incest. And since abortion for career advancement cannot be justified if the unborn entity is fully human, abortion cannot be justified in the cases of rape and incest. In both cases abortion results in the death of an innocent human life. As Dr. Bernard Nathanson has written, "The unwanted pregnancy flows biologically from the sexual act, but not morally from it." **[5]**Hence, this argument, like the ones we have already covered in this series, is successful only if the unborn are not fully human.

Scott Klusendorf wrote the The Case for Life, which is the best book for beginners on the pro-life view. For those looking for advanced resources, Francis Beckwith, a professor at Baylor University, published the book Defending Life, with Cambridge University Press, 2007.

I found a very polished hour-long talk by Scott on Youtube. That talk was delivered to students and faculty at Furman University.

Finally, if you want to see Scott Klusendorf in a debate with a former ACLU executive, you

can see it right here.

My friend Papa Georgio sent me a post that features THREE talks by Scott Klusendorf. (H/T Religio-Political Talk)

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Video:10-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Objective truth in the abortion debate – a pro-life training video
- Alan Shlemon explains a classification system for pro-abortion arguments
- What is the best single book on the pro-life position?

And some posts motivating Christians and conservatives to take abortion seriously:

- Why Christians should focus on cultural issues as well as evangelism
- Republicans introduce House and Senate bills to establish that life begins at conception
- House Republicans introduce ban on taxpayer funding of abortion
- Are Christians too involved in politics?
- What did the early church fathers think about abortion?
- Scott Klusendorf confronts a "pro-life" nun who voted for Obama

Lois Lerner’s Blackberry deliberately destroyed after start of congressional probe

August 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama playing golf – again!
Story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Director of Exempt Organizations for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Lois Lerner prepares to deliver an opening statement to a House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing on alleged targeting of political groups seeking tax-exempt status from by the IRS, on Capitol Hill in Washington. (Reuters)

> **Lois Lerner’s Blackberry was intentionally destroyed after Congress had begun its probe into IRS targeting of conservative groups, a senior IRS lawyer acknowledged in a sworn declaration.**
>
> **Thomas Kane, Deputy Assistant Chief Counsel for the IRS, wrote in the declaration, part of a lawsuit filed by Judicial Watch against the IRS, that the Blackberry was “removed or wiped clean of any sensitive or proprietary information and removed as scrap for disposal in June 2012.”**
>
> That date – June 2012 – is significant because by that time, ex-IRS official Lerner had already been summoned before congressional staffers who interviewed her

> about reports of the IRS' targeting of conservative groups.
>
> "We had already talked to her. Our personal staff and Oversight Committee staff had sat down with Ms. Lerner and confronted her about information we were getting from conservative groups in the state of Ohio and around the country," Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, told Fox News.
>
> "If you intentionally destroy evidence, that is a crime. If you make a statement in court saying the evidence is not available and it is, that is also a crime," said Jay Sekulow, Chief Counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice.
>
> The IRS did not immediately respond to Fox News' request for comment.
>
> News of the Blackberry's destruction followed Monday's statement by Judicial Watch that Justice Department attorneys said in a Friday phone call the federal government backs up all computer records to ensure continuity of government in event of a catastrophe, but retrieving the Lerner emails would simply be "too onerous."
>
> […]Cleta Mitchell, an attorney who represents other conservative groups suing the IRS, cited a whistleblower who bolsters Judicial Watch's interpretation.
>
> "I received information from a former Department of Homeland Security official who had security clearances. He just retired in April," Mitchell said. "He contacted me and he contacted Judicial Watch and some members of Congress and said there is backup material."
>
> The dueling versions are not likely to sit well with District Court Judge Emmet Sullivan, who is presiding over Judicial Watch's lawsuit against the IRS. "He gave the IRS not one, but two opportunities in court filings with him to tell him where they were," said Tom Fitton, president of Judicial Watch. "There was no mention of this backup system to the court at that time."
>
> According to Sidney Powell, author of "Licensed to Lie: Exposing Corruption in the Department of Justice," Sullivan is known to scold government lawyers who withhold evidence.
>
> Powell said Sullivan appointed an independent counsel to investigate DOJ's prosecution of now deceased Republican Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska.Sullivan described the Stevens prosecution as "the worst case of misconduct he'd seen in 25 years."
>
> Sullivan also said, "When government does not meet its obligations to turn over evidence, the system falters."

So, this is the most transparent administration ever, with "not even a smidgeon of corruption" as Obama said, with a straight face.

So I have some advice for American voters. Next time, let's insist that a person has actually done a little work on what they claim to want to do, so we know that they are serious about it. Instead of just believing happy talk, let's see the accomplishments, like we would when hiring for any job. If someone claims to be passionate and competent at

something, like cleaning up corruption and improving transparency, then let's ask them for some evidence that this has been a priority for them in the past. And that it's something they've actually been able to do to a significant degree. We need someone *competent*. Not a clown or a stand-up comedian. He is not the entertainer-in-chief, he is the commander-in-chief.

Also, Newsbusters noticed that none of the mainstream media reported on this story – which is a bombshell of a story. Remember that when you are deciding where to get your news- the mainstream media doesn't cover stories like this. It annoys me when I think of all the people in other countries who watch CNN who will never see this story or stories like it, yet they think they are being informed. Censoring stories like this is not good journalism, but if people don't know what's being left out…

Related posts

- New e-mails: IRS official Lois Lerner called conservatives "a**holes" and "terrorists"
- IRS Lois Lerner pushed to have Republican senator Chuck Grassley audited
- IRS e-mail backups destroyed shortly after targeting of conservatives was discovered
- IRS required BY LAW to store hard copies of all e-mails they claim to have lost
- After a year of stalling, IRS blames loss of e-mails on "hard drive crash"
- Democrats refusing to comply with Freedom of Information Act requests
- House Republicans vote to hold Lois Lerner in contempt of Congress
- E-mails suggest Democrat congressman prompted IRS to target conservative group
- FBI declines to prosecute IRS for targeting Tea Party groups ahead of 2012 election
- IRS exchanged confidential taxpayer information with White House
- IRS fascist Lois Lerner pleads the fifth to avoid transparency and accountability

Burger King leaves U.S. 35% corporate tax rate for Canada's 15% corporate tax rate

August 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper: all your base are belong to us!

Wow, I really hate Burger King, but this latest move leaves me very confused. Maybe I have to eat there now?

The Chicago Tribune reports on it.

Excerpt:

> Canada has become the latest frontier for U.S. companies fleeing the high cost of business, spurred by low corporate taxes and a policy that keeps international earnings out of the clutches of the Internal Revenue Service.
>
> Burger King, the second-largest U.S. burger chain, agreed to acquire Oakville, Ontario-based Tim Hortons on Tuesday for about C$12.5 billion ($11.4 billion) in a deal that creates the world's third-largest fast-food chain and moves its headquarters in Canada. It's "not fair" that companies can renounce their U.S. citizenship by filling out paperwork, a White House spokesman said Monday.
>
> The deal for Oakville, Ontario-based Tim Hortons follows Valeant Pharmaceuticals' merger with Canada's Biovail in 2010, which sparked the latest so- called tax-inversion wave.
>
> Burger King is unlikely to be the last U.S. company to consider moving north even as President Barack Obama and his aides try to curb the practice, tax experts say. In addition to avoiding U.S. taxes on global earnings, companies like Burger King can take advantage of Canadian tax rates that have been cut by about a quarter in the past eight years.

> “We have now made it a lot more attractive for companies to say Canada is a good place to set up shop,” said Jack Mintz, director of the University of Calgary’s School of Public Policy.
>
> […]Lower corporate taxes may also be an attraction for foreign companies. Canada began cutting its federal corporate tax rate in 2001 under the previous Liberal government. Prime Minister Stephen Harper then took up the baton, dropping the rate in several steps to 15 percent in 2012. Combined with provincial rates averaging 11.5 percent, Canada’s rate of 27 percent is now the second-lowest in the Group of Seven countries behind the U.K.’s 21 percent, according to auditing and tax firm KPMG.
>
> Canada’s combined rate is still above the 24 percent average for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, according to the report.
>
> Low corporate tax rates helped the country rise to second place in a Bloomberg ranking of best countries for doing business in January, behind only Hong Kong.
>
> “We are proud that our low tax environment in Canada attracts businesses,” Carl Vallee, a spokesman for Harper, said by email on Monday.

The U.S. corporate tax rate is the highest in the world. It warms my heart to think that corporations are moving out to Canada. And I hope they take the jobs with them, because that’s the only way people will learn to elect presidents who understand economics. Our leader is out of his depth trying to run this country, and is only able to his economic failures by borrowing trillions and trillions of dollars from our children. Anybody can appear competent if they borrow and spend that much money, but it’s a bubble, just like the housing bubble his party caused. Canada’s prime minister has a BA and MA in economics – he actually knows how economies work. We could have picked someone qualified, but we didn’t.

I fully expect Obama to whine like a little girl about this, and call Burger King “unpatriotic”. This is loser talk, because he is a loser. The limit of his knowledge of economics is that he makes snarky speeches insulting people who disagree with him. Why did we elect this stand-up comedian? Is that what a President is supposed to do?

Study explains why college women embrace binge-drinking and hooking up

August 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students throwing up after binge drinking

This study is from the Institute for American Values. Despite their name, they are not conservatives. It was done by Norval Glenn and Elizabeth Marquardt.

If you download the 88 page PDF, the first few pages are an executive summary.

There are a couple of things that really struck me about this IAV study on hooking-up.

First, this one from p. 15:

> A notable feature of hook ups is that they almost always occur when both participants are drinking or drunk.
>
> A Rutgers University student observed, "You always hear people say, oh my gosh, I was so drunk, I hooked up with so and so…" Perhaps not surprisingly, many noted that being drunk helped to loosen one's inhibitions and make it easier to hook up. A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up. A Yale University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up." A New York University student observed, "[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking."
>
> A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then

> if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."
>
> Other women observed that being drunk gives a woman license to act sexually interested in public in ways that would not be tolerated if she were sober. For instance, a University of Michigan student said, "Girls are actually allowed to be a lot more sexual when they are drunk…"
>
> A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."
>
> Some reported that drinking had led them to do things they later regretted. A University of Virginia student said, "My last random hook up was last October and it was bad. I was drunk and I just regretted it very much."

And this one from p. 30 on the effects of hooking-up on their future commitments:

> A few women did see an unambiguous connection between present relationships and future marriage.
>
> […]Many women either saw little or no connection between present and future relationships, or their understanding of this connection was curiously flat. A student at New York University said, "[The present and the future are] connected because I will still have the same values and principles that I have now, but I just won't be single anymore."A number of women said that the present and the future are connected because whatever heartache or confusion they experience now gives them lessons for the future.
>
> A University of Michigan student said, "Early relationships prepare you for marriage because it's like, oh, what type of person do I want to be with? Oh, I've had these bad experiences. Or, I've learned from this relationship that I should do this and I shouldn't do this."
>
> A sophomore at Howard University said that "I am kind of learning from a lot of the mistakes that I have made." At a further extreme, some women saw their future marriage as the reason to experiment widely in the present. A Rutgers University student said,"I think hooking up with different people and seeing what you like and don't like is a good idea. Because eventually you're going to have to… marry someone and I'd just like to know that I experienced everything."
>
> Although it is admirable to take risks and learn from one's mistakes, these women would probably find it difficult to explain how having your heart broken a few or even many times in your early years — or trying to separate sex from feeling, as in hooking up — is good preparation for a trusting and happy marriage later on.

And on p. 42, we learn what women think marriage is and isn't for:

> For instance, in the on-campus interviews one student complained, "[With]

> marriage…you have to debate everything… Why do you need a piece of paper to bond a person to you? …But I know if I don't get married I'll probably feel like… [a] lonely old woman… If anything, I'd get married [because of] that."
>
> This student went on to say that she would be satisfied to live with a man, but added that, if the man was committed to her, he would offer to marry her, and that this was the kind of commitment that she wanted. A student at the University of Washington said,"I don't want to get married right after I graduate from college. I just think that would stunt my growth in every way that there is. I would like to be in a very steady, committed relationship with a guy."

And on p. 44, we learn that they like co-habitation, which increases the risk of divorce by about 50% (but they don't know *that*):

> In the national survey, 58 percent of the respondents agreed that "It is a good idea to live with someone before deciding to marry him." This belief often coexists with a strong desire to marry, because it was embraced by 49 percent of the respondents who strongly agreed that marriage was a very important goal for them.
>
> […]Women we interviewed on campus reflected a similar range of attitudes about cohabitation. Some women thought that cohabitation was a good way to test whether one could spend a lifetime with a potential partner. In such cases, women often cited fears of divorce as the reason for trying cohabitation first. A senior at the University of Washington said, "I kind of don't really see marriages work ever, so I want to make sure that everything's all right before [we get married]. I don't see how people can get married without living together because I know like I have a best friend and I live with her and we want to kill each other, like, every few months."
>
> Other women felt that, in an age of divorce, cohabitation was a preferable alternative to marriage. A student at New York University said, "You see so [many] people getting divorces… I just don't see the necessity [of marriage]." She went on to say, "I think that I don't have to be married to [the] person that I'm with…. You know like… Goldie Hawn [and Kurt Russell]? They're not married."

But let's get back to the drinking and the hook-up sex…

Once a woman abandons femininity for feminism, then sex is all that she can use to get noticed by a man. Men are like hiring managers, and courting is like a job interview for the job of marriage and mothering. If a woman tries to get the job by having sex with the interviewer, he isn't going to hire her for the marriage job, since sex has almost nothing to do with the marriage job. Men have to think about things like fidelity and mothering ability when they are choosing a wife. The problem is that thanks to feminism, women have stopped trying to show their ability to be wives and mothers to men, preferring to instead act like men – no emotions, toughness, hardness, binge-drinking, promiscuity. Men may be happy to have sex with women like that, but they do not commit to them.

Moreover, if a man is constantly being offered sex from feminist women during his 20s and 30s, he basically loses all the time that he could be training for his roles as protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. He will never take on those roles if he is handed sex before marriage for free. That is the root cause of the “man-up” complaint that women make. Why don’t men grow up? Because they don’t have to in order to get sex – women are giving them oral sex on the first date now. There is no need to prove themselves as husbands and fathers anymore.

In a previous post, I explained how feminists wanted to get women to drink like men, have sex like men, and to abolish courtship and marriage. Under the influence of cultural definitions of what makes a good man and a good relationship, women began to choose men to have sex with without any consideration of morality, religion, marriage, etc. This results in a cycle of binge-drinking, one-night-stands, cheating, co-habitating, breaking-up, stalking, aborting, etc., until the woman’s ability to trust and love anyone – including herself – is completely destroyed. And yet these college women somehow believe this is is “fun” and “adventurous”, that it makes them feel “sexy”, and that the experience of being selfish and seeing the worst kind of men acting in the worst possible ways, point blank, somehow prepares them for marriage and motherhood. They are told this, and they are so unable to break out of their need to “fit in” with their peers and culture that by the time they realized they’ve been had, it’s too late to fix it. And yet, they themselves made those decisions. They are responsible.

The problem is made worse because their feminist mothers often deliberately chose men who were poor moral and spiritual leaders. Often, a young unmarried woman’s biological father was NOT selected by her mother based on his ability to make commitments and moral judgments. Many feminists prefer men who do not make moral judgments or present exclusive religious views persuasively. Those are the very things that young unmarried women today seem to dislike most about men. And yet those are exactly the things that make men good husbands and fathers. Some women don’t want to be judged morally or led spiritually, so they choose immoral, non-religious men. The problem is that those men cannot then be counted on to act morally and spiritually in a relationship. They make terrible fathers for daughters, as well – perpetuating the problems of women being unable to resist a secular, relativistic, hedonistic culture. And when these marriages to bad men fail, the daughters grow up fatherless, which is arguably worse than having even a defective father.

Four ways that the progress of experimental science conflicts with atheism

August 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When people ask me whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism, I offer the following four basic pieces of scientific evidence that are more compatible with theism than atheism.

Here are the four pieces of evidence best explained by a Creator/Designer:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the biological information in the first replicator (origin of life)
4. the sudden origin of all of the different body plans in the fossil record (Cambrian explosion)

And I point to specific examples of recent discoveries that confirm those four arguments. Here are just a few of them:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (From an article from Caltech)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning to allow the existence of conscious, embodied life (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)
4. Evidence showing that Ediacaran fauna are not precursors to the Cambrian fossils, (from the journal Nature)

Atheists will typically reply to the recent scientific discoveries that overturned their speculations like this:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause
2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes
4. Maybe we will find a seamless chain of fossils that explain how the Cambrian explosion occurred slowly, over a long period time

Ever heard any of these responses?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the four responses of atheists to the experimental data.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
>
> †Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, USA
>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear

> to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.
>
> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities."
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have

no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. There is no evidence for a multiverse, but there is evidence for fine-tuning. TONS OF IT.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can't make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can't make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth's interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into

meaningful words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them.

4) The best candidate to explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian era fossils was the Ediacaran fauna, but those are now recognized as not being precursors to the Cambrian fossils.

Science Daily reports on a paper from the peer-reviewed journal Science:

> Evidence of the single-celled ancestors of animals, dating from the interval in Earth's history just before multicellular animals appeared, has been discovered in 570 million-year-old rocks from South China by researchers from the University of Bristol, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Paul Scherrer Institut and the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.
>
> […]This X-ray microscopy revealed that the fossils had features that multicellular embryos do not, and this led the researchers to the conclusion that the fossils were neither animals nor embryos but rather the reproductive spore bodies of single-celled ancestors of animals.
>
> Professor Philip Donoghue said: "We were very surprised by our results — we've been convinced for so long that these fossils represented the embryos of the earliest animals — much of what has been written about the fossils for the last ten years is flat wrong. Our colleagues are not going to like the result."
>
> Professor Stefan Bengtson said: "These fossils force us to rethink our ideas of how animals learned to make large bodies out of cells."

The trend is that there is no evolutionary explanation for the body plans that emerged in the Cambrian era. If you want to make the claim that "evolution did it", then you have to produce the data *today*. Not speculations about the future. The data we have today says no to naturalism. The only way to affirm naturalistic explanations for the evidence we have is *by faith*. But rational people know that we need to minimize our leaps of faith, and go with the simplest and most reasonable explanation – an intelligence is the best explanation responsible for rapid generation of biological information.

Conclusion

I do think it's important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see way too much G. K. Chesterton, Francis Chan and other untestable, ineffective jibber-jabber. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it's too hard. It's not too hard. Everyone can understand "Who Made God?" by Edgar Andrews – start with that! Then get Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". That's more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works. You don't want to be anti-science and pro-speculation like atheists are. I recommend reading Uncommon Descent and Evolution News every day for a start.

Does the Bible say thou shalt not kill or thou shalt not murder?

August 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article on it by a prominent Jewish professor of religious studies at the University of Calgary.

His qualifications are here. He is an expert in Hebrew language.

Excerpt:

> Those of us who are familiar with the original Hebrew text of the Bible find frequent occasion to whine about inaccuracies and misleading expressions in the translations that are in use among non-Jews. Many of these discrepancies arose out of patently theological motives, as Christian interpreters rewrote passages in the "Old Testament" so as to turn them into predictions or prefigurations of the life of Jesus. Some of the mistranslations, though, are harder to account for.
>
> For me, one of the most irksome cases has always been the rendering of the sixth commandment as "Thou shalt not kill." In this form, the quote has been conscripted into the service of diverse causes, including those of pacifism, animal rights, the opposition to capital punishment, and the anti-abortion movement.
>
> Indeed, "kill" in English is an all-encompassing verb that covers the taking of life in all forms and for all classes of victims. That kind of generalization is expressed in Hebrew through the verb "harag." However, the verb that appears in the Torah's prohibition is a completely different one, " ratsah" which, it would seem, should be rendered "murder." This root refers only to criminal acts of killing.
>
> It is, of course, not just a question of etymology. Those ideologies that adduce the commandment in support of their gentle-hearted causes are compelled to feign ignorance of all those other places in the Bible that condone or command warfare, the slaughter of sacrificial animals, and an assortment of methods for inflicting capital punishment.

Not that I don't agree with this guy about his comments on abortion. I think abortion IS murder, and that Jews always considered it murder. Consider this post at Reason to Stand.

Excerpt:

*"The law enjoins us to bring up all our offspring, and forbids women **to cause abortion** of what is begotten, or to destroy it afterward; and if any woman appears to have so done, she will be a murderer of her child, by destroying a living creature, and diminishing humankind."* -Josephus, 1st century Jewish historian

Regarding the KJV and its translation of the text as "Thou shalt not kill". The KJV is a poor translation of the Bible. If you know the history of Erasmus and the Textus Receptus,

you'll know it was a rush job done in 1611, and that newer and more manuscripts have emerged since 1611.

Get an NASB. That's the most literal translation available, except for the original Koine Greek itself. **Here's the relevant verse from Exodus 20 in the NASB**. If you want something readable, go for an NIV or and ESV. But to make your case, use an NASB.

Brian Auten interviews Dr. Angus Menuge on philosophy of mind

August 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Click here for the interview. It's up at Apologetics 315!

Details:

> Today's interview is with Dr. Angus Menuge, Professor of Philosophy at Concordia University, and author of *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science*. He talks about his background and work, the philosophy of mind, what reason (or reasoning) is, what materialism is as a worldview, things excluded from a materialistic worldview, methodological naturalism and materialism, accounting for free will, materialistic accounts of reason, the epistemological argument from reason, the ontological argument from reason, finding the best explanation for reason, problems with methodological naturalism, implications of materialism, practical application of the argument from reason, advice for apologists, the International Academy of Apologetics, and more.

If what Dr. Menuge says in this interview is true, and I think it is, then a person who believes in materialism can neither ground free will nor rationality! So atheism wouldn't really be freethought so much as it would be… un-free… non-thought.

In case people don't want to listen to the podcast, then I've got some things for you to read below.

The ontological argument from reason

Dr. Menuge presented a paper at the real Evangelical Philosophical Society conference for students and professors of philosophy, and you can download the paper here in Word format. (here's a PDF version I made)

Here is the introduction to the paper that Dr. Menuge read at the EPS conference:

> The argument from reason is really a family of arguments to show that reasoning is incompatible with naturalism. Here, naturalism is understood as the idea that foundationally, there are only physical objects, properties and relations, and anything else reduces to, supervenes on, or emerges from that. For our purposes, one of the most important claims of naturalism is that all causation is passive, automatic, event causation (an earthquake automatically causes a tidal wave; the tidal wave responds passively): there are no agent causes, where something does not happen automatically but only because the agent exerts his active power by choosing to do it. The most famous version of the argument from reason is *epistemological*: if naturalism were true, we could not be justified in believing it. Today, I want to focus on the *ontological* argument from reason, which asserts that there cannot be reasoning in a naturalistic world, because

> reasoning requires libertarian free will, and this in turn requires a unified, enduring self with active power.
>
> The two most promising ways out of this argument are: (1) Compatibilism—even in a deterministic, naturalistic world, humans are capable of free acts of reason if their minds are responsive to rational causes; (2) Libertarian Naturalism—a self with libertarian free will emerges from the brain. I argue that neither of these moves works, and so, unless someone has a better idea, the ontological argument from reason stands.

The paper is 11 pages long, and it is helpful for those of you looking for some good discussion of one of the issues in the area of philosophy of mind.

You may also be interested in Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason, which is related to this argument. It shows that even to have the ability to think, you have to have a certain anthropology and you have to have mental faculties that are designed for reason, not survival.

Methodological naturalism

Dr. Menuge also wrote an article entitled "Is methodological materialism good for science?".

Intro:

> Should science by governed by methodological materialism? That is, should scientists assume that only undirected causes can figure in their theories and explanations? If the answer to these questions is yes, then there can be no such thing as teleological science or intelligent design. But is methodological materialism a defensible approach to science, or might it prevent scientists from discovering important truths about the natural world? In my contribution to The Waning of Materialism (Oxford University Press, 2010), edited by Robert Koons and George Bealer, I consider twelve of the most common arguments in favor of methodological materialism and show that none of them is convincing.
>
> Of these arguments, perhaps the most prevalent is the "God of the gaps" charge, according to which invoking something other than a material cause is an argument from ignorance which, like a bad script writer, cites a *deus ex machina* to save our account from difficulty. Not only materialists, but also many Christian thinkers, like Francis Collins, worry that appeal to intelligent design commits the God of the gaps fallacy.
>
> As I argue, however, not only is an inference to an intelligent cause not the same as an inference to the supernatural, it is a mistake to assume that all gap arguments are bad, or that only theists make them. If a gap argument is based solely on ignorance of what might explain some phenomenon, then indeed it is a bad argument. But there are many good gap arguments which are made both by scientific materialists and proponents of intelligent design.

So how do you make an argument like that?

> As Stephen Meyer has argued in his *Signature in the Cell*, intelligent design argues in just the same way, claiming not merely that the material categories of chance and necessity (singly or in combination) are unable to explain the complex specified information in DNA, but also that in our experience, intelligent agents are the only known causes of such information. The argument is based on what we know about causal powers, not on what we do not know about them.
>
> Since the inference is based on known causal powers, we learn that the cause is intelligent, but only further assumptions or data can tell us whether that intelligence is immanent in nature or supernatural. It is a serious mistake to confuse intelligent design with theistic science, and the argument that since some proponents of design believe that the designer is God, that is what they are claiming can be inferred from the data, is a sophomoric intensional fallacy.

If you think this is interesting, then do have a listen to the podcast. Dr. Menuge is not an ordinary academic – he is very direct. He calls materialism “a catastrophe” in the podcast!

Barack Obama to reporters on ISIS: “we don’t have a strategy yet”

August 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The leftist Washington Post reports on the story.

Excerpt:

> President Obama said Thursday he has not decided on stepped-up military action against the Islamic State in Iraq or Syria, cautioning that he remains committed to a strategy that protects U.S. interests and builds broader partnerships to combat the threat posed by the militant group.
>
> “We don’t have a strategy yet,” Obama said during a White House news conference, referring to increased military action. “Folks are getting a little further ahead of where we’re at. …The suggestions seems to have been we’re about to go full-scale on some elaborate strategy for defeating ISIL [the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] and the suggestion has been we’ll start moving forward imminently and somehow with Congress still out of town, they’ll be left in the dark. That’s not going to happen.”

And in other news, Russia has invaded more of Ukraine, and Obama responded.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama refused to label Russia’s military action inside eastern Ukraine as an ‘invasion’ on Thursday, calling it an ‘incursion’ despite facing a reporter’s specific action about his choice of words.
>
> Following a conversation with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Obama told reporters that the two leaders agree ‘that Russia is responsible for the violence in eastern Ukraine. … Russia has deliberately and repeatedly violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.’
>
> ‘And the new images of Russian forces inside Ukraine make that plain for the world to see.’
>
> He insisted that the Russian tanks filmed rumbling through Ukraine on Thursday are merely ‘a continuation of what’s been taking place for months now.’
>
> […]Arizona Sen. John McCain, the Republicans’ top dog on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, reacted angrily before Obama’s brief press conference.
>
> ‘Russia’s ongoing aggression in Ukraine can only be called one thing: a cross-border military invasion,’ he said. ‘To claim it is anything other than that is to inhabit President Putin’s Orwellian universe.’
>
> ‘A sovereign nation in the heart of Europe is being invaded by its larger neighbor,’ McCain declared. ‘This runs completely contrary to the civilized world

> that America and our partners have sought to build since World War II.'
>
> Obama's careful parsing was in keeping with State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki's lukewarm refusal hours earlier, during an interview on MSNBC, to discuss varying 'terminology' related to Russian President Vladimir Putin's military moves.

Oh, I don't think we have anything to worry about. It's not an invasion, Obama says it's not:

Baghdad Obama says: "There are no Russian tanks in Ukraine"

The nice thing about foreign policy is that when you screw it up, the consequences come quickly, so you know where the failure occurred. With the borrowing of the 7 trillion dollars, Obama's managed to cloak his economic policy failures so far. But he can't hide this foreign policy mess.

Christian philosopher William Lane Craig offers marriage advice

August 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post is a 3 in one: one lecture, one question and answer, and another lecture – all on different topics.

First, I've got a lecture from the Reasonable Faith web site.

Dr. William Lane Craig is the top living Christian apologist and debater in the world today, and has 2 Masters degrees and 2 Ph.Ds. He also has scores of academic publications including books from Oxford University Press, etc.

The MP3 file is here. (14.5 Mb, about 41 minutes)

Topics:

- the stresses of ministry on marriages
- the Christian position on divorce
- balancing marriage with academic pursuits
- the importance of marrying the right person
- Dr. Craig's politically incorrect advice for choosing a spouse
- Advice for men: Marry someone who believes in you and who supports you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be the kind of person who can commit to being a helper and supporter
- Advice for men: Beware of the career woman who will put their career over supporting you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be careful about marrying if you think that your goals are more important than your husband's goals
- Advice: Don't try to find the right person *for you* but instead focus on learning about marriage and preparing for marriage
- Advice: Flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, love and peace
- Advice: God intends for sex to be within the bounds of marriage, so you need to guard yourself against unchastity
- Advice for men: be careful what images and movies you see with the goal of keeping your chastity
- Advice: your highest responsibility after your relationship with God is your spouse, and your studies are third
- Advice: it's better to drop classes or give up your graduate studies entirely rather than destroy your marriage
- Advice for women: understand that you have to work at the marriage in order to help your man finish his studies
- Advice: set aside a period of the day for communicating and bonding with your

spouse
- Advice: cultivate the ability to talk with your spouse on a personal level, and maintain eye contact
- Advice for men: do not break eye contact with your wife, and also hold her hand when communicating
- Advice: do not be embarrassed to seek out a marriage counselor, but make it a good counselor
- Advice: don't just be doing stuff for your mate, but also be vulnerable and transparent with your mate
- How your relationship with your wife helps you with your relationship with God
- How do you handle the rebellion of children without being overbearing and authoritarian?

There is a period of Q&A at the end. There is another piece of advice that comes out in the Q&A for women: take an interest in your spouse's work even if you don't care about it, and ask him about it every day and try to understand it. Go to the man's workplace and see what he does. Go to his presentations. Get involved in the man's ministry and help him in practical ways. Another piece of advice is to not paper over the differences – it's good to argue, because it means that problems are being confronted and worked through. Husbands should have a good male friend to talk to, and wives should have a good female friend to talk to.

I like how Dr. Craig has thought about how to have a successful marriage, how to choose the right woman, and how to love his wife. I like how he calls out men on the chastity thing. I think that chastity is more important for men than for women, because it's the men who take the lead in choosing and pursuing the right woman for their plan.

Secondly, here is my previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for married couples, where he gives 5 points of advice for married couples.

Here are the main pieces of advice Dr. Craig gives:

1. *Resolve that there will be no divorce*
2. *Delay having children*
3. *Confront problems honestly*
4. *Seek marital counseling*
5. *Take steps to build intimacy in your relationship*

And here's the controversial one (#2):

> 2. *Delay having children.* The first years of marriage are difficult enough on their own without introducing the complication of children. Once children come, the wife's attention is necessarily diverted, and huge stresses come upon you both. Spend the first several years of marriage getting to know each other, working through your issues, having fun together, and enjoying that intimate love relationship between just the two of you. Jan and I waited ten years before having

> our first child Charity, which allowed me the finish graduate school, get our feet on the ground financially, establish some roots, and enjoy and build our love relationship until we were really ready to take on the responsibilities of parenthood. The qualifier here is that if the wife desperately wants children now, then the husband should accede to her wish to become a mother, rather than withhold that from her. Her verdict should be decisive. But if you both can agree to wait, things will probably be much easier.

Third and finally, here is a previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for choosing a good spouse, with illustrations from his own marriage.

For example, Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

If you want to hear another Christian husband talk about how his wife supports him, listen to this lecture called "Giants in the Land" with Dr. Walter Bradley. It's actually my favorite lecture. I also really like his testimony lecture. If you're looking for guidance, these are some of the people I would recommend.

Friday night movie: The Enemy Below (1957)

August 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.8/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> The Enemy Below is a study of submarine warfare from the vantage point of both sides. Robert Mitchum plays the captain of an American destroyer, who despite having lost his family in the war endeavors to let his head rule his heart in combat. Curt Jurgens co-stars as a German U-boat commander, depicted as being as honorable and compassionate as Mitchum. The two men develop a grudging mutual respect as they pursue one another throughout the North Atlantic. Based on a novel by D. A. Rayner.

This is my favorite World War 2 submarine movie. It shows both sides, and the plot is plausible and realistic. Normally, a single destroyer would be at a disadvantage pursing a lone submarine. But this submarine is committed to a single course and keeps coming back to it, and the destroyer has a faster surface speed and better surface armament, which means it can outrun the sub if it knows (or can guess) where the sub is going.

This movie is based on a true story battle between the USS Buckley (Buckley class escort destroyer) and the U-66 (Type IXC U-boat). The Buckley class destroyer escort is designed to conduct anti-submarine warfare in teams, and is definitely the underdog in this one-on-one fight.

I really recommend this movie! Great actors, very realistic, lots of action.

DE Buckley class destroyer escort

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Length:** "Long hull" 306′ 0″ x 300′ 0″
- **Displacement:** 1,400 long tons standard; 1,740 full load.
- **Crew:** Officers, 15; Enlisted, 198.
- **Speed:** 23.5 knots.
- **Screws:** Two.
- **Rudders:** Two.
- **Stack:** One.

ARMAMENT

- **Gun battery:** 3 x 3-inch/50 caliber dual purpose guns.
- **Initial:** 1 x twin 40mm Bofors.

- **Later:** 3 x twin 40mm Bofors.
- **Short range:** 9 x single 20mm Oerlikon.
- **Anti-submarine battery:** 2 x depth charge tracks, 8 x depth charge projectors, 1 x Hedgehog.

SS Type IXC U-Boat

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Displacement:** (tons) 1120 (surface) 1232 (submerged)
- **Length:** (m) 76,76 oa 58,75 ph
- **Power:** (hp) 4400 (surface) 1000 (submerged)
- **Speed:** (knots) 18,3 (surface) 7,3 (submerged)
- **Range:** (miles / knots) 13450/10 (surface) 63/4 (submerged)
- **Crew:** 48-56 men
- **Max depth:** ca. 230 m (755 feet)

ARMAMENT

- **Torpedoes:** 22 4/2 (bow / stern tubes)
- **Mines:** 44 TMA

Happy Friday!

Federal bulletin: U.S. facing imminent terrorist attack via southern border

August 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Judicial Watch, those guys who are always filing those useful FOIA requests, found something scary.

Excerpt:

> **Islamic terrorist groups are operating in the Mexican border city of Ciudad Juarez and planning to attack the United States with car bombs or other vehicle born improvised explosive devices (VBIED). High-level federal law enforcement, intelligence and other sources have confirmed to Judicial Watch that a warning bulletin for an imminent terrorist attack on the border has been issued. Agents across a number of Homeland Security, Justice and Defense agencies have all been placed on alert and instructed to aggressively work all possible leads and sources concerning this imminent terrorist threat.**
>
> Specifically, Judicial Watch sources reveal that the militant group Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) is confirmed to now be operating in Juarez, a famously crime-infested narcotics hotbed situated across from El Paso, Texas. Violent crimes are so rampant in Juarez that the U.S. State Department has issued a number of travel warnings for anyone planning to go there. The last one was issued just a few days ago.
>
> Intelligence officials have picked up radio talk and chatter indicating that the terrorist groups are going to "carry out an attack on the border," according to one JW source. "It's coming very soon," according to this high-level source, who clearly identified the groups planning the plots as "ISIS and Al Qaeda." An attack is so imminent that the commanding general at Ft. Bliss, the U.S. Army post in El Paso, is being briefed, another source confirms. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) did not respond to multiple inquiries from Judicial Watch, both telephonic and in writing, about this information.
>
> The disturbing inside intelligence comes on the heels of news reports revealing that U.S. intelligence has picked up increased chatter among Islamist terror networks approaching the 13th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

Recall that ISIS was able to seize a lot of weapons from their victories in Iraq, including U.S.-made weapons. What kind of weapons am I talking about?

This kind:

> U.S. officials with access to the latest U.S. intelligence on Iraq told Fox News it "appears likely/probable" that U.S.-made Stinger missiles have fallen into the

> hands of Sunni insurgents.
>
> It is possible that the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) fighters acquired them from army bases they have taken over in recent days, the sources said.
>
> The Stinger missile is a shoulder-fired surface-to-air weapon that is used against aircraft.
>
> As ISIS forces have advanced through Iraq, concerns have increased that more U.S.-made weaponry could fall into the hands of the radical group.
>
> Iraqi intelligence officials said ISIS fighters managed to take control of two big weapons depots late last week holding some 400,000 items, including AK-47 rifles, rockets and rocket-propelled grenades, artillery shells and mortars. A quarter of the stockpiles were quickly sent to Syria in order to help the group's comrades there, they said.
>
> Also last week, according to a report from the West Point Combating Terrorism Center, the ISIS "now possesses scores of Iraqi military equipment originally provided by the United States, from Humvees and cargo vehicles to small arms."

And then there is this news:

> A laptop reportedly recovered from an Islamic State jihadist contained a hidden trove of secret plans, including weaponizing the bubonic plague, and lessons on disguise, bomb-making and stealing cars.
>
> A man identified by **ForeignPolicy.com** as Abu Ali, a commander of a moderate Syrian rebel group in northern Syria, told the publication the black laptop was seized earlier this year in a raid on an ISIS hideout in the Syrian province of Idlib, close to the border with Turkey, and belonged to a Tunisian jihadist.
>
> "We found the laptop and the power cord in a room," Ali told ForeignPolicy.com. "I took it with me."
>
> Initially, it appeared the computer had been scrubbed, but on closer inspection, thousands of secret files were discovered on the hard drive, which was not password protected, Ali said.
>
> […]ForeignPolicy.com was permitted to copy of thousands of files, which were in French, English, and Arabic. The information included videos of Usama bin Laden, ideological justifications for jihad and tutorials on how to carry out the Islamic State's deadly campaigns.
>
> […]Foreign Policy verified that the computer's owner had indeed attended a Tunisian university and studied chemistry and physics there until some time in 2011.

This is serious stuff, and pulling out of the war zone where this ISIS group is now ascendent was Obama's decision. You can't just "end" a war with Islamic terrorists by retreating, you have to stay and finish the job.

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalistic alternatives to the Big Bang

August 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture, which was given in 2004 at the University of Colorado, Boulder. A very liberal university!

This lecture might be a little advanced for beginners, but if you stretch your mind first, you shouldn't tear anything. (Note: standard disclaimers apply if you do tear something!)

The description of the video states:

> This is quite simply one of the best lectures William Lane Craig (a philosopher of science) has given. Craig explores the origins of the universe. He argues for a beginning of the universe, while refuting scientific models like the Steady State Theory, the Oscillating Theory, Quantum Vacuum Fluctuation Model, Chaotic Inflationary Theory, Quantum Gravity Theory, String Theory, M-Theory and Cyclic Ekpyrotic Theory.

And here is the description of the lecture from Reasonable Faith:

> A Templeton Foundation lecture at the University of Colorado, Boulder, laying out the case from contemporary cosmology for the beginning of the universe and its theological implications. Includes a lengthy Q & A period which features previous critics and debate opponents of Dr. Craig who were in attendance, including Michael Tooley, Victor Stenger, and Arnold Guminski.

Craig has previously debated famous atheists Stenger and Tooley previously. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A time of this lecture. Imagine – having laid out your entire case to two people who have debated you before and who know your arguments well. What did they ask Craig, and how did he respond?

The scientific evidence

The Big Bang cosmology that Dr. Craig presents is the standard model for how the universe came into being. It is a theory based on six lines of experimental evidence.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe
3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

If you are looking for some detail on these evidences, here's a re-cap of the three main

evidences for the Big Bang cosmology from Caltech. (Numbers 2, 3 and 5 from the list above)

Excerpt:

> Until the early 1900s, most people had assumed that the universe was fixed in size. New possibilities opened up in 1915, when Einstein formulated his famous general relativity theory that describes the nature of space, time, and gravity. This theory allows for expansion or contraction of the fabric of space. In 1917, astronomer Willem de Sitter applied this theory to the entire universe and boldly went on to show that the universe could be expanding. Aleksandr Friedmann, a mathematician, reached the same conclusion in a more general way in 1922, as did Georges Lemaître, a cosmologist and a Jesuit, in 1927. This step was revolutionary since the accepted view at the time was that the universe was static in size. Tracing back this expanding universe, Lemaître imagined all matter initially contained in a tiny universe and then exploding. These thoughts introduced amazing new possibilities for the universe, but were independent of observation at that time.
>
> […]Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

It's probably a good idea to be familiar with these if you are presenting this argument, because experimental science is a reliable way of knowing about reality.

Published research paper

This lecture by Dr. Craig is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Here's the peer-reviewed article that the lecture is based on.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to

> postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

If you want something to post on your Twitter or Facebook that is much shorter than this lecture, then you should check out this quick 4-minute explanation of the kalam argument.

Satellite images show summer ice caps much larger than 2 years ago

August 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports.

Excerpt:

> The speech by former US Vice-President Al Gore was apocalyptic. 'The North Polar ice cap is falling off a cliff,' he said. 'It could be completely gone in summer in as little as seven years. Seven years from now.'
>
> Those comments came in 2007 as Mr Gore accepted the Nobel Peace Prize for his campaigning on climate change.
>
> But seven years after his warning, The Mail on Sunday can reveal that, far from vanishing, the Arctic ice cap has expanded for the second year in succession – with a surge, depending on how you measure it, of between 43 and 63 per cent since 2012.
>
> To put it another way, an area the size of Alaska, America's biggest state, was open water two years ago, but is again now covered by ice.
>
> The most widely used measurements of Arctic ice extent are the daily satellite readings issued by the US National Snow and Ice Data Center, which is co-funded by NASA. These reveal that – while the long-term trend still shows a decline – last Monday, August 25, the area of the Arctic Ocean with at least 15 per cent ice cover was 5.62 million square kilometres.
>
> This was the highest level recorded on that date since 2006 (see graph, right), and represents an increase of 1.71 million square kilometres over the past two years – an impressive 43 per cent.
>
> Other figures from the Danish Meteorological Institute suggest that the growth has been even more dramatic. Using a different measure, the area with at least 30 per cent ice cover, these reveal a 63 per cent rise – from 2.7 million to 4.4 million square kilometres.

Previously, we had seen that Antarctic ice extents recently hit a record high. Is the rising amount of sea ice at the North and South pole evidence of global warming.

MIT physicist explains the challenge of cosmic fine-tuning for naturalism

August 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the article from Harper's magazine.

The MIT physicist says that the fine-tuning is real, and is best explained by positing the existence of an infinite number of universes that are not fine-tuned – the so-called multiverse.

Excerpt:

> While challenging the Platonic dream of theoretical physicists, the multiverse idea does explain one aspect of our universe that has unsettled some scientists for years: according to various calculations, if the values of some of the fundamental parameters of our universe were a little larger or a little smaller, life could not have arisen. For example, if the nuclear force were a few percentage points stronger than it actually is, then all the hydrogen atoms in the infant universe would have fused with other hydrogen atoms to make helium, and there would be no hydrogen left. No hydrogen means no water. Although we are far from certain about what conditions are necessary for life, most biologists believe that water is necessary. On the other hand, if the nuclear force were substantially weaker than what it actually is, then the complex atoms needed for biology could not hold together. As another example, if the relationship between the strengths of the gravitational force and the electromagnetic force were not close to what it is, then the cosmos would not harbor any stars that explode and spew out life-supporting chemical elements into space or any other stars that form planets. Both kinds of stars are required for the emergence of life. The strengths of the basic forces and certain other fundamental parameters in our universe appear to be "fine-tuned" to allow the existence of life. The recognition of this fine-tuning led British physicist Brandon Carter to articulate what he called the anthropic principle, which states that the universe must have the parameters it does because we are here to observe it. Actually, the word *anthropic*, from the Greek for "man," is a misnomer: if these fundamental parameters were much different from what they are, it is not only human beings who would not exist. No life of any kind would exist.
>
> If such conclusions are correct, the great question, of course, is *why* these fundamental parameters happen to lie within the range needed for life. Does the universe care about life? Intelligent design is one answer. Indeed, a fair number of theologians, philosophers, and even some scientists have used fine-tuning and the anthropic principle as evidence of the existence of God. For example, at the 2011 Christian Scholars' Conference at Pepperdine University, Francis Collins, a leading geneticist and director of the National Institutes of Health, said, "To get

> our universe, with all of its potential for complexities or any kind of potential for any kind of life-form, everything has to be precisely defined on this knife edge of improbability…. [Y]ou have to see the hands of a creator who set the parameters to be just so because the creator was interested in something a little more complicated than random particles."
>
> Intelligent design, however, is an answer to fine-tuning that does not appeal to most scientists. The multiverse offers another explanation. If there are countless different universes with different properties—for example, some with nuclear forces much stronger than in our universe and some with nuclear forces much weaker—then some of those universes will allow the emergence of life and some will not. Some of those universes will be dead, lifeless hulks of matter and energy, and others will permit the emergence of cells, plants and animals, minds. From the huge range of possible universes predicted by the theories, the fraction of universes with life is undoubtedly small. But that doesn't matter. We live in one of the universes that permits life because otherwise we wouldn't be here to ask the question.

I thought I was going to have to go outside this article to refute the multiverse, but Lightman is honest enough to refute it himself:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.
>
> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

The multiverse is not pure nonsense, it is theoretically possible. The problem is that the multiverse generator itself would require fine-tuning, so the multiverse doesn't get rid of the problem. And, as Lightman indicates, we have no independent experimental evidence for the existence of the multiverse in any case. Atheists just have to take it on faith, and hope that their speculations will be proved right. Meanwhile, the fine-tuning is just as easily explained by postulating God, and we have independent evidence for God's existence, like the the origin of biological information, the sudden appearance of animal body plans, the argument from consciousness, and so on. Even if the naturalists could explain the fine-tuning, they would still have a lot of explaining to do. Theism (intelligent causation) is the simplest explanation for all of the things we learn from the progress of

science.

We need to be frank about atheists and their objections to the progress of science. Within the last 100 years, we have discovered that the physical universe came into being out of nothing 15 billion years ago, and we have discovered that this one universe is fine-tuned for intelligent life. I don't think it's like that the last 100 years of scientific progress on the origins question are going to be overturned so that science once again affirms what atheists believe about the universe. Things are going the wrong way for atheists – at least with respect to science.

See it in action

To see these arguments examined in a debate with a famous atheist, simply watch the debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens, and judge which debater is willing to form his beliefs on scientific progress, and which debater is forming his beliefs *against* the science we have today, and hoping that the good science we have today based on experiments will be overturned by speculative theories at some point in the future. When you watch that debate, it becomes very clear that Christian theists are interested in conforming their beliefs to science, and atheists are very interested in speculating against what science has shown in order to maintain their current pre-scientific view. That's not what rational people ought to do when confronted with evidence.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- Near-death experiences and mental effort: evidence for the soul
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Why doesn’t God make his existence more obvious to people?

September 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard someone say that if God existed, he would give us more evidence? This is called the “hiddenness of God” argument. It’s also known as the argument from “rational non-belief”.

Basically the argument is something like this:

1. God is all powerful
2. God is all loving
3. God wants all people to know about him
4. Some people don’t know about him
5. Therefore, there is no God.

In this argument, the atheist is saying that he’s looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that’s logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden when our eternal destination depends on our knowledge of his existence.

What reason could God have for remaining hidden?

Dr. Michael Murray, a brilliant professor of philosophy at Franklin & Marshall College, has found a reason for God to remain hidden.

His paper on divine hiddenness is here:
“Coercion and the Hiddenness of God“, American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us. Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him. God places a higher value on people having the free will to respond to him, and if he shows too much of himself he takes away their free choice to respond to him, because once he is too overt about his existence, people will just feel obligated to belief in him in order to avoid being punished.

But believing in God just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants for us. If it is too obvious to us that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and behave morally out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out of interest *in him*, just like we might try to get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God’s veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don't seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to reach out to us and draw us to him. But I do think that we are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist's argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. In order to derive a contradiction, God MUST NOT have any possible reason to remain hidden. If he has a reason for remaining hidden that is consistent with his goodness, then the argument will not go through.

When Murray offers a possible reason for God to remain hidden in order to allow people to freely respond to him, then the argument is defeated. God wants people to respond to him freely so that there is a genuine love relationship – not coercion by overt threat of damnation. To rescue the argument, the atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free choice of his creatures to reject him.

More of Michael Murray's work

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007). The book chapter from the Cambridge book is here. The book chapter from the Routledge book is here.

Michael Murray's papers are really fun to read, because he uses hilarious examples. I should mention that I disagree with his view that God's work of introducing biological information in living creatures has to be front-loaded.

Here's more terrific stuff from Dr. Murray:

- "Who's Afraid of Religion?", Inaugural Lecture delivered March 30, 2006. Franklin and Marshall College.
- "Seek and You Will Find", in God and the Philosophers. Thomas Morris, editor. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1994.

Is there any evidence of God's existence?

Yes, just watch this lecture by Dr. William Lane Craig. It contains 5 reasons why God exists and 3 reasons why it matters.

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If God has a reason for allowing evil and suffering, should we know what it is?

September 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This tiny little thing is a No-See-Um

Have you heard about the terrible noseeums? Then read on, for Steven Cowan will tell you about them.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude. Consider the recent Tsunami in the Indian Ocean that took the lives of almost 200,000 people. Consider as well the infamous Nazi Holocaust in which millions of Jews and others were mercilessly slaughtered. Moreover, we can watch the evening news on almost any day and hear of people in our neighborhoods being robbed, beaten, and murdered. How and why could God allow such things?

Excerpt:

> However, perhaps God's existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God's existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By "pointless evil," Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe's argument may be simply stated as follows:

> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the "noseeum inference." Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a "noseeum" is something that you cannot see—it is a "no-see-um." And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I "no-see-um" a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous. Humans just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a

noseeum. Just because we don't see it doesn't mean it isn't there, and the burden of proof is on the person who says there is NO morally sufficient reason. They're making the claim, they have to shoulder the burden of proof.

By the way, I HAVE the PDF of the William Alston paper. But I can't post it publicly because it's copyrighted.

However, here is a summary of his argument: (it's unnecessarily wordy – this is not Thomas Sowell or Theodore Dalrymple writing this)

> The recent outpouring of literature on the problem of evil has materially advanced the subject in several ways. In particular, a clear distinction has been made between the "logical" argument against the existence of God ("atheological argument") from evil, which attempts to show that evil is logically incompatible with the existence of God, and the "inductive" ("empirical", "probabilistic") argument, which contents itself with the claim that evil constitutes (sufficient) empirical evidence against the existence of God. It is now acknowledged on (almost) all sides that the logical argument is bankrupt, but the inductive argument is still very much alive and kicking.
>
> In this paper I will be concerned with the inductive argument. More specifically, I shall be contributing to a certain criticism of that argument, one based on a low estimate of human cognitive capacities in a certain application. To indicate the point at which this criticism engages the argument, I shall use one of the most careful and perspicuous formulations of the argument in a recent essay by William Rowe (1979).
>
> 1. There exist instances of intense suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse. ,
> 2. An omniscient, wholly good being would prevent the occurrence of any intense suffering it could, unless it could not do so without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.
> 3. There does not exist an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good being (p. 336).
>
> Let's use the term 'gratuitous suffering' for any case of intense suffering, E, that satisfies premise 1, that is, which is such that an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented it without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil equally bad or worse.'
>
> […]The criticism I shall be supporting attacks the claim that we are rationally justified in accepting 1, and it does so on the grounds that our epistemic situation is such that we are unable to make a sufficiently well grounded determination that 1 is the case. I will call this, faute de mieux, the agnostic thesis, or simply agnosticism. The criticism claims that the magnitude or complexity of the question is such that our powers, access to data, and so on are radically insufficient to provide sufficient warrant for accepting 1.And if that is so, the

> inductive argument collapses.

What the atheist has to show is that God could have prevented some instance of evil that appears to be pointless without losing any overall goodness. I.e. – suppose someone gets sick and has to stay home instead of going to a party. The person is suffering, but how do we know that God isn't justified in allowing this suffering? What if, by allowing this suffering, God protects the person from being killed by a drunk driver? If the atheist says that there cannot be ANY moral justification for allowing the suffering, he has to be able to know what would happen in the future to know that nothing good would never come out of it. That's the burden of proof on the atheist, and Alston claims that the atheist is not in a position to know that.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

But as I said before, atheist confuse the purpose of life. They think that the purpose of life is to have happy feelings, and they wonder "how could allowing me to suffer create MORE happy feelings?" And that's where the problem arises. They can't accept the idea that God has a right to form their character, to put them through certain experiences, and to place humans in times and places where he can orchestrate a world that meets his needs, not our needs.

I also found this opening speech from a debate that Steven Cowan did on the problem of evil, which may also be useful to you.

The *best* place to learn about no-see-ums is in this excellent lecture by Biola University professor Doug Geivett.

UK authorities ignored gang of Muslim pedophiles who raped more than 1400 children

September 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the latest news from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> More than 1,400 children were sexually abused over a 16 year period by gangs of paedophiles after police and council bosses turned a blind eye for fear of being labelled racist, a damning report has concluded.
>
> […]Senior officials were responsible for "blatant" failures that saw victims, some as young as 11, being treated with contempt and categorised as being "out of control" or simply ignored when they asked for help.
>
> In some cases, parents who tried to rescue their children from abusers were themselves arrested. Police officers even dismissed the rape of children by saying that sex had been consensual.
>
> […]Details of the appalling depravity in the town and the systemic failures that allowed it to continue were laid out in a report published by Professor Alexis Jay, the former chief inspector of social work in Scotland. Victims were gang raped, while others were groomed and trafficked across northern England by groups of mainly Asian men.
>
> […]Prof Jay wrote: "No one knows the true scale of child sexual exploitation in Rotherham over the years. Our conservative estimate is that approximately 1,400 children were sexually exploited over the full inquiry period, from 1997 to 2013.
>
> "It is hard to describe the appalling nature of the abuse that child victims suffered. They were raped by multiple perpetrators, trafficked to other towns and cities in the north of England, abducted, beaten, and intimidated."
>
> She added: "There were examples of children who had been doused in petrol and threatened with being set alight, threatened with guns, made to witness brutally violent rapes and threatened they would be next if they told anyone."
>
> […]Prof Jay said: "Within social care, the scale and seriousness of the problem was underplayed by senior managers. At an operational level, the police gave no priority to child sex exploitation, regarding many child victims with contempt and failing to act on their abuse as a crime."
>
> It emerged that there had been three previous reports into the problem which had been suppressed or ignored by officials, either because they did not like or did not believe the findings.
>
> **Tuesday's report concluded that by far the majority of perpetrators were Asian men, and said council officials had been unwilling to address**

> **the issue for fear of being labelled racist.**
>
> **The report stated: "Some councillors seemed to think it was a one-off problem, which they hoped would go away. Several staff described their nervousness about identifying the ethnic origins of perpetrators for fear of being thought racist; others remembered clear direction from their managers not to do so."**

So, political correctness stopped people from speaking out, for fear of being branded "racist". The accused came from a certain ethnic group, therefore the police refused to prosecute them, lest they be branded "racist" by the secular left. And now we can see what follows when the mainstream media and her allies on the left make enforcement of the law conditional on such concerns. Children are raped. No one stops them.

More from another UK Telegraph article on the same topic:

> When in 2010 five Asian men from Rotherham were jailed for grooming teenage girls for sex, it was regarded as a feather in the cap for South Yorkshire Police and the local social services which had doggedly pursued the prosecution.

> Sentencing Adil Hussain, Razwan Razaq, Mohsin Khan, Umar Razaq, and Zafran Ramzan, the judge described them as "dangerous sexual predators" and said Rotherham would be a safer place for youngsters with them off the streets.
>
> But Tuesday's damning report into sexual exploitation in the South Yorkshire town revealed in stark and horrifying detail how their appalling crimes were merely the tip of the iceberg.

> For at least 16-years gangs of mainly Asian men were able to target, groom and abuse girls as young as 11, with little to fear from the authorities.
>
> In one of the most shocking cases highlighted in the report, Professor Jay described how in 2001 a 15-year-old girl was doused in petrol by her abuser who threatened to set her alight.
>
> The teenager had been groomed by an older man who trafficked her from Rotherham to Leeds and Bradford where she was forced into having sex.
>
> When social services attempted to intervene the girl was threatened and beaten by her abuser in order to warn her off identifying him.
>
> **She was later stalked by him, doused in petrol and warned that she would be burned alive if she told the police anything. She made several attempts on her own life and eventually ended up homeless.**
>
> **No action was taken against her abuser.**
>
> The report also described how social workers and council chiefs were quick to dismiss the concerns of parents who were attempting to protect their children.
>
> In one case in 2002 a mother contacted social services to voice concerns that her 14-year-old daughter was going missing regularly and was being plied with drink

> by older males.
>
> Her mother said she was worried that her daughter had become sexually active with members of the group.
>
> But despite showing signs that she had been sexually exploited from the age of 11, the case was closed and **the social worker's assessment was that the mother was unable to accept the fact that her daughter was growing up.**
>
> While the police often failed to take action against the abusers, there were cases where concerned parents were arrested for trying to protect their own children.
>
> **The report identified two separate cases where fathers who had tracked their daughters down and were trying to remove them from houses where they were being abused, were themselves arrested.**
>
> n 2008 an 11-year-old girl came to the attention of the police after she disclosed that she and another child had been sexually abused by a group of adult males.
>
> Despite the fact she was identified as being one of a group of girls who was associating with a known sex abuser, her file was closed and she was deemed as being not at risk from sexual exploitation.
>
> Less than a month later, she was found in a derelict house with another child, and a number of adult males.
>
> She was arrested for being drunk and disorderly (her conviction was later set aside) and none of the males were arrested.
>
> **In one of the most staggering passages in the report, Professor Jay revealed how a police officer dismissed the case of a 12-year-old girl who had been having sex with up to five Asian males, because he said she had been "100 per cent consensual in every incident".**

The only person to resign for this so far is a Police Commissioner, and former Labour Party candidate. You'll recall that it was the Labour Party who created the immigraion policies that would achieve their goal of "multiculturalism" – which is another word for importing voters from poor countries who who will vote for the policies of the political left. Policies of bigger government and more dependence on government programs. You can bet that the left isn't pushing for more immigration from countries like Hong Kong or Singapore.

I think there is another lesson to this story, and it's this. All religions are not the same. They really do teach different things. Some religions support pedophilia and polygamy, and some religions support protecting children and romantic, monogamous love between men and women. They are not the same. Although we seem to have embraced this very feminized notion of compassion and non-judgmentalism in the West, we need to remember that right is not wrong, and when we refuse to make more judgments and set moral boundaries, people get hurt. Especially little children who have no mothers or no fathers to care for them.

Do most cosmologists accept the reality of the cosmic fine-tuning?

September 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I don't know how I missed this, but apparently Dr. Richard Carrier, a historian, wrote a critique of the fine-tuning argument a while back, and Dr. Luke Barnes, a cosmologist responded to him.

Much of what is said by both of them in their contributions is beyond me, but I did want to quote one part from a blog post by Luke Barnes about whether most scientists accept that our universe is finely-tuned for complex embodied life.

First, Dr. Carrier writes this:

> [Dr. William Lane Craig] claims "the fundamental constants and quantities of nature must fall into an incomprehensibly narrow life-permitting range," but that claim has been refuted–by scientists–again and again. We actually do not know that there is only a narrow life-permitting range of possible configurations of the universe. As has been pointed out to Craig by several theoretical physicists (from Krauss to Stenger), he can only get his "narrow range" by varying one single constant and holding all the others fixed, which is simply not how a universe would be randomly selected. When you allow all the constants to vary freely, the number of configurations that are life permitting actually ends up respectably high (between 1 in 8 and 1 in 4: see Victor Stenger's The Fallacy of Fine-Tuning).

And Dr. Barnes replies (in part): (links removed)

> I've said an awful lot in response to that paragraph, so let's just run through the highlights.
>
> - "Refuted by scientists again and again". What, in the peer-reviewed scientific literature? I've published a review of the scientific literature, 200+ papers, and I can only think of a handful that oppose this conclusion, and piles and piles that support it. Here are some quotes from non-theist scientists. For example, Andrei Linde says: "The existence of an amazingly strong correlation between our own properties and the values of many parameters of our world, such as the masses and charges of electron and proton, the value of the gravitational constant, the amplitude of spontaneous symmetry breaking in the electroweak theory, the value of the vacuum energy, and the dimensionality of our world, is an experimental ***fact*** requiring an explanation." [emphasis added.]
> - "By several theoretical physicists (from Krauss to Stenger)". I've replied to Stenger. I had a chance to talk to Krauss briefly about fine-tuning but I'm still not sure what he thinks. His published work on anthropic matters

> doesn't address the more general fine-tuning claim. Also, by saying "from" and "to", Carrier is trying to give the impression that a great multitude stands with his claim. I'm not even sure if Krauss is with him. I've read loads on this subject and only Stenger defends Carrier's point, and in a popular (ish) level book. On the other hand, Craig can cite Barrow, Carr, Carter, Davies, Deutsch, Ellis, Greene, Guth, Harrison, Hawking, Linde, Page, Penrose, Polkinghorne, Rees, Sandage, Smolin, Susskind, Tegmark, Tipler, Vilenkin, Weinberg, Wheeler, and Wilczek. (See here). With regards to the claim that "the fundamental constants and quantities of nature must fall into an incomprehensibly narrow life-permitting range", ***the weight of the peer-reviewed scientific literature is overwhelmingly with Craig*****.** (If you disagree, start citing papers).

There's more, too.

I wish I understood cosmology enough to understand everything Dr. Barnes says, but it seems to me that this much is clear. If you're an atheist and you're reading stuff by these very far-out atheists, then you need to be very careful. Dr. Stenger and Dr. Carrier are both highly-intelligent and have great credentials, but it's probably better for all of us to be interacting with the other side when we form our worldviews.

I noticed that respected atheist Jeff Lowder has a post up where he looks at both sides and comes down more with Barnes than with Carrier.

Alexander Vilenkin: “All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning”

September 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’m hearing from atheists that the universe did not begin to exist, so I thought I’d explain why physicists can’t avoid a creation event – or rather, I’d let famous cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin do it.

From Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Did the cosmos have a beginning? The Big Bang theory seems to suggest it did, but in recent decades, cosmologists have concocted elaborate theories – for example, an eternally inflating universe or a cyclic universe – which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos. Now it appears that the universe really had a beginning after all, even if it wasn’t necessarily the Big Bang.
>
> At a meeting of scientists – titled “State of the Universe” – convened last week at Cambridge University to honor Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday, cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University in Boston presented evidence that the universe is not eternal after all, leaving scientists at a loss to explain how the cosmos got started without a supernatural creator. The meeting was reported in *New Scientist* magazine (Why physicists can’t avoid a creation event, 11 January 2012).
>
> […]In his presentation, Professor Vilenkin discussed three theories which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos.

The three theories are chaotic inflationary model, the oscillating model and quantum gravity model. Regular readers will know that those have all been addressed in William Lane Craig’s peer-reviewed paper that evaluates alternatives to the standard Big Bang cosmology.

But let’s see what Vilenkin said.

More:

> One popular theory is eternal inflation. Most readers will be familiar with the theory of *inflation*, which says that the universe increased in volume by a factor of at least 10^78 in its very early stages (from 10^−36 seconds after the Big Bang to sometime between 10^−33 and 10^−32 seconds), before settling into the slower rate of expansion that we see today. The theory of *eternal inflation* goes further, and holds that the universe is constantly giving birth to smaller “bubble” universes within an ever-expanding multiverse. Each bubble universe undergoes its own initial period of inflation. In some versions of the theory, the bubbles go both backwards and forwards in time, allowing the

possibility of an infinite past. Trouble is, the value of one particular cosmic parameter rules out that possibility:

> But in 2003, a team including Vilenkin and Guth considered what eternal inflation would mean for the Hubble constant, which describes mathematically the expansion of the universe. They found that the equations didn't work (Physical Review Letters, DOI: 10.1103/physrevlett.90.151301). "You can't construct a space-time with this property," says Vilenkin. It turns out that the constant has a lower limit that prevents inflation in both time directions. "It can't possibly be eternal in the past," says Vilenkin. "There must be some kind of boundary."

A second option explored by Vilenkin was that of a cyclic universe, where the universe goes through an infinite series of big bangs and crunches, with no specific beginning. It was even claimed that a cyclic universe could explain the low observed value of the cosmological constant. But as Vilenkin found, there's a problem if you look at the *disorder* in the universe:

> Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists – nothing like the one we see around us.
>
> One way around that is to propose that the universe just gets bigger with every cycle. Then the amount of disorder per volume doesn't increase, so needn't reach the maximum. But Vilenkin found that this scenario falls prey to the same mathematical argument as eternal inflation: if your universe keeps getting bigger, it must have started somewhere.

However, Vilenkin's options were not exhausted yet. There was another possibility: that the universe had sprung from an eternal cosmic egg:

> Vilenkin's final strike is an attack on a third, lesser-known proposal that the cosmos existed eternally in a static state called the cosmic egg. This finally "cracked" to create the big bang, leading to the expanding universe we see today. Late last year Vilenkin and graduate student Audrey Mithani showed that the egg could not have existed forever after all, as quantum instabilities would force it to collapse after a finite amount of time (arxiv.org/abs/1110.4096). If it cracked instead, leading to the big bang, then this must have happened before it collapsed – and therefore also after a finite amount of time.
>
> "This is also not a good candidate for a beginningless universe," Vilenkin

> > concludes.
>
> So at the end of the day, what is Vilenkin's verdict?
>
> > "All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

This is consistent with the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin Theorem, which I blogged about before, and which William Lane Craig leveraged to his advantage in his debate with Peter Millican.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past. Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

Conclusion

If the universe came into being out of nothing, which seems to be the case from science, then the universe has a cause. Things do not pop into being, uncaused, out of nothing. The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

Andrew Klavan signed to write the script for the Gosnell movie

September 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

They got an experienced screenwriter – Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> The producers of the Gosnell movie raised the $2.1 million they needed to make the Hollywood-style film that will tell the story of the gruesome abortion practitioner. Now, they've hired a screenwriter to produce the script to tell the story.
>
> "We have some great news that we are excited to share with you," the producers Ann McElhinney and Phelim McAleer told LifeNews today in an email. "We've just signed up the best-selling author and screenwriter Andrew Klavan to write the script for the Gosnell Movie."
>
> Klavan, whose books have been made into movies directed and starring Clint Eastwood and Michael Douglas, said he had wanted to write the Gosnell screenplay "from the moment I heard it was underway." He said the Gosnell project was "a great story" but also an important tale to tell.
>
> Klavan said: "This is so much more than a job of work for me. As I've begun to get into the research materials, it's started to come home to me that we've all taken on a huge responsibility. The women who were brutalized by this Gosnell monster — they can tell their stories. But all his victims, all those babies — we've got to figure out a way to speak for them somehow."
>
> […]In a lengthy writing career Klavan has been nominated for the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Award five times and has won twice. He has recently published a bestselling series of thriller novels for young adults, *The Homelanders*, and his YA novel *If We Survive* was nominated for an International Thriller Writers Award. His latest novel for adults, *Werewolf Cop*, is due out next spring.
>
> His essays and op-eds on politics, religion, movies and literature have appeared in the*Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The LA Times*, and elsewhere. His 2008 *WSJ* op-ed "What Bush and Batman Have in Common," topped the Technorati list as the most-read online piece of the day. He has also produced several popular political satire video series, including "Klavan on the Culture," for PJTV.com, "A Very Serious Commentary," for Glenn Beck's TheBlaze.com and his current series "The Revolting Truth," for TruthRevolt.org.

I've featured some of Andrew Klavan's videos on this blog before, so I already know who he is. If you don't know who he is, then trust me when I say this is a home run for the

movie. They chose well!

Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective

September 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A man raised by two lesbians tells his story in the latest Public Discourse. (H/T Brian)

Introduction:

> The children of same-sex couples have a tough road ahead of them—I know, because I have been there. The last thing we should do is make them feel guilty if the strain gets to them and they feel strange.

> Between 1973 and 1990, when my beloved mother passed away, she and her female romantic partner raised me. They had separate houses but spent nearly all their weekends together, with me, in a trailer tucked discreetly in an RV park 50 minutes away from the town where we lived. As the youngest of my mother's biological children, I was the only child who experienced childhood without my father being around.
>
> After my mother's partner's children had left for college, she moved into our house in town. I lived with both of them for the brief time before my mother died at the age of 53. I was 19. In other words, I was the only child who experienced life under "gay parenting" as that term is understood today.
>
> Quite simply, growing up with gay parents was very difficult, and not because of prejudice from neighbors. People in our community didn't really know what was going on in the house. To most outside observers, I was a well-raised, high-achieving child, finishing high school with straight A's.
>
> Inside, however, I was confused. When your home life is so drastically different from everyone around you, in a fundamental way striking at basic physical relations, you grow up weird. I have no mental health disorders or biological conditions. I just grew up in a house so unusual that I was destined to exist as a social outcast.

A striking snippet:

> In terms of sexuality, gays who grew up in traditional households benefited from at least seeing some kind of functional courtship rituals around them. I had no clue how to make myself attractive to girls. When I stepped outside of my mothers' trailer, I was immediately tagged as an outcast because of my girlish mannerisms, funny clothes, lisp, and outlandishness. Not surprisingly, I left high school as a virgin, never having had a girlfriend, instead having gone to four proms as a wisecracking sidekick to girls who just wanted someone to chip in for a limousine.
>
> When I got to college, I set off everyone's "gaydar" and the campus LGBT group

> quickly descended upon me to tell me it was 100-percent certain I must be a homosexual. When I came out as bisexual, they told everyone I was lying and just wasn't ready to come out of the closet as gay yet. Frightened and traumatized by my mother's death, I dropped out of college in 1990 and fell in with what can only be called the gay underworld. Terrible things happened to me there.
>
> It was not until I was twenty-eight that I suddenly found myself in a relationship with a woman, through coincidences that shocked everyone who knew me and surprised even myself. I call myself bisexual because it would take several novels to explain how I ended up "straight" after almost thirty years as a gay man.

Click here for the rest. I blogged before about a study that found that gay parents are more likely to raise children who become gay.

Another good book that gives a first-person account is "Out From Under" by Dawn Stefanowicz.

J.P. Moreland asks: does truth matter when choosing a religion?

September 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

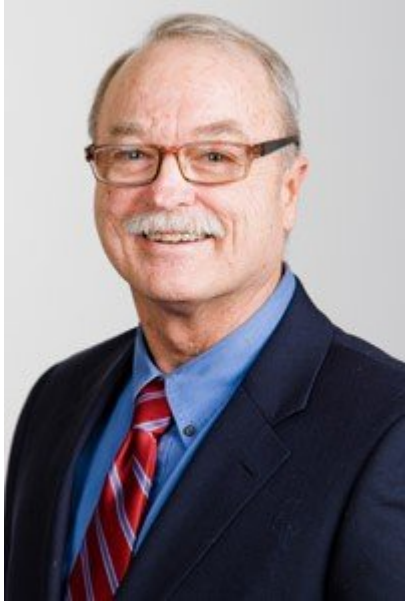

Dr. J.P. Moreland

This lecture contains Moreland's famous "Wonmug" illustration. Ah, memories! If you don't know who Wonmug is, you can find out in this lecture.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Is it intolerant to think that one religion is true?
- Is it more important to be loving and accepting of people regardless of worldview?
- How should Christians approach the question of religious pluralism?
- How does a person choose a religion anyway?
- Who is Wonmug, and would you like to be like Wonmug?
- Is it enough that a belief "works for you", or do you want to believe the truth?
- Can all the religions in the world be true?
- Is it wise to pick and choose what you like from all the different religions?
- Is it possible to investigate which religion is true? How?
- Which religions are testable for being true or false?
- How you can test Christianity historically (very brief)

This is the most fun lecture to listen to, you should listen to it, if you like fun.

Ryan T. Anderson defends marriage at Indiana House Judiciary Committee hearing

September 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(the video is 11 minutes long)

The Heritage Foundation reports.

Excerpt:

> Ryan T. Anderson, the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation, testified before the Indiana House Judiciary Committee yesterday on their proposed constitutional amendment to define marriage as the union of a man and woman.
>
> The controversial bill, which would place the amendment on the state ballot and give citizens the right to vote about such an important matter, spurred a three-hour heated debate full of testimonies from both supporters and opponents.
>
> Anderson, co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "*What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*" which Justice Samuel Alito cited twice in his dissenting opinion in the Supreme Court case involving the Defense of Marriage Act, began his testimony by explaining what marriage is and why marriage matters. According to Anderson, the collapse of marriage over the past 50 years is directly tied to the over-expanded welfare state of the country, and lack of male figureheads in families.
>
> "If the biggest social problem we face right now in the United States is absentee dads," Anderson said, "How will we insist that dads are essential when the law redefines marriage to make fathers optional?"

The full testimony is here at the Public Discourse, and here is one part of it:

> Part of this is based on the reality that there's no such thing as parenting in the abstract: there's mothering, and there's fathering. Men and women bring different gifts to the parenting enterprise. Rutgers sociologist Professor David Popenoe writes, "the burden of social science evidence supports the idea that gender-differentiated parenting is important for human development and the contribution of fathers to childrearing is unique and irreplaceable." He then concludes:
>
> We should disavow the notion that mommies can make good daddies, just as we should the popular notion that daddies can make good mommies. The two sexes are different to the core and each is necessary—culturally and biologically—for the optimal development of a human being.
>
> This is why so many states continue to define marriage as the union of a man and a woman, many doing so by amending their constitutions.

> So why does marriage matter for public policy? Perhaps there is no better way to analyze this than by looking to our own president, President Barack Obama. Allow me to quote him:
>
> We know the statistics: that children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime, nine times more likely to drop out of school, and twenty times more likely to end up in prison. They are more likely to have behavioral problems or run away from home, or become teenage parents themselves. And the foundations of our community are weaker because of it.
>
> There is a host of social science evidence. We go through the litany and cite the studies in our book, but President Obama sums it up pretty well. We've seen in the past fifty years, since the war on poverty began, that the family has collapsed. At one point in America, virtually every child was given the gift of a married mother and father. Today, 40 percent of all Americans, 50 percent of Hispanics, and 70 percent of African Americans are born to single moms—and the consequences for those children are quite serious.
>
> The state's interest in marriage is not that it cares about my love life, or your love life, or anyone's love life just for the sake of romance. The state's interest in marriage is ensuring that those kids have fathers who are involved in their lives.

People who are honest in recognizing that fathers matter cannot press for a redefinition of marriage that makes fathers optional. Any policy that normalizes and celebrates gender-interchangeability is bad for children, and we should be favoring the rights of children over the selfishness of adults in our laws and policies. Period.

The rest of the article is a nice short summary of the case for traditional marriage. It addresses social issues like religious liberty, but it also addresses fiscal issues like the costs of social programs.

What is the purpose of capital punishment? Does it deter crime?

September 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why do some people support the death penalty? Because research conducted by multiple teams of scholars at multiple universities have shown that the death penalty deters crime.

Excerpt:

> "Science does really draw a conclusion. It did. There is no question about it," said Naci Mocan, an economics professor at the University of Colorado at Denver. "The conclusion is there is a deterrent effect."
>
> A 2003 study he co-authored, and a 2006 study that re-examined the data, found that each execution results in five fewer homicides, and commuting a death sentence means five more homicides. "The results are robust, they don't really go away," he said. "I oppose the death penalty. But my results show that the death penalty (deters) — what am I going to do, hide them?"
>
> Statistical studies like his are among a dozen papers since 2001 that capital punishment has deterrent effects. They all explore the same basic theory — if the cost of something (be it the purchase of an apple or the act of killing someone) becomes too high, people will change their behavior (forego apples or shy from murder).

And specifically:

> • Each execution deters an average of 18 murders, according to a 2003 nationwide study by professors at Emory University. (Other studies have estimated the deterred murders per execution at three, five and 14).
>
> • The Illinois moratorium on executions in 2000 led to 150 additional homicides over four years following, according to a 2006 study by professors at the University of Houston.
>
> • Speeding up executions would strengthen the deterrent effect. For every 2.75 years cut from time spent on death row, one murder would be prevented, according to a 2004 study by an Emory University professor.

In case anyone is wondering what sort of crimes are deterred by the death penalty, you can read this graphic description of a recent death-penalty crime.

What sort of crimes are eligible for the death penalty?

Here's an example of a death-penalty eligible crime from the Hartford Courant. (WARNING: graphic!)

Excerpt:

A Superior Court jury today sentenced Steven Hayes to death for the murders of Jennifer Hawke-Petit and her daughters, Hayley and Michaela, during a seven-hour home invasion, robbery and arson at their Cheshire home in July 2007.

Outside the courthouse after the verdicts, Hawke-Petit's father, the Rev. Richard Hawke, said "There are some people who do not deserve to live in God's world."

Asked what he had in his heart, Dr. William Petit Jr. struggled with his answer. "….Probably many of you have kids," he said, pausing to choke back tears. "Michaela was an 11-year-old little girl…tortured and killed in her own bedroom, surrounded by her stuffed animals…."

Petit then talked about his daughter Hayley's bright future and her strength and the children that his wife, Jennifer, helped.

"So, I was really thinking of the tremendous loss" during the verdict, Petit said, adding that he was pleased with it, but "mostly I was sad for the loss we have all suffered."

Asked if he thought there'd be closure now, Petit said, "There's never closure. There's a hole…. with jagged edges…that may smooth out with time, but the hole in your heart and the hole in your soul" remains.

"This isn't about revenge," Petit said. "Vengeance belongs to the Lord. This is about justice."

[…]The jury sentenced Hayes to death on six counts: killing Hawke-Petit and Michaela and Hayley in the course of a single action; killing a child under the age of 16; killing Hawke-Petit in the course of a kidnapping; killing Hayley in the course of a kidnapping; killing Michaela in the course of a kidnapping; and killing Hawke-Petit in the course of a sexual assault.

[…]Hayes, 47, of Winsted, was convicted Oct. 5 of breaking into the Petit home, beating Petit, tying up and torturing the family as Hayes and another man ransacked the home for cash and valuables and tortured the family for seven hours. Testimony during Hayes' trial showed that at one point in the break-in, Hayes forced Hawke-Petit to go to the bank to withdraw money. During that time, according to testimony, Komisarjevsky sexually assaulted Michaela Petit, 11.

When Hawke-Petit and Hayes returned from the bank, Hayes raped and strangled Hawke-Petit. The house was doused with gasoline and set on fire as the intruders fled, testimony showed. Hayley, 17, and Michaela died of smoke inhalation.

[…]Prosecutors used the words of Hayes' younger brother Matthew to counter testimony that home-invasion crime was an aberration in Hayes otherwise troubled but basically nonviolent life.

Matthew Hayes portrayed his brother as a conniving, sadistic, violent thief who saw Matthew take countless beatings from his brutal father for Steven Hayes' misdeeds. At one point, Steven Hayes held a gun to Matthew's head, according to the statement, which was given to state police after the home invasion.

> Examples of Hayes' sadistic behavior toward his brother included hooking Matthew to the garage door by his belt and raising the door up and down, and holding Matthew's hand to a red-hot burner. Matthew said his brother's life of crime was not a result of bad parenting or poor childhood. He said Hayes never learned to take responsibility for his actions.

Sometimes, I think that we have stopped judging others *because* we do not want to be judged *ourselves*. We hope that by not judging anyone, that we will somehow escape being judged by anyone – especially by God himself. The opposition to punishing the guilty is, I think, really just a way of expressing our desire to do away with the idea that we will finally face judgment.We seem to be able to ignore the victim's needs and act as if the criminal is the victim. We act as if deterring a crime with punishment has no impact on the decision making of people who are considering whether to commit the crime. But crime isn't some random action – criminals do consider what will happen to them if they are caught. We send potential killers a message by being willing to punish the ones we catch. But if we treat them like victims, then others watching are not going to be deterred from committing crimes.

Peter J. Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospel narratives

September 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Peter J. Williams

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to

Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?
- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

You can read an interview with Peter Williams here on Between Two Worlds.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate. That link contains a link to the audio of the debate as well as my snarky summary. It's very snarky.

And Apologetics 315 also posted Peter Williams' assessment of Bart Ehrman's "Misquoting Jesus".

Dr. Walter Bradley explains the requirements for life of any imaginable kind

September 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was talking to a friend of mine earlier this week about my experiences as an undergraduate in college, and it turns out that both of us relied on the same web site to get us through our late teens and early 20s. The web site is Leadership University, and it features articles on many different topics from Christian professors.

Here's an article by famous mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley to explain what it takes for a universe that supports complex, embodied life.

Excerpt:

> We teach mechanical engineering students to begin the design process by specifying as clearly as possible the "needs statement" for their project. Then, the assignment for the semester is to develop a design solution that accomplishes the "need(s)" specified for the project. In similar fashion, the minimal needs to be satisfied for a universe to be capable of supporting life of any imaginable type, not just life as we know it, must be identified. Like our automobile illustration, many of the specifications will necessarily be interrelated to make a functional universe. From this essential "needs statement" we can then see how these needs (or design requirements) are met in our universe. We are essentially doing reverse engineering, constructing the blueprint backwards from the product (like an illicit manufacturing company copying a competitor's product). Only then will we be ready to entertain Dawkins' question, "Are there many ways in which these requirements could be satisfied within nature?" Or are the conditions so unique and interrelated that their collective satisfaction by accident would be a "miracle" in its own right? Let us then begin by drafting a "needs statement" for a habitable universe. Then we shall see how these requirements are satisfied in our universe.
>
> ***Needs Statement for a Suitable Universe***
>
> An abbreviated list of requirements for a universe suitable to support life of any imaginable type must include the following items:
>
> - *Order* to provide the stable environment that is conducive to the development of life, but with *just enough chaotic behavior* to provide a driving force for change.
> - *Sufficient chemical stability and elemental diversity* to build the complex molecules necessary for essential life functions: processing energy, storing information, and replicating. A universe of just hydrogen and helium will not "work."
> - *Predictability in chemical reactions,* allowing compounds to form from the

various elements.

- *A "universal connector,"* an element that is essential for the molecules of life. It must have the chemical property that permits it to react readily with almost all other elements, forming bonds that are stable, but not too stable, so disassembly is also possible. Carbon is the only element in our periodic chart that satisfies this requirement.
- *A "universal solvent"* in which the chemistry of life can unfold. Since chemical reactions are too slow in the solid state, and complex life would not likely be sustained as a gas, there is a need for a liquid element or compound that readily dissolves both the reactants and the reaction products essential to living systems: namely, a liquid with the properties of water.
- *A stable source of energy to sustain living systems* in which there must be photons from the sun with sufficient energy to drive organic, chemical reactions, but not so energetic as to destroy organic molecules (as in the case of highly energetic ultraviolet radiation).
- *A means of transporting the energy* from the source (like our sun) to the place where chemical reactions occur in the solvent (like water on Earth) must be available. In the process, there must be minimal losses in transmission if the energy is to be utilized efficiently.

Unless **ALL** of these conditions and many more not included in this list are met, we would have a universe that would preclude the possibility of conscious, complex life forms. However, it is possible to meet all of these conditions for the universe and still not necessarily find a suitable habitat in the universe for complex, conscious life. Therefore, we might say that the above requirements for our universe are necessary, but not by themselves sufficient, conditions for a habitat suitable for complex human life. Next we try to identify the additional conditions within such a suitable universe that would provide a place of habitation for conscious, complex life.

Needs Statement for a Habitat Place in the Suitable Universe for Complex, Conscious Life

An abbreviated, but illustrative, list of additional requirements must be specified for a place of habitation in this universe. First, we need a star that is located in a relatively "quiet" region of the universe (e.g., not too many neighbors that are producing high intensity, sterilizing radiation). This star needs to have its highest intensity of radiation in the range that is suitable to drive the chemical reactions essential to life without destroying the products of these reactions. Furthermore, this star needs to have a very special satellite within its solar system. A partial list of the requirements this satellite must meet include:

- a planet or moon that is terrestrial–or, solid rather than gaseous;
- a temperature range suitable to maintain the universal solvent as a liquid

> rather than a solid or gas;
> - just the right concentration of heavy (radioactive) elements to heat the core of the planet and provide the necessary energy to drive plate tectonics, to build up land mass in what would otherwise be a smooth, round planet completely covered with solvent;
> - just the right amount of solvent (carefully coupled to the plate tectonics activity) to provide a planet with similar proportions of its surfaces as oceans and land mass;
> - just the right protection from the destructive forces in nature such as radiation and asteroids over a reasonable amount of time; and
> - just the right stabilized axis tilt and angular velocity to give moderate, regular, and predictable seasons and moderate temperature fluctuations from day to night.
>
> While one is temped to think that these requirements are easily met, given the large number of stars, it should be noted that there are few places in the universe sufficiently free of sterilizing radiation to provide a suitable solar system. The number of candidate "neighborhoods" is further reduced by the requirements of a sun with the right amount of mass to give the right electromagnetic radiation spectrum. Furthermore, the occurrence of a suitable satellite in conjunction with such a star is even more problematic. Only the earth in our solar system of sixty-two satellites meets the above requirements for a "home" (earth) in safe "neighborhood" like our sun and solar system, which are well placed in a quiet place in a suitable universe as described above.
>
> In the next sections, we will see how these universal and local "needs" (or design requirements) are met by: the specific mathematical form encoded in nature, the exact values of the universal constants in our universe, and the remarkable "coincidence" that initial (or boundary) conditions are exactly what they must be. We will also see that the "evolutional" or developmental path that our universe navigated is consistently remarkable, making the origin of our "Garden of Eden" all the more wondrous and enigmatic.

If you want to see the next sections of his article, you can click here to read the rest.

Why is this important? It's important because a lot of people on the other side want to dismiss the fine-tuning argument by saying that if the fundamental constants and quantities specified in the Big Bang had been different, then the results would be a universe that permits life of some other kind. That's false. If you vary the constants and quantities, you lose things that are required for any conceivable kind of complex life. You can't form stable, metal-rich stars. The universe recollapses into a hot fireball. You have only hydrogen. You have NO hydrogen. It's not just that people have some ridges on their noses or maybe an extra pair of arms. It's that there is no life, period.

This is important. There are minimum requirements for life of any conceivable kind, and messing with the fine-tuning of the universe destroys the ability of the universe to

provide those minimal requirements. Naturalists can smirk and shrug this off, but this is the science that we have today and we have to deal with it.

Dr. George Yancey lectures on anti-Christian bias in academia, and beyond

September 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A 28-minute lecture on bias against religion in academia:

If you watch 5 minutes, then you'll definitely stay and watch the whole thing. It's fascinating.

Details:

> Join Dr. George Yancey in an in depth discussion of the bias taking place within academia against religion in general, but more specifically Christianity. Within the discussion Dr.Yancey uses brief explanations of his previous book, Compromising Scholarship and many other excerpts of his past research as well as his forthcoming research to give us a new viewpoint on academia and religion.

I found a quick description of Dr. Yancey's work in this New York Times article from July 2011.

It says:

> Republican scholars are more likely than Democrats to end up working outside academia,as documented by Daniel Klein, an economist at George Mason University. Dr. Klein, who calls himself a classical liberal (a k a libertarian), says that the university promotes groupthink because its system of "departmental majoritarianism" empowers the dominant faction to keep hiring like-minded colleagues. And when a faculty committee is looking to hire or award tenure, political ideology seems to make a difference, according to a "collegiality survey" conducted by George Yancey.
>
> Dr. Yancey, a professor of sociology at the University of North Texas, asked more than 400 sociologists which nonacademic factors might influence their willingness to vote for hiring a new colleague. You might expect professors to at least *claim* to be immune to bias in academic hiring decisions.
>
> But as Dr. Yancey reports in his new book, "Compromising Scholarship: Religious and Political Bias in American Higher Education," more than a quarter of the sociologists said they would be swayed favorably toward a Democrat or an A.C.L.U. member and unfavorably toward a Republican. About 40 percent said they would be less inclined to vote for hiring someone who belonged to the National Rifle Association or who was an evangelical. Similar results were obtained in a subsequent survey of professors in other social sciences and the humanities.
>
> Dr. Yancey, who describes himself as a political independent with traditional Christian beliefs and progressive social values, advises nonliberal graduate

> students to be discreet during job interviews. “The information in this research,” he wrote, “indicates that revealing one’s political and religious conservatism will, on average, negatively influence about half of the search committee one is attempting to impress.”
>
> Dr. Yancey’s research was a survey, not a field experiment, so it’s impossible to know how many of those academics who confessed to hypothetical bias would let it sway an actual decision. Perhaps they’d try to behave as impartially as the directors of graduate studies in Dr. Gross’s experiment.

The lecture is a real eye-opener. It turns out that in academia, you are likely to be viewed the same way as blacks were viewed by slave-owners, and Jews were viewed by Nazis. Stereotypes, ignorance and hatred abound.

We have a lot of work to do to correct these perceptions, but that’s not going to happen unless churches and Christian parents start to take the life of the mind more seriously.

Friday night movie: One of Our Aircraft is Missing (1942)

September 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB rating: [7.2/10]

Description:

> During the Allied Bombing offensive of World War II the public was often informed that "A raid took place last night over …, One (or often more) of Our Aircraft Is Missing". Behind these sombre words hid tales of death, destruction and derring-do. This is the story of one such bomber crew who were shot down and the brave Dutch patriots who helped them home.

The bomber in the movie that they start with is called a Vickers Wellington. It's not very good, but the four-engine Avro Lancaster they get at the end of the movie is as good or better than the B-17 bomber used by the Americans during the war. Most people think that the Avro Lancaster was the best bomber of World War 2 on either side. My Canadian readers will be thrilled to know that Avro Canada constructed many Avro Lancasters to help with the war effort. You can still see an intact Lancaster in Alberta, Canada.

Happy Friday!

Study explores whether atheism is rooted in reason or emotion

September 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From First Things, based on research reported by CNN.

> A new set of studies in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* finds that atheists and agnostics report anger toward God either in the past or anger focused on a hypothetical image of what they imagine God must be like. Julie Exline, a psychologist at Case Western Reserve University and the lead author of this recent study, has examined other data on this subject with identical results. Exline explains that her interest was first piqued when an early study of anger toward God revealed a counterintuitive finding: Those who reported no belief in God reported more grudges toward him than believers.
>
> At first glance, this finding seemed to reflect an error. How could people be angry with God if they did not believe in God? Reanalyses of a second dataset revealed similar patterns: Those who endorsed their religious beliefs as "atheist/agnostic" or "none/unsure" reported more anger toward God than those who reported a religious affiliation.
>
> Exline notes that the findings raised questions of whether anger might actually affect belief in God's existence, an idea consistent with social science's previous clinical findings on "emotional atheism."
>
> Studies in traumatic events suggest a possible link between suffering, anger toward God, and doubts about God's existence. According to Cook and Wimberly (1983), 33% of parents who suffered the death of a child reported doubts about God in the first year of bereavement. In another study, 90% of mothers who had given birth to a profoundly retarded child voiced doubts about the existence of God (Childs, 1985). Our survey research with undergraduates has focused directly on the association between anger at God and self-reported drops in belief (Exline et al., 2004). In the wake of a negative life event, anger toward God predicted decreased belief in God's existence.
>
> The most striking finding was that when Exline looked only at subjects who reported a drop in religious belief, their faith was least likely to recover if anger toward God was the cause of their loss of belief. In other words, anger toward God may not only lead people to atheism but give them a reason to cling to their disbelief.

I think the best defense to this phenomena is for the church to not tell people that God's job is to make them happy in this life on Earth. I think if we spent less time selling Christianity to young people as life enhancement, we would have much fewer apostates. If young people get into their minds that God is their boss, not their waiter, then that is a

good preparation for the real world. And all of the challenges that Christians face – from poverty, to peer pressure, to health problems to persecution. Stop expecting happiness, that is not God's goal for you.

I was blessed to have discovered apologetics at a very early age. This passage from C. S. Lewis' "The Screwtape Letters" always stood out to me back then:

> Do not be deceived, Wormwood. Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.

When I was young, I shortened this quote into my motto, which lasted until just a few years back when I finally started to feel some security. And that motto was "nothing works". Nothing works. That's right, so get used to it. Everything sucks, nothing works. *Nothing works.*

Stop expecting God to make you happy. You are a soldier, and your job is to fight to the last breath in your body for the General. Hold until relieved. You're damn right it's unfair. Your whole life is unfair and then you die. Get used to it. When I was in college, my Christian friends and I used to joke that even if we fought our entire lives for God and he tossed us into Hell like firewood, we would still do the same things. We were happy to serve and we didn't think about whether we were getting what we wanted. We did not take stupid chances, but we just didn't care about being happy. We felt that God was in the right, and sinful humans were in the wrong, and that it was enough for us to serve on the right side. We didn't expect anyone to care how we felt, we just expected to serve. And if our first plan failed, we went on to the next plan, and the next, until we found a way to serve in spite of the unfairness of it all.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

William Lane Craig lectures on failure in the Christian life

September 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this audio on Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 web site.

Here is the MP3 file.

And here is my summary.

Intro:

- the topic of failure is not one that is often discussed by Christians
- failure #1: failure in the Christian life which is the result of sin
- failure #2: when a Christian is defeated while trying to serve God
- the consequences for failure #1 can be worse for the Christian
- the consequences for failure #2 can be worse for the world as whole
- how is it possible for a person to fail when they are obeying God? (#2)
- how can it be that God can call someone to a task then let them fail?
- failure is not persecution – persecution is normal for Christians
- failure is not trials – testing is normal for Christians to grow

Bill's failure:

- Bill had submitted all the coursework for his second doctoral degree
- but he had to pass a comprehensive oral examination
- he failed to pass the comprehensive exam
- Bill and Jan and his supporters had all prayed for him to pass
- how could God allow this to happen?

Solution to the problem:

- God's will for us may be that we fail at the things we try in life
- there are things that God may teach us through failure
- Bill learned that human relationships are more important than careers
- we need to realize that "success" in life is not worldly success
- true success is getting to know God well during your life
- and failure may be the best way to get to know God well
- it may even be possible to fail to know God while achieving a lot
- the real measure of a man is loving God and loving your fellow man

Practical:

- give thanks to God regardless of your circumstances
- try to learn from your failure
- never give up

The ending of Bill's story:

- Bill spent an entire year preparing for a re-take of his exam
- Bill was awarded his second doctorate "magna cum laude" (with great distinction)
- Bill learned that American students are not well prepared for exams
- the year of studying remedied his inadequate American education
- in retrospect, he is thankful for the failure – he learned more

If you like this, you should pick up Craig's book "Hard Questions, Real Answers", which has a chapter on this problem. And here is a similar lecture that Dr. Craig gave at his home church in Atlanta on the same topic. I'm not posting this because I've had a catastrophic failure or anything. But I think in this economy, I am seeing a lot of my plans dashed and I am being forced to circle the wagons a little and take fewer risks. I am being forced to aim for smaller goals, and plan for future difficulties. It does bother me that I can't comfortably take risks to achieve the best goals that I want to achieve. But I have to play the hand I'm dealt, and do what looks doable right now. Some of my friends are having the same problem of having to recalculate what is probable and what is possible.

New study: amicable divorce just as damaging for children as hostile divorce

September 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The UK Daily Mail reports on a new study on the effects of divorce.

Excerpt:

> Divorcing parents who try to maintain an amicable relationship for the sake of their children are doing nothing to help them, a major study suggests.
>
> The impact of the split on youngsters is the same whether or not the mother and father keep cordial links, it found.
>
> […]The new study, the first in 20 years to examine how the behaviour of separated parents affects their children, was carried out by US academics.
>
> It covered 270 parents who were divorced or separated between 1998 and 2004 in an unnamed US state that compels divorcees to take part in an education programme on 'co-operative co-parenting'.
>
> Of these, 31 per cent considered their relationship with their ex-spouse as 'co-operative and involved'; 45 per cent were 'moderately engaged' with their divorced partner, with some conflict between them; and 24 per cent said their co-operation was 'infrequent but conflictual'.
>
> They were asked to say how their break-up had affected the youngest child in their family. The average age of children involved was eight years.
>
> The study, published in the academic journal Family Relations, said that children of divorced parents are more likely than others to suffer 'external' symptoms such as behaviour problems or drug abuse, more likely to have 'internal' difficulties like anxiety or depression, and more likely to do badly at school.
>
> But the researchers, headed by Dr Jonathon Beckmeyer of Indiana University, found that these children's problems were no worse if their parents continued to row and bicker with each other after the divorce.
>
> The study said 'despite the expectation that children fare better' if their divorced parents develop a co-operative relationship, the behaviour of children as assessed by their parents 'did not significantly differ' between the friendly and the fighting groups of divorcees.

So the take-home lesson is this: there is no such thing as a divorce that doesn't hurt the children. If you're thinking of divorce and you have children, just don't do it. And if you are thinking of marriage, then be careful who you marry. Don't cloud the judgment with premarital sex before you get to know the person and get the commitment.

California State University system de-recognizes IVCF from 23 campuses

September 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Princess Mandy posted this story from Christianity Today, and I am blogging it.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) has been, in modern campus terminology, "derecognized" by California State University schools. Basically, they will no longer be a recognized campus organization on any of the 23 schools in that system. IVCF has been derecognized because they require their leaders to have Christian beliefs.
>
> It's not just InterVarsity that will be impacted. Following the same logic, any group that insists on requiring its leaders to follow an agreed upon set of guiding beliefs is no longer kosher (irony intended) at California's state universities. This will impact many other faith-based organizations with actual, well, faith-based beliefs. Presumably, even People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals would have to allow Oscar Meyer to lead their campus chapters.
>
> […]Now, it's not persecution. Christians are not banned. People can share their faith. But, now, what we once called "equal access" has taken another hit—people of faith do not have equal access to the university community, like the environmentalist club, the LGBT organization, or the chess club.
>
> The university system has decided that speech with beliefs that undergird it—and shape how it is organized—has to be derecognized.
>
> I asked Greg Jao, who is National Field Director & Campus Access Coordinator, what this actually meant. He explained,

> Loss of recognition means we lose 3 things: free access to rooms (this will cost our chapters $13k-30k/year to reserve room). We also lose access to student activities programs, including the new student fairs where we meet most students. We also lose standing when we engage faculty, students and administrators.

> And while they still have freedom to request a meeting spot in some buildings, they no longer have the status when other officially recognized groups request the same spot—even though they are, well, fee-paying students in a facility owned by the people of California.
>
> Jao indicated the work is not done, explaining,

> We still intend to minister on campus but loss of recognition is a significant impediment.

> The bigger, and ongoing, issue is the continual sanitization of unacceptable religious voices from universities. It's ironic—those who champion nondiscrimination, in the name of nondiscrimination, are creating rules that push out those who "discriminate" based on biblical belief statements.
>
> A few years ago, I asked in the pages of USAToday, are evangelicals no longer welcome in the public arena? If that arena is a California state university, and those evangelicals want an official school organization, that answer is obvious.
>
> This has already happened in other places, perhaps most notably at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. But, Vanderbilt is a private university. Now, state schools have decided that, due to their odd policies restricting belief based organization from requiring belief, students who have evangelical beliefs—and think the leaders of their belief-based campus organization should also have beliefs—are no longer welcome as a student organization.

Christian taxpayers in California are paying into this school system, thanks to the compulsory collection of taxes. So now Christian families will have less money to send their own kids to schools that actually allow freedom of association and equal access to Christians. We have to pay twice – once into a system that treats us as second-class citizens, and once into a private system that recognizes our fundamental rights. This is why we should be voting to cut off the money supply to the non-essential responsibilities of government. We need to keep our money to work around the discrimination of the secularists.

IRS reveals that it has lost e-mails of 5 more employees

September 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Were any of these employees in on the IRS persecution of Tea Party groups prior to the 2012 election? Let's see.

Leftist Associated Press reports.

> The IRS says it has lost emails from five more workers who are part of congressional investigations into the treatment of conservative groups that applied for tax exempt status.
>
> The tax agency said in June that it could not locate an untold number of emails to and from Lois Lerner, who headed the IRS division that processes applications for tax-exempt status. The revelation set off a new round of investigations and congressional hearings.
>
> On Friday, the IRS said it has also lost emails from five other employees related to the probe, including two agents who worked in a Cincinnati office processing applications for tax-exempt status.
>
> The agency blamed computer crashes for the lost emails. In a statement, the IRS said it found no evidence that anyone deliberately destroyed evidence.

What are the odds of all these employees suddenly losing their e-mails because of "computer crashes" at the same time? Zero.

Three podcasts on human origins and a literal Adam and Eve

September 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Three episodes of the ID the Future podcast on human origins.

Part 1:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, the CSC's Rob Crowther speaks with Casey Luskin, co-author of the new book *Science & Human Origins*. There are frequent and spurious claims made in the media that the genetic and fossil evidence of human-ape common ancestry is incontrovertible. In *Science and Human Origins*, Doug Axe, Ann Gauger, and Casey Luskin seek to equip readers with the knowledge to discern interpretation from fact and rhetoric from evidence. Listen in as Luskin introduces the book and specifically discusses his own assessment of the fossil data.

The MP3 file is here. (20 minutes)

Part 2:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Casey Luskin interviews Dr. Ann Gauger, co-author of *Science & Human Origins* and senior research scientist at the Biologic Institute. In recent years, human origins has become an especially hot topic as some scientists claim that the human race is a product of undirected natural selection and cannot be traced back to two parents. Dr. Gauger disagrees. Tune in to hear Dr. Gauger discuss the evidence against human-ape common ancestry, drawing from her research in such fields as anatomy and population genetics.

The MP3 file is here. (12 minutes)

Part 3:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Casey Luskin and Ann Gauger, co-authors of *Science & Human Origins*, discuss the assumptions behind the Darwinian evolutionist's argument for common ancestry. Are these assumptions valid, or are there too many unknown variables? Dr. Gauger presents the inconsistencies between the Darwinian doctrine of common ancestry and the evidence from population genetics.

The MP3 file is here. (12 minutes)

Robin Collins lectures on the fine-tuning argument at Pepperdine University

September 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Details:

> Dr. Robin Collins is a Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Messiah College. Collins is the foremost defender of what is known as the teleological argument for the existence of God. He has a background in both physics and philosophy and will be discussing how the specific physical constants and conditions in the universe are finely-tuned for intelligent life and how this "fine-tuning" gives us reason to believe in a Creator.

Here is the video:

Topics:

- the constants and quantities set at the origin of the universe is fine-tuned for conscious, embodied intelligences like us
- three kinds of fine-tuning: 1) laws of nature, 2) constants, 3) quantities
- examples of 1): gravity, electromagnetism, strong force, quantization, Pauli exclusion principle
- examples of 2): **gravitational constant**, **cosmological constant**,
- examples of 3): initial distribution of mass-energy
- in addition to fine-tuning for life, there is also fine-tuning for discoverability
- Naturalistic response to the evidence: the multiverse hypothesis
- problems with the multiverse hypothesis
- additional topics

I put the ones I am ready to speak on in bold. I recommend you learn those as well in order to illustrate the fine-tuning with evidence when you present it. The evidence is important because I've never found a single atheist who I discussed this with who could properly state the argument or understand the evidence. They talk about it without really understanding it, which is why we need to be ready to explain it to them.

Who warned about the consequences of pulling out of Iraq in 2007?

September 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist Washington Post, of all places.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> In the summer of 2007, Bush warned of the dire consequence of pulling U.S. troops out of Iraq against the advice of our commanders on the ground. All of Washington was telling Bush that the surge he had launched would fail and that the time had come to withdraw from Iraq and accept defeat.
>
> At a White House news conference on July 12, 2007, Bush declared: "I know some in Washington would like us to start leaving Iraq now. To begin withdrawing before our commanders tell us we're ready would be dangerous for Iraq, for the region and for the United States. It would mean surrendering the future of Iraq to al-Qaeda. It would mean that we'd be risking mass killings on a horrific scale. It would mean we'd allow the terrorists to establish a safe haven in Iraq to replace the one they lost in Afghanistan. It would mean we'd be increasing the probability that American troops would have to return at some later date to confront an enemy that is even more dangerous."
>
> […]In 2010, Obama did precisely what Bush warned against and withdrew all U.S. forces from Iraq — overruling his commander on the ground, Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, who had recommended that Obama keep 24,000 troops. And since then, everything that Bush warned would happen has come to pass.
> Bush warned that withdrawing against the advice of our military commanders would result in "mass killings on a horrific scale." Check. We're now seeing mass killings on a horrific scale — summary executions, women and children buried alive, people being crucified, the attempted genocide of the Yazidis and two American journalists beheaded.
>
> Bush warned that withdrawal would "allow the terrorists to establish a safe haven in Iraq to replace the one they lost in Afghanistan." Check. The Islamic State now controls a safe haven the size of Belgium.
>
> Bush warned withdrawing too soon would "mean we'd be increasing the probability that American troops would have to return at some later date to confront an enemy that is even more dangerous." Check. The Islamic State is far more dangerous now, the United States is back carrying out airstrikes in Iraq and Obama will address the nation on Wednesday to lay out a new military strategy to defeat the Islamic State.
>
> That's not all. In a July 14, 2007, radio address, Bush also warned that U.S. withdrawal would allow "terrorists to . . . gain control of vast oil resources they

> could use to fund new attacks on America." Check. The Islamic State now controls vast oil resources, which are bringing the group an estimated$3 million a day — helping it to become the wealthiest terror network in the world.
>
> In a Sept. 13, 2007, Oval Office address, Bush warned that "Iran would benefit from the chaos" after U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. Check. Just last week, the United States provided air cover for Iranian-back Shiite militias as they took back the town of Amerli — which means we are now serving as the de-facto air force for the same Iranian-backed militias who were responsible for many of the U.S. casualties in Iraq.
>
> […]In an April 24, 2007, news conference Bush warned that U.S. withdrawal "could unleash chaos in Iraq that could spread across the entire region." Check. After the United States withdrew from Iraq, the Islamic State moved into Syria, killing thousands and using that country as a staging area to recruit jihadists and plan its re-invasion of Iraq.

He was one of the good ones, and I miss his moral clarity – especially when it comes to foreign policy. This man knew right from wrong. If you want to have an influence in a theater of war where your enemies are active, then you need to have boots on the ground. We have an enemy in the Middle East, and that enemy is radical Islam. Bush knew that, and Obama – well he plays golf while American-born journalists have their heads hacked off. Bush knew how to promote American interests abroad with strength, but Obama does not.

Feminists angered by suggestion that alcohol education would curb sexual misconduct

September 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Campus Reform.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, president emeritus and current professor of public service at The George Washington University (GWU), has become the subject of outrage from feminists on social media for suggesting that alcohol education may help prevent sexual assaults on campus.
>
> During an episode of the Diane Rehm Show last week, Trachtenberg participated in a panel discussion about Greek Life at U.S. colleges in which he suggested that binge-drinking is a factor in instances of sexual misconduct.
>
> "Part of the problem is you have men who take advantage of women who drink too much and there are women who drink too much," said Trachtenberg, adding that "we need to educate our daughters and our children in that regard."
>
> Although Trachtenberg prefaced his remarks by saying people should further encourage women to not drink in excess "without making the victims responsible for what happens," female students and women's groups flooded Twitter, calling his remarks "irresponsible" and accusing him of "gross victim blaming" and being a "rape apologist."
>
> Sally Kaplan, a recent graduate of GWU and peace alliance coordinator at the non-profit organization, the Peace Alliance, created a petition using the online platform Change.org to demand that Trachtenberg "issue an apology to the GWU community" and match her and other students' crowdfunding efforts to hire a full-time "Survivors Advocate" at the university.
>
> The petition also calls on the university to provide "better support for university students including more prevention, intervention, education and survivor advocacy resources." Ironically, in a piecepublished by administrators the day after Trachtenberg's remarks, the university promoted a sexual assault prevention event sponsored by GWU's Center for Alcohol and other Drug Education.
>
> According to *Campus Safety Magazine*, "at least 50 percent of college student sexual assaults are associated with alcohol use."
>
> In a column published last October, *Slate* contributor Emily Yoffe explained that "a misplaced fear of blaming the victim has made it somehow unacceptable to warn inexperienced young women that when they get wasted, they are putting themselves in potential peril."
>
> "Let's be totally clear: Perpetrators are the ones responsible for committing their

> crimes, and they should be brought to justice. But we are failing to let women know that when they render themselves defenseless, terrible things can be done to them," wrote Yoffe.

I think I should not marry a radical feminist for the following reason. They want to be able to perform reckless actions and then blame other people when predictable consequences occur. That is scary to me. I want to marry someone who checks her own behavior and makes good decisions. When things go wrong, I want her to take responsibility for her own actions instead of playing the victim. I think the reaction by feminists is also revealing because it seems to show why they are so pro-abortion. In that issue, the feminists want the recreational sex, but not the responsibility for what the choice to have recreational sex produces. Except in that case, it's the innocent child who suffers from the mother's recklessness.

Mark D. Linville: does Darwinian evolution make morality rational?

September 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard an atheist tell you that naturalistic evolution is an answer to the moral argument? I have. And I found a good reply to this challenge in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". The chapter that responds to the challenge is authored by Dr. Mark D. Linville. It is only 13 pages long. I have a link to the PDF at the bottom of this post.

First, a bit about the author:

> Blog: The Tavern at the End of the World
> Current positions:
>
> - PhD Research Fellow
> - Tutoring Fellow in Philosophy
>
> Education:
>
> - PhD in Philosophy with a minor in South Asian Studies and a specialization in Philosophy of Religion, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy of Religion, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
> - MA in Theology, Cincinnati Christian Seminary
> - BA in Biblical Studies, Florida Christian College

Here is his thesis of the essay:

> Darwin's account of the origins of human morality is at once elegant, ingenious, and, I shall argue, woefully inadequate. In particular, that account, on its standard interpretation, does not explain morality, but, rather, explains it away . We learn from Darwin not how there could be objective moral facts, but how we could have come to believe—perhaps erroneously—that there are.
>
> Further, the naturalist, who does not believe that there is such a personal being as God, is in principle committed to Darwinism, including a Darwinian account of the basic contours of human moral psychology. I'll use the term evolutionary naturalism to refer to this combination of naturalism and Darwinism. And so the naturalist is saddled with a view that explains morality away. Whatever reason we have for believing in moral facts is also a reason for thinking naturalism is false. I conclude the essay with a brief account of a theistic conception of morality, and argue that the theist is in a better position to affirm the objectivity of morality.

And here’s a sample to get your attention:

> But even if we are assured that a “normal” person will be prompted by the social instincts and that those instincts are typically flanked and reinforced by a set of moral emotions, we still do not have a truly normative account of moral obligation. There is nothing in Darwin’s own account to indicate that the ensuing sense of guilt—a guilty feeling—is indicative of actual moral guilt resulting from the violation of an objective moral law. The revenge taken by one’s own conscience amounts to a sort of second-order propensity to feel a certain way given one’s past relation to conflicting first-order propensities (e.g., the father’s impulse to save his child versus his impulse to save himself). Unless we import normative considerations from some other source, it seems that, whether it is a first or second-order inclination,one’s being prompted by it is more readily understood as a descriptive feature of one’s own psychology than material for a normative assessment of one’s behavior or character. And, assuming that there is anything to this observation, an ascent into even higher levels of propensities (“I feel guilty for not having felt guilty for not being remorseful over not obeying my social instincts…”) introduces nothing of normative import. Suppose you encounter a man who neither feels the pull of social, paternal or familial instincts nor is in the least bit concerned over his apparent lack of conscience. What, from a strictly Darwinian perspective, can one say to him that is of any serious moral import? “You are not moved to action by the impulses that move most of us.” Right. So?
>
> The problem afflicts contemporary construals of an evolutionary account of human morality. Consider Michael Shermer’s explanation for the evolution of a moral sense—the “science of good and evil.” He explains,
>
> By a moral sense, I mean a moral feeling or emotion generated by actions. For example, positive emotions such as righteousness and pride are experienced as the psychological feeling of doing “good.” These moral emotions likely evolved out of behaviors that were reinforced as being good either for the individual or for the group.2
>
> Shermer goes on to compare such moral emotions to other emotions and sensations that are universally experienced, such as hunger and the sexual urge. He then addresses the question of moral motivation.
>
> In this evolutionary theory of morality, asking “Why should we be moral?” is like asking “Why should we be hungry?” or “Why should we be horny?” For that matter, we could ask, “Why should we be jealous?” or “Why should we fall in love?” The answer is that it is as much a part of human nature to be moral as it is to be hungry, horny, jealous, and in love.3
>
> Thus, according to Shermer, given an evolutionary account, such a question is simply a non-starter. Moral motivation is a given as it is wired in as one of our basic drives. Of course, one might point out that Shermer’s “moral emotions”

> often do need encouragement in a way that, say, “horniness,” does not. More importantly, Shermer apparently fails to notice that if asking “Why should I be moral?” is like asking, “Why should I be horny?” then asserting, “You ought to be moral” is like asserting, “You ought to be horny.” As goes the interrogative, so goes the imperative. But if the latter seems out of place, then, on Shermer’s view, so is the former.
>
> One might thus observe that if morality is anything at all, it is irreducibly normative in nature. But the Darwinian account winds up reducing morality to descriptive features of human psychology. Like the libido, either the moral sense is present and active or it is not. If it is, then we might expect one to behave accordingly. If not, why, then, as a famous blues man once put it, “the boogie woogie just ain’t in me.” And so the resulting “morality” is that in name only.
>
> **In light of such considerations, it is tempting to conclude with C. S. Lewis that, if the naturalist remembered his philosophy out of school, he would recognize that any claim to the effect that “I ought” is on a par with “I itch,” in that it is nothing more than a descriptive piece of autobiography with no essential reference to any actual obligations.**

When it comes to morality, we are not interested in mere descriptions of behavior. We want to know about prescriptions of behavior, and whether why we should care about following those prescriptions. We are interested in what grounds our sense of moral obligation in reality. What underwrites our sense of moral obligation? If it is just rooted in feelings, then why should we obey our moral sense when obeying it goes against out self-interest? Feelings are subjective things, and doing the right thing in a real objective state of affairs requires more than just feelings. There has to be a real objective state of affairs that makes it rational for us to do the right thing, even when the right thing is against our own self-interest. That’s what morality is – objective moral obligations *overriding* subjective feelings. I wouldn’t trust someone to be moral if it were just based on their feelings.

The PDF is right here for downloading, with the permission of the author.

Gay activist pleads guilty to sexually assaulting boys

September 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the leftist LA Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> A former USC professor once on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted fugitives list pleaded guilty Friday to flying to the Philippines and sexually assaulting underage boys he groomed online.
>
> Walter Lee Williams, 65, admitted engaging in illegal sexual contact with minors in foreign places, entering the plea during a brief appearance before U.S. District Judge Phillip S. Gutierrez.
>
> As part of a plea, federal prosecutors agreed to recommend that the onetime eminent professor of gender and sexuality studies serve no more than five years in a federal prison. He also would be subject to 10 years supervision upon release and must pay $25,000 in restitution to his seven victims. Williams will be sentenced Dec. 15.
> He was apprehended within a day of making the FBI's Most Wanted List in June 2013 after he was indicted on sex crimes involving two 14-year-old boys in the Philippines. He was captured in the Mexican coastal town of Playa del Carmen after a resident recognized his photo from a newspaper.
>
> Los Angeles Police Department Deputy Chief Michel Moore said Williams' conduct came to light three years ago when a person concerned about the safety of children contacted authorities.
>
> Williams taught anthropology, gender studies and history at USC for about two decades until he quit in 2011. Under the guise of academic research on sexuality in the Southeast Asia/Pacific region, he repeatedly traveled to the area.
>
> Federal prosecutors alleged that the author and Fulbright Award winner used those trips to sexually assault underage boys. Investigators believe he has at least 10 victims across Southeast Asia, aged 9 to 17.
>
> Williams engaged in webcam sex sessions with two boys, aged 13 and 14, in the Philippines in 2010. The next year, he traveled to the country and sexually assaulted both boys and a 15-year-old boy, according to the plea agreement. He was 62 at the time.
>
> While there, he also had sexual contact with three other 16-year-old boys, records show.
>
> When he returned to Los Angeles International Airport on Feb. 11, 2011, he was "intercepted," and child pornography was found on him. The professor fled Los Angeles a week after being interviewed by the FBI.
>
> An attorney for USC last year provided the FBI with materials the professor

> donated to the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives that contained “lascivious visual depictions of minors,” according to the plea agreement. FBI agents also obtained similar images from Williams’ former home.

And now, I’d like to go over some other recent news stories.

From the San Francisco Chronicle.

Excerpt:

> Veteran gay rights advocate and former San Francisco Human Rights Commission staffer Larry Brinkin pleaded guilty Tuesday to possessing child pornography.
>
> Brinkin, 67, changed his plea in a deal with the district attorney’s office that will result in a sentencing recommendation of six months in county jail, six months of home detention, five years of probation and lifetime registration as a sex offender.
>
> Brinkin, who worked as a senior contract compliance officer with the rights commission until his 2010 retirement, was arrested in June 2012. Authorities said e-mail attachments were found on his America Online subscriber’s account that contained images of toddlers engaged in sex acts with men.
>
> Prosecutors originally charged him with six felony counts of possessing and distributing child pornography, but dropped all but one felony count of possession as part of the plea bargain.
>
> Brinkin must undergo sex offender therapy and is banned from working with kids, contacting a juvenile without parental consent, and living with someone responsible for a child without disclosing his offender status.
>
> During his 22-year tenure at the rights commission, Brinkin helped craft the city’s Equal Benefits Ordinance, which became a national model for workplace equality for gays and lesbians. When he retired, the Board of Supervisors declared the week of Feb. 1, 2010, as Larry Brinkin Week.
>
> Brinkin, who appeared in court with his husband, has been out on $240,000 bail since September 2012. He is scheduled to return for sentencing on March 5, and to surrender into custody at a later date.

The NY Daily News reports on another similar case, and links to CBS News and the Hartford Courant.

Excerpt:

> The case of a same-sex Connecticut couple accused of repeatedly raping and abusing two of their nine adopted boys is headed for trial.
>
> Married couple George Harasz and Douglas Wirth of Glastonbury were supposed to be sentenced Friday in Hartford Superior Court under a plea deal, but instead withdrew from their agreement with prosecutors. The men had already pleaded

> no contest in January to one felony count each of risk of injury to a minor — a reduction from even more serious charges related to sexual assault.
>
> […]Harasz and Wirth adopted nine children — three sets of male siblings — beginning in 2000, and ran a home-based dog breeding business called The Puppy Guy.
>
> The couple was arrested in November 2011 following a police and state investigation of sex-abuse allegations. The children were removed from the home.
>
> Police said two boys, ages 5 and 15, accused Harasz of sexually assaulting them. Harasz was initially facing first-degree sexual assault and other charges, while Wirth had been charged with third-degree sexual assault of the 15-year-old boy.
>
> Their arrest warrants claimed the couple not only sexually and physically abused the children, but also forced them to sleep in closets.
>
> […]One of the victims who spoke during the court hearing said sexual assault began when he was 6.
>
> "They took turns raping me over and over," he said.

This story was reported in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> During his ordeal Mr Cannon was repeatedly plied with Ecstasy and cannabis before being molested by David Cannon and John Scarfe.
>
> His complaints to care workers were ignored and at one stage he was wrongly diagnosed as having mental disorders.
>
> Both men were eventually arrested and charged after Mr Cannon was readmitted to into council care following a domestic incident, at which point he managed to persuade a Forster carer he was being abused.
>
> Cannon, 54, and 31-year old Scarfe were each jailed for 30 months in 2006, for inciting sexual activity with a child.
>
> […]Cannon was allowed to adopt Andy in December 1997, when the youngster was aged eight. This came despite the fact he had earlier been convicted and put on probation for 12 months for assaulting the boy's mother, Elaine Moss, possessing cannabis and handling a stolen computer.
>
> Miss Moss had also claimed Cannon had been abusing her son.
>
> A social worker failed to bring the allegations to the attention of the family court and instead called Cannon a "very caring parent who considered his children's need".

And here's another similar story, this time from Scotland where the head of a gay youth organization was running a child sex ring.

Excerpt:

> Eight men in a Scottish paedophile ring have been found guilty of a series of “horrific” sex offences against children and babies.
>
> […]Two of the men – convicted sex offender Neil Strachan and gay rights campaigner James Rennie – were convicted of sex attacks on children.
>
> Strachan, 41, and Rennie, 38, both from Edinburgh, were also found guilty of conspiring to abuse youngsters, as were three other members of the gang.
>
> […]The jury found Rennie, the former chief of LGBT Youth Scotland, an organisation dedicated to helping young gay people, guilty of molesting a young boy over more than four years.
>
> The child was just three months old when the abuse began.

And of course we had the story of the two gay activists who adopted a boy from Russia and were later convicted of pedophilia.

I think that we need to be more careful about the needs of children when making decisions about public policy.

How brief was the period in which the Cambrian phyla suddenly appeared?

September 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Cambrian explosion refers to the sudden appearance of new body plans in the fossil record. ID proponents think that the period is between 5-10 million years at the most. Naturalists want to stretch out the period in which the body plans appear to tens of millions of years. The two sides can't both be right. What's the truth?

Evolution News has the answer.

Excerpt:

> To establish the length of the most explosive period of innovation within the Cambrian explosion itself, Meyer cites the work of MIT geochronologist Samuel Bowring and his colleagues as well the work of another group led by Smithsonian paleontologist Douglas Erwin. The Bowring-led study showed that (in their words) "the main period of **exponential diversification**" within the Cambrian lasted "only 5-6 million years" (emphasis added). Meyer explains:

> An analysis by MIT geochronologist Samuel Bowring has shown that the main pulse of Cambrian morphological innovation occurred in a sedimentary sequence spanning no more than 6 million years. Yet during this time representatives of at least sixteen completely novel phyla and about thirty classes first appeared in the rock record. In a more recent paper using a slightly different dating scheme, Douglas Erwin and colleagues similarly show that thirteen new phyla appear in a roughly 6-million-year window. (p. 73)

> […][T]ake a look first at the following figure that Bowring and his colleagues included in their definitive 1993 article, published in the journal Science. They use radiometric methods to date the different stages of the Cambrian period, including the crucial Tommotian and Atdabanian stages in which the greatest number of new animal phyla and classes arise. Note that the so-called Manykaian stage of the Cambrian period lasts about 10-14 million years. Note also that the main pulse of morphological innovation didn't begin during this stage but rather during the Tommotian and Atdabanian — a period that they describe as taking between "5 to 10 million years," and in a more detailed passage as taking about 5-6 million years.

> […]In the figure above, the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages of the Cambrian period together span only about 5 million years, starting at about 530 and ending about 525 million years ago. Bowring's figure also depicts the total number of classes and orders present at any given time during the Cambrian period. The biggest increases in morphological innovation occur during the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages. Indeed, during this period the number of known orders nearly

> quadruples. Moreover, Bowring and his colleagues also make clear that this period corresponds to the main pulse of Cambrian morphological innovation as measured by the number of new phyla and classes that first appear. They note that, while a few groups of animals do arise in the earliest Manykaian stage of the Cambrian, the most rapid period of "exponential increase of diversification," corresponding to the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages, "lasted only 5 to 6 m.y."

You can see the figure they are reference in the Evolution News article.

Also, check out these clips that explain the Cambrian explosion:

Part 1:

Part 2:

The first clip features James Valentine, a professor of biology at the University of California who just co-authored a new book on the Cambrian explosion and *is not* a proponent of intelligent design.

The consensus among scientists regarding the period of time *in which the new body plans appear* is 5-6 million years. Biologically speaking, that's a blink of an eye. You aren't going that kind of complexity and innovation in such a short period of time any more than you can expect to win the lottery by buying 5-6 million tickets when the odds of winning are 1 in a googol (10 to the 100th power – 1, followed by 100 zeroes). You don't have enough lottery tickets to make winning the lottery likely. Similarly, 5-6 million years is not enough time for naturalistic mechanisms to code brand new body plans from scratch. It would be like trying to research and write a Ph.D thesis during a single lunch hour. It's just not enough time to produce the amount of information that's required.

J. Warner Wallace: 10 important questions for Jehovah's witnesses

September 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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So there's this group of people called Jehovah's Witnesses that use Christian language to describe a religion that denies key parts of the Christian worldview. Since you may might them knocking on your door to tell you about their worldview, it might be worth it to read this post from J. Warner Wallace over in advance.

I'll just post a snip of the first I use when they come to my door. It's also the first on Wallace's list:

> ***If I am to accept the teaching of the Jehovah's Witness religion, I am first going to have to trust the source of this teaching. But how can I trust someone who claims to speak for God when they have been wrong about prior predictions?***
>
> *There are a number of false predictions made either by Charles Russell, subsequent leaders of the church or the Watchtower Organization itself, including this limited sampling:*
>
> ***1886 The Millennial Reign Has Already Begun*** *"The outward evidences are that the marshalling of the hosts for the battle of the great day of God almighty, is in progress while the skirmishing is commencing." (Watchtower reprints 1, page 817 January 1886)*
>
> ***1897 The Millennial Reign Began in 1874*** *" Our Lord, the appointed King, is now present, since October 1874" (Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 4, page 621)*
>
> ***1899 The Times Described in Revelation 16 Have Begun*** *"…the 'battle of the great day of God Almighty' (Revelation 16:14), which will end in A.D. 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth's present rulership, is already commenced." (The Time Is at Hand, page 101 – 1908 edition)*
>
> ***1916 The Millennial Reign Began in 1873*** *"The Bible chronology herein presented shows that the six great 1000 year days beginning with Adam are ended, and that the great 7th Day, the 1000 years of Christ's Reign, began in 1873." (The Time Is at Hand, page ii)*
>
> ***1917 Armageddon Has Begun*** *"The present great war in Europe is the beginning of the Armageddon of the scriptures." (Pastor Russell's Sermons, 1917, page 676)*
>
> ***1918 The Saints Will Be Resurrected in 1925*** *"Therefore we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old, particularly those named by the Apostle in Hebrews 11, to the condition of human perfection." (Millions Now Living Will Never Die, page 89)*
>
> *"1925 shall mark the resurrection of the faithful worthies…We are standing at the*

> *very portals of that blessed time!" (Millions Now Living Will Never Die, page 105)*
>
> ***1922 Jesus Will Return in 1925*** *"The date 1925 is even more distinctly indicated by the Scriptures than 1914." (The Watchtower, September 1st, 1922, page 262)*
>
> ***1923 Jesus Will Return in 1925*** *"Our thought is that 1925 is definitely settled by the Scriptures. As to Noah, the Christian now has much more upon which to base his faith than Noah had upon which to base his faith in a coming deluge." (The Watchtower, April 1st, 1923, page 106)*
>
> ***1925 Jesus May Return in 1925*** *"The year 1925 is here. With great expectation Christians have looked forward to this year. Many have confidently expected that all members of the body of Christ will be changed to heavenly glory during this year. This may be accomplished. It may not be. In his own due time God will accomplish his purposes concerning his people. Christians should not be so deeply concerned about what may transpire this year." (The Watchtower, January 1st, 1925, page 3)*
>
> ***1940 Armageddon is Eminent Within the Year*** *"The year 1940 is certain to be the most important year yet, because Armageddon is very near." (Informant, May 1940)*
>
> ***1941 Jesus Will Return in Months*** *"Receiving the gift, the marching children clasped it to them, not a toy or plaything for idle pleasure, but the Lord's provided instrument for most effective work in the remaining months before Armageddon." (The Watchtower, September 15th, 1941, page 288)*
>
> ***1946 Armageddon is "At the Door"*** *"…the disaster of Armageddon, greater than that which befell Sodom and Gomorrah, is at the door." (Let God be True, 1946, page 194)*
>
> ***1968 Jesus Will Return in 1975*** *"Why are you looking forward to 1975?" (The Watchtower, August 15th, 1968, page 494)*
>
> *"Just think , brothers, there is only 90 months left before 6000 years of mans existence on earth is completed… the majority of people living today will probably be alive when Armageddon breaks out." (Kingdom Mystery, March 1968, page 4)*

This is the quickest way to see why you should not convert to their organization. In the Bible, it's a serious crime to make a prediction about the future and then have it not come true. It's actually a capital offense, and it's something that "false prophets" do. But it happens all the time with JWs. Just remind them of this and say "I cannot be affiliated with any organization that fails to get their truth claims right over and over again, because it shows me clearly that they don't speak for God".

Wallace actually has the quote from the Bible in his point 3:

Deuteronomy 18:20-22:

> [20] But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’
>
> [21] You may say in your heart, ‘How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’
>
> [22] When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

The other one I use is John 1:1, which Wallace’s first point under the “Biblical Questions” heading.

If you want a longer treatment of this topic, check out Michael Licona’s PDF document on Mormonism and Jehovah’s Witnesses.

IRS auditing conservative news provider Breitbart.com

September 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Yes, the same IRS that targeted Tea Party groups in order to help Obama win re-election.

Ted Cruz wrote a letter to the IRS about the audit, and you can read it here on the Breitbart web site.

Excerpt:

> Dear Commissioner Koskinen:
>
> I write to express deep concern over the recent announcement by Breitbart News that the Internal Revenue Service recently notified the Breitbart News Network, LLC that it would be subject to a far-reaching, burdensome, and open-ended audit.
>
> As you know, the Breitbart News Network LLC is a conservative-leaning press outlet. It has editors and reporters who cover daily political news and regularly breaks stories that are critical of the Obama Administration's policies. To conduct this audit, Breitbart News Network, LLC was asked to provide the IRS with all of its organizational documents, financial records, W-2s, W-4s, 1099s, and K-1s filed, personal income tax returns for each member of the company, payroll tax forms, information regarding properties and assets acquired by the company, bank statements, and array of other records documenting revenues, expenses, and depreciation costs.
>
> This media audit, coupled with the recent proposal of 49 Senate Democrats to amend the Constitution to give Congress plenary power to regulate political speech, paints a disturbing picture of a coordinated assault on the First Amendment.
>
> In another time, under another Administration, the decision to audit a conservative news organization might not have risen to a worrisome level of concern. However, given the IRS's disturbing track record of illegally targeting conservative organizations-including the IRS recently paying a $50,000 settlement for having wrongfully leaked a conservative group's confidential tax information-and the persistent refusal by the current Department of Justice to meaningfully investigate or prosecute those crimes, the decision to audit Breitbart News Network, LLC appears highly questionable.
>
> For the IRS to behave like a partisan political organization, targeting media organizations whose views differ from the President's, would represent a gross abuse of power. It would undermine the statutory mission and integrity of the IRS. And it would likely subject IRS employees to criminal prosecution.

The rest of the letter is Ted Cruz's questioning of the IRS for their actions. It's cases like

this that make me want to abolish the entire IRS and go with a two-tier flat tax system with almost no deductions. Put the corrupt bureaucrats out of a job. That’s the only thing they will understand – the unemployment line.

Are atheists right to say that you can't prove a universal negative like "God does not exist"?

September 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I hear a lot of atheists complaining that they shouldn't have any burden of proof because it is impossible to prove a universal negative, i.e. – "there is no God".

Here's a post from William Lane Craig about it.

Excerpt:

> The first claim is, ironically, usually found on the lips of atheists, who thereby seek to excuse themselves from bearing any share of the burden of proof in the discussion. Usually, the claim is that a universal negative cannot be proved, and therefore the claim that "There is no God" is unprovable. The second claim is typically given as the reason why a universal negative cannot be proved: no matter how much knowledge you have acquired, there will always be more facts that you do not yet know, and perhaps the exception is among them. So one can never prove that there is no God. Perversely, this is somehow interpreted, not as an admission that atheism is indefensible, but as a demonstration that it is in no need of defense!
>
> Unfortunately, the argument is misconceived on a couple of counts.
>
> First, *negative, universally quantified statements can be proved*. We do this all the time. When we make statements about "all" or "none," we are speaking about what is the case with respect to a certain domain. We are saying that all or none of the members of that domain have or has a certain property. If the domain is not too large, I can confidently make universally quantified affirmative and negative statements. For example, I am quite confident that "No U.S. Senator is a Muslim." Or again, if I have a typical sample of the domain, I can make inductive inferences on the basis of the evidence from the sample to the whole, even if the whole domain is too large for me to canvass; for example, taking as my domain all the microbes on Earth, I can confidently assert, "No microbes have brains."
>
> Now someone might say that while it is admittedly true that negative, universal statements can sometimes be proven, still the point remains that in the case of God, the domain is too large and our sample too small to come to any negative conclusion. But those who propound this argument seem to think that the way one determines whether God exists is by taking a sort of universal survey to see if anything answering to the description of God exists somewhere out there. There are, however, other ways of coming to a knowledge of negative, universally quantified statements than doing an inductive survey.
>
> For example, we can have knowledge of negative, universally quantified

> statements on the basis of things' essential properties; for example, "No water molecules are composed of CO2." (Even if something looked and behaved just like water but was made of CO2 , it still would not be water but just a look-alike substance.) Or if we could show that a notion is logically impossible, we would know that it does not exist; for example, "There are no married bachelors." Significantly, many atheists have tried just this route to proving that God does not exist, arguing that the idea of a being which is all-powerful or all-knowing is logically incoherent.
>
> […]Second, *the statement that "God does not exist" is not a universally quantified statement*. When the theist asserts that "God exists," the word "God" is being used as a proper name, not as a common noun. It is not a statement like "Dogs exist" but rather like "Lassie exists." In order to prove that God does not exist, one need not prove that there are no gods whatsoever. Our interest is in one specific being, not in all the other beings which may have been imagined or worshipped throughout the world. So the claim that "God does not exist" is really a singular claim, like "Sherlock Holmes does not exist" or "Harry Potter does not exist." No one thinks that negative, singular claims cannot be proven.

So there are two ways to disprove a universal negative. Look where you expect the thing to be evident, and show that the evidence is not there. For example, show evidence that the universe is eternal. You can't have a Creator if you can show evidence that the universe is eternal. The second way is to show that the concept of God is logically contradictory, e.g. – that the concept of a "timeless person" is self-contradictory. Scholarly atheists try to do this, but this has not filtered down to the rank and file, which is why they still hold to these atheist slogans like "you can't prove a universal negative". Of course you can.

And finally, Craig concludes with some good advice:

> The bottom line is that we have no choice but to go on the basis of the knowledge and evidence that we do have—just we do in all other affairs of life.

Rank and file atheists seem to be very keen on holding out for today's scientific and historical data to be overturned by Star Trek theories of the future. But the more we study the good, scientific arguments for God's existence, the harder it is for naturalism to account for it. I am talking about the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the habitability argument, the origin of life, the origin of phyla, scientific evidence for consciousness and free will (e.g. – mental effort) and so on. Not to mention other arguments like the moral argument and the minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus.

We have to decide on the data we have *now.* And the data we have now fits better with a theistic worldview than an atheistic worldview. I can imagine all kinds of data that would argue against Christian theism. Finding the bones of Jesus. The universe being eternal. Experimental evidence for the multiverse. A probable naturalistic scenario for the origin

of life. Etc. Arguing against Christian theism is not hard, it just takes work. That's why intelligent and informed atheists like Peter Millican and Austin Dacey can do it, but rank and file atheists want to talk about "I lack a belief in God" and "I can't prove a universal negative".

No one is asking atheists to *prove* anything, just as theists don't *prove* anything. We are asking them to give logical arguments with premises that are supported by the evidence. And that's what we expect theists to do, too. Once we have all the arguments and evidence on both sides, then people can decide for themselves. You don't have to "prove" anything in a debate, you just have to state your case as persuasively as possible and the other side does the same, then people decide. Simple.

UPDATE: My favorite atheist Jeff Lowder mentioned this post from Internet Infidels which is on the same topic. His perspective is always worth reading.

UPDATE: And my friend John Fraser has some thoughts on evidence for and against God.

UPDATE: My FB friend Bruce sent me this video:

It's William Lane Craig answering the question in a debate situation.

What are Boltzmann brains, and what challenge do they post to the multiverse hypothesis?

September 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I thought I would turn to the atheist theoretical physicist Sean Carroll, who has previously debated William Lane Craig, to explain to us what a Boltzmann brain is, and what threat it posts to the multiverse hypothesis.

Here is Sean Caroll, quoted by About.com:

> Ludwig Boltzmann was one of the founders of the field of thermodynamics in the nineteenth century. One of the key concepts was the second law of thermodynamics, which says that the entropy of a closed system always increases. Since the universe is a closed system, we would expect the entropy to decrease over time. This means that, given enough time, the most likely state of the universe is one where everything is the in thermodynamic equilibrium … but we clearly don't exist in a universe of this type since, after all, there is order all around us in various forms, not the least of which is the fact that we exist.
>
> With this in mind, we can apply the anthropic principle to inform our reasoning by taking into account that we do, in fact, exist. Here the logic gets a little confusing, so I'm going to borrow the words from a couple of more detailed looks at the situation. As described by cosmologist Sean Carroll in *From Eternity to Here*:
>
> *Boltzmann invoked the anthropic principle (although he didn't call it that) to explain why we wouldn't find ourselves in one of the very common equilibrium phases: In equilibrium, life cannot exist. Clearly, what we want to do is find the most common conditions within such a universe that are hospitable to life. Or, if we want to be more careful, perhaps we should look for conditions that are not only hospitable to life, but hospitable to the particular kind of intelligent and self-aware life that we like to think we are….*
>
> *We can take this logic to its ultimate conclusion. If what we want is a single planet, we certainly don't need a hundred billion galaxies with a hundred billion stars each. And if what we want is a single person, we certainly don't need an entire planet. But if in fact what we want is a single intelligence, able to think about the world, we don't even need an entire person–we just need his or her brain.*
>
> *So the* reductio ad absurdum *of this scenario is that the overwhelming majority of intelligences in this multiverse will be lonely, disembodied brains, who fluctuate gradually out of the surrounding chaos and then gradually dissolve back into it. Such sad creatures have been dubbed "Boltzmann brains" by Andreas Albrecht and Lorenzo Sorbo….*

> In a 2004 paper, Albrecht and Sorbo discussed "Boltzmann brains" in their essay:
>
> *A century ago Boltzmann considered a "cosmology" where the observed universe should be regarded as a rare fluctuation out of some equilibrium state. The prediction of this point of view, quite generically, is that we live in a universe which maximizes the total entropy of the system consistent with existing observations. Other universes simply occur as much more rare fluctuations. This means as much as possible of the system should be found in equilibrium as often as possible.*
>
> *From this point of view, it is very surprising that we find the universe around us in such a low entropy state. In fact, the logical conclusion of this line of reasoning is utterly solipsistic. The most likely fluctuation consistent with everything you know is simply your brain (complete with "memories" of the Hubble Deep fields, WMAP data, etc) fluctuating briefly out of chaos and then immediately equilibrating back into chaos again. This is sometimes called the "Boltzmann's Brain" paradox.*
>
> […]Now that you understand Boltzmann brains as a concept, though, you have to proceed a bit to understanding the "Boltzmann brain paradox" that is caused by applying this thinking to this absurd degree. Again, as formulated by Carroll:
>
> *Why do we find ourselves in a universe evolving gradually from a state of incredibly low entropy, rather than being isolated creatures that recently fluctuated from the surrounding chaos?*
>
> Unfortunately, there is no clear explanation to resolve this … thus why it's still classified as a paradox.

Naturalists like to propose the multiverse as a way of explaining away the fine-tuning that we see, and explaining why complex, embodied intelligent beings like ourselves exist. But even if the multiverse hypothesis were true, we still would not expect to observe stars, planets, and conscious embodied intelligent beings. It is far more likely on a multiverse scenario that any observers we had would be "Boltzmann" brains in an empty universe. The multiverse hypothesis doesn't explain the universe we have, which contains "*a hundred billion galaxies with a hundred billion stars each*" – not to mention our bodies which are composed of heavy elements, all of which require fine-tuning piled on fine-tuning piled on fine-tuning.

William Lane Craig answered a question about Boltzmann brains a while back, so let's look at his answer since we saw what his debate opponent said above.

He writes:

> Incredible as it may sound, today the principal–almost the only–alternative to a Cosmic Designer to explain the incomprehensibly precise fine tuning of nature's constants and fundamental quantities is the postulate of a World Ensemble of (a preferably infinite number of) randomly ordered universes. By thus multiplying one's probabilistic resources, one ensures that by chance alone somewhere in

> this infinite ensemble finely tuned universes like ours will appear.
>
> Now comes the key move: since observers can exist only in worlds fine-tuned for their existence, OF COURSE we observe our world to be fine-tuned! The worlds which aren't finely tuned have no observers in them and so *cannot* be observed! Hence, our observing the universe to be fine-tuned for our existence is no surprise: if it weren't, we wouldn't be here to be surprised. So this explanation of fine tuning relies on (i) the hypothesis of a World Ensemble and (ii) an observer self-selection effect.
>
> Now apart from objections to (i) of a direct sort, this alternative faces a very formidable objection to (ii), namely, if we were just a random member of a World Ensemble, then we ought to be observing a very different universe. Roger Penrose has calculated that the odds of our solar system's forming instantaneously through the random collision of particles is incomprehensibly more probable that the universe's being fine-tuned, as it is. So if we were a random member of a World Ensemble, we should be observing a patch of order no larger than our solar system in a sea of chaos. Worlds like that are simply incomprehensibly more plentiful in the World Ensemble than worlds like ours and so ought to be observed by us if we were but a random member of such an ensemble.
>
> Here's where the Boltzmann Brains come into the picture. In order to be observable the patch of order needn't be even as large as the solar system. The most probable observable world would be one in which a single brain fluctuates into existence out of the quantum vacuum and observes its otherwise empty world. The idea isn't that the brain is the whole universe, but just a patch of order in the midst of disorder. Don't worry that the brain couldn't persist long: it just has to exist long enough to have an observation, and the improbability of the quantum fluctuations necessary for it to exist that long will be trivial in comparison to the improbability of fine tuning.
>
> In other words, the observer self-selection effect is explanatorily vacuous. It does not suffice to show that only finely tuned worlds are observable. As Robin Collins has noted, what needs to be explained is not just intelligent life, but embodied, interactive, intelligent agents like ourselves. Appeal to an observer self-selection effect accomplishes nothing because there is no reason whatever to think that most observable worlds are worlds in which that kind of observer exists. Indeed, the opposite appears to be true: most observable worlds will be Boltzmann Brain worlds.

Allen Hainline explained some of the OTHER problems with the multiverse in a post on Cross Examined's blog. I recommend taking a look at those as well, because I feel funny even *talking* about Boltzmann brains. I would rather just say that there is no experimental evidence for the multiverse hypothesis, as I blogged before, and leave it at that. But if the person you are talking to fights you on it, you can disprove the multiverse with the

Boltzmann brains.

250,000 Virginians to lose their health care coverage due to Obamacare

September 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> "Nearly a quarter million Virginians will have their current insurance plans cut this fall," said the local anchor. "That is because many of them did not–are not following new Affordable Care Act rules, so a chunk of the companies that offer those individuals their policies will make the individuals choose new policies."
>
> Says the reporter, "This goes back to that now heavily-criticized line we heared before Obamacare was put in place: 'If you like your plan, you can keep it.' Ultimately, that turned out not to be true for thousands of Virginians and companies in the commonwealth. … Wednesday Virginia lawmakers on the health insurance reform commission met for the first time this year. Turns out, a staggering number of Virginians will need new plans this fall."
>
> A Virginia health official says, "Cancellation is a word that's used all the time…but really what's happened is the law has changed. We're not allowed to offer those plans anymore. So what we're saying to them is, you need to move to one that's compliant with the law because that's what we can offer."

Not everyone is going to see the full effects of Obamacare before the midterm elections, but these Virginians are seeing it. The Obama administation delayed the employer mandate until after the midterm elections, along with Obama's execute order amnesty. I hope that Americans are paying attention this time.

New study: men's success and well-being determined by relationships with parents and siblings

September 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Astonishing post from the Art of Manliness blog. (H/T Free Northerner)

Excerpt:

> Vaillant found that the men who had the best scores in these areas during their youth and mid-life, were the happiest, most successful, and best adjusted in their latter years. This is the finding of the Grant Study that has emerged most prominently: "**It was the capacity for intimate relationships that predicted flourishing in all aspects of these men's lives**."
>
> The powerful effect of intimate relationships can be seen in a variety of factors in a man's life, including their income levels:
>
> - Men with at least one good relationship with a sibling growing up made $51,000 more per year than men who had poor relationships with their siblings, or no siblings at all
> - Men who grew up in cohesive homes made $66,000 more per year than men from unstable ones
> - Men with warm mothers took home $87,000 more than those men whose mothers were uncaring
> - The 58 men with the best scores for warm relationships made almost $150,000 more per year than the 31 men with the worst scores
>
> […]When the outcomes of the men's lives were analyzed, and compared to this set of criteria, it became quite clear that "for good or ill, the effects of childhood last a long time." **A warm childhood proved a much stronger predictor of many aspects of a man's flourishing later in life, including his overall contentment in his late seventies, than either his parent's social class or his own income**. These effects are particularly striking when the men with the warmest childhoods (who were dubbed "the Cherished") are compared with those in the bottom tenth (who were called "the Loveless"):
>
> - The Cherished made 50% more money than the Loveless
> - The Cherished were 5X more likely to enjoy rich friendships and warm social supports at age seventy
> - The Loveless were 3.5X more likely to be diagnosed as mentally ill (which includes serious depression, abuse of drugs and alcohol, and need for extended psychiatric care)
> - The Loveless were 5X more likely to be unusually anxious

> - The Loveless took more prescription drugs of all kinds, and were twice as likely to seek medical attention for minor physical complaints
>
> A loving, supportive upbringing seemed to both bolster a man's chances for success in his relationships and career, and inoculate him against future psychological distress.
>
> […]While parenting pundits at various times in our history have worried that a household full of unwavering love and support could turn out a young man who was too coddled and dependent,**the Grant Study found that abundant familial love, when coupled with an emphasis on autonomy and initiative, actually produced the *most* stoical (able to keep a stiff upper lip) and independent men.** Such men, Vaillant explains, had learned to be comfortable with their feelings, and "that they could put their trust in life, which gave them courage to go out and face it." In contrast, the men from the worst childhoods turned out to be the most dependent, and struggled with taking initiative.

And most interestingly:

> One of the findings of the study that I personally found most interesting, was that "**a mother who could enjoy her son's initiative and autonomy was a tremendous boon to his future**." Mothers of men who scored highly on the Decathlon of Flourishing admired their sons' assertiveness, and boasted to researchers that their boys were "fearless to the point of being reckless," "could fight any kid on the block," and "is a tyrant in a way that I adore." In other words, **mothers who celebrated their boys' boyishness bolstered their chances of achieving a successful, mature manhood**.

I really recommend that everyone read this post, especially if you know a young man who you want to be influential and effective. And men who are not yet married but want to should understand that who you pick to be the child's mother is going to have an ENORMOUS effect on their emotional well-being and their ability to succeed and provide. Good men require good mothers.

Friday night movie: The Crossing (2000)

September 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.5/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> The drama is about George Washington crossing the Delaware River and the Battle of Trenton during the American Revolutionary War. The film opens with the retreat of the Continental Army across New Jersey after repeated losses and defeats during the campaign of 1776.
>
> After the army narrowly escapes across the river to the Pennsylvania shore, Washington, realizing that something must be done or the Revolution will collapse, conceives a plan to cross the river and conduct a surprise attack on the Hessian garrison at Trenton.
>
> Despite their own fatigue and the winter weather, Washington manages to lift his weary soldiers' spirits, allowing the army to cross the river on Christmas night. The crossing is done in one night, allowing the troops to attack Trenton at eight o' clock on December 26, 1776.

If anyone reading this blog wants to understand the true character of America, a very good thing to do is to read the book "1776" by David McCullough. It covers all of the events leading up to the crucial turning point of the American Revolution: the Battle of Trenton on December 26, 1776. I really recommend the audio version of the book. David McCullough also wrote the famous biography of John Adams which was shown on HBO, then turned into a DVD series.

Here's a quick history of the American Revolution preceding the Battle of Trenton:

> **September 1774**: Delegates from each colony met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in order to form the First Continental Congress. It was designed to discuss colonial grievances.
>
> **April 1775**: Battles of Lexington and Concord: An organized Massachusetts militia ("Minutemen") defended colonial munitions and forced British regulars to retreat back to Boston. Mother England was stunned.
>
> **May 1775**: The Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
>
> **June 1775**: The Continental Congress appointed George Washington as commander-in-chief of its newly established Continental Army. Soon after, British troops achieved victory at the Battle of Bunker (Breed's) Hill but suffered severe casualties during three assaults against the determined colonial troops.

March 1776: Washington commanded the American siege that eventually forced the British to evacuate Boston. The British departed by sea for Halifax.

April 1776: The Continental Army left Boston and moved south to take a defensive position in New York anticipating a British landing. Washington had hoped to keep the British from occupying this locale. New York was a familiar base of operations from the French and Indian War. The colony of New York also had a strong Loyalist population. Additionally, the force which occupied New York would be centrally located and therefore able to keep New England cut off from the south.

July 1776: The Declaration of Independence, adopted by the Second Continental Congress, officially severed American ties to Great Britain.

Summer of 1776: Though the American were successful at making a worthy stand at Lexington and Concord as well as in Boston, they soon discovered that this was only the beginning as 30,000 British troops (including their Hessians allies) arrived in New York harbor. The next few months were filled with disastrous defeats and demoralizing retreats.

August 27-30 1776: The British win the Battle of Long Island (Battle of Brooklyn)

September 15, 1776: The British occupy New York City

September 16, 1776: The British win the Battle of Harlem Heights

October 28, 1776: The American army retreats at the Battle of White Plains

November 16, 1776: The British capture Fort Washington, NY

November 20, 1776: Fort Lee, NJ falls to the British

December 1, 1776: Washington's troops retreated past New Brunswick, New Jersey and headed toward Princeton with the British following closely behind.

December 7-8, 1776: Washington's army crossed into Pennsylvania from Trenton. They were deployed to guard the River for a 25 miles stretch. All boats remained with Washington's army, making it impossible for the British to follow.

December 9, 1776: "All shops ordered to be shut; the militia to march into the Jerseys; all in hurry and confusion; news that General Howe is on his march…." Washington ordered, "Spare no pains or expense to get intelligence about the enemy's motions and intentions."

December 12, 1776: The Continental Congress abandons Philadelphia as they fear the British approaching.

December 13, 1776: Washington received the news that General Charles Lee was taken prisoner by the British at White's Tavern in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. Lee's troops were slowly marching to meet Washington when Lee made a personal side trip which caused his capture. With the loss of Lee, some assumed that America would be forced into complete surrender as he was considered a

> highly valuable soldier.
>
> [British commander] Howe announced that his campaigning season was over and he intended to winter in New York. Cornwallis intended to return to England for the winter, and, like Howe, he departed from the troops.
>
> **December 14, 1776**: Col. Johann Rall's (known as the Hessian Lion) regiment was left in Trenton as one of a loosely connected string of outposts which was to guard the king's subjects in New Jersey and keep watch against an American raid. 1500 troops were stationed at this location while the bulk of the British army wintered in New York.
>
> **December 19, 1776**: "The American Crisis" was published in Philadelphia. Thomas Paine wrote… *These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it NOW deserves the love and thanks of man and woman*.
>
> This essay rekindled the American people's desire for independence and renewed the spirit of the troops.
>
> **December 20-22, 1776**: Taking Lee's place as commander, General John Sullivan delivered Lee's remaining troops to Washington in Pennsylvania.
>
> **December 21, 1776**: The Hessians thought little of the Americans, but they thought even less of their strategic position in Trenton. Thought criticized for not constructing defensive works, Rall felt Trenton was next to impossible to defend. He stated his concerns about his position as well as his troops fatigue to his British Commanders.
>
> Rall's regiment remained alert and concerned as to their tenuous position. They intended not to remain in Trenton but rather wait for the Delaware River to freeze allowing the Hessian troops to march across the frozen river and directly toward Philadelphia.

As you can see from the timeline, Washington has been losing battle after battle leading up to Christmas of 1776. His troops are tired, ill-equipped, sick and they must be released at the beginning of 1777 when their contract is up. Many have deserted already. What will George Washington do? Is this the end of the American Revolution? Watch the movie, and find out. Then read David McCullough's book!

Happy Friday!

Obama delays amnesty by executive order until after midterm elections

September 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From Human Events.

Excerpt:

> The White House waited until a dead spot in the news cycle on Saturday to leak that President Obama won't be handing out amnesty to five million illegal aliens before the election after all. That's how a craven political operation tries to control the spin surrounding an act of cowardice. Obama's style of "leadership" is mostly about keeping his media plates spinning, managing crises and scandals until the news cycle moves on and they die of old age. That's the essence of his non-strategy for dealing with ISIS – he just needs to keep them from pulling off any massive terror attacks, genocidal rampages, or major military advances until the media loses interest in them.
>
> It's *very* interesting that Obama's amnesty orders – formerly portrayed by conventional media wisdom as a brilliant maneuver that would checkmate Republicans politically while changing the American electorate forever – have now become another plate he needs to spin, a political crisis he had to back away from. The idea was that if Obama issued the orders, Republicans would be made to look like racist xenophobes by speaking or acting against them, but if they *didn't* raise loud objections, their own base would desert them. Instead, something very close to the *opposite* has become true. Obama is backing away from his big amnesty giveaway because endangered Democrats are telling him the 2014 elections will become a party bloodbath if he pulls the trigger. Not only will Republicans unite and become energized by the abuse of executive power to degrade American citizenship, but a sizable portion of the *Democrat* base isn't happy about the amnesty idea, due to concerns ranging from national security, to the stress placed upon government services, to the tight job market.

I think his base of union members will not be too happy with losing their jobs to newly naturalized illegal immigrants, and that's why he has to hide it until after the midterm elections. So we are seeing a situation in which the union members will work to get a man elected who will then take their jobs and give it to illegal immigrants. But this is normal – Democrats are not used to the economic way of thinking and seldom ask the most important question you can ask when it comes to economic policy – "*and then what happens?*"

Just to be clear, I am all in favor of legal immigration for skilled workers, but we cannot strain our economy by naturalizing a group of people who will take more from social services than they pay in taxes. On the other hand, if people who came here promised to

pay for their own health care, education, etc. AND never take a dime of welfare AND never commit a crime, then we could take *anybody* and just naturalize them after 10 years of working here legally with work permits. And if they broke the rules in that time, then they would be gone. But Democrats are not looking for *that kind* of skilled immigrant. They want the votes of those immigrants who depend on big government and don’t understand free market capitalism.

Christians have always stood up for a romantic, committed, exclusive view of sex

September 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Consider this post from Michael Krueger, and it's a must-read.

Excerpt:

> [I]n the second century, as Christianity emerged with a distinctive religious identity, the surrounding pagan culture began to take notice. And it didn't like what it saw. Christians were seen as strange and superstitious–a peculiar religious movement that undermined the norms of a decent society. Christians were, well, *different*.
>
> So, what was so different about Christians compared to the surrounding Greco-Roman culture?
>
> […]While it was not unusual for Roman citizens to have multiple sexual partners, homosexual encounters, and engagement with temple prostitutes, Christians stood out precisely because of their refusal to engage in these practices.
>
> For instance, Tertullian goes to great lengths to defend the legitimacy of Christianity by pointing out how Christians are generous and share their resources with all those in need. But, then he says, "One in mind and soul, we do not hesitate to share our earthly goods with one another. All things are common among us *but our wives*" (*Apol*. 39). Why does he say this? Because, in the Greco-Roman world, it was not unusual for people to share their spouses with each other.
>
> In the second-century *Epistle to Diognetus*, the author goes out of his way to declare how normal Christians are in regard to what they wear, what they eat, and how they participate in society. However, he then says, "[Christians] share their meals, *but not their sexual partners*" (*Diogn*. 5.7). Again, this is the trait that makes Christians different.
>
> We see this play out again in the second-century *Apology of Aristides*. Aristides defends the legitimacy of the Christian faith to the emperor Hadrian by pointing out how Christians "do not commit adultery nor fornication" and "their men keep themselves from every unlawful union" (15).
>
> A final example comes from the second-century apology of Minucius Felix. In his defense to Octavius, he contrasts the sexual ethic of the pagan world with that of Christians:
>
> Among the Persians, a promiscuous association between sons and mothers is allowed. Marriages with sisters are legitimate among the Egyptians and in Athens. Your records and your tragedies, which you both read and hear with pleasure, glory in incests: thus also you worship incestuous gods, who have

> intercourse with mothers, with daughters, with sisters. With reason, therefore, is incest frequently detected among you, and is continually permitted. Miserable men, you may even, without knowing it, rush into what is unlawful: since you scatter your lusts promiscuously, since you everywhere beget children, since you frequently expose even those who are born at home to the mercy of others, it is inevitable that you must come back to your own children, and stray to your own offspring. Thus you continue the story of incest, even although you have no consciousness of your crime. But we maintain our modesty not in appearance, but in our heart we gladly abide by the bond of a single marriage; in the desire of procreating, we know either one wife, or none at all (31).

Compare that with the sexual ethic of Muslims, for example. It makes me wonder why any woman would freely choose Islam over Christianity. Or atheism, for that matter.

Here's a pro-tip for women: you want men who believe in chastity before marriage and who believe in committing to you exclusively as protector and provider for a lifetime. And they should have to prove that they can be faithful and committed during the courtship, too. You can't just take their word for it, they have to work before the marriage to demonstrate their ability as a husband and father.

This topic reminds me of my previous post about early church attitudes to abortion and infanticide. Yes, we were solid there, too. We really have always been on the right side of disagreements about sex and love.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

September 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

Review of evidential apologetics book by pastor shows where church needs to improve

September 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Whenever I talk to Christians, I find that they hold one of two views about what faith is.

The first view of faith is the Biblical view of faith as active trust in propositions we know to be true, because we have reasons and evidence to believe those propositions. This view is not only rooted in the Bible, but it extends through Augustine and Aquinas to the present day. I have written about this view of faith before, and quoted many theologians in support of it. In the Bible, people use miracles as a sign in order to convince skeptics. For example, Peter appeals to the resurrection in Acts 2. The Bible teaches that faith is active trusting based on evidence.

The second view is blind faith. This view is nowhere in the Bible, and this view asserts that becoming a Christian is a leap-of-faith in the dark against all the evidence. This view not only minimizes evidence, but it actually opposes presenting evidence to unbelievers and skeptics in the way that the Bible teaches. This view is nowhere in the Bible, and it was not the method used by Jesus or his followers. It is an unBiblical way of viewing faith, but it is very popular in some circles of Christianity. It is also popular among atheists, because this is what many Christian leaders and pastors tell them that faith is.

Consider this review of a recent book that defends the Gospels and the historicity of the resurrection by one such fideist pastor.

He writes:

> There are, however, two significant shortcomings to the book.
>
> First, *Cold-Case Christianity* places far too much emphasis on the role of extrabiblical sources. No doubt there is a legitimate role for biblical archaeology and extrabiblical writing from antiquity. Christianity is, after all, a faith firmly rooted in human history. But there is a grave danger when truth is suspended because of an apparent lack of corroboration from extrabiblical sources. And Wallace, I'm afraid, wanders too close to this dark side of apologetics.
>
> All of chapter 12, for instance, is devoted to proving the Gospels have external corroborative evidence—"evidence that are independent of the Gospel documents yet verify the claims of the text" (183). Wallace then addresses the historicity of the pool of Bethesda and makes another worrying statement: "For many years, there was no evidence for such a place outside of John's Gospel. Because Christianity makes historical claims, archaeology ought to be a tool we can use to see *if these claims are, in fact, true*" (201-202, emphasis added).
>
> In other words, Wallace seems to suggest we cannot affirm the truth of the Gospel accounts without the stamp of approval from archaeology and other extrabiblical sources. Such reasoning is dangerous, not least because it cannot

> affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. But also, it places the final court of appeal in the realm of extrabiblical sources rather than of God's all-sufficient, all-powerful Word.

That is a textbook definition of fideism – that belief is somehow more pious and praiseworthy the less evidence we have. And the best way to have less evidence is to study nothing at all, but to just make a leap-of-faith in the dark. Of course, a leap-of-faith can land you anywhere – Islam, Mormonism. Presumably this pastor is like the Mormons who eschew all evidence and prefer to detect the truth of Mormonism by "the burning of the bosom" which happens when people read the all-sufficient, all-powerful Book of Mormon. His view of faith is identical to theirs, and 180 degrees opposed to the Bible. He has made his leap-of-faith, and that leap-of-faith is not accountable to arguments and evidence. His faith is private and personal, based on his own feelings. He considers it blasphemous to have to demonstrate what he believes to those who disagree with him. Where is this in the Bible? It's nowhere. But it is everywhere in anti-intellectual Christian circles.

There is a good response to this blind-faith pastor on Deeper Waters. Much less angry than my response.

Excerpt:

> The dark side of apologetics? Did I somehow step into a Star Wars universe?
>
> Yes. How horrible to show that the Bible is backed up by sources outside of it. How terrible to show that these events did not happen in a vacuum. Thankfully, no one in the Bible took this approach.
>
> Except for the fact that when the gospel was being preached, there were no gospels per se and there were no epistles. Paul told Agrippa that the events done weren't done in a corner. In other words, investigate the claims for yourself! The early testimony was eyewitness testimony. Sources like Tacitus and others show the eyewitnesses were right! This was not done in a corner! This was done out in the open! Archaeology helps us confirm the biblical writings and shows that unlike the pagan myths, these events were rooted in a place and time. Is there some danger that our faith will be destroyed by outside sources?
>
> It really becomes a fideistic approach. If your worldview is true, you should have no problem putting it to the strictest scrutiny. If it is not, then you will have a problem. No Christian should fear further research into what they believe. No Christian should have a problem with extra-biblical sources. Now I do agree there is a problem with stating that EVERYTHING must be backed extra-biblically. I think this is a prejudice we too often have where nothing in the Bible can be considered historical unless it's verified somewhere else. A gospel account alone could count as a historical claim itself that can be investigated, and indeed is in NT scholarship, but where we can get extra-biblical evidence, I'm all for it.
>
> […]Christianity is a faith that is rooted in evidences so we should be able to use

> evidences to demonstrate it. I have often been told by those of the presuppositional bent that the approach is used all the time in the Bible. The problem is I can't find one. I get told passages like "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Yes. It is. Wisdom refers to godly living. It doesn't refer to confirming the gospel to be true. When I look at the apostles in every case, I see them pointing to evidences.

It is pastors like Pastor Bungle above who are responsible for the great falling away from Christianity that we are seeing when we look at young people. We need pastors who connect the claims of the Christian worldview to evidence.

Does a ban on “assault weapons” reduce gun violence?

September 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the freaking New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Over the past two decades, the majority of Americans in a country deeply divided over gun control have coalesced behind a single proposition: The sale of assault weapons should be banned.
>
> […]But in the 10 years since the previous ban lapsed, even gun control advocates acknowledge a larger truth: The law that barred the sale of assault weapons from 1994 to 2004 made little difference.
>
> It turns out that big, scary military rifles don’t kill the vast majority of the 11,000 Americans murdered with guns each year. Little handguns do.
>
> In 2012, only 322 people were murdered with any kind of rifle, F.B.I. data shows.
>
> […]This politically defined category of guns — a selection of rifles, shotguns and handguns with “military-style” features — only figured in about 2 percent of gun crimes nationwide before the ban.
>
> Handguns were used in more than 80 percent of murders each year, but gun control advocates had failed to interest enough of the public in a handgun ban. Handguns were the weapons most likely to kill you, but they were associated by the public with self-defense. (In 2008, the Supreme Court said there was a constitutional right to keep a loaded handgun at home for self-defense.)
>
> Banning sales of military-style weapons resonated with both legislators and the public: Civilians did not need to own guns designed for use in war zones.
>
> On Sept. 13, 1994, President Bill Clinton signed an assault weapons ban into law. It barred the manufacture and sale of new guns with military features and magazines holding more than 10 rounds. But the law allowed those who already owned these guns — an estimated 1.5 million of them — to keep their weapons.
>
> The policy proved costly. Mr. Clinton blamed the ban for Democratic losses in 1994. Crime fell, but when the ban expired, a detailed study found no proof that it had contributed to the decline.
>
> The ban did reduce the number of assault weapons recovered by local police, to 1 percent from roughly 2 percent.
>
> “Should it be renewed, the ban’s effects on gun violence are likely to be small at best and perhaps too small for reliable measurement,” a Department of Justice-funded evaluation concluded.

So what does work?

> “We spent a whole bunch of time and a whole bunch of political capital yelling and screaming about assault weapons,” Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu of New Orleans said. He called it a “zero sum political fight about a symbolic weapon.”
>
> Mr. Landrieu and Mayor Michael A. Nutter of Philadelphia are founders of Cities United, a network of mayors trying to prevent the deaths of young black men. “This is not just a gun issue, this is an unemployment issue, it’s a poverty issue, it’s a family issue, it’s a culture of violence issue,” Mr. Landrieu said.
>
> More than 20 years of research funded by the Justice Department has found that programs to target high-risk people or places, rather than targeting certain kinds of guns, can reduce gun violence.

So if banning guns doesn’t stop the crime, then what is causing all the crime?

Dr. Michael Tanner of the libertarian Cato Institute explains in his testimony to Congress:

> Welfare contributes to crime in several ways. First, children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. According to one study, children raised in single-parent families are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior.(3) Moreover, O’Neill found that, holding other variables constant, black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as black children from a family where the father is present. Nearly 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 percent of prison inmates.(4) Research indicates a direct correlation between crime rates and the number of single-parent families in a neighborhood.(5)
>
> As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her seminal article for The Atlantic Monthly:
>
> The relationship [between single-parent families and crime] is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. The nation’s mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family break up as the most important source of rising rates of crime.(6)

Don’t ban guns, ban welfare.

What’s the earliest historical source on the life of Jesus?

September 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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First, the creed – which is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8:

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Almost all historians accept this creed as dating back to within 5 years of the death of Jesus. But why?

Here’s a great article from Eric Chabot, director of Ratio Christi Apologetics Alliance, The Ohio State University to explain why.

Excerpt:

> The late Orthodox Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide was so impressed by the creed of 1 Cor. 15, that he concluded that this “formula of faith may be considered as a statement of eyewitnesses.” (5)
>
> Paul’s usage of the rabbinic terminology “passed on” and “received” is seen in the creed of 1 Cor. 15:3-8:
>
> “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.”
>
> There is an interesting parallel to Paul’s statement in 1 Cor. 15:3-8 in the works of Josephus. Josephus says the following about the Pharisees.
>
> “I want to explain here that the Pharisees passed on to the people certain ordinances from a succession of fathers, which are not written down in the law of Moses. For this reason the party of the Sadducees dismisses these ordinances, averaging that one need only recognize the written ordinances, whereas those from the tradition of the fathers need not be observed.” (6)
>
> As Richard Bauckham notes, “the important point for our purposes is that

Josephus uses the language of “passing on” tradition for the transmission from one teacher to another and also for the transmission from the Pharisees to the people.”(7)

Bauckham notes in his book Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony that the Greek word for “eyewitness” (autoptai), does not have forensic meaning, and in that sense the English word “eyewitnesses” with its suggestion of a metaphor from the law courts, is a little misleading. The autoptai are simply firsthand observers of those events. Bauckham has followed the work of Samuel Byrskog in arguing that while the Gospels though in some ways are a very distinctive form of historiography, they share broadly in the attitude to eyewitness testimony that was common among historians in the Greco-Roman period. These historians valued above all reports of firsthand experience of the events they recounted.

Best of all was for the historian to have been himself a participant in the events (direct autopsy). Failing that (and no historian was present at all the events he need to recount, not least because some would be simultaneous), they sought informants who could speak from firsthand knowledge and whom they could interview (indirect autopsy).” In other words, Byrskog defines “autopsy,” as a visual means of gathering data about a certain object and can include means that are either direct (being an eyewitness) or indirect (access to eyewitnesses).

Byrskog also claims that such autopsy is arguably used by Paul (1 Cor.9:1; 15:5–8; Gal. 1:16), Luke (Acts 1:21–22; 10:39–41) and John (19:35; 21:24; 1 John 1:1–4).

While the word “received” (a rabbinical term) can also be used in the New Testament of receiving a message or body of instruction or doctrine (1 Cor.11:23; 15:1, 3; Gal. 1:9, 12 [2x], Col 2:6; 1 Thess 2:13; 4:1; 2 Thess 3:6), it also means means “to receive from another.” This entails that Paul received this information from someone else at an even earlier date. 1 Corinthians is dated 50-55 A.D. Since Jesus was crucified in 30-33 A.D. the letter is only 20-25 years after the death of Jesus. But the actual creed here in 1 Cor. 15 was received by Paul much earlier than 55 A.D.

[…]Even the co-founder Jesus Seminar member John Dominic Crossan, writes:

“Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that “I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received.” The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he “went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days” (11).

This comment by Crossan makes sense because within the creed Paul calls Peter by his Aramic name, Cephas. Hence, if this tradition originated in the Aramaic language, the two locations that people spoke Aramaic were Galilee and Judea.

> (12) The Greek term “historeo” is translated as “to visit” or “to interview.” (13) Hence, Paul’s purpose of the trip was probably designed to affirm the resurrection story with Peter who had been an actual eyewitness to the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:5).

I know what you’re thinking. You’re thinking “Hey WK, isn’t John Dominic Crossan that wacky liberal atheist who is on the far-left fringe of historical Jesus scholarship? So wacky, that he actually thought that Secret Gospel of Mark was *real*, instead of just being a hoax?” Yes, that’s the nutty John Dominic Crossan I mean. The very one.

Here’s a bit more about this early creed from Gary Habermas.

Quote:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: “However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul’s.”[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul’s own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: “It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition.”[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]
>
> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul’s use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which

Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]

Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]

Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.

(3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]

These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.

(4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his

> firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

That’s how solid this early creed is – even atheists like Crossan and Ludemann accept it as historically reliable. It’s historical bedrock, as Michael Licona likes to say. This is the stuff that *everyone* accepts – across the ideological spectrum!

Hillary Clinton confidants were present to “separate” damaging documents before Benghazi probe

September 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The best reporter in the universe is Sharyl Attkisson, and here’s her latest up at the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> As the House Select Committee on Benghazi prepares for its first hearing this week, a former State Department diplomat is coming forward with a startling allegation: Hillary Clinton confidants were part of an operation to “separate” damaging documents before they were turned over to the Accountability Review Board investigating security lapses surrounding the Sept. 11, 2012, terrorist attacks on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya.
>
> According to former Deputy Assistant Secretary Raymond Maxwell, the after-hours session took place over a weekend in a basement operations-type center at State Department headquarters in Washington, D.C. This is the first time Maxwell has publicly come forward with the story.
>
> At the time, Maxwell was a leader in the State Department’s Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, which was charged with collecting emails and documents relevant to the Benghazi probe.
>
> “I was not invited to that after-hours endeavor, but I heard about it and decided to check it out on a Sunday afternoon,” Maxwell says.
>
> He didn’t know it then, but Maxwell would ultimately become one of four State Department officials singled out for discipline—he says scapegoated—then later cleared for devastating security lapses leading up to the attacks. Four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens, were murdered during the Benghazi attacks.
>
> Maxwell says the weekend document session was held in the basement of the State Department’s Foggy Bottom headquarters in a room underneath the “jogger’s entrance.” He describes it as a large space, outfitted with computers and big screen monitors, intended for emergency planning, and with small offices on the periphery.
>
> When he arrived, Maxwell says he observed boxes and stacks of documents. He says a State Department office director, whom Maxwell described as close to Clinton’s top advisers, was there. Though the office director technically worked for him, Maxwell says he wasn’t consulted about her weekend assignment.
>
> **“She told me, ‘Ray, we are to go through these stacks and pull out**

> **anything that might put anybody in the [Near Eastern Affairs] front office or the seventh floor in a bad light,'" says Maxwell. He says "seventh floor" was State Department shorthand for then-Secretary of State Clinton and her principal advisers.**
>
> **"I asked her, 'But isn't that unethical?' She responded, 'Ray, those are our orders.' "**
>
> A few minutes after he arrived, Maxwell says, in walked two high-ranking State Department officials.
>
> In an interview Monday morning on Fox News, Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, named the two Hillary Clinton confidants who allegedly were present: One was Cheryl Mills, Clinton's chief of staff and a former White House counsel who defended President Bill Clinton during his impeachment trial. The other, Chaffetz said, was Deputy Chief of Staff Jake Sullivan, who previously worked on Hillary Clinton's and then Barack Obama's presidential campaigns.
>
> […]**Maxwell also criticizes the ARB as "anything but independent," pointing to Mullen's admission in congressional testimony that he called Mills to give her inside advice after the ARB interviewed a potential congressional witness.**
>
> […]**Maxwell also criticizes the ARB for failing to interview key people at the White House, State Department and the CIA, including not only Clinton but Deputy Secretary of State Thomas Nides, who managed department resources in Libya; Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs Andrew Shapiro; and White House National Security Council Director for Libya Ben Fishman.**
>
> **"The ARB inquiry was, at best, a shoddily executed attempt at damage control, both in Foggy Bottom and on Capitol Hill," Maxwell says. He views the after-hours operation he witnessed in the State Department basement as "an exercise in misdirection."**

It's so surprising to me that we are just finding out about these things *now,* and through the Daily Signal, not through the mainstream media. It certainly does show what a Hillary Clinton presidency would be like, though – after all, she was Secretary of State when the attack occurred, and we can see where her staff's priority's were. This is the woman who blamed a terrorist attack on a Youtube video, to the grieving families of the victims. It sounded good to her, and made her look good, and that's what matters, right? It's not like anyone is out to harm us, right?

Federal court reinstates anti-voter-fraud law in Wisconsin, Democrats hardest hit

September 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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If it's not close, they can't cheat. And in Wisconsin, they can't cheat anyway.

National Review reports:

Voter-ID opponents have suffered another stunning blow.

> On Friday, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals dissolved the injunction that had been issued against Wisconsin's voter-ID law by a federal district court in April. The court told Wisconsin that it "may, if it wishes (and if it is appropriate under rules of state law), enforce the photo ID requirement in this November's elections." In reaction, Kevin Kennedy, the state's top election official, said that Wisconsin would take all steps necessary "to fully implement the voter photo ID law for the November general election." The appeals court issued its one-page opinion within hours of hearing oral arguments in the appeal.
>
> As I explained in an NRO article in May, the district court judge, Lynn Adelman, a Clinton appointee and former Democratic state senator, had issued an injunction claiming the Wisconsin ID law violated the Voting Rights Act as well as the Fourteenth Amendment. Adelman made the startling claim in his opinion that the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in 2008 upholding Indiana's voter-ID law as constitutional was "not binding precedent," so Adelman could essentially ignore it.
>
> However, that was too much for the Seventh Circuit. It pointed out, in what most lawyers would consider a rebuke, that Adelman had held Wisconsin's law invalid "even though it is materially identical to Indiana's photo ID statute, which the Supreme Court held valid in *Crawford v. Marion County Election Board*, 553 U.S. 181 (2008)."
>
> It was also obviously significant to the Seventh Circuit that the Wisconsin state supreme court had upheld the state's voter-ID law in July, since the three-judge panel cited that decision, *Milwaukee Branch of NAACP v. Walker*, too. In fact, the appeals court said the state court decision had changed the "balance of equities and thus the propriety of federal injunctive relief."
>
> In other words, there was no justification for striking down a state voter-ID law that was identical to one that had been previously upheld by both the Supreme Court of the United States and that state's highest court.
>
> […]**This is also another big defeat for Attorney General Eric Holder, who announced in July that the Justice Department would be intervening in this lawsuit. The Department lost a lawsuit that claimed South Carolina's voter-ID law was discriminatory in 2012, and a federal judge**

> **recently refused to issue an injunction against North Carolina's voter-ID law in another lawsuit filed by Justice.**

This is a big win for Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, who faces a tough Democrat challenger backed by powerful unions in November.

Mike Licona lectures on historical methods and the New Testament

September 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's a quick overview of Michael Licona's latest book on the resurrection, entitled "The Resurrection of Jesus".

60 minutes of lecture, 20 minutes of Q&A.

Summary:

- Dr. Licona's background and education
- The definition of history and philosophy of history
- Postmodern approaches to history
- Historical bedrock: facts that are historically demonstrable
- Historical criterion 1: Explanatory scope
- Historical criterion 2: Explanatory power
- Historical criterion 3: Plausibility
- Historical criterion 4: Ad Hoc / Speculation / non-evidenced assumptions
- Inference to the best explanation
- Investigating miracle claims: is it possible? How?
- Objection of James D.G. Dunn
- Objection of Bart Ehrman
- New Testament sources: Gospels and Paul's letters
- The Gnostic gospels: are they good sources?
- The minimal facts
- The hallucination hypothesis
- The best explanation

While watching this lecture, it struck what good preparation it was for understanding debates. This lecture is more about historical methods, but if you're interested in Mike's minimal facts case for the resurrection, here's a video on that:

This is the case he uses in his debates with Richard Carrier, Dale Allison, Bart Ehrman, etc.

Mike Licona's ministry is here: Risen Jesus but there is more to his work than just the resurrection. He co-edited a book on 50 evidences for God from many different areas with William Dembski. He likes evidence from every discipline you can think of, and then some.

If you are looking for a good book to read on the resurrection of Jesus, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

GAO report: Obama lied again – 1,036 Obamacare plans cover abortions

September 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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First it was “you can keep your doctor” then it was “you can keep your health plan”. Now it’s funding of abortions.

CNS News reports:

> President Obama promised that under his health care plan, “no federal dollars will be used to fund abortion,” but that’s just another broken promise, according to a new report from the Government Accountability Office, which indicates that public funding of abortion is happening on a large scale.
>
> “This confirms what we have long suspected,” Rep. Joe Pitts (R-Penn.) said in a conference call with reporters on Monday.
>
> Pitts and other Republicans asked the GAO to find out which taxpayer-subsidized plans in the Obamacare exchanges fund abortion and if consumers know about that coverage.
>
> The report concluded that in 2014, more than a thousand federally subsidized Obamacare policies paid for abortion on demand, sometimes unbeknownst to policyholders. And in five states, every plan offered on the exchanges included abortion on demand, giving consumers no alternative, as required by law.
>
> Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) said the revelations defy both the longstanding Hyde Amendment, which prohibits federal funding of abortion, and the promises made by President Barack Obama.
>
> “In an 11th hour ploy to garner a remnant of pro-life congressional Democrats absolutely needed for passage of Obamacare, the president issued an executive order on March 24, 2010 that said: ‘the Act maintains current Hyde Amendment restrictions governing abortion policy and extends those restrictions to newly created health insurance exchanges’,” said Smith, who is co-chairman of the Bipartisan Congressional Pro-Life Caucus.
>
> “It turns out that those ironclad promises made by the President himself are absolutely untrue,” Smith said.

Obama, in the video above, calls allegations that his health care plan would fund abortion a “fabrication”. And many people believed him, first in 2008 then again in 2012. But as usual, he was lying. After all, Obama knows morality better than pro-lifers do, and he knows more what we should be doing with our own money than we do. We should be grateful that such a wise, moral man casts aside our childish moral objections for the greater glory of taxpayer-funded abortion. Forward!

43-year-old teacher with HIV admits having sex with teen

September 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From CBS local news in Texas, of all places.

Excerpt:

> A North Texas teacher, who is HIV positive, was caught leaving the home of a 15-year-old boy. Police say when Roger "Joe" Kessler was questioned and he admitted having a sexual relationship with the teen. Now Kessler is charged with sexual assault of a child.
>
> The details from his arresting documents are disturbing and have both law enforcement and Richardson ISD officials on alert.
>
> Kessler is a music teacher at Richardson ISD Academy. The 43-year-old is the man police say admitted to having sex with a 15-year-old boy, at least four times. And authorities say the sexual acts were performed without Kessler telling the teen he has HIV.
>
> McKinney police say they were called to a home in the 1300 block of Gough Street on Wednesday. While authorities were responding to a burglary in progress, they arrived to Kessler being detained by the homeowner.
>
> Apparently the teenager's mother had arrived home and thought her home had been burgled, because she saw a man leaving her backyard.
>
> Further investigation revealed Kessler was trying to run away from the house where he admitted to having just had a sexual encounter with the teen.
>
> Court documents detail how Kessler and the 15-year-old met using a smart phone application called Grindr. The app bills itself as a "popular all-male location-based social network," but is known as a place for men looking for sex to connect.
>
> According to police documents, Kessler even logged on to Grindr and showed officers at the scene a series of text messages he had exchanged with the teen.

Previously, I wrote about a Center for Disease Control report that found that men who have sex with men were 150 times more likely to contract HIV, and another CDC report that found that 62% of men who have unprotected sex with other men know they have HIV.

What are the historical arguments for the empty tomb story?

September 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until

> the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

A few quotes from atheist historians not from Dr. Craig's article: (thanks to Eric of Ratio Christi OSU)

> Michael Goulder (Atheist NT Prof. at Birmingham) "…it goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion." ["The Baseless Fabric of a Vision," in Gavin D'Costa, editor, Resurrection Reconsidered (Oxford, 1996), 48.]
>
> Gerd Lüdemann (Atheist Prof of NT at Göttingen): "…the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus…not later than three years… the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE." [The Resurrection of Jesus, trans. by Bowden (Fortress, 1994), 171-72.]
>
> Robert Funk (Non-Christian scholar, founder of the Jesus Seminar): "…The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30 C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." [Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, The Acts of Jesus, 466.]

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s. For example, the atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark some time in the 40s. (See the debate below)

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source

> must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say "The President is hosting a dinner at the White House" and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the "high priest" as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus' death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

So we are dealing with very early sources for the empty tomb.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as "Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women" and "Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female."
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to

> explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

Minnesota’s largest and cheapest Obamacare insurer drops out of exchange

September 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> The largest insurer with the lowest premium rates on Minnesota’s Obamacare exchange is dropping out because the government health-exchange is unsustainable, the company announced Tuesday.
>
> PreferredOne Health Insurance told MNsure, the state-run exchange, Tuesday morning that it would not continue to offer its popular insurance plans on the marketplace in 2015.
>
> […]“Our MNsure individual product membership is only a small percentage of the entire PreferredOne enrollment **but is taking a significant amount of our resources to support administratively**,” the company said in a statement. “We feel continuing on MNsure was not sustainable and believe this is an important step to best serve all PreferredOne members.”
>
> PreferredOne was Minnesota’s largest exchange insurer with 59 percent of individual MNsure sign-ups, according to KSTP. Another four insurance companies — Blue Cross Blue Shield, HealthPartners, Medica and UCare — will continue to offer plans on the exchange next year.
>
> This leaves Minnesota Obamacare customers in a tricky situation. PreferredOne had significantly lower rates than any other insurer on the exchange. When these plans disappear, customers will see a significant rate hike if they choose to continue on the Obamacare exchange, independent of yearly rate hikes.
>
> Minnesota is scheduled to announce premium rates for 2015 Obamacare plans in October and signs point to looming price hikes that will hit Minnesotans doubly hard.

The administration costs are too high.

I noticed that Minnesota has a Senate election this year, and that comedian Al Franken is up for re-election, and he is leading by 9 points. Maybe Minnesota will learn something from their rate hikes and stop voting in a clown who voted for Obamacare. One can hope that money will cause them to learn their lesson.

If you care about the poor, must you vote for bigger government?

September 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's an article on the Daily Signal that traces the history of big government "solutions" to poverty, and argues that big government has not been able to solve the poverty problem no matter how much money they've taken from taxpayers.

Excerpt:

> Today, the U.S. Census Bureau will release its annual report on poverty. This report is noteworthy because this year marks the 50th anniversary of President Lyndon Johnson's launch of the War on Poverty. Liberals claim that the War on Poverty has failed because we didn't spend enough money. Their answer is just to spend more. But the facts show otherwise.
>
> […]Over 100 million people, about one third of the U.S. population, received aid from at least one welfare program at an average cost of $9,000 per recipient in 2013. If converted into cash, current means-tested spending is five times the amount needed to eliminate all poverty in the U.S.
>
> But today the Census will almost certainly proclaim that around 14 percent of Americans are still poor. The present poverty rate is almost exactly the same as it was in 1967 a few years after the War on Poverty started. Census data actually shows that poverty has gotten worse over the last 40 years.
>
> How is this possible? How can the taxpayers spend $22 trillion on welfare while poverty gets worse?
>
> The answer is it isn't possible. Census counts a family as poor if its income falls below specified thresholds. But in counting family "income," Census ignores nearly the entire $943 billion welfare state.
>
> For most Americans, the word "poverty" means significant material deprivation, an inability to provide a family with adequate nutritious food, reasonable shelter and clothing. But only a small portion of the more than 40 million people labelled as poor by Census fit that description.
>
> […]According to government surveys, the typical family that Census identifies as poor has air conditioning, cable or satellite TV, and a computer in his home. Forty percent have a wide screen HDTV and another 40 percent have internet access. Three quarters of the poor own a car and roughly a third have two or more cars. (These numbers are not the result of the current bad economy pushing middle class families into poverty; instead, they reflect a steady improvement in living conditions among the poor for many decades.)
>
> The intake of protein, vitamins and minerals by poor children is virtually identical with upper middle class kids. According to surveys by the U.S. Department of

> Agriculture, the overwhelming majority of poor people report they were not hungry even for a single day during the prior year.

The article goes on t make the point that if the purpose of government social programs is to make people more independent so they can get off the welfare, then the government has *failed* to achieve that goal. In fact, they've made even *more* people dependent on government since they started to try to make them independent of government.

According to a Congressional Research Service study, we spend more on welfare per year (1.03 trillion) than we do on Social Security (725 billion) or Medicare (480 billion) or non-war defense (540 billion). And what do we get? More dependency on government, not less.

Greg Ganssle explains the problems of evil and suffering

September 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I found these three videos on Apologetics 315. They are each about 5 minutes long.

Here's the first one:

Description:

> Part 1 of a trilogy. Greg lays out a classic argument that God does not exist, called 'The Problem of Evil'. He distinguishes two versions of that argument, which are sometimes called 'the deductive' and 'the evidential' version. He goes into some details on the deductive version.

And the second one:

Description:

> Part 2 of a trilogy. Here, Greg gives a response to the deductive version of the Problem of Evil on behalf of someone who believes that God exists. In thinking about this response, we need to think about whether God can make contradictions true, and whether God can have good reasons for allowing bad things to happen.

And the third one:

Description:

> Part 3 of a trilogy. Greg considers the evidential version of the Problem of Evil, and gives a response on behalf of someone who believes that God exists. This involves considering whether God might have a good reason to allow bad things to happen.

This is very practical and you won't find a shorter introduction to the problem of evil than these videos. When things go wrong as they sometimes will in your life it's very important to understand that we shouldn't be surprised by suffering and evil.

Probably the most important thing to understand about evil and suffering is that God is not our cosmic butler. It's not his job to provide happiness for his human pets. You would never get the idea from the Bible that God is interested in making people feel happy, especially if they ignore him and his moral laws. Everything God does with people is meant to make them know him better and serve him better, and many things that happen to us that don't make us happy, but they do give us the opportunity to either grow towards God or away from him.

If the story of Jesus tells us anything, it tells us that you can be morally perfect and still get whammed while you learn how to be obedient to God. Being good is no guarantee of happiness. Doing God's will is no guarantee of happiness. There just is no guarantee of

happiness, no matter how righteous you are. But what there is for us is a promise that God works through evil and suffering in order to make those who respond to his leading as much like his Son Jesus as they can be. And that has to be enough for us. We have to learn how to trust God through suffering. Knowing the logic of the problems of evil and suffering can help us to develop that trust.

Wikipedia editor deletes all evidence of Neil deGrasse Tyson's quote fabrication

September 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Wikipedia is garbage, and here's a story that explains why, from The Federalist.

Excerpt:

> Neil Tyson, a prominent popularizer of science (he even has his own television show) was recently found to have repeatedly fabricated multiple quotes over several years. The fabrications were not a one-off thing. They were deliberate and calculated, crafted with one goal in mind: to elevate Tyson, and by extension his audience, at the expense of know-nothing, knuckle-dragging nutjobs who hate science. Tyson targeted journalists, members of Congress, even former President George W. Bush. And what was their crime? They were guilty of rejecting science, according to Tyson.

> There's only one problem. None of the straw man quotes that Tyson uses to tear them down are real. The quote about the numerically illiterate newspaper headline? Fabricated. The quote about a member of Congress who said he had changed his views 360 degrees? It doesn't exist. That time a U.S. president said "Our God is the God who named the stars" as a way of dividing Judeo-Christian beliefs from Islamic beliefs? It never happened.
>
> […]After I published my piece about Neil Tyson's fabrication of the George W. Bush quote, several users edited Neil Tyson's wiki page to include details of the quote fabrication controversy. The fact-loving, evidence-weighing, ever-objective editors of the online encyclopedia did not appreciate the inclusion of the evidence of Tyson's fabrication. Not at all.
>
> According to a review of the edit history of Tyson's page, one long-time Wikipedia editor deleted an entire pending section summarizing the issue of Tyson's fabricated quotes. Another editor attempted to insert a brief mention of Tyson's fabrication of the George W. Bush quote. That mention was also deleted. When it was reinserted, it was deleted yet again by an editor who describes himself as a childless progressive and an apostle of Daily Kos (h/t @kerpen). Here are just a few of that user's political ramblings, in case you were curious about the motivation behind the scrubbing of Tyson's wiki.
>
> Literally every single mention of Tyson's history of fabricating quotes has been removed from Tyson's Wikipedia page.

The Federalist post has been updated now to indicate that:

> Early this morning, in a discussion thread about whether references to Neil deGrasse Tyson's history of quote fabrication should be added to Tyson's

> Wikipedia page, an editor stated that “no version of this event will be allowed into the article.”

So I hope this helps everyone to understand that Wikipedia is a joke site, and you should try never to quote from it if you are in a debate situation.

On the other hand, I have to give kudos to well-known atheist Hemant Mehta, who has a full breakdown of Tyson’s other fabrications, and Mehta, who might be expected to cover up for Tyson, instead said this “If a pastor or right-wing conservative did it, we’d be calling them out on it immediately. Tyson doesn’t deserve a free pass just because his intentions are pure. It certainly wouldn’t (or shouldn’t) get by in an academic setting, and just because he often speaks to a lay audience doesn’t mean he should make up quotations or fail to cite them if they’re real.” Now that’s an honest atheist. The reason that quote fabrication is not punished on Wikipedia, though, is because it is a joke site. And this episode proves it.

What you do before you marry affects your marital happiness and stability

September 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A recent article from The Federalist explains why chastity matters when choosing a mate. Excerpt:

> [A] new study shows that the more relationships you've had prior to marriage, the less likely you'll have a good marriage. This seems somewhat obvious, but it's so contrary to popular culture and practice these days that even the study's authors say the finding is "counterintuitive."
>
> "In most areas, more experience is better. You're a better job candidate with more experience, not less. When it comes to relationship experience, though, we found that having more experience before getting married was associated with lower marital quality," said Galena K. Rhoades, research associate professor of psychology at the University of Denver. She's a co-author of the study "Before 'I Do': What Do Premarital Experiences Have To Do With Marital Quality Among Today's Young Adults?," from the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia. The report has all sorts of interesting findings, including that large weddings and conscious decision-making in relationships are also factors in happy marriages.
>
> **Previous marriages and previously having lived with a partner were both identified as risk factors for less-happy marriages, the authors said.** We know so much about how living together is a risk factor for all sorts of unhappiness that I seriously have to restrain myself from shouting at my female friends who tell me they're moving in or have moved in with their boyfriends. I mean, even if there were no moral problem with it, it's just bad strategy if you want a happy life.
>
> […][T]he nearly one-quarter of people in the study who had sex solely with the person they married reported high marital quality, higher than those who had sex with other partners prior to marriage. And the more sexual partners a woman had before marriage, the less happy she reported her marriage to be. Well that's not what we've been told by the *Cosmo*-Jezebel alliance. The study's authors speculate on why this might be.

> **One reason that more experience could lead to lower marital quality is that more experience may increase one's awareness of alternative partners. A strong sense of alternatives is believed to make it harder to maintain commitment to, and satisfaction with, what one already has. People who have had many relationships prior to their current one can compare a present partner to their prior partners in many areas—like**

> **conflict management, dating style, physical attractiveness, sexual skills, communication ability, and so on. Marriage involves leaving behind other options, which may be harder to do with a lot of experience.**

I have to say that this factor is the biggest factor that gives me pause when considering marriage with a woman with a sexual past. Will I be compared to these other men? Will I be trusted? Will she be vulnerable to me? Usually when a woman has had past experiences with bad men, then she tends to be more guarded with me, regardless of how I would perform sexually after we were married. I am interested in a woman being trusting and vulnerable, yet a sexual past usually doesn't make a woman more trusting and vulnerable.

However, there is a way to work on the problem, I think – and that way is taking a structured approach to courting that involves open communication and deliberate planning:

> [T]he hook-up thing, which was a factor in lower marital quality, also matches with other less formalized arrangements that are becoming common among younger generations. If you can make out with someone thanks to the lowered inhibitions you guzzled down at the bar, you don't have to make a formal request to ask her out or to plan a date. Similarly, many respondents reported shacking prior to marriage. And those who lived with their eventual spouse before making a commitment to marry reported lower marital quality than those who waited to move in together until they were engaged or married.

> **The study actually had people rate how much of living together was a conscious decision vs. something that just sort of happened. And the more it was a decision, the happier the eventual marriage was. This might be because of higher levels of commitment present at the time of moving in or because it reflects better communication skills, a key to marital contentment, the authors said.**

> **The same sort of conscious decision making effect could be seen in differences in pre-marital counseling. While only 32 percent of those who did not have premarital preparation reported high marital quality, that jumped to 57 percent of those who did take part in premarital preparation. Less sliding, more deciding might not be a Millennial motto but it should be.**

What you want to avoid is someone who cannot communicate and is not good at making decisions and then sticking with her decisions over the long haul. And that can be developed – it can be worked on and improved. But it takes time to do.

Here's the author's conclusion:

> All the options make it hard to man-up or woman-up and make some decisions **because we're so terrified of missing out on the next best thing.** But the whole truly counterintuitive point of a happy marriage is that you're not supposed to be thinking about what your spouse can do for you so much as what you can do for your spouse. That's why this whole commercialized approach to spouse-picking is wrong. When you're trying to figure out which yogurt to buy, you're doing a lot of comparison shopping, but you're not thinking of what you can do for the yogurt, you know?

> We all want marriage, more or less, but we couldn't be doing a worse job of trying to attain it. We want to find the perfect spouse, even though he or she doesn't exist and finding a perfect spouse isn't what marriage is about. What's worse, we demand that someone forgive us our many faults even while we're mentally comparing our potential spouse with other people or figments of our imagination. We should stop with that and really work at doing what it takes to get married and stay happily married.
>
> […]**Even if you have not made the healthiest or most prudential sexual choices prior to now, don't flip out or despair. Just because some factors are related to marital happiness doesn't mean you can't have a happy marriage. Just focus on making better decisions from this point forward. Be conscious and deliberate about them. Stop letting life happen to you and start thinking about what you want and how to get there. And, finally, remember that your big extended family is a blessing and that rituals occur throughout the world for very good reason.**

I think having a string of past relationships does lead a person to want to delay marriage and hold out for "the next best thing". That's why so many women are delaying marriage and getting into fertility problems. They want to have fun and them jump off the carousel into the respectability of marriage at the last possible instant. Which is not fun for a man who is seeking the kind of intimacy that grows slowly over time. I have always been impressed by couples who have been married for decades, but you get that by marrying for the benefit of that other person, instead of holding out for the best deal for you. If you find someone you want to care for for the rest of your life, just marry them – that's my advice. Try to make relationships more about planning and obligations, and less about fun and excitement.

Study of elementary school children finds entrenched discrimination against boys

September 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The study is here (PDF), and Susan Walsh writes about the study on her blog. (H/T Stuart Schneiderman)

Excerpt:

> A new study of nearly 6,000 elementary school children has found that boys are discriminated against beginning in kindergarten. Christopher Cornwell, an economics professor at the University of Georgia, says that "gender disparities in teacher grades start early and uniformly favor girls."
>
> Despite having higher scores on standardized tests, boys get lower grades than girls. Why? Because teachers are basing grades at least partly on classroom behavior, and the standards are very much geared to female norms.
>
> […]Here's what the disparity looks like for kindergarten boys:
>
> | Std. Deviation | Test Scores | Grades |
> |---|---|---|
> | Reading | -.017 | -.27 |
> | Math | +.02 | -.15 |
> | Science | +.035 | -.14 |
>
> (Note: Values are approx., gauged visually from study graphic.)
>
> Another interesting finding was that boys who adhere to female norms on non-cognitive skills were not penalized. Effectively, the more female behavior was rewarded with a grade "bonus" for males.
>
> The implications of this are obvious. Masculinity, even normal maleness, is being punished in schools from a very young age. Only the most female-acting boys are rewarded with a fair assessment.

I found this story on Stuart Schnederman's blog, and this is what he had to say about it:

> The results demonstrated that schoolteachers are prejudiced against boys. When teachers do not just grade on performance, but include a number of intangible qualities that girls are more likely to possess, they are acting as bigots.

I recommend that everyone pick up a copy of "The War Against Boys" by AEI scholar Christina Hoff Sommers to learn more about this anti-male discrimination problem.

I see a lot of people raving at men to "man up" these days. Many of those people are pastors who remain ignorant about the real, systemic causes of male underachievement. Even very obvious factors – like the dominance of female teachers and administrators in schools – are ignored by the blame-men crowd. Boys generally learn better when they

learn from male teachers in all-male classrooms. But unfortunately for boys, there are people who don’t want to do what works for men, especially when it doesn’t fit with feminist ideology.

SATIRE: Unemployed Gender Studies Major Sues 'The Patriarchy'

September 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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From the Daily Currant.

Excerpt:

> An unemployed gender studies major from Eugene, Ore. sued "The Patriarchy" today in federal court for refusing to give her a job.
>
> In a 25-page brief, attorneys for Sarah Miller-Jones, 24, argue that gender discrimination from the patriarchy has prevented their client from finding gainful employment since she graduated from university three years ago.
>
> The suit seeks $2 million in compensation and $139 million in punitive damages, which together equal $1 from every adult man in America.
>
> "Despite the fact that Ms. Miller-Jones graduated with a 2.8 GPA from the prestigious University of Oregon, she has been unable to find a job fitting her qualifications," the document reads.
>
> "Ms. Miller-Jones has been on unemployment benefits for 18 months. And despite extensive coursework in Zambian feminist hip-hop she has only received six job offers — all of which were for entry-level call center and health care positions.
>
> "It is outrageous that the patriarchy refuses to offer our client a decent career. She has applied for over 20 positions in the recording, publishing and television industries and has been rejected every single time.
>
> "We all know that terms like 'no experience' and 'lack of relevant education' are codewords the patriarchy uses to keep keep women in their place. But Ms. Miller-Jones refuses to be a housewife or a nurse. She deserves a real job."
>
> Millions of young Americans who recently graduated from university are finding themselves working in jobs below their educational level.
>
> Media reports have tended to blame the slow recovery from the Great Recession for the trend. However, an equally important factor is the fact that the American university system turns out too few graduates with employable skills.
>
> There are an estimated 3 million open jobs in the United States that go unfilled due to a lack of qualified candidates. Many of these jobs are in science and engineering, while the most popular majors for U.S. college graduates are in psychology and the liberal arts.
>
> According to a former employer, Miller-Jones' gender studies degree actually hurt her employability. Gilbert Grass manages a call center for a local credit union in Eugene and says he regrets hiring her straight out of college.
>
> "She refused to use the words 'he' or 'she' when talking to customers," he says.

> “That lead to a lot of confusion. And she once gave a customer who called to check her bank balance a 20-minute lecture on how the film *Toy Story* perpetuated gender-specific archetypes of heroism.

I’m sorry, but this just makes me laugh so hard. I just want to remind everyone that this is satire. Not real! Not real!

Shorebird’s beak inspires researchers to design new water collection strategy

September 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The shorebird’s beak is more interesting than you might think

Dr. Fazale Rana of Reasons to Believe tweeted this cool example of biomimetics from Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> A UT Arlington engineering professor and his doctoral student have designed a device based on a shorebird’s beak that can accumulate water collected from fog and dew.

> The device could provide water in drought-stricken areas of the world or deserts around the globe.
>
> Xin Heng… a doctoral student in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, and Cheng Luo, MAE professor, have made a device that can use fog and dew to collect water.
>
> Cheng Luo, professor in the Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering Department, and Xin Heng, PhD candidate in the same College of Engineering department, published “Bioinspired Plate-Based Fog Collectors” in the Aug. 25 edition of ACS’ (American Chemical Society) *Applied Materials & Interfaces* journal.
>
> The idea began when Heng saw an article that explained the physical mechanism shorebirds use to collect their food — driving food sources into their throats by opening and closing their beaks. Luo said that inspired the team to try to replicate the natural beak in the lab.
>
> “We wanted to see if we could do that first,” Luo said. “When we made the artificial beaks, we saw that multiple water drops were transported by narrow, beak-like glass plates. That made us think of whether we could harvest the water

> from fog and dew.”
>
> Their experiments were successful. They found out they could harvest about four tablespoons of water in a couple of hours from glass plates that were about 26 centimeters long by 10 centimeters wide.

Now, if we are lifting designs out of nature, then shouldn’t we give honor to God for putting the designs in there in the first place? I really think it’s important to give God credit where due for his clever designs, even if you’re not a big fan of the shorebird. I also think it’s interesting that it’s engineers who made this application of something in nature, not biologists. Also, I feel I have to mention that the birdy is also cute, which is not insignificant, if you like birds as much as I do.

Jennifer Roback Morse on the injustice of the American family court system

September 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here is an article by marriage-defender Jennifer Roback Morse about one of the biggest challenges to life-long married love.

Excerpt:

> Easy divorce opens the door for an unprecedented amount of government intrusion into ordinary people's lives. This unacknowledged reality is the subject of *Taken Into Custody,* by Stephen Baskerville**.** With penetrating insight, the political scientist exposes the truly breathtaking consequences of no-fault divorce for the expansion of state power and the decline of personal autonomy.
>
> First, no-fault divorce frequently means unilateral divorce: one party wants a divorce against the wishes of the other, who wants to stay married. Kim Basinger dumped Baldwin for no particular reason, unleashed the power of the Los Angeles Family Court system to inflict pain on him and, in the process, inflicted untold damage on their child. Second, the fact that one party wants to remain married means that the divorce has to be enforced. Baldwin wanted to stay married and to continue to be a husband and father. Yet, the coercive and intrusive machinery of the state must be wheeled into action to separate the reluctantly divorced party from the joint assets of the marriage, typically the home and the children.
>
> Third, enforcing the divorce means an unprecedented blurring of the boundaries between public and private life. People under the jurisdiction of family courts can have virtually all of their private lives subject to its scrutiny. If the courts are influenced by feminist ideology, that ideology can extend its reach into every bedroom and kitchen in America. Baldwin ran the gauntlet of divorce industry professionals who have been deeply influenced by the feminist presumptions that the man is always at fault and the woman is always a victim. Thus, the social experiment of no-fault divorce, which most Americans thought was supposed to increase personal liberty, has had the consequence of empowering the state.
>
> Some might think the legacy of no-fault divorce is an example of the law of unintended consequences in operation. That assumes its architects did not intend for unilateral divorce to result in the expansion of the state. But Baskerville makes the case in this book—as well as his 2008 monograph, "The Dangerous Rise of Sexual Politics," in The Family in America—that at least some of the advocates of changes in family law certainly have intended to expand the power of the state over the private lives of law-abiding citizens.

She explains who is really behind the attempt to destroy marriage, and the answer might

shock you.

It’s important for people to understand the real reasons why people are not getting married, so that we can do something to encourage them to marry that really fixes the problem. If you don’t understand the threats that men are seeing with respect to marriage, it might be a good idea to take a look at this essay by Stephen Baskerville, hosted by the Christian Touchstone magazine. It’s a summary of the book that Dr. Morse reviewed. I consider that book “Taken Into Custody” to be a must-read for anyone contemplating marriage.

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

September 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien "The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang" in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and

> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

You can get a DVD of the lecture and other great lectures from Access Research Network. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

John Key leads New Zealand conservatives to 48-25 majority victory over leftists

September 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

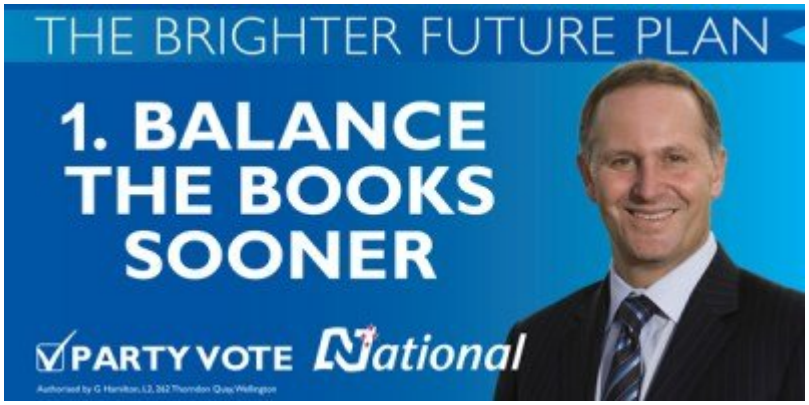

National Party leader John Key

Note: The New Zealand conservative party is called the National Party, but their policies are center-right, at least on fiscal issues.

The Wall Street Journal reports on a stunning victory.

Excerpt:

> John Key is set to lead New Zealand for a third consecutive term after official results showed his party garnered 48% of the national vote, and would likely end up with 61 seats in a 121-member Parliament.
>
> […]David Cunliffe, leader of the main opposition Labour Party, conceded defeat late Saturday. The Labour Party picked up 25% of the overall vote, according to the Electoral Commission, while the Green Party, always thought to be its likeliest coalition partner, won 10%.
>
> The 53-year-old Mr. Key has helped steer New Zealand to a level of prosperity rarely found in developed countries since the global financial crisis, campaigning against a backdrop of the strongest economic growth in a decade.
>
> […]Mr. Key's victory was stronger than opinion polls were predicting. Meanwhile, Labour's weak showing was the worst since the 1920s, prompting speculation of a possible change in leadership, though Mr. Cunliffe said he had no plans to resign. "I don't believe that rotating the leaders is the key to changing and upgrading our party," he said Sunday in a television interview. "If I did, I would simply stand down now."
>
> The University of Otago's Mr. Edwards said it would be difficult for Mr. Cunliffe to reassert his authority after Labour's poor result, but added that the party still had no obvious replacement.
>
> The Green party's support was little changed from 2011, despite opinion polls predicting it could win as much as 14% of the vote. Green Party Co-leader Metiria Turei said Sunday the party had consolidated its 2011 result and held on to its

> 10% support even though the country had swung to the right.

The National Party is not achieving this economic growth by raising taxes on individuals and job creators – New Zealand has the second lowest taxes in the industrialized world.

Look:

> Many countries have been working hard to improve their tax codes. New Zealand is a good example of one of those countries. In a 2010 presentation, the chief economist of the New Zealand Treasury stated, "Global trends in corporate and personal taxes are making New Zealand's system less internationally competitive." In response to these global trends, New Zealand cut its top marginal income tax rate from 38 percent to 33 percent, shifted to a greater reliance on the goods and services tax, and cut their corporate tax rate to 28 percent from 30 percent. This followed a shift to a territorial tax system in 2009. New Zealand added these changes to a tax system that already had multiple competitive features, including no inheritance tax, no general capital gains tax, and no payroll taxes.
>
> In a world where businesses, people, and money can move with relative ease, having a competitive tax code has become even more important to economic success. The example set by New Zealand and other reformist countries shows the many ways countries can improve their uncompetitive tax codes.

Compare that with the United States which is stuck down at 30 out of 32 countries! We have a lower median income and labor force participation than we did five years ago, despite packing over NINE TRILLION dollars onto the national debt.

John Key isn't packing trillions onto his country's national debt they are set to balance the budget in the coming year. And more than the balance budget, he is also trying to privatize bloated, inefficient state-run companies. Imagine what we could do if we privatized the USPS, the departments of motor vehicles and AMTRAK. Just cut the fat out completely.

So now we have conservative majority governments in Canada (Harper), Australia (Abbott) and New Zealand (Key).

Darwinists thought whale hips were accidents of evolution, then science happened

September 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Another win for reason in the long war between science and naturalistic philosophy.

Science Daily reports.

Excerpt:

> Both whales and dolphins have pelvic (hip) bones, evolutionary remnants from when their ancestors walked on land more than 40 million years ago. Common wisdom has long held that those bones are simply vestigial, slowly withering away like tailbones on humans.

> New research from USC and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHM) flies directly in the face of that assumption, finding that not only do those pelvic bones serve a purpose — but their size and possibly shape are influenced by the forces of sexual selection.
>
> "Everyone's always assumed that if you gave whales and dolphins a few more million years of evolution, the pelvic bones would disappear. But it appears that's not the case," said Matthew Dean, assistant professor at the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, and co-corresponding author of a paper on the research that was published online by *Evolution* on Sept. 3.
>
> […]"Our research really changes the way we think about the evolution of whale pelvic bones in particular, but more generally about structures we call 'vestigial.' As a parallel, we are now learning that our appendix is actually quite important in several immune processes, not a functionally useless structure," Dean said.

This is not the first time this has happened – as they said, the appendix now has known functionality.

Flashback: ENCODE study falsifies Darwinian prediction that most of the genome is "Junk" DNA.

Scott Klusendorf defends the pro-life view on the Unbelievable radio show

September 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here are the details:

> The abortion debate reared its head again this summer after controversial tweets by Richard Dawkins made the news.
>
> Justin hosts a discussion between Mara Clarke of the Abortion Support Network and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Instititute. Mara believes women need to be decide whether to terminate a pregnancy, but Scott says that all depends on whether we are dealing with a human life in the womb.
>
> MP3 of this show http://media.premier.org.uk/unbelievable/5fd916e8-46a5-4b08-8eb7-0c0dc4473979.mp3

My snarky paraphrase of the debate (not exact):

- Speaker introductions
- Klusendorf: no justification for abortion is necessary if the unborn are not human
- Klusendorf: we need to address the issue "what is the unborn?" Are the unborn human?
- Klusendorf: SLED: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency
- Klusendorf: None of these things affect the value of a human being
- Klusendorf: Even if we don't KNOW whether the unborn is human
- Mara: I'm not going to debate when life begins
- Mara: Women know when life begins by feelings
- Mara: The moral decision is "whether I can take care of this child?"
- Brierley: When is an unborn being human?
- Mara: I refuse to debate that – the real question is whether women want their babies or not
- Mara: Forced pregnancy is not OK
- Brierley: Could your justification for abortion (not wanting to care for a child) work through all 9 months?
- Mara: Late term abortions are rare, so I don't have to answer that question
- Mara: Abortion should be OK through all 9 months of pregnancy because women cannot be restricted
- Mara: Some women are poor, they need to be able to kill expensive babies at any time
- Klusendorf: although she says she won't debate the unborn, she does take a position
- Klusendorf: she assumes the unborn is not human, because she says that

insufficient funds is justification for abortion
- Klusendorf: no one argues that you can kill a two year old because they cost money, because she thinks they are human
- Klusendorf: she is begging the question by assuming the unborn are not human, but that is the issue we must resolve
- Klusendorf: I am pro-choice on many other things, e.g. women choosing their own husbands, religion, etc.
- Klusendorf: Some choices are wrong – Mara might be right, but she needs to make the case for the unborn not being human
- Brierley: What is your reason for thinking that an unborn child is different from a 2-year old?
- Mara: An unborn child is not the same as a 2-year old, in my personal opinion
- Mara: I am not a debater, so I don't have to provide reasoning for my assertion, I just feel it
- Mara: Not everybody agrees with Scott, they don't have to have a rational argument, they just need to feel differently
- Mara: From my experience, when a woman doesn't want to be pregnant, then she should be able to not be pregnant
- Mara: Women shouldn't be punished with a baby that she doesn't want, even if she chooses to have recreational sex
- Brierley: What do you think of women who think the unborn is human and do it anyway?
- Klusendorf: It's interesting that they never kill their toddlers for those reasons
- Klusendorf: I layed out scientific and philosophical reasons for the humanity of the unborn
- Klusendorf: Her response was "but some people disagree with you"
- Klusendorf: People disagreed about whether slavery was wrong, or whether women should be able to vote
- Klusendorf: that doesn't mean there is no right answer – the right answer depends on the arguments
- Klusendorf: if absence of agreement makes a view false, then it makes HER pro-choice view false as well
- Klusendorf: she did make an argument for the unborn child having no rights because of the location
- Klusendorf: she needs to explain to us why location matters – what about location confers value
- Mara: I'm not going to let Scott frame my debate for me!!!
- Mara: women get pregnant and they don't want their babies! should we put them in jail!!!!
- Klusendorf: I didn't just give my opinion, I had science and philosophy, the issue is "what is the unborn?"
- Mara: philosophical and scientific debates are unimportant, I am an expert in real women's lives

- Klusendorf: Which women? Women in the womb or only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Only those outside the womb
- Klusendorf: Only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Women living outside the womb have a right to kill women inside the womb – women have bodily autonomy
- Klusendorf: then does a pregnant woman with nausea have a right to take a drug for it that will harm her unborn child?
- Mara: Unborn children are only valuable if they are wanted, unborn children only deserve protection if they are wanted
- Mara: There are restrictions on abortion – you can't get an abortion through all nine months in the US
- Mara: There is a 24-week limit in the UK as well
- Klusendorf: There are no restrictions on abortion that conflict with "a woman's health" because Supreme Court said
- Mara: where are these late term abortion clinics?
- Klusendorf: (he names two)
- Mara: that's not enough!!! we need more! where is there one in Pennsylvania?
- Klusendorf: well, there used to be Gosnell's clinic in Pennsylvania, and you could even get an infanticide there….
- Brierley: What about Dawkins' view that it is moral to abort Down's Syndrome babies?
- Klusendorf: he is ignoring the scientific case and philosophical case for the pro-life
- Klusendorf: the pro-life view is a true basis for human equality

What I wanted Scott to ask was whether sex-selection abortions were OK with her. Since her reasoning is "if it's unwanted, it has no rights", then that would mean sex-selection abortions are just fine. That's what a UK abortion expert recently argued. And I also posted recently about how sex-selection abortions are not prosecuted in the UK. If you're looking for a war on women, there it is.

Does a new, distinct human being begin at conception?

September 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Scott Klusendorf posted a public reply to a critic of his debate on the Unbelievable show, which I blogged about yesterday.

The full reply is here, but I wanted to highlight's Scott's scientific defense that the embryo is a human being.

He writes:

> First, your claim that because biological life is continuous (an "unbroken tree" as you put it), we can't say when the embryo's life begins, is demonstrably false. Just because life is continuous between generations does not mean we can't tell when an individual human begins to exist. The science of embryology points to a clear, non-arbitrary divide between sperm/egg on one hand, and a newly conceived embryo on the other. That is to say, from the earliest stages of development, embryos are distinct human beings. True, they have yet to grow and mature, but they are human nonetheless. Leading embryology textbooks affirm this.
>
> For example, in "The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology" (Saunders/Elsevier, 2008), Keith L. Moore & T.V.N. Persaud write: "A zygote is the beginning of a new human being. Human development begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm…unites with a female gamete or oocyte…to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual."
>
> T.W. Sadler's "Langman's Embryology" (Saunders, 1993) states: "The development of a human begins with fertilization, a process by which the spermatozoon from the male and the oocyte from the female unite to give rise to a new organism, the zygote."
>
> Embryologists Ronan O'Rahilly and Fabiola Müller write, "Although life is a continuous process, fertilization is a critical landmark because, under ordinary circumstances, a new, genetically distinct human organism is thereby formed" (Human Embryology & Teratology. 2nd edition. New York: Wiley-Liss, 1996).

And then he quotes some pro-choice scholars, *including Peter Singer and David Boonin*, to make the point:

> Contemporary defenders of abortion also reject your claim that we can't tell when individual life begins. For example, in his book "Practical Ethics" (Cambridge, 1993) Peter Singer—a bioethicist at Princeton University and supporter of both abortion and infanticide —denies your claim the beginning of human life is can't be known. He writes: "Whether a being is a member of given

> species is something that can be determined scientifically, by an examination of the nature of the chromosomes in the cells of living organisms. In this sense, there is no doubt that from the first moments of its existence an embryo conceived from human sperm and eggs is a human being."
>
> Philosopher David Boonin, author of "A Defense of Abortion" (Cambridge, 2002), writes: "A human fetus, after all, is simply a human being at a very early stage in his or her development."

I tried to space it out a bit to make it more readable. I think what his sources are saying is that when an egg and sperm meet, they create something with a completely different DNA signature than either the sperm or the egg. I think if you have an organism that has human DNA, distinct from the mother and father, and it is developing in a self-directed way (unlike your finger nails, or hair, say), then you have a distinct human life. And I don't think "because I'm bigger than she is" is an adequate reason to kill that other human being.

I have a rule in my life. Don't do anything that is likely to get an innocent person killed. Why can't everyone have this rule? Is recreational pre-marital sex REALLY that important? I don't think any of the reasons that people give for having sex (self-esteem, pleasure, etc.) are more important than not killing an innocent human being. When little lives are at stake, we grown-ups should all try to control ourselves, so that we don't harm people who are smaller and weaker than we are. It just isn't right.

You can read the whole dialog between CoD and Scott on the Unbelievable page.

This woman’s husband left her for his business partner and took her kids

September 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A striking story from the Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> In the fall of 2007, my husband of almost ten years told me that he was gay and that he wanted a divorce. In an instant, the world that I had known and loved—the life we had built together—was shattered.
>
> I tried to convince him to stay, to stick it out and fight to save our marriage. But my voice, my desires, my needs—and those of our two young children—no longer mattered to him. We had become disposable, because he had embraced one tiny word that had become his entire identity. Being gay trumped commitment, vows, responsibility, faith, fatherhood, marriage, friendships, and community. All of this was thrown away for the sake of his new identity.
>
> Try as I might to save our marriage, there was no stopping my husband. Our divorce was not settled in mediation or with lawyers. No, it went all the way to trial. My husband wanted primary custody of our children. His entire case can be summed up in one sentence: “I am gay, and I deserve my rights.” It worked: the judge gave him practically everything he wanted. At one point, he even told my husband, “If you had asked for more, I would have given it to you.”
>
> I truly believe that judge was legislating from the bench, disregarding the facts of our particular case and simply using us—using *our children*— to help influence future cases. In our society, LGBT citizens are seen as marginalized victims who must be protected at all costs, even if it means stripping rights from others. By ignoring the injustice committed against me and my children, the judge seemed to think that he was correcting a larger injustice.
>
> […]At the time of the first ceremony, the marriage was not recognized by our state, our nation, or our church. And my ex-husband’s new marriage, like the majority of male-male relationships, is an “open,” non-exclusive relationship. This sends a clear message to our children: what you feel trumps all laws, promises, and higher authorities. You can do whatever you want, whenever you want—and it doesn’t matter who you hurt along the way.
>
> […]Our two young children were willfully and intentionally thrust into a world of strife and combative beliefs, lifestyles, and values, all in the name of “gay rights.” Their father moved into his new partner’s condo, which is in a complex inhabited by sixteen gay men. One of the men has a 19-year-old male prostitute who comes to service him. Another man, who functions as the father figure of this community, is in his late sixties and has a boyfriend in his twenties. My

> children are brought to gay parties where they are the only children and where only alcoholic beverages are served. They are taken to transgender baseball games, gay rights fundraisers, and LGBT film festivals.
>
> Both of my children face identity issues, just like other children. Yet there are certain deep and unique problems that they will face as a direct result of my former husband's actions. My son is now a maturing teen, and he is very interested in girls. But how will he learn how to deal with that interest when he is surrounded by men who seek sexual gratification from other men? How will he learn to treat girls with care and respect when his father has rejected them and devalues them? How will he embrace his developing masculinity without seeing his father live out authentic manhood by treating his wife and family with love, honoring his marriage vows even when it's hard?
>
> My daughter suffers too. She needs a dad who will encourage her to embrace her femininity and beauty, but these qualities are parodied and distorted in her father's world. Her dad wears make-up and sex bondage straps for Halloween. She is often exposed to men dressing as women. The walls in his condo are adorned with large framed pictures of women in provocative positions. What is my little girl to believe about her own femininity and beauty? Her father should be protecting her sexuality. Instead, he is warping it.
>
> Without the guidance of both their mother and their father, how can my children navigate their developing identities and sexuality? I ache to see my children struggle, desperately trying to make sense of their world.

When I was younger and considering marriage, I thought a lot about no-fault divorce and how I would feel about my wife leaving me because she wanted to find herself in Europe, or something. I thought about the feminist judge who would give her custody of our children, and force me to pay alimony and child support. Marriage did not seem like a good risk to me then. I guess part of me always thought that feminists would be the only bad guys in this sexual revolution, and men and children were the victims of feminist selfishness. But this woman's story really makes me realize how women can be just as much the victims of judicial activism as any man was under no-fault divorce laws. That story she told about the activist judge just made my blood run cold. What must that have been like for her, to lose custody of her kids and have them put into the "gay lifestyle" Grindr-style environment? My heart goes out to her.

Previously, I blogged about Dawn Stefanowicz's story of growing up with a gay father.

Is common ancestry confirmed by molecular and morphological evidence?

September 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Casey Luskin did a good podcast explaining a problem with two kinds of evidence commonly used to argue for common ancestry.

Details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Casey Luskin takes a keen-eyed look at Darwin's tree of life and finds that common descent, far from being confirmed by the data, is actually contradicted by it, as *New Scientist* pointed out in their cover story, "Why Darwin was wrong about the tree of life."
>
> Listen in to learn how the data is challenging Darwinist assumptions, and check out "A Primer on the Tree of Life" for more information.

The MP3 file is here.

The paper linked above seems to be exactly what he read out loud in the podcast.

Here is one section from the paper that summarizes everything:

> One authoritative review paper by Darwinian leaders in this field stated, "**As morphologists with high hopes of molecular systematics, we end this survey with our hopes dampened. Congruence between molecular phylogenies is as elusive as it is in morphology and as it is between molecules and morphology.**"
>
> Another set of pro-evolution experts wrote, "That molecular evidence typically squares with morphological patterns is a view held by many biologists, but interestingly, by relatively few systematists. Most of the latter know that the two lines of evidence **may often be incongruent.**"

The two methods of determining ancestry are "often incongruent". What I am looking for in order to be convinced of common ancestry is substantial agreement between morphological phylogenies and molecular phylogenies. I don't see that, so I am still skeptical of common ancestry. Especially with all the examples of convergence that I keep finding out about.

U.S. CO2 emissions declining, but China and Asia CO2 emissions are rising

September 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Investors Business Daily reports.

Excerpt:

> America is a global warming success story, for those who believe in such things. CO2 emissions are on the downtrend in this country. In fact, they are lower today than they were two decades ago. When you account for all the economic and population growth over those 20 years, that decline is even sharper.
>
> What's more, the U.S. — along with several other industrialized nations — is below the CO2 emission targets set by the Kyoto protocol. You know, the treaty that Al Gore & Co. said would save the planet, but that America never ratified.
>
> China is a completely different story. It's tripled the amount of CO2 it pumps into the air each year over those same two decades, to the point where it now emits almost twice as much CO2 as the U.S.
>
> Other developing countries are spewing CO2 at record levels as well. And all are increasing at rates much faster than industrialized nations could ever hope to cut theirs back.
>
> So where are the protestors? Are they in Beijing demanding that the communist leaders there "change course"? Are they in India — where CO2 levels have doubled in the past two decades — demanding more solar panels and electric cars?
>
> Nope. Instead they flock together in New York, in London, even Australia (which emits as much CO2 in an entire year as China does in 16 days).

I guess I don't really care about CO2 levels with respect to climate change, because like all other sane people, I have watched almost all of the projections made by global warming alarmists be falsified in my lifetime by actual data.

The Wall Street Journal explains how this was done.

Excerpt:

> The U.N. no longer claims that there will be dangerous or rapid climate change in the next two decades. Last September, between the second and final draft of its fifth assessment report, the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change quietly downgraded the warming it expected in the 30 years following 1995, to about 0.5 degrees Celsius from 0.7 (or, in Fahrenheit, to about 0.9 degrees, from 1.3).
>
> Even that is likely to be too high. The climate-research establishment has finally admitted openly what skeptic scientists have been saying for nearly a decade:

> Global warming has stopped since shortly before this century began.
>
> First the climate-research establishment denied that a pause existed, noting that if there was a pause, it would invalidate their theories. Now they say there is a pause (or “hiatus”), but that it doesn’t after all invalidate their theories.
>
> When the climate scientist and geologist Bob Carter of James Cook University in Australia wrote an article in 2006 saying that there had been no global warming since 1998 according to the most widely used measure of average global air temperatures, there was an outcry. A year later, when David Whitehouse of the Global Warming Policy Foundation in London made the same point, the environmentalist and journalist Mark Lynas said in the New Statesman that Mr. Whitehouse was “wrong, completely wrong,” and was “deliberately, or otherwise, misleading the public.”
>
> We know now that it was Mr. Lynas who was wrong. Two years before Mr. Whitehouse’s article, climate scientists were already admitting in emails among themselves that there had been no warming since the late 1990s. “The scientific community would come down on me in no uncertain terms if I said the world had cooled from 1998,” wrote Phil Jones of the University of East Anglia in Britain in 2005. He went on: “Okay it has but it is only seven years of data and it isn’t statistically significant.”
>
> If the pause lasted 15 years, they conceded, then it would be so significant that it would invalidate the climate-change models upon which policy was being built. Areport from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) written in 2008 made this clear: “The simulations rule out (at the 95% level) zero trends for intervals of 15 yr or more.”
>
> Well, the pause has now lasted for 16, 19 or 26 years—depending on whether you choose the surface temperature record or one of two satellite records of the lower atmosphere. That’s according to a new statistical calculation by Ross McKitrick, a professor of economics at the University of Guelph in Canada.
>
> It has been roughly two decades since there was a trend in temperature significantly different from zero. The burst of warming that preceded the millennium lasted about 20 years and was preceded by 30 years of slight cooling after 1940.

I love science. But I love *experimental* science. When you have government, which is intent on growing larger, paying scientists to find evidence that government *needs* to grow larger, you have a conflict of interest. We shouldn’t be so anxious to *appear* on the side of the “smart” people, because “smart” people have a tendency to say stupid things when there is money being pressed into their hands. We need to be skeptical.

The cosmic background radiation is fact. The fine-tuning of the force of gravity is fact. Protein folding is fact. Predicting the weather hundreds of years into the future is something else entirely. Especially when you have to edit out the Medieval Warming Period and “hide the decline using Mike’s Nature trick”. That certainly isn’t science. It’s

prostitution.

College allows transgender man to expose himself to young girls

September 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Todd Starnes reports on it for Fox News.

Excerpt:

> A Washington college said their non-discrimination policy prevents them from stopping a transgender man from exposing himself to young girls inside a women's locker room, according to a group of concerned parents.
>
> "Little girls should not be exposed to naked men, period," said David Hacker, senior legal counsel with the Alliance Defending Freedom. A group of concerned parents contacted the legal firm for help.
>
> Hacker said a 45-year-old male student, who dresses as a woman and goes by the name Colleen Francis, undressed and exposed his genitals on several occasions inside the woman's locker room at **Evergreen State College.**
>
> Students from nearby Olympia High School as well as children at a local swimming club share locker rooms with the college.
>
> According to a police report, the mother of a 17-year-old girl complained after her daughter saw the transgender individual walking naked in the locker room. A female swim coach confronted the man sprawled out in a sauna exposing himself. She ordered him to leave and called police.
>
> The coach later apologized when she discovered the man was transgendered but explained there were girls using the facility as young as six years old who weren't used to seeing male genitals.

And listen to what he says about it:

> Francis told KIRO-TV that he was born a man but chose to live as a woman in 2009. Francis said he felt discriminated against after he was told told leave.
>
> "This is not 1959 Alabama," Francis told the television station. "We don't call police for drinking from the wrong water fountain."

This is not 1959 Alabama. He means that if you judge him, then you are a racist. Understand? And legions of college students have been taught to agree with his view, thanks to their highly-educated humanities professors.

The story was also reported on ABC News.

Where did these non-discrimination policies come from?

Well, I remember a secular woman I worked with a while back explaining to me why she favored moral relativism. She said that she felt bad about being judged when she did something selfish, and she thought that if she refused to make any judgments of other

people, then no one would ever judge her. What she really meant is that *if she shamed people who made moral judgments of anyone* then there would be no one left with the courage *to judge her actions.* So moral relativism is really about stopping anyone from judging anyone, in order to not be judged yourself.

This is the mindset behind the people who want us to do away with moral judgments and objective moral standards. This transgender story reminds me of the two gay dads story. Two gay men adopted a newborn boy from Russia for the purpose of child molestation and sex-trafficking. The abuse started almost immediately after *the child's birth.* But this was all perfectly OK with the tolerance/compassion crowd, because as they like to say "who are we to judge?" Whenever you hear that coming from someone, remember what happens when we don't respectfully express disagreements on moral issues, and vote for sensible moral boundaries in the law. We can make moral judgments without being disrespectful or coercive about it. My own view is that we should be promoting the idea that children should grow up with their biological mothers and fathers. We should be celebrating that, and promoting that.

Should we be trying to change the world from the bottom up or the top down?

September 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Dr. Paul Gould is a professor of philosophy (PhD from Purdue) at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Here is his bio, which says, in part:

> I have a Masters in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics from Talbot School of Theology and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Purdue University.
>
> I am an Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Christian Apologetics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

What his bio page doesn't say is that he left a career in business to go onto this apologetics/philosophy track. I find that very interesting, because like most professionals with an interest in apologetics, I had the same dream – to go and do a PhD and get into a college and be a positive influence on Christian kids. But the main thing is that he has had some experience in the real world.

Anyway, Dr. Gould has written two posts on how to change the world, and I want you to look at an excerpt from the first one.

First post:

> Christians like to talk—and aspire—to changing the world. This language stems very naturally from our God-given desire to *make a difference*, to *live a life that matters*. In a very real sense, making a difference *is* to change the world. But, usually, when Christians talk about "changing the world" they mean something like "winning the world for Christ" or "helping the gospel to gain a hearing in culture" or "contributing toward shalom."Recently, there have been a number of very helpful books written by folks who challenge the common view of *how* to go about the task of world-changing, and call into question the relationship between Christ and culture. One of the most important books to enter this discussion is James Davison Hunter's *To Change the World*. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in the topic of world-change. In this post I will share his critique of the "common view" of world change. I think his critique is dead on.
>
> Hunter argued that by and large, Christians have gone about the task of world changing in completely the wrong way and the result is that Christianity in our country at least and in the western world in general, represents a weak culture.
>
> He focuses on world-view ministries (primarily from the US such as Chuck Colson's Wilberforce Forum and Focus on the Families' Truth Project) and those like them that offer the following view of how to change the world:
>
> Common view of world change: as we change the individual beliefs and values of

> persons, and change enough persons, then we will ultimately change society. This is a **bottom up approach**.
>
> On the common view, the implicit view of culture is that "the essence of culture is found in the hearts and minds of individuals" and that culture change will come as enough individual lives are transformed.
>
> Hunter argues that this approach fails to take into account cultural elites and the institutions that yield power within culture.
>
> Instead, cultural change has always been **top-down:** it is always elites—those who have cultural capital to exert influence and power—who have changed the culture. This is why the university, and the media, and the arts are so important in shaping the culture.
>
> All of this leads to a fascinating conclusion: ***some*** *ideas have consequences*—namely ideas propagated by those within society who possess cultural capital and a supporting network of other individuals and institutions also within the center of cultural influence and production.

Second post is here. The second post has a link to his review of Hunter's book (PDF), which is published by Oxford University Press.

I agree completely with the top-down thesis of James Davison Hunter, and I think that it is a *tragedy* that the Christian parents and Christian churches don't do a good job of challenging and guiding young Christians to study the things that will allow them to have an influence. Most Christians I talk to have a negative view of steering young Christians towards advanced degrees, or towards making a lot of money, or towards positions of cultural influence, etc. Instead of focusing on being effective, they tell me "I will do what I want to do, because God has a mysterious will for me to be happy". I don't buy it. I am happy to consider alternative plans that serve God better, but I don't think that the "I'll do what feels good" view is interested in producing a return for God in terms of money and/or influence. Crazy plans do not work out just because we want them to. There are costs to every plan, and not every plan is as likely to lead to influencing the culture as any other plan. This is reality.

I also think it is important to steer children into positions where they can be prosperous and/or influential. Again, many Christians disagree with guiding children that way. In my experience, it is assumed that children need to be happy, and that they are the best people to decide what they should be doing in life. Well, I'm not a heavy-handed bully, but I am not letting my children do whatever they like, because they don't have enough wisdom and experience to know what to do. For example, I am not letting my children study ballet in university. It doesn't pay the bills, and it isn't likely that they will have an influence compared to other choices. Money is important because money can be used to fund Christian scholars, apologetics ministries and apologetics events. Marriage is a great way to have an influence, but marriage costs money, and that means that marriage-minded people should have a plan to *pay the bills* before they consider marriage. We do not have the right to *do whatever we feel like*, because we have a boss

who *expects a return on his investment*. If a person is capable of doing hard things that produce a better return (money or influence or children, etc.) then he should do that.

We have a problem in this country as it is with young people borrowing tens of thousands of dollars to study things that either don't pay off, or that don't allow them to have an influence. It's not unloving to tell children the truth about the choices they make. Especially when the cost of having a child is over six figures *per child*. You can have a huge Christian influence with that kind of money if you spent it on other things, like apologetics scholars, their ministries and their events. So, if you are going to have children and spend it on them, you'd better have some sort of plan, and look for a spouse who is on board with that idea of providing God with a good return on his investment. Everything we do – including the choices to marry and have children – should be focused on serving God. If people shy away from the idea of steering children to have an influence, I don't think it's a good idea to get married at all. Save the money and use it for the kingdom somewhere else. Marriage is about making the best decisions you can in order to serve God, and you can't marry someone who puts their own happiness over the need to produce that return for the boss.

Having said that, if you are already married, stick with it. I am advocating for making smarter decisions *before* you commit. And before you go off to college, ask yourself: is what you are thinking of studying worth it? Trade school is an excellent option that will give you an income that can support a family AND give to apologetics ministries, with less exposure to debt. If you must go to university, then it's generally wiser to stick with STEM degrees, so that you can get a job and actually pay off those loans. Marriages and children are NOT free. Retirement is not free. Health care is not free. Christian apologetics ministries do not run on wishes and hopes. Christian scholars do not get their degrees for free – they need support. I think another good plan is to have one person do philosophy or history and then be supported by other people with jobs in STEM fields. That's what I do – I help out Christian scholars on my team to finish their graduate degrees in fields related to apologetics. Those non-STEM degrees are the best way to have an influence, but it's easier to get them as a multi-disciplinary team effort. Everyone has to pull their weight!

And one last point. The most amazing thing in the world is when I meet people who are very very skeptical about mentoring young people and steering children towards prosperous and influential areas, even though they themselves may be facing the results of their own poor decisions. You would think that someone who has burned $60,000 on a degree in Women's Studies and can't find a job would be on your side about helping other young people to make better decisions, but they are often not on your side. Why is that? Somewhere along the way, this culture stopped liking the Mr. Knightleys who were praised for loving people by telling them the truth about their bad decisions. Now we think that the Emmas can do whatever they want, and no one should be giving them any guidance. How sad.

Do women commit acts of domestic violence as often as men?

September 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A friend of mine posted a link to this Time magazine article that answers that question. Note that Time magazine leans far to the left. (H/T Jerry)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> There is little dispute that men commit far more violent acts than women. According to FBI data on crime in the U.S., they account for some 90% of known murderers. And a study published in *American Society of Criminology* finds that men account for nearly 80% of all violent offenders reported in crime surveys, despite a substantial narrowing of the gap since the 1970s. But, whatever explains the higher levels of male violence—biology, culture or both—the indisputable fact is that it's directed primarily at other males: in 2010, men were the victims in almost four out of five homicides and almost two-thirds of robberies and non-domestic aggravated assaults. Family and intimate relationships—the one area feminists often identify as a key battleground in the war on women—are also an area in which women are most likely to be violent, and not just in response to male aggression but toward children, elders, female relatives or partners, and non-violent men, according to a study published in the *Journal of Family Violence*.

And more:

> Research showing that women are often aggressors in domestic violence has been causing controversy for almost 40 years, ever since the 1975 National Family Violence Survey by sociologists Murray Straus and Richard Gelles of the Family Research Laboratory at the University of New Hampshire found that women were just as likely as men to report hitting a spouse and men were just as likely as women to report getting hit. The researchers initially assumed that, at least in cases of mutual violence, the women were defending themselves or retaliating. But when subsequent surveys asked who struck first, it turned out that women were as likely as men to initiate violence—a finding confirmed by more than 200 studies of intimate violence. In a 2010 review essay in the journal *Partner Abuse*, Straus concludes that women's motives for domestic violence are often similar to men's, ranging from anger to coercive control.

And this is also well-known problem in same-sex relationships, *especially* with lesbian couples:

> What about same-sex violence? The February CDC study found that, over their lifetime, 44% of lesbians had been physically assaulted by a partner (more than

> two-thirds of them only by women), compared to 35% of straight women, 26% of gay men, and 29% of straight men. While these figures suggest that women are somewhat less likely than men to commit partner violence, they also show a fairly small gap. The findings are consistent with other evidence that same-sex relationships are no less violent than heterosexual ones.

And finally this explains why you probably have never heard of this before:

> For the most part, feminists' reactions to reports of female violence toward men have ranged from dismissal to outright hostility. Straus chronicles a troubling history of attempts to suppress research on the subject, including intimidation of heretical scholars of both sexes and tendentious interpretation of the data to portray women's violence as defensive. In the early 1990s, when laws mandating arrest in domestic violence resulted in a spike of dual arrests and arrests of women, battered women's advocates complained that the laws were "backfiring on victims," claiming that women were being punished for lashing back at their abusers. Several years ago in Maryland, the director and several staffers of a local domestic violence crisis center walked out of a meeting in protest of the showing of a news segment about male victims of family violence. Women who have written about female violence, such as Patricia Pearson, author of the 1997 book *When She Was Bad: Violent Women and the Myth of Innocence*, have often been accused of colluding with an anti-female backlash.

I wasn't surprised by any this, because I've written about surveys on who commits more domestic violence before on this blog, as well as on the problem of violence in same-sex couples (reported by the leftist Atlantic magazine). It's very important for people to understand that there are groups in our society who are very invested in painting men as the aggressors and women as the victims. But, if you look at the actual numbers, then quite a different picture emerges. You don't even have to go to conservative sources, as you can see.

Two short videos explain two basic scientific arguments for God’s existence

September 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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These are from Reasonable Faith. The new one is on fine-tuning, and it’s probably the best thing you can give someone to understand the fine-tuning argument in 6 minutes.

Here it is:

The last one they did was on the kalam cosmological argument, and it was even shorter – just over 4 minutes.

Check it out:

If you have any friends who are interested in scientific arguments for the existence of God, send them both of these videos.

Simon Brace on the nature of spiritual warfare and a plea to the Church

September 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This passionate, challenging lecture has been getting shared a lot on Facebook, so I thought that I would do a summary of it.

First, you can grab the MP3 file here.

Note that this talk is given by a very conservative evangelical Christian who is speaking to Christians. So this is not intended for a non-Christian audience. However, non-Christians are free to tune in if you want to hear a really passionate, fire-breathing conservative evangelical go non-linear over the superficial turn that the evangelical church has taken. If you are familiar with J.P. Moreland's view that spiritual warfare is really about disputing speculations and falsehoods using logic and evidence, then you'll know the meaning of the term "spiritual warfare" he has in mind. When he says spiritual warfare, he means apologetics: knowledge and preparation.

I would really caution you not to listen to this if you are not passionate about defending God's honor. It will overwhelm and upset you. Having said that, this lecture reflects my convictions about the churches need to drop anti-intellectualism and take up apologetics. And not pre-suppositional apologetics, which I think is ineffective, but *evidential* apologetics. Evidential apologetics is effective, which is why everyone in the Bible used it.

About the speaker:

> **Simon Brace** is the Director of Evangelism of Southern Evangelical Seminary. Simon was born in Zimbabwe and grew up in South Africa. Simon has a construction background and has lived in a number of countries and travelled extensively. He has a MA in Apologetics and BA in Religious Studies and is currently working on an MA in Philosophy at SES. Simon leads TEAM which is the missions program of SES on local, national, and international trips. In addition, Simon has worked with Ratio Christi at SES, and has an extensive knowledge of Ratio Christi's history and operation. Simon currently resides in North Carolina with his wife Nel and children, Eva and Olivia.

I liked the second part of the lecture more than the first part, so there is less summarizing of the first part.

Topics:

- What does the New Testament say about spiritual warfare in Ephesians?
- Christian slogans about spiritual warfare sound pious, but they are mistaken
- Today, Christianity is focused on piety and zeal, not on study and knowledge
- The result is that Christianity in the West is in a state of erosion and decline
- What we are doing about spiritual warfare is not working to stop the decline

- Preaching, publishing, programs, retreats, etc. are not very useful for spiritual warfare
- Enthusiasm and passion without knowledge are not very useful for spiritual warfare
- The Church has a theoretical understanding of spiritual warfare, but no real capability
- Doesn't work: trying to make Christianity seem popular and cool
- Doesn't work: making Christian music and art that non-Christians will like
- Doesn't work: pastors trying to be relevant by having cool clothes and cool haircuts
- Doesn't work: fundamentalists getting angry about peripheral issues
- Doesn't work: not read things apart from the Bible and sound foolish when speaking in the public square
- Doesn't work: church leaders think that careful exegesis and expository preaching is a good answer to skeptics
- What works: we need to train people who are prepared and willing to defend the truth of the Christian faith
- Evangelicalism has a deep suspicion of reading things outside the Bible, so they are unable to refute anything
- Evangelicals are hyper-spiritualized and hysterical, focusing on demons, prophecy and end-times, etc.
- Evangelicals have a pagan view of using their minds to alter reality, which is irrational and superstitious
- Evangelicals like conservative celebrity preachers who do *nothing* to correct anti-intellectualism in the church
- Evangelicals are focused on their personal relationships with Jesus instead of their whole worldview
- Evangelicals focus too much on homeschooling and not enough on how to impact the secular universities
- Church programs for youth are about "strumming guitars and eating pizza once a week", not apologetics
- Evangelicals have an over-inflated view of the effectiveness of their (non-intellectual) evangelism methods
- The primary focus and primary responsibility in spiritual warfare is not dealing with supernatural evil
- The real focus and responsibility in spiritual warfare is specified in 2 Cor 10:3-5
- What we ought to be doing is defeating speculations (false ideas), using logical arguments and evidence
- Defending the faith is not memorizing Bible verses and throwing them out randomly
- Defending the faith is not just preaching the gospel
- Demolishing an argument requires understanding arguments: premises, conclusions, the laws of logic
- We should exchange our pious Bible memorizing skills and the like for a class in critical thinking
- The New Testament requires that elders be capable of *refuting* those who oppose

sound doctrine (Titus 1:9)
- It is not enough to preach a good sermon, elders have to be able to defend the Christian faith as well
- People who run conservative seminaries do not mandate that M.Div graduates study apologetics
- Famous pastors like Driscoll, Begg, etc. need to teach other pastors to emphasize apologetics in church
- People in church won't engage the culture unless they have reasons and evidence to believe Christianity is true
- We need a balance of both piety and intellectual engagement
- We need to make our evangelism rooted in the intellect in order to have an influence at the university
- Mission organizations also have a responsibility to defend the faith and not merely preach (1 Peter 3:15)

And here is his closing quote from C.S. Lewis:

> To be ignorant and simple now not to be able to meet the enemies on their own ground would be to throw down our weapons and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.

I was really humbled by this, because I sort of knew that the church was anti-intellectual, but I didn't really reflect on how everyone else in society thinks that we are anti-intellectual. It's troubling. The quickest way to make Biblical Christianity respectable again is to hit the books and defeat all comers in intellectual disputations. Are we ready to make the sacrifices to do that?

UPDATE: A friend of mine who blogs at Think Apologetics has written a post on this same issue of anti-intellectualism in the church.

Why is attorney general Eric Holder retiring now?

September 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's one possible reason why Eric Holder is resigning ahead of the mid-term elections.

Excerpt:

> U.S. District Court Judge John D. Bates has denied a request from the Department of Justice to delay the release of a list of Operation Fast and Furious documents being protected under President Obama's assertion of executive privilege.
>
> The list, better known as a Vaughn index, was requested through a June 2012 FOIA filing by government watchdog Judicial Watch. When DOJ didn't respond to the FOIA request in the time required by law, Judicial Watch sued in September 2012, seeking all documents DOJ and the White House are withholding from Congress under executive privilege claims. President Obama made the assertion on June 20, 2012 just moments before Attorney General Eric Holder was held in contempt. In July 2014, after two years of battling for information, Judge Bates ordered the Department of Justice to release the Vaughn Index by October 1. DOJ responded by asking for a month long delay in releasing the list with a deadline of November 3, just one day before the 2014-midterm elections. That request has been denied. A short delay was granted and DOJ must produce the Vaughn index by October 22.
>
> […]"The Obama administration failed to game the courts and now will have to account for its Fast and Furious lies. Two federal courts have now rejected Eric Holder's election-related ploy to keep this information from the American people," Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton said in a statement in reaction to the ruling.

Even if Holder resigns now to avoid influencing the midterm elections, the contempt of Congress inquiry will go on.

Excerpt:

> Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. announced Thursday he is resigning as soon as a replacement is found, though he and the Justice Department still face contempt ofCongress charges that will linger well after he officially gives up the office.
>
> Analysts said Mr. Holder — the first sitting Cabinet official ever to face a contempt citation from Congress — will likely duck any legal punishment, though his department will soon be forced to begin turning over the documents he withheld, which sparked the initial fight. It's just the latest in a series of stormy disputes that have defined his turbulent six-year tenure.
>
> From declining to defend the Defense of Marriage Act to backing President Obama in a losing constitutional battle over presidential recess appointments

> and fighting — unsuccessfully, so far — to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Mr. Holder has been the spearhead for most of Mr. Obama's major legal decisions.
>
> […]"Eric Holder is the most divisive U.S. attorney general in modern history," said Rep. Darrell E. Issa, the California Republican who, as chairman of the House oversight committee, led the push to hold Mr. Holder in contempt for refusing to turn over documents detailing how the Justice Department handled the investigation into the botched Fast and Furious gunwalking operation.

It's not a "gunwalking" operation, it's a gun SMUGGLING operation. Our government smuggled guns to Mexican drug cartels. Who would want to talk about that before mid-term elections? Obviously not Eric Holder.

UPDATE: The seven worst things Eric Holder did as attorney general.

The seven worst things Eric Holder did as attorney general

September 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The list is from the Daily Signal.

The list:

1. Gun smuggling
2. Corrupting election process
3. Failure to investigate IRS targeting of conservative groups
4. Failure to take the threat of terrorism seriously
5. Refusing to respect and defend the rule of law
6. Allying with leftist groups to "sue and settle" with conservative groups
7. Treated the oversight responsibility of Congress with contempt

I've written about the one that bothered me the most – the refusal to investigate the IRS. I just want to make clear how bad this one was.

Look:

> Outgoing Attorney General Eric Holder's legacy – or at least a big part of it – will be obstructing the investigation into the Internal Revenue Service targeting of conservative groups, said Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), who set a low bar for the next attorney general.
>
> "Whoever is going to be next, they have to be better than Eric Holder was," Jordan told The Blaze on the day Holder announced he was retiring from his controversial tenure as head of the Justice Department.
>
> Jordan is the chairman of the subcommittee for regulatory affairs for the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, in which he has probed the IRS targeting of tea party and conservative groups.
>
> Primarily, he points to Holder naming DOJ attorney Barbara Bosserman, who contributed more than $6,000 to President Barack Obama and the Democratic National Committee, to run the investigation.
>
> "It just shows the arrogance that is in this attorney general's agency during his tenure," Jordan said.
>
> Every House Republican and 26 House Democrats voted for a resolution asking for a special prosecutor to investigate the IRS scandal. Holder ignored the resolution.
>
> Not only that, but Jordan points out that Holder is stepping down in the middle of other unanswered questions, such as Operation Fast and Furious and Solyndra – matters that were not resolved but dropped out of focus.

> Jordan said of the entire IRS scandal, “This is like a third rate, B actor crime drama.”
>
> The reason, he is because of a predictable script. First, he said, Obama talks about shadowy conservative groups, then Democratic senators write letters to the IRS demanding an investigation. Once the IRS is caught for their targeting, they blame lower level employees. When that didn’t work, they blamed Russell George, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration for being unfair.
>
> “The last thing they do what everyone else does when they’re caught in a crime, they lose the evidence,” Jordan said, referring to the lost e-mails from Lois Lerner, the former head of the tax exempt organizations unit for the IRS.

This is the kind of administration we’ve had for the past 5+ years. It was Watergate every day in this administration. And it’s not going to stop unless we throw the out the crooks in the next election and put in moral people.

Related posts

- Obama covers-up DOJ operation that allowed gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Republicans prepare contempt citation for AG Eric Holder over Fast and Furious
- Eric Holder wants to brainwash people against legal gun ownership
- Fast and Furious’ goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent’s murder
- Fast and Furious assault weapons seized from drug cartel enforcer’s home
- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Federal court: Obama appointees interfered with New Black Panther prosecution
- Obama administration sues Florida for purging non-citizens from voter rolls
- Democrats and pro-abortion groups target pro-lifers in FBI and DOJ training
- Is Obama’s Department of Justice enabling voter registration fraud?
- Department of Justice won’t purge dead or ineligible voters from roll
- Obama’s attorney general has his head in the sand on national security

Friday night movie: Kansas City Confidential (1952)

September 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here’s tonight’s movie:

IMDB mean rating: [7.5/10]

IMDB median rating: [8/10]

Description:

> Four robbers hold up an armored truck, getting away with over a million dollars in cash. Joe Rolfe (John Payne), a down-on-his-luck flower delivery truck driver is accused of being involved and is roughly interrogated by local police. Released due to lack of evidence, Joe, following the clues to a Mexican resort, decides to look for the men who set him up both to clear his name and to exact revenge.

Happy Friday!

New study: stay-at-home moms have strongest sense their lives are worthwhile

September 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The UK Telegraph reports.

Excerpt:

> Mothers who have put their career aside to care for their children have a stronger sense that their lives are "worthwhile" than the rest of society, official figures suggest.

> New findings from the UK's national "well-being" index show that those classed as economically inactive because they are caring for a family or home are also among the happiest people in Britain.
>
> The figures, published by the Office for National Statistics, also show that people across the UK have got progressively happier, less anxious and more satisfied with their lives in the past year.
>
> The improvement is thought to be linked to the economic recovery and falling unemployment – even if people are not necessarily better off than a year ago.

> The ONS said the improvement appeared to be linked to optimism and improvements in people's personal situations even though typical household incomes are lower in real terms.

So then why don't more women stay home with their children? Well, part of it is going to be feminism. Feminism is everywhere and it causes women to feel guilty about staying home with their kids. They think that they have to do the exact same thing that a man does in order to have any value. They don't know what benefits a stay-at-home wife and mother brings to her family.

But sometimes, it's not feminism, it's just lack of money.

Young women need to understand that what will *really* satisfy them in life is a marriage and raising children at home. And this is not free – an enterprise like that costs money. If a woman seeks this sense of having a life that is "worthwhile", then she needs to find a man who has made decisions in his education and career such that he is able to provide for her to stay home with their children. He has to be faithful, too – not just hardworking.

That's not a popular thing to say to young women these days, and we don't usually say that to them. We tell them that they need to find their happiness in a career, doing exactly what men do. And a lot of them let their fertile years pass by in relationships with the wrong men and focused on careers that do not satisfy. By the wrong men, I mean men who are not interested in a lifelong commitment to provide for a family. Maybe we should be telling young unmarried women what will really satisfy them before it's too

late?

Christian college's accreditation threatened over adherence to Christian moral values

September 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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If you are a Christian, then you take Bible as an authority in sexual matters. That means no sex before marriage. And no sex outside marriage. Period.

Check out this article from Boston Business Journal.

Excerpt:

> The regional body that accredits colleges and universities has given Gordon College a year to report back about a campus policy on homosexuality, one that may be in violation of accreditation standards.
>
> The higher education commission of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges met last week and "considered whether Gordon College's traditional inclusion of 'homosexual practice' as a forbidden activity" runs afoul of the commission's standards for accreditation, according to a joint statement from NEASC and Gordon College.
>
> The commission asked Gordon College to submit a report next September. The report should describe the process by which the college has approached its review of the policy "to ensure that the College's policies and procedures are non-discriminatory," the statement said.

So it doesn't matter to the commission what they teach in the classroom, it just matters that they toe the line on secular sexual ethics. Accreditation doesn't mean having academic standards, it means that your moral beliefs have to match those of the commission.

If you want to contact the four women (1 president, 3 vice presidents) who lead the commission, their contact information is here. I'm sure that these four women believe that they are acting out of compassion and tolerance in order to promote diversity, but from my perspective, I just see it is as another case of secularists trying to force their moral views on Christians by threats and coercion.

Previously, Gordon College was in the news for asking for an exemption from Obamacare, which forces Christians to subsidize the cost of drugs that cause abortions.

From Campus Reform.

Excerpt:

> The town of Salem, Mass., has pitted itself against Gordon College after the president of the private Christian school added his name to a public letter to President Obama asking for a religious exemption from a planned federal mandate.
>
> The expected executive order would force any organization receiving federal

> funds, including religiously based organizations, to hire people whose sexual conduct may not fall in line with their beliefs. Gordon says the mandate would be an "infringement on religious liberty" and "the rights of faith-based institutions to establish a set of standards and expectations for their community."
>
> Gordon's statement of faith and conduct defines marriage as the "lifelong one-flesh union of one man and one woman." It also clarifies that the school is against "homosexual acts," not "same-sex orientation," and claims that it expects its students and faculty to "refrain from any sexual intercourse—heterosexual or homosexual; premarital or extramarital—outside of the marriage covenant."
>
> "Signing the letter was in keeping with our decades-old conviction that, as an explicitly Christian institution, Gordon should set the conduct expectations for members of our community," Gordon College President Michael Lindsay said in a statement. "Nothing has changed in our position."
>
> […]It was Lindsay's signature that prompted Salem Mayor Kimberly Driscoll to publicly chastise the school, calling the small Christian college's longstanding policies of expressly forbidding homosexual practices "offensive" in a statement released by the city. Driscoll went on to say that the city was revoking its contract with the college over the management of the city's Old Town Hall facility.
>
> "While I respect your rights to embed religious values on a private college campus, religious freedom does not afford you the right to impose those beliefs upon others and cannot be extended into a publicly owned facility or any management contract or a publicly owned facility, like Old Town Hall," she said.

This Obamacare mandate is one of the cases that shows why I always urge Christians to vote for smaller and smaller government. The more money stays in our hands, the more freedom we have to run our own lives. The more money we transfer to people in secular governments, the more power they have to intrude into our lives and force their beliefs on us. Part and parcel of the rejection of God as an authority figure is the desire to get the approval of everyone else around you for acting immorally and selfishly. When people reject God, they feel guilty, and it causes them to want to surround themselves with people who tell them that they are actually doing the right thing by doing the wrong thing. But no amount of celebration of their selfishness is enough, and that's why the secular left is so much in favor of taxpayer-funded abortion, restricting disagreement with homosexuality and so on.

One way to stop their desire to get us to celebrate and affirm their immorality is to cut off the flow of money from families and job creators to the secular government. They should be getting no more of what we make than they need to perform their jobs – e.g., building roads, maintaining armed forces, etc. The more we can privatize things like education, health care, etc., the more free we will be. That could go as far as privatizing or even abolishing entire government departments.

Armed company owner prevents former employee from beheading second woman

September 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

The media isn't going to make much of this, but it does show the principal reason WHY law-abiding people should be allowed to own firearms. (H/T Czar B.)

Excerpt:

> On September 26, an armed company owner intervened in an attack by shooting a former employee who had already beheaded one worker and was stabbing another.
>
> The attack took place at Vaughan Foods in Moore, Oklahoma.
>
> Fox News reports that the alleged attacker, 30-year-old Alton Nolen, drove his car into another car in the parking lot of Vaughan Foods' parking lot, then entered the business and beheaded 54-year-old Collee Hufford. He was allegedly stabbing a second victim, 43-year-old Traci Johnson, when company owner Mark Vaughan drew the gun he was carrying and shot Nolen.
>
> Vaughan is C.O.O. of the food company and "a reserve county deputy."
>
> Moore Police Sgt. Jeremy Lewis praised Vaughan's actions, calling him a "hero." He said the situation "could have gotten a lot worse" if had not had his gun.
>
> The Associated Press reports that Lewis added: "This was not going to stop if [Vaughan] didn't stop it."
>
> Nolen was recently fired from Vaughan Foods. The FBI is "probing whether Nolen's recent conversion to Islam had anything to do with the attack."

Time to review the evidence for allowing people to own and carry guns for self-defense.

A quick refresher on why people own guns

People own guns so that they deter criminals and reduce the crime rate in their

communities. The more guns there are in the hands of law-abiding citizens, the lower the crime rate goes, because criminals don't like being shot at by their crime victims.

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime**

> **more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people.

A more recent study – from 2014

A new study that was in the news just last week confirms these findings.Newsmax reported on it.

Excerpt:

> A recent study showing a reverse correlation between concealed weapons and murder rates has renewed the contentious national debate about the effect of gun controls on violent crime.
>
> Reason magazine reported last week on economist Mark Gius' study of gun controls, published in the journal Applied Economics Letters showing states with restrictions on concealed weapons had higher gun-related murder rates than other states.
>
> The study looked at the effects on murder rates of both state-level assault weapons bans and concealed weapons restrictions from 1980 to 2009.
>
> […]The findings come as A 2007 study has been also getting a new look from those who dispute gun control efforts aimed at stemming gun violence, Boston magazine reported last summer.
>
> In research first published in Harvard's Journal of Public Law and Policy, criminologists Don Kates and Gary Mauser looked at the correlation between gun laws and death rates.
>
> "International evidence and comparisons have long been offered as proof of the mantra that more guns mean more deaths and that fewer guns, therefore, mean fewer deaths," the pair wrote in their introduction. "Unfortunately, such discussions [have] all too often been afflicted by misconceptions and factual error and focus on comparisons that are unrepresentative."
>
> The pair found "correlations that nations with stringent gun controls tend to have much higher murder rates than nations that allow guns."

It's not a reasonable position to think that disarming law-abiding citizens will reduce crime rates. The evidence is against it.

Being a member of a large family is associated with marital stability

September 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from the Sacramento Bee explains why some marriages last longer than others. Excerpt:

> A key reason, said University of Virginia sociologist Brad Wilcox, is that a greater proportion of older adults come from large families, born into an era when big families were the norm in American life – and research shows that having lots of siblings correlates with a lower statistical likelihood of divorce.
>
> "In terms of some social outcomes, kids from large families are more likely to flourish," said Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project. "They're less likely to get divorced. It might be the experience early in life of learning to share so much and live with the exceptional stress of having all those different personalities to deal with."
>
> Ohio State University research suggests that only children are the least likely to marry and most at risk of divorcing, while people with four to seven siblings have markedly lower rates of divorce.
>
> Maybe people from big families grow up knowing that they're not going to win every battle. Maybe they understand from birth that they're not alone in life. Or maybe they learn early on to play well with others.
>
> "All those life experiences may have prepared them better for marriage," Wilcox said.
>
> These long unions stand out in the shifting landscape of marriage. While 78 percent of American adults were married in 1950, according to census data, only about half are married today, and they're waiting longer to do so. The age of first marriage for men has risen to almost 30, compared to 23 in 1960. Fewer people marry each year, and confidence in marriage is at such a low point that a recent Pew Research Center survey showed that 40 percent of unmarried Americans think the concept of marriage is outdated.
>
> Even for older Californians, the chances of staying married are decreasing. The number of adults ages 60 and older who are divorced has risen steadily in Sacramento County and across the state during the last decade, census figures show. About 19.2 percent of Sacramento County residents past 60 are currently divorced, compared to 14.1 percent in 2005. Statewide, about 15.2 percent of residents 60 and older are divorced, compared to 13.1 percent nine years ago.
>
> Todd Migliaccio, a California State University, Sacramento, sociology professor, has researched marriages that have lasted 30 years or longer to figure out what keeps couples together. The traditional reasons for marriage – financial support,

> child-rearing, family stability and longstanding gender roles – aren't necessarily factors that speak to 21st-century couples. So what makes marriage last?
>
> Friendship, his research shows: Marriages that endure no matter what tend to involve couples who genuinely like each other and enjoy each other's company.
>
> "We're seeing more and more couples that have lasted where friendship is one of the big factors," he said. "And if they're from a close family, that provides a huge social network that contributes to marital longevity.
>
> "Couples have more to draw on and more commitment to the greater good of the family."

And what about couples who attend church regularly? Does that help?

Yes:

> "The important thing is that people are integrating into a religious community as a couple," said the National Marriage Project's Wilcox. "People who regularly attend religious services together are more likely to stay together.
>
> "But people who don't go to church together are more likely to get divorced than the average American."

So, if you want to help your own children have a better chance at making their marriages work, have more kids, not less.

University of Michigan: withholding sex and affection from a woman is domestic violence

September 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's a recent story from The College Fix that shows how far the university is going with this. (H/T Steve)

Excerpt:

> Examples of abuse listed on the University of Michigan's domestic violence awareness website say "sexual violence" includes "withholding sex and affection" and "discounting the partner's feelings regarding sex" – definitions that have come under fire by some men's rights activists.

> […][I]nterspersed within the typical definitions of abuse – "pushing, shoving, pulling, shaking, slapping, biting, hitting, punching, kicking, strangling, throwing objects at partner, restraining, throwing the partner, use of weapons" – the other examples, such as "discounting the partner's feelings regarding sex … criticizing the partner sexually … withholding sex and affection," are found.
>
> Also included in the definition of sexual violence is the example of having "sex with other people."
>
> The campaign also gives examples of what's considered to be "verbal or psychological abuse," including: "insulting the partner; ignoring the partner's feelings; withholding approval as a form of punishment; yelling at the partner; labeling the partner with terms like 'crazy,' 'stupid.'"
>
> It's not unheard of for sexual violence to be defined so loosely within a campus community.
>
> "Sexual violence is anything that makes someone feel unsafe; it could be catcalls, peer pressure to act a certain way in a situation, verbal harassment and unwanted touching. Many of these things occur daily without anyone giving a second thought to them," Jami Coughler, program coordinator for the Brock University Student Sexual Violence Support Centre, told the Canada-based campus newspaper this week.
>
> The University of Chicago, on its website, defines an abuser as someone who "has a strong belief in extreme gender roles" and "is jealous and possessive" among more typical forms of abuse listed.

A man who has a strong belief in extreme gender roles? That's me! Me and my chivalry and chastity.

When you have a group of feminists who set out to destroy the traditional gender roles of men, and who criminalize the traditional virtues of men, then you should NOT be surprised that government has to grow to fill the void. They told women that chastity was

out, and chivalry was out. Traditional male roles of protector, provider, and moral/spiritual leader are out. What kind of men do women choose if they want to avoid all of those traditional male virtues? Bad men. And when bad men aren't doing what the feminists want, they resort to big government to coerce and punish them. Every other man looking on to this situation is going to be reinforced not to pursue relationships with women, out of fear that they could be hit with false accusations for upsetting her – even if he hasn't done anything at all!

I hope that even non-Christian men who do think that premarital sex is OK will wake up and realize that there is a secular leftist agenda here that they tend to be supportive of when they vote for Democrats. The right is for free market capitalism and individual liberty in almost ever case, except that we don't think it's OK to killing unborn babies or that two men who meet through the Grindr app can then "marry" and then raise a little girl. But the left is all about controlling people's behavior to the smallest detail, and you will be punished if you disagree with their radical ideologies. In fact, if you don't celebrate the ideologies of the secular left, the way that citizens had to at rallies in left-wing regimes like socialist Germany and Communist Russia, then you should expect to be persecuted by the state if you cross any of their favored causes and groups. Using coercion to force people to affirm that wrong is right is pretty standard practice on the secular left.

I have no axe to grind in this premarital sex debate. I'm a virgin and I'm saving my first kiss on the lips for my engagement. I don't go near feminist women because I can't deal with the craziness, the irresponsibility and the misandry. My advice for young men today – Christian and not – is this: don't even speak to third-wave feminists. Don't even speak to women who drink more than a beer or a glass of wine per night. And don't have sex with women before you are married. If you want to go out on dates and get married, then pick a woman who repudiates third-wave feminism in its entirety.

I recommend studying STEM subjects as well, in order to avoid the more radical feminists – they tend to congregate in the humanities or in fake majors like "women's studies".

October 5th is Pulpit Freedom Sunday: is your church getting involved?

September 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I listened to this podcast from the Alliance Defending Freedom and this podcast from the Family Research Council on the weekend. Both of them mentioned that something called Pulpit Freedom Sunday was happening this Sunday.

So I looked it up and found this online:

> Pulpit Freedom Sunday is an event associated with the Pulpit Initiative, a legal effort designed to secure the free speech rights of pastors in the pulpit. Pulpit Freedom Sunday encourages pastors to exercise their constitutionally protected freedom to speak truth into every area of life from the pulpit. Alliance Defending Freedom also hopes to eventually go to court to have the Johnson Amendment struck down as unconstitutional for its regulation of sermons, which are protected by the First Amendment.

The web site is here. They are up to 3520 pastors now who are participating. My pastor did not participate last year. He is not very intelligent when it comes to apologetics and policy, so he probably doesn't know what to say. Or maybe he just afraid, which I can understand more than not knowing what to say.

Not everyone is happy with this. The IRS is investigating churches (not Democrat-favoring churches, of course) for speaking about specific issues.

Here's an article on that.

Excerpt:

> The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has agreed to investigate the political activity of churches after reaching a settlement with an atheist legal group. But a court has yet to decide whether or not to close the case.
>
> The Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) and the IRS jointly asked a Wisconsin federal court last week to dismiss a 2012 lawsuit, FFRF v. Koskinen. The FFRF had alleged that the IRS failed to have a policy in place for investigating political activity at tax-exempt churches and religious organizations, nor did the agency enforce its 501(c)(3) codes against electioneering.
>
> Meanwhile, more than 1,600 churches have deliberately broken the existing law since 2008, endorsing political candidates from their pulpits during Pulpit Freedom Sunday events organized by the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF). The next "showdown" will be October 5.
>
> "This is a victory, and we're pleased with this development in which the IRS has proved to our satisfaction that it now has in place a protocol to enforce its own anti-electioneering provisions," said FFRF co-president Annie Laurie Gaylor in a

press release.

However, the case has not yet been closed. Father Patrick Malone of Holy Cross Anglican Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, had been granted permission to interveneon the side of the IRS, and the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty (which represents Malone) has asked the court to dismiss the case but “with prejudice.” In other words, Becket argues the FFRF should not be able to sue the IRS again on this particular issue, while the FFRF argues that it should be able to do so.

Regardless of the court’s final decision, the IRS won’t be free to investigate churches until a moratorium related to the agency’s controversial scrutiny of tea party organizations is lifted after a congressional investigation closes.

CT has noted how the six-year run of Pulpit Freedom Sunday has tried to provoke the IRS into (ironically) punishing pastors as a means to reexamine the rights of pastors to promote politicians from the pulpit. The initiative even gained an unexpected allylast year in Sen. Charles Grassley and the Commission on Accountability and Policy for Religious Organizations (CAPRO).

Meanwhile, LifeWay Research has found that only 10 percent of Protestant pastors believe pastors should endorse political candidates (while noting that is a different question from should the IRS ban the practice.)

The IRS has not released the language of the settlement, and ADF is concerned about how secretive the church investigations will be—if they indeed happen. ADF has issued a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request in pursuit of the documents surrounding the settlement between the FFRF and the IRS.

“This is one of the major problems with the IRS,” said Erik Stanley, senior legal counsel with ADF. “They are secretive, which breeds mistrust and leads to problems in knowing just how they will enforce and interpret the law.”

Becket has also requested information on documents the FFRF and the IRS are not making available, including: “all documents relating to any investigation or determination by a high-ranking IRS official, in writing, of the acts and circumstances, including potential violations of the electioneering restrictions, that led to the high-ranking official to reasonably believe that a church or religious organization may have violated the requirements for tax exemption under 501(c)(3).”

Stanley says ADF’s strategy—helping churches realize how government is censoring what they say—will not change. If the IRS does monitor electioneering more closely, he hopes the issue will end in a lawsuit.

“The Johnson Amendment is unconstitutional,” said Stanley. “If the IRS begins enforcing it again against churches, Alliance Defending Freedom stands ready to defend a pastor’s right to speak freely from the pulpit.”

ADF has organized Pulpit Freedom Sunday for six years, with 1,621 church and religious leaders participating in 2012 (2013 dropped to nearly 1,100

> participants). But until now, the IRS has all but ignored ADF's attempts to bring the issue to a head. According to Stanley, the IRS does not want to challenge the Johnson Amendment—which bans tax-exempt organizations from endorsing or opposing political candidates—in court.

I think it's interesting that the FFRF is not so much interested in debating whether atheism is true as they in shutting down theists who seek to live consistently with their beliefs by using the power of big government. I think that's pretty par for the course though, if you look through 20th century history. That's what atheist regimes have done, so we should expect individual atheists to do that as well.

I don't recommend to the atheists at FFRF that they intimidate Christians, though, as Jesus seems to think that limiting the practice and free expression of Christian convictions is a bad idea.

Read Matthew 18:1-7:

> 1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"
>
> 2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them,
>
> 3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 4 Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 5 And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me;
>
> 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.
>
> 7 "Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!

I think that we Christians need to take positions that are in accord with what God's Word says, and we need to be ready to defend our positions in public using public arguments and public evidence – especially scientific research – that will be persuasive to non-Christians who do not accept the Bible. That's the only way to stop the cultural decline caused by the secular left.

The best introductory book on the interface between Christianity and politics is "Indivisible: Restoring Faith, Family, and Freedom Before It's Too Late", co-authored by Jay Wesley Richards. The Kindle edition is $9.99. Richards' Ph.D is from Princeton University.

The best comprehensive book is "Politics – According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture" by Wayne Grudem. The Kindle edition of that one is $4.99. Grudem's is from Cambridge University.

First-rate Christian scholarship on practical Christianity.

And you can listen to Grudem delivering Sunday school training at his church on every single chapter of that book right here. All free, and no ads. Be sure and scroll through all the previous years to get all the topics! Ethics, social policy, fiscal policy, foreign policy and more!

For more information on Pulpit Freedom Sunday, check out this web site.

If you want to hear about things like this, then subscribe to the FRC podcasts and the ADF podcast.

How do atheists incorporate the Big Bang cosmology into their worldview?

September 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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It's easy! Just watch the video of his debate with William Lane Craig, who responds to Atkins' explanation.

So, just who is this Peter Atkins, and why is he a good spokesman for atheism?

From his Wikipedia bio.

Peter William Atkins (born August 10, 1940) is an English chemist and a fellow and professor of chemistry at Lincoln College of the University of Oxford. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, 8th ed. (with Julio de Paula of Haverford College), *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*, 4th ed. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.

[…]Atkins is a well-known atheist and supporter of many of Richard Dawkins' ideas. He has written and spoken on issues of humanism, atheism, and what he sees as the incompatibility between science and religion. According to Atkins, whereas religion scorns the power of human comprehension, science respects it.

[…]He was the first Senior Member for the Oxford Secular Society and an Honorary Associate of the National Secular Society. He is also a member of the Advisory Board of The Reason Project, a US-based charitable foundation devoted to spreading scientific knowledge and secular values in society. The organisation is led by fellow atheist and author Sam Harris.

Now watch that 6-minute video above. Peter Atkins thinks that nothing exists. He thinks he doesn't exist. He thinks that you don't exist.

If you watch the full debate, he also argues that objective morality doesn't exist, and that moral values and moral obligations are *illusory*. That's right: a*theists cannot even make rational statements about morality because there is no such thing as an objective moral standard in their worldview.* This denial of morality is *in addition* to denying the mainstream science of the Big Bang cosmology. I don't have the ability to believe things are true that are obviously false the way Atkins does, so I guess I can't be an atheist. Oh well, I tried!

Stephen C. Meyer and Peter Atkins debate intelligent design

September 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This dialog occurred in 2010 on the Unbelievable radio show.

I made a rough transcript, so please see below for that.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

Details:

> The documentary film "Expelled" is presented by US Actor Ben Stein and makes the case that scientists who question Darwinian orthodoxy and support Intelligent Design are being "expelled" from academia.
>
> As the UK edition of the DVD is released we ask "Is freedom of thought at stake or is Intelligent Design out of bounds when it comes to biological science?"
>
> Stephen C Meyer is co founder of the Discovery Institute in the USA and a major proponent of Intelligent Design.
>
> Peter Atkins is Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University and an outspoken atheist.
>
> They both feature in "Expelled" and join Justin to debate the pros and cons of Intelligent Design theory.
>
> Mark Haville who is bringing the film to the UK also joins the discussion.

Note: The transcript below is quite snarky and may include paraphrases of Dr. Atkins for the sake of humor.

My rough transcript of the Meyer-Atkins debate

Stephen Meyer:
– started researching on ID while doing his PhD at Cambridge
– the question is whether the information-bearing properties in DNA require a designer
– what cause is adequate to explain the digital code that in the simplest living cell
– alternative explanations like self-organization and RNA-first have failed
– so the best explanation for functional sequences of parts is an intelligent designer
– Darwinists have responded to this argument with insults and suppression of dissent

Peter Atkins:
– intelligent design is creationism
– there is no science at all in it
– information can emerge without an intelligent designer
– structures emerge spontaneously, no agent is needed to generate the structure
– information in DNA is also a structure

Stephen Meyer:
– structure and information are two different things

– many structures emerge spontaneously
– structure may be like the vortex that occurs when water goes down a drain

Peter Atkins:
– the vortex is information

Stephen Meyer:
– structures are different from functionally-specified digital information
– in DNA, there is a 4-digit alphabet that is used to create code sequences
– the thing to be explained is where do the functional sequences come from

Peter Atkins:
– information can grow without an agent
– the second law of thermodynamics
– the universe is falling into disorder
– but there are local abatements of chaos that create information
– evolution can cause the amount of information to grow

Stephen Meyer:
– that's just an assertion
– I agree that energy flow through a system can produce spontaneous order
– but spontaneous order is not the same thing as information

Peter Atkins:
– spontaneous order is the same as information

Stephen Meyer:
– it's not order that needs to be explained it's specified complexity

Peter Atkins:
– what do you mean by specified complexity?

Stephen Meyer:
– the chemical bonds that connect to each letter do not determine the letter
– the chemical bonding sites will accept any letter as easily as any other
– any one of the 4 bases (letters) can attach at any place along the backbone

Peter Atkins:
– the selection of which letter comes next is determined by evolution

Stephen Meyer:
– that is just an assertion
– there is no physical process that sequences the letters to have a function

Peter Atkins:
– do you believe in evolution? YES OR NO!

Mark Haville:
– for him to answer the question you have to define the word
– do you mean macro or micro? biological or stellar? directed or undirected?

Peter Atkins:
– undirected molecules to man evolution by natural processes

Stephen Meyer:
– but even Dawkins doesn't believe in evolution then
– you're including the origin of life from non-living matter in evolution
– Dawkins says that there is no known naturalistic explanation for that

Mark Haville:
– you need to define your terms

[They discuss of the movie Expelled and the case of Richard Sternberg]

Stephen Meyer:
– the problem is people don't want to talk about the science
– they denounce dissent as unscientific
– they will not debate about whther natural causes can explain the information
– I want to talk about the science

Peter Atkins:
– ID people raise interesting questions for naturalists to work on
– but you want to tell us what the answer is (intelligence) before we begin
– you start from the idea that an intelligence was involved

Justin Brierley:
– but you start with the idea that natural mechanisms can explain everything!

Stephen Meyer:
– for Dr. Atkins, only explanations based on material processes are valid

Peter Atkins:
– that is correct

Stephen Meyer:
– but we think that the activities of mind can explain some effects
– e.g. – the best explanation of the Rosetta stone is a mind

Peter Atkins:
– but we naturalists think of minds as material as well

Stephen Meyer:
– that's a materialist pre-supposition on your part
– we would have to have a debate about mind and body

Mark Haville:
– I think that the materialist position is socially dangerous
– the problem with naturalism is that it is an ideology
– the ideology pushes absurdities, e.g. – the universe came from nothing uncaused
– and naturalists exert power over others to force them to believe nonsense

Stephen Meyer:
– science progresses as the result of scientists disagreeing
– both sides agree to the facts
– the debate is about the interpretation of those facts
– and one side is being ruled out a priori based on the pre-supposition of materialism

Peter Atkins:
– why do you say that an intelligence is involved in DNA but not general relativity

Stephen Meyer:
– it is always logically possible that intelligence can be invlved in any effect
– the main thing is that explanations based on intelligence should not be ruled out

Peter Atkins:
= well you can't appeal to any non-material process in expaining anything
– those are the rules

Moderator:
– what does intelligent design have to do with religion?

Stephen Meyer:
– creationism is about understanding the istory of life using the Bible
– intelligent design is about using the same method of inquiry as Darwin
– we know that information arises from intelligent causes
– humans create information all the time by using intelligence to sequence parts

Moderator:
– are intelligent design proponents disreputable?

Stephen Meyer:
– what's disreputable is shutting down debate by setting arbitrary rules

Peter Atkins:
– we are both interested in the same questions

Moderator:
– why won't you let Stephen publish his papers then?

Peter Atkins:
– because it breaks the pre-suppositions of naturalism and materialism

Stephen Meyer:
– you're shutting down inquiry by using an arbitrary definition of science

Mark Haville:
– we need to define the word science
– science should be based on what we can observe empirically
– we can observe micro-evolution empirically
– but Darwinism goes beyond what is observable to postulate macro-evolution

Peter Atkins:
– but paleobiology is replete with evidence

Stephen Meyer:
– paleobiology uses a method of inference that I think is valid
– but intelligent design uses the same mode of reasoning which is also valid

Peter Atkins:
= you're intellectually lazy

– we’re smart, we’re using our brains

Moderator:
– you’re saying that appeals to intelligent causes ends science?
– is ID the view that some things are too complex to be explained with naturalism?

Peter Atkins:
– yes, and to teach children that materialism is false is child abuse

Stephen Meyer:
– let’s drop the insults and the rhetoric and focus on the arguments
– the ID argument is not based on what we don’t know, it’s based on what we DO know
– first, we can ask what undirected natural processes can and cannot do
– second, we can ask what we know about intelligent causes from our own experience
– what we do know seems to me to require an intelligent agent as a cause

Peter Atkins:
– GOD! Do you mean God!? Do you mean God!?

Stephen Meyer:
– I personally mean God, but all that the arguments proves is a generic intelligent cause
– and I am using the same method of investigation that Darwin used to get there
– what we know from our experience is that a mind is needed to create information

Peter Atkins:
– NONSENSE! ABSOLUTE NONSENSE!

Stephen Meyer:
– in my book, I list 10 predictions made by ID, so it’s not a science-stopper
– furthermore, the enterprise of science began with th goal of understanding God
– consider the earliest scientists, people like James Boyler and Johannes Kepler

Peter Atkins:
– that was 300 years ago, we’ve moved on

Mark Haville:
– what about Max Planck then?

Stephen Meyer:
– how about James Clark Maxwell?

Mark Haville:
– we need to focus on the facts

Peter Atkins:
– what do you mean by the facts?

Mark Haville:
– well the fact is that Darwinism has no mechanism to produce new information

Peter Atkins:
– well copying errors introduces beneficial mutations

Stephen Meyer:

– let’s focus on where we get the first information from the simplest organism
– you can’t account for the first organism by appealing to copying errors
– to add functionality to a program, you need new lines codes from an intelligence
– once you have life, you can generate some new information
– but you can’t generate macro-evolution either

Peter Atkins:
– if we give you your explanation for teh origin of life, will you give this up

Stephen Meyer:
– of course! I’m a former theistic evolutionist
– but right now the evidence is not there for it
– we have to decide these questions based on what we see with our own eyes today

Peter Atkins:
– but I pre-suppose materialism as the starting point of all explanations
– you’re just intellectually lazy to abandon my pre-supposition

Stephen Meyer:
– why is it is less intellectually lazy to insist that materialism is true
– we are making plenty of predictions, and isn’t that what science is about?
– consider Junk DNA – you guys said it had no use
– now we know it has a use

Peter Atkins:
– naturalists were open to the idea that junk DNA might have a use before ID

Moderator:
– Dr. Meyer, what about the wall that locks out intelligence as an explanation?

Stephen Meyer:
– if these are interesting questions, then we should allow freedom of inquiry
– that’s how science advances

Peter Atkins:
– for all their science-talk really they are just saying God did it
– people who don’t agree with me are not using their brains, like I do
– to give up on my pre-supposition of materialism is a denial of humanity

Mark Haville:
– there are important issues that are affected by our view of origins
– everyone who hasn’t seen Expelled movie should definitely see it

William Lane Craig debates Peter Atkins: Does God Exist?

September 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Apologetics 315 posted the video of a debate from the Reasonable Faith speaking tour in the UK:

This is a must-see debate. It was extremely fun to watch.

Details:

> On Wednesday 26th October 2011 William Lane Craig debated Peter Atkins on the topic: *Does God Exist?* This debate took place at the University of Manchester as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig. The debate was chaired by Christopher Whitehead, Head of Chemistry School at the University. Post-debate discussion was moderated by Peter S Williams, Philosopher in Residence at the Damaris Trust, UK.

Dr. William Lane Craig:

> **William Lane Craig** (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich in 1984.

Dr. Peter Atkins:

> **Peter William Atkins** (born 10 August 1940) is a British chemist and former Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Lincoln College. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.
>
> Atkins studied chemistry at the University of Leicester, obtaining a bachelor's

> degree in chemistry, and – in 1964 – a PhD for research into electron spin resonance spectroscopy, and other aspects of theoretical chemistry. Atkins then took a postdoctoral position at the UCLA as aHarkness Fellow of the Commonwealth fund. He returned to Oxford in 1965 as fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, and lecturer in physical chemistry (later, professor of physical chemistry).

You can get the audio of the debate here, along with links to their previous debate from 1998. This debate is accessible and understandable to novice-level Christians.

I am happy when debates like this come out. I have friends who are Christians who doubt the importance of apologetics in evangelism, because they don't think that apologists can prove anything or win arguments. I have friends who are skeptical of using arguments that assume a 14-billion year old universe, because they think that the Big Bang is compatible with atheism (!). I have friends who think that philosophical arguments have no persuasive force. I have friends who think that nothing can be proven from history, beyond a reasonable doubt. I have co-workers who ask me whether anyone wins these debates. I think that this debate answers all of those questions.

This debate clearly shows why Christians should not shy away from studying science, philosophy and history. We will not discover anything that harms Christian theism by thinking logically and by looking at the evidence. To the contrary, it is the atheist who makes war on the progress of science, and who is forced to resist the clear experimental evidence, and to resort to baseless speculations and blind faith. If you want to see a good debate with an intelligent atheist, I recommend watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican instead. But if you want to see a really, really overwhelming defeat for atheism, watch this debate. It is very clear at the end of this debate why Richard Dawkins refused to debate William Lane Craig at Oxford.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING SPEECHES

I only had time to summarize the first two speeches. Keep in mind that Dr. Craig always shines in his rebuttals, and this debate is no different. So you'll want to watch those rebuttals. Dr. Atkins *literally* says in this debate in his first rebuttal "There was nothing here originally. There is nothing here now. But it is an interesting form of nothing which seems to be something." And the audience laughs nervously. This debate is like that. You will see a clear winner and clear loser in this debate. This fight is decided by knockout.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

1. the origin of the universe
2. the moral argument
3. the resurrection of Jesus

Peter Atkins opening speech:

1. Dr. Craig is stupid, lazy and evil:
– Dr. Craig's arguments are old: from the 11th century! Old arguments can't be true
– Dr. Craig is just asserting that "God did it" because he is lazy

– Dr. Craig feels pressured to agree with the theistic majority
– Dr. Craig needs a psychological crutch to comfort him
– Dr. Craig is fearful of death
– Dr. Craig is just wishing for an eternal life of bliss
– Dr. Craig is driven by his heart, and not by his head

2. Origin of the universe:
– Maybe the universe is eternal and has no beginning – we don't know
– Maybe mommy universes can give birth to daughter universes
– It is naive to think that a cause is needed to cause the creation of the universe from nothing
– Science is just about to show how it is possible that something appears out of nothing without cause
– Some scientists have already begun to speculate about about how something can come into being out of nothing
– Maybe nothing is not really nothing, but it is actually something
– It would be admitting defeat to say that God created the universe out of nothing

3. Fine-Tuning:
– It could be the case that the fundamental constants are not variable
– It could be the case that the fine-tuning of the cosmic constants is a happy accident
– It could be the case that there are billions of billions of unobservable universes that are not fine tuned
– It could be the case that the cosmic constants in these billions and billions of unobservable universes are all random so that some are fine-tuned
– Anyone who infers that an intelligence is the best explanation of a finely-tuned set of life-permitting cosmic constants is lazy

4. Purpose:
– Philosophers and theologians are stupid
– I don't think that there is purpose in the universe
– I think that the universe is more grand if there is no purpose, so there is no purpose

5. Miracles:
– I don't think that miracles happen
– The resurrection is a fabrication
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't exist
– It could be the case that Jesus wasn't really crucified
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't really die after being crucified
– It could be the case that the disciples stole his body
– It could be the case that the women went to the wrong hole in the ground
– the gospels are political propaganda written long after the events they are reporting on

6. Theodicy:
– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing humans to perform actions that result in suffering

– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing nature to cause suffering

7. Morality:

– customs and conventions emerges arbitrarily in different times and places based on an awareness of the consequences of actions, as well as various anecdotes and experiences

– these customs and conventions are decided based on the goal for survival, in much the same way as politeness and manners emerge for decorum and to avoid offense

– it is childish to presume that there is an umpire God who decides moral values and duties

8. Religious believers are stupid, lazy and evil:

– the notion of God has arisen because people are stupid and want to be comforted

– there are no arguments or evidences for belief in God

– people who believe in God do not think, but instead take refuge in incomprehensible nonsense

Could the same libertarian impulse that led to gay marriage lead to incest marriage?

October 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article from The Week, a liberal publication. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> You should really care that the German Ethics Council (a government committee) haspronounced that Germany's laws banning consensual incest between adult brothers and sisters ought to be abolished.
>
> Now, it's not because Germany's laws directly affect the United States; they don't, of course. And even within Germany itself, the ruling party of Chancellor Angela Merkel has indicated that it doesn't plan on following the council's recommendation.
>
> The reason why Americans — and especially American liberals — should care about the council's ruling is that it gives us a glimpse of America's future.
>
> The German council's position is based on the claim that "the fundamental right of adult siblings to sexual self-determination" overrides all other moral considerations, including "the abstract idea of protection of the family."

Right now, the Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act because they thought that there is no possible reason for defining marriage as one man and one woman other than "the desire to "'disparage,' 'injure,' 'degrade,' 'demean,' and 'humiliate' our fellow human beings, our fellow citizens, who are homosexual". So does this rationale for allow gay marriage apply to incest marriage?

Well:

Well, how long before the majority wants to and believes it can get away with declaring a constitutional right to sibling incest?

> Don't laugh. As with same-sex marriage, the principle has already been established. In a notorious passage of *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the 1992 decision that upheld the constitutional right to abortion, Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote that "at the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, of the mystery of human life." Kennedy relied on the same passage in his majority opinion in *Lawrence.* The German Ethics Council expressed a similarly libertarian ideal of sexual autonomy in its ruling in favor of sibling incest.
>
> […]Note that the German Ethics Council also held that the prospect of a brother and sister producing children with genetic defects cannot be used as a reason to deny them a right to marry. After all, disabled couples are not prohibited from procreating under German law, even though they have a greater-than-average

> chance of producing disabled kids. The same is true, incidentally, under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Indeed. If people should be allowed to marry whomever they “love” then, there can be no prohibitions on polygamy or incest marriages. Don’t they “love” each other just as much? Well, then those are both “marriage”, too. But maybe that’s OK with the secular left – they never liked that whole “morality” thing anyway. So long as the selfish grown-ups are happy, why should we care about children’s needs or social stability at all?

Study: recessions result in lower birth rates

October 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new study from Princeton University caught my eye.

Excerpt:

> […][N]ew research from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs shows that women who were in their early 20s during the Great Recession will have fewer children in both the short and long term. This result is driven largely by an increase in the number of women who will remain childless at age 40.
>
> The paper, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, is the first to show that recessions have long-term effects on fertility, which actually increase exponentially over time.
>
> […]Their calculations show that a one-percentage point increase in the unemployment rate experienced between ages 20 and 24 reduces the short-term fertility of women by six conceptions per 1,000 women. When following these women to age 40, the same unemployment rate increase leads to an overall loss of 14.2 conceptions per 1,000 women. This increasing effect over time is largely accounted for by an increase in the fraction of women who remain unmarried and childless at age 40. These women not only forego first births, but forego later births as well.
>
> In terms of the Great Recession, the researchers estimate that the increase in unemployment rates experienced between 2008 and 2013 will result in an additional 151,082 women who will remain childless at age 40, leading to a long-term loss of 420,957 conceptions (and 426,850 live births) – a 2.4 percent decrease.

People don't just marry and have kids whenever they feel like it. However individual people may feel about romance and recklessness and risk-taking, the general behavior pattern is that if the economy is lousy, then people have fewer children. That's because they can't afford them. Maybe grown-ups should be thinking more about economic growth, by lowering taxes and reducing wasteful spending.

But there's more to it than that:

> But what are the economic mechanisms driving these results? Currie and Schwandt cite recent empirical studies showing that young adults – especially young men – who enter the job market during an economic downturn are likely to have persistently lower earnings as they age. This phenomenon may make young men less attractive matches for women, explaining the increase in the number of women who forego childbearing.

This quote made me think of another post from the liberal 538 blog.

Ben Casselman writes:

> In its report last week, Pew suggested that one reason for falling marriage rates is the decline in employment among young men. That may also help explain the education gap in marriage. Put simply, men without jobs are much less likely to get married, and men without a college degree are much less likely to get jobs.
>
> In the Pew survey, 78 percent of never-married women said it was "very important" for a prospective spouse (in most cases, a husband) to have a steady job. That ranked above any other requirement, including "same moral and religious beliefs" (38 percent), "at least as much education" (28 percent) and even "similar ideas about having and raising children" (70 percent). The survey results are borne out by women's actual behavior. About half of men ages 25 to 34 with a steady job have been married, compared to just a third of those without a steady job.
>
> For men without a steady job, having more education doesn't help much in terms of finding a spouse — marriage rates are nearly identical regardless of education. But having a degree makes men much more likely to be employed — and therefore more likely to get married. According to the Current Population Survey, more than 20 percent of men ages 25 to 34 with a high school diploma are out of work, versus 10 percent of young men with a college degree. And when they do have jobs, less-educated men earn less and are more likely to be laid off.

For a long time in this country, we have had schools that discriminate against young men and punish them. There are virtually no male teachers in the classrooms. This has a profound effect on young men, causing them to become disinterested in school, which makes it harder for them to find jobs.

USA Today reports on a relevant study:

> For all the differences between the sexes, here's one that might stir up debate in the teacher's lounge: Boys learn more from men and girls learn more from women.
> That's the upshot of a provocative study by Thomas Dee, an associate professor of economics at Swarthmore College and visiting scholar at Stanford University. His study was to appear Monday in *Education Next*, a quarterly journal published by the Hoover Institution.
>
> Vetted and approved by peer reviewers, Dee's research faces a fight for acceptance. Some leading education advocates dispute his conclusions and the way in which he reached them.
>
> But Dee says his research supports his point, that gender matters when it comes to learning. Specifically, as he describes it, having a teacher of the opposite sex hurts a student's academic progress.

Everything is connected together. We need a strong economy and well-educated young men in order to make marriage and child-bearing reasonable to men.

How would gay marriage affect your marriage?

October 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Signal explains what it costs for those who refuse to celebrate same-sex marriage.

Excerpt:

> A bakery owner in Oregon broke down in tears while discussing the fallout of her and her husband's decision not to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex couple on the basis of their Christian beliefs.
>
> Earlier this year, the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries found "substantial evidence" that Aaron and Melissa Klein, owners of Sweet Cakes by Melissa, discriminated against the lesbian couple.
>
> **They now face a fine in excess of $150,000.**
>
> **In an exclusive interview with The Daily Signal on Friday at the 2014 Values Voter Summit, Aaron said the fee would "definitely" be enough to bankrupt the couple and their five children.**
>
> […]In January 2014, the Kleins were charged with violating Oregon's Equality Act of 2007, a law that protects the rights of the LGBT community.
>
> […]Melissa and Aaron Klein are in the process of appealing the decision handed down by the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries. Following threats, vicious protests and boycotts, they have also been forced to close their bakery.
>
> Melissa told The Daily Signal the charges have "definitely impacted us pretty hard financially."
>
> "This was not the first time we've served these girls," said Aaron, maintaining their refusal was not about the couple's sexual orientation, but rather, about their religious convictions.

Sometimes, when a person is doing something they know is wrong, they will try to drown out their conscience by getting everyone around them to tell them that what they are doing is actually right. But what happens when the people around them don't perform? Well, if you're on the secular left, that's where the fascism comes in. On a secular worldview, you can't ground human rights. They don't exist. So when a secular leftists is confronted with a lack of approval for his sinfulness, he turns to government to punish anyone who disagrees with them. Even if it means violating their fundamental human rights. The gay couple in question could have gone somewhere else, but instead they chose to punish people who disagreed with them in order to push their agenda by coercion.

I think a lot of atheists like to console themselves that even if God exists, that they will be OK because they never did anything *really* bad. You know, like rape or murder. And those things are indeed terrible, and definitely worthy of capital punishment now, and an

eternity of separation from God later. But I think there is something even worse than those things. Jesus says that the most important commandment is for a person to love God with everything he has. I think that when a secular leftist uses the power of government to force Christians to break their allegiance to Christ, that they are doing something *worse* than rape or murder, (in terms of final judgment – not criminal law). And this is in addition to the widespread support for abortion (which is murder of an innocent child) that is *widely* supported in the atheist community.

You definitely do not want to be found to be one of those people who made Christians feel ashamed of taking the teachings of Jesus on sexuality seriously on that day. I really think it would be nice if atheists stopped kidding themselves about being good people. You're not good people. We might treat you nicely, because you were made to know God and so have the same value as anyone else, but that doesn't mean you are a good person. In fact, atheists cannot even ground objective morality rationally in their accidental universe. I guess we should not be surprised, then, when we see them using government to force their nihilism on people of faith.

Here is atheist morality:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

That's why they can do these things. Because for them, rape, murder, anything – are all neither praiseworthy nor prohibited. There is no moral oughtness on atheism. And if they have enough power, then it just leads them to behave like the atheist Josef Stalin did in his ruthless suppression of free religious expression. Killing millions of people is no problem for atheists. There is no evil and no good, as Dawkins says. I think what this intolerance towards Christians for their faith is a slippery slope that leads to the kind of religious persecution that we have seen against people of faith in atheist regimes of the past. This is not speculative. Atheists have been willing to kill in order to protect their worldview from challengers. I think fining Christians $150,000 in order to bankrupt them is a step on that path. They lack the power today, but not the will. History teaches us that there is a deep hatred for Christianity inside atheism, and there are no limits to how far

they will go to act on that.

You can read more about atheist morality in this post where I talk about Richard Dawkins' support for extramarital affairs and infanticide. Like I said, if you're an atheist, there is no evil and no good. It's so strange to me when they try to make moral judgments. Like a monkey trying to write a novel. They act so outraged but really they have no standing to declare anything right or wrong. It's not grounded in their worldview, and it's important to understand what we are dealing with when we meet people who cannot distinguish right from wrong, and have no problem with coercing others against their consciences. It's easy to see where Stalin and Mao came from, isn't it?

Poll: fewer than 1 in 3 Americans wants to keep Obamacare

October 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reported on a recent poll by McLaughlin & Associates.

Excerpt:

> A new poll finds that three-fifths of likely voters support the repeal of Obamacare. A large plurality — 44 percent — wants to see Obamacare repealed and replaced with a conservative alternative. A much smaller group —16 percent — wants to see it repealed but not replaced. Less than one in three respondents — 32 percent — would like to keep Obamacare, whether in its current form or in amended form. So, with a conservative alternative in play, 60 percent of Americans support repeal, while only 32 percent oppose it.
>
> Repeal and replace was chosen by a plurality of every age group, every income group aside from those making over $150,000, and both sexes. Among independents, 62 percent said they support repeal, with 46 percent backing a conservative alternative. Only 31 percent of independents support keeping Obamacare in its current form or in amended form. Among those who make between $20,000 and $100,000, 63 percent support repeal, with 48 percent backing a conservative alternative. Only 30 percent of such voters want to try to salvage Obamacare.

I know what you're thinking. This poll must have favored Republican respondents over Democrats.

NOPE:

> The poll included 38 percent Democrats and 32 percent Republicans.

I was talking to a friend the other day who is from outside the United States and he was telling me how he was sure Americans just love Obamacare and that it is working really well. He must be getting that from CNN or something, because this poll is pretty clear. I think we have reason to be hopeful about the 2014 midterm elections.

The 2014 midterm elections

Here's an article from National Review that expresses caution because of the effectiveness of Democrat voter registration efforts, but is also optimistic about the latest polls.

Here's the rundown: (links removed)

> In just about every Senate race that matters, last week brought at least one highly-regarded poll showing exactly what a Republican wants to see.
>
> In Alaska, Dan Sullivan has led the past four polls.

> In Arkansas, Tom Cotton has led 11 of the past 13 polls.
>
> In Colorado, Quinnipiac put Cory Gardner ahead, 48 percent to 40 percent.
>
> In Iowa, the *Des Moines Register* poll put Joni Ernst ahead, 44 percent to 38 percent. NBC News Andrea Mitchell is openly calling Democrat Bruce Braley.
>
> In Louisiana, a runoff between Democrat incumbent Mary Landrieu and Republican Bill Cassidy is virtually assured. Cassidy led the last four polls of the runoff.
>
> Those five, just right there, along with the expected GOP wins in Montana, South Dakota, and West Virginia, would give the GOP a eight-seat pickup. Republicans could lose in Kansas and still keep the Senate. In Kansas, voters are still digesting the fact that the Democrat dropped out and getting to know "independent" Greg Orman. No one has polled this race in ten days, and the GOP is pulling out the stops to save Pat Roberts.
>
> And we've got more races to go…
>
> In New Hampshire, CNN had Scott Brown tied with Jeanne Shaheen.
>
> In Michigan, Republicans can be frustrated that Terri Lynn Landhasn't led any poll recently. But Democrat Gary Peters' share of the vote is actually declining from the mid-40s to the low 40s, with a lot of undecideds left out there.
>
> In North Carolina, Thom Tillis can't quite get the lead over incumbent Kay Hagan, but she's consistently in the mid-40s or even low 40s – a very precarious spot for an incumbent.
>
> Beyond Kansas, Democrats hopes for picking up a GOP seat are evaporating. In Georgia, David Purdue has led four of the past five polls. In Kentucky, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell has led every poll since June.

The current poll averages from Real Clear Politics predict a 52-47 Republican Senate after the midterm elections. Eight pick-ups, with Kansas "too close to call". I hope those polls are accurate, because otherwise Obama is going to pack the courts with more leftist judges. I hope people are doing all they can to get out the Republican vote this year, because we really need to stop the bleeding – NINE TRILLION dollars added to the national debt so far. Too much. Conscience protections and religious liberty under attack. Natural marriage struck down by activist judges, Our national security and foreign policy in a shambles. And pro-life state level restrictions on abortion threatened by Democrat legistlators. We have to do something this time.

Is marriage a good deal for men? How can we make it a better deal for men?

October 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Elusive Wapiti, a Christian men's rights blogger, posted this video from Dr. Helen Reynolds, author of "The Marriage Strike". In the video, she gives 6 reasons why men are shying away from marriage. I agree with some of her reasons, but I wanted to respond and give the positive case for marriage. Also, I think it is worth reading a very challenging comment from "Gaza" in that post, who says that women are pushing marriage off for too long so that they end up not being prepared for it even if they meet a marriage-minded man.

So, onto to the positive aspects of marriage for men.

Let me quote from this NIH publication, which argues that marriage is a great value for men.

Look:

> One of the strongest, most consistent benefits of marriage is better physical health and its consequence, longer life. Married people are less likely than unmarried people to suffer from long-term illness or disability (Murphy et al. 1997), and they have better survival rates for some illnesses (Goodwin et al. 1987). They have fewer physical problems and a lower risk of death from various causes, especially those with a behavioral component; the health benefits are generally larger for men (Ross et al. 1990).
>
> A longitudinal analysis based on data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, a large national sample, documents a significantly lower mortality rate for married individuals (Lillard and Waite 1995). For example, simulations based on this research show that, other factors held constant, nine out of ten married women alive at age 48 would still be alive at age 65; by contrast, eight out of ten never-married women would survive to age 65. The corresponding comparison for men reveals a more pronounced difference: nine out of ten for the married group versus only six out of ten for those who were never married (Waite and Gallagher 2000).

And more:

> Recent studies based on longitudinal data have found that getting married (and staying married to the same person) is associated with better mental health outcomes. Horwitz et al. (1996), Marks and Lambert (1998), and Simon (2002) present evidence of improvements in emotional well-being following marriage, and declines following the end of a union. Marks and Lambert (1998) report that marital gain affects men and women in the same way, but marital loss is generally more depressing for women. Analyses that control for the

> selection of the psychologically healthy into marriage, and also include a wider range of measures of mental well-being, find that although there are differences by sex in the types of emotional responses to marital transitions, the psychological benefits associated with marriage apply equally to men and women (Horwitz et al. 1996; Simon 2002).
>
> Marriage is also associated with greater overall happiness. Analysis of data from the General Social Surveys of 1972–96 shows that, other factors held constant, the likelihood that a respondent would report being happy with life in general is substantially higher among those who are currently married than among those who have never been married or have been previously married; the magnitude of the gap has remained fairly stable over the past 35 years and is similar for men and women (Waite 2000).

And more:

> A large body of literature documents that married men earn higher wages than their single counterparts. This differential, known as the “marriage premium,” is sizable. A rigorous and thorough statistical analysis by Korenman and Neumark (1991) reports that married white men in America earn 11 percent more than their never-married counterparts, controlling for all the standard human capital variables. Between 50 and 80 percent of the effect remains, depending on the specification, after correcting for selectivity into marriage based on fixed unobservable characteristics. Other research shows that married people have higher family income than the nonmarried, with the gap between the family income of married and single women being wider than that between married and single men (Hahn 1993). In addition, married people on average have higher levels of wealth and assets (Lupton and Smith 2003). The magnitude of the difference depends on the precise measure used, but in all cases is far more than twice that of other household types, suggesting that this result is not merely due to the aggregation of two persons’ wealth.

And more:

> Beyond its integrative function, emphasized above, marriage also has a regulative function. Married individuals, especially men, are more likely than their single counterparts to have someone who closely monitors their health-related conduct; marriage also contributes to self-regulation and the internalization of norms for healthful behavior (Umberson 1987). Positive and negative externalities within marriage also play a role: when an individual behaves in a way that is conducive to good health, the benefits spill over to the spouse; similarly, unhealthy behaviors inflict damage not only on the individual but also on the partner. In this way, marriage promotes healthy conduct. In addition, the enhanced sense of meaning and purpose provided by marriage inhibits self-destructive activities (Gove 1973). Consistent with this channel of causality,

> married individuals have lower rates of mortality for virtually all causes of death in which the person's psychological condition and behavior play a major role, including suicide and cirrhosis of the liver (Gove 1973). Lillard and Waite (1995) find that for men(but not for women) there is a substantial decline in the risk of death immediately after marriage, which suggests that the regulation of health behaviors is a key mechanism linking marriage to physical health benefits in the case of men.

Now I want to talk about is policies that will help to promote marriage, because that will help to make marriage safer and more attractive to men.

And for that, we go to the Family Research Council.

They write:

> Our tax policy should protect and encourage marriage. The marriage penalty should be eliminated, so that married couples do not pay higher taxes than single people or cohabiting couples. Along with the aim of strengthening marriage, our tax policy should encourage childbearing and adoption. The 2001 tax relief bill signed by President Bush provided a gradual phase-out of part of the marriage penalty[75] by 2010, a phased-in doubling of the child tax credit from $500 to $1,000, and a doubling of the adoption tax credit from $5,000 to $10,000. But this tax bill expires in 2011. In his 2003 State of the Union address, President Bush called for more prompt tax relief, including immediate marriage-penalty relief and a permanent increase in the child tax credit to $1,000. Representative Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) recently introduced the Adoption Tax Relief Guarantee Act, which would make the adoption tax credit permanent. These tax measures would ensure that married couples do not pay higher taxes simply because they are married and that families receive much-needed tax relief.
>
> Along with providing tax credits, the government should adequately fund abstinence-until-marriage programs, which are very effective in teaching young people how to save sex for marriage. With one out of three babies born out of wedlock today, young people need this message more than ever. The federal government has provided some abstinence-until-marriage funding in recent years, but comprehensive sex education/contraception programs, which downplay abstinence and encourage sexual activity and condom use, are vastly over-funded in comparison. In 2002, abstinence-until-marriage programs received $102 million, while teen sex education and contraception programs received at least $427.7 million.
>
> […]Welfare reform should aim to strengthen marriage, because the breakdown of marriage is a root cause of poverty, as most welfare recipients are never-married or divorced mothers.
>
> […]Historically, welfare laws in the United States have been anti-marriage. The old welfare system, under the Aid to Dependent Families program (AFDC), taught

> single mothers two lessons: don’t work and don’t get married, or your benefits will decrease. Even though the landmark welfare reform law of 1996 encouraged marriage and imposed the family cap ending the reward for illegitimacy, marriage penalties still exist in the welfare law. The welfare system is composed largely of means-tested aid programs, which reduce benefits as non-welfare income increases. This means that if a single mother marries, she will lose welfare benefits; therefore, it is more lucrative for her to stay single. This anti-marriage bias should be removed or at least reduced in order to encourage marriage and discourage single parenthood and cohabitation.

The problem with that last one is that Obama gutted the Welfare Reform Act of 1996. I think that was favorable to the people who tend to vote Democrat, but not good for those of us who favor marriage. In fact, Democrats in general oppose all three of those pro-marriage policies, as well as supporting no-fault divorce laws and opposing shared parenting laws.

So I guess I am posting these ideas to let women who want to get married know that there are definitely things that are scaring men off of marriage, and that nothing makes a man less scared of marriage than a woman who is aware of these dangers, enthusiastic about the benefits for men, and passionate about pro-marriage policies.

When dealing with a non-Christian, make evidence – not behavior – the main issue

October 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Pastor Matt posted about something that I think all Christian apologists believe, deep down. (H/T The Poached Egg)

He writes:

> Typically, the church has defined loving one's neighbor as in line with Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and Christ's teaching in passages such as Matthew 25:31-46, in which we are commanded to love the imprisoned, the homeless, the hungry, etc. as if they were Jesus himself. Of course all believers should do so whether by volunteering at a soup kitchen or donating money to ministries like World Help.
>
> But there is more to loving one's neighbor these days than caring for the poor, as important as that is. Those of us who live in a first world western country now dwell in a post-Christian society. Our neighbors are inundated with naturalism masquerading as good science and sound philosophy. Non-Christians believe the faith is intellectually vacuous.
>
> **It shocks many people when those trained in apologetics point out that atheists cannot answer questions like, "How did the universe come into existence?" "Why is our planet so finely tuned for life despite all the odds against it?" "How did life begin?" "Why do humans have consciousness?" "How is there truth or right and wrong without God?" "Why did the disciples die horrible deaths as impoverished traveling peasants rather than deny the resurrection of Jesus?", etc.**
>
> If we are to help bring our neighbors to saving faith, we must first destroy their false ideas of what Christianity is and is not. That means we must preach the Gospel (2 Cor. 5:21), knock down specious views of the faith and present the truth of what we believe.
>
> Apologetics is not just an intellectual exercise for nerds like me or a debate to be won on college campuses but an increasing tool in loving our neighbors. For if they do not understand the faith, they will likely not come to faith and that is what the God we love wants and how we must show love to our neighbors. So, let's study not just to win arguments but to love others.

That reminds me of 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Our job is to beat up on false ideas and speculations.

Pastor Matt's point is critical, I think. Just stop and think for a minute about your non-believing co-workers. Do they know that the universe began to exist? Do they know that the initial conditions and the cosmological constants have to be finely tuned to support

things like galaxies, stars, planets and elements heavier than hydrogen? Do they know how much information is in a protein, and how many proteins would be needed to make the first living cell? Do they know what it takes to make a planet that can support life? What facts from the gospels and the Pauline letters pass the tests for historicity? What is the best explanation of those minimal facts?

These are the facts that we share when we discuss spiritual things with people. They are not Christian facts, they are public, testable facts. And yet, almost no one in the culture who is not already a believer is curious to find out these things on their own. But without the evidence, how are they supposed to take the first step towards a relationship with God through Jesus Christ? It's not possible. This is a propositional faith, and we know it's true by evidence. To share the evidence with someone so they can decide is as loving as sharing the evidence about retirement planning, or the evidence about nutrition, or the evidence about fitness and exercise, or the evidence about career planning. When you love someone, you tell them the facts, and then they decide. Evangelism is *the same thing*.

Here's something from a recent post by J. Warner Wallace, where he talks about doing apologetics with people who have not yet decided whether God exists or not.

> **The Undecided**
>
> In many ways, this group holds the most promise. People who are undecided usually fall into two categories. Some have never really given the issue much thought. They're neither for nor against; they've simply been living *unaware*. You may be the first person to introduce them to the issues you are trying to share. If so, remember the importance of a first impression. What you say or do will have an impact on the work of those who follow you. The second group of "undecideds" are people who have given the issue some thought, but are just beginning to make their decision. For this group of people, your defense of Christianity may very well be the deciding factor. The responsibility you and I have with the undecided is daunting, but it's a privilege to play a small part in their decision.

OK, so I want to make a point about this. So often, I see Christian parents and leaders trying to focus on changing people's behaviors, and not by giving them evidence. Instead of trying to convince them about what's true, they tell them Bible verses, or maybe tell them they are going to Hell. But given what Matt and J. Warner said, I don't want us to be focused on changing outward behavior. I want us to be focused on showing people what is true and showing our work – how we arrived at these true beliefs. You are doing Christianity wrong if you focus on getting behaviors from people by shaming them, overpowering them or scaring them.

So in my case, I'm not trying to get non-Christians to act like Christians when they have no reasons to be one. I'm trying to get them to settle on true beliefs – so that each of them and God can shake hands and be reconciled, responding to his drawing them of their own free will. Then, they can decide how they are going to act. And how they act

might be even better than what we had in mind for them when all we wanted was for them to quit swearing and eat their vegetables. The Christian life is bigger than just making people do what we want them to do.

Federal appeals court: Texas can proceed with tough regulations on abortion clinics

October 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news on HB2 in Texas from the Associated Press.

Excerpt:

> A federal appeals court Thursday allowed Texas to immediately begin enforcing tough new abortion restrictions that will effectively close all but seven abortion facilities in America's second most-populous state.
>
> A panel of the U.S. 5th Circuit Court in New Orleans stayed a lower judge's ruling while it considers the overall constitutionality of key portions of Texas' sweeping 2013 abortion law, which Republican Gov. Rick Perry and other conservatives say is designed to protect women's health.
>
> U.S. District Judge Lee Yeakel ruled in August that part of the law requiring Texas clinics to spend millions of dollars on hospital-level upgrades was less about safety than making access to abortion difficult.

Guess who was on the panel? My favorite Supreme Court pick, Edith Hollan Jones.

Life News had this:

> When the panel reviewed the bill, they found that the state acted within its prerogative to regulate the medical profession by heeding these patient-centered concerns and requiring abortion practitioners to obtain admitting privileges at a nearby hospital. The state also found that it would be safer for patients to drive further to receive an abortion at a surgical facility with a credentialed and privileged physician than to seek an abortion at a nearby, substandard clinic. The bottom line is women deserve better than substandard care.
>
> Additionally the opinion written by Judge Edith Jones explained why admitting privileges are necessary. She said, "Requiring abortion providers to have admitting privileges would also promote the continuity of care in all cases, reducing the risk of injury caused by miscommunication and misdiagnosis when a patient is transferred from one health care provider to another."
>
> Judge Jones also noted that Planned Parenthood conceded that at least 210 women in Texas annually must be hospitalized after seeking an abortion.
>
> Abortion is not a safe medical procedure.

Life News says that this law is going to reduce the number of abortion clinics in Texas from 19 to 7. That's a huge win for unborn children who had no input into their mother's decision to conceive them. They don't deserve death sentence just because selfish adults want to be irresponsible.

Charles Krauthammer: what the GOP should do if they retake the Senate

October 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From National Review, a follow-up to my post yesterday about the midterm election projection.

Excerpt:

> The Democratic line is that the Republican House does nothing but block and oppose. In fact, it has passed hundreds of bills, only to have them die upon reaching the desk of Senate majority leader Harry Reid. He has rendered the Senate inert by simply ensuring that any bill that might present a politically difficult vote for his Democratic colleagues never comes to the floor.
>
> Winning control of the Senate would allow Republicans to pass a whole range of measures now being held up by Reid, often at the behest of the White House. Make it a major reform agenda. The centerpiece might be tax reform, both corporate and individual. It is needed, popular, and doable. Then go for the low-hanging fruit enjoying wide bipartisan support, such as the Keystone XL pipeline and natural-gas exports, especially to Eastern Europe. One could then add border security, energy deregulation, and health-care reform that repeals the more onerous Obamacare mandates.
>
> If the president signs any of it, good. If he vetoes, it will be clarifying. Who then will be the Party of No? The vetoed legislation would become the framework for a 2016 GOP platform. Let the debate begin.
>
> The risk-averse will say: Why take chances? Why not just run against the Obama legacy in 2016?
>
> The GOP should and will do that. What has happened to economic growth, social cohesion, and America's standing abroad will be a significant drag on Democrats. But it could very well not be enough.
>
> […]Memo to the GOP: Win the Senate, then enact an agenda and dare the president to veto it. Show the country what you stand for. Then take it to the nation in 2016.

So, if the GOP takes the House and Senate, they can proceed to pass every single bill that makes sense to the American people and then have Obama veto each one. Then they can run on those vetoed bills in 2016. Obama is a left-wing radical, so this is exactly who we want to represent the Democrat party in such an operation. Republicans can say "We wanted THIS and the Democrat in charge said no". That's one way of working around the liberal media. Now is the time to debate all the bills that they will want to pass should the GOP win the Presidency in 2016.

Friday night detectives: two episodes of Sherlock Holmes

October 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jeremy Brett is the best Sherlock Holmes *ever*.

Here are 2 episodes of “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes”.

The Speckled Band:

The Blue Carbuncle:

These are considered to be two of the best Sherlock Holmes short stories.

Happy Friday!

Are young, unmarried women sincere about wanting to be married “some day”?

October 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This comment by Gaza on the Elusive Wapiti blog deserves a post of it’s own. He is responding to the video posted in this post.

He writes [in full]: (one part redacted)

> One thing that Helen seems to miss is how women value and prioritize marriage and what role this plays vis a vis the male corollary.
>
> The “story” isn’t just about men being “on strike” or even (to Helen’s credit) rationally choosing to delay and/or avoid; it must also include how women treat marriage WRT their own valuation and prioritization and life decisions (NOT merely stated desires).
>
> There are not swarms of 25 y/o female college-grads looking for a husband with no willing men within sight. There are, however, swarms of 25 y/o/ female college-grads looking to have fun, travel, chase dreams, build careers, and explore their options.
>
> I’ve “dated” a few of these women; most (and their social circles included) are so focused on the self-indulgence (“experience”) and the status associated with sexual conquest/power that any mention of marriage is usually as a joke (enter the “boyfriends/husbands are boring/stupid/lazy” meme); marriage is merely some distant thing to be acquired at some seemingly distant age.
>
> Sure, over time (cue: the wall), the distant thing becomes a stated desire, but the transition from stated-desire to behavioral change and actual prioritization often takes years. I meet women well into their 30’s who still can’t alter their behaviors to demonstrate congruence with their stated desires.
>
> But that is when we start to hear how important marriage is, how men are avoiding commitment, why men should value marriage. All bacon-wrapped in various shaming mechanisms. The women singing the “Man-up and marry me” tune are not the 25 y/o versions; they are too busy singing the “you go girl” showtunes, exactly as prescribed by the Sandberg, lean-in, [binge drinking, continuous alpha male hookups, alpha male cohabitation], [and later, jump off the carousel into a marriage to a beta provider that makes her perpetually feel that she married down compared to the alphas that she used to hookup with while drunk].

> So we can plainly see how something is valued based on the prioritization of one's choices. Most young women value marriage as an idea, as a capstone to her personal journey; an indicator of status and achievement but not as a goal in-of-itself and not as a life decision that supersedes the accumulation of personal experience, the flexing her sexual and relationship power, or the kindling her optionality.
>
> These women desire to "hang-out" with the most attractive men they can, under any number of relationship approximations while pursuing their personal journeys and then suddenly desire to elevate commitment and marriage as something paramount, right around the same time their ability to define and opt-in/out of those indulgent relationship approximations wanes. Hmm.
>
> After 10+ years of treating men and relationships as consumable commodities, marriage is now so valuable? So sacred that it will magically be more robust in the face of challenges, requiring more giving and less taking than those previous marital approximations, and yet because it is now a "Marriage", it won't be treated as merely a vehicle for the pursuit of her apparently perpetually fleeting "happiness"? Convince me.
>
> There is a false premise at work that assumes that it is men who are devaluing marriage. Sure, there is some truth to this, but woman are messaging their own valuation of marriage as well; in real-time, often in very overt means and often at the expense of men who are still clinging to some idealistic view of marriage.
>
> And likely those are the very men who are willing and able to be husbands at 25. The very same men who will grow to become self-sufficient 35 y/o men feeling their own blossoming optionality, harvesting their own "experiences" with the 25 y/o versions of the suddenly-marriage-minded women, while a decade of observational and experiential evidence of what women truly value buries what remains of their marital idealism.
>
> Tl:dr
> I'd consider marriage to a woman who has demonstrated through her choices, prioritization, sacrifice and delayed gratification that marriage is valuable to her and who can articulate how it would be valuable to me. [not holding breath]

What do you think? Is that something that you are seeing more of in the current generation of young, unmarried women? I have to confess, I see a lot of emphasis among Christian women on short-term missions trips and on careers, but not much planning on how to be prepared for marriage. In my experience, there is not much preparation work going on, and marriage is put off later and later. This is despite the fact that a woman's fertility declines starting at age 27 and is pretty much dead at 35. IVF is very expensive,

but has a higher risk of birth defects and and can often lead to too many embryos, some of which will then need to be aborted.

It would be nice if there were some wisdom being transferred from older, married women to young, unmarried women, but I don't see it happening. What I see happening is young women, including ones raised in Christian homes, going off to college to binge drink and hookup and cohabitate, and always expressing the desire for marriage "some day". But marriage is something you prepare for early with every decision. Some decisions are not good preparation for marriage. I get the impression that young, unmarried women think that marriage is "boring" and not the way to "make a difference", and so in practice, they are trying other things.

Remember, the offer that a woman such as Gaza describes to a man is not the same as the offer of marriage that was made by 20-year-old women in the 1950s.

Marriage no longer means:

> - Being the legally and socially recognized head of the household.
> - An expectation of regular sex.
> - Legal rights to children.
> - Lifetime commitment.
> - That you are guaranteed a chaste bride on your wedding night.

Men liked the original version of marriage without the modern debasements. Should they feel obligated to settle for the new version of marriage which is influenced by radical feminism? I would have to be convinced.

Sean Carroll debates William Lane Craig on cosmology and God's existence

October 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Carroll was as good of a speaker as Craig in terms of style. Very easy to listen to, very quick on his feet, very civil. There was no clear winner on style.

It was difficult to assess the truth value of scientific points being made, especially for the layperson. I explained a few of them in my posts earlier this week, but I think laypeople might struggle with them if they are hearing about these things for the first time.

A couple of Craig's slides: (click for larger images)

Slide 1 of 2:

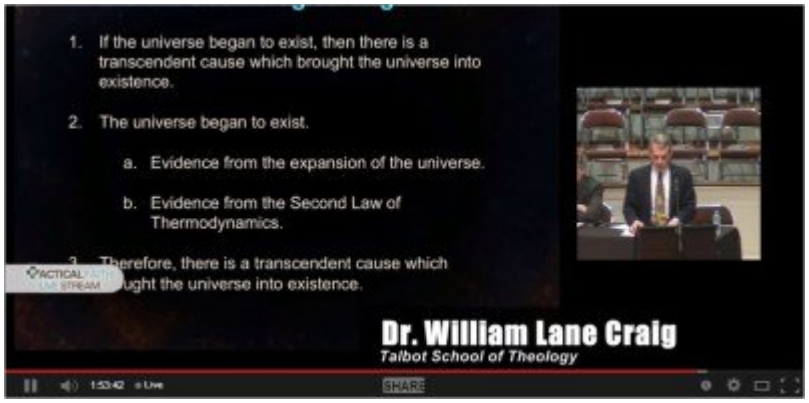

Dr. Craig slide #1 of 2

Slide 2 of 2:

Dr. Craig slide #2 of 2

Quick summary: (this is not complete, because I couldn't get everything they were saying noted)

Dr. Craig defended two arguments: 1) the kalam cosmological argument and the fine-tuning argument.

Dr. Craig supported the origin of the universe with 1) the expansion of the universe and 2) the second law of thermodynamics.

Dr. Craig said that the BGV theorem supports a beginning for the universe.

Dr. Craig said that the consensus of scientists did not accept Carroll's naturalistic

cosmology, quoting Stephen Hawking in support.

Dr. Craig said that multiverse models fall victim to the Boltzmann brain problem, where we should observe Boltzmann brains coming into existence and then phasing out again far more probably than embodied minds. But we observe embodied minds, and no Boltzmann brains.

Dr. Carroll said that science cannot study metaphysical questions.

Dr. Carroll said that science is about making models that may or may not be consistent with the experimental data.

Dr. Carroll said that the BGV theorem does not support a beginning for the universe.

Dr. Carroll proposed 17 alternative cosmologies, but did not provide a shred of scientific evidence for any of them, the way that Craig did for the standard model.

Dr. Carroll refuted Dr. Craig's citation of Stephen Hawking, and Craig yielded the point.

Dr. Carroll speculated that science might progress to the point where the fine-tuning can be explained without an intelligent cause, and he gave an example of where that happened (inflation).

Dr. Craig argued that all 17 of the models suggested by Carroll either conflicted with evidence, had serious problems or did require a beginning.

Dr. Craig argued that Carroll's own model required a beginning.

Dr. Craig argued that Carroll's own model fell victim to the Boltzmann brain problem.

Dr. Craig argued that Carroll's own model violated the second law of thermodynamics.

Dr. Craig re-stated his point that the baby universe spawning in Carroll's model was speculative and incomplete, and cited Christopher Weaver's work.

Dr. Carroll denied that things that pop into being out of nothing require a transcendent cause.

Dr. Carroll reiterated that science can only make naturalistic models, and that he did not have to answer questions about ultimate causes.

Dr. Carroll showed a photo of Alan Guth expressing his opinion that the universe is "probably" eternal. No evidence was given for this assertion.

Dr. Carroll said that the fine-tuning was not done in an optimal way, because one fine-tuned value was lower than it needed to be, and it should be exactly what it needed to be if God did it.

Dr. Carroll said that a finely-tuned universe is more probably in naturalism than in theism, because God can do anything he wants and doesn't need a fine-tuned universe.

Dr. Carroll said he would stop defending his model now, and would instead defend Aguirre-Gratton.

Dr. Craig gave three reasons why the universe popping into being out of nothing requires a transcendent cause.

First, he said that nothing cannot cause anything to happen, because nothing is nothing.

Second, he said that if things pop into being out of nothing, then why don't we see it happening all the time with other things.

Third, he said that we have no reason to dismiss the causal principle, especially when it is the basis of scientific inquiry and has been so fruitful in the progress of science.

Dr. Craig reiterated that baby universes in Carroll's model would be dominated by Boltzmann brains, and we don't observe that.

Dr. Craig said that even on the quantum gravity models that Carroll mentioned, there would still be a beginning.

Dr. Carroll said that Craig mustn't say "popped into being" but instead that "there was a first moment of time".

Dr. Carroll said that his model does indeed violate the second law of thermodynamics "YES!".

At this point Carroll stopped talking about the topic of the debate and started expressing personal opinions about religion. It's funny how often atheists do this in debates.

Dr. Carroll said that most theists don't believe in God because of cosmology, but because of community and feelings.

Dr. Carroll said that science had learned a lot in the last 2000 years, so theism was false.

Dr. Carroll said that most philosophers don't think that God exists, so theism was false.

Dr. Carroll said microscopes and telescopes were absent 2000 years ago, so theism was false.

Dr. Carroll said that religion should be about community and feelings, not about what is true.

Conclusion:

My conclusion was that Carroll lost because he is just satisfied to throw theories out and not to argue that they are true by citing evidence. Carroll never seemed to be interested in finding out what is true, but instead he just wanted to tell a story that didn't include God, and assert that by Occam's Razor, his story was a better explanation. I am not impressed with theoretical speculations, although the layperson might be. I kept waiting for him to respond to Craig's points about how his model was falsified by experimental evidence and observations, e.g. – the Boltzmann brains or the baby universe generation, and he never cited the evidence I wanted him to cite. Craig did have some evidence for his views, but he could have been stronger in making his case. He could have shown the e-mail from Vilenkin that stated that he had understood the BGV theorem, and was using it correctly, for example.

For me the winning side comes down to evidence. The standard model is the standard model because of scientific evidence. Until that evidence is overturned, then speculative models are of no interest to anyone who is evidence-driven. Speculations are not science. A philosophical presupposition of metaphysical naturalism is not science.

The nice thing is that Robin Collins, one of Craig's respondents, went deep into the

science of the fine-tuning, especially on one of my favorite data points, the cosmic microwave background radiation. The paper he presented is now posted on his web site (H/T Christian Apologetics Alliance). I posted about the CMBR before in my post about particle physicist Michael Strauss lecture on cosmology and fine-tuning at Stanford University and the his more recent lecture at the University of Texas. Note that Strauss is an experimental physicist, not a theoretical physicist like Carroll.

Here's another review of the debate by Randy Everist of Possible Worlds blog. He explains the back-and-forth over Boltzmann brains and the BGV theorem in more detail.

Religion and politics: Wayne Grudem's 2012 Pulpit Freedom Sunday sermon

October 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My church probably isn't doing anything for Pulpit Freedom Sunday, because they are a gospel every week church. It's really not clear to me whether my minister is even pro-life or pro-marriage, because he never talks about anything practical. However, I was able to dig up this 2012 sermon from Dr. Wayne Grudem, an amazing pastor who does have a position on many issues relevant to the Christian worldview.

The topic is "Moral and spiritual issues in the 2012 election".

Here it is: (68 minutes, Dr. Grudem starts 4 minues in)

Details:

> This message was delivered by Dr. Wayne Grudem at Calvary Chapel Chino Hills on Pulpit Freedom Sunday. Dr. Grudem addresses directly and poignantly the spiritual and moral issues we face in the upcoming 2012 Election. He urges believers to vote according to a Biblical world view. Dr. Grudem has an excellent understanding of not only the Bible and Theology, but also how the United States political system really works. He is author of the bestselling, "Systematic Theology" (used in numerous seminaries), "Politics According to the Bible," and he is also the General Editor of the bestselling "ESV Study Bible." Please dedicate an hour and listen to him; more importantly, please heed his wisdom and vote responsibly.

The sermon notes are free to download. (PDF) I recommend printing them to follow along with the sermon.

Here's one of slides, just to show you what Wayne Grudem can do:

Federal tax receipts, spending and deficits, fiscal years 2007-2011, billions of dollars

	Receipts	Outlays	Deficit	share of GDP
2007	2,568	2,729	161	1.2%
2008	2,524	2,983	459	3.2%
2009	2,104	3,520	1,416	10.0 %
2010	2,162	3,456	1,294	8.9%
2011	2,303	3,600	1,298	8.6%
2012			1,100	7.2% (CBO projection)

President Obama added: $5.1 trillion. Total debt now = $16 trillion.

Source: WSJ, Oct. 18, 2011, p. A16 (2012 data added from later article)

Pulpit Freedom Sunday: can your pastor do this?
Can your pastor do that? Mine can't.

I think a lot of people like to think of Christianity as something that is about your personal well-being, or maybe your personal morality. If you attend a pretty typical gospel-every-

week church, then you may never learn how the Christian worldview applies to the political issues of the day. It's "too divisive".

If you're looking for the best book on the Bible and policy, it's Wayne Grudem's "Politics According to the Bible". I really really endorse that book.

Several abortion clinics close after court enforces Texas law HB2

October 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Two years ago, there were over 40 abortion facilities operating in Texas with very little oversight. Yesterday, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a ruling that could result in the immediate closure of 13 abortion facilities, leaving only seven open by this weekend.
>
> A spot-check conducted by Operation Rescue early Friday morning of several facilities that are in known non-compliance with the law shows that some have already shut down while others continue to operate.
>
> The ruling blocks a stay issued by a lower court on enforcement of Texas' HB2, which provides minimum safety standards for abortion businesses, until the State's appeal of the lower court's decision that the law is unconstitutional can be heard.
>
> The ruling allowed the full law to be enforced immediately, including portions that were previously blocked by the lower court that pertained to the requirements that abortionists maintain hospital privileges within 30 miles of their abortion facilities and that those facilities meet Ambulatory Surgical Center standards.
>
> "This is a huge victory and gives us every confidence that all the provisions of HB2 will prevail upon appeal," said Troy Newman, President of Operation Rescue, who has coauthored the new book, *Abortion Free*, that outlines how to implement strategy to stop abortion, including those used in Texas will soon be responsible for closing 83% of all abortion centers in that state. Previous closures have already caused abortion numbers in Texas to plummet.
>
> […]"Documenting and exposing abortion abuses can serve as the foundation for safety regulations that can shut down substandard abortion mills and save lives. As a result of yesterday's ruling we expect thousands of women will be spared the trauma and tragedy of abortion and that precious baby boys and girls will grace their lives with blessings," said Newman. "Protecting the lives of women and their babies is what our work is all about."

When I posted about the ruling a few days ago, some jackass came on and talked about how now women would be able to kill their babies more safely. It never ceases to amaze me how people can claim to be pro-life and yet practically be pro-abortion. Being pro-life means saving as many unborn children as possible. If you don't like this law, then you are pro-abortion. Period. End of issue. You don't get to take credit for the pro-life effects of

this law if you opposed it.

I think the take-home lesson on people who oppose incremental pro-life measures that reduce abortion is this: not everyone who claims to be pro-life is intelligent enough to support laws that *actually do something to protect unborn children*.

Scientist who was right about cooling in 2000 predicts more cooling

October 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Don Easterbrook – a climate scientist and glacier expert from Washington State who correctly predicted back in 2000 that the Earth was entering a cooling phase – says to expect colder temperatures for at least the next two decades.
>
> Easterbrook's predictions were "right on the money" seven years before Al Gore and the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for warning that the Earth was facing catastrophic warming caused by rising levels of carbon dioxide, which Gore called a "planetary emergency."
>
> "When we check their projections against what actually happened in that time interval, they're not even close. They're off by a full degree in one decade, which is huge. That's more than the entire amount of warming we've had in the past century. So their models have failed just miserably, nowhere near close. And maybe it's luck, who knows, but mine have been right on the button," Easterbrook told CNSNews.com.
>
> "For the next 20 years, I predict global cooling of about 3/10ths of a degree Fahrenheit, as opposed to the one-degree warming predicted by the IPCC," said Easterbrook, professor emeritus of geology at Western Washington University and author of 150 scientific journal articles and 10 books, including "Evidence Based Climate Science," which was published in 2011.

So what's the mechanism that he used for his predictions?

This:

> Easterbrook said he made his earlier prediction by tracing back "a consistently recurring pattern" of alternating warm and cool ocean cycles called the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) that **occurs naturally every 25 to 30 years**. He discovered that the PDO corresponded with a similar temperature cycle demonstrated by isotope ratios found in Greenland ice cores going all the way back to 1480.
>
> "We don't know what the driving mechanism is, but it's very consistent. It's happened five times a century and every time it's happened, there's been a corresponding change in global temperature, either warm or cool," Easterbrook told CNSNews.com.
>
> "What I did was I projected this same pattern forward to see what it would look

> like. And so in 1999, which was the year after the second warmest year on record, the PDO said we're due for a climate change, and so I said okay. It looks as though we're going to be entering a period of about three decades or so of global cooling.
>
> "And so in 2000, I published a paper with the Geological Society of America in which I predicted that we were going to stop warming and begin cooling for about 25 or 30 years, on the basis of taking the temperature records that go back a century or more and simply repeating the pattern of warming and cooling, warming and cooling, and so on.
>
> "And that in fact has happened. We have now had 17 years with no global warming and my original prediction was right so far. But we have still probably another 20 years or so to see if the cooling trend continues, and if it does, then my prediction will be right and my methods will be right. And so what it boils down to is, so far so good."

We've had seventeen years of global cooling, and now a prediction for more global cooling – 20 more years of it. Where do we taxpayers go to get our money back for the almost $70 billion we spend propping up renewable energy programs.

Woman who escaped from North Korea tells her story

October 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Yeonmi was born on October 4 1993 in Hyesan, a notoriously cold river port along North Korea's 850-mile northern border with China. The following year, on July 8, Kim Il-sung, the country's 82-year-old founder and 'Great Leader', died of a heart attack. Hopes that he might have been ready to gradually open North Korea to the world evaporated as his son Kim Jong-il took power and set about transforming the hermit nation into a member of George W Bush's notorious 'axis of evil'.

> Meanwhile, the economy was collapsing and the Great Famine, which would eventually claim up to 2.5 million lives, according to Andrew Natsios, the former head of USAID, was beginning to take hold. As Barbara Demick describes in Nothing to Envy, her definitive book on the period, those too young, too poor or too honest to find food quickly died. 'The killer targets the most innocent, the people who would never steal food, lie, cheat, break the law or betray a friend.'
>
> […]Initially shielded from the effects of the famine, Yeonmi's world started to disintegrate when, in 2002, her father was arrested for illegal trading. 'Everything changed,' she recalls. Yeonmi's father was taken to a prison near Pyongyang and given a 17-year sentence. Her mother visited him once but that was enough to see the toll that the brutal torture had taken on her husband. He was beaten. Guards placed sticks between his fingers and crunched them together. He was made to sit in excruciating stress positions for interminable periods. Prisoners were deprived of water and food. 'The environment was crazy. So many bugs and lice,' Yeonmi says. 'They treated them like animals. He was a really brilliant man. He was my hero, and the country just beat him. I couldn't believe it.'
>
> Yeonmi's father was luckier than many North Koreans who were spirited off to the country's Soviet-style gulags, never to return. According to a Human Rights Watch report in January this year, up to 120,000 political prisoners, among them children, are currently being held in secretive labour camps known in Korean as the kwan-li-so. Torture including 'sleep deprivation, beatings with iron rods or sticks, kicking and slapping, and enforced sitting or standing for hours', is routine, the group found.
>
> After three years Yeonmi's father managed to bribe his way out of jail. But by then he had been diagnosed with colon cancer. When Yeonmi saw him on his release, the once strapping figure had been transformed into a ghost of a man.

> ‘He had changed so much. He was so small. He spoke differently. I couldn’t believe it was my father,’ she says.
>
> […][O]n the night of March 30 2007, Yeonmi and her mother made their way towards the border with the help of a people smuggler. Yeonmi’s father stayed behind, to minimise the risks. They crossed three mountains and finally came to a frozen river that separated the two countries. It was desperately cold, Yeonmi says, and she remembers feeling terrified that the ice beneath them would give. But they eventually made it to the other side. On dry land, they ran. ‘I ran so fast. The only thing I could think was that I could get shot. I ran and ran and ran.’

The rest of the article tells the terrifying story of how Yeonmi and her family escaped to South Korea.

I read this article and it really caused me to think a lot about what happens when we are not careful about who we vote for. North Korea is an officially atheist and communist regime. There is no public expression of Christian convictions there, nor is there any free market capitalism. That probably sounds like a great idea to many of the people in this country who have the same anti-Christian, anti-capitalist views. But it doesn’t sound like a good idea to me.

What makes a planet suitable for supporting complex life?

October 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Circumstellar Habitable Zone (CHZ)

What do you need in order to have a planet that supports complex life? First, you need liquid water at the surface of the planet. But there is only a narrow range of temperatures that can support liquid water. It turns out that the size of the star that your planet orbits around has a lot to do with whether you get liquid water or not. A heavy, metal-rich star allows you to have a habitable planet far enough from the star so the planet can support liquid water on the planet's surface while still being able to spin on its axis. The zone where a planet can have liquid water at the surface is called the circumstellar habitable zone (CHZ). A metal-rich star like our Sun is very massive, which moves the habitable zone out further away from the star. If our star were smaller, we would have to orbit much closer to the star in order to have liquid water at the surface. Unfortunately, if you go too close to the star, then your planet becomes tidally locked, like the moon is tidally locked to Earth. Tidally locked planets are inhospitable to life.

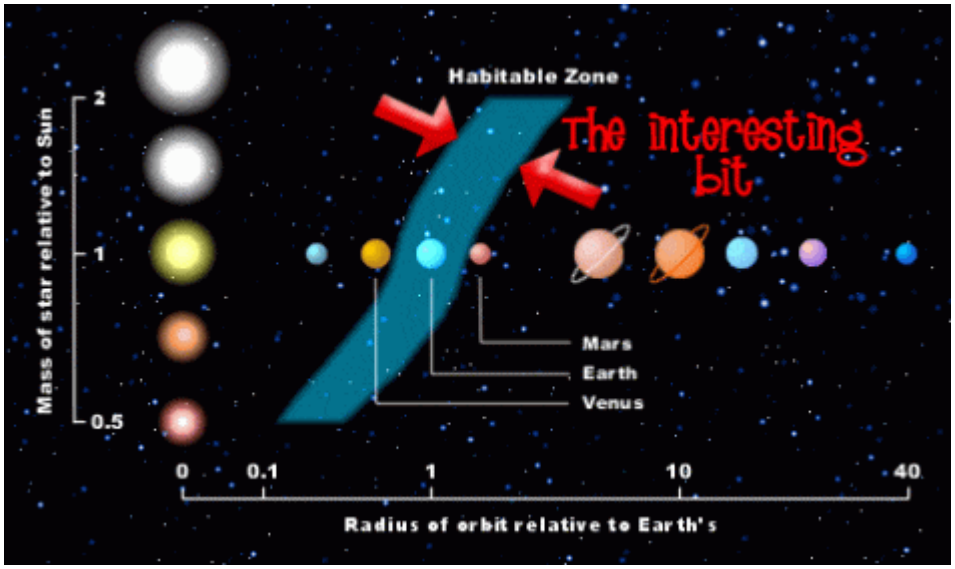

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

Here, watch a clip from The Privileged Planet: (Clip 4 of 12, full playlist here)

But there's more.

The Galactic Habitable Zone (GHZ)

So, where do you get the heavy elements you need for your heavy metal-rich star?

You have to get the heavy elements for your star from supernova explosions – explosions that occur when certain types of stars die. That's where heavy elements come from. But you can't be TOO CLOSE to the dying stars, because you will get hit by nasty radiation and explosions. So to get the heavy elements from the dying stars, your solar system needs to be in the galactic habitable zone (GHZ) – the zone where you can pickup the heavy elements you need but not get hit by radiation and explosions. The GHZ lies

between the spiral arms of a spiral galaxy. Not only do you have to be in between the arms of the spiral galaxy, but you also cannot be too close to the center of the galaxy. The center of the galaxy is too dense and you will get hit with massive radiation that will break down your life chemistry. But you also can't be too far from the center, because you won't get enough heavy elements because there are fewer dying stars the further out you go. You need to be in between the spiral arms, a medium distance from the center of the galaxy.

Like this:

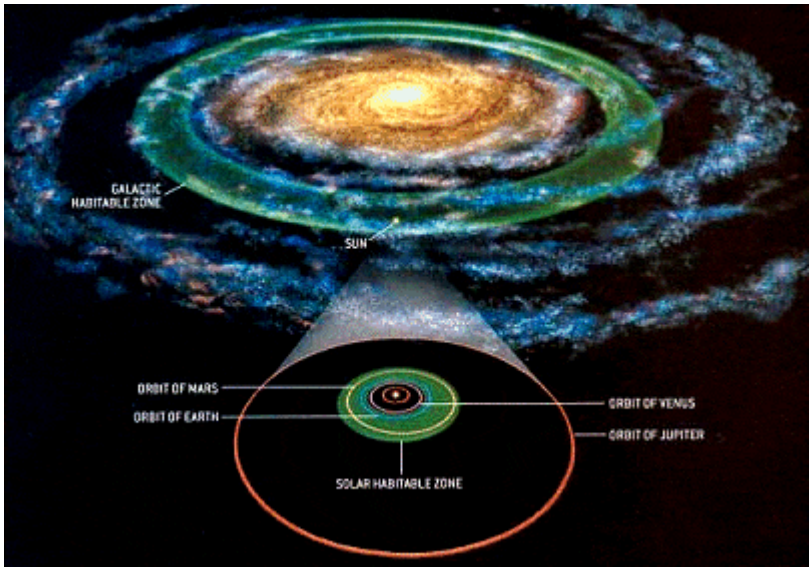

Galactic Habitable Zone and Solar Habitable Zone

Here, watch a clip from The Privileged Planet: (Clip 10 of 12, full playlist here)

The GHZ is based on a discovery made by astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez, which made the front cover of Scientific American in 2001. That's right, the cover of Scientific American. I actually stole the image above of the GHZ and CHZ (aka solar habitable zone) from his Scientific American article (linked above).

These are just a few of the things you need in order to get a planet that supports life.

Here are a few of the more well-known ones:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.

- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

By the way, you can watch a lecture with Guillermo Gonzalez explaining his ideas further. This lecture was delivered at UC Davis in 2007. That link has a link to the playlist of the lecture, a bio of the speaker, and a summary of all the topics he discussed in the lecture. An excellent place to learn the requirements for a suitable habitat for life.

Supreme Court decision not to hear cases legalizes same-sex marriage in five states

October 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From ScotusBlog.

Excerpt:

> In June 2013, in *United States v. Windsor*, a divided Supreme Court struck down Section 3 of the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which until then had defined "marriage" – for purposes of over a thousand federal laws and programs – as a union between a man and a woman.
>
> […]But on the same day, the Court sidestepped a ruling on whether the Constitution includes a right to marry someone of the same sex.
>
> […]We all assumed that the issue would be back again at the Court before too long, and that expectation only increased as lower federal courts around the country started to rely on the Court's decision in *Windsor* to strike down other states' bans on same-sex marriage – in Utah, Virginia, Oklahoma, Indiana, and Wisconsin. All told, by last Monday the Court had before it seven different petitions asking the Court to weigh in on whether states can prohibit same-sex marriage. With all of the parties on both sides in all of the cases in agreement that the Supreme Court should take up the question, review seemed inevitable.
>
> **Until this morning at 9:30, when the Court turned down all seven of the petitions, without comment.**

Since the Supreme Court refused to hear the case, that means that the marriage amendments passed by these five states are null and void, and same-sex marriage is now legal, despite what the legislatures passed.

Ryan Anderson comments on this over at the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> The truth of the matter is that the marriage laws in these five states—as in many states across our nation—are good laws that reflect the truth about marriage. Frequently they were passed with overwhelming democratic support. The Supreme Court should have reviewed these cases and should have upheld the authority of citizens and their elected representatives to make good marriage policy. Instead, the Supreme Court left standing bad rulings from lower federal courts that usurped authority from the people by striking down good laws.
>
> The cases at issue involve lower court rulings that struck down state marriage laws, claiming that they violated the U.S. Constitution. But the courts never provided compelling arguments that laws that reflect the truth about marriage are unconstitutional. Indeed, as former Attorney General Ed Meese and I argued

> last week in The Washington Post, the Supreme Court should have reviewed these cases and declared the laws constitutional.
>
> In a system of limited constitutional self-government, the people and their elected representatives should be making decisions about marriage policy. And there are reasonable arguments on both sides of this debate. Judges should not insert their own policy preferences about marriage and declare them to be required by the Constitution.
>
> […]Declining to review these cases does not speak one way or the other to the merits of the cases. But it does leave in place bad rulings from lower courts—and it will make it harder for courts to do the right thing in the future.

So we now have gay marriage in five states thanks to the Supreme Court, and to a handful of judges who overruled the votes of the majority of the people in their states. How did we ever go from a republic to an oligarchy? And how did more than half the people in this country vote for this – not just once, but twice? Are we that ignorant of history and government that we are willing to be ruled by a handful of elites instead of by laws passed by elected representatives? Sometimes I think that even asking questions like this to people on the secular left is like trying to teach calculus to a wall. They just don't understand a thing about how and why this country was founded in the first place. It's all been reduced, in their minds, to doing what feels good, and forcing people who disagree to affirm their destructive behavior.

How far do gay activists go in order to silence critics?

October 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, consider this article from the Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> Janna Darnelle's recent *Public Discourse* essay, "Breaking the Silence: Redefining Marriage Hurts Women Like Me—and Our Children," reveals what is behind the heartwarming pictures of gay families from a mother's point of view.
>
> […]For those of you who avoid the subterranean landscape of online same-sex parenting debates, it is useful to be introduced to Scott "Rose" Rosenzweig, a virulently misogynistic LGBT activist. As soon as Darnelle's essay was published, Rose went into action, darting from the blog *Good As You* to other sites in an effort to destroy her personally. (Rose's obsessive internet commenting has attracted attention at other news outlets as well.) Darnelle's ex-husband even weighed in. A helpful fellow, he left her personal information in the comments section of several activists' blogs, including her full legal name.
>
> Janna Darnelle wrote under a pen name in order to protect her family. Unfortunately, her ex-husband's comments helped Scott Rose embark on a campaign of harassment and intimidation. As I will discuss below, Rose was not content to confine his character assassination to the internet; he has also contacted Darnelle's employer in an attempt to get her fired.
>
> […]The publication of Janna Darnelle's story led to a spate of blog posts full of vitriol, calling her "a pitiful creature," accusing her of mental instability, and questioning her very existence.
>
> With the help of her husband's comments, Scott Rose set off to dig up and publicize as much personal information as possible about Darnelle, such as high school graduation and real estate records. Rose has harassed Darnelle with threatening messages. He has even contacted Darnelle's employer, leaving this message on the company's Facebook page:
>
> This is a COMPLAINT against […], an executive assistant in […]. Under the nom de plume of "Janna Darnelle," […] has published a horrifying, defamatory anti-gay screed on the website "Public Discourse." The first problem would be that she is creating a climate of hostility for eventual gay elders and/or their visiting friends and relatives. The second problem would be that in the screed, she comes off as being unhinged. Her public expressions of gay-bashing bigotry are reflecting very poorly on LLC.
>
> Sadly, all of this conforms to a predictable pattern of attack. If you study the routine that plays out whenever extreme activists like Scott Rose decide to take

> someone out, you will see seasoned patterns. Four steps comprise their usual character assassination.
>
> First, they call the individual a liar and say the person's existence cannot be verified without more data about him or her. Second, once they have such data, they write to the person's employer to get him or her fired or professionally destroyed. Third, if they cannot get the person fired, they go after the family members. Fourth, if they cannot turn the person's family against him or her, they blast endless broadsides against the person, trying to make him or her feel afraid or unsafe at all times.

This is actually not unusual for some extreme gay activists. I've blogged about things like before – e.g. – getting Frank Turek fired, forcing out Brendan Eich at Mozilla, expelling students from university, discriminating against foster parents, violence at student demonstrations, coercing Christian businesses, leaking the names of pro-marriage donors, closing down adoption agencies, threatening teachers with termination, terminating police chaplains, vandalizing businesses, vandalizing churches, or actually being convicted of committing domestic terrorism by attacking the Family Research Council building with GUNS. Any disagreement with the moral rightness of the gay lifestyle at all – no matter how caring, compassionate or rooted in evidence – could potentially draw a coercive response, or even violent response.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

October 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism. (H/T Allen Hainline)

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining what was in the podcast. (I wish more people who put out podcasts would do that).

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

I'm going to put the list of resources for the podcast that Luke M. mentioned in his post,

but without the actual hyperlinks. It saves me having to type up a summary. If you want to click the links that I removed, go over to Common Sense Atheism and the links are there.

Links for things we discussed:

- Fine-tuned universe
- Cosmological constant
- Miss Marple
- Other forms of life and Daleks
- Elliot Sober
- Cosmic inflation
- The graceful exit problem
- Carr and Rees, "The Anthropic Cosmological Principle and the Structure of the Physical World" (1979)
- David Lewis' modal realism
- Boltzmann's multiverse
- Roger Penrose argues that some modern multiverse theories face the same problem that Boltzmann's multiverse faces in *The Road to Reality*.
- Everett's multiverse
- Wheeler – *At Home in the Universe*
- Thorne-Hawking-Preskill bet
- Edward Robert Harrison
- Luke responds to PZ Myers
- You can find some good talks by Polkinghorne and Ellis on fine-tuning at the Faraday Institute's multimedia page.
- William Lane Craig, "Design and the Anthropic Fine-Tuning of the Universe"
- Robin Collins, "The Teleological Argument"
- **Good stuff**: Davies – *The Goldilocks Enigma*; Rees – *Just Six Numbers*; Barrow – *The Constants of Nature*; Barrow & Tipler – *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*; Leslie – *Universes*; George Ellis articles.
- Fred Adams and Luke's critique
- Luke's critique of Hector Avalos
- Luke's critique of Victor Stenger: part 1 and part 2
- Luke's critique of Hugh Ross
- Luke's critique of William Lane Craig: part 1 and part 2

I thought the funniest part was the Natalie Portman part. Boy, do I wish more atheists would listen to this podcast and understand what the fine-tuning argument is actually about. Luke M. gave Luke B. a ton of time to talk. There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

Democrat Senate candidates support late-term abortion

October 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Take a look at the views of some of these Democrat candidates for the Senate.

First, North Carolina Senate candidate Kay Hagan:

The Weekly Standard explains:

> North Carolina senator Kay Hagan's position on abortion is the target of a new $620,000 TV ad campaign that is being launched today by the Women Speak Out PAC.
>
> In the ad, a husband and wife, Becca and Ned Ryun, tell the moving story of how doctors saved the life of their daughter Charlotte who was born prematurely at 24 weeks into pregnancy. Photos of their daughter in the neo-natal intenseive care unit flash across the screen, and it isn't until the end of the minute-long spot that the viewer gets a political message.
>
> "For those who are advocating late-term abortions, look at my daughter," says Ned Ryun. The ad concludes with a narrator conveying that North Carolina's senator thinks it should be legal to abort infants like Charlotte late in pregnancy: "Kay Hagan supports painful, late-term abortions. She's too extreme for North Carolina."
>
> **Hagan said in 2013 that she opposed legislation that would protect the lives of unborn children after the 20th week of gestation, when babies are old enough to feel pain and able to live long-term if born in many cases.**
>
> The bill was introduced and passed the House of Representatives in the summer of 2013 following the trial of Kermit Gosnell, the Philadelphia abortionist who was convicted of murder for killing infants outside the womb. When Nancy Pelosi, the top Democrat in the House, was asked what the difference was between killing a 23-week-old baby outside the womb and aborting that same child in utero, she sputtered and couldn't answer the question.

The Republican candidate in this race is **Thom Tillis**.

Second, Colorado Senate candidate Mark Udall:

The Weekly Standard explains:

> At the outset of the *Denver Post*'s senatorial debate on Tuesday night, a moderator asked Democratic senator Mark Udall the following question: "We know that you support a woman's right to choose, but given the advances in scientific understanding of fetal development, where pregnant mothers know at which week babies grow fingernails and can swallow, would you support a ban on

> late-term abortions and if so at what week?”
>
> Udall replied by citing the case of a woman who discovered during the eighth month of pregnancy that her child had a severe brain deformity. “To demand that that woman carry that child to term would be a form of government intervention that none of us want to see happen. We ought to respect the women of Colorado and their point of view,” Udall said.
>
> **Udall gave no indication that he supports any legal limits on aborting healthy infants late in pregnancy or any other restrictions on abortion, a position consistent with his voting record.**

The Republican candidate in this race is **Cory Gardner**.

The story of the midterm elections next month is the Republican attempt to take the Senate, in order to block Obama’s plan to pack the courts with leftist judges.

New study: children's brains function better when they can see their mothers

October 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The new study published in Psychological Science was reported in Pacific Standard.

Excerpt:

> For little kids, seeing mom or dad nearby is a calming influence, maybe the difference between between perfect calm and a full-bore freakout. It's as if having a trusted caregiver nearby transforms children from scared toddlers into confident adolescents. And in a way, a new report suggests, that's what having mom around does to a kid's brain.
>
> When they're first born and for years after, infants and young children can't do a whole lot by themselves. They can't eat on their own, they aren't very good at managing their emotions, and it takes a while for them to learn how to dress themselves. Most children figure it out eventually, but in the meantime they need their parents to do a lot of that stuff for them. All the while, their brains are changing, too. Well into adolescence, kids' brains undergoanatomical and physiological changes that affect the way we think and act.
>
> […]Young children's brains responded differently based on whether they were looking at their mothers or strangers. In particular, their brains showed signs of positive amygdala-PFC connections when viewing pictures of strangers, but negative connections when viewing pictures of their mothers, suggesting more mature and stable brain function—and likely more mature and stable behavior, at least when moms were around. In contrast, tweens and teens had negative connections whether they were looking at their mothers or strangers. In other words, looking at pictures of their mothers made young children's brains look a little more like those of adolescents.
>
> The companion behavioral experiment backed up that thinking—young children made around 20 percent fewer errors when their mothers were present than when they weren't, while there was no difference for adolescents. That combined with the fMRI results to suggest that mothers—and likely other caregivers—can provide an external source of mental regulation that young children won't develop until later in life, the authors write in *Psychological Science.*

In view of the recent triumphs for gay marriage advocates, I think it's worth remembering that gay marriage, like single motherhood, is not the best we can do for children. I think it's a bad enough situation when the husband dies and leaves his children to be raised by the mother. That's hard, but it's not immoral. On the other hand, I think that deliberately choosing to deprive a child of his or her mother or father IS immoral. It's child abuse, in my opinion. And that goes for gay marriage as well as "single motherhood by choice". I

also oppose frivolous divorce ("frivorce"), which is very popular in a nation that views structured courtship as "boring" and no-fault divorce as a woman's right.

Previously, I blogged about another study that showed the importance of moms for young children.

Excerpt:

> Both of these images are brain scans of a two three-year-old children, but the brain on the left is considerably larger, has fewer spots and less dark areas, compared to the one on the right.
>
> According to neurologists this sizeable difference has one primary cause – the way each child was treated by their mothers.
>
> The child with the larger and more fully developed brain was looked after by its mother – she was constantly responsive to her baby, reported The Sunday Telegraph.
>
> But the child with the shrunken brain was the victim of severe neglect and abuse.
>
> According to research reported by the newspaper, the brain on the right worryingly lacks some of the most fundamental areas present in the image on the left.
>
> The consequences of these deficits are pronounced – the child on the left with the larger brain will be more intelligent and more likely to develop the social ability to empathise with others.
>
> But in contrast, the child with the shrunken brain will be more likely to become addicted to drugs and involved in violent crimes, much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on state benefits.
>
> The child is also more likely to develop mental and other serious health problems.
>
> Professor Allan Schore, of UCLA, told The Sunday Telegraph that if a baby is not treated properly in the first two years of life, it can have a fundamental impact on development.
>
> He pointed out that the genes for several aspects of brain function, including intelligence, cannot function.
>
> […]The study correlates with research released earlier this year that found that children who are given love and affection from their mothers early in life are smarter with a better ability to learn.
>
> The study by child psychiatrists and neuroscientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, found school-aged children whose mothers nurtured them early in life have brains with a larger hippocampus, a key structure important to learning, memory and response to stress.
>
> The research was the first to show that changes in this critical region of children's brain anatomy are linked to a mother's nurturing, Neurosciencenews.com

> reports.
>
> The research is published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Early Edition.
>
> Lead author Joan L. Luby, MD, professor of child psychiatry, said the study reinforces how important nurturing parents are to a child's development.

I have a very good feminist non-Christian friend who sometimes comments here. I once asked her about marriage and she said that her skills would be wasting on raising children. I explained to her my view that a mother needs to stay at home with the children, and that is more important work. I expect my future wife to read all kinds of books on child care and to give the child attention, nutrition, exercise and play so that the child will grow up to be an effective Christian. Maybe I need to be clear. I am not going to spend hundreds of thousands per child with just any woman. I need a woman who can produce influential and effective Christians who will engage in the public square. And we do not entrust that job to just anyone. We want educated, professional women who are willing to be stay-at-home moms when it's necessary to do that – for the sake of the children.

I expect the woman I marry (if I marry) to have a college degree, and preferably a graduate degree, and at least a couple of years of employment. Then she has to stay home and invest in those children through the first five years, at least. After that she can stay home or work as much as she thinks is beneficial to the family goals of impacting the university, the church and the public square – as well as continuing to raise those children. It's not a waste of her talent to make the next William Lane Craig, or the next Marsha Blackburn, or the next Doug Axe, or the next Edith Hollan Jones.

If you find a discrepancy in the Bible, does that mean Jesus didn't exist?

October 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Even if we don't know whether there was one angel or two angels at Jesus' tomb, we can still know things about whether God exists and whether Jesus rose from the dead.

First, we can know that the universe was created and designed because of reliable, experimental evidence that the universe came into being and is finely-tuned for life. And second, we can know that Jesus was buried, that his tomb was found empty, that a variety of people had experiences of him appearing to them after his death, and that the Christian movement had an early belief that he was resurrected from the dead. We know those core things like we know anything – because we have good evidence. Other things that are more peripheral may not be as supported by evidence. We can remain agnostic about those peripheral things, but that agnosticism about peripheral things doesn't undermine the things that we know.

William Lane Craig answered a question related to this problem for a person who accepted the minimal facts case for the resurrection but then though that someone this case couldn't work unless he accepted inerrancy as well.

Here's the question:

> After re-evaluating my Christian faith and pruning it for two years, I can't shake what seem like two disparate conclusions. One is that the evidence for Jesus resurrection is impecable. But the other is that there seem to be some very awkward realities about the composition of scripture (like errors or authors claiming to write by another name). Yet, the authors of the New Testament, including Jesus, seem to use Scripture in a way that assumes it is word for word from God.
>
> While inductive logic is used to arrive at a strong historical case for the resurrection of Jesus, inductive logic can also be used to arrive at a strong case for many of the peculiaraties about Scripture previously mentioned.
>
> It seems that the approach which many apologists take at this point is that, having established the authority of Jesus by the resurrection, if the argument being raised against scripture contradicts an opinion expressed by Jesus in the Gospels, then the argument for a contradiction must have no possible harmonizations for it to really stick. But I don't see how this is fair to say, since (1) it seems unfair to use inductive logic to evidence Jesus' resurrection but then not use it for criticisms against the Bible and (2) an inductive argument can be strong despite what Jesus as recorded in the Gospels says, especially since we cannot assume the precision with which many of the saying were recorded. And (3), anybody can cook up a harmonization of some verse that is possible but not

> plausible, which I am sure you have seen first hand many times.
>
> **Yet, holding these two positions in tension tends to be corrosive to my faith and ultimately leads to a certain bitterness against God for allowing the biblical writers to play fast-and-loose with his words and for not providing a clarity that brings more certainty about what is from him and what isn't. Any help you can give to relieve this tension would be greatly appreciated.**

Now Dr. Craig has a long response on his Reasonable Faith web site, but I just want to quote you this:

> But secondly, suppose you've done all that and are still convinced that Scripture is not inerrant. Does that mean that the deity and resurrection of Christ go down the drain? No, not all. […]As you recognize, we have a very strong case for the resurrection of Jesus. That case in no way depends on the Bible's being inerrant. This became very clear to me during my doctoral studies in Munich with Wolfhart Pannenberg. Pannenberg had rocked German theology by maintaining that a sound historical case can be made for the resurrection of Jesus. Yet he also believed that the Gospel resurrection appearances stories are so legendary that they have scarcely a historical kernel in them! He did not even trust the Markan account of the discovery of the empty tomb. Rather his argument was founded on the early pre-Pauline tradition about the appearances in I Corinthians 15.3-5 and on the consideration that a movement based on the resurrection of dead man would have been impossible in Jerusalem in the face of a tomb containing his corpse.
>
> Evangelicals sometimes give lip service to the claim that the Gospels are historically reliable, even when examined by the canons of ordinary historical research; but I wonder if they really believe this. It *really is true* that a solid, persuasive case for Jesus' resurrection can be made without any assumption of the Gospels' inerrancy.
>
> By contrast, the case for Jesus' belief that the Old Testament Scriptures are inerrant is much weaker. I think there's no doubt that (5) is the premiss that would have to go if biblical inerrancy were to be abandoned. We should have to re-think our doctrine of inspiration in that case, but we needn't give up belief in God or in Jesus, as Bart Ehrman did. Ehrman had, it seems to me, a flawed theological system of beliefs as a Christian. It seems that at the center of his web of theological beliefs was biblical inerrancy, and everything else, like the beliefs in the deity of Christ and in his resurrection, depended on that. Once the center was gone, the whole web soon collapsed. But when you think about it, such a structure is deeply flawed. At the center of our web of beliefs ought to be some core belief like the belief that God exists, with the deity and resurrection of Christ somewhere near the center. The doctrine of inspiration of Scripture will be somewhere further out and inerrancy even farther toward the periphery as a

> corollary of inspiration. **If inerrancy goes, the web will feel the reverberations of that loss, as we adjust our doctrine of inspiration accordingly, but the web will not collapse because belief in God and Christ and his resurrection and so on don't depend upon the doctrine of biblical inerrancy.**

We have mainstream scientific evidence for God's existence, and a mainstream historical evidence for a minimal facts case for the resurrection. None of that evidence depends on inerrancy being true.

So can we please just accept what can be known from experimental science and standard historical methods, and work our lives around that, and not nitpick about peripheral issues so much? I am inerrantist, and so is Dr. Craig. But you don't have to be in order to accept that the *mainstream* evidence that shows that universe was created and fine-tuned, and that Jesus was raised bodily from the dead. Don't let "one angel vs two angels "stop you from accepting things we can know. You can just stay agnostic about the things you think we don't know.

New 20-year study: long-term use of cannabis raises risk of mental health problems

October 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new study on marijuana was reported in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A definitive 20-year study into the effects of long-term cannabis use has demolished the argument that the drug is safe.
>
> Cannabis is highly addictive, causes mental health problems and opens the door to hard drugs, the study found.
>
> The paper by Professor Wayne Hall, a drugs advisor to the World Health Organisation, builds a compelling case against those who deny the devastation cannabis wreaks on the brain.
>
> Professor Hall found:
>
> - One in six teenagers who regularly smoke the drug become dependent on it
> - Cannabis doubles the risk of developing psychotic disorders, including schizophrenia
> - Cannabis users do worse at school. Heavy use in adolescence appears to impair intellectual development
> - One in ten adults who regularly smoke the drug become dependent on it and those who use it are more likely to go on to use harder drugs
> - Driving after smoking cannabis doubles the risk of a car crash, a risk which increases substantially if the driver has also had a drink
> - Smoking it while pregnant reduces the baby's birth weight
>
> Last night Professor Hall, a professor of addiction policy at King's College London, dismissed the views of those who say that cannabis is harmless.
>
> 'If cannabis is not addictive then neither is heroin or alcohol,' he said.
>
> 'It is often harder to get people who are dependent on cannabis through withdrawal than for heroin – we just don't know how to do it.'
>
> Those who try to stop taking cannabis often suffer anxiety, insomnia, appetite disturbance and depression, he found. Even after treatment, less than half can stay off the drug for six months.

I'm seeing a lot of "Christian libertarians" being supportive of initiatives to legalize drugs, but there is a reason why drugs are illegal. They hurt people. They hurt families. Why would we want to celebrate and normalize something that is known to cause harm?

Please see below for more recent studies on the effects of marijuana.

Related posts

- Report: Negative impacts from the legalization of marijuana in Colorado
- Welfare cash used to purchase marijuana in Colorado
- New study: even casual use of marijuana / cannabis alters brain
- New study: teen pot use could hurt brain and memory
- New study finds connection between early use of marijuana and mental illness
- New study: marijuana use by teens is linked to permanent brain abnormalities
- New study: smoking marijuana raises risk of having a stroke
- New study: smoking marijuana/cannabis permanently lowers IQ
- Should we legalize drugs and prostitution like Ron Paul wants?

New study: patients experience awareness of surroundings after brain ceases to function

October 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reported in the left-wing UK Independent.

Excerpt:

> There is scientific evidence to suggest that life can continue after death, according to the largest ever medical study carried out on the subject.
>
> A team based in the UK has spent the last four years seeking out cardiac arrest patients to analyse their experiences, and found that almost 40 per cent of survivors described having some form of "awareness" at a time when they were declared clinically dead.
>
> Experts currently believe that the brain shuts down within 20 to 30 seconds of the heart stopping beating – and that it is not possible to be aware of anything at all once that has happened.
>
> But scientists in the new study said they heard compelling evidence that patients experienced real events for up to three minutes after this had happened – and could recall them accurately once they had been resuscitated.
>
> Dr Sam Parnia, an assistant professor at the State University of New York and a former research fellow at the University of Southampton who led the research, said that he previously that patients who described near-death experiences were only relating hallucinatory events.
>
> One man, however, gave a "very credible" account of what was going on while doctors and nurses tried to bring him back to life – and says that he felt he was observing his resuscitation from the corner of the room.
>
> Speaking to *The Telegraph* about the evidence provided by a 57-year-old social worker Southampton, Dr Parnia said: "We know the brain can't function when the heart has stopped beating.
>
> "But in this case, conscious awareness appears to have continued for up to three minutes.
>
> "The man described everything that had happened in the room, but importantly, he heard two bleeps from a machine that makes a noise at three minute intervals. So we could time how long the experienced lasted for.
>
> "He seemed very credible and everything that he said had happened to him had actually happened."
>
> Dr Parnia's study involved 2,060 patients from 15 hospitals in the UK, US and Austria, and has been published in the journal Resuscitation.
>
> Of those who survived, 46 per cent experienced a broad range of mental

> recollections, nine per cent had experiences compatible with traditional definitions of a near-death experience and two per cent exhibited full awareness with explicit recall of “seeing” and “hearing” events – or out-of-body experiences.

Previously, I blogged about two very reliable examples of near-death experiences, as well as peer-reviewed published work done by UCLA professor Jeffrey Schwartz on “mental effort”. Not to mention philosophical arguments for non-physical minds.

How should we use this evidence? Well, I wouldn’t use it as part of a case for theism, but I think it is useful to show that materialism is clearly false. And that’s before we even get to the cosmological and fine-tuning arguments, which make it even more clear that materialism is false.

Does archaeological evidence confirm names, dates and places in the Bible?

October 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this post on Be Thinking by UK apologist Peter S. Williams. (H/T Eric Chabot at Think Apologetics)

So let me pick the ones I liked most for this post.

I have to choose this one because I was just sending John 5 to the woman I am mentoring.

Look:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Bethesda
>
> John 5:1-15 describes a pool in Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate, called Bethesda, surrounded by five covered colonnades. Until the 19th century, there was no evidence outside of John for the existence of this pool and John's unusual description *"caused bible scholars to doubt the reliability of John's account, but the pool was duly uncovered in the 1930s – with four colonnades around its edges and one across its middle."*[38] Ian Wilson reports: *"Exhaustive excavations by Israeli archaeologist Professor Joachim Jeremias have brought to light precisely such a building, still including two huge, deep-cut cisterns, in the environs of Jerusalem's Crusader Church of St Anne."*[39]

And this one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Siloam
>
> In the 400s AD, a church was built above a pool attached to Hezekiah's water tunnel to commemorate the healing of a blind man reported in John 9:1-7. Until recently, this was considered to be the Pool of Siloam from the time of Christ. However, during sewerage works in June 2004 engineers stumbled upon a 1st century ritual pool when they uncovered some ancient steps during pipe maintenance near the mouth of Hezekiah's tunnel. By the summer of 2005, archaeologists had revealed what was *"without doubt the missing pool of Siloam."*[40] Mark D. Roberts reports that: *"In the plaster of this pool were found coins that establish the date of the pool to the years before and after Jesus. There is little question that this is in fact the pool of Siloam, to which Jesus sent the blind man in John 9."*[41]

I just read this one because I am working my way through John. In case you haven't read John, you really should it's my favorite gospel.

Here's another one:

> ### Herod the Great
>
> We have a bronze coin minted by Herod the Great. On the obverse side (i.e. the bottom) is a tripod and ceremonial bowl with the inscription 'Herod king' and the year the coin was struck, 'year 3' (of Herod's reign), or 37 BC.
>
> In 1996 Israeli Professor of Archaeology Ehud Netzer discovered in Masada a piece of broken pottery with an inscription, called an ostracon. This piece had Herod's name on it and was part of an amphora used for transportation (probably wine), dated to c. 19 BC. The inscription is in Latin and reads, *"Herod the Great King of the Jews (or Judea)"*, the first such that mentions the full title of King Herod.
>
> Herodium is a man-made mountain in the Judean wilderness rising over 2,475 feet above sea level. In 23 BC Herod the Great built a palace fortress here on top of a natural hill. Seven stories of living rooms, storage areas, cisterns, a bathhouse, and a courtyard filled with bushes and flowering plants were constructed. The whole complex was surrounded and partly buried by a sloping fill of earth and gravel. Herod's tomb and sarcophagus were discovered at the base of Herodium by archaeologist Ehud Netzer in 2007.

And one more:

> ### The 'James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus' Ossuary
>
> James, the brother of Jesus, was martyred in AD 62. A mid-1st century AD chalk ossuary discovered in 2002 bears the inscription *"James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus"* ('Ya'akov bar Yosef akhui di Yeshua'). Historian Paul L. Maier states that*"there is strong (though not absolutely conclusive) evidence that, yes, the ossuary and its inscription are not only authentic, but that the inscribed names are the New Testament personalities."*[68] New Testament scholar Ben Witherington states that:*"If, as seems probable, the ossuary found in the vicinity of Jerusalem and dated to about AD 63 is indeed the burial box of James, the brother of Jesus, this inscription is the most important extra-biblical evidence of its kind."*[69] According to Hershel Shanks, editor in chief of the *Biblical Archaeological Review*: *"this box is [more] likely the ossuary of James, the brother of Jesus of Nazareth, than not. In my opinion … it is likely that this inscription* does *mention the James and Joseph and Jesus of the New Testament."*

And finally one short one:

> **Tiberius Caesar**
>
> The Denarius coin, 14-37 AD, is commonly referred to as the 'Tribute Penny' from the Bible. The coin shows a portrait of Tiberius Caesar. Craig L. Blomberg comments: *"Jesus' famous saying about giving to Caesar what was his and to God what* his *(Mark 12:17 and parallels) makes even more sense when one*

> *discovers that most of the Roman coins in use at the time had images of Caesar on them."*[48]

This is a good article to bookmark in case you are ever looking for a quick, searchable reference on archaeology and the Bible. There are many more examples in that post.

Ross Douthat: challenges facing the modern family, and some pro-family policy ideas

October 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Family Studies blog. It's an interview with moderately conservative New York Times columnist Ross Douthat.

I just want to highlight the problem and a couple of his solutions. If you find it interesting, read the whole thing.

First, the problem:

> **IFS:** *Why should we be so concerned about the state of the American family today? Of all of the family issues on the nation's agenda—marriage, divorce, cohabitation, single parenthood, the fatherhood crisis, or something else—which one has you most concerned?*
>
> **Douthat:** We should be concerned because the family is the taproot of identity and community, the pre-political unit on which politics depend, the place where all the ladders of psychology and personality start. And right now, a familial experience (growing up in an intimate relationship with both your natural parents) that used to be average, boring, typical is increasingly a luxury good, an aspiration that's rising out of reach for people whose talents and resources are limited or modest.
>
> But in thinking about why this is happening, and what's going wrong, I wouldn't single out just one issue, because they're all too deeply intertwined. The biggest problem the American family faces right now is a problem of compounding: The way that many of the trends you cite have, since the 1960s but in certain ways especially in the last generation, effectively all been pushing in the same direction, with each problem making other problems worse. There's a perverse cycle, in other words, that's hard for people to escape: A higher divorce rate creates a cultural context in which young people don't see lifelong monogamy as a plausible goal and don't want to take the chance of being hurt in the way that one or both of their parents were . . . which, in turn, prompts them to delay marriage and cohabit for an extended period instead, to effectively test their partner . . . which makes it more likely that they'll have a child during such a "test" period, without a marital bond with the other parent . . . which raises the odds, whether they marry or not, that the relationship will dissolve, creating more instability in the life of their child or children . . . who in turn will grow up with an even-more pessimistic view of marriage and family life than their own divorce-shy parents did. All of these effects are then amplified by the "social contagion" aspect of family breakdown, in which just having peers or neighbors whose marriages are failing or who have had kids out of wedlock creates a context in which that seems like the norm, and a stable or flourishing family life

> like an exceptional, nearly-unattainable ideal.

The first three solutions I think of when I read this are: 1) eliminate single mother welfare, 2) get the normalization of premarital sex out of the schools, and 3) repeal no-fault divorce. The trouble is that feminists oppose all three of these policies. They want money to be transferred from traditional families where one man works to single mother households. They want women to get away from "sexist" notions like chastity, courtship and chivalry. They want women to be able to get out of her obligations to her husband and children if she feels "unhappy". So unless we roll back radical feminism, none of those ideas are going to happen.

But does Douthat have any other policy ideas?

This one for no-fault divorce:

> **IFS:** *With one recent study indicating that divorce has actually been on the rise over the last generation or so, what do you make of the recent efforts of some states to tighten up their no-fault divorce laws? Is there a way for the state to encourage couples to think twice about ending their marriages without returning to an era where spouses and their children could be stuck in violent relationships?*
>
> **Douthat:** I'm basically supportive of the mix of proposals in (IFS Senior Fellow!) Brad Wilcox's 2009 essay on divorce for National Affairs—waiting periods and counseling for divorcing couples (especially couples with children), preferential treatment in court for spouses who are being divorced against their will (in the absence of evidence of abuse)—and I know that some of those ideas have been taken up by the Coalition for Divorce Reform, which is trying to push state-level changes. My sense is that this kind of incremental tightening of divorce law is a better bet than the "covenant marriage" approach that some social conservatives pressed in the 1990s, where couples would be given the option of entering into a marriage without a no-fault escape hatch. The evidence we have from the three states that adopted the convenant option suggests that almost nobody actually opted into it, and I think it's safe to assume that the people who did choose it were at pretty low risks for divorce already. Better, I think, to push for legal changes—however modest—that might apply across the board, and thus shape incentives for the marginal, most-at-risk couples.

And this one for welfare:

> **IFS:** If you could magically pass a set of policies aimed at strengthening marriage and families, what would those policies be? (Set aside, for now, budget constraints and the chances of getting the proposals through Congress.)
>
> **Douthat:** My economic program would expand on some of the ideas being kicked around already. There would be an even larger child tax credit than the one Republicans like Mike Lee and Marco Rubio have endorsed, and the existing earned-income tax credit would be expanded and converted to a direct wage

> subsidy. I would impose—I'm the enlightened despot here, right, so federalism no longer applies?—various regulatory reforms on states and municipalities aimed at eliminating a lot of zoning and licensing rules that impose particularly steep costs on working class families. I'd cut and cap tax subsidies that disproportionately benefit upper middle class rentiers. I'd pursue some version of the Paul Ryan vision for welfare reform, with much more state-based experimentation in the provision of non-cash benefits. More broadly, I'd combine relatively loose monetary policy with relatively tight immigration rules, seeking a lower unemployment rate and higher wages at the bottom rungs of the economic ladder. And then I'd spend less on prisons and put more money into hiring and training (but not heavily-arming!) cops, and I'd put UCLA's Mark Kleiman in charge of reviewing sentencing policies at both the state and federal level, with an eye toward achieving significant reductions in incarceration rates wherever possible.

So maybe my ideas are not realistic, because I am too conservative, but I'd certainly like his to be enacted if mine can't be. How about you? Do you have any ideas to save marriage? We can't keep going life this – eventually we are going to run out of money for the social programs that prop up the people who bought into the sexual revolution. The spending on social programs for broken homes has got to stop somehow, one way or the other.

Friday night detectives: two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes

October 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jeremy Brett is the best Sherlock Holmes *ever*.

Here are 2 episodes of “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes”.

The Musgrave Ritual:

A Scandal in Bohemia:

These are considered to be two of the best Sherlock Holmes short stories.

Happy Friday!

Do Christians have to do something extraordinary to make a difference?

October 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting article from Relevant. (H/T Eric Chabot from Think Apologetics)

Excerpt:

> Ordinary" has to be one of the loneliest words in our vocabulary today. Who wants a bumper sticker that announces to the neighborhood, "My child is an ordinary student at Bubbling Brook Elementary"? Who wants to be that ordinary person who lives in an ordinary town, is a member of an ordinary church and has an ordinary job?
>
> We think our life *has* to count! We have to leave our mark, have a legacy, make a difference. And all of this should be something that can be managed, measured and maintained. We have to live up to our Facebook profile. It's one of the newer versions of salvation by works.
>
> […]In a world intoxicated by such freedom, everydayness is boring. This vision of reality affects us all. Even more than I'm afraid of failure, I'm terrified by boredom. Facing another day, with ordinary callings to ordinary people all around me is much more difficult than chasing the dreams I have envisioned for the grand story of my life. Other people—especially those close to us—can become props. "The Poor" can be instruments of our life project. **Our big ideas to "change the world" can become ways of actually avoiding the opportunities we have every day, right where God has placed us, to glorify and enjoy Him and to enrich the lives of others.**
>
> […]Taking a summer to build wells in Africa is, for some, a genuine calling. But so is fixing a neighbor's plumbing, feeding one's family and sharing in the burdens and joys of a local church. **What we are called to do every day, right where God has placed us, is rich and rewarding.**
>
> Sometimes, the best way to change the world is to live extraordinarily in what looks like an ordinary existence—to radically love and serve those around us every day, no matter where we are.

I want to quote from a post by Wes Widner. He is a talented software engineer, and a *very* practical person.

Here's a challenging post he wrote about about short-term missions.

Here's what was said:

> Because of this misunderstanding of the great commission and what it truly means to make disciples of those around us, we tend to overlook questions of stewardship and logistics. In fact, since we think the imperative is to go we tend

> to start to think that any cost is acceptable and questions of logistics are a mere nuisance.
>
> How much does a round-trip plane ticket usually cost to travel overseas? $1,000, $2,000? More? Once you count the cost of food, lodging, transportation, etc. you can often approach figures well over $3,000 just to send a single person overseas. Is this really the best way to reach the lost?

> […]Why do we go? Why do we really go? If our real aim is to make disciples as we are commanded to, then we will gladly step back and examine the questions raised above (and many will come to the conclusion that short-term, long-distance mission trips are simply not a good idea) but I believe the main reason most Christians go is to satisfy a desire for an emotional experience which they equate with "being close to God". And therein lies the heart of our dilemma.

So that's the first point to make – do the people who want to fly off to far-flung places for a few weeks want to make a difference? If so, how does throwing away thousands of dollars do that?

In my own life, I've favored stewardship and strength over recklessness and thrill-seeking. I have been working out a slow and steady apologetics-focused plan that started when I was in high school when I was reading C.S. Lewis and winning awards in computer science. From there, I got my BS and MS in computer science and have proceeded to built a gapless resume and a fortune which I use to support Christian students and fund apologetics events. I have sponsored dozens of apologetics events during the last 15 years, and let me tell you, I can fund several campus events with as much as people spend on a 3-week mission trip. And it's a much higher impact. A much better use of funds. We need to be influencing the university, that's where future leaders come from.

Let's take a look at another concern.

Look at this post by a male reader of The Thinking Housewife blog.

Excerpt:

> Since I wrote you last, I have decided to sign up for a few online dating sites, mostly out of curiosity. I could not imagine finding a serious mate on, say, *OKCupid,* but anything is possible. In poring over many hundreds of profiles in the past few days, a few things stand out to me.
>
> - I have not seen any woman make her desire for children, or even marriage, the central focus of her profile. Even though I filter profiles based on the "wants kids?" question (which is, surprisingly, often answered "yes"), nothing in the written profile suggests it is important to them. (This is occasionally not the case for Asian women)
> - The emphasis is instead on career, activities, hobbies, favourite movies/books/music, travel, and political inclinations (always to the left, sometimes the feminist left)

> - The surpreme goal of women my age appears to be to start an NGO in a Third World country.
> - Every woman my age has read *Eat, Pray, Love*.
> - Most are doing (or have done) advanced degrees, often in education or healthcare.
> - It is rare that a woman expresses interest in cooking, though most express interest in restaurants and food.
> - I have never seen a woman mention that she desires a good home, a place to call her own, or that she is otherwise domestically inclined.
>
> I suspect these line up with your readers' experiences too. That said, it may be that women view these traits as being desired by men, and they may be at odds with more deeply held needs.

So marriage and family are not viewed as ways to make a difference, and all the effort is put into travel, education, politics, social work and career.

The Thinking Housewife adds her own thoughts:

> Right now, in this country, there are many children growing up in single-mother homes. Growing up without a father and with a mother who is usually not at home and who may bring strange men into your life is a desolating experience that has been proven to damage many people. I have a friend who is a teacher in a white working-class neighborhood. Many of the children there are growing up in homes of never-married or divorced mothers. These children are hungry for attention and love. Their situation portends further social chaos. Do you think the young Evangelical women you mention would brag about helping these white children? Would volunteer work with them have the same cachet?
>
> I suggest to you that it would not.
>
> I understand that people in Third World countries are materially *poorer* than these white children I mention. But in the Christian view, the immaterial is foremost and the *spiritual conditions* of these white children are nothing less than dire and probably worse than that of most children in the Third World. They are being raised by nihilistic popular culture.
>
> […]Christianity will not flourish in the Third World if it is dying in the West. We need these idealistic women to do their work at home, and that work includes becoming wives and mothers themselves.
>
> The idealism of these women is not wrong, but the direction it has taken *is*. Volunteering in the Third World has become a status symbol for Christians.

This is definitely something that I have seen with young, umarried Christian women. There is very little effort into choosing the right man, and planning for marriage and parenting with him. Everything is about missions trips, graduate degrees, changing the world with broad brush strokes. Being in the spotlight. Being recognized by everyone as

important.

Last link – this time from Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason.

He writes:

> **You can make a difference as long as you're making a difference with someone else with whom you have a difference (here I mean difference in ability). So maybe you know a little bit of theology. Let's say you know like three theological truths. Well, you can teach those to somebody who know less than three theological truths, or don't know those three. You can teach them what you know. That means just about anybody can participate as long as you find someone who knows less than you do, and there's a lot of them around.**
>
> Take what you know, take the circumstance you're in, and bloom where you're planted. And that is when you learn best. When you're teaching someone else, you learn it better. It's very simple. You have a small group. Sometimes your group is two or three people. You have an audience of one, over coffee at Starbucks. You could be sharing, talking, teaching, instructing. You take those opportunities, and you are faithful in those smaller opportunities, and more opportunities will probably come your way.
>
> You may not have an audience of 100 or 1,000 or 3,000. I rarely have that size audience, anyway. But Jesus said, "If you're faithful in smaller things, you'll be given greater things." Jesus wants you to make a difference in small ways. The fields are white with harvest. There are all kinds of need out there, and you've been gifted to meet that need. So it stands to reason, to coin a phrase, that you will be used as you become better at what you do by the One who distributes these gifts, God, through the person of the Holy Spirit.
>
> My answer to the question is then, keep your eyes open, and take the opportunities that come your way, look for opportunities. Bloom where you're planted. Do whatever you can, wherever you're at. And then watch the Lord work and see what He decides to do with what you've done.

Here's the Scripture he mentioned from Luke 16:10:

[10] "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

Even more than teaching another person what you know, you can just care for them and encourage them. You can just love them.

My view has always been to learn skills through study and save money I needed to be able to respond to challenges. If opportunities arose, then I could do something. I also made big plans. But even with these big plans, I always thought that I should be flexible. There have been times when opportunities to mentor someone one-on-one came up, and when they did, I invested heavily in those other people.

So I did have big plans. But then along came individuals, some of them from rough

situations, who needed my help. What should I do? Keep trying to make my big important plan happen? What if the person who came along had a story that fit my abilities and experience so well that I was sure that God had placed us together for me to love and serve this person?

I've always felt that I should be flexible about letting my big plans go and working on these one-on-one relationships. But in order to do that, I had to accept that I might never get the recognition I wanted. That I might never get the excitement that I wanted. But sometimes, I got the joy that comes from supplying another person with what they needed, so that their wounds are healed and they move closer to God.

If we all slowly and carefully built up the skills and resources we needed to be able to make a difference with one person at a time, in the places and times where we are right now, then wouldn't that change the world?

T-shirt company forced to print gay pride t-shirts and attend diversity training

October 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Kentucky.com.

Excerpt:

> Hands On Originals discriminated against the Gay and Lesbian Services Organization of Lexington when it refused to print the group's Lexington Pride Festival T-shirts in 2012, according to a hearing officer in the case.
>
> Greg Munson issued his decision Monday. The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission released it Tuesday morning.
>
> "The evidence of record shows that the respondent discriminated against GLSO because of its members' actual or imputed sexual orientation by refusing to print and sell to them the official shirts for the 2012 Lexington Pride Festival."
>
> Munson wrote that the application of the Fairness Ordinance did not violate the T-shirt vendor's right to free speech and the free exercise of religion. The Human Rights Commission found in 2012 that Hands On Originals violated the city's fairness ordinance, which prohibits businesses open to the public from discriminating against people based on sexual orientation.

Alliance Defending Freedom defended the business, and here was their line of argument:

> "No one should be forced by the government — or by another citizen — to endorse or promote ideas with which they disagree," said ADF Senior Legal Counsel Jim Campbell, who argued before the hearing examiner on behalf of Hands On Originals on June 19.
>
> "Blaine (Adamson, of Hands On Originals) declined the request to print the shirts not because of any characteristic of the people who asked for them, but because of the message that the shirts would communicate."
>
> In the statement, Hands On Originals' co-counsel Bryan Beauman, with the Lexington firm of Sturgill, Turner, Barker and Moloney, said, "No one wants to live in that kind of America — a place where people who identify as homosexual are forced to promote the Westboro Baptists and where printers with sincere religious convictions are forced to promote the message of the GLSO. … In America, we don't force people to express messages that are contrary to their convictions."

In cases like this, the Human Rights Commissions will try to drag the trial out for as long as possible, in order to send an intimidating messages to minorities they want to discriminate against and coerce. This case went on for two years, and probably cost a lot of money to defend. In Canada, Ezra Levant's case went 2 years and also cost $100,000.

The goal here is to use the legal system as a form of terrorist action, to intimidate anyone who disagrees with the secular left. And it works.

If you are looking for something to do with your life, becoming an ADF attorney or supporter is probably a very good option.

Do you think that intimidation like this is uncommon? Well, I've blogged about things like before – e.g. – getting Frank Turek fired, forcing out Brendan Eich at Mozilla, expelling students from university, discriminating against foster parents,violence at student demonstrations, coercing Christian businesses, leaking the names of pro-marriage donors,closing down adoption agencies, threatening teachers with termination, terminating police chaplains, vandalizing businesses, vandalizing churches, or actually being convicted of committing domestic terrorism by attacking the Family Research Council building with guns. So sometimes it's coercion, and sometimes it's vandalism and sometimes it's domestic terrorism. It depends on how extreme the gay activist is in his views.

ISIS on the doorstep of Baghdad as Obama fundraises in San Francisco

October 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the progress of Isis, as reported by the leftist UK Independent.

Excerpt:

> In an offensive in Iraq launched on 2 October but little reported in the outside world, Isis has captured almost all the cities and towns it did not already hold in Anbar province, a vast area in western Iraq that makes up a quarter of the country. It has captured Hit, Kubaisa and Ramadi, the provincial capital, which it had long fought for. Other cities, towns and bases on or close to the Euphrates River west of Baghdad fell in a few days, often after little resistance by the Iraqi Army which showed itself to be as dysfunctional as in the past, even when backed by US air strikes.

Just a note about those air strikes – it's just a political diversion. The actual number of sorties is 10% what were doing during the Iraq war. It's just something so that Obama can say he is "doing something" about the beheading videos. It is election season, after all. And that drives foreign policy if you're a Democrat.

More:

> Today, only the city of Haditha and two bases, Al-Assad military base near Hit, and Camp Mazrah outside Fallujah, are still in Iraqi government hands. Joel Wing, in his study –"Iraq's Security Forces Collapse as The Islamic State Takes Control of Most of Anbar Province" – concludes: "This was a huge victory as it gives the insurgents virtual control over Anbar and poses a serious threat to western Baghdad".
>
> The battle for Anbar, which was at the heart of the Sunni rebellion against the US occupation after 2003, is almost over and has ended with a decisive victory for Isis. It took large parts of Anbar in January and government counter-attacks failed dismally with some 5,000 casualties in the first six months of the year. About half the province's 1.5 million population has fled and become refugees. The next Isis target may be the Sunni enclaves in western Baghdad, starting with Abu Ghraib on the outskirts but leading right to the centre of the capital.

What caused all this mess? Obama's decision to pull our troops out of Iraq. And Iraq is now begging for us to send our troops back.

Excerpt:

> As Islamic State troops move closer to Baghdad, Iraqi officials have issued a plea for American ground troops to return to the country.
>
> A senior governor claimed that up to 10,000 Islamic State fighters were closing in

> on the capital, amid reports that forces had reached Abu Ghraid, a suburb of Baghdad, The Telegraph reported Saturday.
>
> Iraqi officials are worried the Pentagon will not be keen to send U.S. soldiers back to an area once dubbed “the graveyard of the Americans” in Anbar Province. In 2004, U.S. troops fought the Battle of Fallujah in Anabar province, the bloodiest battle involving American troops since the Vietnam War.
>
> **Regardless, government officials believe that if the province were to fall to the radical Islamic Fighters, then it would be a strategic launching point for a full-force attack on Baghdad.**
>
> Nearly 1,500 U.S. troops are already stationed in Baghdad, training the Iraqi army.

So where is Obama?

He’s in San Francisco, fundraising for Democrat candidates in the midterms. And Joe Biden is busy calling for more gun control.

Five-year old girl punished by school for pointing crayon at classmate

October 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Martha L. Peek, Superintendent

Reason #54,993 why you should not send your child to public schools.

Excerpt:

> Mobile mother is not happy about a controversial Mobile County School contract her daughter signed without her consent. The contract promises that her daughter will not kill or injure herself and others.
>
> Rebecca is angry.
>
> “This isn’t right. She’s 5-years-old,” said Rebecca.
>
> Rebecca did not want Local 15 News to use her last name. She said E R Dickson school officials crossed the line when they had her daughter sign a Mobile County Public Safety Contract without her being present.
>
> Rebecca said, “Most of these words on here, she’s never heard in her life.”
>
> School officials told Rebecca they had to send Elizabeth home after an incident in class.
>
> “They told me she drew something that resembled a gun,” said Rebecca. “According to them she pointed a crayon at another student and said, ‘pew pew,” said Rebecca.
>
> She said her child was given a questionnaire to evaluate her for suicidal thoughts.
>
> “[They] Asked her if she was depressed now,” said Rebecca.
>
> Without her permission, Rebecca said her child was given the Mobile County Public School Safety Contract to sign stating she wouldn’t kill herself or others.
>
> “While I was in the lobby waiting they had my 5-year-old sign a contract about

> suicide and homicide," said Rebecca.
>
> According to state law, minors cannot legally sign a contract.
>
> "There should be a different way to handle this situation. If this is protocol it needs to be looked at again," said Rebecca.
>
> Local 15 News contacted school officials to see what the proper protocol is when handling "violent-like" behavior. Local 15 News has not heard back.
>
> "My child interrupted us and said, 'What is suicide mommy? Daddy what is suicide?" said Rebecca. "As a parent that's not right. I'm the one should be able to talk to my child and not have someone else mention words like this in front of her at all."
>
> Rebecca is pushing to have the incident removed from her child's record. **She said school officials have requested Elizabeth see a psychiatrist.**

How long will it be until the school doesn't just request that children see psychiatrists, but they just go right ahead and take the child from you, like what happened with the Boston children's hospital? After all, they are very sure they are right. They are the experts, you are just the parent. They know better than you – they have college degrees from the "education" department. You should be grateful for their guidance about how to raise your children. You should be grateful the opportunity to pay taxes for the salaries of people with degrees in "education".

By the way if you want to e-mail the four women who work in the superintendent's office, you can click here.

Richard Land discusses the National Apologetics Conference on the latest FRC podcast

October 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Land is actually hosting the show. I like to pick on Christian leaders for ignoring apologetics, but I know Dr. Land is very supportive of apologetics, and thinks it is the key to evangelism.

Here are the details of the last Washington Watch Weekly podcast:

> On this weekend edition of "Washington Watch with Tony Perkins," Dr. Richard Land, President of Southern Evangelical Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina, guest hosted the program for Tony. Bestselling author and attorney, David Limbaugh, joined Dr. Land to discuss his new book: *Jesus on Trial, A Lawyer Affirms the Truth of the Gospel*, where he lays out the legal aspects of the gospel and gives hard evidence to support that belief. Fox News' Todd Starnes was here to discuss the latest attack on religious liberty regarding a Lexington, Ky. t-shirt company under attack from the left for standing for Christian principles. Also, FRC's Executive Vice President and founding member of the Army's Delta Force, Lt. General (ret) Jerry Boykin joined Dr. Land to highlight the latest on the ISIS threat to America and former Defense Secretary and CIA Director Leon Panetta's new book where he criticizes the President on his handling of foreign policy issues.

The MP3 file is here. (28 minutes)

This is one of my 5 favorites podcasts.

The five are:

- Family Research Council – Washington Watch Weekly (current events, policy)
- The Weekly Standard (current events, politics, elections)
- Intelligent Design: The Future (science)
- Reasonable Faith (apologetics)
- Cold Case Christianity (apologetics)

There's another podcast I listen to for current events, but because that person has been annoying Michael Licona, he can remain nameless.

J. Warner Wallace podcast: pluralism, relativism and postmodernism at the university

October 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest episode of the Cold Case Christianity podcast is useful to help parents understand what awaits their children at the university.

Details:

> In this episode of the Cold-Case Christianity Broadcast, J. Warner examines four popular misconceptions and misstatements about the nature of objective truth, tolerance and our over-reliance on science. If there are no objective truths (or they can't be known) there is little reason to examine the truth about God. We need to get to the truth about truth before we can ever know the truth about anything else.

The MP3 file is here.

He has it down to 30 minutes now, so if you thought one hour was too long, you're in luck. I liked the one-hour format better, but the new podcast series is really professional.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley: Did Jesus rise from the dead?

October 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence. He's also done debates with Richard Bauckham and Michael Bird. You have to respect him for getting out there and defending his views in public.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is

missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history

- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates

invented legendaryt story-telling
- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and

resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should

prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Concealed-carry permit holder uses gun to save woman from attempted rape

October 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals
From Michigan Live.

Excerpt:

> The mother of a woman who told police she was attacked inside an eastside home said she is thankful for neighbors who rushed to her daughter's aid, including a man who held the alleged attacker at gunpoint then chased him down and helped hold him until police arrived.
>
> "She got lucky," said the woman's mother, who is not being identified to protect the identity of the woman. "If it wasn't for all these people who cared enough to help her, and not turn the other cheek like so many people would, my daughter would be dead right now."
>
> Jessica Abels, who lives near the spot on Cronk Avenue near Illinois Avenue where the woman was found walking bloodied and naked, said she looked out the window when she heard a woman screaming for help around 2 p.m. Sept. 26.
>
> She saw the woman jump out the window of a nearby vacant home, she said.
>
> "Her eyes were all swollen and she had blood all over her and in her mouth," Abels said. "She was pretty messed up."
>
> That's when the community jumped into action.
>
> **Several area residents offered the 21-year-old woman clothing and comfort while a man who holds a valid concealed pistols license ordered the suspect out of the house at gunpoint, according to Flint police.**
>
> **The man took off running but was chased down by the gun-wielding citizen who, with the help of an undercover auto theft police officer,**

> **tackled and held him down until police arrived.**

It’s a good thing when a law-abiding citizen is able to defend his neighbors from criminals. And no shots were fired. That’s what is the most common outcome from a defensive handgun usage. Usually, the mere threat of being shot is enough to stop the crime, and deter the criminal. Guns are a way to stop violence. The very rare case where a gun is fired, it is usually a warning shot. There are degrees of deterrence and shooting *at* a criminal is the last resort. In this case, it was enough to just brandish the weapon.

Statistics on whether atheists are more moral than religious people

October 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, let's take a look at the numbers with this article by Arthur Brooks, published by the Hoover Institute at Stanford University.

Excerpt:

> How do religious and secular people vary in their charitable behavior? To answer this, I turn to data collected expressly to explore patterns in American civic life. The *Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey* (SCCBS) was undertaken in 2000 by researchers at universities throughout the United States and the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. The data consist of nearly 30,000 observations drawn from 50 communities across the United States and ask individuals about their "civic behavior," including their giving and volunteering during the year preceding the survey.
>
> From these data, I have constructed two measures of religious participation. First, the group I refer to as "religious" are the respondents that report attending religious services every week or more often. This is 33 percent of the sample. Second, the group I call "secular" report attending religious services less than a few times per year or explicitly say they have no religion. These people are 26 percent of the sample (implying that those who practice their religion occasionally make up 41 percent of the sample). The SCCBS asked respondents whether and how much they gave and volunteered to "religious causes" or "non-religious charities" over the previous 12 months. Across the whole population, 81 percent gave, while 57 percent volunteered.
>
> **The differences in charity between secular and religious people are dramatic. Religious people are 25 percentage points more likely than secularists to donate money (91 percent to 66 percent) and 23 points more likely to volunteer time (67 percent to 44 percent). And, consistent with the findings of other writers, these data show that practicing a religion is more important than the actual religion itself in predicting charitable behavior. For example, among those who attend worship services regularly, 92 percent of Protestants give charitably, compared with 91 percent of Catholics, 91 percent of Jews, and 89 percent from other religions.**
>
> Socioeconomically, the religious and secular groups are similar in some ways and different in others. For example, there is little difference between the groups in income (both have average household incomes around $49,000) or education level (20 percent of each group holds a college degree). On the other hand, the secular group is disproportionately male (49 percent to 32 percent), unmarried

> (58 percent to 40 percent), and young (42 to 49 years old, on average). In addition, the SCCBS data show that religion and secularism break down on ideological lines: Religious people are 38 percentage points more likely to say they are conservative than to say they are liberal (57 percent to 19 percent). In contrast, secular people are 13 points more likely to say they are liberal than to say they are conservative (42 percent to 29 percent).
>
> It is possible, of course, that the charity differences between secular and religious people are due to these nonreligious socioeconomic differences. To investigate this possibility, I used a statistical procedure called probit regression to examine the role of religious practice in isolation from all other relevant demographic characteristics: political beliefs, income (and hence, indirectly, the tax incentives for giving), education level, gender, age, race, marital status, and area of residence. **The data show that if two people — one religious and the other secular — are identical in every other way, the secular person is 23 percentage points less likely to give than the religious person and 26 points less likely to volunteer.**

Honestly, I've always struggled to understand how giving to charity could be rational, on atheism. If you are only alive for 80 years, and the purpose of your life is to be happy, then the only reason I can think of to give anything away to anyone is because it makes you feel happier or more respected or something. Maybe because you like thinking of yourself as moral, or maybe because you want to be seen as moral, or maybe because you want a tax deduction, or maybe something else. But if this is the only life you are ever going to have, and people are just collections of atoms, then why care about what anyone is doing? We're all just accidents anyway, on atheism, and we're going to die out eventually. There are no objective moral duties – we are *accidents* on the atheist view. One set of atoms giving some atoms to another set of atoms, and then in the end all the atoms get scattered: who cares?

Look:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

They may live better than that for whatever whim, but goodness is not rational within their worldview. And we want to be rational about morality, because as the numbers show, having a reason to be good *makes a big difference* in whether actually *do good*. As opposed to just claiming to be good. Anyone can say anything, but their rational beliefs are the rails on which they run their lives.

Here's something interesting I found about the leaders of the two political parties in this country.

Excerpt:

> In 2009, the Obamas gave 5.9 percent of their income to charity, about the same as they gave in 2006 and 2007. In the eight years before he became president, Obama gave an average of 3.5 percent of his income to charity, upping that to 6.5 percent in 2008.
>
> The Obamas' charitable giving is equally divided between "hope" and "change."
>
> George W. Bush gave away more than 10 percent of his income each year he was president, as he did before becoming president.
>
> Thus, in 2005, Obama gave about the same dollar amount to charity as President George Bush did, on an income of $1.7 million — more than twice as much as President Bush's $735,180. Again in 2006, Bush gave more to charity than Obama on an income one-third smaller than Obama's.
>
> In the decade before Joe Biden became vice president, the Bidens gave a total — all 10 years combined — of $3,690 to charity, or 0.2 percent of their income. They gave in a decade what most Americans in their tax bracket give in an average year, or about one row of hair plugs.
>
> Of course, even in Biden's stingiest years, he gave more to charity than Sen. John Kerry did in 1995, which was a big fat goose egg. Kerry did, however, spend half a million dollars on a 17th-century Dutch seascape painting that year, as Peter Schweizer reports in his 2008 book, "Makers and Takers."
>
> To be fair, 1995 was an off-year for Kerry's charitable giving. The year before, he gave $2,039 to charity, and the year before that a staggering $175.
>
> He also dropped a $5 bill in the Salvation Army pail and almost didn't ask for change.
>
> In 1998, Al Gore gave $353 to charity — about a day's take for a lemonade stand in his neighborhood. That was 10 percent of the national average for charitable giving by people in the $100,000-$200,000 income bracket. Gore was at the very top of that bracket, with an income of $197,729.
>
> When Sen. Ted Kennedy released his tax returns to run for president in the '70s, they showed that Kennedy gave a bare 1 percent of his income to charity — or, as Schweizer says, "about as much as Kennedy claimed as a write-off on his 50-foot sailing sloop Curragh." (Cash tips to bartenders and cocktail waitresses are not considered charitable donations.)
>
> The Democratic base gives to charity as their betters do. At the same income, a single mother on welfare is seven times less likely to give to charity than a working poor family that attends religious services.
>
> In 2006 and 2007, John McCain, who files separately from his rich wife, gave 27.3

> percent and 28.6 percent of his income to charity.
>
> In 2005, Vice President Cheney gave 77 percent of his income to charity. He also shot a lawyer in the face, which I think should count for something.
>
> In a single year, Schweizer reports, Rush Limbaugh "gave $109,716 to 'various individuals in need of assistance mainly due to family illnesses,' $52,898 to 'children's case management organizations,' including 'various programs to benefit families in need,' $35,100 for 'Alzheimer's community care — day care for families in need,' and $40,951 for air conditioning units and heaters delivered to troops in Iraq."

The Democrats are the non-religious party, the Republicans are the religious party. The Democrats are also the talking party, as you can see, and the Republicans are the doing party.

By the way, Arthur Brooks eventually turned this research into a book called "Who Really Cares?", and it's a good response to atheists when they tell you that they can be moral without God. If it doesn't make sense to be moral, then atheists aren't going to do it. You can read more about that book here.

Do Democrats act consistently with their own stated beliefs?

October 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do leftists always act as nicely as they tell us to act?

That's one case, but are leftists always hypocrites?

Do As I Say Not As I Do

I recently listened to the audio book version of Peter Schweizer's 2004 book "Do As I Say Not As I Do". In that book, he profiles a number of leftist public figures, and he discovers that leftists don't practice what they preach, because even they know that leftist ideas *don't actually work*. I really recommend the book, so let's take a closer look at it and you'll see why you should read it, too.

Here's a 32 minute 2011 lecture about the book:

And here's an interview with the author from FrontPage magazine.

Excerpt:

> **FrontPage:** Give us some of the best examples of the gulf between some liberals' social criticisms and the ingredients of their private lives. Give us some insights, for instance, into the likes of Noam Chomsky, Michael Moore, Cornel West, Hillary Clinton, Ted Kennedy and Barbra Streisand.
>
> **Schweizer:** Looking for liberal hypocrisy is, as they say in the military, a target-rich environment. Noam Chomsky, for example, has attacked wealthy Americans who set up trusts to avoid paying inheritance taxes. But this self-professed "radical socialist" has a tax attorney and did the very same thing. (When I asked him about this hypocrisy he said it was okay because he and has family have been working on behalf of suffering people all these years.)

> Michael Moore's hypocrisy is pathological. He has said numerous times that he doesn't own a single share of stock and that capitalism is not acceptable "on any level." And yet, I found that, according to tax returns filed with the IRS, he has owned shares in Halliburton, numerous oil companies, defense contractors and other multinationals through a tax shelter. When it comes he race he's also wildly hypocritical. He says that Americans who happen to live in largely white neighbhorhoods do so because they are "racists." But he lives in Central Lake, Michigan, which according to the U.S. Census has more than 2,500 residents and not a single black person in the entire town.
>
> Cornel West has numerous times condemned middle class blacks that abandon the "chocolate cities" for the "vanilla suburbs" but guess what, his flavour of choice is vanilla, too.
>
> Ted Kennedy likes to pose as the Robin Hood of the Senate, forcing wealthy

> Americans to pay their taxes to help the poor. But I discovered that Kennedys record of actually paying taxes is horrible. Tax the inheritance tax. He says that Americans should pay 49% to the IRS when they die in the name of "social justice." But according to public records, the Kennedys have almost completely avoided contributing to "social justice" by placing their assets in trusts that are located overseas. The Kennedys, over the past thirty years, have paid less than 1% in inheritance taxes on more than $300 million. Ted Kennedy, like Hillary Clinton and George Soros, loves higher taxes. On other people.

And:

> **FrontPage:** Why do you think people are drawn to leftist ideals and what kind of people are they? Self-contempt appears to be a common ingredient, no?
>
> **Schweizer:** Yes, self-contempt is a big part of it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great German pastor who stood up to Hitler, wrote a book about "cheap grace." Liberals are guilty of cheap grace in the political sense. They feel guilty and their form of penance is embracing the destructive ideas of the progressive faith. But it's cheap grace because as I show it the book, they don't actually change the way they live. I think that the religious comparison makes sense because in many respects the modern day left represents a religious movement. They are motivated by a sense of sin, guilt, and the need for salvation and absolution in the political sense. Socialism offers salvation to them. Of course, they don't actually plan to live like socialists.

I would really recommend taking a look at this book. It's similar to Paul Johnson's "Intellectuals" if you've ever read that, but it's better.

City of Houston demands that pastors hand over all sermons on homosexuality

October 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Houston's openly gay mayor, Annise Parker

Fox News has the story and the backstory, too.

Excerpt:

> The city of Houston has issued subpoenas demanding a group of pastors turn over any sermons dealing with homosexuality, gender identity or Annise Parker, the city's first openly lesbian mayor. And those ministers who fail to comply could be held in contempt of court.
>
> "The city's subpoena of sermons and other pastoral communications is both needless and unprecedented," Alliance Defending Freedom attorney Christina Holcomb said in a statement. "The city council and its attorneys are engaging in an inquisition designed to stifle any critique of its actions."
>
> ADF, a nationally-known law firm specializing in religious liberty cases, is representing five Houston pastors. They filed a motion in Harris County court to stop the subpoenas arguing they are "overbroad, unduly burdensome, harassing, and vexatious."
>
> "Political and social commentary is not a crime," Holcomb said. "It is protected by the First Amendment."
>
> The subpoenas are just the latest twist in an ongoing saga over the Houston's new non-discrimination ordinance. The law, among other things, would allow men to use the ladies room and vice versa. The city council approved the law in June.
>
> The Houston Chronicle reported opponents of the ordinance launched a petition drive that generated more than 50,000 signatures – far more than the 17,269

> needed to put a referendum on the ballot.
>
> However, the city threw out the petition in August over alleged irregularities.
>
> After opponents of the bathroom bill filed a lawsuit the city's attorneys responded by issuing the subpoenas against the pastors.
>
> The pastors were not part of the lawsuit. However, they were part of a coalition of some 400 Houston-area churches that opposed the ordinance. The churches represent a number of faith groups – from Southern Baptist to non-denominational.
>
> "City council members are supposed to be public servants, not 'Big Brother' overlords who will tolerate no dissent or challenge," said ADF attorney Erik Stanley. "This is designed to intimidate pastors."
>
> Mayor Parker will not explain why she wants to inspect the sermons.

Why is it that people on the secular left are so comfortable with bringing in the government to threaten, intimidate and coerce those who disagree with them? Could it be that they know that what they are doing is morally wrong, and have to force others to celebrate it so their guilty consciences will be appeased? After all, you don't see chaste people marching around in pride parades, or demanding government force people to celebrate chastity. We know we are right, and opposition to chastity doesn't bother us. Our consciences are clean.

Well, the ADF is on this Houston case, and that's a good thing. Seems like anywhere Christians are under attack, the ADF is there to defend us. If you want to keep up with this story, I recommend subscribing to the Alliance Defending Freedom podcast and the Family Research Council Daily and Weekly podcasts.

Obamacare website won't reveal plan costs until after midterm elections

October 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last year, they revealed all the plans on October 1st. What could cause them to delay the prices this year for over a month?

The Washington Times explains.

Excerpt:

> Those planning to purchase health insurance on the Obamacare exchange will soon find out how much rates have increased — after the Nov. 4 election.
>
> Enrollment on the Healthcare.gov website begins Nov. 15, or 11 days after the midterm vote, and critics who worry about rising premium hikes in 2015 say that's no coincidence. Last year's inaugural enrollment period on the health-care exchange began Oct. 1.
>
> "This is more than just a glitch," said Tim Phillips, president of free-market Americans for Prosperity, in a Friday statement. "The administration's decision to withhold the costs of this law until after Election Day is just more proof that Obamacare is a bad deal for Americans."
>
> […]The Iowa insurance commissioner approved last week premium increases for three insurance carriers: Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield, CoOpportunity Health and Coventry Health. Two of those insurers will implement double-digit hikes ranging from 11.9 to 19 percent, the Des Moines Register reports.
>
> […]The issue is also resonating in the Louisiana Senate race, where Democratic Sen. Mary Landrieu is seeking re-election against Republican Rep. Bill Cassidy. Documents filed with the Louisiana Department of Insurance show some insurers are anticipating double-digit rate hikes, according to the New Orleans Times-Picayune.
>
> Mr. Cassidy, who's a doctor, issued a statement Thursday calling the higher premiums "another hurdle for families and businesses already struggling under the demands of Obamacare."
>
> "Premiums have gone up by 53 percent for the average Louisiana policyholder and many of these policies will again see double-digit increases," Mr. Cassidy said. "It's unfair to Louisianans who have to balance their budgets and their businesses."

I can understand why the Democrats would want to keep the exchange rates private before the election. They are counting on hoodwinking the American public again – vote first, find out what's in the bill later.

Are “budget cuts” to blame for the CDC’s inept handling of Ebola?

October 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily tells the truth.

Excerpt:

> There haven’t been any real cuts to those budgets at all. At least not in the sense that any American household would recognize.
>
> The CDC’s budget today is 25% bigger than it was in 2008 and 188% bigger than in 2000. The NIH budget has been flat for the past few years, but at a level that’s more than double what it was 14 years ago.
>
> Plus, spending at both of these agencies has actually been higher than President Obama himself proposed (see chart). The 2014 NIH budget, in fact, is almost $1 billion bigger than Obama sought in his budget plan, released in early 2010.
>
> True, the heads of these agencies are decrying cuts. But that’s what government officials always do, even as their budgets continue to grow. Besides, the CDC and NIH are desperate to point the finger of blame somewhere other than their own incompetence.
>
> Even if there has been some cutting here and there at these agencies, it’s not as if there isn’t plenty of fat to trim.
>
> If the NIH was really so concerned about developing an Ebola vaccine, for example, it could have directed more grant money to that effort, rather than wasting it researching such things as diseases among male sex workers in Peru ($400,000), why chimps throw feces ($600,000) and sexual attraction among fruit flies (nearly $1 million).
>
> The CDC isn’t much better at husbanding its resources. A few years ago, it dumped $106 million into a swanky visitors’ center in Atlanta, even though it already had one. It bought $10 million worth of furniture for its lavish new headquarters and spent $1.7 million to advise Hollywood on medical plots.
>
> Yes, the federal government has blown it on Ebola. But that’s not because the relevant agencies have too little money to spend. It’s the result of unfocused missions, bureaucratic bloat and a shameful lack of accountability.

I think that this Ebola crisis is an excellent reminder to us why we should not trust government to be accountable to people. We were told that the government was going to handle this, and there was nothing to worry about. But now we know that there has been mistake after mistake. We were told that Ebola could not spread, but now two nurses have it. It’s another case of the government saying one thing, but the opposite is actually true. If we’re going to have government, we should at least have competent government,

and that certainly is not a Democrat government.

Second nurse with Ebola called CDC about her fever, was allowed to fly

October 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From CBS News.

Excerpt:

> In the case of Amber Vinson, the Dallas nurse who flew commercially as she was becoming ill with Ebola, one health official said "somebody dropped the ball."
>
> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that Vinson called the agency several times before flying, saying that she had a fever with a temperature of 99.5 degrees. But because her fever wasn't 100.4 degrees or higher, she didn't officially fall into the group of "high risk" and was allowed to fly.
>
> Officials in the U.S. have been trying to calm fears over the Ebola crisis, but time and again events have overtaken their assurances.
>
> In August, before the first U.S. infection, CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden said: "We're confident that we have the facilities here to isolate patients, not only at the highly advanced ones like the one at Emory, but really at virtually every major hospital in the U.S."
>
> […]And there was reassurance from the White House.
>
> "Every hospital in this county has the capability to isolate a patient, take the measures, put them in place to ensure that any suspected case is immediately isolated and the follow-up steps that have been mentioned are immediately taken," Lisa Monaco, a homeland security and counterterrorism adviser to President Obama, said Oct. 3.
>
> But health care workers weren't so sure.
>
> "We want to make sure that we have the correct equipment – the protective equipment – to protect both our patients and ourselves," Katy Roemer, who has worked as a nurse in California for 20 years, told CBS News correspondent John Blackstone last week.
>
> Blackstone asked her whether hazmat suits were available to her.
>
> "Not that I know of," Roemer said.
>
> Duncan died Oct. 8. Four days later, nurse Nina Pham got sick. Federal officials were now discovering what health workers had warned about.
>
> […]The director of the CDC, who in August said he was "confident," said this Tuesday:
>
> "We could've sent a more robust hospital infection control team and been more hands-on with the hospital from day one," Frieden said. "… I wish we had put a

> team like this on the ground the day the patient – the first patient – was diagnosed. That might have prevented this infection."

We have nothing to worry about, big government is in control. Don't you doubt their ability to handle this. You can keep your doctor. You can keep your health plan. Health care premiums will go down. Nobody in the US will ever be infected with Ebola. Now that Ebola is here, it will not spread to anyone else. And if big government fails to protect you, the solution is for them to take more of your money.

Why should we believe that the same big government leftists who covered up Fast and Furious, who blamed Benghazi on a Youtube video, who lied to us about what pulling out of Iraq would cause, who covered up the IRS targeting of conservatives, who performed clandestine surveillance of journalists, the Bergdahl terrorist-leaders-for-one-traitor swap, ETC., can be counted on to take ANY threat seriously? This is not the private sector we are dealing with – this is the government. The people who lead it win popularity contests. They couldn't solve their way out of a wet paper bag. Whenever anything goes wrong, they cover it up – and ask for more money, so it "won't happen again".

Results of the Bergdahl investigation will be covered up until after midterm elections

October 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily reports.

Excerpt:

> The Army has completed its investigation into Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl's abandonment of his Afghan post but will not release the report until after the midterm elections lest it embarrass the Obama administration.
>
> […]Bergdahl walked away from his army post during wartime in 2009 and was held in semi-captivity for five years until President Obama arranged a trade of five top Taliban commanders held at Guantanamo for Bergdahl's release, initially on the grounds that Bergdahl's physical condition was so grave that immediate action was necessary.
>
> […]As the San Antonio Express-News reported, the Army on Oct. 9 announced the completion of the investigation. The report, by Brig. Gen. Kenneth Dahl, however, will not be released, according to Army spokesman Wayne Hall, until the end of a review process that is likely to be conveniently lengthy.
>
> […]This review process is eerily reminiscent of that which took place regarding the Benghazi talking points. That process was designed to make the administration look good and less culpable. It, too, took place shortly before an election.
>
> Certainly, a report that might say Bergdahl was in fact a deserter would not help an administration amid an election battle and awash in scandals and failures from ObamaCare to the IRS and now the bungling of the Ebola crisis.
>
> We note how Obama tried to mute the Taliban trade by welcoming Bergdahl's parents to the White House, where Bergdahl's father uttered words in Arabic.
>
> The White House sent national security adviser Susan Rice, of Benghazi-video-lie fame, to the talk shows to say Bergdahl served with "honor and distinction."
>
> Could it be that the report says otherwise — and that the trade of five Taliban commanders, the functional equivalents of four-star generals, was just a politically motivated mistake?
>
> Every one of the men who served with Bergdahl or tried to find him and who have spoken out publicly has said he was clearly a deserter.
>
> Indeed, the uncontestable fact is that Bergdahl walked away from his post in a time of war, leaving his weapon and gear behind. He was not out for a walk to relieve stress or clear his head.
>
> "Bowe Bergdahl deserted during a time of war, and his fellow Americans lost

> their lives searching for him," former Sgt. Matt Vierkant told CNN. At least six soldiers died in operations looking for Bergdahl.

We lost 6 soldiers looking for this deserter/traitor and traded 5 Taliban commanders for his release. The report should recommend a court martial for desertion for Bergdahl. That's what all the evidence we have about him would suggest. And that would be a disaster for the Democrats in these midterm elections. That's why it has to be covered up, just like the details of the new Obamacare exchange health plans – it all has to wait until after people have voted.

Are atheists paying attention to the weightiest demands of the moral law?

October 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J. Warner Wallace looks at what Jesus says the most important commandment is, and then asks whether atheists can be justified morally if Jesus is right.

He writes:

> I was an atheist for the first thirty-five years of my life. While I was a committed (and often aggressive) non-believer, most people who knew me would probably have described me as a "nice guy". My behavior wasn't all that different than many of my Christian friends. I worked with many other atheist police officers. We were often suspicious of the Christians in our midst and the people we arrested who claimed to be Christians. Even as atheists we were familiar with Jesus' directive to "love your neighbor as yourself." My partner, Tim, used to say, "If there is a good God and a good Heaven, I think I will be there when it's all over. I'm a good person. I try to 'do the right thing'. *I'm* not a bad guy; I put bad people in jail. So I'm not worried about it." Tim held a "works based" moral worldview and he was sure his good deeds would earn him a spot in Heaven if he was wrong about the existence of God. But Tim (and I) were unfamiliar with Jesus' teaching in its full context, and now, years later as a Christian, I've come to understand why the first part of the "Greatest Command" is even more important than the second.
>
> When approached by a skeptic, Jesus affirmed the greatest commandments of God in the following way:
>
> ***Matthew 22:35-40***
> *One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."*
>
> Most unbelievers recognize the value of the second half of this command ("You shall love your neighbor as yourself") but deny the value of the first part ("'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.") There's a reason, however, why Jesus listed these two commands in this specific order. The first command (loving God) is the "great and foremost commandment" because it is *required* to achieve the second command (loving others). You can't *truly* do the right thing unless you understand the relationship between these two commands:

Read the rest at Cold Case Christianity.

I've made the same point here many times, but I have never been an atheist and I don't make the point in the same winsome way that Wallace does.

I think his post is worth sending along to any atheists you may know who think themselves justified. I think it is a mistake for people to derive their own version of morality based on the time and place where they are, and then think that picking and choosing the parts they like will justify them with God. Remember, a recent survey of atheists found that 97% of them favor abortion rights. I think this is consistent with the atheist view that there are no human rights, including a right to life. Moreover, in my experience, I have found that most atheists have no problem with the government stomping all over the consciences of Christians when it comes to things like gay rights. It's important to show them that there is a standard independent of their personal opinions, justifications and rationalizations.

Why are progressives so blithe about pressuring Christians to act like non-Christians?

October 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A great post from Dr. George Yancey explains the worldview behind so many things we hear in the news these days. Here he is responding to the story about the Houston mayor who subpoena'd all the sermons from the Christian pastors in order to chill dissent to her LGBT agenda.

He writes:

> I am a sociologist studying anti-Christian attitudes in our society. This brings me to my take that I am qualified to talk about – whether this legal strategy is tied to Christianophobia. There are reasons to believe that this attempt to obtain sermons and other information is part of a larger strategy to stigmatize Christians. Thus, I do not discount the possibility that Christianophobia plays some role in these actions.
>
> However, it is work of another book I wrote a couple of years ago which I think is more relevant. That book is named What Motivates Cultural Progressives. In that book, I documented that cultural progressive activists tend to consider their political opponents to be irrational, religious individuals trying to move our culture backwards. They have little respect for their political opponents. They often express concerns about the ability of religious individuals to have influence on our political system. With this sort of mindset, it is easy to perceive a motivation from Houston officials, if they are cultural progressive activists, to gather sermons and other material in an effort to "expose" the irrationality and intolerance of their political opponents. Whether the documents are relevant to the current court case may be less important to these officials than stopping the efforts of those who would take our culture backwards.
>
> My suggestion is that it is not as much a fear of Christians as it is the fear of the socially conservative culture linked to Christians driving these subpoenas. The lack of respect cultural progressive activists have for their political opponents allow them to rationalize using the legal system to "dig up dirt" on them. In my sample, I found several individuals who did not believe that religious individuals had the right to fully participate in our political progress. A good number of respondents also articulated a belief that religious individuals are brainwashed and cultural conservative political movements have developed due to the manipulation of ignorant Christians by evil leaders. Thus the political claims in this movement are not legitimate claims by people seeking to serve their own social and material interests, but are the result of manipulation whereby they have been persuaded to vote against their own economic and social interest. When we recognize that many cultural progressive activists do not see cultural

> conservatives as legitimate political players in our governmental system, then the overreaching request make a great deal of sense.

So how should we respond to this?

Well, the answer is that Christians need to take seriously the need to speak and act *intelligently* when dealing with non-Christians. We need to study apologetics, yes. But we also need to be good at knowing other things – practical things, academic things. We should be able to earn a living and share with others. We should be able to demonstrate sobriety, discipline and chastity. We should be able to explain rationally and evidentially all the moral beliefs that non-Christians find the most objectionable. We should have an interest in current events, economics, law, politics and foreign policy. Etc. We have to be able to out-think our rivals, and win their respect the same way that Joseph won the respect of Pharaoh, and Daniel won the respect of Nebuchadnezzar.

I think it's interesting that Dr. George Yancey himself is an excellent example of what I am talking about. He is a full professor at the University of North Texas, and has published books with Oxford University Press. If people want to know if it is possible to be a Christian and be intelligent, this is exactly who we need to show them – and who we need to be. We should be working on this! And raising our kids to counteract these perceptions that the secular leftists have of us. Often, the secular leftists are raised in Christian homes, see the anti-intellectualism in popular Christianity firsthand, then head off to university to train as a persecutor. We have to shape up and stop this from happening. We are train our own executioners, because of our laziness, ignorance and cowardice.

Friday night detectives: another two episodes of Sherlock Holmes

October 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jeremy Brett is the best Sherlock Holmes *ever*.

Here are 2 episodes of “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes”.

The Man With The Twisted Lip:

The Copper Beeches:

I’m trying to post some of the lessor known ones now, but these are both rated 8 out of 10 on IMDB.

Happy Friday!

Are Christians responsible for making plans and making good decisions?

October 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful post on decision making and the will of God posted on Neil's blog. Neil links to another post where someone is trying to figure out what God wants him to do.

Excerpt:

> **Really short version:** Aside from direct and clear personal revelation from God, you don't have access to his sovereign will when making decisions. Therefore you must look at other factors. **If it isn't moral, don't do it. If it is moral but not wise, don't do it. If it is moral and wise, then use your personal preferences.**
>
> Using this model you can end up with a wise and biblical decision, but you have avoided the traps of the "God told me to ____" routine. People who run around saying that God told them this and that convey a super-spirituality that can leave less mature believers wondering if they really have a relationship with God (i.e., "God doesn't tell me every little thing to do, so maybe I don't really know him.").

He has a helpful picture posted as well:

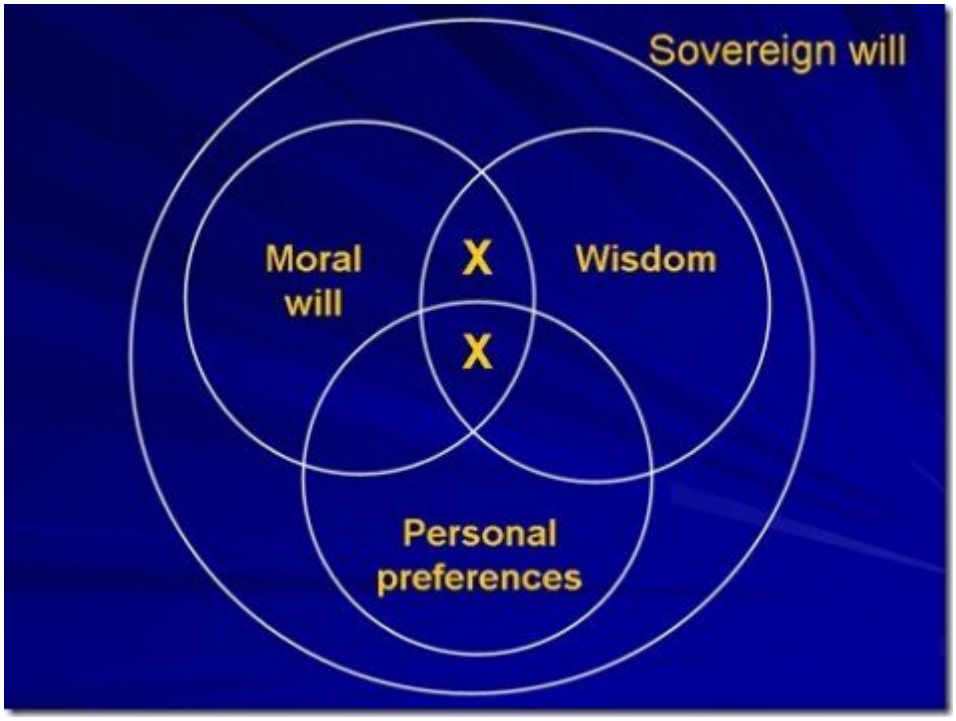

This is actually a very important topic for me, because I like making plans and making good decisions. I like being the quarterback or squad leader of my own life. I like to pick objectives and then make plans to achieve them. (Nothing too exotic, just simple stuff like saving money or reading more books)

Actually, I really oppose the idea that God has a magical fairy tale will for each person that will make them happy and fulfilled. For me, life isn't like that. I don't expect God to

lead me along like a child at a scavenger hunt. I expect to survey the battlefield where I am and then *do something* to make a difference. There are lots of things you can do that will please God. Should you focus on your career and sponsor apologetics conferences? Or should you use your spare time preparing Sunday school lessons? *There are lots of good things you could do to please God*. Your job is to pick the one that will be the most effective. It doesn't matter if it makes you happy, it only matters if it's effective and if you are good at it.

Who is Rifleman Dodd?

A while back, I was busily working my way through the U.S. Marine Corps Official Reading List, and I came across a book by C.S. Forester called *Rifleman Dodd*, or alternatively titled *Death to the French*. It's a work of historical fiction that takes place during the Napoleonic wars. The story is about a British marksman named Dodd, who is cut off from his own lines during a withdrawal maneuver. He is subsequently left to fend for himself behind enemy lines. An ordinary man might be full of despair and forget about his mission entirely. But Dodd is no ordinary man. Not only does he find a way to survive by finding food to eat, water to drink and places to sleep, but he also tries to remember his orders and to think about what he can do to advance the cause of his General, the Duke of Wellington.

Here's an excerpt from a gritty book review:

> It's about a green-coated British infantry rifleman in the Napoleonic Wars, an age when rifles were a novelty and most of the army was red-coated and carried muskets. Private Matthew Dodd gets separated from his regiment during a retreat and finds himself stranded behind enemy (French) lines in Portugal. With the occasional aid of some natives, but mostly on his own, he harasses the French with his rifle and tries to prevent them from building a bridge across the Tagus River. It's a remarkable tale of survival and solitary achievement, of a rank-and-file soldier who lives by his wits and slowly learns to make plans without orders, and shows leadership qualities and a knowledge of warfare.

I think we're in the same situation as Dodd.

There is no point in us looking for breadcrumb trails to happiness at this point. That's not the point of Christianity. The point of Christianity is friendship with God, imitation of Christ, honoring moral obligations, self-sacrificial love for your neighbor (and even your enemies!), and dedication to the truth – whether anyone else likes you or not. It's not supposed to make you happy, and it's not necessarily going to be a normal life like everyone else has. Things may not work out the way you'd like them to.

We seem to be making such a big deal about compassion and forgiveness in the Christian life these days – such a big emphasis on our feelings. Almost like we have forgotten that we have obligations to our friend – and his objectives. A relationship doesn't mean that one person completely disregards the character and goals of the other person and then is automatically granted forgiveness whenever they want it. That's not a friendship – that's

using someone else for your own ends. Maybe it’s time to remember what this is all about.

Dr. Michael Egnor discusses the logical implications of atheism

October 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are four podcasts in this series of talks between Casey Luskin and Michael Egnor.

About Dr. Egnor:

> *Dr. Michael Egnor is a Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery at The State University of New York at Stony Brook, where he specializes in Pediatric Neuroscience. An award-winning neurosurgeon and a widely-published researcher, Dr. Egnor writes regularly at* Evolution News & Views.

Podcast one details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, brain surgeon and ID blogger Michael Egnor talks with CSC Research Coordinator Casey Luskin about his internet debates with Jerry Coyne and the trends and dynamics he sees in the ID/evolution blogosphere. Dr. Egnor also speaks briefly on the evidence he sees for intelligent design in the brain.

The first MP3 file is here.

Podcast two details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Dr. Michael Egnor and Casey Luskin continue their conversation, speaking on Dr. Egnor's recent experience in an online debate on free will with evolutionary biologist Dr. Jerry Coyne. Listen in as Dr. Egnor explains why the argument against free will is self-refuting and shows how determinism as a theory in physics is dead.

The second MP3 file is here.

Podcast three details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, hear more of Dr. Michael Egnor and Casey Luskin's discussion on free will. If there is no free will, and humans are merely following our chemical instructions, than how can we recognize evil and good? Tune in as Dr. Egnor explores the societal and political consequences of denying free will.

The third MP3 file is here.

Podcast four details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Dr. Michael Egnor is on the show again to talk more about his recent debates with atheist evolutionary biologist Dr. Jerry Coyne. Listen in as Egnor and Research Coordinator Casey Luskin discuss recent efforts that Jerry Coyne has made against open discourse on intelligent design and

> evolution, looking at two recent incidents of censorship at Ball State University and the LA County Museum of Natural History.

The fourth MP3 file is here.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

October 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of my favorite lectures, by one of the people I admire the most for his scientific work and robust, evangelical Christian faith.

About Michael Strauss:

His full biography is here. (I removed his links from my excerpt text below)

Excerpt:

> I had an interest in science and theology, so in 1977 I chose to go to Biola University where I could study both subjects in detail. I thoroughly enjoyed college and participated in intramural sports, was elected to student government, served as a resident assistant, competed in forensics, and studied a lot. As I neared college graduation my dual interest continued so I applied to seminary and to graduate school. After graduating *summa cum laude* from Biola, I decided to pursue a graduate degree in physics at UCLA.
>
> During my first few years of graduate school, I developed an increased interest in quantum mechanics and subatomic physics and decided to do research in a field that dealt with these subjects. I joined a High Energy Physics experimental group doing research at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to actively participate in research at SLAC. I graduated in 1988 with my Ph.D in High Energy Physics (a.k.a. Elementary Particle Physics). If you would like to know more about High Energy Physics, the Particle Data Group at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory has a very nice interactive adventure that teaches you all about the subject. My research advisor was professor Charles Buchanan and my disertation was titled "A Study of Lambda Polarization and Phi Spin Alignment in Electron-Positron Annihilation at 29 GeV as a Probe of Color Field Behavior."
>
> After graduation, I accepted a post-doctoral research position with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I continued to do research at SLAC where I joined the SLD experiment. My research interests centered on the SLD silicon pixel vertex detector. I wrote most of the offline software for this device, and did physics analysis which used the vertex detector, including tagging *b* quark events for flavor specific QCD (Quantum Chromodynamics) analysis. In the seven years I was employed by UMASS, I only spent 3 days on the Amherst campus. The rest of the time was spent in California.
>
> […]In August 1995, I accepted a job as an Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of Oklahoma (OU) in Norman, Oklahoma. The University of Oklahoma has a vibrant high energy physics research group involved in experiments at the

> Fermi National Accelerator Center (Fermilab), and CERN. I joined the DØ experiment at Fermilab where I continue to do research in elementary particle physics. As a member of the DØ collaboration I have made contributions to the testing of silicon sensors for the upgraded vertex detector, to the track finding algorithms, to a measurement of the photon production cross section which probes the gluon content of protons, and to other QCD measurements. I am currently studying properties of *B* mesons that contain a *b*-quark, the production cross section of jets coming from quarks and gluons, and other QCD analyses. At CERN, I am a collaborator on the ATLAS detector.
>
> I received tenure in 2001 and was promoted to the rank of Professor in the summer of 2010. Most of the time at OU I have taught introductory physics classes to physics majors, engineers, and life science majors. In these classes I have used a number of interactive techniques to facilitate student participation and learning. I have been privileged to win a few awards for my teaching. In 1999, the Associated Students selected me as the Outstanding Professor in the College of Arts and Science, and in 2000 I was awarded the BP AMOCO Foundation Good Teaching Award. In 2002, I was given the Regents Award for Superior Teaching. I received the Carlisle Mabrey and Lurine Mabrey Presidential Professorship in 2006 which is given to "faculty members who excel in all their professional activities and who relate those activities to the students they teach and mentor."

He seems to have done a fine job of integrating his faith with a solid career in physics research. It would be nice if we were churning out more like him, but that would require the church to get serious about the integration between science and faith.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips, one of which I was able to try out recently at IHOP, and it worked.

Here is a clip:

The full video can be watched on Vimeo:

UPDATE: I pulled the MP3 audio from the lecture in case anyone wants just the audio.

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries

– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

It's a good lecture explaining basic arguments for a cosmic Creator and Designer. If you add the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion (Stephen C. Meyer's arguments), then you will be solid on science apologetics. That's everything a rank-and-file Christian needs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Coeur d'Alene city officials to pastors: perform gay marriages or face jail, fines

October 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Alliance Defending Freedom web site.

Excerpt:

> Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys filed a federal lawsuit and a motion for a temporary restraining order Friday to stop officials in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, from forcing two ordained Christian ministers to perform wedding ceremonies for same-sex couples.
>
> City officials told Donald Knapp that he and his wife Evelyn, both ordained ministers who run Hitching Post Wedding Chapel, are required to perform such ceremonies **or face months in jail and/or thousands of dollars in fines**. The city claims its "non-discrimination" ordinance requires the Knapps to perform same-sex wedding ceremonies now that the courts have overridden Idaho's voter-approved constitutional amendment that affirmed marriage as the union of a man and a woman.
>
> "The government should not force ordained ministers to act contrary to their faith under threat of jail time and criminal fines," said ADF Senior Legal Counsel Jeremy Tedesco. "Many have denied that pastors would ever be forced to perform ceremonies that are completely at odds with their faith, but that's what is happening here – and it's happened this quickly. The city is on seriously flawed legal ground, and our lawsuit intends to ensure that this couple's freedom to adhere to their own faith as pastors is protected just as the First Amendment intended."
>
> The Hitching Post Wedding Chapel is across the street from the Kootenai County Clerk's office, which issues marriage licenses. The Knapps, both in their 60s and who themselves have been married for 47 years, began operating the wedding chapel in 1989 as a ministry. They perform religious wedding ceremonies, which include references to God, the invocation of God's blessing on the union, brief remarks drawn from the Bible designed to encourage the couple and help them to have a successful marriage, and more. They also provide each couple they marry with a CD that includes two sermons about marriage, and they recommend numerous Christian books on the subject. The Knapps charge a small fee for their services.
>
> Coeur d'Alene officials told the Knapps privately and also publicly stated that the couple would violate the city's public accommodations statute once same-sex marriage became legal in Idaho if they declined to perform a same-sex ceremony at their chapel. **On Friday, the Knapps respectfully declined such a ceremony and now face up to 180 days in jail and up to $1,000 in fines**

> **for each day they decline to perform that ceremony.**

This is freaking IDAHO for God's sake. Thankfully the ADF is there to fight the case.

I guess part of me is surprised that in a country where so many people identify as Christians and attend church that such a thing would be possible.

First off, I credit Bible-centric pastors for failing to explain the issues of homosexuality and gay marriage in a way that their parishioners could make sense of it logically and evidentially. We never did that, so that's why Christians had nothing to say to non-Christians when the issue came up OUTSIDE the church. We never learned from church leaders or our parents how to explain the problems with gay rights (Grindr app promiscuity, domestic violence, relationship instability, HIV spread, loss of free speech, loss of religious liberty, harm to children who are separated from their biological parents, etc.). All we learned to say at home and at church was "the Bible says". That's what 20 years of church prepares you to do. That's what being raised in a Christian home prepares you to do.

"The Bible says" works great when you are a child in the Christian subculture, then you hit the university and it just dies. And pastors and parents know this, they just *don't care*, because Christianity was like Santa Claus to them – it was about getting you to behave nicely as a child. It was never to make you kick ass like a William Lane Craig. It was never to make you into Stephen C. Meyer or an ADF attorney. It was just to make your parents' life easier, as much as they try to cover it up with pious talk excusing them from their failed parenting effort.

Secondly, I think that the type of Christianity taught by parents and pastors is also to blame. They keep telling us that Christianity is about God helping you to feel good, and be nice to other people, so they like you. Everything is about feeling good here and now. Feelings. Compassion. Non-judgmentalism. Irrationality. Nothing is about truth, nothing is about facts, nothing is about conflict. We have witnessed the feminization of the church, and as a result, nobody has any response to the rhetoric of the gay rights people. If Christianity is about being nice, being liked and feeling good, then we have no resistance to the gay rights movement's rhetoric which urges us to "be nice" so we can be liked, and feel good.

Declaring that morally wrong practices are actually morally good is only a virtue to those who want to *be liked above all*.

Does the church do a good job of equipping Christians to talk to non-Christians?

October 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Most churches these days are not doing a good job of helping Christians to understand how to explain and defend Christianity to non-Christians. They tend to be focused on providing comfort and entertainment, which is why so much of the focus is on compassion, singing and being "nice". Logical arguments are out. Scientific evidence is out. Historical evidence is out. There is a terrible fear of disagreeing with anyone. Everyone is focused on being "nice" and being "liked" by non-Christians. Instead of teaching people what Christians think is true, we teach people how to recycle cans and how to color pictures of Jesus.

Church is typically a mishmash of mysticism, piety and emotivism. Pastors in particular are often opposed to connecting anything the Bible says to evidence outside the Bible, whether it be research or experiments or philosophical arguments. Even the very best preaching pastors just assert things and then expect people to accept it because "the Bible says so". It's almost as if it dirties up Christianity to test it against what we know from other disciplines like cosmology and ancient history. People who are regarded as Christian leaders seem to never get around to explaining why anyone should accept the Bible as true.Accepting the Bible is just left up to your feelings, or maybe whether you think the pastor is "nice". That's it.

Now how well does this simple, blind-faith be-nice approach work on a real non-Christian?

Mary sent me this article from the New Statesman that explains how it works.

Excerpt:

> It's 7.30pm on a Tuesday evening and I'm at a small church in East London. A man called Adam* hands me a name label, pours me a plastic cup of squash and says dinner won't be long. I pull up a seat and introduce myself to ten strangers. It's all rather awkward.
>
> The reason I'm at church isn't because I'm religious (I'm not) or because my fridge is empty (it is). It's because I've signed up to Alpha, a weekly course run by churches all over the world in order to spread the Christian message. Although I'm an atheist, I don't have a problem with people who subscribe to religion. I am, however, wary of brainwashing, I think most religious beliefs are kind of stupid and I strongly suspect that organised religion is a horrible thing.
>
> […]Adam, the course leader, is wearing a Superdry shirt. After dinner, he explains that it's customary to sing. Rebecca plays the acoustic guitar and Adam mans the PowerPoint presentation, which would have got an A* if it was a piece of ICT GCSE coursework because the lyrics make noises when they appear on the screen.

Now, why on Earth would you make a non-Christian sing?? That makes no sense. If they don't accept Christianity, why would they sing about it?

More:

> After singing comes talking. Specifically, Adam talking. Over the next six weeks, his talks will cover: "Is there more to life than this?"; "Who is Jesus and why did he die?"; "How can we have faith?"; "How can we read the Bible?"; "Why and how do I pray"; and "What about the Church?". After each talk, we'll break off into groups and discuss what we've learnt.
>
> The first couple of sessions are similar. They involve Adam handing out copies of the Bible and saying things like, "So let's assume Jesus does exist and came to Earth to save us…" I'm genuinely the only person who is annoyed that Adam makes no attempt to prove Jesus's existence.

The first questions to address are thing like "Does God Exist?" and "Did Jesus Rise From the Dead?" and "Why Should People Think the Bible is Historically Reliable?". But those questions cannot be asked by Christians, because they are totally unaware, thanks to years and years of avoiding apologetics, that those questions come *before* praise hymns and Bible study and prayer. Christians are so unaware that they don't even realize how to discuss Christianity with a non-Christian, using authorities like logic, science and history, which non-Christians accept.

More:

> Adam's big points in the first two weeks are that we should love Jesus because he loves us in spite of our tendency to sin and that we should try to emulate his behaviour, because it's nice to have a role model.
>
> Discussion time isn't fruitful. Natalie asks me how I'm able to distinguish between moral and immoral behaviour if I don't base my actions on Jesus' example. I explain that I work out what makes my peers happy and try to do those things. Everyone laughs, which I find confusing because I'm not joking. I agree that having a role model can be helpful, but ask how they know Jesus is the best one. Anna and Will, who are married, tell me that it's because the Bible said so. But how do they know the Bible is right? "No offence, Tabatha," replies Louise, "but the Bible is quite far-fetched. I don't get why someone would have made that stuff up if it weren't true." It sounds like I'm lying, but I'm not.
>
> […]This week, Adam's main point is that Christianity isn't about rules. Fine, but there's still no attempt to prove God's existence.

What is going on here? It's that Christians are basically no different than cultists. We think that it's our jobs to just tell people things without ever proving anything with science or history. We don't know how to construct logical arguments. All we do is say what we believe and then hope that the person listening will accept it because "the Bible says so" or maybe because it makes the person feel like a nice person to accept it.

More:

> Then we talk about which bits of the Bible we should take literally. Louise tells me I'll work it out if I read the Bible. I tell her I've read it. She says I will never develop a full understanding because I'm not God so I can't understand everything. This is becoming a recurring theme. These people have answers to some problems, but as soon as they hit a brick wall they settle for not understanding God and refuse to think through alternatives.

Wow, how do Christians handle questions that they don't know the answer to? By going and finding the answer? NO! We think that it's not our job to find answers to this skeptic's questions, it's the skeptic's job to find answers. We hand the work to the skeptic to do, instead of doing the work for them. Finding answers is work, and if Christianity is about anything, it's apparently about avoiding work. That's what we learn in church, anyway.

More:

> This week, Leslie, a priest from the church, speaks about evolution, which has to be our most interesting topic to date. "How do I know evolution isn't true?" he begins, continuing: "Because God revealed himself to me through scripture." This annoys me: these people keep saying really obscure things and not explaining them. Leslie explains that scripture is "God-breathed," so when you read the Bible, God is speaking directly to you. I'm not an idiot but I have absolutely no conception of what that means.

This is pretty much the answer you're going to get from most pastors and church people, even in a time where we have amazing arguments coming out of the intelligent design community about the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion. And even without talking about evolution, we could be talking about the Big Bang cosmology and the cosmic fine-tuning. But those things can't be talked about because they are just too "real" and we want to keep religion in the realm of try-it-and-see-if-you-like-it bromides.

More:

> Leslie goes on to offer practical Bible-reading advice: you should read it for 15 minutes a day and ask God questions by verbalising your thoughts. By this stage, I'm annoyed. I want to know why we should read the Bible, how they know it's true, what God sounds like and how He chooses which prayers to listen to. Instead, Leslie says things like, "If we pray, we become trees. Trees grow fruit, so we will live fruitful lives." This kind of obscure, metaphorical chat is driving me mad.
>
> […]In discussion time, it becomes clear that although these people are interested in religion, they're uncritical of it. It's really starting to bother me that this institution encourages blind faith at the expense of scientific enquiry.

Again, Christians are incapable of understanding that they have to prove claims using arguments and evidence. They just want to state their beliefs, like cultists do when they

knock on your door. What exactly is the difference between us and the cults if it's not that we are able to make a case for our views based on evidence, not feelings?

More:

> Adam tells a story about his wedding ring. It's a more elaborate version of this: Adam went to Costa. He left his wedding ring behind. He realised what he'd done. He said a quick prayer. He went back to Costa. He found his ring. He reckons God answered his prayer.
>
> […]Louise claims that God once answered her prayer to get her to the airport on time. Alasdair thinks God stopped a wave breaking on him when he went surfing as a teenager. Robin tells us that God warned him to wear a helmet when he snowboards.
>
> […]"Anyone feel unconvinced by the power of prayer?" Natalie asks. "YES," I feel like shouting. "YOU'RE IDIOTS. ALL OF THOSE THINGS WERE PROBABLY COINCIDENCES THAT YOU'RE READING TOO MUCH INTO."

Sigh. Well I hope that this is helpful so that everyone understands what non-Christians really need from us. I think we need to focus on studying apologetics, so that we can answer questions. Instead of focusing on telling people weird things, we should just focus on the basics: God's existence, the minimal facts case for the resurrection, intelligent design in nature, the moral argument, the problems of evil and suffering. The basics. And stop trying to talk about our own lives or our own weird experiences, because you can't prove anything by telling stories or mystical experiences or pious feelings. We really need to stop treating religion as something different from practical things. We don't hire employees or pick stocks or buy medicine on the basis of how we feel about them. We study things carefully, we look at evidence, we use reason. Truth is the point of religion, not feelings, and when we focus on feelings when talking to non-Christians, we look like idiots. And rightly so.

White House spokesman on Ebola czar: “what we were looking for was not an Ebola expert”

October 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Pres. Obama wasn’t looking for an Ebola expert when he picked Ron Klain to be the new Ebola Czar, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest explained Friday.
>
> “What does Ron Klain know about Ebola?” a reporter asked Earnest at a press conference.
>
> “The president wanted somebody who could serve in a coordinating function, to manage our implementation of our whole of government approach to this Ebola situation.”
>
> “To more directly address your question, what we were looking for was not an Ebola expert, but rather an implementation expert, and that’s exactly what Ron Klain is.”
>
> Earnest when on to praise Klain’s involvement in the 2009 Stimulus, which he said “exceeded expectations.”

So there main concern was to pick a politician in order to manage the politics.

CNS News again:

> Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) today denounced today Pres. Obama’s selection of Ron Klain to be his Ebola “czar” as well as on the President’s latest executive actions on immigration – warning that Klain will only make the Ebola crisis worse.
>
> Sessions says that Klain is nothing more than a partisan “political spin” expert with no health care expertise:
>
> “Ebola is a health crisis. Yet the President has appointed as his new Ebola ‘czar’ a partisan loyalist whose expertise is politics-not health. One would think, faced with the prospect of an epidemic, the President would task an expert in epidemiology not an expert in political spin. Sound bites are not going to deter a single infection or save a single life.
>
> “The American people can have zero confidence in Ron Klain’s competence to carry out this critical role.”
>
> Sessions says this isn’t the first time Obama has appointed unqualified, partisan department heads, citing the appointments of HHS Sec. Sylvia Burwell and DHS Sec. Jeh Johnson:
>
> “The President’s Director of Health and Human Services, Sylvia Burwell, was promoted after refusing to answer even those most basic financial questions

> from Congress during her dismal tenure at the Office of Management and Budget. Burwell, a former campaign operative, was tasked with overseeing the nation's healthcare system despite no consequential health care experience.
>
> "Secretary Jeh Johnson was chosen to head the one of the largest and most important departments of government despite being a political lawyer with no relevant background. Johnson has devoted his short tenure not to strengthening enforcement but dismantling it.
>
> "Just today-as American citizens face a jobs crisis, debt crisis, border crisis, security crisis, and now a health crisis-Secretary Johnson announced actions not to restore gutted enforcement, but further steps to open our borders.
>
> "DHS is now extending what amounts to a perpetual amnesty to thousands of immigrants from Honduras and Nicaragua, while expediting immigration from Haiti at a time when we can't keep track of the millions we are already admitting."

Still no word on blocking flights from countries where Ebola is out of control, because this is the amnesty administration. We don't want to appear intolerant by telling people "NO", do we?

There was an excellent podcast from The Weekly Standard on the pick featuring Stephen Hayes. Worth a listen.

Wisconsin Democrat Mary Burke would veto bill to ban “pain capable” abortions

October 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There is a big race right now to choose the governor of Wisconsin. The Republican candidate is Scott Walker. He is the current governor. The Democrat is a woman named Mary Burke. They are pretty much tied in the polls, but their positions on abortion are quite different.

First, let’s remember that Scott Walker is pro-life – and not just in word, but in deed.

Here’s a story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Gov. Scott Walker quietly signed a contentious Republican bill Friday that would require women seeking abortions to undergo an ultrasound and ban doctors who lack admitting privileges at nearby hospitals from performing the procedures.
>
> Opponents contend legislators shouldn’t force women to undergo any medical procedure and the bill will force at least two abortion clinics where providers lack admitting privileges to shut their doors.
>
> The Republican-controlled Legislature passed the bill in mid-June.
>
> […]Under the bill, any woman seeking an abortion would have to get an ultrasound. The technician would have to point out the fetus’ visible organs and external features to the woman. Abortion providers would have to have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles to perform the procedures.
>
> Republican supporters argue the ultrasound requirement is designed to help the woman bond with the fetus and convince her to save it. The admitting privileges mandate is meant to ensure an abortion provider can follow up with a patient at the hospital if an emergency arises, they say.
>
> The bill is part of national GOP push to curtail abortions. North Dakota’s governor, Republican Jack Dalrymple, signed a law this spring that outlaws abortions as early as six weeks into a pregnancy, making North Dakota the most restrictive state in the nation to get an abortion. The state’s lone abortion clinic has filed a federal lawsuit seeking to block the law.
>
> Republicans in Arkansas this spring passed a law that bans most abortions after 12 weeks. The American Civil Liberties Union of Arkansas and the Center for Reproductive Rights. A federal judge has temporarily blocked that law. A trial has been tentatively scheduled for next year.
>
> Republicans in Alabama passed a law similar to the Wisconsin bill in April requiring abortion providers to have admitting privileges at a local hospital. The ACLU and Planned Parenthood filed a lawsuit contending the law would shut down three of the state’s five clinics because doctors at the clinics haven’t been

> able to get admitting privileges at nearby hospitals. A federal judge temporarily blocked the law in June.
>
> The Wisconsin bill sparked a fierce debate in both the state Senate and Assembly as minority Democrats tried to push back. Republican leaders in the Senate abruptly halted a floor debate in that house. Senate President Mike Ellis, R-Neenah, flew into a rage as Democrats protested, pounding his gavel so hard he broke the base. Assembly Democrats, for their part, did a slow burn, complaining about the bill for hours. Republicans still rolled the bill through both houses.

The law eventually passed, and it reduced the number of abortions in Wisconsin, as you would expect.

Now let's see what Mary Burke thinks about saving unborn children.

Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> Wisconsin has made huge strides in the protection of unborn babies and mothers in our state. In just 2013 alone, our new lifesaving laws gave mothers more information about their unborn children and helped save 465 babies, who now sleep peacefully in their beds. But we still have far more work to do.
>
> That's why so many Wisconsinites are concerned by Mary Burke's recent statement in a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel interview about her position on legislation that would protect unborn babies who are capable of feeling pain.
>
> When asked what she would do with legislation that would "ban abortions after 20 weeks" (when unborn babies can feel pain), Burke responded, without a moment of hesitation,
>
> "Yeah, I would veto it."

Wow, even if the unborn child can feel pain, she would veto the bill to stop their suffering. You can't get much more innocent than an unborn child.

An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview

October 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you love to listen to the Cold Case Christianity podcast, as I do, then you know that in a recent episode, J. Warner Wallace mentioned a blog post on an atheistic blog that clearly delineated the implications of an atheistic worldview. He promised he was going to write about it and link to the post, and he has now done so.

Here is the whole the whole thing that the atheist posted:

> "[To] all my Atheist friends.
>
> Let us stop sugar coating it. I know, it's hard to come out and be blunt with the friendly Theists who frequent sites like this. However in your efforts to "play nice" and "be civil" you actually do them a great disservice.
>
> We are Atheists. We believe that the Universe is a great uncaused, random accident. All life in the Universe past and future are the results of random chance acting on itself. While we acknowledge concepts like morality, politeness, civility seem to exist, we know they do not. Our highly evolved brains imagine that these things have a cause or a use, and they have in the past, they've allowed life to continue on this planet for a short blip of time. But make no mistake: all our dreams, loves, opinions, and desires are figments of our primordial imagination. They are fleeting electrical signals that fire across our synapses for a moment in time. They served some purpose in the past. They got us here. That's it. All human achievement and plans for the future are the result of some ancient, evolved brain and accompanying chemical reactions that once served a survival purpose. Ex: I'll marry and nurture children because my genes demand reproduction, I'll create because creativity served a survival advantage to my ancient ape ancestors, I'll build cities and laws because this allowed my ape grandfather time and peace to reproduce and protect his genes. My only directive is to obey my genes. Eat, sleep, reproduce, die. That is our bible.
>
> We deride the Theists for having created myths and holy books. We imagine ourselves superior. But we too imagine there are reasons to obey laws, be polite, protect the weak etc. Rubbish. We are nurturing a new religion, one where we imagine that such conventions have any basis in reality. Have they allowed life to exist? Absolutely. But who cares? Outside of my greedy little gene's need to reproduce, there is nothing in my world that stops me from killing you and reproducing with your wife. Only the fear that I might be incarcerated and thus be deprived of the opportunity to do the same with the next guy's wife stops me. Some of my Atheist friends have fooled themselves into acting like the general population. They live in suburban homes, drive Toyota Camrys, attend school plays. But underneath they know the truth. They are a bag of DNA whose only

> purpose is to make more of themselves. So be nice if you want. Be involved, have polite conversations, be a model citizen. Just be aware that while technically an Atheist, you are an inferior one. You're just a little bit less evolved, that's all. When you are ready to join me, let me know, I'll be reproducing with your wife.
>
> I know it's not PC to speak so bluntly about the ramifications of our beliefs, but in our discussions with Theists we sometimes tip toe around what we really know to be factual. Maybe it's time we Atheists were a little more truthful and let the chips fall where they may. At least that's what my genes are telling me to say."

In his post, Wallace comments on the statement above, but for more, you should listen to the podcast.

This fellow is essentially expanding on what Richard Dawkins has said about atheism:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

And Cornell University atheist William Provine agrees: (this is taken from his debate with Phillip E. Johnson)

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

And what about Florida State University atheist Michael Ruse:

> "The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory." (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

I see a lot of atheists these days thinking that they can help themselves to a robust notion of consciousness, to real libertarian free will, to objective moral values and duties, to objective human rights, and to objective meaning in life, without giving credit to theism. It's not rational to do this. As Frank Turek said on the latest episode of "Cross Examined", atheists have to sit in God's lap to slap his face. We should be calling them out on it. I think it's particularly important not to let atheists utter a word of moral judgment on any topic, since they cannot ground an objective standard that allows them to make statements of morality. Further, I think that they should have every immorality ever committed presented to them, and then they should be told "your worldview does not allow you to condemn this as wrong". They can't praise anything as right, either. This is not to say that we should go all presuppositional on them, but if the opportunity arises to point out how they are borrowing from theism in order to attack it, we should do that *in addition* to presenting good scientific and historical evidence.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Domestic violence rates are higher for homosexual couples than for heterosexual couples

October 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the left-leaning Atlantic Monthly.

Excerpt:

> Data on the rates of same-sex partner abuse have only become available in recent years. Even today, many of the statistics and materials on domestic violence put out by organizations like the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Justice still focus exclusively on heterosexual relationships, and specifically heterosexual women. While the CDC does provide some resources on its website for the LGBT population, the vast majority of the information is targeted at women. Materials provided by the CDC for violence prevention and survivor empowerment prominently feature women in their statistics and photographs.
>
> In 2013, the CDC released the results of a 2010 study on victimization by sexual orientation, and admitted that "little is known about the national prevalence of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking among lesbian, gay, and bisexual women and men in the United States." The report found that bisexual women had an overwhelming prevalence of violent partners in their lives: 75 percent had been with a violent partner, as opposed to 46 percent of lesbian women and 43 percent of straight women. For bisexual men, that number was 47 percent. For gay men, it was 40 percent, and 21 percent for straight men.
>
> The most recent statistics available on same-sex intimate partner violence from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, which focuses on LGBT relationships, reported 21 incidents of intimate partner homicides in the LGBT community, the highest ever. Nearly half of them were gay men and, for the second year in a row, the majority of survivors were people of color—62 percent.
>
> In 2012, NCAVP programs around the country received 2,679 reports of intimate partner violence, a decrease of around 32 percent from 2011. However the report noted that many of the NCAVP's member organizations were operating at decreased capacity due to limiting the number of cases they were able to take. The report said that excluding data from organizations, there was actually a 29 percent increase in reports of violence from 2011 to 2012.

That article comes from a source with a very clear pro-gay-agenda bias, so let's take a look at an article from the Family Research Council to balance it out. They rely on mainstream data sources as well, like the CDC, the DOJ, the US Census, etc.

Excerpt:

> A study in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence examined conflict and violence in

> lesbian relationships. The researchers found that 90 percent of the lesbians surveyed had been recipients of one or more acts of verbal aggression from their intimate partners during the year prior to this study, with 31 percent reporting one or more incidents of physical abuse.[69]
>
> In a survey of 1,099 lesbians, the Journal of Social Service Research found that "slightly more than half of the [lesbians] reported that they had been abused by a female lover/partner. The most frequently indicated forms of abuse were verbal/emotional/psychological abuse and combined physical-psychological abuse."[70]
>
> In their book Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them: Battered Gay Men and Domestic Violence,D. Island and P. Letellier report that "the incidence of domestic violence among gay men is nearly double that in the heterosexual population."[71]
>
> […]Homosexual and lesbian relationships are far more violent than are traditional married households:
>
> The Bureau of Justice Statistics (U.S. Department of Justice) reports that married women in traditional families experience the lowest rate of violence compared with women in other types of relationships.[72]
>
> A report by the Medical Institute for Sexual Health concurred,
>
> It should be noted that most studies of family violence do not differentiate between married and unmarried partner status. Studies that do make these distinctions have found that marriage relationships tend to have the least intimate partner violence when compared to cohabiting or dating relationships.[73]

In lesbian relationships, the rate of domestic violence is extremely high, from 17% to 45%, depending on the study. I do think that men exert a calming influence on women's emotions, helping them to channel their feelings into words and reasoned arguments. That short-circuits the tendency toward violent outbursts. That's why I urge men, if they must marry, to practice disagreeing and debating with women before the marriage is actualized. You need to find out what this other person does in a conflict situation before you commit to her for life.

How premarital sex damages a woman's ability to be in a relationship

October 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting article from the radically leftist New York Times to me. I was pleasantly surprised how much I agreed with it.

Excerpt:

> I recently overhead two students talking in a dining hall at the university where I teach. "Yeah, I might get married, too," one confided. "But not until I'm at least 30 and have a career." Then she grinned. "Until then? I'm going to party it up."
>
> This young woman was practically following a script. An increasing number of studies show that many millennials want to marry — someday.
>
> Generation Y is postponing marriage until, on average, age 29 for men and 27 for women. College-educated millennials in particular view it as a "capstone" to their lives rather than as a "cornerstone," according to a report whose sponsors include the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia.
>
> Yet for all of their future designs on marriage, many of them may not get there. Their romance operandi — hooking up and hanging out — flouts the golden rule of what makes marriages and love work: emotional vulnerability.
>
> […]Research led by the social psychologist Sara H. Konrath at the University of Michigan has shown that college students' self-described levels of empathy have declined since 1980, especially so in the past 10 years, as quantifiable levels of self-esteem and narcissism have skyrocketed. Add to this the hypercompetitive reflex that hooking up triggers (the peer pressure to take part in the hookup culture and then to be first to unhook) and the noncommittal mind-set that hanging out breeds. The result is a generation that's terrified of and clueless about the A B C's of romantic intimacy.
>
> In "The End of Sex: How Hookup Culture Is Leaving a Generation Unhappy, Sexually Unfulfilled, and Confused About Intimacy," Donna Freitas chronicles the ways in which this trend is creating the first generation in history that has no idea how to court a potential partner, let alone find the language to do so.
>
> If this fear of vulnerability began and ended with mere bumbling attempts at courtship, then all of this might seem harmless, charming even. But so much more is at stake.
>
> During class discussions, my students often admit to hoping that relationships will simply unfold through hooking up. "After all," one student recently said, "nobody wants to have The Talk," the dreaded confrontation that clarifies romantic hopes and expectations. "You come off as too needy."
>
> This fear sets up the dicey precedent Dr. Brown warns us about: Dodging

> vulnerability cheats us of the chance to not just create intimacy but also to make relationships work.
>
> Then there's the emotional fallout of hooking up. This kind of sexual intimacy inevitably leads to becoming "emotionally empty," writes Dr. Freitas. "In gearing themselves up for sex, they must at the same time drain themselves of feeling."
>
> This dynamic is about more than simply quelling nerves with "liquid courage" at college parties or clubs. It's about swallowing back emotions that are perceived as annoying obstacles. And this can start a dangerous cycle.
>
> "We cannot selectively numb emotions," writes Dr. Brown. "When we numb the painful emotions, we also numb the positive emotions."

I've personally observed women who had sexual histories firsthand, during my college years as an undergraduate student and graduate student. I noticed that it caused them some trouble when they were trying to see a relationship through to marriage. The more a woman chooses men purely for looks rather than husband-qualities, the more likely she is to see a bad side of men. You don't see the good side of men when you hook up with men who are willing to have sex before marriage. If women have enough of these bad experiences with men, it gets very hard for women to continue to invest in relationships and to serve and care for men. The very things that men are looking for from women – support, empathy, understanding, trust, vulnerability – disappear from the woman, and she is left trying to get a man to commit to her using her sex appeal alone. What a scary thought. What kind of man can you land with sex alone? Not the kind that makes a good husband and father, that's for sure.

What does the hook-up culture teach women? It teaches them to work on their educations and careers first. It teaches them to choose the best-looking men. It teaches them to worry more about what their friends will think than about what a man does in a marriage. It teaches them to turn off their emotions for fear of getting hurt. It teaches them that offering recreational sex to a man is the way to get male attention and engagement. In the old days, before feminism, women couldn't even use sexuality to impress a man. Everything had to be done the old-fashioned way. You would hear phrases like "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach". Women would look at men who were good husband candidates and think about getting their attention by cooking and helping and caring. That's all gone now, and many women aren't even cultivating domestic skills. Domestic skills are still very much sought after by men, although sometimes they can't articulate their needs very well.

I asked a friend of mine who had experience dating a woman who had a sexual past about this post, and he said that past sexual relationships with good-looking, non-committal men has the same effect on women that pornography has on men. He said that it changes their expectations, so that they become more and more fixated on the man's appearance, and less and less concerned about his ability to do husband and father tasks. Another man who also has a lot of sexual experience told me that the effect of hook-up sex on women's perception of men would be even stronger than the effect of

pornography on men. Hooking-up with men for status and fun causes a change in how women evaluate men. After all, if a wedding cermemony guarantees you “happily ever after” then why not just try to make a relationship “work out” by jumping right into bed and see if easy access to recreational sex makes the man see the value of long-term, exclusive commitment and self-sacrifice.

So we have a situation where women are not looking at what a man does in a family – working, discovering the truth, setting moral boundaries, helping others to be related to God. Instead, women are trained by the hook-up culture to think about appearances and how a good looking man will make others think about her in her social group. It seems to me to be as counterproductive as if a man were choosing computer based on how the case looked on the outside, rather than the performance and cost of the parts on the inside of the case. It makes no sense. Speaking as a man, I have a list of things that I am looking for from a woman, because I have specific goals that I want marriage to achieve. A woman’s decision and ability to hook-up with me tells me nothing about her ability to perform the tasks I need her to perform in a marriage. The antidote to the strains and stress of marriage and parenting cannot be found in a hook-up, or even in a woman’s career. That’s not going to help a husband the way a husband needs to be helped.

Christian particle physicist Michael Strauss profiled in the College Fix

October 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a link to the article on The College Fix. The article was shared 647 times on Facebook and tweeted 41 times, at the time I am writing this (Monday 11 PM)

Excerpt:

> A physics professor at the University of Oklahoma who often spends his time studying smashed subatomic particles at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN laboratory in Switzerland has another hobby – smashing the notion that all scientists believe the universe was created by some sort of cosmic accident.
>
> Dr. Michael Strauss has given some iteration of a lecture he's titled "Scientific Evidence for the Existence of God" to students and peers at universities across the nation for nearly 15 years, including at Stanford, UT Dallas, UC Santa Barbara, and most recently Thursday at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where he said observable and testable scientific evidence points to a "designer who cares about humanity."
>
> This is coming from an experimental particle physics expert who also says scientific evidence shows the universe is 14 billion years old, and that it was created through a so-called "big bang" – which many people also hear from the likes of atheist and agnostic scientists.
>
> But Strauss, also known for his knowledge and expertise on the Higgs boson "God Particle," told his audience of roughly 200 students and professors who packed a campus auditorium to hear him speak that the discoveries of modern science give abundant evidence for the existence of a transcendent, intelligent designer who created the universe and has a purpose for humanity.

Now here's what he talked about:

> During his talk, Strauss essentially argued that the scientific evidence for the existence of God could be found by studying the origins of the universe, the design of the universe, and what Strauss called the "rare Earth hypothesis."
>
> In historical times, he said, all scientists believed in God, and it was only more recently, within the last 200 years or so, that science based on the assumption there is no creator has dominated the field.
>
> But in 1929, Edwin Hubble discovered the universe was expanding, leading to the Big Bang hypothesis. Other modern experiments have also supported that theory, such as the temperature of the universe and the formation of elements.
>
> "The prediction of general relativity is that the Big Bang itself is the origin of everything we know: space, time, matter and energy," Strauss said during his

> talk to Dallas college students last year. “So the Big Bang is kind of a misnomer. A Big Bang brings up the idea that something exploded, but the Big Bang itself is not an explosion … it’s the origin of everything we know in this universe.”
>
> “If everything in the universe came into being, then the cause of the universe must be transcendent, not a part of this universe,” Strauss argued. “Science kind of stumbled onto something that the Bible declared long ago … that the universe had a beginning.”
>
> Strauss also brought up evidence for the existence of God by citing the apparent design of the universe, noting the amount of matter in the universe, the strength of its strong nuclear force, and the formation of carbon is so finely tuned that if any of these parameters were modified in the slightest, human life could not exist. Strauss stated there are about 100 similar finely tuned parameters.
>
> Strauss’ third point delved into what he called the “rare Earth hypothesis.” Strauss detailed what it would take to for an earthlike planet to form by chance, a planet capable of sustaining not only bacteria, but higher life forms, such as those found in science fiction stories. (Think Class M planets from Star Trek.)
>
> He highlighted how Earth is unique, with its moon, sun and solar system perfectly aligned to allow life to survive. Few if any planets have a large moon in orbit around it to help provide just the right atmosphere. Few if any planets have a neighbor such as Jupiter, which is so large its gravity sucks into it potential threats to Earth, such as comets and asteroids.
>
> In fact, there are 322 such parameters needed for a planet capable of sustaining intelligent life to form, and the probability for occurrence of all 322 parameters to develop by chance is 10 to the minus -282.
>
> “It is unlikely that Earth could ever be duplicated,” Strauss said Thursday.
>
> During his talk, Strauss included many quotes from atheist or agnostic scientists, those who do not believe in God, but still acknowledged the possibility of a higher power at work due to their observations.

Read the whole thing. Dr. Strauss is the one who taught me the power of contrasting the trend of experimental science (big bang, fine-tuning, rare Earth, DNA, Cambrian explosion, etc.) with the speculative “Star Trek” wishing of naturalists. I got that whole idea for an apologetics narrative from his Stanford lecture. If you can share this post (mine) on your social media accounts, please do, because I am going to put some useful links in this post.

First, you can read more about Dr. Strauss’ academic background and you can also read more about his Christian testimony.

Previously, I have also posted and summarized his Stanford University talk, and his University of Dallas talk. If anyone can find his University of Missouri talk, or the Texas Tech talk that he is doing later this week, I would love to blog them. I really feel we need a lot more scientific literacy in the Christian community, especially since God has left us

all this wonderful evidence of his actions.

Report: Kay Hagan and family got nearly $450,000 in taxpayer money

October 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Senator Kay Hagan (D-N.C.)

Here's the latest from Carolina Journal.

Excerpt:

> From a report filed early Saturday by WRAL-TV news, we have confirmation that a cluster of businesses owned by Democratic U.S. Sen. Kay Hagan's husband and other family members collected even more subsidies from taxpayers than initially reported. While *Carolina Journal*'s Don Carrington has highlighted a stimulus grant totaling $250,644 that was paid to JDC Manufacturing, a real estate business co-owned by Hagan's husband, Chip, and his brothers John and David, WRAL confirmed that JDC received an additional $137,000 in energy tax credits from the project. (Some of the relevant documents are here.)
>
> […]Add a second federal renewable energy grant of $50,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the ledger, and we learn that Hagan businesses soaked taxpayers for nearly $450,000 to pay for energy upgrades installed at JDC's 300,000-square-foot building in Reidsville.
>
> […]Team Hagan has chosen to hire Marc Elias, a high-powered political lawyer and Caitlin Legacki, acrisis-management specialist and former Hagan press secretary, to argue otherwise.

Now that the story is out, an Obama donor is blocking access to the Hagan stimulus records.

Excerpt:

> After first agreeing to allow Carolina Journal to inspect the documents relating to a taxpayer-funded U.S. Department of Agriculture energy grant to a company owned by family members of U.S. Sen. Kay Hagan, the USDA Rural Development

> office in Raleigh later said the matter was being handled in Washington — implying the USDA's headquarters in the nation's capital.
>
> On Tuesday, CJ spoke by telephone with Delane Johnson, North Carolina's rural development public information coordinator, who said she would treat CJ's request for documents about the $50,000 renewable energy grant as a Freedom of Information Act request. By email, she said agency policy requires USDA to contact the grant recipient, JDC Manufacturing, before complying with the document request. She also indicated that she would have a response to CJ within 10 days.
>
> By Wednesday, however, Johnson was much less cooperative. CJ went to the Raleigh office to meet Johnson and ask her additional questions about the process of reviewing the grant file. Upon arrival, CJ was told to take a seat outside Johnson's office. Another employee went into the office, closed the door, and a few minutes later, informed CJ that Johnson would not be able to speak with him and that the matter was being handled in Washington.

Not only that, but the Washington Free Beacon also reported on a scandal with a judicial nominee.

Excerpt:

> Just a week after Sen. Kay Hagan (D., N.C.) recommended a North Carolina judge to President Barack Obama for a seat in the U.S. District Court, the judge ruled in favor of a company partially owned by Hagan's husband.
>
> The senator's husband, Charles T. "Chip" Hagan, was a managing member of Hydrodyne Industries LLC when it sued a regional water authority for drawing water out of a river that had one of its hydroelectric dams built on. The lawsuit sought millions of dollars in damages and was carried out by Chip Hagan's legal firm.
>
> Superior Court Judge Calvin E. Murphy ruled the case in favor of Hydrodyne, setting the table for the Piedmont Triad Regional Water Authority to pay millions in damages to companies including Hydrodyne.
>
> Murphy's ruling was made on Oct. 23, 2009, just nine days after Sen. Hagan sent his name to Obama to be nominated for a lifetime seat on the U.S. District Court for Western North Carolina.

Previously, I blogged about her support for late-term abortion.

This is why we vote Republican, people. Because secular people don't do morality much.

Should you marry someone who promises you that “there will be no divorce”?

October 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was having a chat with a friend of mine who just got out of a serious relationship and I was trying to pick his brain to find out everything about the woman he was intending to marry so I could see why things went wrong. He told me that she had told him over and over that “there would be no divorce” and that he found that very convincing, despite very obvious warning signs in the area of respect (which I wrote about yesterday).

Well. I was very surprised to hear this, and so I asked him whether he thought it was enough that this woman told him that “three will be no divorce”. He said yes. This woman had experienced the divorce of her own parents and she was resolved (by act of will) never to let that happen to her. He found that acceptable, but I didn’t because I know the numbers on this, and I know that children of divorced parents are more likely to divorce themselves. So the pain of divorce is no deterrent here.

So should we believe that people can avoid a divorce just by saying they will? I told him no. And for an example, I offered a thought experiment. I said to imagine two runners on a track who are charged with completing 10 laps. One runner is a Navy SEAL like Mike Murphy, who has been trained to run miles and miles carrying a 60 pound load. In the mountains. The other is a 300-lb couch potato whose idea of exercise is reaching for the TV remote control. Suppose I ask both runners: do you intend to finish the 10 laps? Should I believe them if they both say yes?

Look, marriage is like building a house. People can say whatever they want about their prospects for success, but the will doesn’t decide here. You have to certain skills, you have to have a certain amount of money, you have to have a plan, you have to be able to read blueprints, you have to be able to hire specialists, you understand the differences between materials, etc. When you think about it, no long-term enterprise can be accomplished by act of will. Piano recitals, math exams, investing for retirement… nothing can be done by sheer act of will.

Now with that being said, let’s take a look at an example.

An example

I found this article in the Wall Street Journal way back in 2011, but it fits my conversation with my friend.

The author, Susan Gregory Thomas, lists some of the mistakes she made that led her to get a divorce in her first marriage.

This is the first thing I saw that caught my eye:

> “Whatever happens, we’re never going to get divorced.” Over the course of 16 years, I said that often to my husband, especially after our children were born.

So she is trying to express an intention here, repeatedly, to her husband. I think the point here is that she did have good intentions but as we shall see that was not enough to prevent the divorce. That's a warning to others that good intentions are not enough.

Here is the second thing:

> I believed that I had married my best friend as fervently as I believed that I'd never get divorced. No marital scenario, I told myself, could become so bleak or hopeless as to compel me to embed my children in the torture of a split family. And I wasn't the only one with strong personal reasons to make this commitment.

I noticed that a lot of people seem to think that being compatible is very important to marriage. But I don't think that it is the most important thing. For example, you would not expect two cocaine addicts or two gambling addicts, etc. to have a stable marriage. I think marriage is more like a job interview where there are specific things that each person has to be able to do in order to make it work. So again, she's giving a warning to others that compatibility is not a guarantee of marriage success.

And there's more:

> My husband and I were as obvious as points on a graph in a Generation X marriage study. We were together for nearly eight years before we got married, and even though statistics show that divorce rates are 48% higher for those who have lived together previously, we paid no heed.
>
> We also paid no heed to his Catholic parents, who comprised one of the rare reassuringly unified couples I'd ever met, when they warned us that we should wait until we were married to live together. As they put it, being pals and roommates is different from being husband and wife. How bizarrely old-fashioned and sexist! We didn't need anything so naïve or retro as "marriage." Please. We were best friends.
>
> Sociologists, anthropologists and other cultural observers tell us that members of Generation X are more emotionally invested in our spouses than previous generations were. We are best friends; our marriages are genuine partnerships. Many studies have found that Generation X family men help around the house a good deal more than their forefathers. We depend on each other and work together.

So here I am seeing that she rejected sex roles, parental advice, or the moral guidelines of Christianity. Again, she is discussing some of the factors that I at least think contribute to divorce. I think that she is right to highlight the fact that she was wrong to disregard the statistics on cohabitation.

So here are some of the mistakes:

- reject advice from parents
- avoid chastity

- cohabitate for EIGHT YEARS
- embrace feminism, reject complementarian sex roles
- thinking that good intentions would overcome every challenge

So, what does the research show works to have a stable marriage?

- chastity
- rejection of feminism
- regular church attendance
- parental involvement in the courting
- parents of both spouses married
- no previous divorces

Guess what? You can't break all the rules and still succeed by sheer force of will. If you break all the rules like that woman in the story, you can't have a working marriage. Not without repudiating everything you believed, and taking steps to undo all the damage from everything you've done. You can't keep all the bad beliefs and bad habits you've built up and marry them to a marriage that will stand the test of time.

A good marriage is an enterprise, and it requires that your character be changed to fit the requirements. There is no way to short-circuit the preparation / selection processes by act of will. And just because your friends are getting married, that's no reason for you to rush into it unprepared. The best way to prepare for marriage is pick people of the opposite sex and practice marriage behaviors (e.g. – listening, helping) with them – even with people you don't intend to marry. Take an interest in their lives and practice denying yourself to help them with their problems. That's better than making idle promises you're not able to keep. And this works the same for men and for women. Both people need to get this right.

Can Al Mohler evangelize his way out of a wet paper bag?

October 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am basing my answer the question in the title on many months of listening to his excellent "The Briefing" podcast.

And what I've learned from all this listening is that he is very skilled at identifying interesting problems and threats to the Christian worldview, but he rarely or never brings in evidence from outside the Bible so I can discuss these things with non-Christians. Why not? In my experience of listening to him on his podcast, he is not capable of opposing any of the things that he wrings his hands about in any way other than blaming "The Fall" and reminding his listeners what the Bible says. His notion of a "Christian worldview" really just means reading the Bible, and never linking it to science, economics, history, etc. Maybe he is afraid that too much learning about these other areas will crowd out the Bible verses out of his memory. I don't know.

I still think it's good to listen to his podcast, but he's of no value in fixing anything he complains about, unless you're already a Christian.

Here's what a conversation with Al Mohler and the liberal supreme court judges would be like:

- Al Mohler: So, I heard you guys voted to overturn the Defense of Marriage Amendment.
- Liberal SCOTUS justice: That's right.
- Al Mohler: Would you like to hear what the Bible says about that?
- Liberal SCOTUS justice: Actually, no.
- Al Mohler: Are you *sure*?
- Liberal SCOTUS justice: Pretty sure.
- Al Mohler (turns to the choir): See? We live in a Genesis 3 world!
- Liberal SCOTUS justice: What does that even mean?
- Al Mohler: Oh! Oh! Oh! I know that one! It means –
- Liberal SCOTUS: Is that from the Bible? Because if it is, I don't want to hear it.
- Al Mohler: Boooo!!!! Phooey!!!!

Al Mohler is a smart man, and very good to have around if you are evangelizing fundamentalist Christians. But with anyone else, he is not in a position to be convincing. The best he can do is wall Christianity off from non-Christianity, but in my opinion, he's not able to persuasive to the part of culture that he just walled off. OK, that's the end of my satire of Al Mohler.

Anyway, let's take a look at this post from Think Apologetics blog, which explains more about this attitude. Note: Eric does not necessarily endorse my snarky satire of Al Mohler.

He quotes from this interview between two evangelical heavyweight New Testament

critics:

> [Ben] Witherington says:
>
> **You speak frequently about a change, even among the laity, in what I will call the mood of the culture when it comes to Christianity. What are the telltale signs in your mind? How do you see a book like this addressing that change, especially if we are now moving into a post-Christian, post-Biblical era in America?**
>
> [Craig] Blomberg says:
>
> When I was working on my various educational degrees in the 1970s, we were still reeling as a culture from Vietnam, Watergate, Woodstock and a generation of young adults who were often very disenchanted with traditional authority, including religious authority. Yet they were truly open-minded. They were interested in exploring religious options other than Christianity but they were also very open to exploring the evidence for Christianity, especially when it was combined with an authentic, relevant Christian lifestyle. So mixed among other kinds of hippies were a large number of "Jesus people," many of whom had come out of alternative lifestyles.
>
> If you organized an event on a secular college or university campus with a winsome, compelling speaker and did a reasonably good job at publicizing it, there was a good chance you would draw a large crowd and that a significant minority of the non-Christians in the audience would take significant steps closer to becoming followers of Jesus if not make the commitment on that very day. And those who didn't at least had some general knowledge, even before they came to the event, of the worldview they were for the time being, at least, choosing to reject.
>
> Today we see the children of that generation as young adults on the same campuses with the same Christian organizations, with even more compelling speakers and evidence on which to draw, and yet in many instances it is extremely difficult to get a good crowd, if you do you are lucky if even a few unbelievers come, and luckier still if any of them are drawn toward the faith. But it is not as if any new evidence has emerged that we didn't know about a generation ago to make the case for faith weaker. Instead, people have grown up with less awareness of biblical claims, with more prejudice against Christianity, with an eagerness to embrace the most outlandish charges against the Bible without even wanting to research them at all, which really shows that they are looking for reasons not to believe rather than engaging in serious inquiry.

Then Eric says this:

> Did you notice that both Witherington and Blomberg acknowledge we are living in a post-Christian, post-Biblical era in America? I wish the rest of the Church would wake up and stop just giving Christians more Bible verses and Bible

> sermons. I love the Bible**. <u>But as I have said elsewhere:</u>**
>
> If pastors keep assuming that the average person in the culture thinks the Bible is authoritative, they are living in denial. This is not the 1950's! When we as Christians assume everyone outside the four walls accepts our starting point, then we are kidding ourselves. I would love to see more pastors spend at least one month or more a year teaching their congregants on the reliability and authority of the Bible.
>
> For example, let's say we have thousands of seminary students who graduate who are very skilled at exegeting the text. However, the problems is that the majority of these people (and teachers) start with a set of presuppositions that a fairly large part of our culture rejects. Here are our starting points:
>
> 1. God's existence: God exists because the Bible says so.
>
> 2. Epistemology (the study of knowledge): God gives us knowledge of Himself by revelation. The Bible tells us this as well.
>
> 3.Miracles: Christianity is a revelatory religion. Without miracles (such as the resurrection) being both possible and actual, our faith is really not very unique. What about other miracle claims in other religions? There is an overall skepticism towards miracles in the West. How do we answer these issues?
>
> 4.History: Is history knowable? What historical method are we teaching our students? And as far as miracles, can history evaluate a miracle claim such as the resurrection?
>
> 5. Hermeneutics: Can we arrive at objective meaning in the text?
>
> 6. Ethics: Is the Bible a source of ethics for us? How would we explain this to the world around us.
>
> If we continue to start with the Bible itself without Prolegomena, we will end up causing thousands of Christians to beg the question to those we minister to. To beg the question is to take for granted or assume the truth of the very thing being questioned. My advice for seminaries is to make it mandatory for all students to take a class on Prolegomena.

I love the Bible too. But I also know how to have a conversation with a non-Christian about science, economics, politics, etc. I know how to talk about the findings of mainstream science and how they point to a Creator and Designer without dismissing it all as the Devil's handiwork. I know how to make a case for the pro-life view or for chastity or traditional marriage or the free-market system without requiring that my audience assume that the Bible is the inerrant word of God (which I think it is). We need to get to the point where we can have conversations about things with people who don't go as far as we do on inerrancy. I think that when they see that we actually know what we are talking about in these other areas, that will open the door for them to listen to us on spiritual things, too.

Obama calls Ottawa, Canada terrorist attack by a Muslim “senseless violence”

October 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, at least he didn’t call it “workplace violence”, like he did the attack on Fort Hood by Major Nidal Hasan.

Story from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> A gunman who reportedly was a recent convert to Islam launched an attack Wednesday in Ottawa, killing one soldier guarding a war memorial before barging into the capital city’s Parliament amid a hail of gunfire and spawning increased vigilance in Washington and Ottawa, where officials wondered how he managed to get into the government building armed.
>
> The Canadian soldier, identified as Cpl. Nathan Cirillo, was the second killed in three days in an attack by a young Muslim convert. A hit-and-run that left one soldier dead and another injured Monday has been deemed a terrorist attack by Canadian officials.
>
> The Islamic State, which has seized large swaths of land in Iraq and Syria, has called on Muslims to launch attacks in Western countries that have joined the U.S.-led coalition to combat the terrorists. Canadian officials said there was no evidence that the gunman had ties to Islamic extremism, but the investigation was in the early stages.
>
> “But let there be no misunderstanding: We will not be intimidated. Canada will never be intimidated,” Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper said in a TV address to his nation.

The shooting stopped because there was an armed man on the scene:

> In Ottawa on Wednesday, members of Parliament said they owed their lives to Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers, who fatally shot the gunman just outside the caucus rooms where lawmakers were barricading themselves.

More on the Islamic terrorist:

> A Canadian official identified the dead gunman as Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, and an Ottawa hospital said it was treating two other victims from both attacks.
>
> […]Mr. Harper, in his evening address, said the attacks will “lead us to strengthen our resolve and redouble our efforts” to fight terrorists, work with allies and keep the country safe.
>
> He said Monday’s attack was by an “ISIL-inspired terrorist,” and said of Wednesday’s shooting that, “in the days to come, we will learn about the

> terrorist and any accomplices he may have had."
>
> Zehaf-Bibeau, the gunman, had a lengthy criminal history involving convictions for drug trafficking in Montreal, robbery in Vancouver, assault and weapons offenses as well as other crimes.
>
> He was born in Quebec as Michael Joseph Hall but recently converted to Islam, CBS reported.

Home-grown terrorism, from Canada's most liberal and multicultural province.

I'm not surprised this happened in Canada – the Liberal Party was in power for years and years there, and encouraged mass immigration from the poorest countries so that people who came would vote for bigger government (the Liberal Party). They called this "multiculturalism". The problem was that many of these poor immigrants are poor because they come from Islamic countries that don't allow the basic freedoms and rights that are needed for a capitalist economy. When they came to Canada, they not only voted for the Liberal Party, they kept their Islamic beliefs. Nothing that they learned in the multicultural schools would have taught them that there was any need to adopt the values of the country that took them in and offered them generous social programs.

You can see more Mark Steyn from the Sun News Network.

What does Obama plan to do through executive order after the midterm elections?

October 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Three things, and here they are in this Washington Times editorial.

Excerpt:

> The first roundhouse swing: Unless we could quarantine the White House, Mr. Obama's amnesty announcement will sucker punch millions of Americans who could lose jobs to millions of illegal immigrants. Immigration officials already are advertising to purchase up to 39 million plastic ID cards over the next five years. These are to be Employment Authorization Documentation (EAD) cards, two-year work permits like those given by Mr. Obama to over 800,00 "Dreamers." Also, Permanent Residency Cards (PRC, often called green cards). Typically, they are good for 10 years.
>
> The solicitation says the base number needed is 4 million cards a year, plus possible "surges" of an extra 5 million ID cards in 2015, 5-million in 2016, 3 million in 2017, 2 million in 2018 and 3 million in 2019. Each is to have embedded RFID chips and holographic images.
>
> Punch No. 2 is more scary news about Obamacare. Next year's rates should have been revealed Oct. 1st, but that was purposefully delayed until Nov. 14th. Analysts project premiums on the low-cost plans will rise by 14 percent next year. These are high-deductible policies, criticized for requiring a $6,000 deductible to be paid before insurance kicks in. Investors Business Daily reports an expected 64 percent jump in Seattle, rising from $60 to $98 per month. Other examples: In Providence, R.I., the monthly change would be from $72 to $99 per month; Los Angeles from $88 to $111; New York City from $97 to $114.
>
> This Obamacare wallop is a combination punch. Exemptions for "non-compliant" policies will expire, meaning that people who like their coverage cannot keep it. They'll be knocked down into the Obama mess of high premiums, high deductibles and less choice of doctors. For example, Colorado suffered 22,000 policy cancellations last month alone, with 193,000 more expected in the next year.
>
> Mr. Obama's third strike at Americans' jaws is a massive prison release. Expect 20,000 inmates to receive executive clemency in addition to the 36,000 illegal immigrant convicts set free in 2013. Most will be minorities and that's the heart of the matter. Mr. Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder have often complained that minorities are sentenced for too long, especially for drug offenses. The Justice Department announced this "New Clemency Initiative" in April, then invited criminal defense lawyers, public defenders and the ACLU to do

> the screening for who they think should be turned loose.
>
> They claim that violent offenders will be weeded out. But this administration is notorious for announcing supposedly strict guidelines but failing to follow them.
>
> There's also a major risk because a high number may include those recruited in prison by radical Islamists. Those jihadists focus on black American prisoners who want revenge against supposed injustice. The risk is that another Alton Nolen may be among those put on our streets. Nolen, an Islamist convert, was let out of Oklahoma's prisons early and now is accused of beheading a co-worker in his pursuit of jihad revenge.
>
> Mr. Obama's plans are in place for the one-two-three punch on amnesty, Obamacare and get-out-of-jail-early. The last remaining barrier protecting us from Obama-unchained is his need to protect fellow Democrats on Nov. 4th. That date is like a boxing bell, signaling Mr. Obama to unleash his barrage.

Regarding that third "punch", recall that convicted felons vote OVERWHELMINGLY Democrat. That's why he wants to let them out. We already know that he opposes voter ID verification. Between the release of criminals and the amnesty of criminals, we may never see another roadbock on the road to serfdom ever again in this country.

The top 7 things a wife needs to be happy in her marriage

October 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do women influenced by feminism understand marriage?
From MercatorNet.

Here's the list, in order of importance:

1. A husband's emotional engagement
2. Fairness
3. A breadwinning husband
4. A commitment to marriage
5. Staying at home
6. Shared religious attendance
7. Traditional gender attitudes

I want to highlight #3, because it's the one I most frequently find missing in younger, unmarried Christian women.

Here's number three:

> American wives, even wives who hold more feminist views about working women and the division of household tasks, are typically happier when their husband earns 68% or more of the household income. Husbands who are successful breadwinners probably give their wives the opportunity to make choices about work and family—e.g., working part-time, staying home, or pursuing a meaningful but not particularly remunerative job—that allow them to best respond to their own needs, and the needs of their children.

The reason I have found that the young, unmarried Christian women oppose this is because it negates the "follow your heart" Disney princess mentality that they are

often raised on. They don't want to be practical, and some of them even go so far as to shun the good advice of other married women. Women should be able to count the costs of a marriage and understand that handsomeness and confidence does not pay the considerable bills that married couples incur, especially when they have children. I think a good basic education in business, finance and/or econonomics for this "follow your heart", "have no fear" women would be beneficial.

I also liked #4:

> Wives who share a strong commitment to the norm of lifelong marriage with their husband—e.g., who both believe that even unhappily married couples should stay together for the sake of their children—are more likely to have a happy marriage than couples who do not share this commitment to marriage. Shared commitment seems to generate a sense of trust, emotional security, and a willingness to sacrifice for one's spouse—all of which lead to happier marriages for women. This shared commitment also provides women with a long-term view of their marriage that helps them negotiate the inevitable difficulties that confront any marriage.

Again, I've noticed that young unmarried women, even those entering the period of declining beauty and declining fertility, are very alarmed by the idea of being married. Marriage is somehow seen as "boring" and they are not too keen on having to sacrifice their need to be happy to a husband and to children. Marriage can wait – it can wait till they are 40. Plenty of men around to marry them then, good men, too, they say. And so long as their friends affirm their "follow your heart" plan, cost calculations don't enter into it.

So, to summarize, you can send a list like this to most young, unmarried woman and she can read it and agree, and then go in a completely different direction. So strong is her intuition and desire to be happy – it just overrules common sense. They don't know enough to pursue what will really make them fulfilled (by having a meaningful life) in the long run. And that, if I may say so, is really scary. Older, married women are, of course, much wiser and more practical.

Yes, I'm being silly to get on someone's nerves. This whole post is to annoy her. If you saw the parody of me that she wrote of me, it was even funnier than this. She is not a feminist at all, but I like telling her she is one.

Justice Department's list of withheld Fast and Furious documents: 1,323 pages long

October 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From intrepid journalist Sharyl Attkisson, the latest on the Obama administration's operation to run guns to Mexican drug cartels in order to motivate stricter gun regulations here in the USA.

Excerpt:

> For the first time, the Department of Justice has provided a detailed description of 15,662 *Fast and Furious*-related documents it is withholding from Congress, the public and the press under executive privilege exerted by President Obama.
>
> The description comes in the form of a so-called Vaughn index ordered by a federal court in a lawsuit filed against the Justice Department by the conservative watchdog group Judicial Watch. The Justice Department waited to provide the index, due yesterday, until 8:34 p.m.
>
> The number of withheld documents is so extensive, that the list describing them is 1,323 pages long.
>
> […]Among the withheld communications is a March 8, 2011 email from a Mexico-based Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) official less than one week after federal agent John Dodson blew the whistle on *Fast and Furious* in an interview with me for CBS News. The email is described as "discussing response to [Mexico]."
>
> Another withheld email sent in the same time period is from then-White House official Kevin O'Reilly. Dated March 10, 2011, it was sent to more than a dozen federal officials and is described as, "discussing draft press statement."
>
> More withheld emails "forwarding and discussing news items" have Attorney General Holder's name on them. One series of such exchanges is dated July 26, 2011, the same day I reported the revelation that ATF had shared information about *Fast and Furious* with the White House.
>
> […]Other withheld documents are concerning Freedom of Information (FOI) requests I made in May of 2011. It's unclear as to why the president would exert executive privilege to keep from turning over documents discussing "which office will respond" to my FOI requests. The Justice Department never properly responded to my requests.

Please see below for more on what Fast and Furious was all about. The mid-term elections are coming up. Don't let Democrats shake this off!

Related posts

- Obama campaign contributor and gun control advocate ran Fast and Furious

- Obama covers-up DOJ operation that allowed gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Republicans prepare contempt citation for AG Eric Holder over Fast and Furious
- Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent's murder
- Eric Holder testifies on Fast and Furious gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Fast and Furious assault weapons seized from drug cartel enforcer's home
- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference

Evidence supports officer’s account of shooting in Ferguson, Missouri

October 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I suspended judgment on this case- this is my first blog post on it. I am writing about it now because the evidence is just in.

Here’s the story from leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Ferguson, Mo., police officer Darren Wilson and Michael Brown fought for control of the officer’s gun, and Wilson fatally shot the unarmed teenager after he moved toward the officer as they faced off in the street, according to interviews, news accounts and the full report of the St. Louis County autopsy of Brown’s body.
>
> Because Wilson is white and Brown was black, the case has ignited intense debate over how police interact with African American men. But more than a half-dozen unnamed black witnesses have provided testimony to a St. Louis County grand jury that largely supports Wilson’s account of events of Aug. 9, according to several people familiar with the investigation who spoke with The Washington Post.
>
> Some of the physical evidence — including blood spatter analysis, shell casings and ballistics tests — also supports Wilson’s account of the shooting, The Post’s sources said, which casts Brown as an aggressor who threatened the officer’s life. The sources spoke on the condition of anonymity because they are prohibited from publicly discussing the case.
>
> The grand jury is expected to complete its deliberations next month over whether Wilson broke the law in confronting Brown, and the pending decision appears to be prompting the unofficial release of information about the case and what the jurors have been told.
>
> The St. Louis Post-Dispatch late Tuesday night published Brown’s official county autopsy report, an analysis of which also suggests that the 18-year-old may not have had his hands raised when he was fatally shot, as has been the contention of protesters who have demanded Wilson’s arrest.
>
> Experts told the newspaper that Brown was first shot at close range and may have been reaching for Wilson’s weapon while the officer was still in his vehicle and Brown was standing at the driver’s side window. The autopsy found material “consistent with products that are discharged from the barrel of a firearm” in a wound on Brown’s thumb, the autopsy says.
>
> Judy Melinek, a forensic pathologist in San Francisco who reviewed the report for the Post-Dispatch, said it “supports the fact that this guy is reaching for the gun, if he has gunpowder particulate material in the wound.”

> Melinek, who is not involved in the investigation, said the autopsy did not support those who claim Brown was attempting to flee or surrender when Wilson shot him in the street.
>
> […]Seven or eight African American eyewitnesses have provided testimony consistent with Wilson's account, but none have spoken publicly out of fear for their safety, The Post's sources said.
>
> […]Jurors have also seen the St. Louis County autopsy report, including toxicology test results for Brown that show he had tetrahydrocannabinol, the active ingredient in marijuana, in his system. The Post's sources said the levels in Brown's body may have been high enough to trigger hallucinations.
>
> […]The autopsy says that Brown was shot in the forehead, twice in the chest and once in the upper right arm. The fatal wound to Brown's head indicates that he was leaning or falling forward, and the path of a sixth shot, which hit Brown's forearm and traveled from the back of his arm to his inner arm, means that Brown's palms were not facing Wilson in an act of surrender, according to analysts cited by the Post-Dispatch.
>
> In interviews with The Post, sources said blood spatter evidence shows that Brown was heading toward the officer during their faceoff, but analysis of the evidence did not reveal how fast Brown was moving.

Now, that's not what we heard in the mainstream media before the actual forensic tests were done, but that's what the evidence shows. And lest anyone accuse me of racism, I noticed a video with Brown's mother and my skin is darker than hers. Facts are facts, skin color doesn't matter.

Friday night detectives: yet another two episodes of Sherlock Holmes

October 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s Friday, so that means more mysteries.

Here are 2 episodes of “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes”.

The Solitary Cyclist:

The Problem Of Thor Bridge:

These are both puzzling stories. I wonder if you can guess the answers before the end.

Happy Friday!

Woman who claims to be a Christian denounces premarital chastity

October 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the plan for this post. We're going to take a look at a post by a woman who claims to be a Christian. In that post, she offers some reasons why premarital chastity is wrong. Then we'll take a look at what the Bible says. Then we'll take a look at what the research says. Then I explain what this trend among Christian women means for marriage-minded men.

First here is the post by "Joy". Her reasons for disagreeing with premarital chastity are as follows:

1. Chastity makes women who have had premarital sex feel ashamed
2. It does no harm for a woman to have premarital sex before marriage
3. God made people with a sexual drive, so God thinks that premarital sex is OK
4. Most people are already having sex, so God thinks that premarital sex is OK
5. Practicing sex with men you don't intend to marry makes you better at marital sex

In another post, she is more clear about her views: (these are her actual words)

- Choosing to not to abstain from sexual intercourse before marriage is not shameful.
- Your decision to abstain or not to abstain does not necessarily have any connection to the health of your future marriage.
- Your decision to abstain or not to abstain does not necessarily have any connection to the health of your future sex life.

Now first off, she has no Biblical evidence for any of these assertions in the original post I linked to. She also has no evidence from outside the Bible for any of her assertions. Assertion #3 in the list of 5 above seems to me to justify adultery as easily as it justifies premarital sex. Now, you might expect a person who claims to be a Christian to look first to the Bible to see what is right and wrong, then to look to evidence to strengthen the argument when discussing it with others inside and outside the church. For Joy, feelings and peer-pressure are enough to make anything morally OK. Now let's take a quick look at what the Bible says about chastity and premarital sex:

> 1 Cor. 7:8-9
>
> 8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to stay single as I am.
>
> 9 But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.
>
> The idea of "burning" here has to do with sexual desire. Here Paul tells all unmarried people that if they cannot control their sexual desires, they need to

> get married. Why? Because Paul assumes that one cannot fulfill this sexual desire outside of the marital bed. While Paul would love for them to remain single (1 Cor. 7:7), he believes that sex outside of marriage is a destructive sin and *cannot* be used as a gratifying release of our sexual passions.

Now what evidence outside the Bible is there to support that? Here's some:

- New study: delaying sexual activity produces improves relationship quality and stability
- New study: staying a virgin longer enables more satisfying relationships
- New study finds that teens who lose their virginity are more likely to divorce
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Two things you can do to make your marriage last

Now back to Joy, What I have found when dealing with women like Joy in the church is that the Bible has no authority over them. Not even the words of Jesus have authority to lead them. And obviously they are not impressed with evidence from science, history, etc. Their sole reason for acting the way they do is their own feelings. Whatever they do that seems right to them cannot be questioned or judged. If things don't "work out", then they are a helpless victim. God's will for them is that they do whatever they feel like in order to be happy.

It's very very important for men who are seeking marriage to understand that the typical woman they meet in the church does not understand that Christianity imposes any obligations on them. They don't look at the Bible for moral guidance, but for comfort. And they don't study outside the Bible to become persuaded (and persuasive) about what the Bible teaches. Their view of Christianity is that they are good where they are, and that there is nothing that they should be studying or planning for in order to achieve goals, like evangelism or marriage. Everything has to be easy and feel good.

Fortunately, there is a way to detect the women who are serious about Christianity, and it can be done by simply asking them questions to see if they have moved beyond the feelings/selfishness model of Christianity to the truth/ responsibility model of Christianity. All you have to do is ask them questions to see how much effort they've put into confirming what the Bible teaches by reading outside the Bible. Christians read the Bible to know what's true, and they read outside the Bible to convince themselves to act on what they know is true, and to show to others what's true in a persuasive way. But reading outside the Bible is at war with the feelings /victim/ don't-judge-me view of Christianity pushed by people like Joy. That is because the more you read, the less room there is for doing what you feel like. When you study, what you learn constrains your actions.

I think men should avoid women who respond to the claims of Scripture and the evidence from research by sticking their fingers in their ears and saying "don't judge me! don't shame me!". You can't make a *marriage* with someone who is dismissive of moral

obligations, and who acknowledges no higher authority than her own feelings and the approval of her secular, progressive peers. The Bible forbids “unequal yoking”, which is the marriage of a Christian to a non-Christian.

More about Joy and the women of A Deeper Story

A little more digging reveals that they are pro-gay marriage and claim that it is compatible with Christianity:

http://deeperstory.com/a-deeper-story-responds-to-doma-and-prop-8/

Joy Bennett – The Supreme Court’s ruling today to overturn DOMA is the right decision, and one that I welcome. It refers the definition of marriage and recognition of same-sex marriage back to states. It surprises me to hear conservatives, who ardently support states’ rights, bemoaning this ruling as “sin winning.” It is my personal position that any couple wishing to vow fidelity and faithfulness to one another ought to be encouraged in that endeavor. And any couple willing to make that kind of commitment and form a family ought to receive the civil and legal rights that naturally follow the formation of a family. I see the legal recognition of a marriage as a completely separate issue from the theological discussion of homosexuality. The Supreme Court did not change anything about so-called traditional marriage. The Supreme Court did not require churches or religious bodies to recognize same-sex marriage. It made a civil ruling. The theological question of whether homosexuality is a sin is completely separate from its legality, and it would behoove today’s American Christians to remember that fact.

The Sarah Bessey she links to is also in favor of same-sex marriage:
http://deeperstory.com/same-sex-marriage/

They are pro-premarital sex and claim that it is compatible with Christianity (in the post I linked to).

The two articles she linked to bashing the “purity culture” (chastity) contain no Bible verses, and no studies. No truth at all, really. Note that bashing chastity is compatible with their feminist egalitarian convictions.

One of the authors she linked to (Sarah Bessey) has a book that is endorsed by Rachel Held Evans and Brian MacLaren. That’s where these guys are coming from ideologically. They are bashing Biblical morality and judging anyone who dares to say that anything is morally wrong. They feel that that people should never be made to feel bad by what the Bible says. (And what studies confirm).

So these people are not Christian in any meaningful way, but more like Trojan horses, manufacturing “diversity” of opinions where there is none, IF you take the Bible seriously as a rule on moral issues. If you’re a man looking to marry, you need to be able to detect women like this – don’t just assume they are good Christian women because they go to church. Ask questions.

Matthew Vines and Michael Brown debate homosexuality and the Bible on Moody radio

October 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The audio of the Matthew Vines vs Michael Brown debate is streamed here on the Moody site.

Details:

> Can you be gay and Christian? Matthew Vines says you can and he's created a viral video and best-selling book defending his view. This Saturday on Up for Debate, Vines joins host Julie Roys to debate author and leading evangelical apologist, Dr. Michael Brown. Is gay monogamy an option for Christians? Is it unloving to reject gay marriage? Listen and join the discussion this Saturday at 8 a.m. Central Time on Up for Debate!
>
> **Matthew Vines**
>
> Matthew Vines is an advocate for the acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people within Christian communities and in society at large. Living in Wichita, Kansas, Matthew attended Harvard University from 2008 to 2010. He then took a leave of absence in order to research the Bible and homosexuality and work toward LGBT inclusion in the church. In March 2012, Matthew delivered a speech at a church in his hometown about the Bible and homosexuality, calling for acceptance of gay Christians and their marriage relationships. Since then, the video of the speech has been seen more than 500,000 times on YouTube, and it was featured inThe New York Times and The Christian Post. In 2013, Matthew launched The Reformation Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to training LGBT Christians and their allies to reform church teaching on sexual orientation and gender identity. Matthew's book,God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships, is in stores now.
>
> **Dr. Michael Brown**
>
> Michael Brown holds a Ph.D. from New York University in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures and is the author of 25 books, most recently Can You Be Gay and Christian? He has served as a visiting or adjunct professor at seven leading seminaries, and contributed to numerous scholarly publications, including the Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religion and the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. He hosts the nationally syndicated talk radio program The Line of Fire and the TV show Answering Your Toughest Questions, and he has been active in teaching, preaching, and debating since 1973, committed to seeing a Jesus-based moral and cultural revolution.

Summary key: Julie Roys (JR), Matthew Vines (MV), Michael Brown (MB)

Summary:

Opening speeches:

- JR: Why should Christians be open to reinterpreting the Bible on homosexuality?
- MV: Consider the lives and testimonies of gay Christians. Here is my personal story.
- MV: According to the Bible, a person with same-sex attractions would have to embrace lifelong celibacy. I refuse to do that.
- MV: There are 6 passages in the Bible that are relevant to the goodness of homosexuality. All are negative.
- MV: None of these passages address gay relationships that are “long-term” and “faithful” that are based on “commitment” and “love”.
- JR: You say that it is “damaging” for Christians to disagree with you views, is that true?
- MV: Yes. One of my friends declared his homosexuality and he did not feel safe to come home. He felt pain because Christians disagreed with him.
- MV: You cannot ask a person with same-sex attractions to be celibate, it causes too much harm to ask gays to abstain from sexual relationships.
- JR: Respond to Matthew.
- MB: The Bible only permits heterosexual sexuality and in every case condemns homosexual acts.
- MB: Matthew is taking his sexual preferences and activities as given, and reinterpreting the Bible to fit it.
- MB: Genesis talks about women being made to help men, and to fulfill God’s commandment to procreate and fill the Earth.
- MB: The Bible speaks about the complementarity of the sexes when talking about how two become one in marriage.
- MB: I am very sensitive to the stories of people who are gay who experience discrimination as “gay Christians”.
- MB: You can feel sad for people who have two conflicting commitments, but that doesn’t mean we should redefine what the Bible says.
- JR: Stop talking, we have a break.

JR takes a caller for the next topic:

- Caller 1: I had same-sex attractions and I was able to change my sexuality.
- JR: Matthew, respond to that.
- MV: Alan Chambers of Exodus International says that 99.9% of people he worked with had not changed their gay orientation.
- MV: Lifelong celibacy is not acceptable to gays, so the Bible must be reinterpreted to suit gays.
- MB: Matthew thinks that God himself did not understand the concept of sexual orientation and inadvertently hurt gays because of his lack of knowledge.
- MB: There is a solution in the Bible for people who cannot be celibate, and that

solution is heterosexual marriage
- MB: If a person is only attracted to pre-teen girls, do we then have to re-write the Bible to affirm that so they won't be "harmed"?
- MB: Alan Chambers was speaking for his own group, and his statement does not account for the fact that thousands of people DO change.
- JR: What about the Jones/Yarhouse study that found that 38% of reparative therapy subjects were successful in changing or chastity?
- MV: (no response to the question)
- MV: (to Brown) do you accept that the Bible forces gays to live out lifelong celibacy

Another break, then Brown replies:

- MB: Yes. But change is possible.
- MV: Do you know of any Christian who acknowledged that this was the consequence of the Bible's teaching for gays?
- MB: Paul's explanation that the options for ALL Christians are 1) celibacy or 2) heterosexual marriage. For 2000 years.
- MV: Paul (in Romans 1) is talking about people who are not "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships.
- MV: Paul was not aware of "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships at the time he wrote his prohibitions in Romans 1.
- JR: How do you know that fixed sexual orientation is true? And that the Biblical authors would written different things if they knew?
- JR: Are there any references in the first century to "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships?
- MB: Yes, in my book I quote prominent historian N. T. Wright who documents that those relationships were known.
- MB: Matthew's view requires that God did not know about sexual orientation when ordaining the Bible's content.
- MB: Leviticus 18 is for all people, for all time. This was not just for the Jews, this was for everyone.
- MV: I am not saying that Paul was wrong because he was ignorant.
- MV: Paul was writing in a context where "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships were unknown.
- MV: NT Wright does not cite first century texts, he cites a problematic 4th century text.
- MV: Absence of 1st-century references to "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships means that God did not intend to prohibit them.
- MB: Whenever the Bible speaks about homosexuality, it is opposed to it – Old Testament and New Testament.

Another break, then the conclusion:

- JR: Respond to the Leviticus prohibition, which prohibits homosexuality for everyone,

for all time.
- MV: It is a universal prohibition on male same-sex intercourse, but it does not apply to Christians.
- MV: For example, Leviticus prohibits sex during a woman's menstrual period. And Christians are not bound by that.
- MV: What is the reason for this prohibition of male-male sex in Leviticus? It's not affirm the complementarity of the sexual act.
- MV: The Bible prohibits male-male sex because it is written for a patriarchal culture.
- MV: In a patriarchal culture, women are viewed as inferior. That's why the Bible prohibits a man from taking the woman's role in sex.
- MB: The prohibition in Leviticus is a universal prohibition against male-male sex, applicable in all times and places.
- MB: Homosexual sex is a violation of the divine order.
- MB: We can see already the consequences of normalizing this: gay marriage, and supports for polygamy and polyamory.
- MV: So the earliest reference there is to a "long-term", "faithful" gay relationship is a 4th century text.
- MV: But that gay relationship is not like modern gay relationships.

I have a few comments about Vines' points below.

My comments:

Even heterosexuals who have not married are called upon to embrace lifelong celibacy. I am in my 30s and am a virgin because I have not married. I wouldn't seek to reinrepret the Bible to allow premarital sex just because what I am doing is difficult. I would rather just do what the Bible says than reinterpret it to suit me. And it's just as hard for me to be chaste as it would be for him to be. In short, it's a character issue. He takes his right to recreational sex as non-negotiable, and reinterprets the Bible to suit. I take the Bible as non-negotiable, and comply with it regardless of whether it seems to make me less happy. With respect to the purposes of God for me in this world, my happiness is expendable. If I don't find someone to marry, I'm going to be "afflicted" with the lifelong celibacy that Vines seems to think is torture, but let me tell you – God is happy with the contributions I am making for him, and if I have to be chaste through my whole life, I am 100% fine with that. I serve the King. And not the reverse.

Notice that he talks about "long-term" but not permanent relationships, and "faithful" but not exclusive. This is important because the statistics show that gay relationships (depending on whether it is female-female or male-male) are prone to instability and/or infidelity. I just blogged on that recently, with reference to the *published research* on the subject. Vines is talking about a situation that does not obtain in the real world – according to the data. Gay relationships do not normally value permanence and exclusivity in the way that opposite-sex marriage relationships do, especially where the couple regularly attends church. The divorce rate and infidelity rate for religious couples is *far below* the rates for gay couples, depending on the sexes involved. Vines is

committed to the idea that marriage is about feelings, e.g. – "love", but that's not the public purpose of marriage. Marriage is not about love, it's about complementarity of the sexes and providing for the needs of children. We have published studies like this one showing that there are negative impacts to children who are raised by gay couples, which dovetails with studies showing that children need a mother and that children need a father. We should not normalize any relationship that exposes children to harm. We should prefer to inconvenience adults than to harm children.

Matthew Vines made an argument that Christians have to stop saying that homosexuality is wrong, because it makes gay people feel excluded. I wrote previously about the argument that gay activists use where they say "if you don't agree with me and celebrate me and affirm me, then I'll commit suicide". In that post, I quoted a prominent gay activist who made exactly that argument. I don't find the threats to self-destruction to be a convincing argument *for the truth* of the view that gay marriage being the same as heterosexual marriage. In fact, this is confirmed by a recent study which showed that features of gay relationships themselves, and not social disapproval, is to blame for high rates of suicide in the gay community.

Vines seems to want to argue that the context in which the Bible authors were writing did not allow them to address the problem of gays in "long-term", "faithful" relationships. Well, we have already seen that statistically speaking, those relationships are in the minority. One British study mentioned in the post I linked to above found that only 25% of gay couples were intact after 8 years. The number is 82% for heterosexual marriages, and that *doesn't* filter by couples who abstain from premarital sex and who attend church regularly. If you add those two criteria, the number is going to be well above 82% in my opinion. Studies show that premarital chastity and church attendance *vastly* improve the stability and quality of marriages.

In addition, Vines is trying to argue that 1) the Bible authors were not aware of "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships and 2) their failure to explicitly disqualify these "long-term", "stable" gay sexual relationships means that the Bible actually condones them. A friend of mine pointed out that this is a textbook case of the argument from silence, where someone asserts that because something is not explicitly condemned, then it must be OK. Carried through to its logical end, that would mean that things like identity theft are OK, because they are not mentioned explicitly. Brown asserted that there was a blanket prohibition on homosexual acts. He is arguing from what we know. Vines says that "long-term", "faithful" homosexual relationships are not mentioned, and are therefore OK. He is arguing from what we don't know. And he is trying to reverse the burden of proof so that he doesn't have to show evidence for his view. Brown wouldn't take the bait. The fact of the matter is that no one for the last 2000 years of church history have taken Vines' view. Every single Christian before Vines, who were closer to Jesus' teachings than Vines, understood the verses that Brown cited to be providing a blanket prohibition on homosexual sex acts. If Vines wants to claim that the Bible condones what he wants it to condone, he has to produce some positive evidence from the text or from church history or church fathers. He has *nothing* to support his case that

could convince anyone that this is what Christians have believed, and ought to believe.

Finally, if you are looking for another debate, I blogged about a debate between Michael Brown and Eric Smaw. There's a video and summaries of the opening speeches in that post.

California orders churches to fund abortions, or face sanctions

October 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from The Federalist.

Excerpt:

> California's Department of Managed Health Care has ordered all insurance plans in the state to immediately begin covering elective abortion. Not Plan B. Not contraceptives. Elective surgical dismemberment abortion.
>
> At the insistence of the American Civil Liberties Union, the DMHC concluded that a 40-year-old state law requiring health plans to cover "basic health services" had been misinterpreted all these decades. Every plan in the state was immediately ordered, effective August 22, to cover elective abortion. California had not even applied this test to its own state employee health plans (which covered only "medically necessary" abortions). But this novel reading was nevertheless quietly imposed on every plan in the state by fiat.
>
> The news has slowly leaked out as insurers grappling with this change have begun quietly informing employers of this sudden change in the terms of their policy. This is how Kaiser Permanente broke the news to one California *church* that its insurance policy for its pastors and staff would now include elective abortion coverage:
>
> I want to formally share with you that on August 22, 2014, the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) notified Kaiser Permanente and other affected health plans in writing regarding group contracts that exclude 'voluntary termination of pregnancy.'
>
> This letter made clear that the DMHC considered health care services related to the termination of pregnancies – whether or not a voluntary termination – a medically necessary basic health care service for which all health care services plans must provide coverage under the Knox-Keene Health Care Service Plan Act. You may recall that at the request of some employer groups with religious affiliations, Kaiser Permanente submitted a regulatory filing in May 2012 properly notifying the DMHC of a benefit plan option that excluded coverage of voluntary terminations of pregnancies. The DMHC did not object to this filing, permitting Kaiser Permanente to offer such a coverage contract to large group purchasers that requested it. The DMHC acknowledged that it previously permitted these contract exclusions, but now is requiring health care service plans to provide coverage of all terminations of pregnancies, effective immediately. To that end, the DMHC requires Kaiser Permanente and similar health care service plans to initiate steps to modify their plan contracts accordingly.

> Effective August 22, Kaiser Permanente will comply with this regulatory mandate.

This is the kind of story that really justifies my suspicions about secular people's ability to be "moral". It seems to me that even if a person did not believe in God, that they would be respectful of those who do. But when you give up God, it does make a difference to whether you think that other people have these sorts of natural rights. How could you possibly ground natural rights in a materialist universe? And this does have an impact on how they act.

Christina Hoff Sommers: helping boys succeed in school

October 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An article from the leftist Time magazine by feminist Christina Hoff Sommers.

Excerpt:

> Being a boy can be a serious liability in today's classroom. As a group, boys are noisy, rowdy and hard to manage. Many are messy, disorganized and won't sit still. Young male rambunctiousness, according to a recent study, leads teachers to underestimate their intellectual and academic abilities. "Girl behavior is the gold standard in schools," says psychologist Michael Thompson. "Boys are treated like defective girls."
>
> These "defective girls" are not faring well academically. Compared with girls, boys earn lower grades, win fewer honors and are less likely to go to college. One education expert has quipped that if current trends continue, the last male will graduate from college in 2068. In today's knowledge-based economy, success in the classroom has never been more crucial to a young person's life prospects. Women are adapting; men are not.
>
> Some may say, "Too bad for the boys." The ability to regulate one's impulses, sit still and pay attention are building blocks of success in school and in life. As one critic told me, the classroom is no more rigged against boys than workplaces are rigged against lazy or unfocused workers. That is absurd: unproductive workers are adults — not 5- and 6-year-old children who depend on us to learn how to become adults. If boys are restive and unfocused, we must look for ways to help them do better.

She introduces three ideas to fix the problem, and here's the third one:

> In his delightful *Boy Writers: Reclaiming their Voices*, celebrated author and writing instructor Ralph Fletcher advises teachers to consider their assignments from the point of view of boys. Too many writing teachers, he says, take the "confessional poet" as the classroom ideal. Personal narratives full of emotion and self-disclosure are prized; stories describing video games, skateboard competitions or a monster devouring a city are not.
>
> Peg Tyre's *The Trouble With Boys* illustrates the point. She tells the story of a third-grader in Southern Californianamed Justin who loved *Star Wars*, pirates, wars and weapons. An alarmed teacher summoned his parents to school to discuss a picture the 8-year-old had drawn of a sword fight — which included several decapitated heads. The teacher expressed "concern" about Justin's "values." **The father, astonished by the teacher's repugnance for a typical boy drawing, wondered if his son could ever win the approval of**

> **someone who had so little sympathy for the child's imagination.**
>
> Teachers have to come to terms with the young male spirit. As Fletcher urges, if we want boys to flourish, we are going to have to encourage their distinctive reading, writing, drawing and even joke-telling propensities. Along with personal "reflection journals," Fletcher suggests teachers permit fantasy, horror, spoofs, humor, war, conflict and, yes, even lurid sword fights.

> I**f boys are constantly subject to disapproval for their interests and enthusiasms, they are likely to become disengaged and lag further behind. Our schools need to work with, not against, the kinetic imaginations of boys to move them toward becoming educated young men.**

Dr. Sommers participated in a recent debate where she argued in favor of allowing all-male schools against a radical feminist. That page has audio and a transcript as well.

My thoughts

I do think that women need to realize that boys have to be encouraged to do the different things that boys do, if we want boys to be engaged. The good things that boys do in society are not free – they need to be encouraged and not dismissed. Playing a wargame or an adventurous boardgame with a boy is good. Firing real guns with a boy is good. Playing adventurous role-playing games with a boy is good. Going to a war museum or on a camping trip with a boy is good. Watching patriotic war movies or adventurous movies with a boy is good. Reading military history and military biographies is good. Reading classical adventure novels with a boy is good. Listening to adventurous music with a boy is good. Even watching the news with a boy is good.

Nothing is free. We have to create the boys we want, and encourage them to be aggressive, active and righteous.

Top 5 myths that old feminists pass on to young women

October 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christina Hoff Sommers writing in the ultra-leftist Time magazine of all places.

The list:

1. **MYTH 1:** ***Women are half the world's population, working two-thirds of the world's working hours, receiving 10% of the world's income, owning less than 1% of the world's property.***
2. **MYTH 2:** ***Between 100,000 and 300,000 girls are pressed into sexual slavery each year in the United States.***
3. **MYTH 3:** ***In the United States, 22%–35% of women who visit hospital emergency rooms do so because of domestic violence.***
4. **MYTH 4**: ***One in five in college women will be sexually assaulted.***
5. **MYTH 5**: ***Women earn 77 cents for every dollar a man earns—for doing the same work.***

I'm posting 4 and 5 below, since they were mentioned in the video above (that's not Christina Hoff Sommers):

> **MYTH 4**: ***One in five in college women will be sexually assaulted.***
>
> **FACTS**: This incendiary figure is everywhere in the media today. Journalists, senators and even President Obama cite it routinely. Can it be true that the American college campus is one of the most dangerous places on earth for women?
>
> The one-in-five figure is based on the *Campus Sexual Assault Study*, commissioned by the National Institute of Justice and conducted from 2005 to 2007. Two prominent criminologists, Northeastern University's James Alan Fox and Mount Holyoke College's Richard Moran, have noted its weaknesses:
>
> "The estimated 19% sexual assault rate among college women is based on a survey at two large four-year universities, which might not accurately reflect our nation's colleges overall. In addition, the survey had a large non-response rate, with the clear possibility that those who had been victimized were more apt to have completed the questionnaire, resulting in an inflated prevalence figure."
>
> Fox and Moran also point out that the study used an overly broad definition of sexual assault. Respondents were counted as sexual assault victims if they had been subject to "attempted forced kissing" or engaged in intimate encounters while intoxicated.
>
> Defenders of the one-in-five figure will reply that the finding has been replicated by other studies. But these studies suffer from some or all of the same flaws.

> Campus sexual assault is a serious problem and will not be solved by statistical hijinks.
>
> **MYTH 5**: ***Women earn 77 cents for every dollar a man earns—for doing the same work.***
>
> **FACTS**: No matter how many times this wage gap claim is decisively refuted by economists, it always comes back. The bottom line: the 23-cent gender pay gap is simply the difference between the average earnings of all men and women working full-time. It does not account for differences in occupations, positions, education, job tenure or hours worked per week. When such relevant factors are considered, the wage gap narrows to the point of vanishing.
>
> Wage gap activists say women with identical backgrounds and jobs as men still earn less. But they always fail to take into account critical variables. Activist groups like the National Organization for Women have a fallback position: that women's education and career choices are not truly free—they are driven by powerful sexist stereotypes. In this view, women's tendency to retreat from the workplace to raise children or to enter fields like early childhood education and psychology, rather than better paying professions like petroleum engineering, is evidence of continued social coercion. Here is the problem: American women are among the best informed and most self-determining human beings in the world. To say that they are manipulated into their life choices by forces beyond their control is divorced from reality and demeaning, to boot.

Her conclusion:

> Why do these reckless claims have so much appeal and staying power? For one thing, there is a lot of statistical illiteracy among journalists, feminist academics and political leaders. There is also an admirable human tendency to be protective of women—stories of female exploitation are readily believed, and vocal skeptics risk appearing indifferent to women's suffering. Finally, armies of advocates depend on "killer stats" to galvanize their cause. But killer stats obliterate distinctions between more and less serious problems and send scarce resources in the wrong directions. They also promote bigotry. The idea that American men are annually enslaving more than 100,000 girls, sending millions of women to emergency rooms, sustaining a rape culture and cheating women out of their rightful salary creates rancor in true believers and disdain in those who would otherwise be sympathetic allies.

But if young women learn this for four years in college, what hope is there for any kind of trust and vulnerability with men? What hope is there for marriage? They are always going to be trying to find meaning in life on their own, apart from any kind of loving partnership with a man. And the more hooking up and cohabitating they do, the less they are going to value marriage *and take practical steps towards it.* That is the real problem – the wasting of time and the lack of seriousness, as if getting married can be left to age 35 with no

preparation and no planning. As if careers and missionary work and traveling can fill the same hole that a family fills. Yet if no one tells these young women and pushes them to be sensible and discerning, they will mess up the most important decision of their lives.

This might be a good article to share and bookmark.

New study: more than 14% of non-citizens are registered to vote in 2008 and 2010

October 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> In a forthcoming article in the journal Electoral Studies, we bring real data from big social science survey datasets to bear on the question of whether, to what extent, and for whom non-citizens vote in U.S. elections. Most non-citizens do not register, let alone vote. But enough do that their participation can change the outcome of close races.
>
> Our data comes from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study(CCES). Its large number of observations (32,800 in 2008 and 55,400 in 2010) provide sufficient samples of the non-immigrant sub-population, with 339 non-citizen respondents in 2008 and 489 in 2010. For the 2008 CCES, we also attempted to match respondents to voter files so that we could verify whether they actually voted.
>
> **How many non-citizens participate in U.S. elections? More than 14 percent of non-citizens in both the 2008 and 2010 samples indicated that they were registered to vote.**
>
> […]**Because non-citizens tended to favor Democrats (Obama won more than 80 percent of the votes of non-citizens in the 2008 CCES sample), we find that this participation was large enough to plausibly account for Democratic victories in a few close elections.** Non-citizen votes could have given Senate Democrats the pivotal 60th vote needed to overcome filibusters in order to pass health-care reform and other Obama administration priorities in the 111th Congress. Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) won election in 2008 with a victory margin of 312 votes. Votes cast by just 0.65 percent of Minnesota non-citizens could account for this margin. It is also possible that non-citizen votes were responsible for Obama's 2008 victory in North Carolina. Obama won the state by 14,177 votes, so a turnout by 5.1 percent of North Carolina's adult non-citizens would have provided this victory margin.

This is interesting:

> We also find that one of the favorite policies advocated by conservatives to prevent voter fraud appears strikingly ineffective. Nearly three quarters of the non-citizens who indicated they were asked to provide photo identification at the polls claimed to have subsequently voted.

Democrats keep telling us that voter fraud is a non-issue. And that's not surprising when

you look at how the actual voting by non-citizens. The Democrat party doesn’t want voter fraud to go away, they rely on it.

To stop this, we’ll need more than voter ID protection. We should probably have a listing of voters at each precinct, make each voter show ID, strike the name of each person who votes from the list, and no voting in any other precinct.

Was the message of the New Testament corrupted?

October 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video is from the Dallas Theological Seminary Hendricks Center blog:

Apologetics Guy Mikel Del Rosario writes:

> During a special event called "Jesus in Primetime," Dr. Darrell Bock, Dr. Ben Witherington, and Dr. Dan Wallace discussed a variety of topics surrounding Jesus and the Bible in the public square. One of the topics they discussed was the issue of variant readings in the New Testament. Are there really hundreds of thousands of textual differences in our New Testament manuscripts? What does it all mean?
>
> In this video clip, Dr. Dan Wallace identifies four categories of textual variants and explains why these differences don't need to shake our faith in the New Testament.
>
> The first and largest category is made up of **spelling differences** in the text, accounting for over 75% of all textual variants. What about the other 25%?
>
> The next largest category represents **synonyms, word order differences or articles with proper nouns**; issues which don't affect the meaning of text at all. For example, Greek writers would use the definite article before people's names (e.g. "The Jesus"). In this case, whether or not the definite article is there makes no difference in English translations.
>
> The third largest category is made up of variants that actually make a difference in the meaning of the text. But the differences in this category are **unlikely to represent any of the original words** of the New Testament because the manuscripts where they appear are very late–far removed from the time of Jesus and his original followers.
>
> Finally, the fourth category is made up of variants that both **make a difference and may possibly represent the original readings of the text**. But this is less than *1% of all variants in the New Testament*. For example, most scholars discuss whether the story about the woman caught in adultery was not originally in In John's text at this point. This is a genuine discussion that notes in a good study discuss. Many do question its presence. Others still argue the event does describe something that did happen in Jesus' life. What is impacted by this?
>
> Bock answers this question: "What is impacted is whether or not a particular passage teaches a particular point, but in the big scheme of things, there is no fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith that is impacted by this one percent." Wallace agrees: "There is no cardinal doctrine that is impacted by the viable variants."
>
> Indeed, **it seems a bit misleading for certain scholars to declare that**

> **there are between 300,000 and 400,000 textual variants amongst the existing manuscripts we have today and leave it at that.** We have so many variants because we have so many New Testament manuscripts. If all we had was one codex with all the books of the New Testament in it, we wouldn't have any variants!
>
> But having over 5,800 Greek New Testament manuscripts is a good thing because it can help us have more confidence in the readings which best represent the text of the original autographs.

Bart Ehrman tries to sell a lot of books by fussing about these variants, but in a debate with another expert, he quickly folded and admitted that there were only four variants that touched on anything important.

Bart Ehrman's screeching about variants: should we care?

In Ehrman's debate with Peter Williams on the UK-based Unbelievable radio show, and in Ehrman's debate with Dan Wallace, Ehrman lists the 4 worst problems caused by the variants:

1. the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11) is a late addition not present in the earliest manuscripts
2. the long ending of Mark (Mark 16:9-20) is a late addition not present in the earliest manuscripts
3. Jesus was angry and not compassionate when he healed the leper (Mark 1:41)
4. that Jesus died apart from God, and not by the grace of God (Hebrews 2:9)

I personally dislike that story in 1), because I think a lot of feminized Christians like it because they do not want to have their happiness diminished by moral judgments. They misunderstand this passage to support self-serving moral relativism and postmodern hedonism. Or worse, anti-capital-punishment. Eww. I say, get rid of the wimpy passage and good riddance. It's hundreds of years too late from the earliest manuscripts, anyway.

Regarding 2), I like that long ending because it's more useful from an apologetics standpoint. So I do care about this invariant, and I just don't use that ending when I debate these historical issues. For 3), I prefer angry Jesus to compassionate Jesus, but I don't really care because Jesus is angry in lots of places. And for 4) It doesn't really matter to any core doctrine. It's theological stuff, not historical fact.

J. Warner Wallace: practical advice on becoming an effective one-dollar apologist

October 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below is my summary of an episode of J. Warner Wallace's Please Convince Me podcast, which I really liked, and my comments.

Details:

> J. Warner continues examining the Christian life in light of God's desire for all of us to become Christian Case Makers. Jim reads listener email highlighting some of the typical frustrations involved in starting an apologetics ministry and then provides a template to help you become the Case Maker you've always wanted to be. Jim also answers the question: Why Didn't Jesus Reveal Scientific Facts to Demonstrate His Deity?

You can grab the MP3 file here.

This episode is probably one of the best episodes of the Please Convince Me podcast I've ever heard, because it's practical. I like listening to the cold-case detective talk about practical things.

Summary:

- e-mail from someone trying to start an apologetics ministry for college students and facing difficulties
- the challenge of getting Christians to take an evidential approach to their faith
- tips for getting Christians exposed to apologetics materials
- there are a lot of Christians who are making a daily contribution to apologetics even with a full-time job
- Wallace himself started his apologetics ministry while working full-time
- Wallace, as an atheist, was initially skeptical of religion because he thought it was too focused on money
- His plan as an apologist was to take money right out of it – do it for free, and be self-funded
- 1 Cor 9: "But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision."
- People in ministry deserve to be supported, but Paul dispensed with that right to raise support for his ministry
- Paul self-financed his ministry in order to avoid all appearance of doing his ministry for financial gain
- Similarly, Wallace's goal of being self-financed was to avoid the appearance of doing ministry for money
- If you plan your life carefully enough in the first half, you'll have the money you need to do ministry in the second half

- Wallace wanted the liberty to pursue things without any financial need, and he achieved this by working full-time
- The problem with money is that it often causes us to not cooperate well with other people
- Ministries and churches sometimes avoid working with other people, like scholars and apologists
- They do this because they are afraid of losing their own people to these scholars and apologists
- Wallace wants to get the money out of it and be able to serve anyone with a need
- Wallace: you need to work hard in the first half of life, in order to have freedom to serve in the second half
- First area: financial preparation – you need to escape financial needs so that it doesn't restrict your passion
- Wallace married well, to a woman who was a good saver, very frugal, and not materialistic – he saved 30% of his income
- Second area: need to prepare yourself educationally for being able to teach apologetics materially
- That doesn't always mean doing the MA in apologetics, but you do have master the material – continuous learning
- Third area: try to focus on the parts of your career that might have some connection to apologetics
- You want to have experiences in your work where you learn something that can be used in your ministry
- Wallace actually made career choices to focus on evidence, case-making and teaching
- It's hard because men are naturally competitive – we focus on promotions, money and consumer goods
- It's not always the right move in your career to get promoted if it takes you away from skills related to apologetics
- Christian apologists need to not neglect to develop leadership skills and to develop influence
- He recommends a book called "Platform" by Michael Hyatt, which Doug Groothuis also recommended to me
- If you are financially independent, then if an unpaid opportunity arises, you have the freedom to take it
- You can volunteer for positions that you want to have, instead having to take what pays
- Wallace writes for Breakpoint, and he is able to dispense with the 1000-word limit that gets a fee
- Money opens up the danger of corruption, so it's another reason to just take it out of the picture
- You can be very effective in your apologetics ministry while still working full-time
- The second half is a good time to have even more freedom because your kids are

grown up
- A good wife can really help you if she is picking up the slack so that you can work on your ministry
- Jane Pantig works for Ratio Christi, an organization that promotes apologetics on campus
- Jane's model: she is in full-time ministry, with a BS in biology and an MA in apologetics (Biola)
- Jane is able to get many high-quality speakers to speak for free/cheap at San Jose State University

The rest of the podcast deals a question that was asked at the San Jose State University event that Wallace did for Ratio Christi. I blogged about it this morning. I laughed my butt off while listening to that podcast, starting at around 62:50 and on. It's pretty funny when he does the role-pay between Jesus and the people listening to him.

My comments:

The reason I wanted to post this is because I think that a lot of people feel obligated to quit their jobs and raise support because they think that you have to do apologetics full time. It's not true. Wallace explains that he worked as a cold-case detective until just recently when he took his pension. His pension is now underwriting his ministry. Similarly with me, I work a full-time job and run the blog out of my income. In addition, I probably donate a few thousand dollars each year to people who are organizing apologetics lectures, debates and conferences – events featuring speakers I like best.

This blog gets about 1 million page views per year, depending on the year (election years are better), so that's not an insignificant impact. In addition, I meet a lot of young Christians in university in different countries who want advice or mentoring, so I spend a few hours here and there mentoring them, and sometimes sending them rewards (books) for doing difficult degrees at good universities and getting good grades. My full-time job helps me to do all of these things. And before I could have a full-time job in information technology, I had to put in the time and effort to get the Bachelor and Masters degree in computer science.

So I think that Christian men especially need to be thinking about how much the apologetics enterprise of a one-dollar apologist relies on money. We really need to be thinking about that early on, in high school, and choosing to study hard things and to do well in those hard subjects. The higher-paying jobs that are more secure tend to be in fields like science, math, technology and engineering. We need to be thinking of doing these courses in high school – especially the men, but also the women – in order to be able to pay for our apologetics ministry. In addition, my decision to not marry (unless I meet a woman who can support me in my plan) gives me even more freedom to work on my ministry while working full time.

I fully approve of what Wallace said about self-financing your apologetics ministry – and supporting other apologetics ministries – in order to avoid all appearance of self-interest. In fact, I have long admired Wallace for his intentional, practical way of doing his ministry.

He doesn’t take donations, and he gives away tons of materials for free. I like that.

Hillary Clinton’s views on the economy, taxes and jobs

October 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video above explains Hillary Clinton’s views on how jobs get created. She doesn’t think that private companies create jobs.

Here’s the story from economist Stephen Moore writing at Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Hillary Clinton is getting deservedly attacked for her imbecilic statement at a Democratic political gathering in Massachusetts on Friday about business and jobs.
>
> “Don’t let anybody tell you that, ah, you know, it’s corporations and businesses that create jobs,” she preached, to loud applause. “You know that old theory, trickle-down economics. That has been tried, that has failed. It has failed rather spectacularly.”
>
> It may not be too surprising that Hillary can’t connect the dots that it takes an employer to create an employee to create wages and salaries.
>
> That’s how some 150 million Americans get paid every week. Ms. Clinton has made her millions in the cattle futures market, as a government employee and giving speeches for fees of $250,000 a pop. Nice work if you can get it. The rest of us mere mortals need a paycheck.
>
> Hillary’s witless statement might be written off as campaign hyperbole, and some might think the Democratic front-runner for president simply got carried away speaking to her “progressive” base and didn’t really mean it. Sometimes Republicans get into the act, as when Mitt Romney’s GOP rivals attacked him in 2012 for being rich and a successful investor.
>
> But the scary thing is she really DID mean it. Her sophomoric comment, alas, reflects a long-simmering ideologically driven war against business that has become a central platform of the modern-day Democratic party.
>
> Her remarks were simply an extension of President Obama’s “you didn’t build that” statement denigrating businessmen and women who have created companies — large and small.
>
> In the left mindset, economic output and jobs are achieved collectively and thanks to the beneficence of government, not because of the ambition, drive, vision, risk-taking and guts that it takes to start a new enterprise out of nothing.

So who creates jobs then? Well, if it’s not private sector businesses then the only thing left to create jobs is the government. She thinks government creates jobs. And the more government raises taxes, the more money government has to give people jobs.

But is that really how it has worked in the past?

Let's see.

Consider this article by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, which discusses how the Reagan tax cuts affected the unemployment rate.

Excerpt:

> In 1980, President Carter and his supporters in the Congress and news media asked, "how can we afford" presidential candidate Ronald Reagan's proposed tax cuts?
>
> Mr. Reagan's critics claimed the tax cuts would lead to more inflation and higher interest rates, while Mr. Reagan said tax cuts would lead to more economic growth and higher living standards. What happened? Inflation fell from 12.5 percent in 1980 to 3.9 percent in 1984, interest rates fell, and economic growth went from minus 0.2 percent in 1980 to plus 7.3 percent in 1984, and Mr. Reagan was re-elected in a landslide.
>
> […]Despite the fact that federal revenues have varied little (as a percentage of GDP) over the last 40 years, there has been an enormous variation in top tax rates. When Ronald Reagan took office, the top individual tax rate was 70 percent and by 1986 it was down to only 28 percent. All Americans received at least a 30 percent tax rate cut; yet federal tax revenues as a percent of GDP were almost unchanged during the Reagan presidency (from 18.9 percent in 1980 to 18.1 percent in 1988).
>
> What did change, however, was the rate of economic growth, which was more than 50 percent higher for the seven years after the Reagan tax cuts compared with the previous seven years. This increase in economic growth, plus some reductions in tax credits and deductions, almost entirely offset the effect of the rate reductions. Rapid economic growth, unlike government spending programs, proved to be the most effective way to reduce unemployment and poverty, and create opportunity for the disadvantaged.

The Daily Signal describes the effects of the Bush tax cuts.

Excerpt:

> President Bush signed the first wave of tax cuts in 2001, cutting rates and providing tax relief for families by, for example, doubling of the child tax credit to $1,000.
>
> At Congress' insistence, the tax relief was initially phased in over many years, so the economy continued to lose jobs. In 2003, realizing its error, Congress made the earlier tax relief effective immediately. Congress also lowered tax rates on capital gains and dividends to encourage business investment, which had been lagging.
>
> It was the then that the economy turned around. Within months of enactment,

> job growth shot up, eventually creating 8.1 million jobs through 2007. Tax revenues also increased after the Bush tax cuts, due to economic growth.
>
> In 2003, capital gains tax rates were reduced. Rather than expand by 36% as the Congressional Budget Office projected before the tax cut, capital gains revenues more than doubled to $103 billion.
>
> The CBO incorrectly calculated that the post-March 2003 tax cuts would lower 2006 revenues by $75 billion. Revenues for 2006 came in $47 billion above the pre-tax cut baseline.
>
> Here's what else happened after the 2003 tax cuts lowered the rates on income, capital gains and dividend taxes:
>
> - GDP grew at an annual rate of just 1.7% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the six quarters following the tax cuts, the growth rate was 4.1%.
> - The S&P 500 dropped 18% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts but increased by 32% over the next six quarters.
> - The economy lost 267,000 jobs in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the next six quarters, it added 307,000 jobs, followed by 5 million jobs in the next seven quarters.
>
> The timing of the lower tax rates coincides almost exactly with the stark acceleration in the economy. Nor was this experience unique. The famous Clinton economic boom began when Congress passed legislation cutting spending and cutting the capital gains tax rate.

So in the past, the trickle-down supply-side tax cuts that Hillary Clinton derided in her speech created lots of jobs. We have to do what is known to work.

Democrats spied on journalist who reported on gunrunning and Benghazi cover-up

October 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ex-CBS News reporter Sharyl Attkisson

I blogged about this before in May 2013, but this time it's in the New York Post.

Excerpt:

> A former CBS News reporter who quit the network over claims it kills stories that put President Obama in a bad light says she was spied on by a "government-related entity" that planted classified documents on her computer.
>
> In her new memoir, Sharyl Attkisson says a source who arranged to have her laptop checked for spyware in 2013 was "shocked" and "flabbergasted" at what the analysis revealed.
>
> "This is outrageous. Worse than anything Nixon ever did. I wouldn't have believed something like this could happen in the United States of America," Attkisson quotes the source saying.
>
> She speculates that the motive was to lay the groundwork for possible charges against her or her sources.
>
> Attkisson says the source, who's "connected to government three-letter agencies," told her the computer was hacked into by "a sophisticated entity that used commercial, nonattributable spyware that's proprietary to a government agency: either the CIA, FBI, the Defense Intelligence Agency or the National Security Agency."
>
> The breach was accomplished through an "otherwise innocuous e-mail" that Attkisson says she got in February 2012, then twice "redone" and "refreshed" through a satellite hookup and a Wi-Fi connection at a Ritz-Carlton hotel.
>
> The spyware included programs that Attkisson says monitored her every keystroke and gave the snoops access to all her e-mails and the passwords to her financial accounts.

> “The intruders discovered my Skype account handle, stole the password, activated the audio, and made heavy use of it, presumably as a listening tool,” she wrote in “Stonewalled: My Fight for Truth Against the Forces of Obstruction, Intimidation, and Harassment in Obama’s Washington.”
>
> Attkisson says her source — identified only as “Number One” — told her the spying was most likely not court-authorized because it went on far longer than most legal taps.
>
> **But the most shocking finding, she says, was the discovery of three classified documents that Number One told her were “buried deep in your operating system. In a place that, unless you’re a some kind of computer whiz specialist, you wouldn’t even know exists.”**
>
> **“They probably planted them to be able to accuse you of having classified documents if they ever needed to do that at some point,” Number One added.**
>
> In her book, Attkisson says CBS lost interest in her coverage of the deadly attack on the US Embassy in Benghazi, Libya, and killed her stories of the federal “Fast and Furious” gun-running scandal.
>
> Both CBS and the White House declined to comment.

Investors Business Daily has more on some of the other things they and her former employer CBS News did to her to get her to shut up. The funny thing about her is that I remember her going after the Bush-43 administration *hard* when Bush was in power. So she is basically doing her thing whether there’s a Republican or a Democrat administration in power. The problem is her bosses – they were willing to let her report on Republican scandals, but when it was a Democrat administration, it all had to be hushed up.

Will robots and machines ever have consciousness like humans?

October 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There is a very famous thought experiment from UC Berkeley philosopher John Searle that all Christian apologists should know about. And now everyone who reads the Wall Street Journal knows about it, because of this article.

In that article, Searle is writing about the IBM computer that was programmed to play Jeopardy. Can a robot who wins on Jeopardy be "human"?Searle says no. And his famous Chinese room example (discussed in the article) explains why.

Excerpt:

> Imagine that a person—me, for example—knows no Chinese and is locked in a room with boxes full of Chinese symbols and an instruction book written in English for manipulating the symbols. Unknown to me, the boxes are called "the database" and the instruction book is called "the program." I am called "the computer."
>
> People outside the room pass in bunches of Chinese symbols that, unknown to me, are questions. I look up in the instruction book what I am supposed to do and I give back answers in Chinese symbols.
>
> Suppose I get so good at shuffling the symbols and passing out the answers that my answers are indistinguishable from a native Chinese speaker's. I give every indication of understanding the language despite the fact that I actually don't understand a word of Chinese.
>
> And if I do not, neither does any digital computer, because no computer, qua computer, has anything I do not have. It has stocks of symbols, rules for manipulating symbols, a system that allows it to rapidly transition from zeros to ones, and the ability to process inputs and outputs. That is it. There is nothing else.

Here is a link to the full article by John Searle on the Chinese room illustration.

By the way, Searle is a naturalist – not a theist, not a Christian. But he does oppose postmodernism. So he isn't all bad. But let's hear from a Christian scholar who can make more sense of this for us.

Here's a related article on "strong AI" by Christian philosopher Jay Richards.

Excerpt:

> Popular discussions of AI often suggest that if you keep increasing weak AI, at some point, you'll get strong AI. That is, if you get enough computation, you'll eventually get consciousness.
>
> The reasoning goes something like this: There will be a moment at which a

computer will be indistinguishable from a human intelligent agent in a blind test. At that point, we will have intelligent, conscious machines.

This does not follow. A computer may pass the Turing test, but that doesn't mean that it will actually be a self-conscious, free agent.

The point seems obvious, but we can easily be beguiled by the way we speak of computers: We talk about computers learning, making mistakes, becoming more intelligent, and so forth. We need to remember that we are speaking metaphorically.

We can also be led astray by unexamined metaphysical assumptions. If we're just computers made of meat, and we happened to become conscious at some point, what's to stop computers from doing the same? That makes sense if you accept the premise—as many AI researchers do. If you don't accept the premise, though, you don't have to accept the conclusion.

In fact, there's no good reason to assume that consciousness and agency emerge by accident at some threshold of speed and computational power in computers. We know by introspection that we are conscious, free beings—though we really don't know how this works. So we naturally attribute consciousness to other humans. We also know generally what's going on inside a computer, since we build them, and it has nothing to do with consciousness. It's quite likely that consciousness is qualitatively different from the type of computation that we have developed in computers (as the "Chinese Room" argument, by philosopher John Searle, seems to show). Remember that, and you'll suffer less anxiety as computers become more powerful.

Even if computer technology provides accelerating returns for the foreseeable future, it doesn't follow that we'll be replacing ourselves anytime soon. AI enthusiasts often make highly simplistic assumptions about human nature and biology. Rather than marveling at the ways in which computation illuminates our understanding of the microscopic biological world, many treat biological systems as nothing but clunky, soon-to-be-obsolete conglomerations of hardware and software. Fanciful speculations about uploading ourselves onto the Internet and transcending our biology rest on these simplistic assumptions. This is a common philosophical blind spot in the AI community, but it's not a danger of AI research itself, which primarily involves programming and computers.

AI researchers often mix topics from different disciplines—biology, physics, computer science, robotics—and this causes critics to do the same. For instance, many critics worry that AI research leads inevitably to tampering with human nature. But different types of research raise different concerns. There are serious ethical questions when we're dealing with human cloning and research that destroys human embryos. But AI research in itself does not raise these concerns. It normally involves computers, machines, and programming. While all technology raises ethical issues, we should be less worried about AI

> research—which has many benign applications—than research that treats human life as a means rather than an end.

When I am playing a game on the computer, I know exactly why what I am doing is fun – I am conscious of it. But the computer has no idea what I am doing. It is just matter in motion, acting on it’s programming and the inputs I supply to it. And that’s all computers will ever do. Trust me, this is my field. I have the BS and MS in computer science, and I have studied this area. AI has applications for machine learning and search problems, but consciousness is not on the radar. You can’t get there from here.

New study: being raised by married parents has huge positive effect on economic well-being

October 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's some of the findings from the Institute for Family Studies.

Excerpt:

> Wilcox and Lerhman found that growing up in a two-parent family correlated with many positive outcomes for kids, well into adulthood. For example:
>
> - Growing up with both parents reduced the probability for dropping out of high school by 15 percent for men and 9 percent for women.
> - Growing up in an intact family reduced women's chances of becoming single mothers by 12 percent and men's chances of being nonresidential fathers by 5 percent.
> - Both men and women who grew up in intact families enjoyed substantial marriage premiums. Young men who grew up in intact families earned, on average, more than $6,500 more in personal income and more than $16,000 more in family income than their peers who grew up in single-parent families. Young women from intact families earn more than $4,700 in personal income and more than $12,000 more than their peers from single-parent families.
> - Growing up with both parents also increased young adults chances of marrying themselves. Men who grew up in intact homes were 10 percent more likely to get married than their peers who grew up in single-parent families. Women who grew up in intact homes were 12 percent more likely to marry.
>
> Individuals who grow up in intact homes are more likely to marry and once they do, they are the recipients of a host of benefits associated with being married.
>
> - Married men age 28–30 earn nearly $16,000 more, on average, than their single peers. Their family income is nearly $22,000 higher than their single peers. And the marriage premium for men extends to less-educated and minority men who are often at a disadvantage in the work force. Married young men with only high-school educations, for example, earned more than $17,000 more than their single peers.

I don't like to blog about these things without solutions. I have some of my own (school choice, abstinence education funding, repeal no-fault divorce, defund Planned Parenthood, double the child tax credit for married couples, provide a carry forward tax credit to each married parent for ALL income earned by children before age 21, etc.).

But the new study has some solutions too:

> Wilcox and Lehrman do make recommendations for strengthening lower and middle-class families. They recommend eliminating marriage penalties from the tax code, while increasing the child credit and the earned income credit maximum. They also recommend improving vocational training and launching a national campaign that encourages young adults to follow the ”success sequence”: education, job, marriage, children.

I think a lot of kids of my generation should be reading studies like this and wondering “what did the party of premarital sex, no-fault divorce, abortion and gay rights do for me?”. If your political party embraces policies that encourage people to see sex as recreational instead of a way of producing creatures who then become the responsibilities of parents, you are in the wrong political party. The Democrat party is the part of selfishness, and that’s why they attack marriage. Marriage is about restraining adults so that children benefit, and every selfish Democrat policy that damages marriage damages children.

As Dennis Prager says:

> Even today, after decades of feminism, most Americans agree that it is better for women and men — and society — when women and men marry. Yet when women marry, it is bad for the Democratic Party; and when women do not marry, even after — or shall we say, especially after — having children, it is quite wonderful for the Democratic Party.
>
> Married women vote Republican. Unmarried women lopsidedly vote Democrat. It is both silly and dishonest to deny that it is in the Democrats’ interest that women not marry.

They have no reason to strengthen marriage, and their policies (sex education, no-fault divorce, single mother welfare, gay marriage, etc.) don’t strengthen marriage. It sounds like such a nice thing to want to not shame people for premarital sex and divorce. After all, we want people to feel good no matter what they choose, right? But there is a price to pay for this “tolerance” of adult selfishness – it’s paid by their children. That’s what happens when we put feelings about moral boundaries.

Pastor Franklin Graham tells Obama: Islam “is a false religion”

October 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When a pastor does the right thing, I have to feature it.

This is from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Reverend Franklin Graham, son of world renowned evangelical pastor Billy Graham, said that President Barack Obama was “fundamentally mistaken” about radical Islam; questioned why peaceful Muslims do not collectively condemn jihadist terrorism; and argued that Islam “is a false religion” and that “it is impossible for a false religion to be a true religion of peace.”
>
> Rev. Franklin Graham also cited examples from a speech he recently gave outside the White House, decrying the actions of followers of a “peaceful religion” who practice “female circumcision,” hijacking, kidnapping, “honor” killings, and decapitation.
>
> Rev. Graham commended President Obama for sending some U.S. troops to fight the Islamic State but, citing Obama’s Sept. 24 speech at the United Nations where the president said “Islam teaches peace,” the reverend said, “I also believe our president is completely and fundamentally mistaken about the intolerant and violent nature of hardened Islamic followers.”
>
> “For Muslims, peace comes only through submission to Islam,” said Rev. Graham in his November commentary for *Decision* magazine, published by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. “When they speak of peace, they mean submission to their religion. Worldwide, tens of thousands of men, women and children have been slaughtered in the name of Allah, under the bloody flag of Islam.”

Persecution of minorities:

> Rev. Graham noted the case of Pastor Saeed Abedeni, an Iranian American who is in prison in Iran “simply because of his Christian faith, beaten and tortured for the sake of Christ by the hostile Islamic regime.”

Executions:

> “Mr. President, followers of a peaceful religion do not cut off the heads of innocent people in the barbaric fashion the world has watched recently,” Rev. Graham had said over the loudspeakers, addressing the president and the White House.

Kidnapping and sex-trafficking:

> “Mr. President, believers in a peaceful religion do not kidnap 300 young schoolgirls as Boko Haram did in northeastern Nigeria in April and reportedly [sell] them to men to be sex slaves,” he said. “Mr. President, no peaceful religion would tolerate, let alone practice, female circumcision, require a woman to have her husband’s permission to leave her home and take up employment, and restrict her ability to receive justice in the case of sex crimes.”

“Honor” killings:

> Rev. Graham continued, “Mr. President, a peaceful religion would not condone and allow a father to drown a daughter in a swimming pool in front of the family in the name of family honor because she might have stayed out late in the evening with her boyfriend. Mr. President, why haven’t the 3.5 million Muslims in North America rejected this gross, barbaric and despicable behavior by their fellow Muslims on American soil?”

And there is no widespread outrage among Western muslims over these actions:

> Rev. Graham went on to note that the “terrible acts” he cited had not been carried out by “peaceful Muslims, but by radical extremists,” but he questioned why many, “if not most” of the 1.6 billion Muslims in the world have not condemned these violent acts. If a so-called Christian commits an act of terrorism, mainstream Christians “quickly and unanimously rise together to condemn it,” he said.

I don’t think Franklin Graham is right 100% of the time, and I don’t agree with him 100% of the time. But it takes balls of steel to say things like this in today’s politically correct culture. Got to tip my hat to him. But then again, he’s not running for office, so he can say what he really thinks. And I have to say I agree that the examples of behavior by Muslims are outrageous and immoral. And I think a lot of non-Christians are going to agree with Graham, too.

J. Warner Wallace: important differences between Christianity and Mormonism

October 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a podcast featuring J. Warner Wallace. This is an after action report from Wallace's recent missions trip to Utah to evangelize Mormons.

The MP3 file is here. (74 minutes)

Topics:

- Mormons disagree with Christians about the nature of God, Jesus and salvation
- The differences are so dramatic that the two religions are completely different views
- Mormons try to portray themselves as a denomination of Christianity
- The Utah missions trip: how Christians were trained to engage with Mormons
- Mormonism is a works-based religion – you earn your way to eternal life by doing works
- In Christianity, eternal life is a free gift from God to anyone who accepts Jesus as their leader and redeemer
- Mormons believe that doctrines can change from generation to generation (progressive revelation)
- Mormons commonly make the case for a works-based theology by appealing to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount
- Mormons believe that you have to be perfect in order to get "exalted" eternal life
- Christians are perfect because Jesus has paid the price of our rebellion against God
- Christians: Jesus' sacrifice pays for anything evil that we have done and could do
- Christians are made perfect because Jesus' perfection is applied to them
- Christians are not practically perfect, but they are perfect by accepting that the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross
- God credits righteousness to Christians because Jesus has already died to pay off the punishment for their sins
- The good works that Christians do are a voluntary response to this free gift of salvation
- The good works do not secure a Christian's salvation, they are the natural outworking of accepting the gift of salvation
- The Mormon view of the afterlife is different from the Christian view
- The best Mormon afterlife ("exaltation") requires continued righteousness to the end of one's natural life
- This is not compatible with Christian teaching about salvation being by grace and not by doing good works (Gal 3:10-14)
- Mormons can never know whether they are saved or not until the day they die
- Christians can be sure of their salvation from the moment they accept Jesus as their leader and redeemer

- The Bible is clear that we can know whether we are saved or not (John 5:9-14)
- It is inconsistent for Mormons to claim to be Christians and then try to convert Christians to Mormonism
- The reason why Mormons go door to door is because they think Christians are wrong
- The Mormon view of Jesus is nothing like the Christian view of Christ (from the Bible)
- Mormonism is polytheistic, whereas Christianity is monotheistic
- Mormon "gods" are just beings who have a human nature who were "exalted" for doing good works
- When debating Mormons, they will try to argue that Mormonism is true because it results in good works
- The Biblical standard for a good prophet is to see whether his prophecies come true
- The Mormon view is that Joseph Smith is reliable because he did good works
- But good works are not a good way to test truth claims – a person could be "good" and still say false things
- A good question to ask Mormons: is the Book of Mormon ancient? It claims to be ancient, but is it?
- They may try to answer this question by appealing to fideism: praying for confirmation by burning bosom
- But this is not a question that can be assessed by subjective feelings (just pray about it)
- This is a question that needs to be assessed by historians using historical evidence
- There is no historical or archaeological support for the claims in the Book of Mormon
- In contrast, we have direct eyewitness testimony about the life of Jesus in the New Testament
- We have fragments of NT manuscripts dating back to first century so we know that the New Testament is ancient

You can find lots more awesome J. Warner Wallace podcasts here. Also, I know a secret – his new book is coming along well, and he actually posted a picture of all the books he read preparing for it on Facebook. It's a lot! The title is "God's crime scene".

Previously, I posted my refutation of Mormonism which used two evidential arguments. And J.W. Wartick has posted two philosophical arguments against Mormonism as well.

Chicago pastor’s church is broken into by Democrats after he endorses Republican

October 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Chicago Sun-Times.

Excerpt:

> Corey Brooks, a South Side pastor featured in an ad endorsing Republican gubernatorial candidate Bruce Rauner, says he’s moved his family from his home while police investigate an overnight burglary of his church, as well as threatening derogatory phone calls he received which claim he’ll be beaten for being Rauner’s “puppet.”
>
> On Saturday, Brooks rushed to the New Beginnings Church of Chicago after a maintenance employee found the church’s back doors shattered and an estimated $8,000 stolen from a glass charity box, meant to build a community center across from the church.

Nothing surprising about that. To be a Democrat is to take other people’s money. That’s their whole thing.

More:

> “The death threats seem to be related to Bruce Rauner,” Brooks said at the church Saturday. “They say his name as well as mine and most of the references were in response to me in support of him. So it’s really derogatory, real racial, a lot of homophobic words. It’s real life threatening.”
>
> Brooks said he received the five phone calls on Friday. He recorded one of them, and provided it to police. In that call, which was played for the Sun-Times, a man’s voice is disguised via a high-pitched filter. He is heard calling Brooks a “token n—–.”
>
> “We on you boy, we on you. And you ain’t got nobody that can stop us, nobody. Who you go [to] the deacons? They can’t stop us. We going to beat your fat a– in front of your mama congregation Sunday. Yeah we going to steal the sheep of the hypocrite. You’s a hypocrite we going to beat your fat a– in front of your own congregation. Who you got that…f— we going to beat their a– too. They can’t protect you. You sell out you Uncle Tom a– n—–. You token. You a puppet for Bruce Rauner you puppet n—– a–. P—- a– n—–,” the voice says on the recording.
>
> Brooks said he believes his family is in danger, which prompted him to move to a temporary home until the threats are investigated.
>
> “It was enough to want to move my family. Any time people threatening your life, and you know if it were just me, I maybe would just say whatever. But when you mention my family, you mention our church. Things like that, I have to take it

> seriously," Brooks said.

I also noticed that this video of black conservatives has gone viral:

[Source]

As a non-white conservative, I have had reactions like this before. I remember being sneered at by liberal women in college, and I get dirty looks from them in the gym for watching Fox News, too. They ask me if I am pro-life and then turn up their noses at me when I tell them "yes". It's interesting being a colored conservative. People get so angry about it. The best way to defuse that, I've found is to just ask them questions, like who the Vice President is, or who the Speaker of the House is. Once you show them that you know more than they do, they leave you alone.

Harvard poll: majority of youth likely voters favor Republicans this election

October 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm not sure if I really believe this Harvard Institute of Politics poll because young people seem to be so disinterested in moral issues, economics and national security these days. But I guess even young people know whether they have jobs, whether they like living with their parents and whether they want to have their heads chopped off. Right?

Right:

> More than half – 51 percent – of America's millennials who say they will "definitely be voting" in November prefer a Republican-run Congress, with only 47 percent favoring Democrat control, according to a Harvard Institute of Politics poll.
>
> This marks a significant departure from the institute's findings before the 2010 midterm elections, when America's 18-29 year olds who were definitely voting favored Democrats 55 percent to 43 percent.
>
> Institute director Maggie Williams described the youth vote as "politically up for grabs" and a potential "swing vote" for control of Congress in a conference call to announce the results.
>
> "The message to political candidates is clear: Ignore millennial voters at your peril," Williams said.
>
> What's more, the poll found that only 43 percent of millennials approve of President Obama's job performance, while 53 percent disapprove. It is his second-lowest rating in the institute's polls since he took office. The figures are only slightly worse for Obama among those who will "definitely be voting": 42 percent approve, 56 percent disapprove.
>
> The results showed a stark divide in presidential approval along racial and ethnic lines. Only three in 10 young whites approve of the president's performance, while nearly eight in 10 young blacks approve. Hispanic youth approval fell to 49 percent, down from 60 percent just six months ago.
>
> Director of Polling John Della Volpe described youth voters as "a little bit less Democratic" than during Obama's first term, speaking on the conference call. Factoring in the voting likelihood of all millennials, more 18-29 year olds prefer a Democrat-controlled Congress than a Republican one (50 percent to 43 percent), Della Volpe said – but the age group has become less supportive of the party.
>
> **"A lot of it comes down to turnout," Della Volpe said. "It seems that young Republicans are more likely to participate next week."**

And this, I really like:

> The poll also surveyed voters about terrorism threats. More than six in 10 millennials say they are “a great deal” or “somewhat” worried about another terrorist attack, **with young women (66 percent) more afraid than men (56 percent).**

I guess my naive view of young, unmarried women is that they are all like the ones I see in my gym – watching the Bravo channel or game shows to see people with too much make say mean things to one another. But it turns out that they are actually concerned with the economy and national security, which is a very good thing. Welcome aboard, young ladies! It’s not a shame to have a fear of something if the fear is justified, and if you do something about it to make it go away.

And by the way, the men in the gym are just as bad about not paying attention to politics and the economy. The day of the terrorist attack in Ottawa, the men were all watching *ESPN sports*. Horrible! Even the muscle bound Christian guy changes the channel from Fox News to ESPN as soon as I leave. The only person who is responsible *at all* is the gay guy – he at least watches local news.

New poll reveals where evangelicals diverge from orthodox Christian theology

October 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Got this Christianity Today article from my friend Eric Chabot, who blogs at Think Apologetics.

Excerpt:

> A survey released today by LifeWay Research for Ligonier Ministries "reveals a significant level of theological confusion," said Stephen Nichols, Ligonier's chief academic officer. Many evangelicals do not have orthodox views about either God or humans, especially on questions of salvation and the Holy Spirit, he said.
>
> Evangelicals did score high on several points. Nearly all believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead (96%), and that salvation is found through Jesus alone (92%). Strong majorities said that God is sovereign over all people (89%) and that the Bible is the Word of God (88%).

And now the bad parts:

> Almost all evangelicals say they believe in the Trinity (96%) and that Jesus is fully human and fully divine (88%).
>
> But nearly a quarter (22%) said God the Father is more divine than Jesus, and 9 percent weren't sure. Further, 16 percent say Jesus was the first creature created by God, while 11 percent were unsure.

If that's a problem for you, then read this post from Come Reason.

More badness from the original article:

> But if evangelicals sometime misunderstand doctrines about Jesus, the third member of the Trinity has it much worse. More than half (51%) said the Holy Spirit is a force, not a personal being. Seven percent weren't sure, while only 42 percent affirmed that the Spirit is a person.
>
> And 9 percent said the Holy Spirit is less divine than God the Father and Jesus. The same percentage answered "not sure."
>
> Like Arianism, confusion over the nature and identity of the Spirit dates to the early church. During the latter half of the fourth century, sects like Semi-Arians and *Pneumatomachi* (Greek for "Spirit fighters") believed "in the Holy Spirit"—as the First Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) taught—but said the Spirit was of a different essence from the Father and the Son. Some said the Spirit was a creature, and others understood the Spirit to be a force or power, not a person of the Trinity.
>
> At Constantinople, 150 bishops assembled to discuss these heresies, among

> other issues, and affirmed that “the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have a single Godhead and power and substance, a dignity deserving the same honor and a co-eternal sovereignty, in three most perfect hypostases, or three perfect persons.” Affirming the full divinity and personhood of the Holy Spirit, the church ruled out Semi-Arianism and Pneumatomachianism.

Here’s another:

> Human nature and salvation were other areas of confusion for respondents. Two out of three (68%) said that a person obtains peace with God by seeking God first, and then God responds with grace. A similar percentage (67%) said people have the ability to turn to God on the own initiative. Yet half (54%) also think salvation begins with God acting first. So which is it?
>
> In the fifth century, a British monk named Pelagius reportedly argued that people can choose God by the strength of their own will. Adam’s sin, he taught, did not sabotage human freedom, so we still have the ability to choose and follow God by the strength of our will.
>
> His school of thought, known as Pelagianism, was denounced at the Council of Carthage in 418 and later at the Council of Ephesus in 431. A variation, known as Semipelagianism, cropped up shortly thereafter, affirming original sin but teaching that humans take the initiative in salvation. The Council of Orange in 529 rejected Semipelagianism as heretical, maintaining that faith is a gift of God’s grace and does not originate in ourselves.
>
> More than half of survey participants (55%) said people have to contribute to their own salvation. This, however, is a debated issue. Some Christians—such as Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and certain Protestants—believe humans cooperate with God’s grace in salvation. Others believe our efforts can contribute nothing, though a response to God’s grace is a necessary element of conversion. Nevertheless, historic Christian teaching in all branches maintains that whatever role humans play is ultimately inspired by the work of God’s Spirit.

My view is “our efforts can contribute nothing, though a response to God’s grace is a necessary element of conversion”. Nobody desires God, but if we reject his drawing of us to him, in whatever form that takes, we are responsible. That’s my view, anyway!

Go take a look at the article and see if you commit any of the heresies.

The scariest old time radio shows for Hallowe’en

October 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Arrrr! Lobster Pirate is pleased that it is Hallowe’en!
Here are some of the scariest old time radio shows EVER! These are MP3 files. Be careful, they are SCARY!

- The House in Cypress Canyon (Suspense)
- The Thing on the Fourble Board (Quiet, Please)
- Three Skeleton Key (Escape)
- Donovan’s Brain – part1, part 2 (Suspense)
- Sorry, Wrong Number (Suspense)
- The Country of the Blind (Escape)
- Ghost Hunt (Suspense)

The House in Cypress Canyon is the scariest one, in my opinion. If you can’t download MP3s, then you can read the transcript here.

UPDATE: This one is by request from Nathan:

Happy Hallowe’en!

Reformation Day celebrates the supremacy of Scripture and reason in theology

October 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Ligonier Ministries web site has a summary of the event that kicked off the Reformation.

Excerpt:

> On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther tacked up 95 theses on the church door at Wittenberg. With this act, he hoped to provoke a discussion among the scholars about the abuses of the indulgences by the Roman Catholic Church. He was not trying to create a public furor by any means, but within a fortnight, these theses had spread through the country like wildfire. The last thing Luther had in mind was to start some kind of major controversy, but nevertheless major controversy did begin.
>
> From the discussions at Wittenberg, the disputations began to accelerate and escalate. Copies of the theses reached Rome and critical meetings were scheduled with the young monk. In these debates, Luther was maneuvered into proclaiming publicly that he had questions about the infallibility of church councils and also that he thought that it was possible that the pope could err. In 1520 a papal encyclical was issued which condemned Martin Luther as a heretic. Luther burned the document in a public bonfire and his defiance before the church was now a matter of record.
>
> In response, Martin Luther picked up his pen to challenge the entire penitential system of the Roman Catholic Church, which undermined in principle the free remission of sins that is ours in the gospel. By doing so, he was unswervingly advocating his commitment to *sola fide*, the doctrine of justification by faith alone.
>
> In 1521, Luther was summoned to the Imperial Diet, an authoritative meeting that involved the princes of the church, called by the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire to be held in the city of Worms in Germany. Luther was an outlaw. For him to appear at the Diet was to risk his very life; therefore, he was given safe conduct by the Emperor to attend. With a few friends, Luther traveled from Wittenberg to Worms. The eyewitnesses of that episode tell us that when Luther's little covered wagon appeared around the corner of the bend, there were lookouts posted in the church tower at Worms. All the people were agog waiting for the arrival of this notorious person. When Luther's caravan was sighted, people were throwing their hats in the air, blowing trumpets, and creating all the fanfare of the arrival of the hero. It was the 16th century answer to a ticker-tape parade.
>
> Things, however, became very solemn in a hurry because the next day he

> appeared before the Diet. His books were stacked on a table in the room, and he was asked and ordered to recant of his writings. This surprised Luther because he thought he was going to have an opportunity to defend his writings; but the only question really of any importance that was asked of him was this: "Are these your writings?" And when he said yes, they said, "Are you ready to recant of them?"
>
> Hollywood has their version of Luther standing there boldly with his fist in the air saying, "Here I stand!" and so on. But instead he dropped his chin on his chest and muttered something that nobody could understand, so they asked him to speak up. "What did you say?" He said, "May I have 24 hours to think about it." And so Luther was granted a reprieve of 24 hours to return to his room to contemplate the seriousness of this occasion.
>
> The prayer that Luther wrote in that ensuing 24-hour period was one of the most moving prayers I have ever read in my life. In that prayer, Luther cried out for God in his sense of total loneliness fearing that God had abandoned him, and proclaimed, "O Lord, I am Thine, and the cause is Thine, give me the courage to stand."
>
> And on the morrow, Luther was called once again back to the court and was told to reply to the question. He said to the Diet, "Unless I am convinced by sacred Scripture or by evident reason, I cannot recant, for my conscience is held captive by the Word of God, and to act against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me." And with that there was an instant uproar.

The Protestant Reformation emphasizes the responsibility of each person to become familiar with what the Bible teaches for themselves and to make sense of it using the laws of logic for themselves. There is an enormous focus on the individual and individual's responsibility to puzzle theology out for himself, using the tools available to him: reason, science, Scripture, history. The Reformation put forward the famous five Solas: "Sola Scriptura" (Scripture Alone); "Sola Gratia" (Grace Alone); "Sola Fide" (Faith Alone); "Solus Christus" (Christ Alone); and "Soli Deo Gloria" (To God Alone Be Glory).

My friend J.W. Wartick has a post about the effects of the Reformation on society as a whole.

Here's one of the effects: (links removed)

> Capitalism had already begun before the European Reformations, having its renewal start in Italian city states in the 12th Century (for a detailed and extremely interesting discussion of this, see Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason,* 71ff). The Reformation, however, provided a place for capitalism to flourish. John Calvin's thought touched upon nearly every contemporary problem, and one of these was usury (money lending at interest). Focusing upon the cultural context of the prohibition of usury in the Hebrew Scriptures, Calvin

> argued that his contemporary cultural context provided a way for usury to work without being necessarily wrong. Lending money in such a fashion was essential for the later development of capitalism (Alister McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 259-260).
>
> The Reformation also paved the way for a "Protestant Work Ethic." Martin Luther's notion of the "priesthood of all believers" demolished the hard distinction between the "temporal" and "spiritual" realm which dominated the thought of the church at the time. By breaking down this barrier, hard labor was elevated. It was no longer seen as an inferior life to that of monastic withdrawal; rather, any type of work could be pleasing to God (McGrath, 256-258). In contemporary churches, one can often hear about how the engineer, the retail worker, the auto worker, and the like should all utilize their skills to the glory of God. Such thinking came directly from the Reformation.

The Reformation also accelerated scientific exploration, because Christians promoted the idea that nature held secrets about God's existence and character.

Excerpt:

> Without the Reformation, modern science would probably have developed in any event because of the ethos of rationality and the doctrine of creation conducive to it. The Reformation, however, hastened the development by criticizing scholasticism and by putting emphasis on the direct observation of nature. Luther has been called the Copernicus of theology while, on the other hand, Copernicus has been called the Luther of astronomy. Indeed, Thomas Sprat, an Anglican clergyman and an early member of the Royal Society, emphasized that there was a reformation, some would say revolution, in both philosophy and theology [3]. In natural philosophy or science, questions about nature were no longer answered primarily by quoting Aristotle and the Scholastics, but by turning to observation of and experimentation on nature itself. Similarly, after the Reformation, Protestants no longer answered questions in theology primarily by quoting scholastic philosophers and theologians, but by turning directly to the Bible. Luther interpreted Scripture by asking: what is the clear and straightforward meaning of the text? Scientists interpret nature in the simplest way using the minimum number of hypotheses.
>
> Luther believed that the world was beginning a new age, which would bring not only a reform of religion but a new appreciation of nature. In his informal "Table Talk" he said,
>
> We are at the dawn of a new era, for we are beginning to recover the knowledge of the external world that was lost through the fall of Adam. We now observe creatures properly …. But by the grace of God we already recognize in the most delicate flower the wonders of divine goodness and omnipotence [4].
>
> In the last part of this statement, Luther paraphrased the words of the Apostle

> Paul in his letter to the Romans (Rom. 1:20).
>
> Luther was open to the authentic scientific advances of his age [5]. He appreciated the mechanical inventions of his day.
>
> He accepted the use of medicine in treating disease and is quoted as having said [6],
>
> It's our Lord God who created all things and they are good. Wherefore it's permissible to use medicine, for it is a creature of God.
>
> To someone who said that it is not permissible for a Christian to use medicine, Luther replied rhetorically, "Do you eat when you are hungry?" According to Andrew White [7], this attitude of Luther made the Protestant cities of Germany more ready than others to admit anatomical investigation and dissection.
>
> Luther accepted astronomy as a science, but rejected astrology as a superstition because it cannot be confirmed by demonstration. Astrology, according to Luther, is idolatry and violates the first commandment. He was both amused and distressed by Melanchthon's interest in astrology, a belief system that was widely accepted at the time [8].

The Reformation means good economics and good science, as well as good theology.

One problem I think was left unsolved by the Reformation, though, was how to reconcile free will with divine sovereignty.

Thankfully, Christian scholars came up with the doctrine of middle knowledge, which reconciles divine sovereignty with human freedom and responsibility, solving a problem with Reformed theology.

A very good book on middle knowledge is "Salvation and Sovereignty" by Kenneth Heathley. Highly recommended by Paul Gould.

Friday night detectives: yes, two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes

October 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s Friday, so that means more mysteries.

Here are 2 episodes of “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes”.

The Resident Patient:

The Second Stain:

And don’t forget the scary Hallowe’en podcasts I posted this morning.

Happy Friday!

Is feminism compatible with chivalry?

November 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting article in the Federalist that makes a point I've often made about eradication gender roles. If you get rid of the idea men ought to perform certain roles in society, and then don't give them any respect for fulfilling those roles, then don't be surprised when they reject the expectations of society.

Excerpt:

> Well, our brave new world of gender *equality*—in which we scoff at gender differences and men and women are encouraged to act the same—often proves harmful to women and girls. While the modern feminist movement won women tremendous freedoms educationally, professionally, personally, and sexually, it often leaves women feeling anything but empowered.
>
> The reality is these freedoms have too often come at the expense of all values and traditions. We've in effect thrown the helpful social mores out with the old-fashioned bathwater. But it's the modern feminist movement, which ushered away any hint of traditional chivalry and gendered expectations, that's in part to blame. Certainly few want to return to an age when gender roles were excessively rigid, but feminists have gone to extremes and encouraged a culture that undermines healthy gender relationships. Men who hold doors are now viewed as part of the patriarchal society. And girls are expected to just "be one of the guys."
>
> But gender roles helped men and women and in times past allowed the sexes to better navigate the sometimes-rough waters of romance, courtship, marriage, and sex. Feminists view the chivalry and social mores of previous generations as anachronistic. But the reality is these traditional customs of giving up a seat for a woman on a train, or accompanying a woman in public, weren't all rooted in sexism. They were social structures to help make men more respectful of women and to curb this kind of inappropriate behavior.

> It might not have been perfect, but it had a purpose. Today's dismissal of gender differences instead creates confusion, disappointment, and often more opportunity for harassment.

It seems to me that this article explains why men are so disappointing these days with respect to rising up to the roles of protector, provider, moral leader and spiritual leader.

If you tell women that there is nothing that men aspire to that is different than what women aspire to, then they lose the ability to evaluate men as protectors, providers, moral leaders and spiritual leaders. If men have no special roles, then the only way to distinguish a good one from a bad one is by appearance, peer-approval and tingles (feelings). Once men understand that this is how they are being evaluated, that's where

they put their effort.

I can tell you that in my experience, women who are influenced by feminism do not welcome men who focus on and excel at these male responsibilities. My new duties, as I understand them from the culture, are to be fun-loving, thrill-providing, and non-judgmental. No definite moral or spiritual opinions are allowed. That's the job of the public schools – to teach us right and wrong and our secular religion. And protecting and providing? That's the job of the police and the army, and the government social programs. Men don't like it when they don't have respect for fulfilling roles that are their responsibility. We do better when we are respected for being able to do something that others cannot do, and when we are not micro-managed by others while doing it.

Regarding chivalry, I think it's only safe to do now with women who explicitly reject feminism. Being chivalrous to a feminist doesn't earn her respect, so don't bother.

Obama on stay-at-home moms: “that’s not a choice we want them to make”

November 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breitbart reports:

> During a speech in Rhode Island today, President Obama stressed the importance of public pre-school in America, pointing out that the cost of daycare was getting too high.
>
> “Moms and dads deserve a great place to drop their kids off every day that doesn’t cost them an arm and a leg,” Obama stated. “We need better child care, day care, early child education policies.”
>
> Obama explained that in many states it cost parents more money to put their kids in day care than it cost to put them in a public university.
>
> “Too often parents have no choice but to put their kids in cheaper day care that maybe doesn’t have the kinds of programming that makes a big difference in a child’s development,” he said.
>
> Because America lacks public pre-school, Obama said, women often earned less money than men.
>
> “Sometimes, someone, usually Mom, leaves the workplace to stay home with the kids, which then leaves her earning a lower wage for the rest of her life as a result,” he said. “That’s not a choice we want Americans to make.”
>
> Creating public pre-school, Obama explained, was not only “good for families” but “good for the children.”

So I watched this video in which Obama flat out says that he favors having the government spend more money on social programs for children, despite the fact that we know that mothers are best for young children. He is not the first to push this, Nancy Pelosi did the same in 2013. This is the view championed by Democrats.

These programs are a boon to the government workers who vote for Obama, because they will be run by secular leftist social workers. This is how they earn their living – by separating mothers from their children. They want to avoid having to please customers in the private sector – that’s too risky. They prefer to take over the job of mothering from a child’s biological mother. That’s safe. You don’t get fired from the government, and you don’t have the pressure of having to care about what customers think of you. This is attractive to people on the left – they want work to be like this, even if it means a child’s misery.

How will he achieve this?

Well, he will raise taxes on the husband, so that the husband can no longer support the family on his own. This will cause the wife to have to leave the children and go to work in

order to make ends meet. This way, Obama can separate the child from her parents, and from the worldview of the parents. Instead of having parents working to raise their own child, you have the government raising children to believe what the government wants them to believe. For a secular government, this will probably be that family is bad, that religion is bad, that traditional morality is bad, that the free market system is bad, and that bigger government is good. Think of examples like sex education (abortion advocacy) and global warming (anti-capitalism), if you doubt this anti-family, anti-free-market angle exists.

Does it excite me, as a single chaste man, to get married and be a husband in a world run by feminist socialist leftists like Obama? No.

I am getting up every morning and going to work so that I and my future wife can run my family our way – to promote our worldview and our values. We would be doing the work of raising a family, so we should be allowed to pass on our values. But thanks to feminism and socialism, we have these bloated parasites in government who steal our children from us and then charge us money in order to pay for imposing their disgusting, immoral values on them. The American people somewhere along the line decided that even though I earn the money, that someone else ought to be passing on their values to my children. And this would be all the people who traditionally vote Democrat. They decided that. There are many young, unmarried Christian women who vote Democrat. They decided that. They "feel" that more powerful government is more desirable than more powerful families. Nothing they hear in church teaches them not to vote for stronger government over stronger families.

I would like more Christian leaders to be telling the young, unmarried women to stop voting for bigger secular government. Someone has to get that through their heads – that men do not like sharing the duty of leadership with anyone – especially not with clowns who have degrees in the humanities and could not find private sector jobs serving customers. Unfortunately, my friends tell me that the most common books being read by young Christian women on dating sites are books by A.W. Tozer, Francis Chan, Harry Potter, Left Behind, Phillip Yancey, Beth Moore, Nancy Leigh Demoss, Joyce Meyer, Elizabeth George, Stasi Eldgredge and so on. There is a complete lack of seriousness among many Christian women about marriage and family as it relates to economics, politics and education. It's not just apologetics that is lacking. Everything is focused on feelings, but the attraction and feasibility of the marriage/family plan is diminishing after each election right under our noses. It is diminishing for men. And there is no marriage and parenting without a man, however much Christians seem to be turning toward and celebrating single motherhood – i.e. – marriage to the secular state.

Young unmarried women, if you expect to get married, you'd better start voting for small government. Small government means bigger individuals and bigger families, and that's exactly what men who consider marriage and families want. Wake up.

Related posts

- New Oxford University study links non-family day care to anti-social behavior

- How early can you start to teach children about Christian apologetics?
- Feminist Nancy Pelosi pushes national daycare program
- How the UK government penalizes stay-at-home moms and pushes kids into daycare
- UK offers more money to working women and single mothers, nothing for stay-at-home moms
- Single mothers are better off with a $29,000 job and welfare than with a $69,000 job
- Dennis Prager offers the best concise analysis of the effects of feminism ever

Republican Joni Ernst takes 7 point lead in Iowa senate race

November 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Joni Ernst vs Bruce Braley

I hope all my readers in Iowa will vote for her.

Here's the latest poll:

> Joni Ernst has charged to achieve a 7-point lead over Democrat Bruce Braley in a new Iowa Poll, which buoys the GOP's hope that an Iowa victory will be the tipping point to a Republican takeover of the U.S. Senate.
>
> Ernst, a state senator and military leader, enjoys 51 percent support among likely voters. That's a majority, and it's her biggest lead in the three Iowa Polls conducted this fall. Braley, a congressman and trial lawyer, gets 44 percent, according to The Des Moines Register's final Iowa Poll before Tuesday's election.

It looks like she is just winning on the issues:

> Here's what has shaped Ernst's lead, according to the poll results:
>
> - Although a small plurality of likely voters thinks Braley has more depth on the issues, they like Ernst better than Braley on several character descriptions. They think she better reflects Iowa values, she cares more about people like them, and she's more of a regular, down-to-earth person.
> - Voters find Ernst, who has led Iowa troops in war, to be a reassuring presence on security issues, the poll shows. In the wake of news developments on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, increasing aggressiveness of Russia and the rise of the Islamic State in the Middle East, more likely voters see Ernst as better equipped than Braley to show leadership and judgment, by at least 9 points on each issue.
> - Independent voters are going Ernst's way, 51 percent to 39 percent.
> - The negativity in the race has hurt Braley more than Ernst. Forty-four

> percent say he has been more negative in campaign ads, compared with 32 percent for Ernst.
> - Among several potential mistakes the two candidates have made, the one that stands out is Braley's seemingly condescending remark about Republican U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley. In March, GOP operatives released caught-on-tape remarks Braley made at a private fundraiser in Texas that seemed to question the qualifications of "a farmer from Iowa without a law degree" to become the next chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.
>
> That inflicted a lingering hurt, as did emergence of the news that Braley had missed the majority of his Veterans Affairs Committee hearings, the poll shows.

It's hard for a male Democrat to push the "war on women" narrative against a woman who has been off to war.

Since the article is from the ultra-leftist Des Moines Register, they register their disapproval of her support for private Social Security savings accounts. But that's just another plus. I hope she wins, and I could see her being President one day, too. We need more REAL people, not career politicians.

Just in case anyone is wondering, yes – she is pro-life. The ultra-leftist New York Times explains:

> In Iowa, a Democrat, Bruce Braley, had a 12-point advantage among women over his Republican rival, Joni Ernst, who led by 15 percentage points among men, in a poll conducted for CNN/ORC International this week; over all, the two were statistically tied. Ms. Ernst has been a particular target of women's groups because… she has not backed off her support for a "personhood" amendment conferring constitutional rights at conception, which would effectively outlaw abortion and some fertility treatments and birth control methods.

The mid term elections are on Tuesday! Make sure you make your voice heard, especially if you are in Iowa or one of the other key senate race states.

British Columbia law society votes against accrediting evangelical law school

November 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

Global News reports.

Excerpt:

> The Law Society of British Columbia has voted against accrediting a proposed law school at Trinity Western University.
>
> In a binding decision, 74 per cent of lawyers voted against TWU's program, with 8,039 ballots cast in total – more than 60 per cent of all lawyers eligible to vote.
>
> The society says the decision means that "the proposed law school at Trinity Western University is not an approved faculty of law for the purpose of the Law Society's admission program."
>
> The vote was conducted by mail and required a two-thirds majority, with a turnout more than 33.3 per cent.

CBC has the reaction from Trinity:

> The president of Trinity Western University says he is uncertain if the new law school will open as scheduled in 2016 following the recent vote by the B.C. Law Society members to reject the faith-based institution.
>
> TWU president Bob Kuhn expressed his frustration with the recent vote as he left a ratification meeting at the law society on Friday morning.
>
> "They had to choose between the principles upon which they made the initial decision and the popularity of that decision among lawyers in the province," says Kuhn.

> “We’re disappointed of course they chose the latter. But that’s the reality of people in an elected position.”
>
> British Columbia is now the third province, after Ontario and Nova Scotia, to officially reject the university’s law school.
>
> Kuhn says it’s not clear whether the Christian university will move ahead with its 2016 opening date, and the school will decide in the coming weeks whether to file a judicial review.
>
> The board members of the B.C. Law Society voted 25 to one with four abstentions to ratify the results of a referendum announced yesterday rejecting the accreditation of a Trinity Western University’s law school.
>
> More than 8,000 of the society’s 13,530 members voted earlier this month in a special referendum to overturn the board’s decision earlier this year to accredit the faith-based law school.
>
> Critics oppose the new law school’s accreditation because Trinity Western students must sign a Christian covenant that states sexual relations are to be confined within the bounds of a marriage between a man and a woman.

Trinity Western Law School has a rule that says that students are expect not to engage in extramarital sex – regardless of sexual orientation, which is in keeping with what the Bible teaches. And the law society has decided that this teaching should disqualify a person from practicing law. What is objectionable about this rule? Well, the people who voted against it would be condemned by it. And so they seek to remove the influence of anyone who believes in that rule. Times change, but human nature doesn’t change. If you don’t want God, you try to silence anyone who reminds you of that fact. It’s also a reminded that secularism isn’t based in anything that science tells us or history tells us or any kind of evidence. It’s about morality. It’s about denying the authority of the moral law. That’s why people reject God, and intimidate those who don’t reject God.

I think this is a good reminder to Christian parents in the United States about why it is important to have some sort of vision for your children. If we don’t get advanced degrees, then we leave these decisions to the secular bigots. We are either going to take having an influence seriously or we are going to lose the power to have an influence. Do you have a plan to counter this?

Why are insurance costs going up?

November 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, one reason why is because the costs of elective treatments are being covered now, and that means that the costs for them are being distributed to everyone else.

Here's the leftist Washington Post to explain.

Excerpt:

> Aetna this week announced it will start covering gender reassignment surgery next year for federal workers on the insurer's plans. And the company said it will begin rolling out this coverage to many of its commercial plans over the next couple of years.
>
> For years, many health insurance plans have denied coverage for gender reassignment benefits. But with the medical community recognizing gender identity disorder as a diagnosable condition, there has been a growing acknowledgement recently among employers and policymakers that insurers need to be covering these treatments, which otherwise can carry prohibitive costs.
>
> Regulators in eight states and the District of Columbia now ban discrimination against treatments for gender reassignment. In the past four years, the number of large employers covering sex reassignment surgery in their health plans grew from 49 to 340, including at 28 percent of Fortune 500 firms, according to the Human Rights Campaign.
>
> This year, the U.S. government has weighed in considerably. In May, Medicare reversed a decades-old ban on covering gender reassignment surgery in response to a 2013 lawsuit. Advocates said the Medicare decision could put pressure on more insurers to ensure equal benefits for transgender Americans, who make up 0.3 percent of the adult population.
>
> […]Without insurance, the out-of-pocket costs for gender reassignment vary greatly. Some people may only need hormone therapy, which costs hundreds of dollars a year. The cost of surgery, for those needing it, could be tens of thousands of dollars.

The Washington Post is very much in favor of making this "covered".

Now when I think of health insurance, I think of car insurance. With car insurance, you pay when there is an accident. The collision is unexpected, but it is covered. But it is increasingly the case with health insurance that elective treatments are called "health care". I think the trend is that the number of these treatments will increase as more and more of these elective surgeries get added to the mandatory coverages. And if you look at other countries, IVF (some provinces of Canada) and breast enlargements (UK) are covered.

I certainly don’t want to pay for any of these “coverages” but as these treatments become mandatory coverages, I will be paying for them. Even if I don’t use them. My premiums will go up so that other people who do use it can have it without having to pay for it.

New study: picking a spouse who is conscientious is linked to career success

November 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the leftist Washington Post explains what young men should be looking for if they want to do well in the workplace.

Excerpt:

> A new paper published recently in the journal Psychological Science found a link between an individual's career improvement and the conscientiousness of his or her spouse.
>
> The research examined the careers and personalities of more than 4,500 married people, using a common personality test known as the Big Five. The test measures people on five different traits: extraversion (how outgoing and sociable a person is), agreeableness (how honest and sympathetic someone is, versus suspicious and unfriendly), conscientiousness (how well someone can plan and be productive, rather than be disorganized and impulsive), neuroticism (how anxiety-prone someone is) and openness (how naturally curious and open to change a person is).
>
> The researchers found that only one of the five traits — conscientiousness — could be linked to a partner's career success, as measured by job satisfaction, income and promotions. "Even though your spouse doesn't come to work with you day in and day out, their personality contributes to your job success," says Joshua Jackson, an assistant professor at Washington University in St. Louis.
>
> […][W]hen it came to the effect of a *spouse*'s personality traits on a person's career, only high scores on conscientiousness had any impact, whether positive or negative. Jackson suggests two main reasons for this: One, he says, is that people often emulate their spouses' behavior, meaning a husband's or wife's industriousness and organizational skills might rub off on the other.
>
> The second reason is that when a person's spouse is organized, efficient and hard working, they're probably tackling the bulk of the household chores, freeing their husband or wife up to focus more on his or her job. "You're not as stressed about certain chores or duties that need to be done while you're at work," Jackson says.

Now if the person you want to marry doesn't already have this skill, or hasn't exercised it so far in life, then that getting him or her to put it in practice should be part of the courting process – at least if you intend to be effective yourself. Don't be looking for someone fun who makes you feel good – look for someone organized and disciplined who can get things done and deliver results.

Tuesday is election day – please make sure you vote your values!

November 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I don't think that Frank Turek will mind me stealing his entire post from Cross Examined. He writes:

> **When I hear Christians saying we ought not get involved in politics but just "preach the Gospel," I show them this satellite picture of the Korean peninsula.** South Korea is full of freedom, food and productivity—it's one of the most Christianized countries in the world. North Korea is a concentration camp. They have no freedom, no food, and very little Christianity.
>
> **What's the primary reason for the stark difference between these two countries? Politics.** The South politically allows freedom, while the North does not.
>
> **Ironically, Christians who shun politics to supposedly advance the Gospel are actually allowing others to *stop* the Gospel. How so? Because *politics and law affects one's ability to preach the Gospel!*** If you think otherwise, visit some of the countries I have visited—Iran, Saudi Arabia and China. You cannot legally "preach the Gospel" in those countries—or practice other aspects of your religion freely—because politically they've ruled it out as they have in North Korea (it seems the mayor of Houston was about to start down that road recently).
>
> **With that in mind, I strongly encourage you get out to vote THIS Tuesday,November 4th, and support the candidates who best represent natural law values consistent with the Bible.** "For to whom much is given, much shall be required" (Luke 12:48). Voting is more than our opportunity to make a difference. It is a responsibility in being good stewards and protecting our freedom to spread the Gospel. In fact, I think every citizen should get informed and vote.
>
> **Go to http://www.christianvoterguide.com/** for a guide to see where the candidates stand on the most important issues.
>
> ***"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house."* (Matt. 5:14-15)**

We're seeing increasing hostility from the secular left against small government, strong families, the definition of marriage, border security, the economy, national security, our ally Israel and the unborn. Tuesday is your chance to do something about it.

Five reasons why Democrats win elections

November 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's election day today, so make sure you vote Republican.

Today, I wanted to highlight a few stories that show how it is that Democrats are able to win elections despite the fact that they are immoral on social issues, incompetent on fiscal issues, and irresponsible on foreign policy.

Voter fraud

Democrats get a big boost from voter fraud. Let me explain how easy this is to do in America.

Look:

> Filmmaker James O'Keefe has yet again demonstrated just how vulnerable our election system is to fraud.
>
> A Pew Center on the States study in 2012 found that one out of eight voter registrations is inaccurate, out-of-date, or a duplicate. Some 2.8 million people are registered in two or more states, and 1.8 million registered voters are dead.
>
> So O'Keefe decided to take some of the 700,000 "inactive" voters the Voting Integrity Project says are on the rolls in North Carolina, the site of one of the nation's most hotly contested Senate races, and see just how easy it would be to obtain a ballot in their name. Sadly, it was child's play as his video demonstrates.
>
> "Some twenty times, nearly a bus load, we were just a signature or two away from voting. Of course, we never signed anything, but we could have, and if we had, we could have voted and no one would have been the wiser," is O'Keefe's depressing conclusion.
>
> […]Last December, New York City's Department of Investigation detailed how its undercover agents claimed at 63 polling places to be individuals who were in fact dead, had moved out of town, or who were in jail. In 61 instances, or 97 percent of the time, they were allowed to vote. (To avoid skewing results, they voted only for nonexistent write-in candidates.) How did the city's Board of Elections respond? Did it immediately probe and reform their sloppy procedures? Not at all. It instead demanded that the investigators be prosecuted.

A Canadian friend of mine tells me that in Canada, you have to vote in your home precinct, and bring a photo ID. Once you vote, they cross your name off. That works. But if we did that, then Democrats would never win an election. And that's why Eric Holder and his buddies fight against measures to prevent voter fraud tooth and nail. That's the first reason why Democrats win elections.

Dirty Tricks

Not just that, but unions like to get involved, too:

> Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night may keep postal carriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds. But partisan politics, now that may be another matter altogether.
>
> An investigation has been launched into a Neenah postal carrier who allegedly dumped into a recycling bin hundreds of political advertisement mailers from the campaign of Mike Rorhkaste, Republican candidate for Wisconsin's 55th Assembly District,Rorhkaste tells Wisconsin Reporter.
>
> Neenah Postmaster Brian Smoot, who was alerted to the incident on Thursday, confirmed there is an ongoing investigation into the matter, and referred Wisconsin Reporter to the Office of the Inspector General for the U.S. Postal Service.

This kind of stuff happens all the time, when unions are involved.

Billionaire banksters

They're not Republicans, they're Democrats.

Excerpt:

> Meet Tom Steyer, the man being hailed as the "liberal analogue" to the Koch brothers in the political arena.
>
> The New York Times reported Tuesday that the hedge fund billionaire's super PAC — NextGen Climate Action – is set to spend in the neighborhood of $100 million in the 2014 midterm elections to back candidates who support policies Steyer's convinced himself will help stop global warming.

Yes, this is the same global warming that hasn't been happening for the last 18 years, but what do you expect from a non-scientist?

Media bias

Democrats get a big boost from the leftist media. Let me show you how media bias helps Democrats.

Look:

> Being Kay Hagan (or a member of her immediate family) is a pretty good gig if you can find it. As a Democratic senator, Hagan has significantly increased her net worth since getting elected and her husband, son, and son-in-law have received taxpayer funding for their businesses. Additionally, she appears to have convinced the local media that stories reflecting poorly on her are unfit for print.
>
> The *Charlotte Observer* is under fire from Republicans for pulling a story about Hagan and the stimulus grants her family received. After briefly posting a story about state government officials calling for a "legal review" of the grants—with the headline: "Memo: Grant given to company run by Sen. Hagan's husband needs 'legal review'"—the *Observer* erased the story from its website.
>
> Here is the cached version.

If you search for the story now, you get a 404. It will go up after the election, just like the truth about Fast and Furious, Benghazi, IRS persecution of conservatives, etc.

Scare-mongering

Republicans have been campaigning on repealing and replacing Obamacare, because people are seeing the effects of the law (higher premiums, fewer doctors, etc.).

Take a look:

> According to Kantar Media's Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG), Republicans ran nearly 12,000 anti-Obamacare ads in Senate races during the week of October 13-19.
>
> […]The top-5 issues for the GOP in Senate races for the week of October 13-19 were as follows:
>
> 1. Obamacare (nearly 12,000 ads)
> 2. Budget/Government Spending (nearly 9,000 ads)
> 3. Energy/Environment (nearly 7,000 ads)
> 4. Jobs/Unemployment (more than 6,000 ads)
> 5. Immigration (nearly 5,000 ads)

That's what Republicans want the election to be about.

But Democrats? Not so much:

> Campaign materials aimed at getting out the black vote are featuring references to lynchings, Jim Crow-era signs, racial unrest — and, as of last weekend, the Ku Klux Klan.
>
> In Alabama, fliers distributed in largely black communities warn voters to cast ballots or else "land may be given to extremist groups to honor klansmen." A copy of the flier was obtained by The Washington Times.
>
> The specter of the KKK was raised as the latest example of the increase in racially charged scare tactics aimed at bolstering turnout in the black community, a traditional Democratic voting bloc that strategists view as key to winning razor-thin races in an otherwise Republican year.
>
> Conservatives view the tactic with disgust. They argue that such race-baiting is condescending and assumes black voters are concerned solely with racism and not, for example, economic and foreign policy concerns.

Democrat politicians know how to appeal to their supporters – with scare-mongering, not facts.

Summing up

We need every Republican voter to vote today to counter this kind of nonsense in our elections. Make sure you do your part, and get your friends and family to vote as well.

What is the greatest achievement of the Obama administration?

November 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Newsbusters reports on the greatest accomplishment of the Obama administration.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> It is clear that a huge amount of growth in SNAP happened under Obama's watch.
>
> Increases in the size of SNAP were "unprecedented" since 2008, according to a report by the Manhattan Institute, the conservative, New York City-based think tank. The authors of the report, Diana Furchtgott-Roth, Senior Fellow, and Claire Rogers, Research Assistant, attributed this expansion to a combination of "the difficult job market" and an "expansion of benefits" starting in October 2008.
>
> Statistics released by USDA also showed the huge expansion of food stamps under Obama. In 2013, 20 percent of American households were enrolled in SNAP. Enrollment had increased from 32.2 million individuals in January 2009, to at least 46 million individuals during the last 35 straight months for available data. This upsurge represented a jump of more than 42 percent.
>
> Meanwhile, spending on SNAP benefits rose by nearly 120 percent, from $34.6 billion to $76.1 billion, between 2008 and 2013. The increase in spending far outpaced enrollment, and could be attributed to greater benefits handed out per person. "SNAP began to pay more generous benefits to people who enrolled" between 2007 and 2011, according to an analysis published on The New York Times' Economix blog Aug. 29, 2011.
>
> Economist Peter Ferrara agreed with labeling Obama the "food stamp President," calling out the administration's "anti-growth, economic policies, which are precisely crippling the poor and the middle class" in a Forbes article Dec. 31, 2013.
>
> While these increases were partly attributed to Obama's economic policies, they could also be linked to lax enrollment policies implemented by the president. These policies included waivers for healthy individuals with no dependents and who were not actively seeking work.
>
> "The food-stamp work waiver is part of a larger agenda. Poverty advocates have long sought to convert food stamps into a no-strings-attached entitlement," Heather MacDonald, Thomas W. Smith Fellow at the Manhattan Institute, wrote in a New York Post op-ed on May 15, 2014.
>
> Two Heritage Foundation fellows said that while part of the growth in SNAP could be attributed to the country's poor economic conditions, Obama has also increased the size of the program through his budget proposal.

> “Part of that growth is due to the recession, but under Obama’s proposed budget, food stamp spending will not return to pre-recession levels when the economy recovers. Instead, it will remain well above historic norms for the foreseeable future,” Robert Rector, Senior Research Fellow, and Katherine Bradley, Research Fellow, at Heritage wrote.

Of course, if you’re a Democrat, this is a feature, not a bug. They like Americans to be dependent on government, because then more of them vote for bigger government – and that means Democrats get to raise taxes and spend even more money they didn’t earn. That’s good news, but it gets even better – because then they give speeches about how generous they are! *With your money.*

Only 18% of Americans think race relations have improved under President Obama

November 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The IBD/TIPP poll was the most accurate in the 2012 presidential election, and now they found out something about race relations under President Obama.

Excerpt:

> Our latest poll suggests that far from healing America's racial wounds, the first black president has reopened them. Obama the uniter is actually the great divider.
>
> By an almost 3-1 margin, Americans say race relations have worsened under the man who was supposed to usher in a golden era of "post-racial" relations.
>
> Six years after electing the nation's first black president, a stunning 46% in the new IBD/TIPP Poll draw that conclusion compared to 18% who don't. Nearly one in four believe race relations have gotten "much worse" under President Obama, while 35% say they've stayed the same.
>
> The results corroborate a long-running poll on racial attitudes conducted by Hart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies since 1994. It records the steepest decline in positive views occurring over the last three years.
>
> Who can blame Americans for thinking the nation is more divided along racial lines?
>
> When our poll was taken in late October, respondents heard news that authorities in St. Louis are bracing for more senseless riots. Black street agitators bussed in from Chicago are spoiling for a race war, egged on by an attorney general who's tried to convince African-Americans that white cops like Darren Wilson are gunning for them, despite forensic and other evidence refuting such garbage.
>
> These polls also reflect campaign attack ads showing Obama-yoked Democrats resorting to shameless race-baiting in the final days of a congressional election that promises to repudiate them and their party leader.

People like me on the center right have been talking about policy failures, cover-ups and other mistakes for years since the Democrats took power, and yet the only response we ever get from Democrats is to be called "racists". Very curious in my case, since I have darker skin than Obama, and no white parents. In fact, if I ever met the man, I'd be sure to reply to all his criticisms of my views by calling him a racist. I think that's how Democrats talk.

Republican Scott Walker beats Mary Burke to win Wisconsin Governor race

November 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

The man Dennis Prager calls "the nemesis of the left" wins again.

Read it:

> With less than one-third of precincts reporting, ABC News and Fox News project that incumbent Republican governor Scott Walker has defeated Democratic challenger Mary Burke. While most of the polls showed a tight race (except for the Marquette poll that showed Walker winning by 7 points), Walker will likely win by a commanding margin.
>
> With a lot of votes left to be counted Walker leads Burke 58 percent to 41 percent. Walker's lead will shrink considerably as the votes are tallied, but he may be on track to win by a greater margin than he did during the 2010 Republican wave.
>
> Walker, who survived a 2012 recall election, which was spurred by backlash to his budget reforms, has now won election in Wisconsin (a state Obama carried twice) three times in four years. He now stands poised to be a serious contender for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination.

At my time of writing, it's 55-44 with 55.4% counted.

Read a little more about him:

> **Scott Kevin Walker** (born November 2, 1967 in Colorado Springs, Colorado) is the current conservative Governor of Wisconsin and a member of the Republican Party. Previously he was Executive of Milwaukee County and a member of the Wisconsin State Assembly, and while in college he ran a student pro-life organization. He faced a recall election on June 5, 2012 and won it by a landslide. By late May liberals were already beginning to blame each other for

> Walker's lead in the polls: "Top union officials are lashing out at Washington Democrats, claiming they haven't done enough to help them unseat Gov. Scott Walker (R) in Wisconsin's recall election."
>
> Scott Walker became a leader of conservatives nationwide when he supported and then signed into law a repeal of the collective bargaining rights of most government workers. Walker took this historic step to prevent the State from continuing on a path of financial ruin.
>
> Perhaps due to bad political advice, Walker first focused on union issues first and accomplished virtually nothing meaningful on the abortion issue in 2011, despite having overwhelming majorities on his side in the legislature. But in 2012 Walker began signing into law pro-life legislation, which earned him the support of many in the working class, and he then swept to a massive victory in the recall election.

He's my pick for the Republican nominee in 2016, and he is the most vetted Republican we have. They have tried EVERYTHING to beat this man in Wisconsin. Nothing sticks. All he does is win.

Related posts

- Wisconsin House passes Scott Walker's tax cut bill, headed to governor's desk
- Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker cuts taxes again, expects $1 billion surplus in 2015
- Wisconsin governor Walker's reforms hit the left in their wallets
- An interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
- Wisconsin judge defends free speech rights of conservative groups against Democrat censors
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Kenosha teachers vote to de-certify their teacher union, 63 – 37
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- What is a "right-to-work" law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues
- Democrat lawmakers flee state to avoid voting on spending cuts

Republican Tim Scott beats Joyce Dickerson in South Carolina Senate race

November 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Senator Tim Scott (R-SC)

The Tea Party News Network reported this Tuesday night:

> South Carolina Senator Tim Scott has been called the winner in this special election to retain the Senate seat to which he was appointed in January 2013 after then Senator Jim DeMint resigned to head the Heritage Foundation. The election was called early with Scott crushing his opponent, Democrat Joyce Dickerson, 52% to 46%, according to Fox News.
>
> When Scott was appointed, he became the first black senator from the South since Reconstruction. His defeat over Democrat opponent Randall Young helps Republicans in their quest to gain control over the Senate.
>
> During a speech at Howard University, an historically black college, Scott talked about the challenge of being a black Republican. He said, "Part of the challenge of being a black Republican anywhere is that you start off with people walking in with chips on their shoulder trying to figure out what is wrong with you. I hope that people will judge me on my agenda, what I say, and how I vote." It appears that the people of South Carolina have spoken and are supportive of the votes that Scott has made with his re-election.

The result was 61-37. He won by a bigger margin than Lindsay Graham did in the other Senate race.

Let's see what he is all about, although I blogged about him before:

> I am a strong supporter of our traditional conservative values. I believe that government should be protecting our right to religious freedom, not assaulting it.
>
> I am strongly pro-life, supporting the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act, Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, and the No Taxpayer Funding for

> Abortion Act. Since *Roe vs. Wade*, more than 50 million Americans have never had the opportunity to touch our soil, and that is a tremendous tragedy.
>
> As a cosponsor of the Health Care Conscience Rights Act, I have also been steadfast in supporting efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act's intrusion on American's religious beliefs. Government is already overreaching into our homes and businesses; it can't be allowed to do the same with our faith.
>
> The people of South Carolina have voted overwhelmingly to protect the traditional definition of marriage, and I stand with their decision.
>
> I regard all life as sacred, and am proud of our values and traditions. For this reason I am committed to protecting the unborn and continuing to take a stand in defending traditional and religious values.

I think when Christians have a candidate like this, they need to get out to the polls and vote. This guy is the perfect candidate for Christians.

UPDATE: Three black Republicans – one Senator, and two House representatives, were elected. ALL are pro-life.

Republican Joni Ernst beats Bruce Braley in Iowa Senate race

November 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Iowa senator Joni Ernst

NBC local news reports:

> Joni Ernst has been elected as the next U.S. Senator from Iowa. The Republican, a state Senator from Red Oak, defeated Democrat U.S. Representative Bruce Braley in one of the nation's closest watched elections.
>
> Ernst will fill the seat currently occupied by Senator Tom Harkin. Harkin, who has served in the U.S. Senate since 1985, announced in January 2013 that he would retire at the end of his term in January 2015.
>
> Recent polls had shown Ernst pulling ahead, a poll released by the Des Moines Register this weekend showed her with a seven point lead. A Quinnipiac University poll released Monday showed the race was tied at 47%.
>
> Ernst will be sworn in to the Senate in January.

Here's a bit of background on her:

> In 1989, a teenage college student from Iowa completed an agricultural exchange on a family farm in the Soviet state of Ukraine. Not surprisingly, as Joni Ernst retells it, the experience gave her a profound new appreciation for her home country — one that has colored her career choices to this day.
>
> "It was just such a difference between the United States and the opportunity we

had and what that family had in Ukraine," she told RealClearPolitics, citing the farm's lack of basic utilities such as a telephone and running water. (Residents had to use an outhouse behind the chicken coop, and the family shared a single bicycle in the absence of a car. Farm work was done through manual labor, supported by horses and wagons.) "That made such an impression on me when I came back to the United States and it was a matter of 'Oh, I love my country.'"

[…]Ernst's campaign is putting its focus on the candidate's varied life experiences, including 21 years in the U.S. Army Reserves and the Iowa Army National Guard and being a mother of three and grandmother of six. Indeed, Romney's endorsement highlighted her history as a "mother, soldier and proven conservative."

A company commander in Kuwait and southern Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 (and now a lieutenant colonel in the National Guard), Ernst says the grim realities she witnessed in Ukraine long ago sparked her interest in giving back to and supporting her own country.

"I felt that the military was a great way for me to do that, to defend the freedoms and opportunities that we have here in the United States," she explained. "I've loved it."

Nonetheless, Ernst recounts the hardships of serving in the Iraqi desert, including driving convoys in 142-degree temperatures and sandstorms that would sweep over the region. The situation was "just [a] pretty difficult environment, but you just adapt and you just roll with it," she recalled. "It was the greatest of experiences and it was the worst of experiences."

Those experiences are what drew some of Ernst's supporters to her side. Ruben Garza, an officer in the Iowa Army National Guard, said he sees the candidate's service as apt preparation for the U.S. Senate. "When you're a military leader, your actions and your words are highly scrutinized and you're expected to do what you say. I would expect, [if] Senator Ernst says she's going to achieve something, she's going to put 110 percent effort into achieving that."

Her personal story goes far beyond the Iraqi desert, of course. It can be traced back to the cornfields of Stanton, a farming town of about 700 in southwestern Iowa. The town's premier landmark is a water tower modeled after a traditional Swedish coffeepot, complete with a colorful floral design, handle and spout. Erected during Stanton's centennial in 1970, the tower is both a nod to the town's 19th-century Swedish immigrant heritage and a tribute to native daughter Virginia Christine, an actress featured in 1960s television commercials for Folgers Coffee.

Joni Culver, the second daughter of a farming couple, was born the same year the water tower was erected. Ernst and her campaign like to highlight her roots as a farmer's daughter, and she cited this aspect of her life when arguing for reduced government spending during a debate with other Republican candidates

> for the Senate: “As a farmer’s daughter, who grew up in southwest Iowa castrating hogs with her dad, I can go to Washington and cut pork,” she said to cheers from the audience.
>
> Among those familiar with Ernst during those early years is her sixth-grade teacher and campaign supporter, Rick Gustafson. He compares the candidate’s upbringing to “Little House on the Prairie,” where Mrs. Culver would sew young Joni’s and her older sister’s clothes. (He still has a pillow Ernst’s mother gave him, embroidered with the names of all 23 students in his class.) Moreover, Gustafson remembers his former pupil’s strong work ethic and that she learned to drive her father’s tractor, as well as being a model student in class.
>
> “Joni was one of those rare students that had high intellect, very, very good academic ability, and also had a high integrity in terms of doing the right things,” Gustafson told RCP. “She had all those and showed all those qualities at that time, even though she was still in those formative years.”
>
> Ernst first expressed that love by joining the Army Reserves and the National Guard, and she hopes to express it further by serving in the U.S. Senate. What makes her ambition especially noteworthy is that, should she win the GOP primary on June 3 and the general election in November, Ernst would become the first woman from Iowa to serve in Congress. Given the state’s long track record of moderate, independent-minded politics, one might be astonished to learn that only Iowa and Mississippi have yet to elect a woman to federal office or governor.

I think she has the background to be the first woman President one day! She is also pro-life.

Republicans get increased support from non-whites in mid-term elections

November 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> National House exit polls (summarized by CNN here and here) complicate the Democratic narrative of the "emerging electorate" set against Republican appeal limited to old white men. There was a "gender gap," but this time in Republicans' favor: Democrats outpolled Republicans among women, 52% to 47%, but Republicans' advantage among men was 56% to 42%. Republicans did better among voters over 45 and Democrats among those under 45, but Republicans still managed 43% of the under-30 vote.
>
> **Republicans attracted 10% of blacks, 35% of Latinos and 49% of Asian-Americans. The comparable figures in the 2012 presidential race, according to the New York Times, were 6%, 27% and 26%.**

I'm pretty impressed that the Republicans only lost women by 5%, and I bet they won married women by a landslide, as usual. It's nice to see that women were not unduly tricked by the "war on women" rhetoric.

Life News profiled some of the newly Republicans – all of them pro-life:

> Not only did pro-life candidates win huge election victories across the board last night, but black pro-life candidates won as well and helped undermine false criticism from the other side that somehow the pro-life issue is not one that resonates with African-Americans.
>
> In the deep South, South Carolina voters sent pro-life Republican Tim Scott back to the U.S. Senate, making him the first black candidate to win a statewide race there since just after the Civil War. Scott is also the first African-American senator from the South since Reconstruction.
>
> Scott's victory was so certain that his race was called moments after polls officially closed.
>
> […]Meanwhile, in Utah, Mia Love won her congressional race to become the first black Republican woman in Congress. Love is a proudly pro-life candidate who had strong support from pro-life groups.
>
> […]And in Texas, pro-life congressional candidate Will Hurd won his race, unseating Rep. Pete Gallego.

Hurd is a former *undercover* CIA operative. He specializes in cybersecurity and counterterrorism.

Republican Saira Blair

And if all that were not enough, an eighteen-year-old college student was elected to the West Virginia state legislature.

Excerpt:

> A West Virginia University freshman who did most of her campaigning out of her dorm room became the youngest state lawmaker in the nation Tuesday.
>
> Republican **Saira Blair**, a fiscally conservative 18-year-old, will represent a small district in West Virginia's eastern panhandle, about 1½ hours outside Washington, D.C., after defeating her Democratic opponent 63% to 30%, according to the Associated Press. A third candidate got 7% of the vote.
>
> In a statement, Ms. Blair thanked her supporters and family, as well as her opponents for running a positive campaign. "History has been made tonight in West Virginia, and while I am proud of all that we have accomplished together, it is the future of this state that is now my singular focus," she said.
>
> Ms. Blair campaigned on a pledge to work to reduce certain taxes on businesses, and she also holds pro-life and pro-gun positions.

Wouldn't it be great if conservative families were making a generation of young conservatives like her?

Chad Meister: can atheists rationally ground morality?

November 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Philosopher Chad Meister takes a look at the attempts of some prominent atheists to make rational sense of morality within their worldviews.

Here is the abstract:

> Atheists often argue that they can make moral claims and live good moral lives without believing in God. Many theists agree, but the real issue is whether atheism can provide a justification for morality. A number of leading atheists currently writing on this issue are opposed to moral relativism, given its obvious and horrific ramifications, and have attempted to provide a justification for a nonrelative morality. Three such attempts are discussed in this article: Walter Sinnott-Armstrong's position that objective morality simply "is"; Richard Dawkins's position that morality is based on the selfish gene; and Michael Ruse and Edward Wilson's position that morality is an evolutionary illusion. Each of these positions, it turns out, is problematic. Sinnott-Armstrong affirms an objective morality, but affirming something and justifying it are two very different matters. Dawkins spells out his selfish gene approach by including four fundamental criteria, but his approach has virtually nothing to do with morality—with real right and wrong, good and evil. Finally, Ruse and Wilson disagree with Dawkins and maintain that belief in morality is just an adaptation put in place by evolution to further our reproductive ends. On their view, morality is simply an illusion foisted on us by our genes to get us to cooperate and to advance the species. But have they considered the ramifications of such a view? Each of these positions fails to provide the justification necessary for a universal, objective morality—the kind of morality in which good and evil are clearly understood and delineated.
>
> […]We can get to the heart of the atheist's dilemma with a graphic but true example. Some years ago serial killer Ted Bundy, who confessed to over thirty murders, was interviewed about his gruesome activities. Consider the frightening words to his victim as he describes them:
>
> *Then I learned that all moral judgments are "value judgments," that all value judgments are subjective, and that none can be proved to be either "right" or "wrong"….I discovered that to become truly free, truly unfettered, I had to become truly uninhibited. And I quickly discovered that the greatest obstacle to my freedom, the greatest block and limitation to it, consists in the insupportable "value judgment" that I was bound to respect the rights of others. I asked myself, who were these "others"? Other human beings, with human rights? Why is it more wrong to kill a human animal than any other animal, a pig or a sheep or a*

steer? Is your life more to you than a hog's life to a hog? Why should I be willing to sacrifice my pleasure more for the one than for the other? Surely, you would not, in this age of scientific enlightenment, declare that God or nature has marked some pleasures as "moral" or "good" and others as "immoral" or "bad"? In any case, let me assure you, my dear young lady, that there is absolutely no comparison between the pleasure I might take in eating ham and the pleasure I anticipate in raping and murdering you. That is the honest conclusion to which my education has led me—after the most conscientious examination of my spontaneous and uninhibited self.[5]

While I am in no way accusing atheists in general of being Ted Bundy-like, the question I have for the atheist is simply this: *On what moral grounds can you provide a response to Bundy?* The atheistic options are limited. If morality has nothing to do with God, as atheists suppose, what does it have to do with? One response the atheist could offer is moral relativism, either personal or cultural. The personal moral relativist affirms that morality is an individual matter; you decide for yourself what is morally right and wrong. But on this view, what could one say to Bundy? Not much, other than "I don't like what you believe; it offends me how you brutalize women." For the personal relativist, however, who really cares (other than you) that you are offended by someone else's actions? On this view we each decide our own morality, and when my morality clashes with yours, there is no final arbiter other than perhaps that the stronger of us *forces* the other to agree. But this kind of Nietzschean "might makes right" ethic has horrific consequences, and one need only be reminded of the Nazi reign of terror to see it in full bloom. This is one reason why thoughtful atheists, such as Christopher Hitchens, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, and others don't go there.[6]

But what about cultural moral relativism—the view that moral claims are the inventions of a given culture? Most thoughtful atheists don't tread here either, and this is one reason why: If right and wrong are cultural inventions, then it would always be wrong for someone within that culture to speak out against them. If culture defines right and wrong, then who are you to challenge it? For example, to speak out against slavery in Great Britain in the seventeenth century would have been morally wrong, for it was culturally acceptable. But surely it was a morally good thing for William Wilberforce and others to strive against the prevailing currents of their time and place to abolish the slave trade. For the cultural moral relativist, all moral reformers—Wilberforce, Martin Luther King, Jr., even Jesus and Gandhi, to name a few—would be in the wrong. But who would agree with this conclusion? Thankfully, most leading atheists agree that moral relativism is doomed.[7]

So what do they affirm? Here are three accounts that recent atheists have defended: (1) objective morality simply "is," (2) morality is based on the selfish gene, and (3) morality is an evolutionary illusion.[8] Let's take a brief look at each

> of them.

Have you ever heard any of these three categories of objections? If so, click on through and see Chad Meister’s responses.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

November 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below, please find my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

Brian Auten has posted the MP3 audio of the debate at Apologetics 315.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary from tonight (February 1st, 2013).

If you like the summary below, please friend me on Facebook and/or follow me on Twitter.

Summary of the debate

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don’t know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates
- You didn’t need to come out on this cold night
- Craig’s arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn’t listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don’t require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that “every effect requires a cause”
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can’t see
- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig's three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism

5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said. Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means

everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals upholds marriage amendments in four states

November 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

GOOD NEWS! Ryan T. Anderson writes about it in The Daily Signal. (H/T WGB)

Excerpt:

> Earlier today, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit overruled lower court decisions that had struck down state laws defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman.
>
> The 6th Circuit Court ruled that constitutional amendments passed by popular vote in Michigan (2.7 million votes), Kentucky (1.2 million), Ohio (3.3 million) and Tennessee (1.4 million) do not violate the U.S. Constitution. Citizens remain free to define marriage as a male-female institution.
>
> Today's decision helpfully explained why these laws are constitutional, why it is reasonable for citizens to support such laws, and why arguments for court-imposed redefinition of marriage do not succeed. It also sets the stage for marriage to return to the U.S. Supreme Court.

This is a beautiful decision. It does NOT tell the people in the states what marriage is or is not. It simply says that the people in the states have to decide – NOT a handful of judges.

Look:

> As the 6th Circuit decision helpfully notes, at issue in these cases is "whether to allow the democratic processes begun in the States to continue in the four States of the Sixth Circuit or to end them now by requiring all States in the Circuit" to redefine marriage. The court ruled that the democratic process should continue:
>
> Our judicial commissions did not come with such a sweeping grant of authority, one that would allow just three of us—just two of us in truth—to make such a vital policy call for the 32 million citizens who live within the four states of the Sixth Circuit.
>
> […]A dose of humility makes us hesitant to condemn as unconstitutionally irrational a view of marriage shared not long ago by every society in the world, shared by most, if not all, of our ancestors, and shared still today by a significant number of the states.

Look what Ryan writes at the end:

> Today's decision pointed out that in our system of government, a change to marriage, if it should come, should occur "through the customary political processes, in which the people, gay and straight alike, become the heroes of their own stories by meeting each other not as adversaries in a court system but

> as fellow citizens seeking to resolve a new social issue in a fair-minded way."
>
> Indeed, "When the courts do not let the people resolve new social issues like this one, they perpetuate the idea that the heroes in these change events are judges and lawyers."
>
> […]Ultimately, the 6th Circuit ruled that it would not usurp the authority of the American people to discuss, debate and make marriage policy. The ruling argued that change could come in one of two ways: through a judicial usurpation of politics or through the political process. And the court rightly refused to take the former course. It would leave to the people the question of whether to take the latter.
>
> The court argued that it "is dangerous and demeaning to the citizenry to assume that *we*, and only *we*, can fairly understand the arguments for and against gay marriage." No, judges alone should not have this discussion—all Americans should.

We are so often bombarded with the *arrogance* of judges imposing laws on us from the bench, that it is amazing when we actually hear a judge doing what judges are supposed to do – interpret the laws passed by the representatives of the people. When you hear Republicans like George W. Bush talk about "strict constructionist" judges, these are the judges he means – interpreters of the law. When you hear the Democrats like Barack Obama talk about "the Constitution is a living document", they mean that judges make the law – not the people. We need to elect a President who believes that judges are not superior to the people's representatives.

I recommend printing out and reading the entire article. It's very good. It assesses the reasons for a state to define marriage, explains the concept of federalism, and assesses common objections to natural marriage. It's good for us to know how these arguments are used so we can talk about it.

You can also read the press release from Liberty Counsel, the law firm that argued the case for marriage.

UPDATE: More on the decision from Ed Whelan of National Review.

Republican senator Tim Scott pushes school choice in MSNBC interview

November 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I managed to find some of the transcript here on Newsbusters.

Let Tim Scott explain it:

> THOMAS ROBERTS: This is Thomas Roberts by the way. **You said you are concerned about kids that growing up in the wrong zip code** and — like yourself that had a tough start on the way out. **But if we look at agencies that are following some of your voting records, they have concern.** And the NAACP has given you an "F" on their annual scorecard. They also say that you voted against the ACA. You voted to hold Attorney General Eric Holder in contempt of Congress. You oppose the Congressional Black Caucus' budget. Delayed funding on a settlement between the U.S. and black farmers who say they were prejudiced against because of their race. **So how do you respond to that, if your true concern is about lower-income families and kids?**
>
> TIM SCOTT: Let's just ask ourselves if we look back over history when the congress was controlled by the **Democrats for 40 consecutive years. If we look at the result of that control, what has happened in black America? We saw greater poverty. If we take statistics from the 1970s to the 21st-century, what we see very clearly is that poverty's gone from 11% to 15%. These are classic examples of the policies of the left have not worked.** I will tell you, that if I have an "F" on the NAACP scorecard, it's because I believe progress has to be made and the government is not the answer for progress. I was a kid growing up in poverty. I had a mentor who was a Chick-fil-A operator named John Moniz who taught me that the brilliance of the American economy happens through business ownership and entrepreneurial spirit. So whether you own the business or not, **success is possible if you, a: have a good education, b: have a strong work ethic.** For the average person who can work. These two key components come together and form a foundation. **That is the way that you eradicate poverty. All the social programs that we've had. We have the largest government we've ever had in the history of the country. We have more nonprofit organizations working on the same issue. And yet we have higher percentage of people living in poverty.** The key it seems like is individual freedom and economic opportunity, fusing those together in an agenda that focuses on education seems to leave forward.

Elsewhere in the interview, he talks about how Indian-American Republican Governor Bobby Jindal has pushed hard for vouchers for the poor in Louisiana, and how the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship voucher program helped the poorest black students to get a

quality education – even though Barack Obama opposed it as a favor to their public sector union bosses.

See, here's the deal. If Republicans want to get serious about winning the votes of poor people and minorities, they don't have to pass policies that discriminate against the wealthy or against whites. They just have to *pass good policies.* It shouldn't matter what color anybody's skin is. School choice is a police that disproportionately benefits the poor and minorities, but it doesn't discriminate. You just hand money to the parents whose children are stuck in an underperforming public school, and then the parents decide where to send their child. This is better than forcing parents to have to send their kids to a failing public school. It is *not right* for a child to be handed a garbage education just because lazy unionized Democrats don't want to face competition from private schools. Kids come first!

Let's learn about school choice from the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation.

Cato Institute:

The Heritage Foundation:

Awesome!

This is how you build Republican voters and do the right thing *at the same time.* Republicans like to help the poor. But we also like to screw the public sector unions. Private unions are fine – public sector unions are poisonous. We have to destroy them and save the children, at the same time. Everybody wins! Well, except the Democrats.

Friday night detectives: I found two more episodes of Sherlock Holmes

November 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s Friday, so that means more mysteries.

Here are 2 episodes of “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes”.

The Dying Detective:

The Norwood Builder:

I think this might be the last two I can post, so look for something different next week.

Happy Friday!

Are people on the left really concerned about the basic rights of women?

November 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Feminists teach young women in the West a lot about all the evils of men and western society. Christianity is evil. Capitalism is evil. Men are all out to get women and take away their salaries and birth control and abortion rights. And Western men are all rapists. Feminists have defined rape so low now that even unwanted kisses are rape. It sure sounds like they are really concerned about women, right? The Western liberal media certainly talks a lot about the "War on Women" when it's election time.

Well, consider this story from Newsbusters.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> This is the real "War on Women."
>
> Iraqi News reported Nov. 3 on an ISIS document that supposedly listed the prices at which to sell Yazidi and Christian women and children abducted by the terrorist group. Citing economic reasons, ISIS listed the worth of a young woman at $85, of girl at $128, of a child – as young as a year old – at $171. Only a few media outlets covered the story. The feminist media didn't , maybe because free contraceptives weren't at issue.
>
> Translating the ISIS document, the news site revealed, "The market to sell women and spoils of war has been experiencing a significant decrease, which has adversely affected ISIS revenue and financing of the Mujahideen."
>
> In response, the group determined specific prices for women and children, while "vowing to execute whoever violates those controls." This is the worth of a human life, according to ISIS:
>
> - A woman, 40 to 50-years-old: 50,000 dinars. ($42.90)
> - A woman, 30 to 40-years-old: 75,000 dinars. ($64.35)
> - A woman, 20 to 30-years-old: 100,000 dinars. ($85.80)
> - A girl, 10 to 20-years-old: 150,000 dinars. ($128.70)
> - A child, 1 to 9-years-old: 200,000 dinars. ($171.60)
>
> New York Post, Daily Mail, RT, International Business Times, Opposing Views and Christianity Today are among the few outlets to report on the story.
>
> […]In reaction, Tearfund's Katie Harrison told Christianity Today about the "the hasty marriage ceremonies between buyer and the woman they've bought in order to justify his raping her."
>
> "And these are not just grown women," Harrison said. "The youngest girl we heard of being taken for rape was three years old."
>
> This is the war on women the media don't report on. Instead, feminist media

> prefer a “silly” war, where the goals are to ban the word “bossy,” demand free tampons and label abortion as “good” and “moral.”
>
> You’d think, at the very least, they would find time for this too.

Slavery is only a problem for Democrats if it is being used to bash white people from hundreds of years ago. It’s not something that causes them concern *today*. They just bring up slavery because they want “reparations” for themselves today. They don’t care if slavery is actually going on *now* to other people. Not their problem.

Now I can’t prove this, but I am willing to bet that all of these Sandra Fluke feminists vote Democrat, which means that they were in favor of withdrawing from the Middle East and letting the Islamists win. So how do they work that together with their supposed concern for women? Oh, I know. They don’t have concern for *women*, they have a concern for getting as much stuff as possible from others as they can. They care more about getting free abortion drugs for themselves than they do about these Yazidis being protected from rape. Or even about unborn women children. (Oh yes, feminists favor sex-selection abortions). That’s feminism, I guess.

Read Theodore Dalrymple's "Life at the Bottom" online for free

November 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I want to recommend that you read a book that is available online for free.

The author is a psychiatrist in a British hospital that deals with a lot of criminals and victims of crime. So he gets to see the worldview of the "underclass" up close, and to understand how the policies of the compassionate secular left are really working at the street level. The theme of the book is that the left advances policies in order to feel good about themselves, even though the policies actually hurt the poor and vulnerable far more than they help them. And the solution of the elites is more of the same.

The whole book is available ONLINE for free! From City Journal!

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Lots more essays are here, all from City Journal.

My favorite passage

The only bad thing about reading it online is that you miss one of the best quotes from the introduction. But I'll type it out for you.

> The disastrous pattern of human relationships that exists in the underclass is also becoming common higher up the social scale. With increasing frequency I am consulted by nurses, who for the most part come from and were themselves traditionally members of (at least after Florence Nightingale) the respectable lower middle class, who have illegitimate children by men who first abuse and then abandon them. This abuse and later abandonment is usually all too predictable from the man's previous history and character; but the nurses who have been treated in this way say they refrained from making a judgment about him because it is wrong to make judgments. But if they do not make a judgment about the man with whom they are going to live and by whom they are going to have a child, about what are they ever going to make a judgment?
>
> "It just didn't work out," they say, the "it" in question being the relationship that they conceive of having an existence independent of the two people who form it, and that exerts an influence on their on their lives rather like an astral projection. Life is fate.

This is something I run into myself. I think that young people today prefer moral relativists as mates, because they are afraid of being judged and rejected by people who are too serious about religion and morality. The problem is that if you choose someone who doesn't take religion and morality seriously, then you can't rely on them to behave morally and exercise spiritual leadership when raising children. And being sexually involved with someone who doesn't take morality seriously causes a lot of damage.

An excerpt

Here's one of my favorite passages from "Tough Love", in which he describes how easily he can detect whether a particular man has violent tendencies on sight, whereas female victims of domestic violence – and even the hospital nurses – *will not* recognize the same signs.

> All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.
>
> This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious

> young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.
>
> Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.
>
> This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.
>
> Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.
>
> At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how* they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

Go read the rest!

Pope Francis again demotes conservative cardinal who criticized him

November 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The story is from USA Today:

> In a move that reflects the loosening posture of the Vatican on major social issues, conservative U.S. cardinal Raymond Burke was removed by Pope Francis from yet another top post.
>
> Burke, who has long been vocal about denying communion to Catholic politicians who support abortion, was dismissed as head of the Holy See's highest court and given the post of Patron of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, a largely ceremonial job overseeing charity to the elderly.
>
> At 66, Burke is considered young by church hierarchy standards. The dismissal is a set-back to his Vatican career as well as a clear message from Pope Francis to those not hewing to his progressive view of the Catholic Church.
>
> The move was expected by Vatican watchers given that Burke, the former archbishop of St. Louis, had openly criticized Francis' less doctrinaire approach to the faith. Last year, Francis had removed Burke from the Congregation for Bishops, a group tasked with the appointment of new bishops worldwide.
>
> In an interview with a Spanish Catholic weekly published last week, Burke said of the pope's leadership: "Many have expressed their concerns to me. … There is a strong sense that the church is like a ship without a rudder."
>
> […]Philadelphia archbishop Charles Chaput recently characterized Francis' reign as one of "confusion," adding that "confusion is of the devil."

This isn't the first time Burke has been demoted by this Pope, either. It happened before in December 2013:

> Pope Francis moved on Monday against a conservative American cardinal who has been an outspoken critic of abortion and same-sex marriage, by replacing him on a powerful Vatican committee with another American who is less identified with the culture wars within the Roman Catholic Church.
>
> The pope's decision to remove Cardinal Raymond L. Burke from the Congregation for Bishops was taken by church experts to be a signal that Francis is willing to disrupt the Vatican establishment in order to be more inclusive.
>
> […]To replace Cardinal Burke, Francis chose Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington, an ideological moderate with a deep knowledge of the Vatican but also with pastoral experience. Father Reese noted that Cardinal Burke had been a leader of American bishops arguing that Catholic politicians who support abortion rights should be barred from receiving communion, while Cardinal Wuerl

> had taken an opposite tack.

I’m not Catholic, but Burke and Chaput are the two most conservative Catholic leaders in my opinion. As an outsider to the church, I prefer that Catholics try to be as conservative as possible, and not be influenced by the secular culture. I don’t expect them to be Bible-based like evangelical Protestants are, but I expect them to be resistant to the secular culture on things like abortion, gay marriage and the free enterprise system. This is disappointing to me, to go from Benedict to this. Benedict was a Pope I respected, but this Pope… I don’t like who he tries to make friends with.

William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech

November 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can grab the MP3 file of the lecture, or read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video. The essay is for Christians already familiar with basic apologetics.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

If you want to show this lecture and Q&A to your apologetics group, you can find the DVD here.

You can also read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor.

Midterm election: more American women choosing not to depend on government

November 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Congresswoman Elise Stefanik, age 29
From National Review.

Excerpt:

> A funny thing happened in the "war on women" — Mia Love and Joni Ernst won, Wendy Davis and Sandra Fluke lost. The representative who will be the youngest woman ever to have served in Congress, Elise Stefanik, is a Republican who won a formerly Democratic seat — not in Oklahoma or Texas but in New York. Senator-elect Ernst is a 21-year veteran of the Army Reserve and National Guard who served overseas during the Iraq war; Representative-elect Love, a daughter of Haitian immigrants who came to the United States fleeing the Tonton Macoutes, is a former city councilman and mayor of Saratoga Springs, Utah.
>
> The difference could not be more dramatic: The Democrats' vision of an American woman's life was best expressed in the Obama campaign's insipid "Julia" cartoons, in which a faceless, featureless woman at every crossroads in her life turns to the federal government, as personified by Barack Obama, for succor and support. From negotiating a salary to managing her pregnancy, Julia cannot do anything for herself — at every turn, she is reminded that she enjoys political patronage "under President Obama," in the campaign's psychosexually fraught and insistently reiterated phrase. So much for the Democrats. And the Republican women of 2014? They helped fight wars and made new lives for themselves on foreign shores. They were women who ran for office on policy

> platforms, not on their uteruses.
>
> […]Do women aspire to a life like Julia's, or to one more like that of Lieutenant Colonel Joni Ernst? Would you rather be a sanctimonious sack of woe, like Wendy Davis, or a happy warrior, like Mia Love? Would you rather vote for a party that speaks to you as a citizen, family member, entrepreneur, taxpayer, etc. — or one that insists you owe it not only your *vote* but your *obedience* simply because you have a certain configuration of chromosomes or a certain surname?
>
> It is one of life's little ironies that it is the feminists and the party of so-called women's issues who in the 21st century still have not quite figured out that women are individuals, and that there is more to them than the sum of their parts.

If there is any issue that the left thinks is important for women, it's the issue of abortion. You might expect that candidates who made a big deal of being pro-life would have lost in the mid-term elections. But Joni Ernst, Elise Stefanik and Mia Love are all pro-life. It looks like the War on Women rhetoric backfired. Maybe all it takes is for the GOP to put up more women candidates who have real, interesting lives. Maybe women would rather have an awesome life, an awesome marriage, and awesome kids instead of having abortions and being dependent on government. What if women voters were more attracted to the idea of achieving things on their own and forming relationships with real people?

Republican women are awesome.

Wisconsin Health Board declares that wind power is a public health risk

November 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Green Bay Gazette.

Excerpt:

> Brown County health officials have declared wind turbines a public health risk, but they haven't determined how to put their declaration into action.
>
> The county's Health Board this month declared the Shirley Wind Farm operated by Duke Energy Renewables poses a health risk to its neighbors in the town of Glenmore. Three families have moved out of their homes rather than endure physical illness they blame on the low-frequency noise the wind turbines generate, according to Audrey Murphy, president of the board that oversees the Brown County Health Department.
>
> […]Whatever happens, residents "are grateful to the Board of Health for reviewing the research and listening to the people of Brown County," said Susan Ashley, who also lives in the Shirley area and who has helped rally opposition to the wind farm through the years.
>
> Twenty families in the town have documented health issues since the wind farm started operated in 2010, Ashley said.
>
> Duke Energy Renewables was not invited to the health board's discussion and would have cited tests that determined sound levels from the wind generators were low and could not be linked to adverse health impacts, company spokeswoman Tammie McGee said. The company has not received any formal word about the board's declaration, McGee said.
>
> Dr. Jay Tibbetts, vice president of the Brown County health board and its medical adviser, said he knows of no science that proves there isn't a link between health problems and the low-frequency noise the giant fans produce.
>
> "There's been nothing that's debunked anything," he said. "As far as what's happening to these people, it doesn't make a difference whether you're in Shirley or Denmark, or Ontario, Canada. Forty people have moved out of their homes, and it's not just for jollies. In Shirley, three people have moved out of their homes. I know all three. They're not nuts. They're severely suffering."
>
> People might not be able to hear the sounds the Shirley turbines produce, but Tibbetts said he knows of a teenager living in the area who can tell when the turbines are off or on without being able to see them. Area residents or former residents report headaches, nausea and other symptoms they say are brought on by the turbines, and those symptoms clear up when the residents move elsewhere for a time, Tibbetts said.

Previously, I blogged about how wind power is a threat to birds – even rare, protected birds.

Excerpt:

> Wind energy facilities have killed at least 67 golden and bald eagles in the last five years, but the figure could be much higher, according to a new scientific study by government biologists.
>
> The research represents one of the first tallies of eagle deaths attributed to the nation's growing wind energy industry, which has been a pillar of President Obama's plans to reduce the pollution blamed for global warming. Wind power releases no air pollution.
>
> But at a minimum, the scientists wrote, wind farms in 10 states have killed at least 85 eagles since 1997, with most deaths occurring between 2008 and 2012, as the industry was greatly expanding. Most deaths — 79 — were golden eagles that struck wind turbines. One of the eagles counted in the study was electrocuted by a power line.
>
> The vice president of the American Bird Conservancy, Mike Parr, said the tally was "an alarming and concerning finding."

And this is not only something that Democrats know about – they are actually protecting these bird killers.

Look at this article from ultra-liberal PBS:

> The Obama administration said Friday it will allow some companies to kill or injure bald and golden eagles for up to 30 years without penalty, an effort to spur development and investment in green energy while balancing its environmental consequences.
>
> The change, requested by the wind energy industry, will provide legal protection for the lifespan of wind farms and other projects for which companies obtain a permit and make efforts to avoid killing the birds. An investigation by The Associated Press earlier this year documented the illegal killing of eagles around wind farms, the Obama administration's reluctance to prosecute such cases and its willingness to help keep the scope of the eagle deaths secret. The White House has championed wind power, a pollution-free energy intended to ease global warming, as a cornerstone of President Barack Obama's energy plan.
>
> In other areas, too, such as the government's support for corn-based ethanol to reduce U.S. dependence on gasoline, the White House has allowed the green industry to do not-so-green things. Another AP investigation recently showed that ethanol has proven far more damaging to the environment than politicians promised and much worse than the government admits today.
>
> Under the change announced Friday, companies would have to commit to take additional measures if they kill or injure more eagles than they have estimated

> they would, or if new information suggests that eagle populations are being affected. The permits would be reviewed every five years, and companies would have to submit reports of how many eagles they kill. Now such reporting is voluntarily, and the Interior Department refuses to release the information.

Just because something is called green, it doesn’t make it good for nature.

Planned Parenthood, an abortion business, is in California schools teaching sex education

November 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> A group of high school parents in the East Bay area of San Francisco were surprised and upset when they learned Planned Parenthood was teaching sex education to their children in the district's schools.
>
> […]Freshmen sit through a week of "comprehensive sex ed" presented by the California faction of the nation's largest abortion provider.
>
> "The staff and governing board believe Planned Parenthood does an excellent job," Acalanes Superintendent John Nickerson told KPIX. "The concerns that were raised are not merited."
>
> The district has partnered with Planned Parenthood for the past decade, he said, adding that sex education is not about politics.
>
> […]The NOISE Coalition said the school did not notify parents ahead of time, did not have an administrator present in the class, and did not have a formal contract with Planned Parenthood for parents to review, according to the Contra Costa Times.
>
> The district denied the allegations, except for the absent contract, but then signed one with the abortion giant after the fact.

Planned Parenthood makes money off of young people who buy abortions from them. Do you think they are telling children the truth about premarital sex, which creates the need for abortion? Their bottom line depends on them getting these kids to *need abortions*. It would be like having companies that sell alcohol teaching children about the effects of drinking.

Veteran’s Day re-post: Navy SEAL Michael Murphy awarded Medal of Honor

November 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Navy SEAL Michael Murphy wins Medal of Honor

For Veteran’s Day, I am re-posting one of my favorite Medal of Honor stories.

Here is the story of a brave Navy SEAL named Michael Murphy.

Excerpt:

> Engaged in a frenzied firefight and outnumbered by the Taliban, Navy Lt. Michael Murphy made a desperate decision as he and three fellow SEALs fought for their lives on a rocky mountainside in Afghanistan’s Kunar Province in 2005.
>
> In a last-ditch effort to save his team, Murphy pulled out his satellite phone, walked into a clearing to get reception and called for reinforcements as a fusillade of bullets ricocheted around him. One of the bullets hit him, but he finished the call and even signed off, “Thank you.”
>
> Then he continued the battle.
>
> Dan Murphy, the sailor’s father, said it didn’t surprise him that his slain son nicknamed “The Protector” put himself in harm’s way. Nor was he surprised that in the heat of combat his son was courteous.
>
> “That was Michael. He was cool under fire. He had the ability to process information, even under the most difficult of circumstances. That’s what made him such a good SEAL officer,” Murphy said.

> A warship bearing the name of the Medal of Honor recipient will be christened Saturday — on what would have been Murphy's 35th birthday — at Bath Iron Works, where the destroyer is being built.
>
> Murphy, who was 29 when he died, graduated from Pennsylvania State University and was accepted to multiple law schools, but decided he could do more for his country as one of the Navy's elite SEALS — special forces trained to fight on sea, air and land — the same forces that killed Osama bin Laden this week in Pakistan.
>
> […]Murphy, of Patchogue, N.Y., earned his nickname after getting suspended in elementary school for fighting with bullies who tried to stuff a special-needs child into a locker and for intervening when some youths were picking on a homeless man, said Dan Murphy, a lawyer, former prosecutor and Army veteran who served in Vietnam.
>
> Maureen Murphy said he thought he was too young to take a desk job as a lawyer. Instead, he went to officer candidate school, the first step on his journey to become a SEAL officer. He was in training during the Sept. 11 attacks, which shaped his views.
>
> His view was that there are "bullies in the world and people who're oppressed in the world. And he said, 'Sometimes they have to be taken care of,'" she said.
>
> On June 28, 2005, the day he was killed, Murphy was leading a SEAL team in northeastern Afghanistan looking for the commander of a group of insurgents known as the Mountain Tigers.

What happened to Murphy?

> The Operation Red Wings reconnaissance team rappelled down from a helicopter at night and climbed through rain to a spot 10,000 feet high overlooking a village to keep a lookout. But the mission was compromised the following morning when three local goat herders happened upon their hiding spot.
>
> High in the Hindu Kush mountains, Murphy and Petty Officers Marcus Luttrell of Huntsville, Texas; Matthew Axelson of Cupertino, Calif.; and Danny Dietz of Littleton, Colo.; held a tense discussion of the rules of engagement and the fate of the three goat herders, who were being held at gunpoint.
>
> If they were Taliban sympathizers, then letting the herders go would allow them to alert the Taliban forces lurking in the area; killing them might ensure the team's safety, but there were issues of possible military charges and a media backlash, according to Luttrell, the lone survivor.
>
> Murphy, who favored letting the goat herders go, guided a discussion of military, political, safety and moral implications. A majority agreed with him.
>
> An hour after the herders were released, more than 100 Taliban armed with AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades opened fire, attacking from higher elevation, and maneuvering to outflank the SEALs, said Gary Williams,

> author of “Seal of Honor,” a biography of Murphy.
>
> […]As the only survivor, Luttrell has pangs of regret for voting to go along with Murphy, his best friend; he now believes the team could’ve survived if the goat herders were killed.

He wasn’t willing to kill unarmed civilians. That’s the difference between the United States and the Muslim terrorists. It’s a moral difference. Michael Murphy was a good man. He used guns and violence to protect others, and he was not willing to kill unarmed civilians.

Here are the requirements for the Army version of the Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is awarded by the President in the name of Congress to a person who, while a member of the Army, distinguishes himself or herself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. The deed performed must have been one of personal bravery or self-sacrifice so conspicuous as to clearly distinguish the individual above his comrades and must have involved risk of life. Incontestable proof of the performance of the service will be exacted and each recommendation for the award of this decoration will be considered on the standard of extraordinary merit.

I once read an entire book on Medal of Honor award winners in World War II. It’s hard to read those stories, because these people who won the award did amazing acts of bravery, courage and self-sacrifice, but then most of them DIED. The stories almost always end in sadness and grief. Here’s the one that really stuck with me as an example.

On a happier note, what kind of ship do you think would suit Michael Murphy?

USS Michael Murphy DDG 112 Arleigh Burke

Michael Murphy is getting a brand new Arleigh Burke guided missile destroyer! Arleigh Burke vessels have the AEGIS missile defense system and their role is to protect carrier strike groups from incoming SSMs and ASMs.

Excerpt:

> The Arleigh Burke Class destroyers are equipped with the Aegis combat system which integrates the ship's sensors and weapons systems to engage anti-ship missile threats.
>
> The Aegis system has a federated architecture with four subsystems – AN/SPY-1 multifunction radar, command and decision system (CDS), Aegis display system (ADS) and the weapon control system (WCS). The CDS receives data from ship and external sensors via satellite communications and provides command, control and threat assessment. The WCS receives engagement instruction from the CDS, selects weapons and interfaces with the weapon fire control systems.
>
> […]Lockheed Martin is developing the Aegis ballistic missile defence (BMD) capability for the Aegis combat system to engage ballistic missiles with the SM-3 missile. 15 Arleigh Burke destroyers have been fitted with the Aegis BMD system, which provides the capability for long-range surveillance, tracking and engagement of short and medium-range ballistic missiles. The system received US Navy certification for full deployment in September 2006. Work was completed on the 15 destroyers at the end of 2008 and the vessels, with three Ticonderoga cruisers, form the Aegis BMD fleet. On 30 July 2009 the Aegis BMD system was successfully tested by the US Navy on the USS Hopper (DDG 70).Aegis BMD is the main sea-based component of the US ballistic missile defence system.
>
> The weapons control systems include a SWG-1A for Harpoon, SWG-3 for Tomahawk, mk99 mod 3 missile fire control system, GWS34 mod 0 gun fire control system and mk116 mod 7 fire control system for anti-submarine systems.

Only two classes of warships that I know of have the AEGIS system. The DDG Arleigh Burke and the CG Ticonderoga.

Michael Murphy was a real hero. It makes me sad that he is gone. But his spirit will live on in the new warship that bears his name.

Video: Obamacare architect admits deceiving the public was needed to get it passed

November 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News reports.

Excerpt:

> A key architect of Obamacare has been caught openly boasting about taking advantage of, what he calls, "the stupidity of the American voter."
>
> MIT economics professor Jonathan Gruber spoke at a panel on October 17 on the political hurdles Obamacare faced in 2009-10. The video was unearthed and posted on Youtube by **American Commitment**.
>
> Gruber was **instrumental** in crafting the legislation that was signed into law in March 2010.
>
> In the midst of his explanation, Gruber bragged about the multiple deceptions the Obama White House perpetrated on the American people:
>
> "This bill was written in a tortured way to make sure CBO did not score the mandate as taxes. If CBO scored the mandate as taxes, the bill dies. So it was written to do that. In terms of risk related subsidies, if you had a law which made explicit that healthy people pay in and sick people get money it would not have passed. Lack of transparency is a huge political advantage. And basically, call it the stupidity of the American voter or whatever, but basically that was really, really critical to get the thing to pass."
>
> This is a jaw dropping disclosure of the political lengths those in the Obama Administration were willing to go to avoid the hard truths about their signature legislative achievement.

This story is in the news, but this isn't the first time I've blogged about Gruber.

Last November, I wrote about an interview with Jonathan Gruber.

Gruber said this:

> "We currently have a highly discriminatory system where if you're sick, if you've been sick, if you are going to get sick, you cannot get health insurance," Gruber told host Chuck Todd. "The only way to end that discriminatory system is to bring everyone into the system and pay one fair price. That means that the genetic winners, the lottery winners, who've been paying their artificially low price because of this discrimination, now will have to pay more in return. And that, by my estimate is about 4 million people. In return, we'll have a fixed system where over 30 million people will now, for the first time, be able to access fairly priced and guaranteed health insurance."

So if I'm a man who chooses not to use drugs, I am a genetic winner, and I need to pay more to cover the substance abuse treatment coverage for those genetic losers who do choose to use drugs. If I'm a man, who doesn't want to be a woman, I have to pay more in insurance to cover the sex-change surgery of men who do want to be women. If I'm a man who marries and has kids, I have to pay for the IVF of the career feminists who never marry and wait until they are 40 and want suddenly want IVF. And so on.

So according to Gruber, this law was about redistributing wealth *from the beginning.*

Imagine Obamacare applied to auto insurance. It would be like paying more for your auto insurance on a low-risk SUV to cover people who drive expensive motorcycles, which are more risky. You aren't subject to high risk, but your must pay for those who are. That was the whole point of the law. And eventually, more mandatory coverages will be added for politically correct treatments like IVF, breast enlargements and sex changes, as is done in other socialized health care systems in the UK (breast enlargements, IVF) and some provinces in Canada (sex changes).

Think about that when the insurance premiums for Obamacare exchange plans finally get published and the premium are much higher. They. Knew.

UPDATE: The Daily Caller reports that University of Pennsylvania has now pulled the video but the one I linked to above is still live.

Huffington Post leftist credits black Republican woman's election win to "white privilege"

November 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Congresswoman Mia Love

The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> Mia Love, the former mayor of Saratoga Spring, Utah, won her race for Utah's 4th congressional district Tuesday and will now be the first black Republican woman (and first Haitian-American) to sit in the United States Congress.
>
> The heads of leftists have been exploding ever since Love's victory as they attempt to come to grips with how a black woman could champion bedrock conservative principles such as fiscal discipline, limited government and personal responsibility.
>
> The most fascinating treatise about Love — thus far —comes via The Huffington Post where Darron Smith, a desperately confused blogger with a Ph.D. in education, accuses Love of benefitting from a form of "white privilege."

Education departments are an excellent place to go if you want to learn nothing at all of practical value, but borrow a lot of money to do it. It's maybe not as useless as English, but it's pretty useless.

More:

> […][Smith] can't understand, though, how Love doesn't agree with his own political ideology. Because she disagrees with him, he declares that the principles she espouses go against her interests — because of the color of her skin and the sexual organs she possesses.
>
> "Love's political convictions show a strong support for values that do not necessarily represent her interests as a member in any of these oppressed groups," Smith writes. "For example, blacks are not doing well with respect to

> education, economics and health outcomes, while women still trail behind in salary and significant positions of power, and conservative politics are not typically known to aid these groups in such key issues. These actualities of Mia's existence seem to be diametrically opposed to her values that are grounded in a white, male, Christian context."
>
> Smith then lays down his blogger coup de grâce:
>
> "She appears publicly unhampered by the daily grind of white racism that affects other racial minorities within the United States," he proclaims. "Unlike most of them, Mia gets to walk through the hallowed doorways of white institutions controlled by elite, powerful men. She is allowed to pass through in her black, female body with the understanding that she must not see, speak or openly advocate for anything related to race or gender — an unholy compromise. Hence, she might look black, but her politics are red. This is one way white privilege is reproduced at the legislative level of government."
>
> "Mia and others like her are seemingly out of touch with the political realities of African Americans and what remains at stake for them," the blogger concludes, hastening to add that "[i]t would be a mistake to assume that all black people are monolithic and share the same political inclinations."

I think I know why Democrats are losing elections. They are so focused on learning how to recognize racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. in university that they forget how to advocate for policies that actual work for normal people. People who work for a living instead of doing PhDs in Education, for example. So then, when a Republican talks about economic growth, stronger families, school choice, national security, lower health care costs, developing energy resources, reducing the national debt, etc., and wins an election, it really confuses the left. They think that people should win elections by focusing on "important things" like race divisions, class divisions, sex divisions, and most important – FREE BIRTH CONTROL! That's what they think are the important things – that's what they learned in university. They are so focused on ideology that they can't understand that elections are about right-sizing government so that working people's lives *improve*. Mia Love won her election *on the merits*. But the secular left can't make any sense of it.

Who thinks that it’s OK to buy and sell human beings?

November 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> Having children is currently our only legal path to achieving both genetic and memetic immortality. But having kids isn’t easy. You have to find a mate. You have to look outside yourself and into the eyes of another person and convince him or her of your decency, your desirability.
>
> […]There are two categories of infertility: clinical and social. Clinical infertility arises from physical medical problems. Social infertility occurs when someone is unwilling or unable to attract someone of the opposite sex to procreate with.
>
> Studies indicate that up to 15 percent of couples of childbearing age are clinically infertile. Much of this is due to our toxic environment, pollution, and unsafe chemicals, but there is also something to be said about our toxic behavior. At least one quarter of female infertility is a direct result of sexually transmitted infections.
>
> The sperm bank industry initially began as a mission in eugenics, but ballooned due to our unspoken epidemic in low sperm count. Clinically infertile heterosexual couples began quietly using donated sperm. After a while, they began to be open about using donated sperm and insisted that biology doesn’t make a difference for the child’s well-being.
>
> Then lesbian couples began using sperm donors. They argued, if biology doesn’t matter for a child’s well-being, then why should a parent’s gender? They declared that parenting is a set of tasks and obligations, and women can fulfill those tasks just as well as men can. Single-moms-by-choice followed, saying if biology and gender don’t matter, why should the number of caretakers?
>
> So what happens when fathers become disposable? *Public Discourse* readers are well aware that fatherlessness invites a stark range of social ills. For instance, 90 percent of homeless and runaway youth come from fatherless homes, as do over 80 percent of rapists with anger problems. Now, those who promote fatherlessness via sperm donation are celebrating motherlessness via egg vending and surrogacy.
>
> Think motherhood is sacred? One surrogate pregnancy can generate $100-300,000. Today, the motherless child has become the fertility industry’s most lucrative enterprise.
>
> Because this is an industry, we shouldn’t be surprised that fertility industry professionals are trying to *industrialize* the process and do things more

> efficiently. Surrogacy attorney Theresa Erickson was an "industry sweetheart" until she was convicted of baby-selling. Rather than waiting for commissioning parents to sign a contract before conception, Theresa expedited the process. She shopped for egg and sperm donors on her own and found surrogates to impregnate. Then, *after* the baby reached the second trimester, she would find parents, lie to them and tell them the original couple had backed out, and charge up to $180,000 per child. She created thirteen babies this way.
>
> The only thing illegal about what Erickson did—the only reason she was put in jail for baby-selling—is that the paperwork was done *after* conception rather than before.
>
> At a workshop where I once was on a panel with Theresa, she justified separating children from their parents by commenting that her mother was adopted, so what's the difference? Most people I speak to relate third-party reproduction to adoption just as she did.
>
> We've accepted adoption as a good. And adoption can often be very good; it is an institution that finds parents for helpless children who desperately need a decent home. But, at some point, our concept of adoption slid. Many people now think of it primarily as a way of "getting" kids. We know that adoption is made possible by the fact that the relationship between biological parent and child has been severed. So if adoption is good, some reason, then the severing of that relationship must at least be neutral.
>
> But it is not neutral. It's actually very sad.
>
> Adoption is only morally sound as an institution that provides a loving home for *existing* children who—for some uncontrollable reason—cannot be raised by their biological parents. Third-party reproduction is inherently unethical, because it serves as a market to manufacture children for any adult who wants them, purposely severing the biological parent-child relationship for the sake of profit.

I hate to write about these things without offering some solutions, but it's hard to come up with solutions when there are so many powerful, wealthy people wanting to buy and sell other human beings. How am I supposed to stop that? But I actually do have a course of action, even if it's just a shot in the dark.

My thinking is that we need to be focused on courting properly and having strong marriages, and being more open about showing off the love in our marriages and homes. I think that Christians need to take courting and marrying more seriously as a witness to the watching world. We need to be more serious about how our partnerships can influence the outside world by setting a standard for love of spouse and love of children. If people knew that there was a real difference if you do marriage right – the right pre-marital behaviors, the right courting, the right commitment – then maybe they would learn to be more careful and less selfish with children. It might help people to think more carefully about their own plans and focus on making decisions that will allow them to welcome children into the world and give them what they need.

As record cold and snow hits US, Obama set to solve global warming by executive action

November 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, it looks like the Midwest is going to be hit with unexpectedly large amounts of snow and record cold.

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> Residents across the Rockies and Upper Midwest dug out from under a foot or more of snow on Tuesday, after waking up to frigid temperatures that plunged as much as 50 degrees overnight. The rest of the Midwest and the East are expecting a dose of the icy weather later this week thanks to a powerful storm that hit Alaska with hurricane-force winds over the weekend.
>
> […]Michigan's Upper Peninsula was buried under more than 14 inches of snow — with at least another foot expected before the storm moves out Wednesday. As much as 13 inches of snow fell in northern Wisconsin, while some Minnesotans awoke to 15 inches of fresh powder, with more snow expected.
>
> The weather prompted school closures across the region, including at Northern Michigan University. Multimedia journalism student Mikenzie Frost said she was headed out the door to figure skating practice early Tuesday when she got a text from the school saying classes were cancelled.
>
> […]The blast of frigid air crawled all the way to the Texas Panhandle, where temperatures tumbled overnight from the 70s into the teens. In Oklahoma City, where Monday's high was 80 degrees, the low Tuesday morning was 30 degrees — a 50-degree drop — while similar balmy weather in Missouri was replaced by temperatures in the 20s, along with a light dusting of snow.
>
> The region's coldest temperatures hit the Dakotas, where single-digit temperatures — already about 30 degrees below normal — came with frigid wind chills dipped into the negative 20s in Dickinson, North Dakota.
>
> […]Residents of Glenrock, Wyoming, aren't as lucky. More than 1,000 buildings in the town lost service because of a pipeline problem, and temperatures were hovering between zero and 5 degrees in some parts of the state.
>
> In Colorado, temperatures fell into the teens — about 20 to 30 degrees below normal — where they're expected to stay through Thursday, prompting officials to move a Veteran's Day ceremony indoors in Denver.
>
> […]Roads in parts of northern Michigan were in "very poor condition," with 2 to 3 inches of snow falling an hour on Tuesday morning, National Weather Service meteorologist Justin Titus said. But there were no delays reported Tuesday at Sawyer International Airport in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

> Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport saw the brunt of the cancellations and delays Monday, with about 175 cancellations, while about 19 had been cancelled Tuesday out of hundreds of flights, according to the airport.
>
> Elsewhere in Minnesota, the State Patrol said at least two people were killed in accidents on icy roads, and troopers handled 475 crashes and more than 700 spinouts statewide by Monday evening. In eastern Wisconsin, snow-covered roads were blamed for a school bus crash that sent the driver and an aide to a hospital, WBAY-TV reported.

This sounds like January or February weather, so what is it doing here in early November?

The radically leftist Politico has some news about Obama's response to this global warming, now that the midterm elections are over.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration is set to roll out a series of climate and pollution measures that rivals any president's environmental actions since George H.W. Bush signed a rewrite of the Clean Air Act in 1990 — a reality check for Republicans who think last week's election gave them a mandate to end what they call the White House's "War on Coal."
>
> Tied to court-ordered deadlines, legal mandates and international climate talks, the efforts scheduled for the next two months show that President Barack Obama is prepared to spend the remainder of his term unleashing sweeping executive actions to combat global warming. And incoming Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell will have few options for stopping the onslaught, though Republicans may be able to slow pieces of it.
>
> The coming rollout includes a Dec. 1 proposal by EPA to tighten limits on smog-causing ozone, which business groups say could be the costliest federal regulation of all time…
>
> […]**On top of all that, the administration is expected in the coming weeks to pledge millions of dollars — and possibly billions — to help poor countries deal with the effects of climate change.**

Now one thing people need to understand is that any kind of tax increase or burdensome regulation costs businesses money, and they pay for these setbacks by laying off workers and/or raising prices and/or shipping jobs overseas. In fact, environmental regulations are *exactly* the kind of thing that would cause companies to outsource and offshore their operations.

The Washington Times re-caps Obama's record on energy policy.

Excerpt:

> President Obama has intentionally hamstrung domestic energy production under the delusional theory that the U.S. economy can thrive on so-called green power. As Mideast turmoil threatens the oil supply, the price of domestic crude has

> jumped above $100 a barrel and gas at the pump now exceeds $3.46 a gallon. This shows just how dangerous the Obama administration's economic and energy policies can be to our wallets.
>
> There can be no doubt that the president took deliberate action to block access to the nation's energy resources. A federal judge recently found the Interior Department in contempt for ignoring his order overturning the oil-drilling moratorium the administration imposed following the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. On Feb. 22, Judge Martin Feldman upped the pressure by insisting that the department act on five pending permits within 30 days. Permits that would, under normal circumstances, be processed in two weeks have been ignored for four to nine months. "Not acting at all is not a lawful option," Judge Feldman wrote. The department had no choice but to issue the first permit since the spill on Feb. 28.
>
> Interior pinned the blame for delays on technical problems. Yet, as the department dithered, oil companies atrophied and employees lost work. According to a study released in January by the business alliance Greater New Orleans, Inc., the moratorium cost Louisiana about 25,000 jobs. Houston-based Seahawk Drilling, the most recent victim of the drilling ban, announced Feb. 18 that it had filed for bankruptcy and agreed to a buyout from a competitor. The jobs of the company's 494 employees are in jeopardy, according to USA Today.

All this activity to stop global warming, which John Kerry considers to be a bigger threat than terrorism, even though we have had no global warming for the last 18 years.

Students sue school for stopping them from praying during recess

November 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Todd Starnes of Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Chase Windebank, a senior at Pine Creek High School in Colorado Springs. (Courtesy of Alliance Defending Freedom)

> Christian students at a Colorado public high school were told they could no longer meet to pray, sing religious songs or discuss religious topics during free time – because such activity violated the U.S. Constitution, a lawsuit filed in federal court alleges.
>
> Chase Windebank is a senior at Pine Creek High School in Colorado Springs. Three years ago he started meeting together informally with his classmates for prayer and religious fellowship. The young people would meet in an unoccupied choir room to sing songs like "Amazing Grace" and discuss the issues of the day from a religious perspective.
>
> But all that changed on Sept. 29th when Chase was summoned to the office of Assistant Principal James Lucas.
>
> Chase Windebank is a senior at Pine Creek High School in Colorado Springs. Three years ago he started meeting together informally with his classmates for prayer and religious fellowship. The young people would meet in an unoccupied choir room to sing songs like "Amazing Grace" and discuss the issues of the day from a religious perspective."He was told that he could no longer pray with his fellow students during free time because of the separation of church and state," said Jeremy Tedesco, an attorney representing the teenager.
>
> Tedesco is with Alliance Defending Freedom, a law firm that specializes in handling religious liberty cases.
>
> "He was told that he could pray before the school day begins or after the school day ends but he could not do it during the school day," Tedesco told me.
>
> To make sure Chase got the message – he was hauled into Principal Kolette Back's office the following day where it was "reaffirmed that his religious speech could not take place during the open time" known as a "Seminar" period.
>
> The lawsuit states: "Defendants Back and Lucas stated that because of the separation of church and state and because they regarded the Seminar period as instructional time, they were banning students' discussion of issues of the day from a religious perspective during the open time of Seminar period."
>
> Pine Creek is a part of Academy School District No. 20. A spokesperson for the

> district confirmed that the group was told to disband in accordance with state law.

It's not just Christians who are facing sanctions from education administrators, it's conservatives, too.

Excerpt:

> In the wake of a standing room only event with conservative leader Bay Buchanan on the topic of immigration, the Virginia Tech Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) Chapter has been informed that they will not receive funding for the next two semesters.
>
> Lauren McCue, the Chair of her YAF Chapter, requested funding from the Student Budget Board and received it for her club's event with Bay Buchanan. Buchanan was the youngest person ever to serve as Treasurer of the United States, author of two books, and has an extensive career in public policy. The morning after Buchanan spoke, the event made the front page of the school newspaper—apparently administrators didn't like the "controversy" and "stir" that it caused on campus.
>
> Lauren was also told that their fliers went "too far" because the event was advertised as "Alien Invasion: How Illegal Immigration is Hurting America," and while the fliers drew in a large crowd, it was "offensive" to some student groups.
>
> Apparently, the discussion on immigration with the former Treasurer of the United States irked some liberal administrators at Virginia Tech. The Student Budget Board contacted Lauren to tell her that her club would not be funded for the next two semesters because her event "violated the principles of community."

Now, I'm pretty sure that these administrators have no problem with secular leftist groups doing events that offend conservatives.

The importance of having a narrative when confronting the assumption of naturalism

November 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How do you present theism as a rational belief to a person who thinks that the progress of science has removed the need for God?

Canadian science writer Denyse O'Leary writes about the history of cosmology at Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> What help has materialism been in understanding the universe's beginnings?
>
> Many in cosmology have never made any secret of their dislike of the Big Bang, the generally accepted start to our universe first suggested by Belgian priest Georges Lemaître (1894-1966).
>
> On the face of it, that is odd. The theory accounts well enough for the evidence. Nothing ever completely accounts for all the evidence, of course, because evidence is always changing a bit. But the Big Bang has enabled accurate prediction.
>
> In which case, its hostile reception might surprise you. British astronomer Fred Hoyle (1915-2001) gave the theory its name in one of his papers — as a joke. Another noted astronomer, Arthur Eddington (1882-1944), exclaimed in 1933, "I feel almost an indignation that anyone should believe in it — except myself." Why? Because "The beginning seems to present insuperable difficulties unless we agree to look on it as frankly supernatural."
>
> One team of astrophysicists (1973) opined that it "involves a certain metaphysical aspect which may be either appealing or revolting." Robert Jastrow (1925-2008), head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, initially remarked, "On both scientific and philosophical grounds, the concept of an eternal Universe seems more acceptable than the concept of a transient Universe that springs into being suddenly, and then fades slowly into darkness." And Templeton Prize winner (2011) Martin Rees recalls his mentor Dennis Sciama's dogged commitment to an eternal universe, no-Big Bang model:

> For him, as for its inventors, it had a deep philosophical appeal — the universe existed, from everlasting to everlasting, in a uniquely self-consistent state. When conflicting evidence emerged, Sciama therefore sought a loophole (even an unlikely seeming one) rather as a defense lawyer clutches at any argument to rebut the prosecution case.

> Evidence forced theorists to abandon their preferred eternal-universe model. From the mid 1940s, Hoyle attempted to disprove the theory he named. Until

> 1964, when his preferred theory, the Steady State, lost an evidence test.

Here is a quick summary of some of the experimental evidence that emerged in the last few decades that caused naturalists to abandon the eternal universe that they loved so much when they were younger.

The importance of having a narrative

Now I want to make a very, very important point about Christianity and the progress of science. And that point is that it is very important that Christians present the evidence in exactly the way that Denyse presented it in that article – in its historical context, featuring the conflict between naturalists and the experimental evidence.

All Christians should be familiar with the following basic pieces of evidence which fit the war between science and naturalism narrative:

1. The origin of the universe
2. The cosmic fine-tuning
3. The origin of life (biological information)
4. The sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla
5. The habitability/observability correlation

When you talk about these evidences as a Christian theist to non-Christians, you have to have cultivated a genuine interest in reconciling your beliefs with science. You have to accept that there are two books that reveal God's character and attributes. The book of nature, and the book of Scripture. And you need to be flexible about getting these two books to fit together. The book of nature gives us natural theology (see Romans 1). It tells us that God is Creator and Designer. The book of Scripture tells us that God stepped into history as a man to save us by taking the punishment for our headlong rush away from God, which the Bible calls sin. Science is one way that humans can recover some of basic knowledge about God. Knowledge that is only possible because God created and designed the universe (and us) in such a way that we are capable of making discoveries, and that the universe is capable of being explored and understood.

It's very important to present these five basic evidences to non-Christians in the historical context. And here is the story you must tell: "In the beginning, there was the naturalism, and the naturalism tried to argue from ignorance that God was not Creator and God was not Designer. And then came the science, and now people have to give up their naturalism in order to not be crazy and irrational". That's the narrative you use when talking to non-Christians about science.

In the beginning was the naturalism:

1. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the universe was eternal
2. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that a life-permitting universe was as likely as a life-prohibiting universe
3. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the cell was a simple blob of jello that could spontaneously emerge in some warm pond

4. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla would be explained by subsequent fossil discoveries
5. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that there was nothing special about our galaxy, solar system, planet or moon

But then science progressed by doing experiments and making observations:

1. Scientists discovered redshift and the cosmic microwave background radiation (evidence for a cosmic beginning) and more!
2. Scientists discovered the fine-tuning of gravity and of the cosmological constant and more!
3. Scientists discovered protein sequencing and exposed the myth of "junk DNA" and more!
4. Scientists discovered an even shorter Cambrian explosion period and the absence of precursor fossils and more!
5. Scientists discovered galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones and more!

And now rational people – people who want to have true beliefs about reality – need to abandon a false religion (naturalism).

Now naturally, science is in a state of flux and things change. But you have to look at the trend of discoveries, and those trends are clearly going against naturalism, and in favor of Christian theism. No one is arguing for a deductive proof here, we are simply looking at the evidence we have *today* and proportioning our belief to the concrete evidence we have *today*. People who are guided by reason should not seek to construct a worldview by leveraging speculations about future discoveries and mere possibilities. We should instead believe what is more probable than not. That's what a *rational* seeker of truth ought to do. Proportion belief to probabilities based on current, concrete knowledge.

It is very important that Christians keep abreast of the progress of science, and give proper respect to science when forming our worldviews, and keep in mind what is really going on with atheism. There is a lot of loud worshiping of science by people like Dawkins and Atkins and Krauss, but if you dig into things a little, you'll find that they are actually filled with rage and enmity against what science has revealed about nature. And not just in one area, but in many, many areas.

Atheism, as a worldview, is not rooted in an honest assessment about what science tells us about reality. Atheism is rooted in a religion: naturalism. And the troubling thing we learn from looking at the history of science is that this religion of naturalism is insulated from correction from the progress of science. Nothing that science reveals about nature seems to be able to put a dent in the religion of naturalism, at least for most atheists. Their belief in naturalism is so strong that it repels all scientific evidence that falsifies it. Atheists simply don't let science inform and correct their worldview.

It falls to us Christian theists, then, to hold them accountable for their abuse and misrepresentation of science. And that means telling the story of the progress of science

accurately, and accurately calling out the religion of naturalism for what it is – *a religion rooted in blind faith and ignorance that has been repeatedly and convincingly falsified by the progress of science in the modern era*.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

Obamacare fines for non-enrollment TRIPLE for coming year

November 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CBS News reports.

Excerpt:

> Americans will see their bank accounts shrink if they don't sign up for Obamacare in its second enrollment season.
>
> Uninsured Americans who decide not to enroll will face a penalty of $325 per person, more than tripling the $95 penalty those who did not enroll had to pay the first time around.
>
> Children under the age of 18 will be fined $162.50. The maximum amount an uninsured family will be penalized is $975 under the flat-rate method.
>
> […]CBS News reports that many Obamacare plans will be charging more as a 27-year-old earning 250 percent of the poverty rate will now have to pay an average of 7 percent more for the lowest-cost bronze plan. The analysis from Investor's Business Daily found that the lowest-cost silver plan will rise 9 percent and the lowest-priced catastrophic policy will go up by 18 percent.
>
> […]The Health and Human Services Department said earlier this week that between 9 to 9.9 million Americans will receive health care plans through the Affordable Care Act marketplaces for next year's coverage. That's lower than the 13 million estimated by the Congressional Budget Office.
>
> […]The "young invincible" crowd of 18-to-36 year olds is crucial to the law's success because insurance companies need their business to offset the costs of covering older, sicker and more expensive enrollees.

Recall that conservatives had been warning not enough of these young people have been signing up to pay for these more expensive enrollees. The people who need to be FORCED to sign up are the young people who don't use health care. These young people – especially young men – have to be forced to pay into the system while not taking anything out. Young men almost never use health care, so they are the perfect serfs for this government controlled health care plan. If lots of young men have to sign up, then the people who need their substance abuse treatments, etc. can get it much cheaper.

Makes you wonder why young people still vote Democrat, doesn't it? Especially young men! It makes no sense to me.

What factor best predicts whether a romantic relationship will succeed?

November 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Gottman is an expert on what makes marriages fail or succeed.

A new article on Business Insider explains his research in a nutshell.

Excerpt: (emphasis mine)

> Gottman wanted to know more about how the masters created that culture of love and intimacy, and how the disasters squashed it. In a follow-up study in 1990, he designed a lab on the University of Washington campus to look like a beautiful bed and breakfast retreat.
>
> He invited 130 newlywed couples to spend the day at this retreat and watched them as they did what couples normally do on vacation: cook, clean, listen to music, eat, chat, and hang out. And Gottman made a critical discovery in this study — one that gets at the heart of why some relationships thrive while others languish.
>
> Throughout the day, partners would make requests for connection, what Gottman calls "bids." For example, say that the husband is a bird enthusiast and notices a goldfinch fly across the yard. He might say to his wife, "Look at that beautiful bird outside!" He's not just commenting on the bird here: he's requesting a response from his wife — a sign of interest or support — hoping they'll connect, however momentarily, over the bird.
>
> The wife now has a choice. She can respond by either "turning toward" or "turning away" from her husband, as Gottman puts it. Though the bird-bid might seem minor and silly, it can actually reveal a lot about the health of the relationship. The husband thought the bird was important enough to bring it up in conversation and the question is whether his wife recognizes and respects that.
>
> People who turned toward their partners in the study responded by engaging the bidder, showing interest and support in the bid. Those who didn't — those who turned away — would not respond or respond minimally and continue doing whatever they were doing, like watching TV or reading the paper. Sometimes they would respond with overt hostility, saying something like, "Stop interrupting me, I'm reading."
>
> These bidding interactions had profound effects on marital well-being. Couples who had divorced after a six-year follow up had "turn-toward bids" 33 percent of the time. Only three in ten of their bids for emotional connection were met with intimacy. The couples who were still together after six years had "turn-toward bids" 87 percent of the time. Nine times out of ten, they were meeting their partner's emotional needs.

By observing these types of interactions, Gottman can predict with up to 94 percent certainty whether couples — straight or gay, rich or poor, childless or not — will be broken up, together and unhappy, or together and happy several years later. Much of it comes down to the spirit couples bring to the relationship. Do they bring kindness and generosity; or contempt, criticism, and hostility?

"There's a habit of mind that the masters have," Gottman explained in an interview, "which is this: they are scanning social environment for things they can appreciate and say thank you for. They are building this culture of respect and appreciation very purposefully. Disasters are scanning the social environment for partners' mistakes."

"It's not just scanning environment," chimed in Julie Gottman. "It's scanning the *partner* for what the *partner* is doing right or scanning him for what he's doing wrong and criticizing versus respecting him and expressing appreciation."

Contempt, they have found, is the number one factor that tears couples apart. People who are focused on criticizing their partners miss a whopping 50 percent of positive things their partners are doing and they see negativity when it's not there.

People who give their partner the cold shoulder — deliberately ignoring the partner or responding minimally — damage the relationship by making their partner feel worthless and invisible, as if they're not there, not valued. And people who treat their partners with contempt and criticize them not only kill the love in the relationship, but they also kill their partner's ability to fight off viruses and cancers. Being mean is the death knell of relationships.

Kindness, on the other hand, glues couples together. Research independent from theirs has shown that kindness (along with emotional stability) is the most important predictor of satisfaction and stability in a marriage. Kindness makes each partner feel cared for, understood, and validated—feel loved. "My bounty is as boundless as the sea," says Shakespeare's Juliet. "My love as deep; the more I give to thee, / The more I have, for both are infinite." That's how kindness works too: there's a great deal of evidence showing the more someone receives or witnesses kindness, the more they will be kind themselves, which leads to upward spirals of love and generosity in a relationship.

There are two ways to think about kindness. You can think about it as a fixed trait: either you have it or you don't. Or you could think of kindness as a muscle. In some people, that muscle is naturally stronger than in others, but it can grow stronger in everyone with exercise. Masters tend to think about kindness as a muscle. They know that they have to exercise it to keep it in shape. They know, in other words, that a good relationship requires sustained hard work.

"If your partner expresses a need," explained Julie Gottman, "and you are tired, stressed, or distracted, then the generous spirit comes in when a partner makes

> a bid, and you still turn toward your partner."
>
> In that moment, the easy response may be to turn away from your partner and focus on your iPad or your book or the television, to mumble "Uh huh" and move on with your life, but neglecting small moments of emotional connection will slowly wear away at your relationship. Neglect creates distance between partners and breeds resentment in the one who is being ignored.
>
> The hardest time to practice kindness is, of course, during a fight—but this is also the most important time to be kind. Letting contempt and aggression spiral out of control during a conflict can inflict irrevocable damage on a relationship.
>
> "Kindness doesn't mean that we don't express our anger," Julie Gottman explained, "but the kindness informs how we choose to express the anger. You can throw spears at your partner. Or you can explain why you're hurt and angry, and that's the kinder path."

The whole article is worth reading. It's very practical, I think. It's always good to read things like this and then analyze how you are acting. That's why it's important to read articles like this and read books on marriage – to always hold your actions accountable to people who understand what makes a relationship work. It's worth it to put in the time to understand these things, because relationships matter.

My Dad always used to have this habit of going after people when he was in the right, but it's a relationship destroyer to just let loose even if you are right. To build a relationship, you have to be doing constructive things with that other person even when they have done you wrong. You can't always be making withdrawals, there have to be deposits, too. Otherwise the relationship dies.

The Five Love Languages is a useful book for knowing how to love someone else. Even in the middle of a fight, it's good to speak encouraging words, good to give gifts, good to touch, good to serve, good to spend time together. It takes work to be intentional about doing things that convey love to that other person – even when there are conflicts in the background.

Stephen C. Meyer and Keith Fox debate intelligent design and evolution

November 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable" podcast.

Details:

> Stephen Meyer is a leading proponent of Intelligent Design who directs the Centre for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. His [first] book "Signature in the Cell" claims to show that the DNA code is the product of intelligent mind, not naturalistic processes. Keith Fox is Professor of Biochemistry at Southampton University. He chairs the UK Christians in Science network but disagrees strongly with ID. They debate how life could have originated and whether design is allowed as an explanation in science.

Summary: (stuff in italics is my snarky paraphrase)

Meyer:

- background and how he got interested in intelligent design
- his research focus is on the origin of life – the first replicator
- summarizes the history of origin of life studies
- authored the book "Signature in the Cell"
- the DNA enigma: where did the information in DNA come from?
- naturalistic explanations of the DNA information have failed
- but intelligent agents are known to be able to produce information
- the best explanation of the information in DNA is that an intelligent agent authored it
- Meyer's book was named by atheist philosopher of science Thomas Nagel as a Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year in 2010
- why is design so controversial? Many people think that Darwin explained why nature appears design
- the Darwinian view is that nature can create the appearance of design using mutation and selection
- however, Darwinian mechanisms cannot explain the origin of the first living cell, it assumes replication, and the origin of life is about where the first replicator comes from

Fox:

- Meyer's argument is not about the evolution of life after the first cell
- Meyer's case for design is about the origin of life
- naturalists do not know a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life

- there are a number of naturalistic hypotheses for the origin of life, like the RNA-first hypothesis
- maybe in a few years one of them will turn out to be correct
- what intelligent design is arguing from a gap in our current naturalistic knowledge to infer that God intervened in nature

Meyer:

- that's not what intelligent design is at all
- the approach ID theorists use is the inference to best explanation
- you evaluate all explanations, non-intelligent causes and intelligent causes
- you prefer the best possible explanation
- we know that minds are capable of producing information just like the information we find in DNA

Fox:

- living cells replicate, so they have the ability to introduce mutations as they replicate and then some of those mutations can be selected
- so maybe the process of replicating that living cells do created the first living cell
- maybe the first living cell created itself, X brought X into being, self-creation, what's irrational about that?

Meyer:

- the issue is the origin of life – where did the first living cell come from?
- you cannot appeal to the operations that a living cell can perform to explain the origin of the first living cell
- there was no first living cell operating before the first living cell
- there was no replication, mutation or selection before the first living cell
- in fact, in my book I show that there is no known naturalistic mechanism that is able to produce the information needed for the first living cell
- *nothing can create itself, that is self-contradictory*

Fox:

- Well, you are just saying that because something is complex that God did it

Meyer:

- Sadly, no. What I actually said needed to be explained was the information, not complexity
- And we know from software engineering that the process of adding information to code is performed by programmers
- in the absence of any adequate naturalistic explanation for information, we are justified in taking the explanation that we are familiar with – namely, intelligent

agency – based on our uniform, universal experience of what causes information

Fox:

- well, maybe we can appeal to the mutation and selection in existing living cells to explain the origin of the first living cell
- maybe there were living cells before the first living cell, and then these other living cells created the first living cell

Meyer:

- we can't keep invoking mutation and selection when those processes are not operating prior to the origin of the first living cell

Fox:

- well maybe some bare-bones self-replication molecule was a precursor to the first living cell

Meyer:

- even to generate very limited replicator would require a large amount of information
- the argument I am making is – where does the evolution come from?

Fox:

- well, maybe we will think of an explanation for information that is naturalistic in 20 years
- we've thought of explanations to things that were NOT information before
- so maybe we will be able to think of something to explain information based on our ability to explain NOT information before

Moderator: Change topics: the Dover decision

Meyer:

- the Discovery Institute opposed the policy that causes the trial
- the wording of the statute was poor
- the judge was completely wrong in his decision
- young earth creationists used the phrase "intelligent design" to cover their agenda
- intelligent design is an inference using the normal methods of science

Fox:

- intelligent design is a science stopper because it stops looking for a naturalistic explanation
- everything in nature must have a naturalistic explanation
- everything has to be explained using matter and time and chance
- it just has to be that way!!!!

Meyer:

- well, what luck would you have explaining an effect like Mt. Rushmore?
- can you explain that using matter,time and chance?
- Mt. Rushmore was the product of intelligence, not wind and erosion
- similarly, there is information in the cell, and we know that intelligence causes information

Fox:

- So you are saying that we don't understand and therefore an intelligence is necessary?

Meyer:

- no I am saying we DO understand and we are making an inference based on that understanding
- you are the one who is insisting on a material explanation because you pre-suppose materialism
- we know that minds have causal powers, and we can infer mind as an explanation from information

Fox:

- well nature is a seamless chain of material causes and effects

Meyer:

- agents can act without violating the laws of nature
- even humans can act as intelligent agents to create information in books, and they don't violate the laws of nature
- intelligent causes are real, and they explain effects in nature

Fox:

- you're trying to impose on science something to do with meaning and purpose

Meyer:

- no that's not what we're doing, we're inferring from from the fact that we ourselves are known causes of information to the fact that an intelligence cause is the best explanation for information in the cell

Fox:

- *but I am a materialist*, I need a materialist explanation

Meyer:

- mind IS an answer to the how question
- we infer to mind in many other scientific disciplines, like cryptography, archaeology, etc.
- a materialist might accuse an archaeologist of engaging in a “scribe-of-the-gaps” argument, but the best explanation of an artifact with information is a scribe
- we are inferring that mind is the cause from the nature of the effect: information

Moderator: is it appropriate to call DNA “information”
Fox:

- well DNA is just a molecular polymer, any reference to information is just by analogy

Meyer:

- DNA is a molecular polymer, but it also exhibits the property of specified complexity
- the arrangement of bases, which function as machine instructions in a software program, for performings task in the cell
- we have observed that the property of specified complexity always comes from an intelligence

Fox:

- well, maybe there are other sequences that would work, so maybe it’s really not uncommon to develop functioning sequences by chance alone, without an intelligence

Meyer:

- you can measure how precise the functional specificity is in DNA and proteins

Moderator: is Shannon information the same as functional information
Meyer:

- Shannon information refers to the sequences of digits or symbols that do not necessarily have any function, i.e. – a four character string QSZX has as much Shannon information as WORD. However, only the latter is functional against the pattern of the English language. There are arrangements of DNA bases and amino acids that have the same number of symbols/characters as a functional sequence would have, but they have no biological function – they do not exhibit specified complexity

Fox:

- Well, maybe there are lots and lots of sequences of DNA and proteins so that it is fairly easy to get a functional one by chance

Meyer:

- DNA sequences that are functional are extremely rare, protein sequences are even more rare
- this is not my opinion, this is what the research shows – functional protein sequences are rare

Fox:

- well maybe there are other functional sequences that are occur before the first functional sequence that are precursors to the first functional sequence
- maybe there are billions of years of replication, mutation and selection before the first replication, mutation and selection

Meyer:

- you can't get to the first selectable functional sequence by appealing to precursor selectable functional sequences – there are no selectable functional sequences before the FIRST one
- you have to get the first selectable functional sequence by chance alone, because there is nothing to mutate or select before the first replicator
- the chance hypothesis has been rejected because the minimal amount of information for the simplest replicator is too high to get by chance alone, given the resources, including time, that are available

Moderator: *Keith are you confident that naturalism will be able to substantiate these naturalism-of-the-gap speculations that you offer in response to Meyer's actual science that we have today?*

Fox:

- well, it is hard to know for sure because it was just a fluke event
- but there's nothing irrational or unscientific or miraculous about it – the fluke would have a material explanation
- there is nothing that we can detect that would implicate God, my speculations about a fluke which I cannot observe or measure or test would all be compatible with an atheistic worldview that omits God as a causal entity

Meyer:

- where are those material processes that could account for this fluke then?
- the whole point of this argument is that the information in DNA transcends the material components in the sequence
- it's the arrangement of the material parts/letters/characters/symbols/instructions that needs to be explained

Fox:

- Well, I just have a different philosophy of science that rules out intelligent causation

a priori

Meyer:

- Yes, that’s the difference between us – you pre-suppose that all explanations of natural phenomena must exclude intelligent causes

There is a bit more where Meyer talks about how parts of the cell are implementations of various design patterns (Gang of Four design patterns) that are used by software architects who design software.

Find more posts on Stephen C. Meyer here.

New study: education departments don’t produce competent teachers

November 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Excerpt:

> Are teacher-training programs rigorous enough? A new study, completed by a group that has long criticized the quality of teacher preparation, makes the case that they’re not.
>
> Education students face easier coursework than do their peers in other departments, according to the study, and they’re more likely to graduate with honors.
>
> A report on the study—”Easy A’s and What’s Behind Them,” which is to be released on Wednesday by the National Council on Teacher Quality—argues that a more-objective curriculum for teaching candidates would better prepare them for careers in the classroom.
>
> […]The council examined more than 500 institutions and found that 30 percent of all their graduating students earned honors. But when it came to education programs, 44 percent of students did so.
>
> The council also analyzed syllabi across multiple majors to determine whether their assignments were “criterion-referenced” (that is, explicitly knowledge- or skill-based) or “criterion-deficient” (that is, subjective). It found that criterion-deficient assignments were more common in teacher-preparation classes than in other disciplines.
>
> As an example of an assignment that the group finds “criterion-deficient,” Ms. Greenberg described a “literacy-history timeline” task that prompts students to reflect on how their own reading skills developed.
>
> “Even if that had relevance to teaching reading, it wouldn’t be the best way to teach anything,” she said. The advocacy group, she added, was “somewhat dismayed by how little many of the assignments seem to connect with the content and skills teacher candidates are really going to need once they enter the classroom.”

If you’re looking for a couple of good books on this problem, try Thomas Sowell’s “Inside American Education” and “Ed School Follies” by Rita Kramer.

Matt Walsh: women need to take responsibility for their failed relationships

November 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest from Matt Walsh was sent to me by about a dozen people, so I must blog on it. He is responding to "Rebecca" who interpreted some of his previous "man up" posts as a license to blame men for everything that followed from her own poor decisions.

Excerpt:

> […]'[M]en' aren't the problem, Rebecca. It's you. You're the one. You're the common denominator. You're to blame. There has been one person conspicuously involved in all of Rebecca's romantic flops, and her name is Rebecca. Maybe you should take a look at her for a change.
>
> Frankly, it seems that when you refer to 'men' you aren't even talking about a group of actual human beings. 'Men' have become an abstract idea, a conceptual manifestation of everything that's wrong with your life. If men exist at all in your world, they exist only as vehicles for your misery.
>
> Consider that, for ritual purification, the Ancient Syrians used to cast a goat out into the wastelands. The literal scapegoat was supposed to carry the sins of the town into the nether regions, where it and its spiritual luggage would die and decay. What you've done with men is just a more efficient, animal-friendly version of this strategy. You've saddled them with your personal baggage and sent them to the desert to perish. You've made a scapegoat of the entire gender.
>
> Let's borrow a recent example from your own life.
>
> You went on a date with a man who, you claim, had no manners. Maybe that's true, or maybe you're so desperate to find fault in every male on the planet that he was fated to be labeled a boorish dolt no matter what he did or said. You also mention that he 'couldn't look you in the eyes and have a conversation.' Maybe. Maybe he was nervous. Maybe he has social anxieties. Maybe he tried to talk to you but he sensed your stand-offish, snobbish demeanor and it made him uncomfortable. I don't know. I wasn't there. Maybe he wasn't as bad as you say, or maybe he actually was a big, awkward, uncouth, stammering warthog. You seem to have come to latter conclusion very early on in the evening, yet you still chose to go back to his place.
>
> What does that say about *you*, Rebecca? Look in the mirror and ask yourself what it says about*you* that *you* came back to this man's house even though *you* were apparently disgusted by him.
>
> That's a choice you made. You. Not him. You.
>
> He continued to fumble and falter well into the night, committing the unconscionable sin of revealing himself to be a fan of the X-Men film franchise.

The uncultured, lethargic lout only succeeded in finding more ways to repulse and offend you as time wore on, yet you were never put off enough to decline the invitation to stay over.

Here's the thing, Rebecca: I was always told that if I want to attract a good woman, I have to be a good man. Admittedly, I managed to attract a good woman despite being a horribly flawed and sinful man, but there is still wisdom in this idea even if it doesn't always hold true. The point is, you have to work on improving yourself if you want to end up with a man who is equally intent on improving himself.

Not all men are desperate, drooling oafs straight out of some cliched beer commercial. There are plenty of hardworking, engaging, dependable, morally upright men out there, but they won't come knocking on your door just because you've announced that you're a 'woman who deserves it.'

Rebecca, you're willing to essentially typecast a man because he plays with video games and watches superhero movies, but have you ever considered that you might be the victim of similar assumptions because you sleep with dudes you just met? Of course, 'victim' isn't the right word. You've earned the assumptions. I'm not saying that you ought to be alone for the rest of your life, but I am pointing out that you are eager to jump to profound conclusions about a man based on the most superficial of flaws, without stopping to consider what conclusions might be drawn about you based on slightly more significant character traits.

Then again, this guy was willing to sleep with you on the first date just as you were with him. He's not innocent in the transaction, and neither are you. It sounds like, right now, you two are evenly matched. You look at him and see yourself, and you hate him for it.

We hear all of the handwringing about the decline of masculinity and the disappearance of 'real men,' yet very little is ever said about the corresponding deterioration of femininity. It's strange that you purport to care about 'manners and chivalry' yet your email was vulgar and overly aggressive, at times coming across like dialogue out of a middle school boys' locker room.

'P*ssy'? Really? A 32-year-old woman using a word like that to describe men while simultaneously complaining that men aren't courteous? I bet the ones who are courteous just get written off as 'p*ssies' anyway, so it's a lose-lose. A lose-lose for you, especially, because in the end you're the only one who has to pay for your extremely unappealing attitude.

By your account, you've had two broken engagements, and both were the fault of the men who were allegedly 'full of sh*t.' Maybe they were. But it is, from a mathematical perspective, almost impossible for one human being to have two failed engagements without being at least partially to blame. In fact, in the history of human relationships, only a very, very, very tiny fraction of them have

> ever soured or splintered due completely to the actions and choices of one person. It's been my experience, both personally and as a student of history and an observer of people (as creepy as that sounds), that fractured and strained relationships can rarely be broken down into a clear Bad Person vs Good Person dichotomy. And, on the rare occasion when things are actually that simple, it's just as likely to be Bad Woman vs Good Guy as it is to be Bad Guy vs Good Woman.
>
> In short, Rebecca, I'm playing the odds here and assuming that you were probably not the victim of both spoiled engagements, just as you are not the victim of your other fruitless romantic endeavors. You are a participant, a catalyst, a cause.

I have, in my life, seen my share of women who, under the influence of feminism, undertake incredibly unwise and selfish courses of action and then blame the predictable consequences on bad men. In fact, it seems to be very popular. Women make poor choices with men, they complain to other women about how they are victims. You can see it with problems like abortion, cohabitation, divorce, infertility, adultery – lots of cases where women choose bad men, and then blame men when things go wrong. I guess I would recommend that men carefully read Matt's post and then be on the lookout for women who act selfishly, don't choose good men, neglect the needs of good men, and then try to play the victim and blame men. Don't be the guy who ends up married to a woman like that. I don't think it's an accident that this woman had premarital sexual experience, either.

UPDATE: I think this post dovetails nicely with my previous post about the one factor that most causes relationships to succeed or fail.

Friday night movie: Cloak and Dagger (1946)

November 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's tonight's movie:

IMDB mean rating: [6.7/10]

IMDB median rating: [7/10]

Description:

> Inspired by actual events, Cloak and Dagger was first major "atomic power" melodrama of the postwar era. Gary Cooper stars as bookish physics professor Alvah Jesper, a character obviously based on A-bomb codeveloper J. Robert Oppenheimer. Pressed into service by the OSS in the last months of WW2, Jasper is sent to Europe in search of Dr. Polda (Vladimir Sokoloff), an atomic scientist held captive by the Nazis.

This is directed by Fritz Lang.

Happy Friday!

NHS appeals decision allowing midwives to conscientiously object to performing abortions

November 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What happens when you let a secular government take over health care provisioning?

Here is a story from the BBC about the state-run health care system in the UK.

Excerpt:

> The UK's highest court will hear legal arguments on whether midwives have a right to refuse to take any part in abortion procedures on moral grounds.
>
> NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde appealed to the Supreme Court after judges in Scotland said Roman Catholic midwives had a right to conscientious objection.
>
> […]Five judges in London will hear the case. A ruling is expected next year.
>
> Ms Doogan, from Garrowhill in Glasgow, and Mrs Wood, from Clarkston in East Renfrewshire, were employed as labour ward co-ordinators at the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow.
>
> […]This landmark case tests the balance between those whose religious beliefs do not allow them to play any part whatsoever in abortion, and the health authorities' duty under the law to enable women to have an abortion. Many Christian groups back the midwives' position.
>
> The midwives' counsel, Gerry Moynihan QC, told the court in the women's earlier successful appeal that the law was clear that the right to conscientious objection contained in the Abortion Act was intended to apply to the whole team whose involvement was necessary to achieve the procedure.
>
> If the Supreme Court upholds the midwives' earlier successful appeal, it could set a legal precedent, allowing other midwives who object to abortion to take the same stance.
>
> The Royal College of Midwives and the women's charity British Pregnancy Advisory Service have both warned that any such ruling could have severe implications for the care of women choosing to terminate their pregnancy.

The BPAS is the largest abortion provider in the UK. I blogged before about their leader, Ann Furedi, who supports sex-selection abortions. I thought then that sex-selection abortions was the worst thing about abortion, but now I see that she would actually force her moral views on other people, compelling them by the power of government to act against their beliefs. There is something deep inside me that just recoils from making a person do something that they think is morally wrong. But I guess pro-abortion people don't share my concern.

When I blogged before about these two midwives when they won their appeal case, I wrote this:

> If the health care system were private, then it would be easy for midwives to find another company to work for that did not violate their consciences. But when the government runs the whole health care system, where are you supposed to go? They are a monopoly and they make the rules. Yet another reasons for Christians to vote for smaller government. In a free market, if you don't want to buy something from one store, you can go to another store. There is competition. But where are these nurses supposed to go? They are midwives, and the government and the courts make the rules in a government-run health care system.

This is why we need to keep the government OUT of health care. When you work for a government monopoly, and they want you to do something that you don't want to do, you have two choices – do what they want or leave the country. If the only health care system is government-run, then if you want to practice health care, you have to leave. That seems unfair to me.

Physicist Victor Stenger debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

November 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate took place on March 1, 2010 at Oregon State University.

In this debate, Victor Stenger does affirm his belief that the universe could be eternal in his second rebuttal (1:02:30), thus denying the standard Big Bang cosmology. He also denies the law of conservation of energy and asserts that something can come from nothing in his concluding speech (1:33:50). He also caused the audience to start laughing when he said that Jesus was not moral and supported slavery. There is almost no snark in this summary. Instead, I quoted Dr. Stenger *verbatim* in many places. I still think that it is very entertaining even without the snarky paraphrasing.

The debate includes 30 minutes of Q&A with the students.

Here is the MP3 file for the audio.

Here's the video of the debate:

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

- The ontological argument
- The contingency argument
- The cosmological argument
- The moral argument
- The resurrection of Jesus (3-fact version)
- Religious experience

Dr. Stenger's opening speech:

- There is no scientific evidence for God's existence in the textbooks
- There is no scientific evidence for God acting in the universe
- God doesn't talk to people and tell them things they couldn't possibly know
- The Bible says that the Earth is flat, etc.
- There is no scientific evidence that God answers prayers
- God doesn't exist because people who believe in him are ignorant
- Human life is not optimally designed and appears to be the result of a blind, ad hoc evolutionary process
- The beginning of the universe is not ordered (low entropy) but random and chaotic
- It's theoretically possible that quantum tunneling explains the origin of the universe
- The laws of physics are not objectively real, they are "our inventions"
- Regarding the beginning of the universe, the explanation is that something came from nothing*
- Nothing* isn't really nothing, it is "the total chaos that we project existed just before the big bang"

- If something has no structure, then “it is as much nothing as nothing can be”
- Consciousness is explainable solely on the basis of material processes
- There are well-informed, rational non-believers in the world and God would not allow that

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

Stenger’s argument that there is no objective evidence for God’s existence:

- First, it is not required that God rely only on objective evidence in order to draw people to himself (Alvin Plantinga)
- Second, God is not required to provide evidence to everyone, only to the people who he knows would respond to him
- Third, Craig gave lots of objective evidence, from science, history and philosophy
- Stenger asks for certain evidence (answered prayers, prophecy, etc.), but Craig presented the evidence we have

Stenger’s argument that the balance of energy is zero so “nothing” exists:

- if you have the same amount of assets and liabilities, it doesn’t mean that nothing exists – your assets and liabilities exist
- Christopher Isham says that there needs to be a cause to create the positive and negative energy even if they balance
- the quantum gravity model contradicts observations
- the vacuum is not the same as nothing, it contains energy and matter
- the BVG theorem proves that *any* universe that is expanding must have a beginning

Stenger’s argument that mental operations can be reduced to physical operations:

- mental properties are not reducible to physical properties
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with self-identity over time
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with thoughts about other things
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with free will
- substance dualism (mind/body dualism) is a better explanation for our mental experience
- God is a soul without a body

Dr. Stenger’s first rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- Craig’s premise is “everything has a cause”, but quantum mechanics has causeless events
- There are speculative theories about how something could have come into being uncaused out of nothing
- “I don’t know of a single working cosmologist today who believes there was a singularity prior to the Big Bang”

- “If there wasn’t a singularity then there’s no basis for arguing that time began at that point”
- “There’s no reason from cosmology that we know of that the universe can’t be eternal”
- “When I talk about an eternal universe, I mean a universe that has no beginning or end”
- The Hartle-Hawking model doesn’t have a beginning
- “There was no violation of energy conservation by having a universe coming from nothing”
- “The universe *could have* come from a previous universe for example or even just from a region of chaos”
- The paper by Vilenkin is counteracted by other papers (he doesn’t specify which ones)

Craig’s moral argument:

- Dr. Craig is arguing from ignorance
- But morality can be decided by humanity just like governments pass laws, and that’s objective
- Dr. Craig has too little respect for the human intellect
- I don’t need to tell me that slavery is wrong
- The Bible supports slavery
- Atheists can behave as good as theists
- Morality just evolved naturally as an aid to survival

Craig’s resurrection argument:

- No Roman historians wrote about the execution of Jesus but none of them did
- The empty tomb is doubtful because it is only mentioned in the gospels, not by Paul
- John Dominic Crossan says there was no empty tomb
- Christianity only survived because the Roman empire thought that they were useful

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- There is no reason to prefer an indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics
- Dr. Stenger himself wrote that deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics are possible
- The vacuum in quantum mechanics is not nothing
- The quantum vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal
- The cosmological argument does not require a singularity
- The Hartle-Hawking model is from 1983
- Hawking says that there is a beginning of space and time *after* that model
- The Hartle-Hawking model *does still have a beginning of time* – the model is not

eternal
- The BVG theorem that requires a beginning for expanding universes is widely accepted among cosmologists

Craig's moral argument:

- Stenger redefined objective to mean that most people agree with it – but that's not what objective means
- Objective means right and wrong whether anyone accepts it or not
- Richard Dawkins himself says that on atheism there is "no evil and no good" – why is he wrong?
- Even Dr. Stenger says that morality is the same as passing laws – it's arbitrary and varies by time and place
- But on his view, right and wrong are the same as deciding which side of the road to drive on
- But somethings really are right and some things are really wrong

Craig's resurrection argument:

- Josephus is a Roman historian and he wrote about Jesus, for example
- There were four biographies of Jesus are the best sources for his life
- The scholars that Stenger mentioned are on the radical fringe

Dr. Stenger's second rebuttal:

Knowledge and the burden of proof:

- Dr. Craig has to bear the burden of proof, not me – because his claim is more "extravagant"
- "I don't have to prove that a God was not necessary to create the universe"
- "I don't have to prove that a God did not design the universe and life"
- "I don't have to prove that the universe did not have a beginning"
- "I don't have to prove that God did not provide us with our moral sense"
- There are a lot of books written about how morality evolved naturally
- "I don't have to prove that the events surrounding the supposed resurrection of Jesus did not take place"
- Bart Ehrman says that the gospels are generally unreliable (Note: Ehrman accepts all 3 of Craig's minimal facts)
- Just because people are willing to die for a cause, does not make their leader God, e.g. – the Emperor of Japan

Aesthetic concerns about the universe:

- I don't like dark matter and I wouldn't have made the universe with dark matter
- I don't like the doctrine of penal substitution
- I don't like the doctrine of original sin

- I don’t like the heat death of the universe

Dr. Craig’s conclusion:

The case for atheism:

- Dr. Stenger had two arguments and he has to support his premises
- Dr. Craig addressed his two arguments and each premise and Dr. Stenger never came back on it

The contingency argument:

- Dr. Stenger has dropped the refutation of this argument

The cosmological argument:

- The theoretical vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal

The moral argument:

- He asserts that things are wrong, but there is no grounding for that to be objective on atheism

The resurrection of Jesus:

- There are surveys of scholars on the empty tomb and 75% of them agree with it
- Bart Ehrman agrees with all 3 of the minimal facts that Dr. Craig presented
- Ehrman’s objection to the resurrection is not historical: he’s an atheist – he thinks miracles are impossible

Religious experience:

- No response from Dr. Stenger

Dr. Stenger’s conclusion

The cosmological argument:

- “I argued that we have very good physical reasons to understand how something can come from nothing”
- “There is a natural tendency in the universe… to go from.. simpler thing to the more complicated thing”
- The transition from a vapor to a liquid to ice shows how something could come from nothing
- “It cannot be proven that the universe had a beginning”

The moral argument:

- Objective morality, which is independent of what people think, could be developed

based on what people think
- “Jesus himself was not a tremendously moral person… he had no particular regard for the poor… he certainly supported slavery… he was for the subjugation of women” (audience laughter)

The resurrection argument:

- Bart Ehrman says that the majority of the gospels are unreliable

Religious experience:

- I don’t see any evidence that there is anything more to religious experience than just stuff in their heads

God’s purpose of the world should be to make people feel happy:

- God could have made people feel happier
- God could have made people not die
- God could could have made the universe smaller: it’s too big
- God could have made it possible for humans to live anywhere “even in space”

Supply-side economist Larry Kudlow: marriage is pro-economic-growth

November 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a Real Clear Politics editorial from one of the biggest supply-side economics boosters out there.

Excerpt:

> The greatest economic challenge of our time is how to restore economic growth. Over the past dozen years, average real growth has slowed to 1.8 percent annually, under both Republican and Democratic presidents and congresses. It's a bipartisan problem.
>
> And it's a new one. For the past 50 years or so, the American economy grew at just less than 3.5 percent per year. But we're now experiencing one of the longest slow-growth periods in the past 100 years. Excluding the Great Depression, I bet it is the longest slow-growth period in a century.
>
> There are any number of fiscal and monetary prescriptions for restoring economic growth. As a Reagan supply sider, I would recommend lower marginal tax rates, lighter regulations, limited government and a sound dollar.
>
> But I want to add this to the list: marriage. I have come to believe that marriage is a key element of a stronger economy.

Like any good economist, he's got the numbers to back it up, too:

> Naomi Schaefer Riley writes that "children of married parents are more likely to graduate high school, less likely to go to jail and more likely to delay sexual activity. And of course, children of unmarried parents are more than five times as likely to live in poverty."
>
> Economic writer Robert Samuelson notes that single-parent families have exploded, that more than 40 percent of births now go to the unwed, and that the flight from marriage "may have subtracted from happiness." Citing a study from Isabel Sawhill, he notes that some unwed mothers "will have multiple partners and subject their children 'to a degree of relationship chaos and instability that is hard to grasp.'"
>
> Heritage Foundation economist Stephen Moore writes "that marriage with a devoted husband and wife in the home is a far better social program than food stamps, Medicaid, public housing or even all of the combined." Moore points to a Heritage study showing how welfare households are much more likely to have no one working at all, with social assistance becoming a substitute for work.
>
> A recent report from the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for Family Studies, authored by W. Bradford Wilcox and Robert Lerman, reveals that

> married men have higher average incomes, seem to be more productive at work and work more and earn more. Wilcox and Lerman write that 51 percent of the 1980-2000 decline in male employment is due to the drop in marriage rates, and is highest among unmarried men. They find that "differing employment rates among married and unmarried men aren't simply due to education levels or race, either."
>
> They conclude: "Promoting the importance of marriage, looking for ways to reduce marriage penalties in current means-tested welfare programs and engaging leaders at every level to find ways to strengthen marriage in their communities, are other critical steps to take to restore a culture of marriage."
>
> I'll only add this, as I did at the Coolidge Foundation dinner: While restoring economic growth may be the great challenge of our time, this goal will never be realized until we restore marriage.
>
> In short, marriage is pro-growth. We can't do without it.

In case you missed it, there was a nice new study linking marriage to economic growth. It was put out by the American Enterprise Institute, a fiscally conservative think tank. It's getting to be that fiscal conservatives are more interested in social conservatism than the reverse. Now if only we could get pro-lifers and pro-natural-marriage people to come towards lower taxes, smaller government, less restrictive regulations and a stronger dollar. How about it, social conservatives? Can you you run your family better when government leaves you more money in your pocket? Fiscal conservatism and social conservatism go together like peanut butter and jelly.

By the way, if you'd like to read a remarkable booklet put out by the Heritage Foundation called "Indivisible", click here. In it, you'll find well-known social conservatives advocating for fiscal conservatism, and well-known fiscal conservatives advocating for social conservatism. The essays are short and easy to understand. They don't try to prove everything, just one little point per essay. You'll find lots of names you recognize in it, like Jennifer Roback Morse, Michele Bachmann, Paul Ryan and Jay Richards.

Will pro-life women vote for Hillary Clinton in 2016 just because she is a woman?

November 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

This story is from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Candidates such as out-going Colorado Senator Mark Udall and Iowa Senator-wanna-be-but-defeated Iowa Rep. Bruce Braley, along with other Democratic candidates, ran campaigns based on an extremist pro-abortion position. They were absolutely convinced that the American public would vote for candidates who say it's okay to kill helpless, innocent unborn babies at any stage, provided they mischaracterized opposition to this extremism as a "war on women."
>
> But they took this charade even further. Pro-abortion figures such as Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards tried to tell voters that female candidates who oppose abortion know nothing about what women really want.
>
> **Clinton, at a pro-Braley rally, told voters in Iowa, "It's not enough to be a woman, you have to be committed to expand rights and opportunities for all women." Because Joni Ernst (who defeated Braley) thinks unborn babies should be protected, she isn't committed to expanding rights and opportunities for women?**
>
> Obviously, the voters didn't see Ernst in that light. She won by almost a hundred thousand votes and she is now the pro-life Senator-elect from Iowa.
>
> Pro-abortion advocates like to say abortion is a woman's issue, but only pro-abortion women should voice their opinions. Indeed, they come very close to saying it is illegitimate for a woman who is pro-life to speak on abortion. The voices of pro-life women just don't count. The hypocrisy, or should I say the gall, of people who think you have to want to kill unborn children in order to be pro-

> woman is stunning.

In 2008 and 2012, many, many black people who were personally pro-life voted for Barack Obama. Will pro-life women do the same for Hillary Clinton in 2016?

I have to say that it is always a concern to me, as someone who would like to get married, when the majority of young, unmarried women vote Democrat. Maybe I am wrong, but I not only see this as a vote against family in favor of bigger government (via taxes), but I also see it as a rejection of the pro-life and pro-marriage views.

It bothers me when a woman says she is pro-abortion, because to me it means that she wants to perform actions (sex) that are pleasurable to her, but then resort to murder to avoid being burdened with the natural consequences of her actions. You can't make a marriage with a woman who is willing to resort to murder in order to avoid taking responsibility for her actions. If you're going to marry a woman, you want her to be pro-life – to put the lives of little innocent babies first – however they come into being. You want her to have the attitude that it is more important to care for innocent people than to be without the encumbrance of relationships with others. After all, she will be encumbered by a relationship to you if you marry her, and that will not always be pleasant.

It also bothers me when a woman says she is pro-gay-marriage, because to me it means that she is denying the complimentary nature of men and women. She is saying that men can take the place of a mother, and a woman can take the place of a father. In that case, it seems to me that you are dealing with a person who doesn't take the needs of children seriously. Rather than taking a child's real needs seriously, they are more interested in telling selfish adults what they want hear. A man shouldn't make children with a woman who doesn't care about the child's need for a mother and a father. If she doesn't think that a father is necessary to raise a child, then it will be much easier for her to divorce you. It's wrong to celebrate any arrangement that deprives a child of biological parents.

Obamacare bronze plans up 15% on average, but there's more wrong than just that

November 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sure, the cost of Obamacare health plans is higher, especially the cheapest bronze plans which are going up 15%. But that's not the only thing wrong with Obamacare. Here are 14 more ways Obamacare is a disaster, as reported by the Federalist.

The list:

1. Premium Increases
2. Exchange Subsidy Roller Coaster
3. Reducing the Quality of Insurance
4. Slashing Quality of Employer-Provided Insurance
5. Here Come the Trial Lawyers!
6. Enrollees Are Older and Sicker than Average
7. People Dropping Exchange Coverage Are the Ones Exchanges Need Most
8. The Exchanges Benefit Big Business at the Expense of Smaller Businesses
9. Policy Cancellation Déjà Vu
10. Medical Research Has Tanked
11. Medicaid Still Provides Terrible Care for the Poor
12. The Deficit Will Increase $131 Billion in the Next Ten Years
13. Fewer Jobs for Low-Wage Workers
14. More Economic Woes Ahead

The last two stuck out to me, because they have to do with jobs.

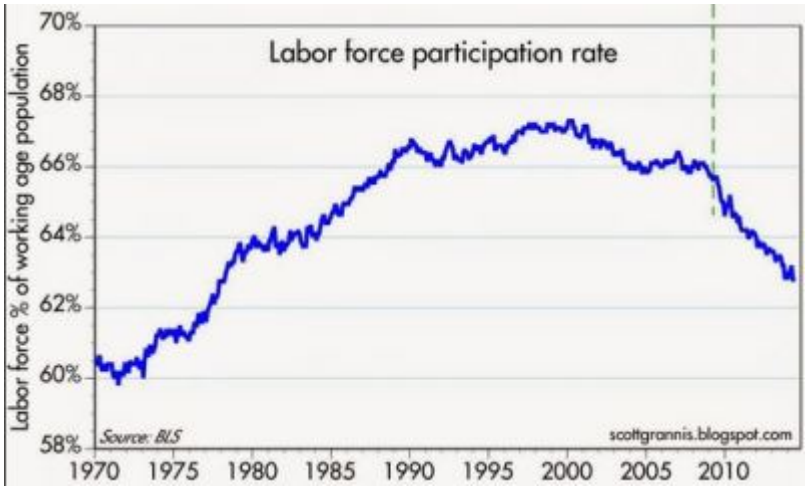

Labor force participation rate

Thirteen:

> Obamacare's employer mandate requires employers with 50 or more full-time employees—"full time" defined as 30 hours or more per week—to provide their workers with health insurance or pay a fine. Critics claimed this would lead to an increase in part-time work leading up to the mandate's imposition, but many

> liberal economists insisted part-time work was not increasing. Then Jed Graham of Investor's Business Daily dug into the data and found that work hours had declined for employees in industries where the average hourly wage was $14.50 or less.
>
> Graham showed that part-time work appeared stable because the decline in hours for low-wage workers was offset by an increase in hours for higher-paid workers. As Graham states, "Overall, in these low-wage industries which employ 30 million rank-and-file workers, the average workweek shrank to 27.3 hours per week in July [2014].... For low-wage industry workers... the recovery in the workweek from a then-record low 27.5 hours in mid-2009 began to reverse in the latter half of 2012, and it's been pretty much all downhill since then." Employers appear to be limiting the work hours of employees who are least likely to have employer-provided insurance. Given the low wages, there are likely many workers in this group who are in need of full-time hours.

Fourteen:

> The employer mandate is causing even more damage as its January 1, 2015 imposition nears. In August, the Federal Reserve Banks of Dallas, New York, and Philadelphia released survey data on how businesses in their regions were responding to the costs of Obamacare. Businesses that had or were expecting to increase part-time employees, outsourcing, and prices far exceeded the number that that had or intended to reduce them. More business also had or intended to reduce the total number of workers and/or wages in response to Obamacare than expected to increase them.

Obamacare is a job killer. And it hurts low-wage workers the most. Imagine what would happen if Obama did an executive order to raise the price of low-wage workers for employers – another incentive to get rid of them. What a disaster.

Decorated pilot faces discharge for telling lesbians to stop breaking Army rules

November 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> The Army is moving to discharge a decorated combat pilot who intervened to stop two lesbian officers from showing what he considered inappropriate affection on the dance floor during a full-dress formal ball at Fort Drum, New York, in 2012.
>
> Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, who was once assigned to the White House and completed tours in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, ended up being convicted administratively of assaulting a soldier trying to videotape the kissing and grabbing. Col. Downey's attorney, Richard Thompson, says his client merely pushed down the camera to prevent photos and video that could end up on social media.
>
> Mr. Thompson said Col. Downey's commanding officer also convicted him of violating the directive that ended the ban on gays openly serving in the military.
>
> "It's political correctness run wild," Mr. Thompson said. "Military rules do not apply to lesbian officers because of political correctness."
>
> Col. Downey won early battle with the Army last year. A special three-officer "show cause" board reviewed the punishment and unanimously ruled that the evidence showed he did not violate Army rules.
>
> "The allegation of conduct unbecoming an officer … is not supported by the preponderance of the evidence," the board wrote. "The findings do not warrant separation."
>
> Yet Col. Downey still faces separation by an Army forced-retirement board that began meeting this week.
>
> On the night of April 14, 2012, seven months after President Obama lifted the ban on acknowledged gays in the military, Col. Downey moved to the dance floor to caution the two lesbian officers, a second lieutenant and a captain.
>
> A warrant officer had approached Col. Downey and complained that their prolonged French kissing, buttocks grabbing and disrobing of Army jackets violated Army rules against inappropriate displays of public affection while in uniform on base, his attorney said.
>
> He said the captain, who since has left the Army, complained that she and her girlfriend, whom she later married and then divorced, were victims of discrimination.

> “Lt. Col. Downey gave his all to the Army and to the country he loves, yet the Army he so loyally served threw him under the bus merely to avoid negative press from the homosexual community,” Mr. Thompson said.

And the more important thing is thing about the chilling effect that a case like this has on others, and how this in-your-face sexuality coarsens the culture. It’s now the case that you can’t even disagree with homosexuality without losing your job.

One other thing about that couple that sued for discrimination. It’s not surprising to me that the two lesbians married and then divorced very quickly, as lesbians have an incredibly low stability rate for their relationships.

Note:

> Other research says the same thing about relationship dissolution rates. A study of two generations of British couples (one born in 1958, the other 1970) in same-sex cohabiting, opposite-sex cohabiting, and heterosexual marriage relationships found the same-sex relationships are dramatically more likely to break up than the opposite-sex cohabiting and married relationships. The probabilities of the various relationships surviving to the four- and eight-year anniversaries are dramatic. After four years, 88 percent of married opposite sex couples are together, 67 percent of opposite-sex cohabiting couples, and only 37 percent of same-sex cohabitors. After eight years, those numbers fall to 82 percent, 60 percent, and 25 percent, respectively.
>
> The author explains the magnitude of his findings “are consistent with previous research in other countries.” There were no significant differences between the two generational cohorts, indicating that issues of social stigma and growing social acceptance had no meaningful effect.
>
> Other studies conducted by celebrated lesbian scholars find notable instability in lesbian homes, even those with children. The current National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study (NLLFS) found “a significant difference” in family dissolution rates when comparing lesbian with mother-father headed families, 56 percent and 36 percent respectively.
>
> Additional research by other scholars highlights a major comparative study between hetero and lesbian homes where, in the five-year period of the study, six of the fourteen lesbian mother-headed homes had broken up compared to only five of the thirty-eight mother“father headed homes. They creatively explain that this stability imbalance is likely due to the “high standards lesbians bring to their intimate unions.” Mundy says that “lesbians . . . tend to discuss things endlessly.” Whatever the reason, lesbian relationships are dramatically more volatile, fragile, and short-lived than heterosexual couples, whether cohabiting or married.

And lesbians also have a very high rate of domestic violence.

Look:

> In 2013, the CDC released the results of a 2010 study on victimization by sexual orientation, and admitted that “little is known about the national prevalence of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking among lesbian, gay, and bisexual women and men in the United States.” The report found that bisexual women had an overwhelming prevalence of violent partners in their lives: 75 percent had been with a violent partner, as opposed to 46 percent of lesbian women and 43 percent of straight women. For bisexual men, that number was 47 percent. For gay men, it was 40 percent, and 21 percent for straight men.

That’s from an article by the left-leaning Atlantic, by the way. Why would anyone encourage a woman to enter this lifestyle?

Is asking “Am I going to Hell?” a good response to scientific arguments for theism?

November 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I want to use this woman’s story to show how sensible atheists reach a belief in God. Excerpt:

> I don’t know when I first became a skeptic. It must have been around age 4, when my mother found me arguing with another child at a birthday party: “But how do you know what the Bible says is true?” By age 11, my atheism was so widely known in my middle school that a Christian boy threatened to come to my house and “shoot all the atheists.” My Christian friends in high school avoided talking to me about religion because they anticipated that I would tear down their poorly constructed arguments. And I did.
>
> As I set off in 2008 to begin my freshman year studying government at Harvard (whose motto is *Veritas*, “Truth”), I could never have expected the change that awaited me.
>
> It was a brisk November when I met John Joseph Porter. Our conversations initially revolved around conservative politics, but soon gravitated toward religion. He wrote an essay for the *Ichthus*, Harvard’s Christian journal, defending God’s existence. I critiqued it. On campus, we’d argue into the wee hours; when apart, we’d take our arguments to e-mail. Never before had I met a Christian who could respond to my most basic philosophical questions: How does one understand the Bible’s contradictions? Could an omnipotent God make a stone he could not lift? What about the Euthyphro dilemma: Is something good because God declared it so, or does God merely identify the good? To someone like me, with no Christian background, resorting to an answer like “It takes faith” could only be intellectual cowardice. Joseph didn’t do that.
>
> And he did something else: He prodded me on how inconsistent I was as an atheist who nonetheless believed in right and wrong as objective, universal categories. Defenseless, I decided to take a seminar on meta-ethics. After all, atheists had been developing ethical systems for 200-some years. In what I now see as providential, my atheist professor assigned a paper by C. S. Lewis that resolved the Euthyphro dilemma, declaring, “God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God.”
>
> Joseph also pushed me on the origins of the universe. I had always believed in the Big Bang. But I was blissfully unaware that the man who first proposed it, Georges Lemaître, was a Catholic priest. And I’d happily ignored the rabbit trail of a problem of what *caused* the Big Bang, and what *caused* that cause, and so on.
>
> By Valentine’s Day, I began to believe in God. There was no intellectual shame in

> being a deist, after all, as I joined the respectable ranks of Thomas Jefferson and other Founding Fathers.
>
> I wouldn't stay a deist for long. A Catholic friend gave me J. Budziszewski's book Ask Me Anything, which included the Christian teaching that "love is a commitment of the will to the true good of the other person." This theme—of love as sacrifice for true good—struck me. The Cross no longer seemed a grotesque symbol of divine sadism, but a remarkable act of love. And Christianity began to look less strangely mythical and more cosmically beautiful.

So, I want to point out the progression of her beliefs from atheist to deist to Christian. First, she listened to the scientific arguments for God's existence, which took her to deism, which is a variety of theism where God just creates the universe and then doesn't interfere with it after. Those arguments, the Big Bang and the cosmic fine-tuning, were enough for her to falsify atheism and prove some sort of theism. After that, she remained open to the evidence for Christian theism, and finally got there after looking at other evidence.

But this makes me think of how some of the atheists that I talk to do the exact opposite of what she did. I start off by explaining to them scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer. I explain the mainstream discoveries that confirm an origin of the universe (e.g. – light element abundance predictions and observations), and I cite specific examples of fine-tuning, (e.g. – the gravitational constant). I explain protein sequencing and folding, and calculate the probabilities of getting a protein by chance. I explain the sudden origin of the phyla in the Cambrian explosion, and show why naturalistic explanations fail. I talk about the fine-tuning needed to get galaxies, solar systems and planets to support life. But many of these atheists don't become deists like the honest atheist in the story. Why not?

Well, the reason why not is because they interrupt the stream of scientific evidence coming out of my mouth and they start to ask me questions that have nothing to do with what we can know through science. See, evangelism is like building a house. You have to start with the foundation, the walls, the plumbing, the electricity, etc., but you can't know all the specific details about furniture and decorations at the beginning. But militant atheists don't care that you are able to establish the foundations of Christian theism – they want to jump right to the very fine-grained details, and use that to justify not not building anything at all. Just as you are proving all the main planks of a theistic worldview with science, they start asking "am I going to Hell?" and telling you "God is immoral for killing Canaanite children", etc. They want to stop the construction of the house by demanding that you build everything at once. But, it is much easier to accept miracles like the virgin birth if you have a God who created the universe first. The foundation comes first, it makes the later stuff easier to do.

So rather than adjust their worldview to the strong scientific evidence, and then leave the puzzling about Hell and Old Testament history for later, they want to refute the good scientific arguments with "Am I going to Hell?". How does complaining about Hell and

unanswered prayer a response to *scientific evidence*? It’s not! But I think that this does explain why atheists remain atheists in the face of all the scientific evidence against naturalism. They insulate their worldview from the progress of science by focusing on their emotional disappointment that they are not God and that God isn’t doing what they want him to do. That’s the real issue. Authority and autonomy. In my experience, they are usually not accountable to science, although there are, thank God, exceptions to that rule.

Japan in recession after following Paul Krugman's Keynesnian advice

November 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the news story as reported by CBC:

> Japan's economy unexpectedly slipped back into recession as housing and business investment dropped following a sales tax hike, hobbling its ability to help drive the global recovery.
>
> The world's third-largest economy contracted at a 1.6 per cent annual pace in the July-September quarter, the government said Monday, confounding expectations that it would rebound after a big drop the quarter before.
>
> The news cast a pall over financial markets: Japan's share benchmark fell 3 per cent, and many others in Asia also declined. Shares were lower in early trading in Europe and Dow Jones and S&P futures were off 0.5 per cent, suggesting a dismal start for the week on Wall Street.

This Daily Signal article by respected economist Stephen Moore explains what led to this mess:

> The tenets of Lord Keynes and his modern disciples have been put on trial in Japan, and the verdict is not a happy one. The rest of the world, not least of all the U.S., ignores these lessons at its own peril.
>
> The engine of growth that created the Land of the Rising Sun economic miracle in the post-World War II era first began to falter in the early 1990s in large part because of a centrally planned industrial policy model.
>
> The panicked response to the downturn was to flood the economy with a continuing series of Keynesian monetary and spending stimulus injections.
>
> None of it has worked.
>
> The collapse of Japan's stock market tells the whole story. In December 1989, the Nikkei 225 index stood at a lofty 38,900. Today, almost a quarter-century later, the index stands at just under 16,000.
>
> In 25 years Japan has experienced a nearly 3/5 liquidation of its financial wealth.
>
> Japan has directed tens of billions of dollars into public works projects — "investments," as President Obama calls them. This was paid for with debt. In the last two decades, Japan's debt burden catapulted from 19% of GDP, among the lowest in the industrialized world, to over 142%, among the highest.
>
> The government spending coincided with a monetary policy almost unprecedented in its looseness. From the late 1980s through 2000, the central bank's balance sheet more than doubled — a precursor to the "quantitative easing" carried out by the U.S. Federal Reserve. And since 2000, the balance

> sheet has doubled once again.
>
> Inflation rates in Japan are bearing down on 4% — a near-high among major competitors.
>
> The result? The expected Keynesian "multiplier effect" from spending and a flood of yen into the market never arrived.
>
> Housing starts in Japan are still lower than the level nearly 25 years ago. Unemployment, still low by international standards, is nearly twice the level of 1990, and wages have been flat.
>
> Labor force participation continues to trend downward as well — falling by around 4 percentage points over the last two decades.

> **Yet, liberal economists have urged Japan to keep the stimulus coming. Last winter, the New York Times' Paul Krugman exulted in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's expansionary fiscal and monetary policies.**
>
> **"So, how is Abenomics working?" he wrote. "The overall verdict on Japan's effort to turn its economy around is so far, so good. If Abenomics works, it will serve a dual purpose — giving Japan itself a much-needed boost and the rest of us an even more-needed antidote to policy lethargy."**
>
> **Japan, Krugman predicted, "may also end up showing the rest of us the way out" of stagnation.**

Forbes magazine confirms leftist "economist" Paul Krugman's detailed advice to Japan:

> **In the 1990s it was Krugman who most loudly championed Japan's innumerable and reckless "stimulus" schemes, together with dozens of rounds of "quantitative easing" (fiat money printing).** Japan followed his advice and ever since then has suffered a secular stagnation. Since 1990 Japan's public debt has ballooned from 68% to 233% of GDP; its money supply is up 286%, while its industrial output is lower by 3.4% and its equity index is down by 73%. This is what Keynesians "stimulus" has done for Japan – and Krugman wants the same for the U.S.
>
> Mr. Krugman repeatedly invokes the magic multiplier, the bogus claim that when we spend our own dollar we boost GDP by a dollar, but when the government takes it and spends it, GDP is boosted by $1.40. Wow. Fabulous. Government spending not only "pays for itself," but more than pays for itself. On this view, were government to take everything we earned and spend it, the economy might well expand to the moon. Is it magic – or voodoo?

I notice that leftists at the BBC are calling the failure a "surprise".

> Where did Abenomics go wrong?
>
> In the spring of 2013, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe launched an ambitious growth

> strategy that rapidly became known as Abenomics.
>
> Its aim was to drag Japan's economy out of 20 years of deflation and put it back on the road to growth. Billions of dollars were pumped into the economy through stimulus spending. The Bank of Japan went on an even bigger spree, printing hundreds of billions of dollars of new money and using it to buy government bonds.

And the leftist New York Times is calling it "unexpected":

> The surprise recession underscores the difficulties faced by Mr. Abe, who won power two years ago on a pledge to reinvigorate the economy and end his country's long streak of wage and consumer-price declines. His agenda, dubbed Abenomics, has focused largely on stimulus measures, in particular an expanded program of asset purchases by the central bank. Yet its impact, economists say, has been dulled by the tax increase, which was approved under a previous government.
>
> […]Then, in early 2014, Mr Abe's government took a calculated gamble. With the economy growing he could risk putting up taxes for the first time in nearly 20 years. Consumption (purchase) tax would rise from 5 to 8%. The tax rise was urgently needed to plug the giant hole in Japan's public finances.

Why does anyone take economic advice from people on the left like Paul Krugman? Raising taxes, increasing debt and more government spending never helps the economy grow. Certainly not at the rate that pro-growth policies do.

We need to cut our corporate tax, which is the highest in the world. We need to cut spending and cut government duplication and waste. We need to privatize inefficient government programs. We need to reward work instead of dependency. We need to stop borrowing money and raising our national debt. We need to stop printing money, aka – quantitative easing. We need to raise interest rates and encourage saving instead of spending.

Yazidi girls who managed to escape Islamic State tell their stories

November 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The 15-year-old girl, crying and terrified, refused to release her grip on her sister's hand. Days earlier, Islamic State fighters had torn the girls from their family, and now were trying to split them up and distribute them as spoils of war.
>
> The jihadist who had selected the 15-year-old as his prize pressed a pistol to her head, promising to pull the trigger. But it was only when the man put a knife to her 19-year-old sister's neck that she finally relented, taking her next step in a dark odyssey of abduction and abuse at the hands of the Islamic State.
>
> The sisters were among several thousand girls and young women from the minority Yazidi religion who were seized by the Islamic State in northernIraq in early August.
>
> The 15-year-old is also among a small number of kidnapping victims who have managed to escape, bringing with them stories of a coldly systemized industry of slavery.
>
> Their accounts tell of girls and young women separated from their families, divvied up or traded among the Islamic State's men, ordered to convert to Islam, subjected to forced marriages and repeatedly raped.

You might think that this would be a big concern to Sandra Fluke feminists here in the West, but it isn't. They all voted Democrat so that our armed forces would pull out and when we are not present we create a vacuum where this sort of behavior becomes possible.

Anyway, back to the Yazidi girls. I was a bit curious to see whether the Quran and Hadith teach that this practice is OK.

Answering Muslims has a listing of verses, and yes – Muslims are allowed to rape captive girls. Moreover, they are allowed to rape women who are already married – as long as they kill the husbands first. You might think that would be seen as adultery, and a serious crime to those who believe the Ten Commandments, but that doesn't seem to be a problem for Muslims – the Quran is all in favor of it. Just think about that for a minute. Think of the fear that a girl feels being kidnapped from her family and then raped, or seeing her husband murdered and then raped. This is the religion that Obama is so insistent is a religion of peace. And don't expect the moral relativists on the secular left to condemn it, they've jettisoned God and so they have no ground to condemn other cultures. They believe in cultural relativism – different things are right in different times and places. Atheists may disagree with rape and sex slavery, like they disagree with

varieties of ethnic food, but rape and sex slavery are not objectively wrong on atheism.

I just want to contrast the Muslim view of women with the Christian view of women. In Christianity, men are commanded to be abstain from sex outside of marriage. No sexual intercourse outside of marriage is permitted. Men are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the church – i.e., to die for them if necessary as a way of loving them self-sacrificially.

Take a look Ephesians 5:22-33: [ESV]

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,

30 because we are members of his body.

31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

33 However,let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

In Christianity, the man has a self-sacrificial obligation to love the woman. He has to sacrifice his own needs and own interests in order to care for her and treat her as worthy and precious. It's from these Christian convictions that chivalry emerged – a standard of conduct that aims to protect women and love them romantically. There is no chastity in Islam. There is no chivalry in Islam. There is rape in Islam. There is adultery in Islam. It's not a moral religion, and it's remarkable to me that anyone would stand in front of a teleprompter and claim that they are moral with a straight face. If you want to be a good person, and not frighten and abuse women, then don't be a Muslim.

By the way, it's interesting to look at the recent comments by the secular leftist President of the United States. After a terrorist attack against a Jewish synagogue, the President urged both sides to refrain from violence. That's like telling a victim of rape and her rapist to refrain from future rapes. But that's not all. President Moral Equivalence also recently said that the beheadings conducted by Islamic State "represent no faith, least of all the

Muslim faith“. Least of all. That means that it is more likely that Christians and Jews would behead their enemies than it is that Muslims would. This is the level of amorality we are dealing with in Barack Obama. The man simply *cannot do* morality.

N.T. Wright lectures on the seven mutations caused by resurrection of Jesus

November 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was reading an excellent post on the high Christology of the early church on Eric Chabot's blog. He was explaining all the earliest sources for the view that Jesus was seen as divine very early on, and he said this about the famous British historian Larry Hurtado:

> This past weekend, I got to hang out and watch Derek Lehman lecture on the his book Divine Messiah. This material was something I was fairly familiar with. I have read most of Larry Hurtado, James Dunn, and Richard Bauckham's work on the subject. And being that I have had a lot of experience with Jewish people, I know their views on the issue of our claim that Jesus is divine. Anyone who studies historical method is familiar with what is called historical causation. Historians seek out the causes of a certain events. For example, there is no doubt that historians can observe the effect- the birth of Christianity pre-70 AD. What must be asked is what has better explanatory power for the birth of early Christianity- pre 70 AD and a very high Christology in a very short time period after Jesus' resurrection?
>
> […]Larry Hurtado describes the early devotion to Jesus as a "mutation." (4) One of the primary factors that Hurtado presents for the cause of this "mutation" in the context of Jewish monotheism is the resurrection itself and the post-resurrection appearances. Some of the features in the early Jesus devotion are as follows:
>
> First, there are hymns to Jesus (Col 1:15-20; Phil.2:5-11) which are exalted things about him done in song.
>
> Second, there are prayers to Jesus: we see prayer to Jesus in prayer-like expressions such as "grace and peace" greetings at the beginning of Paul's letters and in the benedictions at the end. Also, the early followers of Jesus are seen "calling upon" the name of Jesus as Lord (Acts 9:14, 21; 22:16;1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 10:13), which is the same pattern that is used in the Hebrew Bible where it refers to "calling upon the Lord" (Gen. 12:8;13:4 ;21:23 ; 26:25; Psalms 99:6;105:1; Joel 2:32). (5) Allow me to expand on this:
>
> In 2 Corinthians 12:7-8, Paul says, "Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." So here is Paul, a staunch Pharisee who was raised to call nobody 'Lord' expect the God of Israel asking Jesus the Lord to help him.

So since Eric reminded me of "mutations", I've posted this lecture featuring historian N.T.

Wright on seven mutations in the thinking of Jewish converts to Christianity that followed the life of Jesus. Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's a video of his case for the resurrection:

You can read the lecture online here at the Cambridge University web site.

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable* apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being

peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an invented exaltation was already available to do the job.
3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.
5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

After synagogue attack, Obama urges both terrorists and Israelis to “be calm”

November 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports on Obama’s reaction to the latest terrorist attack against Jews in Israel:

> **After a Palestinian terror attack that killed [five] in Israel, President Barack Obama is calling for *both* sides to be calm.** “Too many Israelis have died; too many Palestinians have died. At this difficult time I think it’s important for both Palestinians and Israelis to try to work together to lower tensions and reject violence,” said President Obama, according to the White House pool report.

The death toll is now 5, according to the Washington Post. How is it possible that the President would do the equivalent of urging a woman who has been raped and her rapist to not rape each other any more? Well, there are no more elections, so the faked support for our allies is really coming off. Hamas has not claimed responsibility, but Palestinians are celebrating the attack.

Obama wasn’t done, though. He had something brilliant to say about the recent beheading of an American by Islamic State.

Breitbart reports:

> Returning from his trip to Asia, President Obama issued a statement reacting to the beheading of U.S. aid worker Peter Kassig by Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) terrorists.
>
> Kassig, a convert to Islam, took the name Abdul-Rahman and was captured and held hostage by members of ISIS a year ago.
>
> **“ISIL’s actions represent no faith, least of all the Muslim faith which Abdul-Rahman adopted as his own,” Obama wrote.**

The actions of “Islamic State” don’t represent the Islamic faith. David Wood begs to differ, and explains the 10 most essential verses for understanding ISIS / Islamic State.

Is Obama aware of these verses? Or are his comments just more “you can keep your doctor”, “you can keep your health plan” rhetoric?

Republicans react

Meanwhile, Indian-American governor Bobby Jindal had his own opinion of the terrorist attack on a synagogue.

He said:

> Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal, a possible 2016 Republican presidential candidate, will soon release this statement responding to the terror attack in

> Jerusalem.
>
> “Our hearts and prayers are with the victims and their families after this evil attack on a place of worship,” the statement reads.
>
> **“An attack on a synagogue shows that there are no bounds for terrorists. These are people depraved of any humanity in their hearts, and they must not only be stopped, they must be exterminated.**
>
> “Unfortunately, Israel is no stranger to these types of attacks. That’s why we must always stand with our close friend and ally, condemn the act of terror and defend their right to defend themselves.

That’s quite different than what Obama said, isn’t it? And that’s the difference between the two parties right there.

What is the unborn? A look at the scientific evidence

November 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from National Right to Life.

Excerpt:

> Before deciding how we ought to treat the unborn—a moral question—we must first be clear about what the unborn is. This is a scientific question, and it is answered with clarity by the science of human embryology.
>
> The facts of reproduction are straightforward. Upon completion of the fertilization process, sperm and egg have ceased to exist (this is why "fertilized egg" is an inaccurate term); what exists is a single cell with 46 chromosomes (23 from each parent) that is called a zygote. The coming into existence of the zygote is the point of conception—the beginning of the life of a new human organism. The terms zygote, embryo and fetus all refer to developmental stages in the life of a human being.
>
> Four features of the unborn (i.e., the human zygote, embryo or fetus) are relevant to his or her status as a human being. First, the unborn is living. She meets all the biological criteria for life: metabolism, cellular reproduction and reaction to stimuli. Moreover, she is clearly growing, and dead things (of course) don't grow.
>
> Second, the unborn is human. She possesses a human genetic signature that proves this beyond any doubt. She is also the offspring of human parents, and we know that humans can only beget humans (they cannot beget dogs or cats, for instance). The unborn may not seem to "look" human (at least in her earlier stages), but in fact she looks exactly like a human at that level of human development. Living things do not become something different as they grow and mature; rather, they develop the way that they do precisely because of the kind of being they already are.
>
> Third, the unborn is genetically and functionally distinct from (though dependent on and resting inside of) the pregnant woman. Her growth and maturation is internally directed, and her DNA is unique and different from that of any other cell in the woman's body. She develops her own arms, legs, brain, central nervous system, etc. To say that a fetus is a part of the pregnant woman's body is to say that the woman has four arms and four legs, and that about half of pregnant women have penises.
>
> Fourth, the unborn is a whole or complete (though immature) organism. That is, she is not a mere part of another living thing, but is her own organism—an entity whose parts work together in a self-integrated fashion to bring the whole to maturity. Her genetic information is fully present at conception, determining to a large extent her physical characteristics (including sex, eye color, skin color,

> bone structure, etc.); she needs only a suitable environment and nutrition to develop herself through the different stages of human life.
>
> Thus, the unborn is a distinct, living and whole human organism—a full-fledged member of the species Homo sapiens, like you and me, only at a much earlier stage in her development. She is a human being.

That's what they assert in the introduction. The rest of the article cites textbooks, scientists and even a Senate Judiciary report to substantiate the claims, then refutes common objections. Not many pro-abortion scholars are going to contest the full humanity of the unborn, but it's still nice to review the science. In case this is your first time looking at this, might want to save it for later. Also, if you want a good introductory book on the case for the pro-life view, there's none better than Scott Klusendorf's "The Case for Life".

The importance of Christian men setting an example of benevolent authority

November 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think that children are more likely to accept theism if they have a father who is able to lead them in a loving, caring way. And I also think that children who grow up with an authoritiarian or absent or defective father are more likely to reject theism. The father needs to be strong. The father needs to be good. Otherwise, it's harder for the kids to believe in God.

Let's start proving this with a lecture from psychologist Paul Vitz:

Here's an article by Paul Copan (related to the lecture) which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own* rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all*.[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of Francois-Marie Arouet.
> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did

> not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
>
> We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
>
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence of a psychological explanation for atheism, but there is also statistical evidence.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end

> up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

So, I think we can make a case that anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have a more difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. They may not see the value of a relationship with someone who uses their power for to grow them and guide them. They may view the leadership of a powerful person skeptically, because they have been disappointed by father figures in their own lives.

I think the best way for a Christian man to to lead someone who is less powerful, is to explain why they want the person to grow in a particular dimension. Why are the moral boundaries there? Why is one course of action more practical than another? Why is it

worth it to give up pleasure and do hard things? The experience of trusting male leadership as a child, and seeing it work out, helps a person keep their belief in God. In my own case, I trusted my Dad on things like saving and investing, studying computer science instead of English, living at home instead of going away to college, and many other things, and because I have seen that leadership produce dividends, it's much easier for me to accept that I can be a disciple of Jesus and trust him when things don't go my way. I am used to not getting my way right now, but having it work out well later. I have experienced it with my Dad.

I also think, however, that we need to be cautious about letting children roll over us – because then they will get the idea that God is their cosmic butler, and that's not going to stand up to the rigors of life. We can't let them take advantage of us, they have to understand that being led means that they are going somewhere – that life isn't all about them and their feelings.

Oxford University shuts down public debate on abortion

November 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eagle eggs are protected, unborn babies are not

Journalist Tim Stanley writes about his ordeal in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> An attempt to hold a reasonable debate about abortion in Oxford was called off after students threatened to disrupt it. Tim Stanley, one of the debaters, writes that the authoritarian Left has become everything it claims to hate.
>
> I would've thought that the one place in Britain where you could agree to disagree amicably would be Oxford University. But I was wrong. For instance, I've discovered that you're only allowed to debate abortion there if a) you're a woman and b) you're all for it. Any other approach to the subject is liable to attract a mob…
>
> A few months ago I accepted an invitation by the Oxford Students for Life to debate Brendan O'Neill on the subject "This House believes Britain's Abortion Culture Hurts Us All". The setting was Christ Church College and around 60 people signed up to attend on Facebook. To be clear: this wasn't a pro-life demo and the subject wasn't whether or not women should have the right to choose abortion. Even though I was speaking for the proposition, my speech would've begun with noting that the motion has nothing to do with abortion rights per se and was simply a consideration of how having effective abortion on demand affects wider society. Brendan, speaking for the opposition, would've doubtless

> done a fine job and probably run rings round me. It was a fair and free debate that I half expected to lose.
>
> But someone was outraged that we dared to discuss this issue at all. A protest group of around 300 people called “What the f**k is ‘Abortion Culture’?” appeared on Facebook that promised to “take along some non-destructive but oh so disruptive instruments to help demonstrate to the anti-choicers just what we think of their ‘debate’.” We were guilty of promoting “really sh*tty anti-choice rhetoric and probs some cissexism.” The foul language indicates how sophisticated the protesters were, while the accusation of cissexism had me reaching for my online urban dictionary. Was I being called a sissy by homophobic feminists? Mais non. Apparently a “cis” is someone who identifies with the same gender that they were born with. So that’s a thing now.
>
> The university’s students’ union also issued a statement that took aim at Brendan and me for being so offensively attached to our God-given genitals: “The Women’s Campaign (WomCam) condemn SFL for holding this debate. It is absurd to think we should be listening to two cisgender men debate about what people with uteruses should be doing with their bodies.” Next, the Christ Church Junior Common Room (posh talk for “the committee that run the students’ bar”) passed a motion asking their college to decline to room the debate. Eventually, the college caved-in on the grounds that, “there was insufficient time between today and tomorrow to address some concerns they had about the meeting”. The pro-life society tried to find an alternative venue but everyone else said “no”. I believe that two colleges agreed only to later rescind their invitations. I was sitting in Paddington Station (in a duffel coat and hat!) ready to jump on a train to Oxford at 4.40pm when I was told that the debate was finally, totally called off.

So what do we learn from this?

We learn that feminists on the left are opposed to free speech. Once they decide something, they don’t want to have to consider alternatives or hear evidence contrary to what they feel is right *for them.* It doesn’t matter what is morally right or respectful of the rights of others – the selfish desire for happiness is absolute, and to help with personal responsibility. And if free speech has to go in order to prevent anyone from harassing them with pesky facts, then so much the worse for free speech.

One thing is for sure, the pro-abortion position is not adopted because of logic or evidence. Being pro-abortion is non-cognitive. It cannot be defended rationally, but survives only by mob threats and raw power. If this were not so, then the feminists would have let the debate go through and their side would have won it on the merits. But they knew they would lose a fair debate, and that’s why they shut the debate down. And yet I’m sure that they would call themselves pro-diversity and open-minded.

Human Rights Campaign co-founder Terry Bean arrested for sex crime with 15-year-old

November 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist Terry Bean and Barack Obama
Here is his biography from his web site:

> Terry Bean is a native Oregonian, successful real estate developer, and President and CEO of Bean Investment Real Estate, a private company that trades and invests in commercial real estate as well as large residential complexes. Along with these badges of honor, Terry Bean is often first recognized as a pioneer in the national civil rights movement, promoting full equality for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer/questioning communities. (GLBTQ)
>
> Terry Bean is so well regarded as an activist that Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski declared August 23, 2008, to be "Terry Bean Equality Day" in recognition for the work he has done on LGBT rights causes since the 1970's.
>
> A pioneer in the movement, Terry Bean, started advocating politically for gay rights in the early 1970´s in Eugene, Oregon. Early successes resulted in the passing of a city gay rights ordinance, which, while was later overturned by voters, set the framework for grassroot organizations and strategies which quickly followed—establishing a pattern of victories which have continued well into the new millennium.
>
> In 1979, Bean helped to organize the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, the first such highly visible effort to empower a minority while educating a majority.
>
> **After the march on Washington, Terry Bean turned his focus to the national level co-founding the Gay Rights National Lobby and the Human Rights Campaign Fund. These groups merged to become today's Human Rights Campaign – HRC.**

The Human Rights Campaign is the nation's largest gay rights organization.

Here is the first story from KOIN 6 News:

> A founder of the country's leading gay rights organization was arrested Wednesday on charges related to an incident with a 15-year-old boy last year.
>
> The Portland Police Bureau's Sex Crimes Unit took Terrence Bean into custody at his home in Southwest Portland following a Lane County Grand Jury indictment.
>
> Bean, 66, was on the ground floor of the Human Rights Campaign, according to terrybeanpolitics.com, and is listed as an HRC board member and Portland's sole representation in the group's leadership on hrc.org.

And the follow-up story from Oregon Live:

> The former boyfriend of Terrence P. Bean was arrested early Thursday on sex abuse charges stemming from the same alleged 2013 encounter with a 15-year-old boy at a hotel in Eugene.
>
> Kiah Loy Lawson, 25, was arrested at 1:15 a.m. at the Portland Police Bureau's Central Precinct and booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center shortly after 2 a.m.
>
> He's accused of third-degree sodomy and third-degree sexual abuse.
>
> Lawson is expected to be transferred later Thursday to Lane County, where he was indicted, according to jail officials. His bail was set at $50,000.
>
> Detective Jeff Myers from the Portland's Sex Crimes Unit made the arrest, hours after police took Lawson's ex-boyfriend, Portland developer Terrence Patrick Bean, into custody Wednesday morning.
>
> Bean, 66, a prominent gay rights activist and major Democratic Party fundraiser, was arrested at his home in Southwest Portland and booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center at 10:12 a.m. Wednesday.
>
> The indictment charges Bean with two counts of third-degree sodomy, a felony, and one count of third-degree sex abuse, a misdemeanor, police said.
>
> […]Both Bean and Lawson are accused of having a sexual encounter with the same 15-year-old boy in a hotel in Eugene last year. They had arranged the encounter with the teen after meeting him via a website, investigators allege.
>
> "The investigation began in Portland, but the criminal episode occurred in Lane County," said police spokesman Sgt. Pete Simpson.
>
> **Bean has been one of the state's biggest Democratic donors and an influential figure in gay rights circles in the state. He helped found two major national political groups, the Human Rights Campaign and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, and has been a major contributor for several Democratic presidential candidates, including Barack Obama. He's also a close friend of former Gov. Barbara Roberts.**

The Human Rights Campaign promotes the idea that gay marriage is “equal” to heterosexual marriage. And a lot of big companies are very friendly with the Human Rights Campaign.

Companies that support the Human Rights Campaign

I found a list of companies on the Human Rights Campaign web site that are also strongly oppose traditional marriage.

Platinum Partners:

- American Airlines
- Citi
- Microsoft
- Nationwide Insurance
- VPI Pet Insurance

Gold Partners:

- Bank of America
- Deloitte
- Ernst & Young LLP
- Lexus
- Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams
- Prudential

Silver Partners:

- Beaulieu Vineyard
- BP
- Caesars Entertainment
- Chevron
- Google
- MGM Mirage
- Nike

Bronze Partners:

- Chase
- Cox Enterprises
- Cunard
- Dell
- Goldman Sachs
- IBM
- Macy’s Inc.
- MetLife
- Morgan Stanley

- Orbitz
- Paul Hastings
- PwC
- Replacements, Ltd.
- Shell
- Starbucks
- Toronto-Dominion (TD) Bank
- Tylenol PM

And of course prominent Democrats support them too – like Barack Obama:

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

And Hillary Clinton:

Hillary Clinton and the Human Rights Campaign
UPDATE: Life News says he is also pro-abortion:

> A nationally-known pro-abortion activist has been arrested on charges of raping a 15-year-old boy. Terrance Patrick Bean is the founder of Human Rights Campaign, a group that pushes other political issues but also takes a steadfastly pro-abortion position.
>
> Human Rights Campaign, in addition to advancing abortion, has also lobbied Congress to end all federal funding for abstinence education, and hailed one piece of legislation that cut off fundingbecause it "would end abstinence-only-until-marriage programs once and for all." Bean is also a prominent supporter of pro-abortion President Barack Obama.

Please see the related links below for more related stories.

Related posts

- Gay activist inside IRS leaked names of pro-marriage donors to Human Rights Campaign
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Christian man fired after gay rights group contacts his employer to complain
- "Two Dads are Better Than One": pro-gay adoption ABC profile of convicted pedophile
- Gay rights activist who ran pedophile ring gets life sentence
- Democrats vote to protect pedophiles in H.R. 1913 hate crime bill
- College allows transgender man to expose himself to young girls
- Gay activist pleads guilty to sexually assaulting boys
- Famous gay activist pleads guilty to child pornography charges
- Gay activist honored by Barack Obama charged with sex crimes with a minor
- Gay man gets 40-year sentence for molesting boy he adopted from Russia
- Some supporters of gay marriage favor normalizing pedophilia and incest
- Gay rights activist accused of sexually assaulting 17-year-old boy
- Gay rights activist convicted of manslaughter
- Gay health expert charged with selling adopted 5-year old boy for sex

Should Christianity be open and inclusive to those who practice idolatry?

November 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why, oh why, did I not write this parody of gay activist Matthew Vines. It's entitled "The Case for Idolatry". It's a parody of Matthew Vines' case for compatibility between Christianity and the gay lifestyle.

Excerpt:

> For as long as I can remember, I've wanted to worship idols. It's not that my parents raised me that way, because they didn't; I was brought up in a loving, secure, Christian home. But from childhood until today, my heart has been drawn to idolatry. In fact, if I'm honest, one of the defining features of my identity has been my desire to put something else – popularity, money, influence, sex, success – in place of God.
>
> **That's just who I am**.
>
> For many years, I was taught that idolatry was sinful. As a good Christian, I fought the desire to commit idolatry, and repented when I got it wrong. But the desire to worship idols never went away.
>
> *I wanted it to, but it didn't*.
>
> So it has been such a blessing to discover that **worshipping one God, and him alone, isn't for everyone**. There are thousands of Christians out there who have found faithful, loving ways of expressing worship both to God and to idols, without compromising either their faith or their view of Scripture. In recent years, I have finally summoned the courage to admit that I am one of them. Let me give you a few reasons why I believe that idolatry and Christianity are compatible.
>
> I start with **my own story**, and the stories of many others like me. I am an evangelical, and I have a very high view of the Bible – I am currently studying for a PhD in biblical studies at King's College London, which will be my third theology degree – as well as knowing both the ancient languages and the state of scholarly research. Yet, after much prayerful study, I have discovered the liberating truth that it is possible to be an idolatrous Christian. That, at least, is evidence that *you can be an evangelical and an idolater*.
>
> Not only that, but a number of evangelical writers have been challenging the monolatrous narrative in a series of scholarly books. A number of these provide a powerful case for listening to the diversity of the ancient witnesses in their original contexts, and call for a **Christlike approach of humility, openness and inclusion towards our idolatrous brothers and sisters**.
>
> Some, on hearing this, will of course want to rush straight to the "clobber passages" in Paul's letters (which we will consider in a moment), in a bid to

> secure the fundamentalist ramparts and shut down future dialogue. But as we consider the scriptural material, two things stand out. Firstly, **the vast majority of references to idols and idolatry in the Bible come in the Old Testament** – the same Old Testament that tells us we can't eat shellfish or gather sticks on Saturdays. When advocates of monolatry eat bacon sandwiches and drive cars at the weekend, they indicate that we should move beyond Old Testament commandments in the new covenant, and rightly so.
>
> Secondly, and even more significantly, we need to read the whole Bible with reference to the approach of Jesus. To be a Christian is to be a Jesus-person: one whose life is based on his priorities, not on the priorities of subsequent theologians. And when we look at Jesus, we notice that he welcomed everyone who came to him, including those people that the (one-God worshipping) religious leaders rejected – and that ***Jesus said absolutely nothing about idols in any of the four Gospels***.

Skip forward a bit:

> We should also remember that, as we have discovered more about the human brain, we have found out all sorts of things about idolatry that the biblical writers simply did not know. The prophets and apostles knew nothing of cortexes and neurons, and had no idea that some people are pre-wired to commit idolatry, so they never talked about it. But as we have learned more about genetics, neural pathways, hormones and so on, we have come to realise that some tendencies – alcoholism, for example – scientifically result from the way we are made, and therefore cannot be the basis for moral disapproval or condemnation. *To disregard the findings of science on this point is like continuing to insist that the world is flat*.
>
> With all of these preliminary ideas in place, we can finally turn to Paul, who has sadly been used as a judgmental battering ram by monolaters for centuries. When we do, what immediately strikes us is that in the ultimate "clobber passage", namely Romans 1, the problem isn't really idol-worship at all! The problem, as Paul puts it, is not that people worship idols, but that they "exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images" (1:23). *Paul isn't talking about people who are idolatrous by nature*. He is talking about people who were naturally worshippers of Israel's God, and exchanged it for the worship of idols. What else could the word "exchange" here possibly mean?
>
> Not only that, but none of his references apply to idolatry as we know it today: putting something above God in our affections. Paul, as a Hellenistic Roman citizen, simply would not have had a category for that kind of thing. In his world, idolatry meant physically bowing down to tribal or household deities – statues and images made of bronze or wood or stone – and as such, the worship of power or money or sex or popularity had nothing to do with his prohibitions.

Read the whole thing. You might recognize these arguments from Matthew Vines' debate with Michael Brown about whether you can be a practicing gay person and a Christian at the same time. I I summarized the debate in this post.

I wrote this in reaction to the debate:

> Even heterosexuals who have not married are called upon to embrace lifelong celibacy. I am in my 30s and am a virgin because I have not married. I wouldn't seek to reinrepret the Bible to allow premarital sex just because what I am doing is difficult. I would rather just do what the Bible says than reinterpret it to suit me. And it's just as hard for me to be chaste as it would be for him to be. In short, it's a character issue. He takes his right to recreational sex as non-negotiable, and reinterprets the Bible to suit. I take the Bible as non-negotiable, and comply with it regardless of whether it seems to make me less happy. With respect to the purposes of God for me in this world, my happiness is expendable. If I don't find someone to marry, I'm going to be "afflicted" with the lifelong celibacy that Vines seems to think is torture, but let me tell you – God is happy with the contributions I am making for him, and if I have to be chaste through my whole life, I am 100% fine with that. I serve the King. And not the reverse.

So back to the parody. Apparently, Matthew Vines is saying that he doesn't really use arguments like the ones above, so thankfully Samuel James has gone through Vines' book and listed out exact quotes where he uses the arguments in the parody. This is worth a read as well – it's really first class work, because a lot of people who think Christianity is supposed to be about us being happy and fulfilled buy into these reinterpretations of the Bible. We need to be ready with an answer.

Released e-mails: Obama administration asked CBS News to block Sharyl Attkisson

November 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ex-CBS News reporter Sharyl Attkisson

This is being reported by Pajamas Media. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Judicial Watch reports that the Obama administration has turned over about 42,000 pages of documents related to the Fast and Furious scandal. The administration was forced to turn the documents over to Judicial Watch in a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit. Judicial Watch is posting them on its web site. The administration turned them over on November 18, 2014.
>
> One of the documents provides smoking gun proof that the Obama White House and the Eric Holder Justice Department colluded to get CBS News to block reporter Sharyl Attkisson. Attkisson was one of the few mainstream media reporters who paid any attention to the deadly gun-running scandal.
>
> In an email dated October 4, 2011, Attorney General Holder's top press aide, Tracy Schmaler, called Attkisson "out of control." Schmaler told White House Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz that he intended to call CBS news anchor Bob Schieffer to get the network to stop Attkisson.
>
> Schultz replied, "Good. Her piece was really bad for the AG."
>
> Schultz also told Schmaler that he was working with reporter Susan Davis, then at the *National Journal*, to target Rep. Darrel Issa (R-CA). Issa led the House investigation into Fast and Furious. Davis now works at *USA Today*. In the email chain, Schultz tells Schmaler that he would provide Davis with "leaks."
>
> Davis wrote a critical piece on Issa a few weeks later.
>
> Attkisson was later subjected to hacking of her computer by people who remain unknown, but who likely belong to a government agency. She and CBS parted ways earlier in 2014, and Attkisson has since said that the network blocked her

> reports from airing.

Can anybody remember when journalists actually thought that their job was to report news, not to be allies of the Democrat party? I mean, other than Sharyl Attkisson, are there any actual reporters left who report the news honestly? I never watch anything on TV except Bret Baier on Special Report. At least on Fox News you get different points of view, like Charles Krauthammer vs Ron Fournier, or Stephen Hayes vs Juan Williams.

The biggest driver of income inequality is single motherhood

November 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

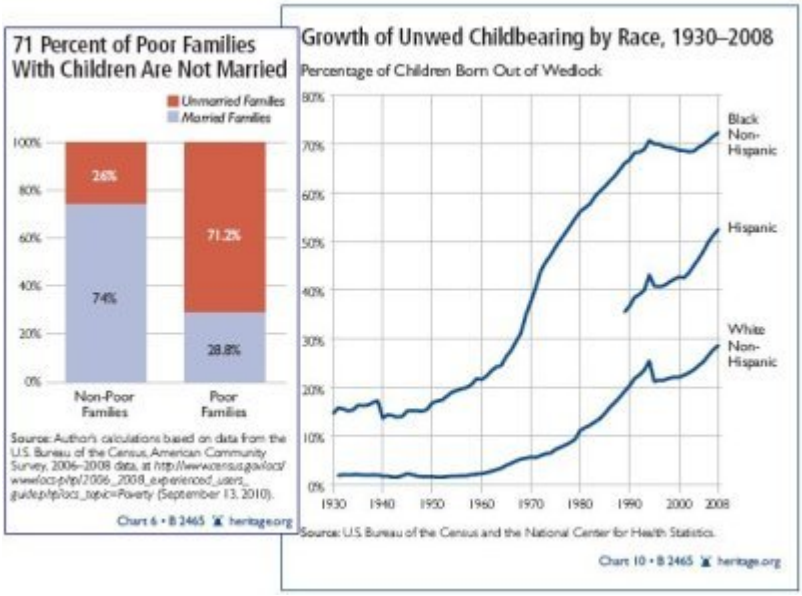

Welfare and out-of-wedlock births

Indian economist Aparna Mathur, whose work I've featured here before, writes about it in Forbes magazine.

Excerpt:

> The fabric of our society is changing. In 1980, approximately 78 percent of families with children were headed by married parents. In 2012, married parents headed only 66 percent of families with children. In a new report, Bradford Wilcox and Robert Lerman explore the role of family structure with new data and analysis, and document how this retreat from marriage is not simply a social and cultural phenomenon. It has important economic implications for, amongst others, men's labor force participation rates, children's high school dropout rates and teen pregnancy rates. Since these factors are highly correlated with economic opportunity and the ability to move up the income ladder, this suggests that income inequality and economic mobility across generations are critically influenced by people's decisions and attitudes towards marriage. Understanding the role of family structure is therefore key to understanding the big economic challenges of our time.
>
> […]Wilcox and Lerman document how the shift away from marriage and traditional family structures has had important consequences for family incomes, and has been correlated with rising family-income inequality and declines in men's labor force participation rates. Using data from the Current Population Survey, the authors find that between 1980 and 2012, median family income rose 30 percent for married parent families, For unmarried parents, family

> incomes rose only 14 percent.
>
> These differential patterns of changes in family income have exacerbated family-income inequality. Since unmarried parent families generally expand the ranks of low-income families, while high-income, high-education adults increasingly marry partners from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, inequality trends are worsened. Comparing the 90th percentile families to the 10th percentile families in 2012, the top 10 percent had incomes that were more than 11 times higher than the bottom 10 percent. However, if we restrict the sample to married families with children, the ratio drops to nearly 7, suggesting that within married families, income inequality is less stark. The authors estimate that approximately 32 percent of the growth in family-income inequality between 1979 and 2012 is associated with changes in family structure. Other research, studying the period 1968-2000, finds that the changing family structure, accounted for 11 percent of the rise widening of the income gap between the bottom and top deciles.
>
> Another interesting observation relates to the trends in employment participation by men. The Wilcox-Lerman study finds that for married fathers, employment and participation rates have remained consistently higher than for married men with no children and unmarried men with no children. The authors speculate that between 1980 and 2008, about 51 percent of the decline in men's employment rates can be associated with the retreat from marriage.

And why is single motherhood so ascendant today? Well, part of it is the loss of morality caused by secularism. If there is no God, then there is no way we ought to be, so let's just do whatever makes us feel good, and pass the bill to the taxpayers. That only works, though, if we elect politicians who want taxpayers who are responsible to pay for the ones who are irresponsible.

So have we done that? Yes – Robert Rector explains in The Daily Signal.

He writes:

> It is no accident that the collapse of marriage in America largely began with the War on Poverty and the proliferation of means-tested welfare programs that it fostered.
>
> When the War on Poverty began, only a single welfare program—Aid to Families with Dependent Children —assisted single parents.
>
> Today, dozens of programs provide benefits to families with children, including the Earned Income Tax Credit, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Women, Infants and Children food program, Supplemental Security Income, food stamps, child nutrition programs, public housing and Section 8 housing, and Medicaid.
>
> Although married couples with children can also receive aid through these programs, the overwhelming majority of assistance to families with children goes to single-parent households.

> The burgeoning welfare state has promoted single parenthood in two ways. First, means-tested welfare programs such as those described above financially enable single parenthood. It is difficult for single mothers with a high school degree or less to support children without the aid of another parent.
>
> Means-tested welfare programs substantially reduce this difficulty by providing extensive support to single parents. Welfare thereby reduces the financial need for marriage. Since the beginning of the War on Poverty, less-educated mothers have increasingly become married to the welfare state and to the U.S. taxpayer rather than to the fathers of their children.
>
> As means-tested benefits expanded, welfare began to serve as a substitute for a husband in the home, and low-income marriage began to disappear. As husbands left the home, the need for more welfare to support single mothers increased. The War on Poverty created a destructive feedback loop: Welfare promoted the decline of marriage, which generated a need for more welfare.
>
> A second major problem is that the means-tested welfare system actively penalizes low-income parents who do marry. All means-tested welfare programs are designed so that a family's benefits are reduced as earnings rise. In practice, this means that, if a low-income single mother marries an employed father, her welfare benefits will generally be substantially reduced. The mother can maximize welfare by remaining unmarried and keeping the father's income "off the books."
>
> For example, a single mother with two children who earns $15,000 per year would generally receive around $5,200 per year of food stamp benefits. However, if she marries a father with the same earnings level, her food stamps would be cut to zero.

So you see, the thing the left complains about the most is actually the thing they do the most to cause. They are all about taxpayer-funded welfare programs and growing government to make more and more people dependent. They are causing the income inequality and then complaining about what they cause.

Pro-life family wins case to avoid paying Obamacare surcharge on health insurance

November 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scheming Unborn Baby scheming about becoming an ADF lawyer

Great news from Life News.

Excerpt:

> A pro-life leader and his family who lost their health plan due to Obamacare filed suit in federal court this year. The family was suing because they were being forced on to the state's health insurance exchange, which only offers plans that require them to pay for other people's abortions.
>
> Barth and Abbie Bracy had insurance through a private insurer, but Obamacare forced the insurer to cancel the policy effective later this year. Forced on to the Obamacare exchange, the Bracys were left only with plans that include a mandatory surcharge used to fund the elective abortions of others. Ironically, Barth Bracy is executive director of The Rhode Island State Right to Life Committee and has warned people of exactly the problems his family is now facing.
>
> The lawsuit also challenged secrecy clauses within Obamacare which forbid Americans from being told prior to enrollment whether the plans they would purchase on an exchange will include abortion coverage. The clauses also forbid Americans from being told how much of the premium is a federally mandated abortion surcharge that pays for other people's elective abortions.

> Now, their attorneys, Alliance Defending Freedom, have informed LifeNews that the Bracy family won't be forced to pay Obamacare's abortion surcharge.
>
> **Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys voluntarily dismissed their lawsuit against federal and state officials Wednesday after the addition of Obamacare plan options that, for the first time in Connecticut, will not require participants to pay for others' elective abortions.** Despite the Connecticut change, many American families are still being forced to pay hidden abortion surcharges.
>
> "Americans should not have to pay a special fee for other people's abortions in order to take care of their own family's health," said ADF Senior Counsel Casey Mattox. "The Bracy family has experienced first-hand the kind of deception that was used to pass and that continues to pervade this law. While we are pleased that Connecticut families will now have a choice to avoid paying this abortion surcharge, it is a shame that other families won't have that choice, and that most Americans don't even know that they must pay this secret fee."
>
> **Federal law forbids taxpayer subsidies for elective abortions; however, the Affordable Care Act requires every exchange plan that includes abortion to collect a separate fee that is used exclusively to pay for abortions. The ACA further forbids disclosure of the abortion surcharge to customers.**

So it's not just this family that won the case – it's the whole state!!! I think this is just amazingly awesome. We need more people like this to take on the government, and thank God the ADF is there to defend them. We need more Christian lawyers who are willing to take cases like this.

American Atheists PR Director announces he wants to be a woman

November 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Christian Post.

Excerpt:

> Dave Muscato, the public relations director for American Atheists, has announced that he'll be transitioning into a transgender woman in the near future, and has chosen the name Danielle as a new identity.
>
> "I consider my gender identity to be personal and, despite my passion for PR, don't intend to do much in the way of interviews about my personal gender identity if I can help it. I fully support intersectionality and working together with LGBTQ activists on mutual goals, but I'm first and foremost an atheist activist, and that hasn't changed," Muscato wrote in a blog post on Monday for The Friendly Atheist.
>
> "There are many other people who are significantly more educated about trans activism than I am and who are already doing great work in that area. I support them and obviously have an interest in their success, but it's not my area of expertise. Exposing the harms that religion causes and making the world a better place for atheists will always be my passion."
>
> Muscato noted that she's (formerly he) grateful for the full support of American Atheists President David Silverman and Managing Director Amanda Knief, as well as other co-workers.
>
> Muscato added that gender identity and gender expression don't always go hand-in-hand.
>
> "While I have identified internally as a woman for a long time, for now, I will be presenting more-or-less as a man; that is, I will continue to wear mostly traditional men's clothing, speak in my natural lower voice, and so on," the American Atheists public relations director wrote.
>
> "Transitioning is a slow, painful, and expensive process and can take many months to several years. As I begin to take bigger steps to change my appearance, I will also begin dressing differently and changing other aspects of my gender expression.
>
> American Atheists, one of the largest secular organizations in the U.S., launched the world's first ever TV channel dedicated exclusively to atheism earlier this year.
>
> "Atheist TV," as the channel is called, is shown through Internet-streaming service Roku 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and has partnered with other notable atheist groups, such as the Richard Dawkins Foundation.

> “There’s a glut of religious TV programming out there, from televangelists to Christmas specials,” Muscato told New York Daily News in May. “But there’s no atheist channel. We wanted to fill that void. … We’ll have shows about philosophy, science, history — a critical examination of the facts.”

His new biography on the American Atheists page says he is “a former Christian praise & worship musician”. As if I wasn’t suspicious of them enough already! Ha ha.

So I think the take-away lesson here is that although atheists like to portray themselves are being motivated by reason, it’s not generally the truth, in my experience.

After all, we live in a created universe that is fine-tuned for complex embodied life. Those are the facts. We have evidence for intelligent causes at the origin of life and in the Cambrian explosion. More facts. Our galaxy, solar system and planet support intelligent life, even though most possible galaxies, solar systems and planets do not have what it takes to support life – and that’s an understatement. Facts again. So when a person claims to be an atheist after being presented with these facts, it’s not reason that is causing them to stay an atheist. It’s something else. And it’s not reason that causes them to spend so much time and effort trying to get rid of God, and objective moral values and duties. It’s something else.

Tim McGrew debates Peter Boghossian on the definition of faith

November 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have tried very hard to avoid writing about Peter Boghossian because I kept hoping that someone would speak to him and set him straight before he went too far.

Basically, when you listen to the debate below, you'll find that Boghossian redefines the word faith so that it basically means "stupidity", and then he tries to get people of faith to accept that they are stupid according to his new definition of faith. The new definition is not found in any dictionary, and it's not used commonly, either.

Anyway, here are the details:

> This Week on Unbelievable : Peter Boghossian vs Tim McGrew – debate on 'A Manual For Creating Atheists"
>
> Peter Boghossian teaches philosophy and is the author of 'A Manual for Creating Atheists'. He believes that faith is a 'false epistemology' (way of knowing things) and even describes it as a 'virus of the mind'. Tim McGrew is a Christian philosophy professor specialising in epistemology. He contests Boghossian's definition of faith and debates the merits of his recent book. To cast your vote on the definition of faith visit www.facebook.com/unbelievablejb.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics: (I reserve the right to satirize Boghossian in this. Listen to the audio if you want his exact words)

- PB: My book tries to avoid the "obfuscations" of reputable, credentialed Christian scholars and discusses faith at my intellectual level
- PB: The goal of the book is to help people abandon the dictionary definition of the word "faith" and accept the definition I invented
- TM: Defining the word "faith" in the wrong way is not the right way to start an authentic, respectful conversation
- TM: Faith does not mean "pretending to know things you don't know" – that is not a standard definition
- TM: the only people who accept your definition of faith are you and the people who follow you online
- TM: your whole book is predicated on on a wrong definition of faith
- PB: that is my definition of faith based on my experience of talking to lots of people
- TM: He says this is how billions of people define faith – but not in my experience, maybe satirists like Ambrose Bierce and Mark Twain do
- TM: Your definition of faith is not in the Oxford English Dictionary and that definition is based on common usage of the word faith

- TM: The New Testament definition of faith “pistis” means trust
- PB: There are 50-100 people who use the term that way, and only in academia
- TM: How about “The Good Atheist” who interviewed you? He is not an academic or a theist, but he didn’t accept your definition
- PB: You are “extraordinarily isolated” from the real definition of faith
- TM: Faith is not belief without evidence, it is trust based on at least some evidence
- PB: Christian leaders use the word according my definition, I won’t name any or quote any, though
- JB: So you are basically saying that Christians are lying when they express their faith, since they know what they are saying isn’t true but they say it anyway
- PB: What percentage of Christians use the word faith to mean “belief without evidence”
- TM: Well below 1%. It may be the case that their evidence is not very good, but they do rest their beliefs on evidence
- TM: Faith is trusting, holding to, and acting on what one has good reasons to believe is true in the face of difficulties
- PB: That’s not what people mean by faith, they mean my definition
- JB: What do you mean when you say that faith is a “virus of the mind”, and a “mental illness”? School programs to remove faith?
- PB: Think about how atheists feel when they are told they will go Hell
- PB: Christians are hurting people, so that means they have a mental disorder that needs to be cured in a systematic way
- PB: Faith is an epistemic virus that hijacks the reasoning process

At that point I quit summarizing, because I didn’t think he was worth listening to any more.

He is clearly not aware of how even basic Christian apologetics books that are bestsellers cover evidences like the Big Bang, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, galactic habitability, stellar habitability, New Testament reliability, historical Jesus, philosophical arguments for theism, and so on. This is the bottom-shelf of Christian apologetics, widely read by rank-and-file Christians, but Boghossian seems to be completely unaware of it. He needs to get out more and talk to people outside of radical atheist circles. Maybe he needs to pick up a serious book like “Debating Christian Theism” and read it before he opens his mouth on topics he knows nothing about.

But that’s not all. As, I explained before, the concept of faith presented in the Bible agrees with what Dr. McGrew said – faith is trust based on evidence. That is the Biblical view.

And finally, this:

John 10:37-38: [NASB]

37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;

38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may

know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

The words of Jesus – he is saying: believe me because of the evidence I provide from miracles that you can see with your own eyes. Period. End of discussion.

So Boghossian's view of faith is nowhere except in his own mind. Not in the apologetics literature. Not in the writings of any reputable Christian scholar. Not in the Bible. Not in the words of Jesus. It's enough to make me think that this talk about "mental disorders" and "viruses of the mind" is just projection.

Vote in the poll

Please vote in this poll:

Thank goodness we have debates like this so that we can find out where Christians really come down on faith.

Why does God allow so much natural evil from earthquakes?

November 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi shared this video with me, which features chemist Fazale Rana.

The video runs under 4 minutes:

Basically, there was an atheist who challenged the idea that nature is designed because there are things in nature which cause suffering, like earthquakes and volcanoes.

Now the first thing to note is that atheists commonly think that God's job is to make humans happy. If he doesn't make humans feel happy – regardless of their knowledge of him and relationship with him – then he is a big failure. Many atheists think that, it is one of the most common reasons why people become atheists. But of course anyone who reads the Bible and reads the story of Jesus knows that the purpose of life on God's view is for humans to know him and to be disciples of a *suffering* Messiah who sacrifices himself in order to obey God the Father. So that's the first thing to say – purpose of life *not* happiness, but knowledge of God and being a disciple of Jesus. This may involve all kinds of suffering, and that's to be expected.

Second, there is a response to the problem of evil based on the necessity of natural laws. The argument goes that you can't have genuine morality without a predictable, knowable system of natural laws.

But I want to talk about something different in this post. In the video, Dr. Rana thinks that many of the things that cause suffering in the natural world are actually necessary for life to exist at all. He provides the example of plate tectonics in his video above, and I want to take that one and add to it the example of heavy element production and the stellar lifecycle. These are both from a book called "Rare Earth", which is written by two non-Christians – Peter Ward and Donald Brownlee, but I'll link to web sites to make the case.

Plate tectonics.

Here's an article from Reasons to Believe by Dr. David Rogstad, who has a PhD in physics from Caltech – the top school for experimental science. The article not only goes over the basic plate tectonics to carbonate-silicate cycle connection, but it adds a newer discovery to boot.

Excerpt:

> Earthquakes are a byproduct of plate tectonics, a theory in geology developed in recent years for explaining motions near the surface of the Earth. One of the benefits from plate tectonics is that Earth maintains the right levels of carbon dioxide (CO_2) in the atmosphere to compensate for the Sun's increasing luminosity. This is accomplished by what is called the carbonate-silicate cycle. CO_2 is removed from the atmosphere through weathering. The weathered

> products are eventually drawn into the Earth's interior via plate tectonics. Processes inside the Earth's interior release the CO_2 back into the atmosphere via volcanoes. While all aspects of this mechanism are not yet fully understood, it has been instrumental in providing a stable environment for life on the Earth for billions of years.
>
> New research provides yet another component that appears fine-tuned for life. In a letter in the September 27, 2007 issue of Nature together with a corresponding news release from the University of Bonn, Arno Rohrbach and his colleagues have discussed another mechanism similar to the carbonate-silicate cycle. It also depends on plate tectonics but, in this case, the mechanism controls the amount of oxygen on the surface of the Earth.
>
> Oxygen becomes bound up in various oxides which are then drawn into the Earth's interior, where various processes result in its being incorporated into an exotic mineral called majorite. The results reported in this letter established that majorite functions as a kind of "reservoir" for oxygen, and when the majorite ascends nearer to the surface of the Earth it breaks down and releases its oxygen. Some of this oxygen also binds with hydrogen released from the interior of the Earth to form water. The authors have referred to the whole process as an "oxygen elevator."
>
> They go on to say that "without the 'oxygen elevator' in its mantle the Earth would probably be a barren planet hostile to life. According to our findings, planets below a certain size hardly have any chance of forming a stable atmosphere with a high water content."
>
> This research confirms the existence of one more finely tuned mechanism that depends on plate tectonics and contributes to an environment that can support life. It also gives humans one more reason to be appreciative rather than dismayed when we experience an earthquake that breaks some precious possessions beyond repair.

Astronomer Dr. Hugh Ross who has a PhD in Astronomy from the University of Toronto and did a 5-year post-doctoral work at Caltech, adds to this with another discovery.

Excerpt:

> In the December 2007 issue of *Astrobiology* Stanford University geophysicists Norman H. Sleep and Mark D. Zoback note that the higher tectonic activity during Earth's early history could have played a key role in cycling critically important nutrients and energy sources for life. The production of numerous small faults in the brittle primordial crust released trapped nutrients. Such faults could also release pockets of methane gas and molecular hydrogen. The methane and hydrogen could then provide crucial energy sources for nonphotosynthetic life. Finally, the production of faults could bring water to otherwise arid habitats, such as rocks far below Earth's surface.

> Faulting, generated by active and widespread tectonics, allowed a youthful Earth to support diverse and abundant life. This enhanced diversity and abundance of life quickly transformed Earth's surface into an environment safe for advanced life. Also, the buildup of biodeposits for the support of human civilization occurred more rapidly due to active tectonics.
>
> The more rapid preparation of Earth for humanity is critical. Without such rapid preparation, humans could not come upon the terrestrial scene before the Sun's increasing luminosity would make their presence impossible (due to excessive heat).

So that's the science behind earthquakes. So that's a brief look at why we need plate tectonics for life, and we just have to buck up and take the earthquakes with it. It's not God's job to give us happiness and health. That's not his plan. People who complain about earthquakes have to show how God could get the life-permitting effects of earthquakes without wrecking his ability to succeed in his plan to make people know him and follow him. But how can an atheist do that? They can't. I think that people just need to realize that humans are not in charge here and we have to live with that. We have to accept that we didn't make the universe, and we don't get to decide what purpose it has. God decides.

On to star formation.

Star formation

Atheists often complain that the universe is too big or too old (which is actually the same thing, since the more time passes, the more it expands). The fact of the matter is that life appeared the earliest it could appear – we needed the universe to be a certain age before it could support life.

Dr. Hugh Ross explains in this article.

Excerpt:

> The second parameter of the universe to be measured was its age. For many decades astronomers and others have wondered why, given God exists, He would wait so many billions of years to make life. Why did He not do it right away? The answer is that, given the laws and constants of physics God chose to create, it takes about ten to twelve billion years just to fuse enough heavy elements in the nuclear furnaces of several generations of giant stars to make life chemistry possible.
>
> Life could not happen any earlier in the universe than it did on Earth. Nor could it happen much later. As the universe ages, stars like the sun located in the right part of the galaxy for life (see chapter 15) and in a stable nuclear burning phase become increasingly rare. If the universe were just a few billion years older, such stars would no longer exist.

The Rare Earth book explains the details on p. 40-4:

> The trick for getting from helium to the generation of planets, and ultimately to life, was the formation of carbon, the key element for the success of life and for the production of heavy elements in stars. Carbon could not form in the early moments following the Big Bang, because the density of the expanding mass was too low for the necessary collisions to occur. Carbon formation had to await the creation of giant red stars, whose dense interiors are massive enough to allow such collisions. Because stars become red giants only in the last 10% of their lifetimes (when they have used up much of the hydrogen in their cores), there was no carbon in the Universe for hundreds of millions to several billion years after the Big Bang—and hence no life as we know it for that interval of time.
>
> […]The sequence of element production in the Big Bang and in stars provided not only the elements necessary for the formation of Earth and the other terrestrial planets but also all of the elements critical for life—those actually needed to form living organisms and their habitats.

> […]The processes that occurred during the billions of years of Earth's "prehistory" when its elements were produced are generally well understood. Elements are produced within stars; some are released back into space and are recycled into and out of generations of new stars. When the sun and its planets formed, they were just a random sampling of this generated and reprocessed material. Nevertheless, it is believed that the "cosmic abundance" mix of the chemical elements—the elemental composition of the sun—is representative of the building material of most stars and planets, with the major variation being the ratio of hydrogen to heavy elements.
>
> […]Many stars are similar in composition, but there is variation, mainly in the abundance of the heavier Earth-forming elements relative to hydrogen and helium. The sun is in fact somewhat peculiar in that it contains about 25% more heavy elements than typical nearby stars of similar mass. In extremely old stars, the abundance of heavy elements, may be as low as a thousandth of that in the sun. Abundance of heavy elements is roughly correlated with age. As time passed, the heavy-element content of the Universe as a whole increased, so newly formed stars are on the average more "enriched" in heavy elements than older ones.
>
> […]The matter produced in the Big Bang was enriched in heavier elements by cycling in and out of stars. Like biological entities, stars form, evolve, and die. In the process of their death, stars ultimately become compact objects such as white dwarfs, neutron stars, or even black holes. On their evolutionary paths to these ends, they eject matter back into space, where it is recycled and further enriched in heavy elements. New stars rise from the ashes of the old. This is why we say that each of the individual atoms in Earth and in all of its creatures—including us—has occupied the interior of at least a few different stars.

What he’s saying is that heavy elements are created gradually because of the star formation lifecycle. The first generation of stars are metal-poor. The next generation of stars is better. And so on until we get to stars that can support life by providing a steady, stable amount of energy – as well as other benefits like planets with an atmosphere. Our planet is 4.5 billion years old, and the universe is about 14 billion years old. Simple life appears about 4 billion years ago on Earth. That means we got life practically immediately, given that we had to develop the heavy elements needed to make a life-supporting star, a life-supporting planet and our physical bodies.

Southern Baptist conference hosts Roman Catholic scholar to speak on the defense of marriage

November 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Roman Catholic marriage defender Sherif Giris speaks to about 1500 Southern Baptists at the 2014 ERLC National Conference on "The Gospel, Homosexuality, and the Future of Marriage." This is a very good introduction to the defense of marriage.

Topics:

- his experience doing formal debates on the definition of marriage in the most liberal universities
- the gay marriage side has no argument for redefining marriage it's all emotions
- on their view, what makes a marriage is a strong emotional bond
- however their view does not rationally ground any of traditional marriage norms
- it does not rationally ground the norm of marriage being permanent
- it does not rationally ground the norm of marriage being sexually exclusive
- it does not rationally ground the norm of marriage being for only two people
- it does not rationally ground the norm of marriage involving sexual activity
- it does not rationally ground the norm of marriage involving a connection to family life
- if we redefine marriage to mean "emotional bond" all these features are not essential
- the community of marriage involves cooperation: common actions towards a common end in a context of commitment
- marriage unites two people at all levels
- it unites them sexually for purpose: not for feelings, but for reproduction
- the sexual act in marriage is oriented to generating family life, which requires commitment
- family life leads naturally into the norms of permanence and exclusivity
- the redefined view of marriage as emotional bonding is opposed to all of this
- we can see the priorities of the redefiners in their support for no-fault divorce
- they we acting on their view of making marriage about emotional fulfillment
- they pushed by saying "how would no-fault divorce affect your marriage?"
- no-fault divorce was the first marriage redefinition and it undermined permanence
- it affected the entire community – a generation of kids raised without father
- it causes a host of problems to kids, crime, lower test scores, earlier sexual activity, etc.
- this is why marriage matters – to give children what they need
- defending marriage as part of the Christian life
- we have to understand the motives of the marriage redefiners and addressing their needs

I think it’s a good point to bring up no-fault divorce to show us how people on the secular left who want a more adult-friendly definition of marriage do their redefining at the expense of children. If this life is the only one you have, and there is no design for how humans ought to be, then it makes a lot of sense to maximize your own freedom and view your children as competitors against your happiness. Or, maybe you lie to yourself and say that fatherlessness and instability doesn’t really hurt children, because “children are resilient”.

The capacity for humans to deceive themselves when it comes to having freedom to “be happy” knows no bounds. It falls to us as Christians, then, to speak out for children – born and unborn. We are the only ones who still believe that in a conflict between adult selfishness and a child’s rights, that the child’s rights should win out. Children are not commodities, and there are more important things than our own happiness to consider. There are more important things than appearing “nice” to our peers to consider.

Who is paying for Obama's executive order amnesty vote buying scheme?

November 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> Illegal immigrants will receive huge payments from American taxpayers under rules now being imposed by President Barack Obama's unilateral amnesty.
>
> The illegals will get work-permits and Social Security cards, and will be required to pay taxes, according to Cecilia Munoz, the former immigration lobbyist who is now a top Obama aide.
>
> That means they're part of the tax system, she said, when she was asked if the illegals would get annual payments under the Earned Income Tax Credit program.
>
> "They are subject to our tax law," she said, carefully.
>
> Most households of illegals have very low income, and pay little in taxes. For example, in 2011, roughly 22 percent of immigrant households — both legal and illegal — were classified as living in poverty. In contrast, only 13 percent of American households were in poverty.
>
> However, once illegal immigrants are enrolled in the tax system, they would be entitled to EITC payments.
>
> The payments may be huge, and will rise each year.
>
> According to the Internal Revenue Service, two parents with three or more children would receive up to $6,143 in 2014 if they earn less than $46,997.
>
> A family with two kids, and an income of $20,000, would receive $14,590 in taxpayer funds this year alone.
>
> Parents who earn less than the threshold would get $3,305 if they have one child, and $5,460 if they have two children.
>
> The EITC program is already poorly monitored and may be subject to large amounts of fraud, according to critics.

Who is Cecilia Munoz? She used to work for "La Raza" for 20 years. La Raza means "The Race" in Spanish. They are a pro-amnesty group.

You would think that the Democrats would use their own money to bribe people to vote Democrat, but they would rather use yours. That's what Obama was talking about when he talked about how society is better when he spreads the wealth around. You didn't need that money you earned for anything, did you? Obama needs to spread it around to people who haven't worked for it.

It all sounds so compassionate until somebody loses their job or can’t afford to provide for their own families with money they earned.

Woman invents hunky man character for her book, then leaves her husband for him

November 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My good friend Dina sent me this article about a very crazy, irrational woman who does not value marriage at all.

Excerpt:

> Her steamy, bestselling novels and strong male characters have seduced hundreds of thousands of female readers worldwide.
>
> But Jodi Ellen Malpas has revealed she has split from her own Mr Right – because he no longer lives up to the fantasy she created.
>
> The 34-year-old, whose This Man trilogy has sold more than 500,000 copies, has left her husband of ten years after 'falling in love' with one of her characters.
>
> **Ms Malpas, from Northampton, says: 'All my fictional men are strong, successful, sophisticated and enigmatic. I guess it's hard for any living, breathing man to live up to such a fantasy.**
>
> **'In This Man I created Jesse Ward, whose forceful personality was appealing to me. There is no denying I fell in love with him.**
>
> **'After all, I created him and I made him the way he is for a reason. Every woman needs some fantasy lover to spice up the dull reality of her real life. I wanted to create my perfect love story.**
>
> 'But the success of my books and the popularity of my male character led to the breakdown of my marriage. Sadly it was not solid enough to withstand the changes success has brought to my life.'
>
> The mother of two, whom many believe is the new E. L. James, the housewife who wrote the Fifty Shades Of Grey trilogy, became a self-publishing sensation last year, swiftly rising to the top of the New York Times Best Seller List.
>
> The This Man trilogy explores the love affair between young interior designer Ava O'Shea and playboy Jesse Ward. The second part of her new trilogy, One Night, has just been published by Orion.
>
> **'I was 23 when Aaron and I got married, so we were both very young,' she says. 'I didn't really know who I was. I got on with being a wife and mother.**
>
> **'But over time I started to feel that something was missing – my normal everyday life had become a routine. I was bored. I guess that is what couples mean when they say they've grown apart. Aaron couldn't understand why I wanted to write my fiction and I couldn't understand why he didn't understand.'**

> **The couple have two children, Alfie, 14, and Patrick, ten.** But although they divorced in August last year, Ms Malpas says their relationship remains amicable. She is currently single and insists that she has no time to get involved in a relationship.
>
> **'My children and my writing are enough for the moment,' she adds. 'In any case, I suspect some men might be a little intimidated by my independence and my success.'**
>
> **And she insists she has no regrets. 'It's been crazy, but I'm loving the stronger more liberated me,' she says.**

They are "her" children. Not her husband's and hers. And they don't need a father – because children don't have needs distinct from her own needs. Her husband doesn't have needs distinct from her own needs.

In her own mind, men are intimidated by her success. But that's not true – they are intimidated because she is insane and irrational and self-centered. They are intimidated because she divorced her husband of 10 years (with children) for a *fictional character!!!!!* She doesn't have any genuine love for a man – only for *herself*. And her husband must have been a dafty for marrying her. What a terrible thing to inflict on your own children by marrying a woman who was only ever interested in herself – her needs, her adventures, her thrills. Men, when you hear a woman who does not take steps toward marrying and building a family together, run away. Run away before she divorces you and destroys your children with her selfishness.

Good Lord. What have women come to under the influence of feminism? The feministy ones seem to place no value on what a married couple can do together. They place no value on the needs of children. Everything is about getting their own fulfillment through worldy "success" and experiences; traveling, feeling good and taking pointless risks. When I think of the men that these feministy women seem to really want (at least when they are in their teens, 20s and 30s) it really scares me. I used to think that most young, unmarried women were sensible and thought that being a wife and mother was a good way to make a difference. Now so many of them are influenced by feminism and they seem to be avoiding it in favor of making lots of money. As if that were an end in itself.

And remember – LOTS OF WOMEN are buying books like hers, and Fifty Shades of Gray and Eat. Pray, Love and so on. What is so boring about marriage that women no longer find it fulfilling? I go to work every day and damned if I think that is more fulfilling that loving a wife and fathering children. I don't think any man would think that. We work because that's how we relate to our wives and children, by providing for them and leading them. And work is not meant to be fun or fulfilling. It's WORK.

New study: Saturn’s orbit keeps Earth in the circumstellar habitable zone

November 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

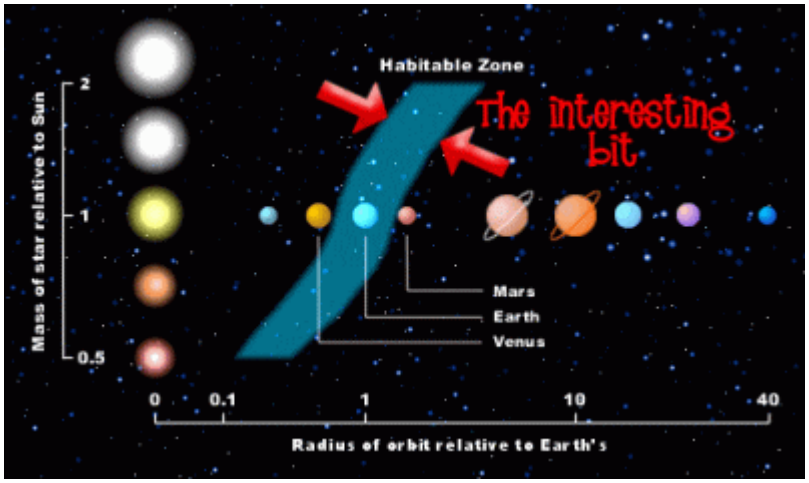

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

What do you need in order to have a planet that supports complex life? First, you need liquid water at the surface of the planet. But there is only a narrow range of temperatures that can support liquid water. It turns out that the size of the star that your planet orbits around has a lot to do with whether you get liquid water or not.

A heavy, metal-rich star allows you to have a habitable planet far enough from the star so the planet can support liquid water on the planet’s surface while still being able to spin on its axis. The zone where a planet can have liquid water at the surface is called the circumstellar habitable zone (CHZ). A metal-rich star like our Sun is very massive, which moves the habitable zone out further away from the star.

If our star were smaller, we would have to orbit much closer to the star in order to have liquid water at the surface. Unfortunately, if you go too close to the star, then your planet becomes tidally locked, like the moon is tidally locked to Earth. Tidally locked planets are inhospitable to life. So we need a star massive enough to give us a nice wide habitable zone far away from the Sun itself.

But even with the right size star, which we have in our solar sytem, we still have CHZ problems. Just because a planet starts off in the circumstellar habitable zone, it doesn’t mean that it will stay there.

Jay Richards tweeted about this new article from the New Scientist, which talks about that very problem.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Earth’s comfortable temperatures may be thanks to Saturn’s good behaviour. If the ringed giant’s orbit had been slightly different, Earth’s orbit could have been wildly elongated, like that of a long-period comet.
>
> Our solar system is a tidy sort of place: planetary orbits here tend to be circular

> and lie in the same plane, unlike the highly eccentric orbits of many exoplanets. Elke Pilat-Lohinger of the University of Vienna, Austria, was interested in the idea that the combined influence of Jupiter and Saturn – the solar system's heavyweights – could have shaped other planets' orbits. She used computer models to study how changing the orbits of these two giant planets might affect the Earth.
>
> Earth's orbit is so nearly circular that its distance from the sun only varies between 147 and 152 million kilometres, or around 2 per cent about the average. Moving Saturn's orbit just 10 percent closer in would disrupt that by creating a resonance – essentially a periodic tug – that would stretch out the Earth's orbit by tens of millions of kilometres. That would result in the Earth spending part of each year outside the habitable zone, the ring around the sun where temperatures are right for liquid water.
>
> Tilting Saturn's orbit would also stretch out Earth's orbit. According to a simple model that did not include other inner planets, the greater the tilt, the more the elongation increased. Adding Venus and Mars to the model stabilised the orbits of all three planets, but the elongation nonetheless rose as Saturn's orbit got more tilted. Pilat-Lohinger says a 20-degree tilt would bring the innermost part of Earth's orbit closer to the sun than Venus.

So the evidence for a out solar system being fine-tuned for life keeps piling up. It's just another factor that has to be just right so that complex, embodied life could exist here. All of these factors need to be just right, not just the orbits of any other massive planets. And you need at least one massive planet to attract comets and other such unwelcome intruders away from the life-permitting planets.

Here's a good clip explaining the circumstellar habitable zone:

The factor I blogged about today is just one of the things you need in order to get a planet that supports life.

Here are a few of the more well-known ones:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere

- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

Here is a study that I wrote about recently about galactic habitable zones.

Where is the outrage in the black community for black-on-black crimes?

November 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams

A recent editorial by George Mason University professor of economics Walter Williams.

Excerpt:

> Each year, roughly 7,000 blacks are murdered. Ninety-four percent of the time, the murderer is another black person.
>
> According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1976 and 2011, there were 279,384 black murder victims. Using the 94-percent figure means that 262,621 were murdered by other blacks.
>
> Though blacks are 13 percent of the nation's population, they account for more than 50 percent of homicide victims. Nationally, the black homicide victimization rate is six times that of whites, and in some cities, it's 22 times that of whites.
>
> Coupled with being most of the nation's homicide victims, blacks are most of the victims of violent personal crimes, such as assault and robbery.
>
> The magnitude of this tragic mayhem can be viewed in another light. According to a Tuskegee Institute study, between 1882 and 1968, 3,446 blacks were lynched at the hands of whites. Black fatalities during the Korean War (3,075), Vietnam War (7,243) and all wars since 1980 (8,197) come to 18,515, a number that pales in comparison with black loss of life at home.
>
> It's a tragic commentary to be able to say that young black males have a greater chance of reaching maturity on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan than on the streets of Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Oakland, Newark and other cities.

This is not even to mention abortion, which disproportionately affects blacks. Yet it is overwhelmingly supported by blacks who vote more than 90% Democrat. Maybe we

should be more focused on black-on-black crime and black genocide, since these are bigger problems.

What’s stopping young adults from getting married?

November 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Before we get to the study, I wanted to share something that a Christian male friend shared with me about yesterday’s post on the crazy feminist mommy porn author.

He writes:

> I saw your post about the woman who “fell in love” with her fantasy character she created. I’m a victim of this.
>
> My ex-wife is a succeeding indie author. She jets off and hangs with NYT best-selling authors, rubs elbows with a lot of fantasy romance and erotica authors. She reads, oh, roughly 200 +/- smut books per year.
>
> This area is the flip side of the porn coin, and it’s not getting the attention it should. If I told my story and part of the reason for the marriage destruction, it would be an “easy sell” to those who understand that women who fantasize about these fictional characters (even the images on the covers) are doing the exact thing men are doing when they fantasize over airbrushed skin images and other skin porn.
>
> Many will argue it’s not the same thing, but that is preposterous. Husbands are competing with fantasy novel cover art and fantasy characters. It’s every bit the same as wives competing with unreal images or even real ones where they compete with younger, more fit, kinkier, etc., etc.
>
> Men get cheated on all the time. Through this stuff. My ex developed an online romance through it all. Exchanged erotic pictures, emails, texts, Skype, on and on and on.
>
> I discovered travel plans, fake email accounts, it was awful.

This is the third time that I have been sent divorce stories like this by conservative, Christian male apologists on Facebook.

The first time, the wife hit a certain age then just went nuts and started working out a ton and trying to look younger and younger. Then as she got success as a personal trainer and attention for all the photos she posted, she just divorced her husband outright to focus on her business and more glamorous photos. And they had children. The second time, the wife just went nuts into new age beliefs and yoga and divorced her husband, and they had children too. So we are talking real destructive craziness here.

This is why I put so much emphasis on building up a woman first by leading her to learn apologetics, conservative politics and economics, and so on. If she is not willing to learn and grow in things that are good for her and that help her to be a better wife and mother, then you know that her heart is not in the difficult realities of married life and the roles of wife and mother. She will be one of these women who wants to be happy and thinks that happiness means getting rid of family obligations and responsibilities to her man and her

kids. Men should ensure that their prospective mates reject the Disney princess perception that relationships should be all about them and their needs – living happily ever after with no hard work or effort. Helping a woman to think logically and argue using evidence is one way to insulate her from the foolish, emotion-driven culture that threatens marriage.

Anyway, with that said, here is the new article from Family Studies.

Here's the introduction:

> In interviews we conducted with working-class young adults, my wife and I were surprised by the strength of their desires to have a long-lasting marriage and stable family life. But many of them were far from realizing those aspirations. Why? The wide-ranging challenges that frustrate their aspirations, which we must understand in order to find effective solutions, fall into four rough categories: family-of-origin, philosophical, psychological, and financial.
>
> […]*Conflicted about marriage.* This crisis of trust, in turn, informs young adults' conflicted thinking about marriage. As Amber and I described in a previous post, their experiences of family fragmentation sharpen their desire to get and stay married, on the one hand, but on the other hand it also shakes their confidence in the durability of marriage. As a result, many young adults find themselves in tenuous cohabiting relationships, wanting to say "I do" eventually but too uncertain to do so now.
>
> […]*The fixed love mindset*. As Amber discussed here, the philosophy of love that young adults inherit from cultural scripts, like Hollywood chick flicks, works against their own aspirations for committed, permanent love. Instead of a "growth mindset" about love that focuses on working through possible differences, these stories about love transmit a "fixed mindset" that focuses on immediate and perpetual compatibility—the absence of which probably indicates that a couple is no longer meant for each other. **Young adults with a fixed mindset about love tend to say things like "love is effortless," or, as one separated spouse put it, "I love him, but I'm not in love with him. I love him as a friend, as the father, but I don't feel that connection as I used to."**
>
> […]*Extreme individualism*. Despite the common challenges that confront working-class young adults, the idea that "my relationship is no one else's business" prevents them from thinking about marriage and family life as a public issue that demands our common efforts.
>
> For instance, Anthony knows first-hand the painful effects of divorce—his parents divorced when he was ten—and he speaks eloquently about how divorce imposed burdens on him and his other friends from divorced families. So what does he believe we can do about the rising number of children raised in fragmented families?
>
> "I don't think there's a thing we can do about it," Anthony told us. "And that's

> kind of the American way—this is a free country, and free this and free that. **But it's your life, and not too many people care about other people's lives. As long as it's not theirs, they don't care."** The result of that attitude, however, is loneliness and helplessness in the face of an urgent social problem.

One of the questions I sometimes discuss with my male friends is "what is the female equivalent of pornography"? It has to be something that teaches women to have unrealistic expectations of men. My answer is that it is this culture that praises irrationality, thrill-seeking, travel and emotionalism over planning, morality and hard work. Many women today seem to really believe that men are there to provide them with fun, thrills and dreams, instead of with long-term achievements that take planning, sacrifice, problem-solving and hard work. The mommy-porn novels that so many women find attractive just feeds these marriage-destroying delusions. There is even a Christian version of the emotional craziness where women are urged to follow their hearts, and somehow, God will make their bad choices and risky plans work out.

As the story above from my friend shows, mommy porn is also an affair-creator and a marriage-killer. About 70% of divorces are initiated by women, and lesbian couples have the highest rates of relationship breakdown. Feministy women need to be taught (hopefully by their fathers) that entering into a relationship means an opportunity to commit to serve the other person self-sacrificially in order to build something that lasts – it's not about getting your own way and feeling good. Many women today seem to enjoy choosing the wrong men in their teens and 20s, and then when the right man comes along later, they want to back away from the demands of a serious relationship with him and go on their merry way.

This is why I tell everyone to stay away from premarital sex and cohabitation – it has a huge impact on a person's willingness to commit. Many women today seem to think that they can choose any man based on superficial criteria (he is fun and handsome and funny) and then make him commit by giving him sex. WRONG. You have to choose the right man by carefully evaluating him for marriage-related responsibilities. A man who can do husband tasks, (e.g. – providing, loving over the long-term, teaching others to defend their faith), is a man who is capable of marriage commitment. The experience of investing in the wrong men and then failing ruins a woman's ability to trust and commit. They mentally and emotionally check out of subsequent relationships and start looking for excuses to get away from commitment. It creates an attitude of wanting to sabotage the relationship. They focus on scanning for the exits instead of on investing, communicating and problem solving.

UPDATE: The friend who wrote me had this in response to the post:

> I carried her physically after her surgery, disciplined her children effectively, managed academics (got one through high school who wouldn't have made it without me), was at her side for weeks praying for her son who nearly died in an accident, supported her in her accounting career and her writing, served all of her physical needs (yeah, THAT way!), sacrificed rural life and property for the

> castle she wanted . . .
>
> You get the idea. None of it mattered. What mattered in the end was her chasing a dream.
>
> I’m left with the castle I don’t want or need, and kids I love have been spirited off to a new life.
>
> Sad.

New study: how the hummingbird performs stunning feats of aerobatics

November 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hummingbird in flight

New study reported by Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> The sight of a tiny hummingbird hovering in front of a flower and then darting to another with lightning speed amazes and delights. But it also leaves watchers with a persistent question: How do they do it?
>
> Now, the most detailed, three-dimensional aerodynamic simulation of hummingbird flight conducted to date has definitively demonstrated that the hummingbird achieves its nimble aerobatic abilities through a unique set of aerodynamic forces that are more closely aligned to those found in flying insects than to other birds.
>
> The new supercomputer simulation was produced by a pair of mechanical engineers at Vanderbilt University who teamed up with a biologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It is described in the article "Three-dimensional flow and lift characteristics of a hovering ruby-throated hummingbird" published this fall in the *Journal of the Royal Society Interface*.
>
> For some time researchers have been aware of the similarities between hummingbird and insect flight, but some experts have supported an alternate model which proposed that hummingbird's wings have aerodynamic properties similar to helicopter blades. However, the new realistic simulation demonstrates that the tiny birds make use of unsteady airflow mechanisms, generating invisible vortices of air that produce the lift they need to hover and flit from flower to flower.

> You might think that if the hummingbird simply beats its wings fast enough and hard enough it can push enough air downward to keep its small body afloat. But, according to the simulation, lift production is much trickier than that.
>
> For example, as the bird pulls its wings forward and down, tiny vortices form over the leading and trailing edges and then merge into a single large vortex, forming a low-pressure area that provides lift. In addition, the tiny birds further enhance the amount of lift they produce by pitching up their wings (rotate them along the long axis) as they flap.
>
> Hummingbirds perform another neat aerodynamic trick — one that sets them apart from their larger feathered relatives. They not only generate positive lift on the downstroke, but they also generate lift on the upstroke by inverting their wings. As the leading edge begins moving backwards, the wing beneath it rotates around so the top of the wing becomes the bottom and bottom becomes the top. This allows the wing to form a leading edge vortex as it moves backward generating positive lift.
>
> According to the simulation, the downstroke produces most of the thrust but that is only because the hummingbird puts more energy into it. The upstroke produces only 30 percent as much lift but it takes only 30 percent as much energy, making the upstroke equally as aerodynamically efficient as the more powerful downstroke.
>
> Large birds, by contrast, generate almost all of their lift on the downstroke. They pull in their wings toward their bodies to reduce the amount of negative lift they produce while flapping upward.

Awesome design in nature!

So the question I have from reading the article is this. Do birds and flying insects have a recent common ancestor? I don’t have too many friends who can answer this for me, but I asked one of them and they both said there is no recent common ancestor for hummingbirds and flying insects. So this looks like another example of convergence – common design in two animals that don’t share a recent common ancestor.

Conservative professor Mike Adams on the decline of Campus Crusade

November 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Famous conservative professor Mike Adams is annoyed with Campus Crusade, let's see why.

He wrote his first article to complain that campus clubs like Crusade don't take stands on obvious moral issues like abortion.

He wrote:

> Nearly half of the abortions in this country are performed on college-age women. According to Students for Life of America, 70% of all abortion-providing and abortion-referring facilities are located within five miles of a college campus. Given those staggering numbers, it would seem that campus ministries would be positioning themselves to do something about the problem. But most are doing nothing at all. If you don't believe me, take the time to go to the Campus Crusade website and do a search for the word "abortion." See what your search reveals.
>
> So why are campus ministries largely silent on such a profound moral issue? Recently, I had a chance to ask a Campus Crusade director that very question. His response was that Campus Crusade is not "a politically-based organization." That explanation is inadequate. In fact, it is demonstrably false.
>
> Several years ago, a good friend of mine named Dave Sterrett gave a pro-life speech to a Campus Crusade chapter at a state university in North Texas. He was invited to speak by a student. During the middle of his speech, he was arguing that the unborn are fully human and have souls by quoting from the Gospel of Luke. His talk was clearly Biblical and not political in nature.
>
> Nonetheless, when the Campus Crusade director arrived, he rudely shut the speech down.
>
> The Campus Crusade director told Dave to come out in the hall after he shut down his talk. The Crusade leader then began to yell at Dave and told him, "I don't know what your deal is talking about this issue. Get your books and get out of here." He went even further calling the headquarters of Crusade, which then demanded an apology from Sterrett.
>
> Shortly after I wrote about the incident, several members of Campus Crusade contacted me – but not to apologize for their mistreatment of Dave. They emailed to admonish me for writing about the incident – even though I did not call out the university or the chapter director by name. The fallout from the incident was revealing. It shows how far some campus ministries will go to avoid controversy – and that they often consider themselves to be above reproach.

> The original incident was also revealing. The censored speech was not political so the problem cannot be that Campus Crusade is not a "politically-based" organization. The speech was morally and Biblically based. Does the rejection of the speech mean that Campus Crusade is not a "morally-based" organization? Or does it mean they are not a "Biblically-based" organization?
>
> Of course it doesn't. **The incident merely shows that Campus Crusade has become a "comfort-based" organization. In other words, an over-riding priority is avoiding topics that might make people feel uncomfortable.**

Now apparently the Crusade people are annoyed with him, and they are complaining – probably not by saying that they are going to be more bold about pushing for apologetics and Christian worldview, but probably by calling him mean and confrontational and conservative.

Here is the second article. He writes:

Dear Kaitlin:

> First of all, I would like to thank you for joining my Facebook fan page and for weighing in on my recent article "The Campus Crusade for Comfort." It is understandable that you would wish to defend your organization, which I criticized rather bluntly in my article. However, your accusation that my article was "un-Christ-like" and was written in a spirit that undermines "Christian unity" requires a response. Since you chose to proffer your criticism in a public forum, I'll respond by using my weekly column.

Looks like I was right about how the Crusade leader would respond – like a feelings-based leftist. Adams then talks about how Campus Crusade abstained from praise hymns and prayers at an event in order to get government funding for it, and then writes this, which is even worse:

> Subsequently, at the very school where Campus Crusade traded its religious freedom for student government funding, there was a lawsuit over a campus speech code. One of the plaintiffs was a fine Christian woman who fought to overturn a speech code that was being used to suppress conservative speech and which also posed a grave threat to religious organizations.
>
> After she sued, homosexual groups erupted in anger – falsely claiming that she was defending "hate speech" by opposing the speech code. They defamed her, physically threatened her, and verbally abused her –all in the name of tolerance and diversity.
>
> This time, Campus Crusade did not remain neutral. They weighed in. But, unbelievably, they weighed in *against* the Christian woman and *in favor* of those defending the speech codes. Later, Campus Crusade changed its name to appear more tolerant and less "offensive." Clearly, they had placed "inoffensiveness" above religious freedom on their list of priorities.

> Right after these unfortunate events unfolded I became embroiled in my own First Amendment lawsuit. In part, because I stood in unity with Christians and defended them against illegal policies, I was denied a promotion at my school.
>
> With the support of numerous Christian organizations, I eventually won the seven-year legal battle. Two Christian legal firms paid my legal bills and countless other Christian ministry and policy groups publicly backed me. But one Christian organization remained conspicuously silent. Of course, I am speaking of your organization, the Crusade formerly named after Christ.
>
> For seven long years I heard not a single word of public support from a single member of Campus Crusade. When I won the case, I was deluged with calls and emails and handwritten letters from Christian leaders all across America.
>
> But I heard not a word from Campus Crusade for months in the wake of the verdict.
>
> Then, in mid-July, the final terms of my settlement were reached. It was reported in the local news that I would get a raise and a check for back pay while may attorneys would get a sum of $615,000. On August 1, 2014, I received the check from the State of North Carolina. On August 2, just 24 hours later, one of the local directors for Campus Crusade wrote me the following:
>
> "Hey Mike. I hope your summer is going well. Would you be interested in having coffee with me next week so I could talk to you about joining my ministry support team?"
>
> After I received that audacious email, I searched through my archives and read every single email correspondence I had received from that director over the course of seven years. There was no offer of prayer support in any of those emails. Nor was there any mention of the legal ordeal I was going through. He simply ignored the suit until the terms of the settlement became public.
>
> In other words, your ministry and its leaders were never interested in unity. They never offered support in public or even in private. They only sought to profit financially from those who win battles Campus Crusade chooses to avoid.

The reason I am linking to this is because I experienced this kind of behavior from IVCF and Campus Crusade as an undergraduate and later as a graduate student. They opposed the introduction of apologetics at every point, and they were both anxious to appease the forces of political correctness. It was depressing. They were far more interested in getting people to show up than taking any sort of bold stand that might make some people uncomfortable. I think there are some IVCF and Crusade groups that may do a decent job. But if I were a student today, I'd head straight for the College Republicans and Ratio Christi if I wanted to get anything useful done. This blog was born out partly out of the anger I felt dealing with the liberal postmodern feminist leadership in those campus clubs when I was a student in college.

The drowning stranger illustration challenges atheistic morality

November 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is by Matt from Well Spent Journey blog.

Excerpt:

> Here's a thought experiment.
>
> _____
>
> *Imagine that you're a healthy, athletic, 20-year-old male. It's the morning after a thunderstorm, and you're standing on the banks of a flooded, violently churning river.*
>
> *You notice an object floating downstream.*
>
> *As it moves closer, you suddenly realize that this object is a person. The head breaks the surface, and you see a panic-stricken elderly woman gasping for air. You've never met her before, but vaguely recognize her as an impoverished widow from a neighboring village.*
>
> *You look around for help, but there's no one in sight. You have only seconds to decide whether or not to jump in after her – recognizing that doing so will put your own life in significant peril.*
>
> _____
>
> Is it **rational** for you to risk your life to save this stranger? Is it **morally good** to do so?
>
> For the Christian, both of these questions can be answered with an emphatic **"yes"**.
>
> The Christian is called to emulate the example set forth by Jesus, who not only risked, but sacrificed his life for the sake of others. The Christian believes that the soul is eternal, and that one's existence doesn't come to an abrupt end with death. Additionally, he can point to the examples of countless Christian martyrs who have willingly sacrificed their own lives.
>
> For the secular humanist, the answers to these questions are much more subjective. When I previously asked 23 self-identifying atheists, *"Is it rational for you to risk your life to save a stranger?"* only 4 of them responded with an unqualified *"yes"*.
>
> Biologically speaking, the young man in our scenario has nothing to gain by jumping after the drowning woman. Since she's poor and elderly, there are no conceivable financial or reproductive advantages involved. Evolutionary biologists often speak of "benefit to the tribe" as a motivation for self-sacrifice…yet the young man's community would certainly place greater practical

> value on his life than that of a widow from a neighboring village.
>
> Secular humanists argue that people are capable of making ethical decisions without any deity to serve as Moral Lawgiver. On a day-to-day basis, this is undeniably true. We all have non-religious friends and neighbors who live extremely moral and admirable lives.
>
> In the scenario above, however, secular ethics break down. The secular humanist might recognize, intuitively, that diving into the river is a **morally good** action. But he has no rational basis for saying so. The young man's decision is between empathy for a stranger (on the one hand) and utilitarian self-interest & community-interest (on the other).
>
> In the end, there can be no **binding moral imperatives** in the absence of a Moral Lawgiver. If the young man decides to sit back and watch the woman drown, the secular humanist cannot criticize him. He's only acting rationally.

When I read this, I was of one of the questions from one of my earliest posts, where I list a dozen interview questions to ask atheists. His question is very much like one of my questions. You may like the others in my list, as well.

It seems to me that on atheism, the only answer you can give for why you would do the right thing is "because it makes me happy". And as we see with abortion – 56 million unborn children dead – it very often *doesn't* make atheists happy to save someone else's life. Not if it means any infringement on their own happiness. Every time an atheist votes Democrat, they are voting to declare that people who get in their way should not be saved. And atheists (the "nones", anyway) are one of the largest Democrat voting blocs. According to the 2012 Secular Census, 97% of secularists deny that unborn children have a right to life. And the 2013 Gallup poll found that "nones", people with no religion, are most likely to be pro-abortion. (Note that "nones" are not necessarily atheists, they may have some beliefs, but they are not observant). It's not rational to inconvenience yourself to save others on atheism. You have one life to live, be happy, survival of the fittest.

Atheists like to help themselves to a lot of beliefs that can only be grounded in a robust theistic worldview. Rationally-grounded morality is just one of those things. And I want to say to you that this is not morally neutral, or a simple failure of the intellect. It's not just a failure to be intelligent. It's not just simple ingratitude towards God. It's the deliberate self-deception they engage in in order to preserve their autonomy to seek pleasure apart from any notion of objective moral values and duties. It's very transparent if you know how to question them.

Atheists like to cash out their rejection of God as some sort of rational, cognitive process, but they typically choose atheism as a result of having their desires for pleasure or peer-approval thwarted, or maybe in university when they don't want professors to think they are ignorant. It's not a rational worldview, it's just easier. Easier to pose as a "smart" person. Easier to indulge in sexual desires at college. Easier to put powerful amoral people at ease, by not judging them for their destructive views on social issues. Easier to not judge others, so that you won't be judged yourself. Easier to speculate about

untestable multiverses and unobservable aliens seeding the Earth with life, so that you don’t have to think about the judgement that comes after the self-delusion. It’s a worldview of speculate, speculate, speculate. Speculations are the way that they keep God away so they can do what they want, call that moral and feel good about themselves in the here and now. The goal is to get one more day where they can do as they please apart from God, and they’ll believe anything they have to believe in order to do that.

New study: gamma ray bursts make life impossible in 90% of galaxies

November 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

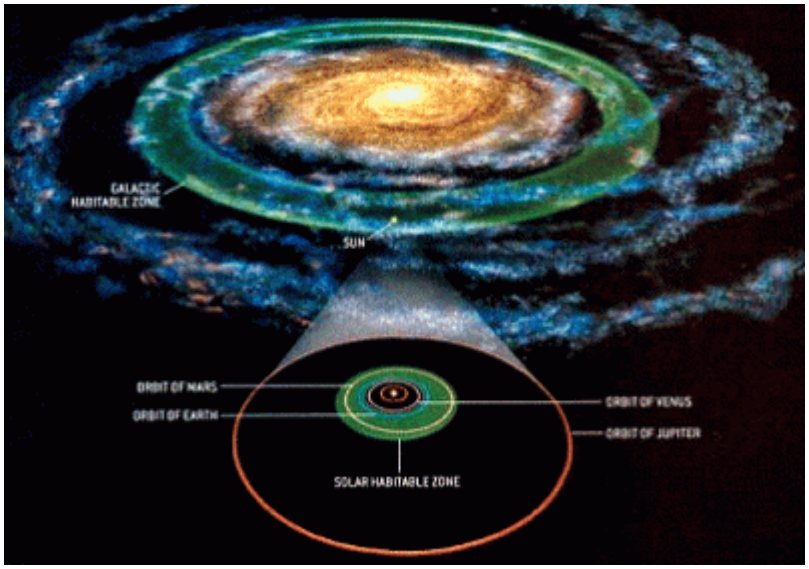

Galactic Habitable Zone

When you argue for theism from science, you typically use arguments like these:

- the origin of the universe from nothing (the Big Bang)
- the fine-tuning of cosmic constants and quantities
- the origin of the first living cell
- the sudden origin of animal phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- the fine-tuning of the galaxy for complex, embodied mind
- the fine-tuning of the solar system for complex, embodied mind
- the fine-tuning of the planet (and moon) for complex, embodied mind

This is a peer-reviewed article from Science, one of the most prestigious peer-reviewed journals. It speaks to the fine-tuning of the galaxy for life.

The article says:

> Of the estimated 100 billion galaxies in the observable universe, only one in 10 can support complex life like that on Earth, a pair of astrophysicists argues. Everywhere else, stellar explosions known as gamma ray bursts would regularly wipe out any life forms more elaborate than microbes. The detonations also kept the universe lifeless for billions of years after the big bang, the researchers say.
>
> […]Astrophysicists once thought gamma ray bursts would be most common in regions of galaxies where stars are forming rapidly from gas clouds. But recent data show that the picture is more complex: Long bursts occur mainly in star-forming regions with relatively low levels of elements heavier than hydrogen and helium—low in “metallicity,” in astronomers’ jargon.
>
> Using the average metallicity and the rough distribution of stars in our Milky Way

> galaxy, Piran and Jimenez estimate the rates for long and short bursts across the galaxy. They find that the more-energetic long bursts are the real killers and that the chance Earth has been exposed to a lethal blast in the past billion years is about 50%. Some astrophysicists have suggested a gamma ray burst may have caused the Ordovician extinction, a global cataclysm about 450 million years ago that wiped out 80% of Earth's species, Piran notes.
>
> The researchers then estimate how badly a planet would get fried in different parts of the galaxy. The sheer density of stars in the middle of the galaxy ensures that planets within about 6500 light-years of the galactic center have a greater than 95% chance of having suffered a lethal gamma ray blast in the last billion years, they find. Generally, they conclude, life is possible only in the outer regions of large galaxies. (Our own solar system is about 27,000 light-years from the center.)
>
> Things are even bleaker in other galaxies, the researchers report. Compared with the Milky Way, most galaxies are small and low in metallicity. As a result, 90% of them should have too many long gamma ray bursts to sustain life, they argue. What's more, for about 5 billion years after the big bang, all galaxies were like that, so long gamma ray bursts would have made life impossible anywhere.
>
> But are 90% of the galaxies barren? That may be going too far, Thomas says. The radiation exposures Piran and Jimenez talk about would do great damage, but they likely wouldn't snuff out every microbe, he contends. "Completely wiping out life?" he says. "Maybe not." But Piran says the real issue is the existence of life with the potential for intelligence. "It's almost certain that bacteria and lower forms of life could survive such an event," he acknowledges. "But [for more complex life] it would be like hitting a reset button. You'd have to start over from scratch."
>
> The analysis could have practical implications for the search for life on other planets, Piran says. For decades, scientists with the SETI Institute in Mountain View, California, have used radio telescopes to search for signals from intelligent life on planets around distant stars. But SETI researchers are looking mostly toward the center of the Milky Way, where the stars are more abundant, Piran says. That's precisely where gamma ray bursts may make intelligent life impossible, he says: "We are saying maybe you should look in the exact opposite direction."

You need to be able to pick up enough heavy elements from surrounding supernovae to make a metal-rich star, but you have to be far enough away from other stars to avoid getting blasted with gamma rays. The metal-rich star is needed to be able to support the circumstellar habitable zone, which is the zone where liquid water exists on the planet's surface.

It's important to understand that this factor in the study just a few of the things you need in order to get a planet that supports life. The more factors you add, the more

unexpected complex, embodied life of any kind becomes.

Here are a few of the more well-known ones:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it’s too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it’s too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet’s rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

There’s a good video on the galactic habitable zone for you to watch right here:

It takes a lot to make just one planet that can support complex, embodied life of any kind.

George Washington’s 1789 Thanksgiving Day proclamation

November 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

To help us be thankful, here is a famous Thanksgiving day proclamation.

Here it is:

> PRESIDENTIAL THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATIONS
>
> 1789-1815 : George Washington, John Adams, James Madison
>
> THANKSGIVING DAY 1789
>
> BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION
>
> Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor – and Whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me “to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.”
>
> Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be – That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks – for his kind care and protection of the People of this country previous to their becoming a Nation – for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his providence, which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war –for the great degree of tranquillity, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed – for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.
>
> And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions – to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually – to render our national government a blessing to all the People, by constantly being a government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed – to protect and guide all Sovereigns and

> Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord – To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and Us – and generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.
>
> Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.
>
> (signed) G. Washington

That’s from George Washington.

Happy Thanksgiving Day!

New study: invisible shield above the Earth protects us from electron threat

November 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Science Daily reports on a new paper published in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal Nature.

Excerpt:

> A team led by the University of Colorado Boulder has discovered an invisible shield some 7,200 miles above Earth that blocks so-called “killer electrons,” which whip around the planet at near-light speed and have been known to threaten astronauts, fry satellites and degrade space systems during intense solar storms.
>
> The barrier to the particle motion was discovered in the Van Allen radiation belts, two doughnut-shaped rings above Earth that are filled with high-energy electrons and protons, said Distinguished Professor Daniel Baker, director of CU-Boulder’s Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP). Held in place by Earth’s magnetic field, the Van Allen radiation belts periodically swell and shrink in response to incoming energy disturbances from the sun.
>
> As the first significant discovery of the space age, the Van Allen radiation belts were detected in 1958 by Professor James Van Allen and his team at the University of Iowa and were found to be composed of an inner and outer belt extending up to 25,000 miles above Earth’s surface. In 2013, Baker — who received his doctorate under Van Allen — led a team that used the twin Van Allen Probes launched by NASA in 2012 to discover a third, transient “storage ring” between the inner and outer Van Allen radiation belts that seems to come and go with the intensity of space weather.
>
> The latest mystery revolves around an “extremely sharp” boundary at the inner edge of the outer belt at roughly 7,200 miles in altitude that appears to block the ultrafast electrons from breeching the shield and moving deeper towards Earth’s atmosphere.
>
> “It’s almost like theses electrons are running into a glass wall in space,” said Baker, the study’s lead author. “Somewhat like the shields created by force fields on Star Trek that were used to repel alien weapons, we are seeing an invisible shield blocking these electrons. It’s an extremely puzzling phenomenon.”
>
> A paper on the subject was published in the Nov. 27 issue of *Nature*.

Something for us to be thankful for on Thanksgiving Day.

White House threatens veto of bipartisan small businesses tax cut bill

November 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's actually for research and experimentation, and small businesses.

Investors Business Daily reports on the story.

Excerpt:

> The White House move this week to torpedo a deal between House Republicans and Senate Democrats to extend dozens of expiring tax breaks suggests that the executive action legalizing 5 million unauthorized immigrants may have been no fluke: Compromise appears to be near the bottom of President Obama's agenda for his last two years in office.
>
> Despite — or perhaps because of — the Republican wave election that capsized Democrats' Senate majority, Obama is tugging his party further left, which could make it harder for the GOP to govern effectively. A shift away from the center might seem counterintuitive, but it's consistent with the Democrats' post-mortem election analysis that put the blame on the party's failure to focus enough on its economic agenda.
>
> The White House's veto threat, which apparently surprised dealmakers, was "really pretty stunning" considering that soon-to-be-demoted Majority Leader Harry Reid was its quarterback, said Chris Krueger, political analyst at Guggenheim Partners' Washington Research Group.
>
> In blowing apart the deal, estimated to cost $440 billion over 10 years, the White House lined up behind liberal Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who attacked it as "a massive handout to big corporations" that asks "working families to pick up the tab."
>
> The Obama administration used the same justification in explaining its threat to veto the bill if it reached the president's desk: "It would provide permanent tax breaks to help well-connected corporations while neglecting working families."
>
> The centerpiece of the deal is a $160 billion provision to make permanent and expand a research and experimentation tax credit, an idea that the administration has supported. The next two biggest pieces, both about $73 billion over 10 years, would make permanent the American Opportunity tuition tax credit and an allowance for small businesses to write off capital investments permanently.
>
> Individuals would be able permanently to deduct sales taxes instead of income taxes, important for residents of states like Florida and Texas, at a cost of $34 billion. Controversial wind production taxes would be extended but phased out over two years, costing $20 billion.

> Other smaller pieces include extending a financial-crisis related provision to shield the value of written-down mortgage principal from taxation; making permanent an expanded deduction for users of mass transit; and making permanent tax-free charitable contributions from tax-protected retirement accounts.

That last point about being able to give away your retirement plan tax-free is huge for me, because that’s what I planned to do with my 401K when I retire, since it doesn’t look like I am going to ever get married. If that tax break on charitable deductions from retirement accounts is ever revoked, it would be bad news for the apologists and Christian scholars I donate to. But it’s in keeping with the leftist idea that individuals like me are only good for earning money, but it takes a big secular government to know how to spend it. They have other plans for my money, like free abortions, IVF and sex changes. Yay, big government!

Do parents have a plan to raise self-sufficient, practical children?

November 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's look at this Huffington Post article about parenting. (H/T Amy)

Introduction:

> When a college freshman received a C- on her first test, she literally had a meltdown in class. Sobbing, she texted her mother who called back, demanding to talk to the professor *immediately* (he, of course, declined). Another mother accompanied her child on a job interview, then wondered why he didn't get the job.
>
> A major employer reported that during a job interview, a potential employee told him that she would have his job within 18 months. It didn't even cross her mind that he had worked 20 years to achieve his goal.
>
> […][W]hy have parents shifted from teaching self-reliance to becoming hovering helicopter parents who want to protect their children at all costs?
>
> "I think it began in the fall of 1982, when seven people died after taking extra-strength Tylenol laced with poison after it left the factory," he says. Halloween was just around the corner, and parents began checking every item in the loot bags. Homemade brownies and cookies (usually the most coveted items) hit the garbage; unwrapped candy followed close behind.
>
> That led to an obsession with their children's safety in every aspect of their lives. Instead of letting them go outside to play, parents filled their kid's spare time with organized activities, did their homework for them, resolved their conflicts at school with both friends and teachers, and handed out trophies for just showing up.
>
> "These well-intentioned messages of 'you're special' have come back to haunt us," Elmore says. "We are consumed with protecting them instead of preparing them for the future. We haven't let them fall, fail and fear. The problem is that if they don't take risks early on like climbing the monkey bars and possibly falling off, they are fearful of every new endeavor at age 29."
>
> Psychologists and psychiatrists are seeing more and more young people having a quarter-life crisis and more cases of clinical depression. The reason? Young people tell them it's because they haven't yet made their first million or found the perfect mate.
>
> Teachers, coaches and executives complain that Gen Y kids have short attention spans and rely on external, instead of internal motivation.

More:

> - **We've told our kids to dream big – and now any small act seems insignificant. In the great scheme of things, kids can't instantly change the world. They have to take small, first steps – which seem like no progress at all to them. Nothing short of instant fame is good enough. "It's time we tell them that doing great things starts with accomplishing small goals," he says.**

> - **We've told our kids that they are special – for no reason, even though they didn't display excellent character or skill, and now they demand special treatment. The problem is that kids assumed they didn't have to do anything special in order to *be s*pecial.**

I have frequently heard from Christian women who I have courted who hear my marriage plan that children should not be directed in any way toward doing hard things, studying STEM fields and getting good jobs. Although these women are not successful themselves, they are very concerned that I will make my children feel bad by steering them towards fields that are hard, but will make the kids successful. Children have to have good self-esteem, they insist. They have to be allowed to study ballet or art history in college, if they feel like it, otherwise they will rebel and become atheists. Two of the women who told me this had double-digit student loan balances and were still living at home in their 30s.

So you have a man like me, who has a BS, MS, a gapless resume and savings, being lectured by an unsuccessful woman on how to make our children successful by following her plan, which is the opposite of my plan. Why is this an attractive value proposition to a man? Kids cost over $150,000 each, and at least in my case, I expect that I would be the one paying for it because I seem to be the only one with savings as opposed to debts. But there is no humility from single Christian women, in my experience. They want me to earn the money, but they want to make the decisions. And they think that their way will work, even when it hasn't worked in their own lives.

I just want to point out to those women who are single that "well, I wouldn't marry you" is not an answer to these concerns. It's not an answer to a life lived on emotions and impracticality. It's not an answer to kids raised to do nothing except what makes them feel good. The question is, how do we make successful kids? Do we let men lead, focusing on responsibility, obligation, incremental improvements and practicality? I want a wife who will be a chief of staff to implement *my plan*. Not someone who doesn't value and respect my decision making in areas where I am proven to know what I am doing. If all I am getting in this deal is rebellion, then I can just not marry at all and instead use the money for apologetics funding. I am not paying over $150,000 per child (not counting tuition) to have ineffective and uninfluential kids. And it alarms me how easily my concerns are dismissed in favor of a woman's emotions (sometimes decorated with God-language) during courting, when we know that good parenting is sorely needed today.

Mother gives up her own life to save her unborn child

November 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Totally awesome story from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> In a selfless act, a mother from Aurora, Colo., made a decision during childbirth that put the life of her unborn baby son before her own. That decision ultimately ended her life while saving her seven-pound, four-ounce "miracle."
>
> "How do I explain to him that his mom is gone giving birth to him?" the woman's husband, Wes Bugal, asked in an interview with NBC 9 News in Aurora. "I think about that all the time. How do I explain when he asks where's Mommy?"
>
> Karisa Bugal died Nov. 4, hours after giving birth the day before to the couple's second child, a son named Declan. She had developed a rare complication called amniotic fluid embolism, which causes protective fluids around a baby to escape into the mother's body, resulting in a breakdown of her organs.

> After medical staff informed Bugal of the danger the embolism posed, she had two options: undergo surgery that could save her life but endanger Declan, whose heart rate had begun to dip, or get a Caesarean section to save her unborn baby's life but put her own at risk.
>
> Bugal chose the second option, a decision that a few hours later resulted in her death.
>
> Friends set up a fundraiser page to help Wes Bugal raise the couple's two children. In just one day, the site surpassed its goal of $20,000.

What a loss for the husband, though. Devastating.

Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sex and sexuality at Harvard University

November 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Dr. Morse delivers a talk based on her book "Smart Sex" at Harvard University.

The MP3 file is here. (21 Mb)

Topics:

- the hook-up culture and its effects on men and women
- cohabitation and its effect on marriage stability
- balancing marriage, family and career
- single motherhood by choice and IVF
- donor-conceived children
- modern sex: a sterile, recreation activity
- the real purposes of sex: procreation and spousal unity
- the hormone oxytocin: when it is secreted and what it does
- the hormone vassopressin: when it is secreted and what it does
- the sexual revolution and the commoditization of sex
- the consumer view of sex vs the organic view of sex
- fatherlessness and multi-partner fertility
- how the "sex-without-relationship" view harms children

52 minutes of lecture, 33 minutes of Q&A from the Harvard students. The Q&A is worth listening to – the first question is from a gay student, and Dr. Morse pulls a William Lane Craig to defeat her objection. It was awesome! I never get tired of listening to her talk, and especially on the topics of marriage and family.

Since Obamacare passed, record number of Americans delaying treatment

November 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> One in three Americans has put off seeking medical treatment in 2014 due to high costs, according to Gallup — the highest percentage since Gallup began asking the question in 2001.
>
> Thirty-three percent of Americans have delayed medical treatment for themselves or their families because of the costs they'd have to pay, according to the survey. Obamacare, of course, had promised that it would help make health care more affordable for everyone, but the number of people who can't afford a trip to the doctor has actually risen three points since 2013, before most Obamacare provisions took effect.
>
> **The hardest-hit: the middle-class. Americans with an annual household income of between $30,000 and $75,000 began delaying medical care over costs more in 2014, up to 38 percent in 2014 from 33 percent last year; among households that earn above $75,000, 28 percent delayed care this year, compared to just 17 percent last year.**
>
> **The lowest-income section, some of whom can take part in Medicaid and who are more likely to qualify for significant premium and cost-sharing subsidies on an Obamacare exchange, are less likely to delay care this year. Now, 35 percent of those who earn under $30,000 a year are putting off seeking medical care, down from 43 percent last year.**
>
> It's a remarkable shift: after Obamacare's redistribution of wealth, the middle class is actually delaying medical care due to high costs at a higher rate than the poorest section of the country, which is highly subsidized by taxpayers.
>
> The growing problem could have serious consequences for the middle-class. Twice as many people (22 percent) have delayed treatment for serious illnesses than than for smaller problems (11 percent).
>
> Part of the problem is an ongoing shift towards higher deductibles and out-of-pocket costs, while health insurance premiums continue to rise all the same. The trend, which existed to some extent before Obamacare, increased in intensity with the onset of the health-care law.

When Obama talked about spreading the wealth around, people in the middle class thought that they would be the recipients of the spreading. But that's not true – the wealth is coming from you, not going to you. It was never designed to reduced the *costs* of health care, it was designed to equalize life outcomes regardless of personal

choices, by redistributing wealth.

Jacqueline C. Rivers: we need to fix the black out-of-wedlock birth rate

November 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is her article from the Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> Despite the determined pursuit of marital unions by freed people, enduring patterns of non-normative male-female relationships had been created by the devastating experience of slavery. These bore bitter fruit in the 25-percent out-of-wedlock birthrate that prompted the Moynihan Report in 1965. The Moynihan Report was an examination of the pathologies created by the explosion of father-absent households among the black poor in the United States. Though the report recommended the creation of programs that would promote healthy families among impoverished blacks, it elicited an outpouring of outrage at the assertion that stable marriages were necessary for the flourishing of the black community. As a result, little action was taken to rectify these problems. Fifty years later, the out-of-wedlock birthrate among blacks in the United States has soared to over 70 percent, a level at which it has stood for roughly a decade. The material, moral, and spiritual consequences are precisely what Moynihan predicted they would be: devastating for the community.

And:

> Black children have suffered the most as a result of the decline of marriage in the black community. The deleterious effects of being raised in single-headed households have been well-documented. Children growing up in female-headed households experience higher rates of poverty. These children underperform in school: they earn lower scores on verbal and math achievement tests and lower grades in their courses. They have more behavioral problems, and higher rates of chronic health and psychiatric disorders. Adolescents and young adults raised without stable families experience elevated risks of teenage childbearing, dropping out of high school, being incarcerated, and being idle (being neither employed nor in school). Yet, even in the midst of this disarray, men and women still long for marriage. Research shows that though marriage has declined among poor women from different racial backgrounds, they, no less than affluent women, desire to be married even as they bear children out of wedlock.

Now, of course she is wrong to blame the out-of-wedlock birth rate increase on “slavery”. It’s was actually caused by the Democrats’ “Great Society” welfare programs, which rewarded people with money if they had children out of wedlock.

Here are the numbers:

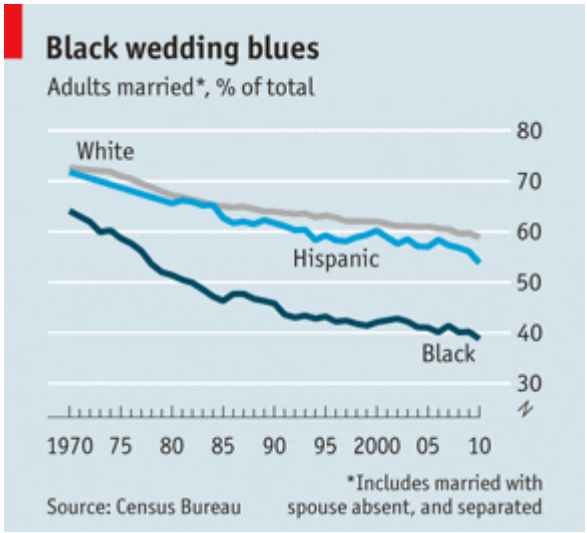

Black marriage rates from 1970

So it’s just political correctness to blame “slavery” for something that was clearly caused by feminism (you don’t need a man to raise a child) and the introduction of massive welfare programs that pay women to have babies out of wedlock. The rest of what she says is accurate though.

If you pay poorer people *of any race* to have babies out of wedlock, they will do it. To stop them from doing it we should be paying poor people to finish high school, stay out of jail, and get married before having children. We should be paying for success, not failure. But then the Democrats would lose a lot of votes from those who are 100% OK with dependency on government. In a very real sense, Democrats cannot urge women to get married, because they would be undermining one of their largest voting blocs: single mothers.

Amnesty executive action: illegal immigrants will get Social Security and Medicare

December 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Washington Examiner reports.

Excerpt:

> A new clash over retirement benefits has come to a head following President Obama's decision to unilaterally protect up to 5 million illegal immigrants from deportation.
>
> The White House now acknowledges that many of the illegal immigrants spared from deportation under Obama's sweeping executive action will become eligible for Social Security and Medicare benefits once they reach retirement age.
>
> […]However, Obama was less eager to wade into the debate about what to do with newly protected immigrants now paying into Social Security. He didn't address the matter while outlining his immigration plan in a prime-time address to the nation, but White House aides later confirmed GOP suspicions about how Obama's unilateral move would affect retirement benefits.
>
> Analysts said that Republicans would use the admission to argue the president is misleading the public about the details of his immigration action.
>
> "It is a bit of surprise," said Michael Tanner, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute who focuses on entitlement programs. "For a long time, there was an argument made by the administration that [undocumented immigrants] would not be eligible for such benefits. It does seem to be a contradiction."

Indeed. But that's not all.

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> Businesses reportedly will have a $3,000-per-employee incentive to hire illegal immigrants over native-born workers under President Obama's sweeping action on illegal immigration.
>
> Because of a kink in ObamaCare, businesses will not face a penalty for not providing illegal immigrants health care, The Washington Times reports. Illegal immigrants are ineligible for public benefits such as buying insurance on ObamaCare's health exchanges.
>
> Congressional aides condemned the loophole saying it puts illegal immigrants ahead of Americans in the job hunt.
>
> "If it is true that the president's actions give employers a $3,000 incentive to hire those who came here illegally, he has added insult to injury," Rep. Lamar Smith,

> Texas Republican told The Washington Times. “The president’s actions would have just moved those who came here illegally to the front of the line, ahead of unemployed and underemployed Americans.”

When stories like this come out, I think back to the elections, when many young Americans who were in college and voting for Obama because he was so cool will have to get the bill for this. Right now, we don’t have to raise taxes to pay for any of this, because Pelosi/Reid/Obama keep adding the spending to the national debt. Pelosi/Reid took over the House and Senate in 2007 when the debt was 8.5 trillion. Since 2007, we’ve added over NINE TRILLION dollars to the national debt – more than doubling it. It’s the young people who keep voting for this massive spending and waste, and thankfully, it’s the young people who will be most impacted by it. There is a price to pay for voting stupidly.

Do Christians have a higher divorce rate than atheists?

December 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm traveling today, so I thought I would re-post this USA Today article from 2011 about that.

Excerpt:

> It's been proclaimed from pulpits and blogs for years — Christians divorce as much as everyone else in America.
>
> But some scholars and family activists are questioning the oft-cited statistics, saying Christians who attend church regularly are more likely to remain wed.
>
> "It's a useful myth," said Bradley Wright, a University of Connecticut sociologist who recently wrote "Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites … and Other Lies You've Been Told."
>
> "Because if a pastor wants to preach about how Christians should take their marriages more seriously, he or she can trot out this statistic to get them to listen to him or her."
>
> The various findings on religion and divorce hinge on what kind of Christians are being discussed.
>
> Wright combed through the General Social Survey, a vast demographic study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and found that Christians, like adherents of other religions, have a divorce rate of about 42%. The rate among religiously unaffiliated Americans is 50%.
>
> When Wright examined the statistics on evangelicals, he found worship attendance has a big influence on the numbers. Six in 10 evangelicals who never attend had been divorced or separated, compared to just 38% of weekly attendees.
>
> […]Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there's been some confusion.
>
> "You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees," he said.
>
> **Wilcox's analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.

> "There's something about being a nominal 'Christian' that is linked to a lot of negative outcomes when it comes to family life," Wilcox said.

Here's a quote from an Oklahoma State University study that confirms the Wright and Wilcox conclusions:

> History of Divorce and Religious Involvement
>
> Those who say they are more religious are less likely, not more, to have already experienced divorce. Likewise, those who report more frequent attendance at religious services were significantly less likely to have been divorced. This pattern of findings held using various analytic techniques that test which variables differentiate persons who have been divorced from persons who have not been divorced, while controlling for other variables that might affect the interpretation of the data, such as age, age of first marriage, income, and gender. When both the global rating of religiousness and the item assessing frequency of attendance at religious services are entered into the same analysis, the attendance item remains significantly associated with divorce history but the global religiousness item does not. This suggests that a key aspect of how religious faith affects marital relationships may be through involvement with a community of faith.

So, please do bookmark this information for the next time you hear an atheist make this argument. Obviously, you can't expect people who are not serious about their religion to be bound by the moral duties imposed by that religion. People who attend church regularly are probably more serious about their religion, and also probably more informed about what their holy book says. If their holy book is the Bible, then there are few options for divorce.

An article from Focus on the Family by Amy Tracy explains when divorce is allowed according to the Bible.

> God is very clear, however, that He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). He also says, "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matthew 19:6). According to the New Testament, there are two justifications for divorce: infidelity (Matthew 5:32) and desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15).

So divorce is not something a Bible believing Christian can do for frivolous reasons, unless he wants to be in rebellion against God.

The future of marriage in the church

In my own case, I learned about chastity and sobriety and courting *outside* the church, and in my case that means that I am still a virgin, that I don't drink more than a beer a year, and that when I like a girl, I court her. I do think that people in the church are generally more moral than people outside the church, but that's more because of convention rather than conviction. I don't think it's going to last, in other words – it's

more like a hangover. Church is not the place where reasons and evidence are given that help people to resist peer pressure when they enter hostile environments, like the university. And often, parents are too busy working to understand the issues and communicate them to their children.

I've never been in a church where they explained the hormones that are released during sex that cause you to bond to the person you're having sex with. You would have to look in books or listen to lectures in order to understand the problem with having sex with someone you are not committed to – how it causes you to hold back your emotions for fear of a break-up. The church doesn't have much to say about the social effects of single motherhood by choice or the effects of gay parenting on children. Nor do they have any positive vision to offer men about how they can serve God by marrying carefully.

Christians who participate in a church community will adopt some of these values, especially if they stay clear of popular culture, the university, etc. Especially if they don't work in a very secular environment, like a high-tech company or in Hollywood. But unless Christian communities get serious about grounding their values in evidence, I wouldn't expect this situation to go on, and you can already see young people falling away from church in record numbers when they get to university as a result of this refusal to engage. We're doing well *now*, but we should move to secure our gains.

The kalam cosmological argument defended in a peer-reviewed science journal

December 1, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the peer-reviewed article. It appears in a scientific journal focused on astrophysics.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

Here's an excerpt in which the author, Dr. William Lane Craig, explains the Big Bang cosmology:

> The monumental significance of the Friedman-Lemaitre model lay in its historization of the universe. As one commentator has remarked, up to this time the idea of the expansion of the universe "was absolutely beyond comprehension. Throughout all of human history the universe was regarded as fixed and immutable and the idea that it might actually be changing was inconceivable."{8} But if the Friedman-Lemaitre model were correct, the universe could no longer be adequately treated as a static entity existing, in effect, timelessly. Rather the universe has a history, and time will not be matter of indifference for our investigation of the cosmos. In 1929 Edwin Hubble's measurements of the red-shift in the optical spectra of light from distant galaxies,{9} which was taken to indicate a universal recessional motion of the light sources in the line of sight, provided a dramatic verification of the Friedman-Lemaitre model. Incredibly, what Hubble had discovered was the isotropic expansion of the universe predicted by Friedman and Lemaitre. It marked a veritable turning point in the history of science. "Of all the great predictions that

> science has ever made over the centuries," exclaims John Wheeler, "was there ever one greater than this, to predict, and predict correctly, and predict against all expectation a phenomenon so fantastic as the expansion of the universe?"{10}
>
> As a GTR-based theory, the Friedman-Lemaitre model does not describe the expansion of the material content of the universe into a pre-existing, empty, Newtonian space, but rather the expansion of space itself. This has the astonishing implication that as one reverses the expansion and extrapolates back in time, space-time curvature becomes progressively greater until one finally arrives at a singular state at which space-time curvature becomes infinite. This state therefore constitutes an edge or boundary to space-time itself. P. C. W. Davies comments,
>
> > An initial cosmological singularity . . . forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity. . . . On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.{11}
>
> The popular expression "Big Bang," originally a derisive term coined by Fred Hoyle to characterize the beginning of the universe predicted by the Friedman-Lemaitre model, is thus potentially misleading, since the expansion cannot be visualized from the outside (there being no "outside," just as there is no "before" with respect to the Big Bang).{12}
>
> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"{13}
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Every theist should be able to understand and defend this argument. It is a scientific refutation of materialism, and it is supported by six lines of scientific evidence – all of which emerged as science has progressed.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe

3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

Those are the scientific discoveries that have led us to the beginning of the universe, which support's Dr. Craig's argument.

Here's a re-cap of the three main evidences for the Big Bang cosmology from Caltech. (Numbers 2, 3 and 5 from the list above)

Excerpt:

> Until the early 1900s, most people had assumed that the universe was fixed in size. New possibilities opened up in 1915, when Einstein formulated his famous general relativity theory that describes the nature of space, time, and gravity. This theory allows for expansion or contraction of the fabric of space. In 1917, astronomer Willem de Sitter applied this theory to the entire universe and boldly went on to show that the universe could be expanding. Aleksandr Friedmann, a mathematician, reached the same conclusion in a more general way in 1922, as did Georges Lemaître, a cosmologist and a Jesuit, in 1927. This step was revolutionary since the accepted view at the time was that the universe was static in size. Tracing back this expanding universe, Lemaître imagined all matter initially contained in a tiny universe and then exploding. These thoughts introduced amazing new possibilities for the universe, but were independent of observation at that time.
>
> **Why Do We Think the Big Bang Happened?**
>
> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

The article goes into detail about each of these three evidences.

This is the kind of evidence I expect all Christian theists to be using when discussing the question of whether God exists. Scientific evidence. When talking to non-Christians, we first need to show that we understand science, because science is a reliable and

respected way of getting knowledge about the universe. Non-Christians do not accept the Bible, but they do accept science, so we begin evangelism with science. Science (experimental, testable, repeatable science) should set limits on what anyone can believe – including non-Christians, who might otherwise not be inclined to listen to Bible verses and theology.

The Big Bang is not compatible with atheism

According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by the atheistic worldview.

You should definitely print out both articles and get familiar with the arguments and the evidence. I have tried this argument out on atheists, and the response I usually get is that scientific discoveries will soon emerge that falsifies all of these six scientific discoveries. That sounds more like faith than reason to me. And we have to make it clear to others who are still deciding that there is a conflict between science and religion. Just not the one they're expecting. Let's make our decisions about what to believe based on what science is telling us today. Let's hold accountable people who want to have a worldview that is based on speculations.

Will the Social Security and Medicare programs be there for young Americans?

December 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Of course not, and the voting in Democrats that they seem to like to do is making it worse.

Here's an article from the Daily Signal to tell about it.

Chart first:

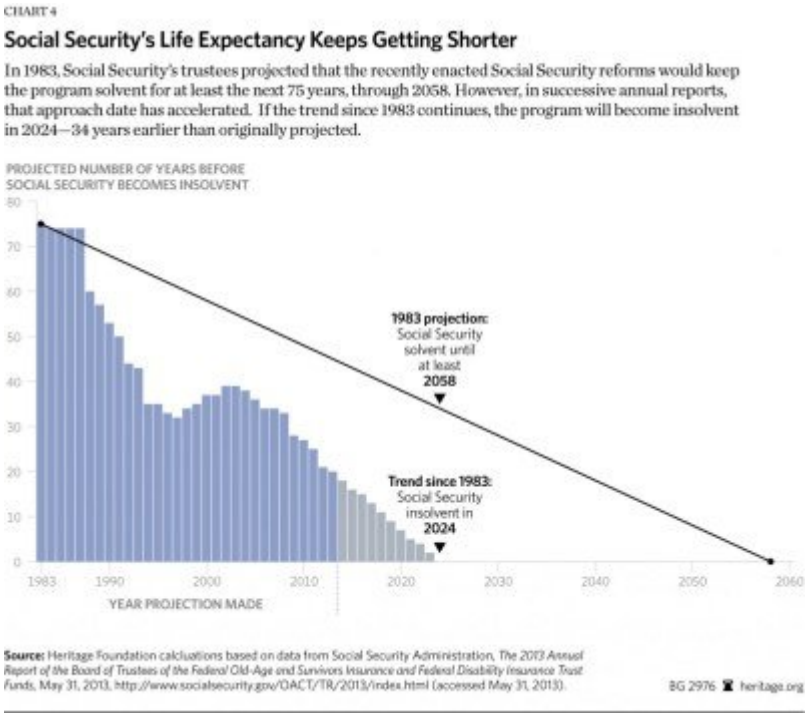

Social Security insolvent in 2024

And now the story:

> Social Security's trustees projected in 1983 that the recently enacted Social Security reforms would keep the program active for at least the next 75 years, through 2058. However, according to research by Rachel Greszler, a senior policy analyst, and James M. Roberts, research fellow for economic freedom and growth at The Heritage Foundation, that approach date has accelerated.
>
> "If the trend since 1983 continues, the program will become insolvent in 2024—34 years earlier than originally projected," Roberts writes.

Now you might think that the way Democrats appeal to younger voters, that they are taking care of this problem for them.

Well, here's an article from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The White House recently conceded that President Obama's executive order effectively legalizing an estimated 5 million undocumented immigrants means

that newly legalized workers will contribute to Social Security and Medicare and be eligible for benefits.

Does the president have any idea how much money his action could cost the country — i.e., taxpayers?

[…]The Social Security and Medicare Trust Fund trustees estimate the two program's combined long-term unfunded liabilities — the estimated amount the government will have to pay in benefits above what it expects to receive — at about $49 trillion. Obama's amnesty action greatly exacerbates the problem, because retirees get back far more than they pay in.

[…]Because the U.S. pays hundreds of thousands of dollars in retirement benefits, on average, for each new retiree, whether part of Obama's amnesty program or not, the president has just vastly worsened the long-term financial condition of the country's two primary retirement safety nets.

But Obama's newly legalized workers will impose even heavier losses than Steuerle's examples.

Most workers pay into the programs for their working careers, between 40 and 50 years. But millions of Obama's newly legalized are working-age adults with children, so many could be in their 40s or older.

Thus they could pay FICA taxes for the next, say, 15 or 20 years — less than half the average American worker — and be eligible for the full array of Social Security and Medicare benefits.

In addition, most will be lower-income workers. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that foreign-born, full-time workers earn about 80% of native-born Americans ($33,500 vs. $41,900).

Social Security is a social insurance program and is structured to provide disproportionately more benefits for lower-income workers. Medicare pays the same regardless of how much a worker pays in.

To be sure, these new workers' entry will likely help the trust funds initially, because most will be paying in rather than taking out.

Under current rules, workers must pay FICA taxes for 40 quarters (10 years total) before being fully eligible for the programs. But within a few decades the oldest will start retiring.

Given the demographic unknowns, estimating the amnesty's financial cost to our retirement programs — and so to U.S. taxpayers — can only be approximate.

But using a basic simulation model, we believe the government will receive about $500 billion in payroll tax revenue (including Part B and drug premiums), and expect it to pay out some $2 trillion in benefits over several decades.

Yeah, so they are actually making it worse. But hey, at least we have redefined marriage, right?

As if that were not enough, there's this lovely story from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> The Daily Treasury Statement that was released Wednesday afternoon as Americans were preparing to celebrate Thanksgiving revealed that the U.S. Treasury has been forced to issue $1,040,965,000,000 in new debt since fiscal 2015 started just eight weeks ago in order to raise the money to pay off Treasury securities that were maturing and to cover new deficit spending by the government.
>
> The only way the Treasury could handle the $942,103,000,000 in old debt that matured during the period plus finance the new deficit spending the government engaged in was to roll over the old debt into new debt and issue enough additional new debt to cover the new deficit spending.
>
> This mode of financing the federal government resembles what the Securities and Exchange Commission calls a Ponzi scheme. "A Ponzi scheme," **says the Securities and Exchange Commission**, "is an investment fraud that involves the payment of purported returns to existing investors from funds contributed by new investors," says the Securities and Exchange Commission.
>
> "With little or no legitimate earnings, the schemes require a consistent flow of money from new investors to continue," explains the SEC. "Ponzi schemes tend to collapse when it becomes difficult to recruit new investors or when a large number of investors ask to cash out."

Now you might ask yourself – are young people aware of these things? Of course not. What they learn in university is how to escape their repressive religious backgrounds by experimenting with risky, irresponsible sexual behavior. They are not aware of the situation, and when they vote, they vote like they were picking candidates on American Idol. I guess I can understand why young people act stupidly. They are concerned with what the culture tells them to be concerned about, and that's legal baby-killing, redefining marriage to separate kids from their mom or dad, police shooting people who commit crimes, a nonexistent gender pay gap and global warming. What is appalling to me is when their parents vote Democrat… which is basically voting to have a higher standard of living for themselves, then passing the bill onto to their kids. It's especially amazing when married women do this to their own kids. What are they thinking?

J. P. Moreland explains the meaning of happiness in the Christian worldview

December 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From happiness expert and Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland.

Excerpt:

> According to ancient thought, happiness is a life well lived, a life that manifests wisdom, kindness and goodness. For the ancients, the happy life — the life we should dream about — is a life of virtue and character. Not only did Plato, Aristotle, the Church Fathers and medieval theologians embrace this definition, but Moses, Solomon and (most importantly) Jesus did, too. Sadly their understanding is widely displaced by the contemporary understanding of happiness defined as pleasure and satisfaction, a subjective emotional state associated with fleeting, egocentric feelings.
>
> Consider the differences:

Contemporary Understanding	**Classical Understanding**
Happiness is:	Happiness is:
1. Pleasure and satisfaction	**1.** Virtue and character
2. An intense feeling	**2.** A settled tone
3. Dependent on external circumstances	**3.** Depends on internal state; springs from within
4. Transitory and fleeting	**4.** Fixed and stable
5. Addictive and enslaving	**5.** Empowering and liberating
6. Irrelevant to one's identity, doesn't color the rest of life and creates false/empty self	**6.** Integrated with one's identity, colors rest of life and creates true/fulfilled self
7. Achieved by self-absorbed narcissism; success produces a celebrity	**7.** Achieved by self-denying apprenticeship to Jesus; success produces a hero

> How can we be certain Jesus is inviting us to a classical understanding of happiness in Matthew 16:24-26? He isn't talking about going to heaven rather than hell, nor is He telling his followers how to avoid premature death. Where Matthew writes, "what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits *his soul*" (emphasis added), Luke clarifies Jesus' teaching by replacing "his soul" with the word "himself" (Luke 9:25). The issue is finding one's self vs. losing one's self. More specifically, to find one's self is to find out how life *ought* to look like and learn to live that way; it's to become like Jesus, with character that manifests the fruit of the Spirit and the radical nature of Kingdom living; it's to find out God's purposes for one's life and to fulfill those purposes in a Christ-honoring way.

I like that “success produces a hero”. Who doesn’t want to be a hero? I certainly do.

In one of his lectures, Dr. Moreland says, and I quote: “Happiness is the freedom to do what we ought to do”. That’s right. When a person is free to comply with God’s design for human flourishing, then he/she is happy. My biggest source of unhappiness is the feeling that I cannot be who I want to be as a Christian. It’s getting even worse when I think about how the government is now using force to prevent me from spending what I earn the way I want, and saying what I want about the issues of the day, regardless of who is offended. I am becoming increasingly thankful for the time I spend with other dedicated Christians. That’s when I can be myself and not worry about what anyone is going to think of me. This is no small source of happiness.

How common is it for a star to support complex, embodied life?

December 2, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

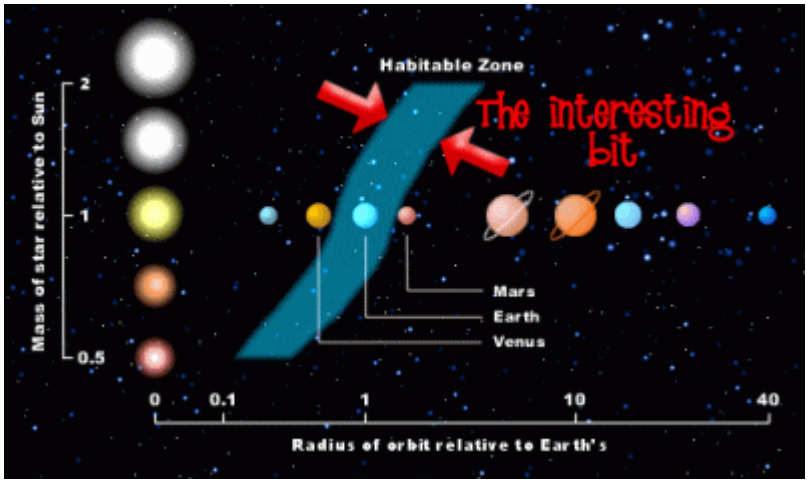

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

I blogged a while back about the need for a star to be massive, in order to push out the habitable zone far enough that the planet in the zone does not get tidally locked, killing the planet's ability to support life. Recently, I blogged about another factor that's needed – large planets further out which catch comets for us have to have a circular orbit, or they will pull us out of the habitable zone.

That's two factors. But here's an article from Evolution News that talks about liquid water and tidal locking, but it has even more factors that need to be fine-tuned for habitability.

Excerpt:

> Stars with masses of 0.1-0.5 solar mass make up 75 percent of the stars in our Milky Way galaxy.[6] These represent the red dwarfs, the M class. But these stars have low effective temperatures, and thus emit their peak radiation at longer wavelengths (red and near-infrared).[7] They can have stable continuously habitable zones over long time scales, up to 10 billion years, barring other disruptions. It is also easier to detect terrestrial sized planets around them.[8] But a serious problem with red dwarf stars in the K and M classes is their energetic flares and coronal mass ejection events. Potentially habitable planets need to orbit these stars closer, to be in these stars' habitable zones. Yet the exposure to their stellar winds and more frequent and energetic flares becomes a serious issue for habitability. Because of these stars' smaller mass, ejections get released with more violence.[9] Any planet's atmosphere would be subject to this ionizing radiation, and likely expose any surface life to much more damaging radiation.[10] The loss of atmospheres in these conditions is likely, but the timescales are dependent on several factors including the planet's mass, the extent of its atmosphere, the distance from the parent star, and the strength of the planet's magnetic field.[11] To protect its atmosphere for a long period, like

> billions of years, a planet with more mass and thus higher gravity could hold on to the gases better. But this larger planet would then hold on to lighter gases, like hydrogen and helium, and prevent an atmosphere similar to Earth's from forming.[12] Another consequence is that the increased surface pressure would prevent water from being in the liquid phase.[13]

So again, you need to have a huge, massive star in order to hold the planet in orbit over LONG distances. If it's a short distance, you not only have the tidal-locking problem, but you also have this solar activity problem (flares, coronal ejections).

But wait! There's more:

> Another stellar parameter for advanced life has to do with UV (ultra-violet) radiation. The life-support star must provide just enough UV radiation, but not too much. UV radiation's negative effects on DNA are well known, and any life support body must be able to sustain an atmosphere to shield them. Yet the energy from UV radiation is also needed for biochemical reactions. So life needs enough UV radiant to allow chemical reactions, but not so much as to destroy complex carbon molecules like DNA. Just this flux requirement alone requires the host star have a minimum stellar mass of 0.6 solar masses, and a maximum mass of 1.9 solar masses.[14]

So the ultra-violet radiation that is emitted has to be finely-tuned. (I'm guessing this assumes some sort of chemical origin-of-life scenario)

Still more:

> Another requirement for habitable planets is a strong magnetic field to prevent their atmosphere from being lost to the solar winds. Planets orbiting a red dwarf star are also more affected by the star's tidal effects, slowing the planet's rotation rate. It is thought that strong magnetic fields are generated in part by the planet's rotation.[15] If the planet is tidally braked, then any potential for a significant magnetic field is likely to be seriously degraded. This will lead to loss of water and other gases from the planet's atmosphere to the stellar winds.[16] We see this in our solar system, where both Mercury and Venus, which orbit closer to the Sun than Earth, have very slow rotation rates, and very modest magnetic fields. Mercury has very little water, and surprisingly, neither does Venus. Even though Venus has a very dense atmosphere, it is very dry. This is due to UV radiation splitting the water molecules when they get high in the atmosphere, and then the hydrogen is lost to space, primarily, again, by solar wind.[17]

You have to hold on to your umbrella (atmosphere), or you get hit with dangerous rain (solar winds).

So a few more factors there, and remember, this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to circumstellar habitability constraints.

New study: stronger net neutrality laws are a tax on Internet use

December 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The leftist Washington Post reports on a new study which counts the cost of the Obama administration's proposed "net neutrality" policies.

Excerpt:

> [A] new study suggests that strong controls on Internet providers might force Americans to pay more for their Internet, anyway.
>
> Internet service providers would be subject to more than $15 billion a year in new fees if the Federal Communications Commission decides to start regulating them with Title II of the Communications Act — the same tool the agency uses to police telephone service, according to Hal Singer and Robert Litan, two economists who support less-aggressive net neutrality rules. And those charges, they say, would inevitably be passed along to you.
>
> Regulating broadband under Title II would allow federal, state and local governments to collect the same fees from ISPs that they already levy on phone companies. Among these are a "universal service" fee that was established decades ago to help ensure everyone in the country had access to telephone service.
>
> In a paper published by the Progressive Policy Institute, Singer and Litan argue that these and other charges stemming from various state and local rules could add $84 or more to a U.S. household's yearly Internet bill.
>
> "Although the state and federal governments collect these fees from broadband providers," Singer and Litan write, "history shows — and economic models of competitive markets predict — that the fees are passed along to customers, just as they are now on telecommunication services. So consumers' Internet bills will soon have all those random charges tacked on at the end, much like they see on their phone bills."
>
> The study is the latest effort by opponents of strong net neutrality rules to describe the potential economic fallout of regulating ISPs under Title II. Last month, telecom lobbyists argued to the FCC that aggressive regulation would slow down the pace of industry investment in network upgrades, to the tune of $45 billion over the next five years.

And there is this from the Heartland Institute, a free-market think tank:

> On June 17, FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski pushed through a 3-2 vote along party lines to begin his agency's process of reclassifying broadband Internet access under a more restrictive regulatory regime known as Title II. Once the

> Internet is reclassified as a telecommunications service rather than an information service under Title I, the FCC will have seized the power necessary to micromanage the vibrant medium we take for granted.
>
> Numerous studies have found FCC enforcement of net neutrality rules would harm the digital economy and consumers. The research on net neutrality points out regulation would stifle innovation and impose costs that would be passed on to consumers. Study after study finds net neutrality is an attempt to fix a "market failure" that doesn't exist.
>
> A recent study from New York University concluded net neutrality would cost Americans 500,000 jobs and $62 billion over the next five years. The international market research firm Frost & Sullivan found net neutrality regulations would likely pass on to the consumer up to $55 per month in additional costs. These and other studies show a hands-off approach to Internet regulation maximizes social and economic welfare.

The rest of the Heartland post links to studies that discuss the impact to the economy and to consumers of these net neutrality laws.

Sociologist George Yancey examines bias against Bible-believing Christians

December 3, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

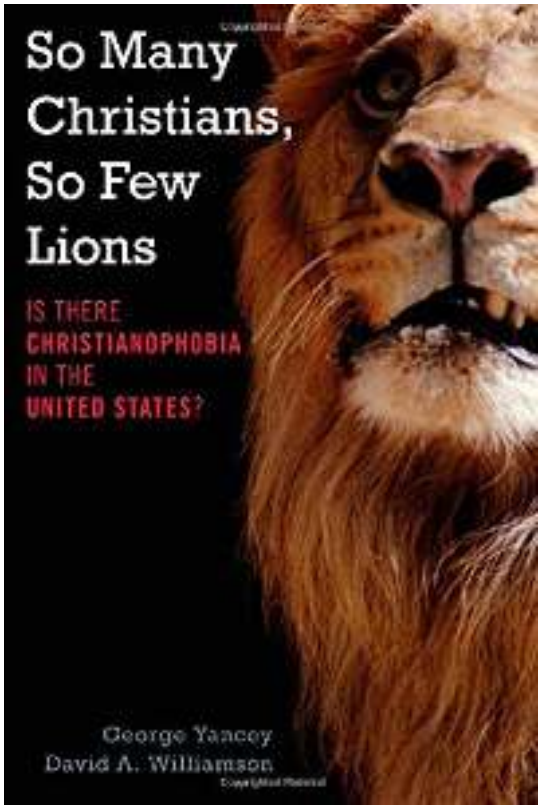

So Many Christians, So Few Lions

There are three posts in the series, and I think these are all worth reading.

Let's see the introduction to the series from the first post.

> Over the next three blog entries, I am going to discuss the content of my latest book –So Many Christians, So Few Lions – Christianophobia in the United States. Actually the book has not come out yet, but will officially come out later this month. Obviously the focus of the book will be the nature of anti-Christian attitudes in the United States. In this first entry, I look at the contours of a basic level of animosity towards conservative Christians in the United States. My next entry will qualitatively explore the nature of Christianophobic attitudes. In my final entry I will consider the implications of this work, as well as other research and social events, for what it means about this type of anti-religious bigotry. For the balance of these blog entries, I will define Christianophobia as unreasonable hatred or fear of Christians.

The first post is here.

Here's a snippet that explains which segment of our society is opposed to Christians who take the Bible seriously:

> In another research project that I am currently working on, we asked college

> teachers how they would define a fundamentalist and how they would see a fundamentalist as different from other Protestants. Beyond basic stereotypical descriptions, these individuals tended to label fundamentalists as those who believed the Bible to be the literal word of God. According to the 2012 ANES, about a third of Americans have such a belief. If the respondents in the ANES use a similar definition of fundamentalism then the animosity exhibited by them is not directed at an extreme Christian fringe but against a substantial portion of the population.
>
> What is as important as the extent of this animosity is who tends to possess this animosity. Those who listed Christian fundamentalists a standard deviation below the mean of the other groups are 79.4 percent white, 47.6 percent with a bachelor degree, 64.5 percent make at least $50,000 a year and 29.2 percent make at least $100,000 a year. All of these numbers are significantly higher than the percentages in the population without this animosity. Thus, those with anti-Christian hostility are whiter, better educated and wealthier than others in our society. These are majority group qualities indicating that those with anti-Christian animosity have more per-capita social power than the average person.
>
> Remember that we not only explored animosity towards conservative Christians but also animosity towards other social groups. I found that those with relative hostility towards atheists are older, non-white, undereducated, political conservatives. Those with relative hostility towards Muslims tend to be older, nonblack political conservative males. Those with relative hostility towards Mormons are younger, non-whites political progressives. This provides some complexity to this discussion of potential religious bias and bigotry. For example, there appear to be just as many people with anti-Muslim hostility as there are with hostility towards conservative Christians. However those with potential Islamophobia do not seem to have a great deal of per-capita political power, unlike those with potential Christianophobia.

The second post is here.

Here's a snippet that discusses whether the group identified in post one *dehumanize* Christians:

> Several researchers and social thinkers have written about dehumanization. But the best conceptualization of dehumanization comes from Nick Haslem. He identified two types of dehumanization: animalistic and mechanical. A cursory reading of the answers from the respondents indicates that animalistic dehumanization fits their responses better than mechanical dehumanization. He identified five qualities of animalistic dehumanization – lack of culture instead of civility, coarseness instead of refinement, amorality instead of moral sensibility, irrationality instead of logic and childlikeness instead of maturity.
>
> I do not have the space to explore all five of these qualities within the answers of my respondents (I did such an exploration in the book). But I will look at the last

> characteristic which is the notion that Christians are childlike instead of mature. Indeed my respondents tended to paint a picture of Christians being immature individuals led by powerful, manipulative leaders.
>
> The leaders are deceptive and power hungry individuals who invoke “God” in a political sense to rally their supporters…They play to people’s emotions, daily. (Female, aged 26-35 with Bachelor degree)

> Their movement’s leaders are the worst type of manipulative authoritarian scum and their millions of followers are sad, weak people who are all too willing to give up their self-respect and liberty for a fantasy. (Male, aged 26-35 with Bachelor degree)
>
> In this way the respondents take away the agency of Christians by suggesting that they are weak individuals unable to resist the desires of evil leaders. Rather the respondents support an image of Christians as being children misled by bad parents.
>
> This type of stereotyping fits quite well with some of the insults that my respondents used in describing Christians. For example, some variation of the term “brainwash” came up 137 times, from 125 respondents. Almost every time the term was used, it was to note the inability of Christians to think for themselves. For example, a female, aged 56-65 with a bachelor degree wrote, “I believe that this group is in general poorly educated and often brainwashed to the point of seeing no perspective but their own. Many allow themselves to become tools of charismatic, self serving leaders because they have been deprived of the education and tools to ever think otherwise.” This respondent, like many other respondents, have a stereotype of Christians reflecting them as unthinking imbeciles. It is a dehumanizing stereotype creating an image of Christians as not having full human capacities.
>
> Beyond the notion of brainwashing, 66 of our respondents use the terms sheep and 5 of our respondents used the term lemmings to describe Christians as well.

> […]These numbers seem low considering that I have a sample of almost three thousand respondents; however, it should be noted that these comments comparing Christians to animals are unprompted. (It is also instructive to consider which terms were not used at all. For example, ape or gorilla was not used by any of the respondents to describe conservative Christians.) Closed ended questions providing respondents with the opportunity to characterize conservative Christians in animalistic terms would likely garner a nontrivial level of support. The comments about Christians as passive animals, combined with the relative willingness of the respondents to use the term brainwashed, occur often enough to provide some confidence that characterizations of Christians as unthinking passive followers are accepted within subcultures with high levels of Christianophobic animosity. If there is any doubt that there is an animalistic element to the type of dehumanizing occurring among my respondents, the use

> of these animals clearly indicates that Christians are not always seen as human.

The third post is here.

Here's a snippet showing how this bias against Christians manifests itself:

> It is well established that academics tend to be more politically progressive and secular than the general population. It is obvious that they are highly educated. So academia theoretically should be a place where we would find a higher than normal level of Christianophobia. This Christianophobia may manifest in discrimination against conservative Christians. A few years ago I conducted research suggesting that this is the case. I found that academics were willing to discriminate against a prospective candidate for an academic position if they found out that the candidate is a conservative Protestant. In fact, they were more willing to discriminate against conservative Protestants than against any other social group included in my survey. Their willingness to discriminate against those Protestants was even more powerful than their willingness to discriminate against political conservatives. Religious intolerance trumps potential political intolerance among academics.
>
> Of course simply because academics state that they are open to discriminating against conservative Protestants does not mean that they actually engage in such discrimination. A survey is not sufficient evidence. However, Rothman and Lichter conducted research documenting that academics with socially conservative beliefs tend to be located in lower status occupational positions even after controlling for demographic variables and their level of productivity. If conservative Protestants are more likely to have socially conservative beliefs than other academics, a reasonable belief, then this research suggests systematic evidence that there are occupational disadvantages in academia to having conservative Christian beliefs. Since academics have a willingness to discriminate against those Christians, this disadvantage cannot merely be due to their inability to do science, as the common stereotype of Christians seems to imply, but discrimination from academics who may be motivated by Christianophobia is likely an important factor.

Buy the book if you find this a useful tool for your own discussions.

You may also like to watch this lecture featuring Dr. Yancey.

Republicans join Democrats in cutting pay and benefits of military personnel

December 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

That audio above is from the Hugh Hewitt radio show (he is a centrist, but on this issue, he's pissed off).

The details were reported in the Military Times. (H/T The Federalist Papers)

Excerpt:

> All of the pay and benefits trims were backed by the Pentagon and White House in an effort to slow the growth of personnel costs. The housing cuts and pharmacy co-pays were the final sticking points for lawmakers, with a compromise reached after nearly a month of behind-the-scenes fights.
>
> The lower pay raise will be the most obvious hit for troops, who would be in line for a 1.8 percent raise based on anticipated private-sector wage growth.
>
> For an E-3 with three years of service, the lower raise is a loss of about $195 a year. For an E-7 with 10 years, it comes out to $356. For an O-5 with 12 years of service, it's $667 in annual salary.
>
> Pentagon planners noted that move alone will save them about $3.8 billion over the next five years. Opponents argued that it creates a new wage gap between troops and their civilian counterparts, giving them less disposable income.
>
> In addition, lawmakers approved trimming back the housing allowances paid to troops who live off base. The Pentagon initially sought to reduce the tax-free housing benefit by 5 percent by reducing the 100 percent of troops' estimated housing costs that are covered now down to an average of 95 percent — in effect making troops pay 5 percent of their housing with out-of-pocket cash.

I am a Republican, and I support Republicans. But this vote really has me shaking my head. If Republicans stand for anything, it's for a strong military to deter aggression. We should not cut pay and benefits for the military at a time where we lavish Social Security and Medicare on illegal immigrants. That is *wrong*. Why can't they just delay this till next year and then pass a real bill that solves whatever problems they are trying to solve but without taking money from the military? Makes me sick.

Lydia McGrew: we need an army of tentmaking Christians

December 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lydia McGrew has a post up at What's Wrong With the World blog that is just excellent. Excerpt:

> Apologetics is wonderful and incredibly important. It's a wonderful thing that a revival of specifically evidentialist apologetics is happening in the United States and even, to some extent, in the Anglophone world at large.
>
> Unfortunately, this revival of interest in apologetics and in being Christian philosophers is coming at a very bad time, economically. Even if you are a genius, your chances in 2013 and following of getting a stable job by the route of going to graduate school in philosophy (or almost any area of the humanities) are pretty darned slim. If you're not a genius, fuhgetaboutit. Nor were there ever all that many jobs in philosophy. It was always an iffy proposition, but it's much worse now than it was even twenty years ago.
>
> As for starting ministries, a poor economy makes it extremely hard to do that, too, because people don't have as much disposable income to donate. Moreover, even in a more robust economy, if all the eager young apologists were to flock to start apologetics and/or campus ministries, they would be competing among themselves for a finite number of available dollars from donors. So that's not the best idea either.
>
> Let me speak very bluntly here: In my opinion, God doesn't need a whole raft of impractical idealists out there getting themselves into debt or half starving (or really starving) with no idea of how in the world they are ever going to support even themselves, much less a family, out at the other end of their education. That just burdens the church with a large number of able-bodied but needy Christians who are in a seemingly unending stage of transition, "getting an education for the kingdom" or "hoping to do work for the kingdom" without a viable plan in mind or any fiscal light at the end of the tunnel.
>
> Instead, I believe that we need an army of tentmakers. If you have a job or a marketable skill, for heaven's sake (literally), don't quit that job and join the ranks of starving students. Keep your day job, but enrich your mind and prepare yourself to answer people's questions about Christianity by studying on your own time. If you have entrepreneurial abilities and the capital, start a business. That will support not only yourself but others you employ, and if successful, you will have more money to give to Christian ministries.
>
> But even if you aren't the entrepreneurial type or don't have that opportunity, at least make sure (to the extent that one can in today's world) that you can pay

> the rent and put food on your own table as well as supporting whatever number of additional people you plan to take on. (In other words, if you are a guy who would like to get married and have children, bear that in mind.) This will inevitably mean spending time at all that distasteful stuff like networking and making a resume. Bookish types don't enjoy that stuff, because it seems bogus, but it can't be helped. It will undoubtedly mean, for most people, not being full-time students beyond the undergraduate level, especially not in the humanities, not trying to become full-time academics as a life work, and not going into full-time ministry, even if you would ideally like to do one or more of those three things.
>
> In the end, if we can have this army of tentmakers, there will be (Lord willing) money to allow some people to work in full-time ministry. But it's going to be quite a small proportion of those who are interested or would ideally like to do so.
>
> […]Inevitably, the course of action I am suggesting will mean a bifurcation for many between their day job and what they are most passionately interested in. So be it. Indeed, so it has ever been in the world. What proportion of people at any moment in human history have been blessed enough to spend most of their time working on what they are most passionately interested in? The question answers itself. So I think that bifurcation has to be accepted by a great many people and that doing so will lead to what I might call a healthier "Christian economy" among committed Christians than what we could otherwise end up with.

So let's see her advice in bullet-point form:

- The job market for philosophers is very bad
- A bad economy means less support money is available
- It's important to have a plan to fund your ministry
- Leverage your full-time job to fund your ministry

I often find that when I talk to Christians, there is this sort of hyper-spiritualized way of deciding what to do, and I've written about this in one of my favorite posts. Hyper-spiritual Christians read the Bible, which is good, but then they don't tend to also look at practical things like economics, science and public policy when making their decisions. The Bible doesn't say much about what to study or what job to get, but there is an example of Paul working at tent-making in order to fund his ministry. So there is precedent for the idea of learning a trade and working to earn enough money to support our families, our ministry and even other people's ministries. I think we have an obligation to take the Bible seriously when it tells us what we can do to please God, but coming up with a plan to please God most effectively is our job. We have to make the plans to serve God. Our plans must be within the bounds of Biblical morality, but they should also reflect our knowledge of how the world really works, too. We'll be more successful with a good plan and some hard work.

Be sure and listen to the podcast by J. Warner Wallace on this issue, and read my comments too (same post).

New paper from Michael Licona on historical methods and miracle claims

December 4, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I hope that all my readers know who Michael Licona is!

The PDF of his new paper is here. It published in the Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus.

Here's the abstract:

> Most biblical scholars and historians hold that the investigation of a miracle report lies outside of the rights of historians acting within their professional capacity. In this essay, I challenge this position and argue to the contrary. A definition of history should not a prioriexclude the possibility of investigating miracle claims, since doing so may restrict historians to an inaccurate assessment of the past. Professional historians outside of the community of biblical scholars acknowledge the frequent absence of a consensus; this largely results from conflicting horizons among historians. If this is the present state among professionals engaged in the study of non-religious history, it will be even more so with historians of Jesus. Finally, even if some historians cannot bring themselves to grant divine causation, they, in principle, can render a verdict on the event itself without rendering a verdict on its cause.

Here's a bit that I found interesting:

> It is clear that the horizon of atheist New Testament scholar Gerd Lüdemann is a driving force behind his historical conclusions when he a priori rules out the historicity of the ascension of Jesus reported in Acts 1.9–11 'because there is no such heaven to which Jesus may have been carried'.14 Ontological naturalism similarly guides James Tabor. He writes:
>
> Women do not get pregnant without a male—ever. So Jesus had a human father… Dead bodies don't rise… So, if the tomb was empty the historical conclusion is simple—Jesus' body was moved by someone and likely reburied in another location.15
>
> Not so obvious is Geza Vermes in his 2008 volume The Resurrection: History and Myth.16 With hardly a comment, Vermes simply dismisses both 'the out-ofh-and rejection of the inveterate skeptic' and the hypothesis that Jesus rose from the dead since it can only be made from 'the blind faith of the fundamentalist believer'.17

I thought these were interesting because Ludemann gives you the post-mortem "visions" of Jesus, and Vermes gives you the empty tomb – yet both are naturalists. Notwithstanding that, it's pretty clear that these guys are not open to miracles *a*

priori, and yet they probably think they are good historians, and able to get at the truth. Even though they rule out some explanations before even looking at the evidence.

So what would you call a detective who ruled out some causes of death but not others, before looking at the evidence?

More:

> Second, methodological naturalism may handicap historians, preventing them in some cases from providing a fuller and more accurate account of the past. Molecular biologist Michael Behe provides a relevant challenge to this approach in his discipline. He writes:
>
> Imagine a room in which a body lies crushed, flat as a pancake. A dozen detectives crawl around, examining the floor with magnifying glasses for any clues to the identity of the perpetrator. In the middle of the room, next to the body, stands a large, grey elephant. The detectives carefully avoid bumping into the pachyderm's legs as they crawl, and never even glance at it. Over time the detectives get frustrated with their lack of progress but resolutely press on, looking even more closely at the floor. You see, textbooks say detectives must 'get their man', so they never consider elephants.19
>
> **In context, Behe is contending that when scientists limit their considerations exclusively to unguided natural causes they will forever keep themselves from discovering the actual cause if a Designer of some sort was responsible. A similar admonition may be issued to historians who a priori exclude a non-human agent as the cause behind a past event. Those who do so could actually be placing themselves in a position where they cannot appraise history accurately.**20

The rest of the paper discusses two options for historians who want to resolve this problem.

So, I'm impressed that Mike Licona reads Mike Behe (that quote is from "Darwin's Black Box"). Pretty cool. You should download the PDF just for the footnotes, to see what else he is reading that you might want to read too. What I like to see is lots of science and lots of debates and lots of different points of view. He reads across disciplines, he reads people who disagree with him. We one-dollar apologists all need to be like that.

Back to his paper. I see this presupposition of naturalism come up in debates on the historical Jesus, where the naturalist will just assume naturalism and then proceed to do history – even at a time where we have so many scientific arguments to undermine naturalism. It's a bad philosophical view, and we shouldn't let it influence how we do history.

If you run into these historians who are slaves to naturalism, it might be worth it to make them defend it. You ask them – do you believe in naturalism? If they say yes, ask them for scientific evidence for naturalism. And when they finish not giving you any, then you can go on a long monologue on the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life,

the Cambrian explosion, the habitability (galactic and stellar), and so on. Then tell them to stop bring their blind religious faith into their historical investigations.

Should young Americans feel confident about their economic prospects?

December 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

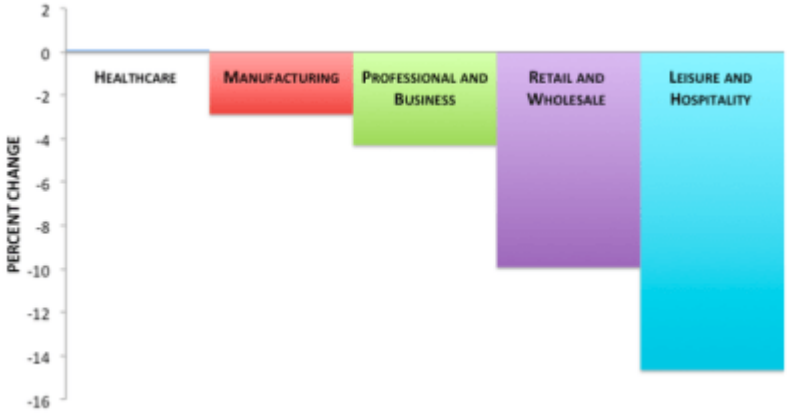

Wages of Young Americans (Source: The Atlantic)
Graph: Young People's Wages Have Fallen Across Industries Between 2007 and 2013.

Young Americans are taking longer to graduate and graduating with more debt, but that's not all – they aren't find jobs, and the jobs they do find typically don't allow them to pay back their loans.

Here's an article from The Atlantic, which leans left.

Excerpt:

> American families are grappling with stagnant wage growth, as the costs of health care, education, and housing continue to climb. But for many of America's younger workers, "stagnant" wages shouldn't sound so bad. In fact, they might sound like a massive raise.
>
> Since the Great Recession struck in 2007, the median wage for people between the ages of 25 and 34, adjusted for inflation, has fallen in every major industry except for health care.
> These numbers come from an analysis of the Census Current Population Surveyby Konrad Mugglestone, an economist with Young Invincibles.
>
> In retail, wholesale, leisure, and hospitality—which together employ more than one quarter of this age group—real wages have fallen more than 10 percent since 2007. To be clear, this doesn't mean that most of this cohort are seeing their pay slashed, year after year. Instead it suggests that wage growth is failing to keep up with inflation, and that, as twentysomethings pass into their thirties, they are earning less than their older peers did before the recession.
>
> The picture isn't much better for the youngest group of workers between 18 and 24. Besides health care, the industries employing the vast majority of part-time students and recent graduates are also watching wages fall behind inflation. (40 percent of this group is enrolled in college.)

It’s not just that – the Democrats are doing a pretty good job of wrecking other parts of the economy, from energy development to health care to entitlement programs to college tuition, which rises higher as government throws more money into the system. They are doing everything they can to wreck the economy with higher taxes and burdensome regulations.

As a result of our headlong rush towards socialism, the U.S. economy has now fallen to number 2 in the world, *behind China.*

Look:

> We’re no longer No. 1. Today, we’re No. 2. Yes, it’s official. The Chinese economy just overtook the United States economy to become the largest in the world. For the first time since Ulysses S. Grant was president, America is not the leading economic power on the planet.
>
> It just happened — and almost nobody noticed.
>
> The International Monetary Fund recently released the latest numbers for the world economy. And when you measure national economic output in “real” terms of goods and services, China will this year produce $17.6 trillion — compared with $17.4 trillion for the U.S.A.
>
> As recently as 2000, we produced nearly three times as much as the Chinese.
>
> To put the numbers slightly differently, China now accounts for 16.5% of the global economy when measured in real purchasing-power terms, compared with 16.3% for the U.S.
>
> This latest economic earthquake follows the development last year when China surpassed the U.S. for the first time in terms of global trade.

So things are bad for young people, and it’s going to get worse.

It’s important to check what major you are studying to make sure you get a return on your investment, and don’t be scared to study something you hate if it means that you can make your career work. Your education and career choices are not about fulfillment and thrills. You have to make hard choices in order to make ends meet so that you have freedom to do the things you ought to do, especially if you want to get married and start a family. Those marriage and family plans start the day you step into high school, in my opinion.

UPDATE: 17.7% Teen Unemployment in America – Still Above Rate of 6 Years Ago and Labor Force Participation Remains at 36-Year Low.

New study: enzymes cannot easily evolve to perform other functions

December 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

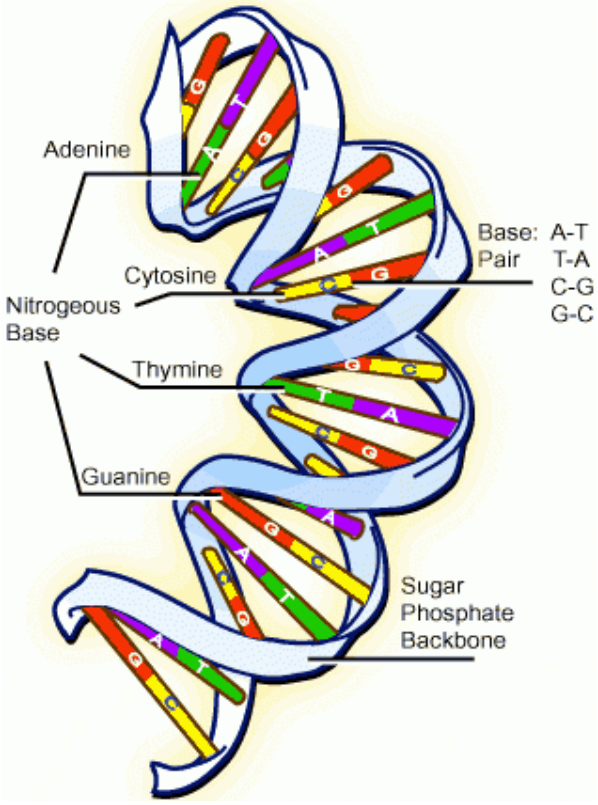

Can atheism explain the origin of life?
This is from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> I am pleased to announce the publication of a new paper from Biologic Institute, a research organization devoted to investigating the limits of unguided evolution and advancing the development of a new paradigm for biology based on intelligent design. This paper, "Enzyme Families — Shared Evolutionary History or Shared Design? A Study of the GABA-Aminotransferase Family," is the closing chapter of our long-term study of bacterial enzymes to determine if they can be coopted to new functions. The answer to this question is important for the evolution debate. If enzymes can't be recruited to genuinely new functions by unguided means, no matter how similar they are, the evolutionary story is false.
>
> Published in the journal *BIO-Complexity*, the work was done by Marci Reeves, Doug Axe, and myself [Ann Gauger].
>
> In a previous paper we described the difficulty of coopting the enzyme Kbl to perform the function of BioF. The two enzymes are very similar in structure (see below) but have different reaction chemistries and different functions in the cell. We wanted to know if a mutated Kbl could replace missing BioF function. After changing nearly every amino acid in Kbl's active site (where its chemistry is

> carried out) to look like BioF, Kbl never was able to make the switch to BioF's function.
>
> In this paper we expanded the story to include *nine* of the most closely related enzymes to BioF, including one that is supposed to be able to carry out both BioF's and Kbl's chemistry. Using random mutagenesis we tested every single-base mutation in those nine genes. None of them was within one mutation of cooption. We went on to test for cooption the two most likely enzymes by generating two-base combinations of mutations. After testing 70 percent of all possible two-base mutations for each enzyme, or about 40 million cells each, that also failed.
>
> What does this mean? In an evolutionary scenario, to get an enzyme to switch functions the first step is to make a spare copy that can be mutated without destroying a function the cell needs. Second, the cell has to overproduce the mutating enzyme, because any newly emerging enzyme will be very bad at the job at first. To compensate there will need to be lots of enzyme around. Third, there is the problem of finding the right combination of mutations by random search.
>
> **Taken together, since we found no enzyme that was within one mutation of cooption, the total number of mutations needed is at least four: one for duplication, one for over-production, and two or more single base changes. The waiting time required to achieve four mutations is *10^{15} years*. That's longer than the age of the universe.** The real waiting time is likely to be much greater, since the two most likely candidate enzymes failed to be coopted by double mutations.

Read the rest of the post, they deal with criticisms to the paper.

Here is one Darwinist's view of this enzyme proble, which they mention in a follow-up post.

Look: (links removed)

> Monday we published a paper in the journal *BIO-Complexity* demonstrating that enzymes can't evolve genuinely new functions by unguided means. We argue that design by a very sophisticated intelligent agent is the best explanation for their origin. I want to take some time to lay out our argument against Darwinian evolution and for intelligent design. It's important, because it reveals the logical fallacy in most evolutionary thinking.
>
> Just to give an example of the thinking of ID critics, here is a passage from one of the references in our paper (Kherhonsky et al. (2006) Enzyme promiscuity: Evolutionary and mechanistic aspects.*Current Opinion in Chemical Biology* 10:498-508):
>
> An oft-forgotten essence of Darwinian processes is that they occur gradually, while maintaining organism fitness throughout. Consequently, a reasonable

> assumption is that, ever since the emergence of the primordial living forms, very little novelty has evolved at the molecular level. Rather, existing genes were modified, or tinkered with', to generate new protein structures and functions that are related to those of their ancestors. Unlike 'out of the blue' scenarios advocated by the 'intelligent design' school, 'tinkering' scenarios depend on the availability of evolutionary starting points. The hypothesis that the broad specificity, or promiscuous functions, of existing enzymes provide these starting points was first formalized by Jensen in a review that has inspired many. Jensen proposed that, in contrast to modern enzymes, primitive enzymes possessed very broad specificities. This catalytic versatility enabled fewer enzymes to perform the multitude of functions that was necessary to maintain ancestral organisms. Duplication of genes and divergence led to specialized genes and increased metabolic efficiency. Since Jensen, the structures of >30,000 proteins, and the sequences of hundreds of thousands, have taught us that these processes led to the creation of enzyme families and superfamilies. The vestiges of these divergence processes are the scaffold and active site architecture shared by all family members [6].
>
> To summarize, the key points of that evolutionary argument are:
>
> 1. Evolution is true. That is, enzymes have evolved new functions by a process of random mutation and natural selection.
> 2. Modern enzymes can't evolve genuinely new functions by random mutation and natural selection but can only tinker with existing functions.
> 3. Therefore, ancient enzymes *must have* been different, capable of carrying out a broad range of enzyme activities.
> 4. Those enzymes underwent duplication and diverged from one another, becoming specialized.
> 5. How do we know this happened? Because we now see a broad array of specialized enzymes. Evolution is the explanation.
>
> This begs the question of whether evolution is true. It is a circular argument unsubstantiated by the evidence and unfalsifiable. No one can know what ancient enzymes actually looked like, and whether they really had such broad catalytic specificities.

That's insufferable badness.

It's not enough for Darwinists to take the age of the universe and then assert that anything can happen in that time. The time from the cooling of the Earth to the appearance of first life is on the order of millions of years. There just isn't time to generate these organic components by chance.

Dennis Prager: does the Bible say do not kill or do not murder?

December 5, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am hoping that a lady I am friends with who really likes the King James Bible will not read this post… but, here goes.

Dennis Prager's column on the sixth commandment.

Excerpt:

> Here is the text of commandment six — explaining why the King James translation is wrong:
>
> You would think that of all the Ten Commandments the one that needs the least explaining is the sixth, because it seems so clear. It is the one that the King James Bible, the most widely used English translation of the Bible, translates as, "Thou shall not kill."
>
> Yet, the truth is the quite the opposite. This is probably the least well understood of the Ten Commandments. The reason is that the Hebrew original does not say, "Do not kill." It says, "Do not murder." Both Hebrew and English have two words for taking a life — one is "kill" (harag, in Hebrew) and the other is "murder" (ratzach in Hebrew).
>
> The difference between the two is enormous. Kill means:
>
> 1. Taking any life — whether of a human being or an animal.
> 2. Taking a human life deliberately or by accident.
> 3. Taking a human life legally or illegally, morally or immorally.
>
> On the other hand, murder can only mean one thing: The illegal or immoral taking of a human life. That's why we say, "I killed a mosquito," not, "I murdered a mosquito." And that's why we would say that "the worker was accidentally killed," not that "the worker was accidentally murdered."
>
> So why did the King James translation of the Bible use the word "kill" rather than "murder"? Because 400 years ago, when the translation was made, "kill" was synonymous with "murder." As a result, some people don't realize that English has changed since 1610 and therefore think that the Ten Commandments prohibits all killing.
>
> But, of course, it doesn't. If the Ten Commandments forbade killing, we would all have to be vegetarians, as killing animals would be prohibited. And we would all have to be pacifists — since we could not kill even in self-defense.
>
> However, you don't have to know how the English language has evolved to understand that the Ten Commandments could not have prohibited all killing.

> A correct understanding of the commandment against murder is crucial because, while virtually every modern translation correctly translates the commandment as “Do not murder,” many people cite the King James translation to justify two positions that have no biblical basis: opposition to capital punishment and pacifism.The very same part of the Bible that contains the Ten Commandments — the Five Books of Moses, the Torah as it is known by Jews — commands the death penalty for murder, allows killing in war, prescribes animal sacrifice and allows eating meat.
>
> Regarding capital punishment and the Bible, as I note in my Prager University course on capital punishment, the only law that appears in each one of the Five Books of Moses is that murderers be put to death. Opponents of the death penalty are free to hold the view that all murderers should be allowed to live. But they are not free to cite the Bible to support their view.
>
> Yet, many do. And they always cite the Commandment, “Do not kill.” But that, as should now be abundantly clear, is not what the commandment says, and it is therefore an invalid argument.

Read the rest (it’s the same as the video).

This is related to his new video series for Prager University on the Ten Commandments. You can watch them all here. There’s one for each commandment, and an introduction. Prager University always does a nice job on these videos, and they are a nice, quick way to find out exactly what traditionally-minded people really believe, and why. Most kids in college will never even hear the other side to what their liberal professors say.

Does the Bible say that you should forgive someone who does not repent?

December 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kevin Lewis, a professor of Theology and Law at the conservative Biola University, was asked this question:

> Recently, I was reading Dr. Kenneth Bailey's "Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes" (IVP press 2008). When commenting on Matthew 6:12-13, he writes,
>
> "It is a common human assumption that the violator of the rights of others must ask for forgiveness before the wronged party can be expected to accept the apology and grant forgiveness…But Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when when there is no confession of guilt… There is a voice from the cross that echoes across history to all saying 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' Neither Pilate nor the high priest nor the centurion offered any apology to Jesus, yet he prayed for divine forgiveness…(p.125)"

And here's his response in full, copied with permission from his Facebook note:

> Regarding Bailey's comments on Matthew 6:12, he errs by not considering the theological context of this statement and fails to consider any implied biblical conditions for forgiveness inherent in the statement. The text simply does not mean what he says it means. He is reading too much into the statement.
> Bailey states, "Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when there is no confession of guilt…"
>
> Bailey errs. Here, Jesus is giving a model for prayer commensurate with the way His Kingdom works. Jesus teaches them to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." This is a statement of the objective, "forgiveness," without a discussion of any express or implied conditions to accomplish the objective. It is also a statement of the proper attitude of the Christian, that is, that we must have a demeanor of being willing to forgive, just as God was willing to forgive us. Bailey's assertion that there is no "confession of guilt" or repentance is merely an unwarranted assumption.
>
> Moreover, the use of "as" (Grk. hos) in the passage introduces a comparison between the way we forgive and the way God forgives. This comparative phraseology is employed elsewhere on the subject of forgiveness. For example, Ephesians 4:32 states that we should be "forgiving each other just as God in Christ also has forgiven" us. Here, the comparative "just as" (Grk. kathos) is employed and indicates our forgiveness is to be just like God's forgiveness of us, which flows from a loving disposition. So in the same manner that God forgives, we must forgive. We are to be "imitators of God" (Eph. 5:1). See also Matthew

5:48 and Luke 6:36 for exhortations to imitate God.

To ascertain whether the Scriptures describe any conditions for forgiveness, one must search elsewhere in the Scriptures for comment. This is the nature of systematic theology. We need to examine what the entire Bible says on a given topic, such as forgiveness. And the Bible contains ample support for the notion that there are conditions for forgiveness.

First, regarding God and His forgiveness, it is undisputed in orthodox Christian theology that God does not forgive everyone. The doctrine of Hell is a sufficient proof of the lack of universal forgiveness by God.

Next, it is clear that God does not forgive without repentance. This doctrine is taught in a number of texts. For example, in Luke 13:3 Jesus says, “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” In Mark 1:15 John the Baptist commands that we must “repent and believe the Gospel.” The connection between repentance and forgiveness of sins (i.e. “salvation”) is seen throughout the Scriptures. For example, in Acts 2:38 repentance is directly connected as a condition for the remission of sins. For additional examples of this connection see Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30-31; Romans 2:4-5; II Corinthians 7:10; II Tim. 2:25-26.

So since we are to be imitators of God and forgive in the same way God forgives, we would expect the Scriptures to be consistent, stating that the condition of repentance is required to be fulfilled before believers are required to forgive each other’s sins. It does.

Jesus stated in Luke 17:3, “If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.” Here, the meaning is clear. The word “if” (Grk. ean) introduces the condition for a rebuke and for granting forgiveness. If (subjunctive) a person sins, we must (imperative) rebuke him, and if (subjunctive) he repents, we must (imperative) forgive him. This is as clear a statement as you will find on the subject. Forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance—and this is one of the same criteria that God requires before He forgives sin.

This principle of permitting believers to withhold forgiveness unless the condition of repentance is satisfied is also explicitly seen in Matthew 18:15-17. Compared with the Luke 17:3 text above, the situation is the same. If a brother sins, reprove him; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. Here, the word “reprove” is used rather than “rebuke” and the word “listen” is employed rather than “repent,” but the meaning is virtually identical to Luke 17:3. What we see in Matthew 18 is an escalation of the issue and the result if the person fails to repent (i.e. “listen”). If the person fails to repent, we are to shun him in all appropriate ways (v. 17).

These passages in Luke and Matthew give us the connection between sin, rebuke, repentance and forgiveness. Other biblical texts that merely mention “forgiveness” as a concept or an objective do not necessarily proffer every

aspect of the doctrine of forgiveness. As such, they must be read in light of the clear conditions expressed in other passages.

Finally, I would make the case that it is harmful to a person to forgive him without requiring repentance. As seen above, the Bible is clear that sin requires a rebuke. Ignoring sin teaches sinners that sin does not bring consequences. This is harmful to their souls. Continuing to have the benefit of a righteous relationship with another and yet remain in sin against that person results in fostering a habituation of sinful inclinations in their soul, which God says brings about suffering and death.

Moreover, since the ultimate purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation, it is meaningless and harmful to forgive when no reconciliation may be had with the sinner. We cannot “walk together” in a biblical manner in righteous peace when the unrepentant sinner walks in unrighteousness. Necessarily, there is a conflict and a want of shalom. Their soul is headed in a different direction than the believer’s soul; they are walking away from God and we cannot have fellowship with darkness. God has no intimate fellowship with unrepentant people, and that is the model for Christians as well (See Matt. 18).

Regarding personal anger issues commonly raised by Christian psychologists, these types of psychologists unbiblically make unconditional forgiveness a part of therapy. By contrast, however, if a counselee will not forgive after the offending party has truly repented, the counselee sins, and this kind of unforgiveness may be one of the causes of his or her problems. But this is a separate issue from universal and unconditional forgiveness raised above.

Human beings in the image of God may be angry in appropriate ways (Eph.4:26, 31). There is a time to love and a time to hate (Ecclesiastes 3:8). The notion that Christians cannot ever hate, be angry, or lack forgiveness is an unbiblical concept. God Himself is eternally angry with sin, but He is certainly not a psychological basket case. He loves, hates, and is angry in appropriate ways. Our task as believers is to imitate this. Be angry with and hate sin appropriately (Rom. 12:9) and love what good appropriately. For example, righteous anger can evolve beyond the biblical limits to become malice, slander, and bitterness while, to give another example, an appropriate love of food can evolve beyond the biblical limits into gluttony.

Psychological problems arise from many issues other than lack of forgiveness. For example, a lack of trust in God that He has a particular instance of evil under His sovereign control can cause undue anxiety in one’s life. Also, if a counselee’s self worth is grounded in the shifting sand of how others treat him (i.e., badly) rather than being grounded in the fact that he is a divine image bearer and inherently valuable no matter how badly anyone treats him, he will likely fall into anxiety, depression, and other sorts of psychological maladies. Changing the biblical doctrine of forgiveness will not truly help a counselee. It only makes it

> worse.
>
> Soli Deo Gloria

I agree with Kevin, and I think it is a helpful tool for people to insist on seeing some sort of repentance and restitution from someone who wrongs you before you trust them again. If they are not even sorry for what they've done, and they refuse to explain why what they did is wrong, then they can't be forgiven, and you can't trust them again.

I think this is the key passage – Luke 17:3-4:

Luke 17:3-4:

3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

That's Jesus speaking, there.

Also, I was having a debate with someone who disagrees with all this, and while debating with her, I thought of another example.

Luke 18:9-14:

9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

13 But the tax collector,standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So again, no forgiveness without repentance.

Forgiveness is what happens when someone who is sinned against treats the sinner as if he had never sinned. It is not on the balance sheet. It is not brought to mind. It is not held against them in the future. The forgiver trusts the sinner again as if the previous sin had never happened.

In divine (vertical) forgiveness, there is no forgiveness without repentance. There are Bible verses above to show that.

My argument is twofold. First, there is a clear teaching of Jesus explaining the sequence of sin and forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness, between humans (Luke 17:3). The verses cited by the forgive without repentance crowd don't show the mechanics of how to forgive, they are making the point that if you want God to forgive you, you should forgive others. The parable in Luke 18:9-14 affirms this again – repentance always

precedes forgiveness.

Second, we have an obligation to imitate God, and that means imitating the way he forgives those who sin against him. When I raise that with the unconditional forgiveness crowd, they want to insist that there is a difference, that the word “forgive” means different things. I’m not convinced.

Finally, I do think that forgiving someone is obligatory if they sincerely repent, and even if they screw up again and again. So long as the repentance is sincere, (like if there is restitution and a genuine effort to show an understanding how the sin affected the wronged party in writing), then forgiveness should be automatic. Depending on how bad the sin is, there maybe be more to do than just say “I’m sorry”. If the repentance is genuine, then I think the person who is sinned against must forgive, if they expect to be forgiven by God for the things they repent of.

Alan E. Kurschner adds one final point about the unconditional forgiveness view. He argues that there is serious textual doubt about the originality of Luke 23:34a, a text used by the pro-unconditional-forgiveness crowd.He has a journal article coming out on it, but a synopsis of his argument is here.

He also wrote this in a comment on this blog:

> Second, on Matt 6:15, this is what I have to say. Notice the then-clause: “neither will your Father forgive your sins.” This would require universalism on the Father’s part according to the unconditional interpretation given the first half: “But if you do not forgive others their sins.” Since everyone has wronged the Father is the Father required to forgive everyone even if they are not seeking forgiveness?

So I think the case for the forgiveness being conditional on repentance is pretty strong, especially when serious harm has been caused.

How to apologize effectively: responsibility, restitution, repentance

December 6, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I guess everyone already knows about Gary Chapman and his 5 Love Languages. But have you heard of his 5 Love Languages of apologies?

I want to focus on two of them that I think are important, because I don't want people to think that just saying "I'm sorry" is good enough.

Here they are (straight out of his book):

Apology Language #3: Making Restitution

In the public arena, our emphasis upon restitution is based upon our sense of justice. The one who commits the crime should pay for the wrongdoing. In contrast, in the private sphere of family and other close relationships, our desire for restitution is almost always based upon our need for love. After being hurt deeply, we need the reassurance that the person who hurt us still loves us.

"How could they love me and do that?" is the question that lingers in our minds. The words "I'm sorry; I was wrong" may not be enough.

For some people, restitution is their primary apology language. For them the statement, "It is not right for me to have treated you that way," must be followed with "What can I do to show you that I still care about you?" Without this effort at restitution, this person will question the sincerity of the apology. They will continue to feel unloved even though you may have said, "I am sorry; I was wrong." They wait for the reassurance that you genuinely love them.

The question, then, is how do we make restitution in the most effective way? Since the heart of restitution is reassuring the spouse or family member that you genuinely love him or her, it is essential to express restitution in the love language of the other person.

[…]If restitution is the primary apology language of an individual, then this becomes the most important part of the apology. "I'm sorry; I was wrong" will never be taken as sincere if these words are not accompanied by a sincere effort at restitution. They wait for the assurance that you still genuinely love them. Without your effort to make amends, the apology will not have the desired results of forgiveness.

Apology Language #4: Genuinely Repenting

The word repentance means "to turn around" or "to change one's mind." In the context of an apology, it means that an individual realizes that his or her present behavior is destructive. The person regrets the pain he or she is causing the other person, and he chooses to change his behavior.

Without genuine repentance, the other languages of apology may fall on deaf ears. What people who've been hurt want to know is, "Do you intend to change, or will this happen again next week?"

How then do we speak the language of repentance?

> - **It begins with an expression of intent to change.** When we share our intention to change with the person we have offended, we are communicating to them what is going on inside of us. They get a glimpse of our heart—and this often is the language that convinces them we mean what we say.
> - **The second step down the road of repentance is developing a plan for implementing change.**Often apologies fail to be successful in restoring the relationship because there is no plan for making positive change.
> - **The third step down the road of repentance is implementing the plan.** Following through with the plan gives evidence to the offended party that your apology was sincere.

Most people do not expect perfection after an apology, but they do expect to see effort.

Thus, expressing your desire to change and coming up with a plan is an extremely important part of an apology to this person. Inviting the offended person to help you come up with a plan for change is perhaps the best way to effectively show repentance.

Here are some practical tips that I recommend to someone who has done something morally wrong and who wants to apologize.

To fix the problem you need more than talk

To me, the only thing that needs an apology is breaking a moral rule – you can't beat someone up for just making a mistake. Whenever someone breaks a moral rule with me, like disrespecting me or being selfish, then I pick out a book for them to read and ask them to read it and then write something about how what they learned in the book applies to what they did to me. I don't pick very long books! But I do this for a very important reason.

The very important reason is that I don't trust people who just agree with me. I don't trust people's words. If someone is really sorry about something, then I want them to read something that describes the moral rule that they broke, and to be willing to listen to the feelings of the person they harmed by breaking that rule. That goes a long way in my mind.

What happens to your children when they arrive at university?

December 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This Philadelphia Inquirer editorial is from famous ethics professor Robert P. George. He writes:

> When many of the flower children and new-left activists of the ’60s became professors and university administrators in the ’70s and ’80s, they did not entirely overthrow the idea of liberal-arts education. Many proclaimed themselves its loyal partisans.Now, it is true that many think it their mission to create soldiers in the battle for “social change” – aspiring ACLU lawyers, Planned Parenthood volunteers, and “community organizers.” But others resist the idea that learning should be instrumentalized. They profess allegiance to the idea that the point of liberal education is to enrich and even liberate the student-learner. That’s what is supposed to be “liberal” about liberal-arts learning – it is supposed to convey the knowledge and impart the intellectual skills and habits of mind that are liberating.Still, there is a chasm between the idea of liberal-arts education as classically conceived, and the conception promoted by some (mercifully, not all) in positions of influence in academic departments today. Many of today’s academic humanists and social scientists have a different view of what students need liberation *from*.In their view (what I will call the revisionist conception), it is liberation from traditional social constraints and moral norms – beliefs, principles, and structures by which earlier generations of Americans and people in the West generally had been taught to govern themselves for the sake of personal virtue and the common good. For them, it has become a dogma that these traditional norms and structures are irrational – “hang ups” that stifle our personalities by impeding desire-fulfillment.
>
> **Liberal-arts learning is thus seen as a way to undermine whatever is left of the old norms and structures.** Teaching and scholarship are meant either (1) to expose the texts and traditions once regarded as the intellectual treasures of our civilization – the Bible, Plato, Augustine, Dante, Aquinas, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Austen, Locke, Gibbon, the authors of *The Federalist*, etc. – as mere propaganda propping up unjust (racist, sexist, classist, homophobic) social orders, or still worse (2) to show how they can be “reappropriated” to subvert allegedly unjust contemporary social orders.
>
> **Beyond this, liberal-arts learning is meant to enable students to become “authentic” – true to themselves – which means, to these liberal-arts revisionists, acting on one’s feelings and desires. For the self is understood precisely as a bundle of feelings and desires, to be acted on without regard to supposedly outmoded moral and social norms.**

> **On the revisionist conception of personal authenticity, whatever impedes one from doing what one most wants (unless what one happens to want would be politically incorrect) is a mere hang-up. So religious convictions and traditional moral ideals are to be transcended for the sake of the free and full development of one's personality – for example, by acting on sexual desires that one might have been "repressing."**

This is something I often encounter when dealing with college kids, especially with women who went to college and fell under the influence of feminism. Even if they come back to the faith later and want to get serious about it, there is a lingering effect of their indoctrination in college that causes them to doubt the traditional virtues and prefer to make decisions on the basis of feelings. They really, really believe in being true to their feelings, and deciding what to do on the basis of these feelings, rather then thinking about virtues like stewardship, or moral obligations in general. We are not good at loving other people, and focusing on ourselves above all does not help us to do that.

Jupiter deflects comets and asteroids that might otherwise hit Earth

December 7, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

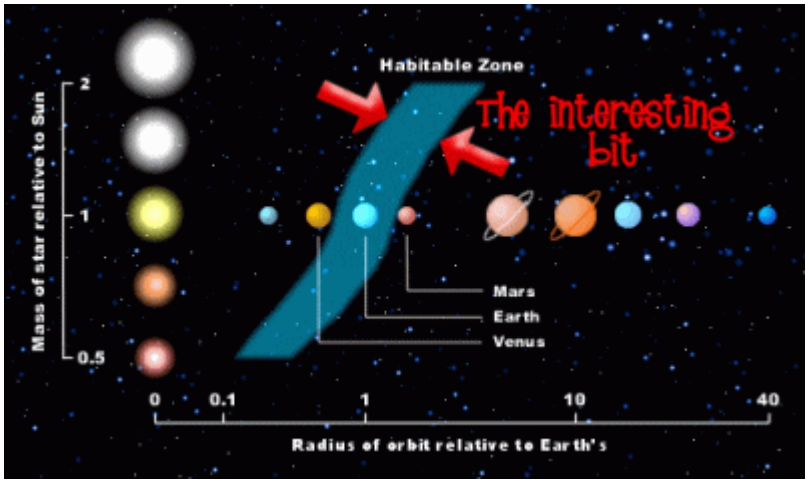

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

This is an older article from Astrobiology magazine, but it shows how important Jupiter is for habitability.

Excerpt:

> To a biologist, the ingredients needed to form life include water, heat and organic chemicals. But some in the astrophysics and astronomy community argue that life, at least advanced life, may require an additional component: a Jupiter-sized planet in the solar neighborhood.
>
> "A long-period Jupiter may be a prerequisite for advanced life," said Dr. Alan Boss, a researcher in planetary formation. Boss, who works at the Carnegie Institution of Washington, is a member of the NASA Astrobiology Institute (NAI).
>
> In our own solar system, Jupiter, with its enormous gravitational field, plays an important protective role. By deflecting comets and asteroids that might otherwise hit Earth, Jupiter has helped to create a more stable environment for life to evolve here. It's generally believed that a massive impact was responsible 65 million years ago for wiping out dinosaurs on Earth. If not for Jupiter, it's possible that many other such impacts would have occurred throughout Earth's history, preventing advanced life from ever gaining a foothold.
>
> Jupiter is significant not only for its size but also for its location in our solar system, far from the Sun. Because it orbits at slightly more than 5 AU (astronomical units the distance between the Earth and the Sun is 1 AU), there is plenty of room in the inner part of our Solar System to accommodate a range of smaller planets.
>
> Within the inner solar system there exists a region, known as the habitable zone, where liquid water, and therefore life, can potentially exist on a planet's surface.

> Without liquid water, life as we know it is not possible. The habitable zone around our Sun stretches roughly from the orbit of Venus to the orbit of Mars. Venus is generally believed to be too hot to support life. Earth, it appears, is just right. And the jury is still out on Mars.
>
> Understanding the role that Jupiter plays in our own Solar System helps astronomers focus their search for habitable planets around other stars. "If," Boss explains, "a Jupiter-mass planet on a stable, circular orbit [around another star at] around 4 to 5 AU was found, without any evidence for other gas giant planets with shorter period orbits, such a discovery would be like a neon light in the cosmos pointed toward that star, saying 'Look here!'. That star would be a prime target for looking for a habitable, Earth-like planet."

Previously, I blogged about how the circular orbit of Saturn and the mass of our star also play a role in making our planet habitable.

People who are not curious about science sort of take these blessings for granted and push away the God who is responsible for the clever life-permitting design of our habitat. In contrast, theists are curious and excited about what science tells us about the Creator. Theists care about science, but naturalists have to sort of keep experimental science at arm's length – away from the presuppositions and assumptions that allow them to have autonomy to live life without respect, accountability and gratitude. Naturalists take refuge in the relief provided by speculative science and science fiction. They like to listen to their leaders speculate about speculative theories, and willingly buy up books by snarky speculators who think that nothing is really something (Krauss), or who think that the cosmic fine-tuning is not real (Stenger), or who think that silicon-based life is a viable scenario (Rosenberg), etc. But theists prefer actual science. Truth matters to us, and we willingly adjust our behavior to fit the scientific facts.

UPDATE: Rebuttal to me here at The Secular Outpost.

Should we “automatically believe rape claims” even if they are proven false?

December 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There was a story about an alleged gang rape published in the Rolling Stone, which is an ultra-left wing magazine, which came under scrutiny from left-wing news sources like The New Republic and The Washington Post because it was not fact-checked and disagreed with known facts.

Yahoo News reports:

> Rolling Stone has clarified its apology over a story that had reported a female student was gang-raped at a University of Virginia fraternity, telling readers the mistakes were the magazine’s fault, not the alleged victim’s.
>
> […]The magazine said that it shouldn’t have agreed to Jackie’s request not to contact the alleged assailants to get their side of the story, out of sensitivity to her. “These mistakes are on Rolling Stone, not on Jackie,” wrote the magazine’s managing editor, Will Dana. “We apologize to anyone who was affected by the story and we will continue to investigate the events of that evening.” The decision not to contact the alleged rapists prompted criticism from other news organizations.
>
> […]The allegations rocked the campus and elevated the issue of sexual assault, leading to protests, a suspension of fraternity activities and an emergency Board of Visitors meeting.
>
> Dana’s updated message added some details calling into question the magazine’s original story. He noted that Phi Kappa Psi has denied the assault, and said it didn’t host an event on the night Jackie alleged she was raped. And Dana said that Jackie is now unsure that the man who allegedly lured her into a room to be gang-raped by seven men, identified as “Drew,” was a member of Phi Kappa Psi.
>
> “According to the Washington Post, ‘Drew’ actually belongs to a different fraternity and when contacted by the paper, he denied knowing Jackie,” Dana wrote in the new note. “Jackie told Rolling Stone that after she was assaulted, she ran into ‘Drew’ at a UVA pool where they both worked as lifeguards. In its statement, the Phi Psi says none of its members worked at the pool in the fall of 2012.” Dana also cited the Post’s account of several of Jackie’s friends doubting her “narrative,” although Jackie told the Post she stood by the account she gave to Rolling Stone.

False rape charges actually occur quite frequently – remember the Duke University rape hoax or the Lehigh University rape hoax or the Hofstra University rape hoax? The left-wing media loves to cover them because it makes men look bad, and makes women think

that they need to vote for bigger government in order to protect them from dangerous men.

But what's been fascinating is the reaction of feminists on the left to the Rolling Stone's apology. Do they care about fact-checking rape charges, or do they think that all rape charges are "automatically" true?

Here's a story from the Washington Post with the title "No matter what Jackie said, we should automatically believe rape claims". (archived here, H/T Mackenzie)

Tweet by the author captured: (H/T The Right Scoop)

Zerlina Maxwell "automatically believe rape claims"

She later changed the title of the article, but the URL still contains the word "automatically". Automatically – believe the charge before checking the facts.

She writes:

> Many people (not least UVA administrators) will be tempted to see this as a reminder that officials, reporters, and the general public should hear both sides of the story and collect all the evidence before coming to a conclusion in rape cases. This is what we mean in America when we say someone is "innocent until proven guilty." After all, look what happened to the Duke lacrosse players.
>
> In important ways, this is wrong. We should believe, as a matter of default, what an accuser says. Ultimately, the costs of wrongly disbelieving a survivor far outweigh the costs of calling someone a rapist. Even if Jackie fabricated her account, UVA should have taken her word for it during the period while they endeavored to prove or disprove the accusation.

The author's bio:

> Zerlina Maxwell is a political analyst, speaker, lawyer, and writer. She typically writes about national politics and cultural issues including domestic violence, sexual assault, and gender inequality.

This is how people on the left form their beliefs in college. They listen to what professors tell them, and insult anyone who questions what they believe by calling them names like "racist", "sexist", "homophobe" or "Islamophobe". This is a college education – at least in non-STEM fields. People pay money to be indoctrinated like this. Lots of money.

Well, maybe this is just a lone outlier, though. One bad feminist who doesn't care about truth.

Nope! Here's famous feminist Jessica Valenti, tweeting this:

Jessica Valenti: fake but accurate
Here's another from Julia Horowitz, reported by Newsbusters: (links removed)

> In a *Politico* magazine article on the UVA rape accusation debacle, in which the accuser's allegations have unraveled, Julia Horowitz, an assistant managing editor at the college paper The Daily Cavalier, claimed **"to let fact checking define the narrative would be a huge mistake."**
>
> [I]t is becoming increasingly clear that the story that blew the lid off campus sexual assault has some major, major holes. Ultimately, though, from where I sit in Charlottesville, to let fact checking define the narrative would be a huge mistake….
>
> It is no accident that the article came out, and it became apparent almost immediately that there were very tangible things we needed to discuss.
>
> Yes, the story was sensational. But even the most sensational story, it seems, can contain frightening elements of truth.
>
> Of course! Facts can be so, well, inconvenient. Viva the "narrative." We're with the Alice in Wonderland Queen: "sentence first — verdict afterwards."

And another one named Melissa McEwan tweeted this:

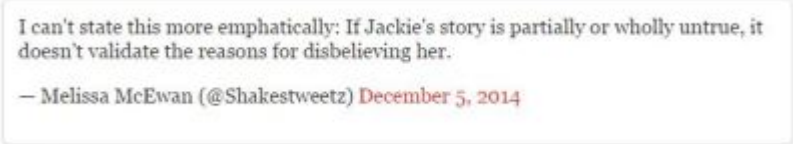

Something false can be true if a feminist says it's true.
and this:

If you insist on fact-based inquiries, you are a rapist.
…before deleting her Twitter account once her craziness was discovered.

Mainstream media

Meanwhile in the mainstream media, the Rolling Stone apology was not news, even though the unretracted story was news:

> When the now-retracted article by the *Rolling Stone* magazine was published on November 19 about a brutal gang rape of a first-year student at the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity house at the University of Virginia (UVA), the major broadcast networks rushed to the story and devoted multiple segments to both the article and reaction on the school's campus.
>
> […]The "big three" of ABC, CBS and NBC offered coverage on their evening newscasts over the course of November 23 and 24, with ABC's *World News Tonight* and *NBC Nightly News* covering it on the 23rd. The following night, an additional report was filed by ABC and NBC each to go along with the first from the *CBS Evening News with Scott Pelley*. On those two evenings alone, the total network coverage was 11 minutes and 14 seconds.
>
> While the three programs combined for just under 8 minutes of thorough coverage on Friday night, that does little to excuse their inability to investigate the story independently or even check the facts of the *Rolling Stone* piece on their own.
>
> […]On *NBC Nightly News*, anchor Brian Williams was the sole anchor to admit that his program had filed stories based off of the very article that he and NBC's Kristen Welker would now report had major **"discrepancies."**
>
> Still, the networks had pitfalls in their coverage of the retraction. As suggested two sentences prior, ABC and CBS failed to join with NBC in not admitting to having previously blindly covered this subject.
>
> Also, CBS and NBC fell short in only interviewing students who, respectively, suggested pieces like this are why victims hesitate coming forward and dismissed the fact that the story is now in severe doubt because the issue of sexual assault is **"still a problem"** on college campuses **"even if it's not real."**

Now, I thought that people who go to journalism school did nothing but learn how to discover the truth about a story. I thought that it was like police detective work – interviewing witnesses, checking facts, corroborating testimony, digging through records. How wrong I was. But I think I'll be right about something else – I think a lot of people who read the original story will believe it based on intuitions and emotions, even now after significant portions of the story conflict with known facts. They'll believe it because that's what they've been brainwashed in non-STEM programs to believe. They've become incapable of critical thinking, incapable of updating their views according to evidence and incapable of respectful dialog with those who disagree with them.

Related posts

- Woman who made false rape accusation gets zero jail time

- UK woman makes EIGHT false rape accusations and gets no jail time
- New research shows that drug-facilitated sexual assault is a myth
- Lehigh University student could stand trial for false rape accusation
- No charges planned for accuser in Hofstra rape hoax

Survey of U.S. military personnel shows steep drop in morale from 2009 to 2014

December 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

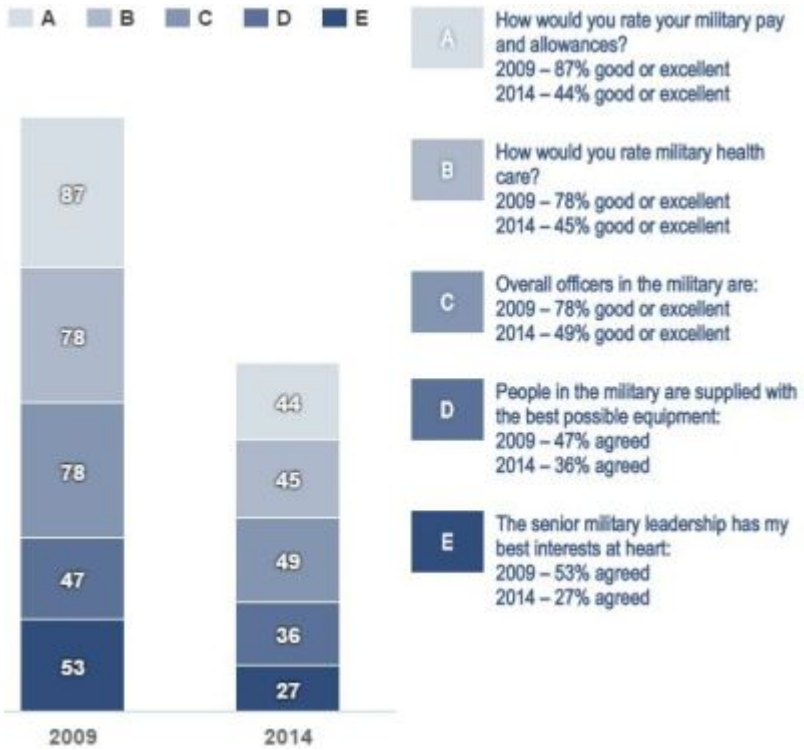

Military morale from 2009-2014 (Source: Military Times)

Story from the Military Times.

Excerpt:

> According to the Military Times survey, active-duty troops reported a stunning drop in how they rated their overall quality of life: Just 56 percent call it good or excellent, down from 91 percent in 2009. The survey, conducted in July and August, found that 73 percent of troops would recommend a military career to others, down from 85 percent in 2009. And troops reported a significant decline in their desire to re-enlist, with 63 percent citing an intention to do so, compared with 72 percent a few years ago.
>
> […]Survey data show that service members are also feeling pain in their own wallets. Congress this year capped the military pay raise at 1 percent, rather than the 1.8 percent that would have kept pace with average annual growth in private-sector wages. It was the first military pay raise since 1999 that did not at least keep pace with private-sector wages, and it was also the lowest annual military pay raise in 40 years.
>
> To save money, the Pentagon had sought to roll back the tax-free housing benefit provided to troops by, in effect, making troops pay 5 percent of their housing with out-of-pocket cash. The new deal on Capitol Hill will result in next year's housing allowance covering 99 percent of estimated costs and troops themselves

> covering the 1 percent shortfall. Service members are unlikely to see an outright reduction in their housing allowance unless they change duty stations, but rates for troops moving into new areas will be set slightly lower when compared to projected housing costs.
>
> Several services also have cut pay for special duty assignments — such as recruiters, divers, drill sergeants and others — while promotions in some fields slow as competition for jobs during a drawdown heats up. And of course, those troops who have frequently collected hazardous duty and deployment pay over the last decade may now have fewer opportunities to do so.
>
> In 2009, 87 percent of active-duty troops who participated in Military Times' survey rated their pay and allowances "good" or "excellent." This year, the figure was just 44 percent. When asked how quality of life might change over the next several years, 70 percent of respondents predicted it would decline further.
>
> A Navy fire controlman chief with 10 deployments said budget fears are contributing to a feeling of distrust and abandonment. "If sailors are worried about not getting paid, how am I supposed to do my job?" he said. "I'm not an effective warfighter if I don't have the backing of my government at home."
>
> A pervasive sense of pessimism about the post-9/11 wars may also contribute to the overall feeling of dissatisfaction among troops and a feeling of detachment from the decision-makers who sent them to those fights. Of those surveyed, 52 percent said they had become more pessimistic about the war in Afghanistan in recent years. Nearly 60 percent felt the war in Iraq was somewhat unsuccessful or not at all successful.
>
> […]Troops today are pocketing far smaller annual pay raises. The 2014 bump of just 1 percent was the smallest in the 41-year history of the all-volunteer force. That compares with 3.9 percent in 2009 — and 6.9 percent in 2002. Congress may well vote to authorize just another 1 percent in 2015. In the best-case scenario, that might go to 1.8 percent.
>
> On top of that, the once-vast pool of cash that flowed directly into service members' pockets in the form of combat pays and re-enlistment bonuses has dried up. In 2014, troops received $3.8 billion in special pays and incentive pays, down from $6.1 billion, adjusted for inflation, in 2003, according to VisualDoD, a company that tracks Pentagon spending. For 2015, that budget is expected to fall to $3.5 billion.

Now we were in both Aghanistan and Iraq in 2009, at the beginning of the survey period, and morale was very high. What changed in 2009? Soldiers who are deployed want to win a war – they don't want to be stuck in limbo. They don't want a leader who views winning a war as an excessive use of force.

UPDATE: Defense policy expert Max Boot has an article explaining why he thinks morale is dropping at Commentary magazine.

The connection between our moon, plate tectonics and habitability

December 8, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interview with Peter Ward (atheist) and Donald Brownlee (agnostic) discussing astrobiology in Forbes magazine. They were asked about how important plate tectonics are for a planet to be able to support complex life.

Excerpt:

> **Astrobiologists often cite the sheer numbers of stars and galaxies as evidence that complex life elsewhere must surely have evolved somewhere. But is probability enough?**
>
> Without a moon, we don't have any idea of how commonly a planet could have the long-term stability needed for complex life. Until we "get" that, going to the sheer numbers argument is useless. Without that moon-forming collision, we wouldn't have plate tectonics. Without plate tectonics, we might have microbes but we'd never get to animals.
>
> **What about the rarity of earth's crustal dichotomy of oceans and continents?**
>
> If you can't make granite, you're not going to have continents. But granite formation is a consequence of our moon-forming collision. That scrambled the entire density of our crust. Mars doesn't have granite; all it's got is this volcanic basalt. To build granite you need a planetary subduction [or plate tectonic] process.
>
> **In triggering complex life, how important were plate tectonics' role in the continual recycling of earth's atmosphere?**
>
> It's this recycling that allows for a very rich planetary atmosphere with an extended life. Photosynthesis gets you oxygen, but how do you get enough photosynthesis to get oxygen at 10 to 20 percent? You've got to have a shoreline next to a rich sea with rocks eroding into it in order to provide the nitrogen and phosphates for [plant] photosynthesis.

This article from Astrobiology explains more about the importance of plate tectonics.

Excerpt:

> Plate tectonics is the process of continents on the Earth drifting and colliding, rock grinding and scraping, mountain ranges being formed, and earthquakes tearing land apart. It makes our world dynamic and ever-changing. But should it factor into our search for life elsewhere in the universe?
>
> Tilman Spohn believes so. As director of the German Space Research Centre Institute of Planetary Research, and chairman of ESA's scientific advisory

> committee, he studies worlds beyond our Earth. When looking into the relationship between habitability and plate tectonics, some fascinating possibilities emerged.
>
> It is thought that the best places to search for life in the Universe are on planets situated in “habitable zones” around other stars. These are orbital paths where the temperature is suitable for liquid water; not so close to the star that it boils away, and not so far that it freezes. Spohn believes that this view may be outdated. He elaborates, “you could have habitats outside those, for instance in the oceans beneath ice covers on the Galilean satellites, like Europa. But not every icy satellite would be habitable. Take Ganymede, where the ocean is trapped between two layers of ice. You are missing a fresh supply of nutrition and energy.”
>
> So planets and moons that lie beyond habitable zones could host life, so long as the habitat, such as an ocean, is not isolated. It needs access to the key ingredients of life, including hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorous and sulphur. These elements support the basic chemistry of life as we know it, and the material, Spohn argues, must be regularly replenished. Nature’s method of achieving this on the Earth appears to be plate tectonics.
>
> Spohn found that the further he delved into the issue, the more important plate tectonics seemed to be for life. For example, it is believed that life developed by moving from the ocean to the kind of strong and stable rock formations that are the result of tectonic action. Plate tectonics is also involved in the generation of a magnetic field by convection of Earth’s partially molten core. This magnetic field protects life on Earth by deflecting the solar wind. Not only would an unimpeded solar wind erode our planet’s atmosphere, but it also carries highly energetic particles that could damage DNA.
>
> Another factor is the recycling of carbon, which is needed to stabilize the temperature here on Earth. Spohn explains, “plate tectonics is known to recycle carbon that is washed out of the atmosphere and digested by bacteria in the soil into the interior of the planet from where it can be outcast through volcanic activity. Now, if you have a planet without plate tectonics, you may have parts of this cycle, but it is broken because you do not have the recycling link.”
>
> It has also been speculated that the lack of tectonic action on Venus contributed to its runaway greenhouse effect, which resulted in the immense temperatures it has today.

Most planets don’t have a moon as massive as ours is, and the collision that formed the moon is very fine-tuned for life. This is just one of the many factors that needs to be present in order to have a planet that supports complex, carbon-based life.

Democrat leak of counter-terrorism secrets endangers Americans and alienates our allies

December 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First off, let's get the facts on the report that the Democrats want to release to the public, and to our enemies, today.

This article from the left-leaning McClatchy DC has most of the facts.

It says:

> U.S. forces and diplomatic missions overseas braced on Monday for the release of the public version of a long-awaited Senate Intelligence Committee report into the CIA's use of torture after a U.S. intelligence community warning of a "heightened potential" for a "violent response," U.S. officials said.
>
> The report's roughly 500-page executive summary, which the White House said would be unveiled on Tuesday, excoriates the CIA, concluding that it didn't gain significant intelligence or the cooperation of detainees by using the harsh interrogation methods, had wrongly subjected some people to the procedures and misled the White House and Congress about the results.
>
> **The Democrat-led committee**'s conclusions, which were obtained in April by McClatchy, are being fiercely disputed by current and former CIA officials, former President George W. Bush and senior officials of his administration, and some lawmakers, mostly Republicans. They contend that the program produced valuable information that disrupted terror plots and led to the capture of key al Qaida operatives.
>
> […]The committee voted in December 2012 to approve a final draft of a 6,300-page classified version of the report and an executive summary, findings and conclusions for release to the public. **But the release was delayed by an uproar over CIA monitoring of the committee staff's computers and a battle over administration demands to black out information that it contended could reveal the identities of undercover CIA officers and anger foreign governments.**

So this is the issue – will CIA personnel be compromised? Will CIA techniques be compromised? Will America's allies in national security be compromised? Will Americans die because our enemies are able to use this information to their advantage?

Let's find out some more about the report:

> Minority Republicans on the Senate Intelligence Committee and the CIA were expected to release separate rebuttals rejecting the findings shortly after the report is made public.
>
> […]The investigation has been marred by an unprecedented breakdown in

> relations between the committee and the CIA over the agency's monitoring of computers used by the Democratic staff to review the more than 6 million pages of emails, cables and other top-secret documents on which the report is based.
>
> The CIA accused the Democratic staffers of removing without authorization highly classified documents from a top-secret agency reading room in Northern Virginia. The Justice Department declined to open criminal investigations into either matter, and – according to the Huffington Post – the Senate Sergeant at Arms Office, the chamber's law enforcement agency, dropped an investigation looking into the alleged classified document removal allegation.

Let me be clear about this. Enhanced interrogation techniques were used on the mastermind of the 9/11 attack in order to prevent a similar 9/11-style attack on Los Angeles.

These are the facts:

> The Central Intelligence Agency told CNSNews.com today that it stands by the assertion made in a May 30, 2005 Justice Department memo that the use of "enhanced techniques" of interrogation on al Qaeda leader Khalid Sheik Mohammed (KSM) — including the use of waterboarding — caused KSM to reveal information that allowed the U.S. government to thwart a planned attack on Los Angeles.
>
> Before he was waterboarded, when KSM was asked about planned attacks on the United States, he ominously told his CIA interrogators, "Soon, you will know."
>
> According to the previously classified May 30, 2005 Justice Department memo that was released by President Barack Obama last week, the thwarted attack — which KSM called the "Second Wave"– planned " 'to use East Asian operatives to crash a hijacked airliner into' a building in Los Angeles."
>
> KSM was the mastermind of the first "hijacked-airliner" attacks on the United States, which struck the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Northern Virginia on Sept. 11, 2001.
>
> **After KSM was captured by the United States, he was not initially cooperative with CIA interrogators. Nor was another top al Qaeda leader named Zubaydah. KSM, Zubaydah, and a third terrorist named Nashiri were the only three persons ever subjected to waterboarding by the CIA. (Additional terrorist detainees were subjected to other "enhanced techniques" that included slapping, sleep deprivation, dietary limitations, and temporary confinement to small spaces — but not to water-boarding.)**

Everyone who opposes enhanced interrogation techniques – be it the ACLU, libertarians, leftists, etc. – were *all in favor of thousands of American civilians dying in another 9/11-style attack.* Obama was in favor of that attack. Holder was in favor of that attack. Feinstein was in favor of that attack. That's what it means for Democrats to coddle

terrorists in order to sound moral by embracing evil as if it were good – *it means Americans die*. Democrats would rather that Americans die than that we poured water on men who planned terrorist attacks.

Here is an editorial that appeared in the leftist Washington Post by Jose Rodriguez, a 31-year veteran of the CIA who knows something about how enhanced interrogation techniques were used.

He writes about the Democrat's report:

> The report's leaked conclusion,which has been reported on widely, that the interrogation program brought no intelligence value is an egregious falsehood; it's a dishonest attempt to rewrite history. I'm bemused that the Senate could devote so many resources to studying the interrogation program and yet never once speak to any of the key people involved in it, including the guy who ran it (that would be me).
>
> According to news accounts of the report, Feinstein and her supporters will say that the CIA violated American principles and hid the ugly truth from Congress, the White House and the public. When the report comes out, I expect that few of the critics who will echo Feinstein's charges will have read it — and far fewer will read or understand the minority response and the CIA's rebuttal.
>
> The interrogation program was authorized by the highest levels of the U.S. government, judged legal by the Justice Department and proved effective by any reasonable standard. The leaders of the Senate and House Intelligence Committees and of both parties in Congress were briefed on the program more than 40 times between 2002 and 2009. But Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) tried to deny that she was told in 2002 that detainees had been waterboarded. That is simply not true. I was among those who briefed her.
>
> There's great hypocrisy in politicians' criticism of the CIA's interrogation program. In the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, lawmakers urged us to do everything possible to prevent another attack on our soil. Members of Congress and the administration were nearly unanimous in their desire that the CIA do all that it could to debilitate and destroy al-Qaeda. The CIA got the necessary approvals to do so and kept Congress briefed throughout. But as our successes grew, some lawmakers' recollections shrank in regard to the support they once offered.
>
> […]On May 26, 2002, Feinstein was quoted in the New York Times saying that the attacks of 9/11 were a real awakening and that it would no longer be "business as usual." The attacks, she said, let us know "that the threat is profound" and "that we have to do some things that historically we have not wanted to do to protect ourselves."
>
> […]**If Feinstein, Rockefeller and other politicians were saying such things in print and on national TV, imagine what they were saying to us in private. We did what we were asked to do, we did what we were assured was legal, and we know our actions were effective. Our reward,**

> **a decade later, is to hear some of these same politicians expressing outrage for what was done and, even worse, mischaracterizing the actions taken and understating the successes achieved.**
>
> **I'm confident that my former CIA colleagues who are still on the job will do what is necessary to protect the nation from new Islamic State and continuing al-Qaeda threats. But in the back of their minds will be the nagging thought that, as they carry out legal, authorized and necessary actions, they may be only a few years away from being criticized and second-guessed by the people who today are urging them onward to the "gates of hell."**

His previous Washington Post editorial is here.

So, how about you? Would you like to work for the CIA right now? Would you like to protect America from attacks like the Los Angeles attack, and then have your government come after you as a scapegoat, because it might help them to win an election? That's what's happening to current employees of the CIA who did their best to protect us – more than the corrupt community organizer and his gangster attorney general ever did.

I don't know if I need to keep saying this, but waterboarding is a standard part of SERE training. We do it to all our pilots to train them in the event that they are captured.

San Jose State University kicks Ratio Christi club off its campus

December 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Ratio Christi blog.

Here's the story:

> On Wednesday, October 8, 2014, the Ratio Christi chapter at San Jose State University (SJSU) received a letter from the university stating that the club had been "de-recognized." In the letter, school officials explained their actions to be in compliance with a new California State University Executive Order regarding how an organization selects its officers.
>
> Ratio Christi, like many other campus Christian organizations, requires that chapter officers adhere to the Christian faith and biblical beliefs. This means that non-Christians, or Christians who do not feel it is necessary to follow New Testament principles as a guide for their daily lives, are not eligible for officer positions in the group. The State of California now deems this as "discriminatory," and punishable by de-recognition.
>
> "Colleges and universities should be encouraging student leadership, not stifling it," said Ratio Christi President Rick Schenker. "All college students, including religious students, should have the right to form groups around shared beliefs and choose leaders who reflect those beliefs without being shut down and kicked off campus. Imagine the College Democrats being required to have a Republican student leader, or the local chapter of PETA being required to have a meat-eating leader. The results of the Cal State policy are simply ridiculous."
>
> Disturbingly, this has already happened to all twenty-three of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship's chapters on California campuses in September and at Vanderbilt University in 2012.
>
> In their letter to the SJSU Ratio Christi chapter, school officials explained the consequences of being "de-recognized," a list that ranged from not being eligible for student funding and financial services to not being allowed to participate in student organization fairs, ceremonies, or training.

This is the Ratio Christi chapter that is run by Jane Pantig, who was mentioned here in a previous blog post.

The troubling thing about these rules is that it is also a violation of fundamental human rights, as this USA Today editorial explains:

> In the massive California State University system, as at some other universities, new anti-discrimination rules for student groups mean it can no longer be required that the president of the Christian student fellowship is Christian, or that

> the head of the Muslim association is Muslim, or that the officers of any group buy into the interests and commitments of that group.
>
> Student clubs that refuse to accept the new rules will find themselves on the sidelineswhen it comes to meeting space, recruitment opportunities and other valuable perks that go with being an officially recognized group.
>
> Such is the fate that has befallen InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, a national campus ministry that finds itself "derecognized" in the 450,000-student Cal State system for insisting that student leaders of its campus chapters affirm the basic tenets of evangelical belief.
>
> […]InterVarsity estimates the cost of operations could rise by many thousands of dollars annually on some of the Cal State campuses. This is part of the reason why InterVarsity is continuing to pray and plead for relief from the new policy.
>
> University officials and state lawmakers should reconsider, and not merely for the sake of InterVarsity. In addition to the freedom from discrimination, there are other relevant freedoms to factor: freedom of religion, freedom of association and our freedom to exercise common sense.

Loss of club status typically means 1) having to pay to reserve rooms, which is thousands of dollars per year, 2) losing access to student fairs, which means less recruitment, and 3) no official standing when speaking to faculty, students or administrators of the university.

I guess I would advise Christians who are not involved in politics to get more informed and involved. California is a Democrat-run state from top to bottom. It sounds nice to pious ears to say that we should be focused on the gospel and praise hymns, but if you ignore politics, politics will come after you. And that's why every Christian should have a broad, comprehensive worldview that takes into account the Bible and integrates it with areas outside the Bible, like economics. The alternative is to feel pious and yet vote for a political party that makes the practice of Christianity illegal, and believe me, I know many people who call themselves Christians who do exactly that. And they are proud of it. I once had a hygienist working on my teeth who claimed to be a Christian and yet she was constantly bashing Republicans. She had the discipline to learn how to clean my teeth, but not to develop a comprehensive Christian worldview.

The good news I have about this story is that these de-recognition attacks can be defeated, if you get a lawyer from a good organization like the Alliance Defending Freedom.

Look at this story from September 2014:

> At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill a Christian fraternity, Alpha Iota Omega (AIO), was stripped of its recognition after UNC administrator Jonathan Curtis declared that the fraternity was required to add an unconstitutional "nondiscrimination" clause to its student group constitution. AIO objected to the "nondiscrimination" clause because it would have forbidden the group from considering religion when determining "membership and participation" in the

> group. FIRE wrote to the university on AIO's behalf outlining the group's rights to freedom of association and religious liberty but the university was unmoved. FIRE teamed up with the Alliance Defense Fund and filed suit, and eventually AIO was granted the right not to enact the nondiscrimination clause.

But again, we have to have Christians getting serious about getting married and raising children who will go on to get the law degrees we need to fight these battles. I think a lot of Christians think that marriage is more like ziplining, surfing or skydiving than work, though. They want it to be free and easy and emotion-driven. But there's a cost to this approach. We don't have the influence in society to defend ourselves when the secular leftists come after us. We are paying them to do this to us, through taxes.

Is silicon-based life a possible alternative for carbon-based life?

December 9, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a recent debate, atheist philosopher Alex Rosenberg responded to the cosmic fine-tuning argument presented by William Lane Craig by asserting that complex life could be other than it is. He specifically mentioned silicon-based life.

Let's see what scientists think of his speculation, using this article from Scientific American.

Excerpt:

> Group IV of the Periodic Table of the Elements contains carbon (C), silicon (Si) and several heavy metals. Carbon, of course, is the building block of life as we know it. So is it possible that a planet exists in some other solar system where silicon substitutes for carbon? Several science fiction stories feature silicon-based life-forms–sentient crystals, gruesome golden grains of sand and even a creature whose spoor or scat was bricks of silica left behind. The novellas are good reading, but there are a few problems with the chemistry.
>
> Indeed, carbon and silicon share many characteristics. Each has a so-called valence of four–meaning that individual atoms make four bonds with other elements in forming chemical compounds. Each element bonds to oxygen. Each forms long chains, called polymers, in which it alternates with oxygen. In the simplest case, carbon yields a polymer called poly-acetal, a plastic used in synthetic fibers and equipment. Silicon yields polymeric silicones, which we use to waterproof cloth or lubricate metal and plastic parts.
>
> But when carbon oxidizes–or unites with oxygen say, during burning–it becomes the gas carbon dioxide; silicon oxidizes to the solid silicon dioxide, called silica. The fact that silicon oxidizes to a solid is one basic reason as to why it cannot support life. Silica, **or sand** is a solid because silicon likes oxygen all too well, and the silicon dioxide forms a lattice in which one silicon atom is surrounded by four oxygen atoms. Silicate compounds that have SiO_4^{-4} units also exist in such minerals as feldspars, micas, zeolites or talcs. And these solid systems pose disposal problems for a living system.

So, first of all, it makes SAND. Second of all, it is so attracted to oxygen that it can't easily join to make any other polymers that could be used in the chemistry of the minimal functions of a living system.

More:

> Also consider that a life-form needs some way to collect, store and utilize energy. The energy must come from the environment. Once absorbed or ingested, the

> energy must be released exactly where and when it is needed. Otherwise, all of the energy might liberate its heat at once, incinerating the life-form. In a carbon-based world, the basic storage element is a carbohydrate having the formula $C_x(HOH)_y$. This carbohydrate oxidizes to water and carbon dioxide, which are then exchanged with the air; the carbons are connected by single bonds into a chain, a process called catenation. A carbon-based life-form "burns" this fuel in controlled steps using speed regulators called enzymes.
>
> These large, complicated molecules do their job with great precision only because they have a property called "handedness." When any one enzyme "mates" with compounds it is helping to react, the two molecular shapes fit together like a lock and key, or a shake of hands. In fact, many carbon-based molecules take advantage of right and left-hand forms. For instance, nature chose the same stable six-carbon carbohydrate to store energy both in our livers (in the form of the polymer called glycogen) and in trees (in the form of the polymer cellulose).
>
> Glycogen and cellulose differ mainly in the handedness of a single carbon atom, which forms when the carbohydrate polymerizes, or forms a chain. Cellulose has the most stable form of the two possibilities; glycogen is the next most stable. Because humans don't have enzymes to break cellulose down into its basic carbohydrate, we cannot utilize it as food. But many lower life-forms, such as bacteria, can.
>
> In short, handedness is the characteristic that provides a variety of biomolecules with their ability to recognize and regulate sundry biological processes. And silicon doesn't form many compounds having handedness. Thus, it would be difficult for a silicon-based life-form to achieve all of the wonderful regulating and recognition functions that carbon-based enzymes perform for us.

The troubling thing I find about atheists is that they seem to be under the impression that an alternative speculative explanation is a refutation of an argument that is based in evidence.

So it goes like this:

- origin of the universe? I can speculate about a naturalistic alternative cosmology which is falsified by observations
- cosmic fine-tuning? I can speculate about an untestable multiverse
- origin of life? I can speculate about unobservable aliens who seeded the Earth with life
- Cambrian explosion? I can speculate about intermediary fossils that have not yet been discovered
- habitability? I can speculate that habitable planets exist just outside the boundary of the observable universe
- resurrection of Jesus? I can speculate that Jesus had an unknown, identical twin

> brother who showed up when he died and took his place

I think that if we are going to make a worldview, we should ground it in the evidence we have today. We should not have faith in speculative theories that we heard about on *Star Trek*. Seriously.

New study: minimum wage hikes hurt low-skill workers during last recession

December 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The American Enterprise Institute reports. (H/T Jay Richards tweet)

Higher unemployment:

> A new NBER working paper from Jeffrey Clemens and Michael Wither of the University of California, San Diego, suggests that the 30% increase in the average effective minimum wage over the late 2000s "reduced the national employment-to-population ratio — the share of adults with any kind of job — by 0.7 percentage point" between December 2006 and December 2012.
>
> That works out to 14% of the total working-age decline during that period. Clemens and Wither basically looked at what happened to workers in states that were affected by federal minimum wage hikes versus what happened in states that weren't. They also adjusted for the differing state-level impact of the Great Recession.

Low-skill workers hurt the most:

> Now what's particularly interesting in what Clemens and Wither found is that the minimum wage hikes made it harder for low-income workers to climb the ladder. From "The Minimum Wage and the Great Recession: Evidence of Effects on the Employment and Income Trajectories of Low-Skilled Workers":
>
> … **we find that binding minimum wage increases had significant, negative effects on the employment and income growth of targeted workers.** Lost income reflects contributions from employment declines, increased probabilities of working without pay (i.e., an "internship" effect), and lost wage growth associated with reductions in experience accumulation….
>
> **We also present evidence of the minimum wage's effects on low-skilled workers' economic mobility.** We find that binding minimum wage increases significantly reduced the likelihood that low-skilled workers rose to what we characterize as lower middle class earnings. This curtailment of transitions into lower middle class earnings began to emerge roughly one year following initial declines in low wage employment. Reductions in upward mobility thus appear to follow reductions in access to opportunities for accumulating work experience.
>
> But this paper is one of several recently that have outlined the negative employment effect of minimum wage hikes. In "More on Recent Evidence on the Effects of Minimum Wages in the United States," researchers David Neumark, J.M. Ian Salas, William Wascher conclude "the best evidence still points to job loss from minimum wages for very low-skilled workers – in particular, for

> teens.”
>
> And the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office find that a $10.10 federal minimum wage option would reduce total employment by about 500,000 workers, or 0.3 percent” in 2016.

So that’s 3 studies from 3 different sources, that all agree that raising the minimum wage will definitely cost jobs. The real minimum wage is, of course, zero. That’s what you get paid when your employer can’t afford to pay you what government tells them to pay you.

A response to Judith Jarvis Thompson's violinist argument for abortion rights

December 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Amy posted this on the Stand to Reason blog, and it got a ton of comments.

Excerpt:

> The "Violinist" argument for keeping abortion legal is an illustration created by Judith Jarvis Thompson for the purpose of clarifying our moral intuitions about abortion by considering a parallel situation. The Violinist story goes like this (see the full, original story here): A woman wakes up to find she's been attached without her consent to a famous violinist who needs the help of her kidneys for the next nine months in order to live. If the woman detaches herself from him, he will die.
>
> According to Thompson, since it's clear that the woman ought not be forced by law to remain attached to this man (though he is a person with rights), in the same way, the law ought not force a woman to remain attached to an unborn child who is similarly using her body to live (though he is a person with rights).
>
> In response to this bodily rights argument, Stephen Wagner, Josh Brahm, and Timothy Brahm (along with others—see acknowledgments) have developed a new illustration that more closely parallels the situation of a pregnant woman (including those who are pregnant by rape), which they call "The Cabin in the Blizzard." From Stephen Wagner's paper, "De Facto Guardian and Abortion":
>
> Imagine that a woman named Mary wakes up in a strange cabin. Having gone to sleep in her suburban home the night before, she starts to scream frantically. She goes to the window and sees snow piled high. It appears she is snowed in. On the desk by the window, she finds a note that says,
>
> "You will be here for six weeks.
> You are safe, and your child is, too.
> There is plenty of food and water."
>
> Since she just gave birth a week ago, she instinctively begins tearing through each room of the cabin looking for her infant son. She finds an infant in a second room, but it is not her infant. It is a girl who appears to be about one week old, just like her son. Mary begins to scream.
>
> Pulling herself together, she goes to the kitchen area of the cabin and finds a huge store of food and a ready source of water. The baby begins to cry, and she rightly assesses that the baby is hungry. Mary sees a three-month supply of formula on the counter in the kitchen area.
>
> Now imagine that the police show up at the cabin six weeks later, and Mary emerges from the cabin. After determining she is in good health, albeit a good bit

> frazzled, one policeman says, “We’ve been investigating this situation for some time. The Behavioral Psychologists from the nearby University of Lake Wobegon are responsible. We’ll bring them to justice. We’re so glad you’re okay. Is there anyone else in the cabin?”
>
> Mary said quietly, “There was.”
>
> “There was?” The police hurry past her to the cabin. They search the cabin and find the infant formula unopened on the counter. They find the infant dead on a bed. The coroner confirms that the infant died from starvation.
>
> We can see that Mary was wrong for not feeding the baby in this situation, regardless of the fact that she did not consent to these demands being placed on her. As Wagner points out, our moral intuition tells us her obligation to feed the child exists even if her only option is to use her own body to breastfeed that child, causing her great discomfort.

Another problem with the violinist argument is that it neglects the fact that the baby is there *as a result of the woman’s own decision to have sex without being ready for a baby.* In the violinist example, the woman is a helpless victim of some group of music lovers. But in a real pregnancy, the woman had to have made a decision that resulted in the baby being born, (except in the case of rape).

Triablogue explains it thus:

> Thompson seems to make a distinction between consent to pregnancy and consent to sex (as Beckwith and others point out). But it seems that pregnancy is the designed result of sex, even though it may not be the desired result. It would seem that our sex organs have the purpose of being ordered towards procreation. Applying this to the violinist then: What if I engaged in an activity, say, spelunking, that regularly created rare kidney diseases in violinists? Say that every time I dropped 50 ft into the cave, a violinist was almost sure to develop the disease that only I had the blood type to correct or fix. If I did so, should I not be hooked up to him, voluntarily or not? Say that there was protection, some kind of spelunking helmet. Say that it was not 100% effective. If my helmet ripped, should I be attached to the violinist? Or say I tried to “pull up” before I hit 50 ft. Unfortunately, it felt so good to decend that I pulled up a little too late and my right foot passed the 50 ft mark. Should I be attached to the violinist? I don’t see why not. Indeed, say that the statistical evidence was that the first two people that ever spelunked together would eventually cause 6 billion violinists to come down with rare kidney diseases, I dare say the Society of Music Lovers, and almost everyone else for that matter, would call for *abstaining from spelunking* unless you agreed to take care of the violinists until they got better. This seems fatal to Thompson’s argument.

It’s very helpful illustration for dealing with pro-abortion people who admit that unborn children are human persons, but who still think that women should have a right to

terminate their pregnancy.

Astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on intelligent design and habitability

December 10, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The 5 video clips that make up the full lecture.

The playlist for all 5 clips is here.

About the speaker

> Guillermo Gonzalez is an Associate Professor of Physics at Grove City College. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington and has received fellowships, grants and awards from such institutions as NASA, the University of Washington, the Templeton Foundation, Sigma Xi (scientific research society) and the National Science Foundation.

Learn more about the speaker here.

The lecture

Here's part 1 of 5:

And the rest are here:

- Part 2 of 5
- Part 3 of 5
- Part 4 of 5
- Part 5 of 5

Topics:

- What is the Copernican Principle?
- Is the Earth's suitability for hosting life rare in the universe?
- Does the Earth have to be the center of the universe to be special?
- How similar to the Earth does a planet have to be to support life?
- What is the definition of life?
- What are the three minimal requirements for life of any kind?
- Requirement 1: A molecule that can store information (carbon)
- Requirement 2: A medium in which chemicals can interact (liquid water)
- Requirement 3: A diverse set of chemical elements
- What is the best environment for life to exist?
- Our place in the solar system: the circumstellar habitable zone
- Our place in the galaxy: the galactic habitable zones
- Our time in the universe's history: the cosmic habitable age
- Other habitability requirements (e.g. – metal-rich star, massive moon, etc.)

- The orchestration needed to create a habitable planet
- How different factors depend on one another through time
- How tweaking one factor can adversely affect other factors
- How many possible places are there in the universe where life could emerge?
- Given these probabilistic resources, should we expect that there is life elsewhere?
- How to calculate probabilities using the “Product Rule”
- Can we infer that there is a Designer just because life is rare? Or do we need more?

The corelation between habitability and measurability.

- Are the habitable places in the universe also the best places to do science?
- Do the factors that make Earth habitable also make it good for doing science?
- Some places and times in the history of the universe are more habitable than others
- Those exact places and times also allow us to make scientific discoveries
- Observing solar eclipses and structure of our star, the Sun
- Observing stars and galaxies
- Observing the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Observing the acceleration of the universe caused by dark matter and energy
- Observing the abundances of light elements like helium of hydrogen
- These observations support the big bang and fine-tuning arguments for God’s existence
- It is exactly like placing observatories on the tops of mountains
- There are observers existing in the best places to observe things
- This is EXACTLY how the universe has been *designed for making scientific discoveries*

This lecture was delivered by Guillermo Gonzalez in 2007 at the University of California at Davis.

Three UVA students who knew “Jackie” challenge Rolling Stone rape story

December 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the leftist Washington Post, of all places.

Excerpt:

> It was 1 a.m. on a Saturday when the call came. A friend, a University of Virginia freshman who earlier said she had a date that evening with a handsome junior from her chemistry class, was in hysterics. Something bad had happened.
>
> Arriving at her side, three students —“Randall,” “Andy” and “Cindy,” as they were identified in an explosive Rolling Stone account — told The Washington Post that they found their friend in tears. Jackie appeared traumatized, saying her date ended horrifically, with the older student parking his car at his fraternity, asking her to come inside and then forcing her to perform oral sex on five men.
>
> In their first interviews about the events of that September 2012 night, the three friends separately told The Post that their recollections of the encounter diverge from how Rolling Stone portrayed the incident in a storyabout Jackie’s alleged gang rape at a U-Va. fraternity. The interviews also provide a richer account of Jackie’s interactions immediately after the alleged attack and suggest that the friends are skeptical of her account.
>
> The scene with her friends was pivotal in the article, as it alleged that the friends were callously apathetic about a beaten, bloodied, injured classmate reporting a brutal gang rape at the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity. The account alleged that the students worried about the effect it might have on their social status and how it might reflect on Jackie during the rest of her collegiate career and that they suggested not reporting it. It set up the article’s theme: That U-Va. has a culture that is indifferent to rape.
>
> “It didn’t happen that way at all,” Andy said.
>
> Instead, the friends remember being shocked. Although they did not notice any blood or visible injuries, they said they immediately urged Jackie to speak to police and insisted that they find her help. Instead, they said, Jackie declined and asked to be taken back to her dorm room. They went with her — two said they spent the night — seeking to comfort Jackie in what appeared to be a moment of extreme turmoil.
>
> […]They said there are mounting inconsistencies with the original narrative in the magazine. The students also expressed suspicions about Jackie’s allegations from that night. They said the name she provided as that of her date did not match anyone at the university, and U-Va. officials confirmed to The Post that no one by that name has attended the school.

> Also, photographs that were texted to one of the friends showing her date that night were actually pictures depicting one of Jackie's high school classmates in Northern Virginia. That man, now a junior at a university in another state, confirmed that the photographs were of him and said he barely knew Jackie and hasn't been to Charlottesville for at least six years.
>
> The friends said they were never contacted or interviewed by the pop culture magazine's reporters or editors. Although vilified in the article as coldly indifferent to Jackie's ordeal, the students said they cared deeply about their friend's well-being and safety.
>
> […]They also said Jackie's description of what happened to her that night differs from what she told Rolling Stone. In addition, information Jackie gave the three friends about one of her attackers, called "Drew" in the magazine's article, differ significantly from details she later told The Post, Rolling Stone and friends from sexual assault awareness groups on campus. The three said Jackie did not specifically identify a fraternity that night.
>
> […]The article's writer, Sabrina Rubin Erdely, did not respond to requests for comment this week.
>
> Rolling Stone also declined to comment, citing an internal review of the story.

The leftist site Slate has an article by well-known radical feminist Hanna Rosin, who analyzes the Washington Post article.

She writes:

> The *Washington Post* has an update on *Rolling Stone*'s UVA story that strongly implies, without outright saying so, that the gang rape at the center of Sabrina Rubin Erdely's article might be fabricated. *Post* reporter T. Rees Shapiro spoke at length with the three friends who met up with Jackie, the student who says she was raped, on the night in question. In the *Rolling Stone* story this scene was crucial. Erdely described Jackie as standing mute in her bloody dress, the Phi Kappa Psi house where the alleged rape happened looming in the background, as her friends callously debated whether they should take her to the hospital and risk ruining their social reputations. This set up the larger theme of a university culture and social scene indifferent even to the most brutalized victims of rape.
>
> Earlier, those friends told the *Post* that Jackie told them she'd been forced to have oral sex—a much different story than what Jackie told *Rolling Stone*. This new *Post* article adds some details that make the entire account seem more suspicious. Jackie had told her friends—referred to by the pseudonyms "Cindy," "Andy," and "Randall" in the original story and in the *Post*'s follow-ups—that she had a date on Sept. 28, 2012, with a handsome junior in her chemistry class. (In the version she told to *Rolling Stone*, that date was with someone she'd met at her lifeguarding job.) But in the *Post* story, the friends imply that this junior might not exist and may have been invented by Jackie to make Randall jealous.

> When the friends first heard about this junior, they were intrigued and asked Jackie for his number. They started exchanging text messages with him, and he described Jackie as a "super smart hot" freshman. He complained, though, that she liked a "nerd 1st yr"— meaning Randall—who is "smart and funny and worth it." Jackie's friends could never find this junior in the UVA database nor on social media. She provided her friends with a picture of him, but the *Post* has since learned that the guy in the picture is a high school classmate of Jackie's who does not go to the University of Virginia and was in another state participating in an athletic tournament on the night of the alleged rape. (More recently, Jackie gave her friends the name of a different guy. The *Post* also contacted him, and he said he'd never met Jackie.)
>
> […]Jackie has now given her friends two different names for the man she was with that night. Neither of them was in fact with her, ever dated her, or even knew her all that well. She appears to have invented a suitor, complete with fake text messages and a fake photo, which suggests a capacity for somewhat elaborate deception. Jackie, though, has not recanted her story. Her attorney would not answer questions for the *Post*'s story on Wednesday and has told reporters to stop contacting Jackie.
>
> Here's the most disturbing journalistic detail to emerge from the *Post*'s reporting: In the *Rolling Stone* story, Erdely says that she contacted Randall, but he declined to be interviewed, "citing his loyalty to his own frat." Randall told the *Post* he was never contacted by Erdely and would have been happy to be interviewed.

A web site called GotNews is claiming to have identified the Jackie from the story, and the Jackie they identified was a student activist in high school. That woman's Pinterest page sported a lot of radical feminist "rape culture" memes. Also, the author of the Rolling Stone piece is a well-known feminist activist and she has in the past confessed to "shopping around" for victims in order to further her feminist agenda. That link takes you to a Youtube video where she explains her feminist agenda in her own words. This is what students learn as gospel in college, though. Our laws and our culture are built around this Sabrina / Rolling Stone view of men.

Jay Richards: eight common myths about wealth, poverty and the free market

December 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you read Jay Richards' book "Money, Greed and God?" Because if you haven't, he's written a series of articles that summarize the main points of the book.

The index post is here.

Here are the posts in the series:

- Part 1: The Eight Most Common Myths about Wealth, Poverty, and Free Enterprise
- Part 2: Can't We Build A Just Society?
- Part 3: The Piety Myth
- Part 4: The Myth of the Zero Sum Game
- Part 5: Is Wealth Created or Transferred?
- Part 6: Is Free Enterprise Based on Greed?
- Part 7: Hasn't Christianity Always Opposed Free Enterprise?
- Part 8: Does Free Enterprise Lead to An Ugly Consumerist Culture?
- Part 9: Will We Use Up All Our Resources?
- Part 10: Are Markets An Example of Providence?

Parts 4 and 5 are my favorites. It's so hard to choose one to excerpt, but I must. I will choose… Part 4.

Here's the problem:

> **Myth #3: The Zero Sum Game Myth – believing that trade requires a winner and a loser.**
>
> One reason people believe this myth is because they misunderstand how economic value is determined. Economic thinkers with views as diverse as Adam Smith and Karl Marx believed economic value was determined by the labor theory of value. This theory stipulates that the cost to produce an object determines its economic value.
>
> According to this theory, if you build a house that costs you $500,000 to build, that house is worth $500,000. But what if no one can or wants to buy the house? Then what is it worth?
>
> Medieval church scholars put forth a very different theory, one derived from human nature: economic value is in the eye of the beholder. The economic value of an object is determined by how much someone is willing to give up to get that object. This is the subjective theory of value.

And here's an example of how to avoid the problem:

> How you determine economic value affects whether you view free enterprise as a

> zero-sum game, or a win-win game in which both participants benefit.
>
> Let's return to the example of the $500,000 house. As the developer of the house, you hire workers to build the house. You then sell it for more than $500,000. According to the labor theory of value, you have taken more than the good is actually worth. You've exploited the buyer and your workers by taking this surplus value. You win, they lose.
>
> Yet this situation looks different according to the subjective theory of value. Here, everybody wins. You market and sell the house for more than it cost to produce, but not more than customers will freely pay. The buyer is not forced to pay a cost he doesn't agree to. You are rewarded for your entrepreneurial effort. Your workers benefit, because you paid them the wages they agreed to when you hired them.
>
> This illustration brings up a couple important points about free enterprise that are often overlooked:
>
> **1. Free exchange is a win-win game**.
>
> In win-win games, some players may end up better off than others, but everyone ends up better off than they were at the beginning. As the developer, you might make more than your workers. Yet the workers determined they would be better off by freely exchanging their labor for wages, than if they didn't have the job at all.
>
> A free market doesn't guarantee that everyone wins in every competition. Rather, it allows many more win-win encounters than any other alternative.
>
> **2. The game is win-win because of rules set-up beforehand.**
>
> A free market is *not* a free-for-all in which everybody can do what they want. Any exchange must be free on both sides. Rule of law, contracts, and property rights are needed to ensure exchanges are conducted rightly. As the developer of the house, you'd be held accountable if you broke your contract and failed to pay workers what you promised.
>
> An exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game.

On this view, what you really need to fear as a consumer is government intervention that restricts your choices in the marketplace.

Economists agree on the benefits of free trade

Who could possibly disagree with free trade? Well, many people on the left do. They favor imposing restrictions on free trade. For example, people on the left favor making those who import goods pay tariffs, which makes it harder to trade with other nations. People on the left want to pass rent control laws to block landlords and tenants from trading more freely. People on the left want to pass minimum wage laws that block employers and workers from trading wages for labor more freely. But economists generally don't agree with any of restrictions on free trade. In fact, *even across the ideological spectrum*,

the majority of economists view free trade as a wealth creating policy, and restrictions on free trade as a wealth destroying policy.

Harvard economist Greg Mankiw explains what most professional economists agree on.

Excerpt:

> Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:
>
> 1. **A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)**
> 2. **Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)**
> 3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
> 4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
> 5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
> 6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
> 7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
> 8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
> 9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
> 10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
> 11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
> 12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
> 13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
> 14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

Now when you are talking to a Democrat, you are talking to someone who disagrees with most or all of those common sense economic policies. For example, Obama's backers in the labor movement inevitably endorse higher import tariffs, which discourage free trade between countries. No economist supports these tariffs on imports, because history has shown (e.g. – Smoot-Hawley Act) that tariffs destroy economic growth and reduce wealth creation. And that's what I mean when I talk about economic illiteracy – I mean ignoring what we know from economics and our past experience with bad policies.

Democrat economic policies don't work because they are making policies that are based

on economic myths. We know that these myths are myths because of economics is a mathematical science, and because we have tried good and bad policies in different times and places. We have calculations and we have experience to know what works and what doesn't work. If you want to help the poor, you have to respect what economists know about how wealth is created. The solution is not to "spread the wealth around", it's to encourage people to create more wealth by inventing things that people freely choose to buy.

William Lane Craig on the unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

December 11, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember that Dr. Craig used a new argument in his debate with Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia.

My notes on the debate record it thus:

> The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
>
> - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
> - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
> - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
> - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see

And now Dr. Craig has expanded on it in the Q&A section of his Reasonable Faith web site.

The question:

> Dear Dr Craig
>
> Firstly can I thank you for all your work. My faith in Christ has been enormously strengthened through studying your work in apologetics in particular and I have grown in confidence in my Christian witness.
>
> My question relates to numbers and mathematics as a whole. On the Defenders podcast you state that as God is the only self-existent, necessary being, numbers and mathematical objects, whilst being useful, don't actually exist as these too would exist necessarily and independently of God. If this is the case, how can it be that mathematics is so easily applied to the natural world? Surely if mathematics only existed in our minds, we would expect to see no correlation between it and how the physical world actually is?
>
> Michael
>
> United Kingdom

Excerpt from the answer:

> As philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng points out, for the non-theistic realist, the fact that physical reality behaves in line with the dictates of acausal mathematical entities existing beyond space and time is "a happy coincidence" (*Mathematics and Reality* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 239). Think

> about it: If, *per impossibile*, all the abstract objects in the mathematical realm were to disappear overnight, there would be no effect on the physical world. This is simply to reiterate that abstract objects are causally inert. The idea that realism somehow accounts for the applicability of mathematics "is actually very counterintuitive," muses Mark Balaguer, a philosopher of mathematics. "The idea here is that in order to believe that the physical world has the nature that empirical science assigns to it, I have to believe that there are causally inert mathematical objects, existing outside of spacetime," an idea which is inherently implausible (*Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 136).
>
> By contrast, the theistic realist can argue that God has fashioned the world on the structure of the mathematical objects. This is essentially what Plato believed. The world has mathematical structure as a result.

This argument was also made by mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley in a lecture he gave on scientific evidence for an intelligent designer. You can read an essay that covers some of the material in that lecture at Leadership University.

Excerpt:

> The physical universe is surprising in the simple mathematical form it assumes. All the basic laws of physics and fundamental relationships can be described on one side of one sheet of paper because they are so few in number and so simple in form (see table 1.1).
>
> […]It has been widely recognized for some time that nature assumes a form that is elegantly described by a relatively small number of simple, mathematical relationships, as previously noted in table 1.1. None of the various proposals presented later in this chapter to explain the complexity of the universe address this issue. Albert Einstein in a letter to a friend expressed his amazement that the universe takes such a form (Einstein 1956), saying:
>
> You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world to the degree that we may speak of such comprehensibility as a miracle or an eternal mystery. Well, a priori one should expect a chaotic world which cannot be in any way grasped through thought. . . . The kind of order created, for example, by Newton's theory of gravity is of quite a different kind. Even if the axioms of the theory are posited by a human being, the success of such an enterprise presupposes an order in the objective world of a high degree which one has no a priori right to expect. That is the "miracle" which grows increasingly persuasive with the increasing development of knowledge.
>
> Alexander Polykov (1986), one of the top physicists in Russia, commenting on the mathematical character of the universe, said: "We know that nature is described by the best of all possible mathematics because God created it." Paul Davies, an astrophysicist from England, says, "The equations of physics have in them

> incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe" (Davies 1984). Successful development of a unified field theory in the future would only add to this remarkable situation, further reducing the number of equations required to describe nature, indicating even further unity and integration in the natural phenomena than have been observed to date.

The whole paper that started this off is called "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics", and it is a must read for advanced Christian apologists. You can read the whole thing here.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Public schools telling 13-year-olds they can have sex and choose their own gender

December 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Yes, Planned Parenthood is involved. Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> Students at one northern California high school are learning more than just the birds and the bees.
>
> Along with local area groups, some parents are irate that their children's sex ed class at Acalanes High School in Lafayette is being taught by employees of Planned Parenthood without their prior knowledge. They are also fuming over the methods and materials being used, including a checklist that asks students if they are "ready for sex" and another worksheet that describes how to give and obtain consent, as well as a diagram that uses a "genderbread" person for lessons in gender identity.
>
> "[Parents] are very concerned," Brad Dacus, president of the Pacific Justice Institute, a non-profit legal organization that is assisting the concerned parents, told FoxNews.com. "Planned Parenthood is not exactly the best when it comes to putting young people first.
>
> "They get more grants from the promiscuity of children," he added. "The material they have provided was material that mirrored their agenda."
>
> It was the parents of ninth-graders at Acalanes that started raising questions after their children told them one instructor threw a model of female reproductive organs at one student and that many felt the sessions were pressuring them to have sex.
>
> "Some of the kids were distracted because it was divergent from what they were taught at home," Dacus said.

> **Acalanes Union School District officials told the institute the class was not taught by teachers but rather the staff from a local Planned Parenthood in nearby Walnut Creek.**
>
> Included in the materials provided to students were documents and worksheets that included a checklist entitled, “Sex Check! Are You Ready For Sex?” in which the 13 and 14-year-old students are asked questions such as if they have water–based lubricants and condoms and if they could handle a possible infection or pregnancy. Another worksheet reads like a how-to on obtaining consent from a possible sexual partner and offers possible statements like “Do you want to go back to my place?” and “Is it OK if I take my pants off?”
>
> Students at Acalanes High School in Northern California were given this gender identity chart in a sex ed class conducted by the local Planned Parenthood chapter.
>
> They were also taught about gender identity with the “Genderbread Person,” a play on the name of the holiday cookie, to teach them on how to identify themselves as either, “agender,” “bigender,” and “two spirit” to name a few.
>
> […]Officials for the Planned Parenthood’s Northern California region did not respond to requests for comment.

In the last fiscal year, Planned Parenthood got $540.6 million of taxpayer money. And now we know what they did with it. If you approve of this, then vote Democrat. If you don’t, then don’t.

Authors of 1 in 5 rape study explain how their work is being misrepresented

December 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Earlier this week I found an amazing piece on the campus rape hysteria authored by Emily Yoffe on posted at the leftist Slate, of all places.

The whole article is worth the read, but there is one part that is very interesting. She spoke to the people who did that 1 in 5 study that everyone (including Obama) has been talking about, and found out some pretty interesting things.

Look:

> One campus rape is one too many. But the severe new policies championed by the White House, the Department of Education, and members of Congress are responding to the idea that colleges are in the grips of an epidemic—and the studies suggesting this epidemic don't hold up to scrutiny. Bad policy is being made on the back of problematic research, and will continue to be unless we bring some healthy skepticism to the hard work of putting a number on the prevalence of campus rape.

> It is exceedingly difficult to get a numerical handle on a crime that is usually committed in private and the victims of which—all the studies agree—frequently decline to report. A further complication is that because researchers are asking about intimate subjects, there is no consensus on the best way to phrase sensitive questions in order to get the most accurate answers. A 2008 National Institute of Justice paper on campus sexual assault explained some of the challenges: "Unfortunately**,** researchers have been unable to determine the precise incidence of sexual assault on American campuses because the incidence found depends on how the questions are worded and the context of the survey." Take the National Crime Victimization Survey, the nationally representative sample conducted by the federal government to find rates of reported and unreported crime. For the years 1995 to 2011, as the University of Colorado Denver's Rennison explained to me, it found that an estimated 0.8 percent of noncollege females age 18-24 revealed that they were victims of threatened, attempted, or completed rape/sexual assault. Of the college females that age during that same time period, approximately 0.6 percent reported they experienced such attempted or completed crime.

> That finding diverges wildly from the notion that one in five women college women will be sexually assaulted by the time they graduate. That's the number most often used to suggest there is overwhelming sexual violence on America's college campuses. It comes from a 2007 study funded by the National Institute of Justice, called the Campus Sexual Assault Study, or CSA. (I cited it last year in a

> story on campus drinking and sexual assault.) The study asked 5,466 female college students at two public universities, one in the Midwest and one in the South, to answer an online survey about their experiences with sexual assault. The survey defined sexual assault as everything from nonconsensual sexual intercourse to such unwanted activities as “forced kissing,” “fondling,” and “rubbing up against you in a sexual way, even if it is over your clothes.”
>
> There are approximately 12 million female college students in the U.S. (There are about 9 million males.) I asked the lead author of the study, Christopher Krebs, whether the CSA represents the experience of those millions of female students. His answer was unequivocal: “We don’t think one in five is a nationally representative statistic.” It couldn’t be, he said, because his team sampled only two schools. “In no way does that make our results nationally representative,” Krebs said. And yet President Obama used this number to make the case for his sweeping changes in national policy.

So the actual number using reliable studies is less than 1%. And yet, we have so many people on the left telling us it’s 20 or 25 percent, in order to get their legislation passed. Just think about that for a minute. Our President stood up there and told us it was 20% but it’s actually less than 1%. And he does the same thing with the women’s pay gap, which he says is 23%, when the actual number when you correct for factors like pregnancies, type of work, number of hours worked, degree required, etc. is near zero.

UPDATE: Commenter Mathetes points me to this Department of Justice study which came up with the number 1 in 52.6, which is less than 2% for rape AND sexual assault together.

Did the early church invent the divinity of Jesus over a long period of time?

December 12, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is

stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this

passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The "Q" source for Matthew and Luke

Here's Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier "Q" source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Bible study: responsibilities and obligations in Philippians 1-4

December 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are some parts of Philippians that speak to an issue that I think is a problem today for many Christians – self-centeredness. I have three parts of Philippians to present below on that topic.

1) The importance of fellowship – preparing to work together with other Christians towards some end:

Phil 1:3-11:

> [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, [4] always offering prayer with joy
> in my every prayer for you all, [5] in view of your participation in the gospel from
> the first day until now. [6] *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began
> a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. [7] For it is only right
> for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both
> in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all
> are partakers of grace with me. [8] For God is my witness, how I long for you all
> with the affection of Christ Jesus. [9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still
> more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, [10] so that you may
> approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until
> the day of Christ; [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes*
> through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Some Christians find it difficult to "participate in the gospel" with anyone because they feel uncomfortable with responsibilities, expectations or obligations to others. In my experience, people who shun responsibilities, obligations and expectations can improve this by taking Paul's advice – grow in real knowledge and all discernment. In my experience, I have found that people who shy away from responsibilities, expectations and obligations do so because they are afraid of failing. They are proud and don't want to look bad if they fail to perform something that they are expected to perform. Christians should not shy away from growing though, because growing is what helps us to be better partners in the gospel. We should try to read hard things, study hard things, and take the hardest jobs we can do – so that we build up our tolerance for responsibilities, obligations and expectations. People who do hard jobs like computer programming or nursing know that that you always struggle to learn difficult things and there is always the risk of looking incompetent. But we accept the risk of looking stupid and being judged and this builds a level of comfort with responsibilities, obligations and expectations. That comfort level with responsibilities, obligations and expectations that you get from doing hard things can only help you be a better partner in the gospel.

2) The importance of not being self-centered, but instead being focused on the needs of

others:

Phil 2:1-8:

> 2 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,[2] make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. [3] Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; [4] do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. [5] Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, [6] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. [8] Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

And Phil 2:19-23:

> [19] But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. [20] For I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. [21] For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. [22] But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child *serving* his father.

Nothing very complicated here, it's important to look out for the interests of others and to be concerned about their welfare. I think it's a good idea to be practical about this, and instead of just expressing opinions like "I care", try to find out what needs to be done and do it. The important thing is that it's good to be focused on other people, and not on ourselves, and to think of the interests of others, not our own interests. That point about looking out for other people's interests is said twice, once in each passage from chapter 2 I quoted above.

3) People who are doing good work for the Lord have needs:

Phil 4:10-18:

> [10] But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned *before*, but you lacked opportunity. [11] Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. [12] I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. [13] I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.[14] Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction.
>
> [15] You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel,

> after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and
> receiving but you alone; [16] for even in Thessalonica you sent *a gift* more than
> once for my needs. [17] Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which
> increases to your account. [18] But I have received everything in full and have an
> abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you
> have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

I think if you are friends with a person and they are working on some task or other for the gospel, then it's a good idea to be sensitive to their needs, and be open to caring for those needs. Your goal should not be to make excuses for why you don't have to do anything to help them. In my case, finances are not a problem, so I don't have that need. I use money to supply the needs of people that I partner with in the gospel, though. Instead, I have other needs that people can help with – for example, after a stressful day of work, I am always looking for people to play games with me. Some of my friends show an interest in that, and others don't. The good things that I do for God are not free, and it matters a lot to me whether those who know me want to listen to me and then take responsibility for making sure that I keep functioning and doing the things that I do for God. We have to have an eye out to maintain people who are doing good things for God – not just take it for granted that it will continue. Sometimes, it is not just sending money (gifts), it can be other love languages like touch, service, quality time and words of encouragement. But tuning away from the needs of others is not good for us.

New study: another biological Big Bang, this time for bird development

December 13, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hummingbird in flight

Story from Evolution News about a new study exploring the genomes of birds.

Excerpt:

> The evidence for intelligent design just keeps getting stronger. It's long been known that the Cambrian explosion isn't the only explosion of organisms in the fossil record. There's also something of a fish explosion, an angiosperm explosion, and a mammal explosion. Paleontologists have even cited a "bird explosion," with major bird groups appearing in a short time period. Frank Gill's 2007 textbook *Ornithology* observes the "explosive evolution" of major living bird groups, and a paper in *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*titled "Evolutionary Explosions and the Phylogenetic Fuse" explains:
>
> > A literal reading of the fossil record indicates that the early Cambrian (c. 545 million years ago) and early Tertiary (c. 65 million years ago) were characterized by enormously accelerated periods of morphological evolution marking the appearance of the animal phyla, and modern bird and placental mammal orders, respectively.
>
> Now, a massive genetic study published in *Science* has confirmed the fossil evidence that birds arose explosively. According to an article titled, "Rapid bird evolution after the age of dinosaurs unprecedented":
>
> > His research helped confirm that some of the first lineages of modern birds appeared about 100 million years ago but that almost all of the modern groups of birds diversified in a small window of less than 10 million years, just after the dinosaurs were wiped out by an asteroid.

> Another news article calls it a "'Big Bang' of bird evolution" and one of the technical papers uses the same language:
>
> > Paleobiological and molecular evidence suggests that such "big bang" radiations occurred for neoavian birds (e.g., songbirds, parrots, pigeons, and others) and placental mammals, representing 95% of extant avian and mammalian species, after the Cretaceous to Paleogene (K-Pg) mass extinction event about 66 million years ago (Ma).
>
> The article further cites "an explosive diversification within Neoaves." So both fossil and genetic evidence suggests diverse organisms arose in an "explosion" or "big bang" that lasted "less than 10 million years."

I am excited to hear about this! Birds are my most favorite creatures in the whole world!

One of the other papers they looked at in the post found large numbers of species appearing within a 1-3 million year window.

The data from these genome studies also conflicts with the phylogenies that are different from phylogenies built from body plans.

Look:

> [T]his molecular study has separated many groups previously thought to be closely related by morphological studies, as is made very clear from Figure 1 of the paper. Bird relations are thus quickly becoming a classic case of conflict between molecule-based and morphology-based trees. As *Nature* notes, in this study "the tree of life for birds has been redrawn by geneticists." They simply appeal to convergent evolution (or other mechanisms) to explain away these non-tree-like patterns.

It's not a tree – it's a *lawn.*

Good news: Venezuelan President complains that fracking is “flooding” oil markets

December 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

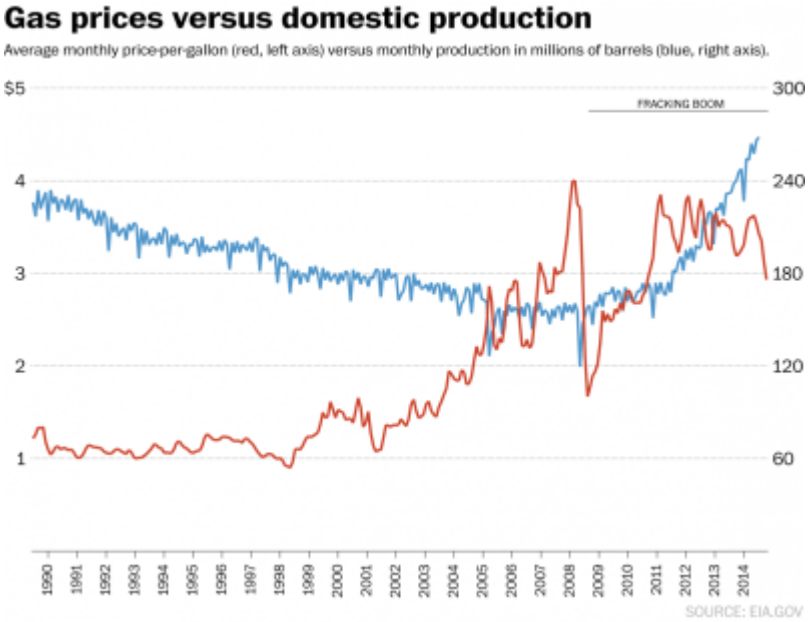

Gas prices vs domestic oil production
(Click for larger image. Source)

Why are gas prices so low all of a sudden?

Well, let’s ask the communist President of Venezuela:

> The broadcast networks may not want to give credit to hydraulic fracturing for increasing U.S. oil production and lowering global oil prices, but at least one angry world leader did just that.
>
> Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro complained that fracking in the U.S. has “flooded” the world market and contributed to lower oil prices, a connection that broadcast networks’ evening news reports barely made recently.
>
> “The oil they’re taking from (shale deposits) and the gas. They’ve flooded the international market to batter the Russian economy …, Iran and to hurt us, Venezuela,” Maduro said in a broadcast on VTV, a state-run TV channel in Venezuela, according to Fox News Latino.
>
> Fracking has been one cause of increased oil production in the U.S. That increased production helped lower oil prices by more than 30 percent since September 29. The decline in oil prices since June has severely impacted Venezuela, since oil exports were a major source of government income. “Some estimates put the break-even price for Venezuela to balance its budget at around $121 a barrel,” CNBC reported on December 7. That’s more than double current oil prices. Oil closed at $59.15-per-barrel on December 11.
>
> As of January 2014, Venezuela’s state-run oil company brought in 96 percent of

> foreign earnings, according to The Economist. Maduro announced on December 2 that the government would cut spending by 20 percent.
>
> […]Venezuela was experiencing particular difficulties. That economy was on the verge of collapsing, CNBC said on Dec. 1. If low oil prices continued, Venezuela may face a "game over" situation and "barbarity and people looting."

Do you know who else is hurt by this? Russia. I sure hope they don't do anything aggressive to their neighbors while their economy feels the pinch of lower gas prices.

It's a good thing when villains shake their fists at us, but it's a better thing when consumers pay less for gas:

> Thanks in part to the widespread use of technologies like hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling, global oil prices plummeted in 2014. Energy experts even predicted the U.S. could be the top oil producer in the next several years.
>
> […]Fracking and other advanced technologies helped the U.S. nearly double its average daily output of oil, from 5 million barrels in 2008 to an expected 9.42 million barrels in 2015. The huge supply increase was one factor sending crude oil prices down. Crude fell by more than 32 percent, from $93 to $63 just since Sept. 29. This already drove gas prices down to a national average of $2.66 for regular on Dec. 9, according to AAA.
>
> This is great news for consumers and businesses which could save as much as $1.3 trillion worldwide because of lower oil prices, according to Julian Jessop, chief global economist at Capital Economics in London. Here in the U.S., Americans could save $230 billion if prices remain low for the next year, The Washington Post said on Dec. 1.

The only bad side to this story is that fracking is an expensive way of drilling, so as the price of oil drops, energy companies will be scaling back fracking until it becomes profitable again.

I think this story is important, because it helps to explain what the people who oppose the Keystone XL pipeline are concerned about. They know that there are two results to allowing that pipeline to be built. First, a hell of a lot of jobs will be created, reducing dependency on government. Second, the price of gas at the pump will go down further. That's what the environmentalists (and their Democrat allies in Washington) are seeking to avoid. They want more government dependency, and higher gas prices.

Lots of candidates for Boehner replacement in list of Cromnibus NO-votes

December 14, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the list of people who voted against the CRomnibus trillion-dollar spending bill that Obama supports.

1. Wittman, R. (R-VA)
2. Williams, R. (R-TX)
3. Webster, D. (R-FL)
4. Weber, R. (R-TX)
5. Stutzman, M. (R-IN)
6. Smith, L. (R-TX)
7. Smith, C. (R-NJ)
8. Sensenbrenner, F. (R-WI)
9. Scott, A. (R-GA)
10. **Schweikert, D. (R-AZ)**
11. Sanford, M. (R-SC)
12. **Salmon, M. (R-AZ)**
13. Rohrabacher, D. (R-CA)
14. Rogers, M. (R-AL)
15. Posey, B. (R-FL)
16. **Pompeo, M. (R-KS)**
17. Poe, T. (R-TX)
18. Perry, S. (R-PA)
19. Olson, P. (R-TX)
20. Neugebauer, R. (R-TX)
21. Mulvaney, M. (R-SC)
22. Miller, J. (R-FL)
23. Meadows, M. (R-NC)
24. McKinley, D. (R-WV)
25. **McClintock, T. (R-CA)**
26. McAllister, V. (R-LA)
27. Massie, T. (R-KY)
28. **Marchant, K. (R-TX)**
29. Lummis, C. (R-WY)
30. Lankford, J. (R-OK)
31. Lamborn, D. (R-CO)
32. LaMalfa, D. (R-CA)
33. Labrador, R. (R-ID)
34. **King, S. (R-IA)**

35. **Jordan, J. (R-OH)**
36. Jones, W. (R-NC)
37. Johnson, S. (R-TX)
38. Hurt, R. (R-VA)
39. **Huelskamp, T. (R-KS)**
40. Griffith, H. (R-VA)
41. **Gowdy, T. (R-SC)**
42. **Gosar, P. (R-AZ)**
43. **Gohmert, L. (R-TX)**
44. Garrett, S. (R-NJ)
45. **Franks, T. (R-AZ)**
46. Flores, B. (R-TX)
47. Fleming, J. (R-LA)
48. Farenthold, B. (R-TX)
49. Duncan, J. (R-TN)
50. **Duncan, J. (R-SC)**
51. DesJarlais, S. (R-TN)
52. **DeSantis, R. (R-FL)**
53. Crawford, R. (R-AR)
54. Cotton, T. (R-AR)
55. Conaway, K. (R-TX)
56. **Clawson, C. (R-FL)**
57. Rice, T. (R-SC)
58. Burgess, M. (R-TX)
59. **Broun, P. (R-GA)**
60. Brooks, M. (R-AL)
61. **Bridenstine, J. (R-OK)**
62. **Brat, D. (R-VA)**
63. Blackburn, M. (R-TN)
64. Bentivolio, K. (R-MI)
65. Barton, J. (R-TX)
66. Bachmann, M. (R-MN)
67. **Amash, J. (R-MI)**

The names in bold are the ones I'd like to see named as Speaker of the House instead of John Boehner. He has to go, along with Mitch McConnell. It's just too much now. They won the election in 2014 and now it's time to do what they were elected to do. If they can't do that, then put in someone as Speaker who can.

A couple of stories on this from Breitbart.

First one:

> Representative Louie Gohmert (R-TX) said that conservatives in the House heard "not one word" from House GOP leadership on compromises to make changes to

> the cromnibus in order to get conservatives to vote for it even though "we were willing to work with them to compromise" on Thursday's "Hannity" on the Fox News Channel.
> "There was no encouragement to conservatives. The Speaker and Majority Leader, these folks knew there's money for abortion, money for the EPA to hurt states like Texas, Arizona. There's just all kinds of money in there for things we don't support. and, Sean, you and I know some of us had gone to our leadership and said, 'look, we can do this very easily. Let's do it together with conservatives. That's the bulk of our conference, don't make them take a wrong vote. Let's fund everything for two months. Let us have a vote on defunding Obama's amnesty, and we'll even agree that the Senate can take it out if they take the hard vote to do that and let it go from there to the president.' **We were willing to work with them to compromise, and not one word, as you know, the calls went to the white house when in a time that the speaker needed votes he turned to somebody that he really identifies with, the president and liberal Democrats and got them to help him pass this vote**" he stated.

Gohmert is one of my favorite congressmen – I hear him all the time on the FRC's Washington Weekly podcast.

Second one:

> Immediately following the House of Representatives' passage of the so-called CR/omnibus spending bill, Reps. Michele Bachmann (R-MN) and Steve King (R-IA) reacted to the vote.
> Bachmann told host Sean Hannity a decision had been made months ago on amnesty, despite efforts to use this bill to take on President Barack Obama's executive amnesty effort.
>
> "I think the reason why they did it is because the political establishment made a decision months ago this they were going to get amnesty," she said. "And they were going to pay for amnesty. The executive amnesty is what they didn't like — President Obama doing it alone. But they wanted amnesty. Let's not mince words. Both Republican and Democrats, the leadership, the establishment, wanted to have amnesty"
>
> Later in the segment, Hannity turned his attention to King and asked if House Speaker John Boehner made a deal with Obama directly.
>
> "Yes," King replied. "I think no good ideas outside of that deal were going to be considered unless we could have succeeded on taking the rule down. And at that point we would have had a new ball game. And I think we had a chance, but we failed by a vote to take the rule down."

Who knew that when we elected so many Republicans to the House and Senate that Boehner would actually be taking over as Democrat leader in the House from Nancy Pelosi? Maybe next time there we can pick a Republican Speaker of the House.

I’m not saying we shouldn’t elect Republicans, I’m saying that we need to primary Republicans who vote for garbage like this so that we get the right men and women for the job. We can start with the 67 we have and keep those, and find as many replacements as possible for the others.

New study: complication rate for chemical abortions is 5.2%

December 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from Life News.

Excerpt:

> The UCSF study, "Incidence of Emergency Department Visits and Complications After Abortion," is based on a recent study of California Medicaid recipients. It appeared in the December 8, 2014, edition of the journal *Obstetrics & Gynecology*.
>
> California is one of the states that pays for the abortions of women enrolled in Medicaid. The study looked at the billing data from 50,273 Medi-Cal patients who had 54,911 abortions in 2009-2010.
>
> […]Nearly 8% (or between one in 12 and one in 13) of women showed up at the clinic or a local Emergency Room (ER) seeking some service within six weeks of their abortions. Some of those were eliminated from further study because billing records appeared to show that they came in for some service unrelated to the abortion. (These were not specified, but this could be something like smashing a finger in the car door, coming down with the flu, etc.)
>
> But even pulling these out and other "complications not validated," one is left with a substantial number of women dealing with medical problems resulting from their "safe" abortions.
>
> On the billing records of those women returning to the clinic or going to the ER, they found women hemorrhaging, dealing with infections, uterine perforations – the sort of problems we're supposed to think were relics of the early days following the Roe v. Wade decision when abortionists were just learning their craft.
>
> A surprising number of these were related to the new chemical or "medication" abortion method that was supposed to offer women a safer alternative to surgical abortion.
>
> **There were nearly four times as many surgical abortions (34,755 first trimester, 8,837 2nd trimester or later) tracked by the study as there were chemical abortions. (11,319). Yet there were more identified complications associated with the chemical method (588) than they were for the surgical ones (438 for first trimester, 130 for 2nd or later) combined.**
>
> **The complication rate for chemical abortions was 5.2%, versus complication rates of 1.3% for first trimester suction aspiration abortions and 1.5% for second trimester or later methods. This would**

> **make chemical abortions four times riskier than early surgical ones and more than three times less safe than a second or third trimester procedure.**
>
> This is hardly the “advance” or “improvement” that women were promised when the government was asked to approve RU-486 more than a decade ago.

I didn’t really want to take Life News’ word for this, so I looked up the study.

They’re right:

> RESULTS: A total of 54,911 abortions among 50,273 fee-for-service Medi-Cal beneficiaries were identified. Among all abortions, 1 of 16 (6.4%, n=3,531) was followed by an ED visit within 6 weeks but only 1 of 115 (0.87%, n=478) resulted in an ED visit for an abortion-related complication. Approximately 1 of 5,491 (0.03%, n=15) involved ambulance transfers to EDs on the day of the abortion. The major complication rate was 0.23% (n=126, 1/436): 0.31% (n=35) for medication abortion, 0.16% (n=57) for first-trimester aspiration abortion, and 0.41% (n=34) for second-trimester or later procedures. The total abortion-related complication rate including all sources of care including EDs and the original abortion facility was 2.1% (n=1,156): 5.2% (n=588) for medication abortion, 1.3% (n=438) for first-trimester aspiration abortion, and 1.5% (n=130) for second-trimester or later procedures.

In other posts, I talked about the other risks associated with abortion.

What happens if you ask 13 gay-owned bakeries to bake a pro-marriage cake?

December 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Since Christian bakers are being forced by courts to bake cakes for gay weddings, wouldn't it neat to see if gay bakeries will bake pro-marriage cakes for Christians?

Well, this blogger did just that:

> Christian bakeries that refuse to make pro-homosexual marriage cakes are getting sued, they get fined, they get death threats, and they lose their businesses.
>
> So Shoebat.com called some 13 prominent bakers who are pro-gay and requested that they make a pro-traditional marriage cake with the words "Gay marriage is wrong" placed on the cake. Each one denied us service, and even used deviant insults and obscenities against us. One baker even said that she would make me a cookie with a large phallus on it. We recorded all of this in a video that will stun the American people as to how militant and intolerant the homosexual agenda is.
>
> If anyone who objects saying that our request for the cake was hateful, this is exactly the type of thing the homosexual activists do to Christian bakeries when they use the state to coerce them to make a cake with an explicitly anti traditional marriage slogans on it.

Here are the videos – WARNING: some have very vulgar language.

Video 1 of 2:

Video 2 of 2:

The videos contain very vulgar language, which is a stark contrast to the apologetic and humble language Christians employ when responding to the wedding-related requests gay activists. We don't seek to offend, but they are totally OK with offending us.

I'll just link to a few of previous stories on how gay activists forced Christian-owned businesses to service their gay marriages – *through the courts.*

The meaning of marriage: a lecture at Google by Tim Keller

December 15, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Disclaimer: I have reservations about Tim Keller. I consider him to be too liberal for my tastes, especially on scientific (intelligent design) and political/economic issues. However, I think he did a good job explaining marriage in the lecture below.

Here's the the video:

Details:

> Timothy Keller visits Google's New York, NY office to discuss his book "The Meaning of Marriage." This event took place on November 14, 2011, as part of the Authors@Google series.
>
> Timothy J. Keller is an American author, speaker, preacher, and the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. He is the author of several books, including "The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism."
>
> "The Meaning of Marriage" touches on topics that all readers can relate to, starting with the role of marriage in our culture, its history and the pessimism that is often associated with it. The Kellers also discuss the feelings of and acts of love, romantic relationships, gender roles, singleness, and the role of sex in a marriage.

I saw a lot of things in his lecture that echo my own views. One point where we agree is on not just looking for traits and virtues in the other person, but in seeing how they handle conflict and solve problems with you. You have to give the other person things to do and see if they make progress and work cooperatively with you. Wes, who linked me the lecture, introduced the link by saying that this is the way that Christians should explain marriage to non-Christians. I agree, and I've added the book to my cart.

Here's an article entitled "You Never Marry the Right Person", that discusses one of the points in the lecture.

Excerpt:

> In generations past, there was far less talk about "compatibility" and finding the ideal soul-mate. Today we are looking for someone who accepts us as we are *and* fulfills our desires, and this creates an unrealistic set of expectations that frustrates both the searchers and the searched for.
>
> […]The Bible explains why the quest for compatibility seems to be so impossible. As a pastor I have spoken to thousands of couples, some working on marriage-seeking, some working on marriage-sustaining and some working on marriage-saving. I've heard them say over and over, "Love shouldn't be this hard, it should come naturally." In response I always say something like: "Why believe that?

> Would someone who wants to play professional baseball say, ‘It shouldn’t be so hard to hit a fastball’? Would someone who wants to write the greatest American novel of her generation say, ‘It shouldn’t be hard to create believable characters and compelling narrative’?” The understandable retort is: “But this is not baseball or literature. This is love. Love should just come naturally if two people are compatible, if they are truly soul-mates. “
>
> The Christian answer to this is that no two people are compatible. Duke University Ethics professor Stanley Hauerwas has famously made this point:
>
> Destructive to marriage is the self-fulfillment ethic that assumes marriage and the family are primarily institutions of personal fulfillment, necessary for us to become “whole” and happy. The assumption is that there is someone just right for us to marry and that if we look closely enough we will find the right person. This moral assumption overlooks a crucial aspect to marriage. It fails to appreciate the fact that we always marry the wrong person.We never know whom we marry; we just think we do. Or even if we first marry the right person, just give it a while and he or she will change. For marriage, being [the enormous thing it is] means we are not the same person after we have entered it. The primary challenge of marriage is learning how to love and care for the stranger to whom you find yourself married.
>
> Hauerwas gives us the first reason that no two people are compatible for marriage, namely, that marriage profoundly changes us. But there is another reason. Any two people who enter into marriage are spiritually broken by sin, which among other things means to be self-centered—living life*incurvatus in se*. As author Denis de Rougemont said, “Why should neurotic, selfish, immature people suddenly become angels when they fall in love … ?” That is why a good marriage is more painfully hard to achieve than athletic or artistic prowess. Raw, natural talent does not enable you to play baseball as a pro or write great literature without enduring discipline and enormous work. Why would it be easy to live lovingly and well with another human being in light of what is profoundly wrong within our human nature? Indeed, many people who have mastered athletics and art have failed miserably at marriage. So the biblical doctrine of sin explains why marriage—more than anything else that is good and important in this fallen world—is so painful and hard.

When you are courting, don’t worry about appearances and feelings and passion so much, because that is all subject to change over time, and those things won’t help you with the real challenges you’ll face in a marriage. Worry about whether they are the kind of person who can make commitments and love other people self-sacrificially – even if they are unlovable. In the long run, their ability to read and understand issues, to care for others and serve them, to keep promises, to be respectful and supportive, to argue respectfully and reasonably, and to solve problems constructively, will all be far more important than appearances and feelings and passion.

And let me be clear again: give them things to do that challenge them during the courtship and see how they handle being given responsibilities – giving a person hard things to do is a much better way to test a person than recreational nights out with recreational drinking, recreational dancing and recreational sex. Marriage means commitment and hard work, not recreation. And that's what you should test for – the ability to work hard at the relationship and to keep promises and commitments and to communicate reasonably and to work through difficulties fairly. The most dangerous thing you want to avoid is self-centeredness. You don't want someone who is primarily interested in minimizing your feelings, and then getting her friends to agree with her that this is legitimate for whatever reasons. You want a person who has had a hard enough life that responsibilities and obligations are natural to her, and who doesn't try to wiggle out of self-sacrificial acts of love when she doesn't feel like doing it.

Four leftist women commit a hate crime against a Muslim conservative

December 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The story is a bit complicated. Basically, a Muslim conservative wrote a satire of all the grievance-mongering at his university. Not only did the liberal campus newspaper go after him, but 4 leftist women also vandalized his dorm room.

First, let's see some of what he wrote:

> It was one of the coldest days of this winter past, and I was hurrying along the Diag to class. The blistering cold did not turn my eyes from all the white privilege falling around my. All those white snowflakes falling thick upon the autumn leaves, burying their colors. Majoring in womyn's studies, I've learned that oppression comes in many forms. Sometimes we fail to notice it because it's just everywhere – just like that white snow.
>
> As I walked, I slipped on a patch of wet leaves lining the steps of the Hatcher, and I fell forward headfirst onto the steps of the library. If it hadn't been for the left hand that I thrust out right before my fall, I would have ended up just another statistic in the war on colored people. As it were, a white cis-gendered hetero upper-class man came down the steps just as I was falling. He looked at me with that white man's burden face that I see too often on this racialized campus.
>
> "Cold, isn't it?"
>
> Behind his words I sensed a patronizing sneer, as if he expected me to be a spokespersyn for my whole race. He offered his hand to help me up, and I thought to myself how this might be a manifestation of the patriarchy patronizing me. I doubt he would've said those violent words had I been white, but he would take any opportunity to patronize a colored m@n or womyn. People on this campus always box others in based on race. Triggered, I waved his hand aside and got up of my own accord.
>
> He was taken aback. Suddenly I felt I was taking back some of that lost agency that colonialism had robbed my people of. I felt like Aamir Khan in Lagaan. That's right, that white man wasn't about to tax me. I didn't even want to be that white. I turned on my heels and showed him my back.
>
> He shouted after me, "I was just trying to do the right thing!"
>
> The right thing… The right thing… I became so aware at that moment of the left hand that I had thrust out before falling, and suddenly my humanity was reduced to my handydnyss. The words rang in my eardrums, and my blood throbbed. This was the microaggression that broke the gender-neutral camel's back. But unlike other microaggressions, this one triggered a shift in my worldview. All this while, I had been obsessed only with the color on this campus. All of a sudden, though,

> that became a side issue. All those race-based microaggressions now seemed trivial. I had, I realized, forgotten to think intersectionally.
>
> The biggest obstacle to equality today is our barbaric attitude toward people of left-handydnyss. It's a tragedy that I, a member of the left-handed community, had little to no idea of the atrocious persecution that we are dealt every day by institutions that are deeply embedded in society. So deeply embedded, and so ever-present, that we don't even notice them.

He wrote that satire in the conservative student newspaper, but he was also employed with main campus newspaper.

Here's what the campus newspaper did:

> After his column was published last week, Mahmood tells The College Fix: "I received a call from the editorial editor [of the Daily] telling me that I had created a 'hostile environment' among the editorial staff and that someone had felt threatened because of what I had written … The issue had been taken to the editor in chief who procured a bylaw by which I was given an ultimatum to leave the Review or leave the Daily within a week. I was not allowed to know the name of the offended individuals." He added the newspaper's leaders are "forcing me to write a letter of apology as a condition for staying on theDaily" and suspended his regular column in the Daily.
>
> Mahmood has written for both the Review and the Daily concurrently for this fall semester, but after this controversial column was published the Daily's editors decided "Mr. Mahmood's involvement with the Michigan Review presents a conflict of interest. Our bylaws say that once a determination is made that a conflict of interest exists, the person in question will have one week to resign from either the Dailyor the organization causing the conflict of interest," according to a statement from the Daily to The College Fix.

And then came the hate crime (video captured above):

> Security camera footage obtained Sunday by The College Fix shows a group of females changing into hoodies and other baggy clothing and proceeding to vandalize a conservative student's apartment doorway.
>
> Angry messages scribbled on papers posted around student Omar Mahmood's doorway labeled him a "d*ck" and "scum" and included an image of the devil, as well as eggs, gum and hot dogs.
>
> The camera footage was taken inside Mahmood's apartment complex, which is just outside the campus property. Mahmood is known at the school as one who holds conservative and libertarian beliefs. The 21-year-old junior, who is double majoring in comparative literature and evolutionary anthropology, has written against the campus' progressive social justice movements.
>
> On Friday, The College Fix reported on the contents of the vandalism, which

> included papers stating: “You scum embarrass us,” “you self-righteous d*ck,” “you have no soul,” “everyone hates you you violent pr*ck,” and other derogatory messages.
>
> The vandalism occurred at approximately 1:43 a.m. Friday and was discovered later that morning.
>
> On Friday night, Mahmood filed a police report, and said he was advised to file a personal protection order against the women once they are identified. He also has an appointment scheduled with university officials on Tuesday for further investigation.
>
> The video shows three women throwing on large hoodies and other baggy clothing that might mask their appearance while on the eleventh floor. Then they go to the sixth floor where they put the fliers and other paraphernalia on and around his doorway before taking pictures of their act and scurrying out.
>
> […]On a printout of “Do the Left Thing,” the vandals wrote: “Shut the f*ck up.”

That’s the level of fascism that you get if you an out conservative on a university campus today. And that’s why I use an alias, because these people graduate and they work alongside you, waiting for you to offend them so they can come after you. Just ask Brendan Eich.

UPDATE: Scott sent me this story from the The College Fix. It has photos from the hate crime. Viewer discretion is advised.

UPDATE: This is from The College Fix today:

> Now Mahmood’s conversations with *The College Fix* and other outlets have drawn a sharp rebuke from the *Daily* in the form of an editor’s note about the situation, intended to “combat the inaccuracies that have been perpetuated about our publication”:
>
> **The way in which the author satirically mocked the experiences of fellow *Daily* contributors and minority communities on campus in his *Review* column violated our values and integrity as a publication.** His actions created a conflict of interest regarding his employment with both the*Daily* and the *Review*.

That’s enough to get you fired, because this is how people on the left *really are.*

Should Christians be committed to small government conservatism?

December 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a paper (PDF) on the University of Washington web site that makes the case for why Christians ought to care about more than just social issues.

Here's the abstract:

> What accounts for cross-national variation in religiosity as measured by church attendance and non-religious rates? Examining answers from both secularization theory and the religious economy perspective, we assert that cross-national variation in religious participation is a function of government welfare spending and provide a theory that links macro-sociological outcomes with individual rationality. Churches historically have provided social welfare. As governments gradually assume many of these welfare functions, individuals with elastic preferences for spiritual goods will reduce their level of participation since the desired welfare goods can be obtained from secular sources. Cross-national data on welfare spending and religious participation show a strong negative relationship between these two variables after controlling for other aspects of modernization.

Here's the conclusion:

> It is quite apparent that there is a strong statistical relationship between state social welfare spending and religious participation and religiosity. Countries with higher levels of per capita welfare have a proclivity for less religious participation and tend to have higher percentages of non-religious individuals. People living in countries with high social welfare spending per capita even have less of a tendency to take comfort in religion, perhaps knowing that the state is there to help them in times of crisis.34 As laid out in the theory above, there is likely a substitution effect for some individuals between state-provided services and religious services. Religion will still be there to serve the spiritual needs of people seeking answers to the philosophic mysteries of life, but those who value those spiritual goods less than the tangible welfare benefits churches provide will be less likely to participate in religious services once secular substitutes become available. Given that religious practice and values are often passed down from generation to generation, the weakening of practice in one generation will likely translate into weaker practice in subsequent generations. Does this mean that secularization theory is correct in its prediction that religion will gradually fade away? Doubtful. Realizing that there is still a yearning among many people to understand the mysteries of life, religion is not likely to dissipate at any time soon. Government simply cannot offer credible substitutes for these less

> tangible, supernatural goods. The explosion in spirituality once religion was made legal in former Soviet bloc countries lends credence to this assertion (Greeley 1994). As religious markets become more deregulated in various parts of the world, it is likely that new religious movements will take advantage of increased liberty and discover ways to expand.
>
> Perhaps one of the most important lessons from the findings above is that the religiosity of a society is not simply determined by sociological factors. Government policy can play an important role in shaping the religiosity of a nation. Policies aimed at regulating the activities of religious organizations — from tax laws to zoning regulations — have important effects on the firms that supply religious goods and services. Many of these policies are designed consciously to promote or inhibit religious practice. Alternatively, welfare policy has been shown here to unintentionally affect the demand for religious services, likely over the course of generations. And, finally, since an extensive welfare state is considered by many to be a hallmark of modernized societies, the microfoundational analysis presented above provides a way of incorporating a component part of the secularization thesis (which relies heavily on notions of modernization) into the religious economy perspective.

Have you ever heard a sermon that addresses the size of government and individual liberty and prosperity? I haven't. You'd have to be reading Wayne Grudem or Jay Richards to find that. The typical church you attend either praises big government or says nothing about it. After all, we can keep making withdrawals on the liberties we have *right now* without ever worrying about having to make any deposits, right? Everything will be fine, and it's easier not to have to think about what's down the road to serfdom, so long as the scenery is nice for us right now. Religion is primarily about comfort, not truth. Right?

The funny thing is that when I talk to most Christians about this, especially non-Americans, they simply don't have the knowledge of economics to understand how big government affects liberty, prosperity and security. There is no one reading F.A. Hayek and Thomas Sowell in Europe, and there are not that many people reading them here at home either.

What’s the best book a woman can read to prepare herself for marriage?

December 16, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A good marriage is more than fun and feelings – it takes planning and work

I found a great lecture by Sue Bohlin, who works at Probe Ministries. The lecture is about the book “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands” by Dr. Laura Schlessinger. I recommend this book more highly than any other book to Christian women. It really does a lot to give young women a different perspective on men and marriage. Don’t be thrown off by the funny title, it’s really good.

The MP3 file is here. (48 minutes)

Here is a blog post that Sue wrote that captures most of the material in the lecture.

Here’s the introduction:

> Talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written a book that is improving thousands of marriages: *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands.* We need this book because millions of wives either don’t know how to love their husbands wisely and well, or they’re too self-centered to see it as important. Dr. Laura credits this dismal condition to forty years of feminist philosophy, “with its condemnation of just about everything male as evil, stupid, and oppressive, and the denigration of female and male roles in families.” While the women’s movement certainly had a hand to play in the disintegration of relationships and the family, I believe the core cause is our sinful self-centeredness, just as the Bible says.
>
> Which is why we need help, and God instructs older women to train younger women to love their husband and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be

> busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* is a great resource for learning these important values and skills.

And here's the first part I thought was most important:

> A listener to Dr. Laura's radio show named Edgar wrote, "There are a few things that men want so bad they would do anything for it. I think a good number of men want respect more than love. They like to feel they have some power. I nearly cry when you tell a woman caller to respect her husband. There is so much selfishness in the world—in marriages. Prosperity has allowed women to be so independent, and thus so selfish. I always feel as though I come last—my feelings come last, my needs come last."
>
> *"A good number of men want respect more than love."* God knew this when He made us. His commands to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:33 reflects each one's deepest needs: "Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." Dr. Emerson Eggerichs of LoveandRespect.com points out that this verse commands a husband to love his wife. Why? She needs love like she needs air to breathe. This same verse commands a wife to respect her husband. Why? He needs respect like he needs air to breathe.
>
> - Respect means treating someone in a way that builds him up and doesn't tear him down, never denigrating or attacking.
> - Respect means always treating the other person with the dignity they deserve as a person made in the image of God.
> - Respect means grasping that a man's needs and wants are every bit as valid and important as a woman's needs and wants.
> - Respect means not venting to others, *especially* the children. One woman wrote to Dr. Laura, "No emotional outlet is worth damaging my husband's reputation."
>
> There are three A's that men long for from their wives: attention, affection, and affirmation. Respect involves paying attention to what they do simply because they're the ones doing it.

Yes, respect is very important to men, but the thing is, a woman can't respect every man equally. She should choose a man who does things that are respectable. Then respecting him will be easy. Sometimes, women overestimate how easy men are to change after marriage. It's better to just pick one who does all the important things instead of thinking that you can pick a good-looking one and make him do the important stuff like be faithful to you, hold a steady job, save money, argue without getting angry, etc. later. Men don't change much, so pick one who does things that you respect and then give him respect.

And this part also seemed important to me:

> A man named Roy wrote to Dr. Laura with some good advice for wives: “If you can’t accentuate the positive, at least acknowledge it. The world is full of messages to men that there are standards we don’t meet. There is always another man who is more handsome, more virile, or more athletic than we are. None of that matters if the most important person in our life looks up to us, accepts us as we are, and loves us even though we aren’t perfect. . . . All I know is that the husband who has a wife who supports him and praises him for the positive things he does is the envy of all the other men who have to live with criticism, sarcasm, and constant reminders of their failures.”
>
> Men desperately want and need the support of their wives. This is reflected in what God reveals in His Word when He says, “It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” And through the apostle Paul, God instructs wives to relate to their husbands in a way that meets this need when He says, “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.”
>
> Submission is basically giving support with a willing, cooperative heart.
>
> A wife’s submission includes knowing her gifts and strengths, and using them to serve her husband and family.
>
> Service has a bad name, but both husbands and wives are called to serve God first and then each other; husbands are called to sacrificially love and serve their wives with Jesus as their pattern.
>
> So what does support look like?
>
> - Believing in him. Telling him, “You have what it takes.” Being his #1 fan.
> - Cultivating a cooperative heart.
> - Being generous and openhearted—willing to use your gifts and strengths to help him succeed.
> - Understanding the importance of making him look good: never saying anything negative in public.
> - Creating a home that’s a safe haven from the world.
> - Having a warm heart with a positive, cheerful demeanor. Women set the temperature of the home; we are thermostats, not thermometers, of the family. (On the other hand, Proverbs says “A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day; restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.”)
> - Being interested in him and his life.
> - Showing thoughtfulness. What does he like? Do it.
> - And though by no means exhaustive, it also means being a person of faithfulness and integrity. That means keeping your promises and being dependable. As Proverbs 31 puts it, “Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.”

Support and encouragement is SO important to a man. A man can continue to function

fine if the whole world opposes him, but not if the woman he loves doesn't support him. When a man falls in love, a woman has to realize the enormous power she has over him, and be careful not to hurt him. Men are vulnerable to the woman they choose. Although they look pretty tough on the outside, they can easily be hurt by insults or discouragement.

Parting thoughts

So, this lecture and the book are good, but young women should also seek out the advice of older Christian women who have been married successfully for some time. Read Titus 2:3-4 – the Bible encourages older women to mentor younger women! This is really important because we are in a time where young women are often pulled by the culture in many wrong directions, and they need help from people who know what they are doing.

One last point – I actually bought the audio version of the Dr. Laura book and noticed that it was just over two hours long. It turns out that the audio version is *abridged* – it is not as complete as the actual book. I noticed that Sue was quoting from the book passages that I had not heard in the audio recording. So, if you want the full content, get the book, not the audio recording.

Should we use waterboarding to stop terrorist attacks against schools in Pakistan?

December 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East

Let's use a real example to assess whether harsh interrogation techniques are ever justified.

The Wall Street Journal:

> Taliban gunmen stormed a military-run school in northwestern Pakistan and killed at least 141 people, methodically shooting schoolchildren in the head and setting fire to some victims in a horrifying 9-hour rampage.
>
> Shahrukh, a 17-year-old survivor of Tuesday's attack in Peshawar, said many students were assembled in the school auditorium when the gunmen burst in and started spraying bullets. He was shot in both legs and fell to the ground.
>
> "I saw them set one of our teachers on fire in front of me," he said.
>
> The scale and level of brutality in the massacre marked a grim milestone in Pakistan's seven-year battle against Islamist insurgents. Of the 141 killed, 132 were schoolchildren. Fifteen bodies of students were burned so badly they couldn't be immediately identified when they were brought to the city's Combined Military Hospital, security officials said.
>
> Amir Ameen, 18 years old, said he and 11 other students were taking an exam when two gunmen entered their classroom. They shot students one by one, mostly in the head, he said from his bed at Peshawar's Lady Reading Hospital.
>
> The attackers shouted "Allahu akbar" or "God is great" over and over as they shot each student, Mr. Ameen said. They spoke Pashto—the language of Pakistan's Pashtun ethnic majority in northwest Pakistan and southern

> Afghanistan.
>
> […]"The dead children we transported were shot in the head and in the face, some in the eye, as if the gun was close to them," he said. "The children who were injured had gunshot wounds on the back of their legs and arms. They were in shock, but told us they were hit as they ran away from the attackers."
>
> […]"They have attacked funerals and mosques, for them there is no limit. They are operating outside human values," said Mehmood Shah, a retired security official in Peshawar. "They want to terrorize the population into submission."

So that's an example of a terrorist attack. This is 100% OK with people on the left, including self-proclaimed "Christians" who think that coddling terrorists is much better than saving innocent children from terrorists. They consider themselves moral – that's why we need to see what they celebrate by opposing tough interrogation techniques.

One quick note: Barack Obama failed to blame the Taliban for the attack. It's just workplace violence. Fort Hood was workplace violence. The attack on the Parliament was senseless violence. It's never Islamic terrorism, because that would insult the terrorists and make them feel bad about what they did.

Now let's have a defense of enhanced interrogation techniques with that example in mind.

This is also from the Wall Street Journal.

Bret Stephens writes:

> I am not sorry Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the operational mastermind of 9/11, was waterboarded 183 times. KSM also murdered Wall Street Journal reporter Danny Pearl in 2002. He boasted about it: "I decapitated with my blessed right hand the head of the American Jew," he said after his capture.
>
> I am sorry KSM remains alive nearly 12 years after his capture. He has been let off far too lightly. As for his waterboarding, it never would have happened if he had been truthful with his captors. It stopped as soon as he became cooperative. As far as I'm concerned, he waterboarded himself.
>
> […]I am not sorry Osama bin Laden died by an American bullet. John Brennan , the CIA director, delivered a master class in rhetorical obfuscation masquerading as epistemology when he waffled last week about the quality of intelligence yielded by the interrogations of KSM and other high-value detainees. But several former directors and deputy directors of the CIA have all attested to the link between KSM's interrogation and the identification of bin Laden's courier.
>
> I am sorry that the Feinstein Report, which failed to interview those directors and thus has the credibility of a Rolling Stone article, seeks to deny this. Maybe Sabrina Rubin Erdely, author of the discredited University of Virginia gang-rape story and a pro at failing to interview key witnesses, will find a new career in Sen. Feinstein's office.

> […]I am sorry that Mr. Cheney, and every other supporter of enhanced interrogation techniques, has to defend the practices as if they were torture. They are not. Waterboarding is part of the military's standard course in Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape, or SERE. Tens of thousands of U.S. servicemen have gone through it. To describe this as "torture" is to strip the word of its meaning.

In my previous post on this, I wrote about how waterboarding KSM also prevented a 9/11-style attack on Los Angeles.

Economist Thomas Sowell reminds us of the consequences of attacking the CIA, the military and the police.

He writes:

> One of the most obscene acts of the Obama administration, when it first took office, was to launch a criminal investigation of CIA agents who had used harsh interrogation methods against captured terrorists in the wake of the devastating September 11, 2001 aerial attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.
>
> Right after those terrorist attacks, when there were desperate fears of what might be coming next, these CIA agents were trying to spare fellow Americans another attack that could take thousands more lives, or perhaps millions more. To turn on these agents, years later, after they did what they were urged to do, as a patriotic duty in a time of crisis, is both a betrayal of those who acted in the past and a disincentive to those in the future who are charged with safeguarding the nation.
>
> […]The ease with which politicians are willing to pull the rug out from under people whose job is to safeguard our lives — whether they are CIA agents, the police or the military — is not only a betrayal of those people but a danger to us all.
>
> People who are constantly denouncing the police, including with demonstrable lies, may think they are showing solidarity with people in the ghettos. But, when police hesitate to go beyond "kinder and gentler" policing, that leaves decent people in black communities at the mercy of hoodlums and thugs who have no mercy.
>
> When conscientious young people, of any race, who would like to help maintain peace and order see that being a policeman means having race hustlers constantly whipping up mob hostility against you — and having opportunistic politicians and the media joining the race hustlers — those young people may well decide that some other line of work would be better for them.
>
> High crime areas need not only the most, but the best, police they can get. Taking cheap shots at cops is not the way to get the people who are needed.
>
> **When people who volunteer to put their lives on the line in the military to defend this country, at home and abroad, see their buddies killed on**

> **the battlefield, and sometimes themselves come back minus an arm or a leg, or with severe physical and mental damage that they may never get over — and then see some headstrong politician in the White House throw away everything they fought for, and see enemy forces take back places for which Americans shed their blood, that can be galling to them and a deterrent to others who might otherwise take their place in the future.**
>
> **If we cannot see beyond the moment today, we will pay dearly tomorrow and in many more tomorrows.**

How about you? Would you be tough on a terrorist in order to prevent an attack like the one on the Pakistan school? Toughness deters future aggression. Or would you rather let the children die? I don’t have any trouble assessing these alternatives.

New study: bird origins poses a convergence challenge to common ancestry

December 17, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Male cockatiel preens his wife's crest

We have to start this post with the definition of convergence in biology.

> In evolutionary biology, convergent evolution is the process whereby organisms not closely related (not monophyletic), independently evolve similar traits as a result of having to adapt to similar environments or ecological niches.
>
> It is the opposite of divergent evolution, where related species evolve different traits.
>
> On a molecular level, this can happen due to random mutation unrelated to adaptive changes; see long branch attraction. In cultural evolution, convergent evolution is the development of similar cultural adaptations to similar environmental conditions by different peoples with different ancestral cultures. An example of convergent evolution is the similar nature of the flight/wings of insects, birds, pterosaurs, and bats.
>
> All four serve the same function and are similar in structure, but each evolved independently.

And now, this new article on convergence in birds and humans, from Evolution News.

They write:

> Everyone is familiar with the striking ability of certain birds (such as parrots) to vocalize speech, much as humans do. Well, according to the new papers published in *Science* that I wrote about earlier, confirming that birds arose explosively, those vocalization abilities are the result of "convergent evolution" at both the morphological and genetic levels.
>
> *Nature News* reports, "The authors also conclude that vocal learning may have

evolved independently in the ancestors of parrots, hummingbirds and songbirds." But this is about more than just birds. According to a *Science Daily* article about the technical papers, the genetic "convergent evolution" extends to birds *and humans*:

> "We've known for many years that the singing behavior of birds is similar to speech in humans — not identical, but similar — and that the brain circuitry is similar, too," said Jarvis, an associate professor of neurobiology at the Duke University Medical School and an investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. "But we didn't know whether or not those features were the same because the genes were also the same."Now scientists do know, and the answer is yes — birds and humans use essentially the same genes to speak.
>
> After a massive international effort to sequence and compare the entire genomes of 48 species of birds representing every major order of the bird family tree, Jarvis and his colleagues found that vocal learning evolved twice or maybe three times among songbirds, parrots and hummingbirds.
>
> Even more striking is that the set of genes involved in each of those song innovations is remarkably similar to the genes involved in human speaking ability.

If you're already thinking "This isn't 'convergent evolution,' it's common design," you haven't seen the best part yet. *Science Daily* goes on:

> One of the Dec. 12 papers in *Science* found there is a consistent set of just over 50 genes that show higher or lower activity in the brains of vocal learning birds and humans. These changes were not found in the brains of birds that do not have vocal learning and of non-human primates that do not speak, according to this Duke team, which was led by Jarvis; Andreas Pfenning, a graduate of the PhD program in computational biology and bioinformatics (CBB); and Alexander Hartemink, professor of computer science, statistical science and biology."This means that vocal learning birds and humans are more similar to each other for these genes in song and speech brain areas than other birds and primates are to them," Jarvis said.
>
> These genes are involved in forming new connections between neurons of the motor cortex and neurons that control the muscles that produce sound.

The *Science* paper puts it this way:

> More than 50 genes contributed to their convergent specialization and were enriched in motor control and neural connectivity functions. These

> > patterns were not found in vocal nonlearners, but songbird RA was similar to layer 5 of primate motor cortex for another set of genes, supporting previous hypotheses about the similarity of these cell types between bird and mammal brains.(Pfenning et al., "Convergent transcriptional specializations in the brains of humans and song-learning birds," *Science*, Vol. 346: 1256846-1 – 1256846-13 (December 12, 2014).)
>
> So certain birds and humans use the same genes for vocalization — but those genetic abilities are absent in non-human primates and birds without vocal learning? If not derived from a common ancestor, as they clearly were not, how did the genes get there? This kind of extreme convergent genetic evolution points strongly to intelligent design.

The rest of the article talks about the conclusions of the study authors – they think it's a huge problem – and it is.

I hope you're all beginning to see why I *love* birds so much. I just *adore* them. In fact, I am excited about them right now, and will probably appear silly by gushing about how great they are. Fortunately, my editorette is not hear to stop me!

Birds are *not* just a living disproof of naturalistic evolution. They are also loveable *and* adorable. (Especially parrots, of course) If you guys are considering a pet, go out and get yourself a cockatiel, if it's your first bird, or a green-cheek conure, if you've had birds before. Just remember that they live 20-25 years, so you have to be ready to face responsibilities, expectations and obligations if you make a commitment like that. And you know what? That is totally awesome, to have someone to care about. It's good stewardship to care for animals. And if you can't commit to a parrot of your own over the long haul, then put out an additional bird feeder this winter, and vote against wind power. Wind power kills birds, and I hate it.

Also, that bird in the Evolution News post is an Indian ringneck parrot. And they are awesome!!!!

More posts on convergence

- New study: how the hummingbird performs stunning feats of aerobatics
- Another example of convergence found in human and squid eye genes
- Convergence detected in the genetic structure of bats and dolphins
- How biological convergence falsifies Darwinian evolution
- Science Daily reports on genetic convergence in bats and whales
- What kinds of predictions does intelligent design make?
- Is universal common ancestry based on established facts?

Marquette University suspends professor for defending student who opposes gay marriage

December 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Here's the back story from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Students who oppose gay marriage are homophobic, according to an audio recording of a Marquette University instructor who went on to say that gay right issues cannot be discussed in class because it might offend homosexuals.
>
> I reached out to the 20-year-old student at the center of this outrageous episode and the story he tells should serve as a warning to anyone who thinks religious schools are safe havens for open discourse.
>
> The story was first reported on a blog run by a Marquette University professor and was picked up by the good folks over at The College Fix.
>
> The young man, who asked not to be identified, explained what happened when his ethics instructor, Cheryl Abbate, led a conversation in "Theory of Ethics" class about applying philosophical theories to modern political controversies. There were a list of issues on the board – gay rights, gun rights, and the death penalty.
>
> "We had a discussion on all of them – except gay rights," the student told me. "She erased that line from the board and said, 'We all agree on this.'"
>
> Well, as it so happened – the student did not agree with instructor Abbate.
>
> So after class he approached the instructor and told her he thought they should have discussed the issue of gay rights. He also recorded their conversation — without her permission.

I'll cut to the bottom line of that conversation:

> “Are you saying if I don’t agree with gays not being allowed to get married that I’m homophobic?” the student asked.
>
> “I’m saying it would come off as a homophobic comment in this class,” the teacher replied.
>
> **[…]“You can have whatever opinions you want but I will tell you right now – in this class homophobic comments, racist comments, sexist comments will not be tolerated,” she said. ‘If you don’t like it, you are more than free to drop this class.”**
>
> So the student dropped the class.

That was reported in November, here’s the latest from the Washington Times about a professor who blogged about the incident.

Excerpt:

> Marquette University professor John McAdams has been suspended from teaching and banned from campus after blogging about another professor who supposedly shut down opposing views to gay marriage in her ethics class.
>
> In November, Mr. McAdams, who runs the Marquette Warrior blog, wrote a post critical of a philosophy instructor, Cheryl Abbate. Ms. Abbate reportedly told a student in her class that his views against pro-gay policies weren’t welcome in the classroom setting because he could offend students who are gay.
>
> Mr. McAdams accused Ms. Abbate of stifling the student’s free speech rights that professors have a duty to protect.
>
> On Tuesday he received a letter from Dean Richard Holz saying the Marquette Warrior is under investigation and he is suspended from all faculty activities indefinitely.

You can read the professor’s response on his blog.

And let this be a reminder to you not to study anything where these leftist ideology-only professors are teaching. The woman who told the student to agree with her or drop the class was speaking in a mandatory philosophy class. That’s why I keep cautioning people against non-STEM fields. This is where the leftists congregate because non-STEM fields like English are insulated from reality. STEM areas are too difficult for people like Cheryl Abatte to infiltrate, because STEM fields require work and the work is bounded by reality. If you choose a STEM program, you can keep your own worldview, learn practical real-world skills, and get a real job doing real work afterwards. Computer science, petroleum engineering, nursing – or go to a vocational school.

Does foreign policy matter? Obama's appeasement policy comes with a cost

December 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama shakes hands with communist dictator Castro

Just a quick rundown of the foreign policy news that just ruined my day.

Investors Business Daily:

> Just as its patron Venezuela hit the rocks, Cuba got a last-minute rescue from none other than President Obama, who announced a Santa Claus-like package of wish-list goodies for the Castro brothers. Why?
>
> In many ways, President Obama's announced plan to normalize relations with Cuba, lift the embargo, extend trade credits and remove Cuba from the state sponsors of terror list is about on par with the rest of his foreign policy.
>
> It was done by executive order without consulting Congress, just like last month's decision to temporarily legalize 5 million illegal immigrants.
>
> It was justified by a claim the U.S. embargo was "not working," comparable to Obama's claim the U.S. immigration system is "broken." In reality, the problem in both cases is that of a halfhearted willingness to enforce the law, rendering it full of holes.
>
> **As for the hostage swap in the bargain, that of U.S. Agency for International Development subcontractor Alan Gross and another U.S. agent for three professional Cuban intelligence officers linked to the murder of U.S. citizens in the 1996 Brothers to the Rescue shootdown, it was a deal that gave far more than it got, just like the hostage swap with the Taliban of U.S. army deserter Bowe Bergdahl for five terrorists.**
>
> […]One is the strange timing of the announcement, coming just as Venezuela and other nations ruled by petrotyrants are on the verge of collapse.

> Venezuela has played sugar daddy to Cuba for years, shipping 100,000 barrels of free oil to the communist state. It can no longer afford to. Rather than use that as leverage, Obama rescued Cuba despite its repressive human rights record. That's one odd bailout.
>
> And the bailout won't be free for U.S. taxpayers.
>
> Obama administration officials have said they are moving swiftly to extend trade credits to Cuba so the $483 million in American goods Cuba now pays for in cash can expand further, thanks to taxpayer-supported U.S. ExImBank trade credits.
>
> **In effect, we've handed the odious Castro brothers Uncle Sam's credit card. Given that the Castroites have defaulted on all of their trading partners since 1961, to the tune of at least $70 billion, it's assumed the Castros, having no sustainable economic model, will eventually default on us too.**

Washington Post:

> IN RECENT months, the outlook for the Castro regime in Cuba was growing steadily darker. The modest reforms it adopted in recent years to improve abysmal economic conditions had stalled, due to the regime's refusal to allow Cubans greater freedoms. Worse, the acceleratingeconomic collapse of Venezuela meant that the huge subsidies that have kept the Castros afloat for the past decade were in peril. A growing number of Cubans were demanding basic human rights, such as freedom of speech and assembly.
>
> On Wednesday, the Castros suddenly obtained a comprehensive bailout — from the Obama administration. President Obama granted the regimeeverything on its wish list that was within his power to grant; a full lifting of the trade embargo requires congressional action. Full diplomatic relations will be established, Cuba's place on the list of terrorism sponsors reviewed and restrictions lifted on U.S. investment and most travel to Cuba. **That liberalization will provide Havana with a fresh source of desperately needed hard currency and eliminate U.S. leverage for political reforms.**
>
> […]No wonder Yoani Sánchez, Cuba's leading dissident blogger, concluded Wednesday that "Castroism has won" and predicted that for weeks Cubans will have to endure proclamations by the government that it is the "winner of its ultimate battle."
>
> […]Mr. Obama says normalizing relations will allow the United States to be more effective in promoting political change in Cuba. That is contrary to U.S. experience with Communist regimes such as Vietnam, where normalization has led to no improvements on human rights in two decades. Moreover, nothing in Mr. Obama's record of lukewarm and inconstant support for democratic change across the globe can give Ms. Sánchez and her fellow freedom fighters confidence in this promise.

> The Vietnam outcome is what the Castros are counting on: a flood of U.S. tourists and business investment that will allow the regime to maintain its totalitarian system indefinitely. **Mr. Obama may claim that he has dismantled a 50-year-old failed policy; what he has really done is give a 50-year-old failed regime a new lease on life.**

We lost our diplomatic leverage by propping up a communist regime.

But maybe communism is working well for the middle class and the poor in Cuba? Is it?

City Journal:

> Marxists have ruled Cuba for more than a half-century now. Fidel Castro, Argentine guerrilla Che Guevara, and their 26th of July Movement forced Fulgencio Batista from power in 1959 and replaced his standard-issue authoritarian regime with a Communist one. The revolutionaries promised liberal democracy, but Castro secured absolute power and flattened the country with a Marxist-Leninist battering ram. The objectives were total equality and the abolition of money; the methods were total surveillance and political prisons. The state slogan, then and now, is "socialism or death."
>
> […]Cuba has a *maximum* wage—$20 a month for almost every job in the country. (Professionals such as doctors and lawyers can make a whopping $10 extra a month.) Sure, Cubans get "free" health care and education, but as Cuban exile and Yale historian Carlos Eire says, "All slave owners need to keep their slaves healthy and ensure that they have the skills to perform their tasks."
>
> […]The police expend extraordinary manpower ensuring that everyone required to live miserably at the bottom actually does live miserably at the bottom. Dissident blogger and author Yoani Sánchez describes the harassment sarcastically in her book *Havana Real*: "Buses are stopped in the middle of the street and bags inspected to see if we are carrying some cheese, a lobster, or some dangerous shrimp hidden among our personal belongings." Perhaps the saddest symptom of Cuba's state-enforced poverty is the prostitution epidemic—a problem the government officially denies and even forbids foreign journalists based in Havana to mention. Some Cuban prostitutes are professionals, but many are average women—wives, girlfriends, sisters, mothers—who solicit johns once or twice a year for a little extra money to make ends meet.
>
> […]Citizens who take public transportation to work—which includes almost everyone, since Cuba hardly has any cars—must wait in lines for up to two hours each way to get on a bus. And commuters must pay for their ride out of their $20 a month. At least commuter buses are cheap. By contrast, a one-way ticket to the other side of the island costs several months' pay; a round-trip costs almost an annual salary.
>
> […]As for the free health care, patients have to bring their own medicine, their

> own bedsheets, and even their own iodine to the hospital. Most of these items are available only on the illegal black market, moreover, and must be paid for in hard currency—and sometimes they're not available at all. Cuba has sent so many doctors abroad—especially to Venezuela, in exchange for oil—that the island is now facing a personnel shortage.
>
> […][A]lmost everyone in Havana lives in a Detroit-style wreck, with caved-in roofs, peeling paint, and doors hanging on their hinges at odd angles.
>
> […]Even things as simple as cooking oil and soap are black-market goods. Individuals who, by some illegal means or another, manage to acquire such desirables will stand on street corners and whisper "cooking oil" or "sugar" to passersby, and then sell the product on the sly out of their living room. If they're caught, both sellers and buyers will be arrested, of course, but the authorities can't put the entire country in jail. "Everyone cheats," says Eire. "One must in order to survive.

When Barack Obama uses American taxpayer money to prop up communism, he keeps this system going. The only solution is for the people to revolt against communism, but when he hands money to the government, they buy more guns and keep the people down in poverty and squalor while the rich communist elites rule over them. It's evil.

Meanwhile, North Korea is able to attack our private industry without even a peep from cowardly Obama and his retreat from Iraq now allows Islamic State terrorists to execute 150 captured women, many of them pregnant, who refused to become "wives" to the terrorists. Any husbands they had would have been shot right in front of them. There is only one way to do something about these problems in the world and that's with a strong U.S. military, strong sanctions and tough negotiations. Obama has failed these victims in every way because of his approval of the evildoers and his rejection of our democratic allies. We need to have more confidence in the goodness of American power and the American way of life.

“Five ways you are destroying your husband and killing your marriage” goes viral

December 18, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article by Katelyn Carmen appeared on the Mormon web site “Family Share”. Katelyn’s husband must be the luckiest husband in the world, judging by this article. It’s up to EIGHT MILLION views, so a lot of people are reading it – hopefully a lot of wives, not just frustrated husbands.

Here is her intro:

> When I got married, I was amazed at the instant, overwhelming sense of responsibility I felt to love and care for my husband. Suddenly, a huge part of someone else’s well-being and happiness was largely affected by my choices and actions.
>
> Women, we need to be careful about how we are caring for our husbands and marriages. Don’t let the small stuff ruin the things that will bring you the greatest happiness in life.
>
> Here are just a few ways you might be unknowingly destroying your husband and killing your marriage…

The list:

1. Living outside of what you can afford
2. Constant negativity
3. Putting everything else first
4. Withholding physical affection
5. Not speaking his language

I’ll focus on the details of one that I think is important:

> 3. Putting everything else first
>
> When your children, mom, best friends, talents, or career in front of your husband, you send a clear message to him that he is unimportant. Imagine having that message sent to you every day for many years. What would that do to your self esteem?
>
> Put your husband first.
>
> Although it sometimes seems counter-intuitive and counterproductive, I think you’d be amazed to find that it’s often the key to the greatest happiness in marriage. So many couples get divorced these days, because they neglect to care and love one another and put each other first.
>
> If you choose to put each other first, you will find a lot of joy.

As a man, I have tested women for this, and wow… you get quite a range of responses. Some of them are amazing at sensing your needs, preparing themselves to take action and then taking action. On my Facebook page, there is an entire photo album dedicated to the flowers I have sent to this one woman who is particularly awesome at sensing the needs of men and delivering affection, approval and attention to them. Even just contractors who come to do work in her building get the royal treatment. And she is a director who manages *dozens* of other people. She is the most accomplished woman I know personally, and has graduate degrees, a gapless resume, and a fabulous career with TONS of money saved. And she is great at apologetics.

I really would recommend to young women that they try very hard to study something difficult in school that they don't like. STEM degrees are the best choices, especially ones that pay. Whatever you do, DON'T STUDY ENGLISH. You don't want the student loan debts for doing basically nothing, and it won't build your character. Choose computer science, nursing, engineering, economics or business administration. Or go to trade school and learn a useful trade, like dental hygienist. Pick a career that requires you to wrestle with real responsibilities, obligations and the expectations of others. That will mature you and prepare you to do things you don't feel like doing, so that you can handle the needs of children and your husband. Marriage is hard work.

William Lane Craig: churches should focus on apologetics to attract more men

December 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Triablogue quoted this passage from William Lane Craig's April 2013 newsletter, which made me very excited and happy.

Here it is:

> One overwhelming impression of these engagements is the way in which the intellectual defense of Christian faith attracts men. Both at Texas A&M and again at Miami every single student who got up to ask a question was a guy! I wondered if the girls are just shy. But then I remembered a lengthy clip Jan and I watched of cast members of Downton Abbey doing a Q&A with an audience in New York. Almost every person who came to the microphone at that event was a woman! It wasn't until late into the evening that a man finally asked a question, which was remarked by all the cast members. Why the difference between that session and the ones I experienced?—simply because the Downton Abbey program is highly relational, which is more appealing to women, whereas my talks were principally intellectually oriented, which is more appealing to men.
>
> Churches have difficulty attracting men, and the church is becoming increasingly feminized. I believe that apologetics is a key to attracting large numbers of men (as well as women) to church and to Christ. By presenting rational arguments and historical evidences for the truth of the Gospel, by appealing to the mind as well as the heart, we can bring a great influx of men into the Kingdom. I'm so pleased that the church in Canada seems to be awakening to this challenge! I'm convinced that we have the opportunity to revolutionize Western Christianity by reclaiming our intellectual heritage.

I could tell you many, many stories of what it was like for me being shut down by churches who were overly sensitive to the desires of women. In college, I and the other male students had *every attempt* to bring in scholars to lecture or debate *shut down* by female leadership. Every single week it was prayer walks, testimonies, hymn sings… over and over. Eventually, the more manly Christians just quit going. Later on, I witnessed apologetics being shut down in the church from the top down and from the bottom up, as well.

I remember one week an excited male friend invited me to his church because his male pastor was giving sermons using Hugh Ross and Gerald Shroeder books. He was trying to tie in the existence of God to cosmology. Well, I showed up the next Sunday to hear, and was disappointed. I could tell that the pastor wanted to go back to that subject, but he never really did. Later on, we found out that a female parishioner had complained that too much science and evidence had ruined her experience of feeling good and being

comforted.

I could go on and on and on telling stories like this. To this day, I cannot stand being in a church unless that church has organized things like apologetic training classes, public lectures, public debates or public conferences. But that's the minority of churches. The fact is that churches are attended far more by women than by men, and pastors are catering to women more than men. Not only will apologetics not be mentioned, but elements of feminism will creep into doctrine (egalitarianism) and all political issues will be avoided. Church has become a place to have good feelings, and it is far divorced from anything like evidence or politics which might be viewed as judgmental and divisive.

Commenters on Triablogue think that Dr. Craig will draw flak for his comment, but he's not going to draw flak from mature Christians. What he said is correct. Mature Christians are right behind him on this point. Christian men who have tried to act to defend God's reputation in public know that there is something wrong in the churches. And eventually, men just tune out of church because we know that there is nothing there for us. If women want men to come back to church, then they have to change the church away from what it is now.

Was Stalin an atheist? Is atheism or communism responsible for mass murders?

December 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at what Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s. The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

Let's see more from a peer-reviewed journal article authored by Crispin Paine of the University College, London:

> Atheist propaganda and the struggle against religion began immediately after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917. While social change would, under Marxist theory, bring religion to disappear, Leninists argued that the Party should actively help to eradicate religion as a vital step in creating 'New Soviet Man'. The energy with which the Party struggled against religion, though, varied considerably from time to time and from place to place, as did its hostility to particular faith groups. The 1920s saw the closure of innumerable churches and synagogues (and to a lesser extent mosques) and the active persecution of clergy and harassment of believers. From 1930, though, Stalin introduced a less aggressive approach, and wartime support for the government earned for the Russian Orthodox Church, at least, a level of toleration which lasted until Stalin's death. Under Khrushchev antireligious efforts resumed, if spasmodically, and they lasted until the end of the Soviet Union.

An article from the pro-communism Marxist.com web site says this about Stalin:

> During the ultra-left period of forcible collectivisation and the Five Year Plan in Four an attempt was made to liquidate the Church and its influence by government decree. Starting in 1929 churches were forcibly closed and priests arrested and exiled all over the Soviet Union. The celebrated Shrine of the Iberian Virgin in Moscow – esteemed by believers to be the "holiest" in all Russia was demolished – Stalin and his Government were not afraid of strengthening

> religious fanaticism by wounding the feelings of believers as Lenin and Trotsky had been! Religion, they believed, could be liquidated, like the kulak, by a stroke of the pen. The Society of Militant Atheists, under Stalin's orders, issued on May 15th 1932, the "Five Year Plan of Atheism" – by May 1st 1937, such as the "Plan", "not a single house of prayer shall remain in the territory of the USSR, and the very concept of God must be banished from the Soviet Union as a survival of the Middle Ages and an instrument for the oppression of the working masses."!

Now, if all you read were atheist web sites, you'd think that Stalin loved religion and wasn't opposed to Christianity at all. An atheist I know told me that Stalin was a Christian because that's what he was as a child at one point. Funny sort of way to carry out your Christian faith, isn't it? If you read atheist web sites, you'd expect Stalin to have had the career of a William Lane Craig or a J.P. Moreland. And yet in the fever swamp of atheist web sites, this is what they tell themselves. They believe it because they want to believe it. They have to believe it, in order to keep God at bay.

Now, if you were going to pick a hero of the Christian faith, you'd probably pick a real fundamentalist like William Wilberforce, who freed the slaves – because of his evangelical Christian convictions. Wilberforce took Christianity seriously – he believed every verse of the Bible, he tried to convert people to his faith, and he pushed his faith on others by passing laws. He was the worst nightmare of atheism – a politically active Evangelical Christian.

But who is a great atheist who was politically active? When I think of a great atheist, someone who really did the most to oppose the "lie" of God's existence, I think of Josef Stalin. So what kind of morality can we expect from someone who takes the message of Richard Dawkins and Dan Barker seriously and has the political power to really do something about it?

The Ukraine Famine

Take a look at this UK Daily Mail article about a great achievement of the atheist Josef Stalin, which occurred in 1932-1933.

Excerpt:

> Now, 75 years after one of the great forgotten crimes of modern times, Stalin's man-made famine of 1932/3, the former Soviet republic of Ukraine is asking the world to classify it as a genocide.
>
> The Ukrainians call it the Holodomor – the Hunger.
>
> Millions starved as Soviet troops and secret policemen raided their villages, stole the harvest and all the food in villagers' homes.
>
> They dropped dead in the streets, lay dying and rotting in their houses, and some women became so desperate for food that they ate their own children.
>
> If they managed to fend off starvation, they were deported and shot in their

> hundreds of thousands.
>
> So terrible was the famine that Igor Yukhnovsky, director of the Institute of National Memory, the Ukrainian institution researching the Holodomor, believes **as many as nine million may have died.**
>
> […]Between four and five million died in Ukraine, a million died in Kazakhstan and another million in the north Caucasus and the Volga.
>
> By 1933, 5.7 million households – somewhere between ten million and 15 million people – had vanished. They had been deported, shot or died of starvation.

This is what follows when you believe that the universe is an accident, that there is no objective good and evil, that human beings are just animals, that no God will hold us accountable, and that human beings are not made in the image of God for the purpose of freely choosing to come into a relationship with him. The Ukrainian famine is an action that came from a man whose worldview was *passionate atheism.*

Atheism today

You might think that today's atheists are much different than Josef Stalin, but understand that according to a recent survey of atheists conducted by atheists, 97% of atheists are pro-abortion. How many people have been killed by abortion? 56 million in the United States alone. Atheists in a society like ours, founded on Judeo-Christian values, are obviously going to live a lot better than Stalin. For one thing, they don't have the power that Stalin had to eradicate theism, although you can see Stalinism in the anti-Christian activities of groups like the Freedom From Religion Foundation. But take away the Judeo-Christian foundations of this society, and what would you see atheists doing?

Remember the words of Richard Dawkins:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

Now, having said that, I readily admit that many atheists adopt Judeo-Christian values if their society is saturated with them, but they are acting better than their worldview

requires. They are acting *inconsistently* with what atheism really teaches. It’s good for us that they do, but for how long?

Paul Helm debates William Lane Craig on Calvinism and Molinism on Unbelievable

December 19, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to this excellent discussion between Dr. William Lane Craig and Oxford University Calvinist philosopher Dr. Paul Helm. I think this is a useful discussion in general because atheists often bring up problems with Calvinism as objections to Christianity in general, such as:

- If God exists, then he controls everything and I don't have free will
- If God knows the future, then I don't have free will
- If God controls everything, then I am not responsible for my sinning
- If God has to choose me to be saved, then I am not responsible for my damnation

Details:

> If God ordains the future, can humans have free will? Are people predestined for salvation? And what does the Bible say on the matter? William Lane Craig is a Christian philosopher and leading proponent of Molinism, a view of divine sovereignty that seeks to reconcile God's fore-ordination with human free will. Paul Helm is a leading Calvin Scholar. He defends the view that God predestines the future, limiting human freedom.
>
> MP3 of this show: http://cdnapi.kaltura.com/p/618072/sp/61807200/playManifest/entryId/1_jn0bdo52/flavorId/0_002f1k0d/protocol/http/format/url/a.mp3?clientTag=feed:1_jlj47tkv
>
> For William Lane Craig: http://www.reasonablefaith.org
>
> For Paul Helm: http://paulhelmsdeep.blogspot.co.uk/

I was surprised because my Calvinist friend Dina thought that Dr. Helm won this debate, but I thought that Dr. Craig won. So without further ado, here is the snark-free summary of the discussion. I also sent the summary to Dina to make sure that it was reasonably fair and accurate. She said it was biased, but she was predestined to say that. Anyway, there's a commentary on the debate over at Michael's Theology blog. And Calvinist Remington has a podcast review in parts. Part 1 is here.

Summary:

JB: Has Lewis had any impact on your apologetics?

Craig: Not as a scholar, but more as a model of a scholar who leaves a legacy through his published work

JB: How did you become interested in Calvinism?

Helm: Starting from childhood, and lately writing more on Calvinism from a philosophical

point of view

JB: How do you view God’s sovereignty?

Helm: Strong view of divine sovereignty, God is sovereign over all events, but that doesn’t mean that they are determined by him

JB: What is Calvin’s legacy?

Helm: He amplified an existing concept of predestination, and wrote on many other topics

JB: What is Molinism?

Craig: Molina affirms divine sovereignty as Paul Helm does, but he also affirms libertarian free will

Craig: Every event that occurs happens by God’s will or by God’s permission

JB: What about open theism?

Craig: Paul and I both oppose open theism

JB: How does Molinism reconcile human free will and divine sovereignty

Craig: God has knowledge of what would happen under any set of circumstances

Craig: God has knowledge of everything that COULD happen, and he has knowledge of everything that WILL happen

Craig: God knows what each person freely choose to do in any set of circumstances and he can place people in times and places where he is able to achieve his ends without violating creaturely freedom and creaturely responsibility

JB: How does this apply to the issue of salvation?

Craig: The circumstances in which God puts a person includes God leading people to him and he foreknows who will respond to his leading

Craig: God has ordered the world in such a way that he foreknows the exact people who will free respond to his leading if he puts them in certain circumstances

JB: Does God want to save the maximum of people?

Craig: My own view is that God does order the world in such a way that the maximum number of people will respond to God’s drawing them to himself

JB: Is the Molinist view gaining ground?

Craig: Yes, Calvinists and open theists are both moving towards it, and Molinism is the dominant view among philosophical theologians

JB: Why has Molinism not convinced you?

Helm: It’s an unnecessary theory, God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge covers what middle knowledge covers

Helm: Calvinism has a stronger view of sin, such that God has to act unilaterally and irrestibly to save them

JB: Are creatures free on your view?

Helm: My view of free will is weaker than Craig’s view of free will

Craig: For the Calvinist, grace is irresistible, but for the Molinist, grace is effective when it is met with a response from the creature

Craig: The Bible affirms the strong view of free will, when it says that in certain circumstances people can freely choose to do other than they do

Helm: But if a person is in circumstances X and they are free, then why don't they choose something that isn't what God can foresee

Craig: In identical circumstances, a person has the freedom to choose, and God doesn't determine what they choose, he just foreknows what they choose

Helm: How can God foreknow what people will freely do if people have this strong view of freedom that allows them to do anything? God would not know what people can freely do if they really are free

Craig: God has knowledge of what his creatures would freely do in any set of circumstances, he has knowledge of subjunctive statements

Craig: The Scripture is filled with statements that show that God has this knowledge of what people would do in other circumstances (e.g. – 2 Cor 2:8)

Helm: I am not denying that the Bible is full of subjunctive statements, but if humans have real libertarian free will, then God cannot know what they will do

Craig: I think God does preordain everything, Molinism has a strong sense of divine sovereignty BUT the foreordaining is done with the knowledge of what humans would do in any circumstances, so that what God ordains achieves his ends, but without violating creaturely free will

Craig: I take at face value the passages of the Bible where it says that God wants all persons to be saved

Craig: When the Bible says that God wants ALL persons to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), the Bible means that God wants ALL persons to be saved

Craig: So either universalism is true OR there is something that stops all from being saved outside of God

Craig: the something that prevents all from being saved is creaturely free will

Helm: Most people don't have the opportunity to hear the gospel, so God doesn't want all to be saved

Helm: People can still be responsible for what God "fore-ordains"

JB: Can a person really be responsible for wickedness if they didn't freely choose it?

Helm: Even though God is the only one who can act unilaterally to make save people, the people who act wickedly are still responsible

Craig: Molinism provides an answer to the problem of why not all people have heard the gospel, because by using middle knowledge he is able to know who would respond to the gospel if they heard it and he places those people in the times and places where they will hear it

Craig: That solution means that NO ONE is lost because they have not heard the gospel

Craig: There is Biblical support for (Acts 17:27) God choosing the times and places where people will live SO THAT they will be led by him and be able to respond to his leading

JB: Is God the author of sin, on Calvinism?

Craig: If Calvinists define providence to mean causal determinism, then he is the cause of every effect including human actions, and he is the one who causes people to sin

Craig: This view (determinism) impugns the character of God

Helm: I don't think that sovereignty requires determinism

Helm: God has mysterious resources – which I cannot specify – that reconcile his sovereignty with human responsibility for wickedness

JB: But if God is the cause of people doing wrong things, then how can they be responsible for it?

Helm: Well, humans do cause their own actions

Craig: Helm is right to say that God has resources to reconcile God's sovereignty with free will and human responsibility, and that resource is not an unknown mystery, it's middle knowledge

Craig: I can affirm everything in the Westminster Confession except for the one clause where they expressly repudiate middle knowledge as the mechanism for reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

Helm: Well, Calvinists have a strong view of sin so that humans cannot respond to God's leading

Craig: Yes, and that's why humans need prevenient grace in order to respond to him

Craig: God has to take the initiative and draw people to himself or they cannot be saved, but that grace is resistible, and that's what the Bible teaches (Acts 7:51), so humans are still responsible if they resist God

Helm: My view of grace is that it is monergistic and irrestible, it is a unilateral action on the part of God, like pulling someone out of an icy pond which they can't get out of

JB: If humans freely choose to respond to God's drawing and leading, does that diminish grace?

Helm: Many are called but few are chosen

Craig: Molinism does not require synergism – which is the idea that humans are partly responsible for their salvation

Craig: In Eph 2:8, Scripture is clear that faith opposite to works, and responding to God's drawing is not meritorious

JB: So receiving a gift is not meritorious?

Craig: It's the passive acceptance of what someone else has done for you

Helm: But doesn't this mean that you can lose your salvation, because you can accept and resist the gift of salvation?

Craig: That's a separate question that Christians can differ on, but if the Holy Spirit indwells a person and seals them, then that would argue for the view that salvation cannot be revoked

JB: Doesn't Romans 8 teach Calvinism pretty clearly?

Helm: This is called the "golden chain", and it does support Calvinism

Craig: Actually, this text is no problem for Molinists because the first link in the chain is foreknowledge, which, if it incorporates middle knowledge, is no problem for Molinists

Craig: What God is electing in Romans 8 is a specific group of people that he knows in advance of creating the universe will freely respond to his drawing them to him

Craig: In Acts 4:27-28, it is talking about God's foreknowledge, which involves and incorporates knowledge of what any individual would freely choose if placed in those circumstances

JB: If God actualizes a set plan with set circumstances for everyone, isn't that very similar to Calvinism?

Craig: Yes! It's a strong statement of divine sovereignty

Helm: Foreknowledge doesn't mean that God knows what people would do, it's just refering to God "knowing his own mind" about what he wants to do

JB: How do you respond to the fairness of God unilaterally and specifically choosing some people for salvation and choosing other people for damnation (because he refuses to act unilaterally for them)?

Helm: God ordinarily bypasses other people in the Bible, like when he chooses the Jews as his chosen people

Craig: The problem with that is that the Bible clearly teaches that God has a genuine will that all will be saved and he makes a genuine offer of salvation to all people

Craig: Also, just being a Jew and a member of the chosen people doesn't mean you were saved, because some Jews rebelled against God

Craig: And there were also people outside of the Jewish people who were righteous and in a relationship with God, like Job

Helm: "the fabric of our faith" depends on God's choice and his not-choice, it is fundamental to the Bible and to God's character, and choosing them "effectively" (irrestibly and unilaterally)

Helm: The idea of God considering "possible worlds", some of which are feasible and not feasible, with conflicts between the wills of free creatures in different circumstances, and then actualizing one world that achieve these ends is very messy

Craig: Some worlds may not feasible for God to create, for example a world in which everyone is saved – it is logically possible, but may not be feasible

Craig: God will not exercise any divine coercion to force people to go to Heaven against their own will

Helm: If God chooses a world because it is feasible, then he doesn't love me directly, he

is choosing a world, not individuals

Craig: Well, when God actualizes a world, he specifically knows which individuals will be saved within that world, but without disrespecting free will

Craig: The world isn't primary, the individuals are primary

Helm: I think that middle knowledge can he included in God's natural knowledge and free knowledge

Craig: The knowledge of what people would do in different circumstances is based on the freedom of the individuals

JB: Make your conclusions!

Craig: Molinism is a Biblical model for reconciling divine sovereignty with human freedom

Helm: It is intellectually mystifying to introduce this strong view of human freedom and it is not Biblical

Bible study: the importance of truth in religion

December 20, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A special Christian lady I know has a birthday today, so I am posting a Bible study post especially for her. Happy birthday, Princess M!

Here's an interesting passage of the Bible. What do you all think the practical value of this passage is?

[1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

[2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

[3] he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

[4] Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

[6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

[7] Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[8] Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

[9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

[10] The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

[11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

[12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king’s officer, “Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?” Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.”

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

[27] Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

[29] “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

[30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom

than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

This passage is interesting to me because it shows the kind of attitude that God answers. The King in this passage was tired of hearing man-made stories from his servants – stories that were undoubtedly influenced by the servants desire to survive the King's wrath. The servants would only have told the King things that were vague and happy, so that they could never be proved wrong or found to be judgmental or offensive. But the King was tired of that. He wanted someone with authority to tell him the truth about the way the world was.

In the rest of the chapter, Daniel interprets the dream, and concludes by saying this: "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.". The King replies: "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

I think it is is going to be difficult for Christians living today to be able to tell people their dreams like that. But what we can do is talk about God's miracles as revealed by science and history. We can study astrophysics, biochemistry and history and we can explain what God did in creating and fine-tuning the universe for life, in sequencing amino acids into functioning proteins, in creating brand new body plans in the Cambrian explosion, in raising Jesus from the dead as a matter of historical record, and so on. We have to show how great God is to people who do not even think he exists, and without assuming that they believe in the Bible.

There are still people out there like the King who are looking for someone who can speak to them with authority. All it takes from us is a little studying, and we can be like Daniel, too. But we have to know what God has done from science and history, and speak with authority about how we can know that God has acted *supernaturally*. Authority to speak comes from having knowledge about what we are talking about, and knowledge comes from studying and debating with people we disagree with. Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer in the God of Israel, but he was still interested in truth. That won't always be the case, but it is the case for some people.

Did leftist hate speech get two cops killed in New York?

December 21, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the news story from WPIX.

Excerpt:

> In a horrific targeted shooting that has stunned the city, two police officers sitting in their car in Brooklyn were shot and killed execution-style Saturday afternoon by a killer who had a "strong bias" against police.
>
> "They were quite simply assassinated, targeted for their uniforms, and for the responsibility they embraced to keep the people of this city safe," Police Commissioner Bill Bratton said at a news conference on the deaths of Officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos.
>
> They were murdered at about 2:47 p.m. outside 98 Tompkins Ave., both in full uniform while sitting in their patrol car. Ramos was in the drivers seat and Liu was in the front seat beside him.
>
> According to Bratton, the killer, Ismaaiyl Brinsley, 28, assumed a shooting stance and fired his weapon several times through front passenger window. They never had the chance to draw their weapons; indeed, they may never had seen their assailant.
>
> […]**Brinsley was posting disturbing information on Instagram, Bratton said, which had a strong anti-police bias.**
>
> **"I'm Putting Wings On Pigs Today. They Take 1 Of Ours…Let's Take 2 of Theirs," Brinsley wrote in one of his Instagram postings. He posted more disturbing messages as he headed north to New York City.**

My headline for this post is meant to pose a serious question. I am often told by leftists that opposition to things like abortion, gay marriage, radical Islam, etc. is dangerous because someone reading it will get angry and commit an act of violence. This is why we have government-run censorship panels to charge people who utter "hate speech" which could expose people to violence.

Does this ever happen on the right? I am not familiar with any case where conservative speech has incited violence. Conversely, leftist hate speech often incites violence. Consider the case where Southern Povery Law Center publishes a map with the Family Research Council building, and calls them a "hate" group. That map is then picked up by a gay activist who then picks up a gun and storms the building in an act of (literal) domestic terrorism. It seems to me that we need to be considering what is and is not hate speech when we have actual violence being committed.

Well, this time we have two dead cops, murdered execution-style. So how about the

speech of the leftist race hustlers? Shouldn't the government-run censorship panels investigate them for hate speech that *actually did* incite violence? Instead of focusing on speech that merely disagrees with other people, we should look at crimes like this one and ask ourselves – whose speech incited this crime?

In a related video, we can see that the police are certainly unhappy with the way that socialist leftist New York mayor Bill de Blasio spoke negatively about the NYPD:

I wonder if de Blasio understands why they did that?

If we really were to get serious about blocking the leftist hate speech that causes violence, we would probably have to regulate most mainstream media news networks – definitely MSNBC. And most universities, too.

UPDATE: Answering Muslims has discovered that the shooter cited a passage from the Quran prior to the shooting.

Vermont governor cancels single-payer health care because of costs

December 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Reported by the Daily Signal:

> Gov. Peter Shumlin announced this week he has called off his plans for single-payer health care in Vermont for 2015, saying "now is not the right time."
>
> **At an unannounced news conference, Shumlin said he received the final modeling for financing single-payer health care on Tuesday and concluded the taxes required to fund a publicly financed system were simply unaffordable.**
>
> "As we completed the financing modeling in the last several days, it became clear that the risk of economic shock is too high at this time to offer a plan I can responsibly support for passage in the legislature," Shumlin said.
>
> "It was clear to me that the taxes required to replace health-care premiums with a publicly financed plan that would best serve Vermont are, in a word, enormous."
>
> The surprise announcement, which came nearly two weeks ahead of schedule, included details that Green Mountain Care's new-revenues requirement had ballooned to $2.6 billion — up from prior high estimates of $2.2 billion. The overall cost for Green Mountain Care's operations and coverage is estimated at $4.3 billion.
>
> **According to Shumlin's financing plan, paying for Green Mountain Care would require a new 11.5 percent payroll tax on all Vermont businesses plus a new sliding-scale income tax of up to 9.5 percent, based on income level and family size.**
>
> Under Shumlin's plan, a family of four with $100,000 of income or more would pay the full 9.5 percent tax. The maximum income tax for any single household would be capped at $27,500.
>
> **At the news conference, Shumlin called single-payer "the greatest disappointment of my political life so far," and he explained why he abandoned his signature policy initiative of the past four years.**

Recall that single-payer health care is the holy grail of the left. It is a massive opportunity for vote-buying because it involves mandatory taxation for "health care" which is then doled out to patients as the government sees fit. Money from people who don't use or need health care (e.g. – young, single men) is taken by mandatory taxation and then used to buy votes of people by making things like contraceptives, breast enlargements, sex changes, IVF, etc. into "health care".

Canada has a single-payer system. How much does this system cost the average Canadian taxpayer?

CTV News reports on a study published by the Fraser Institute.

It says:

> A typical Canadian family with two parents and two kids will pay up to $11,786 for public health care insurance this year, according to a new study from the conservative think tank Fraser Institute.
>
> Using data from Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the Fraser Institute study estimated the amount of taxes Canadian families will pay for public health insurance this year. The study also looked at how much the cost of public health insurance has increased over the last decade.
>
> According to the study, Canadian families will pay on average between $3,592 to $11,786 for public health insurance in 2014, depending on the size of their family. For the purposes of their research, the study authors looked at six different family types.
>
> The study found that over the last 10 years, the cost of public health care insurance for the average Canadian family has increased:
>
> - 1.5 times faster than average income
> - 1.3 times as fast as the cost of housing
> - 1.6 times as fast as clothing costs
> - More than three times as fast as the cost of food

Not only are the costs higher, but the quality is lower when measuring patient outcomes.

We should avoid this system at all costs. Free-market health care is better than government-run health care at keeping costs down. The more we reduce government control of health care, increase competition among health care providers and improve consumer choice, the lower the costs will be.

Frequent denial of sex breaks the marriage covenant as much as adultery

December 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's start this post by quoting a passage from the Bible.

1 Corinthians 7:1-5:

1 Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

[2] But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband.

[3] The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

[4] The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*.

[5] Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

So with that in mind, I want to turn to a well-known Jewish talk show host named Dennis Prager, who is much loved and listened to by Christians. Dennis Prager features a lot of discussions about male-female relationships on his show, particularly during the male-female hour. In this two part series on male sexuality, he explains why women should not deprive their husbands of sex without a good reason.

Part 1 is here.

Excerpt:

> It is an axiom of contemporary marital life that if a wife is not in the mood, she need not have sex with her husband. Here are some arguments why a woman who loves her husband might want to rethink this axiom.
>
> First, women need to recognize how a man understands a wife's refusal to have sex with him: A husband knows that his wife loves him first and foremost by her willingness to give her body to him. This is rarely the case for women. Few women know their husband loves them because he gives her his body (the idea sounds almost funny). This is, therefore, usually a revelation to a woman. Many women think men's natures are similar to theirs, and this is so different from a woman's nature, that few women know this about men unless told about it.
>
> This is a major reason many husbands clam up. A man whose wife frequently denies him sex will first be hurt, then sad, then angry, then quiet. And most men will never tell their wives why they have become quiet and distant. They are afraid to tell their wives. They are often made to feel ashamed of their male sexual nature, and they are humiliated (indeed emasculated) by feeling that they

> are reduced to having to beg for sex.
>
> When first told this about men, women generally react in one or more of five ways…

He then explains the 5 ways that women respond to this.

Here's one:

> 1. You have to be kidding. That certainly isn't my way of knowing if he loves me. There have to be deeper ways than sex for me to show my husband that I love him.

I think that this is a common mistake that liberal women make because they think that men are just hairy women. But men are not women, we are different and sex means something different to men than it does to women. In the past, *most* women understood how men are different than women, but younger women have been taught that there are no differences between the sexes. To think any different is "sexism".

Here's another from the list:

> 4. You have it backwards. If he truly loved me, he wouldn't expect sex when I'm not in the mood.

Again, this is the common mistake that many younger women today make in thinking that love is a one-way street – flowing from men and children to the woman. If men and children DON'T do what the woman wants, or if they make demands on her, then they don't "love" her and she is justified in ignoring them.

Liberal women have been taught to believe that they are always victims or some group of oppressors, such as men and children or corporations. It makes them rebel against having to do anything for anyone else, because they don't want to be "oppressed". That makes them unable to accept that relationships are give-and-take, Once a commitment to love another person permanently has been made, then each person has responsibilities to provide for the needs of the other.

I actually had a conversation with a Christian woman once who said that women should not be obligated to do things that they didn't feel like doing. I asked her if men were obligated to go to work when they didn't feel like going. She said yes, and acted as though I were crazy for asking. I just laughed, because she didn't even see the inconsistency. The truth is that men often don't feel like working, but they get up and go to work anyway, whether they like it or not (in most cases). Similarly, a women should feel obligated to have sex with her husband, even if she is not in a perfect mood for it (in most cases). Sometimes, a man stays home from work, and it's OK. And sometimes a woman says no to sex, and it's OK. But it's not OK to stop doing it for months and months with no good reason.

Part 2 is here.

Excerpt:

> Here are eight reasons for a woman not to allow not being in the mood for sex to determine whether she denies her husband sex.

He then explains the eight reasons.

Here's one of them:

> 7. Many contemporary women have an almost exclusively romantic notion of sex: It should always be mutually desired and equally satisfying or one should not engage in it. Therefore, if a couple engages in sexual relations when he wants it and she does not, the act is "dehumanizing" and "mechanical." Now, ideally, every time a husband and wife have sex, they would equally desire it and equally enjoy it. But, given the different sexual natures of men and women, this cannot always be the case. If it is romance a woman seeks — and she has every reason to seek it — it would help her to realize how much more romantic her husband and her marriage are likely to be if he is not regularly denied sex, even of the non-romantic variety.

Women have to engage their husbands if they expect their husbands to engage in the marriage as a husband and father. Men can't do their protector, provider and spiritual leader roles forever unless their needs are met at some point. Performance of these male duties is not free. Wives have to love their husbands in the way that men expect to be loved. That's what they vowed to do in the wedding, isn't it?

At the end of the article, Prager makes a general point about women that I think needs to be emphasized over and over and over:

> That solution is for a wife who loves her husband — if she doesn't love him, mood is not the problem — to be guided by her mind, not her mood, in deciding whether to deny her husband sex.

This problem of sex-withholding is so widespread, that it really makes me (although I am a virgin) wonder what women think that marriage is about anyway. When a woman vows to love her husband, what do they think that word really means? Why do women think that men marry? What do men want that marriage provides for them? Which of those needs are the women's responsibility to provide for? I think these are questions that men should ask women. I think women should be prepared to answer them. Men should expect that women be reading books on men and marriage, and that she has relationships with men where she is giving support, respect, affirmation, affection and approval. You can learn a lot about a woman by how she treats her father, for example.

Unfortunately, many men today haven't thought through what they need from wives in a marriage. They spend their young years chasing women who are fun and sexually permissive. Every husband I asked about what they need has told me that respect, affirmation, affection and regular sex are more important than appearance and fun. Pre-marital sex, having fun, getting drunk, and going out, etc. are not the right foundation for marriage – which requires mutual self-sacrifice in order to work.

Another point: I have a friend who is very concerned that men are breaking sexual rules, but he seems oblivious to 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. I asked him privately what he thought about sex-withholding, and whether this might cause husbands to turn to pornography and even affairs, and I mentioned 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. He said: “no, it’s not something I take much interest in”. I was tempted to ask him if the Bible was something that he does not take much interest in.

I think he misreads 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 so that it could only be used to condemn *men*. If that were his view, then it actually worries me if well-meaning men are actually undermining marriage, by teaching women that they have no responsibilities to keep the marriage going, and helping them to feel like victims when their marriages fall apart. Sometimes even people who claim to be pro-marriage can undermine marriage practically-speaking, because of their unBiblical belief that women are “naturally good” and should not have any responsibilities in a marriage.

I thought this attitude was so interesting in view of what I read in the Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands. In that book, Dr. Laura urges women to be sensitive to their husbands’ different male natures in order to avoid them looking at pornography and having affairs. Withholding sex from a man is the equivalent of a man withholding *conversation* to a woman. Sex is how a man feels loved! What’s remarkable is how female callers on her show are shocked that men react badly to being deprived of sex.

I do think that some men will look at porn and cheat regardless of what their wife does sexually, but then it again falls to the woman to choose a man who has demonstrated that he has self-control – i.e., a virgin who has remained chaste with her throughout the courtship and protected her from doing sexual things outside of the covenant context. Chastity is hard, but it is how a man loves his wife self-sacrificially, before he even meets her. It should be a trait much sought after *and respected* by women. Basically, women need to be led by their minds, not by their feelings, when choosing a husband.

A man has to get up and go to work every day for his family, regardless of whether he feels like it or not. In fact, the many decisions he has made before getting married are also made not because they make him happy, but because he needs to be responsible to his future wife and children. The decision to study science? Loving obligation. The decision to go to grad school in science? Loving obligation. The decision to work in a demanding, risky career? Loving obligation. The decision to save money and eat instant oatmeal for dinner? Loving obligation. Men don’t do these things because we enjoy them. We do it because we love our wives and children self-sacrificially, *before we ever even meet them*. I think that women need to do the same.

George Ellis and Joe Silk attack untestable cosmological theories in Nature

December 22, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this Evolution News post about it, thanks to a J. Warner Wallace tweet. The article they linked is by two well-known cosmologists.

EN writes:

> Here's what George Ellis and Joe Silk say in *Nature* ("Scientific Method: Defend the Integrity of Physics"):
>
> > This year, debates in physics circles took **a worrying turn**. Faced with difficulties in applying fundamental theories to the observed Universe, some researchers **called for a change in how theoretical physics is done**. They began to argue — explicitly — that if a theory is **sufficiently elegant and explanatory**, it **need not be tested experimentally**, breaking with centuries of philosophical tradition of defining scientific knowledge as **empirical**. We disagree. As the philosopher of science Karl Popper argued: **a theory must be falsifiable to be scientific**. (Emphasis added.)
>
> In particular, they chide the string theorists, multiverse advocates, inflation theorists, and purveyors of the "many worlds" interpretation of quantum mechanics.

Their concern is that the requirement for testability is being relaxed for junky theories.

> Whether Ellis and Silk's definitions of science and the scientific method are adequate is beside the point (the definition of science is a vexed question, testability is vague, and falsifiability has its flaws). What worries them is something else:
>
> > The issue of **testability** has been lurking for a decade. **String theory** and **multiverse theory** have been criticized in popular books and articles, including some by one of us (G.E.). In March, theorist Paul Steinhardt wrote in this journal that the theory of **inflationary cosmology** is no longer scientific because it is **so flexible that it can accommodate any observational result.** Theorist and philosopher Richard Dawid and cosmologist Sean Carroll have countered those criticisms **with a philosophical case to weaken the testability requirement for fundamental physics**.

Interesting that Sean Carroll, a naturalist who proposes naturalistic alternatives to the standard (theism-friendly) cosmology model (creation out of nothing), wants to weaken

the testability requirement. Why do you think that is? Well, if we go by which model is testable, rather than which model is acceptable to that old-time naturalistic religion, then then the standard model (creation out of nothing) wins. That's because we have experimental evidence for the standard model, (light element abundances, cosmic microwave background radiation, second law of thermodynamics, etc.) Carroll's model is falsified by observations (e.g. – humans exist, not Boltzmann brains), and that's why why he weakens the criterion of testability. If testability is what makes science, then he's really just engaged in creative writing.

And about the multiverse in particular:

> > Look what they say about multiverse theory:
> >
> > > The multiverse is motivated by **a puzzle**: why **fundamental constants of nature**, such as the fine-structure constant that characterizes the strength of electromagnetic interactions between particles and the cosmological constant associated with the acceleration of the expansion of the Universe, **have values that lie in the small range that allows life to exist.** Multiverse theory claims that there are billions of unobservable sister universes out there in which all possible values of these constants can occur. So somewhere there will be a bio-friendly universe like ours, **however improbable** that is.
> >
> > That sounds like a lead-up to *The Privileged Planet*, or to *Privileged Species*. Ellis and Silk go on to describe how one of the constants, the cosmological constant, is 120 orders of magnitude off from the predicted theoretical value. So are they ready to consider scientific theories that embrace this evidence, like intelligent design? No, but one thing they do know: multiverse theory is not scientific.
> >
> > > Billions of universes — and of galaxies and copies of each of us — accumulate with **no possibility of communication** between them **or of testing their reality**. But if a duplicate self exists in every multiverse domain and there are infinitely many, **which is the real 'me' that I experience now?** Is any version of oneself preferred over any other? **How could 'I' ever know what the 'true' nature of reality is if one self favours the multiverse and another does not?**
> >
> > That's a logical statement, not an observational one. By this, we see that they are not against using logical inference to eliminate unworthy theories. Isn't that what Meyer does in his books, using "inference to the best explanation"? Isn't that what Dembski does to eliminate the chance hypothesis?

> > In the end, Ellis and Silk never explain cosmic fine-tuning. They just preach that science needs to stick to the old-time religion: respect for observable, testable evidence.

The article by Ellis and Silk takes a lot of shots at fundamentalist religion, but at least we fundamentalists are OK with following *testable* science wherever it goes. Unlike naturalists.

One of the murdered NYPD police officers was a chaplain-in-training

December 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The rhetoric of the leftist mob

Consider this story from the Christian Post about Officer Ramos.

Excerpt:

> Officer Rafael Ramos was passionate about serving God and saw his work as a police officer as a form of ministry; he would have been commissioned as a lay chaplain this past Saturday, the day he was killed.
>
> Ramos was shot and killed execution style along with his partner, Wenjian Liu, on Saturday by a lone gunmen who took his own life inside a New York City subway station after committing the double murder.
>
> Rev. Marcos Miranda, the president of the New York State Chaplain Task Force where Ramos was studying to be certified as a chaplain, remembers the officer as kind man.
>
> "It was an honor to have him (Officer Ramos)," Miranda told The Christian Post. "He had just taken the 10-week course and was a faithful member of his local church, Christ Tabernacle. He was due to graduate this past Saturday, where we graduated 144 chaplains. Ramos would have been a lay leader and been endorsed by his denomination."
>
> "I will remember his kindness the most — even the kindness in his eyes — in our talks, he asked what I thought of him being a police officer, and I said it was an honorable job. He said he thought it was ministry because he was helping those in need. He never thought he could be a chaplain, he saw himself doing this type of ministry after he retired from the NYPD. He was very excited about that possibility," Miranda added.
>
> Miranda is not the only person to remember Ramos' faith and passion for the

> Lord.
>
> "My cousin had a couple of priorities in his life," Ramos' cousin, Ronnie, told The Wall Street Journal on Sunday. "One was God, because he was a God-loving man. I wish I could be half the man my cousin was. He was sweet. He didn't deserve to die."
>
> […]Ramos turned 40 this month and was due to graduate from a community-crisis chaplaincy program, which was incredibly important to the father of two.
>
> Ramos' 13-year-old son, Jaden, posted a heartfelt message about his father on Facebook, which has since gone viral.
>
> "He was the best father I could ask for," Jaden wrote. "It's horrible that someone gets shot dead just for being a police officer. Everyone says they hate cops but they are the people that they call for help. I will always love you and I will never forget you. RIP Dad."

Why did these two minority men, one Hispanic, one Asian, get shot?

Famous black economist Thomas Sowell has the answer in his latest column.

He writes:

> Mayor de Blasio has made anti-police comments with Al Sharpton seated at his side. **This is the same Al Sharpton with a trail of slime going back more than a quarter of a century, during which he has whipped up mobs and fomented race hatred from the days of the Tawana Brawley "rape" hoax of 1987 to the Duke University "rape" hoax of 2006 and the Ferguson riots of 2014.**
>
> **Make no mistake about it. There is political mileage to be made siding with demagogues like Al Sharpton who, as demagogue in chief, has been invited to the White House dozens of times by its commander in chief.**
>
> Many in the media and among the intelligentsia cherish the romantic tale of an "us" against "them" struggle of beleaguered ghetto blacks defending themselves against the aggression of white policemen. The gullible include both whites who don't know what they're talking about and blacks who don't know what they're talking about, either, because they never grew up in a ghetto. Among the latter are the president and his attorney general.
>
> Such people readily buy the story that ghetto social problems today — from children being raised without a father to runaway murder rates — are "a legacy of slavery," even though such social problems were nowhere near as severe in the first half of the 20th century as they became in the second half.
>
> You would be hard-pressed to name just five examples from the first half of the 20th century of the kinds of ghetto riots that have raged in more than 100 cities during the second half. Such riots are a legacy of the social degeneracy of our

> times.
>
> Calling this social degeneracy “a legacy of slavery” is not just an excuse for those who engage in it, it is an excuse for the ideology of the intelligentsia behind the social policies that promoted this degeneracy.
>
> **Let those who have laid a guilt trip on people in our times, for evils done by other people in past centuries, at least face their own responsibility for the evil consequences of their own notions and policies. If they won’t do it, then the rest of us need to stop listening gullibly to what they are saying.**

I wonder if the leftist leaders who demonized the police feel sorry for what they did now. I know that they want to claim now that they never meant things to go this far, but things did go this far. And I think that there is a direct connection between the rhetoric of the leftist leaders and the deaths of these police officers. Maybe instead of complaining about the police, they should complain about how subsidizing single motherhood with welfare and repealing welfare reform causes fatherlessness, and how fatherlessness causes young men to commit crimes. But they can’t do that, because that’s where their votes come from – government dependency.

Two reasons to avoid premarital sex: trust issues and contact with exes

December 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Family Studies blog. (H/T Brad Wilcox)

Excerpt:.

> My own research with working-class young adults leads me to believe that they have basically made peace with sexual permissiveness—at least outside of marriage—even as they retain some ambivalence about it. They tend to move in quickly with new romantic partners, even as they worry that people rush too quickly into relationships. From survey data, we know that people without a college education have more lifetime sexual partners than those with a college education, and that most of them see no problem with premarital sex.
>
> But there is one problem: easy access to sex with multiple partners can make for complicated relationships. As sexual partners accumulate, so does the potential for distrust. As one man whose ex-girlfriend had cheated on him explained, “It’s gonna take a lot more time for me to ever trust somebody again like that. I let her in quick, and now it’s never gonna happen again.” One divorced man said simply, “Everyone has to watch their ass all the time.” There is the feeling that no one is safe—even in marriage. As another young man claimed, “Nowadays, even though you got a ring on your finger, people tend to look past that.”
>
> So people describe keeping vigilant watch over their partners’ cell phones, policing for messages from exes. They live an all but married lifestyle, yet they say that they are hesitant to make the commitment of marriage. Why? Part of the reason is that they don’t trust their partner, or themselves, to remain in the marriage. In one survey, 42.5 percent of low-income, unmarried respondents cited “worry that the marriage would end in divorce” as a reason they might not be pursuing marriage, and 23.5 percent cited “questions about whether your partner is trustworthy.” As one young man that I interviewed said after learning that his fiancée was cheating on him, “I don’t trust nobody.”
>
> **That distrust is at least partly the legacy of the libertarian sexual ethic, which assumes that sexual activity outside of marriage is typically okay so long as people are mutually consenting to the acts. And that distrust is why I have a hard time believing—as Noah Smith does—that sexual permissiveness will somehow evolve into more stable marriages for the working class. (Indeed, having more sexual partners prior to marriage is linked to greater odds of divorce, as Nicholas Wolfinger and W. Bradford Wilcox recently documented.) There is no invisible hand that will transform James and Jessica’s distrust and cynicism, which stems in part from their multiple past sexual relationships, into trust and an**

> **enduring marriage. What the working class needs—what we all need—to achieve our shared aspirations for lifelong love and a stable family is social permission to date without immediately having sex.**
>
> That's important because today young people often assume that withholding sex is a sign of distrust. As James said, if you begin a relationship and don't have sex, "they automatically assume that you're cheating." But sliding into sex often translates into sliding into a relationship—and children—without first building trust and discerning for character and compatibility. And that slide often contributes to the erosion of trust in the opposite sex and in lifelong love. We must confront that reality if we're serious about empowering working young adults to achieve trusting relationships.

"Withholding sex" makes it sound bad. You don't have sex or even do sexual things before marriage because you are trying to prove to your partner that you have self-control enough that when you are married, he/she need not be concerned that you are OK with sex outside of a lifelong commitment. You restrain yourself in order to prove to the other person that you have what it takes in order to be trusted, and the other person does the same to you. It's not that you are trying to reduce the amount of "fun" you are having, it's that you are auditioning for a role, and this is what the other person needs to see from you during the courtship – chastity. It's even better if your exes can produce letters of reference. I always produce letters of references from my exes and they tell the woman "you have nothing to worry about, he may push you for many, many things as he leads you, but sex isn't one of those things". I am very demanding about women learning and growing – just not demanding about sex. Sex is for marriage.

Usually, when a girl I court has sexual experience, it's because she had a period when she was not a Christian. This is fine with me (it's something that requires adjustments and some extra work). You might think because I am so demanding and judgmental, that this is an immediate disqualifier, but it's not. What I like to do is try to lead the woman to learn apologetics, conservative ideas, how marriage works, etc. Usually what happens is that she compares me to her ex-boyfriends who were not Christians and thinks "wow! those guys had no plan for me beyond making me fulfill their sexual needs". Which is what you can expect from a non-Christian man – they have no interest in introducing you to the Boss, and telling you what the Boss requires. That's one of the pluses of being courted by a Christian man – we put the woman's service to God first. We don't push her into sex, because we find other ways for her to show that she loves us other than sex. There are a BILLION ways for a woman to show that she loves you and is interested in you without pushing her for anything sexual.

It does have a strong effect on a woman when she sees me putting my needs second, and trying to get her to learn stuff that is helpful to the Boss. I think when a woman experiences that, it's difficult for them to go back to non-Christian men. At least, that's my experience. The more you teach a woman about how a marriage actually runs, and what a man actually does in a marriage, the less she tends to like guys who have not

prepared for marriage. Well, at least a good woman will connect the dots and adjust what kind of man she is interested in. Men are designed to be protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders. Although it’s tempting for a woman to go for men who don’t make demands and don’t make judgments, in the long run, it’s not good for a marriage project. It would be like stepping on a football field and preferring to talk to the guy who doesn’t take winning too seriously. He’s fun to talk to, not very demanding, but it’s not going anywhere. I think women who choose men who don’t lead or judge on purpose may feel more comfortable, but a goal-directed, demanding relationship is actually more stable.

Can a person believe in God and evolution at the same time?

December 23, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Was Mount Rushmore designed?

Here's a post on Evolution News that explains what theistic evolution is:

> Three geologists stand at the foot of Mt. Rushmore. The first geologist says, "This mountain depicts perfectly the faces of four U.S. Presidents, it must be the work of a master sculptor." The second says, "You are a geologist, you should know that all mountains were created by natural forces, such as volcanoes and plate movements, the details were then sculpted by erosion from water and wind. How could you possibly think this was the work of an intelligent sculptor? Only a person completely ignorant of geophysics could think those faces were designed."
>
> The third geologist says to himself, "I don't want to be seen as ignorant, but the faces in this mountain sure do look like they were designed." So he thinks a moment and says to the second geologist, "Of course you are right, these faces were sculpted by natural forces such as erosion. Only an ignorant person would think they were designed." Then he turns to the first and says, "But what a magnificent result, there obviously must have been a master sculptor standing by and watching."

The third geologist is a theistic evolutionist. Someone who thinks that God did nothing detectable by science in the whole history of the universe, but who also loves to talk about their religious experience and what hymns they like to sing in church. Synonyms for this definition of theistic evolution are "supernaturalist naturalism" and "theistic atheism". I like the latter, myself. Theistic atheism. Atheism at work for my colleagues on Monday, and theism in the church for my pastor on Sundays.

Now if you call yourself a theistic evolutionist, but you think that intelligent design is *detectable in nature by non-theists doing ordinary science with ordinary scientific methods*, then you are not a theistic evolutionist according to this definition. This post is not describing you.

You can listen to a debate on theistic evolution between Michael Behe and theistic evolutionist Keith Fox right here to decide if theistic evolution is *true.* A summary is provided for those who prefer to read instead of listen.

New study: high levels of generosity to spouse makes a happier marriage

December 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the ultra-leftist New York Times, of all places. (H/T Brad Wilcox)

Excerpt:

> Researchers from the University of Virginia's National Marriage Project recently studied the role of generosity in the marriages of 2,870 men and women. Generosity was defined as "the virtue of giving good things to one's spouse freely and abundantly" — like simply making them coffee in the morning — and researchers quizzed men and women on how often they behaved generously toward their partners. How often did they express affection? How willing were they to forgive?
>
> The responses went right to the core of their unions. Men and women with the highest scores on the generosity scale were far more likely to report that they were "very happy" in their marriages. The benefits of generosity were particularly pronounced among couples with children. Among the parents who posted above-average scores for marital generosity, about 50 percent reported being "very happy" together. Among those with lower generosity scores, only about 14 percent claimed to be "very happy," according to the latest "State of Our Unions" report from the National Marriage Project.

And at the bottom of the article, this:

> Top three predictors of a happy marriage among parents:
>
> 1. Sexual Intimacy.
> 2. Commitment.
> 3. Generosity.
>
> Portion of 18- to 46-year-olds with below-average sexual satisfaction who are "very happy" in their marriages:
>
> - Husbands: 7 percent.
> - Wives: 6 percent.

Probably the best way to find out where to be generous with a person is to learn their love language.

But some needs are generic to all women, for example – financial security. It never hurts for a man to start with studying something hard in school, getting a good job, and saving money. At the very least, women tend to be concerned about security, and money definitely helps you as a man to be generous in supplying for her needs there. If another

need is just encouragement, moral leadership or spiritual leadership, then there are ways of building up a supply of that so that you can be generous there as well.

I wanted to write something about a woman I know who I love to be generous with, she is my favorite woman in the whole world. Over the last few years, she has invested a lot into my life, which is not hard, since I just need her to be feminine to me, and to recognize the things I do as a man for God. She adopts my goals as her goals, and prepares herself by reading tough books, then goes out into the world and makes a difference using what she's learned. She does the real work of teaching apologetics, and doing public speaking on issues we care about. That's respect – when a woman listens to your cares and concerns, then acts on them effectively and independently. So, I try very hard to be generous to her, because I've never found another one like her.

Since we are far apart, one of the ways I care for her is by listening to her day and where she struggles and then buying her things that will make her life easier. She was struggling to lift a heavy vacuum up the stairs – so I bought her a new corded hand vacuum. She was cleaning the snow and ice off her car with her gloves – so I bought her a new ice scraper. She hates to do ironing and it takes her forever – so I bought her a new steam generator iron. She struggles to chop up vegetables with her hurt hand – so I bought her a new food processor. She uses a wok pot more than any pot, and hers was literally *rusting* – so I bought her a new Circulon non-stick wok. And so on. I listen to where she is stuck or struggling, and then I solve the problem. Sometimes I get her gifts that are less practical, and more indulgent, like handbags, a sparkly watch, or things for her cat (cat tunnel, catnip balls).

I just wanted to say this to husbands who do have good wives who recognize them for being good earners, good savers, good at Christian apologetics, good at protecting their children from lies, good at being self-controlled and faithful, etc. If your wife recognizes you and is generous in giving you affirmation, approval and affection, then giving her thoughtful gifts to solve her problems is a good way to be generous back. Try to think about what her day is like, and where she is struggling, and then buy her something that will help her. Every time she uses it, she will think of you – her hero! Don't wait to be asked, just do it. Solve the problem!

Important disclaimer: I don't recommend doing this with any radical feminist man-blamers – that would be suicide. Chivalry is wonderful, but you have to pick your target carefully.

FDA now allowing gay men to donate blood

December 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> The FDA will seek to change the ban on gay men's blood, so long as the donor hasn't had sexual contact in the last year.
>
> "The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is a science-based regulatory agency that works to protect and promote the public health. In this role, it is our responsibility to regulate the blood supply and to help ensure its continued safety for the patients who receive these life-saving products," announces FDA commissioner Margaret A. Hamburg.
>
>> Over the past several years, in collaboration with other government agencies, the FDA has carefully examined and considered the available scientific evidence relevant to its blood donor deferral policy for men who have sex with men, including the results of several recently completed scientific studies and recent epidemiologic data. Following this review, and taking into account the recommendations of advisory committees to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the FDA, the agency will take the necessary steps to recommend a change to the blood donor deferral period for men who have sex with men from indefinite deferral to one year since the last sexual contact.
>>
>> This recommended change is consistent with the recommendation of an independent expert advisory panel the HHS Advisory Committee on Blood and Tissue Safety and Availability, and will better align the deferral period with that of other men and women at increased risk for HIV infection. Additionally, in collaboration with the NIH's National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), the FDA has already taken steps to implement a national blood surveillance system that will help the agency monitor the effect of a policy change and further help to ensure the continued safety of the blood supply.

Here's a story from the CBC about how the blood supply became tainted in Canada. (H/T Patriactionary)

Why is this a problem? Well, gay men are at a much higher risk for HIV, and other sexually-transmitted infections. The CDC released this report about the elevated risks posed by this lifestyle.

The write:

> Sixty-two percent of American men who know they are HIV positive continue to

> have unprotected anal sex, according to data released last week by the federal Centers for Disease Control.
>
> This data, which was published Friday, came from the federal government's National HIV Behavioral Surveillance System.
>
> The percentage of self-aware HIV-positive men who engage in unprotected anal sex has been increasing, according to the CDC. In 2005, 55 percent did so. In 2008, 57 percent did so. And, in 2011, 62 percent did so.
>
> "Unprotected anal sex is a high-risk practice for HIV infection, with receptive anal sex having the highest risk," said the CDC report. "Unprotected anal sex also places MSM at risk for other sexually transmitted infections such as syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea. Although condoms can reduce the risk for HIV transmission, they do not eliminate risk and often are not used consistently. Some MSM attempt to decrease their HIV risk by engaging in unprotected sex only with partners perceived to have the same HIV status as their own. However, this practice is risky, especially for HIV-negative MSM, because MSM with HIV might not know or disclose that they are infected and men's assumptions about the HIV status of their partners can be wrong."

And in another report:

> Teens and young adults now account for more than a quarter of the new cases of HIV identified in the United States annually, and a clear majority of those cases involve young gay or bisexual men, the federal government said in a major new survey Tuesday.
>
> Of the nearly 48,000 new HIV cases identified in the United States in 2010, the latest year for which complete data are available, more than 12,000 involved teens and young adults, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found in its latest report.
>
> About 72 percent of these new HIV cases in younger adults occurred in young men who are gay or bisexual, according to the CDC report.
>
> […]According to the CDC figures, black youths accounted for the largest share of new HIV cases, with Hispanic youths and white youths accounting for about 20 percent each.
>
> About 1.1 million people are estimated to be living with HIV in the United States. Some 47,129 new HIV cases were identified in 2010.
>
> The CDC's new report, "Vital Signs: HIV Infection, Testing, Risk Behaviors Among Youths, United States," estimated that youths aged 13 to 24 accounted for 12,200, or 26 percent, of new HIV infections in 2010.

But, this is what we get when we elect a government that is more in service to ideas of "equality", "diversity" and "non-discrimination" than common sense. It would be nice to think that the only people who will suffer from this decision are Democrats, but that's not

the way it works.Everyone suffers when we elect people who are led by emotional ideology (the vision of the anointed, as Thomas Sowell calls it) instead of reason and evidence. We get to be the test subjects of their little experiments.

Is the story of the woman being stoned for adultery in John 7-8 authentic?

December 24, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the leading conservative New Testament scholar Daniel Wallace to explain. Excerpt:

> One hundred and forty years ago, conservative biblical scholar and Dean of Canterbury, Henry Alford, advocated a new translation to replace the King James Bible. One of his reasons was the inferior textual basis of the KJV. Alford argued that "a translator of Holy Scripture must be…ready to sacrifice the choicest text, and the plainest proof of doctrine, if the words are not those of what he is constrained in his conscience to receive as God's testimony." He was speaking about the Trinitarian formula found in the KJV rendering of 1 John 5:7–8. Twenty years later, two Cambridge scholars came to the firm conclusion that John 7:53–8:11 also was not part of the original text of scripture. But Westcott and Hort's view has not had nearly the impact that Alford's did.
>
> For a long time, biblical scholars have recognized the poor textual credentials of the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11). The evidence against its authenticity is overwhelming: The earliest manuscripts with substantial portions of John's Gospel (P66 and P75) lack these verses. They skip from John 7:52to 8:12. The oldest large codices of the Bible also lack these verses: codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both from the fourth century, are normally considered to be the most important biblical manuscripts of the NT extant today. Neither of them has these verses. Codex Alexandrinus, from the fifth century, lacks several leaves in the middle of John. But because of the consistency of the letter size, width of lines, and lines per page, the evidence is conclusive that this manuscript also lacked the *pericope adulterae*. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, also from the fifth century, apparently lacked these verses as well (it is similar to Alexandrinus in that some leaves are missing). **The earliest extant manuscript to have these verses is codex Bezae, an eccentric text once in the possession of Theodore Beza. He gave this manuscript to the University of Cambridge in 1581 as a gift, telling the school that he was confident that the scholars there would be able to figure out its significance.** He washed his hands of the document. Bezae is indeed the most eccentric NT manuscript extant today, yet it is the chief representative of the Western text-type (the text-form that became dominant in Rome and the Latin West).
>
> **When P66, P75, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus agree, their combined testimony is overwhelmingly strong that a particular reading is not authentic. But it is not only the early Greek manuscripts that lack this text. The great majority of Greek manuscripts through the first eight**

> **centuries lack this pericope. And except for Bezae (or codex D), virtually all of the most important Greek witnesses through the first eight centuries do not have the verses. Of the three most important early versions of the New Testament (Coptic, Latin, Syriac), two of them lack the story in their earliest and best witnesses. The Latin alone has the story in its best early witnesses.**
>
> Even patristic writers seemed to overlook this text. Bruce Metzger, arguably the greatest textual critic of the twentieth century, argued that "No Greek Church Father prior to Euthymius Zigabenus (twelfth century) comments on the passage, and Euthymius declares that the accurate copies of the Gospel do not contain it" (*Textual Commentary*, 2nd ed., *loc. cit.*).
>
> It is an important point to note that although the story of the woman caught in adultery is found in most of our printed Bibles today, the evidence suggests that the majority of Bibles during the first eight centuries of the Christian faith did not contain the story. Externally, most scholars would say that the evidence for it not being an authentic part of John's Gospel is rock solid.
>
> But textual criticism is not based on external evidence alone; there is also the internal evidence to consider. This is comprised of two parts: *intrinsic evidence* has to do with what an author is likely to have written;*transcriptional evidence* has to do with how and why a scribe would have changed the text.
>
> Intrinsically, the vocabulary, syntax, and style look far more like Luke than they do John. There is almost nothing in these twelve verses that has a Johannine flavor. And transcriptionally, scribes were almost always prone to add material rather than omit it—especially a big block of text such as this, rich in its description of Jesus' mercy. One of the remarkable things about this passage, in fact, is that it is found in multiple locations. Most manuscripts that have it place it in its now traditional location: between John 7:52 and 8:12. But an entire family of manuscripts has the passage at the end of Luke 21, while another family places it at the end of John's Gospel. Other manuscripts place it at the end of Luke or in various places in John 7.
>
> The *pericope adulterae* has all the earmarks of a pericope that was looking for a home. It took up permanent residence, in the ninth century, in the middle of the fourth gospel.

Wallace teaches at the ultra-conservative fundamentalist Dallas Theological Seminary, and is the foremost evangelical manuscript expert in the world.

Why is this important? I think it is important because this story is very prominent for a great many Christians, especially Christian women, who use this to justify a variety of positions that are inconsistent with the rest of the Bible. These Christians *do not like the idea of anyone being judged* and so they are naturally inclined to blow this disputed passage into an entire theology that repudiates making moral judgments on such things as capital punishment. In fact, in another post, I was accused of being the equivalent of

one of the people who wanted to stone the woman taken for adultery because I oppose fornication and single motherhood. That’s how far this has gone, where some Christians, especially Christian feminists, have leveraged this passage to redefine the Bible so that women are no longer responsible to the Bible’s moral rules and can never be blamed for acting irresponsibly.

What is the meaning and significance of Christmas for Christians?

December 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s the time of year when we explain what Christianity is about.

God exists

Basically, we know from a variety of scientific arguments that the universe was created and fine-tuned for life by an intelligent agent that existed causally prior to the beginning of the universe, because this agent brought the universe into being. Our purpose as humans is to enter into a two-way loving relationship with this Creator/Designer of the universe. This is the only way that we can ultimately be happy and fulfilled.

We avoid God

Now, when you look at human experience, none of us is interested in finding out about the character of this Creator/Designer, because we are afraid that if we find out too much about him then we will have our freedom to do as we please constrained by the demands of a relationship with an all-powerful, all-good being. Just knowing that such a person exists and has a character distinct from our own is enough to cause us to flee from him so that we can stay autonomous from the obligations of the moral law that he expects us to follow.

Christians believe that this universal desire to avoid an all-powerful, all-good God who will judge us is a result of bad behaviors inherited by us from the very first rebellion against God by our ancestors. Ever since that rebellion, the capability for relating to God has been lost, because we no longer have the ability to stop our rebellion against God. Christians call the first rebellion of our ancestors “The Fall of Man”.

What does this rebellion look like for us today? Well, we want to do whatever we want, in

order to be happy, and to ignore God's demands. We want to have happy feelings, including security, community and being morally good, all without a relationship with God. We want to acquire and rearrange matter for our selfish ends without acknowledging and honoring the Creator/Designer of that matter. And, of course, we would like other people to affirm, voluntarily or involuntarily, that our rebellion against God is really the height of moral goodness.

Additionally, some people imagine that God, if he exists at all, must desire our happiness. And of course when their needs are not met by this invented God, then they become even more bitter at God, and eventually decide that God could not really exist since their selfish needs are not being met by him. It never seems to occur to us humans that some pain and suffering may be permitted by God in order to turn our attention away from pleasure and security in this life, and back towards a relationship with him.

This is the mess we find ourselves in. This propensity for turning away from God and trying to pursue selfish happiness and security apart from a relationship with God is what the Bible calls "sin". Every single one of us deserves severe punishment for refusing to pursue a genuine two-way love relationship with the God who is there. That is the mess we are in before Jesus appears to address this problem.

Jesus saves the day

I cannot say much about *how* Jesus solves the problem of rebellion against God, because that is really the story of Easter, and today we are dealing with the story of Christmas. But I can say that the solution to the problem requires that God step into history to communicate with his creatures and to perform actions in order to be reconciled with them. That is the message of Christmas: God is stepping into history to do something to end our rebellion. Easter is the story of *what he does*.

This is talked about in the Bible in John 1, for example.

John 1:1-5:

[1]In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[2]He was with God in the beginning.

[3]Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

[4]In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

[5]The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

You can substitute the word "Word" there for *Logos*, which really means *logic* or *reason* or *wisdom.* This is a person with a divine nature, identified with the eternal being of God, who exists causally prior to the creation of the universe, who is going to take on an additional human nature, including a human body. (Christians believe that there is one divine "what" being and three divine "who" persons). Software engineers, you can think of Jesus having two natures as multiple inheritance in C++.

And it continues in John 1:10-14:

[10]He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not

recognize him.

[11]He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

[12]Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

[13]children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

[14]The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Here the word grace doesn't mean like a graceful ballet dancer. It means an instance of mercy received from a superior. A person (a "who") identified with the divine being (a "what") has decided to make us a top-down offer of mercy.

The same message of God stepping into history is found in the Christmas carols that people sing at Christmas.

Christmas carols

Here's the best one, "O, Holy Night", and it says:

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining.
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

When we were in rebellion, we had lost our most valuable capacity – the capacity of being in a direct relationship with God. And if the newborn baby Jesus can accomplish his mission (and he did), then we are going to regain that capacity for a direct relationship with God.

Now look at "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", which one of my favorites:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

Basically, as I often say, there are only two kinds of people in the world. There are people who are willing to respond to the offer of a relationship with God, with all the little sacrifices and compromises that a relationship entails, and then there are people who are not willing to respond. For the people who are willing to respond, the appearance of Jesus is the best thing that could possibly happen, because now we are finally going to have a chance to deal directly with God, face-to-face, to find out what he is like, and change ourselves to be more like him, with his help.

And that is why people celebrate Christmas. It's the anniversary of the birth of Jesus. It is the story of God stepping into history to be reconciled with his rebellious creatures. It's the story of the divine *Logos* subjecting himself to the life of a creature in order to rescue us from our sinful, self-destructive rebellion. This love for undeserving creatures is above

and beyond the call of duty. We didn’t love him, but instead he loved us first, and he loved us enough to come down here and suffer with us so that we could be reconciled with God.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

December 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

December 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Excerpt:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.
>
> But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.
>
> There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position,

and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.

One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.

So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of

> atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, “So is there a God or not?”

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these “subjective atheists”?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says “I lack a belief in the gravitational force!”. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God’s existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don’t care about a person’s psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over “I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God”? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: “I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!” What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: “Wintery Knight won’t listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!”. I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that’s why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don’t *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I’m not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Related posts

- Is giving to charity more rational for religious people or atheists?
- An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview
- Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?
- Did Jesus exist? Agnostic historian Bart Ehrman debates Infidel Guy

- Is the Bible’s definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?
- Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong? Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral?
- Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?
- William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech
- Can atheists be moral? Sean McDowell and James Corbett debate
- If militant atheists could form a country, what would it look like?
- Chad Meister: can atheists make sense of morality?

Reasonable Faith podcast: the real consequences of atheism

December 25, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you love to listen to the Please Convince Me podcast, as I do, then you know that in a recent episode, J. Warner Wallace mentioned a blog post on an atheistic blog that clearly delineated the implications of an atheistic worldview. He promised he was going to write about it and link to the post, and he has now done so.

The latest episode of Reasonable Faith discusses the post mentioned in the episode.

Details:

> An atheist blogger gets brutally honest about his view and tells other atheists to quit fooling themselves!

The MP3 file is here on the Reasonable Faith web site. (23 minutes)

Kevin Harris (KH) and William Lane Craig: (WLC) discuss this post on the Wintery Knight blog.

Summary:

- KH: New Atheists always try to portray themselves as having meaningful lives, and good without God
- WLC: Exactly, they would say you don't nee God to do positive things, so God makes no difference
- KH: but what happens when an atheist explains the real consequences of atheism?

KH then reads a quote by an atheist blogger:

> "[To] all my Atheist friends.
>
> Let us stop sugar coating it. I know, it's hard to come out and be blunt with the friendly Theists who frequent sites like this. However in your efforts to "play nice" and "be civil" you actually do them a great disservice.
>
> We are Atheists. We believe that the Universe is a great uncaused, random accident. All life in the Universe past and future are the results of random chance acting on itself. While we acknowledge concepts like morality, politeness, civility seem to exist, we know they do not. Our highly evolved brains imagine that these things have a cause or a use, and they have in the past, they've allowed life to continue on this planet for a short blip of time. But make no mistake: all our dreams, loves, opinions, and desires are figments of our primordial imagination. They are fleeting electrical signals that fire across our synapses for a moment in time. They served some purpose in the past. They got us here. That's it. All human achievement and plans for the future are the result of some ancient, evolved brain and accompanying chemical reactions that once served a survival

> purpose. Ex: I'll marry and nurture children because my genes demand reproduction, I'll create because creativity served a survival advantage to my ancient ape ancestors, I'll build cities and laws because this allowed my ape grandfather time and peace to reproduce and protect his genes. My only directive is to obey my genes. Eat, sleep, reproduce, die. That is our bible.
>
> We deride the Theists for having created myths and holy books. We imagine ourselves superior. But we too imagine there are reasons to obey laws, be polite, protect the weak etc. Rubbish. We are nurturing a new religion, one where we imagine that such conventions have any basis in reality. Have they allowed life to exist? Absolutely. But who cares? Outside of my greedy little gene's need to reproduce, there is nothing in my world that stops me from killing you and reproducing with your wife. Only the fear that I might be incarcerated and thus be deprived of the opportunity to do the same with the next guy's wife stops me. Some of my Atheist friends have fooled themselves into acting like the general population. They live in suburban homes, drive Toyota Camrys, attend school plays. But underneath they know the truth. They are a bag of DNA whose only purpose is to make more of themselves. So be nice if you want. Be involved, have polite conversations, be a model citizen. Just be aware that while technically an Atheist, you are an inferior one. You're just a little bit less evolved, that's all. When you are ready to join me, let me know, I'll be reproducing with your wife.
>
> I know it's not PC to speak so bluntly about the ramifications of our beliefs, but in our discussions with Theists we sometimes tip toe around what we really know to be factual. Maybe it's time we Atheists were a little more truthful and let the chips fall where they may. At least that's what my genes are telling me to say."

Back to the summary:

- WLC: this quote explains that on naturalism, moral values and duties are just the by products of biological evolution
- WLC: he is deriding other atheists who put on a civil facade, and that the superior atheist is the one who acts openly like an atheist
- KH: he wants atheists to stop acting like Christians (being outwardly nice)
- WLC: there is no evidence for atheism presented in the quote, so why should he think that morality and meaning are illusory
- WLC: he is saying that morality is not real because our beliefs form by Darwinian evolution
- WLC: even if those beliefs formed that way, that doesn't mean that our moral judgments are not true (genetic fallacy)
- KH: the moral judgments are only false if naturalism is true, and he didn't defend that
- WLC: if objective moral values and duties exist, then naturalism is false

KH quotes Richard Dawkins:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.

More:

- WLC: yes, that's his view, but what reason is there to accept the naturalism that requires all that?
- KH: yet he pushes various moral judgments
- WLC: yes, in his book, he pushes a bunch of moral judgments in his book, all of which are invalid on naturalism?
- KH: he wants humans to choose to show pity, even though nature is pitiless
- WLC: he thinks that these altruistic behaviors can emerge because humans are sociable beings
- WLC: but this "herd morality" is just an evolved convention, there are not objective moral truths

KH quotes Will Provine:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

More:

- WLC: it's his naturalism that is causing him to say that, theistic evolution is compatible with morality
- WLC: naturalism is what conflicts with objective morality, science doesn't invalidate objective morality
- KH: atheists deny objective meaning, but atheists can invent subjective meanings and purposes
- WLC: yes, but these invented subjective meanings and purposes are illusory
- WLC: I don't think that anyone can live happily by think

KH quotes Michael Ruse:

> "The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological

> adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory."

- WLC: again, science is neutral against morality, it's the philosophy of naturalism that is inconsistent with objective morality
- KH: just because theists and atheists get along, it's still important to remind atheists of the consequences of their view
- WLC: I do that in my work on the absurdity of life without God, and in the moral argument for God's existence
- WLC: I love it when they say things like this, because it supports the first premise in Craig's moral argument
- KH: even if the evidence were 50-50, why would atheists lean towards the meaningless view
- WLC: yes, if the evidence is 50-50, then people ought to prefer life, significance and moral value
- KH: you're not saying that people ought to the believe that in theism because it's more palatable to us
- WLC: right, I am saying that naturalism should be rejected on the evidence, including our experience of moral values

If you like this podcast, the RSS feed for the Reasonable Faith podcast is here. I subscribe to it. If you liked the post they were discussing, please click here and share and/or tweet it.

Pro-life governor John Kasich passes laws to promote adoption

December 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this decision

Story from Life News.

Excerpt:

> On Friday, Governor Kasich signed Ohio Right to Life's adoption reform legislation, S.B. 250, following historic bipartisan majority votes from the Senate, 29-1, and the House of Representatives, 81-4. This adoption reform will eliminate unnecessary costs, protect birth parents and adoptive families, prevent fraud and minimize the bureaucracy in the Ohio adoption process.
>
> The following is a statement from Mike Gonidakis, president of Ohio Right to Life:
>
> At present, middle-class and low-income Ohio families are essentially unable to adopt due to the accumulation of expenses during the adoption process. The adoption reform legislation targets these expenses by increasing the current $1,500 tax credit up to $10,000.
>
> Thanks to an increased tax credit and a shortened adoption decree challenge period, Ohioans will now partake in a more simplified, affordable process that remains compassionate and supportive to birth parents.

John Kasich is definitely in the top rank of governors, along with Scott Walker, Mike Pence, Rick Perry and Bobby Jindal. Each of these governors has signed into law policies that

were helpful to unborn children.

Wisconsin governor Scott Walker signed an ultrasound bill that reduced the number of abortions:

> Last year, abortions in Wisconsin dropped 4.4 percent and they declined 7.4 percent the year before. Now, Wisconsin Right to Life informs LifeNews abortions int he Badger State are down another 16 percent.
>
> "Last week, Wisconsin abortion providers stated under oath that abortions have decreased from 6,927 in 2012 to roughly 5,800 in 2013," stated Barbara L. Lyons, Executive Director of Wisconsin Right to Life. "This is another sharp decline of approximately 16%, continuing Wisconsin's record as having some of the lowest abortion numbers in the country."
>
> […]The abortion drop comes after pro-life Governor Scott Walker signed multiple pro-life bills into law.
>
> In 2012, Walker added to his pro-life list of accomplishments today by signing bills the pro-life movement supported, including measures to stop abortion funding in Obamacare and webcam abortions.
>
> Last year, Walker signed Senate Bill 206 (Sonya's Law) into law. This important new law requires that women seeking abortions in Wisconsin be given the opportunity to see their unborn children through ultrasound.

Texas governor Rick Perry signed a ban on late-term abortions, and a law that closed abortion clinics:

> Texas Governor Rick Perry signed a pro-life bill into law July 19 banning abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy and requiring abortionists to have admitting privileges at hospitals close to their abortuaries. The immediate result was Planned Parenthood's decision to shutter three of its clinics even as pro-abortion activists vowed to work to overturn the law — and as at least one abortionist reportedly indicated he would defy the law.
>
> […]The Associated Press reported that in addition to the ban on abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy, the law "restricts abortions to surgical centers and requires doctors who work at abortion clinics to have hospital admitting privileges. Only five of the 42 abortion clinics in Texas … currently meet those new requirements. Clinics will have a year to either upgrade their facilities or shut down after the law takes effect in October."
>
> Immediately after Perry signed the bill into law, Planned Parenthood threw in the towel on three of its abortion facilities, closing their doors rather than shelling out money for the requisite upgrades.

Lousiana governor Bobby Jindal signed pro-life bills to close abortion clinics:

> Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal today signed pro-life bills that could close three of

> the state's five abortion clinics. Jindal has been a staunchly pro-life governor and he is putting into law more pieces of pro-life legislation that has, under his administration, made Louisiana one of the most pro-life states in the nation.
>
> The Louisiana state legislature sent to Jindal HB 388, the Unsafe Abortion Protection Act, that the Planned Parenthood abortion business says could close three of the five abortion clinics in the state.
>
> "This bill will give women the health and safety protections they deserve," Jindal said.
>
> When the state of Texas clamped down on abortion clinics that could not follow basic health and safety standards and failed to ensure abortion practitioners had admitting privileges at local hospitals in cases where women are injured in botched abortions, abortion clinics closed down because they couldn't comply. As many as 20 Texas abortion clinics have closed or stopping doing abortions.
>
> Now, Louisiana is following suit.

Indiana governor Mike Pence signed a bill to stop insurance coverage of abortions:

> Americans United for Life President and CEO Dr. Charmaine Yoest commended Indiana Governor Mike Pence and leading pro-life legislators for enacting a measure that protects Hoosiers from forced funding of abortion-related services via their health insurance plans.
>
> This week Governor Pence signed into law HB 1123, sponsored by Rep. Jeff Thompson, which is based on AUL model legislation.
>
> The bill prohibits "accident and sickness insurance policies" from covering abortion in most circumstances except through a separate rider. This law makes Indiana the ninth state to prohibit private insurance plans operating within their states from covering most abortions.

Republican governors do more than just balance the books and grow the economy. You will never see Democrat governors signing bills to help unborn children like this.

In case you're wondering, Scott Walker is my pick for President in 2016, but I'll take any of the governors in this post. At least we know they can marshal pro-life bills into pro-life laws.

Eric Metaxas: does science make the case for or against God?

December 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from famous writer Eric Metaxas, writing in the Wall Street Journal, of all places. He talks about whether recent discoveries have made the world look more created/designed, or more eternal/undesigned.

In the beginning, there was the naturalism, and the naturalism said that habitable planets are common:

> In 1966 Time magazine ran a cover story asking: Is God Dead? Many have accepted the cultural narrative that he's obsolete—that as science progresses, there is less need for a "God" to explain the universe.
>
> […]The same year Time featured the now-famous headline, the astronomer Carl Sagan announced that there were two important criteria for a planet to support life: The right kind of star, and a planet the right distance from that star. Given the roughly octillion—1 followed by 24 zeros—planets in the universe, there should have been about septillion—1 followed by 21 zeros—planets capable of supporting life.

Then the science happened:

> As our knowledge of the universe increased, it became clear that there were far more factors necessary for life than Sagan supposed. His two parameters grew to 10 and then 20 and then 50, and so the number of potentially life-supporting planets decreased accordingly. The number dropped to a few thousand planets and kept on plummeting.
>
> Even SETI proponents acknowledged the problem. Peter Schenkel wrote in a 2006 piece for Skeptical Inquirer magazine: "In light of new findings and insights, it seems appropriate to put excessive euphoria to rest . . . . We should quietly admit that the early estimates . . . may no longer be tenable."
>
> As factors continued to be discovered, the number of possible planets hit zero, and kept going. In other words, the odds turned against any planet in the universe supporting life, including this one. Probability said that even we shouldn't be here.
>
> Today there are more than 200 known parameters necessary for a planet to support life—every single one of which must be perfectly met, or the whole thing falls apart. Without a massive planet like Jupiter nearby, whose gravity will draw away asteroids, a thousand times as many would hit Earth's surface. The odds against life in the universe are simply astonishing.

And again, naturalism confounded by a stream of discoveries of cosmic fine-tuning:

> The fine-tuning necessary for life to exist on a planet is nothing compared with the fine-tuning required for the universe to exist at all. For example, astrophysicists now know that the values of the four fundamental forces—gravity, the electromagnetic force, and the “strong” and “weak” nuclear forces—were determined less than one millionth of a second after the big bang. Alter any one value and the universe could not exist. For instance, if the ratio between the nuclear strong force and the electromagnetic force had been off by the tiniest fraction of the tiniest fraction—by even one part in 100,000,000,000,000,000—then no stars could have ever formed at all. Feel free to gulp.
>
> Multiply that single parameter by all the other necessary conditions, and the odds against the universe existing are so heart-stoppingly astronomical that the notion that it all “just happened” defies common sense. It would be like tossing a coin and having it come up heads 10 quintillion times in a row. Really?
>
> Fred Hoyle, the astronomer who coined the term “big bang,” said that his atheism was “greatly shaken” at these developments. He later wrote that “a common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect has monkeyed with the physics, as well as with chemistry and biology . . . . The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.”
>
> Theoretical physicist Paul Davies has said that “the appearance of design is overwhelming” and Oxford professor Dr. John Lennox has said “the more we get to know about our universe, the more the hypothesis that there is a Creator . . . gains in credibility as the best explanation of why we are here.”
>
> The greatest miracle of all time, without any close seconds, is the universe. It is the miracle of all miracles, one that ineluctably points with the combined brightness of every star to something—or Someone—beyond itself.

My pastor reads the Wall Street Journal. I am pretty sure this is going to be in his Sunday sermon. It’s the #1 editorial on the Wall Street Journal right now, so he can’t miss it.

You know, as these scientific arguments become more and more mainstream, it really makes me wonder if there is anything more to atheism than some sort of traumatic childhood experience of wounded narcissism. The child experiences some desire for something, and expects God to meet that need. The need is not met. The child, now enraged that it is 1) not God and 2) not in control of God, rejects God. Or maybe it’s just the desire to not be punished for acting immorally. Or to appear “smart” to a crowd of peers. Whatever it is that causes people to believe in atheism, it sure isn’t science. If we are going strictly on the science, then the answer is God. But if the question of God’s existence is about feelings, then the answer is no God. It really is that simple.

Archaeologists discover entrance to Herod’s palace near Bethlehem

December 26, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Herod’s palace

Baptist Press reports on the story.

Full text:

> Israeli archeologists have uncovered an impressive entrance to Herod’s palace at Herodium. Located only three miles southeast of Bethlehem, Herodium played an important part in the events surrounding the early life of Christ.
>
> The December announcement by Hebrew University archeologists Roi Porat, Yakov Kalman and Rachel Chachy dovetails well with the seasonal interest in the nativity accounts of Luke and Matthew in the New Testament.
>
> While both Luke and Matthew wrote that King Herod governed Judea during the era of Jesus’ birth at Bethlehem (Luke 1:5, Matthew 2:1), they included nothing concerning Herod’s massive palace/fortress complex at nearby Herodium.
>
> Herodium, like Herod’s other isolated palace/fortress complexes at Masada and Machaerus, was built on a mountain. To enhance its impressive scale, Herod artificially extended the height of the hill to make it the tallest mountain in the Judean desert.
>
> While the site included the usual Herodian luxuries such as a palace, bathhouse, theatre and garden, Herodium was essentially a fortress, a place where Herod could find refuge if his people revolted.
>
> Herod’s fear of a Jewish revolt led him to establish many fortresses in both urban centers (he maintained two in Jerusalem itself) and in isolated rural areas away from the urban centers.
>
> A small community close to the fortress housed the construction teams and, later, the garrison soldiers and palace servants. The servants who waited on the

king indeed worked in an impressive palace.

The newly uncovered entranceway apparently was still being constructed near the time of the monarch's death.

As shown in one of the photographs, the entryway included three levels of arches in a 65-foot corridor that was 19 feet across and 65 feet in height leading to the palace's courtyard. Curiously enough, the nearly completed entrance was abruptly stopped and backfilled around the time of Herod's death. The archeologists speculated that the now-aging Herod instead sought to convert the entire palace into a memorial mound for his upcoming burial at the site.

Indeed, Herod's plans for Herodium unfolded as Jesus was born and as He spent His early life in nearby Bethlehem. When the magi arrived in Jerusalem and announced they had come to worship the "king of the Jews," Herod sent them to Bethlehem after learning the location of the Messiah's birthplace from the chief priests and learned scholars. The monarch hoped to ascertain from the magi which of the town's small children was the designated royal candidate. Then Herod hoped to execute the child (Matthew 2:1-8, 2:16).

When the magi failed to return with this information, Herod ordered his soldiers into Bethlehem to murder all children age 2 and under. Warned to flee to Egypt, the holy family escaped Herod's plans, but an undisclosed number of children were killed by Herod's soldiers. Although never stated in the biblical account, the soldiers who carried out the old king's infamous order were either stationed in Jerusalem (seven miles from Bethlehem) or in the closer post at Herodium. In fact, Herodium overlooked Bethlehem and could have functioned as a convenient headquarters for Herod's deadly operation.

While the holy family resided in Egypt, another Herodium connection to the early life of Christ took place. After a long and terribly painful illness, Herod died. His surviving eldest son (Herod had murdered his three oldest sons), Archelaus, then buried him in Herodium at a pre-selected tomb and gave his father an elaborate funeral at the site and spared no expense, according to the Jewish historian Josephus (Jewish War, 1,673).

Israeli archeologist Ehud Netzer claimed to have found Herod's tomb and damaged sarcophagus (stone coffin) in 2007 at Herodium, but in 2013 and 2014 other archeologists have raised doubts about the tomb and the sarcophagus. Israeli archeologists Joseph Patrich and Benjamin Arubas largely based their doubts on the modest tomb site and the unimpressive sarcophagus. They believe that the mega-maniacal Herod would have commissioned a larger tomb and a more elaborate sarcophagus.

With Herod now buried in Herodium and with Archelaus eventually ruling over much of his father's former kingdom as an "ethnarch" ("ruler of the people"), the New Testament noted the change in political leadership (Matthew 2:19-22). The change prompted Joseph to consider a move back to Judea (perhaps back to

> Bethlehem itself where the family had lived for about two years), but his misgivings about a Judea under the rule of an already unpopular Archelaus and a warning in a dream led him to reconsider. The decision was a wise one. A return to Bethlehem in the “shadow of Herodium” and the nearby royal city of Jerusalem placed the holy family at potential risk.
>
> Instead, Joseph took his family back to Nazareth in Galilee (Matthew 2:22-23). Galilee was governed by Herod Antipas, the younger brother of Archelaus. At the time, this Herodian ruler, with the title of “tetrarch” (“ruler over a fourth”), was regarded as a milder alternative to the volatile Archelaus. Located far away from the recent unpleasant associations connected to Herodium and the slaughter of the children in Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary would raise Jesus in the peaceful surroundings of Nazareth.
>
> The recent archeological find in Herodium and the continuing dispute concerning Herod’s tomb and sarcophagus calls attention to the background story of the early life of Christ as detailed in the Gospel of Matthew. Perhaps some further archeological discoveries at Herodium will uncover additional information about the familiar nativity narrative.

I liked this article on Baptist Press so much, I pasted it here in full – because of the links between history and the Bible. It’s also reported in secular news sources like NBC News and the UK Telegraph.

When I read stories like this, it really makes me question people who think that the New Testament books were not intended to be history. I think the default view has to be that the authors intended to write history, and then we do the work to see which parts pass historical tests – i.e. – how early, how many sources, how many eyewitnesses, etc. And, do we have archaeological evidence to corroborate the narrative.

After legalizing marijuana, Colorado sees higher number of “daily” users

December 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lee Strobel tweeted this story from the Denver Post.

Excerpt:

> As marijuana legalization took hold in Colorado, the estimated percentage of regular cannabis users in the state jumped to the second-highest level in the country, according to new federal data.
>
> When asked, roughly one out of every eight Colorado residents over the age of 12 reported using marijuana in the previous month. Only Rhode Island topped Colorado in the percentage of residents who reported using marijuana as frequently.
>
> The results come from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health and represent the average of estimates gathered in 2012 and 2013.
>
> […]State-specific data from the survey are averaged over two-year periods to compensate for relatively small sample sizes.
>
> For the 2011-12 period, 10.4 percent of Coloradans 12 and older reported using marijuana in the month prior to being surveyed. That placed Colorado seventh in the country for monthly marijuana use.
>
> Monthly use in Colorado jumped to 12.7 percent — a 22 percent increase — in the 2012-13 data. The result means the survey estimates about 530,000 people in Colorado use marijuana at least once a month.
>
> Nationally, monthly marijuana use by people 12 and older nudged upward by about 4 percent to 7.4 percent. In Washington state — which, like Colorado, in 2012 legalized marijuana use and limited possession for adults — monthly marijuana use rose by about 20 percent to 12.3 percent.
>
> Kleiman said researchers will get a better idea about marijuana use in Colorado once they are able to zoom in on data showing how many people use marijuana daily. A study commissioned by Colorado’s Marijuana Enforcement Division this year found that people who use marijuana almost every day account for about 22 percent of cannabis users in Colorado but consume nearly 67 percent of the marijuana used. Other studies have warned about a possible uptick in heavy marijuana use.
>
> “The fraction of people who are monthly users who are in fact daily users has gone way, way up,” Kleiman said.
>
> Monthly marijuana use increased across all age groups in Colorado, according to the new survey numbers. The number of people who reported using marijuana in the past year also increased in Colorado in the 2012-13 data, but the state

> ranked only sixth nationally in the measurement. Measurements for alcohol consumption and illicit drug use increased, as well.

What will be interesting will be to see how this increased usage affects tax revenues and the crime rate. I think when more people use mind-altering drugs, it is going to harm their ability to get and keep jobs, which affects tax revenue. And when people are addicted to something, they are more inclined to take a risk on committing a crime to get the money to pay for their next fix. Should be interesting to learn from Colorado's little experiment.

Related posts

- New 20-year study: long-term use of cannabis raises risk of mental health problems
- Report: Negative impacts from the legalization of marijuana in Colorado
- Welfare cash used to purchase marijuana in Colorado
- New study: even casual use of marijuana / cannabis alters brain
- New study: teen pot use could hurt brain and memory
- New study finds connection between early use of marijuana and mental illness
- New study: marijuana use by teens is linked to permanent brain abnormalities
- New study: smoking marijuana raises risk of having a stroke
- New study: smoking marijuana/cannabis permanently lowers IQ
- Should we legalize drugs and prostitution like Ron Paul wants?

Alexander Vilenkin: “All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning”

December 27, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve decided to explain why physicists believe that there was a creation event in this post. That is to say, I’ve decided to let famous cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin do it.

From Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Did the cosmos have a beginning? The Big Bang theory seems to suggest it did, but in recent decades, cosmologists have concocted elaborate theories – for example, an eternally inflating universe or a cyclic universe – which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos. Now it appears that the universe really had a beginning after all, even if it wasn’t necessarily the Big Bang.
>
> At a meeting of scientists – titled “State of the Universe” – convened last week at Cambridge University to honor Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday, cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University in Boston presented evidence that the universe is not eternal after all, leaving scientists at a loss to explain how the cosmos got started without a supernatural creator. The meeting was reported in *New Scientist* magazine (Why physicists can’t avoid a creation event, 11 January 2012).
>
> […]In his presentation, Professor Vilenkin discussed three theories which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos.

The three theories are chaotic inflationary model, the oscillating model and quantum gravity model. Regular readers will know that those have all been addressed in William Lane Craig’s peer-reviewed paper that evaluates alternatives to the standard Big Bang cosmology.

But let’s see what Vilenkin said.

More:

> One popular theory is eternal inflation. Most readers will be familiar with the theory of *inflation*, which says that the universe increased in volume by a factor of at least 10^78 in its very early stages (from 10^−36 seconds after the Big Bang to sometime between 10^−33 and 10^−32 seconds), before settling into the slower rate of expansion that we see today. The theory of *eternal inflation* goes further, and holds that the universe is constantly giving birth to smaller “bubble” universes within an ever-expanding multiverse. Each bubble universe undergoes its own initial period of inflation. In some versions of the theory, the bubbles go both backwards and forwards in time, allowing the possibility of an infinite past. Trouble is, the value of one particular cosmic

parameter rules out that possibility:

> But in 2003, a team including Vilenkin and Guth considered what eternal inflation would mean for the Hubble constant, which describes mathematically the expansion of the universe. They found that the equations didn't work (Physical Review Letters, DOI: 10.1103/physrevlett.90.151301). "You can't construct a space-time with this property," says Vilenkin. It turns out that the constant has a lower limit that prevents inflation in both time directions. "It can't possibly be eternal in the past," says Vilenkin. "There must be some kind of boundary."

A second option explored by Vilenkin was that of a cyclic universe, where the universe goes through an infinite series of big bangs and crunches, with no specific beginning. It was even claimed that a cyclic universe could explain the low observed value of the cosmological constant. But as Vilenkin found, there's a problem if you look at the *disorder* in the universe:

> Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists – nothing like the one we see around us.
>
> One way around that is to propose that the universe just gets bigger with every cycle. Then the amount of disorder per volume doesn't increase, so needn't reach the maximum. But Vilenkin found that this scenario falls prey to the same mathematical argument as eternal inflation: if your universe keeps getting bigger, it must have started somewhere.

However, Vilenkin's options were not exhausted yet. There was another possibility: that the universe had sprung from an eternal cosmic egg:

> Vilenkin's final strike is an attack on a third, lesser-known proposal that the cosmos existed eternally in a static state called the cosmic egg. This finally "cracked" to create the big bang, leading to the expanding universe we see today. Late last year Vilenkin and graduate student Audrey Mithani showed that the egg could not have existed forever after all, as quantum instabilities would force it to collapse after a finite amount of time (arxiv.org/abs/1110.4096). If it cracked instead, leading to the big bang, then this must have happened before it collapsed – and therefore also after a finite amount of time.
>
> "This is also not a good candidate for a beginningless universe," Vilenkin concludes.

> So at the end of the day, what is Vilenkin's verdict?
>
> > "All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

This is consistent with the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin Theorem, which I blogged about before, and which William Lane Craig leveraged to his advantage in his debate with Peter Millican.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past. Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

Conclusion

If the universe came into being out of nothing, which seems to be the case from science, then the universe has a cause. Things do not pop into being, uncaused, out of nothing. The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

How pro-life apologetics helps strengthen your evangelism

December 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Scott Klusendorf's Life Training Institute.

Excerpt:

> Beyond the obvious obligation we have as thinking human beings to clarify the status, and defend the value, of innocent, unborn human life, engaging in the pro-life project is also a way to make the case for the truth of Christianity in general. It stands to reason that if the scientific, philosophical, and moral arguments we offer in defense of the humanity of the unborn also happen to align exactly with the biblical notion of what it means to be a human being made "in the image of God," then the Bible might also have something to say about other things of importance.
>
> This is a point Scott makes repeatedly but it was recently driven home in a very concrete way by, of all people, a hard core atheist in the most recent issue of ***Salvo*** magazine. A secular skeptic, law school professor, renowned blogger, and mocker of deluded "Godiots," the "Raving Atheist" attended a blogger party where he serendipitously sat next to a Catholic blogger named Benjamin. As the "Raving Atheist" explains:

> At one point the conversation turned to abortion, and I asked Benjamin's opinion of the practice. I was stunned. Here was a kind, affable, and cogently reasonable human being who nonetheless believed that abortion was murder. To the limited extent I had previously considered the issue, I believed abortion to be completely acceptable, the mere disposal of a lump of cells, perhaps akin to clipping fingernails.

> This unsettling exchange spurred me to further investigate the issue on Benjamin's blog. I noticed that pro-choice Christians did not employ scientific or rational arguments but relied on a confused set of "spiritual" platitudes. More significantly, the pro-choice atheistic blogosphere also fell short in its analysis of abortion. ***The supposedly "reality-based" community either dismissed abortion as a "religious issue" or paradoxically claimed that pro-life principles were contrary to religious doctrine. Having formerly equated atheism with reason, I was slowly growing uncertain of the value of godlessness in the search for truth.***

> Though the "Raving Atheist" continued to rave, there was now a stone in his God-rejecting shoe, placed there by a reasoned defense of the pro-life view. He couldn't disconnect himself from it and later admitted that the "selfless dedication [of pro-life advocates] to their cause moved [him] deeply." Later, he

> met a woman named Ashli whose work in pregnancy care drew him to further consider the pro-life position. Soon thereafter, the "Raving Atheist" became, in part, a pro-life blogsite …

Click here to read the astonishing conclusion. Then come back here.

Back? Ok, so what did we learn from this? Well, the moral of this story is that it is *very* important for Christians to have a good understanding of moral issues like abortion and same-sex marriage so that they can talk about these issues based on what they know. When someone can stake out a *moral* position on these kinds of issues, using science and history and other hard evidence – *not just the Bible* – then it helps non-Christians to take us seriously *as thinkers*.

Unless we demonstrate the ability to reason out there in the real world – outside the church – then we are not going to be viewed as authoritative on any subject – *especially* on spiritual subjects. We really need to study up on other issues, and show that we care about the unborn (abortion issue) and children (same-sex marriage issue). We have to show that there is more to us than just doing what feels good. We have to show that we are smart and that we are willing to be unpopular in order to do the right thing. That we didn't just inherit these views from our parents, or from our culture. That we have actually thought things through more than just reading the Bible, and that it makes a difference in how we view the world, and in how we live. We don't want people to continue in their perception that Christians are just people who play follow-the-leader – we want to show them how we have worked through these issues on our own.

Ignorance is never a good idea when you are trying to do good – and you can't know what is really good just by your feelings and intuitions. If you want to do good, you need to be 1) convincing and 2) effective. And that takes study. Don't choose policies based on what makes you feel good and what sounds good to others. Push for *effective* policies – what actually *does* good – and then have your arguments and evidence ready to convince people, using evidence from authorities *that they accept as non-Christians*. If you have the will to study a little, you can be passionate *and* convincing. Non-Christians respect passion and knowledge. They don't respect fideism and mysticism.

Scott Klusendorf is the author of the best introductory book on pro-life apologetics, entitled "The Case for Life".

Which types of relationships have the highest rates of divorce?

December 28, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A quiz for you, from Ruth Blog.

Question:

> Same sex couples have had the legal right to form domestic partnerships in several European countries. Denmark was the first to introduce registered partnerships, in 1989. Norway was second, in 1993, then Sweden in 1995. Data from 2 of these landmark countries, Norway and Sweden, as well as California, have been studied enough to answer this question:
>
> What types of unions have the highest rates of divorce?
>
> - Opposite sex married couples: men and women are so different, it is a wonder they ever stay married.
> - Male unions: men are naturally less committed, and less monogamous, so their partnerships don't endure.
> - Female unions: women get so emotionally distraught over things. A union of two women, without any male counter-balancing their roller-coaster, is very unstable.
>
> Hint: the answer is the same in all three countries!

And here's the answer:

> Female unions seem to have the highest divorce rates, followed by male unions, followed by opposite sex unions.
>
> "For Sweden, the divorce risk for partnerships of men is 50% higher than the risk for heterosexual marriages, and that the divorce risk for female partnerships is nearly double that for men."
>
> "For Norway, divorce risks are 77% higher in lesbian partnerships than in those of gay men." (The Norwegian data did not include a comparison with opposite sex couples.)
>
> In California, the data is collected a little differently. The study looks at couples who describe themselves as partners, whether same sex or opposite sex. The study asks the question, how likely is it that these couples live in the same household five years later. Male couples were only 30% as likely, while female couples were less that 25% as likely, as heterosexual married couples, to be residing in the same household for five years.
>
> The only contradictory data I have found to this pattern is from the Netherlands. In the Dutch data, same sex couples have a 3.15 times greater dissolution rate

> than opposite sex cohabiting couples, and a 3.15 x 3.66 or 11.5 times greater dissolution rate than opposite married couples. But, female couples seem to be more stable than male couples.

And not all married heterosexual couples are equally stable.

Consider this USA Today article from 2011 about that.

Excerpt:

> It's been proclaimed from pulpits and blogs for years — Christians divorce as much as everyone else in America.
>
> But some scholars and family activists are questioning the oft-cited statistics, saying Christians who attend church regularly are more likely to remain wed.
>
> "It's a useful myth," said Bradley Wright, a University of Connecticut sociologist who recently wrote "Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites … and Other Lies You've Been Told."
>
> "Because if a pastor wants to preach about how Christians should take their marriages more seriously, he or she can trot out this statistic to get them to listen to him or her."
>
> The various findings on religion and divorce hinge on what kind of Christians are being discussed.
>
> Wright combed through the General Social Survey, a vast demographic study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and found that Christians, like adherents of other religions, have a divorce rate of about 42%. The rate among religiously unaffiliated Americans is 50%.
>
> When Wright examined the statistics on evangelicals, he found worship attendance has a big influence on the numbers. Six in 10 evangelicals who never attend had been divorced or separated, compared to just 38% of weekly attendees.
>
> […]Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there's been some confusion.
>
> "You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees," he said.
>
> **Wilcox's analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.
>
> "There's something about being a nominal 'Christian' that is linked to a lot of

> negative outcomes when it comes to family life," Wilcox said.

Here's a quote from an Oklahoma State University study that confirms the Wright and Wilcox conclusions:

> History of Divorce and Religious Involvement
>
> Those who say they are more religious are less likely, not more, to have already experienced divorce. Likewise, those who report more frequent attendance at religious services were significantly less likely to have been divorced. This pattern of findings held using various analytic techniques that test which variables differentiate persons who have been divorced from persons who have not been divorced, while controlling for other variables that might affect the interpretation of the data, such as age, age of first marriage, income, and gender. When both the global rating of religiousness and the item assessing fiequency of attendance at religious services are entered into the same analysis, the attendance item remains significantly associated with divorce history but the global religiousness item does not. This suggests that a key aspect of how religious faith affects marital relationships may be through involvement with a community of faith.

Basically, the more your worldview grounds self-sacrifice over self-centeredness, the more stable it's going to be.

Related posts

- New study finds that cohabitation damages children
- New peer-reviewed paper highlights the benefits of pre-marital chastity/abstinence
- Does being a virgin before marriage affect marital stability?
- Which family configuration is best for raising children?
- Tactics and talking points for defending traditional marriage
- New study links father absence to increased bullying
- How important are biological fathers for healthy child development?
- What causes women to become single mothers, and how are children affected?
- New study shows that children of working mothers live unhealthier lives
- New Scientist article shows why fathers are necessary for children's well-being

Kurt Eichenwald: wilful ignorance of New Testament scholarship so severe, it’s a sin

December 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dan Wallace is the best-known evangelical expert in New Testament manuscripts. He wrote a strong response to a non-scholarly article from a journalist, which appeared in the far-left Newsweek.

Intro:

> Every year, at Christmas and Easter, several major magazines, television programs, news agencies, and publishing houses love to rattle the faith of Christians by proclaiming loudly and obnoxiously that there are contradictions in the Bible, that Jesus was not conceived by a virgin, that he did not rise from the dead, *ad infinitum*, *ad nauseum*. The day before Christmas eve (23 December 2014), Newsweek published a lengthy article by Kurt Eichenwald entitled, “The Bible: So Misunderstood It’s a Sin.” Although the author claims that he is not promoting any particular theology, this wears thin. Eichenwald makes so many outrageous claims, based on a rather slender list of named scholars (three, to be exact), that one has to wonder how this ever passed any editorial review.

Best snip:

> ***Error 1: Gross Exaggerations that Misrepresent the Data***
>
> I will address just one issue here—the notion that the original Bible is unknowable. Eichenwald claims:
>
> “No television preacher has ever read the Bible. Neither has any evangelical politician. Neither has the pope. Neither have I. And neither have you. At best, we’ve all read a bad translation—a translation of translations of translations of hand-copied copies of copies of copies of copies, and on and on, hundreds of times.”
>
> So, none of us today has read anything except a bad translation that has been altered hundreds of times before it got to us? Although Eichenwald enlists Bart Ehrman as one of the three scholars he names in the essay, he has seriously overstated Ehrman’s argument. At one point, it is true, Ehrman says in *Misquoting Jesus*, “Not only do we not have the originals, we don’t have the first copies of the originals. We don’t even have copies of the copies of the originals, or copies of the copies of the copies of the originals.” Here he is speaking of *Greek* copies of *Greek* manuscripts. Nothing is said about translations. At many points he admits that the vast majority of the changes to the text of the New Testament were rather minor over the many centuries of handwritten copying. And in the appendix to the paperback edition of his book Ehrman says, “Essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of

the New Testament." But Eichenwald makes it sound as though all translations current today are bad and that we can't possibly recover the wording of the original text. The reality is that we are getting closer and closer to the text of the original New Testament as more and more manuscripts are being discovered and catalogued.

But let's examine a bit more the actual statement that Eichenwald makes. We are all reading "at best," he declares, a "bad translation—a translation of translations of translations of hand-copied copies of copies of copies of copies, and on and on, hundreds of times." This is rhetorical flair run amok so badly that it gives hyperbole a bad name. A "translation of translations of translations" would mean, at a minimum, that we are dealing with a translation that is at least three *languages* removed from the original. But the first translation is at best a translation of a fourth generation copy in the original language. Now, I'm ignoring completely his last line—"and on and on, hundreds of times"—a line that is completely devoid of any resemblance to reality. Is it really true that we only have access to third generation translations from fourth generation Greek manuscripts? Hardly.

Although we know of some translations, especially the later ones, that were based on translations in other languages of the Greek text (thus, a translation of a translation of the Greek), this is not at all what scholars utilize today to duplicate as faithfully as possible the original wording. No, we have Greek manuscripts—thousands of them, some reaching as far back as the second century. And we have very ancient translations*directly* from the Greek that give us a good sense of the Greek text that would have been available in those regions where that early version was used. These include Latin, Syriac, and Coptic especially. Altogether, we have *at least* 20,000 handwritten manuscripts in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic and other ancient languages that help us to determine the wording of the original. Almost 6000 of these manuscripts are in Greek alone. And we have more than one million quotations of the New Testament by church fathers. There is absolutely nothing in the Greco-Roman world that comes even remotely close to this wealth of data. The New Testament has more manuscripts that are within a century or two of the original than anything else from the Greco-Roman world too. If we have to be skeptical about what the original New Testament said, that skepticism, on average, should be multiplied one thousand times for other Greco-Roman literature.

What of the differences among these witnesses? To be sure, there are more variants for the New Testament than for any other piece of ancient literature, but that's because there are more manuscripts for the New Testament than for any other piece of ancient literature. Consider the King James Version compared to virtually any modern New Testament translation: There are about 5000 differences in the underlying Greek text between these two. The vast majority of the differences cannot even be translated. The KJV is based on significantly later

> manuscripts, yet not a single cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith is affected by the different variants.
>
> The title of Eichenwald's section that deals with manuscript transmission is "Playing Telephone with the Word of God." The implication is that the transmission of the Bible is very much like the telephone game—a parlor game every American knows. It involves a brief narrative that someone whispers to the next person in line who then whispers this to the next person, and so on for several people. Then, the last person recites out loud what he or she heard and everyone has a good laugh for how garbled the story got. But the transmission of scripture is not at all like the telephone game. First, the goal of the telephone game is to see how *badly* the story can get misrepresented, while the goal of New Testament copying was by and large to produce very careful, accurate copies of the original. Second, in the telephone game there is only one line of transmission, while with the New Testament there are multiple lines of transmission. Third, one is oral, recited once in another's ear, while the other is written, copied by a faithful scribe who then would check his or her work or have someone else do it. Fourth, in the telephone game only the wording of the last person in the line can be checked, while for the New Testament textual critics have access to many of the earlier texts, some going back very close to the time of the autographs. Fifth, even the ancient scribes had access to earlier texts, and would often check their work against a manuscript that was many generations older than their immediate ancestor. The average papyrus manuscript would last for a century or more. Thus, even a late second-century scribe could have potentially examined the original document he or she was copying. If telephone were played the way New Testament transmission occurred, it would make for a ridiculously boring parlor game!
>
> One of the most remarkable pieces of illogical reasoning in Eichenwald's essay is his discussion of corruption in the manuscripts. Every single instance he raises *presupposes* that he knows what the original text said, for he speaks about what text had been corrupted *in each instance*! And more than once he contradicts his opening gambit by speaking authoritatively about what the original text actually said. In short, Eichenwald's opening paragraph takes exaggeration to new heights. If his goal is to shame conservative Christians for holding views that have no basis in reality, perhaps he should take some time to look in the mirror.

If I were going to give people any advice about investigating religious truth claims, it would be this – for goodness' sake, look to formal academic debates featuring scholars like Dan Wallace, Michael Licona, William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer, Michael Behe, etc. and their opponents. You will get a lot more out of a formal academic debate with fixed-length speeches than you will get from any left-wing sermon written by a journalist in magazines like Time or Newsweek.

If you want to hear a good debate between Bart Ehrman and Peter Williams, then click

here for my summary and a link to the audio from Apologetics 315.

UPDATE: Mathetes points me to another response from noted New Testament scholar Michael Krueger at the Canon Fodder blog.

Great grandmother florist is the latest victim of the gay inquisition

December 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> A florist in Washington state is being sued for adhering to her Christian beliefs in declining to make flower arrangements for one couple's wedding.
>
> **Before the lawsuit, Barronelle Stutzman, owner of Arlene's Flowers in Richland, Wash., had employed workers who identify as homosexual and sold floral arrangements to gay and lesbian customers.**
>
> **One such customer turned out to be one of the men who would sue her for not being willing to be hired for their same-sex wedding.**
>
> Unlike businesses that face similar lawsuits for refusing to provide specific wedding-related services to gay and lesbian couples on religious grounds—among them bakers in Oregon and farmers in New York—Stutzman is being sued in both a professional and personal capacity.
>
> When Washington state legalized same-sex marriage in 2012, she decided that as a matter of conscience she could not participate in or further same-sex ceremonies by using her creative skills in connection with them.
>
> So when two men, Robert Ingersoll and Curt Freed, asked her to design flower arrangements for their wedding, Stutzman politely declined and referred them to other vendors in the area. Ingersoll had been a valued customer, she says, so it was difficult.
>
> **The state's attorney general said Stutzman's decision to stand by her Christian faith was in direct conflict with a state law ensuring freedom from discrimination.**
>
> The measure prohibits places of public accommodation–which officials say include Arlene's Flowers–from discriminating on grounds of race, creed, sexual orientation, physical disability and so forth.
>
> […]Stutzman is represented by Kristen Waggoner, a lawyer at Alliance Defending Freedom, an organization dedicated to defending religious liberty.
>
> […]Waggoner says it is unprecedented for the Washington attorney general's office to sue a family business owner in a personal capacity unless that owner has committed acts of fraud or misrepresentation.
>
> "They're trying to set an example of her and punish her," says Waggoner, noting the suit has the potential to cripple Stutzman's livelihood. "She's not wealthy, so common sense would tell you that it's going to hurt pretty bad."

So I guess my problem with this is that gay people can go to any other florist and get the flowers they want. But instead of doing that, they prefer to force their morality on this woman. This woman doesn’t think that same-sex marriage is something to be celebrated. But the gay rights activists think that she needs to be forced by the power of the state to celebrate gay marriage. How would gay marriage affect you? Well, you will be prosecuted by the state and have your wealth confiscated. This case should be talked about in every church in the land next Sunday. But then I guess people would complain that that they were being too political and not providing them with feelings of comfort and happiness.

Ryan Bell's year of atheism testimony shows need for apologetics

December 29, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

// This is being re-posted because Bell has now completed his year living as an atheist, and has come out as an atheist, surprising no one.

Are you interested in knowing how to avoid losing your Christian faith? Well, an episode of the Unbelievable show will give you some clues.

But before we go to the podcast, I want to recap some reasons why people think that God exists.

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

In addition to these arguments for theism, Christians should be able to make a minimal facts case for the resurrection, one that leverages the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. And some sort of case for the belief that Jesus was divine using only the earliest sources.

In addition to those positive evidences, there would be informed defenses to other questions like the problem of evil, the problem of suffering, religious pluralism, the hiddenness of God, materialist conceptions of mind, consciousness and neuroscience, the justice of eternal damnation,sovereignty and free will, the doctrine of the Incarnation, the doctrine of the Trinity, and so on.

I listed these out so that you can see how many of these positive arguments and defenses that he wrestles with in his deconversion testimony.

The podcast

Details:

> Ryan J Bell is a former pastor who has decided to try being an atheist for a year.
> He explains why and interacts with New Zealand apologist Matt Flannagan.

The MP3 file is here. (We only care about the first 45 minutes)

Matt Flanagan and Justin Brierley do a great job in this debate getting the real issues on the table, although you have to wait until about 20 minutes in. Quick note about Bell. He has a BA in Pastoral Ministry, an MDiv, and a doctorate in Missional Organization. Now I have a suspicion of people with a background like that – my view is that they are more likely to be impractical and/or insulated from real life.

I also noticed that his politics are liberal, and that he is featured on the web site of GLAAD, a gay rights organization, for supporting gay marriage. Why do people support same-sex marriage? I think the most common reason is because they care more about the needs of adults than they care about the needs of children for a mother and a father. That's where this guy is coming from – he is a people-pleaser, not someone who promotes the needs of children over the needs of adults.

Summary:

At the start of the podcast, we learn that Bell was in the Seventh Day Adventist church, which is strongly invested in young-Earth creationism. Depending on how strict his young Earth view was, this closes off many of the best arguments for theism from science, such as the cosmological argument, the cosmic fine-tuning argument, the stellar habitability argument, the galactic habitability argument, the Cambrian explosion argument, and even the origin of life argument (to a degree). These are the arguments that make theism *non-negotiable*.

When he started his journey to atheism, he says that he was reading a book called "Religion Without God" by Ronald Dworkin.I was curious to see what view of faith was embraced by this book. Would it be the Biblical view of faith, trust based on evidence? Or the atheist view of faith, belief without evidence? I found an excerpt from the book in the New York Times, which said this:

> In the special case of value, however, faith means something more, because our convictions about value are emotional commitments as well and, whatever tests of coherence and internal support they survive, they must feel right in an emotional way as well. They must have a grip on one's whole personality. Theologians often say that religious faith is a sui generis experience of conviction. Rudolf Otto, in his markedly influential book, *The Idea of the Holy*, called the experience "numinous" and said it was a kind of "faith-knowledge." I mean to suggest that convictions of value are also complex, sui generis, emotional experiences. As we will see… when scientists confront the unimaginable vastness of space and the astounding complexity of atomic particles they have an emotional reaction that matches Otto's description surprisingly well. Indeed many of them use the very term "numinous" to describe what they feel. They find the universe awe-inspiring and deserving of a kind of emotional response that at least borders on trembling.

The excerpt quotes William James, who reduces religion to non-rational emotional

experiences. I don't know about you, but I don't think that view of faith is Biblical at all. Biblical faith is rooted in evidence. So clearly, what is important to this Dworkin is not objective evidence, it's feelings. And this is what Bell was reading. He was not reading academic books like "Debating Christian Theism" to get the best arguments pro-and-con. He was looking for something that "resonated" with his feelings.

His journey was prompted by a female Episcopal priest friend who was asked by an atheist "what difference does religion make in my life?". So, the framework of his investigation is set by a question that is not focused on truth, but is instead focused on emotions and life enhancement. Now Christianity might be a real stinker of a worldview for life enhancement, and the Bible warns us not to expect a bed of roses in this life. Christianity is not engineered to make you feel good or to make people like you, especially people like female Episcopal priests and GLAAD.

When talking about atheism, he is not concerned with whether atheism is logically consistent or consistent with objective evidence. He is concerned by whether atheists can have the experience of being moral without God. He sees an atheist who has moral preferences and seems like a good person by our arbitrary social standards, and he finds that as "valid" as religion. He is judging worldviews by whether people have their needs met, not by truth.

He says that as a pastor, his method of evangelizing atheists was to encourage them to "try on faith" "go through the motions" "participate in social justice outreach events", etc. His goal was that they would "step into the stream of the Christian narrative and discover that it held value and meaning to them, and find that they actually believed it". So his method of recommending Christianity to others has nothing to do with logic, evidence or truth. He is offering Christianity as life enhancement – not knowledge but a "narrative" – a story. If it makes you feel good, and it makes people like you, then you can "believe" it. He says that he was "a Christian by practice, a Christian by tradition". Not a Christian by truth. Not a Christian by knowledge. He just picked a flavor of ice cream that tasted right to him, one that pleased his parents, friends and community. And now he has new friends and a new community, and he wants to please them and feel good about himself in this new situation.

He says that the Christian worldview is "a way of approaching reality" and "creating meaning" and "identifying meaning in the experiences we have". And he says that there are "other ways of experiencing meaning". He talks a lot about his correspondence with people and reading atheists, but nothing about reading Christian scholars who deal with evidence, like William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer or Mike Licona.

Literal, literal quote: (23:35) "Well I think the only access we have to the question of God's existence or not is how we feel. I mean there's no falsifiable data that says God either exists or doesn't exist. It's all within the realm of our personal experience". "If living as though God exists makes you happy and comforts you, then by all means, go for it". This attitude is so popular in our churches today, and where does it end? In atheism. I had a fundamentalist woman telling me just last night how this feelings mysticism

approach was the right approach to faith, and that the head knowledge approach was bad and offensive.

I'm going to cut off my summary there, but the podcast goes on for 45 minutes. Matt Flannagan is brilliant, and went far beyond what I wanted to say to this guy, but in such a winsome way. I recommend listening to the whole thing, and be clear where this fideistic nonsense ends – in atheism.

My thoughts

This podcast is a great warning against two views: 1) faith is belief without evidence and 2) religion not about truth, but about life enhancement. Three other related stories might also help: the story of Dan Barker, the story of Nathan Pratt and the story of Katy Perry. I think the Christian life requires a commitment to truth above all. If you think that you can get by as a Christian relying on hymn singing, church attending, mysticism and emotional experiences, you have another thing coming. This is a different time and a different place than 50 years ago, when that sort of naivete and emotionalism might have been safe. Now we have many challenges – some intellectual and some not. To stand in this environment, it's going to take a little more than piety and emotions.

People today are very much looking for religion to meet their needs. And this is not just in terms of internal feelings, but also peer approval and mystical coincidences. They expect God to give them happy feelings. They expect God to give them peer approval. They expect God to make every crazy unBiblical, unwise selfish plan they invent "work out" by miracle. They feel very constrained by planning and moral boundaries, believing in a "God of love" who is primarily concerned with their desires and feelings, not with rules and duties. Nothing in the Bible supports the idea that a relationship with God is for the purpose of making us feel happy and comfortable. When people realize that they will be happier in this life without having to care what God thinks, they will drop their faith, and there are plenty of non-Christians to cheer them on when they do it.

I would say to all of you reading that if the opinions of others causes you to stumble then meditate on the following passage: 1 Cor 4:1-4 too. There is only one person's opinion that matters, ultimately.

Why is it so hard to get married these days?

December 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

A long, long time ago when I was in my "read one or two books about everything important" phase, I remember coming to marriage and picking out two books to read on that. The first was the Judith Wallerstein study on "The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce", which talked about children's experience of divorce over the 25-year period following their parent's decision to divorce. The second was F. Carolyn Graglia's book "Domestic Tranquility".

I found an essay about the latter book that seems to be either the introduction or chapter one. I just thought I would share it here to clear up why people are not getting married as much as they used.

Let's see how it happened:

> Since the late 1960s, feminists have very successfully waged war against the traditional family, in which husbands are the principal breadwinners and wives are primarily homemakers. This war's immediate purpose has been to undermine the homemaker's position within both her family and society in order to drive her into the work force. Its long-term goal is to create a society in which women behave as much like men as possible, devoting as much time and energy to the pursuit of a career as men do, so that women will eventually hold equal political and economic power with men. This book examines feminism's successful onslaught against the traditional family, considers the possible ramifications of that success, and defends a woman's choice to be a homemaker. Feminists have used a variety of methods to achieve their goal. **They have promoted a sexual revolution that encouraged women to mimic male sexual promiscuity. They have supported the enactment of no-fault divorce laws that have undermined housewives' social and economic security. And they obtained the application of affirmative action requirements to women as a class, gaining educational and job preferences for women and**

> **undermining the ability of men who are victimized by this discrimination to function as family breadwinners.**

Sexual promiscuity, no-fault divorce laws and affirmative action laws that discriminate against male providers, were the goals of *radical feminists*. There may have been some men who went along with these things, but the main force behind it was radical feminism.

We continue:

> Certainly, feminism is not alone responsible for our families' sufferings. As Charles Murray details in *Losing Ground*,[1] **President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs, for example, have often hurt families, particularly black families**, and these programs were supported by a large constituency beyond the women's movement. What distinguishes the women's movement, however, is the fact that, despite the pro-family motives it sometimes ascribes to itself, it has actively sought the traditional family's destruction. **In its avowed aims and the programs it promotes, the movement has adopted Kate Millett's goal, set forth in her Sexual Politics, in which she endorses Friedrich Engels's conclusion that "the family, as that term is presently understood, must go"; "a kind fate," she remarks, in "view of the institution's history.[2] This goal has never changed: feminists view traditional nuclear families as inconsistent with feminism's commitment to women's independence and sexual freedom.[3]**

To counter radical feminism, women should be reading books that offer a serious, scholarly defense to feminism (e.g. – Christina Hoff Sommers, Carrie Lukas, F. Carolyn Graglia, etc.). You can tell whether a woman is a feminist based on how brittle she is with the idea that women have certain roles like wife and mother. Another good indicator is whether she is comfortable with the idea that relationships require each person to have certain responsibilities and obligations to the other that *override* their desire for happiness. Everyone in a relationship has responsibilities and obligations to the other person. For example, with few exceptions, a man ought to get up and go to work to support his family, just as the woman, with few exceptions, should try to keep thin and be available for her husband sexually. Feelings and desires should not override responsibilities and obligations in a relationship.

More:

> Emerging as a revitalized movement in the 1960s, feminism reflected women's social discontent, which had arisen in response to the decline of the male breadwinner ethic and to the perception — heralded in Philip Wylie's 1940s castigation of the evil "mom"[4] — that Western society does not value highly the roles of wife and mother. Women's dissatisfactions, nevertheless, have often been aggravated rather than alleviated by the feminist reaction. **To mitigate their discontent, feminists argued, women should pattern their lives after men's, engaging in casual sexual intercourse on the same terms**

> **as sexually predatory males and making the same career commitments as men. In pursuit of these objectives, feminists have fought unceasingly for the ready availability of legal abortion and consistently derogated both motherhood and the worth of fulltime homemakers.**
>
> […]Contemporary feminism has been remarkably successful in bringing about the institutionalization in our society of the two beliefs underlying its offensive: denial of the social worth of traditional homemakers and rejection of traditional sexual morality. The consequences have been pernicious and enduring. General societal assent to these beliefs has profoundly distorted men's perceptions of their relationships with and obligations to women, women's perceptions of their own needs, and the way in which women make decisions about their lives.

Read the rest, it's a good introduction to the book.

So how have men responded to the sexual revolution and no-fault divorce? Well, most non-Christian men are going to take the free sex that's being offered to them, and back away from a life-long commitment to protect and provide. Even a number of "Christian" men are now finding it easy to work premarital sex into their relationships, something that would have been unthinkable to Bible-believers of earlier generations. Also, a woman who has a lot of premarital sexual experience is a red flag to most men – they worry that she will not be able to be faithful to them since she is already accustomed to recreational sex rather than married sex within a covenant. Premarital sex generally makes women less trusting, less vulnerable and less capable at being lovable to a man using non-sexual (feminine) abilities. Research shows that the more premarital sex partners a woman has, the more unstable her marriage becomes. This is also true for men, but the effect is slightly less for men. It's definitely something that has to be worked through, because it's a risk factor for relationship instability.

If you ask any man today about what is holding him up from getting married, the first thing he will tell you is no-fault divorce laws. Whereas women may shy away from marriage because they are worried about being unhappy or losing their freedom, men have a much, much more pressing danger in mind – the danger of having your entire life savings wiped out in an instant. And that's not to mention the prospect of only being able to see your kids for a few hours every month if you don't get joint custody – which is the vast majority of cases (about 90%).

Conservative Republicans plan to vote against John Boehner for Speaker

December 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the New York Post. The event occurred on December 23rd.

> Bah, humbug!
>
> A passenger was tossed off a plane at La Guardia Airport on Tuesday after flipping out — because airline workers wished him a merry Christmas.
>
> The man was waiting to board American Airlines Flight 1140 to Dallas when a cheerful gate agent began welcoming everyone with the Yuletide greeting while checking boarding passes.
>
> The grumpy passenger, who appeared to be traveling alone, barked at the woman, “You shouldn’t say that because not everyone celebrates Christmas.”
>
> The agent replied, “Well, what should I say then?”
>
> “Don’t say, ‘Merry Christmas!’ ” the man shouted before brushing past her.
>
> Once on the plane, he was warmly greeted by a flight attendant who also wished him a “merry Christmas.” That was the last straw.
>
> “Don’t say, ‘Merry Christmas!’ ” the man raged before lecturing the attendants and the pilot about their faux pas.
>
> The crew tried to calm the unidentified man, but he refused to back down and continued hectoring them.
>
> He was escorted off the plane as other fliers burst into cheers and applause.
>
> American Airlines did not return a request for comment.

Where did this attitude of “being offended” come from? I wish they had released more details about who the man was so we could all learn what worldview causes people to start screaming and shouting in public like that. It really makes me wonder if these people who value diversity know what that word really means. It means letting people be who they are in public, and not getting angry at them for expressing their different views and feelings.

National debt up more than $10 trillion since Pelosi/Reid budgets of 2007

December 30, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post is from Red State.

Excerpt:

> Despite his promises to cut the deficit in half by the end of his "first" term, Obama racked up the largest deficits in U.S. history:
>
> - FY2009: The federal budget deficit was $1.413 trillion, the highest in U.S. history. ("Monthly Budget Review: November 2011," Congressional Budget Office, 11/7/11)
> - FY2011: The federal budget deficit was $1.299 trillion, the second highest in U.S. history. ("Monthly Budget Review: November 2011," Congressional Budget Office, 11/7/11)
> - FY2010: The federal budget deficit was $1.294 trillion, the third highest in U.S. history. ("Monthly Budget Review: November 2011," Congressional Budget Office, 11/7/11)
> - FY2012 The federal budget deficit was $1.090 trillion, the fourth highest in U.S. history. ("An Analysis of the President's 2013 Budget," Congressional Budget Office, 10/5/12)
>
> You shouldn't be shocked by Obama's failure to reduce the deficit in half by the end of his first term in office. He did warn us there would be "trillion-dollar deficits for years to come."
>
> **Interest expense on the national debt is what sinks countries. The zero interest rate environment we have today masks the problem. When we return to normal interest rates, say 6%, our interest expense will jump to approximately to 25% of tax receipts. We have recently seen what happens to countries with debt problems similar to ours. Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Argentina all brought to their knees by excessive debt.**

Heritage Foundation economist Stephen Moore:

> **Here is the biggest worry about an $18 trillion debt: What happens if/when interest rates start to drift back upward? Answer: This is the economic equivalent of the nuclear option.**
>
> **Each 1-percentage-point rise in interest rates causes the U.S. deficit to rise by more than $1 trillion over ten years. So a 300-basis-point rise in rates — nothing more than a return to normalcy — would mean about $5**

> **trillion in federal deficits.**
>
> If that happens, the debt-servicing costs grow astronomically and interest payments would become the biggest expense item in the budget. We start to pay more and more taxes just to finance past borrowing. This is what happened in Detroit; look at how that turned out.
>
> Maybe this debt bubble won't burst. Let's pray that it doesn't. If it does, the 2008–09 real-estate crash could look like a picnic by comparison.
>
> […]Oh, and we're still borrowing half a trillion a year, so the debt will likely hit $20 trillion sometime before 2018. Have a nice day.

In 2007, when Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid took over the spending, the national debt was only 8.5 trillion!

I am really hoping that interest rates will go up. Not only would it help me personally to get a predictable return on my investments, but I would like the people who voted for the Democrats to perceive (when it blows up) that lowering interest rates and borrowing trillions of dollars was not the right way to achieve real economic growth. The economy looks better if you throw 10 trillion dollars of borrowed money at it, but it's not sustainable. In fact, it seems as if the left is always trying to wreck the economy with one bubble or another. It's not just reducing mortgage lending requirements to create a housing bubble, it's reducing student loans requirements to create a higher education bubble, and it's reducing interest rates to create a debt bubble. It's almost as if they were trying to destroy the economy.

Christianity expanding rapidly in communist China

December 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jay Richards tweeted this story from Breitbart News.

Excerpt:

> Though the Chinese Communist Party is the largest explicitly atheist organization in the world, with 85 million official members, it is now overshadowed by an estimated 100 millionChristians in China. It is no wonder Beijing is nervous and authorities are cracking down on Christian groups.
>
> Christianity is growing so fast in China that some predict that it will be the most Christian nation in the world in only another 15 years. By far, the greatest growth is coming outside the official state-sanctioned churches, which are rightly considered subservient to the Communist Party. Numbers are increasing, rather, in unofficial Protestant "house churches" and in the underground Catholic church.
>
> "By my calculations China is destined to become the largest Christian country in the world very soon," said Fenggang Yang, a professor of sociology at Purdue University and author of Religion in China: Survival and Revival under Communist Rule.
>
> […]According to the annual report of the human rights group China Aid, persecution of Christians worsened dramatically in 2013, in line with a constant trend of deteriorating religious freedom over the past eight years. Most recently, the oppression of Christians has especially targeted Protestant groups, leaving most Catholics alone, which many feel reflects Beijing's strategic goal of reestablishing diplomatic relations with the Vatican. According to reports, hundreds of Protestant churches in the eastern province of Zhejiang have been targeted for demolition in the past year.
>
> Unrecognized Christian groups have been subject to crackdowns for years, but observers say the atmosphere is getting worse as their numbers increase and the governing Communist Party takes a more nationalist tone under President Xi Jinping.
>
> Particularly hard hit has been a Beijing Christian group called Shouwang. "Things have got worse this year because the police started to detain us. I was detained for a week," said Zhao Sheng, 54, musical organizer for the group's Christmas service.
>
> "But Christmas is still a happy time. No matter what happens, God is with us," he added with a smile.

I think this story is a nice reminder for us that it can be the case that God's permitting of evil can be be justified if it helps more people to know him. Now, of course this seems unfair to narcissistic atheists who think that God, if he existed, ought to be their cosmic

butler. But for people who take God as they find him, it’s not a surprise that God can permit evil things to happen in order accomplish purposes of leading more people into a free love relationship with him. After all, look what happened to Jesus! Christians aren’t surprised by evil and suffering – on the contrary, we expect it. We know that the purpose of life is not for God to make his human pets happy, but for God to draw us toward him and allow us to freely respond to his saving initiative.

Technological advances make the Keystone XL pipeline safer than alternatives

December 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My Dad loves to read Fox News, and he sent me this article about the technology behind the Keystone XL pipeline. We got into a good discussion on this article, too. My Dad used to be a big believer in big government, but now he only cares about what problems the private sector can solve.

The article says:

> The Obama administration continues to block the controversial Keystone XL pipeline that would transport nearly 35 million gallons of oil a day from Canada to the U.S., citing environmental concerns as the reason. But according to pipeline advocates, it would use the latest technology and best safety features to prevent spills.
>
> Advanced steel is part of it. The current part of the Keystone pipeline that already exists uses 2,638 miles of hardened steel built to "withstand impact from a 65-ton excavator with 3.5-inch teeth," according to TransCanada, the company behind the Keystone pipeline.
>
> The steel is also coated with alloys to prevent it from wearing out.
>
> "They use all kinds of methodologies to reduce friction. Corrosion inhibition is pretty sexy stuff in this business," Eric Smith, associate director of Tulane University's Energy Institute, told FoxNews.com
>
> Pumping stations are another critical part. All along the pipeline, pumps move the oil using centrifugal force: a motor spins and forces oil to the edges of the pump, which causes more oil to rush forward to take the place of the oil pulled to the edges.
>
> Each pump has 6,500 horsepower – meaning that the pump exerts an amount of power roughly equivalent to that of 6,500 horses. Total pumping power on the existing pipeline is nearly half a million horsepower, according to TransCanada.
>
> Another critical technology is leak detection systems. The existing Keystone pipeline, for instance, has sensors that collect data from 20,000 different points along the pipeline.
>
> If a leak occurs anywhere along the pipeline, the pressure in the pipeline changes, and TransCanada notes that such changes travel through the pipeline at the speed of sound and so can be detected nearly instantly.
>
> The company adds that the pipeline has "fail-safe" mechanisms that automatically reduce oil pressure in the pipeline to safe levels.
>
> TransCanada also has airplanes monitor the pipeline from the sky, using both the eyes of human pilots and a "Laser Spectroscopy Unit" that shoots a laser near

> the pipeline and then analyzes the reaction of whatever material is hit by the laser beam. TransCanada says this is "capable of identifying tiny methane leaks at patrol altitudes."
>
> The human pilots also catch things. TransCanada reports that one of its pilots once noticed that a circus in Kansas had tethered an elephant to a pipeline stake, which posed a potential threat.
>
> All the layers of security help, say experts.
>
> "It's a belt-and-suspenders kind of approach. You just don't want even minute leaks," Smith said, adding that pipelines are the safest way of moving oil across land.

Pipelines are actually much safer than transporting the oil by train, which is the method favored by environmentalist opponents to Keystone XL:

> According to a 2006 study by Environmental Research Consulting using Department of Transportation data, pipelines have spilled far less than trucks or railroads per ton of oil transported.
>
> Critics of President Obama's delay of the Keystone XL construction say the holdup actually makes everyone less safe, as oil producers instead rely on comparatively dangerous railroads for transportation. From 2008 to 2013, the amount of oil transported by rail skyrocketed from 9,500 carloads in 2008 to 41 times that – 407,642 – in 2013.

My big point to my Dad about this is how the private sector responds to the desires of customers on their own, developing solutions for the people who they expect to buy their products. The government spends 2 billion on the Obamacare web site, and forces people to use it. They can never develop anything people actually want to buy. Government just taxes, regulates and restricts the businesses who seek to solve problems for customers.

It's the private sector businesses who are the real heroes to customers – making the things that we want and need and competing with other businesses to sell the most quality at the lowest price. They even find solutions to our concerns about the environment, if we let them, because that is part of pleasing the customer, too. If we had to wait on public school teachers, politicians, Hollywood clowns and academics to innovate, we would be waiting a long time indeed. I stand with private sector business, and the free-market system in general.

UPDATE: Holy snouts. For the first time in 6 years I am actually proud of Obama for doing something:

> The Obama administration has opened a new front in the global battle for oil market share, effectively clearing the way for the shipment of as much as a million barrels per day of ultra-light U.S. crude to the rest of the world.
>
> The Department of Commerce on Tuesday ended a year-long silence on a contentious, four-decade ban on oil exports, saying it had begun approving a

> backlog of requests to sell processed light oil abroad. It also issued a long-awaited document outlining exactly what kinds of oil other would-be exporters can ship.
>
> The administration's first serious effort to clarify an issue that has caused confusion and consternation in energy markets for more than a year will likely please domestic oil drillers, foreign trade partners and some Republicans who have urged Obama to loosen the export ban, which they see as an outdated holdover from the 1970s Arab oil embargo.
>
> The latest measures were wrapped in regulatory jargon and couched by some as a basic clarification of existing rules, but analysts said the message was unambiguous: a green light for any company willing and able to process their light condensate crude through a distillation tower, a simple piece of oilfield kit.
>
> "In practice this long-awaited move can open up the floodgates to substantial increases in exports by end 2015," Ed Morse, global head of commodities research at Citigroup in New York said in a research note.
>
> […]By opening the door to U.S. crude exports, the administration is offering a bit of relief to some domestic drillers that have said that they are forced to sell their shale oil at a discount of as much as $15 a barrel versus global markets as fast-rising domestic supplies overwhelm local demand.

Let's hope Obama signs the Keystone XL pipeline in the new year, too. That will help people so much and hurt our enemies, Russia, Venezuela and Iran. There are ways to fight wars without firing a shot, and this is how you do it – he looks like Ronald Reagan, now. Well done, Barack Obama! Finally!

Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas

December 31, 2014 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The lecture: (from 2013)

Note: there is a period of 19 minutes of Q&A at the end of the lecture.

About the speaker:

His full biography is here. (I removed his links from my excerpt text below)

Excerpt:

> I had an interest in science and theology, so in 1977 I chose to go to Biola University where I could study both subjects in detail. I thoroughly enjoyed college and participated in intramural sports, was elected to student government, served as a resident assistant, competed in forensics, and studied a lot. As I neared college graduation my dual interest continued so I applied to seminary and to graduate school. After graduating *summa cum laude* from Biola, I decided to pursue a graduate degree in physics at UCLA.
>
> During my first few years of graduate school, I developed an increased interest in quantum mechanics and subatomic physics and decided to do research in a field that dealt with these subjects. I joined a High Energy Physics experimental group doing research at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to actively participate in research at SLAC. I graduated in 1988 with my Ph.D in High Energy Physics (a.k.a. Elementary Particle Physics). If you would like to know more about High Energy Physics, the Particle Data Group at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory has a very nice interactive adventure that teaches you all about the subject. My research advisor was professor Charles Buchanan and my disertation was titled "A Study of Lambda Polarization and Phi Spin Alignment in Electron-Positron Annihilation at 29 GeV as a Probe of Color Field Behavior."
>
> After graduation, I accepted a post-doctoral research position with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I continued to do research at SLAC where I joined the SLD experiment. My research interests centered on the SLD silicon pixel vertex detector. I wrote most of the offline software for this device, and did physics analysis which used the vertex detector, including tagging *b* quark events for flavor specific QCD (Quantum Chromodynamics) analysis. In the seven years I was employed by UMASS, I only spent 3 days on the Amherst campus. The rest of the time was spent in California.
>
> […]In August 1995, I accepted a job as an Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of Oklahoma (OU) in Norman, Oklahoma. The University of Oklahoma has a vibrant high energy physics research group involved in experiments at the

> Fermi National Accelerator Center (Fermilab), and CERN. I joined the DØ experiment at Fermilab where I continue to do research in elementary particle physics. As a member of the DØ collaboration I have made contributions to the testing of silicon sensors for the upgraded vertex detector, to the track finding algorithms, to a measurement of the photon production cross section which probes the gluon content of protons, and to other QCD measurements. I am currently studying properties of*B* mesons that contain a *b*-quark, the production cross section of jets coming from quarks and gluons, and other QCD analyses. At CERN, I am a collaborator on the ATLAS detector.
>
> I received tenure in 2001 and was promoted to the rank of Professor in the summer of 2010. Most of the time at OU I have taught introductory physics classes to physics majors, engineers, and life science majors. In these classes I have used a number of interactive techniques to facilitate student participation and learning. I have been privileged to win a few awards for my teaching. In 1999, the Associated Students selected me as the Outstanding Professor in the College of Arts and Science, and in 2000 I was awarded the BP AMOCO Foundation Good Teaching Award. In 2002, I was given the Regents Award for Superior Teaching. I received the Carlisle Mabrey and Lurine Mabrey Presidential Professorship in 2006 which is given to "faculty members who excel in all their professional activities and who relate those activities to the students they teach and mentor."

He seems to have done a fine job of integrating his faith with a solid career in physics research.

Summary:

- It used to be true that most of the great scientists were believers in God
- But now science has advanced and we have better instruments – is it still true?
- Today, many people believe that science has shows that the universe and Earth are not special
- We used to believe that the Earth was the center of the universe, and Darwin showed we are not designed
- The problem with this view is that it is based on old science, not modern science
- Three topics: origin of the universe, fine-tuning of the universe, the Rare Earth hypothesis

Experimental evidence for the origin of the universe:

- #1: Hubble discovered that the universe expands because of redshifting of light from distant galaxies
- #2: Measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation show the universe had a beginnning
- #3: Measurements of the light element (hydrogen and helium) abundances confirm

an origin of the universe
- The best explanation for an absolute origin of space, time, matter and energy is a supernatural cause

Experimental evidence for the design of the universe:

- #1: The amount of matter: a bit less = no stars and galaxies, a bit more = universe recollapses
- #2: The strong force: a bit more = only hydrogen, a bit more = little or no hydrogen
- #3: Carbon resonance level: a bit higher = no carbon, a bit lower = no carbon

Experimental evidence for galactic, stellar and planetary habitability:

- #1: Galaxy: produces high number of heavy elements and low radiation
- #2: Star: long stable lifetime, burns bright, bachelor star, third generation star (10 billion years must elapsed),
- #3: Planet: mass of planet, stable orbit, liquid water, tectonic activity, tilt, moon

Naturalistic explanations:

- Humans evolve to the point where they reach back in time and create finely-tuned universe
- Eternally existing multiverse

Hawking and Mlodinow response to Rare Earth:

- There are lots of planets so one must support life
- Odds of a planet that supports life are low even with 10^22 planets

Hawking and Mlodinow proposal of M-theory multiverse:

- There is no experimental evidence for M-theory being true
- M-theory is not testable now and is not likely to be testable in the future
- But science is about making testable predictions, not about blind speculation

Hawking and Mlodinow no-boundary proposal:

- This theory requires the laws of physics to exist prior to the universe
- But where do you get laws of physics before there is any physical world?
- There is no experimental evidence for no-boundary proposal
- All the evidence we have now (redshift, CMBR, H-He abundances) is for Big Bang

What science has revealed provide abundant evidence for a transcendent Creator and Designer

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Dennis Prager: which sin is the worst sin?

January 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Drew suggested this post to me to blog about, and I was able to find the Prager University video that goes with it. Drew really liked the video, as well.

Excerpt:

> The worst sin is committing evil in God's name.
>
> How do we know?
>
> From the third of the Ten Commandments. This is the only one of the ten that states that God will not forgive a person who violates the commandment.
>
> What does this commandment say?
>
> It is most commonly translated as, "Do not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. For the Lord will not hold guiltless" — meaning "will not forgive" — whoever takes His name in vain."
>
> Because of this translation, most people understandably think that the commandment forbids saying God's name for no good reason. So, something like, "God, did I have a rough day at work today!" violates the third commandment.
>
> But that interpretation presents a real problem. It would mean that whereas God could forgive the violation of any of the other commandments — dishonoring one's parents, stealing, adultery or even committing murder — He would never forgive someone who said, "God, did I have a rough day at work today!"
>
> Let's be honest: That would render God and the Ten Commandments morally incomprehensible.
>
> As it happens, however, the commandment is not the problem. The problem is the translation. The Hebrew original doesn't say "Do not take;" it says "Do not carry." The Hebrew literally reads, "Do not carry the name of the Lord thy God in vain."
>
> This is reflected in one of the most widely used new translations of the Bible, the New International Version, or NIV, which uses the word "misuse" rather than the word "take:"
>
> "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God."
>
> This is much closer to the original's intent.
>
> What does it mean to "carry" or to "misuse" God's name? It means committing evil in God's name.
>
> And that God will not forgive.
>
> Why not?
>
> When an irreligious person commits evil, it doesn't bring God and religion into

> disrepute. But when a religious person commits evil in God's name he destroys the greatest hope for goodness on earth — belief in a God who demands goodness, and who morally judges people.
>
> The Nazis and Communists were horrifically cruel mass murderers. But their evils only sullied their own names, not the name of God. But when religious people commit evil, especially in God's name, they are not only committing evil, they are doing terrible damage to the name of God.

Now, I don't agree with Dennis on his ranking this sin as the worst. I would put this one lower, and say that rebellion against God is the worst sin. That's what I would say intellectually speaking. Emotionally speaking, I think that attacking people for their allegiance to God is the worst sin, like when people go after Christians for trying to take the Bible seriously in sexual matters, for example.

Dennis is Jewish, so he believes that religions should be judged based on whether they produce good or not, rather than whether they are true or not. I try to listen to Dennis' radio show as often as I can, and although he does like to discuss what we can know about God from science and history, he doesn't think that getting the right answers to theological questions is as important as doing the right actions. I think that might be why he chose this one as the worst, because actions are more important to him. I agree with him that it is certainly very bad to invoke God in a way that makes God look bad.

What is the purpose of capital punishment? Does it deter crime?

January 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Why do some people support the death penalty? Because research conducted by multiple teams of scholars at multiple universities have shown that the death penalty deters crime.

Excerpt:

> "Science does really draw a conclusion. It did. There is no question about it," said Naci Mocan, an economics professor at the University of Colorado at Denver. "The conclusion is there is a deterrent effect."
>
> A 2003 study he co-authored, and a 2006 study that re-examined the data, found that each execution results in five fewer homicides, and commuting a death sentence means five more homicides. "The results are robust, they don't really go away," he said. "I oppose the death penalty. But my results show that the death penalty (deters) — what am I going to do, hide them?"
>
> Statistical studies like his are among a dozen papers since 2001 that capital punishment has deterrent effects. They all explore the same basic theory — if the cost of something (be it the purchase of an apple or the act of killing someone) becomes too high, people will change their behavior (forego apples or shy from murder).

And specifically:

> • Each execution deters an average of 18 murders, according to a 2003 nationwide study by professors at Emory University. (Other studies have estimated the deterred murders per execution at three, five and 14).

> • The Illinois moratorium on executions in 2000 led to 150 additional homicides over four years following, according to a 2006 study by professors at the University of Houston.
>
> • Speeding up executions would strengthen the deterrent effect. For every 2.75 years cut from time spent on death row, one murder would be prevented, according to a 2004 study by an Emory University professor.

In case anyone is wondering what sort of crimes are deterred by the death penalty, you can read this graphic description of a recent death-penalty crime.

What sort of crimes are eligible for the death penalty?

Here's an example of a death-penalty eligible crime from the Hartford Courant. (WARNING: graphic!)

Excerpt:

> A Superior Court jury today sentenced Steven Hayes to death for the murders of Jennifer Hawke-Petit and her daughters, Hayley and Michaela, during a seven-hour home invasion, robbery and arson at their Cheshire home in July 2007.
>
> Outside the courthouse after the verdicts, Hawke-Petit's father, the Rev. Richard Hawke, said "There are some people who do not deserve to live in God's world."
>
> Asked what he had in his heart, Dr. William Petit Jr. struggled with his answer. "….Probably many of you have kids," he said, pausing to choke back tears. "Michaela was an 11-year-old little girl…tortured and killed in her own bedroom, surrounded by her stuffed animals…."
>
> Petit then talked about his daughter Hayley's bright future and her strength and the children that his wife, Jennifer, helped.
>
> "So, I was really thinking of the tremendous loss" during the verdict, Petit said, adding that he was pleased with it, but "mostly I was sad for the loss we have all suffered."
>
> Asked if he thought there'd be closure now, Petit said, "There's never closure. There's a hole…. with jagged edges…that may smooth out with time, but the hole in your heart and the hole in your soul" remains.
>
> "This isn't about revenge," Petit said. "Vengeance belongs to the Lord. This is about justice."
>
> […]The jury sentenced Hayes to death on six counts: killing Hawke-Petit and Michaela and Hayley in the course of a single action; killing a child under the age of 16; killing Hawke-Petit in the course of a kidnapping; killing Hayley in the course of a kidnapping; killing Michaela in the course of a kidnapping; and killing Hawke-Petit in the course of a sexual assault.
>
> […]Hayes, 47, of Winsted, was convicted Oct. 5 of breaking into the Petit home, beating Petit, tying up and torturing the family as Hayes and another man ransacked the home for cash and valuables and tortured the family for seven

> hours. Testimony during Hayes' trial showed that at one point in the break-in, Hayes forced Hawke-Petit to go to the bank to withdraw money. During that time, according to testimony, Komisarjevsky sexually assaulted Michaela Petit, 11.
>
> When Hawke-Petit and Hayes returned from the bank, Hayes raped and strangled Hawke-Petit. The house was doused with gasoline and set on fire as the intruders fled, testimony showed. Hayley, 17, and Michaela died of smoke inhalation.
>
> […]Prosecutors used the words of Hayes' younger brother Matthew to counter testimony that home-invasion crime was an aberration in Hayes otherwise troubled but basically nonviolent life.
>
> Matthew Hayes portrayed his brother as a conniving, sadistic, violent thief who saw Matthew take countless beatings from his brutal father for Steven Hayes' misdeeds. At one point, Steven Hayes held a gun to Matthew's head, according to the statement, which was given to state police after the home invasion.
>
> Examples of Hayes' sadistic behavior toward his brother included hooking Matthew to the garage door by his belt and raising the door up and down, and holding Matthew's hand to a red-hot burner. Matthew said his brother's life of crime was not a result of bad parenting or poor childhood. He said Hayes never learned to take responsibility for his actions.

Sometimes, I think that we have stopped judging others *because* we do not want to be judged *ourselves*. We hope that by not judging anyone, that we will somehow escape being judged by anyone – especially by God himself. The opposition to punishing the guilty is, I think, really just a way of expressing our desire to do away with the idea that we will finally face judgment.We seem to be able to ignore the victim's needs and act as if the criminal is the victim. We act as if deterring a crime with punishment has no impact on the decision making of people who are considering whether to commit the crime. But crime isn't some random action – criminals do consider what will happen to them if they are caught. We send potential killers a message by being willing to punish the ones we catch. But if we treat them like victims, then others watching are not going to be deterred from committing crimes.

Cold Case Christianity: best posts, podcasts and videos of 2014

January 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

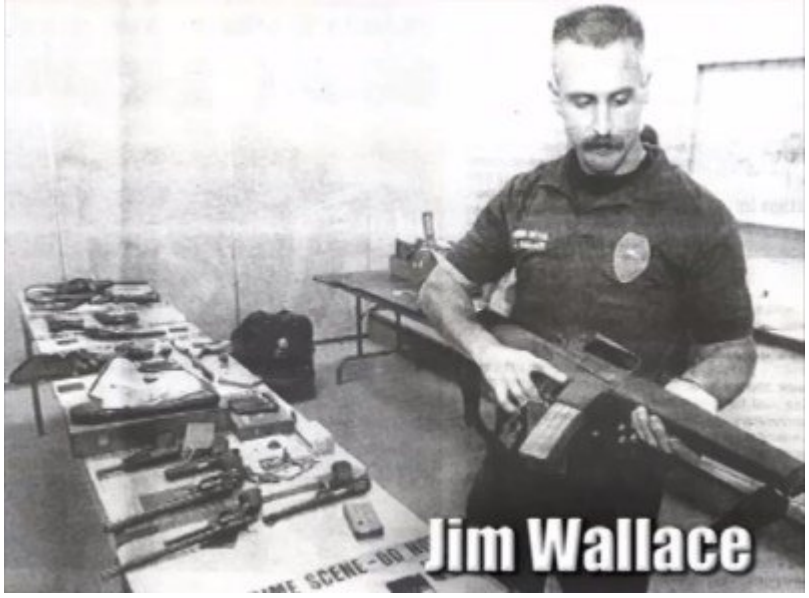

This assault rifle is pretty cool, but apologetics is even cooler

J. Warner Wallace has posted the top 10 blog posts, podcasts and videos for 2014.

Blog posts:

> **10. 10 Important Questions for the Jehovah's Witness Worldview**
> There are a number of philosophical and theological questions exposing the internal contradictions of the Jehovah's Witness worldview.
>
> **9. How the Book of Abraham Exposes the False Nature of Mormonism**
> By taking an evidential approach to Christian and Mormon scripture, I confirmed the veracity of Christianity and guarded myself from the falsity of Mormonism
>
> **8. Ten Principles When Considering Alleged Bible Contradictions**
> If we objectively examine the Scriptures with these principles in mind, we'll grow in our understanding of the Bible and better resolve the difficulties
>
> **7. Is Jesus Simply a Retelling of the Horus Mythology?**
> Is Jesus simply a retelling of the Horus myth? How similar is Horus to Jesus upon close examination? Do these similarities invalidate the historicity of Jesus?
>
> **6. Why Are Young Christians Leaving the Church? It's Simple Math**
> Why Are Young Christians Leaving the Church? Three powerful forces are driving the current departure of young Christians from the Church.
>
> **5. The Inevitable Consequence of An Atheistic Worldview**
> What are the inevitable consequences of an atheistic worldview? A summary from an honest (if not politically correct) comment from an atheist.
>
> **4. Investigating the Evidence for Mormonism In Six Steps**

> Given the evidence, there is more than enough reason to conclude Joseph Smith was a fraud and the Book of Mormon is a work of fiction.
>
> **3. Is the Bible True? The Cumulative Case for the Reliability of the Gospels (Free Bible Insert)**
> Is the Bible true? The case for the reliability of the Gospels is strong and substantive.
>
> **2. The Difference Between "Natural Talents" and "Spiritual Gifts"**
> Natural talents are the result of our genetic inheritance and the training in our family environment. Spiritual gifts are given to us by the Spirit of God once we are saved.
>
> **1. Is There Any Evidence for Jesus Outside the Bible?**
> The ancient non-Christian interpretations (and critical commentaries) of the Gospel accounts serve to strengthen the core claims of the New Testament.

And the podcasts:

> **10. Is the Christian Faith Evidentially Reasonable?**
> J. Warner makes a case for the reasonable nature of the Christian Worldview. Does Christianity require blind faith? Are we to accept the claims of Christianity *without* evidence or even *in spite* of the evidence? Or are we called, as Christians, to place our trust in Jesus *because* of the evidence? Jim also examines the way Jesus responded to those who had doubts.
>
> **9. The Problem with the Problem of Evil**
> J. Warner talks about the challenge we face, as Christian Case Makers, when trying to respond to the problem of evil. If God is all-powerful and all-loving, why is there so much evil in the world? Jim talks about the need for a cumulative response and explains why the problem of evil may be a bigger problem for atheists than for Christians.
>
> **8. The Case for Christian Case Making**
> J. Warner makes a case for an evidential, reasoned, case-making form of Christian belief. Using the New Testament gospels and letters as a guide, Jim articulates the foundation for a reasonable faith in Jesus and our common calling as Christians to a life of case-making.
>
> **7. Are the Gospels Eyewitness Accounts?**
> J. Warner makes a case for the eyewitness status of the New Testament Gospel accounts. Is it appropriate to evaluate these accounts as eyewitness statements? Were they intended to be read in this manner? Jim provides several reasons to accept the accounts as eyewitness testimony.
>
> **6. Four Ways to Strengthen Your Kids Faith**
> J. Warner reviews the statistics related to young people leaving the church and then offers four simple ways parents can help make sure their kids stay in the Christian faith. Jim also discusses the simple math behind the problem and

> illustrates the challenges facing young Christians.
>
> **5. Did Jesus Claim to Be God?**
> J. Warner examines the statements of Jesus to see if He ever claimed to be God. While skeptics may acknowledge Jesus' existence and even the value of His teaching, any assessment of Jesus' instruction must account for his obvious claims of Deity. Jim looks at the cumulative case and assembles the evidence from the Gospels to demonstrate Jesus' claims to Deity.
>
> **4. What (and When) Were the Earliest Claims About Jesus?**
> J. Warner examines the history related to the eyewitness observations of Jesus. How early are the eyewitness accounts and what precisely was being said about Jesus *prior* to the creation of these written documents?
>
> **3. Four Lies the Culture Tells About the Truth**
> J. Warner examines four popular misconceptions and misstatements about the nature of objective truth, tolerance and our over-reliance on science. If there are no objective truths (or they can't be known) there is little reason to examine the truth about God. We need to get to the truth about truth before we can ever know the truth about anything else.
>
> **2. Conversations with Atheists: Four Observations**
> J. Warner provides four observations from his youth ministry trips to UC Berkeley. These simple observations may help you improve the quality of your discussions with non-believers and help you better understand the underlying issues in some of these conversations. J. Warner also answers viewer email related to the disagreements between Christian denominations and the need for personal research.
>
> **1. Is Jesus a Copycat Savior?**
> In this inaugural Cold-Case Christianity video broadcast / podcast, J. Warner re-examines an atheist objection related to the historicity of Jesus. Is Jesus merely a copycat of prior mythologies like Mithras, Osiris or Horus? How can we, as Christians, respond to such claims? Jim provides a five point response to this common atheist claim.

And the videos:

> **10. The Case for Truth**
> In this video, J. Warner Wallace teaches high school and college students at Summit Worldview Conference in Manitou Springs, CO. What is the nature of truth? What is the difference between objective and subjective truth and why does it matter? J. Warner talks about three lies related to truth and offers a proper definition of truth for his students.
>
> **9. When Do We Have Enough Evidence to Know Christianity Is True?**
> J. Warner Wallace was interviewed by Bobby Conway and discussed the role of evidence in determining truth claims. When we can be certain we have sufficient

> evidence to believe something is true?
>
> **8. The Apostle John's Chain of Custody**
> J. Warner Wallace provides a detective's perspective related to the New Testament and the Christian Life as he talks with Rob Melnichuk of "It's Your Call"
>
> **7. Making a Case for the Resurrection of Jesus**
> J. Warner Wallace was interviewed on 100 Huntley Street and talked about the case for Easter by examining the Resurrection of Jesus through abductive reasoning.
>
> **6. Laura Ingraham Interview with J. Warner Wallace**
> Laura Ingraham interviews J. Warner Wallace about his book, Cold Case Christianity
>
> **5. Why Some Skeptics Deny the Credibility of the Gospels**
> J. Warner Wallace provides a detective's perspective related to the New Testament and the Christian Life as he talks with Rob Melnichuk of "It's Your Call"
>
> **4. Were the Gospel Authors Really Present?**
> J. Warner Wallace spoke at the University of Kentucky Christian Student Fellowship in November 2014 about the reliability of the New Testament. In this portion of the talk, J. Warner examines the dating of the Gospels.
>
> **3. The Difference Between Objective and Subjective Truth**
> What is the difference between "Objective Truth" and "Subjective Truth"? How can mastery of the distinction between these two definitions help us to think clearly before we begin to examine the case for the Christian Worldview? (from J. Warner's talk at Calvary Chapel Bangor)
>
> **2. Why Does Every Christian Need Abductive Reasoning?**
> J. Warner Wallace was interviewed by Bobby Conway and discussed the importance of Abductive Reasoning and its application to the Resurrection of Jesus.
>
> **1. Did Jesus Think Jesus Was God?**
> J. Warner Wallace, was interviewed by Bobby Conway and discussed the Deity of Jesus. Did Jesus make claims about His nature as God? Did He intend for others to believe He was God?

If you see one you think is interesting – well, they are all interesting – then click through and take a look. He produces so much material and it's fun to listen to a guy who solves murder mysteries and shoot guns at criminals.

Should you execute a plan that requires God's intervention to work?

January 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a fictional story that I'm going to use to make a point.

Here it is:

> A terrible storm came into a town and local officials sent out an emergency warning that the riverbanks would soon overflow and flood the nearby homes. They ordered everyone in the town to evacuate immediately.
>
> A faithful Christian woman heard the warning and decided to stay, saying to herself, "I will trust God and if I am in danger, then God will send a divine miracle to save me."
>
> Her neighbor came by her house and said to her, "I'm leaving and there is room for you in my car, please come with me!" But the woman declined his offer. "I have faith that God will save me."
>
> As the woman stood on her porch watching the water rise up the steps, a man in a canoe paddled by and called to her, "Hurry and come into my canoe, the waters are rising quickly!" But the woman again said, "No thanks, God will save me."
>
> The floodwaters rose higher pouring water into her living room and the woman had to retreat to the second floor. A police motorboat came by and the policeman saw her at the window. "I will come up and rescue you!" he shouted. But the woman refused, waving him off saying, "Use your time to save someone else! I have faith that God will save me!"
>
> The flood waters rose higher and higher and the woman had to climb up to her rooftop.
>
> A helicopter spotted her and dropped a rope ladder. A rescue officer came down the ladder and he pleaded with the woman, "Grab my hand and I will pull you up!" But the woman STILL refused, folding her arms tightly to her body. "No thank you! God will save me!"
>
> Shortly after, the house broke up and the floodwaters swept the woman away and she drowned.
>
> When in Heaven, the woman stood before God and asked, "I put all of my faith in You. Why didn't You come and save me?"
>
> And He said, "Daughter, I sent you a warning. I sent you a car. I sent you a canoe. I sent you a motorboat. I sent you a helicopter. What more were you looking for?"

I think the lesson from this made-up story is that it's good to not make plans that are

risky and reckless, and therefore unlikely to work. If your plan requires God to do anything in order for it to work, you better get a new plan. I think instead you should do everything you can to make your plan work, and then pray about it for your own peace of mind, and for a blessing that God will use it and bless it to produce a great result.

Look at this passage from the Bible.

Matthew 4:5-7:

[5] Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,

[6] and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written,

‘He will command His angels concerning You’;

and

‘On *their* hands they will bear You up,
So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’”

[7] Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

When you are deciding how your life is going to count, don’t try to hit a home run on the first at bat. Don’t try to swing for a knockout punch in the first round. Make a plan that is cautious and will bear fruit in time. Don’t make a plan that will only work if a miracle occurs, that would be putting God to the test. God is not honored by lousy plans that fail and make people of faith look foolish. We have to appear as if we know what we are doing, and it is easier to love and lead others if we have our own life in order, first. For example, you can’t share with others if you don’t have your own financial house in order.

Now I’ve actually done stupid things that were unlikely to work myself a few times, and they obviously did not work. But I have found a good way to avoid doing this. If you surround yourself with good advisors, then they will tell you not to do stupid things, or they will tell you how to do something else that achieves the same result. It’s good to have advisors and good to let them know what you are planning to do so they can tell you not to do it.

New study: raising minimum wage hurts young, minority workers most

January 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This report is from the libertarian Cato Institute.

Except:

> A new working paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research finds that significant minimum wage increases can hurt the very people they are intended to help. Authors Jeffrey Clemens and Michael Wither find that significant minimum wage increases can negatively affect employment, average income, and the economic mobility of low-skilled workers. The authors find that significant "minimum wage increases reduced the employment, average income, and income growth of low-skilled workers over short and medium-run time horizons." Most troublingly, these low-skilled workers saw "significant declines in economic mobility," as these workers were 5 percentage points less likely to reach lower middle-class earnings in the medium-term. The authors provide a possible explanation: the minimum wage increases reduced these workers' "short-run access to opportunities for accumulating experience and developing skills." Many of the people affected by minimum wage increases are on one of the first rungs of the economic ladder, low on marketable skills and experience. Working in these entry level jobs will eventually allow them to move up the economic ladder. By making it harder for these low-skilled workers to get on the first rung of the ladder, minimum wage increases could actually lower their chances of reaching the middle class.
>
> Most of the debate over a minimum wage increase centers on the effects of an increase on aggregate employment, or the total number of jobs and hours worked that would be lost. A consensus remains elusive, but the Congressional Budget Office recently weighed in, estimating that a three year phase in of a $10.10 federal minimum wage option would reduce total employment by about 500,000 workers by the time it was fully implemented. Taken with the findings of the Clemens and Wither study, not only can minimum wage increases have negative effects for the economy as a whole, they can also harm the economic prospects of low-skilled workers at the individual level.

With that in mind, I have some bad news for everyone who likes the idea of young people of color finding work.

The Daily Signal explains: (H/T Dad)

> At the stroke of midnight today, 19 states increased their minimum wage. Residents of three more and the nation's capital can expect hikes later on this year.

> […]Federal legislation was met with resistance. though. Republicans argued raising the minimum wage would cause an increase in prices for consumers and low-wage workers likely would face layoffs as companies grappled with the higher costs associated with hiked wages.
>
> Some of those concerns were validated last month by a University of California, San Diego, study. For three years, researchers followed low-income workers residing in states that saw wage hikes and those that did not. The study found that minimum wage hikes had negative impacts on employment, income and income growth.
>
> […]"Minimum wage supporters have good intentions, but those good intentions cannot repeal the law of unintended consequences," James Sherk, an expert in labor economics at The Heritage Foundation, told The Daily Signal. He added:
>
>> Minimum-wage increases reduce the total earnings of low-wage workers — the higher pay for some workers gets completely offset by the nonexistent pay of those no longer employed.
>
> In its study, UCSD researchers found that after minimum-wage increases, the national employment-to-population ratio decreased by 0.7 percent points between December 2006 and December 2012.
>
> In addition, the study found that minimum-wage increases hindered low-skilled workers' ability to rise to lower-middle -lass earnings.

So we need to be really careful about setting economic policy based on emotions. Things that sound nice, which we feel will help the poor, actually hurt the poor. We have to have evidence-driven public policy, not feelings-driven public policy. People's lives are depending on it.

Is the vastness of the universe evidence against God's existence?

January 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Physicist Hugh Ross writes about it in Salvo Magazine.

First a quick blurb about Hugh Ross:

> Hugh Ross launched his career at age seven when he went to the library to find out why stars are hot. Physics and astronomy captured his curiosity and never let go. At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver's Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or "quasars," some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

Now back to the topic "Is the vastness of the universe incompatible with God's existence?"

Here's Ross' introduction:

> Scientists seem more difficult to please than the golden-haired girl of fairy-tale fame. While Goldilocks troubled herself over the just-right porridge, chair, and bed, astronomers appear preoccupied with the size of the universe.
>
> In the days before telescopes, when an observer could count a few thousand stars in the night sky, many considered the universe too small and unimpressive to be the work of an almighty, all-knowing Creator. Only an infinite cosmos, they said, would befit an infinite deity. But then, others argued, an infinite cosmos might eliminate the need for a Creator.
>
> Thanks to the Hubble space telescope, scientists now see that the universe contains roughly 200 billion large- and medium-sized galaxies and about a hundred times as many dwarf galaxies. The stars in those galaxies add up to about fifty billion trillion, and they comprise a mere one percent of the mass of the observable universe.
>
> Because of the travel time of light, the universe humans can observe is really the universe of the past. What researchers know about the expansion and geometry of the universe informs us that the universe of today is at least several hundred times more enormous than the universe we can see. The universe is trillions of trillions of times larger and more spectacular than what the earliest astronomers presumed!

> And yet, this new knowledge of the vastness of the universe has led to new complaints. In his book, *God: The Failed Hypothesis,* Victor Stenger says, "If God created the universe as a special place for humanity, he seems to have wasted an awfully large amount of space." Stephen Hawking, in the best-selling science book of all time, *A Brief History of Time,* shares Stenger's view: "Our solar system certainly is a prerequisite for our existence. . . . But there does not seem to be any need for all these other galaxies." So now the universe is too big to befit the all-wise, all-powerful God of the Bible.

I like how he quotes an atheist physicist to get the challenge right. No sense in caricaturing the claim of your opponent.

I formalized Stenger's argument like this:

1. If all things in the universe are done the way that Victor Stenger likes them, then there is a God.
2. It is not the case that all things in the universe were done the way Victor Stenger likes them.
3. Therefore, there is no God.

I would deny premise 1, there, since there is no reason to believe that's it's true.

Anyway, let's see what Hugh Ross says:

> The hot big bang model (now firmly established by observations) tells us that at the moment of cosmic creation, the universe was infinitely or near-infinitely hot and compressed, and all the ordinary matter existed in the form of hydrogen. As the universe expanded, it cooled. The rate at which the universe expanded and cooled depended in large part on its mass—the greater the mass, the slower the expansion and cooling rate. The slower the expansion and cooling rate, the more time the universe would spend in the temperature range (13–150 million degrees Centigrade) at which nuclear fusion can occur.
>
> Because of its mass, the universe spent about twenty seconds in the nuclear fusion temperature range when it was between three and four minutes old. As a result, 24.77 percent of the universe's hydrogen (by mass) fused into helium. Thus, when stars began to form—about 380,000 years later—they started off composed of about 75 percent hydrogen, 25 percent helium, and trace amounts of deuterium, lithium, and beryllium.
>
> **In the nuclear furnaces of the stars themselves, more hydrogen fused into helium, and, in addition to the extra helium, all the rest of the elements that appear in the periodic table were synthesized (created). The capacity of stellar nuclear furnaces to produce an abundance of elements heavier than helium (all but two of the elements) depended critically on how much of the universe's initial hydrogen was fused into helium and heavier elements during the first several minutes after the**

> **cosmic creation event. How much fusion of the universe's primordial hydrogen actually occurred at this time depended, in turn, on the universe's mass or mass density.**
>
> **If the universe's mass (or cosmic mass density) had been even the slightest bit less than a hundred times the fifty billion trillion stars occupying the observable universe, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes of its existence would have proceeded less efficiently. Thus, the cosmos would have been forever incapable of generating elements heavier than helium—elements such as carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, sodium, and potassium—all of which are essential for any conceivable kind of physical life.**
>
> On the other hand, if the universe's mass had been even the slightest bit greater, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes after its beginning would have been too productive, and *all* the hydrogen in the universe eventually would have been fused (after just two generations of stars) into elements as heavy as iron or heavier. Again, all the most life-essential elements, including hydrogen itself, would have ceased to exist.

Basically, your body is made up of heavier elements, and if the universe was not as massive as it is (and as old as it is), then there would not be enough heavy elements to make you, or to make massive stars like our Sun which burn steady for long periods of time. We need the heavy elements and we need the steady source of heat. And while we are waiting on these heavy elements, the universe is expanding.

Dr. Ross has another reason why God would use vast space and long periods of time, and if you want to read that, you can click here. I think that it's important for us all to get used to the idea that we all need to understand science apologetics. God put these evidences into the universe for us to discover and use.

Eight predictions for 2015

January 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These are from The Federalist.

The list:

1. The oil stimulus
2. The EPA's war on energy
3. The Supreme Court gets another shot at ObamaCare
4. Republicans will have just enough power to fight over it
5. Will anyone challenge Hillary?
6. A police rebellion
7. Russia will be in trouble and will be trouble
8. Did anybody tell the enemy the war is over?

Here's the one I want to highlight, because it's the one that concerns me most, at least until we get a Republican President:

> 7) Russia will be in trouble and will be trouble.
>
> One of the most enjoyable consequences of the oil price collapse is seeing how it takes the wind out of the sails of a whole collection of evil regimes.

> Oil is the dictators' best friend. It is a steady source of revenue that can be maintained and controlled by the government, often with the help of foreign subcontractors, even when government controls, corruption, and cronyism have crushed the rest of the economy. So a collapse in the price of oil is a disaster for the bad guys.
>
> Nobody is getting hit worse than the regime in Venezuela, which is now on the verge of defaulting on its debt. Since Venezuela has been a big economic sponsor of the regime in Cuba, you can see how a Venezuelan collapse will affect Cuba—and may well be the reason the Castros are seeking a lifeline from President Obama.
>
> But the big geopolitical implications will come from the impact of the oil collapse on Russia. For years, the conventional wisdom has been that Europe is dependent on buying Russian oil and gas; now we're about to see to what extent Russia is dependent on selling its oil and gas to Europe.
>
> The downside is, as Megan McArdle puts it, "Russia's Problems Are Everyone's Problems." "[T]he world is about to experience a major financial crisis in a country that seems to deal with its internal troubles by slicing off bits of neighboring countries." Like its leader, Vladimir Putin, Russia is a country with a Napoleon complex: the smaller and weaker it gets, the more belligerent it becomes, as a form of overcompensation.

> But shirtless macho posturing only gets you so far when you don't have the cash to back it up. There is some speculation that a financial crisis could lead to defections in Russia's "near abroad," its ring of former Soviet republics and fellow kleptocracies. Then there's the fact that Putin's aggression has permanently alienated Ukraine, which is now taking steps toward joining NATO. Meanwhile, the Baltic states are increasing their defense budgets. One hopes that other European nations will follow, at a time when Russia is not in a position to match their spending.

> I think Russia is weak enough that Putin would slink away with his tail between his legs, if we had an American leader with the guts to call his bluff. But that's not going to happen, so in 2015, look for a volatile mix of greater belligerence and diminished capability.

When I hear about the collapse of the Russian currency, it makes me worry that we could a lot of scary scenarios as Putin tries to hold his state together.

With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013

January 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Life News.

Excerpt:

> The abortion giant Planned Parenthood has released its 2013 annual report and the new numbers indicate it did more abortions than the year before — killing 327,653 babies in abortions while taking in millions in taxpayer funds.
>
> Planned Parenthood Federation of America has released its 2013-2014 Annual Report and Jim Sedlak, vice president of American Life League, broke down the numbers.The report indicates Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013, an increase over the 327,166 abortions it did in 2012.
>
> While it remains America's biggest abortion corporation, the "nonprofit" continued to make money — bringing in $305.4 million last year and $305.3 million this year. Planned Parenthood continued to receive over a half-billion dollars in taxpayer money, as it took in $540 million in 2012 and $528 million in 2013.
>
> "Despite this lack of increase in its primary business, Planned Parenthood continued to receive over a half-billion dollars in taxpayer money," Sedlak said. "It has such a tremendous publicity machine that it convinced corporate and private donors to increase donations by more than $75 million (from $315.4 million to $391.8 million)."
>
> "The increased donations, plus an increase of $28 million in "other operating revenue" and the reduction in costs from closing clinics, led to a near-record $127.1 million in profits for the largest abortion chain in the nation. This was the second highest reported annual profit in Planned Parenthood's history," he explained to LifeNews.
>
> […]After reviewing the report, SBA List President Marjorie Dannenfelser told LifeNews:
>
> "The abortion rate may be declining across America, but not in Planned Parenthood clinics. Their latest annual report is fresh evidence that Planned Parenthood remains an abortion-centered, profit-driven business. In 2013, Planned Parenthood upped the number of abortions they performed to 327,653. Meanwhile, their already limited cancer screenings, prenatal services, adoption referrals – and even contraception services – continue to drop. Planned Parenthood claims to be an altruistic health care provider for women and girls but their bottom line is all about abortion."

Republicans have attempted to cut off some funding for Planned Parenthood in red

states, but as long as we have a Democrat President, the federal subsidies will remain in place. Something to think about in 2016.

Obama administration to push for more government control in 2015

January 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a rundown on some of the planned regulations, courtesy of Fox News. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration is trying to get fossil-fuel fired power plants to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 30 percent from 2005 levels by 2030.
>
> The EPA proposed the rules last year and is set to finalize them by summer 2015.
>
> […]Among them is a controversial EPA proposal to expand regulatory power over streams and wetlands. The agency, set to finalize the rule in April, estimates it could impose costs of between $162 million to $278 million per year…
>
> […][D]etractors claim it is an opening for the EPA to claim authority over countless waterways, including streams that only show up during heavy rainfall. Critics warn this could create more red tape for property owners and businesses if they happen to have even small streams on their land.
>
> Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, chairman of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, has called it an effort to "control a huge amount of private property across the country."
>
> In another EPA initiative, the agency is looking to October to finalize sweeping ozone regulations.
>
> In proposing the limits on smog-forming pollution linked to asthma and respiratory illness in November, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy argued that the public health benefits far outweigh the costs and that most of the U.S. can meet the tougher standards without doing anything new.
>
> "We need to be smart — as we always have — in trying to find the best benefits in a way that will continue to grow the economy," McCarthy said. Of reducing ozone, she added: "We've done it before, and we're on track to do it again."
>
> But business groups panned the proposal as unnecessary and the costliest in history, warning it could jeopardize a resurgence in American manufacturing.
>
> […]The rules are estimated to cost industry anywhere between $3.9 billion and $15 billion by 2025. That price tag would exceed that of any previous environmental regulation in the U.S. Environmental groups are pushing for stricter limits still.
>
> On other fronts, the Federal Communications Commission could move in a matter of months to propose new "net neutrality" rules. Obama weighed in on that debate late last year, urging the FCC to regulate the Internet like other utilities.
>
> The White House is calling for an "explicit ban" on deals between broadband

> Internet providers and online services like Netflix, Amazon or YouTube to move their content faster, a potential new source of revenue for cable companies.
>
> […]Meanwhile, the National Labor Relations Board has issued new rules for so-called “ambush” union elections — speeding up elections and requiring employers to give unions contact information for workers. The rules take effect in April.

These regulations will have nasty effects on job-creating companies and that will work its way down to consumers, who will have to eat the costs. But at least the social engineers will feel really good about themselves, and without having to do the hard work of creating products and services that people will actually pay their own money for of their own free choice.

The very funny thing about this is how unionized blue-collar Democrats complain that they cannot compete with countries abroad, then vote in the very people that make them uncompetitive. You can bet that leaders in other low-cost countries do not pass laws to make them less competitive. And that’s why everything is manufactured abroad. Democrat voters bring these problems on themselves by electing socialists who hamstring American industry.

Washington D.C. city council repeals protections for religious schools

January 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> The D.C. Council has stripped religious schools of legal protection against certain discrimination lawsuits, voting unanimously to repeal an exemption that had been in place for decades.
>
> Under city rules, it is an "unlawful discriminatory practice" for a school to limit any use of facilities, services, or programs to someone based on "sexual orientation, gender identity or expression."
>
> However, an amendment inserted by Congress in a federal appropriations bill 25 years ago offered an exemption for religiously affiliated schools or schools "closely associated with the tenets of a religious organization," allowing them to restrict funds, facilities and endorsements based on their religious convictions regarding homosexuality.
>
> This provision, dubbed the "Armstrong Amendment," came after Georgetown University refused to recognize a pro-gay student group, explained Michael Scott of the D.C. Catholic Conference.
>
> Sen. William Armstrong authored the exemption, called the Nation's Capital Religious Liberty and Academic Freedom Act, which allowed religiously affiliated schools in D.C. to withhold funds, facilities and approval from people and groups "that are organized for, or engaged in, promoting, encouraging, or condoning any homosexual act, lifestyle, orientation, or belief."
>
> But that exemption is now gone, thanks to a Dec. 2 vote by the council to overturn that provision. The council voted "unanimously without comment or changes" to pass the Human Rights Amendment of 2014, which included the repeal of the code, Mr. Scott explained.

Washington, D.C. is one of the most Democrat-dominated cities in the United States. So if you are wondering who pushes through an anti-Christian agenda like this one, it's no mystery.

Indiana legislators working on mandatory civics exam for high schoolers

January 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Indiana is one of my favorite states, and here is some great news about Indiana.

Excerpt:

> Hoosier lawmakers have joined a growing number of states that want your kid to take another exam. To graduate high school, students would have to pass an exam similar to the naturalization test required for immigrants to become U.S. citizens.
>
> Still a work in progress, the bill will come up for debate during the upcoming legislative session and is being championed by Indiana Senate Education Chairman Dennis Kruse, a Republican of Auburn.
>
> Kruse told The Daily Signal that he's eager to see Indiana students rise to the same standard as individuals applying for American citizenship.
>
> "I don't know why our own young people—who are born citizens here, who go through our regular school system—shouldn't know the same information," Kruse said.

This is interesting:

> The naturalization exam administered by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services requires a candidate to verbally answer 6 of 10 questions concerning American history and government. On average, 91 percent of candidates passon their first try.
>
> The test requires citizenship candidates to answer basic questions like "What is the supreme law of the land?" and "What is the name of the president of the United States now?"
>
> Hoosier high-school students would take a similar exam but with a few important differences. Required to answer 60 percent correctly, students would take a written, multiple choice, 100-question test.

So many people are focused on elections that they don't know how to do anything about the culture. Well, I think this policy is going to have a good effect on the culture. If people can understand more about why the United States is organized the way it is, then maybe they will not be in such a hurry to undo it so we can be more like France (or even Greece, judging from the debt). Even making a requirement to teach basic economics and business administration would be good insulation for children against the fact-free, math-free world of leftism.

By the way, according to a report (PDF) by the Center for Education Reform web site,

Indiana is number one for school choice in the USA:

> The Hoosier State leads the country, with a universal voucher program open to all students across the state and no limit on the number of vouchers that can be awarded. The state has taken a varied approach to income-eligibility requirements, with the lowest-in-the-nation threshold for typical students, only increasing that threshold for special needs and failing-school students. The state is the second-worst in the country on infringing on private school autonomy, mandating such things as course content and insisting on allowing government observation of classes. With just a bit of reform in these two areas, Indiana would come close to reaching the maximum score possible.

Ohio and Wisconsin are right behind Indiana. Three of my favorite states.

Conservative Louie Gohmert to challenge moderate John Boehner for House Speaker

January 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Signal reports:

> In announcing his bid today for speaker of the House of Representative, Rep. Louie Gohmert promised to be the engine of change that conservatives have been calling for in their rebellion against the establishment wing of the Republican Party.
>
> "It is time for a change; it really is time for a change," Gohmert said on "Fox & Friends" while announcing his campaign to unseat incumbent Speaker John Boehner.
>
> Gohmert, R-Texas, criticized Boehner, R-Ohio, for a "number of years of broken promises," and specifically challenged the speaker's decision to pass the "CRomnibus" spending bill in December without blocking President Obama's executive actions on immigration.
>
> If elected speaker, Gohmert said he will "fight amnesty tooth and nail."
>
> He said his agenda would also include defunding Obamacare and having "positive solutions that will return power back to the people."
>
> House members are set to vote for their next speaker on Tuesday.

Gohmert is *definitely* one of the conservative members of the House of Representatives. I hear him all the time on the Family Research Council podcasts. He is not just a fiscal conservative, he is a social conservative, as well. I would take him as Speaker over Boehner in a heartbeat. Let's hope and pray that Gohmert is the new Speaker.

Christian pastor who experiences same-sex attraction marries a woman

January 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Clay Jones tweeted this story from the ultra-leftist National Public Radio, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Allan Edwards is the pastor of Kiski Valley Presbyterian Church in western Pennsylvania, a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America. He's attracted to men, but considers acting on that attraction a sin. Accordingly, Edwards has chosen not to act on it.
>
> "I think we all have part of our desires that we choose not to act on, right?" he says. "So for me, it's not just that the religion was important to me, but communion with a God who loves me, who accepts me right where I am."
>
> Where he is now is married. He and his wife, Leanne Edwards, are joyfully expecting a baby in July.

This was the part I thought was interesting:

> Allan first met Leeanne when they both worked as teenagers at a Christian summer camp. "I always joke with her that she was one of the cool kids and I was a raging fundamentalist nerd," he says.
>
> They didn't click at the time, but in 2006 they both applied for the camp director job, and Leeanne got it. When she was ready to leave the position, he took her to lunch to scope out the job.
>
> "We got off talking about the job and started talking about our experience of the last couple years," Allan recalls. "I don't want to be gushy or romantic, but I just melted inside, and thought, this is someone who understands graciousness. This is someone who understands acceptance, and this is someone I want to spend as much time with as possible."
>
> He was drawn to her heart and soul, he explains. "Out of that was birthed our intimate relationship."
>
> Leeanne says she knew Allan struggled against a sexual attraction to men. "I wondered if he was going to be able to put something like that behind him, or if it was going to be something that would affect our relationship," she says.
>
> But they way they see it, people in any marriage must work to resist attractions from outside the relationship, whether from the same or the opposite gender.
>
> "There's always going to be situations where a partner is sexually attracted to someone else and isn't necessarily dealing with sexual attraction with their partner," Leeanne says.

There are a couple of things that I wish I could change about me. I would like to be more involved in my church, I'd like to have a daily quiet time, I'd like to do Bible study more. But usually these things get short shrift because I am so busy trying to earn and save money and have an apologetics ministry. It's nice, though, when a woman responds to a "fixer-upper" man with acceptance and understanding.

The things I want to work on don't seem to have stopped me from making an impact as a Christian. I never had a "falling away" period where I went wild in college, got drunk and cohabitated with atheists. Whatever I've been doing for the 25 years I've been a Christian was obviously enough to keep my faith intact, be a good steward of my resources, and make a difference by mentoring others and blogging. In today's culture, it's probably better to be more practical, and focus less on things that are devotional, like A. W. Tozer and praise hymns.

Another thing occurred to me while I was reading this story. I thought – what good evangelists they will make, because they both have this ability to look past imperfections and listen to people and then work with them. If you really want to change a person and grow them, then you can't just stand back and draw a line in the sand and explain why you get to be lazy and not do something with them that will work to grow them. All the people I have ever mentored had something about them that I didn't think was perfect – but I didn't take it as an excuse to not engage with them, and to do whatever would work to give them a shove in the right direction. And the results speak for themselves! Sometimes Christians who grow up thinking that "the Bible says you have to do it" is enough get lazy though, when confronted with *real people who are not perfect.* And they will say anything to avoid having to do work that helps others grow. They just want to make the judgment and be done with the person. Thank goodness the pastor in this story had friends who didn't dismiss him out of hand because he was not perfect.

How to prepare your kids for the pressure to be "cool"

January 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a post from Pastor Matt Rawlings' blog.

Excerpt:

> […]When any eighteen year old walks on to a secular university (or even many so-called "Christian" ones) they immediately feel pressure. When a "cool professor" emerges trashing everything the eighteen year old has been taught by his or her parents to hold dear, the pressure intensifies. If the eighteen year old dares to speak up, the professor will often ridicule the poor kid like a seasoned stand-up comic dealing with a heckler. The other eighteen year old kids raised in Christian homes will see (or hear about it) and will feel even more pressure to conform.

Here is his recommendation:

> We need to continue to train our kids in apologetics but we also need to prepare them spiritually for the battle they will face on college campuses. They need to know how to engage the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, etc. They also need to be connected with a community that will have their back. I would not advise anyone to attend a secular university without making sure there is a strong Christian campus presence. For example, I live in the Buckeye state and many of the young people I know want to attend Ohio State University (excuse me, The Ohio State University). I always remind them to check out strong nearby churches like Xenos and groups like Ratio Christi led by the fearless Eric Chabot.
>
> Everybody wants to be liked and everyone has a desire to fit in. The pressure to be accepted is even stronger when a person is younger. We need to train our young people to be apologists but we also need to recognize basic human nature including our ability to justify our behavior such as ignoring their training in order to sit at the cool kids' table. We need to train and prayerfully prepare. Let's get to work.

Pastor Matt had a quote from an article by Paul Vitz in his post, and I found the article. It's on Leadership University, which is the web site that got me through college with my faith intact.

Here's a bit of it:

> I am not going into this to bore you with parts of my life story, but to note that through reflection on my own experience it is now clear to me that my reasons for becoming and for remaining an atheist-skeptic from about age 18 to 38 were superficial, irrational, and largely without intellectual or moral integrity.

> Furthermore, I am convinced that my motives were, and still are, commonplace today among intellectuals, especially social scientists.
>
> […]An important influence on me in my youth was a significant social unease. I was somewhat embarrassed to be from the Midwest, for it seemed terribly dull, narrow, and provincial. There was certainly nothing romantic or impressive about being from Cincinnati, Ohio and from a vague mixed German-English-Swiss background. Terribly middle class. Further, besides escape from a dull, and according to me unworthy, socially embarrassing past, I wanted to take part in, in fact to be comfortable in, the new, exciting, even glamorous, secular world into which I was moving. I am sure that similar motives have strongly influenced the lives of countless upwardly mobile young people in the last two centuries. Consider Voltaire, who moved into the glittery, aristocratic, sophisticated world of Paris, and who always felt embarrassed about his provincial and nonaristocratic origin; or the Jewish ghettos that so many assimilating Jews have fled, or the latest young arrival in New York, embarrassed about his fundamentalist parents. This kind of socialization pressure has pushed many away from belief in God and all that this belief is associated with for them.
>
> I remember a small seminar in graduate school where almost every member there at some time expressed this kind of embarrassment and response to the pressures of socialization into "modern life." One student was trying to escape his Southern Baptist background, another a small town Mormon environment, a third was trying to get out of a very Jewish Brooklyn ghetto, and the fourth was me.
>
> […]Another major reason for my wanting to become an atheist was that I desired to be accepted by the powerful and influential scientists in the field of psychology. In particular, I wanted to be accepted by my professors in graduate school. As a graduate student I was thoroughly socialized by the specific "culture" of academic research psychology. My professors at Stanford, however much they might disagree on psychological theory, were, as far as I could tell, united in only two things-their intense personal career ambition and their rejection of religion. As the psalmist says, ". . . The man greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord. In the pride of his countenance the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 10:3-4).
>
> In this environment, just as I had learned how to dress like a college student by putting on the right clothes, I also learned to "think" like a proper psychologist by putting on the right-that is, atheistic-ideas and attitudes.

I blogged about Paul Vitz before. If you have not seen his lecture on the Psychology of Atheism, you really should watch it.

Natasha Crain at Christian Mom Thoughts had some practical advice for dealing with this, and in a minute I'll give you my advice, because this peer-pressure thing was *never* a problem for me.

Excerpt:

> […]I do believe there are things we can do to help *lessen our kids' concern* about coolness:
>
> - **Make sure they have Christian friends.** No, not just the kids they interact with each Sunday at church. Please don't assume your kids' "church friends" are a primary influence just because they rub elbows each week (and don't assume that church friends are truly *Christian* friends). Look at who they spend time with on their own. Meaningful peer relationships with other believers make a big difference.
> - **Give them perspective.** By and large, the most well-grounded Christian kids I've encountered have been heavily involved in service. When kids have built houses in Mexico, served their local homeless, or come to the aid of disaster victims, they are more likely to have a level-headed perspective on why the perceived "coolness" of their beliefs doesn't matter. Faith becomes a living, breathing part of their identity.
> - **Be a family that is comfortable living counter-culturally.** In the book *Revolutionary Parenting*, George Barna analyzed years of research data to determine what common factors exist in the child-rearing efforts of parents whose children remained strong in their faith into their adult years (he calls these kids "spiritual champions"). One major finding was this: *"Parents are more likely to raise spiritual champions if they accept the fact that from day one their parenting efforts will stray from the norm and will put them at odds with parents who are pursuing a more conventional approach."* When kids are raised in a home where they become comfortable living differently than the world around them, they are prepared to carry that confidence into adulthood.
> - **Give them Christian heros and role models.** Our kids need to know that the world is filled with amazing people who love the Lord: athletes, scientists, missionaries, actors, writers, government leaders, business owners…the list goes on. Wherever your child's interests lie, introduce them to Christian role models in that area and the stories of how they're making a difference for God's kingdom.

Now my turn. Peer-pressure wasn't a problem for me growing up. We were poor, so we had much more immediate problems! But I had an answer to the problem of being different from the other kids – I was going to grow up faster than they did and be more mature by *out-earning* them. I always tried to be working at least one job, and I worked summers too – kept it up through high school and my undergraduate degree. That was my plan. So that's my recommendation to young people. Get yourself the best job you can get as young as you can. Never let a summer go by when you are not working to

earn money.

I also recommend listening to this Veritas Forum lecture called "Giants in the Land", by the famous professor of mechanical engineering, Dr. Walter Bradley. My favorite lecture of all time. When you are young and it occurs to you that you are not like other people, it's a wonderful thing to have the words of Dr. Bradley in your mind. Here is my favorite part- he says: "Sometimes we protect our reputation too hard. And what we really need is to get our reputation absolutely destroyed so we don't worry about it any more… On the other side of a very ruined reputation is real freedom… to do what God wants you to do… It's the ripping the reputation off that's a little hard, right? But once it's gone, it's gone. And then you have real freedom."

I value my freedom and I know that caring what people think of me takes my freedom away! I really recommend that young people read or watch the French "Cyrano de Bergerac" (1990) (or the older black-and-white version) to learn the value of being who you are. If you are being good, you don't have to care what people think of you – although you may need an alias now, since people on the secular left have gotten so intolerant. You can be yourself and be a hero. And that's something. That's a lot!

As Christianity declines in Europe, churches are put up for sale

January 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This sad story is from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Two dozen scruffy skateboarders launched perilous jumps in a soaring old church building here on a recent night, watched over by a mosaic likeness of Jesus and a solemn array of stone saints.
>
> This is the Arnhem Skate Hall, an uneasy reincarnation of the Church of St. Joseph, which once rang with the prayers of nearly 1,000 worshipers.
>
> It is one of hundreds of churches, closed or threatened by plunging membership, that pose a question for communities, and even governments, across Western Europe: What to do with once-holy, now-empty buildings that increasingly mark the countryside from Britain to Denmark?
>
> […]The closing of Europe's churches reflects the rapid weakening of the faith in Europe, a phenomenon that is painful to both worshipers and others who see religion as a unifying factor in a disparate society.
>
> […]The Church of England closes about 20 churches a year. Roughly 200 Danish churches have been deemed nonviable or underused. The Roman Catholic Church in Germany has shut about 515 churches in the past decade.
>
> But it is in the Netherlands where the trend appears to be most advanced. The country's Roman Catholic leaders estimate that two-thirds of their 1,600 churches will be out of commission in a decade, and 700 of Holland's Protestant churches are expected to close within four years.
>
> […]As communities struggle to reinvent their old churches, some solutions are less dignified than others. In Holland, one ex-church has become a supermarket, another is a florist, a third is a bookstore and a fourth is a gym. In Arnhem, a fashionable store called Humanoid occupies a church building dating to 1889, with racks of stylish women's clothing arrayed under stained-glass windows.
>
> In Bristol, England, the former St. Paul's church has become the Circomedia circus training school. Operators say the high ceilings are perfect for aerial equipment like trapezes.
>
> In Edinburgh, Scotland, a Lutheran church has become a Frankenstein-themed bar, featuring bubbling test tubes, lasers and a life-size Frankenstein's monster descending from the ceiling at midnight.
>
> Jason MacDonald, a supervisor at the pub, says he has never heard complaints about the reuse. "It's for one simple reason: There are hundreds and hundreds of old churches and no one to go to them," Mr. MacDonald said. "If they weren't

> repurposed, they would just lie empty."
>
> Many churches, especially smaller ones, are becoming homes, and that has spawned an entire industry to connect would-be buyers with old churches.
>
> The churches of England and Scotland list available properties online, with descriptions worthy of a realty firm. St. John's church in Bacup, England, for example, is said to feature "a lofty nave as well as basement rooms with stone-vaulted ceilings," and can be had for about $160,000.

There are many reasons why Christianity has declined in Europe, but surely the widespread embrace of left-wing economic policies – even by evangelical Christians – is one of the largest.

Here's a fairly recent paper (PDF) that explains it:

> What accounts for cross-national variation in religiosity as measured by church attendance and non-religious rates? Examining answers from both secularization theory and the religious economy perspective, we assert that cross-national variation in religious participation is a function of government welfare spending and provide a theory that links macro-sociological outcomes with individual rationality. Churches historically have provided social welfare. As governments gradually assume many of these welfare functions, individuals with elastic preferences for spiritual goods will reduce their level of participation since the desired welfare goods can be obtained from secular sources. Cross-national data on welfare spending and religious participation show a strong negative relationship between these two variables after controlling for other aspects of modernization.

I have many friends in the UK who classify themselves as evangelical Christians. They almost all embrace moderate to leftist economics, and they complain to me about why the church is in decline, why there is no interest in apologetics, why they can't find Christian girlfriends, why they can't get speaking engagements. The answer is, of course, that by majoring only in theology and apologetics, they have crafted the rope that their secular allies in government are using to hang them. Leftism is embraced by European Christians in part because they don't want to be like those dastardly Americans with their free enterprise system and their rule of law and their private property and their law-abiding gun ownership.

It just goes to show you why Christianity suffers when we focus on piety at the expense of practicality. Too much A. W. Tozer, not enough F.A. Hayek. I doubt my well-meaning UK Christian friends – who are *so proud* of their laughable NHS health care – even know who F.A. Hayek is. To think that Lady Thatcher ones brandished "The Constitution of Liberty" by F.A. Hayek and declared "this is what we believe!". But ordinary UK Christians do not believe what she believes, and now they must reap what they sowed with their knee-jerk rejection of the free enterprise system. Ignorance of economics killed Christianity in Europe, and pious, risk-averse Christians were willing participants in the murder.

New study: children who grow up with single parents more likely to see domestic violence

January 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

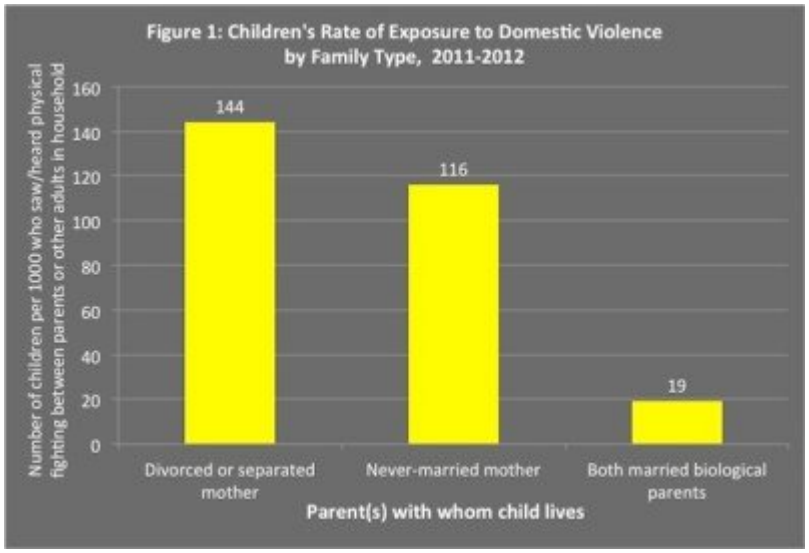

Domestic violence least likely in married homes
This is from Family Studies. (H/T Brad Wilcox)

Excerpt:

> In the 2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health, conducted by the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, parents of 95,677 children aged 17 and under were asked whether their child had ever seen or heard "any parents, guardians, or any other adults in the home slap, hit, kick, punch, or beat each other up." Among children living with both married biological parents, the rate of exposure to family violence was relatively low: for every 1,000 children in intact families, 19 had witnessed one or more violent struggles between parents or other household members. By comparison, among children living with a divorced or separated mother, the rate of witnessing domestic violence was seven times higher: 144 children per 1,000 had had one or more such experiences. (See Figure 1.) **These comparisons are adjusted for differences across groups in the age, sex, and race/ethnicity of the child, family income and poverty status, and the parent's education level.**
>
> One might suppose that women who had never married would be less likely to get into violent arguments with the fathers of their children than separated or divorced mothers. Yet the rate of witnessing domestic violence among children living with never-married mothers was also elevated. It was 116 per 1,000, six times higher than the rate for children in intact families. (Some of these fights involved subsequent partners or boyfriends of the mother, rather than the father of the child.) Even children living with both biological parents who were cohabiting—rather than married—had more than double the risk of domestic violence exposure as those with married birth parents: 45 out of 1,000 of these

> children had witnessed family fights that became physical. Note also that a child's family structure was a better predictor of witnessing family violence than was her parents' education, family income, poverty status, or race.
>
> Experiencing family violence is stressful for children, undercuts their respect and admiration for parents who engage in abusive behavior, and is associated with increased rates of emotional and behavioral problems at home and in school. For example, among children of never-married mothers who had witnessed family violence, 58 percent had conduct or academic problems at school requiring parental contact. The rate of school behavior problems for those who had not been exposed to family fights was significantly lower, though still fairly high (36 percent). Likewise, among children of divorced or separated mothers, nearly half of those exposed to family violence—48 percent—had had conduct or academic problems at school. Even among the small number of children in intact families who had witnessed family violence, just over half—51 percent—presented problems at school. This was twice the rate of school problems among students from intact families who had not witnessed domestic violence. (See Figure 2.) **These figures are also adjusted for differences across groups in age, sex, and race/ethnicity of children, family income and poverty, and parent education levels.** Children experiencing domestic violence were also more likely to have repeated a grade in school and to have received psychological counseling for emotional or behavioral problems. This was true in intact as well as disrupted families.

A good book to read on this topic is Theodore Dalrymple's "Life at the Bottom", which offered this memorable anecdote about about how and why women choose men who abuse them.

Introduction:

> The disastrous pattern of human relationships that exists in the underclass is also becoming common higher up the social scale. With increasing frequency I am consulted by nurses, who for the most part come from and were themselves traditionally members of (at least after Florence Nightingale) the respectable lower middle class, who have illegitimate children by men who first abuse and then abandon them. This abuse and later abandonment is usually all too predictable from the man's previous history and character; but the nurses who have been treated in this way say they refrained from making a judgment about him because it is wrong to make judgments. But if they do not make a judgment about the man with whom they are going to live and by whom they are going to have a child, about what are they ever going to make a judgment?
>
> "It just didn't work out," they say, the "it" in question being the relationship that they conceive of having an existence independent of the two people who form it, and that exerts an influence on their on their lives rather like an astral projection. Life is fate.

Chapter one:

> All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.
>
> This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.
>
> Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.
>
> This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.
>
> Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.

> At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how* they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

The blindness is wilful, because the emotions cannot be corrected by evidence. And everything in the culture affirms women in this craziness, even after they fail over and over again with men – cohabitating with the bad ones for years, and then turning away from the good ones. They *freely* choose the wrong men, and *freely* pass by the good ones. And almost no one tells them that it's *entirely their fault*. Everyone just tells them "follow your heart". This emotional craziness causes harm to innocent children, and it needs to stop. We have to stop the man-blaming and hold women accountable for making decisions with their emotions and then expecting craziness to "work out".

You can read the Dalrymple book online for free in this post.

Are libertarians right to say that lifting sanctions on evil regimes leads to liberalizing reforms?

January 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Has liberalizing relations with China caused their government to introduce pro-liberty reforms? Libertarians like Rand Paul who cheered Obama's appeasement of Cuba think that it has, but what are the facts?

This is a news article from the ultra-leftist UK Guardian.

Excerpt:

> China's drift towards a new authoritarianism under the unsmiling leadership of Xi Jinping has found new expression in a series of alarming year's-end moves to curb personal freedoms and free speech. The country's implacable president and Communist party chief is forcefully driving China towards economic and geopolitical superpower status. But the social cost is mounting steadily.
>
> With the ruthless crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong still fresh in the memory, Xi's latest anti-democratic coup came in the form of expanded action to block Gmail, Google's email service, presumably because it gave users a degree of autonomy that Xi and his unelected party cadres find threatening. China already regularly blocks foreign websites such as Facebook and YouTube. Google pulled most of its business out of China in 2011 after a row over censorship.
>
> Aspects of Xi's policy of "autocracy with Chinese characteristics" are familiar to the country's academic community, which is under renewed pressure to toe the party line. Instructions issued by the president after a higher education conference on Monday included the demand that universities do more to promote Marxist doctrine and Communist party ideological guidance, the Xinhua news agency reported.
>
> "Enhancing [party] leadership and party-building in the higher learning institutions is a fundamental guarantee for running socialist universities with Chinese features well," Xi was quoted as saying.
>
> Political indoctrination is already a routine feature of university life for Chinese students, while their teachers are subject to monitoring to ensure political correctness. In an echo of the Stalinist era in the Soviet Union, this year reporters from state-controlled media were ordered to attend university lectures and detect and denounce teachers whose ideas might be considered "scornful of China" or pro-western.

Christians are hit especially hard:

> China's estimated 60-70 million Christians have not escaped persecution during the Christmas period, according to reports from Beijing suggesting their plight

> has worsened under the new leadership. Members of Shouwang, a Beijing Christian group, told Agence France-Presse that several pastors had been under house arrest since they tried to arrange Easter services in a public square in 2011.
>
> Most Chinese Christians shun state-run churches and worship in "house churches" beyond government control. But official tolerance of such independent activity is waning, judging by a crackdown on 400 churches in eastern Zhejiang province, some of which were reportedly demolished.
>
> Offering an insight into paranoid party thinking, an official recently told Beijing worshippers to "resolutely resist the use of Christianity by foreigners to infiltrate China". Crosses have been torn down at many churches and at a nursing home. The authorities have made an issue out of Christmas lights, which are increasingly popular in Chinese cities, saying they may pose a safety hazard.

The ultra-leftist New York Times had more to say. (H/T Dennis Prager)

Excerpt:

> They pounce on bloggers who dare mock their beloved Chairman Mao. They scour the nation's classrooms and newspapers for strains of Western-inspired liberal heresies. And they have taken down professors, journalists and others deemed disloyal to Communist Party orthodoxy.
>
> China's Maoist ideologues are resurgent after languishing in the political desert, buoyed by President Xi Jinping's traditionalist tilt and emboldened by internal party decrees that have declared open season on Chinese academics, artists and party cadres seen as insufficiently red.
>
> Ideological vigilantes have played a pivotal role in the downfall of Wang Congsheng, a law professor in Beijing who was detained and then suspended from teaching after posting online criticisms of the party. Another target was Wang Yaofeng, a newspaper columnist who voiced support for the recent pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong and then found himself without a job.
>
> "Since Xi came to power, the pressure and control over freethinkers has become really tight," said Qiao Mu, a Beijing journalism professor who was demoted this fall, in part for publicly espousing multiparty elections and free speech. "More and more of my friends and colleagues are experiencing fear and harassment."
>
> Two years into a sweeping offensive against dissent, Mr. Xi has been intensifying his focus on perceived ideological opponents, sending ripples through universities, publishing houses and the news media and emboldening hard-liners who have hailed him as a worthy successor to Mao Zedong.
>
> […]Mr. Xi's recent orders and the accompanying surge of pressure on political foes further dispelled initial suspicions that his ideological hardening was a feint to establish his credibility with traditionalists as he settled into power. Instead, his continuing campaign against Western-inspired ideas has emboldened

> traditional party leftists.

This is why libertarians like Rand Paul can never be the Republican candidate for President. Foreign policy is one of the main responsibilities of the President. When it comes to choosing our leaders, we have to choose someone who sees what has and has not worked in the past. Trade is not a solution to reining in strong anti-Western nations, something else (maybe like Reagan in the Cold War?) is needed to deal with evil regimes. We made a mistake throwing Cuba a lifeline just as we had them on the ropes. We have to look at the world and ask what comes after stage one of foreign policy decisions – for all parties. The trouble with libertarians is that they don’t apply the economic way of thinking to foreign policy.

On day one: House Republicans introduce bill to ban abortions after 20 weeks

January 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News has some great news for pro-lifers.

Excerpt:

> Pro-life members of Congress today introduced legislation in the House of Representatives that bans abortions from after 20-weeks of pregnancy up to the day of birth.
>
> With Republicans controlling both the House and Senate, there is a guarantee that the important pro-life legislation will finally receive a vote in both chambers of Congress. In 2013, the House approved the bill on a 228-196 vote with 6 Democrats voting for the bill and 6 Republicans voting against it. President Barack Obama has issued a veto threat against that bill and Senate Democrats refused to bring it up for a vote.
>
> Congressman Trent Franks of Arizona, along with Representative Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee, are the lead sponsors of the bill.
>
> In a statement, Franks told LifeNews: "More than 18,000 'very late term' abortions are performed every year on perfectly healthy unborn babies in America. These are innocent and defenseless children who can not only feel pain, but who can survive outside of the womb in most cases, and who are torturously killed without even basic anesthesia. Many of them cry and scream as they die, but because it is amniotic fluid going over their vocal cords instead of air, we don't hear them."
>
> "Late term Abortion in America has its defenders, but no true or principled defense. The Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act seeks to afford basic protection to mothers and their unborn babies entering the sixth month of gestation," he said. "Throughout America's history, the hearts of the American people have been moved with compassion when they discover a theretofore hidden class of victims, once they grasp both the humanity of the victims and the inhumanity of what is being done to them. America is on the cusp of another such realization."
>
> "**We have a moral obligation to end dangerous late-term abortions in order to protect women and these precious babies from criminals like Kermit Gosnell and others who prey on the most vulnerable in our society**," Blackburn said. "The United States is one of the few remaining countries in the world that allows abortion after 20 weeks. That is why today we renew our efforts to protect the lives of babies and their mothers with the introduction of the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. Rep. Franks and I

> have been a good team moving this legislation through the House as we continue to lead the fight to ensure the unborn are provided the same protections that all human life deserves."
>
> […]A November 2014 poll from Quinnipiac found that 60 percent of Americans support legislation limiting abortions after 20 weeks, including 56 percent of Independents and 46 percent of Democrats.

The rest of the article is worth reading, because it summarizes the research showing that unborn children can feel pain much earlier than 20 weeks. The science is on the side of the pro-lifers here, but that's no great surprise.

Pretty much any Democrat in the House, Senate or White House is in favor of late-term abortions. Heck, Obama even voted several times for aborting *newborns* when he was a state senator in Illinois. Expect to see every Democrat in the House and Senate vote against this, and then Obama will veto it. But it will be nice for the American people to see where everyone stands on abortion. I have Democrat friends who think Obama is pro-life.

Why is this bill happening? Because there are lots more pro-life Republicans in the House and Senate.

Life News explains:

> The Congress that convenes in January will have at least 21 pro-life women, breaking a high of 18 following the 2010 elections.
>
> In 2010, there were no pro-life women in the Senate. In the next Congress, Iowa Senator-elect **Joni Ernst** will become the third pro-life woman to serve, joining Kelly Ayotte (R., N.H.) and Deb Fischer (R., Neb.).
>
> […]In the House, four women of diverse backgrounds will be joining the ranks:
>
> 1. **Elise Stefanik** (NY-21) becomes the youngest woman ever elected to Congress at age 30.
> 2. **Mia Love** (UT-04) becomes the first ever black Republican woman to serve in Congress.
> 3. **Barbara Comstock** (VA-10) won by an incredible 17 points in a swing district despite aggressive (and ineffective) attacks on her pro-life record.
> 4. **Mimi Walters** (CA-45) will provide an important pro-life female voice from California.
> 5. **Martha McSally**, the first woman fighter pilot ever to fly in combat, won her race in Arizona's second district

If you want to protect the unborn, you vote Republican.

Is building the Keystone XL pipeline safe for the environment?

January 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Signal reports that Obama intends to veto the Keystone XL pipeline.

Excerpt:

> The White House said today that President Obama would veto the Keystone XL pipeline bill, which is supported by more than 60 U.S. senators.
>
> "If this bill passes this Congress, the president wouldn't sign it," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said in a press conference.
>
> The project, which would transport more than 800,000 barrels of oil per day from Canada to the Gulf Coast, is the first order of business in the new 114th Congress.
>
> […]TransCanada's Keystone XL oil pipeline – proposed to run from Alberta, Canada, to the Gulf Coast of Texas — has been one of the biggest bones of contention between the Obama administration and lawmakers in both parties.
>
> The southern leg of the pipeline, spanning from Oklahoma to Texas, already has been completed. The U.S. government has yet to approve the northern leg, which would run from Alberta to Nebraska.
>
> Sixty-seven senate votes would be needed to overturn a veto by President Obama.

Daily Signal also posted 7 reasons why the Keystone XL pipeline should built.

Here are three of them: (links removed)

- **Safest mode of getting oil and gas to Americans.** Many in the United States live near a pipeline without even knowing about it. America has more than 500,000 miles of crude oil, petroleum and natural gas pipelines and another 2 million miles of natural gas distribution pipelines. When it comes to accidents, injuries or fatalities, pipelines are the safest mode of transporting oil and gas.
- **Environmentally safe.** It was Albert Einstein who said the definition of insanity was "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." The State Department must be teetering on the edge of insanity, because after multiple environmental reviews concluding that Keystone XL poses minimal environmental risk to soil, wetlands, water resources, vegetation, fish, and wildlife, we're still without a pipeline.
- **Negligible climate impact**. In a speech last June, Obama said the climate effects of Keystone XL would have an impact on the administration's ultimate decision. These effects, however, would be minimal. The State Department's final environmental impact statement concludes that the Canadian oil is coming out of

> the ground whether Keystone XL is built or not, so the difference in greenhouse gas emissions is miniscule.

I think most people understand that the pipeline will create jobs and lower energy prices, but we are worried about the environmental impact. We shouldn’t be worried, the tests have been down and it’s a green-light. The only reason not to built it is politics.

A closer look at the journey to atheism of Nathan Pratt

January 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a deconversion testimony by an atheist on Prayson Daniel's blog, and I thought it might be useful to take a look at it.

But first, I want to recap some reasons why people think that God exists.

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

In addition to these arguments for theism, Christians would make be some sort of minimal facts case for the resurrection, one that leverages the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. And some sort of case for the early belief that Jesus was divine.

In addition to those positive evidences, there would be informed defenses to other questions like the problem of evil, the problem of suffering, religious pluralism, the hiddenness of God, materialist conceptions of mind, consciousness and neuroscience, the justice of eternal damnation, sovereignty and free will, the doctrine of the Incarnation, the doctrine of the Trinity, and so on.

I listed these out so that you can see how many of these positive arguments and defenses that he wrestles with in his deconversion testimony, which is linked below.

So here is the deconversion testimony.

And here are some revealing snippets, under headings.

Legalist upbringing

" Being baptists things were pretty legalistic growing up."

Anti-intellectual parents

His parents tell him: "This is the bible and its truth can't be debated. It is what it is."

Piety rather than apologetics

"Most of my young life I was "that" religious kid. You know him. He's awkward looking

with coke bottle glasses and horrendous hair and triple hand me down clothes. I told random kids on the bus that I would pray for them and would be mocked in return."

Peer disapproval

"I told random kids on the bus that I would pray for them and would be mocked in return. One time I even got jumped while fishing and once they started punching me I didn't even fight back, "turn the other cheek" was being said in my mind over and over. I got the crap kicked out of me and several months of ridicule at school over getting such a beating.

I think the most embarrassing time for me was in 8th grade science class when one kid started calling me a "bible beater" while the teacher was out of the room. He then got the entire class to mock and laugh at me. It wasn't fun. In fact, it sucked."

Deconversion prior to serious study of the evidence

"I think it was around 9th grade that my apathy for religion and god really started to set it. Being honest with myself I didn't want to be the kid that got mocked anymore."

Ineffective church leadership

"We'd laugh at our peers that were so moved by the message told by the church leaders… Everything I was seeing my peers do could easily be chalked up to a group or mob mentality. A psychological effect of emotions."

I agree with him about this one, the church generally does nothing to form a Christian worldview, even though they have years and years to do it. And they are quite proud of this "focus on the gospel", even as kids drop Christianity as soon as they hear intellectual objections to it in college.

Self-focus / autonomy

"The fact that our purpose of living was the blow smoke up the skirt of a god that will damn us to hell."

Theological determinism

"The thought that a god with a plan can't/won't/doesn't listen to your prayers because if your prayer isn't in line with his plan then it goes unheard or unanswered."

Bible difficulties

"God set up Adam and Eve for failure in the Garden of Eden. If he really didn't want us to "fall from grace" then the tree never would have been there. He would've stopped the serpent from deceiving Adam and Eve. He would've equipped Adam and Eve with the knowledge of deceit so they could recognize when they're being lied to."

God's job is to make us happy and healthy

"God would have either have had a direct hand in creating hell or allowing satan to create it with his knowledge. God created the rules by which people go to hell. He damns billions of people there. Is that love? Is that moral? Is that just?"

Accuracate knowledge of God's character and historical actions are less important than "being good"

“Anne Frank, a Jew, is in hell because she didn’t recognize Jesus as the Son of God, but Ted Bundy, a serial rapist and murderer, is in heaven because he accepted Jesus into his heart before dying on death row. Is that fair? Is that love? Is that moral? Is that just?”

Emotional problem of evil

His brother was killed in a motorcycle accident, and his view is that it’s God’s job to keep everyone alive and happy. So this guy is reading the story of Jesus and he is saying something like this to himself when he reads the Bible, “see, the founder of Christianity has all his needs met by God and he is happy all the time, and everyone likes him and he never, ever has anything bad happen to him that isn’t his fault”. The problem of evil is one of the most responded-to problems in Christian apologetics. He didn’t cite anyone who has responded to it.

Ignorance of how the Bible defines faith

“Faith is believing in something without evidence.”

So he doesn’t even know what the definition of faith is, according to the Biblical use of the term, where faith is trusting in something you know to be true because of the evidence, e.g. – because of the resurrection, say. That was Jesus’ model of getting people to have faith in him, but apparently you can attend church and come up with a different, postmodern notion of what the word means. A definition that is pleasing to all the people in church who are there for emotional comfort, and not for truth and knowledge. His definition of faith is more like the atheist definition of faith, like they say “I have faith in the multiverse” or “I have faith in aliens seeding the Earth with life” or “I have faith that God has no morally sufficient reason for permitting this instance of apparently gratuitous evil”. Atheists project their own irrational epistemology onto Christians.

Unfamiliarity with Christian scholarship

“After I realized that my friends and church leaders had no good responses to anything I was saying I started searching for good apologist books on the internet. A good book about a good reason for belief. I can’t effectively relay my shock at turning up nothing worth the paper it was printed on.”

The purpose of life is to feel happy

“I’d heard through a friend that an old acquaintance from our youth group was now an agnostic… His reply was straight forward in that he’d realized that he’d gained nothing from trying to understand, follow and love god. Since it was bringing nothing positive to his life he left it behind. He shared that we’re all trained as kids in church that we have a god shaped hole in our hearts, but that it wasn’t true. Here he was, 11 years after leaving christianity, at the happiest and most content point of his life. He told me it was okay to doubt.”

Reads simplistic books by atheists

“That book that would ultimately be one of the most revolutionary books in my life was “50 Reasons People Give for Believing in a God.””

This book is a caricature of the reasons why people believe in God. I searched for the

names of top Christian apologists, and there were none. No William Lane Craig, Hugh Ross, Gary Habermas, Michael Licona, Stephen C. Meyer, Mike Behe, etc. I took a look at the 50 arguments. They were generally re-phrasings of this “I’m stupid, so I’ll believe Christianity because it makes me happy”.

I clicked on the few that I thought might cite Christian scholars, but no Christian scholars were cited. For the chapter on “fine-tuning”, the author cited Ray Comfort. And his banana argument. In a chapter on fine-tuning. The chapter on intelligent design did not cite a single scholar, pro or con. ID was not even defined.

My conclusion

Well, I’ll leave the rest of his post to you. I did a quick search on the author’s blog for “William Lane Craig”, just to see, and found nothing. Then I did a search for “intelligent design”, and found nothing. Then I did a search for “minimal facts” and found nothing. His post on his journey to atheism is here. And let this testimony be a lesson to you parents and church leaders not to fail other Christians the way this guy’s parents and church leaders failed him. You should read the comments on his post, as well.

Arthur Brooks: Europe's core problems are demographic, not economic

January 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

AEI President Arthur C. Brooks writes about Europe's most pressing problem in the far-left New York Times, of all places.

He writes:

> According to the United States Census Bureau's International Database, nearly one in five Western Europeans was 65 years old or older in 2014. This is hard enough to endure, given the countries' early retirement ages and pay-as-you-go pension systems. But by 2030, this will have risen to one in four. If history is any guide, aging electorates will direct larger and larger portions of gross domestic product to retirement benefits — and invest less in opportunity for future generations.
>
> Next, look at fertility. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the last time the countries of the European Union were reproducing at replacement levels (that is, slightly more than two children per woman) was the mid-1970s. In 2014, the average number of children per woman was about 1.6. That's up a hair from the nadir in 2001, but has been falling again for more than half a decade. Imagine a world where many people have no sisters, brothers, cousins, aunts or uncles. That's where Europe is heading in the coming decades. On the bright side, at least there will be fewer Christmas presents to buy.
>
> There are some exceptions. France has risen to exactly two children per woman in 2012, from 1.95 in 1980, an increase largely attributed to a system of government payments to parents, not a change in the culture of family life. Is there anything more dystopian than the notion that population decline can be slowed only when states bribe their citizens to reproduce?
>
> Finally, consider employment. Last September, the United States' labor force participation rate — the percentage of adults who are either working or looking for work — reached a 36-year low of just 62.7 percent.
>
> Yet as bad as that is, the United States looks decent compared with most of Europe. Our friends across the Atlantic like to say that we live to work, while they work to live. That might be compelling if more of them were actually working. According to the most recent data available from the World Bank, the labor force participation rate in the European Union in 2013 was 57.5 percent. In France it was 55.9 percent. In Italy, just 49.1 percent.
>
> […]It is true that good monetary and fiscal policies are important. But the deeper problems in Europe will not be solved by the European Central Bank. No matter

> what the money supply and public spending levels, a country or continent will be in decline if it rejects the culture of family, turns its back on work, and closes itself to strivers from the outside.

Either people keep their own money and run their own lives, or bureaucrats take their money and make the decisions about social programs. In America, we used to prefer the former, but Europe has been preferring the latter for decades. Would I get married and have kids in a society run by European bureaucrats? Do I want secular leftist public schools to tell my children what to believe? It doesn't sound very exciting to me. And I'll bet it doesn't sound very exciting to a lot of men in Europe. Men don't want to be taxed, so that they can be replaced by the state's social programs. We want to chart our own course, and guide our own families. But that's not OK with people who want to replace men with government social programs.

Can you disagree with homosexuality using your own name and not be fired?

January 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> A fire chief in Atlanta has officially been fired on Tuesday by Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed for self-publishing a book, in which he argued that homosexuality was immoral, GA Voice reports.
>
> The initial review period which began at the end of fire chief Kelvin Cochran's November suspension is now over. Cochran's termination finally came in on Tuesday, and gay advocacy groups moved quickly to reiterate their support of the mayor and condemnation of Cochran.
>
> […]Back in November, Reed placed Cochran on suspension without pay and forced him into sensitivity training after it was discovered that Cochran had argued that homosexuality is immoral.
>
> […]Former fire captain and lesbian Cindy Thompson sent a tip to the magazine GA Voice after hearing about the book from other fire fighters. Thompson then went directly to speak to Reed's LGBT liaison, which set the scandal in motion.
>
> After further attention from GA Voice, the Reed administration issued a statement saying they were unaware of Cochran's work before it hit the printing presses.
> "The Reed administration was not notified of the book before it was published. The Reed administration will not tolerate discrimination of any kind…The Reed administration is currently conducting a review of the facts surrounding the book. If disciplinary action is recommended as a result of the investigation, we will take decisive action to prevent any inappropriate behavior from occurring in the future," said spokesperson Anne Torres for Mayor Reed in late November, according to GA Voice.
>
> Reed made sure to tell the press that Cochran's views expressed in a 2013 book neither represented him nor the city. Some gay groups stated at the time that Cochran's punishment wasn't nearly harsh enough. "He will be back in charge and I am sure telling his staff anti-LGBT stuff…The Mayor should fire him!" Glen Paul Freedman, chair of Georgia Equality's board of directors, said.
>
> During his tenure as mayor, Reed moved away from past views and openly embraced gay marriage in 2012 after years of advocating for LGBT policies.
>
> "It is well known that I have gone through a good bit of reflection on this issue, but listening to the stories of so many people that I know and care about has strengthened my belief that marriage is a fundamental right for everyone. Loving

> couples, regardless of their sexual orientation, should have the right to marry whomever they want," Reed said in a 2012 statement.

There's a reason why I blog under an alias.

Notice how the lesbian thought that the best response to someone who disagreed with her views on morality was to have him fired. Yet, the gay rights movement is regularly referred to as tolerant, diverse and non-discriminatory. Well, I would never fire a person just because they expressed a belief in same-sex marriage. I don't think it's nice to go after a person's job because they don't agree with me on the definition of marriage. I'm a tolerant person – I allow people to keep their jobs even if they don't celebrate every moral view that I believe in. That makes me different from gay activists, apparently.

Should young people vote for Democrats?

January 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jennifer Kabbany describes what young people got from their vote for Democrats over at the College Fix.

She writes:

> Young America's Foundation released its annual "Youth Misery Index" findings today, and the news is not good for young people – the index has hit an all-time record high.
>
> The foundation calculates the index by adding youth unemployment, student loan debt, and national debt (per capita) figures, and it found "young people are experiencing hardships like never before under the Obama administration, and this generation is especially suffering the consequences of this administration's leftist policies."
>
> **For 2014, youth unemployment sat at 18.1 percent, student loan debt came in at $30,000, and national debt per capita was the highest ever at $58,437. The foundation tallied that all up for a Youth Misery Index of 106.5. That's far above the 2013 figure of 98.6, when the foundation added 16.3, which represented youth unemployment, with 29.4 – the average 4-year college loan debt – and 52.9, each person's national debt burden.**
>
> "The government is largely responsible for all three problems, and we've found a statistically significant relationship between government expenditures and the Youth Misery Index," the foundation states. "Each indicator can be tied to government actions."
>
> While the index has steadily grown over the decades, under Obama the figure has shot up dramatically.
>
> In 2012 it was 95.1, and the year before that 90.6. When Obama first took office in 2009, it was 83.5. When President George Bush left office in 2008 – the index was 69.3. When the figure debuted in 1993, it came in at 53.1.
>
> "Young people will be stuck paying for government debt they had no part in creating, and they'll have to do it with less discretionary income than ever before because of record high levels of student loan debt," the foundation stated.

If interest rates go up, it will get even worse. Interest on loans will make it harder for them to buy houses and cars. Their students loans will cost more. And the government will have to dedicate a lot more money to making payments on the national debt – leaving less money for other expenditures. Taxes might have to go up to pay for the payments on the debt. Whether they raised income, sales or property taxes, it's bad news for young people trying to get on with their lives.

Has MIT physicist Jeremy England solved the origin of life problem?

January 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Casey Luskin assesses a sensational article that was originally published in the radically leftist Salon.

He writes:

> In the law there's a saying, "When the facts are on your side, pound the facts. When the facts aren't on your side, pound the table." Some popular science writers have apparently embraced that maxim while declaring that Massachusetts Institute of Technology physicist Jeremy England may have solved the origin of life.
>
> At Salon, Paul Rosenberg recently asserted that England's work shows "God is on the ropes" and threatens "to undo everything the wacky right holds dear." Claiming England "has creationists and the Christian right terrified," Rosenberg must be borrowing rhetorical excesses from Chris Mooney, who likewise wrongly alleged last year in Mother Jones that science "has creationists terrified."
>
> So what exactly are England's momentous ideas? Business Insider reviewed his theories last month, explaining they are based upon thermodynamic principles that cause matter to "gradually restructure itself in order to dissipate increasingly more energy."

The problem of the origin of life is essentially the problem of sequencing amino acids into proteins. Can you sequence amino acids into proteins by shining sunlight on them?

No:

> The fundamental problem with England's theories, and Rosenberg's polemics, is that sunlight and other forms of energy do not generate new genetic information, nor do they produce new types of biological machines.
>
> It's one thing to observe that energy keeps a machine running; it's quite another to claim energy produced the machine in the first place. You could shine light on random Scrabble tiles or disassembled computer components for billions of years, and you'll never produce a Shakespearean Sonnet or a functional computer. No wonder Harvard biophysicist Eugene Shakhnovich called England's proposals "extremely speculative, especially as applied to life phenomena."
>
> […]Dr. England's work, interesting though it may be, does not provide that insight. Sunlight—or any known form of energy—does not produce the genetic information life needs to build its complex machinery. In our experience, only one cause generates new language-based information or machine-like structures: intelligence.

> Dr. England shouldn’t be faulted if materialists are co-opting his work into an overstated crusade against God and conservative politics. But naturalistic accounts of life’s origins remain as elusive as they have ever been.

Somebody posted this Salon article on my Facebook page and I deleted it because I thought it must be a hoax or something. After all, it was Salon. I mean, not even atheists are stupid enough to think that you can sequence amino acids into protein by shining light on them, are they? Do they think that you can shine sunlight on a keyboard and get a computer program? I didn’t even think this article needed an answer, it’s so ridiculous.

Seriously – when you are talking about creating the first living cell, you are talking about getting a whole bunch of sequences of amino acids right in one shot. It’s an information problem, not a thermodynamics problem. Why would anyone believe that changes in energy levels could explain the creation of information in the first living cell?

Young Texan earns $140,000 a year, with a two-year degree and hard work

January 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I love this story from the Wall Street Journal. I'm linking to the free version on Yahoo News, though!

Excerpt:

> Justin Friend 's parents have doctoral degrees and have worked as university lecturers and researchers. So Mr. Friend might have been expected to head for a university after graduating from high school in Bryan, Texas, five years ago.
>
> Instead, he attended Texas State Technical College in Waco, and received a two-year degree in welding. In 2013, his first full year as a welder, his income was about $130,000, more than triple the average annual wages for welders in the U.S. In 2014, Mr. Friend's income rose to about $140,000.
>
> […]The risks of a mismatch between costly university degrees and job opportunities have become clearer in recent years. Anthony Carnevale, director of the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University, said nearly a third of people aged 22 through 26 with a Bachelor of Arts degree either don't have a job or are working at one that doesn't require a university degree. The numbers are similar for young people with vocational degrees, but those lower-cost degrees don't typically lead to heavy debts.
>
> Student loan debt outstanding in the U.S. totaled $1.13 trillion as of Sept. 30, up by $100 billion from a year earlier, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. (Mr. Friend has no debts.)
>
> […]Mr. Friend, who is single, typically works 72 hours a week, usually including at least one day of the weekend, often on an overnight shift. His base pay is more than $25 an hour, up from about $22 when he started in 2012. He gets overtime after 40 hours a week. Pay is doubled on Sundays and tripled on holidays. He receives health insurance, a 401k retirement plan and paid vacation.
>
> With little free time, expenses are low. He rents a one-bedroom apartment for $1,080 a month in a building with a pool and gym. To stay in shape for mountain-climbing trips, he sometimes runs up and down steps wearing a weighted backpack.
>
> He showed an early inclination to make things. "At three years old, he was using a screwdriver and a hacksaw skillfully," said Dr. Vaughan, his mother. Later, dyslexia made writing and math a struggle for him.
>
> In junior high school, he took a course in welding. Within a few years, he was earning money repairing fences and doing other welding jobs for neighbors.
>
> A documentary on World War II stirred Mr. Friend's interest in pulse jet engines,

> which were used by Germany to propel bombs. He and his father, Ted Friend, a professor of animal science at Texas A&M, together built such an engine. “We used a leaf blower to start it,” pumping in air needed to ignite the engine, the younger Mr. Friend said. “It ran on propane.” When he attached the engine to a golf cart, he said, the vehicle proved difficult to steer after reaching 30 miles an hour.
>
> “Mom didn’t like it,” he said. “She thought I was going to blow myself up.” One of his goals is to put a jet engine on a motorcycle, he says, adding: “I’d try to make it as safe as I could.”
>
> On a recent day, while country music played on a colleague’s radio, Mr. Friend used gas tungsten arc welding techniques to attach two steel parts destined for an oil apparatus. Wearing a T-shirt and Wrangler jeans, he hunched over work requiring the precision of a jewelry maker. After welding, he buffed the part with a wire brush. Colleagues would later X-ray the part to make sure the weld was flawless.
>
> The long hours mean “it’s hard to have a life,” Mr. Friend said. Eventually, he said he may pursue an advanced degree in metallurgy and research welding materials and techniques. For now, he’s building up his savings.

He’s debt-free, and probably didn’t even need student loans for this program. You couldn’t say that about most college students these days – and the ones in non-STEM fields will never be able to pay their loans back. What causes people to go into programs that don’t produce a return on investment? I think I know why. I think that many Americans have the idea that life should be about personal fulfillment, and not about doing things that don’t feel right to them. Hard work doesn’t “feel” right to many young Americans. They want work to make them famous, and to make them happy. Well, work isn’t supposed to be like that. Work is about making money, and very often the most difficult degrees and jobs are the least fame-making, and the least happiness-inducing. This guy is a *welder*! It’s not glamorous.

I would advise my younger readers, especially my male readers, to take a page out of this welder’s handbook. Make a plan to avoid debt, and stick to it.

Why are Christians allowed to eat shellfish but not allowed to have sex before marriage?

January 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful article from Peter Saunders.

The challenge:

> An argument frequently advanced by those attempting to defend homosexual practice is that Christians 'cherry pick' the commands in the Bible – that is, they chose to emphasise some commands while ignoring others.
>
> The Old Testament may forbid homosexual acts (Leviticus 18:2; 20:13) but it also forbids eating seafood without fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9, 10).
>
> So how can Christians then justify upholding laws on sexual morality whilst at the same time ignoring the food laws from the very same books of the Bible? Why may they eat shellfish but not be allowed to have sex outside marriage? Isn't this inconsistent and hypocritical?

The solution is that God enters into "covenants" with his people, and the terms of those covenants change.

Especially dietary laws:

> The answer to this question lies in an understanding of biblical covenants.
>
> A covenant is a binding solemn agreement made between two parties. It generally leaves each with obligations. But it holds only between the parties involved.
>
> There are a number of biblical covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic (Old), Davidic and New.
>
> Under the Noahic covenant, which God made with all living human beings (Genesis 9:8-17), people were able to eat anything:
>
> *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Genesis 9:3).*
>
> But under the Sinaitic (Old) Covenant, which God made with the nation of Israel, people were able to eat certain foods, but not others.

Jesus clearly created a new covenant with his followers, where the dietary laws are lifted:

> Jesus said that he had come to fulfil the 'Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). He would establish this new covenant with new laws, with himself as high priest based on his own sacrificial death on the cross.
>
> This new covenant would completely deal with sin (Hebrews 10:1-18) and protect

> all those who put their faith in him from God's wrath and judgement…
>
> *[…]'In the same way, after the supper (Jesus) took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you"' (Luke 22:20). '…we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Hebrews 10:10)*
>
> People would come under the protection of this new covenant, not by virtue of belonging to the nation of Israel, but through faith in Christ. In fact the function of the Old Testament Law (Sinaitic covenant) was to point to Christ as its fulfilment.
>
> […]So what then did Christ say about foods? He pronounced all foods clean for his followers to eat:
>
> *' "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (Mark 7:18-23)*
>
> Jesus was making that point that under the new covenant God required purity of the heart. Internal thoughts and attitudes were as important as external actions.

Food is OK for Christians, but sexual immorality – which includes premarital sex and adultery – are NOT OK for Christians.

I think sometimes when you are talking to people whose motivation is just to get rid of any objective moral law entirely, they tend to ask questions without really wanting a good answer. This is especially true when it comes to the morality of sex. They ask the question not to get an answer, but to justify getting rid of the moral rules governing sexuality. The answers are there for people who are willing to respect God in their decision-making to find. The answers are not found only by people who have a reason to not want to find them.

The downside of the soul mate / fairy tale view of relationships

January 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do relationships take effort to build?

Astonishing article from the leftist Huffington Post, of all places. (links removed)

Excerpt:

> As millennial women, we were groomed for a white knight fantasy. From childhood favorites such as *Snow White* to adult rom-com staples such as *How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days* or *Sleepless in Seattle*, the media perpetuates a romantic storyline in which compatibility and lasting romance is something effortless, built on chance, sustained by good looks, fun dates and electric sexual chemistry. These story lines shape our expectations for romantic happiness. It is not enough to find someone with whom we are mostly compatible, who would make a good parent, with whom we could learn and grow wrinkly; now, we expect a perfect fit and an easy, instantaneous "connection." In short, we want a soul mate. But it is this desire for a soul mate that is actually the undoing of our happy ending.
>
> A "soul mate" is defined as one who is ideally suited to us, perfectly completes us, one with whom the relationship feels easy and natural. With them, a relationship is just "meant to be"… A survey of young adults conducted by the National Marriage Project found that while 84% of young adults report finding a marriage partner "very important," a full 94% of young adults say they would like to marry a soul mate, and 73% of people ages 18 – 29 believe that there is a soul mate out there for them.

Wow. That doesn't sound like a good approach to me. My approach has always been to pick the girl who was most willing to learn new things. And then to explain to her my vision for marriage and see if I could get her to work independently on that plan before I married her. I don't favor this soul mate approach at all.

Does the "soul mate" approach work?

> We heard that those who get married later and possess a college degree have fewer divorces and more stable marriages. So we spend our twenties trying to find ourselves through travel, accumulating degrees and building a career. Marriage will be the capstone of our achievements, and nothing less than tying the knot with a soul mate will suffice. But the tragic irony is that soul mate thinking makes us increasingly likely to divorce. A study of 1,400 married men and women shows that people who hold soul mate orientations are 150% more likely to end up divorced than those who do not.
>
> **The widespread cultural belief in "soul mate ideology" undermines our chances at happiness because it makes us passive receivers of idyllic romantic expectations. Further, it fosters self-centeredness; one rarely longs to be a soul mate for someone *else*, which would require effort. For this reason, believing in soul mates is one of the most dis-empowering belief systems we can adopt. As millennials, we pride ourselves on actively pursuing the life we want to live, rather than simply accepting whatever hand we are dealt. We are innovative, passionate, proactive and not afraid to take risks. Yet, there is a disconnect when it comes to our desire for lasting love. Though there are prospects around us, we forgo taking the concrete steps needed to build happy compatible relationships because we do not "feel a spark." We are passively waiting on the sidelines for love to "happen," and then wonder why it is so difficult.**

I've always felt that the soul mate approach was like the evil villain in opposition to my noble plan-based approach. My approach is to pick a woman who wants to learn and work hard. Explain your marriage plan to her, and how your marriage plan serves God. My marriage plan accomplishes four goals, for example. 1) Influence the university with apologetics, 2) influence the church with apologetics, 3) provide a model of a good marriage to people in the community, including co-workers, college students and neighbors, and 4) raise effective, influential children who will have an impact for God. Now if you are a Christian woman raised in a church that affirms the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage with this "God has a wonderful plan for your life" stuff, then a specific, non-emotional plan from a man is the last thing you want to hear about.

Their solution is for people to work at compatibility:

> Compatibility is something co-created through intentionality and conscious choice. It involves mutual sacrifice, effort and commitment for the sake of the other's benefit. A recent study found that of the couples who demonstrate above average daily generosity, 50% of them report being "very happy" in marriage; among the low generosity scores, only 14% can say the same. As studies indicate, selflessness is required to create mutual compatibility. It is not instantaneous, nor does it usually begin with true love's kiss.
>
> We both know from experience that there are some you naturally connect with

> and others you do not. This is not a call towards forced attraction or companionship. But, our romantic futures should not be placed in the hands of blind chance. It is time we roll up our sleeves and shift our expectations from unattainable perfection to realistic romance, one that accounts for imperfection. We must understand that work in a relationship is a necessary key to success, rather than an indication of imminent failure. We will be letting go of a tired plot line that sets us up for disappointment and embracing an active role in our own unique story.
>
> How refreshing to know that we do not have to be perfect to be lovable, and that our romantic success is not solely dependent on finding the “right” fit, but instead built through cultivating daily moments of generosity, sacrifice and conscious coupling.

So in my case, I am looking for a woman who listens to the plan, develops the skills for the plan and then independently engages in activities to achieve the goals of the plan. In the past, I have had women listen to the plan carefully, including my motivations and experiences that caused me to choose this plan. And they have been willing to read books, listen to lectures, watch debates, to gain the skills needed to make a difference. And they have even engaged independently with activities like public speaking, teaching classes, and so forth. But none of the women who had done that accepted the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage. They all wanted to hear a good plan, learn useful skills and then get to work. Big difference.

The story of how the Failed Atheist failed at atheism in the UK

January 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend The Failed Atheist has posted his testimony on his blog. Some of the phrases might be a bit unfamiliar, because he grew up in the UK. I always thought that the UK was filled with Christians who loved England and all wanted to be knights when they grew up. I didn't grow up in the UK, but my room as a child was still filled with books on knights and chivalry. Some of them with scribbled drawings in them! I also knew about the Battle of Britain and Spitfire airplanes were pictured on my wall posters. Anyway, I digress.

Here are the first 3 paragraphs of his story:

> Within the next few months I would have been a Christian for ten years and that seems like a long time. Not only did my life go in the direction I had never expected but I'm also the sort of person I never expected I'd be. Over the last ten years I've often been asked how and why (two very different questions) I became a Christian which to most people seemed an obvious and embarrassing mistake. I suppose this shouldn't come as much of a surprise because most people post 9/11 and Dawkin's 'The God Delusion' have gone the other way.
>
> **School Nativity**
>
> I could write a lot but I will try my best to stick to what I think are the most salient points and not ramble. So, I grew up in a secular non-religious single parent family and as far as I can remember like most British children I was in the school nativity play (I was a shepherd) and was occasionally read the odd Bible story by a neighbor. Although the only one I can actually remember was the wise judgement of Solomon found in 1 Kings 3:16-28. I spent one year at a Church of England primary school and if I'm honest the only thing I can remember is that the Priest was a bit of a weirdo.
>
> **My Early Doubts**
>
> My interactions with anyone I knew who were religious amounted to the JW's stopping by to give me a copy of the Watchtower which I probably fed to the dog. I also happened to live very near to a massive Mormon temple but it was years before I even knew what a Mormon actually was and why they wore magic underwear. I remember a friend of mine in Biology class when I was about 13 asking me whether I thought there was a God, I can almost remember verbatim what I said to him, "I like the idea of there being a God but there is no evidence for one". If most people are brutally honest I reckon most people would prefer to be born in a universe where their existence mattered to the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent creator of the universe. The reverse being what Bertrand Russell so eloquently summarized the astronomers view of the human life to be "*...a tiny lump of impure carbon and water crawling impotently on a*

> *small and unimportant planet…*“. Of course I should point out that the degree to which we prefer something to be true has no bearing on whether it is in fact true. I digress.
>
> So by 13 I was persuaded that the universe I inhabited was not created by any deity, and that evolution alone explained life’s journey from the single cell organism to complex carbon based life as reflected in natures pinnacle creation the ‘wise man’ Homo sapiens. Most people I grew up with were either atheists or agnostics although my next door neighbors were Roman Catholics but if I’m honest I didn’t have a clue what that even meant. I just remember my mate coming back one Sunday with tons of money telling me it was his ‘Holy Communion’. I didn’t know what that was and I didn’t think to ask but I remember being jealous, I could’ve done with people pinning cash to my tracksuit bottoms.

His blog has an excellent list of recommended books, as well, separated into categories.

It’s funny how people remember the little opinions they had when they were very young, one way or the other. I remember feeling very protective of God from the beginning, and thinking how he would not be very happy with my parents or the mean kids in school. We were always on the same side, and everyone else was on the other side. Sometimes I wonder if Christianity is easier that way, when you don’t think of your parents as God or exemplars of godliness, then when your parents fail you then think that God is a failure by extension. I remember showing my mother hard verses of the Bible as a child, (e.g. – Matt 10:34-38), and when she said they were false (she is a Muslim-raised atheist), I remember thinking “well, so much the worse for you when you meet him, then” and “well, I don’t even know how I ended up in this family of insolent God-haters”. I remember thinking that my real parents were probably angels and my human parents had probably stolen me from them. I was just a kid, so all this made sense to me then. I was so different than anyone in my family – I am the first Protestant and almost everyone else is Muslim or Hindu, with just a few Catholics and atheists. I’m very happy working alone, though.

Study: brain of child neglected by mother is smaller and underdeveloped

January 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Here is the scan:

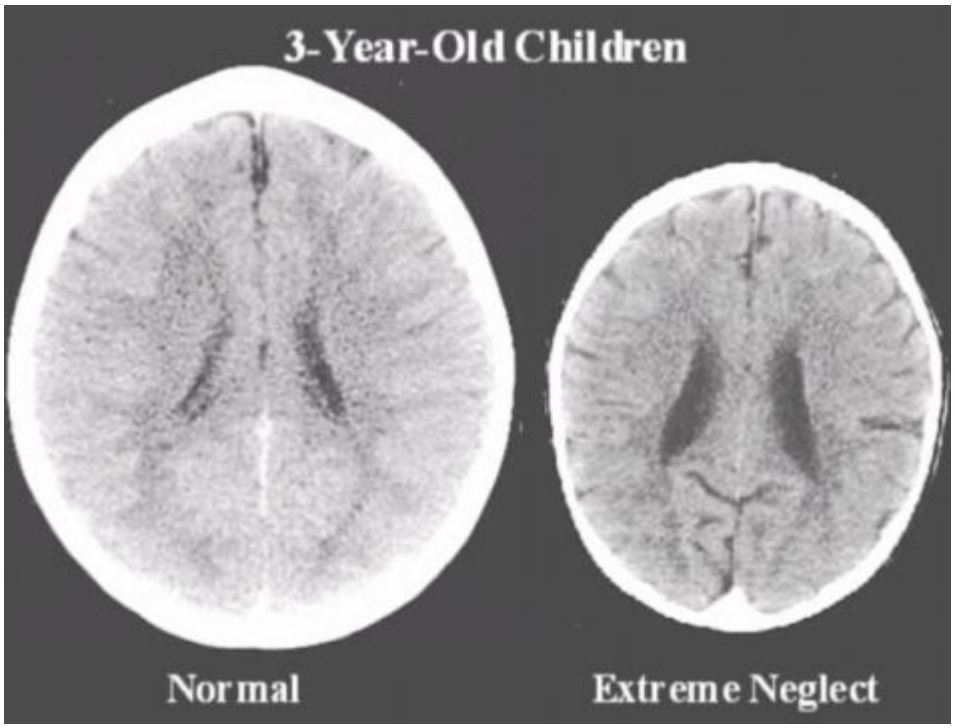

Brain scans of 3-year old children: normal vs neglected

Excerpt:

> Both of these images are brain scans of a two three-year-old children, but the brain on the left is considerably larger, has fewer spots and less dark areas, compared to the one on the right.
>
> According to neurologists this sizeable difference has one primary cause – the way each child was treated by their mothers.
>
> The child with the larger and more fully developed brain was looked after by its mother – she was constantly responsive to her baby, reported The Sunday Telegraph.
>
> But the child with the shrunken brain was the victim of severe neglect and abuse.
>
> According to research reported by the newspaper, the brain on the right worryingly lacks some of the most fundamental areas present in the image on the left.
>
> The consequences of these deficits are pronounced – the child on the left with the larger brain will be more intelligent and more likely to develop the social ability to empathise with others.
>
> But in contrast, the child with the shrunken brain will be more likely to become

> addicted to drugs and involved in violent crimes, much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on state benefits.
>
> The child is also more likely to develop mental and other serious health problems.
>
> Professor Allan Schore, of UCLA, told The Sunday Telegraph that if a baby is not treated properly in the first two years of life, it can have a fundamental impact on development.
>
> He pointed out that the genes for several aspects of brain function, including intelligence, cannot function.
>
> […]The study correlates with research released earlier this year that found that children who are given love and affection from their mothers early in life are smarter with a better ability to learn.
>
> The study by child psychiatrists and neuroscientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, found school-aged children whose mothers nurtured them early in life have brains with a larger hippocampus, a key structure important to learning, memory and response to stress.
>
> The research was the first to show that changes in this critical region of children's brain anatomy are linked to a mother's nurturing, Neurosciencenews.com reports.
>
> The research is published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Early Edition.
>
> Lead author Joan L. Luby, MD, professor of child psychiatry, said the study reinforces how important nurturing parents are to a child's development.

I have a very good feminist non-Christian friend who sometimes comments here. I once asked her about marriage and she said that her skills would be wasting on raising children. I explained to her my view that a mother needs to stay at home with the children, and that is more important work. I expect my future wife to read all kinds of books on child care and to give the child attention, nutrition, exercise and play so that the child will grow up to be an effective Christian. Maybe I need to be clear. I am not going to spend hundreds of thousands per child with just any woman. I need a woman who can produce influential and effective Christians who will engage in the public square. And we do not entrust that job to just anyone. Professional women who are willing to be stay-at-home moms in the first five years of each child's life.

I expect the woman I marry (if I marry) to have a college degree, and preferably a graduate degree, and a couple of years of employment. Then she has to stay home and invest in those children through the first five years at least. After that she can stay home or work as much as she thinks is beneficial to the family goals of impacting the university, the church and the public square – as well as continuing to raise those children. It's not a waste of her talent to make the next William Lane Craig, the next Marsha Blackburn, the next Doug Axe, or the next Edith Jones. Even if we only aim for those guys and get

decent, hard-working Christians who make a difference using apologetics, that would still be something. The main thing is not to be scared to try to achieve something with the family – if you aim at nothing, you always hit it.

UPDATE: I am linking to a relevant post from Lindsay, a Christian mother who has a graduate degree in biology and was teaching biology before leaving her career to care for her children.

The dangers of judging others based on physical attractiveness

January 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UK apologist Calum Miller has a long post up at Dove Theology about people making judgments based on physical appearances.

Here's the part that really struck me:

> Quite obviously, most people put an emphasis on physical appearance. They decide who to date or be friends with at least partly on the basis of physical appearance, and by doing so they create an expectation of the opposite sex (or the same sex) looking good enough. They make comments about people looking good or looking bad. They make comments about people wearing nice or unimpressive clothes, or combinations of clothes. They spend obscene amounts on improving their appearance. They include physical criteria in their lists of what they look for in a partner. They reject people because they don't match some physical criteria. They ogle at others, sometimes making comments to their friends while doing so.
>
> Sometimes they do much of this non-verbally: they make faces to indicate disgust (or something less extreme, but of the same genus) if a suggestion of romantic or social interest is raised regarding someone who has an obvious deformity, or who is wearing something unsightly, or who is too short, or whatever else. Or they gesture to direct friends' attention towards a good-looking person, it being incredibly important that such a person be noticed and lusted after.
>
> Men and women both do this, and do so to enormous degrees. The fact that men have less resources to change how they look, or that some people go to further extremes in their shallowness, or that some people make these ratings and judgments quantitative, is not really the main problem. The main problem is these underlying attitudes and behaviours pervading society at a much deeper level. I know very few people of either sex who don't make comments about others' looks, height and clothes, and that includes champions of these recent campaigns which claim to challenge such shallowness.
>
> The fact that this image seems so farcical is a testament to the fact that this shallowness is something propagated by both sides. The fact that many women will spend their time looking at topless men in magazines while men peruse infamous lads' mags confirms this further. And really, I will controversially suggest, there is not much difference between the woman who fawns over the face and body of a male model with her friends, and the man who comments, "nice t*ts" to his. The latter may be more extreme, more sexually explicit, and more crude, but it is really the same kind of thing: an objectification of the other

> sex, and an instance of lust, which is an indulgence in sexual attraction and the use of another person's body for self-gratification, without the context of a marital commitment and the promise of life-long self-sacrifice and mutual giving.
>
> **And the most hard-hitting part of all of this is that Christians do all of this too, in my experience to just as significant a degree. Christians reject people on their looks, they include stringent physical criteria when looking for partners, they lust regularly and verbalise their lust to their friends, and by doing all these things they create expectations which others feel obliged to fulfill, and which make others feel inadequate and excluded when they don't fulfill them (either because they don't spend extortionate amounts of time and money doing so, or because no realistic amount of time and money would suffice to fulfill them).**

Read the rest. I am not sure if I go as far as he does in the rest of the post, but I definitely agreed with him on the paragraph in bold.

This is something that struck me very hard when I was a young man, and it was especially annoying when Christians did it. I always believed that the most important thing about a person was their character, and that this would especially be true for Christians. Imagine my surprise when I found that Christians in the church were just as likely to judge on appearances as anyone else. There isn't much that people can do to improve their appearance, but we can do a lot to have good theology and sounds apologetics. But in the church, it seems to me that theology and apologetics are on no one's list of priorities. If our job was to preach the gospel, then it seems to me that we should be valuing skills that help us show that the gospel is true.

But there's more to say. Everyday, Christians have to decide who to evangelize, who to defend the faith to, who to disciple, and who to make friends with. It seems to me that we need to remember that every person was made to know God. So we can't be picking and choosing who to do Christianity with based on appearances. Furthermore, if you are assembling a team of Christian friends to serve as resources, we shouldn't be picking on the basis of appearance, we should be picking on the basis of interest and aptitude. If your job as a Christian is to focus on theology and apologetics, and the application of that in loving God and loving your neighbor, then you will pick a completely *different* set of friends than if your job is to be popular.

How much affection and approval should come from God vs from a woman

January 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's start with a quote from the introduction to Dr. Laura's "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands":

> I have never gotten a complaint from a male listener in twenty-five years on the radio over my assertion that men are very simple creatures. They agree. I have explained time and again on my radio program that men are borne of women and spend the rest of their lives yearning for a woman's acceptance and approval. Unless you've got a man with a frank mental or personality disorder (the exception, not the rule), men admittedly are putty in the hands of a woman they love. **Give him direct communication, respect, appreciation, food, and good lovin', and he'll do just about anything you wish — foolish or not.**

Out of all the men in the world, I am probably the one whose life experiences most incline him to appreciate receiving approval, attention and affection from a woman. I was stuck in daycare after 6 weeks with a relative, never had any sisters, and my mother was entirely focused on her career and making money. She remained distant or even antagonistic to everyone in our home until the day she retired from work. The shouting and abusive language stopped almost overnight, but by then it was too late for any of us kids. So I never had the affection, approval and attention from my mother that most people just take for granted.

I always felt that the Holy Grail of my childhood was to get affection from one of these apparently unattainable women. It did not help that I was colored, growing up in neighborhoods that were mostly white – that just seemed to me to make the women even more unattainable. And in my case, it could never be just any woman who would give me these things – it had to be one who had listened to my plan to serve God and who was giving me these things because of what I was doing as a Christian. And unfortunately, there are precious few Christian women who have come along to give me what any man needs from a woman *just because of who I am in Christ* – forgiven, and dedicated to serving him effectively with apologetics and charity.

Those women that do come along sometimes find that my desire for approval, affection and attention can be overwhelming at times. On the surface, I function great as a Christian. Work gets done, money gets saved, chastity and chivalry, million page views per year on the blog, and lots of donations to Christian scholars and apologetics events. But that's because everything emotional is turned off inside – it has to be, in order for me to function like this. But when a woman comes along who values what I have done, and what I am doing, that's when the vulnerability comes out. I am going to look to her for

attention, affection and approval.

This New Year, my friends Blake and Dina decided that I was going to not just go to church almost every week like I am already, but that I was also going to do daily prayer, Bible reading, Psalm reading, meditation on the meaning of what I read, and praise hymns. They know I don't like taking time away from work or apologetics or blogging for any of those things, but they think I need to come back to the things I used to do, in order to be more balanced. And since they are my friends, I really cannot say no to them, because we all have the same Boss.

Dina has asked me to read a chapter out of Paul Tripp's "New Morning Mercies" every day, and here is today's very relevant devotion:

> JANUARY 11
>
> If you have been freed from needing success and acclaim to feel good about yourself, you know grace has visited you.
>
> It is an intensely human endeavor. It is the quest we all pursue. We all want to feel good about ourselves. We all want to think that we are okay. It is a fearful and anxious quest from which only grace can free you. Here's what happens to us all—we seek horizontally for the personal rest that we are to find vertically, and it never works. Looking to others for your inner sense of well-being is pointless. First, you will never be good enough, consistently enough, to get the regular praise of others that you are seeking. You're going to mess up. You're bound to disappoint. You will have a bad day. You'll lose your way. At some point, you'll say or do things that you shouldn't. Add to this the fact that the people around you aren't typically interested in taking on the burden of being your personal messiah. They don't want to live with the responsibility of having your identity in their hands. Looking to people for your inner self-worth never works. The peace that success gives is unreliable as well. Since you are less than perfect, whatever success you are able to achieve will soon be followed by failure of some kind. Then there is the fact that the buzz of success is short-lived. It isn't long before you're searching for the next success to keep you going. That's why the reality that Jesus has become your righteousness is so precious. His grace has forever freed us from needing to prove our righteousness and our worth. So we remind ourselves every day not to search horizontally for what we've already been given vertically. "And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever" (Isa. 32:3.7). That righteousness is found in Christ alone.
>
> For further study and encouragement: 2 Corinthians 6:3-10

What I got out of this devotion is that I should try to remember what my *primary* source of attention, affection and approval should be, and then it would be easier to treat a Christian woman's affection, attention and approval as extra – sort of like dessert after the main course.

Islamic terrorists murder hundreds of innocent people in Nigeria

January 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

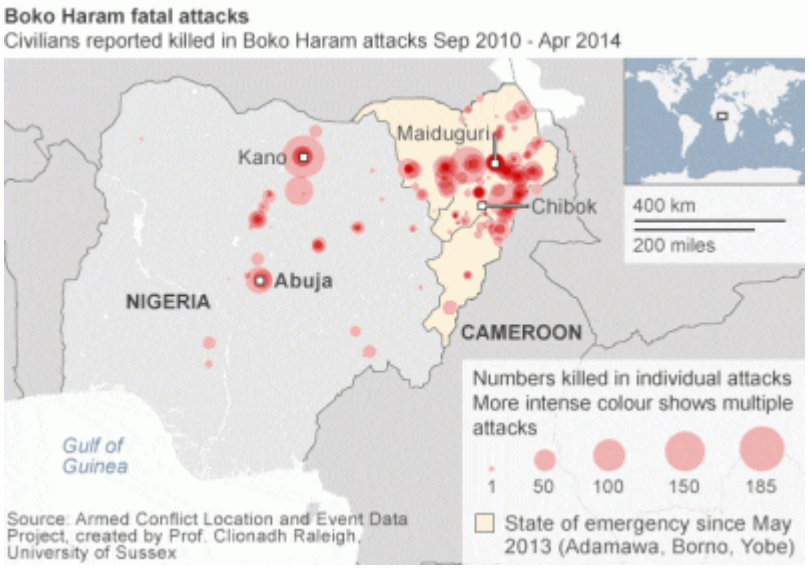

Boko Haram atttacks Sept. 2010 to Apr. 2014 (Source: BBC)

The Week reports.

Excerpt:

> The terrorist group Boko Haram has left bodies rotting in the streets after an assault on the key town of Baga on the edge of Lake Chad.
>
> Reports vary widely, but the death toll is estimated to be in the hundreds, with some reports placing it as high as 2,000.
>
> The jihadists reportedly fired indiscriminately, attacking the key fishing and commercial centre with automatic weapons, petrol bomb and explosives.
>
> "I escaped with my family in the car after seeing how Boko Haram was killing people … I saw bodies in the street. Children and women, some were crying for help," Mohamed Bukar told Reuters.
>
> A senior government official told the BBC that fleeing residents said the town was now "virtually non-existent" after buildings were set on fire, and that residents had not been given the chance to bury their dead.
>
> This comes days after a multinational task force was forced to flee its base in the town. More than 10,000 people have escaped to neighbouring Chad, sparking fears of a major humanitarian disaster. A large number of those attempting to escape reportedly drowned while trying to cross Lake Chad.
>
> The Islamist organisation is fighting to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria and the introduction of Sharia law.
>
> […]It continues to step up its attacks, taking control of large swathes of north eastern Nigeria over the past year despite President Goodluck Jonathan's vow to

> defeat the militants. The country's military, which is the largest in West Africa, has also faced increasing criticism of its inability to deal with the threat.
>
> The group regularly targets civilians, raping, murdering and kidnapping thousands of people. Last year it abducted over 200 schoolgirls from the village of Chibok.
>
> The conflict has displaced over 1.5 million people and killed more than 10,000 last year. ·

NBC News reported on another recent Islamic terrorist homicide bombing.

Excerpt:

> A bomb strapped to a girl aged around 10 years old exploded in a busy marketplace in the Nigerian city of Maiduguri on Saturday, killing at least 16 people and injuring more than 20, security sources said. "The explosive devices were wrapped around her body and the girl looked no more than 10 years old," a police source said.
>
> Maiduguri, the capital of northern Borno state, lies in the heartland of an insurgency by Islamist militant group Boko Haram, and is often hit by bomb attacks. A Nigerian security source said the bomb went off at 12:15 p.m. The girl was killed and the bodies of at least 16 victims were counted in one hospital by mid-afternoon, civilian joint task force member Zakariya Mohammed told Reuters. "Right now, there are 27 injured people in Borno Medical Hospital, while more were taken to other hospitals," he said.
>
> About 80 miles away in the Yobe state capital Damaturu, the army subdued an Islamist militant attack on Friday evening, but not before militants had torched several buildings, a Reuters reporter in the city and witnesses said.
>
> The Boko Haram revolt is seen as the gravest security threat facing Nigeria, a country of 170 million people, and a serious challenge for President Goodluck Jonathan, who is seeking re-election in a national election set for Feb. 14.

I was thinking about what it is like for Islamic terrorists to kidnap, rape and murder unarmed civilians, and then I read this in my Sunday quiet time.

Psalm 10:

> 1 Why, O Lord, do you stand far away?
> Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

> 2 In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor;
> let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised.
> 3 For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul,
> and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord.
> 4 In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him;
> all his thoughts are, "There is no God."

> [5] His ways prosper at all times;
> your judgments are on high, out of his sight;
> as for all his foes, he puffs at them.
> [6] He says in his heart, “I shall not be moved;
> throughout all generations I shall not meet adversity.”
> [7] His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression;
> under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.
> [8] He sits in ambush in the villages;
> in hiding places he murders the innocent.
> His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless;
> [9] he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket;
> he lurks that he may seize the poor;
> he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.
> [10] The helpless are crushed, sink down,
> and fall by his might.
> [11] He says in his heart, “God has forgotten,
> he has hidden his face, he will never see it.”
> [12] Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up your hand;
> forget not the afflicted.
> [13] Why does the wicked renounce God
> and say in his heart, “You will not call to account”?
> [14] But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation,
> that you may take it into your hands;
> to you the helpless commits himself;
> you have been the helper of the fatherless.
> [15] Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer;
> call his wickedness to account till you find none.
> [16] The Lord is king forever and ever;
> the nations perish from his land.
> [17] O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted;
> you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear
> [18] to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed,
> so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

Sometimes, we are so far from a problem that all we can do is pray. But I will say that we should probably elect a President in 2016 who doesn’t call Islamic terrorism “senseless violence” and “workplace violence”, and warn us all to keep believing that Islam is a religion of peace. All Muslims are not terrorists, but when a terrorist attack occurs, it’s almost always a Muslim.

What happens when erotic liberty conflicts with religious liberty?

January 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A recent episode of Al Mohler's the Briefing podcast explains the real issue behind the firing of Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran.

The MP3 file is here.

Here is the relevant part of the transcript:

> "Mr. Cochran held his own news conference Tuesday. He said that the city's investigation found that he had not acted in a discriminatory way toward gay people, and said that he had asked for, and received, permission from the proper bureaucratic channels to write the book — an assertion [the Mayor's] office disputes."
>
> So gay advocates are cheering the mayors decision, the mayor finds himself in something of a political controversy, but the fire chief is out. He's out of a job for having written a book that was basically privately published and very narrowly distributed in which he stated something that is fundamental to evangelical moral conviction – something that basically amounts to nothing more, or least a little more, than actually quoting the Bible, quoting the Scriptures.
>
> The mayor described the book, or at least this portion of the book, as having inflammatory content. But once again, looking at the material supplied by the media, the inflammatory content is what is drawn directly from Scripture – especially from very specific biblical verses dealing with homosexuality. **So what we're looking at here is an undeniable case in which religious conviction actually got the Fire Chief of Atlanta fired; fired simply because he dared to write a book in which he stated his Christian convictions.**
>
> This raises a host of very interesting and complex, not to say troubling, questions. Can anyone now be an evangelical Christian and serve as a Fire Chief or even in the fire department? This raises the question as to whether one can believe that homosexuality is a sin without discriminating against homosexuals. **The clear implication of the Mayor's decision is that the Fire Chief is out, not because he acted in any way, in any discriminatory fashion toward any gay member of the fire department staff or anyone else for that matter, but simply because he expressed his biblical conviction that homosexuality is a sin.**
>
> Now once again, this raises a host of very interesting questions the mayor and furthermore our culture is not going to be able to avoid. Is the Bible itself now going to be defined as hate speech because by any measure the language that the Fire Chief used is drawn, if not immediately from Scripture, then with

> language that is tantamount to it? Can anyone who holds to a biblical understanding of sexuality, anyone who is a member of an evangelical congregation serve in this kind of political and public role? Or does that moral conviction absolutely mean, in a categorical sense, that discrimination is the obvious outcome? Or is holding the belief itself, is holding that biblical conviction itself a form of discrimination; even if no discriminatory act ever follows?
>
> […]Let's look at exactly how the mayor describe his decision as the *New York Times* reports and I quote,
>
> "Despite my respect for Chief Cochran's service, I believe his actions and decision-making undermine his ability to effectively manage a large, diverse work force. Every single employee under the fire chief's command deserves the certainty that he or she is a valued member of the team and that fairness and respect guide employment decisions."
>
> Well let's just look at that statement and imagine what the Mayor has now not only implied but openly stated by firing the chief. One can't hold that all persons are of value, one can't operate in terms of neutrality, in terms of personnel decisions, if one holds to traditional biblical Christianity. Some may argue that it isn't the problem that the chief held these positions and convictions but it's a problem that he published them, that he put them in print.
>
> But as the world is supposedly universally affirming the importance of freedom of expression, are we now to be told that evangelical Christians – or for that matter Orthodox Jews and traditional Catholics – simply must hold their tongue and hold their peace? Never putting their biblical convictions into print or into some form of public statement? The action in Atlanta is not only ominous, it's absolutely frightening. The religious liberty implications of the normalization of homosexuality and the legalization of same-sex marriage are massive, they are unavoidable, and they are now inevitable. And they're showing up in this case not in New York City or Seattle but in Atlanta, Georgia – right in the heart of the South, in a city that the *New York Times* acknowledges includes millions of evangelical Christians and others who would also hold to the Chief's conviction.
>
> **No matter how lavishly people may claim to believe in freedom of expression and no matter how much they may argue this isn't an issue of religious liberty, the bare facts are simply unavoidable. The Fire Chief of Atlanta has been fired. Not because he acted in any way that was discriminatory, not because any employee brought any grievance against him for acting in a discriminatory manner, but merely for having stated, for having articulated in print, his biblical convictions on issues of morality.**

I urge people who want to take a position on homosexuality and/or same-sex marriage to write under an alias. The more serious a sin is, the more people who engage in it will go to any lengths necessary in order to stop criticism of it. The invocation of "tolerance" and

“diversity” on the gay left is a smokescreen. Their goal is to make everyone who disagrees with them not only agree but actually celebrate their behavior. That’s one of the reasons why we need to careful about letting our natural compassion cause us to approve of homosexuality and same-sex marriage. We have our protect the right to say “it’s wrong”. Al Mohler has a longer article on this conflict between religious liberty and erotic liberty up today, too.

UPDATE: Today’s episode of the The Briefing takes a look at the response from the mainstream media, including the response of a gay New York Times columnist. Mohler’s main point is that secularists want to reduce the religious liberty to worship inside a church and private feelings. But religious liberty is more than that – it is the right to honor and respect God in every aspect of our lives, including freedom to speak our disagreement with immorality, and the right to educate our children in schools that respect OUR values – not the values that the secular left seeks to impose on us. Mohler also links to a response by pro-marriage scholar Mark Regnerus.

Are all sins equally bad, or are some sins worse than others?

January 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an article by theologian Robert Gagnon. He has twelve passages to prove his point, but I'll only quote a few below.

He writes:

> (5) **Jesus referred to "the weightier matters of the law"** (Matt 23:23) such as justice, mercy, and faith(fulness), which were more important to obey than the tithing of tiny spices, even though the latter too had to be done (Matt 23:23). These formulations imply that violations of weightier or greater commandments (like defrauding the poor of their resources for personal gain) are more severe than violations of lesser or 'lighter' commandments (like paying tithes on small foods likes spices), which Jesus stated should be done without leaving the weightier matters undone. Jesus adds the following criticism: **"Blind guides, those who strain out the gnat but who swallow the camel"** (23:24). What's the difference between a gnat and a camel if all commands and all violations are equal?
>
> (6) **Jesus famously pinpointed the two greatest commandments** (Mark 12:28-31). **He also said, "Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments** (of the law) and teaches the people (to do things) like this will be called least in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:19). Again, to have greater and lesser commandments is to have greater and lesser violations.
>
> (7) I would submit that **Jesus' special outreach to economic exploiters (tax-collectors) and sexual sinners**, all in an effort to recover them for the very kingdom of God that he proclaimed, was not so much a reaction to their abandonment by society as an indication of the special severity of these sins and the extreme spiritual danger faced by such perpetrators. In this connection one thinks of **the story of the sinful woman** who washed Jesus' feet with her tears, wiped his feet with her hair, kissed them with her lips, and anointed them with ointment (Luke 7:36-50). Jesus explained her extraordinary act by telling a parable of two debtors: **the one whom the creditor "forgave more" would be the one who would "love him more."** The clear inference is that the sinful woman had done something worse in God's eyes. Although Jesus' Pharisaic host did not appreciate the woman coming into contact with Jesus, Jesus extolled the woman's actions: "Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many [or: much, great], have been forgiven, for she loved much [or: greatly]; but the one who is forgiven little, loves little" (7:47). Many Christians treat the notion of being forgiven of greater sins as a bad thing. Jesus turns the idea on its head. Think about how Christians who stress that all sins are equal could use the biblical

> concept of some sins being more severe than others: *Some of us may have needed more forgiveness, but I tell you that this has made us understand the Lord's grace that much better and so love the Lord that much more.*
>
> (8) Another obvious instance of prioritizing some offenses as worse than others is Jesus' characterization of "**blasphemy against the Holy Spirit**" as an "eternal sin" from which one "never has forgiveness"—in context referring to the Pharisees' attribution of Jesus' exorcisms to demonic power (Mark 3:28-30).
>
> (9) According to **John 19:11** Jesus told Pilate, "You would not have any authority against me if it had not been given to you from above. Therefore **the one who handed me over to you has *greater* sin**." The reference is either to Judas (6:71; 13:2, 26-30; 18:2-5) or to Caiaphas the High Priest (18:24, 28). "Greater sin" obviously implies the Pilate's action is a lesser sin.

Previously, I blogged about whether there are degrees of punishment in Hell, and degrees of rewards in Heaven.

House to vote on Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act on January 22nd

January 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news from Life News about that Trent Franks-Marsha Blackburn bill to ban abortions after 20 weeks.

Excerpt:

> Republicans in the House of Representatives will hold a vote on the anniversary of Roe v. Wade late this month on a marquee bill to ban abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy because unborn children feel intense pain in abortions.
>
> Top Republicans and leading pro-life groups have been promoting the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act that bans abortions from after 20-weeks of pregnancy up to the day of birth.
>
> […]In a statement, Franks told LifeNews: "More than 18,000 'very late term' abortions are performed every year on perfectly healthy unborn babies in America. These are innocent and defenseless children who can not only feel pain, but who can survive outside of the womb in most cases, and who are torturously killed without even basic anesthesia. Many of them cry and scream as they die, but because it is amniotic fluid going over their vocal cords instead of air, we don't hear them."
>
> […]A November 2014 poll from Quinnipiac found that 60 percent of Americans support legislation limiting abortions after 20 weeks, including 56 percent of Independents and 46 percent of Democrats.

GOP leaders plan to vote on the federal 20-week abortion ban on January 22, 2015 – the 42nd anniversary of Roe v. Wade.

Can unborn children really feel pain after 20 weeks?

Yes:

> During the hearing on the last bill, former abortion practitioner Anthony Levatino told members of the committee the gruesome details of his former abortion practice and how he became pro-life following the tragic automobile accident of his child.
>
> Another bombshell dropped during the hearing came from Dr. Maureen Condic, who is Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Adjunct Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Utah School of Medicine. She testified that the unborn child is capable of reacting to pain as early as 8-10 weeks. This is when most abortions in America take place.
>
> The bill relies on the science of fetal pain to establish a Constitutional reason for Congress to ban abortions late in pregnancy. The science behind the concept of

> fetal pain is fully established and Dr. Steven Zielinski, an internal medicine physician from Oregon, is one of the leading researchers into it. He first published reports in the 1980s to validate research showing evidence for it.
>
> He has testified before Congress that an unborn child could feel pain at “eight-and-a-half weeks and possibly earlier” and that a baby before birth “under the right circumstances, is capable of crying.”
>
> He and his colleagues Dr. Vincent J. Collins and Thomas J. Marzen were the top researchers to point to fetal pain decades ago. Collins, before his death, was Professor of Anesthesiology at Northwestern University and the University of Illinois and author of Principles of Anesthesiology, one of the leading medical texts on the control of pain.
>
> “The functioning neurological structures necessary to suffer pain are developed early in a child’s development in the womb,” they wrote.
>
> “Functioning neurological structures necessary for pain sensation are in place as early as 8 weeks, but certainly by 13 1/2 weeks of gestation. Sensory nerves, including nociceptors, reach the skin of the fetus before the 9th week of gestation. The first detectable brain activity occurs in the thalamus between the 8th and 10th weeks. The movement of electrical impulses through the neural fibers and spinal column takes place between 8 and 9 weeks gestation. By 13 1/2 weeks, the entire sensory nervous system functions as a whole in all parts of the body,” they continued.
>
> With Zielinski and his colleagues the first to provide the scientific basis for the concept of fetal pain, Dr. Kanwaljeet Anand has provided further research to substantiate their work.

I would really like to see the House and Senate vote on this bill and send it to Obama, who will veto it. It is very important that Americans understand that electing a Democrat is not a pro-life thing to do. We need something very public that will show exactly how extreme Democrats are on the life issue.

Man in persistent vegetative state wakes up after 12 years

January 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from the ultra-leftist National Public Radio, of all places.

Excerpt:

> It was the late ’80s, and young Martin Pistorius, growing up in South Africa, was mostly thinking about electronics. Resistors and transistors and you name it.
>
> But at age 12, his life took an unexpected turn. He came down with a strange illness. The doctors weren’t sure what it was, but their best guess was cryptococcal meningitis.
>
> He got progressively worse. Eventually he lost his ability to move by himself, his ability to make eye contact, and then, finally, his ability to speak.
>
> His parents, Rodney and Joan Pistorius, were told that he was as good as not there, a vegetable. The hospital told them to take him home and keep him comfortable until he died.
>
> But he didn’t die. “Martin just kept going, just kept going,” his mother says.
>
> His father would get up at 5 o’clock in the morning, get him dressed, load him in the car, take him to the special care center where he’d leave him.
>
> “Eight hours later, I’d pick him up, bathe him, feed him, put him in bed, set my alarm for two hours so that I’d wake up to turn him so that he didn’t get bedsores,” Rodney says.
>
> That was their lives, for 12 years.

This part was the most interesting to me:

> **Joan vividly remembers looking at Martin one day and saying: ” ‘I hope you die.’ I know that’s a horrible thing to say,” she says now. “I just wanted some sort of relief.”**
>
> **And she didn’t think her son was there to hear it.**
>
> **But he was.**
>
> “Yes, I was there, not from the very beginning, but about two years into my vegetative state, I began to wake up,” says Martin, now age 39 and living in Harlow, England.
>
> He thinks he began to wake up when he was 14 or 15 years old. “I was aware of everything, just like any normal person,” Martin says.
>
> But although he could see and understand everything, he couldn’t move his body.
>
> “Everyone was so used to me not being there that they didn’t notice when I

> began to be present again," he says. "The stark reality hit me that I was going to spend the rest of my life like that — totally alone."
>
> He was trapped, with only his thoughts for company. And they weren't particularly nice thoughts.
>
> **"No one will ever show me tenderness. No one will ever love me."**
>
> **And of course there was no way to escape. He thought, "You are doomed."**
>
> […]**"You don't really think about anything," Martin says. "You simply exist. It's a very dark place to find yourself because, in a sense, you are allowing yourself to vanish."**
>
> […]**"The rest of the world felt so far away when she said those words," Martin says.**

Eventually, Martin was able to come out of his persistent vegetative state by mental effort, over a long period of time. The NPR story has a nice picture of Martin and his wife, where he is holding her hand. So his story had a happy ending.

Why does God let people suffer? Why is there so much evil in the world?

January 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just wanted to draw your attention to this 4 page essay by Joe Manzari, which is the best darn summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen. The problem of evil is an objection to the existence of God based on the presence of evil or suffering in the world. The arguments basically infer that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then there should not *be* any evil or suffering.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An exampel of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omnipotent being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God

> can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order for the character of humans to develop through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to show* that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that premise 2 is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil that we observe more compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.

Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life. And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.

2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   We humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. Part of knowing God is knowing what he designed us to do – to love him and to love others. And so, the less we know about God, the more we stray from his design for our lives.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.
(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That’s right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I’ve been through… but then, that’s why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

34-year-old career feminist buys herself an engagement ring

January 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Feminist career-girl world traveler: follow your bliss

This is from Marie Claire, a woman's magazine. (H/T Dalrock)

Excerpt:

> "I bought myself an engagement ring in Tanzania," I emailed a group of my girlfriends, mainly for effect.
>
> […][My friends] particularly love to gossip about me, the last single woman standing in our group of college friends, the only one who didn't get married last year.
>
> […]I've been the managing editor of Yahoo Travel since April, which is about how long I've been single. I love the idea of marriage. I love it so much that when I finally do it I want it to last forever. My ex-boyfriend was my best friend, but he wasn't my husband.
>
> […]Now I am single and 34. I have my dream job, one that has allowed me to travel to 12 countries in the past nine months, telling stories all over the globe. It's such a dream that some days I don't even think it's real. I'm convinced that I will wake up one morning and Richard Dawson will pop out of my closet to tell me this isn't my life at all. Rather, I've been on a Japanese reality show for the better part of a year and now is the bit where I'm locked in a house with nudists.

> Earlier this year I published an amazing nonfiction book about nuns called *If Nuns Ruled the World*, and in May I have a new novel coming out.
>
> Like I said, it all seems like a dream. And yet, my friends are very concerned I will end up a spinster, and that has left a large black mark on my otherwise remarkable existence.
>
> […]I'm actually a hopeless romantic… somehow I still believe in the serendipity of locking eyes with someone across a crowded airport, bumping into him in the Acropolis, or being forced to share a cab in Mumbai. I actually have no doubt that I will meet my husband somewhere on my travels.

She buys the ring, and then seeks attention:

> I immediately texted my ex-boyfriend. We talk every day. Like I said: best friend, but not my husband.
>
> "I bought a fancy ring in Tanzania."
>
> […]It's a commitment to myself and a reminder that I'm not wrong, or crazy, or flawed to wait for the right person. I saw the sun rise over Mount Kilimanjaro this morning while writing this, looking at my ring sparkle as my fingers flew across the keyboard. I'm happy to just be with me for a little bit longer.

Four points:

First thing, the fact that she bought an expensive ring from *a gift shop in Africa* ($$$) on the spur of the moment makes me question whether she has the temperament for marriage. A woman who wants to get married has to able to delay gratification and be a good steward of family resources. Husbands prefer women who are not in debt and not wasteful. It's an important way that a woman shows a man respect for studying hard things, building a good resume and saving his money before the marriage.

Second thing, many women like this one want to get married "some day". Even many Christian women. It's very important to understand that women who say they love the idea of marriage often do not love marriage as God designed it. Marriage is designed so that a woman will support her husband and care for her children. Men and children are not accessories that are acquired in order make women happy, or to make her friends envious. Marriage as designed respects the leadership-oriented nature of a man and the needs of young children. A woman who wants marriage must be prepared to accept responsibilities, obligations and expectations in the marriage.

Third thing, she texted the ex-boyfriend and asked for his approval of her impulse buy. The ex-boyfriend affirmed her by saying "Great!" – he wasn't going to tell her the truth. Women today often pick boyfriends like this who will have sex with them before marriage because she can suppress his instinct to lead on moral / spiritual issues by giving him sex. Women like men who listen and affirm them, but they are fearful of responsible men who tell them right from wrong, truth from error. That's why women today freely choose to give men premarital sex – to get the attention and acceptance of a

man without having to care what a man thinks is morally right or true. Many men today would rather take the sex than tell a woman what is right and what is true – even to save her from disasters of her own making. A chaste Christian man who wants to make the marriage serve God by leading his wife and children is rejected immediately because he cannot be controlled with sex. Women have feelings that any restrictions on their pursuit of happiness is “controlling”. And often they don’t look to the leadership of a competent man as a positive thing, no matter how badly their own reliance on emotions, intuitions and peer-approval has failed them in the past. And of course should this immoral, deceptive man she freely chose disappoint her by being immoral and deceptive, then it’s the man’s fault. She is the innocent victim.

Fourth thing, when a woman says that she has a high view of marriage then delays it into her mid-thirties, don’t believe her. Marriage is about the joy and challenges of bonding to someone to accomplish shared goals. It is an enterprise all on its own. With marriage, you can do things as a couple that you could never do as singles. You can model marriage to others. You can have and raise children who will know God. You can work together as partners to achieve bigger things for God. Never believe a woman who says she values marriage who then puts it off for a career. I can understand a woman saying she wants to put off marriage by serving God in some way, but not for a career.

I can’t recommend that anyone marry this woman, because the risk of divorce is too high. A woman has to be able to be sensitive to the needs of those around her. She has to be accustomed to picking a good man who will lead the family, and to respect his leadership because he is the provider. People who reject the design for marriage are not ready for marriage, no matter how much they claim to be romantic and to love marriage. Seventy percent of divorces are initiated by women, most often for general unhappiness. Men – make sure you pick a woman who are focused on marriage as it really is, and not on her own happiness.

Can we trust Democrats to take national security and foreign policy seriously?

January 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First part of the clip is here on The Weekly Standard:

> Q I just want to go back to your statement about the extremists want to incite a religious war against Islam and they failed. There have been a lot of questions raised about why you have chosen not to associate yourself with the language that was used by the French President when he said we're at war with radical Islam, and instead you have chosen a formulation where you say you want to capture individuals who commit violence based on their warped view of Islam. Is the reason you don't want to call it "radical Islam" or use the word "war" because you're afraid of playing into the extremists' desires to incite a religious war on Islam? Is that the reason you've gone to great lengths to come up with this different formulation?
>
> MR. EARNEST: Well, Mara, there certainly — it does seem clear that these terrorists — let's call them what they are — these terrorists are individuals who would like to cloak themselves in the veil of a particular religion. But based on the fact that the religious leaders of that religion have roundly condemned their actions, those religious leaders have indicated that their actions are entirely inconsistent with Islam. I think the fact that the majority of victims of terror attacks that are carried out by al Qaeda and adherents to their particular brand of violence, that the majority of them are Muslim I think is a pretty clear indication that this is not a matter of the world being at war with Islam. The world and the United States — as we've discussed before in the context of ISIL — is at war with these individuals, these violent extremists who carry out these acts of terror and try to justify it by invoking this religion.

> Q Right. But the leader of France, your ally in this effort, has put a name on this ideology, which he calls "radical Islam." You have bent over backwards to not ever say that. There must be a reason.
>
> MR. EARNEST: I think the reason is twofold. One is I certainly wouldn't want to be in a position where I'm repeating the justification that they have cited that I think is completely illegitimate, right? That they have invoked Islam to try to justify their attacks.

Transcript for the second part of the clip is from Fox News:

> MACCALLUM: You know, every time we see this exchange, it seems like the answer is so tortured like it's so difficult to say what everybody around the world seems to feel so clearly it is and what the leaders have said in Canada and

Australia and Paris where they have felt it so potently and personally. They've all said quite clearly that the battle is against Islamic extremism. Why is it so hard to say?

HARF: Well, it's not hard to say, but it's not the only kind of extremism we face. I would recommend to folks looking at this administration's counterterrorism record, I would remind people that more terrorists who claim to — to do acts of violence in the name of Islam has been taken off the battlefield in this administration than under any previous one because of our counterterrorism operations and our efforts that we put in place.

But that's not the only way that you counter this kind of extremism. Much of it Islamic, you're absolutely right, but some of it not. So we're gonna focus on all the different kinds of extremism with a heavy focus on people who do this in the name of Islam, we would say falsely in the name of Islam, but there are other forms of extremism.

(CROSSTALK)

MACCALLUM: Let me ask you this —

HARF: — that are also important.

MACCALLUM: — **tell me, what other forms of extremism are particularly troubling and compelling to you right now?**

HARF: Well, look, there are people out there who want to kill other people in the name of a variety of causes. Of course, Martha, we are most focused on people doing this in the name of Islam. As we've talked about with ISIL, part of our strategy to counter this extremism is to have other moderate Muslim voices to stand up and say, they don't represent our religion. They speak for their religion more than we do certainly, and we need those voices to stand up in addition to all the other efforts we're undertaking.

MACCALLUM: All right. I just think a lot of other countries probably listen to the way we're talking about this and scratch their heads and wonder why it's so hard to spit it out in a lot of these — these conversations.

Mike McCaul — Chairman Mike McCaul said we — we don't see a lead agency. There's no line item in the budget. There are no metrics to measure success. I don't think we have a strategy. We don't have a common definition for what this is. And, you know, obviously he's a critic, but there are people even former administration officials who say we've been working on this for a long time but we — we're not sure whether or not we're getting anywhere.

HARF: Well, I think when you hear the president who's talked about our counterterrorism operations, as has people liked John Brennan, the director of the CIA, the director of National Intelligence, they very clearly said that we have had some success against Al Qaeda core, naming specific leaders we've taken off the battlefield, against AQAP, naming specific leaders we've taken off the battlefield.

> But more broadly speaking, it’s bigger than that.
>
> So, talking about how you counter this extremist narrative, that’s a tougher challenge but it’s one we’re committed to certainly, and I think other countries around the world look at the U.S. and the success we have had and how aggressive we have been and they know how committed we are to it.
>
> MACCALLUM: But I think the world is looking for a leader, you know, someone in the van of Winston Churchill or FDR who says, “Look, we know what we’re facing here. This is a global war. This is, you know, girls taken by Boko Haram. This is 132 students massacred in Pakistan. This is people who are going out for coffee in Australia. This is people who were come — just showing up for work in Paris.”
>
> And there’s a common thread here of radical Islamic extremism and until President Obama or John Kerry or someone else in their position stands up and says, “Look, we know we’re facing a global threat of radical Islamic extremism. We must band together and we must fight it.” That’s what everybody is longing to hear, it appears, Marie. Where is that message?
>
> HARF: Well, I — I — I think all of these leaders have made very clear the serious threats we face. If you look at the president’s speech at West Point, if you look at the things Secretary Kerry has said. It’s not as easy as — as defining at the way you just did. We have to look at each threat individually. All of those threats you just mentioned are from different groups and different places.

We voted for left-wing ideologues and they are going to get us killed because they are afraid to offend our enemies. God help us all.

Fertility and pregnancy: how long can a woman wait before having a baby?

January 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Aeon magazine. The author writes for several ultra-leftist publications, including the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, Salon and Slate.

She writes:

> **Many studies show that women are not only woefully ignorant when it comes to fertility, conception and the efficacy of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) – but they overestimate their knowledge about the subject. For instance, a 2011 study in *Fertility and Sterility* surveyed 3,345 childless women in Canada between the ages of 20 and 50; despite the fact that the women initially assessed their own fertility knowledge as high, the researchers found only half of them answered six of the 16 questions correctly. 72.9 per cent of women thought that: 'For women over 30, overall health and fitness level is a better indicator of fertility than age.' (False.) And 90.9 per cent felt that: 'Prior to menopause, assisted reproductive technologies (such as IVF) can help most women to have a baby using their own eggs.' (Also false.) Many falsely believed that by *not* smoking and *not* being obese they could improve their fertility, rather than the fact that those factors simply negatively affect fertility.**
>
> Fertility fog infects cultures and nations worldwide, even those that place more of a premium on reproduction than we do in the West. A global study published for World Fertility Awareness Month in 2006 surveyed 17,500 people (most of childbearing age) from 10 countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and South America, revealing very poor knowledge about fertility and the biology of reproduction. Take Israel, a country that puts such a premium on children that they offer free IVF to citizens up to age 45 for their first two children. **According to a 2011 study in *Human Reproduction*, which surveyed 410 undergraduate students, most overestimated a women's chances of spontaneous pregnancy in all age groups, but particularly after receiving IVF beyond age 40. Only 11 per cent of the students knew that genetic motherhood is unlikely to be achieved from the mid-40s onward, unless using oocytes or egg cells frozen in advance. 'This can be explained by technological "hype" and favourable media coverage of very late pregnancies,' the authors concluded.**
>
> […]For a woman over 42, there's only a 3.9 per cent chance that a live birth will result from an IVF cycle using her own, fresh eggs, according to the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM). A woman over 44 has just a 1.8 per

> cent chance of a live birth under the same scenario, according to the US National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Women using fresh donor eggs have about a 56.6 per cent chance of success per round for all ages.
>
> Indeed, according to research from the Fertility Authority in New York, 51 per cent of women aged between 35 and 40 wait a year or more before consulting a specialist, in hopes of conceiving naturally first. 'It's ironic, considering that the wait of two years will coincide with diminished fertility,' the group says.
>
> […]**'No one talks about fertility,' said [reproductive endocrinologist Janelle Luk, medical director of Neway Fertility in New York City], who does not believe women are really open to hearing about it. 'I don't think women know that there's a limit: the message is equal, equal, equal. Women say: "We want to go to college, we want to work on our careers, we want to be equal to men." But our biological clock is not.'**
>
> […]**Another way women might even out the fertility playing field is by focussing on the so-called male biological clock.** But is there one? Although there have been recent news stories about how advanced age in men (over 40 or 50) increases time to conception and the incidence of autism and schizophrenia, the absolute risk is negligible. 'When you look at the numbers, you have to separate what the absolute risk and the increased risk is,' said Natan Bar-Chama, director of male reproductive medicine and surgery at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York. 'The absolute risk is still really very small.'

I think if I ever have a daughter, I will be sure to urge her to be skeptical of her emotions and intuitions, to learn how to assess probabilities, to disregard exceptional cases when making plans, to resist the feminism in the culture, to get wisdom from older married women with children instead of young unmarried childless women, to accept that she is not so special that laws and rules don't apply to her, and to accept that the universe is not malleable according to her needs and desires. I hope my wife will see the value of reining our daughter in before the catastrophes like infertility happen.

Where does the organized opposition to educating young women about fertility facts come from?

> 'We feel that women should be able to talk to their ob/gyn about fertility,' said Sandra Carson, ACOG's vice president for education. **'We certainly want to remind women gently that, as they get older, fertility is compromised, but we don't want to do it in such a way that they feel that it might interfere with their career plans or make them nervous about losing their fertility.'** In other words, there are no guidelines for talking to a woman about her fertility unless she herself brings it up.
>
> All this talk of 'gentle' reminders and 'appropriate' counselling has a history – a political one. Back in 2001, the ASRM devoted a six-figure sum to a fertility awareness campaign, whose goal was to show the effects of age, obesity,

> smoking and sexually transmitted diseases on fertility. **Surprisingly, the US National Organization for Women (NOW) came out against it. 'Certainly women are well aware of the so-called biological clock. And I don't think that we need any more pressure to have kids,' said Kim Gandy, then president of NOW. In a 2002 op-ed in *USA Today*, she wrote that NOW 'commended' doctors for 'attempting' to educate women about their health, but thought they were going about it the wrong way by making women feel 'anxious about their bodies and guilty about their choices'.**

We don't want women to feel bad, so it's best to let them follow their hearts. *That view is not helpful to women!* If we want to help women, we must tell them the truth, and take the consequences.

All this talk about fertility could be accompanied by a discussion of the hard fact that a woman's attractiveness will decline as she ages. This is a troubling lesson that countless women have had to learn the hard way. When you are young, you stand a much better chance of finding a successful male with good values and who is willing to commit to marriage and parenting. Many women will testify that, as you get older, this convenience deteriorates quickly. The good men will be claimed by the responsible women who don't waste their youthful years seeking thrills. Men who are contemplating marriage value a woman's appearance, fertility, vulnerability and submissiveness to his leadership. Women need to be careful not to embark on a course that will reduce their ability in any of these areas that are important to men, e.g. – careerism, premarital promiscuity, etc.

House Republicans vote to undo Obama's executive order amnesty

January 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Don't look now, but Republicans have decided to do something about Obama's plan to import a new generation of believers in big government dependency.

The Daily Signal reports:

> The GOP-led House voted today to undo major portions of President Obama's immigration policy, including his recent executive actions and an earlier program that allowed immigrants who entered the country illegally as children—a group known as Dreamers—to stay.
>
> In voting 236-191 to pass a bill funding the Department of Homeland Security through the end of September, the House approved five amendments that revoke four years of Obama's immigration policies, such as his November directive to defer deportation for up to 5 million immigrants living in the country illegally and granting them work permits.
>
> […]In blocking Obama's immigration policies, the House also voted for an amendment that forces immigration officials to treat immigrants convicted of offenses involving domestic violence, sexual abuse, child molestation or child exploitation as top enforcement priorities.
>
> In addition, the House plan restores the "Secure Communities" enforcement program that Obama ended with his executive actions, while also forcing state and local officials to comply with so-called ICE detainers, in which Immigration and Customs Enforcement asks local law enforcement agencies to keep immigrants in custody, even if they would "otherwise be released."

The Weekly Standard had the reaction from Democrats:

> "If Republicans were to get their way, these individuals, including DREAMers who came to America through no fault of their own, would either be pushed back into the shadows, free of any accountability, or deported at great expense to taxpayers and at the expense of a concentrated effort to deport criminals. This vote is bad policy. It's essentially a vote for amnesty. It's also bad politics.

It's "a vote for amnesty" to *undo amnesty?* OK.

I wonder if the recent string of terrorist attacks has anything to do with this push to restore the border security that eroded under Obama?

Pro-life couple decides to allow extra embryos from IVF to be adopted

January 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from Life News.

Excerpt:

> One of the problems with in vitro fertilization is that unused or unwanted embryos are often discarded or destroyed. Unfortunately in 2011, a study in the journal of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine revealed that 19% of unused embryos are discarded and 3% are donated for scientific research.
>
> However, thankfully, there are many people advocating for "embryo adoptions," which is the implanting of unwanted or unused embryos in an adoptive mothers' womb. Although this doesn't remove all the ethical concerns with artificially creating human beings, it does provide an alternative to discarding embryos and destroying lives.
>
> […]When Becky and Chris Henderson decided to use in vitro to start their family, they decided to keep their 11 unused embryos on ice because they believed life began at conception. Now another family has been blessed by the Henderson's unused embryos.

They link to this story from the Christian Post for more:

> Two couples have been blessed by one couple's decision to donate their unused embryos and adopt them out to other couples in need.
>
> "We have been blessed with three when we didn't think we'd have one, so, what kind of awesome thing is it to bless another couple and let them experience the same kind of joy we did?" Becky Henderson told USA Today.
>
> Henderson and husband Chris gave birth to twins via in vitro fertilization and then had a "miracle baby" five years later. After the twins were born, the couple still had 11 embryos frozen; they decided to keep them on ice until they could come to a decision about what they wanted to do. They both believe that life begins at conception, so they decided to place the embryos up for adoption. Eventually, they found Kelli and Dan Gassman, who were looking to have a family of their own.
>
> The four decided to have an "open adoption" and after the Gassmans welcomed son Trevor and, two years later, daughter Aubrey, they still remain close. They share pictures of the children, who are biologically related.
>
> "It was kind of like a joining of hearts," Gassman said.
>
> "Having an open adoption with communication helps you get over the fears and the doubts," Becky said. "The what-ifs? It helps get beyond that."

> Now that the Gassmans have their own children, they have returned the remaining unused embryos to the Hendersons. The Hendersons have found another family to help and will continue to do so until all of the embryos are used.

One of the reasons why I blogged about infertility yesterday is because I wanted to people to plan to marry early and about using IVF. The trouble with IVF, as the Life News article notes, is that there are often leftover embryos. Most people, as they noted, just discard the extra embryos, but this is wrong. Each embryo is a distinct genetic code for a male or female human being. Each one is a boy or a girl. Each one has a right to life equal to any able-bodied adult. You and I were all embryos when we were started off. So in order to avoid having to make tough decisions with these extra embryos, I recommend that people plan to marry earlier and have children normally.

Can relationships succeed independently from the efforts of the people involved?

January 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A few days ago, I blogged about the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage, which I think is the dominant view of marriage among young people today. This view of marriage basically says that there is a person in the world out there who will match up so perfectly with each one of us that we will have to expend no effort and perform no actions and take responsibility for nothing in order for the relationship to work.

I've decided to link to this recent article by Matt Walsh which is on that same topic.

He writes:

> The disease is the fanciful, unrealistic, fictionalized perceptions that both males and females harbor about marriage.
>
> For example, think of the glamorization of the "mysterious" and "damaged" guy from the "wrong side of the tracks." Hollywood makes him seem alluring and sexy, but forgets to mention that most of the time, in the real world, that dude probably has herpes, a coke habit, and a criminal record.
>
> Still, that bit of propaganda is nothing compared to the underlying misconception that so many of us carry around consciously or subconsciously, because we've seen it on TV and in the movies, and read it in books a million times since childhood: namely, that there is just *one* person out there for us. Our soul mate. Our Mr. or Mrs. Right. The person we are "meant to be with."

Matt thinks this view of relationships is not realistic:

> I didn't marry my wife because she's The One, *she's The One because I married her*. Until we were married, she was one, I was one, and we were both one of many. I didn't marry The One, I married *this* one, and the two of us *became* one. I didn't marry her because I was "meant to be with her," I married her because that was my choice, and it was her choice, and the Sacrament of marriage is that choice. I married her because I love her — I chose to love her — and I chose to live the rest of my life in service to her. We were not following a script, we chose to write our own, and it's a story that contains more love and happiness than any romantic fable ever conjured up by Hollywood.
>
> Indeed, marriage is a decision, not the inevitable result of unseen forces outside of our control. When we got married, the pastor asked us if we had "come here freely." If I had said, "well, not really, you see destiny drew us together," that would have brought the evening to an abrupt and unpleasant end. Marriage has to be a free choice or it is not a marriage. That's a beautiful thing, really.
>
> God gave us Free Will. It is His greatest gift to us because without it, nothing is

> possible. Love is not possible without Will. If we cannot choose to love, then we cannot love. God did not program us like robots to be compatible with only one other machine. He created us as individuals, endowed with the incredible, unprecedented power to choose. And with that choice, we are to go out and find a partner, and make that partner our soul mate.
>
> That's what we do. We *make* our spouses into our soul mates by marrying them. We don't simply recognize that they are soul mates and then just sort of symbolically consecrate that recognition through what would then be an effectively meaningless marriage sacrament. Instead, we find another unique, dynamic, wholly individualized human being, and we make the monumental, supernatural decision to bind ourselves to them for eternity.
>
> **It's a bold and risky move, no matter how you look at it. It's important to recognize this, not so that you can run away like a petrified little puppy and never tie the knot with anyone, but so that you can go into marriage knowing, at least to some extent, what you're really doing. This person wasn't made for you. It wasn't "designed" to be. There will be some parts of your relationship that are incongruous and conflicting. It won't all click together like a set of Legos, as you might expect if you think this coupling was fated in the stars.**
>
> **It's funny that people get divorced and often cite "irreconcilable differences." Well what did they think was going to happen? Did they think *every* difference would be reconcilable? Did they think every bit of contention between them could be perfectly and permanently solved?**

Finally, regarding his own marriage:

> There were literally millions of things that either of us could have done. An innumerable multitude of possible outcomes, but this was *our* outcome because we *chose* it. Not because we were destined or predetermined, not because it was "meant to happen," but because we chose it. That, to me, is much more romantic than getting pulled along by fate until the two of us inevitably collide and all that was written in our horoscopes passively comes to unavoidable fruition.
>
> **We are the protagonists of our love story, not the spectators.**

I think that when problems arise between two people who are largely compatible, the right thing to do is to engage and solve the problems. Yes, work isn't required in pop culture notions of romance, but those things don't reflect the real world anyway. In the real world, actions to solve a problem count for more than words that avoid the problem. Engineering principles and self-sacrificial attitude are infinitely more useful in a relationship than all the pop culture descriptions of ideal men and ideal women and ideal relationships combined. Why would you believe a bunch of promiscuous, self-centered, materialistic Hollywood people anyway?

New study: Politifact fact-checker is biased against Republicans

January 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How accurate is the fact-checking site Politifact, a project of the Tampa Bay Times newspaper?

The Weekly Standard reports on a recent study from George Mason University.

Excerpt:

> The Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA) at George Mason University is out with a new study on media fact checkers, and unsurprisingly, their results suggest that PolitiFact has it out for Republicans. Dylan Byers at *Politico* summarized CMPA's findings:
>
> > The fact-checking organization PolitiFact has found Republicans to be less trustworthy than Democrats, according to a new study.
> >
> > Fifty-two percent of Republican claims reviewed by the Tampa Bay Times fact-checking operation were rated "mostly false," "false" or "pants on fire," versus just 24 percent of Democratic statements, according to George Mason University's Center for Media and Public Affairs. By the same token, 54 percent of Democratic statements were rated as "mostly true" or "true," compared to just 18 percent of Republican statements.
> >
> > The CMPA looked at 100 statements — 46 by Democrats, 54 by Republicans — that were fact-checked by PolitiFact between January 20 and May 22.
>
> […]This is also not the first academic study that concluded PolitiFact might be putting their thumb on the scale when it comes to selecting and evaluating political statements. Last year, during the height of campaign season, the CMPA tallied up PolitiFact ratings. That study also showed PolitiFact tends to be much harder on Republicans:
>
> > The study examined 98 election-related statements by the presidential candidates, their surrogates, and campaign ads fact-checked by PolitiFact.com from June 1 to September 11. Major findings:
> >
> > PolitiFact checked the assertions of Democrats slightly more often than those of Republicans (54% vs. 46% of all statements).
> >
> > However, PolitiFact rated Democratic statements as "mostly true" or "entirely true" about twice as often as Republican statements — 42% true ratings for Democrats vs. 20% for Republicans.
> >
> > Conversely, statements by Republicans were rated as entirely false about twice as often as Democratic statements – 29% false ratings for

> > GOP statements vs. 15% false ratings for Democrats. (This includes categories labeled “false” and “pants on fire.”)
>
> Further, the University of Minnesota School of Public Affairs looked at over than 500 PolitiFact stories from January 2010 through January 2011. Their conclusion:
>
> > Current and former Republican officeholders have been assigned substantially harsher grades by the news organization than their Democratic counterparts. In total, 74 of the 98 statements by political figures judged ‘false’ or ‘pants on fire’ over the last 13 months were given to Republicans, or 76 percent, compared to just 22 statements for Democrats (22 percent).

In other words, they are cherry-picking statements that are false for Republicans and true for Democrats. But maybe that’s just because Republicans lie more than Democrats right before an election? Maybe, just before an election, Republicans suddenly start to lie uncontrollably while Democrats suddenly start to tell the truth all the time?

Let’s take a look at one famous case and see.

This is from Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine.

2008 PolitiFact before the election: ‘We rate his statement True’

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site’s “Truth-O-Meter” to evaluate this claim: “Under Barack Obama’s health care proposal, ‘if you’ve got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.’” The article assures us in its headline that “Obama’s plan expands [the] existing system,” and continues that “Obama is accurately describing his health care plan here…It remains to be seen whether Obama’s plan will actually be able to achieve the cost savings it promises for the health care system. But people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama’s plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his statement True.”
>
> The 2008 Obama plan, among other things, sought to transform the individual insurance market; it proposed to bar insurers from charging different premiums to the healthy and the sick, and to require them to offer plans to all comers, regardless of prior health status. According to PolitiFact, however, there was no need to worry that these provisions would be disruptive to existing health plans.
>
> As per PolitiFact’s usual M.O., Holan didn’t seek out any skeptical health-policy experts to suss out the veracity of Senator Obama’s signature claim. Instead, its sources included Jonathan Cohn, a passionate Obamacare supporter at *The New Republic*, and various interviews and statements of Mr. Obama. Holan simply took the “keep your plan” promise at face value, dismissing as dishonest anyone who dared suggest that Obama’s claim would be impossible to keep. “His opponents have attacked his plan as ‘government-run’ health care,” she wrote,

> the scare-quotes around “government-run” being visible to all.
>
> PolitiFact’s pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 campaign.

Here’s the screen capture from 2008:

Politifact caught with its pants on fire

2013 PolitiFact after the election: ‘We rate his statement Pants On Fire’

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama’s infamous promise—that “if you like your health care plan, you can keep it”—its 2013 “Lie of the Year.”
>
> […]So that brings us back to the fall of 2013. As Obamacare’s battle station became operational, and tens of millions of health plans became illegal, PolitiFact was caught with its flaming pants down. Louis Jacobson rapped Valerie Jarrett for tweeting that “nothing in Obamacare forces people out of their health plans”—a claim Jacobson rated as “False,” even though PolitiFact had rated it as “True” and “Half True” before.
>
> On November 4, Jacobson rated as “Pants on Fire” the President’s new claim that “what we said was, you can keep [your plan] if it hasn’t changed since the law passed.” Both pieces were edited by Angie Drobnic Holan, who had initially granted PolitiFact’s seal of approval to Senator Obama’s 2008 promise. Holan delivered the *coup de grâce*, declaring as PolitiFact’s “Lie of the Year” the “keep your plan” promise.
>
> “The promise was impossible to keep,” says Holan in her December piece. Now she tells us! But none of the key facts that made that promise “impossible” in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President’s plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were

> losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan
Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."
Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."
Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact says: we were just kidding! Kidding!
So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, but it's election time so they don't say that.

The Tampa Bay Times. Politifact. It's a catchy name, isn't? It's telling us the Facts about Politics. I suppose the same people who think that Politifact is a reliable fact checker also believe that the Affordable Care Act would lower premiums by $2500, as Obama said. It actually raised them $3000 in objective reality, though. But it says Affordable Care Act in the name, so missing the target by $5500 must be "affordable".

I think this case demonstrates how people on the political left allow their emotions to overturn objective reality. You can keep your doctor. You can keep your health plan. Benghazi was caused by a Youtube video. The e-mails and e-mail backups of all the IRS employees were lost. The Department of Justice did not target Associated Press journalists. The assault weapons were not gun-walked to Mexican drug cartels. *They will believe anything that makes them feel superior and noble, even pinned down by the heavy weight of countervailing facts.*

Is Fox News biased? Two peer-reviewed studies shed light on news media bias

January 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at peer-reviewed academic studies of media bias and see whether Fox News is biased.

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44%

> positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the

> left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

Those are the facts.

So what?

Now consider this column from Brent Bozell, which explains the difference media bias makes to political intelligence.

Excerpt:

> **A 2008 survey by the Pew Research Center asked media consumers three questions: which party was in control of Congress (Democrats), who was the secretary of state (Condi Rice) and who was the prime minister of Britain (Gordon Brown).**
>
> **Let's document how the viewers of "Hannity & Colmes" were better informed than Stewart's "Daily Show" gigglers on basic political facts. Hannity viewers beat Stewart's on the Democratic majority (84 percent to 65 percent correct answers), Condi Rice (a dramatic 73 percent to 48 percent gap) and Gordon Brown (49 percent to 36). Overall, as a percentage getting all three questions right, Hannity won 42-30.**

Just keep that in mind when you are watching the mainstream media news shows. A very good site to bookmark and read is Newsbusters, which documents mainstream media bias daily.

What do the adult children of gay couples think about same-sex marriage?

January 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Life Site News.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Katy Faust, Dawn Stefanowicz, B.N. Klein, and Robert Oscar Lopez, who were all raised by homosexual parents, each submitted briefs to the 5th Circuit opposing the legalization of same-sex "marriage." Recounting childhood memories of households made deeply dysfunctional by their parents' sexual appetites and the radical subculture that went along with their "gay" identities, all four argued that redefining marriage to include homosexual couples will likely lead to the exploitation and abuse of countless children for political and personal gain.
>
> "I grew up with a parent and her partner[s] in an atmosphere in which gay ideology was used as a tool of repression, retribution and abuse," wrote B.N. Klein of her lesbian mother and her series of live-in lovers. "I have seen that children in gay households often become props to be publically [sic] displayed to prove that gay families are just like heterosexual ones."
>
> […]While Klein classified her upbringing as abusive, Robert Oscar Lopez told the court that his own childhood upbringing by his mother and her longtime partner represented the "best possible conditions for a child raised by a same-sex couple." Even so, Lopez testified that the lack of a father figure in his life, combined with the influence of the radical gay culture in which he was raised, gave rise to a devastating confusion about his own sexuality and ultimately led to his becoming a homosexual prostitute in his teen years in order to fulfill his craving for acceptance and love from older men.
>
> […]Katy Faust also testified that children of homosexuals are intimidated into silence by gay activists who threaten them with public shaming, job interference, and worse for daring to speak out against same-sex "marriage."
>
> "Some adult children with gay parents shy away from making their thoughts about marriage public because we do not want to jeopardize our relationships with those to whom our hearts are tethered," Faust wrote. "Unfortunately, many gay-marriage lobbyists have made gay marriage the sole badge of loyalty to our LGBT family and friends."
>
> […]Dawn Stefanowicz echoed the sentiments of the other three, in a frank and graphic testimony of her childhood with a promiscuous homosexual father who later died of AIDS.
>
> […]"As children, we are not allowed to express our disagreement, pain and confusion," wrote Stefanowicz. "Most adult children from gay households do not

> feel safe or free to publicly express their stories and life-long challenges; they fear losing professional licenses, not obtaining employment in their chosen field, being cut off from some family members or losing whatever relationship they have with their gay parent(s). Some gay parents have threatened to leave no inheritance, if the children don't accept their parent's partner *du jour*."

Read the whole thing.

That's just four people, but I want to see a real study.

The Public Discourse reports on a recent study out of Canada.

Excerpt:

> A new academic study based on the Canadian census suggests that a married mom and dad matter for children. Children of same-sex coupled households do not fare as well.
>
> There is a new and significant piece of evidence in the social science debate about gay parenting and the unique contributions that mothers and fathers make to their children's flourishing. A study published last week in the journal *Review of the Economics of the Household*—analyzing data from a very large, population-based sample—reveals that the children of gay and lesbian couples are only about 65 percent as likely to have graduated from high school as the children of married, opposite-sex couples. And gender matters, too: girls are more apt to struggle than boys, with daughters of gay parents displaying dramatically low graduation rates.
>
> Unlike US-based studies, this one evaluates a 20 percent sample of the Canadian census, where same-sex couples have had access to all taxation and government benefits since 1997 and to marriage since 2005.
>
> While in the US Census same-sex households have to be guessed at based on the gender and number of self-reported heads-of-household, young adults in the Canadian census were asked, "Are you the child of a male or female same-sex married or common law couple?" While study author and economist Douglas Allen noted that very many children in Canada who live with a gay or lesbian parent are actually living with a single mother—a finding consonant with that detected in the 2012 New Family Structures Study—he was able to isolate and analyze hundreds of children living with a gay or lesbian *couple* (either married or in a "common law" relationship akin to cohabitation).
>
> So the study is able to compare—side by side—the young-adult children of same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples, as well as children growing up in single-parent homes and other types of households. Three key findings stood out to Allen:
>
> children of married opposite-sex families have a high graduation rate compared to the others; children of lesbian families have a very low graduation rate compared to the others; and the other four types [common law, gay, single

> mother, single father] are similar to each other and lie in between the married/lesbian extremes.
>
> Employing regression models and series of control variables, Allen concludes that the substandard performance *cannot* be attributed to lower school attendance or the more modest education of gay or lesbian parents. Indeed, same-sex parents were characterized by higher levels of education, and their children were more likely to be enrolled in school than even those of married, opposite-sex couples. And yet their children are notably more likely to lag in finishing their own schooling.

With a little digging, I found the abstract of the study.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington.

A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more shorter times). That's not good for children either. Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships have much higher rates of domestic violence. That's not good for children either. So we have three reasons to think that redefining "marriage" would not be good for children.

Related posts

- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

Does premarital sex increase the chances of divorce?

January 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've posted before about how premarital sex wrecks the stability of marriages by making divorce more likely. And I wanted to begin this post by showing that this is not a controversial point in the research.

Here another good study on relationship tempo and relationship quality.

Abstract:

> *Rapid sexual involvement may have adverse long-term implications for relationship quality. This study examined the tempo of sexual intimacy and subsequent relationship quality in a sample of married and cohabiting men and women. Data come from the Marital and Relationship Survey, which provides information on nearly 600 low- to moderate-income couples living with minor children. Over one third of respondents became sexually involved within the first month of the relationship. Bivariate results suggested that delaying sexual involvement was associated with higher relationship quality across several dimensions. The multivariate results indicated that the speed of entry into sexual relationships was negatively associated with marital quality, but only among women. The association between relationship tempo and relationship quality was largely driven by cohabitation. Cohabiting may result in poorer quality relationship because rapid sexual involvement early in the romantic relationship is associated with entrance into shared living.*

The authors are from Cornell University and University of Wisconsin – Madison. Hardly bastions of conservatism! This is not complicated, this is black and white.

Here's another recent study that shows that if a woman has more than her husband as a premarital sex partner, her risk of divorce increases.

His findings:

> Using nationally representative data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, I estimate the association between intimate premarital relationships (premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) and subsequent marital dissolution. I extend previous research by considering relationship histories pertaining to both premarital sex and premarital cohabitation. I find that premarital sex or premarital cohabitation that is limited to a woman's husband is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption. **However, women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship have an increased risk of marital dissolution.**

Here's another study that makes it even more clear.

Findings:

> Data from the 1988 US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) were utilized to assess the impact of premarital sexual activity on subsequent marital stability. **Among white NSFG subjects first married in 1965-85, virgin brides were significantly less to have become separated or divorced (25%) than women who had not been virgins at marriage (35%).**
>
> **[…]The lower risk of divorce on the part of white women with no premarital sexual experience persisted even after numerous intervening and background variables were controlled.**

This study supports what the Bible says about chastity and premarital sex:

> 1 Cor. 7:8-9:
>
> 8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to stay single as I am.
>
> 9 But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.
>
> The idea of "burning" here has to do with sexual desire. Here Paul tells all unmarried people that if they cannot control their sexual desires, they need to get married. Why? Because Paul assumes that one cannot fulfill this sexual desire outside of the marital bed. While Paul would love for them to remain single (1 Cor. 7:7), he believes that sex outside of marriage is a destructive sin and *cannot* be used as a gratifying release of our sexual passions.

Now despite studies supporting the Biblical prohibition on premarital sex, Christians are actually embracing it. Why is that? Well, church pastors are very, very set in the idea that the Bible is *assumed* to be inerrant in church, and they feel that supporting what the Bible says with actual evidence is "putting evidence at the same level as the Bible". That's their approach – don't confirm the Bible with evidence, just tell people to *assume* that the Bible is true, and tell them to believe it, in the face of mounting culture pressure, secular policies and a resurgence of atheism.

What about "The Bible Says"?

Take a look at this review by a pious pastor of a recent apologetics book, if you don't believe me.

Excerpt:

> *Cold-Case Christianity* places far too much emphasis on the role of extrabiblical sources. No doubt there is a legitimate role for biblical archaeology and extrabiblical writing from antiquity. Christianity is, after all, a faith firmly rooted in human history. But there is a grave danger when truth is suspended because of an apparent lack of corroboration from extrabiblical sources. And Wallace, I'm afraid, wanders too close to this dark side of apologetics.
>
> All of chapter 12, for instance, is devoted to proving the Gospels have external corroborative evidence—"evidence that are independent of the Gospel

> documents yet verify the claims of the text" (183). Wallace then addresses the historicity of the pool of Bethesda and makes another worrying statement: "For many years, there was no evidence for such a place outside of John's Gospel. Because Christianity makes historical claims, archaeology ought to be a tool we can use to see *if these claims are, in fact, true*" (201-202, emphasis added).
>
> In other words, Wallace seems to suggest we cannot affirm the truth of the Gospel accounts without the stamp of approval from archaeology and other extrabiblical sources. Such reasoning is dangerous, not least because it cannot affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. But also, it places the final court of appeal in the realm of extrabiblical sources rather than of God's all-sufficient, all-powerful Word.

So does the approach of Bible-thumping church pastors work? Are young people really convinced by proclamations and assertions, piously expressed?

Majority of Christians embrace premarital sex

Consider this article that Dina tweeted from the Christian Post.

Excerpt:

> [A] new Christian Mingle study suggests that it is increasingly commonplace for Christians to sleep together outside of a marital context.
>
> In a survey of 716 Christians released in January, only 11 percent said they save sex exclusively for marriage. Instead, 60 percent said they would be willing to have sex without any strings attached, while 23 percent said they would have to be "in love." Five percent said they would wait to get engaged.
>
> This data supports a 2011 Relevant Magazine poll that revealed that 80 percent of "young, unmarried Christians have had sex" and that "two-thirds have been sexually active in the last year."
>
> While the findings of a 2012 National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and Grey Matter Research poll did not show outcomes as high as the two previous polls, according to its research, 44 percent of unmarried evangelicals between ages 18-29 said that they had sex, including 25 percent who said they had had sex in the last three months.

You know, if just invoking the Bible piously, and asserting that it's without error, were enough, then that's what you'd see people like William Lane Craig doing in debates at the top universities when he faces off against atheists. But he doesn't do that. Dr. Craig appeals to evidence outside the Bible in order to explain why the Bible ought to be respected when we make our decisions. There is no such thing as pious fideism when you are in front of a crowd of students at a major secular university. Young people, no matter how "nice" they behave in church, are not going to behave like Christians outside of church.

When the kids get to college, they are going to face a tsunami of propaganda from the

pro-sexual-immmorality crowd. (WARNING: that link describes what happens during “Sex Week” on college campuses. Reader discretion is advised!) They need to be able to explain their views using something other Bible verse memorization, or they are going to fall away under peer pressure and shaming by secular leftist professors. And they need to have that information BEFORE they get inundated with alcohol and peer pressure.

By the way, another great book on the topic of premarital sex is “Hooked: New Science on How Casual Sex is Affecting Our Children” by Joe S. McIlhaney Jr., M.D. and Freda McKissic Bush, M.D. Again – look at the research and be persuaded, and be persuasive with others. Don’t try to use appeals to piety when evidence works better.

Courage under fire: Ronald Speirs and Easy Company at the Battle of Foy

January 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I try to occasionally post something that shows a particularly brave action from some time and place in military history. For example, I previously wrote about Medal of Honor winner Michael Murphy in 2011. Last year, his story was told more widely in the movie "Lone Survivor", which I recommend to everyone. Today I want to highlight another hero: Ronald Speirs.

It is January 1945 and the famous "Screaming Eagles", the 101st Airborne division, are about to turn the tide of the Battle of the Bulge in Bastogne.

Let's read about the Battle of Foy courtesy of a scenario description from the wargame "Flames of War". (Note: LMG = light machine gun, in this case, a .30 caliber machine gun)

Excerpt:

> E or 'Easy' Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, like the rest of the division, was ordered on to the attack on 9 January 1945 as part of a general offensive to drive back the Germans from Bastogne. In the following days the 506th Regiment, along with the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, cleared the forests around the town of Foy and pushed the Germans out. Their next objective was to take Foy to allow the 11th Armored Division to attack from Foy across the fields northeast towards Noville.
>
> […]At 0900 hours on 13 January Easy Company attacked along the western edge of Foy, along the road. The new year had brought heavy snow and the it blanketed the ground and had reduced temperatures to well below zero. 2nd Battalion commander, Captain Dick Winters, had two section of LMGs deployed on the edge of the woods facing Foy to give Easy Company covering fire while they crossed the 250 yards of open field between the forest and Foy's buildings. There were just a few scattered trees and haystacks to give cover. As Easy Company advance the covering fire did its job, limiting the fire on the paratroopers to sporadic rifle shots. The approach on Foy made good pace under the cover of the LMG fire, but about 75 yards out from the edge of the village the skirmish line halted and the paratroopers hunkered down in the snow. Captain Winters stared in disbelief, wondering what was going on.
>
> Lieutenant Dike, who was commanding Easy Company, had been overwhelmed with indecision. It became obvious to Winters that Dike didn't know what he was doing, or had had a failure of confidence. His immediate impulse was to take command himself, but he noticed Lieutenant Ronald Speirs, a capable platoon commander from D Company, standing nearby. Winters ordered Speirs to take command of Easy Company and get the attack moving again. What Speirs did

> next amazed many of the paratroopers who witnessed it.
>
> **On receiving his orders from Winters, Speirs immediately ran at full speed down to where Dike and his HQ had taken cover behind a haystack and told Dike his orders, 'I'm here to take over'. After quickly being told of the situation by the NCOs he ran off towards Foy. The men of Easy Company immediately followed. On reaching the outskirt buildings of Foy, Speirs immediately sought to link up with I Company of 3rd Battalion who, despite only having 25 men, were supporting the attack from the other flank of Foy. He set off running again, through the German lines, to find I Company's commander. After consulting with its commander, Captain Gene Brown, he turned around and dashed back through Foy and the surprised Germans. Through all this the enemy fired on him with machine-guns, rifles and guns, but not a single shot hit its mark.**

Now with all that said, watch the two clips below, and pay close attention the faces of the men under Lieutenant Dike, and then later under Lieutenant Speirs. Pay close attention to how Speirs' courage inspires the men under him to also be courageous. Especially First Sergeant Lipton, who later risks his own life to draw fire from a German sniper so that Shifty Powers can prevent any other troops from being killed by the sniper.

The two clips are from "Band of Brothers", the episode entitled "The Breaking Point". There is some coarse language, but no sexual language in it. Really, if you are squeamish, do not watch it. However, if you can handle it, then buy the whole DVD set. It will inspire you, and help you to do things that you didn't think were possible. If you really want to understand the men of E Company, you can read a book by Stephen E. Ambrose called *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York, 1992).

Low resolution clip, includes briefing at the beginning

This video is lower resolution, but show Winters reflecting on how Lipton had asked him not to let Dike lead the attack the night before, and also Winters carefully explaining to Dike that the American attack has to *keep moving* or they will get pinned down by machine guns and zeroed-in by mortars and destroyed.

I like that one because it shows the briefing, but the next clip is in 720HD.

High resolution clip, does not include briefing

This is a higher resolution version that is only 8.5 minutes long, but doesn't have the briefing.

If you listen closely when Speirs explains what everyone is going to do, you can here one of the NCOs say "thank God" as he pats the other on the back.

Leadership

To be a good military leader, you have to know many things. A knowledge of strategy and tactics, a knowledge of military history, the ability to see the battlefield, knowledge of

your opponent, knowledge of weapons, and so on. But surely the greatest of these is courage. As Von Clausewitz says in his famous book “On War”, “War is the province of danger, and therefore courage above all things is the first quality of a warrior.” Nothing inspires troops like a commander who is willing to take on the same risks that he asks his troops to take.

Take a look at this article from the Ivey School of Business journal, which talks about the characteristics of Canadian generals in Afghanistan.

Excerpt:

A leader must be in front of subordinates. This takes courage. Leadership from the front encapsulates the adage, *never ask a subordinate to do something that you, the leader, wouldn’t do*. In Afghanistan, the leader must not only be in front, but he or she must *be seen* to be in front. Subordinates seek this reassurance from their leaders at all levels. Though they may be tentative, leaders must demonstrate character and moral strength. Their credibility is inextricably dependent on their ability to do so.. During his frequent visits to Afghanistan, former Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Rick Hillier, made a point of visiting troops that were situated in some of the most IED-laden areas of the Canadian sector. Through his demonstrated courage, he inspired leaders of all levels. “If the CDS goes there, so can I” was the resulting mindset. The current CDS, General Walt Natynczyk, has successfully continued this practice.

[…]All leaders need courage. It is the lynchpin of effective leadership. No one respects a wimp who will buy in to any idea no matter how inane it might be. Courage is having the strength of character to persist and hold on to ideas in the face of opposition. Here, I’m not restricting my treatment of courage as it relates to fear. It’s also about strength of character and devotion to causes and ideas.

As Christians, we have a leader who led by example. We all need to learn to not be so concerned with looking out for ourselves and our happiness first, but to instead be willing to take risks and sacrifice ourselves to do the right thing. We Christians should all be courageous, because we are led by a courageous leader.

That doesn’t necessarily mean going halfway across the world, it can mean reaching out to someone right there next to you who needs your help and support. Maybe that person has been running on an empty tank for a long time, but still trying to do the right thing. You never know when the opportunity to do something amazing will arise, but you won’t take it if you keep thinking of how you might get hurt. You have to reconcile yourself that you are not here to avoid every possible kind of suffering. It doesn’t mean that you take unnecessary risks, but it does mean *not letting fear stop you from doing the right thing*.

Now get out there and take that attack on in.

A simple case for the pro-life position by Scott Klusendorf

January 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you able to make a basic case for the pro-life view?

Here's a short 38-lecture by Scott Klusendorf, president of the Life Training Institute.

This is a long treatment that talks about the challenge of moral relativism and the case for the pro-life view. He does show a clip of abortion in the video to the audience.

There's also a 35-minute audio recording of Scott on the LTI web site. (H/T Apologetics 315) You can put that on your podcast player and listen to it. Listen to it a lot and soon you'll sound like Scott.

Scott also has an article posted on the LTI web site for those who don't have time for the video or the audio.

In the article makes three points:

1. **Clarify the issue**
2. **Defend your pro-life position with science and philosophy**
3. **Challenge your listeners to be intellectually honest**

Here's the second point:

> Scientifically, we know that from the earliest stages of development, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings. Leading embryology books confirm this.[2] For example, Keith L. Moore & T.V.N. Persaud write, "A zygote is the beginning of a new human being. Human development begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm … unites with a female gamete or oocyte … to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual."[3] Prior to his abortion advocacy, former Planned Parenthood President Dr. Alan Guttmacher was perplexed that anyone, much less a medical doctor, would question this. "This all seems so simple and evident that it is difficult to picture a time when it wasn't part of the common knowledge," he wrote in his book *Life in the Making*.[4]
>
> Philosophically, we can say that embryos are less developed than newborns (or, for that matter, toddlers) but this difference is not morally significant in the way abortion advocates need it to be. Consider the claim that the immediate capacity for self-awareness bestows value on human beings. Notice that this is not an argument, but an arbitrary assertion. Why is some development needed? And why is this particular degree of development (i.e., higher brain function) decisive rather than another? These are questions that abortion advocates do not adequately address.
>
> As Stephen Schwarz points out, there is no morally significant difference between

> the embryo that you once were and the adult that you are today. Differences of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not relevant such that we can say that you had no rights as an embryo but you do have rights today. Think of the acronym **SLED** as a helpful reminder of these non-essential differences:[5]
>
> **S**ize: True, embryos are smaller than newborns and adults, but why is that relevant? Do we really want to say that large people are more human than small ones? Men are generally larger than women, but that doesn't mean that they deserve more rights. Size doesn't equal value.
>
> **L**evel of development: True, embryos and fetuses are less developed than the adults they'll one day become. But again, why is this relevant? Four year-old girls are less developed than 14 year-old ones. Should older children have more rights than their younger siblings? Some people say that self-awareness makes one human. But if that is true, newborns do not qualify as valuable human beings. Six-week old infants lack the immediate capacity for performing human mental functions, as do the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, and those with Alzheimer's Disease.
>
> **E**nvironment: Where you are has no bearing on who you are. Does your value change when you cross the street or roll over in bed? If not, how can a journey of eight inches down the birth-canal suddenly change the essential nature of the unborn from non-human to human? If the unborn are not already human, merely changing their location can't make them valuable.
>
> **D**egree of Dependency: If viability makes us human, then all those who depend on insulin or kidney medication are not valuable and we may kill them. Conjoined twins who share blood type and bodily systems also have no right to life.
>
> In short, it's far more reasonable to argue that although humans differ immensely with respect to talents, accomplishments, and degrees of development, they are nonetheless equal because they share a common human nature.

That's the core of the basic pro-life case right there. There's also a good interview of Mr. Klusendorf that I blogged about.

Advanced Objections

You can learn more by reading basic pro-life apologetics… from Francis Beckwith. You might recognize Frank Beckwith as the author of "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice". He wrote that book for Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal.

Here are four essays that answer common arguments in favor of legalized abortion.

- Part I. The Appeal to Pity
- Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem

- Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?
- Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Here's an excerpt from Part II:

Excerpt:

> A woman who becomes pregnant due to an act of either rape or incest is the victim of a horribly violent and morally reprehensible crime. Although pregnancy as a result of either rape or incest is extremely rare, **[1]** there is no getting around the fact that pregnancy does occur in some instances.
>
> […]Despite its forceful appeal to our sympathies, there are several problems with this argument. First, it is not relevant to the case for abortion on demand, the position defended by the popular pro-choice movement. This position states that a woman has a **right** to have an abortion for **any** reason she prefers during the entire nine months of pregnancy, whether it be for gender-selection, convenience, or rape. **[3]** To argue for abortion on demand from the hard cases of rape and incest is like trying to argue for the elimination of traffic laws from the fact that one might have to violate some of them in rare circumstances, such as when one's spouse or child needs to be rushed to the hospital. Proving an exception does not establish a general rule.
>
> […]Fourth, this argument begs the question by assuming that the unborn is not fully human. For if the unborn is fully human, then we must weigh the relieving of the woman's mental suffering against the right-to-life of an innocent human being. **And homicide of another is never justified to relieve one of emotional distress**. Although such a judgment is indeed anguishing, we must not forget that the same innocent unborn entity that the career-oriented woman will abort in order to avoid interference with a job promotion is biologically and morally indistinguishable from the unborn entity that results from an act of rape or incest. And since abortion for career advancement cannot be justified if the unborn entity is fully human, abortion cannot be justified in the cases of rape and incest. In both cases abortion results in the death of an innocent human life. As Dr. Bernard Nathanson has written, "The unwanted pregnancy flows biologically from the sexual act, but not morally from it." **[5]**Hence, this argument, like the ones we have already covered in this series, is successful only if the unborn are not fully human.

Scott Klusendorf wrote the The Case for Life, which is the best book for beginners on the pro-life view. For those looking for advanced resources, Francis Beckwith, a professor at Baylor University, published the book Defending Life, with Cambridge University Press, 2007.

I found a very polished hour-long talk by Scott on Youtube. That talk was delivered to students and faculty at Furman University.

Finally, if you want to see Scott Klusendorf in a debate with a former ACLU executive, you

can see it right here.

My friend Papa Georgio sent me a post that features THREE talks by Scott Klusendorf. (H/T Religio-Political Talk)

Learn about the pro-life case

- How to take an incremental approach to the abortion problem
- Videos from academic debate on abortion at the University of Victoria
- Audio: Scott Klusendorf's 35-minute case for the pro-life position
- Audio: A 55-minute discussion featuring Greg Koukl and Scott Klusendorf
- A comparison of embryonic and adult stem cell research
- Video: 12-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Video:10-year old girl makes the pro-life case in a short speech
- Objective truth in the abortion debate – a pro-life training video
- Alan Shlemon explains a classification system for pro-abortion arguments
- What is the best single book on the pro-life position?

Two kinds of people who have tried to shame me away from Christianity

January 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I recently had two interesting encounters last week, first with a secular Jewish leftist man and second with a New Age prosperity gospel feminist Christian woman. I wasn't going to say anything about them, except that my pastor was talking this morning about how people often fall away because of the shame and scorn that is heaped on them by non-Christians. So now I'm going to say something.

So let me start with the texts he used:

2 Tim 4:1-5:

1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:

[2] preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

[3] For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,

[4] and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

[5] As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

And 1 Peter 3:15-16:

[15] but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

[16] having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Now a quick word about those. I think the real point he was trying to make – and this is what he spoke about eloquently and passionately – is that if you have orthodox theological beliefs in this day and age then you are going to be shamed, humiliated and reviled by people. And I would go further than he did and say that it is not just having an orthodox view of who Jesus is that annoys them (e.g. – deity, exclusivity of salvation, morality, etc.). No, their disapproval spreads on into politics, especially abortion and gay marriage – basically any kind of rules around sexuality. That's what's really bugging these people, I think.

So let's talk about the two people.

The man who thinks that conservative Christians are stupid

The first kind of person who tried to shame me for being a Christian is the person who thinks that Christianity is stupid. This kind of person invokes things that he hears in

secular leftist pop culture as if it is common knowledge that theism generally, and Christianity in particular, is false. He's watched a documentary on the Discovery channel which said that the eternally oscillating cosmology was true. Or maybe he watched a documentary on the History Channel that said that Jesus never presented himself as God stepping into history. He presents these things that he reads in the New York Times, or sees on MSNBC or hears on NPR with the authority that Ben Carson might take when explaining modern medicine to a witch doctor.

I don't want to get into the details of what happened. Suffice to say that my interlocutor invoked a popular-level authority against me, which I promptly discredited, and then I responded with peer-reviewed studies published by scholars from two prominent universities. He ignored the studies and demanded to know whether I would accept his caricatured, simplistic view of what people who disagree with him believe.

This not the first time he has done this to me, either – it is standard practice apparently, for people on the secular left.

It goes like this:

- Me: here are two arguments against naturalistic evolution, the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion.
- Him: but you don't believe in a young-Earth do you? I mean, you believe in evolution don't you?
- Me: let's talk about how proteins and DNA is sequenced, and the sudden origin of Cambrian body plans
- Him: (shouting) Do you believe in evolution? Do you believe in evolution?

And this:

- Me: there hasn't been any global warming for 18 years, and temperatures were warmer in the Medieval Warming Period
- Him: but you don't deny climate change, do you? everyone on NPR agrees that climate change is real
- Me: let's talk about the last 18 years of no warming, and the temperatures during the Medieval Warming Period
- Him: (shouting) Do you believe in climate change? Do you believe in climate change?

He asks these questions so he can either label me as a nut, without having to weigh the evidence I'm presenting, or have me agree with him, without having to weigh the evidence I'm presenting. It's all about ignoring the evidence, so he can get back to his busy, busy practical life – and get back to feeling smug about being smarter than others. I think a lot of men are like this – they don't want to waste their valuable time studying, they just want to jump to the right conclusion, then get back to doing whatever they want – like watching sports on ESPN, or working out, etc.

So how do you respond to a man who gets his entire worldview from the culture, but never deals with peer-reviewed evidence? Well, I think you just defeat his arguments with evidence and then present your own (peer-reviewed) evidence, and then leave it at that. Men like this one have this invincible impression that all the smart people agree with them. Carl Sagan proved that the universe oscillated eternally, Bart Ehrman proved that the "huge" number of manuscript variants discredited the reliability of the Bible, Sam Harris disproved the moral argument with utilitarianism, etc. Their heads are filled with conclusions from discredited arguments, but they are *certain* that *all* the smart people agree with them. The most important thing about these men is that they have never seen a fair academic debate between two sides. They cannot name a single scholar who disagrees with them. They cannot formulate an argument against their own view without caricaturing the argument, e.g. – intelligent design is identical to young Earth creationism, opposition to gay marriage is "homophobia". And they are careful to surround themselves ONLY with opinions that reinforce the imagined intellectual superiority of their views.

The woman who thinks Christianity is life-enhancement

This one is especially difficult when you are a young man, especially if you are rejected by your mother, and especially if you are rejected by your mother for your Christian faith. You find yourself sitting in church or youth group, hoping for the approval and affection of the Christian women for your sound theology and effective apologetics. Little do you know that many Christian women understand Christianity entirely in self-centered, subjective terms. Many women see Christianity as life-enhancement, designed to produce happy feelings. God is their cosmic butler whose main responsibility is to meet their needs and make their plans work out. Many women have learned to water down every part of Christianity that offends their family and friends, or puts the brakes on their plan to be happy in this life.

I have met Christian women in churches and campus clubs who were communists, Darwinists, pro-abortion, pro-gay-marriage, universalists, and pretty much every other kind of secular leftist ideology that is dominant in our culture. When probed, their reason for holding to these views is *always a mix* of emotions, intuitions, family-approval or peer-approval. It's like this subset of Christian women has no independent ability to drive at the truth for themselves through study, but instead they merely adopt whatever feels good from whatever is on offer in their social or cultural environment – like going to a buffet. When they change locations, (e.g. – going off to college), they gravitate to a new set of pleasurable beliefs which earn them peer-acceptance and peer-approval. But the common thread is that they disapprove of any attempt to defend the truth of Christianity objectively with apologetics, and they disapprove of defending (with evidence) the Bible's teachings if it goes against their feelings and/or against family/peer approval.

So how to respond to women who understand Christianity as life enhancement instead of as responsibilities, obligations and expectations?

First thing, be careful that you don't attend a feminized church where the pastor in

preaching and picking hymns that give you the idea that God is your cosmic butler. Second, read the Bible very carefully, and understand that with respect to God's purposes for you in this world, your happiness is expendable. You cannot be looking to attractive Christian women that you happen to meet in church to support you, as many of them have long-since sold out to the culture. They are not interested in learning *evidential* apologetics to defend God's reputation, or in defending the unborn, or in defending natural marriage, or in defending the free enterprise system that supports family autonomy from the state, etc. Those things are hard and unpopular, especially for those women who were raised to think that Christianity is about life enhancement and peer-approval.

In my case, the woman who tried to shame me has a Bible verse on her Facebook cover photo, and "likes" the Bible on Facebook, and her favorite preacher is Joel Osteen. She's very beautiful, athletic and attractive. But you cannot be seeking approval and affection from women like that – you must make the choice to do without it. And most important of all, you must accept that beautiful, athletic attractive women can be fundamentally unserious about Christianity. This is "working as designed", as we say in the software engineering business. Nothing that most pastors say to women during church is going to fix this problem, because most pastors don't see this as a problem. Pastors mostly think that women are naturally good, and that they don't need to know apologetics or integrate with faith with politics, economics, etc.

Here's 1 Cor 4:1-5 to make the point:

1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

And 2 Tim 2:4:

4 No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

Or, since I like Ronald Speirs so much:

This is the situation in which we find ourselves, so get used to it. And believe me, I have to deal with this, too. So I have all the sympathy in the world for you. Resign yourself to the fact that no one is going to approve of you for being faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ; not secular men, not Christian women. There is no cavalry coming to rescue you.

Christian magistrate punished for saying children need a mother and a father

January 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A Christian magistrate has been disciplined **by a Tory Cabinet Minister** for expressing the belief that children should be raised by both a mother and a father.
>
> **Richard Page told colleagues behind closed doors during an adoption case that he thought it would be better for a child to be brought up in a traditional family rather than by a gay couple.**
>
> He was shocked a week later when he found he had been reported to the judges' watchdog for alleged prejudice, and was suspended from sitting on family court cases.
>
> Mr Page, an experienced NHS manager, has now been **found guilty of serious misconduct** by Lord Chancellor Chris Grayling – who previously spoke in support of a Christian couple who turned away a gay couple from their B&B.
>
> He has also been **ordered to go on an equality course** before he is allowed back in the courtroom.
>
> The married 68-year-old was told he had broken the oath sworn by all Justices of the Peace (JPs) as well as Labour's controversial Equality Act, by being guided by his religious views and discriminating against the same-sex adoptive parents.
>
> Last night, critics said the case was another example of how people who hold traditional Christian views feel they have no freedom of speech and find it difficult to hold public office in modern Britain.
>
> Mr Page told The Mail on Sunday: 'There is tremendous pressure to keep quiet and go along with what is seen to be politically correct.
>
> 'Everyone else seems to be allowed to stand up for their beliefs except for Christians.' Mr Page was called on to consider an adoption order at a family court last July.
>
> As a lay judge he is not required to be legally qualified and is meant to 'bring a broad experience of life to the bench' in making decisions. Because of the controversial secretive nature of such hearings, The Mail on Sunday cannot publish details of the case.
>
> […]**'I think there is something about a man, a woman and a baby, that it's natural and therefore the others are not. That is the comment that I made,' he said.**

> **‘Therefore, since my task as a magistrate is to do the best for the child, my feeling was, quite reasonably, that a man and a woman would be better.’**

I found it shocking that a Tory (Conservative Party) Cabinet minister would discipline this man, although I know that the Conservative Party in the UK is pro-same-sex marriage.

What is interesting is Grayling’s change of mind on conscience vs gay rights:

> 2010 As Shadow Home Secretary:
>
> He backs Christian couple’s right to ban gay couple from their B&B (he subsequently lost his job)
>
> ‘I think we need to allow people to have their own consciences. If you look at the case of “Should a Christian hotel owner have the right to exclude a gay couple from their hotel?”… I took the view that if it’s a question of somebody who’s doing a B&B in their own home, that individual should have the right to decide who does and who doesn’t come into their own home
>
> December 2014 as Lord Chancellor:
>
> He disciplines Christian JP who suggested a man and a woman would be better parents for child than gay couple
>
> ‘The Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice have Issued Mr Richard Page JP, a Magistrate assigned to the Central Kent Bench with a reprimand. Mr Page, whilst sitting in the Family Court, was found to have been influenced by his religious beliefs and not by the evidence.
>
> ‘The Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice considered that this amounted to serious misconduct and that Mr Page should have recused himself from the matter.’
>
> […]**As Shadow Home Secretary in 2010, Mr Grayling had backed a Christian couple’s right to turn away a gay couple from their B&B – and as a result of the furore initially missed out on a Cabinet post after the Election.**

Wow. So this Anglican Christian initially used to support Christians doing what their consciences dictate, then after losing his job over it, he changed his mind, and now thinks the secular state should decide.I guess to me, being someone who is not in charge of other people and not very important, the most important thing to do with my life is to do whatever God approves of. At the end of the day, only his opinion matters.

I think what shocks me the most is the fact that Mr. Page was disciplined for just stating common sense about what children need. I wonder which parent the Conservative Party MP thinks a child can do without? Is it a mother? No, we have evidence showing that the mother is vital to boys and girls. Is it the father? I think everyone is well aware now what fatherlessness does to a child – be it a boy or a girl. So here is a Christian man trying to put himself in the place of this child and asking himself – what does a child need? A child

needs a mother and father. Apparently, this is some sort of crime to say in the UK.

How reliable is NASA's pronouncement of 2014 as the warmest year on record?

January 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Federalist throws ice water on global warming alarmism. (H/T Blake)

Excerpt:

> If 2014 is supposed to be "hotter" than previous years, it's important to ask: by how much?
>
> You can spend a long time searching through press reports to get an actual *number* on this—which is a scandal unto itself. Just saying one year was "hotter" or "the hottest" is a vague qualitative description. It isn't science. Science runs on numbers. You haven't said anything that is scientifically meaningful until you state *how much* warmer this year was compared to previous years—and until you give the margin of error of that measurement.
>
> The original NASA press release did not give those figures—and most press reports just ran with it anyway. This in itself says a lot. When it comes to global warming, "journalism" has come to mean: "copying press releases from government agencies."
>
> But a few folks decided to do some actual journalism, and Britain's *Daily Mail* reports that
>
> > the NASA press release failed to mention…that the alleged 'record' amounted to an increase over 2010, the previous 'warmest year', of just two-hundredths of a degree—or 0.02C. The margin of error is said by scientists to be approximately 0.1C—several times as much.
>
> Pause for a moment to digest that. The margin of error was plus or minus one tenth of a degree. The difference supposedly being measured here is two *hundredths* of a degree—five times smaller than the margin of error. The *Daily Mail* continues:
>
> > As a result, GISS's director Gavin Schmidt has now admitted NASA thinks the likelihood that 2014 was the warmest year since 1880 is just 38 per cent. However, when asked by this newspaper whether he regretted that the news release did not mention this, he did not respond.
>
> This is not exactly a high point in the employment of the scientific method.
>
> **If we take into account this margin of error, the most we can say is that 2014 was, so far as we know, just as warm as 2005 and 2010.** There is no significant difference between these years. And that gives the lie to claims of runaway global warming.

I got curious about whether Judith Curry had written anything recent about this story, and she has.

She writes:

> Berkeley Earth has published a nice analysis of their 2014 data [link]. Summary of their main findings:
>
> *1. The global surface temperature average for 2014 was nominally the warmest since the global instrumental record began in 1850; however, within the margin of'error, it's tied with 2005 and 2010 and so we can't be certain it set a new record.*
>
> *2. For the land, 2014 was nominally the 4th warmest year since 1753*
>
> *3. For the sea, 2014 was the warmest year on record since 1850*
>
> *4. For the contiguous United States, 2014 ranked nominally as the 38th warmest year on record since 1850.*
>
> Some other statements of interest:
>
> ***Several European countries set all time records for high annual average temperature, as did the continent of Europe as a whole***
>
> ***The margin of uncertainty we achieved was remarkably small (0.05C with 95% confidence).This was achieved, in part, by the inclusion of data from over 30,000 temperature stations, and by the use of optimized statistical methods. Even so, the highest year could not be distinguished. That is, of course, an indication that the Earth's average temperature for the last decade has changed very little.***
>
> Meanwhile, the 'warmest year' is noticeably missing in the satellite data sets of lower atmospheric temperatures. Roy Spencer reports that 2014 was third warmest year since 1979, but just barely.

Interesting that temperature sensors in European countries reported higher temperatures.

Dr. Curry is Professor and former Chair of the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at the Georgia Institute of Technology. She has previously testified to Congress as an expert on climate change.

Roy Spencer does not think that land-based measurements of temperature are as reliable as satellite-based measurements. Do the satellite-based measurements confirm what NASA said?

He writes:

> Most thermometers measure temperature where people live, and people tend to build stuff that warms the local environment around the thermometer.
>
> Called the urban heat island (UHI) effect, most of the warming occurs long before the thermometer site actually becomes "urban". For instance, if you compare

> neighboring thermometers around the world, and also compare their population densities (as a rough indication of UHI influence), it can be easily demonstrated that substantial average UHI warming occurs even at low population densities, about ~1 deg. F at only 10 persons per sq. km!
>
> This effect, which has been studied and published for many decades, has not been adequately addressed in the global temperature datasets, partly because there is no good way to apply it to individual thermometer sites.
>
> […]For a "record" temperature to be statistically significant, it has to rise above its level of measurement error, of which there are many for thermometers: relating to changes in location, instrumentation, measurement times of day, inadequate coverage of the Earth, etc. Oh…and that pesky urban heat island effect.
>
> A couple *hundredths* of a degree warmer than a previous year (which 2014 will likely be) should be considered a "tie", not a record.
>
> […]Our satellite estimates of global temperature, which have much more complete geographic coverage than thermometers, reveal that 2014 won't be even close to a record warm year.
>
> In fact, the satellite and thermometer technologies seem to be diverging in what they are telling us in recent years, with the thermometers continuing to warm, and the satellite temperatures essentially flat-lining.

Here's the graph:

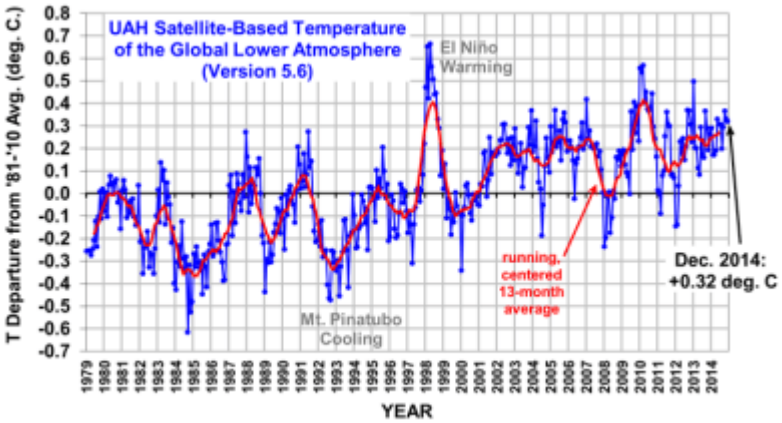

UAH Global Temperature up to 2014, as measured by satellites
It records the temperatures from satellites, which cannot be tampered with as easily as temperature sensors that are placed in urban areas. What we have here is a plateau, and not the hockey stick that was predicted by the global warming alarmists.

Finally: more details on alleged first-century fragment of Mark's gospel emerge

January 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the latest on it from Live Science.

Excerpt:

> A text that may be the oldest copy of a gospel known to exist — a fragment of the Gospel of Mark that was written during the first century, before the year 90 — is set to be published.
>
> At present, the oldest surviving copies of the gospel texts date to the second century (the years 101 to 200).
>
> This first-century gospel fragment was written on a sheet of papyrus that was later reused to create a mask that was worn by a mummy. Although the mummies of Egyptian pharaohs wore masks made of gold, ordinary people had to settle for masks made out of papyrus (or linen), paint and glue. Given how expensive papyrus was, people often had to reuse sheets that already had writing on them.
>
> In recent years scientists have developed a technique that allows the glue of mummy masks to be undone without harming the ink on the paper. The text on the sheets can then be read.
>
> The first-century gospel is one of hundreds of new texts that a team of about three-dozen scientists and scholars is working to uncover, and analyze, by using this technique of ungluing the masks, said Craig Evans, a professor of New Testament studies at Acadia Divinity College in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.
>
> "We're recovering ancient documents from the first, second and third centuries. Not just Christian documents, not just biblical documents, but classical Greek texts, business papers, various mundane papers, personal letters," Evans told Live Science. The documents include philosophical texts and copies of stories by the Greek poet Homer.
>
> The business and personal letters sometimes have dates on them, he said. When the glue was dissolved, the researchers dated the first-century gospel in part by analyzing the other documents found in the same mask.
>
> […]The technique is bringing many new texts to light, Evans noted. "From a single mask, it's not strange to recover a couple dozen or even more" new texts, he told Live Science. "We're going to end up with many hundreds of papyri when the work is done, if not thousands."
>
> […]Evans says that the text was dated through a combination of carbon-14 dating, studying the handwriting on the fragment and studying the other documents found along with the gospel. These considerations led the researchers

> to conclude that the fragment was written before the year 90. With the nondisclosure agreement in place, Evans said that he can't say much more about the text's date until the papyrus is published.
>
> […]Evans said that the research team will publish the first volume of texts obtained through the mummy masks and cartonnage later this year. It will include the gospel fragment that the researchers believe dates back to the first century.
>
> The team originally hoped the volume would be published in 2013 or 2014, but the date had to be moved back to 2015. Evans said he is uncertain why the book's publication was delayed, but the team has made use of the extra time to conduct further studies into the first-century gospel. "The benefit of the delay is that when it comes out, there will be additional information about it and other related texts."

The previous earliest-ever fragments are P52 and P104.

Evangelical Textual Criticism explains:

> A lot has happened since then in the study of Greek palaeography and with the increase in readily available collections of digital images and refined classification one would assume that the experts are able to form an even more informed opinion now than they were in the 1930s. A 2012 article by Orsini and Clarysse provides exactly this re-evaluation. Their method is solid and responsible, both scholars have a tremendous track record, and in general I don't find much to disagree with, even though in some of the finer distinctions Orsini and Clarysse make I cannot always follow them. Their evaluation of the date is not far off from what Roberts came up with in giving the range 125-175 for P52. So is P52 still the earliest fragment of the New Testament?
>
> Possibly, but looking through the results presented by Orsini and Clarysse there is another candidate, P104, an interesting fragment of Matthew 21, published in 1997. This papyrus receives a date 100-200. Some particular scripts are easier to pin down than others and that is why P104 has a span of a century, whilst P52 only half a century. So we have P52 and P104 both dated by a range that has its median in the centre of the second century (it may be earlier, it may be later).
>
> So what is the oldest manuscript? Well, there are two candidates, P52 of John 18, and P104 of Matthew 21; the former oldest manuscript has become part of a double act (two times 52 is 104).

P52 has John 18:31–33 and John 18:37–38 on it.

It will be interesting to see how scholars respond to this new fragment of Mark.

Clint Eastwood's "American Sniper" shows why America goes to war

January 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Chris Kyle, Navy SEAL

John Nolte explains why so many people are going to see it.

He writes:

> "American Sniper" opens during the worst days of Fallujah in Iraq. Kyle (Bradley Cooper) is the eye in the sky watching his fellow warriors through a sniper scope and protecting them when necessary with the kind of precision shooting that will quickly make him a legend (and target).
>
> Through a door, an Iraqi woman emerges with a boy who can't be older than 10. They walk towards a group of Marines. She hands the boy a large grenade. Kyle has been told by his superiors that what happens next is his call.
>
> Before Kyle can make what seems like an impossible choice ("I've never seen such evil," Kyle says later), Eastwood and his screenwriter Jason Hall take us back in time with one of the best flashback sequences you'll ever see. The economy is brilliant, and in just a few minutes we see what made Chris Kyle Chris Kyle: His Christian father's strict but loving moral code, his days as a rodeo rider, his romance with Taya (a terrific Sienna Miller) — the woman who will become his faithful wife, and why two pre-9/11 terrorist attacks on American embassies led Kyle to become a Navy SEAL at the ripe old age of 30.
>
> The rest of the story, which is every bit as compelling (this might be the best-paced film Eastwood has ever made), centers on Kyle's harrowing four tours of duty and his troubled home life. This is a man deeply in love with his country ("I'd die for this country. America is the greatest country in the world.") and his young family. He can only be truly faithful to one. "God, country, family," are the man's priorities.

> “American Sniper” is refreshingly told only from Kyle’s point of view. He reminds a doubting comrade that we’re fighting these “evil f*****g savages” (terrorists) in Iraq so we don’t have to fight them in San Diego. And Eastwood doesn’t flinch from showing these evil f*****g savages for the evil f*****g savages they are. You won’t soon forget watching terrorist mastermind Zarqawi’s chief enforcer, a monster nicknamed The Butcher, slowly torture and murder a young boy with a power drill.
>
> War is ugly and it’s not pretty watching our guys kick in doors. But there are bad guys behind those doors, and no matter how bad those guys might be, Eastwood makes sure the audience knows Americans don’t carry power drills or take lives out of any motive other than self-defense.
>
> There is nothing even close to moral equivalence in “America Sniper,” only the truth: that there is no equivalence between the barbarians who target the innocent and the American heroes who target those who target the innocent.
>
> […]The Big Emotional Question that drives much of “American Sniper” is whether or not, after it’s all over, Kyle still believes in who he is and what he’s done. The film’s best moment comes when that question is answered, when we learn just what is that is tearing Kyle up inside. “I will stand before my Creator and justify every shot,” he tells a military therapist.
>
> You see, it’s not Iraq or Bush or the military or the mission or even those 160 confirmed kills. What’s eating Kyle alive is that he didn’t do more — didn’t save more United States Marines.

This movie made $90 million on its opening weekend. Why aren’t there more movies like this made in Hollywood?

I’m a big fan of war movies – have been since I was a kid. I like war movies that tell the stories of famous battles a lot, but my favorites are movies that show why we have to fight, and the fundamental goodness of fighting evil on the battlefield, when we are threatened by enemies who cannot be dealt with any other way. My favorite war movies are the ones where there are clear-cut villains, like the German Nazis or the Japanese Imperialists or the North Korean communists. I think Islamic extremists belong in there. Why are people so cautious about celebrating our armed forces for confronting evil as clear-cut as any we have had to face in the past?

I really don’t know what’s gone wrong with this country when we celebrate artists, musicians, actors and athletes more than people in the military, the police and the clandestine services. When I was a young man, I would spend hours making and building model jet fighters and drawing pictures of all kinds of military vehicles. Model jet fighters hung from my ceiling. I had maps of all the allied advances during World War 2 on my wall. I read books like this one, which tells the story of every man who won the medal of honor in World War 2. And when I got older, I read military history and military biographies. For me, the idea of stopping a violent evil person has always been a *good thing*.

You can read more about Chris Kyle on military.com.

Canadian court rules that pro-life students can't show images of abortion on campus

January 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Canada

This is from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> In a stunning reversal of recent rulings in nearby provinces, British Columbia Chief Justice Christopher Hinkson has ruled that Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms does not apply to pro-life students seeking space on the University of Victoria campus to demonstrate.
>
> Former U Vic student Cameron Cote and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association had petitioned for a declaration that the university administration had breached the Youth Protecting Youth pro-life club's Charter rights when, in early 2013, it refused permission to display pictures of aborted and healthy babies.
>
> But the Charter only applies to government bodies and Hinkson ruled that the university, though funded mostly by taxpayers, and incorporated by the provincial government, which also appoints a majority of its directors, was acting privately when it decided to deny YPY use of its property. So even though the decision was based on the content of YPY's pro-life message, the Charter protection of free speech and assembly does not apply.
>
> The university is funded by taxpayer dollars – it's not private. But, any port in a storm for this judge.

More:

> [T]he University of Victoria, by simply refusing YPY space to air its views, was acting as a private landlord, ruled Hinkson. But what Hinkson isn't getting, said

> John Carpay, head of the Calgary-based Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedom, is that universities respect freedom of speech, and alternately impose censorship, very selectively.
>
> **“Universities censor pro-life students for showing graphic pictures of aborted babies,” said Carpay. “But universities allow Falun Gong supporters showing graphic pictures of members tortured by the Chinese government. They also allow those promoting use of seat belts to show graphic images of people with their heads halfway through windshields.”**
>
> “Free expression is a cornerstone of democracy,” Carpay added. “But a lot of people seem to believe they have a right not be offended, and this outweighs free speech.”
>
> […]YPY’s battle with the U Vic student society goes back at least to 1999, when the pro-life club won a human rights discrimination ruling. In 2010, a second human rights complaint against the society was settled out of court in the club’s favor.
>
> In all these cases pro-abortion students complained that they felt “harassed” by YPY’s posters, pamphlets, or pictures. The student society then suspended the group’s club status, resulting in the removal of the privilege to use university property for its activities.
>
> **As well, pro-abortion protesters have stolen YPY displays, covered others in cat feces, and pelted members’ belongings with smoke bombs and stink bombs with no response from the university administration. “They’ve created a culture of bullying. They can get away with treating pro-life students badly,” said Anastasia Pearse, western co-ordinator of the National Campus Life Network.**

I’m not sure what secular leftists are learning in college, but it sure isn’t the ability to separate fair process from political correctness. If anyone disagrees with a secular leftists, then the rules don’t apply and anything can be done to stop us from exercises the same rights that everyone else gets. It’s not fair, and I fear that we need to just be more serious about whether what we are doing is going to reverse this problem of not having any influence. I recommend that each one of us not be content with a normal life. In order to fix these problems, we need to aim to have an influence.

A liberal feminist comedian, her beliefs about God and how she formed them

January 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article written by a liberal ex-Catholic woman whose 7-year-old daughter is an atheist.

First the biography of the author:

> **Carolyn Castiglia** is a New York-based comedian/writer wowing audiences with her stand-up and freestyle rap. You may recognize her hip-hop alter ego Miss CKC from Comedy Central, VH1 and MTV2. Carolyn's web vids have been nominated for an ECNY Award and featured in two issues of *EW* magazine. She's appeared in *TONY*, *The NY Post*, *The Idiot's Guide to Jokes* and *Life & Style*. You can find Carolyn's writing elsewhere online at MarieClaire.com and The Huffington Post.

Look at what she wrote:

> I was raised Catholic, and like most people my age who were raised Catholic, I no longer attend church on Sundays. We're "recovering Catholics." That's what so many of us call ourselves. We're still disgusted with the Church for the way it covered up the sex abuse perpetrated against my generation and roll our eyes at the Church's stance on things like abortion, gay marriage and women's rights.
>
> […]I learned a lot about being a Good Person from the things I heard in church… I wanted to be a Good Person, not just because only Good People go to Heaven. I just liked the idea. The meek shall inherit the Earth. It sounded right. Somehow all this sh*t I'm swallowing now, it's gonna pay off later.
>
> I'm pretty much agnostic now (sometimes believing more strongly, other times thinking the concept of God is kind of a joke), but I value the way the idea of God has gotten me through the rough patches. And that has been the payoff. Somehow this notion that there is a giant man in the sky with long hair and a big robe who will hug you from heaven if you need it and carry you on the beach when you've had one too many wine coolers to walk without falling down and getting sand all up in your bikini has been very comforting to me. The image of Jesus but as God but totally as a bro (a homeboy, if you will), there's something righteous about it, if you know what I mean.
>
> But the way I imagine God has changed over the years — He's gone from being a person, a man, to being more of a Thing, a notion. Goodness. The Oneness of the Universe. With something female in there. The energy that keeps the whole thing afloat. God as I know it now when I know it is kind of a cocktail made from a shot of Buddhism, a shot of feminist activism and a splash of ginger ale (because that, my friends, is something you can always count on).

Now the Christians who are reading this will be cringing because we know that these beliefs are not taken out of the Bible. She seems to be speaking more about her opinions rather than what is true. She doesn't seem to be focused on finding truth, but more on being a "good person" and having God as a crutch to pull out if she falls down while pursuing her own plan.

She's wrong that "good people" go to Heaven. Only people who accept Jesus as their leader (Lord) and accept his death as a sacrifice for their rebellion against God (Savior) are resurrected to eternal life. If she is a relativist, then I guess what she means by being a "good person" is that she thinks of herself as good and that the people around her think of her as good. However, the main purpose of Christianity is not to be a good person, or to have people like you or to be happy and comforted. The main goal of Christian living is to puzzle about the truth about God's existence and character, and then to re-prioritize your life based on who Jesus is and what Jesus has done for us. So the focus in Christianity is on truth, and that's what her church should have taught her from a young age. And we are the ones who must read the Bible, we must not rely on someone else to do it for us.

But there is more to her story – her child has been affected by her problematic views of Christianity and God.

She writes:

> My daughter, on the other hand, at the ripe old age of 7, is convinced that there is no God. Not even a god. Yup, my kid's an atheist. And she pretty much has been since she was 5.
>
> It's not for lack of exposure to God or god or even gods and spirituality, because she has attended Church and church and a UU "church" and it has made no impact. We've prayed together. I talk about God sometimes, in a good way. When I asked her recently why she doesn't believe in God she told me, succinctly, "Because I know too much about science!"

Is it a good idea to take scientific advice from a 7-year-old child? I think that we should instead prefer to learn from scholars who research and debate issues in science and religion, and then teach the child based on what we have learned. This is why it was so important to emphasize *how people arrive at true beliefs* in the church. If she had done the work herself to arrive at true beliefs, then she would know what to say to her child's presumptuousness.

More:

> The other night over dinner my daughter looked up at me and said, "Who created the Earth?" And I said, "Well, some people believe that God created the Earth, and some people believe that nature is a creation unto itself." My daughter replied, "I think nature is a creation unto itself." I said, "You know, you're pretty staunch about the fact that there is no God." And she told me, "Well, I don't think he exists. If he does, he's a ghost, and that's weird. I just don't believe it. You

> know, there are Universes beyond our Universe. Once you get outside the Milky Way galaxy, there's a lot more stuff out there."
>
> Wow. When I was 7 I didn't know there was a world outside my town.

So the universe created itself? How could it create itself? It would have to have existed in order to do anything, including create. So it would have to have existed… *before it began to exist*. That's a contradiction, and so it cannot be true. Funny how kids decide whether God exists or not without knowing what they are talking about. It's the parents' job to be able to guide the discussion, not just sit there.

She continues:

> Oh sure, my mother thinks raising a child without religion is dangerous. "I understand you don't think she needs God now, Carolyn. But you gotta give her religion so it's there for her when she needs it later." When the shit hits the fan, when everything falls apart. When you realize there is no one but God you can trust.

See, here is where she needs someone to point out that it's not God's job to help you through crises or make you happy. No one who reads the Bible thinks that God is our cosmic butler. We know from reading the Bible that he has purposes that are different from our purpose to be happy.

Iowa senator Joni Ernst responds to Obama's State of the Union speech

January 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Iowa senator Joni Ernst

Here's the video of the speech:

Transcript from The Weekly Standard.

> Good evening.
>
> I'm Joni Ernst. As a mother, a soldier, and a newly elected senator from the great State of Iowa, I am proud to speak with you tonight.
>
> A few moments ago, we heard the President lay out his vision for the year to come. Even if we may not always agree, it's important to hear different points of view in this great country. We appreciate the President sharing his.
>
> Tonight though, rather than respond to a speech, I'd like to talk about your priorities. I'd like to have a conversation about the new Republican Congress you just elected, and how we plan to make Washington focus on your concerns again.
>
> We heard the message you sent in November — loud and clear. And now we're getting to work to change the direction Washington has been taking our country.
>
> The new Republican Congress also understands how difficult these past six years have been. For many of us, the sting of the economy and the frustration with Washington's dysfunction, weren't things we had to read about. We felt them every day.

We felt them in Red Oak — the little town in southwestern Iowa where I grew up, and am still proud to call home today.

As a young girl, I plowed the fields of our family farm. I worked construction with my dad. To save for college, I worked the morning biscuit line at Hardees.

We were raised to live simply, not to waste. It was a lesson my mother taught me every rainy morning.

You see, growing up, I had only one good pair of shoes. So on rainy school days, my mom would slip plastic bread bags over them to keep them dry.

But I was never embarrassed. Because the school bus would be filled with rows and rows of young Iowans with bread bags slipped over their feet.

Our parents may not have had much, but they worked hard for what they did have.

These days though, many families feel like they're working harder and harder, with less and less to show for it.

Not just in Red Oak, but across the country.

We see our neighbors agonize over stagnant wages and lost jobs. We see the hurt caused by canceled healthcare plans and higher monthly insurance bills. We see too many moms and dads put their own dreams on hold while growing more fearful about the kind of future they'll be able to leave to their children.

Americans have been hurting, but when we demanded solutions, too often Washington responded with the same stale mindset that led to failed policies like Obamacare. It's a mindset that gave us political talking points, not serious solutions.

That's why the new Republican majority you elected started by reforming Congress to make it function again. And now, we're working hard to pass the kind of serious job-creation ideas you deserve.

One you've probably heard about is the Keystone jobs bill. President Obama has been delaying this bipartisan infrastructure project for years, even though many members of his party, unions, and a strong majority of Americans support it. The President's own State Department has said Keystone's construction could support thousands of jobs and pump billions into our economy, and do it with minimal environmental impact.

We worked with Democrats to pass this bill through the House. We're doing the same now in the Senate.

President Obama will soon have a decision to make: will he sign the bill, or block good American jobs?

There's a lot we can achieve if we work together.

Let's tear down trade barriers in places like Europe and the Pacific. Let's sell more of what we make and grow in America over there so we can boost

manufacturing, wages, and jobs right here, at home.

Let's simplify America's outdated and loophole-ridden tax code. Republicans think tax filing should be easier for you, not just the well-connected. So let's iron out loopholes to lower rates — and create jobs, not pay for more government spending.

The President has already expressed some support for these kinds of ideas. We're calling on him now to cooperate to pass them.

You'll see a lot of serious work in this new Congress.

Some of it will occur where I stand tonight, in the Armed Services Committee room. This is where I'll join committee colleagues — Republicans and Democrats — to discuss ways to support our exceptional military and its mission. This is where we'll debate strategies to confront terrorism and the threats posed by Al Qaeda, ISIL, and those radicalized by them.

We know threats like these can't just be wished away. We've been reminded of terrorism's reach both at home and abroad; most recently in France and Nigeria, but also in places like Canada and Australia. Our hearts go out to all the innocent victims of terrorism and their loved ones. We can only imagine the depth of their grief.

For two decades, I've proudly worn our nation's uniform: today, as a Lt. Colonel in the Iowa Army National Guard. While deployed overseas with some of America's finest men and women, I've seen just how dangerous these kinds of threats can be.

The forces of violence and oppression don't care about the innocent. We need a comprehensive plan to defeat them.

We must also honor America's veterans. These men and women have sacrificed so much in defense of our freedoms, and our way of life. They deserve nothing less than the benefits they were promised and a quality of care we can be all be proud of.

These are important issues the new Congress plans to address.

We'll also keep fighting to repeal and replace a health care law that's hurt so many hardworking families.

We'll work to correct executive overreach.

We'll propose ideas that aim to cut wasteful spending and balance the budget — with meaningful reforms, not higher taxes like the President has proposed.

We'll advance solutions to prevent the kind of cyberattacks we've seen recently.

We'll work to confront Iran's nuclear ambitions.

And we'll defend life, because protecting our most vulnerable is an important measure of any society.

Congress is back to work on your behalf, ready to make Washington focus on

> your concerns again.
>
> We know America faces big challenges. But history has shown there's nothing our nation, and our people, can't accomplish.
>
> Just look at my parents and grandparents.
>
> They had very little to call their own except the sweat on their brow and the dirt on their hands. But they worked, they sacrificed, and they dreamed big dreams for their children and grandchildren.
>
> And because they did, an ordinary Iowan like me has had some truly extraordinary opportunities because they showed me that you don't need to come from wealth or privilege to make a difference. You just need the freedom to dream big, and a whole lot of hard work.
>
> The new Republican Congress you elected is working to make Washington understand that too. And with a little cooperation from the President, we can get Washington working again.
>
> Thank you for allowing me to speak with you tonight.
>
> May God bless this great country of ours, the brave Americans serving in uniform on our behalf, and you, the hardworking men and women who make the United States of America the greatest nation the world has ever known.

You can find out more about Joni Ernst in this article from Yahoo News.

Obama issues veto threat against Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act

January 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Signal reports:

> The White House announced today President Obama would veto the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act if it came to his desk.
>
> The bill, which is scheduled for a vote in the House Thursday, would ban elective abortions after twenty weeks–or five months of pregnancy.
>
> That's a policy that has huge public support.
>
> According to a November Quinnipiac poll, *60 percent* of Americans back banning abortion, except in cases of rape or incest reported to the authorities, after 20 weeks. There's virtually no gender divide: 59 percent of women support the ban. Furthermore, the age breakdown shows widespread support for the ban by:
>
> - 57 percent of 18-29 year olds
> - 61 percent of 30-49 year olds
> - 63 percent of 50-64 year olds
> - 58 percent of 65+ American voters
>
> In this divided age, there's little that unites Americans in such large numbers as this ban does.
>
> Most of the world already has such a ban. Only six other countries besides the United States allow elective abortions after 20 weeks, including China and North Korea.
>
> By the time a pregnancy is 20 weeks along, the unborn child is hearing, has fingernails and toenails, and a beating heart.
>
> The child is also close to being potentially able to survive outside the womb. In 2011, 21-one-week-old Frieda Mangold was born in Germany.
>
> She made it.
>
> Little Frieda faced huge obstacles: she weighed just over a pound when born. Sadly, her twin brother didn't survive. But Frieda's birth shows how incredibly developed these 20-week-old babies are, even at this early stage.

Why will Obama veto this bill? Because he is radical on the abortion issue.

First, he supports late-term abortions, as reported by the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> The Washington Post reports that President Obama is running his reelection campaign as a "culture warrior," trying to cast his opponents as extremists on

> such issues as abortion in the case of rape and requiring religious institutions to pay for contraception. But could Obama's own extremism on abortion come back to bite him?
>
> During a 2003 press conference, Barack Obama indicated that he thought abortion should be legal in all situations, even late in pregnancy:
>
> OBAMA: "I am pro-choice."
>
> REPORTER: "In all situations including the late term thing?"
>
> OBAMA: "I am pro-choice. I believe that women make responsible choices and they know better than anybody the tragedy of a difficult pregnancy and I don't think that it's the government's role to meddle in that choice."
>
> In another interview, Obama said: "I voted no on the late-term abortion ban, not because I don't recognize that these are painful issues but because I trust women to make these decisions."

And second, on abortions where the baby is born alive(infanticide):

> When Obama opposed a bill to stop infanticide as a member of the Illinois legislature, he said he did so because it reportedly contained language that would have contravened the Roe v. Wade decision. However, documents uncovered during the 2008 election show Obama has misrepresented his position.
>
> Obama, as a member of the Illinois Senate, opposed a state version of the federal Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, a measure that would make sure babies who survive abortions are given proper medical care.
>
> It also protected babies who were "aborted" through a purposeful premature birth and left to die afterwards.
>
> On the federal level, pro-abortion groups withdrew their opposition to the bill after a section was added making sure it did not affect the status of legal abortions in the United States. Ultimately, the bill was approved on a unanimous voice vote with even leading pro-abortion lawmakers like Hillary Clinton and John Kerry backing it.

And finally, Obama very likely supports sex-selection abortions.

Excerpt:

> President Barack Obama appears to oppose the ban on sex-selection abortions that the House of Representatives debated yesterday and will be voting on today.
>
> ABC News White House correspondent Jake Tapper posted a new report indicating President Obama opposes the bill to prohibit performing or coercing abortions to eliminate unborn babies of an undesired sex. Tapper raised the question at Wednesday's White House press briefing, but did not receive a

> respond to his question about Obama's position.
>
> […]White House deputy press secretary Jamie Smith told him in a statement: "The Administration opposes gender discrimination in all forms, but the end result of this legislation would be to subject doctors to criminal prosecution if they fail to determine the motivations behind a very personal and private decision. The government should not intrude in medical decisions or private family matters in this way."
>
> National Right to Life legislative director Douglas Johnson was upset to learn Obama opposes the common-sense bill, telling LifeNews: "It is appalling, but not surprising, that President Obama now stands with the pro-abortion political committees and his Hollywood donors, rather than with the coerced women, and their unborn daughters, who are victimized in sex-selection abortions."

The Democrat Party also supports sex-selection abortions. Their view is that the mere fact that an unborn child is female is sufficient reason to kill that child. Is that pro-women? What could be more discriminatory and anti-women than that?

I still know Christians who think that Obama is pro-life and pro-natural marriage. I hope that stories like this will wake them up to the fact that he is actually a radical leftist on social issues. Just because a person is handsome and can read a teleprompter, it doesn't mean that he is pro-life and pro-marriage.

Three reasons why you should be aggressive about giving grace to others

January 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm still reading the devotional book (Paul Tripp's "New Morning Mercies") that Dina asked me to read. I will be reading it all year. I find that about one devotion a week is useful, the rest are fluff. However, because she is willing to keep asking me how I am doing with it, and also listen to me complain and criticize, I am keeping up with it.

I wanted to blog about the January 19th devotion.

Here is the text:

> JANUARY 19
>
> If you look into the mirror of God's Word and see someone in need of grace, why would you be impatient with others who share that need?
>
> Maybe one of the biggest sins in our relationships with one another is the sin of forgetting. I wish I could say that this is not my problem, but it is. It is so easy to forget how profound your need of grace is, and it is equally easy to forget the amazing grace that has been freely showered upon you. And when you forget the grace that you've been given, it becomes very easy to respond to the people around you with nongrace.
>
> It is very clear that grace toward others isn't best born out of duty. Pretend with me that I plop down on the couch next to my dear wife, Luella, and say these words: "You know, Luella, I have come to the realization that it's my duty to be gracious to you. So I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to give you grace, not because I really want to, but because I guess it's what I have to do." Do you think that Luella would be encouraged by that statement for a moment? I think not. A joyful life of grace toward others grows best in the soil of gratitude. When I really reflect on who I am, when I take time to consider the grace that I couldn't have earned, achieved, or deserved but which has been lavished on me, and when I remember that that grace came at the cost of the life of another, then I am joyfully motivated to give that grace to others.
>
> For the believer, harsh, critical, impatient, and irritated responses to others are always connected to forgetting or denying who we are and what we have been given in Jesus. It is very clear that no one gives grace better than a person who is deeply convinced of his own need of it and who is cogently aware of the grace he has been, and is being, given.
>
> Because we forget so quickly, because we fall into believing that we are deserving, and because we tend to think that we're more righteous and capable than we actually are, we all need to be given grace right at the very moment when we are called to be a tool of grace in the life of another. The God of grace is

> working his grace into everyone in the room. First John 4:19 really is true: “We love because he first loved us.” Now, that’s worth remembering.
>
> For further study and encouragement: Ephesians 3:14-21

I don’t want to get grace confused with forgiveness. I wrote about forgiveness before. Grace is more broad than that. If you “borrow” my roadster and wrap it around a tree, and you are really sorry and offer to pay for the repairs, then I forgive you. Grace is not just about forgiveness. Grace can just be you being kind and supportive when we play StarCraft 2, even though I am terrible at it. Grace is unmerited favor. I may be terrible at StarCraft 2, but you just keep playing with me and encouraging me until I get better at it (Thanks, Blake!). Grace can also mean just giving you nice things that are extra and unexpected, like sending a Kindle e-book to a friend for his birthday (Happy birthday, Wessel!)

So, here’s my three points about the devotion above:

First, the basis for us giving grace to others is because we have received grace ourselves. It really has nothing to do with how we feel about the person, or whether they deserve it. Grace is *unmerited* favor, so it’s just something you do to give people some extra care or some extra tolerance. You can look in Matthew 18:23-35 to see how much God wants us to treat other people the way he treats us. He forgives us, we forgive our neighbor. He gives us grace, we give grace to our neighbor. It’s not good if we take the benefits from God and then do not show that we appreciate it by treating our neighbor the same way as God treats us. Think about the Lord’s Prayer: “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us”.

Second, we should be *happy* that we get the opportunity to give other people grace, because we are imitating God when we do that. In fact, we should be aggressive about seeking out opportunities to do this. What is the point of being a follower of Jesus if you never get to experience what Jesus does by imitating him? We have to share in the same joys and sorrows by doing the same things. I never really like a woman until I see her trying to do actions that are helping to achieve goals that I think are important. I can explain to her what apologetics is and buy her books. But the real joy comes from seeing her read and study and then take action – speaking in public (Dina) or teaching in church (Mary) or organizing an apologetics event (Tracy). I think God is happy in the same way if we try to imitate him as a way of *respecting* what he has done for us.

Third, we must not underestimate how much grace a person needs by judging how much we needed. Some people need more grace to grow as a Christian than we needed ourselves. So long as a person is moving in the right direction and following Jesus, we should give her as much grace as we can – but still being good stewards of our time and resources. The key is – so long as she is growing in the right direction, and not rebelling. The simple fact is that we are not in a position to know how far any person can go, and God gives us so few people to care for anyway. Why not splurge and give lots of grace to the people we are assigned to care for, even if it’s much more than we needed ourselves? That is the whole point of it – to do more than is expected.

James White debates Adnan Rashid on trustworthiness of the Bible vs Quran

January 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's on Justin Brierley's Unbelievable radio show, from the UK!

The show starts with introductions by each speaker, then the debate begins.

James White's opening address:

The Bible:

- most Christians have a naive view of how holy books come to us from antiquity
- the Bible and Koran were written and transmitted in two different ways
- the Koran was written down and spread in a controlled way
- the Bible was written in an uncontrolled way
- Christianity was illegal until 313, so early Christians were persecuted
- the Bible had to be copied and spread illegally by individuals
- people risked their lives to copy *pieces* of the text
- the good part of this is that there are *tons* of manuscripts
- the manuscripts are *earlier* than the Church councils that define the Canon
- a persecuted minority would not have been able to conspire to change the text
- there are tons of minor variants from misspellings and typos in the manuscripts

The Koran:

- the Hadith (writings that post-date the Koran) record how the Koran was written
- the authorities worried that many fragments and manuscripts would cause disputes
- the authorities got together and created an approved version to distribute
- all the other Koranic materials (fragments and manuscripts) *were burnt*
- this happened soon after the death of Mohammed
- there are fewer variants with this centralized, top-down approach

Adnan Rashid's opening speech:

The Bible:

- the Bible we have today is not infallible, was not transmitted infallibly
- none of the 4 gospels are written by eyewitnesses
- there are around 400,000 variants in the manuscripts (cites Ehrman)
- the huge number of variants touches on virtually every line of text
- the manuscripts have differences – which manuscript is the inspired one?
- editors are needed to adjudicate between all of the variants (cites Metzger)
- editors have to rely on probabilities in order to choose the text itself

The Koran:

- the text of the Koran was selected by Mohammed's immediate successor
- the purpose of this selection was to unify the Arab tribes on one text
- rejected fragments and manuscripts were burned
- no coercion was used to get the bad manuscripts burned

James White's rebuttal:

- 99% of the variants are technicalities of the Greek language
- only 1500-2000 variants change the meaning of the text
- there are many variants is because there are many manuscripts
- more manuscripts makes it harder for any authority to change the text
- the editors don't hide the variants – that why everyone knows about them
- the photographs of the fragments and manuscripts are available, not burnt

Adnan Rashid's rebuttal:

- we are in the process of photographing our fragments and manuscripts
- what the photographs show is that the Koran has no shocking variants
- Metzger is clear that editors are deciding the text based on probabilities

Crosstalk about Metzger:

- James: editors decide the *main reading* and the rest goes in *footnotes*
- James: Metzger doesn't think that this makes the Bible unreliable
- Adnan: prove it

Crosstalk about the Koran:

- James: The Koran has variants too and manuscript issues
- James: Mohammed appointed Ibn Masoud as the authority on the Koran
- Adnan: actually Mohammed pointed out four authorities, not just one
- Adnan: we don't have manuscript problems or variant problems as bad as yours

Crosstalk about the crucifixion of Jesus:

- James: the crucifixion is denied in Surah 4:157
- James: the Koran is written 600 years after the cruficixion
- James: the Koran is written hundreds of miles from the crucifixion site
- James: non-Christians like Ehrman and Crossan do not deny the crucifixion
- James: for 600 years after, history is unanimous that the crucifixion happened
- Adnan: the gospel of Thomas doesn't mention the crucifixion
- Adnan: Thomas predates Mark and is contemporaneous with Q
- James: Thomas contains NO HISTORY – just sayings of Jesus
- James: Thomas is not written by eyewitnesses to the events
- James: Thomas is written in Coptic, originated in Syria, in the 2nd century
- James: Thomas reflects gnostic theology, not Christian theology

- Adnan: if the Koran says that the crucifixion didn’t happen, then it didn’t
- James: Adnan believes one person 600 years later instead of the eyewitnesses
- Adnan: Paul invented the crucifixion out of nothing
- Adnan: The gospels are just theology, not history, written to confirm Paul
- Adnan: some scholars say Thomas isn’t gnostic
- Adnan: some scholars say Thomas is early
- Adnan: Metzger says Thomas was rejected because it was non-Christian
- James: I agree that it was rejected for theology because it’s gnostic

Obama proposes new tax on stay-at-home moms in SOTU speech

January 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brad Wilcox writes in the Wall Street Journal about the new tax on stay-at-home mothers that Obama proposed in his State of the Union speech.

He writes:

> Guess which kind of family was left out in the cold by President Obama as he unveiled his plan to help middle-class families in his State of the Union address? The traditional two-parent family with a single breadwinner.
>
> The president pitched his plan as part of an agenda in which "everyone gets their fair shot, everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same set of rules" in part by "lowering the taxes of working families and putting thousands of dollars back into their pockets each year." But by design or omission, his plan does virtually nothing for married families with a parent at home, usually the mother.
>
> The president's plan would triple the existing child-care tax credit to $3,000 for two-earner families with children under 5 and a combined income of less than $120,000, and it would establish a new $500 credit for families in which both spouses work. The plan would provide tax relief—which would no doubt help with the cost of child care, commuting, etc.—to middle-class families with both parents in the workforce. **But families who choose to have a parent at home would see none of this tax relief.**

Terry Jeffries explains in CNS News why Obama would want to penalize stay-at-home moms.

He writes:

> The perversely logical corollary to Obama's desire to structure the tax code to the disadvantage of stay-at-home mothers is his desire to use tax dollars to replace working fathers with the government itself.
>
> As this column has noted before, in each of the last six years on record — 2008 through 2013 — at least 40 percent of the babies born in the United States were born to unmarried mothers. By contrast, in 1940, only 3.8 percent of the babies were born to unmarried mothers.
>
> According to the Department of Health and Human Services' annual report on "Welfare Indicators and Risk Factors" it is a fact that "historically a high proportion of welfare recipients first became parents outside of marriage."
>
> In 2013, according to the Census Bureau, there were 105,862,000 full-time year-round workers in the United States — including 16,685,000 full-time government

> workers. These full-time workers were outnumbered by the 109,631,000 whom the Census Bureau says were getting benefits from means-tested federal programs — n.b. welfare — as of the fourth quarter of 2012.
>
> Every American family that pays its own way — and takes care of its own children whether with one or two incomes — must subsidize the 109,631,000 on welfare.
>
> Perhaps if we started rolling back the welfare state — and reduced the burden of government on all families that rely on themselves and not the government — more mothers would choose to stay home even if that meant Obama and his ideological heirs would discriminate against them in the tax code.

So if you make it impossible for a woman to stay home, then she goes to work. If she goes to work, she pays taxes to the government. The government turns around and distributes that money to people who will vote for them in exchange for the money – like single mothers on welfare. The more money they make, the more money they have to buy votes with. And they get the votes of all the child care workers, too – because if mothers stayed home, they wouldn't have jobs. Only the parents and the children suffer, as the children get torn away from their parents to be raised by strangers. Often, child care workers are unionized, and work based on government specifications. Parents lose the ability to care for their own children and watch over them, teaching them their beliefs and values. Instead, the values of these strangers are given to them. Instead of a mother's love, they get fed and handled by strangers.

I guess we shouldn't be surprised that the party that aborts unborn children treats born children like this. It amazes me that people who claim to be pro-marriage and pro-family keep voting for politicians who want to raise taxes, forces women to leave their children in the hands of strangers in order to make ends meet.

Is Obama's portrait of the state of the world realistic or delusional?

January 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News compares Obama's words to reality.

Excerpt:

> President Obama is "living in a dream world" if he believes the U.S. is "stopping ISIL's advance" in Iraq and Syria, says former Ambassador to the U.N. John Bolton.
>
> In his State of the Union address Tuesday night, Obama said: "In Iraq and Syria, American leadership — including our military power — is stopping ISIL's advance. Instead of getting dragged into another ground war in the Middle East, we are leading a broad coalition, including Arab nations, to degrade and ultimately destroy this terrorist group. We're also supporting a moderate opposition in Syria that can help us in this effort, and assisting people everywhere who stand up to the bankrupt ideology of violent extremism."
>
> […]"I think the ISIS threat is growing," Bolton continued. "They have consolidated control over the territory. They have seized, going back a year now, a year since they took Fallujah, seven months since they took Mosul. And they see weakness on the American side. They think it's winning support among colleagues in the region."
>
> Bolton disagreed with Obama's assertion that the U.S.-led coalition is stopping ISIL's advance with air strikes.
>
> "No," he said. "The president is living in a dream world. The fact is, we have no effective way of containing ISIS."
>
> Bolton said terrorist groups in North Africa, the Middle East, and as far away as Afghanistan and Pakistan are beginning to declare loyalty to ISIS.
>
> "I think moderate Arab regimes in the region, the king of Jordan, the oil-producing monarchies of the Iranians Peninsula, are in fear of what ISIS will do. The president's notion that we have got opportunities is belied by the continued Iranian progress towards a deliverable nuclear weapons capability. The Middle East is descending into chaos and we are watching."
>
> Rep. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) told MSNBC on Wednesday morning that Obama "is living in a make-believe world when it comes to our national security."
>
> Cotton, like Bolton, disagrees that the U.S.-led coalition is stopping ISIS/ISIL's advance: "That's simply not the case," Cotton told "Morning Joe." "We may have arrested their progress somewhat in Iraq, but you don't win the war on defense — you win on offense."
>
> Cotton also mentioned Yemen, cited by Obama just four months ago as an

> example of a successful counter-terrorism strategy. But Yemen's government is now dealing with an apparently successful coup attempt.

Powerline blog describes a few more crises Obama failed to speak about accurately. We have problems with Iran continuing their progress towards nuclear weapons. Russia has occupied Crimea and continues to attack targets in Ukraine using *regular Russian troops.* In Yemen, Shia rebels are attempting a coup against the president, and the U.S. Navy is heading there to evacuate the U.S. embassy if necessary.

Meanwhile, Obama assures us that the real threat we should be worried about is global warming.

CNS News again:

> Not radical Muslim terrorism, not an unsecured border, not an ever-growing federal debt that now exceeds $18 trillion, not the fact that 109 million live in households on federal welfare programs. These are not the greatest threats facing us today.
>
> "No challenge–no challenge–poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change," President Obama declared in his State of the Union Address on Tuesday night.

That's the top priority of the Democrat party.

New study: another example of convergence, this time for geomagnetic navigation

January 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We have to start this post with the definition of convergence in biology.

> In evolutionary biology, convergent evolution is the process whereby organisms not closely related (not monophyletic), independently evolve similar traits as a result of having to adapt to similar environments or ecological niches.
>
> It is the opposite of divergent evolution, where related species evolve different traits.
>
> On a molecular level, this can happen due to random mutation unrelated to adaptive changes; see long branch attraction. In cultural evolution, convergent evolution is the development of similar cultural adaptations to similar environmental conditions by different peoples with different ancestral cultures. An example of convergent evolution is the similar nature of the flight/wings of insects, birds, pterosaurs, and bats.
>
> All four serve the same function and are similar in structure, but each evolved independently.

And now, Evolution News has a story about a new discovery.

Turtles have the ability to navigate by sensing magnetic isolines:

> *Science* Magazine gives a brief review of the findings:

> Much like shifting sand, **magnetic fields slide slightly over time**, and their strength also increases as one moves away from the equator, akin to latitude.**This property gives each stretch of coast a unique geographic marker**, known as an isoline. The team found that **in years when these magnetic isolines moved apart, the turtle nests spread out over a larger area — by 1 or 2 kilometers**. Conversely, when isolines converged, the nests squeezed into a smaller patch of beach, suggesting the **turtles follow shifting magnetic tracks to their favorite nests**. The findings also argue that **a magnetic address is imprinted on loggerhead turtles at birth** to point the way home.

But so do salmon, and other birds, fishes and mammals:

> Remarkably, salmon show this same ability. Brothers and Lohman write:
>
> > In a previous study, the migratory route of **salmon** approaching their natal river was **shown to vary with subtle changes** in the Earth's field. Whereas the endpoint of the salmon spawning migration was presumably the same regardless of route, **our findings demonstrate**

> > **for the first time** a **relationship between changes in Earth's magnetic field and the locations where long-distance migrants return** to reproduce.
>
> Joining the contenders for this skill set are more unrelated animal types:
>
> > … our results provide the strongest evidence to date that **sea turtles find their nesting areas at least in part** by **navigating to unique magnetic signatures** along the coast. In addition, our results are consistent with the hypothesis that turtles accomplish natal homing **largely on the basis of magnetic navigation** and **geomagnetic imprinting**. These findings, in combination with recent studies on Pacific **salmon**, suggest that **similar mechanisms** might underlie natal homing in **diverse long-distance migrants such as fishes, birds, and mammals**.
>
> So here we have a highly-precise navigational ability, able to cue on very faint properties in the earth's magnetic field, then on olfaction, and possibly on "other supplemental local cues" to find home across thousands of miles. The sensory "instruments" involved are integrated so that they are able to coordinate their functions for the same goal. Furthermore, the baby turtles, with their tiny brains, must have the ability to memorize the natal signatures of odors and magnetic field properties at birth, then recall those memories years later as large adults. (Sea turtles return about every two years to lay eggs.)
>
> That would be a conundrum enough to explain by unguided processes like natural selection. But then, adding to the difficulty for Darwinism, similar abilities are found in distantly related animals like fish, birds, and mammals. Even if a Darwinian could show a possible line of descent from fish to mammal, the abilities involved would have been lost and regained multiple times, because not all fish, birds, and mammals use magnetic navigation. Given the complexities of the sensory systems involved, this would represent a case of "convergent evolution" on steroids. If the origin of this capability in one type of animal is highly implausible by mutation and selection, how about four times or more?
>
> A design perspective, by contrast, would expect that unrelated animals on a common planet would share similar capabilities for their needs. The earth's magnetic field is global. It isn't surprising that very different animals would be designed to use that feature of the earth.

How can it be that animals that have no recent common ancestor can have evolved this remarkable ability independently? The best explanation of this convergence is common design, not common descent.

More posts on convergence

- New study: bird origins poses a convergence challenge to common ancestry

- New study: how the hummingbird performs stunning feats of aerobatics
- Another example of convergence found in human and squid eye genes
- Convergence detected in the genetic structure of bats and dolphins
- How biological convergence falsifies Darwinian evolution
- Science Daily reports on genetic convergence in bats and whales
- What kinds of predictions does intelligent design make?
- Is universal common ancestry based on established facts?

Republicans Renee Ellmers and Jackie Walorski derail vote on 20-week abortion ban

January 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm afraid I have some bad news to report.

This is from the Federalist.

Excerpt:

> Evidently, Republicans don't feel competent enough to make a case against infanticide. Why else would the GOP pull its 20-week abortion limit bill?

> […]A Quinnipiac poll found that 60 percent of women support limiting abortions to the first 20 weeks of pregnancy. A CBS News poll found that 60 percent of Americans thought abortion "should not be permitted" or available only under "stricter limits." A CNN Poll found that 58 percent of Americans believe abortion should legal only in a "few circumstances" or "always illegal."
>
> Yet the GOP caves on a bill that would prohibit most abortions after 20 weeks and promises instead to pass another worthless ban on taxpayer funded abortions—which we all know can be ignored by hiring an accountant.

> Polls change. Polls don't make you right. I know. But today is the 42nd anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. And while the media continues to treat every Obama non-starter and crowd-pleaser as genuine policy idea, the 20-week abortion ban was predictably framed as another divisive play by zealous conservatives. *Controversial*. Republican leadership helpfully confirmed this perception by abandoning the only bill their party has come up with in years that widely supported.
>
> […][T]he most mystifying aspect of the GOP's retreat on the 20-week ban is that the 20-week ban is not new. Most of these same Republicans voted on the same legislation before the midterm elections, including some of the same representatives that reportedly withdrew their support for the bill. Nearly every GOP candidate running in the midterms publicly backed the idea, even in high-profile races where Democrats made abortion *the* central issue of their campaign.
>
> Yet, at the same time, Obama continues to support unrestricted abortion on demand for any reason at any time by anyone. There is no one to moderate his position. No one to make him veto a bill. No one to ask him about it. The president has no compunctions about supporting infanticide…
>
> […]This is about politics. Tragically incompetent politics. Even though a veto was imminent, you have to wonder: If the party representing the pro-life position, a party with a ~~sizable~~ historic majority, can't pull together a vote on an issue as

> unambiguous and risk-free as this one, what are the chances if it coming to a consensus and offering compelling arguments on issues like health care or tax reform? Very little, I imagine.

Before anyone goes crazy and starts to talk about not voting for Republican candidates in general elections, I want to point out that the vast majority of Republicans in the House would have voted for this bill. The opposition to the vote was led by a few Republican women – women who were known to be moderates.

The Federalist reports on that, too:

> Two of the representatives who caused the biggest stink about the bill were Rep. Renee Ellmers of North Carolina and Jackie Walorski of Indiana. Last week, Ellmers said she didn't think it was a good idea to vote on the legislation so early in the session (an argument that makes no sense, but let's put that aside). Yesterday the women pulled their sponsorship of the bill over what they said were concerns over the rape reporting requirement. And yet here are both women speaking in favor of this exact same legislation two years ago…

Renee Ellmers, from North Carolina:

Jackie Walorski, from Indiana:

The rest of the article discusses what a blunder this was for the GOP.

But their conclusion is important:

> Newsflash to the geniuses in her policy shop: there are few issues the Republicans can have with as much support, much less as much passionate support. If you're cowering in fear on popular stuff, what are you going to do when the going gets tough?

What are they going to do on Keystone XL? What are they going to do on Obamacare? Are they going to fight the tough battles when they retreat on the easy ones?

So what's the answer? I think that the answer is that the grassroots have to do the following:

1. Never give money to Republican groups, but only to individual candidates who have pro-life achievements.
2. Find out who the candidates are in the primaries and vote for the most conservative one. You can always vote for the moderate Republican in the general election, should it come to that.
3. Call your elected representatives in Washington and let them know how you feel about these moderate Republican women.

It's *generally* not a good idea to vote for a third party or a Democrat in an election, that would be worse than voting for a moderate… except in the case of these two ring leaders. I think we can send a message to the GOP by voting for a third party or voting Democrat

just for these two. That way, the rest of them will learn not to do what they did. I don't recommend doing this for trivial things, but for a ban on abortions after 20 weeks? I think some retaliation is in order, for the ring leaders. Ellmers is garbage anyway, and needs to go. Her betrayal is a surprise to no one.

Ellmers won her primary

Of course, we should first try to defeat these RINOs in the Republican primaries, where the Republican candidate for the general election is selected.

Ellmers won her last primary because her opponent had no money:

> According to his most recent filing with the Federal Election Commission, Roche had raised only $23,000 through the middle of April, less than three weeks before election day. Ellmers, meanwhile, had raised nearly $1 million over the election cycle and had $424,000 in cash on hand.
>
> In other words, Ellmers had over 18 times as much cash on hand as Roche had raised over the course of the entire race.
>
> Ellmers has also had the backing of the GOP establishment in North Carolina and well-funded national pro-amnesty organizations ranging from Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg via his political advocacy shop FWD.us to ImmigrationWorksUSA, a business group pushing amnesty.
>
> […]Tea Party Patriots, which is led by national coordinator Jenny Beth Martin, has already faced some criticism for where its resources have been focused. Ingraham hosted Martin on her program last week, and asked why she hasn't spent any of the $2 million Tea Party Patriots spent on polling, fundraising and consulting fees on candidates like Roche or House Majority Leader Eric Cantor's primary challenger Dave Brat.
>
> "If you could knock off Cantor and you can knock off Ellmers, that sends shockwaves through the establishment that you seem so committed to upending, and yet you haven't done the research?" Ingraham pressed Martin. "It's a little late in the game to be doing the research. What's the hold up?"
>
> But Martin's group is hardly the only one where this issue–which is not necessarily because of nefarious motives, but more likely because of political inexperience and a pack mentality in the conservative political action committee world where one group goes into a race all others follow–has arisen. Because of actions from various conservative groups like the Senate Conservatives Fund (SCF), Madison Project, FreedomWorks and more–which are focused on races like Matt Bevin's unlikely-to-succeed challenge to Mitch McConnell or Milton Wolf's lagging bid against Pat Roberts–candidates like Roche either go unnoticed, underfunded or ignored.

We actually did knock off Cantor – this actually works. But it works better when pro-lifers start to think about *all* the issues, not just abortion, and start to primary candidates who are liberal on *any issue*, not just on abortion.

Yemen rebels eject pro-Western government, Russian troops seize Donetsk airport

January 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Everything is fine! Obama said what a great job he was doing during his State of the Union speech, right?

Middle East Map

Let's start with Yemen and the Associated Press:

> Yemen's U.S.-backed president quit Thursday under pressure from rebels holding him captive in his home, severely complicating American efforts to combat al-Qaida's powerful local franchise and raising fears that the Arab world's poorest country will fracture into mini-states.
>
> Presidential officials said Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi submitted his resignation to parliament rather than make further concessions to Shiite rebels, known as Houthis, who control the capital and are widely believed to be backed by Iran.
>
> The prime minister and his cabinet also stepped down, making a thinly veiled reference to the Houthis' push at gunpoint for a greater share of power. Houthis deployed their fighters around parliament, which is due to discuss the situation on Sunday.
>
> Yemeni law dictates that the parliament speaker – Yahia al-Rai, a close ally of former autocratic ruler Ali Abdullah Saleh – will now assume the presidency. Saleh still wields considerable power and is widely believed to be allied with the Houthis.
>
> There were conflicting reports suggesting that authorities in Aden, the capital of southern region of Yemen, would no longer submit to the central government's authority. Even before the Houthis' recent ascendance, a powerful movement in

> southern Yemen was demanding autonomy or a return to the full independence the region enjoyed before 1990. Southerners outrightly reject rule by the Houthis, whose power base is in the north. The Houthis are Zaydis, a Shiite minority that makes up about a third of Yemen's population.

This BBC article explains more about why this is bad news for the United States. Maybe they will try to blame this one on a Youtube video, again?

Oh, but there is more good news. Thanks to Obama's fabulous leadership in foreign policy, the Russians have seized control of a Ukrainian airport.

Map of Ukraine

The Wall Street Journal explains:

> Shelling killed at least eight people at a bus stop in Donetsk on Thursday, hours after government forces withdrew from the ruins of the city's airport following months of relentless bombardment.
>
> With government forces in apparent retreat in several spots, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization offered indirect backing for the Ukrainian government's claims of a fresh influx of Russian troops into eastern Ukraine.
>
> A military spokesman in Kiev said 10 government troops also had been killed in the prior 24 hours—one of the highest single-day totals in weeks.
>
> Separatist forces captured 16 wounded soldiers during the battle overnight at Donetsk airport—then brought the captives to the site of the bus-stop shelling, where they were forced to kneel before a crowd of outraged locals.
>
> […]Earlier this week, Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko said Russia had sent more than 1,000 troops across the border to fight alongside the separatists, putting the total on Ukrainian territory at 9,000.
>
> […]On Wednesday, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg had reported "an increase in Russian equipment inside eastern Ukraine," such as tanks, artillery,

> armored vehicles and advanced air-defense systems.
>
> With fighting intensifying along the so-called line of contact, Gen. Breedlove said the Russia-backed forces have shown “a renewed capability now to bring pressure on the Ukrainian forces,” gaining ground “in several places.”
>
> While the airport, about 10 kilometers (6 miles) northwest of the city, is in ruins, the government’s withdrawal from the main terminal was a significant blow, at least to morale, after months of dogged resistance.
>
> “Last night we took a decision to leave the terminal and pull back to new lines,” military spokesman Vladislav Seleznyov said. He said the terminal had been damaged to such an extent that it could no longer be defended, but that fighting around the airport was continuing.
>
> Another spokesman, Col. Andriy Lysenko, said some buildings were still standing and being defended, such as the remnants of the airport tower and fire station.

Remember when Obama ridiculed Romney for thinking that Russia was a threat to world peace? Obama said to Romney “The 1980s Are Now Calling to Ask for Their Foreign Policy Back”. I think that was a mistake.

Five current scientific problems with Darwinian evolution

January 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Intelligent Design FAQ at the Discovery Institute. (H/T Justin Taylor tweet)

Here are the 5 points:

1. Genetics: Mutations cause harm and do not build complexity.
2. Biochemistry: Unguided and random processes cannot produce cellular complexity.
3. Paleontology: The fossil record lacks intermediate fossils.
4. Taxonomy: Biologists have failed to construct Darwin's "Tree of Life."
5. Chemistry: The chemical origin of life remains an unsolved mystery.

Let's look at the first one:

> Mutations cause harm and do not build complexity.
>
> Darwinian evolution relies on random mutations that are selected by a blind, unguided process of natural selection that has no goals. Such a random and undirected process tends to harm organisms and does not improve them or build complexity. As National Academy of Sciences biologist Lynn Margulis has said, "new mutations don't create new species; they create offspring that are impaired." Similarly, past president of the French Academy of Sciences, Pierre-Paul Grasse, contended that "[m]utations have a very limited 'constructive capacity'" because "[n]o matter how numerous they may be, mutations do not produce any kind of evolution."

It's a nice little overview, and all the sections are short like that – it's just an introduction to each area.

There are lot more questions answered in the FAQ. It's a good resource.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

January 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude others
- It's meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can't say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and

permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Related posts

- Ryan Anderson explains how gay marriage is already infringing on religious liberty
- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson debates gay marriage with S.E. Cupp on the Blaze
- Ryan T. Anderson explains marriage to Piers Morgan and Suze Orman
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Frank Turek: is "equality" the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults "co-parenting" children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

New book “Counting to God” discusses seven arguments against atheism from science

January 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Evolution News has a summary of the book – they recommend it.

Excerpt:

> A lot of books — many of them very good — have been written about the debate over intelligent design. But rarely does one come along that combines a compelling story of the author’s personal journey to faith with a well-written, comprehensive, easy-to-read presentation of the scientific evidence. Lee Strobel’s 2004 *Case for a Creator* comes to mind, but that is now ten years old and it’s never too soon for an update. As a result, I’m pleased to recommend an outstanding new book: *Counting to God: A Personal Journey through Science to Belief*, by Douglas Ell.
>
> Doug Ell is an attorney in Washington, D.C., with an undergraduate degree in math and physics from MIT, and a master’s degree from the University of Maryland in theoretical math. You’ll have to read the book to learn Doug’s entire story. He was born into a religious home, but by the time he started college, he had drifted away from his upbringing, which he came to see as outdated superstition. As an undergraduate student, he embraced scientism — the view that scientific investigation is the only means of discovering real truth. Sometime later, however, Doug was introduced to the scientific theory of intelligent design, and everything began to change.
>
> *Counting to God* tells Doug’s story, but it also recounts key lines of evidence that support the theory of intelligent design and challenge materialist explanations of cosmic and biological origins. Ell presents what he calls the “seven wonders” of science of the new millennium:
>
> - The universe had a beginning, and a first cause, some 14 billion years ago.
> - The universe is finely tuned for life.
> - The complexity of life could not arise through unguided processes.
> - DNA contains information and biological machines.
> - New species appear suddenly in the fossil record.
> - Earth is a special planet, uniquely suited to life.
> - Quantum physics points to a reality outside of space and time.
>
> Ell surveys the evidence in each of these areas, discussing other intriguing topics along the way, including the multiverse, junk DNA, irreducible complexity, orphan genes, and near-death experiences.

I think we’ve discussed all seven of those arguments on this blog before, depending on

what he means by them.

The hardcover is a lot more expensive than the Kindle edition, but I felt that this was one book I wanted to put on my desk. So I took a chance and ordered it. I hope it's as good as this review says it is!

UPDATE: The woman I am mentoring and I have both read the book, and we both liked it a lot and agree it's a good introduction to the scientific arguments. I bought a copy for my friend Dina, as well, so we'll get an opinion from her soon, since she is a reading machine.

New study: couples that delay sexual activity experience higher quality relationships

January 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Relationship stability, quality, communication, satisfaction

From Family Studies, news about TWO new studies.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> [T]wo recently published studies call into question the validity of testing sexual chemistry early in dating.
>
> My colleagues and I published the first study a few years ago in the American Psychological Association's *Journal of Family Psychology*. This study involved a national sample of 2,035 married individuals who participated in the popular online couple assessment survey called "RELATE." **We found that the longer a dating couple waits to have sex, the better their relationship is after marriage. In fact, couples who wait until marriage to have sex report higher relationship satisfaction (20% higher), better communication patterns (12% better), less consideration of divorce (22% lower), and better sexual quality (15% better) than those who started having sex early in their dating (see Figure 2). For couples in between—those that became sexually involved later in their dating, but prior to marriage—the benefits were about half as strong.**
>
> […]These patterns were statistically significant even when controlling for a variety of other variables such as respondents' number of prior sexual partners, education levels, religiosity, and relationship length.
>
> **The second study, by Sharon Sassler and her colleagues at Cornell University, also found that rapid sexual involvement has adverse long-term implications for relationship quality.** Using data from the Marital and Relationship Survey, which provides information on nearly 600 low- to moderate-income couples living with minor children, their study examined the tempo of sexual intimacy and subsequent relationship quality in a sample of married and cohabiting men and women. Their analyses also suggest that delaying sexual involvement is associated with higher relationship quality across several

> dimensions.
>
> They discovered that the negative association between sexual timing and relationship quality is largely driven by a link between early sex and cohabitation. Specifically, sexual involvement early in a romantic relationship is associated with an increased likelihood of moving more quickly into living together, which in turn is associated with lower relationship quality. This finding supports Norval Glenn's hypothesis that sexual involvement may lead to unhealthy emotional entanglements that make ending a bad relationship difficult. As Sassler and her colleagues concluded, "Adequate time is required for romantic relationships to develop in a healthy way. In contrast, relationships that move too quickly, without adequate discussion of the goals and long-term desires of each partner, may be insufficiently committed and therefore result in relationship distress, especially if one partner is more committed than the other" (p. 710).

The rest of the post talks about two reasons why this works: improved partner selection and prioritizing communication and commitment. Improved partner selection occurs because you haven't committed too much too soon (sexually) and you have time to let things play out to see if you really fit with the other person. And if you take sex off the table, then you have to use other means in order to build emotional intimacy – communication, service, support, etc.

That's two studies, and there's a third. Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail about a new study showing the importance of chastity for relationship quality and stability.

Excerpt:

> New couples who jump into bed together on the first date do not last as long in relationships as those who wait a new study has revealed.
>
> Using a sample of almost 11,000 unmarried people, Brigham Young University discovered a direct correlation between the length and strength of a partnership and the amount of time they took to have first have sex.
>
> **The study showed that those who waited to initiate sexual intimacy were found to have longer and more positive outcomes in their relationships while those who couldn't help themselves reported that their dalliances struggled to last more than two years.**
>
> 'Results suggested that waiting to initiate sexual intimacy in unmarried relationships was generally associated with positive outcomes,' said the report authored published by the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health.
>
> 'This effect was strongly moderated by relationship length, with individuals who reported early sexual initiation reporting increasingly lower outcomes in relationships of longer than two years.'
>
> The study examined four sexual-timing patterns: Having sex prior to dating,

> initiating sex on the first date or shortly after, having sex after a few weeks of dating, and sexual abstinence.
>
> Each one of these fields yielded different results in relationship satisfaction, stability and communication in dating situations.

Here's another recent study that shows that if a woman has more than her husband as a premarital sex partner, her risk of divorce increases.

His findings:

> Using nationally representative data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, I estimate the association between intimate premarital relationships (premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) and subsequent marital dissolution. I extend previous research by considering relationship histories pertaining to both premarital sex and premarital cohabitation. I find that premarital sex or premarital cohabitation that is limited to a woman's husband is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption.**However, women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship have an increased risk of marital dissolution.**

Here's another study that makes it even more clear.

Findings:

> Data from the 1988 US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) were utilized to assess the impact of premarital sexual activity on subsequent marital stability. **Among white NSFG subjects first married in 1965-85, virgin brides were significantly less to have become separated or divorced (25%) than women who had not been virgins at marriage (35%).**
>
> **[…]The lower risk of divorce on the part of white women with no premarital sexual experience persisted even after numerous intervening and background variables were controlled.**

This study supports what the Bible says about chastity and premarital sex:

> 1 Cor. 7:8-9:
>
> 8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to stay single as I am.
>
> 9 But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.
>
> The idea of "burning" here has to do with sexual desire. Here Paul tells all unmarried people that if they cannot control their sexual desires, they need to get married. Why? Because Paul assumes that one cannot fulfill this sexual desire outside of the marital bed. While Paul would love for them to remain single (1 Cor. 7:7), he believes that sex outside of marriage is a destructive sin and *cannot* be used as a gratifying release of our sexual passions.

If you're going to talk to a young person about sex, it's a good idea to use these studies to explain what you lose by having sex too early in the relationship. Although they may respond with anecdotes to refute studies, studies are important because they represent LOTS of data points, not just one or two cherry-picked cases. My view on all this is the Bible's view – no sex before marriage. But when talking to people about this issue, I find it useful to have evidence ready in order to be convincing in every way possible.

Wisconsin governor Scott Walker draws standing ovations at Freedom Summit in Iowa

January 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from The Hill.

Excerpt:

> Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker (R) delivered a fiery speech in Iowa on Saturday, wowing the conservative crowd with a passionate argument for small government and his own lengthy resume.
>
> The Wisconsin governor, in rolled-up shirtsleeves, paced the stage as he blasted big government and touted a long list of conservative reforms he's pushed through in blue Wisconsin.
>
> The governor also showed a rhetorical flourish that's largely been absent from his previous campaigns, drawing the crowd to its feet multiple times.
>
> "There's a reason we take a day off to celebrate the 4th of July and not the 15th of April," he said, almost yelling as his voice grew hoarse. "Because in America we value our independence from the government, not our dependence on it."
>
> Walker's speech had something for every element of the activist crowd. The governor touted his three victories over Democrats and recall win as well as his state-level education reforms. Each new policy he helped pass drew cheers: Voter ID laws, education reforms, tax cuts and defunding Planned Parenthood.
>
> The biggest question for Walker as he ramps up for a race is whether he has the fire in the belly and political skills to stand onstage against the other candidates. And in his first major Iowa address, he may have done a lot to dispel notions that he lacks charisma.
>
> When he said he won reelection as Milwaukee County Executive in an area where President Obama won by a two-to-one margin, some in the audience gasped.
>
> "If you get the job done the voters will actually stand up with you," he said before contrasting his record with Washington's deadlock.
>
> The preacher's son also showed a personal side — and spoke in religious terms to thank Iowans who prayed for him as he faced death threats during his fight against the public sector unions, including one that promised to gut his wife "like a deer."
>
> Walker made sure to establish his Iowa roots — saying he'd lived there until third grade until his father got a job as a minister in Wisconsin — before promising to return "many more times in the future."

More from a different article from The Hill:

> Scott Walker's stock is soaring after a triumphant return to Iowa.
>
> The Wisconsin Republican governor delivered a pitch-perfect speech to a room packed with influential Hawkeye State conservatives on Saturday, walking them through his robust resume and ideology with a passion that surprised many.
>
> Activists say Walker came out on top after 10 hours of candidate speeches.
>
> "It was a clear Walker victory. He had expectations coming in here, he was on everyone's shortlist and he had to meet those expectations and I thought he far exceeded them," said former Iowa Republican Party political director Craig Robinson. "I thought his speech was just perfect, and I thought his delivery was perfect. The delivery really surprised me."
>
> Walker held his own against Ted Cruz, the event's other star. While the Texas senator always turns in commanding performances with conservative crowds, the governor next door helped himself the most by making a strong first impression with many Iowa activists who simply knew him from his showdown with the unions.
>
> He offered something for almost every type of conservative, rolling through his record of both social and fiscal accomplishments, drawing big applause by knocking "radical Islamic terrorists" and touting legislation he backed to relax gun control laws and cut taxes.
>
> He spoke about his faith in a natural way, and in one sentence managed to mention that he was both the son of a pastor and had Iowa roots (Walker spent his early years in the state before his dad moved to a church in Wisconsin).
>
> Most importantly, he did it all with a folksy yet fiery delivery that had observers gushing and brought the crowd to their feet.
>
> **The biggest question surrounding Walker heading into the weekend is whether his charisma could stack up against the other White House contenders. It was a worry Walker shared — one Republican who talked to him backstage said the governor expressed concern that people would view him as "bland." But as the strode onstage with his shirt sleeves rolled up and paced about the floor, those worries vanished.**
>
> "Walker found a way to talk about himself, talk about the country and talk about Iowa in perfect proportionality, and he did so with a style that was very easy and engaging," said Republican pollster Frank Luntz. "He connected to these people — you could see it."
>
> […]But Walker made a big splash in his first Iowa appearance of 2015, stealing the spotlight from his likely foes.
>
> "That's the first time I've ever heard him live and he was tremendous. It was a great speech," said Sam Clovis, a conservative kingmaker and the GOP's 2014 nominee for state treasurer. "That was something special."

Since we are ramping up to the 2016 election, I took some time to list out my 6 favorite

candidates for the GOP nomination.

Here they are:

1. Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
2. Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal
3. Texas governor Rick Perry
4. New Mexico governor Susana Martinez
5. Indiana governor Mike Pence
6. Texas senator Ted Cruz

Five out of six candidates are governors, because I really think we need to prefer people who have executive branch experience – experience at building consensus with Democrats in order to get sensible bills passed that will help middle class Americans. I would like to see Ben Carson run, but I think he would make a better HHS secretary than President. Ohio governor John Kasich is a good choice, but he doesn't have the same accomplishments that the governors in my list have. Walker is my first choice because he took on the public sector unions and won.

There are also some people I don't think should be President. I like Marco Rubio, but his support for amnesty disqualifies him as a candidate. Jeb Bush is disqualified because he is too supportive of amnesty and Common Core. Mitt Romney's record is too supportive of abortion and gay rights. Romney also supports global warming alarmism. I think Romney is a better Democrat than he is a Republican. Rand Paul is only good on fiscal issues. On social issues Paul is a moderate. And foreign policy, Paul is a Democrat. Chris Christie is really a conservative Democrat.

If you want to learn more about Scott Walker, I recommend Walker's new book. I actually got the audio version, and it's read by governor Walker himself.

Related posts

- Republican Scott Walker beats Mary Burke to win Wisconsin Governor race
- Wisconsin House passes Scott Walker's tax cut bill, headed to governor's desk
- Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker cuts taxes again, expects $1 billion surplus in 2015
- Wisconsin governor Walker's reforms hit the left in their wallets
- An interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
- Wisconsin judge defends free speech rights of conservative groups against Democrat censors
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Kenosha teachers vote to de-certify their teacher union, 63 – 37
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election

- Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- What is a "right-to-work" law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues
- Democrat lawmakers flee state to avoid voting on spending cuts

Greek socialist party that originally caused financial meltdown wins election

January 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of Europe

Well, this is certainly going to be interesting…

Fox News reports:

> Greece voted Sunday in an early general election that could alter the course of the country's struggle with crippling debts, with a radical left party poised to win by promising to rewrite the terms of its international bailout.

> The Syriza party led by Alexis Tsipras has remained firmly ahead of conservative Prime Minister Antonis Samaras' New Democracy party in opinion polls throughout the election campaign, which was called two years ahead of schedule.
>
> But those polls also have shown that a significant portion of voters remained undecided until the last minute, and suggest that Syriza might struggle to win enough parliamentary seats to form a government on its own.
>
> […]**Syriza has promised to renegotiate the country's 240 billion euro ($270 billion) international bailout deal. It has pledged to reverse many of the reforms that international creditors demanded in exchange for keeping Greece financially afloat since 2010.**
>
> **The anti-bailout rhetoric has renewed doubts over Greece's ability to**

> **emerge from its financial crisis that has seen a quarter of its economy wiped out, sent unemployment soaring and undermined the euro, the currency shared by 19 European countries.**
>
> **Greece's creditors insist the country must abide by previous commitments to continue receiving support, and investors and markets alike have been spooked by the anti-bailout rhetoric. Greece could face bankruptcy if a solution is not found, although speculation of a "Grexit" — Greece leaving the euro — and a potential collapse of the currency has been far less fraught than during the last general election in 2012.**
>
> Samaras' campaign focused on the improving economy, which grew for the first time in six years in the third quarter of 2014. He has promised to reduce taxes if re-elected and has warned of the potentially dire consequences of reneging on bailout conditions. Opponents accused him of using fear tactics.
>
> Syriza's promises to end Greece's era of crushing austerity have attracted many voters infuriated by the deterioration in their standard of living and ever-increasing tax bills.
>
> […]Greece's next government faces a series of formidable tasks, the most pressing of which is concluding negotiations with bailout inspectors to release a 7.2 billion euro ($8.1 billion) loan installment originally due late last year.

I'm sure that the socialists will know how to run the economy, after all, they did such a good job last time there were in control.

The plan is for them to beg for debt forgiveness, ramp up government spending and raise the minimum wage.

The Wall Street Journal explains:

> European economic orthodoxy, led by Germany, has fought Greece's debt crisis with painful austerity—public-spending cuts and tax hikes—and other strict reforms. Syriza's rise is the most potent challenge yet to that orthodoxy.
>
> If Syriza wins, it could embolden left-wing parties in other countries, especially Spain, where political tensions also are boiling. It could even result in a rift with Germany that ruptures the euro.
>
> The economic plan advanced by Mr. Lapavitsas and other professors aligned with Syriza is rooted in the core principles of debt forgiveness and higher government spending, which Germany has rejected.
>
> […]It has honed its focus since then, and Mr. Lapavitsas describes the party's platform as "a Keynesian program with redistribution attached, with some Marxist view of the world."
>
> […]In the tradition of John Maynard Keynes, Syriza advocates public spending to reignite economic growth. Greece can afford to spend more if some of its debt is forgiven by other countries.

> **Nikolaos Chountis, a Syriza candidate in Athens, ticks off the party's spending priorities: food and electricity subsidies for impoverished households, a pension boost for the poorest retirees, a hike in the minimum wage and tax cuts for low earners.**
>
> […]The party's first message to Europe would be "let's get rid of the [austerity agreement]," Mr. Stathakis says.

Let's get rid of the austerity agreement? That's the only reason why they are getting the bailouts now.

Look how cavalierly the socialists talk about going back on their agreement.

Associated Press:

> The prospect of an anti-bailout government coming to power in Greece has sent jitters through the financial world, reviving fears of a Greek bankruptcy that could reverberate across the eurozone.
>
> "The verdict of the Greek people ends, beyond any doubt, the vicious circle of austerity in our country," Tsipras told a crowd of rapturous flag-waving supporters.
>
> He won on promises to demand debt forgiveness and renegotiate the terms of Greece's 240 billion euro ($270 billion) bailout, which has kept the debt-ridden country afloat since mid-2010.
>
> To qualify for the cash, Greece has had to impose deep and bitterly resented cuts in public spending, wages and pensions, along with public sector layoffs and repeated tax increases.
>
> **Its progress in reforms is reviewed by inspectors from the International Monetary Fund, European Commission and European Central Bank, collectively known as the troika, before each installment of bailout funds can be released.**
>
> **Tsipras pronounced the troika and its regular debt inspections "a thing of the past."**

Now if you break the deal, you would think that the bailing out would stop. And then the Greek people will understand what it means to elect the same socialists that ruined their economy when they won in 2009. I am not entirely sure that these people have any plan for economic growth, other than "you give me bailouts, I don't pay you back". They needed leftist professors to come up with that one. They certainly couldn't find any economists in the private sector who would believe such nonsense.

Related posts

- As Greece's private sector dies, so does government-provided health care
- Greece and France vote against fiscal responsibility
- In the past 12 months, Greece hasn't fired even one government worker

- How bad is the situation in Greece?

Obama threatens to veto No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act

January 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports:

> Yesterday, the House passed legislation that will put in place a complete ban on taxpayer funding of abortions that ensures abortions are not directly funded in any federal governmental program or department. The president says he will veto it.
>
> The legislation combines several policies that must be enacted every year in Congressional battles and puts them into law where they will not be in jeopardy of being overturned every time Congress changes hands from pro-life lawmakers to those who support abortions.
>
> The House voted 242-179 for the bill with 239 Republicans and three Democrats voting to ban taxpayer funding of abortions under HR7 while 178 Democrats and one Republican voted against it.
>
> Despite strong support for the bill and expected passage in the Senate, as well as strong public opinion , pro-abortion President Barack Obama says he will veto the legislation.
>
> "I am deeply committed to protecting this core constitutional right, and I believe that efforts like H.R. 7, the bill the House considered today, would intrude on women's reproductive freedom and access to health care and unnecessarily restrict the private insurance choices that consumers have today," Obama said in a statement objecting to the bill.
>
> But, according to a Marist poll released today, 68 percent of Americans oppose using taxpayer dollars to fund abortion.
>
> The bill has been around a few years but has only been approved in the House thanks to a pro-abortion Senate. The House voted 227-188 for the bill in 2014 and, on May 4, 2011, the House passed HR 3, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, on a 251-175 vote with Republicans voting 235-0 for the bill and Democrats voting 175-16 against it.
>
> Now that Republicans have taken over the Senate from pro-abortion Democrats, the bill is finally expected to receive a vote in the upper chamber.
>
> […]A majority of Americans object to the use of taxpayer money for funding abortion, according to numerous polls — including a survey CNN conducted in early April showing Americans oppose public funding of abortion by a margin of 61% to 35%.
>
> **The bill will also mitigate concerns about abortion funding in the various loopholes in the Obamacare national health care bill that**

> **various pro-life organizations warned about during debate on the law. The legislation did not contain language banning funding of abortions in its provisions and the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act would fix that problem.**

So, if you are a pro-lifer, and you don't want to subsidize the murder of unborn children, then maybe you should not vote for Democrats like Obama. Abortion is the biggest moral issue of our generation. It's very important to understand that if we allow the people who are irresponsible with sex to face the costs of their sexual lifestyle, then they will adjust their decision-making. The more the government takes over health care and reduces or eliminates the costs of immoral behavior for people, the more immoral behavior there will be.

The best thing we can do to discourage immorality is to let people bear the costs of their lifestyle choices themselves. That can include contraceptives, sexually transmitted disease treatment, abortion costs, single mother welfare, sex changes, and so on. One of the reasons why we have such a growth in immoral behavior is because generous Christians and conservatives keep falling for the plea for "compassion" made by big government leftists. Well, we have to decide now that we are not going to pay people to be immoral. That money has to come from somewhere, you know. And the more you pay people to do something, the more they do it.

There is some good news though – the Republicans are going to try again to get a vote on that ban on abortions after 20 weeks.

Cold Case Christianity: is Mark's gospel linked to the eyewitness Peter

January 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to a dynamite podcast on the weekend by J. Warner Wallace. I like his longer-form, less polished podcasts better than the newer, slicker 30-minute ones. This time, the podcast had heavy metal intro / ending music and it was an hour and a half long!

The M4A file is here.

Details:

> In this blast from the past, J. Warner examines the Gospel of Mark for signs of Peter's influence. Papias, the early church bishop, claimed Mark's Gospel was written as he sat at the feet of Peter in Rome. According to Papias, Mark scribed Peter's sermons and created the narrative we now have in our Bible. In this audio podcast, J. Warner applies Forensic Statement Analysis to Mark's text to see if Peter's fingerprints are present.

You can also read a post on some of what is in the podcast, if you don't want to listen to the podcast.

Here is the part I thought was most interesting:

> **The Omissions of the Gospel Are Consistent With Peter's Influence**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter's special input and influence, including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It's important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It's not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter's standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters 'indiscretions' in their own accounts). Here are some examples of Petrine Omissions grounded in an effort to minimize embarrassment to Peter (see Cold-Case Christianity for a more detailed explanation of the events summarized here):
>
> Peter's shame at the "Miraculous Catch"
> *(Mark 1:16-120 compared to Luke 5:1-11)*
>
> Peter's foolish statement at the crowded healing
> *(Mark 5:21-34 compared to Luke 8:42-48)*
>
> Peter's lack of understanding related to the parable
> *(Mark 7:14-19 compared to Matthew 15:10-18 and Acts 10:9-16)*

> Peter’s lack of faith on the lake
> *(Mark 6:45 compared to Matthew 14:22-33)*
>
> Peter’s rash statement to Jesus
> *(Mark 8:31-33 compared to Matthew 16:21-23)*
>
> Peter’s statement related to money
> *(Mark 10:23-31 compared to Matthew 19:23-30)*
>
> Jesus’ prediction of Peter’s denial
> *(Mark 14:27-31 compared to Luke 22:31-34 and John 13:34-38)*
>
> Peter’s behavior at the foot-washing
> *(Mark 14:22-26 compared to John 13:2-9)*
>
> Peter’s denial and Jesus’ direct stare
> *(Mark 14:66-72 compared to Luke 22:54-62)*
>
> There are a number of places in the Gospel of Mark where details related specifically to the words and actions of Peter have been omitted in what appears to be an effort to protect Peter from embarrassment. This doesn’t mean Peter failed to talk about these things. He may very well have included them in his sermons and teachings. But Mark, his scribe and close friend, simply chose to omit these details related to Peter, either at Peter’s request or on his own initiative.

Mark doesn’t want to annoy his source, Peter, by calling him out for being foolish at times.

This is highly recommended. There’s another blog post from Cold Case Christianity here, on the same topic.

New study: using birth control pill for 5+ years doubles risk of brain cancer

January 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the ultra-leftist Time magazine, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Dr. David Gaist, a neurologist at Odense University Hospital and the University of Southern Denmark, and his colleagues found that women taking hormonal contraceptives — those containing estrogen, progestin or a combination of both — showed higher rates of a rare brain tumor known as glioma. Their results, published Thursday in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*, raise questions about the connection between oral contraceptives and brain cancer, but shouldn't yet be interpreted as a reason to stop taking birth control, says Gaist.
>
> Using data from Denmark's national registries of health records, cancer cases and prescriptions, Gaist zeroed in on the women aged 15 years to 49 years diagnosed with glioma, and then analyzed whether they were prescribed contraceptives and for how long. **Overall, women who had used hormonal contraceptives at any point in their lives showed a 50% higher risk of developing the brain tumors compared to those who had not used them. And women who used the birth control for more than five years nearly doubled their risk of the cancer.**

Let's take a look at some previous studies on the effects of contraceptives.

From the Times of India.

Excerpt:

> Women who take oral contraceptives regularly are at a higher risk of developing breast cancer compared to others, shows a study by AIIMS doctors. Breast cancer risk was found to be 9.5 times more in women with a history of consuming such pills. Early menstruation cycle, late marriage and lower duration of breastfeeding were the other major factors responsible for the disease among Indians, according to the study published in the latest issue of the Indian Journal of Cancer.

> The study was conducted on 640 women, of which 320 were breast cancer patients. "We found long-term use of oral contraceptive pills (OCP) higher among those suffering from breast cancer-11.9%-compared to healthy individuals-1.2%," said Dr Umesh Kapil, a professor at the public health nutrition unit, AIIMS. He said breast cancer is caused by repeated exposure of breast cells to circulating ovarian hormones, and long-term use of OCPs, which contain estrogen and

> progesterone, may be increasing this risk by causing hormonal imbalance.

> The study mostly had women who used OCPs for birth control. Emergency contraceptives, popularly called morning-after pills, were not included.

This is not the first study, nor even the second study, to confirm this link.

Birth control pills

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9) and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed childbearing was a risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

When people talk about a war on women, maybe they should be thinking about this practice of promoting behaviors to women that make them sick. And eventually, we all have to pay for the increased costs of health care when we encourage people to do things that make them sick. We should not be promoting birth control to young women in order to enable them to have recreational sex. It’s not worth the harm it causes them. When you add in the psychological damage and the risk of abortion if the contraception fails, it really is not the right thing to tell a young woman.

Is belief in the Jesus of the Bible needed in order to be rightly related to God?

January 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good introductory lecture on the topic by Chad Gross, who blogs at Truthbomb Apologetics.

You can see the footnotes for his article on his blog.

For those who don't want to watch the video, here's a good thought from J. Warner Wallace at Please Convince Me.

Excerpt:

> A "just" God does justice, which means to punish or reward appropriately. In the Western tradition, we punish people for the actions they commit, but the extent of punishment is dependent also on the person's mental state, and a person's mental state is reflective of his or her beliefs. Premeditated murder is worse than manslaughter, and is punished more severely, and a hate crime is a sentencing enhancement that adds more punishment to the underlying crime. In both examples, a person's beliefs are at play: the premeditated murderer has reflected on his choices and wants the victim dead; a hate crime reflects a belief that the rights of a member of the protected group are especially unworthy of respect. So, considering a person's beliefs may well be relevant, especially if those beliefs have motivated the criminal behavior.
>
> But the challenger's mistake is even more fundamental. He is wrong to assert that people are condemned for not accepting the gospel. Christians believe that people are condemned for their sinful behavior – the "wages of sin is death" – not for what they fail to do. The quoted challenge is like saying that the sick man died of "not going to the doctor." No, the person died of a specific condition – perhaps cancer or a heart attack – which a doctor might have been able to cure. So too with eternal punishment. No one is condemned for refusing to believe in Jesus. While Jesus can – and does – provide salvation for those who seek it, there is nothing unjust about not providing salvation to those who refuse to seek it. After all, we don't normally feel obliged to help someone who has not asked for, and does not want, our assistance. So too the Creator has the right to withhold a gift – i.e. eternity spent in His presence – from those who would trample on the gift, and on the gift-giver.
>
> The quoted assertion also demonstrates an unspoken belief that we can impress God with our "kind" or "generous" behavior. This fails to grasp what God is – a perfect being. We cannot impress Him. What we do right we should do. We don't drag people into court and reward them for not committing crimes. This is expected of them. They can't commit a murder and then claim that punishment is unfair, because they had been kind and generous in the past. When a person

> gets his mind around the idea of what perfection entails, trying to impress a perfect Creator with our “basic goodness” no longer seems like such a good option.

If you want to hear a debate featuring exclusivists versus pluralists, I’ve got a podcast and a summary of a good debate on this issue between Chris Sinkinson and John Hick. You can’t find a more prominent pluralist than John Hick, except for maybe Paul Knitter, who is featured in a debate with Harold Netland in the new “Debating Christian Theism” book that is just out with Oxford University Press.

Obama said Obamacare would not add to the deficit, CBO says it adds $1.35 trillion

January 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the video above, Obama promised the American people that his health care plan would not add one dime to the deficit. And the low-information voters who voted for him believed him. Just like they believed that they could keep their doctor, that they could keep their health care plan, that Obamacare would lower the costs of health care, that Benghazi was caused by a YouTube video, and so on.

So how much did Obamacare add to the deficit?

The UK Daily Mail has the latest numbers from the Congressional Budget Office.

Truth:

> It will cost the federal government – taxpayers, that is – $50,000 for every person who gets health insurance under the Obamacare law, the Congressional Budget Office revealed on Monday.
>
> The number comes from figures buried in a 15-page section of the nonpartisan organization's new ten-year budget outlook.
>
> The best-case scenario described by the CBO would result in 'between 24 million and 27 million' fewer Americans being uninsured in 2025, compared to the year before the Affordable Care Act took effect.
>
> Pulling that off will cost Uncle Sam about $1.35 trillion – or $50,000 per head.
>
> The numbers are daunting: It will take $1.993 trillion, a number that looks like $1,993,000,000,000, to provide insurance subsidies to poor and middle-class Americans, and to pay for a massive expansion of Medicaid and CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) costs.
>
> Offsetting that massive outlay will be $643 billion in new taxes, penalties and fees related to the Obamacare law.
>
> That revenue includes quickly escalating penalties – or 'taxes,' as the U.S. Supreme Court described them – on people who resist Washington's command to buy medical insurance.
>
> It also includes income from a controversial medical device tax, which some Republicans predict will be eliminated in the next two years.
>
> If they're right, Obamacare's per-person cost would be even higher.

Did Obama know that he was lying when he said that his health care plan would not add one dime to the deficit?

Well, his buddy Gruber, the architect of Obamacare, certainly did:

But we should not be surprised, either by the low intelligence levels of Democrat voters

or by the lies of Democrat politicians. After all, they want single payer health care – look what Harry Reid says:

> "What we've done with Obamacare is have a step in the right direction, but we're far from having something that's going to work forever," Reid said.
>
> When then asked by panelist Steve Sebelius whether he meant ultimately the country would have to have a health care system that abandoned insurance as the means of accessing it, Reid said: "Yes, yes. Absolutely, yes."

And they know – from looking up North to Canada – that single-payer health care will necessarily involve *massive* increases in taxes.

CTV News describes a recent study on the costs of single-payer health care in Canada:

> A typical Canadian family with two parents and two kids will pay up to $11,786 for public health care insurance this year, according to a new study from the conservative think tank Fraser Institute.
>
> Using data from Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the Fraser Institute study estimated the amount of taxes Canadian families will pay for public health insurance this year.

What do you get for $11,786?

You get to be on a waiting list for a primary care physician, and you get to wait months for treatment. You can pay taxes your whole life, and then wait behind people who want *sex changes* – people who have never paid a dime into the system. And sometimes, you *die* while waiting for treatment. That's "fairness" and "equality". And that's where the Democrats want to take us.

Remember when Obama said that we could keep our health care plans and our doctors?:

Democrats voters looked at this man, and they just *knew* – without any studies or any evidence – that he was telling the truth.

But the Congressional Budget Office says that TEN MILLION people will lose their employer health plans under Obama by 2021.

Look:

> The Congressional Budget Office now says ObamaCare will push 10 million off employer-based coverage, a tenfold increase from its initial projection. The "keep your plan" lie just gets bigger and bigger.
>
> The latest CBO report is supposed to be a big win for the Obama administration because the projected costs are 20% below what the CBO first projected in 2010.
>
> But the CBO report also shows that ObamaCare will be far more disruptive to the employer-based insurance market, while being far less effective at cutting the ranks of the uninsured, than promised.
>
> Thanks to ObamaCare, the CBO now expects that 10 million workers will lose

> their employer-based coverage by 2021.

This is in addition to the FOUR MILLION who already lost their health care plans in 2013.

If you want some good news, look to Republican governors

January 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's start with the leftist Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel – no fan of Wisconsin governor Scott Walker.

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

They write:

> For the first time Thursday, Walker committed to drug testing recipients of BadgerCare Plus health coverage and also pledged free treatment and job training for those testing positive for drugs.
>
> But the governor offered no details on how the state would cover the costs of that or the testing or whether he expected it to cost the state money overall, as a similar program did in Florida, or save tax dollars. The budget, he said in a statement, would also drop to four years from five the limit on how long a recipient could be in the Wisconsin Works, or W-2, program, the replacement in this state for traditional welfare.
>
> "We know employers in Wisconsin have jobs available, but they don't have enough qualified employees to fill those positions," Walker said. "With this budget, we are addressing some of the barriers keeping people from achieving true freedom and prosperity and the independence that comes with having a good job and doing it well."
>
> The governor said the drug-testing proposal would apply only to able-bodied adults, not the elderly or children, and would include transitional jobs initiatives. Walker wants to test all FoodShare and BadgerCare applicants but limit the drug testing for unemployment benefits to certain applicants.
>
> The idea expands on another requirement passed by Walker and Republicans in 2013 to make able-bodied FoodShare recipients receive job training.

Michigan Republican governor Rick Snyder has the same idea, and his bill was signed into

law last month.

The Daily Signal reports on the latest effort by South Carolina Republican governor Nikki Haley to cut income taxes.

South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley

They write:

> The governor of South Carolina has proposed lowering the state's income tax rate from 7 percent to 5 percent, accompanied by a 10 cent hike in the state's gas tax.
>
> In her annual State of the State address on Wednesday, Gov. Nikki Haley, R-S.C., said the state's income tax puts it at a competitive "disadvantage."
>
> "In order to keep the ball rolling in our economy, we must bring down our income tax," Haley said.
>
> She acknowledged that despite her desire to cut the income tax rate, South Carolina needs to invest in its infrastructure. Greenville Online reports that the South Carolina Department of Transportation "has rated almost half the state's primary and secondary roads in poor condition."
>
> Haley proposed doing "three things at once that will be a win-win-win for South Carolina."
>
> The first would be lowering the income tax over the next decade, which amounts to a 30 percent reduction. The lower 5 percent rate would take South Carolina's nationwide income tax ranking from 38th to 13th.
>
> While the income tax rate would go down, the gas tax would increase by 10 cents over the next three years. Haley said that the revenue generated from this tax will go "entirely toward improving our roads."

I have no problem with raising consumption taxes in exchange for cutting business and/or income taxes.

And here's leftist ABC News discussing Kansas governor Sam Brownback latest proposal.

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback

They write:

> Notable among them is a first-of-its-kind measure being drafted in Kansas, with the backing of the National Right to Life Committee, which would ban doctors from using forceps, tongs or other medical implements to dismember a living fetus in the womb to complete an abortion.
>
> Proponents have titled the bill the Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act and say it targets a procedure used in about 8 percent of abortions in Kansas.
>
> "Dismemberment abortion kills a baby by tearing her apart limb from limb," said National Right to Life's director of state legislation, Mary Spaulding Balch, who hopes the Kansas bill will be emulated in other states.
>
> Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri has vowed to fight the bill "every step of the way."

That article has a few more pro-life measures being pushed by Republicans in other states, although Democrat governors are threatening to veto them.

The American Enterprise Institute talks about the job creation juggernaut created by Republican governor Rick Perry in Texas.

Texas Governor Rick Perry
They write:

> The Texas Workforce Commission released state employment data today for the month of December, and job growth in the Lone Star State continues to lead, and in fact carry the nation's improving labor market as the chart above shows. Here are some highlights of the December employment report for Texas:
>
> 1. Texas ended the year with the state's largest ever year-over-year payroll gain with the eye-popping addition of 457,900 new jobs between December 2013 and December 2014. That's more than 1,700 new payroll jobs that were added every business day last year in the Lone Star State, and 220 new jobs every business hour or almost 4 new jobs added every minute!
>
> 2. In just the last month of December, which marked the 51st consecutive month of employment growth, Texas added 45,700 new payroll jobs, which was more than 2,000 jobs every business day, almost 260 jobs every hour, and more than 4 new jobs every minute! The strong job growth in December brought the state's jobless rate down to 4.6%, the lowest Texas unemployment rate since May 2008.
>
> […]It's a pretty impressive story of how job creation in just one state – Texas – has made such a significant contribution to the 1.169 million net increase in total US employment (+1,444,290 Texas jobs minus the 275,290 non-Texas job loss) in the seven year period between the start of the Great Recession in December 2007 and December 2014. The other 49 states and the District of Columbia together employ about 275,000 fewer Americans than at the start of the recession seven years ago, while the Lone Star State has added more than 1.25 million payroll jobs and more than 190,000 non-payroll jobs (primarily self-employed and farm workers).

So, what have we learned? We learned that if you like more job creation, fewer abortions, lower taxes and drug-testing welfare recipients, then you are a Republican. I'll be doing posts like these regularly until the 2016 election, so that everyone understands what Republicans actually get done.

What did early church fathers think about abortion and infanticide?

January 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about early church traditions
This is from Birds of the Air. (H/T Neil Simpson)

Summary:

> Recently I came across a reading of the Didache. "The *what*?" you may ask. The Didache is a book written somewhere in the first or second century. For a long time it was up for consideration as Scripture. It was believed to be the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Eventually it was agreed that the book was an excellent book, but not inspired Scripture. So I was pleased to be able to download this admirable book containing good teachings from the early Church fathers.
>
> The book seemed to be largely a lot of quotes from Scripture. You'll learn the basic rules of Christianity — "First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself." You'll learn that "grave sins" are forbidden, like adultery, murder, fornication, and so on. (They specifically include pederasty in the list.) There are instructions regarding teachers, prophets, Christian assembly, and so on. Lots of the normal, good stuff. But, since this was written sometime prior to 200 AD, I was somewhat surprised at this instruction: "You shall not murder a child by abortion" (Didache, Ch 2).

I got curious about what babies look like when they are just a few weeks old, so I went

looking for pictures of them.

This post from Life News has ten excellent pictures of life inside the womb.

Here's my favorite from 10 weeks:

Unborn Baby – 10 weeks old
This is a first trimester baby!

I decided to go hunting to see what is developed at this time, and found this list:

> - From this week until birth, the developing organism is called a fetus.
> - The fetus is now the size of a small strawberry.
> - The feet are 2mm long (one tenth of an inch).
> - The neck is beginning to take shape.
> - The body muscles are almost developed. Baby has begun movement.
> - While still too small for you to feel, your little one is wriggling and shifting.
> - The jaws are in place. The mouth cavity and the nose are joined.
> - The ears and nose can now be seen clearly.
> - Fingerprints are already evident in the skin.
> - Nipples and hair follicles begin to form.
>
> The unborn baby is now called a fetus. Though the fetus is constantly moving, you will not be able to actually feel fetal movement for several more weeks. All of the organs, muscles, and nerves are in place and beginning to function. As the hands and feet develop fingers and toes, they have lost their paddle like look. The touch pads on the fingers form and already have fingerprints.
>
> During this week of pregnancy the crown to rump length of the fetus is 0.9 inch to 1.2 inches (22 to 30mm), weight 0.07 ounce (2gm). They are now on the way

> to forming their testicles or ovaries, getting ready for the next generation. Until the ninth week of fetus development, the fetal reproductive apparatus is the same one for the both sexes. The head is still large and curves into chest.
>
> Each week your uterus grows larger with the baby growing inside it. You may begin to see your waistline growing thicker by this time. A pelvic exam will detect that your uterus has grown from it’s normal, size of your fist, to a little bigger than a grapefruit.

Fascinating!

Alliance Defending Freedom wins HHS mandate case: Democrats forced to pay $570,000

January 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News has some good news for us.

They write:

> The bill is coming due, literally, for the Obama administration over its attempts to force companies to comply with the HHS mandate, that compels them to pay for drugs for their employees that can cause abortions.
>
> The pro-life legal group ADF obtained a settlement in federal court Friday that requires the Obama administration to pay an agreed-upon amount of $570,000 to ADF and allied attorneys who won a lawsuit at the U.S. Supreme Court against the abortion-pill mandate in *Conestoga Wood Specialties v. Burwell.*
>
> Conestoga Wood is one of the companies that challenged the abortion mandate in court and the high court eventually sided with them and Hobby Lobby, the most prominent firm taking on the Obama mandate.
>
> "The government does a serious disservice to taxpayers when it pursues unjust laws that force many of them to defend their constitutionally protected freedoms," Alliance Defending Freedom Senior Legal Counsel **Matt Bowman** told LifeNews.com. "While this case is finally over, many others remain. We hope the administration will stop defending its indefensible abortion-pill mandate and end its waste of taxpayer dollars on a fruitless quest to force people to give up their freedom to live and work according to their beliefs."
>
> Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys represent Conestoga Wood Specialties and the Hahn family, Mennonite cabinetmakers in Pennsylvania who appealed to the nation's high court after a divided federal appellate court ruled against them. The Supreme Court eventually sided with the company.
>
> "The cost of religious freedom for the Hahn family and many other job creators across the country who face this mandate is severe," added Senior Legal Counsel Matt Bowman. "A family should not face massive fines and lawsuits just because they want to earn a living consistent with their faith."
>
> The mandate could have cost the family nearly $3 million per month in fines if it doesn't agree to live contrary to its Christian convictions. It forces employers, regardless of their religious or moral convictions, to provide insurance coverage for abortion-inducing drugs, sterilization, and contraception under threat of heavy penalties by the Internal Revenue Service and other federal agencies if the mandate's requirements aren't met.
>
> Conestoga Wood Specialties owners Norman Hahn, Elizabeth Hahn, Norman Lemar Hahn, Anthony H. Hahn, and Kevin Hahn desire to run their company, a

> wholesale manufacturer of custom wood cabinet parts, in a manner that reflects their Christian beliefs, including their belief that God requires respect for the sanctity of human life.

I try not to think about whose money this is… in a fair world, it would come right out of Obama's bank accounts.

I took a quick look to see if there were any ADF podcasts on this case, and I didn't find any.

New study: new climate change model finds IPCC model predictions too hot

January 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a report on a new study on global warming, from Phys.org.

They write:

> A major peer-reviewed climate physics paper in the first issue (January 2015: vol. 60 no. 1) of the prestigious *Science Bulletin* (formerly *Chinese Science Bulletin*), the journal of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, exposes elementary but serious errors in the general-circulation models relied on by the UN's climate panel, the IPCC. The errors were the reason for concern about Man's effect on climate. Without them, there is no climate crisis.
>
> The IPCC has long predicted that doubling the CO2 in the air might eventually warm the Earth by 3.3 °C. However, the new, simple model presented in the *Science Bulletin*predicts no more than 1 °C warming instead – and possibly much less. The model, developed over eight years, is so easy to use that a high-school math teacher or undergrad student can get credible results in minutes running it on a pocket scientific calculator.
>
> **The paper, Why models run hot: results from an irreducibly simple climate model, by Christopher Monckton of Brenchley, Willie Soon, David Legates and Matt Briggs, survived three rounds of tough peer review in which two of the reviewers had at first opposed the paper on the ground that it questioned the IPCC's predictions.**
>
> When the paper's four authors first tested the finished model's global-warming predictions against those of the complex computer models and against observed real-world temperature change, their simple model was closer to the measured rate of global warming than all the projections of the complex "general-circulation" models:
>
> Next, the four researchers applied the model to studying why the official models concur in over-predicting global warming. In 1990, the UN's climate panel predicted with "substantial confidence" that the world would warm at twice the rate that has been observed since.
>
> […]The measured, real-world rate of global warming over the past 25 years, equivalent to less than 1.4° C per century, is about half the IPCC's central prediction in 1990.
>
> […]The new, simple climate model helps to expose the errors in the complex models the IPCC and governments rely upon. Those errors caused the over-predictions on which concern about Man's influence on the climate was needlessly built.

So what are the specific errors in the IPCC model?

These:

> Among the errors of the complex climate models that the simple model exposes are the following –
>
> **The assumption that "temperature feedbacks" would double or triple direct manmade greenhouse warming is the largest error made by the complex climate models. Feedbacks may well reduce warming, not amplify it.**
>
> The Bode system-gain equation models mutual amplification of feedbacks in electronic circuits, but, when complex models erroneously apply it to the climate on the IPCC's false assumption of strongly net-amplifying feedbacks, it greatly over-predicts global warming. They are using the wrong equation.
>
> Modellers have failed to cut their central estimate of global warming in line with a new, lower feedback estimate from the IPCC. They still predict 3.3 °C of warming per CO2 doubling, when on this ground alone they should only be predicting 2.2 °C – about half from direct warming and half from amplifying feedbacks.
>
> Though the complex models say there is 0.6 °C manmade warming "in the pipeline" even if we stop emitting greenhouse gases, the simple model – confirmed by almost two decades without any significant global warming – shows there is no committed but unrealized manmade warming still to come. There is no scientific justification for the IPCC's extreme RCP 8.5 global warming scenario that predicts up to 12 °C global warming as a result of our industrial emissions of greenhouse gases.
>
> Once errors like these are corrected, the most likely global warming in response to a doubling of CO2 concentration is not 3.3 °C but 1 °C or less. Even if all available fossil fuels were burned, less than 2.2 °C warming would result.

Conclusion:

> Dr Willie Soon, an eminent solar physicist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, said: "Our work suggests that Man's influence on climate may have been much overstated. The role of the Sun has been undervalued. Our model helps to present a more balanced view."

I think it's a credit to the scientific enterprise that they grilled this paper with peer-review, and then allowed it to stand, even though if it becomes widely-known and accepted, it will dry up their grant money. They rely on a crisis in order to obtain research money, and what this new, simpler model shows is that there is no crisis. It's bad for the scientists' wallets, but good for science as a whole. Respect++.

William Lane Craig explains the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement

January 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably one of the most common questions that you hear from people who don't fully understand Christianity is this question: "why did Jesus have to die?". The answer that most Christians seem to hold to is that 1) humans are rebelling against God, 2) Humans deserve punishment for their rebellion, 3) Humans cannot escape the punishment for their rebellion on their own, 4) Jesus was punished in the place of the rebellious humans, 5) Those who accept this sacrifice are forgiven for their rebelling.

Are humans rebellious?

Some people think that humans are not really rebellious at all, but it's actually easy to see. You can see it just by looking at how people spend their time. Some of us have no time for God at all, and instead try to fill our lives with material possessions and experiences in order to have happy feelings. Some of us embrace just the parts of God that make us feel happy, like church and singing and feelings of comfort, while avoiding the hard parts of that vertical relationship; reading, thinking and disagreeing with people who don't believe the truth about God. And so on.

This condition of being in rebellion is universal, and all of us are guilty of breaking the law at some point. All of us deserve to be separated from God's goodness and love. Even if we wanted to stop rebelling, we would not be able to make up for the times where we do rebel by being good at other times, any more than we could get out of a speeding ticket by appealing to the times when we drove at the speed limit, (something that I never do, in any case).

This is not to say that all sinners are punished equally – the degree of punishment is proportional to the sins a person commits. However, the standard is perfection. And worse than that, the most important moral obligation is a *vertical* moral obligation. You can't satisfy the demands of the moral law just by making your neighbor happy, while treating God like a pariah. The first commandment is to love God, the second is to love your neighbor. Even loving your neighbor requires you to tell your neighbor the truth – not just to make them feel good. The *vertical* relationship is more important than the *horizontal* one, and we've all screwed up the vertical relationship. We all don't want God to be there, telling us what's best for us, interfering with our fun. We don't want to relate to a loving God if it means having to care what he thinks about anything that we are doing.

Who is going to pay for our rebellion?

The Christian answer to the problem of our rebellion is that Jesus takes the punishment we deserve in our place.

However, I've noticed that on some atheist blogs, they don't like the idea that someone else can take our punishment for us to exonerate us for crimes that we've committed. So

I'll quote from this post by the great William Lane Craig, to respond to that objection. Excerpt:

> The central problem of the Penal Theory is, as you point out, understanding how punishing a person other than the perpetrator of the wrong can meet the demands of justice. Indeed, we might even say that it would be wrong to punish some innocent person for the crimes I commit!
>
> It seems to me, however, that in other aspects of human life we do recognize this practice. I remember once sharing the Gospel with a businessman. When I explained that Christ had died to pay the penalty for our sins, he responded, "Oh, yes, that's imputation." I was stunned, as I never expected this theological concept to be familiar to this non-Christian businessman. When I asked him how he came to be familiar with this idea, he replied, "Oh, we use imputation all the time in the insurance business." He explained to me that certain sorts of insurance policy are written so that, for example, if someone else drives my car and gets in an accident, the responsibility is imputed to me rather than to the driver. Even though the driver behaved recklessly, I am the one held liable; it is just as if I had done it.
>
> Now this is parallel to substitutionary atonement. Normally I would be liable for the misdeeds I have done. But through my faith in Christ, I am, as it were, covered by his divine insurance policy, whereby he assumes the liability for my actions. My sin is imputed to him, and he pays its penalty. The demands of justice are fulfilled, just as they are in mundane affairs in which someone pays the penalty for something imputed to him. This is as literal a transaction as those that transpire regularly in the insurance industry.

So, it turns out that the doctrine of substitionary atonement is not as mysterious or as objectionable as everyone seems to think it is.

Republicans legislators pushing good bills forward and blocking bad bills

January 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What kinds of bills do Republicans pass? Let's take a look at a couple.

The first story is about North Dakota Republican Senator John Hoeven, and it's from the Washington Times.

North Dakota Senator John Hoeven (right)

Excerpt:

> Senators approved the Keystone XL pipeline in a momentous vote Thursday as nine Democrats bucked their party leaders and joined Republicans in backing the long-stalled project, setting up an eventual showdown with President Obama, who has vowed a veto.
>
> The vote marks the first major accomplishment for the Senate Republican majority, who carefully selected the pipeline to put at the top of the agenda in hopes of preparing Democrats for even bigger tests with Mr. Obama.
>
> "This took a bipartisan effort to get done. That's what the people want," said Sen. John Hoeven, the North Dakota Republican who sponsored the legislation.
>
> The 62-36 vote is a high-water mark for the pipeline, which had never before cleared the Senate on a binding vote, and just two months ago fell to a Democratic filibuster.
>
> The bill still must be combined with a House version that passed the chamber this month before it heads to Mr. Obama.

This is a bill that creates jobs, lowers the price of gas, makes us less dependent on foreign sources of oil and it doesn't harm the environment.

Having a job is good because when you earn your own success, you are usually happier than you would be receiving money from the government. Lower gas prices are good, because you can spend the money you safe on useful things, like date night with your wife, or maybe a gift for your mom or dad. Making us less dependent on foreign oil is good, because some of these nations we buy oil from don't like us very much, and that's putting it nicely. We really should not be buying oil from Venezuela, for example. And finally, it's a good idea to conserve nature as it is, because we all like animals, trees, flowers, etc., and we should keep it all clean. A pipeline is safer for moving oil than using trains – fewer environmental disasters.

Next story is about Texas senator Ted Cruz, and it's from the Daily Signal.

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

Excerpt:

> Sen. Ted Cruz wants to protect taxpayers from political targeting by the Internal Revenue Service. The Texas Republican introduced legislation yesterday making it crime to engage in such behavior as questions still linger about the full extent of the IRS scandal.
>
> This is not the first time Cruz has offered this type of legislation. In February 2014, he introduced amendments to the STOP Identity Theft Act. Those measures, however, were defeated by Democrats and did not make it out of the Senate Judiciary Committee.
>
> "Free speech is not a partisan issue. The IRS has no business meddling with the First Amendment rights of Americans," Cruz said during last year's debate.
>
> With a new Republican Senate majority, Cruz is hopeful that this time the language will pass independently as a bill. In a press release, Cruz blasted the lack of action by President Obama and his administration in response to the IRS scandal.
>
> "In May 2013, President Obama declared the IRS's illegal targeting of conservative groups 'intolerable and inexcusable,' yet to this date no one has

> been held accountable for it," Cruz said in a statement.
>
> Cruz's bill would make it a crime for any IRS employee to willfully target anyone based solely on political beliefs. Any employee found in violation would be subject to a fine, up to 10 years in prison, or both.
>
> "This is a well thought out amendment to the IRS code to try and deter and punish the type of naked political targeting engaged in by Lois Lerner and other IRS employees," said Hans von Spakovsky, manager of the election law reform initiative and senior legal fellow at The Heritage Foundation.

I think it's a good idea for government not to be used as a weapon to punish people who want less government and more freedom. Don't you?

Last one is about Republican Congressman Steve King of Iowa, as reported by Doug Ross.

Iowa Congressman Steve King

Excerpt:

> "We're extremely pleased that Congressman King has introduced the National Right to Work Act, intensifying a growing debate about labor law and worker freedom in our country. This legislation would enshrine the common-sense principle – already enforced in nearly half of U.S. states – that no worker should be compelled to join or pay dues to a union just to get or keep a job.
>
> "In an age of legislative overreach, this is one of the shortest bills ever introduced. A National Right to Work Act does not add a single word to federal law. It simply removes language in the National Labor Relations Act that gives union officials the power to extract dues from nonunion workers as a condition of employment.
>
> "Voluntary association is a quintessential American ideal and the case for Right to Work has always rested on the principles of employee freedom, but passage of a National Right to Work law will also pay economic dividends. Studies demonstrate that workers in Right to Work states enjoy greater private sector job growth and higher disposable incomes than their counterparts in states without

> Right to Work protections.
>
> “The Right to Work principle is also popular with the public. Polls consistently show that 80 percent of Americans and union members support the principle of voluntary unionism.
>
> “A National Right to Work Act enshrines worker freedom while providing significant economic benefits for workers. The National Right to Work Committee is mobilizing its 2.8 million members to call on their Congressperson to support the National Right to Work Act.”

Evidence shows that right-to-work states are more attractive to job creators, which results in lower unemployment in states that adopt right-to-work.

Meanwhile, in Virginia, Republican legislators blocked three pro-abortion bills.

If you missed my recent post on four good things that Republican governors are doing, I recommend reading that as well.

Bobby Jindal and Mike Lee on school choice / education reform

January 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal

This is an editorial from the Washington Examiner, authored by school choice champion Bobby Jindal.

What is school choice?

> On the most basic level, school choice represents the freedom to choose — empowering parents to select the best educational options for their sons and daughters. That could be a charter school, a private school, a religious school, home schooling, or even online learning. Governments should provide parents with the personalized and individualized tools they need to help their children excel academically.
>
> That freedom to choose in turn will provide children with the freedom to succeed. With the right educational environment, teachers and academic training; students from all locations, income brackets and demographic groups will have better tools to compete in the global economy. We need to develop the talents of every American — no matter where he or she is from, and no matter the color of his or her skin — to maximize our country's potential.
>
> School choice also serves another important purpose — freeing low-income children from failing schools. No child should see his God-given talents go to waste because he is stuck in a failing school — and no parent should face the disempowerment that comes from knowing her son or daughter remains trapped in a poor school, and she lacks the financial means to move that child elsewhere. We can do better — and, by allowing parents dissatisfied with their school to move with their feet, school choice gives both high-performing and low-performing schools more incentive and motivation to improve their offerings.

> Finally, school choice provides parents with freedom from the status quo — an educational-industrial complex that thinks bureaucrats, not parents, can best make decisions about the lives and futures of America's children. It's about pushing back when the then-head of Louisiana's largest teachers' union said low-income parents had "no clue" how to choose the right school for their children. And it's even about standing up to the Attorney General of the United States, when the Department of Justice asked a court to block Louisiana's school scholarship program on civil rights grounds — even though 90 percent of the program's participants come from racial minority groups.

I don't like people who talk conservative but govern liberal. I want to see the achievements.

The numbers:

> For here in Louisiana, we've put those principles to practice. Since we removed the cap on charters in 2009, we've authorized almost 200 charter schools throughout the state — that's 70,000 kids who now have a choice about where they go to school. This last year, our Recovery School District became the nation's first school district with 100 percent charter school enrollment. And the results are dramatic: The graduation rate in New Orleans has increased from 54.4 percent before Hurricane Katrina in 2004 to 72.8 percent; the percentage of New Orleans students scoring basic and above has increased from 35 percent to 63 percent; and the percentage of failing schools in New Orleans has dropped from 67 percent in 2005 to 17 percent.
>
> We expanded our school choice scholarship program, which was initially confined to New Orleans, statewide. Parental satisfaction with the statewide scholarship program stands at a whopping 91.9 percent. We went even further though and created a dollar for dollar rebate for donations used to fund nonpublic school scholarships low-income students through our "school tuition organizations." Between 2008 and 2013, the percentage of students in the scholarship program who are proficient in third grade English language arts has grown by 20 percentage points and in math by 28 percentage points. Again and again, we've proven that giving more choice to parents is not only vital, but it gets results.
>
> We also expanded access to online and dual enrollment courses for students across the state. This year, we've had over 19,000 students take advantage of our Course Choice program enrolling in advanced placement courses and career and technical courses that they otherwise wouldn't have access to.

He's in my top 2 for the 2016 presidential race, along with Scott Walker.

I'd like to see school choice enacted at the federal level, and fortunately, Utah Senator Mike Lee has the same idea.

Utah Senator Mike Lee

The Daily Signal reports:

> I recently introduced in the Senate a bill that would empower the people most acutely committed to the quality of our education system: America's moms and dads. My colleague on the other side of the Capitol, Rep. Luke Messer, R-Ind., has introduced a companion bill in the House.
>
> By giving parents more power to invest in their child's education and to choose what school best meets their needs, the Enhancing Educational Opportunities for All Act takes an important step toward restoring accountability to our public education system—something that has been missing for far too long.
>
> Under our current system—which has remained essentially unchanged since President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act—most parents are powerless to influence the quality of their child's education.
>
> What occurs in public school classrooms around the country—what teachers teach and how they teach it—is the result of a long, convoluted, bureaucratic chain of command that zigzags its way from Washington to local school districts, but never includes parents.
>
> First, Congress passes legislation authorizing federal bureaucrats to establish rules, regulations, and standards with which states must comply in order to receive federal education funds.
>
> Next, state officials refine—or in some cases distort—these Washington directives, writing narrower rules for their school districts, which then establish the specific policies for individual schools.
>
> At no point in this decision-making process are parents consulted.
>
> Instead, they are left with a "take it or leave it" choice: either accept the education offered at the local public school—no matter how bad it may be—or buy a better alternative, by moving closer to a better school or paying private

> school tuition.
>
> For America's most affluent families, this is no big deal—they can afford private schools and so have the power to choose the school that is best for their children. For everyone else, it precludes parents from making choices about their children's education.
>
> So our bill would expand school choice to all parents, regardless of socio-economic status or zip code, by allowing federal "Title I" K-12 support funds to follow low-income students to any public or private school of their choice.
>
> It would also remove the contribution limits on Coverdell education savings accounts and allow "529" account funds to cover K-12 education expenses.
>
> Our bill would give working parents more opportunities to invest in a variety of learning services and products outside the classroom, such as tutoring, online courses and textbooks.
>
> The problem facing our public school system today is not about a lack of money—we have nearly tripled our investments in elementary and secondary students since 1970. The problem is dysfunctional government policy—however well intentioned—and a lack of accountability.
>
> And that's exactly what we should expect when Washington bureaucrats have more control than parents over a child's education. We have a moral and economic obligation to flip this equation and put parents back in the driver's seat.
>
> For when we tolerate a system in which the quality of a child's education depends on her parents' zip code, we fail to live up to the ideals at the heart of American exceptionalism.
>
> And when millions of children learn from a young age not to dream big, but to surrender to the hopelessness of low expectations, we will live in a society where upward mobility is no longer rule but the exception.
>
> We can and we must do better.

If a school is failing – and they often are, especially in poorer areas – then shouldn't parents have the ability to send their kids to a better school? When I want to buy something online, I know I can always do better by comparing prices and reviews. Competition between suppliers drives prices down, and raises quality up. The customer is king in the free market. It can work in education, too.

Related posts

- Republicans legislators pushing good bills forward and blocking bad bills
- If you want some good news, look to Republican governors

American Sniper thrills audiences – in Baghdad, Iraq!

January 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Chris Kyle, Navy SEAL

This is a very funny story from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> Clint Eastwood's "American Sniper" has wowed American audiences, but for one short week it also thrilled crowds in Baghdad.
>
> Iraq's upscale Mansour Mall played the film for one week before the controversy surrounding the film prompted management to end showings.
>
> **"Some people watching were just concentrating, but others were screaming '[expletive], shoot him! He has an IED, don't wait for permission!'" said moviegoer Gaith Mohammed, the Global Post reported Wednesday. "I love watching war movies because especially now they give me the strength to face [the Islamic State]."**
>
> […]Mr. Mohammed, asked by the newspaper if he agreed with some Western reviews that labeled the movie racist, replied, **"No, why? The sniper was killing terrorists, the only thing that bothered me was when he said he didn't know anything about the Koran!"**
>
> A government ministry employee told the Post he didn't enjoy the film, taking umbrage with the first scene and what he considered the movie's overall anti-Muslim overtones.
>
> "The sniper, he has a chance to hit the child and his mother in their foot or anywhere without killing them, but he didn't because he's bloodthirsty like all the American troops," said Wael, who declined to give his last name, the newspaper reported. **Wael added that he had seen the film three times.**
>
> "American Sniper," which stars Bradley Cooper, has made $257 million worldwide in two weeks of release. The film, which has garnered six Oscar

> nominations, including Best Picture, was made on a budget of $58 million.

Hilarious that Iraqis are less consumed by race than leftists on an American university campus.

I do have a point to make about this. I wonder if people realize that the reason why so many Muslim countries don't like us is because they are forming their impressions from anti-morality made by immoral Hollywood secular leftists? If you put out a decent movie that looks realistic and shows Americans taking care of evildoers, people in other countries are going to like us a lot more.

If you haven't seen American Sniper, what are you waiting for? Go see it!

Cold Case Christianity podcast on the lack of authenticity in the church

January 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On Saturday, I got a chance to listen to the latest episode of the Cold Case Christianity podcast, and the whole thing was solid. This is one you definitely do not want to miss. I wanted to summarize the first topic of three because it's something that's been coming up a lot lately, but topics 2 and 3 are worth listening to, as well.

You can grab the MP3 file here.

Topic #1: Why are young people leaving church?

- problem: not convinced Christianity is true
- problem: apparent conflict with science
- problem: unanswered questions
- problem: difficulties inside the church
- problem: the church's (correct) position on same-sex marriage

Jim's claim: if people do not think that the Bible is accurate and divinely inspired, then they are going to be tempted to pick and choose what to believe and what not to believe

Jim reads a blog post from a young lady who attends church, and here are *her* top problems with the church:

1. you can't ask questions
2. you can't voice your doubts
3. you can't explain your struggles
4. you can't confess your sins
5. you can't confide your fears

And she wants the leadership to be real and open about these things as well.

Wallace says that there here are two main problems that teens run into at college:

1. intellectual skepticism
2. selfish desires, especially in sexual areas

It's aggravated by the hostile university setting (skeptical professors), and a culture of drinking and sex.

The university culture is offering you a worldview that makes your selfish desires more permissible and normal. Unless people have a compelling reason not to reject that, they won't reject it. It's the path of least resistance to conform to the expectations of your peers and professors. Our aim should be to provide young people with evidence before they face the skepticism in college.

Another major problem facing young people is the Christian position on homosexuality

and gay marriage. Christian teachings on sexuality in general are viewed with suspicion, and these things are not discussed or debated in the church. One way to respond to this is to defend the reliability of Scripture. (Note: I think another way to respond is to give *secular reasons* for what the Bible teaches, and to help young people link their decisions about sexuality with their larger life plan).

Topic 2 was about objective vs cultural moral standards, and topic 3 was about whether different denominations differ in essentials or in peripheral issues.

My thoughts on topic #1

If you are dealing with young people, it might be a good idea to not gloss over these problems and keep everything at the surface level. Talk to them about what a Christian life should look like and the struggles you had trying to live it out. Talk to them about their plans, and how different decisions are going to affect those plans. Talk to them about their grades. Talk to them about their future profession. Talk to them about apologetics. Talk to them about politics and economics, so they know how to vote for their futures. Basically, they should have the idea that you are interested in whether Christianity is true or not, and that you are interested in them make some sort of plan to serve God and making the decisions they need to get there. You should tell young people your plan and how you are funding it and working on it, in order to prod them to make their own plan.

So if the problem is perceived lack of authenticity, then the solution is to talk to young people like grown ups and give them insight. This is my plan to serve God. This is my plan for my marriage. This is why I think Christianity is true. This is what I want my kids to end up like. This is what I want my wife to do. This is how I intend to fund all this. These are the laws/public policies that help/hurt my plan. These are the problems and struggles I've had implementing my plan. Here is an area where my sinfulness is really messing up my plan. When I talk to other Christians, we talk about these issues relevant to my plan.

Speaking frankly about what you are trying to do and the challenges you are facing trying to do it that helps young people to get serious about their beliefs. Don't reduce the whole religion to rituals and feelings – it's a mistake.

Atheist Christopher Hitchens' case against the existence of God

January 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that I would go over an opening statement from a previous debate featuring Christopher Hitchens to find out what atheists are like in debates. I used his opening speech from his debate with Frank Turek. The audio from that debate is here, at Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 site.

Now the important thing to remember about a generic debate on whether GOD EXISTS is that there should be no mention of any particular God, such as the Christian God, and no mention of the history of any particular religion. All arguments that assume specific theological or moral doctrines or specific religious history are *irrelevant* to a debate on generic theism.

The question being debated is: does a God who created and designed the universe, who has all the traditional properties of God, such as omniscience, omnipotence, omni-benevolence, etc. exist? That is the question being debated in a "Does God Exist?" debate.

Frank Turek's case for theism:

Frank Turek made 4 *relevant* arguments for theism, each of which *alone* would support his conclusion, that God exists:

- the origin of time, space, matter and energy out of nothing
- the fine-tuning of the physical constants to support the minimum requirements for life of any kind
- the origin of the biological information in the first self-replicating organism
- objective, prescriptive moral rules need to be grounded by the designer of the universe

And he also listed 4 features of the universe that are more consistent with theism than atheism (= materialism).

- non-material minds that allow rationality that would be impossible on materialism/determinism
- the mathematical structure of the universe and its intelligibility to the scientific method
- free will, which is required for moral responsibility and moral choices, requires a non-material mind/soul
- our first person experience of consciousness is best explained by a non-material mind/soul

Hitchens' case against theism

To counter, Hitchens has to argue against God using arguments in one of two forms:

1. The concept of God is logically self-contradictory
2. An *objective* feature of the world is inconsistent with the attributes of God

The claim that God does not exist is a claim to know something about God, namely, that he does not exist. This claim requires the speaker to bear a burden of proof. In a debate on "Does God Exist?", Hitchens must *deny* that God exists. Let me be clear: Hitchens must defeat the arguments for the claim that God exists, and then defend the claim that God does not exist, and support that claim using arguments and evidence.

Hitchens makes 2 basic claims:

- There are no good reasons to believe that theism is true
- There are good reasons to believe atheism is true

So far so good. But what are his good reasons for atheism?

1. I personally don't like Christianity, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: I personally don't like Catholicism getting rid of limbo
   – Premise: I personally don't like Hell
   – Premise: I personally don't like some episodes in church history
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
2. The plurality of religions means that no religious claims can be correct, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: There are lots of religions
   – Premise: The religions all disagree in their truth claims about the external world
   – Conclusion: No religion's claims can be correct, therefore God doesn't exist
3. I believe in one less God than you, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: You disbelieve in every God I do, except one
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
4. Religious people are stupid and evil, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Religious people are ignorant
   – Premise: Religious people are fearful
   – Premise: Religious people are servile
   – Premise: Religious people are masochistic
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
5. Evolution explains how life progressed from single cell to today's bio-diversity, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Modern theists like Turek believe in Paley's argument, and argued it in this debate
   – Premise: Paley's argument was refuted by evolution
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
6. God wouldn't have made the universe this way, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: If God exists, then he would have made the universe my way

– Premise: The heat death of the universe wasn't done my way
– Premise: The extinction of species wasn't done my way
– Premise: The size of the universe wasn't done my way
– Premise: The amount of open space wasn't done my way
– Premise: The large number of stars wasn't done my way
– Premise: The age of the universe wasn't done my way
– Conclusion: God doesn't exist

7. Religion makes people do things that I don't like, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Some religions do suicide bombing
   – Premise: Some religions do child abuse
   – Premise: Some religions do genital mutilation
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
8. If you speak a sentence, I can repeat the same words as you said, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: Anything that you say is good, I can say is good too
   – Premise: Anything that you say is bad, I can say is bad too
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
9. Atheists are morally superior to religious people, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: I act in a way that is consistent with my personal, arbitrary moral preferences
   – Premise: You don't act in a way that is consistent with my personal, arbitrary moral preferences
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
10. If I believe in God, I would have to submit to an authority
    – Premise: If I believe in God, then I can't do whatever I want
    – Premise: But I want to do whatever I want
    – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
11. I don't like certain Christian doctrines, therefore arguments for God from science fail and therefore God doesn't exist
    – Premise: I don't like the atonement
    – Premise: I don't like the virgin birth
    – Premise: I don't like the incarnation
    – Premise: I don't like original sin
    – Premise: I don't like the resurrection
    – Conclusion: Arguments that are built on recent discoveries from the progress of science like the big bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, etc. are incorrect, and therefore God doesn't exist

General comments about Hitchens' case:

- The form of *all* of these arguments is *logically invalid*. The conclusions do not follow from the premises using the laws of logic, such as modus ponens and modus tollens.
- Hitchens cannot complain about morality because he has no foundation for objective

moral facts. What he is really expressing is that he personally does not like such-and-such a state of affairs, based on his own arbitrary personal preferences, and the arbitrary social customs that evolved in the place and time that he finds himself in. On atheism, "morality" is just describing what people do – either individually or as groups living in different times and places. There is no objective right and wrong, and no objective way we ought to be. All statements are *subjective.* They describe what the speaker personally likes and dislikes. Just like taste in foods or taste in dress – which varies by individually, and is influenced by time and place ARBITRARILY.

Specific comments about each argument:

- Argument 1 tries to disprove God by arguing from Hitchens' personal preferences about specific Christian doctrines. Christian doctrines are irrelevant to a debate about generic theism. And there is no reason why God should be bound by the personal, subjective preferences of one man. In fact, the concept of God entails that his unchanging nature is the standard of good and evil. So, this argument doesn't disprove God, it's just a statement of personal, subjective preference.
- Argument 2: Just because there are different truth claims made by different groups, doesn't mean no one is correct. Mormons believe that matter existed eternally, and Jews believe it was created out of nothing. The big bang theory shows that the Mormons are wrong and the Jews are right.
- Argument 3: First of all, the debate is a about a generic Creator and Designer, not any particular religious conception of God. So the argument is irrelevant. Moreover, Christians reject Zeus, for example, because Zeus is supposed to exist in time and space, and therefore could not be the cause of the beginning of time and space.
- Argument 4: This is just the ad hominem fallacy. Hitchens is attacking the character of the theist, but that doesn't show theism is false.
- Argument 5: This argument can be granted for the sake of argument, even though it's debatable. The point is that it is irrelevant, since it doesn't refute any of Turek's actual scientific arguments like the big bang, the fine-tuning of the physical constants, the origin of information in the simplest living cell.
- Argument 6: Again, there is no reason to think that God should be bound by Hitchens' personal opinion of how God should operate.
- Argument 7: This is the ad hominem fallacy again. The good behavior of religious believers is not a premise in any of Turek's FOUR arguments for theism. Therefore, Hitchens' point is irrelevant to the debate.
- Argument 8: The fact that the atheist can parrot moral claims is not the issue. Being able to speak English words is not what grounds objective, prescriptive morality. The issue is the ontology of moral rules, the requirement of free will in order to have moral responsibility and moral choices, ultimate significance of moral actions, and the rationality of self-sacrificial moral actions.
- Argument 9: This is just the ad hominem fallacy again.

- Argument 10: This is not argument so much as it reveals that the real reason Hitchens is an atheist is emotional. One might even say infantile.
- Argument 11: Again, these specific Christian doctrines are irrelevant to a debate about generic theism. And Hitchen's subjective, personal preferences about Christian doctrine certainly do not undermine the objective scientific support for the premises in Turek's 3 scientific arguments.

So Frank Turek talked about facts in the external world, and Christopher Hitchens mistakenly thought that his opinions and preferences about what he would do if he were God were interesting to us. They might be interesting to his psychiatrist, but they are not interesting to us.

Republicans propose expansion of 529 college savings plans

February 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I guess by now everyone has heard about Obama's plan to eliminate college savings plans.

The left-leaning New York Times reported on it:

> President Obama is proposing a radical change to the 529 college savings plans held by millions of families, which would require those who use them to rethink their approach to college savings.
>
> As part of his plan to simplify the tax code and help the middle class, one of the 529 plan's most attractive benefits would be eliminated: Money could no longer be withdrawn tax-free. (The new rules would apply only to new contributions.)
>
> The accounts, many of which are run by the states, allow people to make contributions that grow tax-free. The money can be withdrawn without the paying of capital gains taxes as long as the proceeds are used for education expenses. Many states provide state income tax deductions for contributions as well.

The proposal has now been withdrawn after a huge uproar. The real question is, why would he propose such a stupid thing?

First, it's important to understand that government raises the cost of higher education with subsidies, which the Democrats favor:

> A new study by Dennis Epple, Richard Romano, Sinan Sarpca and Holger Sieg for the National Bureau of Economic Research suggests that the impact of these aid programs is clearly different from what federal policy makers intended. "We show that private colleges game the federal financial aid system," they conclude. Every dollar in new financial aid to students leads to about 40 cents less spent by the colleges on institutional financial aid — so students benefit far less than federal policy makers intended.
>
> In 1987, Secretary of Education William Bennett argued that more federal aid leads to higher tuitions, enabling schools to increase spending. This seems broadly consistent with the latest research results. The net attendance impact of these federal programs, according to the study for NBER, is "modest." In short, these programs haven't substantially spurred student access to colleges, all the while burdening taxpayers and student borrowers.
>
> The ballooning federal aid increases schools' spending. The researchers don't analyze changes in university spending, but an examination of other evidence suggests that money isn't going primarily into improving instruction. Colleges

> have gone on a building spree (financed in part by amassing large debt — more than $220 billion at schools whose bonds are rated by Moody's alone), and pay and perquisites for top university administrators has risen sharply.

The Democrats already want higher education to be out of reach – that's why they keep increasing subsidies. So, eliminating college savings plans is in line with this goal of putting higher education out of reach. It's another way to cause people to have fewer children, something that Democrats are very passionate about. After all, if you can't pay for higher education for four kids, you'll only have two. Democrats have this terrible fear of over-population, and it drives a lot of their policies, including abortion.

But that's not all – there's another reason to stop people from saving for college.

Second, it stops people from saving their own money:

> Megan McArdle suggests, quite reasonably, that this is a desperate move by those who need to finance ever bigger government and are simply going where the money is: the vast American middle class. You can understand why the champions of big government would be slavering over the very thing that defines the middle class, its savings. As she points out, 529s are not the first target. There have already been trial balloons about raiding 401(k)s and IRAs. The truly committed leftist looks upon our private savings as a vast reserve of capital unfairly withheld from its proper function of servicing the needs of the state.

> I think that's the real explanation. This is not so much a rational calculation about how to finance the behemoth state. This is an admission by a man who has no more election campaigns to run, and therefore no pragmatic constraints, about his real outlook and real preferences. A president who just a few weeks ago hailed the triumph of a supposed "middle-class economics" is revealing his hatred and contempt for the middle class.

Republicans would like to see people saving more and more money so that they are less and less dependent on the government. This is because the more independent you are, the more fre you are – and Republicans are for personal liberty.

This is GOP Congressman Lynn Jenkins:

Kansas Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins

Here is her Republican response to Obama's proposal to eliminate 529s:

> Good morning. I'm Lynn Jenkins, Congresswoman from the Second District of Kansas and Vice-Chair of the House Republican Conference.
>
> This is the time of year when high school seniors are putting the final touches on their college applications. That means it's also the time when families are preparing to start paying for that education — whether it's a 4-year college, community college, or a technical school. *(Scroll down for video of these remarks.)*
>
> As a parent with two children in college, I know this can be one of the most rewarding, and at the same time challenging, aspects of being a parent — particularly at a time when costs are going up while wages stay about the same. All told, Americans now owe more than $1 trillion in student loan debt.
>
> And so in the new Congress, Republicans are working to lower costs for middle-class families and empower folks with bottom-up solutions that help prepare you for the future.
>
> That's why, this week, I introduced a bipartisan plan to expand popular 529 college savings accounts.
>
> As you know, these 529 plans were created to help middle-class families save and plan for college. Many parents open them not long after their children are born. And ever since Congress allowed folks to withdraw from these accounts tax-free for college expenses, 1 million account holders have turned into 12 million.
>
> Unfortunately, instead of expanding 529s, the president recently proposed raising taxes on college savings. If implemented his scheme would have turned back the clock on middle-class families, and taken money from your savings to pay for more government. This would have discouraged families from using 529s, meaning less savings, more debt, and more government dependence.

This proposal increases middle-class independence from the government, and makes

people more free to work, earn, save and chart their own course. It’s different from the Democrat proposals which increase dependence on government and reduces liberty.

With Romney out, Scott Walker leads Iowa poll with 16%, Bush at 9%

February 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walker tops big potential GOP field

Scott Walker edges Rand Paul for bragging rights among a list of 16 potential candidates in a new Iowa Poll of likely Republican caucusgoers.

Which one of the following Republican candidates would be your first choice for president? And who would your second choice be?

	FIRST CHOICE WITH ROMNEY	FIRST CHOICE ROMNEY REALLOCATED*	SECOND CHOICE	FIRST OR SECOND CHOICE COMBINED
Scott Walker	15%	16%	10%	25%
Rand Paul	14%	15%	8%	23%
Mitt Romney	13%	n/a	10%	23%
Mike Huckabee	10%	13%	7%	17%
Ben Carson	9%	10%	10%	19%
Jeb Bush	8%	8%	7%	15%
Ted Cruz	5%	6%	6%	11%
Chris Christie	4%	6%	3%	7%
Rick Santorum	4%	5%	6%	10%
Marco Rubio	3%	4%	8%	11%
Rick Perry	3%	3%	5%	8%
Bobby Jindal	2%	2%	2%	4%
Carly Fiorina	1%	1%	1%	2%
John Kasich	1%	1%	1%	2%
Donald Trump	1%	1%	1%	2%
Mike Pence	0%	0%	0%	0%

GOP primary Iowa poll from 2/1/15

A Des Moines Register poll from Iowa came out today, showing Scott Walker in the lead, and the lead increases if Romney is out.

Here are the details:

> Presidential stage newcomer Scott Walker, the conservative reform pit bull who inspired death threats from the left, has become the one to watch in the race for the Republican nomination a year out from the Iowa caucuses.
>
> At 15 percentage points, he leads a big, tightly packed field of potential contenders in a new Des Moines Register/Bloomberg Politics Iowa Poll of likely Republican caucusgoers. The caucuses are scheduled for Feb. 1, 2016.
>
> The Wisconsin governor is also the No. 2 most popular choice for likely caucusgoers who want an establishment candidate, and he's the No. 2 for those who want an anti-establishment candidate, the poll shows.
>
> "He's in a sweet spot," pollster J. Ann Selzer said. "People who don't want an ultra-conservative think he's OK. People who don't want a moderate think he's OK."
>
> […]The day after polling wrapped up, Romney announced he's out of the competition. When the numbers in this poll are shuffled — by giving Romney's

> votes to the contenders his supporters named as their second-choice pick — the five others in the top tier gain support.
>
> […]Walker's support has jumped 11 points since the last Iowa Poll. In October, only 4 percent of likely caucusgoers named Walker as their first choice for president.
>
> […]At the same time, the favorability rating for Walker has climbed 11 percentage points; Carson, 9; Huckabee, 7; Cruz, 6; Santorum, 5; and Paul, 5, the new poll shows.
>
> "The candidates perceived as more conservative are not only leading but are gaining," GOP strategist Vin Weber, a former Minnesota congressman, noted after looking over the results.

Walker and Carson have the lowest "unfavorable" ratings:

Huckabee leads in favorability

Now, I'm going to mention some people talked about as possible candidates for the Republican nomination for president. For each, please tell me if your feelings are very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable. If you don't know enough about the person to answer, just say so.

	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	NOT SURE
Mike Huckabee, former governor of Arkansas	66%	28%	6%
Rand Paul, U.S. senator from Kentucky	64%	25%	11%
Rick Perry, former governor of Texas	64%	26%	10%
Scott Walker, governor of Wisconsin	60%	12%	28%
Ted Cruz, U.S. senator from Texas	58%	21%	21%
Marco Rubio, U.S. senator from Florida	57%	20%	23%
Rick Santorum, former U.S. senator from Pennsylvania	57%	30%	13%
Mitt Romney, former governor of Massachusetts and former Republican nominee for president	57%	40%	3%
Ben Carson, retired neurosurgeon from Maryland	50%	12%	38%
Jeb Bush, former governor of Florida	46%	43%	11%
Bobby Jindal, governor of Louisiana	39%	20%	41%
Chris Christie, governor of New Jersey	36%	54%	10%

GOP primary Favorability

This is good news for Walker, but it's disturbing to me that Huckabee (big government tax-and-spend moderate) and Paul (Peter Pan isolationist pot-legalizer) are that high up in the poll. Ben Carson is looking good, though. I like that the leftist establishment candidates (Bush, Christie and Romney) all had high unfavorable ratings. That's a good sign.

Walker was on ABC's This Week show:

> Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker (R) has not officially announced that he will run for president in 2016, but he is feeling very confident about his chances.
>
> Martha Raddatz, host of ABC's "This Week," asked Walker on Sunday morning whether there is a 99 percent chance he'll run.

> "I don't know that I'd take the odds," Walker responded. "I'll just tell you one thing. After three elections for governor in four years in a state that hasn't gone Republican since 1984 for president, I wouldn't bet against me on anything."
>
> A new Bloomberg/Des Moines Register poll shows Walker as the favorite among possible GOP presidential candidates. The governor was the first choice of 15 percent of respondents, just edging out Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul.
>
> Walker said he believes he could defeat likely Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton because she represents an earlier era in Washington, D.C., politics for which most Americans are not nostalgic.
>
> "People want new, fresh leadership with big, bold ideas, and the courage to act on it," Walker said. "And if we're going to take on a name from the past, which is likely to be former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, I think for the party we need a name from the future."

Looking good. Again, we have to have a candidate who is competent enough on fiscal issues, and has the results, if we hope to get around the media's tendency to go after social conservatives. My list right now is this:

1. Scott Walker
2. Bobby Jindal
3. Rick Perry
4. Susan Martinez
5. Ted Cruz

Pence is off my list after a couple of recent big government missteps (state media and Medicaid expansion).

Related posts

- Wisconsin governor Scott Walker draws standing ovations at Freedom Summit in Iowa
- Republican Scott Walker beats Mary Burke to win Wisconsin Governor race
- Wisconsin House passes Scott Walker's tax cut bill, headed to governor's desk
- Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker cuts taxes again, expects $1 billion surplus in 2015
- Wisconsin governor Walker's reforms hit the left in their wallets
- An interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
- Wisconsin judge defends free speech rights of conservative groups against Democrat censors
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Kenosha teachers vote to de-certify their teacher union, 63 – 37
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare

- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- What is a "right-to-work" law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues
- Democrat lawmakers flee state to avoid voting on spending cuts

Woman reflects on her bio-parents' divorce and growing up in two-lesbian home

February 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Public Discourse posted a really interesting letter from a woman whose biological parents divorced, and then she grew up with her mother and her mother's lesbian partner. She addresses this post to Justice Kennedy, the swing vote on the Supreme Court.

She writes:

> Children are the reason government has any stake in this discussion at all. Congress was spot on in 1996 when it passed the Defense of Marriage Act, stating:
>
> At bottom, civil society has an interest in maintaining and protecting the institution of heterosexual marriage because it has a deep and abiding interest in encouraging responsible procreation and child-rearing. Simply put, government has an interest in marriage because it has an interest in children.
>
> There is no difference between the value and worth of heterosexual and homosexual persons. We all deserve equal protection and opportunity in academe, housing, employment, and medical care, because we are all humans created in the image of God.
>
> However, when it comes to procreation and child-rearing, same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples are wholly unequal and should be treated differently for the sake of the children.
>
> When two adults who cannot procreate want to raise children together, where do those babies come from? Each child is conceived by a mother and a father to whom that child has a natural right. When a child is placed in a same-sex-headed household, she will miss out on at least one critical parental relationship and a vital dual-gender influence. The nature of the adults' union guarantees this. **Whether by adoption, divorce, or third-party reproduction, the adults in this scenario satisfy their heart's desires, while the child bears the most significant cost: missing out on one or more of her biological parents.**
>
> Making policy that intentionally deprives children of their fundamental rights is something that we should not endorse, incentivize, or promote.

What about children who grow up with two gay adults? Aren't they supportive of their gay guardians?

She writes:

> I identify with the instinct of those children to be protective of their gay parent. In fact, I've done it myself. I remember how many times I repeated my speech: "I'm

> so happy that my parents got divorced so that I could know all of you wonderful women." I quaffed the praise and savored the accolades. The women in my mother's circle swooned at my maturity, my worldliness. I said it over and over, and with every refrain my performance improved. It was what all the adults in my life wanted to hear. I could have been the public service announcement for gay parenting.
>
> I cringe when I think of it now, because it was a lie. My parents' divorce has been the most traumatic event in my thirty-eight years of life. While I did love my mother's partner and friends, I would have traded every one of them to have my mom and my dad loving me under the same roof. This should come as no surprise to anyone who is willing to remove the politically correct lens that we all seem to have over our eyes.
>
> Kids want their mother and father to love them, and to love each other. I have no bitterness toward either of my parents. On the contrary, I am grateful for a close relationship with them both and for the role they play in my children's lives. But loving my parents and looking critically at the impact of family breakdown are not mutually exclusive.
>
> Now that I am a parent, I see clearly the beautiful differences my husband and I bring to our family. I see the wholeness and health that my children receive because they have both of their parents living with and loving them. I see how important the role of their father is and how irreplaceable I am as their mother. We play complementary roles in their lives, and neither of us is disposable. In fact, we are both critical. It's almost as if Mother Nature got this whole reproduction thing exactly right.

So in same-sex marriages, either the father or the mother will be missing. I think that children can be a big responsibility, and they are challenging to the happiness of adults. The way that natural marriage solves this problem is by making both parents invested in the children *biologically*. That's what causes mothers and fathers to keep trying and to not quit. They are biologically invested in their children. They are not accessories, they are little clones of their moms and dads.

Regardless of what Hollywood celebrities may tell us, studies show that fatherlessness is a disaster, and motherlessness is a disaster. And of course, studies show that same-sex parenting does not produce the positive outcomes for children that natural marriage does. There's a conflict between children's rights and adult's rights in the same-sex marriage debate, just like their is in the no-fault divorce debate – and we need to side with the children in both cases.

Fighter pilot discusses apologetics and Christian living in new book “One of the Few”

February 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

“One of the Few” by Jason B. Ladd

Here is the blurb for his new book:

> Author, Marine, and Iraq War veteran Jason B. Ladd has just launched a pre-order campaign for his new book One of the Few: A Marine Fighter Pilot’s Reconnaissance of the Christian Worldview. He has until March 22 to reach his goal or it’s back to the drawing board. Read about him and the book below, and then check out his pre-order campaign at
>
> http://publishizer.com/one-of-the-few

The link above has the table of contents and chapter summaries.

From the back cover:

> “Unsatisfied with his secular worldview, Marine fighter pilot Jason B. Ladd shares the struggles he faced during his search for truth and a reasonable defense of the Christian faith.
>
> His mission began with a realization: though ready to defend his country, he was unprepared for his most important missions as a husband and father. Drawing from his military experience, Ladd warn seekers about spiritual apathy and teaches Christians tactics for withstanding spiritual attacks. Birthed from a legacy of service, One of the Few speaks from the spirit of a man reborn—with the soul of a Marine, the mind of a fighter, the heart of a father, and a commitment to the Son. Join him as he uses fighter pilot fundamentals to embark on the greatest mission of all: the pursuit of truth.”
>
> Jason B. Ladd is a Christian apologist, F/A-18 Weapons and Tactics Instructor, and Iraq War veteran. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Peace, War, and Defense from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2001. Jason writes articles for FIGHTER FAITH, a website he founded to help others lead with

> conviction, embrace parenthood with joy, and develop a worldview capable of answering life's biggest questions. He and his wife, Karalyn, are the parents of six children.

Here's the aircraft that Jason flies:

F/A-18 Hornet configured for strike mission

I actually met Jason at a recent SES National Apologetics conference, and it was great fun talking to him. He has a real interest in Christian apologetics and he sees how important it is for Christians to have a defensible worldview.

If you want to see a sample of Jason's writing, check out this post on his blog.

This is interesting:

> Christianity is more than a belief system. It is a away of life. The principles derived from Scripture inform the head and guide the heart. The Christian worldview is one of the few where philosophy corresponds to the human experience with coherence and consistency.
>
> But inevitably, events will occur which threaten to shake the foundations of our world. We lavish God with praise when his blessing fall upon us, but when tragedy strikes, praises turn into questions.
>
> Why does there have to be suffering?
>
> This is one of the most important question you can ask, and it's the topic of a recent book by Ravi Zacharias and Vince Vitale titled "Why Suffering? Finding Meaning and Comfort When Life Doesn't Make Sense".
>
> Abiding by a spiritual code means following a perpetual pattern of study and application. Once a search for truth yields the fruit of discovery, a growing hunger for more knowledge can threaten this balance.
>
> The study of Christian apologetics is about the desire to give answers for anyone with questions. It's about deepening your understanding of why you believe what you believe.
>
> Just as a scientist must leave the lab and work in the field, the apologist must recognize when to stop studying and start applying what he or she has learned.

> **This happened to me recently. Life threw a curveball, and the questions started coming. It was the moment for which all previous studying, thinking, praying, and contemplating was intended: to help someone cope through a time of suffering.**
>
> Zacharias writes:
>
> "At least as important as the question of why there is suffering is the question of how we will face the pain"1
>
> **The question is not just how we will face the pain, but whether we can help others through their own pain.**

I've always understood my Christian faith augmented by my study of military history and military biography. Before I started meeting lots of Christian apologists on the Internet, I thought I was the only person who viewed living out a Christian life in strategic ways, where you make decisions about what you invest in and study with a view of knowing enough about what is true to render yourself impervious to the slings and arrows that life can throw your way. It's interesting to see how people who are trained for actual war-fighting like Jason talks about his faith and how he built it up with apologetics. So you learn apologetics first to take care of yourself, and you make other moves to protect yourself from the things that take away people's faith.

In my case, I play defense by saving money in case something happens to my health or my job. I try not attempt things that I can't complete, and I have a pool of resources and a network of friends to support me. Once you have this foundation, you can then turn outward and build up other Christians – protecting them from challenges to their faith and unexpected losses and suffering. Supporting them, encouraging them and connecting them to other Christians to make them more resilient.

It's really fascinating to be a Christian and take this tactical view of your life. You find yourself constantly reading and studying and earning and saving so that you are able to withstand threats and protect others from threats. It's a very practical view of the Christian life, it's not passive. I find that most often it's those with a career in law enforcement (e.g. – J. Warner Wallace) and the military (e.g. – Jason Ladd) who take this tactical approach to their faith.

Study: non-family daycare linked to anti-social behavior in children

February 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Academics at Oxford University discovered that exposure to some forms of early education contributed to bad behaviour and could be linked to emotional problems.

> The study, based on an analysis of infants from almost 1,000 families, showed that the strongest influence on children came from within the home itself.
>
> Children raised in poor families with high levels of parental stress or mental health problems were most at risk of developing emotional problems by the time they started school, it emerged.
>
> The research also uncovered trends relating to children who were in formal child care — away from their parents.

> The disclosure will revive debate over the best way to raise children amid a surge in the number of under-fives enrolled in nurseries and with childminders in the past 20 years. Figures from the Department for Education show that 441,000 children under five are in day nurseries while another 272,000 are being looked after by childminders.
>
> […]In the Oxford study, researchers recruited 991 families with children aged three months. Mothers had an average age of 30.
>
> Researchers assessed children at the age of four through questionnaires about their behaviour and emotions completed by teachers and parents. They also observed care provided by mothers and observed non-parental care for at least 90 minutes for those children placed in formal childcare settings.
>
> The report, published in the journal Child: Care, Health and Development, said that "children who spent more time in group care, mainly nursery care, were more likely to have behavioural problems, particularly hyperactivity".
>
> The study, led by Prof Alan Stein, of Oxford's Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, found that "spending more time in day care centres, over the total period was a predictor of total problem scores".
>
> "Children who spent more time in day care centres were more likely to be hyperactive," it said. "Children receiving more care by childminders were more likely to have peer problems."
>
> The authors added: "The findings in relation to childminding suggest that it might

> be out of home care rather than group care that raises the risk of behavioural difficulties."
>
> The researchers also tracked other forms of early years care and found benefits to different approaches.
>
> They found that children who spent more time in pre-school playgroups – normally for a few hours a day, rather than a full-time nursery – had fewer problems.
>
> More time with a nanny in parents' own home predicted higher levels of "pro-social behaviour", showing willingness to help others, it emerged.
>
> The study said: "These findings suggest that interventions to enhance children's emotional and behavioural development might best focus on supporting families and augmenting the quality of care in the home."

A study like this will be useful when debating people with open minds, but hardcore feminists and socialists, who want women to work in order to fund bigger government, will not be moved. Because for them, it's not about evidence. It's about ideology. That's why we have to be careful about letting people like that get elected.

Obama says that 99.9% of Muslims worldwide reject radical Islam, is he right?

February 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

That video is from The Weekly Standard, here's the text:

> President Obama told CNN's Fareed Zakaria that 99.9 percent of Muslims reject radical Islam. He made the comments in response to a question about the White House avoiding using the phrase "Islamic terrorists."
>
> "You know, I think that the way to understand this is there is an element growing out of Muslim communities in certain parts of the world that have perverted the religion, have embraced a nihilistic, violent, almost medieval interpretation of Islam, and they're doing damage in a lot of countries around the world," said Obama.
>
> "But it is absolutely true that I reject a notion that somehow that creates a religious war because the overwhelming majority of Muslims reject that interpretation of Islam. They don't even recognize it as being Islam, and I think that for us to be successful in fighting this scourge, it's very important for us to align ourselves with the 99.9 percent of Muslims who are looking for the same thing we're looking for–order, peace, prosperity."

Now, let's take a look at apostasy and blasphemy laws in Muslim countries, with some help from the left-leaning Pew Research.

They write:

> In 10 of 20 countries where there are adequate samples for analysis, at least half of Muslims who favor making sharia the law of the land also favor stoning unfaithful spouses.
>
> Some of the highest support for stoning is found in South Asia and the Middle East-North Africa region. In Pakistan (89%) and Afghanistan (85%), more than eight-in-ten Muslims who want Islamic law as their country's official law say adulterers should be stoned, while nearly as many say the same in the Palestinian territories (84%) and Egypt (81%). A majority also support stoning as a penalty for the unfaithful in Jordan (67%), Iraq (58%). However, support is significantly lower in Lebanon (46%) and Tunisia (44%), where less than half of those who support sharia as the official law of the land believe that adulterers should be stoned.
>
> In Southeast Asia, six-in-ten Muslims in Malaysia consider stoning an appropriate penalty for adultery. About half hold this view in Thailand (51%) and Indonesia (48%).
>
> Muslims in Central Asia as well as Southern and Eastern Europe are generally less

> likely to support stoning adulterers. Among those who favor Islamic law as the official law of the land, only in Tajikistan do about half (51%) support this form of punishment. Elsewhere in the two regions, fewer than four-in-ten favor this type of punishment, including roughly a quarter or fewer across the countries surveyed in Southern and Eastern Europe.

And:

> Compared with attitudes toward applying sharia in the domestic or criminal spheres, Muslims in the countries surveyed are significantly less supportive of the death penalty for converts. Nevertheless, in six of the 20 countries where there are adequate samples for analysis, at least half of those who favor making Islamic law the official law also support executing apostates.
>
> Taking the life of those who abandon Islam is most widely supported in Egypt (86%) and Jordan (82%). Roughly two-thirds who want sharia to be the law of the land also back this penalty in the Palestinian territories (66%). In the other countries surveyed in the Middle East-North Africa region, fewer than half take this view.
>
> In the South Asian countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan, strong majorities of those who favor making Islamic law the official law of the land also approve of executing apostates (79% and 76%, respectively). However, in Bangladesh far fewer (44%) share this view.
>
> A majority of Malaysian Muslims (62%) who want to see sharia as their country's official law also support taking the lives of those who convert to other faiths. But fewer take this position in neighboring Thailand (27%) and Indonesia (18%).
>
> In Central Asia as well as Southern and Eastern Europe, only in Tajikistan (22%) do more than a fifth of Muslims who want sharia as the official law of the land also condone the execution of apostates. Support for killing converts to other faiths falls below one-in-ten in Albania (8%) and Kazakhstan (4%).

Now there is one little problem with this Pew Research data that causes them to understate the real numbers who favor adultery-stonings and apostasy-killings.

Andrew McCarthy explains in National Review:

> But what is striking is that the depressing state of affairs is manifest despite Pew's best efforts to make things seem better than they are. Principally, the survey is about Muslim views about sharia, Islam's legal system and framework for society. It is intimated that Pew's study is exhaustive, involving interviews with 38,000 Muslims across 39 countries. But, as my friend Andy Bostom pointed out to me this morning, guess which countries are not included in the survey? That would be Saudi Arabia, Iran and Sudan — perhaps the three most sharia compliant countries in the world, home cumulatively to nearly 150 million Muslims.

> […]In point of fact, sharia *is* the law of Saudi Arabia and Iran. These countries profess themselves as reflections of the true Islam (Saudi Arabia from the Sunni perspective, Iran from the Shiite) in which no law but sharia is necessary and no departures from sharia are permissible. Sudan (a Sunni Muslim country) is already close to the Saudis and Iranians in this regard and is sure to be more so when it finally adopts a new constitution (which it has been threatening to do for several years).

Iran has about 87 million people, Sudan has about 42 million people, and Saudi Arabia has about 31 million people. These are strict Islamic countries and they were left out of the survey.

So, what are we to make of Obama's comments now? Are Democrats like Barack Obama, John Kerry and Hillary Clinton accurate enough in their beliefs about the world that we should have confidence in their foreign policy? If they really believe these obvious false assertions, and they are making decisions based on these delusions, then how much does that set back the causes of freedom and democracy in the world? It seems to me that the first rule of protecting the good and fighting against evil is to be able to identify which is which.

William Lane Craig's secret weapon is his amazing wife Jan

February 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I want to draw your attention to a talk on "Vision in Life" given by Dr. William Lane Craig. Dr. Craig is the ablest defender of the Christian faith operating today. He has done formal academic debates with all of the best known atheists on major university campuses in front of *thousands* of university students.

It turns out that he owes a lot of his success to his amazing wife Jan.

The MP3 file is here. (32 minutes)

This talk was Dr. Craig's chapel address to Biola University students.

About 11 minutes into the talk, Bill describes what happened after he finished his Bachelor's degree at Wheaton:

> And so I joined the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for 2 years, and was assigned to Northern Illinois University. And that was where I met my wife Jan. She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota where she had come to faith in Christ. And she had a similar vision for her life of evangelism and discipleship.
>
> And as we worked at NIU together, she with gals and I with the guys, leading students to Christ and discipling them to walk with the Lord, we fell in love. And we decided that we would be more effective if we joined forces and became a team.

So their reason for getting together was because they thought that they would be more effective in evangelism and discipleship if they worked as a team.

It is at this point in the talk where Bill begins to explain just how Jan molded him into the lean, mean debating machine that travels the world striking terror into the hearts of atheists.

Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it

> takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

In an article on his web site, he talks about how Jan encouraged him to do his first Ph.D:

> As graduation from Trinity neared, Jan and I were sitting one evening at the supper table in our little campus apartment, talking about what to do after graduation. Neither of us had any clear leading or inclination of what we should do next.
>
> So Jan said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really like to do next?"
>
> I replied, "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to England and do a doctorate under John Hick."
>
> "Who's he?" she asked.
>
> "Oh, he's this famous British philosopher who's written extensively on arguments for the existence of God," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a cosmological argument for God's existence."
>
> But it hardly seemed a realistic idea.
>
> The next evening at supper Jan handed me a slip of paper with John Hick's address on it. "I went to the library today and found out that he's at the University of Birmingham in England," she said. "Why don't you write him a letter and ask him if you can do a doctoral thesis under him on the cosmological argument?"
>
> What a woman! So I did, and to our amazement and delight Professor Hick wrote back saying he'd be very pleased to supervise my doctoral work on that subject. So it was an open door!

And in the same article, he explains how Jan encouraged him to get his second Ph.D:

> As Jan and I neared the completion of my doctoral studies in Birmingham, our future path was again unclear to us. I had sent out a number of applications for teaching positions in philosophy at American universities but had received no bites. We didn't know what to do.
>
> I remember it like yesterday. We were sitting at the supper table in our little house outside Birmingham, and Jan suddenly said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really *like* to do next?"
>
> I laughed because I remembered how the Lord had used her question to guide us in the past. I had no trouble answering the question. "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to Germany and study under Wolfhart

> Pannenberg."
>
> "Who's he?"
>
> "Oh, he's this famous German theologian who's defended the resurrection of Christ historically," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus."
>
> Our conversation drifted to other subjects, but Jan later told me that my remark had just lit a fire under her. The next day while I was at the university, she slipped away to the library and began to research grants-in-aid for study at German universities. Most of the leads proved to be defunct or otherwise inapplicable to our situation. But there were two grants she found that were possibilities. You can imagine how surprised I was when she sprung them on me!

Both of these Ph.D experiences are also described in the talk. And the talk concludes as follows:

> **I am so thankful to be married to a woman who is tremendously resourceful, tremendously talented and energetic, who could have pursued an independent career in any number of areas, but instead, she has chose to wed her aspirations to mine, and to make it her goal to make me the most effective person I can be, for Christ. And she has been like my right arm in ministry over these many years. And it is a tremendous privilege to be a team with a person like that.**
>
> **And you young men, I would encourage you, if you marry, to find a gal who shares your vision, not some independent vision, but who is interested in aligning herself with you, and pursuing together a common vision and goal that will draw you [together], so that you will avoid the growing separateness that so often creeps into marriages.**

And now you know the rest of Bill's story. *The person you marry will have an enormous influence on the impact you will have for Christ and his Kingdom.* It is up to you to decide whether that influence is going to be positive or negative, by deciding if you will marry, and if you do marry, by deciding whom you will marry.

I have a popular post that has a lot of questions to ask a woman to make sure that she has the knowledge required to be a wife and mother, but I think in the context of this talk, I should highlight a few other questions that are more about her personality instead of her knowledge.

- Does she think that the purpose of the relationship is to serve God or to serve herself?
- Does she enjoy taking on the helper role, or does she ignore the man's need for help?
- Is she able provide alternatives when decisions have to be made?
- Is she comfortable letting a man lead by letting him making decisions?

- Is she good at being calm, persuasive and reasonable during disagreements?
- Is she able to control her emotions, and separate facts from feelings?
- Does she respect what her man has been able to achieve in the normal male roles? (Provider, etc.)
- Is she the man's "cheerleader"? Does she praise and encourage him privately and publicly?
- Does she see her man as an engine for serving God? Does she have a plan to help him perform better?
- Does she show her man that she is interested in teaching and mentoring others to grow?
- Does she take an interest in growing her man spiritually? (Men are often more practical than spiritual)

You may also be interested in this talk given by William Lane Craig, entitled "Healthy Relationships" (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008) (audio here) In that talk, he offers advice to Christians who want to have a marriage that is consistent with their Christian faith.

William Lane Craig discusses reason and faith with university students

February 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an interview of Dr. William Lane Craig before college students at the University of Central Florida. (95 minutes)

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (33 MB)

Questions from the interviewer: (40 minutes)

- What started you on his journey of studying faith and reason?
- How would you define the word “faith”?
- Are faith and reason compatible? How are they related?
- How can reasonable faith help us to avoid the two extremes of superstition and nihilism?
- Who makes the best arguments against the Christian faith?
- Why are angry atheists like Dawkins and Hitchens more well known than better-informed academic atheists?
- Does the Bible require Christians to give the unbeliever reasons for their faith?
- How does faith spur Christians to think carefully about the big questions in life?
- Should the American church prod churchgoers to develop their minds so they can engage the secular culture?
- When talking about Christianity intellectually, is there a risk of neglecting the experience of being a Christian?
- Which Christian apologist has shaped your thinking the most?
- Which Christian philosopher has shaped your thinking the most?
- Does the confidence that comes from apologetics undermine humility and reverence?
- If you had to sketch out a 5 minute case for Christianity, what would you present?
- Can non-Christians use their reason to arrive at truth?
- Are there cases where atheists must affirm irrational things in order to remain atheists?
- Can the universe have existed eternal, so that there is no need to explain who created it?
- Even if you persuade someone that Christianity is true, does that mean they will live it out?

There is also a long period of questions, many of them hostile, from the audience of students (55 minutes).

- Haven’t you said nasty things about some atheists? Aren’t you a meany?
- What do you make of the presuppositional approach to apologetics?
- Can a person stop being a Christian because of the chances that happen to them as

they age?
- Why did God wait so long after humans appeared to reveal himself to people through Jesus?
- Can a person be saved by faith without have any intellectual assent to truth?
- How do you find time for regular things like marriage when you have to study and speak so much?
- How would you respond to Zeitgeist and parallels to Christianity in Greek/Roman mythology?
- Do Christians have to assume that the Bible is inerrant and inspired in order to evangelize?
- If the universe has a beginning, then why doesn't God have a beginning?
- Can you name some philosophical resources on abstract objects, Platonism and nominalism?
- How can you know that Christianity more right than other religions?
- Should we respond to the problem of evil by saying that our moral notions are different from God's?
- Define the A and B theories of time. Explain how they relate to the kalam cosmological argument.
- How can Christians claim that their view is true in the face of so many world religions?
- What is the role of emotions in Christian belief and thought?
- Can evolution be reconciled with Christian beliefs and the Bible?
- When witnessing person-to-person, should you balance apologetics with personal testimony?
- Is there a good analogy for the trinity that can help people to understand it? [Note: HE HAS ONE!]
- How can Christians reconcile God's omniscience, God's sovereignty and human free will?

This is a nice introductory lecture that is sure to get Christians to become interested in apologetics. As you watch or listen to it, imagine what the world would be like if *every* Christian could answer the questions of skeptical college students and professors like Dr. Craig. What would non-Christians think about Christianity if *every* Christian had studied these issues like Dr. Craig? Why aren't we making an effort to study these things *so that* we can answer these questions?

It is really fun to see him fielding the questions from the skeptical university students. My favorite question was from the physics student who sounds really foreign, (at 1:19:00), then you realize that he is a Christian. I do think that Dr. Craig went a little far in accommodating evolution, but I put that down to the venue, and not wanting to get into a peripheral issue. I'm also surprised that no one asked him why God allows humans to suffer and commit acts of evil.

If you are looking for a good basic book on apologetics, then I would choose "Is God Just a

Human Invention?" by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow.

Who is William Lane Craig?

About William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

William Lane Craig is, without a doubt, the top living defender of Christianity. He has debated all of the most famous atheists, including Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, etc. as well as academic atheists like Quentin Smith, Peter Millican, etc. if you search this blog, you'll find many debates posted here, sometimes even with snarky summaries.

San Francisco book store closes after minimum wage increase

February 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Important story from the most leftist city in America.

ABC News:

> Independent bookstores have faced tough times for quite a while. In San Francisco, neighborhood businesses have been passionately protected, so it's hard to believe that an initiative passed by voters to raise the minimum wage is driving a Mission District bookstore out of business.
>
> San Francisco's minimum wage is currently $11.05 an hour. By July of 2018, the minimum wage in San Francisco will be $15 an hour. That increase is forcing Borderlands Bookstore to write its last chapter now.
>
> […]Borderlands was turning a small profit, about $3,000 last year. Then voters approved a hike in the minimum wage, a gradual rise from $10.75 up to $15 an hour.
>
> "And by 2018 we'll be losing about $25,000 a year," he said.
>
> It's an unexpected plot twist for loyal customers.
>
> **"You know, I voted for the measure as well, the minimum wage measure," customer Edward Vallecillo said. "It's not something that I thought would affect certain specific small businesses. I feel sad."**
>
> Though it's caught a lot of people off guard, one group that wasn't completely surprised was the Board of Supervisors. In fact, they say they debated this very topic before sending the minimum wage to the voters.
>
> "I know that bookstores are in a tough position, and this did come up in the discussions on minimum wage," San Francisco supervisor Scott Wiener said.
>
> Wiener knows a lot of merchants will pass the wage increases on to their customers, but not bookstores.
>
> "I can't increase the prices of my products because books, unlike many other things, have a price printed on them,"
>
> Wiener says it's the will of the voters. **Seventy-seven percent of them voted for this latest wage hike.**

Unexpected!

Let's review the facts on minimum wage, and then I can make fun of one of my friends in my conclusion.

Abstract from new National Bureau of Economic Research study:

> We estimate the minimum wage's effects on low-skilled workers' employment

> and income trajectories. Our approach exploits two dimensions of the data we analyze. First, we compare workers in states that were bound by recent increases in the federal minimum wage to workers in states that were not. Second, we use 12 months of baseline data to divide low-skilled workers into a "target" group, whose baseline wage rates were directly affected, and a "within-state control" group with slightly higher baseline wage rates. **Over three subsequent years, we find that binding minimum wage increases had significant, negative effects on the employment and income growth of targeted workers**. Lost income reflects contributions from employment declines, increased probabilities of working without pay (i.e., an "internship" effect), and lost wage growth associated with reductions in experience accumulation. Methodologically, we show that our approach identifies targeted workers more precisely than the demographic and industrial proxies used regularly in the literature. Additionally, because we identify targeted workers on a population-wide basis, our approach is relatively well suited for extrapolating to estimates of the minimum wage's effects on aggregate employment. Over the late 2000s, the average effective minimum wage rose by 30 percent across the United States. **We estimate that these minimum wage increases reduced the national employment-to-population ratio by 0.7 percentage point.**

That comes out to 1.4 million workers.

Harvard economist Greg Mankiw explains the top 14 views that a majority professional economists agree on, and here's #12:

> 12. A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)

OK, now the funny part.

I know someone who is a fairly committed Christian. He is also an unemployed graduate student. He doesn't understand anything about politics or economics. He is also single, and looking for a girlfriend. He messages me periodically about new girls he is interested in, and he asks me "is she pretty?". He asks that for each new girl. I try to tell him that there is more to women than just appearances, but this guy looked at my list of courting questions on Christian worldview and he thought it was a joke. Appearance is everything – he wants Barbie with a Bible.

He asked me what I thought of this one lady he liked. I went on her Facebook page, and I found out that she was in favor of minimum wage hikes. So I messaged her and linked her to some peer-reviewed studies by economists showing that minimum wage hikes hurt young, minority workers most – they can't get an entry-level job to start themselves off. And she said, and I quote: "oh, that appeal to authority doesn't work on me at all xD". She is in high school, but wants to study *philosophy*. I hope she doesn't borrow money for that, but I think that she probably will.

She writes:

> it has barely effected (sic) price ranges at all for corporations who've been required to raise the wage. the fact is, corporations have never been trustworthy with voluntarily treating their workers well. our best years were ones where banks and corporations were very heavily regulated.

No evidence was provided for that statement, of course. The money comes from… magic beans! Or something.

I think my friend just likes attention from women, and that they like that he doesn't ask them hard questions, or tell them when they are wrong about anything. He's a good student, but I wouldn't take his advice on anything real-world until he grows up. But I think his tendency to affirm anything a woman says to him will make him very popular with a certain subset of women.

School chaplain fired for disagreeing with homosexuality

February 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from ABC News Australia.

They write:

> A Hobart school chaplain has been sacked for re-posting a comment on Facebook that described homosexuality as "not normal".
>
> Troy Williams was employed by the Scripture Union, Tasmania's main provider of school chaplaincy services which appoints and trains state and private school chaplains.
>
> Mr Williams was stood down from his role at the Hobart College over the post, which also makes the claim that "no-one is born gay".
>
> Mr Williams issued an apology after his Facebook post drew widespread condemnation earlier this month.
>
> He told the ABC: "I've made a mistake and learnt from it. I'm deeply sorry for any offence I've caused. I was very careless in posting that image for discussion. I will work with my employers to ensure there is no repeat."
>
> Following a meeting with the Kingborough Council general manager this morning, Mr Williams was also stood down from his role as a youth outreach worker there.
>
> The council said it acted based on comments he made on a post by a Melbourne-based blogger who used sarcasm to defend Mr Williams.

Here's the comment:

> "Please pray with me that this may become another opportunity for the Gospel to go out. I will probably be fired … for encouraging young people in that they have a choice in who they are and that they shouldn't be bullied by someone telling their lot is predetermined (by someone other than God)."

Factually speaking, he is of course correct that homosexuality is not generically determined – that is what studies show. But he still had to recant in order to get his job back.

Was the tolerant, compassionate left appalled by this infringement of the man's free speech?

Not so much:

> Gay rights activist Rodney Croome welcomed Mr Williams' dismissal.
>
> "If this fellow had been running around saying that blue-eyed or left-handed people are flawed and should be changed, he'd be out on his ear," he said.

> “And it’s right that he’s out on his ear over his comments about same-sex attracted young people too, given the immense damage those comments would cause to those young people when he should, in fact, be supporting them as a chaplain.”
>
> Mr Croome said more needed to be done.
>
> “Kingborough Council and Scripture Union need to assure the public that this will never happen again by overhauling all their policies and their training to make sure that all their youth workers and their chaplains – anyone who comes in contact with young people – discharge their responsibilities in a professional way and do not perpetuate prejudice and stereotype,” he said.

This story shows why it is *so important* for Christians to go for STEM degrees in college, to save their money, and to write under an alias. It is a different world today, and you have to be ready when you get called on the carpet by the other team. I don’t condemn this chaplain for recanting. I might be tempted to do the same, even though I am prepared for it. But I do think it serves as a warning for those who think that God is waiting to save us when we have to stand up for what we believe. Don’t expect him to save you. The world is *not* a Disney movie, and Christians are *not* Disney princesses. Do not follow your heart. Do not listen to people who urge you to follow your heart. Especially when you and your advisors have made poor decisions in the past.

Your ability to be who you are in Christ is partially dependent on your ability to survive a financial crisis. Your ability to be who you are in Christ is partially dependent on your debt / savings balance. What you study in school matters. What jobs you take matters. How fast you pay off your debts matters. How well you save your money matters. Your ability to protect yourself, your family, and your friends in the face of challenges to your faith like this one is directly proportional to your past life decisions. If you are guided by your feelings in your decision-making, you are exposing yourself to dangers that could lead to apostasy. That is not a popular message, but it is a true one. The Bible gives no evidence that our lives will be free of confrontation and judgment.

Consider Luke 14:25-30:

[25] Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them,

[26] “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

[27] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

[28] For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

[29] Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,

[30] saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’

Here is a trustworthy saying from outside the Bible:

> “Si vis pacem, para bellum”
> — Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus

That translates to “Let him who desires peace prepare for war.”

Make sure you keep up with what is happening in the world to Christians. Make sure you have lots of money ready to lawyer up when it’s your turn to go down fighting. You might even find that your opponents will pick on a weaker target if you can afford to defend yourself. That’s why the Human Rights Commissions went after a penniless and obscure pastor, but not a well-connected lawyer and journalist. And if you are strong enough, you can even protect that weaker target out of your strength. Make sure you having something to share with others when they are in distress.

I’m really not sure why Christians have been taught to think that recklessness is a virtue, while prudence is not. But they’re wrong.

Scott Klusendorf defends the pro-life view on the Unbelievable radio show

February 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the details:

> The abortion debate reared its head again this summer after controversial tweets by Richard Dawkins made the news.
>
> Justin hosts a discussion between Mara Clarke of the Abortion Support Network and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Instititute. Mara believes women need to be decide whether to terminate a pregnancy, but Scott says that all depends on whether we are dealing with a human life in the womb.
>
> MP3 of this show: http://cdnapi.kaltura.com/p/618072/sp/61807200/playManifest/entryId/1_ggc953xi/flavorId/1_vto2eisb/protocol/http/format/url/a.mp3?clientTag=feed:1_jlj47tkv

My snarky paraphrase of the debate (not exact):

- Speaker introductions
- Klusendorf: no justification for abortion is necessary if the unborn are not human
- Klusendorf: we need to address the issue "what is the unborn?" Are the unborn human?
- Klusendorf: SLED: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency
- Klusendorf: None of these things affect the value of a human being
- Klusendorf: Even if we don't KNOW whether the unborn is human
- Mara: I'm not going to debate when life begins
- Mara: Women know when life begins by feelings
- Mara: The moral decision is "whether I can take care of this child?"
- Brierley: When is an unborn being human?
- Mara: I refuse to debate that – the real question is whether women want their babies or not
- Mara: Forced pregnancy is not OK
- Brierley: Could your justification for abortion (not wanting to care for a child) work through all 9 months?
- Mara: Late term abortions are rare, so I don't have to answer that question
- Mara: Abortion should be OK through all 9 months of pregnancy because women cannot be restricted
- Mara: Some women are poor, they need to be able to kill expensive babies at any time
- Klusendorf: although she says she won't debate the unborn, she does take a position

- Klusendorf: she assumes the unborn is not human, because she says that insufficient funds is justification for abortion
- Klusendorf: no one argues that you can kill a two year old because they cost money, because she thinks they are human
- Klusendorf: she is begging the question by assuming the unborn are not human, but that is the issue we must resolve
- Klusendorf: I am pro-choice on many other things, e.g. women choosing their own husbands, religion, etc.
- Klusendorf: Some choices are wrong – Mara might be right, but she needs to make the case for the unborn not being human
- Brierley: What is your reason for thinking that an unborn child is different from a 2-year old?
- Mara: An unborn child is not the same as a 2-year old, in my personal opinion
- Mara: I am not a debater, so I don't have to provide reasoning for my assertion, I just feel it
- Mara: Not everybody agrees with Scott, they don't have to have a rational argument, they just need to feel differently
- Mara: From my experience, when a woman doesn't want to be pregnant, then she should be able to not be pregnant
- Mara: Women shouldn't be punished with a baby that she doesn't want, even if she chooses to have recreational sex
- Brierley: What do you think of women who think the unborn is human and do it anyway?
- Klusendorf: It's interesting that they never kill their toddlers for those reasons
- Klusendorf: I layed out scientific and philosophical reasons for the humanity of the unborn
- Klusendorf: Her response was "but some people disagree with you"
- Klusendorf: People disagreed about whether slavery was wrong, or whether women should be able to vote
- Klusendorf: that doesn't mean there is no right answer – the right answer depends on the arguments
- Klusendorf: if absence of agreement makes a view false, then it makes HER pro-choice view false as well
- Klusendorf: she did make an argument for the unborn child having no rights because of the location
- Klusendorf: she needs to explain to us why location matters – what about location confers value
- Mara: I'm not going to let Scott frame my debate for me!!!
- Mara: women get pregnant and they don't want their babies! should we put them in jail!!!!
- Klusendorf: I didn't just give my opinion, I had science and philosophy, the issue is "what is the unborn?"
- Mara: philosophical and scientific debates are unimportant, I am an expert in real

women's lives
- Klusendorf: Which women? Women in the womb or only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Only those outside the womb
- Klusendorf: Only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Women living outside the womb have a right to kill women inside the womb – women have bodily autonomy
- Klusendorf: then does a pregnant woman with nausea have a right to take a drug for it that will harm her unborn child?
- Mara: Unborn children are only valuable if they are wanted, unborn children only deserve protection if they are wanted
- Mara: There are restrictions on abortion – you can't get an abortion through all nine months in the US
- Mara: There is a 24-week limit in the UK as well
- Klusendorf: There are no restrictions on abortion that conflict with "a woman's health" because Supreme Court said
- Mara: where are these late term abortion clinics?
- Klusendorf: (he names two)
- Mara: that's not enough!!! we need more! where is there one in Pennsylvania?
- Klusendorf: well, there used to be Gosnell's clinic in Pennsylvania, and you could even get an infanticide there….
- Brierley: What about Dawkins' view that it is moral to abort Down's Syndrome babies?
- Klusendorf: he is ignoring the scientific case and philosophical case for the pro-life
- Klusendorf: the pro-life view is a true basis for human equality

What I wanted Scott to ask was whether sex-selection abortions were OK with her. Since her reasoning is "if it's unwanted, it has no rights", then that would mean sex-selection abortions are just fine. That's what a UK abortion expert recently argued. And I also posted recently about how sex-selection abortions are not prosecuted in the UK. If you're looking for a war on women, there it is.

Not just #1 in Iowa: Scott Walker leads in latest New Hampshire GOP primary poll

February 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

Here's the story from the Washington Times.

They write:

> Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker leads a host of potential 2016 GOPpresidential contenders in a new poll in the early presidential state of New Hampshire out Wednesday.
>
> Mr. Walker leads the NH1 automated poll, conducted Feb. 2-3, with 21.2 percent of the vote, followed by former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush at 14.4 percent, Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky at 8.3 percent, and retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson at 8.2 percent.
>
> Mr. Walker managed to ride a well-received performance at last month's "Iowa Freedom Summit" into a place atop a recent Bloomberg Politics/Des Moines Register poll in the Hawkeye State among like caucus-goers there. He is scheduled to attend a GOP event in New Hampshire next month.
>
> A NH1 "pulse poll" taken two weeks ago, prior to 2012 GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney's announcement that he would not run for president in 2016, had Mr. Romney well ahead at 29 percent, with Mr. Bush at 11 percent and Mr. Walker at 8 percent.
>
> In the poll out Wednesday, which was conducted by REACH Communications, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie was next at 7 percent, followed by former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee at 6.8 percent and Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida at 5.4 percent.
>
> Next was Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas at 3.3 percent, former Texas Gov. Rick Perry at 2.7 percent, former New York Gov. George Pataki at 2.2 percent, and former

> Hewlett-Packard CEO Carly Fiorina at 1.7 percent.
>
> Among the names left out of the survey were former Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania and Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, who are also weighing presidential bids.
>
> About 19 percent of the 1,012 voters were undecided or wanted someone else.
>
> The poll included registered Republicans and undeclared voters that lean Republican and are likely to vote in the 2016 GOP primary, and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.08 points.

Just a quick flashback to the Iowa poll I blogged about before:

> Presidential stage newcomer Scott Walker, the conservative reform pit bull who inspired death threats from the left, has become the one to watch in the race for the Republican nomination a year out from the Iowa caucuses.
>
> At 15 percentage points, he leads a big, tightly packed field of potential contenders in a new Des Moines Register/Bloomberg Politics Iowa Poll of likely Republican caucusgoers. The caucuses are scheduled for Feb. 1, 2016.
>
> The Wisconsin governor is also the No. 2 most popular choice for likely caucusgoers who want an establishment candidate, and he's the No. 2 for those who want an anti-establishment candidate, the poll shows.
>
> […]The day after polling wrapped up, Romney announced he's out of the competition. When the numbers in this poll are shuffled — by giving Romney's votes to the contenders his supporters named as their second-choice pick — the five others in the top tier gain support.
>
> […]Walker's support has jumped 11 points since the last Iowa Poll. In October, only 4 percent of likely caucusgoers named Walker as their first choice for president.
>
> […]At the same time, the favorability rating for Walker has climbed 11 percentage points; Carson, 9; Huckabee, 7; Cruz, 6; Santorum, 5; and Paul, 5, the new poll shows.

And this is also interesting – the Drudge Report also started a GOP primary poll. With 450,000 votes counted, Walker leads with 44%, and Cruz is second with 13%.

I like winning. I don't see how you can take a regular Joe like Scott Walker and lose to a rich, entitled Democrat elite like Hillary. Trust me on this, we need to nominate a regular person who has a record of smashing deficits without raising taxes. That's the winning message. People will vote for the economy and jobs first. And they will also happen to get a President who passed socially conservative laws as governor of Wisconsin. We run on real fiscal achievements, and we get the social conservatism for free.

If you want to learn more about Scott Walker, I recommend Walker's new book. I actually got the audio version, and it's read by Governor Walker himself.

Related posts

- With Romney out, Scott Walker leads Iowa poll with 16%, Bush at 9%
- Wisconsin governor Scott Walker draws standing ovations at Freedom Summit in Iowa
- Republican Scott Walker beats Mary Burke to win Wisconsin Governor race
- Wisconsin House passes Scott Walker's tax cut bill, headed to governor's desk
- Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker cuts taxes again, expects $1 billion surplus in 2015
- Wisconsin governor Walker's reforms hit the left in their wallets
- An interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
- Wisconsin judge defends free speech rights of conservative groups against Democrat censors
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Kenosha teachers vote to de-certify their teacher union, 63 – 37
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
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- What is a "right-to-work" law, and why do Democrats oppose them?
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues
- Democrat lawmakers flee state to avoid voting on spending cuts

Scott Walker’s new budget: tax cuts, spending cuts, school choice, smaller government

February 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

Scott Walker announces some of the items in his new Wisconsin budget.

The Daily Signal reports:

> Gov. Scott Walker unveiled his proposal for Wisconsin’s state budget on Tuesday night, and he did not shy away from offering bold ideas.
>
> The second-term Republican governor has proposed a budget for 2015-17 that would cut property taxes again, eliminate the cap on the state’s school choice program, and reform government by merging agencies.
>
> Walker’s budget would also spin off the public University of Wisconsin System as a separate state entity and require those receiving government benefits to take a drug test.

Tax cuts, expanding school choice, smaller government.

Here are the details on the school choice expansion:

> The governor also talked about expanding the state’s school choice program.
>
> “I am excited to announce our plans to lift the cap on vouchers so more families … can have the choice to find the best school for their children,” Walker said. “Every child deserves the chance to succeed.”
>
> If passed by the GOP-led legislature, all students living under 185 percent of the federal poverty level and currently attending a public school would have access to a voucher to attend a private school.
>
> This expansion is on top of school choice programs already in place in the cities of Milwaukee and Racine.

> Walker's budget also expands public school choice in the form of independent charter schools. Wisconsin currently authorizes these schools in the city of Milwaukee, but nowhere else in the state. Independent charter schools are public schools, but do not operate under the auspice of the local school board or teachers' union.
>
> The governor has proposed a statewide board, which would authorize new charter schools statewide. In Milwaukee, the independent charter schools have repeatedly outperformed their traditional public school peers.

Oh no! What will the leftist public schools do when parents can choose not to give them money? WHO CARES!

And welfare reform:

> Walker also introduced a plan recently that would build on his previous entitlement reforms.
>
> "Our budget expands the requirement for able-bodied adults to be enrolled in an employment and training program in order to receive food stamps," Walker announced. "Now, some might claim that we're making it harder to get government assistance. We're not. We're making it easier to get a job."

He is mean. Mean to lazy people!

The leftist New York Times reports that the streamlining of government will result in 400 public sector positions (some of which are vacant) being eliminated.

The article also reminds us why conservatives love Scott Walker:

> Mr. Walker came to national prominence in 2011 largely because of his first statewide budget proposal, which relied on cuts to collective bargaining rights and increased health and pension costs for most public workers to help solve an expected budget gap.

That got rid of the massive $3.6 billion deficit he inherited from his Democrat predecessor.

But there is more. What do you think the deepest, darkest place is in the United States? I think it's the university.

The NYT article continues:

> Mr. Walker's proposal calls for cutting about $300 million, or 13 percent, in state funds from the University of Wisconsin System, which includes 13 four-year universities and enrolls some 180,000 students. Mr. Walker's plan would also take the unusual step of removing the university system from direct state control to a "quasi-governmental" authority that could act autonomously on issues of personnel, procurement, capital projects and tuition.
>
> As word spread in recent days that proposed cuts were coming, some in the university system expressed deep concern, likening the focus on the universities

> to Mr. Walker's earlier clashes with public-sector labor unions. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Faculty Senate this week condemned the proposal. Students said they intended to organize opposition.

He went after the leftist public sector unions, and now the bloated leftist public universities. He is so mean to them! Oh well. (Fake cry)

Just ask yourself – what if the guy we chose as the Republican candidate for president actually knew what he was doing? Wouldn't that be interesting? What if our candidate for President could do more than just play golf and read a teleprompter? What if our candidate for President could actually tell the truth instead of saying "let me be clear", then lying, then saying "period" after the lie?

When the Green Bay Packers play NFL MVP Aaron Rodgers at quarterback, the Green Bay fans understand that he actually knows how to play football – and he is actually good at it, based on past experiences playing football. What if we chose a candidate who could actually do the job? And talk about past experiences doing the job? Wouldn't that be something? Picking Scott Walker to be president would be like picking William Lane Craig to debate in favor of Christianity.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

February 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus as the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates.

For example, in his debate with Bart Ehrman, Craig was able to quote Ehrman's own writings where he agreed that all four facts were probably true.

Excerpt:

> Now in his early published work Dr. Ehrman expressed skepticism about these facts. He insisted that we cannot really affirm these facts.
>
> […]Dr. Ehrman has himself come to re-think his position on these issues. Inconsistencies in the details notwithstanding, he now recognizes that we have "solid traditions," not only for Jesus' burial, but also for the women's discovery of the empty tomb, and therefore, he says, we can conclude with "some certainty" that Jesus was in fact buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb and that three days later the tomb was found empty.
>
> When I discovered that Professor Ehrman had reversed himself on this question, my admiration for his honesty and scholarly objectivity shot up. Very few scholars, once they've gone into print on an issue, have the courage to re-think that issue and admit that they were wrong. Dr. Ehrman's reversal of his opinion on these matters is testimony, not merely to the force of the evidence for these four facts, but also to his determination to follow the evidence wherever it leads. What this means is that my first contention is not an issue of disagreement in tonight's debate.

So what are the criteria that historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with

other authentic material, and so forth.

It is somewhat misleading to call these “criteria,” for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called “Indications of Authenticity” or “Signs of Credibility.”

In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus’ life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.

What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:

(1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.

(2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.

(3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.

(4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.

(5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.

(6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.

For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, “The ‘Criteria’ for Authenticity,” in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.

Notice that these “criteria” do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus’ life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same “criteria” are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur’an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the

> better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book.

Try this approach instead:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely

accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection
8. Don't let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And just keep in mind that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. You have to use that – it's the law.

Back to the minimal facts criteria. The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I've read is the one by Robert H. Stein in "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It's a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion "God raised Jesus from the dead". That whole book is really very, very good.

Obama responds to Islamic State terrorism by saying Christians are just as bad

February 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the past I blogged about four myths about the Crusades, but for our purposes, the most important is that the Crusades at least *started out* as defensive reactions to the conquest of Western lands by Islam.

Anyway, here's a reaction to Obama's moral equivalence from Investors Business Daily.

First, what Obama did:

> In remarks at a prayer meeting Thursday, President Obama implied Christianity, just like Islam, is filled with people who "hijack religion for their own murderous ends." This is the progressive disease of moral equivalence at its worst.
>
> In recent days and weeks, the world has watched grimly as the horrific barbarity of fundamentalist Islam has been put on full display.
>
> With routine beheadings, crucifixions, tortures, mass killings of civilians, burying children alive, and, most recently, burning a prisoner alive and filming his death agony to the approving yells of onlookers, it's clear something is horribly wrong within Islam.
>
> And yet, apart from rather routine denunciations of the savagery, Obama used his appearance at a National Prayer Breakfast to upbraid Christians for their sins.
>
> "Unless we get on our high horse and think this is unique to some other place, remember that during the Crusades and the Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ," Obama said. "In our home country, slavery and Jim Crow all too often was justified in the name of Christ."

They write:

> The remarks aren't merely insulting. They betray a deep ignorance of Western Judeo-Christian culture and its history.
>
> No one claims Christians haven't done terrible things, some in the name of religion. But this is a straw-man argument.
>
> Obama, for instance, talks of the Crusades. But far from being about conquest, the Crusades were a counter-reaction to the Muslim jihad that swept Christian lands in the Mideast, North Africa, Spain and Balkans.
>
> Nothing less than Western civilization was at stake. Not much has changed today.
>
> According to Open Doors USA's World Watch List for 2015, "Approximately 100 million Christians are persecuted worldwide, making them one of the most persecuted religious groups in the world."

> And who are the persecutors? “Islamic extremism is the main source of persecution in 40 of the 50 countries” that make up Open Doors USA’s watch list, the report says.
>
> Meanwhile, how are Muslims in the West treated? With visas, welfare, legal protection, even special speech codes to protect their religious sensibilities, along with copious apologies by people such as Obama. Even terrorists at Gitmo are given Halal meals, prayer mats and Qurans.
>
> Obama’s done this before. In a speech in Cairo in 2009, he also suggested the Christian West had much to answer for.
>
> In point of fact, the West’s Judeo-Christian heritage has led to tolerance, justice, women’s rights and the abolition of slavery.
>
> Neither slavery nor Jim Crow laws were “justified” by the U.S. Christian mainstream. Indeed, as history shows, Christians were the driving force behind the anti-slavery movement in the U.S. But slavery is still found in the Muslim Mideast and Africa.
>
> Terrorist murderers won’t be appeased by Obama’s cringe-worthy remarks. They’ll be encouraged. As such, they aren’t merely wrong — they’re dangerous.

I’ve noticed this “reasoning” that Obama is employing before when discussing social issues with feminists. I produce facts showing that children are least likely to be abused when they grow up with their own parents in a married home. And they say that there exists some child who was abused by his married parents. As if the existence of one counterexample negates the probabilities or the relative frequencies in different situations. What Obama is really saying is this “because you defended yourself from Muslim conquerors 900 years ago, that justifies kidnapping underage girls into sex slavery after you murder their parents in front of them”. Should we have elected a President who is incapable of basic reasoning about history and about ethics? Well, we did.

Gallup CEO: The real unemployment rate is much higher than 5.6%

February 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a striking column from Jim Clifton, CEO of the Gallup polling company. His claim about the real unemployment rate is going to come as no surprise to most of my regular readers, who are used to me pushing labor force participation as the real measure of unemployment. Still, it's nice to get some confirmation from high places.

He writes:

> Here's something that many Americans — including some of the smartest and most educated among us — don't know: The official unemployment rate, as reported by the U.S. Department of Labor, is extremely misleading.
>
> Right now, we're hearing much celebrating from the media, the White House and Wall Street about how unemployment is "down" to 5.6%. The cheerleading for this number is deafening. The media loves a comeback story, the White House wants to score political points and Wall Street would like you to stay in the market.
>
> None of them will tell you this: If you, a family member or anyone is unemployed and has subsequently given up on finding a job — if you are so hopelessly out of work that you've stopped looking over the past four weeks — the Department of Labor doesn't count you as unemployed. That's right. While you are as unemployed as one can possibly be, and tragically may never find work again, you are *not* counted in the figure we see relentlessly in the news — currently 5.6%. Right now, as many as 30 million Americans are either out of work or severely underemployed. Trust me, the vast majority of them aren't throwing parties to toast "falling" unemployment.
>
> There's another reason why the official rate is misleading. Say you're an out-of-work engineer or healthcare worker or construction worker or retail manager: If you perform a minimum of one hour of work in a week and are paid at least $20 — maybe someone pays you to mow their lawn — you're not officially counted as unemployed in the much-reported 5.6%. Few Americans know this.
>
> Yet another figure of importance that doesn't get much press: those working part time but wanting full-time work. If you have a degree in chemistry or math and are working 10 hours part time because it is all you can find — in other words, you are severely underemployed — the government doesn't count you in the 5.6%. Few Americans know this.
>
> There's no other way to say this. The official unemployment rate, which cruelly overlooks the suffering of the long-term and often permanently unemployed as well as the depressingly underemployed, amounts to a Big Lie.

> […]Gallup defines a good job as 30+ hours per week for an organization that provides a regular paycheck. Right now, the U.S. is delivering at a staggeringly low rate of 44%, which is the number of full-time jobs as a percent of the adult population, 18 years and older. We need that to be 50% and a bare minimum of 10 million new, good jobs to replenish America's middle class.

Why does anyone think that higher taxes, massive government spending, huge deficits, and 18 trillion national debt would encourage job creators to create more jobs? Only a Democrat voter could believe that making things *worse* for job creators would actually result in more jobs. And maybe it does – just in some other country, when the companies here tire of high taxes and burdensome regulations and ship their jobs overseas.

Here is the labor force participation graph:

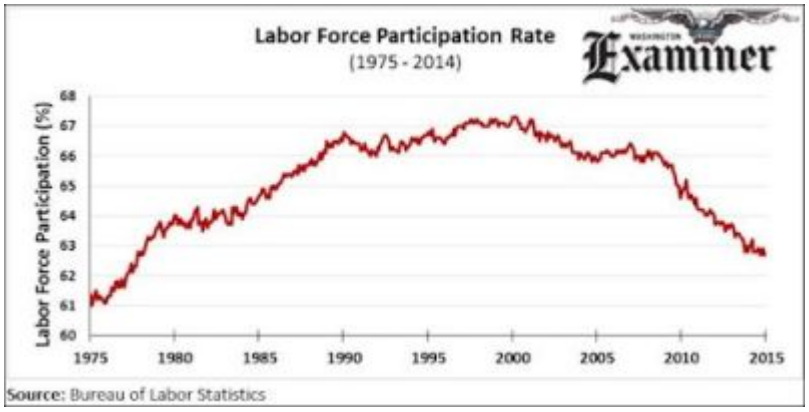

Labor Force Participation 2014

That's where unemployment really stands – this is what Democrats like Barack Obama, Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid deliver. The Republicans lost control of the House and Senate in January 2007, and George W. Bush was a good President, but a lousy at vetoing socialist bills passed by Pelosi and Reid. Every dip in the labor force participation from 2008 on should be blamed on Democrats. They were in the driver's seat, they crashed the car.

Correcting four myths about the history of the Crusades

February 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Crusader

Here is an interesting article from First Principles Journal.

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

If you asked me what are the two best books on the Crusades, I would answer God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades by Baylor professor Rodney Stark and The Concise History of the Crusades by Professor Thomas F. Madden. If you get this question a lot from atheists, then I recommend you pick these up. Anything by Rodney Stark is useful for Christians, in fact.

New study: 50 percent of divorced people wish they had never ended their marriage

February 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The study was reported in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> The decision to divorce is always going to be difficult, and for many there can be good reason to end a marriage.
>
> Yet, 50 per cent of divorcees have regrets about their break-up, a study revealed. Researchers found that after the dust settled, 54 per cent experienced second thoughts about whether they had made the right decision, with many realising they miss or still love their ex-partner.
>
> For some, the regrets have been so severe that 42 per cent have had moments where they considered giving their relationship another go, with a large percentage actually making the effort to try again and 21 per cent of those still together now.
>
> […]A spokesman for the survey, who asked 2,000 UK men and women that have either divorced or called time on a long-term relationship of more than five years, says: 'Getting divorced is a huge step for any relationship, and sometimes, the words 'I want a divorce' can be said in the heat of an argument.
>
> But once you calm down and really think about things, many realise it's the last thing they want, but by then, you can feel it's too late to take it back.
>
> And even if you don't regret it immediately, dealing with the aftermath of a break-up can lead to more second thoughts. But it's great to see some have managed to talk about their regrets and give things another go.'
>
> The study found one in five said the regrets started straight away, with another 19 per cent having second thoughts within a week of saying the D-word.
>
> ### TOP TEN REASONS FOR REGRETTING A DIVORCE
>
> 1. Missing an ex-partner
> 2. Feeling like a failure
> 3. Still being in love with an ex-partner
> 4. Realising they were being unreasonable
> 5. Feeling lonely
> 6. Discovering the grass isn't always greener
> 7. An ex-partner finding someone new
> 8. Realising they are not better off on their own
> 9. Damaging the relationship with their children

> 10. Children's lives being affected
>
> But for some, it took longer with more than one in ten admitting it took a year or more for them to wish they hadn't left their partner.
>
> Others admitted they wished they could take things back when the divorce officially came through. Especially when they have worked to divide their assets or started telling people they were calling it quits.

This study fits together well with another study that I blogged about before.

The article is by Mona Charen, and the study is by the Institute for American Values. It's an older article, but I was reading a book that mentioned the study, so I thought I would blog on it.

Excerpt:

> Now, the Institute for American Values (www.americanvalues.org) has released a new study with some intriguing data about the effects of divorce on the unhappy couples themselves. It seems that another great myth is about to tumble – the myth that at least divorce makes unhappily married adults happier.

> According to the survey, conducted by a team of family researchers, unhappily married adults who divorced were no happier five years after the divorce than were equally unhappy couples who remained together. And two-thirds of unhappily married people who remained married reported marriages that were happy five years later. Even among those who had rated their marriages as "very unhappy," nearly 80 percent said they were happily married five years later. These were not bored or dissatisfied whiners. They had endured serious problems, including alcoholism, infidelity, verbal abuse, emotional neglect, depression, illness, and work and money troubles.
>
> Even more surprising, unhappy spouses who divorced actually showed slightly more depressive symptoms five years later than those who didn't. (They did, however, report more personal growth.) And – make of this what you will – the divorced sample reported a good deal more alcohol consumption than the married group.
>
> […]**The data show that if a couple is unhappy, the chances of their being happily married five years hence are 64 percent if they stay together but only 19 percent if they divorce and remarry. (The authors acknowledge that five years is a relatively short period and many divorced people will eventually remarry, some happily.)**
>
> How did the unhappy couples turn their lives around? The study found three principal techniques. The first was endurance. Many couples do not so much solve their problems as transcend them. By taking one day at a time and pushing through their difficulties, many couples found that time itself often improved matters. Moreover, these couples maintained a negative view of the effects of

> divorce. “The grass is always greener,” explained one husband, “but it’s Astroturf.”
>
> Others were more aggressive. Those the researchers labeled the “marital work ethic” types tackled their problems by arranging for more private time with one another, seeking counseling (from clergy or professionals), receiving help from in-laws or other relatives, or in some cases, threatening divorce or consulting a divorce lawyer.
>
> In the third category were the “personal happiness seekers” who found other ways to improve their overall contentment even if they could not markedly improve their marital happiness.
>
> Certainly the survey found some marriages that were impossible to save and some divorced couples who were happier than those who had remained married. That is as one would expect.
>
> **But the most telling aspect of this research is the light it sheds on the importance of the attitude toward marriage. Those who enter marriage with a dim (some might say accurate) view of divorce and a strong religious or other motivation for avoiding it are not only less likely to divorce; they are also less likely to be unhappy. That is the arresting news here. We’ve known that commitment was good for the children of such marriages. We’ve known that commitment was good for society. But until now, it was not clear that commitment actually made married couples themselves more likely to be happy.**

I think the last point is a good point. Right now, a lot of young people are choosing mates based on superficial criteria (looks, money, popularity). The purpose of marriage is, in their opinion, to be happy. And their spouse’s job is to make them happy. That’s their view of marriage. But this ignores the realities of what marriage is about. Marriage is not a contract, it’s a covenant. People who marry ought to be getting into it because they want the responsibility of loving another sinner in close quarters. It’s not about feelings and life enhancement. The most important thing to look for in a spouse is their ability to love self-sacrificially and to make and sustain long-term commitments. Both of these capabilities are damaged the more a person goes through painful serial break-ups, because people become unable to trust and instead withhold love and commitment for their own safety.

We need to be able to tell women right and wrong

February 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Disclaimer: in this post, when I refer to women, I mean young, unmarried women influenced by feminism.

I want to give several cases of women behaving badly and then make a general point about whether we are doing the right thing when we decline to criticize women for fear of offending them, and instead point the finger of blame at men, however ridiculous it is to do that.

First case – wife threatens divorce unless husband agrees to abort Down's syndrome baby:

> "When I walked into the room they all turned to me and said 'Leo has Down syndrome," he told ABC News. "I had a few moments of shock."
>
> […]"They took me in see him and I looked at this guy and I said, he's beautiful — he's perfect and I'm absolutely keeping him."
>
> Soon Forrest walked into his wife's hospital room with Leo in his arms.
>
> Her reaction was unlike one he ever expected.
>
> "I got the ultimatum right then," he said. "She told me if I kept him then we would get a divorce."
>
> […]One week after his birth, Leo's mom filed for divorce.

Second case – woman abandons her 5-month old baby to go on a two-week partying binge:

> Alena Itapova, 19, who has been nicknamed 'Monster Mum' in Russian media for letting baby Veronika die, tried to blame her parents during appeals but ultimately was found guilty. Russian judges refused her appeal and instead increased her sentence. Itapova claimed the baby's death was her parents' fault for not teaching her how to properly raise a baby.
>
> During a trial last year, Itapova admitted to leaving her baby alone in her apartment while she disappeared for two weeks. She found her daughter dead when she returned.

Third case – a woman writing for Think Progress bemoans Republican efforts to ban dismemberment abortions:

> "Immediately, when I heard the title of these bills, I had to take a deep breath and calm down," Dr. Anne Davis, the consulting medical director for Physicians for Reproductive Health and an OB-GYN who provides abortions, told ThinkProgress. "This is a familiar tactic, similar to the other types of bans we've seen. It seems the strategy is to take language that provokes emotional

> responses and then to argue that, because there's an emotional reaction to something, it should be illegal."

Fourth case – Cathy Young interviews a man accused of rape and finds evidence that contradicts the accuser's story:

> Sulkowicz has said in interviews that she was too embarrassed and ashamed to talk to anyone about the rape, let alone report it; an account of her mattress protest by *New York Times* art critic Roberta Smith says that she "suffered in silence" in the aftermath of the assault. Yet Nungesser says that for weeks after that night, he and Sulkowicz maintained a cordial relationship, and says she seemingly never indicated that anything was amiss.
>
> Nungesser provided The Daily Beast with Facebook messages with Sulkowicz from August, September, and October 2012. (In an email to The Daily Beast, Sulkowicz confirmed that these records were authentic and not redacted in any way; while she initially offered to provide "annotations" explaining the context on the messages, she then emailed again to say that she would not be sending them.) On Aug. 29, two days after the alleged rape, Nungesser messaged Sulkowicz on Facebook to say, "Small shindig in our room tonight—bring cool freshmen."

Despite not being able to present the friendly Facebook messages from two days after the rape at the university trial, he was exonerated. She declined to press criminal charges. Making a false charge to the police is a crime. But she can make a false charge and carry a mattress around on campus, and get her victimhood celebrated by United States senators.

And finally fifth case, false rape accusation investigated by the police, charges dismissed because sex proven consensual.

So what's the point of all this?

The point of all this is that I think that we are letting women getting away with too much. Instead of standing up to their poor decision-making and outright lying (in the rape cases that have been in the news lately), we coddle them and make them out to be victims, and blame the bad men they freely choose to have relationships with when they mess up their lives. They have to take responsibility for their own poor decisions, and make different decisions going forward. There isn't enough money in the world to give them to make up for all the mistakes they are making.

When a women makes decisions in her life to drink, move away from parents, shack up with bad men, take drugs, contract STDs, vote for higher taxes and bigger government, run up student loan debts, drop out of school, get pregnant before marriage, have abortions, go on welfare, choose younger unemployed boyfriends, choosing violent boyfriends, move in with men before marriage, get frivolous divorces for "unhappiness", put kids in non-family daycare when they are under two years old, make fake domestic violence charges, make false rape accusations, deprive children of their father, withhold

sex from their husbands all the time for no good reason, disrespecting men, disrespecting masculine traits, etc. then we ought to be confident enough to tell them NO and IT'S WRONG.

We should not let them direct the conversation away from their own mistakes so they can blame others and justify continued irresponsible, selfish behavior because it "feels right" to them. Women are making really bad decisions these days, and it seems like men have lost all confidence to be able to tell them NO and IT'S WRONG. It's so easy for a woman who is behaving badly to just find people who will agree with her and give her sympathy for her bad decisions. Men and women both seem to love to agree with women who are wrecking their lives and causing problems for everyone else around them.

We need to stop condoning and rationalizing their poor decisions. The harm that women cause is very real, and the costs for "fixing" their mistakes through government programs and charity are ballooning. In the UK, we are now seeing taxpayer-funded breast implants and IVF, in some provinces in Canada, taxpayer-funded IVF, and here at home – free contraceptives and abortion-inducing drugs. We cannot keep paying for lives that are ruined by decision-making dominated by emotions, cultural standards and peer-pressure.

Just because a woman is pretty and sounds nice, that doesn't make her exempt from the moral law. It's not even good for a woman, in the long run, to surround herself with people (men and women) who tell her to "follow her heart" – I can guarantee that that her yes-men and yes-women won't want to deal with the mess she creates by following her heart, when it all blows up in her face. The biggest problem I see is apparently moral Christian men being so desperate for attention and/or sex that they give up the role of being the moral leader so that the woman will prefer them to men who would hold them accountable.

Hillary Clinton’s fake Bosnia gunfire story and her abortion award

February 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does foreign policy make? I married Bill. It’s my turn!

First story has to do with this strange habit that people on the left have to lie about their life experiences to make themselves seem more accomplished and interesting.

From Investors Business Daily:

> Investigative reporter Sharyl Attkisson reminds us the secretary of state who blamed Benghazi on a video once made up a story about courage under fire in Bosnia. Maybe Brian Williams can be her 2016 running mate.
>
> ‘Nothing in life,” Winston Churchill once famously said, “is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result,” except perhaps in the minds of network anchors like NBC’s Brian Williams and political candidates such as Hillary Clinton, who also claimed a brush with death in a war zone on her resume. Perhaps they can swap war stories.
>
> Former CBS reporter Sharyl Attkisson reminded the world of Hillary’s tale of heroism in an interview with CBS Philadelphia affiliate WPHT morning host Chris Stigall last November, a tale told by the former first lady in her 2008 run against one Barack Obama.
>
> “I had come home from an overseas trip vacation, and my husband says, ‘When you went to Bosnia 12 years ago with the first lady, were you shot at?,’ and I’m like, ‘No, I think I would know if I were shot at,'” Attkisson told Stigall of the 1996 trip to Bosnia with Hillary, first daughter Chelsea and celebrities Sinbad and Sheryl Crow.
>
> Candidate Clinton claimed in a 2008 speech in Washington and several subsequent interviews that she and Chelsea were forced to run for cover under hostile fire shortly after landing in Tuzla, Bosnia.
>
> “I remember landing under sniper fire,” Clinton said. “There was supposed to be

> some kind of greeting ceremony at the airport, but instead we just ran with our heads down to get into the vehicles to get to our base."
>
> Her harrowing tale never happened, and Mrs. Clinton's faulty memory also forgot that there was a reporter on the trip who was taking notes and had a video of the event.
>
> "The video showed," Attkisson said, "and I thought this was a pretty good way to explain it — I put her in a box saying, 'We got off the plane and had to duck and run for cover and there was sniper fire' and then I show the video of what was really happening, and she's getting off the plane and she's waving, shaking hands with a little school girl."

Second story from Life News.

They write:

> As if we needed any more evidence that potential 2016 presidential nominee Hillary Clinton is not a moderate, it was announced today that EMILY's List, an extreme pro-abortion organization, will be honoring her with one of their most cherished awards:
>
> EMILY's List, which works to elect Democratic women who support abortion rights, said Tuesday that Clinton would appear at its 30th anniversary awards gala in Washington on March 3. The former secretary of state will receive the group's We Are EMILY Award to honor her leadership "as a fighter for women and families," said Stephanie Schriock, the group's president.
>
> […]Clinton's pro-abortion agenda goes beyond accepting awards. In 1993, when she was attempting to transform the health care industry, she said that under her plan, abortion services "would be widely available." Then, in 1999, she delivered a speech to NARAL, the National Abortion Rights Action League, in Washington, D.C., stating her goal of "keeping abortion safe, legal and rare into the next century."

I'll be featuring lots of stories about her through 2015 and 2016, so we can all learn all about her.

Irish woman explains why she got an abortion: “I wanted to travel”

February 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Abortion lady and her partner
This is from Life News.

Excerpt:

> A young Irish woman has spoken of the trauma she endured by travelling to the UK for an abortion.
>
> Cork woman Tara (24) has told how she and her partner Steve felt they had no choice but to travel eight hours – almost 590 kilometres – to an abortion clinic in west London.
>
> Tara, who does not give her surname, appears in a BBC Three documentary “Abortion: Ireland’s Guilty Secret?” to tell her story and why she’s pro-choice.
>
> Under the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act, it is an offence to “intentionally destroy unborn human life” and those found guilty face a maximum jail term of 14 years.
>
> **Tara, who had an abortion because she wanted to travel** and she wasn’t yet ready, tells reporter Alys Harte that the Government here is “ignoring” her right to choice.
>
> “I’m really angry. I’m angry that they are ignoring women basically at the moment.”
>
> “They shouldn’t have control over my uterus. I deserve that choice and it was taken away from me by my Government.”
>
> “You deserve to be treated as a human and not as a criminal more than anything

> else," she said.
>
> The stress of travelling abroad to have an abortion was "not really pleasant", Tara added.
>
> "This could've been so simple. This could've been something I could've done two weeks ago basically when I found out."
>
> "It's not really pleasant for anyone to have to go through the fact that you have to leave home and fly across the water and do something that is such a simple procedure. It definitely adds to the stress of it."
>
> Tara is one of around 4,000 Irish women who travel to the UK every year for abortions because it is illegal to do so in Ireland.
>
> The country's abortion laws will be the subject of a special report this year by Amnesty International.
>
> Ireland is one of five countries chosen by Amnesty as "emblematic of global abuses of sexual and reproductive rights".
>
> The report aims to include testimonies from Irish women who have had abortions and explore issues such as the "prohibitive" high cost of travel, particularly for young women and socio-economically marginalised groups such as asylum seekers, undocumented migrants and Travellers.
>
> The criminalisation of termination of pregnancy which results from rape, incest or sexual violence will also be reviewed as part of the My Body My Rights Campaign.
>
> Tara claims that Ireland is behind its other Western counterparts on the abortion issue.
>
> **"The rest of the world can see that this is wrong but we're in a western society and yet it hasn't changed yet."**

I think the picture that goes with the story is really telling. Look at the man that she chose… hoop earrings, tattoos, piercings. He is her "partner" – not her husband. He is there for recreation, not to provide for her or lead her on moral/spiritual issues. They are having sex, but it's doubtful that he has the discipline to provide for a family. Yet she is giving him all of herself anyway, because it's fun to have recreational sex. Marriage isn't fun though – marriage is boring. Marriage is work. Marriage is self-sacrifice. She is only 24! It's too early to think of marriage. Now is the time for having fun, seeking thrills and traveling. It's time for adventures! Not for prudence and caution. And if a child comes along who wants to stop her fun, then that child just has to die. And he is all for it!

I think this story goes very well with the mean post I wrote earlier expressing my frustration with how we as a society seem to have lost the ability to tell young, unmarried women "NO" when they want to act selfishly and/or unwisely. Look at the man she chose! He is not the kind of man who would tell her NO for anything she is doing wrong. He wants the sex, and he is willing to keep his mouth shut to get it. He's not looking for a competent partner to support him in some enterprise. They are both more interested in recreational sex than they are in marriage and personal responsibility. I sincerely doubt

that this man is financially prepared to be a protector and provider – he chose a woman who just killed his child! And she chose him because she could get his attention and acceptance, but without having to be judged or led by him in any way.

Why would she choose this man? A person who understands morality subjectively will try to surround herself with people who will always tell her that she is doing the right thing – no matter what she is doing. “Follow your heart”. She will also seek to silence anyone from telling her that what she is doing is wrong. She will also vote for laws that will punish people who say in public that what she is doing is wrong. With respect to abortion, that means no clinic protesters, no graphic images from protesters, no mandatory ultrasounds, no public expressions of Christianity. Anything that makes her feel that a majority of people are opposed to her has to be tuned out or silenced by force of government. The most important question that a subjective-morality person asks is “what will people think of me if I do this?” And also “I want to do this, how can I make more people agree with me?”

If we want women to stop making poor decisions with their lives, then we have to speak up and be convincing on issues like abortion, and to teach them to be careful about surrounding themselves with people who are using them, and who will agree with any crazy thing they want to do in order to keep using them.

One last point about this woman. When I look at her picture, I think about her future. I think about whether the man she has chosen is wasting her youth, and whether she understands that men like that do not stick around when a woman gets older. In order to get a man to commit to a woman past the time where she is at her peak of physical attraction, she has to do two things. First, she has to be developing her own skills and accomplishments. Second, she has to choose a man who s trying to achieve something that requires those skills and accomplishments. That’s what causes a man to fall in love and remain devoted to one woman into old age. But this woman is not looking to improve her skills and to get achievements that a good man would find valuable. Instead, she is choosing the easy road. Giving her physical beauty to the wrong man, in order to have fun and thrills today – and there’s no plan for tomorrow.

And as she ages, she will probably find herself without a man who is dedicated to providing for her, and will instead vote for government to take that role in her life. That means higher taxes, more government spending and borrowing, more debt for the next generation, and fewer young men who can afford to marry and have kids. That’s why we need to tell the women of today NO when they want to behave selfishly, and be guided by their emotions.

Should we care that Democrats ran up the debt from 8.5 to 18.1 trillion?

February 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In 2007, Democrats seized control of the House and Senate after winning the 2006 mid-term elections. The last Republican budget through 2007 had a 160 billion deficit. What followed next was years and years of trillion dollar deficits under Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid. The Republicans only gained back the House in 2011, and the Senate in 2015.

Here's what happened to the deficit while the Democrats had control of spending:

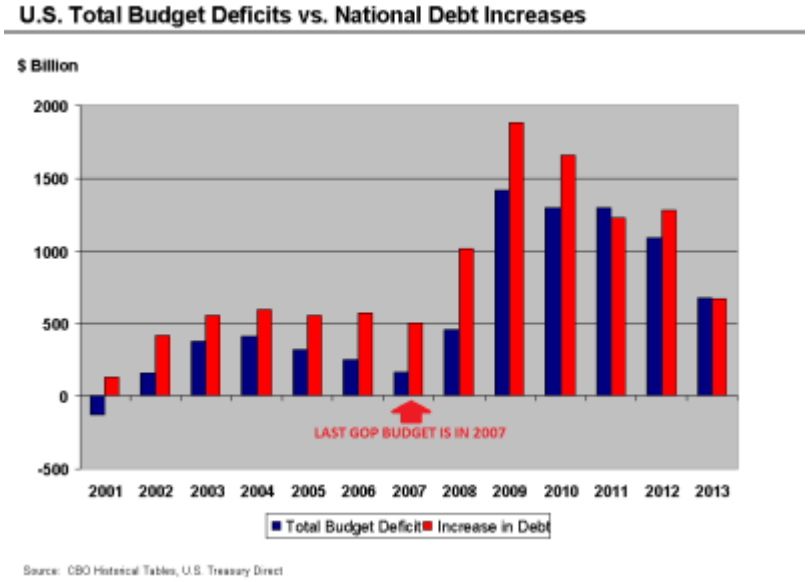

National Debt and Deficit 2007-2013

Now let's take a look why this is a problem going forward, especially for young people. We'll use this article from the Wall Street Journal.

It says:

> The U.S. has come a long way since the days of trillion-dollar deficits, just a few years ago. The **White House** projects 2016 will have the smallest budget deficit in eight years. Yet the budgetary impact of the debt that's been accumulated–$18 trillion in total, $13 trillion of that owed to the public–will reassert itself.
>
> Currently, the government's interest costs are around $200 billion a year, a sum that's low due to the era of low interest rates. Forecasters at the White House and **Congressional Budget Office** believe interest rates will gradually rise, and when that happens, the interest costs of the U.S. government are set to soar, from just over $200 billion to nearly $800 billion a year by decade's end.
>
> By 2021, the government will be spending more on interest than on all national defense. according to White House forecasts. And one year later, interest costs will exceed nondefense discretionary spending–essentially every other domestic and international government program funded annually through congressional

> appropriations. (The largest part of the budget is, and will remain, the mandatory spending programs of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Mandatory spending is over $2 trillion and is set to double to $4 trillion by 2025.)

The advice I would give to young people just entering college is to make sure that you don't vote for more spending and borrowing. Because you're the ones who are going to have to pay it off!!! Also, don't waste your money on a discipline for which there are no jobs. Stay away from anything that is not STEM – science, technology, engineering, and math. Try not to borrow money. One lady I know just completed a couple of years of community college, before heading into a computer science program at a university. That is smart – I really recommend that.

Be willing to move if a good job presents itself, because earning money now before the storm is really important. Work while it's day, in other words. Try not to stay in school any longer than you have to, because work experience is usually worth as much or more than school, and you get paid to work – you don't get paid to go to school. Don't think that things are going to be as good as thy are now, or that things are good enough to take unnecessary risks. This probably isn't the time to "follow your heart" unless your heart is telling you to take the job that pays the most, regardless of how much you like it.

It's very important to start saving as early as possible so that you can take advantage of interest rates when they go up to earn interest. The earlier you start to save, the more you earn in interest. The key is to never miss a chance to earn and save. Always keep working, and never go to school unless you really need to and you are sure that it will produce a return on investment. Your priority has to be working and saving, and not spending money on frivolous things like travel or thrills. We are not at the right time in history for concentrating on sky-diving, zip-lining and surfing. Now is the time for saving.

It’s Sex Week on major university campuses

February 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Time for students to learn all about drunken immoral pre-marital sex, thanks to your tax dollars.

Let’s start with the College Fix‘s report on the “Sex Ed Warrior Queen”.

They write:

> When Megan Andelloux comes to campus, no object is off-limits for being sexualized – including a genitalia-themed puppet.
>
> The clinical sexologist and former Planned Parenthood educator, known professionally as “Oh Megan” and a self-described “Sex Ed Warrior Queen,” encouraged Vanderbilt University students to masturbate in their seats even as she spoke during an interactive sex workshop Tuesday on campus.
>
> “Want to Be Brilliant in Bed?” was sponsored by the Margaret Cuninggim Women’s Center…
>
> She led a workshop at the University of Tennessee last year that described an orgasm as a “political act,” as *The College Fix* reported.
>
> […]Andelloux did not shy away from graphic details or descriptions of “sexual adventures” throughout her workshop.
>
> […]Andelloux also expertly demonstrated how to put on a condom using only her mouth, according to a female student who stayed for the entire two-hour workshop and asked not to be named.

Very important to note sexualizing college students is a “political act” sponsored by the Women’s Center. That’s where this stuff comes from – feminists. And this is what universities do with their money – it’s not to teach you how to program in Java or C#, it’s to make you accept the left’s view of sexuality and reproduction.

Next up, Campus Reform reports on feminism at the University of Utah.

They write:

> Students at the University of Utah can win a year’s supply of birth control, including pills or a vasectomy, this week during Sex Week events.
>
> According to a promotional flyer from the public school, U of U’s Center for Student Wellness, Students for Choice, and Planned Parenthood have partnered for this year’s Sex Week, beginning on Feb., 9.
>
> “The more events you attend, the more chances you’ll have to win a year’s supply of the birth control or STD protection of your choice,” the flyer reads.
>
> The flyer says that the birth control options are limited to those offered at Planned Parenthood, which are: 365 condoms, a 12-month supply of pills, one Intrauterine Device (IUD), four Depo-Provera shots, one diaphragm, one

> vasectomy, 12 NuvaRings, 52 OrthoEvra patches, one Implanon, or information on fertility awareness methods.
>
> The events include a wellness fair, panel discussions, and a showing of " Obvious Child," a movie about a young woman who chooses to get an abortion.
>
> […]Katie Stiel, program manager at the Center for Student Wellness, told Fox 13 that Students for Choice "went through the appropriate channels" to get funding for the events and it would not be removed from campus or cancelled.

Note that Christian clubs and pro-life clubs are being de-funded and disbanded by student governments, but using taxpayer dollars for this is no problem!

Last one is actually not about Sex Week, it's about feminism magazines.

This is from the Federalist:

> True confession: Until last week, I had never read *Cosmopolitan* magazine. I actually kind of like fashion magazines, as a genre: The more spacey-eyed, pouting women in $900 shoes slumping against helicopters parked on yachts the better, I always say! That said, I tend to shrink from those fuschia-flecked, scantily clad drugstore nightmare sheets that screech at me to "HAVE BREAK THE BED SEX!!" when I'm just trying to mind my own business and buy some freaking dental floss.

> The genius of Cosmo, of course—and, I suspect, the reason it's the most popular magazine for young women in America—is that it will breezily suggest 131 creative ways to WEAR NOTHING BUT THAT FREAKING DENTAL FLOSS whilst you DRIVE YOUR MAN BATTY IN THE BOUDOIR. So with Sex Week arriving at the Federalist, I decided to enter uncharted territory. I would not only read Cosmo, but *I would try its sex tips!*

Here is her conversation with her husband:

> ME: Here's one. [Reads headline aloud.] "I Basted My Boyfriend Like a Sexy Thanksgiving Turkey!"
>
> I did garner some male feedback on Cosmo's rather earnest and disturbing sex-advice column.
> HIM: Um.
>
> ME: "I Took My Boyfriend to A Dominatrix!"
>
> HIM: Nope. [Refrains from making eye contact, which is puzzling, as I did not just order a fancy and intimidating Cotes Du Rhone.]
>
> ME: "I Covered Myself in Food For Sex!"
>
> HIM: [Looking up.] Hey, didn't George Constanza do that once on "Seinfeld"? No, no, wait. He just wanted to eat a sandwich while having sex.
>
> [LONG PAUSE.]

> HIM: This is getting ridiculous.
>
> ME: “I Tried All the Sex From ‘Fifty Shades of Grey’ in 1 Weekend!”
>
> HIM: Who are these people?

That article made me laugh.

If you’re a young marriage-minded man of some means, and your heart is set on marriage and children, you will have to search far and wide to find a young, unmarried woman who desires the same. Young unmarried women don’t want marriage and children, they want free birth control and kinky sex. It’s “adventurous” and marriage with children is “boring”.

Can the secular left rationally ground human rights like freedom of speech?

February 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Cheryle Abatte, Marquette University
Let's start this post with an example of the secular left trampling natural rights.

Here's the story from the College Fix:

> It has been a rough three months for Marquette University professor and acerbic blogger John McAdams.
>
> Because McAdams criticized a graduate teaching instructor for silencing an undergraduate owing to his traditional views on marriage, the school informed him last week his tenure is being revoked and he'll be fired.
>
> Though academic observers debated whether McAdams should have named and shamed now-former Marquette grad student Cheryl Abbate – which led to his temporary banishment from campus and canceled classes – even McAdams' critics are warning the university it's setting a terrible precedent.

They didn't fire the grad student for telling her student that pro-marriage views were not welcome at a Catholic university. They fired the professor who made that threat conversation public. The student is not the victim of discrimination, the administrators said – the real victim is the left-wing fascist grad student.

Like I said before, make sure you have money saved when they come after you, because you might as well trust in the tameness of a wolf than the morality of a leftist university administrator. That's the real lesson for Christians from stories like this.

So why is it that people on the left don't respect natural rights like the right to free speech?

Well, it's because human rights are NOT rationally grounded in the atheistic worldview that dominates the university.

Frank Turek explains in The Stream.

He writes:

> Atheist Richard Dawkins has declared, "The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good. Nothing but blind pitiless indifference. . . . DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is, and we dance to its music."
>
> But Dawkins doesn't act like he actually believes that. He recently affirmed that a woman has the right to choose an abortion and asserted that it would be "immoral" to give birth to a baby with Down syndrome. According to Dawkins, the "right to choose" is a good thing and giving birth to Down Syndrome children

> is a bad thing.
>
> Well, which is it? Are there really good and evil, or are we just moist robots dancing to the music of our DNA?
>
> Atheists like Dawkins are often ardent supporters of rights to abortion, same-sex marriage, taxpayer-provided healthcare, welfare, contraceptives, and several other entitlements. But who says those are rights? By what objective standard are abortion, same-sex marriage, same-sex adoption, taxpayer-provided healthcare, and the like, moral rights? There isn't such a standard in the materialistic universe of atheism. So atheists must steal the grounds for objective moral rights from God while arguing that God doesn't exist.
>
> […]Atheists are caught in a dilemma. To simplify a bit, if God doesn't exist, then everything is a matter of human opinion and objective moral rights don't exist, including all those that atheists support. If God does exist, then objective moral rights exist. But those rights clearly don't include cutting up babies in the womb, same-sex marriage, and their other invented absolutes contrary to every major religion and natural law.
>
> Now, an atheist might say, "In our country, we have a constitution that the majority approved. We have no need to appeal to God." True, you don't have to appeal to God to write laws, but you do have to appeal to God if you want to ground them in anything other than human opinion. Otherwise, your "rights" are mere preferences that can be voted out of existence at the ballot box or at the whim of an activist judge or dictator. That's why our Declaration of Independence grounds our rights in the Creator. It recognizes the fact that even if someone changes the law or the political order you still have certain rights because they come from God, not man.
>
> However, my point isn't about how we should put objective God-given rights into human law. My point is, without God there are no objective human rights. There is no right to abortion or same-sex marriage. Of course, without God there is no right to life or natural marriage either!
>
> In other words, no matter what side of the political aisle you're on — no matter how passionate you believe in certain causes or rights — without God they would be without foundation. Human rights would amount to no more than your subjective preferences. So atheists can believe in and fight for rights to abortion, same-sex marriage, and taxpayer-provided entitlements, but they can't justify them as truly being rights.

So although they may be willing to assume natural rights when pushing their own pet causes, those rights are not rationally grounded, and they will disappear when they have to decide what to do with people they don't like. That's why atheists like Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot were responsible for killing tens of millions of inconvenient people. That's why atheists are at the forefront of the abortion cause today. They can't ground natural rights, and when push comes to shove, they shove them aside in order to get their way. It starts

out with the thrusting aside of free speech, and then it goes on to the right to life for the unborn, then the right to life of the born. When stressed, secular leftists will act in line with their own convictions. (Or lack thereof)

Bobby Jindal's education reform vs Jeb Bush's big government Common Core

February 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal

The radically leftist National Journal compares and contrasts the education policies of Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal with former Florida Governor Jeb Bush.

They write:

> Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal is in Washington Monday to unveil a series of education reforms as part of his 2016 presidential preparations. But his proposals call for scaling back Washington's role in education while promoting increased parental choice for children's schools, better measures to assess teacher performance, and more autonomy for individual schools over their own operations.
>
> […]Through his policy-focused nonprofit AmericaNext, Jindal will be delivering his education proposals at a *Christian Science Monitor* Breakfast Monday morning, speaking at an educational forum hosted by South Carolina GOP Sen. Tim Scott and meeting with conservative writers to discuss the plan at the Heritage Foundation. He has previously released detailed policy papers on health care, foreign policy, and energy.
>
> Jindal's education report is a balancing act between calling for higher standards and improved accountability, while limiting the role of the federal government to offer policies to solve the problem. Jindal argues that if parents have more choice in where to send their kids to school—be it local public schools, charter schools, or using vouchers for private or parochial education—the renewed competition will itself force public schools to do a better job. His report calls for less-regimented testing requirements, even as he supports stronger state accountability measures so parents can determine the best schools for their

children.

“The federal government should absolutely not be offering incentives, mandates, or coercing states to adopt a national curriculum—whether it’s Common Core or the next iteration of it,” Jindal said. “We don’t think curriculum decisions should be made at the national level. I’m all for rigor, I’m all for standards, but ultimately, I trust parents. I trust choice and competition. I don’t want a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach.” To that end, Jindal said he favors rolling back the mandates in George W. Bush’s No Child Left Behind law.

If he runs for president, Jindal is expected to make education a central part of his message. In the report, he touts the success of the New Orleans school system as a model of his school-choice pitch. After Hurricane Katrina, the city’s educational system was entirely revamped and turned over to the state-run Recovery School District. They allowed schools to be run independently; now more than 90 percent of students in the city attend charter schools. The results have been one of the country’s biggest educational success stories—the graduation rates have skyrocketed and the city’s passing rate on state tests now rival the statewide averages.

Many of Jindal’s school-choice proposals are an extension of the New Orleans experience. He calls for expanding the number charter schools, urges states to remove the caps on the number of charter schools allowed, and argues that principals should play a more active role in their schools’ direction than local school boards.

“Those on the left who believe in government power don’t trust the American people. In terms of education, the best way to drive excellence is to trust the parents. Parents know their kids best, they want what’s best for their children, and if you allow them to vote with their feet, they will then have the chance to give the best education for their kids. And we’ve seen that in New Orleans,” Jindal said.

All told, Jindal’s preferred policies are in line with what many leading educational reformers are arguing. He believes strongly that teacher quality is the strongest school-based factor in a student’s education, and he believes talented teachers should be rewarded for their work. He rails against the seniority system that keeps the most veteran teachers protected from scrutiny. He is dismissive of requiring teachers to hold educational degrees, preferring recruits that have expertise in the areas they teach. And he is bullish about the role technology can play in improving educational outcomes.

[…]But the political red meat of his proposals is directed squarely at Bush. The biggest differences between the two come from the federal role in education and over testing—two areas where the educational establishment is growing disconnected from public opinion. By calling for less testing, Jindal is taking the sides of parents who believe the sheer number of tests is crowding out time for

> creative endeavors—like art and music—and forcing teachers to drily teach to the test. On that front, Jindal's critiques echo many liberals on the issue and contrast with the Bush view that progress is best measured through standardized tests.
>
> So it's ironic that, despite the report's depth, Jindal's advisers are hoping to reap the biggest political gain from conservatives by attacking Common Core and calling "the federal government [not to] touch curricula with a 10,000-foot pole." It's designed to clearly contrast his version of educational reform with Jeb Bush's. "Our fundamental disagreement is on who is or should be in control of testing and curriculum. Locals v. federal. And make no mistake, the federal role in education is a huge fault line [between Jindal and Bush]," said a senior Jindal adviser.

If Jeb Bush gets the nomination, it will be like electing a Democrat on education issues – he favors big government control of education, and standardized tests controlled at the federal level. We would be much better off choosing a small-government approach like Bobby Jindal's approach, an approach that is consistent with conservative principles and is proven to work.

Homeschooling family from Alabama gets 7 of their 10 kids into college by age 12

February 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

They call them the Brainy Bunch

Here's a wonderful story to cheer everyone up from the Christian Post.

They write:

> An impressive seven of 10 homeschooled children from a Christian family in Montgomery, Alabama, which now boasts a doctor and New York City architect among them, all started college by the time they were 12; and now their parents have written a book about how they managed to pull off such staggering academic success.
>
> The parents of the 10 children, Mona Lisa and Kip Harding, are described as high school sweethearts on a website dedicated to *The Brainy Bunch Book*.
>
> "After four kids, they decided to turn to homeschooling, and their success paved the way for their children to start college by the age of 12, and go on to great careers in medicine, engineering, architecture and more," explaines the website.
>
> **Hannah, 26, is the oldest Harding child. She earned her bachelor of science in mathematics from Auburn University Montgomery and a master's degree in mathematics by the time she was 19. She is now working on a PhD in material science.**
>
> **Rosanna, 24, is now an architect in New York City and became the youngest member in the American Institute of Architects at age 23. Serena, 22, earned her bachelor's degree in biology from Huntingdon College at 17, and became one of America's youngest female doctors at 22. She is now a resident at the Naval Hospital in Bethesda.**
>
> **Their brother Heath, 17, has an master's in computer science. He earned a BA in English at 15, and he is currently working at building his tutoring and online computer business. Keith, who is 15, is pursuing a**

> **bachelor's in music at Faulkner University. Seth, just 13, is a history major at Huntingdon College, while Katrinnah, 10, is a student at Faulkner University.**
> **Their other siblings, Mariannah, 8; Lorennah, 5, and Thunder, 3, are still being homeschooled.**
>
> In an interview with KSL Kip and Mona Lisa noted that their children aren't geniuses. They simply found a way to accelerate their learning by making it fun. One-on-one sessions with the mother who is working on her bachelor's degree at home also helped immensely.
>
> "One teacher has 30 students on average," said Kip. "We can do better than that. Kids get left behind in a classroom. … This is where homeschooling really takes off because those kids are getting extra attention. And who's more loving than a mom and dad teaching them things?"
>
> And for parents considering homeschooling, Mona Lisa had some sage advice.
>
> "I personally would like to tell the moms that if moms read, they can teach their child to read," she said.
>
> "Then their kids have the ability to teach themselves. I basically teach them to love reading and the basics of math, and from there, they can have a lot of their own answers. … The model at home is more a tutoring model."
>
> Despite their success, however, Kip acknowledged the importance of teachers in a traditional classroom setting.
>
> "Teaching is a hard job and teachers still have a place," said Kip. "But government money comes with strings attached. … We're just relying on God and he keeps coming through and it's working out well. Truly, we're just average."

Sigh! I would really like to have executed a plan like this, but before you can, you have to find a woman who thinks that marriage and children are more important than binge-drinking, hooking-up, and flying around the world to be photographed with malnourished children, etc. I think Christian men do have a plan for making their marriages into a project that gets results like this, but you can't do it unless you find a woman who is willing to do the work that's required. Finding one who wants to have kids and manage their progress so that they will have an influence in the world is much harder than it ought to be.

New study: children of same-sex parents have twice as many emotional problems

February 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a report from MercatorNet on a new peer-reviewed study published in the British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science.

Mercator writes:

> Fresh research has just tossed a grenade into the incendiary issue of same-sex parenting. Writing in the British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science, a peer-reviewed journal, American sociologist Paul Sullins concludes that children's "Emotional problems [are] over twice as prevalent for children with same-sex parents than for children with opposite-sex parents".
>
> He says confidently: "it is no longer accurate to claim that no study has found children in same-sex families to be disadvantaged relative to those in opposite-sex families."
>
> This defiant rebuttal of the "no difference" hypothesis is sure to stir up a hornet's next as the Supreme Court prepares to trawl through arguments for and against same-sex marriage. It will be impossible for critics to ignore it, as it is based on more data than any previous study — 512 children with same-sex parents drawn from the US National Health Interview Survey. The emotional problems included misbehaviour, worrying, depression, poor relationships with peers and inability to concentrate.
>
> After crunching the numbers, Sullins found opposite-sex parents provided a better environment. "Biological parentage uniquely and powerfully distinguishes child outcomes between children with opposite-sex parents and those with same-sex parents," he writes.

But is it caused by lack of acceptance and homophobia?

> The most widely-accepted explanation of poor emotional and behavioural results amongst children in same-sex households is homophobia. Supporters of same-sex parenting attribute poor emotional well-being to stigmatization. These kids are damaged, it is said, because they have been singled out, teased and bullied. If their peers were less homophobic, things would be different.
>
> But Sullins dismisses this. "Contrary to the assumption underlying this hypothesis, children with opposite-sex parents are picked on and bullied more than those with same-sex parents."
>
> This sounds surprising, but in another paper, published last year in the British Journal of Medicine and Medical Research and based on the same data, Sullins found that children of same-sex parents are more at risk of ADHD. And if they

> had ADHD, they were over seven times more likely to suffer stigmatization because of their impaired interpersonal coping skills. In other words, if kids from homes with same-sex parents are bullied more, it's because they lack interpersonal skills, not because their parents are gay or lesbian.
>
> Bullying is toxic, but it's important to find out whether kids are being bullied because they're different or because their parents are different.

That's it for that study.

Let's go back and look at the previous one, from Canada.

The Public Discourse reports on a recent study out of Canada.

Excerpt:

> A new academic study based on the Canadian census suggests that a married mom and dad matter for children. Children of same-sex coupled households do not fare as well.
>
> There is a new and significant piece of evidence in the social science debate about gay parenting and the unique contributions that mothers and fathers make to their children's flourishing. A study published last week in the journal *Review of the Economics of the Household*—analyzing data from a very large, population-based sample—reveals that the children of gay and lesbian couples are only about 65 percent as likely to have graduated from high school as the children of married, opposite-sex couples. And gender matters, too: girls are more apt to struggle than boys, with daughters of gay parents displaying dramatically low graduation rates.
>
> Unlike US-based studies, this one evaluates a 20 percent sample of the Canadian census, where same-sex couples have had access to all taxation and government benefits since 1997 and to marriage since 2005.
>
> […]Three key findings stood out to Allen:
>
> children of married opposite-sex families have a high graduation rate compared to the others; children of lesbian families have a very low graduation rate compared to the others; and the other four types [common law, gay, single mother, single father] are similar to each other and lie in between the married/lesbian extremes.
>
> Employing regression models and series of control variables, Allen concludes that the substandard performance *cannot* be attributed to lower school attendance or the more modest education of gay or lesbian parents. Indeed, same-sex parents were characterized by higher levels of education, and their children were more likely to be enrolled in school than even those of married, opposite-sex couples. And yet their children are notably more likely to lag in finishing their own schooling.
>
> […]The truly unique aspect of Allen's study, however, may be its ability to

> distinguish gender-specific effects of same-sex households on children. He writes:
>
> the particular gender mix of a same-sex household has a dramatic difference in the association with child graduation. Consider the case of girls. . . . Regardless of the controls and whether or not girls are currently living in a gay or lesbian household, the odds of graduating from high school are considerably lower than any other household type. Indeed, girls living in gay households are only 15 percent as likely to graduate compared to girls from opposite sex married homes.
>
> Thus although the children of same-sex couples fare worse overall, the disparity is unequally shared, but is instead based on the combination of the gender of child and gender of parents. Boys fare better—that is, they're more likely to have finished high school—in gay households than in lesbian households. For girls, the opposite is true. Thus the study undermines not only claims about "no differences" but also assertions that moms and dads are interchangeable. *They're not*.

Here's the study.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington. A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more shorter times). That's not good for children either. Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships have much higher rates of domestic violence. That's not good for children either. So we have three reasons to think that normalizing gay relationships as "marriage" would not be good for children.

Related posts

- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

Obama: Kosher deli attack was “random”, Iran developing nuclear weapons “contrary to their faith”

February 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Weekly Standard.

They write:

> President Obama referred to the Islamic terrorists who killed several French Jews last month as people who “randomly shoot a bunch of folks in a deli in Paris” in an interview with liberal website Vox.com. In Tuesday’s press briefing, ABC News correspondent Jonathan Karl asked White House press secretary Josh Earnest to clarify the president’s position on the terrorists’ motivation to attack the kosher supermarket.
>
> “Does the president have any doubt that those terrorists attack that deli because there would be Jews in that deli?” Karl asked.
>
> “It is clear from the terrorists and the writings that they put out afterward what their motivation was,” Earnest responded. “The adverb that the president chose was used to indicate that the individuals who were killed in that terrible, tragic incident were killed not because of who they were but because of where they randomly happened to be.”
>
> “These individuals were not targeted by name,” Earnest added.
>
> “Not by name, but by religion, were they not?” Karl asked.
>
> “There were people other than just Jews who were in that deli,” Earnest said.
>
> **After Karl asked again if there was any doubt by the president that the shop was attacked because of the likelihood the terrorists would be able to kill Jews, Earnest finally said, “No.”**
>
> […]State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki was pressed on this question as well, and she refused to speak about the motive behind the attack.

It was random! It was the Crusaders! Pretty sure.

Here’s Josh Earnest:

And Jen Psaki:

But we’re not done yet. No, now Obama is telling us that Iran promises not to develop nuclear weapons because it’s “contrary to their faith”.

Real Clear Politics has the transcript:

> At a joint news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel President Obama addressed the ongoing nuclear negotiations with Iaran. According to the Supreme Leader of Iran, said Obama, “it would be contrary to their faith to obtain a nuclear weapon.”

> PRESIDENT OBAMA: The issues now are sufficiently narrowed and sufficiently clarified where we’re at a point where they need to make a decision. We are presenting to them in a unified fashion, the P5+1 supported by a coalition of countries around the world are presenting to them a deal that allows them to have peaceful nuclear power but gives us the absolute assurance that is verifiable that they are not pursuing a nuclear weapon.
>
> And if in fact what they claim is true, which is they have no aspiration to get a nuclear weapon, that in fact, according to their Supreme Leader, it would be contrary to their faith to obtain a nuclear weapon, if that is true, there should be the possibility of getting a deal. They should be able to get to yes. But we don’t know if that’s going to happen.

Although Iran has been caught cheating on nuclear deals before, this time they really promise to be good. For realsies! Pinky swear!

Five reasons why Christians ought to care about economics

February 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Acton Institute blog.

The five:

1. The Bible Deals with Economic Issues
2. Economics Helps Us Understand the Public Square
3. It Expands Our Model of Discipleship
4. It Enhances Our Theology of Work
5. It Illuminates the Theological Implications of Politics

I want to choose just one of these, but I have to choose two, because they rock my socks off:

2. Economics Helps Us Understand the Public Square

> Second, an understanding of economics and especially of political economy can help us understand what is going on in the world around us. The general election…is impossible to follow without some understanding of the implications of Obamacare and its impact on Medicare, the federal deficit, and the long-term effects of continued deficit spending. The posturing on the part of Republicans and Democrats sometimes seems like little more than rhetoric, but the one who understands what is really at stake can help lead people to a better understanding of their responsibility in the public square.

3. It Expands Our Model of Discipleship

> Third, an understanding of economics can help us pastor our people more effectively by pointing to the need for a more comprehensive model of Christian discipleship. Many people in our churches just don't grasp that wealth is produced through work, how that in itself is a blessing to others, and then what God calls them to do with their wealth, even if they have very little of it. Taking a money management course is important to becoming a mature steward, but what most need more than that is a framework for understanding how politics, economics, and citizenship responsibilities fit into a broader discipleship model of life stewardship. In other words, they need an introduction to biblical oikonomia ("the law of the house"). And this applies to pastors and seminary professors every bit as much as it does to members of the congregation. A good place to start is by imparting some understanding of supply and demand, of fruitfulness and pay, and of how investments work (just to give a small sampling), because this will help God's people to grasp better the role they play every day in the broad sweep of God's mission in the world.

And now a comment from me about 2 and 3:

I wasn't raised in the church and I don't think of God the way that church people do. I think of God as my boss. I don't expect God to micromanage according to some mysterious plan that I can only sense through my emotions. What he does is communicate his character and his goals in the Bible, and then he leaves it up to me to decide how to *steward my resources* in order to *produce a return on his investment.* That's why economics, business and investing are all important to me. If I can understand how the world works, then I know how to make decisions that will help me to achieve good results, like mentoring people and supporting Christian scholars. It's just like fixing a car or building a house. The more you know about how things work, the better it is. Feelings and intuitions have no place in decision-making, it's knowledge all the way.

Here's Matthew 25:14-30.

Look:

[14] "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

[15] To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

[16] He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.

[17] So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.

[18] But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

[19] Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

[20] And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.'

[21] His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

[22] And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.'

[23] His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

[24] He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,

[25] so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'

[26] But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap

where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?

[27] Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.

[28] So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.

[29] For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

[30] And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

He's the boss, and we are here to freely decide what we are going to do about it. If you want to do a good job, then it makes sense to do what everyone else does – learn how things work so that you can make good decisions. If I could give one other piece of advice, it would be to not put mysticism and feelings on the same level as reason and evidence. It doesn't work in the normal workday world, and it doesn't work when you are planning out the overall course of your life, either. Cautious works. Cautious gets results.

Dr. George Yancey: The Nature and Consequences of Christianophobia

February 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. George Yancey recently did a presentation at the Reasonable Faith group at UT Dallas.

Here's the lecture: (40 minutes)

About the speaker:

> Dr. George Yancey is a Professor of Sociology at the University of North Texas. He is the author of Christian works such as One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches (InterVarsity Press), Beyond Racial Gridlock: Embracing Mutual Responsibility (InterVarsity Press), co-author of United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race (Oxford University Press) and co-author of Transcending Racial Barriers (Oxford University Press). He has also authored several research articles on the topics of interracial marriage and multiracial churches. Along those lines he is also the author of Multiracial Families (Routledge) which explores the current literature on different aspects of interracial families and Neither Jew Nor Gentile (Oxford University Press) which explores racial issues on Protestant college campuses.

His BS and MS are in economics. His PhD is in sociology.

Summary of the lecture:

- Is discrimination against Christians real?
- Which groups draw the most animosity?
- What are the characteristics of those who most oppose conservative Christians?
- What do cultural progressives think about conservative Christians?
- Is the animosity against conservative Christians reasonable, or is it hatred / fear?
- What kinds of stereotypes dominate animosity towards Christians?
- Does animosity towards Christians affect hiring decisions in academia?
- Why is the problem of Christianophobia not being addressed?

His latest book is So Many Christians, So Few Lions.

I was thinking about this lecture, and I was thinking, what would I do if I ran into one of these people who were really angry with me and wanted to feed me to lions, gas me, or murder me in other nasty ways. And I guess my only answer would be to speak to them and have them defend their beliefs without allowing them to pigeonhole me with a label. Maybe just focus on one particular issue like media bias or the origin of the universe, and try to focus on evidence rather than state my conclusion. Come to think of it, if you can name people on both sides and give evidence for both sides, that seems to work really well.

The more secular and left-wing the opponent, the more you have to stick with discussing ONLY evidence, and never say your view. So, you can say “how do you work this cosmic microwave background radiation in with your worldview?” but you can’t say, “I’m a conservative evangelical Christian, and you should come to church with me”. The secular progressives seem to be very concerned that Christians vote blindly for political leaders that restrict their freedoms, so again, don’t talk about policies, talk about the reasons on both sides for those policies. For example, do this “what is the morally significant difference between an unborn human and a born human that confers a right to life?” rather than “I’m pro-life and you should be pro-life too, or I’ll put you in jail”.

I have had conversations with people on the secular left who could not name a single reason for any of my beliefs. For example, gun ownership – they had no idea that people own guns for self-defense. Or capital punishment – they had no idea that there is a deterrent effect on other people contemplating violence crimes. They simply cannot express the view of their opponents or the reasons why their opponents hold those views. Maybe that’s partly their fault for being lazy and insular, but it might also be our fault, too, for not knowing the reasons. I know that when I explain the reasons to them (on both sides) and say that this is the evidence that needs to be debated, then they do often calm down. I think that their perception that we are irrational and faith-based scares them.

I think it’s a good idea to become aware of what the research says about secular progressive attitudes towards Christians so that we know how to act around them to avoid setting them off. When you are dealing with people who have this extreme hatred of you, you probably want to chip away at them rather than just be who you are right up front. There doesn’t seem to be a lot of tolerance here, which is so strange coming from the crowd that talks the most about tolerance. We are the only ones who they think it’s ok to fire, fine, imprison, etc.

Pro-gay-marriage atheist progressive Craig Hicks charged with murder of three Muslims

February 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First the facts, from the leftist New York Times.

They write:

> It was a little after 5 p.m., a quiet time in a quiet neighborhood, before many people had returned home from work on Tuesday, when two women called 911 to report multiple gunshots and screams echoing through a condominium complex here near the University of North Carolina.
>
> By the time the police arrived, three people were dead — a newlywed couple and the woman's sister. They were young university students, Muslims of Arab descent, and high achievers who regularly volunteered in the area. A neighbor, a middle-age white man, was missing — then under arrest and charged with three counts of murder.
>
> […]Mr. Hicks, appeared to have a deep dislike of all religion. On his Facebook page, nearly all of his posts expressed support for atheism, criticism of Christian conservatives or both.
>
> Last month, he posted a photo that said, "Praying is pointless, useless, narcissistic, arrogant, and lazy; just like the imaginary god you pray to."
>
> […]His wife also pointed out his support for gay rights and the right to abortion.

Let's take a look at what's on his Facebook page:

> Though no motive for the shooting has been confirmed, local media is reporting that social media sites connected to Hicks might offer a clue. Hicks is a self-described "anti-theist" who lashed out against all religions. Apparently he is associated in some way with United Atheists of America and uses social media to lash out at both "radical Christians and radical Muslims." He also describes himself as a fan of atheist author Richard Dawkins.
>
> TV programmes liked by Hicks include The Atheist Experience, Criminal Minds and Friends, while he describes himself as a fan of Thomas Paine's The Age of Reason and Richard Dawkins' The God Delusion.
>
> Hicks' pictures largely consist of images with text mocking religion and supporting atheism, but include images of himself and his wife at Disneyland, what he describes as his "loaded 38 revovler", and himself separately on a quad bike and wearing a suit.
>
> According to his Facebook "likes," Hicks is a man of the left:
>
> His Facebook Likes included the Huffington Post, Rachel Maddow, the Southern Poverty Law Center, Freedom from Religion Foundation, Bill Nye "The Science

> Guy," Neil deGrasse Tyson, Gay Marriage groups and similar progressive pages.
>
> More:
>
> Hicks is a vehement atheist, according to his Facebook page, where he frequently posts anti-religion musings.
>
> Hicks frequently posted quotes of prominent comedians and atheists, including the prominent British atheist, professor and author Richard Dawkins.

Richard Dawkins had previously expressed his goal of destroying Christianity. Since he turned down the opportunity to debate William Lane Craig multiple times, he must have some other meaning for "destroy Christianity" than "defeat Christianity utterly in a debate".

I found it interesting that the Southern Poverty Law Center was one of his Facebook likes, since they were connected to a previous episode of domestic terrorism – the attack on the Family Research Council.

Remember?

From CBN News.

Excerpt:

> Wednesday's shooting at the headquarters of the Family Research Council, a group known for standing for conservative and Christian values, is raising debate about the rhetoric surrounding hot topic issues like gay marriage.
>
> In 2010, the Southern Poverty Law Center labeled the Family Research Council a 'hate group,' alongside neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan members, black separatists, and others.
>
> The SPLC said it put the conservative group on the list not because the FRC believes homosexuality is wrong, but for "the propagation of known falsehoods in an effort to defame gay people."
>
> "I don't expect everyone to agree with some of the things that we assert about the homosexual lifestyle, but we do present evidence in support of those assertions, and they are certainly not falsehoods or fabrications," FRC Senior Fellow for Policy Studies Peter Sprigg said in defense.

The shooter, Corkins, was a big admirer of the well-known atheist philosopher Nietzche:

> "His parents told the FBI that Corkins "has strong opinions with respect to those he believes do not treat homosexuals in a fair manner."
>
> Corkins definitely comes from the left side of the political spectrum.
>
> According to the Washington Post: "Allan P. Chan, 28, a former George Mason student, said he met Corkins at a campus gym about six years ago. They worked out together, lifting weights, and began to socialize and watch television together. Chan described Corkins as secretive and somewhat odd. Corkins's Facebook page included no photos, not even his own, and he displayed an

> intense interest in the 19th-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche."

Corkins was convicted of domestic terrorism for the attack.

So the common denominator for both of these shooters seems to be left-wing politics and atheism. Quite different from what the mainstream media would have you believe.

I have lots of strong opinions. But when I approach people who disagree with me, my goal isn't to silence, coerce or overpower them. That's what secular leftists want to do to their opponents, often using the power of government. In my case, I'm a Christian theist. My job is to imitate Jesus' way of dealing with his opponents. That's more like showing them evidence and trying to reason with them about it. Persuasion is standard operating procedure for Christians. Not so for atheists on the political left.

South Carolina and West Virginia House Republicans vote for Pain Capable abortion ban

February 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's start with South Carolina. (H/T Mary from Marin)

Life News reports:

> The South Carolina state House has approved a pro-life bill to ban abortions after 20 weeks, because research shows unborn children can feel intense pain.
>
> Called the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (H3114) the measure received an 80-27 vote in the House and now moves to the state Senate. More than 18,000 'very late term' abortions are performed every year on perfectly healthy unborn babies in America.
>
> During the committee hearing, experts talked about unborn children and the pain they feel in abortions.
>
> Dr. Stuart Hamilton, M.D., a Columbia University trained pediatrician and long-time supporter of pro-life legislation, described fetal development for members of the committee. He said he agrees with scientific research demonstrating the unborn child can feel pain at 20 weeks after fertilization.
>
> "There is evidence for the probable appreciation of pain by 20 weeks gestation after fertilization," Dr. Hamilton told the subcommittee. "Anatomically at 20 weeks, the examination of the nervous system displays the appropriate tracks in the central nervous system and the peripheral nerve fibers that are designed to transmit and carry pain impulses." He went on to explain that at the age of 16 weeks, the baby's body shows "substantial neurological maturation." Even at 12 weeks, he said, "The immature constituents of these pathways are clearly visible with magnification."
>
> A father-son team of physicians also spoke in favor of the bill. Dr. Tom Austin, M.D., a retired neonatologist, and former director of Neonatology at the USC School of Medicine, defined pain as "a noxious insult that one attempts to avoid or repel." In his practice he treated babies prematurely born at 18 to 22 weeks. "They did show response to stimuli," he said. "They would respond, move, recoil."
>
> […]The bill relies on the science of fetal pain to establish a Constitutional reason for Congress to ban abortions late in pregnancy. The science behind the concept of fetal pain is fully established and Dr. Steven Zielinski, an internal medicine physician from Oregon, is one of the leading researchers into it. He first published reports in the 1980s to validate research showing evidence for it.
>
> He has testified before Congress that an unborn child could feel pain at "eight-and-a-half weeks and possibly earlier" and that a baby before birth "under the

> right circumstances, is capable of crying."
>
> He and his colleagues Dr. Vincent J. Collins and Thomas J. Marzen were the top researchers to point to fetal pain decades ago. Collins, before his death, was Professor of Anesthesiology at Northwestern University and the University of Illinois and author of Principles of Anesthesiology, one of the leading medical texts on the control of pain.
>
> "The functioning neurological structures necessary to suffer pain are developed early in a child's development in the womb," they wrote.
>
> "Functioning neurological structures necessary for pain sensation are in place as early as 8 weeks, but certainly by 13 1/2 weeks of gestation. Sensory nerves, including nociceptors, reach the skin of the fetus before the 9th week of gestation. The first detectable brain activity occurs in the thalamus between the 8th and 10th weeks. The movement of electrical impulses through the neural fibers and spinal column takes place between 8 and 9 weeks gestation. By 13 1/2 weeks, the entire sensory nervous system functions as a whole in all parts of the body," they continued.

And now. Life News on West Virginia: (H/T Mary from Marin)

> The West Virginia state House today passed a bill to ban abortions after 20 weeks by an 87-12 margin. The vote came on the same day West Virginians for Life held a rally at the state capitol.
>
> More than 18,000 'very late term' abortions are performed every year on perfectly healthy unborn babies in America.
>
> […]One leading expert in the field of fetal pain, Dr. Kanwaljeet S. Anand at the University of Tennessee, stated in his expert report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice, "It is my opinion that the human fetus possesses the ability to experience pain from 20 weeks of gestation, if not earlier, and the pain perceived by a fetus is possibly more intense than that perceived by term newborns or older children."
>
> "The neural pathways are present for pain to be experienced quite early by unborn babies," explains Steven Calvin, M.D., perinatologist, chair of the Program in Human Rights Medicine, University of Minnesota, where he teaches obstetrics.
>
> Dr. Colleen A. Malloy, Assistant Professor, Division of Neonatology at Northwestern University in her testimony before the House Judiciary Committee in May 2012 said, "[w]hen we speak of infants at 22 weeks LMP [Note: this is 20 weeks post fertilization], for example, we no longer have to rely solely on inferences or ultrasound imagery, because such premature patients are kicking, moving, reacting, and developing right before our eyes in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit."
>
> "In today's medical arena, we resuscitate patients at this age and are able to witness their ex-utero growth and development. Medical advancement and

> technology have enabled us to improve our ability to care for these infants…In fact, standard of care for neonatal intensive care units requires attention to and treatment of neonatal pain," Dr. Malloy testified. She continued, "[t]hus, the difference between fetal and neonatal pain is simply the locale in which the pain occurs. The receiver's experience of the pain is the same. I could never imagine subjecting my tiny patients to horrific procedures such as those that involve limb detachment or cardiac injection."

What excites me about these pieces of legislation is the debates, and how our side has all the evidence. I like to talk about the evidence for and against Christian theism. It's great when you can talk about evidence from cosmology, biology and so on. Real experimental evidence is a wonderful sword to wield in a debate. And that's what is fun about the pro-life movement. The more science advances, the more evidence we have to show that even pro-abortion people should not want to kill them. There are a lot of lefties out there who won't eat meat because they are concerned about the pain that animals feel. Well guess what lefties? Unborn babies feel pain, too. We have the science to prove it.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

February 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (30 MB)

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the

first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

UPDATE: There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Obama’s executive amnesty will make it easier for non-citizens to vote in elections

February 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> President Obama’s temporary deportation amnesty will make it easier for illegal immigrants to improperly register and vote in elections, state elections officials testified to Congress on Thursday, saying that the driver’s licenses and Social Security numbers they will be granted create a major voting loophole.
>
> While stressing that it remains illegal for noncitizens to vote, secretaries of state from Ohio and Kansas said they won’t have the tools to sniff out illegal immigrants who register anyway, ignoring stiff penalties to fill out the registration forms that are easily available at shopping malls, motor vehicle bureaus and in curbside registration drives.
>
> Anyone registering to vote attests that he or she is a citizen, but Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted said mass registration drives often aren’t able to give due attention to that part, and so illegal immigrants will still get through.

Oh, but it gets better – they also get tax refunds for years where they worked illegally:

> IRS Commissioner John Koskinen told Congress on Wednesday that even illegal immigrants who didn’t pay taxes will be able to claim back-refunds once they get Social Security numbers under President Obama’s temporary deportation amnesty.
>
> […]Mr. Obama’s new deportation policies, which carve most illegal immigrants out of danger of being removed, and could proactively grant as many as 4 million illegal immigrants work permits and Social Security numbers, are increasingly under fire for ancillary consequences such as tax credits and competition for jobs.
>
> Mr. Koskinen, testifying to the House oversight committee, said the White House never asked him or anyone else at the IRS about the potential tax effects of his amnesty policy.
>
> […]He also clarified his testimony to the Senate last week, where he acknowledged illegal immigrants who had paid taxes using substitute Social Security numbers but who gain real Social Security numbers when they are approved for the amnesty can apply for back-refunds of the Earned Income Tax Credit.
>
> On Wednesday, he said even illegal immigrants who didn’t pay taxes will be able to apply for back-credits once they get Social Security numbers.

> The EITC is a refundable tax credit, which means those who don't have any tax liability can still get money back from the government.
>
> "Under the new program, if you get a Social Security number and you work, you'll be eligible to apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit," Mr. Koskinen said.
>
> He said that would apply even "if you did not file" taxes, as long as the illegal immigrant could demonstrate having worked off-the-books during those years.
>
> That expands the universe of people eligible for the tax credit by millions. He said only about 700,000 illegal immigrants currently work and pay taxes using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, but as many as 4 million illegal immigrants could get a stay of deportation and work permits under the temporary amnesty, which would mean they would be eligible to claim back-refunds if they worked those years.

I just don't like it when I see Democrats making it harder for people who play by the rules and easier for people who break the rules. It's things like this executive amnesty that discourage me from working and getting married. If the government just views me a chump who they can tax with impunity in order to buy votes from the people who get more from government than they put into it, then why should I try to do anything? I feel used. I'm being pressed to work to pay their taxes, then they turn around and give the money to people who break all the rules. Since young, unmarried women are the ones who vote for high taxes and bigger government, it makes me think I should get married at all. Why try to do anything when your government is trying to wreck all your plans anyway? Nobody seems to care about the man who works hard and plays by the rules.

The Wintery Knight’s favorite Bible verses

February 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was asked by the Dina to post Bible verses for a week on my Facebook page, so I chose 8 of them.

If you haven’t seen me posting them this week on my Facebook page, here they are:

Psalm 27:14:

> [11] Teach me Your way, O Lord,
> And lead me in a level path
> Because of my foes.
> [12] Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries,
> For false witnesses have risen against me,
> And such as breathe out violence.
> [13] *I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord
> In the land of the living.
> **[14] Wait for the Lord;**
> **Be strong and let your heart take courage;**
> **Yes, wait for the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**
>
> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.
>
> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

Matthew 5:13:

> 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
>
> **13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**

> 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
>
> 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

2 Timothy 2:4:

> 1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
>
> [2] The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
>
> [3] Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[4] No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.**
>
> [5] Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

Daniel 3:18:

> [13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.
>
> [14] Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?
>
> [15] Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?”
>
> [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.
>
> [17] If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire;and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
>
> **[18] But *even* if *He does* not,let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”**

Esther 4:14:

> [10] Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai:
>
> [11] “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.”

> [12] They related Esther's words to Mordecai.
>
> [13] Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> **[14] For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"**

Philippians 1:9:

> [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> [4] always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> [5] in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> [6] *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> [7] For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
>
> [8] For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> [10] so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
>
> [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Numbers 13:30:

> [25] When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,
>
> [26] they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.
>
> [27] Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.
>
> [28] Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.
>
> [29] Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."
>
> **[30] Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome**

> **it.”**

I know I have some commenters who LOVE to post a million Bible verses in their comments, so if you want to post your favorite Bible verses in the comments, try to be restrained. I’d like to see which ones my readers like best though.

Stephen C. Meyer: does the Big Bang cosmology support the existence of God?

February 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the 66-minute video featuring Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, who holds the Ph.D in philosophy of science from Cambridge University, and other degrees in the hard sciences.

The lecture starts really, really slowly. You can just fast-forward to the 12 minute mark, or you might die of boredom.

Topics:

- Up until the the last 100 years or so, everyone agreed that the universe was eternal
- This is at odds with the traditional Christian view that God created the universe
- Materialism, the view that matter is all there is, requires eternally existing matter
- Discovery #1: Hubble discovers that the universe is expanding (redshift observation)
- The expanding universe was resisted by proponents of the eternal universe, like Einstein
- Some naturalists even proposed speculative static models like the steady-state model
- However, not of the speculative models fit with observations and experimental results
- Discovery #2: Penzias and Wilson discover the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Measurements of this background radiation confirmed a prediction of the Big Bang theory
- The steady-state theory was falsified of by the discovery of this background radiation
- The oscillating model was proposed to prevent the need for an absolute beginning
- But the oscillating model is not eternal, it loses energy on each "bounce"
- A paper by Alan Guth and Marc Sher from 1982 proved that our universe will not bounce
- In addition, experiments reveal that the universe will expand forever, and not contract
- The beginning of the universe is more at home in a theistic worldview than an atheistic one
- The beginning of the universe fits in well with the Bible, e.g. – Genesis 1, Titus 1, etc.

In case you are wondering about what the evidence is for the Big Bang, here are 3 of the evidences that are most commonly offered:

> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to

> become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

By the way, Dr. Meyer also does a great job of explaining the problem of proteins, DNA and the origin of life in this lecture. And you can hear him defend his views in this debate podcast with Keith Fox and in this debate podcast with Peter Atkins. He does a great job in these debates.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalistic alternatives to the Big Bang

February 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture, which was given in 2004 at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

This lecture might be a little advanced for beginners, but if you stretch your mind first, you shouldn't tear anything. (Note: standard disclaimers apply if you do tear something!)

The description of the video states:

> This is quite simply one of the best lectures William Lane Craig (a philosopher of science) has given. Craig explores the origins of the universe. He argues for a beginning of the universe, while refuting scientific models like the Steady State Theory, the Oscillating Theory, Quantum Vacuum Fluctuation Model, Chaotic Inflationary Theory, Quantum Gravity Theory, String Theory, M-Theory and Cyclic Ekpyrotic Theory.

And here is the description of the lecture from Reasonable Faith:

> A Templeton Foundation lecture at the University of Colorado, Boulder, laying out the case from contemporary cosmology for the beginning of the universe and its theological implications. Includes a lengthy Q & A period which features previous critics and debate opponents of Dr. Craig who were in attendance, including Michael Tooley, Victor Stenger, and Arnold Guminski.

Craig has previously debated famous atheists Stenger and Tooley previously. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A time of this lecture. Imagine – having laid out your entire case to two people who have debated you before and who know your arguments well. What did they ask Craig, and how did he respond?

The scientific evidence

The Big Bang cosmology that Dr. Craig presents is the standard model for how the universe came into being. It is a theory based on six lines of experimental evidence.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe
3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

If you are looking for some detail on these evidences, here's a re-cap of the three main evidences for the Big Bang cosmology from Caltech. (Numbers 2, 3 and 5 from the list

above)

Excerpt:

> Until the early 1900s, most people had assumed that the universe was fixed in size. New possibilities opened up in 1915, when Einstein formulated his famous general relativity theory that describes the nature of space, time, and gravity. This theory allows for expansion or contraction of the fabric of space. In 1917, astronomer Willem de Sitter applied this theory to the entire universe and boldly went on to show that the universe could be expanding. Aleksandr Friedmann, a mathematician, reached the same conclusion in a more general way in 1922, as did Georges Lemaître, a cosmologist and a Jesuit, in 1927. This step was revolutionary since the accepted view at the time was that the universe was static in size. Tracing back this expanding universe, Lemaître imagined all matter initially contained in a tiny universe and then exploding. These thoughts introduced amazing new possibilities for the universe, but were independent of observation at that time.
>
> […]Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

It's probably a good idea to be familiar with these if you are presenting this argument, because experimental science is a reliable way of knowing about reality.

Published research paper

This lecture by Dr. Craig is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Here's the peer-reviewed article that the lecture is based on.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified

> as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

If you want something to post on your Twitter or Facebook that is much shorter than this lecture, then you should check out this quick 4-minute explanation of the kalam argument.

How much do we pay as a society for removing the rules around love and marriage?

February 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this UK Daily Mail article.

It says:

> The cost of family breakdown to the country has shot up by more than £10 billion a year since 2009, a study found yesterday.
>
> It put the price to taxpayers in 2015 of clearing up the damage after families fail and looking after the separated adults and children at £47.31 billion.
>
> The bill takes in the cost of benefits, health and social care, housing, policing and the courts, and the price of failure in the education system of children hurt by divorce or the parting of their parents.
>
> The Relationships Foundation think tank said that the money spent because of family breakdown amounts to three per cent of the economic product of the country and each taxpayer will have to contribute £1,546.
>
> The bill has risen from £37.03 billion since the costs were first calculated in 2009. Over the past year alone, despite falling costs for policing, vandalism and disciplinary problems in schools attributable to family breakdown, the cost has risen by £1.55 billion.

Now the further along we go into the sexual revolution, the more the rules slip off and the more the costs go up. But don't try to tell any secular leftists that marriage is necessary to keep government small and tax bills low – they are so committed to "anything goes" moral relativism when it comes to sex that no restrictions of any kind are acceptable to them.

Let's see some more numbers from the United States.

> Divorce and out-of-wedlock childbearing cost U.S. taxpayers more than $112 billion a year, according to a study commissioned by four groups advocating more government action to bolster marriages.
>
> Sponsors say the study is the first of its kind and hope it will prompt lawmakers to invest more money in programs aimed at strengthening marriages. Two experts not connected to the study said such programs are of dubious merit and suggested that other investments — notably job creation — would be more effective in aiding all types of needy families.
>
> There have been previous attempts to calculate the cost of divorce in America. But the sponsors of the new study, being released Tuesday, said theirs is the first to gauge the broader cost of "family fragmentation" — both divorce and unwed childbearing.

> The study was conducted by Georgia State University economist Ben Scafidi. His work was sponsored by four groups who consider themselves part of a nationwide “marriage movement” — the New York-based Institute for American Values, the Institute for Marriage and Public Policy, Families Northwest of Redmond, Wash., and the Georgia Family Council, an ally of the conservative ministry Focus on the Family.
>
> […]Scafidi’s calculations were based on the assumption that households headed by a single female have relatively high poverty rates, leading to higher spending on welfare, health care, criminal justice and education for those raised in the disadvantaged homes. The $112 billion estimate includes the cost of federal, state and local government programs, and lost tax revenue at all levels of government.

Now I blog a lot about the kinds of behaviors that cause marriages to break down – all of which are pushed by radical feminists. We have the sexual revolution, recreational premarital sex, no fault divorce, single mother welfare, and so on – all of these things make it easier for people to break up and harder for them to see relationships as self-sacrificial and permanent. Opening the door to gay marriage is just another redefinition that will remove marital norms like permanence and exclusivity. The more unstable marriage is, the more it creates expensive litigation. The more children grow up without fathers and/or mothers, the more we have to pay in social programs.

Love is a serious business.

David Axelrod: Obama lied about gay marriage in 2008 in order to get elected

February 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> A former senior adviser to President Obama has confirmed what his most strident critics have said all along: Barack Obama lied to the American people about opposing gay "marriage" to boost his chances of winning the 2008 presidential elections.
>
> David Axelrod, a veteran of Chicago left-wing politics who advised Obama during the campaign, makes the admission in a new book *Believer: My Forty Years in Politics*, which hits book shelves today.
>
> Obama first indicated his support for redefining marriage while running for state office in Illinois in 1996, filling out a questionnaire that said, "I favor legalizing same-sex marriages, and would fight efforts to prohibit such marriages."
>
> Candidate Obama wanted to publicly broadcast his views during his campaigns for national office but was afraid the position – then radically unpopular – would end his chances of becoming president. Axelrod writes that campaign manager Jim Messina warned Obama that backing same-sex "marriage" could cost him the electoral votes of North Carolina.
>
> Instead, both he and Hillary Clinton said they held to the traditional definition of marriage, although they supported "civil unions" for homosexuals.
>
> During a 2008 debate, Obama told Saddleback Church megapastor Rick Warren, "I believe that marriage is the union between a man and a woman. Now, for me as a Christian, it is also a sacred union. God's in the mix."
>
> But Axelrod reveals in his new book that, after proclaiming his support for marriage at one campaign event, Obama dismissed his rhetoric as nothing more than a bout of "bullsh—ing."
>
> Axelrod said that the candidate agreed to conceal his views, but "Obama never felt comfortable with his compromise and, no doubt, compromised position. He routinely stumbled over the question when it came up in debates or interviews."
>
> When others asked about Obama's 1996 campaign statement, his supporters played it off as a campaign snafu. White House Communications Director Dan Pfeiffer said in 2011, "That questionnaire was actually filled out by someone else."
>
> As a candidate, he walked a thin line, stating his support for traditional marriage – but opposing any efforts that would legally codify that belief and backing government policies that would grant greater acceptance (and benefits) to

> homosexuals. In 2008, he dismissed opposition to homosexuality as based on “an obscure passage in Romans.”
>
> Obama did, in fact, carry North Carolina in 2008 on his way to the White House, where he chose to bide his time until he could come out in favor of gay “marriage.”

I can remember like yesterday talking to two black Christians in the parking lot outside my office after work about Obama, just before the 2008 elections. Both of them went to church, and both claimed to be evangelical Christians. One in particular loved the writing of Alistair Begg and read lots of Reformed theology. I asked them who they were voting for, and they said “we are voting for Obama”. I told them both about his votes on the Born-Alive Infant Protection Act in Illinois (he voted in favor of infanticide multiple times), his 1996 position in support of gay marriage, his support for cap and trade carbon taxes, his weak stance on national security, and more. I told them that if we ever hoped to repeal Roe v. Wade, that we could not elect this man President. I told him he would pick two pro-abortion Supreme Court judges, at least (and he already has picked two, and will get more in all likelihood). They told me I was wrong about everything and that Obama was pro-life, pro-marriage and really tough on Islamic terrorism.

I also spoke to a black Christian woman in my office. She loved to read books on Bible Study and theology so that she could teach in the church. She even knew some basic apologists, something that the two black guys did not know. She was a much more avid reader than the two guys, who seemed to be more focused on sports, movies and music. She also voted for Obama. I remember her saying she would vote for him, and I could not believe my ears. She was very strong on being pro-life and pro-marriage.

	% Electorate	2008 Obama	McCain
Minority Religious Groups			
Black Protestants	11	95	5
Other Faiths	5	81	19
Ethnic Catholics/Other Christians	6	74	26
Ethnic Protestants	8	52	48
Unaffiliated	12	75	27
White Catholics			
Modernist Catholics	7	66	34
Centrist Catholics	6	34	66
Traditionalist Catholics	6	39	61
White Mainline Protestants			
Modernist Mainline Protestants	6	61	39
Centrist Mainline Protestants	6	51	49
Traditionalist Mainline Protestants	4	32	68
Other Christians	3	28	72
White Evangelical Protestants			
Modernist Evangelical Protestants	3	45	55
Centrist Evangelical Protestants	9	31	69
Traditionalist Evangelical Protestants	15	11	89
ALL	100	54	46

Should Christians have voted for Obama?

I was one of the 5 percent who did not vote for Obama in 2008, despite having dark skin just like my 3 co-workers who voted for him. Those conversations with those three people will stay with me till the day I die. I don’t think I have ever really understand how much people could suppress evidence in order to keep their beliefs before, until I spoke to those people. When I asked them if they were conservative Christians, they told me that they were. I went to a barbecue at one of their houses and saw bookshelves filled with Christian books. And yet they voted for a radical on abortion and a supporter of gay marriage, even when I told them about Obama’s voting record.

Skin color doesn’t matter to me when I am picking a candidate, but to some people it mattered more than facts.

Four ways that the progress of experimental science conflicts with atheism

February 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When people ask me whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism, I offer the following four basic pieces of scientific evidence that are more compatible with theism than atheism.

Here are the four pieces of evidence best explained by a Creator/Designer:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the biological information in the first replicator (origin of life)
4. the sudden origin of all of the different body plans in the fossil record (Cambrian explosion)

And I point to specific examples of recent discoveries that confirm those four arguments. Here are just a few of them:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (From an article from Caltech)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning to allow the existence of conscious, embodied life (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)
4. Evidence showing that Ediacaran fauna are not precursors to the Cambrian fossils, (from the journal Nature)

Atheists will typically reply to the recent scientific discoveries that overturned their speculations like this:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause
2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes
4. Maybe we will find a seamless chain of fossils that explain how the Cambrian explosion occurred slowly, over a long period time

Ever heard any of these responses?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the four responses of atheists to the experimental data.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
>
> †Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, USA
>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear

> to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.
>
> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities."
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have

no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. There is no evidence for a multiverse, but there is evidence for fine-tuning. TONS OF IT.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can't make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can't make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth's interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into

meaningful words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them.

4) The best candidate to explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian era fossils was the Ediacaran fauna, but those are now recognized as not being precursors to the Cambrian fossils.

Science Daily reports on a paper from the peer-reviewed journal Science:

> Evidence of the single-celled ancestors of animals, dating from the interval in Earth's history just before multicellular animals appeared, has been discovered in 570 million-year-old rocks from South China by researchers from the University of Bristol, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Paul Scherrer Institut and the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.
>
> […]This X-ray microscopy revealed that the fossils had features that multicellular embryos do not, and this led the researchers to the conclusion that the fossils were neither animals nor embryos but rather the reproductive spore bodies of single-celled ancestors of animals.
>
> Professor Philip Donoghue said: "We were very surprised by our results — we've been convinced for so long that these fossils represented the embryos of the earliest animals — much of what has been written about the fossils for the last ten years is flat wrong. Our colleagues are not going to like the result."
>
> Professor Stefan Bengtson said: "These fossils force us to rethink our ideas of how animals learned to make large bodies out of cells."

The trend is that there is no evolutionary explanation for the body plans that emerged in the Cambrian era. If you want to make the claim that "evolution did it", then you have to produce the data *today*. Not speculations about the future. The data we have today says no to naturalism. The only way to affirm naturalistic explanations for the evidence we have is *by faith*. But rational people know that we need to minimize our leaps of faith, and go with the simplest and most reasonable explanation – an intelligence is the best explanation responsible for rapid generation of biological information.

Conclusion

I do think it's important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see way too much G. K. Chesterton, Francis Chan and other untestable, ineffective jibber-jabber. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it's too hard. It's not too hard. Everyone can understand Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". That's more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works. You don't want to be anti-science and pro-speculation like atheists are. I recommend reading Uncommon Descent and Evolution News every day for a start.

Why didn’t Scott Walker finish his fourth year of college at Marquette University?

February 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

The Weekly Standard explains the terrible scandal – he got a job offer in his fourth year of college, and he took it.

Excerpt:

> As Scott Walker surges in the 2016 GOP primary polls, Democrats and the mainstream media have taken a newfound interest in the well-known fact that the Wisconsin governor never received a college degree.
>
> […]Walker’s story about his departure from college has always been straightforward: He attended Marquette University in Milwaukee from 1986 to 1990, but in the spring of his fourth year he left Marquette “in good standing” in order to take a full-time job at the American Red Cross. He intended to finish, but couldn’t find the time.
>
> […]When he arrived at college, Walker threw himself into student government and campus politics, but was uninterested in class. The *Post* reports:

> Even in politics class, Walker could appear disengaged.
>
> “He seemed utterly bored,” said Michael Fleet, who taught him in a class on the politics of the Third World. Fleet said he’d hoped to get Walker into debates with the liberals in the room. But it didn’t work. Walker would only give occasional short speeches that made conservative arguments.
>
> So Walker abandoned the pursuit of a political science degree not only to take a full-time job at the American Red Cross but also to launch his political career. In the fall of 1990, Walker ran his first campaign for the Wisconsin legislature. He knocked on 13,000 doors only to lose badly, but his longshot campaign set him

> up for a winning campaign in another legislative district in 1993. In 2002, he was elected (and re-elected twice) as county executive in overwhelmingly Democratic Milwaukee county and went on to win three gubernatorial elections between 2010 and 2014.

Look, I studied computer science, and I thought that was interesting, but if I were studying political science, I would quit it too – if someone offered me a job. Non-STEM programs are a waste of time and money, compared to a real job. The job experience is worth more. And if he left to work, then he could start running for office as soon as he stopped studying full-time. I think people on the left forget how much college costs compared to a job. If you are paying $15K a year for college, then making $45K instead is quite a swing in a positive direction.

I think people in the media are starting to go after Scott Walker, now, so everything gets put under a microscope.

The Weekly Standard also wrote about a New York Times hit piece on Walker that actually *lied* about his record.

Take a look:

> *New York Times* columnist Gail Collins writes about Wisconsin governor Scott Walker's recent speech in Iowa:
>
> Mainly, though, The Speech was about waging war on public employee unions, particularly the ones for teachers. "In 2010, there was a young woman named Megan Sampson who was honored as the outstanding teacher of the year in my state. And not long after she got that distinction, she was laid off by her school district," said Walker, lacing into teacher contracts that require layoffs be done by seniority.
>
> All of that came as a distinct surprise to Claudia Felske, a member of the faculty at East Troy High School who actually was named a Wisconsin Teacher of the Year in 2010. In a phone interview, Felske said she still remembers when she got the news at a "surprise pep assembly at my school." As well as the fact that **those layoffs happened because Walker cut state aid to education** [emphasis added].

Only one problem with that:

> [T]he big error in Collins's piece is her claim that "those layoffs happened because Walker cut state aid to education." **As you can see in the excerpt above, Collins is talking about teacher layoffs that occurred in 2010. Walker did not become governor until 2011.**
>
> The truth is that Walker's reforms actually saved teachers' jobs. Right before the 2012 Wisconsin recall election, Walker's Democratic opponent Tom Barrett couldn't name a single school that had been hurt by Walker's policies. When Walker's 2014 Democratic opponent Mary Burke was asked to name any schools

> hurt by Walker's collective bargaining reform, she relayed an anecdote she'd heard secondhand about one school. Burke's story didn't check out, and the superintendent of that school wrote a letter telling Burke she didn't know what she was talking about.

The New York Times updated their article after two days, with a correction that didn't go far enough, in my opinion.

Meanwhile, the knock on Walker is that he is not able to raise as much money as the RINO candidates.

The Wall Street Journal says boo to that:

> Several GOP fundraisers from the financial-services industry and other Manhattan business sectors are hosting donor events for Mr. Walker, a likely presidential candidate, when he visits New York next week. The events show that while former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie have strong support in New York money circles, neither has a lock on the city's big-dollar donors." The report continues, "Several fundraisers who backed GOP nominee Mitt Romney in 2012 are now helping Mr. Walker, who is best known for challenging Wisconsin public-sector unions and winning three statewide elections in a presidential swing state."

How is Walker doing in the polls? The International Business Times reports on a new Fox News poll:

> Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker is at the head of the class among possible 2016 Republican presidential candidates, according to a new Fox News poll. In a survey that asked respondents to assign letter grades to 10 Republicans who may mount a campaign, Walker received an average grade of "B." Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson and U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., both received "B-" averages.
>
> […]Besides leading the Republican field in average grade, Walker also received the highest share of "A" grades among Republican voters at 18 percent. He was followed by Carson at 15 percent and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee at 12 percent. Ohio Gov. John Kasich got the lowest percentage of "A" grades among the 10 possible GOP candidates at 5 percent, while New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie got the highest percentage of "F" grades at 13 percent.
>
> […]The Fox News poll of 1,044 registered voters was conducted between Feb. 8 and Feb. 10. It has a margin of error of 3 percentage points.

If you want to hear a great introductory podcast on Scott Walker, I recommend listening to this 10-minute podcast on Scott Walker from the Weekly Standard. Get to know your Republican candidates now, don't wait for the mainstream media to pick another Romney for you.

If you want to learn more about Scott Walker, I recommend Walker's new book. I actually

got the audio version, and it's read by Governor Walker himself.

Related posts

- Scott Walker's new budget: tax cuts, spending cuts, school choice, smaller government
- Not just #1 in Iowa: Scott Walker leads in latest New Hampshire GOP primary poll
- With Romney out, Scott Walker leads Iowa poll with 16%, Bush at 9%
- Wisconsin governor Scott Walker draws standing ovations at Freedom Summit in Iowa
- Republican Scott Walker beats Mary Burke to win 2014 Wisconsin Governor race
- Wisconsin House passes Scott Walker's tax cut bill, headed to governor's desk
- Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker cuts taxes again, expects $1 billion surplus in 2015
- Wisconsin governor Walker's reforms hit the left in their wallets
- An interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Kenosha teachers vote to de-certify their teacher union, 63 – 37
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues

Differences between moving in together / living together and getting married?

February 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Dad sent me this article from the Daily Signal. Let's look at it, then I'll give my opinion on this research.

Five points:

1. Cohabiting couples are more prone to break up (and break up for good) than married couples
2. Even after marrying, women who cohabitated prior to marriage are more apt to separate or divorce than those who did not.
3. Men who cohabit tend to make less money than their married counterparts
4. Among young mothers, married women are more financially secure than cohabiting women
5. Cohabiting couples report more depression and more alcohol problems than married couples

The key points for me:

> **1. Cohabiting couples are more prone to break up (and break up for good) than married couples.** In the May 2003 issue of the Journal of Marriage and Family Study, Georgina Binstock and Arland Thornton found that, in the first year of living together, couples who cohabited were eight times more likely to end their relationships than those who were married. In the second and third years, those rates decreased to four and three times more likely, respectively. And when it comes to getting back together after a breakup, cohabiting couples were about a third less likely to get back together again.
>
> **2. Even after marrying, women who cohabitated prior to marriage are more apt to separate or divorce than those who did not.** One study demonstrated that for women who lived with their partners before

> marriage, it was 33 percent more likely for their marriages to result in separation or divorce.
>
> **5. Cohabiting couples report more depression and more alcohol problems than married couples.** Even when controlling for race, age and gender, cohabiting individuals reported higher levels of depression than married ones, 2.8 points according to one study. In another study, cohabiting individuals were three times more likely to report having problems with alcohol consumption than those who were married, as well as 25 percent more problems than single people who did not cohabit. Cohabiting women indicated more alcohol problems than married women—and men who cohabited said they had more alcohol problems than both married *and* single men.

This article from the UK Daily Mail that Dina sent me says that 9 in 10 children being born now will see their parents split by the time the children reach 16.

It says:

> Nearly nine out of ten babies born to co-habiting parents this year will have seen their family break up by the time they reach the age of 16, says a study.
>
> Half of all children born this year will not be living with both natural parents when they reach their mid-teens, and almost all those who suffer family breakdown will be the children of unmarried parents, added the report.
>
> The study, based on figures from the national census and large-scale academic surveys, extrapolates from current trends and calculates that just 9 per cent of babies born to cohabiting couples today will still have their parents living together by the time they are 16.
>
> The report adds that the declining popularity of marriage and the rise of co-habitation will damage the lives of increasing numbers of children.
>
> The figures were produced by researcher Harry Benson, of the Marriage Foundation think tank, who said: 'The report provides solid evidence that married parents are more stable than unmarried parents.
>
> […]The study by the think tank, which is headed by High Court family division judge Sir Paul Coleridge, was based on findings from the census of 2001 and recent results from Understanding Society, a government-backed survey which charts the lives of people in 40,000 homes.
>
> The report said that in 2001, four out of ten teenagers aged 15 were not living with both parents, and among the parents of 15-year-olds who stayed together, 97 per cent were married.

The article is from 2013, but I don't see why things would have gotten any better. We are even more supportive as a society now of adult selfishness and less inclined to take care in our courting so that children are not deprived of fathers and/or mothers through our poor decision making.

So I've had experiences mentoring two women who started off as Christian, fell away from Christianity, then returned to the faith. Both of them spend time cohabitating with atheist men. So when I read numbers like the ones above, I want to warn Christian parents. You should not assume that your daughter will always be a Christian when you are raising them. You have to talk to them about these issues and share these numbers with them. Although you can start by telling them what the Bible says, you have to go on from there to explain what a romantic relationship looks like between Christians, and what happens to people who reject the Bible and start having premarital sex.

I am writing this as a virgin who had no trouble with the Bible. I take the rules on sexuality seriously. I am saving my first kiss on the lips for my engagement. But the reason why this is so easy for me, and so hard for others is because I am being bounded by evidence. I am not making decisions while drunk. I am not embracing a cultural view of what a good romantic partner is. I am not getting my moral rules and boundaries from my peers or from the culture. There is a lot more to building your defenses than just quoting the Bible. Lots of people quote the Bible, but they still end up raising fatherless children or having abortions. Parents, take the time to teach them the evidence.

William Lane Craig explains the purpose of prayer

February 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from a recent Q&A from his web site Reasonable Faith.

Here's the question:

> My question is this: what is the point of prayer? Here prayer is defined as an attempt to communicate with God.
>
> God either can read our thoughts or he cannot. If he can read our thoughts, there is surely no need to try to transmit or broadcast them to him as he already knows what they are. If he cannot read our thoughts, then any thought-based effort to contact him is futile. It doesn't matter what type of prayer it is (eg petition, thanksgiving, repentance), there is no point in making any effort to send it up to him.
>
> Of course, Christianity generally holds that God is omniscient and therefore able to read our thoughts, so the first of these scenarios would be the applicable one. The characteristic of omniscience makes the concept of prayer all the more redundant as it means God already knows any information that might be communicated to him, and exactly what the best thing is to do about it, so prayer could not in any way influence his decisions.
>
> I am well aware that the Bible commands us to pray in numerous instances, but in the light of this argument this strikes me as an incredibly arbitrary thing for a good God to command, and thus makes the reliability of the Bible all the more questionable to me.
>
> Currently it seems to me that the idea of prayer is most sensibly explained as an addictive placebo that gives people a greater sense of control over their circumstances than they actually have.

Dr. Craig's response is long, but here is the key part:

> Yes, God can read our thoughts. So how is that problematic for the spiritual discipline of prayer? You say, "*there is surely no need to try to transmit or broadcast them to him as he already knows what they are.*" Hold on, Joe! Seriously, do you think prayer is a matter of providing God *information*? You defined prayer as communication with God. You don't communicate with another person through a third-person relationship. You enter into what has been called an "I-thou" relationship. You speak *to* another person, not just about that person. Your girlfriend or wife would be decidedly unimpressed if you rationalized never telling her "I love you" on the grounds that she already knows that! Anybody that obtuse is on his way to a break-up! Two people who are in love with each other want to speak to each other, to build an intimate relationship with each other.
>
> So, sure, God reads my mind, and that enables me to pray to Him at any

> moment, even when audible prayers would be inappropriate. I can shoot up a thought-prayer, "Thank you, Lord!" or "God, give me wisdom!" at a moment's notice. This is what people in a relationship do. Can you imagine anyone so obtuse as to say, "I don't have to thank John for what he did for me because he already knows I'm grateful"? Or "I don't have to apologize to Susan because she already knows I'm sorry"?
>
> Moreover, did it not occur to you that such personal communication may be good for you? I-thou relationships open you up as a person, to make you a more loving, transparent, and vulnerable person. Prayer to God is the same way. God knows what is good for us and so wants us to talk to Him.

But in addition to that – yes, God can answer prayers:

> You have a second, different objection to prayer: "*omniscience makes the concept of prayer all the more redundant as it means God already knows any information that might be communicated to him, and exactly what the best thing is to do about it, so prayer could not in any way influence his decisions*." This is an objection to the efficacy of prayer. What the objection overlooks is that God can take prayers (or the lack thereof) into account in His providential planning of the world. Knowing that Joe would freely pray in a certain set of circumstances, God may actualize a world in which Joe's prayers are answered; but had God known that Joe would not pray, God may have actualized something else instead. Prayers, then, are not an effort to change God's mind. Rather God takes account of prayers in choosing which world to actualize. Prayers thus make a *counterfactual* difference: if I were not to pray, then something else would have been the case instead. Knowledge of this sort is called "middle knowledge," and there's a lot on this website about this fascinating topic.

I have to tell you that in a poll of some of my male apologist friends, we all struggle with prayer. I can't say why they struggle with prayer, but in my case it's just that I have trouble understanding how big God is and how much more he can do – especially when there are so many problems and I can't work on them all myself. My personality is very practical. If something needs to be done, I do it. If something needs to be said, I say it. The best thing to do when any dragon appears is to attack it. The best thing to do when a princess is in distress is to rescue her. I do not call for help when there is anything for me to do. Prayer is like a last resort!

Having said that, I do understand that God wants to partner with me and that means that my perception of him changes as I work my way through the standard prayer practices… acknowledging who God is, thanking him for what I have, asking him for what I need, asking him to defend himself and act to make people aware of him and his character, etc. I do struggle with it, though. It's not as easy for me to do as go to church or read the Bible. Apologetics, of course, is no problem for me! I wish someone would encourage me to pray.

I think the middle knowledge point he raised is key, though – God, prior to creating the world *can* factor in all of your prayers that you freely pray, because he foreknows everything you will do in the circumstances (time and place) that he places you in. So, have confidence. Even if he doesn't answer you the way you expect, your prayers were heard.

Aside from all that, I do think that God is pleased when I pray about my concerns to him. It shows him how I am changing, and have his priorities in my mind, and not my own. If you are interested in pleasing God, then talking to him about your concerns and priorities is a good thing to do, especially as your concerns and priorities become more like his.

Will Democrats blame global warming or the Crusades for the murder of 21 Christians?

February 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breitbart reports on a new video from Islamic State: (H/T Ari)

> A newly released video by Islamic State (ISIS) terrorists showing the mass beheading of 21 Christians condemns the faith's believers as "crusaders."
>
> "All crusaders: safety for you will be only wishes, especially if you are fighting us all together," a man on the video says with a North American English accent. "The sea you have hidden Sheikh Osama Bin Laden's body in, we swear to Allah we will mix it with your blood."
>
> The five-minute video, which includes the caption, "The people of the cross, followers of the hostile Egyptian church," shows Egyptian Coptic Christian men on their knees in orange jumpsuits having their heads severed by black-clad terrorists.
>
> President Barack Obama has yet to comment on the mass beheading of Christians by Islamic State terrorists, since he was golfing on Sunday at a private golf course owned by billionaire Larry Ellison.
>
> The release of the Islamic State's Christian beheading video comes a week-and-a-half after Obama infuriated Christians by using the occasion of the National Prayer Breakfast to lecture Christians not to get on their "high horse" about Islamic State terrorists burning a caged Jordanian pilot because "during the Crusades and the Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ."

The Democrats also declined to specify that the victims of this attack were Christians. That's the same thing he did when he described the Jewish victims of Islamic terrorism as "a bunch of folks" who were "randomly shot". Radical Islam is not the problem that Democrats are trying to solve, you know. Obama likes to call this sort of thing "senseless violence" or "workplace violence" in order to avoid impugning radical Islam. The State Department is now saying that radical Islam's root cause is that we don't give them "job opportunities".

Democrats would prefer to ignore radical Islamic terrorism and focus on the real threat.

CNS News explains:

> Not radical Muslim terrorism, not an unsecured border, not an ever-growing federal debt that now exceeds $18 trillion, not the fact that 109 million live in households on federal welfare programs. These are not the greatest threats facing us today.
>
> "No challenge–no challenge–poses a greater threat to future generations than

> climate change," President Obama declared in his State of the Union Address on Tuesday night.
>
> […]President Obama then said that the U.S. military is saying that "climate change" is causing immediate risks to our national security–although he did not explain exactly what this meant or how the "Pentagon" had arrived at this conclusion.
>
> "The Pentagon says that climate change poses immediate risks to our national security," said Obama. "We should act like it."

Global warming alarmism really means increased regulation of business and consumer activity – that's the greatest threat we face, according to Democrats. I think what we are seeing is a fundamental lack of seriousness on global security and foreign policy by the golfer-in-chief and his panel of cultural relativist advisors.

This article from the left-leaning Atlantic makes the point that ISIS/ISIL *is very much Islamic*:

> The reality is that the Islamic State is Islamic. *Very* Islamic. Yes, it has attracted psychopaths and adventure seekers, drawn largely from the disaffected populations of the Middle East and Europe. But the religion preached by its most ardent followers derives from coherent and even learned interpretations of Islam.
>
> Virtually every major decision and law promulgated by the Islamic State adheres to what it calls, in its press and pronouncements, and on its billboards, license plates, stationery, and coins, "the Prophetic methodology," which means following the prophecy and example of Muhammad, in punctilious detail.
>
> […]Every academic I asked about the Islamic State's ideology sent me to [Princeton scholar Bernard Haykel]. Of partial Lebanese descent, Haykel grew up in Lebanon and the United States, and when he talks through his Mephistophelian goatee, there is a hint of an unplaceable foreign accent.
>
> According to Haykel, the ranks of the Islamic State are deeply infused with religious vigor. Koranic quotations are ubiquitous. "Even the foot soldiers spout this stuff constantly," Haykel said. "They mug for their cameras and repeat their basic doctrines in formulaic fashion, and they do it *all the time*." He regards the claim that the Islamic State has distorted the texts of Islam as preposterous, sustainable only through willful ignorance. "People want to absolve Islam," he said. "It's this 'Islam is a religion of peace' mantra. As if there is such a thing as 'Islam'! It's what Muslims do, and how they interpret their texts." Those texts are shared by all Sunni Muslims, not just the Islamic State. "And these guys have just as much legitimacy as anyone else."
>
> All Muslims acknowledge that Muhammad's earliest conquests were not tidy affairs, and that the laws of war passed down in the Koran and in the narrations of the Prophet's rule were calibrated to fit a turbulent and violent time. In Haykel's estimation, the fighters of the Islamic State are authentic throwbacks to

> early Islam and are faithfully reproducing its norms of war. This behavior includes a number of practices that modern Muslims tend to prefer not to acknowledge as integral to their sacred texts. “Slavery, crucifixion, and beheadings are not something that freakish [jihadists] are cherry-picking from the medieval tradition,” Haykel said. Islamic State fighters “are smack in the middle of the medieval tradition and are bringing it wholesale into the present day.”

Democrats are not just unserious about radical Islam, but in Ukraine, too.

Please do read this column from Charles Krauthammer:

> Take Russia. The only news out of Obama’s one-hour press conference with Angela Merkel this week was that he still can’t make up his mind whether to supply Ukraine with defensive weapons. The Russians have sent in T-80 tanks and Grad rocket launchers. We’ve sent in humanitarian aid that includes blankets, MREs and psychological counselors.
>
> How complementary: The counselors do grief therapy for those on the receiving end of the T-80 tank fire. “I think the Ukrainian people can feel confident that we have stood by them,” said Obama at the news conference.
>
> Indeed. And don’t forget the blankets. America was once the arsenal of democracy, notes Elliott Abrams. We are now its linen closet.
>
> Why no anti-tank and other defensive weapons? Because we are afraid that arming the victim of aggression will anger the aggressor.
>
> […]This passivity — strategic, syntactical, ideological — is more than just a reaction to the perceived overreach of the Bush years. Or a fear of failure. Or bowing to the domestic left. It is, above all, rooted in Obama’s deep belief that we — America, Christians, the West — lack the moral authority to engage, to project, i.e., to lead.

I play wargames quite often, and in my experience I find that T-80s are very capable, especially against the Ukraine. The main armament is a very good 125 mm gun with an auto-loader, and unlike the M1A2 Abrams, it does have anti-tank guided missiles. It also has reactive armor, making it resistant to ordinary man-portable anti-tank weapon systems. Yes, it doesn’t have the fire control or speed of the Abrams, but it is a very good tank. It has a very nice low-profile turrent that is hard to hit with unguided anti-tank missiles, especially when it is hull-down.

You are not going to be able to take out one of these from the front with a grenade or a light anti-tank weapon. You will need specialized anti-tank capability, either a well-equipped tank, or a shoulder-fired ATGM (e.g. – Javelin) or a TOW ATGM. In short, we need to arm Ukraine if we expect them to be able to deter a force equipped with T-80 tanks. This is not even to mention what is needed for Ukraine to be able to deal with Russian close-air support helicopters (Mi-28 / Ka-50, etc.) and/or strike aircraft (Su-34).

We really need to think carefully about foreign policy when we vote in elections –

weakness and indecisiveness emboldens aggressors. The price of cutting our military budget in favor of Obamacare, green energy, welfare and other crap is that we can no longer reach into hotspots all over the world and prevent small threats from growing into bigger ones. We lose our ability to deter aggression and stop wars before they happen.

Christian mothers value family over their relationship with Jesus

February 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a shocking article from Church for Men blog. Please read, then read my comments below.

Excerpt:

> When forced to choose their top priority in life, Christian women overwhelmingly pick family over faith, according to a survey from Barna Research. Five times more women chose "being a mother or parent" than chose "being a follower of Christ," as their most important role in life.
>
> These stunning survey results give us a clue as to why Christianity is so rapidly changing into a family-centered faith; why Christian culture is feminizing; and why the gender gap in many denominations continues to grow.
>
> The researchers wrote:
>
> [Women's] spiritual lives are rarely their most important source of identity. That role is taken up by the strong priority Christian women place on family.
>
> The preeminence of family was most overt for Christian women when it came to naming the highest priority in their lives. More than half (53%) says their highest priority in life is family. By contrast, only one third as many women (16%) rate faith as their top priority, which is less than the cumulative total of women who say their health (9%), career performance (5%) or comfortable lifestyle (5%) are top on their list of life objectives.
>
> Despite the characterization of women as intricately connected to their peers, only 3% of Christian women say their friends are their top priority, equal to those who place finances (2%) and leisure (1%) at the top.
>
> Women's sense of identity very closely follows their priorities, with 62% of women saying their most important role in life is as a mother or parent. Jesus came next: 13% of Christian women believe their most important role in life is as a follower of Christ. In third place is their role as wife (11%).
>
> Any other roles women identify with came in at similarly low rankings and far below that of a parent, including that of employee or executive (3%), that of church member (2%) and that of friend or neighbor (2%). American citizen, teacher and caregiver all rank with one percent each.
>
> The researchers continue:
>
> Perhaps not surprisingly given where they place their identity, Christian women also point to family-related objectives as their most important goal in life. Raising their children well is the highest goal for Christian women (36%). While, roughly one quarter of Christian women identify faith-oriented goals as most important

> (26%).
>
> Though women consider themselves family-driven, their marriages may be suffering from a lack of intentionality: only 2% of Christian women say their most important goal in life is to enhance their relationship with their significant other. Marriage comes in below several other goals, including health (6%), career (5%), lifestyle (4%), personal growth (4%), morality (4%) and financial objectives (3%). Only goals related to personal appearance, relationships outside the home and travel come in lower than marital goals.

And I will include one paragraph from the author of the post:

> While the Bible certainly endorses interpersonal harmony, Scripture is not chock-full of happy relationship advice. When Jesus spoke of relationships he usually predicted their demise (Matt. 10:34-35), or promised rewards for people who abandoned their loved ones (Luke 18:29-30). God takes no delight in dysfunctional relationships, but neither did he send his son so you could be at peace with your kids.

I have to quote that because I rebelled against both my parents in order to become an evangelical Protestant. First one in the family.

Now I have something to say about this survey data.

I get a lot of flak for my 10 courting questions that are designed to evaluate a woman's worldview prior to any commitment being made. Men and women alike often tell me to lower my standards. The idea that the marriage is supposed to serve God is losing traction with most young evangelicals today.

The 10 courting questions are designed to help a Christian man make sure that his wife is going to support him in serving God and making the relationship count for God. They are also designed to make sure that his wife will do everything possible to guarantee that his children remain Christians throughout their lives. The simple fact of the matter is that men are away at work most of the time doing stuff to make money. The man's wife is the one who is going to be at home doing the more important work of making sure that his children learn about God, and can resist the culture.

The danger you want to avoid is a situation where your wife is not able to explain to the children how Christianity is rooted in reason and evidence. Your wife needs to be informed and passionate about Christian apologetics, public knowledge related to the Christian worldview, and public policies that affect the execution of a Christian life plan. If she divorces Christianity from truth, then she will not be able to answer the questions of your children, or deal with their doubts, or anticipate threats to their faith (e.g. – the pluralism/relativism at the university), or help them to resist secular popular culture, or explain non-Biblical reasons for various Christian views now unpopular with the culture, e.g. – premarital sex, gay marriage, global warming socialism. And so on.

If your children are raised to think that Christianity is an arbitrary set of rules that cannot be debated or questioned, all in the name of family happiness and respectability, then as

soon as they get to university, they will rebel. So the first priority can never be “family cohesion” – the first priority has to be truth. Christianity is not a tool to achieve happiness in the home, or respectability with the neighbors. Having family as a priority can cause questions and doubts about Christian truth claims to be swept under the rug. That works for a while, but as soon as the kids hit university, they will drop their Christian faith like a hot potato. A better idea is to focus more on truth and open discussion, and let all the doubts and questions and discomfort about being different come out in the open while the kids are growing up.

Christian men, choose your wife wisely. She has to be a thinker. She has to be a fighter. And you have to lead her during the courtship to take Christian worldview and apologetics seriously.

The survey above made me think of this phone call – listen carefully to the mother’s response to her son’s atheism: “How dare you embarrass the family, what will the neighbors think?”. Have a listen – does this response ring true to you?

It’s all about family (and how the family is perceived in the community), and nothing about truth. Nothing about knowledge.

The many meanings of the word “evolution”

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This is from an essay by Stephen C. Meyer and Mike Keas. (H/T Justin Taylor)

Meyer and Keas caution people about answering questions about evolution until the term is clearly defined.

Here are their 6 meanings of the word:

1. Evolution as Change Over Time
2. Evolution as Gene Frequency Change
3. Evolution as Limited Common Descent
4. Evolution as a Mechanism that Produces Limited Change or Descent with Modification
5. Evolution as Universal Common Descent
6. Evolution as the “Blind Watchmaker” Thesis

Here is one that everyone accepts:

> **2. Evolution as Gene Frequency Change**
>
> Population geneticists study changes in the frequencies of alleles in gene pools. This very specific sense of evolution, though not without theoretical significance, is closely tied to a large collection of precise observations. The melanism studies of peppered moths, though currently contested, are among the most celebrated examples of such studies in microevolution. For the geneticist, gene frequency change is “evolution in action.”

And one that is controversial:

> **6. Evolution as the “Blind Watchmaker” Thesis**
>
> The “blind watchmaker” thesis, to appropriate Richard Dawkins’s clever term, stands for the Darwinian idea that all new living forms arose as the product of unguided, purposeless, material mechanisms, chiefly natural selection acting on random variation or mutation. Evolution in this sense implies that the Darwinian mechanism of natural selection acting on random variations (and other equally naturalistic processes) completely suffices to explain the origin of novel biological forms and the appearance of design in complex organisms. Although Darwinists and neo-Darwinists admit that living organisms appear designed for a purpose, they insist that such “design” is only *apparent*, not real, precisely because they also affirm the complete sufficiency of unintelligent natural mechanisms (that can mimic the activity of a designing intelligence) of morphogenesis. In Darwinism, the variation/selection mechanism functions as a kind of “designer substitute.” As Dawkins summarizes the blind watchmaker thesis: “Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered

> and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life, has no purpose in mind. It has no mind and no mind's eye."

For discussion purposes, I accept 1-4, which I think are consistent with the evidence. I deny 5 and 6 because they are inconsistent with the evidence.

It's a good article to read to prepare yourself to discuss this with someone who is antagonistic to design. They may offer evidence for one definition of evolution that everyone accepts, then take it to be proof of a much more controversial definition of evolution. You have to get the definition clear first.

One last piece of advice. If you ever get asked this "do you believe in evolution" question – say, by a secular leftist anxious to label you as a moron – then you might consider going on the offensive, using this list of alternate science-related questions that actually affect public policy from David Harsanyi. Put your questioner on the defensive.

New study: EPA carbon emission regulations eliminate 586,000 manufacturing jobs

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Why don't we build anything in America any more?

Well, we do build many things, but if the question is changed to "why aren't we building more?" then the answer is that the costs of building things in America are much higher than building them elsewhere. One reason is that we have the highest corporate tax rate in the world. Another reason is that we pass regulations that make it expensive to make anything here.

Here is a report from the Daily Signal about a new study by the Heritage Foundation.

They write:

> A new study predicts that more than a half million manufacturing jobs will be eliminated from the U.S. economy as a result of the Obama administration's proposed regulations to curb carbon dioxide emissions.
>
> "Every state would experience overwhelming negative impacts as a result of these regulations, but especially those with higher-than-average employment in manufacturing and mining," said Nick Loris, a co-author of study, which was completed by energy experts at The Heritage Foundation—the parent organization of The Daily Signal.
>
> The researchers projected how many manufacturing jobs would be eliminated in each state and congressional district as a consequence of the carbon plan, which is the centerpiece of President Obama's effort to combat climate change.
>
> The results show that 34 states would lose three to four percent of manufacturing jobs by 2023, and nine other states would lose more.
>
> In Ohio alone, 31,747 jobs would be lost.
>
> The study predicts that the Midwest would be hit the hardest, with Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin losing more than 20,000 jobs each.
>
> […]The analysis comes just months before the Environmental Protection Agency is set to finalize its carbon regulations covering new, existing and modified/reconstructed power plants by mid summer of 2015.
>
> Heritage's study looked at the totality of the Obama administration's efforts to limit carbon dioxide emissions—from motor vehicles and power plants, both new and existing.
>
> The EPA's plan forces states to cut power-industry emissions by 30 percent in 2030 from 2005 levels.

We have to save the planet!!!1!!

Meanwhile, in Boston:

It's global warming! The EPA must save us!

So, the next time anyone asks you why we don't build anything anymore, tell them it's because they voted for Democrats, and how this resulted in higher taxes and more burdensome regulations. Higher taxes and more regulation causes companies to close down here at home and move elsewhere, or they just scale back here and expand elsewhere. Democrats cause American jobs to go overseas, raising the unemployment rate. That's why our labor force participation hasn't been this low for *decades*. It's basic economics.

For the fifth year in a row, Bobby Jindal's state of Louisiana declared "most pro-life"

February 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal

Here's my other "first pick" in the GOP primary.

Life News reports:

> In January, for the fifth year in a row, Louisiana was declared the most pro-life state in the nation by American's United for Life (AUL). Since pro-life Governor Bobby Jindal has been in office for the past six years, it would be fair to say his leadership, at least in part, has created a more pro-life Louisiana.
>
> After AUL made their announcement, Jindal said, "Louisiana was named the most pro-life state for the fifth year in a row. In Louisiana, we promote a culture of life and protect the weakest and most vulnerable among us."
>
> During Jindal's time in office he's signed countless pieces of pro-life legislation as well as limited Obamacare by prohibiting the coverage of elective abortion in health care plans. This is exactly why many pro-life advocates and Republican voters would be thrilled if Jindal ran for president in 2016. In the Decatur Daily, journalist Cal Thomas reported that Jindal said he'd decide in "two to three months" whether to run for president.
>
> The pro-life legislation Jindal's signed include everything from bills that ban abortion at 20-weeks and stop coerced abortions— to legislation that requires abortion facilities to provide ultrasounds prior to an abortion and ensures that medical professionals don't have to participate in abortion.
>
> In 2014, Jindal signed Louisiana Right to Life's flagship legislation, the Unsafe Abortion Protection Act (HB 388), which could close three of the five abortion clinics in the state. HB 388 requires that abortion providers have admitting privileges within 30 miles of a local hospital; clarifies that informed consent

> protections apply to both surgical abortion, as well as to RU-486 chemical abortions; and that facilities that perform more than five abortions maintain proper licensing. After the passage of the HB 388 through the Louisiana Legislation, Gov. Jindal said, "This bill will give women the health and safety protections they deserve."
>
> Earlier this year, *The Washington Times* reported that Jindal blasted U.S. House Republicans after they pulled a bill that bans abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy. He said, "The American people elected a Republican majority to support the pro-life movement and champion conservative principles. I hope they reconsider."
>
> In January, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, which serves under Jindal's administration, announced that they are blocking abortions at an abortion facility Planned Parenthood is building in New Orleans. Originally, their facility was supposed to open by the end of 2014; however, due to opposition from pro-life Louisianans, including Louisiana Right to Life, the Jindal administration and the Archdiocese of New Orleans, their efforts have been stalled.
>
> The Executive Director of Louisiana Right to Life, Benjamin Clapper, told the Washington Post more about Jindal's commitment to protecting unborn life. He said, "He's not just been pro-life behind closed doors. He's also been proudly pro-life across our state." American's United for Life also told the Post that during Jindal's time in office, Louisiana has been the most pro-life it has ever been.
>
> Remarkably, Jindal has always been completely honest about his pro-life views.
>
> In 2003, he said, "In my first race in 2003, at one of my first fundraisers, my first question was from a fairly liberal woman who asked me my position on abortion. I told her I was pro-life. I remember thinking I was going to have to return all the money I had raised! But amazingly, she became a financial supporter despite our differences over abortion. It turns out she already knew I was pro-life; she just wanted to see if I would be honest about my position or if I would waffle in order to get her money."
>
> According to the National Right to Life Committee, Jindal had a 100-percent voting record during three years as member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Additionally, Louisiana Right to Life has honored Gov. Jindal on numerous occasions for his pro-life stand in the Pelican State. In January, as Jindal left the stage after speaking at their annual pro-life rally Clapper said, "Bobby Jindal is the most pro-life governor in the history of Louisiana."

My other "first pick" Scott Walker is now leading his competitors by 14% in the latest Iowa poll. He has 24% of the votes.

If I were going to compare the two of them, I would say that Walker is pro-life, was leader of a pro-life club in college, got some pro-life laws passed, and that those pro-life laws definitely reduced the number of abortions in his state. However, I think his focus is on taking on the big groups on the left like the public sector unions, the welfare collectors,

the secular leftists at the public universities who go after conservatives. Walker is in a blue state, so he basically runs as a fiscal conservative, and then when he wins, which he always does, he brings his social conservatism with him, and does the best he can. But he wins because he is 1) a fighter and 2) competent at all things fiscal. The knock on Walker right now is his immigration plan – he is very vague about what he would do, and conservatives want to know where he stands.

Jindal is different. Not only is he better educated than Walker (Rhodes scholar at Oxford), but he is a policy expert in education and health care policy. He is also very outspoken on foreign policy and social issues. I think his ability to stick to his convictions no matter what is the same as Walker, but he is much more open about his full range of views, instead of just presenting himself as a policy expert and a guy who can get the job done. Jindal is heavily into consumer-driven health care and school choice. The knock on Jindal right now is his budget deficit and high disapproval rating in his home state – he hasn't gotten together the fiscal record right now to stack up against Scott Walker. For a man like Bobby Jindal, though, every crisis is an opportunity. This is his chance to define himself by cutting spending and waste.

We should know by the end of February what Governor Jindal intends to do to close that $1.6 billion shortfall.

Are secular leftists on campus interested in discussing different viewpoints?

February 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A few stories that lead me to think that they are not.

First, Campus Reform writes:

> A female student was threatened by feminist and LGBT organizations at the University of North Carolina – Wilmington after she invited them to attend a pro-life event.
>
> Madison Marston sent personal email invitations to UNCW's National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL), PRIDE, and the Women's and Gender Studies Student Association (WSSA), to extend an invitation to Ratio Christi's "Abortion and Human Equality: A Pro Life Defense of the Unborn" discussion. The three organizations collectively declined while threatening Marston for sending the invitation.
>
> "Each of the leaders of PRIDE, NARAL and WSSA ask that you no longer contact us directly," the email, obtained by *Campus Reform* said. "As a student organization, your events are on the CAIC calendar, part of Hawk e-News, and disseminated in a variety of other ways, which is sufficient for us to be aware of them. We do not need, nor want, these invitations. If you continue to attempt to contact any of us, we will take further action."
>
> In the email, the organizations said they already had a separate event scheduled for that same date but also said they will not participate in any debates with the Christian apologetics organization as they do not share the same beliefs when it comes to abortion and LGBT issues.
>
> "As such, we have no desire to debate them with you or your organization," the organizations said in the email.
>
> […]"We have no desire to attend any event sponsored by your organization and its narrow beliefs steeped in religious bigotry and intolerance."
>
> […]Ratio Christi's event, scheduled for Feb., 26, will host Adams, an outspoken conservative professor at UNCW, "to present a scientific and philosophical argument on the topic of abortion," according to the event's press release obtained by *Campus Reform*.
>
> The free event has a Q&A portion concluding Adams' talk, during which Marston, a biology and chemistry major, was hoping the other student organizations could participate.
>
> "I had naively thought UNCW's pro-choice student organizations would jump at any and every opportunity to participate in events on the topic of abortion," Marston told *Campus Reform* in an interview. "Or at least, I thought they would

> be somewhat interested in having a platform to defend their views. If they believe so strongly that abortion is a woman's right—why are they afraid to defend their belief?"
>
> […]UNCW's College Democrats also declined the invitation to attend the event as "our party's views do not align with the views of the speaker."

I think the pro-abortion folks, the LGBT folks and the Democrats are not so much interested in debate as they are in coercing anyone who disagrees with them.

Next article is from Fox News.

They write:

> Students at Acalanes High School were given a handout with LGBT terminology – including words like pan-sexual, demi-boy and gray gender.

> Teenagers at a California high school were publicly shamed for disagreeing with speakers allowed to push an LGBT agenda during an English class, according to several upset parents.
>
> The Queer Straight Alliance at Acalanes High School, in Lafayette, lectured students in several ninth-grade English classes on Jan. 29 about LGBT issues, according to Brad Dacus, president of the Pacific Justice Institute, which is representing the parents.
>
> During the class, the students, ages 14 and 15, were instructed to stand in a circle. Then, they were grilled about their personal beliefs and their parents' beliefs on homosexuality, PJI alleges.
>
> "The QSA had students step forward to demonstrate whether they believed that being gay was a choice and whether their parents would be accepting if they came out as gay," PJI attorney Matthew McReynolds said. "Students who did not step forward were ridiculed and humiliated."
>
> PJI is a law firm that specializes in religious liberty cases. They are representing several families who had children in the freshman classes — some of whom also are angry because there was no parental notification of the LGBT lecture.
>
> "Singling out students for ridicule based on their moral or political beliefs is a Marxist tactic that should have no place in the United States of America," Dacus said.

Yes, and Christian parents are paying for it by force – there is no school choice. You are forced to pay for this, whether you use it or not.

And finally, an essay on the bullying of Christians and conservatives that happens in schools, from ISI Review.

Excerpt:

> "The new intolerance" is shorthand for the chilled public atmosphere in which

> religious believers now operate. Many people of faith face unique burdens that would have been unthinkable even a couple of decades ago: burdens of ostracism, of losing the good opinion of their neighbors, of being trash-talked in the public square. Some even face the loss of livelihood or the constant threat and reality of litigation; for a primer, see the hounding last spring of Mozilla CEO Brandon Eich for his donation years earlier on behalf of traditional marriage.
>
> Although this new intolerance has begun to attract attention and debate, the connection between that phenomenon and the rise in unbelief among twenty-somethings remains to be explored. And the scrutiny is overdue. It is well known, and well documented by social science, that many students, not only in America but all over, lose their religion in college. The interesting question is why.
>
> […]Students, like any other human beings, cannot help being sensitive to atmospherics. Let's think again of the new force that drives a CEO out of his post for having donated to defend traditional marriage. If the new intolerance can penalize an "alpha" like him so dramatically, how much more menacing must it be to people just starting out, whose futures and livelihoods depend so heavily on the opinion of their peers?
>
> […]It's time to air the idea that college students do not stay out of church or synagogue because their education leads them to enlightened conclusions about the big questions. No, the more likely dynamic is that thanks to the new intolerance, the social and other costs of being a known believer in the public square mount by the year—and students take note. Hence intimidation on the quad, multiplied over many years and campuses, is an unseen engine of secularization.

This intimidation didn't work on me, but I have met Christian women who were very sensitive to peer approval when they got to college. They went from Bible verse memorization to shacking up to abortion to divorce. They started to drift because of the peer-shaming and the professor-shaming, and then it is *cemented* by the *repeated experiences* of binge-drinking, hooking up and shacking up. The repeated experience of putting aside God and moral boundaries in order to have fun forms a new worldview at a deep level, and it continues as they age.

Even if they come back to the Christian faith at a superficial (emotional, devotional) level, the underlying worldview is hard to fix. Attempts to re-orient them towards an effective Christian life that addresses the real problems that Christians are facing today in the culture will not be accepted. The self-centered life-plan that was formed in college remains intact, with just a veneer of piety on top to justify it when it's called into question.

Victor Davis Hanson: Five mistakes Democrats made in the Middle East

February 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This National Review article is by military historian Victor Davis Hanson.

Here are the 5 mistakes:

1. Iran
2. Iraq
3. Libya
4. Egypt
5. Israel

All of the areas are important, but I want to focus on the one that I think is going to hurt us the most: Iran.

Dr. Hanson writes:

> Sanctions were starting to squeeze Iran, which had been unable to absorb Shiite-dominated Iraq. Unrest in Iran was rising, spearheaded by pro-Western young reformers. Less than a month after Barack Obama's inauguration, over a million Iranians hit the streets to protest their country's rigged elections. The Europeans were beginning to understand that a nuclear Iran posed a greater threat of nuclear blackmail to the EU than to the U.S.
>
> Poland and the Czech Republic had agreed to partner with the U.S. in creating an anti-ballistic missile system to deter Iran's growing missile program. The U.S. and its friends occasionally sent armadas slowly through the Strait of Hormuz to remind Iran that we were determined that international waters would always remain international.
>
> So what happened?
>
> The new Obama administration kept silent as the pro-Western Iranian protests deflated. In herky-jerky style, Obama at first upped the sanctions as Tehran ignored his serial empty deadlines on curbing enrichment. Then, unilaterally and without much warning, Obama relaxed sanctions. He reopened negotiations, even as Iran's centrifuges multiplied. Currently, Iran is on the cusp of nuclear acquisition, and it quietly advises its supporters that the U.S. is both weak and naïve — and will soon be gone from the region.
>
> Tehran is creating a sort of Co-Prosperity Sphere at the expense of Sunni and Western interests, as it sabotages Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon. There is no longer talk of regional U.S.-led missile defense.
>
> In brilliantly diabolical fashion, Iran has maneuvered a deer-in-the-headlights U.S. into an embarrassing de facto alliance with it against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. The

> partnership was designed by Tehran to save the pro-Iranian Assad government, to bolster Hezbollah, to relieve diplomatic pressures on its own nuclear-enrichment program, and to increase tensions between the U.S. and the Sunni moderate states like Jordan and the Gulf monarchies.
>
> There has never been a greater likelihood than there is now, under Obama, that Iran will get the bomb, that it will create a radical theocratic Shiite alliance from Yemen to Iraq to Syria to Lebanon, and that it will direct Hamas and Hezbollah to start another war against Israel — this time backed by an Iranian nuclear deterrent.

Right now, people are making a lot of noise about Islamic State, and that is a significant threat in the near term. But that will not be nearly as bad as the development of nuclear weapons by Iran. They have already stated that they want to wipe Israel off the map. With our porous southern border, we should expect to be targeted as well. Iran has had their Al Quds special forces deployed to Venezuela for years now.

The Washington Times reported this in 2010:

> Iran is increasing its paramilitary Qods force operatives in Venezuela while covertly continuing supplies of weapons and explosives to Taliban and other insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq, according to the Pentagon's first report to Congress on Tehran's military.
>
> The report on Iranian military power provides new details on the group known formally as the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF), the Islamist shock troops deployed around the world to advance Iranian interests. The unit is aligned with terrorists in Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, North Africa and Latin America, and the report warns that U.S. forces are likely to battle the Iranian paramilitaries in the future.
>
> The Qods force "maintains operational capabilities around the world," the report says, adding that "it is well established in the Middle East and North Africa and recent years have witnessed an increased presence in Latin America, particularly Venezuela."
>
> […]The report gives no details on the activities of the Iranians in Venezuela and Latin America. Iranian-backed terrorists have conducted few attacks in the region. However, U.S. intelligence officials say Qods operatives are developing networks of terrorists in the region who could be called to attack the United States in the event of a conflict over Iran's nuclear program.
>
> […]The report links Qods force operatives and the larger IRGC to some of the deadliest terrorist attacks of the past 30 years: the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut in 1983, the bombing of a Jewish center in Argentina in 1994, the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia and many insurgent attacks in Iraq since 2003.

That was 2010, but fast forward to 2011, and we have Iran attempting to assassinate the

Saudi ambassador on U.S. soil.

The radically leftist Huffington Post reported this in 2011:

> When Attorney General Holder announced today that federal authorities had thwarted a “made for Hollywood” murder-for-hire plot by alleged Iranian-linked operatives tied to Mexico drug cartels to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the U.S, it came as no surprise to counter-terrorism experts familiar with Iran’s terrorist activities in Latin America. Iran’s terror plotting south of the border has been a well-known fact — orchestrated by the Al Quds paramilitary wing of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), a terrorist organization very well versed in the the art of the tango and tortillas for some time.
>
> For over two decades, Al Quds operatives and their proxies from terrorist organizations throughout the Middle East have been deployed throughout Iran’s embassies in Latin America — most recently in Venezuela and Mexico.
>
> Starting in the late 1980s and early 1990s, using Hezbollah as initial cover, Al Quds masterminds began populating the “failed state” region in Latin American known as the Tri-Border Area (TBA) of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay as a base from which to train Islamic extremists. The 1992 and 1994 attacks against Jewish and Israeli interests in Buenos Aires originated in the TBA. A veritable Star Wars bar scene of terrorists have reportedly been trained by Al Quds in the TBA and have taken shelter at one time or another there, including Iran proxy terrorists belonging to Hezbollah, Hamas, and al-Gama al Islamiya — all under the watchful patronage of Iran’s Al Quds operatives.
>
> The TBA is ideal for laundering terrorist identities because once an operative enters Paraguay he/she can just drive into Brazil and return without the need for showing a passport.

Obama has been as serious about this threat from Iran as he has been about prosecuting the IRS for targeting Tea Party organizations, as he has been about defending the Defense of Marriage Act in court, as he has been about lowering the costs of health care, and so on. He wants to be on the golf course or giving speeches where he jabs his Republican opponents.

With respect to this Iran problem, Obama’s policy has been to effectively tell them go ahead and build the nuclear weapons. We are not going to be able to just make 8 years of clowning around disappear. This is going to hurt. People are going to die.

Alliance Defending Freedom will defend Atlanta fire chief fired for his Christian faith

February 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This report is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Former Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran filed today a federal lawsuit against the city of Atlanta and its Mayor Kasim Reed alleging they terminated his employment because of his belief in traditional marriage.
>
> The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, Atlanta Division, states Cochran's was fired "solely" because:
>
> …[Cochran] holds religious beliefs concerning same-sex marriage and homosexual conduct that are contrary to the mayor's and the city's views on these subjects, and because he expressed those beliefs in the non-work-related, religious book he self-published.
>
> Cochran had been a firefighter since 1981 and was appointed Atlanta's fire chief in 2008. In 2009, President Obama appointed him as U.S. Fire Administrator for the United States Fire Administration in Washington, D.C. In 2010, he returned to serve as Atlanta's fire chief.
>
> Cochran is a devout Christian and active in his community as a member of Elizabeth Baptist Church, where he serves as a deacon and teacher.
>
> On Jan. 6, 2015, after writing and self-publishing a book which briefly mentions homosexuality as one among many sexual sins from a Christian perspective, the city of Atlanta and Mayor Reed suspended Cochran without pay, subjected him to "sensitivity training" and ultimately fired him.
>
> Although a city investigation found that Cochran has not discriminated against anyone throughout his career as fire chief of Atlanta, the city still fired him, citing the need for tolerance of diverse views.
>
> "I respect each individual's right to have their own thoughts, beliefs and opinions, but when you're a city employee and those thoughts, beliefs and opinions are different from the city's, **you have to check them at the door**," said City Councilman Alex Wan, a leader in the campaign to oust Cochran, to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution in November.
>
> Alliance Defending Freedom, a non-profit legal organization that advocates for the right of people to freely live out their faith, is defending Cochran in his lawsuit against the city and mayor of Atlanta.

Please watch the 5-minute video above. The city councilman Alex Wan is openly gay, by the way.

If you want to help out with Cochran's legal defense (and this is a case we really, really need to win) then you can go to the Alliance Defending Freedom page here and read more about the case, and donate, if you feel that this is a team you want to partner with. Even if you don't donate, share the story in social media, because a lot of people need to understand what happens when gay rights activism conflicts with religious liberty. It goes to court, and that's when Alliance Defending Freedom makes their stand.

Listen. If you are looking to steer your kids into a career that will make a difference, consider trying for an Alliance Defending Freedom lawyer. These guys go to bat for all of us, and if you work your parenting well, you might be able to make a child grow up who will make a difference.

And subscribe to the Alliance Defending Freedom podcast.

Florist may lose her business, home and savings for refusing to service gay wedding

February 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I remember reading a blog post by very well known atheist from Washington just after his state legalized same-sex marriage. He said he was very proud of his state. Now we get to find out what he was so proud of.

The story is reported by Alliance Defending Freedom.

They write:

> A state judge has determined that the government can force a floral designer to do custom design work and provide wedding support services even if she has a religious conviction that marriage is between one man and one woman. Barronelle Stutzman was found guilty for referring her friend and long-time customer to another florist because the customer wanted her to design floral arrangements and provide services for a same-sex wedding. Barronelle's referral ensured the customer received the services he wanted, but has been labeled "discrimination" under Washington law.
>
> The court also ruled that both the state and the couple may collect damages and attorneys' fees not only from the floral shop, but also from Stutzman personally.
>
> The court said:
>
> "On the evening of November 5, 2012, there was no conflict … The following evening, after the … enactment of same-sex marriage, there would eventually be a direct and insoluble conflict between Stutzman's religiously motivated conduct and the laws of the State of Washington**. Stutzman cannot comply with both the law and her faith if she continues to provide flowers for weddings as part of her duly-licensed business, Arlene's Flowers.**"
>
> For simply abiding by her faith and a view of marriage held sacred for centuries, the 70-year-old grandmother not only may lose her business, but also her home and savings. Contrast this reality to the same-sex couple, who not only obtained exactly what they needed for their ceremony, but were offered free flowers and wedding services by a multitude of florists. Yet the state attorney general sued her and then the couple, represented by the ACLU, filed a second lawsuit.
>
> Barronelle's referral showed kindness and tolerance to her customer, doing as much as she could without violating her conscience. But apparently there is no tolerance for her religious beliefs about marriage.
>
> "America would be a better place if citizens respected each others' differences and the government still protected the freedom to have those differences," said Barronelle. "Instead, the government is coming after me and everything I have just because my beliefs are different from the government's. I just want the

> freedom to live and work faithfully and to believe what God says about marriage without fear of punishment, just as others have the freedom to believe and say what they want to about marriage."
>
> "The message of these rulings is unmistakable: there is no tolerance for those who disagree with the state's view of marriage," said ADF Senior Counsel Kristen Waggoner, who argued before the court in December. "The couple had no problem getting the flowers they needed. In fact, they received several offers for free flowers. So, where's the tolerance for Barronelle Stutzman? It's hard to believe that Barronelle should prepare to have everything she has earned and built seized by the state just because of her beliefs about marriage."

If you don't *celebrate* same-sex marriage, then the courts will come after you and take everything you have to *make you* celebrate same-sex marriage. This is called *tolerance*. And it is sold to the public with the well-known gay rights motto *"Celebrate Diversity"*.

There is nothing in the atheistic worldview that has a problem when Christians have their consciences violated by government coercion. This is the atheist thing – using power to force others to tell them that their man-made hedonistic moralities are actually valid and true. They are really comfortable with government forcing religious individuals to violate their consciences. And forcing them to do a lot more, too. This is just the beginning. When you believe that morality is make-believe that varies by time or place, instead of something objective built into the universe by its Creator and Designer, then anything is possible. *Anything* is possible. Far from being an unexpected diversion from atheism, this is atheism put into practice. Might makes right. Survival of the fittest. There is no place for a "human right" to free speech in an accidental, materialistic universe.

To end this post on a happy note, I'm going to post a picture of Kristen Waggoner, and her bio, just to remind us who the hero of the story was.

Here she is:

Kristen Waggoner, Alliance Defending Freedom

Her bio:

> Kristen K. Waggoner serves as senior vice president of legal services with Alliance Defending Freedom, leading the organization's legal advocacy efforts. She is a Martindale-Hubbell AV peer-review rated attorney who clerked for Justice Richard B. Sanders of the Washington Supreme Court after law school and served in private practice in Seattle for nearly 20 years. Waggoner is admitted to the state bars in Washington, Florida, and Oregon. She is also admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the 1st and 9th Circuits, and the U.S. District Courts for the Western and Eastern Districts of Washington.

It takes a lot to make one Kristen Waggoner – her parents must be proud of her. She tried her best, and it was good for us that she tried. There's always the appeal. But even if we win that, the point was made – if you're a Christian, then you'd better act like an atheist in public. Or else. You have to have their "morality" such as it is forced on you. Or else. We have been intimidated. To think that this happened in a country that was founded by theists, many of them Christians. It makes me sad.

There was a good episode of the Alliance Defending Freedom podcast on this story, which you can download the MP3 file here.

New study: children's educational outcomes are closely linked to their mother's

February 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Well, I guess everyone who has read my courting questions knows that as a condition of entering into a marriage plan with me, I ask that the woman go on to graduate school and also work for a few years. I ask this because she is going to be in charge of the children all day, at least until we put them into private school, (if we do that), or longer if we go with homeschooling all the way. That means not only does she have to be good at math, science and everything else important, but she also has to know how to apply to college, how to apply to grad school, and how to get a job and survive in the workplace.

The mother of the children is the chief of staff of the home, and she has a more important job than the man. Raising the children is – *truly* – more important to God than the nature and pay of the man's work. The man has to go to work to provide, but that is not normally going to have the impact for God that raising the next Alliance Defending Freedom attorney will have. I intend for my marriage to be (in part) an engine for the manufacture of effective, influential Christian scholars and/or professionals, and that means I expect the VP of the parenting division to be *excellent.*

So… is there any more reason to asking marriage candidates to go to graduate school and to work?

Yes, and a new study reported in Family Studies explains why:

> A new paper by Jessica F. Harding, Pamela A. Morris, and Diane Hughes in the *Journal of Marriage and Family* proposes studying the ways in which mothers' education affects children's outcomes through a three-part framework: mothers' human capital, cultural capital, and social capital.
>
> […]In the realm of parenting, a college degree (or the knowledge and skills it stands for) seems to make people interact with their kids differently. Take the famous thirty-million word gap, for example: some scholars estimate that

> children of parents on welfare hear 30 million fewer words by the age of four than the children of professional parents.
>
> The gap is not only about quantity, but quality: Better educated parents also use a wider vocabulary, and they dole out affirmations (not just complimenting kids, but repeating and building on what they say) more generously than less educated parents. Learning lots of words early in life is tied to better academic outcomes down the road, so parents' early conversations with kids have long-lasting implications.
>
> Mothers' education also matters later in childhood: College-educated mothers are "able to more appropriately tailor cognitively stimulating activities to their children's developmental level," the researchers document, and they are more equipped to help kids do homework and study for tests.
>
> […]Cultural capital revolves around "preferences and behaviors that, although not inherently better than others, are relevant for educational success because they are sanctioned in a particular society's educational settings." Think visiting museums and taking music lessons—the sort of activities that upper-middle class parents emphasize. Participating in such activities "has been associated with teacher-reported academic outcomes for children and adolescents in a number of studies that have adjusted for other factors," and it bolsters high school students' college applications.
>
> Cultural capital also helps kids to navigate the education system successfully: more educated mothers are more comfortable with schools, so they are more likely to advocate for their kids there (say, requesting that their child be assigned a certain well-regarded teacher) and to teach their kids how to advocate successfully for themselves (for instance, telling a child how to request the opportunity to re-take a failed test).
>
> […]Social capital encompasses "interactions that take place between mothers and people in their social networks or between people in mothers' social networks and children." It's about mothers' relationships to and connections with other people (whereas cultural capital has to do with mothers' "abilities to use behaviors that aid in navigating . . . social and institutional relationships"). College-educated mothers are more likely to be part of social networks containing "knowledge, skills, and resources that are relevant to children's academic success," the researchers propose. For instance, their relatives, colleagues, and friends are likely to also have college degrees, meaning mothers can easily pick up tips about the best schools or gain advice about the college application process. Plus, their children will be surrounded by highly educated role models; in their circles, graduating from college will be an expectation, not an aspiration.

Everything I do in relationships is grounded in studies like this one. I work backwards from what God wants, to what the challenges in the society are, to what the children need, to

what each spouse does in the marriage for each other and for the kids, to how each spouse prepares for marriage roles. Then, I look at the studies to find out the best way to achieve the goals. It's all very serious – no getting drunk, hooking up, or partying.

I was preparing to be a husband and father from the time I started high school. Choosing STEM courses, passing on fluff courses. I hated doing hard things that made me look stupid, but I *had to do them*. We – me and my future wife and kids – would *need the money*. Same thing with chastity – I wanted my wife to have assurances that I could be faithful, so I never had sex outside of marriage (never went near the line). And on and on.

Marriage-minded women ought to be doing the same. Work your chastity, yes. But also study hard things, get hard jobs, and study economics, politics, apologetics and everything else a family will need. Find out what children are like. Find out how to cook. Find out how to encourage a man. Find out how to homeschool. Find out how to argue logically. Your successful marriage starts the day you turn your emotions off, and turn on your mind.

Marriage is *hard work*. You can't just go crazy in your teens, 20s and 30s and then jump off at the last second into the perfect marriage. You have to build up to it – think where you want to go, and take steps every day that will get you there. It's much better to learn about how marriage and parenting works from good books, good studies and the experience of wise, older people with long-lasting marriages. Don't follow the culture, it's crap.

Why does the cause of the universe have to be a person / mind?

February 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Must the cause of the universe be a person?

Here's a post from my friend Fred Woodbridge, who blogs at IFCONFIG blog, where he quotes from Dr. Craig's book "Reasonable Faith". The quote contains three arguments for why the cause of the universe must be personal.

Quote:

> **First**, as Richard Swinburne points out [in *The Existence of God]*, there are two types of causal explanation: scientific explanations in terms of laws and initial conditions and personal explanations in terms of agents and their volitions. For example, if I come into the kitchen and find the kettle boiling, and I ask Jan, "Why is the kettle boiling?" she might answer, "The heat of the flame is being conducted via the copper bottom of the kettle to the water, increasing the kinetic energy of the water molecules, such that they vibrate so violently that they break the surface tension of the water and are thrown off in the form of steam." Or she might say, "I put it on to make a cup of tea. Would you like some?" The first provides a scientific explanation, the second a personal explanation. Each is a perfectly legitimate form of explanation; indeed, in certain contexts it would be wholly inappropriate to give one rather than the other. Now a first state of the universe cannot have a scientific explanation, since there is nothing before it, and therefore it cannot be accounted for in terms of laws operating on initial conditions. It can only be accounted for in terms of an agent and his volitions, a personal explanation.
>
> **Second**, the personhood of the cause of the universe is implied by its timelessness and immateriality. The only entities we know of which can possess such properties are either minds or abstract objects, like numbers. But abstract objects do not stand in causal relations. Indeed, their acausal nature is definitive for abstract objects; that is why we call them abstract. Numbers, for example, cannot cause anything. Therefore, the transcendent cause of the origin of the universe must be of the order of mind.
>
> **Third**, this same conclusion is also implied by the fact that we have in this case the origin of a temporal effect from a timeless cause. We've concluded that the beginning of the universe was the effect of a first cause. By the nature of the case, that cause cannot have any beginning of its existence or any prior cause. Nor can there have been any changes in this cause, either in its nature or operations, prior
> to the beginning of the universe. It just exists changelessly without beginning, and a finite time ago it brought the universe into existence. Now this is

exceedingly odd. The cause is in some sense eternal and yet the effect which it produced is not eternal but began to exist a finite time ago. How can this be? If the necessary and sufficient conditions for the production of the effect are eternal, then why isn't the effect eternal? How can all the causal conditions sufficient for the production of the effect be changelessly existent and yet the effect not also be existent along with the cause? How can the cause exist without the effect?

One might say that the cause came to exist or changed in some way just prior to the first event. But then the cause's beginning or changing would be the first event, and we must ask all over again for its cause. And this cannot go on forever, for we know that a beginningless series of events cannot exist. There must be an absolutely first event, before which there was no change, no previous event. We know that this first event must have been caused. The question is: How can a first event come to exist if the cause of that event exists changelessly and eternally? Why isn't the effect co-eternal with its cause?

To illustrate: Let's say the cause of water's freezing is subzero temperatures. If the temperature were eternally below zero degrees Centigrade, then any water around would be eternally frozen. If the cause exists eternally, the effect must also exist eternally. But this seems to imply that if the cause of the universe existed eternally, the universe would also have existed eternally. And this we know to be false.

One way to see the difficulty is by reflecting on the different types of causal relations. In event/event causation, one event causes another. For example, the brick's striking the window pane causes the pane to shatter. This kind of causal relation clearly involves a beginning of the effect in time, since it is a relation between events which occur at specific times. In state/state causation one state of affairs causes another state of affairs to exist. For example, the water's having a certain surface tension is the cause of the wood's floating on the water. In this sort of causal relation, the effect need not have a beginning: the wood could theoretically be floating eternally on the water. If the wood begins to float on the water, then this will be a case of event/event causation: the wood's beginning to float is the result of its being thrown into the water. Now the difficulty that arises in the case of the cause of the beginning of the universe is that we seem to have a peculiar case of state/event causation: the cause is a timeless state but the effect is an event that occurred at a specific moment in the finite past. Such state/event causation doesn't seem to make sense, since a state sufficient for the existence of its effect should have a state as its effect.

There seems to be only one way out of this dilemma, and that is to say that the cause of the universe's beginning is a personal agent who freely chooses to create a universe in time. Philosophers call this type of causation "agent causation," and because the agent is free, he can initiate new effects by freely bringing about conditions which were not previously present. For example, a man

> sitting changelessly from eternity could freely will to stand up; thus, a temporal effect arises from an eternally existing agent. Similarly, a finite time ago a Creator endowed with free will could have freely brought the world into being at that moment. In this way, the Creator could exist changelessly and eternally but choose to create the world in time. By “choose” one need not mean that the Creator changes his mind about the decision to create, but that he freely and eternally intends to create a world with a beginning. By exercising his causal power, he therefore brings it about that a world with a beginning comes to exist. So the cause is eternal, but the effect is not. In this way, then, it is possible for the temporal universe to have come to exist from an eternal cause: through the free will of a personal Creator.
>
> On the basis of a conceptual analysis of the conclusion implied by the kalām cosmological argument, we may therefore infer that a personal Creator of the universe exists, who is uncaused, beginningless, changeless, immaterial, timeless, spaceless, and unimaginably powerful. This, as Thomas Aquinas was wont to remark, is what everybody means by “God.”

There are lots of good objections to the kalam cosmological argument. A person could object to the notion of timeless person is incoherent, or say that the notion of an unembodied mind is incoherent, or that we don’t know that non-physical minds can cause effects in the physical world, or that matter can’t come into being out of nothing, or that even if effects in the physical universe have causes that doesn’t mean the universe as a whole has to have a cause, or that the notion of causation doesn’t make sense unless time has already started. These are objections that Dr. Craig answered in his debate with Peter Millican, so if you hear these objections, I recommend watching that debate.

New study: record high 30.3 percent of millenials live with a parent

February 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Those on the left assure us that the secret to creating more jobs is making it easier for more people to go to college. We have to keep taxing job creators and workers, they say, so that we can pay for more people to get a college indoctrination. I mean education! Well, we have been trying that approach for some time – tax the private sector, make it cheaper for people to go to college. And the result is that we now have a record high number of young adults with college degrees, and a record high number of young adults living in poverty and a record high number of young adults living at home.

The article from Campus Reform tells us where we are now.

They write:

> An all-time high of 30.3 percent of millennials are living with a parent, according to data released from the U.S. Census Bureau's study, "Young Adults: Then and Now."
>
> The study, released Dec., 4, 2014, and tracks the young adult population from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 Censuses and the 2009-2013 American Community Survey, gathering data about salary, education level, transportation habits, and more than 40 other topics.
>
> Millennials are living at home, and more are living in poverty with lower rates of employment than their predecessors.
>
> According to the report, millennials are more likely to live at home than any other generation of young adults. In 1980, 22.9 percent of young adults lived with a parent, while in 1990 the percentage increased to 24.2 percent. In 2000, the percentage decreased to 23.2 percent, but by 2013 it hit a record-level by jumping more than 7 percentage points.
>
> Millennials are living at home, and more are living in poverty with lower rates of employment than their predecessors. According to the study, one in five young adults live in poverty, up from one in seven in 1980. Currently, the study claims 65 percent of millennials are employed compared to the 1980 number of 69 percent.
>
> Yet, 22 percent of young adults have a college degree, compared to only 16 percent in 1980.

The troubling thing about this for me is how much millenials keep voting, again and again, for higher taxes and more regulations. On the one hand, they want to vote against evil corporations. Tax them more! Regulate them, to save the planet! Then, a split-second later, they go and ask these corporations that they've been taught to bash for work.

There is work for them, all right – in other countries with lower taxes and less regulation.

Anyway, we want to be positive, so again, I'm going to provide people with useful information.

First, study STEM programs:

> 1. Petroleum Engineering – Starting Salary: $103,000 / Mid-Career Salary: $160,000
> 2. Actuarial Mathematics – Starting Salary: $58,700 / Mid-Career Salary: $120,000
> 3. Nuclear Engineering – Starting Salary: $67,600 / Mid-Career Salary: $117,000
> 4. Chemical Engineering – Starting Salary: $68,200 / Mid-Career Salary: $115,000
> 5. Aerospace Engineering – Starting Salary: $62,800 / Mid-Career Salary: $109,000
> 6. Electrical Engineering – Starting Salary: $64,300 / Mid-Career Salary: $106,000
> 7. Computer Engineering – Starting Salary: $65,300 / Mid-Career Salary: $106,000
> 8. Computer Science – Starting Salary: $59,800 / Mid-Career Salary: $102,000
> 9. Physics – Starting Salary: $53,100 / Mid-Career Salary: $101,000
> 10. Mechanical Engineering – Starting Salary: $60,900 / Mid-Career Salary: $99,700

And you should also start investing early, and keep investing:

> The good news is there are now more millionaires than ever. But when it comes to retirement, is a million dollars enough?
>
> "If they want to be financially independent, retire at 65 and be able to have an income of $40,000 a year in retirement for 30 years, then it's likely that they're going to need a million dollars to retire to generate that lifestyle," said Bruce Allen, an independent wealth advisor.
>
> Living comfortably on $40,000 a year in retirement, which would require a $1 million nest egg by the time you reach the retirement age, will depend on your expenses, investment returns and health-care costs.
>
> […]Many retirees make it work with less. According to Census data, the median household income for those 65 and older is $34,000, but that's almost half the $66,000 for ages 55 to 64. In order to preserve that preretirement standard of living, financial experts say you'll need more than a million dollars.

And the last piece of advice I would be this – if you are a young person, you should be looking into understanding how to save and invest, and you should be reading unbiased

financial news. It’s not enough to hope that the government is going to bail you out. In all likelihood, the government will be coming to you in 15 years, looking for *you* to bail *them* out of *their* obligations to pay the pensions and health care costs of retirees. You should not take pride in being ignorant of economics and politics. This is *your* problem. Wishing and hoping that things will be OK will not make these challenges go away. Just because your friends, your favorite musicians, your favorite authors, your co-workers, etc. are not talking about these issues to you, it does not mean that these challenges don’t apply to you. They *do* apply to you. And just getting good grades now is NOT a guarantee that you will be OK later. You’re going to be expected to do more with less in a way that your parents never had to do. They are leaving you a worse financial world than they received.

Douglas Groothuis' exhortation to Christians to study apologetics

February 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Groothuis' article lays out 6 "enemies" to the task of apologetics. I'll look at the first 4.

Enemy #1: We don't defend God's existence and character to other people

If we really cared about God like we say we do, then we would care enough to defend his reputation in public. If we really loved our neighbor and believed that they need to follow Jesus in order to be reconciled with God, we would tell them that. But we don't really care enough about God when his reputation is slammed in public. That's what being a good friend to God and to our neighbor requires.

Groothuis writes:

> Too many Christians don't seem to care that Christianity is routinely ridiculed as outdated, irrational, and narrow-minded in our culture. They may complain that this "offends" them (just as everyone else is complaining that one thing or another "offends" them), but they do little to counteract the charges by offering a defense of the Christian world view in a variety of settings. Yet Scripture *commands* all Christians to have a reason for the hope that is within them and to present this with gentleness and respect to unbelievers (1 Peter 3:15).
>
> Our attitude should be that of the Apostle Paul who was "greatly distressed" when he beheld the idolatry of sophisticated Athens. This zeal for the truth of God led him into a fruitful apologetic encounter with the thinkers gathered to debate new ideas (see Acts 17). It should for us as well. Just as God "so loved the world" that he sent Jesus to set us right with God (John 3:16), Jesus' disciples should so love the world that they endeavor to reach the lost by presenting the Gospel and answering objections to the Christian faith (John 17:18).

Enemy #2: We separate Christianity from the reasons and evidence that ground it

Many Christians alter their theology in order to "get along" with other religions that conflict with ours. Instead of wrestling with the competing truth claims of other religions, some Christians just change the nature of our religion so that it is just our personal preference or cultural narrative, instead of being about truth. If the Bible claims that Jesus rose from the dead, we reinterpret that historically testable claim so that it's only true *for us.* If the Bible says that the universe began to exist, we reinterpret that scientifically testable claim so that it is only true *for us*.

Groothuis says:

> For some Christians, faith means belief in the absence of evidence and argument. Worse yet, for some faith means belief *in spite of* evidence to the

> contrary. The more irrational our beliefs, the better–the more "spiritual" they are… When Christians opt for irrationalism, they become just another "religious option," and are classified along with Heaven's Gate, the Flat Earth Society, and other intellectually impaired groups.

Enemy #3: We don't take the time to study the reasons and evidence we have

We don't make time for preparing a defense for our beliefs by leveraging the resources produced by Christian scholars.

Groothuis says:

> Many Christians are not aware of the tremendous intellectual resources available to defend "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3). This is largely because many major churches and parachurch organizations virtually ignore apologetics… Few evangelical sermons ever address the evidence for the existence of God, the resurrection of Jesus, the justice of hell, the supremacy of Christ, or the logical problems with nonChristian worldviews. Christian bestsellers, with rare exceptions, indulge in groundless apocalyptic speculations, exalt Christian celebrities (whose characters often do not fit their notoriety), and revel in how-to methods.

Enemy #4: We would rather be liked by people than be a friend to God

Somehow, we have gotten the idea that the purpose of Christianity is for us to be happy. Being popular and accepted by non-Christians makes us feel happy. Moral judgments are divisive, so we avoid making those. Exclusive salvation is divisive, so we avoid exclusivity. All of this so that our lives will be easier and happier.

Groothuis says:

> In our pluralistic culture, a "live and let live" attitude is the norm, and a capitulation to social pressure haunts evangelicalism and drains its convictions. Too many evangelicals are more concerned about being "nice" and "tolerant" than being biblical or faithful to the exclusive Gospel found in their Bibles. Not enough evangelicals are willing to present and defend their faith in challenging situations, whether at school, at work, or in other public settings. The temptation is to privatize faith, to insulate and isolate it from public life entirely. Yes, we are Christians (in our hearts), but we have difficulty engaging anyone with what we believe and why we believe it. This is nothing less than cowardice and a betrayal of what we say we believe.

You can read the rest of the article here.

The global shift away from marriage and child-bearing

February 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Nicholas Eberstadt explains what's happening to marriage and parenting, in this Wall Street Journal article.

I just want to pull out the parts that seem interesting.

Why is it happening?

> All around the world today, pre-existing family patterns are being upended by a revolutionary new force: the seemingly unstoppable quest for convenience by adults demanding ever-greater autonomy. We can think of this as another triumph of consumer sovereignty, which has at last brought rational choice and elective affinities into a bastion heretofore governed by traditions and duties—many of them onerous. Thanks to this revolution, **it is perhaps easier than ever before to free oneself from the burdens that would otherwise be imposed by spouses, children, relatives or significant others with whom one shares a hearth.**

People are rejecting responsibilities, expectations, and obligations because they are selfish.

When he talks about Europe, he offers an explanation for this:

> Now consider Europe, where the revolution in the family has gained still more ground. European demographers even have an elegant name for the phenomenon: They call it the Second Demographic Transition (the First being the shift from high birth rates and death rates to low ones that began in Europe in the early industrial era and by now encompasses almost every society). In the schema of the Second Demographic Transition, long, stable marriages are out, and divorce or separation are in, along with serial cohabitation and increasingly contingent liaisons. **Not surprisingly, this new environment of perennially conditional, no-fault unions was also seen as ushering in an era of more or less permanent sub-replacement fertility.**
>
> According to Eurostat, the European Union's statistical agency, the probability of marriage before age 50 has been plummeting for European women and men, while the chance of divorce for those who do marry has been soaring. In Belgium—the birth-land of the scholars who initially detected this Second Transition—the likelihood of a first marriage for a woman of reproductive age is now down to 40%, and the likelihood of divorce is over 50%. This means that in Belgium the odds of getting married and staying married are under one in five. A number of other European countries have similar or even lower odds.
>
> Europe has also seen a surge in "child-free" adults—voluntary childlessness. The

> proportion of childless 40-something women is one in five for Sweden and Switzerland, and one in four for Italy. In Berlin and in the German city-state of Hamburg, it's nearly one in three, and rising swiftly. Europe's most rapidly growing family type is the one-person household: the home not only child-free, but partner- and relative-free as well. In Western Europe, nearly one home in three (32%) is already a one-person unit, while in autonomy-prizing Denmark the number exceeds 45%. The rise of the one-person home coincides with population aging. But it is not primarily driven by the graying of European society, at least thus far: Over twice as many Danes under 65 are living alone as those over 65.

"Perenially conditional, no-fault unions". That means that either party can leave at any time, for any reason.

Who is hurt most when marital stability declines?

Kids:

> Our world-wide flight from family constitutes a significant international victory for self-actualization over self-sacrifice, and might even be said to mark a new chapter in humanity's conscious pursuit of happiness. But these voluntary changes also have unintended consequences. The deleterious impact on the hardly inconsequential numbers of children disadvantaged by the flight from the family is already plain enough. So too the damaging role of divorce and out-of-wedlock childbearing in exacerbating income disparities and wealth gaps—for society as a whole, but especially for children. Yes, children are resilient and all that. But the flight from family most assuredly comes at the expense of the vulnerable young.

And the elderly:

> That same flight also has unforgiving implications for the vulnerable old. With America's baby boomers reaching retirement, and a world-wide "gray wave" around the corner, we are about to learn the meaning of those implications firsthand.
>
> In the decades ahead, ever more care and support for seniors will be required, especially for the growing contingent among the elderly who will be victims of dementia, or are childless and socially isolated. Remember, a longevity revolution is also under way. Yet by some cruel cosmic irony, family structures and family members will be less capable, and perhaps also less willing, to provide that care and support than ever before.

I did a quick search for pro-marriage policies and came across an article from USA Today. The author wanted to bash a legislator's pro-marriage ideas, and to do that she found a single mother to quote who disagrees with pro-marriage policies.

Look:

> Indianapolis mother Amanda Louden, 46, has seen parenthood from both married

> and unmarried standpoints.
>
> She had three sons with her former husband, deciding to marry to be traditional about it and for the convenience of everyone having the same last name. Louden later divorced her husband and had another son with her then-boyfriend.
>
> And she says she doesn't think marriage made that much of a difference in raising her children.
>
> "It's really an oversimplification to say that single parenting is bad," Louden said. "Intact families where both parents are involved in their children's lives, that's good. I'm in favor of that. But let's not demonize families that don't have that. It's demonizing people who are doing whatever they can."
>
> The father of her youngest son didn't seem ready or interested in a live-in family role, she said. He became less involved and eventually stopped visiting.
>
> Louden is now raising four sons on her own as a single mother. She disagrees that children with married parents are somehow automatically "better" than hers.

If we are serious about marriage, we are going to have to change attitudes like that. We have to get used to responding to people who say that marriage doesn't matter with real, peer-reviewed evidence. Broken families arise when people think that there are no best practices that should affect their decision making beyond "follow your heart". Following your heart get *no disapproval* at all from the culture. Young people often don't have friends who will challenge them when they are about to make a bad decision. Young people will often seek out peers who agree with them, and avoid parents and other responsible adults who disagree. Peer-approval – that's how disasters happen. The only way to stop people from messing up their lives is to tell them before they mess up their lives – and that means breaking through "follow your heart" as gently and effectively as possible.

One reason why so many marriages break up is recreational premarital sex.

CNS News explains:

> The seeds of this sexual maturity are sown in early childhood, when a child's married parents model faithful love of each other, guide him or her through modesty to a criteria of selecting a spouse and courting the right young man or woman, eventually leading to marriage and a family of their own. Without this guidance—without married parents who have modeled a healthy, monogamous relationship since the child's birth—children generally get lost in pre-marital sex, leading to multiple sexual partners before marriage, in turn leading most into cohabitation and later divorce or permanent single parenthood. The culture has lost its sense of sexual morality.
>
> […][M]ost people do want marriage for themselves and for society; unfortunately, most have severed the connection between premarital chastity and later marriage stability, not knowing that the more sexual partners before marriage

> the greater the likelihood of divorce. **Ninety-five percent of those whose only sexual partner ever is their spouse are still in their first marriage after five years. This figure drops to 62 percent for women who had one sexual partner other than their husband (before they married), and drops down further to 50 percent for those who had two such sexual partners before marrying their husband.**
>
> Therefore, if the nation wants stable marriage, we first must reinvest in shepherding youth to be chaste. This has become more and more difficult for parents as the sexual principles of radical feminism and sexual autonomy pervades our courts, schools, colleges and media, and sadly, even to some extent in our churches.

Yes, *in our churches*.

But there's more to restoring marriage than just confrontation at the one-on-one level. From a policy point of view, we should be voting for policies that promote marriage and child-bearing within marriage. I think we should be giving rewards to married couples who stay together and have children, not to people who want to try any other crazy arrangement that isn't as good for kids. Not every association of people is as stable and healthy as marriage, and the government shouldn't be treating these alternatives as we treat the real thing.

You can look over a list of pro-marriage policy ideas here.

New study: homeschooled children less likely to leave their faith

February 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lindsay, a super-mom who homeschools her kids with her super-husband Doug, sent me this article from Christian News.

Quick blurb:

> The recently-released findings from an in-depth study of nearly 10,000 young adults show that Millennials who were homeschooled are less likely to leave the faith than individuals who attended private or public schools.
>
> Late last month, Generations with Vision and the National Home Education Research Institute published the results of their Gen2 Survey. The study explores the correlations between different educational methods and the spiritual decisions of Millennials who were raised in the church.
>
> "The purpose of the study is to examine these adults who were churched growing up and to understand the key influences which either encouraged or deterred them from believing and practicing the faith of their parents," said the survey's director and lead researcher, Dr. Brian Ray.
>
> Using a sample size of 9,369 18-to 38-year-olds who were churched while growing up, the Gen2 Survey collected data on Millennials' educational backgrounds, worldviews, and religious beliefs. The study found that individuals who were homeschooled, attended church regularly, and had good relationships with their parents were most likely to remain involved in the Christian faith.

> "Having a strong relationship with the child's mother and father, attending church as a child, and years homeschooled were all clearly positively associated with Millennials' basic Christian orthodoxy, broader biblical beliefs, Christian behaviors (e.g., attending church, keeping sex in marriage, prayer, not using pornography), satisfaction in life, civic and community involvement, and having beliefs similar to one's parents," Ray stated.
>
> 87% of study participants who were homeschooled said they have strong Christian beliefs. Conversely, Millennials who were enrolled in public schools or private Christian schools were more likely to walk away from the faith later in life.
>
> "Number of years in Christian school and number of years in public school were negatively associated with most of the adult beliefs and behaviors just mentioned," Ray explained.
>
> Statistically, homeschooled young adults were six times as likely to be believers and seven times as likely to be stronger in their Christian beliefs as Millennials attending private schools. Homeschooled Millennials were also two times as likely to be stronger in Christian beliefs as those who attended Christian schools or

> public schools.

I find that when I court Christian women, they pretty much have the idea that kids are like skydiving, ziplining or surfing. They are fun, and if you make a plan to make them achieve anything, then that is bad because it’s less fun. Sometimes they try to dress it up in emotional or religious language when they are explaining it to others, but under cross-examination, it really turns out to be “marriage and parenting are better when we do whatever I feel like moment by moment”. If the man does not step up during the courtship with the research and get agreement on issues like homeschooling, then he needs to shut it down and move on. Women who are guided by their feelings instead of studies in decisions about how to parent are not safe to marry. Either they accept the the best practices from research, or they are out of the running.

So if a couple determines that they are going to have no strict approach to how to parent the kids and no goals and no information about what works, then they should not be surprised their children fall away from the faith. Either you are aware of who is teaching your kids, and what they are teaching them, or you are not. It is no coincidence that the secular left pushes for earlier and earlier starts to schooling and more and more free college. They know that the more they get the kids away from their parents and in with peers of the same age and secular leftist professors and teaches, the more those kids are likely to adopt their values – not the values of their parents.

Study: creating jobs in poor countries doesn't reduce terrorism

February 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He's better at golf than foreign policy

Remember last week when the Obama administration told us that terrorism is caused by poverty and joblessness?

Let's take a look at the research and see if this is true.

Here's the working paper, authored by a Harvard University scholar from the John F. Kennedy School of Government.

And here's the abstract:

> This article provides an empirical investigation of the determinants of terrorism at the country level. In contrast with the previous literature on this subject, which focuses on transnational terrorism only, I use a new measure of terrorism that encompasses both domestic and transnational terrorism. **In line with the results of some recent studies, this article shows that terrorist risk is not significantly higher for poorer countries, once the effects of other country-specific characteristics such as the level of political freedom are taken into account.** Political freedom is shown to explain terrorism, but it does so in a non-monotonic way: countries in some intermediate range of political freedom are shown to be more prone to terrorism than countries with high levels of political freedom or countries with highly authoritarian regimes. This result suggests that, as experienced recently in Iraq and previously in Spain and Russia,

> transitions from an authoritarian regime to a democracy may be accompanied by temporary increases in terrorism. Finally, the results suggest that geographic factors are important to sustain terrorist activities.

More from the body:

> However, recent empirical studies have challenged the view that poverty creates terrorism. Using U.S. State Department data on transnational terrorist attacks, Krueger and Laitin (2003) and Piazza (2004) find no evidence suggesting that poverty may generate terrorism. In particular, the results in Krueger and Laitin (2003) suggest that among countries with similar levels of civil liberties, poor countries do not generate more terrorism than rich countries. Conversely, among countries with similar levels of civil liberties, richer countries seem to be preferred targets for transnational terrorist attacks.

I know this is shocking – this the same administration that told us that insuring more people for more stuff would lower health care premiums… and that anyone who though that Russia was a threat was crazy… and that pulling out of Iraq would stabilize the region… could they be wrong about this Jobs for Terrorists program, too? The study seems to say they are wrong again.

But wait, there's more. We actually know about some terrorists from their terrorist attacks, and we can see if they were as poor and uneducated as the Obama administration tells us they are.

This article is from The Stream.

It says:

> According to scholar Scott Atran, a research director in Paris who is part of a NATO group studying suicide terrorism, there is no link between poverty and terrorism. Forensic psychiatrist and former foreign service officer Marc Sageman studied 172 participants in jihad for his book, *Understanding Terror Networks,* and came to the same conclusion. Princeton economist Claude Berrebi found that members of Palestinian terrorist organizations were frequently better educated and better off economically than the Palestinian Arab population as a whole.
>
> Islamic terrorists tend to come from cosmopolitan backgrounds, are fluent in multiple languages and have advanced computer skills. Their privileged status enables them to accomplish such horrific acts undercover, often without being detected.
>
> Osama bin Laden was the son of a billionaire construction magnate, who had close ties to the Saudi royal family. The younger bin Laden inherited $25–30 million of his family's wealth. He studied economics and business administration at King Abdulaziz University.
>
> Bin Laden's top deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who replaced him as the leader of al

> Qaeda, came from wealthy Egyptian parents. His father was a surgeon and medical professor, and his mother came from a politically active, financially successful clan. Al-Zawahiri also became a surgeon, even obtaining a master's degree in surgery.
>
> The leader of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Mohammad Atta, studied architecture in Cairo, Egypt, then entered an urban planning graduate program at the Technical University of Hamburg-Harburg in Germany. His father was a lawyer and his mother came from a wealthy farming and trading family.
>
> The "underwear bomber," Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, is the son of a wealthy Nigerian banker and businessman. His father was the chairman of First Bank of Nigeria and has been described by the UK paper*The Times* as "one of the richest men in Africa." Umar studied at several universities, including University College London, where he studied Engineering and Business Finance and earned a degree in mechanical engineering.
>
> One of the 2005 London bombers left an estate valued at over $150,000. Dawood Ibrahim, who coordinated the 1993 Mumbai bombings, is worth somewhere between $6 and $20 billion. Ibrahim despised his father's successful banking profession, condemning it as "immoral" and "un-Islamic" for charging interest, and urged him to quit.

Now, my understanding is that when we elect politicians to run the economy, foreign affairs, etc. that we are picking people who understand the issues – not merely people who give speeches that sound nice. If I am hiring someone to fix my car, I don't want to hear his pet theory about how gremlins are causing the leak. I want people who can see the world clearly, apart from any political correctness or anti-American bias, so that the problems get solved. I want the problems solved effectively and cheaply – that's what I am used to in the private sector, where competence matters. It seems to me that the next time we have an election, we ought to elect someone who can do the work – not someone who just talks a lot of counter-factual nonsense.

New study: federal control of land hurts job growth in oil and gas industry

February 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Signal reports on a new study from the Heritage Foundation.

They write:

> Current government regulations imposed by the Bureau of Land Management are harming energy production and holding back the U.S. economy, a new study reveals.
>
> "While federally owned lands are also full of energy potential, a bureaucratic regulatory regime has mismanaged land use for decades," write The Heritage Foundation's Katie Tubb and Nicolas Loris.
>
> The report focuses on the Federal Lands Freedom Act, introduced by Rep. Diane Black, R-Tenn., and Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla. It is designed to empower states to regain control of their lands from the federal government in order to pursue their own energy goals. That is a challenge in an oil-rich state like Colorado.
>
> "We need to streamline the process as there are very real consequences to poor [or nonexistent] management," Tubb, a Heritage research associate, told The Daily Signal.
>
> "Empowering the states is the best solution. The people who benefit have a say and can share in the benefits. If there are consequences, they can address them locally with state and local governments that are much more responsive to elections and budgets than the federal government."
>
> Emphasizing the need to streamline the process, Tubb pointed to the findings in the new report.
>
> "The Bureau of Land Management estimates that it took an average of 227 days simply to complete a drill application," Tubb said.
>
> That's more than the average of 154 days in 2005 and more than seven times the state average of 30 days, according to the report.
>
> The report blames this increase in the application process on the drop in drilling on federal lands.
>
> "Since 2009," Tubb and Loris write, "oil production on federal lands has fallen by nine percent, even as production on state and private lands has increased by 61 percent over the same period."
>
> Despite almost "43 percent of crude oil coming from federal lands," government-owned lands have seen a 13-point drop in oil production, from 36 percent to 23 percent.

So, if we were interested in more job creation (and lower gas prices) then what we would

be doing is letting oil and gas companies hire more people and extract more oil. Streamlining the process for new new drilling permits would help a lot. Right now, we still have a very low level of labor force participation. If we want companies to hire more people, we need to make it easier for them to do it. That means a less anti-business climate.

Brian Godawa: what “The Imitation Game” tells us about homosexuality

February 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I usually only go to see about one movie in the theaters per year, because I don’t share the same worldview as most people in Hollywood, and I share Plato’s concern about the power of drama to move me to accept their worldview through my emotions. Art is wonderful when it tells the truth, but most of what comes out of Hollywood doesn’t tell the truth.

This related blog post is from Brian Godawa’s blog. I thought it was very interesting.

He writes:

> The story of Alan Turing, the brilliant yet troubled mathematician who led the cryptographic team that defeated the Nazi Enigma code in WWII and created the world’s first computer.
>
> Wow, this Oscar season offers a slew of amazing performances. This one by Benedict Cumberbatch as Turing is a riveting and pathos filled drama that views like a gay version of the Oscar winning *A Beautiful Mind*.
>
> This movie is a riveting, solid, well-told story. Brilliant in its machinations and exciting in its imagination. It explores the nuance of moral decisions in war, the complexity of social classes and issues, the alienation of mental illness, and the pain and irony of genius.
>
> Who could have thought that there could be such exciting suspense, such heart-stirring pity, and such powerful moments of cheerful dramatic victories in a movie about a group of weird nerds penciling out mathematics and building a computer? But *The Imitation Game* is all that.
>
> And it’s a brilliant artistic masterpiece for the homosexual agenda.

How so?

> *The Imitation Game* is a similar timely metaphor. It tells the story of an oddball man who was rejected by the very society that he saved because of his genius. A tragedy of greatness. It is about breaking down our personal and social prejudices by showing that the very kind of people we often reject are the ones who do great things, such as, oh, save the world. History definitely bears out the repeated theme of the movie, “Sometimes, it’s the very people that no one imagines anything of that do the things no one can imagine.” Society too often rejects the misfits, who may offer the most to bring balance to the world. And who of us doesn’t at some time in our lives feel like such misfits and oddballs who feel out of place?
>
> […]**Storytelling does not make logical arguments so much as emotional**

> **arguments. It *incarnates* logic or worldviews which touches us existentially as storied human beings. Story makes its most powerful connections emotionally through such rhetorical techniques as *montage*. The concept is that by placing two or more disparate images or storylines next to each other, viewers make emotional connections between those things, whether or not they are logically connected.**
>
> […][The movie] shows us Alan's alleged autistic Asperger's type social awkwardness. Well, who among us would not feel sorry for such innocent suffering? The poor guy can't help it, and he's really quite sweet underneath that rudeness and lack of emotion and sensitivity. Heck, understanding people is like cracking a code for him. And of course, it is precisely that autism that blesses him with the mathematical brilliance to break the Enigma code of the Germans that ended the war early and saved millions of lives. But that is not all. That autism that we would see as "abnormal" resulted in figuring out the world's first computer, one of mankind's greatest achievements.
>
> So, you can see the litany of injustices that are laid out, with which the viewers could not disagree.
>
> […]Americans are suckers for the underdog. If you want to engender sympathy for a character, make them suffer persecution, unfairness, injustice. In other words, make them a victim.
>
> […]The thematic cleverness of *The Imitation Game* lies in its montage connection of Turing's homosexuality with his genius and with all these other civil rights issues with which we have all come to agree upon. The movie creates a touching tragic homosexual love story from Turing's past to show his deep pain of loss. And then it lays it on heavy with a bookend story of Turing's tragic arrest and conviction of his homosexual acts in a time and place in British history where it was illegal. Who wouldn't feel sorry for the suffering of chemical castration that he had to endure as a legal penalty? Again, more victimization, more emotional sympathy.
>
> It will never occur to many viewers that there is no rational justification for claiming sexual behavior as an innate civil right, that there is no logical or rational connection between Turing's homosexuality and his genius, his saving the world, or other civil rights protections. There doesn't have to be. An *emotional* connection was made through montage and analogy, and that is just as powerful on the viewer's psyche. Emotionally, the viewer *feels* the connection of Turing's homosexual identity with greatness and with saving the world. The irrational, yet emotional conclusion is that to be against homosexuality is to be against greatness and saving the world.

When I talk about movies, video games and other forms of entertainment with Christians, I am often told that I am analyzing too much and I need to enjoy art for art's sake. But my mind works more like Godawa's does. I am always disregarding the obvious stuff that is

happening on the screen, and thinking about what the artist is trying to get me to believe. If it’s good stuff, like in the BBC production of “North and South”, then after a few minutes of watching and thinking, I lower my guard and enjoy. But if it’s bad stuff, then the guard stays up, and it’s no fun for me at all. I don’t play video games where there is a heavy-handed anti-conservative or anti-Christian message, either. Certainly I am not going to pay to be told by Hollywood leftists that my Christian / conservative views are wrong, when all they use to persuade me are emotional tricks.

Something to think about when you decide where to spend your money.

Conservative MP's bill to ban sex-selection abortions is defeated

February 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Conservative MP Fiona Bruce

The leftist BBC reports.

Excerpt:

> MPs have defeated a cross-party bid to clarify in law that abortion on the grounds of gender alone is illegal in the UK.
>
> Conservative MP Fiona Bruce, who spearheaded the move, said the law was being "interpreted in different ways".
>
> But her proposal was defeated by 292 to 201. A review of the extent of sex selective abortion was agreed to.
>
> […]Her amendment would not have changed the law, but sought to update 1967 legislation that was drafted before it was possible to identify the sex of a foetus.
>
> […]Making the case for the change, the Congleton MP said her amendment would "clarify beyond doubt in statute that sex selective abortion is illegal in UK law".

Now you might think that the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats would be against killing unborn girls, just because they are the "wrong" sex.

But you'd be wrong. The Shadow Secretary Yvette Cooper wrote to all the Labour MPs urging them to vote against the bill.

Life News says:

> "Mrs Bruce has provoked furious opposition from the most radical elements in the pro-abortion lobby, who have now been joined by pro-abortion MPs like Yvette Cooper, Jenny Willott and Sarah Newton in attempts to block the condemnation of aborting baby girls," he said.
>
> "Most pro-abortion MPs were initially content to ignore this move because they know it will not change the law. However, the mere restatement of the law has

> split the ranks of the pro-abortion lobby, dividing feminists who recognise that it is used predominantly to abort girls, from feminists who regard the right to demand an abortion for any reason or no reason as the touchstone of feminist orthodoxy," Tully explained. "The more extreme lobby regard the unborn child as a non-entity and won't face the fact that each baby is either a boy or a girl. Aborting baby girls demeans all women, just as aborting babies because of their disability or racial characteristics demeans others like them. The truth is that every abortion demeans all of us."
>
> He concluded: "Ms Cooper's statement undermines claims that Labour MPs are free to vote according to conscience on this issue. As shadow Home Office Secretary, she has intervened not simply to tell Labour MPs to support abortion, but to support one of the most blatant abuses of the law."

Cooper is a high-ranking Labour MP. Jenny Willott is a Liberal Democrat MP. Sarah Newton is a Conservative MP.

In the UK, the crime is not even being prosecuted.

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Britain's top law officer is to come under pressure in the House of Commons this week to say why the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to prosecute over the gender selection abortion scandal.
>
> Dominic Grieve, the attorney general, will face questions from Tory MPs who want the Government to tighten up the 1967 Abortion Act in the wake of the scandal.

> The comments come as Britain's most senior prosecutor prepares to release a paper justifying his decision not to prosecute two doctors over an abortion scandal.

So, there was definitely a need for the law, since no one was being prosecuted for breaking it. And the measure strengthening the language was defeated – which tells me that they like things just the way they are now.

Paul Copan explains some responses to postmodernism

February 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Four articles from Paul Copan over at the UK site "BeThinking". Each article responds to a different slogan that you might hear if you're dealing with non-Christians on the street.

"That's just your interpretation!"

Some of his possible responses:

- Gently ask, 'Do you mean that your interpretation should be preferred over mine? If so, I'd like to know why you have chosen your interpretation over mine. You must have a good reason.'
- Remind your friend that you are willing to give reasons for your position and that you are not simply taking a particular viewpoint arbitrarily.
- Try to discern if people toss out this slogan because they don't like your interpretation. Remind them that there are many truths we have to accept even if we don't like them.
- 'There are no facts, only interpretations' is a statement that is presented as a fact. If it is just an interpretation, then there is no reason to take it seriously.

More responses are here.

"You Christians are intolerant!"

Some of his possible responses:

- If you say that the Christian view is bad because it is exclusive, then you are also at that exact moment doing the very thing that you are saying is bad. You have to be exclusive to say that something is bad, since you exclude it from being good by calling it bad.
- There is a difference, a clear difference between tolerance and truth. They are often confused. We should hold to what we believe with integrity but also support the rights of others to disagree with our viewpoint.
- Sincerely believing something doesn't make it true. You can be sincere, but sincerely wrong. If I get onto a plane and sincerely believe that it won't crash then it does, then my sincerity is quite hopeless. It won't change the facts. Our beliefs, regardless of how deeply they are held, have no effect on reality.

More responses are here.

"That's true for you, but not for me!"

Some of his possible responses:

- If my belief is only true for *me*, then why isn't your belief only true for you? Aren't

you saying you want me to believe the same thing you do?
- You say that no belief is true for everyone, but you want everyone to believe what you do.
- You're making universal claims that relativism is *true* and absolutism is *false*. You can't in the same breath say, 'Nothing is universally true' *and* 'My view is universally true.' Relativism falsifies itself. It claims there is *one* position that is true – *relativism!*

More responses are here.

"If you were born in India, you'd be a Hindu!"

Some of his possible responses:

- Just because there are many different religious answers and systems doesn't automatically mean pluralism is correct.
- If we are culturally conditioned regarding our religious beliefs, then why should the religious pluralist think his view is *less* arbitrary or conditioned than the exclusivist's?
- If the Christian needs to justify Christianity's claims, the pluralist's views need just as much substantiation.

More responses are here.

And a bonus: "How do you know you're not wrong?".

Overview of the fine-tuning argument and some objections to it

February 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are four posts in the series, so far. I think Allen might be done, so I'm going to link to all four and snip something I like from each one.

The first post is on whether the fine-tuning is real, and whether a multiverse explains the fine-tuning so that there is no need for a cosmic Designer.

I just have to choose this quote from the atheist Stephen Hawking on the fine-tuning:

> The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life. For example, if the electric charge of the electron had been only slightly different, stars would have been unable to burn hydrogen and helium, or else they would not have exploded. It seems clear that there are relatively few ranges of values for the numbers [i.e. the constants of nature] that would allow for development of any form of intelligent life.

And from Luke Barnes, who I've mentioned before on this blog:

> In my years of researching this topic, I'm amazed at how few scientists who have studied the fine-tuning details disagree with this core claim that the subset of life-permitting physics is a tiny fraction among possibilities. Since Luke Barnes is a top researcher on this topic, consider his input on the level of acceptance of the fine-tuning claim: *"I've published a review of the scientific literature, 200+ papers, and I can only think of a handful that oppose this conclusion, and piles and piles that support it.*[3]*"*

And on the multiverse as a way to escape the fine-tuning:

> The key issue though is that for the multiverse to be an adequate explanation for the fine-tuning it requires the conjunction of several hypotheses for which we lack *any* empirical evidence:
>
> 1. A universe-generating mechanism that generates a plethora of universes
> 2. That this mechanism doesn't itself require fine-tuning
> 3. The many-worlds interpretation of quantum physics
> 4. The ability to *widely* vary constants in those universes. If you think that it's a foregone conclusion that String Theory/M-Theory[8] will come to the rescue in this area, you should watch this video clip by Oxford physicist Roger Penrose where he exclaims that "it's not even a theory … it's a collection of hopes".
>
> Occam's razor therefore does seem to favor design over the multiverse. When

> one accounts for the extensive problems in affirming premise 2 and how these multiverse theories make predictions incompatible with our universe, the hypothesis that God designed the physics of the universe to bring about life is more plausible.

Here's the second post, where he explains the fine-tuning argument philosophically, and gives an example of one of the constants that has to be fine-tuned in order to support complex, embodied intelligence of any kind.

The cosmological constant:

> The inference to design will be more easily recognized if we shed some light as to the specialness of the required values. Consider the size of the bull's eye and wall based on just 1 parameter – the cosmological constant. There is a natural range for possible values for this constant because there are known contributions that are 10^{120}times larger than the overall net value. (There is a near perfect but inexact cancellation of contributions accurate to 120 decimal places). Let's use the most conservative numbers in the physics literature that indicate a fine-tuning to 1 part in 10^{53}. If the cosmological constant, which governs the expansion rate of the universe, had been larger than its current value by this tiny fraction, then the universe would have expanded so fast that no stars or planets would have formed and therefore no life. If the value were smaller by this amount then the universe would have rapidly collapsed before the universe cooled sufficiently to allow for stable information storage which is required by any self-replicating system such as life.

In the third post, he responds to objections to the fine-tuning argument. One objection you hear from atheists who don't understand the science is that any selection of constants and quantities is as likely as any other, so our life-permitting set is just random. Now, first off, there are only 10 to the 80 atoms in the visible universe, so if the cosmological constant is fine-tuned to 1 in 10 to the 120, it's not rational to say "it just happened randomly".

But here is Allen's response:

> However, the assumption that any set of constants is just as likely as any other is the very thing that we want to know. Starting off with that as an *assumption* begs the question against design. As Luke Barnes articulates in this excellent podcast dealing with responses to the fine-tuning claim, suppose we're playing poker and every time I deal I get a royal flush. If this continues to happen, you become increasingly convinced that I'm likely to be cheating. If I responded to an accusation of cheating by just saying "well any set of 5 cards is just as likely as any other so you can't accuse me of cheating" you would be rational to reject this explanation. The question is not "how likely is any set of 5 cards?" but rather "how likely is it I'm cheating if I just dealt myself 10 straight royal flushes?" This question accounts for the possibility that I'm cheating which

> would almost certainly be true in this scenario. So the right fine-question is "given the fine-tuning evidence, how likely is it that the constants were set at random?" The values for physical constants conform to a very particular pattern – that which supports life. The fact that we have so many finely-tuned constants makes it unlikely that they were all set at random (at least in the single universe scenario and I've already shown some of the problems/challenges in multiverse explanations.)

Every 5-card hand that you draw is equally unlikely, but the royal flush is the highest hand in the game and *always wins.* Every hand you draw is unlikely, but whatever you draw is overwhelmingly likely to not be a royal flush.

Finally, the fourth post deals with the objection that the constants and quantities could not have been other than they are.

He quotes physicist John Barrow giving 5 reasons why the constants can vary, and then this:

> Even if the constants and laws of physics couldn't vary, there is even more reason to think that there were many physically possible sets of initial conditions. Paul Davies states this emphatically:
>
> "Even if the laws of physics were unique, it doesn't follow that the physical universe itself is unique…the laws of physics must be augmented by cosmic initial conditions…there is nothing in present ideas about 'laws of initial conditions' remotely to suggest that their consistency with the laws of physics would imply uniqueness. Far from it…it seems, then, that the physical universe does not have to be the way it is: it could have been otherwise.[4]"
>
> John A. Wheeler agrees: "Never has physics come up with a way to tell with what initial conditions the universe was started off. On nothing is physics clearer than what is not physics."

The constants and quantities are not determined by physics. They were *selected* by whoever created nature in the first place.

So that's the series. I noticed that he kept linking to this Common Sense Atheism podcast featuring famous cosmologist Luke Barnes. I listened to it and wrote a summary of it in this post.

Common Core and amnesty supporter Jeb Bush adds gay activist to staff

February 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from SteveDeace.com.

He writes:

> Jeb Bush may be destroying any hope of becoming the GOP standbearer in 2016, but he's well on his way to throwing one hell of a gay pride parade.
>
> First he hired David Kochel, an aggressive advocate of homosexual marriage and a former Romney hack, as one of his top campaign advisors.
>
> And now Tim Miller, the openly gay executive director of America Rising PAC, has been hired has the Bush campaign's communications director.
>
> Bush has good company, though, when it comes to letting the fox into the hen house on marriage politics. Miller previously served as spokesman at the Republican National Committee and for the presidential campaigns of John Huntsman and John McCain.
>
> Miller, 33, is not shy about promoting his gay lifestyle on social media, and "loves to mock conservatives" who defend marriage being between one man and one woman, according to a website that promotes homosexuality.

I checked on the hires to make sure, and yes, it's true (Jim Miller, David Kochel). It makes me think that Bush is a squish on defending marriage, and the religious liberty of conscientious objectors to the gay agenda. This is a sure sign that Jeb Bush would evolve to support gay marriage if elected President. He's not reliable on social issues.

Jeb Bush is also in favor of federal control of education policy ("Common Core"):

> No Republican is tied to Common Core in the way Jeb Bush is. The governor, through his leadership of the non-profit Foundation for Excellence in Education, played a notable role in the creation and promotion of the standards and he has stood by them ever since. At an education reform conference in November, his keynote address included a firm defense of the Core, which he said ought to represent "the new minimum" for academic standards in the U.S.
>
> […]An October Gallup poll found that nearly 60 percent of Republican parents oppose the standards while under 20 percent support them, and the numbers have been steadily getting worse. With Bush beating out every other potential primary opponent except Mitt Romney in recent primary polls, the pressure to constantly attack him is irresistible.

I think that we should abolish the Department of Education, or at least give parents more choice.

Jeb Bush is also in favor of amnesty and opposed to border security:

> Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, one of the Republican Party's talked-about candidates for president, commented in an April 2013 video: Amnesty for some seems a sound idea. And now, some in the conservative camp are expressing shock.
>
> His remarks, at a conference with the Hispanic Leadership Network and interview with Univision, included an expressed view that DREAMers — the children of parents who came to the country illegally — should have an "accelerated path" to citizenship and that it was "ridiculous" to think otherwise, CNN reported.
>
> "I've never felt like the sins of the parents should be ascribed to the children, you know," Mr. Bush said on the 2013 video. "If your children always have to pay the price for adults' decisions they make — how fair is that? For people who have no country to go back to — which are many of the DREAMers — it's ridiculous to think that there shouldn't be some accelerated path to citizenship."
>
> He also commented that "it's not possible in a free country to completely control the border without us losing our freedoms and liberties," CNN said.

I think we should secure the border and not give illegal immigrants a path to citizenship unless they come in through legal immigration. I do favor work permits, but that's not Bush's position. He favors amnesty.

He's certainly not my candidate in the 2016 GOP primary. Way too far to the left for me.

The latest polls

Here are the latest polls from Real Clear Politics:

Tuesday, February 24

Race	Poll	Results	Spread
2016 Republican Presidential Nomination	PPP (D)	Bush 17, Walker 25, Huckabee 10, Carson 18, Paul 4, Christie 5, Rubio 3, Cruz 5, Perry 3, Jindal , Santorum , Kasich	Walker +7

Monday, February 23

Race	Poll	Results	Spread
Texas Republican Presidential Primary	UT/Texas Tribune	Cruz 20, Walker 19, Bush 9, Carson 9, Perry 8, Huckabee 5, Paul 4, Rubio 4, Christie 2, Jindal 1, Kasich 1, Santorum 1	Cruz +1

Thursday, February 19

Race	Poll	Results	Spread
California Republican Presidential Primary	Field	Walker 18, Bush 16, Paul 10, Carson 8, Rubio 7, Huckabee 5, Cruz 5, Perry 4, Christie 3, Jindal 1	Walker +2
South Carolina Republican Presidential Primary	PPP (D)	Bush 19, Walker 18, Graham 13, Carson 13, Huckabee 12, Christie 7, Paul 5, Rubio , Perry 3, Cruz 3, Santorum	Bush +1

Polls from Real Clear Politics

Still early on, but looking good for Scott Walker. Right now, I like Walker, Jindal and Perry in that order. Cruz is good but lacks the accomplishments I am looking for in a candidate.

As senator, Hillary Clinton paid women 72 cents for every dollar she paid men

February 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

I already knew that Hillary Clinton was pro-gay-marriage, and radically pro-abortion, but it turns out that she is a hypocrite on women's issues, as well.

The Washington Times reports:

> During her time as senator of New York, Hillary Rodham Clinton paid her female staffers 72 cents for every dollar she paid men, according to a new Washington Free Beacon report.
>
> From 2002 to 2008, the median annual salary for Mrs. Clinton's female staffers was $15,708.38 less than what was paid to men, the report said. Women earned a slightly higher median salary than men in 2005, coming in at $1.04. But in 2006, they earned 65 cents for each dollar men earned, and in 2008, they earned only 63 cents on the dollar, The Free Beacon reported.
>
> […]Mrs. Clinton has spoken against wage inequality in the past. In April, she ironically tweeted that "20 years ago, women made 72 cents on the dollar to men. Today it's still just 77 cents. More work to do. #EqualPay #NoCeilings."

Meanwhile, she is making "equal pay for women" her top priority.

CBS News reports:

> Hillary Clinton lamented the number of women in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math at a Silicon Valley women's conference on Tuesday, and called for more action to close the wage gap.
>
> […]In advocating for closing the pay gap, Clinton also endorsed the impassioned plea for wage equality made by Patricia Arquette in her Oscars acceptance speech for Best Supporting Actress.

> “Up and down the ladder many women are paid less for the same work, which is why we all cheered at Patricia Arquette’s speech at the Oscars — because she’s right, it’s time to have wage equality once and for all,” Clinton said.

All right, let’s take a look at the facts on the so-called “pay gap” between men and women.

The facts

This article is from the very left-wing Slate, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The official Bureau of Labor Department statistics show that the median earnings of full-time female workers is 77 percent of the median earnings of full-time male workers. But that is very different than “77 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men.” The latter gives the impression that a man and a woman standing next to each other doing the same job for the same number of hours get paid different salaries. That’s not at all the case. “Full time” officially means 35 hours, but men work more hours than women. That’s the first problem: We could be comparing men working 40 hours to women working 35.

> How to get a more accurate measure? First, instead of comparing annual wages, start by comparing average weekly wages. This is considered a slightly more accurate measure because it eliminates variables like time off during the year or annual bonuses (and yes, men get higher bonuses, but let’s shelve that for a moment in our quest for a pure wage gap number). By this measure, women earn 81 percent of what men earn, although it varies widely by race. African-American women, for example, earn 94 percent of what African-American men earn in a typical week. Then, when you restrict the comparison to men and women working 40 hours a week, the gap narrows to 87 percent.

> But we’re still not close to measuring women “doing the same work as men.” For that, we’d have to adjust for many other factors that go into determining salary. Economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn did that in a recent paper, “The Gender Pay Gap.”.”They first accounted for education and experience. That didn’t shift the gap very much, because women generally have at least as much and usually more education than men, and since the 1980s they have been gaining the experience. The fact that men are more likely to be in unions and have their salaries protected accounts for about 4 percent of the gap. The big differences are in occupation and industry. Women congregate in different professions than men do, and the largely male professions tend to be higher-paying. If you account for those differences, and then compare a woman and a man doing the same job, the pay gap narrows to 91 percent. So, you could accurately say in that Obama ad that, “women get paid 91 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men.”

I believe that the remainder of the gap can be accounted for by looking at other *voluntary* factors that differentiate men and women.

The Heritage Foundation says that a recent study puts the number at 95 cents per dollar.

Excerpt:

> Women are more likely than men to work in industries with more flexible schedules. Women are also more likely to spend time outside the labor force to care for children. These choices have benefits, but they also reduce pay—for both men and women. When economists control for such factors, they find the gender gap largely disappears.
>
> A 2009 study commissioned by the Department of Labor found that after controlling for occupation, experience, and other choices, women earn 95 percent as much as men do. In 2005, June O'Neil, the former director of the Congressional Budget Office, found that "There is no gender gap in wages among men and women with similar family roles." Different choices—not discrimination—account for different employment and wage outcomes.

A popular article by Carrie Lukas in the Wall Street Journal agrees.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Labor's Time Use survey shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. One would expect that someone who works 9% more would also earn more. This one fact alone accounts for more than a third of the wage gap.
>
> […]Recent studies have shown that the wage gap shrinks—or even reverses—when relevant factors are taken into account and comparisons are made between men and women in similar circumstances. In a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30, the research firm Reach Advisors found that women earned an average of 8% more than their male counterparts. Given that women are outpacing men in educational attainment, and that our economy is increasingly geared toward knowledge-based jobs, it makes sense that women's earnings are going up compared to men's.

When women make different choices about education and labor that are more like what men choose, they earn just as much or more than men.

What does social science tell us about children raised by gay couples?

February 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Public Discourse has a post about a new book that summarizes what we know so far. Here is the introduction:

> An important new collection of peer-reviewed scholarly papers entitled *No Differences? How Children in Same-Sex Households Fare* has just been released by the Witherspoon Institute. The papers included and summarized in the book all study the nexus between children's well-being and the structure of the families in which they are raised. In particular, the authors focus on the efficacy of families in which the adults are involved in a physically intimate same-sex relationship.

Here are the chapters:

1. Loren Marks: survey existing studies on parenting by same-sex couples
2. Mark Regnerus: large-scale study comparing standard parenting vs same-sex couple parenting
3. Douglas Allen, Catherine Pakaluk, and Joseph Price: analysis of studies based on census data
4. Douglas Allen: study of educational outcomes of children raised by same-sex couples
5. Walter Schumm: evaluation of the methodology of the Regnerus study
6. Walter Schumm: analysis of the stability of standard relationships vs same-sex relationships

Here's the blurb on one of the chapters:

> The first paper included in the volume, by Loren Marks, examines the foundations of the position taken by the American Psychological Association (APA) on what it calls "lesbian and gay parenting." The 2005 APA monograph setting forth that organization's position asserts that the question of whether the childrearing efficacy of parents in same-sex relationships is at least the equal of that of heterosexual couples is settled, and that the serious academic literature speaks with a single voice on the matter.
>
> Marks reviews an extensive literature on the topic and finds that most of the studies on the subject rely on "convenience samples": groups of respondents that cannot be considered cross-sections of the population at large. Convenience samples are a staple of the literature because same-sex parenting is rare, and so recruiting same-sex parents for a study generally involves placing ads at day-care centers and in publications aimed at the LGBT population, or contacting

> people by way of their network of friends. While they can provide a useful window on the experience of parents in same-sex relationships, Marks notes that convenience samples suffer from two generic problems. First, the sample sizes are very small; one of the better studies might include a dozen or two lesbian families and a comparable number of heterosexual families. In such a small sample, only enormous differences in children's outcomes will rise to the level of statistical significance. Technically speaking, estimates of the difference between outcomes for same-sex parents and those for heterosexual couples suffer from low "power." Moreover, because convenience samples do not constitute a random cross-section of the population, they are not representative, and so estimates based on them suffer from a problem known to statisticians as "bias."
>
> Marks also notes that many of the small studies either fail to identify a comparison group of heterosexual parents, or they compare educated and affluent lesbian couples to single heterosexual parents. He suggests that better comparison groups might consist of married heterosexual parents or of all heterosexual parents. Certainly that would be the case if one wanted to maintain that there was no difference between the status quo outcomes for children of parents in same-sex relationships and those of heterosexual married parents, as some have seemed to want to do.
>
> Marks highlights three studies that avoid small convenience samples and work with much larger random samples, two of which can be found in the new volume, in the chapter by Mark Regnerus and the chapter by Douglas Allen, Catherine Pakaluk, and Joseph Price.

I took a quick look at Loren Marks' bio:

> Loren Marks holds the Kathryn Norwood and Claude Fussell Alumni Professorship in the LSU College of Human Sciences and Education where he teaches family studies classes and conducts research on family relationships. He currently serves as Program Director for Child and Family Studies in Louisiana State University's School of Social Work. Marks received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from BYU, and his Ph.D. from the University of Delaware. Since beginning his work at LSU in 2002, Dr. Marks has centered his research efforts on religion and families, and has published more than 70 articles or chapters, as well as the book *Sacred Matters* (with Wes Burr and Randy Day). He has also studied children's outcomes in various family forms—and strong African American families. His research has received national media attention from outlets including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Times, The Boston Globe,* and *The Wall Street Journal*. Loren was honored with college-level teaching awards in 2005, 2009, and 2013. In 2011-2012, LSU nominated him for the national Carnegie (CASE) Professor of the Year Award—and nominated him again in 2014. He is Co-Director (with Dr. David Dollahite) of the American Families of Faith Project that includes about 200 Christian, Jewish, and Muslim families from all eight regions of the United States.

> Findings from this ongoing project have resulted in over 50 scholarly articles/chapters and two in progress books.

The Kindle edition of the book is currently $7.99. The volume is basically one stop shopping for this issue, so if you ever debate on this, get the book.

The best philosophical book on the definition of marriage is "What is Marriage?" by Girgis, Anderson and George.

I think if you are interested in same-sex marriage as a policy issue, you should get both of these books first.

Barronelle Stutzman turns down deal from Washington attorney general

February 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The attorney general offered her a lighter punishment in exchange for denying her Christian faith… and she surprised him by saying no.

Here is her full response:

> Dear Mr. Ferguson,
>
> Thank you for reaching out and making an offer to settle your case against me.
>
> As you may imagine, it has been mentally and emotionally exhausting to be at the center of this controversy for nearly two years. I never imagined that using my God-given talents and abilities, and doing what I love to do for over three decades, would become illegal. Our state would be a better place if we respected each other's differences, and our leaders protected the freedom to have those differences. Since 2012, same-sex couples all over the state have been free to act on their beliefs about marriage, but because I follow the Bible's teaching that marriage is the union of one man and one woman, I am no longer free to act on my beliefs.
>
> Your offer reveals that you don't really understand me or what this conflict is all about. It's about freedom, not money. I certainly don't relish the idea of losing my business, my home, and everything else that your lawsuit threatens to take from my family, but my freedom to honor God in doing what I do best is more important. **Washington's constitution guarantees us "freedom of conscience in all matters of religious sentiment." I cannot sell that precious freedom. You are asking me to walk in the way of a well-known betrayer, one who sold something of infinite worth for 30 pieces of silver. That is something I will not do.**
>
> I pray that you reconsider your position. I kindly served Rob for nearly a decade and would gladly continue to do so. I truly want the best for my friend. I've also employed and served many members of the LGBT community, and I will continue to do so regardless of what happens with this case. You chose to attack my faith and pursue this not simply as a matter of law, but to threaten my very means of working, eating, and having a home. If you are serious about clarifying the law, then I urge you to drop your claims against my home, business, and other assets and pursue the legal claims through the appeal process. Thanks again for writing and I hope you will consider my offer.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Barronelle Stutzman

The attorney general is a Democrat, of course, and Washington is a very blue state. The

whole case is troubling, but it’s really troubling that Stutzman is paying Ferguson’s salary through her taxes. She is paying him to do this to her. It’s always a scary thing to me when Christians have to have their consciences trampled at the hands of a government that they pay taxes to employ. I am sorry for Barronelle. I don’t think that she should have to celebrate something she disagrees with.

If there is one thing that troubles me about her statement, it’s that she cashes out her opposition to gay marriage in purely religious terms, and I think that’s not he right approach. The right approach is to talk about how children suffer when they are denied their mother or their father or both, how same-sex marriage undermines marital norms of exclusivity and permanence, how same-sex marriage undermines religious liberty, etc. But still, it’s important that she fight this and that everyone understands how same-sex marriage changes society.

California State University system effectively bans Christian clubs

February 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I blogged on the stories of some of these groups when they were de-recognized for "discriminating" against non-Christians.

Now we hear from the College Fix about what happened next.

Excerpt:

> This school year, CSU administrators labeled campus Christian groups that refuse to allow non-Christians to lead them "discriminatory." As a result, Christian clubs at Cal State universities that refused to change their constitutions and check boxes saying they would allow non-Christians as leaders have been officially derecognized by their campus communities.

> They've been scrubbed from campus websites and directories. They cannot take part in events that help campus clubs recruit new members and gain visibility. They are charged a more expensive, outsider fee to rent rooms on campus – straining their already tight coffers. They've lost a chance to receive a portion of student fees collected to help clubs on campuses thrive.
>
> […]Before Cal Poly's Cru chapter was derecognized, student Bible study leaders normally had 10 to 20 people come to their weekly Bible Studies. More recently, only two people showed up, Cal Poly senior Courtney Shipp, a former Cru member, told *The College Fix.*
>
> And Greg Jao, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship's national field director, told *The College Fix* that Chico State's chapter – one of the bigger InterVarsity chapters – lost 50 members due to the new policy.
>
> […]At Cal Poly, Cru can no longer reserve a room on campus as an organization, and must reserve rooms as an outside organization. That cost went from zero to $6,000 a year under the new policy, he said.
>
> Josh Otto, Chico State's Cru director, told *The College Fix* that the cost for them to reserve a room went from being for free for the entire year to $900 for one-time use.
>
> […]Leaders of Cru, formerly known as Campus Crusade for Christ, as well as the two other Christian clubs at San Luis Obispo that were derecognized – InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and Chinese Christian Fellowship – have insisted that they couldn't allow any non-Christians to be leaders.
>
> "We have no issue with anybody of any kind of race, religion coming to our weekly meetings and being a part of who we are," San Luis Obispo Missionary Leader Jamey Pappas said. "It's a question of who's going to be leading our

> students in a Bible Study, mentoring them individually, or deciding what kind of content goes into our weekly meeting, and we want people who agree with what we're about."
>
> […]At Chico, the Cru chapter used to receive $1,000 in funding from student government when they were recognized on campus. They will no longer receive that funding.
>
> […]"Two of my roommates are Bible Study leaders of Cru and they each have between ten and fifteen students that they are working with," Shipp said. "Last week, Melanie Reis had no one show up to her Bible Study. Sarah Sampson only had two girls."
>
> […]Making matters worse, Chico Cru also suffered a drop in attendance since they had to move their weekly meetings to a church seven blocks away from campus. Most of the losses were due to freshmen being unable to go to the meetings off-campus.
>
> "We probably lost about 50 people," Otto said. "We were about 160, 170 before that. Now we're down to 120."

Now think of this – the students have to pay the same fees to the university that are then used to fund other organizations on campus. But they don't get the same access to the facilities. Does that seem right to you? And this is happening in 23 California State universities, according to the article. I am surprised that there hasn't been a lawsuit yet, but it's a bad sign to me – it makes me think that this is going to stick and even spread.

Clinton Foundation receives millions in donations from regimes that oppress women

February 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does foreign policy make?
This is from the leftist Washington Post, of all places.

They write:

> The Clinton Foundation accepted millions of dollars from seven foreign governments during Hillary Rodham Clinton's tenure as secretary of state, including one donation that violated its ethics agreement with the Obama administration, foundation officials disclosed Wednesday.
>
> Most of the contributions were possible because of exceptions written into the foundation's 2008 agreement, which included limits on foreign-government donations.
>
> The agreement, reached before Clinton's nomination amid concerns that countries could use foundation donations to gain favor with a Clinton-led State Department, allowed governments that had previously donated money to continue making contributions at similar levels.
>
> The new disclosures, provided in response to questions from The Washington Post, make clear that the 2008 agreement did not prohibit foreign countries with interests before the U.S. government from giving money to the charity closely linked to the secretary of state.
>
> In one instance, foundation officials acknowledged they should have sought approval in 2010 from the State Department ethics office, as required by the agreement for new government donors, before accepting a $500,000 donation from the Algerian government.
>
> […]**While the foundation has disclosed foreign-government donors for years, it has not previously detailed the donations that were accepted during Clinton's four-year stint at the State Department.**

> […]**Some of the donations came from countries with complicated diplomatic, military and financial relationships with the U.S. government, including Kuwait, Qatar and Oman.**
>
> […]**The Washington Post reported last week that foreign sources, including governments, made up a third of those who have given the foundation more than $1 million over time. The Post found that the foundation, begun by former president Bill Clinton, has raised nearly $2 billion since its creation in 2001.**
>
> […]Foreign governments and individuals are prohibited from giving money to U.S. political candidates, to prevent outside influence over national leaders. But the foundation has given donors a way to potentially gain favor with the Clintons outside the traditional political limits.
>
> […]Foreign governments had been major donors to the foundation before President Obama nominated Clinton to become secretary of state in 2009. **When the foundation released a list of its donors for the first time in 2008, as a result of the agreement with the Obama administration, it disclosed, for instance, that Saudi Arabia had given between $10 million and $25 million.**
>
> In some cases, the foundation said, governments that continued to donate while Clinton was at the State Department did so at lower levels than before her appointment.
>
> […]Qatar, for instance, spent more than $5.3 million on registered lobbyists while Clinton was secretary of state, according to the Sunlight Foundation.The country's lobbyists were reported monitoring anti-terrorism activities and efforts to combat violence in Sudan's Darfur region. Qatar has also come under criticism from some U.S. allies in the region that have accused it of supporting Hamas and other militant groups. Qatar has denied the allegations.

Now I know that Hillary Clinton says that she is very concerned about women's rights, but then one has to wonder how well she translates those happy sounding words in her speeches into actions with these nations like Saudi Arabia. I don't think that the women in these countries saw much help from Hillary when she was Secretary of State. Maybe a few tweets on Twitter? Twitter diplomacy? I wonder if she was quiet about the human rights abuses because of the donations she was getting. I wonder if it will work to make her President in 2016.

IPCC chief resigns over scandals, declares global warming “is my religion”

February 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Al Gore and Rajendra Pachauri

This is from the pro-global-warming Scientific American.

It says:

> Rajendra Pachauri, chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), resigned today following accusations of sexual harassment by a former employee at the energy think tank he heads in New Delhi.
>
> The United Nations’ climate science body, which is currently meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, will now be headed temporarily by Vice Chairman Ismail El Gizouli.
>
> Pachauri, 74, did not travel to Nairobi this week for the IPCC meeting due to a police investigation into a complaint filed Feb. 13 by a 29-year-old employee. According to to the complaint, she accused Pachauri of sending text messages and emails since September 2013 that were inappropriate (*ClimateWire*, Feb. 19).
>
> Since then, at least one other former employee has leveled similar accusations at Pachauri through Indian media.
>
> […]Pachauri’s term as chairman of IPCC was due to expire in October 2015. He has served as head of the panel since 2002, and in 2007 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with former U.S. Vice President Al Gore.
>
> “For me the protection of Planet Earth, the survival of all species and sustainability of our ecosystems is more than a mission,” he wrote. “It is my religion and my dharma [duty].”

It’s his “religion”. That apparently means you can believe anything you want and it’s untestable, and completely divorced from evidence. This guy would make a lousy Christian if that’s his view of what religion is.

Remember when he lied about Himalayan glaciers, as the radically leftist UK Guardian reported:

> Rajendra Pachauri, the head of the international body which produces key reports to advise governments on climate change, today defended the use of "grey literature" which is not published in scientific journals.
>
> The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has come under fire after a high-profile mistake was exposed in its most recent assessment of the scale and impacts of global warming — a claim the Himalayan glaciers would melt by 2035.
>
> The claim came from a report by charity WWF and was based on remarks made by an Indian scientist which were never published in a scientific, peer-reviewed journal.

Here is a reaction to the news from climate skeptic Marc Morano:

> If Pachauri had any decency, he would have resigned in the wake of the Climategate scandal which broke in 2009. Climategate implicated the upper echelon of UN IPCC scientists in attempting to collude and craft a narrative on global warming while allowing no dissent. Or Pachauri could have resigned when he wished skeptics would rub asbestos on their faces or conceded that the IPCC was at the 'beck and call' of governments. There were so many opportunities to to the right thing and fade away. But it took the proceedings of the Indian court system over the allegations of sexual harassment to finally bring Pachauri down. Things can only be looking up for the UN IPCC now that it has ridded itself of this political and ethical cancer.

Pachauri couldn't be brought down for lying about the science, because that's what the whole thing is about – that's his job. He would have been fired by the UN if he had started to tell the truth about global warming nonsense.

So global warming is his religion, and guess what? This religion comes complete with witch-hunts!

Check out this article from the Daily Caller. (H/T Joshua P.)

Excerpt:

> An investigation by Democratic lawmakers into the sources of funding for scientists who challenge details of the greater global warming narrative has already forced one scientist to call it quits.
>
> University of Colorado climate scientist Dr. Roger Pielke, Jr. has been targeted by Arizona Democratic Rep. Raul Grijalva, the ranking liberal on the House Natural Resources Committee, for his research challenging the claim that global warming is making weather more extreme.
>
> This investigation, and other attacks, have forced Pielke to stop researching

> climate issues. He said the “incessant attacks and smears are effective, no doubt, I have already shifted all of my academic work away from climate issues.”
>
> “I am simply not initiating any new research or papers on the topic and I have ring-fenced my slowly diminishing blogging on the subject,” Pielke wrote on his blog.
>
> Pielke is one of seven academics under Grijalva’s investigation for allegedly taking money from the fossil fuels industry in exchange for research. Pielke says he’s never been funded by fossil fuels interests — a fact to which Grijalva already knows since Pielke disclosed as much when he testified before Congress.
>
> […]So what’s Pielke’s connection to all of this? Grijalva’s staff wrote that Pielke “has testified numerous times before the U.S. Congress on climate change and its economic impacts.” One “2013 Senate testimony featured the claim, often repeated, that it is ‘incorrect to associate the increasing costs of disasters with the emission of greenhouse gases.’”
>
> Why is Pielke a target? Because White House science czar John Holdren has “highlighted what he believes were serious misstatements by Prof. Pielke,” according to Grijalva’s letter to the University of Colorado.
>
> “Congressman Grijalva doesn’t have any evidence of any wrongdoing on my part, either ethical or legal, because there is none,” Pielke wrote. “He simply disagrees with the substance of my testimony – which is based on peer-reviewed research funded by the US taxpayer, and which also happens to be the consensus of the IPCC (despite Holdren’s incorrect views).”
>
> Holdren said Pielke’s views were “outside the mainstream.” Pielke presented evidence to the Senate that global warming is not causing weather, like hurricanes and floods, to become more frequent or extreme. Holdren, disagreed, and singled out Pielke in a six page statement saying that global warming was making the weather worse.
>
> The main problem with Holdren’s argument is that the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — which Holdren himself often defers to — has said the evidence favors Pielke’s argument that weather has not gotten more extreme.

I find it ironic that John Holdren is calling Pielke “outside the mainstream”. Recall that Holdren has the bizarre view that a world police force is necessary to oversee forced abortions and compulsory sterilizations. The man’s a psychopath, in short. Exactly the kind of man who would be selected as “science czar” by Democrat Barack Obama.

New study: college students becoming less religious, more depressed

February 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Just how much honor and meaning is there in binge drinking, hooking up and talking about who is the biggest victim?

Campus Reform reports:

> According to research conducted by University of California-Los Angeles, 27 percent of college freshmen no longer identify with a certain religion—the highest this trend has seen in 40 years.
>
> According to the study conducted in 2014, among college freshman, 30 percent of men and 25.4 percent of women responded with "none" when asked a religious preference. This is an increase from a 1971 study that recorded 17.3 percent of men and 13.5 percent of women who responded with "none" as their selection.
>
> […]The same study also showed a profound increase in depression among college freshmen. There is an epidemic of "emotional health issues" within the same students, the study also found.

In speaking with Christians who left their faith in college, I have found that it's typically not cognitive. They wanted to have a good time after escaping from the nest, and they just dropped Christianity and started drinking a lot and having a lot of sex with a lot of people they barely knew. "Everyone" was doing it – it was fun and thrills, and who cares how it impacts your future and your ability to serve God or get married?

Now I want this to be a positive post, so I'll link to J. Warner Wallace who has the solution to the problem.

He writes:

> In my last post, I summarized the studies and publications that describe the flight of young people from the Church. A compelling cumulative circumstantial case can be made to support the fact that young college aged Christians are walking away from Christianity in record numbers. What can we do about it? What *can* be done? Whenever people ask me this question, I always say the same thing. STOP TEACHING YOUNG CHRISTIANS. Just stop it. Whatever Christendom is doing in its effort to teach it's young, the effort appears to largely be a failure. In fact, Ken Ham (in his book, *Already Gone:Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do To Stop It*) found that young Christians who faithfully attended Bible classes were actually more likely to question the authority of Scripture, more likely to defend the legality of abortion, same-sex marriage, and premarital sex, and more likely to leave the church! What's going on here? I think I know. It's

> time to stop teaching ouryoung people; it’s time to start training them.

> There’s a difference between teaching and training. Training is teaching in preparation for a battle. Boxers train for upcoming fights. In fact, boxers are sometimes known to get fat and lazy until the next fight is scheduled. Once the date has been signed, fighters begin to train in earnest. Why? Because they know that they are going to eventually get in the ring and face an aggressive opponent. We train when we know we are about to encounter a battle. Imagine for a moment that you are enrolled in an algebra class. If the teacher assured you that you would never, ever be required to take a test, and that you would pass the class regardless of your level of understanding, how hard do you think you would study? How deeply do you think you would come to understand the material? How committed do you think you would be to the material?

> The problem we have in the Church today is *not* that we lack good teachers. There are many excellent teachers in the Church. The problem is that none of these teachers are scheduling battles. Make no mistake about it, there are battles looming for each and every young Christian in the Church today, but church leaders are not involved in the scheduling of these battles. The battles are waiting for our sons and daughters when they get to University (or enter the secular workplace). The Church needs to be in the business of scheduling battles and training our young people for these battles. Teaching without a planned battle is little more than “blah, blah blah.” This is the problem with traditional Sunday School programs. They are often well-intended, informative and powerfully delivered. But they are impotent, because our young people have no sense of urgency or necessity. There is no planned battle looming on the horizon and the battle of University life is simply too far away to be palpable. It’s time to address the problem not with our *classes* but with our *calendar*. It’s time to start scheduling battles so our teaching becomes training.

Just stop it!

I think that’s good advice – but I don’t think that Christian parents or Christian pastors are following it as much as we need to be.

British paratrooper awarded Victoria Cross for rescuing comrade from 20 Taliban

February 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lance Corporal Joshua Leakey

The story is from Breitbart:

> A British paratrooper has become the first living soldier to receive the most prestigious military award in Britain and the Commonwealth for the Afghanistan war, and the second in his family, after he repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire to help a fallen comrade, and bring machine gun fire down on his enemy.
>
> While many in the UK yesterday enjoyed the 'Brit' music awards, Lance Corporal (L/Cpl) Joshua Leakey was received an award of an entirely different kind today as he had a Victoria Cross pinned on his chest by the Chief of the General Staff. At the ceremony, a senior officer read from his citation: "Drawing the majority of the enemy fire, with rounds splashing around him, L/Cpl Leakey overcame his fatigue to re-site the gun and return fire. This proved to be the turning point.
>
> "Inspired by his actions, and with a heavy weight of fire now at their disposal, the force began to fight back with renewed ferocity. Displaying gritty leadership well above that expected of his rank L/Cpl Leakey's actions single-handedly regained the initiative and prevented considerable loss of life."
>
> **L/Cpl Leakey, a member of the elite Paratrooper regiment first broke cover to give first aid to a fallen United States Marine, and continued to expose himself to fire as he recovered and fired from two machine guns, running up and down a hill in the high heat of the Afghan summer. Although he ran through machine gun fire and exploding grenades three times, he survived and was able to engage 20 Taliban fighters and save the life of the American officer.**

> Despite his selfless heroism and exceptional rarity of the award, Leakey modestly brushed off the ceremony, remarking that it was "just another day in the office". Speaking to journalists after the ceremony, he said: "I am here, I have got all my limbs, my heath, friends and family. This awards is brilliant but it's something I am accepting on behalf of my regiment and battalion, of which I am so proud.
>
> "My big hope is that I can go back on Monday morning and say, 'sorry I was away, what's next?' I am not going to let this define me. It was just another day at the office. It was a memorable patrol but that's what happened.
>
> "The job of the Parachute regiment is to take the fight to the enemy and that's what we had to do on that day."

His cousin won the same medal in World War II – *posthumously.*

The Victoria Cross is like our Medal of Honor – the highest award there is:

The Victoria Cross: "For Valour"

I decided to look it up to see why it is awarded:

> The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest military decoration awarded for valour "in the face of the enemy". It takes precedence over all other orders, decorations and medals. It may be awarded to a person of any rank in any service and civilians under military command, and is presented to the recipient by the British monarch during an investiture held at Buckingham Palace. It is the joint highest award for bravery in the United Kingdom with the George Cross, which is the equivalent honour for valour not in the face of the enemy.

The word "valor" means:

> boldness or determination in facing great danger, especially in battle; heroic courage; bravery:

I got this story from Mark Steyn, and he had a sobering comment on it:

> I would like to think he was “a normal bloke”. But I worry these days that your “normal bloke” is fretting about micro-agressions in the safe space at Wesleyan University. The gulf between those who fight and those they fight for has never seemed wider.

Just think of what the UK is like today, and compare and contrast that with this man.

You can read about some of the other men who have been awarded the Victoria Cross here.

Jeb Bush’s bussed-in supporters applaud driver’s licenses and in-state tuition for illegals

February 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jeb Bush and Barack Obama

Did you know that Jeb Bush supports driver’s licenses and in-state tuition for illegal immigrants?

> He faced questions about his tenure as governor of Florida, when he tried to provide driver’s licenses to illegal immigrants and, later, supported letting undocumented students pay in-state tuition at state colleges.
>
> Bush drew some boos, but stuck to his position that illegal immigrants have to be brought into the American fold.
>
> “I know there’s disagreement here,” he conceded.

Not all CPAC attendees boo’d Bush’s leftist speech at CPAC – some just walked out of the room.

But Breitbart reports that some neither left the room, nor boo’d him – who were they?:

> Perhaps in fear that he didn’t have enough backers willing to show up on their own, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush’s campaign organized to bus supporters to the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) to cheer during his appearance on stage and vote for him in the straw poll.
>
> The New York Times’ Jonathan Martin writes that Bush brought people in from Washington, D.C.: “Mr. Bush’s supporters organized caravans of his Washington backers to attend his speech, and they cheered whenever anyone else booed,” Martin wrote.

> Those same bused in cheerers also will likely be expected by Bush's campaign to vote for him in the famed straw poll.
>
> Betsy Woodruff at the liberal outlet Slate also obtained emails that prove Bush's team was busing in supporters from K Street.
>
> "Emails provided to Slate show that backers of the former Florida governor are busing supporters from downtown Washington D.C. to CPAC in National Harbor, Maryland, and organizing to get them day passes into the event," Woodruff wrote.
>
> One person behind the effort to bus in Bush backers, Woodruff confirmed, was former George W. Bush advance man Fritz Brogan. "A Bush insider confirmed to Slate that Bush's Right to Rise PAC is helping organize the transportation," Woodruff wrote.

And the Bush leftists are lying about it, too:

> Before CPAC, when asked if Bush's supporters would be paid and bused in, Bush spokeswoman Kristy Campbell denied it flatly. She said in an email that she "can confirm that we are not trying to play in the straw poll – despite what anyone else is telling you."
>
> Campbell, Bush's spokeswoman, told Breitbart News on Saturday afternoon: "We aren't trying to play in the straw poll. Some supporters in the DC area who were planning to attend CPAC expressed concerns about getting over to the Gaylord. We helping by providing some limited transportation on Friday only (specific to the time of the Governor's speech.)"

Maybe there is still time for him to switch parties and run against Hillary? Run to her left, I mean. Maybe he can be Elizabeth Warren's running mate or vice versa.

I went back to look at Bush's CPAC speech from 2013.

Here's what he said:

> Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush beseeched a gathering of conservatives in remarkably frank terms on Friday night to change the course of the Republican Party and to become a more diverse, welcoming and understanding party to minorities and low-income Americans.
>
> Bush, speaking at the Conservative Political Action Conference annual dinner, made the heart of his speech a call to the GOP to "learn from past mistakes." He made his case in some of the bluntest language he has used.
>
> "All too often we're associated with being 'anti' everything," Bush said. "Way too many people believe Republicans are anti-immigrant, anti-woman, anti-science, anti-gay, anti-worker, and the list goes on and on and on. Many voters are simply unwilling to choose our candidates even though they share our core beliefs, because those voters feel unloved, unwanted and unwelcome in our party."
>
> […]In his book, written last year, he said he favored a path to residency, but not

> a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. He changed that position in interviews after it was pointed out that the current plan in the Senate includes citizenship.
>
> Bush penned an op-ed in The Wall Street Journal that went live online Friday, in which he again voiced support for a path to citizenship. But while his speech Friday night used much of the content from his op-ed, he cut the lines about the path to citizenship and made only passing mention of immigration reform.

This is what these points mean, in my opinion:

- He's very concerned that he not be perceived as anti-immigrant = AMNESTY.
- He's very concerned that he not be perceived as anti-woman= ABORTION.
- He's very concerned that he not be perceived as anti-science= GLOBAL WARMING.
- He's very concerned that he not be perceived as anti-gay = SAME-SEX MARRIAGE.
- He's very concerned that he not be perceived as anti-worker = SOCIALISM.

He wants to make sure that Democrats approve him – that's his primary concern. He wants to be liked by people on the secular left.

Bush likes to portray himself as very concerned about the poor, but what would he know about poverty?

Look:

> In 1999, Columba Bush, the famously private wife of then-Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, was detained and fined by federal customs officials for misrepresenting the amount of clothing and jewelry she had bought while on a solo five-day shopping spree in Paris.
>
> The incident left the Florida first lady deeply mortified and her husband politically chagrined. Jeb Bush said the first lady had misled customs officials because she did not want him to know that she had spent about $19,000 on the trip.
>
> "The embarrassment I felt made me ashamed to face my family and friends," Columba Bush said in a July 1999 speech to the Central Florida Make-a-Wish Foundation, not long after the incident. "It was the worst feeling I've ever had in my life."
>
> The ordeal did not stop her from spending freely, however. Less than a year later, she took out a loan to buy $42,311.70 worth of jewelry on a single day, according to records filed with the state of Florida by Mayors Jewelers.
>
> That purchase was part of a pattern by Columba Bush of borrowing to buy tens of thousands of dollars of jewelry at a time from the South Florida store over a 14-year period. Documentation available online, which does not include the details of two transactions made less than six weeks apart in 1995, shows that she spent a total of more than $90,000 at the store.

No wonder the CPAC conservatives were booing him – they probably don't make $90,000

in a year of working.

However the leftist mainstream media is very much in favor of Jeb Bush:

- CNN: Jeb Bush survives — and thrives — at CPAC
- Washington Post: Jeb Bush was very, very good at CPAC today
- Politico: Jeb Bush survives at CPAC
- Bloomberg: The Conservative Contempt Awaiting Jeb Bush at CPAC
- NPR: Jeb's Rowdy Supporters Help Him Escape The CPAC Lion's Den
- National Journal: Jeb Bush Survives CPAC

From a left-wing media point of view, Bush did a great job at CPAC. They love him! But then, they love amnesty, Common Core and Obamacare, just like he does.

New study: scientists discover that inverted retina / blind spot is not a “bad design”

March 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s what atheist Richard Dawkins says about the inverted retina:

> Any engineer would naturally assume that the photocells would point towards the light, with their wires leading backwards towards the brain. He would laugh at any suggestion that the photocells might point away from the light, with their wires departing on the side *nearest* the light. Yet this is exactly what happens in all vertebrate eyes. Each photocell is, in effect, wired in backwards, with its wires sticking out on the side nearest to the light. This means that the light, instead of being granted an unrestricted passage to the photocells, has to pass through a forest of connecting wires, presumably suffering at least some attenuation and distortion (actually probably not much but, still, it is the *principle* of the thing that would offend any tidy-minded engineer!)
>
> Source: Dawkins, Richard (1986). *The Blind Watchmaker*. London: Penguin Books; pp. 93-94.

Now let’s look at a new study reported in Science Daily.

They write:

> From a practical standpoint, the wiring of the human eye — a product of our evolutionary baggage — doesn’t make a lot of sense. In vertebrates, photoreceptors are located behind the neurons in the back of the eye — resulting in light scattering by the nervous fibers and blurring of our vision. Recently, researchers at the Technion — Israel Institute of Technology have confirmed the biological purpose for this seemingly counterintuitive setup.
>
> “The retina is not just the simple detector and neural image processor, as believed until today,” said Erez Ribak, a professor at the Technion — Israel Institute of Technology. “Its optical structure is optimized for our vision purposes.” Ribak and his co-authors will describe their work during the 2015 American Physical Society March Meeting, on Thursday, March 5 in San Antonio, Texas.
>
> Ribak’s interest in the optical structure of the retina stems from his previous work applying astrophysics and astronomy techniques to improve the ability of scientists and ophthalmologists to view the retina at high detail.
>
> Previous experiments with mice had suggested that Müller glia cells, a type of metabolic cell that crosses the retina, play an essential role in guiding and focusing light scattered throughout the retina. To test this, Ribak and his colleagues ran computer simulations and in-vitro experiments in a mouse model to determine whether colors would be concentrated in these metabolic cells.

> They then used confocal microscopy to produce three-dimensional views of the retinal tissue, and found that the cells were indeed concentrating light into the photoreceptors.
>
> “For the first time, we’ve explained why the retina is built backwards, with the neurons in front of the photoreceptors, rather than behind them,” Ribak said.

You can read more on some other reasons why the inverted retina is not a bad design in this article by agnostic scientist Michael Denton. But this study is a good reminder of why Christians need to keep up with science and how we need to talk about science.

The importance of having a narrative

All Christians should be familiar with the following basic pieces of evidence which fit the war between science and naturalism narrative:

1. The origin of the universe
2. The cosmic fine-tuning
3. The origin of life (biological information)
4. The sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla
5. The habitability/observability correlation

It’s very important to present these five basic evidences to non-Christians in the historical context. And here is the story you must tell: “In the beginning, there was the naturalism, and the naturalism tried to argue from ignorance that God was not Creator and God was not Designer. And then came the science, and now people have to give up their naturalism in order to not be crazy and irrational”. That’s the narrative you use when talking to non-Christians about science.

In the beginning was the naturalism:

1. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the universe was eternal
2. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that a life-permitting universe was as likely as a life-prohibiting universe
3. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the cell was a simple blob of jello that could spontaneously emerge in some warm pond
4. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla would be explained by subsequent fossil discoveries
5. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that there was nothing special about our galaxy, solar system, planet or moon

But then science progressed by doing experiments and making observations.

Here are some examples of discoveries that undermined the primitive atheism:

1. Scientists discovered redshift and the cosmic microwave background radiation (evidence for a cosmic beginning) and more!
2. Scientists discovered the fine-tuning of gravity and of the cosmological constant and

more!
3. Scientists discovered protein sequencing and exposed the myth of “junk DNA” and more!
4. Scientists discovered an even shorter Cambrian explosion period and the absence of precursor fossils and more!
5. Scientists discovered galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones and more!

Atheism, as a worldview, is not rooted in an honest assessment about what science tells us about reality. Atheism is rooted in a religion: naturalism. And the troubling thing we learn from looking at the history of science is that this religion of naturalism is insulated from correction from the progress of science. Nothing that science reveals about nature seems to be able to put a dent in the religion of naturalism, at least for most atheists. Their belief in naturalism is so strong that it repels all scientific evidence that falsifies it. Atheists simply don’t let science inform and correct their worldview.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument

Mike Licona explains the As, Bs, Cs, Ds and Es of New Testament reliability

March 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Licona is one of my favorite Christian apologists, and here is an excellent lecture to show you why.

In the lecture, he explains why the four biographies in the New Testament should be accepted as historically accurate: (55 minutes)

Summary:

- What a Baltimore Ravens helmet teaches us about the importance of truth
- What happens to Christians when they go off to university?
- The 2007 study on attitudes of American professors to evangelical Christians
- Authors: Who wrote the gospels?
- Bias: Did the bias of the authors cause them to distort history?
- Contradictions: What about the different descriptions of events in the gospels?
- Dating: When were the gospels written?
- Eyewitnesses: Do the gospel accounts go back to eyewitness testimony?

This is basic training for Christians. It would be nice if every Christian was equipped in church to be able to make a case like this.

Obama administration giving away the store in nuclear deal with Iran

March 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

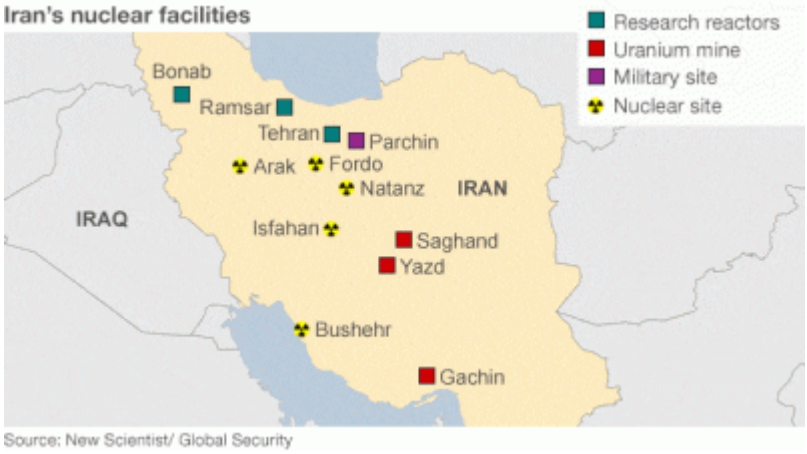

Map of Iran Nuclear Facilities
(Source: BBC)

The Wall Street Journal reports.

Excerpt:

> Secretary of State John Kerry told Congress this week that no one should pre-judge a nuclear deal with Iran because only the negotiators know what's in it. But the truth is that the framework of an accord has been emerging thanks to Administration leaks to friendly journalists. The leaks suggest the U.S. has already given away so much that any deal on current terms will put Iran on the cusp of nuclear-power status.
>
> The latest startling detail is Monday's leak that the U.S. has conceded to Iran's demand that an agreement would last as little as a decade, perhaps with an additional five-year phase-out. After that Iran would be allowed to build its uranium enrichment capabilities to whatever size it wants. In theory it would be forbidden from building nuclear weapons, but by then all sanctions would have long ago been lifted and Iran would have the capability to enrich on an industrial scale.

Is Iran our friend? Not really:

> That is some gamble on a regime that continues to sponsor terrorist groups around the world, prop up the Assad regime in Syria, use proxies to overthrow the Yemen government, jail U.S. reporter Jason Rezaian on trumped-up espionage charges, and this week blew up a mock U.S. aircraft carrier in naval exercises near the Strait of Hormuz.

Charles Krauthammer comments:

> News leaked Monday of the “sunset clause.” President Obama had accepted the Iranian demand that any restrictions on its program be time-limited. After which, the mullahs can crank up their nuclear program at will and produce as much enriched uranium as they want.
>
> Sanctions lifted. Restrictions gone. Nuclear development legitimized. Iran would re-enter the international community, as Obama suggested in an interview last December, as “a very successful regional power.” A few years — probably around 10 — of good behavior and Iran would be home free.
>
> The agreement thus would provide a predictable path to an Iranian bomb. Indeed, a flourishing path, with trade resumed, oil pumping and foreign investment pouring into a restored economy.
>
> Meanwhile, Iran’s intercontinental ballistic missile program is subject to no restrictions at all. It’s not even part of these negotiations.
>
> Why is Iran building them? You don’t build ICBMs in order to deliver sticks of dynamite. Their only purpose is to carry nuclear warheads. Nor does Iran need an ICBM to hit Riyadh or Tel Aviv. Intercontinental missiles are for reaching, well, other continents. North America, for example.
>
> […]The deal now on offer to the ayatollah would confer legitimacy on the nuclearization of the most rogue of rogue regimes: radically anti-American, deeply jihadist, purveyor of terrorism from Argentina to Bulgaria, puppeteer of a Syrian regime that specializes in dropping barrel bombs on civilians.

Based on past deals, we shouldn’t be surprised by this news.

This Heritage Foundation article re-caps our negotiating blunders.

> What makes these deals even worse is that they are all about constraining us, not the other guy. New START didn’t require Russia to destroy a single nuclear missile: it only reduced the size of the U.S. stockpile. The Arms Trade Treaty won’t stop the lawless and incompetent nations of the world from selling arms irresponsibly, but our lawyers will guarantee that it restrains us.
>
> The essence of the Syrian deal was that it saved the U.S. from having to carry out Secretary of State John Kerry’s “unbelievably small” retaliatory strike on the Assad regime, which gets to remain in power. The Iran carve-up removes the lingering threat of any U.S. military action and makes Israeli action all but unthinkable, while the Iranians keep on enriching uranium and can zoom up to weapons-grade levels far faster than we can reimpose sanctions.
>
> The administration is more afraid of having to respond to an Iranian nuclear breakout than it is of a breakout itself. The deal has bought only a six-month delay in the Iranian program, at the cost of easing UN sanctions the U.S. had carefully built up since 2006.
>
> At the core of the accords is the belief that the U.S. is the nation that needs to be restrained. That is why they involve big concessions from us in exchange for far

> less from the other side. Since we are the problem, we are the ones who need to give things up to get a deal.

And what about the global warming deal with China?

We got fleeced there, too:

> When the United States and China announced a surprise carbon-emissions deal, the environmental Left squealed in delight. Al Gore declared it "groundbreaking progress from the world's largest polluter" (i.e., China), while John Kerry patted himself on the back in the New York Times, gushing about how "the world's most consequential relationship has just produced something of great consequence in the fight against climate change." Despite the extraordinary fanfare, there's abundant reason for skepticism.
>
> Though the announcement is politically expedient for both Barack Obama and Xi Jinping, China almost certainly won't take significant steps to reduce carbon emissions.
>
> […]Beijing hasn't actually agreed to much: It will try to "stop increasing" carbon emissions by 2030 — which is a slanted way of saying its emissions will continue to grow for another 16 years — and derive 20 percent of its energy from renewables by then, up from about 10 percent now. Though these goals may be codified into Chinese law, the CCP does not have a reputation for respecting the rule of law. And the United States and the international community won't have any way of enforcing these goals. No wonder Reuters called it a "largely symbolic plan."
>
> […]Critics of the president's environmental policies have noted that even the most stringent emissions reductions from the First World won't have much of an impact unless the developing world also cuts back. The environmental Left is marketing the new U.S.–China deal as a way to eliminate that objection and plow forward with the president's hardline proposals for carbon regulations. "Now there is no longer an excuse for Congress to block action on climate change," Senator Barbara Boxer said in today's New York Times. "The biggest carbon polluter on our planet, China, has agreed to cut back on dangerous emissions, and now we should make sure all countries do their part because this is a threat to the people that we all represent."
>
> Boxer ignores the myriad other valid objections to the Obama administration's proposed regulations, which seek to cut carbon emissions 30 percent from their 2005 levels by 2030. In reality, it's bad policy because, despite enormous economic cost, it would yield very few environmental benefits.

And of course we have the complete surrender to Russia in the Arctic.

We are cutting deals with every bad actor on the planet that will undermine our interests at home and abroad for years to come. And why? Well, it's because Democrats think that United States is more of a threat to world peace than a force for good, and so they think

the best way to save the planet is to strengthen countries like Russia, Iran and China. I think in one way this plan will work – Democrats will feel as if they are doing something, and they will congratulate themselves on their moral superiority. But as far as actually achieving good results? It’s not going to happen.

E-mails: Hillary Clinton's top aides knew in minutes that Benghazi was a terrorist attack

March 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National Review reports on released e-mails from a FOIA request by Judicial Watch.

He says:

> From the very first moments of the terrorist attack on the U.S. compound in Benghazi on September 11, 2012, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her top aides were advised that the compound was under a terrorist attack. In fact, less than two hours into the attack, they were told that the al-Qaeda affiliate in Libya, Ansar al-Sharia, had claimed responsibility.
>
> These revelations and others are disclosed by a trove of e-mails and other documents pried from the State Department by Judicial Watch in a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit. The FOIA litigation focuses on Mrs. Clinton's involvement in the government actions before, during, and after the Benghazi attack, in which Christopher Stevens, the U.S. ambassador to Libya, was murdered by terrorists. Also killed in the attack were State Department information management officer Sean Smith, and two former Navy SEALs, Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty, who were contract security employees and who had fought heroically, saving numerous American lives. At least ten other Americans were wounded, some quite seriously.
>
> At 4:07 p.m., just minutes after the terrorist attack began, Cheryl Mills, Secretary Clinton's chief-of-staff, and Joseph McManus, Mrs. Clinton's executive assistant, received an e-mail from the State Department's operations center (forwarded to her by Maria Sand, a special assistant to Secretary Clinton). It contained a report from the State Department's regional security officer (RSO), entitled "U.S. Diplomatic Mission in Benghazi is Under Attack." The e-mail explained that approximately 20 armed people had fired shots at the diplomatic mission, that explosions had been heard as well, and that Ambassador Stevens was believed to be in the compound with at least four other State Department officials.
>
> About a half-hour later, another e-mail — this one from Scott Bultrowicz, then director of diplomatic security (DSCC) — related:
>
> 15 armed individuals were attacking the compound and trying to gain entrance. The Ambassador is present in Benghazi and currently is barricaded within the compound. There are no injuries at this time and it is unknown what the intent of the attackers is. At approximately 1600 [4 p.m.] DSCC received word from Benghazi that individuals had entered the compound. At 1614 [4:14 p.m.] RSO advised the Libyans had set fire to various buildings in the area, possibly the building that houses the Ambassador [REDACTED] is responding and taking fire.

> At 6:06 p.m., another e-mail that went to top State Department officials explained that the local al-Qaeda affiliate had claimed responsibility for the attack:
>
> Ansar al-Sharia Claims Responsibility for Benghazi Attack (SBU): "(SBU) Embassy Tripoli reports the group claimed responsibility on Facebook and Twitter and call for an attack on Embassy Tripoli"
>
> Despite this evidence that her top staffers were informed from the start that a terrorist attack was underway and that an al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist group had claimed credit for it, Secretary Clinton issued an official statement claiming the assault may have been in "response to inflammatory material posted on the Internet."

Here she is lying to the American people on camera about the nature and cause of the attack:

You'll remember that she repeated the lie again to the family of the victims.

Should we elect a liar to be President in 2016?

Related posts

- Clinton confidants were present to "separate" damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- E-mails: Susan Rice prepped to lie about Benghazi by White House
- Transcripts show that top U.S. military officials briefed Obama on Benghazi terrorist attack
- Benghazi liar Susan Rice to be appointed National Security Adviser by grateful Obama
- Released e-mails show that State Department edited terrorism out of talking points
- Obama: editing of talking points to cover-up of Benghazi terrorist attack is a "sideshow"
- BBC News covers whistle-blower testimony: "After Benghazi revelations, heads will roll"
- What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack "from the get-go"
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours

- Obama’s Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama’s Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama’s security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

Richard Dawkins: prevent parents from teaching their faith onto their kids

March 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Richard Dawkins explains morality on atheism
This is from the radically leftist Huffington Post UK.

Excerpt:

> Prominent atheist Richard Dawkins has argued that children with religious parents must be protected from indoctrination.
>
> Dawkins expressed concerns to the Irish Times that parents are given too much leeway when it comes to their children's education. The biologist, who is backing a campaign by Atheist Ireland to overhaul education, spoke ahead of a talk at Trinity College in Dublin.
>
> He said: "There is a balancing act and you have to balance the rights of parents and the rights of children and I think the balance has swung too far towards parents.
>
> "Children do need to be protected so that they can have a proper education and not be indoctrinated in whatever religion their parents happen to have been brought up in."
>
> Physicist Lawrence Krauss who was also present for the interview agreed, but stressed he believed state education should be held to different standards than private schools.
>
> He said: "If the state is going to provide education, it has an obligation to try and educate children. That means parents have a limited — it seems to me — limited rights in determining what the curriculum is. The state is providing the education, it's trying to make sure all children have equal opportunity."
>
> He added: "Parents, of course, have concerns and 'say' but they don't have the right to shield their children from knowledge.
>
> "That is not right, any more than they have the right to shield their children from healthcare or medicine.
>
> "And those parents who do that are often tried – at least in my country – and imprisoned when they refuse to allow their children to get blood transfusions or whatever is necessary for their health. And this is necessary for their mental health."

So Richard Dawkins is too cowardly to debate Christianity with William Lane Craig, but he

is willing to use the power of big government to force parents not to explain to their children why Christianity is true, and what Christianity teaches.

Why does Dawkins want to prevent parents from teaching their kids about religion? I think the answer is that he doesn't like that religious people can make moral judgments. If there is no God, then there is no rational basis for saying that anything is objectively right or wrong.

This is in fact Dawkins' own view. Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

Dawkins' view is that nothing is really good or bad objectively. Cultures just evolve certain conventions, and those conventions vary arbitrarily by time and place. There's nothing really right or wrong in the universe. Just do what you like as long as you don't get caught – or change the laws so that the evil you want to do is legal. You can even force people to pay the costs of it. Heck, you can even use the courts to force them to celebrate what you do. It's all up in the air for an atheist.

Richard Dawkins himself is in favor of infanticide:

In the past, Dawkins has also spoken positively about adultery.

So this is probably why Dawkins is in favor of using government to prevent parents from teaching their kids that God exists. If you think that morality is an illusion, then you do what feels right to you, hurting the weak if necessary. That is what Darwinism teaches, in fact – survival of the fittest, the strong use and destroy the weak. And if anyone disagrees – well, that's what big government is for. And that's why atheism is often wedded to big government – they need the big government to force people with different views to do what they want them to do. Atheists like Dawkins want to do what feels good to them, and they don't want to be judged for it. Not all atheists are like Dawkins, but he is favored by them for a reason – he represents a large number of them.

Hillary Clinton used her private e-mail account to conduct State Department business

March 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow. The ultra leftist New York Times just dropped a bomb on Hillary's 2016 hopes.

Read it:

> Hillary Rodham Clinton exclusively used a personal email account to conduct government business as secretary of state, State Department officials said, and may have violated federal requirements that officials' correspondence be retained as part of the agency's record.
>
> Mrs. Clinton did not have a government email address during her four-year tenure at the State Department. Her aides took no actions to have her personal emails preserved on department servers at the time, as required by the Federal Records Act.
>
> It was only two months ago, in response to a new State Department effort to comply with federal record-keeping practices, that Mrs. Clinton's advisers reviewed tens of thousands of pages of her personal emails and decided which ones to turn over to the State Department. All told, 55,000 pages of emails were given to the department. Mrs. Clinton stepped down from the secretary's post in early 2013.
>
> Her expansive use of the private account was alarming to current and former National Archives and Records Administration officials and government watchdogs, who called it a serious breach.
>
> "It is very difficult to conceive of a scenario — short of nuclear winter — where an agency would be justified in allowing its cabinet-level head officer to solely use a private email communications channel for the conduct of government business," said Jason R. Baron, a lawyer at Drinker Biddle & Reath who is a former director of litigation at the National Archives and Records Administration.
>
> […]Under federal law, however, letters and emails written and received by federal officials, such as the secretary of state, are considered government records and are supposed to be retained so that congressional committees, historians and members of the news media can find them. There are exceptions to the law for certain classified and sensitive materials.

The problem is, of course, that personal e-mails are not securely transmitted or securely stored. This is an *incredible blunder* that put our national security at risk.

Why did she do it? The leftist Washington Post has the answer:

> The New York Times reported Monday night that, during her tenure at the State Department, Hillary Clinton never used her official email account to conduct

> communications, relying instead on a private email account. As the Times notes, only official accounts are automatically retained under the Federal Records Act, meaning that none of Clinton's email communication was preserved.

She did it so that there would be no record of her e-mail communications should there be any investigations or inquiries. It's sort of like Lois Lerner claiming that the dog ate her hard drive, and the hard drives of all her friends in the IRS. Only this is *worse than that.* At least we could get the Lois Lerner e-mails back from back-ups.

Ed Morrissey of Hot Air reacts:

> According to the New York Times, Hillary Clinton *never used the official e-mail system at all*. When the time came to produce e-mails for the Benghazi probe, her aides "found" 300 or so that they chose to reveal years after the event — with no guarantee that these represent the entire record, or even a significant portion of it.
>
> Clearly, Hillary had contempt for the mechanisms that provide transparency and accountability for government operations and officials. If any of her communications involved sensitive or classified material, Hillary may have broken more laws than just those dealing with archival of official records. This could very well be *huge*, and not just in relation to the 2016 election. Just what may have been gleaned by hostile intelligence services? What else may Hillary have been doing while at State? Congress needs to get to the bottom of this ASAP — and the Benghazi select committee should put Hillary Clinton under oath to demand answers about this.

Morrissey notes that the personal e-mail was set up *the day of her Senate confirmation hearings* for Secretary of State. This was not an accident, this was intentional. Planned. Deliberate. She did not want her e-mails to be on record. And we would never know about this except because Republicans set up a select committee to investigate. We are only finding these things out because of Trey Gowdy's ongoing Benghazi investigation. Give the man credit. He was the right man for the job, and we are finally getting the answers we sought… a little bit at a time.

Related posts

- E-mails: Hillary Clinton's top aides knew in minutes that Benghazi was a terrorist attack
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- Hillary Clinton aides were present to "separate" damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- Universities raise tuition while paying hundreds of thousands to Hillary Clinton

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- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- Hillary Clinton opposes bill to cut taxpayer funding of abortions abroad

New study: marrying in your mid-to-late 20s confers benefits

March 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

This is from moderate Brad Wilcox, writing in the leftist Washington Post.

He writes:

> These days, 20something marriage has gotten a reputation for being a bad idea. That's partly because parents, peers, and the popular culture encourage young adults to treat their twenties as a decade for exploration and getting one's ducks in a row, not for settling down. In the immortal words of Jay-Z, "Thirty's the new twenty."
>
> Indeed, the median age-at-first marriage has climbed to nearly 30 for today's young adults, up from about 22 in 1970. Of course, there's an upside to that. As my coauthors and I report in Knot Yet: the Benefits and Costs of Delayed Marriage in America, women who put off marriage and starting a family earn markedly more money than their peers who marry earlier.
>
> But if you'd like to maximize your marital happiness, your odds of having a couple of kids, and of forging common memories and family traditions, you might not want to delay marriage if the right person presents his or herself in your mid-to-late 20s. A University of Texas study found the highest-quality unions were forged by couples who married during that period.

He then goes over some of the benefits.

Here's one that stuck out to me:

> First, you are more likely to marry someone who shares your basic values and life experiences, and less likely to marry someone with a complicated romantic or family history. Those who marry in their twenties, for instance, are more likely to marry someone who isn't previously married and shares their level of educational

> attainment as well as their religious faith. Marrying at this stage in your life also allows couples to experience early adulthood together. In the words of Elizabeth Gilbert, a 31-year-old woman who married in her mid-twenties, "My husband and I got to grow up together—not apart. We learned sacrifice, selflessness, compromise, and became better people for it."

And:

> Women who marry in their 20s generally have an easier time getting pregnant, and having more than one child, than their peers who wait to marry in their thirties. You'll also be around to enjoy the grandchildren for longer.

Marrying earlier is also nice because you get that "honeymoon" period before you have to start having kids. If you want to have 1-2 kids, you'll need 3-4 years. You will want to have at least 2 years of "honeymoon" time to iron out differences and just enjoy married life. Children are challenging, and they will add more stress to the marriage. You don't want to marry at 33 and start having kids before that 2 year settling-down period is finished. If marriage really is valuable, then it doesn't make sense to put off building it together. The sooner your start, the more you can build. The more you can learn from each other. The more kids you can have.

Related to this study is a 15-minute TED.com lecture that talks about how people should be *preparing for their marriages* during their 20s instead of pursuing fun and thrills. (H/T Lindsay)

The transcript says this:

> Okay, now that sounds a little flip, but make no mistake, the stakes are very high. When a lot has been pushed to your 30s, there is enormous thirtysomething pressure to jump-start a career, pick a city, partner up, and have two or three kids in a much shorter period of time. Many of these things are incompatible, and as research is just starting to show, simply harder and more stressful to do all at once in our 30s.
>
> The post-millennial midlife crisis isn't buying a red sports car. It's realizing you can't have that career you now want. It's realizing you can't have that child you now want, or you can't give your child a sibling. Too many thirtysomethings and fortysomethings look at themselves, and at me, sitting across the room, and say about their 20s, "What was I doing? What was I thinking?"
>
> […]Here's a story about how that can go. It's a story about a woman named Emma. At 25, Emma came to my office because she was, in her words, having an identity crisis. She said she thought she might like to work in art or entertainment, but she hadn't decided yet, so she'd spent the last few years waiting tables instead. Because it was cheaper, she lived with a boyfriend who displayed his temper more than his ambition.
>
> […]First, I told Emma to forget about having an identity crisis and get some

> identity capital. By “get identity capital,” I mean do something that adds value to who you are. Do something that’s an investment in who you might want to be next. I didn’t know the future of Emma’s career, and no one knows the future of work, but I do know this: Identity capital begets identity capital. So now is the time for that cross-country job, that internship, that startup you want to try. I’m not discounting twentysomething exploration here, but I am discounting exploration that’s not supposed to count, which, by the way, is not exploration. That’s procrastination. I told Emma to explore work and make it count.

I think that’s good advice. Have the goal of getting married through high school and college and the early working years. Do hard things to prepare yourself to for the *hard work* that marriage requires. The reason why so many people are divorcing is because they are trying to pursue happiness through their 20s, then jumping off into marriage after their lives have been wrecked by drinking, promiscuity, debts, self-centeredness and painful break-ups. That’s completely the wrong way to go about getting married.

Usually, when I meet a person who has not achieved as much as he/she wants to have done, I try to encourage the person to study hard things. Update their resume. Apply for better jobs. Start saving more money. Try to serve others. Take on more responsibilities, even if they are not fun. Usually, people understand why I am asking them to do hard things. Because the only way to develop “identity capital” is by saying “NO” to the desire for happiness, and “YES” to doing hard things. No, you can’t study philosophy. Yes, you have to study computer science. No you can’t work as a waitress. Yes, you have to apply for an office job. No, you can’t delay paying off your debts. Yes, you have to start investing $100 a month.

Structure and boundaries seem difficult to young people – like they are going to lose their ability to have fun. But in the long run, building something worthwhile is more important than short-term fun and thrills.

William Lane Craig: find a wife who is interested in your field of study or ministry

March 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Blake sent me this question and answer from Dr. William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith web site.

The question is this:

> Dear Dr. Craig,
>
> As one who has recently discovered the realm of apologetics in the past couple years, you were one of the first I had come to know, and it has been a pleasure reading some of your material and watching your debates. I am currently only a junior in college and am studying philosophy and religious studies and love it, and hope to attend seminary in the future and get my masters in apologetics, God willing.
>
> My question for you is not necessarily a theological or philosophical question but a question that I am hoping I could get some pastoral advice from you about that I feel you are perhaps the best suited to answer. I recently got married this past summer to an amazing woman I met at a one year bible college I attended a couple years ago and it has been great. But between transferring to a new (secular) school and being constantly busy with school and work I feel like my relationship with God is constantly on the backburner, as I am not getting into the word nearly as much as I used to and my prayer life is nearly nonexistent, and because of this my relationship with my wife is not where it should be either.
>
> I love my major and I love my wife, but they don't seem to overlap very well, as

> my studies are normally more time intensive than hers and also she see's my talking about it more as an annoyance than anything. I guess why I am writing you is because I am getting so spiritually burnt out and need advice on how to ignite/maintain my relationship with God and keep a healthy relationship with my wife and if having an aspiration of being an apologist is worth it. Not only does everyone else not see why I have picked the path I have because they see philosophy as impractical and I won't be able to support a family with such an aspiration, but the path itself is difficult as I do not have many other fellow Christians in my classes and so I am being practically scorned in all directions. I often ask myself if it is worth it and if I should find some other path that would be more conducive to married life and family life that her and I hope to start in the foreseen future.
>
> Dr. Craig is there a light at the end of the tunnel? Even if I make it through my undergraduate years, will seminary be any easier? I hope to seek out a spiritual mentor in the future but am still getting acquainted with our new local church and would love to have some direction until then. Thanks for your help and your great ministry!
>
> Wesley

I just want to quote the first part of Dr. Craig's answer, then I'll comment briefly below.

> Obviously, Wesley, not knowing you or your wife, I cannot counsel you adequately. Indeed, I'd urge you to treat this crisis with the utmost seriousness by finding a pastoral counselor or older married couple whom you both trust who can advise you on how to go forward.
>
> Before I respond to your concerns, Wesley, I want to alert other readers to the importance of what Wesley has to say. He has married a woman, who, though "amazing," does not share his interest in or burden for philosophy and apologetics and so finds his talking about such things an annoyance. **I strongly urge those of you who are single to make having a shared interest in your field of study and ministry a top criterion in selecting a spouse. It doesn't matter how beautiful she is or what a great cook she is if she has no interest in your field of study and so sees talking about things that you are passionate about as an annoyance.**

That's enough Dr. Craig – now it's time for my comments (which disagree with his in places).

First of all, if you are thinking of studying philosophy or New Testament, etc. then you either need to do it full-time and give up marriage and family, or do it part-time and make your main job a STEM job. I have a friend who has actually done the "full time STEM, part-time philosophy/New Testament" plan, and he has 3 Masters degrees (done part-time) and is completing a PhD (part-time) – and has not a stitch of debt. He is in his 30s. He does not intend to marry, so he is more focused on getting these degrees than saving up

for his marriage. His first priority is to put points on the scoreboard, and he doesn't see marriage as a way to help him do that.

Second, if you are a man with a plan whom God has invested with certain resources – degrees, finances, good health, etc. – then *you cannot throw it all away for the wrong woman.* Talk to the woman you want to marry, and see if she:

1. has cultivated characteristics that are useful in a wife and mother (chastity, sobriety, self-denial, hard work, frugality, etc.)
2. has rejected feminism and understands the roles, responsibilities and needs of men, women and children
3. accepts that the purpose of the relationship is to pool resources and cooperate in order to serve God better – not her and not you
4. accepts that following a plan is a produces better results than chasing culturally-determined notions of happiness
5. is able to identify threats to Christianity in the culture and has studied and prepared to respond to them
6. is able to acknowledge and understand what her husband is trying to achieve and respect his preparations and plans

One positive way to learn how to make good decisions about women is to take some time out to study economics, politics, etc. and develop a marriage plan that has realistic measurable goals and a realistic interim steps to reach them. That project plan enables you to prepare yourself for marriage and your male roles (provider!) by getting the right skills and resources. And it also allows you to lead a woman so that she can develop herself to be ready for marriage *to you*. I hope that she would already have done a lot of the work by herself, (chastity, STEM degree, debt-free, good job, apologetics, conservative politics), before she even meets you. Then what's left is just the final alterations to each of you so the fit is hand in glove.

I have always believed that I could lead any woman and make her more suitable for being a good wife and mother, no matter how badly she had screwed up her life before. So long as she takes responsibility for her own decisions, does not blame anyone else for her mistakes, and is *willing* to grow. That is the only way that she will be a suitable helper and the mother of effective, influential children. I think the women I have mentored would agree that however far we got, I left them better than when I found them. But some women do not want to be better, and that's the kind you need to avoid in order to avoid squandering your resources that God has entrusted to you to produce a return for him.

A good marriage cannot be finessed with emotions and intuitions and pursuing fun and thrills. It cannot be undertaken by people who refuse to grow up. It takes planning and work. You can't go to an Olympic ski jump, put on skis for the first time and slide down the ramp and stick the landing the first time. You have to train and practice first – a lot.

Nobody ever showed up at the Olympics and got a gold medal by doing what was easy and fun at every opportunity, throughout their teens and 20s.

My courting questions would have been very useful for detecting whether a woman is willing to develop herself so that she will be a good wife and mother. I don't think that the wife described in the original question above would have passed any of these questions. It's not the time to start asking these questions after you are already married, either. It was a huge mistake to be swayed by appearance, youth and fun. It was the man's mistake – he chose her. Don't you make the same mistake as this guy.

58 Democrats boycott Benjamin Netanyahu's address to Congress on Iran

March 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke before the U.S. Congress on Tuesday, and below you can find a round-up of reactions.

Here's The Daily Signal summarizing why Netanyahi opposes the deal:

> Netanyahu made the case before Congress that the White House's efforts to negotiate a deal with Iran have about as much in common with the Camp David Accords as an SNL skit has with a State of the Union Address. The administration's proposal is anything but a realistic plan for peace.
>
> A real peace plan would demonstrate that all sides were committed to not adding more nuclear weapons powers to the Middle East. The deal as it stands does the opposite—it preserves the nuclear option for Iran—and as result will prompt other regional powers to hedge their bets and prepare to go nuclear as well rather than live in Tehran's nuclear shadow.
>
> The proposed multi-year moratorium doesn't end concerns that Iran will build a bomb and put nuclear warheads on long-range missiles. Rather, under the agreement, Tehran can walk up to the edge of becoming a declared armed-nuclear state with a robust missile force and sit there. That hardly sets the condition for sure peace in our time.
>
> Meanwhile, even the shaky stalemate proposed by the agreement rests on the assumption that Tehran won't follow North Korea's path to breakout status by cheating on the agreement and then abrogating the deal when it no longer suits the regime.
>
> At the same time the price for Obama's peace comes pretty high. Tehran demands significant and immediate sanctions relief. That means more money for a corrupt regime with one of the world's worst human records to perpetuate strangled hold over the people of Iran.
>
> Obama's deal also means more money for Tehran to prop-up the likes of Hezbollah, Assad, Hamas, the Houthi rebels in Yemen and murderous unaccountable Shia militias in Iraq (which are as big a threat to the future of the country as ISIS). As one of the world's premier state-sponsors of terrorism, enabling and emboldening Iran's efforts to reshape the region by force of arms and slaughtering innocents doesn't make the prospects for peace in the region any brighter.
>
> All the partisan controversy and vitriol over Netanyahu's speech cannot obscure that the White House has no good answers to the legitimate concerns he raised.

Breitbart News summarizes how the speech was received:

> Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered a passionate, inspiring, thoughtful, and "game changing" speech before the American Congress which lasted for about 45 minutes, during which time he was applauded 43 times, often for 15 seconds at a time. His words elicited many standing ovations.
>
> The only other foreign leader to have spoken to Congress three times was Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister. In honor of that, Speaker of the House, John Boehnerplans to present Netanyahu with a bust of Churchill.
>
> Netanyahu received wild applause when he said: "The world should demand that Iran do three things. First, stop its aggression against its neighbors in the Middle East. Second, stop supporting terrorism around the world. And third, stop threatening to annihilate my country, Israel, the one and only Jewish state."
>
> Israel's Prime Minister again received rather thunderous applause and a standing ovation when he noted that Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel was in the audience—and when he said: "My friend, standing up to Iran is not easy. Standing up to dark and murderous regimes never is. Elie, your life and work inspires to give meaning to the words, 'never again!' And I wish I could promise you, Elie, that the lessons of history have been learned. I can only urge the leaders of the world not to repeat the mistakes of the past."
>
> At this point Congress outdid itself in term of applause and a standing ovation.
>
> PM Netanyahu was greeted with a thunderous ovation when he first arrived and again after he was introduced.

And here's Dennis Prager, writing at Investors Business Daily, explaining why Obama refused to meet with Netanyahu:

> The prime minister of Israel is at the forefront of the greatest battle against evil in our time — the battle against violent Muslims. No country other than Israel is threatened with extinction, and it is Iran and the many Islamic terror organizations that pose that threat.
>
> It only makes sense, then, that no other country feels the need to warn the world about Iran and Islamic terror as much as Israel.
>
> That's why, when Benjamin Netanyahu speaks to the United Nations about the threat Iran poses to his country's survival and about the metastasizing cancer of Islamist violence, he unfortunately stands alone.
>
> Virtually everyone listening knows he is telling the truth. And most dislike him for it. Appeasers hate those who confront evil.
>
> Given that this president is the least likely of any president in American history to confront evil — or even identify it — while Benjamin Netanyahu is particularly vocal and eloquent about both identifying and confronting evil, it is inevitable that the former will resent the latter.

Here is the list of 58 Democrats (House and Senate) who walked out of the speech.

> And a number of top Democrats — including Vice President Joe Biden, whose job description includes the title President of the Senate — didn't attend.
>
> […]At least 50 Democratic House members and eight senators who caucus with the Democrats said in recent weeks they wouldn't attend the speech, many in protest to a move that they say is an affront to the president.

The full transcript of the speech has been posted by The Weekly Standard.

Scott Walker: if sent a bill banning abortions after 20 weeks, “I will sign that bill”

March 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’m Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this decision

Life News reports on some good news:

> Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker is a likely pro-life candidate for the Republican nomination for president and he burnished those pro-life credentials today by issuing a letter saying he would sign a bill to ban abortions after 20 weeks.

> “As the Wisconsin legislature moves forward in the coming session, further protections for mother and child are likely to come to my desk in the form of a bill to prohibit abortions after 20 weeks. I will sign that bill when it gets to my desk and support similar legislation on the federal level. I was raised to believe in the sanctity of life and I will always fight to protect it.”
>
> The letter adds:
>
> Life is a value I learned from my parents, and it’s a value I have cherished every day, predating my time in politics. My policies throughout my career have earned a 100% rating with pro-life groups in Wisconsin. Just in my first term I signed numerous pieces of pro-life legislation and I will continue working for every life.
>
> In my past four years as governor, we have made substantial progress in the fight for our pro-life values in Wisconsin. We defunded Planned Parenthood. We prohibited abortion from being covered by health plans in a health exchange. We

> passed legislation assuring the women and their unborn child are better protected under law – through placing stringent requirements on medical professionals and requiring the provision of thorough and vital information to the mother.
>
> I was raised to believe in the sanctity of life and I will always fight to protect it.
>
> Pro-life groups were delighted by Walker's letter.
>
> "Wisconsin Right to Life is very happy to hear that Governor Walker intends to sign a bill that would protect unborn children who are capable of feeling pain," stated Heather Weininger, Executive Director of Wisconsin Right to Life. "In light of this excellent news, we urge the Wisconsin State Legislature to pass a bill to protect pain-capable unborn children as soon as possible."
>
> In 2013, Gov. Walker signed an ultrasound bill (Senate Bill 206, also known as Sonya's Law) that ensures that women seeking abortions are given the opportunity to see their unborn children through ultrasound. The legislation also requires abortionists to have admitting privileges within thirty miles of their facility. This is the kind of pro-woman, pro-life bill that not only has proven to save the lives of unborn babies, but it has closed down abortion clinics that can't comply with basic health and safety requirements. Sure enough, abortion centers in Wisconsin closed down after Walker signed the bill into law.
>
> […]Since Governor Walker took office in January 2011, the pro-life movement in Wisconsin has made monumental gains. Walker signed into law a state budget that included a provision to prohibit the UW Hospital Authority from being involved in performing abortions and from using taxpayer dollars to pay medical students to learn how to perform abortions. Walker steered Wisconsin Well Woman funds to local counties instead of Planned Parenthood.
>
> Governor Walker also signed bills that allow Wisconsin to opt out of abortion funding under Obamacare, to protect pregnant women from coerced abortions and to prohibit RU486 chemical web cam abortions.

Life News reminded us in 2014 that what Scott Walker did got results for unborn babies:

> Last year, abortions in Wisconsin dropped 4.4 percent and they declined 7.4 percent the year before. Now, Wisconsin Right to Life informs LifeNews abortions in the Badger State are down another 16 percent.
>
> "Last week, Wisconsin abortion providers stated under oath that abortions have decreased from 6,927 in 2012 to roughly 5,800 in 2013," stated Barbara L. Lyons, Executive Director of Wisconsin Right to Life. "This is another sharp decline of approximately 16%, continuing Wisconsin's record as having some of the lowest abortion numbers in the country."
>
> […]The abortion drop comes after pro-life Governor Scott Walker signed multiple pro-life bills into law.

I like to see results. A lot of people talk pro-life, and even vote pro-life – but very few sign pro-life bills into law and take the heat for doing so. I like what I've seen so far from Scott Walker. But I am very demanding, and very hard to please. I want to know what Scott Walker has done for unborn babies *lately*!

Yes, I realize that Wisconsin is a blue state, and that Wisconsin has voted for the Democrat candidate in every presidential election since 1988! So getting this pro-life bill signed there would be a tall order. But this is what people expect from Scott Walker. He is in first place in the GOP primary polls because Republican voters know that he regularly does the impossible. He takes on tough problems and he finds conservative solutions to them.

I am sick and tired of seeing Democrats get elected and then aggressively enacting their agenda. When we elect Republicans, I expect them to enact Republican priorities. Look at what is happening in the House with the executive amnesty capitulation. Before that we had the failure to vote on the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. And before that the Cromnibus debacle. I'm sick of it. Scott Walker has a history of taking on big challenges and winning. He can do it! And it would give pro-lifers even more reasons to vote for him than they already have.

Related posts

- Why didn't Scott Walker finish his fourth year of college at Marquette University?
- Scott Walker's new budget: tax cuts, spending cuts, school choice, smaller government
- Not just #1 in Iowa: Scott Walker leads in latest New Hampshire GOP primary poll
- With Romney out, Scott Walker leads Iowa poll with 16%, Bush at 9%
- Wisconsin governor Scott Walker draws standing ovations at Freedom Summit in Iowa
- Republican Scott Walker beats Mary Burke to win 2014 Wisconsin Governor race
- Wisconsin House passes Scott Walker's tax cut bill, headed to governor's desk
- Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker cuts taxes again, expects $1 billion surplus in 2015
- Wisconsin governor Walker's reforms hit the left in their wallets
- An interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Kenosha teachers vote to de-certify their teacher union, 63 – 37
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues

Do college students care about truth? What do they think truth is?

March 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What is truth?

If I want to understand what college students think about truth, I ask my friend Eric Chabot. He is the Ratio Christi ninja at Ohio State University. He can tell you more about what college kids think about ultimate issues than probably anyone else you know.

Here is his latest blog post at Think Apologetics.

He introduces the topic like this:

> Over the last ten years I have done outreach on a major college campus (The Ohio State University which has 56,000 students). I have had hundreds of spiritual conversations with students and direct an apologetics ministry called Ratio Christi Student Apologetics Alliance. It is no secret that many apologists have written books on the Truth question. In other words, the statement "we are living in postmodern times" has almost become cliche in today's society. Hence, because of the impact of post-modernism, many seem to assume that college students are not interested in objective truth. So the supposed fallout is that people are not asking whether Christianity is true. Given my experience on the campus, I will respond to this issue. So the good news is that I am truly speaking from personal experience.
>
> I will go ahead and give some definitions of truth here.

Eric likes to complain about pragmatism most, so he quotes a definition of the pragmatic view of truth:

> #1 Truth is not "what works." One popular theory is the pragmatic view of William James and his followers that truth is what works. According to James, "Truth is the expedient in the way of knowing. A statement is known to be true if

> it brings the right results. It is the expedient as confirmed by future experience." That this is inadequate is evident from its confusion of cause and effect. If something is true it will work, at least in the long run. But simply because something works does not make it true. This is not how truth is understood in court. Judges tend to regard the expedient as perjury. Finally, the results do not settle the truth question. Even when results are in, one can still ask whether the initial statement corresponded to the facts. If it did not, it was not true, regardless of the results.

And here are a couple more definitions that he encounters from the college kids:

> #5 Truth is not "what feels good." The popular subjective view is that truth gives a satisfying feeling, and error feels bad. Truth is found in our subjective feelings. Many mystics and new age enthusiasts hold versions of this faulty view, though it also has a strong influence among some experientially oriented Christian groups. It is evident that bad news can be true. But if what feels good is always true, then we would not have to believe anything unpleasant. Bad report cards do not make a student feel good, but the student refuses to believe them at his or her academic peril. They are true. Feelings are also relevant to individual personalities. What feels good to one may feel bad to another. If so, then truth would be highly relative. But, as will be seen in some detail in the next article, truth cannot be relative. Even if truth makes us feel good—at least in the long run—this does not mean that what feels good is true. The nature of truth does not depend on the result of truth.
>
> #6 Truth is not "what is existentially relevant." Following Soren Kierkegaard and other existential philosophers, some have insisted that truth is what is relevant to our existence or life and false if it is not. Truth is subjectivity. Kierkegaard said: truth is livable. As Martin Buber stated, truth is found in persons, not in propositions. However, even if truth is existential in some sense, not all truth fits into the existential category. There are many kinds of truth, physical, mathematical, historical, and theoretical. But if truth by its very nature is found only subjectively in existential relevance, then none of these could be truth. What is true will be relevant, but not everything relevant is true. A pen is relevant to an atheist writer. And a gun is relevant to a murderer. But this does not make the former true nor the latter good. A truth about life will be relevant to life. But not everything relevant to one's life will be true.

So what do students think?

> The most popular view today seems to be #1 (a pragmatic view of truth) and then coming in second place is a tie between #5 and #6 ("Truth is what feels good" and "Truth is what is existentially relevant").
>
> Many, many, students are viewing the Christian faith as something that helps them have a better life. In other words, they are not asking whether it is

> objectively true. Comments like “I don’t see what difference Jesus would make in my life” and “I don’t think it is relevant whether God exists or Jesus is the Son of God” are somewhat common.
>
> This shouldn’t be surprising given our entire culture is built on pragmatism. After all, people go to college to get a job that will work for them and help them get a good job. Furthermore, the Church has been embracing pragmatism for a long time. John MacArthur wrote an article called Church Pragmatism a long time ago. Not much has changed.

I don’t think there’s anything wrong with getting a good job when you’re finished college, as long as when you get that job you proceed to study everything else that matters. This is especially important for Christian men, who shoulder the load of providing for a family and the people around them. But I get his point.

The rest of Eric’s post offers a solution for how Christians can deal with pragmatism. My solution is to investigate their overall worldview and then introduce evidence that conflicts with their stated beliefs. For example, the kalam cosmological argument and the cosmic fine-tuning argument. It works better if you really can speak about the scientific or historical evidence for Christianity with authority. Just say to them that it’s fine with you if they want to believe things that aren’t truth because they are comfortable with them, but sometimes that will have disastrous consequences. The best way to puncture the self-confidence that pragmatic people have is to show them that at least some of their beliefs are flat out false. They can say that they don’t care, but at least they can’t say that what they believe is true.

Eric Holder’s DOJ finds officer Darren Wilson innocent in Michael Brown shooting

March 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ferguson protesters shut down highway

Normally, I would not post on this, but I think I must because of the way that the mainstream media and the culture as a whole swallowed a narrative that bashes police officers, and by extension the rule of law, and even the responsibility that criminals bear for their own actions.

Hot Air introduces the Department of Justice’s findings:

> The DOJ — Eric Holder’s DOJ — is clear as can be that it thinks Wilson was justified in shooting Michael Brown.
>
> […][The DOJ report] was a considered argument that not only is Wilson not guilty of a federal civil rights charge, he’s not guilty of a criminal offense of any sort. Had Wilson gone to trial, he could have submitted this as his motion to dismiss and the court might well have torpedoed the indictment before opening arguments.

Hot Air extracts some of the most interesting parts of the report, and I am injecting some photos of “hands-up” Democrats in between the findings.

Page 82:

> Wilson’s version is further supported by disinterested eyewitnesses Witness 102, Witness 104. Witness 105. Witness 108. and Witness 109. among others. Those witnesses all agree that Brown ran or charged toward Wilson and that Wilson shot at Brown only as Brown moved toward him. Although some of the witnesses stated that Brown briefly had his hands up or out at about waist-level, none of these witnesses perceived Brown to be attempting to surrender at any point

> when Wilson fired upon him. To the contrary, several of these witnesses stated that they would have felt threatened by Brown and would have responded in the same way Wilson did. For example. Witness 104 stated that as Wilson ran after Brown yelling “stop, stop. stop.” Brown finally turned around and raised his hands “for a second.” However. Brown then immediately balled his hands into fists and “charged” at Wilson in a “tackle run.” Witness 104 stated that Wilson fired only when Brown moved toward him and that she “would have fired sooner.” Likewise. Witness 105 stated that Brown turned around and put his hands up “for a brief moment.” then refused a command from Wilson to “get down” and instead put his hands “in running position” and maned running toward Wilson. Witness 105 stated that Wilson shot at Brown only when Brown was moving toward him. These witnesses’ accounts are consistent with prior statements they have given, consistent with the forensic and physical evidence, and consistent with each other’s accounts. Accordingly. we conclude that these accounts arc credible.

Democrats:

Democrats say “hands up!”

Page 84:

> When the shootings are viewed, as they must be, in light of all the surrounding circumstances and what Wilson knew at the time, as established by the credible physical evidence and eyewitness testimony, it was not unreasonable for Wilson to fire on Brown until he stopped moving forward and was clearly subdued. Although, with hindsight. we know that Brown was not armed with a gun or other weapon, this fact does not render Wilson’s use of deadly force objectively unreasonable. Again. the key question is whether Brown could reasonably have been perceived to pose a deadly threat to Wilson at the time he shot him regardless of whether Brown was armed. Sufficient credible evidence supports Wilson’s claim that he reasonably perceived Brown to be posing a deadly threat. First. Wilson did not know that Brown was not armed at the time he shot him, and had reason to suspect that he might be when Brown reached into the waistband of his pants as he advanced toward Wilson. S

> […]While Brown did not use a gun on Wilson at the SUV, his aggressive actions would have given Wilson reason to at least question whether he might be armed, as would his subsequent forward advance and reach toward his waistband. This is especially so in light of the rapidly-evolving nature of the incident. Wilson did not have time to determine whether Brown had a gun and was not required to risk being shot himself in order to make a more definitive assessment.

Democrats:

Another Democrat says “hands up”
Here’s a witness who was disqualified:

> Witness 101 is a 22-year-old black male who was walking in the middle of Canfield Drive with Brown when they encountered Wilson. Witness 101 made multiple statements to the media immediately following the incident that spawned the popular narrative that Wilson shot Brown execution style as he held up his hands in surrender. These media interviews occurred prior to Witness 101 giving his two statements. First, FBI and SLCPD jointly interviewed Witness 101 on August 13. 2014. in the presence of Witness 101’s mother. Witness 101’s two attorneys, and an individual who explained that he was in charge of Witness 101’s personal security. Witness 101 subsequently testified before the county grand jury.

After pointing out all the inaccuracies and inconsistencies in his testimony, the report concludes:

> Witness 101 has a misdemeanor conviction for a crime of dishonesty likely admissible in federal court as impeachment evidence. As described above, material parts of Witness 101’s account are inconsistent with the physical and forensic evidence. internally inconsistent from one part of his account to the next, and inconsistent with other credible witness accounts that are corroborated by physical evidence. It is also unclear whether Witness 101 had the ability to accurately perceive the shootings. Witness 101 likely crouched down next to a

> white Monte Carlo as Wilson chased Brown. The Monte Carlo was facing west with a view of the passenger side of the SUV. Brown ran in the opposite direction that the Monte Carlo was facing. Witness accounts vary as to whether Witness 101 was ducking for cover on the passenger side of the Monte Carlo with his back to the shooting, or whether he fled the scene prior to the final shots being fired. Both Witness 101's inconsistencies and his ability to perceive what happened, or lack thereof, make his account vulnerable to effective cross-examination and extensive impeachment. Accordingly, after a thorough review of all of the evidence, federal prosecutors determined material portions of Witness 101's account lack credibility and therefore determined that his account does not support a prosecution of Darren Wilson.

Now, I want you to think about what it meant that the mainstream media in this country, and their allies in the Democrat party, were able to cause riots, vandalism, crime, and all manner of unrest because of a lie. Did you fall for it? Do you know anyone who did? I would like to think that the same people who went rioting will hear about this from their favorite media propagandists, but I don't they they will. After all, getting to the truth is the last thing the media wanted to do. They won't cover the correction to their lies. They wanted to cause divisions, and prop up the Democrat party as the savior of colored people.

I recommend that everyone watch this 15-minute TED.com talk with Sharyl Attkisson: (H/T Drew)

For the record, my skin color is about the same as Sheila Jackson Lee, above.

Right-to-work states gained jobs three times faster than forced union states

March 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

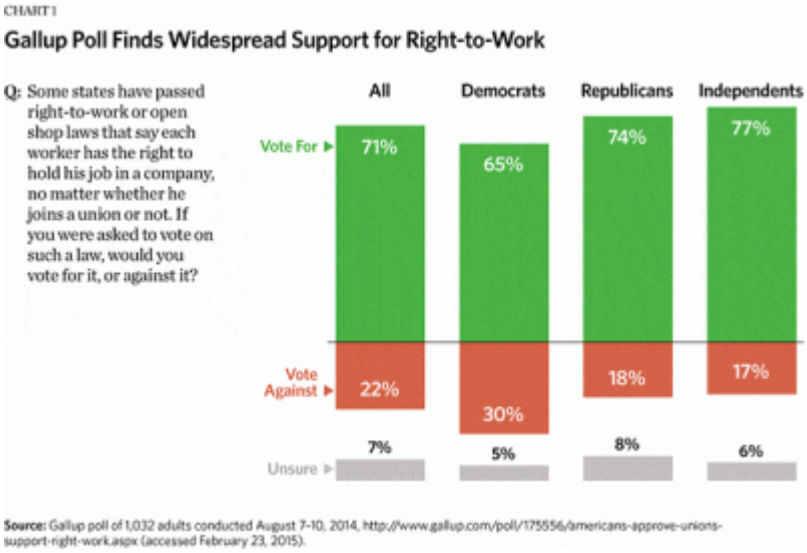

Gallup poll on right-to-work, August 2014

This is from economist Stephen Moore writing in Investors Business Daily.

He writes:

> Wisconsin is poised this week to become the 25th "right-to-work state," ending forced unionization and allowing individual workers to decide if they want to join a union or not.
>
> The Wisconsin Senate just recently passed right-to-work, and our sources in Madison say that the House, which is controlled by Republicans, will enact a similar law in the days ahead.
>
> Republican Gov. Scott Walker, a leading presidential candidate, is sure to sign the bill when it gets to his desk. "This isn't anti-union," insists Walker. "It restores worker rights and brings jobs back to Wisconsin."
>
> Some 3,000 liberal protesters stormed the Capitol in Madison over the weekend to reverse the momentum for the new law. This isn't Walker's first dust-up with union bosses. Four years ago, nearly 100,000 activists grabbed nationwide headlines when they protested his reforms in Wisconsin's collective bargaining process with public employee unions.
>
> If the new law passes, Wisconsin would join two other blue-collar, industrial Midwestern states — Michigan and Indiana — to recently adopt right-to-work. "If you had told me five years ago that right-to-work would become law in Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin, I wouldn't have thought it was even remotely possible," says economist Arthur Laffer.
>
> Laffer and I have conducted substantial economic research showing three times the pace of jobs gains in right-to-work states than in the states with forced union

> rules that predominate in deep blue states such as California, New York and Illinois.
>
> In the 2003-13 period, jobs were up by 8.6% in right-to-work states, and up only 3.7% in forced union states. Most of the southern states, with the exception of Kentucky, are right-to-work
>
> Many auto jobs in recent decades have moved out of Michigan and Ohio and into states such as Texas, Alabama and South Carolina, due in part to right-to-work laws in Dixie.
>
> But as union power recedes in the Midwestern states, many of the region's governors see factory jobs returning to their backyards. "Right to work is already lowering unemployment in Indiana and causing a manufacturing revival here," says Gov. Mike Pence.

Companies are more attracted to right-to-work states, and that means more jobs become available.

Here is Congressional testimony from James Sherk, senior policy analyst in labor economics at The Heritage Foundation. I really recommend bookmarking this article. Even though it is very long, it is up-to-date and comprehensive. I am linking to it because he responds to objections to right-to-work laws raised by unions.

Do right-to-work laws hurt the middle class?:

> **Union Strength and the Middle Class.** Unions and their supporters frequently claim the opposite: that unions helped build the middle class and weaker unions hurt all workers—not just union members. To make this point they often juxtapose the decline of union membership since the late 1960s with the share of income going to the middle class. The Economic Policy Institute did exactly this when criticizing the possibility of RTW in Wisconsin. These comparisons suffer from two problems. First, the absolute standards of living for middle-class workers have risen substantially over the past generation. Inflation-adjusted market earnings rose by one-fifth for middle-class workers between 1979 and 2011. After-tax incomes rose at an even faster pace. Middle-class workers today enjoy substantially higher standards of living than their counterparts in the 1970s.
>
> Secondly, these figures conflate correlation with causation. During the time period EPI examined union membership correlates well with their measure of middle-class income shares. Extending the graph back another two decades eliminates this correlation. U.S. union density surged in the late 1930s and during World War II. It peaked at about a third of the overall economy and private-sector workforce in the mid-1950s. During this time period America had few global competitors. From the mid-1950s onward global competition increased and U.S. union membership steadily declined. Between 1954 and 1970 union density dropped from 34.7 percent to 27.3 percent. Unions lost over a fifth of their

> support in just over a decade and a half.
>
> During this period middle-class income and living standards grew rapidly. No one remembers the 1950s and 1960s as bad for the middle class, despite the substantial de-unionization that occurred. Over a longer historical period changes in U.S. union strength show little correlation with middle-class income shares. Liberal analysts come to their conclusion by looking only at the historical period in which the two trends align.

Do right-to-work states have lower wages?:

> **Unions Argue RTW Hurts Wages.** In the same vein, unions argue that RTW laws lower wages. As the Wisconsin AFL-CIO recently claimed:

> These anti-worker Right To Work laws just force all working families to work harder for lower pay and less benefits, whether they're in a union or not. The average worker makes about $5,000 less and pensions are lower and less secure in Right to Work states.

> This statement contains a degree of truth: average wages in right-to-work states are approximately that much lower than in non-RTW states. This happens because right-to-work states also have below-average costs of living (COL). Virtually the entire South has passed RTW, but no Northeastern states have passed an RTW law. The Northeast has higher COL and higher average wages; the South has lower living costs and lower wages.
>
> […]All but one right-to-work state has living costs at or below the national average. All ten of the states with the highest COL have compulsory union dues. Analyses that control for these COL differences have historically found that RTW has no deleterious effects on workers' real purchasing power.
>
> Recently the Economic Policy Institute has claimed that workers in RTW states make 3 percent less than workers without RTW protection, even after controlling for living costs. Heritage replicated this analysis and found that EPI made two major mistakes: it included improper control variables and did not account for measurement error in their COL variables. These mistakes drive their results. Correcting these mistakes shows that private-sector wages have no statistically detectable correlation with RTW laws. The supplement and the appendices to this testimony explain the technical details of this replication. Properly measured, RTW laws have no effect on wages in the private sector.

Although the history of unions shows that unions were a valuable and necessary check on the power of greedy corporations in times past, today unions are using the dues they collect from workers to elect Democrats. The vast majority of political contributions made by the big unions go to Democrats.

Here's one example, using the Service Employees International Union numbers:

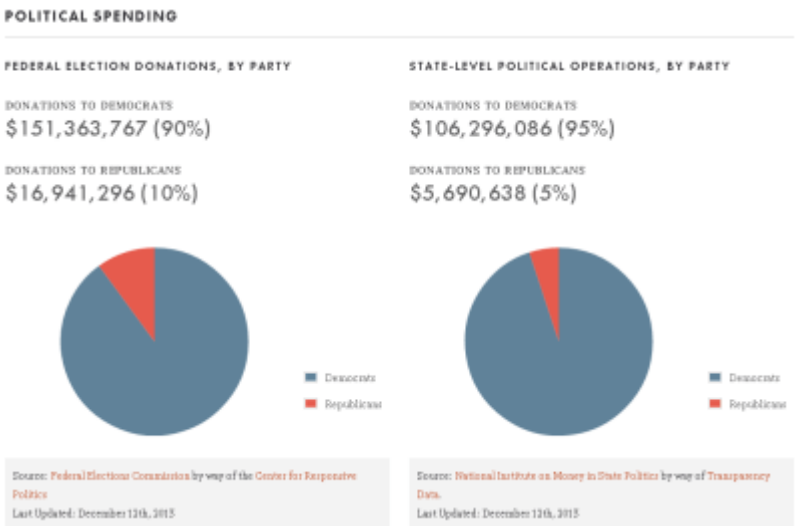

Service Employees International Union
(Click for larger image)

So if you oppose what Democrat politicians are doing, it makes sense to free workers from being forced to pay union dues for causes that are against their values. The average rank-and-file member of a union does not share Democrat values on things like abortion and gay marriage, in my opinion. Why should they be forced to pay union dues that go to elect politicians who oppose their values?

What do ancient non-Christian sources tell us about the historical Jesus?

March 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

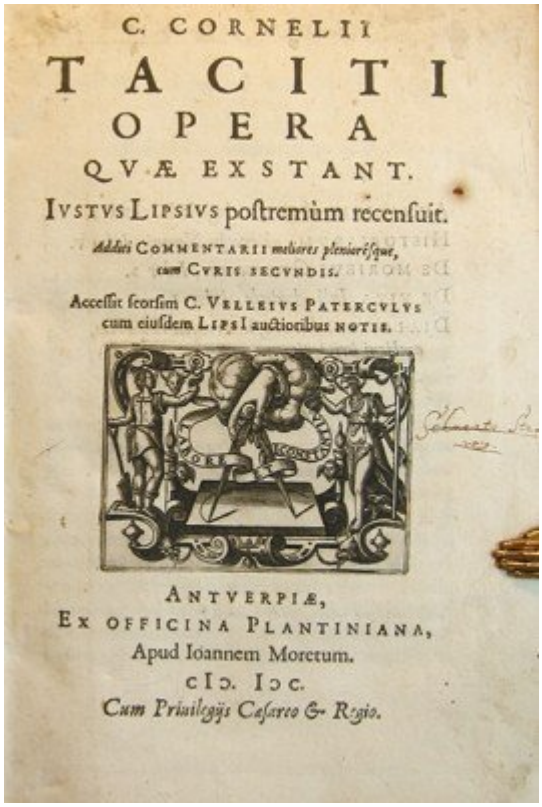
C. CORNELII
TACITI
OPERA
QVÆ EXSTANT.
IVSTVS LIPSIVS postremùm recensuit.
Addit COMMENTARII meliores pleniorésque, cum CVRIS SECVNDIS.
Accessit seorsim C. VELLEIVS PATERCVLVS cum eiusdem LIPSI auctioribus NOTIS.
ANTVERPIÆ,
EX OFFICINA PLANTINIANA,
Apud Ioannem Moretum.
CIↃ. IↃC.
Cum Priuilegijs Cæsareo & Regio.

The Annals, by Roman historian Tacitus

This article from Biblical Archaeology covers all the non-Christian historical sources that discuss Jesus.

About the author:

> Lawrence Mykytiuk is associate professor of library science and the history librarian at Purdue University. He holds a Ph.D. in Hebrew and Semitic Studies and is the author of the book Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200–539 B.C.E. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004).

Here are the major sections:

- Roman historian Tacitus
- Jewish historian Josephus
- Greek satirist Lucian of Samosata
- Platonist philosopher Celsus
- Roman governor Pliny the Younger
- Roman historian Suetonius
- Roman prisoner Mara bar Serapion

And this useful excerpt captures the broad facts about Jesus that we get from just the

first two sources:

> We can learn quite a bit about Jesus from Tacitus and Josephus, two famous historians who were not Christian. Almost all the following statements about Jesus, which are asserted in the New Testament, are corroborated or confirmed by the relevant passages in Tacitus and Josephus. These independent historical sources—one a non-Christian Roman and the other Jewish—confirm what we are told in the Gospels:31
>
> 1. He existed as a man. The historian Josephus grew up in a priestly family in first-century Palestine and wrote only decades after Jesus' death. Jesus' known associates, such as Jesus' brother James, were his contemporaries. The historical and cultural context was second nature to Josephus. "If any Jewish writer were ever in a position to know about the non-existence of Jesus, it would have been Josephus. His implicit affirmation of the existence of Jesus has been, and still is, the most significant obstacle for those who argue that the extra-Biblical evidence is not probative on this point," Robert Van Voorst observes.32 And Tacitus was careful enough not to report real executions of nonexistent people.
>
> 2. His personal name was Jesus, as Josephus informs us.
>
> 3. He was called Christos in Greek, which is a translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, both of which mean "anointed" or "(the) anointed one," as Josephus states and Tacitus implies, unaware, by reporting, as Romans thought, that his name was Christus.
>
> 4. He had a brother named James (Jacob), as Josephus reports.
>
> 5. He won over both Jews and "Greeks" (i.e., Gentiles of Hellenistic culture), according to Josephus, although it is anachronistic to say that they were "many" at the end of his life. Large growth
> in the number of Jesus' actual followers came only after his death.
>
> 6. Jewish leaders of the day expressed unfavorable opinions about him, at least according to some versions of the Testimonium Flavianum.
>
> 7. Pilate rendered the decision that he should be executed, as both Tacitus and Josephus state.
>
> 8. His execution was specifically by crucifixion, according to Josephus.
>
> 9. He was executed during Pontius Pilate's governorship over Judea (26–36 C.E.), as Josephus implies and Tacitus states, adding that it was during Tiberius's reign.
>
> Some of Jesus' followers did not abandon their personal loyalty to him even after his crucifixion but submitted to his teaching. They believed that Jesus later appeared to them alive in accordance with prophecies, most likely those found in the Hebrew Bible. A well-attested link between Jesus and Christians is that Christ, as a term used to identify Jesus, became the basis of the term used to identify his followers: Christians. The Christian movement began in Judea, according to Tacitus. Josephus observes that it continued during the first century. Tacitus

> deplores the fact that during the second century it had spread as far as Rome.

I remember reading the 1996 book by Gary Habermas entitled "The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ". This book is a little before the time of most of you young Christian apologists, but back before the time of Lee Strobel and J. Warner Wallace, this is the stuff we all read. Anyway, in the book he makes a list of all that can be known about Jesus from external sources. And fortunately for you, you don't have to buy the book because you can read chapter 9 of it right on his web site.

From Tacitus he gets this:

> From this report we can learn several facts, both explicit and implicit, concerning Christ and the Christians who lived in Rome in the 60s A.D. Chronologically, we may ascertain the following information.
>
> (1) Christians were named for their founder, Christus (from the Latin), (2) who was put to death by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilatus (also Latin), (3) during the reign of emperor Tiberius (14 37 A.D.). (4) His death ended the "superstition" for a short time, (5) but it broke out again, (6) especially in Judaea, where the teaching had its origin.
>
> (7) His followers carried his doctrine to Rome. (8) When the great fire destroyed a large part of the city during the reign of Nero (54 68 A.D.), the emperor placed the blame on the Christians who lived in Rome. (9) Tacitus reports that this group was hated for their abominations. (10) These Christians were arrested after pleading guilty, (11) and many were convicted for "hatred for mankind." (12) They were mocked and (13) then tortured, including being "nailed to crosses" or burnt to death. (14) Because of these actions, the people had compassion on the Christians. (15) Tacitus therefore concluded that such punishments were not for the public good but were simply "to glut one man's cruelty."

And from Josephus he gets this:

> (1) Jesus was known as a wise and virtuous man, one recognized for his good conduct. (2) He had many disciples, both Jews and Gentiles. (3) Pilate condemned him to die, (4) with crucifixion explicitly being mentioned as the mode. (5) The disciples reported that Jesus had risen from the dead and (6) that he had appeared to them on the third day after his crucifixion. (7) Consequently, the disciples continued to proclaim his teachings. (8) Perhaps Jesus was the Messiah concerning whom the Old Testament prophets spoke and predicted wonders. We would add here two facts from Josephus' earlier quotation as well. (9) Jesus was the brother of James and (10) was called the messiah by some.

So when you are reading the New Testament, these facts are the framework that you read within. It's a good starting point when dealing with people who have never looked into who Jesus was and what he taught and what his followers believed about him, right from the start.

Media silent on DOJ report that refutes their “hands up, don’t shoot” myth

March 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNN clowns lie about Ferguson “hands up, don’t shoot”

Yesterday, I reported on how the Department of Justice had found officer Darren Wilson innocent, and asserted that the mainstream media that spread lies about him would not correct their lies.

Newsbusters reported on how the mainstream media reported on the DOJ report.

Excerpt:

> “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot” has been the rallying cry of Ferguson protesters since officer Darren Wilson fatally shot Michael Brown on a Missouri street last August. Brown, the “gentle giant,” was shot while trying to surrender or de-escalate his encounter with Wilson. It was an article of faith on the left, and the three networks used the phrase 140 times in their coverage of Ferguson.
>
> **Now, the DOJ report and Attorney General Eric Holder have admitted that the catch phrase was based on false witness accounts. None of the networks apologized or admitted their own reporting spread that false narrative. Instead, they focused on DOJ’s assertions of racism in the Ferguson police department.**
>
> **In a press conference yesterday, AG Holder admitted that a false account of events had mysteriously gained popularity with the public, but he wouldn’t admit the media had some small part in this. “I recognize that the findings in our report may leave some to wonder how the department’s findings can differ so sharply from some of the initial, widely reported accounts of what transpired,” he said, “It remains not only valid – but essential – to question how such a strong alternative version of events was able to take hold so swiftly, and be accepted so readily.”**
>
> **Er, it might have something to do with people in the media and**

> **government (Holder very much included) being all too eager to believe, or at least cynically parrot that "alternative version." For example, the "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" phrase was mentioned 34 times by NBC, 51 by ABC and 55 by CBS from August 9, 2014 to March 3, 2015.**
>
> **But only the CBS *Evening News*, which gave 42 seconds to clearing Wilson, noted that there was "no credible evidence Brown had his hands up attempting to surrender."**
>
> […]It's not just the broadcast news that was complicit in spreading false information and adding fuel to the fire in the Ferguson case. Shockingly, a CNN panel even participated in siding with the protesters by hosting their own, "Hands Up" protest after the grand jury found Wilson not guilty of any criminal charges in December.

You can see the CNN panel raising their hands in order to spread the "hands up, don't shoot" lie in the photo above.

Is media bias real?

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling

> $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

I think that we need to be really careful when we watch the mainstream media news channels. It's not good to willingly subject ourselves to lies that we find comfortable – that fit within our already-established prejudices. As you can see from the handling of the DOJ report on Ferguson, we should be skeptical of what we hear from the news media.

Atheist struggles with the problem of rationally grounding moral values and duties

March 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Which worldview rationally grounds morality?

An atheist named John Gray wrote a piece in the radically leftist UK Guardian that's been getting a lot of attention from Christians.

Here's Gray:

> Awkwardly for these atheists, Nietzsche understood that modern liberalism was a secular incarnation of these religious traditions. [. . .] Nietzsche was clear that the chief sources of liberalism were in Jewish and Christian theism: that is why he was so bitterly hostile to these religions. He was an atheist in large part because he rejected liberal values. To be sure, evangelical unbelievers adamantly deny that liberalism needs any support from theism. If they are philosophers, they will wheel out their rusty intellectual equipment and assert that those who think liberalism relies on ideas and beliefs inherited from religion are guilty of a genetic fallacy. Canonical liberal thinkers such as John Locke and Immanuel Kant may have been steeped in theism; but ideas are not falsified because they originate in errors. The far-reaching claims these thinkers have made for liberal values can be detached from their theistic beginnings; a liberal morality that applies to all human beings can be formulated without any mention of religion. Or so we are continually being told. **The trouble is that it's hard to make any sense of the idea of a universal morality without invoking an understanding of what it is to be human that has been borrowed from theism.**

Here's Maverick Philosopher to explain why the atheist has this intuition:

> Consider *equality*. As a matter of empirical fact, we are not equal, not physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, socially, politically, economically. By no empirical measure are people equal. We are naturally unequal. And yet we are

> supposedly equal *as persons*. This equality as persons we take as requiring equality of treatment. Kant, for example, insists that every human being, and indeed very rational being human or not, exists as an end in himself and therefore must never be treated as a means to an end. A person is not a thing in nature to be used as we see fit. For this reason, slavery is a grave moral evil. A person is a rational being and must be accorded respect just in virtue of being a person. And this regardless of inevitable empirical differences among persons. Thus in his third formulation of the Categorical Imperative in his 1785 *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant writes:
>
> Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only. (*Grundlegung* 429)
>
> In connection with this supreme practical injunction, Kant distinguishes between price and dignity. (435) "Whatever has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; on the other hand, whatever is above all price, and therefore admits of no equivalent, has dignity." Dignity is intrinsic moral worth. Each rational being, each person, is thus irreplaceably and intrinsically valuable with a value that is both infinite — in that no price can be placed upon it — and the same for all. The irreplaceability of persons is a very rich theme, one we must return to in subsequent posts.
>
> These are beautiful and lofty thoughts, no doubt, and most of us in the West (and not just in the West) accept them in some more or less confused form. But what do these pieties have to do with reality? Especially if reality is exhausted by space-time-matter?
>
> Again, we are not equal by any empirical measure. We are not equal as animals or even as rational animals. (Rationality might just be an evolutionary adaptation.) We are supposedly equal as persons, as subjects of experience, as free agents. But what could a person be if not just a living human animal (or a living 'Martian' animal). And given how bloody many of these human animals there are, why should they be regarded as infinitely precious? Are they not just highly complex physical systems? Surely you won't say that complexity confers value, let alone infinite value. Why should the more complex be more valuable than the less complex? And surely you are not a species-chauvinist who believes that *h. sapiens* is the crown of 'creation' because we happen to be these critters.
>
> If we are unequal as animals and equal as persons, then a person is not an animal. What then is a person? And what makes them equal in dignity and equal in rights and infinite in worth?

When it comes to discussing morality, we aren't interested in what people *can do* if they feel like it. We are not interested in feelings at all. We are interested in whether a worldview provides a rational grounding for the moral value of human beings, and the moral duties we have towards other human beings.

In the past, I've written that morality can only be *rationally* grounded by a worldview that

includes the following 5 concepts:

> 1) Objective moral values
>
> There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.
>
> 2) Objective moral duties
>
> Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?
>
> 3) Moral accountability
>
> Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?
>
> 4) Free will
>
> In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.
>
> 5) Ultimate significance
>
> Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Atheism can ground none of these. Christian theism grounds all five of them.

And it's because of this fact that people look on atheism as a flight from morality, rather than a serious grappling with the moral life. When Christian theists hear about stories like

Dr. Richard Carrier announcing that he's been cheating on his wife, who supported his atheistic ministry for years while he did essentially nothing productive, we are not surprised. He's only following the advice of Dr. Richard Dawkins, who is a big advocate for adultery. And then there is atheist apologist John Loftus – adultery is what got him started in atheism.

Self-sacrificial, incumbent morality makes as much sense on atheism as astrophysics makes to fishes. It's a complete reduction of the question "what ought I to do in order to be good?" to "what pleasurable things can I get away with doing in this time and place?" Anything. Goes.

What if you only had four minutes to defend Israel's attack on the Canaanites?

March 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

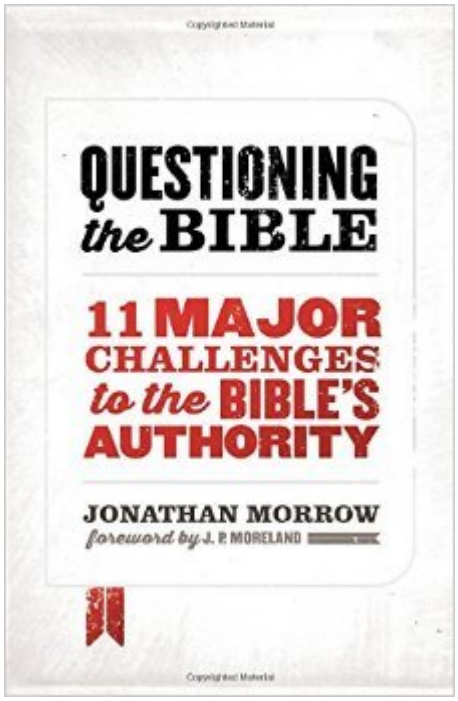

"Questioning the Bible" by Jonathan Morrow

Jonathan Morrow is giving you just four minutes to respond to a well-known challenge to belief in the Christian God.

Can you handle it?

If not, here is a podcast to help you get ready.

Description:

> ***Is the God of the Old Testament violent and bloodthirsty? Did God really command genocide? Why did Israel attack the Canaanites?*** These are just a few of the tough questions I tackle in this episode of the think Christianly podcast. Learn how to respond to one of the most challenging and emotional objections to Christianity in under 10 minutes.

Summary:

- quotes Richard Dawkins to set up the objection
- response: does God have the authority to give and take life?
- response: after the Fall, things in the world are not the way they are supposed to be
- response: Old Testament commands for the Jews to judge other nations are specific to them in that time
- response: "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing" are not accurate descriptions of the attack on Canaan
- response: the attack on the Cannanites takes place in the context of redeeming the

whole world

Here is the Christian Post article he was interviewed for, where he had to answer:

> Jonathan Morrow, author of *Questioning the Bible: 11 Major Challenges to the Bible's Authority*, says readers are often perplexed by Old Testament scripture because "sometimes we just picture a God where anger and love can't co-exist." Yet he explains, "We all have seen people who have been taken advantage of and that makes us angry [because] we love them. So those emotions can co-exist."
>
> […]Along that same line, Morrow clarifies that God's instructions to the Israelite army in Deuteronomy 20 to destroy the people occupying the land of Canaan is "about judgment, not genocide."
>
> "The Bible teaches clearly that all people are sinful and in rebellion, kind of living in open rebellion against God, and God is just to judge anyone," says Morrow. "But in this particular case with the Canaanites, there's several things going on there, but one of those things was the wickedness of the people which was well documented – child sacrifices to Moloch and others, and bestiality and a lot wickedness."
>
> He says this judgment was necessary because "Israel's national survival was crucial so that the Messiah – we would know Jesus as the Messiah – and God's saving purposes of redemption to the world could one day be born because if the Messiah was supposed to come through the lineage of Israel and Israel co-mingled with this wicked people and was ultimately destroyed, that promise of hope and blessing to the whole world could not have been realized."
>
> […]Morrow recognizes that Old Testament questions are particularly challenging. "We live in a sound bite culture and so this is one of those questions where it kind of gets thrown out for people, why does God command genocide, and that's really easy to say and then it takes some time to respond to because there's some context."
>
> Morrow says his sound bite answer is: "These passages are about judgment; they're not about genocide."
>
> However, he encourages believers to find out the asker's real interest in this question. "I would ask them, you know, it sounds like this is a pretty emotional question for you, why is that. Let them talk about it some so you can better understand because that's the goal. We're not just trying to win an argument; we're trying to understand and help people."
>
> It the asker is after truth, Morrow advises Christians to "ask them … are you interested in kind of walking through and getting kind of messy about looking at the evidence for this because I'd love to share that with you, and sometimes they'll go, 'yeah, that'll be great.'"
>
> Other times, Morrow says, the asker is simply looking for "space and distance

> from God and this question allows them to put space between them and God."

By the way, Morrow and McDowell's basic apologetics book – "Is God Just a Human Invention?" – is my first pick when mentoring new people in apologetics.

UPDATE: J.W. Wartick has reviewed the 11 Questions book on his blog.

U.S. millennials perform horribly on technology tests compared to other countries

March 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

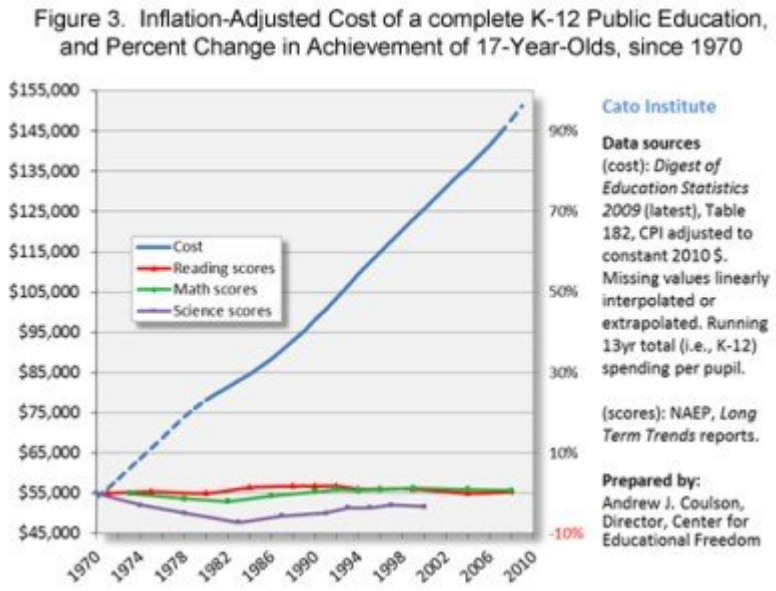

Education spending has tripled since 1970
This is from the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> There was this test. And it was daunting. It was like the SAT or ACT — which many American millennials are no doubt familiar with, as they are on track to be the best educated generation in history — except this test was not about getting into college. This exam, given in 23 countries, assessed the thinking abilities and workplace skills of adults. It focused on literacy, math and technological problem-solving. The goal was to figure out how prepared people are to work in a complex, modern society.
>
> And U.S. millennials performed horribly.
>
> That might even be an understatement, given the extent of the American shortcomings. No matter how you sliced the data – by class, by race, by education – young Americans were laggards compared to their international peers. In every subject, U.S. millennials ranked at the bottom or very close to it, according to a new study by testing company ETS.
>
> “We were taken aback,” said ETS researcher Anita Sands. “We tend to think millennials are really savvy in this area. But that’s not what we are seeing.”
>
> The test is called the PIAAC test. It was developed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, better known as the OECD. The test was meant to assess adult skill levels. It was administered worldwide to people ages 16 to 65. The results came out two years ago and barely caused a ripple. But recently ETS went back and delved into the data to look at how millennials

> did as a group. After all, they're the future – and, in America, they're poised to claim the title of largest generation from the baby boomers.
>
> U.S. millennials, defined as people 16 to 34 years old, were supposed to be different. They're digital natives. They get it. High achievement is part of their makeup. But the ETS study found signs of trouble, with its authors warning that the nation was at a crossroads: "We can decide to accept the current levels of mediocrity and inequality or we can decide to address the skills challenge head on."
>
> The challenge is that, in literacy, U.S. millennials scored higher than only three countries.
>
> In math, Americans ranked last.
>
> In technical problem-saving, they were second from the bottom.
>
> "Abysmal," noted ETS researcher Madeline Goodman. "There was just no place where we performed well."
>
> Nope. U.S. millennials with master's degrees and doctorates did better than their peers in only three countries, Ireland, Poland and Spain. Those in Finland, Sweden and Japan seemed to be on a different planet.
>
> Top-scoring U.S. millennials – the 90th percentile on the PIAAC test – were at the bottom internationally, ranking higher only than their peers in Spain. The bottom percentile (10th percentile) also lagged behind their peers.

Now the problem can't be to spend more money on education – we already spend more money than all the other countries.

Excerpt:

> The United States spent more than $11,000 per elementary student in 2010 and more than $12,000 per high school student. When researchers factored in the cost for programs after high school education such as college or vocational training, the United States spent $15,171 on each young person in the system — more than any other nation covered in the report.
>
> That sum inched past some developed countries and far surpassed others. Switzerland's total spending per student was $14,922 while Mexico averaged $2,993 in 2010. The average OECD nation spent $9,313 per young person.

So the solution has to be something else. What could it be? Previously, I linked to some ideas from Bobby Jindal. I think that's the direction that we need to go in if we are to solve the problem. It's pretty clear that raising taxes and throwing more money at teachers who can never be fired no matter how badly they perform is not the answer. It's probably a good idea for kids to focus less on indoctrinating kids in leftist ideology, e.g. – sex education, postmodern skepticism and moral relativism. It's probably a better idea for parents to take more responsibility for raising their kids and making sure that they do their homework and develop a love of learning. But that would require that we teach

children as projects and have goals for them that we push them towards.

373 children were victims of UK Muslim sex trafficking gang in Oxfordshire

March 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

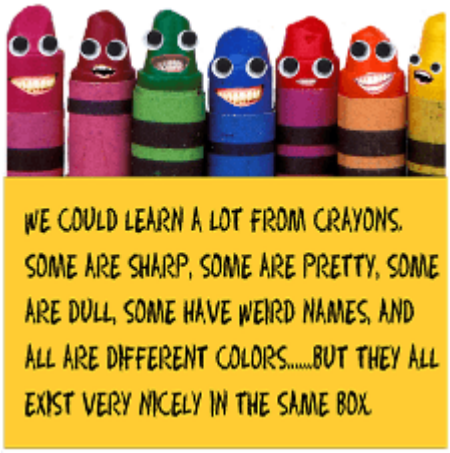

The UK Labour Party

This is reported by the ultra-leftist BBC, so they are very politically correct.

They write:

> As many as 373 children may have been targeted for sex by gangs of men in Oxfordshire in the last 16 years, a serious case review found.
>
> The investigation came after a sadistic sex gang of seven men were jailed in 2013 for abusing six girls in Oxford, between 2004 and 2012.
>
> Thames Valley Police and Oxfordshire County Council made “many errors” in that case and could have acted sooner.
>
> A victim of the gang said the issue had been “swept under the carpet”.
>
> Of the 373 cases, the council said about 50 victims were boys.
>
> […]The report also called for research into why a significant proportion of people convicted in these kind of cases are of “Pakistani and/or Muslim heritage”.
>
> In the Oxford case, known as Operation Bullfinch, two of the men were of east African origin and five of Pakistani origin.

Part of the problem with dealing with problems caused by unrestricted immigration from Muslim countries (e.g. – gang raping, sex-trafficking, terrorism) is that the leftist political parties don’t dare take action for fear of offending Muslims.

You’ll recall that our own State Department and President have both made statements to the effect that Islamic terrorists are only committing acts of terrorism because they are poor. Presumably, they also think that poor Christians and Jews would do the same if they were poor. It has nothing at all to do with an anti-West culture that is rooted in radical Islam. The solution – according to the secular left – is to give them jobs.

Let’s take a look at the story of Jihad John to see how well that worked:

> Jihadi John family's 20 years on benefits: How it's cost taxpayers up to £400k to house fanatic and his relatives in upmarket areas
>
> - Mohammed Emwazi's family granted asylum in 1996 after leaving Kuwait
> - They have since lived in five homes, one of which was worth £450 per week
> - Neither his father Jasem, 51, nor mother Ghaneya worked while in Britain
> - Westminster City Council is still paying rent on family's £600,000 flat
> - One landlord described the family as 'parasites' and 'tenants from hell'
> - MPs blasted family for 'abusing hospitality' and say payouts are 'disgrace'
>
> Jihadi John and his asylum-seeking family have milked the British benefits system for 20 years, the Mail can reveal today.
>
> Housing the Islamic State executioner and his relatives in affluent parts of London has cost taxpayers up to £400,000.
>
> One landlord said Mohammed Emwazi's family were 'parasites' and 'tenants from hell'. Incredibly, they are still believed to be pocketing £40,000 a year in handouts despite there being no sign of them in Britain.
>
> Emwazi's father Jasem, who has six children, is back in his native Kuwait – the country he claimed he fled fearing for his life.
>
> Westminster City Council is still paying the rent on the family's £600,000 flat even though the rules say housing benefit should normally be stopped after 13 weeks.
>
> […]The Mail investigation can also reveal that:
>
> - The family fled Kuwait after the first Gulf War, claiming persecution because they were seen to favour the Iraqi invasion in 1990;
> - They claimed asylum in the UK and won refugee status in 1996;
> - Five years later they were made British citizens and then started travelling back to Kuwait;
> - The family have claimed hundreds of thousands of pounds in benefits in Britain since their arrival in the country and lived in homes costing £450 a week;
> - Emwazi's father is now back working in Kuwait while the family continues to receive state assistance for the home in Queen's Park.
>
> The owner of a house in Little Venice where they lived for four years said Westminster City Council paid £450 a week in rent for the family – £23,400 a year.
>
> Two more of the five owners of homes they have lived in have confirmed their rent was paid by the council or through a housing association.
>
> Assuming the same £23,400-a-year cost, then the bill over 20 years is £468,000.

I think what the secular left really means by "give them jobs" is "give them money for

doing nothing”, i.e. – welfare. Political correctness is an ideology for wealthy elites, but it’s not so good for the poor people who actually have to deal with the consequences of the bad policies.

Now if you ask the Labour Party, who created these generous immigration policies and welfare programs, about their policies, they will tell you that this is all working as designed. It’s a feature, not a bug. They feel very good about themselves, calling good evil, and evil good. They are very generous handing out money they didn’t work for to people who then use it to kill the people who worked for the money. This is morally good, according to the secular left.

If we are really going to get serious about the problem, maybe we need leaders who aren’t so politically correct.

Police will charge gay activist Adam Hoover with faking his own abduction

March 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This was reported by NBC News.

They say:

> A suburban Cincinnati gay rights activist was charged with a misdemeanor early Tuesday after police say he falsely claimed online that he was kidnapped and thrown in the trunk of his car, NBC affiliate WLWT reported. In a post on Facebook and Twitter just before 12:30 a.m. ET, Adam Hoover alerted his friends and followers that he was in danger. He said he was using social media instead of dialing 911 because he didn't want to be heard.
>
> "Please help me I'm in the trunk of my ford escort red 2000 gbh 2812," the 20-year-old wrote. "They said they are going to kill my family please call 911 I don't want them to hear me." He included his mother's phone number and his family's address. "Please please call. I don't want to die," he added.
>
> The plea for help spread quickly on social media and sparked an immediate search in the Cincinnati area. But after investigating, Green Township police and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office believe the kidnapping was a hoax. Authorities discovered Hoover's car abandoned on a highway near the Ohio-Indiana border, WLWT reported. He was seen coming out of a nearby home with police and was unharmed, according to the station. Police didn't immediately release a motive for why Hoover allegedly faked his own abduction.

What was interesting about this story is that the local paper considered spiking the story rather than make this gay activist look bad.

Newsbusters explains:

> In its two reports on the story Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* posted the following introductory note:
>
> We decided to publish this story because it dealt with a prominent local figure who posted claims in a very public setting. We understand and respect Mr. Hoover's privacy, but we also believe it's important to cover public figures and events that potentially have an impact on public safety resources.
>
> By indicating that a "decision to publish" was made, the *Enquirer* has undeniably and outrageously admitted that it considered not reporting the results of a story which had already gone viral. Why?
>
> It would seem that a factor contributing to that reluctance is that Hoover, according to local TV station WLWT, "is a founder of Marriage Equality Ohio, which he helped create in 2010." (The Enquirer's Wednesday report says

> that"Hoover started working for Marriage Equality Ohio in 2011 and has done most of the promotion work for the organization since then.")
>
> Thus, there appear to have been discussions in the *Enquirer* newsroom about how reporting on Hoover might hurt his cause. It's also reasonable to believe that the paper was pressured by outsiders and/or parent company Gannett to either not cover Hoover's hoax or to downplay it as much as possible. The introductory note at its two stories comes off as a de facto "Sorry, we wish we could ignore this, but we can't, so please-please-please don't hate us for it" apology to those who would have wanted the story suppressed.
>
> **If there was pressure to downplay the story, those who exerted it appear to have gotten their way, as headlines relating to Hoover disappeared quite quickly from the *Enquirer*'s home page.**
>
> It's hard to imagine that the *Enquirer* would have been so deferential if the person faking his abduction had been an advocate on the other side of the same-sex "marriage" issue.

So the headlines eventually disappeared from their web site. Interesting.

You can read about more fake hate crimes against gays from Life Site News.

There was another story like this one in the news, recently. This one concerns Wikileaks leaker Bradley Manning.

Excerpt:

> "After carefully considering the recommendation that (hormone treatment) is medically appropriate and necessary, and weighing all associated safety and security risks presented, I approve adding (hormone treatment) to Inmate Manning's treatment plan," Col. Erica Nelson, the commandant of the Fort Leavenworth Disciplinary Barracks in Kansas, wrote in a Feb. 5 memo.
>
> **Formerly named Bradley Manning, the soldier was convicted of sending classified documents to anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks. Manning is serving a 35-year prison sentence and is eligible for parole in about seven years.**
>
> At Manning's trial, her attorneys argued she had been disillusioned by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and believed the release of the documents, including diplomatic cables and military reports, should be seen by the public.
>
> Manning sued the federal government for access to the treatment. The Army referred questions about Manning to the Department of Justice, which has been handling the case. Nicole Navas, a Justice Department spokeswoman, declined to comment, saying the government's position is detailed in court filings.
>
> The American Civil Liberties Union, which represents Manning in the case, did not have an immediate comment on the Army's memo.
>
> Manning had asked for hormone therapy and to be able to live as a woman.

> Transgender individuals are not allowed to serve in the U.S. military and the Defense Department does not provide such treatment. The Department of Veterans Affairs, however, does provide the treatment for veterans.

That's the same Department of Veterans Affairs that provides such poor care for veterans who actually fought in wars, rather than for people like Manning, who just gave away our military secrets. If the government is in control of health care, then the government gets to decide who gets treated. Their idea of who deserves health care might not be the same as the taxpayers who pay for it, but oh well.

Related posts

- Human Rights Campaign co-founder Terry Bean arrested for sex crime with 15-year-old
- Gay activist inside IRS leaked names of pro-marriage donors to Human Rights Campaign
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Christian man fired after gay rights group contacts his employer to complain
- ABC News writes pro-gay adoption piece about two dads, now convicted pedophiles
- Gay rights activist who ran pedophile ring gets life sentence
- Democrats vote to protect pedophiles in H.R. 1913 hate crime bill
- College allows transgender man to expose himself to young girls
- Gay activist pleads guilty to sexually assaulting boys
- Famous gay activist pleads guilty to child pornography charges
- Gay activist honored by Barack Obama charged with sex crimes with a minor
- Gay man gets 40-year sentence for molesting boy he adopted from Russia
- Some supporters of gay marriage favor normalizing pedophilia and incest
- Gay rights activist accused of sexually assaulting 17-year-old boy
- Gay rights activist convicted of manslaughter
- Gay health expert charged with selling adopted 5-year old boy for sex

E-mails released by Clinton: there are “months, and months, and months” missing

March 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Signal reports:

> During an appearance on CBS News’ “Face the Nation” today, Rep. Trey Gowdy said there are “huge gaps” in the emails he has received from former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton related to the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, on Sept. 11, 2012.
>
> “There are gaps of months and months and months,” Gowdy told CBS News’ Bob Schieffer.
>
> The South Carolina Republican, who is leading the House’s Benghazi investigation, said he has nearly 800 pages of Clinton’s emails, but none from her 2011 trip to Libya.
>
> Gowdy mentioned the “iconic” photo of then-Secretary Clinton during that trip, looking at her “handheld device.”
>
> “We have no emails from that day. In fact, we have no emails from that trip. So, it strains credibility to believe that if you’re on your way to Libya to discuss Libyan policy that there’s not a single document that’s been turned over to Congress. So there are huge gaps,” said Gowdy.
>
> Gowdy said Clinton doesn’t get to determine what does or does not constitute “public record.”
>
> “I continue to naively believe that people have a right to expect their government to tell them the truth in the aftermath of a tragedy,” said Gowdy.
>
> Gowdy said in the absence of “all” of Clinton’s emails, he wouldn’t be making a “selective release” of the ones he does have.

The important thing to realize about this is that because the e-mails were stored on Clinton’s servers, she can just delete the ones she doesn’t want us to see and we will never see them. There are no back-ups. Now unless you believe she is some sort of saint who couldn’t misuse this situation to hide immoral and or illegal actions, this is very disturbing. Remember that the Clinton Foundation is taking in millions of dollars from foreign governments, as I wrote about before. Who knows what she was offering in exchange for these donations? Since we have no access to her e-mails, we will probably never know. That’s why federal employees are obligated by law to use their secure, backed-up e-mail accounts – to avoid corruption and fraud.

Obama is saying he had no idea that her e-mail address was not a secure, backed-up State Department e-mail address:

> President Obama says he first learned from news reports that his former

> secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, used a private email account during her tenure, amid reports the White House and State Department may have known as far back as last August that Clinton did not use government email.
>
> "The same time everybody else learned it, through news reports," Obama told CBS' Bill Plante, in response to a question of when the president learned of Clinton's use of a private email account for conducting government business.

This is actually the same line he has used for the many, many scandals afflicting his corrupt administration:

> The Obama administration has been engulfed in an unending stream of scandals — and President Barack Obama learned of most of them through news reports.
>
> From the 2012 Benghazi attacks that killed four Americans, to the IRS targeting conservative nonprofit groups, to the revelations about veterans dying while waiting for care because of falsified lists at the Department of Veterans Affairs, the president and his top aides have admitted that they found out about them in the media.
>
> "I first learned about it from the same news reports that I think most people learned about this," Obama said in June 2013 when he was asked about the IRS scandal. "I think it was on Friday."

Is this corruption a problem?

I think if you are one of the people who vote Democrat because they are essentially paying you to vote for them through government programs, then this isn't a problem. It's not even a problem for the clueless millennials who also vote for him, even though they are the ones who are going to be stuck with the bill for the bribes. If you're a single mother by choice who is getting welfare from the government, then you'll keep voting Democrat to keep the money coming. But the loan will be paid back by your fatherless child. What a world.

Related posts

- Hillary Clinton used her private e-mail account to conduct State Department business
- E-mails: Hillary Clinton's top aides knew in minutes that Benghazi was a terrorist attack
- Clinton Foundation receives millions in donations from regimes that oppress women
- As senator, Hillary Clinton paid women 72 cents for every dollar she paid men
- Hillary Clinton's fake Bosnia gunfire story and her abortion award
- Hillary Clinton: don't let anybody tell you that corporations and businesses create jobs
- Hillary Clinton aides were present to "separate" damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- Universities raise tuition while paying hundreds of thousands to Hillary Clinton

to speak
- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- Hillary Clinton opposes bill to cut taxpayer funding of abortions abroad

Planet Fitness expels woman for judging transexual man in women's locker room

March 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the local news story from WNEM. (H/T Ari)

Excerpt:

> It's a business that sells itself on being non-judgmental but Planet Fitness has allegedly revoked the membership of a woman for complaining.
>
> Yvette Cormier, a member at the Midland location, says she had no idea what that meant until a few days ago.
>
> "I was stunned and shocked. He looked like a man.. He did not look like a woman," Cormier said. Cormier is talking about a transgender woman who walked into the woman's locker room while she was getting undressed. She says she couldn't believe her eyes.
>
> "This is very unprofessional. This is very scary," Cormier said.
>
> Not knowing why the person was in the women's locker room, Cormier said she immediately complained to the front desk and eventually to corporate offices.
>
> "They told me the same thing, that he was allowed in there because that's the sex he wants to be," Cormier said.
>
> Cormier said she understands that some men self-identify as women and some women self-identify as men, but said the person looked like a man and that caught her off guard.
>
> Cormier lost her membership for violating the company's no judgement zone policy.
>
> Moving forward, Cormier said she isn't concerned with getting her membership back. Her concern now is to warn other women at this gym to make them aware of this policy, because she says Planet Fitness failed to warn her.
>
> The company told TV5 that Cormier's concerns about the policy regarding gender identity was inappropriate and disruptive by complaining to other members at the gym.
>
> Representatives with Planet Fitness issued this statement:
>
> *"Planet Fitness is committed to creating a non-intimidating, welcoming environment for our members. Our gender identity non-discrimination policy states that members and guests may use all gym facilities based on their sincere self-reported gender identity.*
>
> In expressing her concerns about the policy, the member in question exhibited behavior that club management deemed inappropriate and disruptive to other members, which is a violation of the membership agreement and as a result her

> membership was canceled”

They are non-judgmental! They kicked this woman out of their gym because she did not want a man in the women’s (and girls!) locker room. But that’s not judgmental. She is welcome there, just like anyone else, except not really.

What does this policy really mean? Well, it means that any man can walk into the women’s locker room and expose himself naked to women – and girls! – so long as he “self-identifies” as a woman. And just keep in mind that this could easily be a registered sex-offender. And what Planet Fitness is saying is this – if you don’t stand up and salute this, then you are a bigoted hatemonger who needs to be excluded from their gym. They don’t want you.

Dennis Prager has an article that explains what is behind stories like this.

He writes:

> Most Americans do not realize that, as large as the issue of same-sex marriage is (and it is very large), there is an even larger issue at stake in the same-sex marriage debate.
>
> That issue is whether gender matters: Do male and female, man and woman, matter?
>
> In the brief span of about 40 years, a war against the male-female distinction has been waged. And it has been largely successful.
>
> […]It began with modern feminism, a movement that has influenced vast numbers of men and women born after World War II. It was the movement’s goal of women’s equality that led to its denial of innate male-female differences. First, feminists feared than any acknowledgement of male-female differences would lead back to male-female roles. Second, they increasingly tended to equate “equal” with “same.”
>
> Feminism convinced a generation of men and women, especially those attending college and graduate school, that (to cite one well-known example) the only reason boys play with trucks and girls play with dolls and tea sets is due to a sexist upbringing. Without sexist assumptions about boys’ and girls’ alleged differences, boys would just as happily play with dolls and tea sets and girls would just as happily play with trucks.
>
> […]The next societal force working to erase the significance of the sexes was the gay rights movement. The very premise of the movement is that the only thing that matters in sexual relations is that consenting adults engage in it. Whether men and women make love to one another or to members of their own sex makes no difference. Gender doesn’t matter.
>
> And if gender doesn’t matter, then it doesn’t matter with regard to parents: It makes no difference whether children have two mothers, two fathers or a mother and a father. Schools such as New York’s progressive Rodeph Sholom Day School, in 2001, even banned any celebration of Mother’s Day or Father’s Day

> among its elementary school students.
>
> Catholic Charities, the nation's oldest ongoing adoption services, were forced out of the adoption business in states like Massachusetts and Illinois — because they placed children for adoption only with a married man and woman. Progressives consider such a sentiment — that, all things being equal, it is better for a child to have a mother and a father — as bigoted and absurd. Since the sexes aren't different, a mother provides nothing that two fathers can't provide, and a father provides nothing that two mothers can't provide.

Prager is Jewish, and he adds this specific to Jewish Scriptures:

> The Torah went out of its way to assert the monumental importance of gender distinctions. When God created the first human beings, the Torah tells us, "Male and female He created them." Only of humans does the creation story make this statement; gender distinctions don't matter among animals except with regard to procreation. And the Torah prohibits men from wearing women's clothing and women from wearing that which represents manhood.

Do you think that men and women are different, and that it's a good thing that they come together in marriage to work together as a unit? If so, be aware that you are in the cross-hairs of the radical feminism / gay rights agenda.

Clinton Foundation: all eight of the highest paid executives are men

March 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I blogged about how Hillary Clinton pays the women on her staff 72 cents for every dollar she pays the men on her staff.

This is from The Weekly Standard.

They write:

> In late February, Hillary Clinton, a self-proclaimed champion of women's rights and gender equity, came under fire for a *Washington Free Beacon* analysis that showed women on Mrs. Clinton's staff during her tenure in the Senate were paid an average of 72 cents on the dollar compared to male staff. Now, an analysis of the latest IRS filing for the foundation that bears her name, the Bill, Hillary, and Chelsea Clinton Foundation, shows a similar compensation disparity between men and women employees. Although compensation figures are available for only a limited number of Foundation personnel, the 2013 Form 990 filed with the IRS shows that out of eleven highly compensated individuals listed, the top eight are all men.
>
> [...]A further analysis of the four most recent 990 filings shows that a "gender gap" among highly compensated employees at the Clinton Foundation has been relatively consistent over time, with the gap actually widening for the years considered in this analysis. The number of women represented in the highly compensated group has seen a decrease over the same time period.
>
> The data is summarized below showing the year, the average compensation of the highly compensated men versus that of the highly compensated women, the number of men versus women in the highly compensated group of individuals listed on the 990s, and the percentage on the dollar that those men were paid versus the women:
>
> > 2010 – $210,000 vs. $149,000 (four men vs. five women) – 71%
> >
> > 2011 – $190,000 vs. $147,000 (five men vs. four women) – 77%
> >
> > 2012 – $257,000 vs. $166,000 (five men vs. three women) – 65%
> >
> > **2013 – $294,000 vs. $185,000 (eight men vs. three women) – 63%**
>
> Again, this analysis does not consider all employees of the Clinton Foundation, but only those required to be listed on the 990 IRS tax form. The total pay of the highly compensated employees for 2013 totals only $2.9 million versus total salaries and compensation for all employees of $29 million.

We don't have the numbers for all the employees, but I would expect it would be

comparable to the 72 cents on the dollar she pays her female staffers.

You can read all about what the Clinton Foundation does in my previous post, but a one-line summary is that they take millions of dollars from foreign countries. While Hillary is Secretary of State. It’s the Clinton Foundation. Taking money from foreign countries. And she wants to run for President.

Walter Bradley: three scientific evidences that point to a designed universe

March 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. Here's a bio:

> Walter Bradley (B.S., Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin) is Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor. He comes to Baylor from Texas A&M University where he helped develop a nationally recognized program in polymeric composite materials. At Texas A&M, he served as director of the Polymer Technology Center for 10 years and as Department Head of Mechanical Engineering, a department of 67 professors that was ranked as high as 12th nationally during his tenure. Bradley has authored over 150 refereed research publications including book chapters, articles in archival journals such as the Journal of Material Science, Journal of Reinforced Plastics and Composites, Mechanics of Time-Dependent Materials, Journal of Composites Technology and Research, Composite Science and Technology, Journal of Metals, Polymer Engineering and Science, and Journal of Materials Science, and refereed conference proceedings.
>
> Dr. Bradley has secured over $5.0 million in research funding from NSF grants (15 yrs.), AFOSR (10 years), NASA grants (10 years), and DOE (3 years). He has also received research grants or contracts from many Fortune 500 companies, including Alcoa, Dow Chemical, DuPont, 3M, Shell, Exxon, Boeing, and Phillips.
>
> He co-authored The Mystery of Life Origin: Reassessing Current Theories and has written 10 book chapters dealing with various faith science issues, a topic on which he speaks widely.
>
> He has received 5 research awards at Texas A&M University and 1 national research award. He has also received two teaching awards. He is an Elected Fellow of the American Society for Materials and the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the largest organization of Christians in Science and Technology in the world. He is President elect of the ASA and will serve his term in 2008.

You can read more about his recent research in this article from Science Daily.

Below, I analyze a lecture entitled “Is There Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer?”. Dr. Bradley explains how the progress of science has made the idea of a Creator and Designer of the universe more acceptable than ever before.

The MP3 file is here.

Evidence #1: The design of the universe

1. The correspondence of natural phenomena to mathematical law

- All observations of physical phenomena in the universe, such as throwing a ball up in the air, are described by a few simple, elegant mathematical equations.

2. The fine-tuning of physical constants and rations between constants in order to provide a life-permitting universe

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants and ratios: (there are more examples in the lecture)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would NOT be able to build up the nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.
- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living

beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – "carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can't be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

3. Fine-tuning to allow a habitable planet

- A number of factors must be fine-tuned in order to have a planet that supports life
- Initial estimates predicted abundant life in the universe, but revised estimates now predict that life is almost certainly unique in the galaxy, and probably unique in the universe.
- Even though there are lots of stars in the universe, the odds are against *any* of them supporting complex life.
- Here are just a few of the minimal requirements for habitability: must be a single star solar system, in order to support stable planetary orbits, the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to have liquid water at the surface, the planet must sufficient mass in order to retain an atmosphere, etc.

The best non-theistic response to this argument is to postulate a multiverse, but that is very speculative and there is no experimental evidence that supports it.

Evidence #2: The origin of the universe

1. The progress of science has shown that the entire physical universe came into being out of nothing (= "the big bang"). It also shows that the cause of this creation event is non-physical and non-temporal. The cause is *supernatural*.

- Atheism prefers an eternal universe, to get around the problem of a Creator having to create the universe.
- Discovery #1: Observations of galaxies moving away from one another confirms that the universe expanded from a single point.
- Discovery #2: Measurements of the cosmic background radiation confirms that the universe exploding into being.
- Discovery #3: Predictions of elemental abundances prove that the universe is not eternal.
- Discovery #4:The atheism-friendly steady-state model and oscillating model were both falsified by the evidence.

- And there were other discoveries as well, mentioned in the lecture.

The best non-theistic response to this argument is to postulate a hyper-universe outside of ours, but that is very speculative and there is no experimental evidence that supports it.

Evidence #3: The origin of life

1. The progress of science has shown that the simplest living organism contains huge amounts of biological information, similar to the Java code I write all day at work. This is a problem for atheists, because the sequence of instructions in a living system has to come together all at once, it cannot have evolved by mutation and selection – because there was no replication in place prior to the formation of that first living system!

- Living systems must support certain minimum life functions: processing energy, storing information, and replicating.
- There needs to be a certain amount of complexity in the living system that can perform these minimum functions.
- But on atheism, the living system needs to be simple enough to form by accident in a pre-biotic soup, and in a reasonable amount of time.
- The minimal functionality in a living system is a achieved by DNA, RNA and enzymes. DNA and RNA are composed of sequences of proteins, which are in turn composed of sequences of amino acids.

Consider the problems of building a chain of 100 amino acids

- The amino acids must be left-handed only, but left and right kinds are equally abundant in nature. How do you sort out the right-handed ones?
- The amino acids must be bound together using peptide bonds. How do you prevent other types of bonds?
- Each link of the amino acid chain needs to be carefully chosen such that the completed chain with fold up into a protein. How do you choose the correct amino acid for each link from the pool of 20 different kinds found in living systems?
- In every case, a human or other intelligence could solve these problems by doing what intelligent agents do best: *making choices.*
- But who is there to make the choices on atheism?

The best current non-theistic response to this is to speculate that aliens may have seeded the Earth with life at some point in the past.

The problem of the origin of life is not a problem of chemistry, it is a problem of engineering. Every part of car functionality can be understood and described using the laws of physics and chemistry. But an intelligence is still needed in order to assemble the components into a system that has the minimal requirements for a functioning vehicle.

Scott Walker signs right-to-work: workers not forced to join a union in order to work

March 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gov. Scott Walker signs right-to-work bill

He has a diary up at Red State, the grassroots conservative web site, where he explains why he did it.

He writes:

> When I took office as governor of Wisconsin in 2011, I called together our new Republican majority in the legislature and told them it was time to "put up or shut up." As the elected leaders of our state, we owed it to our fellow Wisconsinites to follow through with our promises and to tackle the big issues head on.
>
> Our first order of business was reclaiming power for the people of our state. For too long, the big government union bosses had called the shots in our state capital.
>
> At the time, Wisconsin faced a $3.6 billion budget shortfall. We needed to reduce spending, yet collective bargaining by public employees had limited the ability of taxpayers and local governments to control that spending. Taxpayers picked up the tab for all pension contributions and most health insurance contribution. The unions even had a virtual monopoly on schools' health insurance business by having negotiated requirements to use a union-owned insurance company. Unions didn't even have to collect their own dues—taxpayers footed the bill for that too.
>
> To change all this, we enacted legislation that became known as Act 10.This is the bill that prompted all the protests in our capitol building and even in front of my personal home. But for all the attention, it was really pretty commonsense legislation.
>
> With Act 10, we reformed the collective bargaining laws so that public employees now make modest contributions to their healthcare and pensions—much like private sector employees. Public employees can now decide for themselves

> whether to join a union. And while unions can still collectively bargain for wages, they can't bargain over things like the size of bulletin boards or getting paid time off for union business.
>
> Act 10 also allowed local governments and districts to pay employees based on merit and not just seniority. Teachers can get raises and promotions for a doing a good job—not just being there the longest. Taxpayers get a better deal because local governments can shop around for the most affordable employee insurance plans.
>
> Because Act 10 freed up funds for school districts, fewer have had to lay off teachers. In fact, the three districts with the most teacher layoffs following Act 10 were ones that did not adopt the reforms.
>
> In short, Act 10 ensured that the state government treated taxpayers fairly and spent tax dollars more effectively. While the D.C.-based special interests have attacked us for it, the people of Wisconsin like what they see. We have been re-elected three times in four years.
>
> Now we are once again presented with another chance at big and bold reform—taking on the special interests a second time. Yesterday, the Wisconsin state Senate passed Freedom to Work legislation, which will mean no Wisconsin worker can be forced to join a union as a condition of employment. I will sign the bill into law.
>
> I've supported Freedom to Work for years, dating back to my time in the state legislature when I co-sponsored it. And now the people of Wisconsin have voiced their support through their state Senators and representatives. According to polling, 69 percent of Wisconsinites support the policy, and a majority of union households—51 percent—also support the law.
>
> Here's why I'm signing Freedom to Work in Wisconsin: it is good for economic growth. In the last decade, forced unionization states have had about half the rate of wage growth, job growth and manufacturing growth as Right to Work states. Adjusted for cost of living, employees in forced unionization states have almost $2,000 less disposable income. Bottom line, this reform is pro-freedom and pro-work for Wisconsin.

Here's the right-to-work map now:

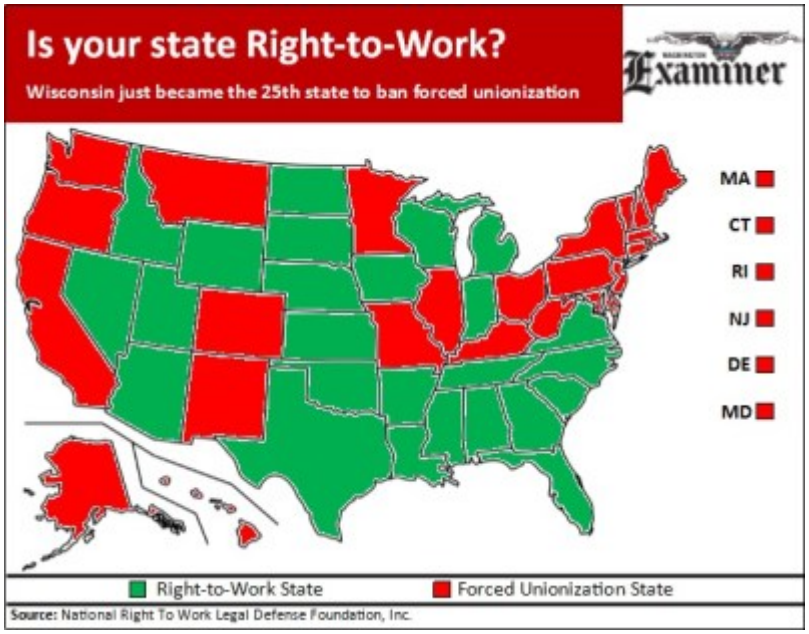

Right to Work Map 2015

Please see below to learn more about Scott Walker. If you look over the stories below, you can see how he took an incremental approach to getting the support for this law. First, reformed collective bargaining, to prevent unions signing deals with health care providers they own, etc. Second, cut off automatic deduction of union dues, to force unions to spend their own money to collect the dues, further limiting their ability to interfere in politics. Third, pass this right-to-work law, to allow conservative blue-collar mid-Westerners to work a job without having to shell out money to the unions. The law passed with a majority of union households supporting it. They want their take-home pay! Walker is sitting in a blue state that has gone for Democrats in every presidential election since 1984. He knows how to get conservative reforms passed – by chipping away at his opponents and building consensus.

Get caught up!

The Weekly Standard has an excellent re-cap on Walker's accomplishments as governor. If you don't know Walker's history in Wisconsin, please read it!

One snippet:

> Which is that Scott Walker is a very bad man. And not merely because he opposes the progressive agenda and would like to roll back its successes. Hell, all kinds of right wing pols want to do *that.* Or say they do, anyway. You shake a Republican tree and half-a-dozen of them fall to the ground, talking about repealing this and defunding that. But Scott Walker is unusual, maybe even unique, and recalls the old joke about the graduate student out doing sociological research on religion in the rural South. He comes upon an old son of the soil and after a bit of conversation to soften him up, says delicately, "I'm wondering, sir, since you are a religious man, if you believe in Baptism by immersion."
>
> The old fellow squints and spits and says. "Believe in it? Hell, sonny, I seen it done."
>
> When it comes to rolling back the progressive agenda, you see, Walker has

> actually done it. That's what the recall election was about. His enemies, many of whom still bear the tread marks of his tires on their backs, know that he is not another hapless Republican who makes it his business to raise taxes to pay for the excesses of the other party and calls that good government. Instead of enabling bloated government, he takes it on.
>
> Walker's appeal, one suspects, is based on a sense among the demoralized citizenry that government at all levels lives high, doesn't deliver, and fears no man.

There is a reason that people like this guy. He talks moderate, and then mauls his opponents in horrible ways. I almost feel sorry for them, except not really. We have an $18.5 trillion dollar debt, and we need to have a grown-up at the helm in 2016.

Related posts

- Right-to-work states gained jobs three times faster than forced union states
- Scott Walker: if sent a bill banning abortions after 20 weeks, "I will sign that bill"
- Why didn't Scott Walker finish his fourth year of college at Marquette University?
- Scott Walker's new budget: tax cuts, spending cuts, school choice, smaller government
- Not just #1 in Iowa: Scott Walker leads in latest New Hampshire GOP primary poll
- With Romney out, Scott Walker leads Iowa poll with 16%, Bush at 9%
- Wisconsin governor Scott Walker draws standing ovations at Freedom Summit in Iowa
- Republican Scott Walker beats Mary Burke to win 2014 Wisconsin Governor race
- Wisconsin House passes Scott Walker's tax cut bill, headed to governor's desk
- Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker cuts taxes again, expects $1 billion surplus in 2015
- Wisconsin governor Walker's reforms hit the left in their wallets
- An interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Kenosha teachers vote to de-certify their teacher union, 63 – 37
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Should Wisconsin voters recall governor Scott Walker?
- Wisconsin public school teachers protest the publication of their salaries in flier
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues

Western woman explains how radical Islamists convinced her to join them

March 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Blaze, but it links to the BBC.

They write:

> What prompts young women in England to consider joining the Islamic State? According to one woman who claims that she was radicalized by Muslim men in her home country of England, flattery and a sexual attraction had a great deal to do with it. And it all started with three words.
>
> Speaking to a BBC reporter, a woman in her 20s, with her identity masked for her own protection, told the story of how she was first contacted and eventually drawn into radical thinking when she was a teenager.
>
> All of the radicalization explained in the video happened before the formal establishment of the Islamic State. However, it is believed the organization and its supporters are using similar tactics today.
>
> How was this woman drawn into the world of radicalized Muslim thinking? She tells the BBC she was just 17-years-old at the time a Muslim man approached her via social media: "It was on Facebook, I was just approached one day online by him, and he said, 'You're very attractive.'"
>
> The online recruiter also told her, "Now's your time to cover that beauty because you're so precious."
>
> The woman, called "Ayesha" by the reporter, said the order to cover up was "borderline harassment" but also said that it worked in getting her attention.
>
> She began checking out online videos posted by various radical Islamic groups and admits she was looking to find "eye candy." Apparently, her search was fruitful.
>
> "Ayesha" told the BBC, "In all the YouTube videos, for some reason, they were all really really attractive."

Reminds me of what Michelle Malkin wrote about a while back.

She writes:

> I would like to declare a war on women — namely, all those cringe-inducing ninnies who lust after every celebrity criminal defendant with big muscles, tattoos, puppy-dog eyes or Hollywood hair.
>
> You know who I'm talking about, right? America's Bad Boy groupies. They'reon the courthouse steps with their "Free Jahar" signs, cooing over how "hot" and "cute" the bloodstained Boston Marathon bombing suspect is. He "can blow me

> up with babies," one moral reprobate quipped shortly after his capture. "I'm not gonna lie, the second bombing suspect, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, is hot. #sorrynotsorry," another young girl boasted.
>
> Among the callous accused killer's victims, in case you'd forgotten: 8-year-old boy Martin Richard, who had been cheering on his dad and other family friends at the race. But who cares about an innocent dead child blown to bits by pressure cooker bombs in the name of Allah? *Jahar is HAWT!*
>
> Far from a minuscule fringe, the Ja-harem is a growing social media phenomenon. Its members mimic Justin Bieber's Beliebers, adopting the last name of their Tiger Beat terrorist and doodling hearts around his mug shot. In heat or in jest, these depraved females continue to spread viral photos, memes and hashtags of their Islamist Idol. One woman showed up at Tsarnaev's court appearance Wednesday donning a "Free the Lion" T-shirt. Another sported a "Dzhokhar Tsarnaev is innocent" tee, while her gal pal shouted, "Exonerate!"
>
> For those ladies who prefer jocks to jihadis, there's accused murderer/NFL star Aaron Hernandez. He's "fine as wine," one woman lusted. He's "too damned sexy to go to prison," another lamented. "He can come to jail at my house," sighed yet another. In response to one of gangsta Hernandez's Glock-wielding Instagram pics, one sick chick slavered, "Soooo hot with the combination handgun-mirror selfie."
>
> Fugitive cop-killer Christopher Dorner also had his own fan club. Parked in front of their TV sets, women cheered on the "kinda sexy" homicidal maniac as he terrorized Southern California before perishing in a cabin inferno. "I'd honestly hide Dorner in my house," one fan girl enthused. Tens of thousands "liked" Dorner's various support pages on Facebook.
>
> […]They're your neighbors and relatives, suburban gals like Colleen "Jihad Jane" LaRose and Jamie "Jihad Jamie" Paulin-Ramirez of Colorado, who agreed to wed Muslim terrorists and conspired to kill Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks. Paulin-Ramirez dragged her 6-year-old (whom she renamed "Walid") to Ireland to assist with the plot. Family members said she was "easily influenced" and that "any man that came along … she kind of followed like a lost puppy."

So it turns out that what matters to some young, unmarried women is how the man looks. And maybe what her friends think of him. Sigh!

Here's a study on this from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> It takes a woman just three minutes to make up her mind about whether she likes a man or not, a study has revealed.
>
> The average female spends the time sizing up looks, physique and dress-sense as well as taking in scent, accent and eloquence of a potential suitor.
>
> Women also quickly judge how he interacts with her friends and whether he is

> successful or ambitious.
>
> It also emerged most women believe 180 seconds is long enough to gauge whether or not he is Mr Right, or Mr Wrong.
>
> The study also found women rarely change their mind about a man after their initial reaction – and believe they are ‘always right’ in their assumptions and judgments.
>
> The report which was commissioned among 3,000 adults to mark the release of Instinct, a new book by Ben Kay.
>
> Kay said: ‘I think a lot of people believe in trusting their instincts when dating. It makes it seem more magical, like it’s coming from somewhere deeper.

I am not sure if this method of choosing mates should be used by Christian men and women. If the goal of a relationship is to please God and serve him, then our feelings should not be the guide. God is the customer of the relationship, not the woman, and not the man. Pleasing God needs to be done intelligently, with preparation, and respecting strict moral boundaries, if it is going to stand the chance of being effective at achieving his goals.

New study: outstanding student loans reduce a woman's odds of marrying

March 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the study, which was published in *Demographic Research.*

Abstract:

> BACKGROUND
>
> With increasing levels of student loan debt, the path to economic stability may be less smooth than it was for earlier generations of college graduates. This paper explores this emerging trend by assessing whether or not student loan debt influences family formation.
>
> OBJECTIVE
>
> The objective of this study is to examine whether student loan debt delays marriage in young adulthood, whether or not the relationship between student loan debt and marriage differs for women and for men, and if this relationship attenuates during the years immediately after college graduation.
>
> METHODS We estimate a series of discrete-time hazard regression models predicting the odds of first marriage as a function of time-varying student loan debt balance, using a nationally representative sample of bachelor's degree recipients from the 1993 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (N = 9,410).
>
> **RESULTS We find that the dynamics of loan repayment are related to marriage timing for women, but not for men. Specifically, an increase of $1,000 in student loan debt is associated with a reduction in the odds of first marriage by 2 percent a month among female bachelor degree recipients during the first four years after college graduation. This relationship attenuates over time.**
>
> CONCLUSION Our study lends support to the proposition that the financial weight of monthly loan repayments impedes family formation in the years immediately following college graduation – however, only for women. This finding questions traditional models of gender specialization in family formation that emphasize the economic resources of men.

I think that a woman who is serious about studying something that will allow her to get a job related to her field so she can quickly pay off her loans in the first few years is a very good sign of RESPECT for a man, and for his role as primary/sole provider. Men choose tough majors / trades for a reason, and they do tough jobs for a reason. When a woman chooses something hard to study and then chooses a hard job to do to pay off her loans, it's showing to her man that she respects what he is doing to provide for the family. I think this is something that parents need to encourage young women to do, but so often

parents focus too much on spiritual / emotional concerns instead of practical wisdom when leading their kids.

When a woman asks a man to work to pay for the marriage – with all the costs of home, furniture, diapers, tuition, etc. – she is asking him for a commitment to work until he is 65. That is a lot to ask, and it is very hard to accept this from a woman who doesn't understand the difficulty of earning and saving money.

So what do I recommend to a woman? I recommend she do a STEM degree, pay off her debts, guard her chastity, marry young when she is fertile, have a few years of work to pay off student loans and get used to the workplace, demonstrate ability in apologetics and mentoring others, etc. A wife needs to have a lot more skills than just being pretty and young. There are things she has to do in the marriage – things that take preparation. The more accustomed she is to hard work and self-sacrifice, the easier she will take to her role in the marriage. Women who are used to having to do hard things that they don't feel like doing make the best wives and mothers. It's something that a woman can grow into, if she lets herself be challenged to grow.

My friend Amy is fond of telling me that people usually adapt to their friends. So if all your friends are very spiritual and impractical, and they don't have jobs or savings, then chances are you'll be like them, too. To get out of debt, don't take financial advice from people who, in their own lives, show no evidence of knowing what to study, how to find a job, how to save money, and so on. Instead of pushing away the people who "rain on your parade" with wisdom, grab them and keep them close. Watch what they do. Talk to them about your finances. Rely on them to hold you accountable for choosing a good major, updating your resume, and continuously growing your salary, through annual raises or job changes. That's how you get better.

I don't say these things in order to make women feel bad, or limit their freedom unnecessarily. I tell women to make good decisions to prepare for marriage, to practice self-denial and self-sacrifice, to choose the right men, to not be scared away by strong providers and men with moral and religious convictions. Although on one level, women can be scared off by men who have firm and definite convictions, they need to understand that these men are the most reliable men to marry. Men who don't make demands on women usually don't respond well to demands that women make on them. A strict moral and theological framework can seem scary to a woman – she might feel scared that she could be rejected. But it's exactly these convictions that ground a man's ability to keep loving her, to stick with her, and to encourage and support her as she grows.

Instead of being frightened by men who ask her to do good things, she should view it as an asset, not a liability. And the more she listens to his leading and grows, the more independent and capable she will be. She will *feel better* about doing hard things and playing a role. Better than she would feel about always choosing the easy way and then finding herself without accomplishments. Demanding men can be bad, but not if the demands they make are to build the woman up. The demand that a woman be serious

about paying her debts with a real plan might seem scary to some women, but the study shows that this is good advice for her to be more attractive – to *any man* who might want to marry her.

Hillary Clinton deleted 32,000 e-mails, refuses to turn over her home-based server

March 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Washington Times reports on her press conference, which only featured questions from reporters handpicked by her spokesman Nick Merrill.

Excerpt:

> Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton deleted nearly 32,000 emails she deemed private from her time in the Obama administration and refused Tuesday to turn over her personal email server, insisting she "fully complied" with the law and that voters will have to trust her judgment.
>
> Answering questions for the first time about her emails, Mrs. Clinton said she's turned over to the State Department 55,000 pages of emails she deemed work-related, but said she got rid of the rest last year. She defended her decision to keep control of her emails by using a private account, saying previous secretaries did the same thing, and saying it was more "convenient" for her this way.
>
> "I wanted to use just one device for both personal and work emails instead of two," she said in a hastily called press conference after she spoke at the U.N. Conference on Women.

She lied about Benghazi, claiming it was a protest caused by a Youtube video. So we know that she is capable of lying for gain.

Well, is she telling the truth this time?

> But her explanations are already coming under fire. One conservative group, America Rising PAC, said Mrs. Clinton has previously said she keeps both a BlackBerry and an iPhone.
>
> Mrs. Clinton also said the email server was set up for her husband, former President Clinton, but his office told The Wall Street Journal that he has only sent two emails in his life, and both were during his time as president, which ended in 2001, or eight years before the private server was created.

It's not a "conservative group" that said that she had two devices – it's Clinton herself:

Read about that video here.

She deleted half her e-mails:

> Of the 62,320 emails in her account, her office said 30,490 were deemed public business, while the remaining 31,830 were deemed private.

And she won't let anyone see the private server she kept in her home:

> Congressional Republicans said Mrs. Clinton shouldn't take credit for turning over

> her emails since it was only done under pressure from the House committee probing the 2012 Benghazi terrorist attack.
>
> […]The former first lady flatly rejected turning over her server, saying she's already done enough in her mind to comply with her obligations.

This is just plain stupid:

> Some cybersecurity analysts have said maintaining a private server was an invitation to hacking, but Mrs. Clinton said the system was kept on property guarded by the Secret Service, and she asserted there "were no security breaches."

Secret Service people walking around outside a home do not prevent penetration attacks.

We have to have the actual server and check to see whether it was secure or not. If she doesn't give it to us, along with ALL the e-mails, then we don't know whether it's been compromised, and we don't know what the enemies of the United States would have seen in the event of a breach of security. This is not a case where we can "trust" her – we have to *know for certain.*

Another thing – why is she printing out e-mails and giving it to the State Department for them to then give it to Trey Gowdy's Select Committee? Why not just give them the server? It's not easy to conduct an automated search on pieces of paper, that's why. She is deliberately slowing down the Benghazi investigation by refusing to provide searchable electronic copies.

The concerns about a security breach are not idle. We already KNOW FOR CERTAIN that State Department e-mails were hacked.

> In March 2013, an adviser to Clinton, Sidney Blumenthal, had his e-mail hacked by "Guccifer" — the Romanian hacker perhaps best known for revealing George W. Bush's paintings to the world. At the time, Gawker reported that Blumenthal was communicating with an account that appeared to belong to Clinton at the "clintonemail.com" domain. The content of some of those e-mails was published by RT.com.

The hacked e-mails are the reason why we know that she intentionally set up her domain on the day she took office. This was not done by accident – it was deliberate.

What difference does national security make?
Investor's Business Daily reminds us other mysteries that the e-mails would shed light on:

> **What we do know, as Catherine Herridge of Fox News has reported, is that emails scattered through those obtained by Judicial Watch via a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit show that there existed a "Benghazi Group," a code phrase used inside the State Department for a Benghazi damage-control operation led by Clinton aides Cheryl Mills and Philippe Reines, who has been described as Hillary Clinton's "gatekeeper."**
>
> **The two ran interference for Hillary during the 2012 Benghazi attack and were involved in what has been dubbed "Operation Basement" — going through documents and emails and turning over only those not damaging Hillary Clinton's reputation or political future.**
>
> **"Cheryl Mills was instrumental in seeing the big lie was put out there," says Judicial Watch head Tom Fitton. "What's notable thus far is we received no emails from or to (Clinton). You have to wonder whether these aides went offline and were using secret accounts to communicate with her about the Benghazi attack."**
>
> **You also have to wonder if Hillary and her State Department staff were also busy concocting the inflammatory Benghazi video lie.**
>
> **Ron Fournier of the National Journal advises that the emails may help us "follow the money" that has flowed into Clinton Foundation coffers, a tale of possible "pay for play" involving unknown promises in exchange for donations.**
>
> **Fournier writes that "Hillary Clinton's secret communications stash is a bombshell" whose "greatest relevancy is what the emails might reveal about any nexus between Clinton's work at State and any donations to the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation from U.S. corporations and foreign nations."**

But there is more here than just the Benghazi cover-up and the Clinton Foundation donations – there are real national security concerns. We need to get our hands on that

server and all the e-mails in order to know whether we have a breach, and if so, what has been breached. It is *incredibly unprofessional* and a *firing offence* (in my opinion) for her to tell us "just trust me". That is not in the best interest of the security of the United States. And it shows why we ought not take Hillary Clinton seriously as a candidate for the Office of the Presidency. She is in it for herself, not for the good of her country. This is all about her – her ambitions.

UPDATE: Two of her top aides were also using personal e-mails, not State Department e-mails.

Related posts

- Clinton Foundation: all eight of the highest paid executives are men
- E-mails released by Clinton: there are "months, and months, and months" missing
- Hillary Clinton used her private e-mail account to conduct State Department business
- E-mails: Hillary Clinton's top aides knew in minutes that Benghazi was a terrorist attack
- Clinton Foundation receives millions in donations from regimes that oppress women
- As senator, Hillary Clinton paid women 72 cents for every dollar she paid men
- Hillary Clinton's fake Bosnia gunfire story and her abortion award
- Hillary Clinton: don't let anybody tell you that corporations and businesses create jobs
- Hillary Clinton aides were present to "separate" damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- Universities raise tuition while paying hundreds of thousands to Hillary Clinton to speak
- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- Hillary Clinton opposes bill to cut taxpayer funding of abortions abroad

Did Republican senators do anything wrong by writing a letter to Iran's leaders?

March 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of the Middle East

Stephen Hayes is the foreign policy expert for the Weekly Standard and he has some facts that undermine the left-wing media narrative.

He appeared on the Special Report panel, and thanks to Newsbusters, you can see the video of it on their web site, and read the transcript.

Hayes also had a longer form article posted at The Weekly Standard:

> In a tweet this morning, NBC News senior political editor Mark Murray writes: "With GOP Senators' Iran Move, Politics Goes Beyond the Water's Edge." 47 Republican Senators sent to the Supreme Leader of Iran reminding him that Congress is not bound by deals that Congress does not approve. The article Murray links to describes this as "stunning" and "unprecedented" and implies that the letter constitutes a breach of protocol so significant that it ends the long tradition of bipartisan foreign policy.
>
> This is utterly preposterous.
>
> The only way to reach such a conclusion is to ignore efforts by Democrats to undermine George W. Bush.
>
> In September 2002, David Bonior, the second-ranking Democrat in the House of Representatives, flew to Baghdad in an attempt to undermine George W. Bush's case for war in Iraq on a trip paid for by Saddam Hussein's regime. Bonior, accompanied by Representatives Jim McDermott and Mike Thompson, actively propagandized for the Iraqi regime. McDermott, asked whether he found it acceptable to be used by the Iraqi regime, said he hoped the trip would end the

> suffering of children. “We don’t mind being used,” he said.
>
> In 2004, the Democratic Party offered its full embrace of Michael Moore’s fantastical conspiracy theory,*Fahrenheit 9/11*. Minority Leader Tom Daschle, DNC chairman Terry MacAullife and assorted Democratic heavyweights flocked to a special screening of the film in Washington, DC, where they offered unreserved praise.
>
> In 2007, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi traveled to Damascus, Syria, in an open attempt to undercut White House efforts to isolate Syrian dictator Bashar Assad. Pelosi amplified Assad’s claims that he was ready for peace talks with Israel and wanted Syria to rejoin the international community.
>
> The letter from Senate Republicans provides a stark contrast from these efforts. It is a straightforward, fact-based description of the U.S. constitutional system and the role Congress plays in international agreements and treaties.
>
> It takes a selective reading of that history to conclude that this letter, as opposed to previous efforts by congressional Democrats, means the end of bipartisan foreign policy.

I think it’s wonderful that Republicans are doing everything possible to try to put the brakes on the Obama administration’s efforts to lift sanctions on Iran so that they can proceed to develop nuclear weapons at a faster pace. As you know, the Obama administration was accused by former U.N. ambassador John Bolton of leaking details of a planned strike on Iranian nuclear assets by Israel. So we know *exactly* where their allegiance lies, here. (This article says it was actually Hillary Clinton who did the leaking that scratched the strike plan) This is not a mystery – we need to judge the Obama administration by their actions.

I had to post on this because one of my co-workers asked me to respond to this story, as well as tell him the Republican alternative to Obamacare (he is not into health care policy that’s to the right of center). Here’s the alternative to Obamacare, you. (That’s Wall Street Journal, Newsmax overview of the plan here) Those are recent articles, but you can find the official policy explained in detail on Paul Ryan’s Congressional web site.

Was early Earth's atmosphere suitable for creating the building blocks of life?

March 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

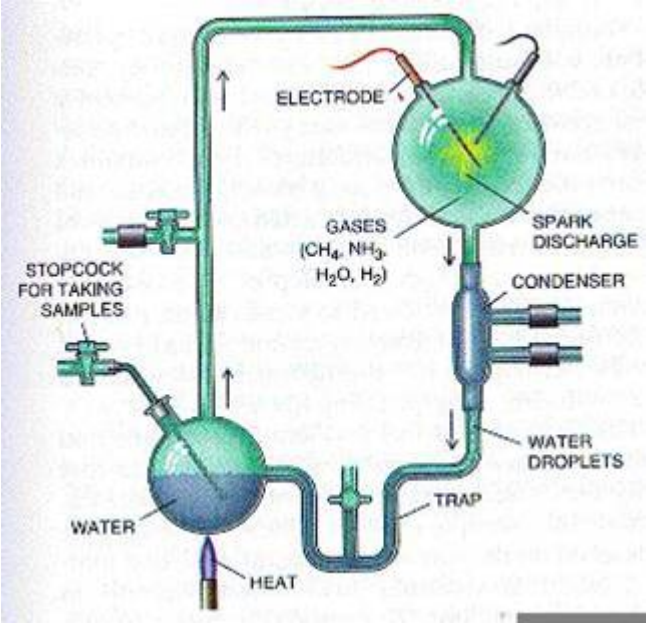

The Miller-Urey experiments

Biochemist Dr. Fazale Rana of Reasons to Believe offers some evidence.

Excerpt:

> Today, the Miller-Urey experiment is considered to be irrelevant to the origin-of-life question. Current understanding of the composition of early Earth's atmosphere differs significantly from the gas mix used by Miller. Most planetary scientists now think that the Earth's primeval atmosphere consisted of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and water vapor. Laboratory experiments indicate that this gas mixture is incapable of yielding organic materials in Miller-Urey-type experiments.
>
> In May 2003 origin-of-life researchers Jeffrey Bada and Antonio Lazcano, long-time associates of Miller, wrote an essay for Science (May 2, 2003, pp. 745-746)commemorating the 50-year anniversary of the publication of Miller's initial results.They pointed out that the Miller-Urey experiment has historical significance, but not scientific importance in contemporary origin-of-life thought. Bada and Lazcano wrote:
>
> Is the "prebiotic soup" theory a reasonable explanation for the emergence of life? Contemporary geoscientists tend to doubt that the primitive atmosphere had the highly reducing composition used by Miller in 1953.
>
> In his book Biogenesis, origin-of-life researcher Noam Lahav passes similar judgment:
>
> The prebiotic conditions assumed by Miller and Urey were essentially those of a

> reducing atmosphere. Under slightly reducing conditions, the Miller-Urey reaction does not produce amino acids, nor does it produce the chemicals that may serve as the predecessors of other important biopolymer building blocks. Thus, by challenging the assumption of a reducing atmosphere, we challenge the very existence of the "prebiotic soup", with its richness of biologically important organic compounds.
>
> For many people, the generation of amino acids from simple chemical compounds thought to be present in early Earth's atmosphere meant that life could originate all on its own without the need for a Creator. Work done on the early planetary conditions of Earth in the intervening decades between Miller's famous experiment and his death, however, have invalidated this famous experiment and its support for an evolutionary explanation for life's origin, in spite of what textbooks report.

The IDEA Center has a nice summary of origin-of-life research that explains why scientists no longer accept the idea that the building blocks of life can be formed by sparking the gasses that were present on the early Earth.

Miler and Urey used the wrong gasses:

> Miller's experiment requires a reducing methane and ammonia atmosphere, however geochemical evidence says the atmosphere was hydrogen, water, and carbon dioxide (non-reducing). The only amino acid produced in a such an atmosphere is glycine (and only when the hydrogen content is unreasonably high), and could not form the necessary building blocks of life.

Miller and Urey didn't account for UV of molecular instability:

> Not only would UV radiation destroy any molecules that were made, but their own short lifespans would also greatly limit their numbers. For example, at 100ºC (boiling point of water), the half lives of the nucleic acids Adenine and Guanine are 1 year, uracil is 12 years, and cytozine is 19 days (nucleic acids and other important proteins such as chlorophyll and hemoglobin have never been synthesized in origin-of-life type experiments).

Miller and Urey didn't account for molecular oxygen:

> We all have know ozone in the upper atmosphere protects life from harmful UV radiation. However, ozone is composed of oxygen which is the very gas that Stanley Miller-type experiments avoided, for it prevents the synthesis of organic molecules like the ones obtained from the experiments! Pre-biotic synthesis is in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. The chemistry does not work if there is oxygen because the atmosphere would be non-reducing, but if there is no UV-light-blocking oxygen (i.e. ozone – O_3) in the atmosphere, the amino acids would be quickly destroyed by extremely high amounts of UV light (which would have been 100 times stronger than today on the early earth).This

> radiation could destroy methane within a few tens of years, and atmospheric ammonia within 30,000 years.

And there were three other problems too:

> At best the processes would likely create a dilute "thin soup," destroyed by meteorite impacts every 10 million years. This severely limits the time available to create pre-biotic chemicals and allow for the OOL.

> Chemically speaking, life uses only "left-handed" ("L") amino acids and "right-handed" ("R)" genetic molecules. This is called "chirality," and any account of the origin of life must somehow explain the origin of chirality. Nearly all chemical reactions produce "racemic" mixtures–mixtures with products that are 50% L and 50% R.

Two more problems are not mentioned in the article. A non-peptide bond anywhere in the chain will ruin the chain. You need around 200 amino acids to make a protein. If any of the bonds is not a peptide bond, the chain will not work in a living system. Additionally, the article does not mention the need for the experimenter to *intervene* in order to prevent interfering cross-reactions that would prevent the amino acids from forming. That's another problem with the origin of life – experiments show that getting the building blocks requires an intelligence to intervene.

Now keep in mind that even if you get the building blocks, you are left with the sequencing problem – but that's another topic for another day.

We have single-payer health care already in the VA system – is it working?

March 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

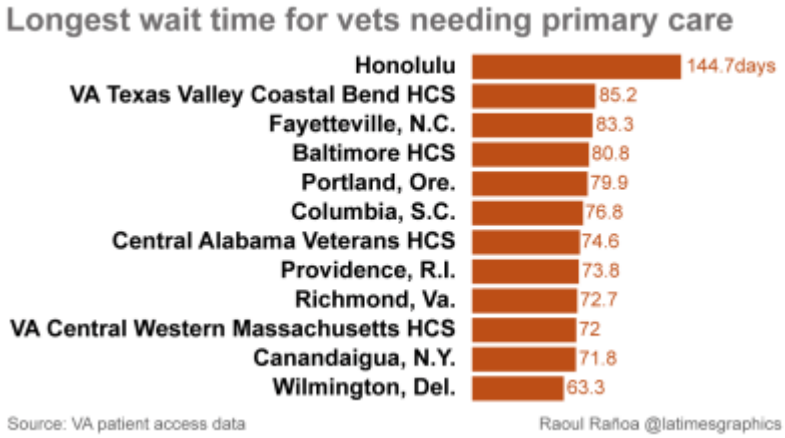

VA health care wait times

This is health care policy expert Sally Pipes, writing in Investors Business Daily.

She writes:

> A new report from the Government Accountability Office has confirmed that the Department of Veterans Affairs can't take care of those it's supposed to serve.
>
> The GAO has placed the VA's health system on the "high risk" list of federal programs that are vulnerable to "fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement." The agency is still struggling to recover from an 8-month-old internal audit that revealed that returning soldiers had to wait more than 90 days for care. Some patients died while waiting.
>
> The GAO's findings apply far beyond the VA. The agency's problems — which include long wait-times and out-of-control costs — demonstrate what happens in any government-run, single-payer health care system.
>
> The VA's failings ought to give pause to the liberal politicians and policy analysts who would love to introduce single-payer health care for all Americans. But they don't seem to have heeded the GAO report. Within a week of its release, Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., called for "Medicare for All."
>
> Champions of socialized medicine used to point to the VA as proof that single-payer worked. In 2011, economist Paul Krugman called it "a huge policy success story, which offers important lessons for future health reform." In a 2009 debate with me, Princeton professor Uwe Reinhardt said that there's an example of a single-payer system in the U.S. that works — the VA.
>
> The VA offers lessons about health reform — just not the ones single-payer's proponents have in mind.
>
> Defenders of government-run health care claim that it will control costs by cutting out middlemen such as insurance companies. The evidence shows

> otherwise. According to the GAO, the VA budget more than doubled between 2002 and 2013 even as enrollment increased by less than a third.
>
> Single-payer's "guarantee" of access to high-quality care is a myth, too.
>
> "Despite these substantial budget increases," the GAO report says, "for more than a decade there have been numerous reports … of VA facilities failing to provide timely health care."
>
> Over the last decade, more than 63,000 veterans have been unable to get a doctor's appointment. At least 40 veterans have died because of long waits.
>
> Things aren't likely to get better anytime soon. The VA has yet to act on more than 100 GAO recommendations for improving care.
>
> Last summer, lawmakers allocated $10 billion to a program intended to reduce wait times by permitting veterans to see private doctors outside the VA system. So far, the agency has only authorized 31,000 vets to seek private care — out of a possible 8.5 million.
>
> That has to change — 88% of veterans say that they want the ability to choose where they receive their care.

However, there is one military person who is getting health care – convicted traitor Bradley Manning. He's getting *sex-change surgery* while he is in jail for leaking national security secrets to our enemies. He won't have to wait at all for his health care. This is what happens when you take money out of your wallet, give it to the government, and then hope that when you get sick, someone in the government will decide that you are worthy of treatment. Which you aren't, unless they want your vote.

It's not just the VA health care system – government-run health care doesn't work in other places:

> The United Kingdom's National Health Service, for instance, is notorious for denying patients everything from certain cancer medications to hip replacements.
>
> The program is also financially unsustainable. According to its own medical director, Bruce Keogh, "if the NHS continues to function as it does now, it's going to really struggle to cope because the model of delivery and service that we have at the moment is not fit for the future."
>
> **In Canada's single-payer system, the average wait time between referral from a general practitioner and the actual receipt of treatment by a specialist was more than four months in 2014. That's nearly double the wait time of two decades ago.**

The Canadian system is the one that Democrats want to emulate – but Canada's rich left-wing politicians come here when they want care. They don't want to wait in line. Why should we want to wait in line? We need to prefer consumer-driven health care over government-controlled health care.

Tad Hopp accumulates six figures of college debt, wants taxpayer bailout

March 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
From: theawkwardyeti.com
Here's an interesting editorial from a "Christian" left blog. (H/T Acton Institute via Lindsay)

The author, Tad Hopp is graduating a PCUSA seminary – an extremely liberal, left-wing denomination.

He writes:

> I graduated college in 2007.
>
> […] I majored in English, not exactly what most people consider a 'marketable' or 'practical' degree…
>
> […]I went to a somewhat expensive private school…
>
> […]I did what many students in their last year of high school do: I went to the school where I felt I was being called…
>
> […]I do not regret my four years at my undergraduate institution one bit.
>
> [….]When I graduated college, I owed nearly $50,000 in student loan debt and was unemployed for almost six months before I finally found a low-paying office job.
>
> […]"Can't find a job? Well, you should have majored in something more 'practical', like economics or business or medicine." Yeah, that *would* be great…if those were the subjects where my skills and passions lie. They're not.
>
> […]I felt called to go to seminary.
>
> […]I will graduate seminary with close to six figures worth of student loan debt.

Let's take stock of what he's said so far:

- he studied English, a language that he already spoke, which has one of the lowest employment rates
- he was warned by people who knew something about earning and saving money not to study English
- he went to a school he couldn't afford to go to, and he graduated with $50,000 in debt
- he went to seminary, another subject that doesn't pay, and added another $50,000 or so of debt
- he says that he doesn't have to study subjects that lead to a career because he isn't "passionate" about them

- he “followed his heart” by going to the school that he had mystical, emotional, intuitions about = “calling”

My advice to Tad at this point would be for him to take the Bible seriously when it says this:

2 Thessalonians 3:10:

10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

And 1 Timothy 5:8:

8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Now, for a Bible-believing Christian, these are inerrant and cannot be denied. But we have to go *outside the Bible* and learn how the world really works in order to figure out how to achieve those stated goals. Why should anyone hire us? What is working really about?

But even before looking at economics, Tad needs to push away all his friends who tell him to “follow his heart” and stick close by his friends who understand economics, who have jobs already, who have savings already, and so on. Don’t look for advice from dreamers, you look to advice from doers – people who can read the times, run the numbers and who have *demonstrated* the ability to create plans that work to achieve *results* that please God. When it comes to planning about the future, look at the past accomplishments. Weaving a happy narrative sounds nice, but judge future predictions based on past performance.

I would recommend that Tad read an economist like Thomas Sowell, especially on work, prices, etc., and realize that work means providing value to others. It then follows that he is obligated by the Bible to NOT “follow his heart”, but to instead do something that *offers value* to his fellow man. Prices are a way of determining what is most valued by your fellow man. And we know what careers have the highest value:

> Petroleum Engineering – Starting Salary: $103,000 / Mid-Career Salary: $160,000
> Actuarial Mathematics – Starting Salary: $58,700 / Mid-Career Salary: $120,000
> Nuclear Engineering – Starting Salary: $67,600 / Mid-Career Salary: $117,000
> Chemical Engineering – Starting Salary: $68,200 / Mid-Career Salary: $115,000
> Aerospace Engineering – Starting Salary: $62,800 / Mid-Career Salary: $109,000
> Electrical Engineering – Starting Salary: $64,300 / Mid-Career Salary: $106,000
> Computer Engineering – Starting Salary: $65,300 / Mid-Career Salary: $106,000
> Computer Science – Starting Salary: $59,800 / Mid-Career Salary: $102,000
> Physics – Starting Salary: $53,100 / Mid-Career Salary: $101,000
> Mechanical Engineering – Starting Salary: $60,900 / Mid-Career Salary: $99,700

English and seminary are dead last on the list – he literally could not have chosen worse than he did. I don’t mind if a woman studies these things, but Tad is a man – he has the

Biblical obligation to be the primary provider, as we saw in the verse above.

More Tad:

> Is the PCUSA doing anything to address this crisis?
>
> […]What has our government done to address this issue?
>
> […]I, like so many in my generation, voted for Obama…
>
> […]It seems to me that we've bought into the lie that student loan debt is brought on by the individual person…
>
> […]You know what I think might stimulate the economy? Automatically cancelling every single outstanding student loan!
>
> […]If we can spend $640 billion dollars on defense spending, why can't we find the money to better support public education?

It's important to understand that an English degree and a seminary degree do not prepare a person to make statements on economics and government. Tad has never studied these things, has no experience in them. He cannot state what the impact of his suggestions would be to all groups, i.e. – he cannot answer "and then what happens?" for every impacted group. Thinking economically is a valuable skill, but as Tad's personal life shows, it's not an area he is really knowledgeable about. But he wants to shift money from defense spending (which he knows nothing about) so that he can have a personal bailout. I personally doubt that taxpayers would be better served by paying for his English degree and liberal seminary degree than they would be if a peace-loving democracy could project power abroad to deter aggression from countries like North Korea, Iran, Russia, China and Syria.

Here is the solution to Tad's problems:

- we need to put Tad to work in a minimum wage job and confiscate his entire salary, until his loans are paid off.
- we need to put Tad on a watch list such that he is never allowed to borrow money from anyone ever again.
- once Tad's loans are paid off, he should be taxed on his future earnings at the top tax rate for the rest of his life. The money we tax from him can fund education – that's what he said he wanted.
- Tad and his household should all be barred from collecting any money for unemployment, welfare or other social programs.

That's the only bailout Tad should get. It would actually be in his best interest that he encounter real life as quickly as possible, because the longer he waits, the harder it's going to be for him to recover to independence. He needs to stop his crazy retreat from adult responsibilities, and start working and saving now. I would say that at this point, marriage and parenting is out of the question for him (in another post, he comes out as gay, so that also complicates things). And he can thank the politics of the secular left for marriage and family being less affordable now, thanks to laws like Obamacare, which

raised the cost of health care by thousands of dollars. I found it interesting that he actually did work at some point but he mocked the job as a “dead-end job” – as if it was beneath him.

I know some of you will be thinking, “but God called him things and so of course God is going to bail him out with $100,000 for his student loans”. But the thing is, God doesn’t usually work like that. First, I don’t accept that he is a Christian at all. Second, just because you have feelings that your plan will work, that isn’t a calling. The truth is that you certainly can assess the feasibility of things that you feel “called” to do, and if the plan looks crazy, then don’t do it. If you find yourself at odds with wise, practical people when explaining your calling to them, then you’re probably doing it wrong.

Democrats holding up Republican bill that gets tough on sex-trafficking

March 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Life News reports:

> Senate Democrats today continued to block a bill to help human trafficking victims because the measure won't pay for their abortions.
>
> The legislation passed through the Senate Judiciary Committee without any problems but, now that it's slated for consideration on the floor of the U.S. Senate, pro-abortion activists are raising a stink about how funds for restitution for human trafficking victims won't pay for abortions. The objection is offensive to victims of human trafficking and millions of girls and young women around the world who are victimized by it, putting abortion ahead of meeting their needs.
>
> Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn, a pro-life Republican, is the lead sponsor of the measure to help human trafficking victims and aides to pro-abortion Democrats apparently missed the fact, during the committee hearing, that Cornyn crafted the bill in a way to help women as opposed to making Americans pay for abortions.
>
> This week, Senate Democrats falsely claimed Republicans snuck in the language in the bill to prevent abortion funding. Challenging them on their assertion Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell offers Democrats a chance to vote on the abortion funding provision if they were that opposed to keeping the provision in the bill. Senate Democrat Leader Harry Reid objected.
>
> "It's unconscionable that Democrats would put politics above such important legislation. The politics have to stop," Sen. John Thune said in response.
>
> Leading pro-life groups are taking Democrats to task for putting abortion funding ahead of sex trafficking victims.

In the video above, Iowa Senator Joni Ernst explains the situation:

> First, thank you all for coming today, and Senator Cornyn thank you very much for working so diligently on this legislation. Again, thank you for being here.
>
> As the mother of three beautiful daughters, and as someone who as a young woman volunteered my time, my energy at a women's crisis shelter that dealt with many of these forms of abuse, this is important legislation. This legislation is near and dear to my heart. So it is very disheartening to see the partisan politics, the political theatrics that we are seeing this week with this important legislation. Human trafficking cannot be allowed to continue. It shouldn't exist. And this is essentially modern-day slavery.We have the opportunity to do something about it, and we must do something about it.

> Senate Democrats in the Judiciary Committee voted unanimously to bring this bill forward, and as my colleagues have stated the language that is found in this bill is nothing new. This is language that has existed for 39 years. So essentially, what they are saying is, 'It was hidden, it was hidden.' It was not hidden. This is language that again has been in existence. We're maintaining the status quo with this legislation.
>
> So Senate Democrats, either failed to read that bill or again they are just playing partisan politics and political theatrics with an important issue. Again, as a mother, as a grandmother, we cannot allow our children to be victimized. And now that we have the opportunity to do something about it, we must push this issue, and we must bring this bill forward for a vote. I want to emphasize again that Senate Democrats voted unanimously to bring this bill out of committee, and as stated earlier, there were 10 co-sponsors, Democratic co-sponsors of this bill.
>
> So, I am imploring our Senate Democrats to stop the theatrics. Let's take the opportunity to do something very important for not only our nation's children, but other children that are being brought into the United States. Let's enforce these laws, let's bring forward stiffer penalties, and let's protect our children. Again, thank you for being here this afternoon.

Democrat legislators vote against bills that say that taxpayer-funding should not be used to fun abortions. If Democrats have to choose between prosecuting sex-traffickers and taxpayer funding of abortion, they'll take the latter.

Could Hillary Clinton be sent to prison because of her secret e-mail server?

March 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Your puny laws don't apply to Queen Hillary!
The first way is in the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration will soon find itself in court having to explain to federal judges why it never told anyone former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton used a secret email address, potentially spoiling dozens of open records requests, experts said Wednesday.
>
> **And Mrs. Clinton could face up to three years in prison per message if she is found to have broken her word and handled classified information on the secret account, one open records expert told The Washington Times.**
>
> The legal challenges have already begun, with The Associated Press filing a federal lawsuit saying the State Department has foiled five years' worth of requests for Mrs. Clinton's emails, but never told them or the court that she kept her own server — meaning that her emails weren't being searched.

The article points out that because Clinton had a secret, personal e-mail server, it will be difficult to prove that she handled classified information unless someone on the other end of one the e-mails shows up.

The State Department itself could face sanctions for refusing to own up to the existence of Hillary's personal e-mail server when processing Freedom of Information Act requests:

> Tom Fitton, president of Judicial Watch, which for years has battled for access to State Department records, said they are already preparing to ask several federal courts to review whether the Obama administration was skirting the law by not including Mrs. Clinton's email server in its searches for documents.
>
> "We had hundreds of requests. The State Department knew from the beginning

> these records weren't being searched, and no one told us about it, no one told the courts about it," Mr. Fitton said.
>
> […]The Associated Press filed a lawsuit Wednesday that could test the limits of the government's ability to go after emails. Despite five years of questions, the State Department never said it didn't have control over Mrs. Clinton's emails, the AP said, suggesting that officials were breaking the spirit of open records when they said they were conducting searches for records.
>
> "State's failure to ensure that Secretary Clinton's governmental emails were retained and preserved by the agency, and its failure timely to seek out and search those emails in response to AP's requests, indicate at the very least that State has not engaged in the diligent, good-faith search that FOIA requires," the news organization said in its lawsuit, filed in federal district court in Washington, D.C.

The second way that Hillary Clinton could go to prison is described at Fox News:

> A former Justice Department lawyer says Hillary Clinton, despite her claims that she broke no rules or laws, may have committed a violation in leaving the State Department without turning over all official emails and records.
>
> Shannen Coffin, a senior lawyer under the George W. Bush administration, pointed to a "separation" form that he said officials are supposed to sign upon leaving the department.
>
> His argument: If she signed the form, she probably gave a false statement and broke the law; if she didn't, she ran afoul of department policy.
>
> The form — OF109 — certifies that the person who signs it has turned over all "classified or administratively controlled" materials, as well as all "unclassified documents and papers" relating to official government business.
>
> It's unclear whether Clinton indeed signed that document. But Coffin told Fox News, "If that's the case, there's no question [she broke the law]."
>
> "Making a false statement in this context, knowingly and willfully — which I can't imagine anything more knowing and willful than knowing you have 55,000 records sitting in your home — if you do that, it is a felony," he told Fox News' "The Kelly File."
>
> The form cites "criminal penalties" for knowingly falsifying or concealing information.
>
> "Every employee at the State Department has to sign this little piece of paper when they leave," Coffin said. And if Clinton did not sign that document, he added, "why not?"

Here's the video:

National Review reports that the State Department spokeswoman declined to produce the form:

> State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki couldn't tell reporters on Thursday if Hillary Clinton signed an official records form presented to all employees as they leave the department — a crucial question in determining whether the former Secretary of State committed a felony by failing to turn over government e-mail records.
>
> […]"A former DOJ attorney has asked if, under department policy, Secretary Clinton — like all officials here in this building, when they depart or separate from this office, has to sign something called a form OF-109," a reporter asked Psaki on Thursday. "It's a separation statement declaring that when you leave office, you turn over not just classified materials, but any documents for official purposes. Did she sign –"
>
> "I think this has been asked," Psaki interrupted. "It was more than two years ago. I don't have an update on that specific question at this point."

Here's the video:

Select Committee chair Trey Gowdy is continuing his Benghazi investigation, and the chair of the National Security Subcommittee of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ron DeSantis is thinking of starting his own investigation of Hillary.

He said this on the Hugh Hewitt show:

> HH: I want the audience to know Congressman DeSantis is a Harvard Law grad as well as a veteran of the Armed Services, and knows of which he speaks when it comes to national security. And I believe you were on the National Security Subcommittee of Government Oversight, are you not?
>
> RD: I'm the chairman, Hugh, so this is right up our alley. And we're definitely going to pursue the security aspect of this, because, and I think it's been written up pretty well in some of the blogs, the State Department has been hacked before. And they have a lot of resources that they put into to maintaining the integrity of that system. If she used Google or Microsoft or one of those, they put in some resources, too. She set up her own system, and so the question is did she invest any of her personal resources to make sure that this had integrity and was not susceptible to being hacked? And those are answers that we're going to find out.
>
> HH: How are you going to go about pursuing that, Congressman DeSantis, because I know Trey Gowdy's got the Select Committee. But their scope begins really with our invasion of Libya, or our intervention in Libya. And the scope of her breaking of official norms begins the day she enters into office if not before with this private email server.
>
> RD: No doubt about it, and I think we're going to defer for the Libya stuff to Chairman Gowdy. He's been working on that. **But I'm going to urge our chairman, Jason Chaffetz, to use the full committee and as well as my subcommittee to look at all of what she did for her four year period,**

> **because we need to know whether there was any type of compromise of sensitive military. You see, in the military, if you send something over unclassified channels that is classified, it does not matter whether somebody actually intercepted. You assume that there's been a security breach, and you change your affairs accordingly. And I find it hard to believe that she would have had four years as Secretary of State and not discussed sensitive matters over that email. And I think the American people deserve answers to those questions.**

Defense analyst Frank Gaffney says that there is no way that Hillary's claim that she never sent or received classified information is true. So we have to wait for those investigations to find them, then we can hold her accountable.

Can atheists be moral? Sean McDowell and James Corbett debate

March 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I got the audio for this debate from Apologetics 315, linked below.

Here is the MP3 file.

Sean's case is similar to the one I make, but he only has 3 minimal requirements for morality.

First, he explains the difference between objective and subjective truth claims, and points out that statements of a moral nature are meaningless unless morality is objective. Then he states 3 things that are needed in order to ground objective morality.

1. an objective moral standard
2. free will
3. objective moral value of humans

The question of the foundations of morality is without a doubt the easiest issue for beginning apologists to discuss with their neighbor. If you're new, then you need to *at least* listen to his opening speech. He's an excellent speaker, and his rebuttals are very, very smooth. The citations of atheist philosophers like Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, e.g. – to show that "religious" wars had *nothing* to do with religion, really hurt his opponent. He seems to cite prominent atheists like Thomas Nagel, Richard Taylor, Michael Shermer, etc., constantly in order to get support for his assertions. That took preparation. McDowell was very calm in this debate. It's very hard to stay calm when someone is disagreeing with you in front of a crowd, but McDowell did a great job at that. He also seemed to be really prepared, because his rebuttals were crisp and concise.

For those of you who want to understand how these things work, listen to the debate. There is a period of cross-examination if you like that sort of thing. I do!

Pastor hires two prostitutes and takes them to a hotel room – what happens next?

March 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post has some mature subject matter. Reader discretion is advised.

This story is from Christian Today.

Here's the setup:

> Last weekend I hired some prostitutes for the first time in my life – two young ladies for the whole night.
>
> Because I'm a preacher and didn't want people to know what I was doing, I asked a trusted friend, Cossette, to hire these women and bring them to a hotel where I would join them. I also didn't want an absurdly inflated price because of being white, so she could hopefully negotiate ahead of time a more reasonable fee. Neither of us really knew how these things worked, and we were both a little nervous. What on earth is the going rate? Would anyone spot us?
>
> If I were exposed, caught with them, then my whole credibility and reputation would be destroyed in this country where I've invested 16 years…
>
> Cossette and I had our plan lined up. She met them in Bwiza, a few miles away, and brought them over by taxi to our part of town, Kinindo – as far as I know, prostitutes don't operate in our more respectable suburb. She called me when they had arrived and checked in at the hotel nearby, and after reading bedtime stories and putting my kids to bed I went down to meet them.

> I joined them at the table in the restaurant. They were fashionably dressed and wore lots of make-up. One was on the skinny side, the other more chunky, both pretty. They were definitely nervous but were trying hard to look relaxed. Divine and Arlette, 21 and 22 years old respectively.
>
> Their mechanical smiles broke my heart. I sat down and introduced myself. I told them how I wanted them to have the night off. They could order whatever they wanted, enjoy a hot shower, and then have a night of deep rest. The only rule was not to solicit any of the hotel guests. I would be back in the morning to pay them, and after breakfast together, they could go.
>
> I lay in bed that night next to my wife and couldn't stop thinking about Divine and Arlette, and of the thousands of women within a few miles of us who right at that moment would be enduring some random customer having sex with them. I hate the sex trade with a passion, in no small part because I have a mother, a sister, a wife, a daughter, and each one of them would probably have ended up doing the same thing had they been dealt the same hand in life as Divine and Arlette, and countless others.

> Morning came and we met over breakfast. I'd kept the previous night's conversation short because they would obviously have found it totally weird and been full of distrust. But at least now their guards were somewhat down. I didn't want to probe too much, and told them they didn't have to answer any of my questions if they didn't want to. I said I thought that as little girls they didn't dream that one day they'd grow up to be prostitutes. Sometimes terrible things happen in life, and you're forced into difficult choices. But maybe things could change – if they wanted to.

Read the whole thing, because my comments have spoilers!

This part deserves a comment:

> I asked them what their dreams were. They said they wanted to run a small business, or maybe go into marketing. I told them we had prayed that God would lead Cossette to the right ladies to help. Of the thousands of prostitutes out there, she'd come across the two of them. Maybe it was a coincidence, or maybe God was in it. I imagined out loud how, if they made good choices from now on, that in ten years – who knows – they could be running a healthy business at the market, happily married with a few kids. Divine's eyes lit up at the thought. Dared she believe…?

I think it's an excellent idea to listen to the stories of people who have made mistakes in their lives, to see if they are at the point where they are willing to listen to an alternative and talk about it. I actually worry that he could get into trouble, but I think he did this in a very careful way, with witnesses. Another part I liked is that he sat down and made a financial plan with them to figure out how they were going to move forward.

I think this BBC story is a useful foil. It talks about rape in India, where poor women are devalued.

It says:

> One of the men I interviewed, Gaurav, had raped a five-year-old girl. I spent three hours filming his interview as he recounted in explicit detail how he had muffled her screams with his big hand.
>
> He was sitting throughout the interview and had a half-smile playing on his lips throughout – his nervousness in the presence of a camera, perhaps. At one point I asked him to tell me how tall she was. He stood up, and with his eerie half-smile indicated a height around his knees.
>
> When I asked him how he could cross the line from imagining what he wanted to do, to actually doing it – given her height, her eyes, her screams – he looked at me as though I was crazy for even asking the question and said: "She was beggar girl. Her life was of no value."

No Christian could ever say those things or act like that. Christianity teaches that everyone was made to know God and has value because they are made in God's image,

and for that special purpose. No one is too unimportant to achieve that purpose – everyone has equal value with respect to that purpose. Christians take seriously the obligation not to act towards another person in any way that would dissuade them from that intended relationship with God.

Book review of Frank Turek's "Stealing from God"

March 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This book review was posted at Apologetics 315.

It says:

> From the very onset of the book, it is clear that Turek has the so-called "new atheists" in his crosshairs and his main contention is that "atheists are using aspects of reality to argue against God that wouldn't exist if atheism were true. In other words, when atheists give arguments for their atheistic worldview, they are stealing from a theistic worldview to make their case. In effect, they are stealing from God in order to argue against Him." [p. xviii]
>
> […]The author explains that since stealing is a crime, and atheists are stealing from God to make their case, the book will use CRIMES [1] as an acrostic to demonstrate the intellectual crimes atheists are committing. Each letter in CRIMES is representative of "one or more aspects of reality that wouldn't exist if atheism were true." [xviii]
> They are:
> C = Causality
> R = Reason
> I = Information and Intentionality
> M= Morality
> E = Evil
> S = Science

Now look here. I am not one of these weird presuppositionalists who tries to "argue" for God by assuming he's exists already. I do like to use evidence, so I can convince people who don't already believe in God. But if an atheist tries to argue back and is basing his arguments on assumptions that are grounded by theism and not by atheism, then I am ready to point that out.

Here is one case:

> In Chapter 4, this reviewer was interested to see how the author would handle the issue of morality. After all, arguments such as the cosmological argument and the argument from information are based upon scientific evidence and philosophical argument, but the moral argument gets personal!
>
> Turek begins the chapter by contending that objective moral values indeed exist and that God is necessary to ground them. He then continues by taking Sam Harris and his book The Moral Landscape to task and points out Harris' key mistake in assessing the objective morality:

> Why does a moral law exist at all, and why does it have authority over us…The Moral Landscape give us no answer. It's a nearly three-hundred-page long

> example of the most common mistake made by those who think objective morality can exist without God. Harris seems to think that because we can know objective morality (epistemology), that explains why objective morality exists in the first place (ontology). [p. 100]

> The author continues by arguing that evolution cannot explain morality, dealing with the infamous "Euthyphro dilemma," and contending that for atheists to offer a moral objection against God, they need God to do it.

There can be no statements about the supposed "immorality" of God without assuming a standard of objective morality by which you judge God. But then, the very standard you use to judge God could not exist unless God was there to make a standard of right and wrong that was independent of human opinions.

There was a good recent CRI article dealing with atheist attempts to ground morality, where the evolutionary accounts are evaluated.

Here's a bit:

> Paul Copan argues that evolutionary naturalism can *describe* how people behave, but it cannot*prescribe* how people *should* behave.[15] In order to say that an action is good or evil, one needs an objective and universal moral standard that transcends individual people and individual societies. It must also be personal in nature. Moral standards deal with right and wrong, what*should* and *should not* be done. That implies a choice that requires personality and consciousness. A transcendent moral standard would therefore need to be grounded in a conscious, personal, and transcendent reality. Christians find this in God—the only place where such a standard can be found.[16]
>
> If God does not exist, then as Francis Schaeffer explains, ethics merely explain what *is* rather than what *should be*. There is then no objective difference between kindness and cruelty because there is no standard.[17] The very terms "kind" and "cruel" would be meaningless. As Norman Geisler and Frank Turek argue, atheists rule out a transcendent Lawgiver in advance:18 This creates a problem: "While they may *believe* in an objective right and wrong, they have no way to *justify* such a belief (unless they admit a Moral Law Giver, at which point they cease to be atheists)" (emphasis in original).[19]

As soon as an atheist says that there is a way that things ought to be *objectively* rather than just their personal opinion, they have used God to disprove God.

Report: In 2008, then-Senator Obama sent emissary to Iran to undermine Bush

March 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A group of 47 senators sent an open-letter to the leaders of Iran reminding them that treaties that are negotiated by the President have to be approved by Congress. This is in fact how the Constitution works.

The Democrats are furious that anyone is questioning their self-confessed "bad deal" with Iran.

Breitbart News explains:

> President Obama set his Vice Presidential attack dog on the forty-seven GOP senators who dared send their March 9th letter to Iran's leadership warning them any deal signed with Team Obama may be short-lived when a new president comes to office.
>
> But Biden, like his boss, fails to do his homework before making outlandish statements or else chooses conveniently to overlook the facts.
>
> Livid over the GOP letter, Biden proclaimed: "In thirty-six years in the United States Senate, I cannot recall another instance in which Senators wrote directly to advise another country."
>
> Directing his venom at the Senate's Republican majority, Biden claimed the GOP letter was "expressly designed to undercut a sitting President in the midst of sensitive international negotiations…(an act) beneath the dignity of an institution I revere."

Well, how about it? Has any other senator undermined diplomatic efforts by a President?

Well, yes – Obama himself, when he was a senator:

> According to Pajamas Media columnist Michael Ledeen, in 2008, a Democratic senator sent a personal emissary to Tehran encouraging the mullahs not to sign an agreement with the outgoing Bush Administration as negotiations would take on a much friendlier tone following President Bush's departure from office.
>
> That senator was a presidential candidate at the time. His name was Barack Obama.

The plain truth is that Obama wants a nuclear Iran. That's what this deal is about – undermining U.N. sanctions against Iran, and removing U.S. sanctions against Iran.

The leftist Washington Post explains:

> We surmised yesterday that the Obama administration had the idea to go to the United Nations to pass by resolution what Congress would never agree to: a lifting of sanctions on Iran in exchange for a nearly worthless deal in which Iran

> would keep thousands of centrifuges and get a 10-year glide path to nuclear breakout.
>
> […]For quite some time, former U.N. spokesman Richard Grenell has been warning that this is exactly what is coming down the pike. Last year Grenell wrote: “President Obama’s Geneva proposal to the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council allowing Iran to enrich some uranium violates previous UN resolutions demanding the Islamic Republic stop ‘all’ uranium enrichment activity. To avoid a violation of current UN resolutions, the permanent members must ask the entire Security Council to vote to weaken and supersede their previous demands.” He continued, “The UN’s four rounds of hard-fought sanctions on Iran and several other resolutions demanding compliance call for a full suspension of all enrichment activities, including research and development, then full verification of that suspension before negotiations on a permanent diplomatic solution begin. The sequencing was strategic. It was designed to build international confidence in a secretive country’s deceitful past.” But Obama deliberately departed from these restrictions, so he has always planned to go back. Otherwise, his deal would be *in violation* of existing international law.
>
> That brings us to U.S. law. The U.N. resolutions don’t automatically become law, the administration was forced to concede. But under *current*U.S. sanctions law, the president can waive them. And that is just what Obama intends to do. He will get the U.N. to water down international sanctions while he suspends U.S. sanctions.
>
> Obama’s legacy becomes demolition of the sanctions regime and an opening for Iran to either make a dash for breakout or to wait 10 years and get its stamped permission slip. The word for this is “containment.” The next president can reverse the waiver, but the Iranian economy will be on the road to recovery and the next president’s options will be severely limited. Iran might even have a bomb by then.

So Obama is trying to undo U.N. sanctions against Iran, drop U.S. sanctions against Iran – for what? What is the purpose of helping Iran to develop nuclear weapons? Why would anyone interested in world peace want to do that?

Navy chaplain removed from unit for teaching Biblical views on sex and marriage

March 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> A former Marine and current Navy chaplain has been removed from his unit after sharing the teachings of his faith tradition in private, pastoral settings.
>
> Lt. Cmdr. Wes Modder, a chaplain at the Base Chapel Naval Weapons Station at Joint Base in South Carolina, is an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God.
>
> According to his legal team, a "handful" of individuals complained about his views on issues like atheism, homosexuality and sexual relationships outside of marriage.
>
> According to Military Times, after the complaints, **Modder's commanding officer wrote in a "detachment for cause" letter that states Modder is "unable to function in the diverse and pluralistic environment" of the United States Navy.**

It's such a diverse environment that if you disagree with the secular leftist view of sex and marriage, then you can't say anything. And we are paying taxes to pay for these people to violate the basic human rights of Christian employees. It's not just happening to Christian business owners who refuse to celebrate gay marriage, now. It's just regular Christians workers, too.

More:

> His commanding officer has requested that Modder be removed from the promotion list (despite his ranking as "Early Promote," the highest rating), separated from his unit, and brought before a Board of Inquiry.
>
> The same commanding officer previously wrote in Modder's fitness report in October of 2014 that Modder was the "best of the best" and recommended him for promotion.
>
> The board could force Modder, who previously served as a Marine in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, out of the Navy. His case is currently under review.

I thought this was useful to see what pressures authentic Christians face as they try to earn the money they ned to provide for their families in an increasingly secular environment:

> Mike Berry, the senior counsel and director of military affairs at the Liberty Institute, is handing Modder's case.

> […]“He’s in a catch-22 between his faith and his career,” said Berry.
>
> Berry said that Modder offered everyone who sought his guidance a “disclaimer” that he was speaking to them as an ordained Christian minister, stressing that Modder offered “spiritual advice” and “Biblical truth” according to his faith tradition in “private” sessions, not merely “unsolicited opinions.”
>
> But after the complaints of a “handful” of individuals, Modder’s future in the Navy is in jeopardy.
>
> […]Modder is also approaching his 20-year anniversary of military service. If his case is not resolved by Sept. 1, his pension and retirement benefits could also be in jeopardy.

Seems like he was very careful, but that did not protect him from the complaints of a handful of individuals who wanted to get rid of him for disagreeing with them. And of course Modder’s commanding officer has to deal harshly with him, or he will not be promoted. This is the new secular Inquisition.

Now, try to think with me about how many people are teaching their views on sex and marriage, and using taxpayer dollars to do it. Public school teachers, Planned Parenthood… Heck, in Ontario, Canada, the Liberty Party’s sex education curriculum was developed by a convicted child pornographer. And yet Christian chaplains are the ones who have to face discrimination for stating their views.

Scott Walker and Jeb Bush meet GOP voters in New Hampshire

March 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker
This is from left-leaning ABC News.

Excerpt:

> Jeb Bush and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker are two possible presidential candidates who were in New Hampshire this weekend for the same reason: to introduce themselves to voters. Though there were some similarities in the schedules of the two would-be front-runners, the men received starkly different reactions.
>
> The former Florida governor faced the challenge of not only using his family name to his advantage but adapting his issues on hot-button topics like the Common Core and immigration to appeal to the Granite State's conservative voters. The Wisconsin governor simply had to tell his personal story to motivate his audience.
>
> The enthusiasm that Walker earned at his address to the 2016 Kickoff Grassroots Training Session hosted by the New Hampshire GOP Saturday was missing at the house party held for Bush Friday night. At the house party, the crowd of roughly 100 invited guests and upward of 60 media attendees packed the home of Fergus Cullen, the state's former GOP chairman, forcing everyone to stand throughout because there was simply no room to sit down.
>
> On Saturday, the high school auditorium filled with volunteer activists for Walker's speech all had a seat but chose to get on their feet multiple times throughout his nearly 45-minute speech.
>
> Another show of support at Walker's event that was lacking at Bush's was a smattering of "hallelujah" affirmations throughout his talk.

> “I think he’s a man of great courage,” Denis Cronin told ABC News after Walker’s speech. “I thought he was great. Very articulate.”
>
> Walker generated more passion – on both sides – because of his fight against unions in Wisconsin. There were several dozen union workers protesting outside the high school where Walker held his event Saturday, though they dispersed when it started lightly snowing an hour before the governor arrived.
>
> There were no such protests at either public Bush function, only interest in seeing the next member of the political family try to win over Granite State voters.
>
> “He’s somebody you have to see and listen to him, but I don’t agree with a lot of his immigration stuff,” said Ken Hawkins, a former state representative who spoke to ABC News before Walker’s speech at the New Hampshire GOP event.
>
> “I think that people are tired of Bushes just like they’re tired of Clinton’s just like they were tired of Kennedy’s,” Hawkins said.
>
> The son and brother of former presidents is going to have a tougher time portraying himself as an “everyman” than the son of a preacher who flipped burgers growing up and whose sons went to public school. Walker talked about his love of Kohl’s cash, boasting that he bought the sweater he was wearing for $1 Friday, while Bush talked about a conversation he had with the founder of Uber and how new self-serve soda machines at his movie theater in South Coral Gables, Florida, will lead to fewer low-income jobs.
>
> **When it comes to policy, Bush has the hurdle of reaffirming himself as a conservative in spite of his support for immigration overhaul and Common Core education standards.**

“Immigration overhaul” is ABC News language meaning amnesty.

More:

> In tackling those particular issues, he won the support of moderate Republicans or self-proclaimed independents — like Brian Lenzi, who attended the party at Cullen’s house and thought Bush “presented himself very well” – but will lose conservatives at the same time.
>
> “I think based on what I am hearing, he’s trying to appeal to the center and that’s not what I’m looking for,” fellow Cullen party attendee Fenton Groen told ABC News.

A new poll of GOP voters finds Rubio in first place, Walker second. But Rubio has much higher negatives than Walker – probably because Rubio supported an amnesty deal.

The Washington Times explains:

> Potential Republican primary voters appear most open to supporting Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker for president in a new poll that shows overall voters are clamoring for “change” even more than they were in

> 2008.
>
> **Fifty-six percent of Republicans said they could see themselves supporting Mr. Rubio, and 53 percent said the same for Mr. Walker, according to the NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll. Twenty-six percent said they could not see themselves supporting Mr. Rubio, and 17 percent said the same of Mr. Walker.**
>
> Fifty-two percent said they could see themselves supporting former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, but four in 10 say they could not see themselves supporting him.
>
> Forty-nine percent said they could see supporting former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, with 42 percent saying they could not see themselves supporting Mr. Bush and 40 percent saying the same of Mr. Paul.

I think right now it’s pretty clear that Walker is the most electable conservative candidate although I am hoping to see more from Bobby Jindal and Ted Cruz in the future.

Muslim student wants to censor showing of "American Sniper" on campus

March 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Muslim student Farah El-Jayyousi

This is from The College Fix.

It says:

> [A] Muslim student activist who declared showing the film on campus would make her feel "unsafe" and demanded an "apology and explanation" as to how and why the movie was even selected for Mizzou audiences.
>
> The uproar was taken quite seriously, and prompted the student government to conduct a meeting to determine whether the flick should be shown.
>
> "This film is blatant racist, colonialist propaganda that should not be shown under any circumstances and especially not endorsed by a branch of student government that purports to represent me and have my best interests in mind," student Farah El-Jayyousi had stated.
>
> She made the comments in a letter to the editor to the campus newspaper earlier this month, denouncing the decision to show the blockbuster – the highest grossing film of 2014. El-Jayyousi accused the movie of dehumanizing Muslims and glorifying the murder of Iraqis, and referred to Chris Kyle, the Navy SEAL featured in the film, as "a killer with no regard for human life."

What do you think she is studying to have such blindness to the violence and anti-woman discrimination in the Middle East? She is double-majoring in psychology and women's and gender studies. Of course!

Let's just see what sort of violence happens in the Middle East.

This is from the leftist BBC about the conflict in Syria:

> Some 6,000 women have been raped since the start of the conflict in March 2011, the Euro Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) says.
>
> A spokeswoman for the group said these women were then socially stigmatised, and often forced to flee their homes.
>
> Women are being targeted by snipers and used as human shields, often with their children, the report also says.
>
> Violence against Women, a Bleeding Wound in the Syrian Conflict is based on interviews with victims and medical staff in the first half of 2013.
>
> The report describes how hundreds of Syrian women have been subjected to arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances and have undergone various forms of torture, in state detention facilities.
>
> […]The report also says the kidnapping of women has also become a strategy of exchanging prisoners and exacting revenge, and that the nature of the crimes – rape and gang-rape – leaves many women isolated.

That's not a concern to our Muslim student. She is more concerned about soldiers who go to the Middle East to try to liberate women from the rule of regimes that genitally mutilate them, honor-murder them, keep them illiterate, stone them, rape them, imprison them and "marry" them when they are still children. And so on. That's what she is learning to parrot at an American university. And of course she learns that sex-selection abortions are the height of women's rights, too.

Imagine if a Christian student went to a Muslim university (is there one that accepts women in Afghanistan? Oh right, there isn't) and wrote a similar article, but against the practice of genital mutilation in Mali, for example. What would happen to her, do you think? Exactly. But that's not a concern to our intrepid Muslim student. It must take some powerful self-deluding to be this self-contradictory, but that's why we have non-STEM departments in universities, isn't it?

Famous gay fashion designers express opposition to gay marriage

March 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is reported by Breitbart News.

Excerpt:

> Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana, founders of the eponymous fashion house, have come out strongly against gay marriage, the notion of gay families, and the use of surrogacy to procreate.
> The billionaire pair, who used to be romantically linked, gave an interview with the Italian magazine Panorama, in which they said, "The only family is the traditional one. No chemical offspring and rented uterus. Life has a natural flow; there are things that cannot be changed."
>
> They also said, "Procreation must be an act of love."
>
> "I call children of chemistry, synthetic children. Uteri for rent, semen chosen from a catalogue," Dolce stated.
>
> Gabanna said, "The family is not a fad. In it there is a supernatural sense of belonging."
>
> The pair have long been outspoken about gay marriage. In 2013, when the LondonTelegraph asked them if they had ever considered getting married, they answered, "What? Never!" Dolce said, "I'm a practicing Catholic."
>
> Gabbana told the Daily Mail in 2006, "I am opposed to the idea of a child growing up with two gay parents."
>
> LGBTNews in Italy is already calling for a boycott of Dolce and Gabbana.
>
> It is not unusual for gay men in Europe to oppose gay marriage. In fact, a group of gay men in France, calling themselves Les Hommen, have been an ongoing feature of traditional marriage protests in France. Les Hommen invaded the French Open, stripped to the waist, with pro-marriage slogans written on their chests. Gay Star News suggested it was "the most homoerotic anti-gay protest ever."

First Things has a quick review of their success story:

> Domenico and Stefano were for years perhaps the globe's most prominent gay power couple. In the tightly knit, family-based, quasi-aristocratic world of Italian fashion, these two men came from nowhere to make a name for themselves that the whole world would recognize. In a 2005 New Yorker article, John Seabrook marveled at their success:
>
> Unlike the Guccis, Pradas, Puccis, Zegnas, Ferragamos, and Fendis, Dolce and Gabbana do not come from families with long pedigrees in the production and

> sale of luxury goods. . . . They began as outsiders, with their noses pressed to the windows of the fashion world. Their business and their distinctive style are based not so much on family history and artisanal traditions as on their relationship with each other. And the only reason that Dolce and Gabbana are creative and business partners at all is that they were romantic partners first.
>
> The two men have long approached political orthodoxies with the same brashness and iconoclasm that guide their fashion sensibility. In 2006, Gabbana told the Daily Mail, "I am opposed to the idea of a child growing up with two gay parents." Such statements have yet to affect Dolce & Gabbana's business, but as gay rights make gains there is likely to be less freedom to speak for those who oppose them—even if those speaking are gay men.
>
> Already the new interview has prompted opposition, with the website LGBT News Italia calling for a boycott like the one launched against Barilla pasta after its chairman made similar comments. I tend to loathe the sub-democratic habit of expressing political preferences through consumer choices, but it would be hard to object to the victory won for elegance if conservatives were to start wearing D&G in solidarity with these two brilliant, independent-minded Italians.

I just want to say that I have absolutely no problem with these two guys. I think they should be allowed to believe what they want, act how they want, speak how they want and even have private commitment ceremonies if they want. All I want from them is that I be allowed to say the same things that they say in public, and not face the wrath of the secular leftist state and their powerful LGBT allies. I would like to also have the freedom to not celebrate or endorse anything that gay people do in word or deed.

I hope that a lot of gay people like these two guys will speak out for freedom like this, and in favor of natural marriage and family. I don't expect any gay people to endorse my sexual orientation, which is premarital chastity and postmarital exclusive fidelity. But I do expect them to *tolerate* me, just like these two guys seem to be able to do. I could probably be friends with these two guys, except that I don't care about fashion. But on gay marriage, these two guys really get it, and they get it better than most Christians and conservatives. Is it that hard to make a simple defense of natural marriage? I think not.

Did Eric Holder's hate speech incite violence against Ferguson cops?

March 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Lt. Governor of Missouri says that attorney general Eric Holder incited the Ferguson mobs "many times".

Breitbart News reports:

> Sunday on Fox News Channel's "America's News HQ," Lt. Governor Peter Kinder (R-MO) said Attorney General Eric Holder "on many occasions" seemed to "be inciting the mob."
>
> Kinder said, "He is sounding the right notes today, this afternoon. I just wish he had been more judicious and measured in his comments since the August 9. Because Mr. Holder came in and seemed on many occasions to be inciting the mob. He seemed to be putting his weight on the one side of the scales of justice and not backing up law enforcement. And if he is now, you know, backing up law enforcement mode, then I will be among those cheering him. And I hope that's the way he is from now on."
>
> When asked if he had spoken to Mr. Holder directly, Kinder said, "No, no, no, he doesn't bend to speak with people like me. He comes into town and meets with one side. He met with the family of Michael Brown, and that's fine that he met with them. But, he did not meet with the family of officer Darren Wilson or with his brother and sister officers to say I'm backing you up. "

Let's review what Eric Holder's boss Obama did in the wake of the Ferguson shooting.

Frontpage magazine recalls the violence from the protests:

> Despite Obama's superficial condemnations of violence, at least 25 businesses were set ablaze, many of which are total losses—and most of which were minority owned. Ten cars were burned at a dealership, and a "lot of gunfire," as Ferguson Asst. Fire Chief Steve Fair put it, made maintaining control of the streets highly problematic, if not impossible. Reporters were assaulted, the store Michael Brown robbed prior to his confrontation with Wilson was looted, and at least 61 people have been arrested. "What I've seen tonight is probably much worse than the worst night we ever had in August, and that's truly unfortunate," said St. Louis County Police Chief Jon Belmar Monday at a 1:30 a.m press conference. Belmar further noted that there was "nothing left" along West Florissant between Solway Avenue and Chambers Road, that he heard at least 150 gun shots, and that he was surprised he and Missouri Highway Patrol Captain Ron Johnson, who "got lit up," as they drove through the area, weren't hit by that gunfire.
>
> "We talked about peaceful protest, and that did not happen tonight," Johnson

> said. “We definitely have done something here that’s going to impact our community for a long time…that’s not how we create change.”

Now Obama met with Al Sharpton and the other protest leaders in the White House before these protests, before the police officers were whot last week. So either he is incapable of leading or he actually wanted the violence, vandalism and shooting that followed.

And keep in mind that the DOJ’s own report on the shooting found the police officer *completely innocent*, as did the grand jury report before the DOJ report. So there was no reason for all these violent protests and now shootings of police officers – except that it caused Democrat constituencies to believe that they need to vote Democrat to save them from a “threat” that turns out not to exist. The real threat to black citizens is, of course, black-on-black crime. And the real solution to that threat is to reduce government payments to women who have children before they marry, while raising them for married couples who have children. In any case, low-information Democrat voters probably do not even know about the DOJ findings, and that’s why the shootings continue. The mainstream news media is almost entirely composed of Democrats, and they have no interest in telling the truth about the DOJ report.

Race relations have plummeted in this country since Obama was elected and chose Eric Holder as his attorney general, and what do you expect? They are a couple of race hustlers. These are not problem solvers, they are problem creators.

Don’t let unmet needs block you from honoring your obligations to God

March 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

I’m still reading the devotional book (Paul Tripp’s “New Morning Mercies”) that Dina asked me to read. I will be reading it all year. I find that about one devotion a week is useful, the rest are fluff. However, because she is willing to keep asking me how I am doing with it, and also listen to me complain and criticize, I am keeping up with it.

I wanted to blog about the March 17th devotion.

Here it is:

> If you put too many things in your need category, you will end up frustrated with life, hurt by others, and doubting God’s goodness.
>
> It really is one of the sloppiest words used in human culture. If need means “essential for life,” then the vast majority of the things we say that we need we don’t actually need. You know this if you have children or are around children. Let’s say you’re a parent and you have taken your child to the mall (which is your first mistake). As you’re walking through the mall, your child sees the sneaker store and immediately makes a left-hand turn. Now, with nose pressed against the window of the store, he says, “Mom, I neeeeeeeed those sneakers.” You look down at his feet, which are encased in perfectly good shoes, and you say: “No, I’m not getting you those sneakers. You already have perfectly good shoes.” Now, when you say this, your child does not think: “What a wise mother I have been blessed with. She has seen through my distorted sense of need, has recognized selfish desire, and has lovingly rescued me from me.” No, your child lashes out against you: “You always say ‘no’ to me. I don’t know why I have to have the one mom who hates sneakers.” Then your child refuses to relate to you

> for the rest of the time that you are in the mall.
>
> When you tell yourself that something is a need, three things folio' First, you feel entitled to the thing, because, after all, it is a need. Second, because it is a need, you feel it's your right to demand it. And third, you then judge the love of another person by his or her willingness to deliver the thing. This not only happens in our relationships with one another, but more important, it happens in our relationship with God. When you name something as a need and God doesn't deliver it, you begin to doubt his goodness. What is deadly about this is that you simply don't run for help to someone whose character you've come to doubt.
>
> In Matthew 6:32, Jesus reminds us that we have a heavenly Father who knows exactly what we need. There is comfort and confrontation in Jesus's words. The confrontation is this: the reason Jesus reminds us that we have a Father who has a clear understanding of our true needs is because we don't have such an understanding. We constantly get needs and wants confused, and when we do, we are tempted to question the love of our heavenly Father. The comfort is that, by grace, we have been made to be the children of the wisest, most loving Father that the universe has ever known. He is never, ever confused. He knows our every need because he created us. We can rest in the grace that has made us his children, knowing that our place in his family guarantees that we will have what we need.
>
> For further study and encouragement: Psalm 145

I'm posting this because it applies to me. I have a need for recognition and acknowledgement from Christian women, and for a very long time in my life, I had to do without it, despite making what I considered to be all the right moves. I don't think anyone would say that I was not a successful person, and not a successful man. But I think something has changed in the culture that makes it harder to get appropriate recognition from women, even if you do all the right things. So I had to face this problem of having an unmet need for most of my life, until I started blogging and met tons and tons of women who recognized and acknowledged me. (My love language is words of encouragement)

I think the best thing I can say about this is that it hasn't affected my willingness to serve God. I remember having a conversation with an atheist woman who expected God to meet all her needs. She expected him to appear to her and explain why she had certain bad experiences. And of course he didn't appear, because it's a suffering religion. The founder of the religion did everything right, and he still suffered. You can do everything right as a Christian, and still suffer. When you are suffering really badly from unmet needs, the best you can do is decide to keep faith with God and not let your unmet needs cause you to dump him.

So I guess my advice to all of you is to say that I am right with you having an unmet need. But if I can keep doing my job for God, then you can do it, too. You can have needs. You can ask for them to be met. You can talk to God about it. But it still may not be

forthcoming. And then you have a decision to make. Make the decision I made, and resolve to keep serving regardless of whether your needs get met.

William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia: Does God Exist?

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Here is the video from the third debate from Dr. William Lane Craig's speaking tour in Australia.

Format:

- William Lane Craig (15 min)
- Lawrence Krauss (15 min, but was actually 21:40)
- Moderated discussion
- Question and answer

Dr. Graham Oppy, the moderator, is a well-known atheist philosopher. He let Dr. Krauss speak for 21 minutes and 40 seconds, which is why my summary of Krauss is so long.

The video:

Summary

After careful consideration, I decided not to be snarky at all in this summary. What you read below is what happened. There may be some small mistakes, but I will fix those if people tell me about them. I also included some quotes and timestamps for the more striking things that Dr. Krauss said.

The debate itself starts at 4:50 with Dr. Craig's opening speech. He does use slides to show the structure of his arguments.

Dr. Craig's opening speech. (4:50)

1. The kalam cosmological argument:
    - God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe
    - The Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem supports the absolute beginning of the universe
    - Even if our universe is part of a multiverse, the multiverse itself would have to have an absolute beginning
    - Speculative cosmologies try to challenge the Big Bang theory, but none of them – even if true – can establish that the past is eternal
    - Only two types of things could explain the origin of spece, time, matter and energy – either abstract objects or minds
    - Abstract objects do not cause effects, but minds do cause effects (we do it ourselves)
    - A mind is the best explanation for the origin of the universe
2. The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
    - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature

    - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
    - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
    - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see
3. The cosmic fine-tuning for the existence of intelligent life
    - There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) cosmological constants and 2) quantities
    - These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life
    - There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design
    - Law is rejected because they are put in at the beginning or matter – they don't emerge from matter
    - Chance must be rejected, because they odds are just too long unless you appeal to a world-ensemble
    - We do not observe what the world ensemble hypothesis predicts that we should observe
    - Design is the best explanation for finely-tuned constants and quantities
4. The existence of objective moral values and duties
    - Our experience of morality (values and duties) is that it is objectively real and incumbent on us
    - When someone goes into a classroom and shoots at innocent children, that is objectively wrong
    - On naturalism, moral values and moral duties do not exist – they are conventional and variable by time and place
    - The best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties is that God exists
5. The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus
    - There are three widely-accepted facts that are best explained by the resurrection hypothesis
    - 1) the empty tomb, 2) the post-mortem appearances, 3) the early church's belief in the resurrection
    - Naturalistic attempts to explain these 3 boilerplate facts fail
    - The best explanation of the 3 minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead
6. The immediate experience of God
    - Belief in God is a "properly basic" belief – rational even without arguments because of experience of God

Dr. Krauss' opening speech. (21:12)

Slides: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

1. Religious pluralism I

    - There have been lots of different gods created by people through history
    - We've gotten rid of all of them by understanding how the universe works by doing science
    - Religion is just stories, and the stories are inconsistent with how the universe works
2. Progress of naturalistic science I
    - Newtonian physics refutes the idea that angels push planets around
    - Darwinian evolution refutes design arguments, including the one that Dr. Craig presented (24:10)
    - Biochemistry hasn't explained how life originated, but we will have the solution soon
    - Physics shows us that matter can be created and destroyed without need a God
    - Physics shows us that universes can be created and destroyed "no problem"
3. Religious pluralism II
    - Since we have been able to disprove all the gods we've invented, why hang on to the last one
    - It's unlikely that the God that Dr. Craig presented exists, because we disproved all the others he didn't present
4. Hiddenness of God
    - There is a complete lack of evidence for the other 999 gods, so how likely is it that the God Dr. Craig presented exists
5. Religious pluralism III
    - There are inconsistencies between various religions, so therefore there can be no religion that is right
6. Progress of naturalistic science II
    - Peasants had a very low level of knowledge about the world and they believed in God
    - But our level of knowledge has increased over time, so we shouldn't believe in God now
    - Peasants thought that the Earth orbited the Sun, but this is now known to be false
    - The Scriptures said that the Earth orbited the Sun, but now we know that's false from science
7. Christianity plagiarizes from other religions I
    - There is nothing new or special about Jesus
    - He's just as unpleasant as all the other gods
    - Everything particular to Jesus occurs in other religions
8. Catholics are inconsistent about what they believe
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in transubstantiation
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in the virgin birth
9. The resurrection is copied from many other religions
    - Dionysus, Osiris, etc.

10. There is no evidence for the resurrection
    - The stories about Jesus were written “decades or hundreds of years after the fact”
    - The stories are inconsistent with each other
    - Dr. Craig tells me that historical Jesus scholars all accept that the resurrection happened
    - That’s like saying that all alien abductions experts agree that alien abductions happened
    - It’s unreasonable to think that the resurrection happened because no one saw it happen
    - I accept that people reported on appearances, but hallucination theory can explain that
11. The timeline for the creation and incarnation are all wrong
    - The creation, planet formation, hominids, incarnation, etc. all take place in the wrong times
    - If God knew what he was doing, he would done everything at better times to be more efficient
12. David Hume’s argument against miracles is sound
    - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – nothing wrong with this argument
    - Miracles are really just coincidences
    - Catholic apparitions at Lourdes disprove the historical argument that Dr. Craig made for the resurrection
13. God is petty and jealous
    - God shouldn’t demand that we trust him, esteem him and consider his character when we make decisions
    - The atoning death of Jesus for the sins of the world also makes no sense
14. Belief is based on geography
    - What you believe is clearly correlated with where you are born
    - There is even an Islamic clone of Dr. Craig who “uses the exact same arguments” that he does to prove Islam
    - Belief in God is decreasing in the Internet-accessible world
15. Science can develop morals without God
    - Reason is able to guide our actions to be moral
    - Morality evolves over time, so there is no objective morality
    - Catholicism teaches things that are immoral
    - Some things are prohibited by biological revulsion, such as incest
    - But if a brother and sister have sex using condoms “is that morally wrong? I can’t say it is frankly” (37:24)
16. Dr. Craig is irrational
    - “I came here convinced based on my past interactions and his writing that Dr. Craig was a dishonest Charlatan”
    - “Any argument that validates God is reasonable to him”

    - “And any argument against it is not only unreasonable but wrong and worth distorting”
    - “Because it must be wrong – he’s decided the answer in advance”
17. Dr. Craig is immoral
    - Dr. Craig thinks it is OK for God to command that Canaanite children are killed
    - “So in fact if they were Canaanite children in that schoolroom that he talked about then it would be OK”
    - It’s not reasonable to justify genocide in that way, but Dr. Craig is willing to go to those lengths
18. The cause of the origin of the space time universe need not be God
    - Dr. Craig says that if there is an explanation for the origin or space, time, matter and energy it must be God
    - But it could just as easily be turtles or Zeus
19. Dr. Craig misrepresents the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem
    - Alexander Vilenkin wrote me an e-mail that says that the theorem doesn’t work in all cases
    - “Dr. Craig is so convinced that these arguments must be true that he won’t listen to the fact that they’re not”
20. Darwinian evolution explains the fine-tuning
    - “Life was fine tuned – we got rid of it with Darwin”
    - Mutation and natural selection explain the cosmic fine-tuning argument that Dr. Craig presented
21. Suboptimal design disproves the fine-tuning argument
    - “We get back aches” therefore “This argument that [the universe] is fine-tuned for life is nonsense”
22. William Lane Craig can be proven to exhibit homosexual behavior using logical arguments
    - Look, you can construct arguments that are clearly wrong
    - Premise 1: “All mammals exhibit homosexual behavior”
    - Premise 2: “William Lane Craig is a mammal”
    - Seems to be saying that logical arguments can prove false things “it’s nonsense”
23. Dr. Craig distorted a podcast that some group made on pain receptors
    - Dr. Craig’s faith is so strong that it causes him to distort what this group said

Discussion: (44:35)

I will not be summarizing everything that was said, just a few main points.

The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the

universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can't even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don't work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don't have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON'T KNOW!!!!!!!" (raising his voice)
- Craig: I'm not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"
- Craig: "I wonder what you deleted from the original letter"
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "I just told you!"
- Craig: "Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) 'You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is

highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.'
- Craig: "That's Vilenkin."
- Krauss: "In this paper, that's absolutely right"
- Krauss: But it's ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it's unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: "Isn't it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?"
- Krauss: "No"
- Craig: "Well, can you give us one then"
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) "In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong"
- Krauss: "You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it's hard"
- Craig: "Right"

I noticed that a huge number of atheist web sites are taking the Vilenkin quote that Krauss used out of context, like this one and this one. There are probably a lot more of them like that, which I think is interesting. That's why we have these debates, I guess. To set the record straight about who accuses people of being dishonest, and who is actually dishonest.

Fine-tuning:

- Krauss tried to argue that he had explained the fine-tuning with the Higgs particle, but Dr. Craig said that only applied to the cosmological constant, not all the other examples of fine-tuning. Krauss said that it wasn't impressive that this universe permitted life and that "It would have been much more surprising if we evolved in a universe in which we couldn't live". Krauss argued the fine-tuning was only for "Life like us". But Dr. Craig explained that the fine-tuning is what allows us to have the basics of any kind of life, like slow-burning stars, chemical diversity, etc. – things that are required for basic minimal life functions in any living system. Craig said that he was working with the current physical laws of this universe (F = ma, etc.) and that he was looking at what changed if we changed those even slightly. Krauss tried to say that if he changed things like the mass of particles then the strength of forces would change. (But the forces aren't laws!) Krauss argued that the cosmological constant would be even better for life if it was zero, and Craig said that the life permitting range did include zero, but that the range of life-permitting values was narrow.

Jesus' existence:

- Craig reponded to the mystery religions charge, the charge that the evidence for the minimal facts is too late/too weak, the charge that grief visions explained the evidence better, and Hume's argument against miracles. Craig brought up the early

creed from 1 Cor 15:3-7 and explained to Krauss that it was 5 years after the events, and that Jewish standards of oral transmission were strong enough to ensure that the creed was reliable, and most of the eyewitnesses would still have been alive.

Audience Q and A: (1:21:09)

The first topic is the grounding of morality. Krauss agrees that there is no objective morality and no objective moral oughts. He also said that that standards of behavior are arbitrary, and that they change over time and they are adopted for promoting social order. Dr. Craig pressed the point that science itself would collapse without ethical values. It assumes them, but cannot ground them.

The next topic was free will. Krauss is a determinist. Craig asked him how he could reconcile moral responsibility with determinism.

The next topic was the effectiveness of mathematics. Krauss didn't have an explanation for it and didn't think it needed one. Then they got into whether the Genesis has been verified by science and whether it is meant to be taken literally.

The next topic was whether philosophy makes any progress. Craig gave the example of verificationism being rejected as too narrow, and self-refuting. Krauss: "I'm going to come to the defense of philosophy for the first time". Craig: "That's amazing!" Krauss said that science provides new knowledge. Craig said there were some things that could be known apart from science.

Hillary Clinton never signed separation form that required her to turn over all e-mails

March 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National Review reports:

> **After days of fending off the question, State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki admitted on Tuesday that the department has no record of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton signing a separation form that could open her up to perjury charges.**
>
> **Form OF-109 is a document required to be signed by all State Department employees as they exit the department. In it, the employee claims, under penalty of perjury, that he or she has turned over all relevant communications to the government at the time of his or her departure.**
>
> **By turning over her private e-mails at the end of 2014, two years after leaving office, Clinton violated that agreement — if, in fact, she signed it.**
>
> On Tuesday, the State Department finally indicated that she did not — or at least, they have no records of her doing so. "We have reviewed Secretary Clinton's official personnel file and administrative files, and do not have any record of her signing the OF-109," Psaki said on Tuesday. "It is not clear that this form is used as part of a standard part of check-out across the federal government, or even at the State Department. So we're certainly looking into that."
>
> AP reporter Matt Lee pressed Psaki, asking why the department had previously intimated that the form was "required" and if Clinton's non-signature violated any rules.
>
> "It's not a violation of any rule, no," she said, saying that signing the form may not be a common departure practice and that "there are differences between regulations and, certainly, recommendations."
>
> "The form exists, certainly," Psaki said. "Beyond that, I don't have more statistics on what percentage of State Department employees sign on departure from the building."
>
> "Yes, the form exists, and it exists for a reason," Lee replied. "It doesn't exist simply because someone thought, 'Hey, let's have a form that someone has to sign!' It exists for a reason, and probably a pretty good reason, right?"
>
> "Well, there are probably hundreds of forms in the federal government that exist — thousands, tens of thousands of forms that exist," Psaki said. "So I don't know that I would over-emphasize the existence of a form."

They don't have a record of her signing a required form. Everyone is supposed to sign that form before leaving the State Department. If the signed form were recovered, then she would be guilty of perjury for keeping a private e-mail server and deleting the e-mails. Add the missing e-mails to the millions of dollars of donations to the Clinton Foundation, and you have the makings of a serious, serious scandal.

Your puny laws don't apply to Queen Hillary!

My absolute favorite liberal journalist is Ron Fournier, who writes for the very left-wing National Journal.

He says this is a big deal:

> *National Journal* Senior Political Columnist and Editorial Director Ron Fournier said that Democrats are "scared to death" over the scandals regarding donations to the Clinton Foundation and Hillary Clinton's emails on Monday's "Special Report" on the Fox News Channel.
>
> "Don't buy the spin, they [Democrats] are scared to death. And there's a lot of them who are already starting to think 'is she really the best candidate for us?'…Their bench, compared to the Republican bench is awfully, awfully thin. And there's a lot of Democrats, by the way, who are saying 'follow the money.' A lot of Democrats are really worried about the Foundation, that's what they're really worried about" he stated.
>
> Earlier, Fournier said that the Clinton Foundation's acceptance of Chinese donations is "a big issue. There's a lot of other ways the Chinese government, and the Saudis, and the [Qataris] — there are other ways that they can help the world if that's what they want to do. They're giving their money to the Clinton Foundation for a reason. They want something out of it. So I know, what I really want to see in these e-mails is any e-mail that mentions the Foundation and mentions one of the donors."

Watch:

This should sink Hillary Clinton as a candidate, and it will, so long as the heat stays on.

White House turns its back on transparency

You might recall that previously, Barack Obama told us that his administration would be

the most transparent ever:

But the White House is now refusing to comply with Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests:

> The White House is exempting an office from compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, angering open-government advocates, who accuse President Barack Obama of not living up to his pledge to run the “most transparent administration in history.”
>
> The White House said Tuesday that the move to exclude the White House Office of Administration from the federal open-access law reflected a court ruling that predated the Obama administration and wouldn’t have any effect on its commitment to open records and its compliance with requests for records.
>
> “This is a matter of just cleaning up the records that are on the books,” White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said. “It has no impact at all on the policy that we had maintained from the beginning to comply with the Freedom of Information Act, when it’s appropriate.”
>
> The move, announced Tuesday in the Federal Register, came as news organizations marked Sunshine Week to showcase the public’s right to know, and it drew sharp criticism from advocates who already give the administration poor marks for news-media access.
>
> “This is another example of the White House position avoiding transparency,” said John Wonderlich, policy director of the nonprofit Sunlight Foundation. “Instead of creating more and better access to information, it’s trying to control it.”
>
> “The president has routinely failed to deliver on his promise,” said Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who’s proposed a law that would reduce the use of exemptions to withhold information from the public.

The most transparent administration in history? Not a smidgeon of corruption? Not so much.

Should blacks vote for Democrats? Do liberal policies help young black men?

March 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I want to quote from two black economists – my two favorite economists – to answer some questions.

First, Thomas Sowell.

Economist Thomas Sowell

Is minimum wage good for young blacks?

He writes:

> Low-income minorities are often hardest-hit by the unemployment that follows in the wake of minimum wage laws. The last year when the black unemployment rate was lower than the white unemployment rate was 1930, the year before there was a federal minimum wage law.
>
> The following year, the Davis-Bacon Act of 1931 was passed, requiring minimum wages in the construction industry. This was in response to complaints that construction companies with non-union black construction workers were able to underbid construction companies with unionized white workers (whose unions would not admit blacks).
>
> Looking back over my own life, I realize now how lucky I was when I left home in 1948, at the age of 17, to become self-supporting. The unemployment rate for 16- and 17-year-old blacks at that time was under 10%. Inflation had made the minimum wage law, passed 10 years earlier, irrelevant.
>
> But it was only a matter of time before liberal compassion led to repeated increases in the minimum wage to keep up with inflation. The annual unemployment rate for black teenagers has never been less than 20% in the past 50 years, and has ranged as high as over 50%.
>
> You can check these numbers in a table of official government statistics on page 42 of professor Walter Williams' book "Race and Economics."
>
> Incidentally, the black-white gap in unemployment rates for 16-year-olds and 17-

> year-olds was virtually nonexistent back in 1948. But the black teenage unemployment rate has been more than double that for white teenagers for every year since 1971.

Second, Walter Williams.

Economist Walter Williams

Is voting for black leaders good for blacks?

He writes:

> Black leaders stress the importance of political power and getting out the vote, but we might ask how important political power is to the ordinary black person. As a start toward answering that question, we might examine black life in cities where blacks hold considerable political power.
>
> Detroit is the nation's most dangerous city. Rounding out Forbes magazine's 2013 list of the 10 most dangerous cities are Oakland, Calif.; St. Louis; Memphis, Tenn.; Stockton, Calif.; Birmingham, Ala.; Baltimore; Cleveland; Atlanta; and Milwaukee.
>
> According to a recent American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, the 10 poorest cities with populations of more than 250,000 are Detroit, with 33% of its residents below the poverty line; Buffalo, N.Y., 30%; Cincinnati, 28%; Cleveland, 27%; Miami, 27%; St. Louis, 27%; El Paso, Texas, 26%; Milwaukee, 26%; Philadelphia, 25%; and Newark, N.J., 24%.
>
> In addition to poverty, there is grossly inferior education and high welfare dependency in these cities.
>
> The most common feature of these cities is that for decades, all of them have had Democratic administrations. Some cities — such as Detroit, Buffalo, Newark and Philadelphia — haven't elected a Republican mayor for more than a half-century.
>
> What's more is that in most of these cities, blacks have been mayors, chiefs of police, school superintendents and principals, and have dominated city councils.

> […]Let's be clear about what I am saying and not saying. I am not suggesting that there's a causal relationship between crime, poverty and squalor on the one hand and Democratic and black political power on the other. Nor am I suggesting that blacks ought to vote Republican.
>
> What I am saying is that if one is strategizing on how to improve the lives of ordinary — and particularly the poorest — black people, he wants to leave off his high-priority to-do list the election of Democrats and black politicians. Also to be left off the to-do list is a civil rights agenda.
>
> Perhaps the biggest roadblock to finding solutions is the widely held vision that the major problem confronting blacks is discrimination. I am not arguing that every vestige of discrimination has been eliminated. I am arguing that the devastating problems facing a large proportion of the black community are not civil rights problems. The solutions will not be found in the political or civil rights arena.

And third, more Walter Williams.

Is focusing on the few cases where a white police officer shoots a black man good for blacks?

He writes:

Excerpt:

> Each year, roughly 7,000 blacks are murdered. Ninety-four percent of the time, the murderer is another black person.
>
> According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1976 and 2011, there were 279,384 black murder victims. Using the 94-percent figure means that 262,621 were murdered by other blacks.
>
> Though blacks are 13 percent of the nation's population, they account for more than 50 percent of homicide victims. Nationally, the black homicide victimization rate is six times that of whites, and in some cities, it's 22 times that of whites.
>
> Coupled with being most of the nation's homicide victims, blacks are most of the victims of violent personal crimes, such as assault and robbery.
>
> The magnitude of this tragic mayhem can be viewed in another light. According to a Tuskegee Institute study, between 1882 and 1968, 3,446 blacks were lynched at the hands of whites. Black fatalities during the Korean War (3,075), Vietnam War (7,243) and all wars since 1980 (8,197) come to 18,515, a number that pales in comparison with black loss of life at home.
>
> It's a tragic commentary to be able to say that young black males have a greater chance of reaching maturity on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan than on the streets of Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Oakland, Newark and other cities.

Not everyone who runs around crying "racism, racism" is interested in helping blacks to do as well as other racial groups.

Blacks will do well, just as they used to do, when the political parties in power embrace free-market capitalist policies, such as lowering the minimum wage, or scrapping it entirely. Blacks will do well, just as they used to do, when we strengthen and subsidize natural marriage – by repealing no-fault divorce and reforming welfare for single mothers. Blacks will do well, just as they used to do, when we make public schools more responsive to parents, and less responsive to teacher unions. And so on.

What are the arguments for the historicity of the empty tomb story?

March 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investigating the historical Jesus

I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do

so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

A few quotes from atheist historians not from Dr. Craig's article: (thanks to Eric of Ratio Christi OSU)

> Michael Goulder (Atheist NT Prof. at Birmingham) "…it goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion." ["The Baseless Fabric of a Vision," in Gavin D'Costa, editor, Resurrection Reconsidered (Oxford, 1996), 48.]
>
> Gerd Lüdemann (Atheist Prof of NT at Göttingen): "…the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus…not later than three years… the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE." [The Resurrection of Jesus, trans. by Bowden (Fortress, 1994), 171-72.]
>
> Robert Funk (Non-Christian scholar, founder of the Jesus Seminar): "…The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30 C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." [Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, The Acts of Jesus, 466.]

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s. For example, the atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark some time in the 40s. (See the debate below)

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say "The President is hosting a dinner at the White House" and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the "high priest" as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus' death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

So we are dealing with very early sources for the empty tomb.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as "Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women" and "Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female."
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers

> of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

Woman raised by two lesbian parents speaks out: I missed my Dad

March 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Heather Barwick

This is from The Federalist. Just so you know, the author is a former same-sex marriage advocate.

She writes:

> Gay community, I am your daughter. My mom raised me with her same-sex partner back in the ’80s and ’90s. She and my dad were married for a little while. She knew she was gay before they got married, but things were different back then. That’s how I got here. It was complicated as you can imagine. She left him when I was two or three because she wanted a chance to be happy with someone she really loved: a woman.

> My dad wasn’t a great guy, and after she left him he didn’t bother coming around anymore.
>
> Do you remember that book, “Heather Has Two Mommies”? That was my life. My mom, her partner, and I lived in a cozy little house in the ‘burbs of a very liberal and open-minded area. Her partner treated me as if I was her own daughter. Along with my mom’s partner, I also inherited her tight-knit community of gay and lesbian friends.

But now she opposes same-sex marriage because it became apparent to her through her own life experience and the experience of having children that children need a mother and father.

She writes:

> Growing up, and even into my 20s, I supported and advocated for gay marriage. It’s only with some time and distance from my childhood that I’m able to reflect on my experiences and recognize the long-term consequences that same-sex parenting had on me. And it’s only now, as I watch my children loving and being

> loved by their father each day, that I can see the beauty and wisdom in traditional marriage and parenting.

> Same-sex marriage and parenting withholds either a mother or father from a child while telling him or her that it doesn't matter. That it's all the same. But it's not. A lot of us, a lot of your kids, are hurting. My father's absence created a huge hole in me, and I ached every day for a dad. I loved my mom's partner, but another mom could never have replaced the father I lost.
>
> I grew up surrounded by women who said they didn't need or want a man. Yet, as a little girl, I so desperately wanted a daddy. It is a strange and confusing thing to walk around with this deep-down unquenchable ache for a father, for a man, in a community that says that men are unnecessary. There were times I felt so angry with my dad for not being there for me, and then times I felt angry with myself for even wanting a father to begin with. There are parts of me that still grieve over that loss today.

> I'm not saying that you can't be good parents. You can. I had one of the best. I'm also not saying that being raised by straight parents means everything will turn out okay. We know there are so many different ways that the family unit can break down and cause kids to suffer: divorce, abandonment, infidelity, abuse, death, etc. But by and large, the best and most successful family structure is one in which kids are being raised by both their mother and father.

I recommend reading the whole thing.

Dawn Stefanowicz said similar things about her experience raised by her Dad and his gay partner in this interview posted on MercatorNet. This is mature subject matter.

It says:

> **MercatorNet:** How did you feel about what was going on around you?
>
> **Stefanowicz**: You become used to it and desensitised. I was told at eight years old not to talk about this but I knew that something was wrong. I was not thinking "this is right or wrong" but I was disturbed by what I was experiencing. I was unhappy, fearful, anxious and confused. I was not allowed to tell my father that his lifestyle upset me. You can be four-years-old and questioning, "Where is Daddy?" You sense women are not valued. You think Daddy doesn't have time for you or Daddy is too busy to play a game with you. All this is hard because as a child this is the only experience you have.
>
> **MercatorNet:** How did this affect your relationship with others?
>
> **Stefanowicz**: I had a hard time concentrating in school on day-to-day subjects and with peers. I felt insecure. I was already stressed out by an early age. I'm now in my 40s. You're looking at life-long issues. There is a lot of prolonged and unresolved grief in this kind of home environment and with what you witness in

> the subcultures.
>
> It took me until I was into my 20s and 30s, after making major life choices, to begin to realise how being raised in this environment had affected me. Unfortunately, it was not until my father, his sexual partners and my mother had died, that I was free to speak publicly about my experiences.

And:

> **MercatorNet:** Why do so few children speak out?
>
> **Stefanowicz:** You're terrified. Absolutely terrified. Children who open up these family secrets are dependent on parents for everything. You carry the burden that you have to keep secrets. You learn to put on an image publicly of the happy family that is not reality. With same-sex legislation, children are further silenced. They believe there is no safe adult they can go to.

As I've written here before there are several completely non-religious reasons to oppose same-sex marriage. But the one that is surely the easiest to understand is that children need a mother and a father, and when they don't have both they miss having both. In general, children do better with their mom and dad close by as they they are growing up. That's a very good reason to promote the traditional definition of marriage – one man, one woman, for life. Period. I don't want to have any part in depriving children of the safety and security of their mothers and fathers. It's a scary thing to grow up in the world and not have two people who are YOURS. Who are interested in your development, and whose bond to you is irrevocable and undeniable.

What can Winston Churchill teach us about deterring aggression?

March 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Winston Churchill on appeasement

Famous economist Thomas Sowell explains.

He writes:

> Despite Churchill's legendary status today, he was not merely ignored but ridiculed at the time, when he was repeatedly warning in vain. Knowing that his warnings provoked only mocking laughter in some quarters, even among some members of his own party, he said on March 14, 1938 in the House of Commons, "Laugh but listen."
>
> Just two years later, with Hitler's planes bombing London, night after night, the laughter was gone. Many at the time thought that Britain itself would soon be gone as well, like other European nations that succumbed to the Nazi blitzkrieg in weeks (like France) or days (like Holland).
>
> How did things get to such a desperate situation, with Britain alone continuing the fight, and struggling to survive, against the massive Nazi war machine that now controlled much of the material resources on the continent of Europe?
>
> Things got that desperate by following policies strikingly similar to the policies being followed by the Western democracies today, including some of the very same notions and catchwords being used today.
>
> Just recently, a State Department official in the Obama administration said that Americans have remained safe in a nuclear age, not because of our own nuclear arsenal but because "we created an intricate and essential system of treaties, laws and agreements."
>
> If "treaties, laws and agreements" produced peace, there would never have been a Second World War. The years leading up to that monumental catastrophe were filled with international treaties and arms control agreements.
>
> The Treaty of Versailles, which ended the First World War, imposed strong

> restrictions on Germany's military forces — on paper. The Washington Naval Agreements of 1922 imposed restrictions on all the major naval powers of the world — on paper. The Kellogg-Briand pact of 1928 created an international renunciation of war — on paper.
>
> The Munich agreement of 1938 produced a paper with Hitler's signature on it that British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain waved to the cheering crowds when he returned to England, and said that it meant "Peace for our time." Less than a year later, World War II began.
>
> Winston Churchill never bought any of this. He understood that military deterrence was what preserved peace. With England playing a leadership role in Europe, "England's hour of weakness is Europe's hour of danger," he said in the House of Commons in 1931.
>
> […]While Russia and China increased the share of their national output that went to military spending in 2014, the United States reduced its share. Churchill deplored the "inexhaustible gullibility" of disarmament advocates in 1932. That gullibility is still not exhausted in 2015.
>
> "Not one of the lessons of the past has been learned, not one of them has been applied, and the situation is incomparably more dangerous," Churchill said in 1934. And every one of those words is more urgently true today, in a nuclear age.

Here's another article by Thomas Sowell that explains it more.

Excerpt:

> In France, after the First World War, the teachers' unions launched a systematic purge of textbooks, in order to promote internationalism and pacifism.
>
> Books that depicted the courage and self-sacrifice of soldiers who had defended France against the German invaders were called "bellicose" books to be banished from the schools.
>
> Textbook publishers caved in to the power of the teachers' unions, rather than lose a large market for their books. History books were sharply revised to conform to internationalism and pacifism.
>
> The once epic story of the French soldiers' heroic defense against the German invaders at Verdun, despite the massive casualties suffered by the French, was now transformed into a story of horrible suffering by all soldiers at Verdun—French and German alike.
>
> In short, soldiers once depicted as national heroes were now depicted as victims— and just like victims in other nations' armies.
>
> […]France, where pacifism and internationalism were strongest, became a classic example of how much it can matter.
>
> During the First World War, France fought on against the German invaders for

> four long years, despite having more of its soldiers killed than all the American soldiers killed in all the wars in the history of the United States, put together.
>
> But during the Second World War, France collapsed after just six weeks of fighting and surrendered to Nazi Germany.
>
> At the bitter moment of defeat the head of the French teachers' union was told, "You are partially responsible for the defeat."
>
> Charles de Gaulle, Francois Mauriac, and other Frenchmen blamed a lack of national will or general moral decay, for the sudden and humiliating collapse of France in 1940.

Is the same thing happening in our public schools? Are our children taught to think that wars can be prevented by unilaterally disarming?

The lesson we need to learn from history is that the way to stop wars is by making the people who want to start them understand that there will be a price to pay if they start a war. That means that we need a certain amount of military power, and that we should have demonstrated that we are willing to use it. That is counter-intuitive to people on the left who cannot imagine that evil tyrants really are evil tyrants. They want to believe that problems can be solved with talk, but history teaches that talk is cheap.

Do Democrats want to deport illegal aliens who commit serious crimes?

March 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jeb Bush and Barack Obama support amnesty

Let's start with the raw numbers from CNS News.

They write:

> According to weekly detention and departure reports from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, there were 167,527 non-detained convicted criminal aliens in the United States as of Jan. 26 of this year, a congressional hearing revealed Thursday.
>
> House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah.) read the statistic aloud Thursday durin a hearing examining ICE's priorities and procedures for removing criminal aliens currently living in the United States.
>
> "In that report, it said that there are 167,527 non-detained, final-order convicted criminals on the loose in the United States," Chaffetz pointed out while questioning ICE Director Sarah Saldana."These are people that are here illegally, get caught, convicted, and you release back out into the public," he said, adding that some of the crimes committed by those who have been released include homicide, sex crimes, child pornography, drunk driving, robbery and kidnapping.
>
> The federal government announced Wednesday that ICE had released about 30,000 convicted criminal aliens from ICE custody in 2014 alone, according to The Washington Times, which first reported the statistic.
>
> […]During the hearing, Saldana said that ICE releases criminal aliens back into

> the community based on the agency's "discretionary control."
>
> […]"So you don't automatically deport them, then?" Chaffetz asked.
>
> "Automatically, sir? No," Saldana responded, adding that "the law gives us that discretion."
>
> "And so when we say, if you're a criminal, you'll be deported, that's not necessarily true," Chaffetz said.
>
> "It is true, sir. It's in–"
>
> "After they get released back into the public for untold number of times?" Chaffetz asked.
>
> "It does happen. It does happen, yes, and that's exactly what we're here to do," Saldana admitted.
>
> "What does happen? That they get released?" Chaffetz asked.
>
> "Yes," Saldana said, "Even criminals that are released."
>
> "Those people were released under the laws of the United States," Saldana added, explaining that according to "due process," it can easily take "months and even years to deport folks."

Meanwhile, the Washington Times reports on some criminals who were amnestied by Obama's executive action.

Excerpt:

> Nearly two dozen of the illegal immigrants picked up in a nationwide sweep for criminal aliens earlier this month had previously been approved for President Obama's deportation amnesty, the Homeland Security Department said Wednesday.
>
> All 23 were part of Mr. Obama's original program for so-called Dreamers, which began in 2012 and which had granted tentative legal legal status to nearly 640,000 as of the end of last year.
>
> Of the 23, 15 were still actively part of the amnesty, while eight had been approved once but had not gotten their status renewed after the first two-year period expired.
>
> […]Homeland Security spokeswoman Marsha Catron said 14 of the 15 Dreamers who were still part of "deferred action" were convicted of their crimes after they were approved. The other one had a has a pending criminal charge but hadn't yet been convicted or acquitted.

Now I am all in favor of legal immigration and even naturalization of skilled workers who come here on work permits and prove over a long period time that they can 1) keep a job, 2) avoid committing crimes, and 3) not collect any benefits from the government. But I am really at a loss to understand why the United States shows almost no interest in getting skilled immigrants to settle down, but a great interest in giving special benefits

to illegal immigrants who commit serious crimes. It really makes no sense to me – it's not fair. It's really a mystery to me how a "Republican" presidential candidate like Jeb Bush can be in favor of amnesty when this is what amnesty actually does, in practice. Why is Bush even running as a Republican? He should be challenging Hillary Clinton for the Democrat nomination.

What is it like to be a donor-conceived child?

March 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Yesterday, I wrote about children who are raised by same-sex parents. Today I want to link to an article written by two donor-conceived children.

The thing about donor-conceived children is this – the child's natural father and/or mother's absence has been bought and paid for by the adopting couple. One or both of the people who conceived the child is being *paid by the adopter to go away*.

From the article:

> [M]y mother informed me of my true parentage when I was 14, and it was, as they say, irrevocable. My mother's then-husband had waited until they divorced to permit her to tell me, and the revelation of his not being my biological father clarified an overwhelming amount of issues between us. For a multitude of reasons—his background, my personality and beliefs, our lack of biological connection—the cards were stacked against our having a conventional, loving father-daughter relationship. And we didn't.

> One of the greatest tragedies of donor conception is the loss of belonging: to family, to a culture. Essentially, one becomes malleable like an infant. I crave a home. I see myself as I travel in many directions—doing anything in order to find one.
>
> Through the storytelling of other donor-conceived individuals, and scientific research pertaining to third-party reproduction and genetics, I have discovered that my situation is by no means unique, and I now understand the scientific explanations as to why my social father and I—up to a certain point—were unable to bond. It is natural for me to desire my father, for evolution has blessed those that secure such a bond with better survival rates.
>
> The lack of my biological father's presence is a devastating reality, a burden I will likely bare my entire existence. And now, knowing the truth of my conception,

> when I remember my past I remember everything that was absent from it.

The study she linked to in that paragraph says this:

> It is on these grounds that we hypothesized, many years ago, that any and all sorts of abuse and exploitation would be seen to occur at higher rates in steprelationships than in genetic parent-child relationships, and that the differences would persist when possible confounds such as socio-economic status were controlled for… This hypothesis has since been abundantly supported in our own research and in that of many others. This differential (mis)treatment is what we refer to as the "Cinderella effect".
>
> […][I]n several countries, stepparents beat very young children to death at per capita rates that are more than 100 times higher than the corresponding rates for genetic parents.
>
> […]The evidence for Cinderella effects in nonlethal abuse is much more extensive than that for homicides. Numerous studies from a diversity of countries indicate that stepparents perpetrate both nonlethal physical assaults and sexual abuse at much higher rates than genetic parents.
>
> […][S]teprelationships are difficult, and those who make it their business to help stepfamilies in distress are unanimous in cautioning that it is a mistake to expect that a stepparent-stepchild relationship is, or will with time become, psychologically equivalent to a birthparent-child relationship… Research tells the same story. Duberman (1975)… interviewed a select sample of well-established, "successful", middle class, registered-marriage U.S. stepfamilies, and reported that only 53% of the stepfathers and 25% of the stepmothers felt able to say that they had any "parental feeling" (much less "love") for their stepchildren.

It's a well-known fact that mothers in particular have trouble treating their adopted children as well as their naturally-born children. This should be a caution to those women who want to put off marriage through their 20s and 30s, thinking that they can always adopt. Until you study the issues, it's hard to know how to make a plan that takes into account the what children need in order to be happy, healthy and effective. Research should be consulted in order to make plans that will *actually work*.

More from the original article:

> In the study "My Daddy's Name Is Donor," it was found that, "Regarding troubling outcomes, even with controls, the offspring of lesbian couples who used a sperm donor to conceive appear more than twice as likely as those raised by their biological parents to report struggling with substance abuse," an alarming result displaying the reality of being raised without both genetic parents.
>
> Some suggest that spending more money on making children means that they are more loved. Our children are *definitively wanted*, they say.

> "The baby doesn't care anything about the money," says marriage and family

> therapist Nancy Verrier, regarding the issues surrounding surrogacy. “That’s not what hurts the baby. The baby is hurt by the separation, by the loss of that mother that it knows.” This ever-present realization of loss remains with both mother and child throughout their lives. Nature has ensured that mothers and children attach to one another, as it is a trait necessary to our survival; without motivation to love or instinctively care for her child, why would a mother protect her children from potential danger? She wouldn’t, and that would have heralded the end of our species. With this biological connection so immediate and meaningful, why doesn’t society view maintenance of that connection as more imperative?

The answer is that we are becoming more secular as a society as belief in God and therefore in objective morality declines. We are elevating the need to pursue happiness in this life over respect for objective morality. That’s why laws are changing to promote adult selfishness over the needs of children. Abortion, no-fault divorce, same-sex marriage… these are all elements of the secular worldview which wants to avoid the demands that children place on us. We want to have fun – not be saddled with moral obligations to others, that diminish our fun. We as a society have decided – whether we admit it or not – that the universe is an accident, that morality is an illusion, that responsibilities must be avoided, and that this life is all we have.

It’s amazing how widespread this attitude is, not just among atheists, but among Christians as well. Usually, the Christians just put a little spiritual spin on it though – “God told me to pursue my calling, so you can’t assess the feasibility and destructive impact of my choice”. That works to fool many “spiritual” people who put more faith in feelings than competence, but it doesn’t work to prevent the destructiveness of not thinking things through.

Report: UK moms with children as likely to work as women with no children

March 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

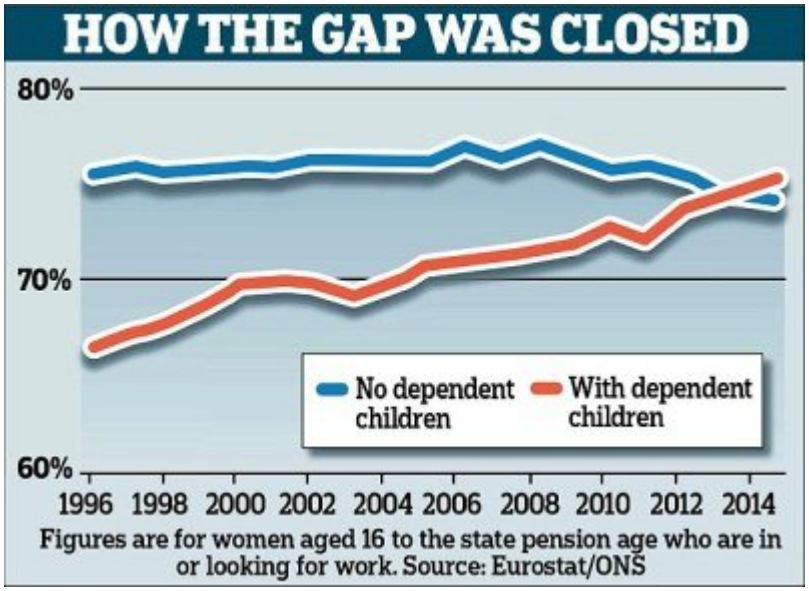

Stay-at-home moms in the UK at 25%

Dina sent me this stunning article from the UK Daily Mail.

It says:

> Mothers are now as likely to go out to work as women without children, figures showed yesterday.
>
> The historic landmark reached last year means just one mother in four stays at home to raise children.
>
> Figures from the Office for National Statistics showed 74.1 per cent of mothers with children under 16, or between 16 and 18 if they are still at school, are regarded as 'participating in the labour market'.
>
> By comparison, 75 per cent of women without dependent children were either in work or looking for a job last year.
>
> […]The new estimates are based on the large-scale Labour Force Survey covering women who either have jobs or are unemployed and looking for work. The ONS report said benefit changes that have pressed single parents into looking for work may have influenced the change.
>
> It added: 'Other government policies, for example to fund 570 hours of free early education childcare a year in England for all three to four-year-olds, will have provided additional incentives to engage with the labour market.'
>
> The biggest change has been among mothers of children under five. In 1996, 1.6 million of them were in the labour market, compared with 2.1 million last year. This represents a rise from 54.5 per cent of mothers of under-fives in work in

> 1996 to 65 per cent now.

There are three things I want to say about this.

First, it's undeniable that daycare is not optimal for a child when compared with having a stay-at-home mom for the early years of childhood. That's not my opinion, it's a fact. Part of preparing to get married and have kids is understanding what marriage requires and what children need. Don't rely on the government to provide for your kids, they are only interested in putting you to work so they can get your income taxes. That's especially true for big-government leftist parties that want to weaken marriage and the traditional family in any case.

Second, it's undeniable that government programs can make the choice to stay home or not more or less financially feasible. Make sure when you vote that you vote for smaller government and lower taxes. The bigger the government, the less money you have to run your own family game plan. Social programs exist so that the government can buy votes from people by transferring wealth from those who work to those who don't. If you work and want to have a family, then vote for your family, not for big government.

Third, single men and women need to factor in the costs of a stay-at-home mom into their marriage plan *early*. Your 20s are not the time for you to waste money on alcohol, parties, contraceptives, and recreational sex with hawt atheists. Your pre-marriage years should be the time when you to get used to hard work and save a nest egg. If the needs of your future children are important to you, then you study STEM subjects or a trade in school, you get a real job after college, you pay off your student loans, and you start saving money for your marriage *as soon as possible*. Again, you can't "feel" your way to a good marriage. Recklessness is not going to work.

How secular leftists misuse science to normalize sexual anarchy

March 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jay Richards tweeted this article Touchstone magazine.

Here's part of it:

> Here is how the Mead Method works. It has four easily memorized steps. You begin by proving that some behavior is natural, in the sense of being enjoyed by primitive people, who are assumed to be far closer to the basic human realities than we are. As the *Chronicle*'s writer put it:
>
> Less than 50 years ago, Canela women, who live in Amazonian Brazil, enjoyed the delights of as many as 40 men one after another in festive rituals. When it was time to have a child, they'd select their favorite dozen or so lovers to help their husband with the all-important task. Even today, when the dalliances of married Bar ladies in Colombia and Venezuela result in a child, they proudly announce the long list of probable fathers.
>
> Then you find some way to show that the behavior works. If to our overdeveloped modern eyes it looks like self-indulgence or sluttishness, it is actually a rational and effective way of living. An anthropologist quoted in the article claims that the more possible fathers a child has, the more men will take care of him and his mother. As the writer put it, "Fooling around appears to have helped our ancestral mothers equip their little ones for success—the sexual equivalent of reading to them every night or enrolling in the after-school chess club."
>
> Having established to your satisfaction that the behavior is not only natural but effective, you then declare that all such behaviors are just social constructions anyway and ours (the modern, still sort of Christian way) is really not nearly so common as we would like to think. To do this the writer quotes an anthropologist who studied tribes in Paraguay and Tanzania, who said, "This model of the death-do-us-part, missionary-position couple is just a tiny part of human history. The patterns of human sexuality are so much more variable."
>
> At this point, the case is often strengthened by caricaturing the present. That "missionary-position couple" is supposed, I think, to suggest "dull." It can be strengthened even more by not stopping to ask what the patterns found in history might actually be. Perhaps there are only a few patterns, and contemporary marriage an expression (as it seems to be) of a dominant mode by which human societies try to restrain the destructive effects of human sexual desire and direct it to social ends.
>
> Finally, you imply, without quite saying it, that the primitive behavior would work just as well for us, it being (though a social construction) more natural and all.

> The writer does this with quotes, like this one from a William Crocker of the Smithsonian Institution: “Multiple lovers, that’s just part of the life. It’s recreation, just like races and running. It’s all done in the spirit of joy and fun.”
>
> The Margaret Mead Method, in either its original or modified form, is a very useful method . . . if you’re a creep. It proves—to the standard of the man with his pants halfway off and the woman who has gotten a better offer than her husband the couch potato will make, anyway—that sexual libertinism is natural and sexual restraint unnatural, and since being natural is always good, you ought to let go and have fun, just like the jolly party girls of the South American tribes.
>
> This is why *Coming of Age in Samoa* made Mead famous. You want to have an affair with the babe next door? Well, those darling little Samoans living in a state of nature are doing it all the time, and look how happy and fulfilled and innocent they are. Margaret Mead said so. It’s scientific. You feel guilty? You’re a modern man afflicted with Judeo-Christian guilt, but just ignore it—socially constructed and unnatural as it is—and enjoy the pleasures nature and evolution have provided for you.
>
> I am afraid this is the idea these stories almost always promote, whatever insights into the nature of a fallen creation they provide. They begin with reports of young Samoans having free and joyful sex among the palm trees, and end with middle-aged Barney desperately betraying his wife at the Hampton Inn.

Now this is supposed to be a hopeful, helpful blog post, so let me give you some advice.

There are things you can do to get around the older people who try to sell you this in school and in the culture. You have to do your own research, and learn the consequences of getting rid of the rules around sexual conduct before you break them.

First, read Romans 1, and understand that people who are doing evil things feel better about what they are doing if they can get you to approve of it, celebrate it, and subsidize it. So keep that in mind when people are telling you that something wrong is “right”.

Second, understand that people who are teaching you in school often portray themselves one way in class, but in actual fact, their private lives are totally messed up. It’s tempting to give them more respect than they deserve.

Third, it’s good to be think critically about what you see in the culture, and to read history in order to gain a perspective that allows you to judge what is seen as normal in your own time.

Fourth, it’s good to read studies to find out what happens next, should you take some course of action that is “normal”. For example, it’s a very good idea to research the link between the number of premarital sexual partners and divorce rate.

Fifth, you should be skeptical of people who misuse science in order to push an agenda. Just understand where they are going and then see if they might not be abusing science to get there. It happens all the time – just look at how global cooling / global warming has been used to justify increased control of energy development and consumption by

government.

Study: non-family daycare linked to anti-social behavior in children

March 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Academics at Oxford University discovered that exposure to some forms of early education contributed to bad behaviour and could be linked to emotional problems.

> The study, based on an analysis of infants from almost 1,000 families, showed that the strongest influence on children came from within the home itself.
>
> Children raised in poor families with high levels of parental stress or mental health problems were most at risk of developing emotional problems by the time they started school, it emerged.
>
> The research also uncovered trends relating to children who were in formal child care — away from their parents.

> The disclosure will revive debate over the best way to raise children amid a surge in the number of under-fives enrolled in nurseries and with childminders in the past 20 years. Figures from the Department for Education show that 441,000 children under five are in day nurseries while another 272,000 are being looked after by childminders.
>
> […]In the Oxford study, researchers recruited 991 families with children aged three months. Mothers had an average age of 30.
>
> Researchers assessed children at the age of four through questionnaires about their behaviour and emotions completed by teachers and parents. They also observed care provided by mothers and observed non-parental care for at least 90 minutes for those children placed in formal childcare settings.
>
> The report, published in the journal Child: Care, Health and Development, said that "children who spent more time in group care, mainly nursery care, were more likely to have behavioural problems, particularly hyperactivity".
>
> The study, led by Prof Alan Stein, of Oxford's Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, found that "spending more time in day care centres, over the total period was a predictor of total problem scores".
>
> "Children who spent more time in day care centres were more likely to be hyperactive," it said. "Children receiving more care by childminders were more likely to have peer problems."
>
> The authors added: "The findings in relation to childminding suggest that it might

> be out of home care rather than group care that raises the risk of behavioural difficulties."
>
> The researchers also tracked other forms of early years care and found benefits to different approaches.
>
> They found that children who spent more time in pre-school playgroups – normally for a few hours a day, rather than a full-time nursery – had fewer problems.
>
> More time with a nanny in parents' own home predicted higher levels of "pro-social behaviour", showing willingness to help others, it emerged.
>
> The study said: "These findings suggest that interventions to enhance children's emotional and behavioural development might best focus on supporting families and augmenting the quality of care in the home."

A study like this will be useful when debating people with open minds, but hardcore feminists and socialists, who want women to work in order to fund bigger government, will not be moved. Because for them, it's not about evidence. It's about ideology. That's why we have to be careful about letting people like that get elected.

Why are Asian mothers so much better at raising high-performing children?

March 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article in the Wall Street Journal.

But first – a little bit about Amy Chua, the author of the article:

> Amy Chua is the John M. Duff Professor of Law at Yale Law School. Her first book *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability* was a *New York Times* bestseller, was selected by both the *Economist* and the *Guardian* as one of the Best Books of 2003 and translated into eight languages. Her second book, *Day of Empire: How Hyperpowers Rise to Global Dominance – and Why They Fall* was a critically acclaimed Foreign Affairs bestseller. Amy Chua has appeared frequently on radio and television on programs such CNN Headline News, C-Span, The Lehrer News Hour, Bloomberg Television, and Air America. Her writings have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Financial Times, Harvard Business Review*, and the *Wilson Quarterly*. She lives with her husband, two daughters, and two Samoyeds in New Haven, Connecticut.

And now, an excerpt from the piece itself:

> A lot of people wonder how Chinese parents raise such stereotypically successful kids. They wonder what these parents do to produce so many math whizzes and music prodigies, what it's like inside the family, and whether they could do it too. Well, I can tell them, because I've done it.
>
> […]Despite our squeamishness about cultural stereotypes, there are tons of studies out there showing marked and quantifiable differences between Chinese and Westerners when it comes to parenting. **In one study of 50 Western American mothers and 48 Chinese immigrant mothers, almost 70% of the Western mothers said either that "stressing academic success is not good for children" or that "parents need to foster the idea that learning is fun." By contrast, roughly 0% of the Chinese mothers felt the same way. Instead, the vast majority of the Chinese mothers said that they believe their children can be "the best" students, that "academic achievement reflects successful parenting," and that if children did not excel at school then there was "a problem" and parents "were not doing their job." Other studies indicate that compared to Western parents, Chinese parents spend approximately 10 times as long every day drilling academic activities with their children. By contrast, Western kids are more likely to participate in sports teams.**
>
> What Chinese parents understand is that nothing is fun until you're good at it. To

> get good at anything you have to work, and children on their own never want to work, which is why it is crucial to override their preferences. This often requires fortitude on the part of the parents because the child will resist; things are always hardest at the beginning, which is where Western parents tend to give up. But if done properly, the Chinese strategy produces a virtuous circle. Tenacious practice, practice, practice is crucial for excellence; rote repetition is underrated in America. Once a child starts to excel at something—whether it's math, piano, pitching or ballet—he or she gets praise, admiration and satisfaction. This builds confidence and makes the once not-fun activity fun. This in turn makes it easier for the parent to get the child to work even more.

And here are her three main points:

> Chinese parents demand perfect grades because they believe that their child can get them. If their child doesn't get them, the Chinese parent assumes it's because the child didn't work hard enough. That's why the solution to substandard performance is always to excoriate, punish and shame the child. The Chinese parent believes that their child will be strong enough to take the shaming and to improve from it. (And when Chinese kids do excel, there is plenty of ego-inflating parental praise lavished in the privacy of the home.)
>
> […]Chinese parents believe that their kids owe them everything. The reason for this is a little unclear, but it's probably a combination of Confucian filial piety and the fact that the parents have sacrificed and done so much for their children. (And it's true that Chinese mothers get in the trenches, putting in long grueling hours personally tutoring, training, interrogating and spying on their kids.) Anyway, the understanding is that Chinese children must spend their lives repaying their parents by obeying them and making them proud.
>
> […]Chinese parents believe that they know what is best for their children and therefore override all of their children's own desires and preferences. That's why Chinese daughters can't have boyfriends in high school and why Chinese kids can't go to sleepaway camp. It's also why no Chinese kid would ever dare say to their mother, "I got a part in the school play! I'm Villager Number Six. I'll have to stay after school for rehearsal every day from 3:00 to 7:00, and I'll also need a ride on weekends." God help any Chinese kid who tried that one.
>
> […]Here's a story in favor of coercion, Chinese-style.

Now you go read the whole article to find out the three differences and read the coercion story. Read the coercion story now!

And what do we learn from it? Well, what I learned is that if we Christians want to have any hope of having an influence in the public square, then we will have to marry well, and we will have to train our children like Amy does. We should not be thinking of marriage as a way to have feelings and to gain happiness and fulfillment. Marriage should be about service to God. And one of the ways we serve is by producing children who will have an

influence. I think that parents in the West tend to have the idea that the world is a safe place, and that we should try to please our children and make them like us – so that everyone will be happy. But there is one person who will not be happy if we focus on ourselves instead of serving God. Do you know who that might be?

One thing I would say in criticism of Amy is that she seems to only care about grades – which are assigned by teachers who are not necessarily going to have the same goals as a Christian parent. Teachers have their own agenda, and will happily give a child an F for espousing a belief in abstinence, or for talking about the Big Bang or protein sequence specificity, or for mentioning Climategate and dissent from man-made catastrophic global warming. If the class is math or computer science, then the children should be required to be the best. If the class is on hating America, then maybe the child should be going to a different school or being homeschooled. (Assuming that the Democrats have not banned all private schooling and homeschooling, which their masters in the teacher unions would dearly love to do).

My advice for men is this: Have a plan for marriage and parenting. Make decisions your whole life to implement that plan. Choose a wife based on the criteria of the job of marriage. And raise your children to have an influence for Christ.

If you cannot find a wife who actually puts serving God over her own feelings and desires, remain chaste and do not marry. There is no point in getting married unless marriage and parenting can serve God. The point of marriage is not to have a big wedding. The point of marriage is not to make women happy and fulfilled. The point of marriage is not for the woman to neglect her children while focusing on her career. The point of marriage is not to blindly hand children off to the schools to be indoctrinated as they obtain non-STEM degrees.

New study: separating from mother causes children to have higher anxiety and fear

March 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal reports on a new study.

It says:

> We learn to be afraid. One of the oldest discoveries in psychology is that rats will quickly learn to avoid a sound or a smell that has been associated with a shock in the past—they not only fear the shock, they become scared of the smell, too.
>
> **A paper by Nim Tottenham of the University of California, Los Angeles in "Current Topics in Behavioral Neurosciences" summarizes recent research on how this learned fear system develops, in animals and in people. Early experiences help shape the fear system. If caregivers protect us from danger early in life, this helps us to develop a more flexible and functional fear system later. Dr. Tottenham argues, in particular, that caring parents keep young animals from prematurely developing the adult system: They let rat pups be pups and children be children.**
>
> Of course, it makes sense to quickly learn to avoid events that have led to danger in the past. But it can also be paralyzing. There is a basic paradox about learning fear. Because we avoid the things we fear, we can't learn anything more about them. We can't learn that the smell no longer leads to a shock unless we take the risk of exploring the dangerous world.
>
> Many mental illnesses, from general anxiety to phobias to posttraumatic-stress syndrome, seem to have their roots in the way we learn to be afraid. We can learn to be afraid so easily and so rigidly that even things that we know aren't dangerous—the benign spider, the car backfire that sounds like a gunshot—can leave us terrified. Anxious people end up avoiding all the things that just might be scary, and that leads to an increasingly narrow and restricted life and just makes the fear worse. The best treatment is to let people "unlearn" their fears—gradually exposing them to the scary cause and showing them that it doesn't actually lead to the dangerous effect.
>
> Neuroscientists have explored the biological basis for this learned fear. It involves the coordination between two brain areas. One is the amygdala, an area buried deep in the brain that helps produce the basic emotion of fear, the trembling and heart-pounding. The other is the prefrontal cortex, which is involved in learning, control and planning.
>
> Regina Sullivan and her colleagues at New York University have looked at how rats develop these fear systems. Young rats don't learn to be fearful the way that

> older rats do, and their amygdala and prefrontal systems take a while to develop and coordinate. The baby rats “unlearn” fear more easily than the adults, and they may even approach and explore the smell that led to the shock, rather than avoid it.
>
> **If the baby rats are periodically separated from their mothers, however, they develop the adult mode of fear and the brain systems that go with it more quickly. This early maturity comes at a cost. Baby rats who are separated from their mothers have more difficulties later on, difficulties that parallel human mental illness.**
>
> Dr. Tottenham and her colleagues found a similar pattern in human children. They looked at children who had grown up in orphanages in their first few years of life but then were adopted by caring parents. When they looked at the children’s brains with functional magnetic resonance imaging, they found that, like the rats, these children seemed to develop adultlike “fear circuits” more quickly. Their parents were also more likely to report that the children were anxious. The longer the children had stayed in the orphanages, the more their fear system developed abnormally, and the more anxious they were.

Whenever I read books about daycare, the word “anxiety” is the one that seems to be the most common.

It’s important for the mother to stay at home, and plans should be made before the marriage to make that financially feasible. The plans should start for each parent when they are deciding what the study, where to work, and so on. A working mother who puts her child in daycare will have to exercise extra care to make sure that the child is OK. And this becomes even harder to do when her stress levels go up from work. You can’t bond with a child if you can’t stop screaming obscenities and/or being violent because of work stress.

Another risk factor for anxiety is demanding a lot from a child (say, academically) but not taking the steps to monitor daily progress and provide daily assistance. Think of it as a scale from report-card-day tantrums all the way to daily monitoring and helping with homework. The closer the parents are to the report card day tantrums side of things, the more anxiety if is going to cause the child. Yes, it’s important for children to do well in school so that they can get jobs later. But tantrums don’t achieve anything except to scare them away from learning. Daily monitoring and listening is a better way to create the connection that reduces the child’s anxiety.

Brookings Institution: a $1.2 billion social program that doesn't work

March 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a surprising article coming from the leftist Brookings Institution.

They write:

> Afterschool programs, or out-of-school time programs, burst into view in the late 1990s. The federal government—flush with budget surpluses of hundreds of billions—began spending more on the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program. The program was created by the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act and had languished as an obscure provision to promote schools as community resources. Initially, the program received no appropriation, until Congress appropriated $40 million for it in 1998.
>
> Spending exploded after the program pivoted to support afterschool programs. By 2002, the program's appropriation was $1 billion. For a federal program to grow from $40 million to $1 billion in a few years happens rarely. The agency overseeing the program, the U.S. Department of Education, partnered with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to underwrite conferences and technical assistance for program providers, pumping millions more into the program.
>
> In 1999, the Department of Education contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to evaluate the 21st Century program. The evaluation had elements that were both rigorous and representative. The elementary school part of the study was designed as an experiment; the middle school part was designed as a random sampling of programs around the country, with students participating in the program matched with students in neighboring schools (or the same school, in rural areas) that were not participating in the program. The evaluation collected data on a wide range of outcomes including grades, test scores, attendance, and behavior.[1]
>
> Ultimately, the evaluation reported on how the program affected outcomes. **In a series of reports released between 2003 and 2005 (here, here, and here), the answers emerged: the program didn't affect student outcomes. Except for student behavior, which got *worse.* And small samples were not an issue explaining why findings were insignificant. The national evaluation included about 2,300 elementary school students and 4,400 middle school students. The results were insignificant because the estimates of program effects hovered around zero.**
>
> In the face of these results, one course of action would have been to at least reduce program spending, if not eliminate the program altogether. The Bush administration proposed a reduction of $400 million in the program budget,

> advocates rallied to the cause, Arnold Schwarzenegger got involved, and ultimately Congress left program spending unchanged. To this day, the program spends more than a billion dollars each year.
>
> If the national evaluation was thought to be unreliable or errant, a sensible next step would be to do another, possibly with different focuses or features. That hasn't happened. Or perhaps the evaluation findings were dismissed because other research has shown that afterschool programs are effective. It hasn't. Echoing a previous 2006 review by Zief, Lauver, and Maynard, a 2015 review of dozens of studies that were published up to 2014 concluded that "mean effects were small and non-significant for attendance and externalizing behaviors."[2](This is how researchers say the evidence shows that after school programs do not improve attendance or behavior.)
>
> Two other pieces of evidence add to this picture. **First, the U.S. Department of Education continues to collect and summarize the program's annual performance reports (each state reports on its programs to the Department). Its most recent summary noted that 'nearly all of the performance targets for the 2009-2010 reporting period were not reached.' Second, a recent federal study of supplemental services programs found no effects on academic outcomes.** The study examined programs that are required to be offered by schools that do not meet target levels of adequate yearly progress under No Child Left Behind. They are tutoring and academic support service programs offered outside the regular school day that have a stronger academic focus than the 21st Century programs (which can offer snacks, recreation, and youth development activities), and yet they still did not improve academic outcomes.

I am linking to this because I want people to understand that not every problem has to be solved by the government. It is *possible* that when politicians tell us that they want to solve a problem by taxing us and spending our money, it's possible that what they spend our money on *does not work*. Normally, when it comes to government spending on children,it's very hard to cut spending because compassionate people do not want to take money away "from the children". Most Democrat voters do not even realize that money spent by the government either comes from taxation or borrowing from the next generation does not work, it can be very hard to cut funding for those those programs, because the powerful pro-government party has no interest in cutting government spending in *any area*. They get contributions from people who are very interested in big government.

New study: what you study in college matters more than where you go to college

March 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

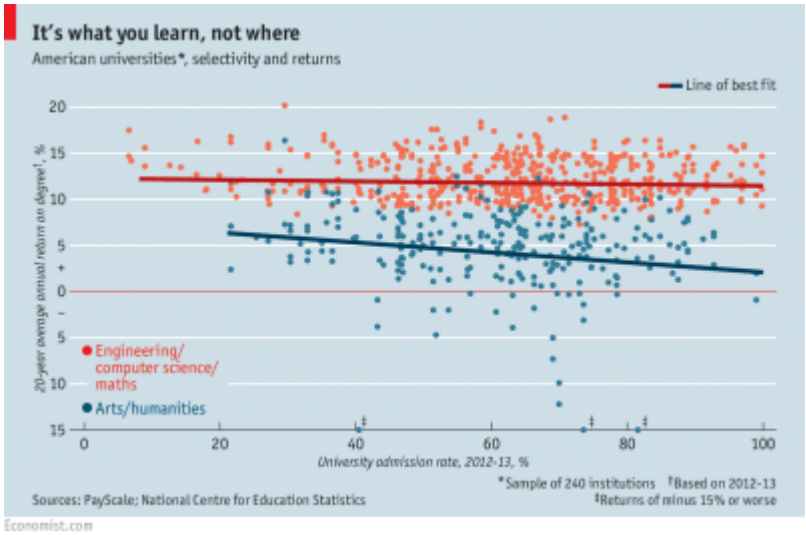

What you study matters more (click for larger image)

This study was reported by the leftist The Economist.

They write:

> A new report from PayScale, a research firm, calculates the returns to a college degree. Its authors compare the career earnings of graduates with the present-day cost of a degree at their alma maters, net of financial aid. College is usually worth it, but not always, it transpires. And what you study matters far more than where you study it.
>
> Engineers and computer scientists do best, earning an impressive 20-year annualised return of 12% on their college fees (the S&P 500 yielded just 7.8%). Engineering graduates from run-of-the-mill colleges do only slightly worse than those from highly selective ones. Business and economics degrees also pay well, delivering a solid 8.7% average return. Courses in the arts or the humanities offer vast spiritual rewards, of course, but less impressive material ones. Some yield negative returns. An arts degree from the Maryland Institute College of Art had a hefty 20-year net negative return of $92,000, for example.

I think if you are looking for a great way to be out of debt before you are 30, it's a great idea to do your first few years at community college, get rid of all your generic prerequisite courses, then move on to college/university to do your computer science/engineering courses, and then graduate.

Here is the nightmare scenario: you go study a non-stem major at an expensive university, come out with a ton of debt and *NO JOB* in your field. A much better solution is to go to a less-expensive, less-presitigious school that has a good STEM program in the area you want, and then get in and get out as quickly as possible. Make sure that you

either do internships or work in the summer *in your field*. At this point, you should be willing to pay your employer for letting you work for them, or volunteer – you want to get a company name on your resume, and a name added to your references before you graduate and start looking for a real full-time job. Any pay they give you should be considered a bonus – that's how important it is to work in your field before graduating. The before-graduation work experience will help you to know what skills are in demand, too – which will improve your course selection. You might even be able to get a mentor from the company you work for to advise you.

The longer you go without working related to your field, the harder it is to be competitive in the job market. It's very important to get debt paid off – especially now, because interest rates are going to be rising soon. You definitely want to start investing as soon as possible, so you can use that interest rate in your favor as you head towards retirement. It's a rocky road ahead with an $18.5 trillion debt, a demographic challenge from the large number of retirees, and the decline of marriage and family. It makes sense to focus on financial issues as early as possible, and have a good plan.

Has the Creator of the universe ever spoken to us?

March 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Has God every reached out to humanity?

People often ask the question, “why must I believe in Jesus and only Jesus in order to be rightly related to God?”

Indeed. Why should we care about the teachings of Jesus more than any other religious leader. Well, we know from scientific evidence that the universe had a beginning, and hence a Creator. We know from the fine-tuning argument that there is a Designer of the cosmos, as well. So the question becomes, has there ever been a human being who could give us accurate information about who the Creator and Designer is?

It turns that there is such a person, and we know it because we have evidence that this person rose from the dead – a feat only possible if the Creator and Designer wanted to draw attention to this person, and to his teachings. The account of this is recorded in a collection of ancient writings called the New Testament, which can be investigated using the ordinary rules of ancient historiography. Although much of what is written in the New Testament cannot be proven historical, a few facts that are reported there pass the mainstream historical tests. From those facts, we can infer that God was putting his stamp of approval on the teachings of a very important person.

The man who returned from the dead

Dr. Craig’s famous minimal facts case for the resurrection has been posted at the Christian Apologetics Alliance. He presents 4 facts admitted by the majority of New Testament historians, and then he supplies multiple pieces of evidence for each fact.

Here are the four facts:

- FACT #1: *After his crucifixion, Jesus was buried in a tomb by Joseph of Arimathea.*
- FACT #2: *On the Sunday following the crucifixion, Jesus’ tomb was found empty by a group of his women followers.*
- FACT #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.*

- FACT #4: *The original disciples believed that Jesus was risen from the dead despite their having every predisposition to the contrary.*

He shows how each fact is supported reasons which pass the standard historical rules used by ancient historians.

Here's the detail on fact #3, the post-mortem appearances.

> FACT #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.*
>
> This is a fact which is almost universally acknowledged among New Testament scholars, for the following reasons:
>
> 1. The list of eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection appearances which is quoted by Paul in I Cor. 15. 5-7 guarantees that such appearances occurred. These included appearances to Peter (Cephas), the Twelve, the 500 brethren, and James.
>
> 2. The appearance traditions in the gospels provide multiple, independent attestation of these appearances. This is one of the most important marks of historicity. The appearance to Peter is independently attested by Luke, and the appearance to the Twelve by Luke and John. We also have independent witness to Galilean appearances in Mark, Matthew, and John, as well as to the women in Matthew and John.
>
> 3. Certain appearances have earmarks of historicity. For example, we have good evidence from the gospels that neither James nor any of Jesus' younger brothers believed in him during his lifetime. There is no reason to think that the early church would generate fictitious stories concerning the unbelief of Jesus' family had they been faithful followers all along. But it is indisputable that James and his brothers did become active Christian believers following Jesus' death. James was considered an apostle and eventually rose to the position of leadership of the Jerusalem church. According to the first century Jewish historian Josephus, James was martyred for his faith in Christ in the late AD 60s. Now most of us have brothers. What would it take to convince you that your brother is the Lord, such that you would be ready to die for that belief? Can there be any doubt that this remarkable transformation in Jesus' younger brother took place because, in Paul's words, "then he appeared to James"?
>
> Even Gert Ludemann, the leading German critic of the resurrection, himself admits, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus' death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."3

Yes, Gerd Ludemann is actually an atheist new Testament historian, and he has even debated Dr. Craig on the resurrection – not once, but *twice*. That's the kind of evidence Dr. Craig uses in his case.

So, if you are undertaking an investigation to see if the God who creates and designs the universe has anything to say to you, a good place to start is seeing what this guy Jesus had to say to you. No faith required.

Obama told us that Yemen was a success of his foreign policy

March 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal reports:

> The Obama administration's calculated gamble during the past three years in Yemen has crumbled in recent days, leaving the country on the brink of a civil war with U.S. troops involved in counterterror operations withdrawing amid intense fighting.
>
> What happened in Yemen, according to descriptions by current and former officials and experts, was a miscalculation about the changes unleashed by the Arab Spring revolutions. It involved an overreliance by Washington on a promising new leader who ultimately was unable to hold off rival forces and tensions, they said.
>
> As a result, a country President Barack Obama last year cited as a model of American counterterrorism success has now descended into chaos, with U.S. influence and drone strikes no match for at least four sides at war with one another.
>
> "In many ways, this is all the Thanksgiving Dinner from hell," said Jon Alterman, a former State Department official and director of the Middle East program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "It is people who have been dealing with each other for a long time, none are satisfied, and the fight has broken out. And the first thing is figuring out who the different sides are."
>
> The U.S. and allies such as Yemen's neighbor Saudi Arabia had tried to take advantage of the Arab Spring revolution in Yemen in 2011. They supported a new, friendly regime led by President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi.
>
> The White House hailed Mr. Hadi's leadership and—with his cooperation—carried out dozens of drone strikes against the country's al Qaeda offshoot. Meanwhile, they collected intelligence and training Yemeni forces to battle the terrorist group al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP.
>
> But the Obama administration limited its involvement with others in Yemen, and was largely removed from numerous tribal leaders and the rising rebel group known as the Houthis, according to former U.S. officials and foreign policy experts. The success of the White House's involvement with Yemen relied largely on Mr. Hadi staying in power, they said, adding that the White House had few alternatives. That is why the U.S. approach was upended last month when Shiite-linked Houthi rebels, believed to be backed by Iran, seized control of Yemen's capital and forced Mr. Hadi to flee. Forces loyal to Mr. Hadi are now warring against the Houthis, and U.S. officials believe, against his predecessor, Ali

> Abdullah Saleh.
>
> The Yemeni president has asked Gulf countries to intervene militarily against the Houthis as they advance toward his base in the southern city of Aden, according to Saudi media reports quoting Mr. Hadi's foreign minister. Over the past few days, the Houthis have been advancing southward into the major southern city of Taiz, where they have encountered resistance and large street protests against them. Houthi gunmen fired live ammunition and tear gas on Monday into crowds of demonstrators in the city, wounding at least seven people. Meanwhile, militants claiming allegiance to Islamic State carried out dramatic suicide attacks in an area that had traditionally been the safe haven for rival AQAP, which some believe could trigger competitive jihadist attacks.
>
> The Houthis had already taken over the airport and some government buildings in Taiz and erected checkpoints in the southern city when the violence flared, said local government officials and protest organizers, who reported the casualties.
>
> […]Before political chaos erupted earlier this year, the U.S. had everything invested in Mr. Hadi. Central Intelligence Agency Director John Brennan was a key liaison to the country when he served as a top White House counterterrorism aide in the first years of the Obama administration. His replacement, Lisa Monaco, had kept in constant contact with Mr. Hadi since then.
>
> In September, President Obama hailed Yemen as a success story in its counterterrorism approach, saying the country's aggressive pursuit of terrorists would prevent the spread of Islamic State.

Look at the stupidity of Samantha Power:

> **Samantha Power, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said Sunday that all parties in Yemen should agree to U.N.-backed negotiations and "refrain from any further unilateral and offensive military actions."**
>
> "We are supporting all the right [United Nations] resolutions, but most of the people in Yemen could care a flying fig for a U.N. resolution," said Barbara Bodine, who was U.S. Ambassador to Yemen at the time of the USS Cole attack.

The Obama administration simply cannot take evil seriously – they keep thinking that everyone in the world is like them, and it's killing our foreign policy. Obama keeps making promises that him and his party of amateurs and academics cannot keep.

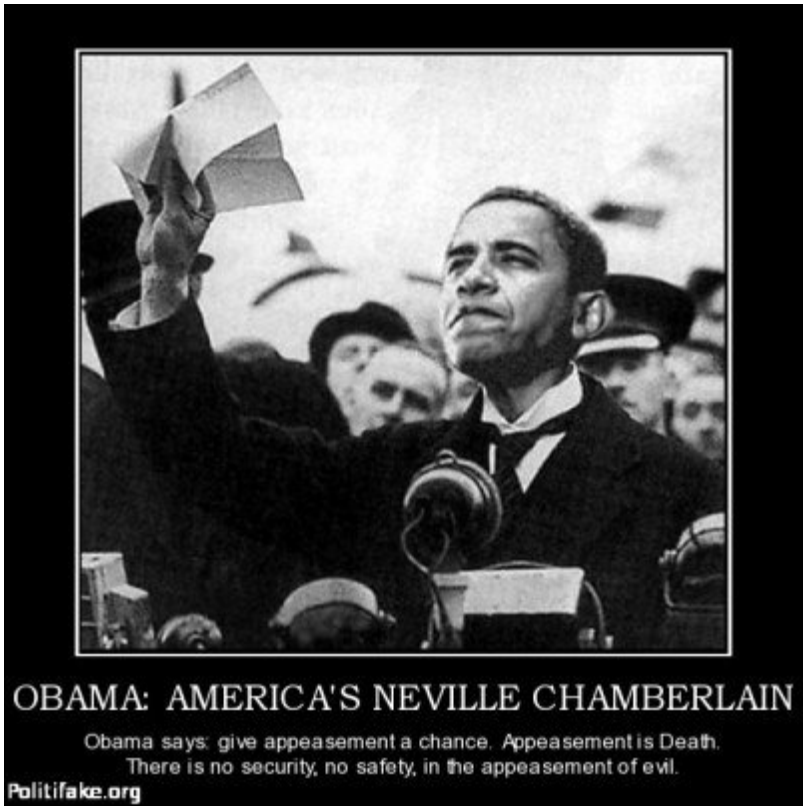

Neville Chamberlain Obama: peace in our time

If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. If you like your health plan, you can keep your health plan. If you like your IRS e-mails, you can keep your IRS e-mails. If you like your Tea Party charitable status, you can keep your Tea Party charitable status. If you like your Ukraine, you can keep your Ukraine. If you like your traditional marriage, you can keep your traditional marriage. If you like your State Department transparency, you can keep your State Department transparency. If you like your European missile defense, you can keep your European missile defense. If you like your 12 carrier strike groups, you can keep your 12 carrier strike groups. If you like your full-time work week, you can keep your full-time work week. If you like your health care for veterans, you can keep your health care for veterans. If you like your $8 trillion dollar debt, you can keep your $8 trillion dollar debt. If you like your coal plant, you can keep your coal plant. If you like your race relations, you can keep your race relations. If you like your freedom to not buy others abortion drugs, you can keep your freedom to not buy others abortion drugs. If you like your F-22 stealth fighter, you can keep your F-22 stealth fighter. If you like your Israel, you can keep your Israel.

We can fix the spending, we can fix the laws, we can fix the fraud, we can fix the corruption, we can repeal Obamacare… but the foreign policy blunders will be very, very hard to fix.

Why is it so hard to reason with college-educated millenials about spiritual things?

March 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why is it hard to reason with students?

The first article today is from lesbian feminist Camille Paglia. She is a university professor, but liberal (in the classical sense) in her outlook.

An hour-long interview is posted at Reason, and there's a transcript.

Camille says:

> reason: Clarify what's the difference between a legitimate gripe and whining?
>
> Paglia: Well, in my point of view, no college administration should be taking any interest whatever in the social lives of the students. None! If a crime's committed on campus, it should always be reported to the police. I absolutely do not agree with any committees investigating any charge of sexual assault. Either it's a real crime, or it's not a real crime. Get the hell out. So you get this expansion of the campus bureaucracy with this Stalinist oversight. But the students have been raised with helicopter parents. They want it. The students of today—they're utterly uninformed, not necessarily at my school, the art school, I'm talking about the elite schools.
>
> reason: So it's those kids over at that other school.
>
> Paglia: It's the grade grubbers, the bright overachievers. I'm not at that kind of school [here at University of the Arts in Philadelphia] . I'm at a school of arts and communication where people already have a vocational trend. To be admitted here, you have to already have demonstrated a vocational aptitude. I'm talking about the Ivy League. **Now, I've encountered these graduates of Harvard, Yale, the University of Pennsylvania, and Princeton, I've encountered them in the media, and people in their 30s now, some of them, their**

> **minds are like Jell-O. They know nothing! They've not been trained in history. They have absolutely no structure to their minds. Their emotions are unfixed. The banality of contemporary cultural criticism, of academe, the absolute collapse of any kind of intellectual discourse in the U.S. is the result of these colleges, which should have been the best, have produced the finest minds, instead having retracted into caretaking. The whole thing is about approved social positions in a kind of misty, love of humanity without any direct knowledge of history or economics or anthropology.**
>
> reason: Maybe the university is not the place where that sort of stuff is happening anymore. So, for instance, you have think tanks that do a lot of economic or policy work. You have popular historians who are not academic. Fiction and poetry, even as there's been a rise in for decades now of creative writing programs and what not. Nobody looks to the university to be cutting edge on almost anything really, so maybe it's just that you picked the wrong hors. Maybe you should have followed the campus radicals' suggestion and not gone into academia?
>
> Paglia: [As a] writer of cultural criticism, I find that I'm happiest when I'm writing for the British press, and I write quite a bit for The Sunday Times magazine in London. I find that the general sense of cultural awareness means that I can have an authentic discourse about ideas with international journalists from Brazil or Germany or Italy or Norway or Canada even—somewhat, but they have a P.C. problem themselves. I can feel the vacuum and the nothingness of American cultural criticism at the present time. It is impossible—any journalist today, an American journalist, you cannot have any kind of deep discussion of ideas.

The students at the Ivy league universities are so insulated from "vocation" (working for money) and so indoctrinated in political correctness, that they cannot have a civil conversation about ideas. All they can do is state their own views, and if you disagree with them, then they call you names then retreat to "safe spaces", where all unpleasant communication is blocked . They can't even explain why they hold their own views except they have been taught to believe that all smart people believe them. They are *traumatized* by dissent, and they are not able to critically assess arguments and evidence.

Here's a second article by Eleanor Taylor writing in the ultra-leftist New York Times.

She writes:

> KATHERINE BYRON, a senior at Brown University and a member of its Sexual Assault Task Force, considers it her duty to make Brown a safe place for rape victims, free from anything that might prompt memories of trauma.
>
> So when she heard last fall that a student group had organized a debate about campus sexual assault between Jessica Valenti, the founder of feministing.com,

> and Wendy McElroy, a libertarian, and that Ms. McElroy was likely to criticize the term “rape culture,” Ms. Byron was alarmed. “Bringing in a speaker like that could serve to invalidate people’s experiences,” she told me. It could be “damaging.”
>
> Ms. Byron and some fellow task force members secured a meeting with administrators. Not long after, Brown’s president, Christina H. Paxson, announced that the university would hold a simultaneous, competing talk to provide “research and facts” about “the role of culture in sexual assault.” Meanwhile, student volunteers put up posters advertising that a “safe space” would be available for anyone who found the debate too upsetting.
>
> **The safe space, Ms. Byron explained, was intended to give people who might find comments “troubling” or “triggering,” a place to recuperate. The room was equipped with cookies, coloring books, bubbles, Play-Doh, calming music, pillows, blankets and a video of frolicking puppies, as well as students and staff members trained to deal with trauma. Emma Hall, a junior, rape survivor and “sexual assault peer educator” who helped set up the room and worked in it during the debate, estimates that a couple of dozen people used it. At one point she went to the lecture hall — it was packed — but after a while, she had to return to the safe space. “I was feeling bombarded by a lot of viewpoints that really go against my dearly and closely held beliefs,” Ms. Hall said.**
>
> **Safe spaces are an expression of the conviction, increasingly prevalent among college students, that their schools should keep them from being “bombarded” by discomfiting or distressing viewpoints. Think of the safe space as the live-action version of the better-known trigger warning, a notice put on top of a syllabus or an assigned reading to alert students to the presence of potentially disturbing material.**

I have had the opportunity to interact with people who went through the college system in non-STEM programs. The combination of binge-drinking, hooking-up, co-habitating, and indoctrination in secular leftist ideologies like feminism, postmodernism, moral relativism really seems to break down their ability to reason calmly with someone who disagrees with them. They become very brittle and defensive when their indoctrinated views are confronted with critical thinking. I think the indoctrinated views were accepted largely because of emotions, intuitions and peer-pressure, so any kind of questioning using reason, evidence, wisdom and experience are met with this fight-or-flight response. People who are wiser and more experienced aren’t allowed to speak in the “safe space”.

There are two ways I see this playing out. On the one hand, any attempt to lead the thinking of an indoctrinated person is going to be met with insults. For example, trying to teach basic economics is going to be called “manipulation”. Or, trying to tell them to that they have an obligation to behave a certain way towards others is going to be dismissed

because others have to take “personal responsibility”. These are just smokescreens that cover the fact that indoctrinated millenials cannot be reasoned with, cannot be led, cannot be told to do the right thing. When challenged, they block all communication and retreat to a “safe space” where their similarly indoctrinated friends are there to reassure them. Unfortunately for them, reality has a way of breaking through the illusions in the long run.

Police conclude that University of Virginia rape story was fabricated

March 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should we blame women who make false rape charges?

This is the Associated Press story.

They write:

> A four-month police investigation into an alleged gang rape at the University of Virginia that Rolling Stone magazine described in graphic detail produced no evidence of the attack and was stymied by the accuser's unwillingness to cooperate, authorities said Monday.
>
> The article, titled "A rape on campus," focused on a student identified only as "Jackie" who said she was raped at the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity more than two years earlier.
>
> It described a hidden culture of sexual violence fueled by binge drinking at the college. Police said they found no evidence of that either.
>
> […][Police chief] Longo said Jackie's first mention of an alleged assault came without key details, during a meeting she had with a dean about an academic issue in May 2013. The dean brought in police, but the case was dropped because Jackie didn't want them to investigate, Longo said.
>
> In any case, the "sexual act" she described that year was "not consistent with what was described" in the Rolling Stone article.
>
> Almost immediately, news organizations found discrepancies that prompted the magazine to print an apology.
>
> University of Virginia President Teresa Sullivan asked police to investigate, and they called Jackie in for another interview. She showed up with a lawyer and again refused to talk.
>
> […]Investigators spoke to about 70 people, including friends of the accuser and fraternity members, and spent hundreds of hours on the investigation, Longo said. None provided any evidence supporting the claim of a gang rape at the Phi Kappa Psi house. They gathered ample evidence casting doubt on Jackie's claims,

> he said.
>
> […]The fraternity called the article defamatory and said it was exploring its legal options.

Here's the law:

> § 18.2-209. False publications.
> Any person who knowingly and willfully states, delivers or transmits by any means whatever to any publisher, or employee of a publisher, of any newspaper, magazine, or other publication or to any owner, or employee of an owner, of any radio station, television station, news service or cable service, any false and untrue statement, knowing the same to be false or untrue, concerning any person or corporation, with intent that the same shall be published, broadcast or otherwise disseminated, shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor.
>
> Code 1950, § 18.1-407; 1960, c. 358; 1975, cc. 14, 15; 1978, c. 359.

I blogged previously on the three UVA students who challenged the original Rolling Stone story.

What are some of the arguments against gay marriage?

March 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Here are 10 from the Family Research Council. (H/T Dangerous Idea)

The list:

1. **Children hunger for their biological parents.**
2. **Children need fathers.**
3. **Children need mothers.**
4. **Evidence on parenting by same-sex couples is inadequate.**
5. **Evidence suggests children raised by homosexuals are more likely to experience gender and sexual disorders.**
6. **Same-sex "marriage" would undercut the norm of sexual fidelity within marriage.**
7. **Same-sex "marriage" would further isolate marriage from its procreative purpose.**
8. **Same-sex "marriage" would further diminish the expectation of paternal commitment.**
9. **Marriages thrive when spouses specialize in gender-typical roles.**
10. **Women and marriage domesticate men**.

The eleventh one they missed is that a husband's leadership is beneficial to a woman because it gives her direction and balances her emotional highs and lows. It's not politically correct to say what women need from men in marriage, but it's true. Just like men, women have weaknesses that can be corrected and compensated for by the opposite sex. The twelfth one they missed is that same-sex marriage is incompatible with religious liberty, as recent court cases have shown.

Anyway, here are the details on #7:

> **7. Same-sex "marriage" would further isolate marriage from its**

> **procreative purpose.**
>
> Traditionally, marriage and procreation have been tightly connected to one another. Indeed, from a sociological perspective, the primary purpose that marriage serves is to secure a mother and father for each child who is born into a society. Now, however, many Westerners see marriage in primarily emotional terms.
>
> Among other things, the danger with this mentality is that it fosters an anti-natalist mindset that fuels population decline, which in turn puts tremendous social, political, and economic strains on the larger society. Same-sex marriage would only further undercut the procreative norm long associated with marriage insofar as it establishes that there is no necessary link between procreation and marriage.
>
> This was spelled out in the *Goodridge* decision in Massachusetts, where the majority opinion dismissed the procreative meaning of marriage. It is no accident that the countries that have legalized or are considering legalizing same-sex marriage have some of the lowest fertility rates in the world. For instance, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Canada have birthrates that hover around 1.6 children per woman–well below the replacement fertility rate of 2.1.

I chose this one because I wanted to comment.

I think it's common today for men and women to not put the production and development of children *at the center* of their marriage plans. They are not working a financial plan to prepare for children. They are not developing the skills they need to mentor and nurture others. They are resentful of any demands placed on them that restrict their freedom. And they want marriage to be about fun and self-fulfillment. This is not compatible with children, however. And that's the point. The more we redefine marriage to be about adult selfishness – first with no-fault divorce, then with same-sex marriage – the less emphasis there is on the pre-marital preparations for making and raising children.

If you want to know what you should be doing with your life before marriage, then think of the process of having children and raising children. Think of how much it costs, what skills you will need, and how your character has to be trained. Many of the things that you see young people doing these days – binge drinking, hooking up, running up debt, cohabitating, avoiding things that are hard to do – are not preparing their character for the responsibilities, expectations and obligations that people face when they have children.

Suppose you have a friend who is not good at driving a manual transmission car or not good at weight lifting or not good at doing apologetics – are you able to help them do it, or are you incapable of taking responsibility? If you can't take responsibility for helping an adult, you certainly can't take responsibility for a child – children are much less capable. Now are you able to say no to doing things for your own happiness? If you are not able to give up your own happiness – and this is a thing that gets easier as you practice more – then you're liable to look on your duties to your children with resentment – that you are

being “manipulated” into it. You don’t suddenly learn how to put up with children just by walking down the aisle at a wedding. It takes training to get good at being generous with your time, money and effort. It takes practice.

In fact, a smart man who is courting a woman would be trying to get her to practice the behaviors of a wife and mother before he marries her. And the same for a smart women who is being courted by a man. For example, a man has to comfortable giving things to the people around him – he can’t be resentful about it. Even when he doesn’t particularly like those people, he has to focus on their needs, think about where he is trying to lead them, and then work a plan to provide for their needs so they get where he wants them to go. If a man doesn’t like the feel of caring for others who may not be grateful – or who may even hate him – then he should take steps to prepare his character to learn to like it. When a little kid says “I hate you!” to his father, who is paying thousands of dollars for him to grow up, it’s not an easy thing. Always being selfish before you marry is not good preparation for what children will demand of you. This is something I struggle with personally – being content to invest in others who turn out to be ungrateful, and even destructive.

So I think this focus on parenting is a wonderful way for people to work backwards from the goal (healthy, happy, successful children) to the interim tasks and required skills. It helps us to get away from thinking that marriage is about us – our happiness, our needs. Unfortunately, not everyone who runs around telling people that they want to get married “some day” is really taking steps to prepare for marriage and parenting right now. Marriage is a commitment to *self-sacrificially* love another person – however much they change – for the rest of their lives, and to love any children who appear, too. People don’t like to read about marriage and think it through. But just saying “I want to marry someday” is not a proof of preparation for marriage, as the divorce rate attests. To get married, you have to train yourself to think of others, and to do hard things that don’t make you feel “free” or “happy”. There is no path to a successful marriage that does not involve responsibilities, expectations and obligations for husband *and* wife. It’s not “happily ever after”. It’s hard work!

Are Latter Day Saints (LDS) doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

March 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It is based on several lines of evidence, and is broadly compatible with Genesis. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that although Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous

> god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell

> us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

Further study

There is a very good podcast featuring J. Warner Wallace that summarizes some other theological problems with Mormonism that I blogged about before. And if you want a nice long PDF to print out and read at lunch (which is what I did with it) you can grab this PDF by Michael Licona, entitled "Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock".

Obama traded 5 Taliban commanders for a soldier now accused of desertion

March 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Weekly Standard reports:

> Bowe Bergdahl, the American soldier held captive in Afghanistan by Taliban-affiliated terrorists for nearly five years, will be charged with desertion. Bergdahl was returned to the United States last year in exchange for five Taliban commanders being held at the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay.

Previously, the Weekly Standard reported how his fellow soldiers called him a deserter:

> In an appearance on ABC's *This Week* on Sunday, National Security Adviser Susan Rice claimed that Bergdahl "wasn't simply a hostage, he was an American prisoner of war, taken on the battlefield." She added: "He served the United States with honor and distinction."
>
> "That's not true," says Specialist Cody Full, who served in the same platoon as Bergdahl, and whose tweets over the weekend as @CodyFNfootball offered an early firsthand account of Bergdahl's departure. "He was not a hero. What he did was not honorable. He knowingly deserted and put thousands of people in danger because he did. We swore to an oath and we upheld ours. He did not."
>
> "He walked off—and 'walked off' is a nice way to put it," says Specialist Josh Cornelison, the medic in Bergdahl's platoon. "He was accounted for late that afternoon. He very specifically planned to walk out in the middle of the night."
>
> "He was a deserter," says Specialist Full. "There's no question in the minds of anyone in our platoon."

But Democrat Susan Rice disagrees:

The Weekly Standard:

> President Obama's national security adviser, Susan Rice, said on ABC that Bowe Bergdahl "served the United States with honor and distinction" and that "Sergeant Bergdahl wasn't simply a hostage; he was an American prisoner of war captured on the battlefield."
>
> […]"He is going to be safely reunited with his family. He served the United States with honor and distinction. And we'll have the opportunity eventually to learn what has transpired in the past years, but what's most important now is his health and well being, that he have the opportunity to recover in peace and security and be reunited with his family. Which is why this is such a joyous day."
>
> Elsewhere in the interview, Rice says, "Sergeant Bergdahl wasn't simply a hostage; he was an American prisoner of war captured on the battlefield." She

> adds, “We have a sacred obligation that we have upheld since the founding of our republic to do our utmost to bring back our men and women who are taken in battle, and we did that in this instance.”

“Captured on the battlefield”? “Sacred obligation”?I guess we should not be surprised since she also blamed Benghazi on a Youtube video when it was known from the first instant that it was a terrorist attack defended the swap.

What difference does it make?
But other Democrats praised the terrorists-for-deserter swap as well:

> **Hillary Clinton, Obama’s former secretary of state, defended the deal in the days following. Clinton dismissed claims at the time that Bergdahl had deserted as “irrelevant.” “We bring our people home,” she said. Obama’s national security adviser Susan Rice said Bergdahl had served with “honor and distinction.”**

> Congressional leaders were effusive in their praise as well.
>
> “Today is a joyful day for our nation,” said House minority leader Nancy Pelosi in a May 31 statement. “As Sgt. Bergdahl returns home, we join in celebrating his safe return, and in expressing our gratitude for the relentless dedication of all the service members, intelligence officers, and diplomats who worked so hard to make this day a reality.”
>
> Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, then the majority leader, took to the Senate floor on June 4 to castigate Republicans criticizing the exchange. “As the president said, this is not a victory for him. It is a victory for the United States military and our country,” said Reid.

Here’s Megyn Kelly interviewing the State Department spokeswoman about the charges:

As Megyn Kelly says in the clip at the top, at least 3 of the 5 released Taliban commanders have tried to reconnect with terrorist networks:

> **At least three of the five Taliban leaders traded last year for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl have tried to plug back into their old terror networks, a government official familiar with the intelligence told Fox News,**

> **describing it as an attempt to “re-engage.”**
>
> […]The director of the Defense Intelligence Agency recently told Congress that, after that expiration, all his officers can do is warn the U.S. government if the men return to the battlefield.
>
> “I’ve seen nothing that causes me to believe these folks are reformed or [have] changed their ways or intend to re-integrate to society in ways to give me any confidence that they will not return in trying to do harm to America,” Rep. Mike Pompeo, R-Kan., a member of the House intelligence committee, told Fox News.
>
> The official who described the attempts by three to make contact did not identify the men by name. But the evidence came to light through intelligence from liaison services and monitored communications available to the U.S. government.
>
> A defense official did not dispute the claim, emphasizing that one of the men has come “very close, trying to provide advice, council or inspiration” to his terror network, while the other two had not crossed that line.

As Hillary Clinton would say, “what different at this point does it make?”. I guess if you are a Democrat, trading five of our strongest enemies for a deserter makes a lot of sense, how dare we voters think otherwise?

Kansas Republicans pass law banning dismemberment abortions

March 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this message

This good news story of the day is from Life News.

They write:

> The state of Kansas has been a haven for late-term abortions for decades and pro-life advocates there successfully lobbied the legislature to approve new legislation that would help put an end to some of them.
>
> In a move that it tells LifeNews.com will transform the landscape of abortion policy in the United States, National Right to Life announced a major new component of the right to life movement's 2015 legislative agenda with introduction in Kansas of the Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act. The pro-life group says the wave of pro-life victories in the 2014 election helped set the stage for this first-of-its-kind legislation, which would protect unborn children from the brutality of dismemberment abortion.
>
> "Dismemberment abortion kills a baby by tearing her apart limb from limb," said National Right to Life Director of State Legislation Mary Spaulding Balch, J.D. "Before the first trimester ends, the unborn child has a beating heart, brain waves, and every organ system in place. Dismemberment abortions occur after the baby has reached these milestones."

> Now, Kansas has approved the bill.
>
> This morning by a voice vote, the Kansas House gave first round approval to landmark pro-life legislation, Senate Bill 95,"The Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act."
>
> Kansans for Life Executive Director, Mary Kay Culp, thanked legislators for their diligence in tackling the issue, and enacting a sound law crafted to withstand constitutional scrutimy, that will stop a horrific procedure.
>
> "With the introduction of the bill by lead sponsor, Sen. Garrett Love (R-Montezuma), and 24 Senate co-sponsors, the bill generated immediate grass-roots support and passed the Kansas Senate, 31-9. After a final vote in the House, (possibly later today), SB 95 will head to Gov. Sam Brownback, who has promised his signature," Culp said.
>
> Culp explained that SB 95 bans a particularly gruesome abortion method in which a living unborn child in her mother's womb is ripped apart by an abortionist using sharp metal tools. In the words of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, the unborn child, "dies just as a human adult or child would: It bleeds to death as it is torn limb from limb."[Stenberg v. Carhart, 530 U.S. 914, 958-959].
>
> The bill was carried on the House floor by Rep. Steve Brunk (R-Wichita), with assistance on legal areas by former judge, Rep. John Rubin (R-Shawnee) – both pro-life leaders in the House.

This is not the first time that Kansas governor Sam Brownback has come through for pro-lifers.

Kansas governor Sam Brownback

Here are some of his other achievements:

- Brownback Signs Comprehensive Pro-Life Bill
- Brownback Signs Key Pro-Life Conscience Bill
- Brownback Signs Bill Protecting Pro-Life Pharmacists
- Brownback Puts Pro-Life Attorney on State Health Board
- Brownback Signs Bill De-Funding Planned Parenthood

- Brownback Signs Abortion Inspection, Ultrasound Bill
- Brownback Signs Fetal Pain-Abortion Ban

As you might expect, abortions are down in Kansas.

I am a 3-point conservative, not just a social conservative. It really matters to me that a politician support fiscal conservatism and foreign policy conservatism as well. I never used to like Sam Brownback much because he used to be more fiscally liberal. But that all changed when he became governor of Kansas and turned into this tax-cutting machine – and he's cutting government spending, too. Now I can't find a thing wrong with him. He saves unborn babies and returns money to taxpayers, so they can afford to get married and to raise children. Families need the money more than government does.

I think if you're going to make a Democrat cry, it makes sense to make them cry *a lot*. So why not do *all* the things that they don't want you to do?

Is the acceleration of the universe's expansion compatible with Hinduism?

March 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Science and Religion

First, a news story – and then we'll see how the accelerating universe relates to the existence of God.

Excerpt:

> Three astrophysicists who discovered that the universe's expansion is accelerating rather than decelerating, as had been expected, win the Nobel Prize in physics.
>
> Adam Riess was sure he'd spotted a blatant error in his results. It was 1997, and the young post-doc's measurements of distant, exploding stars implied that the universe was expanding at a faster and faster rate, instead of slowing down, as he had expected.
>
> It wasn't an error at all. Instead, what was at fault were some basic assumptions about the workings of the universe.
>
> On Tuesday, the Johns Hopkins University astrophysicist received the Nobel Prize in physics for the revolutionary discovery and its implications, along with team leader Brian Schmidt of Australian National University and astrophysicist Saul Perlmutter of UC Berkeley and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, who had reached the same conclusion independently.
>
> At the time of their work, astrophysicists believed that the rate of expansion of the universe — set in motion by the Big Bang 13.7 billion years ago — would be slowing down as matter was pulled together by gravity. The goal at the time was to figure out how rapid the deceleration was.
>
> What the two teams found instead was that the expansion of the universe was accelerating — an observation that could best be explained by the existence of a mysterious "dark energy" that pushes matter farther and farther apart.
>
> Many scientists had thought that, just as the universe started with the Big Bang,

> it would end with a Big Crunch — with gravity pulling all the matter in the universe inward.

Does anyone remember that week that I wrote those posts about "Why I am not a… <insert some religion here>"? I explained why I was not all kinds of different religions and denominations, including Roman Catholicism, Calvinism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, etc. Everyone was offended and we fought about it. Ah, I remember it well.

Now let's apply science to the Hindu religion and see if they go together, especially this new discovery about the expansion of the universe.

Why I am not a Hindu

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

So that's one reason why I am not a Hindu. And now we have more scientific confirmation that there is no cycle of universes coming into being and going out of being.

The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with Buddhism and Mormonism and maybe other religions. They also require an eternally existing universe.

And modern cosmology disagrees with atheism, too

I think it's important for all of you to be familiar with the scientific evidence for the Big Bang. It will help you with your cosmological argument, and it will help you to refute many, many other religions that require eternal universes, including atheism.

I wrote about how the Big Bang cosmology falsifies atheism before.

Excerpt:

> According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* The Big Bang has been confirmed by experimental evidence such as redshift measurements, light

> element abundances and the cosmic microwave background radiation. This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by atheist Scriptures.

The experimental evidence that confirms the Big Bang creation out of nothing falsifies many worldviews. Those who care about evidence will have to choose some other religion that is compatible with what we know from science today.

How to respond to complaints about Indiana's new religious freedom law

March 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news to start your day!
First, the story, from the Daily Signal:

> A bill known as the Religious Freedom Restoration Act has been signed into law by the governor.
>
> Supporters of Indiana Senate Bill 101 say that the law protects the free practice of religion, and opponents say the law will allow gay and lesbian individuals to be discriminated against.
>
> **For example, the law could permit business owners who felt that being forced to serve a certain customer in a particular case violated their religious beliefs to appeal to a judge. The courts would then decide if their objection was valid or not.**
>
> The bill was passed by the House 63-31 on Monday, and was approved by the Senate 40-10.
>
> Gov. Mike Pence, R-Ind., approved the legislation today.
>
> "Indiana is rightly celebrated for the hospitality, generosity, tolerance and values of our people, and that will never change," Pence said in a statement. "Faith and religion are important values to millions of Hoosiers and with the passage of this legislation, we ensure that Indiana will continue to be a place where we respect freedom of religion and make certain that government action will always be subject to the highest level of scrutiny that respects the religious beliefs of every Hoosier of every faith."

This is the key part:

> **Sarah Torre, a policy analyst at The Heritage Foundation, told The Daily Signal that the bill is modeled off of the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, which passed with bipartisan support and was signed into law by President Bill Clinton.**
>
> The federal law "prohibits substantial burdens on religious exercise unless the government can show a compelling interest in burdening religious liberty and does so through the least restrictive way possible," said Torre. "Protections for religious freedom, like the one passed in Indiana, provide a commonsense way to balance the fundamental right to religious liberty with compelling government interests."
>
> **Torre said that it's important to note that the law "doesn't allow individuals to do whatever they wish in the name of religion:"**
>
> "The law is simply a commonsense way of balancing government interests with the fundamental freedom of individuals to live out their faith. There will be times when a state or federal government can show it has a compelling reason for burdening religious expression—to ensure public safety, for instance. But Religious Freedom Restoration Acts set a high bar for the government to meet in order to restrict religious freedom."
>
> Such legislation at the state and federal level merely protects First Amendment rights, according to Torre.
>
> "A robust conception of religious liberty provides every person the freedom to seek the truth, form beliefs, and live according to the dictates of his or her conscience—whether at home, in worship, or at work," said Torre.
>
> **Torre added that 19 other states have similar laws.**

And if that were not enough, here is an Indianapolis Star editorial from law professor at Indiana University School of Law – *who supports same-sex marriage* – who is in favor of Indiana passing the bill.

He writes:

> I am a supporter of gay rights, including same-sex marriage. But as an informed legal scholar, I also support the proposed Indiana Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).
>
> […]The bill would establish a general legal standard, the "compelling interest" test, for evaluating laws and governmental practices that impose substantial burdens on the exercise of religion. This same test already governs federal law under the federal RFRA, which was signed into law by President Bill Clinton. And some 30 states have adopted the same standard, either under state-law RFRAs or as a matter of state constitutional law.
>
> […]But granting religious believers legal consideration does not mean that their religious objections will always be upheld. And this brings us to the issue of

> same-sex marriage.
>
> Under the Indiana RFRA, those who provide creative services for weddings, such as photographers, florists or bakers, could claim that religious freedom protects them from local nondiscrimination laws. Like other religious objectors, they would have their day in court, as they should, permitting them to argue that the government is improperly requiring them to violate their religion by participating (in their view) in a celebration that their religion does not allow.
>
> But courts generally have ruled that the government has a compelling interest in preventing discrimination and that this interest precludes the recognition of religious exceptions. Even in the narrow setting of wedding-service providers, claims for religious exemptions recently have been rejected in various states, including states that have adopted the RFRA test. A court could rule otherwise, protecting religious freedom in this distinctive context. But to date, none has.
>
> In any event, most religious freedom claims have nothing to do with same-sex marriage or discrimination. The proposed Indiana RFRA would provide valuable guidance to Indiana courts, directing them to balance religious freedom against competing interests under the same legal standard that applies throughout most of the land. It is anything but a “license to discriminate,” and it should not be mischaracterized or dismissed on that basis.

What the secular leftists in the media are saying is that the law gives religious people the right to reject any customer for any reason. Big businesses, which are overwhelmingly leftist, are also reacting the same way. The truth – as we saw above – is nothing like what the secular leftists are saying. The law is simply an echo of a federal law that already exists and was signed by Bill Clinton. Well done, Indiana. Well done, Republican legislators. Well done, Governor Mike Pence.

If you accept Jesus and become a Christian, will God make you happy?

March 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Navy SEAL Matthew "Axe" Axelson

This is a wonderful, wonderful post from Amy Hall, who writes for the Stand to Reason blog.

She writes:

> I had a brief interaction with an atheist on Twitter a couple of weeks ago that unexpectedly turned to the issue of suffering when she said:
>
> You clearly never had a time you were hurt. I don't mean sick. I don't mean heart broken. I mean literally a near death experience or rape or abusive relationship…. You can keep floating on a [expletive] cloud thinking Jesus will do everything for you but it's a lie. What makes you so special?
>
> That surprised me at first because it didn't seem to have anything to do with the tweet she was responding to, and I was confused as to why she would assume I'd never been through anything traumatic. But then in subsequent tweets, when she revealed she had been raped, it became clear that her trauma had played a central role in her becoming an outspoken, obviously angry "antitheist." She's a self-described antitheist now because she thinks Christianity teaches Jesus "will do everything for you" to give you a perfect life, and now she knows that's a lie. The rape proved her understanding of Christianity false.
>
> So it made sense for her to reason that since I believe Christianity is true, I must still be under the delusion that Jesus is making my life special, which means I obviously never encountered any evil or suffering to shake that delusion.

All right, readers. I don't want any of you to be thinking that if you become a Christian that these things should be expected to happen:

- you will feel happy all the time

- you will be able to sense God's secret plan for your life through your feelings
- God's secret plan for your life will automatically work, even though it's crazy
- God will give you a perfect spouse and lots of money without you having to do any work
- you get permission to do things that that make you happy, even if they are expressly forbidden by the Bible
- you don't have to do anything that makes you feel bad (e.g. – go to work), because God wants you to be happy

No! Where do people get this idea that if they convert to Christianity, then God will become their cosmic butler?

Amy has the answer: (emphasis mine)

> Hear me, everyone: **This is a failure of the church.**
>
> A friend of mine who was deeply suffering once said to me that many Christians are in for "an epic letdown" when they realize their preconceived notions about what God is expected to do for us are false. Pastors who preach a life-improvement Jesus are leading people down this precarious path to disillusionment.
>
> If suffering disproves your Christianity, you've missed Christianity. The Bible is filled with the suffering of those whom God loves. The central event of the Bible is one of suffering. Love involves suffering. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." That means suffering.

It's the church. It's all the singing about happy things and having of happy feelings and happy preaching designed to make us feel good. I would say the comforting devotional reading doesn't help to make us any tougher or more practical, either. People seem to use Bible study and devotion as a way to artificially create good feelings of happiness, peace and comfort, instead of just *doing hard things to serve God*. I don't think it's a "spiritual" Christian thing to read A. W. Tozer, etc. just so that you can feel comforted and spiritual. That stuff just gives you a false sense of safety about your precarious situation. God's job is not to prevent you from suffering. In fact, even if you make really smart, practical decisions, you can expect to get creamed *anyway*.

Please take 15 minutes and read the book of 1 Peter in the New Testament.

Here's a summary from GotQuestions.org:

> **Purpose of Writing:** 1 Peter is a letter from Peter to the believers who had been dispersed throughout the ancient world and were under intense persecution. If anyone understood persecution, it was Peter. He was beaten, threatened, punished and jailed for preaching the Word of God. He knew what it took to endure without bitterness, without losing hope and in great faith living an obedient, victorious life. This knowledge of living hope in Jesus was the message

> and Christ's example was the one to follow.
>
> **Brief Summary:** Though this time of persecution was desperate, Peter reveals that it was actually a time to rejoice. He says to count it a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ, as their Savior suffered for them. This letter makes reference to Peter's personal experiences with Jesus and his sermons from the book of Acts. Peter confirms Satan as the great enemy of every Christian but the assurance of Christ's future return gives the incentive of hope.
>
> **Practical Application:** The assurance of eternal life is given to all Christians. One way to identify with Christ is to share in His suffering. To us that would be to endure insults and slurs from those who call us "goodie two shoes" or "holier than thou." This is so minor compared to what Christ suffered for us on the Cross. Stand up for what you know and believe is right and rejoice when the world and Satan aim to hurt you.

Recently, I blogged about how suffering is compatible with an all-powerful God, so you might want to read that too if you missed it.

Scott Walker discusses foreign policy and national security with Hugh Hewitt

March 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

Hugh Hewitt is a horrible RINO Republican establishment guy (backed Romney), but I sometimes listen to his show.

I got this audio and transcript from Hugh Hewitt's blog.

The MP3 file is here. (19 minutes)

And here are the relevant parts of the transcript:

> HH: You mentioned today, you called it "the safety issue," not the "national security issue," that sort of brings, explain to people why you use that terminology.
>
> SW: I do, because I think it's come to the forefront not so much because "national security," that, to me, as I said [at lunch], is on page 6A of the newspaper where only a handful of us read into that. But when people see the videos, when they see the Jordanian burned alive in a cage, when they see the Egyptian Christians who were beheaded, when they see some of these other folks from around the world, including James Foley, who went to Marquette University where my son's a junior, and suddenly, that becomes very real to everyday Americans.
>
> HH: One of the beheaded Islamic State videos.
>
> **SW: Absolutely, whose parents are actually from New Hampshire, not far from where I was at a weekend ago, and you just realize, you can see it on your phone, you can see it on your iPad. You don't need the filter of the network news or the daily newspaper to tell you how bad this is. It suddenly becomes an issue of safety, because that's not something, national security, foreign policy is something over there.**

Safety is something you feel inside your chest, you feel in your heart. And I think increasingly, Americans feel a sense of concern that particularly if they have family members or loved ones that ever want to travel again, they see France, they see Canada, they see other places around the world, not just the Middle East, and it's a safety issue. And they, and then I would just add to this, as they look at this more closely, they see a president whose drawn a line in the sand and crossed it, who called ISIS just a year ago the "jayvee squad," who called Yemen last fall a success story, who calls Iran now a place where we can do business. Think about how screwed up that is. I remember the movie in the 80s, Trading Places…

HH: Right.

SW: …you know, with Dan Akroyd and Eddie Murphy, it's like Iran and Israel are trading places in the sequel. In the eyes of this president, our ally is supposed to be Israel. Our adversary has been historically Iran. And yet this administration completely does it the other way around. We need to call radical Islamic terrorism for what it is, and a commander-in-chief who's willing to act.

HH: Now I asked maybe one of your potential competitors yesterday, Senator Marco Rubio, who I know is a friend of yours.

SW: Good guy, yeah.

HH: I asked him yesterday would you disown and agreement that this president signs with Iran that leaves Iran uranium enrichment. What's Scott Walker think about the deal, because that's the outline, it appears?

SW: Absolutely.

HH: Would you reject that deal if you took the Oval Office?

SW: Absolutely, on Day One. I mean, to me, it is, the concept of a nuclear Iran is not only problematic for Iran, and certainly for Israel, but it opens the doors. I mean, the Saudis are next. You're going to have plenty of others in the region. People forget that even amongst the Islamic world, there is no love lost between the Saudis and the Iranians. And so they're going to want to have a nuclear weapon if the Iranians have a nuclear weapon. This is something that just escalates right before our eyes. And the fact that this administration began these discussions essentially conceding that they're going to allow enrichment to go forward with the Iranians just shows you that they don't have the same level of concern that I think I and Senator Rubio and many others out there have, that a nuclear Iran is a problem for the entire world, not just for Israel.

HH: Does the rising of these headlines, Saudi Arabia may be going to war with Yemen before this broadcast is over, if some of these Reuters reports are true.

SW: Right.

HH: And the Quds Force general is in Tikrit, right? So the world's on fire. Does this hurt a governor's claim to the presidency and elevate perhaps senators who have been there or other people who have been abroad and done that sort of thing? Or does it help you?

SW: Well, I think leadership is the fundamental ingredient that's important in anything, particularly when it comes to foreign policy. And I won't belittle any of the other would-be candidates. I would say, though, that my lifetime, the most significant president when it comes to foreign policy was a former governor, Ronald Reagan. The most faulty president, I would argue, when it comes to foreign policy and national security is a first term senator by the name of Barack Obama, who was on the Foreign Affairs Committee. And so, just those qualifications alone aren't enough. Now again, I think Senator Rubio and I are very much aligned on these issues. I agree with a number of my other colleagues who might be prospective candidates should I and others get into the race in the future. What people need to look at is what do you bring to the table, who do you surround yourself with, what kind of leadership style do you have, and people, I think in this case in particularly, not just in the travels and the studies, need to know how you think. In this case, I think Americans more than anything want a commander-in-chief of the future who does a couple of things – 1) calls out radical Islamic terrorism for what it is, and says we will do whatever it takes to take the fight to them before they bring the fight to us, because unlike the Cold War, when containment was enough, when the Soviet Union and the United States could have leaders like Gorbachev and Reagan talking about containment, that's not enough. When you have, not only with ISIS and al Qaeda, but you have an Iran, you have other places around the world groups that that want to not only annihilate Israel, but annihilate us in America, it's like a virus. You've got to eradicate it. You can't take out part of it, or it will come back.

HH: You also have people like Putin, Governor Walker…

SW: Absolutely.

HH: …who are pushing everywhere, and we've got Baltic allies. And people are wondering whether or not we'd actually come to their defense if Putin pushes into Estonia or Latvia or Lithuania. What do you think?

SW: We absolutely have to. I mean, NATO is the strongest military alliance we've had in history. It was part of, through Reagan's leadership, but certainly part of the ingredient that allowed us to win the Cold War without firing a shot. If we don't defend NATO members in a scenario like that, now I think we preempt that by showing strength in even dealing with Ukraine, which is not a NATO member, but is very much geographically aligned with what we're talking about. Remember, Putin isn't just aggressive for the sake of being aggressive. He's a

> **nationalist. He believes in the history of Russia and the old Soviet Union. Part of what you see here is the old Lenin adage that you probe with bayonets. If you find mush, you proceed. If you find steel, you withdraw. Well, in Ukraine, he's found mush, and he's found mush not only from the United States, but from others like, others and NATO partners out there. If it were to extend, and my belief is we need a president who's going to act aggressively by giving lethal force to the Ukrainians and others to try to preempt that from happening. But a couple of weeks ago, I met with the president of Estonia. Certainly, we saw a week ago the Lithuanian leadership is literally giving out literature telling their own citizens what to do if Russians invade. Latvia, I just talked to someone the other day whose mother immigrated here from Latvia, and in each of those Baltic states, there are real serious concerns about what happens if we don't deal with this in Ukraine. We need American leadership not just for America's sake, but for the world.**

If you find that interesting, listen to the whole thing or read the transcript. He also talks about education reform, if you're into that. I am.

We don't talk much about foreign policy as Christians, but it is important for us to understand it in order to promote the good, and achieve good results. We can't just be led by our feelings, we have to do what works, and that requires understanding how the world works.

SATIRE: Unemployed Gender Studies Major Sues 'The Patriarchy'

March 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Daily Currant.

Excerpt:

> An unemployed gender studies major from Eugene, Ore. sued "The Patriarchy" today in federal court for refusing to give her a job.
>
> In a 25-page brief, attorneys for Sarah Miller-Jones, 24, argue that gender discrimination from the patriarchy has prevented their client from finding gainful employment since she graduated from university three years ago.
>
> The suit seeks $2 million in compensation and $139 million in punitive damages, which together equal $1 from every adult man in America.
>
> "Despite the fact that Ms. Miller-Jones graduated with a 2.8 GPA from the prestigious University of Oregon, she has been unable to find a job fitting her qualifications," the document reads.
>
> "Ms. Miller-Jones has been on unemployment benefits for 18 months. And despite extensive coursework in Zambian feminist hip-hop she has only received six job offers — all of which were for entry-level call center and health care positions.
>
> "It is outrageous that the patriarchy refuses to offer our client a decent career. She has applied for over 20 positions in the recording, publishing and television industries and has been rejected every single time.
>
> "We all know that terms like 'no experience' and 'lack of relevant education' are codewords the patriarchy uses to keep keep women in their place. But Ms. Miller-Jones refuses to be a housewife or a nurse. She deserves a real job."
>
> Millions of young Americans who recently graduated from university are finding themselves working in jobs below their educational level.
>
> Media reports have tended to blame the slow recovery from the Great Recession for the trend. However, an equally important factor is the fact that the American university system turns out too few graduates with employable skills.
>
> There are an estimated 3 million open jobs in the United States that go unfilled due to a lack of qualified candidates. Many of these jobs are in science and engineering, while the most popular majors for U.S. college graduates are in psychology and the liberal arts.
>
> According to a former employer, Miller-Jones' gender studies degree actually hurt her employability. Gilbert Grass manages a call center for a local credit union in Eugene and says he regrets hiring her straight out of college.
>
> "She refused to use the words 'he' or 'she' when talking to customers," he says.

> “That lead to a lot of confusion. And she once gave a customer who called to check her bank balance a 20-minute lecture on how the film *Toy Story* perpetuated gender-specific archetypes of heroism.

I’m sorry, but this just makes me laugh so hard. I just want to remind everyone that this is satire. Not real! Not real!

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

March 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

Are evangelism and human responsibility for sin rational in Calvinism?

March 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a quote from Dr. Craig that seems to get Calvinists so angry:

> "The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom which confront Him are outside His control. He has to play with the hand He has been dealt."
>
> (Source)

Calvinists have told me that this quotation from Dr. Craig is "heretical" or "borderline heretical". They are claiming that Dr. Craig thinks that God is lacking in power somehow. But why is God's power limited, according to this quote?

Well, it's because God respects FREE WILL. That quote is simply Dr. Craig's way of saying that God does not override the free will of his creatures.

So let's make sense of Craig's statement. Either there is determinism and God causes people to act, or humans have free will and they cause themselves to do things. If you do not cause yourself to act, then you are not responsible for what you do. Just think for a minute. If I push you into someone and you fall into them and then they fall off a cliff, then are you a murderer? No – I would be, because I am the cause. The Bible teaches that God has chosen to limit his power so that that people have genuine responsibility for their actions, and that means they have genuine free will. Humans can only be responsible for their sins if they have the ability to do other than they do, and this is the traditional Christian view.

It's true that human beings are totally depraved as a result of the fall, and do not want God in their lives, but they are responsible because God wants them to be saved, and it is their free choice that prevents it. Rather than force humans to love him against their will, God lets them resist him, and so they are responsible for their sin.

Dr. Craig cites the famous Calvinist D. A. Carson (who I like) explaining some of the themes of the Bible that affirm robust free will and human responsibility:

> The classical Reformed [scholars]… acknowledge that the reconciliation of Scriptural texts affirming human freedom and contingency with Scriptural texts affirming divine sovereignty is inscrutable. D. A. Carson identifies nine streams of texts affirming human freedom: (1) People face a multitude of divine exhortations and commands, (2) people are said to obey, believe, and choose God, (3) people sin and rebel against God, (4) people's sins are judged by God, (5) people are tested by God, (6) people receive divine rewards, (7) the elect are responsible to respond to God's initiative, (8) prayers are not mere showpieces scripted by God, and (9) God literally pleads with sinners to repent and be saved (*Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension,* pp. 18-22). These passages rule out a deterministic understanding of

> divine providence, which would preclude human freedom.

On Calvinism, however, all of these 9 features of reality, supported by dozens and dozens of Bible passages, are all false. On Calvinism, God is the sole causal agent. There is no free will. People go to Heaven or Hell as a choice of God. People can only perform good actions if God acts unilaterally to "regenerate" them, making obedience to God possible. Calvinism teaches that God and his agents are constantly exhorting and commanding things that they literally cannot do because they are unregenerate, and the only way to get regenerate is for God to regenerate them, *against their will*. And they can't resist that.

So let's make sense of D.A. Carson's list of 9 items:

1. On Calvinism, when God or his agents exhort or command people to perform good actions, it's meaningless because God has to unilaterally regenerate them first, so that they can perform the good actions.
2. On Calvinism, when God or his agents tell people to obey, believe and choose God, it's meaningless because God has to unilaterally regenerate them first, so they can obey, believe and choose God.
3. On Calvinism, when people sin and rebel against God, it's like people are soda cans that God shakes up some of them, and then pops the tabs on all of them and the ones he shook up fizz.
4. On Calvinism, when God judges people for sinning, it's like God sends the cans who don't fizz to Hell for eternity, even though he unilaterally chose not to shake them, which is the only way they could fizz.
5. On Calvinism, when God tests people, it's meaningless, because there is no way they can pass the tests unless God unilaterally regenerates them first, so they can pass the test.
6. On Calvinism, when people receive divine rewards, it's meaningless, because all the credit goes to God for regenerating them. They are just fizzing because he shook the can.
7. On Calvinism, when people respond to God's initiative, it's meaningless, because God's regeneration is irresistible and irrevocable. They can do nothing other than fizz when he shakes the can.
8. On Calvinism, when people pray, it's meaningless, because God unilaterally decides whether to regenerate people or not, and all their fizzing comes solely from his decision to shake or not shake the can.
9. On Calvinism, when God pleads with sinners to repent and be saved, it's meaningless, because God has to unilaterally regenerate them before they can repent.

Here's William Lane Craig to explain it further in an answer to a question of the week from Dr. Craig's Reasonable Faith web site.

5 problems:

1. *Universal, divine, causal determinism cannot offer a coherent interpretation of Scripture.*
2. *Universal causal determinism cannot be rationally affirmed*.
3. *Universal, divine, determinism makes God the author of sin and precludes human responsibility.*
4. *Universal, divine, determinism nullifies human agency*.
5. *Universal, divine determinism makes reality into a farce*.

If God's choice, to regenerate or not, causally determines whether we can respond to him, or not, then that is *determinism*. And it makes our lives *meaningless* because we are not responsible for anything we do. Life is a puppet show, and there is only one person pulling the strings. Evangelism makes no sense, because God decides unilaterally and irrevocably who is saved. When I explain this to Calvinists, their response is that God commands us to evangelize, so we must even if it *makes no sense on their view.*

A Calvinist might respond to this defense of free will and human responsibility with passages from Romans 8 and 9, but those are best understood as speaking about corporate election, rather than unilaterally-determined selection. Membership in the elect group is based on people responding to God's drawing of them to him. That interpretation fits with the rest of the Bible, which is uniformly affirmative of human free will and human responsibility. Concerns about diminished divine sovereignty are resolved by middle knowledge, in which God chooses to actualize exactly the world that achieves his sovereign will out of all the possible worlds, and he saves exactly the people he chooses to save – but without violating their free will. Yes, it's cosmic entrapment, but at least the cosmic entrapment does not violate the free will of the creatures, which would render then irresponsible for their own sins.

Disclaimer: I don't think that this is an issue that should divide Christians, and I do think that Calvinists are most definitely Christians. And that they are very devout and intelligent Christians, too.

If you are looking for a good book on this issue, I recommend Kenneth Heathley's "Salvation and Sovereignty", which is a thorough discussion of the problem of divine sovereignty and human freedom.

Is marriage boring? Why are some women bored by marriage?

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In this post, when I refer to women, I am referring to young, unmarried women under the age of 35 who have been influenced by feminism to reject goal-directed marriage.

My pastor gave a sermon recently where he talked about 2 Tim 2:3, and he emphasized that in order to be useful for God, you have to be willing to "flee from youthful lusts".

2 Tim 2:20-23:

[20] Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

[21] Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these *things*, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

[22] Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

[23] But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

The pastor asked everyone to consider what they were like when they were young, but not to yell it out for everyone to hear. Then he listed out some of the characteristics of youth. They are impractical. They are thrill-seekers. They are self-centered. They want to pursue selfish pleasures. They want to be the center of attention.

My marriage plan is boring

As I was listening to the sermon, it reminded me of my experiences dealing with Christian women in campus clubs and churches. My approach with Christian women was always to lay out my plans, and then explain what I had already done to prepare for those plans, and then ask them to build skills in a mentoring relationship with me, while deciding whether we were compatible for marriage. It's understood that I am presenting a complementarian plan here, that I would be the leader of the marriage and family. The customer of the marriage would of course be God, and not my wife or I, nor the children.

Let's just quickly review what I would tell them and see if it's boring or not.

So here's the plan:

1. Influence the church with apologetics (teach apologetics classes, bring in speakers, organize conferences, etc.)
2. Influence the university with apologetics (support campus clubs, bring in speakers, organize conferences, open house to students, etc.)
3. Influence the public square (advocate for pro-family policies, lower taxes, smaller government, religious liberty, peace through strength, etc.)
4. Raise effective and influential children who are excellent students and who are

motivated to enter fields that matter and earn PhDs.

And here are some things I learned over the years from presenting this plan to marriage candidates.

Red flags when choosing a candidate

I really recommend that if you are looking for a wife, you should prefer to interview women who did not have a "wild" period of drinking, hooking up and cohabitation with atheists. Chastity really does matter – even if the woman became unchaste as a non-Christian before returning to Christianity, it will affect her ability to trust you, be vulnerable to you, let you lead her, be content with marriage and family, and in some cases to even remain faithful to you. In my experience the damage done from recreational premarital sex is still detectable after the conversion, and the women involved are unable to articulate why what they did was wrong, and what has been lost. In short, they are not remorseful.

Make sure she has done hard things in her life that have taught her that objective reality trumps her feelings and intuitions. You should prefer a woman with a STEM degree or a trade certification, no student loans, a job related to her degree, savings of her own – and someone who is not still living at home at age 30. If you want to put God first in the marriage, then you want to avoid someone who wants to redirect your time and money to fun and thrill-seeking.

You need to find a woman who is not "bored" by the duties and challenges of being a wife and mother. And you need to make sure to stress her with challenges during the courtship to make sure that she understands that marriage is about serving God, not about serving herself. When a woman has made all of her decisions using her emotions, and has achieved nothing, it does not bode well for her ability to make plans, stick to plans and achieve goals. It also does not help her to respect your plans and achievements. She will look at all your strengths (education, profession, savings, Christian influence) and think it is nothing impressive unless she has experienced sacrifice to achieve goals herself.

The main point is that a woman who has never had to do anything hard and achieve goals over the long-term has NO RESPECT for men who have done these things. Respect is what you need in order to lead. And you need to be in the lead in order for the marriage to work.

You want to avoid a woman who complains that home life is boring, that predictability and routine and safety are boring. You want to avoid a woman who disdains the humdrum of day-to-day earning money in an office building and saving money rather than blowing it on expensive things and one-shot thrills. You want to avoid women who rebels just for the sake of rebelling. You want to avoid women who resent anyone who tells them to be prudent, cautious, modest, etc. You want to avoid women who don't get along with their fathers, who don't see the value of benevolent authority. You want to avoid women who don't have a track record of doing the hard work needed to achieve goals (e.g. – women who avoid STEM degrees). You want to prefer a woman who has the desire for

achievement in the service of God more than the desire for pleasure or attention. You want to pick someone with a demonstrated ability to care for and nurture others in a goal-directed way, not someone whose relationships are more about getting her needs met.

The perception of "spiritual maturity"

Many Christian women who have been raised in a Christian home, who have prayed, done Bible studies, read A.W. Tozer, listened to sermons, and gone to AWANA and Sunday school have a very warped view of spiritual maturity. What the Christian home and the church teaches young women is that religion should be about their feelings. Private devotional reading and Bible study are much better (in their eyes) than preparing for public debates or sponsoring public lectures at a university. This is the feminized view of spiritual maturity that you find in the church, and this is how many Christian women judge the spiritual maturity of men.

I recommend that you find a woman who has an outward-focused practical view of Christianity and who respects action and results, not private piety and feelings. A great test for "outward-focusedness" in a woman is whether she has ability in evidential apologetics, especially science and to a lesser degree, history. Apologetics has value in Christianity because it is the thing that makes you resistant to suffering and disappointment with God. And the more evidence-based it is, the better. Reading "Signature in the Cell" is millions of times more effective than anything written by people like C.S. Lewis or G.K. Chesterton.

Is marriage primarily about the woman's happiness?

Here is my list of courting questions that I use to detect women who will be bored by marriage. If you suspect that a woman is more focused on her own happiness than making the marriage count for God, then you just have to ask her these questions. If she gets angry and refuses to answer or learn how to answer them, then she's self-centered and wants fun and thrills. Move on to the next one.

Understand that some young, unmarried women today who identify as Christian have these fun-seeking, thrill-seeking skeletons in their closets and that it seriously undermines their ability to perform "boring" marriage and parenting roles. Do not listen to them when they say they want to be married "some day" when all they are doing *now* is seeking pleasure apart from marriage and family as their fertility clock ticks away. Then they don't really want it. Women say "some day" because they want to present themselves to others a certain way, but some women say that while really just wanting to indulge their emotions, have a good time, and never sacrifice for the future.

Many Christian women tend to draw their their standards for what will make them happy from the culture and from their peers. Whatever they claim to believe on Sunday, their actions the rest of the time are going to be inline with the culture and their peers. So pay attention to their actions, not their words. The words are designed to paint a picture for others to think well of them, but the actions show what their priorities really are.

Adult children of gay parents testify against same-sex marriage at Supreme Court

March 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

This story is from the Washington Times. (H/T William)

They write:

> Six adult children of gay parents have filed briefs with the U.S. Supreme Court to dissuade the justices from legalizing same-sex marriage, citing their childhood experiences.
>
> The group and their attorney — David Boyle of Long Beach, California — were in Washington on Friday to visit congressional offices and meet with scholars and advocacy groups. Mr. Boyle and five of the adult children sat for a short interview with The Washington Times.
>
> “We don’t have childhoods,” said Dawn Stefanowicz, who grew up with two brothers in a chaotic world dominated by their gay father and his many lovers.
>
> “There were no safe boundaries in my home,” said Denise Shick, who explained in her amicus brief how her transgender father spied on and fondled her, stole her clothes and tried to step into her shoes because, as a girl blossoming into womanhood, she was the very thing he wanted to be.
>
> Robert Oscar Lopez, founder and president of the International Children’s Rights Institute, noted that judges often have asked attorneys if gay marriage “harms” anyone. The answer to that question is in the briefs and other publications, said Mr. Lopez, who was raised by his lesbian mother and her partner. He filed a brief with colleague B.N. Klein, who grew up with her lesbian mother and her partners.
>
> The briefs reveal children’s struggles with gender confusion, pressures to conform to gay values and attitudes, and feelings of isolation and sadness without being able to talk about those things with anyone.
>
> The inconsolable longing for the “missing” parent is another common theme.

> “When you have kids, all of a sudden it hits you,” said Mr. Lopez, who reconnected with his biological father in his late 20s.
>
> If the Supreme Court “rules to redefine marriage, it rules to redefine parenthood as well,” Katy Faust and Heather Barwick wrote in a joint brief.
>
> The women, who both grew up with loving lesbian mothers, said they realized gay marriage is wrong for kids when they saw their husbands interact with their children.
>
> “Adult desires do not trump child rights,” Ms. Faust said.
>
> There’s “no reason to write out of civil code the need for a mother and a father,” she said. “This court must either side with adult desires or side with children’s rights. But it cannot do both.”

Indeed – that is the issue. It’s a conflict between adult selfishness and children’s needs.

I found a very moving long-form essay at The Public Discourse by one of the women mentioned in the news story above.

Denise Shick writes:

> What was your biggest concern when you were nine years old? Was it trying to memorize your multiplication tables? Was it that the school cafeteria might serve your least favorite vegetable at lunch? Perhaps it was something more serious; perhaps your parents were talking of getting divorced. My biggest concern at age nine was how to keep my daddy’s secret, the one he revealed to me as we sat alone on a hill near our home. In a sense, I lost my dad that day, when he told me he wanted to become a woman.
>
> […]His confessions left me confused and hurt. After all, I just wanted a dad who would love and cherish me, who would make me feel special as a daughter. I felt rejected and abandoned by my own father. By the time I was eleven, my dad had begun to abuse me emotionally and sexually. Even so, I continued to keep my dad’s secret locked away, deep down in my heart.
>
> My dad created a home environment that made me feel as if I was walking on pins and needles. His resentment over my possession of what he so deeply desired for himself—a woman’s body—turned into anger and abuse. As his desires intensified, he began to borrow my clothing. Many times I discovered my underclothes and tops under bathroom towels, or in the attic—often in places I had not been. I learned to organize my clothes just so, in order to know if he had been in my dresser drawers. When I confirmed that he’d worn an article of my clothing, I simply could not bring myself to ever wear that item again.
>
> As an adolescent, I had to be careful about how I dressed. I always had to ask myself how he would react to my outfit. Would it make him so envious that he’d “borrow” it (without my consent, of course)? I began to hate my body. It was a constant reminder of what my father wanted to become. When I began to wear makeup, I had to block out the images I had of him applying makeup or eye

> shadow or lipstick. He was destroying my desire to become a woman.
>
> I looked elsewhere for comfort. Attending school dances and overnights at friends' homes gave me opportunities to seek some emotional escape through alcohol. Even on school days, a friend and I sometimes met in a school restroom to share bottles of Jack Daniel's. I desperately tried to fit in, but the truth is I was hurting.
>
> I was so hungry to have my father's love and attention that I tried to fill that void in other ways. I had thirteen boyfriends in seventh grade alone. I also tried, futilely, to soothe my hurting heart with alcohol. By age fifteen, I was struggling with my own sexuality and gender. I began to seriously consider taking drugs, but God had another plan.

I really recommend reading her essay from top to bottom if you want to understand the same-sex marriage issue. The guy who rescues her from her father (and the mother who chose to marry him) is an absolute hero, in my opinion.

Anyway, back to same-sex marriage. The last time we redefined marriage, we removed the presumption of permanence by allowing any spouse to end the marriage for any reason, or no reason at all. We were told by two left-wing constituencies – the feminists and the trial lawyers – that no-fault divorce would have a neutral or even a positive effect on children. Well, we now know that this was a pack of lies. The feminists wanted to destroy the "unequal roles" of marriage, and the trial lawyers wanted to get rich from divorce trials. The primary losers was the generation of children whose parents divorced instead of working out their problems. Now, the same social engineers are at it again with same-sex marriage. I hope we win this one, but since we elected Barack Obama, we lost two picks on the Supreme Court. Without those two picks, we don't have much hope.

How schools of social work stifle conservative views in the name of diversity

March 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a great story from The Weekly Standard. It's hard for me to slice it up so I can make the point of the article, but I'll try, and if you like it, you go read the whole thing.

The author Devorah Goldman says this:

> "I can't have you participate in class anymore."
>
> I was on my way out of class when my social welfare and policy professor casually called me over to tell me this. The friendliness of her tone did not match her words, and I attempted a shocked, confused apology. It was my first semester at the Hunter College School of Social Work, and I was as yet unfamiliar with the consistent, underlying threat that characterized much of the school's policy and atmosphere. This professor was simply more open and direct than most.
>
> I asked if I had said or done anything inappropriate or disrespectful, and she was quick to assure me that it was not my behavior that was the problem. No: It was my opinions. Or, as she put it, "I have to give over this information as is."
>
> I spent the rest of that semester mostly quiet, frustrated, and missing my undergraduate days, when my professors encouraged intellectual diversity and give-and-take. I attempted to take my case to a higher-up at school, an extremely nice, fair professor who insisted that it was in my own best interest not to rock the boat. I was doing well in his class, and I believed him when he told me he wanted me to continue doing well. He explained to me that people who were viewed as too conservative had had problems graduating in the past, and he didn't want that to happen to me. I thought he was joking . . . until I realized he wasn't.
>
> […]Two hundred thirty-five master's programs in the United States are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which requires schools to "advocate for human rights and social and economic justice" and to "engage in practices that advance social and economic justice" as part of their curricula. As Greg Lukianoff, president of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), points out, the CSWE standards act as "an invitation for schools to discriminate against students with dissenting views."
>
> Lukianoff discovered the abusive culture fostered by CSWE after several students complained about their treatment in social work programs. Emily Brooker, a Christian student at Missouri State University's School of Social Work in 2006, was asked by her professor to sign a letter to the Missouri legislature in favor of homosexual adoption. When she explained that doing so would violate her

> religious beliefs and requested a different assignment, she was subjected to a two-and-a-half-hour interrogation by an ethics committee and charged with a "Level Three Grievance" (the most severe kind). Brooker was not permitted to have an advocate or a tape recorder with her at the ethics meeting, during which she was told to sign a contract promising that she would "close the gap" between her religious beliefs and the values of the social work profession. At the risk of having her degree withheld, Brooker acquiesced.
>
> Bill Felkner, a student at Rhode Island College's School of Social Work, was instructed to lobby the Rhode Island legislature for several policies he did not support. In addition, RIC's policy internship requirements for graduate students included forcing students to advance policies that would further "progressive social change." When Felkner accepted an internship in the policy department of Republican Rhode Island governor Don Carcieri's office, he received a letter from Lenore Olsen, chair of the Social Work Department, informing him that he had violated their requirements and could no longer pursue a master's degree in social work policy.
>
> […]And so I sat, zombie-like, through the strange and sad reality that is groupthink for two long years. In a publicly funded school in America's greatest city, I was censored, threatened, and despised by my teachers. I left school after graduation feeling that something had been stolen from me. I wanted to go back and argue with my teachers some more, ask them, for example, whether a description of Reagan's economic policies as "nightmarish" in a textbook could be considered unbiased in any context. I wished I had stood up more often for my white male friends in class, asked people if they really believed that Band-Aids that were not exactly fair and not exactly dark in color were racist. Realizing that I had been awarded a diploma in part because I kept my opinions to myself was deeply unsatisfying.

Conservative students need to be aware that they are likely to face discrimination in social work programs on campus, and probably in many other programs as well. They will either have to silence themselves or change their views to be in compliance with secular leftist ideology. What's even scarier, though, is when students who are raised in traditional evangelical homes go off to college and swallow secular leftist values uncritically. It always shocks me a little when I meet students who were raised in a married home with two evangelical parents and they tell me that they vote for Democrats. I just had a conversation this week with a young woman who claimed to be pro-life and pro-marriage who voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012. She is studying *journalism*, and I would bet that there are no conservative professors in her program. She told me that she voted for Obama because of environmentalism and Obamacare. She also expressed preference for big government over small government.

It's definitely something to be aware of – the lack of critical thinking and respectful dialog in some of these programs. I'm going to be giving her a list of conservative news sites to

read, like The Stream, The Weekly Standard, The Daily Signal, and so on. I wonder if she has ever read a conservative economist or journalist before… I'll find out.

If you insist on going to programs that are more ideology than marketable skills, then expect to have to keep your mouth shut all the way through in order to graduate. And then after you graduate, whenever you get the chance, vote for smaller government, lower taxes, and more academic freedom laws that protect a diversity of views in the classroom. I also recommend donating to legal groups who defend basic liberties, such as Alliance Defending Freedom.

What is the best introductory book about pro-life apologetics?

March 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this message

Do you like to argue about controversial things? Of course you do. And so does Scheming Unborn Baby.

Here's an excellent book review of the best pro-life book for ordinary people. It's by Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Institute.

Excerpt:

The Case for Life by Scott Klusendorf is an absolutely outstanding defense of the pro-life position with regard to the abortion debate. Being familiar with Scott's work through Stand to Reason I was looking forward to this book with much anticipation. Scott is one of the most able, articulate, persuasive, and winsome pro-life speakers in the country and his book does not fail to deliver.

He's got chapter-by-chapter breakdowns, so let's look at some of them:

In **chapter five** Scott addresses the nature of truth and the topic of *moral relativism*, a view of morality our culture is saturated with to the core. Addressing this topic becomes absolutely necessary given its prevalence and the fact that often the claims of pro-lifers are misunderstood. This is seen in such cliches as "Don't like abortion? Don't have one!" or "I'm personally opposed to abortion but I think it should remain legal." In short, pro-lifers are not making subjective preference claims when they say abortion is morally wrong but rather objective truth claims. Scott lays out some fundamental problems with

moral relativism as well as a brief history outlining the move from moral realism to moral non-realism.

In **chapter six** Scott exposes the myth of moral neutrality. Both sides of the abortion debate have views they want to legislate and it is impossible for the state to remain neutral. However, it is often pro-lifers who are accused of trying to “legislate morality” while pro-abortion choice advocates get a free pass. In short, pro-lifers are dismissed as “religious” because of an unwillingness by pro-abortion choice advocates to address the issues. This is intellectually dishonest. How bout we stick with science?

And more:

In chapters **ten through fifteen** Scott addresses some of the most common arguments put forth by pro-abortion choice advocates. These include “Women will die from illegal abortions,” “You shouldn’t force your view on others,” “Pro-lifers should broaden their focus,” “Rape justifies abortion,” “Men can’t get pregnant,” and “It’s my body, I’ll decide.” The fundamental problem with most of these objections is that they beg the question. They assume the unborn is not a human person.

One more chapter – I’ve never seen chapters like this before:

In **chapter sixteen** Scott outlines four essential tasks that pastors concerned with biblical truth need to accomplish:

First, Christian pastors need to emphasize a biblical view of human value and ensure their congregation understands that abortion unjustly takes the life of an innocent human being. Second, they need to equip their congregation with pro-life apologetics so they can compete in the marketplace of ideas. Third, they need to emphasize the healing power of the gospel of Jesus Christ and preach repentance and forgiveness for post-abortion men and women. Finally, Christian pastors need to overcome their fear that abortion is a distraction, their fear of driving people away who might otherwise hear the gospel, and their fear of offending people with abortion-related content.

If you want to see Scott speak, here’s a new-ish 42-minute lecture:

If you like that, consider getting the book. Scheming Unborn Baby recommends it, and so do I.

Hillary Clinton attacks Indiana’s religious liberty law

March 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let’s take a look at what Jesus says about same-sex marriage.

Matthew 19:1-6:

1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.

2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?”

4 He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,

5 and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?

6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Now, let’s see some reactions to the Indiana law, which I explained in a previous blog post, from people on the secular left.

Hillary Clinton thinks that any arrangement of people who love each other is as good as any other:

Hillary Clinton opposes religious liberty

Her tweet implies support for incestuous relationships being “marriage” as well as

polygamy. That is a direct logical implication of calling an arrangement of people who love each other “marriage”.

But she’s not the only one.

Marriage defender Ryan T. Anderson responds to Apple CEO Tim Cook in the Daily Signal.

He writes:

> Apple CEO Tim Cook has taken to The Washington Post to tell the nation that, in the words of the headline, “Pro-discrimination ‘religious freedom’ laws are dangerous.”
>
> Notice the scare quotes around “religious freedom.” But the reality is that the only person in favor of discrimination in this debate is Tim Cook.
>
> It is Tim Cook who favors laws that discriminate against people of faith who simply ask to be left alone by government to run their businesses and their schools and their charities in accordance with their reasonable belief that marriage is the union of a man and a woman. It is Tim Cook who would have the government discriminate against these citizens, have the government coerce them into helping to celebrate a same-sex wedding and penalize them if they try to lead their lives in accordance with their faith.
>
> […]As Sarah Torre and I explained last week, Indiana’s religious freedom law protects citizens from government coercion—it places the burden of proof on the government if it is going to violate liberty. For over 20 years, the federal government has lived by this standard—the Religious Freedom Restoration Act passed unanimously in the House, with 97 votes in the Senate, and was signed into law by Bill Clinton. Twenty states have passed this law. And 11 additional states have religious liberty protections that state courts have interpreted to provide a similar level of protection.
>
> So, in total, the federal court system and 31 state court systems enforce this level of protection. Why is Tim Cook suddenly opposed to it?
>
> The answer is simple: This isn’t a debate about Religious Freedom Restoration Acts. This is a debate about whether Americans should remain free to live in accordance with the truth about marriage in their public lives. This is a debate about whether or not the government should be able to coerce people into violating their belief that marriage is the union of a man and a woman.

This is what the Indiana law is suppose to defend against:

Again, it’s not a slam dunk – all it says is that when a secular big government sues a person of any religion to force them to deny their faith, then religious liberty can be brought in as part of their defense during their day in court. By the way, always vote for smaller government, then these things don’t even happen because marriage, family and private businesses are less regulated.

How is the law applied?

This article from The Federalist lists 10 examples of how religious freedom laws have been applied.

Here's one:

> **7) Muslim prisoner fights to wear short beard: Abdul Muhammad**
> Abdul Muhammad is a Muslim incarcerated in Arkansas. He was not allowed to grow the 1/2 inch beard his religion commands even though Arkansas permits beards for other reasons. And the same beard would have been allowed in 44 state and federal prison systems in the country. In 2011, he filed suit. He won the suit using the "RFRA for prisoners" — the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act. That bill was also signed by Bill Clinton.Earlier this year, Muhammad won his case unanimously at the United States Supreme Court. They held that he'd shown the restriction was a substantial burden on his religious exercise.

And:

> **9) Florida denies prisoners kosher meals: Bruce Rich**
>
> Bruce Rich is an Orthodox Jewish prisoner in Florida, one of the last remaining states in the country that doesn't provide kosher food for Jewish prisoners. He argued this violates the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000, RFRA for prisoners.
>
> Florida claimed it limited food options to control costs and maintain security. The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which took Rich's case, noted that 35 states and the federal government provided kosher meals without it posing a problem.
>
> […]Rich withdrew his case once Florida began providing the necessary meals.

Does this law sound like a free pass to discriminate against gays to you? It goes to trial, and religious liberty is part of the defense that the judge considers.

Look at this opinion from another Indiana law professor:

> I should stress–and this point was totally lost in the Indiana debate–that RFRA does not provide immunity. It only allows a defendant to raise a defense, which a finder of fact must consider, like any other defense that can be raised under Title VII or the ADA. RFRA is *not* a blank check to discriminate.

Here's another defense of the Indiana law by an Indiana University law professor who supports same-sex marriage.

You can read another analysis of the religious liberty law from Gabriel Malor, a gay conservative. Actually, I re-tweeted THREE gay conservatives who were in favor of the law yesterday (Gabriel Malor, Milo Yiannopoulos, and Gay Patriot). This is *not* what you are hearing in the mainstream media, but is being used as a club to beat Christians into silence. And sadly, many younger evangelicals will respond to this and vote Democrat out of a lack of understanding of the issues.

The first redefinition of marriage was much worse for children than same-sex marriage

March 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

% of Marriages Remaining Intact

I am speaking about no-fault divorce, of course. Let's take a look at it with a few articles.

First, let's take a look at what Jesus says about divorce.

Matthew 19:1-9:

1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.

2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"

4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,

5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"

8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

I'll just link to one study to prove divorce is bad, but everyone knows that.

Now, let Theologian and cultural analyst Al Mohler explain how we got no-fault (unilateral) divorce:

> The story behind America's love affair with no-fault divorce is a sad and instructive tale. As Baskerville documents, no-fault divorce laws emerged in the United States during the 1970s and quickly spread across the nation. Even though only nine states had no-fault divorce laws in 1977, by 1995, every state had legalized no-fault divorce.
>
> Behind all this is an ideological revolution driven by feminism and facilitated by this society's embrace of autonomous individualism. Baskerville argues that divorce "became the most devastating weapon in the arsenal of feminism, because it creates millions of gender battles on the most personal level." As far back as 1947, the National Association of Women Lawyers [NAWL] was pushing for what we now know as no-fault divorce. More recently, NAWL claims credit for the divorce revolution, describing it as "the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken."
>
> The feminists and NAWL were not working alone, of course. Baskerville explains that the American Bar Association "persuaded the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws [NCCUSL] to produce the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act." Eventually, this led to a revolution in law and convulsions in society at large. This legal revolution effectively drove a stake into the heart of marriage itself, with inevitable consequences. In effect, no-fault divorce has become the catalyst for one of the most destructive cultural shifts in human history. Now, no-fault divorce is championed by many governments in the name of human rights, and America's divorce revolution is spreading around the world under the banner of "liberation."
>
> Baskerville gets right to the heart of the matter, labeling no-fault divorce as a "misnomer." In reality, the "no-fault" language was taken from the world of automobile insurance. These new divorce laws did not really remove fault from the context of divorce, but they "did create unilateral and involuntary divorce, so that one spouse may end a marriage without any agreement or fault by the other." As Baskerville explains, "Moreover, the spouse who divorces or otherwise abrogates the marriage contract incurs no liability for the cost or consequences, creating a unique and unprecedented legal anomaly."
>
> In many cases, the reality is even worse. In effect, no-fault divorce means that the courts now assist the violator of marriage vows. Any spouse can now demand a divorce for any reason and be assured that the courts will award the divorce–and will often grant disproportionate favor to the party seeking the divorce.
>
> As Judy Parejko, author of Stolen Vows, argues, no-fault divorce means that legislators created an "automatic outcome" in issues of divorce. "A defendant is

> automatically found ‘guilty’ of irreconcilable differences and is not allowed a defense,” Parejko notes.
>
> Researcher Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, author of the influential book, The Divorce Culture, points to the therapeutic seduction of the culture as a contributing factor. “According to therapeutic precepts,” she explains, “the fault for marital breakup must be shared, even when one spouse unilaterally seeks a divorce.”
>
> In other words, no-fault divorce laws actually assume that both parties are equally at fault, since no party could be innocent. The perverse assumption inherent in this argument is that if any individual is unhappy, someone else must necessarily be at fault. Once no-fault divorce became a reality, spouses found themselves simply informed of the fact that their marriage was effectively over. Many of these spouses were not even aware that the marriage was in trouble–and trouble is not even necessary.
>
> Why did all this happen? How could an institution as fundamental and basic as marriage become transformed in less than a decade’s time? Baskerville insists that no-fault divorce laws were not demanded by the public. “No popular clamor to dispense with divorce restrictions preceded their passage; no public outrage at any perceived injustice provided the impetus; no public debate was ever held in the media.” As Baskerville summarizes: “In retrospect, these laws can be seen as one of the boldest social experiments in history. The result effectively abolished marriage as a legal contract. As a result, it’s no longer possible to form a binding agreement to create a family.”

No-fault divorce is worse than same-sex marriage, and there is almost no support among Christians for taking it on, although my view is that both no-fault divorce and same-sex marriage need to be repealed. I don’t know how we are going to fix this unless Christians start to get serious about marrying well, and for the long-term. But more is needed – we have to make it harder for people to get divorced, and harder for people to get money from the government just for having children outside of marriage. We have to shame behaviors that harm children, and shrink government so that men become more indispensable, and staying married becomes more important to women. (over two-thirds of divorces are initiated by women)

And (in response to a comment below) we should be showing young people the benefits of getting married and staying married – not just for children, but for society as a whole. That’s especially true for young Christians in church – in my experience, the men often don’t see marriage as an exciting enterprise that could make a difference for Christ, and the women often think of marriage as something boring to put off for as long as possible. I think one of the great ways of evangelizing the culture is showing them a romantic marriage, a home that is warm and welcoming, and happy, healthy children who are respectful and hard-working.

You can read more in this article about no-fault divorce by Dr. Stephen Baskerville. (The Baskerville that Mohler mentioned)

He covers 5 myths about no-fault divorce:

1. No-fault divorce permitted divorce by mutual consent, thus making divorce less acrimonious
2. We cannot force people to remain married and should not try
3. No-fault divorce has led men to abandon their wives and children
4. When couples cannot agree or cooperate about matters like how the children should be raised, a judge must decide according to “the best interest of the child”
5. Divorce must be made easy because of domestic violence

I hope this clears up the false charge that people who oppose same-sex marriage do so only because of animus towards homosexuals. There are many reasons to oppose same-sex marriage – religious liberty concerns, concerns about the needs of children, public health concerns, and so on. But social conservatives like me are consistent. We oppose no-fault divorce because it harms children, and we oppose unrestricted welfare for single mothers for the same reason, because it pays people to have fatherless children. There are reasons for socially conservative views, it’s not just “dislike”. Only someone who has never been presented with conservative views *by conservative scholars* would think such things. But that’s what happens to students in universities – it’s just indoctrination.

What do skeptical ancient historians think of the earliest Christian creed?

March 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson solving a mystery

Here is a post from my friend Eric Chabot. He writes about the earliest historical source for the minimal facts about the resurrection, which is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Corinthians: 3-7.

1 Cor 15:3-7:

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Just in case you didn't know, Cephas is Peter, one of Jesus' closest followers.

The general consensus among scholars is the that creed goes back to within 1-3 years after the death if Jesus, when almost all the eyewitnesses were still around.

The creed

In Eric's post, he quotes very well-known skeptical historians who affirm each part of the creed.

First, the creed as a whole is respected, even by atheist scholars like John Dominic Crossan:

> Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that "I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received." The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition

> would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he "went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days" (3).

And atheist scholar Robert Funk:

> The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30 C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." — Robert Funk co-founder of the Jesus Seminar.(5)

Let's take a look at one of the parts of the creed that is respected by skeptical historians… namely, the early belief that Jesus was resurrected shortly after his death.

The early belief in the resurrection

Skeptical scholar E.P. Sanders:

> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. "I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: 'I saw him first!' 'No! I did.' Paul's tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus' followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions." "Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the 'resurrection': the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it. (14)

Skeptical scholar Bart Ehrman:

Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus' resurrection, since this is a matter of public record. (17)

> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don't doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don't have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don't think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19). (18)

You know, if all you did was give someone his post, I think that would be enough to show people that a more complete investigation of the historical Jesus was certainly a reasonable thing to do. It's amazing to me that people who grow up at this time when access to the data is so easy do not take the opportunity to look into Christianity.

List of virtually undeniable facts

Finally, below is a list of facts about the historical Jesus that are accepted by ancient historians – Christian, non-Christian, atheist.

These are compiled by non-Christian scholar E.P. Sanders:

From his book "Jesus and Judaism" (1985):

- Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.
- Jesus called disciples and spoke of there being twelve.
- Jesus confined his activity to Israel.
- Jesus was a Galilean who preached and healed.
- Jesus engaged in a controversy about the temple.
- Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem by the Roman authorities.
- After his death, his followers continued as an identifiable movement.
- At least some Jews persecuted at least parts of the new movement.

From his book "The Historical Figure of Jesus" (1993):

- Jesus was born c.4 BCE, near the time of the death of Herod the Great;
- He spent his childhood and early adult years in Nazareth, a Galilean village;
- He was baptized by John the Baptist;
- He called disciples;
- He taught in the towns, villages, and countryside of Galilee (apparently not the cities);
- He preached "the kingdom of God";
- Around the year 30 he went to Jerusalem for Passover;
- He created a disturbance in the temple area;
- He had a final meal with the disciples;
- He was arrested and interrogated by Jewish authorities, specifically the high priest;
- He was executed on the orders of the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate;
- His disciples at first fled;
- They saw him (in what sense is uncertain) after his death;
- As a consequence they believed he would return to found the kingdom;
- They formed a community to await his return and sought to win others to faith in him as God's Messiah.

The way the resurrection of Jesus is presented on TV, you would think that mythical stories about Jesus emerged decades and even centuries after the fact in other parts of the world from where the events happened. But the trouble is that no ancient historian thinks that. Only Hollywood TV producers and movie makers think that. Now, if you are getting your view of the historical accuracy of basic Christian beliefs from television and movies, then don't be surprised if you are wrong. No one is saying that you have to go to Christian pastors and preachers for the facts, but you should go to the historians. They at least know the minimal facts.

The best way for a skeptic to tackle these issues is, I think, to watch a decent debate on the resurrection of Jesus between two respected scholars. My favorite debate on the resurrection is William Lane Craig versus atheist historian James Crossley. I have a video and a summary already ready made just waiting for you to check it out. Don't worry, no one will be looking over your shoulder making you change everything your life should you be convinced. Just watch the debate and decide what you are going to do with it on your own. You don't have to change your whole life overnight. Becoming a Christian is instantaneous and easy to do. Living like a Christian is a process, and it's between you and God how fast you go. So just see what the facts are to start with and then take it from there.

Police officers buy poor family a car seat instead of ticketing them

April 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from ABC News.

Excerpt:

> Two Michigan police officers are being hailed for making the decision to buy a car seat for a family in need instead of citing the child's parents.
>
> Officers Jason Pavlige and James Hodges of Fruitport Township, Michigan, responded to a dispatch call reporting a woman at a local McDonalds holding a baby in her arms in a car's passenger seat.
>
> The officers observed a minor traffic violation and pulled over the driver, also the father of the 10-month-old girl, on the violation, Hodges, 26, a nearly two-year veteran of the force, told ABC News.
>
> When the officers spoke with the parents, who were not identified, they quickly realized they did not have the resources to purchase a car seat for their daughter.
>
> "They had just recently moved to the area," Hodges said. "We tried to have them contact family but they don't have anyone close.
>
> "There were no co-workers, no one who could help them out," he said.
>
> Instead of issuing the parents a citation, Pavlige and Hodges decided to take action in another way.
>
> "We spoke with each other and made the decision to go get them a car seat so we'd know the kid was safe and that this issue wouldn't come up again," Hodges said.
>
> While Pavlige stayed with the family, Hodges went to a local Walmart and purchased a new car seat with money from his and Pavlige's own pockets. They then installed the car seat and gave the family instructions on how to properly use it.
>
> "The father was, I think, almost in shock," said Hodges, who declined to say how much the car seat cost. "They didn't say much but were just very appreciative."
>
> Hodges and Pavlige's good deed occurred in February but was publicized just last week after a Walmart employee called the police station to report what the officers had done.
>
> "It was only brought to our attention by a clerk at Walmart who saw it and thought they should be recognized," Fruitport Township Police Lt. Bruce Morningstar told ABC News. "They were doing it on their own without any recognition."

> Hodges says the incident was just another day on the job in the life of a police officer.
>
> “We made the decision that was what we needed to do to solve the issue,” Hodges said. “When we left we went onto the next call.”
>
> “It’s just part of what police officers do on a daily basis,” he said.

Here is another case that happened last year:

That story is also from Michigan.

Well, I hate to politicize these stories, but I do find it funny that the news media normally makes too much of stories that feed their anti-police agenda, and then when something like this happens, almost nobody reports it. And yet, I think this case represents what the ordinary day-to-day work of a police officer is like. Wouldn’t it be nice if, instead of trying to inflame different groups against each other, the news media tried to bring people together by tell the truth more? There never was any “hands up, don’t shoot”, but this child-seat story really happened. Why don’t they make a big deal out of that?

Study: children are safest when they live with their two married biological parents

April 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

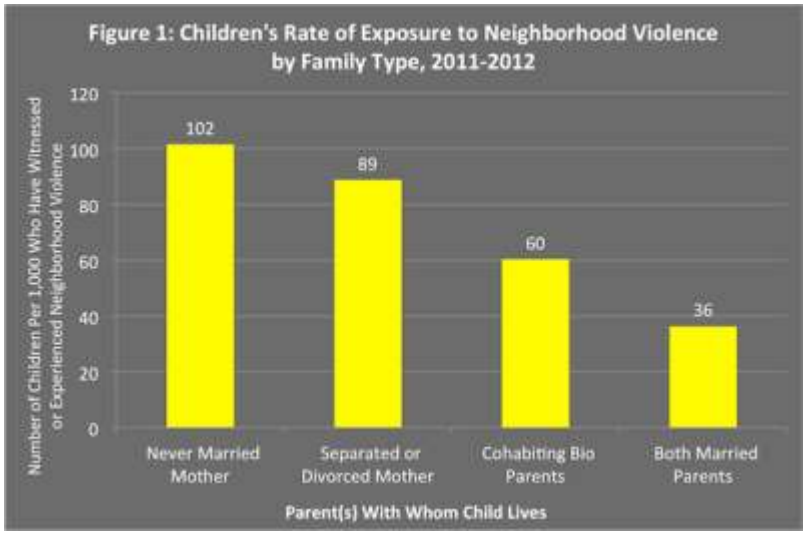

Marriage is the safest environment for children

Story from Family Studies.

It says:

> Young people are less likely to be victims of crime if they live in two-parent than in single-parent households. That has been a consistent finding of the National Crime Victimization Survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice. But it has been unclear whether the safety advantage stems from married couples living in less dangerous neighborhoods, on average, than unmarried parents, or from other differences in vulnerability between family types. My analysis of recent data from another national survey shows that even when their families live in unsafe neighborhoods, children in married two-parent families are less likely to be exposed to violent crime than children of never-married and divorced parents.
>
> In the 2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health, conducted by the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, parents of 95,677 children aged 17 and under were asked whether their child was "ever the victim of violence or witnessed any violence in his or her neighborhood." Among children living with their married biological parents, the overall rate of exposure to neighborhood violence was comparatively low: for every 1,000 children in intact families, 36 had witnessed or experienced neighborhood violence. By contrast, among children living with a never-married mother, the rate of violent crime exposure was nearly three times higher: 102 children per 1,000 had one or more such experiences. Among children living with a separated or divorced mother, the rate of exposure was more than twice as high as for children of married parents: 89 children per 1,000. (See Figure 1.) These comparisons are adjusted for

> differences across family types in the average age, sex, and race/ethnicity of the child; family income and poverty status; the parent's education level; neighborhood quality; and frequency of residential moves.
>
> Some might assume that the absence of an adult male to protect the household is key to the higher victimization rates of single-parent families. Yet children living with a biological parent and a stepparent also had an elevated rate of exposure to neighborhood violence: 84 children per 1,000. Even children living with both biological parents who were cohabiting rather than married had a significantly higher victimization rate—60 children per 1,000—though not as high as those in never-married or divorced families.
>
> […]**Why are children living with never-married or separated and divorced mothers more susceptible to neighborhood violence? Beyond the greater likelihood of having to live in unsafe neighborhoods and the more frequent moves that often come with family disruption, there are several other factors that increase vulnerability. First is the stress of conflict between parents and the strain of raising children as a lone parent in reduced financial circumstances. These can lead to a lack of vigilance and the overlooking of simple precautions, such as making sure that doors and windows are locked in houses and vehicles. Second, if they have broken up with their child's other parent, a single parent will usually begin dating and trying to find a new partner. This process often involves being out of the house at night, sometimes leaving children with no or inadequate supervision. Third, as children become adolescents, the peers they become involved with in their less-than-ideal neighborhoods and schools are often troubled ones, who can lead them into hazardous situations and activities.**

Marriage matters! We can allow alternatives to natural marriage, but natural marriage is best for kids.

You can read more about the safety advantages of marriage for women and children in this Heritage Foundation paper. Marriage matters, and we should doing everything we can to shrink secular big government programs that discourage marriage (e.g. – single mother welfare), and promote programs that encourage people to marry and have children, (e.g. – getting rid of the marriage penalty). It's a policy problem – we aren't doing enough to help children when the secular big government is more interested in making it easier for people to not marry (single mother welfare), and breaking up existing marriages (no-fault divorce laws).

Richard Carrier debates Mark Goodacre: Did Jesus exist?

April 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's April Fools today, and I have an April Fool for you – his name is Richard Carrier.

Debate topic:

> Richard Carrier is the world's foremost proponent of the "mythicist" view of Jesus – that he never actually existed as a historical person. He explains his theory that St. Paul only ever spoke of Jesus in the spiritual realm and that the Gospels are "extended parables". Mark Goodacre is NT professor at Duke University. He contends that Carrier's mythicist view is extremely far fetched and the evidence for the historical Jesus is beyond reasonable doubt.

Here are the participants:

> **Mark Goodacre** is an Associate Professor in New Testament at the Department of Religion, Duke University, North Carolina, USA. He earned his MA, M.Phil and DPhil at the University of Oxford and was Senior Lecturer at the University of Birmingham until 2005. His research interests include the Synoptic Gospels, the Historical Jesus and the Gospel of Thomas.
>
> **Richard Carrier** holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University in ancient history, specializing in the intellectual history of Greece and Rome, particularly ancient philosophy, religion, and science, with emphasis on the origins of Christianity and the use and progress of science under the Roman empire.

The debate can be listened to here:

This debate took place on Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable?" show based in the UK.

Carrier uses the letters of Paul as his sources, because they are the earliest. He doesn't think that there is enough there to ground Jesus as a real person in history. Goodacre responds by looking at the letters of Paul to see what facts about a real, historical Jesus are there, and also which other eyewitnesses Paul talked to. In particular, Carrier has to respond to the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15 as well as his meeting with Peter and James, two other eyewitnesses, twice in Galatians. 1 Corinthians and Galatians are two early Pauline letters that are unanimously regarded as authentic. Carrier's strategy is to try to introduce parallels between myths and the historical Jesus.

Goodacre also raises the crucifixion a historical fact about Jesus, which is a virtually undeniable fact about Jesus that is not even denied by people like the radical atheist John Dominic Crossan. Goodacre says that the crucifixion story would be embarrassing to the early Christians. They would not have invented a story of their Messiah-candidate being crucified – it was considered to shameful of a way to die. Carrier responded that other groups make up history that is embarrassing to them all the time. Goodacre says this

practice was not common among the groups of Jews that we know about. Carrier says that there are other unknown groups of Jews that we have no evidence for who did do that. Then he calls arguing based on the practices of the Jews that we do not know about an “argument from ignorance”.

Carrier talks about how Philippians has that embarrassing passage about Jesus abandoning his divine capabilities to humble himself by becoming an actual human being, and says that this is evidence that he was not an actual human being. (Unforced error!) Philippians is another one of the Pauline epistles that is not in doubt. Carrier then says that John invents historical reports in order to emphasize certain things about Jesus, and therefore that means that other non-John sources are therefore all falsified by John’s exaggerating on some details. He then cites the radical atheist John Dominic Crossan to say that historical narratives are actually extended parables.

What the reaction to the Indiana religious liberty law tells us about the secular left

April 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and the Human Rights Campaign

I surveyed three articles for this post, and we'll see a little from each.

Jewish conservative Ben Shapiro has more in Townhall. (H/T Pastor Matt)

Shapiro writes:

> **Same-sex marriage, it turns out, was never designed to grant legal benefits to same-sex couples. That could have been done under a regime of civil unions. Same-sex marriage was always designed to allow the government to have the power to cram down punishment on anyone who disobeys the government's vision of the public good. One need not be an advocate of discrimination against gays to believe that government does not have the ability to enforce the prevailing social standards of the time in violation of individual rights. There are many situations in which advocates of freedom dislike particular exercises of that freedom but understand that government attacks on individual rights are far more threatening to the public good.**
>
> You do not have a right to my services; I have a right to provide my services to whomever I choose. If you believe that your interpretation of public good enables you to bring a gun to the party, you are a bully and a tyrant. So it is with the modern American left, to whom freedom now means only the freedom to do what it is the left wants you to do at point of gun.

And Ben Shapiro again for Breitbart on what's next for the secular left:

> […][T]he obvious next step is for the left to target churches for revocation of

> their non-profit status.
>
> […]Once non-profit status is revoked for churches on the basis of supposed discrimination against homosexuals, those churches become private institutions engaged in commerce. Which means that they are regulated as common businesses under anti-discrimination law. Which means they can be shut down or fined for failure to perform same-sex weddings. The left says this will never happen. Which means we are a few years away from it happening.
>
> Religious universities will certainly be targeted, both as to their non-profit status and then for fines if they refuse to provide benefits for same-sex spouses, for example. Under the *Bob Jones University* case, which has already been touted by the left as the model for a federal case against same-sex marriage, universities will be considered discriminatory if they stand against same-sex marriage the same way Bob Jones University was with regard to its interracial dating standard. The difference, of course, is that dating between races is not the same as dating within the same sex. But the left has always equated race with homosexual behavior and will extend that equation to the law as it applies to institutions of higher education.
>
> Just because religious schools are run by religious institutions does not exempt them from the wrath of the left. Leftists have already declared in states in which same-sex marriage has been approved that children must be taught about same-sex marriage in public schools; in California, for example, the law also requires that parents allow children to attend such classes.
>
> This logic will be extended to private schools. Why should private schools be allowed to "discriminate" against same-sex couples by exempting children from learning about them? Why should homeschooled children be given state-credentialed status without being indoctrinated in the decency of homosexual behavior, all in the name of non-discrimination?

Here is an article from The Stream:

> **History teaches that mass vilification rarely stops short of spilling blood. The French Jacobins who spent the 1780s slandering the clergy in pornographic pamphlets went on in the 1790s to slaughter Christians by the hundreds of thousands. The Turks paved the way for killing a million Armenian Christians with a wave of propaganda. The Bolsheviks followed their "anti-God" crusade of the 1920s with starvation camps and firing squads. The Communist governments of Eastern Europe obeyed the same script, as scholar Anne Applebaum documents in her sobering study *The Iron Curtain*. The Hutu government of Rwanda prepared for its assault on the once-powerful Tutsis by incessantly describing them as "cockroaches" on radio broadcasts, which triggered a genocide.**

The point here is that before the mob resorts to violence, they first have to *dehumanize* their opponents. That's what we saw from the secular left in response to laws defending individual religious liberty against the secular state.

I think that it's important for us to engage the source of secular leftist radicalism – the university. This is where the next generation of radical leftists are indoctrinated. I think that Christians need to be studying apologetics, as well as economics and politics. We need to have Christians study harder things in better schools and take more influential jobs. This is a *major failure* of the Christian church – we have been too focused on spirituality and piety at the expense of effectiveness and influence. Churches are simply not set up to connect the prosperity, liberty and security that Christians need to act as authentic Christians in the public square, to specific battles over laws and policies. We are not persuasive or effective in those battles.

We really need to be more engaged and well-rounded, but all I see the church doing is the gospel, the gospel, the gospel – every week. I don't even know whether my pastor is pro-life or pro-marriage, and he certainly has never shared any reasons for his flock to be. And as far as apologetics, politics and economics? Forget it. I wonder how many young evangelicals in his church voted to set in motion the forces that would see him presiding over gay weddings , or having his children taken away from him lest they learn that there is anything wrong with abortion. But I'm sure he is very good at reading devotions, singing praise hymns, and doing Bible study. We need to be training influential young Christians and raising effective children.

Should we fear fascism more from Christians or from secular leftists?

April 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two posts by Jewish author Jonah Goldberg from National Review supply us with the facts to set the record straight.

Let's start with the first post, where Goldberg looks at the actions of the fascist Adolf Hitler.

1) Hitler wanted Christianity removed from the public square

> Like the engineers of that proverbial railway bridge, the Nazis worked relentlessly to replace the nuts and bolts of traditional Christianity with a new political religion. The shrewdest way to accomplish this was to co-opt Christianity via the Gleichschaltung while at the same time shrinking traditional religion's role in civil society.

2) Hitler banned the giving of donations to churches

> Hitler banned religious charity, crippling the churches' role as a counterweight to the state. Clergy were put on government salary, hence subjected to state authority. "The parsons will be made to dig their own graves," Hitler cackled. "They will betray their God to us. They will betray anything for the sake of their miserable little jobs and incomes."

3) Hitler replaced Christian celebrations with celebrations of the state

> Following the Jacobin example, the Nazis replaced the traditional Christian calendar. The new year began on January 30 with the Day of the Seizure of Power. Each November the streets of central Munich were dedicated to a Nazi Passion play depicting Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch. The martyrdom of Horst Wessel and his "old fighters" replaced Jesus and the apostles. Plays and official histories were rewritten to glorify pagan Aryans bravely fighting against Christianizing foreign armies. Anticipating some feminist pseudo history, witches became martyrs to the bloodthirsty oppression of Christianity.

4) Hitler favored the complete elimination of Christianity

> When some Protestant bishops visited the Fuhrer to register complaints, Hitler's rage got the better of him. "Christianity will disappear from Germany just as it has done in Russia . . . The German race has existed without Christianity for thousands of years . . . and will continue after Christianity has disappeared . . . We must get used to the teachings of blood and race."

5) Hitler favored the removal of mandatory prayers in schools

> In 1935 mandatory prayer in school was abolished…

6) Hitler favored the banning of Christmas carols and nativity plays

> …and in 1938 carols and Nativity plays were banned entirely.

7) Hitler abolished religious instruction for children

> By 1941 religious instruction for children fourteen years and up had been abolished altogether….

And now the second post.

8) Hitler opposed the ideas of universal truth and objective moral absolutes

> …Just as the Nazi attack on Christianity was part of a larger war on the idea of universal truth, whole postmodern cosmologies have been created to prove that traditional religious morality is a scam, that there are no fixed truths or "natural" categories, and that all knowledge is socially constructed.

Practically everything this man believed was 100% anti-Christian. But he fits in fine on the secular left. In fact, if you read out this list of actions to the groups who represent the secular left, I have no doubt that they would get to their feet and applaud the squashing of religious liberty and religious expression in the public square.

Conclusion

Adolf Hitler was a man influenced by two big ideas: evolution and socialism. His party was the national SOCIALIST party. Like the secular leftists in our own time, he was not a proponent of small government and individual rights, like religious liberty. He wanted to force his own values onto businesses and individuals that had a different allegiance, such as Christianity. He favored a strong role for the state in interfering with the free market and telling private business owners what to do. He was in favor of regulating the family so that the state could have a bigger influence on children. He did not like the idea that Christian parents would teach their children Christianity, instead of the doctrines that he favored. His ideas are 100% incompatible with Christianity and with capitalism, as well. Christians value individual rights and freedoms, small government and the autonomy of the family against the state. The differences are clear and significant.

Should we fear mass murder more from Christians or from secular leftists?

April 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at what Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s. The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

Let's see more from a peer-reviewed journal article authored by Crispin Paine of the University College, London:

> Atheist propaganda and the struggle against religion began immediately after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917. While social change would, under Marxist theory, bring religion to disappear, Leninists argued that the Party should actively help to eradicate religion as a vital step in creating 'New Soviet Man'. The energy with which the Party struggled against religion, though, varied considerably from time to time and from place to place, as did its hostility to particular faith groups. The 1920s saw the closure of innumerable churches and synagogues (and to a lesser extent mosques) and the active persecution of clergy and harassment of believers. From 1930, though, Stalin introduced a less aggressive approach, and wartime support for the government earned for the Russian Orthodox Church, at least, a level of toleration which lasted until Stalin's death. Under Khrushchev antireligious efforts resumed, if spasmodically, and they lasted until the end of the Soviet Union.

An article from the pro-communism Marxist.com web site says this about Stalin:

> During the ultra-left period of forcible collectivisation and the Five Year Plan in Four an attempt was made to liquidate the Church and its influence by government decree. Starting in 1929 churches were forcibly closed and priests arrested and exiled all over the Soviet Union. The celebrated Shrine of the Iberian Virgin in Moscow – esteemed by believers to be the "holiest" in all Russia was demolished – Stalin and his Government were not afraid of strengthening

> religious fanaticism by wounding the feelings of believers as Lenin and Trotsky had been! Religion, they believed, could be liquidated, like the kulak, by a stroke of the pen. The Society of Militant Atheists, under Stalin's orders, issued on May 15th 1932, the "Five Year Plan of Atheism" – by May 1st 1937, such as the "Plan", "not a single house of prayer shall remain in the territory of the USSR, and the very concept of God must be banished from the Soviet Union as a survival of the Middle Ages and an instrument for the oppression of the working masses."!

Now, if you were going to pick a hero of the Christian faith, you'd probably pick a real fundamentalist like William Wilberforce, who freed the slaves – because of his evangelical Christian convictions. Wilberforce took Christianity seriously – he believed every verse of the Bible, he tried to convert people to his faith, and he pushed his faith on others by passing laws. He was the worst nightmare of the secular left – a politically active Evangelical Christian.

But who is a great atheist who was politically active? When I think of a great atheist, someone who really did the most to oppose the "lie" of God's existence, I think of Josef Stalin. So what kind of morality can we expect from someone who takes the message of Richard Dawkins and Dan Barker seriously and has the political power to really do something about it?

The Ukraine Famine

Take a look at this UK Daily Mail article about a great achievement of the atheist Josef Stalin, which occurred in 1932-1933.

Excerpt:

> Now, 75 years after one of the great forgotten crimes of modern times, Stalin's man-made famine of 1932/3, the former Soviet republic of Ukraine is asking the world to classify it as a genocide.
>
> The Ukrainians call it the Holodomor – the Hunger.
>
> Millions starved as Soviet troops and secret policemen raided their villages, stole the harvest and all the food in villagers' homes.
>
> They dropped dead in the streets, lay dying and rotting in their houses, and some women became so desperate for food that they ate their own children.
>
> If they managed to fend off starvation, they were deported and shot in their hundreds of thousands.
>
> So terrible was the famine that Igor Yukhnovsky, director of the Institute of National Memory, the Ukrainian institution researching the Holodomor, believes **as many as nine million may have died.**
>
> […]Between four and five million died in Ukraine, a million died in Kazakhstan and another million in the north Caucasus and the Volga.
>
> By 1933, 5.7 million households – somewhere between ten million and 15 million

> people – had vanished. They had been deported, shot or died of starvation.

This is what follows when you believe that the universe is an accident, that there is no objective good and evil, that human beings are just animals, that no God will hold us accountable, and that human beings are not made in the image of God for the purpose of freely choosing to come into a relationship with him. The Ukrainian famine is an action that came from a man whose worldview was *passionate atheism.*

Atheism today

You might think that today's atheists are much different than Josef Stalin, but understand that according to a recent survey of atheists conducted by atheists, 97% of atheists vote pro-abortion. How many people have been killed by abortion? 56 million in the United States alone. Atheists in a society like ours, founded on Judeo-Christian values, are obviously going to live a lot better than Stalin. For one thing, they don't have the power that Stalin had to eradicate theism, although you can see Stalinism in the anti-Christian activities of groups like the Freedom From Religion Foundation. But take away the Judeo-Christian foundations of this society, and what would you see atheists doing?

Remember the words of Richard Dawkins:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

Now, having said that, I readily admit that many atheists adopt Judeo-Christian values if their society is saturated with them, but they are acting better than their worldview requires. They are acting *inconsistently* with what atheism really teaches. It's good for us that they do, but for how long?

Christian-owned pizza business shuts down after death threats from gay activists

April 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Crystal O'Connor, victim of bullying by gay activists

I read a lot of articles on this, and Todd Starnes' on Fox News was the most detailed.

He writes:

> A small town, family-owned pizzeria has become the latest target of an angry mob of modern-day fascists — hell-bent on silencing anyone who opposes gay marriage.
>
> Kevin O'Connor and his daughter Crystal own Memories Pizza in Walkerton, Ind. — just a hop, skip and a jump southwest of South Bend.
>
> Mr. O'Connor and his family have been forced into hiding and had to temporarily shut down their store after they told a local television reporter that they would not cater a gay wedding.
>
> "If a gay couple came in and wanted us to provide pizzas for their wedding, we would have to say no," Crystal told ABC 57 on Tuesday.
>
> Neither Crystal nor her father realized they were about to become the LGBT community's Public Enemy No. 1.
> "I'm a born-again Christian," Kevin O'Connor told me in an exclusive telephone interview Thursday. "My faith is the base of my business."
>
> And the O'Connor family's faith teaches them that marriage is reserved for a man and a woman.
>
> "I would not participate in a gay marriage," Kevin O'Connor said. "To condone a gay wedding to me is just wrong. I could not put my stamp of approval on a gay wedding."
>
> The television station labeled Memories Pizza as the "first business to publicly deny same-sex service," in the aftermath of the state's new Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the Washington Post reported.

> But the O'Connors said they have never denied a same-sex couple a pepperoni pie.
>
> "I have never turned anybody away from my store," Kevin O'Connor said. "If they come in there with clothes barely hanging on their back – I don't turn anybody away. I don't care what their beliefs are."
>
> The hell storm this 61-year-old grandfather faced as a result of his Christian faith is simply beyond belief.
>
> The family business came under fierce assault by LGBT activists and their cronies — accusing them of being anti-gay bigots. Their Facebook pages were smeared with gay pornography. Their phones were overwhelmed by vulgar and profane threats.
>
> A high school softball coach in Concord, Ind., was suspended after posting an arson threat on Twitter.
>
> "Who's going to Walkerton, IN to burn down #memoriespizza w me?" Coach Jess Dooley tweeted.
>
> […]The events of the past few days have been incredibly troubling for the O'Connor family. During my interview with Kevin — he became quite emotional.
>
> "It's been pretty tough, yeah," he said. "It's been hard."
>
> It was his lifelong dream to own a business. That dream came true when he opened the pizzeria in 2006, when he started the business from scratch.
>
> And his Christian faith is evident in the restaurant.
>
> "We get together and pray every day when the store opens," he said. "We have a box for customers to put prayer requests in. We don't push it. We don't try to preach."
>
> He doesn't force his religion on anyone.
>
> "We treat them like we want to be treated," he said.
>
> Kevin told me he was especially thankful for the support he's received from fellow Christians around the nation — including a group that launched a fundraising drive.
>
> He also wants other Christian business owners to be encouraged.
>
> "Trust the Lord," he said. "Pray. Even though we don't see where He's taking us, He's got control. And He will make it work for His good and our good."
>
> Kevin said he hopes to reopen the pizzeria sooner rather than later – but an exact date is unclear.
>
> Right now, he's trying to console his 21-year-old daughter – who has shouldered a mountain of hateful threats.
>
> "Crystal needs some time," Kevin said. "This scared her pretty good."

There is some good news, from the Washington Times:

> Supporters of the Indiana family under attack for refusing to cater a hypothetical gay wedding stepped up Thursday, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars and dropping by Memories Pizza even though it remained closed after a rash of threats.
>
> A crowdfunding campaign launched by conservative talk-show host Dana Loesch and her staff had collected more than $410,000 in 24 hours for the O'Connor family to help with "the financial loss endured by the proprietors' stand for faith," said a statement on the GoFundMe.com page.
>
> The O'Connors shut down the restaurant after being bombarded Wednesday with angry phone calls and social media posts, a reaction to co-owner Crystal O'Connor telling ABC57 that the family would not cater a same-sex wedding ceremony for religious reasons — not that they had been asked to do so.
>
> At one point, the family had even considered leaving town over the uproar, but Ms. O'Connor, 21, said on Ms. Loesch's Twitter on Thursday, "It's totally different today than it was yesterday. We're not leaving."

Try to remember which side the gay activists are on in the next election, by the way:

Hillary Clinton and the Human Rights Campaign

The thing about this is that we are on defense here. We are using up our funding to play defense. We should be filing lawsuits and taking the fascists to court. Not waiting for them to bully us in the courts. See the related posts for some of the gay activism that Democrats never speak out against.

Related posts

- Two Christian preachers brutally beaten at Seattle Gay Pride Festival
- Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged
- Man who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric

- The mainstream media’s biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Gay activist Dan Savage bullies Christian teens and bashes Christianity
- Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll’s Mars Hill Church
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Gay manager at Cisco Systems gets Dr. Frank Turek fired
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration

What should you say when a co-worker asks you if you believe in evolution?

April 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

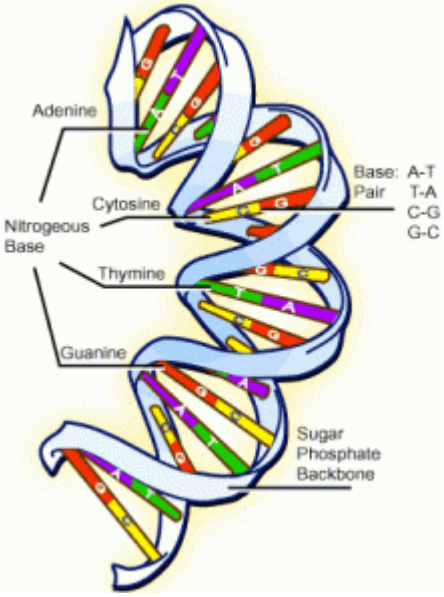

How did life begin?

You only have a few minutes to respond, and your answer is going to go all around the office. So what should you say?

Stephen C. Meyer has the answer at Evolution News.

He writes:

> I spoke recently to the Faith and Law group on Capitol Hill in D.C., a regular meeting of congressional staffers. At their request, I addressed the topic: "What Should Politicians Say When Asked About Evolution?"
>
> […]In my talk, I not only gave an answer to the question "What Should Politicians Say When Asked About Evolution?" but I first explained why it is a difficult question for many politicians, especially conservative ones, to answer. There are three main reasons.

I'm only going to give the first reason:

> First, the term "evolution" can mean several different things, ranging from (1) the scientifically uncontroversial idea of "change over time" (think of small-scale variations in the shape and size of Galapagos finch beaks) to (2) the more controversial notion of universal common ancestry (think of Darwin's tree of life) to (3) the increasingly controversial idea that the mechanism of natural selection and random mutation have produced all the forms of life we see today without any guidance or design. The last meaning of "evolution" is what Richard Dawkins calls the "Blind Watchmaker" thesis.
>
> Equivocation in the definition of evolution can make it difficult for a politician to

> express legitimate skepticism about the controversial meanings of evolution without being presented to the public as being ignorant of established fact, or "anti-science." In Walker's recent case, media coverage traded on precisely this ambiguity to present him as being at odds with the majority of the American public, not to mention the scientific establishment. Media outlets repeatedly cited a poll showing that 65 percent of the American people believe that "human beings have changed over time" — i.e., the first and non-controversial meaning of evolution — without mentioning that a huge majority of Americans (and many scientists) reject the third and distinctly controversial meaning of evolution — the idea that the cause of the change over time is an unguided and undirected mechanism.

You can click through and read the other two, but for now, let's jump to the right way to answer the question:

> Most politicians, of course, don't know about this tumult in the field or of any of the *scientific* problems with modern Darwinism. They are thus often unnecessarily intimidated by the consensus that supposedly exists in its favor.
>
> In light of all this, any candidate asked about "the theory of evolution" would be well advised to give an answer that affirms the need to teach *about* contemporary evolutionary theory, but one that also makes clear distinctions between the different meanings of evolution and indicates an awareness of the scientific problems with the standard theory as demonstrated in the scientific literature. And frankly this is not party-specific advice. The scientific literature says what it says, whether consulted by Democrats or Republicans.
>
> Politicians can also say that they think students should learn about those problems since they regard knowledge of the *actual* status of the theory as a matter of basic scientific literacy. They should not frame the issue as one of "Science versus the Bible," or answer as if they were being asked about their personal religious beliefs, or as if they think the only alternative to current dogmatic teaching of Darwinian evolution (with its strict insistence on *undirected* evolution) is to teach Bible-based creationism. They can challenge the dogmatic (and often ideological) way the topic is currently taught and at the same time affirm their commitment to scientific literacy, academic freedom, and critical thinking.

And here's a sample question and answer:

> **Reporter**: "Do you believe in evolution?"
>
> **Candidate**: "Of course, I believe that organisms have changed over time. I certainly believe in evolution in that sense. But I am skeptical about *unguided* evolution — the idea that natural selection and random mutations have produced the major changes in the history of life we observe without any guidance or design. In fact, in peer-reviewed scientific publications, many

> scientists have expressed doubts about the creative power of natural selection and random mutation. I think that students in learning about the modern version of Darwin's theory should learn why scientists have these doubts. Understanding the strengths *and weaknesses* of scientific theories is a matter of basic scientific literacy. And there are scientific weaknesses in modern Darwinian theory."

This is the right answer because you pull in the majority of people – the young Earth creationists, the intelligent designists and the guided evolutionists. The only people you leave out are the flat-out materialist naturalists, and they are in the minority. So that's how you answer the question. It would probably help a great deal if you had read both of Meyer's books on biological evolution, since he writes at the highest level – far higher than left-wing journalists who probably dropped biology because it was too much work.

When speaking to non-Christians, do you use any of these Christianese terms?

April 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this article by J. Warner Wallace and thought it was appropriate because it's Easter, and there are always questions.

First, the list of Christianese: (not his term)

- **#1. "God has put you (or something) on my heart. / God told me."**
- **#2. "Be 'born again.' / Have a spiritual rebirth."**
- **#3. "You need to come to repentance. / Experience a conversion."**
- **#4. "Deal with your sin."**
- **#5. "Invite Jesus into your heart."**
- **#6. "Make Jesus the Lord of your life."**
- **#7. "Have faith."**
- **#8. "Be saved."**
- **#9. "Be washed by the blood of the Lamb."**
- **#10. "Be Sanctified."**
- **Bonus Expression #11. "Enjoy fellowship."**

This article is pretty funny, but it ought to be because I think we really need to shame church Christians when they talk like this.

Here's the one I liked best:

> **#5. "Invite Jesus into your heart."**
> You mean like a boyfriend? What exactly does that mean to have "Jesus in my heart?" I'm not an emotional kind of guy, so please don't ask me to sing songs or hold hands with Jesus, especially in public. Do I have to emasculate myself to become a Christian? If so, thanks for reminding me why I'm not a Christian.
>
> **Try this instead**: "When we admit our imperfections, believe Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our mistakes, and accept His sacrifice, we can start a new relationship with God."

Indeed. It's a wonder that any rough and tough men become Christians after what they find in church.

I think that a lot of Christians struggle with explaining "sin" to non-Christians, but I have an approach that works for me. I just ask them how much effort they have put into looking for the evidence for and against God. How much effort into cosmology, especially. How much into the origin of life. How much into the fine-tuning. Usually, the answer is "I watched every episode of Star Trek" or "I watched a documentary on the Pyramids on the Discovery Channel". I try to show them that God has left fingerprints in the natural world, and by avoiding that evidence they are, in fact, *avoiding God*. Keeping him at arm's

length by dancing away from the evidence and focusing instead on having good feelings. Collecting stuff. Having thrills and adventures. Making people like them. Etc. I call this refusal to try to seek God and adjust to him “sin”. It’s rebellion against the obligation to know God. And to know God is to love God. And to love God is to make decisions that reflect his character, even when it’s difficult.

Wallace concludes:

> I understand the importance of our theologically rich Christian language, and as a Christian I often use similar words when talking with Christians. But when I’m talking with unbelievers, I try to think about how I used to hear and interpret these words before I became a Christian. How do I share what I believe? I take the time to translate important Christian concepts for those who might be willing to entertain the ideas if only I was willing to speak their language.

I think that there is a real need for churches to train Christians in how to bring up topics that are of interest to Christians in public. The approach I’ve always taken is to have a broad worldview, including areas like economics and policy, so that I wouldn’t just sit there silent while other people are talking. I can ease into discussing spiritual things much more easily because I can start the conversation from politics, economics and current events. You have to show that you have knowledge in real-world areas before anyone will listen to you about other things. That’s my approach anyway. You really have to establish your credentials before you start to speak about spiritual things.

Islamic terrorists murder nearly 150 mostly Christian students in Kenya

April 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

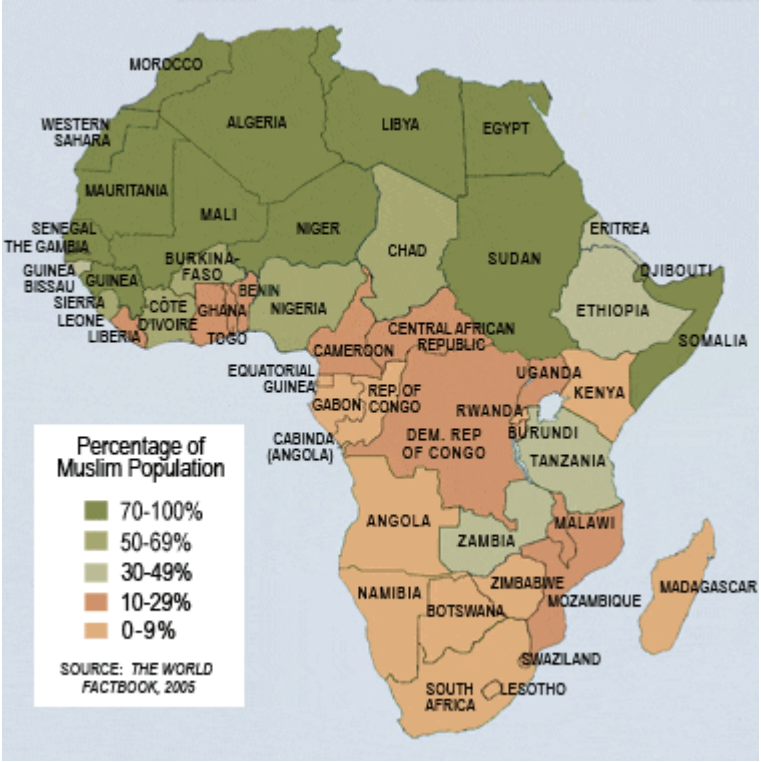

Map of Africa

While the mainstream media was protesting religious freedom laws, they neglected to make a big deal out of a terrorist attack by Islamic terrorists against Christian students in Kenya.

Let's read about it in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

It says:

> Elosy Karimi curled up in a crawl space, immobilized by fear.
>
> Her classmates were flooding out of the dorms, in boxer shorts and thin nightgowns. Gunfire was ringing all around her. People were screaming. It was predawn and pitch black.
>
> "If you want to survive, come out!" the militants yelled. "If you want to die, stay inside!"
>
> In the terrifying confusion, Ms. Karimi, 23, decided to risk it inside, she said, and stayed hidden in the ceiling above her bunk bed for the next 28 and a half hours.
>
> "I knew those guys were lying," she said at the hospital, having just arrived to be checked after the ordeal.
>
> New details emerged on Friday about how a handful of fighters from the Shabab militant group, with just a few light weapons, managed to kill nearly 150 students in Kenya's worst terrorist attack since the 1998 bombing of the United States

> Embassy in Nairobi.
>
> Survivors said many students had fallen for the militants' trick, voluntarily leaving their dorm rooms and obeying commands to lie down in neat rows, only to be shot in the back of the head.
>
> One of the militants appeared to be a trained sniper, some witnesses said, picking off several Kenyan soldiers and critically hampering the rescue effort, giving the gunmen hours more to keep killing.
>
> The militants seemed especially cruel and gleeful, ordering some students to call their parents on their cellphones and tell them that the attack was payback for Kenya's military intervention in Somalia.
>
> Students who hid during the attack said they had heard their classmates whimpering as the militants taunted them. Then a single gunshot. Then silence.
>
> "They were shooting people as they came out; they were making others lie down," said a doctor who was not authorized to speak publicly. "They had so many people lying in one place, it was easy killing."

I am contrasting this story with the photos of the people marching around in Indiana for their right not to be refused gay marriage services from Christians. They were not marching for the Christian students who were murdered by terrorists in Kenya. Oh no – they have much higher priorities. The journalists who spent hours and hours lying about the religious liberty law also had different priorities. What a strange world where people think that it is more important to compel others to celebrate their behavior instead of condemning something that is truly evil. I guess it's too much to ask that entitle secular leftist bullies would care about the basic human rights of others. They want a happy life for themselves, but there is no morality underlying any of their rhetoric.

As an aside, I think this story shows the important of America having a strong military and having the will to use it. It's one thing to read about stories like this, but if you go to the polls and vote for Democrats to cut our defense budget and neuter the army with politically correct policies, then there is nothing we can do when things like this happen. The bad guys in this story only understand one thing, and that's men with guns standing between them and their intended victims. No shrieking anti-war activist in pink could have helped the victims, but our military could have.

Indiana RFRA “fix” is a full repeal, religious liberty will be no defense

April 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News analyzes the “fix” proposed by Indiana *Republicans*.

Excerpt:

> Indiana House Speaker Brian Bosma and Senate President Pro Tem David Long announced Thursday that they would submit a new versionof the state’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) to Gov. Mike Pence to counter criticism that it discriminates against gays and lesbians.
>
> “It was never intended to discriminate against anyone,” Long told reporters. “That perception led to the national protests we’ve seen.”
>
> **But a lawyer for The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty says the proposed legislative “fix” is not only unnecessary, it would undermine the religious rights of Hoosiers and leave them vulnerable to criminal prosecution for following their religious beliefs, the opposite of what RFRA was intended to do.**
>
> “We think the Indiana law is a very good law which is modeled on what has worked at the federal and state level for 20 years, and which is similar to constitutional provisions that are backed up by 50 years of jurisprudence,” Becket legal counsel Daniel Blomberg told CNSNews.com. “These laws work very well to protect the religious rights of minorities.
>
> **“All the Indiana law does is the same thing that’s been working very well for a long time,” he pointed out. “Today the Indiana legislature proposed a ‘fix’ that we think is 1) unnecessary; and 2) itself is broken and would create a very dangerous change in Indiana law.**
>
> **“Individuals asked to be part of a same-sex wedding who decline because they feel it violates their religious beliefs would not be able to raise the RFRA under the ‘fix’,” Blomberg told CNSNews.com. “It would leave them defenseless. It also makes specific allowances for criminal prosecution. So not only is the ‘fix’ not helpful, it should not be accepted.**
>
> **“We have a choice on how to handle these situations. We can allow government to drive religious people out of business, fine them and possibly imprison them, or we can allow religious people to have their day in court, and let the courts balance their religious claims against other competing values.”**

Gary Bauer explains what’s at stake:

> “Gov. [Mike] Pence is going through a rhetorical lynching,” Gary Bauer, former Republican presidential candidate and president of American Values, told CNSNews.com. “This is what we were warning about in the [Manhattan] Declaration, and why the Declaration was written.”
>
> Besides upholding the “sanctity of life” and the “dignity of marriage,” the Manhattan Declaration, which was signed by Bauer and a number of other religious and political leaders in 2009, championed “religious freedom”. “No one should be compelled to embrace any religion against his will, nor should persons of faith be forbidden to worship God according to the dictates of conscience or to express freely and publicly their deeply held religious convictions,” the Declaration stated.
>
> It warned that “freedom of religion and the rights of conscience are gravely jeopardized by those who would use the instruments of coercion to compel persons of faith to compromise their deepest convictions.”
>
> Such restrictions “undermine the viability of the intermediate structures of society, the essential buffer against the overweening authority of the state, resulting in the soft despotism [Alexis de] Tocqueville so prophetically warned of,” the Declaration continued. “Disintegration of civil society is a prelude to tyranny.”
>
> “It’s becoming clearer and clearer that the tolerance movement used by the cultural Left in recent decades was just a poll-driven strategy and not an actual commitment to tolerance,” Bauer continued, adding that the Indiana law is being used to cut off debate and redefine anyone with traditional moral values as a bigot. “Every pastor and every parent should be deeply worried about what is happening in Indianapolis,” he said.

I guess I blame the church for this. I go to church. I know what goes on in there. It’s a sermon on the gospel every week. There is about 20 minutes of singing. Current events are never mentioned. The existence of God and the resurrection are never explained or defended. The Bible is just assumed to be true, and no issues outside it are ever discussed. Objections to Christian theism are never named, much less defended against. Reasons and evidence are never provided for the Biblical view on topics like abortion or same-sex marriage, much less economics, the environment, etc. The emphasis is on comforting people. The emphasis is on not judging. The emphasis is on making people feel good and leaving them free to do whatever makes them feel good.

I just don’t see young people having any interest in defending Christianity any more against the culture. I mean, I am seeing “pro-life”, “pro-marriage” evangelicals voting for Democrats because they want a bigger secular government. They want more money to be transferred from Christian families to Solyndra so we can fight the global warming monster. They believed Obama about keeping your doctor, keeping your health plan, and not funding abortions – but Obama lied on all three of these. They want to vote for Obama’s promise that health insurance premiums will drop $3000 in 2008, and then vote

for the same guy again in 2012 when the premiums have actually gone up $2500. They voted for Obama saying that he supported traditional marriage, but then his Justice Department declined to defend the Defense of Marriage Act.

Young Christians just don't care about marriage as Jesus defined it – one man, one woman, for life. They say they do, but then they vote for the party that opposes religious liberty when they get the chance. Global warming and raising the minimum wage are more important. Why? Because the secular culture told them so. And that's their authority when it comes to voting.

Young Christians just seem to be completely disloyal to God as he really is. I don't think that Christians really want to have to think about what would work to defend God's reputation and character from these attacks. They just want to do their own thing, and get the praise from men, rather than the praise from God. In my own case, I am now in my upper 30s and still very much respecting the Biblical standards around sex: no pre-marital sex, no adultery, no frivolous divorce. Why is it such a difficult standard for younger evangelicals to accept and to defend? They seem to believe that chastity, natural marriage, and natural child-bearing are all unimportant things. The only rule now is to have fun with sex, and to never judge anyone for breaking the rules. That's not what the Bible teaches, but that's what young Christians believe. Who is going to talk to them about it? Not the pastors. Not their parents. And not their friends.

William Lane Craig presents the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

April 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s Resurrection Day, so that means it’s time for a William Lane Craig lecture:

And if you like the lecture, you can see these ideas defended in a formal academic debate right here.

And, if you would rather read an essay by Dr. Craig on the resurrection, you can read one right here.

Is love more about accepting a woman as she is, or growing her into something better?

April 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A man leading a woman upward

On Saturday, my friend Dina asked me to do a Bible study with her, and she chose Ephesians. I decided that if I read it right away, it would give me more time to think about it. So I was on the treadmill today listening to all six chapters of it, and listening to some parts over. I have an NIV dramatized Bible on my smartphone, so it's super easy to listen to. Something stood out to me when I was listening to Ephesians 5 though, so I wanted to write about it.

Look at this from Ephesians 5:25-31:

[25] Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

[26] that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

[27] so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

[28] In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

[29] For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,

[30] because we are members of his body.

[31] "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

I have always tried to apply this verse when dealing with women, and even when mentoring men. In my relationships, I try to listen to the woman's story and then try to think of where she is trying to get to in her life as a Christian. To help her along, I try to engineer activities that will allow her to grow in strength and confidence by achieving better and better things. There is no shortcut to confidence based on mere words, you

have to help her do hard things so she has the experiences of feeling scared, failing, practicing more, then finally succeeding. Although a woman might think that it's fine to study English for a year, then drop out and sit around the house drinking beer and watching TV, a good man will not think that's acceptable. If a man loves a woman, then he wants to build her up into something nice for God. And in truth, that will be more fulfilling for her in the long run, although it might conflict with her feelings in the short run.

C.S. Lewis makes the same point in "The Problem of Pain":

> Finally we come to an analogy full of danger, and of much more limited application, which happens, nevertheless, to be the most useful for our special purpose at the moment—I mean, the analogy between God's love for man and a man's love for a woman. It is freely used in Scripture. Israel is a false wife, but her heavenly Husband cannot forget the happier days; 'I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thy espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness.' 6 Israel is the pauper bride, the waif whom her Lover found abandoned by the wayside, and clothed and adorned and made lovely and yet she betrayed Him .7 'Adulteresses' St James calls us, because we turn aside to the 'friendship of the world', while God 'jealously longs for the spirit He has implanted in us'.8 The Church is the Lord's bride whom He so loves that in her no spot or wrinkle is endurable? For the truth which this analogy serves to emphasize is that Love, in its own nature, demands the perfecting of the beloved; that the mere 'kindness' which tolerates anything except suffering in its object is, in that respect, at the opposite pole from Love. **When we fall in love with a woman, do we cease to care whether she is clean or dirty, fair or foul? Do we not rather then first begin to care? Does any woman regard it as a sign of love in a man that he neither knows nor cares how she is looking? Love may, indeed, love the beloved when her beauty is lost: but not because it is lost. Love may forgive all infirmities and love still in spite of them: but Love cannot cease to will their removal. Love is more sensitive than hatred itself to every blemish in the beloved; his 'feeling is more soft and sensible than are the tender horns of cockled snails'. Of all powers he forgives most, but he condones least: he is pleased with little, but demands all.**
>
> […]We are, not metaphorically but in very truth, a Divine work of art, something that God is making, and therefore something with which He will not be satisfied until it has a certain character. Here again we come up against what I have called the "intolerable compliment." Over a sketch made idly to amuse a child, an artist may not take much trouble: he may be content to let it go even though it is not exactly as he meant it to be. But over the great picture of his life—the work which he loves, though in a different fashion, as intensely as a man loves a woman or a mother a child—he will take endless trouble—and would doubtless, thereby give endless trouble to the picture if it were sentient. **One can imagine**

> **a sentient picture, after being rubbed and scraped and re-commenced for the tenth time, wishing that it were only a thumb-nail sketch whose making was over in a minute. In the same way, it is natural for us to wish that God had designed for us a less glorious and less arduous destiny; but then we are wishing not for more love but for less."**

Imagine that you have signed up for swimming lessons and then your instructor takes you aside and says "listen, you really have talent at swimming. I think that you could compete in the Olympics if you apply yourself. I want you to work harder than everyone else here, and practice more on your own." How would you feel? The extra practice is going to cut into your TV and popcorn eating time. You are not even sure that you want to be an Olympic swimmer. What good is it to you if you are one? Why can't your instructor just accept you as you are and leave you alone to do whatever you want? If he loved you,wouldn't he just let you do what you wanted? Well… that's the challenge of letting yourself be led; recognizing leadership as love, and submitting to it.

Choosing a good leader

I have some advice for women who encounter men who believe that they have talent and who try to get them to grow into something better. A good man who wants to marry you is going to audition for the role of husband by trying to lead you upward. That's what love is, self-sacrifice designed to help the other person grow. It can be scary to let a man lead you. Letting a man lead you is especially hard if you have been indoctrinated by feminism to not trust men, or if you have had experiences with bad men who abused your trust and vulnerability. What if what he wants you to do is hard, and exposes you to failure? That won't feel good. Would he reject you if you failed? That wouldn't feel good. How can you tell if *this* man can be trusted when so many others have failed to be trustworthy? Aren't men all the same?

So here is some advice for picking a good leader. You can look around at some of the other people that this man has tried to lead, and see how it has worked out. Are the other people that he's mentored happy with the results? Did they achieve more with his mentoring than without it? Has anyone he mentored been left in a worse state than they were in when he started investing in them? Were any of the people he mentored rejected for not being good enough? If they tried but failed to be perfect, did the man give up on them or was he delighted that they tried and achieved something less than perfect? Does he try to surround you with other people who are older and wiser so that they can mentor you and support you as well? I think that answering those kinds of questions can show whether the leading is meant to help you or harm you. The answers to those questions counterbalance the feelings that we all have when someone tries to love us upward.

And if a man isn't trying to audition for the husband role by leading you, then you should ask yourself why.

Clarifications:

- this doesn’t apply to dating, only courting. Also, I don’t believe that men should not be allowed to ask women out until they have a degree / trade and a job and some job experience
- this advice only works with men who are capable of leading, it’s not some sort of given that all men get to lead without qualification
- when I am talking about leadership, I mean leadership before marriage in order to improve a woman’s skills so she can serve God better, e.g. – improving apologetics or public speaking or teaching
- the goal of this is for the man and woman to experience how a man leads before the marriage, so that there are no surprises after the wedding
- leadership to me is the same as leadership in the corporate world, it means providing a vision, building consensus, enabling others to do their best, and motivating them with rewards and/or recognition
- examples of me leading a woman are: leading her to complete her undergraduate degree, leading her to start a masters, leading her to pay off her debts, leading her to teach in church, leading her to give lectures on apologetics issues, etc.

UK’s largest teacher union tells teachers they MUST promote the gay lifestyle to students

April 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this article from the UK Daily Mail.

It says:

> Schools should be forced to promote gay relationships in sex education lessons, union leaders say.
>
> The National Union of Teachers has called for a ‘positive portrayal of same sex relationships’ in lessons to be made ‘compulsory’ under the next government.
>
> It said MPs had a duty to tackle ‘homophobia, biphobia and transphobia’ in schools and create a ‘positive climate of understanding about sexuality’.
>
> […]Simon Calvert of the Christian Institute said: ‘This motion is itself an act of intolerance towards mainstream Christians and their beliefs. It would force Christian teachers to have to choose between their faith and their job.
>
> ‘I wonder whether Christian members of the NUT who have paid their dues can expect any help from the NUT when their jobs are on the line.’
>
> He added that Church schools already teach ‘love and tolerance’ of others without having to explicitly approve of same sex relationships.
>
> The proposal was contained in a motion on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights passed by the NUT at its annual conference in Harrogate yesterday.
>
> It stated: ‘Conference instructs the executive to call upon the present and future government to … make it compulsory that all schools’ sex education policies include a positive portrayal of same sex relationships.’

That reminded me of this story from a few weeks ago about the Catholic teacher who was forced to take down pro-traditional marriage postings from her Facebook page.

The article says:

> A Catholic high school teacher was forced to remove her Facebook page Wednesday after a petition surfaced online calling attention to her “homophobic” posts.
>
> The petition was posted on change.org Tuesday and has 441 signatures as of Wednesday evening. It points directly to posts allegedly made by Patricia Jannuzzi, a theology teacher at Immaculata High School in Somerville, and has caught the eye of actress Susan Sarandon and former “Real Housewives of New Jersey” cast member Greg Bennett.
>
> “Mrs Jannuzzi’s facebook is a religious curtain covering hateful message,” the

> petition reads. “The homophobic and short-sighted posts are disturbing and degrading.”
>
> **In a statement provided to NJ Advance Media, the school said it took “immediate action” and “mandated that the teacher involved permanently de-active her Facebook page.”**
>
> **“The opinions reflected in these posts do not in any way represent the philosophy, mission or student experience of this high school,” the statement said. “… Through our investigation, we have determined that the information posted on this social media page has not been reflected in the curriculum content of the classes she teaches.”**
>
> […]Another alumnus, Scott Lyons, who is gay and had Januzzi as a teacher, shared a letter on Facebook he sent to her after reading one of her posts. He said in the letter that he remembers Januzzi’s classes to be “focused on love and acceptance” but that he is “offended and disappointed” by her recent posts.
>
> “While I respect the fact that people have different opinions on the matter what I can tell you from my heart is that I urge you to be careful with your words and the messaging you are putting out there,” he wrote.
>
> Lyons is the nephew of Sarandon, who shared the post to her 3,000 followers.
>
> “So proud of my nephew Scott and the dialogue he started,” Sarandon writes. “…High school is a tough time anyway… students don’t need teachers making it even more difficult.”
>
> **Immaculata said in its statement that the school is reviewing its social media policy with faculty and staff members.**
>
> **“It is the policy of the school that all faculty and staff demonstrate respect and sensitivity to all people at all times and to avoid offending any individuals or groups,” the statement said.**

The Catholic teacher linked to an article from Young Conservatives. A mainstream conservative site. And that’s what her employer did to her. Apparently, the employer is a Catholic school.

Images of unborn babies developing in the womb

April 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post from Life News has ten excellent pictures of life inside the womb.

Here's my favorite from 10 weeks:

Unborn Baby – 10 weeks old
This is a first trimester baby!

I decided to go hunting to see what is developed at this time, and found this list:

> - From this week until birth, the developing organism is called a fetus.
> - The fetus is now the size of a small strawberry.
> - The feet are 2mm long (one tenth of an inch).
> - The neck is beginning to take shape.
> - The body muscles are almost developed. Baby has begun movement.
> - While still too small for you to feel, your little one is wriggling and shifting.
> - The jaws are in place. The mouth cavity and the nose are joined.
> - The ears and nose can now be seen clearly.
> - Fingerprints are already evident in the skin.
> - Nipples and hair follicles begin to form.
>
> The unborn baby is now called a fetus. Though the fetus is constantly moving, you will not be able to actually feel fetal movement for several more weeks. All of the organs, muscles, and nerves are in place and beginning to function. As the hands and feet develop fingers and toes, they have lost their paddle like look.

> The touch pads on the fingers form and already have fingerprints.
>
> During this week of pregnancy the crown to rump length of the fetus is 0.9 inch to 1.2 inches (22 to 30mm), weight 0.07 ounce (2gm). They are now on the way to forming their testicles or ovaries, getting ready for the next generation. Until the ninth week of fetus development, the fetal reproductive apparatus is the same one for the both sexes. The head is still large and curves into chest.
>
> Each week your uterus grows larger with the baby growing inside it. You may begin to see your waistline growing thicker by this time. A pelvic exam will detect that your uterus has grown from it's normal, size of your fist, to a little bigger than a grapefruit.

Here are some new photos from another Life News, which actually show sperm and egg, as well as the earliest stages after conception.

Did your science textbook teach that embryo drawings prove evolution?

April 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

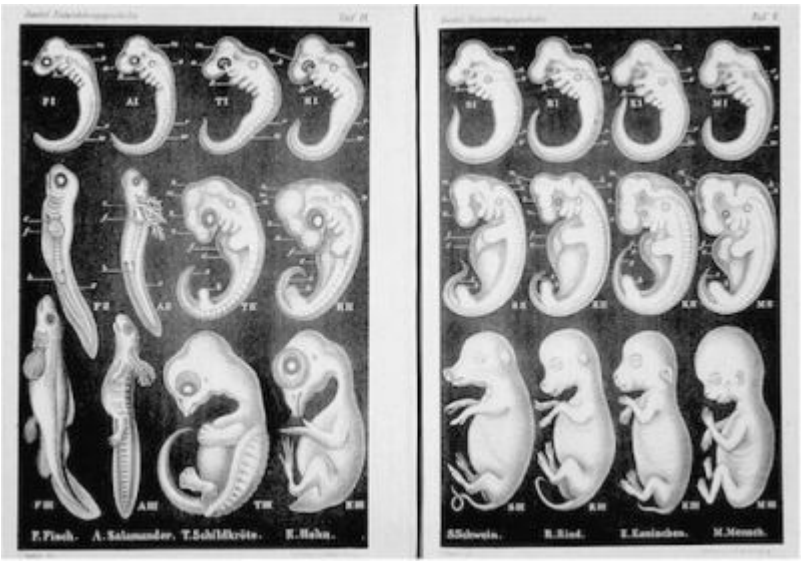

Haeckel's embryos and scientific fraud

Jonathan Wells, a biologist with Ph.Ds from Yale and UC Berkeley, writes about one example of fake evidence here:

> Charles Darwin thought that "by far the strongest" evidence that humans and fish are descended from a common ancestor was the striking similarity of their early embryos. According to Darwin, the fact that "the embryos of the most distinct species belonging to the same class are closely similar, but become, when fully developed, widely dissimilar… reveals community of descent." [2] To illustrate this, German Darwinist Ernst Haeckel made some drawings in the 1860s to show that the embryos of vertebrates (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals) look almost identical in their earliest stages.
>
> But Haeckel faked his drawings. Not only do they distort vertebrate embryos by making them appear more similar than they really are (in a way that Stephen Jay Gould wrote "can only be called fraudulent" [3]), but they also omit classes and stages that do not fit Darwin's theory. *Most significantly, Haeckel omitted the earliest stages, in which vertebrate embryos are strikingly different from each other.* The stage he portrayed as the first is actually midway through development. Yet according to Darwin's logic, early *dis*-similarities do *not* provide evidence for common ancestry.
>
> Haeckel used his faked drawings to support not only Darwinian evolution, but also his own "Biogenetic Law," which stated that embryos pass through the adult stages of their ancestors in the process of development.
>
> …Haeckel's drawings were exposed as fakes by his own contemporaries, and his Biogenetic Law was thoroughly discredited by 20th century biologists. It is now

> generally acknowledged that early embryos never resemble the adults of their supposed ancestors. A modern version of recapitulation claims that early embryos resemble the *embryos* of their ancestors, but since fossil embryos are extremely rare, this claim is little more than speculation based on the assumption that Darwin's theory is true.

Now the standard response from Darwinists: *no textbooks are still using the fraudulent embryo images*.

You can see the actual faked pictures from the modern textbooks here. These textbooks were being produced as late as 2004, even though the fraud was detected in the 1800s! Is this the vaunted self-correction of science, or science being twisted to support social and political goals?

And this excerpt from that article is interesting:

> Some Darwinists continue to deny that there has been any misuse of Haeckel in recent times. If that is the case, why did Stephen Jay Gould attack how textbooks use Haeckel in 2000? Gould wrote: "We should… not be surprised that Haeckel's drawings entered nineteenth-century textbooks. But we do, I think, have the right to be **both astonished and ashamed by the century of mindless recycling that has led to the persistence of these drawings in a large number, if not a majority, of modern textbooks!**" (emphasis added) Similarly, in 1997, the leading embryologist Michael K. Richardson lamented in the journal *Anatomy and Embyology* that "Another point to emerge from this study is the **considerable inaccuracy of Haeckel's famous figures**. These drawings are **still widely reproduced in textbooks** and review articles, and continue to exert a significant influence on the development of ideas in this field." (emphases added)

Here is a link to the peer-reviewed journal Science, where there is an article talking about the fraudulent embryo drawings. Yes – the drawings really are fraudulent.

And finally, Casey Luskin has a new post up at Evolution News that lists all the textbooks that contain the fraudulent drawings. One is dated 2013! The drawings just keep getting recycled over and over as a "proof" of evolution.

UVA retracts rape story after Columbia University calls it “journalistic failure”

April 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UVA students blindly following their leftist masters

The Wall Street Journal reports on the conclusion to this radical-feminist scandal. I’ll explain later why I am writing about this, too.

Excerpt:

> Rolling Stone retracted an explosive article detailing an alleged gang rape at a University of Virginia fraternity after Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism concluded that the story was a “journalistic failure that was avoidable.”
>
> The Rolling Stone story was written by Sabrina Rubin Erdely and published last November under the headline “A Rape on Campus.” It sparked a national uproar over sexual misconduct at college campuses. At UVA, President Teresa Sullivan suspended all Greek activities for six weeks and students marched in protest.
>
> But before long, other media reports raised serious doubts about the veracity of the article and the reporting and editing process behind it.
>
> […]The “most consequential” decision, the report found, was Rolling Stone’s acquiescence to the fact that Ms. Erdely “had not contacted the three friends who spoke with Jackie on the night she said she was raped.” If Rolling Stone had done so, it said, it “would have almost certainly led the magazine’s editors to change plans.”
>
> […]The Charlottesville, Va., police concluded in March after a four-month investigation that “there is no substantive basis to support the account alleged in the Rolling Stone article,” the Columbia report notes. Police said at the time they were unable to interview the woman featured in the story and their investigation remains suspended until she decides she “wishes to cooperate.”

Jackie was later discovered to be a radical feminist. The author of the retracted rape story

is also a radical feminist. And she is presenting herself as a victim:

> Ms. Erdely, in a statement, said the past few months have been among the most painful in her life, and reading the Columbia report detailing her mistakes was "a brutal and humbling experience."
>
> […]The report said that Rolling Stone's editors, as well as Ms. Erdely, "concluded that their main fault was to be too accommodating of Jackie because she described herself as the survivor of a terrible sexual assault."
>
> **Columbia, however, disagreed with that conclusion, noting that editors made decisions about "attribution, fact-checking and verification that greatly increased their risks of error but had little or nothing to do with protecting Jackie's position."**

Newsbusters quotes the report, which shows that Erdely's story was agenda-driven from the start:

> Last July 8, Sabrina Rubin Erdely, a writer for Rolling Stone, telephoned Emily Renda, a rape survivor working on sexual assault issues as a staff member at the University of Virginia. Erdely said she was searching for a single, emblematic college rape case that would show "what it's like to be on campus now … where not only is rape so prevalent but also that there's this pervasive culture of sexual harassment/rape culture," according to Erdely's notes of the conversation.

Reason.com quotes this part of the report to show her editors were complicit:

> Jackie proved to be a challenging source. At times, she did not respond to Erdely's calls, texts and emails. At two points, the reporter feared Jackie might withdraw her cooperation. Also, Jackie refused to provide Erdely the name of the lifeguard who had organized the attack on her. She said she was still afraid of him. That led to tense exchanges between Erdely and Jackie, but the confrontation ended when Rolling Stone's editors decided to go ahead without knowing the lifeguard's name or verifying his existence. After that concession, Jackie cooperated fully until publication.

Reason also comments:

> It's actually even worse than that. When Erdely told Jackie that she really did need to know the name of Jackie's date (the lifeguard who supposedly masterminded the attack), Jackie stopped answering her phone calls and texts for about two weeks. Eventually, Erdely left Jackie another voicemail in which the writer agreed to stop trying to contact the lifeguard and instead use a pseudonym, *Drew*. After that, Jackie magically reappeared, calling Erdely back "quickly," according to the report.
>
> Jackie, in fact, displayed impressive levels of self-preservation and rational behavior—at least, from the perspective of a highly disturbed person whose goal

> was to spread an incredible lie without exposing it as such. She was highly detailed in her account of the crime, gave descriptions, and recalled (wholly invented) conversations with great accuracy. And she studiously avoided any line of questioning that would have exposed the lie. If a particular question posed a threat, she either invented a reason why it couldn't be answered, or simply stopped responding.

No one at Rolling Stone has been fired, much less charged with crimes. The woman who made the false rape charge has also not been charged with anything. So there is no deterrent there to prevent this from happening again – either to the women who make the charges, or to the radical feminists who "report" on them. Let's hope that when the lawsuits shake out that both Erdely and her Rolling Stone cheerleaders find themselves bankrupted.

How often are rape claims false?

National Review explains:

> Specifically, in their analysis of sexual-assault cases at a large university, the authors found that 5.9 percent of cases were provably false. **However, 44.9 percent cases "did not proceed" – meaning there was insufficient evidence, the accuser was uncooperative, or the incident did not meet the legal standard of assault. An additional 13.9 percent of cases could not be categorized due to lack of information. That leaves 35.3 percent of cases that led to formal charges or discipline against the accused.**

"35.3 percent of cases that led to formal charges or discipline against the accused". That's a lot of Jackie-scenarios.

The trouble is when people don't do the homework and just come to have a general mistrust of men based on their intuitions and emotions from stories they hear about from the news media – stories like this one. And yet they become so sure that they have an educated and informed opinion, just from hearing news reports. They never hear about the retractions.

My take

So why did I cover this story in past blog posts, and why am I bringing up the retraction now? Well, it's because of the feminist agenda. I want to point out how the feminist left uses stories like this in order to push a wedge between men and women. Women who are indoctrinated for four years in misandry are less likely to look to men as protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders. Marriage, with its traditional gender roles of men working and woman raising the kids, will be out.

If men are all rapists, then how could a woman give up her own dreams and career to stay home and raise kids? If men are all rapists, how could a woman trust a man to be faithful to her? If men are all rapists, then how could a man be trusted to provide for a family. If men are all rapists, then how could a woman trust a man to stick around when she is old and wrinkly? And of course, this lousy impression of men is all reinforced by the

binge-drinking, hooking-up, and serial cohabitation that is so popular in university campuses.

There is a reason why Rolling Stone ran with this story, despite all the warning signs – it made the point that they wanted to make. Women who think that they can't depend on men will naturally turn to bigger government to provide for them, and that's what people on the left want women to do. Marriage is subversive to their plan. Having a lot of children is subversive to their plan. Homeschooling is subversive to their plan.

Are you ready for marriage? 10 questions to find out how prepared you are

April 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Would you like your marriage to be long-lasting and fulfilling? Well, check out the questions below and see if you are ready for life-long wedded bliss.

1. Are you opposed to no-fault divorce laws?

No-fault divorce laws allow one spouse to leave the marriage at any time, for any reason, or for no reason at all. If you support no-fault divorce, then your view of marriage is that it's something to be entered into lightly, because it can be exited easily. You'll be walking down the aisle thinking "oh well, if it doesn't work out, I can always get a divorce". If you oppose no-fault divorce laws, then your view of marriage is that there is no escape hatch. You'll probably be a lot more careful about getting married. Since you are convinced that marriage is built to last forever, you'll have a courtship of at least 6 months, and involve both sets of parents in the process. If you put commitment above happiness, you're ready for marriage.

2. Are you opposed to abortion laws?

Abortion laws basically make it easy for two people to have recreational sex, and then get rid of any complications that result quickly and easily. This way, both the people that created the effect can escape the responsibility for what they did, and keep right on pursuing their goals and dreams. If you support abortion laws, you're really saying that you can engage in recreational sex with people who are unwilling to accept responsibility for any children that result. If you are pro-life, then you're saying that people should be careful about having sex, and be ready to take responsibility for a child, should one appear. Being responsible is good preparation for marriage.

3. Are you supportive of daycare for young kids?

Daycare services are essential for couples who need both the father and the mother to be working. The advantage of both parents working is that you can afford lots of shiny new stuff – like vacations, boats, shoes and handbags. Studies show that children don't die

during daycare, although if you put a child in daycare, there will be effects on the child's behavior, such as higher anxiety and aggression. If you oppose daycare, you're putting the needs of your children above your need for shiny stuff. Putting the needs of children first is a sign that you are ready for the self-sacrifice that marriage requires.

4. Are you in favor of smaller government?

If you're in favor of smaller government, then you would rather keep taxes low so that more money stays in the family. If you support bigger government, then you think that government knows how to spend your money better than you and your spouse do. Additionally, government usually likes to spend more money than they take in. For example, in the last 8 years, we've added $10 trillion dollars to the debt, which is now $18.5 trillion. If you oppose higher taxes and bigger government, then you want government to pass on less debt to your children. Putting your kids' financial well-being over your own is pro-marriage.

5. Are you in favor of school choice?

If you're opposed to school choice, then you think that government should decide which schools your children will attend. School choice laws allow parents to give money to the schools they think are best for the children. If a school has excellent teachers and teaches students skills that they can use in their professional lives, then parents can choose that school. Schools have to compete to provide higher quality to parents, for lower cost. If you support giving parents more choice, then you put the needs of children – especially poor, minority children – above the needs of education administrators and teacher unions. Putting kids fist is pro-marriage.

6. Are you in favor of premarital sex?

Premarital sex is really fun (so I'm told). You can have sex with people who are just really attractive, even if these people have lousy character. Your friends will be impressed, and you'll feel more attractive – like you were climbing a ladder of attractiveness with each new partner. If you combine sex with being drunk, then you can't remember anything after. And you can't feel guilty if the booze made you do it, right? On the other hand, if you present yourself to your spouse as a virgin, you are telling them that you have self-control, that you take sex as communication rather than recreation, and that they can trust you to be faithful by keeping sex inside the marriage. Trust is important for a good marriage.

7. Are you in favor of welfare for single mothers?

Sometimes, women find themselves pregnant before they are married. If you think that giving taxpayer money to women who have babies before they have husbands is a good idea, then you are rewarding behavior that creates fatherless children. Raising a child without a father causes serious behavioral problems. Boys tend to become more violent, and are more likely to commit crimes. Girls tend to engage in sex at earlier ages. If you oppose encouraging fatherlessness with welfare, you want women to get married before they have kids. Taking the needs of children seriously is pro-marriage.

8. Are you in favor of same-sex marriage?

When a man and a man get married and acquire children, those children will not be raised with their birth mother. Similarly with lesbians, the children will not grow up with their birth father. Studies show that children suffer from not being raised by their biological parents. For example, children of same-sex parents have lower graduation rates than children raised by heterosexual couples. If you think that children have a right to a stable relationship with their biological mother and father, then you place a higher value on the needs of children as opposed to the needs of adults. That's a good sign you're ready for marriage.

9. Are you in favor of radical feminism?

Feminism shows that you think the purpose of marriage is to make women happy, and not to work as a team to serve God and raise good children. Indeed. Marriage doesn't work if the woman approaches it as an accessory. Marriage is about a man and a woman sacrificing their own interests and compromising in order to work together as a team. Husbands and children have needs that women should care about. Feminism teaches women that husbands and children are less important than their careers, hobbies and interests. Feminism is anti-marriage.

10. Are you responsible with earning, budgeting and saving money?

This one comes to us from Bob P. He says that marriages work better when both spouses are "committed to financial planning, budgeting and a renunciation of debt to support a lifestyle. Disagreement about financial issues is one of the greatest causes of marital stress." If you're able to choose a college major or a trade that you don't like, but that pays well, that's a positive. If you're able to string together jobs so that your resume is gap-less, that's a positive. If you're able to save money even though it means you're having less fun, that's a positive. If you're able to give away money to others to support them, that means you're able to sacrifice your interests for the benefit of others. That's pro-marriage.

Well, how did you do? Leave your ideas for more policies and points of view that are marriage-friendly in the comments.

Wayne Grudem debates Richard Glover on economics and the Bible

April 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A great episode of the Unbelievable podcast. This is a great debate. I really enjoyed it. All three speakers were excellent putting forward their points. It's nice to hear an American voice, a British voice and an Australian voice debating an important issue. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Details:

> Wayne Grudem is a theologian known for his conservative approach to both doctrine and economics. His new book "The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution" (co-authored with economist Barry Asmus) makes the case that pouring aid into developing countries is a failed strategy. Grudem debates whether the Bible supports free market, capitalist economics with Australian economist and theologian Richard Glover who wrote a critique of the book for the Australian Bible Society.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

Grudem:

- The Bible speaks to all of life, including economics, stewardship, government
- The study of economics helps us to understand how to take care of the poor
- My job is to apply the teachings of the Bible to all of life

Brierley:

- What's your thesis in the book?

Grudem:

- A good system is one where the poor have the opportunity to earn and save from their labor
- Book is a response to a Kenyan couple Grudem met at a London conference on business and Christianity
- Book is not concerned with how individuals and groups can do charity to help the poor
- Our church already does that and we support individuals and groups doing charity
- The book is concerned with how should nations be transformed in order to grow economically
- What should the laws, policies and cultural beliefs of a nation be in order for it to not be poor?

- The book lists factors that have moved nations from poverty to prosperity in different times and places
- The thesis of the book is this: government should set their people free to be able to produce more
- We advocate freedom in economics: freedom to work, freedom to save, freedom to start businesses
- We believe that this free enterprise view is consistent with the Bible in a number of places
- E.g. – private property is good for prosperity (thou shall not steal) but forbidden by communism

Brierley:

- What about the church sharing in communities in Acts 2 and Acts 4?

Grudem:

- That is not redistribution of wealth among individuals and businesses by a secular government
- Those passages showed that there was voluntary sharing among Christians, which is not communism

Brierley:

- What's wrong with Grudem's book?

Glover:

- The book emphasizes the Bible and the goal is to help the poor in poor countries
- Criticism 1: the book doesn't engage with non-free-market perspectives on economics
- Criticism 2: the book doesn't survey all that the Bible says about economics

Brierly:

- For 1) what is one of the views that is not considered?

Glover:

- Jeffrey Sachs says that nations need a leg up before they can grow economically
- Ha-Joon Chang says that free enterprise was not how the wealthy nations became wealthy

Grudem:

- We do engage with other points of view, especially Jeffrey Sachs in the book
- The trouble with leftist views on economic development is that it does not work in

practice
- NO COUNTRY has even been lifted out of poverty by foreign aid
- He says we don't cite enough from the wisdom literature: we have 64 citations in the index
- He says we don't cite enough from the gospels: we have 42 citations in the index
- He says we don't cite enough from the epistles: we cite 22 of 27 epistles in the index
- Some economists won't criticize cultural and moral values that hurt prosperity
- As Christians, we think that moral and cultural values are part of the problem that needs solving

Brierley:

- What about foreign aid?

Grudem:

- Foreign aid doesn't help: a lot of the money goes into government and rulers can be corrupt
- Instead of encouraging people to start businesses, it tells people to go into government to get aid money
- Economists (lists 3) are saying that foreign aid entrenches corrupt government in power, does no good

Brierley:

- If it's not working, should we keep doing it?

Glover:

- When there is an immediate need, we should do it, even if it is not a long-term solution: we need both

Brierley:

- Should we stop foreign aid completely?

Grudem:

- Voluntary charitable giving from individuals and churches to help poor countries is good
- Me and my co-author are both active on our church board that helps poor countries with urgent needs
- Food and doctors are urgent needs, and we should help, but it doesn't lift countries out of poverty
- We need a long-term solution that helps poor countries produce their own food and

doctors
- We are criticizing 1) government to government aid and 2) IMF/World bank to government aid
- We have had pushback because 500,000 people make a living from this foreign aid industry
- No country has ever been lifted out of poverty into sustainable prosperity
- That's the definition of insanity: continuing to do the same thing that has never worked

Brierley:

- Does the Bible support free enterprise as a way of creating sustainable prosperity?

Glover:

- When I said the Bible was absent from his book, absent was a bad choice of words
- But the hundreds of references he listed were not dealth with *in depth*
- In the Scriptures, God is the one who provides (e.g. – in Ephesians, Sermon on the Mount)
- The Bible is less focused on his people making money, and more focus on sharing basics, like food
- Secular governments should just take it from people who have food and give it to hungry people
- In 2 Cor 8-9, Paul talks about voluntary sharing so everyone will be equal

Brierley:

- Does 2 Cor 8-9 undermine the free enterprise system you champion in the book?

Grudem:

- The sharing in the Bible solves cases of urgent need, it does not lift countries from poverty to sustainable prosperity
- Some older translations say "equality" in 2 Cor 8:13-14, but newer translations (e.g. – ESV) say "fairness"
- The Greek word is translated as "fairly" the only other place it appears in the NT (Col 4:1), in every translation
- God uses the means of human work and productivity to provide (daily bread is baked, doesn't just fall from Heaven)
- In general, there's no provision in Scripture for a person to be dependent on donations for their entire lives
- God promises Israel fields and mountains to tend and mine, but prosperity is from work, not depending on others

Brierley:

- Does the Bible support this focus on work?

Grudem:

- Working is highly praised in Scripture, (lists Bible passages that favor work over dependency)
- Countries that were exposed to this notion of work and productivity have been more prosperous

Glover:

- Jeffrey Sachs and other development economists don't say you can be prosperous through dependence
- They say that it is a necessary part of leading to nations out of poverty into poverty

Grudem:

- It's never worked. What nation has become prosperous through foreign aid?

Glover:

- There are lots of nations, especially in Africa, where foreign aid has helped lift them out of poverty

Grudem:

- Name one country in Africa where foreign aud has lifted them out of poverty into sustainable prosperity

Glover:

- I can't think of one right now.

Grudem:

- Our book contains a map of Africa and we looked at every nation's per capita income
- No nation has been able to rise out of poverty through dependence on foreign aid
- The only close one is Botswana, but they have abundant freedoms, Christian morals, less corrupt government
- So Botswana is the best case and they became prosperous through becoming productive, not foreign aid

Brierley:

- Is he right to say that charity is a short-term solution, but that it's not good long-term for prosperity?

Glover:

- Yes, and work is a very important focus in the Scriptures as he says.
- But since the Fall work has been much harder, and may not have the outcomes that we would like

Grudem:

- I also believe in emergency aid for when catastrophies happen, like floods and famines
- But dependence on foreign aid enriches corrupt rulers and does not create the productivity that leads to sustained prosperity

Brierley:

- Can foreign aid be used to give poor nations a leg up on becoming prosperous?

Grudem:

- Dambisa Moyo, Oxford-educated economist from Zambia, says stop the aid, it's doing more harm than good
- Jeffrey Sachs' view is that foreign aid hasn't worked yet, but just keep trying a bit more
- What works: limited government, rule of law, fair courts, documented property rights, low taxes, stable currency
- People are creative and want to work, we just have to get government out of the way and let people work, earn and save

Brierley:

- Is this free enterprise system supported by the Bible?

Glover:

- The wealthy nations of the world did not become wealthy through productive work and free enterprise policies
- Ha-Joon Chang: free enterprise policies have never brought a country from poverty to wealth
- E.g. – wealth is created through tariffs (not by innovating and by economic freedom?)

Grudem:

- I've read Ha-Joon Chang's book, and his examples are very selective and limited
- Index of Economic Freedom: the freest countries are the most prosperous, the least free countries are the most poor

- When you look at macro data, instead of very selective examples, the free enterprise system is best for prosperity

Glover:

- The book doesn’t do enough to engage with leftist economists (he doesn’t say which ones)
- Just because nations who are free are rich, doesn’t mean freedom causes productivity
- There are parts of the Bible that doesn’t support the free enterprise system (he names none)

Grudem:

- The Bible is focused on work not dependency, and charity not government redistribution
- The best way to help the poor in other countries is by encouraging work and productivity

Should Christian apologists avoid political, moral and cultural issues?

April 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

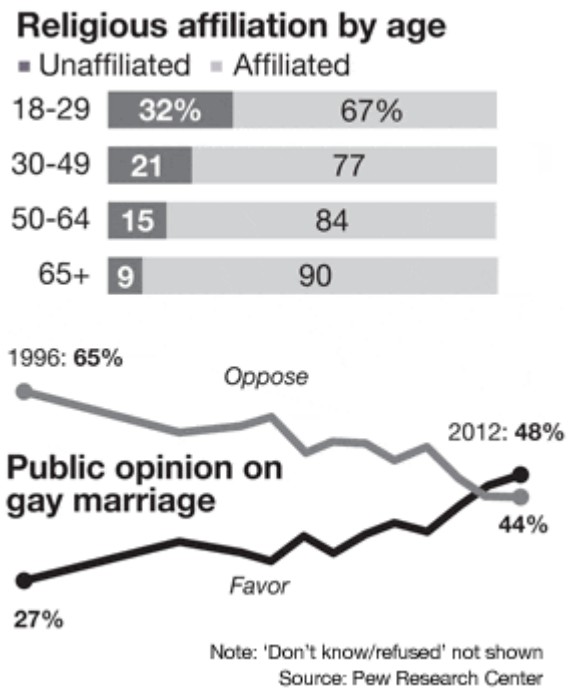

The Sexual Revolution and the decline in religious affiliation

Here's an article from The American Conservative, by moderate conservative Rod Dreher, dated April 2013.

He writes:

> Twenty years ago, new president Bill Clinton stepped on a political landmine when he tried to fulfill a campaign promise to permit gay soldiers to serve openly. Same-sex marriage barely registered as a political cause; the country was then three years away from the Defense of Marriage Act and four years from comedian Ellen DeGeneres's prime-time coming out.
>
> Then came what historians will one day recall as a cultural revolution. Now we're entering the endgame of the struggle over gay rights and the meaning of homosexuality. Conservatives have been routed, both in court and increasingly in the court of public opinion. It is commonly believed that the only reason to oppose same-sex marriage is rank bigotry or for religious reasons, neither of which—the argument goes—has any place in determining laws or public standards.
>
> The magnitude of the defeat suffered by moral traditionalists will become ever clearer as older Americans pass from the scene. Poll after poll shows that for the young, homosexuality is normal and gay marriage is no big deal—except, of

course, if one opposes it, in which case one has the approximate moral status of a segregationist in the late 1960s.

[…]When they were writing the widely acclaimed 2010 book *American Grace*, a comprehensive study of contemporary religious belief and practice, political scientists Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell noticed two inverse trend lines in social-science measures, both starting around 1990.

They found that young Americans coming into adulthood at that time began to accept homosexuality as morally licit in larger numbers. They also observed that younger Americans began more and more to fall away from organized religion. The evangelical boom of the 1970s and 1980s stopped, and if not for a tsunami of Hispanic immigration the U.S. Catholic church would be losing adherents at the same rate as the long-dwindling Protestant mainline.

Over time, the data showed, attitudes on moral issues proved to be strong predictors of religious engagement. In particular, the more liberal one was on homosexuality, the less likely one was to claim religious affiliation. It's not that younger Americans were becoming atheists. Rather, most of them identify as "spiritual, but not religious." Combined with atheists and agnostics, these "Nones"—the term is Putnam's and Campbell's—comprise the nation's fastest-growing faith demographic.

Indeed, according to a 2012 Pew Research Center study, the Nones comprise one out of three Americans under 30. This is not simply a matter of young people doing what young people tend to do: keep church at arm's length until they settle down. Pew's Greg Smith told NPR that this generation is more religiously unaffiliated than any on record. Putnam—the Harvard scholar best known for his best-selling civic culture study *Bowling Alone*—has said that there's no reason to think they will return to church in significant numbers as they age.

Putnam and Campbell were careful to say in *American Grace* that correlation is not causation, but they did point out that as gay activism moved toward center stage in American political life… the vivid public role many Christian leaders took in opposing gay rights alienated young Americans from organized religion.

In a dinner conversation not long after the publication of *American Grace*, Putnam told me that Christian churches would have to liberalize on sexual teaching if they hoped to retain the loyalty of younger generations. This seems at first like a reasonable conclusion, but the experience of America's liberal denominations belies that prescription. Mainline Protestant churches, which have been far more accepting of homosexuality and sexual liberation in general, have continued their stark membership decline.

It seems that when people decide that historically normative Christianity is wrong about sex, they typically don't find a church that endorses their liberal views. They quit going to church altogether.

That’s why I am somewhat underwhelmed with the pure apologetics approach of most apologists.The real reason that drives atheist “apologetics” is, to be frank, the desire to dispense with rules around sexuality. The sexual freedom comes first, and then the speculative smokescreens follow. Close behind the sexual freedom is leftist economic policies (which are seen as more “fair”) and anti-business environmentalist policies. So there’s more turf to defend here than just the existence of God, the resurrection and the reliability of the Bible. That’s not what’s behind the drift of young people away from Christianity.

That’s why on this blog, you get a ton of politics and tons of studies and arguments against premarital sex, no-fault divorce, single motherhood by choice, same-sex marriage, and everything else that comes before traditional apologetics. (And you also get lots of apologetics, too!) We need to get better at defending Christian sexual ethics using purely secular arguments and evidence, e.g. – showing people how premarital sex undermines marital stability or how gay parenting harms the well-being of children. There are reasons for these rules we have, and we have to go beyond “The Bible Says…” if we expect to be convincing to young people.

And when we go against the Sexual Revolution, we have to bring secular arguments and secular evidence and bring it to bear squarely against radical feminism, and the Sexual Revolution. In particular, we have to put the burden of responsibility for poor sexual decisions back on the shoulders of young people. Young men must reject a cultural standard of what a “good” woman is. Young women must reject a cultural standard of what a “good” man is. Men and women who reject traditional Christianity, traditional morality, and traditional notions of male leadership and male roles are *bad people to have relationships with*. We have to persuade both men and women about the harm that poor choices cause – abortion, divorce, fatherlessness, expensive welfare programs. There is no point in blaming bad men and women – they are already bad. We have to teach young people to choose good men and good women. We have to teach them that choosing mates poorly, and making poor sexual choices, is *their responsibility.* They are not victims! And we shouldn’t be blaming one sex for the others *poor choices,* i.e. – we should not be blaming bad men when women chose them and make bad choices with the bad men. Those men were bad before the women chose them, and those women are only victims of *their own poor choices.*

When it comes to same-sex marriage, we have to defend traditional marriage using secular arguments and secular evidence. We have to show how same-sex marriage undermines religious liberty. We have to show how same-sex marriage undermines marital norms like exclusivity and permanence. We have to show how same-sex marriage harms children by depriving them of a mother or a father or both. And so on. We have to defend the goodness of traditional marriage.

New study: tiny songbirds fly over the Atlantic ocean and back each year

April 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Blackpoll Warbler- so cute!
I love birds! I really, really do! A lot!

So here is the latest study, reported in Science Daily about our amazing feathered friends.

They write:

> For more than 50 years, scientists had tantalizing clues suggesting that a tiny, boreal forest songbird known as the blackpoll warbler departs each fall from New England and eastern Canada to migrate nonstop in a direct line over the Atlantic Ocean toward South America, but proof was hard to come by.
>
> Now, for the first time an international team of biologists report "irrefutable evidence" that the birds complete a nonstop flight ranging from about 1,410 to 1,721 miles (2,270 to 2,770 km) in just two to three days, making landfall somewhere in Puerto Rico, Cuba and the islands known as the Greater Antilles, from there going on to northern Venezuela and Columbia. Details of their study, which used light-level, or solar, geolocators, appear in the current issue of *Biology Letters.*
>
> First author Bill DeLuca, an environmental conservation research fellow at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, with colleagues at the University of Guelph, Ontario, the Vermont Center for Ecostudies and other institutions, says, "For small songbirds, we are only just now beginning to understand the migratory routes that connect temperate breeding grounds to tropical wintering areas. We're really excited to report that this is one of the longest nonstop overwater flights ever recorded for a songbird, and finally confirms what has long been believed to be one of the most extraordinary migratory feats on the planet."
>
> While other birds, such as albatrosses, sandpipers and gulls are known for trans-

> oceanic flights, the blackpoll warbler is a forest dweller that migrates boldly where few of its relatives dare to travel. Most migratory songbirds that winter in South America take a less risky, continental route south through Mexico and Central America, the authors note. A water landing would be fatal to a warbler.
>
> […]For this work the scientists fitted geolocator packs on 20 birds in Vermont and 20 more in Nova Scotia. They were able to recapture three birds from the Vermont group and two from the Nova Scotia group for analyses.
>
> So-called light-level geolocators use solar geolocation, a method used for centuries by mariners and explorers. It is based on the fact that day length varies with latitude while time of solar noon varies with longitude. So all the instrument needs to do is record the date and length of daylight, from which daily locations can then be inferred once the geolocator is recaptured. "When we accessed the locators, we saw the blackpolls' journey was indeed directly over the Atlantic. The distances travelled ranged from 2,270 to 2,770 kilometers," DeLuca says.

Evolution News has more on the discovery.

They write:

> More record-breaking discoveries may be in store. Oskin says that some of the blackpoll warblers spend their summers in Alaska and Canada instead of New England. If they fly east before joining the southern route to Colombia and Venezuela, it would add three thousand more miles to their annual migration.
>
> […]But that's not all. Lest we forget, there are the Monarch butterflies, much smaller and lighter than birds, that travel three thousand miles from Canada to Mexico each year, as detailed in Illustra's film *Metamorphosis*. Even though butterflies don't fly non-stop, that's — well, we need an adjective beyond "extraordinary." And more recently, British scientists found that another butterfly, the painted lady, flies triple that distance — nine thousand miles — in its annual migration from the UK to Africa.
>
> Think of all the integrated systems that have to be in place to make these migrations possible. The birds or butterflies need elegant flight systems, with all the attendant muscles, nerves, and structural supports required. They require digestive systems to sustain them, circulatory systems, thermal systems, sensory systems, and protection from the elements. Most astonishing are the navigational systems, including sensing the stars or the earth's magnetic field, to take them unerringly to their destination and back over routes of thousands of miles. To pack all that in a tiny animal is a masterpiece of miniaturization. Oh — and then there's a reproductive system, and a battery of instincts to operate all the systems.
>
> It seems fair to say these engineering marvels are beyond the reach of unguided Darwinian evolution. The birds don't have to fly that far. Warblers could stay inland along the coast, and feed on the way, or learn to get by through the winter

> like other birds do. Butterflies, too, could stay with other species that don't migrate. Natural selection would take the easy road, get rid of the wings, and let them grovel in the dirt to eke out a living. These migratory abilities are gratuitous and superfluous to the requirements of mere survival. Such over-design, right on the "brink of impossibility," speaks of design so beyond our comprehension, we can only stand in awe.

Butterflies are OK, but birds are much better – you can actually make friends with birds. Anyway, if you like birds as much as I do… well, no one likes them as much as I do… but if you like birds a lot, then you should get Illustra's documentary *Flight: The Genius of Birds* and watch it. And share it with your friends.

How brief was the period in which the Cambrian phyla suddenly appeared?

April 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Cambrian explosion refers to the sudden appearance of new body plans in the fossil record. ID proponents think that the period is between 5-10 million years at the most. Naturalists want to stretch out the period in which the body plans appear to tens of millions of years. The two sides can't both be right. What's the truth?

Evolution News has the answer.

Excerpt:

> To establish the length of the most explosive period of innovation within the Cambrian explosion itself, Meyer cites the work of MIT geochronologist Samuel Bowring and his colleagues as well the work of another group led by Smithsonian paleontologist Douglas Erwin. The Bowring-led study showed that (in their words) "the main period of **exponential diversification**" within the Cambrian lasted "only 5-6 million years" (emphasis added). Meyer explains:

> An analysis by MIT geochronologist Samuel Bowring has shown that the main pulse of Cambrian morphological innovation occurred in a sedimentary sequence spanning no more than 6 million years. Yet during this time representatives of at least sixteen completely novel phyla and about thirty classes first appeared in the rock record. In a more recent paper using a slightly different dating scheme, Douglas Erwin and colleagues similarly show that thirteen new phyla appear in a roughly 6-million-year window. (p. 73)

> […][T]ake a look first at the following figure that Bowring and his colleagues included in their definitive 1993 article, published in the journal Science. They use radiometric methods to date the different stages of the Cambrian period, including the crucial Tommotian and Atdabanian stages in which the greatest number of new animal phyla and classes arise. Note that the so-called Manykaian stage of the Cambrian period lasts about 10-14 million years. Note also that the main pulse of morphological innovation didn't begin during this stage but rather during the Tommotian and Atdabanian — a period that they describe as taking between "5 to 10 million years," and in a more detailed passage as taking about 5-6 million years.

> […]In the figure above, the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages of the Cambrian period together span only about 5 million years, starting at about 530 and ending about 525 million years ago. Bowring's figure also depicts the total number of classes and orders present at any given time during the Cambrian period. The biggest increases in morphological innovation occur during the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages. Indeed, during this period the number of known orders nearly

> quadruples. Moreover, Bowring and his colleagues also make clear that this period corresponds to the main pulse of Cambrian morphological innovation as measured by the number of new phyla and classes that first appear. They note that, while a few groups of animals do arise in the earliest Manykaian stage of the Cambrian, the most rapid period of "exponential increase of diversification," corresponding to the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages, "lasted only 5 to 6 m.y."

You can see the figure they are reference in the Evolution News article.

Also, check out these clips that explain the Cambrian explosion:

Part 1:

Part 2:

The first clip features James Valentine, a professor of biology at the University of California who just co-authored a new book on the Cambrian explosion and *is not* a proponent of intelligent design.

The consensus among scientists regarding the period of time *in which the new body plans appear* is 5-6 million years. Biologically speaking, that's a blink of an eye. You aren't going that kind of complexity and innovation in such a short period of time any more than you can expect to win the lottery by buying 5-6 million tickets when the odds of winning are 1 in a googol (10 to the 100th power – 1, followed by 100 zeroes). You don't have enough lottery tickets to make winning the lottery likely. Similarly, 5-6 million years is not enough time for naturalistic mechanisms to code brand new body plans from scratch. It would be like trying to research and write a Ph.D thesis during a single lunch hour. It's just not enough time to produce the amount of information that's required.

Is Obama’s nuclear deal with Iran good for our national security?

April 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Iran’s chief negotiator: all the sanctions cease immediately

This is the top article on the Wall Street Journal right now. It’s written by two former Secretaries of State, Henry Kissinger and George P. Shultz.

They are assessing the Iran deal:

> While Iran treated the mere fact of its willingness to negotiate as a concession, the West has felt compelled to break every deadlock with a new proposal. In the process, the Iranian program has reached a point officially described as being within two to three months of building a nuclear weapon. Under the proposed agreement, for 10 years Iran will never be further than one year from a nuclear weapon and, after a decade, will be significantly closer.
>
> […]Progress has been made on shrinking the size of Iran’s enriched stockpile, confining the enrichment of uranium to one facility, and limiting aspects of the enrichment process. Still, the ultimate significance of the framework will depend on its verifiability and enforceability.
>
> […]Under the new approach, Iran permanently gives up none of its equipment, facilities or fissile product to achieve the proposed constraints. It only places them under temporary restriction and safeguard—amounting in many cases to a seal at the door of a depot or periodic visits by inspectors to declared sites. The physical magnitude of the effort is daunting. Is the International Atomic Energy Agency technically, and in terms of human resources, up to so complex and vast an assignment?
>
> In a large country with multiple facilities and ample experience in nuclear concealment, violations will be inherently difficult to detect. Devising theoretical models of inspection is one thing. Enforcing compliance, week after week, despite competing international crises and domestic distractions, is another. Any

> report of a violation is likely to prompt debate over its significance—or even calls for new talks with Tehran to explore the issue. The experience of Iran's work on a heavy-water reactor during the "interim agreement" period—when suspect activity was identified but played down in the interest of a positive negotiating atmosphere—is not encouraging.
>
> Compounding the difficulty is the unlikelihood that breakout will be a clear-cut event. More likely it will occur, if it does, via the gradual accumulation of ambiguous evasions.
>
> When inevitable disagreements arise over the scope and intrusiveness of inspections, on what criteria are we prepared to insist and up to what point? If evidence is imperfect, who bears the burden of proof? What process will be followed to resolve the matter swiftly?
>
> **The agreement's primary enforcement mechanism, the threat of renewed sanctions, emphasizes a broad-based asymmetry, which provides Iran permanent relief from sanctions in exchange for temporary restraints on Iranian conduct. Undertaking the "snap-back" of sanctions is unlikely to be as clear or as automatic as the phrase implies. Iran is in a position to violate the agreement by executive decision. Restoring the most effective sanctions will require coordinated international action. In countries that had reluctantly joined in previous rounds, the demands of public and commercial opinion will militate against automatic or even prompt "snap-back." If the follow-on process does not unambiguously define the term, an attempt to reimpose sanctions risks primarily isolating America, not Iran.**
>
> The gradual expiration of the framework agreement, beginning in a decade, will enable Iran to become a significant nuclear, industrial and military power after that time—in the scope and sophistication of its nuclear program and its latent capacity to weaponize at a time of its choosing. Limits on Iran's research and development have not been publicly disclosed (or perhaps agreed). **Therefore Iran will be in a position to bolster its advanced nuclear technology during the period of the agreement and rapidly deploy more advanced centrifuges—of at least five times the capacity of the current model—after the agreement expires or is broken.**

That doesn't sound like a good deal to me.

It sounds like we are trading permanent relief from sanctions. Those sanctions were built up over years of negotiations with the UN countries. Sanctions that are not easy to "snap back" if Iran breaks the deal, because they require negotiations with many different UN countries again – it won't be automatic. That's the "asymmetry" they are talking about in the article. Iran can break the agreement unilaterally, or just block the inspections, and the sanctions will stay off until we get agreement with the UN countries.

Here's the former Democrat campaign worker, and now State Department spokeswoman

Marie Harf:

She is confused by all the “big words” that these two Secretaries of State used in the article above.

But it gets worse!

Here’s the latest from the Times of Israel. (H/T Director Blue via ECM)

It says:

> **Iran will begin using its latest generation IR-8 centrifuges as soon as its nuclear deal with the world powers goes into effect, Iran’s foreign minister and nuclear chief told members of parliament on Tuesday, according to Iran’s semi-official FARS news agency.**
>
> If accurate, the report appears to make a mockery of the world powers’ much-hailed framework agreement with Iran, since such a move clearly breaches the US-published terms of the deal, and would dramatically accelerate Iran’s potential progress to the bomb.
>
> Iran has said that its IR-8 centrifuges enrich uranium 20 times faster than the IR-1 centrifuges it currently uses.
>
> According to the FARS report, “Iran’s foreign minister and nuclear chief both told a closed-door session of the parliament on Tuesday that the country would inject UF6 gas into the latest generation of its centrifuge machines as soon as a final nuclear deal goes into effect by Tehran and the six world powers.”
>
> It said that Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) head Ali Akbar Salehi made the promise when they briefed legislators on the framework agreement, and claimed the move was permitted under the terms of the deal.

Oh, I guess was wrong. This is a good deal! For Iran.

Sigh. I guess if you want to be even more horrified by the Iran deal, you can listen to an interview that Hugh Hewitt did with Wall Street Journal columnist Bret Stephens, and there’s a transcript as well for those who would rather read about the incompetence of the Obama administration rather than hear about the incompetence of the Obama administration.

After destroying religion and marriage, Europe tries to convince people to make babies

April 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fertility rates in European countries (click for larger image)

This is from the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

They write:

> Recently, Sex and Society, a nonprofit group that provides much of Denmark's sex education, adjusted its curriculum. The group no longer has a sole emphasis on how to prevent getting pregnant but now also talks about pregnancy in a more positive light.
>
> It is all part of a not-so-subtle push in Europe to encourage people to have more babies. Denmark, like a number of European countries, is growing increasingly anxious about low birthrates. Those concerns have only been intensified by the region's financial and economic crisis, with high unemployment rates among the young viewed as discouraging potential parents.
>
> The Italian health minister described Italy as a "dying country" in February. Germany has spent heavily on family subsidies but has little to show for it. Greece's depression hasfurther stalled its birthrate. And in Denmark, the birthrate has been below the so-called replacement rate needed to keep a population from declining — just over two children per woman — since the early 1970s.
>
> "For many, many years, we only talked about safe sex, how to prevent getting pregnant," said Marianne Lomholt, the national director of Sex and Society. "Suddenly we just thought, maybe we should actually also tell them about how to get pregnant."
>
> The demographic shift is more pressing in Europe than almost any other major region, save Japan. There are an estimated 28 Europeans 65 or older for every

> 100 residents ages 20 to 64, almost twice the world average, according to the United Nations, and compared with 24.7 for the United States. By the end of the century, the United Nations expects the European figure to double.
>
> Such trends will transform societies, potentially reducing economic growth and increasing stress on public pension systems and requiring more elder care. Japan already faces existential questions in a country whereadult diaper sales are beginning to eclipse those of baby diapers.
>
> But there is not a consensus about the impact of demographics. Some see a natural maturing of developed societies. Others see disaster ahead, because with fewer workers and more retirees, the active work force faces an increased burden to sustain social programs.
>
> Productivity gains over time, though, can make up for such population stresses. Declining birthrates can also lead to labor shortages, and Germany has faced a gap in skilled labor. But that is hardly an issue now for much of Europe, which is mired in high unemployment.

OK, so it's a crisis. But how did it happen?

Nicholas Eberstadt explains what's happening to marriage and parenting, in this Wall Street Journal article.

Why is it happening?

> All around the world today, pre-existing family patterns are being upended by a revolutionary new force: the seemingly unstoppable quest for convenience by adults demanding ever-greater autonomy. We can think of this as another triumph of consumer sovereignty, which has at last brought rational choice and elective affinities into a bastion heretofore governed by traditions and duties—many of them onerous. Thanks to this revolution, **it is perhaps easier than ever before to free oneself from the burdens that would otherwise be imposed by spouses, children, relatives or significant others with whom one shares a hearth.**

People are rejecting responsibilities, expectations, and obligations because they are selfish.

When he talks about Europe, he offers an explanation for this:

> Now consider Europe, where the revolution in the family has gained still more ground. European demographers even have an elegant name for the phenomenon: They call it the Second Demographic Transition (the First being the shift from high birth rates and death rates to low ones that began in Europe in the early industrial era and by now encompasses almost every society). In the schema of the Second Demographic Transition, long, stable marriages are out, and divorce or separation are in, along with serial cohabitation and increasingly contingent liaisons. **Not surprisingly, this new environment of perennially**

> **conditional, no-fault unions was also seen as ushering in an era of more or less permanent sub-replacement fertility.**
>
> According to Eurostat, the European Union's statistical agency, the probability of marriage before age 50 has been plummeting for European women and men, while the chance of divorce for those who do marry has been soaring. In Belgium—the birth-land of the scholars who initially detected this Second Transition—the likelihood of a first marriage for a woman of reproductive age is now down to 40%, and the likelihood of divorce is over 50%. This means that in Belgium the odds of getting married and staying married are under one in five. A number of other European countries have similar or even lower odds.
>
> Europe has also seen a surge in "child-free" adults—voluntary childlessness. The proportion of childless 40-something women is one in five for Sweden and Switzerland, and one in four for Italy. In Berlin and in the German city-state of Hamburg, it's nearly one in three, and rising swiftly. Europe's most rapidly growing family type is the one-person household: the home not only child-free, but partner- and relative-free as well. In Western Europe, nearly one home in three (32%) is already a one-person unit, while in autonomy-prizing Denmark the number exceeds 45%. The rise of the one-person home coincides with population aging. But it is not primarily driven by the graying of European society, at least thus far: Over twice as many Danes under 65 are living alone as those over 65.

"Perenially conditional, no-fault unions". That means that either party can leave at any time, for any reason.

Basically, people became skeptical of objective morality and the afterlife, and they have decided to follow their hearts and go more the most happiness they can have in this life. And they've noticed that relationships with other people – with all the nasty expectations, obligations and responsibilities – get in the way of this self-centeredness. To get married and have children is to embrace responsibility. It means that you are accepting the obligation to learn the needs of other people and care for those needs. Something has gone wrong in European society where these social obligations declined, just as religion declined. And the same thing is being taught to the next generation in our most prestigious universities.

This is a bird's-eye view. I'll have a closer look at the problem in my next post.

Colorado Civil Rights Commission: anti-conscience laws can only target Christians

April 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Todd Starnes, writing at The Stream.

He writes:

> Bill Jack wants to make one thing perfectly clear: Bakers should not be forced to make a cake that would violate their conscience or freedom of expression.
>
> Jack, of Castle Rock, Colo., is making national headlines over an experiment he conducted in the wake of attacks on Christian business owners who refuse to provide services for same-sex marriages.
>
> Last year, the Colorado Civil Rights Commission ruled that the Masterpiece Cakeshop in Lakewood unlawfully discriminated against a gay couple who wanted a wedding cake. Jack Phillips, the owner of the cake shop, is a devout Christian, and his attorneys argued that to force him to participate in the gay wedding would violate his religious beliefs.
>
> The Civil Rights Commission saw it differently.
>
> So if Christian bakers who oppose gay marriage are compelled under law to violate their beliefs — what about bakers who support gay marriage? Would they be compelled to make an anti-gay marriage cake?
>
> […]As you probably guessed, the bakeries rejected Jack's request for what some would call "anti-gay" cakes.
>
> "If he wants to hate people, he can hate them not here in my bakery," Azucar Bakery owner Marjorie Silva told 7NEWS. She called the writing and imagery "hateful and offensive."

But hating Christians enough to force your morality on them with fines and emprisonment – that's not hatred at all.

More:

> So Jack filed a discrimination complaint with the Colorado Civil Rights Commission — just as the gay couple did in the Masterpiece Cakeshop case.
>
> Using the commission's logic — if a Christian baker is forced to violate his beliefs, shouldn't all bakers be forced to violate theirs, too?
>
> Absolutely not, says the Colorado Civil Rights Commission.
>
> It ruled that Azucar did not discriminate against Jack based on his creed. It argued that the bakery refused to make the cakes because of the "derogatory language and imagery," The Denver Channel reported.
>
> Jack told me it's a double standard — pure and simple.

> “I think it is hypocritical,” he said. “It’s unequal treatment before the law. The Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act is being used to coerce businesses to participate in events that violate their consciences.”
>
> Jack said he decided to conduct his experiment to prove the Colorado law was “only being applied to Christian business people.”
>
> “Christians need to understand that this is the state of Christianity in the United States,” he said. “We are now second-class citizens. Our free speech is being censored.”
>
> To be clear, Jack believes the bakeries had the right to deny him service. His point was to draw attention to the hypocrisy.
>
> “I stand for liberty for all, not liberty for some,” he said. “If we don’t have liberty for all, then we have liberty for none.”

So. Although Christians may have voted for these laws thinking that they were “nice”, the truth is that every scrap of Christianity that anyone finds of offensive is going to become illegal. At some point, we are all going to have to choose between the Bible and being punished by the state.

Psychological Society of Ireland: disagreement with same-sex marriage is harmful

April 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Spiked Online.

It says:

> To see how straitjacketed the debate about gay marriage has become, look no further than Ireland.
>
> There, on 22 May, there will be a referendum, with voters asked to say Yes or No to amending the Irish Constitution so that marriage will be redefined as a union between 'two persons without distinction as to their sex'. Sounds good, right? An opportunity for an actual electorate to have a debate and have its say on the future of marriage? Not so fast.
>
> The run-up to the referendum has been about as far from a fair or open debate as it's possible to get. One side in the debate – the side that is critical of gay marriage – is demonised daily, treated virtually as heretics, almost as criminals. It's accused of causing psychological harm, branded as 'hate speakers', and frequently forced to make public apologies simply for expressing its belief that marriage should be between a man and a woman. And as a writer for the *Irish Independent* says, 'It's not a debate if one side can't speak'. The public discussion before the Irish referendum has not been a debate, she says – it's been 'a Two Minutes Hate' against anyone who doesn't think gay marriage is the greatest idea ever.
>
> Pretty much the entire establishment in Ireland, aside from the increasingly uninfluential bishops and priests, backs gay marriage (giving the lie to the gay-marriage movement's depiction of itself as a beleaguered minority bravely battling The Man for its civil rights). From the prime minister, Enda Kenny, to the vast majority of Dail Eireann, to pretty much the whole media – most notably the *Irish Times*, voice of the minuscule cultural elite in Dublin that sets the moral and political agenda in Ireland – every person with power is rallying for gay marriage. And barely a week passes when they don't demonise the other side, the smaller, less powerful side, the side which, in opposing gay marriage, is apparently harming citizens, causing violence and, worst of all, jeopardising Ireland's political future.
>
> As with all heretics in history, Ireland's opponents of gay marriage stand accused of directly harming the public. So last month, the Psychological Society of Ireland issued a dire warning that the propaganda of the anti-gay marriage camp could 'impact detrimentally on people'. PSI said it is 'seriously concerned' that this lobby's claim that traditional marriage is better than gay marriage, on the grounds that a mother and father make better parents than two people of the

> same sex, could have 'far-reaching implications'. It chastised opponents of gay marriage for promoting ideas that 'run contrary to the positions of professional bodies' – that is, for daring to defy the new priests: the expert class – and said their words could wreak mental and moral havoc.
>
> As one news report summed it up, PSI thinks that '*the debate itself* [my italics] carrie[s] the potential to have detrimental effects, both psychological and emotional, on adults and children'. So discussion is dangerous; positing a view that runs counter to the elite's outlook could cause emotional damage. It's remarkable how much the authoritarian boot has shifted: once it was those who denied Biblical truths who were accused of doing moral harm to citizens; now it is those who cleave to Christian views and doubt gay marriage whose words, whose desire to have a debate, are depicted as dangerous, warping things.

Rod Dreher is following the religious liberty issue pretty closely, and he wrote this recently:

> I had a 30-minute phone conversation today with a prominent Christian physician who works at one of the great medical institutions in the world, here in the US. He reached out to me through a mutual friend to say to me how important it is to raise the alarm about what's happening on this front, and to start networking and building institutions to help us get through what is to come.
>
> "This is what I think you mean with the Benedict Option," he said, correctly. "You need to write that book so somebody can give the public a clear understanding of where we are, how we got here, and what we're going to have to do to get through what's coming."
>
> We were talking on background, so I don't feel comfortable relating specific details of our discussion here. He gave me a lot of deeply concerning information about what's happening in the medical world around this and related culture-war issues. He said he's been watching it unfold for some time now, and he's been trying to make people understand that Christians in this country are facing something unprecedented in US history.
>
> One of the things he sees coming, and coming fast: the inability of many professionals, and not only in the medical field, to work unless they sign off on things they cannot in good conscience accept. "We're going to see jobs lost and retirements lost," he said.
>
> In his institution, said the doctor, every single one of his colleagues believes that on LGBT issues, Christians who hold to the orthodox view are no better than segregationists. This cultural attitude is sooner or later going to be absorbed into the law.

To just to let you know how this has affected me personally – on Thursday afternoon, my entire Facebook account with 1103 friends and 933 people who liked this blog's page were shut down for "abusive" speech. We will never know who exactly was responsible

for the charges, but I wouldn’t be surprised if it was more of what’s going on in Ireland right now. What does the secular left know about free speech? Nothing. I would sooner hope for mercy from a lion than hope for tolerance from the secular left. They are fascists.

What is it like to be a conservative in Silicon Valley?

April 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article comes to us from my favorite far-left new source, The Nation.

They write:

> Deep in Silicon Valley, where the free market reigns and the exchange of ideas is celebrated, a subset of tech workers are hiding their true selves. Working as programmers and software engineers, they don't want the stigma that comes with revealing who they really are.
>
> They're the tech company employees, startup founders, and CEOs who vote for and donate to Republican candidates, bucking the Bay Area's liberal supremacy. Fearing the repercussions of associating with a much-maligned minority, they keep their political views fiercely hidden.
>
> "It's a liberal echo chamber," Garrett Johnson, a co-founder of Lincoln Labs, which was started in 2013 to connect the right-of-center outsiders in Silicon Valley, told *National Journal*. "People have been convinced that Silicon Valley is reflexively liberal or progressive. And so their response is to conform."
>
> […]**Rather than ruffle feathers—or worse—Republicans who work there often just keep quiet.**
>
> […]One startup CEO who has worked in Silicon Valley for more than a decade says that while it's popular to talk politics in the workplace, the underlying assumption is that everyone has similar views.
>
> The CEO, who generally votes Republican and donates to GOP candidates—he spoke on background to conceal his right-leaning views—said that in 2012, "you wouldn't want to say you're voting for Romney in the election." At the same time, openly expressing one's support for Obama was "incredibly common."
>
> His opposition to raising the minimum wage is just one area where he diverges with most of his colleagues. "If you say something like, 'We need a higher minimum wage,' you don't get critiqued," he said. But he would never reveal his more conservative outlook on the matter.
>
> **"They can't fathom that somebody disagrees with them," he said. "And I disagree with them. So I'm not going to open up that box."**

I was chatting by e-mail with a well known atheist who sometimes links to me. He still thinks that atheism is a good thing, and he has no idea who he has thrown in with. For example, he had never heard of Brendan Eich, who is mentioned in the article.

It says:

> The consequences for being outed for conservative views can be dire. In a highly public controversy last year, newly-hired Mozilla CEO Brendan Eich, who is

> registered as an independent in California, stepped down after critics attacked his 2008 donation to support Proposition 8, the anti-same-sex marriage law in California. Eich, who declined to comment for this story, faced an internal uprising from within the Mozilla community, as well as boycotts from other tech companies, and quit after just two weeks on the job.

Previously, he had written about his support for same-sex marriage. The same same-sex marriage that got Brendan Eich forced out as CEO.

The atheist blogger assured me not to worry – even though people are being fired, fined, and thrown into prison for taking conservative positions. He is a very smart fellow, but I just think he doesn't know what's really going on. I've been following these issues in other countries *for years*, and I know how far his side will go to squash ours. He ought to know too, if he looked back far enough.

What got me started on apologetics? William Lane Craig debate transcripts

April 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

To have informed views, you should listen to both sides

Yes, William Lane Craig debate transcripts. In fact, I still read them from time to time to keep up my skills.

Here's one of my favorites, the Craig-Nielsen debate on grounding morality without God

Summary:

> THE CRAIG-NIELSEN DEBATE: GOD, MORALITY, AND EVIL
> William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen
> with annotations by William Lane Craig
> February 1991, University of Western Ontario

Best part:

Finally, he raises the issue of immortality and says, "Death doesn't undermine moral values. In fact, things that we value become all the more precious." Well, in one sense he's right. It's the *absence of God* that undermines the objectivity of moral values, not *death*. But let's suppose that there are objective moral values. What would be undermined by the lack of immortality? I think two things.

First, I think there would be no reason to adopt the moral point of view. Since you're going to die, everyone ends up the same. It doesn't make any difference whether you live as a Hitler or a Mother Teresa. There is no relationship between your moral living and your ultimate fate. And so in that sense, death undermines the reason for adopting the moral point of view rather that just being an egoist and living for self.

Second, there's no basis for self-sacrifice on this point of view. Why should an atheist, who knows everything is going to end in death, do things that are morally right that go against self-interest? For example, a few years ago there was a terrible mid-winter air disaster in Washington, DC, as a plane crashed into a bridge spanning the Potomac River,

spilling its passengers into the icy waters. And as the helicopters came to rescue these people, attention focused on one man who again and again passed by the rope ladder rather than be pulled to safety himself. Seven times he did this, and when they came again, he was gone. The whole nation turned its eyes to this man in respect and admiration for the noble act of self-sacrifice that he did. And yet on the atheistic view, that man wasn't noble. He did the *stupidest* thing possible. He should have gone for the rope ladder first, pushed others away, if necessary, in order to survive! But to give up all the brief existence he will ever have for others he didn't even know? Why? It seems to me, then, that it's not simply the absence of God that undermines objective moral values, but ethical living is also undermined by the atheistic point of view because you then have no reason to adopt the moral point of view and you have no basis for acts of self-sacrifice.

By contrast, on the Christian view, where you have both God and immortality, you have the necessary presuppositions for the affirmation of objective moral values and for consistent living of the ethical life.

And another of my favorites, the Craig-Taylor debate on the ontological grounding of morality.

Summary:

> Is The Basis Of Morality Natural Or Supernatural?
> Richard Taylor and William Lane Craig
> October 1993, Union College, Schenectady, New York

Sample Craig:

(2) I argued that moral accountability also exists under the supernaturalist view, and Professor Taylor didn't deny the point.

(II) What about my critique, then, of naturalism? I said that naturalism doesn't provide a sound foundation for morality, and here I made two points:

(1) On the naturalist view, objective right and wrong do not exist. Again, Professor Taylor doesn't deny this point; he just says, "Well, to say that they're conventional doesn't mean they're contemptible." Well, granted; but it *does* mean they're arbitrary, they're non–objective. There's no more difference between moral right and wrong than driving on the right–hand side of the road versus the left–hand side of the road. It's simply a societal convention. And the modern evolutionist thinks these conventions are just based in socio–biological evolution. According to Michael Ruse, a professor of the philosophy of science,

> The position of the modern evolutionist…is that humans have an awareness of morality…because such an awareness is of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation, no less than are hands and feet and teeth…. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, [ethics] is illusory. I appreciate that when somebody says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves…. Nevertheless…such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid

> to survival and reproduction and…any deeper meaning is illusory….{26}

This is essentially the same view as Professor Taylor's. Moral values are simply rooted in socio–biological evolution, that have passed down as certain taboos and certain commands, but they have no objective validity in terms of their moral rightness or wrongness. Professor Taylor says, "But I have a high regard for people who are truly moral and decent." I don't deny that. Of course he does! But the point is that in his ethics, in his philosophy, he has no *basis* for that affirmation. What I bring is not a new set of values—I think we pretty much hold those in common—but I'm offering a secure *foundation* for those values that we all want to hold dear.

You see, on Professor Taylor's view, there really isn't any objective morality. I think every one of us here tonight would agree that it's wrong to kill babies and that the holocaust was morally wrong. But in his book Professor Taylor says, "The infanticide practiced by the Greeks of antiquity did not violate their customs. If we say it was nevertheless wrong, we are only saying that it is forbidden by *our* ethical and legal rules. And the abominations practiced by the Nazis…are forbidden by our rules, and not, obviously, by theirs."{27} I submit that that is simply a patently false view of moral values and that naturalism, therefore, can't provide any objective basis for right and wrong.

And another of my favorites, the Craig-Tooley debate on the problem of evil.

Summary:

> A Classic Debate on the Existence of God
> Dr. William Lane Craig & Dr. Michael Tooley
> November 1994, University of Colorado at Boulder

Sample Craig:

(2) Christian doctrines increase the probability of the coexistence of God and the evils in the world. Let me just mention a couple of these.

(i) On the Christian view, the purpose of life is not happiness as such in this life. Rather it is the knowledge of God—which will ultimately produce true and everlasting happiness. What that means is that many evils occur in this life which might be utterly pointless with respect to producing human happiness. But they might not be pointless with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Dr. Tooley assumes when he talks about changes that would make this world a better place, that the purpose of life is basically to be happy in this life. And I certainly admit that you could make changes that might appear to make this life a better place, make it happier. But that's not God's purpose. So if you understand that the purpose of life is not happiness as such, I think that you can see that the existence of evil doesn't necessarily cast any improbability upon God's existence.

(ii) It's also the Christian view that God's purpose spills over into eternal life. In the afterlife God will bestow a glory and happiness upon us that is incomparable to what we've suffered here on earth. And the longer we spend in eternity with Him, the more the sufferings in this life shrink by comparison to an infinitesimal instant. Dr. Tooley admits in his article that it is possible that immortality could justify such evils. But, he says, it's

“very unlikely” that there is life after death. Well, I have two comments. First, I’d like him to prove that it’s unlikely that there is life after death.{26} Second, I suggest that the resurrection of Jesus gives us grounds for hoping in life after death, and I’ve attempted to justify that historically. So given these Christian doctrines, I think you can see that the existence of God and evil is not so improbable after all.

[…](4) Finally, I think that there is actually an argument for God from evil. It would go like this:

(i) If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist. If there is no God, moral values are either socio-biological by-products or just expressions of personal preference.

(ii) Evil exists. That’s the premise of the atheist. There is real evil in the world.

(iii) Therefore, objective values do exist. Some things are really wrong.

(iv) Therefore, God exists.

Thus the presence of evil in the world actually demonstrates God’s existence because in the absence of God, there wouldn’t be any distinction objectively between good and evil, between right and wrong. So although evil in one sense calls into question God’s existence, in a much deeper sense, I think, it actually requires God’s existence.

So in the light of these four responses, I think that the argument from evil, as difficult and emotionally pressing as it might be, in the end doesn’t constitute a good argument against the existence of God. So I think the four arguments given against the existence of God by Dr. Tooley are inconclusive. You’ve still got my six arguments for God’s existence, and therefore I still think that on balance the evidence favors theism as the more rational worldview.

You can find more debates here.

Why is college so expensive? Why does university tuition cost so much?

April 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The *correct answer* appeared in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

This is by Paul F. Campos, law professor at the radically leftist UC Boulder.

He writes:

> [P]ublic investment in higher education in America is vastly larger today, in inflation-adjusted dollars, than it was during the supposed golden age of public funding in the 1960s. Such spending has increased at a much faster rate than government spending in general. For example, the military's budget is about 1.8 times higher today than it was in 1960, while legislative appropriations to higher education are more than 10 times higher.
>
> **In other words, far from being caused by funding cuts, the astonishing rise in college tuition correlates closely with a huge increase in public subsidies for higher education. If over the past three decades car prices had gone up as fast as tuition, the average new car would cost more than $80,000.**
>
> Some of this increased spending in education has been driven by a sharp rise in the percentage of Americans who go to college. While the college-age population has not increased since the tail end of the baby boom, the percentage of the population enrolled in college has risen significantly, especially in the last 20 years. Enrollment in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs has increased by almost 50 percent since 1995. As a consequence, while state legislative appropriations for higher education have risen much faster than inflation, total state appropriations per student are somewhat lower than they were at their peak in 1990. (Appropriations per student are much higher now than they were in the 1960s and 1970s, when tuition was a small fraction of what it is today.)
>
> **As the baby boomers reached college age, state appropriations to higher education skyrocketed, increasing more than fourfold in today's dollars, from $11.1 billion in 1960 to $48.2 billion in 1975. By 1980, state funding for higher education had increased a mind-boggling 390 percent in real terms over the previous 20 years. This tsunami of public money did not reduce tuition: quite the contrary.**
>
> […]State appropriations reached a record inflation-adjusted high of $86.6 billion in 2009. They declined as a consequence of the Great Recession, but have since risen to $81 billion. And these totals do not include the enormous expansion of the federal Pell Grant program, which has grown, in today's dollars, to $34.3

> billion per year from $10.3 billion in 2000.

The more money that is attached to students, the more money universities charge – simple.

But where is the money going? Is it mostly going to research? To the classroom? To hire more and better professors?

No:

> **Interestingly, increased spending has not been going into the pockets of the typical professor. Salaries of full-time faculty members are, on average, barely higher than they were in 1970. Moreover, while 45 years ago 78 percent of college and university professors were full time, today half of postsecondary faculty members are lower-paid part-time employees, meaning that the average salaries of the people who do the teaching in American higher education are actually quite a bit lower than they were in 1970.**
>
> **By contrast, a major factor driving increasing costs is the constant expansion of university administration. According to the Department of Education data, administrative positions at colleges and universities grew by 60 percent between 1993 and 2009, which Bloomberg reported was 10 times the rate of growth of tenured faculty positions.**
>
> **Even more strikingly, an analysis by a professor at California Polytechnic University, Pomona, found that, while the total number of full-time faculty members in the C.S.U. system grew from 11,614 to 12,019 between 1975 and 2008, the total number of administrators grew from 3,800 to 12,183 — a 221 percent increase.**

If you're going to college or trade school, go to a low-cost school. Do a STEM degree or do a trade that pays well. Try to get tuition assistance even if it means going to a less prestigious school. And work at every opportunity you get in the most serious job you can find. Don't spend your money – save it. Especially don't spend your money on fun, vacations and alcohol. As soon as you grow up, you're going to wish you could have it all back.

Why is it so hard for young people to find a job?

April 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

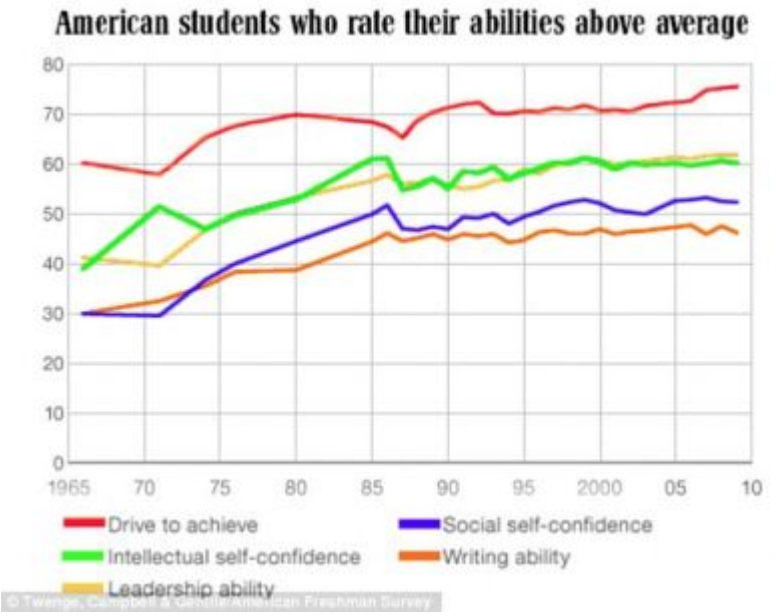

Young people have a sense of entitlement

Bloomberg News discusses the "Professionalism in the Workplace" survey of human resources specialists from York College of Pennsylvania.

> **Forty-nine percent of [those surveyed] stated that less than half of new employees "exhibit professionalism in their first year." More than half (53 percent) have noticed "a sense of entitlement" rising among younger workers; almost 45 percent have seen a "worsening of the work ethic," including "too casual of an attitude toward work" and "not understanding what hard work is."**
>
> Younger workers believe they can multitask and remain productive, the human-resources people told the York researchers. Thirty-eight percent of respondents blamed multitasking for the lack of "focus" among younger workers. The authors of the study explained that the younger generation "believes that it is possible to multi-task effectively" and that using social media, for example, is an efficient way to communicate. In interviews, the applicants check their phones for texts and calls, dress inappropriately and overrate their talents.
>
> "The sad fact is some of these persons probably do not understand what is wrong with this," the authors note.
>
> Older workers have always complained about younger workers, of course, but there's a difference: This time they attribute the youthful flaws not to ignorance or waywardness, but to a "sense of entitlement."
>
> We might forgive 18-year-olds fresh out of high school for lacking employability skills (the manufacturing sector hires many workers lacking undergraduate degrees). But when he or she reaches 23 and has four years of college,

> employers expect a white-collar worker to recognize basic norms of dress and deportment.
>
> **What happened in college, then? The survey by York College's Center for Professional Excellence assigns colleges part of the blame, observing that letting students miss deadlines without penalty and assigning good grades for middling work only make them form the wrong expectations.**

Meanwhile, the UK Daily Mail had the results from a 2013 survey:

> Young people's unprecedented level of self-infatuation was revealed in a new analysis of the American Freshman Survey, which has been asking students to rate themselves compared to their peers since 1966.
>
> Roughly 9 million young people have taken the survey over the last 47 years.
>
> Psychologist Jean Twenge and her colleagues compiled the data and found that over the last four decades there's been a dramatic rise in the number of students who describe themselves as being 'above average' in the areas of academic ability, drive to achieve, mathematical ability, and self-confidence.
>
> But in appraising the traits that are considered less invidualistic – co-operativeness, understanding others, and spirituality – the numbers either stayed at slightly decreased over the same period.
>
> Researchers also found a disconnect between the student's opinions of themselves and actual ability.
>
> **While students are much more likely to call themselves gifted in writing abilities, objective test scores actually show that their writing abilities are far less than those of their 1960s counterparts.**
>
> **Also on the decline is the amount of time spent studying, with little more than a third of students saying they study for six or more hours a week compared to almost half of all students claiming the same in the late 1980s.**
>
> **Though they may work less, the number that said they had a drive to succeed rose sharply.**
>
> […]Twenge is the author of a separate study showing a 30 per cent increase towards narcissism in students since 1979.
>
> 'Our culture used to encourage modesty and humility and not bragging about yourself,' Twenge told BBC News. 'It was considered a bad thing to be seen as conceited or full of yourself.'
>
> Just because someone has high self-esteem doesn't mean they're a narcissist. Positive self-assessments can not only be harmless but completely true.
>
> However, one in four recent students responded to a questionnaire called the Narcissistic Personality Inventory with results pointing towards narcissistic self-

> assessments.
>
> Narcissism is defined as excessive self-love or vanity; self-admiration, or being self-centered.
>
> Twenge said that’s a trait that is often negative and destructive, and blames its boom on several trends – including parenting styles, celebrity culture, social media, and easy credit – for allowing people to seem more successful than they really are.

I think what I am seeing is that not only do they work less, but they work at things they “like”, rather than at things that will allow them to provide value to others. So, you’re not going to find a lot of computer programmers or petroleum engineers among young Americans, but you will find a lot of people gravitating to jobs that are easy that make them feel good about themselves, and look good to other people, too.

Obviously, there are policy reasons for youth unemployment being so high, but I think this attitude that young people have is definitely part of it.

Can prayer, Bible reading, church-singing and charismatic preaching stop Katy Perry's apostasy?

April 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I received an e-mail from a woman who was telling me to drop my list of 10 worldview questions and just look for a wife who reads the Bible and has feelings about Jesus.

She wrote:

> My suggestion to you is to consider a top-down approach. Just pray for God to send you your wife and pray that you recognize her immediately. You don't seem like you really want to remain single…and your children are missing out on having you as their dad. Marriage is for children, remember? I know several young ladies who know their Scripture and who love Jesus but who, I don't think, would pass your test because, in my perception, they aren't cerebral enough.

I get this e-mail a lot, especially from women who have married non-Christians or who are divorced. Now the whole point of the list of 10 questions is to detect women who are not going to help me to produce effective, influential Christian children. If I am going to spend north of $100,000 per child + tuition, then I expect to get some sort of return on that investment for God. That money doesn't earn itself, and it needs to be well-spent serving God.

It's my wife's job to help me to do that. My goal in choosing a wife is to find a helper to make the relationship serve God. Otherwise, it's better for God if I give that money that I worked very hard to earn directly to effective Christian scholars. I don't have money to burn "playing house" with someone who is guided by her feelings. I can just give the money to Reasonable Faith or Discovery Institute instead.

Let's take a look at two parents who aimed at nothing and hit it with their daughter. The two parents run a ministry that is based around passionate preaching, prayer and Bible verses.

Excerpt:

> The Lord spoke to Arise International Conference host Mary Hudson to encourage women to reach their full destiny in Jesus Christ. He wants women to rise up as trailblazers, to think outside the box and be bold in Him, of course putting God first, your husband second and then your family!
>
> Mary's ministry of Arise! International holds annual women's empowerment and leadership conferences in Hawaii, Belgium, Colombia, France, Switzerland, Denmark and the USA. The river of glory is rising and we must flow with it.
>
> 2012 promises to be a break-through year to Arise! in who you are in Christ. Lean on Him for direction, don't look to man. Knowing the signs of the times and hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit will be vital to being at the right place at the

> right time to reap the harvest of souls coming into the Kingdom.
>
> Pray about being a part of Arise! this coming year. It just may be the meeting that propels you into the next level for your life. Remember, you are equipped with everything you need to fulfill your purpose. God's assignments reveal your abilities and your capabilities, and He will provide both the potential and the provision to meet every assignment.
>
> We call you blessed and highly favored!

I noticed that their "book store" offers nonsense books like this:

Keith Hudson "Looking and Seeing":

> Like this disciplined athlete, you need to learn how to look beyond your present situation and keep your eye on His Presence. God is ready to display His glory in your life as well in these last days, but it is going to take boldness for you to take the mask off and look at people and situations the way God sees them, not how man looks at them. What may stand in front of you may look too big for you to grasp; that what you see now is the way it's always going to be. Or you look at the dream God has given you and think, "there is no way I can ever accomplish this with my resources at my age…" That is the moment you have to flip the switch from looking to seeing.

Mary Hudson "Smart Bombs":

> Smart Bombs is a book which will show you practically and with true life examples how to take God's Word and let it explode strongholds in your life. When you read the Bible, He quickens particular passages or verses to your heart. You know it is God talking to you about your situation. Or when you receive a prophetic word, you sense in your heart this is speaking to you. But what do you do with these words when they bear witness with you? Let them fade away and disappear off of your memory? No, Smart Bombs shows you how to go on the offense with the anointed word of God, how to demolish strongholds and take back everything the enemy has stolen from you.
>
> This easy read is a must for anyone who is looking for clarity on their destiny.

Keith Hudson "The Cry":

> The Cry will reignite you with new fire. Christians lose their passion when they let go of their zeal for God. We come into prayer meetings and we are so polished and perfected. But the Lord wants to hear the cry of your heart. The church has lost its cry: God is about to restore it. Why did the thirty people gathered for the Azusa Street revival have such a move of the spirit of God in their day? Because they had a cry in their hearts and in their prayers. The Cry will release a desperate longing in you for Gods intervention in your life. It goes way beyond your natural thinking into a spiritual hunger from your innermost being. When

> everything else has failed, a desperate cry touches the heart of God.

Now do you think that someone who reads books like that will produce the same kind of children as parents who read William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer, Jay Richards, and Michael Licona? Of course not. Because the Hudson books are fluff and the books by real Christian scholars are not fluff.

Now let's read an article from Christian Post about what sort of child the fluff approach produces. (H/T Mysterious Chris S.)

Excerpt:

> Katy Perry, the 29-year-old singer and songwriter, is revealing that while she prays she no longer identifies with Christianity.
>
> "I don't believe in a heaven or a hell, or an old man sitting on a throne. I believe in a higher power bigger than me because that keeps me accountable," she told Marie Claire magazine recently. "Accountability is rare to find, especially with people like myself, because nobody wants to tell you something you don't want to hear."
>
> Perry, who took the Billboard charts by storm with her hit song "I Kissed a Girl" in 2008, told Marie Claire that she no longer considers herself a Christian despite being raised by Christian ministers.
>
> "I'm not Buddhist, I'm not Hindu, I'm not Christian, but I still feel like I have a deep connection with God. I pray all the time – for self-control, for humility," she told Marie Claire. "There's a lot of gratitude in it. Just saying 'thank you' sometimes is better than asking for things."
>
> Despite her decision to perform music that may seem controversial to the Christian community, the chart-topping singer has never shied away from crediting the Christian church for giving her a start as a performer.
>
> "The atmosphere I grew up in was 100 percent Christian," Perry said her "Part of Me: 3D" movie which was released last year. "I started singing in the church, I never really had another plan."

Their daughter is writing songs to promote homosexuality to young people. That's their legacy. The legacy of spiritual gifts, God opening doors of mysticism and charismatic anti-intellectualism. That's what they are going to present to God as their spiritual legacy. I noticed that Mary Hudson is now calling her daughter's celebrity divorce after one year of marriage a "gift from God". Her daughter married a heroin-addicted leftist non-Christian – but he was *hawt*. Tall, dark, handsome and a famous comedian, too.

The list of questions I use when courting helps me to avoid marrying a woman like Katy Perry's mother. She could not answer any of my questions. None of them. And what's more, she doesn't want to answer them. She wants to live her whole life without learning how to answer them. She wants to stick with her Bible, her singing, her feelings, her passionate oratory and her crowds of gullible people. I will not marry a woman like that. It

produces disaster and failure. It produces anti-Christian children.

In fact, you can’t succeed at anything worthwhile in life using the Keith and Mary Hudson approach to parenting. You can’t do a thing with that approach. Not writing software, not fixing cars, not making investments, not sending a rocket to the moon, not even evangelizing an apostate daughter. You do not want to be a Christian man who pumps 30 years of hard labor into a family that produces apostate children. If you are going to spend the money, then make sure you get the results.

Slowly but surely, I am becoming less upset when bad things happen

April 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

“The wounded soldier” – Étienne Prosper Berne-Bellecour

I had some drama at the end of last week. My plan to share my thoughts online using an alias ran into a snag, and I’ve had to make adjustments.

Anyway, things are fixed now as well as they can be, so we continue. But what was interesting to me was that all my closest friends thought that I must be ready to jump off a cliff because of the setback. Well, no. I just took a couple of days to think about it and then did the best I could to fix it, and that’s it.

So I thought about why they might be so concerned and I came up with three ideas. First, they thought that because I always talk about plans, responsibilities, expectations and obligations so much that I would flip out if anything went wrong. Second, they thought that because I have anxiety left over from being stuck in daycare so much that I would be shattered by the setback. Third, some of my male friends thought that I should be really angry and fight against the injustice.

Well, here’s why I didn’t get depressed or angry.

1. First, and most importantly, it’s important to understand that in Christianity, salvation is a free gift of God. God’s love for me is not conditional on me achieving specific results, even though I am very serious about achieving specific results. Although I’m not a guy who has a past full of wild sins, I have something else – I have a lot of missed opportunities. I could have succeeded better and been more effective and influential. In my first job, I got a ton of stock options, but we were acquired 1 month before they vested. The gain in our stock price would have been worth $100,000 to me. I also missed a chance to intern with a small company that was later acquired by Oracle. I chose instead to intern with a much larger company that eventually went bankrupt. I failed an

on-site interview with a great small company because I mentioned my conservative politics (my manager-to-be had run at the state level as a Democrat). They also got acquired by Oracle.

And there have been many more near misses. And even now, some of the plans I made (marriage, PhD) are 12 years and 8 years behind schedule, respectively. I've been forced to scramble to find other options in order to make a difference. But that's OK, because I'm not under pressure to earn my way to Heaven here. God is in control. Being faithful doesn't mean you get everything you plan to achieve, it just means being serious and self-sacrificial when you make decisions, and then leave the rest to God. It means reacting to targets of opportunity when your primary and secondary targets are not available.

2. Second, God has done an excellent job of strengthening me to recover from the daycare anxiety. He's done it in three ways.

First, my education and career went well enough that I have kept up with my financial goals. Having enough money to survive all the terrible things I can imagine happening to me is a *big calming influence* on me. And this was a gift from God. I believe that my finances and my career are not things that I achieved, but things that God gave me in order for me to be able to mentor and assist others with the experience gained from being given these gifts. God gave these things to me so that I could fill a role with others – advising them on their decisions about education and career.

God also gave me a string of unexpected disasters to experience to build up my toughness, e.g. – running over a large possum at night while on the way back from a J. Warner Wallace event, or being rear-ended by a college student driving her Dad's SUV. When these things happened to me early in my life, I would cry like Niagara Falls. I was raised to think that everything had to be "perfect" growing up – my working mom was always stressed out and aggressive. But now, when bad things happen, I'm much less phased. Sometimes, people run away from challenges if they don't learn that it's OK to fail, but thanks to God leading me, I didn't end up like that. I kept trying.

Finally, the influence of supportive Christian women in my life has helped me a lot. It's amazing how one action – the first time a Christian woman put her hand on my face – has stayed with me, and it makes everything terrible seem so easy to bear with. Whenever things go wrong, I just think of that day. It was a *big deal*. When you wait a long time for it, and when the woman understands you and approves of you, it makes a difference – *for the rest of your life*.

3. Third, I believe that God is sovereign so that I don't have to defend myself all the time when things go wrong. Sometimes, when things go wrong, the most important thing to do is to not fix it, and just concentrate on being calm and polite to everyone around you. Sometimes, God has reasons for allowing me to fail or get hurt. And since I can't see everything he can see, what's the point in thinking that I have to get upset every time someone disrespects me or sets me back? I don't. If God wanted me to make a huge difference right away, he could make me do that. But he's not going to do anything that

will threaten his most important goal for me, and that's making sure I get where I need to be after my life is finished. With all the focus on plans and goals, it can be easy to forget that this is what really matters.

So all of that is just to say that I am not earning my way to Heaven here – the most important thing to know about me is that God the Father has saved me through his Son, Jesus. The rest of my life is just me reacting to that as respectfully and effectively as I can, and not really caring much what people think of me. That doesn't mean I'm going to do whatever I want, but it does mean that if things don't go perfectly, then the most important thing about me isn't going to be affected. At all. There is a great contentment in understanding these things when you are trying to interpret unexpected setbacks.

By the way, please like the new Facebook page for the blog if you haven't already. It has fewer likes than the old page did right now, but we'll get back up there.

Does the New Testament book of James undermine salvation by faith alone?

April 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Are people brought in a right relationship with God because God provides for their salvation, or must we do works in order to earn our place with God in the afterlife?

The Bible is pretty clear that God provides our salvation from our rebellion by himself, all we have to do is accept it.

Look at Romans 3:21-30:

> [21] But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
>
> [22] even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;
>
> [23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
>
> [24] being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
>
> [25] whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;
>
> [26] for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
>
> [27] Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.
>
> [28] For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.
>
> [29] Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God*of Gentiles also? Yes, of

> Gentiles also,
>
> [30] since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

Here's theologian R.C. Sproul, to explain a passage from the Bible that seems to contradict the passages that teach that faith alone is sufficient for salvation.

Here's James 2:18-24:

> [18] But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."
>
> [19] You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.
>
> [20] But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?
>
> [21] Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?
>
> [22] You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;
>
> [23] and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God.
>
> [24] You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Sproul explains the apparent conflict:

> What James is saying is this: If a person says he has faith, but he gives no outward evidence of that faith through righteous works, his faith will not justify him. Martin Luther, John Calvin, or John Knox would absolutely agree with James. We are not saved by a profession of faith or by a claim to faith. That faith has to be genuine before the merit of Christ will be imputed to anybody. You can't just say you have faith. True faith will absolutely and necessarily yield the fruits of obedience and the works of righteousness. Luther was saying that those works don't add to that person's justification at the judgment seat of God. But they do justify his claim to faith before the eyes of man. James is saying, not that a man is justified before God by his works, but that his claim to faith is shown to be genuine as he demonstrates the evidence of that claim of faith through his works.

So yes, works are important as a sign to others that you believe what you say you believe, but not important for balancing your sins. Your sins are already paid for by Jesus, what you do in your life doesn't add or take away anything from that. But I will say that if you can see that a person is spending a great deal of their time performing actions that are consistent with a concern for God's purposes and reputation, then that's a good sign that his faith is in good shape. Yes, even if he doesn't do as much Bible study, devotions, singing and praying as he should. The important thing about actions (works) is that you

can look at a person’s life and see evidence that he is taking God seriously – that Jesus is his leader, and that Jesus’ character is informing their decision-making and prioritizing.

Robin Collins lectures on the fine-tuning argument at Pepperdine University

April 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A lecture on the fine-tuning argument by an expert.

Details:

> Dr. Robin Collins is a Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Messiah College. Collins is the foremost defender of what is known as the teleological argument for the existence of God. He has a background in both physics and philosophy and will be discussing how the specific physical constants and conditions in the universe are finely-tuned for intelligent life and how this "fine-tuning" gives us reason to believe in a Creator.

Here is the video:

Topics:

- the constants and quantities set at the origin of the universe is fine-tuned for conscious, embodied intelligences like us
- three kinds of fine-tuning: 1) laws of nature, 2) constants, 3) quantities
- examples of 1): gravity, electromagnetism, strong force, quantization, Pauli exclusion principle
- examples of 2): **gravitational constant**, **cosmological constant**,
- examples of 3): initial distribution of mass-energy
- in addition to fine-tuning for life, there is also fine-tuning for discoverability
- Naturalistic response to the evidence: the multiverse hypothesis
- problems with the multiverse hypothesis
- additional topics

I put the ones I am ready to speak on in bold. I recommend you learn those as well in order to illustrate the fine-tuning with evidence when you present it. The evidence is important because I've never found a single atheist who I discussed this with who could properly state the argument or understand the evidence. They talk about it without really understanding it, which is why we need to be ready to explain it to them.

Is Obama's economy as good as the mainstream media are telling us?

April 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from CNS News was tweeted by GOP presidential candidate Carly Fiorina.

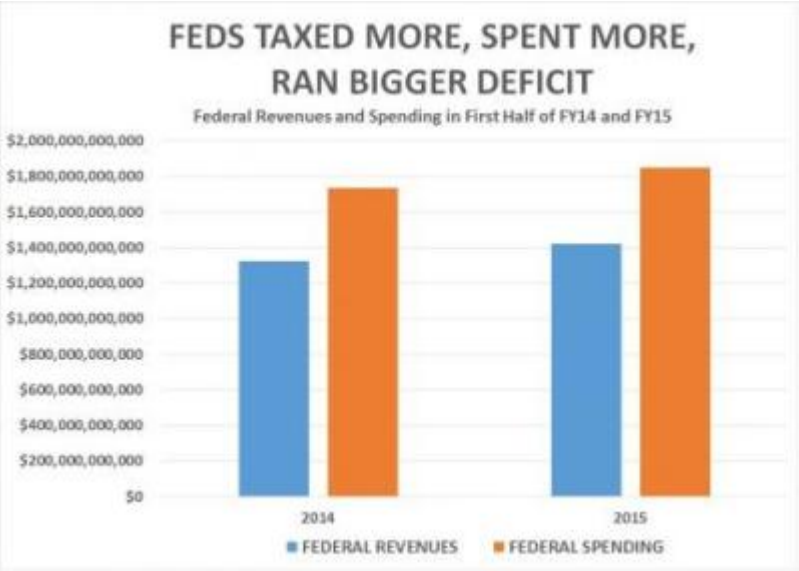

This economy is not good (click for larger image)

It says:

> The federal government taxed away more money, spent more money and ran a bigger deficit in the first half of fiscal 2015 than it did in the first half of fiscal 2014, according to the Congressional Budget Office.
>
> "The federal government ran a budget deficit of $430 billion for the first half of fiscal year 2015, CBO estimates–$17 billion more than the shortfall recorded in the same span last year," the CBO said in its Monthly Budget Review for March 2015, which was published April 8. "Both revenues and outlays were about 7 percent higher than the amounts recorded in the first six months of fiscal year 2014."

Keep in mind that these deficit numbers are for *half a year.* In 2007, George W. Bush was running a deficit of $160 billion *for an entire year.*

And we're being taxed more, too:

> The biggest source of additional tax revenue for the federal government was the individual income tax. In the first six months of fiscal 2014, Americans paid the federal government approximately $585,000,000,000 in individual income taxes. In the first six months of fiscal 2015, Americans paid $642,000,000,000 in individual income taxes—an increase of $57 billion (or 9.7 percent) from fiscal 2014.

What's the long-term forecast?

The Wall Street Journal has it:

> **Question: "How close are we from seeing entitlement programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security come into direct conflict with defense spending priorities? Defense spending is almost 20% of the Fed budget and nearly 60% of discretionary spending. Current cost of health care and an aging population are strong indicators this could happen sooner than later."**
>
> **Zumbrun:** "I'd say we're already seeing it now. As Nick noted above, the CBO projects that mandatory spending and spending on interest will climb, but that defense and nondefense discretionary spending will be squeezed. Anyone who doesn't want to see that happen in the next decade needs some combination of higher revenue, much faster economic growth, or cuts to entitlement programs.
>
> "The budget deal known as sequestration squeezed down both defense and non-defense discretionary spending. If, instead, everyone agreed it was okay to cut entitlements (which they obviously don't), you wouldn't have needed to squeeze that down. So I think it's fair to say these things are already in conflict."
>
> **Question: "Debt as long as partnered with productivity is no problem. From the looks of it, the U.S. might fall as an economy, but is now the time?"**
>
> **Timiraos:** "That's a good point. One thing that's a little bit troubling, however, is that estimates of the potential output of the U.S. economy have been revised down. What does that mean exactly? Instead of growing at a 2.7% rate from 2014-18, it now says the economy will grow at a 2.5% rate. That doesn't sound too bad, but over time, it adds up."
>
> **Question: "The U.S. has so far been capable of keeping its cost of borrowing at a remarkably low level. What about in the long term where it seems likely that servicing the debt will eat up a larger and larger percentage of government expenditures in an age of slowing growth?"**
>
> **Zumbrun:** "There's actually decent reason to believe that if the economy slows down a lot then interest rates will stay very low. That's basically the situation in Japan, right? They're mired in decades of low growth, driven by aging demographics and a central bank that was really timid for a long time, but as a result of their permanently stagnant economy, interest rates are incredibly low. In the U.S., one scenario like this is known as secular stagnation.

Wow, if our economy starts to look like Japan, that will not be good. They have massive deficits, zero economic growth and a looming demographic crisis (few young workers, many older retirees). It's a very bad situation that's being masked by low interest rates and massive, massive borrowing.

The Brookings Institute agrees

Lest you think that this is just the conservative take on this, here's the leftist Brookings

Institute, writing about it just last week.

They say:

> Debt figures tell part of the story. When the Great Recession hit, the federal debt was equal to about 40 percent of GDP. But to fight the recession, Congress enacted an $800 billion dollar stimulus bill. Stimulus spending, combined with already enacted spending and tax policy, **resulted in four years of trillion dollar deficits**. As a result, the debt ballooned to 78 percent of GDP in 2013, almost twice the pre-recession level. The annual deficit is now declining at a stately pace, but by 2016 it will begin increasing again, and by 2020 under CBO's alternative fiscal scenario, **we will once again return to annual deficits above a trillion dollars**, thereby once again greatly increasing the national debt.

Oh come on – Obama says that he saved the economy, and everyone in the mainstream media agrees.

Did he?

> What's the word for our fiscal situation? Stunning? Shocking? Desperate? In recent testimony before the Senate Budget Committee, Boston University Economics Professor Laurence Kotlikoff, in effect, told the Committee that all of these terms are pathetically inadequate to describe our true fiscal situation. **In compelling testimony, Kotlikoff argues that the federal fiscal situation is much worse than the CBO estimates let on. The reason is that CBO's debt estimates do not take into account the full financial obligations the government is committed to honor, especially for future payments of Social Security, Medicare, and interest on the debt.** He asserts that the federal government should help the public understand the nation's true fiscal situation by using what economists call "the infinite-horizon fiscal gap," defined as the value of all projected future expenditures minus the value of all projected future receipts using a reasonable discount rate.

If you're going to be retirement age around 2030, you'd better do two things right now – first, don't expect any help from the Federal government. I don't care if you paid into their Ponzi scheme redistribution programs – there is *no money for you there.* Second, if you're working till you're retired, then expect the government to *raise taxes even more* on you.

Would you expect secularists to care about the next generation when this is the only life they have? I would not. Ideas have consequences.

Gay activists target student leader Lindsey Kolb for defending religious liberty

April 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A banner with Lindsey Kolb

Here's the story from The College Fix.

Excerpt:

> Members of the LGBT community at Missouri State University are demanding the school retaliate against a student leader for her off-campus activism against a local ordinance that could harm religious freedom.
>
> […]A petition posted Wednesday on Change.org, originally titled "#TakeLindseyOffCarrington" but since changed to "#AccurateRepresentationMSU," asks the school to remove a banner from its signature building, Carrington Hall, depicting "university ambassador" Lindsey Kolb.
>
> As of Sunday night, the petition had 873 signatures.
>
> Providing little context for its subject or a clear articulation of its demand, the petition was posted the day after Springfield residents voted to repeal a city council ordinance that banned discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender.
>
> Proponents of repeal have argued the ordinance did not provide substantial religious exemptions for businesses and individuals.
>
> Removing the banner of Kolb would "send a message of cultural competence and not advertise someone who has no respect for a culture different from their own," petition author and MSU student Connor Hayes wrote at Change.org.
>
> Kolb told *The College Fix* her opponents have mischaracterized her beliefs and

> her faith.
>
> **“I advocated for repeal because I believe in religious freedom,” said Kolb in a statement. “A Church should not be forced to host a LGBTQ wedding. A cake shop should not be forced to make a cake for a LGBTQ couple’s wedding.”**
>
> Kolb wears many hats, according to her LinkedIn page: state chairman of the Missouri Federation of College Republicans and president of MSU’s chapter, receptionist for the dean of students and office of admissions, member of the student government cabinet, and even “campus ambassador” for a clothing brand.

What’s scary about this is the response of the gay activists:

> She initially came under fire after taking issue with a satirical op-ed in *The Standard* by Caleb Hearon, which mocked Christians who favored of repeal of the Springfield ordinance.
>
> “Repealing this protects religious freedom. It is my God-given right to hate whomever I want. Can I get a yee-yee?” Hearon wrote.

Caleb? What kind of name is Caleb for a secular leftist? That’s just weird.

More:

> Though Hayes’ petition says its goal “is not to make Lindsey a scapegoat for the way the [Springfield ordinance repeal] vote turned out,” it continually returns to Kolb, calling her unfit to represent the university.
>
> “Her remarks in the past do not exemplify an ethical leader by ostracizing and discriminating against current and prospective students who identify as member or ally of the LGBT+ community,” it states. “For Missouri State to continue to endorse her discriminatory views is effectively showing that they do not in fact value ethical leadership.”
>
> Kolb told *The Fix* she feels “bullied” by the petition.
>
> “The people who started this petition did not personally know me, my convictions, and completely took my views out of context,” she said.
>
> Her opponents have taken to Twitter, using the hashtag #TakeLindseyOffCarrington and labeling her an “awful individual” and a “bigot”among other slurs.

I feel badly for her – trying to stand up for religious liberty using your real name is a disaster these days. It’s not safe. I do think that it’s extra good when a woman stands up for religious liberty, though. In my experience, women are more likely to want to hide their conservative beliefs from their peers – or even get rid of them completely in order to fit in. I feel really bad when that happens – I want to get in there and reinforce her so that she doesn’t feel pressured to change her values in order to fit in.

Look how tough Lindsey is:

> And while Smart's intervention on her behalf suggests Kolb's banner will remain on Carrington Hall, "If it ever comes down to me having the freedom of speech and religion or having a banner on campus, I choose my faith and freedom every time," Kolb told *The Fix*.

Fortunately, this story has a happy ending so far:

> University President Clif Smart decried those attacking Kolb in a Wednesday night blog post.
>
> "In the same way that discrimination will not be permitted at Missouri State, we will also not permit retaliation based on someone's political or religious beliefs or advocacy efforts on this or any other political issue," Smart wrote.
>
> He said the university's "public affairs" mission – the petition's stated rationale for removing Kolb's banner – "is not a weapon to be wielded when we work or study with those who have different ideas, beliefs or values than our own."
>
> Discouraging people from speaking openly is not what Missouri State is about, Smart continued: "We do not behave as ethical leaders when we seek to stifle free expression or punish those who advocate for particular viewpoints."

And there is a counter-petition for you to sign to support Lindsey, as well. I posted this because my heart just went out to her trying to do the right thing and taking flak from the secular leftist mob. She is a very, very brave girl – I'm sure this experience has hurt her some. It's scary – so many of our young people are like Crazy Caleb – even the ones raised in Christian homes. And there are so few Lindseys. The university is a very dark place right now. And yet it has so much influence in our society that we can't abandon it, we have to keep trying to get a foothold.

Florida senator Marco Rubio will compete in the GOP presidential primary

April 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

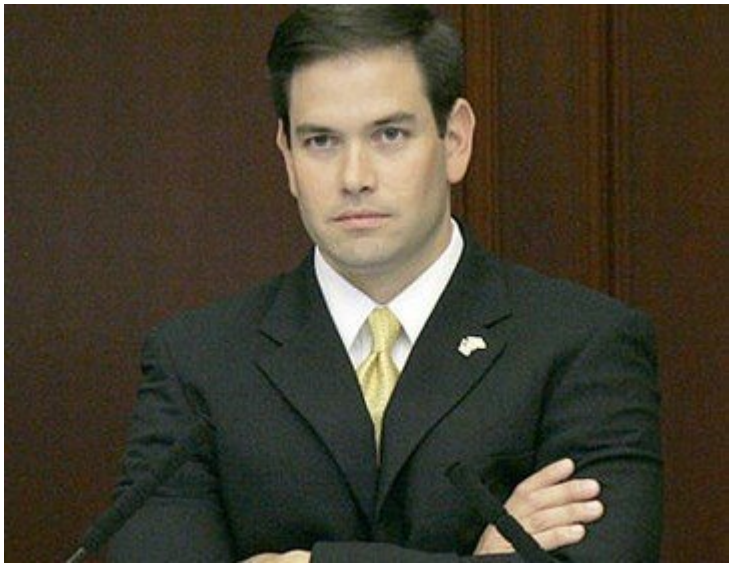

Florida Senator Marco Rubio

Here's a profile of Marco Rubio posted by Rachel Alexander at The Stream.

She writes:

> On Monday night, Florida Senator Marco Rubio became the third major Republican candidate to announce he was officially running for president, after Senators Ted Cruz and Rand Paul. He made the announcement from the Freedom Tower in downtown Miami, considered the Ellis Island of Florida, where Cuban refugees seeking political asylum from Castro's communist regime were processed by the federal government in the '60s and early '70s. It made a powerful statement, that the son of refugees is now running for president.
>
> Rubio's parents came to America before the Castro regime, and took menial jobs. He told the cheering crowd, "My father stood behind a small portable bar in the back of a room so that tonight I could stand behind this podium in front of this room."
>
> Rubio has been an outspoken critic of Obama's efforts to relax relations with Cuba, and takes a hawkish approach to foreign policy. Earlier this year, he published the book *American Dreams*, which lays out how to rise to success economically in the U.S.
>
> The youngest candidate in the race, Rubio reached out to younger voters in his speech, saying, "This election is not just about what laws we will pass, it is a generational choice about what kind of country we will be."

He has lots of experience and a track record we can analyze:

> A lawyer, Rubio worked his way up through the political system, serving in the

> Florida House from 2000 to 2008 and eventually becoming Speaker. While there he developed a reputation for pursuing innovative policy ideas and while Speaker of the Florida House, he wrote a book, *100 Innovative Ideas for Florida's Future,* which contained many ideas he implemented while Speaker.
>
> He went on to defeat liberal Republican turned Democrat Charlie Crist in a surprising underdog campaign to become U.S. Senator in 2010, making him an instant Tea Party favorite. *The New York Times* magazine declared him the "first Senator from the Tea Party."

His most exciting policy is his tax policy:

> On the fiscal side of the conservative equation, Rubio's new tax reform proposal is raising some eyebrows. Introduced with conservative stalwart Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah), the plan would consolidate income tax rates into just two, 15 percent and 35 percent, eliminate capital gains taxes on investment income for individuals, combine all corporate tax rates to 25 percent, and resuscitate the child tax credit, which had shrunk under the Obama administration. However, individuals making as little as $75,000 would be subject to the 35 percent rate. Many conservatives prefer the more radical flat tax option advocated by Ted Cruz and Rand Paul.

Mike Lee is my favorite conservative in the Senate.

Rubio is a solid conservative in terms of voting:

> He has a 98.67 percent lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union, higher than most other Republican Senators.The Pulse 2016, a new site tracking the presidential election, gave Rubio an A grade on handling the Indiana religious freedom law controversy. The site noted that during an appearance on *The Five*, Rubio spoke "intelligently, knowledgeably, and at length about the need to protect the rights of Christians to follow their religious convictions."

But he doesn't have the executive accomplishments of a Scott Walker or a Bobby Jindal, since he isn't a governor.

This is his biggest flaw:

> Since taking office, Rubio has disappointed the Tea Party once, in 2013, when he joined a bipartisan group of Democrats and moderate Republicans to propose a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants, which went further than even Jeb Bush's plan. Bush supports a path for legal status only. Rubio's legislation failed, and at CPAC earlier this year, he said he now would only support a path to citizenship after securing the border.

Rubio is a strong candidate, but I can't forgive him for endorsing a path to citizenship for those who break the law coming into the United States without a work permit. I don't even favor work permits for people who break the law, much less permanent residencies,

much less citizenship. Rubio is *far* to the left of me on immigration. But if you take away that negative, he is a formidable candidate in the general election. He would make an extremely difficult opponent for Hillary Clinton, or whoever the Democrats choose.

I am OK with him being our candidate in the general, and I think he would be as electable as Scott Walker, my top choice. If we were just choosing positions, I agree most with Cruz, but Cruz lacks accomplishments and I don't see intelligent policies coming out of his mouth – the kinds of policies that can move us in a conservative direction, while still appealing to independents.

But I rank Rubio fifth in my list:

1. Gov. Scott Walker
2. Gov. Bobby Jindal
3. Gov. Rick Perry
4. Sen. Ted Cruz
5. Sen. Marco Rubio

I like Rick Santorum more than Marco Rubio, but I'm not sure if he's running. Carly Fiorina and Ben Carson are not on my list because of lack of experience, but I would love to see them run and be present to speak at the debates – I like listening to them both. They are both stars, but maybe not ready for the Presidency.

Rand Paul is a good candidate on fiscal policy. His statements on social policy are good, but he lacks accomplishments.His foreign policy is too much like Obama's for me. He has said some good things, but he lacks accomplishments. I don't want any more weakness and appeasement. Paul is to the left of Cruz and Rubio on foreign policy – I don't want him on my list. But I'd put him in charge of the Federal Reserve in an instant.

We have SO MANY good candidates, and the Democrats have picked themselves a stinker. It's so good! I feel bad that young people are so lousy on the marriage issue, but maybe with a good leader, we can change some of their minds during the debates? Do young people even watch debates?

New study: cohabitation produces far inferior outcomes to marriage

April 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This study is from the American College of Pediatricians.

The Stream writes about the study:

> The American College of Pediatricians recently published a paper, *Cohabitation*, which cautions adolescents and young adults about the negative consequences of cohabitation for both themselves and their children, and urges parents to teach their children about the advantages of waiting until marriage.
>
> More young people are now first cohabiting than are marrying without prior cohabitation, yet research shows that, rather than being a stepping-stone to a healthy marriage, living together before marriage (cohabitation) makes couples more likely to break-up and more likely to divorce if they do marry. It results in lower marital satisfaction and increased negative communication. Cohabiting couples spend less time together; men are more likely to spend their time on personal pleasure than do married men.

Commitment failure:

> Cohabiting couples are now less likely to later marry than 40 years ago. Controlling for other factors that increase risk of divorce, marriages preceded by cohabitation are still **50 percent more likely to end in divorce**. (Some recent studies challenge this, but are scientifically flawed and omit the raw data.) **Also 27 percent of cohabitations dissolve without marriage in the first three years.**

Domestic violence:

> Cohabiters commit increased violence against their partner. Women are nine times more likely to be killed by a cohabiting partner than by their husband. Severe violence is four times as common among cohabiting couples; any violence is nearly 50 percent more common among couples cohabiting before marrying and doubled among couples continuing to cohabit after five years.

Alcohol abuse:

> Men who cohabit without marrying in 5 to 10 years have more than double the rate of alcohol abuse as married men; women who cohabit without marrying have 4 to 7 times the rate of alcohol abuse as married women.

Infidelity:

> Cohabiters, both men and women, have rates of infidelity in the preceding year

> more than triple that of married spouses. Among the married, those cohabiting prior to marriage were 50 percent more likely to be unfaithful as those marrying without cohabiting.

Poverty:

> Poverty is more common among cohabitating women and their children. Their male partners have both a higher unemployment rate (15 percent vs 8 percent), and work less hours if employed.

Abortion:

> Cohabitating women are ten times more likely to have an abortion than married women, and suffer from its associated mortality and morbidity. In fact, 89 percent of women who have had abortions have at one time cohabited; 40 percent have lived with three or more men. Abortion also puts future children at risk, especially from extremely premature birth.

Harm to children:

> Children who survive also suffer due to parental cohabitation. They have increased risk of losing a parent to divorce or separation, possibly multiple times. Children born of cohabiting parents are over four times more likely to suffer separation of their parents by their third birthdays (49 percent) than those born to married parents (11 percent).
>
> […]Nearly one-third of couples enter into cohabitation with a child from a previous relationship, as do half of those cohabitating for six years or longer. Children living with a parent and unmarried partner (live-in boyfriend) have 20 times the risk of sexual abuse and eight times the risk of all maltreatment compared to children living with married biological parents. Even if the couple marries, stepchildren have over eight times the risk of sexual abuse and triple the overall risk of abuse of neglect. Girls living with a stepparent had 60 percent higher risk of being raped than girls living with their biological parents.

Depression:

> Women in cohabiting relationships have more depression than married women, and poorer responsiveness to their children's emotional needs. Children whose mothers are depressed have increased cortisol responses to stress (which may explain their increased hypertension in adulthood). Children with unmarried mothers are half as likely to be breastfed, leading to higher rates of asthma, pneumonia, ear and intestinal infections, diabetes, obesity, and lower intelligence.

Please believe me when I say that you should click through to the Stream and read the entire article.

So what do I want to say about this in my 500 words? Well, I want to say that the cohabitation issue is a good opportunity for us to reason about whether there should be any rules around sexuality and relationships.

Our culture is absolutely poisoned right now with a kind of feelings-oriented non-judgmentalism that prevents debate. Everything has been reduced to people feeling "offended" and using the power of government to stifle debate. Nowhere is this more evident than on the university campus, which is the source of the problem. This hyper-tolerance and emotional non-judgmentalism leaves people open to making poor decisions that cause self-destruction and harm to others. As a result, young people are blindly accepting a script for sexuality and relationships from the culture, e.g. – Hollywood, celebrities, and ideologically-driven academics. A script made by professional story-tellers insulated from the consequences of their ideas.

As Christians, we seem to have so much trouble talking to young people about rules around sexuality and relationships. So many young people think that premarital sex is benign. That cohabitation is no big deal. And that redefining marriage cannot be opposed. Christian parents and pastors are not preparing themselves to discuss these things with young people. If there is a battle of ideas, and one side shows up with a bunch of feelings and lies, that side still wins – if the other side doesn't show up at all. Don't be so focused on your career and your own self that you fail your children by failing to discuss and debate with them about the issues. Don't assume that just because your children look OK on the surface that there are not serious questions underneath.

There is so much I could say about this problem of talking to young people. As I argued in a previous post, I truly believe that apologists should not neglect these social / cultural / fiscal issues. We have to study them and know how to argue for our values using secular arguments and evidence, such as you see in the study above. Once young people have decided that Christian teachings on sexuality (e.g. – chastity, courting) are primitive and irrational, or worse, then getting them to accept Christianity becomes that much harder. And that goes double for marriage. If they think that cohabitation, no-fault divorce, same-sex marriage and gay adoption are opposed for no other reason than blind prejudice or even hatred, then we've lost before we even begin to make our first philosophical argument. We have to use a combined arms approach.

Let's attack! Now is the time!

Professor explains how his study of the historical Jesus made him leave atheism

April 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's investigate Jesus!

Dr. Michael F. Bird has a great article in Christianity Today. I've featured his debates with atheist historican James Crossley on this blog before, and I have the book they co-wrote.

In the article, Dr. Bird writes:

> I grew up in a secular home in suburban Australia, where religion was categorically rejected—it was seen as a crutch, and people of faith were derided as morally deviant hypocrites. Rates for church attendance in Australia are some of the lowest in the Western world, and the country's political leaders feel no need to feign religious devotion. In fact, they think it's better to avoid religion altogether.
>
> As a teenager, I wrote poetry mocking belief in God. My mother threw enough profanity at religious door knockers to make even a sailor blush.
>
> Many years later, however, I read the New Testament for myself. The Jesus I encountered was far different from the deluded radical, even mythical character described to me. This Jesus—the Jesus of history—was real. He touched upon things that cut close to my heart, especially as I pondered the meaning of human existence. I was struck by the early church's testimony to Jesus: In Christ's death God has vanquished evil, and by his resurrection he has brought life and hope to all.
>
> When I crossed from unbelief to belief, all the pieces suddenly began to fit together. I had always felt a strange unease about my disbelief. I had an acute suspicion that there might be something more, something transcendent, but I also knew that I was told not to think that. I "knew" that ethics were nothing more than aesthetics, a mere word game for things I liked and disliked. I felt conflicted when my heart ached over the injustice and cruelty in the world.
>
> Faith grew from seeds of doubt, and I came upon a whole new world that, for the first time, actually made sense to me. To this day, I do not find faith stifling or

> constricting. Rather, faith has been liberating and transformative for me. It has opened a constellation of meaning, beauty, hope, and life that I had been indoctrinated to deny. And so began a lifelong quest to know, study, and teach about the one whom Christians called Lord.

And now specifics:

> For many secularists, Ehrman is a godsend who propagates common misconceptions about Jesus and the early church. He believes there was a spectrum of divinity between gods and humans in the ancient world. Therefore, he asserts that the early church's beliefs about Jesus evolved: from a man exalted to heaven to an angel who became human to a pre-existent "divine" person who became incarnate to a subordinated or lesser god to being declared one with God.
>
> **My faith and studies have led me to believe otherwise. First-century Jews and early Christians clearly demarcated God from all other reality, thus leading them to hold to a very strict monotheism. That said, Jesus was not seen as a Greek god like Zeus who trotted about earth or a human being who morphed into an angel at death. Rather, the first Christians redefined the concept of "one God" around the person and work of Jesus Christ. Not to mention the New Testament writers, especially Luke and Paul, consistently identify Jesus with the God of Israel.**
>
> **Many people get the idea that Jesus was just a prophet and never claimed to be divine. But a careful look at the Gospels shows that the historical Jesus explicitly claimed to exercise divine prerogatives. He identified himself with God's activity in the world. He believed that in his own person, Israel's God was returning to Zion, just as the prophets had promised. And he claimed he would sit on God's throne. These claims, when studied up close, are de facto claims to divine personhood, the reasons religious leaders of the day were so outraged.**
>
> Evidence shows that Jesus claimed to be God incarnate, and within 20-some years after his death and resurrection, Christians were identifying him with the God of Israel, using the language and grammar of the Old Testament to do so.
>
> Sure, some sects in the first few centuries held heretical beliefs about Jesus. But the mainstream, orthodox view of Christ's identity was always consistent with and rooted in the New Testament, though orthodox Christology became more refined in the following centuries.

It's definitely true that you can recover a high Christology (a view of Jesus as divine) from the earliest gospel, Mark. I wrote about it in a previous post. But the earliest evidence for Jesus is that creed in 1 Corinthians 15, that I blogged about recently.

Here is his conclusion:

> Some have great confidence in skeptical scholarship, and I once did, perhaps more than anyone else. If anyone thinks they are assured in their unbelief, I was more committed: born of unbelieving parents, never baptized or dedicated; on scholarly credentials, a PhD from a secular university; as to zeal, mocking the church; as to ideological righteousness, totally radicalized. But whatever intellectual superiority I thought I had over Christians, I now count it as sheer ignorance. Indeed, I count everything in my former life as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing the historical Jesus who is also the risen Lord. For his sake, I have given up trying to be a hipster atheist. I consider that old chestnut pure filth, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a CV that will gain me tenure at an Ivy League school, but knowing that I've bound myself to Jesus—and where he is, there I shall also be.

I recently led a Bible study on the passage he is paralleling there – it comes from my *favorite* book of the Bible, Philippians.

What I like about Bird's story is that he was a skeptic, and his study of history is what changed his mind. This contradicts a narrative that young people are sold at the university, which is that the more education you have, the more you turn away from theism in general, and Christianity in particular. I wouldn't even classify him as a super conservative scholar, by any means – he's just a good scholar who believes whatever he thinks is historically sound. It just turns out that you can recover enough historically to ground a commitment to Jesus Christ. You can't get *everything* as a historian, but you get enough to cause a change of mind about who Jesus was.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

California Democrats introduce bill to force pregnancy centers to refer abortions

April 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The bill was introduced by two Democrats:

> Assemblymembers David Chiu (D-San Francisco) and Autumn Burke (D-Los Angeles) introduced AB 775, a bill that helps ensure women receive prompt access to affordable, comprehensive reproductive-health care and are empowered to make fully informed decisions. AB 775 will be heard in the Assembly Committee on Health tomorrow, on April 14th.
>
> AB 775, the Reproductive Freedom, Accountability, Comprehensive Care and Transparency (FACT) Act, requires licensed facilities that provide family planning and pregnancy-related services to inform patients about available assistance for affordable contraception, abortion, and prenatal care, including how to obtain that assistance. Facilities that offer similar services but do not have a medical license must disclose that they are not licensed facilities and do not have a licensed provider on staff. The bill is sponsored by NARAL Pro-Choice California and Black Women for Wellness.

Life News explains what the bill actually does to pro-life crisis pregnancy centers:

> A California committee has approved a bill that would force pregnancy centers providing women with abortion alternatives to refer women for abortions.
>
> Thousands of pregnancy centers across the nation are the counterbalance to the abortion industry by providing women with tangible help and real alternatives to abortion. But pregnancy centers in California may soon find themselves forced to promote abortions under legislation pending in the California legislature.
>
> AB 775, the Pregnancy Counseling Discrimination Rule, would require all pregnancy centers to promote abortions to their clients. There is no conscience clause or opt out for centers that provide pregnant women assistance without abortions or abortion referrals. Failure to comply carries a $500 fine for first offense and $1,000 for each subsequent offense. The bill authorizes the Attorney General, city attorney, or county counsel to impose the civil fines.

I've been posting a lot of stories lately about how the secular left forces people who support natural marriage to be in favor of redefining marriage. But secular leftists are willing to use the power of big government to bully people of morality elsewhere – this time on the abortion issue. Yes, when they're not busy denying children their mothers or fathers, they're trying to kill them with abortion. And if you disagree with being forced to do evil things to born and unborn children, well, that's what courts and prisons are for. I guess they think that if everyone is forced to be complicit, either by funding it or

participating in it, then no one is innocent. Then what they are doing is not really wrong at all. That’s what they tell themselves.

Clinton Foundation continues to take donations from regimes that oppress women

April 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton: secretive, entitled, hypocritical, deceptive
From the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> The board of the Clinton Foundation said Wednesday night that it will continue accepting donations from foreign governments, but only from six nations, a move that appears aimed at insulating Hillary Rodham Clinton from controversies over the charity's reliance on millions of dollars from abroad as she ramps up her presidential campaign.
>
> Clinton, who resigned from the foundation's board last week, has faced mounting criticism over the charity's ties to foreign governments.
>
> The board of the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation said that future donations will only be allowed from the governments of Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom – all nations that previously supported the charity's health, poverty and climate change programs.
>
> While direct contributions from other governments would be halted, those nations could continue participating in the Clinton Global Initiative, a subsidiary program that encourages donors to match contributions from others to tackle international problems without direct donations to the charity.
>
> The foundation also will begin disclosing its donors every quarter instead of annually – an answer to long-standing criticism that the foundation's once-a-year lists made it difficult to view shifts and trends in the charity's funding. Former President Bill Clinton and other foundation officials have long defended the charity's transparency, but the new move signaled sensitivity to those concerns, particularly as his wife begins her race for the White House.
>
> […]An Associated Press analysis of Clinton Foundation donations between 2001

> and 2015 showed governments and agencies from 16 nations previously gave direct grants of between $55 million and $130 million. Those governments include the six nations that will be allowed to continue donating. The remaining 10 are Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Kuwait, Italy, Brunei, Taiwan and the Dominican Republic.
>
> […]Hillary Clinton had previously agreed with the Obama administration to limit new foreign donations to the foundation while she served as secretary of state, but at least six nations that previously contributed still donated to the charity during her four-year stint. In one case, thefoundation failed to notify the State Department about a donation from the government of Algeria.

One feminist activist has come out and asked Clinton to stop taking donations from countries that oppress women.

The Weekly Standard explains:

> A prominent Pakistani-born women's rights activist is asking presidential candidates, including Hillary Clinton, to pledge not to accept donations from foreign nations that oppress women. Raheel Raza, the Canadian journalist behind the documentary film *Honor Diaries*, is requesting all the presidential candidates, from both parties and both "men and women," to sign her pledge.
>
> This week, Hillary Clinton announced her candidacy for President," said Raza in a statement. "As a woman, I congratulate her, but as a women's rights advocate, I'm concerned about the $13,000,000-$40,000,000 the Clinton Foundation reportedly took from regimes that persecute women, namely Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and the UAE."
>
> Raza's pledge is not limited to presidential campaigns, asking candidates to promise to "never take money from regimes that oppress women, even after I leave public office, including any libraries or foundations in my name."
>
> "If you're running for President—and if you want women's votes—you should sign 'The Pledge to Women' and say 'no' to money from regimes that forbid women to vote or run for office," said Raza.
>
> The Clintons' foundation has said that it will continue to accept donations from a specific set of Western nations, though not from the Middle Eastern regimes that persecute women. The related Clinton Global Initative may, however, still allow participation from those regimes, the *Wall Street Journal* reports.
>
> Raza is a liberal Muslim who has spoken out against Islamic terrorism as well as so-called honor killings within Muslim communities. She has received death threats for her views.

I don't think this is going to reach most of her low-information supporters, who will just vote for her because she is a woman regardless, but the independents might care about what they are getting.

We've already seen how liberals think with the election and re-election of Barack Obama. Here is how it works, and there really is no more to their thinking than this – at any level. They think "Obama is black, so that means we should vote for him because he will help blacks". Except that the facts show that black unemployment has recovered the least of any race during his time as President. That's from the radically leftist Washington Post, by the way. With Hillary, a lot of women will be voting for her thinking, "she's a woman, she'll help women". But the facts clearly show that not only does Hillary pay her women staffers less than men, but that her foundation also pays women less than men. And she takes donations from nations that oppress women. And I don't mean "no free condoms" when I say oppress women, I mean stuff like "have them killed for not wearing a burkha".

Serial sexual relationships, multi-partner fertility, single motherhood and fatherlessness

April 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A man leading a woman upward

Here's an article from the policy journal National Affairs (editor is Yuval Levin) that has some statistics about single motherhood by choice. When you are reading the article, keep in mind that most people who lean left are so influenced by feminism that they seem to think that women trip and fall accidentally, and end up pregnant from random men. I don't think that we should minimize the fact that most women *freely choose* the men who treat them badly.

Excerpt:

> Pew Foundation and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention surveys indicate that, on a range of measures, a very large share of fathers who do not live with their children have virtually no meaningful relationship with their non-custodial children. More than one-half report that they had not shared a meal with their non-custodial children in the last four weeks, while nearly two-thirds had not read to their children and a full three-quarters had not done homework with them. Moreover, these are self-reported figures, so the share of fathers with no relationship to their non-custodial children is most likely even higher.
>
> When fathers form new romantic partnerships, their involvement with children from previous relationships declines. Jo Jones and William Mosher report that, while 39% of fathers in new romantic relationships had shared a meal with their non-custodial 5- to 18-year-old children at least once in the past month, 62% of those not in a new romantic relationship had. While 55% of fathers in a new romantic relationship had spoken with their 5- to 18-year-old non-custodial children, 77% of those not in a new romantic relationship had.
>
> In addition, men with less education are more likely to exhibit absent-father behavior. Whereas 70% of fathers with at least some college had talked to their

non-custodial 5- to 18-year-old children at least once in the past month, 59% of those with no more than a high-school degree had done so. While 74% of fathers with at least some college had played with their non-custodial child under 5 years old at least once in the past month, only 53% of those fathers with no more than a high-school degree had.

Multi-partner fertility is not only associated with father abandonment, it also adversely impacts child-maltreatment rates. Women attempting to balance work, the demands of new relationships, and the challenges of raising children are faced with a set of chronic stressors that often lead to child abuse and neglect. The shift from welfare to work increased these stresses. Partially as a result, between 1993 and 2005, the rate of overall abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and serious abuse, respectively, rose by 22%, 14%, 49%, and 34% for children living with single mothers. By contrast, for children living in two-parent households, child-abuse rates fell on each of the four measures (by 42%, 24%, 62%, and 37%, respectively). By 2005, the child-abuse rate was 2.9 per 1,000 for children living with married biological parents but 10.2 for those living with a single parent and no partner, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This disparity cannot be explained solely by socioeconomic status since the abuse rate for children in families *of all kinds* in the lowest socioeconomic group was still lower than that for children living in single-parent households.

Multi-partner fertility also increases child-abuse rates in a second way: the presence of non-biological fathers in the house. Child abuse in households with single mothers triples when they live with a man other than the child's father. Child-maltreatment rates are actually lower in black than white households when the mother lives alone. But unfortunately, many men bring their job and other frustrations into the home, creating abusive situations. As a result, when a partner is present, the black rates on all three measures of child maltreatment — emotional, physical, and endangerment — are almost double the white rates. In addition, rates of intimate violence are over 12 times higher for single mothers than for married mothers.

Edin and Nelson ignore the subject of abusive behavior in men. Instead, despite the fathers' caring attitudes, we are told, the mothers kick them out because they don't earn sufficient income. And on the impact of multi-partner fertility on children, *Doing the Best I Can* offers *one* benign sentence: "Kids are amazingly resilient, but the rate of family change among children of unwed fathers has become so rapid, and now leads to such complicated family structures, that kids might have a hard time adjusting."

Academic studies paint a much grimmer picture. After surveying the evidence, Sara McLanahan and Christopher Jencks concluded earlier this year,

> [A] father's absence increases antisocial behavior [among children], such

> > as aggression, rule breaking, delinquency, and illegal drug use. These antisocial behaviors affect high school completion independent of a child's verbal and math scores. Thus it appears that a father's absence lowers children's educational attainment…by disrupting their social and emotional adjustment and reducing their ability or willingness to exercise self-control.
>
> The effects of growing up without both parents when it comes to aggression, rule breaking, and delinquency are also larger for boys than for girls. Marianne Bertrand and Jessica Pan found in 2011 that the behavior of boys is far more dependent upon good parenting practices — spending time with a child, emotional closeness, and avoiding harsh discipline — than that of girls. Such parenting habits are far more common in two-parent families, which helps to explain why boys with absent fathers are more likely to be suspended and have other behavioral problems than boys who have both parents at home.
>
> The evidence also indicates that the outcomes are most negative when a man other than the biological father is present. Cassandra Dorius and Karen Guzzo found that "adolescents with a half-sibling with a different father are about 65 percent more likely to have used marijuana, uppers, inhalants, cocaine, crack, hallucinogens, sedatives, or other drugs by the time of their 15th birthday than those who have only full siblings." Cynthia Harper and Sara McLanahan reported in 2004 that, among fatherless boys, those who lived with stepfathers were at an even greater risk of incarceration than those who lived with a single mother.

I think in today's society, there seems to be a lot of fear and trembling to speak about moral standards. And it seems to be especially true that men are not allowed to tell women about their moral obligations. I know that at least when I speak to young women, they are often very rebellious. The attitude I encounter most often is that they feel that they should be able to trust their feelings and act in the way that their feelings dictate. Any destructiveness that results – which I warned them about – is dismissed as "unexpected".

I can clearly remember the first time this happened to me, when I was in high school. I was friends with a girl named Tara who would come over and speak to me before morning announcements. She would tell me about her stock car driving boyfriend. One day, she told me that she was moving in with him. I warned her against it, and listed off a bunch of statistics about how this would cause problems. She stopped coming to talk to me, and so did her best female friend. Well, a few years later I ran into her again at one of our local universities where I was an undergraduate. She filled me in on what had happened. He had cheated on her with her best friend in their house. He got her pregnant. She had an abortion. She knew better now, but back in high school I was easily dismissed, and all of her friends sided with her.

Whenever I try to produce evidence to say that something is likely to cause harm, the response is usually "well I know a person who broke the rules and nothing happened". I

produce statistics about some likely consequence of following your heart, and it's dismissed because some Hollywood celebrity managed to escape the probabilities. "Don't judge me!" they say. Happiness comes first, and the best way to decide how to be happy in the long-term is apparently to do what makes a person feel happy right now. But statistics are there to tell a story of how the world *normally* works – dismissing it all with individual cases is bad logic. There are consequences to following your feelings and dismissing moral obligations.

What are Hillary Clinton's views on amnesty and illegal immigration?

April 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a story from the Weekly Standard.

It says:

> Hillary Clinton's campaign is now saying she supports driver's licenses for illegal immigrants. "Hillary supports state policies to provide driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants," a spokesperson told the *Huffington Post*.
>
> The issue gave Clinton fits last time she ran for president. She was for it before being against it.
>
> […]But now Clinton has completely flipped again, taking up the position now most in line with the Democratic base. It would appear the front-running Democratic candidate is doing her best to adopt the positions of her chief rival, Martin O'Malley, whose long supported this liberal policy.

So she supports Obama's executive order amnesty. How many driver's licenses are we talking about?

The Washington Times has the number.

Excerpt:

> The administration has granted about 541,000 Social Security numbers to illegal immigrants under President Obama's original 2012 deportation amnesty for Dreamers, officials told Congress in a letter made public Wednesday.
>
> That means almost all of the illegal immigrants approved for the amnesty are being granted work permits and Social Security numbers, opening the door to government benefits ranging from tax credits to driver's licenses.
>
> […]**Social Security numbers are considered one of the gatekeepers for being able to live and work in the U.S., and some experts have said granting them to illegal immigrants makes it easier for them to access rights reserved only for citizens, such as voting.**
>
> **But the Obama administration has ruled that the illegal immigrants it has approved for its temporary deportation amnesty, known as "deferred action," are here legally for as long as the program exists, and so they are entitled to work permits and Social Security numbers.**
>
> **The IRS has acknowledged that getting a Social Security number entitles illegal immigrants to go back and claim refunds under the Earned Income Tax Credit for time they worked illegally — even if they didn't file returns or pay taxes for those years.**

> **Republican critics of the president's immigration policy say he's helping illegal immigrants at the expense of American workers, whose taxes pay for Social Security and other government benefits.**
>
> "This grant transfers jobs, wealth and benefits from marginalized U.S. workers directly to illegal workers," said Stephen Miller, a spokesman for Mr. Sessions. "One of the most dramatic costs of amnesty — whether legislative or imposed through executive diktat — is the opening of our federal Trust Funds to large numbers of lower-income illegal immigrants."
>
> Mr. Obama's latest amnesty, announced in November 2014, has been halted by a federal court, so no Social Security numbers have been granted under that policy.
>
> But the first amnesty, announced in June 2012 and covering young adult illegal immigrants known as Dreamers, remains in effect, and had approved nearly 639,000 persons as of the end of 2014.

I think this quotation hits on the problem that conservatives have with illegal immigration – whether the illegal immigrants will pay more in taxes than they use in social services. It is good to be generous to others, but I would rather use my own money to help people who will respect my values and let me into their decision-making, instead of having the government swoop in and hand out money in exchange for votes – my money. My plans require the money I earn. When that money is taken by government for someone else who doesn't know me at all, that makes it harder for me to carry out my plan and help the people who know me.

To give someone financial aid is to present your values to them in a positive light. Who is respected when government takes my money and hands it out? I don't get to pass my values to the people I am helping. Government gets to pass their values to the people they are using my money to help. I have the ability to speak into the decision-making of people who ask me for my help – I get to advise them. But government has nothing to say to people when they hand out money, except maybe to encourage them to make more bad decisions so they can get more of other people's money. That's not a hand up, that's a hand-out.

Michael Ruse debates Stephen C. Meyer on intelligent design and evolution on NPR

April 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a debate between:

- Stephen C. Meyer, author of Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design
- Michael Ruse, Director of the History and Philosophy of Science Program at Florida State University

The MP3 file is here. (28 minutes)

The following summary is rated S for Slightly Snarky. Reader discretion is advised.

Topics:

- Moderator: (to Meyer) define creationism, evolution, and intelligent design
- Meyer: creationism is based on an interpretation of the Bible
- Meyer: evolution is an unguided process of mutation and selection that produces organisms
- Meyer: intelligent design is the idea that the best explanation for certain features of life
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Where do you disagree?
- Ruse: Intelligent design is similar to creationism, but I won't say how exactly
- Meyer: ID is a good explanation for the sudden origin of animal body plans in the Cambrian era
- Moderator: (to Meyer) Is the designer God? Is the designer the Christian God?
- Meyer: No, ID theory is an inference that is rooted in scientific evidence, not in a religious text
- Meyer: ID can be inferred from the origin of biological information and from molecular machines
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Where do you disagree?
- Ruse: Meyer is disingenuous because ID requires the designer to be God
- Meyer: The biological evidence for intelligent design by itself does not implicate God
- Meyer: The fine-tuning of the cosmos is intelligent design in physics, and that *would* require God
- Moderator: (to Meyer) Explain what the Cambrian explosion is
- Meyer: sudden origin of 36 body plans in 10 million years 530 million years ago
- Moderator: So you think that 36 body plans in 10 million years is too sudden for Darwinian mechanisms to produce?
- Meyer: Yes, for two reasons. One, there are no precursors prior to the start of the explosion in complexity
- Meyer: And two, the complexity of animal life includes code, circuitry, hierarchies –

best explained by a designer
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Is it a problem for you?
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that denies that the Ediacaran fauna are precursors to the Cambrian animals
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that denies that microfossils are precursors to the Cambrian animals
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that denies that animal complexity goes from simple to complex in the fossil record
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that shows that the Cambrian explosion took place over a few million years
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that shows that there were complex organ types at the start of the Cambrian explosion
- Ruse: There is no peer-reviewed paper that denies that we already have a materialist explanation for the Cambrian explosion
- Ruse: everything is solved! nothing to see here! (folds arms and beams) I trust that my unsupported assertions have relieved your doubts, yes?
- Moderator: Is intelligent design undermined by more recent science?
- Meyer: no, there is an absence of precursor fossils in the period before the Cambrian explosion
- Meyer: there are other things that make the problem even worse for naturalism, like information from epigenetics
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Answer that
- Ruse: He is just pulling out passages out of context because he is a creationist!
- Moderator: The leftist New Yorker reviewer Gareth Cook says that the Cambrian explosion took tens of millions of years
- Meyer: Actually, the peer-reviewed science is clear that the standard date is at most 10 million nears
- Moderator: (to Ruse) Deny the mainstream date
- Ruse: Well, Prothero says no! Ho ho ho! (folds arms) He just says it. No it’s not published in peer-reviewed research
- Ruse: We know so much more than Darwin did, how could the progress of science disprove my materialist pre-supposition? It’s unpossible!
- Moderator: (to Meyer) Isn’t ID pseudo-science?
- Meyer: If we limit ourselves to materialist explanations only, then we cannot infer intelligence when we see artifacts like the Rosetta Stone
- Meyer: wind and erosion is not an adequate explanation for certain systems – systems that are rich in information
- Meyer: the best explanation is the explanation that relies on known causes – we know that intelligence produces information
- Moderator: (to Meyer) so the intelligence is the best explanation of systems that have information?
- Meyer: yes, think about software code – the best explanation of new computer instructions is an intelligence

- Meyer: we have uniform and repeated experience of intelligence bringing new information into being, and new animals need new information
- Moderator: (to Ruse) must science only work with natural explanations?
- Ruse: intelligent design is religion! Ho ho ho ho! (folds arms)
- Ruse: there is no a priori way of ruling out supernatural causes in order to explain nature
- Ruse: We don't need to introduce supernatural causes to explain information in living systems or in software code
- Ruse: Steve is asking me to explain the Cambrian explosion, but why does he want me to explain that?
- Ruse: How did anything start to fly? How did whales come? There, those questions explain the Cambrian explosion naturalistically
- Ruse: Steve's answer to explain new information is to bring in miracles, like when he said that new computer code requires God
- Ruse: inferring intelligence as an explanation for information like the computer code is religion! God! Creationism! Prayer in schools!
- Ruse: we have to keep looking for naturalistic explanations for the Big Bang, the DNA, the fine-tuning, the Cambrian fossils, etc.
- Ruse: we are never justified in inferring an intelligence to explain information, because that would deny my religion of materialism
- Moderator: (to Ruse) what are the requirements for a theory to be scientific?
- Ruse: any explanation has to be naturalistic, because I am an atheist and that's my religion, and we can't go against my religion
- Ruse: it's "really stupid" to infer God as the explanation of the creation of the entire physical universe or the cosmic fine-tuning
- Moderator: (to Meyer) why is intelligent design so popular when we have court cases saying it is not science?
- Meyer: the Discovery Institute does not have an agenda to teach intelligent design in public schools
- Meyer: intelligent design is about inferring intelligence as a causal explanation for information in living systems, and elsewhere
- Moderator: (to Ruse) are evolutionists unwilling to entertain the possibility of intelligence being the best explanation?
- Ruse: scientists have to make sure that that all their explanations don't go outside of the materialist reservation
- Ruse: intelligent design is evangelical Christianity dressed up to look like science, the Dover judge said so
- Ruse: Meyer is disingenuous! Ho ho ho ho ho! (folds arms contentedly)
- Meyer: first, judges don't decide science, evidence decides science
- Meyer: the Dover people made a mistake by trying to go to the courts to get things into the schools
- Meyer: intelligent design is about research, writing books and papers based on what we learn from science

- Moderator: (to Ruse) is intelligent design dangerous?
- Ruse: yes, intelligent design is about politics, it’s not about cosmic fine-tuning, origin of life, molecular machines or Cambrian explosion
- Ruse: intelligent design is about abstinence, prayer in schools, burdening women with unwanted babies and male-female marriage
- Ruse: my reason for opposing ID is the socially conservative agenda which emerges from protein folding probability calculations
- Ruse: I don’t want to be drafted to fight in Vietnam, I don’t want them to take away my drugs, etc. so that’s why I believe Darwinism
- Moderator: (to Meyer) why do you want to take abortion away, you meany?
- Meyer: actually, intelligent design is about science, and in any case National Review gave my book a bad review
- Moderator: (to Ruse) are science and religion in conflict?
- Ruse: well religion can just abstain from making any claims about the physical world, and just stick to subjective nonsense – that’s fair
- Moderator: (to Meyer) isn’t all opposition to evolution rooted in fundamentalist religion?
- Meyer: you can believe in Darwinism and be a theist, but the real reason for doubting Darwinism is the scientific evidence, not religion

Tell me how you think Dr. Meyer did in the comments.

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

April 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a debate with a well-qualified atheist and Dr. Craig.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have

a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It’s not just that the settings are unlikely, it’s that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a “herd morality” that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved “herd morality”. However, people do experience objective moral values, and

these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims

are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it’s not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn’t hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time “prior to” the universe’s beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It’s possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It’s also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a

sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology

removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Obama’s irresponsible student loan policies leave taxpayers with trillion-dollar bubble

April 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

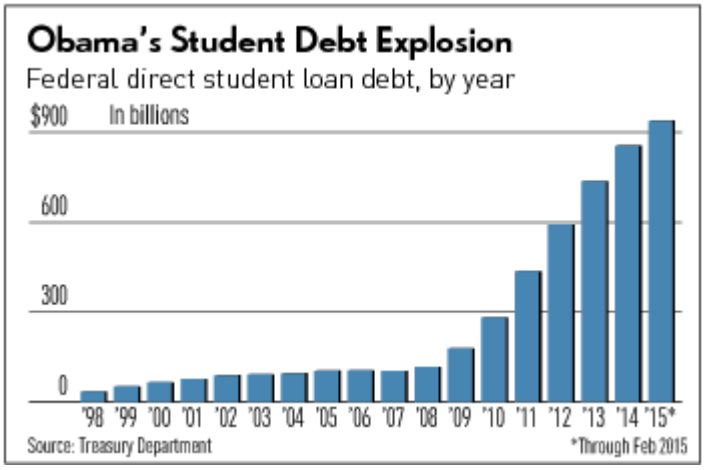

President Obama’s student loan bubble

This is from Investors Business Daily.

It says:

> In 2010, Obama eliminated the federal guaranteed loan program, which let private lenders offer student loans at low interest rates. Now, the Department of Education is the only place to go for such loans.
>
> Obama sold this government takeover as a way to save money — why bear the costs of guaranteeing private loans, he said, when the government could cut out the middleman and lend the money itself?
>
> The cost savings didn’t happen. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office just increased its 10-year forecast for the loan program’s costs by $27 billion, or 30%.
>
> What did happen was an explosive growth in the amount of federal student loan debt. President Clinton phased in direct federal lending in 1993 as an option, but over the next 15 years the amount of loans was fairly stable. The result of Obama’s action is striking. In each of the past six years, federal direct student loan debt has climbed by more than $100 billion. (See chart.)
>
> And since Obama keeps making it easier and easier to avoid repaying those loans, it’s a problem that taxpayers will eventually have to shoulder.
>
> Through words and actions, Obama has encouraged irresponsibility on the part of student borrowers. He constantly talks as if student debt were an unfair burden they unknowingly had foisted upon them.
>
> At the same time, he’s made it easier and easier to avoid paying back student loans in full. Earlier this year, for example, Obama expanded eligibility for his “pay as you earn” program, which limits loan payments to 10% of income, with

> any debt left after 20 years forgiven.
>
> Students got the message. The St. Louis Fed reports that 27.3% of student loans in repayment are at least a month behind in payments. That's a far higher delinquency rate than any other kind of debt, and it's significantly higher than the delinquency rate 10 years ago.
>
> "This overall level of delinquency is very concerning," concluded authors Juan Sanchez and Lijin Zhu.
>
> A 2013 Consumer Financial Protection Board report found that less than half of this federal loan money was actually being paid. About 30% was held by borrowers still in school or in a grace period, another chunk in deferment or forbearance, and almost 14% was in default.

The problem here is that whenever the government nationalizes something that the private sector is doing, it always creates a problem. Let me explain. If student loans (or mortgage loans) are run solely by the private sector, then the motivation for lending money out at interest is to make money for the bank's depositors and investors. In other words, because the bankers are in a free market and have to compete for depositors and investors, they have an interest in making sure that the loans they make get paid back.

But when the government takes over loans, they are not interested in being wise with the money they lend out – it's not their money. They want to lend out as much as possible today in order to buy votes, and then kick the can down the road on the repayment. So instead of being careful about asking "will this get paid back?" they ask "how can I borrow from the future in order to buy as many votes as I can right now?" And that's how we got the housing crisis of 2008, as well as this trillion-dollar student loan crisis.

When you take the profit motive out of the lending decision, then money gets lend to people who will never be able to pay it back. No private bank that has to answer to shareholders hands out money to students who want to study underwater basket-weaving. But the government does. They want to buy as many votes as possible. And besides, this is not their money. They are borrowing it from the future earnings of the very students they are giving it to! That's what happens when you let big government decide everything.

Whenever big government politicians want to buy votes with taxpayer money, they always sell it to the people with sob stories about some poor, helpless group of people will suffer through no fault of their own. There are a lot of voters who will vote for politicians who cry crocodile tears for them, especially ones who don't understand economics. There is no free lunch – somebody has to pay. Democrats are basically throwing a party for students, and then mailing them the (unexpected) bill for it, with interest.

Does peer-reviewed science support Bill Nye's attempt to prove materialism?

April 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

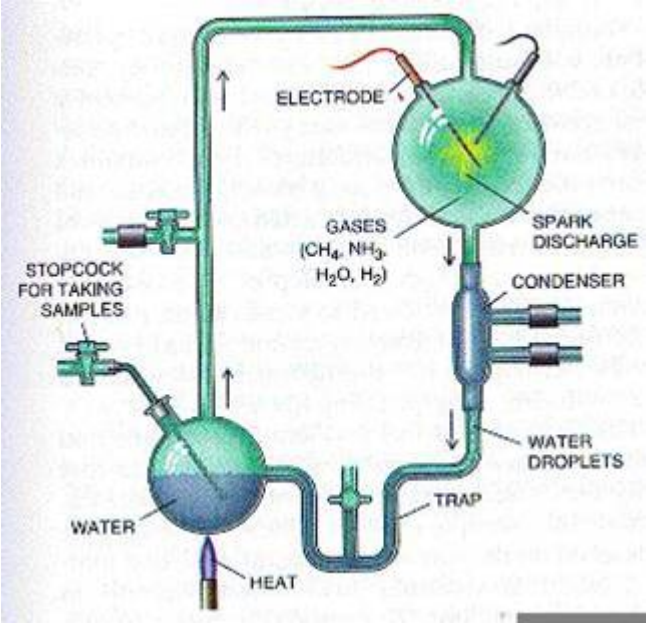

Do the Miller-Urey experiments simulate the early Earth?

Casey Luskin looks at Nye's new book "Undeniable", which turns out to be very deniable, since it uses discredited science to support materialist philosophy.

Luskin writes:

> If you think Nye's ideology is bad, wait until you see the "science" he uses to justify these claims.
>
> On the origin of life, Nye maintains that the famous Miller-Urey experiments "simulate[d] the conditions on earth in primordial times," and "produced the natural amino acids." Yet the Miller-Urey experiments did *not* accurately simulate the earth's early atmosphere. An article in *Science* explains why the experiments are irrelevant: "the early atmosphere looked nothing like the Miller-Urey situation."
>
> Nye also invokes the unsophisticated argument that humans and apes must share a common ancestor because our gene-coding DNA is only about 1% different. "This is striking evidence for chimps and chumps to have a common ancestor," he writes.
>
> This argument is not just simplistic, it's also false.
>
> An article in the journal *Science* challenged "the myth of 1%," suggesting the statistic is a "truism [that] should be retired," since "studies are showing that [humans and chimps] are not as similar as many tend to believe." Geneticist Richard Buggs maintains that "the total similarity of the genomes could be below 70%."

> Even if we do share DNA with chimps, why should that demonstrate common ancestry? Intelligent agents regularly re-use parts that work in different systems (e.g., wheels for cars and wheels for airplanes). Nye's crude argument ignores the possibility of common design.
>
> *Undeniable* also botches arguments that the fossil record shows "transitional forms."
>
> Nye cites *Tiktaalik* as a "'fishapod' (transition between fish and tetrapod, or land animal with four legs)" that is a fulfilled "prediction" of evolution because of when it was found in the fossil record. Nye is apparently unaware that this so-called evolutionary "prediction" went belly-up after scientists found tracks of true tetrapods with digits some 18 million years before *Tiktaalik* in the fossil record. As *Nature* put it, *Tiktaalik* cannot be a "direct transitional form."
>
> In another instance, Nye claims we've "found a whole range of human ancestors, including *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*," apparently not realizing that an article in *Nature* reported there are "many … features that link the specimen with chimpanzees, gorillas or both," since "*Sahelanthropus* was an ape."
>
> There are other scientific errors in Nye's book, but one more will suffice. Throughout *Undeniable*, Nye demeans humanity by claiming our bodies are poorly designed, promoting the old canard that the human eye is wired backwards, and "not an optimal optical arrangement." Nye apparently never saw a 2010 paper in *Physical Review Letters* which found that our eyes have special glial cells which sit over the retina, acting like fiber-optic cables to channel light through tissue directly onto our photoreceptor cells, showing the human retina is "an optimal structure designed for improving the sharpness of images."
>
> *Undeniable* is one long attempt at wedding materialist philosophy with science. "The natural world is a package deal," Nye insists at one point, "you don't get to select which facts you like and which you don't." Yet he consistently ignores facts that contradict his arguments for Darwinian orthodoxy.

Interesting that he stands by the Miller-Urey experiments, when we now know that the experiment used gases that were not found on the early earth, not to mention that the experiments required experimenter intervention. And this is just to get the letters for proteins and DNA code – it doesn't even count the sequencing problem, which is where you run into improbabilities that make materialist explanations for the origin of life as unlikely as flat-Earthism. You can believe if you really need to, but I wouldn't call wanting to believe something really badly "scientific".

Largest individual donor to Clinton Foundation has trade ties to Iran

April 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

This is from the leftist Newsweek, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The fourth richest man in Ukraine, Pinchuk owns Interpipe Group, a Cyprus-incorporated manufacturer of seamless pipes used in oil and gas sectors.
>
> Newsweek has seen declarations and documents from Ukraine that show a series of shipments from Interpipe to Iran in 2011 and 2012, including railway parts and products commonly used in the oil and gas sectors.
>
> Among a number of high-value invoices for products related to rail or oil and gas, one shipment for $1.8m (1.7m) in May 2012 was for "seamless hot-worked steel pipes for pipelines" and destined for a city near the Caspian Sea.
>
> Both the rail and oil and gas sectors are sanctioned by the US, which specifically prohibits any single invoice to the Iranian petrochemical industry worth more than $1m.

Hot Air says that the group should not have been doing business with Iran:

> In other words, Interpipe should have been slapped with penalties and sanctions for its operations with Iran. Pinchuk's company has a US subsidiary, which means that US sanctions apply across the entire organization. The agency for imposing penalties for sanctions violations in these cases, Ross notes, is the State Department. Who was in charge at the State Department during this period? None other than Hillary Clinton.

> […]Despite all of Pinchuk's activity with Iran, the State Department apparently took no action against his company or Pinchuk himself. That lack of response finally got the attention of Rep. Steve Stockman last November, before his retirement, who requested that the Department of the Treasury investigate Interpipe. So far, there have been no developments on that front.

Hot Air also linked to this Wall Street Journal article that specifies the amounts of the donations.

Hold on to your hats:

> **Between 2009 and 2013, including when Mrs. Clinton was secretary of state, the Clinton Foundation received at least $8.6 million from the Victor Pinchuk Foundation, according to that foundation, which is based in Kiev, Ukraine.** It was created by Mr. Pinchuk, whose fortune stems from a pipe-making company. He served two terms as an elected member of the Ukrainian Parliament and is a proponent of closer ties between Ukraine and the European Union.
>
> Mr. Pinchuk and his wife—the daughter of former Ukraine PresidentLeonid Kuchma—began donating to Clinton charities in 2006 after being introduced to Mr. Clinton by Doug Schoen, a pollster who has worked for both Clintons.
>
> In 2008, Mr. Pinchuk made a five-year, $29 million commitment to the Clinton Global Initiative, a wing of the foundation that coordinates charitable projects and funding for them but doesn't handle the money. The pledge was to fund a program to train future Ukrainian leaders and professionals "to modernize Ukraine," according to the Clinton Foundation. Several alumni are current members of the Ukrainian Parliament. Actual donations so far amount to only $1.8 million, a Pinchuk foundation spokesman said, citing the impact of the 2008 financial crisis.

Now you might think that millions of dollars is a lot of money to Hillary Clinton, but actually, her campaign is expected to blow through $2.5 BILLION, according to the radically leftist New York Times.

The ultra-leftist New Yorker listed some more of the Clinton Foundation donors, and one of them is a monster:

> The *Guardian* story, by highlighting the fact that some of the Clinton Foundation's donors have been maintaining bank accounts in Switzerland, has focussed attention on its sources of financing rather than its makeover or its philanthropic activities. Among the donors named by the *Guardian* were the British retail mogul Richard Caring; Frank Giustra, a Canadian mining magnate who appeared earlier this week at C.G.I.'s annual winter meeting, in New York; **and Jeffrey Epstein, a New York financier who was jailed in 2008 for soliciting prostitution from underage girls.** According to the Clinton Foundation's donor database, Giustra and charities linked to him have donated at least fifty million

> dollars. In 2006, Epstein gave twenty-five thousand dollars, the *Guardian* said. Other donors to the foundation who were identified as clients of H.S.B.C.'s Geneva office included Eli Broad, the Californian entrepreneur and philanthropist, and Denise Rich, whose former husband, the fugitive commodities trader Marc Rich, was pardoned by Bill Clinton just before he left office, in 2001.

Maybe Epstein is hoping for a pardon, the way that Marc Rich got a pardon from Bill Clinton, just before he left office? This whole situation is incestuous. It sickens me that this is what Democrats do in order to get elected. TWO AND A HALF BILLION DOLLARS? That's how you get elected President?

Or maybe it's just being a woman:

Do you think those college students know about where the Clinton Foundation gets its millions of dollars of donations?

Related posts

- What are Hillary Clinton's views on amnesty and illegal immigration?
- Hillary Clinton never signed separation form that required her to turn over all e-mails
- Could Hillary Clinton be sent to prison because of her secret e-mail server?
- Hillary Clinton deleted 32,000 e-mails, refuses to turn over her home-based server
- Clinton Foundation: all eight of the highest paid executives are men
- E-mails released by Clinton: there are "months, and months, and months" missing
- Hillary Clinton used her private e-mail account to conduct State Department business
- E-mails: Hillary Clinton's top aides knew in minutes that Benghazi was a terrorist attack
- Clinton Foundation receives millions in donations from regimes that oppress women
- As senator, Hillary Clinton paid women 72 cents for every dollar she paid men
- Hillary Clinton's fake Bosnia gunfire story and her abortion award
- Hillary Clinton: don't let anybody tell you that corporations and businesses create jobs
- Hillary Clinton aides were present to "separate" damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- Universities raise tuition while paying hundreds of thousands to Hillary Clinton to speak
- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- Hillary Clinton opposes bill to cut taxpayer funding of abortions abroad

Will gay activists threaten this little girl for covering her eyes at a gay pride parade?

April 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It seems to me that we need to have another massive protest like we saw in Indiana! Some impertinent little girl at a gay rights parade in Toronto has dared to refuse to celebrate at a gay pride parade.

Look at her committing a hate crime against this innocent gay man. (I am not posting this picture on my blog, and viewer discretion is advised)

The story says:

> Earlier this week, our managing editor Steve Jalsevac published a slideshow with his photos from the 2011 Toronto Gay Pride Parade. Many of the photos were shocking. But one commenter pointed out a detail in one photo that many people probably missed.
>
> The photo says it all: Naked men marching in Toronto's Pride parade, showcasing what supporters cheer on as the advancement of "gay rights" and "sexual liberation." The naked men march past men, women, and yes even children. Everyone is encouraged to celebrate "diversity."
>
> Oh, but what's this? A young girl with blond hair in a turquoise teeshirt knows that something is wrong.
>
> The girl, maybe 8 or 9, doesn't want to see naked men displaying their genitals. She feels assaulted by what she sees. She implicitly understands that her innocence is threatened by what she sees. She knows something wrong is happening.

Death threats and getting people fired is getting to be a common response of gay activists to anything less than enthusiastic celebration of the gay agenda. That's what happened to the religious liberty law in Indiana, to the pizza store that refused to cater a gay wedding. Maybe this little girl needs to be taught a lesson, too, right gay activists?

Where does it end?

Interesting to note that Ontario, the province where this occurred, has elected a gay premier (governor), and that their sex education curriculum was written in consultation with a convicted sex offender.

Read it:

> A man who was once Ontario's deputy minister of education has pleaded guilty to three child pornography-related charges in a Toronto court.
>
> Benjamin Levin, who was also a university professor, entered a guilty plea for making written child pornography, counselling a person to commit a sexual

> assault, and possession of child pornography.
>
> He was originally charged with seven child-pornography-related offences.
>
> The investigation that led to Levin's July 2013 arrest began in mid-2012 after officials in Toronto were contacted by authorities in New Zealand and later police in London, Ont.
>
> From late 2004 to early 2007, Levin held the post of deputy education minister in Ontario, and was on Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne's transition team as she took office.
>
> He also served as Manitoba's deputy minister of advanced education and deputy minister of education, training and youth between 1999 and 2002.
>
> Levin has been back in the spotlight in recent days as Ontario released an updated sex-education curriculum.

Kathleen Wynne is the lesbian premier. She divorced her husband and left her three kids when she "came out". Something to celebrate! You'd better celebrate it, or else. And the sex education curriculum will make sure that going forward, fewer and fewer people will see anything wrong with what she did.

You can read about the sex education curriculum here.

Look:

> CLC has studied the 2015 proposed curriculum and we have found that the controversial elements of the program that angered parents in 2010 have remained unchanged, word for word, at the same age-inappropriate grade levels as before, when it was written under the direction of confessed child pornographer Benjamin Levin, then Deputy Education Minister. The only difference now is that Kathleen Wynne has made the curriculum even more explicit and more age-inappropriate than before, dramatically increasing the mentions of "Gender Identity" theory, sexual "identities" and "orientations".
>
> Anal intercourse is still being presented in a way that students will interpret as carrying no higher risk for STIs than vaginal intercourse, an irresponsible and misleading presentation of the former which carries a 3000% higher risk for contracting HIV. The curriculum also downplays the seriousness of contracting HIV, potentially leaving the impression with students that it's not really that big a deal. A section on HIV and AIDS seems to have an undertone of making it acceptable and normal for individuals who are HIV positive to continue having sex with others. Of course this is not science-based teaching. It's political and social engineering. It is irresponsible and may also put lives at risk.
>
> The 2015 version has added a new, controversial and very flawed theory that will be taught to elementary school children, called "gender expression". The new curriculum document also has a much stronger undertone of sex as a purely **recreational activity whose purpose is pleasure, apart from love or marriage**. In fact, the words "love" and "marriage" never appear once in the

> sex-education strand of the curriculum. Not a single mention. Does that reveal the mindset of its writers, if not the philosophical underpinnings of the curriculum itself?

That’s what politicians on the left stand for. That’s what they want for your children. Canada is about 10-20 years ahead of us, but we are catching up to them with each new Democrat we elect.

Hillary Clinton and the Human Rights Campaign

Make no mistake that Hillary Clinton is on board with this agenda, and she gives speeches extolling the virtues of the gay agenda to the Human Rights Campaign, just as Obama did.

New book by Peter Schweizer: Clinton State Department favored foreign donors

April 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton: secretive, entitled, hypoctritical

This is from the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

They write:

> The book does not hit shelves until May 5, but already the Republican Rand Paul has called its findings "big news" that will "shock people" and make voters "question" the candidacy of Hillary Rodham Clinton.
>
> "Clinton Cash: The Untold Story of How and Why Foreign Governments and Businesses Helped Make Bill and Hillary Rich," by Peter Schweizer — a 186-page investigation of donations made to the Clinton Foundation by foreign entities — is proving the most anticipated and feared book of a presidential cycle still in its infancy.
>
> **The book, a copy of which was obtained by The New York Times, asserts that foreign entities who made payments to the Clinton Foundation and to Mr. Clinton through high speaking fees received favors from Mrs. Clinton's State Department in return.**
>
> **"We will see a pattern of financial transactions involving the Clintons that occurred contemporaneous with favorable U.S. policy decisions benefiting those providing the funds," Mr. Schweizer writes.**
>
> **His examples include a free-trade agreement in Colombia that benefited a major foundation donor's natural resource investments in the South American nation, development projects in the aftermath of the Haitian earthquake in 2010, and more than $1 million in payments to Mr. Clinton by a Canadian bank and major shareholder in the Keystone XL oil pipeline around the time the project was being debated in the State**

> **Department.**

This is the piece that is missing in this Clinton Foundation story – the piece that could sink her, even if she has a $2.5 billion campaign war chest.

The book description from Amazon.com:

> In 2000 Bill and Hillary Clinton owed millions of dollars in legal debt. Since then they've earned over $130 million. Where did the money come from? Most people assume the Clintons amassed their wealth through lucrative book deals and high-six-figure fees for speaking gigs. Now Peter Schweizer shows who is really behind those enormous payments.
>
> In his *New York Times* best-selling books *Extortion* and *Throw Them All Out*, Schweizer detailed patterns of official corruption in Washington that led to congressional resignations and new ethics laws. In *Clinton Cash* he follows the Clinton money trail, revealing the connection between their personal fortune, their close personal friends, the Clinton Foundation, foreign nations, and some of the highest ranks of government.
>
> Schweizer reveals the Clintons' troubling dealings in Kazakhstan, Colombia, Haiti, and other places at the Wild West fringe of the global economy, where business is often conducted on the basis of bribes and personal connections. In this blockbuster exposé, Schweizer does not allege illegal or unethical behavior; he merely presents the troubling facts he's uncovered. Meticulously researched and scrupulously sourced, filled with headline-making revelations, *Clinton Cash* raises serious questions of judgment, of possible indebtedness to an array of foreign interests, and ultimately of fitness for high public office.

Peter Schweizer is one of my favorite authors, and his research in his previous books was first class scholarship. I'm excited to see that he is hitting this story with a thorough review right when the story is heating up. He has to do the work that the mainstream media won't do, or we will end up with another Obama.

Related posts

- Largest individual donor to Clinton Foundation has trade ties to Iran
- Clinton Foundation continues to take donations from regimes that oppress women
- What are Hillary Clinton's views on amnesty and illegal immigration?
- Hillary Clinton never signed separation form that required her to turn over all e-mails
- Could Hillary Clinton be sent to prison because of her secret e-mail server?
- Hillary Clinton deleted 32,000 e-mails, refuses to turn over her home-based server
- Clinton Foundation: all eight of the highest paid executives are men
- E-mails released by Clinton: there are "months, and months, and months" missing
- Hillary Clinton used her private e-mail account to conduct State Department business

- E-mails: Hillary Clinton’s top aides knew in minutes that Benghazi was a terrorist attack
- Clinton Foundation receives millions in donations from regimes that oppress women
- As senator, Hillary Clinton paid women 72 cents for every dollar she paid men
- Hillary Clinton’s fake Bosnia gunfire story and her abortion award
- Hillary Clinton: don’t let anybody tell you that corporations and businesses create jobs
- Hillary Clinton aides were present to “separate” damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- Universities raise tuition while paying hundreds of thousands to Hillary Clinton to speak
- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- Hillary Clinton opposes bill to cut taxpayer funding of abortions abroad

“Dead broke” Hillary Clinton makes more money in an hour than top-paid CEO

April 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

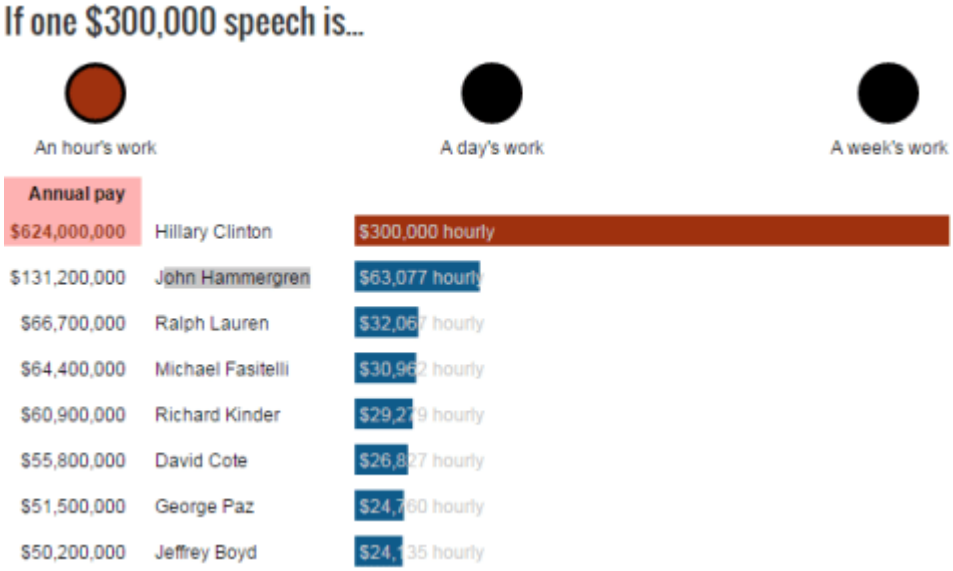

$300,000 an hour for a speech

Astonishing article from the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton is drawing a populist bead on lavish Wall Street pay packages as she revs up her march to the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination, but in some respects the fat-per-speech fee she can charge puts her far ahead of the top 10 highest-paid American CEOs.
>
> “I think it’s fair to say that if you look across the country, the deck is stacked in favor of those already at the top. There’s something wrong when CEOs make 300 times more than the American worker…,” Clinton said during her first campaign swing last week at an Iowa community college.
>
> Bashing Wall Streeters is part of Clinton’s strategy of remaking her image to appear more sympathetic to middle class voters, while also appealing to left-wing Democrats who are attracted to Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and the even more radical supporters of Sen. Bernie Sanders, the Vermont socialist who talks of seeking the 2016 nomination.

Let’s compare the per-hour rate of pay for Hillary compared to the top American CEOs:

> On that basis, the CEOs are pikers compared to an hour of Clinton speaking for $300,000. Hammergren, for example, makes only $63,076 for the same hour of labor. Clothing magnate Ralph Lauren, the second best-paid CEO on the Forbes list receives $32,067. Vornado Realty’s Michael Fasitelli, the third-place CEO, gets $30,961 per hour.

Now at least those CEOs are being paid to produce a return – invent new products and services that people are willing to pay for. What does a speech do? Do the people who pay for it get anything in return? What does she talk about?

Here's a sample from one of her speeches:

I think she is making a pitch there for Soviet-style re-education camps – not sure why this is worth $300,000, comrades.

But she's not the only hypocrite on the left.

Here's a crazy racist, pro-abortion MSNBC commentator named Melissa Harris-Perry:

> According to the IRS, although she likely makes a substantial living anchoring a weekend MSNBC show and as a professor at Wake Forest University, the left-wing Melissa Harris-Perry does not pay her taxes. The Internal Revenue Service just placed a $70,000 tax lien against Harris-Perry.
>
> She is the second left-wing MSNBC anchor caught not paying her fair share. Al Sharpton reportedly owes Uncle Sam upwards of $3 million.
>
> According to Harris-Perry, a left-wing activist who frequently rails against the wealthy for not paying enough taxes, the tax bill is from 2013, and she and her husband plan to pay the lien off as quickly as possible.
>
> Harris-Perry is most famous for her the terrible things she has said about Mitt Romney's black grandchild, wearing tampon earrings, and telling parents that their children belong to the community.

Meanwhile, here she is advocating for higher taxes:

Indeed! People on the left often advocate in favor of higher taxes, but you shouldn't infer from that that they want to pay higher taxes *themselves*. Studies show that people on the left give far less money to charity as well. They talk about the poor, but when they get the chance to do something about it, they don't. It's just a pose, but it works on a lot of stupid people to get them to vote Democrat.

Do tax hikes, welfare spending and minimum wage hikes lower income inequality?

April 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Heritage Foundation economist Stephen Moore to explain.

He writes:

> Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren recently appeared on one of the late night talk shows, beating the class warfare drum and arguing for billions of dollars in new social programs paid for with higher taxes on millionaires and billionaires. In recent years, though, blue states such as California, Illinois, Delaware, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland and Minnesota adopted this very strategy, and they raised taxes on their wealthy residents. How did it work out? Almost all of these states lag behind the national average in growth of jobs and incomes.
>
> So, if income redistribution policies are the solution to shrinking the gap between rich and poor, why do they fail so miserably in the states?
>
> The blue states that try to lift up the poor with high taxes, high welfare benefits, high minimum wages and other Robin Hood policies tend to be the places where the rich end up the richest and the poor the poorest.
>
> California is the prototypical example. It has the highest tax rates of any state. It has very generous welfare benefits. Many of its cities have a high minimum wage. But day after day, the middle class keeps leaving. The wealthy areas such as San Francisco and the Silicon Valley boom. Yet the state has nearly the highest poverty rate in the nation. The Golden State, alas, has become the inequality state.
>
> In a new report called "Rich States, Poor States" that I write each year for the American Legislative Exchange Council with Arthur Laffer and Jonathan Williams, we find that five of the highest-tax blue states in the nation—California, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Illinois—lost some 4 million more U.S. residents than entered these states over the last decade. Meanwhile, the big low-tax red states—Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Arizona and Georgia—gained about this many new residents.

What's wrong? Isn't raising taxes, growing government and spending more on welfare supposed to make reduce income inequality? Well, the trouble is that you need to think about things from the point of view of the people who create the jobs. People who want to start a business prefer to move to states where they can *keep more of the money they earned*. So, that's why there is a mass exodus from states that don't allow job creators to keep the money they earn. And naturally, they hire workers in their new state once they get there. Eventually people in the high-tax states move to where the jobs are, too.

Stephen Moore has actually measured it:

> **The least “regressive” tax states [high tax states] had average population growth from 2003 to 2013 that lagged below the national trend. The 10 most highly “regressive” tax states [low tax states], including nine with no state income tax, had population growth on average 4 percent above the U.S. average. Why was that? Because states without income taxes have twice the job growth of states with high tax rates.**
>
> […]Ohio University economist Richard Vedder and I compared the income gap in states with higher tax rates, higher minimum wages and more welfare benefits with states on the other side of the policy spectrum. There was no evidence that states with these liberal policies had helped the poor much and, in many cases, these states recorded more income inequality than other states as measured by the left’s favorite statistic called the Gini Coefficient.

> […]The 19 states with minimum wages above the $7.25 per hour federal minimum do not have lower income inequality. States with a super minimum wage—such as Connecticut ($9.15), California ($9.00), New York ($8.75), and Vermont ($9.15)—have significantly wider gaps between rich and poor than states without a super minimum wage.

No, I am not an economist, but I think that this is because the real minimum wage is ZERO, and that’s what more people in high minimum wage states make compared to people in low minimum wage states. If Seattle raises the minimum wage to $15 and the workers end up making the real minimum wage (ZERO) because job creators can’t pay them, then naturally the gap between rich and poor increases.

I think it’s always a good idea for people to think about things from the point of view of the small business job creator, and it all makes sense. If you want to get trained in how to do this, I recommend picking up introductory books by economists like Thomas Sowell, Milton Friedman or even F.A. Hayek. The goal here is to achieve good results, not to have good intentions.

Scott Walker's immigration plan is more conservative than Bush or Rubio

April 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

According to Breitbart News, which took a good look at it.

Excerpt:

> Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, a likely 2016 GOP presidential candidate, pledged to protect American workers from the economic effects, not only of illegal immigration but also of a massive increase in legal immigration.
>
> During an interview with Glenn Beck, Walker became the first declared or potential 2016 GOP presidential candidate to stake out a position on immigration fully in line with that of Senate Judiciary Committee subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest chairman Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL). He also noted that he has been working with Chairman Sessions on the issue to learn more about it.

His view is now secure the border and implement E-Verify for foreign workers:

> Walker says he discussed immigration policy in depth with Texas Gov. Greg Abbott when he visited the border a few weeks ago. He said that he doesn't think he was "directly wrong" before but didn't have a "full appreciation for what is the risk along our border."
>
> He continued:
>
> I knew there were people traveling, coming across the border, but really what you have is much greater than that. What you have is international criminal organizations, the drug cartels aren't just smuggling drugs—they're smuggling firearms and smuggling not only humans but trafficking and horrific situations. It's an issue that's not just about safety or about national security, it's about

> sovereignty. If we had this kind of assault along our water based ports, the federal government would be sending in the navy. And yet there is a very minimal force along our land-based borders, be it New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, or California, and so to me it was clearly far bigger than immigration.
>
> We need to have a much bigger investment from the federal government to secure the border, through not only infrastructure but personnel and certainly technology to do that and to make a major shift. If you don't do that, there's much greater issues than just immigration. Folks coming in from potentially ISIS-related elements and others around the world, there's safety issues from the drugs and drug trafficking and gun trafficking and gun things with regard—but to get to immigration you have got to secure the border, because nothing you do on immigration fundamentally works if you don't secure that border.
>
> Walker also discussed the need for interior enforcement:
>
> Then I think you need to enforce the law and the way you effectively do that is to require every employer in America to use an effective E-Verify system and by effective I mean you need to require particularly small businesses and farmers and ranchers. We got to have a system that works, but then the onus is on the employers and the penalties have to be steep that they're only hiring people who are here, who are legal to be here. No amnesty, if someone wants to be a citizen, they have to go back to their country of origin and get in line behind everybody else who's waiting.
>
> This development, perhaps one of if not the biggest of the 2016 presidential campaign so far, comes as Walker has taken a commanding lead in polls in all three of the first GOP primary states: Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina.

Walker also said in the interview that he would "absolutely" repeal Common Core in Wisconsin. Jeb Bush is, of course, a huge proponent of Common Core.

So, whatever our worries were about Walker on immigration, I think now we can relax. The only trouble now is getting the electorate to care more about accomplishments than charisma. But if the fight is between Walker and Clinton, I have no doubt that Clinton's "entitled" attitude is going to lose her the election. No matter how much money she has. And remember that Walker is able to speak to any issue in a way that is persuasive to independents – he proved that in Wisconsin. While Hillary is taking about "equal pay" and smashing the glass ceiling, Walker's going to be cleaning up on the issues middle-class Americans care about.

Chins up, buttercups! Things are looking good for our side.

Related posts

- Scott Walker discusses foreign policy and national security with Hugh Hewitt
- Scott Walker signs right-to-work: workers not forced to join a union in order to work
- Right-to-work states gained jobs three times faster than forced union states
- Scott Walker: if sent a bill banning abortions after 20 weeks, "I will sign that bill"

- Why didn’t Scott Walker finish his fourth year of college at Marquette University?
- Scott Walker’s new budget: tax cuts, spending cuts, school choice, smaller government
- Wisconsin governor Scott Walker draws standing ovations at Freedom Summit in Iowa
- Republican Scott Walker beats Mary Burke to win 2014 Wisconsin Governor race
- Wisconsin House passes Scott Walker’s tax cut bill, headed to governor’s desk
- Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker cuts taxes again, expects $1 billion surplus in 2015
- Wisconsin governor Walker’s reforms hit the left in their wallets
- An interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker’s pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker’s union restrictions
- Wisconsin governor’s union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues

What should we do to encourage men to marry?

April 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Dina tweeted two articles in a row about a new book that describes some of the reasons that men aren't marrying. I thought that since she tweeted two of them, that I had better blog on them. I think there are some good ideas in here about why men are not marrying as much as they used to.

The first article is from the UK Daily Mail, and it talks about how men are mocked in the popular culture.

It says:

> Our universities and further education institutions are dominated by women at a proportion of ten to every seven men, with the Royal Veterinary College formally identifying boys as an under-represented group.
>
> Across the Russell Group of Britain's leading 20 universities, just three have a majority of male students.
>
> This means your son will be more likely to join the ranks of the unemployed, the majority of whom are now — yes, you've guessed it — men.
>
> The Office of National Statistics noted that in the summer of 2014 a total of 1,147,511 British men were out of work, compared with 887,892 women.
>
> Psychologically, your son will be more likely to suffer from depression and attempt suicide than his sibling, but there'll be less support in place to save him.
>
> He's also more likely to endure everyday violence than women, with the latest crime statistics for England and Wales noting that two-thirds of homicide victims were men.
>
> […]By the time your son is 18, he will probably have absorbed the social message that his dad is much less valuable as a parent than his mother — that fathers in families are an added bonus, not a crucial cog.
>
> Then, if he starts his own family and his relationship doesn't last, he may become

> one of the four million UK men who have no access to their children, yet are forced to fund them.

This part below about health care for men was interesting – how well do men do in a big-government health care system?

Not well:

> To cap it all, he'll be progressively neglected by British healthcare despite being more likely to get — and die from — nine out of the top ten killer diseases. You know, the biggies: these include cancer, heart conditions, strokes, pneumonia, diabetes and cirrhosis of the liver.
>
> **Fifteen years ago the UK Men's Health Forum showed that, for every £1 spent on men's health, £8 was spent on women's. Since then little has changed, for no good reason. Or rather, one very bad reason: we live in a medical matriarchy. In other words, male life is cheap. Bargain basement, last-day-of-the-sale cheap.**
>
> **The ultimate insult? It's all done at our expense. The National Health Service is funded by the public purse, but it's men — yes, men — who pay a whopping 70 per cent of UK income tax. Yet we are thrown nothing but crumbs in return.**
>
> **Currently, women are screened for breast cancer, ovarian and cervical cancer. This is great, but excuse me if I don't jump for joy. There's still no screening programme for prostate cancer, even though it kills four times more men than cervical cancer does women.**
>
> And while we're on the subject of statistics, we men will die five years earlier than our wives, sisters, daughters and girlfriends in a life expectancy gap that's increased 400 per cent since 1920.

Regarding government-run health care in the UK, this is the same as in other government-run systems. In America, men do much better because the health care system is slightly less controlled by government.

Look:

> **Americans have better survival rates than Europeans for common cancers.**[1] Breast cancer mortality is 52 percent higher in Germany than in the United States, and 88 percent higher in the United Kingdom. Prostate cancer mortality is 604 percent higher in the U.K. and 457 percent higher in Norway. The mortality rate for colorectal cancer among British men and women is about 40 percent higher.
>
> **Americans have lower cancer mortality rates than Canadians.**[2] Breast cancer mortality is 9 percent higher, prostate cancer is 184 percent higher and colon cancer mortality among men is about 10 percent higher than in the United States.

I was wondering if he was going to say something about divorce and child custody in his article, but he left that for his second article, also tweeted by Dina.

He writes:

> **'Ultimately, men know there's a good chance they'll lose their friends, their respect, their space, their sex life, their money and — if it all goes wrong — their family,' says Dr Helen Smith, author of Why Men Are Boycotting Marriage, Fatherhood And The American Dream.**
>
> **'They don't want to enter into a legal contract with someone who could effectively take half their savings, pension and property when the honeymoon period is over.**
>
> **'Men aren't wimping out by staying unmarried or being commitment phobes. They're being smart.'**
>
> […]It wasn't always this way. In the 1800s, men typically got custody of the children in the event of a split — not as a result of privilege, but because they were solely financially responsible for them.
>
> They got the children, but they also got the bill. **Benefits Britain didn't exist, encouraging single mums to go it alone.**
>
> Now, 200 years on, women get the children, but men still get the bill. Sometimes, men even pay for children who aren't theirs.
>
> The Child Support Agency has 500 cases of paternity fraud a year, where a mother names a man as the biological father of her child, even when she has a good idea he isn't. And that's just the cases we know about. According to a YouGov study, 1.2 million men doubt they are the fathers of their partners' children.
>
> […][N]o British woman has been convicted of paternity fraud.

And finally, the well-known sex-withholding problem:

> Think your wedding day will be the happiest day of your life, chaps? You may need to think again. The quantity — and quality — of sex dwindles after marriage, say researchers.
>
> A recent survey of 3,000 couples found those who had sex four times a week before their wedding did the deed just once a week afterwards.

The value proposition of marriage to men has certainly changed over time, and men are responding to the changing incentives.

One of my co-workers who has no trouble attracting talented, attractive women to live with him asked me to name one reason why he – as an atheist – ought to get married. I could not think of one. The risks are just too high, and in my experience, women (not Dina, obviously), generally don't understand the problem, nor are they sympathetic with the needs of men.

Are atheists more moral than religious people?

April 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, let's take a look at the numbers with this article by Arthur Brooks, published by the Hoover Institute at Stanford University.

Excerpt:

> How do religious and secular people vary in their charitable behavior? To answer this, I turn to data collected expressly to explore patterns in American civic life. The *Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey* (SCCBS) was undertaken in 2000 by researchers at universities throughout the United States and the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. The data consist of nearly 30,000 observations drawn from 50 communities across the United States and ask individuals about their "civic behavior," including their giving and volunteering during the year preceding the survey.
>
> From these data, I have constructed two measures of religious participation. First, the group I refer to as "religious" are the respondents that report attending religious services every week or more often. This is 33 percent of the sample. Second, the group I call "secular" report attending religious services less than a few times per year or explicitly say they have no religion. These people are 26 percent of the sample (implying that those who practice their religion occasionally make up 41 percent of the sample). The SCCBS asked respondents whether and how much they gave and volunteered to "religious causes" or "non-religious charities" over the previous 12 months. Across the whole population, 81 percent gave, while 57 percent volunteered.
>
> **The differences in charity between secular and religious people are dramatic. Religious people are 25 percentage points more likely than secularists to donate money (91 percent to 66 percent) and 23 points more likely to volunteer time (67 percent to 44 percent). And, consistent with the findings of other writers, these data show that practicing a religion is more important than the actual religion itself in predicting charitable behavior. For example, among those who attend worship services regularly, 92 percent of Protestants give charitably, compared with 91 percent of Catholics, 91 percent of Jews, and 89 percent from other religions.**
>
> Socioeconomically, the religious and secular groups are similar in some ways and different in others. For example, there is little difference between the groups in income (both have average household incomes around $49,000) or education level (20 percent of each group holds a college degree). On the other hand, the secular group is disproportionately male (49 percent to 32 percent), unmarried (58 percent to 40 percent), and young (42 to 49 years old, on average). In

> addition, the SCCBS data show that religion and secularism break down on ideological lines: Religious people are 38 percentage points more likely to say they are conservative than to say they are liberal (57 percent to 19 percent). In contrast, secular people are 13 points more likely to say they are liberal than to say they are conservative (42 percent to 29 percent).
>
> It is possible, of course, that the charity differences between secular and religious people are due to these nonreligious socioeconomic differences. To investigate this possibility, I used a statistical procedure called probit regression to examine the role of religious practice in isolation from all other relevant demographic characteristics: political beliefs, income (and hence, indirectly, the tax incentives for giving), education level, gender, age, race, marital status, and area of residence. **The data show that if two people — one religious and the other secular — are identical in every other way, the secular person is 23 percentage points less likely to give than the religious person and 26 points less likely to volunteer.**

Honestly, I've always struggled to understand how giving to charity could be rational, on atheism. If you are only alive for 80 years, and the purpose of your life is to be happy, then the only reason I can think of to give anything away to anyone is because it makes you feel happier or more respected or something. Maybe because you like thinking of yourself as moral, or maybe because you want to be seen as moral, or maybe because you want a tax deduction, or maybe something else. But if this is the only life you are ever going to have, and people are just collections of atoms, then why care about what anyone is doing? We're all just accidents anyway, on atheism, and we're going to die out eventually. There are no objective moral duties – we are *accidents* on the atheist view. One set of atoms giving some atoms to another set of atoms, and then in the end all the atoms get scattered: who cares?

Look:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

They may live better than that for whatever whim, but goodness is not rational within their worldview. And we want to be rational about morality, because as the numbers show, having a reason to be good *makes a big difference* in whether actually *do good*. As opposed to just claiming to be good. Anyone can say anything, but their rational beliefs are the rails on which they run their lives.

Here's something interesting I found about the leaders of the two political parties in this

country.

Excerpt:

> In 2009, the Obamas gave 5.9 percent of their income to charity, about the same as they gave in 2006 and 2007. In the eight years before he became president, Obama gave an average of 3.5 percent of his income to charity, upping that to 6.5 percent in 2008.
>
> The Obamas' charitable giving is equally divided between "hope" and "change."
>
> George W. Bush gave away more than 10 percent of his income each year he was president, as he did before becoming president.
>
> Thus, in 2005, Obama gave about the same dollar amount to charity as President George Bush did, on an income of $1.7 million — more than twice as much as President Bush's $735,180. Again in 2006, Bush gave more to charity than Obama on an income one-third smaller than Obama's.
>
> In the decade before Joe Biden became vice president, the Bidens gave a total — all 10 years combined — of $3,690 to charity, or 0.2 percent of their income. They gave in a decade what most Americans in their tax bracket give in an average year, or about one row of hair plugs.
>
> Of course, even in Biden's stingiest years, he gave more to charity than Sen. John Kerry did in 1995, which was a big fat goose egg. Kerry did, however, spend half a million dollars on a 17th-century Dutch seascape painting that year, as Peter Schweizer reports in his 2008 book, "Makers and Takers."
>
> To be fair, 1995 was an off-year for Kerry's charitable giving. The year before, he gave $2,039 to charity, and the year before that a staggering $175.
>
> He also dropped a $5 bill in the Salvation Army pail and almost didn't ask for change.
>
> In 1998, Al Gore gave $353 to charity — about a day's take for a lemonade stand in his neighborhood. That was 10 percent of the national average for charitable giving by people in the $100,000-$200,000 income bracket. Gore was at the very top of that bracket, with an income of $197,729.
>
> When Sen. Ted Kennedy released his tax returns to run for president in the '70s, they showed that Kennedy gave a bare 1 percent of his income to charity — or, as Schweizer says, "about as much as Kennedy claimed as a write-off on his 50-foot sailing sloop Curragh." (Cash tips to bartenders and cocktail waitresses are not considered charitable donations.)
>
> The Democratic base gives to charity as their betters do. At the same income, a single mother on welfare is seven times less likely to give to charity than a working poor family that attends religious services.
>
> In 2006 and 2007, John McCain, who files separately from his rich wife, gave 27.3 percent and 28.6 percent of his income to charity.

> In 2005, Vice President Cheney gave 77 percent of his income to charity. He also shot a lawyer in the face, which I think should count for something.
>
> In a single year, Schweizer reports, Rush Limbaugh "gave $109,716 to 'various individuals in need of assistance mainly due to family illnesses,' $52,898 to 'children's case management organizations,' including 'various programs to benefit families in need,' $35,100 for 'Alzheimer's community care — day care for families in need,' and $40,951 for air conditioning units and heaters delivered to troops in Iraq."

The Democrats are the non-religious party, the Republicans are the religious party. The Democrats are also the talking party, as you can see, and the Republicans are the doing party.

By the way, Arthur Brooks eventually turned this research into a book called "Who Really Cares?", and it's a good response to atheists when they tell you that they can be moral without God. If it doesn't make sense to be moral, then atheists aren't going to do it. You can read more about that book here.

New study: how the mainstream media deleted Hillary Clinton's e-mail scandal

April 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Newsbusters has done some work to quantify it.

Excerpt:

> Hillary Clinton's official presidential announcement was a golden opportunity for networks to demand the former Secretary of State respond to unanswered questions about her e-mail scandal. Yet in the flurry of coverage since her official rollout (April 12 – April 20) the e-mail scandal garnered a total of just 7 minutes, 12 seconds on the Big Three (ABC, CBS, NBC) evening and morning shows.
>
> Even a new angle on the e-mail scandal – the *New York Times* reported April 14 that Clinton never responded to a congressional inquiry [in December of 2012] that "directly asked" if she had used a private e-mail account – failed to re-ignite the interest networks initially showed when the scandal first broke in March.
>
> Over the past five weeks, all three broadcast networks have essentially walked away from covering the ex-Secretary of State's secret extra-governmental e-mail server and the possible loss of crucial documents needed by the House Select Committee investigating the 2012 Benghazi attacks, with coverage on ABC, CBS and NBC's morning and evening news shows falling by more than 93 percent from the levels seen in early March.
>
> When news first broke that Clinton improperly used her own private e-mail account, the Big Three networks actually jumped to cover the story, filling their evening and morning shows with a total of 124 minutes and 55 seconds of airtime (NBC: 53 minutes, 51 seconds; CBS: 36 minutes, 39 seconds; ABC: 34 minutes, 25 seconds) within the first two weeks (March 3-16) of coverage that encompassed Hillary Clinton's March 10 press conference.
>
> But despite pundits and journalists like NBC's Chuck Todd insisting that Clinton's press conference "didn't satisfy her media critics" a look at the coverage in the ensuing weeks shows they lost a lot of their interest in the story.
>
> In the third week, (March 17-23), the networks reduced their coverage of the latest Clinton controversy to just 1 minute and 59 seconds (NBC: 23 seconds; CBS 29 secondsl; ABC: 1 minute, 7 seconds).
>
> In the fourth week (March 24-30), the stunning news that Clinton's own attorney admitted her server had been wiped clean caused a brief spike in coverage — but even that development generated just 11 minutes and 14 seconds of airtime (ABC: 1 minute, 32 seconds; CBS: 4 minutes, 48 seconds; NBC: 4 minutes, 54 seconds).
>
> By week 5 (March 31-April 6) the story was virtually non-existent drawing just 1

> minute and 16 seconds total coverage. (ABC: 0; CBS: 29 seconds; NBC: 47 seconds).
>
> […]Even though unanswered questions still persist (Why was her private server wiped clean? Was there incriminating evidence in those e-mails regarding the Benghazi investigation or Clinton Foundation donations? Could a foreign nation, like Russia, have hacked her server?) the networks have essentially discarded the story, reducing their coverage to just a total of 2 minutes and 11 seconds (CBS: 14 seconds, ABC: 42 seconds, NBC: 1 minute, 15 seconds) by the seventh week.

Compare a few minutes here and there with the coverage of the VA scandal:

> In nearly four and a half weeks, the ABC, CBS and NBC morning and evening news shows have offered 110 minutes to an evolving Obama administration scandal involving secret lists designed to keep veterans from receiving proper medical treatment. Back in January, it took those same network shows just four and a half days to churn that much coverage for Chris Christie's Bridgegate.
>
> Since the VA story broke on April 23 with the news that as many as 40 veterans seeking treatment at one Phoenix facility died while on secret waiting lists, CBS has provided the most coverage, 48 minutes and 46 seconds. NBC allowed 44 minutes and 53 seconds and ABC came in last with a scant 16 minutes and 44 seconds. None of the networks bothered covering the story until May 6, almost two weeks after it broke. (This is despite heavy investigative reporting by Fox News and CNN.)
>
> An analysis last week by the Media Research Center found that through the morning of May 16, a mere five seconds of the coverage included criticism of Barack Obama's handling of the VA hospital scandal. Only this week, as the pressure mounted and new details emerged, the storyline finally shifted to including criticisms of the President.

Oh, but if it's a Republican scandal then clear the decks:

> A 2014 Media Research Center study found that the broadcast networks of ABC, CBS, and NBC devoted a stunning 88 minutes of air time to the Bridgegate story in less that 48 hours after it broke on January 8 of that year.

And it didn't fade, either:

> In stark contrast, when a scandal involving the administration of New Jersey Governor Chris Christie (R) erupted in January, CNN provided wall-to-wall coverage. In the first full day of coverage on January 9, CNN spent a whopping eight hours and 35 minutes covering the Christie story.

I'm really not sure why so many Americans willingly indoctrinate themselves by watching the mainstream media and pretending that it's unbiased news. If you're looking for

balance, then you’re better off reading something from a quality left-leaning source like National Journal or the Atlantic.

In Wisconsin, Democrat district attorney has armed police raid the homes of conservatives

April 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story, which was written up in National Review by religious liberty defender David French, has two parts.

The first part talks about the police raids. I can only snip a little to capture the horror of the raid.

It says:

> 'THEY CAME WITH A BATTERING RAM."
>
> Cindy Archer, one of the lead architects of Wisconsin's Act 10 — also called the "Wisconsin Budget Repair Bill," it limited public-employee benefits and altered collective-bargaining rules for public-employee unions — was jolted awake by yelling, loud pounding at the door, and her dogs' frantic barking. The entire house — the windows and walls — was shaking.
>
> She looked outside to see up to a dozen police officers, yelling to open the door. They were carrying a battering ram.
>
> She wasn't dressed, but she started to run toward the door, her body in full view of the police. Some yelled at her to grab some clothes, others yelled for her to open the door.
>
> "I was so afraid," she says. "I did not know what to do." She grabbed some clothes, opened the door, and dressed right in front of the police. The dogs were still frantic.
>
> "I begged and begged, 'Please don't shoot my dogs, please don't shoot my dogs, just don't shoot my dogs.' I couldn't get them to stop barking, and I couldn't get them outside quick enough. I saw a gun and barking dogs. I was scared and knew this was a bad mix."
>
> She got the dogs safely out of the house, just as multiple armed agents rushed inside. Some even barged into the bathroom, where her partner was in the shower. The officer or agent in charge demanded that Cindy sit on the couch, but she wanted to get up and get a cup of coffee.
>
> "I told him this was my house and I could do what I wanted." Wrong thing to say. "This made the agent in charge furious. He towered over me with his finger in my face and yelled like a drill sergeant that I either do it his way or he would handcuff me."
>
> They wouldn't let her speak to a lawyer.

The article talks about a few more of the home invasions, and the warnings not to tell anyone were the same.

Here’s another:

> Don’t call your lawyer. Don’t talk to anyone about this. Don’t tell your friends. The kids watched — alarmed — as the school bus drove by, with the students inside watching the spectacle of uniformed police surrounding the house, carrying out the family’s belongings. Yet they were told they couldn’t tell anyone at school.
>
> They, too, had to remain silent.
>
> The mom watched as her entire life was laid open before the police. Her professional files, her personal files, everything.

Now the second part. Who was ordering these pre-dawn police raids on law-abiding families, and why?

District attorney John Chisolm (left)

Here’s who and why:

> District Attorney Chisholm was a Democrat, a very partisan Democrat.
>
> Almost immediately after opening the John Doe investigation, Chisholm used his expansive powers to embarrass Walker, raiding his county-executive offices within a week. As Mr. O’Keefe and the Wisconsin Club for Growth explained in court filings, the investigation then dramatically expanded:

> Over the next few months, [Chisholm’s] investigation of all-things-Walker expanded to include everything from alleged campaign-finance violations to sexual misconduct to alleged public contracting bid-rigging to alleged misuse of county time and property. Between May 5, 2010, and May 3, 2012, the

> Milwaukee Defendants filed at least eighteen petitions to formally "[e]nlarge" the scope of the John Doe investigation, and each was granted. . . . That amounts to a new formal inquiry every five and a half weeks, on average, for two years.

> This expansion coincided with one of the more remarkable state-level political controversies in modern American history – the protest (and passage) of Act 10, followed by the attempted recall of a number of Wisconsin legislators and, ultimately, Governor Walker.
>
> Political observers will no doubt remember the events in Madison — the state capitol overrun by chanting protesters, Democratic lawmakers fleeing the state to prevent votes on the legislation, and tens of millions of dollars of outside money flowing into the state as Wisconsin became, fundamentally, a proxy fight pitting the union-led Left against the Tea Party–led economic Right.
>
> At the same time that the public protests were raging, so were private — but important — protests in the Chisholm home and workplace. **As a former prosecutor told journalist Stuart Taylor, Chisholm's wife was a teachers'-union shop steward who was distraught over Act 10's union reforms. He said Chisholm "felt it was his personal duty" to stop them.**
>
> **Meanwhile, according to this whistleblower, the district attorney's offices were festooned with the "blue fist" poster of the labor-union movement, indicating that Chisholm's employees were very much invested in the political fight.**
>
> [Chisholm] launched yet another John Doe investigation, "supervised" by Judge Barbara Kluka. Kluka proved to be capable of superhuman efficiency — approving "every petition, subpoena, and search warrant in the case" in a total of one day's work.
>
> If the first series of John Doe investigations was "everything Walker," the second series was "everything conservative," as Chisholm had launched an investigation of not only Walker (again) but the Wisconsin Club for Growth and dozens of other conservative organizations, this time fishing for evidence of allegedly illegal "coordination" between conservative groups and the Walker campaign.
>
> In the second John Doe, Chisholm had no real evidence of wrongdoing. Yes, conservative groups were active in issue advocacy, but issue advocacy was protected by the First Amendment and did not violate relevant campaign laws. Nonetheless, Chisholm persuaded prosecutors in four other counties to launch their own John Does, with Judge Kluka overseeing all of them.
>
> Empowered by a rubber-stamp judge, partisan investigators ran amok. They subpoenaed and obtained (without the conservative targets' knowledge) massive amounts of electronic data, including virtually all the targets' personal e-mails and other electronic messages from outside e-mail vendors and communications companies.

> The investigations exploded into the open with a coordinated series of raids on October 3, 2013. These were home invasions, including those described above. Chisholm's office refused to comment on the raid tactics (or any other aspect of the John Doe investigations), but witness accounts regarding the two John Doe investigations are remarkably similar: early-morning intrusions, police rushing through the house, and stern commands to remain silent and tell no one about what had occurred.

This is how Democrats operate… and it shows what we can expect from them the more they gain political power.

Judge Barbara Kluka

Here's how the families were affected:

> O'Keefe, who has been in contact with multiple targeted families, says, "Every family I know of that endured a home raid has been shaken to its core, and the fate of marriages and families still hangs in the balance in some cases."
>
> Anne also describes a new fear of the police: "I used to support the police, to believe they were here to protect us. Now, when I see an officer, I'll cross the street. I'm afraid of them. I know what they're capable of."
>
> Cindy says, "I lock my doors and I close my shades. I don't answer the door unless I am expecting someone. My heart races when I see a police car sitting in front of my house or following me in the car. The raid was so public. I've been harassed. My house has been vandalized. [She did not identify suspects.] I no longer feel safe, and I don't think I ever will."
>
> Rachel talks about the effect on her children. "I tried to create a home where the kids always feel safe. Now they know they're not. They know men with guns can come in their house, and there's nothing we can do." Every knock on the door brings anxiety. Every call to the house is screened. In the back of her mind is a single, unsettling thought: These people will never stop.
>
> Victims of trauma — and every person I spoke with described the armed raids as traumatic — often need to talk, to share their experiences and seek solace in the

> company of a loving family and supportive friends. The investigators denied them that privilege, and it compounded their pain and fear.
>
> The investigation not only damaged families, it also shut down their free speech. In many cases, the investigations halted conservative groups in their tracks. O'Keefe and the Wisconsin Club for Growth described the effect in court filings:
>
> O'Keefe's associates began cancelling meetings with him and declining to take his calls, reasonably fearful that merely associating with him could make them targets of the investigation. O'Keefe was forced to abandon fundraising for the Club because he could no longer guarantee to donors that their identities would remain confidential, could not (due to the Secrecy Order) explain to potential donors the nature of the investigation, could not assuage donors' fears that they might become targets themselves, and could not assure donors that their money would go to fund advocacy rather than legal expenses. The Club was also paralyzed. Its officials could not associate with its key supporters, and its funds were depleted. It could not engage in issue advocacy for fear of criminal sanction.

> These raids and subpoenas were often based not on traditional notions of probable cause but on mere suspicion, untethered to the law or evidence, and potentially violating the Fourth Amendment's prohibition against "unreasonable searches and seizures." The very existence of First Amendment–protected expression was deemed to be evidence of illegality. The prosecution simply assumed that the conservatives were incapable of operating within the bounds of the law.
>
> Even worse, many of the investigators' legal theories, even if proven by the evidence, would not have supported criminal prosecutions. In other words, they were investigating "crimes" that weren't crimes at all.

I really recommend that you read this entire article to get the details of the raids, and the trauma that was inflicted on families who thought that the police were their friends. It is literally the most astonishing and fearful thing that I have read all year, and I have read a lot of scary things. This is like my worst nightmare. It reminds me of one of my favorite movies "The Lives of Others", which is a foreign film about the East German "Stasi" secret police. I didn't think it could happen here. But I guess leftists are leftists.

Paul Gould at the University of Toronto: Does Jesus answer life's biggest questions?

April 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(72 minutes)

A friend of mine sent me a link to this lecture, and he says the Q&A is dynamite.

Here's the description:

> What is the meaning of my life? What is my purpose? What happens after I die? How do I know what is true? How should I live? Why? What does Jesus have to do with my everyday life? Does he answer life's biggest questions? If he does is there evidence for this?
>
> On Feb 12, 2015 at the University of Toronto, Dr. Paul Gould gave a compelling case for why Jesus answers life's biggest questions and he also answered a number of tough and interesting questions in the Question and Answer Period.
>
> This lecture is part of a series called "God + Reason: A Christian Perspective" (http://www.bitly.com/godandreasonpt1).
>
> In this series professors, thinkers, academics, or graduate students give reasons why they trust in God and address objections to trusting in God.
>
> **SPEAKER'S BIO:**
>
> Dr. Paul Gould is a philosopher, a scholar, a teacher, a husband, a father, and a follower of Jesus Christ. He believes that Jesus is humanity's greatest need and our highest good. As C.S. Lewis, puts it:
>
> "God wills our good, and our good is to love Him (with that responsive love proper to creatures) and to love Him we must know Him: and if we know Him, we shall in fact fall on our faces."
>
> So, God wills our good–and our good is to love Him–and to love Him is to know Him. His passion in life is to present to the world Jesus–in all his brilliance and beauty.
>
> He received his MA in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics from Biola University and a PhD in Philosophy from Purdue University.
>
> Dr. Paul Gould is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Christian Apologetics at Southwestern Theological Seminary.
>
> He is married to Ethel and has four wonderful children.
>
> **EMCEE'S BIO:**
>
> Mark Sutherland received his BEng in Engineering Science from the University of Toronto and is currently a masters student in Applied Science (Computer Engineering) at the University of Toronto.

My friend also noted that Dr. Gould has an article up on his web site on the same topic as the lecture that lays out all the questions he covered in the lecture.

It says:

Is there a God? Yes, and he loves and pursues you.

What is the nature of Reality? It is enchanted, a world of rich physical, aesthetic and moral beauty.

What is the purpose of the universe? For God to spread his joy and delight and love and you to find happiness in creaturely response.

What is the meaning of life? Ditto.

Why am I here? Because God created me.

Does prayer work? Yes, God is ever present and involved in your life, even when you don't know it.

Is there a soul? Is it immortal? Yes, you are essentially a soul that has a body, you will live forever.

Is there free will? Yes, we are self-determiners of our action and our character.

What happens when we die? We enter into eternal life, either with God in heaven or without God in hell.

What is the difference between right and wrong, good and bad? There is objective morality, the right is what God commands and the wrong is what God prohibits; the good is that which God has created, the bad that which sin has corrupted.

Why should I be moral? Because it is good in itself and for what it brings (as Plato puts it in the Republic).

Is abortion, euthanasia, suicide, paying taxes, foreign aid, or anything else you don't like forbidden, permissible, or sometimes obligatory? There is a moral law, not everything is permissible, nor is everything forbidden.

What is love, and how can I find it? Love is the one thing that can never hurt anyone, although it may cost dearly.

Does history have any meaning or purpose? Yes, there is meaning and purpose to everything.

Does the human past have any lessons for our future? Yes, and we'd be wise to listen to them.

Paul Gould is one of my favorite Christian scholars – he comes from a business background and has a real heart for evangelism. We also agree that the "top-down" approach to having an influence is the correct approach, and therefore we both see impacting young people when they are at the university as absolutely vital. There are a lot of things that are worthwhile for Christians to do, but the university is the place that creates the next generation of influential people. We have to make our stand there, whether we like it or not. Whether it feels good or not.

Left uses stories and peer-pressure to indoctrinate children to support same-sex marriage

April 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National Education Association

This is a striking story from Life Site News. It talks about how the school system gets pro-same-sex-marriage speakers to teach the children to support same-sex-marriage.

It says:

> A primary grade lesbian teacher from an Ontario public school revealed in a workshop at a homosexual activist conference for teachers earlier this month how she uses her classroom to convince children as young as four to accept homosexual relationships.
>
> "And I started in Kindergarten. What a great place to start. It was where I was teaching. So, I was the most comfortable there," Pam Strong said at the conference, attended by LifeSiteNews.
>
> The conference, hosted by the homosexual activist organization Jer's Vision, now called the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, focused on the implementation of Bill 13 in Ontario classrooms. Bill 13, called by critics the 'homosexual bill of rights,' passed in June 2012 and gave students the right to form pro-gay clubs in their school, including Catholic ones, using the name Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA).
>
> Strong, who is in an open relationship with another woman and who has been a teacher for about five years, focused her workshop on what she called the "power of conversation" for promoting LGBTQ issues in an elementary classroom. She began her talk by relating how she reacted the first time one of her students

> called another student ‘gay’ as a putdown.
>
> “With [the principal’s] encouragement, we decided that I would go from class to class and talk about what ‘gay’ means, what does ‘LGBTQ’ mean, what do ‘I’ mean,” she told about 40 attendees, all educators, at her workshop.

There are some examples of how she manipulates the children, but I want to focus on one in particular:

> Strong related an incident that happened last fall involving a new boy who had recently entered her grade 5 classroom. The new boy had not yet been made aware of Strong’s sexual preference for other women.
>
> “All my class is very used to who I am. My family picture is very proudly in my room now. On Mondays they quite often will say, ‘What did you do with your wife?’ It’s normal in my classroom.”
>
> Strong said that a conversation between herself and the students came up one day where it was mentioned that she was a lesbian. The new boy put his hands over his mouth and said, according to Strong: “Oh, my God, I think I’m going to puke.”
>
> “As I took the abuse — personally, as an individual – of those words, I also saw half of my class look at me with incredible concern. One student who was right in front of me already had tears in her eyes. And I noticed several other students who were looking at him. They were just very, very upset with this kid,” she related.
>
> **Strong said the boy instantly became aware that “something he had said had just created this unbelievable tension in the room.” She related how she addressed the boy, telling him: “I think that what you might not be aware of is that I am gay, and I am married to a woman, and my family has two moms.’”**
>
> **“His eyes just started darting around, and he was incredibly uncomfortable,” she related.**
>
> “I looked at the other kids and I said: ‘Ok guys, what I want to ask you is: Am I upset with him?’ And the one little girl in my class put up her hand — that doesn’t usually get into these conversations very much in my classroom — and she said, ‘Mrs Strong, I know you’re not upset with him, because he hasn’t had the benefit of our conversations.”
>
> “And I looked at my little friend, my ‘new’ friend, and I said: ‘But, we’re going to have one now,’” she related.
>
> Strong said that she then directed her class to the board and asked them to write everything she had told them related to LGBTQ.
>
> “And my class all of a sudden popped up. ‘LGBTQ’ was on the board, ‘lesbian,’ and all the different words coming out there. And I sat back and said, ‘Let’s

> review.' So, the last year and a half of 'inclusive' education came alive in my classroom."
>
> **Strong told her workshop attendees that her "new little friend" is now a devoted champion of diversity. She boasted how he was the one in her class to count down the days to the pro-homosexual Day of Pink that took place earlier this month. When Strong took a photo of all the children wearing pink shirts in her classroom, she said the boy requested to be in the front.**

She isn't interested in presenting both sides of the argument, or persuading grown adults like Dr. Ryan T. Anderson. She wants to go after children with stories that make her side look a certain way, stories that cannot be challenged or refuted by children. And with no opt-out or notification for parents, because parents have to be kept in the dark. Parents just get to pay to feed and clothe and shelter the children – but what they think is decided by teachers with an agenda. This indoctrination against the values of parents is taxpayer-funded. With no opt-out. This is the "big government" that so many young evangelicals support.

This is why I am concerned about finding a wife who understands these things and takes them seriously enough to make a plan to deal with it. I have had Christian women who responded to this challenge from the schools by telling me that they intended to entrust the children to daycare and secular schools so they could focus on careers, travel, buying bling, etc. I try to show them studies showing how children are affected by daycare, homeschooling, etc. Usually, it's like banging your head against a brick wall. It's almost as if they *have to* get their way on these things even though they have not studied these things themselves. They have to find a way to escape from any responsibilities to others so they can be free to do what feels good to them. But I need a partner who will take these concerns seriously and think of our children, not of her own happiness.

Keep in mind that even if you homeschool or private-school your kids, that they have live next door to the brainwashed kids. The brainwashed kids are taught to hold to their views at a brittle, non-rational, emotional level. This is why children who are indoctrinated by the secular left are so offended by "triggering" behaviors that they have to take refuge in "safe spaces" free of opposing views. Our kids (raised by us) might agree with us, but they are not free of the influence from a much larger group of brainwashed kids. Our kids have to work for them. Our kids have to go to school with them. Our kids have to live under the laws that these other kids will pass, as they are shuffled through the best schools because they have the "right" views. The brainwashed kids vote and we will have to live under the laws they pass. Do you have a plan to deal with this? It seems to me that if women want to get married and have kids "some day", then they should have thought about this some and be willing to talk about what to do about it, and be open to the fact that they may have to make some adjustments to prepare for it.

UPDATE: Life Site News is now threatened with a lawsuit after breaking this story.

New study: lack of secure attachment during early childhood harms children

April 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the leftist Brookings Institute, a respected think tank I usually disagree with. They write about a new study:

> Attachment theory is founded on the idea that an infant's early relationship with their caregiver is crucial for social and emotional development. It is an old theory, born during the 1950s. But it can bring fresh light on issues of opportunity and equality today, as a three-decade longitudinal study of low-income children from Alan Sroufe, Byron Egeland, Elizabeth Carlson, and W. A. Collins, all University of Minnesota psychologists, demonstrates.
>
> […]Small infants are heavily dependent on caregivers, who must respond to their needs. But counter-intuitively, the infants who have a reliable caregiver are also most likely to become self-efficacious later.
>
> Infants (aged 9 to 18 months) with responsive parents learn how their own behavior can impact their environment. This "call and response" process builds the infant's sense of self-efficacy— one reason parents *should* pick up the sippy cup, especially for the hundredth time! But this virtuous learning cycle breaks down if the caregiver fails to respond adequately.

Here are the definitions:

- **Secure attachment**: When the caregiver (mom, in this study) is present, the infant explores the room and interacts with the experimenter, occasionally returning to the caregiver for support. When the caregiver leaves, the child becomes sad and hesitates to interact with the experimenter, but upon their return, is visibly excited.
- **Anxious/resistant attachment:** Regardless of the caregiver's presence, the infant shows fear of the experimenter and novel situations—these infants cry more and explore the room less. They become upset when the caregiver leaves, and while they approach upon return often resist physical contact, as a form of "punishment".
- **Anxious/avoidant attachment:** No preference is shown between a caregiver and a stranger— infants play normally in the presence of the experimenter and show no sign of distress or interest when their caregiver leaves and returns. The experimenter and the caregiver can comfort the infant equally well.

And here the results:

> The Minnesota study found that attachment makes a difference later in life. Without knowing students' attachment history, preschool teachers judged those who had secure attachments to have higher self-esteem, to be more self-reliant, to be better at managing impulses, and to recover more easily from upsetting

> events. When teachers were asked which students, among those with serious struggles in class, nonetheless had “a core of inner self-worth, an indication that… maybe they could get better,” they picked students that had secure attachments as infants.
>
> In contrast, children with anxious/resistant attachments:
>
> - tended to hover near teachers
> - became easily frustrated
> - were more likely to be seen as “dependent” by blinded observers
> - were less competent and patient with puzzles and other cognitive challenges
>
> Children with anxious/avoidant attachments:
>
> - tended to be apathetic towards other children
> - failed to ask for adult help when stressed
> - were “often self-isolating”
>
> Both groups had higher rates of anxiety and depression as teenagers.

So again, we are seeing that when it comes to parenting, you have to think about what you are doing. That doesn’t mean that you have to be slaves to your kids, or spoil them or hover over them. It means that what you are doing with your kids matters. It means that you need to make a plan to have enough time and money to be able to care for them. I think that the right time to talk about such things is during the courtship.

Also, one more point. If you meet people with some of these short comings, (I had most of the anxious/avoidant ones growing up), then try not to draw lines in the sand where you reject them over these shortcomings. Instead, do what I do. Recognize that these people have value and that if you take responsibility to care for them and supply for their needs, you might be able to guide them to do some pretty amazing things. Don’t be so self-centered that you expect people to be perfect so they don’t need anything from you. Nobody is perfect. Everybody has a story. If you want to be like Jesus, why not start by recognizing the effects of a disrupted childhood through study, and then make a plan to grow people – even difficult ones like me.

The seven fatal flaws of moral relativism

April 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Moral relativism is the view that moral values and moral duties do not exist in reality, but only exist as opinions in people's minds. When you ask a moral relativist where the belief that stealing is wrong comes wrong, he may tell you that it is his opinion, or that it is the opinion of most people in his society. But he cannot tell you that stealing is wrong independent of what people think, because morality (on moral relativism) is just personal preference.

So what's wrong with it?

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Australian site Faith Interface.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like "It's wrong to push your own morality on others". This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don't let them make any moral statements without asking them first to ground morality on their worldview. And that's because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can't answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people's personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It's all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be "it depends". It depends on the person who is speaking because it's a subjective claim, not an objective

claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

The whole point of atheism is to pursue pleasure without the bonds of morality – there is no other reason to do anything on atheism except for the pleasure it gives you. You do fashionable things to feel good getting praise from your neighbors, and you do unfashionable things in private to make yourself feel good and you hope that no one who is powerful enough to hold you accountable ever finds out. There’s no way you were made to be.

Mitt Romney: Hillary's Clinton Foundation Uranium One scandal "looks like bribery"

April 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What looks like bribery? Well, read this story from the radically leftist New York Times, of all places. It should be the end of Hillary's campaign.

Excerpt:

> The headline in the website Pravda trumpeted President Vladimir V. Putin's latest coup, its nationalistic fervor recalling an era when its precursor served as the official mouthpiece of the Kremlin: "Russian Nuclear Energy Conquers the World."
>
> The article, in January 2013, detailed how the Russian atomic energy agency, Rosatom, had taken over a Canadian company with uranium-mining stakes stretching from Central Asia to the American West. The deal made Rosatom one of the world's largest uranium producers and brought Mr. Putin closer to his goal of controlling much of the global uranium supply chain.
>
> But the untold story behind that story is one that involves not just the Russian president, but also a former American president and a woman who would like to be the next one.
>
> At the heart of the tale are several men, leaders of the Canadian mining industry, who have been major donors to the charitable endeavors of former President Bill Clinton and his family. Members of that group built, financed and eventually sold off to the Russians a company that would become known as Uranium One.
>
> Beyond mines in Kazakhstan that are among the most lucrative in the world, the sale gave the Russians control of one-fifth of all uranium production capacity in the United States. Since uranium is considered a strategic asset, with implications for national security, the deal had to be approved by a committee composed of representatives from a number of United States government agencies. Among the agencies that eventually signed off was the State Department, then headed by Mr. Clinton's wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton.
>
> **As the Russians gradually assumed control of Uranium One in three separate transactions from 2009 to 2013, Canadian records show, a flow of cash made its way to the Clinton Foundation. Uranium One's chairman used his family foundation to make four donations totaling $2.35 million. Those contributions were not publicly disclosed by the Clintons, despite an agreement Mrs. Clinton had struck with the Obama White House to publicly identify all donors. Other people with ties to the company made donations as well.**
>
> **And shortly after the Russians announced their intention to acquire a majority stake in Uranium One, Mr. Clinton received $500,000 for a**

> **Moscow speech from a Russian investment bank with links to the Kremlin that was promoting Uranium One stock.**
>
> **At the time, both Rosatom and the United States government made promises intended to ease concerns about ceding control of the company's assets to the Russians. Those promises have been repeatedly broken, records show.**
>
> […]The path to a Russian acquisition of American uranium deposits began in 2005 in Kazakhstan, where the Canadian mining financier Frank Giustra orchestrated his first big uranium deal, with Mr. Clinton at his side.
>
> The two men had flown aboard Mr. Giustra's private jet to Almaty, Kazakhstan, where they dined with the authoritarian president, Nursultan A. Nazarbayev. Mr. Clinton handed the Kazakh president a propaganda coup when he expressed support for Mr. Nazarbayev's bid to head an international elections monitoring group, undercutting American foreign policy and criticism of Kazakhstan's poor human rights record by, among others, his wife, then a senator.
>
> Within days of the visit, Mr. Giustra's fledgling company, UrAsia Energy Ltd., signed a preliminary deal giving it stakes in three uranium mines controlled by the state-run uranium agency Kazatomprom.
>
> […][T]he company's story was hardly front-page news in the United States — until early 2008, in the midst of Mrs. Clinton's failed presidential campaign, when The Times published an article revealing the 2005 trip's link to Mr. Giustra's Kazakhstan mining deal. It also reported that several months later, Mr. Giustra had donated $31.3 million to Mr. Clinton's foundation.
>
> […]**[T]he ultimate authority to approve or reject the Russian acquisition rested with the cabinet officials on the foreign investment committee, including Mrs. Clinton — whose husband was collecting millions of dollars in donations from people associated with Uranium One.**

Romney, in his interview with Hugh Hewitt, explained that because Bill and Hillary are married, their assets are co-mingled.

So what's the problem with this deal?

> The national security issue at stake in the Uranium One deal was not primarily about nuclear weapons proliferation; the United States and Russia had for years cooperated on that front, with Russia sending enriched fuel from decommissioned warheads to be used in American nuclear power plants in return for raw uranium. Instead, it concerned American dependence on foreign uranium sources. While the United States gets one-fifth of its electrical power from nuclear plants, it produces only around 20 percent of the uranium it needs, and most plants have only 18 to 36 months of reserves, according to Marin Katusa, author of "The Colder War: How the Global Energy Trade Slipped From America's Grasp."

> "The Russians are easily winning the uranium war, and nobody's talking about it," said Mr. Katusa, who explores the implications of the Uranium One deal in his book. "It's not just a domestic issue but a foreign policy issue, too."

It's a national security issue. We shouldn't be selling uranium companies to countries like Russia who not only invade their neighbors, but also sell long-range missiles to Iran – and a host of other nasty things, too. This country is not friendly to us.

Hillary Clinton: secretive, entitled, hypoctritical

What was Hillary's response? It's a distraction invented by the vast right-wing conspiracy:

That's some vast right-wing conspiracy that makes its way onto the nation's most respected leftist national newspaper.

So, does this explain why Hillary Clinton deleted tens of thousands of e-mails and then wiped her private e-mail server clean? We'll never know, because she destroyed all the evidence. But one thing is for sure – there is no reason to vote for this candidate for President, although some people will:

That's the only "reason" that people will vote for her, because on the merits, she's a stinker.

Related posts

- New study: how the mainstream media deleted Hillary Clinton's e-mail scandal
- "Dead broke" Hillary Clinton makes more money in an hour than top-paid CEO
- New book by Peter Schweizer: Clinton State Department favored foreign donors
- Largest individual donor to Clinton Foundation has trade ties to Iran
- Clinton Foundation continues to take donations from regimes that oppress women
- What are Hillary Clinton's views on amnesty and illegal immigration?
- Hillary Clinton never signed separation form that required her to turn over all e-mails
- Could Hillary Clinton be sent to prison because of her secret e-mail server?
- Hillary Clinton deleted 32,000 e-mails, refuses to turn over her home-based server
- Clinton Foundation: all eight of the highest paid executives are men

- E-mails released by Clinton: there are “months, and months, and months” missing
- Hillary Clinton used her private e-mail account to conduct State Department business
- E-mails: Hillary Clinton’s top aides knew in minutes that Benghazi was a terrorist attack
- Clinton Foundation receives millions in donations from regimes that oppress women
- As senator, Hillary Clinton paid women 72 cents for every dollar she paid men
- Hillary Clinton’s fake Bosnia gunfire story and her abortion award
- Hillary Clinton: don’t let anybody tell you that corporations and businesses create jobs
- Hillary Clinton aides were present to “separate” damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- Universities raise tuition while paying hundreds of thousands to Hillary Clinton to speak
- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- Hillary Clinton opposes bill to cut taxpayer funding of abortions abroad

A third of Americans who have a savings plan have less than $1000 in it

April 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

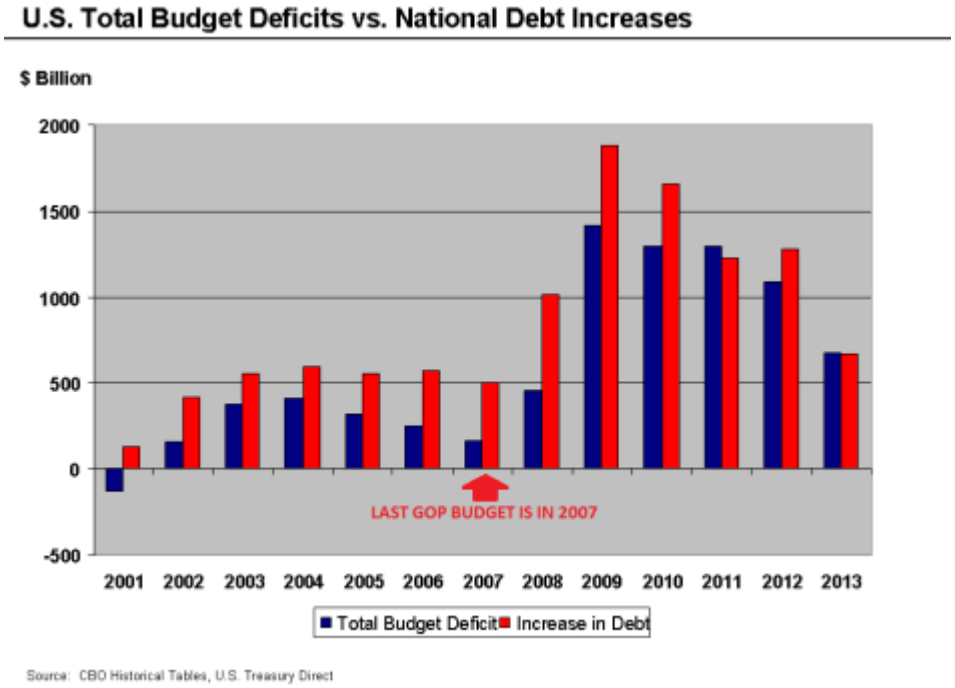

National Debt and Deficit 2007-2013

Let me start with the facts from Breitbart News, and then I'll comment on the part in bold.

Excerpt:

> Study after study shows that Americans are not saving for retirement like they should, and a new survey finds that nearly one third of people who have some sort of savings plan have amassed less than $1,000 for retirement.
>
> The survey titled "Preparing for Retirement in America," by Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) and Greenwald and Associates, finds that only 65 percent of workers have any savings for retirement, a number that fell below the 75 percent figure from 2009.
>
> But 28 percent of workers report that they have saved less than $1,000 for retirement, and almost 6 in 10 Americans say that their financial planning needs improvement.
>
> Additionally, 34 percent say they have made no effort at all to saving anything or make a retirement plan. Still, most say that they intend to start saving at some point.
>
> **But intentions may not be enough. "Intending one thing and doing another is human, but it's an impulse we should all fight hard to resist," Rebekah Barsch, vice president of planning and sales at Northwestern Mutual, said in a press statement. "Intentions only get us so far. And**

> **when the stakes are high, it's taking action that's critical."**
>
> Many say that the average person needs to save one million dollars for retirement, but a recent piece by David Marotta, president of Marotta Wealth Management in Charlottesville, VA, noted that a 20-year-old in 2015 may have to amass up to $7 million to retire comfortably.
>
> "Someone retiring now in 2014 with $1 million at age 65 can safely withdraw $43,600 a year," Marotta wrote last May. "However, [because of inflation], today's 20-year-olds will need over $7 million to have that same lifestyle when they retire. In 1970, they would only have needed $166,000 in retirement to have a similar purchasing power for the rest of their life."
>
> Many Americans save for retirement using the 401K plans provided through their employer, but according to the federal government, around 50 million Americans don't have the ability to enroll in such a savings plan.

Here's a helpful article from CNBC that answers the question "how much do I need to retire?".

It says:

> You can't feel secure in retirement if you don't have a good idea of how much money you'll need.
>
> But if you believe a new Legg Mason survey, you may have to save far more than you think. Investors surveyed by the global investment management firm said they will require an average of $2.5 million in retirement to enjoy the quality of life they have today.
>
> That's about $2.2 million *more* than the average balance of $385,000 those investors actually had in 401(k)s and similar retirement plans, which might help explain why only 40 percent of the 458 investors surveyed said they are "very confident" in their ability to "retire at the age I want to." (And the investors surveyed have set more aside than the average retirement saver. At Fidelity, the nation's largest retirement plan provider, the average 401(k) balance was $91,300 at the end of 2014.)
>
> […]**Fidelity estimates most investors require about eight times their ending salary to increase the chances that their savings will last during a 25-year retirement.** But every retirement is different. People also tend to spend lavishly in their first years of retirement before their spending declines in later years.
>
> Health care is the wild card in retirement planning, especially as Americans live longer. Fidelity projects a 65-year-old couple retiring will need an average of $220,000 to cover medical expenses in retirement.

So, according to Fidelity's rule, if you are single and making $50K after taxes, then you need $400,000 to retire at age 65. You'll need more the earlier you retire. That seems

about right to me. The important thing to do when planning for the future is not to imagine a higher income than you have right now, though. Imagining that things will be better than they are right now is a terrible mistake. You can't make the world change just by imagining things that make you feel good, or by looking at cherry-picked examples from people you know who got lucky.

The trouble with young people today is that they think that things tomorrow will be the same as they were yesterday. They don't see the future implications of running our national debt up to $18.5 trillion dollars. They think entitlement programs will be solvent when they are ready to retire. They aren't aware of what's going on in the economies of other countries that we trade with. They aren't aware of what's going on in Greece, and how that will affect the European Union. They aren't aware of the demographic crisis in Europe, and especially in Japan. They aren't thinking about the implications for future wars as America withdraws from the world stage. And so on. And since they are not aware, they are delaying making a plan to save, so they can have more fun now. Their retirement plan is all future sunshine and rainbows, but no actions are being taken *right now.*

If I could give young people one piece of advice, it's this. It's much easier to shift your life out of a position of financial security to something lighter but more meaningful in the second half of your life. It's harder to work back to earning and saving if you have squandered your early life on fun, thrills, travel, non-STEM degrees, etc. If you're 30 years old and don't have any savings, you are in serious, serious trouble. You need to get focused on a regular career as soon as possible, and start saving. Get those debts paid off *now.* Still think that your rosy picture of the future will obtain? Usually, you can tell how good you are at strategic forecasting by looking at your past decisions. Have you been wise before, or have you chosen poorly? If you've chosen poorly, then it's a good idea to defer to people who haven't made the same mistakes. If you're an optimistic person who is always being surprised and disappointed, that's a good sign you need to start saving now.

Ryan T. Anderson: background on the same-sex marriage case before the Supreme Court

April 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This Daily Signal article is a great summary of everything that a lay-person like me or you ought to know about the case that is going to be decided by the Supreme Court.

Here are a few of the points I thought were most interesting:

> 2. The overarching question before the Supreme Court is not whether a male–female marriage policy is the best, but only whether it is allowed by the Constitution. The question is not whether government-recognized same-sex marriage is good or bad policy, but only whether it is required by the Constitution.
>
> Those suing to overturn male-female marriage laws thus have to prove that the man–woman marriage policy that has existed in the United States throughout our entire history is prohibited by the Constitution. They cannot successfully so argue.
>
> 3. As Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito pointed out two years ago, there are two different visions of what marriage is on offer. One view of marriage sees it as primarily about consenting adult romance and care-giving. Another view of marriage sees it as a union of man and woman—husband and wife—so that children would have moms and dads.
>
> Our Constitution is silent on which of these visions is correct, so We the People have constitutional authority to make marriage policy.
>
> The debate over whether to redefine marriage to include same-sex relationships is unlike the debate over interracial marriage. Race has absolutely nothing to do with marriage, and there were no reasonable arguments ever suggesting it did.
>
> Laws that banned interracial marriage were unconstitutional and the Court was right to strike them down. But laws that define marriage as the union of a man and woman are constitutional, and the Court shouldn't strike them down.
>
> 4. The only way the Court could strike down state laws that define marriage as the union of husband and wife is to adopt a view of marriage that sees it as an essentially genderless institution based primarily on the emotional needs of adults and then declare that the Constitution requires that the states (re)define marriage in such a way.
>
> Equal protection alone is not enough. To strike down marriage laws, the Court would need to say that the vision of marriage that our law has long applied equally is just wrong: that the Constitution requires a different vision entirely.
>
> But the Constitution does not require a new vision of marriage.
>
> Advocates for the judicial redefinition of marriage cannot reasonably appeal to

> the authority of Windsor, to the text or original meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment, to the fundamental rights protected by the Due Process Clause, or to Loving v. Virginia. So, too, one cannot properly appeal to the Equal Protection Clause or to animus or Lawrence v. Texas.
>
> Nor can one say that gays and lesbians are politically powerless, so one cannot claim they are a suspect class. Nor can one say that male–female marriage laws lack a rational basis or that they do not serve a compelling state interest in a narrowly tailored way, as explained in Heritage Foundation legal memorandum "Memo to Supreme Court: State Marriage Laws Are Constitutional."
>
> 7. Redefining marriage to make it a genderless institution fundamentally changes marriage: It makes the relationship more about the desires of adults than the needs—or rights—of children. It teaches that mothers and fathers are interchangeable.

I think that's the fundamental question in the marriage debate. The question is, is marriage a relationship that is geared towards producing children, and locking in husbands and wives together in an exclusive, permanent relationship so that those children have two people who are biologically-related to them who are nearby to watch over them and care for them. When I think about what it is like to be a little child, or even a little animal, it is obvious to me that we should be aggressive about encouraging and celebrating couples who have children and then stick together to raise them. It's a hard, self-sacrificial job. It's not about self-centered hedonism. It's about doing the right thing to provide for the needs of children as they grow up. Marriage isn't about grown-ups being happy, it's about regulating sex for the benefit of children, and society as a whole. We do better together as a society with natural marriage.

Should we be trying to change the world from the bottom up or the top down?

April 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Paul Gould is a professor of philosophy (PhD from Purdue) at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Here is his bio, which says, in part:

> I have a Masters in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics from Talbot School of Theology and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Purdue University.
>
> I am an Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Christian Apologetics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

What his bio page doesn't say is that he left a career in business to go onto this apologetics/philosophy track. I find that very interesting, because like most professionals with an interest in apologetics, I had the same dream – to go and do a PhD and get into a college and be a positive influence on Christian kids. But the main thing is that he has had some experience in the real world.

Anyway, Dr. Gould has written two posts on how to change the world, and I want you to look at an excerpt from the first one.

First post:

> Christians like to talk—and aspire—to changing the world. This language stems very naturally from our God-given desire to *make a difference*, to *live a life that matters*. In a very real sense, making a difference *is* to change the world. But, usually, when Christians talk about "changing the world" they mean something like "winning the world for Christ" or "helping the gospel to gain a hearing in culture" or "contributing toward shalom."Recently, there have been a number of very helpful books written by folks who challenge the common view of *how* to go about the task of world-changing, and call into question the relationship between Christ and culture. One of the most important books to enter this discussion is James Davison Hunter's *To Change the World*. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in the topic of world-change. In this post I will share his critique of the "common view" of world change. I think his critique is dead on.
>
> Hunter argued that by and large, Christians have gone about the task of world changing in completely the wrong way and the result is that Christianity in our country at least and in the western world in general, represents a weak culture.
>
> He focuses on world-view ministries (primarily from the US such as Chuck Colson's Wilberforce Forum and Focus on the Families' Truth Project) and those like them that offer the following view of how to change the world:
>
> Common view of world change: as we change the individual beliefs and values of

> persons, and change enough persons, then we will ultimately change society. This is a **bottom up approach**.
>
> On the common view, the implicit view of culture is that "the essence of culture is found in the hearts and minds of individuals" and that culture change will come as enough individual lives are transformed.
>
> Hunter argues that this approach fails to take into account cultural elites and the institutions that yield power within culture.
>
> Instead, cultural change has always been **top-down:** it is always elites—those who have cultural capital to exert influence and power—who have changed the culture. This is why the university, and the media, and the arts are so important in shaping the culture.
>
> All of this leads to a fascinating conclusion: ***some*** *ideas have consequences*—namely ideas propagated by those within society who possess cultural capital and a supporting network of other individuals and institutions also within the center of cultural influence and production.

Second post is here. The second post has a link to his review of Hunter's book (PDF), which is published by Oxford University Press.

I agree completely with the top-down thesis of James Davison Hunter, and I think that it is a *tragedy* that the Christian parents and Christian churches don't do a good job of challenging and guiding young Christians to study the things that will allow them to have an influence. Most Christians I talk to have a negative view of steering young Christians towards advanced degrees, or towards making a lot of money, or towards positions of cultural influence, etc. Instead of focusing on being effective, they tell me "I will do what I want to do, because God has a mysterious will for me to be happy". I don't buy it. I am happy to consider alternative plans that serve God better, but I don't think that the "I'll do what feels good" view is interested in producing a return for God in terms of money and/or influence. Crazy plans do not work out just because we want them to. There are costs to every plan, and not every plan is as likely to lead to influencing the culture as any other plan. This is reality.

I also think it is important to steer children into positions where they can be prosperous and/or influential. Again, many Christians disagree with guiding children that way. In my experience, it is assumed that children need to be happy, and that they are the best people to decide what they should be doing in life. Well, I'm not a heavy-handed bully, but I am not letting my children do whatever they like, because they don't have enough wisdom and experience to know what to do. For example, I am not letting my children study ballet in university. It doesn't pay the bills, and it isn't likely that they will have an influence compared to other choices. Money is important because money can be used to fund Christian scholars, apologetics ministries and apologetics events. Marriage is a great way to have an influence, but marriage costs money, and that means that marriage-minded people should have a plan to *pay the bills* before they consider marriage. We do not have the right to *do whatever we feel like*, because we have a boss

who *expects a return on his investment*. If a person is capable of doing hard things that produce a better return (money or influence or children, etc.) then he should do that.

We have a problem in this country as it is with young people borrowing tens of thousands of dollars to study things that either don't pay off, or that don't allow them to have an influence. It's not unloving to tell children the truth about the choices they make. Especially when the cost of having a child is over six figures *per child*. You can have a huge Christian influence with that kind of money if you spent it on other things, like apologetics scholars, their ministries and their events. So, if you are going to have children and spend it on them, you'd better have some sort of plan, and look for a spouse who is on board with that idea of providing God with a good return on his investment. Everything we do – including the choices to marry and have children – should be focused on serving God. If people shy away from the idea of steering children to have an influence, I don't think it's a good idea to get married at all. Save the money and use it for the kingdom somewhere else. Marriage is about making the best decisions you can in order to serve God, and you can't marry someone who puts their own happiness over the need to produce that return for the boss.

Having said that, if you are already married, stick with it. I am advocating for making smarter decisions *before* you commit. And before you go off to college, ask yourself: is what you are thinking of studying worth it? Trade school is an excellent option that will give you an income that can support a family AND give to apologetics ministries, with less exposure to debt. If you must go to university, then it's generally wiser to stick with STEM degrees, so that you can get a job and actually pay off those loans. Marriages and children are NOT free. Retirement is not free. Health care is not free. Christian apologetics ministries do not run on wishes and hopes. Christian scholars do not get their degrees for free – they need support. I think another good plan is to have one person do philosophy or history and then be supported by other people with jobs in STEM fields. That's what I do – I help out Christian scholars on my team to finish their graduate degrees in fields related to apologetics. Those non-STEM degrees are the best way to have an influence, but it's easier to get them as a multi-disciplinary team effort. Everyone has to pull their weight!

And one last point. The most amazing thing in the world is when I meet people who are very very skeptical about mentoring young people and steering children towards prosperous and influential areas, even though they themselves may be facing the results of their own poor decisions. You would think that someone who has burned $60,000 on a degree in Women's Studies and can't find a job would be on your side about helping other young people to make better decisions, but they are often not on your side. Why is that? Somewhere along the way, this culture stopped liking the Mr. Knightleys who were praised for loving people by telling them the truth about their bad decisions. Now we think that the Emmas can do whatever they want, and no one should be giving them any guidance. How sad.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

April 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below, please find my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

Brian Auten has posted the MP3 audio of the debate at Apologetics 315.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates

- You didn’t need to come out on this cold night
- Craig’s arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn’t listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don’t require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that “every effect requires a cause”
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can’t see
- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism

6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said.

Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

What is the “unforgiveable sin” in Mark 3 and Matthew 12?

April 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Take a look at these two puzzling passages from the New Testament.

Mark 3:28-29:

[28] Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter,

[29] but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

Matthew 12:30-32:

[30] “Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

[31] And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

[32] Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

What can it mean?

Well, here’s a post by Dr. Paul Gould to shed some light on it.

Excerpt:

> Taken in isolation, it is hard to make sense of this passage—how is it that all kinds of sins can be forgiven but one sin will not be forgiven? What is going on here? Well, here is a principle of sound biblical interpretation:
>
> Principle #1: I*n order to correctly understand a passage, we must always look at it within its context.*
>
> And what is the passages context? The broader context can be found in Matthew 12:22-32. In this broader context we read of Jesus performing a miracle (he performs an exorcism and heals a blind and mute man), we read of the crowd’s amazement and wonderment over the identity of Jesus (“Could this be the Son of David?”), we find the slanderous (and murderous) charge of the Pharisees, and we find Jesus’ response to the Pharisees charge (both his reasoned response to their explicit charge that he drives out demons by Satan’s power as well as his warning to the Pharisees if they continue to attribute to Satan what is in fact the work of God’s Spirit).
>
> After looking at this passage in context, we find that the “unforgivable sin” is (basically) attributing what is in fact the work of God’s Spirit to His ultimate enemy, Satan.
>
> Fair enough, you say, but there are other problems passages that talk about the unforgivable sin—Hebrews 6, 1 John 5, and Hebrews 10 come to mind. What

> about those passages? Well, here is our second principle of biblical interpretation:
>
> Principle #2: *Always interpret unclear passages in light of the clear teachings of Scripture (as a whole)*.
>
> And what is the clear teaching of Scripture related to sin and forgiveness? It is this:
>
> **Forgiveness of sins is a consequence of man's repentance, and repentance is a consequence of the activity of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. So in the end, it seems that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is nothing more or less than the unrelenting rejection of His advances.**

So, the only unforgiveable sin is the sin of deliberately rejecting God's efforts to draw you into a saving relationship with him. What does this mean for you? It means that if you are a Christian and you believe the essentials of the faith, then you aren't going to be able to lose your salvation by performing sinful actions. You can't sin your way out of God's forgiveness, because if you accept Jesus' death as payment for your sins, then it covers all your sins. I do think that the Bible is very clear that you can lose your salvation by "the unrelenting rejection" of God's advances. But that's not a description of any Christians, it's a description of someone who does not believe in Jesus.

Physicist Victor Stenger debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

April 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate took place on March 1, 2010 at Oregon State University.

In this debate, Victor Stenger does affirm his belief that the universe could be eternal in his second rebuttal (1:02:30), thus denying the standard Big Bang cosmology. He also denies the law of conservation of energy and asserts that something can come from nothing in his concluding speech (1:33:50). He also caused the audience to start laughing when he said that Jesus was not moral and supported slavery. There is almost no snark in this summary. Instead, I quoted Dr. Stenger *verbatim* in many places. I still think that it is very entertaining even without the snarky paraphrasing.

The debate includes 30 minutes of Q&A with the students.

Here is the MP3 file for the audio.

Here's the video of the debate:

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

- The ontological argument
- The contingency argument
- The cosmological argument
- The moral argument
- The resurrection of Jesus (3-fact version)
- Religious experience

Dr. Stenger's opening speech:

- There is no scientific evidence for God's existence in the textbooks
- There is no scientific evidence for God acting in the universe
- God doesn't talk to people and tell them things they couldn't possibly know
- The Bible says that the Earth is flat, etc.
- There is no scientific evidence that God answers prayers
- God doesn't exist because people who believe in him are ignorant
- Human life is not optimally designed and appears to be the result of a blind, ad hoc evolutionary process
- The beginning of the universe is not ordered (low entropy) but random and chaotic
- It's theoretically possible that quantum tunneling explains the origin of the universe
- The laws of physics are not objectively real, they are "our inventions"
- Regarding the beginning of the universe, the explanation is that something came from nothing*
- Nothing* isn't really nothing, it is "the total chaos that we project existed just before the big bang"

- If something has no structure, then “it is as much nothing as nothing can be”
- Consciousness is explainable solely on the basis of material processes
- There are well-informed, rational non-believers in the world and God would not allow that

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

Stenger’s argument that there is no objective evidence for God’s existence:

- First, it is not required that God rely only on objective evidence in order to draw people to himself (Alvin Plantinga)
- Second, God is not required to provide evidence to everyone, only to the people who he knows would respond to him
- Third, Craig gave lots of objective evidence, from science, history and philosophy
- Stenger asks for certain evidence (answered prayers, prophecy, etc.), but Craig presented the evidence we have

Stenger’s argument that the balance of energy is zero so “nothing” exists:

- if you have the same amount of assets and liabilities, it doesn’t mean that nothing exists – your assets and liabilities exist
- Christopher Isham says that there needs to be a cause to create the positive and negative energy even if they balance
- the quantum gravity model contradicts observations
- the vacuum is not the same as nothing, it contains energy and matter
- the BVG theorem proves that *any* universe that is expanding must have a beginning

Stenger’s argument that mental operations can be reduced to physical operations:

- mental properties are not reducible to physical properties
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with self-identity over time
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with thoughts about other things
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with free will
- substance dualism (mind/body dualism) is a better explanation for our mental experience
- God is a soul without a body

Dr. Stenger’s first rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- Craig’s premise is “everything has a cause”, but quantum mechanics has causeless events
- There are speculative theories about how something could have come into being uncaused out of nothing
- “I don’t know of a single working cosmologist today who believes there was a singularity prior to the Big Bang”

- “If there wasn’t a singularity then there’s no basis for arguing that time began at that point”
- “There’s no reason from cosmology that we know of that the universe can’t be eternal”
- “When I talk about an eternal universe, I mean a universe that has no beginning or end”
- The Hartle-Hawking model doesn’t have a beginning
- “There was no violation of energy conservation by having a universe coming from nothing”
- “The universe *could have* come from a previous universe for example or even just from a region of chaos”
- The paper by Vilenkin is counteracted by other papers (he doesn’t specify which ones)

Craig’s moral argument:

- Dr. Craig is arguing from ignorance
- But morality can be decided by humanity just like governments pass laws, and that’s objective
- Dr. Craig has too little respect for the human intellect
- I don’t need to tell me that slavery is wrong
- The Bible supports slavery
- Atheists can behave as good as theists
- Morality just evolved naturally as an aid to survival

Craig’s resurrection argument:

- No Roman historians wrote about the execution of Jesus but none of them did
- The empty tomb is doubtful because it is only mentioned in the gospels, not by Paul
- John Dominic Crossan says there was no empty tomb
- Christianity only survived because the Roman empire thought that they were useful

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- There is no reason to prefer an indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics
- Dr. Stenger himself wrote that deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics are possible
- The vacuum in quantum mechanics is not nothing
- The quantum vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal
- The cosmological argument does not require a singularity
- The Hartle-Hawking model is from 1983
- Hawking says that there is a beginning of space and time *after* that model
- The Hartle-Hawking model *does still have a beginning of time* – the model is not

eternal
- The BVG theorem that requires a beginning for expanding universes is widely accepted among cosmologists

Craig's moral argument:

- Stenger redefined objective to mean that most people agree with it – but that's not what objective means
- Objective means right and wrong whether anyone accepts it or not
- Richard Dawkins himself says that on atheism there is "no evil and no good" – why is he wrong?
- Even Dr. Stenger says that morality is the same as passing laws – it's arbitrary and varies by time and place
- But on his view, right and wrong are the same as deciding which side of the road to drive on
- But somethings really are right and some things are really wrong

Craig's resurrection argument:

- Josephus is a Roman historian and he wrote about Jesus, for example
- There were four biographies of Jesus are the best sources for his life
- The scholars that Stenger mentioned are on the radical fringe

Dr. Stenger's second rebuttal:

Knowledge and the burden of proof:

- Dr. Craig has to bear the burden of proof, not me – because his claim is more "extravagant"
- "I don't have to prove that a God was not necessary to create the universe"
- "I don't have to prove that a God did not design the universe and life"
- "I don't have to prove that the universe did not have a beginning"
- "I don't have to prove that God did not provide us with our moral sense"
- There are a lot of books written about how morality evolved naturally
- "I don't have to prove that the events surrounding the supposed resurrection of Jesus did not take place"
- Bart Ehrman says that the gospels are generally unreliable (Note: Ehrman accepts all 3 of Craig's minimal facts)
- Just because people are willing to die for a cause, does not make their leader God, e.g. – the Emperor of Japan

Aesthetic concerns about the universe:

- I don't like dark matter and I wouldn't have made the universe with dark matter
- I don't like the doctrine of penal substitution
- I don't like the doctrine of original sin

- I don’t like the heat death of the universe

Dr. Craig’s conclusion:

The case for atheism:

- Dr. Stenger had two arguments and he has to support his premises
- Dr. Craig addressed his two arguments and each premise and Dr. Stenger never came back on it

The contingency argument:

- Dr. Stenger has dropped the refutation of this argument

The cosmological argument:

- The theoretical vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal

The moral argument:

- He asserts that things are wrong, but there is no grounding for that to be objective on atheism

The resurrection of Jesus:

- There are surveys of scholars on the empty tomb and 75% of them agree with it
- Bart Ehrman agrees with all 3 of the minimal facts that Dr. Craig presented
- Ehrman’s objection to the resurrection is not historical: he’s an atheist – he thinks miracles are impossible

Religious experience:

- No response from Dr. Stenger

Dr. Stenger’s conclusion

The cosmological argument:

- “I argued that we have very good physical reasons to understand how something can come from nothing”
- “There is a natural tendency in the universe… to go from.. simpler thing to the more complicated thing”
- The transition from a vapor to a liquid to ice shows how something could come from nothing
- “It cannot be proven that the universe had a beginning”

The moral argument:

- Objective morality, which is independent of what people think, could be developed

based on what people think
- “Jesus himself was not a tremendously moral person… he had no particular regard for the poor… he certainly supported slavery… he was for the subjugation of women” (audience laughter)

The resurrection argument:

- Bart Ehrman says that the majority of the gospels are unreliable

Religious experience:

- I don’t see any evidence that there is anything more to religious experience than just stuff in their heads

God’s purpose of the world should be to make people feel happy:

- God could have made people feel happier
- God could have made people not die
- God could could have made the universe smaller: it’s too big
- God could have made it possible for humans to live anywhere “even in space”

New study: children's brains function better when they can see their mothers

April 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The new study published in Psychological Science was reported in Pacific Standard.

Excerpt:

> For little kids, seeing mom or dad nearby is a calming influence, maybe the difference between between perfect calm and a full-bore freakout. It's as if having a trusted caregiver nearby transforms children from scared toddlers into confident adolescents. And in a way, a new report suggests, that's what having mom around does to a kid's brain.
>
> When they're first born and for years after, infants and young children can't do a whole lot by themselves. They can't eat on their own, they aren't very good at managing their emotions, and it takes a while for them to learn how to dress themselves. Most children figure it out eventually, but in the meantime they need their parents to do a lot of that stuff for them. All the while, their brains are changing, too. Well into adolescence, kids' brains undergoanatomical and physiological changes that affect the way we think and act.
>
> […]Young children's brains responded differently based on whether they were looking at their mothers or strangers. In particular, their brains showed signs of positive amygdala-PFC connections when viewing pictures of strangers, but negative connections when viewing pictures of their mothers, suggesting more mature and stable brain function—and likely more mature and stable behavior, at least when moms were around. In contrast, tweens and teens had negative connections whether they were looking at their mothers or strangers. In other words, looking at pictures of their mothers made young children's brains look a little more like those of adolescents.
>
> The companion behavioral experiment backed up that thinking—young children made around 20 percent fewer errors when their mothers were present than when they weren't, while there was no difference for adolescents. That combined with the fMRI results to suggest that mothers—and likely other caregivers—can provide an external source of mental regulation that young children won't develop until later in life, the authors write in *Psychological Science.*

In view of the recent triumphs for gay marriage advocates, I think it's worth remembering that gay marriage, like single motherhood, is not the best we can do for children. I think it's a bad enough situation when the husband dies and leaves his children to be raised by the mother. That's hard, but it's not immoral. On the other hand, I think that deliberately choosing to deprive a child of his or her mother or father IS immoral. It's child abuse, in my opinion. And that goes for gay marriage as well as "single motherhood by choice". I

also oppose frivolous divorce ("frivorce"), which is very popular in a nation that views structured courtship as "boring" and no-fault divorce as a woman's right.

Previously, I blogged about another study that showed the importance of moms for young children.

Excerpt:

> Both of these images are brain scans of a two three-year-old children, but the brain on the left is considerably larger, has fewer spots and less dark areas, compared to the one on the right.
>
> According to neurologists this sizeable difference has one primary cause – the way each child was treated by their mothers.
>
> The child with the larger and more fully developed brain was looked after by its mother – she was constantly responsive to her baby, reported The Sunday Telegraph.
>
> But the child with the shrunken brain was the victim of severe neglect and abuse.
>
> According to research reported by the newspaper, the brain on the right worryingly lacks some of the most fundamental areas present in the image on the left.
>
> The consequences of these deficits are pronounced – the child on the left with the larger brain will be more intelligent and more likely to develop the social ability to empathise with others.
>
> But in contrast, the child with the shrunken brain will be more likely to become addicted to drugs and involved in violent crimes, much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on state benefits.
>
> The child is also more likely to develop mental and other serious health problems.
>
> Professor Allan Schore, of UCLA, told The Sunday Telegraph that if a baby is not treated properly in the first two years of life, it can have a fundamental impact on development.
>
> He pointed out that the genes for several aspects of brain function, including intelligence, cannot function.
>
> […]The study correlates with research released earlier this year that found that children who are given love and affection from their mothers early in life are smarter with a better ability to learn.
>
> The study by child psychiatrists and neuroscientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, found school-aged children whose mothers nurtured them early in life have brains with a larger hippocampus, a key structure important to learning, memory and response to stress.
>
> The research was the first to show that changes in this critical region of children's brain anatomy are linked to a mother's nurturing, Neurosciencenews.com

> reports.
>
> The research is published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Early Edition.
>
> Lead author Joan L. Luby, MD, professor of child psychiatry, said the study reinforces how important nurturing parents are to a child's development.

I have a very good feminist non-Christian friend who sometimes comments here. I once asked her about marriage and she said that her skills would be wasting on raising children. I explained to her my view that a mother needs to stay at home with the children, and that is more important work. I expect my future wife to read all kinds of books on child care and to give the child attention, nutrition, exercise and play so that the child will grow up to be an effective Christian. Maybe I need to be clear. I am not going to spend hundreds of thousands per child with just any woman. I need a woman who can produce influential and effective Christians who will engage in the public square. And we do not entrust that job to just anyone. We want educated, professional women who are willing to be stay-at-home moms when it's necessary to do that – for the sake of the children.

I expect the woman I marry (if I marry) to have a college degree, and preferably a graduate degree, and at least a couple of years of employment. Then she has to stay home and invest in those children through the first five years, at least. After that she can stay home or work as much as she thinks is beneficial to the family goals of impacting the university, the church and the public square – as well as continuing to raise those children. It's not a waste of her talent to make the next William Lane Craig, or the next Marsha Blackburn, or the next Doug Axe, or the next Edith Hollan Jones.

Study: fathers are important for the development of children's brains

April 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fathers and children

The study was reported in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Braun's group found that at 21 days, the fatherless animals had less dense dendritic spines compared to animals raised by both parents, though they "caught up" by day 90. However, the length of some types of dendrites was significantly shorter in some parts of the brain, even in adulthood, in fatherless animals.
>
> "It just shows that parents are leaving footprints on the brain of their kids," says Dr. Braun, 54 years old.
>
> The neuronal differences were observed in a part of the brain called the amygdala, which is related to emotional responses and fear, and the orbitofrontal cortex, or OFC, the brain's decision-making center.
>
> […]The balance between these two brain parts is critical to normal emotional and cognitive functioning, according to Dr. Braun. If the OFC isn't active, the amygdala "goes crazy, like a horse without a rider," she says. In the case of the fatherless pups, there were fewer dendritic spines in the OFC, while the dendrite trees in the amygdala grew more and longer branches.
>
> A preliminary analysis of the degus' behavior showed that fatherless animals seemed to have a lack of impulse control, Dr. Braun says. And, when they played with siblings, they engaged in more play-fighting or aggressive behavior.
>
> In a separate study in Dr. Braun's lab conducted by post-doctoral researcher Joerg Bock, degu pups were removed from their caregivers for one hour a day. Just this small amount of stress leads the pups to exhibit more hyperactive behaviors and less focused attention, compared to those who aren't separated, Dr. Braun says. They also exhibit changes in their brain.

> The basic wiring between the brain regions in the degus is the same as in humans, and the nerve cells are identical in their function. “So on that level we can assume that what happens in the animal’s brain when it’s raised in an impoverished environment … should be very similar to what happens in our children’s brain,” Dr. Braun says.

Read the whole thing.

I think this is important because we hear so much today that marriage can be redefined, that having one of each parent doesn’t matter, that live-in boyfriends and stepfathers have the same motivation to care for a woman’s children as the biological father does. We don’t want to make judgments, even if setting boundaries is better for children. A child’s well-being is enormously affected by the woman’s choice of biological father. You can’t have it both ways – either we are going to judge women who choose men who don’t have the desire to commit to marriage, and do the father role, OR we are going to take things away from children by encouraging women to choose men based on “feelings” instead of abilities. Lowering moral standards and removing moral obligations *hurts children.* It sounds so nice when we tell women, “you can do whatever you feel like, and just forget about responsibilities, expectations and obligations”, but letting women be guided by their feelings *harms children*. My stock broker makes me feel uncomfortable because he knows more than I do, and does not respect my opinion. But I *pay him* to make investment decisions for me. I mustn’t let my pride get in the way of letting him do his job – a job he is more qualified than I am to do. Let him do his job.

Here’s a related question: Are biological fathers or unrelated men more dangerous for children?

This article from the Weekly Standard answers the question.

Excerpt:

> A March 1996 study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics contains some interesting findings that indicate just how widespread the problem may be. In a nationally representative survey of state prisoners jailed for assaults against or murders of children, fully one-half of respondents reported the victim was a friend, acquaintance, or relative other than offspring. (All but 3 percent of those who committed violent crimes against children were men.) A close relationship between victim and victimizer is also suggested by the fact that three-quarters of all the crimes occurred in either the perpetrator’s home or the victim’s.
>
> A 1994 paper published in the Journal of Comparative Family Studies looked at 32,000 documented cases of child abuse. Of the victims, only 28 percent lived with both biological parents (far fewer than the 68 percent of all children who live with both parents); 44 percent lived with their mother only (as do 25 percent of all children); and 18 percent lived with their mother and an unrelated adult (double the 9 percent of all children who live with their mother and an unrelated adult).

> These findings mirror a 1993 British study by the Family Education Trust, which meticulously explored the relationship between family structure and child abuse. Using data on documented cases of abuse in Britain between 1982 and 1988, the report found a high correlation between child abuse and the marital status of the parents.
>
> Specifically, the British study found that the incidence of abuse was an astounding 33 times higher in homes where the mother was cohabiting with an unrelated boyfriend than in stable nuclear families. Even when the boyfriend was the children's biological father, the chances of abuse were twice as high.
>
> These findings are consonant with those published a year earlier by Leslie Margolin of the University of Iowa in the journal Child Abuse and Neglect. Prof. Margolin found that boyfriends were 27 times more likely than natural parents to abuse a child. The next-riskiest group, siblings, were only twice as likely as parents to abuse a child.
>
> More recently, a report by Dr. Michael Stiffman presented at the latest meeting of the American Academy of Pediatrics, in October, studied the 175 Missouri children under the age of 5 who were murdered between 1992 and 1994. It found that the risk of a child's dying at the hands of an adult living in the child's own household was eight times higher if the adult was biologically unrelated.
>
> The Heritage Foundation's Patrick Fagan discovered that the number of child-abuse cases appeared to rise in the 1980s along with the general societal acceptance of cohabitation before, or instead of, marriage. That runs counter to the radical-feminist view, which holds that marriage is an oppressive male institution of which violence is an integral feature. If that were true, then child abuse and domestic violence should have decreased along with the rise in cohabitation.
>
> Heritage also found that in the case of very poor children (those in households earning less than $ 15,000 per year), 75 percent lived in a household where the biological father was absent. And 50 percent of adults with less than a high-school education lived in cohabitation arrangements. "This mix — poverty, lack of education, children, and cohabitation — is an incubator for violence," Fagan says.
>
> Why, then, do we ignore the problem? Fagan has a theory: "It is extremely politically incorrect to suggest that living together might not be the best living arrangement."

The moral of the story is that it is a lot safer for children if we promote marriage as a way of attaching mothers and fathers to their children. Fathers who have a biological connection to children are a lot less likely to harm them. We should probably be teaching women to choose men who have a certain tenderness towards people they mentor or nurture, as well. These things are not free, you have to persuade women to value the male tendency to want to lead / guide / mentor. A lot of social problems like child poverty, promiscuity and violence cannot be solved by replacing a father with a check from the

government. We need to support fathers by empowering them in their traditional roles. Let the men lead. Swallow your feminist instincts, and prefer men who take seriously their role of leading others upward.

Hillary Clinton: let's use government to force Christians to stop being pro-life

April 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Mary from Marin tweeted this story from Life News.

It says:

> In a speech last week, Hillary Clinton lamented that too many women are supposedly denied abortions. The Democratic presidential candidate came under fire for that pro-abortion comment, but she also is drawing widespread condemnation for another remark in the speech.
>
> The comment has Hillary Clinton essentially saying that Christians must be forced to change their religious views to accommodate abortions.
>
> "Far too many women are still denied critical access to reproductive health care and safe childbirth. All the laws we've passed don't count for much if they're not enforced," Clinton said, using the euphemism for abortion.
>
> "Rights have to exist in practice — not just on paper," Clinton argued. "Laws have to be backed up with resources and political will. And deep-seated cultural codes, religious beliefs and structural biases have to be changed,:
>
> That is not going over well with pro-life advocates.
>
> Bill Donohue of the Catholic League let Hillary have it in his remarks to LifeNews.
>
> "It was not surprising that Hillary Clinton, who strongly opposes a ban on partial-birth abortion, would tell her feminist audience that she supports Planned Parenthood. What was surprising was her comment on the need to change religious beliefs on abortion," he said. "In others words, Hillary has a problem with the Catholic Church's teachings on abortionthey must be changed."
>
> "Never before have we seen a presidential candidate be this bold about directly confronting the Catholic Church's teachings on abortion. It's time for Hillary to take the next step and tell us exactly what she plans to do about delivering on her pledge. Not only would practicing Catholics like to know, so would Evangelicals, Orthodox Jews, Muslims, and all those who value life from conception to natural death," Donohue added.
>
> David Ripley of Idaho Chooses Life also condemned her remarks.
>
> "We have known for some time that abortion would be Hillary's primary campaign message," he said. "What made this particular speech unique was Hillary's bold declaration that God needed to get His act together on this whole abortion thing. It was past time to update the Ten Commandments."
>
> "Now, of course, most of those "religious beliefs" are based upon clear teachings within Scripture that teach us to hold children precious, to sacrifice ourselves for

> others – and, above all, not to kill the innocent. What Clinton and her comrades on the Left do not seem to understand is that our religious beliefs are not a matter of personal opinion, but, rather, one of submission to our Creator," Ripley continued. "Clinton is not the first self-proclaimed leader to shake a fist at the Almighty. One can presume that He is not particularly impressed; though His heart is undoubtedly grieved."
>
> "And we can all be grieved that a person of such arrogance stands a chance of becoming president over this great nation," he concluded.

Here she is speaking to Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider:

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood
And Planned Parenthood gets taxpayer funding.

A lot of evangelical Christian women will be voting for Hillary just because she is a woman. Do you know any? Why don't you ask them?

Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal to anti-marriage corporate bullies: “Save your breath”

April 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal

Bobby Jindal is my #2 pick for President, just behind Scott Walker. Previously, I blogged about how Jindal had the best pro-life record of any of the GOP primary candidates. And now were going to see that he is tough on defending marriage, as well.

Jindal defends marriage in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

Jindal writes:

> THE debate over religious liberty in America presents conservatives and business leaders with a crucial choice.
>
> In Indiana and Arkansas, large corporations recently joined left-wing activists to bully elected officials into backing away from strong protections for religious liberty. It was disappointing to see conservative leaders so hastily retreat on legislation that would simply allow for an individual or business to claim a right to free exercise of religion in a court of law.
>
> Our country was founded on the principle of religious liberty, enshrined in the Bill of Rights. Why shouldn’t an individual or business have the right to cite, in a court proceeding, religious liberty as a reason for not participating in a same-sex marriage ceremony that violates a sincerely held religious belief?
>
> That is what Indiana and Arkansas sought to do. That political leaders in both states quickly cowered amid the shrieks of big business and the radical left should alarm us all.

It might be a surprise for my readers, but big greedy corporations are as liberal as big greedy unions – conservatives don’t like unions or big corporations. We like small

businesses. And so does Bobby Jindal.

While Indiana and Arkansas retreat, Jindal wants to double down:

> **As the fight for religious liberty moves to Louisiana, I have a clear message for any corporation that contemplates bullying our state: Save your breath.**
>
> In 2010, Louisiana adopted a Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which prohibits government from unduly burdening a person's exercise of religion. However, given the changing positions of politicians, judges and the public in favor of same-sex marriage, along with the potential for discrimination against Christian individuals and businesses that comes with these shifts, **I plan in this legislative session to fight for passage of the Marriage and Conscience Act.**
>
> **The legislation would prohibit the state from denying a person, company or nonprofit group a license, accreditation, employment or contract — or taking other "adverse action" — based on the person or entity's religious views on the institution of marriage.**
>
> **Some corporations have already contacted me and asked me to oppose this law. I am certain that other companies, under pressure from radical liberals, will do the same. They are free to voice their opinions, but they will not deter me. As a nation we would not compel a priest, minister or rabbi to violate his conscience and perform a same-sex wedding ceremony. But a great many Americans who are not members of the clergy feel just as called to live their faith through their businesses. That's why we should ensure that musicians, caterers, photographers and others should be immune from government coercion on deeply held religious convictions.**

I know that many of you have not heard of Bobby Jindal, but he is one of our best and most conservative candidates. I think that for people who vote primarily for social conservatism, he is the most effective on those issues – much more than all the other candidates. Honestly, I don't think he cares about being popular, he just does what he thinks is right.

GoFundMe shuts down fundraising accounts of pro-marriage baker and florist

April 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Here's the latest, from The Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Less than 48 hours after the crowdfunding website GoFundMe shut down a campaign setup for Sweet Cakes by Melissa, GoFundMe yanked a similar fundraiser for a 70-year-old Washington florist facing seven-figure financial penalties for violating her state's anti-discrimination law.
>
> The campaign, created for Barronelle Stutzman, a Christian florist who refused to make flower arrangements for a gay couple's wedding, had been operating on GoFundMe for over two months.
>
> It wasn't until GoFundMe removed the Sweet Cakes by Melissa campaign—meant for Aaron and Melissa Klein, the Oregon-based bakers who were fined $135,000 for refusing to make a cake for a same-sex wedding—that it closed the account for Stutzman, owner of Arlene's Flowers.
>
> Before it was shut down, Stutzman's GoFundMe page had raised more than $174,000 in donations.
>
> […]Meanwhile, the Sweet Cakes by Melissa campaign had raised more than $109,000 in nine hours before being removed.
>
> What happened?
>
> A Facebook group, called "Boycott Sweet Cakes by Melissa, Gresham, OR," sought to shut the account down.

> In multiple posts, the group linked to the Klein's GoFundMe page, writing, "How fast can we shut this down."
>
> Kristen Waggoner, the attorney representing Stutzman on behalf of Alliance Defending Freedom, told The Daily Signal that opponents are trying to bully people like Stutzman and the Kleins who are trying to live in accordance to their faith.
>
> "It's not enough to have the government redefine marriage or to punish those who disagree," she said.
>
> **The opponents of freedom have to ruin every aspect of the lives of those who disagree—denying them a living, the ability to feed their families, and the opportunity to raise money to pay the so-called 'victims.'** This type of vindictive, hateful behavior is terrifying. Corporations like Apple, Salesforce, and GoFundMe want to make sure they can live and work consistent with their beliefs about marriage, but then deny that same right to people like Barronelle Stutzman who lovingly served her customer for nearly a decade but simply couldn't participate in the celebration of his same-sex wedding.

I'm not expert, but it seems to me that the businesses who receive death threats and are put on trial and fined tens of thousands of dollars are bigger victims. But I guess now the "right to not be offended" is more important than freedom of religion. All I want to be able to say in public is that marriage is better for children than divorce, cohabitation, single motherhood by choice, and same-sex marriage – because children need their mother and father. Apparently, it's now illegal to say that, and not just in the way that a parking ticket is illegal. This is serious. I think a lot of Christians on the margin are going to be even more intimidated about speaking out and donating to pro-marriage causes the more these persecutions intensify.

Only 10% of money given to Clinton Foundation goes to charity

April 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Astonishing article from The Federalist.

It says:

> After a week of being attacked for shady bookkeeping and questionable expenditures, the Clinton Foundation is fighting back. In a tweet posted last week, the Clinton Foundation claimed that 88 percent of its expenditures went "directly to [the foundation's] life-changing work."
>
> There's only one problem: that claim is demonstrably false. And it is false not according to some partisan spin on the numbers, but because the organization's own tax filings contradict the claim.

Look:

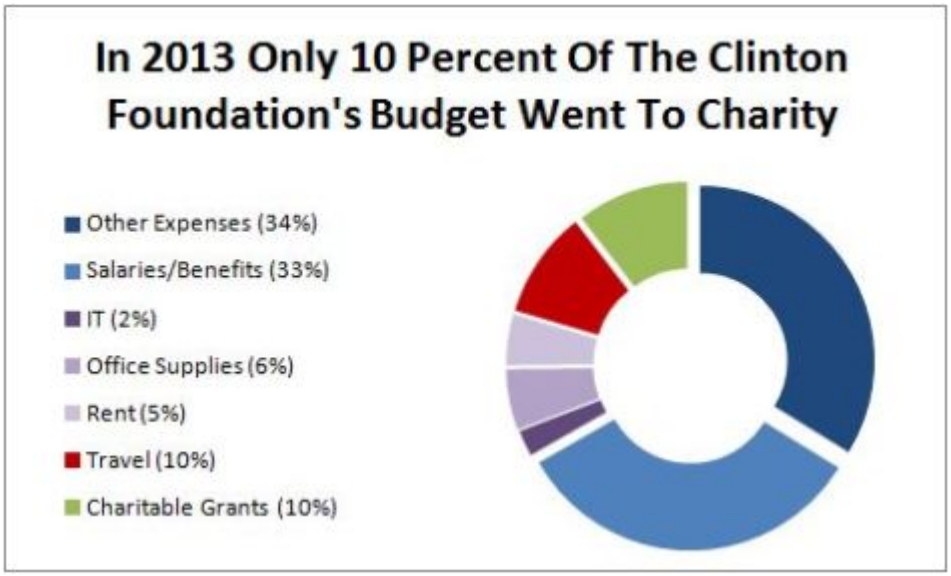

Only 10% of their income goes to charity

And:

> In order for the 88 percent claim to be even remotely close to the truth, the words "directly" and "life-changing" have to mean something other than "directly" and "life-changing." For example, the Clinton Foundation spent nearly $8.5 million–10 percent of all 2013 expenditures–on travel. Do plane tickets and hotel accommodations directly change lives? Nearly $4.8 million–5.6 percent of all expenditures–was spent on office supplies. Are ink cartridges and staplers "life-changing" commodities?
>
> Those two categories alone comprise over 15 percent of all Clinton Foundation expenses in 2013, and we haven't even examined other spending categories like employee fringe benefits ($3.7 million), IT costs ($2.1 million), rent ($4 million) or conferences and conventions ($9.2 million). Yet, the tax-exempt organization

> claimed in its tweet that no more than 12 percent of its expenditures went to these overhead expenses.
>
> How can both claims be true? Easy: they're not. The claim from the Clinton Foundation that 88 percent of all expenditures go directly to life-changing work is demonstrably false. Office chairs do not directly save lives. The internet connection for the group's headquarters does not directly change lives.
>
> […][T]he IRS 990 forms submitted by the Clinton Foundation include a specific and detailed accounting of these programmatic expenses. And even using extremely broad definitions–definitions that allow office supply, rent, travel, and IT costs to be counted as programmatic costs–the Clinton Foundation fails its own test.
>
> According to 2013 tax forms filed by the Clinton Foundation, a mere 80 percent of the organization's expenditures were characterized as functional programmatic expenses. That's a far cry from the 88 percent claimed by the organization just last week.
>
> […]In 2013, for example, only 10 percent of the Clinton Foundation's expenditures were for direct charitable grants. The amount it spent on charitable grants–$8.8 million–was dwarfed by the $17.2 million it cumulatively spent on travel, rent, and office supplies. Between 2011 and 2013, the organization spent only 9.9 percent of the $252 million it collected on direct charitable grants.
>
> While some may claim that the Clinton Foundation does its charity by itself, rather than outsourcing to other organizations in the form of grants, there appears to be little evidence of that activity in 2013. In 2008, for example, the Clinton Foundation spent nearly $100 million purchasing and distributing medicine and working with its care partners. In 2009, the organization spent $126 million on pharmaceutical and care partner expenses. By 2011, those activities were virtually non-existent. The group spent nothing on pharmaceutical expenses and only $1.2 million on care partner expenses. In 2012 and 2013, the Clinton Foundation spent $0. In just a few short years, the Clinton's primary philanthropic project transitioned from a massive player in global pharmaceutical distribution to a bloated travel agency and conference organizing business that just happened to be tax-exempt.

As if that were not bad enough, now Bloomberg News is reporting that there were 1100 UNREPORTED DONORS to the Clinton Foundation, most of them non-US residents.

Look:

> There are in fact 1,100 undisclosed donors to the Clinton Foundation, Giustra says, most of them non-U.S. residents who donated to CGEP.
>
> […]The reason this is a politically explosive revelation is because the Clinton Foundation promised to disclose its donors as a condition of Hillary Clinton becoming secretary of state. Shortly after Barack Obama was elected president

> in 2008, the Clinton Foundation signed a “memorandum of understanding” with the Obama White House agreeing to reveal its contributors every year. The agreement stipulates that the “Clinton Giustra Sustainable Growth Initiative” (as the charity was then known) is part of the Clinton Foundation and must follow “the same protocols.”
>
> It hasn’t.

So, if none of the money from all these foreign donors was being used for charitable activities, then what was it being used for? Hmmmn, what could a Secretary of State who wants to run for President do with all that money?

What happened in other countries, e.g. Canada, after gay marriage was legalized?

April 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you want real confidence, try studying instead of yelling

This article from CNS News is a must-read for sleepy American Christians.

It says:

> Rather than settle animosity and ease cultural tensions, the advent of same-sex "marriage" will lead to the repression of religious freedom and determination to root out dissent to the gay rights doctrine. At LifeSiteNews, we have watched this play out for nearly two decades in 17 countries around the world – and America is next.
>
> A prime example is Canada. Same-sex "marriage" passed in 2005. Similar to European countries which have done so, there has been a relentless pursuit of the minds of children against the wishes of their parents. Schools, both public and private, were first mandated by law to have gay-straight alliance clubs under the auspices of anti-bullying. Then, sex-education, teaching the normalcy of homosexual sex, was given to children without parents being permitted to opt their children out of the classes.
>
> We have arrived at this state of affairs because of the silence of Christian pulpits on sexual matters, and the concomitant shouting from every secular pulpit, screen and book. Even the current discussion around same-sex "marriage" in the United States reveals a grave reluctance to speak about the heart of the issue – homosexual sex. Rather, arguments are made about the goodness of natural marriage, about its benefit to children, and its unchangeable character.
>
> From reporting on the subject every day for so many years, we knew that the

> struggle for same-sex "marriage" has very little to do with marriage. In fact, until just recently, gay activists didn't even *want* to be "married" to each other. Most had no interest in the constraints that such a formalized union would entail in terms of exclusive partnership.
>
> However, the leaders among the activists convinced the movement that they must attain marriage as a societal stamp of approval to homosexual behavior. And, frankly, they have largely succeeded.
>
> Today, in many of the nations where same-sex "marriage" is law, opposition to it is seen as akin to racism. It is seen falsely as an animosity against someone for who they are—an unwillingness to recognize the human dignity of a class of persons due to an immutable characteristic.
>
> However, that false perception is due to a purposeful agenda to conflate animosity against homosexual sex acts with animosity against persons who experience same-sex attraction. The ancient Christian teaching to "love the sinner and hate the sin" is an impermissible distinction in the minds of some. It is, however, the key to understanding the majority of the opposition to same-sex "marriage."
>
> The plain truth of the matter is that opposition to same-sex "marriage" is rooted not in hatred and bigotry, but just the opposite – in love. Like parents who do not allow children to behave dangerously without lovingly correcting them, opponents of same-sex relationships are hoping to save people with same-sex attractions from severe physical, psychological, and spiritual harm.
>
> Just as, out of love and concern for their children's welfare, parents must correct and discipline, despite the protests they may get in return, any true believer in marriage, natural law and science must lovingly correct their fellow man.
>
> **In other nations, the perception that opposition to same-sex "marriage" is based upon bigotry has led to laws that violate religious liberty, parental rights and freedom of speech. This is why those who oppose same-sex "marriage" must present their reasoning as based on love and concern for the welfare of those in homosexual relationships, in addition to concerns for children and society itself. And there is ample evidence on which to base that concern in the numerous studies showing the grave harm of homosexual sex to both body and psyche.**

The danger is something that some gay activists (who are honest) speak about:

> When I've spoken of these findings at conferences around the world, some have questioned if the researchers who showed these harms weren't themselves biased by anti-gay sentiment. And so I've taken to carrying with me on my phone the quotes of the late Canadian gay activist Gens Hellquist, whose testimony proves the harms of gay sex better than any study ever could.
>
> Speaking a year after the passage of same-sex "marriage" into law, Hellquist was

> seeking more healthcare dollars for the LGBT community. “We have one of the poorest health statuses in this country,” he said. “Health issues affecting queer Canadians include lower life expectancy than the average Canadian, suicide, higher rates of substance abuse, depression, inadequate access to care and HIV/AIDS.”
>
> “There are all kinds of health issues that are endemic to our community,” he added. “We have higher rates of anal cancer in the gay male community, lesbians have higher rates of breast cancer.”
>
> He concluded: “Now that we can get married everyone assumes that we don’t have any issues any more. A lot of the deaths that occur in our community are hidden, we don’t see them. Those of us who are working on the front lines see them and I’m tired of watching my community die.”

Here is a good summary of what happened in Canada in the years after they legalized same-sex

Why is this happening? The answer is that American Christians have become more concerned about soft-aspects of Christianity than about truth. The church is more concerned about feeling good and being liked by non-Christians. Cultivating intellectual ability to defend marriage through a study of the relevant literature is definitely out. The very pious Bible-focused fundamentalists are confident that the best way to argue with non-Christians is to quote Bible verses to them.

I have a different idea of what we should be doing. I think we should be reading books on the philosophical arguments for marraige, (e.g. – “What Is Marriage?“) ,and reading books on what happens to children who are raised by same-sex adults instead of by their own mom and dad, (e.g. – “Gender and Parenthood“). It’s this study of philosophical arguments and social science evidence which allows us to be bold in defending marriage. Studying the issues instead of trying to do pious, subjective devotional activities will also help our children to be able to reach positions of influence in the culture, from which they can push the pro-marriage view.

Robert Gagnon debates gay activist Jayne Ozanne on Bible vs homosexuality

April 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I am tempted to say that this is the best podcast I have ever heard on the Unbelievable show. Do anything you have to do in order to listen to this podcast.

Details:

> Prof Robert Gagnon has become a well-known voice advocating the traditional biblical view on sexuality. In a highly charged show he debates the scriptural issues on sexuality with Jayne Ozanne, the director of Accepting Evangelicals who came out as gay earlier this year.

The MP3 file is here.

If you can only listen for 15 minutes, then start at 49 minutes in and listen from there.

The following summary is rated MUP for made-up paraphrase. Reader discretion is advised.

Summary:

Intro:

- Speaker introductions
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree that the Bible doesn't support it
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree Jesus taught male-female marriage
- Ozanne: I went to the hospital because I was sick from trying to suppress my gay desires
- Ozanne: Doctors told me that I would die if I didn't act on my gay desires
- Ozanne: I decided to reinterpret the Bible to fit with my gay desires

- Ozanne: According to my new interpretation, Jesus actually supports my gay desires

Segment 1: Genesis

- Ozanne: In Genesis the Bible says that Adam needs a woman to complete him
- Ozanne: I reinterpret this to mean that Adam needed a “complementarian human being”
- Ozanne: Genesis doesn’t say whether Eve was complemented by Adam in that chapter
- Ozanne: It’s not critical that men are complemented by women, a man could complement a man
- Ozanne: Genesis 2 doesn’t talk about children, it’s all about adult needs from a relationship
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 has never been interpreted that way in all of history
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language specifically implies a human being who is opposite/different
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language translates to complement or counterpart
- Gagnon: Genesis as a whole teaches that the sexuality is for male and female natures
- Gagnon: The extraction of something from the man that is given to the woman is complementarian
- Ozanne: I think that people can be complementary outside of male-female Genesis language
- Ozanne: I don’t want to discuss specific words and texts and Greek meanings
- Gagnon: the text has always been read and interpreted to support male/female complementarity
- Gagnon: the male-female nature argument is made because the two natures are complementary
- Ozanne: the text was interpreted by patriarchal males who treated women like property, it’s biased
- Ozanne: what is important to me is how Christ interprets Genesis (?? how does she know that?)
- Ozanne: I am passionate about my interpretation of Scripture which supports my gay desires
- Gagnon: just because a person is passionate about their interpretation it doesn’t make it right
- Gagnon: I am not arguing for the male-female view based on passion, but on scholarship, evidence and history
- Ozanne: both sides are equally passionate about their interpretations (?? so both are equally warranted?)
- Ozanne: the real question is why God “allowed” two different interpretations of Scripture

Segment 2: Is homosexuality a sin?

- Gagnon: Jesus affirmed traditional sexual morality, which forbids homosexuality
- Gagnon: Jesus teaches that marriage is male-female, and limited to two people
- Gagnon: No one in history has interpreted the Bible to say that homosexuality was not immoral
- Ozanne: Jesus came to bring life, and that means he supports homosexuality
- Ozanne: I was dying, and embracing my gay desires allowed me to live, so Jesus approves of me
- Ozanne: God says "I am who I am" and that means he approves of me doing whatever I want
- Ozanne: There is an imperative to be who I am, and that means embracing my gay desires
- Gagnon: Jesus argued that the twoness of the sexual bond is based on the twoness of the sexes
- Gagnon: Jesus did not come to gratify people's innate desires, he called people to repent of sin
- Gagnon: Jesus did reach out to sinners but he never condoned the sins they committed
- Gagnon: Jesus' outreach to tax collectors collecting too much and sexual sinners is the same: STOP SINNING
- Ozanne: I don't think that Romans 1 is talking about homosexuality
- Ozanne: I think it's talking about sexual addiction, not loving, committed gay relationships
- Ozanne: Paul was condemning pederasty in Romans 1, not loving, long-term, consensual sexual relationships between gay adults
- Gagnon: nothing in the passage limits the condemnation to pederasty
- Gagnon: the passage was never interpreted to be limited to pederasty in history
- Gagnon: rabbis and church fathers knew about committed two-adult same-sex relationships, and said they were wrong
- Gagnon: the argument for marriage is based on the broad two-nature argument, with no exceptions
- Gagnon: the condemnation is not limited to exploitative / coercive / lustful / uncommitted relationships
- Gagnon: even pro-gay scholars agree the passage cannot be interpreted Ozanne's way (he names two)

Segment 3: The showdown (49:00)

- Ozanne: I don't care how many pages people have written on this
- Ozanne: God says that "the wisdom of the wise I will frustrate" so you can't use scholars, even pro-gay scholars, to argue against my passionate interpretation
- Ozanne: I am not interested in the text or history or scholarship or even pro-gay

scholars who agree with you
- Ozanne: what decides the issue for me is my mystical feelings about God's love which makes my sexual desires moral
- Ozanne: you are certain that this is wrong, but your view does not "give life" to people
- Ozanne: your scholarship and historical analysis is "a message of death" that causes teenagers to commit suicide (= you are evil and a meany, Robert)
- Ozanne: "I pray for you and your soul" (= opposing me will land you in Hell) and "I hope that listeners will listen with their hearts" (?? instead of their minds?)
- Ozanne: you can prove anything you want with research, even two mutually exclusive conclusions, so you shouldn't rely on scholarship and research since it could be used to prove my view as well
- Ozanne: instead of relying on research, you should rely on your heart and your feelings about God's love to decide what the Bible teaches about sexual morality
- Gagnon: you are distorting the gospel in order to make your case
- Gagnon: attacking my "certainty" is an ad hominem attack to cover your dismissmal of the scholarship and history
- Gagnon: you distort the gospel to make it seem like Christ just wants us to get what we want, when we want it, with who we want it with
- Gagnon: Christ calls us to take up our cross, to lose our lives and to deny ourselves
- Gagnon: you have a notion of what "fullness of life" is, but it's not reflective of the gospel
- Gagnon: Paul's life was much more troubling than yours, mine or anyone else around here
- Gagnon: Paul was beaten, whipped, stoned, poorly sheltered, poorly clothed, poorly fed, shipwrecked, and anxious for his churches
- Gagnon: on your view, he should have been miserable and angry with God all the time
- Gagnon: but instead Paul was constantly thankful and rejoicing to be able to suffer with Jesus and look forward to the resurrection
- Gagnon: I have suffered too, but the suffering we go through never provides us with a license to violate the commandments of God
- Ozanne: "the ultimate thing is what people feel God has called them to"
- Ozanne: My goal right now is to tell young people that homosexuality is fine so they don't commit suicide
- Ozanne: the view that homosexuality is wrong is "evil and misguided"
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm in the gay community are intrinsic to homosexual unions, not caused by external disapproval of homosexuality

Segment 4: Concluding statements

- Gagnon: gay male relationships on average have more sex partners and more STDs
- Gagnon: female relationships on average have shorter-length relationships and

more mental issues
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm are because there is no complementarity / balance in the relationships
- Gagnon: everyone has some disappointment or suffering in their lives that hurts them, and that they are tempted to break the rules to fix, but we should not break the rules in order to be happy
- Ozanne: both sides are passionate, so no one can be right, and evidence proves nothing
- Ozanne: only feelings about “what God is doing” can allow us to decide what counts as sin or not
- Ozanne: the main thing that is at stake here is to make people like us, not to decide what the Bible says about sin
- Ozanne: my message to people is to do whatever you want, and ignore mean people who don’t affirm you
- Ozanne: we should be more opposed to mean people who make non-Christians feel unloved than about doing what the Bible says

Atheist Richard Carrier, who divorced his wife to go polyamorous, seeks new sex partner

April 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

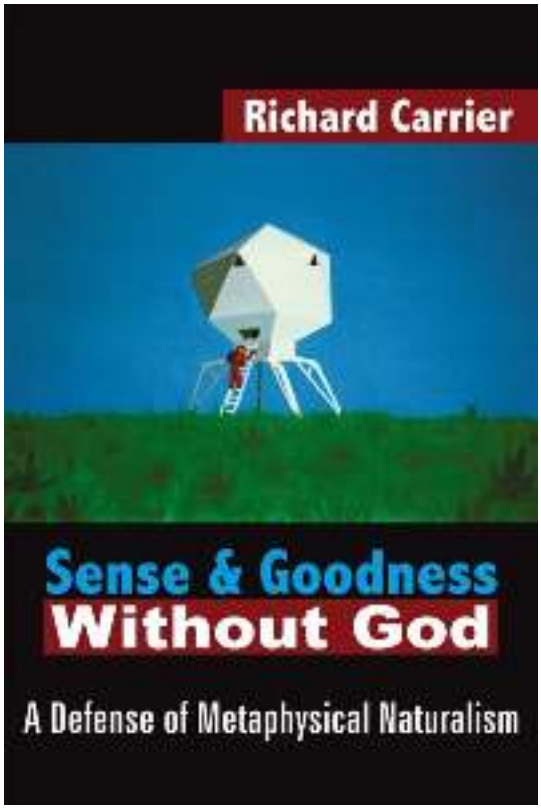

Goodness Without God: is it possible?
Is atheism a rational worldview, or is it just rationalizing sexual misbehavior?

A while back, prominent atheist Dr. Richard Carrier explained how he was divorcing his wife – who supported him financially – in order to go polyamorous full-time.

The Yeti's Roar, a libertarian atheist blog reacted to the news: (link removed)

> In a recent blog post, entitled "Coming Out Poly + A Change of Life Venue", the esteemed Dr. Richard Carrier PhD, discusses his "coming out" as polyamorous, an "orientation" that he just discovered at the young age of 47.
>
> […]Carrier claims that after 17 years of marriage, he cheated on his wife multiple times, for reasons that he won't disclose. In the midst of his infidelity, he suddenly "discovered" (as a middle aged man) that he was polyamorous. Even though his wife attempted to make the marriage work by allowing him to see other women under the guise of an "open marriage", Carrier still decided to kick her to the curb. So in Carrier's view, his affairs were not a mistake, but rather a fun new "lifestyle choice" that he will pursue, regardless of the past commitment to his wife.
>
> What is even more despicable about Carrier's behavior toward his wife is the fact that she supported him financially.

> […] The only reason he has been able to live a comfortable lifestyle while blogging and writing obscure books is due to his wife's financial support. The reason that he could afford to invest his time in getting graduate degrees from Columbia in subjects that will never land him a decent paying job is due to the support of his wife. The reason he was able to travel around the country for low paying speaking engagements instead of having to get a real job is due to his wife's financial support. And how does he repay his wife for the support she has given him? He cheats on her, waits until he is making enough money where he no longer needs her income, and kicks her to the curb.

So, whenever Richard Carrier was talking about morality without God, now we know what he meant. He even dedicated his book on morality without God to his now ex-wife. How ironic.

But the new polyamoratheism news is that Carrier is actually searching for a new "date".

I am not linking to his blog post, but it says: (H/T The Yeti's Roar)

> I'll start by making sure anyone considering this is up to speed. I am polyamorous. I currently have many girlfriends. All I consider my friends. Some are just occasional lovers. Some I am more involved with. They are also polyamorous, or near enough (not all of them identify that way, but all of them enjoy open relationships). And I will always have relationships with them, as long as they'll have me in their life.
>
> Many different things can be meant by the following terms, but just for the present purpose, if by a primary relationship is meant someone you live with or just about as good as live with, a secondary as someone you date regularly, and a tertiary as someone you date occasionally, all my relationships are tertiary, but only because of geography. I live just below Sacramento, California, where the rents are cheap, which means, where no one wants to live. And I'm unlikely to move anytime soon. So relationships with me, at best, are likely to be tertiary—long distance chatting with occasional being together throughout the year. Even so, I always take such friendships seriously.
>
> […]**I'm 0.5 on the Kinsey scale. Not heavy into kink (but get along well with people who are). I have an unusual fetish or two but don't expect any of my partners to share them. I'm pro sex worker, and though I personally find strip clubs and brothels uninteresting at best (uncomfortable at worst), I like partners who are or who have been sex workers. I also like women who have or pursue a lot of partners or who love to boast of their sexual exploits, especially over wine or whiskey or equivalent. I'm not going to get all butt-hurt or angsty over how high Your Number is. It very much has the opposite effect on me.**
>
> […]I am also planning to have a hotel room, and am comfortable sharing it platonically. Certainly I would enjoy sharing it non-platonically, but I don't expect

> it. I can't believe (even though I know) there are still guys who assume the other sh*t buys them sex, thus necessitating I say this: if you are going to have sex with me, it has to be because it's fun and you want to, not because it's something you owe me. On the same understanding, if you have a place for me to crash in town (platonically or not), and are happy to have me over to spare me the cost of hiring a room, that would be lovely. And yes, if you are poly or open and live with a partner or two, I'm comfortable with that as well.
>
> This also means you don't have to live in the LA area to join me for this. If you can get to LA, and don't mind sharing a room (at my expense), the opportunity remains.

This is Richard Carrier's book on morality without God:

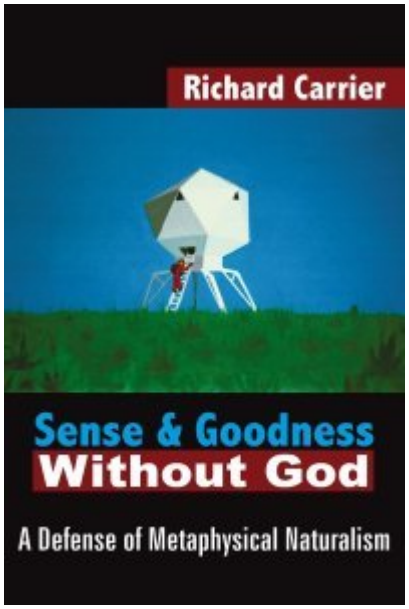

Goodness without God: Now we know what he was talking about
And the book is dedicated to his wife, now ex-wife:

> For Jen…
>
> My buxom brunette
> My wellspring of joy
> My north star of sanity

Indeed.

You can read a multi-part review of the book here on Deeper Waters (Nick Peters' site)

I trust that everyone now understands what I was saying about the reasons why atheists jettison God and objective morality. Sexual freedom is definitely a big one, and probably the biggest. This is not a worldview, people, it's not something that is derived from logic and evidence. It starts and ends with getting rid of moral accountability to the Creator. Period. End of issue.

Not that all atheists are as immoral as Carrier, and not all atheists are motivated by sexual perversion. But the primary motivation is always to be able to get God out of the morality business. There's no denying that atheists look pretty normal in a society that is

still running on the fumes of a declining Judeo -Christian value system. But if you look at how they vote, e.g. – for abortion, for gay marriage, against religious liberty, etc., it's very clear that they want the society to move away from Judeo-Christian values. And it is this desire that more and more human beings not respect the moral oughts that God prescribes that is the real rebellion.

Romans 1:18-21 nails this:

> [18]The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,
>
> [19]since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.
>
> [20]For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.
>
> [21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

What is expected in the Christian worldview is not to pick and choose a few moral behaviors here and there. Individual moral values are not the issue. When Christ calls a man, he call him to die to himself and his own self-interest, and to take up his moral positions and champion them. Have you ever tried to champion the pro-life cause in an increasingly secular society? How about championing the pro-marriage cause? In order to be a Christian, you don't just accept the sacrifice of Jesus as atonement for sin, but you also let him lead. And one of those areas of letting him lead is in defining what is and is not moral. It's very easy for a man to not murder unborn children himself, and to marry someone of the opposite sex, and congratulate himself on how moral he is. Personal morality is not the issue. Inventing your own arbitrary moral code and then following it might make you feel good, but that is not what God requires. The real challenge of Christianity has to do with standing up for the truth claims, including the moral values, in the face of a society that will not approve of you.

What is required of a man on the Christian worldview is total abandonment to God's calling and a 100% re-prioritization of his life. It's not about doing X and Y, but not A and B, and getting a passing grade. It's about putting Jesus Christ in as your commanding officer in every area of your life.

The top 7 things a wife needs to be happy in her marriage

April 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do women influenced by feminism understand marriage?
From MercatorNet.

Here's the list, in order of importance:

1. A husband's emotional engagement
2. Fairness
3. A breadwinning husband
4. A commitment to marriage
5. Staying at home
6. Shared religious attendance
7. Traditional gender attitudes

I want to highlight #3, because it's the one I most frequently find missing in younger, unmarried Christian women.

Here's number three:

> American wives, even wives who hold more feminist views about working women and the division of household tasks, are typically happier when their husband earns 68% or more of the household income. Husbands who are successful breadwinners probably give their wives the opportunity to make choices about work and family—e.g., working part-time, staying home, or pursuing a meaningful but not particularly remunerative job—that allow them to best respond to their own needs, and the needs of their children.

The reason I have found that the young, unmarried Christian women oppose this is because it negates the "follow your heart" Disney princess mentality that they are

often raised on. They don't want to be practical, and some of them even go so far as to shun the good advice of other married women. Women should be able to count the costs of a marriage and understand that handsomeness and confidence does not pay the considerable bills that married couples incur, especially when they have children. I think a good basic education in business, finance and/or economics for this "follow your heart", "have no fear" women would be beneficial. It's very important that women learn to value a man's ability to make decisions that allow him to find work that pays well.

It's getting common now for men to be in their late 20s and yet never have had a job that earns money. Women should not be relying on penniless students younger than they are – men who have not proved (from their past) that they can fulfill the demands of the provider role. Women should not be resting their hopes on men who have no proven record of work experience. They should not hope that things will get better in the future. Future wishes are not evidence of the ability to provide, only past performance at providing is evidence of the ability to provide. What is needed is a record of earning money, of showing up to work on time, of getting promotions, of steady long-term employment (not jumping around to different jobs), and being good at saving money that is earned.

I also liked #4:

> Wives who share a strong commitment to the norm of lifelong marriage with their husband—e.g., who both believe that even unhappily married couples should stay together for the sake of their children—are more likely to have a happy marriage than couples who do not share this commitment to marriage. Shared commitment seems to generate a sense of trust, emotional security, and a willingness to sacrifice for one's spouse—all of which lead to happier marriages for women. This shared commitment also provides women with a long-term view of their marriage that helps them negotiate the inevitable difficulties that confront any marriage.

I think the commitment ideal is something that is now very much against the grain in our culture. We want to have relationships that make us happy all the time. We don't want to make commitments that will force us to confront the needs of that other person. We don't want to have to deal with expectations, responsibilities and obligations, especially when they conflict with our pursuit of self-fulfillment and fun. But commitment is the opposite of pursuing fun. Commitment is about making a promise to another person to care for their needs. If caring for someone else's needs scares you, then naturally, you'll want to avoid commitment as much as you can.

Unfortunately, marriage isn't compatible with obligation avoidance. Commitment is the very center of it, and if you want a good marriage, then you'd better get used to making and keeping commitments. If you are good at sensing and caring for the needs of others, and putting others above yourself, and enduring hardships and difficulties to keep your commitments, then you're ready for marriage.

Atheist Michael Shermer tries to rationally ground morality in debate with Frank Turek

April 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Shermer debates Frank Turek: atheism and morality

The topic of the debate was on the grounding of morality – which worldview (theism or atheism) is better at grounding morality?

And here is the MP3 for the cross-examination only, which is what I will be summarizing. (12.5 Mb)

The full debate can be seen here and can be heard here.

Turek's cross-examination period starts at 74m22s and ends at 89m20s.

Shermer's cross-examination period starts at 89m50s and ends at 105m0s.

Topics of Turek's cross-examination:

- evolution produces Shermer's moral sense and Hitler's moral sense
- why does Shermer think his is better than Hitler's, since both were produced by the same evolution?
- what makes right or wrong if evolution is the source of morality?
- why is Stalin's opinion of right and wrong less valuable than the herd's opinion of right and wrong?
- do the Founding Fathers ground inalienable rights in a Creator, or in evolution?
- can atheism ground the existence of inalienable rights?
- can you ground objective moral values and objective moral duties by asking people how they feel?
- can you ground objective human rights on atheism by shouting like a madman and interrupting?
- how can you trust your thinking if they are the result of an unguided, random process of evolution?
- how can you have rational thoughts if materialism is true, and you are a machine

made out of meat?
- can you ground objective moral values and objective moral duties on personal preferences?
- how do the personal preferences of some individuals create an objective moral duty for other individuals?
- does naturalistic evolution orient human beings toward survival or truth?
- on materialism, what is the chemical composition of justice?

Topics of Shermer's cross-examination:

- Radical muslims are exactly the same as evangelical Christians, and have the same God (Allah is the same as the Triune Christian God)
- Radical muslims would assert that their God is the same as the Triune Christian God, with Jesus and the Holy Spirit also being God
- Therefore, we can lay the blame for what radical muslims do on the backs of evangelical Christians
- Radical muslims and evangelical Christians are the same, because "you're enthusiastic, they're enthusiastic"
- The Bible's notion of indentured servitude to pay off debt is the identical to the idea of slavery based on race
- The Bible's notion that masters and slaves are equal in the sight of God forms a basis for thinking they are unequal
- The Bible teaches things that I disagree with, like the idea that marriage should provide children with a mother and a father
- Gay marriage is solidly grounded in evolution, even though the morality that evolution produces varies by time and place
- Atheists can ground objective moral values and objective moral duties by asking people how they feel
- Can atheists who want to legalize gay marriage because "they're in love" prohibit polygamy or incest as marriage?
- Is shouting "you're on the wrong side of history" a way to rationally ground morality in an accidental atheistic universe?
- Is it loving for atheists to celebrate a lifestyle that exposes gay men to sickness and premature death?
- Is it "bigotry" for the Center for Disease Control to warn men who have sex with men about higher health risks?
- How do Christians decide what is right and wrong when they are confronted with a moral dilemma?
- How do humans sense the objective moral standard that is required for them to make moral judgments
- Can enlightenment philosophers who merely *imagine* human rights actually *create* those human rights?
- If revelations change over time for Mormons, does that undermine the need for God

to ground objective morality?

I apologize for the poor quality of the video and audio. The moderator was extremely ineffective, letting Shermer go on and on making speeches instead of asking questions during his questioning time. Also, Shermer apparently thought that shouting at Turek and waving his finger at Turek was a good strategy to defend against Turek's use of logic and evidence.

My thoughts on Michael Shermer

I do want to make some general comments about what Shermer said. Shermer's view of morality is "what is best for the greatest number of people". There are no inalienable rights that act as a break on the will of the majority. Shermer has no objection to anything that the majority has decided in any time or in any place. If he were there, he would agree that whatever they decided was morally right.

Two hundred years ago, Shermer would have endorsed slavery. And if he were in Germany 50 years ago, he would have endorsed the Holocaust. If he lived in a Pakistan today, he would endorse stoning women for wearing the wrong clothes. Atheists always think that whatever the majority is doing in a particular time and place is right for them. There are no inalienable human rights that exist apart from human opinions, on atheism.

Another problem is that Shermer is constantly making moral judgments when his own view is that morality is constantly changing in different times and places. He condemns the moral values of other times and places without having any standard in his worldview that can decide between different moral values and duties. It is like saying that lunch is better than breakfast because lunch is here and now, and breakfast was then and there. That is literally what atheists do when they make moral judgments. They have no standard that applies to different times and places, just the ever evolving opinions of the majority of people in different times and places.

Is Michael Shermer concerned about morality?

Finally, I want people to understand what kind of person Michael Shermer is. You can read a post by PZ Myers on his blog Pharyngula to get the picture. I think it's useful to know about Shermer's own morality since he seems to like to make moral judgments so much during debates. In my own experience in dealing with atheists, although they will talk about slavery and the Crusades, there is nothing in an atheist's moral system that makes things wrong for all times and all places. They bring it up to stop you from judging them about the things that they care about. When an atheist says "the Crusades! Slavery!" what they really mean is "I need to shame you for having a basis for moral judgments against me, so that you won't say anything about me getting married women drunk then raping them". That's what atheistic use of moral language is really about.

What atheists really think about morality

Atheist Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any

> rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

So, when Shermer tries to shame Christians for behaviors in other times and places which our society here and now disagrees with, what he really means is "morality, objectively speaking, is nonsense, but I will use your moral sense that comes from your non-atheistic worldview to shame you, so that you won't have the confidence to judge me for my immoral behavior". And we need to get used to understanding this about atheists. Morality is nonsense to them, and their real goal is to get you off their back for their hedonism. For atheists, morality is just complying with arbitrary social customs which vary by time and place. There is nothing more to it than aping their neighbors (at least when their neighbors are watching). And they would have aped slave-owners, widow-burners and Nazi prison guards too, if they lived in that time and place. And shouted at Christians for disagreeing with them, just like Shermer did about gay marriage.

If you like the way that Frank Turek debates, then be sure and check out his new book "Stealing From God". I highly recommend it.

Warning: if the Supreme Court legalizes same-sex marriage, you could lose your church

May 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and the Human Rights Campaign

This is by John Zmirak, who is writing at The Stream. You should read the whole thing.

He writes:

> If you aren't following the arguments over same-sex marriage before the Supreme Court, you should be. Even if you don't cater weddings or sell pizza in Indiana, your religious freedom is in danger. For detailed accounts of the debate and the questions asked by justices that might be readable tea leaves, see Ryan Anderson's analysis and the capsule summary provided by Russell Moore and Andrew T. Walker.
>
> The outcome of this week's debate will determine whether orthodox American Christians will fall to the status of *dhimmis*, the third-class Christian citizens of sharia Muslim states. (Dhimmis have bare freedom of worship, but pay special, heavy taxes and are excluded from any positions of influence.) If the court imposes same-sex "marriage," it will be exposing the churches attended by the majority of Americans to sustained legal attack. Does that sound like crazy alarmism? The Solicitor General of the United States agrees with me. Except that he is in favor of it.
>
> Justice Samuel Alito asked Solicitor General Donald Verrilli whether acceptance of same-sex marriage would subject orthodox Christian churches to the treatment once accorded Bob Jones University, which lost its tax-exempt status because its ban on interracial dating contradicted federal policy. Verrilli seemed a little taken

> aback, then answered yes, "it's certainly going to be an issue."
>
> In other words, if the Supreme Court votes against natural marriage, it will free up the feds to target organizations you might have heard of, such as the Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Convention. (In theory, the feds might also take aim at every mosque in America, but something tells me that the mosques are likely to get a pass.) Remember that the Obama administration has *already* tried to force these same churches to provide abortifacients to their employees. Attacking their tax-exempt status over biblical sexual ethics is peanuts next to that.
>
> In case you don't follow tax policy as a hobby, see Joe Carter's detailed account of the grave consequences this would have for churches. Put briefly, *most would close.* Unless, of course, they caved.
>
> Imagine if your house of worship needed to turn a hefty profit, so it could pay the same taxes on its property and income as a casino or a strip joint — unlike Planned Parenthood, since that abortion business is a tax-exempt (and federally funded) "charity." Imagine if none of the money you gave your church were deductible from your taxes, unlike the money you sent to Greenpeace. Many if not most religious schools and colleges would also shut their doors, unable to pay the same business taxes as for-profit diploma mills.
>
> The First Amendment won't prevent any of this. When the dictates of a religion conflict with what courts have ruled is a constitutional right, the church's claims give way every time.

Practical point:

> When presidential candidates come to our states to court us during the primaries — the only time faithful Christians exercise any real leverage in this country — the issue of same-sex marriage must now rival abortion in its importance. Any hopeful should be pressed repeatedly to give a straight, unambiguous answer to this question: **"Do you support a constitutional amendment restoring natural marriage? If not, then what exactly will you do to protect my religious freedom? If nothing, why should I support you?"** We should print that question on cards and distribute it in Iowa and New Hampshire, and candidates should hear nothing else from us till they answer. We need to know whether a year from now we will be living like Americans, or increasingly like Christians in China.

You don't have to speculate about these things, you just have to look north to Canada, or east to Europe, where the secular leftists are much stronger. Same-sex marriage is a club that the secularist leftists can use to get publicly expressed religious convictions out of the public square, once and for all. All they have to do is leverage sentiments of tolerance that come from religion to pass the gay marriage law, and then use the gay marriage law to get rid of the moral convictions that make it harder for them to do what they want

without feeling ashamed. And it’s working, because we have reduced Christianity to emotions, instead of grounding it on reason and evidence. It’s all about feeling good now, and feeling good is more important to most Christians than respecting God’s actual character.

Why do atheists like Dan Barker abandon their faith?

May 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unbelievable's latest radio show featured a discussion with former Christian Dan Barker, the founder and co-President of the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

I thought that I would make some general comments about why I think that many people leave the Christian faith, and what you should be careful of in order to avoid following in Dan Barker's footsteps, specifically.

Basically, there are four major reasons why people leave Christianity.

1. They want to do something immoral with impunity. This type of person wants to do something immoral that is forbidden by Christianity, like pre-marital sex. They dump Christianity in order to feel better about seeking happiness in this life, apart from God and his moral duties.
2. They want to pursue happiness in irresponsible ways. This type of person thinks that God's job is to save them when they act irresponsibly while pursuing happiness. When God disappoints them by not giving them what they want in order to be happy, they leave the faith.
3. They want to be loved by people, not by God. This type of person thinks that Christianity is a tool that they can use to become popular. When they first try to articulate the gospel in public, they find that people don't like them as much, and they feel bad about offending people with exclusive truth claims that they cannot back up using logic and evidence. So, they water down Christianity to get along with atheists, liberal Christians and other religions. Finally, they jettison Christianity completely and focus on making everyone feel good about whatever they believe.
4. They don't want to learn to defend their faith. This type of person is asked questions by skeptics that they cannot answer. Usually this happens when people go to university after growing up in the shelter of the Church. The questions and peer pressure make them feel stupid. Rather than investigate Christianity to see if it's true and to prepare to defend it in public, they dump it so they can be thought of as part of the "smart" crowd.

Now listen to the discussion and see if you can identify some of these factors from Barker's own carefully-prepared words. He is trying very hard to make himself look honest and moderate, because he wants Christians to be sympathetic with his story and his motives for leaving Christianity. But I think that there is enough in his statements to construct a different hypothesis of why he left Christianity.

I've grouped the data by risk factor. (These are not his *exact* views)

Non-rational, emotional approach to Christianity

- he was raised in a devout Christian family where he probably wouldn't have faced skeptical questions
- he converted to Christianity at age 15 as a result of a religious experience, not a serious investigation
- his idea of God was probably idealized and uninformed, e.g. – a loving God who wants us to be happy
- he wandered around from church to church preaching, with no fixed address or source of income
- he earned money by collecting "love offerings" from churches where he performed his music
- he wrote Christian songs and Christian musicals, but nothing substantive on apologetics and theology
- he worked in three churches known for being anti-intellectual and fundamentalist
- there's no evidence that of any deep study of philosophy, science and history during this time

Desire to gain acceptance from non-Christians

- he began to notice that some people were uncomfortable with sin and Hell
- he began to avoid preaching about sin and Hell in order to make these people comfortable
- he watered-down the gospel to focus on helping people to be happy in this life
- his manic approach to Christian ministry was challenged by the "real life" needs of his growing family
- he met liberal pastors while performing his music in their churches
- he found it difficult to disagree with them because they seemed to be "good" people
- he watered down his message further in order to appeal to people across the theological spectrum

Ignorance of Christian apologetics

- he began to think that if there are many different views of religion, then no view can be correct
- he was not intellectually capable of using logic and evidence to test these competing claims to see which was true
- he decided to instead re-interpret Christian truth claims as non-rational opinions, so they could all be "valid"
- he became a theological liberal, abandoning theism for an impersonal "ground of being"
- he embraced religious pluralism, the view that all religions are non-rational and make no testable truth claims
- he began to see God as a "metaphor" whose purpose is to make people have a sense of meaning and purpose
- he jettisoned God completely and focused more on helping people find meaning and

morality apart from God
- seems to think that religion is about having a “great life”, and felt that you can have a “great life” without religion
- seems to think that religion is about being “good”, and felt that you can be “good” without religion
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them what to do instead of letting them do anything they want
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them what is true, instead of letting them believe whatever they want
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them that God will hold them accountable for their beliefs and actions

So what do I think happened?

I think he abandoned his faith because he wanted people to like him and because he needed to be invited to liberal churches in order to make money to pay for the “real life” needs of his family.

He seems to have thought that Christianity is about having his needs met and being liked by others. I think he wanted to feel good and to make people feel good with his preaching and singing. He seems to have become aware that the exclusive claims of Christianity made other people feel offended, so he cut them out. He hadn’t studied philosophy, science or history so that he would have been able to demonstrate to other people whether what he was saying was true. It’s hard to offend people when you don’t really know whether your claims are true or not, and when you don’t know how to demonstrate whether they are true or not.

I also think money was a factor. It seems to me that it would have hurt his career and reduced his invitations from liberal churches if he had kept up teaching biblical Christianity. In order to appeal to a wider audience, (like many Christian singers do – e.g. – Amy Grant, Jars of Clay, etc.), he would have felt pressured to water down the unpleasant parts of his preaching and singing. Lacking apologetics skill, he instead abandoned his message. He needed to account for his family’s needs and “real life”, and exclusive truth claims and Hell-talk would probably have reduced his ability to do that. It seems to me that he should have scaled back his extreme schedule of preaching and singing, and instead gotten a steady job so that he could afford “real life” and a family without being pressured into altering his message.

Life isn’t a fairy tale. God isn’t there to reward risky behavior. We need to be more shrewd about financial matters so that we have the ability to *not care* about what people think of us. Look at this blog. I work all day as a senior software engineer with two degrees in computer science so that I can refuse donations. I save most of what I make in case a tragedy strikes. Since I am financially secure, I can say what I think, and disregard anyone who wants me to change my message because they are offended. Becoming a Christian isn’t a license to behave irrationally and immaturely with money. For some people, (like William Lane Craig), stepping out in faith works. But if it doesn’t work, it’s

better to retreat and re-trench, rather than to compromise your message for money.

Barker didn't seem to make any effort to deal intellectually with typical challenges like the existence of Hell and religious pluralism. He just wanted to be liked by people instead of being liked by God. He seemed to have thought that being a Christian would make him happy and that other people would all respond to him and like him without having to do any work to explain why Christianity is true. But that's not Biblical. When the singing and preaching is over, you still have to know how to give an answer to non-Christians. But Barker couldn't give an answer – not one that allowed him to retain his beliefs. He had not prepared a defense.

What does Dan Barker think about Christianity today?

Many atheists today are interested in eradicating public expressions of Christian beliefs in the public square, because they hate Christianity and believe that Christians should not be allowed to make them feel bad by exercising their rights of free speech. Is Dan Barker one of these militant atheists?

Well, take a look at this video, in which he objects to a nativity scene and demands that an atheistic denunciation of theism be posted alongside it. In the video, Barker explains that the nativity scene is *hate speech*, and that the baby Jesus is a *dictator*. He seems to be totally oblivious to the the idea that if Christianity is *true,* then it doesn't matter whether it's mean and exclusive. And this seems to me to have been his problem all along, from the day of his "conversion".

So the real question is this: is it true? Barker seems to be much more interested in asking "is it nice?" and "will it make me happy?".

What can we do to have the perfect marriage?

May 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

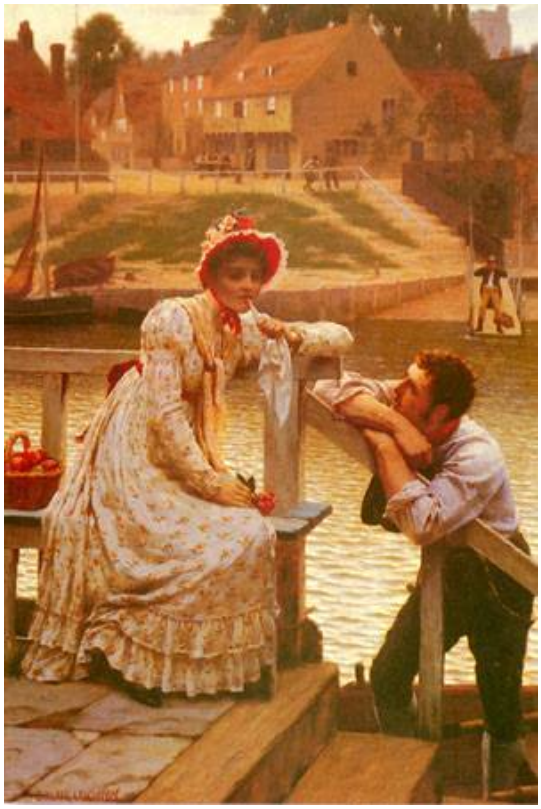

Painting: “Courtship”, by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

I’m finding it hard to convince young feminists that marriage is worthwhile, but here is something that might work.

This is from chapter 1 of the book “The Proper Care and Feeding of Marriage” by Dr. Laura Schlessinger.

Is there really ever such a thing as a perfect marriage? The answer to that question is, “YES.” I know you’re stunned. Stay with me here: “perfect” doesn’t mean that everything goes right, or your way for that matter, or that you’re feeling romantically perky all the time. There are just too many unpredictable events, challenges, and tragedies in life for any of us to feel content and satisfied for any prolonged period of time. Yet, even in the midst of misery, you can still feel and believe that your marriage is perfect if you have the right attitude; and I don’t mean that you think positively – I do mean that you think outwardly. When you do so, married life becomes perfect no matter what difficulties you’re going through.

I took a call from Michelle, a seventeen-year-old high-school student, which will clarify:

Michelle: Hi, Dr. Laura! It’s a pleasure to speak with you. My question is this: this Saturday is my boyfriend’s and mine senior prom. As it turns out, we have a conflict because it is also his championship lacrosse game, at the same time as the dance. He has told me that I could decide which one we should do.

Dr L: Really? So, what’s your decision?

Michelle: Well, personally, I want to go to the prom because it's our senior prom and it's our last dance together, it's meaningful, you know? But it's also his major opportunity because scouts will be at this game for college recruitment. So, for him the best choice would be for the game but I want to go to prom… selfishly.

Dr L: Do you love him?

Michelle: Of course. Yes.

Dr L: Do you imagine you're going to marry him? I'm asking you that because I just want to know the depth of your compassion and caring for him.

Michelle: I can see it. I can definitely see it working, but I'm only seventeen… Yes, I care for him a lot.

Dr L: Well then, I guess he's going to his lacrosse tournament.

Michelle: (sounding deflated) Okay.

Dr L: **Because that's what we do when we're in love – we give them gifts… that doesn't mean you go to the store and buy something. It means you give up something that's very important to you to give them something that's very important to them.** O'Henry wrote a short story called, The Gift of the Magi. There was a young couple, very poor, married, and very much in love with each other. Christmas is coming and there is no money to buy gifts for one another. Her prized possession was her long, lovely hair which she had grown since childhood. His prized possession was his solid gold pocket watch – an heirloom, passed down from generation to generation.

Come Christmas morning, she hands her beloved a package. It is a solid gold chain for his pocket watch. He hands his beloved a package. It is a bejeweled comb to hold her beautiful hair in a bun on top of her head. They both cried with joy… even though… he no longer had the pocket watch, as he had sold it to buy her the jeweled comb… and she no longer had long hair, as she had sold it to buy him the gold chain.

Neither could use the gift the other had given them from a store – but look at the gift they truly got from the other.

Michelle: WOW!

Dr L: So, when you love somebody you give them what they really need – and your boyfriend needs you to be supportive of the fact that this game is important to his college career – for scholarships. If you do get married, you'll be dancing together for the rest of your lives.

Michelle: That's true. Well, I guess he'll be playing this game and I'll be sitting on the sidelines cheering.

Dr L: Good for you! That's the kind of woman a man should marry.

Michelle: Thank you so much, Dr. Laura.

Oh, wait a minute, friends! The story does not end there. A few days later I received this email from Michelle:

"A few days ago I called in with a dilemma I had with prom because my boyfriend's

championship lacrosse game (with college scouts) was the same night. You told me the story of the Gift of the Magi, and that if you really loved someone you would be willing to give up whatever was most important to you – which for me was the prom. I took your advice and called up my boyfriend telling him that we would be going to his lacrosse game instead of senior prom. He explained to me that he knew I would decide to go to his game, so he went ahead and bought our prom tickets so we would go to the prom.

So, basically, I was willing to give up senior prom for him, and he was willing to give up what was most important to him, his championship game – proving the story of the Gift of the Magi…

But hold on! The story gets better! Yesterday we found out that because of some unknown factor, his championship game was changed from 7 o'clock to 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Is this a God thing? I think so! Now we not only get to go to prom and his lacrosse game, but we have the knowledge that we are both willing to sacrifice what is most important to us because our love is stronger.

I know that I am only 17, but I think I found a keeper!! Thank you so much for your wonderful advice to let my MAN know how important he is to me. This experience not only made me grow as a person, but is strengthening our relationship as well."

Now, dear friends, even some seventeen year olds can understand the beauty and meaning of having somebody care enough about you to put themselves aside for you – that beats every prom and game imaginable. And when you are living this scenario, no matter what grunge is going on in your life, your marriage is PERFECT!

Emphasis mine. The point of getting married is to give self-sacrificially to someone else. Just like Jesus. Instead of being annoyed by other people's needs, we should be happy that there is something there for us to do. And of course, the right person for you will be looking at you and thinking the same thing – how can I help you by giving self-sacrificially to you? I'm not sure what is scaring women away from marriage, but if I had to guess, it's this fear of losing their autonomy and having the moral obligation to care for the needs of other people – even if those other people are strong in other areas and able to care for them.

Is the story of the woman being stoned for adultery in John 7-8 authentic?

May 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the leading conservative New Testament scholar Daniel Wallace to explain. Excerpt:

> One hundred and forty years ago, conservative biblical scholar and Dean of Canterbury, Henry Alford, advocated a new translation to replace the King James Bible. One of his reasons was the inferior textual basis of the KJV. Alford argued that "a translator of Holy Scripture must be…ready to sacrifice the choicest text, and the plainest proof of doctrine, if the words are not those of what he is constrained in his conscience to receive as God's testimony." He was speaking about the Trinitarian formula found in the KJV rendering of 1 John 5:7–8. Twenty years later, two Cambridge scholars came to the firm conclusion that John 7:53–8:11 also was not part of the original text of scripture. But Westcott and Hort's view has not had nearly the impact that Alford's did.
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> For a long time, biblical scholars have recognized the poor textual credentials of the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11). The evidence against its authenticity is overwhelming: The earliest manuscripts with substantial portions of John's Gospel (P66 and P75) lack these verses. They skip from John 7:52to 8:12. The oldest large codices of the Bible also lack these verses: codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both from the fourth century, are normally considered to be the most important biblical manuscripts of the NT extant today. Neither of them has these verses. Codex Alexandrinus, from the fifth century, lacks several leaves in the middle of John. But because of the consistency of the letter size, width of lines, and lines per page, the evidence is conclusive that this manuscript also lacked the *pericope adulterae*. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, also from the fifth century, apparently lacked these verses as well (it is similar to Alexandrinus in that some leaves are missing). **The earliest extant manuscript to have these verses is codex Bezae, an eccentric text once in the possession of Theodore Beza. He gave this manuscript to the University of Cambridge in 1581 as a gift, telling the school that he was confident that the scholars there would be able to figure out its significance.** He washed his hands of the document. Bezae is indeed the most eccentric NT manuscript extant today, yet it is the chief representative of the Western text-type (the text-form that became dominant in Rome and the Latin West).
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> **When P66, P75, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus agree, their combined testimony is overwhelmingly strong that a particular reading is not authentic. But it is not only the early Greek manuscripts that lack this text. The great majority of Greek manuscripts through the first eight**

> **centuries lack this pericope. And except for Bezae (or codex D), virtually all of the most important Greek witnesses through the first eight centuries do not have the verses. Of the three most important early versions of the New Testament (Coptic, Latin, Syriac), two of them lack the story in their earliest and best witnesses. The Latin alone has the story in its best early witnesses.**
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> Even patristic writers seemed to overlook this text. Bruce Metzger, arguably the greatest textual critic of the twentieth century, argued that "No Greek Church Father prior to Euthymius Zigabenus (twelfth century) comments on the passage, and Euthymius declares that the accurate copies of the Gospel do not contain it" (*Textual Commentary*, 2nd ed., *loc. cit.*).
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> It is an important point to note that although the story of the woman caught in adultery is found in most of our printed Bibles today, the evidence suggests that the majority of Bibles during the first eight centuries of the Christian faith did not contain the story. Externally, most scholars would say that the evidence for it not being an authentic part of John's Gospel is rock solid.
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> But textual criticism is not based on external evidence alone; there is also the internal evidence to consider. This is comprised of two parts: *intrinsic evidence* has to do with what an author is likely to have written;*transcriptional evidence* has to do with how and why a scribe would have changed the text.
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> Intrinsically, the vocabulary, syntax, and style look far more like Luke than they do John. There is almost nothing in these twelve verses that has a Johannine flavor. And transcriptionally, scribes were almost always prone to add material rather than omit it—especially a big block of text such as this, rich in its description of Jesus' mercy. One of the remarkable things about this passage, in fact, is that it is found in multiple locations. Most manuscripts that have it place it in its now traditional location: between John 7:52 and 8:12. But an entire family of manuscripts has the passage at the end of Luke 21, while another family places it at the end of John's Gospel. Other manuscripts place it at the end of Luke or in various places in John 7.
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> The *pericope adulterae* has all the earmarks of a pericope that was looking for a home. It took up permanent residence, in the ninth century, in the middle of the fourth gospel.

Wallace teaches at the ultra-conservative fundamentalist Dallas Theological Seminary, and is the foremost evangelical manuscript expert in the world.

Why is this important? I think it is important because this story is very prominent for a great many Christians, especially Christian women, who use this to justify a variety of positions that are inconsistent with the rest of the Bible. These Christians *do not like the idea of anyone being judged* and so they are naturally inclined to blow this disputed passage into an entire theology that repudiates making moral judgments on such things as capital punishment. In fact, in another post, I was accused of being the equivalent of

one of the people who wanted to stone the woman taken for adultery because I oppose fornication and single motherhood. That’s how far this has gone, where some Christians, especially Christian feminists, have leveraged this passage to redefine the Bible so that women are no longer responsible to the Bible’s moral rules and can never be blamed for acting irresponsibly.

A popular reason why people leave Christianity: disappointment with God

May 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Part 2 of a brilliant series by Bradley Wright. This time he explains how people leave Christianity because they expect God to meet their needs and he doesn't.

Excerpt:

> In a study of religious deconversion, we analyzed 50 on-line testimonies posted by former Christians, and in these testimonies we found four general explanations for deconversion. The first explanation, which I wrote about last week, regarded intellectual and theological concerns about the Christian faith. The second, which I elaborate here, regards a failed relationship with God. Almost half (22 of 50) of the writers expressed sentiments that in some way God had failed them by His not doing what they thought He should.
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> God's perceived failure took various forms, most of which fall under the general heading of "unanswered prayers."
>
> One way that people felt that God had failed them happened when He did not respond to requests for help during difficult times. A young man raised in a Baptist church epitomized this feeling of failure when he wrote about God not answering his prayers about family difficulties. He wrote: "The first time I questioned the faith was when my grandmother shriveled up in front of me for 6 month's due to cancer. I was 13 & my mother & father [were] getting a divorce. My father told me I should have been aborted. I prayed to God but nothing fails like prayers."

So you can see here where people have this expectation that it is God's job to give them good health. But is that anywhere in the Bible? Is it God's job to make us healthy so that we can have a happy life, even if we are busy spending that happy life ignoring him and not knowing his character. When you ask a serious Christian what it is like to be a Christian, we will tell you that what God is about is NOT making us healthy or happy, but instead giving us time and peace to study him, to make plans to serve him, to execute those plans, and to have (sometimes unhappy) experiences that cause our sympathies to change as we feel what God feels. In short, life is about getting closer to him, and suffering and sickness is one of the tools God uses in order to get us to know him as he is and to participate in the relationship.

> Likewise, a woman raised in a Methodist household described her step-father as "cruel and abusive" to her, and she could not understand why "if God loves me, why won't he protect me instead of letting this happen to me?"

I think the reason why God allows suffering like this is to create people who take his rules

about sexual morality seriously. When I was growing up I had front-row seats to the divorces of many of my friends. I remember vividly talking to children who cried to me about how they felt when their mothers invited new men into the house after the divorce. Pain and suffering like this is a reminder to us that the moral law is real, that God expects us to follow it in order to prevent harm. One of the reasons why I am chaste is because I listen to the stories of men whose girlfriends aborted their babies, the stories of women who cohabitated and then were betrayed, the stories of the children of divorces. And from this I learn that morality is real and it matters.

> In a variation of this theme, some deconverts lamented God's inactivity amidst spiritual difficulties. A man in his forties, a former elder at a charismatic church, wrote: "In my own life, no matter how much I submitted to 'God' and prayed in faith, 'sin' never seemed to leave me. Well, what's the point of being 'saved' if you aren't delivered from 'sin'?"

This is why accurate theology matters. No serious Christian thinks that you stop sinning after you become a Christian, and no serious Christian thinks that prayer alone is a solution to sin. To stop sinning, you need to engage more than the spirit, you need to engage the mind. Most people want to spiritualize things because prayer is easier than study. But if you want to stop sinning, the best way is a combination of prayer and study. If you want to stop premarital sex, study how premarital sex affects STD infection, risk of divorce, future marital stability, oxytocin, quality of marriage, and so on. Study the risks of divorce. That's how you stop sinning. Some people want to dumb Christianity down to the level of superstition then they complain that it doesn't work. But Christianity is better when you learn more and work harder.

> A former Southern Baptist described the various good things that God failed to give him: "God promises me a lot in the bible and he's not come through. Ask and it shall be given. Follow me and I will bless you. I promise you life and promise abundance. Man should not be alone. I have a plan for you. Give tithe and I will reward you. All broken promises. This god lacks clarification. This god lacks faith in me. He wants my faith. I want his too."

Do you know what I expect from God after reading the Bible? I expect what Jesus got: pain and suffering during obedience. What kind of simpleton reads the Bible and thinks that it is about getting goodies from God? That is NOWHERE in the Bible. It's projecting Santa Claus onto God and that isn't going to work – God has other plans for us, and those plans involve work and pain. People become Christians because they want to be like Jesus, and they understand that Jesus was not having fun. He was doing a job, and he wasn't happy or appreciated.

> Other writers took a different approach to God's failures. They too sought God's help, but when they did not receive it, they simply concluded that God did not exist. A former member of an Assemblies of God church explicitly linked unanswered prayers and the existence of God: "How many humble and totally

> selfless prayers offered up to and ignored by the imaginary skydaddy does it take for the average person to finally throw in the towel and say [God doesn't exist]!!!!" His answer: "Too damn many."

It's so strange to me that people think that the best way to see God interfere is to pray. The way I see God working in my life is when I go home and listen to some debate about the problem of evil, and then the next day some atheist asks me out to lunch to talk about why God allows evil. Maybe instead of doing easy things, we should actually invest in our relationship with God and then see if he responds by giving us work to do. Maybe a relationship with God is about serving him, and the joy is about seeing him reward those efforts by working with us and through us. Maybe God has more for us than just entertainment.

> Still others sought a tangible sign of God's presence. A former Pentecostal exclaimed: "There were many nights while in bed I would ask God to show me the truth, or give me some type of sign to show that he or she existed. These prayers would never be answered. So I would just go on with my life having doubts." Likewise, a former Baptist missionary wrote: "I've begged God to show himself to me and put an end to my inner torture. So far it hasn't happened and the only thing I know for sure is that I have unanswered questions."

I think this paragraph is interesting, since I consider things like church, praying and singing hymns to be less practical when compared with practical and difficult things like chastity, apologetics, charity, studying hard things, getting a good job, committing to caring for others who have special needs, etc. If you want to feel the presence of God, then do the right thing and take the punishment for doing it. That's what Christianity is really about.

The example of Dan Barker

I've actually written about this before in the context of Dan Barker, a charismatic fundamentalist praise hymn singer and writer who expected God to validate all of his irresponsible ministry decisions. Eventually, he fell away from the church because he had this ludicrous Santa Claus caricature of God that didn't match reality. Dan Barker is the complete opposite of everything I consider a manly Christian to be. He is the polar opposite of what I recommend to men when I recommend that they study math, science, engineering and technology, avoid music, singing and dancing, and prefer apologetics and conservative politics over speaking in tongues and apocalyptic fiction. This man, when he was a "Christian", was the complete opposite of the WK Christian man model. Men should be practical.

I think that Christians should protect themselves from the Dan Barker outcome by being aware of how emotional experiences and praise hymns warp your view of God. God is a person, and he has a goal for you – to know him. To achieve that goal, it may not be effective to just give you everything you want. It may be the case that God has to allow you to experience some suffering, to form your character and to bring your goals in line

with his character. Children have to grow up, and shielding them from pain and responsibility doesn’t allow them to grow up.

Should Christians expect to know God's will by means of feelings and intuitions?

May 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two views on the topic of decision making and the will of God. The view you learn in the church is called "the traditional view". I call this view the feelings/intuition view. This view that elevates feelings / intuitions to the level of divine communications from God. The more practical view is called "the wisdom view". I call this view the battlefield commander view. I am a proponent of the wisdom / commander view.

Let's learn about the two different views:

> [The traditional view is] that God has a plan for our lives and that we receive guidance through methods such as "open and closed doors", "feeling led" and "the still, small, voice".
>
> [The wisdom view] holds that God does not have an "individual will" for our lives, but rather that all of God's will can be summed up within two categories, God's sovereign will and God's moral will. Basically God's sovereign will is all the things that god decrees will happen. It is hidden (mostly) from us, and does not play an active part in our decision, although some of it is revealed in the bible. God's moral will is the part that we must concern ourselves with in making decisions. It is fully revealed in the bible and our decisions must be made within it. We may use wisdom in applying god's moral will to our lives, or we may be in an area not covered by god's moral will. We must finally submit in advance to God's sovereign will, being prepared for him to sovereignty intervene and redirect us through whatever means he wills (see James).

Here's a bit more from someone else:

> Regarding the view that God has a personal will for us individually that we have to discern and find, J.I. Packer says, "The first thing to say is that the idea of guidance is actually a novelty among orthodox evangelicals. It does not go back farther than the last century. Second, it has led people to so much foolish action on the one hand, and so much foolish inaction on the other, as well as puzzlement and heartbreak when the 'hotline' to God seems to go silent, that it has to be discredited. Third, it must be said that Scripture gives us no more warrant constantly to expect personal 'hotline,' 'voice-from-the-control-tower' guidance than to expect new authoritative revelations to come our way for the guidance of the whole church." (Hot Tub Religion, page 118).
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> As to the point of the question, how do I make decisions, I attempt to make decisions in light of three factors: God's moral will, wisdom, and my personal desires. If something is opposed to God's moral will, then I should obviously flee from it. If it's not opposed, then I consider the wisdom of the choices. For

> example, would it be wise for me to marry a woman who loves Jesus, though we have nothing else in common? Probably not. If the options pass the criteria of wisdom, then I'm free to choose how I wish. If I'm offered two jobs, and both are honoring to God, and both would be wise to take, then I'm free to choose the job I would like more. I don't need to put out a fleece or await some other confirmation from God. If it's moral and wise, then the only question as to whether or not it will honor Him is my attitude.
>
> Some examples of this model used in the Bible (in theological circles referred to as the Wisdom Model) are in Paul's planning of a mission to Rome in Romans 1:9-15, 15:22-24, the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29), and Paul's instructions for legal disputes (1 Cor 6:3-6).

The best book on this topic is Garry Friesen's "Decision Making and the Will of God". In it, you'll find a full assessment about what the Bible teaches on this topic.

When I am trying to decide what will be effective, I look at Christian scholars, at their papers, books, and public debates. That's effectiveness because it is addressed to a non-Christian audience in public with the force of reason and evidence. It is persuasion and it is addressed to rational minds. I want to change the minds of people who have a large influence on society on the whole. I don't think that offering Christianity as life-enhancement or self-help is really "having an influence". I think that offering Christianity as truth, with support, is "having an influence".

So let me be clear about what I believe:

- I don't think that God normally talks to people directly
- I don't believe that life is an Easter egg hunt, filled with clues accessible only to emotion and intuition
- I don't believe that God expects people to discover a specific will for their lives using non-rational means
- I think that people make up their own life plan that is consistent with the Bible
- The goal of the life plan is to be effective, and there are no other considerations
- I think that there are many good things a person can do, but that some are more effective than others
- I think that with respect to the goal of serving God effectively, *my happiness is expendable*
- I don't think that the purpose of doing something for the Lord is to feel good about ourselves
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they like them
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they are good at them
- I think people should do hard things that they don't like – as long as it's more effective
- I don't think that any course of action is as effective as any other – some plans

accomplish more
- I don't think that life is totally unpredictable and irrational and subjective
- I think that we can know what is or is not effective by studying and learning about the world
- I think life is like a battlefield that must be surveyed, understood and acted upon deliberately

I think that every person is the commanding officer of his or her own life, and each person must study everything they can, make a plan that is consistent with the Bible's moral prescriptions, execute the plan and achieve whatever they can achieve for the Lord. And the goal is not comfort or happy feelings, but real achievements. Not for the purpose of being saved, of course, because salvation is a free gift of God because of what Jesus did on the cross. Life is more like a battle than a vacation resort or a buffet or a shopping center. God's will for us is not have happy feelings, but that we freely choose to sacrifice ourselves out of obedience and service to him. In my case, that means studying hard things, making money, saving money, and giving money away to good scholars, sponsoring good events and being persuasive to non-Christians. None of this necessarily makes me happy, but it does work to bring glory to God. I cried when I had to learn calculus, because it was so hard. But who cares? The main thing is that I have money now to sponsor Christian speakers or to give books to Christians to read, and God is happy with that.

I think that it is very important to realize that God is not impressed by our not being smart and not being effective. If we have the ability to be smart, then we should be smart, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability to make money, then we should make money, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability have a great influence, then we should have a great influence, whether it makes us happy or not. There will be plenty of time for happiness after we're dead. But this life is a time of serving, and we should try to serve effectively, whether it makes us happy or not. With respect to God's purposes in the world, my happiness is expendable.

Whenever someone questions my goals and plans by saying that I am asserting my will over God's will, the first question I want to ask that person is this: "how do you know what God's will is?" and "what is your basis for thinking that my plan to serve will not be effective?". I want to know if I have misunderstood something about the way the world is, or miscalculated in some way. I want someone to look at my calculations and show where they are going to produce a less optimal result for the Lord. That's the only concern I have – effectiveness for the Lord. Usually what I have found is that the other person wants to make the purpose of life *their own happiness*, and it makes them happier to choose what to do moment by moment, without having to study anything or make plans. It's not that they have better goals (for God) or better plans (for God). It's that they want their goals to be above God, and they don't want to make plans other than to do whatever makes them happy.

This article by Greg Koukl may be helpful.

And I also found this summary of the Friesen book useful:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4
- Part 5
- Part 6
- Part 7
- Part 8
- Part 9

In nine parts.

Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?

May 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture by New York University professor Paul Vitz to explain a connection between atheism and fatherlessness:

Here's an article by Paul Copan (related to the lecture) which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own*rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all*.[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of Francois-Marie Arouet.
> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.

> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Here are some corrections to the list:

1) Voltaire was not an atheist but a deist who rejected claims of the Bible's inspiration, like Paine. Voltaire's aphorism, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him," far from being the cynical remark it is often taken for, it was meant as a retort to the atheistic clique of d'Holbach, Grimm, and others.

2) David Hume's religious views remain uncertain. He never said he was an atheist. A gentle skeptic suits him more.

3) Bertrand Russell was an agnostic.

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence of a psychological explanation for atheism, but there is also statistical evidence.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or

> absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an enormously difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary.

By the way, isn't it interesting to note that Barack Obama also grew up fatherless and has

issues with God and morality.

What’s the best book a woman can read to prepare herself for marriage?

May 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A good marriage is more than fun and feelings – it takes planning and work

I found a great lecture by Sue Bohlin, who works at Probe Ministries. The lecture is about the book “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands” by Dr. Laura Schlessinger. I recommend this book more highly than any other book to Christian women. It really does a lot to give young women a different perspective on men and marriage. Don’t be thrown off by the funny title, it’s really good.

The MP3 file is here. (48 minutes)

Here is a blog post that Sue wrote that captures most of the material in the lecture.

Here’s the introduction:

> Talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written a book that is improving thousands of marriages: *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands.* We need this book because millions of wives either don’t know how to love their husbands wisely and well, or they’re too self-centered to see it as important. Dr. Laura credits this dismal condition to forty years of feminist philosophy, “with its condemnation of just about everything male as evil, stupid, and oppressive, and the denigration of female and male roles in families.” While the women’s movement certainly had a hand to play in the disintegration of relationships and the family, I believe the core cause is our sinful self-centeredness, just as the Bible says.
>
> Which is why we need help, and God instructs older women to train younger women to love their husband and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be

> busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* is a great resource for learning these important values and skills.

And here's the first part I thought was most important:

> A listener to Dr. Laura's radio show named Edgar wrote, "There are a few things that men want so bad they would do anything for it. I think a good number of men want respect more than love. They like to feel they have some power. I nearly cry when you tell a woman caller to respect her husband. There is so much selfishness in the world—in marriages. Prosperity has allowed women to be so independent, and thus so selfish. I always feel as though I come last—my feelings come last, my needs come last."
>
> *"A good number of men want respect more than love."* God knew this when He made us. His commands to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:33 reflects each one's deepest needs: "Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." Dr. Emerson Eggerichs of LoveandRespect.com points out that this verse commands a husband to love his wife. Why? She needs love like she needs air to breathe. This same verse commands a wife to respect her husband. Why? He needs respect like he needs air to breathe.
>
> - Respect means treating someone in a way that builds him up and doesn't tear him down, never denigrating or attacking.
> - Respect means always treating the other person with the dignity they deserve as a person made in the image of God.
> - Respect means grasping that a man's needs and wants are every bit as valid and important as a woman's needs and wants.
> - Respect means not venting to others, *especially* the children. One woman wrote to Dr. Laura, "No emotional outlet is worth damaging my husband's reputation."
>
> There are three A's that men long for from their wives: attention, affection, and affirmation. Respect involves paying attention to what they do simply because they're the ones doing it.

Yes, respect is very important to men, but the thing is, a woman can't respect every man equally. She should choose a man who does things that are respectable. Then respecting him will be easy. Sometimes, women overestimate how easy men are to change after marriage. It's better to just pick one who does all the important things instead of thinking that you can pick a good-looking one and make him do the important stuff like be faithful to you, hold a steady job, save money, argue without getting angry, etc. later. Men don't change much, so pick one who does things that you respect and then give him respect.

And this part also seemed important to me:

> A man named Roy wrote to Dr. Laura with some good advice for wives: “If you can’t accentuate the positive, at least acknowledge it. The world is full of messages to men that there are standards we don’t meet. There is always another man who is more handsome, more virile, or more athletic than we are. None of that matters if the most important person in our life looks up to us, accepts us as we are, and loves us even though we aren’t perfect. . . . All I know is that the husband who has a wife who supports him and praises him for the positive things he does is the envy of all the other men who have to live with criticism, sarcasm, and constant reminders of their failures.”
>
> Men desperately want and need the support of their wives. This is reflected in what God reveals in His Word when He says, “It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” And through the apostle Paul, God instructs wives to relate to their husbands in a way that meets this need when He says, “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.”
>
> Submission is basically giving support with a willing, cooperative heart.
>
> A wife’s submission includes knowing her gifts and strengths, and using them to serve her husband and family.
>
> Service has a bad name, but both husbands and wives are called to serve God first and then each other; husbands are called to sacrificially love and serve their wives with Jesus as their pattern.
>
> So what does support look like?
>
> - Believing in him. Telling him, “You have what it takes.” Being his #1 fan.
> - Cultivating a cooperative heart.
> - Being generous and openhearted—willing to use your gifts and strengths to help him succeed.
> - Understanding the importance of making him look good: never saying anything negative in public.
> - Creating a home that’s a safe haven from the world.
> - Having a warm heart with a positive, cheerful demeanor. Women set the temperature of the home; we are thermostats, not thermometers, of the family. (On the other hand, Proverbs says “A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day; restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.”)
> - Being interested in him and his life.
> - Showing thoughtfulness. What does he like? Do it.
> - And though by no means exhaustive, it also means being a person of faithfulness and integrity. That means keeping your promises and being dependable. As Proverbs 31 puts it, “Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.”

Support and encouragement is SO important to a man. A man can continue to function

fine if the whole world opposes him, but not if the woman he loves doesn't support him. When a man falls in love, a woman has to realize the enormous power she has over him, and be careful not to hurt him. Men are vulnerable to the woman they choose. Although they look pretty tough on the outside, they can easily be hurt by insults or discouragement.

Parting thoughts

So, this lecture and the book are good, but young women should also seek out the advice of older Christian women who have been married successfully for some time. Read Titus 2:3-4 – the Bible encourages older women to mentor younger women! This is really important because we are in a time where young women are often pulled by the culture in many wrong directions, and they need help from people who know what they are doing.

One last point – I actually bought the audio version of the Dr. Laura book and noticed that it was just over two hours long. It turns out that the audio version is *abridged* – it is not as complete as the actual book. I noticed that Sue was quoting from the book passages that I had not heard in the audio recording. So, if you want the full content, get the book, not the audio recording.

Frequent denial of sex breaks the marriage covenant as much as adultery

May 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's start this post by quoting a passage from the Bible.

1 Corinthians 7:1-5:

1 Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

[2] But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband.

[3] The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

[4] The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*.

[5] Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

So with that in mind, I want to turn to a well-known Jewish talk show host named Dennis Prager, who is much loved and listened to by Christians. Dennis Prager features a lot of discussions about male-female relationships on his show, particularly during the male-female hour. In this two part series on male sexuality, he explains why women should not deprive their husbands of sex without a good reason.

Part 1 is here.

Excerpt:

> It is an axiom of contemporary marital life that if a wife is not in the mood, she need not have sex with her husband. Here are some arguments why a woman who loves her husband might want to rethink this axiom.
>
> First, women need to recognize how a man understands a wife's refusal to have sex with him: A husband knows that his wife loves him first and foremost by her willingness to give her body to him. This is rarely the case for women. Few women know their husband loves them because he gives her his body (the idea sounds almost funny). This is, therefore, usually a revelation to a woman. Many women think men's natures are similar to theirs, and this is so different from a woman's nature, that few women know this about men unless told about it.
>
> This is a major reason many husbands clam up. A man whose wife frequently denies him sex will first be hurt, then sad, then angry, then quiet. And most men will never tell their wives why they have become quiet and distant. They are afraid to tell their wives. They are often made to feel ashamed of their male sexual nature, and they are humiliated (indeed emasculated) by feeling that they

> are reduced to having to beg for sex.
>
> When first told this about men, women generally react in one or more of five ways…

He then explains the 5 ways that women respond to this.

Here's one:

> 1. You have to be kidding. That certainly isn't my way of knowing if he loves me. There have to be deeper ways than sex for me to show my husband that I love him.

I think that this is a common mistake that liberal women make because they think that men are just hairy women. But men are not women, we are different and sex means something different to men than it does to women. In the past, *most* women understood how men are different than women, but younger women have been taught that there are no differences between the sexes. To think any different is "sexism".

Here's another from the list:

> 4. You have it backwards. If he truly loved me, he wouldn't expect sex when I'm not in the mood.

Again, this is the common mistake that many younger women today make in thinking that love is a one-way street – flowing from men and children to the woman. If men and children DON'T do what the woman wants, or if they make demands on her, then they don't "love" her and she is justified in ignoring them.

Liberal women have been taught to believe that they are always victims or some group of oppressors, such as men and children or corporations. It makes them rebel against having to do anything for anyone else, because they don't want to be "oppressed". That makes them unable to accept that relationships are give-and-take, Once a commitment to love another person permanently has been made, then each person has responsibilities to provide for the needs of the other.

I actually had a conversation with a Christian woman once who said that women should not be obligated to do things that they didn't feel like doing. I asked her if men were obligated to go to work when they didn't feel like going. She said yes, and acted as though I were crazy for asking. I just laughed, because she didn't even see the inconsistency. The truth is that men often don't feel like working, but they get up and go to work anyway, whether they like it or not (in most cases). Similarly, a women should feel obligated to have sex with her husband, even if she is not in a perfect mood for it (in most cases). Sometimes, a man stays home from work, and it's OK. And sometimes a woman says no to sex, and it's OK. But it's not OK to stop doing it for months and months with no good reason.

Part 2 is here.

Excerpt:

> Here are eight reasons for a woman not to allow not being in the mood for sex to determine whether she denies her husband sex.

He then explains the eight reasons.

Here's one of them:

> 7. Many contemporary women have an almost exclusively romantic notion of sex: It should always be mutually desired and equally satisfying or one should not engage in it. Therefore, if a couple engages in sexual relations when he wants it and she does not, the act is "dehumanizing" and "mechanical." Now, ideally, every time a husband and wife have sex, they would equally desire it and equally enjoy it. But, given the different sexual natures of men and women, this cannot always be the case. If it is romance a woman seeks — and she has every reason to seek it — it would help her to realize how much more romantic her husband and her marriage are likely to be if he is not regularly denied sex, even of the non-romantic variety.

Women have to engage their husbands if they expect their husbands to engage in the marriage as a husband and father. Men can't do their protector, provider and spiritual leader roles forever unless their needs are met at some point. Performance of these male duties is not free. Wives have to love their husbands in the way that men expect to be loved. That's what they vowed to do in the wedding, isn't it?

At the end of the article, Prager makes a general point about women that I think needs to be emphasized over and over and over:

> That solution is for a wife who loves her husband — if she doesn't love him, mood is not the problem — to be guided by her mind, not her mood, in deciding whether to deny her husband sex.

This problem of sex-withholding is so widespread, that it really makes me (although I am a virgin) wonder what women think that marriage is about anyway. When a woman vows to love her husband, what do they think that word really means? Why do women think that men marry? What do men want that marriage provides for them? Which of those needs are the women's responsibility to provide for? I think these are questions that men should ask women. I think women should be prepared to answer them. Men should expect that women be reading books on men and marriage, and that she has relationships with men where she is giving support, respect, affirmation, affection and approval. You can learn a lot about a woman by how she treats her father, for example.

Unfortunately, many men today haven't thought through what they need from wives in a marriage. They spend their young years chasing women who are fun and sexually permissive. Every husband I asked about what they need has told me that respect, affirmation, affection and regular sex are more important than appearance and fun. Pre-marital sex, having fun, getting drunk, and going out, etc. are not the right foundation for marriage – which requires mutual self-sacrifice in order to work.

Another point: I have a friend who is very concerned that men are breaking sexual rules, but he seems oblivious to 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. I asked him privately what he thought about sex-withholding, and whether this might cause husbands to turn to pornography and even affairs, and I mentioned 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. He said: “no, it’s not something I take much interest in”. I was tempted to ask him if the Bible was something that he does not take much interest in.

I think he misreads 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 so that it could only be used to condemn *men*. If that were his view, then it actually worries me if well-meaning men are actually undermining marriage, by teaching women that they have no responsibilities to keep the marriage going, and helping them to feel like victims when their marriages fall apart. Sometimes even people who claim to be pro-marriage can undermine marriage practically-speaking, because of their unBiblical belief that women are “naturally good” and should not have any responsibilities in a marriage.

I thought this attitude was so interesting in view of what I read in the Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands. In that book, Dr. Laura urges women to be sensitive to their husbands’ different male natures in order to avoid them looking at pornography and having affairs. Withholding sex from a man is the equivalent of a man withholding *conversation* to a woman. Sex is how a man feels loved! What’s remarkable is how female callers on her show are shocked that men react badly to being deprived of sex.

I do think that some men will look at porn and cheat regardless of what their wife does sexually, but then it again falls to the woman to choose a man who has demonstrated that he has self-control – i.e., a virgin who has remained chaste with her throughout the courtship and protected her from doing sexual things outside of the covenant context. Chastity is hard, but it is how a man loves his wife self-sacrificially, before he even meets her. It should be a trait much sought after *and respected* by women. Basically, women need to be led by their minds, not by their feelings, when choosing a husband.

A man has to get up and go to work every day for his family, regardless of whether he feels like it or not. In fact, the many decisions he has made before getting married are also made not because they make him happy, but because he needs to be responsible to his future wife and children. The decision to study science? Loving obligation. The decision to go to grad school in science? Loving obligation. The decision to work in a demanding, risky career? Loving obligation. The decision to save money and eat instant oatmeal for dinner? Loving obligation. Men don’t do these things because we enjoy them. We do it because we love our wives and children self-sacrificially, *before we ever even meet them*. I think that women need to do the same.

Don Johnson: six reasons why people reject Christianity

May 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post on practical evangelism by Christian scholar Don Johnson.

His list of reasons why people often reject Christianity:

1. Christians behaving badly
2. Disappointment with God
3. Weak or absent father
4. Social pressure
5. Cost of discipleship
6. Immorality (especially sexual immorality)

And here's the detail on #6:

> Of all the motivations and reasons for skepticism that I encounter, immorality is easily the most common. In particular, sexual sin seems to be the largest single factor driving disbelief in our culture. Brant Hanson calls sex "The Big But" because he so often hears this from unbelievers: "'I like Jesus, BUT…' and the 'but' is usually followed, one way or the other, with an objection about the Bible and… sex. People think something's deeply messed-up with a belief system that says two consenting, unmarried adults should refrain from sex." In other words, people simply do not want to follow the Christian teaching that sexual intercourse should take place only between and man and woman who are married, so they throw the whole religion out.
>
> The easiest way to justify sin is to deny that there is a creator to provide reality with a nature, thereby denying that there is any inherent order and purpose in the universe.
>
> Aldous Huxley admitted that this is a common reason for skepticism:
>
> I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently I assumed that it had none and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption…. Those who detect no meaning in the world generally do so because, for one reason or another, it suits their books that the world should be meaningless. …
>
> For myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was …liberation from … a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom…. There was one admirably simple method in our political and erotic revolt: We could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever. Similar tactics had been adopted during

> the eighteenth century and for the same reasons. (Ends and Means, 270-273)
>
> Indeed, similar tactics have been used extensively up to the present day. If you are looking for two great resources that document the extent to which the work of the world's "great" atheistic thinkers has been "calculated to justify or minimize the shame of their own debauchery," (Spiegel, 72) I recommend *Intellectuals* by Paul Johnson and *Degenerate Moderns: Modernity as Rationalized Sexual Misbehavior* by E. Michael Jones. The bottom line is that these skeptical scholars didn't reach their conclusions by following the evidence where it led. They didn't "discover" that the world was meaningless and then proceed to live accordingly. They lived sinful lives (usually involving some type of sexual deviancy) and then produced theories that justified their actions.

It's important to understand that an atheist is not identical to a Christian, except not religious. There is something else going on in their minds when they reject very obvious evidences like the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability arguments, etc. The something else that is going on is hinted at when you look at atheist attitudes to abortion. According to a recent survey of atheists, 97% of them were pro-abortion!

What kind of person likes abortion? The kind of person who wants to be sexually active with no consequences, even if it means taking someone else's life. The desire to do as they please and retreat from obligations to others is the key. Now dispensing with God and his obligations is not an unreasonable view if there is no evidence for God, but it does provide a motive for people to not look for that evidence if happiness is their main goal. When I discuss these issues with atheists, I find that no work has been done to read anything. Not even debates, where there are two sides. They don't want to hear the case for Christian theism, and they work hard to avoid stumbling across it by accident, too.

God and the cosmic authority problem

Tough Questions Answered has a quote from Christian philosopher Paul Moser that I think is relevant:

> It would be a strange, defective God who didn't pose a serious cosmic authority problem for humans. Part of the status of being God, after all, is that God has a unique authority, or lordship, over humans. Since we humans aren't God, the true God would have authority over us and would seek to correct our profoundly selfish ways.

So we're not dealing with unbiased truth-seekers here. The goal might not always be sex, but let's be honest. Who wants to have to spend time reading the Bible, praying, going to church and reading thick books by Stephen C. Meyer, Michael Licona and Hugh Ross so that we can answer questions? No one. Who wants to give up premarital sex so that we can create a stable marriage for children so they can grow up in a safe place where knowing God is natural and easy? No one. We just don't want to have to do stuff for God, even if it's good stuff. We don't want to have build a life that is a testament to God's

existence and character, especially if it means that other people will think that we are weird and maybe even a bit mean. We want to do what we want to do instead, and be liked by other people.

That's the real challenge of Christianity: setting aside what you wanted to do, and letting God be your customer, instead. You'd be surprised how many Christians aren't comfortable with the idea of serving God and being viewed in a bad way by non-Christians. They aren't OK with the self-sacrifice, and they are really not OK with the social disapproval. It's hard to be chaste, and to be known to be chaste by your peers, for example. Much easier to just give in and do what everyone else is doing.

Let's illustrate with C.S. Lewis

And here's a relevant quote from C.S. Lewis' "The Screwtape Letters" to illustrate:

> You must have often wondered why the enemy [God] does not make more use of his power to be sensibly present to human souls in any degree he chooses and at any moment. But you now see that the irresistible and the indisputable are the two weapons which the very nature of his scheme forbids him to use. Merely to over-ride a human will (as his felt presence in any but the faintest and most mitigated degree would certainly do) would be for him useless. He cannot ravish. He can only woo. For his ignoble idea is to eat the cake and have it; the creatures are to be one with him, but yet themselves; merely to cancel them, or assimilate them, will not serve.... Sooner or later he withdraws, if not in fact, at least from their conscious experience, all supports and incentives. He leaves the creature to stand up on its own legs—to carry out from the will alone duties which have lost all relish.... He cannot "tempt" to virtue as we do to vice. He wants them to learn to walk and must therefore take away his hand.... Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.
>
> — Uncle Screwtape, in The Screwtape Letters

I'm not a big fan of Lewis, but I think he is onto something there. That's really what the Christian life is like, and no wonder more people don't choose it. Who wants to do your duty for God, as part of a relationship with him, in a universe that seems so unfair? It's a tall order, and most people prefer to do their own thing instead of building something nice for God with their lives.

Colorado Democrats vote down bill to protect unborn victims of violence

May 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is from Life News.

Excerpt:

> After Republicans in the Colorado state Senate approved an unborn victims bill to hold criminals accountable when they kill or injure unborn children in violent crimes against them and their mothers, Democrats in the state House killed the bill.
>
> That means victims like Baby Aurora, who was cut out of her mother Michelle Wilkins' (pictured above) womb in a horrific assault that claimed her life earlier this year, will not receive any justice. Criminals in Colorado, unlike most other states, can't be charged with a second crime for killing or injuring unborn babies.
>
> Today the Offenses Against Unborn Children Act, (SB 268) was defeated in the House State Veterans and Military Affairs Committee in a party-line vote of 6-5 with Democrats opposing the bill and Republicans supporting it.
>
> Colorado Citizens for Life, the statewide pro-life group, is very disappointed by the vote.
>
> "In March, a woman in Longmont was arrested after she attacked Michelle Wilkins and cut her 7-month-old unborn baby from her womb. Michelle's daughter Aurora died, but she survived. Unbelievably, after the grisly incident, prosecutors in Boulder County announced that the woman responsible for baby Aurora's death would not face murder charges because Colorado law refuses to provide justice for unborn babies," said Colorado Citizens for Life director Sarah Zagorski.
>
> […]The bill creates a number of crimes against unborn children who are killed or injured in the process of an assault or homicide against the baby's mother. The measure is similar to bills that have been used in the past to prosecute criminals for two crimes against both mother and child. Unborn victims laws have repeatedly been upheld as constitutional in court.
>
> […]Colorado state law does not regard unborn children as human beings who deserve justice when they are killed. In 2013, Colorado Democrats killed a bill that would add the state to the list of more than 25 states that provide justice and protection for pregnant women and unborn children.

These laws are important because it is an incremental step to getting the courts to recognize the value of unborn children. I think that the Democrat lawmakers are unwilling to protect unborn victims of violence for that reason. But what a position to take. Who is going to give the pregnant woman her baby back? And the child's entire future was

snuffed out in an instant, and Democrats just don’t care.

Thomas Sowell: if we care about poverty and crime, then we should encourage marriage

May 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Thomas Sowell

My favorite economist Thomas Sowell writes about poverty and crime in National Review.

Excerpt:

> The "legacy of slavery" argument is not just an excuse for inexcusable behavior in the ghettos. In a larger sense, it is an evasion of responsibility for the disastrous consequences of the prevailing social vision of our times, and the political policies based on that vision, over the past half century.
>
> Anyone who is serious about evidence need only compare black communities as they evolved in the first 100 years after slavery with black communities as they evolved in the first 50 years after the explosive growth of the welfare state, beginning in the 1960s.
>
> You would be hard-pressed to find as many ghetto riots prior to the 1960s as we have seen just in the past year, much less in the 50 years since a wave of such riots swept across the country in 1965.
>
> We are told that such riots are a result of black poverty and white racism. But in fact — for those who still have some respect for facts — black poverty was far worse, and white racism was far worse, prior to 1960. But violent crime within black ghettos was far less.
>
> Murder rates among black males were going down — repeat, *down* — during the much-lamented 1950s, while it went up after the much celebrated 1960s,

> reaching levels more than double what they had been before. Most black children were raised in two-parent families prior to the 1960s. But today the great majority of black children are raised in one-parent families.
>
> Such trends are not unique to blacks, nor even to the United States. The welfare state has led to remarkably similar trends among the white underclass in England over the same period. Just read *Life at the Bottom*, by Theodore Dalrymple, a British physician who worked in a hospital in a white slum neighborhood.
>
> **You cannot take any people, of any color, and exempt them from the requirements of civilization — including work, behavioral standards, personal responsibility, and all the other basic things that the clever intelligentsia disdain — without ruinous consequences to them and to society at large.**
>
> **Non-judgmental subsidies of counterproductive lifestyles are treating people as if they were livestock, to be fed and tended by others in a welfare state — and yet expecting them to develop as human beings have developed when facing the challenges of life themselves.**
>
> **One key fact that keeps getting ignored is that the poverty rate among black married couples has been in single digits every year since 1994. Behavior matters and facts matter, more than the prevailing social visions or political empires built on those visions.**

So skin color has nothing to do with it, the real problem is that social programs encourage people to make poor choices – including more poverty and crime. We reward failure, and we are surprised when we get more failure.

The book he mentioned – Life at the Bottom – is one of my favorite books. It really shows how social programs that redistribute wealth actually teach poor people to make poor choices, and then refuse to take responsibility for their own poor choices. I posted links to the full text of the book here.

Why does God allow so much natural evil from earthquakes?

May 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi shared this video with me, which features chemist Fazale Rana.

The video runs under 4 minutes:

Basically, there was an atheist who challenged the idea that nature is designed because there are things in nature which cause suffering, like earthquakes and volcanoes.

Now the first thing to note is that atheists commonly think that God's job is to make humans happy. If he doesn't make humans feel happy – regardless of their knowledge of him and relationship with him – then he is a big failure. Many atheists think that, it is one of the most common reasons why people become atheists. But of course anyone who reads the Bible and reads the story of Jesus knows that the purpose of life on God's view is for humans to know him and to be disciples of a *suffering* Messiah who sacrifices himself in order to obey God the Father. So that's the first thing to say – purpose of life *not* happiness, but knowledge of God and being a disciple of Jesus. This may involve all kinds of suffering, and that's to be expected.

Second, there is a response to the problem of evil based on the necessity of natural laws. The argument goes that you can't have genuine morality without a predictable, knowable system of natural laws.

But I want to talk about something different in this post. In the video, Dr. Rana thinks that many of the things that cause suffering in the natural world are actually necessary for life to exist at all. He provides the example of plate tectonics in his video above, and I want to take that one and add to it the example of heavy element production and the stellar lifecycle. These are both from a book called "Rare Earth", which is written by two non-Christians – Peter Ward and Donald Brownlee, but I'll link to web sites to make the case.

Plate tectonics.

Here's an article from Reasons to Believe by Dr. David Rogstad, who has a PhD in physics from Caltech – the top school for experimental science. The article not only goes over the basic plate tectonics to carbonate-silicate cycle connection, but it adds a newer discovery to boot.

Excerpt:

> Earthquakes are a byproduct of plate tectonics, a theory in geology developed in recent years for explaining motions near the surface of the Earth. One of the benefits from plate tectonics is that Earth maintains the right levels of carbon dioxide (CO_2) in the atmosphere to compensate for the Sun's increasing luminosity. This is accomplished by what is called the carbonate-silicate cycle. CO_2 is removed from the atmosphere through weathering. The weathered

> products are eventually drawn into the Earth's interior via plate tectonics. Processes inside the Earth's interior release the CO_2 back into the atmosphere via volcanoes. While all aspects of this mechanism are not yet fully understood, it has been instrumental in providing a stable environment for life on the Earth for billions of years.
>
> New research provides yet another component that appears fine-tuned for life. In a letter in the September 27, 2007 issue of Nature together with a corresponding news release from the University of Bonn, Arno Rohrbach and his colleagues have discussed another mechanism similar to the carbonate-silicate cycle. It also depends on plate tectonics but, in this case, the mechanism controls the amount of oxygen on the surface of the Earth.
>
> Oxygen becomes bound up in various oxides which are then drawn into the Earth's interior, where various processes result in its being incorporated into an exotic mineral called majorite. The results reported in this letter established that majorite functions as a kind of "reservoir" for oxygen, and when the majorite ascends nearer to the surface of the Earth it breaks down and releases its oxygen. Some of this oxygen also binds with hydrogen released from the interior of the Earth to form water. The authors have referred to the whole process as an "oxygen elevator."
>
> They go on to say that "without the 'oxygen elevator' in its mantle the Earth would probably be a barren planet hostile to life. According to our findings, planets below a certain size hardly have any chance of forming a stable atmosphere with a high water content."
>
> This research confirms the existence of one more finely tuned mechanism that depends on plate tectonics and contributes to an environment that can support life. It also gives humans one more reason to be appreciative rather than dismayed when we experience an earthquake that breaks some precious possessions beyond repair.

Astronomer Dr. Hugh Ross who has a PhD in Astronomy from the University of Toronto and did a 5-year post-doctoral work at Caltech, adds to this with another discovery.

Excerpt:

> In the December 2007 issue of *Astrobiology* Stanford University geophysicists Norman H. Sleep and Mark D. Zoback note that the higher tectonic activity during Earth's early history could have played a key role in cycling critically important nutrients and energy sources for life. The production of numerous small faults in the brittle primordial crust released trapped nutrients. Such faults could also release pockets of methane gas and molecular hydrogen. The methane and hydrogen could then provide crucial energy sources for nonphotosynthetic life. Finally, the production of faults could bring water to otherwise arid habitats, such as rocks far below Earth's surface.

> Faulting, generated by active and widespread tectonics, allowed a youthful Earth to support diverse and abundant life. This enhanced diversity and abundance of life quickly transformed Earth's surface into an environment safe for advanced life. Also, the buildup of biodeposits for the support of human civilization occurred more rapidly due to active tectonics.
>
> The more rapid preparation of Earth for humanity is critical. Without such rapid preparation, humans could not come upon the terrestrial scene before the Sun's increasing luminosity would make their presence impossible (due to excessive heat).

So that's the science behind earthquakes. So that's a brief look at why we need plate tectonics for life, and we just have to buck up and take the earthquakes with it. It's not God's job to give us happiness and health. That's not his plan. People who complain about earthquakes have to show how God could get the life-permitting effects of earthquakes without wrecking his ability to succeed in his plan to make people know him and follow him. But how can an atheist do that? They can't. I think that people just need to realize that humans are not in charge here and we have to live with that. We have to accept that we didn't make the universe, and we don't get to decide what purpose it has. God decides.

On to star formation.

Star formation

Atheists often complain that the universe is too big or too old (which is actually the same thing, since the more time passes, the more it expands). The fact of the matter is that life appeared the earliest it could appear – we needed the universe to be a certain age before it could support life.

Dr. Hugh Ross explains in this article.

Excerpt:

> The second parameter of the universe to be measured was its age. For many decades astronomers and others have wondered why, given God exists, He would wait so many billions of years to make life. Why did He not do it right away? The answer is that, given the laws and constants of physics God chose to create, it takes about ten to twelve billion years just to fuse enough heavy elements in the nuclear furnaces of several generations of giant stars to make life chemistry possible.
>
> Life could not happen any earlier in the universe than it did on Earth. Nor could it happen much later. As the universe ages, stars like the sun located in the right part of the galaxy for life (see chapter 15) and in a stable nuclear burning phase become increasingly rare. If the universe were just a few billion years older, such stars would no longer exist.

The Rare Earth book explains the details on p. 40-4:

> The trick for getting from helium to the generation of planets, and ultimately to life, was the formation of carbon, the key element for the success of life and for the production of heavy elements in stars. Carbon could not form in the early moments following the Big Bang, because the density of the expanding mass was too low for the necessary collisions to occur. Carbon formation had to await the creation of giant red stars, whose dense interiors are massive enough to allow such collisions. Because stars become red giants only in the last 10% of their lifetimes (when they have used up much of the hydrogen in their cores), there was no carbon in the Universe for hundreds of millions to several billion years after the Big Bang—and hence no life as we know it for that interval of time.
>
> […]The sequence of element production in the Big Bang and in stars provided not only the elements necessary for the formation of Earth and the other terrestrial planets but also all of the elements critical for life—those actually needed to form living organisms and their habitats.

> […]The processes that occurred during the billions of years of Earth's "prehistory" when its elements were produced are generally well understood. Elements are produced within stars; some are released back into space and are recycled into and out of generations of new stars. When the sun and its planets formed, they were just a random sampling of this generated and reprocessed material. Nevertheless, it is believed that the "cosmic abundance" mix of the chemical elements—the elemental composition of the sun—is representative of the building material of most stars and planets, with the major variation being the ratio of hydrogen to heavy elements.
>
> […]Many stars are similar in composition, but there is variation, mainly in the abundance of the heavier Earth-forming elements relative to hydrogen and helium. The sun is in fact somewhat peculiar in that it contains about 25% more heavy elements than typical nearby stars of similar mass. In extremely old stars, the abundance of heavy elements, may be as low as a thousandth of that in the sun. Abundance of heavy elements is roughly correlated with age. As time passed, the heavy-element content of the Universe as a whole increased, so newly formed stars are on the average more "enriched" in heavy elements than older ones.
>
> […]The matter produced in the Big Bang was enriched in heavier elements by cycling in and out of stars. Like biological entities, stars form, evolve, and die. In the process of their death, stars ultimately become compact objects such as white dwarfs, neutron stars, or even black holes. On their evolutionary paths to these ends, they eject matter back into space, where it is recycled and further enriched in heavy elements. New stars rise from the ashes of the old. This is why we say that each of the individual atoms in Earth and in all of its creatures—including us—has occupied the interior of at least a few different stars.

What he’s saying is that heavy elements are created gradually because of the star formation lifecycle. The first generation of stars are metal-poor. The next generation of stars is better. And so on until we get to stars that can support life by providing a steady, stable amount of energy – as well as other benefits like planets with an atmosphere. Our planet is 4.5 billion years old, and the universe is about 14 billion years old. Simple life appears about 4 billion years ago on Earth. That means we got life practically immediately, given that we had to develop the heavy elements needed to make a life-supporting star, a life-supporting planet and our physical bodies.

Paul Helm debates William Lane Craig on Calvinism and Molinism on Unbelievable

May 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to this excellent discussion between Dr. William Lane Craig and Oxford University Calvinist philosopher Dr. Paul Helm. I think this is a useful discussion in general because atheists often bring up problems with Calvinism as objections to Christianity in general, such as:

- If God exists, then he controls everything and I don't have free will
- If God knows the future, then I don't have free will
- If God controls everything, then I am not responsible for my sinning
- If God has to choose me to be saved, then I am not responsible for my damnation

Details:

> If God ordains the future, can humans have free will? Are people predestined for salvation? And what does the Bible say on the matter? William Lane Craig is a Christian philosopher and leading proponent of Molinism, a view of divine sovereignty that seeks to reconcile God's fore-ordination with human free will. Paul Helm is a leading Calvin Scholar. He defends the view that God predestines the future, limiting human freedom.
>
> MP3 of this show: http://cdnapi.kaltura.com/p/618072/sp/61807200/playManifest/entryId/1_jn0bdo52/flavorId/0_002f1k0d/protocol/http/format/url/a.mp3?clientTag=feed:1_jlj47tkv
>
> For William Lane Craig: http://www.reasonablefaith.org
>
> For Paul Helm: http://paulhelmsdeep.blogspot.co.uk/

I was surprised because my Calvinist friend Dina thought that Dr. Helm won this debate, but I thought that Dr. Craig won. So without further ado, here is the snark-free summary of the discussion. I also sent the summary to Dina to make sure that it was reasonably fair and accurate. She said it was biased, but she was predestined to say that. Anyway, there's a commentary on the debate over at Michael's Theology blog. And Calvinist Remington has a podcast review in parts. Part 1 is here.

Summary:

JB: Has Lewis had any impact on your apologetics?

Craig: Not as a scholar, but more as a model of a scholar who leaves a legacy through his published work

JB: How did you become interested in Calvinism?

Helm: Starting from childhood, and lately writing more on Calvinism from a philosophical

point of view

JB: How do you view God’s sovereignty?

Helm: Strong view of divine sovereignty, God is sovereign over all events, but that doesn’t mean that they are determined by him

JB: What is Calvin’s legacy?

Helm: He amplified an existing concept of predestination, and wrote on many other topics

JB: What is Molinism?

Craig: Molina affirms divine sovereignty as Paul Helm does, but he also affirms libertarian free will

Craig: Every event that occurs happens by God’s will or by God’s permission

JB: What about open theism?

Craig: Paul and I both oppose open theism

JB: How does Molinism reconcile human free will and divine sovereignty

Craig: God has knowledge of what would happen under any set of circumstances

Craig: God has knowledge of everything that COULD happen, and he has knowledge of everything that WILL happen

Craig: God knows what each person freely choose to do in any set of circumstances and he can place people in times and places where he is able to achieve his ends without violating creaturely freedom and creaturely responsibility

JB: How does this apply to the issue of salvation?

Craig: The circumstances in which God puts a person includes God leading people to him and he foreknows who will respond to his leading

Craig: God has ordered the world in such a way that he foreknows the exact people who will free respond to his leading if he puts them in certain circumstances

JB: Does God want to save the maximum of people?

Craig: My own view is that God does order the world in such a way that the maximum number of people will respond to God’s drawing them to himself

JB: Is the Molinist view gaining ground?

Craig: Yes, Calvinists and open theists are both moving towards it, and Molinism is the dominant view among philosophical theologians

JB: Why has Molinism not convinced you?

Helm: It’s an unnecessary theory, God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge covers what middle knowledge covers

Helm: Calvinism has a stronger view of sin, such that God has to act unilaterally and irrestibly to save them

JB: Are creatures free on your view?

Helm: My view of free will is weaker than Craig’s view of free will

Craig: For the Calvinist, grace is irresistible, but for the Molinist, grace is effective when it is met with a response from the creature

Craig: The Bible affirms the strong view of free will, when it says that in certain circumstances people can freely choose to do other than they do

Helm: But if a person is in circumstances X and they are free, then why don't they choose something that isn't what God can foresee

Craig: In identical circumstances, a person has the freedom to choose, and God doesn't determine what they choose, he just foreknows what they choose

Helm: How can God foreknow what people will freely do if people have this strong view of freedom that allows them to do anything? God would not know what people can freely do if they really are free

Craig: God has knowledge of what his creatures would freely do in any set of circumstances, he has knowledge of subjunctive statements

Craig: The Scripture is filled with statements that show that God has this knowledge of what people would do in other circumstances (e.g. – 2 Cor 2:8)

Helm: I am not denying that the Bible is full of subjunctive statements, but if humans have real libertarian free will, then God cannot know what they will do

Craig: I think God does preordain everything, Molinism has a strong sense of divine sovereignty BUT the foreordaining is done with the knowledge of what humans would do in any circumstances, so that what God ordains achieves his ends, but without violating creaturely free will

Craig: I take at face value the passages of the Bible where it says that God wants all persons to be saved

Craig: When the Bible says that God wants ALL persons to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), the Bible means that God wants ALL persons to be saved

Craig: So either universalism is true OR there is something that stops all from being saved outside of God

Craig: the something that prevents all from being saved is creaturely free will

Helm: Most people don't have the opportunity to hear the gospel, so God doesn't want all to be saved

Helm: People can still be responsible for what God "fore-ordains"

JB: Can a person really be responsible for wickedness if they didn't freely choose it?

Helm: Even though God is the only one who can act unilaterally to make save people, the people who act wickedly are still responsible

Craig: Molinism provides an answer to the problem of why not all people have heard the gospel, because by using middle knowledge he is able to know who would respond to the gospel if they heard it and he places those people in the times and places where they will hear it

Craig: That solution means that NO ONE is lost because they have not heard the gospel

Craig: There is Biblical support for (Acts 17:27) God choosing the times and places where people will live SO THAT they will be led by him and be able to respond to his leading

JB: Is God the author of sin, on Calvinism?

Craig: If Calvinists define providence to mean causal determinism, then he is the cause of every effect including human actions, and he is the one who causes people to sin

Craig: This view (determinism) impugns the character of God

Helm: I don't think that sovereignty requires determinism

Helm: God has mysterious resources – which I cannot specify – that reconcile his sovereignty with human responsibility for wickedness

JB: But if God is the cause of people doing wrong things, then how can they be responsible for it?

Helm: Well, humans do cause their own actions

Craig: Helm is right to say that God has resources to reconcile God's sovereignty with free will and human responsibility, and that resource is not an unknown mystery, it's middle knowledge

Craig: I can affirm everything in the Westminster Confession except for the one clause where they expressly repudiate middle knowledge as the mechanism for reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

Helm: Well, Calvinists have a strong view of sin so that humans cannot respond to God's leading

Craig: Yes, and that's why humans need prevenient grace in order to respond to him

Craig: God has to take the initiative and draw people to himself or they cannot be saved, but that grace is resistible, and that's what the Bible teaches (Acts 7:51), so humans are still responsible if they resist God

Helm: My view of grace is that it is monergistic and irrestible, it is a unilateral action on the part of God, like pulling someone out of an icy pond which they can't get out of

JB: If humans freely choose to respond to God's drawing and leading, does that diminish grace?

Helm: Many are called but few are chosen

Craig: Molinism does not require synergism – which is the idea that humans are partly responsible for their salvation

Craig: In Eph 2:8, Scripture is clear that faith opposite to works, and responding to God's drawing is not meritorious

JB: So receiving a gift is not meritorious?

Craig: It's the passive acceptance of what someone else has done for you

Helm: But doesn't this mean that you can lose your salvation, because you can accept and resist the gift of salvation?

Craig: That's a separate question that Christians can differ on, but if the Holy Spirit indwells a person and seals them, then that would argue for the view that salvation cannot be revoked

JB: Doesn't Romans 8 teach Calvinism pretty clearly?

Helm: This is called the "golden chain", and it does support Calvinism

Craig: Actually, this text is no problem for Molinists because the first link in the chain is foreknowledge, which, if it incorporates middle knowledge, is no problem for Molinists

Craig: What God is electing in Romans 8 is a specific group of people that he knows in advance of creating the universe will freely respond to his drawing them to him

Craig: In Acts 4:27-28, it is talking about God's foreknowledge, which involves and incorporates knowledge of what any individual would freely choose if placed in those circumstances

JB: If God actualizes a set plan with set circumstances for everyone, isn't that very similar to Calvinism?

Craig: Yes! It's a strong statement of divine sovereignty

Helm: Foreknowledge doesn't mean that God knows what people would do, it's just refering to God "knowing his own mind" about what he wants to do

JB: How do you respond to the fairness of God unilaterally and specifically choosing some people for salvation and choosing other people for damnation (because he refuses to act unilaterally for them)?

Helm: God ordinarily bypasses other people in the Bible, like when he chooses the Jews as his chosen people

Craig: The problem with that is that the Bible clearly teaches that God has a genuine will that all will be saved and he makes a genuine offer of salvation to all people

Craig: Also, just being a Jew and a member of the chosen people doesn't mean you were saved, because some Jews rebelled against God

Craig: And there were also people outside of the Jewish people who were righteous and in a relationship with God, like Job

Helm: "the fabric of our faith" depends on God's choice and his not-choice, it is fundamental to the Bible and to God's character, and choosing them "effectively" (irrestibly and unilaterally)

Helm: The idea of God considering "possible worlds", some of which are feasible and not feasible, with conflicts between the wills of free creatures in different circumstances, and then actualizing one world that achieve these ends is very messy

Craig: Some worlds may not feasible for God to create, for example a world in which everyone is saved – it is logically possible, but may not be feasible

Craig: God will not exercise any divine coercion to force people to go to Heaven against their own will

Helm: If God chooses a world because it is feasible, then he doesn't love me directly, he

is choosing a world, not individuals

Craig: Well, when God actualizes a world, he specifically knows which individuals will be saved within that world, but without disrespecting free will

Craig: The world isn't primary, the individuals are primary

Helm: I think that middle knowledge can he included in God's natural knowledge and free knowledge

Craig: The knowledge of what people would do in different circumstances is based on the freedom of the individuals

JB: Make your conclusions!

Craig: Molinism is a Biblical model for reconciling divine sovereignty with human freedom

Helm: It is intellectually mystifying to introduce this strong view of human freedom and it is not Biblical

Socialist party wins majority in Canada's most conservative province

May 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

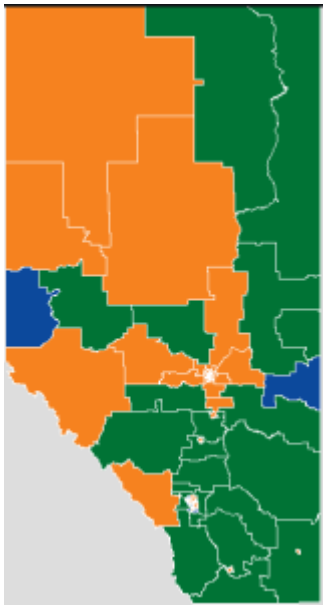

Orange = NDP, Green = Wildrose, Blue = Conservative

This article from Reuters explains what happened.

It says:

> The left-wing New Democrats won election in the Canadian province of Alberta on Tuesday, ending the 44-year run by the Progressive Conservatives amid promises to review oversight of the oil and gas sector in the home of Canada's oil sands.
>
> At the end of a month-long campaign, the New Democratic Party (NDP), which has never held more than 16 seats in the 87-seat provincial legislature, will lead a majority government. It held a commanding lead in early results, leading or elected in 54 seats at 9 p.m. local time while the Conservatives were ahead in just 13, according to CBC TV.
>
> The NDP is expected to be far less accommodative to the Western Canadian province's powerful energy industry.
>
> NDP Premier-elect Rachel Notley has proposed reduced support for pipeline export projects and a review of oil and gas royalties in the resource-rich province, and energy shares on Canadian stock markets are expected to react negatively to her party's victory.
>
> The NDP had promised to hike corporate tax rates by two percentage points to 12 percent if elected, but its promise to review the amount of royalty payments due the province from oil and gas production made some investors nervous.
>
> Alberta's oil sands are the largest source of U.S. oil imports.

> The Conservatives had won 12 straight elections, but support for rookie Premier Jim Prentice plunged during the campaign and right-wing voters split support between the Conservatives and the younger, more conservative Wildrose Party, which appeared on track to be the official opposition.

The Alberta "Progressive Conservatives" are almost as leftist as the NDP. The only real conservatives in Alberta are the Wildrose.

This Canadian Press looks at specific NDP policies:

> The NDP have won a majority in Alberta. What could Alberta look like moving forward? Leader Rachel Notley campaigned on having the wealthy pay more to fund better health care and education. Here's a look at some of the party's key platform planks:
>
> — A Resource Owners' Rights Commission to review the royalties oil companies pay to the province with any amount earned above the current rates going into savings.
>
> — A boost in the corporate tax rate to 12 per cent from 10 per cent and an increase in the minimum wage to $15 and hour by 2018.
>
> — More tax brackets on high earners than the Tories are proposing: A 12 per cent tax rate on income between $125,000 to $150,000; 13 per cent on income between $150,000 to $200,000; 14 per cent between $200,000 and $300,000 and 15 per cent over $300,000. The NDP also plans to roll back the Tory health levy.
>
> — The creation of 2,000 long-term care spaces over four years.
>
> **— A ban both corporate and union donations to political parties.**

That last one looks like a conservative policy, since big corporations and unions are both leftist. So there's a silver lining to this cloud. I'm sorry for my Canadian friends who will have to live with this, but the mistake was made last election, when they chose the Progressive Conservatives over Wildrose. One thing is for sure, Alberta supplies a lot of our oil here, so this NDP win will raise oil prices, and it's going to put pressure on American families. Maybe we should be drilling for our own oil?

How accurate are past global warming predictions ?

May 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like this article from The Stream, which lists a bunch of failed predictions by global warming socialists.

Here's the list:

1. 2015 is the 'last effective opportunity' to stop catastrophic warming
2. France's foreign minister said we only have "500 days" to stop "climate chaos"
3. President Barack Obama is the last chance to stop global warming
4. Remember when we had "hours" to stop global warming?
5. United Kingdom Prime Minister Gordon Brown said there was only 50 days left to save Earth
6. Let's not forget Prince Charles's warning we only had 96 months to save the planet
7. The U.N.'s top climate scientist said in 2007 we only had four years to save the world
8. Environmentalists warned in 2002 the world had a decade to go green
9. The "tipping point" warning first started in 1989

Here are the 3 I thought were the worst:

> **7. The U.N.'s top climate scientist said in 2007 we only had four years to save the world**
>
> Rajendra Pachauri, the former head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said in 2007 that if "there's no action before 2012, that's too late."
>
> "What we do in the next two to three years will determine our future. This is the defining moment," he said.
>
> Well, it's 2015 and no new U.N. climate treaty has been presented. The only thing that's changed since then is that Pachauri was forced to resign earlier this year amid accusations he sexually harassed multiple female coworkers
>
> **8. Environmentalists warned in 2002 the world had a decade to go green**
>
> Environmentalist write George Monbiot wrote in the UK Guardian that within "as little as 10 years, the world will be faced with a choice: arable farming either continues to feed the world's animals or it continues to feed the world's people. It cannot do both."
>
> In 2002, about 930 million people around the world were undernourished, according to U.N. data. by 2014, that number shrank to 805 million. Sorry, Monbiot.
>
> **9. The "tipping point" warning first started in 1989**
>
> In the late 1980s the U.N. was already claiming the world had only a decade to

> solve global warming or face the consequences.
>
> The San Jose Mercury News reported on June 30, 1989 that a “senior environmental official at the United Nations, Noel Brown, says entire nations could be wiped off the face of the earth by rising sea levels if global warming is not reversed by the year 2000.”
>
> That prediction didn’t come true 15 years ago, and the U.N. is sounding the same alarm today.

Should we believe the global warming socialists? Based on past predictions, we should not. And we especially should not because current levels of solar activity – which is the actual cause of climate change – are extremely low. It’s getting colder, not warmer.

Polk State College professor fails student for refusing to bash Christianity

May 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Campus Reform.

Excerpt:

> A professor at Polk State College has allegedly failed a humanities student after she refused to concede that Jesus is a "myth" or that Christianity oppresses women during a series of mandatory assignments at the Florida college.
>
> According to a press release from the Liberty Counsel, a non-profit public interest law firm, Humanities Professor Lance "Lj" Russum gave a student a "zero" on four separate papers because the 16-year-old did not "conform to his personal worldviews of Marxism, Atheism, Feminism, and homosexuality." The law firm has called for a full, private investigation of the professor and the course curriculum.

His view is that all religions are false:

> "The point of this is not to 'bash' any religion, we should NEVER favor one over another, they all come from the same source, HUMAN IMAGINATION and [sic] they demonstrate that humanity is one," a copy of Russum's class outline, riddled with grammatical errors, says.

But he targets Christians especially, of course:

> "The point of this is not to 'bash' any religion, we should NEVER favor one over another, they all come from the same source, HUMAN IMAGINATION and [sic] they demonstrate that humanity is one," a copy of Russum's class outline, riddled with grammatical errors, says.
>
> "We have much to thank of [sic] humans like Michelangelo who took a sacred space, a temple to god, and made it a HUMAN space, a space where humanism can meet with god and discourse," one course assignment read. "Finally humanity and the gods are on equal footing and that is what the myths of Hercules, Apollo and Jesus are all about—the divine becoming human and human being divine."
>
> In her essay, the student, who Liberty Counsel identifies as "G.L.," argued that "it is a logical fallacy to make the assumption that Christian humanism's goal was to 'blend mythologies and make man the center' simply on account of Michelangelo's artwork or because Renaissance artists incorporate classicism."
>
> The student apparently received a zero on that assignment.
>
> Another assignment allegedly required students to discuss how "fortunate"

> Martin Luther was to be born in a historical moment that allowed him to "challenge the mythos of the power structure of the church." The assignment required students to write only about the humanism of Luther and his reformation—and students were instructed in bolded text to keep theology out of the paper:
>
> "WHAT YOU MUST NOT WRITE ABOUT: 1. This is NOT about Luther's theology
>
> "2. Any quotes from his sermons or writings MUST be about humanism and how the reformation is in the right place and right time in history NOT some divine providence of the gods
>
> "3. You must stay focused on the history of the humanism of Luther and his reformation IF You turn this into a theological debate or divine providence I will NOT read it and you will be given a zero."
>
> She failed that assignment as well.
>
> Another description on the course outline criticized Christianity as one of the "most violent forms of religion the world has ever seen," and bashed the religion for its "dominance by powerful men." The description, supposedly for a class centered on the role of religion in the Middle Ages, claims that today's major religions "STILL attempt to regulate the bodies of women."

That sounds like indoctrination to me, not education.

How did the college respond to complaints?

> In an email to G.L.'s parents, obtained by Liberty Counsel, Dean of Academic Affairs Donald Paintersaid that he had reviewed the materials presented in Russum's Humanities 2020 course and "believe[d] them to be appropriate." Painter apologized that the student and her family found the course materials to be "distasteful," but said the materials would not be modified.
>
> Painter, who did not respond to an emailed request for comment from *Campus Reform*, reminded the student's parents in the email that they had signed an agreement with her dual-enrollment that acknowledged they were aware that some course material may be developed for "the adult student, age 18 or older."

Yet another reason to never go into non-STEM degree programs. There are certainly good humanities professors, but there are also secular leftist clowns. It's just far too easy for knuckleheads like this professor, who are divorced from reality, to get teaching positions in most secular leftist universities. They get paid for spouting opinions, and if you disagree with them, then they fail you. Don't give them any of your money. It just prolongs their retreat from the adult responsibilities.

Most Americans believe that religious businesses can refuse gay wedding-related services

May 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This poll is from CBS News.

It says:

> A majority of Americans (57 percent) continue to say it should be legal for same-sex couples to marry, although that's down three points from a high reached in February. Most Democrats (66 percent) and independents (61 percent) think same-sex marriage should be legal, while most Republicans (61 percent) do not.
>
> **Still, just over half of Americans (51 percent) think small business owners should be allowed to refuse wedding services to same-sex couples if it violates their religious beliefs; 42 percent think those businesses should be required to provide those services. There are sharp partisan differences on this issue.**

I found the numbers in this poll troubling – it seems to me that the support for same-sex marriage over religious liberty is worse than I thought.

According to this Washington Examiner article, Bobby Jindal and Ted Cruz appear to be the toughest defenders of religious liberty, with Walker and Rubio in the second tier.

It says:

> Evangelical Christian voters are facing an unusual problem: they may have too many choices when it comes to the 2016 presidential election. Several Republican candidates are vying for their support, viewing the voting bloc as a key stepping stone to the nomination.
>
> More than ever before, evangelical sources say, candidates will need to focus on the issue of religious liberty to win this crucial vote, especially in states like Iowa. Many evangelicals felt Indiana Gov. Mike Pence failed to stand up for his state's Religious Freedom and Restoration Act, which animated conservative Christians across the country.
>
> Steve Deace, a leading talk radio personality in Iowa, believes the impact of Pence's decision on voters in his state cannot be understated. "There's a better chance Hillary Clinton will be the [GOP] nominee next year than Mike Pence," Deace told the *Washington Examiner*. "Religious freedom is going to be the biggest issue. It has become a transcendent issue. It's bigger than life, it's bigger than marriage."
>
> […]Bob Vander Plaats, the CEO of the social conservative group the Family Leader, is a kingmaker of sorts in Iowa who has gained influence in the state by leading the effort to remove three Iowa Supreme Court judges from office

> because of a decision in favor of gay marriage. In 2008, he endorsed former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee. In 2012, he picked former Sen. Rick Santorum, R-Pa.
>
> This time, Vander Plaats expects to endorse someone around the Thanksgiving holiday, and said Huckabee, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz are the Republicans that have already impressed him.
>
> […]Deace said that after the candidate forum he moderated in Des Moines, Iowa, last month, he believes Cruz and Jindal to be the early favorites among evangelical voters. But many evangelical voters, he says, have interest in Florida Sen. Marco Rubio and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, and have not yet made a decision. Unlike recent elections past, Deace says evangelical listeners who are loyal members of his audience want someone who has the organization and financing capable of winning the Republican nomination.
>
> "They're tired of the false choice of choosing between the guy who believes in something and the guy who raises a bunch of money," Deace said. "They want the guy who believes in something to raise a bunch of money. … They're not necessarily looking for the nice guy, or the guy who says 'Jesus' the most."

Evangelicals have several good candidates this time in the primary. I am still favoring Jindal and Walker above all the others, and I'm happy to see that they are seen as solid on religious liberty.

Do Supreme Court justices understand the reasons for traditional marriage?

May 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from the Public Discourse takes a look at the oral arguments from the same-sex marriage case in progress at the Supreme Court.

Here's the list:

- **Error Number One: Massachusetts Marriage Rates Have Stayed the Same**
- **Error Number Two: Because Some Men Leave Their Wives and Children, Marriage Does Not Help Keep Fathers Around**
- **Error Number Three: The Purpose of States' Recognizing and Regulating Marriage is to Bestow Dignity on Couples**
- **Error Number Four: The Only Harm to Legalizing Same-Sex Marriage Is Making Marriage More Adult-Centered**
- **Error Number Five: There Is a Parallel between *Brown*/*Loving* and *Lawrence*/*Obergefell***
- **Error Number Six: Age Restrictions on Marriage Are Equivalent to the Definitional Element of One Man and One Woman**

One of Obama's Supreme Court picks is showing herself a poor thinker:

> **Error Number Two: Because Some Men Leave Their Wives and Children, Marriage Does Not Help Keep Fathers Around**
>
> Justice Sotomayor also committed what is commonly referred to as an exception fallacy. This is where someone reaches an overall conclusion about a group on the basis of a few exceptional cases. Thus, when Mr. Bursch was making the argument that redefining marriage to include same-sex couples will disconnect marriage from the long-held norm that the institution binds children to their biological mother and father, Justice Sotomayor responded:
>
> Marriage doesn't do that on any level. How many married couples do fathers with the benefits or the requirements of marriage walk away from their children? So it's not that the institution alone does it and that without it that father is going to stay in marriage. He made a choice . . . Some mothers do the same thing.
>
> This is a classic example of the exception fallacy. Of course some men and women walk away from their marriage and their children. But that is the exception, not the rule, and it is certainly counter to the social norm of marriage that gently pushes parents to stay together and raise their children.
>
> It is rather shocking that a justice of the United States Supreme Court would claim that "on any level" marriage does not have that effect and longstanding purpose. It is also disappointing that she would commit such a basic error of

> logic.

I often encounter the problem among people with no math background. You cite statistics about what outcomes are expected, and they reply with an exceptional outlier to refute the argument. I'm troubled that Supreme Court justices lack the ability to reason in this way, though.

Here's another pretty obvious mistake:

> **Error Number Four: The Only Harm to Legalizing Same-Sex Marriage Is Making Marriage More Adult-Centered**
>
> Several justices struggled to see how redefining marriage in genderless terms would cause any harm or have any impact on the institution of marriage. As Mr. Bursch correctly but incompletely argued, legalizing same-sex marriage will alter the institution to be primarily concerned with fulfilling the desires of adults rather than the needs of children.
>
> But that's not all. As the 100 Scholars of Marriage made clear in their amicus brief, several other important and beneficial social norms will be eroded, if not erased, by same-sex marriage, including:
>
> **– Gender-diverse parenting**: the norm that children both need and deserve to be raised by a man and a woman, not only because of what they learn from interacting with a parent of each sex, but because men and women parent and interact with their children differently, providing distinct but complementary benefits. By its very structure, same-sex marriage eliminates this norm and its attendant benefits to children.
>
> **– Biological bonding**: the norm that marriage binds children to their biological mother and father in a family unit. Same-sex marriage and parenting, by definition, means that at best only one of a child's biological parents will be in the home. While death, divorce, or parental delinquency create exceptions, elevating the exception to the norm undermines that norm and the benefits it produces.
>
> **– Postponing or channeling procreation**: the norm that procreation should only responsibly occur within the stable bonds of marriage. Same-sex marriage is not, and biologically cannot be, about procreation. By redefining marriage in this way, the institution becomes less about being the socially recommended "place" and "time" where procreation is recommended.
>
> **– Placing social value on raising children**: the norm that society values and needs children to be born and raised by their parents. Again, same-sex marriage is not primarily about procreation, and its acceptance attenuates this norm for the institution as a whole. Of course, same-sex couples can adopt or one member of the couple can reproduce with someone of the opposite sex, but these are secondary purposes and behaviors.
>
> What impact will the weakening or elimination of these norms have on the institution of marriage, and thus the behavior of society? Put another way, as

> Justice Breyer asked, “what’s the empirical connection?”
>
> Well, the last major alteration to the institution of marriage—no-fault divorce—did have unintended negative consequences, reducing marriage rates and increasing divorce rates more than expected, with children and women suffering the consequences. Additionally, the Netherlands, the country that has had same-sex marriage the longest, after controlling for other factors, has experienced a drop in opposite-sex marriage rates among young women after adopting same-sex marriage.
>
> The truth is, no one knows for sure what the effect will be—but it clashes with history, common sense, and theory to assume it will be innocuous.

The norm of gender-diverse parenting is important, because fathers and mothers are both needed.

Look at this abstract from a very new study to see why:

> The association between family structure instability and children’s life chances is well documented, with children reared in stable, two-parent families experiencing more favorable outcomes than children in other family arrangements. This study examines father household entrances and exits, distinguishing between the entrance of a biological father and a social father and testing for interactions between family structure instability and children’s age, gender, and genetic characteristics. **Using data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study and focusing on changes in family structure by age (years 0–9), the authors show that father exits are associated with increases in children’s antisocial behavior, a strong predictor of health and well-being in adulthood. The pattern for father entrances is more complicated, with entrances for the biological father being associated with lower antisocial behavior among boys and social father entrances being associated with higher antisocial behavior.** Child’s age does not moderate the association; however, genetic information in the models sharpens the findings substantially.

Biological fathers need to present in the home.

It doesn’t look like we will get a good legal decision on this case. The leftist judges are just not thinking clearly.

William Lane Craig answers: should Christians accept intelligent design?

May 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the question he is answer on his Reasonable Faith web site:

> Dr. Craig,
>
> First of all, I appreciate all you have done for the Kingdom of God. I pray you keep up the good work. You are someone I look up to.
>
> I'm taking a philosophy of religion course right now, and it is very fascinating to me. I'm taking the course because I am interested in Christian Apologetics. One aspect of Christian Apologetics is to argue for intelligent design. To my surprise, my professor, who is a Christian, does not believe in intelligent design (ID). I also wanted to point out the fact that in an astronomy class my girlfriend is taking, the professor lectured on how most Christians do not believe in ID.
>
> As I'm pondering on why my Christian professor doesn't believe in ID and how an astronomy professor lectures on how most Christians don't believe in ID, I start to question if I even know what ID really is.
>
> I thought that God was the intelligent designer that we are arguing for in Christian Apologetics.
>
> So my questions for you are:
>
> 1) What is your definition of intelligent design?
>
> 2) Is intelligent design something that Christians should believe in?
>
> 3) If Christians should believe in intelligent design, then why do some people not believe in it? Are they just confused on the meaning of intelligent design?
>
> I appreciate your time.
>
> Drew

Here is part of Dr. Craig's answer:

> I think it advisable to capitalize "Intelligent Design" (ID) in order to signal that we are using the words in a technical sense, rather than in the sense accepted by every Christian. Broadly speaking, we may say that ID is a theory of justifiable design inferences. That is to say, it's a theory which seeks to answer the question: what justifies us in inferring that design is the best explanation of some phenomenon? It is obvious that we make such design inferences all the time. A teacher who finds that a student's term paper reproduces sections from Wikipedia realizes that this is not the result of chance but of deliberate plagiarism. Archaeologists excavating a site readily discern the difference between the products of sedimentation and metamorphosis and human artifacts.

> A beachcomber who comes upon a sandcastle recognizes that it's not the result of the action of the waves and the wind but of intelligent design.
>
> Some of these inferences are so obvious that it never even occurs to us to ask why we are justified in making such inferences to design. But philosophically, it's no trivial matter to provide a theory of what makes a design inference justified. The theory of Intelligent Design seeks to provide just such an account. As an account of justified design inferences, Intelligent Design theory is of interest to a wide variety of fields: for example, to cryptographers who are trying to discern whether a sequence of letters is just meaningless jibberish or an encoded message; to crime scene investigators who want to determine whether the fire was a result of natural causes or of arson; to searchers for extra-terrestrial intelligence who are trying to make out whether the signal they're receiving is just random noise or a message from an extra-terrestrial intelligence, and so on and so forth.
>
> ID theorists have offered a number of accounts of what justifies a design inference. Undoubtedly one of the most sophisticated which has been offered comes from the mathematician William Dembski in his book *The Design Inference*, which appeared in Cambridge University Press's monograph series on Probability, Induction, and Decision Theory. Dembski argues that a design inference is justified when two conditions are met: first, the event to be explained is extraordinarily improbable and, second, the event corresponds to an independently given pattern.
>
> **In its most fundamental sense, then, Intelligent Design is a theory of design inferences which is applicable to a number of diverse fields. While disagreement may exist over which theory of design inference is correct, this is hardly the point at which Intelligent Design encounters heated opposition. Rather controversy arises when the theory of Intelligent Design is applied to the field of biology. For Dembski and other ID theorists have made the controversial claim that biological organisms exhibit just that combination of high improbability and conformity to an independently given pattern that justifies an inference to intelligent design. Accordingly, they maintain that we are justified scientifically in inferring that biological complexity is best explained by Intelligent Design.**

We infer design in biology (e.g. – protein sequencing) the same way we infer design in blog posts, computer programs, etc.

This video featuring Stephen Meyer explains ID in 5 minutes: (H/T Evolution News)

If you want to understand intelligent design better, I recommend this lecture by Stephen C. Meyer on the origin of life.

Schools ask 12-year-old children whether they have had gay, oral and anal sex

May 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Breitbart News. (H/T Ari)

Full text:

> A public hearing is taking place Wednesday morning in the Massachusetts State House to look into a controversial sex survey given to middle school and high school students.
> Developed by the Centers for Disease Control and called the "Youth Risk Behavior Survey," the survey asks students as young as 12 a series of very personal and highly ideological questions.
>
> The survey asks students if they are homosexual and if they are transgender. It also asks if they have had oral or anal sex and if they have performed such acts with up to six people.
>
> Whether or not they have carried a gun, smoked cigarettes, consumed alcohol and how much also appear on the questionnaire, as well as whether they have taken drugs, such as OxyContin, Percocet, and Vicodin. It asks how often their guardian uses a seat belt, if the youngster has a sexually transmitted disease, and where they sleep.
>
> The group MassResistance says the survey is "psychologically distorting" and will lead the child to think he is "abnormal if he is not doing it all." The group stated that "having children reveal personal issues about themselves and their family can have emotional consequences." They also complain that "the survey results are used by radical groups from Planned Parenthood to LGBT groups to persuade politicians to give more taxpayer money [to] these groups."
>
> Though students fill out the survey anonymously, MassResistance warns that "they are administered by the teacher in the classroom and there is often pressure for all kids to participate."
>
> The test is given nationally and not without controversy. The Chicago Tribune reported two years ago that a Chicago teacher was reprimanded for telling students they had a "constitutional right" not to fill out the survey.

This post is a lead-in for my 2 PM post, which tries to explain what people on the secular left are hoping to achieve by trying to break down the natural resistance that children have to sexual exploitation.

What difference does the doctrine of humans being in “the image of God” make?

May 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s an article from the leftist The Week about how Christianity transformed our view of the value of children. (H/T Trina)

It says:

> We have forgotten just how deep a cultural revolution Christianity wrought. In fact, we forget about it precisely because of how deep it was: There are many ideas that we simply take for granted as natural and obvious, when in fact they didn’t exist until the arrival of Christianity changed things completely. Take, for instance, the idea of children.
>
> Today, it is simply taken for granted that the innocence and vulnerability of children makes them beings of particular value, and entitled to particular care. We also romanticize children — their beauty, their joy, their liveliness. Our culture encourages us to let ourselves fall prey to our gooey feelings whenever we look at baby pictures. What could be more natural?
>
> In fact, this view of children is a historical oddity. If you disagree, just go back to the view of children that prevailed in Europe’s ancient pagan world.
>
> As the historian O.M. Bakke points out in his invaluable book *When Children Became People*, in ancient Greece and Rome, children were considered nonpersons.

Here’s how children were viewed before Christianity:

> One of the most notorious ancient practices that Christianity rebelled against was the frequent practice of *expositio*, basically the abandonment of unwanted infants.
>
> […]Another notorious practice in the ancient world was the sexual exploitation of children. It is sometimes pointed to paganism’s greater tolerance (though by no means full acceptance) of homosexuality than Christianity as evidence for its higher moral virtue. But this is to look at a very different world through distorting lenses. The key thing to understand about sexuality in the pagan world is the ever-present notion of concentric circles of worth. The ancient world did not have fewer taboos, it had different ones. Namely, most sexual acts were permissible, as long as they involved a person of higher status being active against or dominating a person of lower status. This meant that, according to all the evidence we have, the sexual abuse of children (particularly boys) was rife.
>
> […]According to our sources, most abandoned children died — but some were “rescued,” almost inevitably into slavery. And the most profitable way for a small

> child slave to earn money was as a sex slave. Brothels specializing in child sex slaves, particularly boys, were established, legal, and thriving businesses in ancient Rome. One source reports that sex with castrated boys was regarded as a particular delicacy, and that foundlings were castrated as infants for that purpose.
>
> Of course, the rich didn't have to bother with brothels — they had all the rights to abuse their slaves (and even their children) as they pleased. And, again, this was perfectly licit. When Suetonius condemns Tiberius because he "taught children of the most tender years, whom he called his little fishes, to play between his legs while he was in his bath" and "those who had not yet been weaned, but were strong and hearty, he set at fellatio," he is not writing with shock and horror; instead, he is essentially mocking the emperor for his lack of self-restraint and enjoying too much of a good thing.
>
> This is the world into which Christianity came, condemning abortion and infanticide as loudly and as early as it could.

Here are a couple of stories that contrast the Christian view of children as made in the image of God with the secular leftist view that children, unborn and born, are basically just machines made out of meat.

First one from the Washington Times is on a wealthy Democrat donor named Jeffrey Epstein:

> **Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is incensed that her husband, former President Bill Clinton, has been tied to sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, who's also at the heart of an investigation into Prince Andrew's alleged sexual dalliances with a minor, the New York Post reported.**
>
> **[…]Court documents related to a suit filed by Virginia Roberts, who allegesMr. Epstein paid her $15,000 to have sex with the prince, also included several references to Mr. Clinton. The documents from 2011 show thatMr. Epstein had 21 different email and telephone numbers for Mr. Clinton and an aide in his directory.**
>
> The court documents also show Mr. Clinton "frequently flew" with Mr. Epstein on his private plane between 2002 and 2005. The court documents say that Mr. Clinton "suddenly stopped, raising the suspicion that the friendship abruptly ended, perhaps because of events related to Epstein's sexual abuse of children," the Post reported.
>
> Mrs. Clinton, widely considered the front-runner for the 2016 Democratic presidential bid, is reportedly outraged that her husband's name has again popped up in a sex scandal.

When I read the story about what allegedly happened to Virginia Roberts, I literally cried my eyes out. But then again, I'm coming at this from a Christian perspective where

selfish adults ought to give way to the needs of vulnerable children. Secular leftists don't have that view, so anything goes.

The second story is from Oregon Live and is about another wealthy Democrat donor:

> The former boyfriend of Terrence P. Bean was arrested early Thursday on sex abuse charges stemming from the same alleged 2013 encounter with a 15-year-old boy at a hotel in Eugene.
>
> Kiah Loy Lawson, 25, was arrested at 1:15 a.m. at the Portland Police Bureau's Central Precinct and booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center shortly after 2 a.m.
>
> […]Detective Jeff Myers from the Portland's Sex Crimes Unit made the arrest, hours after police took Lawson's ex-boyfriend, Portland developer Terrence Patrick Bean, into custody Wednesday morning.
>
> **Bean, 66, a prominent gay rights activist and major Democratic Party fundraiser, was arrested at his home in Southwest Portland and booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center at 10:12 a.m. Wednesday.**
>
> The indictment charges Bean with two counts of third-degree sodomy, a felony, and one count of third-degree sex abuse, a misdemeanor, police said.
>
> […]Both Bean and Lawson are accused of having a sexual encounter with the same 15-year-old boy in a hotel in Eugene last year. They had arranged the encounter with the teen after meeting him via a website, investigators allege.
>
> […]**Bean has been one of the state's biggest Democratic donors and an influential figure in gay rights circles in the state. He helped found two major national political groups, the Human Rights Campaign and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, and has been a major contributor for several Democratic presidential candidates, including Barack Obama. He's also a close friend of former Gov. Barbara Roberts.**

Children are weak and adults are strong. Secular leftists believe that selfish adults should be able to do whatever they want with children in order to gratify their own desires. This is the default "no God" view. I can guarantee you that no one who abuses children, unborn or born, expects to face God and be held accountable for what they did.

The secular left, which does not recognize that children are made in the image of God in order to know God, has discovered that it's easier to sexually abuse children if you separate them from their biological parents, especially their fathers. That's one of the reasons why they support no-fault divorce, single mother welfare, and now even same-sex marriage. Children who don't have biological parents are much easier to exploit sexually. And if the children find anything wrong with being sexualized at an early age and groomed for sexual exploitation, well, we have public schools to teach them that this is all perfectly normal. Public schools that are championed by Democrats, of course.

Economist Walter Williams explains how to not be poor

May 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Walter Williams

Here is his article on wealth and poverty on Creators.

First, there is no real poverty in the United States:

> There is no material poverty in the U.S. Here are a few facts about people whom the Census Bureau labels as poor. Dr. Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield, in their study "Understanding Poverty in the United States: Surprising Facts About America's Poor", report that 80 percent of poor households have air conditioning; nearly three-quarters have a car or truck, and 31 percent have two or more. Two-thirds have cable or satellite TV. Half have one or more computers. Forty-two percent own their homes. Poor Americans have more living space than the typical non-poor person in Sweden, France or the U.K. What we have in our nation are dependency and poverty of the spirit, with people making unwise choices and leading pathological lives aided and abetted by the welfare state.

Second, the "poverty" is not caused by racism, but by poor choices:

> The Census Bureau pegs the poverty rate among blacks at 35 percent and among whites at 13 percent. The illegitimacy rate among blacks is 72 percent, and among whites it's 30 percent. A statistic that one doesn't hear much about is that the poverty rate among black married families has been in the single digits for more than two decades, currently at 8 percent. For married white families, it's 5 percent. Now the politically incorrect questions: Whose fault is it to have children without the benefit of marriage and risk a life of dependency? Do people have free will, or are they governed by instincts?
>
> There may be some pinhead sociologists who blame the weak black family structure on racial discrimination. But why was the black illegitimacy rate only 14

> percent in 1940, and why, as Dr. Thomas Sowell reports, do we find that census data "going back a hundred years, when blacks were just one generation out of slavery … showed that a slightly higher percentage of black adults had married than white adults. This fact remained true in every census from 1890 to 1940"? Is anyone willing to advance the argument that the reason the illegitimacy rate among blacks was lower and marriage rates higher in earlier periods was there was less racial discrimination and greater opportunity?

Third, avoiding poverty is the result of good choices:

> No one can blame a person if he starts out in life poor, because how one starts out is not his fault.
>
> If he stays poor, he is to blame because it is his fault. Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior. It turns out that a married couple, each earning the minimum wage, would earn an annual combined income of $30,000. The Census Bureau poverty line for a family of two is $15,500, and for a family of four, it's $23,000. By the way, no adult who starts out earning the minimum wage does so for very long.

Fourth, what stops people from making good choices is big government:

> Since President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty, the nation has spent about $18 trillion at the federal, state and local levels of government on programs justified by the "need" to deal with some aspect of poverty. In a column of mine in 1995, I pointed out that at that time, the nation had spent $5.4 trillion on the War on Poverty, and with that princely sum, "you could purchase every U.S. factory, all manufacturing equipment, and every office building. With what's left over, one could buy every airline, trucking company and our commercial maritime fleet. If you're still in the shopping mood, you could also buy every television, radio and power company, plus every retail and wholesale store in the entire nation". Today's total of $18 trillion spent on poverty means you could purchase everything produced in our country each year and then some.

Walter Williams is one of my two favorite economists, the other being Thomas Sowell. By sheer coincidence, they both happen to have grown up poor, and they both happen to be black. They understand what causes poverty very well. I recommend their books to you if you want to understand poverty, too.

Must you agree with a person who threatens to kill himself if you don't?

May 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest from Life Site News about Stanford's University's attempt to suppress a pro-natural-marriage group's campus event.

Excerpt:

> At a recent GSC meeting, SAS co-president Judy Romea reminded student leaders that not only is the SAS not "anti-gay," it stood "in solidarity" with homosexual groups against the controversial Westboro Baptist Church when it held a protest on campus.
>
> But that wasn't enough for campus gay activist groups, who turned out en masse for the same GSC meeting to demand that funding for the event be pulled.
>
> "Their viewpoint kills people," Jeffrey Cohen, vice president of GradQ, a homosexual advocacy group for graduate students, told the GSC. "There's a lot of research published in top psychology journals that have looked at university environments, both positive and negative. An event such as this would be a negative event, [and] in schools that have negative events there is a statistically significant increase in suicide." He said the last time a pro-marriage speaker visited the campus, someone told him "they wanted to kill themselves."
>
> Cohen said he was especially "bothered by the idea that their conference is trying to create better ways to deliver [the pro-marriage] message. … The idea that they are learning how to deliver their message scares [me]." Cohen suggested SAS cancel its conference and instead hold a joint event with GradQ in which gay activists would have a chance to promote their message too.
>
> Ben Holston, chair of the undergraduate senate, also threw his weight behind the gay groups. "This is an event that hurts the Stanford community," Holston said. "To express a belief that, for some reason this event is not discriminatory, is completely off-base. This event as it stands, given the speakers, and given that they have said the event is supposed to 'promote one-man one-woman [marriage],' which promotes stripping away rights of people in this room, is unacceptable on Stanford's campus." He urged the GSC to withdraw its funding for the conference.

Now I'm chaste, and a virgin, so I was just imagining what it would be like for me at Yale during Sex Week, when my student fees (hypothetically) would be used to bring in sex addicts to instruct college students that my view is sick and twisted and that binge drinking and premarital promiscuity is morally praiseworthy. Does anyone here seriously think that I would threaten to commit suicide unless people who disagreed with my chastity and virginity stopped disagreeing with me? No. A sex addict's disapproval of my

chastity and virginity doesn't make me want to commit suicide, *because I am not insane.* I'm also *not engaged in immoral behavior* by being chaste and remaining a virgin. Criticism of me for being moral doesn't bother me – that's *your* problem if you disagree with morality.

If you tell me that what I'm doing is wrong, I've got piles of papers in peer-reviewed journals showing me that for my plans – life-long married love and influential Christian children raised by a stay-at-home mom – chastity is the best plan. But it doesn't bother me if you disagree with me, and I'm not going to attack your place of work with guns, vandalize your church, or force you to lose your job – because I'm not a gay activist. I don't care that you disagree with me, because I believe that there is a right to free speech and no right to force you to celebrate and fund my sexual orientation.

That gay activist sounded insane, but I don't think that most gay people agree with him.

Look:

> Ben, a graduate student in neuroscience, told the GSC that even though he is homosexual, he believes the SAS should be able to access the same student funding as any other group.
>
> "What bothers [me] the most is that in the name of tolerance, we are silencing and taking away support from a view that we don't agree with," Ben said. "These views are out there, we should listen to them. I totally disagree with these people, but we need to hear what they have to say. We need to hear SAS."

Now there is a gay person I can tolerate – because he tolerates me.

What UK Prime Minister David Cameron will do, and an extra thing that he should do

May 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

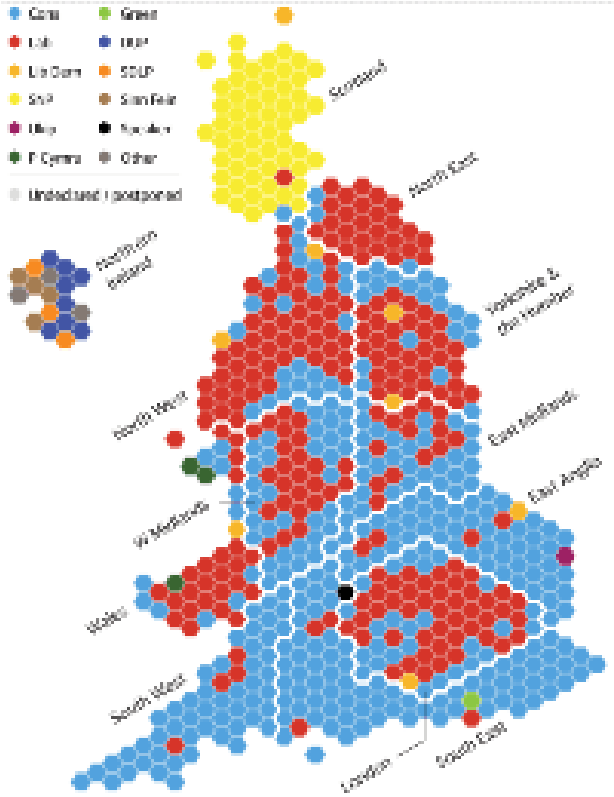

CON = 331 (+24), LAB = 232 (-26), SNP = 56 (+50), LIB = 8 (-47), UKP = 1 (+1), OTH = 22

Here's an article from the radically leftist UK Independent, which is furious with the Conservative Party victory in Thursday's national elections.

In it, they explain what Cameron intends to do:

> David Cameron will use the Conservative Party's first majority in the House of Commons for nearly 20 years to "deliver" on a radical agenda to cut welfare, shrink the size of the state and re-define Britain's relationship with Europe.

> Conservative insiders said Mr Cameron would move to the right to consolidate support among his backbench MPs after five years of compromise with the Liberal Democrats.
>
> Among Mr Cameron's first legislative priorities will be to enshrine an EU referendum into law, bring in the so-called 'snoopers charter' to give police greater powers to monitor internet communications and give English MPs a veto over legislation only affecting England. The Tories also intend to publish plans to scrap the Human Rights Act within their first 100 days. All proposals had been previously blocked by the Lib Dems.

I always think of the UK as the biggest dupes when it comes to global warming, especially

after the Climategate e-mails came out showing that that there was a concerted effort to falsify data and persecute global warming skeptics. But, like Canada's Conservative Party, the UK Conservative Party is taking a stand against the pseudo-science.

Look:

> As well as deep welfare cuts *The Independent* understands that the Department of Business and the Department of Energy and Climate Change, previously run by the Lib Dems, will be among the biggest casualties in terms of spending reductions.
>
> Oliver Letwin, the Tories' policy chief, has spent the campaign in Whitehall drawing up proposals to merge quangos and slash Government regulation. These are likely to form a key part of the spending review. The review has been made more difficult by Mr Cameron's late and unexpected election pledge to find an extra £8bn for the NHS. This has yet to be funded and if the Tories stick to their other tax and spending commitments could require further cuts. Most senior Tories had expected to be negotiating another coalition agreement with the Liberal Democrats, giving them the flexibility to raise taxes to fund their additional spending commitments. As it is they are now bound to implement legislation binding the Government not to increase income tax, national insurance or VAT rates for the next five years.

Quangos are "quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations". Abolishing or merging these will put a serious dent in government over-spending – and overreach.

The Democratic Unionist Party factor

Cameron would do well to add the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) members to his coalition. Conservative MEP Daniel Hannan says that "On immigration, on constitutional reform, on defence, on Europe, on rural issues, on education, on law and order, the DUP is, well, conservative."The Conservatives need 323 seats to govern. They have 331 by themselves, and 8 more would help them in case there are any rebellions from within their own ranks. If he can get the lone UKIP member on board, that would help too, giving him a majority of 340.

More about the DUP:

> The DUP bills itself as "right-wing in the sense of being strong on the constitution", but "to the left on social policy". The party's members show a strong leaning towards the Conservatives, Professor Jonathan Tonge notes, backing them by a ratio of seven to one over Labour. The DUP also back the Conservatives on areas like Europe, with Nigel Dodds insisting that any coalition they are involved in would need to offer an EU referendum.
>
> […]The DUP, which has close links to the Dr Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church, has frequently sparked controversy for how it discusses homosexuality. This has led to David Cameron facing tough questions earlier this month during a Q&A when one audience member wanted him to vow not to go into coalition with the

> DUP because of its views on LGBT rights, something he refused to rule out.
>
> […]The DUP also oppose the right of women to an abortion, with Jim Wells saying it should be ruled out for rape victims. The party has also called for a parliamentary debate on resinstating the death penalty.

It sounds like they are even further right than Cameron, which is good, because Cameron is what Americans would call a RINO.

Give Scotland enough rope to hang itself

But the most important thing for Cameron to do is to give Scotland full fiscal autonomy.

This is even something that the SNP leader wants:

> Nicola Sturgeon was forced to admit in the second Scottish leaders' debate that her MPs would be prepared to vote next year for full fiscal autonomy, which according to experts would make Scotland £7.6 billion worse off.
>
> […]In March, she suggested it might not happen straightaway as she faced claims it would cost almost 140,000 jobs and leave Scotland with a higher deficit than Spain.
>
> […]It would mean Scotland opting out of the Barnett Formula which currently sets Scotland's public spending block grant, and gives Scots around £1,200 extra per head.
>
> […]In March, Ms Sturgeon dismissed warnings from the impartial Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) that her general election demand for full fiscal autonomy would create a multi-billion pound financial black hole in Scotland's finances.

Daniel Hannan thinks this would be a great idea:

> Commentators struggle to explain the rise of the SNP: why, seven months after rejecting separation, should Scots turn to the separatist party? Those commentators miss the point. The SNP knows fine well (as Scots say) that opinion has not moved on the independence issue. Nicola Sturgeon had to keep promising that there'd be no re-run of the vote.
>
> **No, the SNP is better understood as Scotland's version of Greece's Syriza or Spain's Podemos – a far-Left, populist insurgency. Like those parties, it has a touching belief in its ability to conjure wealth through alchemy.**
>
> […]There is a very weak link in Scotland between taxation, representation and expenditure. Because of the Barnett Formula, Scottish politicians get to spend money that has been raised through taxation elsewhere. This incentivises their constituents to vote for high-spending parties. Over time, that tendency has become self-reinforcing to the extent that the very act of calling for fiscal restraint is seen as alien, un-Scottish.
>
> Not all Scots are on the Left, obviously. There are some free-marketeers in the

> land of Adam Smith. But the prevailing assumption among Holyrood politicians and pundits is that higher spending is a defining national characteristic. They don't use those words, of course. They say, "We're a compassionate, fair-minded people". But it's what they mean.
>
> What can be done about it? Well, the SNP demands full fiscal autonomy, and David Cameron should hurry to meet that demand. Partly because linking taxation to expenditure north of the border might allow a revival, over time, of Right-of-Centre politics in Scotland. Partly because the measure will also be popular with English taxpayers. Partly, too, because, without such a reform, separatism will revive. And partly because greater autonomy for Scotland could bring about a new, devolved settlement for the entire United Kingdom, something that is long overdue. Mainly, though, because most Scots say they want it, and the SNP has won an unarguable mandate. What are we waiting for?

The Scottish electorate – by and large – make Greek socialists like Tsipras / Syriza appear fiscally prudent. They need to find out how economics works the hard way. Let them make their own decisions, and maybe when they are picking leaves off of trees to feed themselves in a few years, they will come to their senses and be ready to deal. It's very important for people who are led by their feelings and who pursue dreams against reality to crash and burn, so that they understand the value of practical people who have worked hard, saved and played by the rules.

The Scots are voting for slogans like "stop austerity" without any idea of how difficult working and saving really is for taxpayers, of which there are precious few in Scotland. Let them face the consequences of their own folly, and then come back to the negotiating table with a weaker hand, just as Greece is doing now. Maybe if Cameron does this in the UK, it will inspire Harper to do the same with Quebec in Canada. Just give Quebec full fiscal autonomy and then cut off the equalization payments that allow them to live far beyond their means. Make them grow up.

One thing is for sure. The UK electorate (aside from Scotland and Wales) has impressed me. This is the beginning of a period of liberty, prosperity and security for the UK, and I for one am envious that they are getting a head start on it, while we have to wait another year and a half before we join them by electing a Republican president, and holding the House and Senate.

New study: unborn babies are viable at 22 weeks

May 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby – 10 weeks old

This story appeared in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

It says:

> A small number of very premature babies are surviving earlier outside the womb than doctors once thought possible, a new study has documented, raising questions about how aggressively they should be treated and posing implications for the debate about abortion.
>
> […]The study, one of the largest and most systematic examinations of care for very premature infants, found that hospitals with sophisticated neonatal units varied widely in their approach to 22-week-olds, ranging from a few that offer no active medical treatment to a handful that assertively treat most cases with measures like ventilation, intubation and surfactant to improve the functioning of babies' lungs.
>
> […]The study, involving nearly 5,000 babies born between 22 and 27 weeks gestation, found that 22-week-old babies did not survive without medical intervention. In the 78 cases where active treatment was given, 18 survived, and by the time they were young toddlers, seven of those did not have moderate or severe impairments. Six had serious problems such as blindness, deafness or severe cerebral palsy.
>
> Of the 755 born at 23 weeks, treatment was given to 542. About a third of those

> survived, and about half of the survivors had no significant problems.

You can double-check the details of the study.

Meanwhile, in Congress, the Republicans are getting ready to reintroduce a bill that bans abortions after 20 weeks.

Excerpt:

> Republicans in the House of Representatives will hold a vote on or around the anniversary of the murder conviction of late-term abortionist Kermit Gosnell on a marquee bill to ban abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy because unborn children feel intense pain in abortions. This is the second time Republicans have planned a vote on the major pro-life bill — and this vote is expected to take place next week, possibly Wednesday, the anniversary of Gosnell's conviction.
>
> […]As pro-life sources have informed LifeNews, other new provisions of the bill that strengthen in include a born-alive infant protection requirement that requires a second doctor be present and prepared to provide care to the child if he or she is born alive and that the child must receive the same level of care as would any other premature infant. The baby must then be transported and admitted to a hospital. The woman is also empowered with a right to sue if the law is not followed, and is provided with an informed consent form that notifies her of the age of her baby and the requirements under the law.
>
> Abortionists are explicitly required to follow state mandatory reporting laws and state parental involvement laws. Finally, abortionists are required to report any late abortions done under the exceptions to the Center for Disease Control and such data will be compiled into an annual public report to ensure accountability.

This bill doesn't go all the way to banning all abortions – far from it. But pro-life groups are pleased, because they want to save some lives even if they can't save all:

> Top pro-life advocates are strongly supporting the final version of the bill up for a vote next week, according to the Weekly Standard. Two major pro-life groups have already signed off on the revised bill.
>
> > "We will have even stronger support than we did in the last Congress," said Rep. Chris Smith of New Jersey, a leading pro-life advocate in the House. "It will be good to have a truly unified pro-life conference."
> >
> > National Right to Life Committee president Carol Tobias worked closely with Republican leadership staff members and met Thursday with McCarthy. "I felt very comfortable working with leadership staff," said Tobias. "We were working as allies."
> >
> > "We are thankful to our pro-life allies on the Hill, including House GOP leadership and the Congressional Pro-Life Women's Caucus, who have tirelessly worked to bring this bill to a vote," said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List. "This process has yielded a

> > strong bill which we expect to pass next week with enthusiastic bipartisan support.”
>
> Sponsoring Congressman Trent Franks of Arizona says the bill has the potential to save thousands of babies from abortion.

That bill is, of course, opposed by Democrats.

UPDATE: Here’s a news story about a woman who killed a 20-week-old baby who was born alive and left to die.

What does it take to be a good spiritual leader? What does following Jesus mean?

May 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

I think it's pretty clear from the gospels that if Jesus did anything, he certainly died for our sins in obedience to God his Father. He did this not because it was fun and thrilling, but because he though it would be effective on our behalf. I'm sure that Jesus would have preferred to go do fun things, have nice vacations, etc. But instead, he chose the suffering and the death. And for those of us who claim to be Christian, we should be careful that we are not living our lives in the constant pursuit of pleasure as well. There is no place for that in Christianity – we need to be about the work of identifying with Jesus' example of suffering, self-denial, self-sacrifice.

Matthew 16:24-27:

> 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.
>
> 25 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.
>
> 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?
>
> 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.

Matthew 23:12-12:

> 12 Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

John 12:25-26:

> [25] He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.
>
> [26] If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

Our lives are supposed to be about taking up our crosses and following Jesus. Not having fun or pursuing thrills. Sometimes I say that to people I mentor who have been raised in the church, who love to read devotionals and Bible study, who love to go to church. And what I find is that they disagree and think that the purpose of life is to do easy things that make them feel good and that make other people think that they are something special. It is an article of faith for them that you can make a difference for God by choosing the easiest, funnest and most thrilling option throughout your life and that God will work this into an effective life. But Jesus didn't think like that. In fact, I cannot think of a single case in the Bible where Jesus chose fun and thrills. Jesus chose the cross. He was not trying to have good feelings or to be liked by lots of people. And we are supposed to be following in his steps.

Christian self-sacrifice is all about denying desires and interests which interfere with our ability to follow Jesus. For example, one of my goals is to follow Jesus through charity. So I went into a field that was not easy for me, took jobs that I did not like, and put away investments instead of spending – all so that I would be able to invest in others as a way of imitating the self-denial and self-sacrifice of Jesus, with the goal of making a difference. I am trying to stop looking out for number one, and starting looking out for Jesus. And if I have to do things that I don't feel like doing, well so much the worse for me. And let me tell you, investing in people who then betray you at the deepest level is no fun. And yet I must keep giving away money to people joyfully, even after this happens. I have to continue to care for others and to deny myself. It is not good for my self-love and self-esteem to be hurt when I invest in others, but it is following Jesus.

So I want to say three things about this based on my own personal experiences.

The first thing to say is that a good spiritual leader is one who leads us to be more like Jesus. And that means helping us be better less interested in fun, less interested in thrills, less interested in travel, less interested in vanity. And so on. For example, if what you are trying to do with your life now is the exact same thing that you were trying to do with your life before you became a Christian, it's a good sign that you are deceiving yourself that your plan is from God. A good spiritual leader is able to spot when you are wrapping your pre-conversion desire in a cloak of religious language. In my own case, if you ask me to lead you, you'll find that I'll push you away from things that do not work to serve God. But there's more to self-denial than just avoiding fun, there's self-control. Don't do stuff just so that you can tell everyone about it on Facebook. An outspoken supporter of intelligent design I know proudly posted that she had been admitted to a prestigious graduate school on her Facebook page, and she lost her academic adviser. We need to have humility, wisdom and self-control if we expect to have an impact for Christ. A good spiritual leader can sense when you are just doing stuff in order to impress other people,

and he will tell you not to do that.

The second thing to say is that a bad spiritual leader does not make us more like Jesus. A bad spiritual leader is someone who says yes to other people in order to be liked by them. He is not able to understand what will and will not work – especially in areas where he has no experience. A bad spiritual leader is someone who is more concerned about making a name for himself by using Christianity to become popular and admired. A bad spiritual leader is someone who lacks self-control. Instead of looking around to others to see how he can help them, he looks out for himself and undermines others for his own benefit. Instead of seeking the good of others, he helps himself to good things for his own appetites, and takes away the good things that others need. I also think that in general, a bad spiritual leader is someone who lacks life experience. For example, do not take advice on professional and financial matters from someone who is still a student in her late 20s and who has never worked a paid job. She will not know what you should do financially or professionally.

The final thing I have to say is about the kind of person who rejects a good spiritual mentor and chooses a bad one. I want to advise you to be careful about rejecting people with real experience of following Jesus. That is, people who have actually engaged in acts of self-denial, self-sacrifice, etc. in order to be more like Christ. People who have studied things they did not like. Worked at jobs they did not want to. Given away money to people who did not appreciate it. Mentored people to serve God who were rebellious and emotional. Do not choose people who are easy to control, e.g. – people who are younger or less mature than you are, to be your mentor. Do not choose people who say yes to your desire to feel good or to have fun because they only want to be liked by you. Be careful of choosing advisers who lack maturity and who are easy to manipulate because of their need for attention. It's better to prefer the people who labor in service to others without wanting attention drawn to themselves. It's better to prefer the people who tell you no and point you towards self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice. This is real spiritual leadership – pointing you towards the example of Jesus.

If you look back in your past and see yourself making bad decision after bad decision because you hid things from good spiritual leaders so you could have fun, you know you are vulnerable to doing this. If you know you have sought out the approval of poor inexperienced leaders deliberately, then you ought to know better. You cannot make a bad plan work by pushing away mature spiritual leaders and surrounding yourself with young, immature, emotion-driven advisers. You need to prefer people who tell you the truth about what you are doing, even if it is uncomfortable for you – that is the wise thing to do. Do not seek out advisers who tell you that your feelings are the voice of God speaking to you – that is just telling you what you want to hear. The first part of exercising self-control is not letting your emotions affect strategic decisions.

If you want to read more about self-denial, here's a lecture to read by Charles Finney.

What policies can we enact to help poor children out of poverty?

May 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Teacher union says no to vouchers

Well, obviously pro-marriage policies will help – encouraging people to get married before they have children, then sticking together to raise the children. That will help.

Economist Stephen Moore has another idea, which I support.

He writes about it at the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> The scenes of Baltimore set ablaze have many Americans thinking: What can be done to rescue families trapped in an inner-city culture of violence, despair and joblessness?
>
> There are no easy answers, but down the road from Baltimore in Washington, D.C., an education program is giving children in poor neighborhoods a big lift up.
>
> The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, which George W. Bush signed into law in 2004, has so far funded private school tuition for nearly 5,000 students, 95 percent of whom are African-American. They attend religious schools, music and arts schools, even elite college-prep schools. Last month at The Heritage Foundation in Washington, I met with about 20 parents and children who participate in the program. I also visited several of these families in their homes—which are located in some of the most beaten-down neighborhoods in the city, places that in many ways resemble the trouble spots in Baltimore.
>
> These families have now pulled together to brace for a David vs. Goliath fight to save the program. For the seventh straight year, President Obama has proposed eliminating this relatively tiny scholarship fund, which at $20 million accounts for a microscopic 0.0005 percent of the $4 trillion federal budget.

Why would Obama want to end the program? Because if children can choose schools that don't fail them, the teachers are the failing schools might lose their jobs. Since Obama

needs the votes and the political support of the teacher unions, he cannot put the interests of the children above the interests of the unionized teachers.

More from the article:

> An Education Department-funded study at the University of Arkansas recently found that graduation rates rose 21 percentage points—to 91 percent, from 70 percent—for students awarded the scholarship vouchers through a lottery, compared with a control group of those who applied for but didn't get the scholarships. For all D.C. public schools, the high school graduation rate is closer to an abysmal 56 percent.
>
> "If you've got a program that's clearly working and helping these kids, why end it?" asks Pamela Battle, whose son Carlos received a voucher and was able to attend the elite Georgetown Day School. He's now at Northeastern University in Boston. She says Carlos "almost surely wouldn't have gone to college" without the voucher. "We send all this money overseas for foreign aid," she adds, "why not save the kids here at home first?"

Well, as I said, the Democrats don't like the law:

> Amazingly, these energized parents are opposed by almost every liberal group, even the NAACP, and nearly every Democrat in Congress—including Eleanor Holmes Norton, who represents the District of Columbia in Congress but opposes a program that benefits her own constituents.
>
> There is little question what stirs this opposition. The teachers union sees the program as taking away union jobs, and it is so powerful that the Democratic establishment falls in line. "It is so sad that our public schools aren't doing what's best for the kids," laments Ford, but instead are looking out for "the adults."
>
> […]Obama won't even meet with these parents. A few years ago the voucher supporters held a rally with 3,000 minority and disadvantaged families in front of the Capitol to protest President Obama's proposed elimination of the program for all new students. Republicans in Congress, including House Speaker John Boehner, one of the program's strongest supporters, stood in solidarity with the families, while Nancy Pelosi and her Democratic colleagues were nowhere to be seen.

So, the next time someone accuses conservatives of not caring about children, be sure and tell them the story of the D.C. voucher program. We conservatives are very much in favor of helping poor children. It's the people on the left who are not. Don't let your conversations with leftists be about vague things like racism and "the rich". Bring it down to the level of details – "I support voucher programs for poor children to get out of failing schools. Do you? Why don't your Democrat leaders support them?" Go on the attack with the facts.

By the way, read the whole post by Moore – it's chock full of parents giving their opinion

about the program, and telling stories of how vouchers worked for them. Children first, adults second. That has to be our rule.

Is it wrong to pass incremental pro-life laws?

May 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and saving a life is a good thing

Pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf summarizes a recent debate between a pro-life incrementalist and a pro-life abolitionist. An incrementalist is a pro-lifer who wants to pass laws that save lives right now, while still working for a full ban on abortion. An abolitionist is a pro-lifer who does not want to pass laws that solve part of the problem, preferring to hold off on laws that save lives until they can get all abortions banned.

So there was a debate, and Scott watched it, and here is his review.

First, the intro:

> T. Russell Hunter issued a very public challenge calling for any pro-life leader to debate him on incrementalism. Gregg Cunningham, a former member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Executive Director of the Center for Bioethical Reform, accepted. The formal debate structure was as follows: 20-minute opening statements, 15-minute rebuttals, 15-minute cross-examination, 5-minute closing statements. An informal audience Q&A followed the formal debate.
>
> […]Gregg Cunningham won the formal exchange handily and he did so early by pointing out a fundamental flaw in Hunter's argument—namely, the mistaken claim that pro-lifers have the power to end abortion immediately but won't. Again and again, he exposed Hunter's fallacious either/or reasoning by demonstrating that pro-lifers don't have to choose between incremental legislation that saves

> some children right now or total abolition that saves all at a later time. Rather, they can advance both strategies simultaneously and save many lives in the process. Cunningham also demonstrated a superior grasp of social reform history, noting that while Wilberforce, Lincoln, and Martin-Luther King were in *principle* moral absolutists, in practice they *functioned* as strategic and tactical incrementalists—as do pro-lifers today. During cross-examination, Hunter stumbled badly when asked if those babies saved through incremental legislation should have been left to die. When he refused to give a clear answer—despite being repeatedly pressed to do so—the debate was effectively over. In short, Hunter could not preach his way to victory, even when invoking his understanding of Scripture. His claim that incrementalism is not found in the Bible was decisively refuted when Gregg cited three examples from Scripture where God dealt incrementally with His people.

I watched this video clip to get a feel for how it went down:

In the clip, Cunningham asks if the babies who are saved by incremental legislation should be allowed to die instead. He has some evidence from a law professor saying that incremental laws do save some lives, and he is asking the AHA person should we not enact these incremental laws that save the lives of unborn children.

Scott has the transcript:

> GC: I'd like to return to the question with which I began, which Russ hasn't answered. Should we allow these babies to die rather than enact incremental legislation?
>
> TRH: No.
>
> GC: I'm sorry?
>
> TRH: Like, should we allow – should we allow babies to die?
>
> GC: Should we allow these – because…
>
> TRH: The charade is – the charade is not even what we're talking about – the incrementalism/immediatism debate. Focusing the ax at the tree, getting all the people who follow incrementalism to become immediatists and help put that ax to the branch – to the root…
>
> GC: Would you answer this question?
>
> TRH & GC: [unintelligible]
>
> Moderator: That was the last question. Russ, go ahead and answer that, and then we're gonna end this.
>
> GC: Just for the record, Russ didn't answer the question: Should we have allowed these babies to die, which this university professor says would have died had that legislation not been enacted. Should we have allowed them to die rather than enact the incremental legislation?
>
> Moderator: Okay, Russ, answer that question, then we'll change.

> TRH: Um, well, I firmly believe that abortion is evil, and it is one of these things that the powers and principalities of darkness and high places are very in to. It's the crown jewel of darkness, and I actually believe that if they can keep abortion going by deceiving people into becoming gradualists, they will do it. And if to deceive them they have to give them empty, illusory victories, and law professors may claim that babies were saved, they'll do it. But I – if someone goes to an abortion mill and shoots a doctor, a baby might be saved that day, but that's not going towards abolishing abortion. It's not establishing justice that day [unintelligible] a baby that day.
>
> GC: May I ask for clarification for your answer? You're saying this guy's making this up?
>
> TRH: Uh, no, I have to read it. But I'm just saying that convincing people to be gradualists by saying, "Hey look, we saved some," while they're still being – I'm pretty sure that you can convince people to be gradualists for the next 40 years…
>
> GC: Hey Russell, let's do both. Let's do both. Let's do both.

Honestly, I am not sure why anyone pays these AHA people any mind. Just judging from that one clip, I don't think that Hunter has anything of value to say in this debate. His group seems to be more concerned with attacking other pro-lifers who actually are getting the job done than doing anything. In the real world, incremental pro-life laws save lives. To be persuasive on those incremental laws, you have to talk about the logic and science that supports the pro-life view. That will be persuasive to Christians as well as non-Christians. Building consensus for incremental pro-life laws by appealing to a bigger audience that includes non-Christians makes sense – it solves the actual problem.

Physicist Frank Tipler on the usefulness of refereed journals, then and now

May 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I really enjoyed this episode of the ID the Future podcast.

Description:

> Is the only good science peer-reviewed science? Are there other avenues to present important scientific work? On this episode of **ID The Future**, Professor of Mathematics Dr. Frank Tipler discusses the pros and cons of peer review and refereed journals. More than fifty peer-reviewed papers discussing intelligent design have been published, but critics of the theory still proclaim a lack of peer-reviewed work as an argument. Listen in as Tipler shows how things have changed with the peer review process and what we can do about it.

About the speaker:

> Frank Tipler was born and raised in Andalusia, Alabama. His first science project was a letter written in kindergarten to Werner von Braun, whose plans to launch the first earth satellite were then being publicized. Von Braun's secretary replied, regretting he had no rocket fuel for Tipler as requested. By age five, he knew he wanted to be an astrophysicist. But he's always been a polymath, reading widely across disciplines and into the history of science and theology. After graduating from MIT and the University of Maryland, he did postdoctoral work at Oxford and Berkeley, before arriving at Tulane in 1981.

William Lane Craig often cites a book by two physicists named "Barrow and Tipler" called "The Anthropic Cosmological Principle" (Oxford University Press, 1988) in his debates to support the fine-tuning argument. This Tipler is that Tipler! Dr. Tipler is a master of the physics of cosmology and fine-tuning. However, I definitely disagree with him on some of his ideas.

The MP3 file is here. (17 minutes)

Topics:

- the changing nature of refereed journals and peer-review
- previously, the refereed journals were more about communication
- now, ideas are not taken seriously unless they are published in these journals
- the problem is that referees can be motivated by ideological concerns
- before, an obscure patent official named Einstein submitted a physics paper and it was published
- now, an uncredited person would not be able to have a brilliant paper published like that
- today, there are so many scientists that many more papers are submitted

- although it restricts BAD ideas, it can also end up censoring NEW ideas
- the problem is that any really brilliant idea has to go against the prevailing consensus
- peer-review may actually be holding back the progress of science by censoring NEW ideas
- some referees are motivated to censor ideas that undercut their reputation and prestige
- Dr. Tipler was told to remove references to intelligent design before one of his papers would be published
- how scientists with NEW ideas can bypass the system of refereed journals when they are censored
- peer-review has value when it finds errors, but not when it suppresses new ideas

I think this one is a must listen. I like to refer to peer-reviewed evidence when arguing, but it’s not perfect, for sure.

Woman fakes cancer for late-term abortion money, baby died after being born alive

May 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

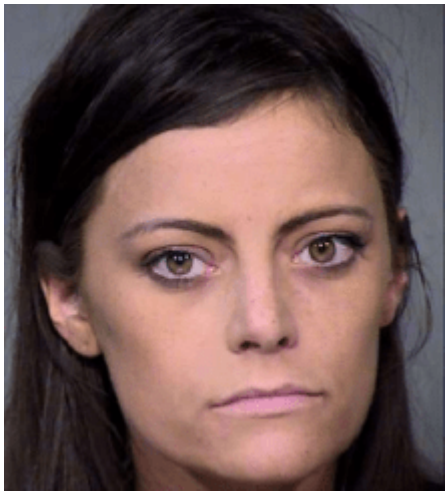

Chalice Renee Zeitner

Here's the story from ABC Local News.

It says:

> A convicted con artist duped the state into paying for her late-term abortion, a procedure which otherwise would not have been funded with public money, according to court records.
>
> Chalice Renee Zeitner made up a story about having cancer in order to qualify for an abortion while on Arizona's Medicaid insurance, and forged a doctor's note to support her claim, according to charging documents.
>
> A doctor performed the abortion when Zeitner was 22-weeks pregnant.
>
> Arizona's Medicaid, known as AHCCCS, will only pay for an abortion in cases of rape or incest or "medical necessity," which include cases where the pregnancy causes or worsens a serious health risk to the mother.
>
> Zeitner, 29, received "what was thought to be a medically necessary late-term abortion," court documents state.
>
> "Zeitner claimed she had stage IV sarcoma in her abdomen and lower spine, had received chemotherapy and radiation treatments and was scheduled to receive a life-saving surgery in Boston," documents state.
>
> That was later determined to be a fraud, according to documents.
>
> Zeitner had produced a one-page letter, purportedly from a Massachusetts doctor, that supported her claims, documents state.
>
> The abortion was performed in 2010.
>
> But one year later, it was another pregnancy that led to the discovery of Zeitner's alleged scam.

> She returned to the same doctor who performed the abortion to deliver a full-term child by cesarean section. During that birth, the doctor found no signs of cancer, documents state.
>
> That led to a check with the Boston doctor, which revealed that "he did not know Zeitner and had never treated her," so the cancer letter from him was a fraud, documents state.
>
> Attorney General Mark Brnovich's office on Tuesday charged Zeitner with felonies including fraud, theft, and forgery. She has a history of skipping town when she gets into trouble with the law, according to court documents. While a warrant was issued Wednesday, records do not yet indicate that she has been arrested.
>
> **Zeitner's aborted child was born alive, weighing just more than one pound, documents state.**
>
> **"The baby lived for approximately 20 minutes and received no life-saving measure by hospital staff," according to documents.**
>
> […]Zeitner has a previous forgery-related conviction in Maricopa County, documents state.
>
> She could not be reached for comment.

Now, if you ask a typical Democrat, they will say that this woman did nothing wrong from start to finish, and that the real solution is for pro-life taxpayers to pony up the money for her late-term abortion. The Democrat position on abortion is that it should be allowed through all nine months of pregnancy, that it should be taxpayer-funded, that doctors and nurses should have to assist without objection, and that babies who are born-alive should be left to die. Our current President, Barack Obama, voted for that last one multiple times when he was a state senator in Illinois.

I sent this story to a Christian woman friend who is strongly feminist and very anti-male. She told me that although she personally opposes abortion, that the law should allow this woman to choose to kill her baby. I was not surprised by this, because whenever I tell her stories about women making horrible decisions, she always either blames men, or gives a counter-example of where someone else made the same stupid decision and it worked out for them. I think that's what scares me the most about the abortion issue. How many apparently nice people are so convinced that whatever a woman wants to do must be OK.

I can imagine Zeitner posting news of her late-term, born alive abortion and having all her friends click like on it. Yay, Chalice! You didn't do anything wrong. After all, the baby is dead and gone now, and the mother still alive, and we want her to like us. Why rock the boat by telling her that she did anything wrong? A dental hygienist our family knows has had 3 children out of wedlock, and each time she changes boyfriends, she posts a picture of herself with the new boyfriend on Facebook, and all her friends click like on the picture. What could be wrong with changing boyfriends every year when you have 3 young children to take care of? I think the same cheering on of bad decisions must have happened many times with Zeitner – people around her refusing to set boundaries on her

long before she started killing her own babies. It’s easy for a woman to surround herself with people who just approve of everything she is doing – especially when she is young and attractive. Anyone who cautions her can just be blocked out. And the guaranteed failures that result from following her heart can just be declared “unexpected” by her carefully picked entourage of supporters. Life is so unpredictable, so she is not responsible.

Before Zeitner’s abortion decisions ever materialized, there were a million bad decisions that Zeitner made in order to find herself facing the choice to abort. She was acting on selfish motives – she wanted to have fun. So she broke moral rules more and more, and pushed away anyone who would judge her. All her friends and family standing around said nothing or even approved of her, because they were afraid to tell her “this will not work” or “this is wrong”. She had to have an exciting life, and hang out with exciting men. It’s the failure to draw the line with women beforehand that causes them to get to a place where a baby has to die. But we want so much to be her friend. And to be liked. Maybe to get attention from her, or affection from her, or even sex with her. Judging her seems so… intolerant and mean. We don’t want to be mean, do we? The Christian version of this is even more insidious, where the woman’s feelings are “God’s mysterious will for her life” and cannot be questioned or assessed rationally. It all ends the same, though.

How well is the Tspiras-Syriza “austerity is over” plan working out for Greece?

May 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

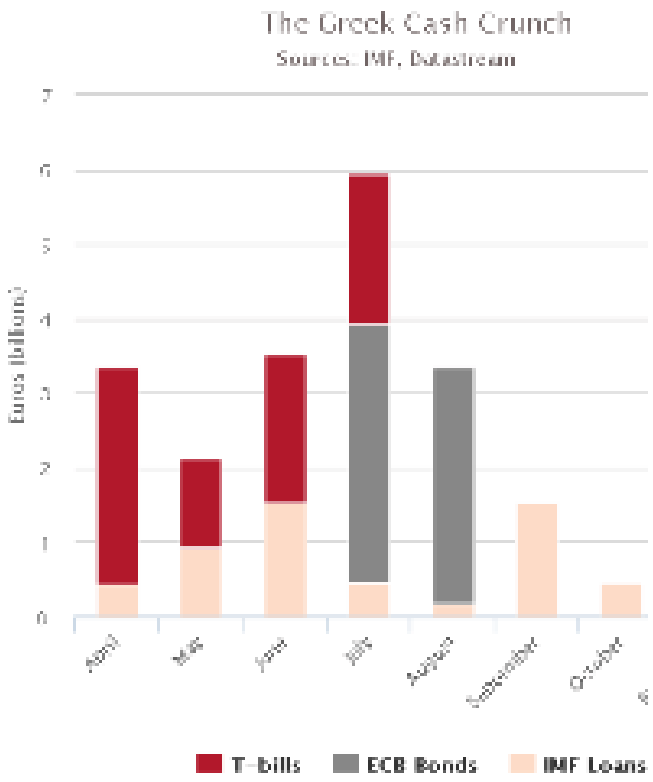

Greece debt repayment schedule

First, let’s recall what the socialist leader Tsipras said after he was elected to save nearly bankrupt Greece.

Look how the radically leftist UK Guardian gushed when Tsipras took office:

> In a dramatic start to his tenure in office, Greece’s new prime minister, Alexis Tsipras, has begun unpicking the deeply unpopular austerity policies underpinning the debt-stricken country’s bailout programme.
>
> [...]“We won’t get into a mutually destructive clash, but we will not continue a policy of subjection,” said Tsipras, who at 40 is Greece’s youngest postwar leader.
>
> [...]**Earlier, the energy minister, Panagiotis Lafazanis, called a halt to the privatisation programme that the EU and IMF have demanded in exchange for the €240bn in aid keeping Greece afloat. Plans to sell off the country’s dominant power corporation, PPC, were to be frozen with immediate effect. “We will immediately stop any privatisation of PPC,” said the politician, who heads Syriza’s militant Left Platform. A proposed scheme to privatise the port of Pireaus, the country’s largest docks, were also put on hold.**

Yes, only nasty conservatives like me think that private industry is cheaper, more efficient and less corrupt than big government for handling big projects.

More:

> **After that, ministers announced more measures: the scrapping of fees for prescriptions and hospital visits, the restoration of collective work agreements, the rehiring of workers laid off in the public sector, the granting of citizenship to migrant children born and raised in Greece.** On his first day in office – barely 48 hours after storming to power – Tsipras got to work. The biting austerity his Syriza party had fought so long to annul now belonged to the past, and this was the beginning not of a new chapter but a book for the country long on the frontline of the euro crisis.
>
> "A new era has begun, a government of national salvation has arrived," he declared as cameras rolled and the cabinet session began. "We will continue with our plan. We don't have the right to disappoint our voters."
>
> If Athens's troika of creditors at the EU, ECB and IMF were in any doubt that Syriza meant business it was crushingly dispelled on Wednesday . With lightning speed, Europe's first hard-left government moved to dismantle the punishing policies Athens has been forced to enact in return for emergency aid.
>
> Measures that had pushed Greeks on to the streets – and pushed the country into its worst slump on record – were consigned to the dustbin of history, just as the leftists had promised.

Yes, everything is going to be sunshine and roses, because a 40-year-old know-nothing with no experience says it will be. Economics? That dismal science belongs in the dustbin of history. We can unilaterally reverse the policies our creditors demanded, and then they will of course keep lending us money anyway.

Another leftist UK Guardian article has more happy rhetoric and socialist policies:

> Dismantling the EU-IMF mandated measures that had plunged Greece into poverty and despair would, declared Panos Skourletis, the labour minister, be his single greatest priority.
>
> "The reinstatement of the minimum wage to €751 (£560) [a month] will be among the government's first bills," Skourletis announced on Antenna TV.
>
> **Under international stewardship, Athens had been forced to pare back the minimum wage to under €500, ostensibly to increase competitiveness and make the labour market more attractive. Skourletis, formerly Syriza's hard-nosed spokesman, said plans were similarly under way to bring back collective work agreements – a major demand of unions – and to annul the enforced mobilisation of workers protesting against cuts.**

Everything is awesome! Well, those two articles were from January 2015. Let's see what's

happening now.

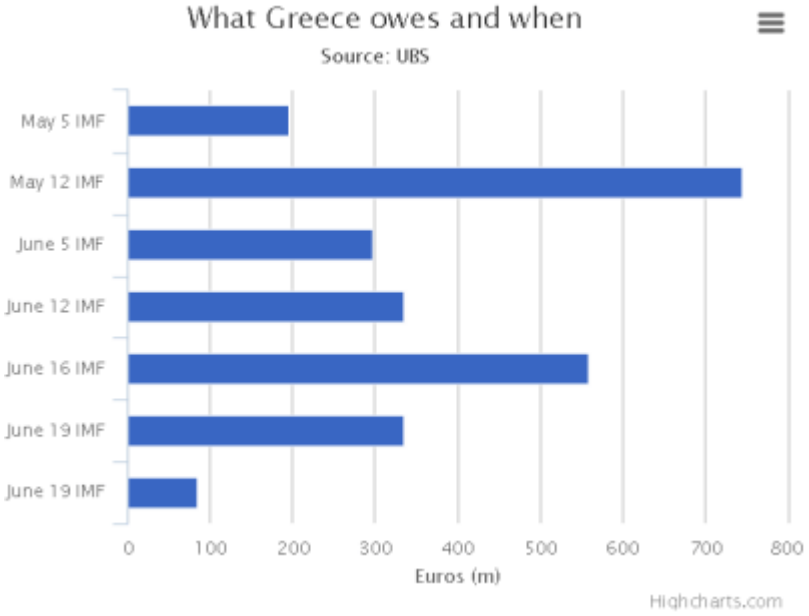

Everything is awesome! Lets have fun!
This is from UK Telegraph:

> Greece's "war cabinet" has resolved to defy the European creditor powers after a nine-hour meeting on Sunday, ensuring a crescendo of brinkmanship as the increasingly bitter fight comes to a head this month.
>
> Premier Alexis Tsipras and the leading figures of his Syriza movement agreed to defend their "red lines" on pensions and collective bargaining and prepare for battle whatever the consequences, deeming the olive-branch policy of recent weeks to have reached a dead end.
>
> "We have agreed on a tougher strategy to stop making compromises. We were unified and we have a spring our step once again," said one participant.
>
> The Syriza government knows that this an extremely high-risk strategy. The Greek treasury is already empty and emergency funds seized from local authorities and state entities will soon run out.
>
> Greece's mayors warned over the weekend that they would not release any more funds to the central government. The Greek finance ministry must pay the International Monetary Fund €750m (£544m) on Tuesday, the first of an escalating set of deadlines running into August.
>
> **"We have enough money to pay the IMF this week but not enough to get through to the end of the month. We all know that," said one minister, speaking to The Telegraph immediately after the emotional conclave.**

If there's one thing that makes me feel better about all the crap that is happening in this world, it's the wonderful truth that eventually, bad economics meets with reality. You can imagine anything you want today that makes you feel good, and imagine that it will all be paid for somehow in the future. I really like it when people who don't have any money

make these elaborate future plans and then bet their futures on it. Because when reality comes, we all find out that there is justice in the world after all. There is no path to prosperity that involves doing whatever you want and being happy all the time – that is a myth that children have about life. Anyway, pass me the popcorn and let’s see how the Peter Pan plans of these inexperienced children work out. We won’t have to wait long. Mmm, this popcorn tastes schadenfreudelicious.

A positive thing, should the SCOTUS same-sex marriage decision go against us

May 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

I am looking forward to something if the Supreme Court decides to redefine marriage to remove the complementary genders.

This USA Today article from Michael Farris, head of the HSLDA, hints at it.

He writes:

> Justice Alito posed a predictable, but revealing question to Solicitor General Donald Verrilli, Jr., in the recent Supreme Court same-sex marriage oral argument: "In the Bob Jones case, the court held that a college was not entitled to tax exempt status if it opposed interracial marriage or interracial dating. So would the same apply to a university or a college if it opposed same-sex marriage?"
>
> Verrilli replied that he would need to know more specifics, but allowed that "it's certainly going to be an issue. I don't deny that."
>
> The solicitor general's answer should have been and probably was practiced. The question was unlikely to have surprised Verrilli, especially with the kind of preparation undertaken by the highest appellate lawyer for the United States in such high stakes situations. Such preparations would include multiple moot courts, simulated arguments with various lawyers playing the roles of each of the members of the Supreme Court trying to ask as many questions as possible.
>
> As an appellate litigator and the coach of eight collegiate national moot court championship teams, I understand the goal of such preparation. You never want to hear a question from the bench that you have not thought about ahead of time.
>
> Alito's question was premised on the Bob Jones University case from 1983 in which the IRS revoked the school's tax exempt status because of its policies on

> interracial dating and marriage. BJU defended on the basis of the free exercise of religion. The Supreme Court rejected their defense holding that the government's goal of eradicating racial discrimination in marriage was more important than BJU's religious rights.
>
> So, the follow-up question from Alito's question is obvious: If the court rules in favor of same sex marriage, how can religious colleges that refuse to acknowledge such unions avoid BJU's fate?
>
> **No one should think that IRS implications will stop with colleges. Religious high schools, grade schools and any other religious institution will face the same outcome. And this includes churches.**
>
> **All of these entities are exempt from taxation under the same section of the IRS code. And even though churches can be exempt without application, their exemption can nonetheless be revoked.**
>
> **Even if it takes the IRS years to begin the enforcement proceedings against such institutions, we can expect other fallout from this decision to begin shortly after the release of the Supreme Court's opinion.**
>
> **Colleges and universities that receive federal funding will be coerced into immediate compliance. Accreditation agencies will ratchet up their bullying of Christian institutions, as has already been done against Gordon College in Massachusetts. Threats to accreditation are fatal. Colleges may not legally operate in several stateswithout it.**
>
> **Christian colleges and churches need to get prepared. We must decide which is more important to us — our tax exemption or our religious convictions. Keep in mind, it is not the idea that the college itself might have to pay taxes that is the threat. Schools like Patrick Henry College, which I started, never run much of a profit. But since PHC refuses all government aid, all of our donations for scholarships and buildings come from tax deductible gifts. Cutting off that stream of revenue is effectively the end of such colleges absent a team of donors who simply don't care if gifts are deductible.**
>
> A slogan of the American Revolution, "We have no King but Jesus" may well be overturned by a 5 to 4 decision of the Supreme Court near the end of June.

Now here's what I want to see.

I have spent a lot of my life in church, youth groups, campus Christian groups (not talking about Ratio Christi of course) and around happy-clappy Christians who focused on feelings and being accepted. In my current church, issues like abortion and same-sex marriage have never been discussed, much less economics and foreign policy. The leaders of the church are very pious Calvinists who struggle with the idea that they should discuss anything. It probably has something to do with losing the money they get from having a tax-exempt status, but they couch it in piety when they explain to us why

we are getting a gospel sermon for the millionth time in a row.

Well, now. I think that if we lose this same-sex marriage case in the Supreme Court, one of the wonderful things that will happen is that these pious churchy ministers will at last be confronted with the mistake they made by giving away the culture to the secularists. At last, all the decades of anti-intellectualism and feminization will hit them right where it hurts – in their pocketbooks. And there will be no denying that they made a terrible mistake in trying to make church solely about praise hymns, devotions and Bible study then. There is a price to pay for focusing on good feelings and comfort, and the churchy pastors are about to find out what it is.

Maybe the Sunday after the decision, the pastors in my church might actually talk to us about the good secular arguments and sociological evidence that there is in favor of traditional marriage. Hey, we might even get a sermon on the evils of divorce, with more arguments and evidence to support the Bible's position on that issue. Maybe even a sermon on the sexual revolution and premarital sex, that pairs what the Bible teaches with secular arguments and secular evidence that can be used by the flock to make an impact with non-Christians in the culture. Money has a wonderful way of focusing the minds of the most pious of pastors.

UVA Dean sues Rolling Stone for publishing Jackie's false rape story

May 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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135. Pinkleton said that Erdely kept asking her questions designed to get Pinkleton to embellish her own sexual assault, like repeatedly trying to get her to say that her perpetrator was feeding her drinks to get her drunk. Pinkleton felt that a run-of-the-mill date rape was not good enough for Erdely, saying "I felt that she wasn't satisfied with my perpetrator as someone who wasn't clearly monstrous.... I didn't like that it seemed like she was looking for a story that had to be at a fraternity."

136. A Yale student contacted by Erdely said that she "put [Erdely] in touch with a couple of students who had ... normal rape stories, and none of them were good enough for her."

137. Another UVA student interviewed by Erdely said she and several other students "felt really uncomfortable" after being interviewed by Erdely, because they concluded that Erdely was not objective and had an agenda.

None of the normal rape stories were good enough for her
This is from the leftist Washington Post, of all places.

Excerpt:

> A University of Virginia associate dean of students filed a multimillion dollar defamation lawsuit against Rolling Stone magazine Tuesday, alleging that it portrayed her as callous and indifferent to allegations of sexual assault on campus and made her the university's "chief villain" in a now-debunked story about a fraternity gang rape.
>
> Nicole Eramo is seeking more than $7.5 million in damages from Rolling Stone, its parent company Wenner Media and Sabrina Rubin Erdely, the investigative journalist who wrote the explosive account of sexual assault on the campus in Charlottesville, Va. The magazine retracted the story after news organizations and the Columbia University journalism school found serious flaws in it.
>
> Eramo, who is the university's chief administrator dealing with sexual assaults, argues in the lawsuit that the story destroyed her credibility, permanently damaged her reputation and caused her emotional distress. She assailed the account as containing numerous falsehoods that the magazine could have avoided if it had worked to verify the story of its main character, a student named Jackie who alleged she was gang raped in 2012 and that the university mishandled her case.
>
> "Rolling Stone and Erdely's highly defamatory and false statements about Dean Eramo were not the result of an innocent mistake," according to the lawsuit, which was filed in Charlottesville Circuit Court. "They were the result of a wanton

> journalist who was more concerned with writing an article that fulfilled her preconceived narrative about the victimization of women on American college campuses, and a malicious publisher who was more concerned about selling magazines to boost the economic bottom line for its faltering magazine, than they were about discovering the truth or actual facts."
>
> […]"Erdely and Rolling Stone's epic failure of journalism was the result of biased, agenda-driven reporting," the lawsuit says. The suit claims that the magazine's account represented "a purposeful avoidance of the truth, and an utter failure to investigate the accuracy of Jackie's claims."
>
> The magazine also printed a photo illustration of Eramo that she argues is inflammatory; the lawsuit says that the magazine turned a mundane Cavalier Daily student newspaper photo of her addressing a classroom and turned it into a wild-eyed image of her sitting in an office and giving a thumbs-up in front of a distraught sexual assault victim as protesters hold signs outside. The lawsuit claims the doctored image "demonstrates the lengths Erdely and Rolling Stone were willing to go to portray Dean Eramo as a villain."
>
> The complaint details that in the wake of the story's publication, Eramo received hundreds of spiteful e-mails from alumni and others who judged her based on her portrayal in Rolling Stone. In addition to rape and death threats, the messages described Eramo as a "wretched rape apologist" and "a disgusting, worthless piece of trash" who should "burn in hell forever."

Yes, that's what we call "radical feminism". The whole point of radical feminism is to tell lies and make fake statistics to make women look like victims, and men look like evil brutes. Then the government steps in and fixes everything, e.g. – giving women free birth control pills. And that's why feminists vote for bigger and bigger government, because they have been told, through these myths and fake statistics, that they are victims. This is the same big government, by the way, that is now going to war with freedom of speech and freedom of religion. Should Christians care about puncturing the myths that cause people to vote for the big government that comes after us? We better start making the connections and getting in the game now, before it's too late.

We as Christians really need to consider why people are voting for the bigger secular government that turns around and trashes our liberties, for example, with the Hobby Lobby case and the mandate that companies pay for drugs that cause abortions. If you *don't* want Christian-owned companies to be forced to do bad things, then understand that you have to counter the reasons why non-Christians vote for bigger government. If it's global warming, you have to defeat that. If it's higher minimum wage, you have to defeat that. And I am telling you right now, there are *a lot* of women out there who are being led by their emotions into disastrous situations of their own making, and then turning to big government for a bailout, because feminists are telling them that it's all the fault of those evil men. If you want your religious liberty, your right to work, your right to keep what you earn, then you'd better start connecting the dots and

confronting the people around you. Christians, we cannot absorb doctrines like radical feminism into our worldview, we have to fight against it by telling the truth.

Related posts

- Three UVA students who knew “Jackie” challenge Rolling Stone rape story
- UVA retracts rape story after Columbia University calls it “journalistic failure”
- Police conclude that University of Virginia rape story was fabricated
- Should we “automatically believe rape claims” even if they are proven false?
- Woman who made false rape accusation gets zero jail time
- UK woman makes EIGHT false rape accusations and gets no jail time
- New research shows that drug-facilitated sexual assault is a myth
- Lehigh University student could stand trial for false rape accusation
- No charges planned for accuser in Hofstra rape hoax

Women tells ex-boyfriend their baby was aborted so she could sell it to a gay man

May 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is it OK to tell women when they are wrong?
This is from the UK Daily Mail.

It says:

> A pregnant mother allegedly conned her lover into thinking she had undergone an abortion so she could sell his newborn baby to a gay friend, a jury has been told.
>
> The 29-year-old woman, from Perth, Perthshire, who cannot be named for legal reasons, allegedly wanted to pocket up to £300 by selling her unborn daughter to the 35-year-old man.
>
> The court heard how the woman and the gay man allegedly orchestrated an elaborate story in order to dupe the biological father into thinking the child had never been born.
>
> But the court heard how the mother had given birth to the child in February 2011, before claiming the father was her gay friend.
>
> After putting his name on the birth certificate, the pair allegedly duped the NHS, the local registrar and council officials in an alleged scam which rumbled on for nearly three years.
>
> The court heard how, initially, the woman had pretended that she did not give birth to the child at all.
>
> Instead, the pair allegedly set up a fake Facebook profile for a fictional woman

> known as Clare Green, who was described as the child's surrogate mother.
>
> The bogus profile claimed that the woman had been a surrogate for the gay man and that she had gone on to give him full custody of the child.
>
> But the mother later admitted to council officials that she had been pregnant with her former lover but terminated the pregnancy. She claimed she then fell pregnant for a second time with her friend after sleeping together on his birthday.
>
> The mother and the man are now on trial accused of carrying out the elaborate hoax over the baby girl's parentage.
>
> She claimed she had been in a relationship with the biological father from the end of 2009 to early 2010 and had fallen pregnant with him but had lost the baby.
>
> She said that, once they had split up, she ended up sleeping up with her co-accused, an old friend, following a pub crawl to mark his birthday.
>
> […]The woman insisted that the other man could not have been the father as she had not seen him prior to falling pregnant.
>
> But the court heard how doctors said the baby could not have been conceived in April 2010 and had instead been conceived at least one month later.
>
> It was not until a second police interview that the woman finally conceded that the baby might have been her ex-partner's because she had 'slept with both of them', the court heard.

And the UK Daily Mirror says that in fact her ex-boyfriend was the father:

> The court had earlier heard that she and her co-accused duped the biological dad out of knowing he had a child by putting the other man's name on the birth certificate.
>
> A joint minute was lodged with the court which stated as fact that the duo registered their names as mother and father of the child at the registry office in Perth.
>
> The agreed statement said they had both signed the register but it was a matter of fact, discovered subsequently, that another man was the biological father of the child.

Now remember, children do better when growing up in a stable home with their biological mother and biological father.

But think about the situation this little kid is going to find herself in. What kind of environment can a single gay man offer a child?

A Family Research Council paper cites 4 different studies thus:

> In *The Sexual Organization of the City,* University of Chicago sociologist Edward Laumann argues that "typical gay city inhabitants spend most of their adult lives

> in ‘transactional’ relationships, or short-term commitments of less than six months.”[5]
>
> A study of homosexual men in the Netherlands published in the journal *AIDS* found that the “duration of steady partnerships” was 1.5 years.[6]
>
> In his study of male homosexuality in *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, Pollak found that “few homosexual relationships last longer than two years, with many men reporting hundreds of lifetime partners.”[7]
>
> In *Male and Female Homosexuality,* Saghir and Robins found that the average male homosexual live-in relationship lasts between two and three years.[8]

Is that nice to do to a child? Do we even care any more what children need when deciding who to have sex with? Or is it all adult selfishness, all the time now… and pass the bill for the damages to the next generation of motherless, fatherless, children? Children need us to restrain our passions so that they can get what they need. They are weaker and more vulnerable than we are, and our feelings and desires have to give ground so that they get what they need. We have to get used to self-denial and self-sacrifice for their benefit, because we are the ones who are choosing to make them. They didn’t ask to be born. We are the ones who choose the behaviors that create them, and that puts obligations, expectations and responsibilities on us.

William Lane Craig answers: why choose Christianity over Judaism or Islam?

May 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson

This is the latest question on the Reasonable Faith Q&A section.

It says:

> Hello Dr. Craig,
>
> I have always wondered about your claim that Christianity is the only true religion (based on historical evidence as you say). But how can you be so sure when Islamic and Jewish scholars claim the same claim?
>
> As a former atheist and now an agnostic, the question of which religion to choose is essential. I'm very well acquainted with Islamic Theology and unlike your claim. Islam affirms that Christians, Jews and Muslims worship the same god ("Allah" is not a special god for Muslims rather it's the term for god in Arabic).
>
> So what is your position on Islam? (And I would really like to know from who do you get your information on Islamic theology).
>
> I also would to invest some time in Christian theology, would kindly recommend some introductory books?

I think we are going to have to work from the historical Jesus to answer this one, and we won't be able to use the New Testament as if it is the inspired Word of God. We'll have to use it like a history book, and see what we can get from it using the ordinary rules for doing history on ancient documents.

Here's the best part of Dr. Craig's answer for Islam:

> The short answer to your question of why Christianity rather than Islam or Judaism, Sultan, is Jesus of Nazareth. While Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are the world's three great monotheistic faiths, genetically related and so having much in common, what divides them is their account of Jesus. I think that neither Judaism nor Islam gives a satisfactory historical account of the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth.
>
> […]It is ironic that the Qur'an chooses to deny the best established fact about Jesus, namely, his crucifixion (IV.157). Not only is there not a single shred of evidence in favor of this remarkable hypothesis, but the evidence supporting Jesus' crucifixion is, as Emory University New Testament scholar L. T. Johnson puts it, "overwhelming" *(The Real Jesus* [San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1996], p. 125). Paula Frederickson, whose book *From Jesus to Christ* inspired the PBS special by the same name, declares, "The crucifixion is the strongest single fact we have about Jesus" (Society of Biblical Literature meeting, November 22, 1999). The crucifixion of Jesus is recognized even by the sceptical critics in the Jesus Seminar as–to quote Robert Funk–"one indisputable fact" (Jesus Seminar video).
>
> When we think that the Qur'an was written by a man living in Arabia 600 years after Jesus with no independent source of information about him, it really isn't so surprising that his view of Jesus was distorted. Whatever else one might say about Islam, its view of Jesus is erroneous, and so this religion cannot be true.

And the best part of Dr. Craig's answer for Judaism:

> As for Judaism, again I should say that the decisive consideration is Jesus' claims to be the Jewish Messiah and his subsequent resurrection from the dead. Jewish scholars are coming to recognize the historical facts undergirding Jesus' resurrection and are hard-pressed to explain those facts apart from the resurrection. Indeed, one of their number, the late Pinchas Lapide, whom I heard lecture at the University of Munich, declared himself convinced that the God of Israel raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead. He also thought that Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah.

The striking thing about this is that I know a Jewish guy who will debate historical Jesus with me, and he LOVES The Teaching Company (now called "The Great Courses"). I tell him that even the atheist Bart Ehrman is willing to give me the burial, the empty tomb and the post-mortem appearances of Jesus in his course on the historical Jesus for The Teaching Company. So if we are going to do some history, it's going to be pretty awkward for the Jewish guy to come up with a hypothesis that can explain those 3 facts, not to mention the early proclamation of the first Christians that Jesus was the Messiah, even after he was executed in a shameful way. Even non-Christian sources report *that.* And their proclamation of the resurrection that didn't win them any friends, let me tell you.

In the post, Dr. Craig recommended a book where he debates a Jewish New Testament scholar, edited by Paul Copan and Craig Evans. I asked my friend Eric Chabot about the book, and he said he had read it and it was “great”. So I bought it. I love debate books. I try to buy them all right away and then read them, since I like to read a fight. Somehow, this one had escaped my notice until now. If you’re interested in these issues, I recommend getting that book as well.

House Republicans pass ban on abortions after 20 weeks, Hillary tweets against it

May 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Life News reports on some great news, and the timing was interesting.

Excerpt:

> The House of Representatives today approved a pro-life bill that bans abortions from after 20-weeks of pregnancy up to the day of birth.
>
> The vote for the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act broke down on mostly partisan lines with Republicans supporting the ban on late-term abortions and Democrats opposing it. The House approved the bill on a 242-184 vote with four Democrats (Reps. Cuellar, Langevin, Lipinski, and Peterson) voting for the bill and five Republicans voting against it (Reps. Dent, Dold, Hanna, Frelinghuysen) or voting present (Hice).
>
> During the debate today on a bill to ban abortions after 20 weeks, Congressman Sean Duffy gave what may be one of the most passionate defenses of the pro-life position ever seen on the floor of Congress. Duffy took on the claim often made by Democrats who support abortion saying they stand for the defenseless and voiceless.
>
> “I’ve listened to the floor debate day after day .. about how they fight for the forgotten, they fight for the defenseless, they fight for the voiceless. And they pound their chest and stomp their feet. You don’t have anyone in our society that’s more defenseless than these little babies,” he said. “And we are not taking — I believe in conception. I know my colleagues can’t agree with me on that. Can’t we come together and say we are going to stand with little babies that feel pain, that survive outside the womb? Ones that don’t have lobbyists and money?

> Don’t we stand with those little babies?”
>
> “If you stand with the defenseless, with the voiceless, you have to stand with little babies. Don’t talk to me about cruelty in our bill — when you look at little babies being dismembered, feeling excruciating pain, if we can’t stand to defend these children, what do we stand for in this institution?” he added.
>
> […]This is the second time the House has voted for the legislation — having approved it in May 2013. The bill was then blocked by pro-abortion Democrats who controlled the U.S. Senate.

The bill also includes protections for babies who are born alive during the abortion. It empowers women who have abortions to sue their abortion providers if they don’t comply with the law. Right now, there are no restrictions on abortions through all nine months of pregnancy at the federal level, and Democrats have even introduced a bill to reverse restrictions on abortion at the state level.

Hillary Clinton is not happy with the bill, because she stands for abortion through all nine months of pregnancy:

> No sooner did the House of Representatives pass a bill to protect babies from late-term abortions and ban them after 20 weeks than Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton fired off a statement slamming them for doing so.
>
> The House of Representatives today approved a that bans abortions from after 20-weeks of pregnancy up to the day of birth. The vote for the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act broke down on mostly partisan lines with Republicans supporting the ban on late-term abortions and Democrats opposing it.
>
> Should the Senate approve the bill, President Barack Obama has issued a veto threat and now Hillary Clinton has joined him in opposing the bill.
>
> **“Politicians should not interfere with personal medical decisions, which should be left to a woman, her family and her faith, in consultation with her doctor or health care provider,” Clinton’s senior policy adviser Maya Harris said in a statement on her behalf.**
>
> **“This bill is a direct challenge to Roe v. Wade, which has protected a woman’s constitutional right to privacy for over forty years,” the Clinton campaign said. “The bill puts women’s health and rights at risk, undermines the role doctors play in health care decisions, burdens survivors of sexual assault, and is not based on sound science.”**
>
> **“It also follows a dangerous trend we are witnessing across the country. In just the first three months of 2015, more than 300 bills have been introduced in state legislatures — on top of the nearly 30 measures introduced in Congress — that restrict access to abortion,” the Clinton spokeswoman added.**
>
> **Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton sent out a tweet opposing the late-term**

> **abortion ban and supporting Roe v. Wade, which allowed for virtually unlimited abortions up to the day of birth in the United States.**

And Barack Obama, has vowed to veto the bill if the Senate approves it.

> [T]he White House says Obama would veto the bill.
>
> The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 36, which would unacceptably restrict women's health and reproductive rights and is an assault on a woman's right to choose. Women should be able to make their own choices about their bodies and their health care, and Government should not inject itself into decisions best made between a woman and her doctor.
>
> If the President were presented with this legislation, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto this bill.
>
> A veto of the bill, which is already state law in 11 states, would put Obama at odds with public opinion on abortion once again.

Look here, if you're in favor of dismembering a 20-week-old unborn child who can feel you tearing her apart limb from limb, then something is really wrong with you. And yet there he is, our President. How did it happen?

Are Christians more concerned about social issues than they are about the poor?

May 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw this editorial on the leftist Washington Post and thought it was useful in case you get this question.

It says:

> Broadly speaking, American churches are incredibly generous to the needs of a hurting world.
>
> As noted by The Philanthropy Roundtable:
>
> "In 2009, overseas relief and development supported by American churches exceeded $13 billion, according to path-breaking calculations by the Hudson Center for Global Prosperity. (This includes not just evangelical churches but also Catholic and mainline Protestant congregations, and covers both direct missions work and donations to private relief groups.) That compares to $5 billion sent abroad by foundations in the same year, $6 billion from private and voluntary relief organizations apart from church support, and $9 billion donated internationally by corporations. The $13 billion in religious overseas philanthropy also compares impressively to the $29 billion of official development aid handed out by the federal government in 2009."
>
> […]In 2012 alone, the evangelical relief group World Vision spent "roughly $2.8 billion annually to care for the poor," according to World Vision U.S. President Richard Stearns. "That would rank World Vision about 12th within the G-20 nations in terms of overseas development assistance."
>
> World Vision is only one such major evangelical ministry. Groups such as Samaritan's Purse, Food for the Hungry, World Relief and many others provide hundreds of millions of dollars in anti-poverty programs at home and abroad.
>
> The gold-standard accountability group for evangelical ministries, the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, represents groups that provide food, medical care, education, adoption services, orphan care, post-prison assistance, substance abuse help and other critical services at home and abroad. In aggregate, the more than 600 evangelical ministries represented in the ECFA provide more than $9.2 billion in relief assistance.
>
> Catholic ministries, too, here and abroad are vibrant: How many Americans, of every faith and every economic status, have received world-class health care in Catholic hospitals? In total, The Economist magazine's assessment of the Catholic Church's estimated $170 billion total U.S. income finds that about 57 percent (roughly $97 billion) goes to "health-care networks, followed by 28 percent on colleges, with parish and diocesan day-to-day operations accounting for just 6

> percent, with the remaining $4.6 billion going to ‘national charitable activities.’”
>
> […]What about some hard numbers? Of the major national conservative Christian groups that are involved in the political arena, here is a representative sampling of various financial reports:
>
> - Susan B. Anthony List: $7 million
> - Americans United for Life: $4.5 million
> - Family Research Council: $15.2 million
> - National Right to Life: $6.4 million
> - National Organization for Marriage: $1.7 million
> - Focus on the Family: $94.5 million
> - Alliance Defending Freedom: $38.2 million
>
> For the sake of argument, let’s add in the roughly 40 state Family Policy Councils and, generously, surmise their budgets, together, total $100 million.
>
> […]If you want to be generous, the national/state combo is about $270 million.

I am actually not in favor of Christians focusing so much on alleviating poverty through these massive organizations. This is especially true now, when it’s pretty clear that religious liberty is at stake, even to the degree that our schools, universities and churches are going to lose their tax-exempt status. I think now, we should probably thinking a lot more about apologetics in the churches, better schools and universities, raising influential kids, and political action. This is a crisis situation, survival is more important to me than helping others. We can get back to helping others if we are still here in 25 years.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

May 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of my favorite lectures.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips.

Here is a clip:

The full video can be watched on Vimeo:

I pulled the MP3 audio from the lecture in case anyone wants just the audio.

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

It's a good lecture explaining basic arguments for a cosmic Creator and Designer. If you add the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion (Stephen C. Meyer's arguments), then you will be solid on science apologetics. That's everything a rank-and-file Christian needs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

ABC News anchor who defended Clinton Foundation donated $75,000 to Clinton Foundation

May 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Text at the bottom: White House Senior Advisor George Stephanopolous with President Clinton in the Oval Office
(Image source: Time Magazine)

The text at the bottom of the April 4, 1994 Time Magazine cover says: "White House Senior Advisor George Stephanopolous with President Clinton in the Oval Office".

Whenever the story is media bias, the web site to go to is Newsbusters.

First article:

> ABC news host George Stephanopoulos admitted Thursday he had donated $75,000 to the Clinton Foundation and did not disclose this conflict of interest to viewers before interviewing the author of a book critical of the foundation's foreign donors and influence over Hillary Clinton at the State Department.
>
> Stephanopoulos, a former Bill Clinton communications aide, interviewed *Clinton Cash* author Peter Schweizer on the April 26 edition of *This Week*, where he pushed back against his reporting and Schweizer himself, repeating Democratic attacks that he had a "partisan interest" in disparaging the Clintons.
>
> "They say you used to work for President Bush as a speech writer. You are funded by the Koch brothers," he said. "How do you respond to that?"
>
> "As you know, the Clinton campaign says you haven't produced a shred of

> evidence that there was any official action as secretary that supported the interest of donors," he asked later. "We've done investigative work here at ABC News, found no proof of any kind of direct action. An independent government ethics expert at the Sunlight Foundation Bill Allison wrote this: 'There's no smoking gun. No evidence that the changed policy based on donations to the foundation. No smoking gun.' Is there a smoking gun?"
>
> Stephanopoulos did not point out that the Sunlight Foundation is funded by left-wing billionaire George Soros.
>
> […]The story came to light when the *Free Beacon*'s Andrew Stiles discovered Stephanopoulos' donation and requested a comment from ABC News. Stephanopoulos then confirmed the donation to *Politico* and issued an apology for not disclosing it beforehand, and ABC announced it would not take any punitive action against him.

Second article:

> Talking to Bloomberg Politics correspondent Joshua Green on Wednesday, *Clinton Cash* author Peter Schweizer said he was "really quite stunned" by the revelation that ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos gave $50,000 to the Clinton Foundation. Schweizer called it a "massive breach of ethical standards" for the Bill Clinton operative turned journalist.
>
> Referencing a contentious interview with Stephanopoulos for *This Week* on April 26, Schweizer observed: "He fairly noted my four months working as a speech writer for George W. Bush. But he didn't disclose this?" In that exchange, Stephanopoulos accused Schweizer of having a "partisan interest" in writing a book critical of the Clintons.
>
> In 2014, Stephanopoulos offered a glowing puff piece on the Clinton Foundation, hailing it as an organization that "brings together world leaders…and celebrities, re-imagining the world and taking action."
>
> Also on Thursday, Kentucky Senator and Republican presidential candidate Rand Paul told *The New York Times* that Stephanopoulos should not be permitted to moderate any 2016 debates: "It's impossible to divorce yourself from that, even if you try. I just think it's really, really hard because he's been there, so close to them, that there would be a conflict of interest if he tried to be a moderator of any sort."

And Rand Paul is getting what he asked for, the former Clinton administration communications director George Stephanopolous will not be moderator of a GOP debate. Honestly, why was he in there in the first place? You might as well pick Satan to moderate a debate on the resurrection of Jesus. I'm really not sure why ABC News would make him their chief anchor, since the man is a diehard Democrat. A top Clinton aide, and White House Communications Director when Clinton was President. Do you know what the White House Communications Director does? He just says whatever he has to to make

the President look good.

A fair moderator of GOP debates? Give me a break.

The radically leftist New York Times reminds us what Stephanopolous did in the 2012 presidential debate he moderated:

> In 2012 advisers in the Romney campaign actively lobbied to exclude Mr. Stephanopoulos from the primary debates to no avail. Conservatives say their fears were borne out during the ABC News debate in New Hampshire that year. Mr. Stephanopoulos repeatedly asked Mr. Romney if he believed that states could outlaw birth control — a question that the Romney campaign saw as off-point and far afield of the issues that concerned voters. Mr. Stephanopoulos pressed repeatedly, asking six follow-up questions.

That's right. He asked 7 questions about a topic that as relevant to the campaign as Clinton's affairs with Monica Lewinsky. He did it in order to smear Republicans.

ABC News is, of course, not punishing him from reporting on a foundation that he donated to.

The original source for this story was the Washington Free Beacon. Credit where due.

Related posts

- Only 10% of money given to Clinton Foundation goes to charity
- Mitt Romney: Hillary's Clinton Foundation Uranium One scandal "looks like bribery"
- New study: how the mainstream media deleted Hillary Clinton's e-mail scandal
- "Dead broke" Hillary Clinton makes more money in an hour than top-paid CEO
- New book by Peter Schweizer: Clinton State Department favored foreign donors
- Largest individual donor to Clinton Foundation has trade ties to Iran
- Clinton Foundation continues to take donations from regimes that oppress women
- What are Hillary Clinton's views on amnesty and illegal immigration?
- Hillary Clinton never signed separation form that required her to turn over all e-mails
- Could Hillary Clinton be sent to prison because of her secret e-mail server?
- Hillary Clinton deleted 32,000 e-mails, refuses to turn over her home-based server
- Clinton Foundation: all eight of the highest paid executives are men
- E-mails released by Clinton: there are "months, and months, and months" missing
- Hillary Clinton used her private e-mail account to conduct State Department business
- E-mails: Hillary Clinton's top aides knew in minutes that Benghazi was a terrorist attack
- Clinton Foundation receives millions in donations from regimes that oppress women
- As senator, Hillary Clinton paid women 72 cents for every dollar she paid men
- Hillary Clinton's fake Bosnia gunfire story and her abortion award
- Hillary Clinton: don't let anybody tell you that corporations and businesses create jobs

- Hillary Clinton aides were present to “separate” damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- Universities raise tuition while paying hundreds of thousands to Hillary Clinton to speak
- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- Hillary Clinton opposes bill to cut taxpayer funding of abortions abroad

Germany is further along the green energy road, how is it working for them?

May 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

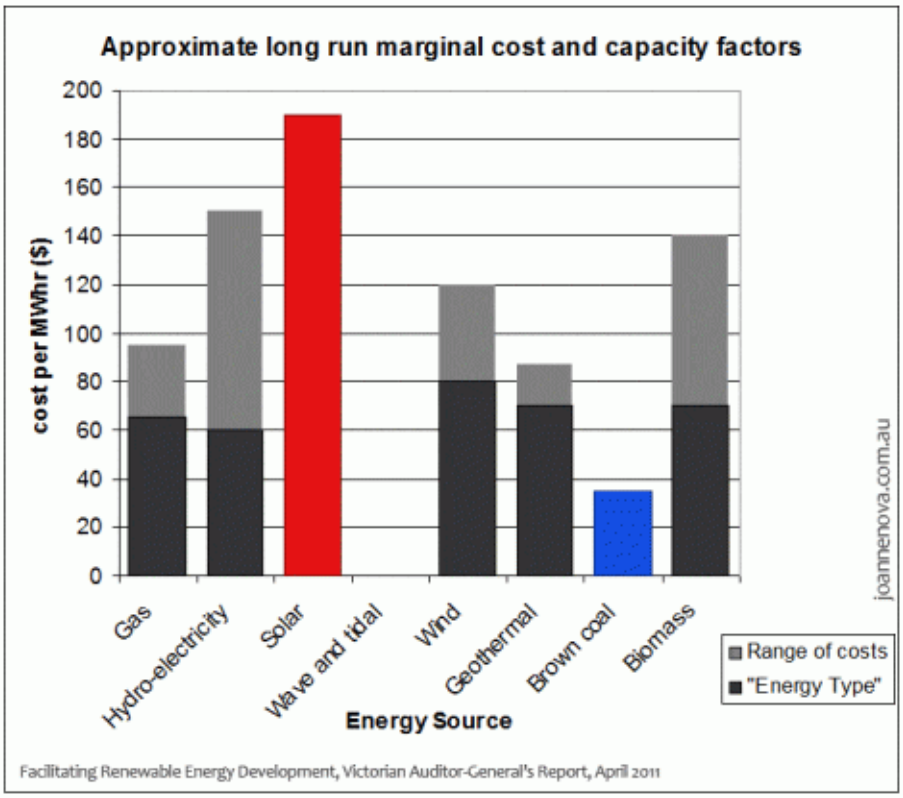

Cost of renewable wind and solar energy

This is from National Review, and I think it's important for the young people to know, because they are the ones who think that green energy is a moral imperative that has no downside.

Look:

> According to EU data, Germany's average residential electricity rate is 29.8 cents per kilowatt hour. This is approximately double the 14.2 cents and 15.9 cents per kWh paid by residents of Germany's neighbors Poland and France, respectively, and almost two and a half times the U.S. average of 12 cents per kWh. Germany's industrial electricity rate of 16 cents per kWh is also much higher than France's 9.6 cents or Poland's 8.3 cents. The average German per capita electricity consumption is 0.8 kilowatts. At a composite rate of 24 cents per kWh, this works out to a yearly bill of $1,700 per person, experienced either directly in utility bills or indirectly through increased costs of goods and services. The median *household*income in Germany is $33,000, so if we assume an average of two people per household, the electricity cost would amount to more than 10 percent of available income. And that is for the median-income household. The amount of electricity that people need does not scale in proportion to their paychecks. For the rich, $1,700 per year in electric bills might be a pittance, or at

> most a nuisance. But for the poor who are just scraping by, such a burden is simply brutal.

The trouble with solar and wind power is that they are not consistent:

> So, what has the German government accomplished for "the Earth" in exchange for the severe harm it has inflicted on the nation's poorer citizens? It is claimed that Germany has replaced 30 percent of its electricity with renewable energy. If all you look at is capacity, that might appear to be true. Germany has a total installed capacity of 172 gigawatts (GW), and 65 GW of that is based on renewables. **But neither wind nor solar power obtains an around-the-clock average of anything close to full capacity. Rather, these methods of electricity generation typically average at best about 20 percent of their full rated power. Thus Germany's nominal 65 GW of solar and wind generation capacity is worth about as much as 13 GW capacity in conventional power plants.** Of the 614,000 GW hours that Germany generated in 2014, 56,000 GWh came from wind and 35,000 GWh from solar, for an actual combined average power of 10.4 GW, or 14.8 percent of all electricity generated. About half of this, or 5.2 GW, has been developed since 2005.

Germany used to have safe, clean nuclear power with zero emissions, but they got rid of it:

> However, in 2011 Germany had 20 GW of capacity in nuclear power plants, producing more than twice as much electricity as wind and solar do currently, at less than half the cost, with no carbon emissions whatsoever. But, using the rather improbable threat of a Fukushima-like tsunami as a pretext, the nation's elites decided to shut them down; 8.3 GW have already been eliminated.
>
> Thus, over the past decade, the total amount of carbon-free power that Germany has produced under its oppressive green-energy policy has actually *decreased* by 3 GW.

This makes me think of what happened to the wind farms in the UK during cold weather – they had to keep spinning using power from the main grid, to keep themselves from freezing! What a disaster. Green energy is just not ready for prime time. The more the government pushes it, the more the cost of electricity rises. Not good for the poor. Does anyone care how these "feel good" policies of the rich left affect the poorest people?

Professor concerned by students who are unable to consider alternative views

May 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a post by Dr. George Yancey, and he's writing about the 5-minute video clip above. Dr. Yancey writes:

> Here is a great example of what I term education dogma. Note that the students are chanting about not being silenced while they are obviously silencing the speaker. My understanding of this situation is that the speaker published something that challenges some of the assertions about a campus rape culture. Such a challenge is an affront to the dogma of the students. Therefore, these students do not feel that the speaker has a right to speak on a different topic. The violation of beliefs they accept without question or doubt creates their incentive to shut down the proceedings.
>
> […]For the dogmatic, ideas that violate the notions defended by education dogma are deemed "dangerous" and too much for the tender ears of our students. So in additional to shouting down speakers there have been calls for "trigger warnings" and "safe spaces" so that individuals do not have to listen to dangerous ideas. The true danger of these ideas is their threat to certain dogmatic beliefs of our students. These students are unwilling to consider the possibly that they are wrong, or perhaps not as right as they might believe. .
>
> […]**As I watch that video I did not see intellectual powerhouses but I symbolically saw individuals who were yelling nonsense with their hands over their ears so that they would not hear an idea that may confront their presuppositions about reality.**

Here, Dr. Yancey compares the secular leftist students to religious fundamentalists: (links removed)

> For all practical purposes the students saw the speaker as a heretic. The use of the term heretic can bring up images of torturing, imprisoning and killing of those who disagree. This is not occurring. However, it is reasonable to ask whether the seemingly restraint of the students from such drastic actions is due to their moral compass or to the fact that they do not have the social power to engage in such actions. Education dogma has led to attempting to kick offending businesses off campus, attempts to fire professors, and the official "shunning" of students who hold the "wrong ideas." Those with education dogma do punish those who violate their beliefs to the highest extent possible given their current level of institutional powers.

So if the holding your hands over your ears and screaming doesn't work, there is always

calling the police, or using other means of coercion. Scary, especially when you consider the history of the secular left in communist countries where God is dead, and the state is all-powerful. How far would these leftist students go to silence people who disagreed with them?

More:

> […][H]igher education occurs in a specific social institution that promotes certain subcultural values and beliefs. Participants in these institutions are expected to accept these values and beliefs without question. These beliefs are not the result of gaining more facts but instead are the dogmatic adaptation of certain social values provided to them by this subculture.

The trouble here is that they don't want more facts – that's why they are holding their hands over their ears and screaming.

It makes me think of my own intellectual journey… the way I got started in apologetics in college was by reading transcripts of William Lane Craig debates that I found on the Leadership University web site. What was exciting was reading *both sides* and seeing what each person would say to respond. Would you go to a football game where only one side showed up? What if you already knew the score in advance, would you still go? What if one team didn't play very hard, would that be worth watching? What makes intellectual inquiry fun and interesting is that two sides show up and play their best. Otherwise, it's just brainwashing, not a search for truth. When I write a summary with a good atheist like Peter Millican, I actually feel like I have learned something – I have learned how far I can push each of my arguments, and what I need to study going forward. I care to learn more about what is discussed in a real debate.

This is the striking part of his essay:

> Students are responsible for seeking out alternative perspectives and developing an attitude of inquiry allowing them to interrogate their own presuppositions. But their college and university teachers should be held to account since more than a few college professors have done a horrible job introducing critical thinking skills. These teachers come in with a certain set of assumptions and if students agree with those assumptions then they can leave college without any disturbance to their pre-college ideology. Then we have the gall to call that critical thinking. It is anything but critical thinking. It is confirmation thinking and we do our students a disservice with such an approach.

This is why I get so frustrated by non-STEM disciplines. I think those non-STEM areas are the places where what he described is most likely to happen. When you walk into a computer science classroom, you are there to learn something that you will be doing for money in a couple of years. You can go home and use what you just learned to write a sorting program, or improve the speed of your database queries, or write a mobile application and put it out for use. I just don't get that feeling of usefulness from non-STEM disciplines, aside from maybe analytical philosophy, which is just computer science

anyway (symbolic logic). The critical thinking in computer science comes from trying things yourself and seeing what works and doesn't work in real life. Where is the testing against reality in non-STEM disciplines? There is none.

And then here is something hopeful for conservatives:

> Ironically a conservative Christian Republican has a better opportunity to learn critical thinking in college than a progressive humanist Democrat because of the opportunity he/she gains to consider new ideas. When we allow students with certain perspectives to go through college without challenging them we not only promote dogma, we also do those students the disservice of never helping them to engage in the critical thinking necessary to intellectually grow. They are reduced to being a sounding board that regurgitated the latest expression of political correctness.

This is where all my hope lies. I really hope that the left educates itself into imbecility by refusing to consider different points of view, and that we conservatives are the ones who start to outperform them and take the high ground in the culture. To innovate, you have to do things better, and to do things better, you have to do things differently.

Read his whole essay.

Frank Turek and Michael Shermer defend their debate to gay activists

May 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Shermer debates Frank Turek: atheism and morality

Remember how I blogged on the debate between Frank Turek and Michael Shermer a few days ago?

Well, apparently, a group of gay activists did not like the debate, and they complained – presumably in order to punish the debate organizers and shut down future debates.

Turek and Shermer have responded to their challenge, though, in this letter to the editor. And Shermer will even be on Turek's radio show at 10 AM Eastern to discuss their joint response.

The show can be heard here on the Cross Examined web site.

> CrossExamined Radio Program and Podcast
>
> Listen to CrossExamined with Frank Turek on American Family Radio network
>
> Saturday, 10-11 am Eastern on AFR network streaming audio and FM radio
>
> Tune in to our weekly call-in radio program hosted by Frank Turek on American Family Radio network. Join Frank as he discusses challenging topics, takes calls from listeners, and interviews dynamic Christian apologists. Sponsored by CrossExamined.org, this apologetics program is both informative and entertaining!

If you miss the show, the podcast archive is here.

And here's part of the joint letter:

> It's not often that an atheist and a Christian, who have just had a debate on campus, can be brought into agreement by a group in the audience. But the Graduate Queer Alliance (GQA) at Stony Brook University has managed to do that. Their letter to the editor on April 30 was so full of false assertions and

> totalitarian demands that we, Dr. Michael Shermer (an atheist) and Dr. Frank Turek (a Christian), felt compelled to write this letter together in response.
>
> The central assertion of the GQA is that anyone who expresses a negative opinion of same sex marriage or homosexual behavior is guilty of "hate speech" and should be barred from speaking at Stony Brook University. The GQA says this while also claiming to believe "that a university should provide an open forum for controversial ideas to be discussed and debated." We both wonder how the GQA can hold these two contradictory opinions at the same time. After all, they say they are for the debate of controversial issues, but apparently only if both debaters hold the same position and that position agrees with the GQA. Some debate!
>
> How is disagreement over controversial moral and political issues "hate speech?" If it is then GQA's position is "hate speech" because it disagrees with people who believe marriage should be defined in other ways. Calling people names or characterizing their arguments as "hate speech" is not good public discourse designed to discover the truth; it is bullying—the very thing GQA should be against.

If you remember my post, the clip I played had some back and forth on gay rights in it. I guess the GQA didn't like hearing any ideas contrary to their own.

More:

> The true motives of the GQA are revealed by what is not in the letter: the arguments made by Dr. Shermer in support of same sex marriage, arguments he made with great passion that elicited equal passion—on both sides of the issue—from the audience. If those in the GQA are so interested in advancing their position through sound reason and science—which was Dr. Shermer's point—why would they not highlight the arguments offered in support of it? Instead, the GQA seems to think they have a right not to hear an opposing opinion lest they be challenged!
>
> It's a shame that those in GQA appear so uninterested in evidence.

Well, read the whole thing.

I think the letter from the gay activists and the response are particularly interesting, especially given what Dr. George Yancey said in his essay on educational dogma, which I talked about yesterday.

This:

> For the dogmatic, ideas that violate the notions defended by education dogma are deemed "dangerous" and too much for the tender ears of our students. So in additional to shouting down speakers there have been calls for "trigger warnings" and "safe spaces" so that individuals do not have to listen to dangerous ideas. The true danger of these ideas is their threat to certain

> dogmatic beliefs of our students. These students are unwilling to consider the possibly that they are wrong, or perhaps not as right as they might believe. .

And:

> For all practical purposes the students saw the speaker as a heretic. The use of the term heretic can bring up images of torturing, imprisoning and killing of those who disagree. This is not occurring. However, it is reasonable to ask whether the seemingly restraint of the students from such drastic actions is due to their moral compass or to the fact that they do not have the social power to engage in such actions. Education dogma has led to attempting to kick offending businesses off campus, attempts to fire professors, and the official "shunning" of students who hold the "wrong ideas." Those with education dogma do punish those who violate their beliefs to the highest extent possible given their current level of institutional powers.

Dr. Yancey was talking about a different group of college leftists, but I think that's exactly what's going on here, too. For now, it's shouting down and writing letters and getting people fired (which actually happened to Turek, before). But will they stop there?

Former CIA deputy director: foreign countries have everything on Clinton's e-mail server

May 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from The Daily Caller.

Full text:

> Former acting CIA director Michael Morell said he believes former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's Homebrew email server was indeed compromised by foreign intelligence services.
>
> Morell, who served as both deputy director and acting director of the CIA during his four year tenure (2010-2013) made the remark to radio host Hugh Hewitt Friday afternoon as he continued promoting his new book on America's war on terror.
>
> "As a professional matter, do you believe at least one, or perhaps many, foreign intelligence services have everything that went to and from that server?" Hewitt asked.
>
> "So I think that foreign intelligence services, the good ones, have everything on any unclassified network that the government uses, whether that's a private server or a public one," Morell said. "They're that good."
>
> "So that's a yes?" Hewitt asked in affirmation.
>
> "Yep," Morell said.

Well, that's a comforting thought. But look on the bright side: at least with the e-mails all deleted, we don't have any evidence that Clinton committed treason with Benghazi, the Clinton Foundation, etc. That's a positive, right? Well, what do you care about more? Our national security, or Hillary Clinton getting elected President in 2016?

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George Stephanopolous was a member of the Clinton Global Initiative in 2010 and 2011

May 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

White House Senior Advisor George Stephanopolous with President Clinton in the Oval Office
(Image source: Time Magazine)

The text at the bottom of the April 4, 1994 Time Magazine cover says: "White House Senior Advisor George Stephanopolous with President Clinton in the Oval Office".

Breitbart News has more news on the ABC News defense of the Clinton Foundation by former Clinton administration top aide George Stephanopolous.

Excerpt:

> George Stephanopoulos' connections to the Clinton Foundation may be more substantial than he has so far admitted.
>
> An archived page of the Clinton Global Initiative website lists George Stephanopoulos as a "notable member" for the years 2010 and 2011. ABC News has confirmed Mr. Stephanopoulos was a member during both years.
>
> Blogger Jeryl Bier first noticed Stephanopoulos' name on a CGI list of "notable past members." The site did not specify when each individual listed had been a member. However, the Internet archive shows that Stephanopoulos was listed as a notable member in 2010 and 2011 along with a list of other well-known media members like Matt Lauer and Anderson Cooper.

> […]Breitbart News contacted ABC News and was told that Mr. Stephanopoulos did not pay a membership fee in either 2010 or 2011. According to a spokesperson, he was listed as a member because he moderated a panel for CGI events both of those years.
>
> The Internet archive does not have a cache of the notable CGI members prior to 2010, but according to publicly available sources, Stephanopoulos also participated in CGI events in 2005, in 2006, in 2007 and in 2009. Therefore, it's possible he was considered a member for every year between 2005-2011, with the possible exception of 2008, when he does not appear to have taken part in any CGI event.
>
> On Wednesday of this week, the Washington Free Beacon discovered that ABC's Stephanopoulos was listed on the Clinton Foundation website as a donor. WFB reporter Andrew Stiles contacted ABC News to confirm those donations. Rather than respond to the WFB, the spokesperson for ABC News appears to have leaked the story on the donations to Politico.

Politico is a left-wing organization, and they would have spun the story to protect the Clintons and ABC News. It amazes me that anyone looks to the mainstream media for news. Why would you trust people to tell you the truth about Clinton when they donated to the Clinton Foundation, did events for the Clinton Global Initiative, helped to get Bill Clinton elected President as a top aide, then worked in Bill Clinton's administration as White House Communications Director?

Remember what Stephanopoulos did to Romney during the last Republican primary debate?

The radically leftist New York Times summarizes the clip above:

> In 2012 advisers in the Romney campaign actively lobbied to exclude Mr. Stephanopoulos from the primary debates to no avail. Conservatives say their fears were borne out during the ABC News debate in New Hampshire that year. Mr. Stephanopoulos repeatedly asked Mr. Romney if he believed that states could outlaw birth control — a question that the Romney campaign saw as off-point and far afield of the issues that concerned voters. Mr. Stephanopoulos pressed repeatedly, asking six follow-up questions.

That's right. He asked 7 questions about a topic that as relevant to the campaign as Clinton's affairs with Monica Lewinsky. He did it in order to smear Republicans.

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Atheist gets her PhD in astronomy and astrophysics and finds evidence for God

May 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson

Christian apologist Terrell Clemmons tweeted this testimony by Sarah Salviander, a research scientist in astronomy and astrophysics at the prestigious University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Salviander writes:

> I was born in the U.S., but grew up in Canada. My parents were socialists and political activists who thought British Columbia would be a better place for us to live, since it had the only socialist government in North America at the time. My parents were also atheists, though they eschewed that label in favor of "agnostic." They were kind, loving, and moral, but religion played no part in my life. Instead, my childhood revolved around education, particularly science. I remember how important it was to my parents that my brother and I did well in school.

I just want to point out that I hope that all you Christian parents are taking seriously the obligation to make your kids do well in school, because even if they start out as atheists when they are young, they can still find their way back to God through study, as Sarah did.

She had a bad start, that's for sure:

> I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, a time when science fiction was enjoying a renaissance, thanks largely to the popularity of *Star Wars*. I remember how fascinated I was by the original *Star Wars* trilogy. It had almost nothing to do with science—it's more properly characterized as space opera—but it got me thinking about space in a big way. I also loved the original *Star Trek*, which was more science fiction. The stoic and logical character of Mr. Spock was particularly appealing to me. Popular science was also experiencing a renaissance at that

> time, which had a lot to do with Carl Sagan's television show, *Cosmos*, which I adored. The combination of these influences led to such an intense wonder about outer space and the universe, that by the time I was nine years old I knew I would be a space scientist someday.
>
> Canada was already post-Christian by the 1970s, so I grew up with no religion. In retrospect, it's amazing that for the first 25 years of my life, I met only three people who identified as Christian. My view of Christianity was negative from an early age, and by the time I was in my twenties, I was actively hostile toward Christianity. Looking back, I realized a lot of this was the unconscious absorption of the general hostility toward Christianity that is common in places like Canada and Europe; my hostility certainly wasn't based on actually knowing anything about Christianity. I had come to believe that Christianity made people weak and foolish; I thought it was philosophically trivial. I was ignorant not only of the Bible, but also of the deep philosophy of Christianity and the scientific discoveries that shed new light on the origins of the universe and life on Earth.

She documents a phase of following Ayn Rand and embracing "Objectivism", but eventually she rejects it for failing to answer the big questions of life.

More:

> I began to focus all of my energy on my studies, and became very dedicated to my physics and math courses. I joined campus clubs, started to make friends, and, for the first time in my life, I was meeting Christians. They weren't like Objectivists—they were joyous and content. And, they were smart, too. I **was astonished to find that my physics professors, whom I admired, were Christian. Their personal example began to have an influence on me, and I found myself growing less hostile to Christianity.**

This is why I think it is so important for Christian parents to raise their children to get advanced degrees… either to become professors themselves, or to finance others (e.g. – our own children) to do advanced degrees. It is so important for university students to see Christian professors on campus. And failing that, it's important that we bring Christian speakers in to debate non-Christian speakers on the important issues. This will not happen unless we recognize how important it is, and then make a plan to achieve it.

More:

> **I had joined a group in the Center for Astrophysics and Space Sciences (CASS) that was researching evidence for the big bang. The cosmic background radiation—the leftover radiation from the big bang—provides the strongest evidence for the theory, but cosmologists need other, independent lines of evidence to confirm it. My group was studying deuterium abundances in the early universe. Deuterium is an isotope of hydrogen, and its abundance in the early universe is sensitive to the amount of ordinary mass contained in the entire**

> **universe. Believe it or not, this one measurement tells us whether the big bang model is correct.**
>
> **If anyone is interested in how this works, I'll describe it, but for now I'll spare you the gruesome details. Suffice it to say that an amazing convergence of physical properties is necessary in order to study deuterium abundances in the early universe, and yet this convergence is exactly what we get. I remember being astounded by this, blown away, completely and utterly awed. It seemed incredible to me that there was a way to find the answer to this question we had about the universe. In fact, it seems that every question we have about the universe is answerable. There's no reason it has to be this way, and it made me think of Einstein's observation that the most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it's comprehensible. I started to sense an underlying order to the universe. Without knowing it, I was awakening to what Psalm 19 tells us so clearly, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."**
>
> That summer, I'd picked up a copy of T*he Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas and was reading it in my off hours. Previous to this, I'd only known it as an exciting story of revenge, since that's what the countless movie and TV adaptations always focused on. But it's more than just a revenge story, it's a philosophically deep examination of forgiveness and God's role in giving justice. I was surprised by this, and was starting to realize that the concept of God and religion was not as philosophically trivial as I had thought.
>
> All of this culminated one day, as I was walking across that beautiful La Jolla campus. I stopped in my tracks when it hit me—I believed in God! I was so happy; it was like a weight had been lifted from my heart. I realized that most of the pain I'd experienced in my life was of my own making, but that God had used it to make me wiser and more compassionate. It was a great relief to discover that there was a reason for suffering, and that it was because God was loving and just. God could not be perfectly just unless I—just like everyone else—was made to suffer for the bad things I'd done.

The Count of Monte Cristo is one of my favorite, favorite books as well, and had the same impact on me as it did on her.

OK, that's enough for this post. Go read the rest, and please share it. This woman is an expert Christian apologist and her life will have an influence. Are you going to be like her? Will you mentor others to be like her? Will you marry someone like her? Will you raise children who are like her (which is my plan)? We really need everyone to pull their weight now, because everywhere you look, the truth of Christianity is under attack.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory

- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Obama administration lifts 32-year-old ban on gay / bisexual men donating blood

May 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breitbart News reports.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration, more interested in pleasing its LGBT supporters than in protecting the health of the general public, is proposing "new rules" through the FDA that would terminate the 32-year-old ban on blood donations from gay and bisexual men.
>
> Hilariously, the FDA would still ban gay men from donating if they confess to having sex with a man within a year before donating blood.
>
> The FDA did admit that "some individuals knowingly donate despite the deferral."
>
> […]The FDA decided that the MSM group (men who have sex with men) was much less of a risk than those in the commercial sex work (CSW) and injection drug use (IDU) groups, even though the agency reported, "In 2010, male-to-male sexual contact accounted for 63% of newly diagnosed HIV infections among adults, and 78% of newly diagnosed HIV infections in men, indicating that male-to-male sexual contact remains associated with high risk of HIV exposure." Further, the FDA allowed that "the available epidemiologic data in the published literature do not support the concept that MSM who report mutual monogamy with a partner or who report routine use of safe sex practices are at low risk for HIV."
>
> So why make the change? The FDA admits, "Although not making a change would maintain the current level of safety of the blood supply, as noted above… there is evidence that the deferral policy is becoming less effective over time. **In addition, the policy is perceived by some as discriminatory.**"

Previously, I blogged about the HIV infection rates among men who have sex with men (MSM).

It said:

> Recent statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on HIV infection in the United States reveal some disturbing trends concerning gay males or, in CDC terminology, "men who have sex with men" (MSM). In recent data the CDC estimated that 61 percent of the 48,079 HIV infections diagnosed in 2010 occurred through male to male sexual contact.(1) According to the CDC data, sexual contact and injection drug use are the predominant means by which HIV is transmitted.
>
> The CDC data on HIV diagnoses came from forty-six states and five U.S.

> dependent areas. Some 29,194 new HIV diagnoses in 2010 were linked to male homosexual contact where no injection drug use took place. There were approximately 4550 HIV male diagnoses linked to heterosexual contact. Injection drug use was involved in 5481 cases. Women contracting the HIV virus through heterosexual contact accounted for approximately 8,800 cases. Another 47 HIV cases came from sources other than the four listed. Included in the other 47 cases were blood transfusions and prenatal exposure.(2) When CDC statistics are analyzed using the estimate of the MSM population at 4 percent of the American male population and assuming the other 96 percent who do not have sex with men are heterosexual, the risk of HIV infection from sexual contact for MSM was approximately 150 times greater than the heterosexual male population in 2010.(3)

Did Obama make a good decision by lifting the ban?

Christian florist Barronelle Stutzman explains what it is like to face persecution

May 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barronelle Stutzman vs Washington state

This article appeared in the Washington Post, and I though it might be good for us to find out what it is like when big government comes after you for taking the Bible seriously.

Barronelle writes:

> I've been a florist in Richmond, Wash., for more than 30 years. In that time, I've developed close relationships with many of my clients.
>
> One of my favorites was Rob Ingersoll. Ingersoll came in often and we'd talk. Like me, he had an artistic eye. I'd try to create really special arrangements for him. I knew he was gay, but it didn't matter — I enjoyed his company and his creativity.
>
> Then he asked me to create the floral arrangements for his wedding. I love Rob, and I'd always been happy to design for his special days. But there's something different about a wedding.
>
> Every person in the creative professions regularly has to make decisions about where they lend their artistic talents and which events they will participate in. For me, it's never about the person who walks into the shop, but about the message I'm communicating when someone asks me to "say it with flowers."
>
> I was raised Christian. In my religious tradition, marriage is a sacred religious ceremony between a man, a woman and Christ. It's a covenant with the

church. To participate in a wedding that violates those principles violates the core of my faith.

When Rob asked me, I thought about it carefully. I talked over the decision with my husband, and I prayed. But ultimately I know I had to stay true to my faith. I couldn't do it.

When I told Rob, I felt terrible that I couldn't share this day with him, as I'd shared so many with him before. I took his hands and said, "I'm sorry I can't do your wedding because of my relationship with Jesus Christ." Rob said he understood, and that he hoped his mom would walk him down the aisle, but he wasn't sure. We talked about how he got engaged and why they decided to get married after all these years. He asked me for the names of other flower shops. I gave him the names of three floral artists that I knew would do a good job, because I knew he would want something very special. We hugged and he left.

I never imagined what would happen next. Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson sued me after hearing in the media what had happened. That was shocking. Even more surprising, Rob and his partner Curt, with their ACLU attorneys, filed suit shortly thereafter. A judge ruled against me, but this week, with the help of the Alliance Defending Freedom, I appealed.

We've always heard that same-sex marriage would never affect anyone aside from the same-sex couples who wanted to be married. But a judge recently told me that my freedom to live and work according to my beliefs about marriage expired the day same-sex marriage became the law in my state.

Our government is supposed to protect our First Amendment rights — freedom of religion and expression. But the government is telling me I can only be a faithful Christian within the four walls of my church. That's impossible and it's unjust. What would Rob and Curt say if the government told them they could only be who they are in their own homes?

This isn't about bigotry. I've had gay and lesbian employees and friends. And it's important to remember that Rob was a long-time customer and friend despite our different beliefs about marriage. When I had to refer him for this one event, I did everything I could to avoid hurting his feelings and I believed we would remain friends when he left the shop. He got enough offers after this situation became public to do about 20 weddings.

In Washington, Rob and Curt have the right to get a marriage license. But that doesn't mean that the state should be able to force people in the creative professions like myself to create expression celebrating the ceremonies. We all have different viewpoints about how to live our lives. One thing I've loved about our country is that we protect the freedom of artistic expression and the right to disagree over these kinds of issues without one side being threatened by the government over it.

> But whatever the state says and however they want to try to punish me, they can't change my faith. What happens in my business or my life is in God's hands. Having a clear conscience means much more to me than any amount of money or my business. Rob and Curt have their beliefs about marriage and aren't being stopped by the state from living them out. I only ask for the same freedom.

If you want to understand just how bad things are in the culture right now, read some of the comments to her post. Lots of non-Christians telling her that true Christianity consists in abandoning morality completely and celebrating whatever non-Christians tell her to celebrate.

Anyway, I definitely *would not* live in Washington State. But not all states are like Washington.

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal

Here's Bobby Jindal, the Republican governor of Louisiana:

> Louisiana Governor and prospective GOP presidential candidate Bobby Jindal argued that to President Obama and Hillary Clinton religious liberty only means "you get to go to church and say what you want inside church" during a speech in South Carolina on Saturday.
>
> Jindal said, "There was a time when the left believed in the First Amendment. There was a time when the left really understood that religious liberty is the foundation of our freedom of speech, and freedom of association…without religious liberty, there are no other freedoms like freedom of speech, and freedom of association, and freedom of the press.
>
> He continued, "And make no mistake about it this isn't just about marriage, though, unlike President Obama and Secretary Clinton, my views on marriage are not evolving with the polls. I continue to believe in traditional marriage between a man and a woman. This debate is much, much bigger than that. It is bigger than marriage. This is about the power of the state to to close or fine Christian

> business owners, this is about the left trying to silence us and telling us we don't have a right to live our lives according to our sincerely held beliefs. When Secretary Clinton, when President Obama say, 'you've got the freedom of religious expression,' to them, that just means you get to go to church and say what you want inside church. That's not religious liberty. Religious liberty is the ability to live our lives according to our faith 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

Christianity is a whole life worldview. I want to be able to speak out in the public square for the Christian worldview, just like the gay activists can speak out for their worldview. That's what the First Amendment is all about, after all. If I wanted secularism, I'd move to North Korea. Unfortunately, we seem to be headed in that direction.

Why don’t men talk to women about commitment and marriage any more?

May 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

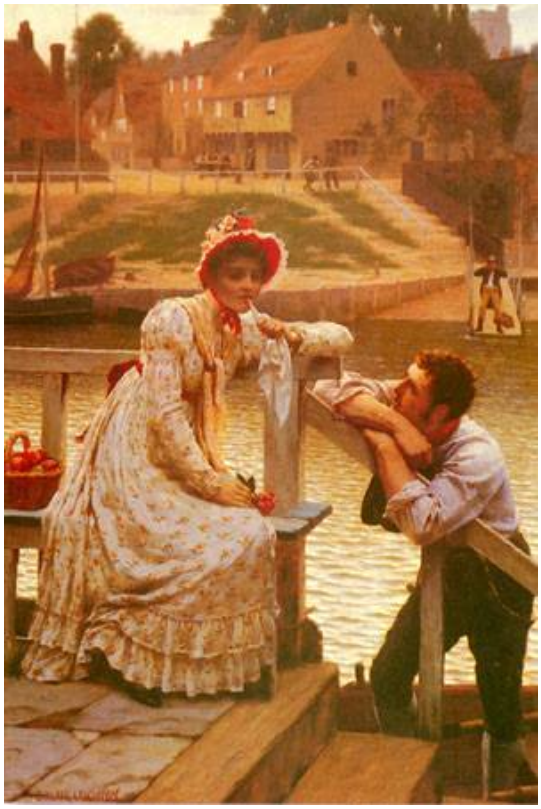

Painting: “Courtship”, by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

I saw this essay from a young woman named Jordana Narin who is explaining how she feels about not being able to talk seriously to a man she had sex with.

The essay was published in the radically leftist New York Times.

First kiss:

> I met [a guy] at summer camp in the Poconos at 14, playing pickup basketball by day and talking in the mess hall late into the night. Back home we lived only 30 minutes apart, but I didn’t see him again until 11th grade, when we ran into each other at a Halloween party in a Lower Manhattan warehouse.
>
> […]Under the muted flashes of a strobe light, we shared our first kiss.

Why do you think that she kissed a guy she barely knew? It makes no sense to me.

This is how they talked:

> We stayed in touch for the rest of high school, mostly by text message.

Oh my goodness. What can you find out about a person in 140-character messages? It makes no sense to me.

More:

> Every time his name popped up on my phone, my heart raced.
>
> Still, we were never more than semiaffiliated, two people who spoke and loved to speak and kissed and loved to kiss and connected and were scared of connecting. I told myself it was because we went to different schools, because teenage boys don't want relationships, because it was all in my head.
>
> I told myself a lot of things I never told him.
> Two years after our first kiss, we were exchanging "I've missed you" messages again. It was a brisk Friday evening in our first semesters of college when I stepped off a train and into his comfortable arms.
>
> He had texted weeks earlier on Halloween (technically our anniversary) to ask if I would visit. We had not talked since summer, and I was trying to forget him. We had graduated from high school into the same inexpressive void we first entered in costume, where an "I've missed you" was as emotive as one got. I decided to leave him behind when I left for college.
>
> But he wouldn't let me. Whenever I believed he was out of my life, I'd get a text or Facebook comment that would reel me back in.
>
> And I wouldn't let me, either. His affection, however sporadic, always loomed like a promise. So I accepted his invitation, asking myself what I had to lose.

She had sex with him, losing her virginity, and then:

> Naïvely, I had expected to gain clarity, to finally admit my feelings and ask if he felt the same. But I couldn't confess, couldn't probe. Periodically I opened my mouth to ask: "What are we doing? Who am I to you?" He stopped me with a smile, a wink or a handhold, gestures that persuaded me to shut my mouth or risk jeopardizing what we already had.
>
> On the Saturday-night train back to Manhattan, I cried. Back in my dorm room, buried under the covers so my roommates wouldn't hear, I fell asleep with a wet pillow and puffy eyes.
>
> The next morning I awoke to a string of texts from him: "You get back OK?" "Let's do it again soon :)"

Yes. She had sex with him because of text messages, Facebook comments and because he "missed her". Not because he had presented his resume and balance sheet to her father, then bought her an engagement ring, then a wedding ring, then walked down the aisle with her. And *of course* that opened her up for hurt. Sex binds people together. It's supposed to be for people who first commit to each other, self-sacrificially, for life – through all trials and hardships.

They had a lot more sex, but never talked about why or to what end:

> I'm told my generation will be remembered for our callous commitments and rudimentary romances. We hook up. We sext. We swipe right.
>
> All the while, we avoid labels and try to bury our emotions. We aren't supposed

> to want anything serious; not now, anyway.

"Swipe right" refers to a hooking-up app called Tinder. Who would use that? It makes no sense to me.

She praises the "control" that the Sexual Revolution gave her:

> To this day, if I ever let a guy's name slip out to my father, his response is always, "Are you two going steady?"
>
> He means to ask if we're dating exclusively, if I have a boyfriend. I used to hate it.
>
> "People don't go steady nowadays," I explain. "No one says that anymore. And almost no one does it. Women today have more power. We don't crave attachment to just one man. We keep our options open. We're in control."

Anyway, there's also an interview that goes with it on the radically leftist NPR web site, but I saved a copy of the MP3 file here in case it disappears.

Moderate Christian Rod Dreher comments on the interview:

> I wouldn't have understood the full scope of what this young woman is saying in her essay without the interview, which is short. In the segment, Narin says that men and women in her generation don't have actual romantic relationships anymore. It's all casual, non-committal sex. "Nobody knows whether their own feelings are real," she says.
>
> Our generation doesn't have relationships anymore. Nobody to call their own. Just casual. Nobody knows whether their own feelings are real.
>
> She tells the interviewer that there's lots of making out and sex, but nobody wants to be emotionally vulnerable to anybody else.
>
> […]**"Everyone in college uses Tinder," she said, referring to the wildly popular dating and hook-up app. "You can literally swipe right and find someone just to hang out for the night. There's no commitments required, and I think that makes committing to someone even harder, because it's so normal, and so expected even, to not want to commit."**
>
> "**In a different time, my grandparents, my great grandparents, they might have thought they were missing out on casual sex**," she says. "But since my generation has been saddled down with that, we kind of look to the past and say well, wasn't that nice. I think both are optimal. **I'm a huge feminist, and I think women should be able to do whatever they want to do. If a woman wants to have tons of casual sex, she totally should.** But I think that there should be the option. And they shouldn't be gendered, women and men. But there should be the option of being in a relationship."

Right. Young women like her who have swallowed radical feminism hook, line and sinker don't want to miss out on casual sex right now, but they want to get married "some day".

But what do they think marriage is? I think this popular song sheds some light on it.

I heard this popular song by Meghan Trainor being deconstructed on the Ben Shapiro show last week – look at the lyrics:

> You got that 9 to 5
> But, baby, so do I
> So don't be thinking I'll be home and baking apple pies
> I never learned to cook
>
> After every fight
> Just apologize
> And maybe then I'll let you try and rock my body right
> Even if I was wrong
> You know I'm never wrong
>
> Make time for me
> Don't leave me lonely
> And know we'll never see your family more than mine
>
> Even when I'm acting crazy
> Tell me everything's alright

This is what women today understand marriage to be. They expect to be pursuing their own careers, not supporting their husbands and raising children. An independent flow of money is important to feminists, because it allows them to insulate themselves from the husband's vision of stewardship, which is important to his primary goal of making the marriage serve God above all. I have also heard that women want to work because they view the roles of wife and mother as demeaning, and they don't trust men to provide. Well, that's why they ought to be choosing men who 1) have a resume with long-term commitments, 2) are used to sharing with others and donating to causes. But I personally know two women who chose men 5 years younger than they were, students who had never earned a dime – presumably because they were easier to manipulate and control. (One of the women has chosen younger, unemployed, penniless men three times in a row, and then she complains that men are not financially prepared for marriage!) The lyrics also say that wives don't do cooking, and probably implies not being domestic at all.

And in marriage, women expect to win every disagreement. One woman told me that her opinions about financial matters were as good as mine. I have a BS, MS and a very high net worth. She is in debt 25K in her 30s, is living at home with her parents and working an easy minimum wage job. She expects to win any disagreements about career and money, because, like the song says, she is never wrong. The lyrics also say that sex is conditional on whether the woman feels validated and happy. But men are expected to go to work regardless of whether their needs are met. When it comes to visiting family and holidays – two frequent disagreements even in complementarian couples – she lets us know that her family is more important than his. And she is allowed to act crazy, which

could involve a whole host of selfish, wasteful, narcissistic behaviors, (e.g. – skydving, ziplining, surfing), and he is just supposed to accept it – and pay for it. For the rest of his life. How does any of this craziness help him in his plan to build a marriage that serves God? But even Christian women often think that relationships and marriage are about their needs, not serving God. It's very important to understand that women today are only able to sustain relationships with men by giving them sex and then shutting up about what it means and where the relationship is headed – they have nothing that a man wants with respect to the role of wife, so there will be no marriage.

So is it worth it for a man to make a lifelong commitment to provide for a woman like this?

Let me explain to you why men are not interested in committing to, or discussing commitment with, radical feminists. Men will have sex with a radical feminist, but they will never commit to them. Why not? If a man's role is just to please the "huge feminist", then there is no reason to commit to her. Because of no-fault divorce laws, a man loses all leverage in negotiations the minute he marries a radical feminist. The only leverage he has with her is *before* the marriage. Radical feminists believe that relationships are about their plans and their needs. They are not interested in responsibilities, expectations or obligations to men or to children. But men, even secular men, understand that they must not marry a woman who thinks that relationships should impose no obligations on her. Men play dumb with women to keep the sex coming, but there is no way they would commit to such women.

Let me speak about the men who are interested in commitment. A man marries a woman if she is interested in supporting his plan to change the world. For Christian men, that means making sure that the marriage and children will build up the Kingdom of God. Although you might think that every woman who claims to be a Christian would be interested in a man who has a plan to build the Kingdom of God, that is not a common view of relationships, even among Christian women. Every Christian woman needs to be evaluated to understand what they expect marriage to be like. If they don't show evidence in their own choices that they are used to self-denial, self-sacrifice, etc. (which all Christians ought to be), then it's not a good idea to marry her.

The problem with feminism is that it makes women think that marriage is about them getting their needs met, with no obligations to men or children. That's what the sexual revolution and abortion taught women. Relationships should be recreational. You get a man to pay attention to you with sex, not with support or love. If a baby arrives, don't let it impose obligations on you – just kill it. But marriage – lifelong commitment to have a home and raise kids – requires that women have a certain character. Marriage is hard work, especially with kids. Men who are interested in marriage will prefer a woman who thinks less of herself ("hugely feminist"), and more about others (husbands and children), and who accepts that the needs of others create obligations on her, which she is responsible for. That's why I recommend women who go into STEM fields in college and have solid resumes. STEM helps to break the selfishness of women. (Jordana has a degree in creative writing) But many women will not want to be led to do hard things that

prepare her for marriage, and that's why commitment-minded men don't talk to them. If a woman is not interested in the obligations that a life-long commitment imposes on her, then she will be stuck with men who are only interested in sex with her.

Now there is one exception to this rule, and that's young, naive men. If a woman is a "huge feminist" then she might be able to get attention from a doormat man without having to give him sex. Typically, these men have no work experience, no savings, are much younger, and are so desperate for attention that they do what Meghan Trainor says in the song: apologize, grovel, condone craziness and selfishness, etc. Although a woman may think she wants a man like that in the short-term, in the long-term, those men prove unattractive and unsatisfactory. In order to be masculine, a man needs to be a good moral leader and a good spiritual leader. And that means that he needs to call a woman higher, away from her self-centeredness, so she can serve God and serve other people. He cannot just agree with whatever crazy, emotional thing that she thinks up that is fun, thrilling and bound to fail. A good leader has *experience* as a provider, protector and leader that he brings to bear on decision-making, and proven ability achieving and leading others to greatness. I think women with low self-esteem will be interested in men who are doormats, but that is not the solution to the commitment problem. The real solution is for them to let themselves be led by a good man into doing harder and harder things – graduate school, non-trivial work (if there are no young children at home), organizing Christian speakers on campus, teaching classes in apologetics, defending the unborn, defending marriage, getting herself out of debt, moving out of her parents' house, etc. The self-esteem she needs has to come from doing hard work – that is what builds her into the kind of person who can handle responsibilities, expectations and obligations in a marriage. There is no shortcut to an effective, influential marriage that goes through a doormat man.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley: Did Jesus rise from the dead?

May 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence. He's also done debates with Richard Bauckham and Michael Bird. You have to respect him for getting out there and defending his views in public.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is

missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history

- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates

invented legendaryt story-telling
- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and

resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should

prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Republican Governor Mary Fallin defends religious liberty against gay marriage

May 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Oklahama Governor Mary Fallin

Great news about one of my favorite Republican governors, Mary Fallin.

Excerpt:

> If the U.S. Supreme Court decides to overturn the millennia-long definition of marriage, Oklahoma clergy will not have to be concerned that they will be forced to perform such ceremonies.
>
> On May 1, Governor Mary Fallin signed a law that would allow ministers to exercise their religious beliefs on marriage and decline to "wed" same-sex couples.
>
> Governor Fallin's office said in a press release that H.B. 1007 is "a bill protecting religious leaders from being compelled to perform marriages that are in direct contradiction to their religious beliefs."
>
> The law says that "no regularly licensed, ordained, or authorized official of any religious organization shall be required to solemnize or recognize any marriage that violates the official's conscience or religious beliefs."
>
> Unlike other governors, the Oklahoma Republican did not back down from the potential controversy that could surround her signature of H.B. 1007.
>
> "This bill makes it clear that the government can never compel our religious leaders or houses of worship to act in violation of their faith where marriage is concerned," Fallin said. "I am proud to join our legislature in taking a strong stand in defense of religious liberty and the freedoms awarded to all American citizens by the U.S. Constitution."

Somehow, I missed this story about a similar bill passed last week – although this one has

not been signed:

> The bill is similar to one passed by the Texas Senate last week, the "Pastor Protection Act." The bill, which is being considered by the House, has enraged some LGBT activists.
>
> The Texas Freedom Network, which says its mission is "to counter the Religious Right," said the bill would give religiously affiliated entities the "authority to discriminate against almost any Texas family."
>
> The bill's supporters say they are simply trying to guarantee conscience rights, which even the Obama administration's Solicitor General, Donald Verrilli, has admitted could be imperiled by a Supreme Court ruling redefining marriage.

I wonder if either of these states will draw protests from the big corporations and the gay activists? I am more optimistic about Oklahoma, because they don't have the same exposure to the big corporations that Texas does. Remember that in Indiana it was the big corporations like Apple, Salesforce, Wal-Mart, Angie's List, etc. that caused Governor Mike Pence to back down, and then the legislature passed a law that made it even tougher on people who want to refuse to celebrate gay marriage.

Barack Obama and Planned Parenthood

Meanwhile, Obama the atheist wants Bible-believing Christians to convert to Marxism:

> […]…President Obama told the Catholic-Evangelical Leadership Summit that churches should spend less time focusing on abortion and same-sex "marriage."
>
> During a panel discussion on poverty at Georgetown University last Tuesday, Obama criticized churches for how they engage politically, focusing on "divisive issues" such as protecting life and preserving marriage.
>
> […]While the Christian religion has rejected abortion since its founding, and always considered homosexuality a grave sin, traditionally no welfare state economic theory has been endorsed by the Christian Church.
>
> […]"I reject his premise," blogger Stan Guthrie, an editor at large at *Christianity Today*, commented. "People of faith already do far more for the poor than secular leftists."

> President Obama's comments, he said, exemplified "unbelievable ignorance on display."
>
> The unusual scene of a sitting president criticizing churches for emphasizing traditional doctrines opened the question of whether the president and others on the Left intend to influence, cajole, or bully Christians into altering their fundamental moral beliefs. Obama's remarks came shortly after presidential candidate Hillary Clinton declared that religious beliefs against abortion "have to be changed."
>
> She had previously likened beliefs that homosexuality is immoral to "honor killings, widow burning, or female genital mutilation."
>
> […]Those churches which have emphasized issues like economic redistribution or climate change have had the most precipitous loss of members, according to a new Pew Research Center report on the decline of Christianity in America.
>
> In his remarks at Georgetown, Obama also criticized Fox News for its reporting on welfare and government aid recipients, declaring, "We're going to have to change how the media reports on these issues."

I blogged about Hillary Clinton's comments about forcing Christians to endorse abortion in a previous post. I have no doubt that she has the same views on forcing Christians to celebrate gay marriage, too.

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Well, the good news is that we get another shot at this in 2016. I expect a lot of people who claim to be Christians to vote for Hillary Clinton, the candidate of abortion and gay marriage. The candidate of anti-Christian fascism. Will it be different this time? Are we going to put the lives of children, born and unborn ahead of global warming and free birth control pills, this time?

A Harvard University student explains how evidence changed her mind about God

May 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Harvard University student discovers apologetics

Here's a must-read article about the effectiveness of apologetics on college campuses in Christianity Today.

Excerpt:

> I don't know when I first became a skeptic. It must have been around age 4, when my mother found me arguing with another child at a birthday party: "But how do you know what the Bible says is true?" By age 11, my atheism was so widely known in my middle school that a Christian boy threatened to come to my house and "shoot all the atheists." My Christian friends in high school avoided talking to me about religion because they anticipated that I would tear down their poorly constructed arguments. And I did.
>
> As I set off in 2008 to begin my freshman year studying government at Harvard (whose motto is *Veritas*, "Truth"), I could never have expected the change that awaited me.
>
> It was a brisk November when I met John Joseph Porter. Our conversations initially revolved around conservative politics, but soon gravitated toward religion. He wrote an essay for the *Ichthus*, Harvard's Christian journal, defending God's existence. I critiqued it. On campus, we'd argue into the wee hours; when apart, we'd take our arguments to e-mail. Never before had I met a Christian who could respond to my most basic philosophical questions: How does one

> understand the Bible's contradictions? Could an omnipotent God make a stone he could not lift? What about the Euthyphro dilemma: Is something good because God declared it so, or does God merely identify the good? To someone like me, with no Christian background, resorting to an answer like "It takes faith" could only be intellectual cowardice. Joseph didn't do that.
>
> And he did something else: He prodded me on how inconsistent I was as an atheist who nonetheless believed in right and wrong as objective, universal categories. Defenseless, I decided to take a seminar on meta-ethics. After all, atheists had been developing ethical systems for 200-some years. In what I now see as providential, my atheist professor assigned a paper by C. S. Lewis that resolved the Euthyphro dilemma, declaring, "God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God."
>
> Joseph also pushed me on the origins of the universe. I had always believed in the Big Bang. But I was blissfully unaware that the man who first proposed it, Georges Lemaître, was a Catholic priest. And I'd happily ignored the rabbit trail of a problem of what *caused* the Big Bang, and what *caused* that cause, and so on.
>
> By Valentine's Day, I began to believe in God. There was no intellectual shame in being a deist, after all, as I joined the respectable ranks of Thomas Jefferson and other Founding Fathers.
>
> I wouldn't stay a deist for long. A Catholic friend gave me J. Budziszewski's book Ask Me Anything, which included the Christian teaching that "love is a commitment of the will to the true good of the other person." This theme—of love as sacrifice for true good—struck me. The Cross no longer seemed a grotesque symbol of divine sadism, but a remarkable act of love. And Christianity began to look less strangely mythical and more cosmically beautiful.

Now, I'm going to get into a lot of trouble for saying this, but I think that if you are a Christian and you are in a secular university, then you really need to have put in the effort to study the areas of science, history and philosophy that are relevant to the Christian faith. This is regardless of your personal abilities or field of study. We must all make an effort regardless of how comfortable we are with things that are hard for us to learn.

Granted, most people today are not interested in truth, because we just have this cultural preoccupation with having fun and feeling good and doing whatever we want to do whenever we want to do it. Most atheists I've met are like that, but some are more honest, open-minded, and they just have never encountered any good reasons or evidence to think that God exists and that Jesus is anything other than a man. There are a lot of atheists like that who are just waiting to hear some decent evidence. Our job is to prepare for them and then engage them, if they are willing to be engaged.

I think that definition of love she cited – self-sacrifice for the true good of another person – is important. I don't think that ordinary Christians like you or me spends time on apologetics because we "like" it. I know lots of Christians who are in tough, expensive

academic programs trying to get the skills they need to defend truth in areas that matter. They do this because they know that there are people out there who are interested in truth, and who are willing to re-prioritize their lives if the truth is made clear to them. We need to be willing to serve God by doing hard things that work.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig at Biola U: Does God Exist?

May 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang
– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws

– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection
– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus

– god wouldn’t have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that’s a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that’s a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that’s a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don’t support life, that’s a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that’s a bad design

3. hitchens’ burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can’t prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig’s scientific arguments don’t go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don’t prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don’t prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn’t be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig’s evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can’t use the progress of science
– it’s too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god’s existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn’t forming his view based on evidence
– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don’t believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you’ve got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God

– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH’s evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH’s argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn’t need to be efficient

CH’s argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH’s argument that Craig’s scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH’s argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn’t need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH’s citation of Craig’s book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true
– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH’s rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH’s rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH’s argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed

– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them
– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that's a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven't even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn't prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they're growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn't improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do

– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn't need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that's why people act morally
– it's degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don't know why, because i can't ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don't hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don't believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don't agree

WC moral argument: it's not epistemology it's the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing

– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history
– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it’s just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that’s not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

In one day, Bill and Hillary Clinton got over $1 million for FOUR speeches

May 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow, “dead broke” indeed.

The Weekly Standard reports:

> Disclosure forms filed with the Federal Election Commission by Hillary Clinton provide fascinating details of the remarkable money-making machine that is the once-and-possibly-future first couple. Between January 2014 and the filing of the forms on May 15, 2015 (up to and including a speech by Bill Clinton to the American Institute of Architects the day before the filing), the Clintons made about $30 million, approximately $25 million from speeches alone.
>
> Both of the Clintons have given speeches regularly in the 16-month period covered in the filing with rarely more than a few weeks off in between engagements. Often events are crowded together during a period of several days, sometimes with more than one speech on the same day. On a single day last October, Bill and Hillary delivered a total of four speeches, taking home over $1 million. Those four speeches fell in the middle of a three-day blitz that brought in a total of $1,511,000. (Mrs. Clinton edged out her husband $786,000 to $725,000.)
>
> […]Although the audiences for the Clintons vary widely, the actual content and duration of the speeches is not always revealed. However, a YouTube video of Bill Clinton’s recent speech to the American Institute of Architects, apparently recorded by an attendee, shows that the $250,000 fee paid to Mr. Clinton purchased the group a 23 minute speech, an hourly rate of about $652,000.

On a per-hour basis, she makes more than all of the CEOs of the largest companies.

Look:

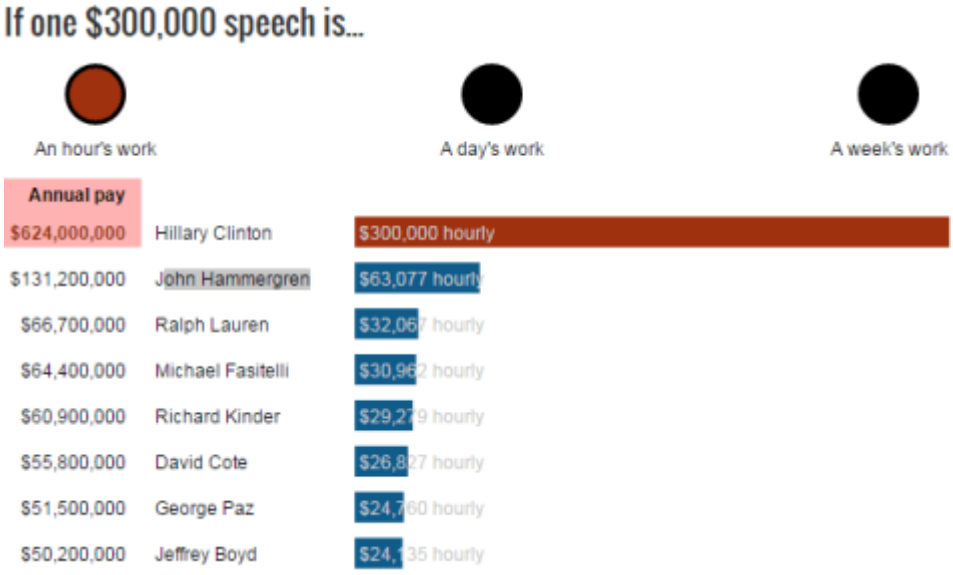

$300,000 an hour for a speech
That's from this astounding article from the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton is drawing a populist bead on lavish Wall Street pay packages as she revs up her march to the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination, but in some respects the fat-per-speech fee she can charge puts her far ahead of the top 10 highest-paid American CEOs.
>
> "I think it's fair to say that if you look across the country, the deck is stacked in favor of those already at the top. There's something wrong when CEOs make 300 times more than the American worker…," Clinton said during her first campaign swing last week at an Iowa community college.
>
> Bashing Wall Streeters is part of Clinton's strategy of remaking her image to appear more sympathetic to middle class voters, while also appealing to left-wing Democrats who are attracted to Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and the even more radical supporters of Sen. Bernie Sanders, the Vermont socialist who talks of seeking the 2016 nomination.

Let's compare the per-hour rate of pay for Hillary compared to the top American CEOs:

> On that basis, the CEOs are pikers compared to an hour of Clinton speaking for $300,000. Hammergren, for example, makes only $63,076 for the same hour of labor. Clothing magnate Ralph Lauren, the second best-paid CEO on the Forbes list receives $32,067. Vornado Realty's Michael Fasitelli, the third-place CEO, gets $30,961 per hour.

And this is what her speeches are like:

Is that worth millions of dollars? When you put this together with the secretive Clinton Foundation, it looks like something else might be going on here.

The radically leftist New York Times is saying that the "dead broke" Clintons made $30 million in a 16-month period.

Astonishing:

> Hillary Rodham Clinton and her husband made at least $30 million over the last 16 months, **mainly from giving paid speeches to corporations, banks and other organizations**, according to financial disclosure forms filed with federal elections officials on Friday.
>
> The sum, which makes Mrs. Clinton among the wealthiest of the 2016 presidential candidates, could create challenges for the former secretary of state as she tries to cast herself as a champion of everyday Americans in an era of income inequality.
>
> The $25 million in speaking fees since the beginning of last year continue a lucrative trend for the Clintons: They have now earned more than $125 million on

> the circuit since leaving the White House in 2001.
>
> In addition, the report shows, Mrs. Clinton reported income exceeding $5 million from her memoir of her time as secretary of state, “Hard Choices.”

Now, she wants to save us from the “1%”. She’s the 1% of the 1% of the 1%.

Related posts

- George Stephanopolous was a member of the Clinton Global Initiative in 2010 and 2011
- Former CIA deputy director: foreign countries have everything on Clinton’s e-mail server
- ABC News anchor who defended Clinton Foundation donated $75,000 to Clinton Foundation
- Only 10% of money given to Clinton Foundation goes to charity
- Mitt Romney: Hillary’s Clinton Foundation Uranium One scandal “looks like bribery”
- New study: how the mainstream media deleted Hillary Clinton’s e-mail scandal
- “Dead broke” Hillary Clinton makes more money in an hour than top-paid CEO
- New book by Peter Schweizer: Clinton State Department favored foreign donors
- Largest individual donor to Clinton Foundation has trade ties to Iran
- Clinton Foundation continues to take donations from regimes that oppress women
- What are Hillary Clinton’s views on amnesty and illegal immigration?
- Hillary Clinton never signed separation form that required her to turn over all e-mails
- Could Hillary Clinton be sent to prison because of her secret e-mail server?
- Hillary Clinton deleted 32,000 e-mails, refuses to turn over her home-based server
- Clinton Foundation: all eight of the highest paid executives are men
- E-mails released by Clinton: there are “months, and months, and months” missing
- Hillary Clinton used her private e-mail account to conduct State Department business
- E-mails: Hillary Clinton’s top aides knew in minutes that Benghazi was a terrorist attack
- Clinton Foundation receives millions in donations from regimes that oppress women
- As senator, Hillary Clinton paid women 72 cents for every dollar she paid men
- Hillary Clinton’s fake Bosnia gunfire story and her abortion award
- Hillary Clinton: don’t let anybody tell you that corporations and businesses create jobs
- Hillary Clinton aides were present to “separate” damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- Universities raise tuition while paying hundreds of thousands to Hillary Clinton to speak
- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- Hillary Clinton opposes bill to cut taxpayer funding of abortions abroad

Letitia Wong: making a difference with apologetics inside and outside her home

May 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Letitia Wong
Article in the Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Letitia Wong is a busy woman.
>
> She is a devoted mother of two, a responsibility that she takes very seriously. She also writes a Christian Apologetics blog, "Talitha, Koum!"
>
> At Missouri Baptist University in St. Louis; she directs a student chapter which is devoted to providing those students with resources for defending the Christian worldview against cultural and intellectual challenges. In addition to helping college students, she also helps teenagers with apologetics through a local organization called Faith Ascent Ministries.
>
> Letitia is a cohost of a weekly radio program – named TRU-Life Fridays Radio – which focuses on educating and promoting the defense of a healthy ethic of human life.
>
> […]Letitia is well-qualified in her specific focus on the defense of life, having studied Health Sciences at Purdue and Medical Technology at Arizona State. Letitia's unique capacity to uphold the Christian worldview does not stop here, though:

This quotation from Letitia was what caused me to link to her profile:

> "For as long as I can remember, critics have accused Christianity as a legalistic religion that is anti-woman among other things. This seems to demand that Christian women come to the forefront to proclaim that Woman was created as

> the completion to humankind. How appropriate, then, that women engage and complete the argument for the validity and veracity of the Christian faith. Plus, women who can communicate well and teach other women make the disciplines used in apologetics so much more accessible so that more women can become involved.
>
> "I have many times heard women disparage apologetics study, questioning its relevance, worried that it causes people to complicate faith or be combative. I want to shift this perspective. **Women tend to invest heavily in their children's education and spiritual and worldview formation. However, they also tend to disconnect at the most crucial point in this investment, the point at which the Christian worldview relies heavily on sound reasoning about philosophical and theological matters. The need to follow through is key to bringing the heart and the mind together to apply all the knowledge of their education (history, science, and the humanities) to be able to have and share an integrated Christian worldview. Apologetics study completes what women begin in earnest in properly educating their children, and I believe what is beneficial for children is likewise beneficial for women.** Apologetics bridges the gap between knowledge and application. Knowledge and application together are the key to communication of truth to a world that is skeptical about the claims of Christianity."

I have always felt concerned because I meet many women who are not interested in apologetics, and especially not the evidential kind that Letitia likes. I really love the way that she has thought through her responsibilities as wife and mother, and realized that apologetics is needed for her to do her jobs. I know that she has been involved with organizing apologetics conferences, her pro-life podcast, and her blog. So clearly, she has a need to be good at defending her faith. I think that's the right way to become interested in apologetics – you want to be able to talk to people about these things, and have an influence. That means having the knowledge, so that you are leading others, not just expressing your opinions.

Define biomimetics and give two examples from peer-reviewed science journals?

May 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm baby octopus, and I approve this message

Today, I have two examples of biomimetics.

But first, here's what that is:

> Biomimetic refers to human-made processes, substances, devices, or systems that imitate nature. The art and science of designing and building biomimetic apparatus is called biomimetics, and is of special interest to researchers in nanotechnology, robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), the medical industry, and the military.

Here's the first example from Science Daily.

> A robotic arm that can bend, stretch and squeeze through cluttered environments has been created by a group of researchers from Italy.

> Inspired by the eight arms of the octopus, the device has been specifically designed for surgical operations to enable surgeons to easily access remote, confined regions of the body and, once there, manipulate soft organs without damaging them.
>
> It is believed the device could reduce the number of instruments, and thus entry incisions, necessary in surgical operations, with part of the arm being used to manipulate organs whilst another part of the arm operates.

> The device, which has been presented 14 May, in IOP Publishing's journal ***Bioinspiration and Biomimetics***, holds a key advantage over traditional surgical tools due to its ability to quickly transform from a bending, flexible instrument into a stiff and rigid instrument.
>
> It has been inspired by the eight highly flexible arms of the octopus which have no rigid skeletal support and can thus easily adapt to the surrounding environment by twisting, changing their length or bending in any direction at any point along the arm.
>
> The octopus can, however, vary the stiffness of its arms, temporarily transforming the flexible limbs into stiffened segments to allow the octopus to move and interact with objects.
>
> […]The ability of the robotic arm to manipulate organs while surgical tasks are performed was successfully demonstrated in simulated scenarios where organs were represented by water-filled balloons.
>
> 'Traditional surgical tasks often require the use of multiple specialized instruments such as graspers, retractors, vision systems and dissectors, to carry out a single procedure,' Dr Ranzani continued.
>
> 'We believe our device is the first step to creating an instrument that is able to perform all of these tasks, as well as reach remote areas of the body and safely support organs around the target site.'

Fascinating, and useful. If we are reverse engineering these designs, should we assume that they were designed in the first place? Especially when there is zero evidence for macroevolution either in the lab or in the fossil record.

The shorebird's beak is more interesting than you might think

My second example of biomimetics is also from Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> A UT Arlington engineering professor and his doctoral student have designed a device based on a shorebird's beak that can accumulate water collected from fog

> and dew.

> The device could provide water in drought-stricken areas of the world or deserts around the globe.
>
> Xin Heng… a doctoral student in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, and Cheng Luo, MAE professor, have made a device that can use fog and dew to collect water.
>
> Cheng Luo, professor in the Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering Department, and Xin Heng, PhD candidate in the same College of Engineering department, published "Bioinspired Plate-Based Fog Collectors" in the Aug. 25 edition of ACS' (American Chemical Society) ***Applied Materials & Interfaces*** journal.
>
> The idea began when Heng saw an article that explained the physical mechanism shorebirds use to collect their food — driving food sources into their throats by opening and closing their beaks. Luo said that inspired the team to try to replicate the natural beak in the lab.
>
> "We wanted to see if we could do that first," Luo said. "When we made the artificial beaks, we saw that multiple water drops were transported by narrow, beak-like glass plates. That made us think of whether we could harvest the water from fog and dew."
>
> Their experiments were successful. They found out they could harvest about four tablespoons of water in a couple of hours from glass plates that were about 26 centimeters long by 10 centimeters wide.

Now, if we are lifting designs out of nature, then shouldn't we give honor to God for putting the designs in there in the first place? I really think it's important to give God credit where due for his clever designs, even if you're not a big fan of the shorebird. I also think it's interesting that it's engineers who made this application of something in nature, not biologists. Also, I feel I have to mention that the birdy is also cute, which is not insignificant, if you like birds as much as I do. I blog about birds a lot on this blog. And dragonflies too! Because wings are awesome!

Pro-gay marriage study retracted for using “completely” fake data

May 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

The story was reported in the ultra-leftist Politico.

They say:

> One of the authors of a recent study that claimed that short conversations with gay people could change minds on same-sex marriage has retracted it.
>
> Columbia University political science professor Donald Green’s retraction this week of a popular article published in the December issue of the academic journal Science follows revelations that his co-author allegedly faked data for the study, “When contact changes minds: An experiment on transmission of support of gay marriage.”
>
> According to the academic watchdog blog Retraction Watch, Green published a retraction of the paper Tuesday after confronting co-author Michael LaCour, a graduate assistant at UCLA.
>
> **The study received widespread coverage from The New York Times, Vox, The Huffington Post, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal and others when it was released in December.**
>
> “I am deeply embarrassed by this turn of events and apologize to the editors, reviewers, and readers of Science,” Green told the blog.
>
> […]The investigation into the paper began when graduate students at the University of California, Berkeley, were initially impressed with the work and wanted to do an extension of it, according to a timeline of their probe posted Tuesday. When the students started a similar study, they found they were not getting the large response rate that Green and LaCour received in theirs.
>
> […]**Qualtrics said it was not familiar with the project and “denied having the capabilities” to do some of what the survey described, according to**

> **Green, after UCLA's political science department chair contacted the company. The graduate students also contacted a Yale political science professor to help look into the discrepancies.**
>
> **After speaking with LaCour, Green told one of the graduate students and the Yale professor that the UCLA graduate assistant [Michael LaCour],had confessed to "falsely describing at least some of the details of the data collection."**

The equally leftist Washington Post is even more forceful – calling the data a complete fake.

Excerpt:

> […]…**[W]hat really happened was that the data were faked by first author LaCour.** Co-author Green (my colleague at Columbia) had taken his collaborator's data on faith; once he found out, he firmly retracted the article.
>
> Ironically, **LaCour benefited (in the short term) by his strategy of completely faking it.** If he'd done the usual strategy of taking real data and stretching out the interpretation, I and others would've been all over him for overinterpreting his results, garden of forking paths, etc. But, by doing the Big Lie, he bypassed all those statistical concerns.

The Christian Post has an article on this that makes the faking of the data look deliberate.

Excerpt:

> According to Hughes, after Green was alerted to the irregularities, he contacted LaCour's dissertation advisor, Professor Lynn Vavreck. **After Vavreck confronted LaCour, he was unable to provide the study's raw data and claimed he accidentally deleted the file. A representative from Qualtrics, the company that provided the survey program LaCour used, told UCLA there was no evidence that the data had been deleted.**

Isn't it amazing that the fake study was quickly picked up by the mainstream media, but none of them thought to check the data? Well, I guess it's what they wanted to believe, and there was not even one person who thought critically about it. That's the trouble with surrounding yourself with people who agree with you. I doubt that anyone in the mainstream media can even state the case against same-sex marriage without resorting to insults or caricatures. And that's how these mistakes get made.

Here's an older post that summarizes what we know from research on same-sex parenting. This post is more recent, and links to two studies – one from the UK, and one from Canada – that show that same-sex parenting does have a negative effect on children. Surprise! Moms matter. Dads matter. You can't switch either one out without hurting the child. That's one reason why people oppose same-sex marriage. And another is because it is not compatible with religious liberty and freedom of conscience. We're getting more proof of that almost every day.

Jay Richards: why should Christians learn about economics?

May 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good basic introduction to the free enterprise system by Dr. Jay Richards:

In this lecture, Dr. Richards covers the following topics:

- the piety myth – thinking that good intentions matter more than good results
- the greed myth – thinking that capitalism is about greed instead of about innovation and serving others
- the zero sum game myth – thinking that voluntary exchanges between buyers and sellers result in win-lose outcomes
- the materialist myth – thinking that there is only a set amount of wealth to be divided by competition

It turns out that the best system for lifting the poor out of poverty – by work or charity – is the economic system that creates wealth through human ingenuity and hard work. That system is the free enterprise system.

Something to read?

If you can't listen to the lecture and don't want to buy the whole book "Money, Greed and God?" Then I have a series of posts on each chapter for you.

The index post is here.

Here are the posts in the series:

- Part 1: The Eight Most Common Myths about Wealth, Poverty, and Free Enterprise
- Part 2: Can't We Build A Just Society?
- Part 3: The Piety Myth
- Part 4: The Myth of the Zero Sum Game
- Part 5: Is Wealth Created or Transferred?
- Part 6: Is Free Enterprise Based on Greed?
- Part 7: Hasn't Christianity Always Opposed Free Enterprise?
- Part 8: Does Free Enterprise Lead to An Ugly Consumerist Culture?
- Part 9: Will We Use Up All Our Resources?
- Part 10: Are Markets An Example of Providence?

Parts 4 and 5 are my favorites. It's so hard to choose one to excerpt, but I must. I will choose… Part 4.

Here's the problem:

> **Myth #3: The Zero Sum Game Myth – believing that trade requires a winner and a loser.**

> One reason people believe this myth is because they misunderstand how economic value is determined. Economic thinkers with views as diverse as Adam Smith and Karl Marx believed economic value was determined by the labor theory of value. This theory stipulates that the cost to produce an object determines its economic value.
>
> According to this theory, if you build a house that costs you $500,000 to build, that house is worth $500,000. But what if no one can or wants to buy the house? Then what is it worth?
>
> Medieval church scholars put forth a very different theory, one derived from human nature: economic value is in the eye of the beholder. The economic value of an object is determined by how much someone is willing to give up to get that object. This is the subjective theory of value.

And here's an example of how to avoid the problem:

> How you determine economic value affects whether you view free enterprise as a zero-sum game, or a win-win game in which both participants benefit.
>
> Let's return to the example of the $500,000 house. As the developer of the house, you hire workers to build the house. You then sell it for more than $500,000. According to the labor theory of value, you have taken more than the good is actually worth. You've exploited the buyer and your workers by taking this surplus value. You win, they lose.
>
> Yet this situation looks different according to the subjective theory of value. Here, everybody wins. You market and sell the house for more than it cost to produce, but not more than customers will freely pay. The buyer is not forced to pay a cost he doesn't agree to. You are rewarded for your entrepreneurial effort. Your workers benefit, because you paid them the wages they agreed to when you hired them.
>
> This illustration brings up a couple important points about free enterprise that are often overlooked:
>
> **1. Free exchange is a win-win game**.
>
> In win-win games, some players may end up better off than others, but everyone ends up better off than they were at the beginning. As the developer, you might make more than your workers. Yet the workers determined they would be better off by freely exchanging their labor for wages, than if they didn't have the job at all.
>
> A free market doesn't guarantee that everyone wins in every competition. Rather, it allows many more win-win encounters than any other alternative.
>
> **2. The game is win-win because of rules set-up beforehand.**
>
> A free market is *not* a free-for-all in which everybody can do what they want. Any exchange must be free on both sides. Rule of law, contracts, and property rights

> are needed to ensure exchanges are conducted rightly. As the developer of the house, you'd be held accountable if you broke your contract and failed to pay workers what you promised.
>
> An exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game.

If you do get the book, be sure and skip the chapter on usury. It's just not as engaging as the others, in my opinion.

Ted Cruz shows how to answer questions on social issues from leftist reporter

May 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Real Clear Politics.

Transcript:

> SEN. TED CRUZ: Let me ask a question: Is there something about the left, and I am going to put the media in this category, that is obsessed with sex? Why is it the only question you want to ask concerns homosexuals? Okay, you can ask those questions over and over and over again. I recognize that you're reading questions from MSNBC…
>
> […]You're wincing. You don't want to talk about foreign policy. I recognize you want to ask another question about gay rights. Well, you know. ISIS is executing homosexuals. You want to talk about gay rights? This week was a very bad week for gay rights because the expansion of ISIS, the expansion of radical, theocratic, Islamic zealots that crucify Christians, that behead children and that murder homosexuals. That ought to be concerning you far more than asking six questions all on the same topic.
>
> REPORTER: Do you have a personal animosity against gay Americans?
>
> CRUZ: Do you have a personal animosity against Christians sir? Your line of questioning is highly curious. You seem fixated on a particular subject. Look, I'm a Christian. Scripture commands us to love everybody and what I have been talking about, with respect to same-sex marriage, is the Constitution which is what we should all be focused on. The Constitution gives marriage to elected state legislators. It doesn't give the power of marriage to a president, or to unelected judges to tear down the decisions enacted by democratically elected state legislatures.

His delivery is smooth, fluid, natural. He speaks like this because he has thought about it a lot, and he knows how to present his views to hostile audiences in the best possible light. His positions are not check boxes that he ticks in order to appeal to Christian voters. He actually believes the things we believe, and he will debate with those who disagree.

My concern with Cruz is that he hasn't got the experience of building consensus to move legislation and enact policies, the way others like Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker have done.

Here's Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, for example, backing up his words with actions.

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal

Excerpt:

> Defying state legislators who rejected a measure that sought to protect "the right of conscience as it relates to marriage," Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal acted on his own Tuesday.
>
> "I'm going to do anything I can to protect religious liberty," the Republican governor told The Daily Signal in a phone interview on Wednesday.
>
> His executive order, issued after state legislators voted down the Louisiana Marriage and Conscience Act, prohibits "all departments, commissions, boards, agencies, and political subdivision of the state" from discriminating against people or businesses with deeply held religious beliefs about marriage.
>
> "My executive order accomplishes the intent of the [Louisiana Marriage and Conscience Act]. It prevents the state from discriminating against people or their business with deeply held religious beliefs," Jindal said.
>
> The measure builds on a Religious Freedom Restoration Act that was enacted during Jindal's first term as governor. The state of Louisiana, under a Constitutional amendment, also defines marriage strictly as the union between a man and a woman.
>
> […]**"Even if you don't agree with me on the definition of marriage … you still should want those folks to have their rights—our rights to live the way we want," he said.**
>
> **Jindal, who is exploring a 2016 presidential bid, doesn't shy away from his support for traditional marriage.**
>
> **"I believe in the traditional definition of marriage," he said. "Unlike President Obama and Hillary Clinton, my opinions are not evolving on this issue. But at the end of the day, this is even bigger than marriage."**
>
> **[…]"Don't waste your breath trying to bully me in Louisiana," he said. "It is absolutely constitutional to have religious liberty and economic freedoms."**

I have actually been saying “Don’t Waste Your Breath” to a lot of people lately, it’s become my motto whenever I am defiant.

Study explores whether atheism is rooted in reason or emotion

May 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Image of Navy SEAL Matthew "Axe" Axelson from the movie "Lone Survivor"
From First Things, based on research reported by CNN.

> A new set of studies in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* finds that atheists and agnostics report anger toward God either in the past or anger focused on a hypothetical image of what they imagine God must be like. Julie Exline, a psychologist at Case Western Reserve University and the lead author of this recent study, has examined other data on this subject with identical results. Exline explains that her interest was first piqued when an early study of anger toward God revealed a counterintuitive finding: Those who reported no belief in God reported more grudges toward him than believers.
>
> At first glance, this finding seemed to reflect an error. How could people be angry with God if they did not believe in God? Reanalyses of a second dataset revealed similar patterns: Those who endorsed their religious beliefs as "atheist/agnostic" or "none/unsure" reported more anger toward God than those who reported a religious affiliation.
>
> Exline notes that the findings raised questions of whether anger might actually affect belief in God's existence, an idea consistent with social science's previous clinical findings on "emotional atheism."
>
> Studies in traumatic events suggest a possible link between suffering, anger toward God, and doubts about God's existence. According to Cook and Wimberly (1983), 33% of parents who suffered the death of a child reported doubts about God in the first year of bereavement. In another study, 90% of mothers who had given birth to a profoundly retarded child voiced doubts about the existence of

> God (Childs, 1985). Our survey research with undergraduates has focused directly on the association between anger at God and self-reported drops in belief (Exline et al., 2004). In the wake of a negative life event, anger toward God predicted decreased belief in God's existence.
>
> The most striking finding was that when Exline looked only at subjects who reported a drop in religious belief, their faith was least likely to recover if anger toward God was the cause of their loss of belief. In other words, anger toward God may not only lead people to atheism but give them a reason to cling to their disbelief.

I think the best defense to this phenomena is for the church to not tell people that God's job is to make them happy in this life on Earth. I think if we spent less time selling Christianity to young people as life enhancement, we would have much fewer apostates. If young people get into their minds that God is their boss, not their waiter, then that is a good preparation for the real world. And all of the challenges that Christians face – from poverty, to peer pressure, to health problems to persecution. Stop expecting happiness, that is not God's goal for you.

I was blessed to have discovered apologetics at a very early age. This passage from C. S. Lewis' "The Screwtape Letters" always stood out to me back then:

> Do not be deceived, Wormwood. Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.

When I was young, I shortened this quote into my motto, which lasted until just a few years back when I finally started to feel some security because of my contingency fund's size. And that motto was "nothing works". Nothing works. That's right, so get used to it. Everything sucks, nothing works. *Nothing works.*

Stop expecting God to make you happy. You are a soldier, and your job is to fight to the last breath in your body for the General. Hold until relieved. You're damn right it's unfair. Your whole life is unfair and then you die. Get used to it. When I was in college, my Christian friends and I used to joke that even if we fought our entire lives for God and he tossed us into Hell like firewood, we would still do the same things. We were happy to serve and we didn't think about whether we were getting what we wanted.

Certainly, we did not take stupid chances to get ourselves into trouble deliberately. But we just didn't care about being happy, that was not our goal. We felt that God was in the right, and sinful humans were in the wrong, and that it was enough for us to serve on the right side. We didn't expect anyone to care how we felt, we just expected to serve. And if our first plan failed, we went on to the next plan, and the next, until we found a way to serve in spite of the unfairness of it all.

There is no way that you could read the New Testament and come out with the idea that Jesus wanted fun and thrills and good feelings. He never laughed. He was killed for his

obedience to God. He desperately wanted to avoid punishment, but he did things that he did not feel like doing because it was for the benefit of others, in obedience to God his Father. And it’s that kind of realistic pessimism – downbeat practical resignation – that we ought to be striving for. This life is not a trip to the mall where everything is on sale and we grab what we like. At all.

Two Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on love, sex, economics and marriage

May 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Here's a quick bio of the person who is in the image above:

> Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, Senior Fellow in Economics at the Acton Institute and regular contributor to*National Review Online* and *The National Catholic Register*, received her Ph.D. in economics from the University of Rochester. Until recently, she was a Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution. She has been on the faculty of Yale University and George Mason University, and is the author of *Love and Economics: Why the Laissez-Faire Family doesn't work*.

And here are two lectures from the great Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse. One of my favorite scholars to listen to, and a great debater, as well.

Lecture one: Love and Economics

(June 13, 2014) Dr J traveled to Phoenix to participate in Alliance Defending Freedom's Blackstone Legal Fellowship, where she gave two talks. This is the first one, "Love and Economics," on what marriage is and why we need it–stay tuned for the next one!

The MP3 file is here.

Lecture two: Defending Marriage

(June 13, 2014) Dr J traveled to Phoenix to participate in Alliance Defending Freedom's Blackstone Legal Fellowship, where she gave two talks. This is the second one, "Defending Marriage," on why marriage matters and what has happened and will happen as it gets more and more redefined by the progress of the sexual revolution.

The MP3 file is here.

I was listening to these late at night, and when she said "you know Catholics aren't good

with Bible verses" at the beginning of lecture two, I howled with laughter. I'm sure the property manager is going to let me know not to howl with laughter after midnight. Oh well – it was hilarious. She is Catholic. I howled again when made a comment about chaste people over the age of 30, like me. It's just FUN to listen to, but these are serious subjects.

By the way, she debates on these issues as well. And she's *really good at it.*

Or something to read?

For those who prefer to read something, here is an article by marriage-defender Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse about how divorce courts challenge marriage.

Excerpt:

> Easy divorce opens the door for an unprecedented amount of government intrusion into ordinary people's lives. This unacknowledged reality is the subject of *Taken Into Custody,* by Stephen Baskerville**.** With penetrating insight, the political scientist exposes the truly breathtaking consequences of no-fault divorce for the expansion of state power and the decline of personal autonomy.
>
> First, no-fault divorce frequently means unilateral divorce: one party wants a divorce against the wishes of the other, who wants to stay married. Kim Basinger dumped Baldwin for no particular reason, unleashed the power of the Los Angeles Family Court system to inflict pain on him and, in the process, inflicted untold damage on their child. Second, the fact that one party wants to remain married means that the divorce has to be enforced. Baldwin wanted to stay married and to continue to be a husband and father. Yet, the coercive and intrusive machinery of the state must be wheeled into action to separate the reluctantly divorced party from the joint assets of the marriage, typically the home and the children.
>
> Third, enforcing the divorce means an unprecedented blurring of the boundaries between public and private life. People under the jurisdiction of family courts can have virtually all of their private lives subject to its scrutiny. If the courts are influenced by feminist ideology, that ideology can extend its reach into every bedroom and kitchen in America. Baldwin ran the gauntlet of divorce industry professionals who have been deeply influenced by the feminist presumptions that the man is always at fault and the woman is always a victim. Thus, the social experiment of no-fault divorce, which most Americans thought was supposed to increase personal liberty, has had the consequence of empowering the state.
>
> Some might think the legacy of no-fault divorce is an example of the law of unintended consequences in operation. That assumes its architects did not intend for unilateral divorce to result in the expansion of the state. But Baskerville makes the case in this book—as well as his 2008 monograph, "The Dangerous Rise of Sexual Politics," in The Family in America—that at least some of the advocates of changes in family law certainly have intended to expand the

> power of the state over the private lives of law-abiding citizens.

It’s important for people to understand the real reasons why people are not getting married, so that we can do something to encourage them to marry that really fixes the problem. If you don’t understand the threats that men are seeing with respect to marriage, it might be a good idea to take a look at this essay by Stephen Baskerville, hosted by the Christian Touchstone magazine. It’s a summary of the book that Dr. Morse reviewed. I consider that book “Taken Into Custody” to be a must-read for anyone contemplating marriage.

Islamic State burns a woman alive for refusing to engage in extreme sex act

May 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jay Richards tweeted this appalling story from the leftist Washington Post.

It says:

> Zainab Bangura, the U.N.'s special representative on sexual violence in conflict, recently conducted a tour of refugee camps in the shadow of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, war-ravaged countries where the Islamic State commands swaths of territory. She heard a host of horror stories from victims and their families and recounted them in an interview earlier this week withthe Middle East Eye, an independent regional news site.
>
> "They are institutionalizing sexual violence," Bangura said of the Islamic State. "The brutalization of women and girls is central to their ideology."
>
> Bangura detailed the processes by which "pretty virgins" captured by the jihadists were bought and sold at auctions. Here's a chilling excerpt:

> After attacking a village, [the Islamic State] splits women from men and executes boys and men aged 14 and over. The women and mothers are separated; girls are stripped naked, tested for virginity and examined for breast size and prettiness. The youngest, and those considered the prettiest virgins fetch higher prices and are sent to Raqqa, the IS stronghold.
>
> There is a hierarchy: sheikhs get first choice, then emirs, then fighters. They often take three or four girls each and keep them for a month or so, until they grow tired of a girl, when she goes back to market. At slave auctions, buyers haggle fiercely, driving down prices by disparaging girls as flat-chested or unattractive.
>
> We heard about one girl who was traded 22 times, and another, who had escaped, told us that the sheikh who had captured her wrote his name on the back of her hand to show that she was his "property."

> Estimates vary, but there are believed to be somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000 women enslaved by the Islamic State. Many are Yazidis, a persecuted minority sect that the extremist Islamic State considers to be apostate "devil-worshippers," in part because of the Yazidis' ancient connection to the region's pre-Islamic past. The jihadists' treatment of Yazidi women, in particular, has been marked out by its contempt and savagery.
>
> Here's Bangura again:

> They commit rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution and other acts of extreme brutality. We heard one case of a 20-year-old girl who was burned alive because

> she refused to perform an extreme sex act. We learned of many other sadistic sexual acts. We struggled to understand the mentality of people who commit such crimes.

> Hundreds of Yazidi women and girls have escaped their captors, either by running away, or being ransomed and rescued by their families. Bangura has urged international assistance in providing proper medical and "psychosocial" support to the escaped women, who have experienced terrible trauma.
>
> "It was painful for me. The countries I have worked on include Bosnia, Congo, South Sudan, Somalia and Central African Republic," says Bangura, a former former minister of Sierra Leone who is no stranger to conflicts. "I never saw anything like this. I cannot understand such inhumanity. I was sick, I couldn't understand."

Two points about this.

First, we have a Democrat administration now that apologizes for everything that Muslim terrorists do, and tries to remind Christians that they should not judge such crimes as we just heard about because of the Crusades. That literally came out of our pro-Muslim atheist President's own mouth. He simply isn't capable of moral reasoning – he wants to deny the reality of evil.

Second, the preceding administration was Republican, and it won the war in Iraq using a surge of forces. Then the Democrats came along and turned a war that had already been won into a lost war where crimes like this are happening. When Bush turned over Iraq to the Democrats, Al Qaeda in Iraq was annihilated, and there was no Islamic State terrorist group. Now, we hear stories like this all the time.

Here's former deputy director of the CIA to explain how Islamic State came to be:

> Sunday on CBS's "Face the Nation," former deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency under President Barack Obama, Michael Morell said the rise of ISIS in Iraq was not an intelligence failure.
>
> Morell argued in 2011 when U.S. forces completely pulled out "al Qaeda in Iraq was essentially defeated" and Morell continuing to defend the intelligence added "the intelligence community monitored the growth of al Qaeda post 2001 in great detail with intelligence reporting, with analysis, we made it very clear that this group was becoming more and more dangerous."

The United States cannot pull out of wars leaving a vacuum for bad actors to step into. We won World War 2, and we stayed in Germany from the end of that war to the present day, in order to deter aggression into Germany by the Soviets. Similarly with North and South Korea. If you want to stop a war from happening, you remain in theater, in force, for decades after the war, until the country has recovered.

Man uses his own legally-owned handgun to foil carjacking attempt

May 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the story from WSB local news.

Excerpt:

> An East Point man held a would-be carjacker at gunpoint until police arrived and arrested the suspect, according to Atlanta police.
>
> Hashim Fannin, the car owner, says the attempted carjacking occurred just after he had pulled into a parking spot at the Family Dollar on Marietta Boulevard in northwest Atlanta earlier this month.
>
> Fannin says the man slipped into the passenger's seat when his doors automatically unlocked.
>
> "He told me, 'You know what this is,'" Fannin said. That is when Fannin says he pulled his gun out.
>
> "I asked him to get out the car, probably not in those exact words," Fannin said.
>
> "I told him no, there's no leaving, leaving was before you hopped into my car … at this point there is not leaving," Fannin said.
>
> The car owner kept the suspect, Edgar Horn, 61, at gunpoint face down in the parking lot for several minutes until police arrived.
>
> "You were not trying to rob me," Fannin said to the man on cellphone video of the incident. "Do you just get into random people's cars … you thought I was your friend … you thought I was your friend … so you woke up stupid this morning?"
>
> When police arrived, you can see Fannin wave them over, and put his gun down. The police officer shakes his hand, before putting the suspect in handcuffs.
>
> "Honestly, I look at it like this. That is one less guy I got to worry about bothering my mom when she's out grocery shopping," Fannin said.
>
> According to a police report, the suspect was arrested for attempted robbery and entering an automobile.

I keep running into people (mostly women) who don't understand why it is that law-abiding taxpayers need to be able to carry their own weapons in order to protect themselves and their families. The reason is that there is no time for the police to arrive when you are the victim of a crime. You are on your own. Or, as in the case of Baltimore, the mayor will just instruct the police to give the criminals space to destroy, i.e. – to commit crimes. That actually happens more often than you think in different times and places.

Black guy with gun holds white criminal for cops

I like that the cop shook his hand, too. That would only happen in America.

Meanwhile, in the socialist, feminist United Kingdom, there is not only a ban on handguns, (with a consequent doubling of violent crime in the years following the ban), there is also a ban on righteous masculinity of any kind.

Look at this story from the UK Telegraph:

> Police reprimanded a nine-year-old boy for using a broken ruler as a sword in a playground games of “knights and dragons”.

> Kyron Bradley was spoken to by officers at George’s Bickley CE Primary School, Bromley, Kent.

> His mother Natasha, 27, is reported to have burst into tears when she learned the news.
>
> Two days earlier, she’d gone into school to meet with the head teacher following complaints Kyron had used a broken ruler in the playground as a weapon.

> During the meeting, Ms Bradley, a carer, said her son, a Year 4 pupil, explained he had been playing a chasing game with two other boys involving pretend swords.
>
> […]Ms Bradley said she thought the matter was closed following the initial meeting with the headteacher until she was told the police had been asked to speak with Kyron on April 29.

That story is hat-tip Dina, who does encourage boys and men of all ages to fight against evil with force. And good for her, that’s getting increasingly rare among women these days.

Boy Scouts to end ban on openly gay men being troop leaders

May 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Matt Barber writing for The Stream.

Excerpt:

> On Thursday BSA President Robert Gates announced that the BSA will soon invite men who have sex with males (MSM) to become troop leaders. “The status quo in our movement’s membership standards cannot be sustained,” Gates disingenuously claimed, indicating that to maintain the BSA’s century-old proscription on “out” homosexual men would spell “the end of us as a national movement.”
>
> This, of course, is hyperbolic nonsense and simply reflects a continuation of Gates’ long-standing pro-homosexual activism. While serving as secretary of defense he both advocated for and oversaw the implementation of the full repeal of the military’s “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” policy. This has resulted in rampant anti-Christian discrimination and an explosion (a 33 percent spike) in male-on-male homosexual assaults. Does any honest, sane, thinking person imagine that a comparable increase in homosexual assault will not befall the Boy Scouts?
>
> […]Parents, the BSA is about to place political correctness above your child’s safety. This is not an opinion. It’s an empirical, quantifiable certainty.
>
> Consider, for instance, a study published in the left-leaning Archives of Sexual Behavior, of over 200 convicted pedophiles. It found that “86 percent of offenders against males described themselves as homosexual or bisexual.” This demonstrates, observes Peter Sprigg of the Family Research Council: “Since almost 30 percent of child sexual abuse is committed by homosexual or bisexual men (one-third male-on-male abuse times 86 percent identifying as homosexual or bisexual), but less than 3 percent of American men identify themselves as homosexual or bisexual, we can infer that homosexual or bisexual men are approximately 10 times more likely to molest children than heterosexual men.”
>
> This makes perfect sense when coupled with another 2001 study in the same peer-reviewed publication. It found that nearly half of all “gay”-identified men who participated in research were molested by a homosexual pedophile as boys: “46 percent of homosexual men and 22 percent of homosexual women reported having been molested by a person of the same gender. This contrasts to only 7 percent of heterosexual men and 1 percent of heterosexual women reporting having been molested by a person of the same gender.”
>
> The connection between homosexual abuse and “gay identity” is undeniable. Although clearly not all “gay”-identified men and women abuse children, or were

> abused as children, the reality is that an alarmingly high percentage of them do and were. As with most forms of abuse, the cycle is both circular and vicious.

If I ever have boys, I certainly will not enroll them in the Boy Scouts. And I am sorry for the children who will suffer as a result of this decision that puts little children at risk.

Related posts

- Human Rights Campaign co-founder Terry Bean arrested for sex crime with 15-year-old
- Gay activist inside IRS leaked names of pro-marriage donors to Human Rights Campaign
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Christian man fired after gay rights group contacts his employer to complain
- “Two Dads are Better Than One”: pro-gay adoption ABC profile of convicted pedophile
- Gay rights activist who ran pedophile ring gets life sentence
- Democrats vote to protect pedophiles in H.R. 1913 hate crime bill
- College allows transgender man to expose himself to young girls
- Gay activist pleads guilty to sexually assaulting boys
- Famous gay activist pleads guilty to child pornography charges
- Gay activist honored by Barack Obama charged with sex crimes with a minor
- Gay man gets 40-year sentence for molesting boy he adopted from Russia
- Some supporters of gay marriage favor normalizing pedophilia and incest
- Gay rights activist accused of sexually assaulting 17-year-old boy
- Gay rights activist convicted of manslaughter
- Gay health expert charged with selling adopted 5-year old boy for sex

Let’s celebrate our heroes for Memorial Day

May 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

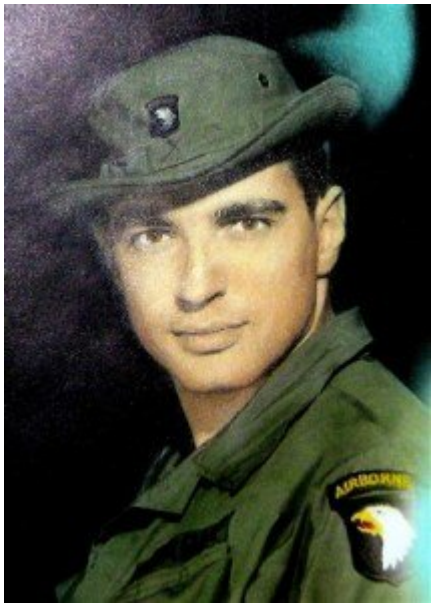

Leslie Sabo

Here’s a story of heroism from Investors Business Daily.

It says:

> Leslie Sabo was killed during the Vietnam War’s 1970 Cambodian Campaign. He was nominated for the Medal of Honor, but the records were lost until a veteran rediscovered them in 1999. In 2012, Sabo’s widow received the nation’s highest military award on his behalf, the 249th for Vietnam.
>
> Sabo’s platoon and another had been ambushed from all sides by a large and well-entrenched force of communist soldiers.
>
> He repeatedly attacked and killed enemy soldiers, was wounded by a grenade as he shielded a comrade, and then was fatally shot as he provided covering fire for a medevac helicopter.
>
> “His indomitable courage and complete disregard for his own safety saved the lives of many of his platoon members,” said the Medal of Honor citation. “Spc. 4 Sabo’s extraordinary heroism and selflessness, above and beyond the call of duty, at the cost of his life, are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, and the United States Army.”
>
> Leslie Jr. was born in 1948 in Kufstein, Austria, where his well-to-do family had moved after the Soviet occupation of Hungary at the end of World War II, leaving almost everything behind.
>
> They moved to America when he was 2. They lived in Youngstown, Ohio, and then Ellwood City, Pa.
>
> Leslie Sr., a lawyer in Hungary, retrained as an engineer, and both parents taught

> their two remaining sons (another was killed by a bomb during the war) patriotism for their adopted country.

Here are some more details from the Army web site:

> 4 Leslie H. Sabo Jr. distinguished himself, May 10, 1970, in Se San, Cambodia, while serving as a rifleman in Company B, 3d Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division.

> Members of B. Co. were ambushed by a large enemy force. While conducting a reconnaissance patrol, 22-year-old Sabo, charged an enemy position, killing several enemy soldiers. Immediately thereafter, he assaulted an enemy flanking force, successfully drawing their fire away from friendly soldiers and ultimately forcing the enemy to retreat.
>
> When a grenade landed nearby a wounded comrade, Sabo picked up the grenade threw it away while shielding his buddy with his own body, thus absorbing the brunt of the blast and saving the man's life.

> Seriously wounded by the blast, Sabo, nonetheless, retained the initiative and single- handedly charged an enemy bunker that had inflicted severe damage on the platoon. He received several serious wounds from withering automatic weapons fire in the process. Despite being mortally injured, he crawled towards the enemy emplacement and, when in position, threw a grenade into the bunker. The resulting explosion silenced the enemy fire, but also ended Spc. 4 Sabo's life.

He gave his life to save his friends.

Check out some of my Medal of Honor posts:

- Navy SEAL Michael Murphy awarded Medal of Honor
- How Sal Giunta earned a Medal of Honor and lived to tell about it
- What can Christians learn from Rob Miller's Medal of Honor story?

God bless our soldiers, airmen and sailors!

A friend from Ireland reports on their referendum on same-sex marriage

May 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

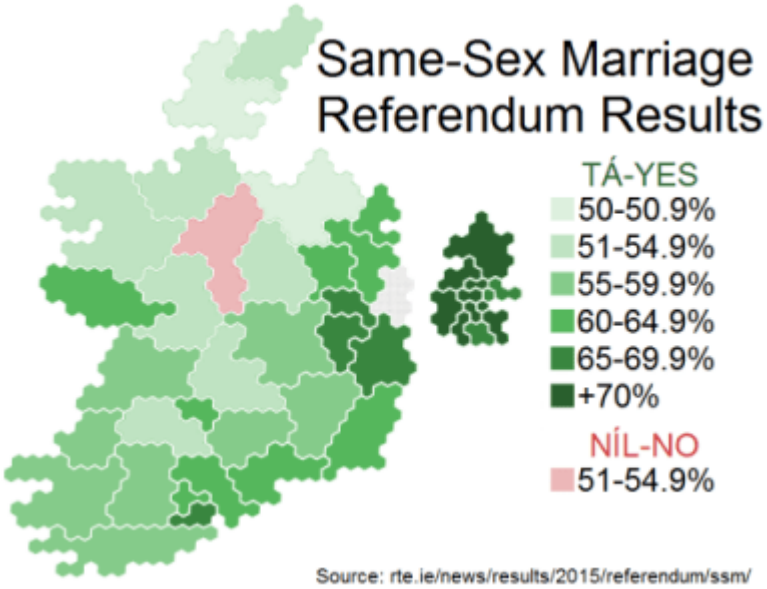

Ireland 2015 Same-Sex Marriage Referendum

I got an e-mail from a friend in Ireland about the referendum they just had where the pro-marriage side lost by a margin of 62-38.

He writes:

> Hope you don't mind the link suggestions but I've listed some interesting articles from the marriage referendum in Ireland. I'm from the North part of Ireland so I couldn't vote but some of the vitriol and hatred from the so-called "tolerant" left was absolutely vile. From "all the no voters should be murdered" to "why don't all you no voters jump into a well", it was fairly clear to see just what the true colours were.
>
> The slogans all around the country were "marriage equality for all". By hijacking the term "equality", this effectively suggested that any naysayers are just vile, intolerant bigots. It wouldn't be like the secular left to shut down discussion now would it?
>
> […]What I think you may be interested in is the sheer scale of the bullying that went on here. "Vote No" posters were ripped down, eggs were thrown at no campaigners and a young child was even hurt at a demonstration. Virtually all discussion was closed and no debate was allowed with respect to the politicians. All parties were enforcing the whip and any dissenters would no doubt be expelled from the party. Then you have to throw in the huge corporations that have offices in Ireland like Google, Microsoft and Twitter. They all have policies which promote diversity and inclusion so how would any no-voters who happen to be employees of these companies feel when their employer takes a political

> stance?

He understands the problem with the redefinition of marriage so that it is based on “love” rather than a lifelong commitment centered around producing and raising children:

> What frustrates me about this slogan is that they absolutely were not about “marriage equality for all”. They still place limits on marriage such as close relatives, young children or indeed other topologies of relationship such as polyamory.
>
> It seems to be that marriage in Ireland from this point forward is just some genderless institution for the purposes of validating love. Perhaps the government will introduce some means-testing to ensure that the love of those involved really is valid!

Yes, that’s the problem with love, it comes and goes. And that’s why male-male and female-female relationships are so short lived. If marriage is about feelings of love and self-fulfillment, rather than the needs of the children you make to have a mom and a dad who love them and care about them, then it does not last. Period. (Aside: and that’s why you never marry a woman who rejects responsibilities, expectations, and obligations for fun and thrills!)

Here are his three links:

1. Ireland’s ‘tolerant’ elite now demonise anyone who opposes gay marriage
2. Ireland’s gay marriage vote was never an equal contest
3. Asking questions about funding for referendum campaign

I had already read the first two, but not the third. I really recommend reading the first one, so you can reflect on where your money is going when you choose to patronize big corporations, and when you vote for parties on the secular left, as many Christians do.

Just briefly from the first:

> The president, Michael D Higgins, and the prime minister, Enda Kenny, back gay marriage. So does virtually every politician. Indeed, the main parties are enforcing the party whip on gay marriage, meaning any Senator or TD who votes against it is likely to be expelled from his or her party. According to the Irish Independent, even politicians who harbour ‘reservations about this major legislative change’ are not speaking out, ‘for fear of disobeying the party whip’.
>
> […]The public sector also backs gay marriage. It’s apparently being strongarmed to do so. According to one dissenting politician — the only one — ‘agencies who receive state funding are being pressured [by officials] into supporting a Yes vote’.
>
> Silicon Valley is fully behind Yes: Twitter, Google and eBay have all come out for gay marriage. Twitter’s Irish boss says a Yes victory will enhance ‘Ireland’s international reputation’ — another way of saying that if you vote No, you are

> damaging your own country. Even the police are saying Yes: the Garda Representative Association caused a stir by calling on its members to support gay marriage, leading some to wonder if it's right for coppers to stick their truncheons into politics.
>
> So, the armed wing, political wing and chattering wing of the Irish elite is behind Yes.

The second article mentions that U.S.-based gay activist groups bankrolled the Yes side effort:

> I suppose it is possible that the vote would have been quite as conclusive – roughly 60:40 – if the debate had not been both staggeringly one-sided and the Yes campaign had not been bankrolled so overwhelmingly by US pressure groups. Certainly the youth vote would have gone that way anyway.
>
> […]But one of its in-house dissidents – the impression of balance is desirable – is Breda O'Brien, a Catholic commentator, who rather put the cat among the pigeons with a piece on 9 May on the funding for the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (Glen) and other lobby groups by a US organisation called Atlantic Philanthropies. The striking thing about the donations was not just their size – $4.7 million to Glen in 2005-11, nearly $475,000 to Marriage Equality; some $11.5 million to the Irish Council for Civil Liberties, 2001-213 – but that they refer to years before the referendum debate got under way. I can't wait to see the actual figures for the campaign itself. By comparison the No campaign got by, I gather, on a shoestring budget of about 200,000 euros.
>
> So when friends of mine found that when they entered a shopping centre in Limerick by one entrance on Thursday and left from the other, they were bombarded with leaflets from the Yes campaign, there was a reason for it besides spontaneous enthusiasm. One side could afford a PR campaign; the other couldn't, though the papers heroically made the most of the tiny-by-comparison sums that US Christians put the way of the No campaign. The motives of Google for entering the fray are probably similar to those that made it take sides on the issue in the US; the referendum was on Friday, and you couldn't open their bloody homepage without being told it was in favour of marriage equality.

The third article he mentioned talks about how well gay activist organizations were funded. While Christians are giving away billions to feed the hungry and help the poor, our freedom to speak and practice our religion was being removed by groups with very different priorities.

My friend writes, in a second e-mail:

> If I was a blogger here I'd be asking three things this morning…
>
> 1. If marriage is now a genderless institution focused only on adult love, is the government going to propose a new institution that is solely focused on

> children?
> 2. If marriage is now purely about a validation of love then wouldn't it be wise of the government to consider investigating the depth and sincerity of this love before before handing out marriage licences? They surely wouldn't want to validate a relationship where the two parties weren't really in love. Some sort of means-test perhaps? /irony
> 3. Given the slogans aiming for marriage equality for all, at which point does the government plan to remove the current limits that restrict marriage to two persons?

My question would be this: when will Christians realize that they are under attack and start redirecting funds to pro-marriage groups rather than anti-poverty groups and big government? That money could have been used to fight back in Ireland, but instead Christians just seem to have their heads in the sand on how the world really works.

And finally, I want to add one more article to his list, about a baker in Northern Ireland who was fined for refusing to bake a cake that celebrated same-sex marriage.

After a tough fight to take Ramadi, Obama hands it back to Islamic State

May 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Control of Iraq (click for larger image)
(Source: Political Geography Now)

First, let's start with and article from Breitbart News about Obama's retreat from Iraq:

> There is no commitment to America's fighting men and women that President Barack Obama has not broken. When he ran for office in 2008, he promised to leave a residual force in Iraq to secure that country against external meddling and internal collapse. When he took office, President George W. Bush handed over a relatively stable and secure Iraq, thanks to the "surge" Obama opposed, and thanks to the sacrifices made by thousands of Americans, killed and wounded in battle.
>
> Yet in 2011, Obama withdrew all combat troops–which is likely what he intended to do all along–and left Iraq before the job was done, allowing terrorists to regroup and sectarian rivalries to re-emerge. By pulling out troops, he also removed the only remaining strategic threat to the Iranian regime. Today, ISIS is running rampant across the region, and he and his sycophants assure the American people that they are winning the war against the "junior varsity" terrorist caliphate.
>
> […]"I don't think we're losing," Obama says. That is because he has won, politically. But our troops paid the price.

Now an article from famous war journalist Michael Fumento, in Investors Business Daily. He writes:

> Ramadi is a city of vast importance, both strategic and symbolic. It's the city that al-Qaida in Iraq chose as its headquarters, and it became the most fiercely contested area in the country. It's why SEAL Team 3 of "American Sniper" fame was stationed there and became the most decorated SEAL unit since Vietnam.
>
> Many experts consider the Battle of Ramadi and the "Anbar Awakening," engineered by Capt. Travis Patriquin, the actual turning point of the war. Patriquin — who a few months after briefing me on his brilliant plan was killed in Ramadi — got the Sunni chieftains to join the Americans and Iraqi security forces to defeat al-Qaida.
>
> Yet, bizarrely, the Obama administration wrote off Ramadi last month, declaring that defense of an oil refinery took precedence — as if we couldn't do both. (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey claimed, "It has no symbolic meaning." Now Dempsey says Islamic State "gains in Ramadi are a serious setback for its long-suffering inhabitants.")
>
> In any event, within days the refinery was out of danger. Yet, the administration still refused to defend Ramadi.
>
> […]…[O]n no day previously did the U.S. launch more than a handful of sorties in defense of Ramadi, and on many days it flew none.
>
> Yet, area assets include hundreds of strike aircraft, most of which can fly several sorties a day. These comprise F-16s, F-15s, F-22s, A-10s, B-1 heavy bombers, helicopters, and Reaper and Predator drones among U.S. forces, plus aircraft of 11 other coalition nations.
>
> A single Reaper can carry a mix of 14 bombs and missiles, meaning it's capable of that many airstrikes. Cruise missiles are also in theater, and the U.S. can hit with heavy B-52 and B-2 bombers from anywhere in the world.
>
> Yet with this massive armada and with assets on the ground to help identify targets, the administration seems unable to find and strike more than a handful of targets daily. A machine gun here, a truck there. By comparison, during the 1968 siege of Khe Sanh, American aircraft dropped roughly 1,300 tons of bombs daily — five tons each day for every North Vietnamese soldier besieging the base.
>
> But it's not just Ramadi that Obama has neglected. Fact is, the so-called air war against IS is a fraud. Rarely are more than a couple of dozen targets struck in a day throughout both Iraq and Syria.
>
> Obama is simply keeping U.S. air power grounded.
>
> […]…[G]enerally, Obama seems simply clueless when it comes to prosecuting war, stuck at pre-school level. (Even grade-schoolers know that bombs are

> worthless unless you actually drop them.)
>
> This is as bewildering as Obama’s trading the top five Taliban in captivity for one American deserter, as I wrote in these pages last June.
>
> It’s time for Congress and the presidential candidates to make this an issue. Alas, for Ramadi it’s too late. IS has scored a huge coup and the slaughter of our allies already has begun.

This is why it’s important when you elect a President that you elect one who understands the value of projecting military force and the threat of military force abroad. The next time we get attacked by terrorists trained in Iraq, maybe then we will realize the cost of abandoning the crossroads of the Middle East to the enemy. You can’t just end a war by unilaterally backing out of it, because it sounds nice. That’s how you lose a war. To win a war, you have to be decisive, use overwhelming force, and stay on until the region is stabilized.

Clinton-appointed judge rules that pro-life license plates are “patently offensive”

May 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

New York pro-life license plate

Here’s an interesting story from The Daily Caller. (H/T Mary from Marin)

It says:

> A new decision by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals holds that New York’s state government has the right to ban “Choose Life” license plates on the grounds that such a statement is “patently offensive.”
>
> The dispute stems from a now-suspended program offered by New York’s Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) which allowed private organizations to create custom license plates. If drivers purchased the plates, the purchasing price was split between the DMV and the non-profit.
>
> The Children First Foundation (CFF), an organization promoting adoption as an alternative to abortion, submitted a design for a “Choose Life” license plate, which featured a drawing of two children’s faces in front of a yellow sun.
>
> The proposed plate was rejected, with the DMV citing a policy that allows it to ban “patently offensive” plates in order to prevent incidents of road rage. The “patently offensive” category in U.S. speech is typically related to public obscenity laws, and allows for limitations on things like the public display of pornography or other materials that blatantly violate community standards.
>
> **Judge Rosemary Pooler, a Clinton appointee, agreed with New York’s position in her majority opinion. She took this view even though she also ruled that license plates are private speech subject to First Amendment protections. Despite these protections, however, she said that so many New Yorkers could find a plate advocating an anti-abortion position “patently offensive” that the DMV was justified in suppressing the speech.**

I want to focus in on the life of the judge who made the decision.

I found her biography on Wikipedia. Look at how successful she was:

> Rosemary Pooler was born in New York City. She earned a B.A. from Brooklyn College in 1959, an M.A. from the University of Connecticut, and a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School.
>
> Following graduation from law school, Pooler entered private law practice in Syracuse, New York. In 1972, she was appointed as Director of the Consumer Affairs Unit in the Syracuse Corporation Counsel's Office, serving in that post for a year. From 1974 to 1975, she served on the Syracuse City Council. In 1975, she was appointed as Chairman of the New York State Consumer Protection Board, serving until 1980. The following year, she was appointed to the state Public Service Commission. In 1987, she served as a committee staff member for the New York State Assembly. Following a stint on the law faculty at Syracuse University College of Law, she served for a year as Vice President of Legal Affairs at the Atlantic States Legal Foundation.
>
> In 1986, Rosemary Pooler decided to run for the United States House of Representatives. She challenged conservative Republican incumbent George C. Wortley, who was seeking a fourth term. She campaigned aggressively and came within less than 1,000 votes of winning.
>
> In 1990, she was elected as a Justice for the Fifth Judicial District of the Supreme Court of New York. Four years later, she was appointed to the federal bench by President Bill Clinton, serving from 1994 to 1998, as federal district judge in the Northern District of New York. She received her current appointment as a Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in 1998.

So, this license plate case, along with many of the other issues that I blog about, is the problem. What is the solution to all these problems? The solution is for us as Christians to get serious about our education, our work experience, our earning and saving, and our marriages and parenting in order to have an influence. We need to be the judges who make these decisions about whether pro-life license plates are legal or illegal. Failing that, our children need to be the judges. And that means that when it comes to education and career, instead of doing what makes us feel happy we have to work hard at having an influence. And when it comes to marriage, we should look at it less as something that is feelings-directed and happiness-focused, and more about making it serve God by raising influential, effective children.

Advice for Christian parents from a woman who left Christianity at university

May 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you want your children to accept Christianity, then apologetics is needed

This is from the Beyond Teachable Moments blog – a great blog for Christian parents who want to raise effective, influential children.

Intro:

> I recently had the opportunity to meet an intelligent young Christian woman who is proactively learning how to discuss her faith in a secular society.
>
> Why is she so dedicated to doing this? **Because her Christian upbringing had completely failed to prepare her for the challenges of secularism, religious pluralism and atheism at university.**
>
> This young woman grew up in close-knit, loving Christian home. She faithfully attended church. She was enrolled in a Christian school that taught subjects such as apologetics, hermeneutics, inductive Bible study and managing relationships. Her parents cared about her spiritual formation.
>
> And yet, this is how she describes her university experience:
>
> "Although I was still living at home during the beginning of my freshman year, university was traumatic at best. I went from a class of 15 in a small Christian school, to 30,000 people at a public university.
>
> The most troubling thing was the amount of differing beliefs and worldviews I encountered, from professors and other students. At the time I thought they had much better arguments than I did for the validity of their views."
>
> Added to her challenge was the fact that her faith was borrowed, not her own.
>
> "I can honestly and sadly say that as I started my freshman year at age 19, my faith was very much borrowed. It was a set of rules to adhere too. Although I was well aware of the concept of a relationship with Jesus Christ, I did not have it. I

> was entrenched in the notion of conforming to what people wanted me to do in order to escape condemnation and judgment."
>
> "My faith at the university was non-existent. If you asked me what I believed I would say Christian, but I did not back that up with any action whatsoever."
>
> As a mom of two young boys, the top-of-mind question I had for her was: what did she wish she'd known before she went to university?

The rest of the post is her response, but I wanted to quote this part, because it reminds me of what Pastor Matt Rawlings posted about his own loss of faith a while back.

The mysterious Christian woman says this:

> **Don't use me to make you look good in front of other people at church, I can see straight through that.** It does not feel good and drives me far away. What matters is what is going on inside, not what is projected. Looking perfect and going through the motions does nothing. The very basis for Christianity is what is going on in the heart. Only by letting Jesus work in your heart can actions follow with true authenticity.

And here's what Pastor Matt said:

> Looking back, I had a very fuzzy understanding of the Gospel. I (and I think many people who call themselves Christians) are what theologians call "semi-Pelagians." I believed anyone could come to the altar but if they wanted to continue to be welcomed in the pews, they had to clean up their act and do so almost overnight. The culture of Christianity at large appeared to me to be that if you came to faith and continued to struggle with lust, a foul mouth or whatnot then there was just something wrong with you. I felt the church was more about behavior modification than grace.
>
> I needed someone who I knew loved me to sit down with me long before all of these problems arose, look me in the eye and tell me how easy and how difficult it is to be a Christian. I needed someone cared for me to unpack 2 Corinthians 5:21 and point out that by being "in Christ" I would be judged by Christ's perfect life instead of my own. I needed to know that the faith is not about "keeping the rules" but about doing things and not doing certain things to show my love and gratitude to God for what He did for me. I needed to be able to read the Bible, especially the Old Testament, in a way that always pointed to Jesus Christ. I needed to understand that God has graciously given us the spiritual disciplines of fasting, prayer, serving the poor, worship, etc. to help me grow. I needed to hear that all Christians struggle with sin and will, to a certain degree, until they go to be with the Lord or He returns to be with us.
>
> I needed good theology, good spiritual practices, good apologetics and good relationships. I needed knowledge and it needed to come from someone who I knew loved me even though I was thoroughly unlovable. You can't just leave this

> to the church staff because they do not have to time to meet with everyone and people with a chip on their shoulder about the church (like I had) feel like they are just doing it as part of their job. All young people in the church, especially the "troubled kids" need this. It is a lot of work but anyone's eternity is worth it, isn't it?

As J.P. Moreland has pointed out, your beliefs are not something that you form by sheer acts of will. You cannot will to believe things. Your beliefs form naturally through study, and then outward actions come from those beliefs. You cannot focus on the outward actions of your children – you have to focus on the beliefs inside. And know that those beliefs are not formed by habit, singing, church attendance or any other non-cognitive approaches. Beliefs form *through a careful study of the evidence on BOTH SIDES.* The first thing that Christian parents should be showing their kids is debates with both sides represented. That shows them that there is more to a worldview than just being bullied into it by raising your voice at them.

Christian parents, take note. Don't be focused on making your child behave nicely on the outside and making it impossible for them to talk about temptations and doubts. Christianity comes from the inside – from the mind. You need to be helping them form a worldview that has been tested and approved by them, before they ever set foot on a university campus. The Christian faith is not adopted by habit or tradition, it is adopted by transferring knowledge and discussing opposing views openly and honestly.

Don't be like this mother who is only focused on externals – what family and friends think of her:

The good news is that atheism is not generally adopted because of logic or evidence. That means that a little bit evidence for God's existence goes a long way against *no evidence*. A little bit evidence for the reliability of the Bible goes a long way against *no evidence*. A little bit of the minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus goes a long way against *no evidence*. It's very important that when your children get to university that they find a conflict between *some* evidence and *no evidence*. At that point, it becomes their choice to decide what to do, and it could go either way. You don't have to make them William Lane Craig before they get to university, for example. But they should have at least read his popular-level essays and books, heard his podcasts, and seen him debate.

Peer pressure on a secular university is powerful – but if you've taught your children to value *truth* over popularity, vanity, selfishness and immorality, then you've done your job. Lots of people fall away from Christianity in university because of the hostile environment. Some fall away because they want to be approved of by their peers, some because they just want to be seen as tolerant or smart, some because they want to get good grades from liberal professors, some because they want to have a good time, etc. That's not your concern. Your concern is to demonstrate your love of truth, and communicate to them a sober assessment of the evidence pro and con on ultimate issues. After that, it's up to them.

New study: voucher program improved odds of poor students graduating by 21 percent

May 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Signal reports on the study.

Excerpt:

> Private school choice initiatives have become increasingly common across the United States. Far from being rare and untested, private school choice policies are an integral part of the fabric of American education policy.
>
> In the United States today, 56 different school choice policies exist in 28 states plus the District of Columbia, and the number of choice policies has approximately doubled every four years from 2000 to 2012.
>
> The District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program remains the nation's only federally sponsored private school choice initiative. It provides scholarships worth up to $8,000 in grades K-8 and $12,000 in high school to low-income children in D.C. to attend any of more than 50 participating private schools.
>
> When the Opportunity Scholarship Program was launched in 2004, the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences selected me to lead the initial government evaluation of this pilot program in parental school choice. Demand for scholarships exceeded supply, so most applicants faced a lottery to determine if they would receive an Opportunity Scholarship, permitting us to use a "gold standard" experimental research design to determine what impact the program had on participants.
>
> Students in our pioneering study graduated from high school at a rate 21 percentage points higher than they otherwise would have as a result of using an Opportunity Scholarship. In scientific terms, we are more than 99 percent confident that access to school choice through the Opportunity Scholarship Program was the reason students in the program graduated at these much higher rates.

But that's just one program, how about some others?

> My research team similarly found the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program significantly increased the rates of high school graduation, college enrollment and persistence in college for the low-income students participating in our nation's oldest urban private school choice program.
>
> Researchers at Harvard University and the Brookings Institution determined that a privately funded K-12 scholarship program in New York City significantly increased the rate at which black and immigrant students enrolled in college. Increasingly and consistently, researchers are finding that private school choice

> programs like the Opportunity Scholarship Program enable students to go farther in school.

It is so good for the poor, minority children if we let their parents get money for school tuition directly. We should let parents make the choice about which school is best for their child. But, Democrats oppose school choice, because they want their allies in the teacher unions to be insulated from competition from better-performing private schools.

Look how the Democrats have fought to kill the D.C. voucher program. They talk about helping poor kids, but they don't really mean it. And note, that article is written by ultra-leftist Democrat Juan Williams, but even he cares more about poor, minority kids getting an education than the Obama administration does.

Terrell Clemmons: Is Matthew Vines twisting Scripture to validate his sexual behavior?

May 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Terrell Clemmons

Here's a post from Christian apologist Terrell Clemmons about efforts by gay activists to redefine Christianity so that it is consistent with homosexual behavior. This particular post is focused on Matthew Vines. **NOTE: Matthew Vines has tweeted to say that he is not engaging in any sexual behavior, so we are criticizing his position, not his personal actions. I have updated my comments to make it about behavior, not Matthew.**

She writes:

> In March 2012, two years after having set out to confront homophobia in the church, Matthew presented the results of his "thousands of hours of research" in an hour-long talk titled "The Gay Debate." The upshot of it was this: "The Bible does not condemn loving gay relationships. It never addresses the issues of same-sex orientation or loving same-sex relationships, and the few verses that some cite to support homophobia have nothing to do with LGBT people." The video went viral (more than three quarter million views to date) and Matthew has been disseminating the content of it ever since.
>
> In 2013, he launched "The Reformation Project," "a Bible-based, non-profit organization … to train, connect, and empower gay Christians and their allies to reform church teaching on homosexuality from the ground up." At the inaugural conference, paid for by a $104,000 crowd-funding campaign, fifty LGBT advocates, all professing Christians, gathered for four days in suburban Kansas City for teaching and training, At twenty-three years of age, Matthew Vines was already becoming a formidable cause célèbre.

Terrell summarizes the case he makes, and here is the part I am interested in:

Reason #1: *Non-affirming views inflict pain on LGBT people*. This argument is

undoubtedly the most persuasive *emotionally*, but Matthew has produced a Scriptural case for it. Jesus, in his well-known Sermon on the Mount, warned his listeners against false prophets, likening them to wolves in sheep's clothing. Then switching metaphors he asked, "Do people pick grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?" The obvious answer is no, and Jesus's point was, you can recognize a good or bad tree – and a true or false prophet – by its good or bad fruit. From this, Matthew concludes that, since non-affirming beliefs on the part of *some* Christians cause the bad fruit of emotional pain for*other* Christians, the non-affirming stance must not be good.

Terrell's response to this is spot on, and I recommend you read her post to get the full response.

She writes:

> Matthew Vines in particular, and LGBTs in general, appear to be drivingly fixated on changing other people's moral outlook. But *why*? Why are they distressed over the shrinking subset of Christianity that holds to the traditional ethic of sex? Note that Matthew found an affirming church in his hometown, as can most any LGBT-identifying Christian. Affirming churches abound. Gaychurch.org lists forty-four affirming denominations – *denominations*, not just individual churches – in North America and will help you find a congregation in your area. Why, then, given all these choices for church accommodation, are Matthew and the Reformers specifically targeting churches whose teachings differ from their own?
>
> One gets the sense that LGBTs *really*, *really need* other people to affirm their sexual behavior. Certainly it's human to *want* the approval of others, but this goes beyond an emotionally healthy desire for relational comity. Recall Matthew's plea that non-affirming views on the part of *some* Christians cause emotional pain for *others*. He, and all like-minded LGBTs, are holding *other people* responsible for their emotional pain. This is the very essence of *codependency*.
>
> The term came out of Alcoholics Anonymous. It originally referred to spouses of alcoholics who enabled the alcoholism to continue unchallenged, but it has since been broadened to encompass several forms of dysfunctional relationships involving pathological behaviors, low self-esteem, and poor emotional boundaries. Codependents "believe their happiness depends upon another person," says Darlene Lancer, an attorney, family therapist, and author of *Codependency for Dummies*. "In a codependent relationship, *both* individuals are codependent," says clinical psychologist Seth Meyers. "They try to control their partner and they aren't comfortable on their own."
>
> Which leads to an even more troubling aspect of this Vinesian "Reformation." Not only are LGBT Reformers *not* content to find an affirming church for themselves and peacefully coexist with everyone else, *everyone else must change* in order to be correct in their Christian expression.
>
> This is the classic progression of codependency, and efforts to change everyone

> else become increasingly coercive. We *must* affirm same-sex orientation, Matthew says. If we don't, we are "tarnishing the image of God [in gay Christians]. Instead of making gay Christians more like God … embracing a non-affirming position makes them less like God." "[W]hen we reject the desires of gay Christians to express their sexuality within a lifelong covenant, we separate them from our covenantal God."
>
> Do you hear what he's saying? LGBTs' relationships with God are dependent on Christians approving their sexual proclivities. But he's *still* not finished. "In the final analysis, then, it is not gay Christians who are sinning against God by entering into monogamous, loving relationships. It is *we* who are sinning against them by rejecting their intimate relationships." In other words, non-affirming beliefs stand between LGBTs and God. Thus sayeth Matthew Vines.

The rest of her article deals with Vines' attempt to twist Scripture to validate sexual behavior that is not permissible in Christianity.

One of the things I love about Terrell is that I am so used to Christian women, especially single Christian women, being incredibly wishy washy and lame on every issue you can imagine to Christians, from foreign policy, to economics, to business, to abortion, to same-sex marriage. Just absolutely dominated by the secular culture, straight down the line. That's why Terrell's article was like water in the desert for me.

I think the trouble with Vines needing affirmation stems directly from his advocacy of sexual behaviors not permitted by Christian teaching, which naturally result in a desire to get people to approve of it, so that the sinner can delude himself into thinking that what he is doing is not wrong. I.e. – if I can get lots of people to agree with me and silence those who disagree then what I am doing will be right. I am a chaste man now in my late 30s. I have not so much as kissed a woman on the lips. There is no celebration for what I am doing, not even in the church. Most of the Christian women I meet think that the purpose of relationships of is for the man to make the woman happy, or else she can divorce him and take all his wealth and future earnings. But you don't see me complaining that people need to validate my choice to be chaste. And the reason is, that even if the entire world were against me, the morality of chastity is self-authenticating. It doesn't matter how many people make me feel bad about what I am doing, I have the direct experience of doing the right thing – and it comes out in the way that I love women upward, giving them my whole heart.

Matthew Vines is annoyed that we expect homosexuals to work through their same-sex attractions, abstain from premarital sex, and then either remain chaste like me, or marry one person of the opposite sex and then confine his/her sexual behavior to his/her marriage. But how is that different than what is asked of me? I have opposite sex-attractions (boy, do I!), but I am also expected to abstain from premarital sex, and either remain chaste, or marry one woman for life, and confine my sexual behavior to that marriage. If I have to exercise a little self-control to show God that what he wants from me is important to me, then I am willing to do that.

Believe me, I understand what it is like to be without a woman's love and support. I started out with a cold, distant, selfish, career-oriented mother. I dreamed about marriage since I was in high school – I remember praying about my future wife, even then. No one that I know has a stronger need for validation and encouragement from a woman than I do. Yet if I have to let that go in order to let God know that what he wants matters to me, then I will do it. I have been rejected by women because they refused to understand that what God has entrusted me with (education, career, wealth, health) is *NOT* for them to control for their own enjoyment. I am open to a woman telling me, logically and with supporting evidence, how to use my resources (or pool our resources) to serve God better. But I am not willing to marry if it means that the resources that God has entrusted to me will be redirected to fun and thrills, as her feelings dictate. I already have a Boss. I am not the boss. I don't need a different boss. My relationships, if I am going to have any, are going to reflect what God wants, not what I want, and not what she wants.

My service to God is not conditional on me getting my needs met. And my needs and desires are no less strong than the needs of people who engage in sex outside the boundaries of Christian teaching. We just make different decisions about what/who comes first. For me, Jesus is first, because I have sympathy with Jesus for loving me enough to die in my place, for my sins. I am obligated to Jesus, and that means that my responsibility to meet expectations in our relationship comes above my desire to be happy and fulfilled. For Matthew, the sexual needs come first, and Scripture has to be reinterpreted in light of a desire to be happy. I just don't see anything in the New Testament that leads me to believe that we should expect God to fulfill our desires. The message of Jesus is about self-denial, self-control and putting God the Father first – even when it results in suffering. I take that seriously. That willingness to be second and let Jesus lead me is what makes me an authentic Christian.

Matthew Vines and Michael Brown had a debate on the Bible and homosexuality, and I summarized it and commented on it in this post. Note that at the time of writing, I thought that Vines was engaged in the behaviors he was advocating for. There is also a good debate featuring Robert Gagnon and a gay activist in this post. There's another debate between Michael Brown and Eric Smaw in this post.

Advice for Christians who discuss their faith with atheists… from an atheist

May 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this post by Jeffery Jay Lowder on The Secular Outpost, and I think it's good advice.

> There are times where two people speak the same language, use the same words, and mean *very* different things by the same words. In conversations between Christians and atheists, "faith" is one such word. For many atheists, the word "faith" means, by default, belief *without* evidence or even belief *against* the evidence. In contrast, I doubt many Christians would accept that definition. For example, according to the NIV translation, Hebrews 11:1 states, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."
>
> Victor Reppert, at *Dangerous Idea,* writes this about the word "faith."
>
> Every time you use the word "faith" in a discussion with an atheist, they are going to declare victory. They will presume that you are believing for no reason, and that you are are admitting that the evidence is against you.
>
> I think he is probably right. If Christians want to dialogue with atheists, I think Christians would be well served to speak the 'language' of atheists. The word "faith" simply has too much baggage associated with it; inserting that word into the conversation is likely to become a distraction from whatever point the Christian was probably trying to make. So if you're a Christian talking with atheists, my advice is to temporarily delete the word "faith" from your vocabulary. Find some other way to make your point.

A better word to use is "trust", and here's Christian apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason to make the same point:

Christian apologist Jonathan Morrow had a similar post on Think Christianly. (Mark well the part he put in bold)

Excerpt:

> In today's post I want to share a conversation I had with some of the sharp young men during lunch. It had to do with how we talk about Christianity with our friends, family, and coworkers. Most of the time, well meaning Christians talk about Christianity in the context of religion…not reality. Is that a problem? Yes, and here's why. Religion is understood as a personal and private feeling that is not accessible by everyone else. You can't question, challenge, or investigate it; you must simply be tolerant of it (and by tolerant, I am using the modern misunderstanding of tolerance which believes that all religious views are equally valid simply because a person sincerely believes them). That's why having a

> conversation about Christianity as a religion is a dead end. It's a non-starter.
>
> That's why I encouraged these students to talk about Christianity in the context of reality where terms like truth, knowledge, reason, and evidence apply. Any claim about reality is either true or false (it can't be both). *If Christianity is not the kind of thing that can be true or false…the battle has already been lost and the Gospel cannot be seriously considered*. We need to talk about Christianity in the same way we talk about having a prescription filled at the pharmacy or receiving instruction from a Doctor.
>
> In today's society, religion is a fuzzy (i.e., socially constructed or psychologically projected) category that makes little difference in everyday life. **But if Christianity is true, then it speaks to ALL of life. It makes a comprehensive claim on reality**. Jesus didn't intend to merely address two hours of our week. As Christians we need to have more conversations about reality and less about religion.

I've even written a post about the concept of faith that is presented in the Bible and the word faith has nothing to do with blind belief in the Bible – it's always based on evidence, so that people can know for certain what the truth is. I highly recommend it for anyone who disagrees with Jeffery,Greg or Jonathan. When you're talking about Christianity, you're talking about what you know. You're talking about the way the world is, for everyone. When you talk about your belief in God, you should say "trust". You should not say "faith".

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Clinton shell corporation “WJC, LLC” allowed non-disclosure of speaking fee revenue amounts

May 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton: secretive, entitled, hypocritical

This is from James Taranto of the Wall Street Journal.

First, about the “pass-through” / “shell” corporation:

> If the Clintons had any wit, they’d have called it Everyday Americans LLC. The Associated Press reports that last week’s financial disclosures by inevitable Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton “omit a company with no apparent employees or assets that the former president [the candidate’s husband] has legally used to provide consulting and other services, but which demonstrates the complexity of the family’s finances.”
>
> The company is known as WJC LLC. The first set of initials stand for William Jefferson Clinton, the second for limited liability company. As the Small Business Administration website explains, an LLC “is a hybrid type of legal structure that provides the limited liability features of a corporation and the tax efficiencies and operational flexibility of a partnership.” An LLC doesn’t pay corporate income tax but rather passes profits along to its “members” (owners) as personal income.
>
> There’s no evidence the Clintons failed to comply with the applicable laws in this matter. “Under federal ethics disclosure rules, declared candidates do not have to report assets worth less than $1,000,” the AP reports. Since WJC LLC is a “shell” or “pass-through,” which holds no assets, it falls short of that threshold by roughly a grand. **The rules require Mrs. Clinton only “to identify the source of her spouse’s income and confirm that he received more than $1,000,” which she did in at least one case that “surfaced in emails from Bill Clinton’s aides to the [State] department’s ethics officials.”**
>
> **But because there is no obligation to disclose how much money the spouse earned, “the precise amounts of Bill Clinton’s earned income from consulting have not been disclosed, and it’s not known how much**

> **was routed through WJC, LLC." More is known about the Clintons' extravagant speaking fees—"as much as $50 million" for him during her tenure as secretary of state—which went directly to them or the Clinton Foundation.**

But that's not all! When Hillary was Secretary of State, her department approved arms deals (SALE OF WEAPONS) to parties who made donations to her Clinton Foundation.

Amazing:

> Graver for the Clintons is a report yesterday from David Sirota and Andrew Perez of the International Business Times. (Sirota is the left-wing author who enjoyed a dubious 15 minutes of fame in 2013 when he penned a piece for Salon titled "Let's Hope the Boston Marathon Bomber Is a White American.")
>
> **Sirota and Perez report that they found "dozens of arms sales," worth $165 billion, that were "approved by Hillary Clinton's State Department" and "placed weapons in the hands of governments that had also donated money to the Clinton family philanthropic empire." In some cases, the sellers of the armaments were also Clinton Foundation donors.** The report opens with this example:

> Even by the standards of arms deals between the United States and Saudi Arabia, this one was enormous. A consortium of American defense contractors led by Boeing would deliver $29 billion worth of advanced fighter jets to the United States' oil-rich ally in the Middle East.

> Israeli officials were agitated, reportedly complaining to the Obama administration that this substantial enhancement to Saudi air power risked disrupting the region's fragile balance of power. The deal appeared to collide with the State Department's documented concerns about the repressive policies of the Saudi royal family.

> But now, in late 2011, Hillary Clinton's State Department was formally clearing the sale, asserting that it was in the national interest. At a press conference in Washington to announce the department's approval, an assistant secretary of state, Andrew Shapiro, declared that the deal had been "a top priority" for [Mrs.] Clinton personally. Shapiro, a longtime aide to Clinton since her Senate days, added that the "U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army have excellent relationships in Saudi Arabia."

> These were not the only relationships bridging leaders of the two nations. In the years before Hillary Clinton became secretary of state, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia contributed at least $10 million to the Clinton Foundation, the philanthropic enterprise she has overseen with her husband, former president Bill Clinton. Just two months before the deal was finalized, Boeing—the defense contractor that manufactures one of the fighter jets the Saudis were especially

> keen to acquire, the F-15—contributed $900,000 to the Clinton Foundation, according to a company press release.

> Sirota and Perez also cite fishy-looking speaking fees to Mr. Clinton, such as $175,000 from the Kuwait America Foundation "paid in the same time frame as a series of deals Hillary Clinton's State Department was approving between the Kuwaiti government and Boeing."

And now, there are connections between the Clinton Foundation and the FIFA scandal that's now in the news.

The radically leftist Daily Beast:

> Both Bill Clinton and his family's charity have been tied to soccer's governing body, as well as Qatar's disastrous World Cup bid.

> And just like that, another Clinton Foundation donor is in the news.
>
> **The Clinton global charity has received between $50,000 and $100,000 from soccer's governing body and has partnered with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association on several occasions, according to donor listings on the foundation's website.**
>
> **Several top FIFA executives were arrested Wednesday in Zurich and face corruption charges stretching back two decades, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.**
>
> Involvement with the embattled body extends beyond the foundation to Bill Clinton himself. The former president was an honorary chairman of the bid committee put together to promote the United States as a possible host nation for the 2018 or 2022 World Cup.
>
> When the U.S. lost the 2022 bid to Qatar, Clinton was rumored to be so upset he shattered a mirror.
>
> But apparently Qatar tried to make it up to him.
>
> The Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee, partnering with the State of Qatar, "committed to utilizing its research and development for sustainable infrastructure at the 2022 FIFA World Cup to improve food security in Qatar, the Middle East, and other arid and water-stressed regions throughout the world," according to the Clinton Foundation website.
>
> The cost of the two-year project is not listed on the Clinton Foundation website, but the Qatar 2022 committee gave the foundation between $250,000 and $500,000 in 2014 and the State of Qatar gave between $1 million and $5 million in previous, unspecified years.
>
> FIFA, which has never been a bastion of ethics, was heavily criticized for awarding the 2018 and 2022 World Cup to Russia and Qatar, respectively, in part because of their abysmal human-rights records.

> *The Guardian* reported in 2013 about "appalling labor abuses," including possible forced labor and worker death on Qatar's World Cup infrastructure projects. It is also considered to be too hot to play soccer in Qatar in the summer.

Seriously, is Hillary Clinton the kind of person we want to sent to the White House?

Related posts

- In one day, Bill and Hillary Clinton got over $1 million for FOUR speeches
- George Stephanopolous was a member of the Clinton Global Initiative in 2010 and 2011
- Former CIA deputy director: foreign countries have everything on Clinton's e-mail server
- ABC News anchor who defended Clinton Foundation donated $75,000 to Clinton Foundation
- Only 10% of money given to Clinton Foundation goes to charity
- Mitt Romney: Hillary's Clinton Foundation Uranium One scandal "looks like bribery"
- New study: how the mainstream media deleted Hillary Clinton's e-mail scandal
- "Dead broke" Hillary Clinton makes more money in an hour than top-paid CEO
- New book by Peter Schweizer: Clinton State Department favored foreign donors
- Largest individual donor to Clinton Foundation has trade ties to Iran
- Clinton Foundation continues to take donations from regimes that oppress women
- What are Hillary Clinton's views on amnesty and illegal immigration?
- Hillary Clinton never signed separation form that required her to turn over all e-mails
- Could Hillary Clinton be sent to prison because of her secret e-mail server?
- Hillary Clinton deleted 32,000 e-mails, refuses to turn over her home-based server
- Clinton Foundation: all eight of the highest paid executives are men
- E-mails released by Clinton: there are "months, and months, and months" missing
- Hillary Clinton used her private e-mail account to conduct State Department business
- E-mails: Hillary Clinton's top aides knew in minutes that Benghazi was a terrorist attack
- Clinton Foundation receives millions in donations from regimes that oppress women
- As senator, Hillary Clinton paid women 72 cents for every dollar she paid men
- Hillary Clinton's fake Bosnia gunfire story and her abortion award
- Hillary Clinton: don't let anybody tell you that corporations and businesses create jobs
- Hillary Clinton aides were present to "separate" damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- Universities raise tuition while paying hundreds of thousands to Hillary Clinton to speak
- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- Hillary Clinton opposes bill to cut taxpayer funding of abortions abroad

Two reasons to avoid premarital sex: trust issues and contact with exes

May 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Family Studies blog. (H/T Brad Wilcox)

Excerpt:.

> My own research with working-class young adults leads me to believe that they have basically made peace with sexual permissiveness—at least outside of marriage—even as they retain some ambivalence about it. They tend to move in quickly with new romantic partners, even as they worry that people rush too quickly into relationships. From survey data, we know that people without a college education have more lifetime sexual partners than those with a college education, and that most of them see no problem with premarital sex.
>
> But there is one problem: easy access to sex with multiple partners can make for complicated relationships. As sexual partners accumulate, so does the potential for distrust. As one man whose ex-girlfriend had cheated on him explained, “It’s gonna take a lot more time for me to ever trust somebody again like that. I let her in quick, and now it’s never gonna happen again.” One divorced man said simply, “Everyone has to watch their ass all the time.” There is the feeling that no one is safe—even in marriage. As another young man claimed, “Nowadays, even though you got a ring on your finger, people tend to look past that.”
>
> So people describe keeping vigilant watch over their partners’ cell phones, policing for messages from exes. They live an all but married lifestyle, yet they say that they are hesitant to make the commitment of marriage. Why? Part of the reason is that they don’t trust their partner, or themselves, to remain in the marriage. In one survey, 42.5 percent of low-income, unmarried respondents cited “worry that the marriage would end in divorce” as a reason they might not be pursuing marriage, and 23.5 percent cited “questions about whether your partner is trustworthy.” As one young man that I interviewed said after learning that his fiancée was cheating on him, “I don’t trust nobody.”
>
> **That distrust is at least partly the legacy of the libertarian sexual ethic, which assumes that sexual activity outside of marriage is typically okay so long as people are mutually consenting to the acts. And that distrust is why I have a hard time believing—as Noah Smith does—that sexual permissiveness will somehow evolve into more stable marriages for the working class. (Indeed, having more sexual partners prior to marriage is linked to greater odds of divorce, as Nicholas Wolfinger and W. Bradford Wilcox recently documented.) There is no invisible hand that will transform James and Jessica’s distrust and cynicism, which stems in part from their multiple past sexual relationships, into trust and an**

> **enduring marriage. What the working class needs—what we all need—to achieve our shared aspirations for lifelong love and a stable family is social permission to date without immediately having sex.**
>
> That's important because today young people often assume that withholding sex is a sign of distrust. As James said, if you begin a relationship and don't have sex, "they automatically assume that you're cheating." But sliding into sex often translates into sliding into a relationship—and children—without first building trust and discerning for character and compatibility. And that slide often contributes to the erosion of trust in the opposite sex and in lifelong love. We must confront that reality if we're serious about empowering working young adults to achieve trusting relationships.

"Withholding sex" makes it sound bad. You don't have sex or even do sexual things before marriage because you are trying to prove to your partner that you have self-control enough that when you are married, he/she need not be concerned that you are OK with sex outside of a lifelong commitment. You restrain yourself in order to prove to the other person that you have what it takes in order to be trusted, and the other person does the same to you. It's not that you are trying to reduce the amount of "fun" you are having, it's that you are auditioning for a role, and this is what the other person needs to see from you during the courtship – chastity. It's even better if your exes can produce letters of reference. I always produce letters of references from my exes and they tell the woman "you have nothing to worry about, he may push you for many, many things as he leads you, but sex isn't one of those things". I am very demanding about women learning and growing – just not demanding about sex. Sex is for marriage.

Usually, when a girl I court has sexual experience, it's because she had a period when she was not a Christian. This is fine with me (it's something that requires adjustments and some extra work). You might think because I am so demanding and judgmental, that this is an immediate disqualifier, but it's not. What I like to do is try to lead the woman to learn apologetics, conservative ideas, how marriage works, etc. Usually what happens is that she compares me to her ex-boyfriends who were not Christians and thinks "wow! those guys had no plan for me beyond making me fulfill their sexual needs". Which is what you can expect from a non-Christian man – they have no interest in introducing you to the Boss, and telling you what the Boss requires. That's one of the pluses of being courted by a Christian man – we put the woman's service to God first. We don't push her into sex, because we find other ways for her to show that she loves us other than sex. There are a BILLION ways for a woman to show that she loves you and is interested in you without pushing her for anything sexual.

It does have a strong effect on a woman when she sees me putting my needs second, and trying to get her to learn stuff that is helpful to the Boss. I think when a woman experiences that, it's difficult for them to go back to non-Christian men. At least, that's my experience. The more you teach a woman about how a marriage actually runs, and what a man actually does in a marriage, the less she tends to like guys who have not

prepared for marriage. Well, at least a good woman will connect the dots and adjust what kind of man she is interested in. Men are designed to be protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders. Although it’s tempting for a woman to go for men who don’t make demands and don’t make judgments, in the long run, it’s not good for a marriage project. It would be like stepping on a football field and preferring to talk to the guy who doesn’t take winning too seriously. He’s fun to talk to, not very demanding, but it’s not going anywhere. I think women who choose men who don’t lead or judge on purpose may feel more comfortable, but a goal-directed, demanding relationship is actually more stable.

Chris Sinkinson debates John Hick on religious pluralism and salvation

May 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two rams butting heads: may the best ram win!

Looks like Justin Brierley on the Unbelievable radio show found a pastor with a Ph.D in philosophy, and he can really whip some ass. And that's a good thing, because he is taking on one of the two leading proponents of religious pluralism, in my opinion, (the other being Paul Knitter).

The players:

> John Hick is a noted philosopher and theologian who is a proponent of a pluralist view of religion – that there is one light (God) but many lampshades (religious expressions).
>
> Chris Sinkinson is a pastor and Bible tutor who has critiqued Hick's work. He says that pluralism empties Christianity of any content and in its own way disrespects other religions more than his own exclusivist stance.

The MP3 file is here. (Note: This link works)

Justin does a great job as moderator of this debate. He said what I was thinking of saying a number of times during the debate.

Anyway, here is my snarky summary. I creatively paraphrase some of the things that Hick says to make it more clear. And funny.

—-

Hick:
– had an experience looking at the buildings of other religions
– other religions have buildings, so all religions are equal
– I spent some time in the East, and met nice Eastern people
– since Eastern people are nice that means all religions are equal

Justin:
– isn't Jesus' claim to be the exclusive path to salvation offensive?

Sinkinson:
– all religions that are exclusive and have to deal with religious pluralism
– even John Hick writes polemically in favor of his own view
– even John Hick thinks that religions that are exclusive are false

Justin:
– what about the blind man and the elephant?
– the story seems to say that other people have a partial grasp?
– but the story-teller himself has the privileged view
– so isn't the religious pluralist just as arrogant as exclusivists?

Hick:
– well, it's not arrogant to claim to have the right answer
– Jesus never made the claim to be God incarnate
– Jesus never made the claim to be the exclusive path to God
– historians don't think that John's gospel is reliable because it is late
– the proclamation of exclusivity was added by evangelists much later

Sinkinson:
– the historians who doubt the high Christology are radical skeptics
– the mainstream of historical scholarship accepts a high Christology
– the EARLIEST history about Jesus has the highest Christology

Hick:
– the moderate scholars do think Jesus was divine but that he didn't think he was divine
– the phrase "Son of God" was used to describe any remarkable person
– only later did the early church turn the generic term into "God the Son"

Sinkinson:
– there is reflection on Jesus' identity and developments, but not invention
– Jesus and his followers were in trouble precisely for linking him to deity
– why else would Jesus get into trouble and get crucified?

Hick:
– the Romans crucified him because people were saying he was the Messiah
– but the Messiah was not identified as being divine, but political
– and that's why the Romans crucified him

Justin:
– do you (Sinkinson) think that people in other religions can be saved?

Sinkinson:
– the traditional view is exclusivism
– the other world religions are logically contradictory with Christianity
– you have to respect their differences – they are not the same as Christianity
– exclusivists allow that people can be saved by responding to natural theology
– and there are also other cases where non-Christians are saved, like old testament saints and babies who die in infancy

Hick:

– but people’s religions are based on where they are born
– so it’s not fair for God to expect people to be saved in one religion only

Sinkinson:
– the plurality of religions grouped by location doesn’t make christianity false
– that would be the genetic fallacy – rejecting an idea because of its origin
– the real question to consider is whether it is true
– and even the objection assumes that God is a God of love, who should be fair
– but how do you know that God is loving? that is an exclusive view
– how can the “blob” ultimate of religious pluralism be “loving” and “fair”

Hick:
– the ultimate reality is loving or not loving depending on each person’s religion

Sinkinson:
– but some religions and theistic and some are atheistic
– how can those God exist and not exist?

Hick:
– God is beyond everyone’s understanding, except mine
– God is beyond all definitions, except mine
– God is beyond all human understanding, except mine
– i’m not contradicting myself, it’s a mystery! a mystery!
– as long as you don’t look to closely, they’re all the same!
– allow me to tell you about God, which no one can do but me

Justin:
– doesn’t your religious pluralism mean that Christianity is false?

Hick:
– well, Christianity can’t be true, because it disagrees with other religions
– Christianity can’t falsify other religions, that would be mean to them
– other religions are just as “profound” as Christianity – and that’s what matters – not whether a religion makes true claims
– some religions are older than Christianity, that means they can’t be disagreed with
– we can’t let Christianity be true, because then some people will feel bad
– if people feel bad, then they don’t like me and then I feel bad
– if there’s one thing I know about the unknowable ultimate reality, it’s that it wants me to be liked by lots of people

Sinkinson:
– your view seems to be agnosticism – that nothing can be known about the “ultimate real”
– if we can’t express in words what God is like, then why are you saying what God is like?

Hick:
– the indescribable ultimate is described (falsely, but interestingly) by various tradition

Sinkinson:

– does the “ultimate real” exist?

Hick:
– no

Justin:
– are all the exclusive religions wrong, and only you are right?

Hick:
– all propositions about God in all the religions are false
– the experience of being deluded and having feelings about your delusions is “valid” in all religions
– all religions are equally good ways to believe false things and to have feelings about your false beliefs
– only my propositions about God are true
– everyone who disagrees with me is wrong

Sinkinson:
– so all the propositions of all the religions are wrong
– but all the experiences and feelings are “right”

Hick:
– yes
– all propositions about God are humanly constructed, and so false
– except mine – mine are true!

Sinkinson:
– so everything distinctive about Christianity are literally false?

Hick:
– yes, Christian doctrines are all false
– because if they were true, other religions would be false, and they would feel bad
– and we can’t have that, because everyone has to like me
– only things that don’t offend people in other religions can be true

Sinkinson:
– so do we have to then treat all religions as non-propositional?

Hick:
– well just don’t ask people about the content of their beliefs
– just treat their religion as non-cognitive rituals, feelings and experiences
– don’t inquire too deeply into it, because all religions are all nonsense
– i’m very respectful and tolerant of different religions!

Sinkinson:
– but Muslims, for example, think their religion is making truth claims

Hick:
– but there can be tolerance as long as you treat religions as non-propositional nonsense

Sinkinson:
– um, I have a higher respect for religions than you do

– I actually consider that the claims of other religions could be true
– I think that other religions make truth claims and not nonsense claims

Hick:
– well they are all useful because they are all false
– I don't emphasize beliefs, I emphasize living, experiences and feelings
– as long as everyone accepts my view and rejects their religion, we'll all be tolerant

Justin:
– erm, isn't that an exclusive claim?
– you're trying to say that your view of what religion is is right, and everyone else is wrong

Hick:
– I'm not arrogant, I just think that all the religions of the worlds are false
– only my statements about religion are true – everyone else is wrong
– I'm tolerant, and Christians are arrogant

Justin:
– but you think Sinkinson's view is wrong
– why should we accept your view and deny his view?

Hick:
– His view of salvation is false, and mine is true

Sinkinson:
– you use words with set meanings, but you mean completely different things
– when I say salvation, I mean deliverance from sins through Jesus

Hick:
– I get to decide what salvation means for everyone, you intolerant bigot

Sinkinson:
– but that word has a specific meaning that has held true in all of Christian history
– but what you mean by salvation is people having subjective delusions that are not true

Hick:
– I don't like using the word salvation

Sinkinson:
– but you just used it!
– and you think that it is present in different world religions, but it isn't

Hick:
– God is unknowable and indescribable
– God isn't a wrathful God though
– and the Christian description of God is false
– Evangelical Christians are mean
– I had experiences with people of other faiths
– and these experiences taught me that religions that think that the universe is eternal are true

– as long as you reduce religion to behaviors and not truth, then religions are all good at producing behaviors
– if you just treat all religions as clothing fashion and food customs, they are all valid
– the main point of religion is for people to agree on cultural conventions and stick to them
– never mind the propositional statements of religions… who cares about truth? not me!
– but Christianity is definitely false

Sinkinson:
– the Judeo-Christian God is different – he reveals himself to humans
– he is distinct from the other religions
– he is personal, and is loving but also angry at sin

Hick:
– But God isn't a person, and he isn't a non-person
– I can't say what he is – I'll offend someone if I say anything at all!
– except Christians – I can offend them because they are arrogant bigots
– I'm also very spiritual – I meditate on my breathing

Sinkinson:
– you can't assess a religion by the experiences that people have
– people who have weird experiences do all kinds of evil things
– so the real question has to be about truth – is the New Testament reliable?, etc.

New Gallup poll’s scary numbers: social conservatism in decline

May 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

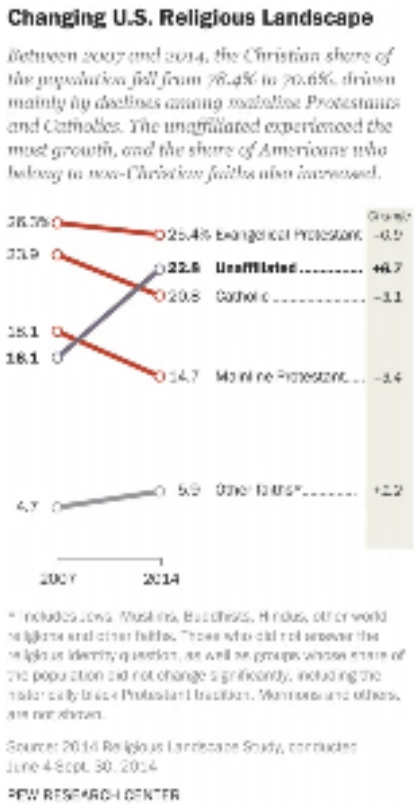

Changes in religious affiliation

A while ago, some numbers came out showing that mainline Protestant denominations were in decline, while Roman Catholicism was in steep decline. Evangelicals had a slight decline.

Here’s the ultra-leftist Washington Post on the findings:

> Christianity is on the decline in America, not just among younger generations or in certain regions of the country but across race, gender, education and geographic barriers. The percentage of adults who describe themselves as Christians dropped by nearly eight percentage points in just seven years to about 71 percent, according to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center.
>
> “It’s remarkably widespread,” said Alan Cooperman, director of religion research for the Pew Research Center. “The country is becoming less religious as a whole, and it’s happening across the board.”
>
> At the same time, the share of those who are not affiliated with a religion has jumped from 16 percent to about 23 percent in the same time period. The trend follows a pattern found earlier in the American Religious Identification Survey, which found that in 1990, 86 percent of American adults identified as Christians, compared with 76 percent in 2008.

I have an idea why this is happening and here it is: Christian leaders have nothing to say about the issues being debated in the mainstream culture. And once people get involved in the trendy sinful behaviors that are so widespread right now, it's no wonder they dump Christianity. I'm sure it will surprise no one to say that I think that Christian leaders ought to be focusing more on issues like abortion, marriage, science, economics, foreign policy, climate change, etc. from a Christian perspective – since young people are leaving Christianity precisely on those grounds.

For example, shouldn't we have something to say about premarital sex?

> Relatively extensive evidence has established that more religious adolescents tend to delay first sexual intercourse. In a paper that Sara Vasilenko and I published last year, we wanted to examine whether this association, usually assumed to be in this direction (from religiosity to sexual behavior), was actually bidirectional. We used the 100 participants from the University Life Study who transitioned to first intercourse between their first and seven semester in college. Our findings demonstrated that 12 months after transitioning to first intercourse, students attended religious services less frequently and viewed religion as less important than they had prior to first intercourse. Eventually, religiosity returned to levels that would be predicted by developmental trends prior to intercourse.

Maybe somebody ought to be explaining to them how premarital sex affects the stability and quality of their future marriage, using secular evidence from social science studies? But we're not doing that. We're stuck with assuming the Bible is true, preaching the gospel every Sunday, and studiously avoiding trying to demonstrate what the Bible teaches with real-world evidence that can be used *in the real world!*

Maybe we should have something to say about marriage and divorce?

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.

Have you ever heard a sermon on the policies that cause families to break up? I mean a sermon on anti-marriage forces like welfare programs (which make husbands unnecessary for having children), no-fault divorce (easy divorce if the woman is "unhappy"), etc? Many soft-hearted, empty-headed Christians vote for policies that actually undermine marriage because they sound nice, and we have been taught that being nice and being liked is more important than having true beliefs that are supported by evidence. In general, the church is not helping us to make the connections, either. There are *many* challenges to marriage. How many have you heard discussed from the pulpit in church? If we don't start to discuss these, then we can expect Christianity to decline – and with it, our influence.

When Christianity declines, morality declines with it. Here are the latest numbers from Gallup:

Moral Acceptability: Changes Over Time

% Morally acceptable

	2001	2015	Change
	%	%	(percentage pts.)
Gay or lesbian relations	40	63	+23
Having a baby outside of marriage*	48	64	+16
Sex between an unmarried man and woman	52	68	+15
Divorce	59	71	+12
Medical research using stem cells obtained from human embryos*	58	64	+12
Polygamy (when married person has more than one spouse at the same time)**	7	18	+9
Cloning humans	7	15	+8
Doctor-assisted suicide	49	56	+7
Suicide	15	15	0
Gambling**	65	67	+2
Abortion	42	45	+3
Cloning animals	31	34	+3
Buying and wearing clothing made exclusively of fur	60	61	+1
Married men and women having an affair	7	8	+1
The death penalty	66	60	-6
Medical testing on animals	65	56	-9

Note: Sorted by change in the percentage saying each is "morally acceptable"; ranked on the values on social issues first measured in 2001.

* First measured in 2002

** First measured in 2003

GALLUP

Gallup: changing opinions on moral values

Summary:

> The substantial increase in Americans' views that gay and lesbian relations are morally acceptable coincide with a record-high level of support for same-sex marriage and views that being gay or lesbian is something a person is born with, rather than due to one's upbringing or environment.
>
> The public is now more accepting of sexual relations outside of marriage in general than at any point in the history of tracking these measures, including a 16-percentage-point increase in those saying that having a baby outside of marriage is morally acceptable, and a 15-point increase in the acceptability of sex between an unmarried man and woman. Clear majorities of Americans now say both are acceptable.

> Acceptance of divorce and human embryo medical research are also up 12 points each since 2001 and 2002, respectively.
>
> Polygamy and cloning humans have also seen significant upshifts in moral acceptability — but even with these increases, the public largely perceives them as morally wrong, with only 16% and 15% of Americans, respectively, considering them morally acceptable.

This is becoming a concern for me. We will not be able to impact the culture until we start to win arguments on the issues that cause Christians to step away from the faith. And that is especially true for young people, who, owing to their undeveloped brains and lack of experience in real life, are more easily swayed by the cultural elites, especially at the university.

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

May 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God

alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?

3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the

personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Mike Licona debates Bart Ehrman on the reliability of the gospels

May 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two ninjas face off at sundown
From the Unbelievable radio show.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is well known as a US New Testament Scholar who lost his Christian faith and now questions many core precepts of Christianity, including the Resurrection of Jesus. When Mike Licona had doubts he devoted himself to investigating the evidence and became convinced that Jesus resurrection is the only rational explanation for the facts.
>
> They debate key historical facts about the resurrection – are the letters of Paul that report the resurrection and the Gospel accounts trustworthy or theologised and changed with time? What about apparent contradictions between the Gospels? Does the consensus of scholars count as evidence, or is there a Christian bias? Can a miracle count as an explanation for historical data?

The MP3 file is here. (Note: this link works)

Snarky summary of the radio debate: (items with * are my made-up paraphrases/clarifications)

Ehrman:
– Bart's new book is about forgeries in the ancient world
– some books were falsely attributed to prominent Christian figures
– there are mistakes in the Bible
– there are mistakes in the resurrection narratives
– the defeat of inerrancy led to his conversion to liberal Christianity
– the problem of evil and suffering caused him to become a non-Christian

Licona:

– there are minimal facts that are agreed to by a broad spectrum of scholars
– the minimal facts are accepted because they pass standard historical criteria
– Fact 1: Jesus died by crucifixion
– Fact 2: Individuals and groups had visions of Jesus after his death
– Fact 3: Paul, a skeptic and an enemy, had an appearance of Jesus that converted him
– these facts are agreed to atheist scholars, liberal scholars, etc.
– virtually 100% of scholars agree with these three facts
– there is no naturalistic explanation of these three facts
– therefore, the best explanation of these three facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Ehrman:
– all historians would accept these three facts, except for maybe the group appearances
– the death of Jesus is irrelevant to the resurrection
– the second and third point can be collapsed together
– so really there is only one fact

Moderator:
– the crucifixion is relevant because Muslims don't admit that fact
– the crucifixion important because it establishes a resurrection, not a resuscitation

Ehrman:
– well, if the point is that he died, then yes, this does require a resurrection

Licona:
– the crucifixion refutes Muslims who deny that Jesus died
– the crucifixion refutes the apparent death theory (swoon theory)
– the death is required for a bodily resurrection
– it's important to know what facts most scholars, regardless of worldview, agree on
– it's important to emphasize that Licona is working from historical bedrock facts
– the resurrection is the best explanation for the historical bedrock facts

Ehrman:
– you are trying to list 3 things, but really it is just one thing – the appearances
– and not ALL scholars agree that the group visions occurred

Licona:
– name one prominent scholar who denies the group appearances

Ehrman:
– the radically leftist atheist nutcase John Dominic Crossan denies the group appearances
* Crossan is so far on the left that I look like a nutcase for even citing him
* Crossan believes in the Secret Gospel of Mark, which is a hoax – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan believes that the synoptics are LATER than gnostic forged gospels – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan presupposes atheism, so he cannot admit to miracle stories as a pre-supposition – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan pre-supposes religious pluralism, so he cannot allow any exclusive claims

Christians make – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan is a good historian, it's just that he is so far to the left that no one – NO ONE – agrees with his all of crazy theories
* I think it is a good idea to cite historians who pre-suppose atheism and political correctness before they sit down to do history

Licona:
– let me explain why most scholars accept the individual and group post-mortem appearances
– the best source for the appearances is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 15:3-8
– Paul himself had an appearance of Jesus after Jesus' death
– Paul received this material from a source very soon after the appearances – within 1-3 years
– we know that Paul met with Jesus disciples multiple times prior to writing
– Paul probably received it from Peter and James, who were themselves eyewitnesses

Moderator:
– this early dating presumably rules out legend

Licona:
– well legends CAN start quickly
– it does show that Paul was an eyewitness
– it does show that Paul was in contact with reliable eyewitnesses

Ehrman:
– 1 Corinthians is written around 55 AD, twenty-five years after Jesus died
– it is not implausible that Paul got the creed from the disciples, who were eyewitnesses
– but you don't need a long time for legends to emerge, so that is a possibility

Licona:
– only about 3% of people could read and write back them
– instead, people had enormous capacity for memorization
– the Pharisees were particularly good at memorization
– Jews were very serious about passing along traditions accurately
– Paul, a prominent Pharisee, would have been capable of passing on early creeds accurately
– Paul, in 1 Cor 7, shows that he is willing to separate his opinions from authentic tradition
– Paul had an opportunity in 1 Cor 7 to put words into Jesus' mouth, but he wouldn't do it

Ehrman:
– cultural anthropologists show that things do get changed in some oral cultures
– in these oral cultures, it is assumed that the story teller will change the story
– only in written cultures are they careful to avoid changing the story
– in the New Testament, you can compare the same story in two different gospels, there are differences

Licona:
– Ehrman is right that the gospel writers pick and choose things from the oral tradition

that they want to include in their gospels
– different oral tradition transmission schemes have more or less embellishment
– african tribes embellish more, rabbinic teaching embellishes less
* Jesus' followers would have viewed him as a rabbi, and been careful about adding to his teachings
– Paul, an eyewitness, probably received the creed in 1 Cor 15 from other eyewitnesses
– Paul speaks about going twice to Jerusalem in Galatians
– he is meeting with Peter and James to check his facts

Ehrman:
– when you look at Mark and John, there are lots of differences in the narrative

Licona:
– I agree that the gospels have differences, but the oral tradition is likely fixed

Ehrman:
– but Mark and John have different sayings
– why doesn't Mark have the same explicit high Christology that John has?

Licona:
– first, John is trying to weave the oral tradition into a compelling story
– and second, when you look in Mark, the high Christology is there in the Son of Man sayings
– the apocalyptic Son of Man is in Mark, and everywhere in the New Testament

Ehrman:
– the "apocalyptic Son of Man" isn't in John

Licona:
– what about in John 9 with the man who was born blind

Ehrman:
– where is the apocalyptic part?

Licona:
– the healed man worships Jesus because he is the Son of Man
– that links to the apocalypic passages in the Old Testament

Moderator:
– what about the differences between the gospels?

Ehrman:
* well, now is the time for me to set up an inerrantist straw man and then knock it down!
* who was at the empty tomb: one angel or two angels? we don't know, so the whole Bible is false!
* I used to be an inerrantist, so one minor difference is enough for me to dump the whole Bible
* I'll kill you, you stupid straw man! I hate you, Moody Bible Institute! You lied to me!

Licona:
– many of these problems can be solved by realizing that the gospel writers compress

time
– the stories don't have to list ALL the characters in every scene
– you don't have to force the Bible to meet some sort of wooden chronology
– the main thing is that the events happened, not that the descriptions match word for word across sources

Ehrman:
– you can't infer a miracle from history, David Hume says so
* extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, David Hume says so
* no I don't know what begging the question is, I'm not a philosopher
* no I don't remember when Bill Craig kicked my ass on this Hume objection in our debate
– the New Testament gospels contradict each other at every point, they are not reliable at all!
* they cannot even agree what Jesus' name is! There are 1 trillion variants of Jesus' name!
* "one angel vs two angels" proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point
* my expansive list of FOUR theologically insignificant variants proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point

Licona:
– um, the gospels agree on the central narrative and disagree on the peripherals
– and they agree on the minimal facts I presented, even if they disagree about the number of angels

Ehrman:
* they have to agree on everything and be inerrant! The Moody Straw Man Bible Institute says so!
* I really really really need to have the number of angels be the same, or Jesus didn't die on the cross

Licona:
– but you don't deny any of the three minimal facts I presented (crucifixion, appearances, Paul)

Ehrman:
– well, I don't know if the group appearances occurred – maybe they did
– i think Jesus died on the cross, and I think that people said they saw him alive afterward

Licona:
– if you deny the minimal facts, then you are outside the majority of scholars

Ehrman:
– the majority of scholars who agree to the minimal facts you presented are Christians
* Gerd Ludemann is an atheist Christian
* James Crossley is an atheist Christian
* Hector Avalos is an atheist Christian
* the majority of the atheist scholars are all Christians!
– VIRTUALLY EVERYBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IS A CHRISTIAN!!!

(Yes, he said that)

Licona:
– you really think so?

Ehrman
– you name one non-Christian in the SBL

Licona:
– (incredulous) um, John Dominic Crossan is an atheist

Ehrman:
– but he CLAIMS TO BE A CHRISTIAN so that means HE IS A CHRISTIAN
* all you have to do to be a Christian is claim to be one
* you can even deny the existence of God and the divinity of Christ and still be one, you bigot!

Licona:
– would Jesus or the apostles recognize a Christian as being someone who doubts God's existence

Ehrman:
– my view is that Jesus and the apostles would not recognize evangelical Christians as Christians
* a non-theist can be a Christian just by claiming to be one, but evangelical Christians are not Christians even if they claim to be Christians
– Christians can't record accurate history about the resurrection because they are biased

Licona:
– on your view, if a person is a Christian then he can't write about the evidence for the resurrection
– so then similarly, you would not allow Jews to write about the historicity of the Holocaust
– because you think that if people have an interest in what they are recording then they can't be objective
– but you have to consider the evidence we have, taking the biases of the sources into account

Ehrman:
– but the only people who believe in the resurrection are Christians!

Licona:
– well, people can consider the evidence for the resurrection as non-Christians
– and then if they accept it they can become Christians

Moderator:
– what about your bias? you don't believe in God – doesn't that pre-supposition affect how you do history?

Ehrman:
– well, I presuppose naturalism, so I can't admit to anything in history that implicates

supernatural causes
* no I have never heard of the arguments for the Big Bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, limits on mutations creating information, habitability and so on – I never heard about that stuff from my atheist university professors and even if I had I would have been expelled for talking about it because that would make people feel bad about their sinning

Licona:
– so it's not bias you are concerned about, it's that you don't want history to contradict your untested religion of naturalism?
– why not just do the history without pre-suppositions to gather the minimal facts and then see what the best explanation is?

Ehrman:
* well God is out of bounds as an explanation because I could not have got my PhD if I mentioned God
* I really needed my smart atheist professors to like me and give me good grades so God is RIGHT OUT
* ideas like a real God and moral laws and Hell makes my atheist professors uncomfortable and that means low grades for me
* I'm not really interested in butting heads with professors – it's easier to just agree with them and move on to selling books to the gullible
* My books are much more sensational than Dan Brown books, so please buy lots of them!

Licona:
– what if the historical evidence is good enough to show that Jesus rose from the dead?

Ehrman:
– well I would not call someone rising from the dead a miracle – I would call it weird
* I also think that the Big Bang is "weird" but that doesn't prove that God created the universe out of nothing
* if it's a miracle then I'm going to have to not sin, and maybe even go to Hell, and we can't have that

Licona:
– well, you accept the three minimal facts
– what if we try all the naturalistic explanations for those three facts and there are problems with all of them?
– what if the resurrection is the best explanation for the three minimal facts?

Ehrman:
– but I want to arbitrarily rule God put because I want to pre-suppose naturalism
– there is not historical reason I have to rule put supernatural explanations a priori

Licona:
– I think you are struggling with the theological implications of a historical conclusion

Ehrman:

– well when you do theology, you have to avoid grounding your theology on science or history
– theology has to be completely made up or it’s not good theology

Licona:
– I think you are letting your dislike of the implications of the resurrection determine your historical conclusions
– you have to use historical methods to gather the minimal facts that every scholar accepts, regardless of worldview
– then you weigh ALL the hypotheses, natural and supernatural, that could account for these minimal facts
– then you choose the hypothesis that best explains the minimal facts

The importance of having a narrative when confronting the assumption of naturalism

May 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

How do you present theism as a rational belief to a person who thinks that the progress of science has removed the need for God?

Canadian science writer Denyse O'Leary writes about the history of cosmology at Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> What help has materialism been in understanding the universe's beginnings?
>
> Many in cosmology have never made any secret of their dislike of the Big Bang, the generally accepted start to our universe first suggested by Belgian priest Georges Lemaître (1894-1966).
>
> On the face of it, that is odd. The theory accounts well enough for the evidence. Nothing ever completely accounts for all the evidence, of course, because evidence is always changing a bit. But the Big Bang has enabled accurate prediction.
>
> In which case, its hostile reception might surprise you. British astronomer Fred Hoyle (1915-2001) gave the theory its name in one of his papers — as a joke. Another noted astronomer, Arthur Eddington (1882-1944), exclaimed in 1933, "I feel almost an indignation that anyone should believe in it — except myself." Why? Because "The beginning seems to present insuperable difficulties unless we agree to look on it as frankly supernatural."
>
> One team of astrophysicists (1973) opined that it "involves a certain metaphysical aspect which may be either appealing or revolting." Robert Jastrow (1925-2008), head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, initially remarked, "On both scientific and philosophical grounds, the concept of an eternal Universe seems more acceptable than the concept of a transient Universe that springs into being suddenly, and then fades slowly into darkness."

> And Templeton Prize winner (2011) Martin Rees recalls his mentor Dennis Sciama's dogged commitment to an eternal universe, no-Big Bang model:

> For him, as for its inventors, it had a deep philosophical appeal — the universe existed, from everlasting to everlasting, in a uniquely self-consistent state. When conflicting evidence emerged, Sciama therefore sought a loophole (even an unlikely seeming one) rather as a defense lawyer clutches at any argument to rebut the prosecution case.

> Evidence forced theorists to abandon their preferred eternal-universe model. From the mid 1940s, Hoyle attempted to disprove the theory he named. Until 1964, when his preferred theory, the Steady State, lost an evidence test.

Here is a quick summary of some of the experimental evidence that emerged in the last few decades that caused naturalists to abandon the eternal universe that they loved so much when they were younger.

The importance of having a narrative

Now I want to make a very, very important point about Christianity and the progress of science. And that point is that it is very important that Christians present the evidence in exactly the way that Denyse presented it in that article – in its historical context, featuring the conflict between naturalists and the experimental evidence.

All Christians should be familiar with the following basic pieces of evidence which fit the war between science and naturalism narrative:

1. The origin of the universe
2. The cosmic fine-tuning
3. The origin of life (biological information)
4. The sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla
5. The habitability/observability correlation

When you talk about these evidences as a Christian theist to non-Christians, you have to have cultivated a genuine interest in reconciling your beliefs with science. You have to accept that there are two books that reveal God's character and attributes. The book of nature, and the book of Scripture. And you need to be flexible about getting these two books to fit together. The book of nature gives us natural theology (see Romans 1). It tells us that God is Creator and Designer. The book of Scripture tells us that God stepped into history as a man to save us by taking the punishment for our headlong rush away from God, which the Bible calls sin. Science is one way that humans can recover some of basic knowledge about God. Knowledge that is only possible because God created and designed the universe (and us) in such a way that we are capable of making discoveries, and that the universe is capable of being explored and understood.

It's very important to present these five basic evidences to non-Christians in the historical context. And here is the story you must tell: "In the beginning, there was the naturalism, and the naturalism tried to argue from ignorance that God was not Creator and God was

not Designer. And then came the science, and now people have to give up their naturalism in order to not be crazy and irrational". That's the narrative you use when talking to non-Christians about science.

In the beginning was the naturalism:

1. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the universe was eternal
2. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that a life-permitting universe was as likely as a life-prohibiting universe
3. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the cell was a simple blob of jello that could spontaneously emerge in some warm pond
4. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla would be explained by subsequent fossil discoveries
5. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that there was nothing special about our galaxy, solar system, planet or moon

But then science progressed by doing experiments and making observations:

1. Scientists discovered redshift and the cosmic microwave background radiation (evidence for a cosmic beginning) and more!
2. Scientists discovered the fine-tuning of gravity and of the cosmological constant and more!
3. Scientists discovered protein sequencing and exposed the myth of "junk DNA" and more!
4. Scientists discovered an even shorter Cambrian explosion period and the absence of precursor fossils and more!
5. Scientists discovered galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones and more!

And now rational people – people who want to have true beliefs about reality – need to abandon a false religion (naturalism).

Now naturally, science is in a state of flux and things change. But you have to look at the trend of discoveries, and those trends are clearly going against naturalism, and in favor of Christian theism. No one is arguing for a deductive proof here, we are simply looking at the evidence we have *today* and proportioning our belief to the concrete evidence we have *today*. People who are guided by reason should not seek to construct a worldview by leveraging speculations about future discoveries and mere possibilities. We should instead believe what is more probable than not. That's what a *rational* seeker of truth ought to do. Proportion belief to probabilities based on current, concrete knowledge.

Atheism, as a worldview, is not rooted in an honest assessment about what science tells us about reality. Atheism is rooted in a religion: naturalism. And the troubling thing we learn from looking at the history of science is that this religion of naturalism is insulated from correction from the progress of science. Nothing that science reveals about nature seems to be able to put a dent in the religion of naturalism, at least for most atheists.

It falls to us Christian theists, then, to hold them accountable for their abuse and misrepresentation of science. And that means telling the story of the progress of science accurately, and accurately calling out the religion of naturalism for what it is – *a religion rooted in blind faith and ignorance that has been repeatedly and convincingly falsified by the progress of science in the modern era*.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Architect of Kathleen Wynne's Ontario Liberal Party sex ed curriculum sentenced for child porn

May 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Liberal Party: Kathleen Wynne and Justin Trudeau

A reader of the Wintery Knight blog insisted that I write about this story from Canada, and he helped me with all these details of Ontario politics in this post. WARNING: This post contains graphic details of sexual deviancy committed by the Liberal Party of Ontario.

Life Site News reports.

Excerpt:

> Ben Levin, the man who "appeared to have it all," was today sentenced to three years in prison for three child pornography offences.
>
> […]The once-tenured professor at Ontario's Institute for Studies in Education had a "hidden, dark side" in a "depraved on-line world" as a "deviant mentor" who made "insidious attempts to normalize the sexual exploitation of children," McArthur noted in her 23-page reasons for sentence.
>
> […]A member of Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne's transition team, Levin was deputy minister of education in 2009 when he and then-minister of education Wynne developed the "equity and inclusive education strategy," part of which was the 2010 radical sex-ed curriculum shelved by then-Premier Dalton McGuinty after parental backlash. The 2015 sex-ed curriculum is virtually the same as the 2010 version.
>
> Campaign Life Coalition says Levin's connection to the current radical sex-ed curriculum is further reason to reject it.

> “Ben Levin’s prison sentence is another reminder to Ontario families of why they must continue to oppose Kathleen Wynne’s sex-ed curriculum,” says CLC’s Ontario president Mary Ellen Douglas. The curriculum, to be rolled out this September, prematurely sexualizes children by introducing homosexuality in Grade 3, masturbation in Grade 6, and oral and anal sex in Grade 7.
>
> […]Levin himself claimed in a 2010 interview: “I was the deputy minister of education. In that role, I was the chief civil servant. I was responsible for the operation of the Ministry of Education and everything that they do; I was brought in to implement the new education policy.”
>
> […]Levin pled guilty on March 3, 2015, to three of an original seven child pornography related charges.
>
> McArthur related how in 2010, Levin created a profile on an “alternative sexual lifestyle networking site” frequenting chat-rooms on “incest” and “teens.” He subsequently “came to the attention of three undercover officers.”
>
> In the course of sex-chats with these officers, Levin “wrote a story detailing the violent sexual abuse of a child” and “counseled another officer, posing as a young mother, to sadistically sexually assault her eight-year-old daughter.”
>
> “Mr. Levin’s offending behavior was not isolated or impulsive,” she said. He “collected child pornography over two years. He saved the first image in March 2011 and the last just weeks before his arrest.” Levin also had a list of about 1,750 online contacts with whom he communicated on “subversive sexual interests,” primarily “sexual contact between parents and children.”
>
> In his sex-chats, Levin “normalized the subject of the sexual touching of children.”
>
> In his June 2013 chats with police officer Janelle Blackadar, who posed as the mother of an eight-year-old girl, Levin instructed her on how to get her daughter “used” to sex using pornography and masturbation.
>
> […]“Mr. Levin recklessly pursued his own selfish, sexual urges, all the while knowing an innocent child could be abused as a result. Mr. Levin’s moral blameworthiness is extremely high.”
>
> The “sadistic overtones to the counseling adds a disturbing dimension to the offence,” McArthur stated, noting that psychiatrist Dr. Julian Gojer testified that Levin had a “pedophiliac interest in children” which was “intense” for three to four years. Gojer stated Levin “had sadistic impulses that seemed interwoven with his pedophilic interest” and “was on the extreme end of the sadomasochistic spectrum as it relates to the sexual abuse of children.”

That’s who is teaching children in Ontario schools – public, Catholic, private. There is no opt-out. Taxpayers paid for this.

Very important now to take a look at why Kathleen Wynne is the one calling the shots in Ontario:

> Wynne was born in Toronto to Dr. John B. Wynne and Patsy O'Day, a musician who grew up in the Bahamas before immigrating to Canada.
>
> She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Queen's University and a Master of Arts degree in linguistics from the University of Toronto. She achieved a Master of Education degree in adult education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto).
>
> […]Prior to her coming out as a lesbian at age 37 she was married to Phil Cowperthwaite, with whom she had three children. She now lives with her second spouse, Jane Rounthwaite, whom Wynne has stated is to be referred to as her "partner" (rather than "wife"). They were married in July 2005 at Fairlawn Avenue United Church in Toronto. Wynne is a member of the United Church of Canada.
>
> […]On September 18, 2006, she was promoted to Minister of Education in a cabinet shuffle occasioned by the resignation of Joe Cordiano from the Legislature. She was the province's first openly lesbian cabinet minister, and only the second openly LGBT cabinet minister after Deputy Premier George Smitherman.

George Smitherman is the one who brought back taxpayer-funded sex changes.

When Christian leaders focus in on a version of Christianity that is about feeling good – getting your needs met, following your heart, singing praise songs, reading devotionals by A. W. Tozer, etc. – we are in fact leaving the public square wide open so that secular leftists like Kathleen Wynne can step in and take control. Either we get serious about recognizing the value of education, career and money, or we continue to let Judeo-Christian morality slip away. The people running things in Ontario have contempt for Christians, and for traditional marriage and traditional families. But they are the ones in charge, not us. Because they put in the time to get the credentials.

If we continue to make Christianity about fun, thrills and seat-of-the-pants "plans" based solely on the "fear of missing out" and "you only live once", then secular Ontario is our future. We have to get serious about studying things that matter, getting real jobs, and doing hard work, so that we can have an influence from the top-down. Self-denial, self-sacrifice, wisdom – that's what we need if we hope to make a difference in this world.

If you want to read what is happening to Christians in Canada, this article from the leftist CBC (government-run, like our own leftist PBS) has a good rundown. This is what's coming here for us.

What happens to crime rates if we punish police officers for stopping crime?

May 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story from Heather MacDonald in the Wall Street Journal is scary.

She writes:

> The nation's two-decades-long crime decline may be over. Gun violence in particular is spiraling upward in cities across America. In Baltimore, the most pressing question every morning is how many people were shot the previous night. Gun violence is up more than 60% compared with this time last year, according to Baltimore police, with 32 shootings over Memorial Day weekend. May has been the most violent month the city has seen in 15 years.
>
> In Milwaukee, homicides were up 180% by May 17 over the same period the previous year. Through April, shootings in St. Louis were up 39%, robberies 43%, and homicides 25%. "Crime is the worst I've ever seen it," said St. Louis Alderman Joe Vacarro at a May 7 City Hall hearing.
>
> Murders in Atlanta were up 32% as of mid-May. Shootings in Chicago had increased 24% and homicides 17%. Shootings and other violent felonies in Los Angeles had spiked by 25%; in New York, murder was up nearly 13%, and gun violence 7%.
>
> Those citywide statistics from law-enforcement officials mask even more startling neighborhood-level increases. Shooting incidents are up 500% in an East Harlem precinct compared with last year; in a South Central Los Angeles police division, shooting victims are up 100%.
>
> By contrast, the first six months of 2014 continued a 20-year pattern of growing public safety. Violent crime in the first half of last year dropped 4.6% nationally and property crime was down 7.5%. Though comparable national figures for the first half of 2015 won't be available for another year, the January through June 2014 crime decline is unlikely to be repeated.

What could the cause of this be? Well, it's the backlash against police officers who defend themselves from assault by criminals who attack them:

> Since last summer, the airwaves have been dominated by suggestions that the police are the biggest threat facing young black males today. A handful of highly publicized deaths of unarmed black men, often following a resisted arrest—including Eric Garner in Staten Island, N.Y., in July 2014, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., in August 2014 and Freddie Gray in Baltimore last month—have led to riots, violent protests and attacks on the police. Murders of officers jumped 89% in 2014, to 51 from 27.

> The state's attorney general, Eric Schneiderman, wants to create a special state prosecutor dedicated solely to prosecuting cops who use lethal force. New York Gov.Andrew Cuomo would appoint an independent monitor whenever a grand jury fails to indict an officer for homicide and there are "doubts" about the fairness of the proceeding (read: in every instance of a non-indictment); the governor could then turn over the case to a special prosecutor for a second grand jury proceeding.
>
> **This incessant drumbeat against the police has resulted in what St. Louis police chiefSam Dotson last November called the "Ferguson effect." Cops are disengaging from discretionary enforcement activity and the "criminal element is feeling empowered," Mr. Dotson reported. Arrests in St. Louis city and county by that point had dropped a third since the shooting of Michael Brown in August. Not surprisingly, homicides in the city surged 47% by early November and robberies in the county were up 82%.**
>
> **Similar "Ferguson effects" are happening across the country as officers scale back on proactive policing under the onslaught of anti-cop rhetoric. Arrests in Baltimore were down 56% in May compared with 2014.**

But there's more – there's also leniency towards property and drug crime, and criminals are getting the message:

> As attorney general, Eric Holder pressed the cause of ending "mass incarceration" on racial grounds; elected officials across the political spectrum have jumped on board. A 2014 California voter initiative has retroactively downgraded a range of property and drug felonies to misdemeanors, including forcible theft of guns, purses and laptops. More than 3,000 felons have already been released from California prisons, according to the Association of Deputy District Attorneys in Los Angeles County. Burglary, larceny and car theft have surged in the county, the association reports.
>
> "There are no real consequences for committing property crimes anymore," Los Angeles Police Lt. Armando Munoz told Downtown News earlier this month, "and the criminals know this." The Milwaukee district attorney, John Chisholm, is diverting many property and drug criminals to rehabilitation programs to reduce the number of blacks in Wisconsin prisons; critics see the rise in Milwaukee crime as one result.

Yes, this is what happens with the leftist mainstream media and the Democrats who run big cities like Baltimore, Ferguson, New York, Cleveland, Seattle, etc. get together and decide that they are more opposed to police officers than they are to criminals. If we as a society choose to intimidate and persecute the police for doing their jobs, then crime goes up. What's my counter to this? Well, it might be time to start thinking about moving

out of big cities, especially ones that are run by Democrats. I just don't see how this is going to get fixed in the near-term, given that Obama rolled back welfare reform, and welfare is what causes women to have children before they get married. Fatherless children are more likely to become criminals. The decline of marriage and family that everyone seems to be celebrating as "tolerance" will just make more delinquent children. So, just when we most need the police (since we insist on attack marriage with welfare, no-fault divorce and same-sex marriage) we are actively working to undermine them.

But that's not all I am seeing that troubles me. I see a lot of support for amnesty, and that means a lot more Democrat voters in the future, especially in states with a high concentration of illegal immigrants. Not only that, but there are problems of underfunded pensions at the state level, and the trillion dollar student loan bubble, and the problem of continued funding of entitlement programs like Social Security. And of course we have the $10 trillion that the Democrats added to the debt, and the problems in so many countries in the Middle East, like Iran, Iraq, Libya, Yemen and Syria. The whole Middle East is on fire, and this is bound to affect us as our defense spending declines.

How to respond to this? I think having earnings and savings is key, and maybe trying to move away from areas that are likely to have high crime, and strains on state and local budgets from illegal immigrants, pension obligations, etc. I really have no answer to the student loan bubble, the entitlements, the debt and the foreign policy threats. What I am doing is focusing on earning money (through work) and saving it by restricting spending on luxury items, e.g. – travel, fun, etc.

Bart Ehrman debates the reliability of the gospels with Craig Evans

May 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson

This is the first debate ever between these two top-ranked scholars. Both Evans and Ehrman are probably 2 of the 10 most recognized historical Jesus scholars.

The MP3 audio and a link to the video is here. (From Brian Auten at Apologetics 315)

Speakers

Bart Ehrman

Dr. Ehrman, is a graduate of Wheaton College (Illinois), Professor Ehrman received both his Masters of Divinity and Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary, where his 1985 doctoral dissertation was awarded magna cum laude. Since then he has published extensively in the fields of New Testament and Early Christianity, having written or edited twenty-one books, numerous scholarly articles, and dozens of book reviews. Among his fields of scholarly expertise are the historical Jesus, the early Christian apocrypha, the apostolic fathers, and the manuscript tradition of the New Testament.

Craig Evans

Dr. Evans received his B.A. degree in History and Philosophy from Claremont McKenna College, his M.Div. degree from Western Baptist Seminary in Portland, Oregon, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Biblical Studies from Claremont Graduate University in southern California. Author and editor of more than fifty books and hundreds of articles and reviews, Professor Evans has given lectures at Cambridge, Durham, Oxford, Yale, and other universities, colleges, seminaries, and museums, such as the Field Museum in Chicago and the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa.

Note: This is a very snarky summary, and I am just paraphrasing things to be silly and funny. Reader discretion is advised.

Summary

Snarky things I made up are in italics.

Question 1: are the gospels historically reliable?

Bart Ehrman opening speech:

- I used to be an ignorant fundamentalist like you!
- but then I went to Princeton, and now I know better
- to Craig: are there errors in the Bible
- the gospels have some reliable and some unreliable info
- only careless readers don't see contradictions in the gospels
- contradictions in the genealogies
- contradictions in timing of recognizing Jesus as the Messiah
- contradiction about when Jesus died
- contradiction about when the stone was rolled away
- contradiction about who was at the empty tomb
- contradiction about when the disciples went to Galilee
- contradictions in minor details means the gospels are unreliable

Craig Evans opening speech:

- the question is "do the gospels tell us enough about Jesus for faith?"
- the gospels don't tell us everything, but they tell enough for faith
- the extremely early creed in 1 Cor 15:3-7 has an outline of the gospel
- it contains the burial, the appearances to eyewitnesses
- and it agrees with the early sermons of Peter in Acts 2
- the gospels agree with these extremely early summaries
- the gospels are based on earlier sources
- the gospels are corroborated by the Jewish historian Josephus

Question 2: Do the gospels accurately preserve the teachings of Jesus Christ?

Bart Ehrman

- are there any discrepancies in the gospels?
- the gospels have things Jesus said, and things he didn't say
- if the Bible is inaccurate in some minor details, then it's all unreliable
- in the latest gospel, John, Jesus calls himself God and sees himself as divine
- but these high-Christology statements are not in the synoptics
- therefore, Jesus really didn't say these things
- why didn't the synoptics record these claims to divinity
- the author of John changed the words of Jesus and John the Baptist?

Craig Evans

- E.P. Sanders (a non-Christian scholar) says we can know what Jesus taught

- cites E.P.'s list of Jesus' core teachings that are agreed on by most scholars
- Jesus' focus was talking about the Kingdom of God – the rule of God
- Jesus' followers were expected to record and understand the words of Jesus
- It is permissible for the followers of Jesus to have some editorial license

Question 3: Do the gospels accurately preserve the activities of Jesus Christ?

Bart Ehrman

- E.P. Sanders agrees with me that there are discrepancies in the gospels
- E.P. Sanders agrees with me that there are mistakes in the gospels
- If Jesus' followers changed his words a little, then we can't know anything he said
- If the author changes the story a little, then the story was changed a lot
- If there not 100% accurate, then they're not accurate at all
- contradiction of the ordering of Jesus' temptations
- contradiction of the number of animals Jesus rode into Jerusalem
- contradiction of whether Jesus spoke or didn't speak in some instance
- contradiction of what Jesus said on the cross
- contradiction of the number of robbers who speak to Jesus
- Jesus can only say ONE THING when he's on the cross
- the gospel writers have to be in complete agreement

Craig Evans

- E.P. Sanders (non-Christian) lists 7 virtually indisputable facts about Jesus
- just because there are discrepancies, doesn't mean there are no minimal facts
- in additional to E.P. Sanders, there are other facts that are widely-accepted
- many assertions in the gospels are embarrassing to the author
- many liberal scholars think that Jesus was a healer and an exorcist
- all scholars agree on the crucifixion
- most scholars accept the "King of the Jews" placard placed over the cross
- this means that Jesus *was* viewed by his followers as the Messiah

Question 4: Do the gospels contain eyewitness tradition?

Bart Ehrman

- I used to be an ignorant uninformed fundie, *like you all*
- but then I started to study seriously, *not like Craig Evans*
- I changed my mind based on intense research, *not peer pressure*
- *My apostasy has nothing to do with the problem of evil and suffering!*
- I use my brain, *and Craig Evans and you fundies don't use your brains*
- the gospels don't claim to be written by eyewitnesses
- the titles of the gospels were added later
- the gospels don't claim to be written by the authors attributed to them
- the gospels were written anonymously

- the gospels only had names attached in 120-140 AD
- even if gospels were written by eyewitnesses, they are not always accurate
- written 40-60 years after Jesus died
- written in Greek, not Aramaic
- written in different countries
- based on stories that were told and retold and changed over time

Craig Evans

- Richard Bauckham says the gospels are largely based on eyewitness accounts
- the gospels were written while there were still eyewitnesses alive
- the people who met Jesus were there to correct the written accounts
- there were many disputes about things in the early church, so if the early church invented sayings, then why not invent sayings of Jesus to resolve the disputes?
- there is no evidence of things being invented wholesale by the early church
- Pappias says that he talked to Christians who knew the eyewitnesses to Jesus

Question 5: Do archaeologists and historians use the gospels as sources?

Bart Ehrman

- archaeologists do not use the gospels, they just dig things up
- historians do use gospels
- Jesus is not mentioned by any Greek or Roman non-Christian source for 80 years after Jesus' death
- The earliest Jewish source is Josephus, writing 60 years after Jesus' death
- Paul is the earliest source, but says nothing about Jesus' words and deeds
- the earliest sources for words and deeds are the discrepancy-filled gospels
- the gospels are based on telling and re-telling of the stories

Craig Evans

- James Charlesworth has a 700-book about archaeology and the Bible
- the book contains hundreds of references to the four gospels
- the four gospels and Acts are viewed as the best sources for archaeologists
- they provide accurate information about the way things were
- the gospels and Acts helps archaeologists to know where to dig for things
- the Biblical sources are early and based on eyewitnesses
- the gospels and Acts fit well in the first century culture
- the gospels and Acts talk about real events and real places and real customs
- the gospels and Acts talk about real buildings and real public figures and real groups
- the language of the gospels traces back nicely to Aramaic
- the gospels talk about geography and climate
- archaeologists discover many things discussed in the gospels

Question 6: Have the gospels been accurately preserved done through the centuries

Bart Ehrman

- if God inspired the Bible without error, he should have preserved it without error
- but the originals have NOT been preserved without error
- so I no longer accept the inerrancy of the autographs (the originals)
- we don't have the originals
- we only have copies of copies… of copies… of copies… of copies
- and the copiers all made mistakes
- the first manuscripts are decades later
- and the manuscripts we have are different from one another
- the earliest copies have the most mistakes
- even if we have many copies, they are late, so we don't know what the original said
- we don't have early manuscripts

Craig Evans

- we know where the discrepancies in the manuscripts are
- the discrepancies are marked in your Bible
- the discrepancies affect peripheral issues
- some discrepancies are supported by other verses
- Mark doesn't have the appearances, but 1 Cor 15 does, and it's earlier
- the errors are things like spelling and grammar errors, typos, etc.
- we have fragments that are earlier than the full manuscripts
- some early manuscripts have errors, but other early manuscripts are correct

Question 7: Do scribal errors and textual variants significantly impact any teaching of Jesus or any important Christian teaching?

Bart Ehrman

- the woman caught in adultery is a late addition
- the ending of Mark is a late addition
- can we handle snakes or can't we?
- did Jesus sweat blood or didn't he?
- some manuscripts have errors – that should not be allowed by God
- some scribes are careless – that should not be allowed by God
- *we have to have perfect copies of the originals, or I won't believe!*
- *if God really inspired it, it all has to be perfect! Perfect! I was lied to!!!!*
- *if the snake-handling verse isn't there, then the whole Bible is lies! Lies!*

Craig Evans

- no variants impact any teaching of Jesus or significant Christian teaching
- the vast majority of the manuscripts agree on 98-99% of the text

- often, the theology *gives rise* to a variant, which is introduced later
- variants aren't central enough to affect any theological doctrines

And then there are concluding speeches by each speaker.

I made this summary based on the video, which is here on Apologetics 315.

Should Christians be motivated by the fear of missing out (FOMO)?

June 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Dina was off from her stressful job last week, so we spent some time talking over some articles that we found on the culture. We specifically talked about what is motivating young people, so I wanted to write something about that.

FOMO: Fear Of Missing Out

Here's a leftist New York Times article explaining where FOMO comes from:

> It's known as FOMO, or "fear of missing out," and refers to the blend of anxiety, inadequacy and irritation that can flare up while skimming social media like Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare and Instagram. Billions of Twitter messages, status updates and photographs provide thrilling glimpses of the daily lives and activities of friends, "frenemies," co-workers and peers.
>
> […]When we scroll through pictures and status updates, the worry that tugs at the corners of our minds is set off by the fear of regret, according to Dan Ariely, author of "Predictably Irrational" and a professor of psychology and behavioral economics at Duke University. He says we become afraid that we've made the wrong decision about how to spend our time.
>
> […]A friend who works in advertising told me that she felt fine about her life — until she opened Facebook. "Then I'm thinking, 'I am 28, with three roommates, and oh, it looks like you have a precious baby and a mortgage,' " she said. "And then I wanna die."

It's like they want to run a race to do fun and exotic things with their peers, and not finish last.

Anyway, I want to begin this post with examples of FOMO behavior I have personally

encountered.

FOMO Travel

Dina and I read and discussed this article by Alain de Botton in *The European* – notice the emphasis on travel and having fun, sophisticated experiences:

> We're continually being bombarded with suggestions about what we might do (go jet skiing, study in Colorado, visit the Maldives or see the Pyramids). We're always hearing of the amazing things friends have done or are going to do: 'there was this great bar we all went to …'; 'she's getting married in a little country church, then we're having a picnic…'; 'the sun was glinting on Sydney Harbour…' There are endless hints of the allure of life in other places: an article about family-friendly restaurants in Brooklyn, a crime novel set in Trieste, the departure board at the airport with its list of places only a plane trip away: Moscow, Bangkok, Addis Ababa… The modern world makes sure we know at all times just how much we're missing. It is a culture in which intense and painful doses of FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) are almost inevitable.

What's interesting is this – how does FOMO travel affect young, unmarried Christians?

Travel through missions work seems to be the FOMO activity of choice for at least a few young, unmarried Christians. One of my best friends who is married to another of my best friends told me about her missions trip to a European country. I asked her why she did it, since it meant lost savings, lost earnings, lost work experience, etc. (She gave up a year of earnings, and she had a great job in engineering). Her answer was that she did it for the adventure. I have a hard time hearing Jesus say that he was going to do something because he was bored and wanted an adventure. Especially when it's $30,000 in costs, $60,000 of lost income, and lost work experience – per year. This was before the time of the Internet, though, when missionary work actually made sense. I just don't think it's worth spending that kind of money for the impact you make. The people I know who went on missionary trips just wanted to feel spiritual, look spiritual, and have a fun "life experience" vacation. One missionary told me that she was desperate to get away from her boring mid-Western roots.

If you really want to share Christ effectively with people in other countries, then you can start a blog and pay the tiny costs for it out of your earnings from your day job – that's what I do. I get more people from Europe reading my blog than I could contact in a year of missionary work. I Skype with the people who are interested in Christianity from these countries (Scotland, Northern Ireland, England, Canada, etc.), as well. Meanwhile, I keep working my not-exciting job, so my savings increase, and my resume remains gap-less. This is good stewardship of finances, and self-denial prepares your character for the hard work of marriage and parenting. The Bible says that those who do not work should not eat. And Paul says that he built tents so that no one could accuse him of taking on missionary work for financial gain.

You can tell whether a person is sincere in their missionary intentions by looking at how

responsible they've been in their decision-making. If a person has gone into debt paying for fun, thrilling activities like skydiving, ziplining, surfing, etc., then it's FOMO travel. We must look past the spiritual smokescreen, and tell young people to grow up.

After all, if defending God's honor was the missionary's main goal, then the real battlefield would be the university.

Bill Craig puts it best:

> **William Lane Craig** (Famed Christian apologist and philosopher): "It is at the university that [our most influential people] will formulate or, more likely, simply absorb the worldview that will shape their lives. And since these are the opinion-makers and leaders who shape our culture, the worldview that they imbibe at the university will be the one that shapes our culture. If we change the university, we change our culture… If the Christian worldview can be restored to a place of prominence and respect at the university, it will have a leavening effect throughout society."[3]

If serving God is your goal, look to the university

There is already a perfectly fine university right next door – no need to fly to Europe to find one! Remember, the university that took your faith away, or maybe the faith of someone you cared about? Yeah, *it's still there in your home town!* And it's still ruining the lives of thousands of young people. It seems to me that it's better stewardship to stay here and work, then give money to groups like Reasonable Faith. And you can start a blog, teach in church and invite scholars to the local university, too. That costs almost nothing, and it produces better results.

What about Jesus?

Sometimes, it's a good idea to look beyond the words of the Bible and reflect on the overall message of it at a higher level. When I look in the Bible, I see that Jesus went through a lot of suffering in obedience to God in order to secure the salvation of people who did not even like him. And it's from this sacrifice on our behalf that his claim on our obedience comes. There are things that I don't like to do that I do anyway because they work to serve God. Jesus life's ambition was not to do things that were easy, or that made him happy. Experienced Christians do things that are not fun, because these things are right and *because they solve the real problem*.

J. Warner Wallace: practical advice on becoming an effective one-dollar apologist

June 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

As promised, below is my summary of J. Warner Wallace's most recent Please Convince Me podcast, and my comments.

Details:

> J. Warner continues examining the Christian life in light of God's desire for all of us to become Christian Case Makers. Jim reads listener email highlighting some of the typical frustrations involved in starting an apologetics ministry and then provides a template to help you become the Case Maker you've always wanted to be. Jim also answers the question: Why Didn't Jesus Reveal Scientific Facts to Demonstrate His Deity?

You can grab the MP3 file here.

This episode is probably one of the best episodes of the Please Convince Me podcast I've ever heard, because it's practical. I like listening to the cold-case detective talk about practical things.

Summary:

- e-mail from someone trying to start an apologetics ministry for college students and facing difficulties
- the challenge of getting Christians to take an evidential approach to their faith
- tips for getting Christians exposed to apologetics materials
- there are a lot of Christians who are making a daily contribution to apologetics even with a full-time job
- Wallace himself started his apologetics ministry while working full-time
- Wallace, as an atheist, was initially skeptical of religion because he thought it was too focused on money
- His plan as an apologist was to take money right out of it – do it for free, and be self-funded
- 1 Cor 9: "But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision."
- People in ministry deserve to be supported, but Paul dispensed with that right to raise support for his ministry
- Paul self-financed his ministry in order to avoid all appearance of doing his ministry for financial gain
- Similarly, Wallace's goal of being self-financed was to avoid the appearance of doing ministry for money
- If you plan your life carefully enough in the first half, you'll have the money you need to do ministry in the second half

- Wallace wanted the liberty to pursue things without any financial need, and he achieved this by working full-time
- The problem with money is that it often causes us to not cooperate well with other people
- Ministries and churches sometimes avoid working with other people, like scholars and apologists
- They do this because they are afraid of losing their own people to these scholars and apologists
- Wallace wants to get the money out of it and be able to serve anyone with a need
- Wallace: you need to work hard in the first half of life, in order to have freedom to serve in the second half
- First area: financial preparation – you need to escape financial needs so that it doesn't restrict your passion
- Wallace married well, to a woman who was a good saver, very frugal, and not materialistic – he saved 30% of his income
- Second area: need to prepare yourself educationally for being able to teach apologetics materially
- That doesn't always mean doing the MA in apologetics, but you do have master the material – continuous learning
- Third area: try to focus on the parts of your career that might have some connection to apologetics
- You want to have experiences in your work where you learn something that can be used in your ministry
- Wallace actually made career choices to focus on evidence, case-making and teaching
- It's hard because men are naturally competitive – we focus on promotions, money and consumer goods
- It's not always the right move in your career to get promoted if it takes you away from skills related to apologetics
- Christian apologists need to not neglect to develop leadership skills and to develop influence
- He recommends a book called "Platform" by Michael Hyatt, which Doug Groothuis also recommended to me
- If you are financially independent, then if an unpaid opportunity arises, you have the freedom to take it
- You can volunteer for positions that you want to have, instead having to take what pays
- Wallace writes for Breakpoint, and he is able to dispense with the 1000-word limit that gets a fee
- Money opens up the danger of corruption, so it's another reason to just take it out of the picture
- You can be very effective in your apologetics ministry while still working full-time
- The second half is a good time to have even more freedom because your kids are

grown up
- A good wife can really help you if she is picking up the slack so that you can work on your ministry
- Jane Pantig works for Ratio Christi, an organization that promotes apologetics on campus
- Jane's model: she is in full-time ministry, with a BS in biology and an MA in apologetics (Biola)
- Jane is able to get many high-quality speakers to speak for free/cheap at San Jose State University

The rest of the podcast deals a question that was asked at the San Jose State University event that Wallace did for Ratio Christi. I blogged about it this morning. I laughed my butt off while listening to that podcast, starting at around 62:50 and on. It's pretty funny when he does the role-pay between Jesus and the people listening to him.

My comments:

The reason I wanted to post this is because I think that a lot of people feel obligated to quit their jobs and raise support because they think that you have to do apologetics full time. It's not true. Wallace explains that he worked as a cold-case detective until just recently when he took his pension. His pension is now underwriting his ministry. Similarly with me, I work a full-time job and run the blog out of my income. In addition, I probably donate a few thousand dollars each year to people who are organizing apologetics lectures, debates and conferences – events featuring speakers I like best.

This blog gets about 1 million page views per year, depending on the year (election years are better), so that's not an insignificant impact. In addition, I meet a lot of young Christians in university in different countries who want advice or mentoring, so I spend a few hours here and there mentoring them, and sometimes sending them rewards (books) for doing difficult degrees at good universities and getting good grades. My full-time job helps me to do all of these things. And before I could have a full-time job in information technology, I had to put in the time and effort to get the Bachelor and Masters degree in computer science.

So I think that Christian men especially need to be thinking about how much the apologetics enterprise of a one-dollar apologist relies on money. We really need to be thinking about that early on, in high school, and choosing to study hard things and to do well in those hard subjects. The higher-paying jobs that are more secure tend to be in fields like science, math, technology and engineering. We need to be thinking of doing these courses in high school – especially the men, but also the women – in order to be able to pay for our apologetics ministry. In addition, my decision to not marry (unless I meet a woman who can support me in my plan) gives me even more freedom to work on my ministry while working full time.

I fully approve of what Wallace said about self-financing your apologetics ministry – and supporting other apologetics ministries – in order to avoid all appearance of self-interest. In fact, I have long admired Wallace for his intentional, practical way of doing his ministry.

He doesn’t take donations, and he gives away tons of materials for free. I like that.

William Lane Craig: Christians are idling in intellectual neutral

June 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video is 40 minutes long.

The full transcript is available here on the Reasonable Faith web site. (H/T Think Apologetics)

Excerpt:

> No one has issued a more forceful challenge to Christians to become intellectually engaged than did Charles Malik, former Lebanese ambassador to the United States, in his address at the dedication of the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois. Malik emphasized that as Christians we face two tasks in our evangelism: saving the soul and saving the mind, that is to say, not only converting people spiritually, but converting them intellectually as well. And the Church is lagging dangerously behind with regard to this second task. Our churches are filled with people who are spiritually born again, but who still think like non-Christians. Mark his words well:
>
> I must be frank with you: the greatest danger confronting American evangelical Christianity is the danger of anti-intellectualism. The mind in its greatest and deepest reaches is not cared for enough. But intellectual nurture cannot take place apart from profound immersion for a period of years in the history of thought and the spirit. People who are in a hurry to get out of the university and start earning money or serving the church or preaching the gospel have no idea of the infinite value of spending years of leisure conversing with the greatest minds and souls of the past, ripening and sharpening and enlarging their powers of thinking. The result is that the arena of creative thinking is vacated and abdicated to the enemy.
>
> Malik went on to say:
>
> It will take a different spirit altogether to overcome this great danger of anti-intellectualism. For example, I say this different spirit, so far as philosophy alone—the most important domain for thought and intellect—is concerned, must see the tremendous value of spending an entire year doing nothing but poring intensely over the *Republic* or the *Sophist* of Plato, or two years over the *Metaphysics* or the *Ethics* of Aristotle, or three years over the *City of God* of Augustine. But if a start is made now on a crash program in this and other domains, it will take at least a century to catch up with the Harvards and Tübingens and the Sorbonnes—and by then where will these universities be?
>
> What Malik clearly saw is the strategic position occupied by the university in shaping Western thought and culture. Indeed, the single most important

> institution shaping Western society is the university. It is at the university that our future political leaders, our journalists, our lawyers, our teachers, our scientists, our business executives, our artists, will be trained. It is at the university that they will formulate or, more likely, simply absorb the worldview that will shape their lives. And since these are the opinion-makers and leaders who shape our culture, the worldview that they imbibe at the university will be the one that shapes our culture.

And:

> The great Princeton theologian J. Gresham Machen warned on the eve of the Fundamentalist Controversy that if the Church loses the intellectual battle in one generation, then evangelism would become immeasurably more difficult in the next:
>
> False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. Under such circumstances, what God desires us to do is to destroy the obstacle at its root.
>
> The root of the obstacle is to be found in the university, and it is there that it must be attacked. Unfortunately, Machen's warning went unheeded, and biblical Christianity retreated into the intellectual closets of Fundamentalism, from which it has only recently begun to re-emerge. The war is not yet lost, and it is one which we must not lose: souls of men and women hang in the balance.

This lecture is an excellent opportunity for us all to ask ourselves: what are we doing to influence the university? Do you have a plan?

Many of the strongest people who are now opposed to Christianity raised in two-parent Christian homes, and went to church for a decade before going off to the university. I'm thinking especially of people like Tim Gill, in Colorado. At university (and even increasingly in high school) they turned away from Christianity. All their peers and the adults could not answer their questions. As adults, they were able to get money, power and influence. Many of them are using it against Christ and his kingdom – kicking away the ladder that they climbed to success on. Why is this? Unfortunately, many of us are not willing to do what works – pick up the Lee Strobel books and read them. Especially "The Case for a Creator".

Seven ways to cut government spending and anti-business regulations

June 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an article from The Federalist.

The 7 policies:

1. Repeal ObamaCare
2. Health Savings Accounts
3. Means-test Social Security
4. Restart economic growth
5. Re-reform welfare
6. Save the cities
7. Federalism

Since we just had a horrible quarter of negative GDP growth, (-0.7%), I think I'll focus on #4:

> Since the financial crisis, the United States has slipped into the Obama rate of growth, a permanent state of semi-stagnation. We've been through market crashes and recessions before, but usually after a year or two of pain, we get a strong burst of growth to make up for it. This time, we're in the long twilight of a non-recovery recovery. The economy is technically growing again, but at such a feeble rate that it hardly feels like it. It's the kind of economy in which the unemployment rate falls, not because the long-unemployed are all getting jobs again, but because so many people are dropping out of the workforce altogether.
>
> This low rate of growth makes the burden of the welfare state greater, because we can no longer grow our way out from under its expenses. At the same time, it makes the welfare state harder to get rid of. You can't just tell the unemployed to go out and get a job when the economy is still flopping around and gasping like a fish in the bottom of a bass boat. If we're going to expect people to be more self-reliant, they must also have a sense of economic hope.
>
> There are a whole range of reforms we can champion to promote renewed economic growth. These include the old-fashioned tax cuts that the reform conservatives scoff at. But they also include getting rid of a whole host of intrusive regulations. On the highest level, this would include halting and rolling back the EPA's crusade against cheap energy. We've seen in the past year, for example, that the only stimulus that really stimulates is cheap gasoline.
>
> On the lower level, it could include things like crusading against unnecessary and burdensome business licensing requirements, such as the recently overturned Texas law requiring licenses for hair-braiding, which the court found failed to

> “advance public health, public safety, or any other legitimate government interest.” You can say that again, about a great many laws. There is no shortage of other ideas for getting the government out of the way of growth, for the simple reason that there is no shortage of intrusive government meddling.

> Or we could solve the problem from the other end, targeting taxes and regulations that make everyday goods for the poor more expensive. It is the poor, for example, who struggle to keeping their gas tanks filled so they can drive to work—which is what makes our massive gas taxes, which politicians are always scheming to increase, so scandalous. So we can make economic growth go farther by imposing fewer costs on those who are trying to provide the necessities of life.
>
> Economic growth always shrinks the welfare state by helping more people rise above poverty and above the need for government assistance. But it also creates the conditions for bigger reductions in the welfare state. Remember that what made the welfare reform of the 1990s such a big success was a booming economy with low unemployment, a growing work force, and rising wages. So when people were required to work, they found that the private economy was open to them.

The EPA raises the cost of electricity for everyone, and this is a hidden tax on commercial activity which slows down our entire economy. If we want to get the economy moving, we have to spur our own domestic energy industry by promoting policies that increase energy production – like the Keystone XL pipeline. Economic growth creates jobs, and creating jobs should be our number one concern – get people off of government dependency.

When can Christians start dating?

June 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

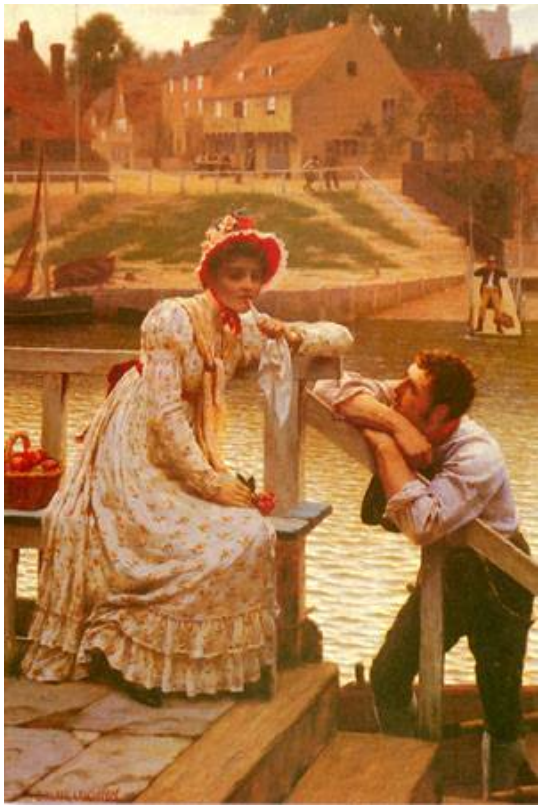

Painting: “Courtship”, by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)
First, read this article from a Crisis Pregnancy Center worker.

Excerpt:

> I have concerns about the number one way that our culture chooses to perpetuate the cancer of broken marriages and failed relationships– underage dating.
>
> You can follow them on Facebook – the failed attempts at love, I mean. Somebody is always changing their status from “in a relationship” to “single.” Unfortunately, a huge number of these disappointed lovers are too young to be legally married. I wonder sometimes if I am the only one who winces to hear a thirteen-year old speak with cavalier abandon of his or her “ex?” Since when is it considered healthy and acceptable for underage people to be in “relationships?” Just what do parents and educators expect to be the result of the romantic conquests of these middle-school children and young high school students? The results I’ve witnessed personally are beyond disturbing; they are downright sinister, and have caused me to question whether or not those who claim to champion marital fidelity and family values are paying any attention at all to the standards we are passing to our children.
>
> The trouble with underage dating is that it presents an entirely faulty view of what interaction with the opposite gender should be about. Rather than placing

> emphasis on building one strong relationship with one person at a stage of life when a marital commitment is feasible, dating encourages young people to pour their energies into consistently seducing other young people at a time when neither of them are capable of making any long-term commitments. Their "relationships" are destined to fail from the get-go because they are founded on unhealthy perceptions of love and not backed by any real necessity to stick it out.
>
> The beauty of marriage, as it was intended to be, is that it teaches two people of opposite genders to learn to work through incompatibilities and give of themselves. In the same way, the great ugliness of dating as it is practiced by our culture and portrayed by our media, is that it teaches two people of opposite genders to be selfish by giving them an easy "out" when things don't go according to their initial feelings. I believe it is fair to say that this form of dating is a training manual for divorce, because it encourages young people to grow accustomed to giving their hearts away and then taking them back.
>
> Sadly, parents who should know better continue to display shocking naïveté regarding the absurd practices of driving their twelve year olds out on a "date," or purchasing provocative clothing for their sixteen-year-olds, or sympathizing with their broken-hearted fourteen-year-olds by assuring them that they'll "find someone better." "They're just having fun," they'll tell us, rolling their eyes at what they consider to be our tightly wound principles. I work a volunteer shift at Crisis Pregnancy Clinic where I witness every week the ruined lives and broken dreams that "fun" has left with our youth.

And now here's my take.

Basically, relationships are not meant to be entertainment, but to lead to marriage. So, you can start dating whenever the woman and man are able to demonstrate to each other that they are prepared to fulfill their roles in a future marriage.

For example, the woman should be able to show that she has been able to maintain commitments to caring for others through some period of time, maybe with small children or pets. She should be voluntarily entering into relationships and responsibilities with other people where she is giving of herself – like volunteering at a crisis pregnancy center or caring for an ailing or elderly relative. That shows potential suitors that she has the right attitude to relationships – serving others self-sacrificially, and not looking for tingles and excitement. She should be able to show that she is good at making commitments and solving problems by studying hard subjects in school, i.e. – STEM subjects. And then she should be able to get a job in a difficult field and save money, instead of wasting it on frivolous fun activities. That shows a man that she can do hard things self-sacrificially – even if she doesn't feel like it.

And for the man, he should be able to show that he is able to do his roles – protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. He should be able to prove that he is able to mentor and guide other people to learn things and do things that will make them more effective

Christians. That’s moral and spiritual leadership. Spiritual leadership is not just agreeing with people, it means leading them to serve God more effectively, perhaps by helping others to make better decisions about their education and careers. A man should have studied a subject that is going to allow him to find work. It’s not enough to be a hard worker, he has to be able to show from his resume and bank account that he understands how to earn, save and invest money. I don’t think that an unemployed man should start a relationship with a woman, because cannot demonstrate ability in the provider role. He needs to show that he can work self-sacrificially, even if the work does not make him feel happy. He also needs to prove that he is comfortable sharing it with others – since he will have to share with his family when the time comes.

I think there are other ways for men and women to show that they are ready for marriage, but those are some ways. The key thing is that people shouldn’t be dating until they are able to show that they know the roles that they are expected to fill in marriage as men and women. They should also be looking for the right things in others. They can’t be looking for the shallow things that give them tingles, like looks, athleticism, etc. Before men and women start dating, they have to be able to show that they are working on being able to handle their responsibilities, and they have to show that their selection criteria for the opposite sex are at least partly based on the responsibilities that the opposite sex has in a marriage.

J. Warner Wallace: 10 reasons why you hesitate to share your faith

June 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Want to be brave? Then talk about things you know

He has links to 10 articles in his post.

Here are the titles:

1. We mistakenly think our beliefs about Christianity are entirely subjective
2. We think we have to be a theologian or apologist to share effectively
3. We aren't sure *who* we should share with
4. We are simply afraid to take the first step
5. We think we have to know someone well before we can share the truth
6. We're not sure how to engage people (especially people we don't know well)
7. We're afraid of feeling uncomfortable at any point in the process
8. We hold pessimistically low expectations of being successful
9. We have been conditioned to speak a Christian language foreign to the secular culture
10. We think our success as evangelists is entirely dependent on our individual effort

Number 1 is the most important to me, but the one that I am seeing the most in church is number 7.

The biggest problem I am seeing is that people think that Christianity should make them feel good, and that it should make other people like them. Even if we are doing spiritual things, the overall goal is for us to feel good and be liked as we do them. Well… people are reacting very angrily to Christianity these days, so normal Christianity is not going to make you feel good or be liked by others. The animosity to Christianity is primarily for one reason – our moral rules on sexuality. A lot of people are not interested in hearing about the truth claims of Christian theism, e.g. – Jesus is God stepping into history, since they are already blocked off from Christianity because of their commitment to engaging

in sexual activity.

Wallace's solution is for us to get used to the fact that Christianity is not supposed to make us happy, or make people like us:

> So my first goal in training yesterday was to simply help these young men and women *get comfortable with discomfort* by taking their eyes off themselves and placing them firmly on God. I tried to remind them that *character* is more important than *comfort*. It's easy to get caught up in thinking that our worldly image is more important than our heavenly mission. As Christians, we ought to know better:
>
> **1 John 2:15-17**
> Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.
>
> **James 4:4**
> You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
>
> Sometimes our fears expose what's really important to us, so they're a good place to assess and address our priorities. What are you afraid of? What's keeping you from sharing the Gospel with the people in your life, even the strangers who you meet every day? It might just be that (like me) you're often more concerned with your own comfort than you are with the cause of Christ. It's easy to worry more about the world we see than the Kingdom that matters. But we can change all that. We can conquer our fears by simply changing our focus.

Yes, Christianity is not meant to be fun. If you are asking yourself how to merge Christianity with your desire to be happy and to feel good, you're doing Christianity wrong.

My solution to the problem of feeling uncomfortable when talking about Christianity to non-Christians is to talk about science. Specifically, to talk about mainstream scientific discoveries around cosmology, biology, paleontology, embryology, and so on. No one is going to get mad at you for that – not even at work. The best way to be able to get to Christian specifics, especially the resurrection, is to first establish the existence of a supernatural Creator and Designer from mainstream scientific evidence. Then we can talk about whether history shows us that miracles have occurred, e.g. – that Jesus rose from the dead. Before you can have miracles, you need God right? Otherwise, who is there to do the miracles? So, start with the easy stuff first – science. People feel more comfortable talking about science because the findings of science are universally accessible to all religions, and even to no religion at all.

The secret to talking about God with strangers is not to talk about things that are private and subjective. Don't start with your subjective Christianese testimony – that just makes them uncomfortable. As uncomfortable as you would be if a witch doctor or voodoo priest started telling you their testimony with all their weird spiritual language. So don't do that. Talk about pure science using pure scientific language, until you defeat the presumption of naturalism. When the naturalism is dead, turn your attention to the historical claims of Christianity. When the historical claims are defended, then turn to defending Christian theism from philosophical arguments like the problem of evil, the hiddenness of God, and so on. Start from the things that even non-religious people accept, and they will discuss them with you easily. Don't annoy them with Christian theology and your religious experiences. That just makes them uncomfortable, because *they can't see how any of what you are saying is connected to reality*. It's like you are trying to get them to take your make-believe seriously – they don't know what to say back without offending you.

The only downside to this approach (which works, trust me) is that you have to study first. Which is probably why some Christians don't want to do it.

But, I have books to help you. Wallace actually has a new book out where he goes over the scientific arguments for a Creator and Designer. It's actually on sale (pre-order) on ChristianBook.com right now. If you want to read something easy and good right now, get yourself a copy of Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". You should also get the 3-DVD pack on intelligent design from Amazon.com if you want to watch something instead of reading.

Clinton Foundation fundraising branch in Sweden lobbied State Department for sanction relief

June 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton: secretive, entitled, hypoctritical

More bad news for the Clinton machine, this time reported in the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> **Bill Clinton's foundation set up a fundraising arm in Sweden that collected $26 million in donations at the same time that country was lobbying Hillary Rodham Clinton's State Department to forgo sanctions that threatened its thriving business with Iran, according to interviews and documents obtained by The Washington Times.**
>
> The Swedish entity, called the William J. Clinton FoundationInsamlingsstiftelse, was never disclosed to or cleared by State Department ethics officials, even though one of its largest sources of donations was a Swedish government-sanctioned lottery.
>
> **As the money flowed to the foundation from Sweden, Mrs. Clinton's team in Washington declined to blacklist any Swedish firms despite warnings from career officials at the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm that Sweden was growing its economic ties with Iran and potentially undercutting Western efforts to end Tehran's rogue nuclear program, diplomatic cables show.**
>
> "Sweden does not support implementing tighter financial sanctions on Iran" and believes "more stringent financial standards could hurt Swedish exports," one such cable from 2009 alerted Mrs. Clinton's office in Washington.
>
> Separately, U.S. intelligence was reporting that Sweden's second-largest employer, telecommunications giant Ericsson AB, was pitching cellphone tracking technology to Iran that could be used by the country's security services, officials told The Times.

> **By the time Mrs. Clinton left office in 2013, the Clinton Foundation Insamlingsstiftelse had collected millions of dollars inside Sweden for his global charitable efforts and Mr. Clinton personally pocketed a record $750,000 speech fee from Ericsson, one of the firms at the center of the sanctions debate.**

Now the last time I blogged about these issues, I think what was said was that if a company had offices in America, as Ericsson does, then they would be subject to sanctions from America for dealing with Iran, depending on what they were doing.

What's interesting is that the responses to inquiries from the media:

> The foundation, however, declined repeated requests to identify the names of the specific donors that passed through the Swedish arm.
>
> A spokesman for Mrs. Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign offered no comment or explanation despite two weeks of requests.
>
> When Mrs. Clinton became President Obama's secretary of state in 2009, she vowed to set up a transparent review system that would ensure any of her husband's fundraising or lucrative speaking activities were reviewed for possible ties to foreign countries doing business with her agency, insisting she wanted to eliminate even the "appearance" of conflicts of interests.
>
> But there is growing evidence that the Clintons did not run certain financial activities involving foreign entities by the State Department, such as the Swedish fundraising arm and the Clinton Giustra Sustainable Growth Initiative based in Canada, or disclose on her annual ethics form the existence of a limited liability corporation that Mr. Clinton set up for his personal consulting work.

The Washington Times article is a must-read, and please do share it. We have to make sure that we do not elect another Democrat who will take our country even further away from its conservative roots. If exposing Clinton Foundation finances stops the Democrats from getting more pro-abortion, anti-marriage Supreme Court picks, then that's what we have to talk about.

By the way, this is not the first story to come out on dealings like this… we already had one from Canadian allies of the Clinton Foundation, and another from a Ukrainian donor who was dealing with Iran.

Related posts

- Clinton shell corporation "WJC, LLC" allowed non-disclosure of speaking fee revenue amounts
- In one day, Bill and Hillary Clinton got over $1 million for FOUR speeches
- George Stephanopolous was a member of the Clinton Global Initiative in 2010 and 2011
- Former CIA deputy director: foreign countries have everything on Clinton's e-mail server

- ABC News anchor who defended Clinton Foundation donated $75,000 to Clinton Foundation
- Only 10% of money given to Clinton Foundation goes to charity
- Mitt Romney: Hillary's Clinton Foundation Uranium One scandal "looks like bribery"
- New study: how the mainstream media deleted Hillary Clinton's e-mail scandal
- "Dead broke" Hillary Clinton makes more money in an hour than top-paid CEO
- New book by Peter Schweizer: Clinton State Department favored foreign donors
- Largest individual donor to Clinton Foundation has trade ties to Iran
- Clinton Foundation continues to take donations from regimes that oppress women
- What are Hillary Clinton's views on amnesty and illegal immigration?
- Hillary Clinton never signed separation form that required her to turn over all e-mails
- Could Hillary Clinton be sent to prison because of her secret e-mail server?
- Hillary Clinton deleted 32,000 e-mails, refuses to turn over her home-based server
- Clinton Foundation: all eight of the highest paid executives are men
- E-mails released by Clinton: there are "months, and months, and months" missing
- Hillary Clinton used her private e-mail account to conduct State Department business
- E-mails: Hillary Clinton's top aides knew in minutes that Benghazi was a terrorist attack
- Clinton Foundation receives millions in donations from regimes that oppress women
- As senator, Hillary Clinton paid women 72 cents for every dollar she paid men
- Hillary Clinton's fake Bosnia gunfire story and her abortion award
- Hillary Clinton: don't let anybody tell you that corporations and businesses create jobs
- Hillary Clinton aides were present to "separate" damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- Universities raise tuition while paying hundreds of thousands to Hillary Clinton to speak
- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- Hillary Clinton opposes bill to cut taxpayer funding of abortions abroad

Insurance companies are raising their premiums in response to Obamacare

June 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> We pointed out that several states had already tried these "guaranteed issue" and "community rating" reforms, and they'd been a disaster. Higher premiums encouraged the young and healthy to forgo insurance, knowing that they could sign up after they got sick, which drove premiums still higher.
>
> ObamaCare was supposed to avoid this fate by heavily subsidizing insurance premiums and imposing a tax penalty for going uninsured, to get the young and healthy to sign up and keep premiums down.
>
> But when IBD's Jed Graham looked at the limited number of filings two weeks ago, he noted that insurers were asking for hikes that averaged 18.6%. And as more rate filings became public, that picture hasn't changed.
>
> In Virginia, for example, just one plan came in with a proposed rate increase below 10%. Three are above 25%. In Texas, Scott & White wants a 32% boost and Humana 30%. Alliance Health Plans in Georgia says that it needs a 37.85% increase.
>
> The reasons given for these huge increases? The insurance pool is older and sicker than expected.
>
> Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, which enrolled more than 329,000 people in the state, wants a 29% hike, saying, "Actual claims experience of the members … is significantly higher than expected."
>
> CareFirst in Maryland said that its per-enrollee claims shot up 49% in the first year of ObamaCare. WPS Health Plan also cited "the impact of numerous additional taxes and fees imposed upon our plan" as part of the reason why it wants a 19% boost.

It sounds so nice to feelings-oriented voters to cover all kinds of things that some people like, like birth control and sex changes. It sounds so nice to feelings-oriented voters to not turn people away with pre-existing conditions. It sounds to nice to feelings-oriented voters for every plan to cover maternity care – even for people who don't use it, e.g. – men. But the simple fact of the matter is that when you force insurers to include more coverages and extend coverage to more people, then there will be more claims, and the next rounds of premiums must rise to cover the increased number of claims. That's how insurance works. Although I doubt the average feelings-oriented Democrat understands that.

More:

> What’s more, these big increases are coming before ObamaCare’s temporary industry bailout programs go away. They were specifically designed to protect insurers from big losses, allowing them to keep premiums lower than they might have otherwise.

The cost of claims is going higher. The subsidies to cover the higher claims disappear. The private insurance companies cannot pay the higher claims. The private insurance companies close. The government takes over the health care industry. Taxes go up, to pay for a bloated and wasteful government-run health care system. Patients are forced to wait longer for care, even after paying into the single payer system their whole lives. Conscience protections disappear. More and more unethical behaviors that require health care get covered by the single payer system, encouraging patients to be less responsible since health care is “free”. Tax rates go higher to cover skyrocketing costs of “free” health care. Government decides to cut costs by implementing coerced abortion and euthanasia.

All we have to do is look to Europe and Canada to see how it works. This is how the socialist game plan plays out.

Are secular concerns about overpopulation science-based or science fiction?

June 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson

Christian apologists should care about this Weekly Standard story, and I'll explain why at the end of this post.

The story begins by profiling the king of overpopulation hysteria, a man named Paul Ehrlich. Ehrlich's hysterical predictions were at least partly responsible for rise in public support for secular causes such as abortion, euthanasia, global warming alarmism, eugenics, and so on. But, as the article notes, Ehrlich's predictions were wrong. Basically, you can think of overpopulation as a the "Left Behind" doomsday story of the left.

One quick example of Ehrlich's failure at predictions:

> Of course, it's been obvious that Ehrlich was not just misguided, but an actual charlatan, since the 1970s. The late economist Julian Simon spent most of his career exposing Ehrlich's errors. You may remember the Ehrlich-Simon wager. In 1980, Simon bet Ehrlich $1,000 that over the course of the following decade the price of a basket of commodities—any resources Ehrlich chose—would drop, as proof that Ehrlich's ravings about the relationship of population to scarcity was wrong.
>
> Simon was correct. Ten years later Ehrlich sent him a check, with no note. Never prone to either civility or introspection—he frequently called people he disagreed with "fools," "idiots," "clowns," and worse—Ehrlich later told the *Wall Street Journal,* "If Simon disappeared from the face of the Earth, that would be great for humanity." Hell of a guy.

The part of the article I want to look at it is how this disproved charlatan was supported by the secular left:

> In 1990—the same year he lost his bet with Julian Simon—Ehrlich was awarded a million dollar MacArthur "genius" grant and was simultaneously feted across the Atlantic with Sweden's Crafoord Prize, which was worth just about half a million.

> In 1993 the Heinz Family Foundation bestowed on him its first Heinz Award. This little trinket came with $100,000 in cash and the most delusional praise possible, claiming that Ehrlich's "perspective, uncommon among scientists, has made [him and his wife] the target of often harsh criticism—criticism they accept with grace as the price of their forthrightness." Which is a peculiar way of explaining that Ehrlich was completely wrong and that he responded to all such evidence with ad hominem attacks. Five years later, in 1998, he was awarded the Tyler Prize,which comes with $200,000. The money train kept on rolling.
>
> And it wasn't just dumb philanthropists. "Serious" organizations continued to honor him. In 2001, the American Institute of Biological Sciences gave Ehrlich its "Distinguished Scientist" award. In 2009, the World Wildlife Fund featured him as a guest lecturer in their flagship speaker series. In 2012, he was inducted into London's Royal Society, which is Britain's nearly 400-year-old national academy of science. There is more. So much more.
>
> Paul Ehrlich's entire career stands as a monument to the ideological imperatives of the world's elites and the extent to which they exist not just independent from, but in actual opposition to, both science, evidence, reason, and good faith.

So basically, we are dealing with a cult leader who makes false predictions and then is celebrated even as they are falsified. It reminds me of Jehovah's Witnesses. For just one recent story on the demographic crisis, check out this one about Germany, which has the lowest birth rate in the industrialized world, and is set for long-term decline because of it.

I basically have two issues where I diverge from the consensus view: global warming and fully naturalistic molecules-to-man evolution. Of course, I have scientific reasons to doubt them. But I also have observed for people who support these myths behave – defending their heroes and painting the opposition as crazy. It's an important lesson to learn. How far will people go to believe what they want to believe and try to convince others to believe it, too?

How is this relevant to Christian apologetics? Well, in Christian apologetics, you don't just talk about the resurrection. You have to establish your credibility as a truth-seeker, and it's better if you can do it in some non-religious area. For example, I have a secular Jewish guy who I talk to who is a strong supporter of abortion. He believes in global warming, Darwinism and this overpopulation nonsense, too. If you can show him the evidence that disproves any one of these, it exposes how he has deliberately chosen to believe things that he didn't have evidence for because he wanted to believe it so badly.

Demonstrating mastery at disproving the secular left's myths in one area clears the way for getting them to rethink what they believe and why in every area. It's important for Christians not to appear desperate. We cannot just fixate on the gospel and salvation and try to rush people to a conversion in 5 minutes by threatening them with Hell. We have to show them that Christianity should be adopted because it's true, because it's the end result of a process of thinking clearly. Thinking clearly in one area is evidence to our audience that we can at least in principle be thinking clearly about religious issues, too.

And this is another reason to be responsible and wise with your life decisions. Don’t study junk in school. Don’t work easy jobs. Don’t waste all your money on fun and thrills. Don’t lack self-control. People judge your ideas by how successful you have been in your education and profession. So make decisions that show them that you are competent, not crazy. If you present yourself as a an irresponsible, out-of-control thrill seeker who has not succeeded in your education, career and finances, then you’ll have no credibility with a secular audience before you even open your mouth. Be a person who gathers respect because you know what you are doing. If you want to succeed at evangelism, you have to heed this warning and avoid doing the easy thing just because it feels good.

New study: most Americans have not saved enough for their retirement

June 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

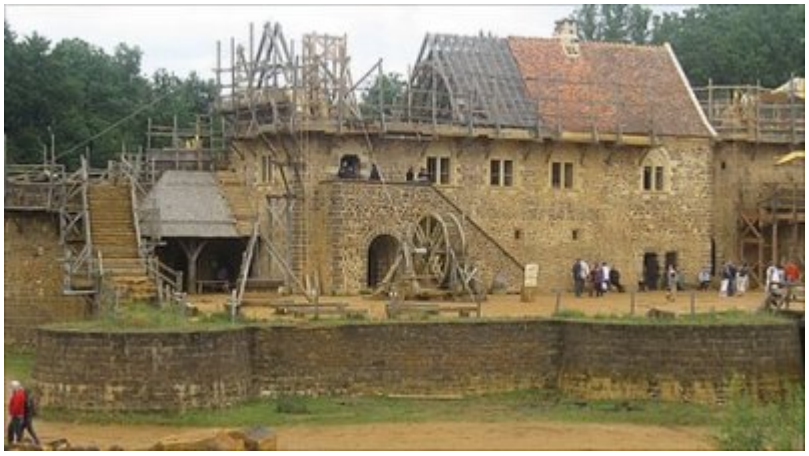

Building a castle isn't easy – it takes work

This story is from CNBC, and I hope it causes you young people to count the cost of your plans.

It says:

> A new GAO analysis finds that among households with members aged 55 or older, nearly 29 percent have neither retirement savings nor a traditional pension plan.
>
> "There hasn't been a significant increase in wages, people have student loans and other debt, and many are continuing to struggle financially," said Charles Jeszeck, the GAO's director of education, workforce and income security, which analyzed the Federal Reserve's 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances to come up with its estimates. "We aren't surprised that people have not saved a lot for retirement."
>
> Even among those who do have retirement savings, their nest eggs are small. The agency found the median amount of those savings is about $104,000 for households with members between 55 and 64 years old and $148,000 for households with members 65 to 74 years old. That's equivalent to an inflation-protected annuity of $310 and $649 per month, respectively, according to the GAO.

Americans underestimate how much money is needed in order to retire:

> Estimates about the size and scope of the retirement savings problem vary widely, the GAO found. In addition to examining the Survey of Consumer Finances, it reviewed nine studies conducted between 2006 and 2015 by a variety of organizations, including academics, benefits consultant Aon Hewitt, the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) and the Investment Company

> Institute. **Based on these reports, it concluded that one-third to two-thirds of workers are at risk of falling short of their retirement savings targets, in part because of the range of assumptions about how much income is required in retirement.**

Given that we have been inflating the currency and running low interest rates for the last few years, any savings you have will buy less than they buy today.

Here's another really key point:

> **The research that the GAO examined consistently showed that people aged 55 to 64 are less confident about their retirement and plan to work longer to afford retirement. However, a 2012 study by the EBRI found that about half of retirees said they retired earlier than planned because of health problems, changes at their workplace or having to care for a spouse or another family member. This suggests "that many workers may be overestimating their future retirement income and savings," wrote GAO researchers.**

Got that? When young people make plans about the future, they underestimate the risks and overestimate their own abilities.

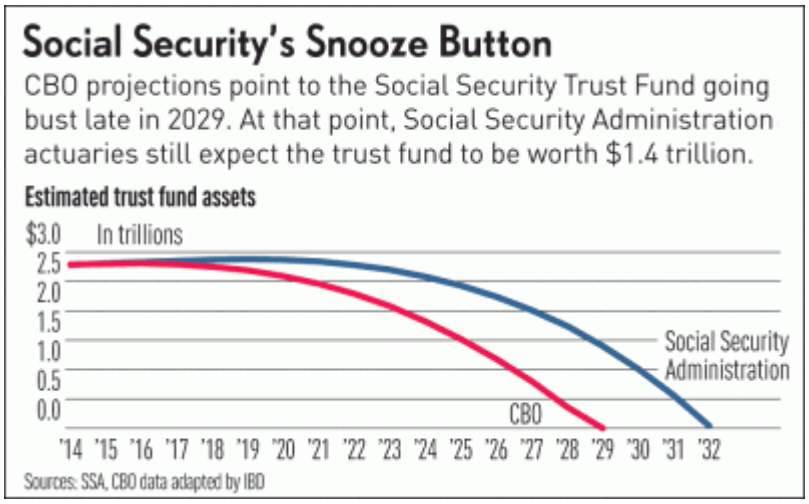

Don't rely on Social Security, precious little snowflakes

Investors Business Daily has been posting a lot about Social Security, and they are saying that payouts are going to be dropping sooner than you think.

Look:

> Every year, the Social Security Administration releases its Trustees Report, which projects the program's solvency — how much it will take in, how much it will pay out and how long the "trust fund" can cover revenue gaps — over the next 75 years.
>
> The latest report says that Social Security can meet its financial obligations for about 18 more years. After that, the trust fund will be exhausted, and payroll taxes won't cover nearly all the benefit costs.
>
> That's bad enough. But a new study by researchers at Harvard and Dartmouth

> shows that this day of reckoning will almost certainly come far sooner than that.
>
> The authors compare previous Trustees Report forecasts about life expectancy, fertility rates and other variables to actual results. They found that these forecasts have grown increasingly unreliable.
>
> Worse, since 2000 “the direction of the biases are all in the same direction, making the Social Security trust funds look healthier than they turned out to be.”
>
> For example, Social Security has been consistency underestimating life expectancy, which means that people are living and collecting benefits for longer than predicted. Underestimating life expectancy by just 1.3 years leads to 150,000 more people collecting benefits than predicted, the researchers note.
>
> The Trustees Report has also overestimated the nation’s fertility rate. In 2010, for example, 315,000 fewer children were born than predicted. This error makes the population look younger, which in turn makes Social Security’s financial outlook seem healthier.
>
> Likewise, the report has consistently overestimated the Trust Fund’s assets and solvency.
>
> Many of these forecasts are so bad that the actual results are often worse than the report’s “worst case” scenario, which currently has the program becoming insolvent in just 14 years.

Don’t be depending on Social Security if you are under 50 – it’s not going to be there for you, even though you’re going to be paying into it.

When young people imagine what the future will be like, they almost always underestimate the things that can go wrong. They are so optimistic and inexperienced, that they simply can’t conceive of the possible setbacks, and calculate the probabilities of these occurring. The best way to get around this is to talk to someone who is good at doing what you are trying to do. When I was training as a software engineer, I actually had to take classes in software design to learn how to identify unexpected scenarios. This is because engineers start off the same as everyone else – optimistic. We have to train ourselves to identify dependencies and risks. This is how you design software – by thinking not just of common usage scenarios, but also unexpected disaster scenarios, like power failures and data transmission interruptions and database failures. When it comes to earning and saving money, don’t talk to your inexperienced young friends. Talk to someone a little older who has already been through it, and who is doing a good job at it.

Jennifer Roback Morse debates on marriage at Columbia University

June 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. J makes marriage interesting and fun

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse defends marriage at Columbia University in this short hour-long exchange. This is your chance to hear how anti-child advocates of same-sex marriage really are. And Dr. J links SSM to unilateral divorce at the end of the Q&A, too. Awesome! This debate really needed to go for twice the time, and I look forward to hearing MORE debates from Dr. J.

Details:

Columbia University's Federalist Society hosts a debate between Dr J and Professor Katherine Franke based on the question "Is Marriage Equality Possible?" About an hour of audio includes opening position (Dr J), arguments (Prof. Franke), and rebuttal (Dr J), as well as a brief question-and-answer period.

The MP3 file is here.

Dr. J's opening speech (15 min.)

Two basic contentions:

- 1) same-sex marriage is not the equivalent of traditional marriage
- 2) if we legislate that they are equal, then we are really redefining marriage by changing the essential purpose of marriage

A case study from Ireland:

- a known sperm donor for a lesbian couple was excluded from having a relationship with the child he conceived
- after the child was born, the sperm donor wanted regular contact with the child, but the women opposed giving him access
- same-sex marriage requires that courts are able to assign parental rights instead of having rights assigned biologically, as with traditional marriage
- That is why SSM is different from TM

What is the purpose of marriage?

- Marriage is about attaching mothers and fathers to children, and mothers and fathers to one another
- Children are born helpless from two opposite-sex parents and they need parental guidance and care during development
- In TM, there is no third party needed in order to have a child
- In TM, the biological parents have rights and responsibilities for the child
- TM is about providing the child with justice
- Every child is entitled a relationship to both biological parents, and is entitled to care, protection and nourishment from both parents, and every child is entitled to a stable family environment
- the problem is that children don't have standing to sue for these rights in court
- so the purpose of marriage is that we have a social construct to provide these rights to children naturally, without the state having to intervene

The purpose of marriage according to SSM?

- In SSM, the essential child-centered purpose marriage is replaced with new purposes like pooling resources and having same-sex couples recognized by society

SSM redefines marriage in four ways:

- it diminishes the entitlement of children to a relationship with both biological parents
- it diminishes the identification of parental roles with biology
- it requires the state to determine parental relationships, instead of recognizing biological parents
- it enshrines the idea that mothers and fathers are interchangeable, that children don't really need mothers AND fathers

Dr. Franke's opening speech (20 min.)

Hard cases make bad law 1: the presumption of paternity

- consider the case where a mother is married and has an affair resulting in a child
- the Supreme Court has ruled that the father of the child has no right of contact
- this is a case where marriage gets in the way of biological parents having a relationship with the child
- so it can be the case where marriage is in conflict with the relationships to biological parents

Hard cases make bad law 2: the purpose of marriage can be changed

- marriages was used to keep peace between families and communities
- marriage used to be about trading and trafficking of women

- so the concern for offspring was not always the greatest concern

TM and SSM are both equally able to create stability for children:

- same-sex unions are just as stable for children as TM marriages

Same-sex unions do provide justice for the child:

- giving the adults in same-sex couples the social recognition that opposite sex married couples have is good for children

Children can sue in court

- children can use guardians to sue their parents in court to get their rights

Opposing SSM is racism

- opposing same-sex marriage is equivalent to racism
- we could abolish marriage completely and let individuals form private contracts, then the state would really be neutral on marriage

Dr. J's rebuttal speech (5 min.)

The state cannot be neutral on marriage

- what the deinstutionalization of marriage means is that the private contracts are made by adults and children will have no consideration in those contracts

Regarding the adultery case

- the presumption of paternity is there to protect the marriage
- such borderline cases almost never happen with TM, whereas in SSM these third party problems occur in 100% of the cases

Children are not happy being separated from their biological parents

- adults do not have a right to exclude a child's biological parents from having a relationship with them, and children are often not happy being excluded from their biological parents

New report: IRS used hundreds of lawyers to hide IRS persecution of conservatives

June 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

IRS Chief Fascist Lois Lerner

This is from the Washington Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The IRS's director of privacy, governmental liaison and disclosure division testified Wednesday that the tax agency set up a special team with hundreds of lawyers to handle the probe into whether Tea Party groups were targeted, but repeatedly said she had no idea how it operated.
>
> Mary Howard, who also works as the head Freedom of Information Act officer in the IRS, told the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform that once the "special project team" was created and operational, she never saw requests for information.
>
> "My understanding was that it started soon after the request came from Congress and other investigators asking for documents around this whole issue," which she surmised meant around spring of 2013.
>
> **Asked who was on the team, she said: "My first hand knowledge of that is none." But she did say the Chief Council of the IRS — one of only two political appointees in the IRS; the other is the commissioner — was on the "special project team," as were "hundreds of attorneys."**
>
> **She said her office did not interact with the White House, but asked whether the "special project team" did, said: "I have no personal knowledge of how that team acted except that I know they amassed hundreds of attorneys to go through the documents and redact them."**
>
> […]Congress held Lerner in contempt after she claimed she did not know about the targeting, but then later took the Fifth Amendment to avoid answering questions. She was never prosecuted by the Justice Department, but two dozen

> House members want new Attorney General Loretta Lynch to pursue charges.

Just to be clear – "go through the documents and redact them" means conceal information from Congressional oversight.

This is the very definition of a cover-up. As if we did not have enough scandals in this administration already. We must be up to about a dozen Watergates already.

The ACLJ notes that this is not the first shifty behaviour from the IRS lawyers – delaying the applications of Tea Party groups for years:

> According to multiple IRS attorneys in D.C., including tax law specialist Carter Hull, who oversaw the review of the Tea Party cases, Lois Lerner, former Director at the Exempt Organizations Division, and her top advisor directed that certain Tea Party applications as part of a "test" group be sent to her office and IRS Chief Counsel for review in the winter of 2010-2011.
>
> Chief Counsel's office, after months more of delay, then demanded Mr. Hull make further inquiries of the Tea Party. According to the testimony, it was Chief Counsel's office that was demanding to know more information about the conservative groups' activities "right before the [2010] election period. In other words, immediately before."
>
> In addition, the testimony indicates that the Chief Counsel's office was heavily involved in preparing a template for handling these cases, something Mr. Hull testified was impractical "because these organizations, all of them are different. A template wouldn't work." Yet, as he testified, a template was prepared by someone in Chief Counsel's office in conjunction with other tax law specialists. **Even more disturbing he testified that after three years, IRS Chief Counsel's office had not made a determination about these "test" Tea Party cases, even though in 2011, Mr. Hull had all the information he needed to make a recommendation as to their request for tax-exempt status.**

The ACLJ has an ongoing lawsuit on behalf of many of the conservative / pro-life / Christian groups that were targeted by the IRS. It's times like this where I wonder what my friend the evangelical woman who voted twice for Obama would say. She is the one who is for environmentalism and big government, you remember. Well, there's your big government right there, Jessica. Surprise! They don't like Christians or conservatives.

Draft EPA study: fracking does not cause pollution of drinking water

June 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

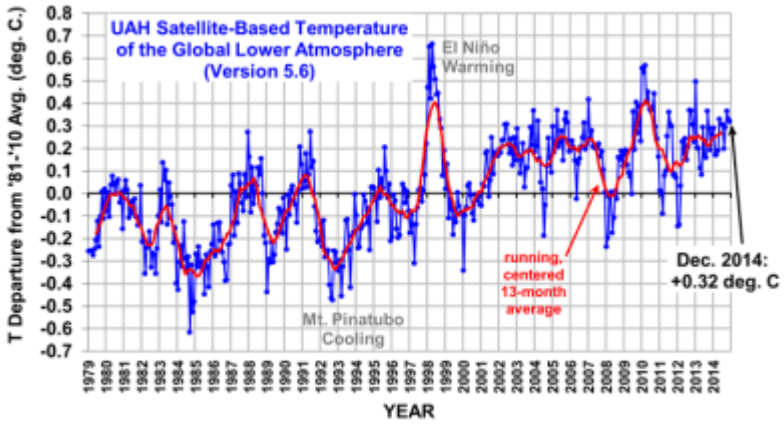

UAH Global Temperature up to 2014
This is reported in the radically leftist National Public Radio, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The Environmental Protection Agency says it finds no evidence that hydraulic fracturing — better known as fracking — has led to widespread pollution of drinking water. The oil industry and its backers welcome the long-awaited study while environmental groups criticize it.
>
> "We found the hydraulic fracturing activities in the United States are carried out in a way that has not led to widespread systemic impacts on drinking water resources," says Tom Burke, Science Advisor and Deputy Assistant Administrator of EPA's Office of Research and Development. "In fact, the number of documented impacts to drinking water resources is relatively low when compared to the number of fractured wells," he adds.
>
> The EPA's draft assessment was conducted at the request of Congress. "It is the most complete compilation of scientific data to date," says Burke, "including over 950 sources of information, published papers, numerous technical reports, information from stakeholders and peer-reviewed EPA scientific reports."
>
> Fracking has allowed drillers to tap oil and natural gas reserves once thought off-limits deep underground. That has led to drilling booms across the country and boosted the country's oil and natural gas production significantly. But environmental groups have long argued fracking comes with a cost to the environment, especially to water. Those groups have called for stronger regulations and even bans on fracking altogether.
>
> [...]The American Petroleum Institute says the conclusions echo what the oil industry has argued all along. "Hydraulic fracturing is being done safely under the strong environmental stewardship of state regulators and industry best

> practices," says Erik Milito, API upstream group director.
>
> Acknowledging the potential vulnerabilities outlined in the EPA report, Milito says, "Continuous safety improvements have been an ongoing part of hydraulic fracturing for 65 years."

Indeed. This is not the first time that the radically leftist EPA has cleared the fracking industry, either. I blogged about the last one for Dimock, Pennsylvania.

Here's an excerpt from the EPA press release that exonerates fracking:

> The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today that it has completed its sampling of private drinking water wells in Dimock, Pa. Data previously supplied to the agency by residents, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Cabot Oil and Gas Exploration had indicated the potential for elevated levels of water contaminants in wells, and following requests by residents EPA took steps to sample water in the area to ensure there were not elevated levels of contaminants. Based on the outcome of that sampling, EPA has determined that there are not levels of contaminants present that would require additional action by the Agency.
>
> […]Overall during the sampling in Dimock, EPA found hazardous substances, specifically arsenic, barium or manganese, all of which are also naturally occurring substances, in well water at five homes at levels that could present a health concern. In all cases the residents have now or will have their own treatment systems that can reduce concentrations of those hazardous substances to acceptable levels at the tap. EPA has provided the residents with all of their sampling results and has no further plans to conduct additional drinking water sampling in Dimock.

So, if you want to worry about fracking, it will have to be because of something other than facts.

Are pastors and churches doing a good job of preparing women for marriage?

June 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Disclaimer: This post mostly targets young, unmarried women.

Let's start with famous pastor Mark Driscoll explaining how men are to blame for single motherhood:

> Part of it is the unintended consequences of divorce. Forty percent of kids go to bed at night without a father. Not to be disparaging toward single moms, but if you're a single mom and you're working 60 hours a week, and you've got a boy, and he's home all by himself with no parents and no dad, he's just going to be hanging out with his buddies, feeding himself pizza rolls.
>
> The number one consumer of online pornography is 12- to 17-year-old boys. What that means is he's home eating junk food, drinking Monster energy drinks, downloading porn, masturbating and screwing around with his friends. That really doesn't prepare you for responsible adulthood. That's a really sad picture, especially if you're a single gal hoping to get married someday. You're like: "Seriously, that's the candidate pool? You've got to be kidding me." That's why 41 percent of births right now are to unmarried women. A lot of women have decided: "I'm never going to find a guy who is actually dependable and responsible to have a life with. So I'll just get a career and have a baby and just intentionally be a single mother because there are no guys worth spending life with."

First, notice how Driscoll is apparently clueless about the fact that many single mothers have lots of children precisely so that they don't have to work, and can just live off of welfare. But that doesn't fit his narrative.

My main point, though, is that the Bible says that premarital sex is wrong for men *and women*, but Mark Driscoll knows better – he thinks that it is only wrong *for men.* And that the consequences of it can all be blamed on men. Driscoll also says that Christian women who choose to have recreational premarital sex with non-Christian men should *expect* those men to commit to them. He also has said men should not pass over single mothers, although the sociological data shows that single mothers are more likely to divorce if they do marry, which is bad for men financially. The same is true for women who cohabitate – there's a higher risk of divorce if they do eventually marry the person they are cohabitating with.

If you look at the sociological data, single motherhood by choice is extremely harmful to the child- we should not be condoning this by telling women "it's not your fault, it's the fault of bad men, so just go on and keep choosing bad men!" As my friend and fellow woman-blamer Dina would say, "No, Baby, No!"

To respond to this problem, here is a post was written by Lindsay.

First the picture she posted:

Focus on the Family: blame the man for what the woman does

Now here is what Lindsay says about the image above:

> Focus on the Family recently posted this meme on their page.
>
> At first glance, many people might be tempted to agree with it. But the statement in the poster is actually false.
>
> The truth is that there are plenty of loving, gentle men who are worthy of respect but whose wives are not responding properly to their love and gentleness. Plenty of women have fallen for the feminist ideas that they should never submit or let a man lead them and will be difficult to live with, no matter how wonderful their man is. Even among women who are not feminists, it's difficult for many women to follow a husband's leadership because our sinful nature is in rebellion against God's plan.
>
> Submission and following our husbands is something that must be learned, not something we're born with or develop naturally. Women aren't naturally good and kind any more than men are. We're all fallen. We have to work to develop good habits and learn to do what God wants of us.
>
> It certainly is easier for women to follow a loving, gentle man, but the poster is wrong in assuming that the only barriers to a woman following her man are *his flaws*. That simply isn't true. Women also have to overcome *their own flaws* that stand in the way of the proper relationship they were meant to have.
>
> Unfortunately, this attitude that women are naturally good and that men are the

> flawed ones that need to change is very prevalent, even among Christians. Imagine the outrage people would have if the scenario was reversed and the poster said something like this:
>
> *"Men are usually comfortable being kind and loving to their wives if their wives are submissive, keep up their appearance, and respect them."*
>
> People would be up in arms over such a statement that assumes that men are always wonderful if women will just behave as they should. Why is it any different if the assumption is that women are always wonderful if men are behaving properly? Both are wrong. Both sexes are responsible for their own actions, regardless of what the other person in the marriage does.

Note that the Bible does not qualify the command in Ephesians 5 that women should submit to their husbands by making it conditional on anything that a man has to do. A man has separate duties, and those are not conditional on anything a woman has to do, either. He has to get up and go to work to provide for the family, whether she does what she is supposed to do or not. It's a moral obligation. The command to not deny each other sex except temporarily and by mutual consent is not conditional on anyone's behavior. NO SEX-WITHHOLDING, if you believe the Bible. It doesn't matter if you are feel happy or unhappy, you are obligated. That's what it means to take responsibility to perform an obligation!

What I have been seeing lately is older Christian women telling younger Christian women not to take seriously the obligations of complementarianism, but to instead make sure they choose a man who will let their desires rule. As someone who is used to not getting my own way, but instead putting God first, I find the idea that my resources will be redirected to *making my wife feel good* rather than *serving God as a team* to be absolutely horrifying and unacceptable. I have been entrusted with significant resources by God, and much is expected of me and my marriage. I really wish women would understand this – **I have a Boss and my purpose in life is to serve him effectively**. We are in a battle here in this culture, and there is a lot I want to do. I want a wife who will sacrifice her own happiness and needs as much as I have, and help me to serve my Boss. She needs to have experiences that prepare her character for that role. I am not asking for any more self-denial and self-sacrifice than I am willing to do myself, and I am not asking for her to do these things for me, but for our Boss.

As someone who has made sacrifices to prepare for marriage in areas like chastity, education, career, savings, apologetics ministry, etc., I am often shocked when I meet women who have – throughout their entire lives – always done what felt good to them. And yet many of those women tell me what a great Christian wife and mother they would make. I often find a huge mismatch of education, career, financial assets and chastity between men and women in relationships, and I believe that much of it results from pastors and church leaders giving Christian women this implicit green light to let their feelings and desires override the plain meaning of the Bible. Christian women need to understand that *doing whatever feels good to you over and over* is not consistent with

the example of Jesus, nor moral teachings of the New Testament as a whole. Marriage is hard work, and you need to train yourself to get used to it by repeated exposure to experiences of self-denial, self-sacrifice and self-control. If your preparation for marriage is studying what feels good, working wherever feels good, spending money in order to feel good, etc. you are not preparing for marriage. There is no “happy path” to a great marriage.

Greg Koukl has a wonderful line: “the more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in battle”. That’s right. Lindsay and her husband have been married for five years*, and they have never shouted at one another once. That takes wisdom. We ought to be listening to people like Lindsay and her husband about marriage. I know I listen to them. If you want to know what to do to have a good marriage, *why don’t you just ask Lindsay*? Similarly, my best friend Dina has an extremely stressful job dealing with difficult customers and life-or-death situations every day. She has so much responsibility at work that she makes my job look like a boiling an egg. And yet whenever I ask her for anything, e.g. – “play a game of Memoir ’44 with me”, she almost always does it, even when she doesn’t feel like it. I ask her why, and she says “because although you are very demanding, your needs are easy-peasy, lemon-squeezy compared to what I had to deal with today at work!” That’s why I encourage women to do hard things.

*=*Today is their 5-year anniversary! Congratulations, Doug and Lindsay! I admire you both so much, and you make me feel validated about my vision for marriage, and my high standards.*

Ronald Reagan's 40th anniversary D-Day speech: the boys of Pointe du Hoc

June 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

June 6, 1944 D-Day Normandy Invasion Map

It's June 6th, today, and it's the anniversary of D-Day: the Allied invasion of northern France – the beginning of the end of World War 2. One of the most pivotal events of that day was the assault on German gun emplacements by members of the Army Rangers at a fortified position called "Pointe du Hoc".

President Ronald Reagan recognized the soldiers who attacked Pointe du Hoc back in 1984:

You can read the full transcript of that speech here.

Ronald Reagan also made the case for gratitude and vigilance:

Here's the hymn that starts to play at the end:

The Boys of Pointe du Hoc

Here's a summary of the Pointe du Hoc mission:

> [Lt. Col. James Earl] Rudder took part in the D-Day landings as Commanding Officer of the United States Army's 2nd Ranger Battalion. His U.S. Army Rangers stormed the beach at Pointe du Hoc and, under constant enemy fire, scaled 100-foot (30 meter) cliffs to reach and destroy German gun batteries. The battalion's casualty rate for this perilous mission was greater than 50 percent. Rudder himself was wounded twice during the course of the fighting. In spite of this, they dug in and fought off German counter-attacks for two days until relieved. He and his men helped to successfully establish a beachhead for the Allied forces.

You can watch a three-clip documentary on it, too: part 1, part 2, part 3.

Although initially, the Rangers did not find the guns where they had expected them, they did find them further back behind the cliffs and destroyed them there, removing a threat to the forces that would be landing later.

What does D-Day mean to Christians in particular?

A Christian friend asked me what she should be thinking about when I sent her one of the videos above, and so I wrote her this to explain why I sent her the video:

> To make you close your eyes and think in a more practical way about what it means for someone to sacrifice their lives to save you, of course. What it means to look up cliffs at machine guns, barbed wire and mortars raining death on you and to take a rope in your hands and to climb up a sheer cliff, under heavy fire, in order to save generations yet unborn and freedom itself.
>
> To think about a concrete example helps us to be able to appreciate what Christ did for us in giving his life for us so that we could be free of sin, as well.
>
> This is the insight that drives my entire interest in war and military history, in fact.
>
> What does this mean: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
>
> The more you know about D-Day, the more fearful what Jesus did appears, and the more you can be grateful.
>
> Bullets and shrapnel are scary… and so are nails and lashes. Why on Earth would anyone endure either for me? And what should my response be to it?
>
> I think it is helpful to explain Christianity to those who are not yet Christian, and for Christians to fully appreciate what Christianity is all about.
>
> We were in peril. And now we have been saved. But at a cost.

I think that it's important for Christians to look to history, art, poetry and music to help them to reflect and comprehend the sacrifice that Christ made for us in dying on the cross to protect us from peril. What must the cross have looked like to Jesus? It must have been something like what the Omaha beach looked like to the Americans landing in Normandy. Jesus saw whips, thorns and nails, and the heroes of Normandy saw 88 mm AT guns, 81 mm mortars and MG42 machine guns. How should you feel about people who face death on your behalf? Think about it.

On wargames, history and heroes: “this story shall the good man teach his son”

June 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Memoir ’44: Pegasus Bridge setup

Re-posting this old post because Dina and I spent Friday night playing games again! And this is one of my favorite posts. Last night was Portal 2 and Orcs Must Die! 2.

Last night, I played through the Pegasus Bridge scenario from the Memoir ’44 wargame with Dina a few times. We actually played the online version of the game, using Steam. She was very gracious to play a wargame with me, which I don’t think is necessarily the first thing on most women’s lists of things to do on a Thursday night! I appreciated her agreeing to learn how to play and then playing with me several times. I think that Christians need to plan and execute more “together” activities like that – activities that involve interaction, co-operation, communication and engagement. We try to avoid doing things where we are both spectators. Playing wargames is not the only thing we do – we also do Bible study and cooking lessons (for me), for example.

Anyway, the point of this post is to express the deeper meaning behind playing wargames. I think that it is important to recognize and celebrate those who have demonstrated good character, whether it be now, or in the past. I think that it is important for us to search out the best role models ourselves, so that they will influence the way we act in our own lives. The second world war was a clear example of good versus evil. Anyone on the Allied side who demonstrated bravery and courage should be celebrated for safeguarding the security, liberty and prosperity that we enjoy today. In the case of Pegasus bridge, the hero is Major John Howard of the British paratroops.

Here is a quick re-cap of his exploits that day from the New York Times:

> Maj. John Howard, the commander of glider-borne British infantrymen who seized the strategically vital Pegasus Bridge in the first battle of the D-Day invasion of Normandy, died Wednesday in a hospital in Surrey, England. He was 86 and had lived in Burford, near Oxford.

> Under cover of night on June 6, 1944, six gliders carrying 181 officers and men of the Second Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry landed on the eastern flank of a 60-mile invasion front on the northern coast of France. The regiment had a heritage going back to the battles of Bunker Hill and New Orleans, to Waterloo and to World War I. Now its soldiers were in the vanguard of the invasion of Hitler's Europe.
>
> Major Howard's D Company was ordered to seize two bridges, one over the Caen Canal and the other spanning the parallel Orne River. If the Germans held on to those bridges, panzer units could move across them in a counterattack isolating 10,000 British paratroopers jumping behind the British invasion beach known as Sword, where infantry forces would arrive at daybreak. And Major Howard's men sought to strike swiftly to prevent the Germans from blowing up the bridges if they were overwhelmed; the British needed those bridges to resupply their airborne units.
>
> [image]British Halifax bombers towed the gliders over the English Channel, then cut them loose.

> Major Howard's lead glider landed at 12:16 A.M., only 50 yards from the Caen Canal bridge, but the glider's nose collapsed on impact, knocking everybody aboard unconscious for a few seconds. The soldiers quickly emerged, and over the next five minutes the men directly under Major Howard killed the surprised German defenders.
>
> The nearby Orne River bridge was captured by other troops in Major Howard's unit, and soon the words "Ham and Jam," signifying mission accomplished, were radioed to the airborne.
>
> Two British soldiers were killed and 14 wounded in the operation.
>
> Over the next 12 hours, British paratroopers and commandos reinforced Major Howard's men, and British forces were able to move toward the city of Caen, their flank having been protected by the capture of the bridges.
>
> On July 16, Major Howard received the Distinguished Service Order, Britain's second-highest award for valor. On the 10th anniversary of D-Day, he received the Croix de Guerre Avec Palme from the French Government, which had renamed the Caen Canal span Pegasus Bridge, for the flying horse symbolizing the British airborne. The road crossing the bridge was later renamed Esplanade Major John Howard.

Why is this important? Well, it's important to think on the things that are excellent. There are so many things in the culture that are not excellent that we are confronted with every day. We have to make it our business to do things together where goodness is celebrated. Especially when manly virtues like courage are celebrated. We don't do that much anymore. And I think there's a connection between wargames and Christian apologetics that we need to *deliberately* encourage.

Here's an excellent passage from Shakespeare's "Henry V" that makes the point:

> This day is called the feast of Crispian:
> He that outlives this day and comes safe home,
> Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,
> And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
> He that shall live this day, and see old age,
> Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
> And say, 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'
> Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
> And say, 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
> Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
> But he'll remember with advantages
> What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
> Familiar in his mouth as household words,
> Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
> Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
> Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.
> **This story shall the good man teach his son;**
> And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
> From this day to the ending of the world,
> But we in it shall be rememberèd;
> We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
> For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
> Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile
> This day shall gentle his condition:
> And gentlemen in England, now a-bed
> Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
> And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
> That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day. (4.3.43)

This is from the famous speech in which King Henry charges his men to fight well before the famous Battle of Agincourt.

You can read more about the history of the British Airborne division and Pegasus bridge. The famous historian of the second world war Stephen E. Ambrose also wrote a history of the Pegasus bridge battle, called "Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944". You won't find many military historians better than Stephen E. Ambrose!

You might be surprised how many men are interested in military history and wargames, precisely because men instinctively look up to men like John Howard who embody qualities like bravery and courage. We have a dearth of moral character in this society. And we don't do much to teach young men about manly virtues, even in the church. I think that it is important for us to think of creative ways for us to present good character to our young men. Young women should also learn about good character, because they

must separate out the good men from the bad when they are courting.

Thanks to Dina for helping me to edit this post!

Remembering Lt. Richard Winters on D-Day: The Battle of Brecourt Manor

June 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Richard D. Winters Monument

The caption says, “Wars do not make men great, but they do bring out the greatness in good men.” Now let’s see what Dick Winters did during World War II.

Mission: locate and destroy enemy artillery

Brecourt Manor

I want to link to this article from Investors Business Daily about Lt. Winters action at Brecourt Manor.

> Here’s the summary of what Dick Winters did on the morning of June 6th, 1944:
>
> First Lt. Dick Winters leapt into leadership on D-Day, June 6, 1944. His commander’s aircraft was shot down as the men parachuted at 600 feet. When Winters headed to earth, he was in charge of a small platoon.

> When he landed, he had to command Company E with 148 men, because his commander had been lost along with the plane.
>
> Yet in the chaos, Winters could locate only a dozen other soldiers for their first task: take out a 50-man German artillery battery.
>
> “Winters ordered his assault force to strip down to only essential weapons — guns and grenades — to use against the well-prepared defenses, then deployed his machine guns to cover his advances,” Keith Huxen, senior director of research at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, told IBD. “Waiting for the proper moment, he led a charge across an open field, gaining the first gun placement, and then they moved down the trenches, systematically destroying each gun.
>
> “In the process, Winters discovered a map detailing all German gun positions to kill American soldiers coming up from Utah Beach, which saved many lives.”
>
> Joined by five reinforcements during the fight, Winters lost four dead and six wounded. The Yanks managed to kill 15 Nazis, capture 11 and wound many others.
>
> Winters’ maneuvers are still studied at West Point as a case of successfully attacking a fixed position, despite being outnumbered.
>
> Winters (1918-2011) was born in Ephrata, Pa., and the family moved to Lancaster when he was 8.
>
> He later attributed his character and desire to go to church regularly to his mother.
>
> Winters attended local Franklin & Marshall College and earned an economics degree with top honors in 1941. He enlisted in the Army in August to shorten his service time, rather than wait to be drafted if America was to join the war.

Here’s where everything was, and the Rangers attacked through the trenches containing the four guns, while being raked with fire from multiple MG42 heavy machine guns across the open field.

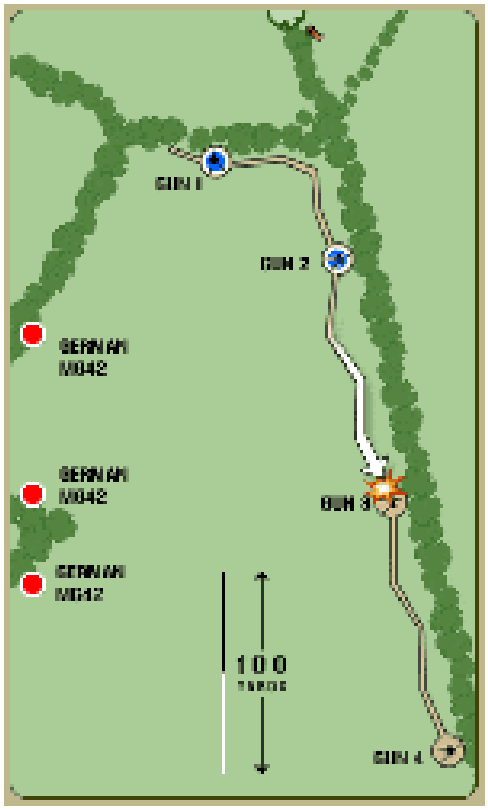

Assaulting the guns at Brecourt Manor

If this sounds familiar, it's because he led one of the most famous actions in the Normandy invasion, and you may have seen it portrayed in the Band of Brothers DVD series. But the article notes that when Dick Winters read the script, "he asked that the profanity be cut from the dialogue of his character, since he never swore". When the producers told him it was too late to change it, he wrote them a letter of resignation from the production, because "I don't want these boys and girls thinking it is acceptable using profanity". In the end, the cleaned up his swearing.

If you are looking for a reason to buck the culture and stop swearing, there's a good reason for you right there – Dick Winters never used profanity.

You can watch the scene from Band of Brothers in low resolution here:

If you play Combat Mission, like I do, you can watch a 28 minute AAR from the simulation of the battle.

The article talks about a lot of the actions that Winters participated in during World War II.

Operation Market Garden

More from the article, this time Operation Market Garden:

> Near Nijmegen on Oct. 5, Winters' platoon was a position where any movement carried risks. Rather than retreat when fired on by a larger force behind a dike, he led a charge to the top and on the other side discovered a company of 150 Nazi SS troops. Despite having only 40 men, the Americans opened up with everything they had, then shot up a company of enemy reinforcements.
>
> The fray ended with 50 Germans dead, 11 POWs and countless wounded, with few casualties among the Americans.

> “This was Easy Company’s crowning achievement of the war and my apogee as a company commander,” Winters told Kingseed. “This demonstrated its overall superiority, of every soldier, of every phase of infantry tactics: patrol, defense, attack using a base of fire, withdrawal and, above all, superior marksmanship with rifles, machine guns and mortar fire.”

Dick Winters is a brave man, someone I admire him very much. And I am grateful for men like him.

I blogged about another hero of the 101st Airborne Division, Ronald Speirs, in a previous post.

Dr. George Yancey: advice for responding to hostility from non-Christians

June 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. George Yancey

This article contains an interview with Dr. George Yancey, who does research on bias against Christians. It appeared in the Christian Post.

Here's the introduction to the interview:

> What should Christians do about the hostile environment they increasingly face? In a Christian Post interview, professor George Yancey talks about his new book written for fellow Christians, *Hostile Environment: Understanding and Responding to Anti-Christian Bias*.
>
> Christianophobia exists among a powerful elite subculture in the United States, University of North Texas sociologists Yancey and David Williamson wrote in *So Many Christians, So Few Lions: Is There Christianophobia in the United States?* While that book was written in an academic voice, in *Hostile Environment*, Yancey writes as a Christian speaking to fellow Christians, and offers some guidance on how Christians should respond to that anti-Christian hostility.
>
> In an email interview with CP, Yancey said he appreciated the opportunity to speak from the heart to fellow believers about how he thinks Christians should respond to Christianophobia.
>
> The early chapters summarize much of his work in *So Many Christians, So Few Lions* and helps readers understand the sources of Christianophobia. The middle chapters, "Are Christians Responsible for Christianophobia" and "Trouble Within"

> discuss ways to deal with hypocrisy, sin and dysfunction within the Church. The latter chapters deal more specifically with ways to confront anti-Christian bigotry.
>
> Yancey is also careful throughout the book to distinguish between the discrimination against Christians in the United States and the violence against Christians in other parts of the world. He does not use the word "persecution," for instance, to describe the negative experiences of Christians domestically.
>
> "Christians are not being persecuted, but religious discrimination and bigotry in our society can affect us. We should combat that discrimination and bigotry when it rears its ugly head," he wrote.

Here's the part that I thought was the most interesting:

> **CP: What do people with Christianophobia want from Christians?**
>
> **Yancey**: In a nutshell they want Christians to shut up and stay in their homes and churches.
>
> Individuals with Christianophobia have a great deal of pre-capita social and cultural power as they are more likely to be white, male, educated and wealthy than other Americans. They indicated in my research that they believe they know what is best for our society, and perhaps that is because they possess such power.
>
> They also argue that Christians are leading us back to the "Dark Ages," want to set up a theocracy, and oppose science. They also demand that Christians do not proselytize others since they believe that Christians are not very intelligent or are trying to manipulate others for money or power.
>
> These beliefs and stereotypes provide them with justification to assert that they, and not Christians, should run our society and government. For this reason it is not surprising that they want Christians to stay out of the public square.
>
> People with Christianophobia at least superficially value the ideals of religious neutrality. They perceive themselves as non-biased. So while they want to exclude Christians from the public square, they are unlikely to support measures that overtly single out Christians for punishment. This allows them to hold on to a social identity that is linked to "tolerance."
>
> However, they have a willingness to support measures that disproportionately punish Christians, or remove Christians from the public square, as long as such punishment or removal can be justified with non-bigoted reasons. This is similar to the concept of disparate impact that has been discussed as a part of the racial problems in the United States.

Other Christian apologists who read my blog sometimes ask me why I write so much issues outside of Christian apologetics, since that's what I am most interested in. Well, I have encountered the attitude that Dr. Yancey is talking about when I was in university, and in the workplace as well. I understand that these very educated non-Christians think

that Christians have no reasons for believing what we believe. They think it's all superstition and bigotry. And so, they are alarmed by the idea that we are voting for public policies based on irrationality. One reason why I talk a lot about politics to get Christians thinking about policies, and reasons why we should support and oppose specific policies. Specifically, I want Christians who believe in policies that are consistent with the Bible to be able to discuss those policies with non-Christians by appealing to public, testable evidence.

But there's another reason to talk about evidence outside of the Bible on this blog. And that reason is so that Christians understand that their faith is not private, nor is it meant to produce good feelings, nor to make them feel liked. Christianity is about truth, and we need to be studying science, history and philosophy, and making connections between what the Bible says to public, testable knowledge when we talk about our faith. We need to counter the perception that we are "dangerous" because we are irrational by being skilled at having conversations about what we believe and why. It can't just be superstition or "this is how I was raised". That's what atheists find scary. They do not find it scary when we can explain ourselves. And that's why we need to get really good at explaining how Christianity relates to these other areas. And not just explaining, but being persuasive using arguments and evidence, too.

Did the city of Nazareth exist at the time of the birth of Jesus?

June 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Israeli archaeologist Yardena Alexandre inspects Roman 1st-century pottery found from the city of Nazareth.

I was discussing a recent debate that a friend attended between an atheist musician named Dan Barker and a Christian with a doctorate in New Testament Studies named Justin Bass.

According to my friend's report, the atheist questioned the existence of Nazareth, and then went on from there to assert that everything we know about Jesus is legendary.

This is what the atheist's argument sounds like:

1. If the New Testament contains reliable history about Jesus, then Nazareth must exist.
2. Nazareth does not exist.
3. Therefore, the New Testaments does not contain reliable history about Jesus. (M.T. 1,2)

I was able to find a web site where an atheist was making the claim that Nazareth did not exist at the time of Jesus. So this is not completely outside the realm of mainstream atheism. I doubled checked with two more people who attended the debate that Barker indeed made an argument like the one above.

Two things to say about this 3-step argument. First off, when speaking to atheists, Christians only care about making a case for the resurrection. This is for two reasons. One, our goal is to disprove atheism, and the historical argument for the resurrection is the most evidenced miracle claim in the New Testament. Nazareth is not part of that core of minimal facts about the resurrection of Jesus. Second, it's possible to be a Christian by

accepting a core of Christian dogma (e.g. – the Apostle's Creed), while remaining agnostic or even skeptical of other things in the Bible. Nazareth is not part of that core of minimal facts that must be affirmed in order to become a Christian.

The problem I have with atheists is that they pick and choose from the Bible according to their own agenda. Every Christian has read basic books on the resurrection by people like Lee Strobel, Michael Licona, William Lane Craig, J. Warner Wallace and so on. This is like table stakes for living a Christian life. We all know how to make a case based off of minimal facts for the resurrection. When Christians get into debates about Jesus, we want to make a case for the core of historical knowledge about him, minimal facts that almost no one disagrees with. But many atheists aren't like that. They want to pick and choose a few verses out of the Old Testament and the New Testament that they personally find distasteful *to them*, and then deny the minimal facts about Jesus on that basis. I don't think that it makes sense to deny evidence for widely-accepted facts by bringing up minor problems that are irrelevant to the well-attested core facts.

But it's worse than that – we actually DO know that Nazareth existed, and we know it not from some fundamentalist preacher, but from atheist Bart Ehrman.

Ehrman writes in his book:

> One supposedly legendary feature of the Gospels commonly discussed by mythicists is that the alleged hometown of Jesus, Nazareth did not exist but is itself a myth. The logic of this argument, which is sometimes advanced with considerable vehemence and force, appears to be that if Christians made up Jesus' hometown, they probably made him up as well. I could dispose of this argument fairly easily by pointing out that it is irrelevant. If Jesus existed, as the evidence suggests, but Nazareth did not, as this assertion claims, then he merely came from somewhere else. Whether Barack Obama was born in the U.S. or not (for what it is worth, he was) is irrelevant to the question of whether he was born.
>
> Since, however, this argument is so widely favored among mythicists, I want to give it a further look and deeper exploration. The most recent critic to dispute the existence of Nazareth is René Salm, who has devoted an entire book to the question, called The Myth of Nazareth. Salm sees this issue as highly significant and relevant to the question of the historicity of Jesus: "Upon that determination [i.e., the existence of Nazareth] depends a great deal, perhaps even the entire edifice of Christendom."

So that seems like a fair representation of the argument I outlined above.

Bart's response is long, but here's part of it:

> There are numerous compelling pieces of archaeological evidence that in fact Nazareth did exist in Jesus' day, and that like other villages and towns in that part of Galilee, it was built on the hillside, near where the later rock-cut kokh tombs were built. For one thing, archaeologists have excavated a farm connected with the village, and it dates to the time of Jesus. Salm disputes the

> finding of the archaeologists who did the excavation (it needs to be remembered, he himself is not an archaeologist but is simply basing his views on what the real archaeologists – all of whom disagree with him — have to say). For one thing, when archaeologist Yardena Alexandre indicated that 165 coins were found in this excavation, she specified in the report that some of them were late, from the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. This suits Salm's purposes just fine. But as it turns out, there were among the coins some that date to the Hellenistic, Hasmonean, and early Roman period, that is, the days of Jesus. Salm objected that this was not in Alexandre's report, but Alexandre has verbally confirmed (to me personally) that in fact it is the case: there were coins in the collection that date to the time prior to the Jewish uprising.
>
> Aalm also claims that the pottery found on the site that is dated to the time of Jesus is not really from this period, even though he is not an expert on pottery. Two archaeologists who reply to Salm's protestations say the following: "Salm's personal evaluation of the pottery … reveals his lack of expertise in the area as well as his lack of serious research in the sources." They go on to state: "By ignoring or dismissing solid ceramic, numismatic [that is, coins], and literary evidence for Nazareth's existence during the Late Hellenisitic and Early Roman period, it would appear that the analysis which René Salm includes in his review, and his recent book must, in itself, be relegated to the realm of 'myth.'"

Read Bart's whole excerpt from his book in his post.

I did a quick double check on the archaeologist Ehrman mentioned, and found an Associated Press story about another archaelogical discovery made by archaeologists in Nazareth. This time, it's not the coins, but pottery fragments. The date range on the pottery is 100 before Jesus' birth to 100 years after Jesus' birth.

Even though Ehrman is an atheist, I think that he understands how to do history. You can't be a credentialed historian and throw out the early proclamation of Jesus' resurrection because of doubts about Old Testament violence. You can't be a credentialed historian and throw out the conversions of Paul and James because you don't know whether there was one angel or two angels at the empty tomb. Denying the core facts about Jesus by bringing up concerns about peripheral issues is not a responsible way to investigate the historical Jesus.

One final point. This happens when discussing scientific evidence with atheists, too. I was discussing the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the cosmic fine-tuning with an atheist – mentioning names, dates and places related to the discoveries – and she cut me off with "Am I going to Hell?"

Satellite temperature measurements show no global warming for 19 years

June 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

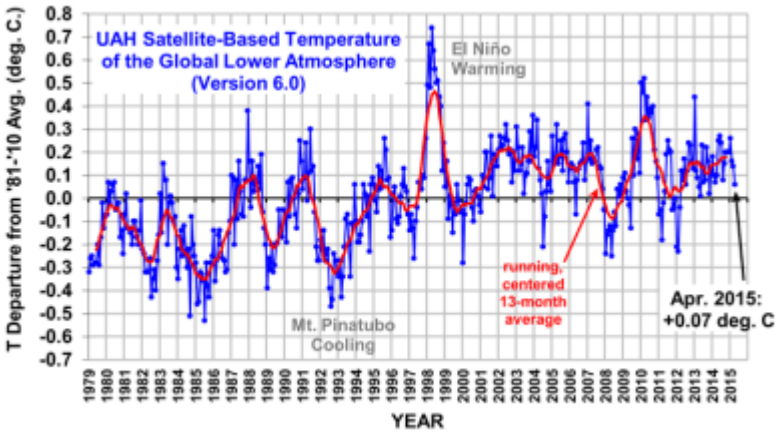

Atmospheric temperature measurements though April 2015
(Image source: Dr. Roy Spencer, University of Alabama – Huntsville)

The best measurements of the Earth's temperature are the atmosphere measurements, not the surface measurements, because those are more easily tampered with.

Here's The Daily Caller reporting on the NOAA's latest effort to tamper with data that we've had for years, to make it prove global warming.

Excerpt:

> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration scientists have found a solution to the 15-year "pause" in global warming: They "adjusted" the hiatus in warming out of the temperature record.
>
> New climate data by NOAA scientists doubles the warming trend since the late 1990s by adjusting pre-hiatus temperatures downward and inflating temperatures in more recent years.
>
> "Newly corrected and updated global surface temperature data from NOAA's [National Centers for Environmental Information] do not support the notion of a global warming 'hiatus,'" wrote NOAA scientists in their study presenting newly adjusted climate data.
>
> To increase the rate in warming, NOAA scientists put more weight on certain ocean buoy arrays, adjusted ship-based temperature readings upward, and slightly raised land-based temperatures as well. Scientists said adjusted ship-based temperature data "had the largest impact on trends for the 2000-2014 time period, accounting for 0.030°C of the 0.064°C trend difference." They added that the "buoy offset correction contributed 0.014°C… to the difference, and the additional weight given to the buoys because of their greater accuracy contributed 0.012°C."

Scientific critics of global warming alarmism responded quickly:

> Climate expert Bob Tisdale and meteorologist Anthony Watts noted that to "manufacture warming during the hiatus, NOAA adjusted the pre-hiatus data downward."
>
> "If we subtract the [old] data from the [new] data… we can see that that is exactly what NOAA did," Tisdale and Watts wrote on the science blog Watts Up With That.
>
> "It's the same story all over again; the adjustments go towards cooling the past and thus increasing the slope of temperature rise," Tisdale and Watts added. "Their intent and methods are so obvious they're laughable."
>
> NOAA's updated data was also criticized by climate scientists with the libertarian Cato Institute. Scientists Richard Lindzen, Patrick Michaels and Chip Knappenberger argue the adjustments made by NOAA were "guaranteed to put a warming trend in recent data."
>
> Cato scientists also argued that NOAA's new data is an outlier compared to other global temperature records, which overwhelmingly show a hiatus in warming.
>
> It "would seem more logical to seriously question the [NOAA] result in light of the fact that, compared to those bulk temperatures, it is an outlier, showing a recent warming trend that is not in these other global records," the three scientists wrote.
>
> "Adjusting good data upwards to match bad data seems questionable, and the fact that the buoy network becomes increasingly dense in the last two decades means that this adjustment must put a warming trend in the data," wrote Michaels, Knappenberger and Lindzen, who is a top climatologist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
>
> […]Georgia Tech climate scientist Judith Curry also chimed in, arguing that NOAA excluded extremely accurate sea buoy data in order to erase the hiatus in warming. Curry wrote that it "seems rather ironic, since this is the period where there is the greatest coverage of data with the highest quality of measurements — ARGO buoys and satellites don't show a warming trend."

It's Climategate all over again, but this time, they are doing it out in the open for everyone to see, rather than trying "hide the decline using Mike's Nature trick", as the leaked Climategate e-mails revealed. The trouble with the NOAA fraud is that the atmospheric measurements cannot be as easily monkeyed with. And – SURPRISE! – the atmospheric measurements still show 19 years with no significant warming.

The Daily Caller summarizes the atmospheric measurements, which have not been changed to fit the global warming narrative.

Excerpt:

> […][N]ew satellite-derived temperature measurements show there's been no

> global warming for 18 years and six months.
>
> “For 222 months, since December 1996, there has been no global warming at all,” writes climate expert Lord Christopher Monckton, the third viscount Monckton of Brenchley
>
> “This month’s [satellite] temperature – still unaffected by a slowly strengthening el Niño, which will eventually cause temporary warming – passes another six-month milestone, and establishes a new record length for the Pause: 18 years 6 months,” Monckton adds.
>
> […]Scientists have already pushed back against NOAA’s new study. The news site Mashable interviewed about a dozen climate scientists not involved in the study, and nearly all of them said “the study does not support the authors’ conclusion that the so-called warming pause never happened.”
>
> “Instead, they said it simply proves that changing the start and end dates used for analyzing temperature trends has a big influence on those measurements, a fact that was already widely known,” Mashable reported.

I think this important, because global warming alarmism is being pushed by the secular left, especially onto young people in public schools. This affects government spending, which is ultimately paid for by us – the taxpayers. I don’t know about you, but as a Christian, my priorities for my money are much different than those of secular leftist bureaucrats. Also, when young people are taken in by the siren song of environmentalism, they vote for bigger government to limit industry (fewer jobs are created) and to regulate personal consumption (higher costs of gas, heating and cooling, electricity). This again results in less money for me to run my life plan, which is focused on serving God. So, as a conservative and a Christian, I am all over this issue, and you should be as well. Show people the evidence, let them decide. Otherwise, the secular left will be making the rules that we have to live by.

The kalam cosmological argument defended in a peer-reviewed science journal

June 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the peer-reviewed article. It appears in a scientific journal focused on astrophysics.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

Here's an excerpt in which the author, Dr. William Lane Craig, explains the Big Bang cosmology:

> The monumental significance of the Friedman-Lemaitre model lay in its historization of the universe. As one commentator has remarked, up to this time the idea of the expansion of the universe "was absolutely beyond comprehension. Throughout all of human history the universe was regarded as fixed and immutable and the idea that it might actually be changing was inconceivable."{8} But if the Friedman-Lemaitre model were correct, the universe could no longer be adequately treated as a static entity existing, in effect, timelessly. Rather the universe has a history, and time will not be matter of indifference for our investigation of the cosmos. In 1929 Edwin Hubble's measurements of the red-shift in the optical spectra of light from distant galaxies,{9} which was taken to indicate a universal recessional motion of the light sources in the line of sight, provided a dramatic verification of the Friedman-Lemaitre model. Incredibly, what Hubble had discovered was the isotropic expansion of the universe predicted by Friedman and Lemaitre. It marked a veritable turning point in the history of science. "Of all the great predictions that

> science has ever made over the centuries," exclaims John Wheeler, "was there ever one greater than this, to predict, and predict correctly, and predict against all expectation a phenomenon so fantastic as the expansion of the universe?"{10}
>
> As a GTR-based theory, the Friedman-Lemaitre model does not describe the expansion of the material content of the universe into a pre-existing, empty, Newtonian space, but rather the expansion of space itself. This has the astonishing implication that as one reverses the expansion and extrapolates back in time, space-time curvature becomes progressively greater until one finally arrives at a singular state at which space-time curvature becomes infinite. This state therefore constitutes an edge or boundary to space-time itself. P. C. W. Davies comments,
>
> > An initial cosmological singularity . . . forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity. . . . On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.{11}
>
> The popular expression "Big Bang," originally a derisive term coined by Fred Hoyle to characterize the beginning of the universe predicted by the Friedman-Lemaitre model, is thus potentially misleading, since the expansion cannot be visualized from the outside (there being no "outside," just as there is no "before" with respect to the Big Bang).{12}
>
> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"{13}
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Every theist should be able to understand and defend this argument. It is a scientific refutation of materialism, and it is supported by six lines of scientific evidence – all of which emerged as science has progressed.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe

3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

Those are the scientific discoveries that have led us to the beginning of the universe, which support's Dr. Craig's argument.

Here's a re-cap of the three main evidences for the Big Bang cosmology from Caltech. (Numbers 2, 3 and 5 from the list above)

Excerpt:

> Until the early 1900s, most people had assumed that the universe was fixed in size. New possibilities opened up in 1915, when Einstein formulated his famous general relativity theory that describes the nature of space, time, and gravity. This theory allows for expansion or contraction of the fabric of space. In 1917, astronomer Willem de Sitter applied this theory to the entire universe and boldly went on to show that the universe could be expanding. Aleksandr Friedmann, a mathematician, reached the same conclusion in a more general way in 1922, as did Georges Lemaître, a cosmologist and a Jesuit, in 1927. This step was revolutionary since the accepted view at the time was that the universe was static in size. Tracing back this expanding universe, Lemaître imagined all matter initially contained in a tiny universe and then exploding. These thoughts introduced amazing new possibilities for the universe, but were independent of observation at that time.
>
> **Why Do We Think the Big Bang Happened?**
>
> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

The article goes into detail about each of these three evidences.

This is the kind of evidence I expect all Christian theists to be using when discussing the question of whether God exists. Scientific evidence. When talking to non-Christians, we first need to show that we understand science, because science is a reliable and

respected way of getting knowledge about the universe. Non-Christians do not accept the Bible, but they do accept science, so we begin evangelism with science. Science (experimental, testable, repeatable science) should set limits on what anyone can believe – including non-Christians, who might otherwise not be inclined to listen to Bible verses and theology.

The Big Bang is not compatible with atheism

According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by the atheistic worldview.

You should definitely print out both articles and get familiar with the arguments and the evidence. I have tried this argument out on atheists, and the response I usually get is that scientific discoveries will soon emerge that falsifies all of these six scientific discoveries. That sounds more like faith than reason to me. And we have to make it clear to others who are still deciding that there is a conflict between science and religion. Just not the one they're expecting. Let's make our decisions about what to believe based on what science is telling us today. Let's hold accountable people who want to have a worldview that is based on speculations.

Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral? Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong?

June 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: For a Christian response to the complaint that the Bible doesn't condemn slavery, see this article and this article for slavery in the Old Testament, and this article for slavery in the New Testament. These are all by Christian philosopher Paul Copan. You can watch a lecture with Paul Copan on the slavery challenge here, and buy a book where he answers the challenge in more detail. There is also a good debate on whether the Bible condones slavery here, featuring David Instone-Brewer and Robert Price. My post is not a formal logical essay on this issue, it is more that I am outraged that atheists, who cannot even rationally ground objective morality, insist on criticizing the morality of the Bible. I think that atheists who are serious about finding the truth about these issues should check out those links, if they are interested in getting to the truth of these matters.

In other posts, I've argued that without an objective moral standard of what is right and wrong, any judgments about right and wrong are just individual opinions. So, when an atheist says slavery is wrong, what he really means is that he thinks slavery is wrong *for him*, in the same way that he thinks that,say, that chocolate ice cream is right *for him*. He isn't saying what is wrong *objectively*, because on atheism there are no objective moral rules or duties. He is speaking for himself: "I wouldn't own a slave, just like I wouldn't eat broccoli – because it's yucky!". But he has no rational argument against other people owning slaves in other times and places, because their justification for owning slaves is the same as his justification for not owning slaves : personal preference and cultural conventions.

So do atheists oppose slavery? Do they believe in an objective human right to liberty? Well, there are no objective human rights of any kind on atheism. Human beings are just accidents in an accidental universe, and collections of atoms do not mysteriously accrue "rights". There is no natural right to liberty on atheism. Now consider abortion, which is favored by most atheists. Like slavery, abortion declares an entire class of human beings as non-persons in order to justify preserving their own happiness and prosperity by means of violence. That's exactly what slavery does, except abortion is worse than slavery, because you actually kill the person you are declaring as a non-person instead of just imprisoning them.

So how many atheists have this pro-abortion view that it is OK to declare unborn children as non-persons so they can kill them?

Well, according to Gallup, the "non-religious" are the group most likely to support abortion. In fact, 68% favor legalized abortion, compared to only 19% who oppose it.

Take a look at the Gallup poll data from 2012:

Americans' Abortion Views, by Education and Religion

With respect to the abortion issue, would you consider yourself to be pro-choice or pro-life?

	"Pro-choice"	"Pro-life"
	%	%
National adults	41	50
No religion	68	19
Catholic	38	54
Protestant/Other Christian	33	57
Postgraduate	58	37
College graduate only	45	53
Some college	41	49
High school graduate or less	33	53

May 3-6, 2012

GALLUP

Most atheists are OK with the strong killing the weak

The Gallup numbers might actually be low, because “No religion” might include people who are spiritual, but not religious. But what about atheists alone?

As a group, atheists tend to be among the most radical supporters of legalized abortion. The Secular Census of 2012 found that 97% of atheists vote for abortion. There are almost no pro-life atheists. Why is it that atheists look at unborn children and think it’s OK to kill them? Well, let’s see what atheists scholars think about morality, and from that we’ll find out why they think abortion is morally permissible.

Atheist scholars think morality is nonsense

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin’s views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That’s the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Source: http://www.arn.org/docs/orpages/or161/161main.htm

Atheists Michael Ruse says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I

> appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory.(Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

Atheist Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

Most atheists are like this – although some affirm objective morality, without really having a rational basis for it. In general though, when atheists use moral language to condemn God, the Bible, or Christians, it's very important to understand that it is just theater. They are trying to use words that describe realities that they do not even believe in, usually with the goal of getting you to stop judging them for their own sin. I blogged about two examples of this before – Richard Carrier and Michael Shermer.

Let's take a closer look at Richard Dawkins' statement that there is "no evil and no good".

Richard Dawkins and morality

Here's Richard Dawkins' view of abortion:

Richard Dawkins explains morality on atheism
But wait! He goes even further than mere abortion:

Dawkins believes in Darwinian evolution. Survival of the fittest. The strong kill the weak. Where is protection for the unborn in that narrative?

Richard Dawkins even advocates for adultery.

So, what Dawkins really believes is that morality is nonsense. But in order to get you to stop condemning abortion, adultery, infanticide and a whole host of other atheistic misbehaviors, he will try to condemn you using moral language to stop you from making moral judgments. But the goal here is to intimidate you into not judging. By his own words, he thinks that the whole notion of objective moral values and objective moral duties is just nonsense.

Who does oppose slavery?

How did slavery end?

Dinesh D’Souza explains:

> Slavery was mostly eradicated from Western civilization–then called Christendom–between the fourth and the tenth century. The Greco-Roman institution of slavery gave way to serfdom. Now serfdom has its problems but at least the serf is not a “human tool” and cannot be bought and sold like property. So slavery was ended twice in Western civilization, first in the medieval era and then again in the modern era.
>
> In the American South, Christianity proved to be the solace of the oppressed. As historian Eugene Genovese documents in Roll, Jordan, Roll, when black slaves sought to find dignity during the dark night of slavery, they didn’t turn to Marcus Aurelius or David Hume; they turned to the Bible. When they sought hope and inspiration for liberation, they found it not in Voltaire or D’Holbach but in the Book of Exodus.
>
> The anti-slavery movements led by Wilberforce in England and abolitionists in America were dominated by Christians. These believers reasoned that since we are all created equal in the eyes of God, no one has the right to rule another without consent. This is the moral basis not only of anti-slavery but also of democracy.

And, in fact, you can see Christians pushing the culture hard against abortion today, just as we did with slavery. We also oppose frivolous divorce, and redefining marriage in a way that normalizes removing mothers and/or fathers away from their children. Defending the weak is what we do.

New York judge rules that it is racist to expect teachers to be functionally literate

June 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

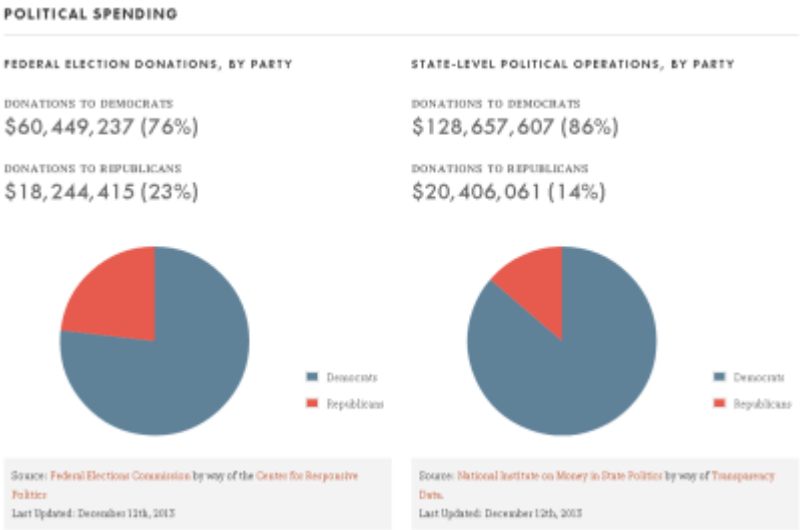

Political spending by the NEA union in 2013

This story is from The Stream.

Excerpt:

> A federal judge in New York has struck down a test used by New York City to vet potential teachers, finding the test of knowledge illegally discriminated against racial minorities due to their lower scores.
>
> […][T]he city's second Liberal Arts and Science Test (LAST-2) …[is]… simply a test to make sure that teachers had a basic high school-level understanding of both the liberal arts and the sciences.
>
> One sample question from the test asked prospective educators to identify the mathematical principle of a linear relationship when given four examples; another asked them to read four passages from the Constitution and identify which illustrated checks and balances. Besides factual knowledge, the test also checks basic academic skills, such as reading comprehension and the ability to read basic charts and graphs.
>
> Nevertheless, this apparently neutral subject matter contained an insidious kernel of racism, because Hispanic and black applicants had a passage rate only 54 to 75 percent of the passage rate for whites.
>
> Once their higher failure rate was established, the burden shifted to New York to prove that LAST-2 measured skills that were essential for teachers and therefore was justified in having a racially unequal outcome. While it might seem obvious that possessing basic subject knowledge is a key skill for a teacher, District Judge Kimba Wood said the state hadn't met that burden.
>
> "Instead of beginning with ascertaining the job tasks of New York teachers, the

> two LAST examinations began with the premise that all New York teachers should be required to demonstrate an understanding of the liberal arts," Wood wrote in her opinion, according to *The New York Times*.
>
> LAST-2 hasn't been used in New York since 2012, but the ruling will still have repercussions. Minorities who failed the exam (who number in the thousands) may be owed years of back pay totaling millions of dollars, and those who were relegated to substitute teaching jobs could be promoted to having their own classrooms. In addition, while Wood's ruling only applies to New York City, the test was used statewide, and it could serve as a precedent for further lawsuits.
>
> The ruling could also pave the way for another ruling finding New York's current teacher test, the Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST), to be discriminatory as well. That test is even harder than LAST-2, with a strong focus on literacy skills such as writing and reading comprehension, and like LAST-2 it has a very large gap in scores between whites and minorities. A lawsuit, once again being heard by Wood, is already pending, with the plaintiffs arguing that there is no clear evidence strong literacy skills are essential for a teacher.

See this is why you shouldn't send your children to public schools without checking them out first. Places like New York and Chicago are especially notorious for hiring poorly-performing teachers – and for refusing to fire them, no matter what they do. What does the government care whether the kids learn or not? Unionized teachers do not get paid based on their ability to get students to perform. They get paid based on the contracts that are negotiated between their union and the government. If it's a Democrat government, then a fair amount of the union dues are going to be funneled into Democrat coffers, anyway. So why would the Democrats take on the teacher unions that get them elected? They would not. And that's one major reason why so many kids in these public schools cannot read, write, or do math. It's by design. The goals of the public education system are 1) to make sure teachers get paid regardless of performance, and 2) to get Democrats elected. Parents and children are no part of the equation.

It seems to me that the real racism is when judges privilege the interests of grown-ups over the interests of poor, minority students. We should be focused on making sure that students have the best teachers, not protecting the jobs of the worst teachers for political gain.

What happened to the economy of North Carolina when Republicans cut taxes?

June 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from The Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Four years ago, North Carolina's unemployment rate was above 10 percent and the state still bore the effects of its battering in the recession. Many rural towns faced jobless rates of more than 20 percent.
>
> But in 2013, a combination of the biggest tax rate reductions in the state's history and a gutsy but controversial unemployment insurance reform supercharged the state's economy and has even helped finance budget surpluses.
>
> As Wells Fargo's Economics Group recently put it: "North Carolina's economy has shifted into high gear. Hiring has picked up across nearly every industry."
>
> The tax cut slashed the state's top personal income tax rate to 5.75 percent, near the regional average, from 7.75 percent, which had been the highest in the South. The corporate tax rate was cut to 5 percent from 6.9 percent. The estate tax was eliminated.
>
> Next came the novel tough-love unemployment insurance reforms. The state became the first in the nation to reject "free" federal payments for extended unemployment benefits and reduce the weeks of benefits to 20 from 26. The maximum weekly dollar amount of payments, $535, which had been among the highest in the nation, was trimmed to a maximum of $350 a week. As a result, tens of thousands of Carolinians left the unemployment rolls.
>
> […]After a few months, the unemployment rate started to decline rapidly and job growth climbed. Not just a little. Nearly 200,000 jobs have been added since 2013 and the unemployment rate has fallen to 5.5 percent from 7.9 percent.
>
> […]Even with lower rates, tax revenues are up about 6 percent this year according to the state budget office. On May 6, Gov. McCrory announced that the state has a budget surplus of $400 million while many other states are scrambling to fill gaps.
>
> […]Because North Carolina built in a trigger mechanism that applies excess revenues to corporate rate cuts, the business tax has fallen to 5 percent from 6.9 percent, and next year it drops to 4 percent.

Although North Carolina is too liberal for me, it is nice to see them turning their economy around with tax cuts on job creators, and benefit cuts to those who choose not to work.

At the end of the day, the only real security that any of us has comes from the skills we

have developed by working and the work experience we put on our resumes. The economy is in for some harsh conditions going forward. The more we can get Americans working, the better they will be able to weather the coming storm. A little kick in the ass might hurt, but in the long-term, it’s for the best.

Big government working with gay rights groups to punish Christians

June 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

Here is a story from The Daily Signal about the Christian bakers who are being sued for $135,000 for refusing to bake a gay couple a wedding cake.

Excerpt:

> The Daily Signal has exclusively learned that the government agency responsible for enforcing Oregon's anti-discrimination law appears to be working closely with a powerful gay rights advocacy group in its case against Aaron and Melissa Klein, owners of Sweet Cakes by Melissa.
>
> Communications between the agency, the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, and the LGBT organization, Basic Rights Oregon, raise questions about potential bias in the state's decision to charge the Kleins with discrimination for refusing to make a cake for a same-sex wedding.
>
> In April, a judge for the agency recommended the Kleins be fined $135,000.
>
> Communications obtained through a public records request show employees of the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries—which pursued the case against the Kleins—participating in phone calls, texting, and attending meetings with Basic Rights Oregon, the largest LGBT advocacy group in the state.
>
> […][T]he Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries commissioner, who is in charge

> of determining the Kleins' final punishment, met with Basic Rights Oregon on multiple occasions and purchased tickets costing hundreds of dollars benefiting the advocacy group.
>
> […]Communications between Bureau of Labor and Industries Commissioner Brad Avakian and Basic Rights Oregon, which has actively spoken out against the Kleins, raise questions about whether the commissioner and other agency employees were using the case to benefit a political agenda, and in the process, stripping the Kleins of their right to a fair trial.
>
> According to emails, Avakian met with Basic Rights Oregon on multiple occasions.
>
> One of those meetings was planned for May 1, 2014, shortly before a federal court struck down Oregon's Defense of Marriage Act.
>
> Another meeting between the commissioner and Basic Rights Oregon occurred on or around August 5, 2014. This fell between the time a judge denied the Kleins' first attempt to disqualify the commissioner for bias and shortly before a hearing for the case was scheduled to begin.

So the government, which is supposed to be fair to everyone, is actually collaborating with advocacy groups to punish those who disagree with the advocacy groups. It reminds me of the targeting of Tea Party groups by the IRS. Big government, which is funded by the taxpayers, using their power to coerce and punish taxpayers.

Related to this story, I found another story in The Public Discourse, about how the Obama administration appointed gay rights activists to push the gay agenda in the public schools.

Excerpt:

> Through his executive appointments, President Obama has helped expose American schoolchildren to activism that places them at risk.
>
> On May 19, 2009, a few short months after his inauguration, Obama gave the green light to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to appoint Kevin Jennings to a top position to influence school policy: the post of Assistant Deputy Secretary for the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, also known as the "safe schools czar." Jennings, a powerful LGBT rights activist who is himself a gay man, was the founder of the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). GLSEN is one of the largest LGBT activist organizations in the nation and is devoted to promoting homosexuality in K-12 schools. Jennings served as "safe schools czar" from 2009-2011.
>
> Given his connection with the organization, we should not be shocked to discover that GLSEN received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control in 2011 for $1.425 million over five years to promote the LGBT agenda in public schools at taxpayers' expense. Through these publicly funded in-school programs, kids are being bombarded with the message that same-sex attraction and gender-identity

> confusion are innate and therefore not changeable.
>
> […]GLSEN knows that the elementary years are a prime opportunity to encourage kids to reject the values of their parents. The handbook outlines a variety of activities that gradually introduce and reinforce the messages that gender is a social construct, that moms and dads are interchangeable, and that anyone who says otherwise is hateful and prejudiced.
>
> Along with lessons designed to help kindergarten through fifth-graders to "explore the definition of a family and to understand that there are a variety of family structures" and to "challenge their own and other's [*sic*] assumptions about gender and gender roles," the guide recommends a variety of books and videos to help cement the lessons.

Just think about how people on the secular left were so loud and passionate about pushing for separation of church and state, blocking even the slightest hint of free expression of religion. They didn't want even a hint of government support for Christianity, and not a speck of Christianity in the public schools. But when the shoe is on the other foot, and the left is in power, they are only too happy to push their agenda in the schools and from the government-run censorship panels.

Federal court upholds Texas pro-life law that has saved about 10,000 lives already

June 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of incrementalism

Great news!!! This story is from Life News, and I have more great news below.

Excerpt:

> A federal appeals court issued a ruling today upholding a Texas pro-life law credited with closing multiple abortion clinics and cutting abortions 13 percent, saving an estimated 9,900 babies from abortion.
>
> The legislation, House Bill 2 (HB2), requires abortion facilities to meet the same safety standards of other Ambulatory Surgical Centers in the state, ensures that abortionists have admitting privileges at a local hospital, and bans painful late abortions on fully formed babies. The admitting privileges portion of the law was the portion responsible for closing abortion clinics and, because so many shut down or stopped doing abortions, Judge Lee Yeakel claimed that constituted an undue burden on women.
>
> Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott filed an appeal of Judge Yeakel's ruling and the appellate court issued its decision on that today.
>
> The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the lower court "erred by substituting its own judgment for that of the legislature" when ruling against the pro-life bill. It ruled that all abortion clinics have to follow the admitting privileges law except

> one.

And some more good news from Life News, this time from Missouri.

Excerpt:

> The Missouri General Assembly adopted legislation during this year's session which will dramatically increase funding for alternatives to abortion programs. The authorization for enhanced funding for abortion alternatives efforts was included in a bill which overhauled the state's major public assistance program.
>
> The bill adopted by the Missouri Legislature, Senate Bill 24, was known as the "Strengthening Missouri Families Act." It was sponsored by Senator David Sater of Cassville, and handled in the House by Representative Diane Franklin of Camdenton.
>
> The legislation revised Missouri's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. That form of public assistance is most commonly referred to as welfare benefits, and used to go by the name Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC).
>
> The most widely reported change contained in the bill was a provision that scaled back the period of time in which a person can receive TANF assistance. The bill reduced the lifetime limit for recipients of TANF benefits from 60 to 45 months.
>
> **A lesser noted section of the bill established that 2% of block grant funds received from the federal government for TANF assistance shall be dedicated to the state's alternatives to abortion services and public awareness programs.**
>
> **That means that approximately $4.3 million in new annual funding will be available for alternatives to abortion programs.**
>
> […]Services financed by the program include prenatal, medical, and mental health care; child care, newborn, and infant care; food, clothing, and pregnancy related supplies; parenting training; housing and utilities; transportation; and educational services. During the 2014 fiscal year, services were provided to a total of 1,511 women and their children.
>
> […]Another favorable provision in the bill calls for a similar 2% (another $4.3 million) of the federal TANF block grant funding to be earmarked for programs promoting healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood. These programs were created as a component of the major welfare reform law passed by Congress in 1996.
>
> Those funds can be used for pre-marital education, marriage skills, marriage mentoring, and divorce reduction programs. Funds can also be expended for parenting skills training, and counseling programs to combat domestic violence and child abuse.

The Democrat governor voted to veto the bill, but there were enough Republicans in the

House and Senate to override his veto. So this is more good news. If you’re a fiscal conservative who believes in smaller government, you like the welfare reform in this story as well. I know I do.

Dennis Prager: does the Bible say do not kill or do not murder?

June 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager's column on the sixth commandment.

Excerpt:

> Here is the text of commandment six — explaining why the King James translation is wrong:
>
> You would think that of all the Ten Commandments the one that needs the least explaining is the sixth, because it seems so clear. It is the one that the King James Bible, the most widely used English translation of the Bible, translates as, "Thou shall not kill."
>
> Yet, the truth is the quite the opposite. This is probably the least well understood of the Ten Commandments. The reason is that the Hebrew original does not say, "Do not kill." It says, "Do not murder." Both Hebrew and English have two words for taking a life — one is "kill" (harag, in Hebrew) and the other is "murder" (ratzach in Hebrew).
>
> The difference between the two is enormous. Kill means:
>
> 1. Taking any life — whether of a human being or an animal.
> 2. Taking a human life deliberately or by accident.
> 3. Taking a human life legally or illegally, morally or immorally.
>
> On the other hand, murder can only mean one thing: The illegal or immoral taking of a human life. That's why we say, "I killed a mosquito," not, "I murdered a mosquito." And that's why we would say that "the worker was accidentally killed," not that "the worker was accidentally murdered."
>
> So why did the King James translation of the Bible use the word "kill" rather than "murder"? Because 400 years ago, when the translation was made, "kill" was synonymous with "murder." As a result, some people don't realize that English has changed since 1610 and therefore think that the Ten Commandments prohibits all killing.
>
> But, of course, it doesn't. If the Ten Commandments forbade killing, we would all have to be vegetarians, as killing animals would be prohibited. And we would all have to be pacifists — since we could not kill even in self-defense.
>
> However, you don't have to know how the English language has evolved to understand that the Ten Commandments could not have prohibited all killing.
>
> A correct understanding of the commandment against murder is crucial because, while virtually every modern translation correctly translates the commandment as "Do not murder," many people cite the King James translation to justify two

> positions that have no biblical basis: opposition to capital punishment and pacifism.The very same part of the Bible that contains the Ten Commandments — the Five Books of Moses, the Torah as it is known by Jews — commands the death penalty for murder, allows killing in war, prescribes animal sacrifice and allows eating meat.
>
> Regarding capital punishment and the Bible, as I note in my Prager University course on capital punishment, the only law that appears in each one of the Five Books of Moses is that murderers be put to death. Opponents of the death penalty are free to hold the view that all murderers should be allowed to live. But they are not free to cite the Bible to support their view.
>
> Yet, many do. And they always cite the Commandment, "Do not kill." But that, as should now be abundantly clear, is not what the commandment says, and it is therefore an invalid argument.

Read the rest (it's the same as the video).

This is related to his new video series for Prager University on the Ten Commandments. You can watch them all here. There's one for each commandment, and an introduction. Prager University always does a nice job on these videos, and they are a nice, quick way to find out exactly what traditionally-minded people really believe, and why. Most kids in college will never even hear the other side to what their liberal professors say.

What does the concept of resurrection mean to Jewish theologians?

June 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a helpful post from Eric Chabot talks about this and other interesting topics related to the resurrection.

Excerpt:

> **Where do we see resurrection in the Hebrew Bible?**
>
> As just stated, belief in a resurrection of persons from the dead are seen in eight passages: (Job 19:26; Ps. 17:15; 49:15; 73:24; Is. 26:19; 53:10; Dn. 12:2;12:13). The resurrection terminology is seen in two places (Ezek. 37:1-14; Hos. 6:2) to show a national and spiritual restoration brought about by the return from the exile. As far as the nature of the future bodily resurrection, it may involve a corpse or the receipt of a material body comparable to the present physical body (Job 19:26; Is. 26:19), or it may be a matter of transformation (Dn. 12:2-3 and perhaps 12:13); or glorification after reanimation, in the case of the righteous.
>
> As far as the function of the resurrection, it may be personal vindication (Is. 26:16; 53:10-12). Resurrection may also have a function in relation to reward or punishment (Dn. 12:2; 12:13), an assumption to heaven and enriched fellowship with God (Ps. 49:15; 73:24,26), or preface to the beatific vision of God (Ps. 17:15 and possibly Job 19:26). (1)
>
> The Greek word for resurrection is "anatasis" which means "a raising up" or "rising." There are resuscitations in the Tanakh such as the example of Elijah and Elisha raising a person from death (1 Kings 17-23; 2 Kings 4:34-35). While these figures may have been raised in a resurrection sense, they were not raised immortal in the same way Jesus was.
>
> **Extra-Biblical Passages on Resurrection**
>
> There are also extra-biblical passages that speak about the resurrection (Enoch 92:2; 4 Ezra 7:32; Enoch 91:10; 2 Maccabees 7:9; 14; 28-29). Even the The Messiah Apocalypse, which is dated between 100 and 80 B.C.E mentions resurrection: "He [God] frees the captives, makes the blind see, and makes the bent over stand straight…for he will heal the sick, revive the dead, and give good news to the humble and the poor he will satisfy, the abandoned he will lead, and the hungry he will make rich." (2)
>
> In the Rabbinical literature there are explicit teachings on the resurrection. It says in the Mishnah 10.1, it says, "All Israelites have a share in the world to come; … and these are they that have no share in the world to come: he that says that there is no resurrection of the dead prescribed in the Law." Moses Maimonides, a Jewish rabbi and a medieval Jewish philosopher who has forever

> influenced the Jewish and non-Jewish world said:
>
> ” The resurrection of the dead is one of the cardinal principles established by Moses our teacher. A person who does not believe this principle has no real religion, certainly not Judaism. However, resurrection is for the righteous. This is the earning of the statement in Breshit Rabbah, which declares: “the creative power of rain is both for the righteous and the wicked, but the resurrection of the dead is only for the righteous.” Our sages taught the wicked are called dead even when they are still alive; the righteous are alive even when they are dead” (Bab. Talmud Brakhot 18 b).
>
> 3 points are made here: 1. Resurrection is a cardinal principle taught in the Torah which all Jews must believe 2. It is for the righteous alone 3. All men must die and their bodies decompose. (3)

It’s important to understand that the concept of resurrection had a meaning before Christianity ever started. And it’s interesting to ask why the early Christians applied the notion of resurrection to Jesus. What is the best explanation for their decision to do such a strange thing? Why not just give up on him and deny that he was the Messiah when he was killed by the Romans?

Top fertility specialist advises women: don’t wait till 30 to try to have children

June 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Dina sent me this UK Daily Mail article a while back, but I held onto it until I could find something to pair it with.

It says:

> One of Britain’s top NHS fertility specialists last night issued a stark warning to women: Start trying for a baby before you’re 30 – or risk never having children.
>
> In a strongly worded letter to Education Secretary Nicky Morgan, consultant gynaecologist Professor Geeta Nargund has also demanded that teenagers are taught about the dangers of delaying parenthood, because of the spiralling cost to the taxpayer of IVF for women in their late 30s and 40s.
>
> Professor Nargund cites the agony of a growing number of women left childless as a key reason why fertility lessons must be included in the national curriculum. Her controversial intervention – in which she warns Britain faces a ‘fertility timebomb’ – will fuel the debate over the best time to start a family, amid the rise in women delaying motherhood to pursue careers.
>
> […]Arguing passionately for fertility lessons, she tells Mrs Morgan: ‘Information is power and the best way to empower people to take control of their fertility is through education.’ Prof Nargund said last night: ‘Ideally, if a woman is ready for a child, she should start trying by the time she is 30. She should consider having a child early because as a woman gets older, her fertility declines sharply.’
>
> If a woman started trying early enough, doctors would still have time to diagnose problems and take action before it was too late, she said.
>
> Her comments were endorsed by Professor Allan Pacey, outgoing chair of the British Fertility Society.
>
> **‘You need to be trying by 30 because if there is a problem and you need**

> **surgery, hormones or IVF, then you've got five years to sort it out,' he said. 'If a woman starts trying at 35, doctors have got to sort it out when she is already on a slippery fertility slope'.**

Let's see how accurate women's beliefs about fertility and age are.

Consider this article from Aeon magazine.

It says:

> Many studies show that women are not only woefully ignorant when it comes to fertility, conception and the efficacy of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) – but they overestimate their knowledge about the subject. **For instance, a 2011 study in *Fertility and Sterility* surveyed 3,345 childless women in Canada between the ages of 20 and 50; despite the fact that the women initially assessed their own fertility knowledge as high, the researchers found only half of them answered six of the 16 questions correctly.** 72.9 per cent of women thought that: 'For women over 30, overall health and fitness level is a better indicator of fertility than age.' (False.) And 90.9 per cent felt that: 'Prior to menopause, assisted reproductive technologies (such as IVF) can help most women to have a baby using their own eggs.' (Also false.) Many falsely believed that by *not* smoking and *not* being obese they could improve their fertility, rather than the fact that those factors simply negatively affect fertility.
>
> […]**According to a 2011 study in *Human Reproduction*, which surveyed 410 undergraduate students, most overestimated a women's chances of spontaneous pregnancy in all age groups, but particularly after receiving IVF beyond age 40.** Only 11 per cent of the students knew that genetic motherhood is unlikely to be achieved from the mid-40s onward, unless using oocytes or egg cells frozen in advance. 'This can be explained by technological "hype" and favourable media coverage of very late pregnancies,' the authors concluded.

So, I guess now I'll issue my advice to women in their 20s on how to avoid infertility:

Money gives men confidence to pull the trigger on marriage, so you should focus your efforts on men with a solid balance sheet and a gap-less resume. Beware of men who paint a rosy picture of their finances in the future that makes you feel good, but who have not demonstrated their ability to earn or save. It's much better to focus your time on a man who can marry you *right now*. The best way to tell if a man is capable of marriage is not by listening to confident words, it's by looking to see how he has prepared to perform his roles, one of which is *provider*.

Be debt free. Study STEM in school, update your resume, and get a job that pays well. Jobs are not meant to be fun or fulfilling. You need to be preparing financially for marriage, and that means a normal 9-5 job in an office with 3% annual raises and 401K matching. The more you save to help your man with the down payment on your house,

the better. Pursuing fun and spending money on frivolous things like travel is not the way to prepare for marriage (unless you travel as part of your job, of course). *Don't* live in the moment, *do* sacrifice for the future. Believe me: debt is a *serious* damper on couples being willing to marry. It has to die, and it has to die *now.* Like "yesterday" now.

If you went to college, chances are that you absorbed a lot of feminism. Feminism emphasizes being free of constraints, feeling happy, having fun, career over family, and independence from the needs of men and children. You need to renew your mind in order to undo the cultural denigration of marriage and children. Get yourself a marriage mentor ask for book recommendations that will educate you about the challenges and rewards of marriage. A good marriage mentor will explain to you why marriage is a better plan than the feminist plan, and will emphasize self-denial, self-sacrifice, self-control and serving others. It's only by getting specific about marriage and parenting that your heart will change to want to work on marriage rather than work on the things that the feminist culture prefers. I recommend Tim Keller's book on marriage, and Dr. Laura's book on husbands, and lectures by Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse.

I guess my closing advice would be to be careful about the things you hear about marriage in the culture. A lot of people have agendas that sound good, but ultimately, they don't satisfy. I really recommend that you read Philippians and mediate on Philippians 2 and 4, which talk about the importance of caring about other people (2) and sharing with other people (4).

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense

June 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Reformed Baptist theologian Wayne Grudem speaks on the Bible and the right of self-defense.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Topics:

- what about turning the other cheek? doesn't that undermine self-defense?

- what does Jesus say about the right to self-defense in the New Testament
- did Jesus' disciples carry swords for protection during his ministry?
- why did Jesus tell his disciples to sell their cloaks and buy swords?
- what about Jesus stopping Peter from using force during Jesus' arrest?
- shouldn't we rely on police instead of our own personal weapons?
- what about brandishing a handgun vs actually trying to shoot someone?
- what are violent crime rates in pro-gun USA and in the anti-gun UK?
- does outlawing guns cause violent crime to increase or decrease?
- do academic studies show that gun control decreases crime?
- do academic studies show that concealed carry laws decreases crime?
- what do academic studies show about defensive handgun usage?
- do many children die from guns in the home compared to other causes?
- doesn't the US Constitution limit the usage of guns to the army and police?
- what did the Founding Fathers believe about lawful ownership of firearms?
- What should be the goal of someone who uses a weapon in self-defense?

This is a good example of applying the Bible to real life. We need more of that!

UK woman explains why she chose a man who savagely attacked her

June 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this man a good candidate for father/husband roles?

Trina sent me this astonishing post about a woman whose boyfriend literally gouged her eyes out. The article is written by one of my favorite authors, Dr. Theodore Dalrymple. It appears in City Journal, the famous journal of the centrist Manhattan Institute.

There are no graphic images in the article, but there is very vulgar and violent language in some parts. The author of the article is sympathetic with her suffering, but we can learn a lot from her story about how to choose a good man.

Fatherless

First, we learn that Ms. Nash grew up fatherless and the bills were paid by the state – she had *no idea* that women should prefer men who work hard, self-sacrificially, to be able to provide for a family:

> Nash was born in Cornwall, one of six children to a mother whose relationships with men were tumultuous. "I'd seen my mum go through hundreds of break-ups and be badly treated by men," she tells us. The mother's complex love life left little time for her children, for, as Nash observes, "I was much closer to [my grandmother] than my mum, who never seemed to have time for us." How many of the six children shared the same father we never learn, and indeed Nash makes no mention of a father of any of them, including her own. It appears that she came into a radically fatherless world, and though she does not say so, it is

> likely that at least some of her brothers and sisters were half-siblings; and again, though she does not say so, it is likely that the principal economic support of the family was the state, whose paid-out benefits meant that it was, in effect, father to the children. Nash grew up in public housing and seems to have lived in such subsidized housing all her life.

Not seeing her father providing for the family and loving her mother left her with no way to tell good men apart from bad men:

> She tells us early in the book that she is a single mother of two children. Speaking of her first child, she says, "I may have had [him] when I was very young but my kids mean the world to me and not for one moment did I regret becoming a mum at sixteen."
>
> […]The next sentence reads: "My choice in men, however, left a lot to be desired." And when she reaches the beginning of the narrative of her blinding, she writes, "I had [moved back to my town of birth] with two sons by different dads and a series of dead-end relationships." **It is obvious that the suitability of men to be fathers to her children arose for her neither before nor after their births, because she deemed fathers inessential or even useless, as economically they obviously were, given her likely financial support from the state. That is why her choice in men "left a lot to be desired": nothing of long-term significance for her hung on it, or seemed to hang on it, so that the only criterion of choice was immediate attraction—commonly known as lust.**

This is the problem with feminism that I am always warning you all about. If women are taught that there are no *specific* behaviors that men are responsible for, (because that's sexist), then they will prefer men solely on surface criteria like appearance, feelings and peer-approval. They will not choose men who can actually do the jobs that men do: protect, provide, lead on moral and spiritual issues.

Alcohol

Drinking too much contributed to her poor choices with men:

> We arrive now at her choice of Jenkin as consort. As it happened, Nash had met him at a party some years previously, just following his release from prison after serving four and a half years "for stomping on a guy's head and giving him brain damage," as her best friend put it—adding that "he's a bloody psycho." And Nash's first experience of him was not altogether favorable: after they spent hours talking about music and "our mutual love of rapper 2pac," he tried to force himself sexually upon her. It was not love at first sight, therefore: it was love at second sight.
>
> That second sight came when "I'd had a few glasses of wine" at a restaurant and a "few shots of tequila" at a nightclub, where she ran into him again, so that she "could barely hear in my head those words of warning [about Jenkin by her best

> friend years earlier] for all the alcohol I had knocked back."
>
> […]When he asked for her telephone number, "I didn't hesitate for a second. **I felt I could trust him.**"

She felt (feelings) that she could trust him. But there was no evidence that he could be a good father and husband.

Lust

So, why did she feel she could trust him?

> **What was so attractive about Jenkin? It was his size and muscles. He was six feet, four inches tall, and "his chest was so big his T-shirt clung to him like cellophane, highlighting his pectoral muscles. His blue jeans molded to his thighs, showing off his pert bum." Nash's subsequent rationalizations for staying with him were but a smokescreen for the rawness of her desire.**

> […]But Jenkin struck Nash as a "great big teddy bear" with "puppy-dog eyes." On waking up after her first night of sex with him, however, she noticed the tattoos on his chest and arms: "Down his right arm was an image of a hooded executioner raising his sword like he was about to slaughter someone. . . . On his left chest was a tattoo of a tiger ripping someone's head off. Down his left arm was OUTLAW in big bold black letters." Still, though she knew he had served a long prison sentence for seriously injuring someone, she "chuckled at the thought that Shane fancied himself as a bit of an outlaw." His night of love with her resulted in him failing to get up in the morning, whereupon he lost his job as a painter and decorator, and he never found, or sought, another.

No woman who believed in traditional gender roles could ever think that this man would make a good husband. He is unemployed, unchaste, a convicted violent criminal, a drunkard and a brute.

Violence

The article then talks for a while about the drinking, partying and domestic violence between Nash and Jenkin. He accuses her of cheating, spits in her face repeatedly, throws a brick through her car window.

There were plenty of signs:

> **Jenkin exhibits almost every conceivable warning sign of vicious future violence. He takes anabolic steroids. He arrives one day with a crossbow—a formidable weapon—claiming that some Lithuanians with whom he has had a dispute want to kill him. He spends his days playing violent video games and his nights watching horror films of terrible sadism, including some that graphically depict people having their eyes gouged out with bare hands—scenes that obviously excite him and that he demands Nash watch with him. Nash learns that Jenkin had stabbed**

> **his own dog to death—a Rottweiler, needless to say—when he grew tired of it.**

Jenkin actually attacked her before the eyes were gouged out. And she lied in court saying he was innocent and that she fallen down the stairs. And she took him back after he was acquitted of the first attack. The second time he attacked, it cost her her eyes. And all was done in front of her children.

The article ends with this:

> In her book, Tina Nash describes how she tried bravely to get on with life after being blinded. After she finished the book, she found a new boyfriend. He has just been sent to prison for assaulting her.

Here's a news story about the new boyfriend.

The point of me posting this is as a warning to those who believe that there are no differences between men and women – no specific things that men are supposed to do for a woman that she should choose him for. A man has to be able to work in order to provide. He should be protective and gentle with women, children and animals. He should be loving and caring. He should know God and be prepared to defend God. He should have strong convictions about theology and the moral law.

A woman learns about the qualities of good men by reading stories about good men, e.g. – Austen, Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, etc., and also from watching her father be a protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader in the home. It is very important that her father perform the standard male roles for her mother in front of her. That's how daughters learn what it means to be a good man, and how men are supposed to love women well. It doesn't mean letting a woman be spoiled and selfish all the time. But she should always feel safe and loved, no matter what she does.

By the way, you can read Dalrymple's first book for free online. All the chapters are linked in this post.

A closer look at the beliefs and habits of Major Richard Winters

June 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

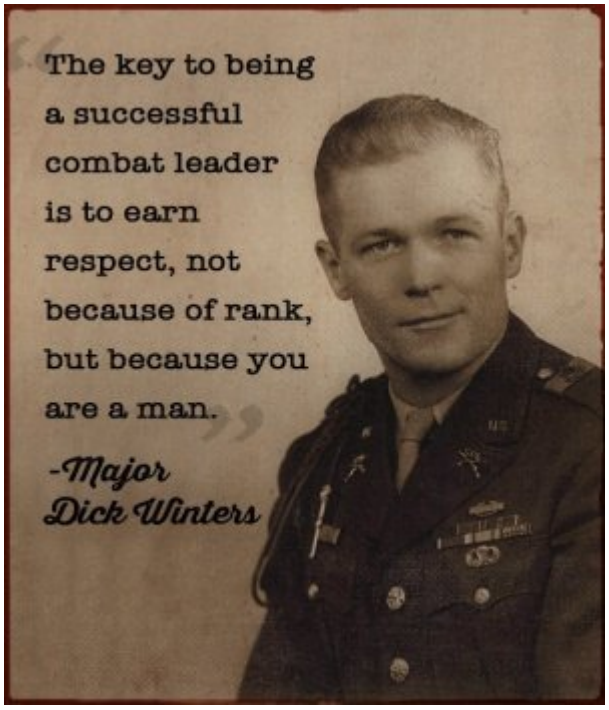

Major Richard Winters, U.S. Army Airborne

This post came to me from Brian, and it's from the Art of Manliness blog. I blogged about Winters on D-Day and here is that post.

Let's find out what made Dick Winters tick.

Excerpt:

> Growing up, Dick Winters was by temperament and intention a self-described loner. In high school and college, he was content to focus less on his social life and more on his personal development. Sports, work, and especially his studies took priority over "running around." Simplifying his life in this way allowed him "time to spend with my inner thoughts and ideas stimulated by reading."
>
> Winters took a similar approach to serving in the Army, eschewing social pursuits in favor of studying military manuals and critically thinking through life and leadership. While training stateside, he "preferred a quiet evening in the barracks to the nightlife" of cities close to camp, and he abstained from joining "in the parties and social gatherings in which most officers participated."
>
> After their paratrooper training was complete, Easy Company deployed to the quaint English village of Aldbourne for nine months of preparation preceding the invasion of Normandy. On his first Sunday there, Winters attended a church service and then visited a small adjoining cemetery, where he "sat on a bench and took time for personal reflection and simply to enjoy some solitude." It was there he met Mr. and Mrs. Barnes, who proved crucial in extending such

> opportunities for private contemplation.
>
> The Barneses, who had already lost a son in the war, took an immediate liking to Dick, and when the Army asked who among the natives of Aldbourne might be willing to billet pairs of its officers, they volunteered their home — as long as Winters was one of the two.

Winters preferred planning to passion and spontaneity, because he believed that preparing in advanced trained him to make better decisions on the fly:

> The Barneses adopted Dick as one of their own, and provided him with a quiet refuge in which to hone his martial monasticism. While other officers and troops hung out at the village pub, and enjoyed the social life in neighboring towns, Winters rarely left Aldbourne, choosing instead to pore over tactical manuals and plan for D-Day. In preparing to lead men in combat, he felt his time to be extremely precious and thus devoted as much of it as possible to becoming "totally proficient in tactics and technology" and developing his own "personal perspective on command."
>
> Major Winters ultimately found that his "intense study paid huge dividends in Normandy." Not only did he have ready solutions to the challenges he and his men faced in combat, but his hours of quiet reflection proved invaluable in another way.
>
> **As the famous saying goes, "No plan survives first contact with the enemy," and Major Winters encountered many scenarios to which there was no textbook answer as to how to proceed. In such situations he proved able to deftly improvise. The months of stillness to which Winters had exposed his mind left it keenly responsive to insights and intuitions — giving him what he termed a true "sixth sense" when it came to making decisions.**

Winters was careful to not let women interfere with his mission:

> Most monks take a lifetime vow of chastity; Dick Winters didn't extend it that far, but he did put the pursuit of women on hold for a season.
>
> To Winters, romantic relationships were another distracting entanglement that would prevent him from fully developing himself and following the way of the monastic warrior. As is true of many eminent men, in his youth he made going after girls a low priority, and went on "only a handful of dates."
>
> When Winters went off to war, he and a female acquaintance became pen pals. She developed romantic feelings for the strapping officer, but he steadfastly kept her at arm's length. In observing the men of Easy Company, he had found that those with romantic attachments were more susceptible to combat fatigue and shell shock.
>
> […]Bachelors have less to lose and are therefore able to more fearlessly throw

> themselves into the fight. Thus, desiring to detach himself from anything that would inhibit his focus on the task at hand, Winters was committed to remaining in full-on monk mode for the duration…

Winters writes:

> "under fire in combat, whether it's rifle fire or artillery, the men who seemed to have their eyes glazed over quickest and put their heads down and kept their heads down, were those who were married. Either they were married or in love or had a fiancée back home. They were the first to show fear. Those who hadn't fallen in love or who weren't engaged seemed to be able to hold on longer."
>
> […]"As a matter of fact, I wouldn't even kiss a girl's hand, for as a soldier, I don't want any more people than necessary to even know me. It's no good. If a soldier lives, O.K., get out of the army and forget it. If he doesn't, O.K., there are just that fewer people who feel the toll of the war."

Isn't it amazing that in today's society, it's just the opposite. The "best" men are the ones who are able to get the largest number of attractive women to have recreational sex with them before marriage. It didn't used to be that way.

The article talks about how Winters was very serious about physical fitness. He felt that his mental ability and his moral courage was based on being physically fit.

But I want to focus on his moral character:

> Winters believed that the cornerstone of character was honesty, and that from there you worked to develop a moral compass that was guided by the virtues of courage, fairness, consistency, selflessness, and respect for your fellow men. He felt that integrity was paramount as well, noting that "it is easier to do the right thing when everyone is looking," but "more difficult to do what you should do when you are alone."
>
> To these core values, Winters added his own ascetic precepts, choosing to abstain from canoodling with women, drinking alcohol (he was a lifelong teetotaler), and, as we shall see, swearing.

Winters says that the most important part of being a leader is sharing the burden of risk and danger with his men:

> "The intensity of a fire, or a heavy concentration, to be a leader, you have to be able to concentrate on that fire and move just as soon as it stops or the last round hits. Move. Get up. Start circulating among your men. Is everybody okay? Let's get up. Let's move. Keep your eye open for an attack. Get their attention. Move among your men as quickly as possible. And moving among them—the fact that they see you and they're talking to you—they know that you are there and you are talking to them, and it makes all the difference in the world to know that you are not in this thing by yourself. That's what officers must do—break the cycle of fear. If a soldier is concentrating on his own feelings and on his own fear,

> and he sees you moving around, he realizes that you're sharing the burden with him. That's why he can then move."

His morality was rationally grounded in a Christian worldview:

> For Major Winters, his spirit-maintaining ritual was church attendance. Very few soldiers attended religious services while overseas, even in the anxious days leading up to the invasion of Normandy. But for Winters, going to church "became the bedrock of [his] character" and he only missed 3 services in the 9 months he lived in Aldbourne. As he explained to his pen pal, "The way I feel about it, it is a very special privilege to be able to go at all and I don't want to miss a chance."

The article is definitely worth a read. We are surrounded by so many celebrities and athletes with low moral character that it is nice to go back in time and learn what Americans used to be like. You could do much worse than learning from Richard Winters.

Previously, I blogged about Winters' heroism at Brecourt Manor and Nijmegen, as well as another famous airborne officer, Ronald Speirs, at the Battle of Foy.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment

June 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Reformed Baptist theologian Wayne Grudem speaks on the Bible and capital punishment.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?
- what did God say to Noah about CP?

- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?
- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?
- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?
- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?
- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the “whole life ethic” and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

The Bible is awesome because it gives us knowledge about God’s character. How are we supposed to act in a way that is pleasing to God if we don’t know what he thinks of the issues of the day? We won’t know how we are supposed to act unless we know who God is first. And that’s why when we read the Bible we should be looking to find out the truth about who God is.

Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 interviewed by… the Wintery Knight!

June 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten interviewed by Wintery Knight
Click here for the interview on Apologetics 315. Yes, it's really me. That's what I sound like!

Summary:

Questions for WK:
• Why not use your real name?
• What's the focus on WinteryKnight.com?
• What's your goal in interviewing Brian?

Questions for Brian:
• How did you come to be in Northern Ireland?
• How did you get interested in apologetics?
• What would you do with unlimited funding to propagate apologetics resources?
• What arguments are the most persuasive for you?
• What arguments should we use with others?
• Do we need a million "one dollar" apologists, or one "million-dollar" apologist?
• How important do you think it is for apologists to focus on scientific evidences?
• How can the *lay person* get up to speed on these evidences?
• What's the best way to make the case for the resurrection[image]?
• Use a sledgehammer approach, or a velvet glove approach?
• What about psychological reasons for rejecting the arguments ?
• How does apologetics benefit Christians?
• What about dealing with fear when speaking with people?
• What are the unique resources on the blog?

The audio is 53 minutes long!

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools

June 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

This is a must-listen lecture from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Note: public schools = government-run schools.

Topics:

- Does God care whether we people marry and have children?
- Does God care whether Christian parents raise their children to know him?
- Should government promote bearing children?
- What are some effects of declining birth rates in other countries?
- What are the economic effects of declining birth rates?
- Who has the right to decide how children are trained: government or parents?
- What does the Bible say about parents having to raise children to know him?
- Does the government have the responsibility for training children?
- What do educational bureaucrats think of parents training children?
- What do school boards think of parents training children?
- Should school boards be elected by local, state or federal government?
- Should Christians be opposed to government-run education? (public schools)
- How should schools be viewed by parents? As a replacement or as a helper?
- How are schools viewed by those on the left and in communist countries?
- How can you measure how supporting a government is of parental rights?
- How is parental authority viewed in left-wing EU countries like Germany?
- How is parental authority respected in the United States?

- Should parents have a choice of where their children go to school?
- What is a voucher program? How is it related to parental autonomy?
- How does competition (school choice) in education serve parental needs?
- Why do public school teachers, unions and educrats oppose competitition?
- How well do public schools do in educating children to achieve?
- Does the government-run monopoly of public schools produce results?
- Does paying more and more money to public schools make them perform?
- How do teacher unions feel about having to compete in a voucher system?
- Does the public school monopoly penalize the poorest students?
- Does the public school monopoly penalize children of certain races?
- Does the public school monopoly cause racial prejudice?
- What else should parents demand on education policy?
- Is it good for parents when schools refuse to fire underperforming teachers?

This podcast is just amazing! This is what we need to be teaching in church. Church should be the place where you go to learn and reflect about how to tailor your life plan based on what the Bible says. And I think that this whole notion of free market – of choice and competition benefiting the consumer (parents) – applies to everything that government does, especially education and health care. The genius of America is that our Founding Fathers engineered a system that reflected all of this knowledge of economics, which then made it much easier for individuals and families to enjoy liberty and a higher quality of life. If we want to keep the benefits, we have to remember why these decisions were made at the founding of our nation.

Was Stalin an atheist? Is atheism or communism responsible for mass murders?

June 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Disclaimer: small-government libertarian atheists, you are exempt from this post's criticism.

Let's take a look at what Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

Let's see more from a peer-reviewed journal article authored by Crispin Paine of the University College, London:

> Atheist propaganda and the struggle against religion began immediately after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917. While social change would, under Marxist theory, bring religion to disappear, Leninists argued that the Party should actively help to eradicate religion as a vital step in creating 'New Soviet Man'. The energy with which the Party struggled against religion, though, varied considerably from time to time and from place to place, as did its hostility to particular faith groups. The 1920s saw the closure of innumerable churches and synagogues (and to a lesser extent mosques) and the active persecution of clergy and harassment of believers. From 1930, though, Stalin introduced a less aggressive approach, and wartime support for the government earned for the Russian Orthodox Church, at least, a level of toleration which lasted until Stalin's death. Under Khrushchev antireligious efforts resumed, if spasmodically, and they lasted until the end of the Soviet Union.

An article from the pro-communism Marxist.com web site says this about Stalin:

> During the ultra-left period of forcible collectivisation and the Five Year Plan in Four an attempt was made to liquidate the Church and its influence by government decree. Starting in 1929 churches were forcibly closed and priests arrested and exiled all over the Soviet Union. The celebrated Shrine of the Iberian

> Virgin in Moscow – esteemed by believers to be the "holiest" in all Russia was demolished – Stalin and his Government were not afraid of strengthening religious fanaticism by wounding the feelings of believers as Lenin and Trotsky had been! Religion, they believed, could be liquidated, like the kulak, by a stroke of the pen. The Society of Militant Atheists, under Stalin's orders, issued on May 15th 1932, the "Five Year Plan of Atheism" – by May 1st 1937, such as the "Plan", "not a single house of prayer shall remain in the territory of the USSR, and the very concept of God must be banished from the Soviet Union as a survival of the Middle Ages and an instrument for the oppression of the working masses."!

Now, if all you read were atheist web sites, you'd think that Stalin loved religion and wasn't opposed to Christianity at all. An atheist I know told me that Stalin was a Christian because that's what he was as a child at one point. Funny sort of way to carry out your Christian faith, isn't it? If you read atheist web sites, you'd expect Stalin to have had the career of a William Lane Craig or a J.P. Moreland. And yet in the fever swamp of atheist web sites, this is what they tell themselves. They believe it because they want to believe it. They have to believe it, in order to keep God at bay.

Now, if you were going to pick a hero of the Christian faith, you'd probably pick a real fundamentalist like William Wilberforce, who freed the slaves – because of his evangelical Christian convictions. Wilberforce took Christianity seriously – he believed every verse of the Bible, he tried to convert people to his faith, and he pushed his faith on others by passing laws. He was the worst nightmare of atheism – a politically active Evangelical Christian.

But who is a great atheist who was politically active? When I think of a great atheist, someone who really did the most to oppose the "lie" of God's existence, I think of Josef Stalin. So what kind of morality can we expect from someone who takes the message of Richard Dawkins and Dan Barker seriously and has the political power to really do something about it?

The Ukraine Famine

Take a look at this UK Daily Mail article about a great achievement of the atheist Josef Stalin, which occurred in 1932-1933.

Excerpt:

> Now, 75 years after one of the great forgotten crimes of modern times, Stalin's man-made famine of 1932/3, the former Soviet republic of Ukraine is asking the world to classify it as a genocide.
>
> The Ukrainians call it the Holodomor – the Hunger.
>
> Millions starved as Soviet troops and secret policemen raided their villages, stole the harvest and all the food in villagers' homes.
>
> They dropped dead in the streets, lay dying and rotting in their houses, and some women became so desperate for food that they ate their own children.

> If they managed to fend off starvation, they were deported and shot in their hundreds of thousands.
>
> So terrible was the famine that Igor Yukhnovsky, director of the Institute of National Memory, the Ukrainian institution researching the Holodomor, believes **as many as nine million may have died.**
>
> […]Between four and five million died in Ukraine, a million died in Kazakhstan and another million in the north Caucasus and the Volga.
>
> By 1933, 5.7 million households – somewhere between ten million and 15 million people – had vanished. They had been deported, shot or died of starvation.

This is what follows when you believe that the universe is an accident, that there is no objective good and evil, that human beings are just animals, that no God will hold us accountable, and that human beings are not made in the image of God for the purpose of freely choosing to come into a relationship with him. The Ukrainian famine is an action that came from a man whose worldview was *passionate atheism.*

Atheism today

You might think that today's atheists are much different than Josef Stalin, but understand that according to a recent survey of atheists conducted by atheists, 97% of atheists are pro-abortion. How many people have been killed by abortion? 56 million in the United States alone. Atheists in a society like ours, founded on Judeo-Christian values, are obviously going to live a lot better than Stalin. For one thing, they don't have the power that Stalin had to eradicate theism, although you can see Stalinism in the anti-Christian activities of groups like the Freedom From Religion Foundation. But take away the Judeo-Christian foundations of this society, and what would you see atheists doing?

Remember the words of Richard Dawkins:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

Now, having said that, I readily admit that many atheists adopt Judeo-Christian values if

their society is saturated with them, but they are acting better than their worldview requires. They are acting *inconsistently* with what atheism really teaches. It’s good for us that they do, but for how long?

Domestic violence rates are higher for homosexual couples than for heterosexual couples

June 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family
From the left-leaning Atlantic Monthly.

Excerpt:

> Data on the rates of same-sex partner abuse have only become available in recent years. Even today, many of the statistics and materials on domestic violence put out by organizations like the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Justice still focus exclusively on heterosexual relationships, and specifically heterosexual women. While the CDC does provide some resources on its website for the LGBT population, the vast majority of the information is targeted at women. Materials provided by the CDC for violence prevention and survivor empowerment prominently feature women in their statistics and photographs.
>
> In 2013, the CDC released the results of a 2010 study on victimization by sexual orientation, and admitted that "little is known about the national prevalence of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking among lesbian, gay, and bisexual women and men in the United States." The report found that bisexual women had an overwhelming prevalence of violent partners in their lives: 75 percent had been with a violent partner, as opposed to 46 percent of lesbian women and 43 percent of straight women. For bisexual men, that number was 47 percent. For gay men, it was 40 percent, and 21 percent for straight men.
>
> The most recent statistics available on same-sex intimate partner violence from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, which focuses on LGBT relationships, reported 21 incidents of intimate partner homicides in the LGBT community, the highest ever. Nearly half of them were gay men and, for the second year in a row, the majority of survivors were people of color—62 percent.

> In 2012, NCAVP programs around the country received 2,679 reports of intimate partner violence, a decrease of around 32 percent from 2011. However the report noted that many of the NCAVP's member organizations were operating at decreased capacity due to limiting the number of cases they were able to take. The report said that excluding data from organizations, there was actually a 29 percent increase in reports of violence from 2011 to 2012.

That article comes from a source with a very clear pro-gay-agenda bias, so let's take a look at an article from the Family Research Council to balance it out. They rely on mainstream data sources as well, like the CDC, the DOJ, the US Census, etc.

Excerpt:

> A study in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence examined conflict and violence in lesbian relationships. The researchers found that 90 percent of the lesbians surveyed had been recipients of one or more acts of verbal aggression from their intimate partners during the year prior to this study, with 31 percent reporting one or more incidents of physical abuse.[69]
>
> In a survey of 1,099 lesbians, the Journal of Social Service Research found that "slightly more than half of the [lesbians] reported that they had been abused by a female lover/partner. The most frequently indicated forms of abuse were verbal/emotional/psychological abuse and combined physical-psychological abuse."[70]
>
> In their book Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them: Battered Gay Men and Domestic Violence,D. Island and P. Letellier report that "the incidence of domestic violence among gay men is nearly double that in the heterosexual population."[71]
>
> […]Homosexual and lesbian relationships are far more violent than are traditional married households:
>
> The Bureau of Justice Statistics (U.S. Department of Justice) reports that married women in traditional families experience the lowest rate of violence compared with women in other types of relationships.[72]
>
> A report by the Medical Institute for Sexual Health concurred,
>
> It should be noted that most studies of family violence do not differentiate between married and unmarried partner status. Studies that do make these distinctions have found that marriage relationships tend to have the least intimate partner violence when compared to cohabiting or dating relationships.[73]

In lesbian relationships, the rate of domestic violence is extremely high, from 17% to 45%, depending on the study. I do think that men exert a calming influence on women's emotions, helping them to channel their feelings into words and reasoned arguments. That short-circuits the tendency toward violent outbursts. That's why I urge men, if they

must marry, to practice disagreeing and debating with women before the marriage is actualized. You need to find out what this other person does in a conflict situation before you commit to her for life.

Why does the Wintery Knight have to have an alias?

June 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

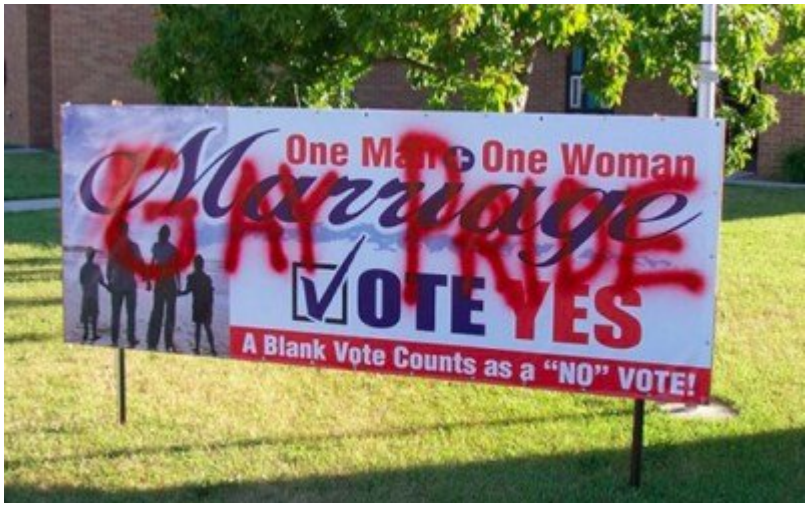

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

To answer that question, let's look at the latest from The Weekly Standard by Johnathan Last.

It says:

> You may recall Brendan Eich. The cofounder and CEO of Mozilla was dismissed from his company in 2014 when it was discovered that, six years earlier, he had donated $1,000 to California's Proposition 8 campaign. That ballot initiative, limiting marriage to one man and one woman, passed with a larger percentage of the vote in California than Barack Obama received nationally in 2012. No one who knew Eich accused him of treating his gay coworkers badly—by all accounts he was kind and generous to his colleagues. Nonetheless, having provided modest financial support to a lawful ballot initiative that passed with a majority vote was deemed horrible enough to deprive Eich of his livelihood. Which is one thing.
>
> What is quite another is the manner in which Eich has been treated since. A year after Eich's firing, for instance, Hampton Catlin, a Silicon Valley programmer who was one of the first to demand Eich's resignation, took to Twitter to bait Eich:
>
>> Hampton @hcatlin Apr 2
>>
>> It had been a couple weeks since I'd gotten some sort of @BrendanEich related hate mail. How things going over there on your side, Brendan?
>>
>> BrendanEich @BrendanEich
>>
>> @hcatlin You demanded I be "completely removed from any day to day activities at Mozilla" & got your wish. I'm still unemployed. How're you?
>>
>> Hampton @hcatlin Apr 2
>>
>> @BrendanEich married and able to live in the USA! . . . and working

> > together on open source stuff! In like, a loving, happy gay married way!

> It's a small thing, to be sure. But telling. Because it shows that the same-sex marriage movement is interested in a great deal more than just the freedom to form marital unions. It is also interested, quite keenly, in punishing dissenters. But the ambitions of the movement go further than that, even. It's about revisiting legal notions of freedom of speech and association, constitutional protections for religious freedom, and cultural norms concerning the family. And most Americans are only just realizing that these are the societal compacts that have been pried open for negotiation.

He co-founded the company, invented the most widely-used client-side programming language used on the Internet, and he had to step down for making a donation to the cause of male-female marriage. This guy is a hundred times the programmer that I will ever be. And yet he has not found a job since he was thrown out of the company that he co-founded and made successful.

That's why I have an alias. Because I want to be able express my convictions about issues ranging from abortion to marriage to intelligent design to climate change without losing my job. I need my job to be able to help other Christians, and to have any chance at all of getting married and having children.

The Weekly Standard article traces the progress of the gay agenda, quoting from gay activists in Slate, The Daily Beast, The Atlantic, The Economist, The New Republic, etc.

Let's look at one of them: Jonathan Rauch writing in The Daily Beast:

> Then Rauch turned to the question of whether or not the creation of same-sex marriage was an obvious extension of liberty—as gay rights advocates have always insisted—or something much bigger:
>
> Virtually all human societies, including our own until practically the day before yesterday, took as a given that combining the two sexes was part of the essence of marriage. Indeed, the very idea of a same-sex marriage seemed to most people a contradiction in terms. . . .
>
> By contrast, marriage has not always been racist. Quite the contrary. People have married across racial (and ethnic, tribal, and religious) lines for eons, often quite deliberately to cement familial or political alliances. Assuredly, racist norms have been imposed upon marriage in many times and places, but as an extraneous limitation. Everyone understood that people of different races *could* intermarry, in principle. Indeed, that was exactly why racists wanted to stop it, much as they wanted to stop the mixing of races in schools. In both intent and application, the anti-miscegenation laws were about race, not marriage.
>
> Why should this distinction matter today, if both kinds of discrimination are wrong? Because asking people to give up history's traditional understanding of marriage is a big ask. **You don't expect thousands of years of**

> **unquestioned moral and social tradition to be relinquished overnight.**
>
> […]The First Amendment carves out special protections for religious belief and expression. That does not mean, of course, that Christian homophobes can discriminate as much as they want provided they quote the Bible. It does mean, ***at least for a while***, courts and legislatures will strike compromises balancing gay rights and religious liberty, something they did not have to do with black civil rights. This makes gay marriage more complicated—legally, socially, and even ethically—than interracial marriage. And it means gay-marriage supporters will hit a constitutional brick wall if we try to condemn our opponents to ***immediate*** and total perdition.

Got that? Gay activists do "expect thousands of years of unquestioned moral and social tradition to be relinquished" – *just not overnight*. Courts and legislatures can compromise on annihilating freedom of speech and religious liberty – *at least for a while.* The generous gay rights activists won't condemn those of us who think that children need a mother and a father to *immediate* punishment of the sort that Brendan Eich got. Or the punishment that the Oregon bakery got. Or the punishment that the Washington florist got. Or the punishment that the New Mexico photographer got. Only some people will need to be punished – as an example to the others to fall in line.

Are you getting this? *This is fascism*.

There are three things to do to make it safe for people who believe in natural marriage to speak out without fear. First, never vote for any Democrats ever again, and make sure that the Republicans you vote for are supportive of religious liberty and free speech. Second, we need to get informed in order to be persuasive on the marriage issue. Read a book on pro-marriage apologetics. Read another book on the sociological evidence that shows the importance of mothers and fathers to children. And then read another book on the sociological evidence for the harm caused to children raised by same-sex parents. Then you will know what you have to know to be a change agent for marriage where you are. Finally, it's never a bad idea to donate to the Alliance Defending Freedom, the team of lawyers who defend Christians in court.

Are Christians responsible for making plans and making good decisions?

June 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful post on decision making and the will of God posted on Neil's blog. Neil links to another post where someone is trying to figure out what God wants him to do.

Excerpt:

> **Really short version:** Aside from direct and clear personal revelation from God, you don't have access to his sovereign will when making decisions. Therefore you must look at other factors. **If it isn't moral, don't do it. If it is moral but not wise, don't do it. If it is moral and wise, then use your personal preferences.**
>
> Using this model you can end up with a wise and biblical decision, but you have avoided the traps of the "God told me to ____" routine. People who run around saying that God told them this and that convey a super-spirituality that can leave less mature believers wondering if they really have a relationship with God (i.e., "God doesn't tell me every little thing to do, so maybe I don't really know him.").

He has a helpful picture posted as well:

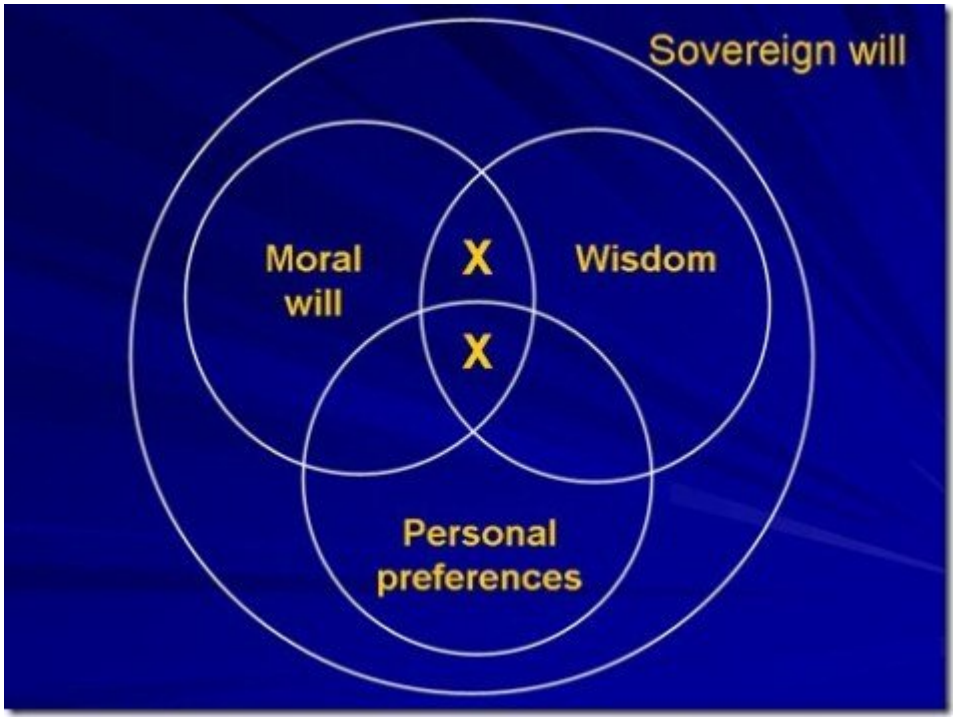

This is actually a very important topic for me, because I like making plans and making good decisions. I like being the quarterback or squad leader of my own life. I like to pick objectives and then make plans to achieve them. (Nothing too exotic, just simple stuff like saving money or reading more books)

Actually, I really oppose the idea that God has a magical fairy tale will for each person that will make them happy and fulfilled. For me, life isn't like that. I don't expect God to

lead me along like a child at a scavenger hunt. I expect to survey the battlefield where I am and then *do something* to make a difference. There are lots of things you can do that will please God. Should you focus on your career and sponsor apologetics conferences? Or should you use your spare time preparing Sunday school lessons? *There are lots of good things you could do to please God*. Your job is to pick the one that will be the most effective. It doesn't matter if it makes you happy, it only matters if it's effective and if you are good at it.

Who is Rifleman Dodd?

A while back, I was busily working my way through the U.S. Marine Corps Official Reading List, and I came across a book by C.S. Forester called *Rifleman Dodd*, or alternatively titled *Death to the French*. It's a work of historical fiction that takes place during the Napoleonic wars. The story is about a British marksman named Dodd, who is cut off from his own lines during a withdrawal maneuver. He is subsequently left to fend for himself behind enemy lines. An ordinary man might be full of despair and forget about his mission entirely. But Dodd is no ordinary man. Not only does he find a way to survive by finding food to eat, water to drink and places to sleep, but he also tries to remember his orders and to think about what he can do to advance the cause of his General, the Duke of Wellington.

Here's an excerpt from a gritty book review:

> It's about a green-coated British infantry rifleman in the Napoleonic Wars, an age when rifles were a novelty and most of the army was red-coated and carried muskets. Private Matthew Dodd gets separated from his regiment during a retreat and finds himself stranded behind enemy (French) lines in Portugal. With the occasional aid of some natives, but mostly on his own, he harasses the French with his rifle and tries to prevent them from building a bridge across the Tagus River. It's a remarkable tale of survival and solitary achievement, of a rank-and-file soldier who lives by his wits and slowly learns to make plans without orders, and shows leadership qualities and a knowledge of warfare.

I think we're in the same situation as Dodd.

There is no point in us looking for breadcrumb trails to happiness at this point. That's not the point of Christianity. The point of Christianity is friendship with God, imitation of Christ, honoring moral obligations, self-sacrificial love for your neighbor (and even your enemies!), and dedication to the truth – whether anyone else likes you or not. It's not supposed to make you happy, and it's not necessarily going to be a normal life like everyone else has. Things may not work out the way you'd like them to.

We seem to be making such a big deal about compassion and forgiveness in the Christian life these days – such a big emphasis on our feelings. Almost like we have forgotten that we have obligations to our friend – and his objectives. A relationship doesn't mean that one person completely disregards the character and goals of the other person and then is automatically granted forgiveness whenever they want it. That's not a friendship – that's

using someone else for your own ends. Maybe it’s time to remember what this is all about.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about war

June 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot
A two-part sermon from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

The part 1 MP3 file is here.

The part 2 MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Part 1 topics: (just war and conduct of war)

- the commandment to not kill does not apply to killing enemy soldiers in war
- government is authorized to prevent foreign countries from harming citizens the same way it prevents criminals from harming citizens
- there are examples in the Bible of using military force to stop an aggressive nation, e.g. – David vs Goliath
- principles of a just war, and relevant Bible passages, e.g. – just cause, only as a last resort
- Moral principles for the conduct of a just war, e.g. – proportionality, combatants vs non-combatants
- Can a Christian serve in a just war in good conscience?
- What should a Christian do if called upon to fight in an unjust war?

Part 2 topics: (responses to pacificism)

- what are the arguments in favor of pacifism?
- government can do some things that individuals cannot do, e.g. – taxing vs stealing, punishing criminals vs revenge
- it's wrong for individuals to use force to advance the gospel, but not wrong for

government to use force to restrain evil
- Jesus loves everyone, but even he will come in judgment one day and use force to punish evil
- what about nuclear weapons, nuclear arsenals for deterrence, and defenses to long-range nuclear missiles?
- missile defense systems work, e.g – Iron Dome in Israel stopped about 85% of incoming missiles
- building defenses does not embolden the enemy to attack us, it deters the enemy from attacking us
- “turn the other cheek” means don’t return an insult, but you can defend yourself from physical threats

My favorite part of this two-part series was the midpoint of part 2, when a lady asked him a question about what is behind pacificism. Dr. Grudem runs through all the places in society where the secular left is opposed to authorities judging and punishing bad behavior with force. There are so many examples of this: parents disciplining rebellious children, teachers disciplining misbehaving kids, police catching criminals (lots of that lately!), courts putting criminals in jail for long periods of time, giving murderers the death penalty, using waterboarding on terrorists, and of course pacifism in the face of aggression, e.g. – Iran vs Israel, Russia vs Ukraine. Then another lady asked him why the same people who are so concerned about going easy on violent criminals and aggressive nations are so intent on being able to kill defenseless innocent children in the womb. Good question.

Why is it so hard to get married these days?

June 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

A long, long time ago when I was in my "read one or two books about everything important" phase, I remember coming to marriage and picking out two books to read on that. The first was the Judith Wallerstein study on "The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce", which talked about children's experience of divorce over the 25-year period following their parent's decision to divorce. The second was F. Carolyn Graglia's book "Domestic Tranquility".

I found an essay about the latter book that seems to be either the introduction or chapter one. I just thought I would share it here to clear up why people are not getting married as much as they used to.

Let's see how it happened:

> Since the late 1960s, feminists have very successfully waged war against the traditional family, in which husbands are the principal breadwinners and wives are primarily homemakers. This war's immediate purpose has been to undermine the homemaker's position within both her family and society in order to drive her into the work force. Its long-term goal is to create a society in which women behave as much like men as possible, devoting as much time and energy to the pursuit of a career as men do, so that women will eventually hold equal political and economic power with men. This book examines feminism's successful onslaught against the traditional family, considers the possible ramifications of that success, and defends a woman's choice to be a homemaker. Feminists have used a variety of methods to achieve their goal. **They have promoted a sexual revolution that encouraged women to mimic male sexual promiscuity. They have supported the enactment of no-fault divorce laws that have undermined housewives' social and economic security. And they obtained the application of affirmative action requirements to women as a class, gaining educational and job preferences for women and**

> **undermining the ability of men who are victimized by this discrimination to function as family breadwinners.**

Sexual promiscuity, no-fault divorce laws and affirmative action laws that discriminate against male providers, were the goals of *radical feminists*. There may have been some men who went along with these things, but the main force behind it was radical feminism.

We continue:

> Certainly, feminism is not alone responsible for our families' sufferings. As Charles Murray details in *Losing Ground*,[1] **President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs, for example, have often hurt families, particularly black families**, and these programs were supported by a large constituency beyond the women's movement. What distinguishes the women's movement, however, is the fact that, despite the pro-family motives it sometimes ascribes to itself, it has actively sought the traditional family's destruction. **In its avowed aims and the programs it promotes, the movement has adopted Kate Millett's goal, set forth in her Sexual Politics, in which she endorses Friedrich Engels's conclusion that "the family, as that term is presently understood, must go"; "a kind fate," she remarks, in "view of the institution's history.[2] This goal has never changed: feminists view traditional nuclear families as inconsistent with feminism's commitment to women's independence and sexual freedom.[3]**

To counter radical feminism, women should be reading books that offer a serious, scholarly defense to feminism (e.g. – Christina Hoff Sommers, Carrie Lukas, F. Carolyn Graglia, etc.). You can tell whether a woman is a feminist based on how brittle she is with the idea that women have certain roles like wife and mother. Another good indicator is whether she is comfortable with the idea that relationships require each person to have certain responsibilities and obligations to the other that *override* their desire for happiness. Everyone in a relationship has responsibilities and obligations to the other person. For example, with few exceptions, a man ought to get up and go to work to support his family, just as the woman, with few exceptions, should try to keep fit and be available for her husband sexually. Feelings and desires should not override responsibilities and obligations in a relationship.

More:

> Emerging as a revitalized movement in the 1960s, feminism reflected women's social discontent, which had arisen in response to the decline of the male breadwinner ethic and to the perception — heralded in Philip Wylie's 1940s castigation of the evil "mom"[4] — that Western society does not value highly the roles of wife and mother. Women's dissatisfactions, nevertheless, have often been aggravated rather than alleviated by the feminist reaction. **To mitigate their discontent, feminists argued, women should pattern their lives after men's, engaging in casual sexual intercourse on the same terms**

> **as sexually predatory males and making the same career commitments as men. In pursuit of these objectives, feminists have fought unceasingly for the ready availability of legal abortion and consistently derogated both motherhood and the worth of fulltime homemakers.**
>
> […]Contemporary feminism has been remarkably successful in bringing about the institutionalization in our society of the two beliefs underlying its offensive: denial of the social worth of traditional homemakers and rejection of traditional sexual morality. The consequences have been pernicious and enduring. General societal assent to these beliefs has profoundly distorted men's perceptions of their relationships with and obligations to women, women's perceptions of their own needs, and the way in which women make decisions about their lives.

Read the rest, it's a good introduction to the book.

So how have men responded to the sexual revolution and no-fault divorce? Well, most non-Christian men are going to take the free sex that's being offered to them, and back away from a life-long commitment to protect and provide. Even a number of "Christian" men are now finding it easy to work premarital sex into their relationships, something that would have been unthinkable to Bible-believers of earlier generations. Also, a woman who has a lot of premarital sexual experience is a red flag to most men – they worry that she will not be able to be faithful to them since she is already accustomed to recreational sex rather than married sex within a covenant. Premarital sex generally makes women less trusting, less vulnerable and less capable at being feminine in order to love a man. Research shows that the more premarital sex partners a woman has, the more unstable her marriage becomes. This is also true for men, but the effect is slightly less for men. It's definitely something that has to be worked through, because it's a risk factor for relationship instability.

If you ask any man today about what is holding him up from getting married, the first thing he will tell you is no-fault divorce laws. Whereas women may shy away from marriage because they are worried about being unhappy or losing their freedom, men have a much, much more pressing danger in mind – the danger of having your entire life savings wiped out in an instant. And that's not to mention the prospect of only being able to see your kids for a few hours every month if you don't get joint custody – which is the vast majority of cases (about 90%).

Is the probability of getting a universe that supports complex life 100%?

June 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Let's have a quick review of the famous fine-tuning argument to start.

The argument from cosmic fine-tuning looks at various constants and quantities in our universe that are set at particular values and notes that if any of the values of these constants and quantities were to change, then complex embodied life of any kind could not exist. The argument is fully in line with the standard Big Bang cosmology, and is based on mainstream science.

There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) constants and 2) quantities. These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life. There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design. Law is rejected because the numerical values of constants and quantities are set at the beginning of the universe – when there was no matter, space or time. The values of the constants and quantities were not determined by anything causally prior to the moment the universe began to exist. Chance is not a good explanation, because the probabilities are far, far too small for us to reasonably believe them (e.g. – the chance is 1 in X, where X is much higher than the number of subatomic particles in the visible universe). Since the fine-tuning is not due to law or chance, it must be due to design.

Here's one example of something that is set correctly to allow complex, embodied life from The New Scientist:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe's birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If

> the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Changing the value at all means there would be no complex, embodied life of any kind anywhere in this universe.

Here's a quick video clip to explain what The New Scientist is saying:

Now, this is going to surprise you, but there are some non-theists who try to argue that the finely-tuned constants and quantities that were set up at the beginning of the universe – long before we ever existed – are actually explained by our existence *today.*

Atheist Jeffery Lowder summarizes a debate between William Lane Craig and Doug Jesseph, and Jesseph says something like this:

> Craig's argument is like asking the question, "What are your chances of landing in a universe hospitable to life, assuming you were tossed into any old universe whatever." That is precisely not the point. It's presupposed in the question that you're already in a universe which favors life. Confuses conditional probability with unconditional probability.

Unlike me, Lowder is never snarky in his summaries, so this is guaranteed to be accurate.

Here's what Dr. William Lane Craig says to that idea that our being here explains the fine-tuning:

> Now some people have tried to avoid this conclusion by saying that we really shouldn't be surprised at the enormous improbability of the fine-tuning of the universe because, after all, if the universe were not fine-tuned then we wouldn't be here to be surprised about it. Given that we are here we should expect the universe to be fine-tuned. But I think the fallacy of this reasoning can be made clear simply by a parallel illustration. Imagine that you were traveling abroad in a third world country and you were arrested on trumped up drug charges, and you were dragged in front of a firing squad of 100 trained marksmen, all with rifles aimed at your heart to be executed. And you hear the command given – "Ready, aim, fire!" And you hear the deafening roar of the guns. And then you observe that you are still alive, that all of the 100 marksmen missed! Now, what would you conclude? Well, I guess I really shouldn't be surprised that they all missed; after all, if they hadn't all missed I wouldn't be here to be surprised about it. Given that I am here, I should expect them all to miss. Of course not. You would

> immediately suspect that they all missed on purpose. That the whole thing was a set up engineered by some person for some reason. And in exactly the same way, given the incomprehensible improbability of the fine-tuning of the initial conditions for intelligent life, it is rational to believe that this is not the result of chance but of design.

Does it make sense? It's true that any arrangement of bullet holes in a condemned spy is as unlikely as any other, but the vast majority of possible arrangements of 100 bullet holes result in you being dead. Being marksmen, the shooters definitely know how to hit a target at close range. It doesn't matter if some hit your head and some hit your heart and some hit your throat – the most common consequence of a hundred bullets fired by expert marksmen at you is "dead you" – regardless of the specific arrangement of bullet holes. If you find yourself not dead, that requires an explanation. The explanation is design.

Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on the corelation between habitability and discoverability

June 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are 5 video clips that make up the full lecture, which took place in 2007 at the University of California, Davis.

The playlist for all 5 clips is here.

About the speaker

> Guillermo Gonzalez is an Associate Professor of Physics at Grove City College. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington and has received fellowships, grants and awards from such institutions as NASA, the University of Washington, the Templeton Foundation, Sigma Xi (scientific research society) and the National Science Foundation.

Click here to learn more about the speaker.

The lecture

Here's part 1 of 5:

And the rest are here:

- Part 2 of 5
- Part 3 of 5
- Part 4 of 5
- Part 5 of 5

Topics:

- What is the Copernican Principle?
- Is the Earth's suitability for hosting life rare in the universe?
- Does the Earth have to be the center of the universe to be special?
- How similar to the Earth does a planet have to be to support life?
- What is the definition of life?
- What are the three minimal requirements for life of any kind?
- Requirement 1: A molecule that can store information (carbon)
- Requirement 2: A medium in which chemicals can interact (liquid water)
- Requirement 3: A diverse set of chemical elements
- What is the best environment for life to exist?
- Our place in the solar system: the circumstellar habitable zone
- Our place in the galaxy: the galactic habitable zones
- Our time in the universe's history: the cosmic habitable age

- Other habitability requirements (e.g. – metal-rich star, massive moon, etc.)
- The orchestration needed to create a habitable planet
- How different factors depend on one another through time
- How tweaking one factor can adversely affect other factors
- How many possible places are there in the universe where life could emerge?
- Given these probabilistic resources, should we expect that there is life elsewhere?
- How to calculate probabilities using the "Product Rule"
- Can we infer that there is a Designer just because life is rare? Or do we need more?

The corelation between habitability and measurability.

- Are the habitable places in the universe also the best places to do science?
- Do the factors that make Earth habitable also make it good for doing science?
- Some places and times in the history of the universe are more habitable than others
- Those exact places and times also allow us to make scientific discoveries
- Observing solar eclipses and structure of our star, the Sun
- Observing stars and galaxies
- Observing the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Observing the acceleration of the universe caused by dark matter and energy
- Observing the abundances of light elements like helium of hydrogen
- These observations support the big bang and fine-tuning arguments for God's existence
- It is exactly like placing observatories on the tops of mountains
- There are observers existing in the best places to observe things
- This is EXACTLY how the universe has been *designed for making scientific discoveries*

This argument from the "discoverability" of the universe has now been picked up by famous Christian philosopher Robin Collins, so we should expect to hear more about it in the future.

Move over housing bubble and student loan bubble: here's pension bubble!

June 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

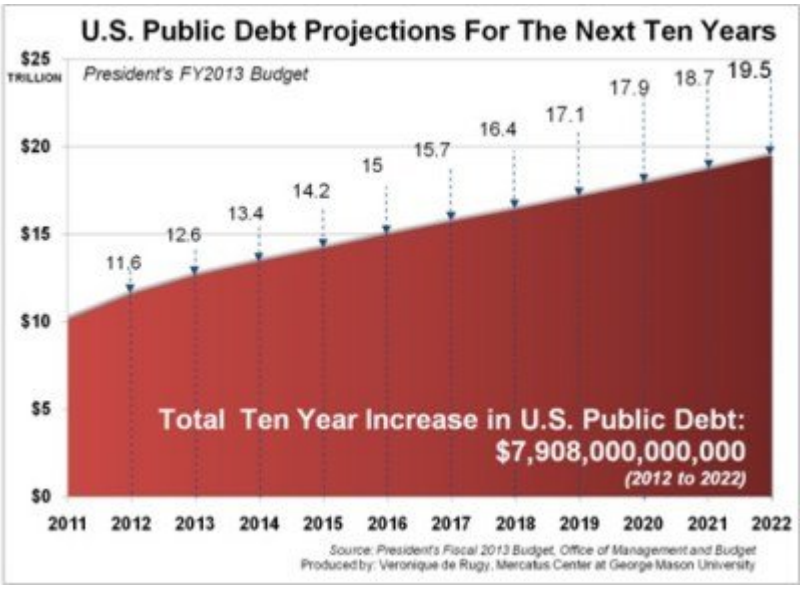

Obama 2013 Budget Debt Projection

Recently, I was talking to Dina about which state I would like to live in. I looked at a whole bunch of factors like tax rates, housing prices, religious liberty laws, voting patterns… but I also looked at state obligations to pay pensions.

Let's take a look at the story from the Washington Examiner to see why this is important.

It says:

> Years of gimmicks and politically motivated benefit increases for government workers have left America's states and municipalities with pension funds that are short at least $1.5 trillion — and possibly as much as $4 trillion if the investment returns of these funds don't live up to expectations in coming years.
>
> […]Since 2007, states and localities have been forced to increase annual contributions into pensions by $43 billion, or 65 percent, and in various places these rising payments are crowding out other government services or driving taxes higher or both. Retirement debt has even played a crucial role in high-profile government bankruptcies — including in Detroit; Stockton, California; and Central Falls, Rhode Island. Fixing the problem is proving expensive, and it won't happen quickly in places with the worst debt.
>
> […][O]fficials in Stockton spent years enhancing benefits to workers without understanding the debts they were accruing. The city agreed back in the 1990s, for instance, to pay not only its own share of contributions into the pension system, but those of staff, too. It also guaranteed healthcare for life for retirees.
>
> […]Facing $400 million in pension debt and $450 million in promises for future healthcare, the city declared bankruptcy in 2012. Employees lost some of their

> perks, like healthcare in retirement, but citizens suffered, too. Trying to save money, the city cut essential services, including the police department, and crime soared.
>
> […]Places that cannot reform pensions, or where legislators were slow to act, are inevitably seeing tax increases to finance these steep obligations. In Pennsylvania, 164 school districts applied in 2014 to increase property taxes above the state's 2.1 percent tax cap. Every one of them listed pension costs as a reason for the higher increases. In West Virginia, the state has given cities the right to impose their own sales tax to pay for increased pension costs.
>
> Several cities, including Charleston, have already gone ahead with the new tax. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel tried to impose a $250 million property tax increase last year to start wiping out pension debt in the Windy City, where pensions are only 35 percent funded. When the City Council balked, Chicago instead passed $62 million in other taxes, including a levy on cell phone use, as a stopgap measure. But the city faces a pension bill that is scheduled to rise by half a billion dollars annually in 2016.

I was able to find a helpful table that shows the solvency of all the public sector pension plans in each state. There are sensible states where I could live. It's also important to look at the trend to see what direction the state is moving in, and thankfully the table had that information.

Anyway, here is the point I want to make about this.

When I look at these numbers, *I feel sad*, because it means that I have to be careful about my spending, and not spend too much on things that are fun in the short-term. I also cannot stop working to take a year off to go backpacking in Europe, because that would wreck my resume, and lose me a whole bunch of earned income. Sometimes, reality causes us to feel bad like that, so we run away from it. We find people who will agree with our feelings, and we shut out people who see things clearly. But we as Christians should not make decisions based on intuitions and feelings. And it doesn't even work if you wrap up a bad decision in spiritual language, i.e. – "God told me…", either. As much as I might feel like spending my money on frivolous things, I know in my mind that I cannot do that. I don't *like* having constraints on my freedom, but to ignore data like this in my decision-making would not end well for me.

Sue Bohlin of Probe Ministries recently wrote a wonderful post about short-term pain versus long-term pleasure.

She writes:

> Decision-making often involves choosing between short-term pleasure or short-term pain. (Usually it's more like short-term inconvenience.)
>
> Short-term pleasure often leads to long-term pain, and short-term pain often leads to long-term pleasure. What doesn't work, and is a horribly unrealistic expectation for life, is short-term pleasure leading to long-term pleasure!

> (Wouldn't THAT be nice?!)
>
> Maturity and wisdom is displayed by the choices we make, especially when we exercise patience and self-control, not insisting on the instant-gratification jolt of "I want it NOW!!!" Many of our choices for pleasure in the right-now end up costing us down the road, causing pain later. You know, like that fourth brownie that tastes soooooo good in the moment, but then you can't zip up your jeans a few days later. Or indulging your child's demands and whims today because you want to be the "cool parent" and you want them to like you, but then you start to notice the ugliness of that child's sense of self-absorbed entitlement. Short-term pleasure, even when that pleasure is simply trying to avoid pain, results in long-term unpleasant consequences.
>
> But when we recognize the value of self-control and self-denial in the present, so that we can reap the harvest of pleasure in the future, that's wisdom. Mark Twain advised, "Do one thing every day you don't want to do." That's good advice, but of course God thought of that much earlier! Using self-control and self-denial is how we fulfill the biblical idea of not indulging the flesh (Galatians 5:16).
>
> […]Jesus said, "If anyone wants to become My follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23) Denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and following Jesus are all about short-term pain with major long-term pleasures!

Sue is wise. And her newest post is all about how to deal with feelings.

She says:

> What is the biblical perspective on how to handle overwhelming feelings?
>
> There are healthy and unhealthy ways to do that.
>
> The healthy way to deal with strong feelings starts with thinking wisely about feelings in general. Our pastor often says that feelings are real (we do feel them, often intensely), but they're not reliable (they make terrible indicators of what is true). So we should acknowledge them, but not be led by them.
>
> Especially powerful, overwhelming feelings.
>
> Allowing yourself to be controlled by your feelings is unwise and immature. The flip side of that is our example of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. No one ever experienced the strength of horrific feelings like He did, to the point of sweating blood. He allowed Himself to feel His feelings, but then He turned in trust to His Father, submitting to His will. He set the bar for how to handle overwhelming feelings: *feel the feelings, and trust the Lord*.
>
> Often, though, especially in the young, people deal with their strong feelings in unhealthy ways.

Feel the feelings, but don't let them into your decision-making.

Three serious breaches of national security under this Democrat administration

June 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does national security make?
The first one was Edward Snowden's leak of classified data.

This article from Reuters has an update on the damage that Snowden caused.

It says:

> Britain has pulled out agents from live operations in "hostile countries" after Russia and China cracked top-secret information contained in files leaked by former U.S. National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, the Sunday Times reported.
>
> Security service MI6, which operates overseas and is tasked with defending British interests, has removed agents from certain countries, the newspaper said, citing unnamed officials at the office of British Prime Minister David Cameron, the Home Office (interior ministry) and security services.
>
> Snowden downloaded more than 1.7 million secret files from security agencies in the United States and Britain in 2013, and leaked details about mass surveillance of phone and internet communications.
>
> […]British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said Snowden had done a huge amount of damage to the West's ability to protect its citizens.
>
> "As to the specific allegations this morning, we never comment on operational intelligence matters so I'm not going to talk about what we have or haven't done in order to mitigate the effect of the Snowden revelations, but nobody should be in any doubt that Edward Snowden has caused immense damage," he told Sky News.
>
> […]A Home Office source told the newspaper that Russian President Vladimir Putin did not grant Snowden asylum for nothing.
>
> "His documents were encrypted but they weren't completely secure and we have

> now seen our agents and assets being targeted," the source said.
>
> A British intelligence source said Snowden had done "incalculable damage".
>
> "In some cases the agencies have been forced to intervene and lift their agents from operations to stop them being identified and killed," the source was quoted as saying.

You'll recall that it was a British agent who stopped a recent attack by an Islamic terrorist. And now, British agents from MI6 are pulling out of their stations. There is a cost to focusing too much on global warming and free contraceptives, and not enough on national security and foreign policy.

Note that we haven't done anything to Snowden or Russia that might discourage others from doing similar things in the future, because I guess the Democrats think that would be too mean. I don't think it would be too mean.

Bradley Manning and WikiLeaks

Here's the second great intelligence failure, Private Bradley Manning.

> Bradley E. Manning, the soldier convicted of leaking a trove of classified documents, was sentenced to 35 years in prison Wednesday for the largest public breach of secret data in U.S. history, sparking a debate over the length of his prison term and whether he could ever win an early release.
>
> The judge, Col. Denise Lind, also demoted him from private first class to private and dishonorably discharged him from the Army at a brief court-martial hearing at Fort Meade, Md.
>
> […]Manning, 25, was convicted July 30 on 20 charges, including six under the Espionage Act, for downloading, copying and passing to WikiLeaks more than 700,000 raw U.S. military battlefield reports from Iraq and Afghanistan and State Department cables, all classified "Secret."
>
> […]His defense attorney, David Coombs, argued that the military was partly to blame because it should have pulled Manning's access to classified documents after a series of extreme emotional events the junior intelligence analyst experienced during his deployment in Iraq.
>
> Manning raged at superiors, emailed photos of himself dressed as a woman and punched a female soldier in the face.

Manning now wants to get a sex change and be referred to as Chelsea. What exactly was he doing with all of this classified information? Does the Obama administration not check people for these things, or did he get a free security pass because he was gay?

China hacking

Here's the third great intelligence failure, the recent China hacking of government employee data.

Here's Jonah Goldberg writing in The Stream.

Excerpt:

> [I]t was revealed last week that the Chinese stole millions of personnel files and mountains of background-check information from the U.S. government. I suppose I should say the Chinese “allegedly” stole the information, but many lawmakers, government officials, anonymous intelligence sources and industry experts are convinced that the Chinese did it. Besides, we normally use “allegedly” in such cases because we don’t want to prejudice a jury — and this case is never, ever going to court.
>
> The damage is hard to exaggerate. Former NSA counterintelligence officer John Schindler calls it a “disaster” in a column headlined “China’s hack just wrecked American espionage.” Joel Brenner, America’s top counterintelligence official from 2006 to 2009, says the stolen data amounts to the “crown jewels” of American intelligence. “This tells the Chinese the identities of almost everybody who has got a United States security clearance,” he told the Associated Press.
>
> Countless current and past federal employees are now extremely vulnerable to blackmail and even recruitment by Chinese intelligence operatives. Millions are open to identity theft (the files included all of their personal information, including Social Security numbers, and in many cases medical, family, romantic and substance-abuse histories). My wife, who previously worked for the Justice Department, may have lived a fine and upstanding life, but I don’t relish the fact that some chain-smoking Chinese bureaucrat is going over her personal information.
>
> Many are calling it a “cyber Pearl Harbor.”

I would not want to be a non-official cover agent working for the U.S. government right now.

Next time, let’s vote for the serious party.

Why doesn’t God make his existence more obvious to people?

June 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson about to do philosophy

Have you ever heard someone say that if God existed, he would give us more evidence? This is called the “hiddenness of God” argument. It’s also known as the argument from “rational non-belief”.

Basically the argument is something like this:

1. God is all powerful
2. God is all loving
3. God wants all people to know about him
4. Some people don’t know about him
5. Therefore, there is no God.

In this argument, the atheist is saying that he’s looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that’s logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden when our eternal destination depends on our knowledge of his existence.

What reason could God have for remaining hidden?

Dr. Michael Murray, a brilliant professor of philosophy at Franklin & Marshall College, has found a reason for God to remain hidden.

His paper on divine hiddenness is here:
“Coercion and the Hiddenness of God“, American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us.

Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him. God places a higher value on people having the free will to respond to him, and if he shows too much of himself he takes away their free choice to respond to him, because once he is too overt about his existence, people will just feel obligated to belief in him in order to avoid being punished.

But believing in God just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants for us. If it is too obvious to us that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and behave morally out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out of interest *in him*, just like we might try to get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God's veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don't seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to reach out to us and draw us to him. But I do think that we are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist's argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. In order to derive a contradiction, God MUST NOT have any possible reason to remain hidden. If he has a reason for remaining hidden that is consistent with his goodness, then the argument will not go through.

When Murray offers a possible reason for God to remain hidden in order to allow people to freely respond to him, then the argument is defeated. God wants people to respond to him freely so that there is a genuine love relationship – not coercion by overt threat of damnation. To rescue the argument, the atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free choice of his creatures to reject him.

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007). The book chapter from the Cambridge book is here. The book chapter from the Routledge book is here.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines

- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

House Republicans attempting to end some of the taxpayer-funding for Planned Parenthood

June 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I will vote Republican

Good news from Life News.

It says:

> Congressional Republicans are pushing a new budget that would help end some of the taxpayer funding the Planned Parenthood abortion business receives.
>
> […]Last week the House Appropriations Committee considered the Fiscal Year 2016 State, foreign operations, and related programs appropriations bill which contains several important pro-life policies. Among those policies is a provision that would end federal family planning programs. Although such programs are about contraception ad birth control, the taxpayer funding freed up money Planned Parenthood can use to promote and perform abortions.
>
> […]The battle over Planned Parenthood funding is an important one for the pro-life movement as a March 2015 report showed American taxpayers have been forced to send $1.5 billion in federal funds to the nation's biggest abortion business, Planned Parenthood.
>
> Two years ago, pro-life members of Congress sent a letter to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) requesting a comprehensive report on which abortion advocacy groups Americans were forced to fund with their tax dollars. In March, the government watchdog (GAO) released the requested report which details

> funding for six abortion advocacy groups over a three year period (2010-2012).
>
> The six organizations researched were Planned Parenthood, Population Council, International Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Guttmacher Institute, Advocates for Youth and Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States.
>
> **The report found the Planned Parenthood abortion corporation and its affiliates received $344.5 million in federal funds and another $1.2 billion in funding from Medicaid (which includes a combination of federal and state funds) for a total of $1.5 billion over three years from federal programs. The abortion fiant receives $1.2 billion from Medicaid, $201 million from the Title X family planning program $40.6 million from Title XX Social Services block grants and $25.9 million from the Title V Maternal and Child health Services block grant.**
>
> **On average, Planned Parenthood receives approximately $500 million a year in taxpayer funds. The report found that the six organizations spent $481 million in federal funding from Fiscal Years 2010 to 2012.**
>
> Congresswoman Diane Black, a Tennessee Republican, was dismayed by the numbers.
>
> **"This report confirms what we suspected all along: hard-earned taxpayer dollars continue to be used to promote abortions. The GAO study found that Planned Parenthood Federation of America alone – the nation's largest abortion provider – spent about $1.5 billion in combined federal and state funding during this reporting period. This is shameful and we have a responsibility to stop it," she said. "As a nurse for more than 40 years, I know that abortion is not health care. In light of this report, Congress should act swiftly by passing the Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act, which would help cut off federal funding of organizations like these that promote the destruction of unborn life."**

If you want some action on ending abortion, then your party is the Republican Party. Naturally, we need to keep a close eye on them to make sure that they are getting things done, but this and the ban on late-term abortions are good news for pro-lifers.

Related posts

- Republicans in Congress will investigate Planned Parenthood's organ harvesting
- ABC, CBS, CNN, and MSNBC all ignore Planned Parenthood organ harvesting story
- Governor Bobby Jindal announces investigation of Planned Parenthood
- What does Hillary Clinton think of Planned Parenthood selling unborn baby parts?
- House Republicans attempting to end some of the taxpayer-funding for Planned Parenthood
- With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013
- Planned Parenthood, an abortion business, is in California schools teaching sex

education
- Arizona Planned Parenthood clinic failed to report rapist
- Planned Parenthood must pay $1.4 million in Medicaid fraud settlement
- Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You
- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- 24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic

Was atheism or Christianity more responsible for the Scientific Revolution?

June 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

First, here's an article from the blog of the peer-reviewed journal Nature, probably the best peer-reviewed journal on science in the world.

The article is written by Dr. James Hannam. He has a PhD in the History and Philosophy of Science from the University of Cambridge and is the author of The Genesis of Science: How the Christian Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution (published in the UK as God's Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of Modern Science).

Excerpt:

> Few topics are as open to misunderstanding as the relationship between faith and reason. The ongoing clash of creationism with evolution obscures the fact that Christianity has actually had a far more positive role to play in the history of science than commonly believed. Indeed, many of the alleged examples of religion holding back scientific progress turn out to be bogus. For instance, the Church has never taught that the Earth is flat and, in the Middle Ages, no one thought so anyway. Popes haven't tried to ban zero, human dissection or lightening rods, let alone excommunicate Halley's Comet. No one, I am pleased to say, was ever burnt at the stake for scientific ideas. Yet, all these stories are still regularly trotted out as examples of clerical intransigence in the face of scientific progress.
>
> Admittedly, Galileo was put on trial for claiming it is a fact that the Earth goes around the sun, rather than just a hypothesis as the Catholic Church demanded. Still, historians have found that even his trial was as much a case of papal egotism as scientific conservatism. It hardly deserves to overshadow all the support that the Church has given to scientific investigation over the centuries.
>
> That support took several forms. One was simply financial. Until the French Revolution, the Catholic Church was the leading sponsor of scientific research. Starting in the Middle Ages, it paid for priests, monks and friars to study at the

> universities. The church even insisted that science and mathematics should be a compulsory part of the syllabus. And after some debate, it accepted that Greek and Arabic natural philosophy were essential tools for defending the faith. By the seventeenth century, the Jesuit order had become the leading scientific organisation in Europe, publishing thousands of papers and spreading new discoveries around the world. The cathedrals themselves were designed to double up as astronomical observatories to allow ever more accurate determination of the calendar. And of course, modern genetics was founded by a future abbot growing peas in the monastic garden.
>
> But religious support for science took deeper forms as well. It was only during the nineteenth century that science began to have any practical applications. Technology had ploughed its own furrow up until the 1830s when the German chemical industry started to employ their first PhDs. Before then, the only reason to study science was curiosity or religious piety. **Christians believed that God created the universe and ordained the laws of nature. To study the natural world was to admire the work of God. This could be a religious duty and inspire science when there were few other reasons to bother with it. It was faith that led Copernicus to reject the ugly Ptolemaic universe; that drove Johannes Kepler to discover the constitution of the solar system; and that convinced James Clerk Maxwell he could reduce electromagnetism to a set of equations so elegant they take the breathe away.**
>
> Given that the Church has not been an enemy to science, it is less surprising to find that the era which was most dominated by Christian faith, the Middle Ages, was a time of innovation and progress. Inventions like the mechanical clock, glasses, printing and accountancy all burst onto the scene in the late medieval period. In the field of physics, scholars have now found medieval theories about accelerated motion, the rotation of the earth and inertia embedded in the works of Copernicus and Galileo. Even the so-called “dark ages” from 500AD to 1000AD were actually a time of advance after the trough that followed the fall of Rome. Agricultural productivity soared with the use of heavy ploughs, horse collars, crop rotation and watermills, leading to a rapid increase in population.

I don’t know about you, but the first thing I do when I am trying to find a game to play is ask “is it well designed?” If it’s not well-designed, then I will not take the time to learn the rules and practice playing. That was the situation before science started. The non-scientists thought that the universe was chaotic, that there were no rules, and so there was no point in trying to learn the rules. It was the idea that the universe was made by an intelligent Creator and Designer that made the first scientists start to do science. If there are rules to the game, then it’s worth it to learn them. But that’s a belief that’s more at home in a theistic worldview, not in a pagan or atheistic one.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about spending, saving and charity

June 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

A practical lecture on money – spending, saving, charitable giving – from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

If you're like me and you struggle with Bible study and church sermons unless you get something practical out of it, then these Bible studies are for you. You'll like the way that Grudem navigates the Bible finding the passages that tell you who God is, so that you can make better decisions by analyzing alternatives and choosing the one that gives your Boss a maximum return on investment.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Spending:

- Christianity does not teach asceticism (= don't enjoy anything in this world), Paul condemns it in 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- When you buy nice things, even if it is a little more expensive, it's an opportunity to be thankful for nice things that God has provided
- Even being rich is OK, but don't let it make you haughty and arrogant, and don't set your hopes on your money (see 1 Tim 6:17)
- It is important for you to earn money, and you are supposed to use it to support yourself and be independent
- It is possible to overspend and live recklessly (Luke 15:13) and it's also possible to overspend and live too luxuriously
- *Increasing your income through career progression is wise*, because it allows you to give away more and save more

- God gives us freedom to decide how much we spend, how much we give away, and how much we save
- every choice a Christian makes with money will give him or her more or less reward in his or her afterlife
- Do not spend more than you have – you should make every effort to get out of debt as quickly as possible

Saving:

- Saving money is wise so you can help yourself and others, and have money in your old age when you will not be working
- If you do not save your own money, you end up being dependent on others (e.g. – family or taxpayers)
- Not saving money for the future is a way of "putting God to the test" (Matt 4:7)
- You are to "be dependent on no one", to the extent that you can (1 Thes 4:12)
- We don't know the future, that's why we should prepare for an emergency, and buy insurance to guard (James 4:13-17)
- It's right for us to learn how to save to be able to buy bigger assets, like a car or a college education
- Saving and investing in stocks and bonds lets people in business start and grow companies, creating jobs and new products
- *Don't over-save, trusting too much in money more than you trust in God* (Ps 62.10; Matt 6:19,24; Luke 12:15-21)

Giving:

- it is required for the people of God to give something out of what they earn, but no percentage is specified (Deut 26:12-13)
- you do not give money to become right with God, you can't earn your salvation
- *a Christian gives to show God that you trust him to take care of you, and to experience trusting him through your giving*
- the quality of your resurrection life with God is affected by giving you do for the Kingdom (Phil 4, Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:18-19)
- when you get involved in the lives of others and give to them, you have the joy of experiencing caring for others (Acts 20:35)
- it's possible to give too little, but it's also possible to give too much – be careful about pride creeping in as well

The first part of this lecture made me think of my treat for the week, which is to go to an Indian buffet on Wednesdays, if I can. It costs $10, which is more than my usual $3.50 for a frozen meal for lunch and another $3.50 for a frozen meal for dinner. Spending a little more on a yummy plate of my favorite food makes it easy for me to remember to say grace, which is what Grudem said about spending making you thankful.

My weekly treat causes me to be VERY thankful

I was so happy listening to this talk because he was condemning bad stewardship, which I see in a lot of young people these days. I was happy until he got to the part about trusting in your savings for your security, and then I thought – that's what I do wrong! I save a lot but it's not just for emergencies and to share with others, like he was saying – I want a sense of security. This was more of a temptation in my 20s than it is now in my 30s, though.

Ironically, I woke up Wednesday morning and was singing this song in the shower:

It's a song about being wanting to be righteous, and yet being unable to attain it on your own. I must think that being justified by faith in Jesus is more important than money, because I never wake up singing about the security I get from my savings. Still, I consider myself warned.

I can remember being in my first full-time job as a newly hired junior programmer when the 2001 recession struck. I would cry while signing checks to support William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith ministry, because I was so scared. I had no family or friends where I lived to help me if anything went wrong, and that's been the story of my working life. If anything goes wrong, there is no backup. But it's that experience of crying when I gave that allows me to say today "that's when I became the man I am, that's what a man does when he is a follower of Jesus". If you are not doing the actions of charity, then you will not having the experience of trusting God and letting him lead you. There is more to the Christian life than just saying the right things – you have to do the right things.

If you're scared about giving when you are young, then do what I did in my 20s: work 70-hour weeks, get promoted often, and save everything you earn. I volunteered every Saturday for 9 months in order to get my first white-collar part-time job when I was still in high-school. The faster you increase your savings, the easier it's going to be to take a *genuine interest* in caring for the people around you. Read Phil 1 (fellowship), Phil 2 (concern for others), and Phil 4 (charity). Turn off your emotions and desires, and put Philippians into practice. Note that your freedom to give is very much tied to the quality of your decisions of what to study, where to work, how much you spend on

entertainment, and so on. That’s why you need to turn off your feelings and desires and do what works, even it it’s not fun, and even if it involves responsibilities and obligations.

Supreme Court rules for free speech and against big government

June 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

"Freedom of Speech" by Norman Rockwell

This happy Friday story is from The Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> In a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court struck down a town's sign ordinance as an unconstitutional, content-based regulation of speech. This ruling for free speech means the government can't pick and choose what speech deserves more protection based on the content of the speech.
>
> Like most other towns in America, Gilbert, Ariz., regulates when, where and how signs may be displayed around town. Temporary non-commercial signs are classified by their content, and each category has its own set of regulations.
>
> Real estate signs, for example, may be up to 80 square feet, and political signs may be up to 32 square feet; political signs may be displayed for four and a half months before an election, including in the public right of way; and homeowners' association event signs may be displayed for 30 days.
>
> The Good News Community Church, which holds services at different facilities such as local schools because it doesn't have a permanent church, uses signs to invite people to services. Because the signs include directional information (i.e., an arrow pointing to the location of the service), they may not be bigger than 6 square feet and can go up only 12 hours before their Sunday services start,

> meaning the signs are posted late on Saturday night when they are hard to see in the dark.
>
> The church challenged the town's sign code in 2007 as an impermissible content-based restriction on speech in violation of the First Amendment. The district court in Arizona upheld the sign code, and the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals agreed, finding that there was no evidence that the town adopted its sign code for a discriminatory purpose.
>
> Today, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Good News Community Church, concluding that these sign restrictions are content-based regulation because they define the categories of temporary, political and ideological signs on the basis of their messages and subject each category to different restrictions. As Justice Clarence Thomas points out,
>
> If a sign informs its reader of the time and place a book club will discuss John Locke's 'Two Treatises of Government,' that sign will be treated differently from a sign expressing the view that one should vote for one of Locke's followers in an upcoming election, and both signs will be treated differently from a sign expressing an ideological view rooted in Locke's theory of government.
>
> The court found that these restrictions are subject to, and do not survive, strict scrutiny because the town did not demonstrate that the differentiation furthers a compelling governmental interest and is narrowly drawn. Assuming the town has a compelling interest in preserving its aesthetic appeal and traffic safety, the code's distinctions are highly underinclusive.
>
> Thus, the town cannot claim that placing strict limits on temporary directional signs is necessary to beautify the town when other types of signs create the same problem, and it did not show that temporary directions signs pose a greater threat to public safety than ideological or political signs.

Here's the first amendment to the Constitution, which allows freedom of speech and free exercise of religion:

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

Thank God that I live in a country where those words still have meaning, although you would never know it if you walked onto a university campus. Seems like free speech doesn't apply there, because people on the secular left are so easily offended by different opinions than their own.

Zack Kopplin debates Casey Luskin on science education

June 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two Rams butting heads: may the best ram win!

The Michael Medved show is a national radio show broadcast out of Seattle, Washington. According to Talkers magazine, he has the fifth largest radio audience.

The MP3 file is available for download. (38 minutes)

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, the Medved Show hosts the CSC's Casey Luskin and student Zack Kopplin, a leading activist in the effort to repeal the Louisiana Science Education Act. Luskin and Kopplin debate the implications of the Louisiana law for science education standards and whether or not the law promotes the teaching of creationism.

Topics:

- Medved: Should teachers be forced to teach creationism in public schools?
- Luskin: The Discovery Institute has never advocated that creationism be taught in public schools
- Medved: Does the Louisiana law mandate that creationism be taught in public schools
- Kopplin: Yes, the bill does because Bobby Jindal said that the bill teaches creationism
- Luskin: (Reads the actual text of the law) the law EXPLICITLY STATES that teaching creationism is forbidden
- Luskin: Governor Jindal is misinformed about the law, but if you look at the law it says NO CREATIONISM
- Kopplin: I don't care about what the law actually says, I'll just repeat that Bobby Jindal thinks it's creationism
- Kopplin: Thirty years ago, there was an attempt to mandate creationism, therefore this law is doing the same thing

- Medved: Are there any complaints that creationism is being taught in any schools after this law has been passed
- Kopplin: No, I don't know of any, but that's not because there are none! Maybe there are some that I haven't heard about yet
- Medved: If you are taught something that you think is stupid, then is that automatically a violation of your rights?
- Kopplin: Because you cannot allow the progress of science to call the religion of naturalism into question
- Luskin: About that Jindal quote – he was talking about what he wanted to pass, not the law that actually passed
- Luskin: (reads the text of the law again) The law explicitly says that teaching creationism in the classroom is prohibited
- Luskin: Intelligent design is not creationism. Creationism starts with the Bible. Intelligent Design starts with science
- Luskin: The law only supports teaching both sides of things that are already in the curriculum
- Luskin: ID is not already in the curriculum, therefore, the law does not allow it to be discussed
- Medved: Take Stephen C. Meyer's book on the origin of life, could that be used in the classroom?
- Kopplin: I am not very familiar with Meyer's book, but if it is critical of Darwinism and naturalism, then it should not be taught. I don't need to read it before I can censor it
- Luskin: Meyer's book advocates for ID, so it should not be taught in science classrooms
- Luskin: non-ID science papers that are critical of Darwinism should be allowed in science classroom so students get both sides
- Medved: Consider this brand new Oxford University Press book that is critical of Darwinian mechanisms, authored by Masatoshi Nei who is at Penn State University professor (written up on Evolution News)
- Medved: Should this research critical of Darwinism be allowed in science classrooms?
- Kopplin: I don't know if this book should be allowed in science classrooms
- Kopplin: I already know without reading anything though that there will never be evidence that supports intelligent design
- Kopplin: There is no evidence against Darwinism and there is no controversy and there is no disagreement among scientists
- Luskin: There are hundreds of papers in mainstream science peer-reviewed publications critical of Darwinism
- Luskin: (lists a stack of papers critical of core tenets of Darwinian theory from respect science journals in the last few years)
- Luskin: Masatoshi Nei recently posted a comment critical of the usefulness of the mutation-selection mechanism

- Luskin: The real issue is whether students are allowed to hear mainstream scientific criticisms of Darwinism in the science classroom
- Medved: Is it OK for a teacher to admit that on a specific issue in science, that there is no credible naturalistic explanation?
- Kopplin: I am a history major, so I don't want to comment on whether it is OK to admit that naturalism doesn't explain everything
- Luskin: A Harvard chemist says that the origin of life is an open issue in this peer-reviewed journal article
- Luskin: Teachers should be allowed to say that there is no accepted naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- Luskin: teachers should NOT be teaching religion, or creationism, or even intelligent design in science classrooms
- Luskin: but teachers should be allowed to say what the Harvard chemist said in that peer-reviewed article in the science classroom
- Kopplin: there was a creationist woman who sat next to the Discovery Institute person when the law was being debated
- Kopplin: so based on that there is a scary hidden creationist agenda behind the law which is not reflected in the actual text law
- Luskin: Um, that woman has no connection to the Discovery Institute
- Luskin: seating arrangement at the hearings were pre-determined, not selected by those in attendance
- Luskin: what about people who are pushing Darwinism, who are anti-religious atheists and humanists? should they be disqualified?
- Luskin: we should not discredit the arguments of either side based on speculations about their motives – what counts is the evidence
- Kopplin: but I have a letter signed by lots of Nobel-prize winning scientists that opposes the Louisiana science education law
- Luskin: but that letter never actually quotes from the law, it is critiquing views that have nothing to do with the actual law
- Medved: Summarize your views
- Kopplin: Criticism of Darwinism and naturalism using mainstream scientific evidence SHOULD NOT be allowed in the science classroom
- Luskin: Criticism of Darwinism and naturalism using mainstream scientific evidence SHOULD be allowed in the science classroom

And there is a period of questions from the callers.

This episode features a debate, so it is not to be missed. it is *always a good idea to hear both sides.* Unfortunately, ID people are the only ones who think that both sides should be heard.

I subscribe to the ID the Future podcast, and I really recommend that you do as well!

Dan Barker debates Casey Luskin on academic freedom

June 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two ninjas face off at sundown

The Michael Medved show is a national radio show broadcast out of Seattle, Washington. According to Talkers magazine, he has the fifth largest radio audience.

The MP3 file is available for download. (38 minutes)

The description is:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, the CSC's Casey Luskin and atheist Dan Barker of the Freedom From Religion Foundation debate academic freedom and free speech on the Medved Show. This debate was inspired by the ongoing case of Professor Eric Hedin, a physicist at Ball State University who is being threatened by the Freedom From Religion Foundation for favorably portraying intelligent design in the classroom.

Topics: (note that I am paraphrasing Dan Barker for the sake of humor, and he will probably sue me, since that is his entire contribution to the search for truth in this debate)

- Michael Medved: untenured Ball State University professor Eric Hedin is under fire for teaching both sides of intelligent design in a college course
- Dan Barker: this complaint against professor Hedin came to our attention from Jerry Coyne not from students of Professor Hedin
- Dan Barker: professors are not allowed to question the presuppositions atheism, materialism, naturalism in the physics classroom
- Dan Barker: this is a science course and you cannot question the religion of naturalism in class or else it's teaching religion
- Dan Barker: we need to use the power of the courts to stifle any dissent from of my religion (naturalism)

- Dan Barker: the classroom of a university is not the proper place for students to inquire about both sides of scientific disputes
- Dan Barker: even if students are paying their money and choosing this course of their own free will, they can't be allowed to hear both sides
- Casey Luskin: this course is not a science course, it is open to non-science students
- Casey Luskin: the course evaluations from students of all majors is overwhelmingly positive
- Casey Luskin: the course features people on both sides
- Casey Luskin: the course features brilliant scholars like Lennox and Penrose, both from Oxford University
- Casey Luskin: the course features opponents of intelligent design like Francis Collins and Karl Gilberson
- Casey Luskin: the course features non-Christians like Lee Spetner, Paul Davies, Roger Penrose and Gerald Schroeder
- Dan Barker: (taking over the host) you cannot study scientists like Francis Collins who mapped the human genome, that is "creationism"
- Michael Medved: academic freedom allows professors to put a slant on what they are teaching
- Dan Barker: if the professor's slant is against my religion of naturalism, then I have to put them in jail and inquisition them
- Dan Barker: you cannot teach science like the Big Bang and fine-tuning as if it is science because it contradicts naturalism
- Casey Luskin: Even radical atheist PZ Myers says that professors have the right to academic freedom
- Dan Barker: I'll burn that creationist at the stake, too! And smash his filthy microscopes and telescopes!
- Michael Medved: Casey, would you use state power to fire a professor who disagreed with you because you were offended?
- Casey Luskin: no, I had to take tons of courses from professors who had a slant against my views and I learned a lot from different views
- Dan Barker: you will address me as the Holy Father, please! Every professor who disagrees with my religion must burn!
- Casey Luskin: Barker has no idea what is going on in the class, he never attended it
- Casey Luskin: The atheists students who took his class gave him high ratings and said he graded fairly
- Dan Barker: I don't have to look through the telescope to know the Earth is flat – Hedin is a traitor! Off with his head!
- Dan Barker: Creationist PZ Myers is wrong, and I'll burn him at the stake for creationist heresy against my Holy Church!
- Dan Barker: Oxford professors like John Lennox are creationists because his Big Bang religion is grounded on experimental data like the cosmic background radiation, the hydrogen/helium abundances and the redshifting of light from distant galaxies

- Dan Barker: I have a degree in Religion and I write hymns, which makes me smarter than John Lennox since he is a “creationist”
- Dan Barker: I haven’t published any scientific research myself, but I have written some atheist praise hymns, so I am qualified to burn the heretics!
- Michael Medved: The course is taught by someone with a PhD in Physics, and the syllabus says that it investigates science and religion
- Michael Medved: Why is it wrong to investigate the science that questions philosophical assumptions like naturalism and materialism?
- Casey Luskin: The syllabus features amazing readings from all the latest science relevant to that question from both sides
- Michael Medved: What will Ball State U do to the professor?
- Casey Luskin: So far no action from Ball State U, but people need to sign the petition to protect the professor
- Michael Medved: Isn’t academic freedom being applied inconsistently here?
- Casey Luskin: Yes and science is supposed to move forward by disagreement and debate
- Casey Luskin: How confident can intelligent design censors really be if their contribution to the debate is coercion and intimidation?
- Michael Luskin: Is Dan Barker right to say that Oxford professor John Lennox is a “creationist”?
- Casey Luskin: Creationism starts with the Bible, but intelligent design starts with scientific data

And there is a period of questions from the callers. This episode features a debate, so it is not to be missed.

Now Dan Barker sounded pretty confident in that debate, so you might be surprised by his academic background:

> Dan became a teenage evangelist at age 15. At 16 he was choir librarian for faith-healer Kathryn Kuhlman’s Los Angeles appearances. He received a degree in Religion from Azusa Pacific University and was ordained to the ministry by the Standard Community Church, California, in 1975.
>
> […]Dan preached for 19 years. He maintained an ongoing touring musical ministry, including eight years of full-time, cross-country evangelism. An accomplished pianist, record producer, arranger and songwriter, he worked with Christian music companies such as Manna Music and Word Music. For a few years, Dan wrote and produced the annual “Mini Musicale” for Gospel Light Publications’ Vacation Bible School curriculum.

I’m not sure if Dan Barker has the right background for disputing whether intelligent design belongs in a classroom or not. Remember, the bulk of his life was spent writing and singing feel-good, happy-clappy songs. In his debates with Christians, it’s quite clear that he is totally unequipped to assess scientific evidence from the Big Bang, the fine-

tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, or habitability. It’s just not his thing, and I don’t think that musicians have what it takes to understand those arguments enough to feel comfortable using the courts to suppress people with actual PhDs in science.

You can read more about my opinion about how Dan Barker arrived at his atheism through a mistaken view of the Christian life.

I subscribe to the ID the Future podcast, and I really recommend that you do as well!

Are atheists able to perform the greatest moral duty?

June 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

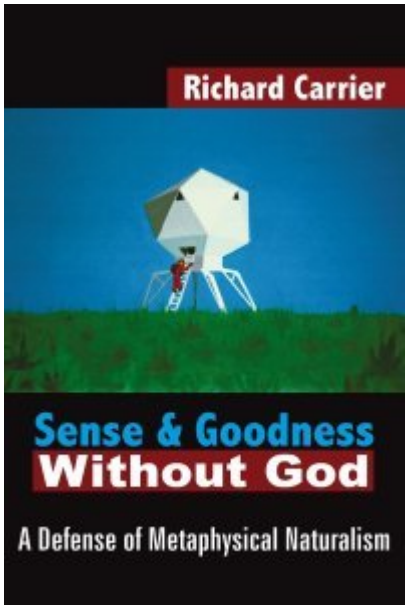

Goodness Without God: is it possible?

J. Warner Wallace looks at what Jesus says the most important commandment is, and then asks whether atheists can be justified morally if Jesus is right.

He writes:

> I was an atheist for the first thirty-five years of my life. While I was a committed (and often aggressive) non-believer, most people who knew me would probably have described me as a "nice guy". My behavior wasn't all that different than many of my Christian friends. I worked with many other atheist police officers. We were often suspicious of the Christians in our midst and the people we arrested who claimed to be Christians. Even as atheists we were familiar with Jesus' directive to "love your neighbor as yourself." My partner, Tim, used to say, "If there is a good God and a good Heaven, I think I will be there when it's all over. I'm a good person. I try to 'do the right thing'. *I'm* not a bad guy; I put bad people in jail. So I'm not worried about it." Tim held a "works based" moral worldview and he was sure his good deeds would earn him a spot in Heaven if he was wrong about the existence of God. But Tim (and I) were unfamiliar with Jesus' teaching in its full context, and now, years later as a Christian, I've come to understand why the first part of the "Greatest Command" is even more important than the second.
>
> When approached by a skeptic, Jesus affirmed the greatest commandments of God in the following way:
>
> ***Matthew 22:35-40***
> *One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the*

> *great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."*
>
> Most unbelievers recognize the value of the second half of this command ("You shall love your neighbor as yourself") but deny the value of the first part ("'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.") There's a reason, however, why Jesus listed these two commands in this specific order. The first command (loving God) is the "great and foremost commandment" because it is *required* to achieve the second command (loving others). You can't *truly* do the right thing unless you understand the relationship between these two commands:

Read the rest at Cold Case Christianity.

I've made the same point here many times, but I have never been an atheist and I don't make the point in the same winsome way that Wallace does.

I think his post is worth sending along to any atheists you may know who think themselves justified. I think it is a mistake for people to derive their own version of morality based on the time and place where they are, and then think that picking and choosing the parts they like will justify them with God. Remember, a recent survey of atheists found that 97% of them favor abortion rights. I think this is consistent with the atheist view that there are no human rights, including a right to life. Moreover, in my experience, I have found that most atheists have no problem with the government stomping all over the consciences of Christians when it comes to things like gay rights. It's important to show them that there is a standard independent of their personal opinions, justifications and rationalizations. And that they don't measure up to it. You can make up your own morality all you want,

Stay-at-home motherhood falls to record low in the UK

June 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

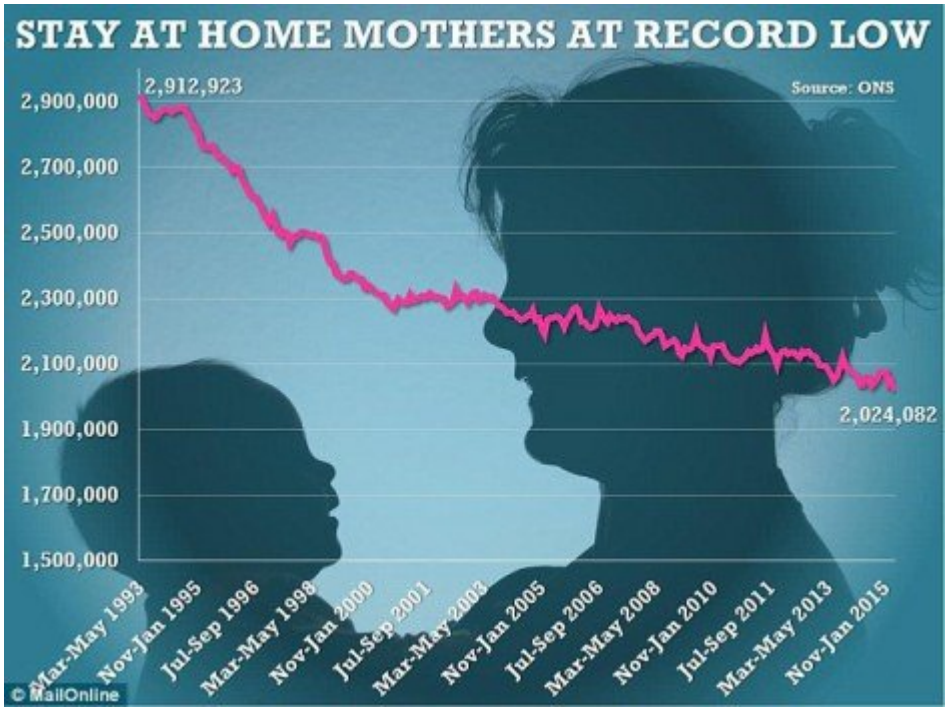

Stay-at-home mothers at a record low in the UK

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail, and I want to comment on it.

It says:

> The number of stay-at-home mothers has hit a record low as more women choose to get a job, new figures reveal.
>
> In the last two decades, the number of women who do not work to look after their home and raise their family has dropped by a third to just over 2million.
>
> […]The number of stay at home mothers and grandmothers has fallen steadily since records began in 1993.
>
> New official figures show that there are only 2.024 million women out of work to look after a home or family, a 31 per cent fall on 2.913 million in spring 1993.
>
> […]The sharp turnaround comes after 20 years of social and economic change, with parents increasingly sharing the burden of raising a family and many women reluctant to give up their career once they have children.

In socialist countries like the UK, the majority of the people are so accustomed to big government and dependency that they cannot conceive of shrinking government and letting the private sector and families and churches solve any problem. Right now, the current problem is that they are spending too much on huge numbers of social welfare programs that reward selfish, destructive behavior like men not working, single motherhood by choice, unskilled immigration, welfare that is not means-tested, welfare

that is not time-limited, and so on. It is a nanny state, and during election times, all the candidates do is talk about how they want to spend the people's money to be "nice". So, you can get breast enlargements, sex-changes and in vitro fertilization (IVF) as part of the country's bloated "health care" system. So the question is: how will they pay for all this "generosity"? Well, all the political parties agree on the answer: it's to put in places taxes and policies that make it impossible for women to stay home with their kids instead of working.

More:

> David Cameron has promised to double free childcare for three and four-year-olds from 15 hours per week during term time to 30 hours.
>
> The Tories argue the measure will 'help parents who want to work'.
>
> But critics warn it is discriminating against people who do not want to go back to work.
>
> Claire Paye, spokesman for Mothers At Home Matter, said: 'The government has set arbitrary targets to get mothers into work and to make sure that they are using government funds to pay to look after those children instead of mothers doing it for free.
>
> 'There is a real concern that the drop in stay at home others is because mothers are being priced out of the home.
>
> 'The government's only focus is to get mothers into work and they will not support any other family model than two parents working.
>
> 'We are concerned that these figures represent families who are no longer able to choose to look after their own children even if they want to.'
>
> In a House of Lords debate this week, the Bishop of Durham said stay at home parents were made to feel that they are 'somehow not doing the best for the nation or the child'.
>
> Rt Rev Paul Butler warned of the 'implicit and not so implicit message that it is better to put your child in childcare and go out to work than stay at home and look after your own children'.

So, we have a couple of points in there. Stay-at-home mothers are shamed for "wasting" their education on raising children. Daycare, which is proven to affect children negatively, especially in the first two years, is set forward as praiseworthy. Tax increases force women out of the home to work, in order to maintain the same-standard of living they had before the higher taxes and big government. And those big social programs almost never go to help married couples – they are primarily there to enable a permanent lifestyle of disfunction.

I thought of a couple more problems. Easily obtainable divorce and sole custody for the mother is a *major* deterrent to men marrying in the UK. So, of course the marriage rate is in a free fall as men stop trying to get married and settle for stress-free jobs that allow

them to scrape by as singles. Why work hard just to support a wife when the whole culture is telling her to divorce you and get alimony and child support for life? And you'll never see your kids again, either. Easy divorce and easy premarital sex sounded like such a good idea to feminist ears, but they never thought about how men would respond to it. Most men just take the free sex that the feminist Sexual Revolution provides, and decline the responsibility of marriage and fatherhood.

Another problem is that Christian parents these days have a different view of the Christian life than I have. If you look at the *shema* in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, it's very clear that parents have a responsibility to teach their kids about God. And that requires a plan to marry well so that the parents have time to teach their kids about God themselves (homeschooling), and put them into schools that will not push secularism on them.

Deut 6:4-7:

> 4 "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!
>
> 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
>
> 6 These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.
>
> 7 You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

Eph 6:4:

> 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Heb 12:9-11:

> 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?
>
> 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.
>
> 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

As a man, I would of course be delegating a lot of this responsibility to my trusted chief of staff (i.e. – future wife), whose skill in parenting, especially apologetics, would be phenomenal. I would certainly not trust strangers to implement the specification in these Bible verses. If we had to bring in expert Christians – either through Sunday school, lectures, debates and conferences, or through books, DVDs, etc. then we would. But parenting the kids is our responsibility. Secular daycare and secular public schools will not be the main influence on my kids. And I oppose all policies and laws that make the state more influential than us in raising our kids.

Parents have a responsibility to make sure their kids will be Christians into adulthood, and will make a difference for Christ and his Kingdom. But what has happened is that Christianity has become all about me and my feelings. Parents themselves that they don't have to know whether it's true, in order to teach it to the children as truth. We think that it just has to make us feel comfortable and peaceful. But that is not the way to raise kids who will make a difference, much less remain Christian in a world like this.

How fathers teach children to work hard and believe in God

June 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Here's a good article for Father's Day from Arthur Brooks in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The data confirm that hard work is correlated with well-being. The University of Michigan's Panel Study of Income Dynamics polls thousands of American families, and its 2009 results show that people who feel good about themselves work more than those who don't. It asks how often the respondents felt so sad that nothing could cheer them up. My analysis of the study showed that people who felt that way "none of the time" worked 10 percent more hours per week than those who felt that way "most of the time." This holds true when we eliminate people who worked zero hours, so it is not merely that unemployed people are miserable. This doesn't prove that extra work hours chase away sadness, but it weakens any argument that the cure for the blues is a French workweek.
>
> So vocation is crucial to leading a satisfying life. Who teaches this truth to children? Many traditions emphasize the role of fathers. Jesus defended himself to the Pharisees for working on the Sabbath by saying, "my Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." And the Talmud instructs us, "For a man not to teach his son a trade or profession is equivalent to teaching him to steal."
>
> The best way for a father to teach this is by example. This explains why a child's ability to grow up to be a productive adult is so strongly predicted by the presence of a working father in the home. The Princeton sociologist Sara McLanahan has for decades studied what happens to sons and daughters when their fathers are absent. She finds that after controlling for demographics, children in fatherless families are roughly twice as likely to drop out of high

> school as kids in intact homes. Even after controlling for student talent via standardized test scores, a sharp decline in grades and attendance persists. And young men who grow up without a father are 1.5 times more likely to be idle — that is, neither in the work force nor in school — than those with a father in the home. And this brings us to a particularly serious issue this Father's Day: Our growing national jobs deficit. In 1953, just 14 percent of adult American men were neither working nor seeking work. Today, that rate has more than doubled, to 30 percent. And this doesn't only reflect an aging population with more retired men: Just after World War II, 8 percent of noninstitutionalized males ages 25 to 54 were not working. Today, 17 percent of that same group of men are idle.

So fathers are important for teaching children to work, which is how they become independent and able to share with others in need. That's valuable. And that was certainly true for me – my father took me to work all the time and on weekends even. And when I was in high school, he encouraged me to work in the summers and take a job in the evenings year-round. Looking back, this is definitely one the things that went right in my story.

But there's more that fathers can do. Take a look at this statistical evidence on fathers and religious belief of children.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes *up* from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or

> hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an enormously difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary.

You can learn even more about the importance of fathers by looking at these statistics on fatherlessness.

William Lane Craig offers advice to Christians considering marriage

June 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post is a 3 in one: one lecture, one question and answer, and another lecture – all on different topics. My friend Neil S. requested this so I'm posting it.

I got this lecture from the Reasonable Faith web site.

Dr. William Lane Craig is the top living Christian apologist and debater in the world today, and has 2 Masters degrees and 2 Ph.Ds. He also has scores of academic publications including books from Oxford University Press, etc.

The MP3 file is here. (14.5 Mb, about 41 minutes)

Topics:

- the stresses of ministry on marriages
- the Christian position on divorce
- balancing marriage with academic pursuits
- the importance of marrying the right person
- Dr. Craig's politically incorrect advice for choosing a spouse
- Advice for men: Marry someone who believes in you and who supports you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be the kind of person who can commit to being a helper and supporter
- Advice for men: Beware of the career woman who will put their career over supporting you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be careful about marrying if you think that your goals are more important than your husband's goals
- Advice: Don't try to find the right person *for you* but instead focus on learning about marriage and preparing for marriage
- Advice: Flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, love and peace
- Advice: God intends for sex to be within the bounds of marriage, so you need to guard yourself against unchastity
- Advice for men: be careful what images and movies you see with the goal of keeping your chastity
- Advice: your highest responsibility after your relationship with God is your spouse, and your studies are third
- Advice: it's better to drop classes or give up your graduate studies entirely rather than destroy your marriage
- Advice for women: understand that you have to work at the marriage in order to help your man finish his studies
- Advice: set aside a period of the day for communicating and bonding with your

spouse
- Advice: cultivate the ability to talk with your spouse on a personal level, and maintain eye contact
- Advice for men: do not break eye contact with your wife, and also hold her hand when communicating
- Advice: do not be embarrassed to seek out a marriage counselor, but make it a good counselor
- Advice: don't just be doing stuff for your mate, but also be vulnerable and transparent with your mate
- How your relationship with your wife helps you with your relationship with God
- How do you handle the rebellion of children without being overbearing and authoritarian?

There is a period of Q&A at the end. There is another piece of advice that comes out in the Q&A for women: take an interest in your spouse's work even if you don't care about it, and ask him about it every day and try to understand it. Go to the man's workplace and see what he does. Go to his presentations. Get involved in the man's ministry and help him in practical ways. Another piece of advice is to not paper over the differences – it's good to argue, because it means that problems are being confronted and worked through. Husbands should have a good male friend to talk to, and wives should have a good female friend to talk to.

I like how Dr. Craig has thought about how to have a successful marriage, how to choose the right woman, and how to love his wife. I like how he calls out men on the chastity thing. I think that chastity is more important for men than for women, because it's the men who take the lead in choosing and pursuing the right woman for their plan, and their judgment cannot be clouded by the desire for premarital sex.

It's the man who is accountable for making the marriage count for God, he will never be able to achieve anything if chooses a wife is merely pretty, rather than being a good learner, resourceful, hard-working, organized and effective. She is the one who has to be chief of staff and take care of the details of his plan to lead the family. (In my case, the plan is 1) impact the church with apologetics, 2) impact the university with apologetics, 3) advocate for laws and policies that protect religious liberty, right to life, marriage and family, and 4) raise Children who will remain Christian and have an influence for Christ and his Kingdom). A man can't choose a woman who is merely attractive and fun-loving – she will never be willing to *commit to doing the hard work* that will allow the family to achieve anything as a team.

This is important: don't choose a woman who isn't willing to help you with your plan to serve God. And don't choose a woman who is more interested in fun and thrills than learning and working to achieve a goal. If she is not able to commit to tasks and finish what she starts, then she is not for you. That's what good women do – they are not content to talk about big plans and not achieve then, they are doers. They find ways to get the job done through organization, discipline and self-sacrifice.

Secondly, here is my previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for married couples, where he gives 5 points of advice for married couples.

Here are the main pieces of advice Dr. Craig gives:

1. *Resolve that there will be no divorce*
2. *Delay having children*
3. *Confront problems honestly*
4. *Seek marital counseling*
5. *Take steps to build intimacy in your relationship*

And here's the controversial one (#2):

> 2. *Delay having children.* The first years of marriage are difficult enough on their own without introducing the complication of children. Once children come, the wife's attention is necessarily diverted, and huge stresses come upon you both. Spend the first several years of marriage getting to know each other, working through your issues, having fun together, and enjoying that intimate love relationship between just the two of you. Jan and I waited ten years before having our first child Charity, which allowed me the finish graduate school, get our feet on the ground financially, establish some roots, and enjoy and build our love relationship until we were really ready to take on the responsibilities of parenthood. The qualifier here is that if the wife desperately wants children now, then the husband should accede to her wish to become a mother, rather than withhold that from her. Her verdict should be decisive. But if you both can agree to wait, things will probably be much easier.

Third and finally, here is a previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for choosing a good spouse, with illustrations from his own marriage.

For example, Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to

> take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

If you want to hear another Christian husband talk about how his wife supports him, listen to this lecture called "Giants in the Land" with Dr. Walter Bradley. It's actually my favorite lecture. I also really like his testimony lecture. If you're looking for guidance, these are some of the people I would recommend.

Are there any candidates Christians can get excited about in 2016?

June 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Monday, June 15

Race/Topic (Click to Sort)	Results	Spread
Iowa Republican Presidential Caucus	Walker 18, Rubio 7, Huckabee 10, Paul 10, Bush 10, Carson 5, Cruz 4, Santorum, Trump 5, Christie 6, Perry, Fiorina 2, Kasich, Jindal	Walker +8
Iowa Democratic Presidential Caucus	Clinton 54, Sanders 12, Biden 9, O'Malley 1, Webb 1, Chafee	Clinton +42

Iowa Republican Primary Poll

Well, at the Faith and Freedom Coalition's "Road to Majority" conference, four candidates shined – according to the left-wing Politico, no less.

Intro:

> At the latest GOP cattle call, about a dozen presidential contenders rolled through a Washington, D.C. ballroom over a three-day period to tout their socially conservative bona fides at the Faith and Freedom Coalition's "Road to Majority" conference. Most of the 2016 hopefuls managed to impress evangelical and other conservative Christian voters by championing religious freedom, highlighting support for traditional marriage and stressing the importance of family and family values.

Here's their summary of the 4 winners:

> **Ted Cruz**
>
> Cruz flat-out owned this event, firing up the crowd like no other candidate did — attendees were still talking about him two days after he spoke. The Texas senator delivered a rousing call to action aimed at the evangelical community, saying that 50 million of them sat home in 2012 but could make the difference in 2016. "If people of faith show up, if we stand for our faith and our liberty and the Constitution, we will win and turn the country around," he said. To a rapt crowd, Cruz did his best Reagan impression when he promised "Morning is coming. Morning is coming." And he tore into what he framed as the Obama administration's assault on religious liberty — a prominent theme at the conference. When Cruz finished, the crowd mobbed him.
>
> **Bobby Jindal**
>
> The Louisiana governor, who is expected to announce his presidential bid next

> week, is trailing badly in the polls but his appearance Friday was a chance to impress evangelicals — and he seized the moment. More than just about any other candidate, Jindal is a champion of religious liberty, and at the Faith and Freedom conference, he came out swinging. He blasted big business for making an “unnatural alliance” with liberals who opposed controversial religious freedom measures in Indiana and Arkansas. He tweaked Obama and Clinton for, in his view, “evolving” to support same-sex marriage only when the polls suggested it was safe — something Jindal pledged he would never do. He warned darkly that freedom, particularly religious freedom, is under assault, a stance that went over well with the crowd.
>
> **Scott Walker**
>
> The Wisconsin governor, the son of a preacher, met an enthusiastic crowd as he keynoted the closing session on Saturday night. The audience greeted him with a standing ovation after the president of Concerned Women for America introduced him by ticking through his record of opposition to abortion rights, and the speech itself was punctuated by attendees standing up to applaud. He reiterated his support for religious liberty, and his recitation of his confrontation with unions was well-received. But the biggest and most sustained applause of the night came as the governor offered a hawkish riff on foreign policy, tearing into the Obama administration for its approach to ISIS, Syria and Iran. Walker, who has been seeking to burnish his national security credentials ahead of an all-but-certain presidential run, appeared most energized during that portion of the speech — and the audience responded.
>
> **Carly Fiorina**
>
> The former Hewlett-Packard executive, who has shined at other GOP cattle calls, did it again Saturday. Attendees, particularly female attendees, were buzzing about her morning speech on the final day of the conference. Some noted that they had gone in knowing little about her, but had come out impressed with her resume and her energetic speech, praising her delivery as clear and direct. For Fiorina, who is known as her party’s most frequent and vigorous critic of Hillary Clinton, raising her standing in the polls is essential — her long-shot bid all but depends on qualifying for the primary debate in August, an event she nodded to in her remarks.

My first choices are Scott Walker, Bobby Jindal and Ted Cruz. I like Walker the best, though, because he has more accomplishments than Cruz (who is not able to build consensus to get legislation moved forward) and his state is doing better financially than Bobby Jindal’s Louisiana (Louisiana is struggling with a huge budget deficit).

Is the EPA paying researchers to produce only the results they want?

June 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

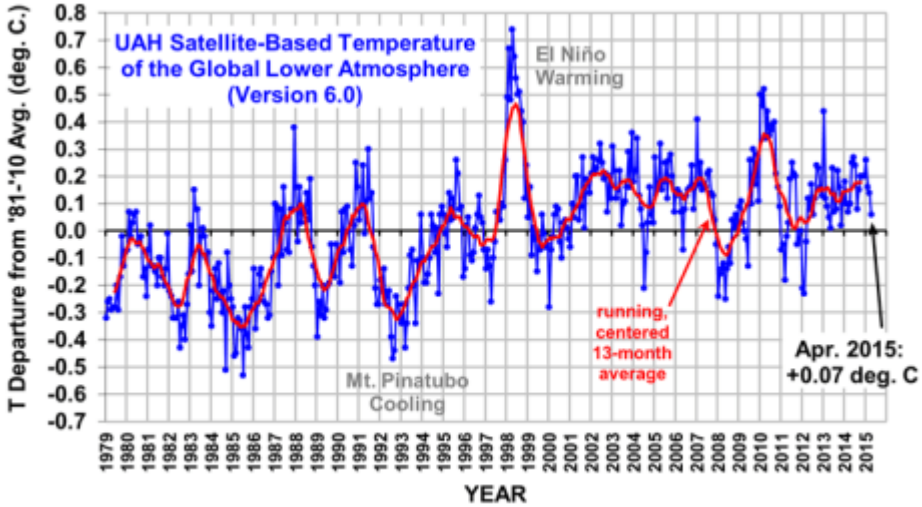

Atmospheric temperature measurements though April 2015
This remarkable story is from the Daily Signal.

It says:

> Researchers from Harvard University, Syracuse University and four other institutions used climate models to predict the impact the EPA's proposed carbon emissions reductions would have on human health. And not surprisingly, it turned out the government's plan was not just among the options that would produce positive results but was, in fact, the best way to achieve the goals.
>
> But there was a line in this story that sets it apart. Jonathan Buonocore, a research fellow at Harvard's Center for Health and the Global Environment, told U.S. News the EPA did not participate in the study or interact with its authors.
>
> But it seems the agency did participate and did interact with the authors.
>
> The chain of emails went back and forth as the researchers and the agency both sought to add participants to the call. The fact the research showed precisely what the government wanted it to and that the government's own proposal, when mimicked by researchers, produced the best results further raise suspicion.
>
> […]The scientists who produce this government-favored research not only have begun to cash in at taxpayers' expense, but they've also begun to ask the agency for help with fundraising.

The study's authors got about $45 million in research grants from the EPA, and that is taxpayer's money.

But surely scientists who are critical of bigger government receive the same government-funding and support, right? After all, research is about truth, and the government just

funds research that is truth-focused, right?

Not so much:

> Willie Soon, an astrophysicist with the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, co-authored a paper published in January that found the models used in the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are laced with mathematical errors. Soon then endured an avalanche of criticism of his funding sources and implications he had shaped his findings to please them.
>
> It mattered not that he got only about $60,000 per year from the one "compromised" source or that the compromised source was the Smithsonian or that he had not known where the Smithsonian got the money it paid him.
>
> Then, a few days after the New York Times piece on Soon appeared, Congress got into the act. Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., ranking minority member on the House Natural Resources Committee, sent letters to seven universities asking for documents on climate change research connected with scientific skeptics who have questioned the premise of anthropogenic (man-made) global warming.
>
> This was followed by a letter from Sens. Edward J. Markey, D-Mass., Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., to 100 fossil fuel companies, trade groups, and other outfits "to determine whether they are funding scientific studies designed to confuse the public and avoid taking action to cut carbon pollution, and whether the funded scientists fail to disclose the sources of their funding in scientific publications or in testimony to legislators."
>
> Indeed, the deck remains stacked against those who dare to stray from the government message on global warming, and the conflicts of interest seem concentrated on the researchers and scientists who accept government money, according to William Happer, a professor of physics at Princeton University.
>
> "Unless you accept the alarmist position and the dictates of the [Obama] administration, you cannot typically receive government funding," said Happer.

It's no wonder that so many Republicans, myself included, put the EPA in the list of Departments we would abolish. For me it's the Department of Education, the EPA, the Department of Energy and IRS. Just get rid of the public sector bureaucracy at the federal level and push it down to the state and local levels. And privatize as much of it as possible.

JP Morgan Chase tells employees to celebrate gay rights or else

June 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

This is from Breitbart News.

Excerpt:

> A document provided to Breitbart News shows the investment banking behemoth JP Morgan Chase has joined a long line of major corporations in putting pressure on employees to sign up for the cause of gay rights. And they have not-so-subtly let each employee know not signing up will be noted.
>
> Employees are being told "to help create an environment for open and honest dialogue." The document notes descriptors such as "wife" and "boyfriend" are frowned upon, and "partner" is preferred. Not referring to your wife as your wife "offers up the opportunity for more inclusive conversations."
>
> […]JP Morgan urges employees to "print and display your ally placard," which implies the recalcitrant will be noticed.
>
> The document tells employees to "explore your personal beliefs, use inclusive language, avoid making assumptions by asking conscientious questions, increase your awareness about issues impacting the gay community, include LGBT issues in your everyday life, attend events that celebrate diversity and inclusion, and speak out against hurtful comments."
>
> […]Besides the gay pride placard each employee is supposed to display in their workspace, perhaps the most intrusive article in the documents calls upon employees to "include LGBT issues in your everyday life." JP Morgan brass want employees to "include [LGBT issues] in your life and conversations, just as you would any other topic."

> Employees are urged to “take some time to listen to music, see movies or read books and magazines by and about gay people…there’s no substitute for knowledge.”
>
> […]This follows a controversy last year when JP Morgan Chase sent each employee a survey asking them if they were a “gay ally.” JP Morgan employees reached out anonymously to Breitbart News and other outlets about the pressure put on them to violate their own religious consciences.

Now imagine that you are working for this company or another like it and they are asking you to wear a symbol of the gay agenda on your desk. What exactly are you supposed to do, as an observant Christian, Muslim or Jew? Your Scriptures don’t condone you doing that, but your performance review or promotion may depend on being a “team player”. Should you violate your conscience for the sake of your career? Well, you might be tempted to do it if you were supporting a wife and several children, but maybe not if you were single. You might be tempted to do it if you had a lot of outstanding loans, like student loans . You’re more likely to have unpaid student loans if you chose to study something easy like English than if you studied petroleum engineering. You might feel more obligated to violate your conscience if you had many children, instead of just a few or none. You might feel more obligated to violate your conscience if you were making payments on an expensive house and/or an expensive car. You might feel more obligated to violate your conscience if you didn’t have a strong enough resume to get another job.

Do you see how all your life decisions fit in with this? Your freedom to honor your conscience or not depends on the *decisions that you make*. Your choice to do hard things instead of easy things will affect whether you have freedom to follow your conscience or not. The time is coming, and is now here, when your religious liberty will hinge on your seriousness about life decisions. Were you self-controlled? Were you self-disciplined? Were you self-sacrificial? Did you do things that you didn’t feel like doing in school, at work, and with money? If you were prudent and said no to fun, travel, spending, etc. then you can more easily afford to have religious liberty. Think about the threats before they happen, and make good decisions in your early life. Build yourself a castle with your decisions about education, work and money, so that you don’t have to care when non-Christians force you to choose between God and your belly.

Here are a few verses that were significant to me when I was in high school and college, and had to make the decisions that would either leave me with freedom or force me to comply with the JP Morgan Chase people in the world:

Eccl 12:1:

> 1 Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, “I have no delight in them”

Prov 25:28:

> 28 Like a city that is broken into and without walls

> Is a man who has no control over his spirit

John 9:4:

> 4 We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

Luke 14:28:

> 28 For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?

I think it's always a good idea to think "how will I make decisions that allow me to achieve the practical result of what these verses are saying?" We want to be obedient to what God says, not to what our feelings say. It may feel good to indulge our feelings, but that never works if we are trying to be serious about achieving real-world results. Feelings only work in the movies.

New study: leftists have less self-control than conservatives

June 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina tweeted this article from the UK Daily Mail, and it's worth a look.

It says:

> In three studies, US scientists tested the abilities of two groups: undergraduates who considered themselves politically conservative and 'liberals'.
>
> They classed conservatives as those who endorse traditional values and the status quo, while liberals 'endorse egalitarian ideals and progressive change'.
>
> They found that the conservatives were better at 'regulating their attention' and persisting with tasks.
>
> And they found the difference between the two groups was linked to how closely they believed in free will.
>
> The authors wrote in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences: 'Three studies document a clear difference in self-control as a function of political ideology, as political conservatism (versus liberalism) was consistently related to greater self-control.'
>
> […]The researchers from the universities of Cincinatti, Indiana and Florida said their research followed on from previous studies that found conservatives tended to be more studious at university than their left-wing counterparts.
>
> The authors suggest that a belief that success is down to one's own efforts rather than being pre-determined is key to academic success.
>
> Explaining findings that conservative students do better at university, they suggest it 'could be that conservatives believe they have greater control over their performance and thus expend greater self control in their academic pursuits.'

This is interesting. The theistic view is that human beings *are* non-physical souls, and the non-physical souls tell the body what to do. Since the non-physical soul is not material, it's behavior is not governed by fixed physical processes. This is in contrast with the naturalistic view, which is that you are your body, there is no free will, and no personal responsibility.

Isn't it interesting that the people who do believe in free will also believe in personal responsibility, and this causes them to take more responsibility for their own choices? I cannot imagine how a person can deny free will, yet this is the natural outworking of saying "nature is all there is".

For those who don't like the Daily Mail, you can read about the study here in Science Daily.

Does God’s omniscience conflict with human free will?

June 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s the setup for the question, from Come Reason ministries.

Excerpt:

> Hello,
>
> Christian doctrine holds that God is all knowing (1 John 3:20), and humans have free will (Deuteronomy 30:19 is my favorite example). however, at my favorite apologetics debate board, I have seen skeptics raise an objection to these points several times. the basic logic behind their arguments is this:
>
> 1. A being with free will, given two options A and B, can freely choose between A and B.
> 2. God is omniscient (all-knowing).
> 3. God knows I will choose A.
> 4. God cannot be wrong, since an omniscient being cannot have false knowledge.
> 5. From 3 and 4, I will choose A and cannot choose B.
> 6. From 1 and 5, omniscience and free will cannot co-exist.
>
> I have read many counter-arguments from apologetics sites, but they were either too technical (I couldn’t understand them), or not satisfying. so, I was wondering what would your input be on this issue?
>
> Thank you,
>
> Justin

Ever heard that one? I actually had that one posed to me by a guy I used to work with who had a Ph.D in computer science from Northwestern. So this is an objection you may actually here.

Here’s Lenny Eposito’s answer:

> Hi Justin,
>
> Thanks for writing. This is a great question as it shows how even those who appeal to logic can have biases that blind them. Let’s examine this argument and see if it follows logically.
>
> Premises 1 and 2 in your outline above are the main premises to the argument and are not disputed. The Christian worldview argues that every human being is a free moral agent and is capable of making choices simply by exercising their will, not under compulsion or because of instinct. Also, it is a long held doctrine of Christianity that God is all-knowing. The Bible says that God knows “the end from

> the beginning (Isaiah 46:10).” For omniscience to be truly knowledgeable it must be correct knowledge, so premise number 4 is also granted.
>
> However, point number 5 is where the logic falters. Those who argue in this manner make the mistake of thinking that because God possesses knowledge about a specific matter, then he has influenced it. That does not follow at all. Just because God can foresee which choice you will make, it does not mean you couldn’t still freely choose the other option.
>
> Let me give you an example. I have a five year old son. If I were to leave a chocolate chip cookie on the table about a hour before dinner time and my son was to walk by and see it, I know that he would pick up the cookie and eat it. I did not force him to make that decision. In fact, I don’t even have to be in the room at all. I think I know my son well enough, though, to tell you that if I come back into the kitchen the cookie will be gone. His act was made completely free of my influence, but I knew what his actions would be.
>
> In examining the argument, the assumption is made in premise 3 that because God knows I will choose A somehow denies me the choice of B. That is the premise that Christianity rejects. Omniscience and free will are not incompatible and it is a non-sequitor to claim otherwise.
>
> Thank you Justin for this interesting question. I pray that you will continue to defend the gospel of our Lord and may He continue to bless you as you seek to grow in Him.

That’s a great answer and should work in ordinary conversations.

More technical

J.W. Wartick maps out the arguments more fully with symbolic logic here on his Always Have A Reason blog. But I’ll just excerpt the gist of it.

Excerpt:

> It is necessarily true that if God knows x will happen, then x will happen. But then if one takes these terms, God knowing x will happen only means that x will happen, not that x will happen *necessarily.* Certainly, God’s foreknowledge of an event means that that event will happen, but it does *not* mean that the event could not have happened otherwise. If an event happens necessarily, that means the event could not have happened otherwise, but God’s foreknowledge of an event doesn’t somehow transfer necessity to the event, it only means that the event will happen. It could have been otherwise, in which case, God’s knowledge would have been different.
>
> […]Perhaps I could take an example. Let’s say that I’m going to go to classes tomorrow (and I do hope I will, I don’t like missing classes!). God knows in advance that I’m going to go to classes tomorrow. His knowledge of this event means that it will happen, but it doesn’t mean that I couldn’t choose to stay in and sleep for a while, or play my new copy of Final Fantasy XIII, or do something

> more useless with my time. If I chose to, say, play Final Fantasy XIII (a strong temptation!), then God simply would have known that I would play FFXIII. His knowledge does not *determine* the outcome, His knowledge is simply *of the outcome*.

If we choose A, God would foreknow A. If we choose B, God would foreknow B. His foreknowledge of our choices is contingent on our making free choices.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

June 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates).

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it!

The MP3 file is here.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see

the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

What did Hillary Clinton accomplish as Secretary of State?

June 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does national security make?
Thomas Sowell writes about Hillary's foreign policy achievements in Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> U.S. intervention in Libya and Egypt, undermining governments that were no threat to American interests, led to Islamic extremists taking over in Egypt and terrorist chaos in Libya, where the American ambassador was killed, along with three other Americans.
>
> […]In Europe, as in the Middle East, our foreign policy during Hillary Clinton's tenure as secretary of state was to undermine our friends and cater to our enemies.
>
> The famous "reset" in our foreign policy with Russia began with the Obama administration reneging on a pre-existing American commitment to supply defensive technology to shield Poland and the Czech Republic from missile attacks.
>
> This left both countries vulnerable to pressures and threats from Russia — and left other countries elsewhere wondering how much they could rely on American promises.
>
> Even after Russia invaded Ukraine, the Obama administration refused to let the Ukrainians have weapons with which to defend themselves.
>
> […][Obama and Clinton] both opposed the military "surge" in Iraq, under General David Petraeus, that defeated the terrorists there.
>
> Even after the surge succeeded, Hillary Clinton was among those who fiercely

> denied initially that it had succeeded, and sought to discredit Gen. Petraeus, though eventually the evidence of the surge's success became undeniable, even among those who had opposed it.
>
> The truly historic catastrophe of American foreign policy — not only failing to stop Iran from going nuclear, but making it more difficult for Israel to stop them — was also something that happened on Hillary Clinton's watch as secretary of state.
>
> What the administration's protracted and repeatedly extended negotiations with Iran accomplished was to allow Iran time to multiply, bury and reinforce its nuclear facilities, to the point where it was uncertain whether Israel still had the military capacity to destroy those facilities.
>
> There are no offsetting foreign policy triumphs under Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Syria, China and North Korea are other scenes of similar setbacks.

As if that wasn't bad enough, news has now come out that the Benghazi investigation has managed to get hold of e-mails that Hillary Clinton sent to her non-State-Department-employee friend Sidney Blumenthal. They did NOT get the e-mails from Hillary, like they were supposed to. They got them from Sidney Blumenthal. Why didn't Hillary hand over *those* work-related e-mails? You can read about that story in the Washington Times.

And more – Clinton approved of the release of one of the Benghazi terrorist attack suspects in 2012. She assured conservative Congressman Tom Cotton that the Benghazi suspect would be monitored by the Tunisians, so that he could do us no more harm. Well, he ended up in Mosul, Iraq, and was just killed by an airstrike in June 2015. You can read more about that story in The Weekly Standard.

Seriously… I would think that the Libya debacle alone would be enough to sink Hillary's presidential hopes. When you add the Russian reset, Benghazi YouTube alibi, Libya, Egypt, Syria, the Clinton Foundation scandal, and so many other failures and mistakes, we'd be better off hiring a clown to be President than putting her in charge. She just isn't qualified to the job. She just doesn't take national security and foreign policy seriously. She is only interested in one thing: getting elected.

New paper from Michael Licona on historical methods and miracle claims

June 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson about to do some historical inquiry

I hope that all my readers know who Michael Licona is!

The PDF of his new paper is here. It was just published in the Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus. It talks about how the pre-suppositions of ancient historians can mess with their ability to investigate the past.

Here's the abstract:

> Most biblical scholars and historians hold that the investigation of a miracle report lies outside of the rights of historians acting within their professional capacity. In this essay, I challenge this position and argue to the contrary. A definition of history should not a priori exclude the possibility of investigating miracle claims, since doing so may restrict historians to an inaccurate assessment of the past. Professional historians outside of the community of biblical scholars acknowledge the frequent absence of a consensus; this largely results from conflicting horizons among historians. If this is the present state among professionals engaged in the study of non-religious history, it will be even more so with historians of Jesus. Finally, even if some historians cannot bring themselves to grant divine causation, they, in principle, can render a verdict on the event itself without rendering a verdict on its cause.

Here's a bit that I found interesting:

> It is clear that the horizon of atheist New Testament scholar Gerd Lüdemann is a driving force behind his historical conclusions when he a priori rules out the historicity of the ascension of Jesus reported in Acts 1.9–11 'because there is no such heaven to which Jesus may have been carried'. Ontological naturalism similarly guides James Tabor.
>
> He writes:

> Women do not get pregnant without a male—ever. So Jesus had a human father… Dead bodies don't rise… So, if the tomb was empty the historical conclusion is simple—Jesus' body was moved by someone and likely reburied in another location.
>
> Not so obvious is Geza Vermes in his 2008 volume The Resurrection: History and Myth. With hardly a comment, Vermes simply dismisses both 'the out-of-hand rejection of the inveterate skeptic' and the hypothesis that Jesus rose from the dead since it can only be made from 'the blind faith of the fundamentalist believer'.

I thought these were interesting because Ludemann and Vermes still agree with some of the minimal facts in a case for the resurrection case, such as Craig, Habermas or Licona might make. Ludemann gives you the post-mortem "visions" of Jesus, and Vermes gives you the empty tomb – yet both are naturalists, as you can see. They both rule out miracle as an explanation of the minimal facts *a priori*, but they both allow for useful minimal facts because the historical case is there to support them. Isn't that interesting?

So what would you call a detective who ruled out some causes of death but not others, before looking at the evidence?

More:

> Second, methodological naturalism may handicap historians, preventing them in some cases from providing a fuller and more accurate account of the past. Molecular biologist Michael Behe provides a relevant challenge to this approach in his discipline. He writes:
>
> Imagine a room in which a body lies crushed, flat as a pancake. A dozen detectives crawl around, examining the floor with magnifying glasses for any clues to the identity of the perpetrator. In the middle of the room, next to the body, stands a large, grey elephant. The detectives carefully avoid bumping into the pachyderm's legs as they crawl, and never even glance at it. Over time the detectives get frustrated with their lack of progress but resolutely press on, looking even more closely at the floor. You see, textbooks say detectives must 'get their man', so they never consider elephants.
>
> **In context, Behe is contending that when scientists limit their considerations exclusively to unguided natural causes they will forever keep themselves from discovering the actual cause if a Designer of some sort was responsible. A similar admonition may be issued to historians who a priori exclude a non-human agent as the cause behind a past event. Those who do so could actually be placing themselves in a position where they cannot appraise history accurately.**

The rest of the paper discusses two options for historians who want to resolve this problem.

So, I'm impressed that Mike Licona reads Mike Behe (that quote is from "Darwin's Black

Box”). Pretty cool that he reads across disciplines, and that he reads people who disagree with him. We one-dollar apologists all need to be like that.

Back to his paper. I see this presupposition of naturalism come up in debates on the historical Jesus, where the naturalist will just assume naturalism and then proceed to do history – even at a time where we have so many scientific arguments to undermine naturalism. It’s a bad philosophical view, and we shouldn’t let it influence how we do history.

If you run into these historians who are committed to naturalism, it might be worth it to make them defend it. You ask them – do you believe in naturalism? If they say yes, ask them for scientific evidence for naturalism. And when they finish not giving you any, then you can go on a long monologue on the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability (galactic and stellar), and so on. Then tell them to stop bring their blind religious faith into their historical investigations.

Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical souls

June 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This podcast is a must-listen. Please take the time to download this podcast and listen to it. I guarantee that you will love this podcast. I even recommended it to my *Dad* and I almost never do that.

Details:

> In this podcast, J. Warner examines the evidence for the existence of the mind (and inferentially, the soul) as he looks at six classic philosophical arguments. Jim also briefly discusses Thomas Nagel's book, Mind and Cosmos and discusses the limitations of physicalism.

The MP3 file is here. (67 MB, 72 minutes)

Topics:

- Atheist Thomas Nagel's latest book "Mind and Cosmos" makes the case that materialism cannot account for the evidence of mental phenomena
- Nagel writes in this recent New York Times article that materialism cannot account for the reality of consciousness, meaning, intention and purpose
- Quote from the Nagel article:

> Even though the theistic outlook, in some versions, is consistent with the available scientific evidence, I don't believe it, and am drawn instead to a naturalistic, though non-materialist, alternative. Mind, I suspect, is not an inexplicable accident or a divine and anomalous gift but a basic aspect of nature that we will not understand until we transcend the built-in limits of contemporary scientific orthodoxy.

- When looking at this question, it's important to not have our conclusions pre-determined by presupposing materialism or atheism
- If your mind/soul doesn't exist and you are a purely physical being then that is a defeater for Christianity, so we need to respond
- Traditionally, Christians have been committed to a view of human nature called "dualism" – human beings are souls who *have* bodies
- The best way* to argue for the existence of the soul is using philosophical arguments

The case:

- The law of identity says that if A = B' if A and B have the exact same properties
- If A = the mind and B = the brain, then is A identical to B?

- Wallace will present 6 arguments to show that A is not identical to B because they have different properties

Not everyone of the arguments below might make sense to you, but you will probably find one or two that strike you as correct. Some of the points are more illustrative than persuasive, like #2. However, I do find #3, #5 and #6 persuasive.

1) First-person access to mental properties

- Thought experiment: Imagine your dream car, and picture it clearly in your mind
- If we invited an artist to come and sketch out your dream car, then we could see your dream car's shape on paper
- This concept of your dream car is not something that people can see by looking at your brain structure
- Physical properties can be physically accessed, but the properties of your dream care and privately accessed

2) Our experience of consciousness implies that we are not our bodies

- Common sense notion of personhood is that we own our bodies, but we are not our bodies

3) Persistent self-identity through time

- Thought experiment: replacing a new car with an old car one piece at a time
- When you change even the smallest part of a physical object, it changes the identity of that object
- Similarly, your body is undergoing changes constantly over time
- Every cell in your body is different from the body you had 10 years ago
- Even your brain cells undergo changes (see this from New Scientist – WK)
- If you are the same person you were 10 years ago, then you are not your physical body

4) Mental properties cannot be measured like physical objects

- Physical objects can be measured (e.g. – use physical measurements to measure weight, size, etc.)
- Mental properties cannot be measured

5) Intentionality or About-ness

- Mental entities can refer to realities that are physical, something outside of themselves
- A tree is not about anything, it just is a physical object
- But you can have thoughts about the tree out there in the garden that needs water

6) Free will and personal responsibility

- If humans are purely physical, then all our actions are determined by sensory inputs and genetic programming
- Biological determinism is not compatible with free will, and free will is required for personal responsibility
- Our experience of moral choices and moral responsibility requires free will, and free will requires minds/souls

He spends the last 10 minutes of the podcast responding to naturalistic objections to the mind/soul hypothesis.

*Now in the podcast, Wallace does say that scientific evidence is not the best kind of evidence to use when discussing this issue of body/soul and mind/brain. But I did blog before about two pieces of evidence that I think are relevant to this discussion: corroborated near-death experiences and mental effort.

You might remember that Dr. Craig brought up the issue of substance dualism, and the argument from intentionality ("aboutness"), in his debate with the naturalist philosopher Alex Rosenberg, so this argument about dualism is battle-ready. You can add it to your list of arguments for Christian theism along with all the other arguments like the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, stellar habitability, galactic habitability, irreducible complexity, molecular machines, the Cambrian explosion, the moral argument, the resurrection, biological convergence, and so on.

Obama administration hiding the extent of damage from the OPM hack

June 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I blogged about three serious breaches of secure data that occurred under the Obama administration, which is not known for competence in information technology (think Obamacare web site). The three breaches were Snowden, Manning, and China's hack of Office of Personnel Management (OPM). I did not include Hillary Clinton's private e-mail server, since we don't know the extent of the damage there, although in a previous post, I quoted a former deputy director of the CIA saying that foreign governments had *everything* on Clinton's e-mail server. So that would be a fourth massive breach of security.

First, let's see who Obama put in charge of OPM. Was it someone with a background and experience adequate to the job?

About Katherine Archuleta:

> This morning, Katherine Archuleta was sworn-in as the 10th Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and will serve as the Federal government's personnel chief. She will be the first Latina to hold this position. Katherine shares President Obama's vision for diversity and inclusion in the federal workforce…
>
> […]OPM has recognized and acknowledged the underrepresentation of Hispanics in the federal work force, and the potential and talent they have to offer. OPM has made it a point to expand outreach and recruitment within the Hispanic community…
>
> […]Katherine also worked as the National Political Director for President Obama's reelection campaign…
>
> […]Katherine served as the Executive Director of the National Hispanic Cultural Center Foundation…

Now look at this article from the Wall Street Journal – it turns out that the Obama administration is trying to avoid revealing the severity of the hack, just like when they blamed their failure to protect our assets in Benghazi on a YouTube video.

Look:

> The Obama administration for more than a week avoided disclosing the severity of an intrusion into federal computers by defining it as two breaches but divulging just one, said people familiar with the matter.
>
> That approach has frustrated lawmakers as they probe the administration's handling of one of the biggest-ever thefts of government records.
>
> Agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation suspect China was behind the hack of Office of Personnel Management databases discovered in April, **and that**

> **those hackers accessed not only personnel files but security-clearance forms, current and former U.S. officials said. Such forms contain information that foreign intelligence agencies could use to target espionage operations.**
>
> […]**The administration on June 4 disclosed the breach of personnel files—but not the security-clearance theft. That theft was disclosed a week later, even though investigators knew about it much earlier, people familiar with the situation said.**

They are trying to hide the extent of the damage from the public, just like they hid Hillary Clinton's home-brew e-mail servers and the IRS e-mails dealing with the targeting of Tea Party groups:

> Before the OPM formally announced June 4 that it had been hacked, officials at the agency denied to The Wall Street Journal that security-clearance forms were taken, as people familiar with the attack had described.
>
> A day after the public announcement, an OPM spokesman said there was "no evidence to suggest that information other than what is normally found in a personnel file has been exposed.'' By that time, the FBI already knew—and told OPM—that security-clearance forms had been tapped, officials said.
>
> […]Officials familiar with the behind-the-scene discussions said officials at the White House and OPM agreed to handle the problem as at least two separate breaches—one of the personnel files, and one of the security clearance forms.
>
> That had major implications for the initial description of damage. Rather than saying the hack potentially involved the private details of an estimated 18 million people—and possibly millions more if relatives and close friends listed on the security clearance forms are counted—the agency said about four million people were potentially affected.

Eighteen million! And the Chairman of the Committee thinks the real number could be as high as 32 million, according to this article from the radically leftist NPR. In order to give someone a very high security clearance, you have to submit them to a background check. And that's what China got – the background checks of anyone who needed a security clearance. And background checks require you to disclose all the foreign contacts you have interacted with – *including the names of dissidents in foreign countries* who you've been in contact with.

Now, let's see what Congressman Mike Pompeo has to say. He is a graduate of West Point and Harvard Law, and he is on the House Inteligence Committee and the Select Committee on Benghazi.

Excerpt:

> HH: And the Supreme Leader rejected any meaningful concessions yesterday. That's a talk for a different day. I want to turn to the OPM story with you,

> Congressman Pompeo. I just read the Wall Street Journal editorial today. I told people I was the general counsel and deputy director of the OPM. I describe for them what's in these files. So did the Journal. Why hasn't anyone been fired?
>
> MP: Incomprehensible. I don't know how else to explain it. I can't account for why there haven't been not only folks fired, but massive corrective action taken inside that organization that would permit this kind of thing to have happened with no accountability, no one taking responsibility for it, and most importantly, no one beginning the task of ensuring that this kind of thing never happens again, and mitigating the damage from this particular set of breaches.

And a bit later:

> HH: Has the administration been forthcoming to the Intelligence Committee, and you are the right venue, on the scale and nature of the breach, and the risk that it poses? I've been speculating along with the Wall Street Journal, because I know what's in those files. The Chinese have basically a map of every American, and our intelligence agencies, dating back as long as they had digitized it.
>
> MP: You know, I'll say this. They have been behind the curve in identifying not only the scope, but continuing to uncover the things that need to be done to counter the fact that some of this information is likely in the hands of folks who we don't want to have it. So there is a lot of work to do, and time is of the essence to protect lots of folks whose data was in the hands of the federal government, and is now likely in the hands of other governments.
>
> HH: Now you know, Mike Pompeo, when Hanssen spied on the United States and gave away our secrets, people died, because the Russians went and they killed the people that they suspected were working for us. The Chinese are going to be able to run different analyses of this data and come to the conclusion who's working for us, and who's not. And a bunch of other people, they might sell it, they might turn people, they might blackmail people. The scope of this is Snowden-like. So this is the second time in three years that our government has taken just a knee to the groin. I can't describe it any other way, and in the worst possible way, and we're doubled over, and no one seems to know about it.
>
> MP: It is a big deal, Hugh. It is, I don't make statements like firing folks and saying that a senior leader should be let go from their position lightly. But this is serious business. There are real people out there whose lives and potentially the families of those people whose lives are at risk if this data ends up in the hands of folks that shouldn't have it. And that risk is out there, and we've got a lot of work to do to make sure and protect those folks at the level that is demanded from our government.

You can listen to that interview in its entirety on Hugh Hewitt's website. Think anyone will be fired over this? Has anyone been fired over the Obama administration's other failures?

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal is running for President

June 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal

If you don't know who Bobby Jindal is, just know that I have been following his career since the year 2002. I have always consider him to be the Savior of the Republican party, and told all my Indian friends that he would be President one day. You can read his biography here.

Life News has the story about his Wednesday announcement.

Excerpt:

> In January, for the fifth year in a row, Louisiana was declared the most pro-life state in the nation by American's United for Life (AUL).
>
> […]During Jindal's time in office he's signed countless pieces of pro-life legislation as well as limited Obamacare by prohibiting the coverage of elective abortion in health care plans.
>
> The pro-life legislation Jindal's signed include everything from bills that ban abortion at 20-weeks and stop coerced abortions— to legislation that requires abortion facilities to provide ultrasounds prior to an abortion and ensures that medical professionals don't have to participate in abortion.
>
> In 2014, Jindal signed Louisiana Right to Life's flagship legislation, the Unsafe Abortion Protection Act (HB 388), which could close three of the five abortion clinics in the state. HB 388 requires that abortion providers have admitting privileges within 30 miles of a local hospital; clarifies that informed consent protections apply to both surgical abortion, as well as to RU-486 chemical abortions; and that facilities that perform more than five abortions maintain

> proper licensing. After the passage of the HB 388 through the Louisiana Legislation, Gov. Jindal said, “This bill will give women the health and safety protections they deserve.”
>
> Earlier this year, *The Washington Times* reported that Jindal blasted U.S. House Republicans after they pulled a bill that bans abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy. He said, “The American people elected a Republican majority to support the pro-life movement and champion conservative principles. I hope they reconsider.”
>
> In January, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, which serves under Jindal’s administration, announced that they are blocking abortions at an abortion facility Planned Parenthood is building in New Orleans. Originally, their facility was supposed to open by the end of 2014; however, due to opposition from pro-life Louisianans, including Louisiana Right to Life, the Jindal administration and the Archdiocese of New Orleans, their efforts have been stalled.
>
> The Executive Director of Louisiana Right to Life, Benjamin Clapper, told the Washington Post more about Jindal’s commitment to protecting unborn life. He said, “He’s not just been pro-life behind closed doors. He’s also been proudly pro-life across our state.” American’s United for Life also told the Post that during Jindal’s time in office, Louisiana has been the most pro-life it has ever been.
>
> Remarkably, Jindal has always been completely honest about his pro-life views.
>
> In 2003, he said, “In my first race in 2003, at one of my first fundraisers, my first question was from a fairly liberal woman who asked me my position on abortion. I told her I was pro-life. I remember thinking I was going to have to return all the money I had raised! But amazingly, she became a financial supporter despite our differences over abortion. It turns out she already knew I was pro-life; she just wanted to see if I would be honest about my position or if I would waffle in order to get her money.”
>
> According to the National Right to Life Committee, Jindal had a 100-percent voting record during three years as member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Additionally, Louisiana Right to Life has honored Gov. Jindal on numerous occasions for his pro-life stand in the Pelican State. In January, as Jindal left the stage after speaking at their annual pro-life rally Clapper said, “Bobby Jindal is the most pro-life governor in the history of Louisiana.”

Bobby Jindal is very good on defending natural marriage, as well. On fiscal and foreign policy, he is absolutely perfect.

In his announcement video below, he mentions some of his other accomplishments as governor of Louisiana – anti-corruption measures, school choice programs, cutting government waste, cutting taxes, and more… everything you could want as a conservative. I don’t really care at all what candidates promise, or how I feel when they speak. I don’t care which candidate is anointed by Fox News, Wall Street, or the Republican Party. I just want to see the past achievements of the candidates. That’s how

we ought to make this hiring decision – show me the numbers.

The transcript is here, and pay attention to this part about religious liberty, which is my top concern:

> I know that some believe that I talk too much about my faith. But I will not be silenced in order to meet their expectations of political correctness.
>
> They don't accept the idea that you can be both intellectual and Christian. They can't fathom the notion that you can be both smart and conservative. But, they need to get out more. There's a big country out here with millions of Americans who believe in God and are not ashamed to say so.
>
> I would be wary of a president who didn't seek wisdom from the Almighty. I don't know about you, but I've met many very smart people who lack wisdom. Yet Christianity is under assault today in America. But the liberals have forgotten their history. Religious liberty is not some quaint notion from the past. It is fundamental to our freedom. That's why it is protected in the First Amendment to the Constitution. I'm going to say this slowly so that even Hillary Clinton can understand it. America did not create religious liberty, religious liberty created the United States of America.
>
> […]As Republicans, we've already tried to appease the Left, to make the media like us better, to talk in politically correct language, to hide some of our beliefs by calling them distractions. We've tried to mask our conservative ideals, and we have failed.
>
> Every Republican will say they are for school choice, shrinking government, cutting the government workforce, and getting rid of Common Core. But talk is cheap. Talk is just talk. I haven't just talked about doing these things, I've actually done these things.
>
> Every Republican will say they will fight to protect the unborn, repeal Obamacare, secure the border, and destroy ISIS. I won't simply talk about these things, I will do these things.

If I could say one thing to my opponents in the Democrat Party and the left-wing media, I would say that. If you're an evangelical Christian, you won't find a better champion than Jindal. Other people talk the talk, but Jindal walks the walk. Bobby Jindal has no filter. He tells you exactly what he thinks, and he does exactly what he says. And when he is finishing doing it, he will not apologize for it.

Watch the speech. Read the transcript.

UPDATE: My Twitter friend Rachel Alexander has an article on Jindal on The Stream.

Is it better to be liked than respected?

June 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Étienne Prosper Berne-Bellecour – The wounded soldier

As soon as I saw the title of this post from Cold Case Christianity, I knew it would be significant to me.

J. Warner Wallace writes:

> Popularity often requires agreement. It's easy to like people who hold the same opinions and values. It's not really surprising, therefore, that many of us, in an effort to be liked, try to find a way to come to agreement with the people around us. And that's where the trouble usually starts. There are two ways to form agreement:
>
> 1. Influence others toward our position, or
> 2. Simply embrace the positions of others
>
> We can try to move them toward us, or we can simply move toward them. One of these strategies will ensure our likability but the other is the path to respect.
>
> […]We want our kids to influence others rather than allow their friends to influence them, don't we? While it may be easy to embrace the beliefs of others to gain approval, we know the courageous path requires us to point others to the truth, even when it's inconvenient or unpopular. It's time for the Church to take this second path. We've spent far too much time trying to become like the world in order to win its acceptance, rather than having the moral courage to make the case for what we believe. Only this second way will win the respect of those

> around us. I want to hear people say, “Jim, I don’t agree with you at all, but I respect the fact that you’ve tried to be thoughtful about your position and you were kind to me along the way.” That’s the kind of reaction I’m looking for.

Recently, I had to make a hard choice about whether to agree with someone else, or tell her the truth. I found myself discussing education, career and finances with a young lady. I was telling her about the likely consequences of some of the choices that she was making that were related to one of the two areas that I actually know something about. (The other area is apologetics, and she already knows lots about that)

I gave her some advice based on my understanding of these things – from my experience. There was no doubt that when it came to these areas, I had more experience than she did, and more results to show for my past decisions in those areas. But I could feel her slipping away the more evidence I showed her. She preferred to listen to people who agreed with what her feelings were telling her. Eventually, I lost her. But there was nothing else I could do. I spoke the truth based on what I knew and experienced myself in those areas. I wouldn’t have given her advice in many other areas where she knew much more than I did – just in this one, where I actually knew what I was talking about.

Fortunately other young people do take my advice in those areas, and it does work out well for them. But for me to tell them what they don’t want to hear does take courage. And sometimes, you end up losing someone close who just doesn’t believe that you know what you are talking about. So I would say that telling the truth and pointing to evidence does not *always* get you respect for what you know about. It gives you a chance of being respected.

By the way, I could still be proven wrong with that lady I was advising. It’s happened before. I think I told her the truth, and I hope one day she will see that.

Supreme Court legislates from the bench to save Obamacare, again!

June 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

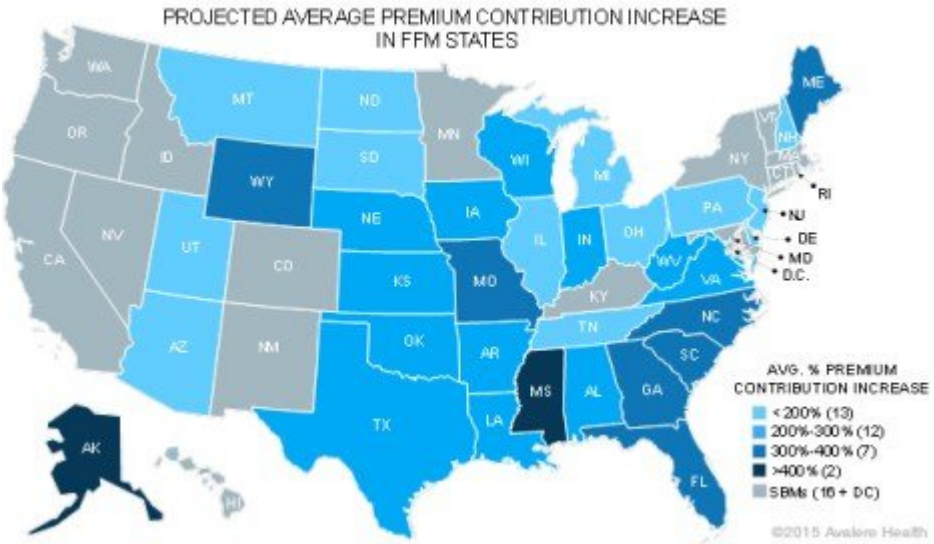

Obamacare premium increases by state (click for larger image)

Ben Shapiro who is a Harvard Law grad has a good summary of Thursday's awful Supreme Court decision.

He writes:

> On Thursday, the Supreme Court released its long-awaited decision on Obamacare's IRS subsidies under federal health insurance exchanges. And, as expected, the Court rewrote the statute to help President Obama's signature law.
>
> […]In King v. Burwell, four citizens sued over Obamacare, alleging that they had been forced to purchase health insurance; they said that the federal health exchange set up in Virginia in absence of a state-created health exchange under Obamacare did not count as a "state exchange" for purposes of the statute, making it illegal for them to receive federal subsidies for their health insurance. Without the subsidies, they would no longer be required to purchase health insurance, since it would be too expensive.
>
> Now, Obamacare's language is quite clear: it states that only those who buy insurance via state-run health exchanges may receive federal subsidies. This provision was purposefully designed to incentivize states to set up their own exchanges, in order that politicians could take credit for making health insurance more widely available with the help of the federal government. When states turned down the opportunity to set up such exchanges, the scheme collapsed. Or at least it would have, had not President Obama's IRS casually rewritten the law, and provided federal health insurance subsidies via the federal health exchanges in violation of both the letter and spirit of the law.

Basically, the Supreme Court judges interpreted "an exchange established by the State"

to mean “an exchange established by the State *or the Federal Government*“. If you think that’s a substantial mistake, you’re right. It’s a complete fabrication, and it amounts to writing legislation on-the-fly to save Obama’s law.

Shapiro again:

> Roberts utilized the following logic, direct from the insane asylum:
>
> [W]e must determine whether a Federal Ex- change is “established by the State” for purposes of Section 36B. At the outset, it might seem that a Federal Exchange cannot fulfill this requirement. After all, the Act defines “State” to mean “each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia”—a definition that does not include the Federal Government. 42 U. S. C. §18024(d). But when read in context, “with a view to [its] place in the overall statutory scheme,” the meaning of the phrase “established by the State” is not so clear.
>
> Then, for page after dreadful page, Roberts and the Court majority torture the statute, declaring that if it floats, state exchanges will be deemed federal exchanges, and if it sinks, federal exchanges will be declared state exchanges.

Apparently, the plain meaning of the text is not so clear to our nine black-robed oligarchs.

Ben quotes Justice Scalia’s dissent:

> The Court holds that when the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act says “Exchange established by the State” it means “Exchange established by the State or the Federal Government.” That is of course quite absurd, and the Court’s 21 pages of explanation make it no less so…. Words no longer have meaning if an Exchange that is not established by a State is “established by the State.” It is hard to come up with a clearer way to limit tax credits to state Exchanges than to use the words “established by the State.” And it is hard to come up with a reason to include the words “by the State” other than the purpose of limiting credits to state Exchanges.

Investors Business Daily says that Obamacare is running into financial struggles. So it’s not just that you can’t keep your doctor, you can’t keep your health plan, and you have to pay thousands more for health insurance. Now we find out that the rosy fiscal projections for the cost of the law were *false*.

Looks like we are going to be stuck with Obamacare until we get a Republican President. I think that as more people who get their health care through their employers start to feel the premium pain that self-employed people have already felt. That may be useful for the 2016 election, especially since Hillary has already thrown her support behind Obamacare. Maybe when people are paying double what they used to pay for half as much coverage, then they’ll understand why we do not want government involved in the health care industry.

How should Christians respond to the Supreme Court’s decision to redefine marriage?

June 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

In case you haven’t heard, the Supreme Court voted to redefine marriage to remove the focus on creating and raising children in stable relationships. Now marriage is just for any two or more people who have feelings for each other, and when the feelings go, so does the marriage. The commitment is gone, the child-centered focus is gone. It’s just about the needs of selfish adults.

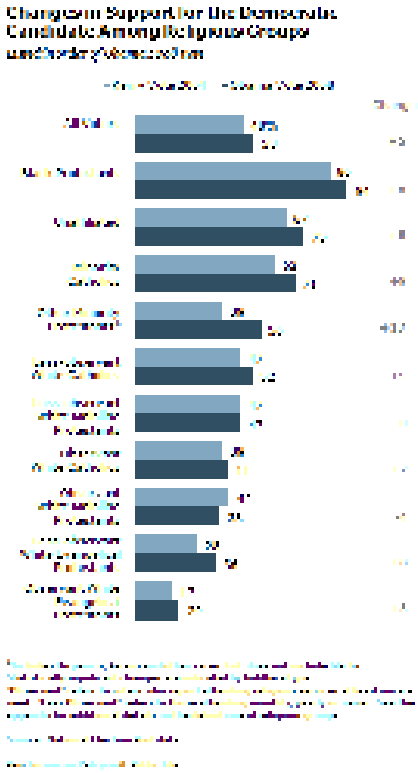

Which Religions Voted for Obama in 2008?

And more:

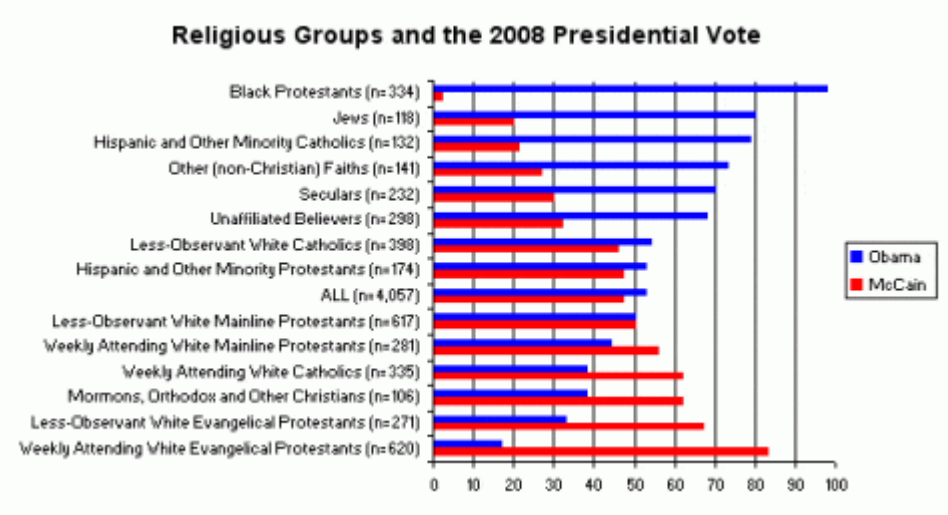

2008 voting broken down by religious groups

So, remember that when you are processing today's decision on gay marriage – not every person who calls herself a Christian actually is what she claims to be. For many of them, religion is just a custom, like the clothes they wear, or the food they eat. They don't really believe a word of the Bible, and just want to dance and sing in church for the sake of their own happiness. There is nothing cognitive going on in some churches. No understanding, no authenticity.

You can read Justice Scalia's dissent to the decision here.

How should Christians respond?

This post by Lenny Esposito at Come Reason made me laugh. He writes about how Christians should respond to same-sex marriage, since the Supreme Court is about to rule on it, and is guaranteed to rule against natural marriage.

Lenny has arguments against same-sex marriage that are made on the basis of logic and evidence. But not everyone is happy with his approach.

He writes:

> I did receive a few responses from people who wrote something to the effect of "All we need is the Gospel. Share the Word with them." I've run into such thinking before, with those who question the necessity of rigorous training in logic and apologetics. They think such things are "of men." They admonish me and other believers to simply let loose the "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17) to fight our battles.
>
> I think such talk is sincere but misguided. First of all, we live in a post-Christian culture. The Bible is not taken to be the final answer on issues such as same-sex marriage. That's why if I quote the Bible to a person who supports homosexual unions, it really doesn't sway them at all. **In fact, many times it solidifies their stance since they see themselves as more modern and progressive than some 2,000 year-old book.**
>
> Anyone who has been paying attention to the changes of belief about this issue

> can quickly see my point. We've been offering Biblical admonition against homosexuality and same-sex marriage for over 30 years. Which way did the culture shift? Which way did the Church shift? According to a newly released Pew study, over 60% of Catholic and mainline Protestants support same-sex marriage.1 Even among Evangelicals, the support for same-sex marriage has DOUBLED in the last ten years.2 All this even though the scriptural admonitions against homosexuality are clear and have been discussed repeatedly, especially in churches.
>
> In the words of Dr. Phil, "How's that workin' for ya?" I can answer that: it isn't.

I'm actually not sure that any churches have talked about the Bible says about any issue in the real world. Mine certainly never does, and the pastors are all quite proud of preaching the gospel every week and never talking about current events, law or policy. It's just Bible, Bible, Bible all the time, and never a word about how it is supported by evidence, or how it applies to real world issues. No wonder churched Christians get the idea that Christianity is just about their emotional state, and not about reality.

More from Lenny:

> While I do believe that the Christians who think quoting scripture is the proper way to face these questions are sincere, they are trying to make scripture into something that it is not. They think scriptures are some kind of secret weapon that cannot be resisted. They see it as a sort of mystical summons of the Holy Spirit who will magically change those with whom they're engaging; a few phrases that one only needs to voice in order to change people's hearts and minds.
>
> But "the Word" is not a magical incantation and it's wrong to think of it that way. Such is an unbiblical view of scripture itself. Yes, the Holy Spirit is the one who transforms lives. It is he would is responsible for our understanding our sinfulness and our need for Christ. But that doesn't mean the Spirit will reshape every unregenerate idea, even among believers. That's why Paul didn't quote scripture to the Athenians in Acts 17 when he witnessed to them. Instead, he used popular poets and thinkers they were familiar with to make his point. When Paul was held prisoner in Jerusalem, he didn't quote scripture to his captors, but appealed to Roman law (Acts 22:25) in order to escape flogging.

I thought it was worth quoting what Lenny said. I think he is more familiar with the normal church background where people rely on feelings and nudges and intuitions, and are hyper-spiritual about everything.

So what do you think? Is he right about this?

He didn't provide a case against same-sex marriage in his post, so I'll just link to my case against same-sex marriage, and summarize the main points below:

1. Celebrating same-sex unions is bad for children

2. Celebrating same-sex unions is bad for public health
3. Celebrating same-sex unions is bad for business and religious liberty

And of course there have been more recent studies since I wrote that which are relevant, like this one that I blogged about previously. There's much more to the case for natural marriage than my 3 points, but it's a start.

Should Christian apologists avoid political, moral and cultural issues?

June 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

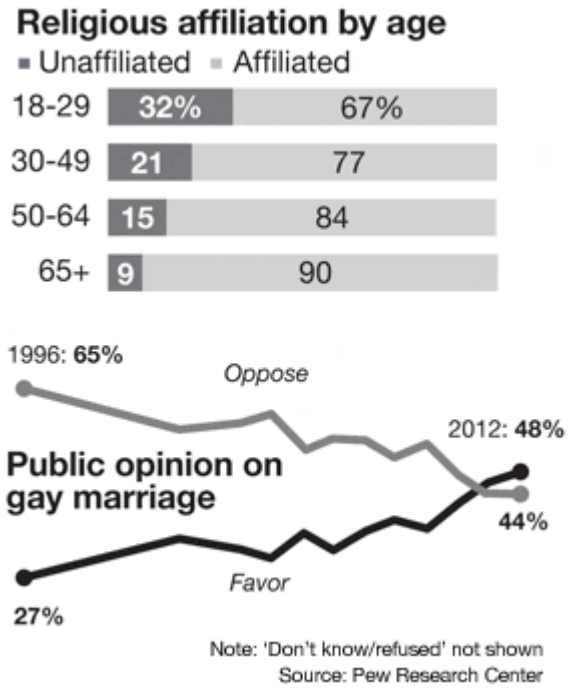

The Sexual Revolution and the decline in religious affiliation
Here's an article from The American Conservative, by moderate conservative Rod Dreher, dated April 2013.

He writes:

> Twenty years ago, new president Bill Clinton stepped on a political landmine when he tried to fulfill a campaign promise to permit gay soldiers to serve openly. Same-sex marriage barely registered as a political cause; the country was then three years away from the Defense of Marriage Act and four years from comedian Ellen DeGeneres's prime-time coming out.
>
> Then came what historians will one day recall as a cultural revolution. Now we're entering the endgame of the struggle over gay rights and the meaning of homosexuality. Conservatives have been routed, both in court and increasingly in the court of public opinion. It is commonly believed that the only reason to oppose same-sex marriage is rank bigotry or for religious reasons, neither of which—the argument goes—has any place in determining laws or public standards.
>
> The magnitude of the defeat suffered by moral traditionalists will become ever clearer as older Americans pass from the scene. Poll after poll shows that for the young, homosexuality is normal and gay marriage is no big deal—except, of course, if one opposes it, in which case one has the approximate moral status of

> a segregationist in the late 1960s.
>
> […]When they were writing the widely acclaimed 2010 book *American Grace*, a comprehensive study of contemporary religious belief and practice, political scientists Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell noticed two inverse trend lines in social-science measures, both starting around 1990.
>
> They found that young Americans coming into adulthood at that time began to accept homosexuality as morally licit in larger numbers. They also observed that younger Americans began more and more to fall away from organized religion. The evangelical boom of the 1970s and 1980s stopped, and if not for a tsunami of Hispanic immigration the U.S. Catholic church would be losing adherents at the same rate as the long-dwindling Protestant mainline.
>
> **Over time, the data showed, attitudes on moral issues proved to be strong predictors of religious engagement. In particular, the more liberal one was on homosexuality, the less likely one was to claim religious affiliation. It's not that younger Americans were becoming atheists. Rather, most of them identify as "spiritual, but not religious." Combined with atheists and agnostics, these "Nones"—the term is Putnam's and Campbell's—comprise the nation's fastest-growing faith demographic.**
>
> Indeed, according to a 2012 Pew Research Center study, the Nones comprise one out of three Americans under 30. This is not simply a matter of young people doing what young people tend to do: keep church at arm's length until they settle down. Pew's Greg Smith told NPR that this generation is more religiously unaffiliated than any on record. Putnam—the Harvard scholar best known for his best-selling civic culture study *Bowling Alone*—has said that there's no reason to think they will return to church in significant numbers as they age.
>
> Putnam and Campbell were careful to say in *American Grace* that correlation is not causation, but they did point out that as gay activism moved toward center stage in American political life… the vivid public role many Christian leaders took in opposing gay rights alienated young Americans from organized religion.
>
> In a dinner conversation not long after the publication of *American Grace*, Putnam told me that Christian churches would have to liberalize on sexual teaching if they hoped to retain the loyalty of younger generations. This seems at first like a reasonable conclusion, but the experience of America's liberal denominations belies that prescription. Mainline Protestant churches, which have been far more accepting of homosexuality and sexual liberation in general, have continued their stark membership decline.
>
> **It seems that when people decide that historically normative Christianity is wrong about sex, they typically don't find a church that endorses their liberal views. They quit going to church altogether.**

That's why I am somewhat underwhelmed with the pure apologetics approach of most

apologists.The real reason that drives atheist “apologetics” is, to be frank, the desire to dispense with rules around sexuality. The sexual freedom comes first, and then the speculative smokescreens follow. Close behind the sexual freedom is leftist economic policies (which are seen as more “fair”) and anti-business environmentalist policies. So there’s more turf to defend here than just the existence of God, the resurrection and the reliability of the Bible. That’s not what’s behind the drift of young people away from Christianity.

That’s why on this blog, you get a ton of politics and tons of studies and arguments against premarital sex, no-fault divorce, single motherhood by choice, same-sex marriage, and everything else that comes before traditional apologetics. (And you also get lots of apologetics, too!) We need to get better at defending Christian sexual ethics using purely secular arguments and evidence, e.g. – showing people how premarital sex undermines marital stability or how gay parenting harms the well-being of children. There are reasons for these rules we have, and we have to go beyond “The Bible Says…” if we expect to be convincing to young people.

And when we go against the Sexual Revolution, we have to bring secular arguments and secular evidence and bring it to bear squarely against radical feminism, and the Sexual Revolution. In particular, we have to put the burden of responsibility for poor sexual decisions back on the shoulders of young people. Young men must reject a cultural standard of what a “good” woman is. Young women must reject a cultural standard of what a “good” man is. Men and women who reject traditional Christianity, traditional morality, and traditional notions of male leadership and male roles are *bad people to have relationships with*. We have to persuade both men and women about the harm that poor choices cause – abortion, divorce, fatherlessness, expensive welfare programs. There is no point in blaming bad men and women – they are already bad. We have to teach young people to choose good men and good women. We have to teach them that choosing mates poorly, and making poor sexual choices, is *their responsibility.* They are not victims! And we shouldn’t be blaming one sex for the others *poor choices,* i.e. – we should not be blaming bad men when women chose them and make bad choices with the bad men. Those men were bad before the women chose them, and those women are only victims of *their own poor choices.*

When it comes to same-sex marriage, we have to defend traditional marriage using secular arguments and secular evidence. We have to show how same-sex marriage undermines religious liberty. We have to show how same-sex marriage undermines marital norms like exclusivity and permanence. We have to show how same-sex marriage harms children by depriving them of a mother or a father or both. And so on. We have to defend the goodness of traditional marriage.

Stephen Baskerville: five myths about no-fault divorce

June 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Catholic News Agency.

Introduction:

> Almost four decades after the "no-fault" divorce revolution began in California, misconceptions abound. Even the many books about divorce, including myriad self-help manuals, are full of inaccurate and misleading information. No public debate preceded the introduction of no-fault divorce laws in the 1970s, and no debate has taken place since.
>
> Yet divorce-on-demand is exacting a devastating toll on our children, our social order, our economy, and even our constitutional rights. A recent study estimates the financial cost of divorce to taxpayers at $112 billion annually. Recent demands to legitimize same-sex marriage almost certainly follow from the divorce revolution, since gay activists readily acknowledge that they only desire to marry under the loosened terms that have resulted from the new divorce laws. Divorce also contributes to a dangerous increase in the power of the state over private life.

Here are the five myths about no-fault divorce:

- No-fault divorce permitted divorce by mutual consent, thus making divorce less acrimonious
- We cannot force people to remain married and should not try
- No-fault divorce has led men to abandon their wives and children
- When couples cannot agree or cooperate about matters like how the children should be raised, a judge must decide according to "the best interest of the child"
- Divorce must be made easy because of domestic violence

And the details about number three:

> Myth 3: No-fault divorce has led men to abandon their wives and children.
>
> Fact: This does happen (wives more often than children), but it is greatly exaggerated. The vast majority of no-fault divorces — especially those involving children — are filed by wives. In fact, as Judy Parejko, author of Stolen Vows, has shown, the no-fault revolution was engineered largely by feminist lawyers, with the cooperation of the bar associations, as part of the sexual revolution. Overwhelmingly, it has served to separate large numbers of children from their fathers. Sometimes the genders are reversed, so that fathers take children from mothers. But either way, the main effect of no-fault is to make children weapons and pawns to gain power through the courts, not the "abandonment" of them by

> either parent.

Al Mohler wrote about the history of no-fault divorce a while back, and I think it's worth reviewing why we have this lousy law.

> The story behind America's love affair with no-fault divorce is a sad and instructive tale. As Baskerville documents, no-fault divorce laws emerged in the United States during the 1970s and quickly spread across the nation. Even though only nine states had no-fault divorce laws in 1977, by 1995, every state had legalized no-fault divorce.
>
> Behind all this is an ideological revolution driven by feminism and facilitated by this society's embrace of autonomous individualism. Baskerville argues that divorce "became the most devastating weapon in the arsenal of feminism, because it creates millions of gender battles on the most personal level." As far back as 1947, the National Association of Women Lawyers [NAWL] was pushing for what we now know as no-fault divorce. More recently, NAWL claims credit for the divorce revolution, describing it as "the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken."
>
> The feminists and NAWL were not working alone, of course. Baskerville explains that the American Bar Association "persuaded the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws [NCCUSL] to produce the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act." Eventually, this led to a revolution in law and convulsions in society at large. This legal revolution effectively drove a stake into the heart of marriage itself, with inevitable consequences. In effect, no-fault divorce has become the catalyst for one of the most destructive cultural shifts in human history. Now, no-fault divorce is championed by many governments in the name of human rights, and America's divorce revolution is spreading around the world under the banner of "liberation."

And note that Democrats oppose any effort to reform laws that make it easy to break up marriages:

> A basic dishonesty on the question of divorce pervades our political culture. Baskerville cites Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm as referring to divorce as a couple's "private decision." Granholm's comments came as she vetoed a bill intended to reform divorce law in her state. The danger and dishonesty of referring to divorce as a couple's "private decision" is evident in the fact that this supposedly private decision imposes a reality, not only on the couple, but also on children and the larger society. Indeed, the "private decision" is really not made by a couple at all–but only by any spouse demanding a divorce.

So, no-fault was pushed by two groups: feminists and trial lawyers.

There's a lot of talk these days about gay marriage and how it undermines marital norms and normalizes raising children without either their biological father or biological mother.

But before there was gay marriage, there was no-fault divorce, which deprives children of their biological father. There is no provision for no-fault divorce in the Bible, so it seems to me that Christians should be against frivolous divorce just like we are against same-sex marriage.

If you find a discrepancy in the Bible, does that mean Jesus didn't exist?

June 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's think clearly about Christianity

Even if we don't know whether there was one angel or two angels at Jesus' tomb, we can still know things about whether God exists and whether Jesus rose from the dead.

First, we can know that the universe was created and designed because of reliable, experimental evidence that the universe came into being and is finely-tuned for life. And second, we can know that Jesus was buried, that his tomb was found empty, that a variety of people had experiences of him appearing to them after his death, and that the Christian movement had an early belief that he was resurrected from the dead. We know those core things like we know anything – because we have good evidence. Other things that are more peripheral may not be as supported by evidence. We can remain agnostic about those peripheral things, but that agnosticism about peripheral things doesn't undermine the things that we know.

William Lane Craig answered a question related to this problem for a person who accepted the minimal facts case for the resurrection but then though that someone this case couldn't work unless he accepted inerrancy as well.

Here's the question:

> After re-evaluating my Christian faith and pruning it for two years, I can't shake what seem like two disparate conclusions. One is that the evidence for Jesus resurrection is impecable. But the other is that there seem to be some very awkward realities about the composition of scripture (like errors or authors claiming to write by another name). Yet, the authors of the New Testament, including Jesus, seem to use Scripture in a way that assumes it is word for word

> from God.
>
> While inductive logic is used to arrive at a strong historical case for the resurrection of Jesus, inductive logic can also be used to arrive at a strong case for many of the peculiaraties about Scripture previously mentioned.
>
> It seems that the approach which many apologists take at this point is that, having established the authority of Jesus by the resurrection, if the argument being raised against scripture contradicts an opinion expressed by Jesus in the Gospels, then the argument for a contradiction must have no possible harmonizations for it to really stick. But I don't see how this is fair to say, since (1) it seems unfair to use inductive logic to evidence Jesus' resurrection but then not use it for criticisms against the Bible and (2) an inductive argument can be strong despite what Jesus as recorded in the Gospels says, especially since we cannot assume the precision with which many of the saying were recorded. And (3), anybody can cook up a harmonization of some verse that is possible but not plausible, which I am sure you have seen first hand many times.
>
> **Yet, holding these two positions in tension tends to be corrosive to my faith and ultimately leads to a certain bitterness against God for allowing the biblical writers to play fast-and-loose with his words and for not providing a clarity that brings more certainty about what is from him and what isn't. Any help you can give to relieve this tension would be greatly appreciated.**

Now Dr. Craig has a long response on his Reasonable Faith web site, but I just want to quote you this:

> But secondly, suppose you've done all that and are still convinced that Scripture is not inerrant. Does that mean that the deity and resurrection of Christ go down the drain? No, not all. […]As you recognize, we have a very strong case for the resurrection of Jesus. That case in no way depends on the Bible's being inerrant. This became very clear to me during my doctoral studies in Munich with Wolfhart Pannenberg. Pannenberg had rocked German theology by maintaining that a sound historical case can be made for the resurrection of Jesus. Yet he also believed that the Gospel resurrection appearances stories are so legendary that they have scarcely a historical kernel in them! He did not even trust the Markan account of the discovery of the empty tomb. Rather his argument was founded on the early pre-Pauline tradition about the appearances in I Corinthians 15.3-5 and on the consideration that a movement based on the resurrection of dead man would have been impossible in Jerusalem in the face of a tomb containing his corpse.
>
> Evangelicals sometimes give lip service to the claim that the Gospels are historically reliable, even when examined by the canons of ordinary historical research; but I wonder if they really believe this. It *really is true* that a solid, persuasive case for Jesus' resurrection can be made without any assumption of

> the Gospels' inerrancy.
>
> By contrast, the case for Jesus' belief that the Old Testament Scriptures are inerrant is much weaker. I think there's no doubt that (5) is the premiss that would have to go if biblical inerrancy were to be abandoned. We should have to re-think our doctrine of inspiration in that case, but we needn't give up belief in God or in Jesus, as Bart Ehrman did. Ehrman had, it seems to me, a flawed theological system of beliefs as a Christian. It seems that at the center of his web of theological beliefs was biblical inerrancy, and everything else, like the beliefs in the deity of Christ and in his resurrection, depended on that. Once the center was gone, the whole web soon collapsed. But when you think about it, such a structure is deeply flawed. At the center of our web of beliefs ought to be some core belief like the belief that God exists, with the deity and resurrection of Christ somewhere near the center. The doctrine of inspiration of Scripture will be somewhere further out and inerrancy even farther toward the periphery as a corollary of inspiration. **If inerrancy goes, the web will feel the reverberations of that loss, as we adjust our doctrine of inspiration accordingly, but the web will not collapse because belief in God and Christ and his resurrection and so on don't depend upon the doctrine of biblical inerrancy.**

We have mainstream scientific evidence for God's existence, and a mainstream historical evidence for a minimal facts case for the resurrection. None of that evidence depends on inerrancy being true.

So can we please just accept what can be known from experimental science and standard historical methods, and work our lives around that, and not nitpick about peripheral issues so much? I am inerrantist, and so is Dr. Craig. But you don't have to be in order to accept that the *mainstream* evidence that shows that universe was created and fine-tuned, and that Jesus was raised bodily from the dead. Don't let "one angel vs two angels "stop you from accepting things we can know. You can just stay agnostic about the things you think we don't know.

This woman’s husband left her for his business partner and took her kids

June 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A striking story from the Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> In the fall of 2007, my husband of almost ten years told me that he was gay and that he wanted a divorce. In an instant, the world that I had known and loved—the life we had built together—was shattered.
>
> I tried to convince him to stay, to stick it out and fight to save our marriage. But my voice, my desires, my needs—and those of our two young children—no longer mattered to him. We had become disposable, because he had embraced one tiny word that had become his entire identity. Being gay trumped commitment, vows, responsibility, faith, fatherhood, marriage, friendships, and community. All of this was thrown away for the sake of his new identity.
>
> Try as I might to save our marriage, there was no stopping my husband. Our divorce was not settled in mediation or with lawyers. No, it went all the way to trial. My husband wanted primary custody of our children. His entire case can be summed up in one sentence: “I am gay, and I deserve my rights.” It worked: the judge gave him practically everything he wanted. At one point, he even told my husband, “If you had asked for more, I would have given it to you.”
>
> I truly believe that judge was legislating from the bench, disregarding the facts of our particular case and simply using us—using *our children*— to help influence future cases. In our society, LGBT citizens are seen as marginalized victims who must be protected at all costs, even if it means stripping rights from others. By ignoring the injustice committed against me and my children, the judge seemed to think that he was correcting a larger injustice.
>
> […]At the time of the first ceremony, the marriage was not recognized by our state, our nation, or our church. And my ex-husband’s new marriage, like the majority of male-male relationships, is an “open,” non-exclusive relationship. This sends a clear message to our children: what you feel trumps all laws, promises, and higher authorities. You can do whatever you want, whenever you want—and it doesn’t matter who you hurt along the way.
>
> […]Our two young children were willfully and intentionally thrust into a world of strife and combative beliefs, lifestyles, and values, all in the name of “gay rights.” Their father moved into his new partner’s condo, which is in a complex inhabited by sixteen gay men. One of the men has a 19-year-old male prostitute who comes to service him. Another man, who functions as the father figure of this community, is in his late sixties and has a boyfriend in his twenties. My

> children are brought to gay parties where they are the only children and where only alcoholic beverages are served. They are taken to transgender baseball games, gay rights fundraisers, and LGBT film festivals.
>
> Both of my children face identity issues, just like other children. Yet there are certain deep and unique problems that they will face as a direct result of my former husband's actions. My son is now a maturing teen, and he is very interested in girls. But how will he learn how to deal with that interest when he is surrounded by men who seek sexual gratification from other men? How will he learn to treat girls with care and respect when his father has rejected them and devalues them? How will he embrace his developing masculinity without seeing his father live out authentic manhood by treating his wife and family with love, honoring his marriage vows even when it's hard?
>
> My daughter suffers too. She needs a dad who will encourage her to embrace her femininity and beauty, but these qualities are parodied and distorted in her father's world. Her dad wears make-up and sex bondage straps for Halloween. She is often exposed to men dressing as women. The walls in his condo are adorned with large framed pictures of women in provocative positions. What is my little girl to believe about her own femininity and beauty? Her father should be protecting her sexuality. Instead, he is warping it.
>
> Without the guidance of both their mother and their father, how can my children navigate their developing identities and sexuality? I ache to see my children struggle, desperately trying to make sense of their world.

When I was younger and considering marriage, I thought a lot about no-fault divorce and how I would feel about my wife leaving me because she wanted to find herself in Europe, or something. I thought about the feminist judge who would give her custody of our children, and force me to pay alimony and child support. Marriage did not seem like a good risk to me then. I guess part of me always thought that feminists would be the only bad guys in this sexual revolution, and men and children were the victims of feminist selfishness. But this woman's story really makes me realize how women can be just as much the victims of judicial activism as any man was under no-fault divorce laws. That story she told about the activist judge just made my blood run cold. What must that have been like for her, to lose custody of her kids and have them put into the "gay lifestyle" Grindr-style environment? My heart goes out to her.

Previously, I blogged about Dawn Stefanowicz's story of growing up with a gay father.

MIT physicist Alan Lightman on fine-tuning and the multiverse

June 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
Here's the article from Harper's magazine.

The MIT physicist says that the fine-tuning is real, and is best explained by positing the existence of an infinite number of universes that are not fine-tuned – the so-called multiverse.

Excerpt:

> While challenging the Platonic dream of theoretical physicists, the multiverse idea does explain one aspect of our universe that has unsettled some scientists for years: according to various calculations, if the values of some of the fundamental parameters of our universe were a little larger or a little smaller, life could not have arisen. For example, if the nuclear force were a few percentage points stronger than it actually is, then all the hydrogen atoms in the infant universe would have fused with other hydrogen atoms to make helium, and there would be no hydrogen left. No hydrogen means no water. Although we are far from certain about what conditions are necessary for life, most biologists believe that water is necessary. On the other hand, if the nuclear force were substantially weaker than what it actually is, then the complex atoms needed for biology could not hold together. As another example, if the relationship between the strengths of the gravitational force and the electromagnetic force were not close to what it is, then the cosmos would not harbor any stars that explode and spew out life-supporting chemical elements into space or any other stars that form planets. Both kinds of stars are required for the emergence of life. The strengths of the basic forces and certain other fundamental parameters in our universe appear to be "fine-tuned" to allow the existence of life. The recognition of this fine-tuning led British physicist Brandon Carter to articulate what he called the anthropic principle, which states that the universe must have the parameters it does because we are here to observe it. Actually, the word *anthropic*, from the Greek

> for “man,” is a misnomer: if these fundamental parameters were much different from what they are, it is not only human beings who would not exist. No life of any kind would exist.
>
> If such conclusions are correct, the great question, of course, is *why* these fundamental parameters happen to lie within the range needed for life. Does the universe care about life? Intelligent design is one answer. Indeed, a fair number of theologians, philosophers, and even some scientists have used fine-tuning and the anthropic principle as evidence of the existence of God. For example, at the 2011 Christian Scholars’ Conference at Pepperdine University, Francis Collins, a leading geneticist and director of the National Institutes of Health, said, “To get our universe, with all of its potential for complexities or any kind of potential for any kind of life-form, everything has to be precisely defined on this knife edge of improbability…. [Y]ou have to see the hands of a creator who set the parameters to be just so because the creator was interested in something a little more complicated than random particles.”
>
> Intelligent design, however, is an answer to fine-tuning that does not appeal to most scientists. The multiverse offers another explanation. If there are countless different universes with different properties—for example, some with nuclear forces much stronger than in our universe and some with nuclear forces much weaker—then some of those universes will allow the emergence of life and some will not. Some of those universes will be dead, lifeless hulks of matter and energy, and others will permit the emergence of cells, plants and animals, minds. From the huge range of possible universes predicted by the theories, the fraction of universes with life is undoubtedly small. But that doesn’t matter. We live in one of the universes that permits life because otherwise we wouldn’t be here to ask the question.

I thought I was going to have to go outside this article to refute the multiverse, but Lightman is honest enough to refute it himself:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.
>
> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

The multiverse is not pure nonsense, it is theoretically possible. The problem is that the multiverse generator itself would require fine-tuning, so the multiverse doesn't get rid of the problem. And, as Lightman indicates, we have no independent experimental evidence for the existence of the multiverse in any case. Atheists just have to take it on faith, and hope that their speculations will be proved right. Meanwhile, the fine-tuning is just as easily explained by postulating God, and we have independent evidence for God's existence, like the the origin of biological information, the sudden appearance of animal body plans, the argument from consciousness, and so on. Even if the naturalists could explain the fine-tuning, they would still have a lot of explaining to do. Theism (intelligent causation) is the simplest explanation for all of the things we learn from the progress of science.

We need to be frank about atheists and their objections to the progress of science. Within the last 100 years, we have discovered that the physical universe came into being out of nothing 15 billion years ago, and we have discovered that this one universe is fine-tuned for intelligent life. I don't think it's like that the last 100 years of scientific progress on the origins question are going to be overturned so that science once again affirms what atheists believe about the universe. Things are going the wrong way for atheists – at least with respect to science.

See it in action

To see these arguments examined in a debate with a famous atheist, simply watch the debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens, and judge which debater is willing to form his beliefs on scientific progress, and which debater is forming his beliefs *against* the science we have today, and hoping that the good science we have today based on experiments will be overturned by speculative theories at some point in the future. When you watch that debate, it becomes very clear that Christian theists are interested in conforming their beliefs to science, and atheists are very interested in speculating against what science has shown in order to maintain their current pre-scientific view. That's not what rational people ought to do when confronted with evidence.

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- William Lane Craig's moral argument

- Near-death experiences and mental effort: evidence for the soul
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

ADF offers advice on SCOTUS marriage redefinition ruling

June 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

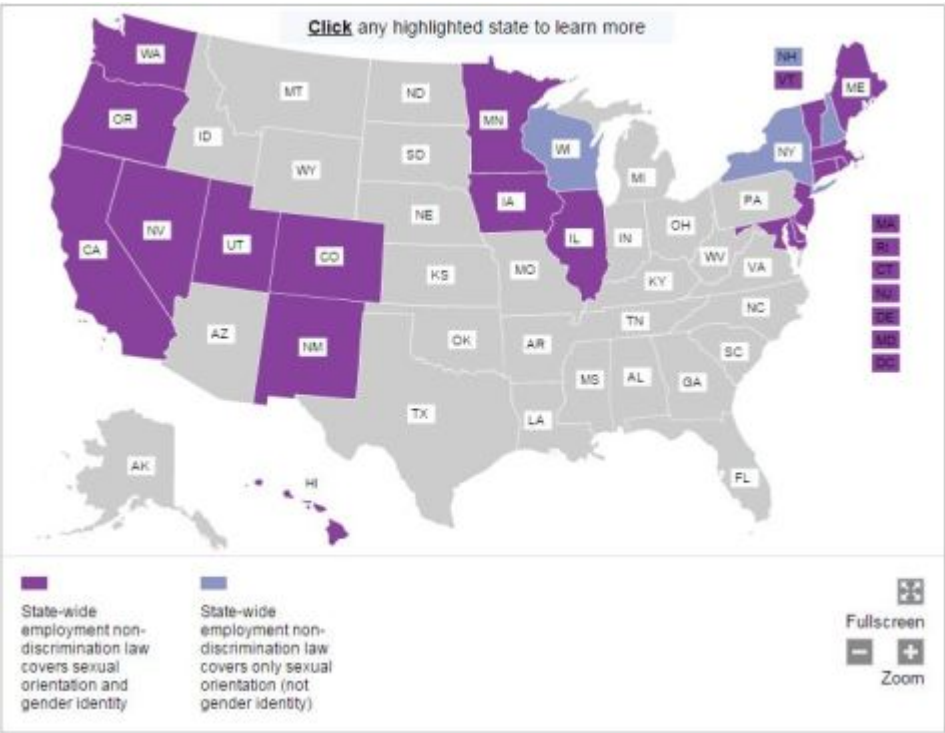

States with non-discrimination laws
(Source: ACLU)

Erik Stanley of the Alliance Defending Freedom offers advice to churches on how to respond to the Supreme Court's decision to redefine marriage to remove the gender requirement.

He says:

> […][T]he greatest threat for churches lies in the application of the Court's decision to believers who live in jurisdictions covered by so-called "non-discrimination" laws and ordinances. Everywhere that marriage has been redefined in the last several years has seen an awakening of non-discrimination laws that prohibit discrimination in employment, housing, or places of public accommodation on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. These laws are peppered throughout the states and local governments and are a linchpin of the sexual revolution's broader legal and political strategy: to establish non-discrimination laws at all levels throughout the country and to to "ensure that religion is not used as an excuse to discriminate."
>
> In coming days, the threat from these non-discrimination laws will materialize in numerous ways as same-sex couples marry. But there are proactive steps your church can take to protect itself.

I put the map from the ACLU above. I think that's what he is talking about when he says

non-discrimination states. Keep in mind that the ACLU supported redefining marriage, and opposes religious liberty.

Erik's article covers 3 areas:

1. Church's statement of faith
2. Pastors officiating same-sex marriage ceremonies
3. Church's facility usage policy

Part 3) was the most interesting to me:

> **3. Churches should ensure their facilities usage policies are revised to allow only uses consistent with the church's religious beliefs.**
>
> In the wake of the Supreme Court ruling, some churches may be approached by same-sex couples seeking to be married in the church facility. Churches should not feel as if they have to close their doors to the community just to prevent wedding ceremonies with which they disagree. Churches must continue to be a welcoming presence in the community and can do so through updating or revising their facility usage policy. The key point is to tie usage of the church's facility to the statement of faith and religious beliefs of the church. And then to make clear that uses inconsistent with those religious beliefs will not be allowed. Alliance Defending Freedom has a sample facilities usage policy available in our Protecting Your Ministry manual.

So you update your statement of faith, and then tie usage of the the facility to that statement of faith. Simple.

I took a quick look at the booklet, and it also talked about tying employment within the church and church membership to the statement of faith.

Denny Burk summarizes those:

> **2. Religious Employment Criteria**
>
> Your church can best avail itself of the First Amendment's protection in employee disputes if you create and faithfully enforce religious employment criteria for every employee. That requires churches to do at least two things: (1) require all employees and volunteers to sign a statement affirming the church's statement of faith and standards of conduct, and (2) create written job descriptions for every employee and volunteer position.
>
> **4. Formal Membership Policy**
>
> If your church does not have a membership policy, you need to change that. Biblically, this should already be a priority for your church. You need to specify what the requirements for membership are, how one joins, how one resigns, and the procedures for church discipline. If all of this isn't spelled out up front, your church could be exposed (see ADF guide pp. 17-18).

So what to make of this? Well, the ADF is an organization that I admire and trust. I cannot abide Christians who do not want to understand the details of what is happening with religious liberty in their country. The ADF has first class lawyers from the top law schools, and they defend religious liberty at every level of our justice system, up to and including the Supreme Court. If you want to help your church protect itself from prosecution, then you must point them to the ADF booklet linked above.

And this is especially true if you are in one of those states in the map above. In looking over the map, I noticed that much of the trouble we have been having with Christian businesses getting sued are in states that have these laws… Oregon, Washington, New Mexico, New York, and so on. Pay attention to that map and make decisions about where to live accordingly.

William Lane Craig on the unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

June 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember that Dr. Craig used a new argument in his debate with Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia.

My notes on the debate record it thus:

> The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
>
> - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
> - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
> - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
> - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see

And now Dr. Craig has expanded on it in the Q&A section of his Reasonable Faith web site.

The question:

> Dear Dr Craig
>
> Firstly can I thank you for all your work. My faith in Christ has been enormously strengthened through studying your work in apologetics in particular and I have grown in confidence in my Christian witness.
>
> My question relates to numbers and mathematics as a whole. On the Defenders podcast you state that as God is the only self-existent, necessary being, numbers and mathematical objects, whilst being useful, don't actually exist as these too would exist necessarily and independently of God. If this is the case, how can it be that mathematics is so easily applied to the natural world? Surely if mathematics only existed in our minds, we would expect to see no correlation between it and how the physical world actually is?
>
> Michael
>
> United Kingdom

Excerpt from the answer:

> As philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng points out, for the non-theistic realist, the fact that physical reality behaves in line with the dictates of acausal mathematical entities existing beyond space and time is "a happy coincidence" (*Mathematics and Reality* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 239). Think

> about it: If, *per impossibile*, all the abstract objects in the mathematical realm were to disappear overnight, there would be no effect on the physical world. This is simply to reiterate that abstract objects are causally inert. The idea that realism somehow accounts for the applicability of mathematics "is actually very counterintuitive," muses Mark Balaguer, a philosopher of mathematics. "The idea here is that in order to believe that the physical world has the nature that empirical science assigns to it, I have to believe that there are causally inert mathematical objects, existing outside of spacetime," an idea which is inherently implausible (*Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 136).
>
> By contrast, the theistic realist can argue that God has fashioned the world on the structure of the mathematical objects. This is essentially what Plato believed. The world has mathematical structure as a result.

This argument was also made by mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley in a lecture he gave on scientific evidence for an intelligent designer. You can read an essay that covers some of the material in that lecture at Leadership University.

Excerpt:

> The physical universe is surprising in the simple mathematical form it assumes. All the basic laws of physics and fundamental relationships can be described on one side of one sheet of paper because they are so few in number and so simple in form (see table 1.1).
>
> […]It has been widely recognized for some time that nature assumes a form that is elegantly described by a relatively small number of simple, mathematical relationships, as previously noted in table 1.1. None of the various proposals presented later in this chapter to explain the complexity of the universe address this issue. Albert Einstein in a letter to a friend expressed his amazement that the universe takes such a form (Einstein 1956), saying:
>
> You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world to the degree that we may speak of such comprehensibility as a miracle or an eternal mystery. Well, a priori one should expect a chaotic world which cannot be in any way grasped through thought. . . . The kind of order created, for example, by Newton's theory of gravity is of quite a different kind. Even if the axioms of the theory are posited by a human being, the success of such an enterprise presupposes an order in the objective world of a high degree which one has no a priori right to expect. That is the "miracle" which grows increasingly persuasive with the increasing development of knowledge.
>
> Alexander Polykov (1986), one of the top physicists in Russia, commenting on the mathematical character of the universe, said: "We know that nature is described by the best of all possible mathematics because God created it." Paul Davies, an astrophysicist from England, says, "The equations of physics have in them

> incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe" (Davies 1984). Successful development of a unified field theory in the future would only add to this remarkable situation, further reducing the number of equations required to describe nature, indicating even further unity and integration in the natural phenomena than have been observed to date.

The whole paper that started this off is called "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics", and it is a must read for advanced Christian apologists. You can read the whole thing here.

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Supreme Court rules against EPA's job-killing tax on electricity

June 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

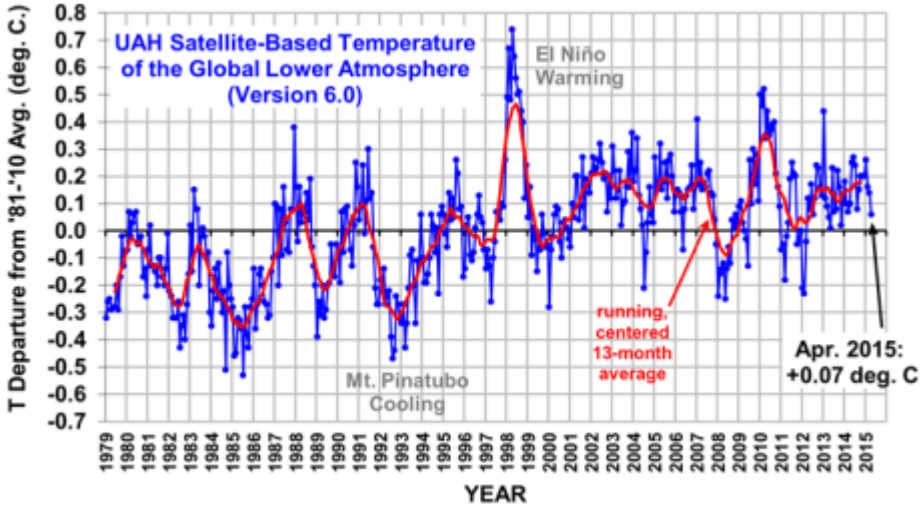

Atmospheric temperature measurements though April 2015

If you have to pay your own electricity bill out of your own earnings, then I have some good news for you.

The Daily Signal has the story.

Excerpt:

> Today, the Supreme Court in Michigan v. EPA held that the Environmental Protection Agency improperly ignored costs when it decided to regulate hazardous air pollutants from power plants. The court, in this 5-4 opinion, struck down this extremely costly rule, known as Utility MACT or Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS).
>
> Under Section 112 of the Clean Air Act, which applies to power plants, the EPA administrator shall regulate if the regulation is found to be "appropriate and necessary." According to the EPA, they didn't have to consider cost when deciding to regulate, even though the statute specifically says that the regulation has to be "appropriate."
>
> Justice Antonin Scalia, writing for the majority, explained, "[a]gainst the backdrop of this established administrative practice [consideration of cost], it is unreasonable to read an instruction to an administrative agency to determine whether 'regulation is appropriate and necessary' as an invitation to ignore costs."
>
> The EPA was going to ignore an astonishing amount of costs. The EPA estimated the costs to be $9.6 billion annually. This compared to benefits of $4 million to $6 million annually. As pointed out by Scalia, "[t]he costs to power plants were thus between 1,600 and 2,400 times as great as the quantifiable benefits from

> reduced emissions of hazardous air pollutants." As the court succinctly explained, "[n]o regulation is 'appropriate' if it does significantly more harm than good."

Unfortunately, energy prices are still going to go up, and jobs are still going to be lost as a result of previous EPA regulations.

The Stream says:

> While this is a major legal win for the coal industry, it may have come too late. Power plant operators have already slated to retire 13 gigawatts of coal-fired power by the end of this year. Coal plant owners also must ready themselves to comply with upcoming ozone and greenhouse gas regulations.

Well, it's been a rough week, but we have to take our victories where we can. A win's a win. Hopefully, the next President will abolish the EPA and the Department of Energy entirely, so that those clowns have to get real jobs doing something useful for a change.

Governor Mary Fallin signs bill protecting pastors from gay rights coercion

June 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Oklahama Governor Mary Fallin

Lindsay posted this happy article from Tulsa World.

It says:

> Gov. Mary Fallin has signed into law a bill that allows ministers to refuse to perform same-sex marriages if such marriages conflict with their religious beliefs.
>
> Fallin said Friday that the law will protect the constitutional and religious rights of Oklahomans.
>
> The law says no licensed, ordained or authorized official of a religious organization can be required to solemnize or recognize a marriage that violates that official's conscience or religious belief.
>
> Fallin said the bill makes it clear that religious leaders and houses of worship can't be forced by the government to violate their faith where marriage is concerned.

This persecution of pastors for refusing to celebrate same-sex marriage is already happening in some states.

Here's an article from Alliance Defending Freedom, which is doing a case on this right now.

It says:

> The Coeur d'Alene city attorney confirmed in a letter Monday that ordained ministers operating a for-profit wedding chapel are in violation of a city ordinance

> for declining to marry same-sex couples.
>
> The letter states that “if they are providing services primarily or substantially for profit and they discriminate in providing those services based on sexual orientation then they would likely be in violation of the ordinance.” ADF attorneys representing Donald and Evelyn Knapp explain that the letter’s contention that the Hitching Post Wedding Chapel is a non-profit entity that would be exempt from the ordinance is false.
>
> “The city has said explicitly, repeatedly, and publicly that it would prosecute a for-profit business. That’s what the Hitching Post is, and it has never claimed to be anything other than that,” said ADF Senior Legal Counsel Jeremy Tedesco. “While the Knapps do operate a ministry, they charge a fee for the ceremonies in order to be able to make a modest living. Therefore, the city, in its letter and elsewhere, is admitting that it would prosecute these pastors, who are clearly under a present threat of being sent to jail, fined, or both. The city has had months to figure out its own ordinance, and our clients have years of incarceration and devastating fines hanging over their heads. The city’s disingenuous waffling is indefensible.”
>
> The religious corporation document filed by the Knapps on Oct. 6 did not change the chapel to a non-profit entity. It continues to operate as a for-profit LLC.
>
> City officials told the Knapps that he and his wife Evelyn, both ordained ministers, are required to perform such ceremonies or face months in jail and/or thousands of dollars in fines. The city repeatedly claimed its “non-discrimination” ordinance requires the Knapps to perform same-sex wedding ceremonies now that the courts have overridden Idaho’s voter-approved constitutional amendment that affirmed marriage as the union of a man and a woman.

There is no state-wide non-discrimination law in Idaho, but this local ordinance is there, and that’s what got them into trouble.

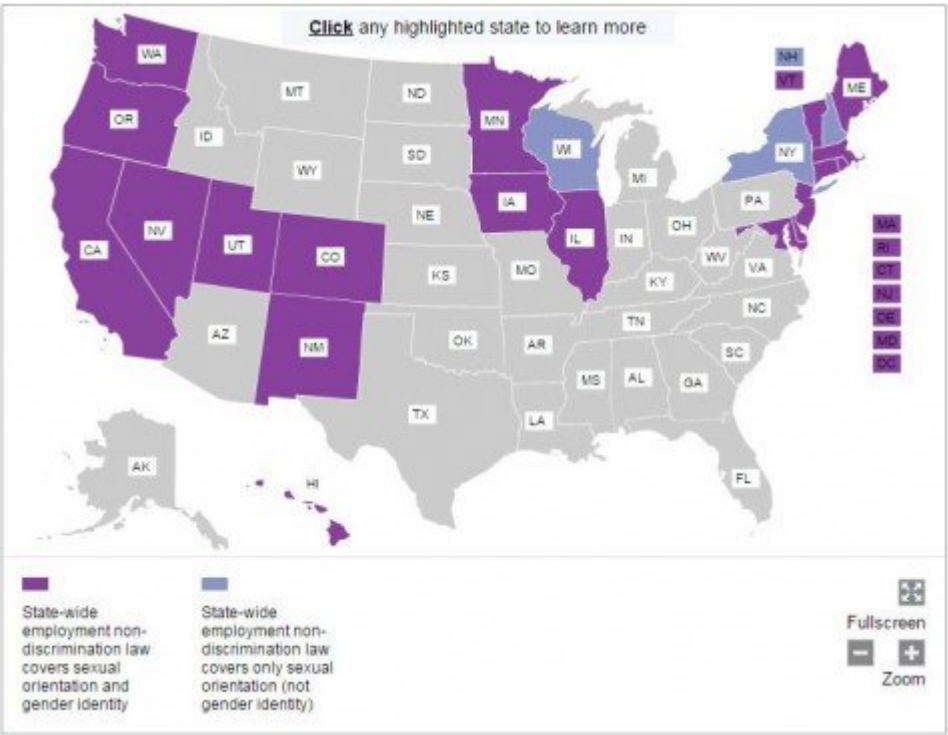

States with non-discrimination (pro-fascism) laws

Another reason to live in a small town in a conservative state. It’s probably a good idea to go into a STEM field where this is less likely to be a problem. But you’re never really safe now.

Yesterday, I posted an article with advice for churches from the Alliance Defending Freedom. ADF is the premier defender of civil liberties in the country. The problem of big government attacking free speech and religious liberty in the name of gay “equality” is a real thing. Hope you are ready for the new rules.

Gay activist pleads guilty to domestic violence

June 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's start with an example of LGBT domestic violence and then go to the studies.

Here's the San Francisco Examiner.

Excerpt:

> A prominent advocate for transgender and women's rights in the tech world has been charged with raping her wife, The San Francisco Examiner has learned.
>
> Dana McCallum, a senior engineer at Twitter who speaks and writes about women's and transgender-rights and technology issues, was arrested Jan. 26 and booked into County Jail on suspicion of five felonies, according to the Sheriff's Department.
>
> McCallum, 31, who was born a male, openly identifies as a female and whose legal name is Dana Contreras, was charged Jan. 29 with five felonies, including three counts of spousal rape, one count of false imprisonment and one count of domestic violence, according to the District Attorney's Office. She has since pleaded not guilty.
>
> McCallum has been out of jail on $350,000 bail. A condition of her release is that she attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, according to court documents.
>
> A Jan. 29 criminal protective order obtained by The Examiner says McCallum must not contact or come within 150 feet of her wife.

Reteurs has news about the guilty plea and the sentence.

Now is this an isolated incident or is it more common for LGBT people to get inolved with domestic violence?

Let me quote from The Advocate, a prominent and respected gay rights publication.

They write

> The National Violence Against Women survey found that 21.5 percent of men and 35.4 percent of women living with a same-sex partner experienced intimate-partner physical violence in their lifetimes, compared with 7.1% and 20.4% for men and women, respectively, with a history of only opposite-sex cohabitation. Transgender respondents had an incidence of 34.6 percent over a lifetime according to a Massachusetts survey.
>
> The CDC's 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, released again in 2013 with new analysis, reports in its first-ever study focusing on victimization by sexual orientation that the lifetime prevalence of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner was 43.8 percent for lesbians, 61.1 percent for bisexual women, and 35 percent for heterosexual women, while it was 26 percent for gay men, 37.3 percent for bisexual men, and 29 percent for

> heterosexual men (this study did not include gender identity or expression).
>
> These studies refute the myths that only straight women get battered, that men are never victims, and that women never batter — in other words, that domestic violence is not an LGBT issue. In fact, it is one of our most serious health risks, affecting significant numbers within our communities.
>
> […]Myths about domestic violence, victims' fear and shame, a silence that stems from a desire not to harm perceptions of the LGBT community — all these together contribute to making the problem invisible to others.

That article comes from a source with a very clear pro-gay-agenda bias, so let's take a look at an article from the Family Research Council to balance it out. They rely on mainstream data sources as well, like the CDC, the DOJ, the US Census, etc.

Excerpt:

> A study in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence examined conflict and violence in lesbian relationships. The researchers found that 90 percent of the lesbians surveyed had been recipients of one or more acts of verbal aggression from their intimate partners during the year prior to this study, with 31 percent reporting one or more incidents of physical abuse.[69]
>
> In a survey of 1,099 lesbians, the Journal of Social Service Research found that "slightly more than half of the [lesbians] reported that they had been abused by a female lover/partner. The most frequently indicated forms of abuse were verbal/emotional/psychological abuse and combined physical-psychological abuse."[70]
>
> In their book Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them: Battered Gay Men and Domestic Violence,D. Island and P. Letellier report that "the incidence of domestic violence among gay men is nearly double that in the heterosexual population."[71]
>
> […]Homosexual and lesbian relationships are far more violent than are traditional married households:
>
> The Bureau of Justice Statistics (U.S. Department of Justice) reports that married women in traditional families experience the lowest rate of violence compared with women in other types of relationships.[72]
>
> A report by the Medical Institute for Sexual Health concurred,
>
> It should be noted that most studies of family violence do not differentiate between married and unmarried partner status. Studies that do make these distinctions have found that marriage relationships tend to have the least intimate partner violence when compared to cohabiting or dating relationships.[73]

You can find more data comparing married heterosexuals to same-sex relationships in this FRC paper, which again uses mainstream data sources. Ask yourself: is this a lifestyle

that you would recommend to someone you cared about? Far from trying to hurt gay people or make them feel bad, it’s we conservatives who are actually trying to protect them from self-destructive behaviors. Say what you want about us, but we mean well. When I post stories about the drawbacks of homosexuality, I am doing the same thing as I do when I post stories about the dangers of borrowing a ton of money to go to university for a non-STEM degree. People may feel more or less offended, but my purpose is to save my readers from decisions that result in harm.

Puerto Rico debt crisis will impact U.S. investors

July 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

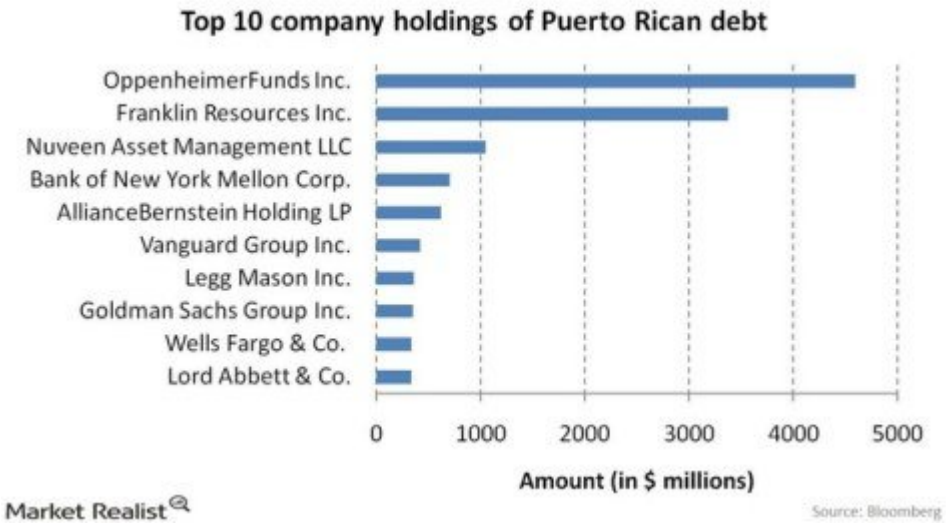

Which financial companies hold Puerto Rico debt?

Pay attention to this article from Investors Business Daily if you have investments.

It says:

> With the financial world transfixed by Greece's debt-driven meltdown, Puerto Rico announces it can't pay its $73 billion in debt. Once again, we're learning that welfare statism is no replacement for fiscal responsibility.
>
> Compared to Greece's $353 billion in debt, Puerto Rico's $73 billion doesn't sound so big. On a per capita basis, it's about a third less.
>
> But appearances deceive. Puerto Rico is in deep, owing actually much more than that amount.
>
> We learned this after a report on Monday, co-authored by former International Monetary Fund No. 2 Anne Krueger, revealed the island's finances are a shambles.
>
> The devastating analysis noted that some 150 agencies ran up deficits that couldn't even be accurately counted, so the true indebtedness might be even higher — as much as $100 billion by some estimates.

Now Republicans favor privatizing state-owned organizations because the private sector is more efficient. Democrats want to nationalize private sector services so that they can control access to it and use their monopoly to buy votes.

What does Puerto Rico do?

> The government has funneled public money to state-owned enterprises that are supposed to be financially independent. Worse, the report said, many workers no longer even look for jobs, since welfare benefits pay more than actual work.

Now guess whether a Republican or a Democrat is to blame for this. Which party likes to

borrow money from future generations in order to buy votes with spending right now?

> In short, the government has been horrendously mismanaged.
>
> […]The problem is, Puerto Rico's dysfunctional economy means the debts only piled higher, with no way to pay them. Deficits grew, too, since spending was never really cut.
>
> Now, as a commonwealth, it can't declare bankruptcy. It can default, however. That would be messy, creating a financial crisis in the territory, causing businesses to close and sending thousands fleeing to the U.S. mainland. Yet the Democrat-led government has said that, while it hopes to avoid default, it won't cut either pensions or spending. So disaster looms.

Wow, just like Greece – they refused to cut pensions, raise retirement ages and cut spending, too. There is some good news – we probably won't have to bail them out:

> A bailout? Even President Obama rules that out. If the White House couldn't bail out union-run Detroit, it sure couldn't do it for Puerto Rico.
>
> And, despite Padilla's denials, politics is very much a part of the equation. Just like Greece and dozens of other financial basket cases, Puerto Rico has become a welfare state run by leftist bureaucrats and politicians that overspends on public pensions without having the money to pay for it all.
>
> It's a story repeated over and over around the world.
>
> **If Puerto Rico defaults, it won't suffer alone, however. As the New York Times notes, "much of Puerto Rico's debt is widely held by individual investors on the United States mainland, in mutual funds or other investment accounts, and they may not be aware of it."**
>
> **So better check your 401(k). Or your hedge fund. Because virtually all of that $73 billion is held by the U.S.**

This is not to time for you to quit your job and go on vacations or focus on fun in any way. There is a world-wide financial crisis brewing. It's nothing to panic over, but this is serious enough for us all to focus on our careers and savings, and cut our own spending. It's not just Greece or Puerto Rico either, there are other warning signs from other countries, e.g. – China, Japan, etc.

Look:

> Meanwhile, across the globe, we're headed toward a reckoning on excessive debt, and it won't be pretty. The welfare state model with big pensions for all and lavish unemployment benefits is dead. We're watching its death throes now. Only the politicians don't get it.

Even here, many states have severe debt problems with underfunded public sector obligations, as well as other problems. There's just this problem with people wanting to depend on government. There are too many people wanting a free ride, and too few

people willing to work and raise the next generation of workers.

What helps young men resist peer disapproval?

July 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tough enough to not care whether you approve of what he's doing

A post by Nick Peters about young people and apologetics, at the Christian Apologetics Alliance blog.

Excerpt:

> Now picture a teenage youth who is a Christian. Is he on the outs with his peers in any way? Well if he's a good and observant Christian, he'll be a virgin (since most teenagers in high school aren't married). Will that lead to any shame to his peers? Yep. Especially since they consider "getting laid" to be a rite of passage and a sign that you are a real man or woman.
>
> So what happens with a boy who's seventeen and can drive and who is with the guys who are talking about their sexual exploits and the guy has nothing to contribute? If he is asked why he's not "getting some" he replies that he is a Christian. Is that going to win him any friends? Nope. His "friends" there will most likely mock him for believing in antiquated ideas that science has disproven and tell him he needs to get with the times. Result? The young man is shamed.
>
> Now imagine instead if he's told the latter part about how his ideas are antiquated and instead, he's able to make a rational case for the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Do you think he'll be able to be shamed the same way? Sure, his friends can still mock him, but he can take the mockery as a sign that they cannot answer his arguments. The young boy has honor then, rather than shame. He might not be sleeping around, but he can hold his head high knowing he can stand up against his peers.
>
> […]No one wants to be embarrassed, and that includes youth, but if our young people think they can do something that none of their peers can do, it will help

> them to have that honor that they seek, and there is nothing wrong with seeking honor. Remember the parable where Christ told us to take a lowly position at a banquet so our host would say, “Move up to a better place” and we would be honored? He was saying that that is the proper way to receive honor. Don’t just go out and try to grab it. Let it be given to you.
>
> There are many things that a young person can be ashamed of, but if they’re intellectually unprepared, being a Christian is something that they may be shamed for. In the face of temptation, they need a reason to be obedient rather than just, “The church says so” or “Mom and Dad say so.” Neither of those will be seen as honorable positions. They need to know for themselves why it is that they hold the stance that they do. If they are waiting until marriage, they need to know why. If they believe a man rose from the dead, they need to know why.
>
> That youth are eating this stuff up should tell us something. Youth don’t want to be shamed in the eyes of their contemporaries. They won’t mind holding a different position as long as they can defend that position. If they cannot, then the tide of social pressure could be enough to get them to abandon that and if their emotions and wills start acting against Christianity, it is only a matter of time until the intellect follows.

That excerpt is basically a summary of my life – that’s how I started out as a teen – with apologetics. I’ve been a Christian the whole time in between then and now. I think many parents and churches are wondering how it is that you get a young man to stand up to the culture and peer pressure. The answer is apologetics, and I think integrating Christianity with every other area of knowledge helps as well. Winning arguments over and over is an excellent way to build a suit of armor against temptation and peer pressure.

And in speaking to young people who were raised as Christians then fell away, the common denominator is that they were uncomfortable claiming to be Christians in a secular environment. We have to have a plan to help our young people deal with pluralism and peer pressure. Apologetics is the best answer I can think of.

New study: open relationships in the gay community

July 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the San Francisco Chronicle.

Excerpt:

> A new study released this week by the Center for Research on Gender & Sexuality at San Francisco State University put statistics around what gay men already know: Many Bay Area boyfriends negotiate open relationships that allow for sex with outsiders.
>
> […]"I think it's quite natural for men to want to continue to have an active and varied sex life," said 50-year-old technology consultant Dean Allemang from Oakland, who just ended a 13-year-open relationship and has begun another with a new boyfriend.
>
> "I don't own my lover, and I don't own his body," he said. "I think it's weird to ask someone you love to give up that part of their life. I would never do it."
>
> Hoff, who just received a $3.5 million grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to continue the study for five more years, initially started her research based on findings that HIV infection is on the rise among male couples.
>
> "So much of the HIV prevention effort is aimed at a different set – men in dance clubs or bathhouses having anonymous sex," she said. "HIV prevention might want to expand its message to address relationships; we have to look at risk in a greater context."
>
> In her study of gay couples, 47 percent reported open relationships. Forty-five percent were monogamous, and the remaining 8 percent disagreed about what they were.

Another researcher quoted in the story explains how same-sex marriage is compatible with an "open relationship", and that this interpretation of marriage *would* be a redefinition of traditional marriage.

Related to that, there is this radio interview with a gay activist.

Excerpt:

> "It's a no-brainer that (homosexual activists) should have the right to marry, but I also think equally that it's a no-brainer that the institution of marriage should not exist. …(F)ighting for gay marriage generally involves lying about what we are going to do with marriage when we get there — because we lie that the institution of marriage is not going to change, and that is a lie.
>
> The institution of marriage is going to change, and it should change. And again, I don't think it should exist. And I don't like taking part in creating fictions about my life. That's sort of not what I had in mind when I came out thirty years ago.

> I have three kids who have five parents, more or less, and I don’t see why they shouldn’t have five parents legally… I met my new partner, and she had just had a baby, and that baby’s biological father is my brother, and my daughter’s biological father is a man who lives in Russia, and my adopted son also considers him his father. So the five parents break down into two groups of three… And really, I would like to live in a legal system that is capable of reflecting that reality, and I don’t think that’s compatible with the institution of marriage.”

The word marriage means, one man, one woman, for life. And both parents sacrifice to raise the children they create. And no frivolous divorce, either. And if you ask me, it should also mean no sex before marriage, formal courtship, approval of both sets of parents, and the wife stays home when the children under five.

All evidence points to Hillary Clinton as source of Internet video lie

July 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does national security make?

Investors Business Daily reports on the latest e-mails requested and received by Judicial Watch, a government watch-dog organization. The title for this post is a shortening up of a line from Judicial Watch, by the way.

Excerpt:

> History recorded that the White House's United Nations Ambassador Susan Rice appeared a few days after the terrorist incident on a number of Sunday television news shows saying that attack, which killed four Americans, including the U.S. ambassador to Libya, was provoked by an Internet video.
>
> It was just a few Islamic hotheads, she suggested, who took a protest over the video too far. We were assured the violence was in no way connected to President Obama's Libya policy.
>
> Judicial Watch, however, has been combing through the emails and finds they tell a different story.
>
> **They indicate a cover-up occurred. Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton said the documents that keep piling up "show the Obama White House was behind the big lie, first promoted by Hillary Clinton, that an Internet video caused the Benghazi terrorist attack."**
>
> "Top White House aide Ben Rhodes, Hillary Clinton, and many key Obama officials pushed others to tie the Internet video to the attacks," he said.
>
> "It is little wonder that Mrs. Clinton and the entire Obama administration have fought so hard to keep these documents from the American people. **All evidence now points to Hillary Clinton, with the approval of the White**

> **House, as being the source of the Internet video lie.**"
>
> It was a lie that bloomed into a conspiracy. The new documents released to Judicial Watch show "the Obama administration engaged domestic and foreign Islamist groups and foreign nationals to push the Internet video narrative."
>
> It appears the White House even successfully recruited the Turkish government, or at least Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, to help spread the lie.
>
> Another email, says Judicial Watch, "evidently from the Office of the Secretary of Defense" and sent to National Security Council spokesperson Bernadette Meehan and other top White House officials, "shows that the administration took no action to deploy military assets almost five hours after the attack began."
>
> This corroborates early and continued speculation that the men were left on their own to die.
>
> Why would the administration want to spin this tragic incident in such a way? Why did it want to, in the words of White House operative Rhodes, "underscore that these protests are rooted in an Internet video"?
>
> Because, as Rhodes said, it did not want to admit the attack was part of "broader failure of policy."
>
> **The administration knew the Benghazi attack was a terrorist act, but it couldn't dare admit it because that would call into question the Obama policy and expose as a lie the president's claim that Libya was a success.**

The Washington Times writes that the State Department is now admitting that Hillary lied about her e-mail server not containing any classified information.

Excerpt:

> The State Department on Wednesday conceded that two dozen of Hillary Clinton's emails did contain classified information, a fact that could trigger a U.S. policy that authorizes the government to take control of her private server and sanitize the contents.
>
> A former senior intelligence official told The Washington Times the policy also requires the government to check other Internet paths her secret information could have taken.
>
> The procedures are spelled out by the National Security Agency's special panel on controlling leaked secrets, called the Committee on National Security Systems. It published a policy, "Securing Data and Handling Spillage Events," that fits Mrs. Clinton's unauthorized private server kept at her home while she was secretary of state, according to the retired officer's reading of the regulations.

Why would anyone think that she would make a good President? It seems to me that she made a poor decision (Libya invasion), lied to cover up her poor decision (Youtube video),

and lied when she said that her e-mails did not contain classified information.

The drowning stranger illustration challenges atheistic morality

July 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Learning about right and wrong, good and evil
This is by Matt from Well Spent Journey blog.

Excerpt:

> Here's a thought experiment.
>
> _____
>
> *Imagine that you're a healthy, athletic, 20-year-old male. It's the morning after a thunderstorm, and you're standing on the banks of a flooded, violently churning river.*
>
> *You notice an object floating downstream.*
>
> *As it moves closer, you suddenly realize that this object is a person. The head breaks the surface, and you see a panic-stricken elderly woman gasping for air. You've never met her before, but vaguely recognize her as an impoverished widow from a neighboring village.*
>
> *You look around for help, but there's no one in sight. You have only seconds to decide whether or not to jump in after her – recognizing that doing so will put your own life in significant peril.*
>
> _____
>
> Is it **rational** for you to risk your life to save this stranger? Is it **morally good** to do so?
>
> For the Christian, both of these questions can be answered with an emphatic **"yes"**.

> The Christian is called to emulate the example set forth by Jesus, who not only risked, but sacrificed his life for the sake of others. The Christian believes that the soul is eternal, and that one's existence doesn't come to an abrupt end with death. Additionally, he can point to the examples of countless Christian martyrs who have willingly sacrificed their own lives.
>
> For the secular humanist, the answers to these questions are much more subjective. When I previously asked 23 self-identifying atheists, *"Is it rational for you to risk your life to save a stranger?"* only 4 of them responded with an unqualified *"yes"*.
>
> Biologically speaking, the young man in our scenario has nothing to gain by jumping after the drowning woman. Since she's poor and elderly, there are no conceivable financial or reproductive advantages involved. Evolutionary biologists often speak of "benefit to the tribe" as a motivation for self-sacrifice…yet the young man's community would certainly place greater practical value on his life than that of a widow from a neighboring village.
>
> Secular humanists argue that people are capable of making ethical decisions without any deity to serve as Moral Lawgiver. On a day-to-day basis, this is undeniably true. We all have non-religious friends and neighbors who live extremely moral and admirable lives.
>
> In the scenario above, however, secular ethics break down. The secular humanist might recognize, intuitively, that diving into the river is a **morally good** action. But he has no rational basis for saying so. The young man's decision is between empathy for a stranger (on the one hand) and utilitarian self-interest & community-interest (on the other).
>
> In the end, there can be no **binding moral imperatives** in the absence of a Moral Lawgiver. If the young man decides to sit back and watch the woman drown, the secular humanist cannot criticize him. He's only acting rationally.

When I read this, I was of one of the questions from one of my earliest posts, where I list a dozen interview questions to ask atheists. His question is very much like one of my questions. You may like the others in my list, as well.

It seems to me that on atheism, the only answer you can give for why you would do the right thing is "because it makes me happy". And as we see with abortion – 56 million unborn children dead – it very often *doesn't* make atheists happy to save someone else's life. Not if it means any infringement on their own happiness. Every time an atheist votes Democrat, they are voting to declare that people who get in their way should not be saved. And atheists (the "nones", anyway) are one of the largest Democrat voting blocs. According to the 2012 Secular Census, 97% of secularists deny that unborn children have a right to life. And the 2013 Gallup poll found that "nones", people with no religion, are most likely to be pro-abortion. (Note that "nones" are not necessarily atheists, they may have some beliefs, but they are not observant). It's not rational to inconvenience yourself to save others on atheism. You have one life to live, be happy, survival of the fittest.

First openly gay Episcopal bishop to divorce same-sex partner

July 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an Associated Press article, so it is extremely liberal and sympathetic to the gay bishop. (H/T Tom)

Excerpt:

> The first openly gay Episcopal bishop, who became a symbol for gay rights far beyond the church while deeply dividing the world's Anglicans, plans to divorce his husband.
>
> […]Robinson, 66, had been married to a woman and had two children before he and his wife divorced. He and Andrew had been partners for more than a decade when Robinson was elected to lead the New Hampshire Diocese. The two men were joined in a 2008 civil union in New Hampshire, which became a legal marriage when the state recognized gay marriage two years later.
>
> […]Robinson was… widely celebrated as a pioneer for gay rights, became an advocate for gay marriage and was the subject of several books and a documentary about Christianity, the Bible and same-sex relationships. He delivered the benediction at the opening 2009 inaugural event for President Barack Obama and, after retirement, became a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, a Democratic think tank with close ties to the White House.

The interesting thing about this is that although Americans have been fed a steady diet of propaganda from Hollywood to make us think that gay relationships are stable, the reality is that they are NOT stable.

Let's take a look at the data

Consider this post from The Public Discourse which explains that there are few stable, long-lived gay relationships – even the ones with children.

Excerpt:

> The [NFSS] study found that the children who were raised by a gay or lesbian parent as little as 15 years ago were usually conceived within a heterosexual marriage, which then underwent divorce or separation, leaving the child with a single parent. That parent then had at least one same-sex romantic relationship, sometimes outside of the child's home, sometimes within it. **To be more specific, among the respondents who said their mother had a same-sex romantic relationship, a minority, 23%, said they had spent at least three years living in the same household with both their mother and her romantic partner. Only 2 out of the 15,000 screened spent a span of 18 years with the same two mothers. Among those who said their father**

> **had had a same-sex relationship, 1.1% of children reported spending at least three years together with both men.**
>
> This strongly suggests that the parents' same-sex relationships were often short-lived, a finding consistent with the broader research on elevated levels of instability among same-sex romantic partners. For example, a recent 2012 study of same-sex couples in Great Britain finds that gay and lesbian cohabiting couples are more likely to separate than heterosexual couples. A 2006 study of same sex marriages in Norway and Sweden found that "divorce risk levels are considerably higher in same-sex marriages" such that Swedish lesbian couples are more than three times as likely to divorce as heterosexual couples, and Swedish gay couples are 1.35 times more likely to divorce (net of controls). Timothy Biblarz and Judith Stacey, two of the most outspoken advocates for same-sex marriage in the U.S. academy, acknowledge that there is more instability among lesbian parents.
>
> **Therefore, while critics of the NFSS have faulted it for lacking comparisons between children of IBFs and the children of committed and intact gay or lesbian couples, this was attempted, but was not feasible. Despite drawing from a large, representative sample of the U.S. population, and despite using screening tactics designed to boost the number of respondents who reported having had a parent in a same-sex relationship, a very small segment reported having been parented by the same two women or two men for a minimum of three years. Although there is much speculation that today there are large numbers of same-sex couples in the U.S. who are providing a stable, long-term parenting relationship for their children, *no studies* based upon large, random samples of the U.S. population have been published that show this to be true, and the above-cited studies of different nations show that on average, same-sex couple relationships are more short-lived than those of opposite-sex couples.**

I think this is an important point to make – and it's consistent with the research from previous studies. The bottom line is that gay marriage is another step on the path towards making marriage about the needs and feelings of adults. In natural marriage, parents are concerned about how breaking up will affect their children – so thy have a reason to stay together and work conflicts out. The needs of the adults are secondary to the needs of the children. But in gay marriage, there is no such constraint. The children are not related biologically to both partners, and so that protection is not in place. Now that gay marriage is legalized, we should understand that children will be getting a lot less stability, and that's in addition to being deprived of their biological mother and father.

Couple fined $135,000 for declining to participate in gay marriage

July 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

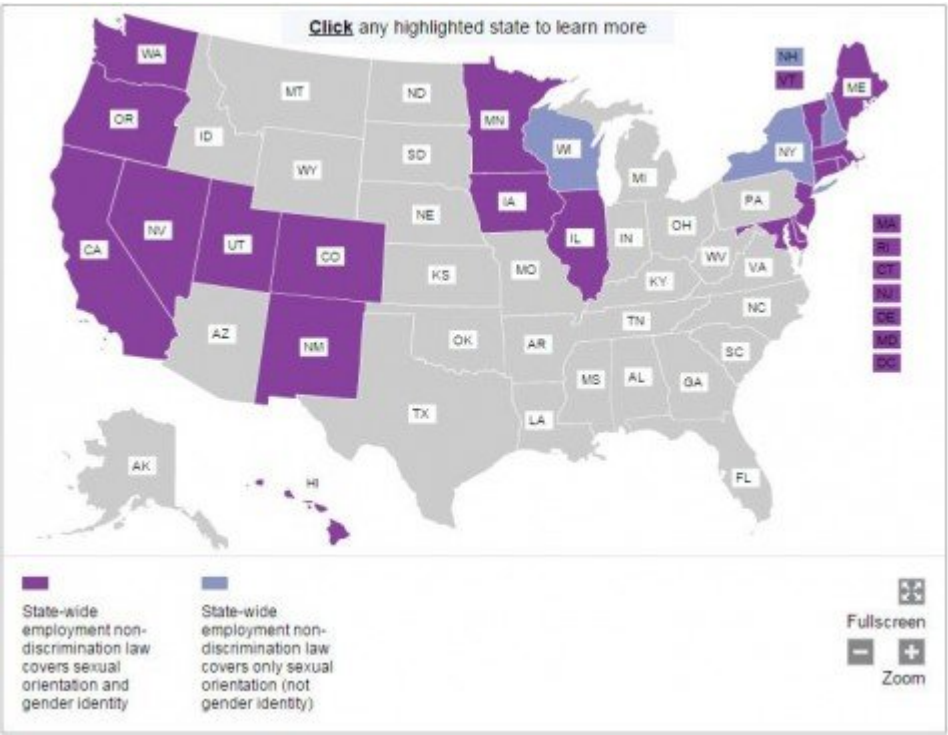

States with non-discrimination laws

How much does it cost to be an authentic Christian? You might think that in America, the land of religious freedom, that being a Christian would be free.

And you'd be wrong.

Here's the story from Oregon Live.

Excerpt:

> Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian on Thursday ordered the owners of a former Gresham bakery to pay $135,000 in damages to a lesbian couple for refusing to make them a wedding cake.
>
> Avakian's ruling upheld a preliminary finding earlier this year that the owners of Sweet Cakes by Melissa had discriminated against the women on the basis of their sexual orientation.
>
> Bakery owners Melissa and Aaron Klein cited their Christian beliefs against same-sex marriage in denying service.
>
> […]Avakian's final order makes clear that serving potential customers equally trumps the Kleins' religious beliefs.
>
> […]The commissioner ordered the Kleins to pay $75,000 to Rachel Bowman-Cryer and $60,000 to Laurel Bowman-Cryer. His ruling may be appealed to the Oregon Court of Appeals.

In addition to the fine, there were other consequences for the Kleins:

> The Sweet Cakes by Melissa car was vandalized and broken into twice. Photographers and florists severed ties with the company, eventually forcing Sweet Cakes to close the Gresham shop in September 2013. The business now operates out of the couple's home in Sandy.

If that were not enough, Avakian also ordered the Kleins to not speak about the case in public:

> In the ruling, Avakian placed an effective gag order on the Kleins, ordering them to "cease and desist" from speaking publicly about not wanting to bake cakes for same-sex weddings based on their Christian beliefs.
>
> "This effectively strips us of all our First Amendment rights," the Kleins, owners of Sweet Cakes by Melissa, which has since closed, wrote on their Facebook page. "According to the state of Oregon we neither have freedom of religion or freedom of speech."

Compare that with a similar case from Canada, where a Canadian pastor who disagreed with homosexuality was also issued with a gag order.

This is why I always put such a high emphasis on using aliases and making education and career decisions that allow you to accumulate money for your legal defense. There was a time in this country when being a Christian was free. It is no longer that time. And most Americans are not going to lift a finger to protect us. We are on our own. You need to be careful with your money, to prepare for the day when you are fined $135,000 for the crime of acting as if Christianity is true.

Consider this verse, which is one of my life verses:

Luke 14:28:

> [28] For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?

I do not say this proudly. I am not as strong in my career or savings as I would like to be. But I am constantly meeting young men and especially young women who think that the Bible is giving them license to do whatever their heart is telling them, irrespective of stewardship. But we cannot afford to ignore stewardship of money any more. We are beyond doing what is easy and fun now. We are beyond doing what makes us happy now. Don't expect that God will rescue you from a lack of prudence.

Previously, I posted something about what the Bible says about earning, saving and giving away money – featuring pastor Wayne Grudem. Do take a look at it with fresh eyes, now that this Oregon sentence is out.

Polygamy is next: Montana throuple applies for wedding license

July 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

The Supreme Court redefined marriage so that it no longer means one man, one woman, for life. What follows from attaching the word "marriage" to people who have temporary feelings of love for other people?

Here's the story from MSN.com.

Excerpt:

> A Montana man said Wednesday that he was inspired by last week's U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing gay marriage to apply for a marriage license so that he can legally wed his second wife.
>
> Nathan Collier and his wives Victoria and Christine applied at the Yellowstone County Courthouse in Billings on Tuesday in an attempt to legitimize their polygamous marriage. Montana, like all 50 states, outlaws bigamy — holding multiple marriage licenses — but Collier said he plans to sue if the application is denied.
>
> "It's about marriage equality," Collier told The Associated Press Wednesday. "You can't have this without polygamy."
>
> […]The Supreme Court's ruling on Friday made gay marriages legal nationwide. Chief Justice John Roberts said in his dissent that people in polygamous relationships could make the same legal argument that not having the opportunity to marry disrespects and subordinates them.

Meanwhile, this lady writing in The Federalist explains how she wants polyamory to come next after the gay marriage. Why? Because she and partner don't always feel "in love". Her solution is that she be able to add people to her current relationship so that she can have those "in love" feelings.

She writes:

> The problem is, fires don't burn indefinitely unless you keep adding more wood. They start with a spark, work their way up to a roar, then calm back down to a crackle. When the crackling gets too quiet, someone throws another log on, and the flames flare back up. The cycle repeats over and over again, as long as there are more logs, more fuel.

> Our fuel is running out. Brad and I have tried all the tricks. We've fanned the flames. We need more logs—new energy, a fresh perspective. It doesn't mean we don't love each other, or that we are done with each other. It just means we need something new.

> […]Four years into our relationship, we found ourselves in the typical rut of co-dependence, resentment, boredom, and fighting over the grocery bill. We'd had an unplanned baby, I'd quit my job to do attachment parenting full-time, and Brad was working long hours in a dungeon of a warehouse. I was stuck at home washing dishes, folding laundry and talking to a two-year-old, bored out of my mind. If we didn't have anything to fight about, we'd find something, just to make life a little more interesting.

Now for the part that's interesting to me. I have heard this same reasoning from so many formerly Christian women:

> I had freed myself from the grips of government, religion, and parents. The only chains left to throw off were those on my sexuality—particularly the chains of monogamy.

> The first authority I came to see as illegitimate was government, shortly after discovering Ron Paul in 2008. I stumbled upon his campaign like a rabbit hole that led me to question all of society's rules. Soon after, I started to question my religion—Christianity. How much of it had been made up, twisted, and contrived—in collusion with the government—to support the powers that be?

> Along with the fear of God, I cast off any respect for parental authority I once had. Since the punitive, authoritarian man in the clouds was no longer real to me, who was to say children should obey their parents?
>
> […]Then, one day, I came across an article about polyamory. One article led to another, and soon I was watching documentaries about polyamorous triads and quads. I became obsessed with the reality TV show "Polyamory: Married and Dating," and ordered the book "Sex at Dawn: How We Mate, Why We Stray, and What it Means for Modern Relationships."
>
> "This is it!" I thought. I'd finally found what seemed like a desirable alternative to the wedded misery I saw all around me.

She exchanged the God of the Bible for a reality TV show about polyamory. And do you think it was because she worked through all the arguments for Christian theism? No – it was because she wanted to throw off the authority of God and her parents.

This focus on self-centeredness and personal autonomy will work for her for a while, too. It will work until she hits 40 and loses the only thing that gives her value to the men she prefers – her youth and beauty. She has not used her youth to take responsibility, accept obligations and develop the skills, work experience, assets and character traits that will make her a good wife and mother. She is headed for a disaster once her youth and beauty fades. When she is cast off for being too old, it will be too late for her to turn back and rebuild the character traits that a marriage-minded man values no matter how old a woman is. *A typical man is willing to put up with self-centeredness for a beautiful, young woman, but not for one who loses that beauty and youth.*

That's why we had marriage, so that a woman learned to love a man with more than just looks and youth, and a man learned to look beyond looks and youth, because he knew he was committing to a woman for life. Marriage (prior to no-fault divorce) was society's answer to the fading of a woman's youth and beauty. Since marriage was for life, men looked for more than just fun and thrills from a woman, they looked for character and ability as a wife and mother. And women responded to men by minimizing youth and beauty, and trying to cultivate skills, work experience, assets and character traits that would help her support and encourage a man in his life plan.

Gay man fakes hate crime against himself

July 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young, unmarried women celebrate gay pride

Here is a story from the left-wing Associated Press.

They write:

> A man who reported someone beat him and carved a homophobic slur into his arm staged the attacks, authorities in rural Utah said Tuesday.
>
> Millard County Sheriff Robert Dekker said Rick Jones, 21, could face charges after officers investigating the series of reported attacks found inconsistencies in the evidence. The Delta man eventually acknowledged faking the harassment, Dekker said.
>
> […]Jones has since begun mental health treatment, the lawyer said.
>
> The purported attacks began with a beating at his family's pizza business in April that left Jones with head and facial bruising.
>
> Five days later, the family's home was found spray-painted with a homophobic slur. On June 10, a rock and a molotov cocktail were thrown through the window of the home. That same day, the business was spray-painted, broken into and robbed of $1,000.
>
> Jones told KSL-TV earlier this month he believed he was targeted because he is gay.
>
> Dekker said prosecutors are considering possible charges including filing a false report and reckless burning.

Previously, I blogged about a case where a gay activist claimed that allowing a pro-

marriage event would cause gay people to commit suicide.

That story came from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> "Their viewpoint kills people," Jeffrey Cohen, vice president of GradQ, a homosexual advocacy group for graduate students, told the GSC. "There's a lot of research published in top psychology journals that have looked at university environments, both positive and negative. An event such as this would be a negative event, [and] in schools that have negative events there is a statistically significant increase in suicide." He said the last time a pro-marriage speaker visited the campus, someone told him "they wanted to kill themselves."
>
> Cohen said he was especially "bothered by the idea that their conference is trying to create better ways to deliver [the pro-marriage] message. … The idea that they are learning how to deliver their message scares [me]." Cohen suggested SAS cancel its conference and instead hold a joint event with GradQ in which gay activists would have a chance to promote their message too.
>
> Ben Holston, chair of the undergraduate senate, also threw his weight behind the gay groups. "This is an event that hurts the Stanford community," Holston said. "To express a belief that, for some reason this event is not discriminatory, is completely off-base. This event as it stands, given the speakers, and given that they have said the event is supposed to 'promote one-man one-woman [marriage],' which promotes stripping away rights of people in this room, is unacceptable on Stanford's campus." He urged the GSC to withdraw its funding for the conference.

I don't know what to say to all of this. Part of me just thinks about what it would be like to have a friend like that. They ask me for my opinion about their decision to do something morally wrong. I say "no, that's not a good idea, you should not do that". Then they threaten to commit suicide because I said that. Or they run into a wall, and claim that I made them do it by not celebrating their bad decisions. I'm just not comfortable being bullied into agreeing with someone else's decisions. Just let me say what I really think, and don't punish me because I disagree with you. Yet this seems to be a major part of gay activism: agree with me or I will hurt myself.

Happy Independence Day 2015!

July 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

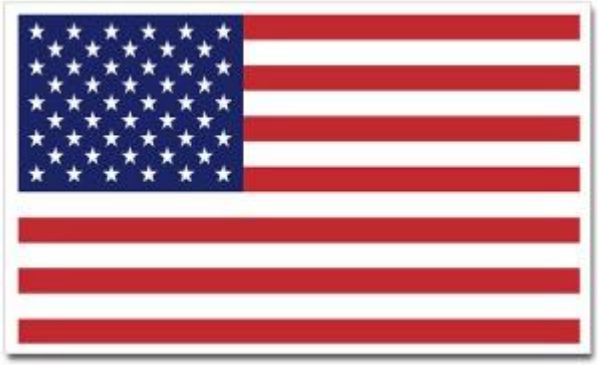

The Stars and Stripes

The Declaration of Independence

Here's the complete text of the Declaration of Independence here.

And now let's take a look at an article at The Federalist which talks about what the Declaration of Independence tells us about the character of America.

It says:

> The Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson famously wrote, was "intended to be an expression of the American mind." Although not intended as such, it was also an expression of the American character. Woven throughout the text are insights into the minds and virtues of those Lincoln called the "once hardy, brave, and patriotic, but now lamented and departed race of ancestors" who fought for the independence we still enjoy.

> This aspect of the Declaration of Independence receives scant attention from scholars and citizens, yet it must be understood. The theory of government elaborated in that text presupposes the existence of citizens who know how to govern themselves and are willing to assert their rights. The American character is the unstated premise of the argument, without which the theory, though still true, doesn't work in practice.

So, what's the American character?

> What sets us Americans apart is that we do not merely declare for liberty. We staunchly stand for it. To be an American is not only to know that you are born free, it is to have the courage to defend your freedom. This admirable aspect of the American character is evident in the fifth grievance the Declaration levels against the king.

> It reads: "He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing, with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people." The king acted as monarchs are wont to do. Our forefathers, although they were subjects, did not

> take his abuses passively. They resisted—with manly firmness.
>
> Today, King George III is long gone. Our representative houses are no longer dissolved at will (although they have unconstitutionally been declared to be in recess). Our rights, however, are still encroached upon, whether by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Environmental Protection Agency. Thankfully, courageous Americans still push back, like the Green family, who challenged Obamacare's abortifacient mandate, or the Sacketts, who fought the EPA's effective seizure of their property.
>
> No charter of liberties or Constitution—not even one handed down by God himself—could ever, on its own, protect the rights of the people. James Madison, the father of our own Constitution, was not so foolish as to place his trust in mere "parchment barriers against the encroaching spirit of power."
>
> In Federalist No. 57, Madison takes up the question of "what is to restrain the House of Representatives from making legal discriminations in favor of themselves and a particular class of the society?" His answer: "the genius of the whole system; the nature of just and constitutional laws; and *above all*, the vigilant and manly spirit which actuates the people of America—a spirit which nourishes freedom, and in return is nourished by it."
>
> The 56 men who signed our Declaration of Independence set the example for their fellow countrymen and for future generations. They did not simply proclaim the universal rights of man. They also pledged "to each other, our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor." And they meant it. Twelve served as combat commanders during the Revolutionary War. Five were captured and imprisoned by the British. Seventeen lost part of their fortunes.

> America is not a country for servile men and women. We not only have a *right* to be free, but a *duty* to be free. For "when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it *is their right, it is their duty*, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security." Free as we are, we have no liberty to choose despotism—even if it is sugarcoated, as it is today, with material comfort and license.
>
> […]Two centuries later, the American character endures, battered and bruised though it may be. It has been corroded by the Progressive faith in government, the sixties ethos of "if it feels good, do it," and the mindlessness and vulgarity of pop culture. But we can still readily discern among many Americans the habits of mind and the virtues of a free people. For this, we should be grateful on this Fourth of July.

To love liberty means to be willing to stand up for liberty, and that can mean something as simple as 1) not voting for bigger government just because they are handing out money to you and 2) not voting for bigger government because they are letting you do

immoral things.

Standing up for liberty means standing up for your own personal responsibility. It means looking primarily to yourself for earning a living. It means choosing to behave morally so that you don’t create a situation where you need the government to bail you out of your own immoral decisions with someone else’s money.

The Fourth of July reminds us to fight for liberty

July 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is called a Gadsen flag.

John Zmirak is my favorite writer on The Stream. Here's his 4th of July post.

He writes:

> The Fourth of July is a time for celebration, but it's also a time to recommit ourselves to champion those American principles, and to remember that those principles stand over against some very particular evils:
>
> - Arbitrary seizure and use of private property by the state in the name of the "common good."
> - A corrupt bargain between the government and religion, with funds and favors flowing to the churches that toe the government line, and taxes and bans restricting the free exercise of religion.
> - Government micromanagement of the economy, with politically connected companies exploiting their crony connections to legislators and restricting the freedom of commerce.
> - Paternalistic government, which saw the common man as a hapless sheep, to be herded and sheared by elites.
> - The concentration of power in a single, national government that bullied colonies, cities and villages, imposing a single uniform policy on a diverse and various country.
>
> Each of these things our forefathers denounced, defied and defeated. Each generation of Americans has had to re-fight the American Revolution in one way or another, hefting the leaden weight of our fallen wills that drags us down toward vice and tyranny. Ben Franklin, when asked what manner of government the infant Constitution offered, said, "A republic, if you can keep it."
>
> Like each fresh crop of Americans before us, we find republic-keeping a bold and

> arduous duty. Sometimes we keep it safe in wars, at other times we keep it back from the brink of a cliff. And now we keep our republic faithful to its principles by resisting it, by refusing to obey unjust laws that betray our nation's honor.

I think the general consensus among my friends about how to respond to the threats from the secular left is to act according to your conscience and be willing to go to jail. Then talk about what happened to you. And in the meantime, while you are not yet in jail, take the opportunity to get an alias and speak out. Studying is important so that you can learn how to speak intelligently about the issues we face. Right now, the left is winning because they speak in emotional, irrational ways. If we can articulate the reasons for our views, with evidence, that helps people to remember what liberty is and why our Founders fought for it.

I keep seeing statements about the problems we are likely to face from so many writers, and every time I see them, I think of this one Christian woman I knew long ago who told me that my speaking accurately about this threats "scared her", and that the right response was to not be scared. Every time I asked her which fear scared her, she would not name one. So I started explaining them to her and she said that she didn't want to hear the details. Well, surprise! Our respected conservative leaders are now joining me in being scared, and because they *know the details*.

John Zmirak says:

> This is not the easiest time to be an American Christian, or a Christian American. The core elements of our creed are under attack from without and within, while our nation's civic religion has been rewritten by the Supreme Court to exclude every orthodox Christian. A cabal of radicals has gained control of the government. They wish to control all our churches, and find willing collaborators in all too many pulpits. Has the American Revolution been reversed and replaced with the French Revolution?
>
> Unless Christians stand up, unite and fight, this may be one of the last Fourths of July we can celebrate as full citizens, and the last election in which we have any meaningful voice. If the federal government moves on to punitively taxing Christian churches, how fitting would it be for us to raise the red, white and blue and shoot off fireworks to honor that government? We might be forced instead to mourn our vanished republic.

Ben Shapiro says:

> With God safely shunted to the side in favor of Justice Kennedy, the next step in the gay rights movement will be the smashing of idolators — namely, those who cling to their religion and church in spite of Justice Kennedy's New New Testament. Leftists have already moved to ban nonprofit status for religious institutions that refuse to acknowledge same-sex marriages; leftists have already sued into oblivion religious business owners who refuse to participate in same-sex weddings. It will not stop there. Religious schools will be targeted. Then, so

> will homeschooling programs. The secular religion of the left has been set free to pursue its own crusade against the infidel.

Matt Walsh says:

> I believe strongly that real persecution awaits us down the road. I think my children will face hostility and opposition and maybe even violence on a level I haven't yet seen. We are heading into very challenging times, but if we keep our families together and our hearts with God, we'll be OK. No matter what happens, we'll be OK. And, by extension, if we pour ourselves into our families and into our faith, we might be able to rescue this culture and this country from the clutches of progressive annihilation. It won't happen quickly, and I don't know if it will happen at all, but I know there's a chance. America is not lost completely. Not yet.

Dennis Prager says:

> Moreover, the war to replace God, Judeo-Christian values and the Bible as moral guides is far from over. What will this lead to?
>
> Here are three likely scenarios:
>
> 1. Becoming more and more like Western Europe, which has more or less created the first godless and religion-less societies in history. Among the consequences are less marriage and the birth of far fewer children.
>
> 2. More and more ostracizing — eventually outlawing — of religious Jews and Christians, clergy, and institutions that refuse to perform same-sex weddings.
>
> 3. An America increasingly guided by people's hearts.
>
> If you trust the human heart, you should feel confident about the future. If you don't, you should be scared.

You should be scared. I am scared. And yet Dennis Prager is not about to stop fighting, and neither am I. In fact, I am better equipped to fight this intellectually and financially than many of my other friends who *are not scared*. It's not wrong to be scared when there really is a threat, and usually, the people who study these things more have more a more accurate view than the people who just feel confident. Blind confidence is stupid – it's a mental disorder to be blindly optimistic in the face of a threat. Invoking spiritual language to dismiss a legitimate threat is ineffective, and therefore unwise. The right thing to do is to see the reality and then engage it and defeat it. I have been blogging about the threat to religious liberty since this blog started in 2009, and it was one of my 3 arguments in my post arguing against same-sex marriage in June 2011.

This is not the time for us to be thinking of fun and thrills. We have work to do.

Should Christians seek to help the poor by growing a secular government?

July 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a paper (PDF) on the University of Washington web site that makes the case for why Christians ought to care about more than just social issues when it comes to politics and elections.

Here's the abstract:

> What accounts for cross-national variation in religiosity as measured by church attendance and non-religious rates? Examining answers from both secularization theory and the religious economy perspective, we assert that cross-national variation in religious participation is a function of government welfare spending and provide a theory that links macro-sociological outcomes with individual rationality. Churches historically have provided social welfare. As governments gradually assume many of these welfare functions, individuals with elastic preferences for spiritual goods will reduce their level of participation since the desired welfare goods can be obtained from secular sources. Cross-national data on welfare spending and religious participation show a strong negative relationship between these two variables after controlling for other aspects of modernization.

Here's the conclusion:

> It is quite apparent that there is a strong statistical relationship between state social welfare spending and religious participation and religiosity. Countries with higher levels of per capita welfare have a proclivity for less religious participation and tend to have higher percentages of non-religious individuals. People living in countries with high social welfare spending per capita even have less of a tendency to take comfort in religion, perhaps knowing that the state is there to help them in times of crisis.34 As laid out in the theory above, there is likely a substitution effect for some individuals between state-provided services and religious services. Religion will still be there to serve the spiritual needs of people seeking answers to the philosophic mysteries of life, but those who value those spiritual goods less than the tangible welfare benefits churches provide will be less likely to participate in religious services once secular substitutes become available. Given that religious practice and values are often passed down from generation to generation, the weakening of practice in one generation will likely translate into weaker practice in subsequent generations. Does this mean that secularization theory is correct in its prediction that religion will gradually fade away? Doubtful. Realizing that there is still a yearning among many people to understand the mysteries of life, religion is not likely to dissipate at any time

> soon. Government simply cannot offer credible substitutes for these less tangible, supernatural goods. The explosion in spirituality once religion was made legal in former Soviet bloc countries lends credence to this assertion (Greeley 1994). As religious markets become more deregulated in various parts of the world, it is likely that new religious movements will take advantage of increased liberty and discover ways to expand.
>
> Perhaps one of the most important lessons from the findings above is that the religiosity of a society is not simply determined by sociological factors. Government policy can play an important role in shaping the religiosity of a nation. Policies aimed at regulating the activities of religious organizations — from tax laws to zoning regulations — have important effects on the firms that supply religious goods and services. Many of these policies are designed consciously to promote or inhibit religious practice. Alternatively, welfare policy has been shown here to unintentionally affect the demand for religious services, likely over the course of generations. And, finally, since an extensive welfare state is considered by many to be a hallmark of modernized societies, the microfoundational analysis presented above provides a way of incorporating a component part of the secularization thesis (which relies heavily on notions of modernization) into the religious economy perspective.

Have you ever heard a sermon that addresses the size of government and individual liberty and prosperity? I haven't. You'd have to be reading Christian scholars like Wayne Grudem or Jay Richards to find that. The typical church you attend either praises big government or says nothing about it. After all, we can keep making withdrawals on the liberties we have *right now* without ever worrying about having to make any deposits, right? Everything will be fine, and it's easier not to have to think about what's down the road to serfdom, so long as the scenery is nice for us right now. Religion is primarily about comfort, not truth. Right?

The funny thing is that when I talk to most Christians about this, especially non-Americans, they simply don't have the knowledge of economics to understand how big government affects liberty, prosperity and security. Few of my international friends read people like F.A. Hayek and Thomas Sowell, and there are not that many people reading them here at home, either. Maybe we should be, though.

Do unemployment benefits discourage people from working?

July 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that the latest jobs report showed that the percentage of work-eligible Americans working was at a 38-year-low.

CNS News reports:

> A record 93,626,000 Americans 16 or older did not participate in the nation's labor force in June, as the labor force participation rate dropped to 62.6 percent, a 38-year low, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
>
> In June, according to BLS, the nation's civilian noninstitutional population, consisting of all people 16 or older who were not in the military or an institution, hit 250,663,000. Of those, 157,037,000 participated in the labor force by either holding a job or actively seeking one.

Now, let me ask you this. Does paying people to not work cause more people to not work? It seems to me that whatever you subsidize, you get more of, and whatever you tax, you get less of.

Now look at this article from the radically-leftist New York Times.

It says:

> Before this recession, most economists probably thought that some amount of unemployment benefits were just and compassionate, and offered a sense of security even to people who were lucky enough to retain their jobs, despite the fact that the program would raise unemployment rates and reduce both employment and economic output.
>
> In other words, unemployment benefits shrink the economy to some degree, but shrinking the economy a bit may be a price worth paying.
>
> Unemployment benefits were thought to reduce employment and output because, by definition, working people were ineligible for the benefits. In particular, an unemployed person who finds and starts a new job, or returns to working at his previous job, is supposed to give up his unemployment benefits. **Economists had found that a large fraction of unemployed people delay going back to work solely because the unemployment insurance program was paying them for not working.**

Here's a new study explaining how the "generosity" of the big government Democrat Party actually encourages people to avoid working, and to remain dependent on the government for their "income".

> A study published by two labor economists, Stepan Jurajda and Frederick J.

> Tannery, looked at employment histories for unemployment insurance recipients in Pittsburgh in the early 1980s. Unemployment rates got quite high in Pittsburgh in those days, reaching 16 percent at one point, and staying over 10 percent for two and a half years.
>
> The chart below summarizes their findings for Pittsburgh.
>
> The chart displays the fraction of persons (in Pittsburgh) receiving unemployment benefits who began working again, as a function of the number of weeks until their unemployment benefits were scheduled to be exhausted. For example, a "hazard" value of "0.04″ for week "-14″ means that, among unemployed persons with 14 weeks remaining until their benefit exhaustion date, 4 percent of them either began working a new job or returned to their previous job.

The chart:

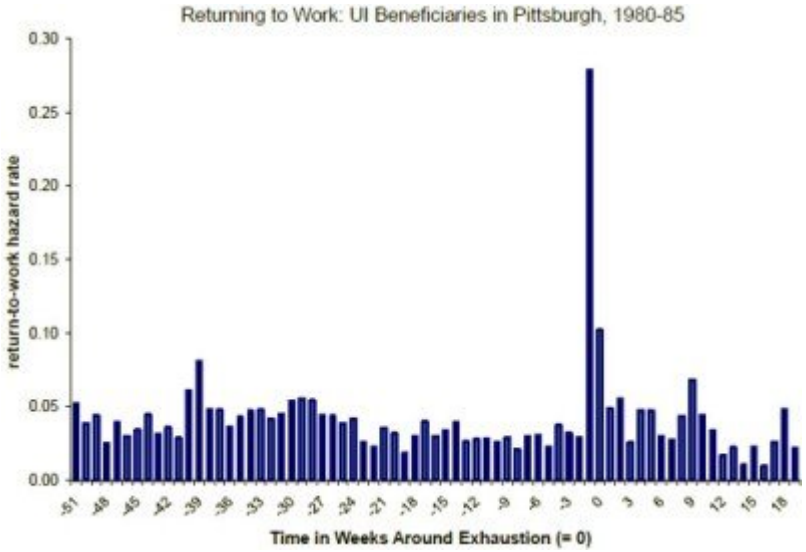

Unemployment benefits offer a disincentive for Americans to find work

The most troubling thing about this is what is not said in the chart or the study – think about the children growing up in these households where their parents, especially the fathers, are not working. What are they learning about self-sufficiency and the role of government? They are the ones who we are going to task with paying for our lavish entitlement programs in the future. Are people who think that dependency on government is normal being trained to pay for the exploding costs of Social Security and Medicare?

Survey: women explain why they avoid having children

July 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are women today genuinely interested in marriage and children, or do they have other plans?

This article comes from the leftist Huffington Post.

They write:

> The Huffington Post and YouGov asked 124 women why they choose to be childfree. Their motivations ranged from preferring their current lifestyles (64 percent) to prioritizing their careers (9 percent) — a.k.a. fairly universal things that have motivated men not to have children for centuries. To give insight into the complex, layered decisions women make, HuffPost asked childfree readers to discuss the reasons they have chosen not to have kids and gathered 270 responses here.

They grouped the responses into 5 categories:

1. I want to prioritize my career
2. I don't like children
3. I had a bad relationship with my parents
4. I don't want the financial responsibility
5. I like my life as it is

And here are some of the ones that I thought were the most interesting, and pay attention to the ones that include fear-of-missing-out travel, which I blogged about before:

Category 1:

> I am a first-generation college graduate in my family. My mother was a single mom my entire childhood, and I was there to see that struggle. Being a parent, for a woman, means for life. Being a parent, for men, seems to be something very different. I understand raising children is a big life change and I don't want to sell myself short on my potential to become something more and maybe even create change. **I am childfree because I want to travel, move, pursue my career wholly** and be able to push myself to be an inspiration to other women. If a child comes into my life, it won't be until I am happy and successful in my work life, and not until I am secure with my finances and a marriage. I don't want to one day wake up as an old woman wishing I had waited to have children so I could live my own life first, make mistakes, learn new things and find myself. Today kids are not for me.

Category 2:

> I'm nearly 47; my boyfriend (domestic partner) of 17 years is nearly 50. I've never been pregnant and have taken every precaution to remain childfree. I tolerate other people's children when I have to. I'm happiest when there are NO children around. I definitely don't want them in my home. I like my life as it is. My boyfriend and I are both scientists. We also raise snakes and spiders! **We like to travel. We travel to ride roller coasters (members of ACE — American Coaster Enthusiasts) and to attend rock concerts.** I am also a performer in a senior winter guard. My plate overfloweth! I see no reason to procreate. I would be unhappy. Why be unhappy?

Category 3:

> I have a great relationship with my husband. **We have the time and money to travel, and that gives us precious memories.** I had a bad relationship with my dad, and maybe I'm scared to treat my children like that. I'm very happy with my decision. I have a great relationship with myself too.

Category 4:

> My spouse and I have talked in depth about having children. However, **we both decided that our desire to travel the world is a financial burden in itself. If we have kids, we will never have the means to travel**, and at the end of our life, we would rather be 100 percent committed to fulfilling our own realistic dreams rather than only able to provide a subpar life for a child. Comes down to the fact we are selfish, but at least we recognize this and made the choice early enough to avoid damaging a kid

Category 5:

> The thought of having to do kiddie crap every weekend makes me want to shoot

> myself. I like having the extra money to save for retirement and not worry about braces, summer camp or college tuition. **I can travel on a moment's notice.** I can give my all to my job and not have to worry about daycare, sick days, or having to leave my co workers to pick up my slack. I'm the "cool aunt" to all my nieces and nephews. I have more time to do the things that make me happy and productive. My relationship with my guy is not strained due to the constant neediness of children. I don't want to put my body through pregnancy and childbirth. I can give my dog all the attention he needs and deserves.

If I had to choose one comment to represent the entire survey, it would be this one:

> The moment you have children, you're life ceases to be about yourself. Kids always take priority and I feel like I can do more for this world than just generate offspring.

Or maybe this one:

> I honestly feel too lazy. I haven't achieved enough, and if I had a child I would "just be a mom," which isn't enough for me or what I want out of life.

I think this is the real reason why young, unmarried women choose not to prepare or plan for marriage and children . Marriage and children "some day" is like planning for your retirement by winning the lottery. Marriage and children "some day" is an excuse to signal to family and friends that you will *eventually* want the responsibility of a husband and kids, but that you are justified in being self-centered *right now*.

We need to move beyond a survey to quantify this, and this U.S. Census data does that:

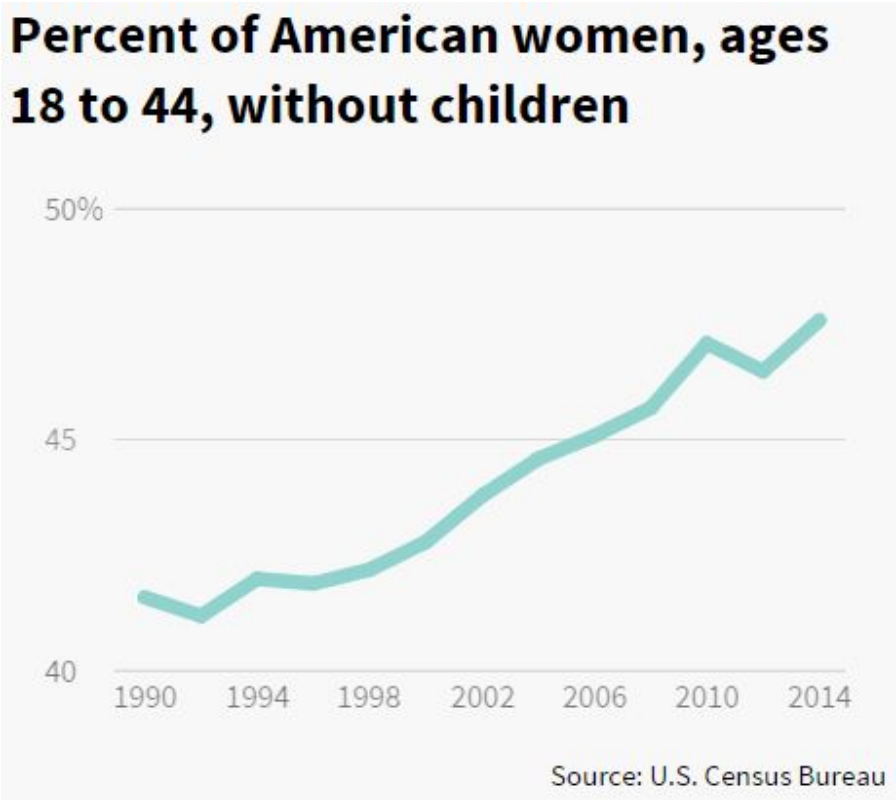

Childless by choice, not because of men failing to "man up"

These quotations are very troubling if you are a young man who has been serious about obtaining STEM degrees, saving money by *not traveling*, and making a plan to have a marriage and family that will serve God. I am seeing real hostility in young, unmarried Christian women to the idea that marriage will impose responsibilities, expectations and obligations on them. And their parents, relatives, friends and co-workers are doing nothing to detect and counter this attitude. As Lindsay argued on this blog before, the marriage / children plan is an excellent way for Christians to make a difference. It will take a lot of work, but it makes much more of a difference for the kingdom than just doing whatever makes you feel happy.

UPDATE: Commenter Bee comments below:

> Sad to say this but many Christian voices are encouraging Christian women to travel, date around and delay marriage and childbirth. Here are several negative voices:
>
> Mandy Hale is a Christian woman who is mid 30's, never married and has wasted years in travel and bad relationships. She has a large twitter following. She promotes her travel oriented, feelings oriented lifestyle.
>
> http://thesinglewoman.net/about/
>
> Christian counselor Stephen Arteburn tells of encouraging his daughter to travel and date around and not think about marriage until her late 20's. Unfortunately, no one can flip a switch on their 28th birthday and quickly get married to a quality guy. Also, late marriage for women means having more than 1 or 2 children is risky.
>
> http://www.amazon.com/This-One-Simple-Dates-Finding-ebook/dp/B006BEETVK/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1436189794&sr=8-5&keywords=steve+arterburn&pebp=1436189798009&perid=07F1AJ7WTWBV04G0N41V
>
> Bskillet81 found evangelical american princesses (EAP) obsessed with travel, entitlement, feelings, and personal fulfillment.
>
> https://societyofphineas.wordpress.com/2014/11/24/evangelical-american-princess/

I just read some of Mandy's quotes from GoodReads and she is certifiably nuts.

In Canada, Trinity Western University's law school loses accreditation

July 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

2011 election: Conservatives in Blue, Socialists in Red, Communists in Orange

Canada legalized gay marriage in 2005, and they are about 10 years ahead of us in destroying religious liberty. Want to know what comes after a country legalizes same-sex marriage? Then look to Canada. Specifically, look to the financial hub of Canada, the very liberal province of Ontario.

The Daily Caller reports on it.

> A court in Canada has upheld the denial of accreditation to a Christian law school, holding the private school's prohibition of homosexual behavior is sufficiently discriminatory that its degrees can be invalidated for that reason alone.
>
> Trinity Western University is a 4,000-student, evangelical Protestant college in the Vancouver suburb of Langley. It has been seeking to open a law school, but has struggled to obtain accreditation in several provinces. This difficulty is not based on the school's academics, but rather is based on outside objections to the covenant the school makes all students and professors sign. The covenant, among other things, forbids all sex other than that within heterosexual marriage, a rule opponents say discriminates against both gays and those who do not believe in marriage.

The actual regulation says nothing about gay anything. It is just as much opposed to

heterosexual extra-marital sex as it is to homosexual extra-marital sex. But somehow, in Canada, if you believe what the Bible teaches about sex, then you can't practice law. Because rainbow flag, tolerance and diversity.

More:

> Based on the rule, the Law Society of Upper Canada, which governs bar admission in Ontario, refused to accredit the school, meaning graduates would not be allowed to practice law in the province. Trinity sued, leading to Thursday's decision.
>
> In its ruling, the Ontario Superior Court found that the denial of accreditation did violate Trinity's freedom of religion, but that this violation was acceptable because of the greater good of protecting equality.
>
> […]The court also held that individual evangelical Christians could not claim to have had their freedom violated by the ruling, because they could still attend law school elsewhere.

Got that? So gay people who want a wedding cake, wedding flowers, wedding venue, wedding photography, etc. ARE having their rights violated even though they can go elsewhere. But Christian students who want to attend Trinity ARE NOT having their rights violated when they have to go elsewhere. It's "equal", in the eyes of the secular left.

Let's take a look at two 5-minute clips of the Ontario decision from two Canadian journalists.

Ezra Levant (who is Jewish):

Brian Lilley (who is Catholic):

In Canada, gay rights trump religious liberty rights.

But Canada is a different country, would the Democrats really be able to go after Christian schools the same way here?

This article from Campus Reform says yes.

Excerpt:

> The recent Supreme Court opinion threatens the operations of religious colleges, according to a constitutional lawyer.
>
> "If same-sex marriage is really the law of the land, if it's really constitutionally required, isn't there a risk that accrediting bodies are going to start pressuring religious colleges to recognize same-sex marriages for all purposes on their campuses as a condition of accreditation?" constitutional lawyer Gene Schaerr rhetorically asked Tuesday in his analysis of *Obergefell v Hodges*.

By the way, I don't need to mention that many Christians in Canada voted for the *bigger government* over the last two decades, and that's conservative Christianity is almost dead there. Why would "Christians" vote to expand for bigger secular government? Because Christians in Canada thought that it was the government's job to take care of

poverty and to give everyone “free health care”. When you ask a secular government to control more and more of our lives, this is what you get. Let me be clear: a “Christian” who favors *bigger government* favors *the end of Christianity*. Period. That clear enough for you?

Public schools implanting IUDs in sixth-grade girls without parent's knowledge

July 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

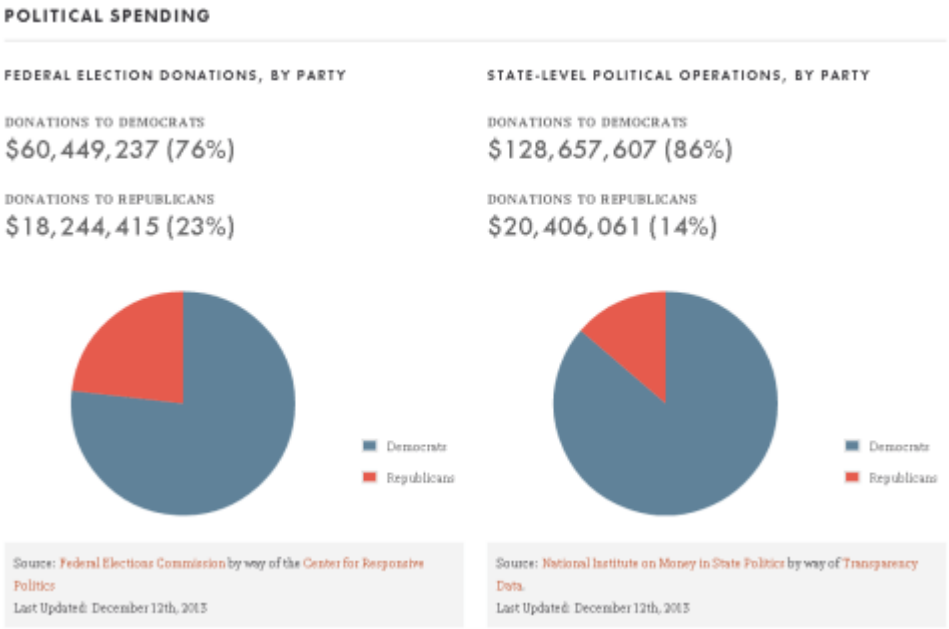

Political spending by the National Education Association in 2013

What does big government really look like? What does it mean for individuals, families, businesses and churches to give their money to the government so that the government can distribute it as they see fit?

Well, Seattle is one of the most liberal cities in America and they *embody* the idea of big government. Let's see how they spend the massive amounts of money they extract from individuals, families, businesses and churches.

Life News reports.

Excerpt:

> Earlier this month, LifeNews.com reported on a high school in Seattle, Washington that is now implanting intrauterine devices (IUD), as well as other forms of birth control and doing so without parental knowledge or permission.
>
> The IUD is known as a long acting reversible contraception, and may even act as an abortifacient. So, a young teen in Seattle can't get a coke at her high school, but she can have a device implanted into her uterus, which can unknowingly kill her unborn child immediately after conception. Or, if she uses another method, she can increase her chances of health risks for herself, especially if using a new method.
>
> The high school, Chief Sealth International, a public school, began offering the devices in 2010, made possible by a Medicaid program known as Take Charge and a non-profit, Neighborcare. Students can receive the device or other method free of cost and without their parent's insurance. And while it's lauded that the

> contraception is confidential, how can it be beneficial for a parent-child relationship when the parents don't even know the devices or medication their daughter is using?
>
> As it turns out, Chief Sealth isn't the only school in Seattle doing this. As CNS News reports, more schools are fitting young girls — as young as 6th grade — with the devices and doing so without their parents knowing.

Now how did this happen? Where did the public schools get the authority to have control of these children? And where did the money come from to pay for these schools?

The answer is that the money was taken from individuals, families, businesses and churches and given to the government. And how does a secular government spend this money? Do they spend it the same way that individuals, families, businesses and churches spend this money? No. They spend the money advancing their secular agenda, which, in this case, is to advance feminism and the sexual revolution. They want young girls to be available for sex, because they helps them to be less capable of life-long married love. A woman who has had a large number of break-ups, abortions, etc. at a young age is more likely to look to government, not to a husband, for support. Undermining her father's authority in the area of sexuality is exactly what they are trying to achieve. And the father is paying to be undermined with his tax dollars.

Robin Collins lectures on fine-tuning for discoverability from particle physics

July 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This lecture is 29 minutes long, the Q&A is 15 minutes. I highly recommend this lecture to *all audiences* of *all levels of ability*, for the simple reasons that apart from the content, this lecture is a how-to clinic in the tone, body language, slides and so on for you to use when trying to be persuasive when making your case. Science is king in this lecture. The scientific method is defined and applied in a winsome way. Making science understandable *should be* the bread and butter approach to Christian apologetics, and this lecture rivals the Mike Strauss lecture at Stanford University and the Mike Strauss lecture at the University of Texas – Dallas as the ideal lectures for showing that. It's not just the scientific material that makes this lecture by Collins work, it's the narrative and the style that make the lecture work.

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

His thesis in one slide:

Strongest Thesis

Thesis 2: Discoverability-Livability Optimality Thesis (DLO):
Within the range of values of a given fundamental parameter p that yield near-optimal livability, p will fall into that subrange of values that *optimize discoverability*.

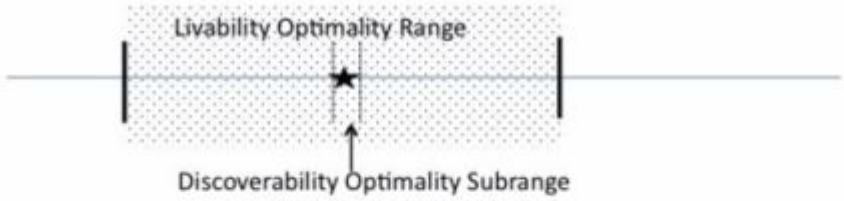

- ⋆ is actual value of parameter.
- Region between thick black lines is livability near-optimality range.
- Region between dashed lines is discoverability optimality subrange.
- DLO predicts ⋆ will fall between dashed lines.

Fine-tuning for discoverability – the DLO thesis
Summary:

- Thesis: the universe is more intelligible than we would expect it by chance
- The regular fine-tuning argument says that complex embodied observers are very rare
- But the number of highly-discoverable universes that have complex embodied observers is rarer still
- Why do we exist in a highly-discoverable universe?
- Can we quantify and test discoverability?
- Yes: by varying fundamental parameters and seeing how it affects discoverability
- Conclusion of his calculations: The Discoverability-Liveability Optimality range is an even smaller range within the Liveablity Optimality range of the standard fine-tuning argument
- Fine-tuning #1: the fine structure constant, governs the strength of the electro-magnetic force
- If larger, wood-burning fire becomes impossible because fires won't stay lit, and therefore forging metals becomes unlikely
- If smaller, wood-burning fires won't go out, e.g. – from lightning strikes, so that wood would be less accessible
- Other constraints: smaller value decreases effectiveness of light microscopes, drastically lowers efficiency of transformers and motors
- Fine-tuning #2: the cosmic microwave background radiation (CMBR), radiation left over from the Big Bang
- humans need to discover the CMBR in order to confirm the Big Bang creation out of nothing, and it depends on baryon/pothon ratio
- his calculations show that the actual value of CMBR is exactly at the peak for

detectability by humans
- if baryon/photon ratio larger, CMBR is less discoverable
- if baryon/photon ratio smaller, CMBR is less discoverable
- Fine-tuning #3: parameters related to subatomic particles are fine-tuned for their discovery and usefulness, e.g. – the bottom quark, the charm quark, the tau lepton and the Higgs Boson
- the lifetime of the particles affects their usefulness to scientists who want to investigate the Standard Model of physics
- decay rates of these subatomic particles are related to several of the finely-tuned parameters
- for example, the mass of the bottom quark is finely-tuned for its discoverability by scientists
- the tau lepton and the charm quark are similarly fine-tuned for disoverability
- the mass of the Higgs boson is finely-tuned for discoverability and for making further discoveries
- Conclusion: the DLO thesis is strongly confirmed – this is an even greater degree of fine-tuning that the already astonishing probabilities of the fine-tuning for complex, embodied intelligent beings
- The formalized version of the philosophical argument based on this evidence is impervious with some of the traditional objections to the standard fine-tuning argument
- #1 multiverse/selection effect: it is not subject to multiverse / observer selection objections
- #2 normalizeability: it is not subject to the McGrew-Vestrup objection because the range of possible values is *finite* not *infinite*
- #3 falsifiability: it makes falsifiable predictions, and in fact Collins' earlier calculations of the CMBR discoverability contained an error that falsified the thesis – until he found the error and corrected for it
- #4 usefulness: it gives clues about the Creator's purpose for us, namely that the universe was created for us to be able to do science and find evidence of the Creator's existence – there is no expectation for us to exercise blind faith, trust in God is meant to be a plausible deduction from the progress of experimental science

Sample slide:

Example: Ideal Lifetime of Bottom Quark

Particle Physicist Matt Strassler: "Bottom quarks . . . have lifetimes in a **"sweet spot"** . . . .*The distance that bottom quarks typically can travel [before they decay]. . . turns out to be* ***an ideal*** *distance for detection by the LHC detectors ATLAS and CMS, and the Tevatron detectors CDF and DZero, and many other experiments too."*

Bottom quark lifetime is finely-tuned for discoverability
And another:

Higgs Mass Ideal

- Particle Physicist Abdelhak Djouadi: "The Higgs particle was born under **a very lucky star** . . . the mass value $M_H \approx$ 125 GeV allows to produce the Higgs particle at the LHC in many redundant channels and to detect it in a large variety of decay modes."
- Particle Physicist Narei Lorenzo Martinez: "In this [low mass] region, most of the decay channels are accessible. An hypothetical Higgs boson at 125 GeV is then **an ideal scenario** for studying its couplings to other particles."

Higgs boson mass is finely-tuned for discoverability
Earlier, I blogged about a Robin Collins lecture on the fine-tuning that allows complex, embodied life to exist. Another must-see lecture. If you are looking for something to study in university, and you have funding, then physics, mathematics and philosophy are the best places to be for a Christian scholar.

Illegal immigrant murderer chose San Francisco because it's a sanctuary city

July 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Breitbart News reports on the recent murder of a young woman in northern California.

Excerpt:

> Five-time deportee, seven-time convicted felon Juan Francisco Lopez-Sanchez said in a new interview Sunday with a local ABC News affiliate that he came to San Francisco because he knew the sanctuary city would not hand him over to immigration officials.
>
> […]Lopez-Sanchez has confessed to shooting Kathryn Steinle last Wednesday at Pier 14.
>
> Had San Francisco authorities not refused a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainer request, Lopez-Sanchez may not have been in the United States and Steinle might still be alive.
>
> […]An ICE official told Breitbart News that ICE Enforcement and Removal had begun processing the suspect for reinstatement of removal from the U.S. in March. But instead Lopez-Sanchez was transferred on March 26 from the Bureau of Prisons in another city to the San Francisco Sheriff's Department (SFSD) because of a drug warrant. ICE then filed the detainer request to be notified prior to Lopez-Sanchez's release from custody.
>
> A San Francisco court dismissed Lopez-Sanchez's drug charges on March 27.
>
> San Francisco and SFSD policy is to deny ICE detainer requests, barring special circumstances, such as a warrant for a suspected violent offender. The ICE detainer request was denied, and on April 15, 2015 Lopez-Sanchez was released. Two and a half months later Kate Steinle was killed.
>
> The 2013 "Trust Act," signed by Gov. Jerry Brown, gave California cities like San Francisco more leeway in deciding whether to comply with immigration authorities.

When I was listening to Ben Shapiro talk about this story while driving home last night, I was thinking about how much of a mistake it is to live in areas that are dominated by the secular left. You can see how many times common sense and the rule of law were disregarded.

The true horror of this story is that the victim paid taxes that were used to pay the people who refused to deport her murderer. She paid taxes and the state used them to pass policies and laws that protected her murderer.

The Breitbart News article closed with this:

> The same night Steinle was shot and killed, a four-time deported illegal alien in

> Laredo, Texas, murdered his wife with a hammer, according to his own admission. Breitbart Texas previously reported that Laredo Police Department admitted three prior violent encounters with the man. Federal agents told Breitbart Texas that Laredo police failed to inform Border Patrol of the encounters with the illegally present foreign national.
>
> It was suggested that the woman would still be alive today, had police reported the man to Border Patrol.

The police are paid by taxpayers, but sometimes they don't protect taxpayers. Sometimes, they have other priorities – political correctness and compassion.

What is interesting is the Obama administration response to the Steinle murder:

> Referring to the shooting death last week of Kathryn Steinle, allegedly shot by a Mexican man who has been deported five times, White House press secretary Josh Earnest said the U.S. would be safer if Republican lawmakers had approved comprehensive immigration reform backed by the president.
>
> "The president has done everything within his power to make sure that we're focusing our law enforcement resources on criminals and those who pose a threat to public safety," Mr. Earnest said.

So, the Democrat solution to the problem of illegal immigrants murdering taxpayers is to give the murderers citizenship. I'm not sure that this will solve the problem.

Here's another one from Breitbart News:

> A six-time-deported illegal immigrant is charged in the felony hit-and-run of an Arizona mother and her two young children. The man allegedly admitted to being high on marijuana while causing the severe lacerations to a five-year-old boy. The five-year-old and a two-year-old were both taken to an area hospital.

And The Stream reports that the federal government released him to San Francisco knowing it was a "sanctuary city":

> This is a national story, because the federal government released accused shooter Francisco Sanchez to a San Francisco jail in March and the jail released Sanchez to the streets April 15 after the district attorney dropped a 20-year-old charge for marijuana possession. Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi said he did so in keeping with San Francisco's sanctuary city policy.

Individual anecdotes are useful to illustrate, but for real knowledge, I need to see the aggregate data.

And here it is, from The Daily Signal:

> According to a recent study released from the Center for Immigration Studies, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) released 30,558 criminally-convicted illegal immigrants, with a total of 79,059 convictions altogether, in

> 2014.
>
> Furthermore, the CIS report shows that among the 904,000 illegal immigrants who have ignored orders to leave the U.S., approximately 167,527 of these are convicted criminal immigrants.
>
> Likewise, CIS's April 2015 statistics indicate ICE has only arrested 11,983 at-large convicted criminal immigrants—despite the fact 168,000 criminal immigrants were identified.

Is government as responsive to the needs of taxpayers as private companies are to the needs of their customers? Or is government more concerned about the rule of law, or not offending their favored groups? Maybe we should think twice about voting for bigger government.

Man suspected of influencing Tunis attack collecting welfare in UK

July 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's not their money, so it can be wasted

This is from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> A leader of the terrorist group suspected of being behind the Tunisian beach massacre is living in benefits in Britain.
>
> Hani al-Sibai, an al-Qaeda cleric suspected of radicalising "Jihadi John", lives in a £1 million house leafy street in fashionable west London.
>
> He is said to be one of the "key influencers" of the Islamic fanatics believed to have recruited and trained gunman Seifeddine Rezgui.
>
> Egyptian-born al-Sibai, 54, reportedly lives on £50,000 a year in handouts, disability living allowance, with his wife and five children.
>
> Asked how he could justify taking so much in benefits, al-Sibai, who is under investigation suspected of benefit fraud, told the Daily Mail: "Ask David Cameron, don't ask me."
>
> […]Al-Sibai is understood to have close links to Tunisian terror group Ansar al-Sharia, which authorities believe to have recruited and trained Rezgui.
>
> He is cited at length in a 2013 report by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism in The Hague, and is described as one of its "key influencers".
>
> Security services are understood to be investigating links between al-Sibai and his influence on the west London terror network in which Jihadi John – unmasked as Mohammed Emwazi – operated.
>
> It is claimed that al-Sibai, a charismatic preacher, had "captivated" a number of

> young Muslim men who subsequently went abroad to fight jihad.
>
> In a court case last year, he was accused of having “provided material support to al-Qaeda and conspired to commit terrorist acts”, an allegation he denies.

I guess people who support big government would tell me that this is compassion in action. The bigger government is, the more people government can help, right? That’s why we need to raise taxes and give the government more money so it can take care of all of these helpless people.

Well, I am for small government. No individual worker, working family, or private sector company would survive financially for very long by handing out money to terrorist imams. It’s so easy to make mistakes handing out money that isn’t yours, in order to buy votes from people. That’s what government does, and that’s why we need to keep government small. I don’t know about you, but have better things to do with my money than give it to government, so they can buy the votes of terrorists imams with it.

Tim McGrew lectures on undesigned coincidences in the Bible

July 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Tim McGrew

I have an interesting lecture for you to listen to today, by Dr. Tim McGrew. He is a professor of philosophy at Western Michigan University.

The MP3 file is here.

I do not have a summary of the lecture, but I do have an article that explains what undesigned coincidences are.

Lydia McGrew explains the concept of undesigned coincidences on her blog:

> Undesigned coincidences in the Gospels … is an argument that was well-known in the nineteenth century but has, for no really clear reason, simply been forgotten as time has gone on. It is a cumulative case argument that the Gospels reflect, to an important extent, independent knowledge of actual events. Please note that this argument is quite independent of one's preferred answer to the synoptic question. That is to say, even if, e.g., Mark was the first Gospel and others had access to Mark and show signs of literary dependence on Mark, the argument from undesigned coincidences provides evidence for independent knowledge of real events among the Gospel writers. There are many more of such coincidences beyond those given in the talk.

Basically, this argument finds cases where the same story is in two sources, but where some important detail is left out of one account so that something about the story seems out of place. But the other source has the missing detail that unlocks the mystery. This supports the view that the sources are independent witnesses of the same events. Multiple attestation is an indicator that the material is historical.

My favorite example of undesigned coincidences is the Philip example from John 6. Lydia explains that example here:

> As I was listening to Tim's examples, I was struck by all the reasons there might be for a real eyewitness not to fill out the *explanation for* a detail. Think for example how tedious it is to listen to someone who goes back to explain every little detail he mentions in a story.
>
> […]Similarly, as John is telling the story about the feeding of the five thousand, it would be quite natural for him to say that Jesus asked Philip where they could buy bread if he were really an eyewitness–that is, because he remembered that Jesus *did* ask Philip. (Tim talks about why it was Philip in the interview.) But John himself might have had to stop and think for a moment if someone had asked him, "Why did Jesus ask Philip rather than any of the other disciples?" Presumably when John told the story, he wasn't particularly thinking about some special reason for Jesus to select Philip for the question. But if someone were forging the story as fiction, he would have a reason for choosing to use a given disciple as a character at that point in his fictional narrative, and therefore he would be unlikely to choose that character without making the reason clearer to his readers.
>
> All sorts of such things can happen when one is telling a true story, especially a story one has witnessed. One gets caught up in what one actually remembers and drops in incidental references to small facts, which facts are to some extent selected randomly by the memory as one brings the scene back to memory. This is typical of real memoirs but not of elaborate forgeries.

If you think this is interesting and useful, then give the lecture a listen.

Obama administration gives $5.6 million taxpayer dollars to abortion provider

July 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Do you like big government? Some people do. But let's take a look at what big government does with the money it takes from taxpayers – many of whom are pro-life.

Here's an article from Life News to make the point.

It says:

> The Obama administration has made funding the Planned Parenthood abortion business a top priority during two terms and the administration has just announced another $5.6 million for the abortion corporation. The grants to various affiliates of the Planned Parenthood abortion business came via the Department of Health and Human Services.
>
> […]The Obama administration grants to Planned Parenthood follow on the heels of a new report showing Planned Parenthood does one-third of all abortions in the United States.
>
> Planned Parenthood sells itself as a non-profit organization that concerns itself with women's health, but a shocking new report indicates Planned Parenthood is little more than an abortion business. While the number of abortions it does and the percentage of its operations that are abortions is in the rise, the number of women receiving legitimate health care at Planned Parenthood is steadily declining.
>
> […]In December, the abortion giant Planned Parenthood released its 2013 annual report and the new numbers indicate it did more abortions than the year before — killing 327,653 babies in abortions while taking in millions in taxpayer funds. The report indicates Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013, an

> increase over the 327,166 abortions it did in 2012.
>
> While it remains America's biggest abortion corporation, the "nonprofit" continued to make money — bringing in $305.4 million last year and $305.3 million this year. Planned Parenthood continued to receive over a half-billion dollars in taxpayer money, as it took in $540 million in 2012 and $528 million in 2013.

Let's assume you're a Christian reading that post. Is that how you would spend your money? If not, then why would you want the government to take your money and give it to abortion providers so they can take the lives of innocent unborn children?

Does it make you feel good to think that your vote helps the poor, but without you having to do anything as an individual? I want to suggest that you vote for smaller government, and then use the money you save in taxes to do good things *on your own*. That way, you can be sure that your money will be used to do things that don't violate your conscience.

How a Democrat district attorney terrorized conservatives in Wisconsin

July 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

District attorney John Chisholm (left)

Would you like the police to break into your house at 4 AM and search it just because you are a conservative? Then order you to tell no one about the raid? That's what happened in Wisconsin.

Religious liberty expert David French writes about it in National Review.

Excerpt:

> It was still dark outside when "Jonah" (not his real name) heard the pounding on his front door. As luck would have it, he was awake — or mostly awake. He'd gotten up at 4:00 a.m. on October 3, 2013, to see his parents off to the airport. They were leaving on a quick trip to raise money for the children's charity his father runs. Jonah was 16 at the time, old enough to stay home alone for a short time, but not old enough to deal with what awaited him on the other side of the door.
>
> The pounding continued, and Jonah peered out the window to discover its source. To his horror, he saw uniformed officers, their guns drawn. "Police," they yelled. "We have a warrant." An officer shined a flashlight on a document Jonah couldn't read. Unsure what to do, but unwilling to defy the authorities, he let them in.

> The officers sat him down, read him the entire search warrant, and ordered him not to tell anyone about the raid — not even school officials. He asked if he could call his parents. They said no. He asked if he could call a lawyer. They said no.
>
> Then, they proceeded to turn his house "upside down."
>
> […]The pretense for the October raids was suspected "coordination" between various conservative organizations and Wisconsin governor Scott Walker's campaign — activity that a trial court has held constituted nothing more than entirely legal "issue advocacy," if it even occurred. Because they'd had the temerity to engage in this issue advocacy — constitutionally protected free speech — multiple conservative citizens were subjected to so-called John Doe proceedings by Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm, a Democrat.
>
> […]As a prominent Wisconsin conservative and political consultant, Jonah's father was one of Chisholm's targets.

Obviously, Jonah's father's career was negatively impacted when news of this raid got out. But even more interesting than the professional damage was the psychological damage:

> Even reliving the experience of the raid in an interview was difficult for Jonah. He has a "deep sense" that his home is no longer safe. His family lives in a rural part of their county, and cars — especially dark SUVs — approaching their driveway now cause him deep, immediate anxiety. His family used to be more politically active; now, they watch what they say. They used to be more trusting, especially of police; now, they assume the worst.
>
> And his mother continues to be terrified by the thought of what could have happened in the raid.
>
> "We're so fortunate that he's okay," she says. "He could have been in the shower. They could have broken the door down. He could have been shot. Over politics."

You know, we have all these stories of secular leftist regimes in the Soviet Union, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, etc. and we imagine to ourselves "well, that can't happen here, because secular leftists are different here". No they aren't. They just have to operate within a legal framework that puts the brakes on what they'd really like to do to people who disagree with them. Historically speaking, the left *does* shoot people over politics. They have shot *millions and millions of people* over politics in the last 100 years. That is not my opinion, that's the record of leftist political regimes in the 20th century. There is no right-wing regime that shoots people over politics – to be right-wing means to be for free enterprise, free speech, freedom of religion, marriage and family, right to life, private property, self-defense, and so on. People on the right value individuals, businesses and families. Conservatives oppose big secular government breaking down people's doors at 4 AM, with guns drawn.

Previously, I blogged about some of Chisholm's other victims. One of them has now filed a civil rights lawsuit against him, which is good news – although criminal charges would be better. And criminal charges would also be good for the IRS leaders who persecuted conservative groups just ahead of the 2012 election.

IRS Chief Fascist Lois Lerner

And there is actually more news about the IRS targeting of conservatives, from The Stream.

Excerpt:

> Newly released documents show Department of Justice officials, Internal Revenue Service and Federal Bureau of Investigation officials were discussing prosecuting nonprofit organizations for allegedly engaging in illegal political activity.
>
> An official "DOJ Recap" document obtained by the group *Judicial Watch* details an Oct. 8, 2010 meeting between DOJ, IRS and FBI officials, including Lois Lerner, where the administration employees discussed "several possible theories to bring criminal charges under FEC law" against groups "posing" as tax exempt nonprofits.

Those groups are, of course, the Tea Party groups – groups that could have affected the re-election of Barack Obama.

More:

> *Judicial Watch* says another document shows that just prior to the October 2010 meeting the IRS began giving the FBI confidential taxpayer information on nonprofits. The document obtained by *Judicial Watch* says the IRS gave the FBI some 21 disks with 1.25 million pages of taxpayer records.
>
> "These new documents show that the Obama IRS scandal is also an Obama DOJ and FBI scandal," Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton said in a statement. "The FBI and Justice Department worked with Lois Lerner and the IRS to concoct some reason to put President Obama's opponents in jail before his reelection. And this abuse resulted in the FBI's illegally obtaining confidential taxpayer information.

> How can the Justice Department and FBI investigate the very scandal in which they are implicated?”

Does anyone in the leftist media care about this? Of course not. They like that government is criminalizing conservatives. They are 100% on board with it, and that’s why they cover it up.

Stephen Cowan asks: does God have a reason for allowing evil and suffering?

July 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Philosophy of religion that hits the spot

Here is an article by Steven Cowan about the problems of evil and suffering.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude.

Now let's find out what a noseeum is, and how it relates to the existence of evil and suffering:

> However, perhaps God's existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God's existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By "pointless evil," Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe's argument may be simply stated as follows:
>
> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the "noseeum inference." Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a "noseeum" is

> something that you cannot see—it is a “no-see-um.” And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I “no-see-um” a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child’s suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don’t think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

In that example, the planet is the noseeum. Just because you look really hard, you can’t be confident that the planet is not there. And similarly with the problem of evil and suffering, looking really hard and finding no reason does not mean that there is no reason. It just means that you are not in a good position to see the reason. You don’t know enough to to be sure that there is no reason, because of your limitations as a human being.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous. (You can get the PDF here)

According to the paper, human beings just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil

and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a noseeum. To know for sure that there is no reason, we would need to have more knowledge than we do.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

I also found this opening speech from a debate that Steven Cowan did on the problem of evil, which may also be useful to you.

The *best* place to learn more about no-see-ums is in this excellent lecture by Biola University professor Doug Geivett.

Hillary Clinton lied to CNN about not receiving a subpoena

July 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does national security make?

Hillary Clinton finally agreed to do an easy interview on CNN, but even though the questions were were easy, and the audience friendly, she still got caught in an obvious lie.

Here she is claiming she never was received a subpoena regarding her private, unsecure e-mail server:

Now here's Trey Gowdy explaining to CNN that she in fact did receive a subpoena:

Former Congressman John Campbell interviewed Trey Gowdy on the Hugh Hewitt show – a national radio show. The audio and the transcript have been posted.

The MP3 file is here.

Here's the interesting part of the transcript:

> JC: We have with us on the line now Congressman Trey Gowdy and chairman of the House Select Committee on Benghazi. Hey, Trey, great to have you on the show.
>
> TG: Congressman, we miss you, and thank you for having me on.
>
> JC: Well, thank you so much for coming on. Now I'm going to play for you, I'm sure you expected this, the clip from Hillary Clinton yesterday when she was being interviewed on CNN by Brianna Keilar. So please play that clip.
>
> BK: Facing a subpoena, deleted emails from them?
>
> HRC: You know, you're starting with so many assumptions that are, I've never had a subpoena.
>
> JC: I've never had a subpoena, her words. Congressman Trey Gowdy, did Hillary

Clinton lie yesterday?

TG: Well, she certainly had a subpoena. You know, when you lie, a lie suggests an intent to deceive. I can't imagine whatever intent she could possibly have. I try not to use the word lie. I can certainly tell you this. **It is a fact that there was a subpoena issued to her in March of 2015. But Congressman, it's also a fact that there was a subpoena in existence from another Congressional committee far before that one. So there are two subpoenas.** There are letters from Congress. And there's a statutory obligation to her to preserve public records. So whether it's a subpoena in place or whether it's a statute in place, or whether it's a Congressional investigation in place, you can't delete and wipe out public records.

JC: Now Chairman Gowdy, I have the subpoena that your committee sent out, I have a copy of it, sitting in front of me from March of 2015. But you're now telling me that there was another one prior to that?

TG: Oh, yes, sir. There was, think back right after Benghazi, Jason Chaffetz wrote a letter to Secretary Clinton, in fact, saying Congress has the right and the authority to investigate these attacks. That is tantamount to a 'do not destroy' request. And also keep in mind, Congress wrote her directly when she was Secretary of State and asked her specifically, do you ever use personal email. She never answered that question. She never said yes, she never said no. All right, fast forward. The Oversight Committee is looking into Benghazi. They issued a subpoena to the State Department to bring certain documents over to Congress so we can inspect them. It is that subpoena that ultimately led the State Department to give us the first eight emails we got from her.

JC: And when was that?

TG: We got them in August of…

JC: No, but when was that subpoena?

TG: 2013.

JC: 2013?

TG: Yes, sir.

JC: So she, all right, so, because she had this subpoena in March, 2015, and then you're saying she had another one in 2013.

TG: There was another one to the State Department. In August of 2013, there were two subpoenas sent to the State Department, which are requests for documents. But as a result of that subpoena to the State Department, the State Department then produced to us her emails. So there is no way to claim that there was not some legal process directing that those emails be retained and ultimately produced, because they were.

JC: Yeah, because I've read that her trying to weasel out of this is, out of the lie, and I'm going to use that term, and I'm going to get back to it in a minute, but is

> that well, I thought that the question was whether I was under any subpoenas when the emails were deleted. And so obviously, she had subpoenas. I mean, there is no way that she didn't have subpoenas. That's without question. I've got them sitting in front of me. But you're saying that also, there were subpoenas that covered the deletion of those emails?
>
> TG: There are, there were subpoenas in place well before our committee ever existed.

CNN has also posted a story about this. As if there were not already enough Clinton scandals, here is another one to add to the heap.

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Bobby Jindal: policies of Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders are the same as Greece

July 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal

Here's an excellent editorial by Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal in left-leaning Time magazine.

He writes:

> It's simple math to understand what is happening in Greece right now. When Greece joined the euro, it benefited from the financial support of its more fiscally responsible neighbors in the euro zone. Rather than taking the opportunity to enact the structural reforms that could have increased growth — reforms that it still has not undertaken — Greece instead went on a spending spree funded by other people's money.
>
> Greece has been cooking the books with complicated financial instruments for years. But the problems don't stop there. Greece's Rubik's Cube tax code and rampant corruption make tax evasion widespread. **Golden parachute public pensions that allow public sector workers to retire as early as 45 drain dollars out of the government coffers while incentivizing a still healthy and work-age workforce to live on the public dime. It's hard to have sufficient tax paying workers when about 75% of Greek public-sector employees retire by the age 61.**

Did the new socialist government run by 40-year-old child Alex Tsipras fix anything?

They made it worse:

> After taking office in January, the Alexis Tsipras administration reversed promised

> privatization of state-owned assets like the Port of Piraeus. In 2011, the IMF predicted Greece could bring in 50 billion euros ($56 billion) from the sale of state assets, not to mention the savings from moving those employees off the public wage and benefit system. To date, it has raised about 3 billion euros.
>
> Business has no interest in creating jobs when crushed by government regulation. Tspiras promised to raise the minimum wage, despite the economy spiraling out of control. It's not surprising the March unemployment rate stood at 25.6%.

Privatization is a thing that conservatives do, because we don't like the idea that government workers get automatic pay from compulsory taxation. We prefer that whoever is providing services be in the private sector, as independent from government influence as possible. That way, they actually have to compete with other providers to earn your money – something a government monopoly never has to do.

Anyway, back to Greece socialism. Who would be stupid enough to raise taxes, raise minimum wage, increase spending and promise people more free stuff as a way of getting out of debt?

These two unqualified clowns, that's who:

> Clinton and Sanders are math deniers, like most of the Democrats in D.C. They want to grow the government economy instead of the real American economy. Rather than pursuing tax reform to improve growth or entitlement changes to reduce future expenditures, Clinton and Sanders are focused on spending trillions on Obamacare, giving free college to everyone, and raising the federal minimum wage.

Since January 2007, Democrats have added well over $10 trillion to the national debt, running it up to $18.5 trillion, higher than the entire GDP of the country. What have we got for that? Fewer people in the labor force, and more people dependent on government, that's what. But oh, you can marry your siblings and pets now, because *lurve*, so that's something.

OK, so let's talk about Bobby Jindal. Initially, I had him slotted in as my #2 candidate with Scott Walker on top. But Walker has had two months and hasn't done anything super conservative. Meanwhile, Jindal has offered a lot of red meat to conservatives on marriage and right to life, and now we have this aggressive condemnation of socialism, too. I think Jindal is now my top pick, and Walker is next, then Cruz. Fiorina is looking better at this point and is #4, and Rubio is off my list entirely.

Is the root cause of crime poverty or fatherlessness?

July 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

If we were really serious about stopping crime, then we should go after the root cause of crime. So what is that root cause? The answer might surprise you.

Here is Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to explain:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:
>
> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]

> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

People on the left claim that poverty causes crime, but they don't look for the root cause of poverty. The root cause of poverty is the decline of marriage, which produces fatherless children. Unfortunately, some people promote the decline of marriage because they do not like the "unequal gender roles" inherent in marriage. So what is the main tool that the anti-marriage people use to increase the number of fatherless children?

Dr. Michael Tanner of the libertarian Cato Institute explains one of the causes of fatherlessness in his testimony to Congress:

> Welfare contributes to crime in several ways. First, children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. According to one study, children raised in single-parent families are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior.(3) Moreover, O'Neill found that, holding other variables constant, black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as black children from a family where the father is present. Nearly 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 percent of prison inmates.(4) Research indicates a direct correlation between crime rates and the number of single-parent families in a neighborhood.(5)
>
> As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her seminal article for The Atlantic Monthly:
>
> The relationship [between single-parent families and crime] is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family break up as the most important source of rising rates of crime.(6)
>
> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth.

> Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on family structure concluded that "providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women."(9)

The poverty that everyone complains about is not the root cause of crime. The poverty is caused by fatherlessness. The fatherlessness is caused by welfare. Fatherlessness is also caused by laws and policies that make it easier for people to divorce, e.g. – no-fault divorce laws. Again, it's people on the left who push for no-fault divorce laws. So the left is pushing two policies, welfare and no-fault divorce, which cause crime.

Are illegal immigrants more likely to commit crimes than the general public?

July 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kathryn Steinle was murdered by an illegal immigrant.

So we had a case in the news where an illegal immigrant who had been arrested and deported numerous times was allowed to stay in the U.S. thanks to San Francisco's very Democrat "sanctuary city" policy. All the people running for the Democrat presidential nomination support sanctuary cities, and amnesty for illegal immigrants as well. But how do these policies affect American taxpayers?

Breitbart News has the numbers from the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

Excerpt:

> While illegal immigrants account for about 3.5 percent of the U.S population, they represented 36.7 percent of federal sentences in FY 2014 following criminal convictions, according to U.S. Sentencing Commission data obtained by Breitbart News.
>
> According to FY 2014 USSC data, of 74,911 sentencing cases, citizens accounted for 43,479 (or 58.0 percent), illegal immigrants accounted for 27,505 (or 36.7 percent), legal immigrants made up 3,017 (or 4.0 percent), and the remainder (about 1 percent) were cases in which the offender was either extradited or had an unknown status.
>
> Broken down by some of the primary offenses, illegal immigrants represented 16.8 percent of drug trafficking cases, 20.0 percent of kidnapping/hostage taking, 74.1 percent of drug possession, 12.3 percent of money laundering, and 12.0 percent of murder convictions.

Now a lot of those convictions will be related to immigration… what happens when we take those out?

The sentencing rate is still higher than normal:

> **Eliminating all immigration violations, illegal immigrants would account for 13.6 percent of all the offenders sentenced in FY14 following federal criminal convictions — still greater than the 3.5 percent of the population illegal immigrants are said to make up.**

All that crime is not only dangerous and expensive, but we have to pay for the fails and law enforcement to catch them, too. Now, let's review Hillary Clinton's views on illegal immigration.

The Washington Times reports that she favors amnesty:

> Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Rodham Clinton vowed Tuesday that if elected, she would try to expand President Obama's deportation amnesty to more illegal immigrants, saying this administration has left out a number of aliens who deserve to be granted legal status.
>
> Speaking in Las Vegas at a Cinco de Mayo meeting focused on immigration, Mrs. Clinton also called for granting attorneys to illegal immigrants facing the complex immigration system, and said she would like to re-examine detention to ensure more illegal immigrants are released as they await deportation.
>
> Mrs. Clinton delivered on just about every question from immigrant rights activists, who had been pressing her to reject Mr. Obama's detention policies and go beyond his amnesty.

The Daily Caller reminds us that she also supports sanctuary cities:

> Clinton last weighed in publicly on sanctuary cities during the 2008 presidential campaign.
>
> "You would allow the sanctuary cities to disobey the federal law?" Clinton was asked by Tim Russert during a Sept. 6, 2007, debate at Dartmouth College.
>
> "Well, I don't think there is any choice," she responded.
>
> Clinton said she backed the sanctuary city concept because without it, illegal immigrants refuse to cooperate with police because they are afraid of being deported.
>
> "Local law enforcement has a different job than federal immigration enforcement," Clinton said. "The problem is the federal government has totally abdicated its responsibility."
>
> Clinton again expressed her support for sanctuary cities in a 2008 interview with Fox's Bill O'Reilly.
>
> "Are you going to crack down on the sanctuary cities?" O'Reilly asked.
>
> "No, I'm not," Clinton said, eliciting a shocked response from the host.

I'm all for more skilled immigration, but that's not what is happening on our southern border. If Hillary becomes president, that situation will only get worse.

Obamacare success: health insurance premiums to rise 20-40 percent in 2016

July 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama on the golf course having fun

This is from the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

They write:

> Health insurance companies around the country are seeking rate increases of 20 percent to 40 percent or more, saying their new customers under the Affordable Care Act turned out to be sicker than expected. Federal officials say they are determined to see that the requests are scaled back.
>
> Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans — market leaders in many states — are seeking rate increases that average 23 percent in Illinois, 25 percent in North Carolina, 31 percent in Oklahoma, 36 percent in Tennessee and 54 percent in Minnesota, according to documents posted online by the federal government and state insurance commissioners and interviews with insurance executives.
>
> The Oregon insurance commissioner, Laura N. Cali, has just approved 2016 rate increases for companies that cover more than 220,000 people. Moda Health Plan, which has the largest enrollment in the state, received a 25 percent increase, and the second-largest plan, LifeWise, received a 33 percent increase.
> **Jesse Ellis O'Brien, a health advocate at the Oregon State Public Interest Research Group, said: "Rate increases will be bigger in 2016 than they have been for years and years and will have a profound effect on consumers here. Some may start wondering if insurance is affordable**

> **or if it's worth the money."**
>
> […]**The rate requests are the first to reflect a full year of experience with the new insurance exchanges and federal standards that require insurers to accept all applicants, without charging higher prices because of a person's illness or disability.**

Bye-bye private health insurance, hello government-run VA style health care:

> In financial statements filed with the government in the last two months, some insurers said that their claims payments totaled not just 80 percent, but more than 100 percent of premiums. And that, they said, is unsustainable.

Here's Minnesota and Tennessee:

> At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, for example, the ratio of claims paid to premium revenues was more than 115 percent, and the company said it lost more than $135 million on its individual insurance business in 2014. "Based on first-quarter results," it said, "the year-end deficit for 2015 individual business is expected to be significantly higher."
>
> BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, the largest insurer in the state's individual market, said its proposed increase of 36 percent could affect more than 209,000 consumers.

Missouri, North Carolina, Kansas:

> Coventry Health Care, now owned by Aetna, is seeking rate increases that average 22 percent for 70,000 consumers in Missouri. "The claims experience for these plans has been worse than anticipated," Coventry reported.
>
> In its proposal to increase rates by an average of 25 percent for more than 397,000 consumers, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina cited "inpatient costs, particularly in treatment of cancer and heart conditions, emergency room utilization, and cost for specialty drug medications" to treat hepatitis C, breast cancer and cystic fibrosis.
>
> Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas sought increases averaging 37 percent for 2016 and said the increase could affect 28,600 consumers.
>
> "Kansans who purchased these individual plans since 2014 were older, in general, than expected and required more medical services than anticipated," the company told federal health officials.

Wow, so when Obama promised all kinds of new free things, that actually costs money? I can't believe it. Why didn't Obama tell us that it would cost more to do all these things he promised, and that we would be stuck with the bill – not him? I thought he was such a generous guy and was going to pay for all this himself. But it turns out that he was just telling you what he was going to buy with *your money*.

Should government get out of the marriage business?

July 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Here are three articles by Jennifer Roback Morse posted at The Public Discourse. The articles answer the charge from social liberals and libertarians that government should "get the government out of marriage".

Here's the first article which talks about how government will still be involved in marriage, even if we get rid of the traditional definition of marriage, because of the need for dispute resolution in private marriage contracts. She uses no-fault divorce as an example showing how it was sold as a way to get government out of the divorce business. But by making divorce easier by making it require no reason, it increased the number of disputes and the need for *more government intervention* to resolve these disputes.

Here's the second article which talks about how the government will have to expand to resolve conflicts over decisions about who counts as a parent and who gets parental rights. With traditional marriage, identifying who the parents are is easy. But with private marriage contracts where the parties are not the biological parents, there is a need for the state to step in and assign parental rights. Again, this will require an expansion of government to resolve the disputes.

Here's the third article which talks about how marriage is necessary in order to defend the needs and rights of the child at a time when they cannot enter into contracts and be parties to legal disputes.

The third article was my favorite, so here is an excerpt from it:

> The fact of childhood dependence raises a whole series of questions. How do we get from a position of helpless dependence and complete self-centeredness, to a position of independence and respect for others? Are our views of the child somehow related to the foundations of a free society? And, to ask a question that may sound like heresy to libertarian ears: Do the needs of children place

> legitimate demands and limitations on the behavior of adults?
>
> I came to the conclusion that a free society needs adults who can control themselves, and who have consciences. A free society needs people who can use their freedom, without bothering other people too much. We need to respect the rights of others, keep our promises, and restrain ourselves from taking advantage of others.
>
> We learn to do these things inside the family, by being in a relationship with our parents. We can see this by looking at attachment- disordered children and failure-to-thrive children from orphanages and foster care. These children have their material needs met, for food, clothing, and medical care. But they are not held, or loved, or looked at. They simply do not develop properly, without mothers and fathers taking personal care of them. Some of them never develop consciences. But a child without a conscience becomes a real problem: this is exactly the type of child who does whatever he can get away with. A free society can't handle very many people like that, and still function.
>
> In other words I asked, "Do the needs of society place constraints on how we treat children?" But even this analysis still views the child from society's perspective. It is about time we look at it from the child's point of view, and ask a different kind of question. *What is owed to the child*?
>
> **Children are entitled to a relationship with both of their parents. They are entitled to know who they are and where they came from. Therefore children have a legitimate interest in the stability of their parents' union, since that is ordinarily how kids have relationships with both parents. If Mom and Dad are quarreling, or if they live on opposite sides of the country, the child's connection with one or both of them is seriously impaired.**
>
> **But children cannot defend their rights themselves. Nor is it adequate to intervene after the fact, after harm already has been done. Children's relational and identity rights must be protected proactively.**
>
> **Marriage is society's institutional structure for protecting these legitimate rights and interests of children.**

I recommend taking a look at all three articles and becoming familiar with the arguments in case you have to explain why marriage matters and why we should not change it. I think it is important to read these articles and to be clear that to be a libertarian doctrine does not protect the right of a child to have a relationship with both his or her parents. Nor does libertarianism promote the idea that parents ought to stick together for their children. Libertarianism means that adults get to do what they want, and no one speaks for the kids.

The purpose of marriage is to make adults make careful commitments, and restrain their desires and feelings, so that children will have a stable environment with their biological parents nearby. We do make exceptions, but we should not celebrate exceptions and we

should not subsidize exceptions. It’s not fair to children to have to grow up without a mother or father just so that adults can pursue fun and thrills.

How America exchanged free speech and debate for mob rule

July 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I posted this article from The Federalist on Facebook and was surprised by the response. It's about how the secular left managed to shut down debate by replacing rational thought and disagreement with the practice of using power to silence people who disagree with them.

The article is long, and very very good. I will try to snip enough of it here to convince you to read it. The thesis is that the secular left is trying to push their views on the masses, and succeeding, but not through rational discourse.

How are they doing pushing their agenda, then?

> A lot of Americans watched in shock while cultish mobs suddenly attacked the RFRA that Pence initially defended. But the groundwork for mass hysteria like this was stealthily laid for decades, and the minefields sown.
>
> Family breakdown led to community breakdown, which we can see in the decline of trust in society. Ignorance was cultivated in the schools through political correctness and squashing free debate. The academy's disparaging of western civilization virtually wiped out respect for any serious study of history and civics, as well as for the Socratic method and the rules of civil discourse. Political correctness sewed confusion into the language, particularly regarding identity politics. Youth are now set to be programmed for conformity through the K-12 "Common Core" curriculum mandates.
>
> All of that and more promotes the semantic fog that allows for mind rape. It amounts to an act of "logicide," to borrow a term from Meerloo, whom I will continue to quote below. To kill logic and reason that might stand in their way,

> wannabe dictators "fabricate a hate language in order to stir up mass emotions." Leaders in Indiana, Arkansas, and Louisiana have been unable to understand this tactic and are grossly unprepared to deal with it. So they simply surrendered. In effect, they joined the mob, further endangering everybody's freedom.

So, a majority of Americans have been presented with the idea that to some opinions on certain topics can be easily disregarded because they are "hate" – i.e., they make a certain group of people feel bad. And if you try to have a reasoned discourse with them, their response will be non-cognitive. They will call you names, try to shame you, and then comes the coercion as a last resort. The coercion can be anything from getting you fired, to vandalism, to violence, to domestic terrorism – in the case of Floyd Lee Corkins.

It turns out that deep within the human spirit, there is some sort of need to join up with a group of people, to feel righteous, and to let go of reason and just let feelings run wild over the rights of others. This is the so-called "mob mentality" which is so possible with groups on the left.

More:

> Most who protest the RFRA laws are more likely pawns than true believers. Like the "Occupy Wall Street" crowd, they tend to be atomized individuals who are drawn to the psychic thrill of being part of a mobilized mass that feeds on emotions and can feel a sense of righteousness in the stated pretext. (In the RFRA case, it's the semantic device of "marriage equality," but it'll just as easily be something else tomorrow.) "The ecstatic participation in mass elation is the oldest psycho drama in the world," wrote Meerloo.
>
> "Crowds and Power," by Elias Canetti, is a classic work that explores in detail the draw of the crowd for human beings. With the continued chipping away of the organic family of mother-child-father, human relationships inevitably become diluted and more subservient to a mass state. This detachment cultivates human alienation, which draws more people to answer to the call of the mass state's mob.
>
> Such protesters and their scores of clueless apologists in the media are also utterly detached from the reality of the meaning of laws such as an RFRA. The RFRA only clarifies that the government doesn't get to coerce us in private thought or to dictate what we are allowed to feel, believe, think, and express. In other words, the First Amendment is not negotiable if we are to have any semblance of freedom in this country.
>
> But the emotional stew in which we are now boiling doesn't allow logic or reason to prevail.

I was having a chat with a Christian woman recently. We were just sort of getting to know each other and seeing what we each believed. And what was interesting to me (and this is before I read this article) is how we both 1) had a different view of what counts as good literature, good music, good drama, etc. and 2) we were very comfortable with not liking

what everyone else liked. In fact, we were talking about how to get along with friends and co-workers who disagree with us on things like politics, marriage, and so on.

I was just reflecting on that as I was reading the article, and thinking to myself "in order to be a Christian, you have to have arrived at your views on issues independently or you will just abandon it whenever the majority challenges you". Being a rebel is central to the Christian worldview – we have to do our own homework in order to resist the culture. For her, some of that was from her family experiences and her reading and following current events. For me, some of it comes from watching debates and listening to both sides. But the point is that we are both very conscious that we don't fit in, and we are OK with it. But I think for the majority of people today, it's not OK for them. They really have this emotional need to fit in with the "nice" group, and part of how they remain in the "nice" group is by refusing to listen to any views that are not their own. That is literally what they are taught in university, for example. They are taught to call anyone who disagrees with them a name.

I was once told by a particularly foolish East Indian man that I was pro-life because I "hated women". I was trying to explain to him baby development in the womb, and he cut me off, ran to each of my friends, and whispered to them that I hated women. This was a *grown man* doing this. A computer programmer. That is what you can expect from the secular left today when disagreements arise. I sometimes wonder what that man would have thought if I showed him plugging his ears and running around in circles telling everyone what a hater I was, as I was flipping through a biology textbook and trying to show him the pictures.

But that's exactly what's different today. Somehow, the left has made us want to form our views based on the feelings of some group of victims. It's the worst thing in the world to make these special people feel bad, and we have to be "on the right side of history" (their side) without ever having a rational debate about anything. Feelings of being hurt and offended short-circuit debate now. All the Christians, including me, have had to shut down talking about these things at work, because you never know what kind of psychopath you are dealing with now, and how far they will go to sanction you. It's sad because some of my co-workers want me to talk policy and law and current events with them. But I can't – I never know who is listening who will be offended. And that's exactly what the propagandists are counting on. They want their followers to be little childish barbarians who organize into mobs and threaten and coerce, as we see with the Christian businesses. And they have no shame about taking a person's job, savings, home, etc. They are unable to see we who disagree with them as human beings, so strong is their hatred of reasoned discourse and their feeling of being "offended". I literally cannot have a conversation with some leftists because they start to shout insults at me the minute they apprehend that I don't agree with them on some issue.

Bible study: why would a loving God make a terrible place like Hell?

July 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

It's time for us to take a look in the Bible and make some sense of it, again. Today's question is really "what does God expect us to be doing with our lives?" but I wanted the title of this post to be more eye-catching for non-Christians.

Why do people go to Hell?

Let's start with finding out what we are supposed to be doing, and then we'll know why there is a place like Hell for people who don't do that to be separated from God.

Everyone has a moral obligation to choose how to use their time wisely during their life time. People everywhere, in all times and places, have had the choice of whether to spend more time thinking about the "big questions" or more time having fun and being selfish. Thinking about the big questions logically leads a person to making discoveries about God's existence and character. Once the people who think about the "big questions" discover the answers to those big questions, they are morally obligated to use their free will to love God using all their capabilities.

Bible verse break:

Deuteronomy 4:27-30:

> 27 The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the Lord will drive you.
>
> 28 There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell.
>
> 29 But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul.
>
> 30 When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in

> later days you will return to the Lord your God and obey him.

At a bare minimum, loving God also means obeying the moral law. But I think there is a lot more to loving God than just obeying rules. Each person is also obligated to engage in and support enterprises that help others to know God as he really is. If a person fails to use their free will to love God, then that person is *sinning*. Notice that on my view, being nice to your neighbor is relatively unimportant compared to being nice to God. Jesus' first commandment is to love God, and that vertical dimension is much more important than horizontal dimension of loving your neighbor.

Bible verse break, again – this time Paul is explaining what he does to love God:

Philippians 1:3-19:

> 3 I thank my God every time I remember you.
>
> 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy
>
> 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,
>
> 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> 7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.
>
> 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> 9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,
>
> 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,
>
> 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.
>
> 12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.
>
> 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.
>
> 14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.
>
> 15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill.
>
> 16 The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.
>
> 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition,not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains.
>
> 18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether

> from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.
>
> Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,
>
> 19 for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

So we are supposed to be telling people the gospel, which is the good news about who God is, and what he has done for us to bring us into a right relationship with him, despite our lack of curiosity about him, and our focus on ourselves instead of him. The pre-condition to loving God and sharing the gospel is knowing what his character is really like. Most people are born into a certain religion or learn it from their parents or their culture and they either adopt it without thinking or they reject it without thinking. They are not interested in investigating who God is using reason and evidence, including scientific and historical evidence.

On the Christian view, the best thing you can possibly do with your time is to investigate whether God is real, and what he is like. It's wrong to say that investigating doesn't matter or that all religions are the same. In fact, when you actually look into these things like you do any other area of knowledge, with logic and evidence, you do arrive at knowledge of who God is. And that's because God has left clues of who he is in the natural world and in history – he expects us to be looking for him. He is as real as any other person you know, and his character is as defined as any other person you know.

Bible verse break:

Acts 17:26-27:

> 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.
>
> 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

I think that the result of any honest investigation is going to be that the Christian religion is going to be found to be more true in its major claims than any other religion. I.e. – people who conduct an honest investigation are going to find that the Christian claims about the universe coming into being out of nothing, and of Jesus rising from the dead, etc. will be validated by the progress of science and historical inquiry.

But since people have a natural tendency to focus on making themselves happy, not many investigations occur. They know that if Christianity is true, they would have to engage in radical self-denial and self-sacrificial love. They know they would have to sober, be chaste, be different, and not be liked because of their exclusive view. And people don't want to do that, so an honest investigation *never even gets started.*

Instead, what you find non-Christians doing is hoping in speculations to justify their flight from the demands of the God who is there. We want to be free to make ourselves happy, and that means that we have to keep the real God who is there and who is not silent at

arms length. That’s what non-Christians do – they use their time on Earth to push God away so they can focus on themselves and their own happiness. In fact, even Christians do it, which is why we rely on Jesus as a sacrifice for our sin. We could come near to God and work on the things that he would like us to work on without some way to get past our own rebellion. For those who grasp the sacrifice of Jesus as an atonement for our rebellion, cooperation with God becomes possible.

One of the problems that Christians have today is that we do not really understand what sin is. We think that sin is about hurting other people or making other people feel bad. But actually, the sinfulness of a person has little to do with that, and much more to do with how we respond to God. We have a moral obligation to know God and to include God in all of our decision making. Hell is the place that God has made for people who turn away from him. A person chooses Hell when she refuses to investigate whether God is there and who God is, so that she does not have to adjust her choices to respect God.

Director of OPM was focused on promoting gay agenda, not national security

July 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Katherine Archuleta, Director of OPM Diversity

Are Democrats capable of taking national security and foreign policy seriously?

Well, consider the recent hack of Office of Personnel Management records by Chinese hackers.

The radically leftist New York Times reports on the extent of the hack:

> The Obama administration on Thursday revealed that 21.5 million people were swept up in a colossal breach of government computer systems that was far more damaging than initially thought, resulting in the theft of a vast trove of personal information, including Social Security numbers and some fingerprints.
>
> Every person given a government background check for the last 15 years was probably affected…
>
> The agency said hackers stole "sensitive information," including addresses, health and financial history, and other private details, from 19.7 million people who had been subjected to a government background check, as well as 1.8 million others, including their spouses and friends.
>
> […]The breaches constitute what is apparently the largest cyberattack into the systems of the United States government, providing a frightening glimpse of the technological vulnerabilities of federal agencies that handle sensitive information.

Has any Democrat being fired for this catastrophic failure?

No:

> In a conference call to detail the grim findings and announce the agency's

> response, Katherine Archuleta, the director of the Office of Personnel Management, said that she would not resign despite calls from members of Congress in both parties for her dismissal.
>
> "I am committed to the work that I am doing at O.P.M.," she said. "We are working very hard, not only at O.P.M. but across government, to ensure the cybersecurity of all our systems, and I will continue to do so."

Let's read about Katherine Archuleta to see why Obama chose her to run OPM:

> This morning, Katherine Archuleta was sworn-in as the 10th Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and will serve as the Federal government's personnel chief. She will be the first Latina to hold this position. Katherine shares President Obama's vision for diversity and inclusion in the federal workforce…
>
> […]OPM has recognized and acknowledged the underrepresentation of Hispanics in the federal work force, and the potential and talent they have to offer. OPM has made it a point to expand outreach and recruitment within the Hispanic community…
>
> […]Katherine also worked as the National Political Director for President Obama's reelection campaign…
>
> […]Katherine served as the Executive Director of the National Hispanic Cultural Center Foundation…

So, her main qualification for the job of safeguarding government personnel records from hackers seems to be that she helped Obama get re-elected by reaching out to Hispanic voters.

And in fact this new story in The Weekly Standard shows that diversity was her focus at the OPM.

Excerpt:

> The day before the Office of Personnel Management first announced a massive data breach of personal information, now former OPM director Katherine Archuleta's attention was focused elsewhere. Archuleta published a blog post on June 3 entitled "Celebrating Every Member of Our Federal Family" in recognition of "LGBT Pride Month." The White House reposted Archuleta's article the same day.
>
> In her post, Archuleta announced the release of an updated guide called "Addressing Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination in Federal Civilian Employment: A Guide to Employment Rights, Protections, and Responsibilities."
>
> As we celebrate LGBT Pride Month, I want to proudly reinforce my continued commitment to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender members of our federal family, and recognize the incredible contributions this community has made in service to the American people…

> That's why I'm so excited to announce that the Office of Personnel Management is joining our partners at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Merit System Protections Board, and the Office of Special Counsel to release an updated guide titled "Addressing Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination in Federal Civilian Employment: A Guide to Employment Rights, Protections, and Responsibilities." This informative resource will help LGBT federal employees make more informed choices about how best to pursue their individual claims when they believe they have suffered from discrimination.
>
> On the OPM website, the agency has seven "top priorities" listed. The first two are "Honoring the Workforce" and "Build a More Diverse and Engaged Workforce".

Obama didn't hire this woman because she had any qualifications related to the job. He hired her because she was a radical leftist who helped him get re-elected. And when she was appointed, she focused on what she was good at – pushing a leftist ideological agenda instead of doing her job. And we taxpayers had to pay her to do that.

And finally, as if all that were not bad enough, during the 2012 election campaign, she mocked Mitt Romney for his concerns about national security on Twitter.

We have had FOUR catastrophic security breaches under this government: Snowden, Bradley Manning, Hillary's unsecure e-mail server, and this China hack. Is that by accident? Or is there something about being feelings-obsessed that makes it harder to take threats from our enemies seriously?

Who’s better at managing money – Republicans or Democrats?

July 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the best jobs for managing money is being governor of a state. So, let’s take a look at the 50 states and see which ones have the best governors for managing money.

Here’s a new report from George Mason University, and it’s written up in Investors Business Daily.

IBD says:

> A new report from George Mason University’s Mercatus Center ranks all 50 states based on 14 measures designed to determine whether states can pay their short-term bills and meet their long-term obligations — debt, pension liabilities and such. The data go through 2013.
>
> The best-run states have enough cash to pay its current bills, enough revenue coming in to meet its fiscal year needs, a cushion for economic shocks, and management long-term liabilities.
>
> The worst states, in contrast, have “tens, if not hundreds, of billions of dollars in unfunded liabilities — constituting a significant risk to taxpayers in both the short and the long term.”
>
> […]There’s only one factor these fiscal winners and losers share in common. And that’s their political leanings. Of the top 10 states in the Mercatus ranking, just two — Florida and Ohio — voted for the Democratic presidential candidate in the past four elections, and just one — Montana — has a Democratic governor. Even if you look at the 25 best-performing states, only three could be considered reliably liberal.
>
> At the other end of the list, just two of the 10 lowest-ranked states — Kentucky and West Virginia — have voted for the Republican in the past four presidential elections. And while four of them have Republican governors, they all are in solid blue states and all were elected to clean up messes left by their Democratic predecessors.
>
> It’s also worth noting that these same states consistently show up at the top and bottom of other lists that measure business friendliness, tax burden and economic freedom.
>
> In fact, six of the 10 worst-performing states in the Mercatus ranking — California, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Connecticut — are also states with the heaviest tax burdens and rated the least business friendly, according to rankings from the Tax Foundation and Chief Executive magazine.
>
> It would appear, then, that abiding by a philosophy of limited government, lower taxes and fewer regulations leads to growth, prosperity and fiscal soundness.

Here’s the full map from the George Mason University study:

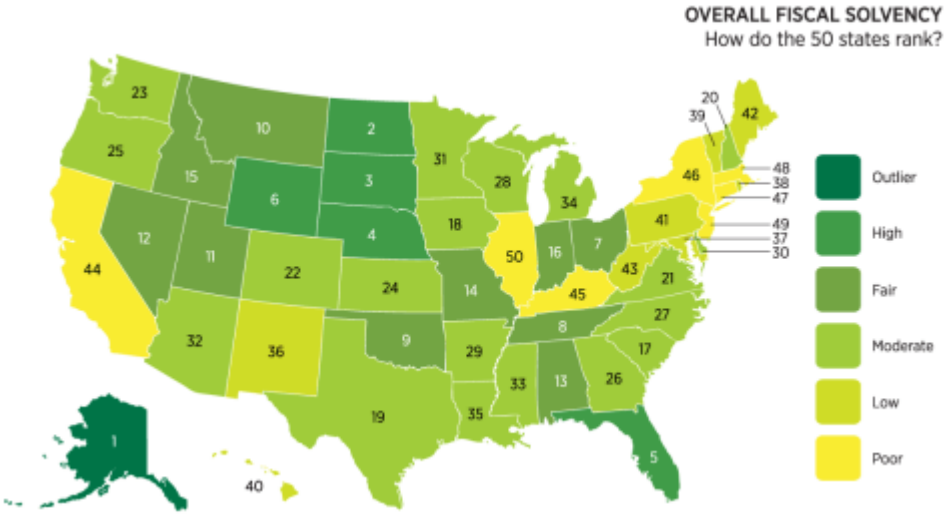

George Mason University study on fiscal solvency

At the state-level, everyone understands that Republican governors know what they are doing, because they understand economics. So then why do we forget that and elect a community organizer when it comes to the Presidency? Do we just not care about the debts we are piling onto our children when we elect wastrels and profligates?

Governor Scott Walker cuts wasteful spending on leftist university system

July 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I knew that the mountain of skulls of his enemies was real!
This is from The Daily Caller. (H/T Scott)

It says:

> Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker is poised to win a huge victory on education as the state legislature passed a budget that repeals state tenure guarantees while also slashing the budget of the University of Wisconsin.
>
> […]The two-year, $73 billion budget approved Thursday makes a host of changes Walker has sought in the realm of education. Wisconsin's school voucher program is expanded, and $250 million in funding is taken from the University of Wisconsin. That's down from the $300 million cut Walker originally sought, but still a substantial haircut.
>
> Bowing to the fait accompli, later on Thursday the University of Wisconsin approved its own budget, implementing the big cuts expected of it. About 400 positions will be laid off or will go unfilled, and the university's budgets no money for pay hikes. The school's situation is made tougher because the legislature has also frozen in-state tuition.
>
> While academics have accused Walker of sabotaging the school's competitiveness, Walker has refused to yield, arguing that professors should be teaching more classes.
>
> […]University of Wisconsin-Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank sent a letter to Walker Friday begging him to veto the changes, saying they would drive away current and prospective faculty.

> […]Angry faculty have directed a great deal of venom toward Blank and the UW board of regents, accusing them of letting the tenure provisions pass by failing to make a loud protest.
>
> Walker is expected to sign the budget by Monday, when he is scheduled to officially announce his presidential campaign.

Keep in mind that the angry faculty and the chancellor are all Democrats, so this is nothing but an attack on influential leftists – hitting them where they hurt. The pocketbook.

Universities are very far on the left, and – like big corporations, big unions, mainstream news media, trial lawyers, and Hollywood – they donate almost exclusively to Democrats:

> Ivy League educators overwhelmingly supported President Obama with their campaign donations in the presidential election, reinforcing the suspicions of critics who say their bias also shows up in the classroom.
>
> Some 96 percent of faculty and staffers at the eight universities who donated wrote their checks to Obama, and at Brown University, just one professor contributed to Mitt Romney's bid, according to a study by student political advocacy group Campus Reform. In all, the employees of the prestigious schools sent more than $1.2 million to President Obama and just $114,166 for Romney's campaign — a ratio of more than 10-to-1.

Think conservatives are welcome on these leftists campuses? About as welcome as Jews would be at a Nazi party rally.

Why is it important to do cur funding for a leftist university? It's important because it is another step in Walker's war on the left's ability to give donations to Democrats. What Walker likes to do is go after the big leftist elites and take their money away and return it to the ordinary taxpayers who earned the money in the first place. This is the simple, low-key way of turning the Titanic around. Removing the influence of the left on politics by removing the money they have to influence politics. The advantage of this is that not only does it solve the fiscal problems that most Americans care about, but it also makes it harder for the left to push for more liberal laws and policies on social issues. They don't have the money any more, the taxpayers have their money back.

Although some impatient Christians attach a lot of importance to people like Ted Cruz, who talk tough on social issues, but have never been able to move any legislation, I think we should be more interested in governors like Scott Walker and Bobby Jindal, who have had to work with legislatures to get the bills they want signed into law. Walker in particular is very good at appealing to moderates, independents and libertarians. He wins elections because he focuses on doing a good job for the middle class on financial issues. If you look a little deeper under the surface of his fiscal policies, you can see how his policies promote common sense conservative values and personal responsibility.

We need to favor people who win the tough battles and get things done in purple / blue states. No sense electing a conservative firebrand who loses in the general election

because he has nothing to say to fiscal conservatives who also happen to be social liberals.

Related posts

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All he does is win: Governor Scott Walker's long record of pro-life victories

July 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scott Walker – pro-life deeds, not pro-life words (Image provided by ECM)

Life News has an overview of Scott Walker's record fighting against abortion.

Here's the latest accomplishment:

> Earlier this year, Walker burnished his pro-life credentials by issuing a letter saying he would sign a bill to ban abortions after 20 weeks.

> "As the Wisconsin legislature moves forward in the coming session, further protections for mother and child are likely to come to my desk in the form of a bill to prohibit abortions after 20 weeks. I will sign that bill when it gets to my desk and support similar legislation on the federal level. I was raised to believe in the sanctity of life and I will always fight to protect it."
>
> Since then, the Wisconsin legislature has approved the pro-life measure and Governor Walker is expected to sign the 20-week abortion ban into law soon.
>
> The position is not a new one as Walker co-sponsored legislation in 1998 while he was a member of the Wisconsin state legislature to ban abortions after 20 weeks.

And here's the rest of the list:

> **Abortion Funding**: As an Assembly Representative, Walker voted against taxpayer funding of abortions for public employees. As Governor, Walker signed into law a state budget provision to prohibit the UW Hospital Authority from being involved in performing abortions and from using taxpayer dollars to pay medical students to learn to perform abortions. Also as Governor, Walker signed legislation allowing Wisconsin to opt-out of taxpayer-funded abortion coverage under ObamaCare.
>
> **Funding Abortion Providers**: As an Assembly Representative, Walker voted to prohibit taxpayer dollars from going to organizations that provide or promote abortions. As Governor, Walker signed into law a state budget provision to prohibit Title V taxpayer dollars from going to organizations that perform abortions. Also as Governor, Walker steered funds from the Wisconsin Well

> Woman program to local counties instead of Planned Parenthood.
>
> **Protecting Unborn Children**: As an Assembly Representative, Walker voted to recognize an unborn child as a separate victim of a criminal act against the pregnant mother, to prohibit partial-birth abortions, and to protect unborn children at risk due to drug or alcohol use by the mother.
>
> **Protecting Families**: As an Assembly Representative, Walker voted to strengthen Wisconsin's law requiring parental consent before a minor's abortion. As Governor, Walker signed legislation returning sex education curriculum to local control and allowing abstinence-only programs.
>
> **Protecting Women**: As an Assembly Representative, Walker voted for the Woman's Right to Know Act which requires that women be given full information prior to an abortion and establishes a 24-hour waiting period. As Governor, Walker signed legislation to protect women from coerced abortions; to prohibit unsafe RU 486 chemical web cam abortions designed to expand abortions into local communities; to require that a woman view an ultrasound of her unborn child 24 hours before an abortion can take place; and to require abortionists to have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of the abortion clinic.
>
> **Alternatives to Abortion**: As an Assembly Representative, Walker voted for tax exemptions related to adoption expenses; to improve adoption laws; to expand funding for adoption assistance for children at risk of developing disabilities; and for a provision to allow a woman and her unborn child to be considered as a family eligible for BadgerCare.
>
> **Conscience Protections**: As an Assembly Representative, Walker authored legislation to strengthen conscience protections for medical professionals and institutions.
>
> **Other**: As an Assembly Representative, Walker voted in favor of legislation to prohibit lawsuits based on the "wrongful" life of an unborn child and to prohibit the sale of body parts of aborted babies.

The radically leftist National Journal, which despises Scott Walker, explains how he wins:

> **The son of a conservative small-town minister who showed his son how to be "pastoral," Walker has mastered the art of governing in a manner that mobilizes the party faithful while campaigning in a way that doesn't scare off moderates, independents, and even some Democrats. This misdirection has been the source of much of Walker's political success.**
>
> "Even as he cut that abortion ad, there isn't a single pro-life voter in the state who suddenly thinks he's pro-choice," said Matt Batzel, executive director of American Majority, a conservative activist group. "They know he shares their views."
>
> **Batzel, who is based in Wisconsin and has had a front-row seat for**

> **Walker's biggest political battles, added: "He has legislated very conservatively. But when you look at his tone and how he wins elections, it's different. And that's a needle he's successfully been able to thread in Wisconsin."**
>
> This is the story of Walker's political rise. In a National Journal magazine profile last year, the governor's friends and foes alike remarked on his unique ability—demonstrated over the past two decades—to wrap a fierce ideological agenda in a neighborly, nonthreatening persona.
>
> **"He has an altar boy's appearance," said Bob Jauch, a longtime Democratic state senator who worked closely with Walker in the legislature. "But Darth Vader writes his policies."**

Now, I understand that some pro-lifers would prefer that Walker sound more direct about his pro-life views during election campaigns. They think that there are enough pro-lifers who will go for tough rhetoric of the Ted Cruz sort. But that's false of course. Candidates who sound shrill on social issues in a purple state like Wisconsin simply don't win elections. Pro-lifers are notorious for shooting themselves in the foot when it comes to politics, and there is a lot of pious chest-pounding from the sidelines. But Walker knows better. He knows that to win elections, you have to speak about the issues that everyone cares about, like balancing the budget and creating jobs and lowering property taxes, and that's how he gets elected. Then, when he is elected, he actually does pro-life things. Why would you talk to the hostile left-wing media about abortion? They will just use anything you say against you! A much better idea is to promise fiscal achievements, achieve them, win re-election on the strength of your fiscal achievements, and then be the guy who can quietly push for incremental pro-life legislation. Walker has done more for the pro-life cause than a whole host of shrill pro-life activists who have strong rhetoric, but do not have the chance to make the impact that a governor does.

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Andreas Kostenberger explains what the Bible says about marriage and family

July 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

A long essay posted by the Family Research Council, and written by the expert on Bible and marriage.

About the author:

> Andreas J. Kostenberger is the Director of Ph.D. Studies and Professor of New Testament at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is also editor of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (JETS) and founding president of Biblical Foundations, an organization with the aim of "restoring the biblical foundations of the home, the church, and society." Dr. Kostenberger holds doctorates awarded by Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS) and the Vienna University of Economics. His publications include the commentary on *John* in the Baker Exegetical Commentary Series, and *God, Marriage, and Family*. With Peter O'Brien, he wrote *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, and *The Book Study Concordance* with Raymond Bouchoc.

Intro:

> Incredible as it may seem, we can no longer assume that people in our culture understand what the proper definition of "marriage" and "the family" is. Not only is this a sad commentary on the impact of same-sex marriage activists on our society, it also shows how the culture's memory of the biblical tradition on which it is largely based is fading fast. What is marriage, biblically defined? And what is the biblical definition of a family? In this brief treatise on marriage and the family, we will take up these questions and proceed to discuss a number of related matters, such as singleness, divorce and remarriage, and homosexuality, in an effort to develop a full-orbed understanding of the biblical teaching on the subject. As I have sought to demonstrate at some length in my book *God,*

> *Marriage, and the Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, marriage and the family are institutions under siege today, and only a return to the biblical foundation of these God-given institutions will reverse the decline of marriage and the family in our culture today.
>
> […]These aspects of marriage–the complementarity of male and female, and the irreplaceable role of male-female relations in reproducing the human race–are part of the original order of creation, and are evident to all human beings from the enduring order of nature. These common elements of marriage are at the heart of our civil laws defining and regulating marriage. Therefore, people of all cultures and religions–including those who lack faith in God, Christ, or the Bible–are capable of participating in the institution of marriage. However, we who are Christians believe that the fullest understanding of God's will for marriage can be derived from a careful examination of scriptural teachings. It is incumbent upon the church to educate both itself and the larger culture regarding the full breadth and depth of God's intentions for marriage.

The essay itself covers many useful areas:

- difference between a contract and a covenant
- 5 principles of marriage: permanence, sacredness, intimacy, mutuality, exclusivity
- alternatives to marriage: polygamy, divorce, adultery, homosexuality, sterility
- the Biblical pattern for marriage and what it means
- how marriage mirrors Christ's relationship with his church
- singleness, chastity, celibacy
- homosexuality
- divorce

For my two excerpts, I want to focus on two things that I have personally encountered with a young Christian woman, who disagree with both of these points.

First, marriage as a covenant means that you stay in it regardless of feelings:

> Today, marriage and the family are regularly viewed as social conventions that can be entered into and severed by the marital partners at will. As long as a given marriage relationship meets the needs of both individuals involved and is considered advantageous by both sides, the marriage is worth sustaining. If one or both partners decide that they will be better off by breaking up the marriage and entering into a new, better marital union, nothing can legitimately keep them from pursuing their self-interest, self-realization, and self-fulfillment.
>
> […]In essence, a covenant is a contract between two parties that is established before God as a witness, a contract whose permanence is ultimately safeguarded by none other than God himself. In this sense, marriage is a covenant: it is entered into by the husband and the wife before God as a witness. Because it is ultimately *God* who has joined the marriage partners together, the husband and

> the wife vow to each other abiding loyalty and fidelity “till death do us part.” Rightly understood, therefore, a marriage entered into before God involves three persons: a husband, a wife, and God. **For this reason, it is not self-interest, human advantage, or an unfettered commitment to personal freedom that governs the marriage relationship, but the husband and wife’s joint commitment to conduct their marriage based on God’s design and sovereign plan.**

And you should practice self-denial, self-sacrificial love, etc. before the marriage. Practicing how to do whatever makes you feel good even when it hurts others is not preparation for marriage.

Second, the notion of male headship, which means that in marriage, men set the overall strategy and enable their wives to help them by clearing obstacles and encouraging her to engage:

> Wives, for their part, are called to submit to their own husbands, as to the Lord. As the church submits to Christ, so wives should to their husbands in everything (Ephesians 5:21-24). Husbands, in turn, are to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. They are to provide for their wives both physically and spiritually and to cherish them as God’s special provision for them (Ephesians 5:25-30).

If you want to know what the Bible says about marriage, read this article. I’m sure you’ll learn something new about marriage as God intended it. It’s always good to look in the Bible and see what God wants from us. We should not be reading it n order to try to make it serve our feelings. Let’s open the Bible and see who God is first. Once we know God, then we can make decisions and plans that respect him, and pursue those plans regardless of our feelings and desires.

Scott Walker presidential announcement speech: video and transcript

July 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

Video posted by the left-wing Milwaukee Journal Sentinel:

Transcript is here courtesy the left-wing Time magazine.

His central themes:

> Americans want to vote FOR something and FOR someone.
>
> So let me tell you what I'm for: I'm for Reform. Growth. Safety.
>
> I'm for transferring power from Washington to the hard-working taxpayers in states all across the country. That's real reform.
>
> I'm for building a better economy where everyone can live their piece of the American Dream. That's pro-growth.
>
> I'm for protecting our children and grandchildren from radical Islamic terrorism and other threats in the world. That's true safety.

Let's look at his achievements, since that's the only thing we can really know about the candidates. You can watch the whole speech to see what he promises, but I only care about what he has already done.

Cut spending and lowered taxes:

> Since I've been Governor, we took on the unions and won.
>
> We reduced taxes by $2 billion and lowered taxes on individuals, employers and property. In fact, property taxes are lower today than they were in 2010. How many Governors can say that?
>
> Since I've been Governor, we passed lawsuit reform and regulatory reform. We defunded Planned Parenthood and enacted pro-life legislation. We passed Castle

> Doctrine and concealed carry. And we now require a photo ID to vote in the State of Wisconsin.

Education reform:

> Today, people elected by local taxpayers actually get to run the schools. Our reforms ended seniority and tenure. Now we can hire and fire based on merit and pay based on performance. We can put the best and the brightest in the classroom.
>
> Four years later: our graduation rates are up, third grade reading scores are higher and Wisconsin's ACT scores are now second best in the country.

Welfare reform to reduce dependency:

> In Wisconsin, we enacted a program that says that adults who are able to work must be enrolled in one of our job training programs before they can get a welfare check. Now, as of the budget I just signed, we are also making sure they can take a drug test.

Health care reform:

> First, we must repeal ObamaCare. That's right, repeal the so-called Affordable Care Act entirely and put patients and families back in charge of their health care decisions – not the federal government.
>
> As Governor, I approved Wisconsin joining the lawsuit against ObamaCare on my first day in office. We need a President who – on the first day in office – will call on Congress to pass a full repeal of ObamaCare.

Reduce red tape and bureaucracy:

> Next, we need to rein in the federal government's out-of-control regulations that are like a wet blanket on the economy. Yes, enforce common sense rules – but don't add more bureaucratic red tape.
>
> In Wisconsin, I called for an overhaul of Wisconsin's regulatory process on my first day as Governor. We can do the same in Washington, then we can act to repeal Obama's bad regulations.

School choice, including homeschooling:

> In Wisconsin, we reformed our public schools and gave families as many quality choices as possible because I trust parents to make the right decision for their children. I believe that every child deserves access to a great education – be it in a traditional public, charter, choice, private, virtual or home school environment.

His domestic policy will be all about federalism: transferring tax revenue and decision-making away from Washington, D.C. down to the state level, down to the local level, down to individual families, down to individuals. It was federalism all the way. Get the

money and the power out of Washington, let the people make their own decisions. The second half of the speech was on national security and foreign policy.

When I compare and contrast this speech with the speeches of Hillary Clinton, it's night and day. She has no achievements, she has no accomplishments. She hasn't done anything. Walker is different – he can talk about the things he has done, and anyone can see that he's actually done it. Let's elect someone who knows what he is doing this time.

Related posts

- All he does is win: Governor Scott Walker's long record of pro-life victories
- Governor Scott Walker cuts wasteful spending on leftist university system
- Scott Walker's immigration plan is more conservative than Bush or Rubio
- Scott Walker discusses foreign policy and national security with Hugh Hewitt
- Scott Walker signs right-to-work: workers not forced to join a union in order to work
- Right-to-work states gained jobs three times faster than forced union states
- Scott Walker: if sent a bill banning abortions after 20 weeks, "I will sign that bill"
- Why didn't Scott Walker finish his fourth year of college at Marquette University?
- Scott Walker's new budget: tax cuts, spending cuts, school choice, smaller government
- Wisconsin governor Scott Walker draws standing ovations at Freedom Summit in Iowa
- Republican Scott Walker beats Mary Burke to win 2014 Wisconsin Governor race
- Wisconsin House passes Scott Walker's tax cut bill, headed to governor's desk
- Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker cuts taxes again, expects $1 billion surplus in 2015
- Wisconsin governor Walker's reforms hit the left in their wallets
- An interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues

Illegal immigrants released by ICE into U.S. commit murder

July 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He's better at golf than border security

The leftist Washington Post has a decent article on illegal immigration. Let's take a look at the numbers to see how many illegal immigrants are released by the Obama administration inside the United States, and then go on to commit serious crimes.

Excerpt:

> It got little notice, but on May 28, Sarah Saldana, director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, admitted in a letter to Sens. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) that between fiscal years 2010 and 2014, the Obama administration had released "121 unique criminal aliens who had an active [deportation] case at the time of release and were subsequently charged with homicide-related offenses."
>
> Think about that: 121 times over the past four years, the administration has released an illegal immigrant with prior criminal convictions who went on to be charged with murder. That is one every 12 days.

Now just think about that for a minute. Think about the fact that taxpayers are paying government workers in ICE to enforce the laws, and the government is refusing to enforce the laws, which then get the taxpayers murdered. *Murdered!*

How much contempt must the Democrats have for us, that they consider 121 Americans expendable for their pro-amnesty policies? *We pay their salaries!*

Here's an example:

> In one case, an illegal immigrant and felon named Apolinar Altamirano allegedly gunned down a 21-year-old Arizona convenience store clerk, Grant Ronnebeck, over a pack of cigarettes. Altamirano had been convicted of felony burglary and

> was in the middle of deportation proceedings. But ICE released him after he posted a $10,000 bond — which allowed him to allegedly go kill an innocent young man. **Asked by Sens. Flake and Grassley whether she had notified state and local authorities when Altamirano was released, Saldana replied, "ICE does not routinely notify local authorities when a detainee is released on bond from ICE custody."**

Sex offenders, too:

> **ICE also does not routinely notify local authorities when it releases illegal immigrants who are sex offenders.** Last month, a Boston Globe investigation found that between 2008 and 2012, ICE released 424 sex offenders into communities across the country — including "convicted rapists, child molesters and kidnappers" — and that "immigration officials have released them without making sure they register with local authorities as sex offenders." **The paper further found that "At least 34 of the 424 released sex offenders . . . were back in jail as of last month, state records show, some for heinous crimes committed after ICE released them."**

Here is the total number for all convictions of illegal immigrants who were released:

> In 2013, the Obama administration released 36,007 illegal immigrants with criminal convictions — 1,000 of whom were subsequently convicted of other crimes after their release. Last year they released 30,558 such immigrants. According to the House Judiciary Committee, only 8 percent of those were due to the Supreme Court's decision in *Zadvydas v. Davis*, which requires that illegal immigrants be released after 180 days if their home countries won't take them back. The other 92 percent were released because of Obama's policies.

The Democrats take a soft stance on crime in general, but they especially soft on illegal immigration. And it is very clear that there is a cost for this laxity – innocent Americans are suffering as a result of this lack of seriousness about the law. The mainstream media and the Democrat politicians don't make a big deal out of these victims, because they are not useful victims. They are taxpayers. And the criminals who commit these crimes are not the right kind of criminal. They are illegal immigrants. That's why this is being hushed up.

Previously, I blogged about the crime rates for illegal immigrants in general, and as you might expect, the rates are higher than for the general public.

Republicans introduce bill to protect natural marriage supporters

July 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and the Human Rights Campaign

Ryan T. Anderson writes about it in The Daily Signal.

He says:

> […][Congress] today introduced the First Amendment Defense Act (FADA) to guarantee such a scenario *never* becomes "an issue."
>
> This bill, introduced by Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, and Rep. Raul Labrador, R-Idaho, is good policy in part because it is so simple. It says that the federal government cannot discriminate against people and institutions that speak and act according to their belief that marriage is a union of one man and one woman. That's it in a nutshell.
>
> […][G]overnment should respect those who stand for marriage and the First Amendment Defense Act would do so by specifically prohibiting bureaucrats from retaliating against individuals, family businesses, charities and schools because they refuse to change their deeply held views on what marriage is, no matter what the Supreme Court or politicians may say about it in the coming days.

Now you might be thinking, "everything is going to be fine for Christians" or "we can trust the Democrats to not act like Nazis", but let's not talk in generalities, let's look at the facts with a specific example where the government went after Christians:

> […][I]n July 2014, Obama issued an executive order barring federal contractors from what it describes as "discrimination" on the basis of sexual orientation and

> gender identity. The order contains extremely narrow accommodations of religious freedom and no exceptions for contractors who conscientiously judge sexual conduct to be relevant to their mission, purpose or bathroom policies.
>
> Such radical changes in policy in effect exclude legions of taxpayers from being eligible for federal contracts funded with their own tax dollars because they hold conscientious beliefs about sexuality and biology that run counter to the administration's.
>
> Similar threats to religious freedom and conscience in licensing and contracts are mounting at the state level.
>
> **Facing coercion by state governments to place children with same-sex couples, faith-based adoption agencies in Massachusetts, Illinois and Washington, D.C., have been forced to end foster care and adoption services rather than abandon their belief that children do best with a married mother and father.**
>
> In those states, refusing to place children in same-sex households would have meant forfeiting necessary contracts with the state government for foster care services or, in some situations, even losing state licenses to place any children for adoption.

So, do you think that adopted children would be better off in a home where they have an adoptive Mom and an adoptive Dad? Well, there is a lot of evidence from studies showing that both moms and dads help a child's development in different, complementary ways. But the Democrats think either moms or dads are dispensable to kids, and so yes, they do go after Christian organizations who put the needs of the children over the needs of selfish adults. And what happens to those organizations? They shut down. And what happens to those kids? They don't get adopted.

We have an election coming up in 2016, and it will be a time for pro-marriage voters to consider where the candidates stand on religious liberty issues. Make sure you make it a priority to find out, and to get involved in getting pro-religious-liberty candidates elected.

William Lane Craig discusses faith and reason with university students

July 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an interview of Dr. William Lane Craig before college students at the University of Central Florida. (95 minutes)

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (33 MB)

Questions from the interviewer: (40 minutes)

- What started you on his journey of studying faith and reason?
- How would you define the word "faith"?
- Are faith and reason compatible? How are they related?
- How can reasonable faith help us to avoid the two extremes of superstition and nihilism?
- Who makes the best arguments against the Christian faith?
- Why are angry atheists like Dawkins and Hitchens more well known than better-informed academic atheists?
- Does the Bible require Christians to give the unbeliever reasons for their faith?
- How does faith spur Christians to think carefully about the big questions in life?
- Should the American church prod churchgoers to develop their minds so they can engage the secular culture?
- When talking about Christianity intellectually, is there a risk of neglecting the experience of being a Christian?
- Which Christian apologist has shaped your thinking the most?
- Which Christian philosopher has shaped your thinking the most?
- Does the confidence that comes from apologetics undermine humility and reverence?
- If you had to sketch out a 5 minute case for Christianity, what would you present?
- Can non-Christians use their reason to arrive at truth?
- Are there cases where atheists must affirm irrational things in order to remain atheists?
- Can the universe have existed eternal, so that there is no need to explain who created it?
- Even if you persuade someone that Christianity is true, does that mean they will live it out?

There is also a long period of questions, many of them hostile, from the audience of students (55 minutes).

- Haven't you said nasty things about some atheists? Aren't you a meany?
- What do you make of the presuppositional approach to apologetics?
- Can a person stop being a Christian because of the chances that happen to them as

they age?
- Why did God wait so long after humans appeared to reveal himself to people through Jesus?
- Can a person be saved by faith without have any intellectual assent to truth?
- How do you find time for regular things like marriage when you have to study and speak so much?
- How would you respond to Zeitgeist and parallels to Christianity in Greek/Roman mythology?
- Do Christians have to assume that the Bible is inerrant and inspired in order to evangelize?
- If the universe has a beginning, then why doesn't God have a beginning?
- Can you name some philosophical resources on abstract objects, Platonism and nominalism?
- How can you know that Christianity more right than other religions?
- Should we respond to the problem of evil by saying that our moral notions are different from God's?
- Define the A and B theories of time. Explain how they relate to the kalam cosmological argument.
- How can Christians claim that their view is true in the face of so many world religions?
- What is the role of emotions in Christian belief and thought?
- Can evolution be reconciled with Christian beliefs and the Bible?
- When witnessing person-to-person, should you balance apologetics with personal testimony?
- Is there a good analogy for the trinity that can help people to understand it? [Note: HE HAS ONE!]
- How can Christians reconcile God's omniscience, God's sovereignty and human free will?

This is a nice introductory lecture that is sure to get Christians to become interested in apologetics. As you watch or listen to it, imagine what the world would be like if *every* Christian could answer the questions of skeptical college students and professors like Dr. Craig. What would non-Christians think about Christianity if *every* Christian had studied these issues like Dr. Craig? Why aren't we making an effort to study these things *so that* we can answer these questions?

It is really fun to see him fielding the questions from the skeptical university students. My favorite question was from the physics student who sounds really foreign, (at 1:19:00), then you realize that he is a Christian. I do think that Dr. Craig went a little far in accommodating evolution, but I put that down to the venue, and not wanting to get into a peripheral issue.

What does Hillary Clinton think of Planned Parenthood selling unborn baby parts?

July 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

It's another sting video, this time against Planned Parenthood's Senior Director of Medical Services.

Watch the 9-minute video, and see the face of evil for yourself:

Life News has the story here:

> A shocking new expose' video has caught Planned Parenthood's top doctor describing how the abortion business sells the body parts of aborted babies.
>
> New undercover footage shows Planned Parenthood Federation of America's Senior Director of Medical Services, Dr. Deborah Nucatola, describing how Planned Parenthood sells the body parts of aborted unborn children and admitting she uses partial-birth abortions to supply intact body parts.
>
> In the video, Nucatola is at a business lunch with actors posing as buyers from a human biologics company. As head of PPFA's Medical Services department, Nucatola has overseen medical practice at all Planned Parenthood locations since 2009. She also trains new Planned Parenthood abortion doctors and performs abortions herself at Planned Parenthood Los Angeles up to 24 weeks.
>
> **Nucatola admits that Planned Parenthood charges per-specimen for baby body parts, uses illegal partial-birth abortion procedures in order to get salable parts, and is aware of their own liability for doing so and takes steps to cover it up.**
>
> The footage shockingly depicts the top medical official at the Planned Parenthood corporation munching on her salad while she discusses the sale of body parts of

> unborn children victimized by abortions. She brazenly describes how the heads of unborn babies killed in abortions command top dollar.
>
> The buyers ask Nucatola, “How much of a difference can that actually make, if you know kind of what’s expected, or what we need?”
>
> “It makes a huge difference,” Nucatola replies. “I’d say a lot of people want liver. And for that reason, most providers will do this case under ultrasound guidance, so they’ll know where they’re putting their forceps. The kind of rate-limiting step of the procedure is calvarium. Calvarium—the head—is basically the biggest part.”
>
> Nucatola explains, “We’ve been very good at getting heart, lung, liver, because we know that, so I’m not gonna crush that part, I’m gonna basically crush below, I’m gonna crush above, and I’m gonna see if I can get it all intact.”
>
> […]A separate clip shows Planned Parenthood President and CEO Cecile Richards praising Nucatola’s work to facilitate connections for fetal tissue collection. “Oh good,” Richards says when told about Nucatola’s support for fetal tissue collection at Planned Parenthood, “Great. She’s amazing.”

As you might expect, there is a blackout in the mainstream media on this story. (H/T William)

The story linked above has images of searches on the web sites of the Washington Post, the New York Times, CNN, The Los Angeles Times, Politico, ABC News, NBC News, and CBS News. There is not one story on this video. NOT ONE. And Democrats say there is no such thing as leftist media bias. Give me a break!

Planned Parenthood got $1.5 billion taxpayer dollars over the last three years to perform this organ trafficking.

> A report released Wednesday by the Government Accountability Office found that America’s largest abortion provider, Planned Parenthood, received at least $1.5 billion in state and federal funding in a three-year span from 2010-2012.
>
> […]The report, which was compiled after a group of over 60 pro-life Congress members led by U.S. Reps. Diane Black, R-Tenn., Chris Smith, R-N.J. and Pete Olson, R-Texas, sent a letter to GAO in February of 2013 asking for data on the how much federal funding was expended by six major organizations who advocate and or perform elective abortion-on-demand from 2010-2012.
>
> […]”The Obama Administration is committed to advancing a pro-abortion agenda and continually has placed the demands of abortion advocates and providers at the top of its public health agenda for six years [and] all the expenses [are] the taxpayers,” said the director of Family Research Council’s Center for Human Dignity, Arina Grossu, in a press release.
>
> **Although Planned Parenthood gets about $500 million in taxpayer dollars every year and offers other services, abortions accounted for 94**

> **percent of the company's pregnancy services in 2013.**

That money came from taxpayers, many of of whom are pro-life Republicans. We are paying for this, because the Democrats don't see a problem with making us pay for organ harvesting of unborn children.

Now look at this photo: This is Obama speaking for Planned Parenthood:

Barack Obama and Planned Parenthood

Obama is an enthusiastic supporter of Planned Parenthood.

See these young, unmarried women at an Obama rally in 2012?

Over 70% of young, unmarried women voted for funding Planned Parenthood

They were voting to send taxpayer money to Planned Parenthood to abort innocent children and harvest their organs.

See these different religious groups who vote overwhelmingly for Obama?

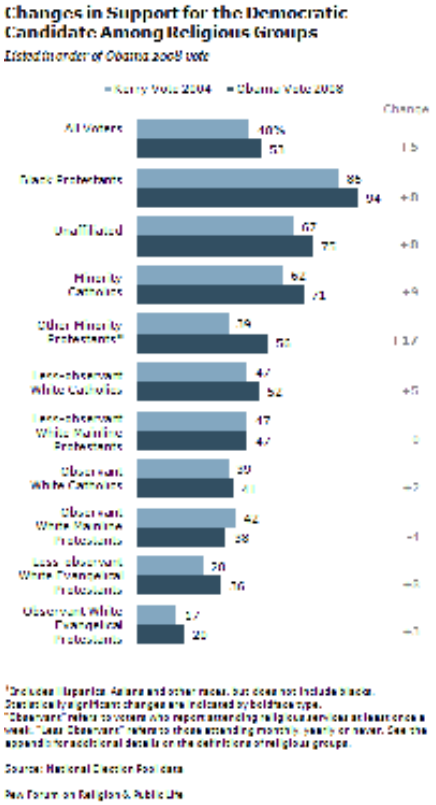

Which religions supported Obama most in 2008?
They were voting to send taxpayer money to Planned Parenthood to abort innocent children and harvest their organs.

Are you a Democrat? Do you vote for the Democrat Party? Wake up – this is what you are voting for. And you will have to answer for it before God one day. Do you know someone who is a Democrat? Maybe you should tell them what they are voting for.

The most direct thing we can do to stop this organ harvesting and human trafficking is to not elect Democrats in the next election. Let’s not respond to this by turning inward, having feelings, and doing spiritual, devotional things. Let’s be practical about this, and think of how to make it right in the real world.

Now is the time for action that will make a difference. There is an election coming up in 2016. The most proven pro-life candidates are Jindal, Perry, Walker and Cruz. Get out there and make sure that pro-life Republicans get elected instead of Planned Parenthood supporters like Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

Related posts

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- Governor Bobby Jindal announces investigation of Planned Parenthood
- What does Hillary Clinton think of Planned Parenthood selling unborn baby parts?
- House Republicans attempting to end some of the taxpayer-funding for Planned Parenthood
- With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013
- Planned Parenthood, an abortion business, is in California schools teaching sex education

- Arizona Planned Parenthood clinic failed to report rapist
- Planned Parenthood must pay $1.4 million in Medicaid fraud settlement
- Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You
- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- 24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic

Governor Bobby Jindal announces investigation of Planned Parenthood

July 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal

Although the mainstream media has not covered the story of Planned Parenthood harvesting organs that I blogged about yesterday, Bobby Jindal has heard about it. And he is going to knock over some tables and whip some ass.

Breitbart News reports.

> Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal announced Tuesday he is directing his state's Department of Health and Hospitals to launch an investigation into Planned Parenthood. This comes on the heels of the release of an investigative video by pro-life group Center for Medical Progress depicting the abortion giant's chief medical officer speaking about how to abort a baby intact to harvest its body parts for sale.
>
> "Today's video of a Planned Parenthood official discussing the systematic harvesting and trafficking of human body parts is shocking and gruesome," Jindal, a Republican presidential contender, said in a statement sent to Breitbart News.
>
> "This same organization is seeking to open an abortion clinic in New Orleans," he continued. "I have instructed Louisiana's Department of Health and Hospitals to conduct an immediate investigation into this alleged evil and illegal activity and to not issue any licenses until this investigation is complete. I am also asking the FBI to assist DHH in investigating this alleged criminal activity by this organization."

Jindal is the strongest pro-lifer in the Republican primary. And he gets the top spot in this

post, because he was the only Republican to take immediate action on it.

Some of the other GOP candidates are upset at Planned Parenthood, as well.

Life News reports:

> Now, pro-life Republican presidential hopefuls Rick Perry and Carly Fiorina are both slamming Planned Parenthood over its business of selling aborted baby body parts.
>
> **Former Texas Governor Rick Perry** released the following statement on the video showing a Planned Parenthood staffer attempting to sell the body parts of aborted children:
>
> "The video showing a Planned Parenthood employee selling the body parts of aborted children is a disturbing reminder of the organization's penchant for profiting off the tragedy of a destroyed human life. It is because of stories like this that I signed legislation **defunding Planned Parenthood in the state of Texas** – to protect human life and the health and safety of Texans."
>
> And pro-life businesswoman **Carly Fiorina** responded as well:
>
> "I am proudly pro-life. I believe that every human life has potential and that every human life is precious. This latest news is tragic and outrageous. This isn't about "choice." It's about profiting on the death of the unborn while telling women it's about empowerment."
>
> **Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal**, also a Republican candidate for president, has opened a state investigation into Planned Parenthood.
>
> **Senator Ted Cruz**, another pro-life presidential candidate, has also issued a statement calling for Congress to launch an investigation.
>
> "Today's news regarding allegations that Planned Parenthood is possibly selling the body parts of the babies it has aborted is sickening.
>
> "There is no place for taxpayer funding of organizations that profit from taking away innocent life, much less profiting off the bodies of the lives they have stolen. Congress should immediately begin an investigation of Planned Parenthood's activities regarding the sale and transfer of aborted body parts, including who is obtaining them and what they are being used for. And it should renew efforts to fully defund Planned Parenthood to ensure that its morally bankrupt business receives not one penny of taxpayer money.
>
> "I proudly stand on the side of life and remain committed to fighting for all innocent life to be valued and protected under the laws of this nation."

Meanwhile, governor Scott Walker had this to say, and this was reported by The Hill:

> Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker on Tuesday called a video purportedly showing a top Planned Parenthood executive discussing the transfer of aborted fetal tissue **"absolutely horrifying and disgusting."**

> "Planned Parenthood and the Democrats who vote to fund this organization owe the American people an explanation for these heinous, and possibly illegal, actions," the 2016 Republican presidential candidate said, according to BuzzFeed.
>
> **"Practices like this cannot be tolerated, which is why as governor, I defunded Planned Parenthood," Walker added.**

Scott Walker did indeed defund Planned Parenthood in his state, and he is not even in a red state – Wisconsin is a blue state. I like that two of the people running for president actually defunded Planned Parenthood in their states (Walker and Perry).

Finally, Texas Governor Greg Abbott has also launched an investigation of Planned Parenthood in his state.

Democrat Hillary Clinton loves Planned Parenthood:

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Democrat Barack Obama loves Planned Parenthood:

Barack Obama and Planned Parenthood

But Republicans prefer unborn babies to Planned Parenthood. Where do you stand?

Related posts

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Iran deal: no snap inspections, sanctions dropped, nuclear weapon within one year

July 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does foreign policy make?

Hillary Clinton supports the new deal that Obama has struck with Iran. So let's see what's in the deal.

Here are the key points about the Democrats' deal with Iran from foreign policy expert Nile Gardiner:

> […][T]his is a disastrous agreement that **leaves Iran's nuclear infrastructure largely in place**, with only limited "managed" access to inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In effect **the Iranian regime will be able to deny unfettered inspections of its nuclear facilities**. Iran has never cooperated with good faith with the IAEA in the past – there is no reason to believe it will do so now.
>
> […]Under the proposed arrangement, **Iran would be in a position to produce enough weapons-grade uranium for a nuclear weapon within a year** – the "breakout" time – if it chose to renege on the agreement. Even if Iran sticks to the deal, which is highly unlikely, the sunset restrictions on uranium enrichment will expire in a decade. In the meantime **there are no restrictions put in place to limit Iran's development of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) or its conventional weapons capability.**
>
> […]With the impending **lifting of economic sanctions against Iran**, which had been painstakingly put together by the UN Security Council over the course of many years despite Russian and Chinese resistance, **Tehran will have potentially hundreds of billions of additional dollars to invest in its nuclear facilities**, conventional weapons capability, and its state sponsored terror network, including Hamas and Hezbollah.

> […]There can be no doubt that the Iran nuclear deal will spark a dangerous arms race in the Middle East, with Iran's Arab neighbours seeking to defend themselves in the event that Tehran becomes a nuclear weapons power. **The prospect of a nuclear war in the Middle East will be dramatically raised as a result of this agreement**.
>
> […]The end result can only be an emboldened Iran that grows ever more aggressive as it seeks to establish regional dominance. **For Israel… the deal threatens its own long-term survival**. In the face of a genocidal tyranny that has vowed its destruction, the people of Israel are nervous for their own future.

Is that threat to Israel real, or am I just exaggerating? Well, it's no secret that Iran has made the threat many times in the past to annihilate Israel. But what's striking is that they have been making it during the negotiations as well.

CNS News explains:

> A photograph posted on Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's official website–as the Obama administration was finalizing negotiations on a deal intended to prevent Iran from building a nulcear weapon–shows the walking stick-waving supreme leader striding across, and apparently glaring at, a painted representation of Israel's national flag.
>
> The caption on the photo, according to a translation by American Enterprise Institute scholar Michael Rubin, reads, "The Zionist Regime is Condemned to Vanish."

Now, if you ask Obama and Clinton, Israel has nothing to worry about from a nuclear-enabled Iran. Does that seem reasonable in view of the facts, though? I would not be surprised to see Israel nuked the day after the 2016 presidential election… with the United States as the next target, of course.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the aisle, Republican presidential candidates oppose the deal with Iran.

Finally, let's close with a sobering recap of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton's disastrous string of foreign policy blunders, courtesy of Ben Shapiro:

> America used to worry about its allies being targeted for destruction. Obama's new deal with Iran contains zero restrictions on their terrorist activity across the Middle East and the world, and relieves sanctions on figures including Qasem Soleimani, head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Quds Force, **a group responsible for the murder of hundreds of American troops**. The deal also enriches Iran massively, and Iran has made clear that **it will use those increased resources to help its terrorist allies like Hamas and Hezbollah**.
>
> […][Obama] has purposefully hollowed out America's military, and fully embraces Iran's regional aspirations.
>
> […]Obama wants Iran to take over large sections of the Middle East. Like most

> Europeans, Obama sees America and Israel as greater threats to world peace than Iran or North Korea. His top priority in the Iran deal was forestalling action by the United States and Israel. He achieved that, at the cost of Saudi Arabia and Egypt seeking nuclear weapons, Hamas reinforcing its position as a terrorist cancer in the Gaza Strip, Hezbollah retrenching as the controlling force in Lebanon, Bashar Assad ensuring his continued leadership, Iraq turning into an Iranian client state, Afghanistan preparing for Iranian-influenced sectarian violence, and Houthi-caused chaos in Yemen, for a start.

It's the foreign policy blunders that will be the hardest to fix. The domestic stuff we can fix, the foreign policy – it's going to almost impossible to roll that back. And if we do see a nuclear weapon within a year, Obama will veto anyone who tries to stop Iran from using it on Israel – or on us. Iran is not kidding when they say "death to Israel" and "death to America". We are about to find out, and sooner than you think.

Now the big question is this – will that make any difference to Democrat voters? Sometimes I think that Democrat voters have their heads so far up their asses that no amount of facts can break in. Maybe the only thing that will wake them up is the mushroom cloud over Israel… or maybe over New York or Los Angeles. But honestly, they will probably just blame Bush or something. It's invincible ignorance. Prove me wrong, Democrats. Because this time, it's life and death serious.

J.P. Moreland asks: does truth matter when choosing a religion?

July 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

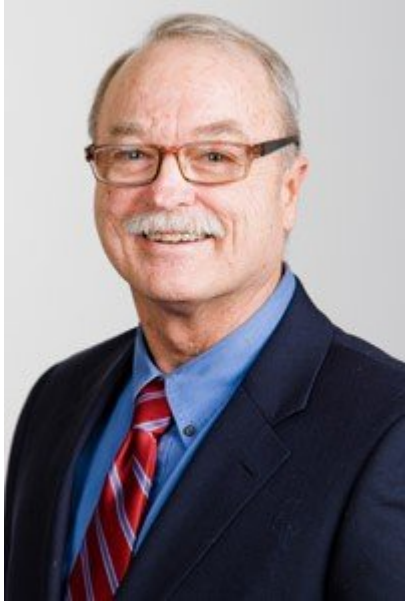

Dr. J.P. Moreland

This lecture contains Moreland's famous "Wonmug" illustration. Ah, memories! If you don't know who Wonmug is, you can find out in this lecture.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Is it intolerant to think that one religion is true?
- Is it more important to be loving and accepting of people regardless of worldview?
- How should Christians approach the question of religious pluralism?
- How does a person choose a religion anyway?
- Who is Wonmug, and would you like to be like Wonmug?
- Is it enough that a belief "works for you", or do you want to believe the truth?
- Can all the religions in the world be true?
- Is it wise to pick and choose what you like from all the different religions?
- Is it possible to investigate which religion is true? How?
- Which religions are testable for being true or false?
- How you can test Christianity historically (very brief)

This is the most fun lecture to listen to, you should listen to it, if you like fun.

ABC, CBS, CNN, and MSNBC all ignore Planned Parenthood organ harvesting story

July 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Two stories from Newsbusters, the premier source for exposing media bias.

First story:

> A taxpayer-funded organization reportedly selling baby hearts and livers should be a huge story. Not so, say the broadcast networks, which have devoted just 39 seconds to the story, out of the 9 hours and 30 minutes of news shows they've aired since it broke.
>
> The broadcast networks censored an undercover video of Planned Parenthood senior director of medical services Dr. Deborah Nucatola explaining how her organization procures and sells the body parts of aborted babies. Of the three broadcast networks, only NBC has mentioned the footage released July 14 by the "anti-abortion" Center for Medical Progress (CMP) – in a mere 39 seconds.
>
> […]**ABC and CBS turned a blind eye to the Planned Parenthood exposé — in favor of other, more pressing stories.**

The pressing stories were just standard tabloid fluff, of course.

Second story:

> **While cable networks CNN and MSNBC on Tuesday looked the other way following the release of the disturbing video showing a Planned Parenthood executive discussing the sale of body parts from aborted babies, the Fox News Channel program Special Report offered a full report on the investigation by the Center for Medical Progress (CMP)**

> **from chief legal correspondent Shannon Bream.**
>
> Bream then outlined the contents of the video:
>
> The Center for Medical Progress, or CMP, launched this website today by releasing a video it says is the result of a two-and-a-half-year undercover investigation into practices at Planned Parenthood. In the video shot in the Los Angeles restaurant last summer, a woman identified as Dr. Deborah Nucatola, senior director of medical services for Planned Parenthood, discusses the transfer of fetal body parts harvested after abortion.
> After a soundbite from the video, Bream noted that "[f]ederal law bans the sale of human organs as well as commercial trafficking of body parts from an aborted fetus" with actors working for CMP even "ask[ing] if doctors could perform custom-tailored abortion with the goal of harvesting specific organs and hearts" (to which Nucatola confirmed as being a possible option).
>
> Adding at the end of her report, Bream mentioned that "the woman identified as Planned Parenthood's senior director of medical services says prices per body part would likely range from $30 to $100."

Here's a clip of Fox News' coverage:

By far, the best program on FNC is Special Report, and you can see why. They will tell you the news that does not fit the secular left's agenda.

I thought that this related clip featuring Christian apologist Sean McDowell was very telling about media bias:

The mainstream media tells the story that it wants to tell, in order to sway public opinion towards the secular left – towards Democrats.

I spotted this related article on Breitbart News, which listed 10 other major stories that the left-wing media declined to cover:

1. ACORN Corruption
2. Obama Politicizing the NEA For Propaganda Purposes
3. Democrats Lie About Tea Party N-word
4. Dylann Roof and the Breakdown of Federal Background Checks
5. Clinton Foundation Scandals
6. Hillary Clinton's Secret Email Account and Server
7. IRS Persecutes Obama's Political Enhemies
8. Obama's Increased Surveillance State
9. DOJ Seizes AP Phone Records
10. Benghazi

These are individual examples, but there are also studies that look at the aggregate data. If you want to see the research on media bias, I have written about the studies here in a previous blog post.

Related posts

- Republicans in Congress will investigate Planned Parenthood’s organ harvesting
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- Governor Bobby Jindal announces investigation of Planned Parenthood
- What does Hillary Clinton think of Planned Parenthood selling unborn baby parts?
- House Republicans attempting to end some of the taxpayer-funding for Planned Parenthood
- With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013
- Planned Parenthood, an abortion business, is in California schools teaching sex education
- Arizona Planned Parenthood clinic failed to report rapist
- Planned Parenthood must pay $1.4 million in Medicaid fraud settlement
- Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You
- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- 24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic

Republicans in Congress will investigate Planned Parenthood's organ harvesting

July 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Great news from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Speaker John Boehner announced today that committees in the House of Representatives will take a look at the Planned Parenthood abortion business after a shocking new expose' video that caught Planned Parenthood's top doctor describing how the abortion business sells the body parts of aborted babies.
>
> […]Now, Speaker John Boehner says the House of Representatives will look into the "grisly" practice at Planned Parenthood. Boehner issued the following statement on the video released yesterday documenting the grisly practices embraced by Planned Parenthood.
>
> "Nothing is more precious than life, especially an unborn child. When anyone diminishes an unborn child, we are all hurt, irreversibly so. When an organization monetizes an unborn child – and with the cavalier attitude portrayed in this horrific video – we must all act. As a start, I have asked our relevant committees to look into this matter. I am also calling on President Obama and Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell to denounce, and stop, these gruesome practices."
>
> House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, the number two Republican, also released a statement calling on House Committees to investigate inhumane abortion practices first revealed yesterday in a video of a Planned Parenthood employee.
>
> "Life is truly a miracle, and here in the House we have fought and will continue to

> fight to protect the sanctity of life. I speak for all of my colleagues when I say I was deeply disturbed by reports and video of an organization engaging in such grotesque and inhumane practices. I will be working with House Committees to investigate the claims made by the employee. We should all agree that no life is expendable, and our society has no place for such callous indifference to life."
>
> The statements come just hours before members of Congress will host a press conference also calling for a Congressional investigation. Representatives Chris Smith (NJ-04), Sean Duffy (WI-07) and Ann Wagner (MO-02) are hosting a press conference calling for further investigation into the evidence presented in undercover video.

And the Republican governors of Texas and Louisiana are also taking immediate action:

> Governors of two states are also looking into the selling of body parts from aborted babies and Texas Governor Greg Abbott and Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal have launched investigations in their states.

Yesterday, I blogged about how Republican governors Scott Walker (Wisconsin) and Rick Perry (Texas) had defunded Planned Parenthood in their states. If you don't like organ harvesting, you vote Republican. Period.

Related posts

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Walt Russell explains how to read the Bible effectively

July 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walt Russell's book on the subject of interpreting the Bible is called "Playing With Fire: How the Bible Ignites Change in Your Soul". I like that book, but I found four articles that summarize the main points of the book so people can understand how to read the Bible at a high livel.

Here is part one which talks about how postmodern relativism is at odds with discovering the original intent of an author.

Excerpt:

> Twenty-four year-old "Janet" (not her real name) was angry at my emphasis on seeking to discover authors' intentions when we read their texts. She was an evangelical Christian and a second grade teacher in a public school. She prided herself in helping her 20 students learn to love literature. She would read them a story as they gathered around her, and then ask each child, "What does the story mean to you?" She prodded them to come up with their own unique meanings. With such strong encouragement, the class of 20 would eventually have 20 different meanings for the one story. Janet sensed that I was a naysayer about such "love of literature." Pouring a little emotional gasoline on the fire, I said, "Janet, you're certainly doing your part to insure that these 7 year-olds will never recover from a radically relativistic view of meaning!" Now I had her full attention.

Here is part two which talks about the importance of knowing the genre of a text before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" — the newspaper headline virtually screams out at you. The thought of something being slain is repulsive. You're gripped by a mental image of southern India's Bengal tiger. You imagine its beautiful face, its stripes and piercing eyes. Then your image is shattered by the sudden blast of a high-powered rifle. You see the exquisite creature writhe in pain, fall gracelessly in its tracks and die. Having read no further than the headline, you feel sick, as if you've witnessed something tragic.
>
> But *should* you feel this way? The slaughter of an endangered species — especially one as magnificent as the Bengal tiger — is horrifying, no doubt. But suppose you failed to notice that the headline "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" appeared in the *sports page* of the morning paper. Clearly enough, it now refers to different Indians, different Tigers and a different manner of slaying than you originally thought. And is it really that tragic that the Cleveland Indians badly beat the

> Detroit Tigers in a major league baseball game last night? Not unless you're a long-suffering Detroit Tigers' baseball fan. But how do you now know that the headline is about baseball and not tiger-slaying in India? You look at the words "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS" and you know exactly what each word means. When you combine these words, how can they not mean exactly what you first thought they did — that *Indians slay tigers*? Answer: because their meanings are communicated (as the meanings of *all* words are) through *genres*!

Here is part three which talks about the importance of reading the context of a verse before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "Never Read a Bible Verse!" That's the title of a little booklet my friend and Christian radio personality, Gregory Koukl, has written to help people read the Bible well. What great advice. "That's right, never read a Bible verse. Instead, always read a paragraph — at least." But the current is flowing the other way in our popular sound-bite culture. Not to be left out (or left behind!), the Church has its own version of sound-bite culture: *verse-bite culture*. In verse-bite culture we take a sentence or sentence-fragment from a biblical paragraph, memorize it out of context, write it on a little card, put it on a billboard, a plaque, a rock, etc. Somehow we think that just because this little chunk of Scripture has a verse number in front of it, it was meant to be a free-standing unit of thought. Nothing could be further from the truth.
>
> Apart from the fact that chapter and verse divisions weren't added to the New Testament text until 1560 — long after the New Testament's inspired authorship — there is a more important reason for never reading just a Bible verse, and instead reading at least the paragraph that contains it.

Here is part four which talks about the importance of applying the words of the Bible to your life.

One verse that is often misinterpreted is missing from the articles, but present in the STR lecture. It's Philippians 1:6 that says "6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus". Russell says in the lecture that this promise is specifically intended for the church in Philippi, to whom Paul is writing, not necessarily to all Christians. He is giving them a promise just after directly referring to their good work in supporting him in his ministry. Some verses are just not meant for us, and the context reveals it.

Obama learned nothing from Fort Hood: four marines killed in gun free zone

July 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Another multiple-victim shooting in another gun-free zone

Breitbart News has the story.

Excerpt:

> After gunman Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez, a Muslim immigrant from Kuwait, allegedly shot and killed four Marines in Chattanooga, Tennessee, former NYPD detective Harry Houck said the military's "gun-free zone" mindset has to change.
>
> Speaking to CNN Newsroom, Houck said, "I'm a Marine. And this really is hitting me a little harder here than normal that [these Marines] weren't able to protect themselves at the time this occurred."
>
> "We need people that are armed," he added. He also said that even if that means getting armed guards, then so be it; something has to change.
>
> *[…]*Ironically, one of the earliest post-attack photos of the recruiting center shows shattered glass and bullet holes by the very sign that designated the office a gun free zone.

You can see the photo above, with the gun-free zone sticker.

So, let me make two points about this.

First, the shooter was not some poor person who just needed to be given a job, as the State Department spokeswomen, e.g. Marie Harf, are always trying to tell us.

The Tennessean explains:

> Authorities identified the gunman as Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez of Hixson, Tenn., though the spelling of his first name was in dispute, with federal officials and records giving at least four variations.

> […]The shooting suspect's family lived there about 15 years and did not bring attention to themselves, according to neighbor Dean McDaniel.
>
> […]It was unclear whether Abdulazeez was a U.S. or Kuwaiti citizen.
>
> **University of Tennessee at Chattanooga officials confirmed that Abdulazeez graduated in 2012 with a degree in electrical engineering. He also interned at the Tennessee Valley Authority, the agency confirmed.**

Second, this was not an episode of "senseless violence" or "workplace violence", as politically correct leftists might like to say. This guy was a Muslim and he was "very religious".

> Ryan Smith told the Times Free Press that he wrestled with Abdulazeez at Red Bank High School.
>
> **Smith said that Abdulazeez was very religious and that he would argue "back and forth" with the boys' high school wrestling coach during fasting rituals.**

This was not a random attack.

Recall the Fort Hood attack, another gun-free zone. That time, it was Major Nidal Hasan, a devout Muslim, and Obama called that attack "workplace violence". Not terrorism! It's "workplace violence".

The problem with not taking domestic terrorism seriously is that instead of fixing the gun-free zones that enable these attacks, we keep going as before, and invite more attacks. Obama learned nothing from Fort Hood, and now four more U.S. Marines are dead because of his difficulty at accepting reality.

Wisconsin Supreme Court halts John Chisholm's fascist witch hunts

July 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

District attorney John Chisholm (left)

I blogged three times previously about this rogue Democrat district attorney from Wisconsin, (January 2014, April 2015, July 2015), who was sending armed police to break down the doors of the homes of conservatives, in pre-dawn military-style raids. Well, the case went to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, and the decision came out on Wednesday.

The radically left-wing Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel has the story.

Excerpt:

> Dealing Gov. Scott Walker a victory just as his presidential campaign gets underway, the Wisconsin Supreme Court in a sweeping decision Thursday ruled the governor's campaign and conservative groups had not violated campaign finance laws.
>
> The ruling means the end of the investigation, which has been stalled for 18 months after a lower court judge determined no laws were violated even if Walker's campaign and the groups had worked together as prosecutors believe.
>
> It could also reshape how campaigns are run in Wisconsin because it makes clear campaigns can work closely with outside groups, allowing more political money to flow without the names of donors being disclosed.
>
> Also, the decision builds momentum for rewriting campaign finance laws,

> overhauling the state's elections and ethics agency, and limiting the ability of prosecutors to conduct John Doe probes. Republicans who control the Legislature have argued such investigations should not be conducted in political cases and targets of inquiries shouldn't be barred from speaking out publicly.
>
> The ruling dealt with three pieces of litigation, and the justices split 4-2 on the campaign finance laws that were at the center of the probe.
>
> Writing for the majority, Justice Michael Gableman found collaboration between issue groups and campaigns was not illegal. He ordered prosecutors to return all records they seized and destroy any copies they made of them.
>
> **"It is utterly clear that the special prosecutor has employed theories of law that do not exist in order to investigate citizens who were wholly innocent of any wrongdoing," Gableman wrote.**
>
> **Calling the challengers brave, Gableman wrote that their litigation gave the court "an opportunity to re-endorse its commitment to upholding the fundamental right of each and every citizen to engage in lawful political activity and to do so free from the fear of the tyrannical retribution of arbitrary or capricious governmental prosecution. Let one point be clear: our conclusion today ends this unconstitutional John Doe investigation."**

National Review reviews the types of raids ordered by the Democrats against conservatives:

> In two separate reports, National Review described these raids in detail. (The court cited our reports in its opinion.) On October 3, 2013, multiple Wisconsin conservatives were awakened by a persistent pounding on the door, their houses were illuminated by floodlights, and police — sometimes with guns drawn — poured into their homes. Once inside, the investigators turned the private residences of these innocent conservative citizens "upside down," seeking an extraordinarily broad range of documents and information. These raids were supplemented by subpoenas that secured for investigators massive amounts of electronic information.
>
> […]The raid victims have suffered severe, long-term consequences as a result of these raids. Almost to a person, they say they no longer feel secure in their own homes. They report watching what they say, terrified that overt political involvement could lead their homes to be invaded again. One victim said, "I tried to create a home where the kids always feel safe. Now they know they're not. They know men with guns can come in their house, and there's nothing we can do." Another victim — whose son was home alone when police arrived, guns drawn — is haunted by this chilling thought: "He could have been in the shower. They could have broken the door down. He could have been shot. Over politics."

Funny how the media doesn't make a big deal out of this story, isn't it? Seems like it

would be an important thing to report on.

Well, this story is still not over. Now we wait for civil lawsuits to be filed, so that Chisholm is bankrupted. I would also like to see criminal charges filed, and I hope he spends the rest of his life in jail. That would be justice, which is something he clearly needs a lesson in.

Review of evidential apologetics book by pastor shows where church needs to improve

July 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Whenever I talk to Christians, I find that they hold one of two views about what faith is.

The first view of faith is the Biblical view of faith as active trust in propositions we know to be true, because we have reasons and evidence to believe those propositions. This view is not only rooted in the Bible, but it extends through Augustine and Aquinas to the present day. I have written about this view of faith before, and quoted many theologians in support of it. In the Bible, people use miracles as a sign in order to convince skeptics. For example, Peter appeals to the resurrection in Acts 2. The Bible teaches that faith is active trusting based on evidence.

The second view is blind faith. This view is nowhere in the Bible, and this view asserts that becoming a Christian is a leap-of-faith in the dark against all the evidence. This view not only minimizes evidence, but it actually opposes presenting evidence to unbelievers and skeptics in the way that the Bible teaches. This view is nowhere in the Bible, and it was not the method used by Jesus or his followers. It is an unBiblical way of viewing faith, but it is very popular in some circles of Christianity. It is also popular among atheists, because this is what many Christian leaders and pastors tell them that faith is.

Consider this review of a recent book that defends the Gospels and the historicity of the resurrection by one such fideist pastor.

He writes:

> There are, however, two significant shortcomings to the book.
>
> First, *Cold-Case Christianity* places far too much emphasis on the role of extrabiblical sources. No doubt there is a legitimate role for biblical archaeology and extrabiblical writing from antiquity. Christianity is, after all, a faith firmly

> rooted in human history. But there is a grave danger when truth is suspended because of an apparent lack of corroboration from extrabiblical sources. And Wallace, I'm afraid, wanders too close to this dark side of apologetics.
>
> All of chapter 12, for instance, is devoted to proving the Gospels have external corroborative evidence—"evidence that are independent of the Gospel documents yet verify the claims of the text" (183). Wallace then addresses the historicity of the pool of Bethesda and makes another worrying statement: "For many years, there was no evidence for such a place outside of John's Gospel. Because Christianity makes historical claims, archaeology ought to be a tool we can use to see *if these claims are, in fact, true*" (201-202, emphasis added).
>
> In other words, Wallace seems to suggest we cannot affirm the truth of the Gospel accounts without the stamp of approval from archaeology and other extrabiblical sources. Such reasoning is dangerous, not least because it cannot affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. But also, it places the final court of appeal in the realm of extrabiblical sources rather than of God's all-sufficient, all-powerful Word.

That is a textbook definition of fideism – that belief is somehow more pious and praiseworthy the less evidence we have. And the best way to have less evidence is to study nothing at all, but to just make a leap-of-faith in the dark. Of course, a leap-of-faith can land you anywhere – Islam, Mormonism. Presumably this pastor is like the Mormons who eschew all evidence and prefer to detect the truth of Mormonism by "the burning of the bosom" which happens when people read the all-sufficient, all-powerful Book of Mormon. His view of faith is identical to theirs, and 180 degrees opposed to the Bible. He has made his leap-of-faith, and that leap-of-faith is not accountable to arguments and evidence. His faith is private and personal, based on his own feelings. He considers it blasphemous to have to demonstrate what he believes to those who disagree with him. Where is this in the Bible? It's nowhere. But it is everywhere in anti-intellectual Christian circles.

There is a good response to this blind-faith pastor on Deeper Waters. Much less angry than my response.

Excerpt:

> The dark side of apologetics? Did I somehow step into a Star Wars universe?
>
> Yes. How horrible to show that the Bible is backed up by sources outside of it. How terrible to show that these events did not happen in a vacuum. Thankfully, no one in the Bible took this approach.
>
> Except for the fact that when the gospel was being preached, there were no gospels per se and there were no epistles. Paul told Agrippa that the events done weren't done in a corner. In other words, investigate the claims for yourself! The early testimony was eyewitness testimony. Sources like Tacitus and others show the eyewitnesses were right! This was not done in a corner! This was done out in

> the open! Archaeology helps us confirm the biblical writings and shows that unlike the pagan myths, these events were rooted in a place and time. Is there some danger that our faith will be destroyed by outside sources?
>
> It really becomes a fideistic approach. If your worldview is true, you should have no problem putting it to the strictest scrutiny. If it is not, then you will have a problem. No Christian should fear further research into what they believe. No Christian should have a problem with extra-biblical sources. Now I do agree there is a problem with stating that EVERYTHING must be backed extra-biblically. I think this is a prejudice we too often have where nothing in the Bible can be considered historical unless it's verified somewhere else. A gospel account alone could count as a historical claim itself that can be investigated, and indeed is in NT scholarship, but where we can get extra-biblical evidence, I'm all for it.
>
> […]Christianity is a faith that is rooted in evidences so we should be able to use evidences to demonstrate it. I have often been told by those of the presuppositional bent that the approach is used all the time in the Bible. The problem is I can't find one. I get told passages like "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Yes. It is. Wisdom refers to godly living. It doesn't refer to confirming the gospel to be true. When I look at the apostles in every case, I see them pointing to evidences.

It is pastors like Pastor Bungle above who are responsible for the great falling away from Christianity that we are seeing when we look at young people. We need pastors who connect the claims of the Christian worldview to evidence.

Why Christian parents get nervous about evidence when discussing Christianity

July 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Homeschooling mother Dr. Lydia McGrew explains why Bible-believing Christians are uneasy with the use of evidence on her blog What's Wrong With The World. (H/T Eric Chabot)

Excerpt:

> 4) The idea that, if a young person gets deeply interested in Christian evidence, he will go out on the Internet (or at his public high school or secular college) seeking giants to slay and will get overwhelmed. Again, this worry has merit as a sociological matter. That can certainly happen.
>
> That is why we should say loud and clear to Christians interested in this topic: **Don't do that!** What do I mean? Just this: Being committed to investigating the evidence for Christianity does not mean that one has to find out *every possible thing* that anyone has ever said about or against Christianity and know the answer to it. That would be impossible because of the sheer bulk of (ultimately unpersuasive) objections which skeptics can bring up as though they were real problems.
>
> In this context the words of George Horne, an 18th century bishop, from his *Letters on Infidelity*, are wise and helpful. (Emphasis added.)
>
> In the thirty sections of their pamphlet, they have produced a list of difficulties to be met with in reading the Old and New Testament. Had I been aware of their design, I could have enriched the collection with many more, at least as good, if not a little better. But they have compiled, I dare say, what they deemed the best, and, in their own opinion, presented us with the essence of infidelity in a thumb-phial, the very fumes of which, on drawing the cork, are to strike the bench of bishops dead at once. Let not the unlearned Christian be alarmed, "as though some strange thing had happened to him," and modern philosophy had discovered arguments to demolish religion, never heard of before. The old ornaments of deism have been "broken off" upon this occasion, "and cast into the fire, and there came out this calf." These same difficulties have been again and again urged and discussed in public; again and again weighed and considered by learned and sensible men, of the laity as well as the clergy, who have by no means been induced by them to renounce their faith.
>
> [snip]
>
> Many and painful are the researches sometimes necessary to be made, for settling points of that kind. **Pertness and ignorance may ask a question in three lines, which it will cost learning and ingenuity thirty pages to**

> **answer. When this is done, the same question shall be triumphantly asked again the next year, as if nothing had ever been written upon the subject.**

And a bit later:

> 5) The unspoken fear that Christianity cannot stand up to scrutiny and doesn't really have good evidential support.
>
> Here I do not blame the parents, but not because I share the unspoken fear. I do not blame them, because in most cases no one has ever taught them otherwise. How many pastors and priests have really taught apologetics to their congregations, or even offered such studies as an option? Too few. How many courses on sharing your faith have explicitly taught people not to get involved in responding to questions and objections but just to "share their experience" because "no one can argue with that"? Too many. It's no wonder then that the congregation comes away with the sneaking suspicion that our Christian faith is no better grounded than Mormonism and that we, like they, must depend chiefly on the burning in the bosom.
>
> And one can always push the blame further back. Perhaps the pastors weren't taught Christian evidences at their seminaries.
>
> In fact, I would not be surprised if all too many theologians who give high-falutin' rationalizations for being anti-evidentialist are actually making a virtue out of what they deem to be a necessity. Since they don't think Christian faith *is* founded on fact, they might as well make up some profound-sounding theological theory that tells us that it shouldn't be.
>
> When Nathanael asks Philip, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip simply says, "Come and see." (John 1:46) And he brings him to Jesus. If you as a parent or mentor to the young are opposed to the study of Christian evidences partly because deep down you suspect that they aren't very good, I can only say to you as well, "Come and see."

I blogged about this tendency of church leaders to make a virtue out of laziness and ignorance before.

Here's a snip:

> Suppose a pastor or campus group leader wants to avoid having to learn physics and cosmology, or the minimum facts case for the resurrection, or how to respond to apparently gratuitous suffering, or the problem of religious pluralism. Suppose he thinks that Christianity, if it is about anything, is about his feeling happy and comfortable with a minimum of effort and work. So, he diligently avoids reading apologetics, because learning evidence is hard work. He avoids watching debates on God's existence and the resurrection, because this is hard work. He avoids conversations with people who do study these things, and

implies that there is something wrong with them for studying these things. He endeavors to conceal his laziness and ignorance and cowardice from his flock with much pious God-talk and fervent praise-hymn-singing.

Eventually, some member of his church asks him to go for lunch with an actual non-Christian family member. The pastor agrees and when he meets the unbelieving family member, he has nothing at all to say about typical challenges that unbelievers face. He has no knowledge of evolution, the problem of evil, the hiddenness of God, or the hallucination theory. He has never read a single atheist, and never read a single piece of evidence to refute them from Christian scholars. He lacks humility, refusing to admit that other Christian scholars may know more than he does because they have studied other areas. Needless to say, he fails to defend God's reputation to the non-Christian. What will he say to the members of his flock about his failure? How will he justify his obstinate refusal to do what everyone else in the Bible does when confronting non-believers?

Well, consider this review of a recent book that defends the Gospels and the historicity of the resurrection by one such fideist pastor.

He writes:

There are, however, two significant shortcomings to the book.

First, *Cold-Case Christianity* places far too much emphasis on the role of extrabiblical sources. No doubt there is a legitimate role for biblical archaeology and extrabiblical writing from antiquity. Christianity is, after all, a faith firmly rooted in human history. But there is a grave danger when truth is suspended because of an apparent lack of corroboration from extrabiblical sources. And Wallace, I'm afraid, wanders too close to this dark side of apologetics.

All of chapter 12, for instance, is devoted to proving the Gospels have external corroborative evidence—"evidence that are independent of the Gospel documents yet verify the claims of the text" (183). Wallace then addresses the historicity of the pool of Bethesda and makes another worrying statement: "For many years, there was no evidence for such a place outside of John's Gospel. Because Christianity makes historical claims, archaeology ought to be a tool we can use to see *if these claims are, in fact, true*" (201-202, emphasis added).

In other words, Wallace seems to suggest we cannot affirm the truth of the Gospel accounts without the stamp of approval from archaeology and other extrabiblical sources. Such reasoning is dangerous, not least because it cannot affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. But also, it places the final court of appeal in the realm of extrabiblical sources rather than of God's all-sufficient, all-powerful Word.

That is a textbook definition of fideism – that belief is somehow more pious and praiseworthy the less evidence we have. And the best way to have less evidence is to study nothing at all, but to just make a leap-of-faith in the dark. Of course, a

> leap-of-faith can land you anywhere – Islam, Mormonism. Presumably this pastor is like the Mormons who eschew all evidence and prefer to detect the truth of Mormonism by "the burning of the bosom" which happens when people read the all-sufficient, all-powerful Book of Mormon. His view of faith is identical to theirs, and 180 degrees opposed to the Bible. He has made his leap-of-faith, and that leap-of-faith is not accountable to arguments and evidence. His faith is private and personal, based on his own feelings. He considers it blasphemous to have to demonstrate what he believes to those who disagree with him. Where is this in the Bible? It's nowhere. But it is everywhere in anti-intellectual Christian circles.
>
> […]I think that Christians are much better off following the example of authentic Christian pastors like R.C. Sproul, who, in a conference on evangelism, invited Dr. Stephen C. Meyer to present multiple lines of evidence from mainstream science to establish the existence of God. The only reason not to take this approach is laziness, which leads to ignorance, which leads to cowardice. And failure. It is pastors like Pastor Bungle above who are responsible for the great falling away from Christianity that we are seeing when we look at young people. Pastors who pride themselves in refusing to connecting the Bible to the real world, with evidence and with policy analysis, are causing young people to abandon the faith.

I think that many people who reject Christianity can point to a general impression that they got from Pastor Bungle and his ilk that faith is somehow *different from other areas of knowledge* and that it was *morally praise worthy to insulate faith from critical thinking and evidence*. Pastor Bungle could never justify his view by using the Bible, but a lot of church leaders have that view regardless of whether it's Biblical or not.

The really troubling thing that I see again and again in the church is when pastors base all of their opposition to behaviors like abortion and gay marriage on Christianity. This effectively makes it impossible to do anything about these issues in the public square, because Christians are then taught to have nothing persuasive to say on these issues to non-Christians. It's like pastors are more interested in striking a pious pose with their congregations instead of studying secular arguments and evidence so they can equip Christians to actually solve the problem.

New study: regular churchgoers and married people most satisfied with their love life

July 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

This article from Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> Regular churchgoers, married people or those who enjoy harmonious social ties are most satisfied with their love life. This also goes for people who are currently in love or who experience the commitment and sexual desire of their partners, says Félix Neto and Maria da Conceição Pinto of the Universidade do Porto in Portugal. Their findings, published in an article in Springer's journal *Applied Research in Quality of Life,* look at the influences on love life satisfaction throughout one's adult life.

> The researchers associate love with the desire to enter into, maintain, or expand a close, connected, and ongoing relationship with another person. In turn, love life satisfaction is a purely subjective, overall measurement of someone's actual enjoyment of love. To investigate the factors that influence this across various age groups, 1,284 adult Portuguese women and men ranging between 18 and 90 years old were asked to evaluate and weigh specific facets of their own love lives by using the Satisfaction With Love Life Scale.
>
> […]**While education does not impact a person's love life satisfaction, religious involvement does. The finding that believers and regular churchgoers are positive about their love lives is in line with previous studies that associate religious involvement with better mental health and greater satisfaction with life and sexual relationships in general.**

Previously, I blogged about a study reported in USA Today, which showed that people who attend church have lower divorce rates than those who don't attend church.

Excerpt:

> It’s been proclaimed from pulpits and blogs for years — Christians divorce as much as everyone else in America.
>
> But some scholars and family activists are questioning the oft-cited statistics, saying Christians who attend church regularly are more likely to remain wed.
>
> […]The various findings on religion and divorce hinge on what kind of Christians are being discussed.
>
> **Wright combed through the General Social Survey, a vast demographic study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and found that Christians, like adherents of other religions, have a divorce rate of about 42%. The rate among religiously unaffiliated Americans is 50%.**
>
> **When Wright examined the statistics on evangelicals, he found worship attendance has a big influence on the numbers. Six in 10 evangelicals who never attend had been divorced or separated, compared to just 38% of weekly attendees.**
>
> […]Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there’s been some confusion.
>
> “You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees,” he said.
>
> **Wilcox’s analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.
>
> “There’s something about being a nominal ‘Christian’ that is linked to a lot of negative outcomes when it comes to family life,” Wilcox said.

Whenever I talk to atheists about marital satisfaction and marital stability, they always tell me these myths about how atheists divorce less and are happier in their marriages than religious people. But when I ask them for studies, they don’t have any, or they start to talk about the Discovery Channel or Star Trek or something. It’s like they believe things without any evidence at all. Meanwhile, one also has to note that atheists have much lower rates of marriage than church-attending believers.

Now clearly, there are going to be atheists with great marriages that never break up. But individual cases do not overturn peer-reviewed research studies. The fact is that marriage is an institution that is soaked through with moral values and moral obligations. If you think that morality is just arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place,

as is logically consistent with atheism, then the odds are that you won’t be able to stay married for long – if you even get married at all.

Governors Bobby Jindal, Mary Fallin and Greg Abbott issue orders to arm military personnel

July 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In Democrat states, you see sanctuary cities, wasteful welfare spending, massive underfunded public sector pensions, and other leftist nonsense. In Republican states, you see awesome, more awesome, and awesome on stilts.

Let's take a look.

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal

Here's Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal first:

> Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana issued an executive order Friday that authorized the Adjutant General of the state's National Guard to both identify and arm guardsmen in order to protect those military facilities, a press release from the governor's office announced.
>
> Jindal also issued an executive order that calls for the flags at all Louisiana buildings to be flown at half-staff until July 24 in honor of the victims of the Chattanooga, Tennessee, terrorist attacks.

I really like it when immigrants come to America and then act to defend America because they love America. Bobby Jindal loves America, and it always makes me smile when he takes action to defend her.

Oklahama Governor Mary Fallin

Next, Oklahoma governor Mary Fallin:

> On Friday, Gov. Fallin issued an executive order that allows Maj. Gen. Robbie Asher to arm certain full-time personnel in military installations throughout Oklahoma.
>
> “Four unarmed Marines were killed in what appears to be a domestic terrorist attack,” Gov. Fallin said. “It is painful enough when we lose members of our armed forces when they are sent in harm’s way, but it is unfathomable that they should be vulnerable for attack in our own communities. For that reason, I want to make sure that our National Guardsmen are authorized to arm themselves at our military facilities.”
>
> The personnel may be armed with weapons that “adequately provide for security of the facilities and their occupants.”
>
> Those facilities include military recruiting offices.
>
> “This attack is a horrible tragedy for our country and especially those in the State of Tennessee,” she said. “Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families and friends of those who were killed.”

She is one of my favorite governors, and I would love to move to Oklahoma one day. She runs a tight ship, and her state made the list of the top 10 best run states.

Last, Texas Governor Greg Abbott:

> Governor Greg Abbott announced today he will authorize the Adjutant General John Nichols of the Texas National Guard to arm National Guard personnel at military facilities across Texas. This order comes following the recent shooting on two military facilities in Chattanooga, Tennessee that resulted in the deaths of four United States Marines and one Navy Sailor.
>
> "It is with a heavy heart that I issue this order," said Governor Abbott. "After the recent shooting in Chattanooga, it has become clear that our military personnel must have the ability to defend themselves against these type of attacks on our own soil. Arming the National Guard at these bases will not only serve as a deterrent to anyone wishing to do harm to our service men and women, but will enable them to protect those living and working on the base."

Like governor Bobby Jindal, governor Abbott also issued an order this week to investigate Planned Parenthood, after that video surfaced showing them selling the body parts of unborn children to greedy, ghoulish corporations.

Florida Governor Rick Scott and Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson also issued orders to arm the military. Both are Republican governors, of course. And I just got word from Jackie that Indiana Governor Mike Pence, another Republican, has done the same.

Like I said, if it's common sense, you can bet there is a Republican governor involved in it. I am not just *against Democrats*, I am *for Republicans*. When I read the news on Republican governors, I smile, because they are not afraid to do the right thing – to do what works. We have to be guided by what works – not what makes us feel good.

Is the answer to multiple victim shootings more gun control, or less fatherlessness?

July 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did the family background of Dylann Roof have anything to do with his desire to commit a violent crime?

This article from The Federalist has some answers. (H/T ECM)

It says:

> As more information slowly seeps out about Dylann Roof, the 21-year-old who murdered nine people at a church in Charleston, South Carolina, one fact should surprise exactly no one: Roof came from a broken home. Roof's parents divorced three years before he was even born, later reuniting just long enough to produce a child who would later become a mass murderer.
>
> […]As University of Virginia Professor Brad Wilcox pointed out back in 2013: "From shootings at MIT (i.e., the Tsarnaev brothers) to the University of Central Florida to the Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy in Decatur, Ga., nearly every shooting over the last year in Wikipedia's 'list of U.S. school attacks' involved a young man whose parents divorced or never married in the first place." His observation is largely ignored.
>
> In contrast, conversations about black-on-black violence often raise the link between broken households (or fatherless homes) and juvenile delinquency. But when the conversation turns to mass shootings, we seem to forget that link altogether.

> […]On CNN's list of the "27 Deadliest Mass Shootings In U.S. History," seven of those shootings were committed by young (under 30) males since 2005. Of the seven, only one—Virginia Tech shooter Seung-Hui Cho (who had been mentally unstable since childhood)—was raised by his biological father throughout childhood.

It turns out that fatherlessness is known to cause the character traits that are present in multiple victim shooters.

More:

> Let's revisit some those characteristics of mass shooters. Violence? There's a direct correlation between fatherless children and teen violence. Suicide? Fatherless children are more than twice as likely to commit suicide. Dropping out of school? Seventy-one percent of high school dropouts came from a fatherless background. Drug use? According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Fatherless children are at a dramatically greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse." How about guns? Two of the strongest correlations with gun

> homicides are growing up in a fatherless household and dropping out of school, which itself is directly related to lack of an active or present father.

If we wanted to get serious about stopping these multiple victim shootings, the first thing we should do is repeal no-fault divorce and make it harder for people to leave marriages in which they are "unhappy". People should be more careful about vetting their candidate spouse before they marry. And people should also be careful about preparing their own character for the constraints and duties of marriage – perhaps by not engaging in recreational sex with a high number of partners before marriage.

But in addition to repealing no-fault divorce, we should also be scaling back welfare for single mothers, because this is basically paying women to have fatherless children.

Read this congressional testimony from a Cato Institute economist:

> Welfare contributes to crime in several ways. First, children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. According to one study, children raised in single-parent families are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior.(3) Moreover, O'Neill found that, holding other variables constant, black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as black children from a family where the father is present. Nearly 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 percent of prison inmates.(4) Research indicates a direct correlation between crime rates and the number of single-parent families in a neighborhood.(5)
>
> As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her seminal article for The Atlantic Monthly:
>
> The relationship [between single-parent families and crime] is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family break up as the most important source of rising rates of crime.(6)
>
> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of

> out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on family structure concluded that "providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women."(9)
>
> […]Current welfare policies seem to be designed with an appallingly lack of concern for their impact on out-of-wedlock births. Indeed, Medicaid programs in 11 states actually provide infertility treatments to single women on welfare.(12)
>
> I should also point out that, once the child is born, welfare also appears to discourage the mother from marrying in the future. Research by Robert Hutchins of Cornell University shows that a 10 percent increase in AFDC benefits leads to an eight percent decrease in the marriage rate of single mothers.(13)
>
> As welfare contributes to the rise in out-of-wedlock births and single-parent families, it concomitantly contributes to the associated increase in criminal activity.

So, it seems to me that we know that there is a link between fatherlessness and crime, and that's where we should be putting our efforts. Gun control isn't the solution young people who commit terrible acts of violence, but promoting fathers in the home is.

Michael Licona on ancient biography and harmonizing Bible contradictions

July 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten posted the latest lecture by Dr. Michael Licona at Apologetics 315. Brian's site has the MP3 file (48 minutes, 44.5 Mb). I can make a smaller version for anyone who wants it.

Here is the video and my point-form summary.

The topic:

- Contradictions do not affect the minimum facts case for the resurrection, although they are troubling
- Most people respond to alleged contradictions by trying to harmonize them
- Most verses that appear contradictory can be harmonized successfully
- Some verses cannot be harmonized successfully without really damaging the texts
- Christians should not gloss over these few real contradictions nor pretend that they don't exist
- How should we respond to the verses that cannot easily be harmonized?

Genre considerations:

- The genre of the gospels is "ancient biography"
- Ancient biography is not the same genre as modern biography

Insignificant differences

1. Contradictions vs. Differences:

- In ancient biography, if a source mentions one person's name, it does not mean that other people were not present
- Example: one woman versus two women at the tomb, an account may only mention one woman when there are two
- That is a difference, not a contradiction

2. Time compression:

- in ancient biography, writers are allowed to leave out events in order to compress time
- Some gospels omit details (guy version) and other gospels give more details (girl version)
- For example, the cursing of the fig tree in Mark and Matthew

3. Narrative flow:

- the ancient biographer’s style was to link together events into a narrative, even if they are slightly out of order
- This means that the ordering matters less to ancient biographers than forming a coherent narrative
- For example, the prediction by Jesus that Peter would deny him

Significant differences:

1. Biography allows for portrait painting

- When people paint portraits, they sometimes use illustrations or imagery to convey the person’s character
- For example, Shakespeare adds things to his history of Julius Caesar to make it more dramatic
- For example, the genealogies in Matthew, the portrait of Jesus in the garden in John

2. Even if there are contradictions in an account it doesn’t mean that the basic facts are undermined

- For example, even if we don’t know for sure if one thief or two thieves cursed Jesus, no one doubts that he was crucified
- The basic details of the story are not affected by apparent contradictions

Then there is a period of Questions and Answers.

The Muratorian fragment, dated 170 A.D., affirms 22 out of 27 New Testament books

July 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

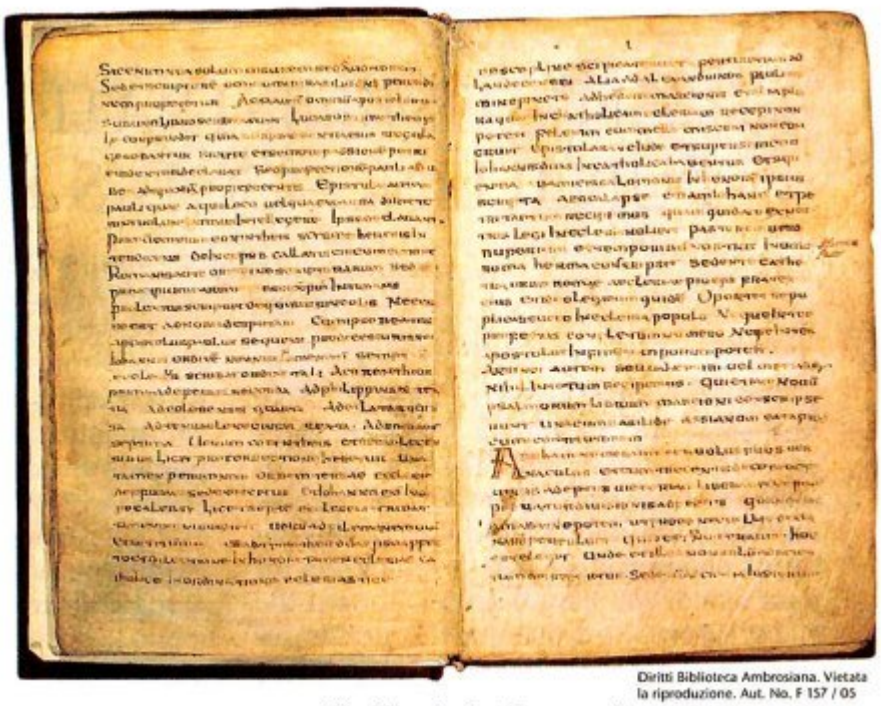

The Muratorian Fragment
Lines 32-85

The Muratorian fragment / The Muratorian canon (click for larger image)

I sometimes hear this odd objection that the books that were to be included in the Bible were not decided until the 4th century. I think it comes from some Hollywood movie, or maybe a TV show. Anyway, this post should help fix that myth.

I'm going to quote from New Testament expert Dr. Michael J. Kruger from his blog.

He writes:

> One of the key data points in any discussion of canon is something called the Muratorian fragment (also known as the Muratorian canon). This fragment, named after its discoverer Ludovico Antonio Muratori, contains our earliest list of the books in the New Testament. While the fragment itself dates from the 7th or 8th century, the list it contains was originally written in Greek and dates back to the end of the second century (c.180).
>
> […]What is noteworthy for our purposes here is that the Muratorian fragment affirms 22 of the 27 books of the New Testament. These include the four Gospels, Acts, all 13 epistles of Paul, Jude, 1 John, 2 John (and possibly 3rd John), and Revelation. This means that at a remarkably early point (end of the second century), the central core of the New Testament canon was already established and in place.

Although there is still dispute about some books, that does not negate the fact that the main books we use (the gospels, Acts, the letters of Paul) are all considered to be canon by 180 A.D., much before any famous church councils ever happened. And those books were decided on because they were in widespread use and respected by everyone.

What about the books that were in dispute? Do they throw any core doctrines into doubt?

> Second, if there was a core collection of New Testament books, then the theological trajectory of early Christianity had already been determined prior to the debates about the peripheral books being resolved. So, regardless of the outcome of discussion over books like 2 Peter or James, Christianity's core doctrines of the person of Christ, the work of Christ, the means of salvation, etc., were already in place and already established. The acceptance or rejection of books like 2 Peter would not change that fact.

By the way, I'd actually heard that the date for this fragment was 170 A.D., so it might even be earlier than Dr. Krueger says.

I did search around a bit for something to break the tie between me and Krueger, because I couldn't remember my source for the date. I found this book "Jesus, Gospel Tradition and Paul in the Context of Jewish and Greco-Roman Antiquity" by David E. Aune, and he writes on p. 22:

> The four Gospels are also referred to in the Canon Muratorianus, a seventh or eighth century manuscript originally translated from Greek into a deponent form of Latin and widely regarded as having been produced ca. 170 CE. Though the beginning of this canonical list is fragmentary (though obviously referring to Mark), the first two clear references to New Testament books are to Luke and John (lines 2, 9): tertio euangelii librum secando Lucan guard evangeliorutn lohannis ex decipolis." ("The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke … The fourth of the Gospels is that of John, [one) of the disciples").

So, that's why the date in the title of this post is 170 A.D., and not the later 180 A.D. he mentions. And that's why there's no reason to be skeptical that the Bible we have today is any different than the Bible that everybody in the early church had.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

July 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society

web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, “This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology.” Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is “noise” leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent “noise” of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn’t radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out “urban interference”, and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. “To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It’s not something I’m happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma,” said Penzias.5 “And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction.”6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias’ and Wilson’s discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said “well boys, we’ve been scooped.”7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only

> Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Governor Scott Walker signs ban on pain-capable abortions

July 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of incrementalism
Good news from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, a leading contender for the Republican presidential nomination, signed a bill today barring abortions on unborn babies capable of feeling pain.
>
> "For people, regardless of where they might stand, when an unborn child can feel pain I think most people feel it's appropriate to protect that child," the governor said.
>
> A child's ability to feel pain constitutes a "reasonable standard" for the state to offer protection.
>
> "At five months, that's the time when that unborn child can feel pain," he added. "When an unborn child can feel pain, we should be protecting that child."
>
> The measure would disallow abortions after 20 weeks except to save the mother's life or if she would suffer major, irreparable physical harm within the next 24 hours.
>
> Abortions outside that criteria would be classified as felonies carrying a maximum sentence of three-and-a-half years in prison and a $10,000 fine.

> The parents of children aborted after that point can also sue abortionists for damages under the terms of the law.
>
> It contains no exceptions for rape or incest — something that caused Democratic Party spokeswoman Kaylie Hanson to brand it “radical, dangerous, and lacks respect for half the population of Wisconsin.”

Oh well, too bad for the Democrats in Wisconsin.

I thought I would tell a bit about what a baby is like at 20 weeks, so we can put Democrat opposition to a ban on pain-capable abortion in perspective:

> You are 20 weeks pregnant. (fetal age 18 weeks)
>
> - Baby now weighs about 11 ounces and is roughly 7 inches long.
> - Baby is 17 cm long crown to rump, and weighs about 310 grams.
> - The baby can hear and recognize the mother’s voice.
> - The mother will probably start feeling the first fetal movements.
> - The toenails and fingernails are growing.
> - The growth of hair on the rest of the body has started.
> - The skin is getting thicker.
> - The heart can now be heard with a stethoscope.
>
> Your baby may react to loud sounds. Baby can actually hear noises outside of the womb. Familiar voices, music, and sounds that baby becomes accustomed to during their development stages often are calming after birth. This is an important time for sensory development since nerve cells serving each of the senses; taste, smell, hearing, sight, and touch are now developing into their specialized area of the brain.
>
> Your baby now weighs about 11 ounces and at roughly 7 inches long they are filling up more and more of the womb. Though still small and fragile, the baby is growing rapidly and could possibly survive if born at this stage.

The Life News article noted that about a dozen states also banned abortions when the unborn child can feel pain. Makes you wonder about the states that don’t.

Oxford University Press book: is religion responsible for wars and violence in history?

July 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

J.W. Wartick posted a review of a book called "The Myth of Religious Violence", and written by Dr. William T. Cavanaugh.

Let's take a look at some of the review.

Here, J.W. quotes from the book:

> The story goes that, after the Protestant Reformation divided Christendom along religious lines, Catholics and Protestants began killing each other for holding to different doctrines. The wars of religion… demonstrated to the West the inherent danger of public religion. The solution to the problem lay in the rise of the modern state, in which religious loyalties were marginalized and the state secured a monopoly on the means of violence…
>
> This story is more than just a prominent example of the myth of religious violence. It has a foundational importance for the secular West, because it explains the origin of its way of life and its system of governance. It is a creation myth for modernity (123).

Then writes this:

> Following the lines of thinking of Voltaire, John Locke, and others, Cavanaugh argues that the myth of religious violence is perpetuated in order to marginalize that which is considered religious and give rise to the nation-state. According to this myth, "All theological religions are to be tolerated, provided they do not interfere with the obligations of citizens to the state…" (129). The myth is that religion is divisive and that they "fight over doctrines or 'religious creeds'" so that "the state steps in to make peace" (130).
>
> Cavanaugh shows that this myth is indeed false. The "wars of religion" had any number of motivating factors. The use of this story is not so much to tell a truth

> as it is a means by which to legitimize the nation-state. He argues towards these conclusions by showing that many "wars of religion" were in fact wars of economy, wars of power structures, and the like. He notes four primary factors for this myth to work: that combatants were motivated by religious difference, that the primary cause of war was religion, that religious causes are analytically separable from political, economic, and social causes at the time of the wars, and that the rise of the modern state was not a cause of the wars (141-142). He then analyzes each of these in turn based upon the historical record and shows that these all fail to account for the actual history of the "wars of religion." In fact, the opposite is true in each case (142-177).
>
> "We must conclude that the myth of the wars of religion is finally incredible, which is to say, false" (177).

> […]Perhaps the most challenging and paradigm-shifting portion of the book is that which focuses upon the uses of the myth of religious violence. Cavanaugh argues that the myth is so perpetuated because of its usefulness.

Cavanaugh has his BA from the University of Notre Dame, his MA from Cambridge University, and his PhD from Duke University.

Regarding religion and wars, consider this post from Well Spent Journey:

> **The Claim:** *"Religion has been the primary cause of war and oppression throughout the history of mankind."*
>
> **The Truth:** In their comprehensive Encyclopedia of Wars, Phillips and Axelrod document the recorded history of warfare. Of the 1,763 wars presented, a mere 7% involved a religious cause. When Islam is subtracted from the equation, that number drops to 3.2%.
>
> In terms of casualties, religious wars account for only 2% of all people killed by warfare. This pales in comparison to the number of people who have been killed by secular dictators in the 20th century alone.

So let's take a look at those secular dictators.

According to the The Black Book of Communism, published by Harvard University Press, over 100 million innocent people were killed in atheistic, communist regimes in the last century. In the past, consistent atheists like Stalin who had power enough to ignore objective morality caused millions of innocent deaths. And you can even see atheism killing lots and lots of people in countries like North Korea today – where the official state religion is atheism. Why is that? It's because the worldview of atheism teaches that the universe, and human beings, are here by accident. We are all just molecules in motion, and there is no inherent dignity or purpose to any of our lives that would obligate others to treat us a certain way.

On the Christian view, every single person has dignity because they are made in the image of God, and made to know him. Christians can never treat another person (of any

religion or no religion) in any way that would discourage them from knowing God and experiencing his love for us. We could never hurt anyone in a way that causes them to turn against God. We are careful with people, because we want to act towards them in a way that helps them to accomplish this purpose.

Of course there are lots of atheists in the Judeo-Christian West who live more peacefully, because they are living in a background of objective morality and human rights provided by Western religions. But in countries like North Korea, with a state religion that cannot ground free will or objective morality or human rights or judgment after death, there are fewer restraints.

Even here, we have already seen over 50 million unborn children killed since abortion became legal. And I can guarantee you that it's not authentic, Bible-believing Christians who are having these abortions. People who think they are going to face God when they die do not treat their fellow humans like machines made out of meat. As a group, atheists tend to be among the most radical in favor of abortion rights. The Secular Census of 2012 found that 97% of atheists vote for abortion. And of course today in the news we got the second video of Planned Parenthood top brass explaining how they sell the body parts of unborn babies to the highest bidder. I wrote about the first video here.

The idea of the strong killing the weak for their own advantage is the law of the jungle, and it's not surprising to me that those who think that humans *are just animals* would act this way with vulnerable children. If you only have 80 years to be happy in an accidental universe, then anything goes. No one is there to hold you accountable when you die. If the weak get in your way, kill them all. Just don't get caught. That's what atheist morality teaches.

Here's famous atheist Richard Dawkins explaining why infanticide is OK:

And here's what he thinks of objective moral values and duties:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.
>
> –Richard Dawkins, (River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

You can read more about the morality of atheists likeRichard Dawkins here.

In a previous post, I looked at an article by an atheist who explained what it meant to live consistently with atheism. I really recommend reading that in order to understand what is rational within that worldview.

Walter Bradley lectures on the creation and design of the universe

July 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

This lecture is special to me, because I bought a VHS tape of it just after I started working full-time, and watched it a million times. It changed my life. The lecture was delivered at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Bradley received his B.S. in Engineering Science and his Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Texas in Austin.
>
> Dr. Bradley taught for eight years at the Colorado School of Mines before assuming a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1976.
>
> During his 24 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Bradley served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and as Director of the Polymer Technology Center, and received five College of Engineering Research Awards. He has received over $4,500,000 in research grants and has published over 140 technical articles and book chapters. He has also co-authored "The Mystery Of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Materials and of the American Scientific Affiliation and serves as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.
>
> He currently serves as Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University.

The lecture: (63 minutes lecture, 25 minutes audience Q&A)

Summary slide:

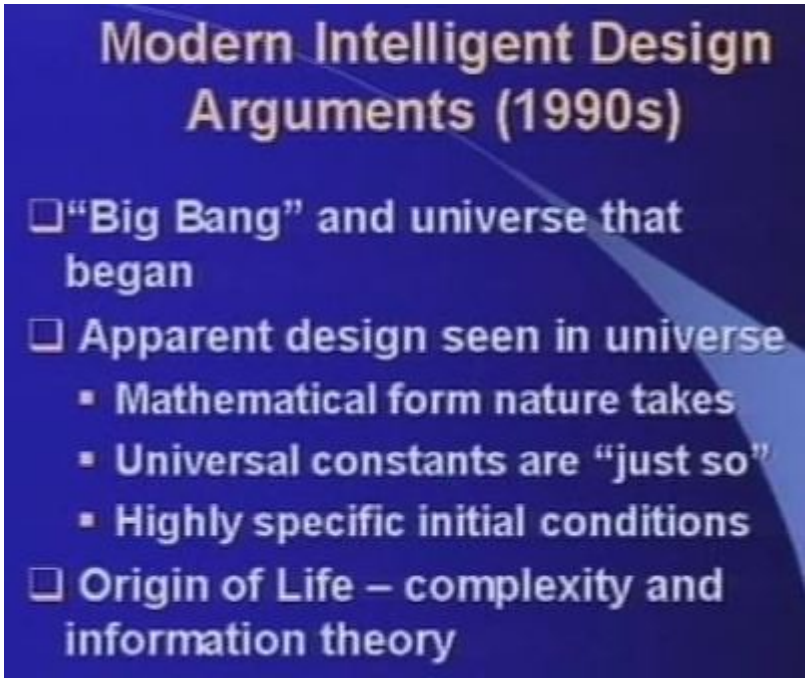

This slide summarizes the content of the lecture

Introduction:

- At the beginning of the 20th century, people believed that the progress of science was pointing away from an intelligent Creator and Designer, and towards naturalism
- A stream of new discoveries has shifted the support of science towards theism, and away from naturalism
- Richard Dawkins, an atheist, says that nature only has the appearance of design, but that if you look closer, naturalistic mechanisms can account for the appearance of design
- When deciding between design and apparent design ("designoid"), it matters whether you think there is an intelligence there to do the designing

Evidence #1: The Big Bang:

- an eternal "steady state" universe is more compatible with naturalism, but a created universe is more compatible with a Creator
- In 1929, Hubble used telescopes to observe that the light from distant galaxies was *redshifted.* The further away galaxies were, the faster they were moving away. Therefore, space is expanding in all directions, suggesting an explosive origin of the universe
- In 1965, the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation matched a prediction of the Big Bang cosmology, and of the creation event
- In 1992, the COBE space telescope allowed us to test four specific predictions of the Big Bang model, especially the predictions for light element abundances (hydrogen and helium), which matched the predictions of the creation model

Evidence #2: Simple mathematical structure of the physical laws

- the simple mathematical structure of natural laws allows us to understand these laws, make discoveries, and engineer solutions to problems
- early scientists saw the mathematical structure of the universe to mean that nature was designed by an intelligent to be understood
- the fundamental equations of the laws of the universe can be easily written on one side of one sheet of paper
- Eugene Wigner's famous paper, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Physical Sciences" makes the point that this simple structure is an unexpected gift that allows is to do science

Evidence #3: fine-tuning of the physical constants and quantities

- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stars that provide energy within specific ranges for long periods of time
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need planets with stable orbits that will not suffer from extreme temperature swings as it varies in distance from its star
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stable atomic structure
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need to have chemical diversity and correct relative abundances of each element
- organic life has minimum requirements: process energy, store information, replicate, and you can't fulfill those functions if there is only one element, e.g. – hydrogen
- the energy level from the photons from the sun have to match the energy levels of the different elements in order to drive the chemical bonding needed for life
- These requirements for life of any imaginable type depend on the values of the constants and quantities. The constants and quantities cannot vary much from what they are, or the universe will lose the characteristics (above) that allow it to support complex life of any imaginable time
- For example, ratio of strong force to electromagnetic force:
  – if 2% larger, then no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no compounds containing hydrogen, e.g. – water
  – if 5% smaller, no stable stars, heavy hydrogen would be unstable, few elements other than hydrogen

Evidence #4: initial conditions for habitability

- Universe: expansion rate of the universe must be fast enough to avoid a re-collapse, but slow enough to allow matter to clump together and form stars and planets for complex life to live on
- Planet: right distance from the star to get the right climate
- Planet: right mass to retain the right atmosphere

Evidence #5: origin of life and information theory

- It’s possible to explain every process in an automobile engine using plain old naturalistic mechanisms – no supernatural explanation is necessary to understand the processes
- But the existence of engine itself: engineering all the parts has to be explained by the work of an intelligence
- Similarly, we can understand how living systems work, but the existence of the living systems requires an intelligence
- Even the simplest living system has to perform minimal function: capture energy, store information and replicate
- Living systems are composed of objects like proteins that are composed of sequences of components complex such that the order of the components gives the overall structure function
- Developing the components for a simple living cell is very improbable – even given the large number of galaxies, stars and planets in the universe, it is unlikely that complex, embodied life would exist *anywhere* in the universe

Evidence #6: more initial conditions for habitability

- Location within the galaxy: you need to be away from the center of the galaxy, because the explosions from dying stars, and excessive radiation will kill life
- Location within the galaxy: you need to be close enough to the center in order catch the heavy elements you need for life from the explosions of other stars
- Location within the galaxy: the best location is between two arms of a spiral galaxy, where you can get the heavy elements you need from dying stars, but without being hit with explosions and harmful radiation
- Star mass: determines rate at which the sun burns, determines the energy level of photons that are used to drive chemical bonding reactions, determines the length of time the star will be stable
- Star mass: star mass must be the correct value in order to allow liquid water on the planet’s surface, while still preserving stable orbit

I wish there was more curiosity about science in churches, and young Christians understood *how critical science is* for grounding the rationality of the Christian worldview. We need to be training up more scientists who think about the big questions, like Dr. Walter Bradley.

Planned Parenthood senior executive who sells baby parts: “I want a Lamborghini”

July 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Planned Parenthood senior executive: organ harvesting for a Lamborghini

A Lamborghini is a very expensive car, so you have to do a lot of late-term abortions and organ harvesting if you want to save up enough money to afford one.

Here’s the second video from Center for Medical Progress:

Story here from Rachel Alexander, writing for The Stream.

She writes:

> The Center for Medical Progress has released a second undercover video showing a Planned Parenthood abortionist discussing the cost of selling aborted fetuses. Perhaps even more so than in the first video, it appears that Planned Parenthood is committing federal felonies, selling body parts for profit.
>
> […]The exposé begins with a statement by Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards that the organization is not selling the fetuses for profit. “I want to be really clear,” she declares, “the allegation that Planned Parenthood profits in any way from tissue donation is not true.”
>
> Then it moves to the undercover footage. The undercover buyers sit down for a business lunch with Dr. Mary Gatter, president of the Planned Parenthood Medical Directors’ Council, and another unidentified woman. When the undercover buyers ask what the cost is for intact tissue, Gatter responds, “Well why don’t you start by telling me what you’re used to paying?” They haggle over who is going to throw out a number, and the buyers instruct her not to lowball it. Gatter finally says $75 per specimen. She admits she’s sold them for $50 in the past at a different location, and — in a clear attempt to cover her tracks about negotiating the profits — explains that Planned Parenthood is not in it for the profit and doesn’t want to be accused of selling tissue. She asserts there are costs associated with “the use of space and such.” The buyers then offer $100, and

> Gatter doesn't object but seems pleasantly surprised.

Later on, she says "I want a Lamborghini" – a very expensive car.

Rachel suggests two ways that Planned Parenthood appears to be violating the law.

Here is possibility number two:

> Planned Parenthood also appears to violate the law after the undercover buyers tell Gatter they are interested in second trimester 10-to-12 week old specimens. Gatter explains that to obtain them intact at that stage, they have to change the suction method used, which means a change in their protocols. She says she can ask their surgeon to change the suction method to "a less crunchy" technique, but admits that it contradicts the patient consent form, which says they are not changing any of their procedures with them. The consent form states, "I understand there will be no changes to how or when my abortion is done in order to get my blood or the tissue."
>
> When the buyers in the video ask Gatter if she's comfortable with having the doctor change the procedure despite the consent form's stipulation not to do so, she says she's fine with that since, as she asserts, it doesn't increase the pain and the patients surely wouldn't care if they knew. Congress passed the National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act of 1993 prohibiting abortion doctors from altering procedures or timing in cases where a fetus is to be used later for medical research.

Getting Gatter to talk about this at length is useful, because it shows her thought process and rationale. It will be interesting to see what the Republicans in Congress do with this, and whether they are going to be able to overcome Democrat support for organ harvesting for profit. After all, Planned Parenthood donates tons of money to the Democrat Party, and why would the Democrats want to do anything to cut off their supply of campaign funding?

In fact, the Obama administration is taking a position on Planned Parenthood's organ harvesting – they support it:

> On Friday, White House spokesman Josh Earnest said the group's explanation was good enough for the White House.
>
> "I did read the news reports indicating that the policies that are followed by Planned Parenthood are entirely consistent with the strictest ethical guidelines that have been established in the healthcare industry," Earnest said.
>
> He then tried to refer questions about Planned Parenthood's compliance with those standards to the group itself, and deflected when a reporter pressed him on whether the president believes it is ethical to sell aborted fetus remains.

Here's Barack Obama speaking at Planned Parenthood:

Barack Obama and Planned Parenthood

Here's Hillary Clinton speaking at Planned Parenthood:

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

That's what Democrats think about rich white people selling the parts of murdered black babies in order to buy Lamborghinis for themselves. They have no problem with it.

Related posts

- Republicans in Congress will investigate Planned Parenthood's organ harvesting
- ABC, CBS, CNN, and MSNBC all ignore Planned Parenthood organ harvesting story
- Governor Bobby Jindal announces investigation of Planned Parenthood
- What does Hillary Clinton think of Planned Parenthood selling unborn baby parts?
- House Republicans attempting to end some of the taxpayer-funding for Planned Parenthood
- With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013
- Planned Parenthood, an abortion business, is in California schools teaching sex education
- Arizona Planned Parenthood clinic failed to report rapist
- Planned Parenthood must pay $1.4 million in Medicaid fraud settlement
- Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You
- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding

- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- 24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic

Judge denies Human Rights Campaign co-founder's offer to settle child sex abuse case

July 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist and top Obama-donor Terry Bean (left) and Barack Obama

A follow up on the story about the criminal charges against Terry Bean – prominent gay activist, Democrat donor, and co-founder of the Human Rights Campaign – from Oregon Live.

Excerpt:

> A Lane County judge denied gay activist Terry Bean's request Thursday to settle child sex abuse charges by compensating the underage victim.
>
> Bean, 66, and his former boyfriend, Kiah Loy Lawson, 25, are accused of having sex with a 15-year-old boy at a Eugene hotel in 2013.
>
> They each are charged with two counts of third-degree sodomy, a felony, and third-degree sexual abuse, a misdemeanor.
>
> Bean, who lives in Portland and is a prominent political fundraiser, proposed a civil compromise that could result in the dismissal of the criminal charges. Had the request been granted, the criminal charges against Bean would have been dismissed.

Time to review who Terry Bean is, using my previous post about the initial filing of charges.

Let's review the details of the original charges from Oregon Live:

> The former boyfriend of Terrence P. Bean was arrested early Thursday on sex abuse charges stemming from the same alleged 2013 encounter with a 15-year-old boy at a hotel in Eugene.

> Kiah Loy Lawson, 25, was arrested at 1:15 a.m. at the Portland Police Bureau's Central Precinct and booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center shortly after 2 a.m.
>
> He's accused of third-degree sodomy and third-degree sexual abuse.
>
> […]The indictment charges Bean with two counts of third-degree sodomy, a felony, and one count of third-degree sex abuse, a misdemeanor, police said.
>
> […]Both Bean and Lawson are accused of having a sexual encounter with the same 15-year-old boy in a hotel in Eugene last year. They had arranged the encounter with the teen after meeting him via a website, investigators allege.
>
> **[…]Bean has been one of the state's biggest Democratic donors and an influential figure in gay rights circles in the state. He helped found two major national political groups, the Human Rights Campaign and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, and has been a major contributor for several Democratic presidential candidates, including Barack Obama. He's also a close friend of former Gov. Barbara Roberts.**

Here is his biography from his web site:

> Terry Bean is a native Oregonian, successful real estate developer, and President and CEO of Bean Investment Real Estate, a private company that trades and invests in commercial real estate as well as large residential complexes. Along with these badges of honor, Terry Bean is often first recognized as a pioneer in the national civil rights movement, promoting full equality for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer/questioning communities. (GLBTQ)
>
> Terry Bean is so well regarded as an activist that Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski declared August 23, 2008, to be "Terry Bean Equality Day" in recognition for the work he has done on LGBT rights causes since the 1970's.
>
> A pioneer in the movement, Terry Bean, started advocating politically for gay rights in the early 1970′s in Eugene, Oregon. Early successes resulted in the passing of a city gay rights ordinance, which, while was later overturned by voters, set the framework for grassroot organizations and strategies which quickly followed—establishing a pattern of victories which have continued well into the new millennium.
>
> In 1979, Bean helped to organize the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, the first such highly visible effort to empower a minority while educating a majority.
>
> **After the march on Washington, Terry Bean turned his focus to the national level co-founding the Gay Rights National Lobby and the Human Rights Campaign Fund. These groups merged to become today's Human Rights Campaign – HRC.**

The Human Rights Campaign is the nation's largest gay rights organization.

Barack Obama supports the Human Rights Campaign:

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

Hillary Clinton also supports the Human Rights Campaign:

Hillary Clinton and the Human Rights Campaign

The Democrat Party is on board with the gay agenda.

William Lane Craig and atheist Daniel Dennett discuss cosmology and fine-tuning

July 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two rams butting heads: may the best ram win!

Here is audio of a very interesting exchange between William Lane Craig and leading atheist Daniel Dennett.

This audio records a part of the Greer-Heard debate in 2007, between prominent atheist Daniel Dennett and lame theistic evolutionist Alister McGrath. Craig was one of the respondents, and this was the best part of the event. It is a little bit advanced, but I have found that if you listen to things like this over and over with your friends and family, and then try to explain it to non-Christians, you'll get it.

By the way, this is mostly original material from Craig, dated 2007, and he delivers the speech perfectly, so it's entertaining to listen to.

Craig presents three arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe:

- the contingency argument
- the kalam cosmological argument
- the teleological argument

He also discusses Dennett's published responses to these arguments, and that's what I want to focus on, since most of you are already familiar with Craig's philosophical arguments for the existence of God.

Dennett's response to Craig's paper

Here is my snarky paraphrase of Dennett's reponse: (this is very snarky, because Dennett was just awful)

- Craig's three arguments are bulletproof, the premises are plausible, and grounded by the best cutting edge science we know today.
- I cannot find anything wrong with his arguments right now, but maybe later when I go home it will come to me what's wrong with them.
- But atheism is true even if all the evidence is against it today. I know it's true by my

blind faith.
- The world is so mysterious, and all the science of today will be overturned tomorrow so that atheism will be rational again. I have blind faith that this new evidence will be discovered any minute.
- Just because the cause of the beginning of time is eternal and the cause of the beginning of space is non-physical, the cause doesn't have to be God.
- "Maybe the cause of the universe is the idea of an apple, or the square root of 7". (HE LITERALLY SAID THAT!)
- The principle of triangulation might have brought the entire physical universe into being out of nothing.
- I don't understand anything about non-physical causation, even though I cannot even speak meaningful sentences unless I have a non-physical mind that is causing my body to emit the meaningful sentences in a non-determined manner.
- Alexander Vilenkin is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- Alan Guth is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- This science stuff is so complicated to me – so Craig can't be right about it even though he's published about it and debated it all with the best atheists on the planet.
- If God is outside of time, then this is just deism, not theism. (This part is correct, but Craig believes that God enters into time at the moment of creation – so that it is not a deistic God)
- If deism is true, then I can still be an atheist, because a Creator and Designer of the universe is compatible with atheism.
- I'm pretty sure that Craig doesn't have any good arguments that can argue for Christianity – certainly not an historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus based on minimal facts, that he's defended against the most prominent historians on the planet in public debates and in prestigous books and research journals.

This is a very careful treatment of the arguments that Dr. Craig goes over briefly during his debates. Recommended.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason

- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Illegal immigrant released by Obama administration sexually assaults 14-year-old girl

July 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Illegal immigrant Keane Dean

This story is in the radically leftist Los Angeles Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> A convicted sex offender charged last week with sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl in Santa Clarita is in the country illegally and had recently been released on bail from immigration custody, according to federal authorities.
>
> Keane Dean, 26, a citizen of the Philippines, was released in April on $10,000 bond so he could be free while he contested his immigration case. He had been targeted for deportation because of his criminal record.
>
> The 14-year-old girl, who was found in Dean's garage, told investigators that Dean befriended her at a grocery store the previous day, according to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.
>
> Dean has been charged with two counts of child sexual abuse and is being held in lieu of $110,000 bail.

This was not his first offence:

> In March 2014, Dean was caught inappropriately touching himself inside a Macy's department store and was banned from the Glendale Galleria for three years. He was sentenced to six months in state prison for indecent exposure and 16 months for burglary, to be served concurrently, a district attorney's spokesman said.
>
> Dean also has a 2008 conviction for lewd conduct in public.

> There are interesting quotes in the articles from people who agree with giving detainees “bond hearings” where they can be released if they post bond.
>
> […]Dean was released April 29 after posting $10,000 bond.

A Democrat appointed judge named Kim Wardlaw said this about the bond hearings:

> “This injunction will not flood our streets with fearsome criminals seeking to escape the force of American immigration law,” Judge Kim Wardlaw of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals wrote in an April 2013 opinion affirming the need for the bond hearings.

This is Kim Wardlaw:

Justice Kim Wardlaw, 9th Circuit Court of Appeals

Before she was appointed by Bill Clinton, she volunteered to help his presidential campaign in California in 1991-1992. She later served on the Clinton-Gore presidential transition team. A few years later she was appointed to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, which many regard as the most liberal appeals court in the United States. She is a Democrat.

Now let’s move to a second case.

Do you remember how Obama is always talking about his DREAMers? These are children of illegal immigrants who got a blanket amnesty from Obama.

Breitbart News reports on another case. This time, a 10-year-old boy was tortured and murdered by an illegal immigrant.

Excerpt:

> At a Tuesday Senate hearing dedicated to the families who lost loved ones

> thanks to illegal aliens, Laura Wilkerson gave testimony on her youngest son Joshua's horrific death while some in the silent audience wept.
>
> […]**"This was our family's 9/11 terrorist attack by a foreign invader," she said at the most pivotal point in her testimony. "It is going to take another life lost by a Senator, a Congressman, the President, even another of today's heroes, someone from Hollywood before someone in a position moves on this."**
>
> "My son's name was Joshua Wilkerson," she began. "On November 16, 2010, he was beaten, strangled, tortured until he died. He was tied up, thrown in a field, and set on fire. His killer, Hermilo Moralez, was brought here illegally by his illegal parents when he was ten years old, so he fit the 'DREAM' kid description. He was sentenced to life in prison, which means it will be 30 years before he's up for parole. He'll be a 49-year-old man, who I don't expect to be deported. And I just hope he doesn't come to live in your city."
>
> […]Wilkerson read aloud portions of the gut-wrenching autopsy: "'This body is received in a grey body bag. There's a tag on his toe that bears the name, Joshua Wilkerson. This is a white male weighing a hundred pounds. He is tied up with braided rope — 13 loops around his neck in a slipknot. It goes behind his back through his back belt loop. It goes to his hands and his feet, behind his body. He has multiple fractures in his face and nasal cavity. His throat and his voicebox are crushed.'"
>
> Wilkerson took a deep breath and continued, looking at the senators before her with a steady gaze. "He was kicked so hard in the stomach that it sent his spleen into his spine, and sliced it in two… The medical examiner said it was torture."

She went on to attack the sanctuary cities which are supported by Democrats, and in particular, by Hillary Clinton.

I think the part in bold is interesting – about how nothing will change until someone famous and powerful is a victim of an illegal immigrant.

One of my favorite authors, British psychiatrist Theodore Dalrymple, makes the point often that the effects of "compassionate" laws made by rich leftists are never felt by the rich leftists themselves. The leftists are insulated from the effects of their own laws. They live in gated communities where they don't have to worry about being the victims of crime. The rich leftists pass these laws to feel generous without actually having to give away anything of their own. But the people who do feel the effects of these laws are the people in the lower classes. The poor people, who have to live with the laws and policies passed by rich leftists seeking to feel superior. And so, because the rich leftists need to feel compassionate and superior, we get victims like that 14-year-old girl, and like that 10-year-old boy.

UPDATE: The Obama administration on victims of crime committed by illegal immigrants:

> The White House vowed Thursday to veto a bill to punish sanctuary cities,

> instead calling on Congress to legalize illegal immigrants as the way to solve the problem of criminals who shouldn’t be on the streets.
>
> The threat came just hours before the House was expected to pass a bill that would withhold money from states or localities that don’t abide by a federal law that requires them to cooperate when federal immigration authorities request help identifying illegal immigrants.

It’s no problem. As long as it’s your kids, and not their kids. Because the important thing is that they feel good, and get the votes from their special interest groups.

Are Christians cherry-picking which verses to obey from the Old Testament?

July 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful article from Peter Saunders.

The challenge:

> An argument frequently advanced by those attempting to defend homosexual practice is that Christians 'cherry pick' the commands in the Bible – that is, they chose to emphasise some commands while ignoring others.
>
> The Old Testament may forbid homosexual acts (Leviticus 18:2; 20:13) but it also forbids eating seafood without fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9, 10).
>
> So how can Christians then justify upholding laws on sexual morality whilst at the same time ignoring the food laws from the very same books of the Bible? Why may they eat shellfish but not be allowed to have sex outside marriage? Isn't this inconsistent and hypocritical?

The solution is that God enters into "covenants" with his people, and the terms of those covenants change.

Especially dietary laws:

> The answer to this question lies in an understanding of biblical covenants.
>
> A covenant is a binding solemn agreement made between two parties. It generally leaves each with obligations. But it holds only between the parties involved.
>
> There are a number of biblical covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic (Old), Davidic and New.
>
> Under the Noahic covenant, which God made with all living human beings (Genesis 9:8-17), people were able to eat anything:
>
> *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Genesis 9:3).*
>
> But under the Sinaitic (Old) Covenant, which God made with the nation of Israel, people were able to eat certain foods, but not others.

Jesus clearly created a new covenant with his followers, where the dietary laws are lifted:

> Jesus said that he had come to fulfil the 'Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). He would establish this new covenant with new laws, with himself as high priest based on his own sacrificial death on the cross.
>
> This new covenant would completely deal with sin (Hebrews 10:1-18) and protect

> all those who put their faith in him from God's wrath and judgement…
>
> *[…]'In the same way, after the supper (Jesus) took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you"' (Luke 22:20). '…we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Hebrews 10:10)*
>
> People would come under the protection of this new covenant, not by virtue of belonging to the nation of Israel, but through faith in Christ. In fact the function of the Old Testament Law (Sinaitic covenant) was to point to Christ as its fulfilment.
>
> […]So what then did Christ say about foods? He pronounced all foods clean for his followers to eat:
>
> *' "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (Mark 7:18-23)*
>
> Jesus was making that point that under the new covenant God required purity of the heart. Internal thoughts and attitudes were as important as external actions.

So, for Christians, the dietary / ceremonial laws don't apply, but the moral laws do apply. Food is OK for Christians, but sexual immorality – which includes premarital sex and adultery – are NOT OK for Christians.

I think sometimes when you are talking to people whose motivation is just to get rid of any objective moral law entirely, they tend to ask questions without really wanting a good answer. This is especially true when it comes to the morality of sex. They ask the question not to get an answer, but to justify getting rid of the moral rules governing sexuality. The answers are there for people who are willing to respect God in their decision-making. The answers are not found only by people who have a reason to not want to find them.

Of course you're smart enough to learn how to defend your faith

July 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Practice that makes perfect – everyone struggles at the beginning

Pastor Matt Rawlings has a post for all of you who are worried that you are not smart enough to learn how to defend the Christian faith (apologetics).

His post is here on his blog. (H/T The Poached Egg)

He starts like this:

> One of the objections I often receive when I point out that defending the Christian faith is a Scriptural command (1 Peter 3:15) is "But I'm not smart enough to be a Christian apologist!" My answer is always, "Your IQ does not need to bust the bank for you to defend Christianity in a graceful and compelling manner.
>
> Columnist Thomas Friedman (not someone I usually agree with) pointed out that the key to success often is NOT an individual's IQ but their CQ or "Curiosity Quotient." What Friedman means is that a person's willingness to dig in and work at something out of their intellectual passion will succeed.
>
> It is important to remember that some scholars maintain that Albert Einstein did not have a genius IQ and he blew his first attempt at earning a spot in college. Yet, physics was his passion and after failing to land a teaching gig, his curiosity propelled him to carry on and, as a result, he changed the world.
>
> You may or may not make a worldwide impact but you can make an eternal one by learning to defend the Christian faith. If you are passionate about Jesus Christ, your desire can learn enough to answer questions like, "If God exists and is good, why is there evil?", "Doesn't the Old Testament portray God as angry and violent?", "But doesn't science prove that Genesis is inaccurate?", "Is there any real evidence for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?", etc.

> Any Christian can learn to defend the faith if they are willing to do a little bit of reading. You don't have to be well-versed in physics or philosophy of religion. You don't have to earn a degree in apologetics. You just need to pick up a few books and memorize a few solid arguments to respond to the most common objections to Christianity.
>
> I would recommend starting with a few short, readable but powerful books such as Greg Koukl's Tactics (Zondervan 2009), Det. J. Warner Wallace's Cold-Case Christianity (David C. Cook 2013), Lee Strobel's The Case for a Creator (Zondervan, 2005), Mark Mittleberg's Confident Faith (Tyndale 2013) and, of course, I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek (Crossway 2004).

So, no excuses, get to reading and practice defending the faith with others. Anyone can do it and most can do it very well.

I just started trying to get a friend of mine to learn more about the Christian worldview, and the four books I recommended were these:

1. Is God Just a Human Invention? (by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow)
2. The Case for Life (by Scott Klusendorf)
3. What is Marriage? (by Robert P. George, Ryan T. Anderson and Sherif Girgis)
4. Indivisible (by Jay W. Richards and James Robison)

We are busy working though the first one already, which is my favorite book to give people new to apologetics. It provides *real capabilities* in a short, easy-to-read book. Even the chapters are short. I picked #2 and #3 to be on social issues, and #4 to be on politics, because I wanted to have a broad focus before narrowing down to pure apologetics. And because I wanted to take about practical issues that impact our daily lives.

After we finish book #1, I'm going to recommend "Cold Case Christianity" by J. Warner Wallace and "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" by Michael Licona and Gary Habermas. All of these books are introductory. And yet, to be perfectly honest, I do not recommend much more than these 6 books, for most lay Christians. These books are a thousand times better than the stuff I read when I was getting started in apologetics 25 years ago.

What I like about Pastor Matt's post is that he challenges Christians to grow by doing things that may be a bit uncomfortable for them. The command to defend the Christian worldview is right there in the Bible in 1 Peter 3:15. It's not some optional spiritual gift in some list of optional spiritual gifts – it's a duty that we all must perform to the best of our ability. I wish more pastors urged lay Christians to learn how to discuss their faith with non-Christians – with people who do not assume that the entire Bible is infallible. Just urge them to talk about ordinary things, the "big questions" that Matt listed. We need to be curious, just like he said.

Obama administration will investigate whistleblowers who filmed Planned Parenthood

July 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Planned Parenthood senior executive: organ harvesting so she can get a Lamborghini

I know, I know. You thought that the Obama administration would investigate Planned Parenthood for being caught selling the body parts of unborn babies. But you were wrong.

The Federalist has the story. (H/T Ari)

Full text:

> The U.S. Department of Justice announced plans to investigate the group that produced undercover videos showing Planned Parenthood employees admitting that they harvest and sell organs ripped from the bodies of aborted babies. Politico reported the news of the coming DOJ investigation earlier today:
>
> JUSTICE TO PROBE CENTER FOR MEDICAL PROGRESS — While congressional committees investigate Planned Parenthood's practices, the Justice Department agreed to look into whether the group that released the sting videos obtained the footage legally. In response to a request by House Democrats, Attorney General Loretta Lynch said Wednesday afternoon that Justice would "review all of the information and determine what the appropriate steps moving forward would be." Planned Parenthood has staunchly defended its practices and claims that the Center for Medical Progress illegally obtained its footage, then excessively edited it to misrepresent what the organization does.
>
> The DOJ investigation of the Center for Medical Progress, which, unlike Planned Parenthood, is not in the business of killing healthy, viable unborn babies in order to sell their organs for cash, was announced after several Democratic lawmakers called for the organization to be targeted:
>
> Four Democrats in Congress — Reps. Jan Schakowsky, Zoe Lofgren, Jerry Nadler, and Yvette Clarke — have written to Attorney General Loretta Lynch and California Attorney General Kamala Harris, asking them to open investigations

> into the Center for Medical Progress. The Democrats say the videos were filmed as part of an "elaborate scheme" — using "fake identification" and without the approval of the Planned Parenthood doctor who appears in them.
> It's interesting that Lynch decided so early to make a statement about the group. There are certainly more videos to come, and if Planned Parenthood's panicked press releases are any indication, the footage may be far more damaging than anything that's been revealed thus far. However, given the abject politicization of multiple agencies under Obama's command — including the Internal Revenue Service, which targeted conservative non-profits, and the DOJ, which has been hesitant to investigate Obama allies — it seems unlikely that Lynch and those who report to her will ever crack down on Abortion, Inc.

This is not surprising, given the lead from the White House:

And this from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has taken a firm position on new undercover videos of national Planned Parenthood leaders discussing the harvesting and sale of aborted babies' body parts: It's all a lie.
>
> Rather than dispute whether the abortionists commit partial birth abortions to profit from the sale of human organs, the administration instead echoed concerns raised by a public relations firm hired by Planned Parenthood that the eight-minute-long versions of the videos were misleading.
>
> White House spokesman Josh Earnest said at a press conference today that, while he had not spoken with President Obama about "the actual videos" — and he believed President Obama had not seen either video in question — Earnest was "confident" that Obama had read reports "raising considerable concerns about the way those videos were selectively edited to distort, not just the words of the individuals speaking, but also the position of Planned Parenthood."
>
> Earnest's words today were longer than his previous statement on the growing scandal. When asked if the Obama administration would consider withholding federal funds from Planned Parenthood over the scandal, Earnest replied curtly, "no."
>
> The investigative organization the Center for Medical Progress has released both two shorter videos that are eight minutes long, as well as two videos, each roughly two hours in duration, which it says is the full and unedited conversation.
>
> Planned Parenthood has not disputed the legitimacy of the longer, uncut footage.

Still think it's a good idea to sit home during the next election, evangelicals? Because, you know… stuff is actually happening in the real world outside your church. Stuff you ought to care about.

Related posts

- Planned Parenthood senior executive who sells baby parts: “I want a Lamborghini”
- Republicans in Congress will investigate Planned Parenthood’s organ harvesting
- ABC, CBS, CNN, and MSNBC all ignore Planned Parenthood organ harvesting story
- Governor Bobby Jindal announces investigation of Planned Parenthood
- What does Hillary Clinton think of Planned Parenthood selling unborn baby parts?
- House Republicans attempting to end some of the taxpayer-funding for Planned Parenthood
- With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013
- Planned Parenthood, an abortion business, is in California schools teaching sex education
- Arizona Planned Parenthood clinic failed to report rapist
- Planned Parenthood must pay $1.4 million in Medicaid fraud settlement
- Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You
- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- 24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic

Democrats' "Equality Act" will threaten religious liberty in all 50 states

July 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

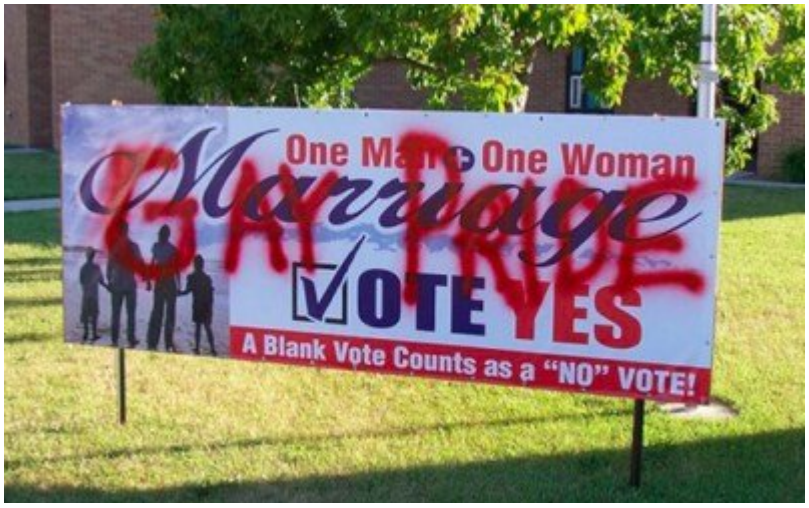

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

First, let's get the news from the left-leaning U.S. News and World Report.

It says:

> Hoping to harness the momentum generated by the Supreme Court's landmark decision legalizing gay marriage, congressional Democrats on Thursday unveiled sweeping legislation that would extend additional rights to members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.
>
> The Equality Act – introduced by Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., in the upper chamber and Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I., in the House – seeks to expand the 1964 Civil Rights Act's protections against racial and sex-based discrimination to include discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
>
> […]The measure would prohibit discrimination against LGBT persons in categories ranging from employment and housing to education and jury service, and would broaden where discrimination would be illegal in a "public accommodation" to include everything from shopping centers and banks to travel agencies and funeral parlors.
>
> According to the Human Rights Campaign, which advocates for greater LGBT rights, 31 states do not have laws that explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

The bill has 190 Democrats sponsors, and 0 Republican sponsors.

In a previous post, I explained that only states that have "non-discrimination" laws are able to punish Christian bakers, photographers, florists, etc. We are seeing the punishment of pro-marriage people in the states with these "non-discrimination" laws, e.g. – Oregon, New Mexico, Washington and so on. See the map below for more.

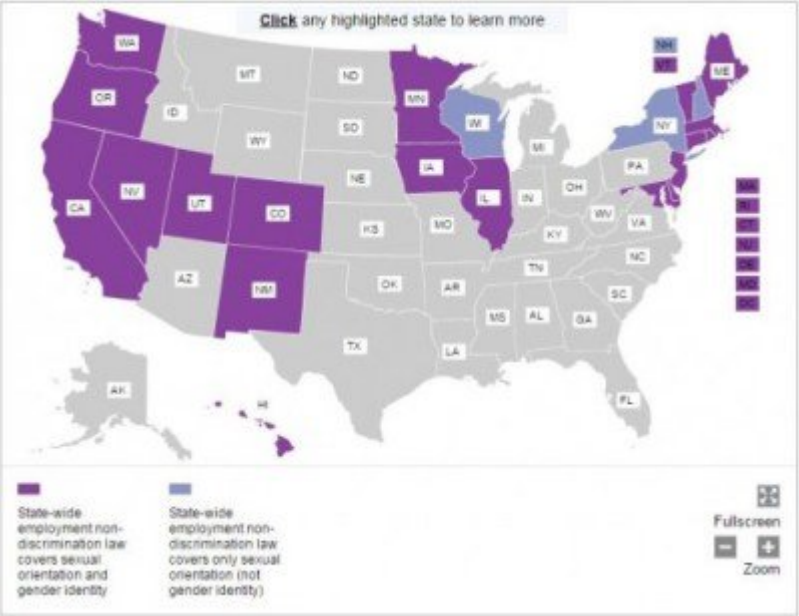

States with non-discrimination laws

But this “Equality Act” bill would make all 50 states allow these kinds of punishments against people who disagree with same-sex marriage. The laws really are anti-religious-liberty laws, because they force you to agree with the gay agenda, or else face consequences. They force you to violate your conscience, just because you don’t agree with redefining marriage. If this law passes, it means that anyone who disagrees with gay marriage being the same as child-centered natural marriage would be a potential target for the federal government.

Marriage defender Ryan T. Anderson writes about a new law crafted by the Human Rights Campaign, which I’ll talk more about later.

Ryan says:

> Politico is reporting that the so-called “Equality Act” will be introduced today in Congress. The bill is the brainchild of the Human Rights Campaign—an influential, sophisticated and lavishly funded LGBT activist organization.
>
> **The “Equality Act” is a misnomer. The bill does not protect equality before the law, but unnecessarily and unjustly violates freedom by creating special privileges based on sexual orientation and gender identity.**
>
> This proposed legislation would add “sexual orientation and gender identity” (SOGI) to more or less every federal law that protects on the basis of race. It goes well beyond the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)—which would have added SOGI only to employment law.
>
> ENDA, which was first introduced in Congress in 1994, has been defeated each and every Congress. When it was first introduced, ENDA included only “sexual orientation,” but in 2007 “gender identity” was added to the bill. Thankfully, ENDA has never been made law.
>
> Nevertheless, having expanded the bill from including sexual orientation to also

> including gender identity, activists have also extended this misguided policy well beyond employment—to "credit, education, employment, federal funding, housing, jury service and public accommodations." These SOGI laws must be resisted, as I explain in chapter six of my new book, "Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom."
> The Advocate reports that the "Equality Act's" special privileges would apply to "public accommodations, public education, employment, housing, federal funding, jury service, legal protections, and credit. The bill would also clarify that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act cannot be used to defend" people who believe that marriage is the union of man and woman. That's right: the bill says that religious freedom needs to take a back seat to special SOGI protections.
>
> The Advocate also reports that the "Equality Act" would require that "sex-segregated facilities must admit individuals in accordance to their gender identity." That's right: the bill would require biological males who identify as women to be able to use women's bathrooms and locker rooms.
>
> […]SOGI laws can have serious unintended consequences. They threaten small-business owners with liability for alleged "discrimination" based not on objective traits, but on subjective and unverifiable identities. They expand state interference in labor markets, potentially discouraging job creation. They endanger religious liberty and freedom of speech. And they mandate employment policies that, with regard to many workplace conditions, violate common sense.

The ENDA bill is a nightmare for religious liberty. If Anderson thinks this bill is worse, that should tell you something about how far the left is willing to go to compel celebration of same-sex marriage.

I want to remind my readers of two things about the Human Rights Campaign, which Anderson said is behind the bill.

First, as I blogged about earlier this week, their co-founder Terry Bean has been charged with child sexual buse.

Second, after a gay activist named Floyd Lee Corkins attacked the Family Research Council with guns, the Human Rights Campaign pronounced the Family Research Council a "hate group". The FRC is a respected conservative, pro-life, pro-family think tank. Corkins was convicted for domestic terrorism for attacking them with guns. And the HRC called the FRC a "hate group", even after the attack. And now they are supporting this "Equality Act" bill.

We ought to be concerned.

What are the historical arguments for the empty tomb story?

July 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until

> the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

A few quotes from atheist historians not from Dr. Craig's article: (thanks to Eric of Ratio Christi OSU)

> Michael Goulder (Atheist NT Prof. at Birmingham) "…it goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion." ["The Baseless Fabric of a Vision," in Gavin D'Costa, editor, Resurrection Reconsidered (Oxford, 1996), 48.]
>
> Gerd Lüdemann (Atheist Prof of NT at Göttingen): "…the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus…not later than three years… the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE." [The Resurrection of Jesus, trans. by Bowden (Fortress, 1994), 171-72.]
>
> Robert Funk (Non-Christian scholar, founder of the Jesus Seminar): "…The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30 C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." [Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, The Acts of Jesus, 466.]

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s. For example, the atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark some time in the 40s. (See the debate below)

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source

> must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say “The President is hosting a dinner at the White House” and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the “high priest” as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus’ death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

So we are dealing with very early sources for the empty tomb.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as “Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women” and “Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female.”
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus’ empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to

> explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

How do atheists try to accommodate the Big Bang in their worldview?

July 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

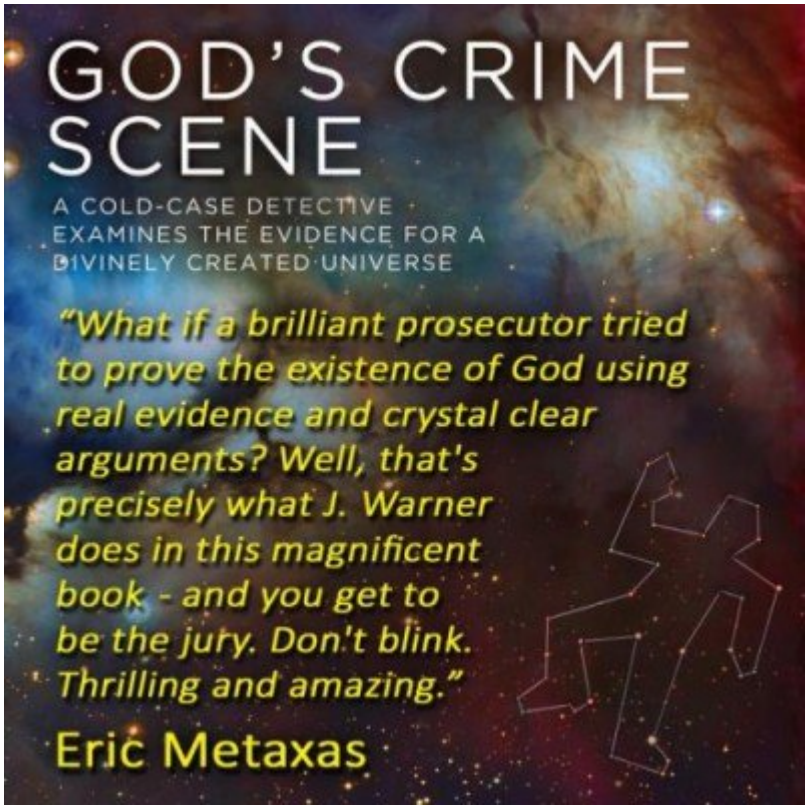

J. Warner Wallace: God's Crime Scene

OK, so J. Warner Wallace has a new book out and it's about science and God. I know, because I saw pictures of his reading list, that he has read tons and tons of atheists like Carl Sagan, Lawrence Krauss and so on.

He's writing about some of the things he learned from all this reading on his blog, and I wanted to link to something about Lawrence Krauss trying to accommodate the Big Bang within his worldview of atheism.

Wallace writes:

> One of the key pieces of evidence in the universe is simply it's origin. If our universe began to exist, what could have caused it's beginning? How did *everything* (all space, time and matter) come into existence from *nothing*? One way atheist physicists have navigated this dilemma has simply been to redefine the terms they have been using. What do we mean when we say "everything" or "nothing"? At first these two terms might seem rather self-explanatory, but it's important for us to take the time to define the words. As I've already stated, by "everything" we mean all space, time and matter. That's right, space is "something"; empty space is part of "everything" not part of "nothing". For some of us, that's an interesting concept that might be hard to grasp, but it's an important distinction that must be understood. When we say "nothing", we mean

> the complete absence of everything; the thorough non-existence of anything at all (including all space time and matter). These two terms, when defined in this way, are consistent with the principles of the Standard Cosmological Model, but demonstrate the dilemma. If everything came from nothing, what caused this to occur? What is the non-spatial, atemporal, immaterial, uncaused, first cause of the universe? A cause of this sort sounds a lot like a supernatural Being, and that's why I think many naturalists have begun to redefine the terms.
>
> Lawrence Krauss, Arizona State University Professor (School of Earth and Space Exploration and Director of the Origins Initiative) wrote a book entitled, *"A Universe from Nothing: Why There Is Something Rather than Nothing"*. As part of the promotion for the book, Krauss appeared on the Colbert Report where he was interviewed by comedian Stephen Colbert. During the interview, Krauss tried to redefine "nothing" to avoid the need for a supernatural first cause:
>
> *"Physics has changed what we mean by nothing… Empty space is a boiling, bubbling brew of virtual particles popping in and out of existence… if you wait long enough, that kind of nothing will always produce particles." (Colbert Nation, June 21st, 2012)*
>
> Now if you're not careful, you might miss Krauss' subtle redefinition. In describing the sudden appearance of matter ("particles"), Krauss assumes the prior existence of space ("empty space") and time ("if you wait long enough"). If you've got some empty space and wait long enough, matter appears. For Krauss, the "nothing" from which the universe comes includes two common features of "everything" (space and time), and something more (virtual particles). This leaves us with the real question: "Where did the space, time and virtual particles come from (given all our evidence points to their origination at the beginning of our universe)?" Krauss avoids this inquiry by moving space and time from the category of "something" to the category of "nothing".
>
> If you've got a teenager in your house, you might recognize Krauss' approach to language. I bet you've seen your teenager open the refrigerator door, gaze at all the nutritious fruits and vegetables on the shelves, then lament that there is "nothing to eat."

I used to say that when I was a teenager, but I grew out of it. I didn't go on the Comedy Channel and try to convince everyone that what I was saying about the refrigerator was scientific.

Anyway, here is a debate between William Lane Craig and Lawrence Krauss, if you want to see how Krauss defends his "refrigerator has nothing to eat" view of cosmology. I know everybody and even many Christians all think that we have something to hide when it comes to science, but if you would just watch these debates, you would see that there is nothing to fear from science at all. We own it.

Meanwhile, I want to show you that this is not at all rare among atheists.

Look, here is Peter Atkins explaining how he makes the Big Bang reconcile with his

atheism – and notice that it's a completely different view than Krauss:

So, just who is this Peter Atkins, and why is he a good spokesman for atheism?

From his Wikipedia bio.

Peter William Atkins (born August 10, 1940) is an English chemist and a fellow and professor of chemistry at Lincoln College of the University of Oxford. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, 8th ed. (with Julio de Paula of Haverford College), *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*, 4th ed. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.

[…]Atkins is a well-known atheist and supporter of many of Richard Dawkins' ideas. He has written and spoken on issues of humanism, atheism, and what he sees as the incompatibility between science and religion. According to Atkins, whereas religion scorns the power of human comprehension, science respects it.

[…]He was the first Senior Member for the Oxford Secular Society and an Honorary Associate of the National Secular Society. He is also a member of the Advisory Board of The Reason Project, a US-based charitable foundation devoted to spreading scientific knowledge and secular values in society. The organisation is led by fellow atheist and author Sam Harris.

Now watch that 6-minute video above. Peter Atkins thinks that nothing exists. He thinks he doesn't exist. He thinks that you don't exist. This is how atheism adapts to a world where the Big Bang creation event is fact.

I think Peter Atkins should join Lawrence Krauss on the Comedy Channel and present that view. I would laugh. Wouldn't you?

What historical evidence is there to support the post-mortem appearances of Jesus?

July 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi Ohio State University has a *great* post up about the post-mortem appearances of Jesus.

The post contains:

- a list of the post-mortem resurrection appearances
- quotations by skeptical historians about those appearances
- alternative naturalistic explanations of the appearances
- responses to those naturalistic explanations

Although there is a lot of research that went into the post, it's not very long to read. The majority of scholars accept the appearances, because they appear in *so many different sources* and because some of those sources are very early, especially Paul's statement of the early Christian creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, which is from about 1-3 years after Jesus was executed by the Romans. Eric's post lists out some of the skeptical scholars who the appearances, and you can see how they allude to the historical criteria that they are using. (If you want to sort of double-check the details, I blogged about how historians investigate ancient sources before)

Let's take a look at some of the names you might recognize:

> **E.P. Sanders:**
>
> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. "I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: 'I saw him first!' 'No! I did.' Paul's tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus' followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions." "Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the 'resurrection': the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it."[1]
>
> **Bart Ehrman:**
>
> It is a historical fact that some of Jesus' followers came to believe that he had been raised from the dead soon after his execution. We know some of these believers by name; one of them, the apostle Paul, claims quite plainly to have

> seen Jesus alive after his death. Thus, for the historian, Christianity begins after the death of Jesus, not with the resurrection itself, but with the belief in the resurrection.[2]
>
> **Ehrman also says:**
>
> We can say with complete certainty that some of his disciples at some later time insisted that . . . he soon appeared to them, convincing them that he had been raised from the dead.[3]
>
> **Ehrman also goes onto say:**
>
> Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus' resurrection, since this is a matter of public record.[4]
>
> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don't doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don't have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don't think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19).[5]
>
> **Marcus Borg**
>
> The historical ground of Easter is very simple: the followers of Jesus, both then and now, continued to experience Jesus as a living reality after his death. In the early Christian community, these experiences included visions or apparitions of Jesus. [8]

The references to Paul are because of the early creed he records in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, and his conversations with the other eyewitnesses in Galatians. Eric has another post where he goes over that early creed, and it is something that every Christian should know about. It's really kind of surprising that you never hear a sermon on that early creed in church, where they generally sort of assume that you believe everything in the Bible on faith. But skeptical historians don't believe in the post-mortem appearances by faith – they believe it (in part) because of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

If you want to see a Christian scholar make the case for the resurrection appearances in a debate, then here is a post I wrote with the video, audio and summary of the William Lane Craig vs James Crossley debate on the resurrection.

Is Kepler-452b an Earth-like planet? Does it support life?

July 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Previously, I blogged about a few of the minimum requirements that a planet must satisfy in order to support complex life.

Here they are:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the planet has to be far enough from the star to avoid tidal locking and solar flares
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits
- planet mass must be enough to retain an atmosphere, but not so massive to cause a greenhouse effect

Now what happens if we disregard all of those characteristics, and just classify an Earth-like planet as one which is the same size and receives the same amount of radiation from its star? Well, then you end up labeling a whole bunch of planets as "Earth-like" that really don't permit life.

Here's an article from The Conversation which talks about a recent case of science fiction

trumping science facts. (H/T JoeCoder)

Excerpt:

> NASA's announcement of the discovery of a new extrasolar planet has been met with a lot of excitement. But the truth is that it is impossible to judge whether it is similar to Earth with the few parameters we have – it might just as well resemble Venus, or something entirely different.
>
> The planet, Kepler-452b, was detected by the Kepler telescope, which looks for small dips in a star's brightness as planets pass across its surface. It is a method that measures the planet's size, but not its mass. Conditions on Kepler-452b are therefore entirely estimated from just two data points: **the planet's size and the radiation it receives from its star**.

Size and radiation from its star? That's all?

More:

> Kepler-452b was found to be 60% larger than the Earth. It orbits a sun-like star once every 384.84 days. As a result, the planet receives a similar amount of radiation as we do from the sun; just 10% higher. This puts the Kepler-452b in the so-called "habitable zone"; a term that sounds excitingly promising for life, but is actually misleading.
>
> The habitable zone is the region around a star where liquid water could exist on a suitable planet's surface. The key word is "suitable". A gas-planet like Neptune in the habitable zone would clearly not host oceans since it has no surface. The habitable zone is best considered as a way of narrowing down candidates for investigation in future missions.

What about plate tectonics – does it have that?

> Kepler-452b's radius puts it on the brink of the divide between a rocky planet and a small Neptune. In the research paper that announced the discovery, the authors put the probability of the planet having a rocky surface about 50%-60%, so it is by no means sure.
>
> Rocky planets like the Earth are made from iron, silicon, magnesium and carbon. While these ingredients are expected to be similar in other planetary systems, their relative quantities may be quite different. Variations would produce alternative planet interiors with a completely different geology.
>
> For example, a planet made mostly out of carbon could have mantles made of diamond, meaning they would not move easily. This would bring plate tectonics to a screeching halt. Similarly, magnesium-rich planets may have thick crusts that are resilient to fractures. Both results would limit volcano activity that is thought to be essential for sustaining a long lasting atmosphere.

What about retaining the right kind of atmosphere, which depends on the mass of the

planet. Does it have that?

> If Kepler-452b nevertheless has a similar composition to Earth, we run into another problem: gravity. Based on an Earth-like density, Kepler-452b would be five times more massive than our planet.
>
> This would correspond to a stronger gravitational pull, capable of drawing in a thick atmosphere to create a potential runaway greenhouse effect, which means that the planet's temperature continues to climb. This could be especially problematic as the increasing energy from its ageing sun is likely to be heating up the surface. Any water present on the planet's surface would then boil away, leaving a super-Venus, rather than a super-Earth.

You might remember that "retain atmosphere" requirement from the lecture by Walter Bradley that I posted with a summary a few days ago.

What about having a Jupiter-sized sweeper planet – does it have that?

> Another problem is that Kepler-452b is alone. As far as we know, there are no other planets in the same system. This is an issue because it was most likely our giant gas planets that helped direct water to Earth.
>
> At our position from the sun, the dust grains that came together to form the Earth were too warm to contain ice. Instead, they produced a dry planet that later had its water most likely delivered by icy meteorites. These frozen seas formed in the colder outer solar system and were kicked towards Earth by Jupiter's huge gravitational tug. No Jupiter analogue for Kepler-452b might mean no water and therefore, no recognisable life.

What about having a magnetic field – does it have that?

> All these possibilities mean that even a planet exactly the same size as Earth, orbiting a star identical to our sun on an orbit that takes exactly one year might still be an utterly alien world. Conditions on a planet's surface are dictated by a myriad of factors – including atmosphere, magnetic fields and planet interactions, which we currently have no way of measuring.

You know, after the whole global warming hoax, you would think that NASA would have learned their lesson about sensationalizing wild-assed guesses in order to scare up more research money from gullible taxpayers who watch too much Star Trek and Star Wars.

The best answer to this is for parents to make sure that their kids are learning the facts about astrobiology from books like "The Privileged Planet" and "Rare Earth", where *the full list* of requirements for a life-supporting planet will be found. Pity that we can't rely on taxpayer-funded public schools to do that for us, because they are too busy pushing Planned Parenthood's sex education curriculum and global warming fears, instead of real science and engineering.

Brian Auten interviews J. Warner Wallace of ColdCaseChristianity.com

July 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

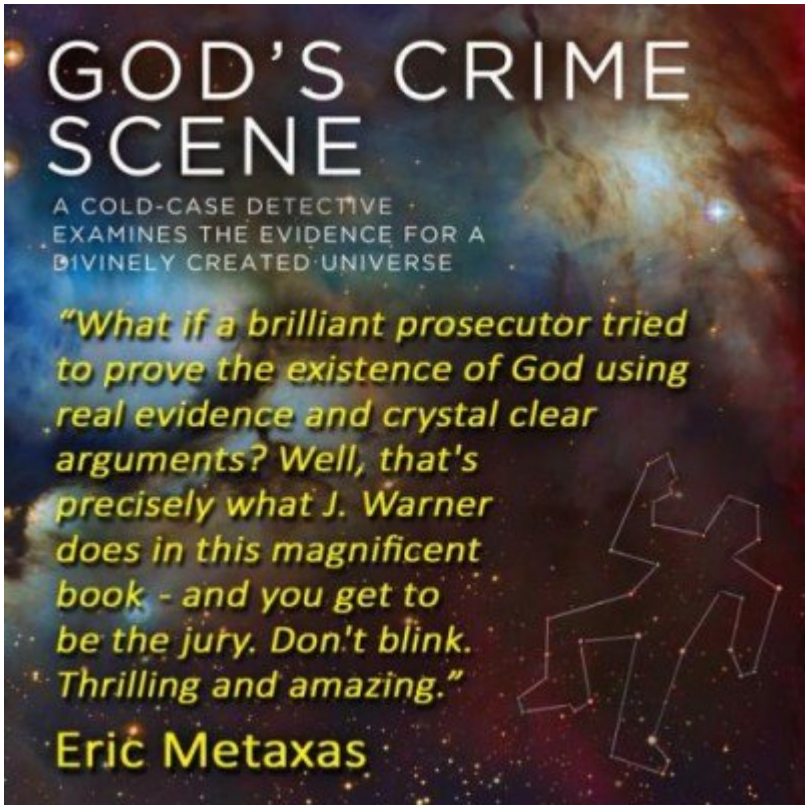

J. Warner Wallace: God's Crime Scene

I spotted this on Apologetics 315.

The MP3 file is here. (43 minutes)

Details from Brian's post:

> Today's interview is with Jim Wallace of PleaseConvinceMe.com and host of the PleaseConvinceMe Podcast. As a cold case detective, Jim brings a unique perspective to his approach to apologetics and a very down-to-earth logical style. In this interview, Jim talks about his approach to the evidence (inference to the best explanation), Tactics[image] and apologetics, debate vs. dialogue, pitfalls to apologists, and more.

Topics:

- Jim's background as an Catholic-raised atheist, and cold-case detective
- Jim believed in the progress of science to answer all the unresolved questions
- How did Jim become an atheist?
- Why didn't Jim respond to Christians witnessing to him without evidence?
- What approach worked to start him thinking about becoming a Christian?
- What did Jim do to grow as a Christian?
- How did Jim's police training help him to investigate Christianity?

- What investigative approach is used in his police work?
- Does “abductive reasoning” also work for investigating Christianity?
- What sort of activities did Jim get involved in in his community?
- How Jim’s experience as a youth pastor convinced him of the value of apologetics
- How young people learn best by training for engagement with opponents
- How Jim takes his youth on mission trips to UC Berkeley to engage the students
- Is it possible to run an apologetics ministry part-time while keeping a day job?
- Do you have to be an expert in order to have an apologetics ministry?
- What books would Jim recommend to beginning apologists?
- How the popular apologist can have an even bigger impact than the scholar
- How the tactical approach is different for debates and conversations
- Jim’s advice for Christians who are interested in learning apologetics
- How Christian apologist need to make sure they remain humble and open-minded
- How your audience determines how much you need to know from study

Jim’s reason for becoming an atheist, (his mother was excluded from the Catholic church after her divorce), is one I have heard before. I like the way he eventually came back to Christianity. No big emotional crisis, just taking a sober second look at the evidence by himself, and talking with his Christian friends. I’m impressed with the way he has such a productive ministry, as well.

Obama administration refuses FOIA requests about Planned Parenthood

July 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

This story from The Federalist explains how the Obama administration responded to Freedom of Information Act requests for all communication, payments, etc. to Dr. Deborah Nucotola of Planned Parenthood.

Excerpt:

> Earlier this week, Mary Hasson broke the news here at the Federalist that federal funds went to Planned Parenthood's salad-munching, wine-sipping, organ-harvesting Dr. Deborah Nucatola for advice on "healthy baby" births.
>
> Hasson requested all communications and documents relevant to any payments to or compensation of fees, consultant fees, reimbursements, etc. to Deborah Nucatola, MD, a Planned Parenthood employee. And she requested that the documents be sent as soon as possible.
>
> The Freedom of Information Act requires the federal government to be transparent, but successfully receiving information from the Obama Administration has gone so poorly — even more poorly than previous administrations — that many media outlets have resorted to suing the federal government to get them to respond to FOIA requests.
>
> In March it was announced that the Obama administration had set new records for censoring information, outright denying access to information, and length of time to fulfill requests. They also, "refused a record number of times to turn over files quickly that might be especially newsworthy," according to the Associated Press.
>
> Since FOIA requests can routinely take years to fulfill, if they're ever filled, Hasson requested that the Health and Human Services FOIA office expedite her

> request. She wrote:
>
> "The public has a right to know of any federal monies going to Dr. Nucatola in light of the video, released by the Center for Medical Progress, that includes remarks by Dr. Nucatola that raise questions about whether federal laws may have been violated regarding patients' informed consent for fetal tissue, and conflict of interest. Expedited processing required because of planned or pending Congressional hearings and the public's demand for transparency on this issue."
>
> You'll never guess what happened next.
>
> **HHS denied her request for expedited information on the compensation and payments given to Nucatola. They claimed it didn't fit the public's "urgent" right to know:**
>
> "Further, in order to meet second prong of the compelling need standard, the requested information must be the type of information that has a particular value that will be lost if not disseminated quickly, and ordinarily refers to a breaking news story of general public interest."
>
> HHS is arguing that the Planned Parenthood scandal, the very same one that has Planned Parenthood honcho Cecile Richards panicking and running every public relations response in the book, is not a "breaking news story of general public interest!"
>
> To be sure, while HHS denied Hasson's expedited FOIA request, they could at some point in the years to come respond to Hasson's simple information request. Or, then again, maybe not.

And in fact the White House has gone a step further and actually lied about the video in order to provide cover for Planned Parenthood, which is not surprising when you think about how much money Planned Parenthood gives to the Democrat Party at election time.

What's the answer to this? Where do we go from here?

I think the answer lies in efforts to shed more light on what Planned Parenthood is actually doing. If we can't do it through FOIA requests, then we can always try other ways to try to shine light on what Planned Parentood is really doing.

One way I have seen that done is with mandatory ultrasound laws, such as the one signed into law by Governor Scott Walker in Wisconsin. The Stream has an article about how that is relevant to these Planned Parenthood videos.

Excerpt:

> Scott Walker has done the women of Wisconsin a signal service, and advanced the respect for human life, by pushing and signing a bill that mandates ultrasounds before abortions. As in his battle with corrupt, cash-grabbing public employee unions, Walker faced down a wave of vilification that spilled over into hatred, and he never flinched. This is the kind of political courage we need in a

> president, on a wide range of issues from religious freedom to foreign policy, from budget battles to Supreme Court appointments.
>
> […]But abortion profiteers like Planned Parenthood fought like wildcats to stop the ultrasound bill. If the procedure doesn't change any minds, why would you think they would do that? Ultrasounds are safe, non-invasive procedures that most expectant mothers request at least once during each pregnancy. Their only outcome is usually a photo that goes on the fridge, and is Tweeted to friends. Why would doctors who specialize in aborting children, not delivering them, object to providing this service? Might they fear that women could change their minds once they saw their babies?
>
> Pro-lifers such as Gov. Walker hoped that this is precisely what would happen. Dropping the sick pretense that abortion is a morally neutral decision which the state has no business attempting even to influence, Walker boldly said as much. He wants to encourage Wisconsin women not to destroy their unborn Wisconsin children, and to do that he wants to offer them more information, an extra medical procedure that is routine, standard and safe. The groups that profit from selling human organs want to give women less information, to urge them to make a lethal decision in the dark. Could the contrast be any clearer? One side wants to tell the truth in the service of life, the other to keep it hidden in service of death.

If you want to stop abortion, the answer is to provide people with more information of what abortion is, and the motives of the people who provide abortions, and the motives of the people who want taxpayers to subsidize it. We have to be able to talk about it to your neighbors in detail, and explain what really happens to the unborn baby during an abortion.

What are public schools teaching your kids about marriage and sexuality?

July 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National Education Association

This article from the radically leftist Washington Post unapologetically praises public school teachers for pushing their vision of sex and marriage onto children as young as four years old.

It says:

> As young children develop their understanding of the world, they tend to rely heavily on binaries. If we understand the binaries a child is working within, we can encourage that child to think of counterexamples or introduce counterexamples ourselves into the conversation. These provide useful stumbling blocks that encourage them to expand their thinking.
>
> […]As the year unfolded, my students continued to play at themes of love and marriage. The conversations expanded and both kids and I were able to introduce new and different stumbling blocks: One can be in love and not get married, not all married people are moms or dads, and not all moms and dads are married. The conversations shifted based on what information the kids had internalized.

The author relays an example conversation about same-sex marriage and incest marriage, which she participates in, trying to undermine the traditional views expressed by the children.

More:

> As this deeply layered conversation moved on, many points of view were stated, more questions were posed, and the children were able to articulate what they

> thought. I made a mental note to myself about topics to revisit, including finding a way to talk about inherited traits and Jane's ideas about the dangers of incest. There's always a new challenge!
>
> […]It's easy to feel vulnerable or overwhelmed when children ask questions about identity, but when we don't engage the issues involved, we are sending a message that the subjects are taboo. In terms of gender and sexuality, avoidance and silence can be particularly harmful for students who are or will later identify as LGBTQ (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer) or who come from families with LGBTQ family members. Silence is not a neutral response.

Is this a conversation that you want a secular public school teacher having with your kids?

Regardless of what you do with your own kids, your tax dollars are going to be paying for these kinds of conversations. They are, in fact, undermining the natural desire of most parents under the parents' noses. Although leftist educators tend to have fewer children than conservatives, or even no children, they can push their ideas into the next generation by running the public schools.

Public schools tend to do a woeful job of teaching the useful skills that parents really want, but they do a great job of pushing leftist values onto children, and the earlier the better. In fact, they are not being paid on the basis of whether your child learns math and science and engineering and is able to get a job. Public school teachers are paid regardless of student performance, because public schools are a monopoly. This is not a free market which service providers compete to give customers more quality for less money. Public schools are totally insulated from the demands of consumers, that's why public school teachers are free to push whatever values they want on kids.

If you want to see how far the gay left intends to go with this, take a look at the province of Ontario, Canada, where the sex education curriculum was designed by an education minister who was convicted for child pornography. The Ontario premier is a lesbian, and she is a strong defender of that sex education curriculum, over and against the protests of traditional-minded parents. But somehow, she got elected, and somehow, the child-pornographer became the minister of education. Somebody decided that he was the right person for the job, and somebody decided that public school teachers have a right to push his curriculum on children. And the taxpayers are paying for this indoctrination of young, impressionable kids.

Now, take a look at this story that I got from my friend Ari, about a gay rights conference in Iowa, held at a very rural public school.

Read it:

> In rural, small-town Iowa, a group of parents and community leaders is seeking to prevent students from the local taxpayer-funded middle school and high school from attending future versions of an anti–bullying conference for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender teens.

> The last one — in April — left many of the denizens of Humboldt, Iowa up in arms, reports Des Moines NBC affiliate WHO-TV.
>
> Iowa Safe Schools, an activist group out of Des Moines, hosted the conference.
>
> […]Among the nearly two dozen speakers, "only two" addressed bullying, one attendee estimated, according to EAGnews.org.
>
> The rest of the sessions involved issues such as "how to pleasure their gay partners."
>
> Middle school girls from Humboldt (pop.: 4,690) had the opportunity to learn "how to sew fake testicles into their underwear in order to pass themselves off as boys."
>
> One speaker wore a dress made out of condoms to which could be "used as needed." . . .
>
> **Nate Monson, executive director of Iowa Safe Schools, said parents who worry about middle school kids hearing about anal sex with strap-ons and analingus are "disgusting."**
>
> **"It's incredibly frustrating that adults are being the problem and being the bully," Monson told the Des Moines NBC affiliate.** "

The mission statement of "Iowa Safe Schools" makes it clear that this is about pushing early sexual activity and the broader gay agenda onto children in the public schools:

> The mission of Iowa Safe Schools is to: a) improve school climate in order to increase the personal safety, mental health, and student learning of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and allied (LGBTA) and all other students; b) increase awareness and understanding among current and future educators, school administrators, and key community agents of inequities regarding the safety of LGBTA students and their family member(s) in schools and communities throughout Iowa. Iowa Safe Schools also seeks to empower these key actors with effective, research-based tools and strategies to combat intolerance and safety inequities.

That's what's happening in public schools. Should we be voting to send more money to these public schools? Will more money result in kids having better math, science and engineering skills? It seems to me that public schools have nothing to do with teaching math, science and engineering, and everything to do with normalizing the gay lifestyle, against the wishes of most traditional parents. Make sure that when you are voting, you vote for school choice, not a government-run public school monopoly. Let parents get the money, and let the parents decide where to send their kids based on what the kids need to learn valuable skills and get real jobs.

New study: Saturn’s orbit keeps Earth in the circumstellar habitable zone

July 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

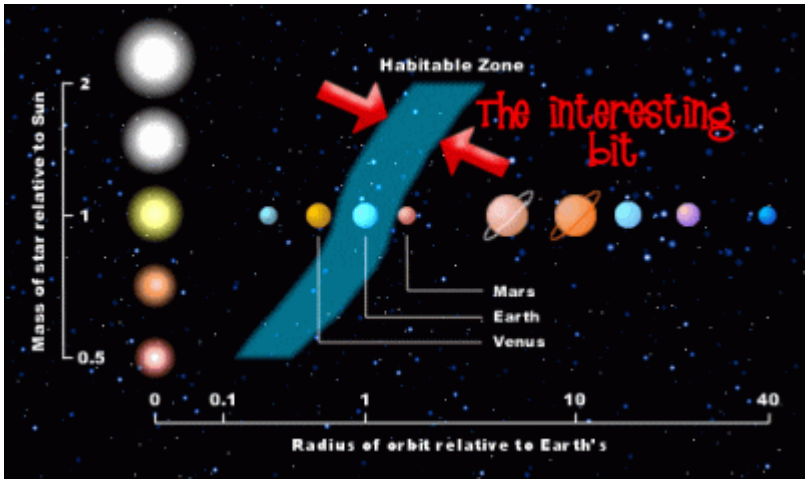

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

What do you need in order to have a planet that supports complex life? First, you need liquid water at the surface of the planet. But there is only a narrow range of temperatures that can support liquid water. It turns out that the size of the star that your planet orbits around has a lot to do with whether you get liquid water or not.

A heavy, metal-rich star allows you to have a habitable planet far enough from the star so the planet can support liquid water on the planet’s surface while still being able to spin on its axis. The zone where a planet can have liquid water at the surface is called the circumstellar habitable zone (CHZ). A metal-rich star like our Sun is very massive, which moves the habitable zone out further away from the star.

If our star were smaller, we would have to orbit much closer to the star in order to have liquid water at the surface. Unfortunately, if you go too close to the star, then your planet becomes tidally locked, like the moon is tidally locked to Earth. Tidally locked planets are inhospitable to life. So we need a star massive enough to give us a nice wide habitable zone far away from the Sun itself.

But even with the right size star, which we have in our solar sytem, we still have CHZ problems. Just because a planet starts off in the circumstellar habitable zone, it doesn’t mean that it will stay there.

Jay Richards tweeted about this new article from the New Scientist, which talks about that very problem.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Earth’s comfortable temperatures may be thanks to Saturn’s good behaviour. If the ringed giant’s orbit had been slightly different, Earth’s orbit could have been wildly elongated, like that of a long-period comet.
>
> Our solar system is a tidy sort of place: planetary orbits here tend to be circular

> and lie in the same plane, unlike the highly eccentric orbits of many exoplanets. Elke Pilat-Lohinger of the University of Vienna, Austria, was interested in the idea that the combined influence of Jupiter and Saturn – the solar system's heavyweights – could have shaped other planets' orbits. She used computer models to study how changing the orbits of these two giant planets might affect the Earth.
>
> Earth's orbit is so nearly circular that its distance from the sun only varies between 147 and 152 million kilometres, or around 2 per cent about the average. Moving Saturn's orbit just 10 percent closer in would disrupt that by creating a resonance – essentially a periodic tug – that would stretch out the Earth's orbit by tens of millions of kilometres. That would result in the Earth spending part of each year outside the habitable zone, the ring around the sun where temperatures are right for liquid water.
>
> Tilting Saturn's orbit would also stretch out Earth's orbit. According to a simple model that did not include other inner planets, the greater the tilt, the more the elongation increased. Adding Venus and Mars to the model stabilised the orbits of all three planets, but the elongation nonetheless rose as Saturn's orbit got more tilted. Pilat-Lohinger says a 20-degree tilt would bring the innermost part of Earth's orbit closer to the sun than Venus.

So the evidence for a our solar system being fine-tuned for life keeps piling up. It's just another factor that has to be just right so that complex, embodied life could exist here. All of these factors need to be just right, not just the orbits of any other massive planets. And you need at least one massive planet to attract comets and other such unwelcome intruders away from the life-permitting planets.

Here's a good clip explaining the circumstellar habitable zone:

The factor I blogged about today is just one of the things you need in order to get a planet that supports life.

Here are a few of the more well-known ones:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere

- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

Here is a study that I wrote about recently about galactic habitable zones.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell should step down

July 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mitch McConnell shaking hands with his buddy Obama

I've just had it with this man, he is utterly useless as a Republican, and he is harming the brand with his kowtowing to the left.

The Daily Caller reports:

> Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has never been a favorite of conservatives. Those who see him as a "squishy" compromiser more interested in placating President Barack Obama and K Street lobbyists than the Republican base had more fuel tossed on that fire when he blocked amendments to the Highway Bill Tea Party members wholeheartedly support.
>
> One amendment would defund Planned Parenthood, the nationwide abortion provider which receives more than a half billion dollars in taxpayer subsidies annually. McConnell has previously said he supports defunding Planned Parenthood, which was recently the subject of undercover sting videos in which executives with the organization can be heard discussing the sale of organs from aborted babies. But the leader blocked an amendment to the Highway Bill that would have defunded the organization.

At a time when we have the public behind us on defunding Planned Parenthood, McConnell blinks. What good is he?

As if the social issues were not bad enough, he's screwed up fiscal issues as well.The Senate revived the Export-Import Bank on Sunday, which is just a nightmare of crony capitalism and corporate welfare. Thankfully, the conservatives in the House of Representatives killed it, and stopped McConnell from screwing the conservative base of

the Republican party *again*.

I hope everyone understands that big corporations are not conservative, and we should not be helping them in any way. If anything, the government should be pushing for more choice and competition, and lowering barriers to entry for new start-ups.

What do we do about Mitch McConnell?

Next time he is up for election, he should be primaried. If you get a request for donations from anything remotely related to the Senate, send it back with a note that says “not till McConnell steps down as majority leader”.

Frankly, I recommend never donating to the NRSC.

Does the word atheism mean “a lack of belief in God”?

July 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Making sense of the meaning of atheism

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Excerpt:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, "I believe that there is no gold on Mars" with my saying "I do not believe that there is gold on Mars." If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There's a difference between saying, "I do not believe (p)" and "I believe (not-p)." Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.

But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.

There's a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called "presumption of atheism." At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies,

> **who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.**
>
> **One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.**
>
> So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, "So is there a God or not?"

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these "subjective atheists"?

Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion non-cognitively. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God's existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true.

Matt Dillahunty debates David Robertson on atheism, morality and evil

July 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two Rams butting heads: may the best ram win!

OK. So I think it's safe to say that of all the Christian apologists out there, David Robertson is my least favorite debater. Why? Many reasons, but mostly because he does not bring in evidence, especially scientific evidence. And he seems to make these clever quips like G. K. Chesterton. I like evidence. I would rather that he talk about scientific and historical evidence.

Well, Dina asked me to listen to this debate between David Robertson and agnostic Matt Dillahunty (he's not an atheist, he's just an agnostic) and I went in absolutely convinced that Robertson was going to have his ass handed to him by Matt Dillahunty. And I could not have been more wrong.

Here's the debate posted on YouTube (audio only):

This snarky summary is just a paraphrase from certain parts of the debate, it is not designed for accuracy, but for fun – to make you listen to the debate. Listen to the debate to get the exact words in context.

Summary:

- Matt Dillahunty: he's an agnostic who calls himself an atheist
- David Robertson: he's from Scotland, could we not get someone better?
- Robertson opening statement is incredibly weak, as you might expect, he only had two arguments embedded in a long list of nonsense: 1) origin and design of the universe 2) reality of evil requires objective morality

1) Creation/Design:

Robertson: The fact is that matter exists. There are 3 views that could account for this fact: 1) created, 2) eternal, 3) self-generated out of nothing. 3) is self-contradictory, 1) requires a Creator, and 2) is falsified by the Big Bang cosmology. So what's your view?

Dillahunty: You're trying to get me to say what my view is, but I can just say "I don't

know” and get out of having to take any position on how matter got here. I can say “I don’t know” to all the scientific evidence for the Big Bang cosmology, too!

2) Evil requires objective morality, requires a moral lawgiver:

Robertson: evil exists, e.g. – the Holocaust. If atheism is true, objective morality is impossible. Richard Dawkins agrees. Therefore, theism is the best explanation for the existence of evil.

Dillahunty: In my opinion, morality means doing what helps people have well-being. And I think that the Holocaust is obviously bad, because it hurts the well-being of the victims.

Robertson: The problem is that people decide what well-being is.If you were raised in the Social Darwinism of the Nazi regime, you would believe that the Holocaust was the best for the well-being of the society as a whole.

Dillahunty: Isn’t it obvious that killing people is bad for their well-being?

Robertson: Is it bad for the well-being of unborn children to kill them?

Dillahunty: Yes

Robertson: So you’re against abortion, then?

Dillahunty: No

Robertson: So you think that killing the child in the womb is against the well-being of the child, but you’re for that?

Dillahunty: I don’t know! I don’t know!

Then Dillahunty tried to claim Hitler was a Christian:

Dillahunty: here is a quote by Hitler saying that secular schools are bad, and religious schools are good – see, he’s a Christian!

Robertson: when was that said and to whom?

Dillahunty: I don’t know, I don’t know!

Robertson: It was said in 1933, during an election campaign, to Catholic authorities – he was a politician, looking for votes from Catholics so he could become Chancellor.

Good and evil on atheism:

Dillahunty: good actions results in states with more well-being, and evil actions result in states with less well-being.

Brierley: but when the Nazis slaughtered all those people, they believed they were increasing well-being

Dillahunty: But you could demonstrate to them that their action is not going to increase well-being. Survival of the fittest is descriptive of what happens, but it’s not prescriptive.

Robertson: Whose well-being will human beings think about most, if not their own? Do you really think that you can stop people like Charles Manson from being evil by sitting down and trying to prove to them that they are not helping their victim’s well-being?

(A BIT LATER)

Robertson (to Dillahunty): Is it a fact that Dachau (a concentration camp) was morally

wrong?

Dillahunty: (literally, not a paraphrase) I DON'T KNOW

My thoughts:

When I listened to this debate, the overwhelming conviction that emerges is that Matt Dillahunty is not someone who forms his worldview based on evidence. His rejection of the Big Bang cosmology with "I don't know" is just atrocious. His comments about slavery in the Bible and Hitler being a Christian show that his investigations of these issues is far below the level of a responsible adult. His dallying with the Jesus-never-existed view just shows him to be fundamentally anti-intellectual, as even Bart Ehrman denies that view. His definition of faith has nothing to do with the Bible, or Christian authorities, or Christian scholars – it's just something that atheists invent and believe among themselves, with no reference to reality. Why? Because it makes them feel more intelligent to look down on others, even if they have to lie to themselves to do it. When asked to state his positions or respond to specific evidence, his response is very often "I don't know". It seems to me that atheism, to him, means not pursuing truth with the aim of grasping it. He wants to keep reality at a safe distance. This is not intellectually responsible – we are supposed to be searching for truth.

On morality, it's even worse. It's not surprising to me that he is pro-abortion and has no opinion about concentration camps being objectively evil. Most atheists are pro-abortion, by the way, which tells you a lot of their misappropriation of moral language when it suits them. When it comes to morality, Dillahunty only has his own personal opinions, and they refer to nothing outside his own mind. (His opinion of morality as related to well-being is utilitarianism – a very problematic view – but moreover, it is *his view* and different people will differ on what constitutes well-being). Without an after-life, there is no reason for anyone to care about the moral point of view when it goes against their self-interest, anyway. Atheists use moral language, but there is nothing substantial there, because their statements are not referring to any objective, prescriptive moral reality. Atheism is materialistic and therefore deterministic – it does not even ground the free will that is needed to make moral choices. Their view is Darwinian survival of the fittest, that's what emerges from their origins story – and it does not rationally ground morality. The strong kill the weak, if they can. I've written before about how difficult it is for atheists to *rationally* condemn things like slavery, and nothing in Dillahunty's presentation led me to believe that he had solved that problem.

Anybody can be an intellectually-satisfied atheist with an empty head – it's *knowledge* that causes people to conform their beliefs to *reality*.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information

- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Third video of Planned Parenthood doctors discussing organ harvesting

July 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

WARNING: The video linked below contains images of unborn baby body parts.

Here's the third video released by The Center for Medical Progress:

And here's the story from Anika Smith, writing at The Stream.

Excerpt:

> The latest video exposing Planned Parenthood isn't just an undercover lunch conversation; it's a first-person interview with a clinic worker who knows exactly what she's doing as she explains Planned Parenthood's sale of aborted fetal body parts.
>
> […]It opens with Holly O'Donnell, a licensed phlebotomist who took a job as a "procurement technician" with the now-infamous fetal tissue company and biotech start-up StemExpress in late 2012. (As their website says, *start with the source*.)

O'Donnell explains what her job was:

> "We're asked to procure certain tissues like brain, liver, thymus, pancreas, heart, lungs, skin, pretty much anything on the fetus. It's basically the trafficking of fetal tissues."

And why was this happening? Well, for the money, of course:

> For six months, O'Donnell's job was to identify pregnant women at Planned Parenthood who met criteria for fetal tissue orders and to harvest the fetal body parts after their abortions. What O'Donnell has to say about Planned Parenthood's profit motives decisively contradicts every defense Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards has come up with in denying these charges for the past two weeks. O'Donnell explains:
>
> For whatever we could procure, they would get a certain percentage. The main nurse was always trying to make sure we got our specimens. No one else really cared, but the main nurse did because she knew that Planned Parenthood was getting compensated.

And a bit later, this statement from Planned Parenthood's Dr. Savita Ginde:

> Standing in the Planned Parenthood abortion clinic pathology laboratory, where the bodies of aborted fetuses are brought, Ginde coolly calculates how payment per organ removed from a fetus will be the most beneficial to Planned Parenthood:

> I think a per-item thing works a little better, just because we can see how much we can get out of it.

The Daily Signal is reporting that the Senate Republicans intend to introduce a bill to defund Planned Parenthood. The problem is that a stand-alone bill is less likely to pass than than if the defunding of Planned Parenthood was attached to a “mandatory” bill.

> Republican Sens. Rand Paul, Ky.; James Lankford, Okla.; and Joni Ernst, Iowa, are working on legislation that would block federal funds from Planned Parenthood. The group receives more than $500 million annually in government grants. The money cannot be used for abortions except in specific cases involving rape and incest.
>
> Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said Democrats would defeat the effort.
>
> “Good luck with that,” Reid said. “We’re dealing with the health of American women, and they’re dealing with some right-wing crazy.”
>
> The GOP will need 60 votes to defund the group, and there are 54 Republicans in the Senate.
>
> […]President Obama said he would veto any attempts to defund the group.

The House has a different bill which bans the government from entering into contracts with companies that donate directly to Planned Parenthood. That one is more likely to pass the House than the Senate bill is likely to pass the Senate.

Archaeologists decipher text from burned scroll 1,500 years old

July 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

6th century fragment of Leviticus 1
It's a fragment of Leviticus!

Live Science reports: (H/T ECM)

> A burned 1,500-year-old Hebrew scroll found on the shore of the Dead Sea was recently deciphered, 45 years after archaeologists discovered it, researchers in Israel have announced.
>
> "The deciphering of the scroll, which was a puzzle for us for 45 years, is very exciting," Sefi Porath, the archaeologist who discovered the scroll in 1970 in Ein Gedi, Israel, said in a statement from The Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA).
>
> The Ein Gedi parchment scroll is the oldest scroll discovered from the Hebrew Bible since the Dead Sea Scrolls, which date to the end of the Second Temple period, about 2,000 years ago.
>
> The parchment scroll was so charred that it was illegible to the naked eye. Only with advanced technology did the scroll reveal the opening verses of the book of Leviticus, the third book of the Hebrew Bible.

So, this is the second oldest fragment of the Old Testament, with the Dead Sea Scrolls being earlier, and containing far more material than this fragment. The deciphering was done using micro-CT scanners.

And what's the text on it?

> On the newly deciphered scroll, the text (from the beginning of the book of Leviticus), translated from the original Hebrew, reads as follows:
>
> "The Lord summoned Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting,

> saying: Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: When any of you bring an offering of livestock to the Lord, you shall bring your offering from the herd or from the flock. If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, you shall offer a male without blemish; you shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, for acceptance in your behalf before the Lord. You shall lay your hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be acceptable in your behalf as atonement for you. The bull shall be slaughtered before the Lord; and Aaron's sons the priests shall offer the blood, dashing the blood against all sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. The burnt offering shall be flayed and cut up into its parts. The sons of the priest Aaron shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the parts, with the head and the suet, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar." (Leviticus 1:1-8).
>
> The biblical text marks the first time a Torah scroll was found inside a synagogue in any archaeological excavation, according to the IAA.

The Live Science story notes that other fragments are still being analyzed, so we may get more stories like this sooner, rather than later.

Fine-tuning the habitable zone: tidal-locking and solar flares

July 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

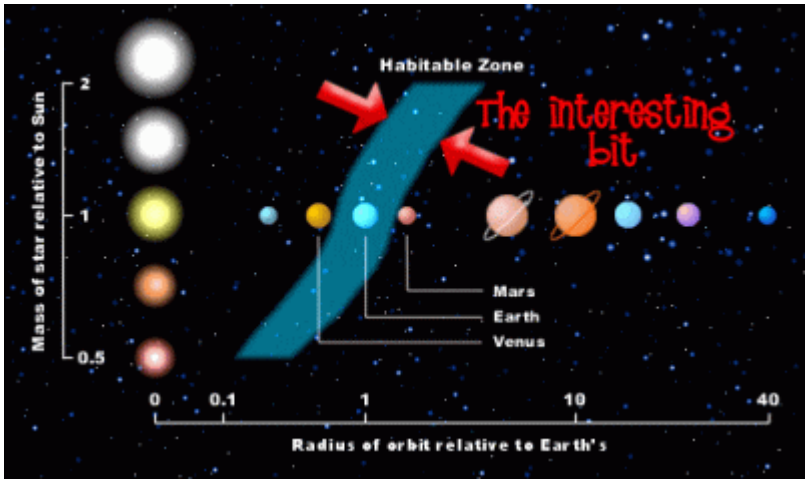

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

Here's an article from Evolution News that talks about liquid water and tidal locking, but it has even more factors that need to be fine-tuned for habitability.

Excerpt:

> Stars with masses of 0.1-0.5 solar mass make up 75 percent of the stars in our Milky Way galaxy.[6] These represent the red dwarfs, the M class. But these stars have low effective temperatures, and thus emit their peak radiation at longer wavelengths (red and near-infrared).[7] They can have stable continuously habitable zones over long time scales, up to 10 billion years, barring other disruptions. It is also easier to detect terrestrial sized planets around them.[8] But a serious problem with red dwarf stars in the K and M classes is their energetic flares and coronal mass ejection events. Potentially habitable planets need to orbit these stars closer, to be in these stars' habitable zones. Yet the exposure to their stellar winds and more frequent and energetic flares becomes a serious issue for habitability. Because of these stars' smaller mass, ejections get released with more violence.[9] Any planet's atmosphere would be subject to this ionizing radiation, and likely expose any surface life to much more damaging radiation.[10] The loss of atmospheres in these conditions is likely, but the timescales are dependent on several factors including the planet's mass, the extent of its atmosphere, the distance from the parent star, and the strength of the planet's magnetic field.[11] To protect its atmosphere for a long period, like billions of years, a planet with more mass and thus higher gravity could hold on to the gases better. But this larger planet would then hold on to lighter gases, like hydrogen and helium, and prevent an atmosphere similar to Earth's from forming.[12] Another consequence is that the increased surface pressure would prevent water from being in the liquid phase.[13]

So again, you need to have a huge, massive star in order to hold the planet in orbit over LONG distances. If it's a short distance, you not only have the tidal-locking problem, but you also have this solar activity problem (flares, coronal ejections).

But wait! There's more:

> Another stellar parameter for advanced life has to do with UV (ultra-violet) radiation. The life-support star must provide just enough UV radiation, but not too much. UV radiation's negative effects on DNA are well known, and any life support body must be able to sustain an atmosphere to shield them. Yet the energy from UV radiation is also needed for biochemical reactions. So life needs enough UV radiant to allow chemical reactions, but not so much as to destroy complex carbon molecules like DNA. Just this flux requirement alone requires the host star have a minimum stellar mass of 0.6 solar masses, and a maximum mass of 1.9 solar masses.[14]

So the ultra-violet radiation that is emitted has to be finely-tuned. (I'm guessing this assumes some sort of chemical origin-of-life scenario)

Still more:

> Another requirement for habitable planets is a strong magnetic field to prevent their atmosphere from being lost to the solar winds. Planets orbiting a red dwarf star are also more affected by the star's tidal effects, slowing the planet's rotation rate. It is thought that strong magnetic fields are generated in part by the planet's rotation.[15] If the planet is tidally braked, then any potential for a significant magnetic field is likely to be seriously degraded. This will lead to loss of water and other gases from the planet's atmosphere to the stellar winds.[16] We see this in our solar system, where both Mercury and Venus, which orbit closer to the Sun than Earth, have very slow rotation rates, and very modest magnetic fields. Mercury has very little water, and surprisingly, neither does Venus. Even though Venus has a very dense atmosphere, it is very dry. This is due to UV radiation splitting the water molecules when they get high in the atmosphere, and then the hydrogen is lost to space, primarily, again, by solar wind.[17]

You have to hold on to your umbrella (atmosphere), or you get hit with dangerous rain (solar winds).

So a few more factors there, and remember, this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to circumstellar habitability constraints.

How likely is it for blind forces to sequence a functional protein by chance?

July 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

How likely is it that you could swish together amino acids randomly and come up with a sequence that would fold up into a functional protein?

Evolution News reports on research performed by Doug Axe at Cambridge University, and published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Molecular Biology.

Excerpt:

> Doug Axe's research likewise studies genes that it turns out show great evidence of design. Axe studied the sensitivities of protein function to mutations. In these "mutational sensitivity" tests, Dr. Axe mutated certain amino acids in various proteins, or studied the differences between similar proteins, to see how mutations or changes affected their ability to function properly.[10] He found that protein function was highly sensitive to mutation, and that proteins are not very tolerant to changes in their amino acid sequences. In other words, when you mutate, tweak, or change these proteins slightly, they stopped working. In one of his papers, he thus concludes that "functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences," and that functional protein folds "may be as low as 1 in 10^77."[11] The extreme unlikelihood of finding functional proteins has important implications for intelligent design.

Just so you know, those footnotes say this:

> [10.] Douglas D. Axe, "Estimating the Prevalence of Protein Sequences Adopting Functional Enzyme Folds," *Journal of Molecular Biology*, 1-21 (2004); Douglas D. Axe, "Extreme Functional Sensitivity to Conservative Amino Acid Changes on Enzyme Exteriors," *Journal of Molecular Biology*, Vol. 301:585-595 (2000).
>
> [11.] Douglas D. Axe, "Estimating the Prevalence of Protein Sequences Adopting Functional Enzyme Folds," *Journal of Molecular Biology*, 1-21 (2004).

And remember, you need a lot more than just 1 protein in order to create even the simplest living system. Can you generate that many proteins in the short time between when the Earth cools and the first living cells appear? Even if we spot the naturalist a prebiotic soup as big as the universe, and try to make sequences as fast as possible, it's unlikely to generate even one protein in the time before first life appears.

Here's Doug Axe to explain his research:

If you are building a protein for the FIRST TIME, you have to get it right all at once – not by building up to it gradually using supposed Darwinian mechanisms. That's because there is no replication before you have the first replicator. The first replicator cannot rely on explanations that require replication to already be in place.

News media freaks out over dead lion, ignores Planned Parenthood organ harvesting

July 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I have more value than a stupid lion

The best site for documenting media bias is Newsbusters. Let's see what the mainstream news media reported about instead of reporting on the third Planned Parenthood organ harvesting video.

They reported on a stupid lion:

> America's anchors have spoken: the shooting of one lion vastly outweighs the trafficking of baby parts by a taxpayer-funded abortion giant.
>
> **In other words, the broadcast news shows spent *more time in one day on Cecil the Lion than they did on the Planned Parenthood videos in two weeks.***
>
> The three broadcast networks, ABC, NBC and CBS censored the third video released Tuesday by the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) exposing Planned Parenthood's practice of harvesting aborted baby parts — censored it at Planned Parenthood's urging. But the news shows did find more than 14 minutes for a more important story: the "outrage" over the shooting of Cecil, a famed African lion, by an American dentist.
>
> Tuesday, the networks spent 5 minutes, 44 seconds during their evening news shows on Cecil — and that's not even counting the teasers. Wednesday morning,

> ABC, NBC and CBS lamented over the lion for 8 minutes, 17 seconds.
>
> But they couldn't do the same for a story of babies "picked" apart by tweezers.

The rest of that article outlines some of the extreme hand-wringing by the left-wing media over this MAN-EATING LION – and this is the same mainstream media that is ignoring the selling of the organs of babies pulled apart while they are still alive – for profit. It's not a nice pet lion, it would eat you. And despite all their tears and concern for the lion, it would eat them, too. Really not sure where they are going with crying about this lion, and ignoring the unborn babies being chopped up and sold to ghouls for money. The latter seems worse.

Meanwhile, in the Obama administration, the Department of Health and Human Services says there is nothing to investigate about Planned Parenthood, because reasons.

Breitbart News:

> In testimony before the House Education and the Workforce Committee Tuesday, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Sylvia Burwell said she had not viewed any of the videos regarding Planned Parenthood's involvement in harvesting the body parts of aborted babies for sale, and that her office would not be conducting an investigation into the practices of the nation's largest abortion provider.

Just remarkable to me that people on the left are freaking out about a stupid lion, but totally indifferent to 60 million unborn children being killed in this country alone, since Roe. v. Wade. Not to mention all the innocent victims of criminals. Why is it considered virtuous now to freak out over lions while ignoring innocent human beings who are dying? People are more important than lions, because they are made in the image of God, to know God. People are more important than lions.

Meanwhile, a California judge has ruled that no more videos that make Stem Express (the aforementioned ghouls) look bad may be released by the Center for Medical Progress.

Life Site News reports:

> The California Superior Court has issued a narrow temporary restraining order preventing the Center for Medical Progress (CMP), a pro-life group, from releasing further undercover video footage taken of three top-level staff of StemExpress.
>
> CMP is the organization behind the series of three videos released over the past three weeks exposing the alleged harvesting and sale of body parts from aborted babies by Planned Parenthood – body parts that are then purchased by StemExpress.
>
> CMP has alleged that the fees paid by StemExpress to Planned Parenthood violate federal law prohibiting the sale and trafficking of human tissue.
>
> While Planned Parenthood has claimed that the fees paid to them by StemExpress merely cover their costs, and fall within the bounds of the law, the video footage released so far has appeared to show Planned Parenthood

> employees seeking profit as part of the transaction.
>
> In the most recent video, released Tuesday, a Planned Parenthood affiliate vice president was caught on video describing how the abortion organization can maximize profit. “I think a per-item thing works a little better, just because we can see how much we can get out of it,” Dr. Savita Sinde said of the aborted baby.

Nice First Amendment you have there, America. Shame if anything were to happen to it.

CMP should probably go ahead and release all the videos immediately, to stop the judges from silencing them.

New study: women seeking to have a child should start before age 32

July 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

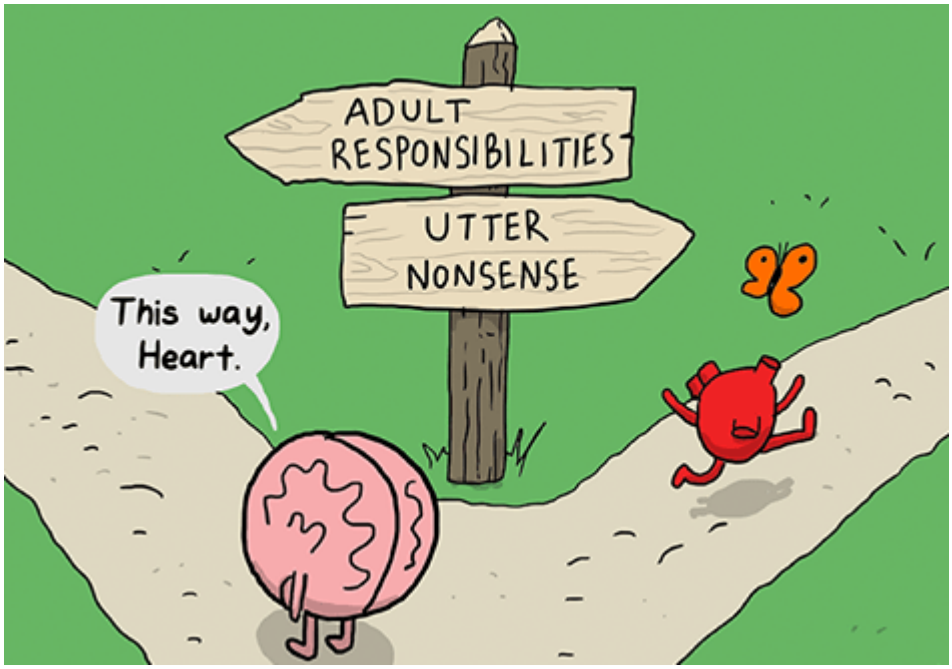

Brain vs Heart, from: theawkwardyeti.com

Dina sent me this sobering piece of research from the New Scientist which is perfect for all the young feminists who have been taught in college that marriage should be put off, and women can easily get pregnant after age 40.

Excerpt:

> It's a question many people will ask themselves at some point in their lives: when should I start a family? If you know how many children you'd like, and whether or not you would consider, or could afford, IVF, a computer model can suggest when to start trying for your first child.
>
> Happy with just one? The model recommends you get started by age 32 to have a 90 per cent chance of realising your dream without IVF. A brood of three would mean starting by age 23 to have the same chance of success. Wait until 35 and the odds are 50:50 (see "When to get started").
>
> The suggestions are based on averages pulled from a swathe of data so don't give a personal prediction. And of course, things aren't this simple in real life – if only family size and feelings about IVF were the only factors to consider when planning a family. But the idea behind the model is to help people make a decision by condensing all the information out there into an accessible form.
>
> "We have tried to fill a missing link in the decision-making process," says Dik Habbema at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, one of the creators of the model. "My son is 35 and many of his friends have a problem deciding when to have children because there are so many things they want to

> do.”
>
> It’s a scenario that will be familiar to many; the age at which people have their first child has been creeping up over the last 40 or so years. For example, the average age at which a woman has her first child is 28 in the UK and has reached 30 in Italy, Spain and Switzerland. In the US, the birth rate for women in their 20s has hit a record low, while the figures for those over 35 have increased over the last few decades.
>
> The decision is more pressing for women thanks to their limited supply of eggs, which steadily drop in quantity and quality with age. Female fertility is thought to start declining at 30, with a more significant fall after the age of 35.
>
> […]The new model incorporates data from studies that assess how fertility naturally declines with age. The team took information on natural fertility from population data collected over 300 years up to the 1970s, which includes data on 58,000 women.

I have often tried to talk to young women about the need to get their lives in gear. I advise them to work summers during high school, obtain a STEM degree in university, minimize borrowing money by going to community college for the generic prerequisites, don’t have premarital sex, get a job related to their STEM field straight out of college, pay off their debts, move out of their parents’ house, start investing from the first paycheck, marry between age 25-30, and then start having children after the first two “stabilizing” years of marriage. This is sound advice, rooted in my careful reconnaissance of the things that human beings care about and need in their old age. This advice is not bullying, it comes from reading many, many relevant papers. It comes from putting the knowledge gained from reading the papers into practice, and seeing results where appropriate.

I am giving you the numbers. Straight out of a peer-reviewed study. Don’t follow your heart. Don’t listen to your friends. Follow the science. Make your decisions within the boundaries of reality. God will not save you from foolish decisions.

Related posts

- Top fertility specialist advises women: don’t wait till 30 to try to have children
- Should Christians be motivated by the fear of missing out (FOMO)?
- New study: marrying in your mid-to-late 20s confers benefits
- Fertility and pregnancy: how long can a woman wait before having a baby?
- Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sex and sexuality at Harvard University

New software calculates the probability of generating functional proteins by chance

July 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Here's an article sent to me by JoeCoder about a new computer program written by Kirk Durston.

About Kirk:

> Kirk Durston is a scientist, a philosopher, and a clergyman with a Ph.D. in Biophysics, an M.A. in Philosophy, a B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering, and a B.Sc. in Physics. His work involves a significant amount of time thinking, writing and speaking about the interaction of science, theology and philosophy within the context of authentic Christianity. He has been married for 34 years to Patti and they have six children and three grandchildren. He enjoys landscape photography, antiques of various types, wilderness canoeing and camping, fly fishing, amateur astronomy, reading, music, playing the saxophone (alto), and enjoying family and friends.
>
> Kirk grew up on a cattle and grain farm in central Manitoba, Canada, where he spent countless hours wandering around on his own in the forest as a young boy, fascinated with the plants and animals that are native to that region of the province. Throughout his teen years he spent six days a week in the summer working as a farm hand with cattle and grain. He left his father's farm at the age of 19 to go to university.

Canada? Can anything good come out of Canada? Oh well, at least he's not from Scotland. Anyway, on to the research, that's what we care about. Code!

Summary of the article:

- Biological life requires proteins
- Proteins are sequences of amino acids, chained together
- the order of amino acids determines whether the sequence has biological function

- sequences that have biological function are rare, compared to the total number of possible sequences
- Durston wrote a program to calculate the number of the probability of getting a functional sequence by random chance
- The probability for getting a functional protein by chance is incredibly low

With that said, we can understand what he wrote:

> This program can compute an upper limit for the probability of obtaining a protein family from a wealth of actual data contained in the Pfam database. The first step computes the lower limit for the functional complexity or functional information required to code for a particular protein family, using a method published by Durston et al. This value for I(Ex) can then be plugged into an equation published by Hazen et al. in order to solve the probability M(Ex)/N of 'finding' a functional sequence in a single trial.
>
> I downloaded 3,751 aligned sequences for the Ribosomal S7 domain, part of a universal protein essential for all life. When the data was run through the program, it revealed that the lower limit for the amount of functional information required to code for this domain is 332 Fits (Functional Bits). The extreme upper limit for the number of sequences that might be functional for this domain is around 10^92. **In a single trial, the probability of obtaining a sequence that would be functional for the Ribosomal S7 domain is 1 chance in 10^100 … and this is only for a 148 amino acid structural domain, much smaller than an average protein.**
>
> For another example, I downloaded 4,986 aligned sequences for the ABC-3 family of proteins and ran it through the program. **The results indicate that the probability of obtaining, in a single trial, a functional ABC-3 sequence is around 1 chance in 10^128.** This method ignores pairwise and higher order relationships within the sequence that would vastly limit the number of functional sequences by many orders of magnitude, reducing the probability even further by many orders of magnitude – so this gives us a best-case estimate.

There are only about 10^80 particles in the entire physical universe – 10^85 at the most. These are *long odds*. But maybe if we expand the probabilistic resources by buying more slot machines, and we pull the slot machine lever at much faster rate… can we win the jackpot then?

Nope:

> What are the implications of these results, obtained from actual data, for the fundamental prediction of neo-Darwinian theory mentioned above? **If we assume 10^30 life forms with a fast replication rate of 30 minutes and a huge genome with a very high mutation rate over a period of 10 billion years, an extreme upper limit for the total number of mutations for all of life's history would be around 10^43. Unfortunately, a protein**

> **domain such as Ribosomal S7 would require a minimum average of 10^100 trials, about 10^57 trials more than the entire theoretical history of life could provide – and this is only for one domain. Forget about 'finding' an average sized protein, not to mention thousands.**

So even if you have lots of probabilistic resources, and lots of time, you're still not going to get your protein.

Compare these numbers with the 1 in 10^77 number that I posted about yesterday from Doug Axe. There is just no way to account for proteins if there is no intelligent agent to place the amino acids in sequence. When it comes to writing code, writing blog posts, writing music, or placing Scrabble letters, you need an intelligence. Sequencing amino acids into proteins? You need an intelligence.

Planned Parenthood executive admits abortion victim is a baby in fourth video

July 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

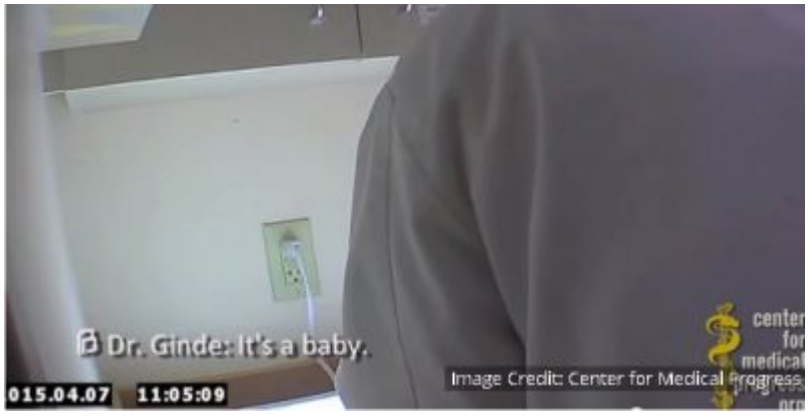

Planned Parenthood's Dr. Savita Yeshawant Ginde says: "it's a baby"

WARNING: The following video contains mature subject matter. Viewer discretion is advised.

The fourth Planned Parenthood sting video is out, and it's the most serious one yet.

Anika Smith writes about it at The Stream:

> For the second time in a week, the Center for Medical Progress has a new video up featuring undercover footage inside Planned Parenthood.
>
> […]The setup is a meeting with Dr. Ginde, Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains' Vice President and Medical Director. Her Planned Parenthood affiliate does over 10,000 abortions a year and has a contract to supply fetal body parts to Colorado State University.
>
> […]The smoking gun in this video is this statement by Ginde:
>
> **Sometimes, if we get, if someone delivers before we get to see them for a procedure, then we are intact.**
>
> "Delivers before" means these children are potentially born-alive infants. According to the Center for Medical Progress:
>
> Since PPRM does not use digoxin or other feticide in its 2nd trimester procedures, any intact deliveries before an abortion are potentially born-alive infants under federal law (1 USC 8).

So that would be infanticide then, not mere abortion.

Don't "get caught" doing this:

> […]**Ginde also suggests ways for Planned Parenthood to cover up its sale of aborted body parts. "Putting it under 'research' gives us a little bit of an overhang over the whole thing," Ginde remarks. "If you have someone in a really anti state who's going to be doing this for you,**

> **they're probably going to get caught."**

With a good lawyer, you won't get caught:

> At one point Ginde seems to suggest that PPRM's lawyer, Kevin Paul, is helping the affiliate skirt the fetal tissue law: "He's got it figured out that he knows that even if, because we talked to him in the beginning, you know, we were like, 'We don't want to get called on,' you know, 'selling fetal parts across states.'" The buyers ask, "And you feel confident that they're building those layers?" to which Ginde replies, "I'm confident that our Legal will make sure we're not put in that situation."

It's a baby?

> The video also features footage inside the lab. It is hard to watch, and many readers will find it disturbing. At one point, there's a cracking sound of an aborted fetus's skull, and Dr. Ginde says, "It's a baby," as she points out the heart and kidneys and explains that a per-item pricing system is best for them.

It's a baby boy:

> Dr. Ginde and her medical assistants pull out tiny eyeballs, heart, kidneys, stomach and identify the child at the end as "another boy!"

Hmmm. I thought that the Planned Parenthood story we were being told was that this was just "medical tissue". It's just a clump of cells, that's what the Democrats and their allies in the mainstream media tell me. But that's not what I see in this video. I see people saying "it's a baby" and "another boy".

It was a baby boy, and he had a life ahead of him. Maybe he would have gone to school and studied computer science, like me. Maybe he would have cared for his siblings. Maybe he would have met a girl and got married and provided for her. Maybe he would have become a father himself. Maybe, maybe, maybe. It's never going to happen now, because he's dead. They killed him. They took away his whole future so that they could have more money for themselves in their present. No one was there to protect him. Not even his own mother wanted to protect him.

Rachel Alexander has a list of "admissions of guilt" in the video in an article up at The Stream. If you are trying to make sense of what this video means, you should read this post.

She concludes:

> This fourth video alone provides more than enough evidence that Planned Parenthood is selling fetal body parts not merely to cover costs but for profit, a violation of 42 U.S. Code 289g. It also reveals that when Planned Parenthood calls their organ harvesting work "research," this is at least sometimes mere pretense.
>
> Its defenders and friends in the media dutifully repeat those words whenever

> anyone objects to funding Planned Parenthood. This video will make this ruse *much* harder to pull off.

If you want to read a good article that summarizes everything that happened this week with these videos, then check out this article from The Federalist by Mollie Hemingway. Her list:

1. Injunction On Release Of Potential Upcoming Video
2. Crisis Communications Firm Helping Planned Parenthood
3. Planned Parenthood Claims Web Site Attacked, But Was It?
4. Media Very Interested In Cecil The Lion, But Not Cecile The President Of Planned Parenthood
5. Hillary Clinton Says Videos Are 'Disturbing'
6. Planned Parenthood Poll Mocked
7. Planned Parenthood Fails To Show Up To Texas Hearing
8. Trouble for Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood
9. #UnplannedParenthood hashtag
10. Planned Parenthood Mammogram Falsehood Resurrected

One last thing. You'll recall that our glorious President Barack Obama voted multiple times against a bill that would require doctors to care for babies who were born alive during abortions. So where do you think he stands on "intact" fetuses? And this is the man who so many "pro-life" voters voted for twice in a row. When you meet someone who votes Democrat, you are look at someone who supports everything you see Planned Parenthood doing in these videos. I have been talking to some Democrats about this, and they cannot even look me in the eyes. Make sure you know what you are doing when you cast your vote in elections. You will have to answer for it on that day.

Does sex before marriage have any effect on your future relationships?

July 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young people understand the long-term impact of premarital sex?

I've posted before about how premarital sex affects the stability of marriages by making divorce more likely. But there has been more research published since. Let's take a look.

Here a good study on relationship tempo and relationship quality.

Abstract:

> Rapid sexual involvement may have adverse long-term implications for relationship quality. This study examined the tempo of sexual intimacy and subsequent relationship quality in a sample of married and cohabiting men and women. Data come from the Marital and Relationship Survey, which provides information on nearly 600 low- to moderate-income couples living with minor children. Over one third of respondents became sexually involved within the first month of the relationship. Bivariate results suggested that delaying sexual involvement was associated with higher relationship quality across several dimensions. The multivariate results indicated that the speed of entry into sexual relationships was negatively associated with marital quality, but only among women. The association between relationship tempo and relationship quality was largely driven by cohabitation. Cohabiting may result in poorer quality relationship because rapid sexual involvement early in the romantic relationship is associated with entrance into shared living.

The authors are from Cornell University and University of Wisconsin – Madison. Prestigious schools, and very far to the left.

Here's another recent study that shows that if a woman has more partners than just her husband as a premarital sex partner, the risk of divorce increases.

Conclusion:

> Using nationally representative data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, I estimate the association between intimate premarital relationships (premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) and subsequent marital dissolution. I extend previous research by considering relationship histories pertaining to both premarital sex and premarital cohabitation. I find that premarital sex or premarital cohabitation that is limited to a woman's husband is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption. **However, women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship have an increased risk of marital dissolution.**

Here's another study that makes it even more clear.

Findings:

> Data from the 1988 US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) were utilized to assess the impact of premarital sexual activity on subsequent marital stability. **Among white NSFG subjects first married in 1965-85, virgin brides were significantly less to have become separated or divorced (25%) than women who had not been virgins at marriage (35%).**
>
> **[…]The lower risk of divorce on the part of white women with no premarital sexual experience persisted even after numerous intervening and background variables were controlled.**

And I am going to save the best study for last. This marvelous PDF is from August 2014, and is put out by the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia. It is comprehensive, and links to many papers from decades ago to the state of the art today. It seems like people are really rushing into sex these days, without much thought. They want to have fun, feel accepted, be like their friends, conform to the culture. But sometimes, it's better to be practical than to be governed by the desire for fun and thrills. If you want to do something, look at the research and find out what the consequences are before you do it. That's what a sensible person does.

When it comes to discussing the Bible's rules on sex, evidence is very important. Evidence is what convinces even non-Chrsitian people to take the Bible seriously when it comes to putting sex in its proper place. That's why we need to know what the Bible says, and we need to augment that with real-world evidence so that it is applied to our own decision-making, and so that we can be persuasive when discussing it with others.

Where to get help if you have a selfish, absent or abusive mother or father

July 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Normally in my 6 PM post I like to write about something related to apologetics, because that's when people are done with their work and have time to think about the big questions. Today, I want to say something this article about lambs in Scotland, written by Sheila Walsh in the The Stream.

She writes:

> I am very fond of sheep. I grew up on the west coast of Scotland with sheep all around me, field after field of white wool and incessant crying when things seemed a little off.
>
> […]Of all the lessons I have learned from these defenseless, gentle animals, the most profound is the most painful. Every now and then, a ewe will give birth to a lamb and immediately reject it. Sometimes the lamb is rejected because they are one of twins and the mother doesn't have enough milk or she is old and frankly quite tired of the whole business. They call those lambs, *bummer lambs*.
>
> Unless the shepherd intervenes, that lamb will die. So the shepherd will take that little lost one into his home and hand feed it from a bottle and keep it warm by the fire. He will wrap it up warm and hold it close enough to hear a heartbeat. When the lamb is strong the shepherd will place it back in the field with the rest of the flock.
>
> "Off you go now, you can do this, I'm right here."
>
> The most beautiful sight to see is when the shepherd approaches his flock in the morning and calls them out, "*Sheep, sheep, sheep*!"
>
> The first to run to him are the bummer lambs because they know his voice. It's

> not that they are more loved — it's just that they believe it.
>
> I am so grateful that Christ calls himself the Good Shepherd.
>
> "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice." (John 10:3-4 NLT)

My older brother and I grew up with a mother who was very much focused on her career and earning and saving money for her retirement. We were both stuck in daycare very early after being born, so that she could go back to work right away. My older brother has shown the ill effects of our parents (especially our mother) not having any plan for us, especially morally and spiritually. He dropped out of college after failing his first year, never had a career. Although he has normal intelligence and mental health, he never could stick in any real job.

Although there were early warning signs when his grades started to drop in Grade 5, my parents never took responsibility to make a plan to solve it. Oh, they would yell and scream at him at report card time, but just for a day or two, and after that, nothing constructive. My brother decided that he could just ride out the flak my parents gave him on report card night, and keep going with his plan of having fun and being popular. My parents just forgot about it until the next report card day, because they did not want to be distracted from their careers, hobbies and retirement planning.

I had the exact same upbringing as my older brother. He actually did pretty well until Grade 5 just like me, but then our paths diverged. From Grade 5 on, his grades deterioriated. He got tired of having to study and he was more interested in the opinions of his peers and conforming to pop culture. In my case, from Grade 5 on, my grades were always high-90s. I remember taking the same classes as he did, in the same high school, with the same teachers. He got a 44 in data processing, I got a 96 with the same teacher and won the award for the entire grade. Every class I went to, the teachers would speak fondly of my older brother – he was a nice guy, very popular with his peers, good at sports, but not a very good student. How was it that I was winning awards when he had scored so poorly. Was I really his brother? How could we be so different?

The difference is that in Grade 5, he got a Gideon's New Testament and he read it and he didn't put it into practice, and in Grade 5, I got a Gideon's New Testament and I read it twice and I did put it into practice. That was the difference. I had the awareness of the moral law (i.e.- wisdom) that allowed me to judge my parents and judge my peers and judge my teachers and stand alone. When you cannot rely on anyone to lead you, judging others is critical. That is what allows you to maintain appropriate boundaries and minimize the influence of friends and family who do not have any plan to grow you. Awareness of the moral law is what allows you to stop trying to please people who do not want what is best for you. On the other hand, God is always willing to give you wisdom, and you can find out all about him because he has left plenty of evidence concerning his existence and character for you to find. It is in knowing God as he really is that you can find your sense of value, purpose and meaning.

For me, Christianity was a simple matter of being willing to go along with what was true, and not insisting having fun or conforming to peer expectations. The essential characteristic of my faith, in contrast to my older brother's lack of faith, was this – I did not mind being different, so long as I never lost a debate about what was true. My obedience to Christ has never been conditional on things going my way, on being liked, or anything like that. The only thing that mattered was being factually correct. It never bothered me what other people were doing, or what other people expected me to do, so long as as I was acting on what I knew to be true. And God helped me to find out what was true my motivating me to study, and leading me to him with good evidence, and good mentors.

How has this affected me? Well, this is the second thing I wanted to say about the bummer lamb analogy. Since I was a victim of this hands-off, me-first style of parenting, it's caused me to be extra sensitive about being a good spiritual leader to others in the same predicament.The people I mentor can see it in the way that I treat them the exact opposite of the way that my older brother and I were treated. I care what people read. I care what courses they choose. I care what they eat. I care how they feel. I care about their finances. I care about their plans to serve God. I care about their romantic relationships. I care whether they get recognition for doing good. I care whether their life is going in the right direction. One person I mentored who once considered taking her own life wrote to me when she graduated from a STEM program, and she said this: "I wish you could have been here at my graduation. My parents only paid for this degree. You were the one who got me through it". We have never met in person, but she is going to continue to make a huge difference for Christ and His Kingdom going forward.

I think when you have been a bummer lamb, you are extra careful to make decisions that will enable you to be a good shepherd to other lambs. Being a good shepherd does not mean being pious, spiritual, mystical, etc. Being a good shepherd does not mean making the lambs feel good about making bad decisions. Being a good shepherd means understanding what God has done to lead you, and then reflecting that love back to others *in practical, self-sacrificial actions that solve actual real-world problems for other people who want to know and serve God*. If you are about to jump off a cliff, the last thing you need is someone with no wisdom or experience telling you that God is OK with you doing whatever feels good to you. What you need is someone practical and competent to give you good advice, however much that advice may make you feel bad, or block your pursuit of fun.

One of my friends proof-read the draft of this post told me that it made her think of 2 Cor 1:3-5:

> [3] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
>
> [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.
>
> [5] For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort

> abounds through Christ.“

Nothing else I do in life matters to me as much as taking care of the people I mentor, especially the ones who are lost and lacking guidance and care. I have good health, good education, good career, and great finances. But by far the most important thing I do is following the example of the Shepherd by caring for other lambs.

Federal judge blocks release of future sting videos of Planned Parenthood

August 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

The Stream has the story.

Excerpt:

> A federal judge on Friday blocked the release of any recordings made at meetings of an abortion providers' association by an anti-abortion group that previously revealed secretly recorded videos of a Planned Parenthood leader.

> Judge William Orrick in San Francisco issued a temporary restraining order against the Center for Medical Progress hours after the order was requested by the National Abortion Federation.
>
> […]David Daleiden, a leader of the Center for Medical Progress who is also named in the suit, said in a statement that Planned Parenthood and its allies were trying to silence the group and suppress investigative journalism.
>
> "The Center for Medical Progress follows all applicable laws in the course of our investigative journalism work and will contest all attempts from Planned Parenthood and their allies to silence our First Amendment rights," he said.

The order is effective immediately, the hearing is scheduled for Monday August 3rd. Full text of the restraining order is up at The Federalist.

Twitchy had some information about the judge:

> Judge Orrick, a "huge Democratic donor" and bundler for President Obama, was appointed by President Obama to the bench after a recommendation from Planned-Parenthood cheerleader Sen. Barbara Boxer.
>
> Orrick's judgeship was approved by the Senate in 2013 after a lengthy confirmation battle by a vote of 56-41, with GOP Senators Susan Collins (Maine),

> Jeff Flake (Ariz.) and Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) voting to confirm.

The wife of the judge is a huge abortion supporter.

I wasn't really sure what to make of this order by the judge – will we really not see any more Planned Parenthood sting videos?

But Jay Richards tweeted the Stream story that I linked to three times with three dismissive comments:

Jay Richards is not convinced

So that's good news for us who would like to see these videos released. I would really like the American people to know that the people who perform abortions are not good people, and they are not doing these procedures to be nice. It's all about the money.

The connection between our moon, plate tectonics and habitability

August 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

I found an interview with Peter Ward (atheist) and Donald Brownlee (agnostic) discussing astrobiology in Forbes magazine. They were asked about how important plate tectonics are for a planet to be able to support complex life.

Excerpt:

> **Astrobiologists often cite the sheer numbers of stars and galaxies as evidence that complex life elsewhere must surely have evolved somewhere. But is probability enough?**
>
> Without a moon, we don't have any idea of how commonly a planet could have the long-term stability needed for complex life. Until we "get" that, going to the sheer numbers argument is useless. Without that moon-forming collision, we wouldn't have plate tectonics. Without plate tectonics, we might have microbes but we'd never get to animals.
>
> **What about the rarity of earth's crustal dichotomy of oceans and continents?**
>
> If you can't make granite, you're not going to have continents. But granite formation is a consequence of our moon-forming collision. That scrambled the entire density of our crust. Mars doesn't have granite; all it's got is this volcanic basalt. To build granite you need a planetary subduction [or plate tectonic] process.
>
> **In triggering complex life, how important were plate tectonics' role in the continual recycling of earth's atmosphere?**
>
> It's this recycling that allows for a very rich planetary atmosphere with an extended life. Photosynthesis gets you oxygen, but how do you get enough photosynthesis to get oxygen at 10 to 20 percent? You've got to have a shoreline next to a rich sea with rocks eroding into it in order to provide the nitrogen and

> phosphates for [plant] photosynthesis.

This article from Astrobiology explains more about the importance of plate tectonics. Excerpt:

> Plate tectonics is the process of continents on the Earth drifting and colliding, rock grinding and scraping, mountain ranges being formed, and earthquakes tearing land apart. It makes our world dynamic and ever-changing. But should it factor into our search for life elsewhere in the universe?
>
> Tilman Spohn believes so. As director of the German Space Research Centre Institute of Planetary Research, and chairman of ESA's scientific advisory committee, he studies worlds beyond our Earth. When looking into the relationship between habitability and plate tectonics, some fascinating possibilities emerged.
>
> It is thought that the best places to search for life in the Universe are on planets situated in "habitable zones" around other stars. These are orbital paths where the temperature is suitable for liquid water; not so close to the star that it boils away, and not so far that it freezes. Spohn believes that this view may be outdated. He elaborates, "you could have habitats outside those, for instance in the oceans beneath ice covers on the Galilean satellites, like Europa. But not every icy satellite would be habitable. Take Ganymede, where the ocean is trapped between two layers of ice. You are missing a fresh supply of nutrition and energy."
>
> So planets and moons that lie beyond habitable zones could host life, so long as the habitat, such as an ocean, is not isolated. It needs access to the key ingredients of life, including hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorous and sulphur. These elements support the basic chemistry of life as we know it, and the material, Spohn argues, must be regularly replenished. Nature's method of achieving this on the Earth appears to be plate tectonics.
>
> Spohn found that the further he delved into the issue, the more important plate tectonics seemed to be for life. For example, it is believed that life developed by moving from the ocean to the kind of strong and stable rock formations that are the result of tectonic action. Plate tectonics is also involved in the generation of a magnetic field by convection of Earth's partially molten core. This magnetic field protects life on Earth by deflecting the solar wind. Not only would an unimpeded solar wind erode our planet's atmosphere, but it also carries highly energetic particles that could damage DNA.
>
> Another factor is the recycling of carbon, which is needed to stabilize the temperature here on Earth. Spohn explains, "plate tectonics is known to recycle carbon that is washed out of the atmosphere and digested by bacteria in the soil into the interior of the planet from where it can be outcast through volcanic activity. Now, if you have a planet without plate tectonics, you may have parts of

> this cycle, but it is broken because you do not have the recycling link."
>
> It has also been speculated that the lack of tectonic action on Venus contributed to its runaway greenhouse effect, which resulted in the immense temperatures it has today.

Most planets don't have a moon as massive as ours is, and the collision that formed the moon is very fine-tuned for life. This is just one of the many factors that needs to be present in order to have a planet that supports complex, carbon-based life.

If you want to learn more about this data, I recommend watching "The Privileged Planet" DVD, and someone posted it on YouTube:

If you haven't seen it, and have 90 minutes, this is time well-spent.

Is there a downside to celebrating homosexuality as normal?

August 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When disagreements come up, it's good to look at what the evidence is

This article from Touchstone magazine has the numbers. The "CDC" is the government-run Centers for Disease Control.

It says:

> We don't hear much about the HIV/AIDS epidemic anymore. When was the last time you read an article either online or in a newspaper of general circulation, or saw a report on a television news program about HIV/AIDS? **And yet, with no media attention or public fanfare, Mr. Obama's proposed 2016 federal budget requests almost $32 billion for HIV/AIDS treatment and research, an increase of 3.1% over the prior year.** Notwithstanding the Supreme Court's recent decision finding a fundamental, constitutional "right" to homosexual and lesbian "marriage," there is a deeply dark and dangerous side to today's American homosexuality. Since the first cases of what would later become known as AIDS were reported in the United States in June of 1981, more than 1.8 million people in the U.S. are estimated to have been infected with HIV, of whom 658,507 have already died. Today, the Centers for Disease Control ("CDC") estimates that more than 1,218,400 people aged 13 years and older are living with HIV/AIDS in the United States. Of those, tragically, the CDC estimates that almost 1 in 8 (156,300 or 12.8%) are unaware of their infection. Homosexual and bisexual men who have sex with men, particularly young African-American men, continue to be the most seriously affected by HIV/AIDS. Over the past decade, approximately 50,000 people are newly infected *annually*. In 2013, the CDC estimated that 47,352 people were diagnosed with HIV infection, and an

> additional 26,688 people were diagnosed with full-blown AIDS in the United States. Again, according to the CDC, in 2012, notwithstanding medical advances, an estimated 13,712 people with AIDS died.
>
> Although African-Americans represent 12 percent of the U.S. population, but accounted for 44% of new HIV infections in 2012, and accounted for 41% of people living with HIV/AIDS. Hispanics/Latinos account for 20 percent of people living with HIV infection. Although homosexual and bisexual men who have exchanges of body fluids through anal intercourse and other sexual contact with other men represent a very small proportion of the male population in the United States, the CDC reports that they account for *78 percent of new HIV infections among males*, and 63 percent of all new infections. Importantly, in a typical year, the greatest number of new HIV infections occur in younger African-American males aged 13-24. Younger black men accounted for 45% of all new HIV infections among African-Americans, and *55% of new HIV infections among all younger homosexual and bisexual men*.

We can all think of behaviors that are not good for people. Suppose you notice your friend has started smoking, or maybe is eating too much and not exercising, or maybe's she's getting really thin and not eating enough – if you loved them, you would say something. What if they got defensive and they felt bad about being judged? I still think it's good to gently but firmly tell the truth.

In my office, I have leftists who often tell me to recycle cans. If I don't recycle cans, nothing bad will happen to me. But strangely enough, the leftists don't have anything to say about behaviors that really would hurt me, like homosexuality. Secondhand smoke? They will condemn that. But engaging in risky sexual activity? They want to celebrate that. What sense does this double standard make? Tell people the truth about what behaviors might hurt them, but do it in a gentle way. Don't just tell someone "it's wrong", either. Instead, show them the facts and the sources so they can check out the data for themselves.

Bible study: responsibilities and obligations in Philippians 1-4

August 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(Note: this video illustrates an infantry tactic where one group monitors the movement of another group. And then they switch roles. This is called "bounding overwatch")

Here are some parts of Philippians that speak to an issue that I think is a problem today for many Christians – self-centeredness. I have three parts of Philippians to present below on that topic.

1) The importance of fellowship – preparing to work together with other Christians towards some end:

Phil 1:3-11:

> [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, [4] always offering prayer with joy
> in my every prayer for you all, [5] in view of your participation in the gospel from
> the first day until now. [6] *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began
> a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. [7] For it is only right
> for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both
> in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all
> are partakers of grace with me. [8] For God is my witness, how I long for you all
> with the affection of Christ Jesus. [9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still
> more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, [10] so that you may
> approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until
> the day of Christ; [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes*
> through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Some Christians find it difficult to "participate in the gospel" with anyone because they feel uncomfortable with responsibilities, expectations or obligations to others. In my experience, people who shun responsibilities, obligations and expectations can improve this by taking Paul's advice – grow in real knowledge and all discernment. In my experience, I have found that people who shy away from responsibilities, expectations and obligations do so because they are afraid of failing. They are proud and don't want to look bad if they fail to perform something that they are expected to perform. Christians should not shy away from growing though, because growing is what helps us to be better partners in the gospel. We should try to read hard things, study hard things, and take the hardest jobs we can do – so that we build up our tolerance for responsibilities, obligations and expectations. People who do hard jobs like computer programming or nursing know that that you always struggle to learn difficult things and there is always the risk of looking incompetent. But we accept the risk of looking stupid and being judged and this builds a level of comfort with responsibilities, obligations and expectations. That comfort level with responsibilities, obligations and expectations that you get from doing hard

things can only help you be a better partner in the gospel.

2) The importance of not being self-centered, but instead being focused on the needs of others:

Phil 2:1-8:

> 2 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,[2] make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. [3] Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; [4] do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. [5] Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, [6] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. [8] Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

And Phil 2:19-23:

> [19] But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. [20] For I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. [21] For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. [22] But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child *serving* his father.

Nothing very complicated here, it's important to look out for the interests of others and to be concerned about their welfare. I think it's a good idea to be practical about this, and instead of just expressing opinions like "I care", try to find out what needs to be done and do it. The important thing is that it's good to be focused on other people, and not on ourselves, and to think of the interests of others, not our own interests. That point about looking out for other people's interests is said twice, once in each passage from chapter 2 I quoted above.

3) People who are doing good work for the Lord have needs:

Phil 4:10-18:

> [10] But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned *before*, but you lacked opportunity. [11] Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. [12] I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. [13] I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.[14] Nevertheless, you

> have done well to share *with me* in my affliction.
>
> [15] You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel,
> after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and
> receiving but you alone; [16] for even in Thessalonica you sent *a gift* more than
> once for my needs. [17] Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which
> increases to your account. [18] But I have received everything in full and have an
> abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you
> have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

I think if you are friends with a person and they are working on some task or other for the gospel, then it's a good idea to be sensitive to their needs, and be open to caring for those needs. Your goal should not be to make excuses for why you don't have to do anything to help them. In my case, finances are not a problem, so I don't have that need. I use money to supply the needs of people that I partner with in the gospel, though. Instead, I have other needs that people can help with – for example, after a stressful day of work, I am always looking for people to play games with me. Some of my friends show an interest in that, and others don't. The good things that I do for God are not free, and it matters a lot to me whether those who know me want to listen to me and then take responsibility for making sure that I keep functioning and doing the things that I do for God. We have to have an eye out to maintain people who are doing good things for God – not just take it for granted that it will continue. Sometimes, it is not just sending money (gifts), it can be other love languages like touch, service, quality time and words of encouragement. But turning away from the needs of others is not good for us.

Planned Parenthood president visited White House 39 times since 2009

August 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama and Planned Parenthood

This story is from CNS News.

It says:

> Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards, head of the taxpayer-subsidized abortion giant currently facing a firestorm for allegedly selling body parts harvested from aborted babies, has made personal visits to the White House 39 times since President Barack Obama took office in 2009, White House records show.
>
> According to online records on the White House website, Richards first visited the White House on Jan. 20, 2009 — the same day Obama first took office. Since then, Richards has met with Obama alone at least three times and First Lady Michelle Obama at least twice. She also met with president and his wife together another four times.
>
> […]In 2014 alone, Planned Parenthood, America's largest abortion provider, received $528.4 million in taxpayer funding, according to its 2014 annual financial report. That year, the organization performed 327,653 abortions.

And in return, Planned Parenthood gives a boatload of money to Democrats, to help them get elected.

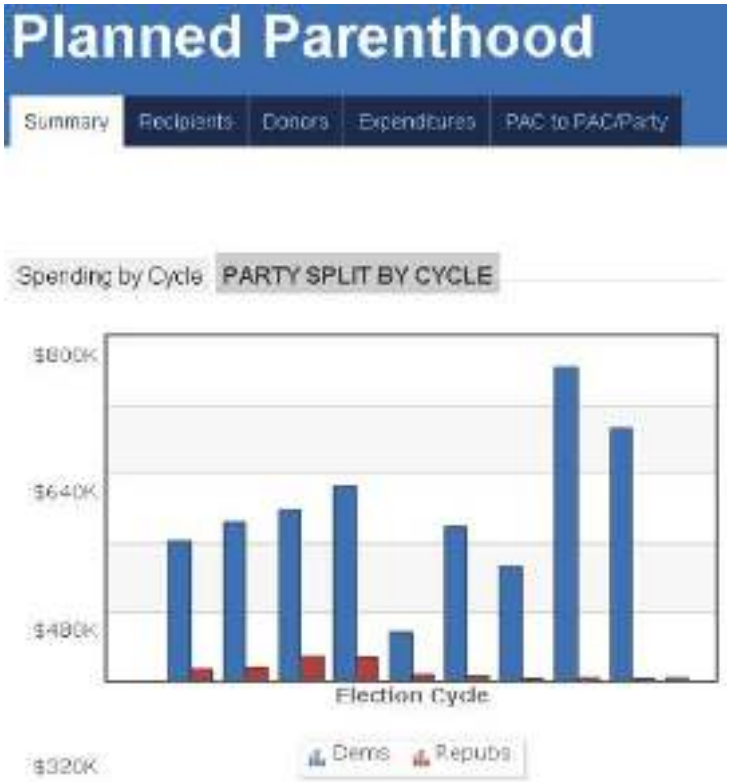

Planned Parenthood donations to Democrats
Source: Open Secrets

In the 2014 election cycle, Planned Parenthood gave 100% of their contributions to Democrats, and they are strongly backing Hillary Clinton in 2016.

That record of donations might explain why the White House is 100% behind Planned Parenthood's organ harvesting operation.

Investors Business Daily covered the White House response to the Planned Parenthood sting videos.

Excerpt:

> The White House has denounced an anti-abortion group's videos of Planned Parenthood's activities as "fraudulent" and circled its wagons to defend the indefensible. What kind of White House is this?
>
> For an institution that might argue that it doesn't have a dog in this fight, the White House sure has stepped into the Planned Parenthood baby-parts selling scandal on the side of the flesh-peddlers.
>
> Sounding a little surreal, White House press secretary Josh Earnest firmly stood up for Planned Parenthood on behalf of the Obama administration following the release of four undercover videos from the Center for Medical Progress showing the family-planning agency's leaders' callous disregard for human life and its grotesque efforts to reap commercial benefit for itself.
>
> At a White House press briefing Friday, Earnest called the videos "fraudulent," falsely claimed that they were "heavily edited" when in fact they were released in full, and hemmed and hawed to reporter's questions about whether President

> Obama had seen the videos, saying only: “I suspect someone has.”
>
> “And where are you getting your information of the fact that it’s fraudulent, or the fact that they’re distorted and edited unfairly?” a reporter asked at Friday’s White House press briefing.
>
> “Based on the public comments of Planned Parenthood, who has indicated that the views that are represented in the video are entirely inconsistent with that organization’s policies and with the high ethical standard that they live up to,” Earnest said, demurring again when the reporter asked if he was buying their talking points hook, line and sinker.

Yes, don’t believe your own eyes, voters. Josh Earnest is telling you that Planned Parenthood is a saintly organization, that lives up to the highest ethical standards. Keep voting Democrat, pro-life Democrats, everything is under control. You can keep your doctor, you can keep your health plan, and there is no organ harvesting for profit by Democrat special interest groups.

Obama has vowed to veto any bill that defunds Planned Parenthood. The organ harvesting must go on, and pro-life people must subsidize it, so that we are all equally guilty. It’s important that we all take part in this, so that those who are doing it can tell themselves that this is supported and condoned by taxpayers.

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

You might have heard that even Hillary Clinton is now saying that she found the videos “disturbing”. That’s true, but what she found “disturbing” was that someone had made the videos, not what was going on in the videos. It’s the fact that voters are seeing these videos that is disturbing to Hillary, not the organ harvesting for profit and the subsequent donations to the Democrat party.

Hillary Clinton loves Planned Parenthood

She has no moral qualms at all about what Planned Parenthood is doing in the videos. Probably why she got the Margaret Sanger award from Planned Parenthood. She is behind them 100%. And they are behind her 100%, having given her tens of thousands of dollars in donations.

Red families v. blue families: which states have the strongest families?

August 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

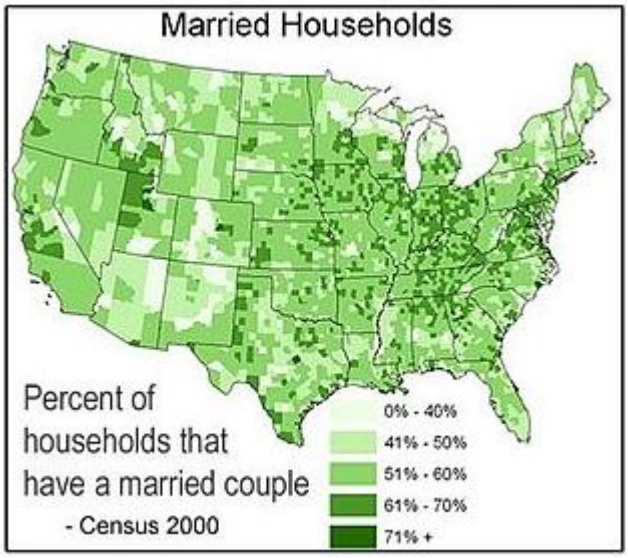

Map of marriage rate by state

This article from The Daily Signal talks about a recent study.

It says:

> According to a study from the Institute for Family Studies, red counties tend to have more married adults, more children born within marriage and higher levels of children living with both biological parents than blue counties.
>
> "The reddest counties have higher rates of family stability, which is surprising because red counties, especially in the South, tend to have higher divorce rates," said W. Bradford Wilcox, senior fellow with the Institute for Family Studies and author of the study. "But what seems to be happening here is that non-marital childbearing has emerged as a bigger engine of family instability than divorce in America. And this brief indicates that non-marital childbearing is lower in redder counties."
>
> […]Wilcox acknowledged in his report some of the most stable families do come from blue states, such as Massachusetts and Minnesota, and that, indeed, the most stable families exist in the most extreme red and blue states.
>
> But Wilcox said the state-level data addresses only part of the equation because it does not explain the "connection between family stability and political culture" at the local level.
>
> **"At the local level, red counties typically enjoy somewhat stronger families than do blue counties on at least three measures worth considering: marriage, non-marital childbearing and family stability," Wilcox wrote in the report.**

> "The bottom line: The marriage advantage in red America helps explain why children in red counties are somewhat more likely to enjoy stable families than are children in blue counties," he added.

I'm going to guess that the reason why people in blue states have lower rates of marriage and higher out-of-wedlock birth rates is because of higher tax rates, marriage penalties at the state level, and big government welfare programs that reward single mothers. Smaller government helps economic growth and leaves money in the pockets of responsible people. It's much easier to take the marriage track when you have more of your own money in your pocket.

I also think that Judeo-Christian values are a huge factor. People who are religious have the habit of unselfishness that is necessary to get married in the first place. Marriage is about self-sacrificially loving another sinner, and that is attractive to religious people. Marriage is not so attractive to people who think that there is no afterlife, that the purpose of life is fun, and selfishness is awesome. If you believe that this life is all there is and there is no objective morality, then there is no rational basis there for serving others when it goes against your self-interest.

Regarding that last point, about how religious people are more suited to unselfishness and cooperation, there is a new study out.

Consider this recent study from the University of Toronto, in Canada.

The abstract says:

> A large literature is currently contesting the impact of religion on prosocial behavior. As a window into this discussion, I examine the close social networks of American adults and consider whether religious traditionalists are more likely than other network members to supply several basic forms of social support. Analysis of the Portraits of American Life Survey reveals three main findings. First, a majority of Americans—religious or not—count at least one perceived religious traditionalist among their close network ties. **Second, American adults are more likely to receive advice, practical help, and money from ties identified as religious traditionalists than from other types of ties, a pattern that held among both kin and nonkin network ties. Finally, although perceived traditionalist network members appear especially inclined to assist highly religious people, they nevertheless offer social support to Americans across a broad spectrum of religiosity.** Beyond its relevance for debates on religion and community life, this study also proposes a novel strategy to assess prosocial behavior. Asking people to recount the deeds of their network members can reduce certain self-reporting biases common to survey research and helps locate prosocial activity in concrete and meaningful social relationships.

So, people who are more religious and traditional already have the character traits to be unselfish. And what is marriage, but the promise to be unselfish, for the sake of your

spouse, and eventually, for the sake of your kids?

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

August 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

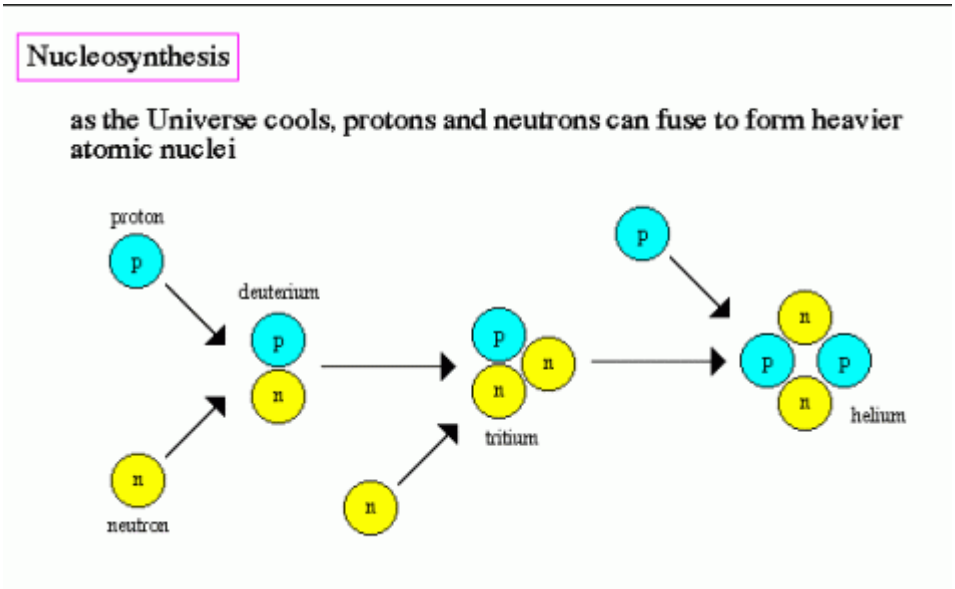

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion (Source)

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of

these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 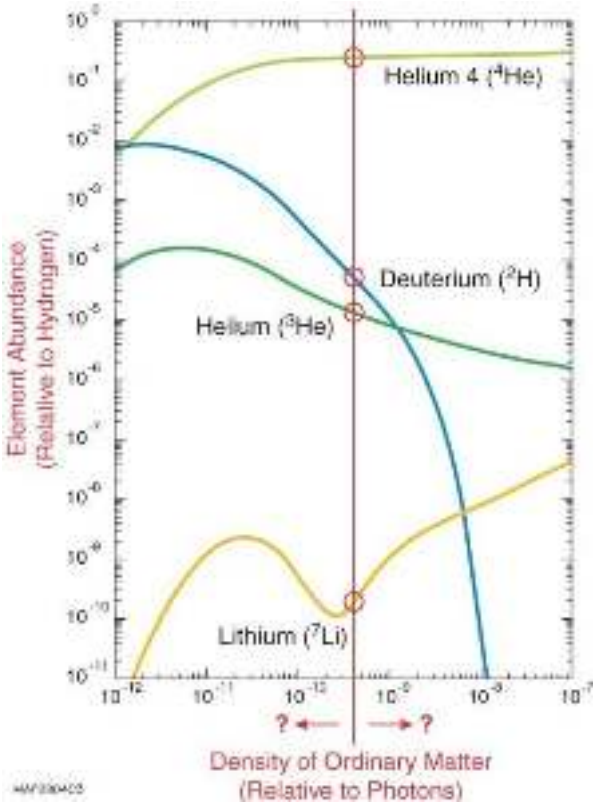
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

(Source)

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Democrats defeat Republican bill to defund Planned Parenthood

August 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Iowa Senator Joni Ernst's bill to defund Planned Parenthood

Life News has the story.

Excerpt:

> Senate Democrats today defeated an effort to revoke taxpayer funding for the Planned Parenthood abortion business by filibustering the bill and preventing a vote on it. Republicans were unable to secure the 60 voted needed to invoke cloture and stop debate on the bill, allowing an up or down vote.
>
> The legislation follows four shocking videos that have caught Planned Parenthood doctors discussing and arranging the sale of body parts of aborted babies.
>
> The Senate voted 53-46 on the cloture motion — failing to get the 60 votes needed to stop the Democratic filibuster against the de-funding measure. had the cloture vote been approved and the bill passed, and should the House pass its own bill to de-fund Planned Parenthood, President Barack Obama said he would veto the measure. The vote was an improvement over a 2011 vote that saw the vote on the filibuster fail and technically the Senate is 5 votes away from overcoming a Democratic filibuster.

I am actually curious to hear how the videos where put to the Democrats, and how they responded, because who could really vote in favor of these practices?

The Republicans did a good job of showing the Democrats the evidence:

> During the debate in the Senate, Republican lawmakers sought to highlight those shocking videos showing Planned Parenthood arranging for the sale of aborted babies.
>
> Republican Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa said, “The American taxpayer should not be asked to fund an organization like Planned Parenthood that has shown a sheer disdain for human dignity and complete disregard for women and their babies.”
>
> “The barbaric practice of conducting abortions in a way that promotes harvesting fetal organs, or profiting from such practices, has no place in modern society,” said Sen. Dan Coats of Indiana. “Planned Parenthood’s disgusting practices should not receive a dime of taxpayer money.”

Here’s Joni Ernst making the case:

Basically, she summarized what was in the videos, and yet the Democrats still voted in favor of allowing the organ harvesting to occur. Atheists like to talk a lot about empathy, and here you can see the empathy of the secularists on display. If the roles were reversed, and they were the unborn child, you can bet that they would vote for their own lives. But, tough break for those kids. They are not powerful senators, so kill them all and sell their body parts. That’s what a Democrat is. Surprise! All this talk about being against slavery is just smokescreen – Democrats are in favor of slavery. It never ended, for them.

Well, it’s a loss. The right way to do this, of course, would have been to attach the defunding of Planned Parenthood to an essential bill, and shut down the government over it. But the Senate Republicans are not as conservative as the House leaders or the Governors.

Here’s what comes next:

> With the Senate voting against de-funding, attention now turns to attempts to de-fund Planned Parenthood via the budget process. Already, 18 House Republicans have said they will not allow passage of any essential bills to fund the federal government if such bills do not include language de-funding Planned Parenthood.
>
> Attention will also now turn to Congressional and state efforts to investigate Planned Parenthood’s sale of body parts from aborted babies and state-level efforts to de-fund Planned Parenthood further.

And in fact, my #1 choice for President, Governor Bobby Jindal, went ahead and did something about this in his home state of Louisiana:

> Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal canceled Planned Parenthood’s Medicaid contract with his state Monday, moving to strip the organization of funding in the wake of disturbing undercover videos that appeared to show employees haggling over selling fetal tissue obtained from abortions.

> Mr. Jindal said the videos showed Planned Parenthood workers admitting they engaged in late-term abortions and did them to try to leave fetus body parts as intact as possible so they could be sold later.
>
> He said his state health department believes Planned Parenthood's local affiliates could be breaking laws that prohibit groups that take funding from encouraging women to have abortions.
>
> "Planned Parenthood does not represent the values of the people of Louisiana and shows a fundamental disrespect for human life," the governor said in a statement announcing the move. "It has become clear that this is not an organization that is worthy of receiving public assistance from the state."

My #2 choice for President, Governor Scott Walker, had already de-funded Planned Parenthood in his state. Striking, since Wisconsin is a blue state. But then again, Scott Walker is not someone who runs from a fight.

I really hope we nominate someone conservative this time.

Atheist Jerry Coyne explains why morality is impossible for atheists

August 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson about to do philosophy

Let's review what you need in your worldview in order to have a rationally grounded system of morality.

You need 5 things:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you

just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Theism rationally grounds all 5 of these. Atheism cannot ground *any of them.*

Let's take a look at #4: free will and see how atheism deals with that.

Atheism and free will?

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality.

Here are some more atheists to explain how atheists view morality.

William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud

> and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

When village atheists talk about how they can be moral without God, it's important to ask them to justify the minimum requirements for rational morality. Atheists may act inconsistently with their worldview, believing in free will, expecting praise and blame for complying with the arbitrary standards of their peer group, etc. But there is nothing more to morality on atheism that imitating the herd – at least when the herd is around to watch them. And when the herd loses its Judeo-Christian foundation – watch out. That's when the real atheism comes out, and you can see it on display in the Planned Parenthood videos. When God disappears from a society, anything is permissible.

Justin Bass fact-checks Dan Barker's debate performance

August 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two Rams butting heads: may the best ram win!

I read this post from Justin Bass, PhD about his recent debate with Dan Barker on the historical Jesus. Bass takes a look at Barker's arguments in his written work, as well as his performance in the debates.

First, Barker does not quote any mainstream historians, he only cites people like G.A. Wells (a professor of German language), Barbara G. Walker (an expert in *knitting*), and other people on the radical fringe:

> In writing on Jesus and Christianity, Dan cites only these other sources: John Remsburg, J. M. Robertson, W. B. Smith, Barbara Walker, G. A. Wells, Randall Helms, John Allegro, Hugh Schonfield, Earl Doherty, Robert Price and Richard Carrier. A review of their credentials quickly reveal that the majority of them are inadequate sources for Jesus and early Christianity.
>
> […]That was very honest of Dan to admit that he erred in using Walker as a source, but why did Dan not cite anywhere in his books James Dunn, E. P. Sanders, John P. Meier, N. T. Wright, Paula Fredricksen, Dale Allison, Martin Hengel, Richard Bauckham, or really any of the other 6000+ scholars professionally teaching in relevant subjects of early Christianity?

One thing is for sure – with a list of clowns like that, Barker is not interested in truth, but just interested in believing whatever suits his emotional needs.

The rest of the Bass essay covers these topics:

1. Did Nazareth Exist during the Lifetime of Jesus?
2. Josephus and Tacitus on Jesus
3. Did Paul Believe Jesus' Resurrection was Physical or Spiritual?
4. The 500 Eyewitnesses
5. "Contradictions" in the Resurrection Accounts
6. Dan's One Alternative Explanation (for the minimal facts)

7. Even if Jesus rose from the dead, Dan would still not accept Him as his Lord

You might remember that I already blogged about Dan Barker's crazy view that Nazareth did not exist at the time of Jesus, and the archaeological discoveries that falsify his view.

Let's just look at one of other ones in the list. I think this is the craziest one of all – Dan Barker's explanation for the minimal facts:

Bass writes:

> I presented 7 facts concerning the historical Jesus and the rise of the Christian movement in the first century in my opening statement that are agreed upon by all full-time teaching scholars in the Western world (6000+) whether in Classics, History, or in Early Christianity. And I argued that the best explanation of these 7 facts is that Jesus of Nazareth rose bodily from the dead and therefore is Lord of all.
>
> Throughout the night, Dan only gave one possible alternative explanation that would, even if true, explain only one of my 7 facts. He admitted before he shared this explanation that the hallucination hypothesis (which is the leading alternative explanation among NT scholars today) is "weak." **Instead, Dan proposed a theory found first in the writings of Robert Price. You can watch the clip above, but Dan essentially argues that because Peter felt so bad about his denial of Jesus after his death, he had an experience that convinced him Jesus was still alive.** But as I said in the debate this in no way answers why someone like Paul would become a follower of Jesus and I pressed Dan for evidence for this theory and he gave none.
>
> Ultimately, this was just something Robert Price just made up out of thin air and Dan is carrying on Price's imagination.

How the heck are you supposed to get Paul to exchange his comfortable life as a zealous, respected Pharisee for his life as a Christian missionary *based on Peter feeling guilty?* Paul was trying to kill Peter – he isn't interested in Peter's supposed feelings of guilt. No one – and I mean no one – doubts that Paul was a zealous Pharisee who thought that he saw a post-mortem appearance of Jesus. That is the only way to explain his complete change of mind. In fact, the Peter-grief theory does not explain the empty tomb. It does not explain the post-mortem appearances to Paul, James and others, and it does not explain the early belief in the resurrection that emerged in Jerusalem. It's a ridiculous theory, and the only way to believe it is by insulating yourself from the evidence.

Fifth video: Planned Parenthood selling intact 20-week baby cadavers for profit

August 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Here's the latest video:

WARNING: The video above contains graphic images of violence against unborn children, especially in the second half. Viewer discretion is advised.

Rachel Alexander writes about the fifth video from the Center for Medical Progress at The Stream.

She writes:

> Posing as a research company interested in purchasing fetuses, the undercover buyers discuss the costs with Melissa Farrell, Director of Research for Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast. Farrell, with her background in finance, makes it clear the transaction will be profitable — a felony since federal law prohibits profiting from the sale of fetal body parts — and that they can change the abortion procedures to ensure the fetuses come out intact (thus rendering them more marketable in the fetal body parts aftermarket), also a violation of law.
>
> A particularly incriminating part of the video comes when Farrell turns to a technician and asks, "Any idea why the other affiliates in Texas think it's illegal?"

The big new development in this video is that the abortion procedures are being modified in order to deliver intact unborn baby corpses.

More:

> Farrell discusses how they'll need to change their abortion procedures to make sure the fetuses come out intact: "We deviate from our standard, get creative …

> exploring how to make a higher chance of intact, talk directly to the doctor — they can make it happen." This is further evidence that the abortionists, contrary to federal law, do often deviate from standard procedure to improve the marketability of the baby body parts. The standard procedures are standard, incidentally, because they are judged to be the best procedures for the life and health of the mothers, but apparently never mind about that when other considerations are on the table.

Amelia Hamilton comments in her article at The Stream:

> When Melissa Farrell referred to fetuses as "a matter of line items," she is talking about money, discussing how to charge to get the most out of each baby. Here are some other examples from this fifth video.
>
> "My department contributes so much to the bottom line of our organization here." (7:08 into the video)
>
> "If we alter our process, and we are able to obtain intact fetal cadavers, then we can make it part of the budget that any dissections are this and splitting the specimens into different shipments is this — it's all just a matter of line items." (7:58 into the video)

So they can add a line item (charge) to each order for specific parts because each specific part request requires dissection and shipping costs. They can add those line items to each order so that they can maximize revenue. So the abortion business is really not about recouping costs at all – it really is about making a profit. They are using unwanted human beings to make money. Much like slave owners did, except slave owners never treated their slaves this gruesomely.

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UK Tory MP: use anti-terrorism laws against Christians who say gay marriage is wrong

August 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

This article appeared in the far left UK Telegraph. (H/T Dina)

It says:

> New banning orders intended to clamp down on hate preachers and terrorist propagandists should be used against Christian teachers who teach children that gay marriage is "wrong", a Tory MP has argued.

> Mark Spencer called for those who use their position in the classroom to teach traditionalist views on marriage to be subject to "Extremism Disruption Orders" (EDOs), tough new restrictions planned by David Cameron and Theresa May to curb radicalisation by jihadists.
>
> In a letter to a constituent, Mr Spencer, the MP for Sherwood in Nottinghamshire, insisted that Christian teachers were still "perfectly entitled" to express their views on same-sex marriage – but only "in some situations".

> Christian campaigners said Mr Spencer's remarks confirmed what they had previously warned: that those who believe marriage should only be between a man and a woman would now be "branded extremists".
>
> […]Ministers have signalled that the orders, expected to be a key plank of the Government planned new Counter-Extremism Bill, would be used not only curb the activities of radical Islamist clerics but those who promote other views deemed to go against "British values".

According to the MP's letter, the anti-terrorism laws would be used whenever teachers

taught children that redefining marriage was wrong. This is the view of every Bible-believing Christian, by the way. Defending the standard definition of marriage is now the equivalent of advocating for Jihad, in British schools.

I did a quick search to see what really is going on in the UK with freedom of conscience, free speech, and so on, and I found this story:

> A Christian registrar who claimed religious discrimination has today been denied an appeal by the European Court of Human Rights, in a move described as a "sad day for liberty of conscience".
>
> Lillian Ladele was claiming religious discrimination after being forced out of her Islington Council job over her conscientious objection to same-sex civil partnerships.
>
> She was seeking to appeal to the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights after losing a 5-2 majority decision in January.
>
> Two other Christians, Shirley Chaplin and Gary McFarlane, also had their applications for appeal turned down.

It's a good idea, when deciding who to vote for, to look at other countries to see where the policies being put forward today have led. One policy that led to a terrible place, especially for men and children, was no-fault divorce. Today, we have same-sex marriage, which denies children access to their biological mother or father, or both, and makes relationships about the needs of selfish adults, instead about the needs of children. And in the UK, speaking against this second redefinition of marriage is now a crime.

Scott Klusendorf defends the pro-life view on the Unbelievable radio show

August 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of this debate
Here are the details:

> The abortion debate reared its head again this summer after controversial tweets by Richard Dawkins made the news.
>
> Justin hosts a discussion between Mara Clarke of the Abortion Support Network and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Instititute. Mara believes women need to be decide whether to terminate a pregnancy, but Scott says that all depends on whether we are dealing with a human life in the womb.
>
> MP3 of this show: http://cdnapi.kaltura.com/p/618072/sp/61807200/playManifest/entryId/1_ggc953xi/flavorId/1_vto2eisb/protocol/http/format/url/a.mp3?clientTag=feed:1_jlj47tkv

My snarky paraphrase of the debate (not exact):

- Speaker introductions
- Klusendorf: no justification for abortion is necessary if the unborn are not human
- Klusendorf: we need to address the issue "what is the unborn?" Are the unborn human?
- Klusendorf: SLED: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency

- Klusendorf: None of these things affect the value of a human being
- Klusendorf: Even if we don't KNOW whether the unborn is human
- Mara: I'm not going to debate when life begins
- Mara: Women know when life begins by feelings
- Mara: The moral decision is "whether I can take care of this child?"
- Brierley: When is an unborn being human?
- Mara: I refuse to debate that – the real question is whether women want their babies or not
- Mara: Forced pregnancy is not OK
- Brierley: Could your justification for abortion (not wanting to care for a child) work through all 9 months?
- Mara: Late term abortions are rare, so I don't have to answer that question
- Mara: Abortion should be OK through all 9 months of pregnancy because women cannot be restricted
- Mara: Some women are poor, they need to be able to kill expensive babies at any time
- Klusendorf: although she says she won't debate the unborn, she does take a position
- Klusendorf: she assumes the unborn is not human, because she says that insufficient funds is justification for abortion
- Klusendorf: no one argues that you can kill a two year old because they cost money, because she thinks they are human
- Klusendorf: she is begging the question by assuming the unborn are not human, but that is the issue we must resolve
- Klusendorf: I am pro-choice on many other things, e.g. women choosing their own husbands, religion, etc.
- Klusendorf: Some choices are wrong – Mara might be right, but she needs to make the case for the unborn not being human
- Brierley: What is your reason for thinking that an unborn child is different from a 2-year old?
- Mara: An unborn child is not the same as a 2-year old, in my personal opinion
- Mara: I am not a debater, so I don't have to provide reasoning for my assertion, I just feel it
- Mara: Not everybody agrees with Scott, they don't have to have a rational argument, they just need to feel differently
- Mara: From my experience, when a woman doesn't want to be pregnant, then she should be able to not be pregnant
- Mara: Women shouldn't be punished with a baby that she doesn't want, even if she chooses to have recreational sex
- Brierley: What do you think of women who think the unborn is human and do it anyway?
- Klusendorf: It's interesting that they never kill their toddlers for those reasons
- Klusendorf: I layed out scientific and philosophical reasons for the humanity of the

unborn
- Klusendorf: Her response was “but some people disagree with you”
- Klusendorf: People disagreed about whether slavery was wrong, or whether women should be able to vote
- Klusendorf: that doesn’t mean there is no right answer – the right answer depends on the arguments
- Klusendorf: if absence of agreement makes a view false, then it makes HER pro-choice view false as well
- Klusendorf: she did make an argument for the unborn child having no rights because of the location
- Klusendorf: she needs to explain to us why location matters – what about location confers value
- Mara: I’m not going to let Scott frame my debate for me!!!
- Mara: women get pregnant and they don’t want their babies! should we put them in jail!!!!
- Klusendorf: I didn’t just give my opinion, I had science and philosophy, the issue is “what is the unborn?”
- Mara: philosophical and scientific debates are unimportant, I am an expert in real women’s lives
- Klusendorf: Which women? Women in the womb or only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Only those outside the womb
- Klusendorf: Only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Women living outside the womb have a right to kill women inside the womb – women have bodily autonomy
- Klusendorf: then does a pregnant woman with nausea have a right to take a drug for it that will harm her unborn child?
- Mara: Unborn children are only valuable if they are wanted, unborn children only deserve protection if they are wanted
- Mara: There are restrictions on abortion – you can’t get an abortion through all nine months in the US
- Mara: There is a 24-week limit in the UK as well
- Klusendorf: There are no restrictions on abortion that conflict with “a woman’s health” because Supreme Court said
- Mara: where are these late term abortion clinics?
- Klusendorf: (he names two)
- Mara: that’s not enough!!! we need more! where is there one in Pennsylvania?
- Klusendorf: well, there used to be Gosnell’s clinic in Pennsylvania, and you could even get an infanticide there….
- Brierley: What about Dawkins’ view that it is moral to abort Down’s Syndrome babies?
- Klusendorf: he is ignoring the scientific case and philosophical case for the pro-life
- Klusendorf: the pro-life view is a true basis for human equality

What I wanted Scott to ask was whether sex-selection abortions were OK with her. Since her reasoning is “if it’s unwanted, it has no rights”, then that would mean sex-selection abortions are just fine. That’s what a UK abortion expert recently argued. And I also posted recently about how sex-selection abortions are not prosecuted in the UK. If you’re looking for a war on women, there it is.

New Hampshire defunds Planned Parenthood, Democrat governor opposed

August 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

The New Hampshire Executive Council voted 3-2 to deny a $639,000 contract with Planned Parenthood of Northern New England.

This is from the Washington Times. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> The New Hampshire vote, coming over the objections of Democratic Gov. Maggie Hassan, comes as the latest example of the backlash against Planned Parenthood following the release of five undercover videos raising alarm over the organization's involvement in the trade of fetal organs from abortions.
>
> […]The Republican-controlled New Hampshire Executive Council denied state funding by turning down a $639,000 contract with Planned Parenthood of Northern New England.
>
> […]At least 10 other states have reacted by launching investigations, but New Hampshire is not one of them. The executive council's decision to deny state funding to Planned Parenthood came after Ms. Hassan refused calls to look into the group's practices regarding fetal tissue.
>
> The governor has said there is no evidence of illegality at the state clinics, which reportedly do not handle fetal tissue donations, adding, "We do not launch investigations in the state of New Hampshire on rumor."
>
> The Democratic governor also rejected a request from Republicans, including Mr. Sununu, to look into using other health care providers for nonabortion services offered by the Planned Parenthood clinics.

> […]Ms. Hassan blasted the executive council's vote in a Wednesday statement, saying, "I am incredibly disappointed in the outcome of today's vote."
>
> "The council's vote to defund Planned Parenthood will hurt the health and economic well-being of thousands of Granite Staters," Ms. Hassansaid. "Moving forward, I will continue to fight to ensure that women and families have access to the important health services that are essential to the economic security and vitality of our families."

So, there is some good news. New Hampshire joins other states like Wisconsin and Louisiana who have already de-funded the organ harvestors / human traffickers.

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FBI conducting investigation of Hillary Clinton's private, secret e-mail server

August 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does national security make?
This is from the ultra-leftist Washington Post, of all places.

It says:

> The FBI has begun looking into the security of Hillary Rodham Clinton's private e-mail setup, contacting in the past week a Denver-based technology firm that helped manage the unusual system, according to two government officials.
>
> Also last week, the FBI contacted Clinton's lawyer, David Kendall, with questions about the security of a thumb drive in his possession that contains copies of work e-mails Clinton sent during her time as secretary of state.
>
> The FBI's interest in Clinton's e-mail system comes after the intelligence community's inspector general referred the issue to the Justice Department in July. Intelligence officials expressed concern that some sensitive information was not in the government's possession and could be "compromised."
>
> […]The inquiries are bringing to light new information about Clinton's use of the system and the lengths to which she went to install a private channel of communication outside government control — a setup that has emerged as a major issue in her campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination.
>
> For instance, the server installed in her Chappaqua, N.Y., home as she was preparing to take office as secretary of state was originally used by her first campaign for the presidency, in 2008, according to two people briefed on the setup. A staffer who was on the payroll of her political action committee set it up in her home, replacing a server that Clinton's husband, former president Bill Clinton, had been using in the house.
>
> **The inquiries by the FBI follow concerns from government officials that**

> **potentially hundreds of e-mails that passed through Clinton's private server contained classified or sensitive information. At this point, the probe is preliminary and is focused on ensuring the proper handling of classified material.**

Previously, I blogged about how former deputy director of the CIA Mike Morrell said that everything on Hillary's server was now in the possession of foreign governments. And we know that this included classified information.

No wonder she is dropping in the polls… *precipitously*.

What will God do with people who have never heard about Jesus?

August 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm baby octopus, and I approve this message

The baby octopus is there for no particular reason, because this is a theology post. Still, he is quite cute, don't you think?

One of the most difficult questions for Christians to answer, especially when posed by adherents of other religions, is the question of what happens to those who have never heard of Jesus? In this post, I will explain how progress in the field of philosophy of religion has given us a possible (and Biblical) solution to this thorny question.

First, Christianity teaches that humans are in a natural state of rebellion against God. We don't want to know about him, and we don't want him to have any say in what we are doing. We just want to appropriate all the gifts he's given us, do whatever we want with them, and then have eternal bliss after we die. We want to do whatever we want and then be forgiven, later.

Along comes Jesus, who, through his sinless life and his death on the cross, heals that rift of rebellion between an all-good God and rebellious man. Now we have a real understanding of the fact that God is real, that he has power over death, and that he has very specific ideas on what we should be doing. If we accept Jesus' atoning sacrifice and follow his teachings, we can avoid the penalty of our rebellion.

The only problem is that in order to appropriate that free gift of reconciliation, people need to actually *know* about Jesus. And there are some people in the world who have not even *heard* of him. Is it fair that these other people will be eternally separated from God,

just because they happened to be born in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Enter famous Christian apologist William Lane Craig to save the day. His solution is that God orders the world in such a way that anyone who would freely choose to acknowledge Jesus and appropriate his teachings in their decision-making *will* be given eternal life. God knows in advance who would respond, and chooses their time and place of birth, and he supplies them with the amount of evidence they need.

And this agrees with what the Bible teaches. The apostle Paul says this in his apologetic on Mars Hill in Acts 17:22-31:

> 22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.
> 23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ' N D ' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.
> 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;
> 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;
> 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, **having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,**
> **27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;**
> 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'
> 29 "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.
> 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,
> 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

This passage is not difficult to understand, although some may find it difficult to accept. According to the Bible, God puts us in the best possible place for us to respond to him, and if we don't, we are responsible. We decide how to respond to God's efforts to make himself known to us. We would never find him ourselves, but he takes the initiative to reveal himself, without being coercive. It falls to us to investigate and find the clues, and re-prioritize our lives according to what we find.

In this research paper, Craig explains in detail how God foreknows how people will choose in every set of circumstances, and how God uses that knowledge to get everyone where they need to be *without violating their free will.* God wants the best for everybody, and has ordered to whole universe in order to give each of us our best opportunity for eternal

life.

Here is a summary of the what is in his paper:

> The conviction of the New Testament writers was that there is no salvation apart from Jesus. This orthodox doctrine is widely rejected today because God's condemnation of persons in other world religions seems incompatible with various attributes of God.
>
> Analysis reveals the real problem to involve certain counterfactuals of freedom, *e.g.*, why did not God create a world in which all people would freely believe in Christ and be saved? Such questions presuppose that God possesses middle knowledge. But it can be shown that no inconsistency exists between God's having middle knowledge and certain persons' being damned; on the contrary, it can be positively shown that these two notions are compatible.

Go read this paper and equip yourself to answer this common question!

Carly Fiorina wins first GOP debate, Perry and Jindal survive to fight again

August 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Carly Fiorina outperforms at first GOP primary debate

Carly Fiorina was the star of the first GOP debate, no one else was even close. I admit that even though I am someone who favors only conservative governors as candidates (Walker, Jindal, Perry).

Highlights:

The Fox News moderators were just awful, but Fiorina still shined. The other candidates who impressed me were Perry and Jindal.

The reactions on Twitter were unaninmous in declaring her the winner, with Jindal and Perry being mentioned as runners-up.

Twitter reactions to the first GOP debate

Let’s take a look at that article from The Federalist that Mollie Hemingway tweeted.

She says:

> FOX News hosted an early debate for seven candidates whose polling numbers weren’t high enough to get on the main stage. Former New York Governor George Pataki, former Virginia Governor Jim Gilmore, Sen. Lindsay Graham, R-SC, Former Sen. Rick Santorum, R-PA, former Texas Governor Rick Perry, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal and businesswoman Carly Fiorina answered questions from FOX News’ Martha MacCallum and Bill Hemmer.
>
> Graham focused his answers on ISIL, discussion of which seems to be the main motivating factor in his run for presidency. Perry focused on his experience. Jindal emphasized the importance of conservative governance. Pataki and Gilmore emphasized records from their time as governors less recent than Perry’s. And Santorum revisited themes, such as helping out blue collar workers, he emphasized during his earlier run for presidency.
>
> But it was Carly who stood out. Fiorina towered over her opponents, even though many of them handled themselves well. When asked about Donald Trump’s popularity, Fiorina pointed out progressive positions he held while also acknowledging that his popularity is a result of the GOP political class failing to serve its constituents. Still, she asked, “What are the principles by which he’ll govern?
>
> “There’s a sharpness and intelligence about her. A precision of her message that really cuts through,” FOX News’ Chris Wallace said immediately after the debate.
>
> That was seen in one answer when she went out of her way to draw distinctions

> between conservatism and progressivism, about how they differ at their core in their views of the individual, equality, and the role of the government. Though she officially ran out of time in this answer, she kept going until she made her point and a moderator would have been crazy to stop her, on account of how compelling the moment was. Her control of the stage at that moment had something of Reagan's "I am paying for this microphone" to it, a defiance based in commitment to a cause.
>
> Simply articulating conservatism, much less doing it with precision and eloquence, reminds viewers how rarely such defenses of conservatism are heard from current Republican leadership. It also reminds them how ineffective and inarticulate such defenses of conservatism usually are.

She should have been in the debate of the top 10 candidates, and let that clown Donald Trump go jump in a lake.

Now there was some division about who won – some people thought Jindal and Perry also did well the debate:

Jindal and Perry also did well in the first GOP debate

Rachel Alexander explain why she liked Jindal in this article at The Stream.

She writes:

> It was clear who the winners were. Carly Fiorina and Bobby Jindal consistently had solid, confident, precise, conservative answers to each question.
>
> The other candidates fared less well. Lindsey Graham was tripped up a couple of times on his lack of a conservative record. When confronted about working with Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton on climate change legislation, he admitted he

> would reduce the country's use of fossil fuels. George Pataki likewise stumbled when confronted about his pro-choice record. Asked about the horrific Planned Parenthood undercover videos of selling fetal body parts, he responded that *Roe v. Wade* has been the law of the land for over 40 years and he would not ban abortion before 20 weeks.
>
> Rick Perry seemed unsure of himself on issues, stumbling a bit over his words. Rick Santorum kept saying he wanted to make the U.S. number one in manufacturing jobs — despite the fact we are a First World country and technology is naturally causing shrinkage in manufacturing jobs. Jim Gilmore seemed too focused on repeating his past experience.
>
> When asked about Ohio Governor John Kasich supporting Medicaid expansion in Ohio, Bobby Jindal soundly refuted it. "We can't afford the entitlement programs we already have today," he said, and stated that it was a mistake to expand Medicaid.
>
> He said Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton are working hard to turn the American dream into a nightmare.
>
> "We're going to have too many people in the cart rather than pulling the cart," he said, and it isn't free money we're borrowing from China. He then pivoted to simultaneously enlist Obama in the point he was making, and point up how loose spending weakens America on the world stage:
>
> Yesterday, the president stunningly admitted this. He said, "we don't have leverage with China to get a better deal on Iran because we need them to lend us money to continue operating our government."
>
> The president of the United States admitting that he's weakening our government's position, our foreign policy standing, because he can't control spending in D.C.
>
> Both Perry and Fiorina did well discussing the Iranian threat. Perry said he's on the side that keeps Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. In a surprise endorsement of Fiorina, he said, "I would rather have Carly doing our negotiation than John Kerry." If so, he continued, maybe there might be a deal that didn't give everything away. There needs to be a Congress that says, "Hell, no" to this regime. If elected, the first thing he would do would be to tear up Obama's agreement with Iran.

I also found an interesting exchange between Fiorina and that liberal clown Chris Matthews on MSNBC. She knows how to deal with the liberal media. Probably because she is used to being CEO and having people listen.

I listened to the second debate as well, but it was harder to follow, because of the crowd noise, and the more obnoxious moderators, e.g. – Megyn Kelly. Will hopefully have a post up about that by midnight.

Cruz and Carson did the best in Thursday's top 10 GOP primary debate

August 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

It's late Thursday night, so I am just going to round up a few clips that stood out to me.

Ted Cruz's introductory speech:

Marco Rubio on helping small businesses:

Ted Cruz on Obama weakness with Russia and China:

Ben Carson on race relations in the United States:

Scott Walker defends his strong pro-life record:

Ben Carson on America's declining military power:

Scott Walker defends his economic record in Wisconsin:

And Ben Carson's short closing speech was the highlight of the night:

I like Scott Walker best in the second debate group, but he didn't say much that I hadn't heard before. I really think he is the guy to beat Hillary, especially since Jindal's record in Louisiana is just not ready for prime time. Would like a Walker/Jindal ticket, with Cruz as Attorney General and Ben Carson as Health and Human Services Secretary and Carly Fiorina as Commerce Secretary and John Bolton as Secretary of State and Rand Paul as Chairman of the Federal Reserve. Oh yes, please.

Democrat Senator Chuck Schumer opposes Obama deal to let Iran nuke Israel

August 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neville Chamberlain Obama: peace in our time

From the radically leftist New York Times, of all places. They must be pretty pissed about this story.

Excerpt:

> Senator Chuck Schumer, the most influential Jewish voice in Congress, said Thursday night that he would oppose President Obama's deal to limit Iran's nuclear program.
>
> "Advocates on both sides have strong cases for their point of view that cannot simply be dismissed," Mr. Schumer, Democrat of New York, said in a lengthy statement. "This has made evaluating the agreement a difficult and deliberate endeavor, and after deep study, careful thought and considerable soul-searching, I have decided I must oppose the agreement and will vote yes on a motion of disapproval."
>
> Mr. Schumer had spent the last several weeks carrying a dog-eared copy of the agreement in his briefcase and meeting with Mr. Obama and officials like Wendy R. Sherman, the deal's chief negotiator. With his decision, he paves the way for other Democrats on the fence to join Republicans in showing their disapproval.
>
> "There are some who believe that I can force my colleagues to vote my way," Mr. Schumer said. "While I will certainly share my view and try to persuade them that

> the vote to disapprove is the right one, in my experience with matters of conscience and great consequence like this, each member ultimately comes to their own conclusion."
>
> […]Mr. Schumer said that the inspection regime in the first 10 years of the agreement would be too weak, and that provisions to reimpose sanctions if Iran cheated were too onerous. He said his most serious concerns were with the freedom that Iran would have after 10 years to quickly build a nuclear weapon.
>
> "To me, after 10 years, if Iran is the same nation as it is today, we will be worse off with this agreement than without it," he said.

Now, Chuck Schumer is as blue as you can get, so this opposition to the nuke-Israel-via-Iran deal is quite striking. Most Democrats do want to nuke Israel via Iran, and that's why they want to give Iran between $100 to $140 billion of oil revenue to start the terrorism against us and our allies as quickly as possible. But I guess Schumer is an exception to that.

Alabama Governor terminates contract with Planned Parenthood

August 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

ECM sent me this great story about the great state of Alabama.

Excerpt:

> Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley announced Thursday that he was terminating the state's Medicaid contract with Planned Parenthood, making it the third state to cut ties with the abortion provider following the release of undercover videos that allegedly show employees discussing the distribution of fetal organs.
>
> "The deplorable practices at Planned Parenthood have been exposed to Americans, and I have decided to stop any association with the organization in Alabama," said Bentley in a statement. "As a doctor and Alabama's Governor, the issue of human life, from conception to birth and beyond, is extremely important to me. I respect human life, and I do not want Alabama to be associated with an organization that does not."
>
> In addition to Bentley's actions, Alabama's Senate also advanced a measure Thursday that would make it a felony to give or receive any money in return for fetal tissue.

And in case you missed the awesome from earlier in the week:

> Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal made a similar move earlier this week, as did New Hampshire yesterday after its executive council voted 3-2 to override Gov. Maggie Hassan and reject a $639,000 contract with the organization. More states may join them soon, though, as investigations of Planned Parenthood prompted by the videos are still ongoing in several Republican-controlled states.

What do we learn from this? If you want to cut off the flow of money to Planned Parenthood, then elect Republicans. Democrats are with Planned Parenthood all the way.

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life by J. P. Moreland

August 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this essay on After All, but it looks like their site is not working well, so I'm just going to steal it and post it here, in case it disappears completely. This is one of my favorite short essays on utilitarianism, and it's a wonder that the thing can't stay up somewhere. Well, it will have a home here now. I'd be surprised to see anyone else be this awesome in a measly 1000 words as Dr. Moreland is below.

—-

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life

What Is Utilitarianism?

Utilitarianism (also called consequentialism) is a moral theory developed and refined in the modern world by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). It can be defined as follows:

> *An action or moral rule is right if and only if it maximizes the amount of nonmoral good produced in the consequences that result from doing that act or following that rule compared with other acts or rules open to the agent.*

By focusing on three features of utilitarianism, we can clarify this definition.

(1) Utilitarian theories of value.

What is a nonmoral good? Utilitarians deny that there are any moral actions or rules that are intrinsically right or wrong. But they do believe in objective values that are nonmoral.

Hedonistic utilitarians say that the only intrinsic good is pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Quantitative hedonists (Bentham) say that the amount of pleasure and pain is the only thing that matters in deciding between two courses of action, I should do the one that produces the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain (measured by factors like the duration and intensity of the pleasure). Qualitative hedonists (Mill) say that pleasure is the only intrinsic good, but the type of pleasure is what is important, not the amount. They would rank pleasures that come from reading, art, and friendship as more valuable than those that come from, say, a full stomach.

Pluralistic utilitarians say there are a number of things that have intrinsic, nonmoral value: pleasure, friendship, health, knowledge, freedom, peace, security, and so forth. For pluralists, it is not just the pleasure that comes from friendship that has value but also friendship itself.

Currently, the most popular utilitarian view of value is subjective preference utilitarianism. This position says it is presumptuous and impossible to specify things that

have intrinsic nonmoral worth. So, they claim, intrinsic value ought to be defined as that which each individual subjectively desires or wants, provided these do not harm others. Unfortunately, this view collapses into moral relativism.

(2) Utilitarians and maximizing utility.

Utilitarians use the term utility to stand for whatever good they are seeking to produce as consequences of a moral action (e.g., “pleasure” for the hedonist, “satisfaction of subjective preference” for others). They see morality in a means-to-ends way. The sole value of a moral action or rule is the utility of its consequences. Moral action should maximize utility. This can be interpreted in different ways, but many utilitarians embrace the following: the correct moral action or rule is the one that produces the greatest amount of utility for the greatest number of people.

(3) Two forms of utilitarianism: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.

According to act utilitarianism, an act is right if and only if no other act available maximizes utility more than the act in question. Here, each new moral situation is evaluated on its own, and moral rules like “don’t steal” or “don’t break promises” are secondary The moral agent must weigh available alternatives and choose the one that produces the best consequences. Rule utilitarianism says that correct moral actions are done in keeping with correct moral rules, However, no moral rule is intrinsically right or wrong. Rather, a correct moral rule is one that would maximize utility if most people followed it as opposed to following an alternative rule. Here, alternative rules (e.g., “don’t lie” vs. “don’t lie unless doing so would enhance friendship”) are compared for their consequences, not specific actions.

What Is Wrong with Utilitarianism?

Several objections show the inadequacy of utilitarianism as a normative moral theory.

First, utilitarianism can be used to justify actions that are clearly immoral. Consider the case of a severely deformed fetus. The child is certain to live a brief, albeit painless life. He or she will make no contribution to society. Society, however, will bear great expense. Doctors and other caregivers will invest time, emotion, and effort in adding mere hours to the baby’s life. The parents will know and love the child only long enough to be heartbroken at the inevitable loss. An abortion negates all those “utility” losses. There is no positive utility lost. Many of the same costs are involved in the care of the terminally ill elderly. They too may suffer no pain, but they may offer no benefit to society. In balancing positives and negatives, and excluding from the equation the objective sacredness of all human life, we arrive at morally repugnant decisions. Here deontological and virtue ethics steer us clear of what is easier to what is right.

Second, in a similar way, utilitarianism denies the existence of supererogatory acts. These are acts of moral heroism that are not morally obligatory but are still praiseworthy.

Examples would be giving 75 percent of your income to the poor or throwing yourself on a bomb to save a stranger. Consider the bomb example. You have two choices — throwing yourself on the bomb or not doing so. Each choice would have consequences and, according to utilitarianism, you are morally obligated to do one or the other depending on which option maximized utility. Thus, there is no room for acts that go beyond the call of morality.

Third, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of human rights and human dignity. If enslaving a minority of people, say by a lottery, would produce the greatest good for the greatest number, or if conceiving children only to harvest their parts would do the same, then these could he justified in a utilitarian scheme. But enslavement and abortion violate individual rights and treat people as a means to an end, not as creatures with intrinsic dignity as human beings. If acts of abortion, active euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and so forth maximize utility, then they are morally obligatory for the utilitarian. But any moral system that makes abortion and suicide morally obligatory is surely flawed.

Finally, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of motives and character. We should praise good motives and seek good character because such motives and character are intrinsically valuable. But utilitarianism implies that the only reason we should praise good motives instead of bad ones, or seek good character instead of bad character, is because such acts would maximize utility. But this has the cart before the horse. We should praise good motives and blame bad ones because they are good or bad, not because such acts of praising and blaming produce good consequences.

In sum, it should be clear that utilitarianism is an inadequate moral theory. Unfortunately, ours is a pragmatic culture and utilitarianism is on the rise. But for those of us who follow Christ, a combination of virtue and deontological ethics is a more adequate view of common sense morality found in natural law and of the moral vision contained in the Bible.

Kentucky bans pastor from prison ministry because he disagrees with homosexuality

August 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign
Yes, in Kentucky.

The Stream has the story.

Excerpt:

> Like Christian ministers across the confessional spectrum, David Wells takes seriously the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: "I was in prison and you did not visit me." Minister of evangelism of Pleasant View Baptist Church in McQuady, Kentucky, he has been visiting and mentoring juveniles in the Warren County Regional Juvenile Detention Center for 12 years.
>
> Not any more. On July 7th, the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) revoked his volunteer credentials and permanently barred him from visiting, counseling or leading worship services for juveniles. He was found in violation of a newly revised departmental policy on "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" because he could not sign a state-mandated statement that he would not use the word "sinful" when talking about homosexuality. The policy states that volunteers:
>
> shall not refer to juveniles by using derogatory language in a manner that conveys bias towards or hatred of the LGBTQI community. DJJ staff, volunteers, interns, and contractors shall not imply or tell LGBTQI juveniles that they are abnormal, deviant, sinful, or that they can or should change their sexual orientation or gender identity.
>
> The acronym "LGBTQI" stands for "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and Intersexed."

I recommend reading the articles to get the details on the inmates, so that you see what they are in for, what their real problems are, and what it is that the pastor talks to them about.

But I want to skip to the end, which is about the conflict between the gay agenda (don't offend me by saying that what I am doing is wrong, because it makes me feel bad) with the Constitutional right of religious liberty.

More:

> The issue really isn't the way Wells speaks to the juveniles he ministers to. The issue is what he says. In effect, the DJJ wants to remove the Bible from his hands. The policy equates the teaching of Biblical morality with derogatory and hateful speech.
>
> Removing the Bible from a pastor's hands is like taking a scalpel from the hands of a surgeon. The policy effectively deletes passages such as Romans 1:24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, and 1 Tim 1:10 from the New Testament. The words of Scripture are the gifts a pastor has to offer. He's not there just to counsel the young people. He's there to tell them the good news of Jesus Christ. That's not hate speech, it's love speech.
>
> Wells is represented by Liberty Counsel. In a letter to the commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, Liberty Counsel explained that the new policy creates an unconstitutional religious test for access to the DJJ. The First Amendment prohibits the government from discriminating on the basis of viewpoint. This detention center may not prohibit the expression of biblical morality because DJJ policymakers object to the Bible.
>
> That's what the American Constitution says, but the authorities in other states and in federal and military prisons have begun imposing similar restrictions on religious speech. This may become one more aftershock of the *Obergefell v Hodges* decision. The homosexual equivalency movement wants to insert homosexual activity into the category of a protected class under State and Federal law in order to use the police power of the State against those who disagree with them. It's one more example of a growing soft persecution underway in the United States.

I have been saying for some time that Christians have been really missing the boat by focusing on charity without theology. We are interested in being nice so we can be liked. We are not interested in telling the truth, so that we can be faithful. We spend all our money feeding hungry people and helping the poor and so on, and nothing is going to defend religious liberty – the freedom to actually treat what the Bible about God as real and serious – in public. Maybe instead of doing nice things, we can try to focus more on doing good things. We can start by not voting for secularists who charm us with their desire solve the world's problems by redistributing wealth, and instead vote for people who promise to protect our religious liberty and our freedom of conscience. No more

giving money to World Vision and the Boy Scouts of America and Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. We have other things to think about now.

Archaeologists discover entrance to city of Gath, home of Goliath

August 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

I found a post on James Bishop's blog thanks to a J. Warner Wallace tweet. It's about an exciting new archaelogical discovery.

Live Science reports:

> A massive gate unearthed in Israel may have marked the entrance to a biblical city that, at its heyday, was the biggest metropolis in the region.
>
> The town, called Gath, was occupied until the ninth century B.C. In biblical accounts, the Philistines — the mortal enemies of the Israelites — ruled the city. The Old Testament also describes Gath as the home of Goliath, the giant warrior whom the Israelite King David felled with a slingshot.
>
> The new findings reveal just how impressive the ancient Philistine city once was, said lead archaeologist of the current excavation, Aren Maeir, of Bar-Ilan University in Israel.
>
> "We knew that Philistine Gath in the 10th to ninth century [B.C.] was a large city, perhaps the largest in the land at that time," Maeir told Live Science in an email. "These monumental fortifications stress how large and mighty this city was."
>
> […]Both the impressive settlement size and mentions in biblical accounts suggest to scholars that the site is the historic city of Gath, which was ruled by the Philistines, who lived next to the Jewish kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Most scholars think that Gath was besieged and laid to waste by Hazael, King of Aram Damascus, in 830 B.C., Maeir said.
>
> […]The team also found ironworks and a Philistine temple near the monumental gate, with some pottery and other finds typically associated with Philistine culture. Though the pottery represents a distinctive Philistine style, it also shows elements of Israelite technique, suggesting the cultures did influence each other

> in ways unrelated to war.

James Bishop adds this:

> Recently, in 2005, an important inscription was found. Scratched on a shard were two non-Semitic names written in Semitic "Proto-Canaanite" letters. The two names: "ALWT" (אלות) and "WLT" (ולת), are similar to the name Goliath (גלית).
>
> Goliath was the feared Philistine warrior champion, who according to the biblical text, was a native of Gath, and was felled by David. Although this is not conclusive historical evidence of the Biblical Goliath's existence, it provides excellent evidence of the cultural milieu of this period.

The story of David and Goliath is found in 1 Samuel 17. Why don't you give it a read? It's a great story.

I was just thinking about going through 1 Samuel myself, for personal reasons. I started this week wishing very much for vindication in a situation where someone completely disregarded my advice and then instead took the advice of a very impractical and inexperienced child. I really wanted to not be affected by this, and it made me think of Saul and David, and Saul's anger at David. I just have so much disappointment for this one particular person who is making so many mistakes. I am anticipating a real judgment by God against this person in the near future. I expect that when this judgment comes, that this person will really understand the difference between making decisions based on emotions and selfishness, and making decisions based on practical concerns. I really would like to be vindicated.

Anyway, I felt alarmed about how much I was thinking about this expected vindication, so I thought – time to go to the Bible to remind myself what I am supposed to be like. I wanted to inform myself with the Bible in order to have the right response, whatever happens. So, I thought of 1 Samuel, and I thought that if I could just read about Saul's anger again, then I would get the right perspective on anger and stop worrying about this until it's all decided. So I was already headed to 1 Samuel this week, to fix my bad character. Then this 1 Samuel discovery came out.

One of the nice things the Bible gives you – when you've read it – is a knowledge of where to go when you need to encourage yourself to act the way God wants you to act. I'm supposed to be full of love and forgiveness, I know. But when I am not acting like that, I need to know where to go to find something that will get me back on track.

Any kind of confirmation of the Bible from science or history is just awesome, because it helps us to take the Bible seriously as truth, and then actually adjust our own actions to respect it, since it is true. And it's true regardless of our needs and feelings. That's why we need evidence. Evidence makes us less likely to push our feelings and desires onto the Bible, and more likely to adjust our actions so that they are compliant with what the Bible says – just the same way as we might make our computer program comply with the syntax of the language, so that it compiles and runs. The more I look at evidence, the more seriously I take the Bible, and the more I will involve God's concerns for me in my

decision-making – like this case where I need to be patient and wait for everything to come out.

Ironically, I ended up talking to a friend about my vindication-seeking, and she wanted the whole story about why I was angry. And by the time I was done telling her, I felt a lot better. It’s nice when Christians help each other. And we have Bible study tomorrow, too. I want to keep God’s character on my mind so that I make good decisions.

By the way, if you can think of anything else in the Bible that is related to this problem of feeling injustice and wanting vindication, please let me know by e-mail or in the comments.

Two short videos explain two basic scientific arguments for God’s existence

August 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These are from Reasonable Faith. The new one is on fine-tuning, and it’s probably the best thing you can give someone to understand the fine-tuning argument in 6 minutes.

Here it is:

The last one they did was on the kalam cosmological argument, and it was even shorter – just over 4 minutes.

Check it out:

If you have any friends who are interested in scientific arguments for the existence of God, send them both of these videos.

UPDATE: My friend David sent me this video, which is the third in the series:

It’s on the moral argument.

Related posts

- How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism
- How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism
- How do atheists try to accommodate the Big Bang in their worldview?
- How do atheists try to accommodate the fine-tuning in their worldview?
- Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University
- Walter Bradley lectures on the creation and design of the universe
- Robin Collins lectures on fine-tuning for discoverability from particle physics
- The importance of having a narrative when confronting the assumption of naturalism

Does Planned Parenthood do mammograms? Is abortion only 3% of their services?

August 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Life Site News explains the myth and the reality.

Excerpt:

> The day before hundreds of pro-life activists prepared to flood Planned Parenthood's offices with requests to schedule a mammogram, the organization issued a statement admitting that they do not offer the cancer screening procedure at any of their facilities.
>
> The calls were placed today as part of "Call Planned Parenthood to Schedule Your Imaginary Mammogram Day" – an event organized by pro-life activists in response to President Obama's statement during the presidential debate Tuesday that the abortion organization offers mammograms.
>
> "There are millions of women all across the country, who rely on Planned Parenthood for, not just contraceptive care, they rely on it for mammograms, for cervical cancer screenings," the president had said, repeating a claim he had made earlier this summer in an interview with *Glamour* magazine.
>
> But Obama isn't the only one.
>
> The notion that Planned Parenthood offers mammograms is one of the most enduring myths about the abortion giant. The claim is regularly trotted out by pro-abortion politicians eager to defend taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood, but wary of invoking its controversial status as the country's leading provider of abortions.

Not only does Planned Parenthood not provide mammograms, but the abortions they

perform have been linked to the epidemic of breast cancer that is afflicting women today.

What about the claim that only 3% of what Planned Parenthood does is doing abortions? False:

> Practically every defender of the organization, fighting to preserve its federal funding, reverts to the 3 percent figure. How could you possibly, they ask, defund a group that devotes itself overwhelmingly to uncontroversial procedures and services for women?
>
> […]The 3 percent factoid is crafted to obscure the reality of Planned Parenthood's business. The group performs about 330,000 abortions a year, or roughly 30 percent of all the abortions in the country. By its own accounting in its 2013–2014 annual report, it provides about as many abortions as Pap tests (380,000). The group does more breast exams and provides more breast-care services (490,000), but not by that much.
>
> The 3 percent figure is derived by counting abortion as just another service like much less consequential services. So abortion is considered a service no different than a pregnancy test (1.1 million), even though a box with two pregnancy tests can be procured from the local drugstore for less than $10.
>
> By Planned Parenthood's math, a woman who gets an abortion but also a pregnancy test, an STD test, and some contraceptives has received four services, and only 25 percent of them are abortion. This is a little like performing an abortion and giving a woman an aspirin, and saying only half of what you do is abortion.
>
> Such cracked reasoning could be used to obscure the purpose of any organization. The sponsors of the New York City Marathon could count each small cup of water they hand out (some 2 million cups, compared with 45,000 runners) and say they are mainly in the hydration business. Or Major League Baseball teams could say that they sell about 20 million hot dogs and play 2,430 games in a season, so baseball is only .012 percent of what they do.
>
> Supporters of Planned Parenthood want to use its health services as leverage to preserve its abortions, as if you can't get one without the other. Of course, this is nonsense. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides free or low-cost breast- and cervical-cancer screenings — without aborting babies. State health departments provide free cancer screenings — without aborting babies. Community health centers provide a range of medical services — without aborting babies.

I think it's a good idea to be able to respond to Planned Parenthood's rhetoric. These are the people who kill babies, and we have to be able to respond to their false claims. When a majority of people learn the truth about the baby killing business, it will stop.

Related posts

- Fifth video: Planned Parenthood selling intact 20-week baby cadavers for profit
- Democrats defeat Republican bill to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood president visited White House 39 times since 2009
- Federal judge blocks release of future sting videos of Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood executive admits abortion victim is a baby in fourth video
- Third video of Planned Parenthood doctors discussing organ harvesting
- Obama administration refuses FOIA requests about Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration will investigate whistleblowers who filmed Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood senior executive in second video: “I want a Lamborghini”
- Republicans in Congress will investigate Planned Parenthood’s organ harvesting
- ABC, CBS, CNN, and MSNBC all ignore Planned Parenthood organ harvesting story
- Governor Bobby Jindal announces investigation of Planned Parenthood
- What does Hillary Clinton think of Planned Parenthood selling unborn baby parts?
- House Republicans attempting to end some of the taxpayer-funding for Planned Parenthood
- With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013
- Planned Parenthood, an abortion business, is in California schools teaching sex education
- Arizona Planned Parenthood clinic failed to report rapist
- Planned Parenthood must pay $1.4 million in Medicaid fraud settlement
- Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You
- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- 24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic

EPA dumped a million gallons of mine waste into Animas River in Colorado

August 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

EPA dumps 1 million gallons of mining waste into river

Yes, the Environmental Protection Agency is polluting rivers. They are not admitting responsibility, and the mainstream news media is covering for them.

Let's get the story from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Imagine if a business dumped a million gallons of mine waste into Animas River in Colorado, turning it into what looked like Tang, forcing the sheriff's office to close the river to recreational users, and prompting the EPA to warn farmers to shut off water intakes along the river.
>
> Oh, and imagine that the business also failed to warn officials in downstream New Mexico about the spill.
>
> Such a calamity would probably lead the nightly news, with calls from environmentalists and the EPA for investigations, fines, lawsuits, and tougher pollution controls.
>
> Except in this case it's the EPA itself that is to blame.

Newsbusters notes that the mainstream media is mum – because they are all for big government, and big government never makes mistakes:

> Yet here we are four days later, and the story has gotten very little visibility outside of center-right blogs and outlets. That's largely explained by how the wire services have handled the story. After the jump, readers will see headlines and descriptions of the stories which have appeared thus far at the web site of the *New York Times*:
>
> No headline acknowledges the EPA's admitted responsibility for the spill. Only

> one headline mentions the EPA at all.
>
> […]Although the first AP report parroted the EPA's claim that **"that there was no threat to drinking water from the spill,"**a story at the *Denver Post* yesterday indicated that **"Tests show (Animas River) water (is) acidic as coffee,"** and that**"EPA officials on Saturday morning also said they are bracing for another surge of acid discharge from mines above Silverton."** In other words, the ordeal is far from being over.

But look on the bright side – at least the EPA is hard at work banning coal production so that we all have to pay more for electricity, including heating and cooling our homes.

If I could close four departments out at the federal level, I would choose the EPA, the Department of Energy, the IRS and the Department of Education. Get rid of failure.

Fox News debate moderators focused on attention-seeking, not informing voters

August 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First point, there was record viewership for the second debate.

The Washington Times reports:

> **The two-hour political extravaganza pulled in 24 million viewers according to initial Nielsen ratings numbers – breaking the all-time record for a non-sports cable event.**
>
> **[…]A good comparison here: the largest audience that any debate drew in the 2012 election was 7.6 million.**
>
> […]And about that coverage on Thursday: Of the two-hour broadcast, the candidates collectively spoke for one hour and eight minutes total. Mr. Trump spoke for 10 minutes, 32 seconds, with Jeb Bush in second place at eight minutes, 32 seconds – this according to University of Minnesota political professor Eric Ostermeier, who tallied it all up with a stop watch and a spreadsheet.
>
> […]Trump and Bush were the only two candidates who reached — and exceeded — that mark," the professor adds. "They received more than their equal share of speaking time while the rest of the field was shortchanged."
>
> In third place was Mike Huckabee at 6:40 followed by Sen. Ted Cruz (6:39), Ohio Gov.John Kasich (6:31), Ben Carson (6:23), Sen. Marco Rubio (6:22), New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie (6:10), Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker (5:51), and in last place, Sen. Rand Paul (5:10).
>
> **The Fox News moderators spoke for 32 minutes – taking up about a third of the total on-camera dialogue.**

The Fox News moderators spoke for 32 minutes. They should have spoken for 10 minutes total, and in fact I saw them say that they only intended to speak for 10 minutes, just after the early debate for second-tier candidates.

Conservative Mark Levin was not please with the Fox News moderators' performance.

He says:

> Lawyer, constitutional scholar, best selling author, and conservative talk radio host Mark Levin, in an interview on theBreitbart News Saturday radio program, expressed outrage at the Thursday night GOP presidential debate hosted by Fox News.
>
> Levin asserted, "I think that we were all duped. The fact of the matter is that this was a ratings gambit."

> […]Levin claims that "We the people" were overlooked in the debate, and the event became a media spectacle with more emphasis on the show's moderators than on discussing the important issues that face America.
>
> […]Bannon observed that the debate reeked of "opposition research" and had a definite "adversarial" tone with the questions they asked Trump and others. Levin agreed and recounted that the question they asked Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker about abortion seemed prosecutorial in nature.

It's not just that the speaking time was unfair, and actually favored the moderators, it's that the moderators' questions were almost entirely tabloid-style gotcha questions:

> Levin described the debate as a failure to address the two hundred trillion that America faces in unfunded liabilities, the bankruptcy of the Social Security system, the fact that Medicare and Medicaid are on the brink of collapse, that our educational system costs a trillion dollars a year and is a "complete failure," our immigration policy is a disaster, the EPA is destroying our economic system, and that our Constitution is being undermined. Levin rebuked Fox for wasting time on "pardon the phrase—trumped up stuff. To me it is such an outrage what took place. And it was planned. The questions were planned. I am very troubled by it too."

I think Megyn Kelly in particular was a lousy moderator, and just approached the debate as a way to attract attention to herself. She was a disgrace. People say Fox News is conservative, but they were anything but conservative during the second debate. They were in it for themselves, and the Republican Party suffered. I might as well have been watching CNN, or even MSNBC.

Anyway with that in find, here are the changes in poll numbers following the debate: (H/T ECM)

Change since last week among Republican primary voters including leaners			
	Last Week	Now	Change
Ted Cruz	6%	13%	+7
Carly Fiorina	2	8	+6
Ben Carson	8	11	+3
Donald Trump	22	23	+1
Mike Huckabee	4	5	+1
Lindsey Graham	1	1	0
Marco Rubio	8	8	0
Bobby Jindal	1	1	0
George Pataki	0	0	0
Rick Perry	2	2	0
John Kasich	3	2	-1
Rand Paul	6	5	-1
Rick Santorum	1	0	-1
Chris Christie	3	1	-2
Jeb Bush	10	7	-3
Scott Walker	10	7	-3

Recent post-debate GOP primary poll
Cruz, Fiorina and Carson helped themselves the most, and that's exactly what I said in my previous post when I declared Fiorina the winner of the first debate, and Cruz and Carson the winners of the second debate.

William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech

August 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Making sense of the meaning of atheism

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can grab the MP3 file of the lecture, or read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video. The essay is for Christians already familiar with basic apologetics.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Here's a quick couple of quotes from the essay for those who cannot watch:

> If there is no God, then any ground for regarding the herd morality evolved by homo sapiens as objectively true seems to have been removed. After all, what is so special about human beings? They are just accidental by-products of nature which have evolved relatively recently on an infinitesimal speck of dust lost somewhere in a hostile and mindless universe and which are doomed to perish individually and collectively in a relatively short time. Some action, say, incest, may not be biologically or socially advantageous and so in the course of human evolution has become taboo; but there is on the atheistic view nothing really wrong about committing incest. If, as Kurtz states, "The moral principles that govern our behavior are rooted in habit and custom, feeling and fashion,"[5] then the non-conformist who chooses to flout the herd morality is doing nothing more serious than acting unfashionably.
>
> The objective worthlessness of human beings on a naturalistic world view is

> underscored by two implications of that world view: materialism and determinism. Naturalists are typically materialists or physicalists, who regard man as a purely animal organism. But if man has no immaterial aspect to his being (call it soul or mind or what have you), then he is not qualitatively different from other animal species. For him to regard human morality as objective is to fall into the trap of specie-ism. On a materialistic anthropology there is no reason to think that human beings are objectively more valuable than rats. Secondly, if there is no mind distinct from the brain, then everything we think and do is determined by the input of our five senses and our genetic make-up. There is no personal agent who freely decides to do something. But without freedom, none of our choices is morally significant. They are like the jerks of a puppet's limbs, controlled by the strings of sensory input and physical constitution. And what moral value does a puppet or its movements have?
>
> […]Moreover, if atheism is true, there is no moral accountability for one's actions. Even if there were objective moral values and duties under naturalism, they are irrelevant because there is no moral accountability. If life ends at the grave, it makes no difference whether one lives as a Stalin or as a saint. As the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky rightly said: "If there is no immortality, then all things are permitted."

If you want to show this lecture and Q&A to your apologetics group, you can find the DVD here.

You can also read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor.

New study: natural selection can act to impede speciation

August 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Australian Walking Stick

My friend KL sent me this press release from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

It says:

> An intriguing study involving walking stick insects led by the University of Sheffield in England and the University of Colorado Boulder shows how natural selection, the engine of evolution, can also impede the formation of new species.
>
> The team studied a plant-eating stick insect species from California called *Timema cristinae* known for its cryptic camouflage that allows it to hide from hungry birds, said CU-Boulder Assistant Professor Samuel Flaxman. *T. cristinae* comes in several different types — one is green and blends in with the broad green leaves of a particular shrub species, while a second green variant sports a white, vertical stripe that helps disguise it on a different species of shrub with narrow, needle-like leaves.
>
> While Darwinian natural selection has begun pushing the two green forms of walking sticks down separate paths that could lead to the formation of two new species, the team found that a third melanistic, or brown variation of *T. cristinae* appears to be thwarting the process, said Flaxman. The brown version is known to successfully camouflage itself among the stems of both shrub species inhabited by its green brethren, he said.
>
> Using field investigations, laboratory genetics, modern genome sequencing and computer simulations, the team concluded the brown version of *T. cristinae* is shuttling enough genes between the green stick insects living on different shrubs

> to prevent strong divergent adaptation and speciation. The brown variant of the walking stick species also is favored by natural selection because it has a slight advantage in mate selection and a stronger resistance to fungal infections than its green counterparts.
>
> "This is one of the best demonstrations we know of regarding the counteractive effects of natural selection on speciation," said Flaxman of CU-Boulder's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, second author on the new study. "We show how the brown population essentially carries genes back and forth between the green populations, acting as a genetic bridge that causes a slowdown in divergence."
>
> A paper on the subject appeared in a recent issue of the journal *Current Biology.*
>
> […]"This movement of genes between environments slows down the genetic divergence of these stick insect populations, impeding the formation of new species," said Aaron Comeault, a former CU-Boulder graduate student and lead study author who conducted the research while at the University of Sheffield.

So, in the past I had read that natural selection can act as a stabilizing force in nature – keeping the organism operating within a type. This study seems to be confirmation of that. But there are other problems with generating macro-evolutionary change.

Also related to the problem raised by the study is this problem of genetic drift, which also works against the preservation of beneficial mutations.

Evolution News explains the genetic drift problem:

> Evolutionary biologists often assume that once mutations produce a functionally advantageous trait, it will easily spread (become "fixed") throughout a population by natural selection. For example, imagine a population of brown-haired foxes that lives in a snowy region. One fox is born with a mutation that turns its fur coat white, rather than brown. This fox now has an advantage in hunting prey and escaping predators, because its white fur provides it with camouflage. The white fox survives, passing its genes on to its offspring, which are also adept at surviving and reproducing. Over time, the white-haired trait spreads throughout the population.
>
> This is how it's supposed to work — in theory. In the real world, however, merely generating a functionally advantageous trait does not guarantee it will persist, or become fixed. For example, what if by chance the white fox trips, breaks a leg, and gets eaten by a predator — never passing on its genes? Random forces or events can prevent a trait from spreading through a population, even if it provides an advantage. These random forces are lumped together under the name "genetic drift." When biologists run the mathematics of natural selection, they find that unless a trait gives an extremely strong selective advantage, genetic drift will tend to overwhelm the force of selection and prevent adaptations from gaining a foothold in a population.

> This underappreciated problem has been recognized by some evolutionary scientists who are skeptical of the ability of natural selection to drive the evolutionary process. One of those scientists is Michael Lynch, an evolutionary biologist at Indiana University, who writes that “random genetic drift can impose a strong barrier to the advancement of molecular refinements by adaptive processes.”[2] He notes that the effect of drift is “encouraging the fixation of mildly deleterious mutations and discouraging the promotion of beneficial mutations.”[3]

I guess the point of this is that if someone wants to convince you that macro-evolution is possible through the mechanisms of random mutation and natural selection, then they have some work to do. And it’s more work than just asserting that it happened.

People who are technical may benefit from reading Michael Behe’s book “The Edge of Evolution”, which studies how likely it is to get several positive adaptations in a row within a reasonable period of time.

UPDATE: A biologist friend tells me that “whether natural selection is driving speciation or preventing it, in neither case is it explaining how these organisms came to be in the first place. It only explains how existing organisms interact with their environment. And this can be explained at least as well through intelligent design as through naturalistic processes.” She also says that natural selection can drive speciation, but still within a kind.

Women, under the influence of feminism, are willing participants in the hook-up culture

August 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Another post in which I try to pull women out of the quagmire of radical feminism
Note: in this article, when I refer to women, I mean young, unmarried women who have been influenced by feminism. I do not mean all women, and especially not married women.

My good friend Tom sent me this article from the ultra left-wing Vanity Fair. Tom is a veteran of the New York City dating scene and has been telling me for years about the practices described in this article.

The article is very, very long, so I can only quote a little, and then I'll encourage you to read it, although be warned, it's filled with sex and bad language, and it tries to present women as victims.

Excerpt:

> It's a balmy night in Manhattan's financial district, and at a sports bar called Stout, everyone is Tindering. The tables are filled with young women and men who've been chasing money and deals on Wall Street all day, and now they're out looking for hookups. Everyone is drinking, peering into their screens and swiping on the faces of strangers they may have sex with later that evening.

Tinder is a hook-up app that people use to find people to have sex with, based solely on their photograph. This is actually what studies say about how women choose men – it's all physical appearance, and nothing that is learned subsequently alters that first impression.

The article says this:

> "Romance is completely dead, and it's the girls' fault," says Alex, 25, a New

> Yorker who works in the film industry. “They act like all they want is to have sex with you and then they yell at you for not wanting to have a relationship. How are you gonna feel romantic about a girl like that? Oh, and by the way? I met you on *Tinder.*”
>
> “Women do exactly the same things guys do,” said Matt, 26, who works in a New York art gallery. “I’ve had girls sleep with me off OkCupid and then just ghost me”—that is, disappear, in a digital sense, not returning texts. “They play the game the exact same way. They have a bunch of people going at the same time—they’re fielding their options. They’re always looking for somebody better, who has a better job or more money.” A few young women admitted to me that they use dating apps as a way to get free meals. “I call it Tinder food stamps,” one said.
>
> Even the emphasis on looks inherent in a dating game based on swiping on photos is something men complain women are just as guilty of buying into. “They say in their profiles, ‘No shirtless pictures,’ but that’s bulls**t,” says Nick, the same as above. “The day I switched to a shirtless picture with my tattoos, immediately, within a few minutes, I had, like, 15 matches.”
>
> And if women aren’t interested in being treated as sexual objects, why do they self-objectify in their profile pictures? some men ask. “There’s a lot of girls who are just like, Check me out, I’m hot, I’m wearing a bikini,” says Jason…
>
> Men talk about the nudes they receive from women. They show off the nudes. “T*t pics and booty pics,” said Austin, 22, a college student in Indiana. “My phone is full of ‘em.”

Although the article, and the women who are interviewed, try to pass themselves off as victims, it’s very clear that they are full participants in this hook-up culture. It’s “fun” for them to be free and independent – no responsibilities, expectations or obligations from a relationship.

Feminist writer Hanna Rosin says that this hook-up culture is great:

> Some, like *Atlantic* writer Hanna Rosin, see hookup culture as a boon: “The hookup culture is … bound up with everything that’s fabulous about being a young woman in 2012—the freedom, the confidence.”

The Vanity Fair author comments:

> “Short-term mating strategies” seem to work for plenty of women too; some don’t want to be in committed relationships, either, particularly those in their 20s who are focusing on their education and launching careers.

Previously, I quoted a feminist professor writing in the New York Times. She also thought that it was great that women were hooking up with hot guys for fun, but staying focused on their educations and careers.

Here’s Amanda to explain it:

> “There is no dating. There’s no relationships,” says Amanda, the tall elegant one. “They’re rare. You can have a fling that could last like seven, eight months and you could never actually call someone your ‘boyfriend.’ [Hooking up] is a lot easier. No one gets hurt—well, not on the surface.”
>
> […]It’s not, she says, that women don’t want to have sex. “Who doesn’t want to have sex? But it feels bad when they’re like, ‘See ya.’ ”

Who doesn’t want to have sex? Well, me for one. At least, not till I’m married.

Amanda later explains that she doesn’t want to care, because that would mean that she “somehow missed the whole memo about third-wave feminism”. She has to be independent – able to dismiss responsibilities, expectations and obligations in a real relationship – because third-wave feminism tells her so. I know Christian women who think they are fundamentalists who have this exact same attitude. They think that relationships are somehow compatible with doing whatever they want to do – that doing whatever makes them happy each and every moment is compatible with a lasting relationship. Married people laugh at this, but this is what most young, unmarried women believe. And of course most men are only to happy to take advantage of this and treat women like objects.

Why don’t women reject the men who use them like kleenexes? Why is the man’s appearance so much more important than his character and suitability for the marriage roles of husband and father? Feminism tells women that gender distinctions are “sexist”, that chivalry is “sexist”, that chastity is “repressive” because it blocks having recreational sex, that marriage is boring and must be delayed, and that having lots of sexual experience makes you more attractive. All nonsense, but this is what the vast majority of American women believe. They measure men by how the man makes them *feel* and whether he will be impressive *physically* to their peers. They believe in feminism and the denial of specific male roles and male virtues. I can’t speak for all the men, but all my male friends are either virgins or married, and we are horrified because we don’t know who we are supposed to marry.

Probably the most traumatic experiences that I have ever heard in my life are the stories I hear from women who are raised in Christian homes, with two married Christian parents, who nevertheless dump their Christianity late in high school, or sometimes when they get to university. One minute, they are adorable little kids playing with teddy bears or riding horses. The next minute they are hooking up and shacking up and avoiding marriage and child-bearing in order to have as much fun as possible.

Two interesting things about this. First, their parents never find out what is really going on. The parents always believe that the daughters are as pure as the driven snow, no matter how long the “lost” period is, where their daughters went crazy. Second, the young woman’s core desire to have fun and seek thrills never goes away. Conversion to Christianity doesn’t make an irresponsible woman responsible. And she usually is careful

to surround herself with people who will affirm her in her recklessness, perhaps confidently calling her emotional desires “the voice of God speaking to her”. My friend Dina likes to tell me that these women do not want to be rescued – they are having a good time doing what they want to do, and they think it will go on forever – that the attention from men will always be there, and that chasing happiness will somehow “work out”.

What is interesting is how the parents don’t fix the problem when the girls are young. They are too busy with their careers, their own traveling and fun, etc. Usually, the girl’s mother has chosen a man who is not really strong on truth or moral convictions, because then he is easier to get along with and will not judge her. Women do not like being judged by men, either about factual claims or about moral claims. When the girl starts to act up, and the mother turns to the non-judgmental, postmodern relativist man she chose, and expects him to do something about it. Unfortunately, he does nothing to set boundaries on the daughter.

Finally, you might think that the pastors would be aware of this, and be doing something about restoring women back to the way they used to be. On Sunday, I was talking with a friend who is also in his 30s, also a virgin, also an engineer, and also went to graduate school. We both agreed that the church was doing *nothing* to counter the radical feminism that exalts this retreat from relationship, and denigrates chastity, marriage and child-bearing. There’s no response from the church to radical feminism.

As always, should you, as a young Christian man of some means, desire to get married, then I recommend using my checklist to validate your candidate. And remember, the right answers are unimportant – only the willingness to learn matters.

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

August 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two Rams butting heads: may the best ram win!

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to video)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

Here's the debate:

Summary

Note: the following debate summary is rated "S" for Snarky. Reader discretion is advised.

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism
- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program

- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent
- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true
- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival

explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah
- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet 9 from Outer Space!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren't going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

Hillary Clinton gives up her unsecure, home-brew server to the DOJ

August 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does national security make? Rules do not apply to Queen Hillary!
This article from the leftist Associated Press was posted at The Stream, and it's sure to be the big story today.

Excerpt:

> Hillary Rodham Clinton relented Tuesday to months of demands she relinquish the personal email server she used while secretary of state, directing the device be given to the Justice Department.
>
> The decision advances the investigation into the Democratic presidential front-runner's use of a private email account as the nation's top diplomat, and whether classified information was improperly sent via and stored on the home-brew email server she ran from her house in suburban New York City.

There were classified e-mails:

> Republicans jumped on Tuesday's decision to change course, as well as the additional disclosure that two emails that traversed Clinton's personal system were subsequently given one of the government's highest classification ratings.
>
> […]Word that Clinton had relented on giving up possession of the server came as Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa said two emails that traversed Clinton's personal system were deemed "Top Secret, Sensitive Compartmented Information" — a rating that is among the government's highest classifications. Grassley said the inspector general of the nation's intelligence community had reported the new details about the higher classification to Congress on Tuesday.
>
> "Secretary Clinton's previous statements that she possessed no classified information were patently untrue," House Speaker John Boehner said in a

> statement. “Her mishandling of classified information must be fully investigated.”
>
> […]The inspector general for the intelligence community had told Congress that potentially hundreds of classified emails are among the cache that Clinton provided to the State Department.

No evidence that encryption was used:

> There is no evidence she used encryption to shield the emails or her personal server from foreign intelligence services or other potentially prying eyes.

> Previously, I blogged about how former deputy director of the CIA Mike Morrell said that everything on Hillary’s server was now in the possession of foreign governments.

More information about the classified e-mails:

> The classified emails stored on former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s private server contained information from five U.S. intelligence agencies and included material related to the fatal 2012 Benghazi attacks, McClatchy has learned.
>
> Of the five classified emails, the one known to be connected to Benghazi was among 296 emails made public in May by the State Department. Intelligence community officials have determined it was improperly released.
>
> […]While campaigning for the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination, Clinton has repeatedly denied she ever sent or received classified information.

I know she is running for the White House, but I actually expect to see her in the Big House (i.e. – PRISON) come January 2017.

To protect children, we need to tell women to choose conservative, traditional men

August 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Women need to learn to choose men who are prepared to be a father and husband

Yesterday, I blogged about the hook-up culture, and how many young women were freely choosing to participate in it. In their own words, the young, unmarried women explained how they wanted to have fun and get "acceptance" from men who were good-looking by having sex with them within minutes of meeting them. I argued that we needed to tell young, unmarried women not to be seeking fun and thrills, and that we need to oppose radical feminism and selfishness in the culture.

Well, a woman who had an irresponsible mom read that post and left a comment telling her story.

Here is the first comment from Mysterious M. in full:

> I was born to a woman who fits a very similar description to what you describe here in your post, WK, so perhaps it would be apropos for me to share my experience being raised by her.
>
> My mom was brought up in a Christian home but allowed herself to be influenced by the feminist movement of the 60s and 70s after she left home. She spent one year in college, got a job, got married and then divorced within a few years (no kids). She met my dad in a bar after her divorce. She celebrated her divorce by going out drinking, btw. My dad was married at the time they met and had been previously married, as well, and had a slew of kids scattered across the country. His current wife was also pregnant. My half sister was born 3 weeks before me, in the same hospital.

Once she found out she was pregnant, she realized that I'd be better off without him around and told him to leave, which he did without any argument, unsurprisingly. I asked her once what she saw in him and she said, "Well, he was funny." So she slept with him. No matter that he had a wife, ex-wives, kids, etc. Those things aren't important when you're out looking for a good time for yourself.

I was a teenager before I knew who my dad was and how I came into being. After I was born she did start to attend church and put me in Christian school and attempted to raise me in a Christian home. However, she never once told me that she thought she'd done anything wrong or that she was sorry for the pain that her decisions caused me. I went through years of anguish, depression, an eating disorder that almost killed me and other behavioral problems clearly stemming from the feelings of abandonment I experienced and her continuously irresponsible behavior, but never once did it appear to cross her mind that she might be responsible for any of this.

Although my mom appeared from the outside to have changed her ways, in hindsight I see that the reckless independence she acquired from her years away from family and church never really left. They switched from outwardly rebellious behavior, like dating married men, to more private bad habits to fulfill her desire for fun and excitement, like internet gambling and reckless spending on credit cards (to the tune of 70K at last count). I think these were also attempts to distract and comfort herself when she was lonely. When she got older, she resented that she didn't have a husband to take care of her and enjoy a simple life with, but never seemed to put it together that her choices pretty much precluded her from that opportunity.

Although she's faithfully attended church since my childhood and read her Bible, etc, I have never, ever once heard her admit that she sinned by doing any of these things, or that they were bad decisions that caused unnecessary hurt and harm to her child or herself. If anything, she still seems to think that it's kind of funny or cute that she, an otherwise quiet, reserved, seemingly respectable woman, has a torrid past that resulted in an affair with a married man and a child to commemorate the event. I almost sense she's proud of it, to this day, and that makes me very sad and scared for her.

She's dying now and her mind is going. She says she's ready to meet the Lord, and I can only hope that between herself and Him, she's made things right, although I've seen very little fruit speaking to that possibility. She talks the talk, but seeing her walk up close and in person, I'm left with more questions than answers about whether she really ever submitted to Christ. It just doesn't show to me, and I probably know her better than anyone else. She's left an enormous mess financially for my husband and I to cope with and she can no longer distract herself with spending sprees, so the bitterness caused by her life decisions have

> finally caught up with her and there's no avoiding them now.
>
> I guess from my perspective, when I see young woman who claim to be Christian but are living the most important aspects of their lives out in the way the rest of the world says is acceptable, it makes me very confused about what they really believe. I purposely waited for sex until marriage, chose a man with good morals and a good job and did everything in power to stay as far away from the hook-up culture as possible. I know the pain that comes from such foolish living. I can't fathom why any Christian woman would engage in such foolish and selfish behavior as the ones I see doing this very thing today. They do not know what it means to know, serve and love Christ. They are too busy loving and serving themselves to see what a dangerous path they are traveling.

There are a couple more comments now.

Here's an excerpt from one:

> My mom was raised in a loving home with Christian parents and grew up very involved in church. My grandmother ran the Sunday school program for years. My other aunts and uncles led decent, moral, Christian lives. My mom wanted to do something more exciting. She was rebellious, plain and simple. She thought it was funny. If she had been raised in a situation that was equally as bad as the one she created, I could feel more sympathy. But she was raised differently than what she chose. I don't understand it but I watched my own Christian friends do the same thing as a teen and young adult. It's so perplexing to me. They're raised in a stable Christian household and then choose the most unstable and reckless men because of the feelings those men inspired. I was the product of those feelings and knew from a young age I'd rather stay single and chaste the rest of my life than end up repeating the choices that my parents made.

And an excerpt from a later one:

> I know it's popular to say that any time someone makes bad choices, it's because they are hurting and are acting out. But once you reach adulthood and have a child, you forfeit your right to make excuses for your behavior. You either change or you risk damaging the children you've been entrusted with.
>
> Regarding WK's comment about condoning her recklessness, I will say this. **To my mom, any relationship that involved conflict was disposable. I know that other Christians tried to confront her, and she rejected them. She cut them out, no holds barred. If you didn't agree, you were not a part of her circle. For those who were close, she was very adept at keeping secrets. Even I didn't know the breadth of the destructiveness of certain aspects of her life until recently, I was her closest confidant. People who are desperate to keep secrets are typically fairly adept at doing so, at least for a while. Eventually it catches up, but often it's far too late to do any real remediation.** At that point it's just a matter of salvaging what

> you can and trying to cope with the rest as best as possible.
>
> […]Bottom line: excuses or not, bad decisions create bad consequences and are generally pretty avoidable if you’re willing to be humble and submit to Christ, regardless of the circumstances. Helping people identify excuses does not help them avoid these consequences. **Only by pointing out the truth, no matter the friction it might cause, can we help people on a bad path see the error of their ways and offer them any real hope.**

That is a situation (text in bold) that I have experienced myself.

Can evolution, empathy and well-being account for the existence of moral facts?

August 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

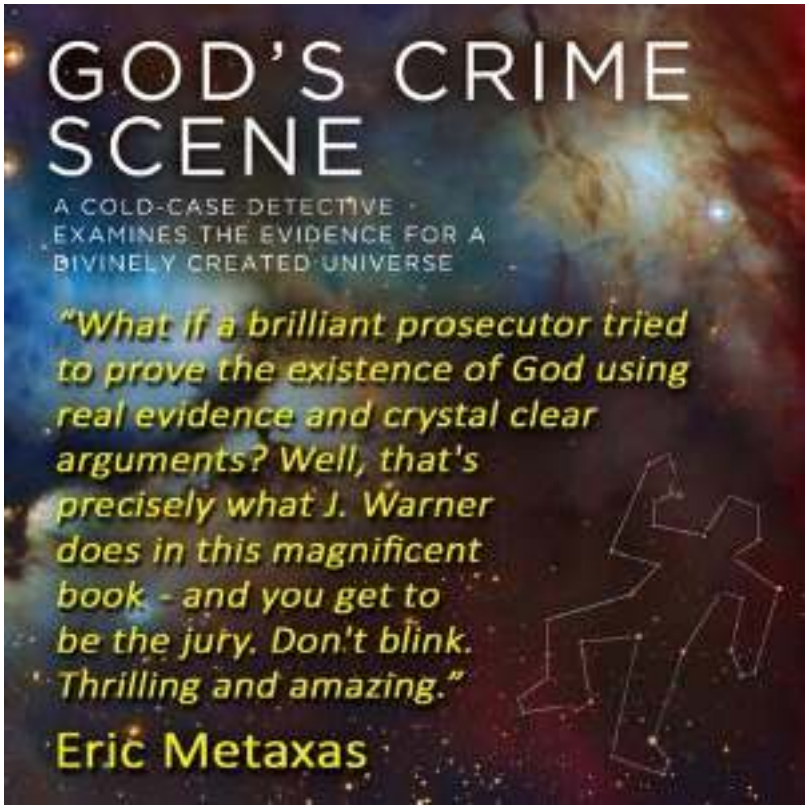

J. Warner Wallace: God's Crime Scene

J. Warner Wallace is publishing blog posts related to the material covered in his newest book. This latest post is related to that big discussion we had last week about whether atheists can ground objective moral values and objective moral duties.

He writes:

> How are we to account for the existence of objective, transcendent moral truths? Some philosophers, like Sam Harris, believe "moral values are really questions about the well-being of conscious creatures." Well-being (also described as human "flourishing") is, according to Harris, the purpose of our existence as human beings. Since human biology transcends human culture, moral truths (if they are rooted in human biology), would also transcend culture. As a result, we can account for the existence of objective, transcendent moral truths without having to ground them in a transcendent moral truth-giver (like God). Harris believes these kinds of truths are simply grounded in the well-being of our entire species, and according to Harris, can be ascertained and apprehended by simply studying the science of human flourishing. Harris argues "that science can, in principle, help us understand what we should do and should want—and, therefore, what other people should do and should want in order to live the best lives possible. There are right and wrong answers to moral questions, just as

> there are right and wrong answers to questions of physics, and such answers may one day fall within reach of the maturing sciences of mind." But this attempt to ground objective, transcendent moral truths in human biological flourishing is misguided for several reasons…

Here's one of the reasons:

> **This View Assumes a *Moral* Definition of "Well-Being"**
> What is Harris' definition of "well-being" in the first place? Is it merely *survival*, or is it a particular *kind of survival*? Even philosophers who hold this view readily admit some behaviors (like subjugating slaves and stealing the resources of opposing groups) can actually *aid* in the survival of a people group. But these same thinkers simultaneously believe these kinds of behaviors are detrimental to the group's *well-being*. This implies, however, there's a *right* way to survive and a *wrong* way. Did you spot the logical inconsistency here? Those who believe the pursuit of human well-being is the *origin* of moral truth, begin with a definition of well-being already *infused* with moral truth. Who gets to determine the right or wrong way to survive or flourish? This approach to moral truth argues for something *more* than mere biological survival of the fittest. It argues for a kind of *moral* survival (described as "well-being") *before* it has adequately explained the *source* for moral truth.

The minute you are talking about well-being, you have smuggled in a concept of what counts as good, and what counts as evil.

And here's another reason:

> **This View Fails to Determine *Whose* Well-Being Is Most Important**
> Why would any of us consider the well-being of strangers prior to the well-being of our own families and communities? If history is any indicator, humans are far more inclined to care for *themselves*than for others, even when the activities of their own group may ultimately harm the survivability of the entire species. Who gets to define "flourishing" when cultures and individuals disagree about notions of happiness, compassion, contentedness, or physical and psychological health? When competing interests collide, whose definitions (and whose well-being) warrants our consideration? As philosopher Patricia Churchland observes, "no one has the slightest idea how to compare the mild headache of five million against the broken legs of two, or the needs of one's own two children against the needs of a hundred unrelated brain-damaged children in Serbia."
>
> Even if we are only interested in the well-being of an isolated group, should we be more concerned about *total* well-being or *average* well-being of the group? Those concerned with total well-being prefer a world in which the most people possible are able to live with at least moderate well-being. Those concerned with average well-being prefer a world in which smaller groups maximize their well-being, even if others suffer, so the average for the species is elevated. If we

> derive moral value from an action's impact on the well-being of the entire species, why should I, as a law enforcement officer, care at all about murdered gang members such as Jesse's victim? Shouldn't I be more focused on the fate of those better educated, wealthier or more intelligent contributors to our society than those who are actually preying on our society? Aren't those in the first group more likely to contribute to the well-being of our species than those in the second? Assessing an action's moral value on the basis of its ultimate consequence is nearly impossible to accomplish and leads to disturbing discrimination.

In fact, the "well-being" view pushed by Sam Harris and others is really just utilitarianism, and I posted something about the many problems with that view previously.

Why does objective morality matter? Well consider a previous post where I looked at a debate between Matt Dillahunty and David Robertson. Robertson asked Dillahunty whether it was an objective fact that Dachau, a Nazi concentration camp, was morally evil. Dillahunty's reply? "I don't know". And that is consistent with his atheistic view. The answer to EVERY question about moral facts for an atheist is "I don't know". They *have to* not know. If they did know, then God would have to exist to ground that moral fact, because it would exist independent of personal preferences and cultural customs.They have to say I don't know, or give up their atheism. And that's why moral facts are nowhere grounded in an atheistic worldview. They use the words, but the words refer to nothing that exists independent of personal preferences and cultural conventions – which vary over time and place. If you agree with Dillahunty's ignorance about whether concentration camps are moral evils as a matter of *fact*, then you can be an atheist.

God's Crime Scene

Some really good blog posts are coming out on Cold Case Christianity blog related to this new book. Just judging from the table of contents and the podcast he did on it, it looks like it covers 8 of the good, substantial arguments for God's existence. I always like the science arguments more than the history arguments, and history arguments more than the philosophical arguments, because I'm an engineer. Really looking forward to a quiet weekend with this new book. I got the audio edition in addition to the book itself.

Sixth Planned Parenthood video: baby parts taken and sold without mom's consent

August 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Here's the sixth video released by the Center for Medical Progress:

Here's the story from Anika Smith writing for The Stream.

She writes:

> The latest video from the Center for Medical Progress presents a day in the life of Holly O'Donnell, a former StemExpress employee who has turned into a whistleblower on the baby body parts industry. O'Donnell formerly worked at the Planned Parenthood Stockton and Fresno, CA, which she describes in grim detail.
>
> […]In this latest sting video, O'Donnell says, "They give you a sheet and it's everybody for that day who's coming in for an ultrasound, for an abortion, medical and late-term abortion … We take them in the room or meet them in the chair … Pregnancy tests are potential pregnancies are potential specimens. It's just taking advantage of the opportunities."
>
> Yes, there really was a list with the tissues requested from research centers. And yes, this list did dictate how they treated these women and the children in their wombs — as commodities.
>
> […]The most damning statement will shock many women who feel that an abortion is a private, personal matter: **O'Donnell says in the video that if the aborted child was older, and the technicians needed a specimen that age, "there were times where they would just take what they wanted. And these mothers don't know. There's no way they would know."**
>
> O'Donnell tells one particularly chilling incident from her time at the Fresno clinic,

> where there was a mother who said she did not want to "donate" the aborted child for scientific research. A worker at this clinic took her valuable specimen anyway.

Rachel Alexander also has an article up at The Stream, on the alleged legal violations in the video.

She writes:

> The latest Planned Parenthood video has just been released by the Center for Medical Progress, and it contains evidence of *yet more* laws being broken by the organization. This time, it's informed consent. The National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act of 1993 prohibits the harvesting of fetal body parts without obtaining the consent of the mother. So far, Planned Parenthood has defended itself against the videos by saying its employees who were secretly taped were misunderstood. But how will it get around the testimony of a former worker who seems happy to testify in court against the organization?
>
> […]O'Donnell also describes times when women would be asked for consent to take the fetus *even before* a pregnant mother had decided to have an abortion. The National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act of 1993 specifically prohibits this discussion until *after* a woman has decided to have an abortion: "The consent of the woman for the abortion was obtained prior to requesting or obtaining consent for a donation of the tissue for use in such research." Section 112 of that Act imposes criminal penalties on the originating organization for "soliciting or receiving a directed donation."

So that's two more.

Well, let's connect this to politics… Hillary Clinton is the presumed Democrat nominee, what does she think about selling the organs of unborn babies?

Hillary says this:

Don't you dare touch Planned Parenthood's taxpayer-funding, Hillary says. We need to make sure that pro-life taxpayers pay for this organ harvesting operation, because the Democrat Party gets a cut by way of political contributions.

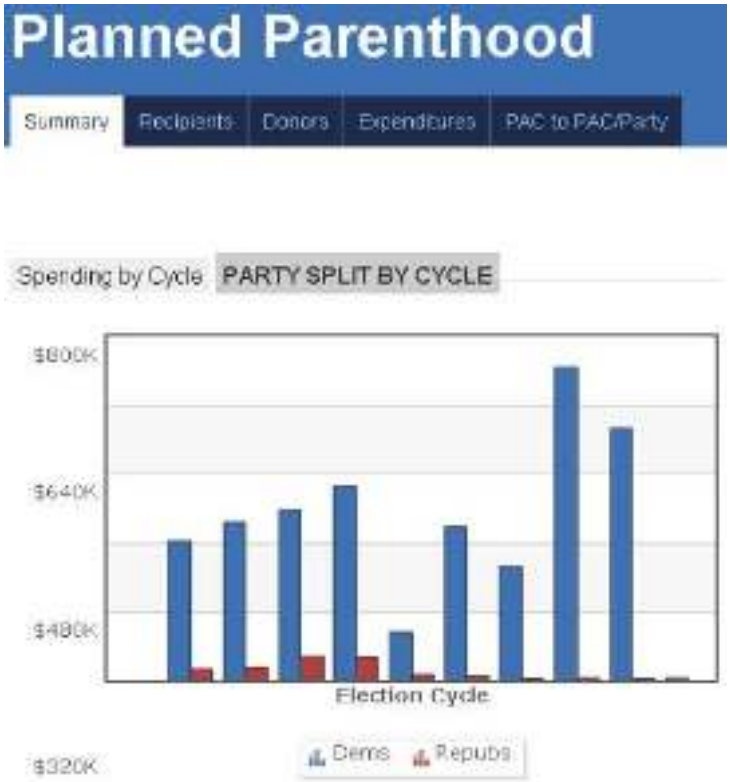

Planned Parenthood donations to Democrats

Meanwhile, Republican candidate Ben Carson said this on Fox News:

> ***CARSON:*** Maybe *I am not objective when it comes to Planned Parenthood, but, you know, I know who Margaret Sanger is, and I know that she believed in eugenics, and one of the reasons you find most of their clinics in black neighborhoods is so that you can find a way to control that population. I think people should go back and read about Margaret Sanger who founded this place — a woman Hillary Clinton by the way says that she admires. Look and see what many people in Nazi Germany said about her.*
>
> ***CAVUTO:*** *That she was for targeting certain races?*
>
> ***CARSON:*** *That she was a great person.*

Carson is very, very, very much opposed to funding Planned Parenthood's organ harvesting operation. And I would really prefer if "pro-life Democrats" put their vote behind people like him instead of people like Hillary Clinton.

Related posts

- Does Planned Parenthood do mammograms? Is abortion only 3% of their services?
- Fifth video: Planned Parenthood selling intact 20-week baby cadavers for profit
- Democrats defeat Republican bill to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood president visited White House 39 times since 2009
- Federal judge blocks release of future sting videos of Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood executive admits abortion victim is a baby in fourth video
- Third video of Planned Parenthood doctors discussing organ harvesting
- Obama administration refuses FOIA requests about Planned Parenthood

- Obama administration will investigate whistleblowers who filmed Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood senior executive in second video: “I want a Lamborghini”
- Republicans in Congress will investigate Planned Parenthood’s organ harvesting
- ABC, CBS, CNN, and MSNBC all ignore Planned Parenthood organ harvesting story
- Governor Bobby Jindal announces investigation of Planned Parenthood
- What does Hillary Clinton think of Planned Parenthood selling unborn baby parts?
- House Republicans attempting to end some of the taxpayer-funding for Planned Parenthood
- With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013
- Planned Parenthood, an abortion business, is in California schools teaching sex education
- Arizona Planned Parenthood clinic failed to report rapist
- Planned Parenthood must pay $1.4 million in Medicaid fraud settlement
- Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You
- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- 24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic

What’s the earliest historical report of the resurrection of Jesus?

August 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let’s take a look at the facts

First, the creed – which is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8:

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Almost all historians accept this creed as dating back to within 5 years of the death of Jesus. But why?

Here’s an article about this early creed from ancient historian Gary Habermas.

Quote:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: “However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul’s.”[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul’s own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to

many witnesses, both individuals and groups.

Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: "It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition."[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]

The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]

Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]

Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.

> (3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]
>
> These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.
>
> (4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

Here's a great article from Eric Chabot, director of Ratio Christi Apologetics Alliance, The Ohio State University to explain who accepts this creed. It's not just conservatives!

Excerpt:

> Even the co-founder Jesus Seminar member John Dominic Crossan, writes:

> "Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that "I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received." The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he "went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days" (11).
>
> This comment by Crossan makes sense because within the creed Paul calls Peter by his Aramic name, Cephas. Hence, if this tradition originated in the Aramaic language, the two locations that people spoke Aramaic were Galilee and Judea. (12) The Greek term "historeo" is translated as "to visit" or "to interview." (13) Hence, Paul's purpose of the trip was probably designed to affirm the resurrection story with Peter who had been an actual eyewitness to the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:5).

Now the Jesus Seminar was a radical group of scholars – these were not moderates. Crossan himself admitted to being an atheist in his debate with William Lane Craig. So

here you have an atheist admitting that 1 Cor. 15:3-8 is early and in contact with eyewitnesses.

Gary Habermas and James Crossley discuss the minimal facts case for the resurrection

August 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two ninjas face off at sundown

James Crossley is my favorite atheist ancient historian, such a straight shooter. He's on the skeptical left, but he has a no-baloney way of talking that I really like. I was so excited to summarize this, and there's not a speck of snark in this summary. Crossley dates the gospel of Mark 37-43 A.D., far earlier than most scholars. Justin Brierley does a great job as moderator. Gary Habermas is OK, but he is not familiar with any useful arguments for God's existence, (kalam, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, etc.), and that is a problem in this debate.

Here are the details of the debate:

> Christian philosopher and historian Gary Habermas has been at the forefront of the 'minimal facts' approach as evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.
>
> He debates the commonly agreed facts with agnostic New Testament scholar James Crossley and they discuss whether the miracle of the resurrection can be a historically valid explanation of the evidence.

Note: this is the first of two shows they are doing together!!

The MP3 file is here. (If this disappears, tell me, I have a copy)

There is also a video on YouTube:

This non-snarky summary starts at 10:52.

Summary:

- Habermas: the minimal facts are the facts that even the majority of *skeptical* scholars will accept

Habermas list of minimal facts: (near universal acceptance)

1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion
2. After his death, his disciples had experiences that they believed were appearances of the risen Jesus
3. The disciples were transformed by their experiences and proclaimed his resurrection and were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection
4. The proclamation of his resurrection was early
5. James was converted by a post-mortem experience
6. Paul was converted by a post-mortem experience

Habermas list of widely-accepted facts:

1. Burial for Jesus in a private tomb
2. The private tomb found empty
3. The disciples despaired after Jesus was crucified
4. The proclamation of the resurrection started in Jerusalem
5. Changing the worship day from Saturday to Sunday

Crossley's views on the minimal and widely-accepted facts:

- Crossley: I am in broad agreement with what Gary said
- Crossley: "the resurrection appearances are some of the hardest, best evidence we have" because it's in early 1 Cor 15:3-8 creed
- Crossley: people were convinced that they had seen the risen Christ

The burial in a private tomb:

- Crossley: I have my doubts about the private tomb burial and the empty tomb
- Crossley: Mark's gospel has the burial in a private tomb by Joseph of Arimethea, and Mark is the earliest gospel
- Crossley: I don't have a doubt, it's just that there are other possible alternatives, and then the tradition was invented later – but that's just a possibility
- Crossley: there is not enough evidence to make a decision either way on the burial

The empty tomb:

- Habermas: there are multiple lines of evidence for the empty tomb
- Habermas: the reason it's not one of my minimal facts is because a quarter to a third of skeptical scholars reject it

The transformation of the followers of Jesus:

- Crossley: "yes, clearly, I don't think you can argue with that, it's fairly obvious"

The conversions of James and Paul:

- Crossley: “yes, because it’s based on 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, that report, that was handed on to him”

Where Habermas and Crossley agree:

- Habermas: you agree with the 6 facts in the minimal facts list, and you have problems with 2 of 5 facts from the widely accepted list
- Crossley: Yes

The empty tomb:

- Crossley: Two problems: first, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 doesn’t mention it, but it “probably assumes the idea that Jesus left behind an empty tomb when resurrected, I am convinced by some of the conservative arguments on that one, but it’s not hard evidence for there actually being an empty tomb”
- Crossley: Second, “the other early source we have ends with no resurrection appearances”, it makes him a bit skeptical of the empty tomb
- Habermas: the empty tomb is not a minimal fact, I want 90% agreement by skeptical scholars for it to be a minimal fact
- Habermas: I have never included the empty tomb in my list of minimal facts
- Brierley: William Lane Craig puts it in his list of minimal facts
- Habermas: It is very well attested, so if that’s what you mean, then it’s a minimal fact, but it doesn’t have the 90% agreement like the other minimal facts
- Habermas: I have 21 arguments for the empty tomb, and none of them require early dating of sources or traditional authorship of the gospels, e.g. – the women discovered the empty tomb, the pre-Markan source, the implications of 1 Cor 15 has some force, the sermons summary in Acts 13 which Bart Ehrman dates to 31 or 32 A.D. has putting a body down and a body coming up without being corrupted

Why is 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 more respected as a source than the gospels?

- Habermas: There is a unanimous New Testament conclusion, across the board, from conservative to liberal, that in 1 Cor 15:3-8 Paul is presenting creedal data, Richard Bauckham says that this goes back to the early 30s A.D., Paul got this from the eyewitnesses he mentions in Galatians 1 and 2
- Crossley: [reads 1 Corinthians:3-8 out loud], now that’s a tradition that’s handed on, this is Paul, we know this is Paul, writing mid-50s, this is kind of gold, this is the evidence I wish we had across the board

Why doesn’t James accept the resurrection:

- Crossley: Historians should not conclude that the supernatural is real, concluding the supernatural is outside of history
- Crossley: I am more interested in what people believed at that time
- Brierley: as a historian, are you required to give an explanation of the commonly-

accepted facts
- Crossley: yes, historians must give their explanation for the facts
- Crossley: we know people have visions, and how the cultural context determines the content of visions, e.g. – the background of martyrdom
- Brierley: so you would go for the hallucination hypothesis?
- Crossley: yes, but I prefer not to use that word

Should historians rule out the supernatural?

- Habermas: let's not ask what caused the event, let's just see if the disciples thought they saw him before he died, that he died on the cross, and then believed they saw him after he died, like you might see someone in the supermarket
- Habermas: I'm not asking whether a miracle occurred, I just want to know whether Jesus was seen after he died on the cross
- Crossley: that sounds like the angle I'm coming at this from
- Crossley: the problem is that there is a supernatural element to some of the appearances, so it's not a supermarket appearances
- Brierley: it's not angels and hallelujah in the sky
- Habermas: nothing like that, no light in the early accounts, fairly mundane

Does James agree that people believed they saw Jesus after his death?

- Crossley: yes, I think that's fairly clear that we do
- Crossley: but historians cannot prove claims that what happened to Jesus was supernatural
- Brierley: your view is so far from what I see on Internet atheists sites, where they say it's all legendary accumulation, fairy tales
- Crossley: I'm perfect comfortable with the idea – and I think it happened – that people created stories, invented stories
- Crossley: there are too many cases where people are sincerely professing that they thought they saw Jesus after his death

Would you expect the disciples to have visions of a resurrected Jesus if nothing happened to him?

- Habermas: the dividing line is: did something happen to Jesus, or did something happen to his disciples?
- Habermas: the view that people were seeing a kind of ghostly Jesus (non-bodily) – a Jedi Jesus – after his death is a resurrection view, but I hold to a bodily resurrection view
- Brierley: N.T. Wright says a resurrected Jesus was contrary to expectations – should we expect the disciples to have a vision of Jesus as resurrected?
- Crossley: Wright generalizes too much thinking that there was a single view of the resurrection (the general resurrection at the end of the age), there are a variety of

views, some are contradictory
- Crossley: Herod Antipas thought that Jesus might be John the Baptist returned from the dead, and he knew Jesus was flesh and blood, there is the story of the dead rising in the earthquake in Matthew, there are stories of the resurrection in Maccabees, and this would influence what people expected
- Habermas: the earliest Christian view was *bodily* resurrection
- Crossley: yes, I think that's right
- Crossley: In Mark 6, they thought Jesus was a ghost, so there is room for disagreement

Why should a historian not rule out a supernatural explanation?

- Habermas: to get to supernatural, you have to go to philosophy – it's a worldview problem
- Habermas: he predicted his own death and resurrection
- Habermas: one factor is the uniqueness of Jesus
- Habermas: the early church had belief in the bodily resurrection, and a high Christology out of the gate
- Habermas: you might look at evidence for corroborated near-death experiences that raise the possibility of an afterlife
- Crossley: I'm content to leave it at the level of what people believe and not draw any larger conclusions
- Crossley: regarding the predicting his own death, the gospels are written after, so it's not clear that these predictions predate Jesus' death
- Crossley: it's not surprising that Jesus would have predicted his own death, and that he might have foreseen God vindicating him

If you admit to the possibility of miracles, is the data sufficient to conclude that the best explanation of the facts is resurrection?

- Crossley: If we assume that God exists, and that God intervenes in history, and that this was obvious to everyone, then "of course"
- Brierley: Are you committed to a naturalistic view of history?
- Crossley: Not quite, broadly, yes, I am saying this all I can do
- Brierley: should James be open to a supernatural explanation?
- Habermas: if you adopt methodological naturalism,it colors how look at the data is seen, just like supernaturalism does

Colorado Court of Appeals rules that Christian must bake cakes for gay wedding

August 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

This is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> A custom cake baker in suburban Denver can't cite his religious convictions in declining to make a wedding cake for two men, a Colorado appeals court ruled today.
>
> "Cake artist" Jack Phillips said he gladly serves gays and lesbians in his family business. But, Phillips said, he could not in good conscience design a wedding cake for a same-sex couple when, as a Christian, he believes marriage is the union of a man and a woman.
>
> A three-judge panel of the Colorado Court of Appeals ruled that not doing so amounts to illegal discrimination based on sexual orientation, Associated Press reported.

You'll recall that Colorado is one of the states that does not recognize religious liberty as a human right:

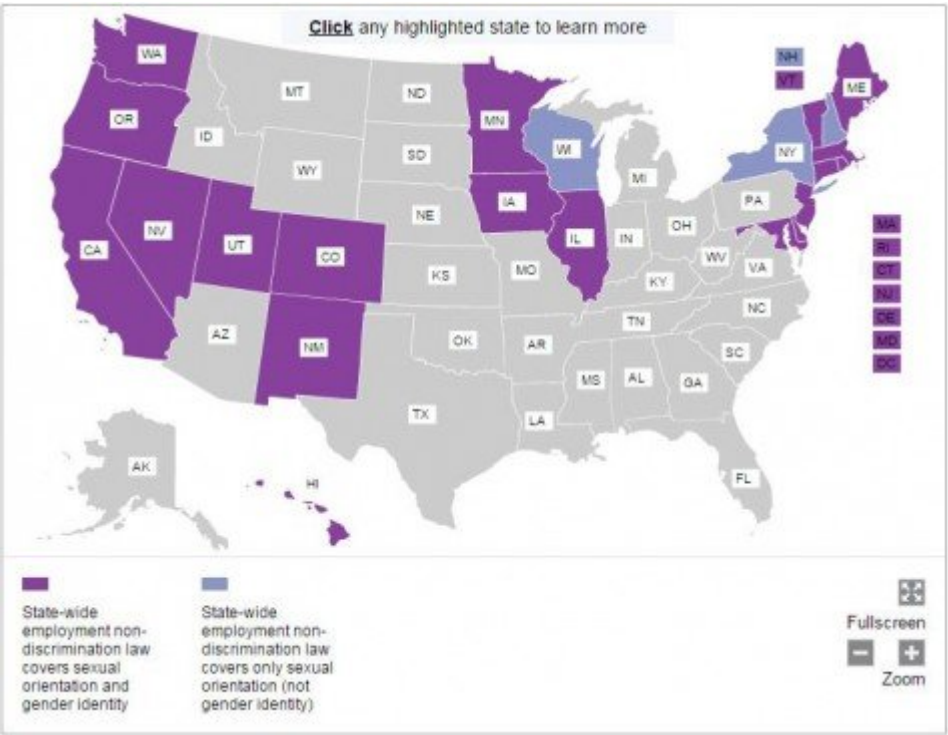

States with non-discrimination laws

If you live in one of the non-gray states, you're at risk.

What's troubling to me about this is that Phillips was defended by Jeremy Tedesco of the Alliance Defending Freedom. He is a very capable religious liberty lawyer.

More:

> The baker's lawyer, Jeremy Tedesco, told The Daily Signal that the three judges "got it wrong on all counts" in a unanimous, 65-page opinion.
>
> "He objects to the message, not to their protected status," Tedesco said of the business owner's attitude toward Charlie Craig and David Mullins, the two men who wanted him to design a wedding cake. "That's not discrimination under the law."
>
> Tedesco, senior legal counsel with Alliance Defending Freedom, added:
>
> Business owners have a right–especially when they're engaged in expression, as our client is–to run their business in accordance with their beliefs. …When they're engaged in expression, [they may] decline to create an expression that violates their convictions.

What's interesting is that after being denied the cake, the gay couple easily went to another shop and got a cake. There was no harm done.

But that was not good enough for them, hence their decision to involve the state, and punish the Christian for choosing not to celebrate something he disagreed with.

Tedesco says that the baker should not be forced to say something that he violates his conscience:

> As The Daily Signal reported, Tedesco argued that compelling Phillips to create a cake for the wedding of two men would violate his First Amendment rights not

> only to freedom of religion but also free speech or expression.
>
> “The other side of the case thinks there are no First Amendment rights in the commercial context and once you open a business, you cede all First Amendment protections,” Tedesco told The Daily Signal after the hearing in Denver.

The ADF intends to appeal the case to the Colorado Supreme Court, and then to the Supreme Court of the United States. Unfortunately, since Obama won in 2008 and 2012, the Supreme Court is likely to rule against religious liberty. We’ll find out, I guess.

You can read more about Jeremy Tedesco here.

Federal court cripples Obama administration's bird-killing green energy agenda

August 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is business as usual for the Democrat Party

So, one of the quirky things about me is that I am a huge bird lover.

Birds are my favorite creatures, and I oppose anything that harms them. Well, it turns out that green energy schemes harm a lot of birds, whether it be solar power or wind power.

To get around this fact, the Obama administration decided to to allow green energy producers to get licenses to kill rare, protected birds – including bald eagles and golden eagles. Green energy scams are a useful way for the Obama administration to pay off their campaign bundlers with taxpayer money, as a reward for helping Democrats get elected. And if huge numbers of rare, protected birds have to die to do that, well, it's no big deal.

Here's the story from Bird Watching Daily. (H/T ECM)

It says:

> The U.S. District Court in San Jose, California, today ruled that the Department of the Interior violated federal laws when it created a final regulation allowing wind energy and some other companies to obtain 30-year permits to kill protected Bald and Golden Eagles without prosecution by the federal government. The court decision invalidates the rule.
>
> American Bird Conservancy (ABC), a plaintiff in the lawsuit, hailed the decision.

> “We are pleased that the courts agreed with us that improper shortcuts were taken in the development of this rule,” said Michael Hutchins, director of ABC’s Bird Smart Wind Energy Program. “The court found that important laws meant to protect our nation’s wildlife were not properly followed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, putting Bald and Golden Eagles at greater risk.”
>
> The court wrote: “… substantial questions are raised as to whether the Final 30-Year Rule may have a significant adverse effect on bald and golden eagle populations.”

By the way, in case you wanted a reference for my claim that solar power also harms birds, this Scientific American article explains how solar power kills endangered bird species.

> You might never have seen an Yuma clapper rail. Fewer than 1,000 are thought to still be sloshing about in cattail-thick marshes from Mexico up to Utah and across to California. But if you were lucky enough to spot one, you might chuckle at its oversized toes.
>
> When officials with the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory saw one of these endangered birds last year, it was no laughing matter. It was dead. It was one of 233 birds recovered from the sites of three Californian desert solar power plants as part of a federal investigation. The laboratory’s wildlife equivalents of CSI stars concluded that many of the birds had been fatally singed, broken, or otherwise fatally crippled by the facilities.

233 doesn’t sound too bad, but the total death toll is much higher.

This Weather.com article puts the number of birds killed by solar power at *thousands every year* for just one solar power plant:

> According to the Associated Press, up to 28,000 birds per year might be meeting an early death after burning up in the focused beams of sunlight, with birds dying at a rate of one bird every two minutes. The burned-up birds are being dubbed “streamers,” after the poof of smoke produced by the igniting birds.
>
> A report by the USFWS states that most of the birds are dying from various levels of exposure to “solar flux” which causes “singeing of feathers.”
>
> “Severe singeing of flight feathers caused catastrophic loss of flying ability, leading to death by impact with the ground or other objects,” the report states. “Less severe singeing led to impairment of flight capability, reducing ability to forage and evade predators, leading to starvation or predation.”

Solar power is actually worse than wind power, when it comes to killing birds, and that’s still going on, unchecked. When I look at the dead and injured birds in the pictures from these news stories, it just makes me sick.

Walter Bradley asks: what is religion really supposed to be about?

August 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

This lecture is based on the book "Truth in Religion" by famous philosopher Mortimer J. Adler. At the time of writing the book, he was not a Christian, but there is still a lot of value in the book for Christians who are trying to understand what religion should really be about.

About the speaker

The speaker is one of my top 3 favorite speakers of all time in Christian apologetics, Dr. Walter Bradley. (The other two are Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Michael Strauss)

Here's a biography:

> Dr. Bradley received his B.S. in Engineering Science and his Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Texas in Austin.
>
> Dr. Bradley taught for eight years at the Colorado School of Mines before assuming a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1976.
>
> During his 24 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Bradley served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and as Director of the Polymer Technology Center, and received five College of Engineering Research Awards. He has received over $4,500,000 in research grants and has published over 140 technical articles and book chapters. He has also co-authored "The Mystery Of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Materials and of the American Scientific Affiliation and serves as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.

You can read more about his recent research on how to use coconuts to make car parts in this article from Science Daily.

The MP3 file is here. (31 minutes + Q&A)

Topics:

- what is pluralism?
- what is multiculturalism?
- what is relativism?
- some propositions are true culturally – just for certain groups in certain times (cultures)
- some proposition are true trans-culturally – true independently of what anyone wants or feels
- Mathematical truth is trans-cultural – it is true regardless of cultural fashions
- Scientific truth is trans-cultural – it is true regardless of cultural fashions
- Some truths are not like this – cooking traditions, clothing traditions and greeting traditions
- These kinds of truths are NOT trans-cultural, they vary by culture
- The question is – is religion true like math and science, or true depending on the culture
- Some people think that your religion depends on where you were born or what your family believes
- Religions make conflicting claims about the way the world really is, so they can't all be true
- And these conflicts are at the core of the religions – who God is, how can we be related to him, etc.
- So if religions convey trans-cultural truth, then either one is true or none are true
- If they are not trying to convey trans-cultural truth, then they are not like math and science
- Let's assume that religion is the same as trans-cultural truth
- How can we know which religion is true? 1) the laws of logic, 2) empirical testing against reality
- Logical consistency is needed to make the first cut – self-contradictory claims cannot be true
- To be true trans-culturally, a proposition must at least NOT break the law of non-contradiction
- According to Mortimer Adler's book, only Christianity, Judaism and Islam are not self-contradictory
- All the others can be excluded on the basis of overt internal contradictions on fundamental questions
- The others that are self-contradictory can be true culturally, but not trans-culturally
- The way to proceed forward is to test the three non-contradictory religions against science and history
- One of these three may be true, or they could all be false
- We can test the three by evaluating their conflicting truth claims about the historical

Jesus
- Famous skeptics have undertaken studies to undermine the historical Jesus presented in the Bible
- Lew Wallace, Simon Greenleaf and Frank Morrison assessed the evidence as atheists and became Christians
- There is a lot of opposition in culture to the idea that one religion might be true
- But if you take the claims of Jesus at face value, he claims to be the unique revelation of God to mankind
- Either he was telling the truth about that, or he was lying, or he was crazy
- So which is it?

Why don't religious people ask if their religion is true?

People seem to be chicken these days about claiming that their religion is true. It's easier to say that my religion is true for me, and your religion is true for you – reduce it to personal preferences. So long as everyone is sincere about what they believe, then that's the most important thing, right?

But it is NOT TRUE that you can believe whatever you want as long as you are sincere – sincerity doesn't mean that you can't be mistaken. I can jump off the top of the Sears Tower and be sincere in my belief that I will float down like a feather, but that doesn't make my belief true. If you want to have a good relationship with God, you have to know things about him, not just have sincere beliefs. You have to know whether he exists and what he is like – *really*. It's not enough to have sincere beliefs that are not actually true.

I think that God's existence and character can be assessed and known based on logic and evidence. I think that God exists independently of whether I want him to or not, and I think that his character and desires are not the same as *my* character and desires. And I don't really care what my neighbors think of my disagreeing with them, my goal is not to keep silent and to just *get along with them* and *be happier in my community*.

God's first commandment to us is not to love our neighbor – that's number two. Number one is to love him. And how can we love him, if we don't want to know him. And how can we love him, if we don't tell people the truth about him when they ask us?

That message is not going to win us a lot of friends, but our job as Christians is to tell how and why God stepped into history. Jesus expects us to be his ambassadors and to carry out the task of evangelism faithfully, and to suffer with him and – if necessary – to be rejected like he was rejected.

Bible study: the importance of truth in religion

August 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here's an interesting passage of the Bible. What do you all think the practical value of this passage is?

[1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

[2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

[3] he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

[4] Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

[6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

[7] Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[8] Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

[9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

[10] The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king

asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

[11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

[12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king."

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him."

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

[27] Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

[29] “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

[30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

This passage is interesting to me because it shows the kind of attitude that God answers. The King in this passage was tired of hearing man-made stories from his servants – stories that were undoubtedly influenced by the servants desire to avoid the King’s wrath. The servants would only have told the King things that were vague and happy, so that they could never be proved wrong or found to be judgmental or offensive. But the King was tired of that. He wanted someone with authority to tell him the truth about the way the world was.

In the rest of the chapter, Daniel interprets the dream, and concludes by saying this: “The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”. The King replies: “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

I think it is is going to be difficult for Christians living today to be able to tell people their dreams like that. But what we can do is talk about God’s miracles as revealed by science and history. We can study astrophysics, biochemistry and history and we can explain what God did in creating and fine-tuning the universe for life, in sequencing amino acids into functioning proteins, in creating brand new body plans in the Cambrian explosion, in raising Jesus from the dead as a matter of historical record, and so on. We have to show how great God is to people who do not even think he exists, and without assuming that they believe in the Bible.

There are still people out there like the King who are looking for someone who can speak the truth to them. All it takes from us is a little studying, and we can be like Daniel, too.

What does it mean for a woman to respect a man?

August 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: “Godspeed” by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

Matt Walsh writes a popular blog where he sometimes talks about male-female relationships. I got the impression that he was writing too much about how to blame men, and not enough about the policies and practices that provide incentives for men to underperform, e.g. – mostly female teachers, unfair divorce laws, stimulus spending geared towards women, etc. So imagine my surprise when I came across this article about men and their need for respect.

Matt is concerned that men are hearing too many negative messages in the culture, and not getting enough respect for what they do right.

He writes:

> These cultural messages aren’t harmful because they hurt my manly feelings; they’re harmful because of what they do to young girls. Society tells our daughters that men are boorish dolts who need to be herded like goats and lectured like school boys. Then they grow up and enter into marriage wholly unprepared and unwilling to accept the Biblical notion that “wives should submit to their husbands” because “the husband is the head of the wife.” [Ephesians 5]
>
> It is a fatal problem, because the one thing that is consistently withheld from men and husbands — respect — is the one thing we need the most.
>
> Yes, *need*. We need respect, and that need is so deeply ingrained that a marriage cannot possibly survive if the man is deprived of it.

> Often, people will say that a husband should only be respected if he "earns" it. *This attitude is precisely the problem*. A wife ought to respect her husband because he is her husband, just as he ought to love and honor her because she is his wife. Your husband might "deserve" it when you mock him, berate him, belittle him, and nag him, but you don't marry someone in order to give them what they deserve. In marriage, you give them what you've promised them, even when they aren't holding up their end of the bargain.

OK really, one last quote from Matt:

> Respect is our language. If it isn't said with respect, we can't hear it. This is why nagging is ineffective and self defeating. This is why statements made in sarcastic tones, or with rolling eyes, will never be received well. We have a filter in our brains, and a statement made in disrespect will be filtered out like the poison it is.
>
> Men are notoriously reluctant to share feelings or display vulnerability. Many times, we keep those inner thoughts locked away — our feelings guarded and hidden — because we know we are not respected. A man will never be vulnerable to someone who doesn't respect him. Never.
>
> A man isn't satisfied or content if he isn't respected. If he can't find respect where he is, he will seek it somewhere else. This can have disastrous implications for a relationship, but it applies in other areas of life as well. A man is much more likely to stay in a low paying job, a physically demanding job, a dangerous job, or a tedious job, than a job where he isn't respected.
>
> I'm only emphasizing this because I think it might actually be news to some people. Society does not permit men to be vocal about their need for respect, so the need is often ignored.

What I've found in speaking to women about this is that all the married and divorced women know about this need that men have. And by and large, they agree with it, too. But that is much rarer among single women, which is why men need to be ready to explain their needs and feelings. And women need to allow them to do that and then provide what men need in order to keep them performing.

Let's take a quick look at the Bible, because that's always a good thing to do when you want the truth about these things.

Ephesians 5:22-33:

22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up

for her,

26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;

29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church,

30 because we are members of His body.

31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.

Some women get scared by that, but they shouldn't be, because women get to pick their husbands, so just pick someone whose leadership you actually respect. Believe it or not, it is actually very comforting to co-operate with someone who knows what he is doing, and has demonstrated that through his past decisions.

And now for my opinion about this topic.

To start, remember that men are supposed to be good at the following roles:

- protecting
- providing
- moral leader
- spiritual leader

If a woman sees a man – any man – working away at these tasks so that he can solve her problems with something more than *confident promises about the future*, that's the time to practice respecting him. All men need to be recognized and encouraged in these areas, by all woman who care that men are masculine.

When I think of protecting, there is obviously the physical protection, but there is also the protection from lies and bad decisions. For protection, what I end up doing most is analyzing decisions for women and then giving my recommendation. I have 12 young people I mentor, men and women, who are in undergraduate or graduate school. My job is to make sure that they are not studying garbage subjects, and not wasting their summers. I am proud to say that the 6 women I advise are all in STEM areas, and that took some convincing. Why is this protection? Because women need to not starve, and they need to not feel pressured to settle for a guy because they can't be financially independent by themselves. I am not a feminist, but I do think that women make better wives when they study hard subjects and do hard jobs. It shapes their character so that

they are easier to reason with, less fun-focused, and more able to perform hard work without complaint. I also advise women not to waste money of pursuing fun and thrills when they are young, and instead advise them to save and invest it early. One of the young ladies I mentor just finished her BS in computer science, is starting an MS in computer science, worked as a TA and in the summers as a software tester, and she has an account with Fidelity, just like me.

When I think of providing, I think of the man's ability to work for money. It starts in high school, in the summers or evenings and goes on right to retirement. I did a summer internship with a huge telecom firm when I was in my sophomore year of high school, so it is possible. A man should not rely on others for money, he needs to be independent. A man should not find paid work "boring" and "meaningless". In fact, part of what it means to be a man is to do things that you don't feel like doing, so that you can provide for others. A man does not spend his money on alcohol or travel or other entertainments. He will have plenty to spend it on when he gets older – his family or maybe charity. A man buys things for others that will help them achieve goals – solving problems for others with his earned income. For example, if a woman has surgery on both of her hands, and cannot lug the vacuum up and down the stairs to clean up her cat's fur, then the man buys her a corded hand vacuum, which is much lighter for her to use every day, (he knows she has OCD and wants everything clean). Money makes a woman's life easier, freeing her up to do more important things. It's important for a man to get started early earning money, because earnings can be invested to produce a return. A man's confidence about the future has no cash value. A woman's feelings about a man's potential future earnings has no cash value. Cash has cash value. There is no such thing as assumed future income, there is only a resume, which predicts future earned income based on *the reality* of past earned income.

A good moral leader is not just good at being moral and spiritual himself, but of convincing others to be moral and spiritual. He is able to present his views on moral issues in a convincing way, especially to non-Christians. He studies philosophy (in his spare time! not as a job because it does not pay!) and is aware of research that helps him to make his point about topics like abortion and marriage. He has an interest in current events and politics, and is able to talk about legislation, policies and court cases related to his worldview. He is able to solve problems that could impact a person's ability to be moral or spiritual in the future. For example, consider that some people really do lose their faith when experiencing evil and suffering. A good spiritual leader advises a woman to not make plans that are likely to fail, so that she will never blame God for her own poor decisions. A good moral leader convinces a woman to be serious about marriage early, so that she is not tempted to become a single mother by choice later. Those last two cases are cases I actually had to face, and I won the first one (she dumped a complete loser of a man), and lost the second (she became a single mother by choice and had a fatherless son). But the point is that there is more to being a moral leader than reciting moral rules. And there is more to being a spiritual leader than reciting Bible verses. A good leader proves he can lead by pushing the people he leads into real world achievements.

These are the things that a good woman looks for in a man, and when she finds them, she accords a man respect in those areas.

Bowe Bergdahl has been charged with treason

August 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does national security make?
Story from Breitbart News.

Excerpt:

> Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl has been charged with treason, his lawyer says, but the White House is not commenting on the news yet.
>
> A request for comment about the news was referred by the White House to the Department of Defense, which is in charge of the investigation.
>
> President Obama was instrumental in organizing Bergdahl's release, which included the president's decision to release five Taliban operatives from Guantanamo Bay to Qatar in order to bring Bergdahl back to the United States. He was held captive by militants in Afghanistan for five years after disappearing from his base.
>
> […]The Obama administration maintained that Berghdal was a hero when he was first brought back to American soil as a result of the Guantanamo deal.

Here is the video explaining how the deserter served with honor and distinction:

The Weekly Standard:

> President Obama's national security adviser, Susan Rice, said on ABC that Bowe Bergdahl "served the United States with honor and distinction" and that "Sergeant Bergdahl wasn't simply a hostage; he was an American prisoner of war captured on the battlefield."
>
> […]"He is going to be safely reunited with his family. He served the United States with honor and distinction.
>
> […]Elsewhere in the interview, Rice says, "Sergeant Bergdahl wasn't simply a hostage; he was an American prisoner of war captured on the battlefield." She

> adds, “We have a sacred obligation that we have upheld since the founding of our republic to do our utmost to bring back our men and women who are taken in battle, and we did that in this instance.”

“Captured on the battlefield”? “Sacred obligation”? He deserted his post and is now being charged with treason. I guess we should not be surprised since she also blamed Benghazi on a Youtube video when it was known from the first instant that it was a terrorist attack defended the swap. (Yes, it’s the same Susan Rice who lied about that, too)

But other Democrats praised the terrorists-for-traitor swap as well:

> Hillary Clinton, Obama’s former secretary of state, defended the deal in the days following. Clinton dismissed claims at the time that Bergdahl had deserted as “irrelevant.” “We bring our people home,” she said.

Here’s Megyn Kelly interviewing the State Department spokeswoman about the charges:

As Megyn Kelly says in the clip at the top, at least 3 of the 5 released Taliban commanders have tried to reconnect with terrorist networks:

> **At least three of the five Taliban leaders traded last year for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl have tried to plug back into their old terror networks, a government official familiar with the intelligence told Fox News, describing it as an attempt to “re-engage.”**
>
> […]The director of the Defense Intelligence Agency recently told Congress that, after that expiration, all his officers can do is warn the U.S. government if the men return to the battlefield.
>
> “I’ve seen nothing that causes me to believe these folks are reformed or [have] changed their ways or intend to re-integrate to society in ways to give me any confidence that they will not return in trying to do harm to America,” Rep. Mike Pompeo, R-Kan., a member of the House intelligence committee, told Fox News.

As Hillary Clinton would say, “what different at this point does it make?”. I guess if you are a Democrat, trading five of our strongest enemies for a deserter makes a lot of sense. It’s the right thing to do, and how dare you question their patriotism?

Utah becomes the 5th state to defund Planned Parenthood

August 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of incrementalism
Good news, everyone!

Life News has the story:

> Utah has become the 5th state to de-fund the Planned Parenthood abortion business in the wake of six videos exposing how the abortion giant sells the body parts of aborted babies for research. The state follows Arkansas, Alabama and Louisiana, which are revoking a contract with Planned Parenthood using state Medicaid dollars, and New Hampshire, which zapped $650,000 in state taxpayer funding.
>
> According to news reports, Utah is saying it will no longer allow itself to be used by the federal government to funnel funds to the abortion company. The decision essentially revokes well over $200,000 in taxpayer funding to Planned Parenthood.
>
> As the Salt Lake Tribune reports:
>
> Gov. Gary Herbert has ordered all state agencies to stop funneling federal funds to the Planned Parenthood Association of Utah.
>
> The federal government provides grants to Planned Parenthood, which are distributed through the Utah Department of Health. Utah law bars any

> organization from using state funds for abortions, and that prohibition extends to Planned Parenthood's federal grants, Herbert said in a statement Friday afternoon.
>
> The move came in response to the release of secretly recorded videos by an anti-abortion group showing Planned Parenthood officials in Houston describing how they provide fetal tissue from abortions for medical research.
>
> "The allegations against Planned Parenthood are deeply troubling," Herbert said.
>
> ""If they want to engage with the federal government directly and get their money, I think that's fine," the governor said.
>
> The governor said there is no reason to fund the abortion business because other organizations provide the same non-abortion services as Planned Parenthood.

Now there is some bad news: the Obama administration is actually threatening states that have cut off funding for their ally, Planned Parenthood. After all, the Democrat Party has gotten $25 million in donations from Planned Parenthood. The Democrats have every financial incentive to keep the organ harvesting / human trafficking operation going. That's how they get the money to for their campaign ads, which so many people find convincing.

Related posts

- Sixth Planned Parenthood video: baby parts taken and sold without mom's consent
- Does Planned Parenthood do mammograms? Is abortion only 3% of their services?
- Fifth video: Planned Parenthood selling intact 20-week baby cadavers for profit
- Democrats defeat Republican bill to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood president visited White House 39 times since 2009
- Federal judge blocks release of future sting videos of Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood executive admits abortion victim is a baby in fourth video
- Third video of Planned Parenthood doctors discussing organ harvesting
- Obama administration refuses FOIA requests about Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration will investigate whistleblowers who filmed Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood senior executive in second video: "I want a Lamborghini"
- Republicans in Congress will investigate Planned Parenthood's organ harvesting
- ABC, CBS, CNN, and MSNBC all ignore Planned Parenthood organ harvesting story
- Governor Bobby Jindal announces investigation of Planned Parenthood
- What does Hillary Clinton think of Planned Parenthood selling unborn baby parts?
- House Republicans attempting to end some of the taxpayer-funding for Planned Parenthood
- With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013
- Planned Parenthood, an abortion business, is in California schools teaching sex education
- Arizona Planned Parenthood clinic failed to report rapist

- Planned Parenthood must pay $1.4 million in Medicaid fraud settlement
- Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You
- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- 24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic

Islamic State claims that Quran justifies raping captive women and sex slavery

August 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Consider this disturbing article from the leftist New York Times. Definitely for adults only.

Excerpt:

> In the moments before he raped the 12-year-old girl, the Islamic State fighter took the time to explain that what he was about to do was not a sin. Because the preteen girl practiced a religion other than Islam, the Quran not only gave him the right to rape her — it condoned and encouraged it, he insisted.
>
> He bound her hands and gagged her. Then he knelt beside the bed and prostrated himself in prayer before getting on top of her.
>
> When it was over, he knelt to pray again, bookending the rape with acts of religious devotion.
>
> "I kept telling him it hurts — please stop," said the girl, whose body is so small an adult could circle her waist with two hands. "He told me that according to Islam he is allowed to rape an unbeliever. He said that by raping me, he is drawing closer to God," she said in an interview alongside her family in a refugee camp here, to which she escaped after 11 months of captivity.
>
> The systematic rape of women and girls from the Yazidi religious minority has become deeply enmeshed in the organization and the radical theology of the Islamic State in the year since the group announced it was reviving slavery as an institution. Interviews with 21 women and girls who recently escaped the Islamic State, as well as an examination of the group's official communications, illuminate how the practice has been enshrined in the group's core tenets.

> The trade in Yazidi women and girls has created a persistent infrastructure, with a network of warehouses where the victims are held, viewing rooms where they are inspected and marketed, and a dedicated fleet of buses used to transport them.
>
> A total of 5,270 Yazidis were abducted last year, and at least 3,144 are still being held, according to community leaders. To handle them, the Islamic State has developed a detailed bureaucracy of sex slavery, including sales contracts notarized by the ISIS-run Islamic courts. And the practice has become an established recruiting tool to lure men from deeply conservative Muslim societies, where casual sex is taboo and dating is forbidden.
>
> A growing body of internal policy memos and theological discussions has established guidelines for slavery, including a lengthy how-to manual issued by the Islamic State Research and Fatwa Department just last month. Repeatedly, the ISIS leadership has emphasized a narrow and selective reading of the Quran and other religious rulings to not only justify violence, but also to elevate and celebrate each sexual assault as spiritually beneficial, even virtuous.

So, I was really dreading having to write about this on Sunday night. My first response was "HOW COULD YOU DO THAT TO A WOMAN???!!!!" I'm trying to think about how I feel being exposed to this evil. I think I just want to crawl into a hole and die.

I'm a Christian, so I believe that men must not engage in premarital sex. It's actually a terrible sin do so. This is not even to speak about rape, which to me should be a capital offense if the charge is proven in a criminal court.

Anyway, I wanted to say something about how their view contrasts with the Christian view. On the Christian view, it's just that rape of anyone is forbidden… Christians cannot even have *consensual* premarital sex.

Here's 1 Corinthians 6:18-20:

> 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.
>
> 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,
>
> 20 for you were bought with a price.So glorify God in your body.

And 1 Thessalonians 4:1-5:

> 1 Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.
>
> 2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.
>
> 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;

> 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,
>
> 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;

The term sexual immorality there means "fornication"which includes premarital sex and adultery.

John Piper explains the second citation:

> What Does the Bible Mean by "Sexual Purity"?
>
> Verse 3 gets to the point: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification [or your holiness], that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality." This phrase "sexual immorality" (porneia), means mainly fornication – that is, two people acting as if they are married when they are not married. Touching each other and sleeping together in a way God designed only for a man and a woman married to each other. God said, this close physical relationship is for married people only. "A man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 7:2; Exodus 20:14). So "sexual immorality" includes sexual relations before marriage and wrong sexual relations among married people.

So, I'm chaste and now in my late 30s. Really not happy with that, would like to be married, because married sex would be awesome. But, should I marry, my chastity would demonstrate to my wife that I have the self-control to be faithful to her as I court her. She knows that I will be faithful in a marriage because I've been faithful before marriage. And the previous women I have courted are right there to tell her how long I courted them and how self-controlled I was. That's a gift you give your wife – the confidence to trust you because she sees what kind of person you are. I've listened to people who have married who were not virgins, and they always say that they wish they had waited, for the sake of giving all of themselves to their spouse. That's why I'm chaste. I want to give all of myself to one woman.

In Christianity, I know I am supposed to love a woman. Women need love like a car needs gasoline. And obviously that means NOT doing things that make her upset or that hurt her or that make her cry. (although sometimes, I do have to say "NO" to craziness, although it gives me no pleasure to have to do so) And the reason for that is simple… her relationship with God grows based on her free choices to respond to his leading her. I would not want to do anything that would pull her away from God. I am a man, and it's my job to make sure that women use their two hands to love and serve God. I must treat them in a way that encourages them to do that. This goes double for my future wife. I want to be extra careful to make sure that nothing I do causes her to push God away. Marriage is what a man does when he wants to promise God that he will take care of this one woman, and present her to Him on that day. And the wife promises the same to God, but for her husband. They are shielding each other from suffering and evil that could cause them to turn away from God.

All of us are fragile when it comes to suffering and evil. I spent some time this weekend

chatting with a woman who divorced her husband for cheating on her, and with a woman who left her boyfriend because he would not talk about Christianity with her, and another woman whose father divorced her mother. I know perfectly well how this affects them, because I listen to them. And it just is obvious that women are made to know God, and men should not treat them in any way that would push them away from God by making them suffer.

Being nice to women doesn't mean you become their doormat and just stand by and watch them march off a cliff because they want to have fun. But it does mean coming alongside them and taking care of them. A good book to read on this is the Book of Ruth in the Bible. You can read the thing in a half hour, and it's worth it. This is the better way.

Do moral dilemmas undermine objective moral absolutes?

August 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

One reason why some people reject the existence of objective morality is because moral absolutes can conflict.

Canadian philosopher Michael Horner to explains the problem.

He writes:

> You may have been confronted with the story of the Nazi soldier coming to the door of the family who are hiding some Jewish people in their home and asking them point blankly, "Are there any Jews here?" The person telling the story then asks you, "What would you say?" or more precisely, "What should you say?"
>
> […]I think for many people the term moral absolutes connotes ideas like inflexibility and rigidity, and that there can never be exemptions. I have also found that many people believe that holding to moral absolutes means that circumstances are not relevant in a moral evaluation and that moral absolutism cannot handle moral dilemmas. But in fact it is possible to believe in moral absolutes, or as I prefer to call them objective moral values, without adhering to these connotations I have mentioned.
>
> For many people to believe in moral absolutes is to believe in rules that no other rules can ever trump. It follows from this that moral absolutes are all equal and there can never be any exemptions. But what if moral absolutes exist in a hierarchy?
>
> We know from experience that very often more than one moral rule applies to a situation. This often leads to moral dilemmas. So in the 'hiding the Jews example' the moral rule of telling the truth seems to apply to the situation, but it would

> seem that the moral rule to protect innocent human life from torture and murder applies also.
>
> If absolutes are all equal there is no way out of the dilemma. You can't choose one absolute over another because in doing so you would be violating at least one absolute which, in their view, is supposed to be inviolable.

So, in this case, it seems as if the moral absolutist is stuck in a dilemma. If you lie to save the innocent life, then that would be wrong. But if you tell the truth and hand the innocent person over to murderers, then that would be wrong. Does this really disprove objective moral absolutes?

This problem annoys me, because I know this is the kind of objection to objective morality that annoying philosophy lecturers like to push onto freshmen in order to convince them that morality is nonsense. But does the moral dilemma objection really work?

More Horner:

> […][I]f moral absolutes exist in a hierarchy and the circumstances or the situation were relevant in determining which absolute takes precedent, then there may be a solution to the moral dilemma. That is exactly what I think is the case in the example. I for one have no difficulty knowing that the morally right thing to do in that situation is to protect the life of innocent people from torture and murder rather than tell the truth to a person who has torture and murder in their plans. My moral intuitions are very clear about this.
>
> If someone objects and says, "No, you must always tell the truth. After all it is an absolute, and absolutes by definition can never be violated," I would point out that they are just using a different hierarchy, putting truth telling above protecting the life of innocent people from torture and murder. There is no way to avoid making a judgment like that since more than one absolute does apply to the situation. I would just ask them to think it through again, and once they see that they have to make a judgment based on some sort of hierarchy in that situation, then I think most people's moral intuitions will affirm that protecting the lives of innocent people from torture and murder, in that situation, trumps truth telling. There is no way to avoid choosing one over the other.

But isn't this moral relativism? After all, we are deciding what to do based on the situation! It's relativism, isn't it?

No, it isn't, because there is always one right thing to do in every situation. In every situation, you always follow the weightiest moral rule. The right thing to do does not depend on your subjective state of mind. It is an objective moral duty, and it is the same for everyone, across all times and in all places. That's what objective morality means - what is right and wrong is not determined by personal preferences or cultural conventions, which vary by time and place.

And of course, God is the ground of this hierarchy of objective moral absolutes. They existed through him before human beings even appeared, as part of his design for us, his

creatures. How we ought to behave is grounded ontologically in God’s design for us.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

August 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude others
- It's meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional

relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can’t say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards

the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Related posts

- Ryan Anderson explains how gay marriage is already infringing on religious liberty
- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson debates gay marriage with S.E. Cupp on the Blaze
- Ryan T. Anderson explains marriage to Piers Morgan and Suze Orman
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Frank Turek: is "equality" the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults "co-parenting" children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

Christian man stabbed by pro-LGBT woman after sharing his beliefs on homosexuality

August 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

A friend shared this story with me that appeared on Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> A 26-year-old Mennonite missionary was violently stabbed in the back on Friday by a pro-LGBTQ woman who became aggressive after he shared with her his Christian beliefs regarding homosexuality.
>
> "The confrontation was about the idea of homosexuality…if that's OK, if that's acceptable, and whether God loves somebody who is in that state. And we assured her that he does," said Eric Brubacher, a member of the Mennonite community who was present during the attack, to CTV.
>
> The unnamed victim was rushed to the hospital where he was treated for non-life threatening injuries and then released. The attacker fled the scene of the crime.
>
> The stabbing occurred in the Byward Market area three days prior to the opening of Ottawa's "Pride Week" where homosexuality is celebrated and promoted openly with parties and a parade.
>
> The Maranatha Conservative Mennonite Church had traveled to Ottawa from Drayton, Ontario for three days of evangelization through singing and handing out Gospel literature. Friday was the community's first day.
>
> […]Ottawa Police are looking for the attacker, who is described as white, 22 years of age, of slim build, and sporting blond hair with pink highlights.
>
> An Ottawa Police spokesperson told LifeSiteNews that as of Monday morning the attacker had not yet been apprehended. The investigation is still ongoing.

Ottawa is the capital of Canada, and it is in the very liberal province of Ontario.

Now I know that most people on the left like to talk a lot about tolerance, critical thinking, and diversity. Might I suggest that they go back to the drawing board and re-think what those words mean. I am seeing more and more stories come out every day where gay activists are going after the livelihood of people who disagree with them or even just refuse to celebrate what they are doing. It may have started non-violently, but now I am seeing it escalate into violence. I would like to see the leaders of the gay rights movement step forward and take responsibility for their inflammatory rhetoric, and dial down their persecution and violence against those who disagree with them. I don't see any coercion, vandalism and violence coming from the traditional moral values side. Maybe the other side needs to take a lesson in civility and tolerance from us. Disagreement – yes. Violence – no way.

Related posts

- Two Christian preachers brutally beaten at Seattle Gay Pride Festival
- Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged
- Gay activist who attempted mass shooting at Family Research Council pleads guilty
- Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll's Mars Hill Church
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration

Proposed minimum wage increases will lead to increased automation in restaurants

August 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Basic economics: when you raise the price of something, people buy less of it

This is from the leftist Washington Post, of all places. Not the place you would normally look for knowledge of basic economics.

Excerpt:

> The [restaurant / fast food] industry could be ready for another jolt as a ballot initiative to raise the minimum wage to $15 an hour nears in the District and as other campaigns to boost wages gain traction around the country. About 30 percent of the restaurant industry's costs come from salaries, so burger-flipping robots — or at least super-fast ovens that expedite the process — become that much more cost-competitive if the current federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour is doubled.
>
> […]Many chains are already at work looking for ingenious ways to take humans out of the picture, threatening workers in an industry that employs 2.4 million wait staffers, nearly 3 million cooks and food preparers and many of the nation's 3.3 million cashiers.
>
> […]Labor isn't the only ingredient that factors into the price of a Big Mac: There's also real estate, which has been getting more expensive, especially in the hot urban markets where restaurants are seeking to locate. Wholesale food costs, meanwhile, have escalated 25 percent over the past five years.

> The avalanche of rising costs is why franchisers are aggressively looking for technology that can allow them to produce more food faster with higher quality and lower waste. Dave Brewer is chief operating officer with Middleby Corp., which owns dozens of kitchen equipment brands, and is constantly developing new ways to optimize performance and minimize cost.
>
> "The miracle is, the wage increase is driving the interest," Brewer said. "But the innovation and the automation, they're going after it even before the wages go up. Why wait?"
>
> All that innovation helps restaurants streamline other parts of their operations — and draw more customers. Electronic menus can be constantly updated so that items that are out of stock can be removed. Connecting the point of the sale to the oven's operating system allows precise amounts of food to be cooked, which helps cut down on costs. Other inventions save energy, reduce maintenance and better dispose of grease. On the digital side, restaurants are working on apps that include reward systems and location tracking that prompt customers to eat with them more frequently.
>
> […]The labor-saving technology that has so far been rolled out most extensively — kiosk and tablet-based ordering — could be used to replace cashiers and the part of the wait staff's job that involves taking orders and bringing checks. Olive Garden said earlier this year that it would roll out the Ziosk system at all its restaurants, which means that all a server has to do is bring out the food.
>
> Robots can even help cut down on the need for high-skilled workers such as sushi chefs. A number of high-end restaurants use machines for rolling rice out on sheets of nori, a relatively menial task that takes lots of time. Even though sushi chefs tend to make more than $15 an hour, they could be on the chopping block if servers need to make $15 an hour, too.
>
> "For our operation, we're not buying entry-level labor, but if entry-level labor goes up a huge amount, everything goes up," said Robert Bleu, the president of True World Group, a seafood distributor and consultant that also owns a sushi restaurant in Chicago. "I don't consider rice-forming a high art. You can escape some of the drudgery."

Let's review the facts on minimum wage.

Abstract from new National Bureau of Economic Research study:

> We estimate the minimum wage's effects on low-skilled workers' employment and income trajectories. Our approach exploits two dimensions of the data we analyze. First, we compare workers in states that were bound by recent increases in the federal minimum wage to workers in states that were not. Second, we use 12 months of baseline data to divide low-skilled workers into a "target" group, whose baseline wage rates were directly affected, and a "within-state control" group with slightly higher baseline wage rates. **Over three subsequent years,**

> **we find that binding minimum wage increases had significant, negative effects on the employment and income growth of targeted workers**.
>
> […]Over the late 2000s, the average effective minimum wage rose by 30 percent across the United States. **We estimate that these minimum wage increases reduced the national employment-to-population ratio by 0.7 percentage point.**

That comes out to 1.4 million workers who lost their jobs, thanks to minimum wage mandates. And those are primarily young, unskilled workers who are affected – people trying to get a start in the workplace and build their resumes, so they can move up.

Harvard economist Greg Mankiw explains the top 14 views that a majority professional economists agree on, and here's #12:

> 12. A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)

And these facts affect more than the restaurant / fast food business. Here's an example from ABC News of another business that is having to shut its doors: independent bookstores. It always seems that the people on the lowest "start" rungs of the economic-independence ladder are most affected by bad liberal economic policies.

Men having a mid-life crisis are searching for meaning in all the wrong places

August 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two Air Force JTACs discuss mission parameters prior to calling in CAS

I can always count on my good friend Dina to be even more angry at feminists and feminism than I am – she has to deal with young, unmarried women behaving selfishly and irresponsibly every day, and sees the trouble they cause for others.

So when she sent me this article from the UK Telegraph, and told me that I needed to write about how men are going terribly wrong, I knew it was time to balance things out a little on this blog.

Here are the parts I want to comment on:

> Something strange happens to men in middle age.
>
> […]Aches and pains used to disappear quickly, now they hang around for months. Hair no longer grows on the head, you can't stop it growing out of your ears. You can't sit down, stand up, or pick up any object without emitting an accompanying grunt. But it's not the age, it's the anxiety; those 'dark nights of the soul', staring at the ceiling, pondering the ultimate question of middle age: 'Is that it?'
>
> […] Some take up the triathlon and wear unfeasibly tight Lycra. "I want to prove that I can still do it," said a marathon running friend. "I'm fitter than guys half my age." Some change their appearance. The jeans grow tighter than their lycra. A tattoo appears. Then there's the sports car because they think that buying something will cure their sadness. But they end up just as unhappy, but at a higher speed.

> […]Studies show that in our forties and fifties levels of happiness and life satisfaction dip to their lowest levels psychological distress is at its height. Forty-five is the most common age for depression to be diagnosed. This is a complex situation with many factors, but in my many conversations with 'men of a certain age', I sensed an underlying lack of meaning and purpose, and a sense of having failed in some way.
>
> Many of them had spent their life climbing the corporate ladder only to find out it was leaning against the wrong wall. At one event where I was speaking, I met a judge. He'd spent his life striving to reach that position, only to find that, when he got there, he felt as empty as ever. Another friend returned from a long career teaching overseas. He saw a TV advert featuring men admiring their DIY handiwork and saying, 'I did that.' He burst into tears: he felt there was nothing in his life of which he could say, 'I did that.' He was wrong. But it didn't feel that way.

Men are wrong to think that they can produce meaning by achieving pointless worldly goals. Pointless worldly achievements don't ward off old age, sickness and death. There is not some judging ceremony when you die where the person who has the most stuff, or who had the most sex, or who ran the most marathons, or who traveled to the most countries, wins anything. No man can really achieve objective meaning or purpose through material objects, pleasure, sex, triathlons, alcohol, drugs, sports, gambling, travel, or any kind of this-worldly achievement. The things you build in this world will stay in this world. If you want to build something that lasts outside this world when you die, then you need to get to work on finding out whether God exists, and what he expects from you. It is *only* by focusing your life on the bigger picture that you will achieve things that actually count.

So how to get a man thinking clearly about meaning and purpose?

First, you should have a serious conversation with him about his plans and goals, and get him to reflect on whether what he is trying to achieve is going to matter. Men like to think that they are living a good, meaningful, purposeful life. They need to be questioned about this. They get so distracted with the good feelings they have watching sports, playing golf, going fishing, home improvement, working out, etc. that they don't think about the big picture. This article by William Lane Craig may prove useful (video of lecture). Sometimes, a man can decide that the big questions don't matter at age 12, after he suffers some minor disappointment with God, and then never go back and re-evaluate until age 90. You need to point out to him how stupid it is to decide big questions as a teen, when he hasn't uncovered any facts to would help him to draw accurate conclusions.

Second, men are often very impatient and dismissive of spiritual things, because they are very practical and evidential. Practical and evidential are good, and this is how they must be approached – they must be made aware of the areas of science, history and philosophy that touch on the big questions. I will never forget one of the engineers in my

office asking me about the William Lane Craig vs Lawrence Krauss debate after I told him I blogged on it. This guy builds stuff, fixes cars, everything manly you can imagine. He asked me “did anyone win?” That’s what men care about. Your first goal in getting a man interested in deep questions is to show him how known facts arbitrate disputes, resulting in real winners and losers.

You cannot tell men the answers in advance, because they are explorers and adventurers. Men must be presented with alternatives, and left alone to explore and adjudicate winners and losers on their own, based on careful reasoning and evidence.

By the way, this MP3 file contains the testimony of one of my favorite 3 speakers, Dr. Walter Bradley – a mechanical engineering professor who reached the highest levels of his profession, and made a *huge* difference for Christ, speaking at dozens of university campuses. I have listened to this lecture dozens of times, and it changed my life. Really good thoughts about meaning and purpose in life.

Disclaimer

Now, as you all know, I do think men should study hard things and work hard jobs that they hate but that pay well, in order to provide for others. But there is a difference between getting your meaning and purpose in life from climbing a ladder at work, and getting your meaning and purpose in life in a relationship with God. The same thing goes for fast cars – I love them, I bought one the week after I started working full-time after graduating. Don’t confuse fast cars with the meaning and purpose you get from partnering to achieve results for your Boss.

Hillary Clinton walks out of press conference when questioned about e-mail server

August 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does national security make?
This is from The Hill.

Excerpt:

> Hillary Clinton dismissed the controversy surrounding her private email server and defended her conduct as legal during a press conference Tuesday in Las Vegas.
>
> A visibly aggravated Clinton repeatedly insisted that she had done nothing wrong and seemed frustrated by questions about the issue.
>
> […]Asked if the server, which has been turned over to the Department of Justice, had been wiped clean, Clinton initially shrugged and later joked: "Like with a cloth or something?"
>
> "I don't know how it works digitally at all," she added.

With a cloth or something? That's the contempt she has for those who try to get the truth and hold her accountable. That's what she would be like as President – "how dare you judge me, peasants?"

Although Clinton said that no material on her e-mail server was classified… well, let the Washington Times explain:

> More than 300 of former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's emails — or 5.1 percent of those processed so far — have been flagged for potential secret information, the State Department reported to a federal court Monday as the political furor continued to grow for the Democratic presidential candidate and her aides.

> […]Mrs. Clinton has insisted that she never sent any classified information from her account at all and that none of the messages she received had information that was marked classified at the time — though some of it has since been designated.
>
> […]Internal watchdogs have contradicted Mrs. Clinton's account, saying messages clearly contained classified information, even if it wasn't marked as such, and should have been kept more secure than on her own server.

These are the e-mails that Clinton insists are her "personal business". You know, recipes, Yoga, pictures of Chelsea's weddings… nothing classified. Move along, nothing to see here.

The UK Daily Mail got a world exclusive scoop yesterday. Doing the journalism that the left-wing United States media won't do.

Excerpt:

> The IT company Hilary Clinton chose to maintain her private email account was run from a loft apartment and its servers were housed in the bathroom closet, Daily Mail Online can reveal.
>
> Daily Mail Online tracked down ex-employees of Platte River Networks in Denver, Colorado, who revealed the outfit's strong links to the Democratic Party but expressed shock that the 2016 presidential candidate chose the small private company for such a sensitive job.
>
> […]It will be the small scale of the firm and its own home-made arrangements which will raise the most significant questions over security and over what checks Clinton's aides made about how suitable it was for dealing with what new transpires to be classified material.

The article says that the firm did not even have an alarm.

So… the entire national security of the nation… was being managed by a company that ran out of a loft apartment… with servers in a bathroom closet? That's really secure and great disaster recovery, too. Is that a good way to safeguard national security secrets? There is a reason why government employees have to use secure servers that are disaster-resistant, encrypted, and so on. This was not a casual mistake by Clinton – she went out of her way to make sure that what she wrote in her e-mails would never be discovered and used against her.

A former CIA analyst explains what should happen to her in the Washington Examiner:

> If Hillary Clinton allowed classified information onto her private server or personal phone, she should be disqualified from becoming president, former CIA spy Bob Baer said Saturday.
>
> Baer, a former CIA officer and commentator on national security issues, said that sending or receiving top secret information is a "transgression that I don't think the president of the United States should be allowed to have committed."

> In an interview with CNN International, Baer claimed that the markings on emails believed to have crossed the private server Clinton maintained as secretary of state represented the highest levels of secrecy in the government.
>
> “You don’t get any more secret than that,” he said.
>
> “Even Snowden didn’t get into that,” Baer said. “If this in fact was on a private server, you and I would get fired and possibly jailed. This could be a felony.”
>
> Baer said that when he was on assignment, he wasn’t allowed to receive messages at that level of classification, and that putting it on a private server or handheld device was a major mistake.
>
> “If this was on her server and it got into her smartphone, there’s a big problem there,” he claimed. “Seriously, if I had sent a document like this over the open Internet, I’d get fired the same day — escorted to the door, and gone for good, and probably charged with mishandling classified information.”

She’s running for the White House, but her lousy judgment could land her in the Big House. Unforgiveable.

J. Warner Wallace: 10 important questions for Jehovah's witnesses

August 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

So there's this group of people called Jehovah's Witnesses that use Christian language to describe a religion that denies key parts of the Christian worldview. They like to go door-to-door to tell people what they believe. Since you may might them knocking on your door to tell you about their worldview, it might be worth it to read this post from J. Warner Wallace over in advance.

I'll just post a snip of the first I use when they come to my door. It's also the first on Wallace's list:

> ***If I am to accept the teaching of the Jehovah's Witness religion, I am first going to have to trust the source of this teaching. But how can I trust someone who claims to speak for God when they have been wrong about prior predictions?***
>
> *There are a number of false predictions made either by Charles Russell, subsequent leaders of the church or the Watchtower Organization itself, including this limited sampling:*
>
> ***1886 The Millennial Reign Has Already Begun*** *"The outward evidences are that the marshalling of the hosts for the battle of the great day of God almighty, is in progress while the skirmishing is commencing." (Watchtower reprints 1, page 817 January 1886)*
>
> ***1897 The Millennial Reign Began in 1874*** *" Our Lord, the appointed King, is now present, since October 1874" (Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 4, page 621)*
>
> ***1899 The Times Described in Revelation 16 Have Begun*** *"…the 'battle of*

the great day of God Almighty' (Revelation 16:14), which will end in A.D. 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth's present rulership, is already commenced." (The Time Is at Hand, page 101 – 1908 edition)

1916 The Millennial Reign Began in 1873 *"The Bible chronology herein presented shows that the six great 1000 year days beginning with Adam are ended, and that the great 7th Day, the 1000 years of Christ's Reign, began in 1873." (The Time Is at Hand, page ii)*

1917 Armageddon Has Begun *"The present great war in Europe is the beginning of the Armageddon of the scriptures." (Pastor Russell's Sermons, 1917, page 676)*

1918 The Saints Will Be Resurrected in 1925 *"Therefore we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old, particularly those named by the Apostle in Hebrews 11, to the condition of human perfection." (Millions Now Living Will Never Die, page 89)*

"1925 shall mark the resurrection of the faithful worthies…We are standing at the very portals of that blessed time!" (Millions Now Living Will Never Die, page 105)

1922 Jesus Will Return in 1925 *"The date 1925 is even more distinctly indicated by the Scriptures than 1914." (The Watchtower, September 1st, 1922, page 262)*

1923 Jesus Will Return in 1925 *"Our thought is that 1925 is definitely settled by the Scriptures. As to Noah, the Christian now has much more upon which to base his faith than Noah had upon which to base his faith in a coming deluge." (The Watchtower, April 1st, 1923, page 106)*

1925 Jesus May Return in 1925 *"The year 1925 is here. With great expectation Christians have looked forward to this year. Many have confidently expected that all members of the body of Christ will be changed to heavenly glory during this year. This may be accomplished. It may not be. In his own due time God will accomplish his purposes concerning his people. Christians should not be so deeply concerned about what may transpire this year." (The Watchtower, January 1st, 1925, page 3)*

1940 Armageddon is Eminent Within the Year *"The year 1940 is certain to be the most important year yet, because Armageddon is very near." (Informant, May 1940)*

1941 Jesus Will Return in Months *"Receiving the gift, the marching children clasped it to them, not a toy or plaything for idle pleasure, but the Lord's provided instrument for most effective work in the remaining months before Armageddon." (The Watchtower, September 15th, 1941, page 288)*

1946 Armageddon is "At the Door" *"…the disaster of Armageddon, greater than that which befell Sodom and Gomorrah, is at the door." (Let God be True, 1946, page 194)*

> ***1968 Jesus Will Return in 1975*** *"Why are you looking forward to 1975?" (The Watchtower, August 15th, 1968, page 494)*
>
> *"Just think , brothers, there is only 90 months left before 6000 years of mans existence on earth is completed… the majority of people living today will probably be alive when Armageddon breaks out." (Kingdom Mystery, March 1968, page 4)*

This is the quickest way to see why you should not convert to their organization. In the Bible, it's a serious crime to make a prediction about the future and then have it not come true. It's actually a capital offense, and it's something that "false prophets" do. But it happens all the time with JWs. Just remind them of this and say "I cannot be affiliated with any organization that fails to get their truth claims right over and over again, because it shows me clearly that they don't speak for God".

Wallace actually has the quote from the Bible in his point 3:

Deuteronomy 18:20-22:

> 20 But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'
>
> 21 You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?'
>
> 22 When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

The other one I use is John 1:1, which Wallace's first point under the "Biblical Questions" heading. Really, though, the failed predictions alone should be enough for you to falsify the Jehovah's Witness worldview.

If you want a longer treatment of this topic, check out Michael Licona's PDF document on Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Biomimetics again: scientists reverse engineer the design of snake scales

August 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Today, I have an example of biomimetics.

But first, here's what that is:

> Biomimetic refers to human-made processes, substances, devices, or systems that imitate nature. The art and science of designing and building biomimetic apparatus is called biomimetics, and is of special interest to researchers in nanotechnology, robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), the medical industry, and the military.

This is from Science Daily. (H/T Fuz Rana)

It says:

> A snake moves without legs by the scales on its belly gripping the ground. It generates friction at the points needed to move forwards only and prevents its scales from being worn off by too much friction. Researchers of KIT have found a way to transfer this feature to components of movable systems. In this way, durability of hip prostheses, computer hard disks or smartphones might be enhanced.
>
> "Friction and wear are two of the biggest challenges in systems of several individual components," Christian Greiner of the Institute for Applied Materials says. A solution is found in nature: Snakes, such as the ball python, or lizards, such as the sandfish skink, use friction to move forwards, but can reduce it to a minimum thanks to their scales. Together with Michael Schäfer, Greiner developed a process to transfer the scale structure of reptiles to components of electromechanical systems: With a fiber laser, they milled scales into a steel bolt of 8 mm in diameter.
>
> With the help of two different structures, the materials researchers tested whether the distance of the scales influences friction behavior. In the first

> structure, the scales overlap and are located very closely to each other, such as the scales on the belly of a ball python. The second structure consists of scales arranged in vertical rows at a larger distance, such as the skin of a sandfish skink. “The distance between the rows in our experiment was the smallest possible distance we could produce with the laser. The structure, hence, does not entirely correspond to that of the sandfish skink,” Greiner says. In the future, however, the researchers plan to produce structures that are closer to the original in nature.
>
> […]To find out whether scales reduce friction, Greiner and Schäfer fixed the structured surface of the bolts to a rotating plate. The experiments were carried out without and with a lubricant (1 ml of mineral oil). For the experiments with oil as lubricant, the scientists used steel disks. Under dry sliding conditions, sapphire disks were applied. The disk diameter was 50 mm.
>
> Experiments under lubricated conditions revealed that both narrow and wide arrangements of the scales increase friction compared to the unstructured bolt: By the wide scales, friction is increased by a factor of 1.6. The narrow scales increase friction by a factor of 3. In the non-lubricated state, the wide scale structure reduced friction by more than 40 percent, while friction was reduced by 22 percent in case of a narrow scale structure.
>
> The finding that the narrow scale structure increases friction under both lubricated and non-lubricated conditions had not been expected by the researchers: “We assumed that the narrow structure is more effective, as it is closer to nature,” Greiner says.

See the related posts for more examples of humans learning from the engineering designs in nature.

Related posts

- Define biomimetics and give two examples from peer-reviewed science journals?
- New study: how the hummingbird performs stunning feats of aerobatics
- Shorebird’s beak inspires researchers to design new water collection strategy
- Target acquisition and interception in dragonflies

Seventh Planned Parenthood video: cutting through living baby's face to get intact brain

August 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A baby delivered intact so they could cut open his face and and sell his brain

Blogging has always been a challenge for me, because it takes up my time for leisure. But recently, I've had a new problem where what I want to write about is so depressing that it makes it even harder to write than normal.

Well, here we go again, with the seventh video:

Anika Smith writes about it at The Stream:

> O'Donnell tells the story of a woman seeking an abortion at the Alameda Planned Parenthood clinic who was very upset. "Finally she calmed down and the doctor went in to perform the abortion. It takes a little while, and I'm in the hallway. I see the jar come out, goes into the path lab, and Jessica [her coworker] I can hear is preparing it, rinsing out the jar, rinsing out the linen … then I hear her call my name… 'Come over here, I want you to see something kinda cool, this is kinda neat.' The moment I see it, I'm just flabbergasted. This is the most gestated fetus and closest thing to a baby I've seen."
>
> Then her coworker takes an instrument, "just taps the heart, and it starts beating."
>
> […]Those who harvest these baby parts seem unashamed. One lab official, the executive director of Novogenix, is recorded saying matter-of-factly, "There are times when after the procedure is done the heart is still beating."
>
> O'Donnell's coworker's response to a still-moving child was merely clinical: "OK,

> this is a really good fetus and it looks like we can procure a lot from it…. We're going to procure brain."
>
> O'Donnell clearly struggles as she describes a coworker ordering her to cut open the child's head. "I remember picking it up and finishing going through the rest … and Jessica picking up the brain … and I'm just sitting there, like, what did I just do? And that was the moment I knew that I couldn't work for the company anymore."
>
> […]"It had a face. Its nose was very pronounced. It had eyelids. And its mouth was pronounced."

Today's video made Amelia Hamilton cry, and she explains why at The Stream:

> After six videos from the Center for Medical Progress, I have heard and seen such horrifying things that I made it almost 6 minutes into this seventh video, third in the Human Capital series, without reaction.
>
> The descriptions of a "huddle" in which the employees look at a list of abortions to be done that day to determine what to harvest didn't surprise me. When Procurement Manager Perrin Larton described a baby that "just fell out" because it was already in the vaginal canal, I was disgusted, but I didn't cry. I made it through Melissa Farrell and Dr. Nucatola talking about altering the process to ensure that the brain is saved. I was angry that they would turn a baby in the womb, forcing it out breech to serve their bottom line, but I wasn't surprised. I listened with growing horror as former StemExpress employee Holly O'Donnell described the first time she saw an aborted baby with a heartbeat.
>
> I made it through things that would have made me cry in earlier videos, but that I've now come to expect.
>
> But, at 5:59 I cried.
>
> At 5:59, I saw footage of a living baby in a pie plate, waiting to have its life ended. I saw a baby with a heartbeat, a baby who was moving. I saw its little legs stretching and kicking as it would have done in the womb. I thought about how the mother must have felt her baby moving inside the womb, and probably didn't know it would still be moving after the abortion. She can't have known that they would put scissors through the baby's chin to end her life while preserving the parts that would yield the most profit. And, so, I cried.

The people who did this were once babies the same size as this little baby, but they cut through his face and took his brain so they could sell it. His future – all that he would ever be, and all that he would ever do – wasn't as important as the money they could make by selling his brain. They were strong, and he was weak, and they didn't think that God was watching. They didn't think that they would have to explain what they were doing to anyone on Judgment Day. Atheism is a necessary pre-condition to perform barbaric acts like this one.

Anyway, in light of these videos, I think Planned Parenthood should be investigated, and de-funded if necessary. And if they are found to be breaking the law, then they should be prosecuted criminally. The Democrats from top to bottom disagree with me on this – they want this business to continue, with taxpayer funding, no questions asked. That's Barack Obama's view, that's Hillary Clinton's view. There's money in selling these baby parts, and the Democrat Party gets a cut through political donations.

This post at Newsbusters has all the videos in one post, if you haven't seen them, including this new one.

Related posts

- Sixth Planned Parenthood video: baby parts taken and sold without mom's consent
- Does Planned Parenthood do mammograms? Is abortion only 3% of their services?
- Fifth video: Planned Parenthood selling intact 20-week baby cadavers for profit
- Democrats defeat Republican bill to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood president visited White House 39 times since 2009
- Federal judge blocks release of future sting videos of Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood executive admits abortion victim is a baby in fourth video
- Third video of Planned Parenthood doctors discussing organ harvesting
- Obama administration refuses FOIA requests about Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration will investigate whistleblowers who filmed Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood senior executive in second video: "I want a Lamborghini"
- Republicans in Congress will investigate Planned Parenthood's organ harvesting
- ABC, CBS, CNN, and MSNBC all ignore Planned Parenthood organ harvesting story
- Governor Bobby Jindal announces investigation of Planned Parenthood
- What does Hillary Clinton think of Planned Parenthood selling unborn baby parts?
- With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013
- Planned Parenthood, an abortion business, is in California schools teaching sex education
- Arizona Planned Parenthood clinic failed to report rapist
- Planned Parenthood must pay $1.4 million in Medicaid fraud settlement
- Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You
- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- 24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic

Advice for organizing a protest against Planned Parenthood on Saturday, August 22nd

August 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young pro-life women defending unborn children's right to life

This Saturday, protests are being held at Planned Parenthood abortion clinics across the nation. One of the people I mentor wanted to organize an event in her home state. So, I arranged a conversation between her and an expert pro-life debater, who has a lot of experience with these things. I listened in and contributed to the discussion, and I took notes, as well. They gave me permission to type up the notes on this blog. I think it makes for an interesting post.

So the first thing the expert said was that it's a good idea to contact someone at City Hall, in order to get the permit to hold a protest. If you have a protest with more than X people, you need a permit. X depends on where you are doing the protest. The permit normally takes a week or so to get. Permits cost money, and you have to say the time period during which you will be protesting. Expert also said that it was a good idea to get the name and number of the person at City Hall, in case the police arrive and ask questions. Expert also recommended talking to the police and asking about what the law says, and then getting the officer's name, phone number and badge number. Expert said that the person at the station will likely outrank any police officer who shows up, which is good because it really shows that the demonstrators have done their homework.

Expert said it was a useful thing to know whether there was going to be a counter-protest. The way these things work is that you have to stand on the sidewalk, and you can't block access to anything, and you have to not use wood handles on your signs. If you run out of space, you can stand on the other side of the street, on the sidewalk.

Expert said it was a good idea to have a coffee / snack event after the protest is over and debrief.

Expert recommended that Organizer have many copies of a press release from a national organization like Created Equal in case anyone from the media asked what the protest was about. Expert suggested that copies of the press release be sent to the local media – newspapers, radio and local TV news. Expert wanted to spend the rest of the time doing mock interviews with Organizer, where he would be the journalist and she would answer his mock questions.

Basically, Expert said that the media would show up and ask the following questions:

1. **Who are you?** Organizer would reply with name
2. **Why are you here?** Organizer would explain that because of the Center for Medical Progress videos, there were allegations that Planned Parenthood was breaking the law, that she wanted to raise awareness about the videos, that she wanted Planned Parenthood investigated, and then if the investigations found evidence of misconduct, then she wanted Planned Parenthood to be de-funded.
3. **Where do these allegations come from?** Organizer will mention where the videos can be found online, and urge the journalists and the people hearing / seeing this on the news to watch the videos. Expert recommended mentioning the place where the videos can be see in all answers from now on in the interview, since that is the main point to make and that we did not want it to be cut out during the editing process.
4. **What did you see in the videos?** Organizer says that she saw attempts to maximize how money is being charged to buyers rather than just recovering costs, abortion procedures being altered to maximize revenue, partial-borth abortions being performed, and mother's refusal to consent being disregarded.
5. **Respond to critics' charge that videos are highly-edited.** Organizer should reply that the full videos for many of the clips are posted online at the CMP web site, and that people should go and watch the videos.
6. **What do you want people to do about this?** Organizer wanted to urge people to watch the videos, and then contact their local legislators and governor to get the investigation and possible de-funding started.

There is a good Newsbusters article that I tweeted earlier that has all the videos in one place, so if you haven't watched them, do it. And if you want to organize or attend a protest this Saturday, hope this post helps you.

Resources for the #ProtestPP event are here, including a sample press release.

And here is a quick primer on debating the abortion issue:

It's actually not as scary as you think to debate it, you just have to stay calm, and be used to hearing different points of view. Reading "The Case for Life" by Scott Klusendorf is more than enough background to debate this issue.

Peter J. Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospel narratives

August 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Peter J. Williams

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to

Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?
- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

Bobby Jindal to counter pro-Planned Parenthood protest by showing sting videos on loop

August 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal

This is real leadership from a real social conservative.

Life News reports:

> If you’re the pro-life governor of one of the states that has been at the forefront of stopping the abortion industry, how do you counter a rally to support the Planned Parenthood abortion business at a time when it’s been exposed selling aborted babies and their body parts? If you’re Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, you screen the shocking expose’ videos outside the governor’s mansion for the public to see.
>
> Jindal’s office said Tuesday that the pro-life Republican presidential candidate will set up a huge screen outside the governor’s mansion and run each of the seven shocking expose videos of Planned Parenthood on a loop. The move will generate further publicity for the videos that the mainstream media have either defended or virtually ignored.
>
> Assuming the shorter versions of each of the videos is shown, that’s approximately an hour of footage Jindal’s office will show the public over and over again. If Jindal shows the full unedited versions of the videos, that would consume even more time.
>
> ns into Planned Parenthood in light of undercover video footage from an anti-abortion-rights group that scrutinizes the health provider’s fetal tissue donation program.
>
> The group says the footage shows Planned Parenthood illegally profiting from

> fetal tissue donations, among other claims.

Make no mistake, the showing of these videos is being done specifically to target the pro-Planned Parenthood demonstrators. Most people who are still defending Planned Parenthood have not watched the videos. In that sense, they are similar to Western journalists who defended Stalin because they refused to learn the truth about what Stalin was doing, for example, by starving millions of Ukrainians to death. But Governor Jindal has a cure for that: show them the videos. Confront them with exactly what it is they support. They are lining up to be impacted, and he is not going to miss his chance to attack the ringleaders of the pro-abortion movement.

UPDATE: Governor Jindal has posted a video about the Planned Parenthood protest:

They ran away from the videos to a far corner of the lawn, where they wouldn't have to watch them. Ran away from the truth.

South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley

Meanwhile, other Republican governors have also been busy. Another Indian-American Republican governor, Nikki Haley, has launched an investigation against Planned Parenthood in South Carolina:

> Following shocking videos showing the Planned Parenthood abortion business selling aborted babies and their body parts, pro-life South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley has launched an official investigation. The state is one of 12 that have officially launched investigations while other states have de-funded Planned Parenthood.
>
> […]Haley asked the South Carolina health department to look into the practices at the state's abortion clinics, according to a local news report, and complained that the state health department has been lax about inspecting abortion clinics…

South Carolina is number 12, and Florida was number 11:

> Florida officials are today reiterating to the Planned Parenthood abortion business that it may not do 2nd-trimester abortions on unborn babies in the state in violation of state laws. Planned Parenthood abortion clinics in Florida are not happy they were caught illegally doing 2nd-trimester abortions, so they sued the

> state to keep doing them and the state is once again saying no.
>
> The state of Florida launched an investigation into the Planned Parenthood abortion business aftermultiple expose' videos have caught the abortion business selling the body parts of aborted babies. State health department inspectors found Planned Parenthood illegally doing the kind of later abortions that allow Planned Parenthood to gather the body parts of aborted babies for sale.
>
> Florida became the 11th state to launch a investigation into Planned Parenthood after the abortion company was exposed selling the body parts of aborted babies. Florida Governor Rick Scott, who is pro-life, ordered an investigation of 16 statewide Planned Parenthood offices.
>
> Scott asked the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to immediately begin investigating the 16 Planned Parenthood offices in Florida that perform abortion procedures to ensure they are in full compliance with the law.
>
> They found three have performed procedures outside the scope of their licenses and one has not kept proper records on disposing fetal remains.

There are lots of protests against Planned Parenthood going on nationwide, this Saturday. You might want to consider attending one, if what Planned Parenthood is doing upsets you.

Iran side deal allows Iran to inspect its own nuclear weapons site

August 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He’s way better at golf than foreign policy, and he sucks at golf

Everything is awesome!

The normally-leftist Associated Press explains how awesome everything is:

> Iran will be allowed to use its own inspectors to investigate a site it has been accused of using to develop nuclear arms, operating under a secret agreement with the U.N. agency that normally carries out such work, according to a document seen by The Associated Press.
>
> **[…]The agreement in question diverges from normal procedures by allowing Tehran to employ its own experts and equipment in the search for evidence of activities it has consistently denied — trying to develop nuclear weapons.**
>
> **[…]The Parchin agreement was worked out between the IAEA and Iran. The United States and the five other world powers were not party to it but were briefed by the IAEA and endorsed it as part of the larger package.**

Everything is fine, stop worrying. Obama and Kerry and Clinton think that there is nothing wrong with this side deal. We can trust Iran to inspect themselves, it’s not like they’ve cheated on any agreements in the past. Oh wait, they have.

The Wall Street Journal points out:

> Secretary of State John Kerry has said he hasn't read the side deal, though his negotiating deputy Wendy Sherman told MSNBC that she "saw the pieces of paper" but couldn't keep them. IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano has told Members of the U.S. Congress that he's bound by secrecy and can't show them the side deals.
>
> That secrecy should be unacceptable to Congress—all the more so after the AP dispatch. The news service says it has seen a document labelled "separate arrangement II." The document says Iran will provide the IAEA with photos and locations that the IAEA says are linked to Iran's weapons work, "taking into account military concerns."
>
> **In other words, the country that lied for years about its nuclear weapons program will now be trusted to come clean about those lies. And trusted to such a degree that it can limit its self-inspections so they don't raise "military concerns" in Iran.**

Foreign policy expert Charles Krauthammer is not pleased:

But let's just trust Iran again, because Obama needs a legacy. What are you, a racist? You better shut up before the IRS audits you.

N.T. Wright lectures on the resurrection of Jesus: did Jesus rise from the dead?

August 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's a video of his case for the resurrection:

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable* apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> ...the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection

> that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an invented exaltation was already available to do the job.

3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.
5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

The meaning of marriage: a lecture at Google by Tim Keller

August 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

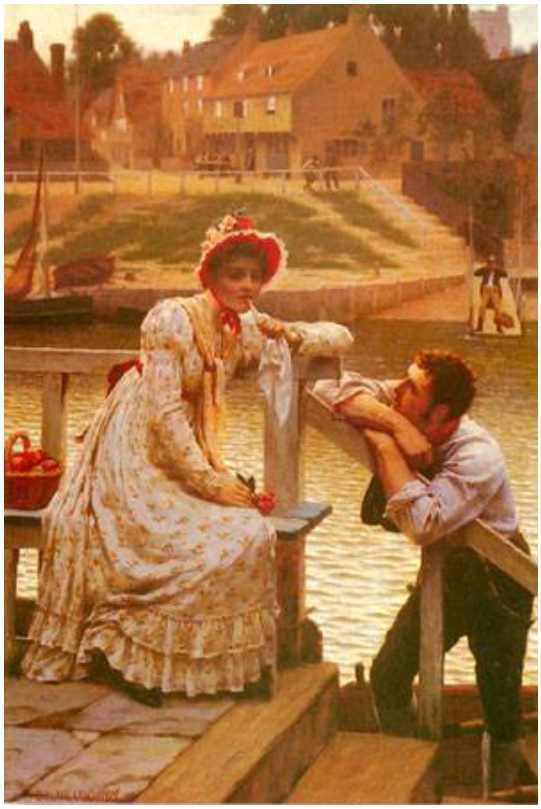

Painting: “Courtship”, by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

Disclaimer: I have reservations about Tim Keller. I consider him to be too liberal for my tastes, especially on scientific (intelligent design) and political/economic issues. However, I think he did a good job explaining marriage in the lecture below.

Here’s the the video:

Details:

> Timothy Keller visits Google’s New York, NY office to discuss his book “The Meaning of Marriage.” This event took place on November 14, 2011, as part of the Authors@Google series.
>
> Timothy J. Keller is an American author, speaker, preacher, and the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. He is the author of several books, including “The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism.”
>
> “The Meaning of Marriage” touches on topics that all readers can relate to, starting with the role of marriage in our culture, its history and the pessimism that is often associated with it. The Kellers also discuss the feelings of and acts of love, romantic relationships, gender roles, singleness, and the role of sex in a marriage.

I saw a lot of things in his lecture that echo my own views. One point where we agree is

on not just looking for traits and virtues in the other person, but in seeing how they handle conflict and solve problems with you. You have to give the other person things to do and see if they make progress and work cooperatively with you. The most important thing to look for is someone who sees potential in you and is committed to helping you realize it. You want someone who won't give up on you, no matter how hard things get. There are fun and happy times in a marriage, but those come naturally – the real question is how well two people stick together to get things done when it's hard. I definitely recommend Keller's book on marriage, it's such a good vision of what marriage could be.

Here's an article entitled "You Never Marry the Right Person", that discusses one of the points in the lecture.

Excerpt:

> In generations past, there was far less talk about "compatibility" and finding the ideal soul-mate. Today we are looking for someone who accepts us as we are *and* fulfills our desires, and this creates an unrealistic set of expectations that frustrates both the searchers and the searched for.
>
> […]The Bible explains why the quest for compatibility seems to be so impossible. As a pastor I have spoken to thousands of couples, some working on marriage-seeking, some working on marriage-sustaining and some working on marriage-saving. I've heard them say over and over, "Love shouldn't be this hard, it should come naturally." In response I always say something like: "Why believe that? Would someone who wants to play professional baseball say, 'It shouldn't be so hard to hit a fastball'? Would someone who wants to write the greatest American novel of her generation say, 'It shouldn't be hard to create believable characters and compelling narrative'?" The understandable retort is: "But this is not baseball or literature. This is love. Love should just come naturally if two people are compatible, if they are truly soul-mates. "
>
> The Christian answer to this is that no two people are compatible. Duke University Ethics professor Stanley Hauerwas has famously made this point:
>
> Destructive to marriage is the self-fulfillment ethic that assumes marriage and the family are primarily institutions of personal fulfillment, necessary for us to become "whole" and happy. The assumption is that there is someone just right for us to marry and that if we look closely enough we will find the right person. This moral assumption overlooks a crucial aspect to marriage. It fails to appreciate the fact that we always marry the wrong person.We never know whom we marry; we just think we do. Or even if we first marry the right person, just give it a while and he or she will change. For marriage, being [the enormous thing it is] means we are not the same person after we have entered it. The primary challenge of marriage is learning how to love and care for the stranger to whom you find yourself married.
>
> Hauerwas gives us the first reason that no two people are compatible for

> marriage, namely, that marriage profoundly changes us. But there is another reason. Any two people who enter into marriage are spiritually broken by sin, which among other things means to be self-centered—living life*incurvatus in se*. As author Denis de Rougemont said, “Why should neurotic, selfish, immature people suddenly become angels when they fall in love … ?” That is why a good marriage is more painfully hard to achieve than athletic or artistic prowess. Raw, natural talent does not enable you to play baseball as a pro or write great literature without enduring discipline and enormous work. Why would it be easy to live lovingly and well with another human being in light of what is profoundly wrong within our human nature? Indeed, many people who have mastered athletics and art have failed miserably at marriage. So the biblical doctrine of sin explains why marriage—more than anything else that is good and important in this fallen world—is so painful and hard.

When you are courting, don’t worry about appearances and feelings and passion so much, because that is all subject to change over time, and those things won’t help you with the real challenges you’ll face in a marriage. Worry about whether they are the kind of person who can make commitments and love other people self-sacrificially – even if they are unlovable. In the long run, their ability to read and understand issues, to care for others and serve them, to keep promises, to be respectful and supportive, to argue respectfully and reasonably, and to solve problems constructively, will all be far more important than appearances and feelings and passion.

During the courtship, give the other person things to do that challenge them and see how they handle being given responsibilities – giving a person hard things to do is a much better way to test a person than recreational nights out with recreational drinking, recreational dancing and recreational sex. Marriage means commitment and hard work, not recreation. And that’s what you should test for – the ability to work hard at the relationship and to keep promises and commitments and to communicate reasonably and to work through difficulties fairly. The most dangerous thing you want to avoid is self-centeredness. You don’t want someone who is primarily interested in minimizing your feelings, and then getting her friends to agree with her that this is legitimate for whatever reasons. You want a person who has had a hard enough life that responsibilities and obligations are natural to her, and who doesn’t try to wiggle out of self-sacrificial acts of love when she doesn’t feel like doing it. Each person needs to invest in the other, so that both can have fuel to do their job in the relationship.

Three unarmed Americans subdue Islamic terrorist armed with AK-47 on French train

August 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Three American heroes rescue civilians from Islamic terrorist
Quick 3-minute interview with two of the heroes:

The person on the right is a British IT specialist who assisted the 3 Americans. US Airman Spencer Stone, not shown in the video, was injured in the attack. He was the one who charged the attacker, and ran 10 meters to tackle him first. The attackers gun jammed, but he was able to stab Spenser. The injuries sound terrible, but are not life-threatening. However, Spencer disregarded his own injuries in order to help the another victim, saving his life.

Here is a picture of Spenser after his treatment:

US serviceman Spencer Stone departs the Clinique Lille Sud
He’s doing fine, they are going to release him today.

My friend Laura shared this story from the UK Daily Mail, which has more details.

Excerpt:

> US airman Spencer Stone, who on board the train during the attack, spotted the 26-year-old Moroccan acting suspiciously and heard him trying to load his weapon in the toilet.
>
> He was travelling with Oregon National Guard member Alek Skarlatos, 22, who was on leave and travelling through Europe at the time after returning from a tour in Afghanistan.
>
> With the help of their friend Anthony Sadler, from Pittsburg, California, and fellow passenger British IT consultant Chris Norman, they managed to wrestle the attacker to the ground, stopping what could have been a deadly terrorist attack.
>
> Mr Sadler has described how the attacker pleaded with them to return his AK-47.
>
> He said: 'He was just telling us to give back his gun. 'Give me back my gun! Give me back my gun!' But we just carried on beating him up and immobilised him and that was it.'

French security services knew about the terrorist:

> Thwarted train gunman Ayoub El-Qahzzani was part of an Islamic terrorist cell which came within hours of carrying out a 'major' attack in Belgium before it was shut down in a deadly fire-fight with police, according to French media reports.
>
> El-Qahzzani has been linked to a gang of Muslim fanatics in Belgium who opened fire on anti-terrorism officers when Special Forces closed in on them near the railway station in the eastern city of Verviers, in January 2015.
>
> Two terrorist suspects were killed and a third was arrested in the operation, close to the Belgian border with Germany.
>
> Now El-Qahzzani has been linked to this terrorist cell, which was made up of Islamic extremists who had returned to Europe after fighting against the Assad regime in Syria.
>
> France's La Voix du Nord newspaper reported: 'According to our sources, he [Al Qahzzani] was part of the same jihadist group which attacked on Belgian anti-terrorist police in a violent fire-fight in January 2015, in Verviers, near Liege.
>
> 'It appears that he had been identified as a potential security threat by the Spanish authorities who had alerted French authorities and had asked them for further information about him.'

I guess the French socialists were too busy passing their 75% tax rate and selling warships to Russia to do anything about protecting their own people from terrorism.

French train staff did nothing to help the passengers:

> Train staff on board the high speed train which was the scene of a suspected Islamic extremist attack yesterday have been accused of barricading themselves

> in their staffroom and locking the door, leaving passengers to fend for themselves.
>
> The Moroccan terrorist was disarmed and beaten unconscious by US servicemen and a British man after he opened fire on a Paris-bound train with a Kalashnikov.
>
> Now, French actor Jean-Hugues Anglade, who was on board the Thalys train during the attack has slammed train staff who he claims locked themselves in an office away from the attacker and refused to help the trapped passengers.

The Socialist party in France has erected such a wide-ranging welfare state that it causes the French people to lose their proud national character as they become more and more accustomed to dependency. It's sad, but no country is immune to the corrosive effects of dependency… many Americans are like the French, collecting payments from their neighbor's earnings, looking out for themselves rather than serving their neighbors through work.

It might be a good idea for France to allow law-abiding civilians to carry their own weapons to stop attacks like this, but most Europeans, unlike most Americans, seem to have a horror of self-defense. I wonder if that will change if there are enough attacks like this? Reality has a way of disrupting leftist illusions.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton prioritized gay rights and abortion over national security

August 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National security was never a priority for Hillary Clinton, but gay rights and abortion were First, the very-leftist Reuters explains how little Hillary cared about national security.

Excerpt:

> For months, the U.S. State Department has stood behind its former boss Hillary Clinton as she has repeatedly said she did not send or receive classified information on her unsecured, private email account, a practice the government forbids.
>
> While the department is now stamping a few dozen of the publicly released emails as "Classified," it stresses this is not evidence of rule-breaking. Those stamps are new, it says, and do not mean the information was classified when Clinton, the Democratic frontrunner in the 2016 presidential election, first sent or received it.
>
> But the details included in those "Classified" stamps — which include a string of dates, letters and numbers describing the nature of the classification — appear to undermine this account, a Reuters examination of the emails and the relevant regulations has found.
>
> **The new stamps indicate that some of Clinton's emails from her time as the nation's most senior diplomat are filled with a type of information the U.S. government and the department's own regulations automatically deems classified from the get-go — regardless of whether it is already marked that way or not.**
>
> **In the small fraction of emails made public so far, Reuters has found at**

> **least 30 email threads from 2009, representing scores of individual emails, that include what the State Department's own "Classified" stamps now identify as so-called 'foreign government information.' The U.S. government defines this as any information, written or spoken, provided in confidence to U.S. officials by their foreign counterparts.**
>
> **This sort of information, which the department says Clinton both sent and received in her emails, is the only kind that must be "presumed" classified, in part to protect national security and the integrity of diplomatic interactions, according to U.S. regulations examined by Reuters.**
>
> "It's born classified," said J. William Leonard, a former director of the U.S. government's Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO). Leonard was director of ISOO, part of the White House's National Archives and Records Administration, from 2002 until 2008, and worked for both the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations.
>
> "If a foreign minister just told the secretary of state something in confidence, by U.S. rules that is classified at the moment it's in U.S. channels and U.S. possession," he said in a telephone interview, adding that for the State Department to say otherwise was "blowing smoke."

Being able to recognize classified information is part of the job of all people at the State Department, especially people at the top. The bottom line is that Clinton created this private e-mail server to hide her e-mails from her employer, the American people. She didn't care about the security of the most powerful nation in the world. She had other priorities.

Now, you might be wondering about what Hillary Clinton prioritized when she was Secretary of State instead of national security. And the answer is simple: she promoted gay rights and abortion abroad.

Here's an article by radical leftist Jackie Kucinich in the radically leftist Daily Beast that explains it:

> Secretary of State Hillary Clinton did not openly support gay marriage in 2009, but according to a new set of emails released by the State Department, she was dedicated to expanding gay rights both domestically and abroad from the beginning of her term.
>
> From March to December 2009, Clinton received several emails from her staff on the issue detailing Clinton's own successes expanding gay rights inside the State Department, as well as her concerns about the treatment of LGBT individuals abroad.
>
> The 2009 emails offer a look at how Clinton and her staff began to make LGBT individuals part of their mission—culminating in her 2011 United Nations speech declaring, "Gay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay

> rights."
>
> The changes within the State Department started in May 2009, when Clinton was able to extend benefits to the same-sex partners of diplomats.

This was the center of her foreign policy efforts:

> Secretary of State Hillary Clinton yesterday put the Obama administration clearly on the opposite side of Christians seeking religious freedom in the debate over human sexuality, prompting praise from gay rights activists and criticism from GOP presidential candidate Rick Perry.
>
> In remarks on Tuesday in Geneva to the United Nations, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said religious and cultural beliefs are standing in the way of homosexual human rights worldwide.
>
> "Now, raising this issue, I know, is sensitive for many people and that the obstacles standing in the way of protecting the human rights of LGBT people rest on deeply held personal, political, cultural, and religious beliefs," said Clinton.
>
> Called a "landmark" speech by the homosexual community, Clinton announced that the U.S. would spend $3 million in aid and the full strength of their diplomacy to expand the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people worldwide.

That's taxpayer money being used to do that – money from people like you and me. If there's a conflict between religious liberty and gay rights, Hillary Clinton sides with gay rights. But it's not just gay rights that is more important than national security – it's also abortion.

CNS News explains:

> Despite her longstanding and vocal support for adoption, Clinton's State Department also sends tens of millions of dollars to African countries each year for family planning and reproductive health services, including abortion.
>
> The largest recipient is the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), which received $50 million from the State Department in 2010, the most recent year for which figures are available.
>
> UNFPA has a history of supporting abortion services in Africa, most notably in 2005 through its Maputo Plan of Action.
>
> The plan, adopted by the health ministers of the African Union, calls for the implementation of another UNFPA-drafted document known as the Continental Framework on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, which calls on African countries to "[p]rovide safe abortion services to the fullest extent of national laws, and where appropriate provide legal framework for safe abortion services."
>
> In both the Continental Framework and the Maputo Plan, discussion of abortion is couched in terms of reducing "unsafe" abortions, providing "safe" abortions, and

> promoting access to family planning in Africa.
>
> Through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the State Department also sends millions of dollars to Africa to help with population control and family planning programs.
>
> Clinton on Monday cited six countries – Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, and Uganda – which had partnered with the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's The Way Forward Project to increase care for children in their countries.
>
> Combined, those six countries received a $90.5 million for "family planning" in 2010.

If there's a conflict between religious liberty and abortion, Hillary Clinton sides with abortion.

Well, what about the rights of Jews and Christians in Muslim countries? Is that a concern for Hillary Clinton? Apparently not. If you're a Christian voter, and you would like to see the government prioritize religious liberty in other countries, then Hillary Clinton is not your candidate. Her twin priorities are abortion and gay rights.

Correcting four myths about the history of the Crusades

August 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Crusader

Here is an interesting article from First Principles Journal.

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

If you asked me what are the two best books on the Crusades, I would answer God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades by Baylor professor Rodney Stark and The Concise History of the Crusades by Professor Thomas F. Madden. If you get this question a lot from atheists, then I recommend you pick these up. Anything by Rodney Stark is useful for Christians, in fact.

Democrats launch investigation of pro-life group that filmed Planned Parenthood videos

August 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Democrat Elijah Cummings (left) with his good friend Lois Lerner

The Democrats won't investigate Planned Parenthood, they want to investigate the group that revealed the truth about Planned Parenthood to the public.

Life News reports:

> Just one day after Planned Parenthood was exposed cutting up a live baby for body parts for sale, Democrats in the House of Representative are launching their own investigation after the Planned Parenthood abortion business. Instead of looking into the abortion giant, they are probing the pro-life group behind the series of expose' videos.
>
> The top Democrat on the House Oversight Committee is launching an investigation into the Center for Medical Progress, the pro-life organization that spent years recording the undercover videos and tracking information to expose Planned Parenthood and the abortion industry and biotech industry's involvement in the abortion of unborn babies and the sales of their body parts to top universities for research.
>
> While House Republicans are investigating Planned Parenthood and more than a dozen states have either taken steps to de-fund Planned Parenthood or launch their own investigations, Democrats in Congress are going after the pro-life advocates responsible for the undercover sting operation. The Hill has more:
>
> Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) sent a letter to the Center for Medical Progress on Thursday, demanding details to show whether the group broke state or federal laws when it secretly recorded videos of Planned Parenthood staff without consent.
>
> The Center, led by the anti-abortion activist David Daleiden, established a fake company to gain entry into clinics and meetings with Planned Parenthood officials — a move that Democrats, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (Calif.), have blasted as potentially illegal.

> The group has also been asking for donations as a nonprofit charitable organization for the last two years, which Cummings said contrasts with its current self-identification as a group of citizen journalists.
>
> Cummings warned that if Republican leaders of the committee decide to hold hearings on Planned Parenthood, he will ask Daleiden to testify as well.
>
> "Any legitimate and balanced congressional investigation must also address your group's role in these activities," Cummings wrote.
>
> […]Meanwhile, two committees in the House of Representatives have already launched investigations of Planned Parenthood. One committee is looking into whether or not the abortion business is breaking federal law by altering abortion procedures to better obtain aborted baby body parts for sale. Another committee, among other things, is investigating the Obama administration and whether there is any connection between it and the abortion giant.

The differences between Republicans and Democrats could not be more clear on abortion.

Now, you might be wondering why I put a picture of Elijah Cummings next to a picture of IRS fascist Lois Lerner at the top of the post.

Here's why:

> The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) sent tax documents on a targeted conservative group to Democratic staff on the House Oversight Committee, newly released emails show, despite previous denials by ranking Oversight Democrat Elijah Cummings (D., Md.) that such contact had occurred.
>
> **Emails released by the GOP-led Oversight Committee show Democratic staff requested information from the IRS' tax-exempt division on True The Vote, a conservative group that monitors polling places for voter fraud.**
>
> Republicans and conservative activists say the IRS tax-exempt division, led by former official Lois Lerner, targeted dozens of conservative groups because of their politics while ignoring similar progressive organizations.
>
> Cummings publicly requested information from True the Vote in October 2012 on its volunteer activities and training.
>
> Five days later, the IRS sent True the Vote a letter requesting the group provide the agency with copies of its volunteer registration forms and additional information on its volunteer activities.
>
> Cummings' staff requested more information from the IRS about True the Vote in January 2013. The request was channeled from the IRS' Legislative Affairs office to several other IRS officials, including Lerner.
>
> […]In a February 2014 Oversight Committee hearing, Cummings denied allegations by True The Vote attorney Cleta Mitchell that his staff had worked

> with the IRS in targeting the group.
>
> “We want to get to the bottom of how these coincidences happened, and we’re going to try to figure out whether any—if there was any staff of this committee that might have been involved in putting True the Vote on the radar screen of some of these Federal agencies,” Mitchell said. “We don’t know that, but we—we’re going to do everything we can do to try to get to the bottom of how did this all happen.”
>
> “What she just said is absolutely incorrect and not true,” Cummings replied.
>
> Cummings has staunchly opposed the Oversight Committee’s months-long investigation of the IRS targeting scandal, arguing it is a waste of time and money.
>
> Oversight chairman Darrell Issa (R., Calif.) and five subcommittee chairmen sent a letter to Cummings Thursday demanding an explanation for his staff’s activities.
>
> “Although you have previously denied that your staff made inquiries to the IRS about conservative organization True the Vote that may have led to additional agency scrutiny, communication records between your staff and IRS officials—which you did not disclose to Majority Members or staff—indicates otherwise,” Issa wrote. “As the Committee is scheduled to consider a resolution holding Ms. Lerner, a participant in responding to your communications that you failed to disclose, in contempt of Congress, you have an obligation to fully explain your staff’s undisclosed contacts with the IRS.”

It’s not out of character for Elijah Cummings to use government to persecute people he disagrees with, it’s just business as usual. This is the Democrat Party – what they are really about.

The next bubble that Democrats will burst on taxpayers: student loan debt

August 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Student loans became a huge problem when the Obama administration decided to take the decision about whether to grant the loans away from private sector loan managers and put it into the hands of politicians. Nationalizing student loans allowed Democrats to buy the votes of college students who wanted to get funding for degrees in Why Your Religious Parents Are Evil, which actually turn out to be Four Years of Drunken Hook-Up Sex. The trouble with this vote-buying plan was always how to deal with the loans after the four years are up. Well, how about continuing to buy the votes by passing the cost of the non-STEM degrees onto taxpayers? After all, working families don't need the money, and it's much better spent on beer and contraceptives, right? Responsible people don't vote for Democrats anyway, so let's just take their money and buy the votes of drunk promiscuous college students.

Here's the story from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Virginia Murphy borrowed a small fortune to attend law school and pursue her dream of becoming a public defender. Now the Florida resident is among an expanding breed of American borrower: those who owe at least $100,000 in student debt but have no expectation of paying it back.
>
> Ms. Murphy pays just $330 a month—less than the interest on her $256,000 balance—under a federal income-based repayment program that has become one of the nation's fastest-growing entitlements. She plans to use another federal program to have her balance forgiven in about seven years, a sum set to swell by then to $300,000.
>
> The promise of forgiveness is "the only reason I would have ever considered" amassing so much debt to attend Tulane University Law School, says Ms. Murphy, 45 years old. She earns $56,500 a year as an assistant public defender in West Palm Beach.
>
> The doubling of student debt since the recession, to $1.19 trillion, has stoked a national discussion over how to rein in college costs and debt and is becoming a major issue in the 2016 presidential race.

$300,000? That's no problem. it was so good that we got Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid to spend more money in 2007:

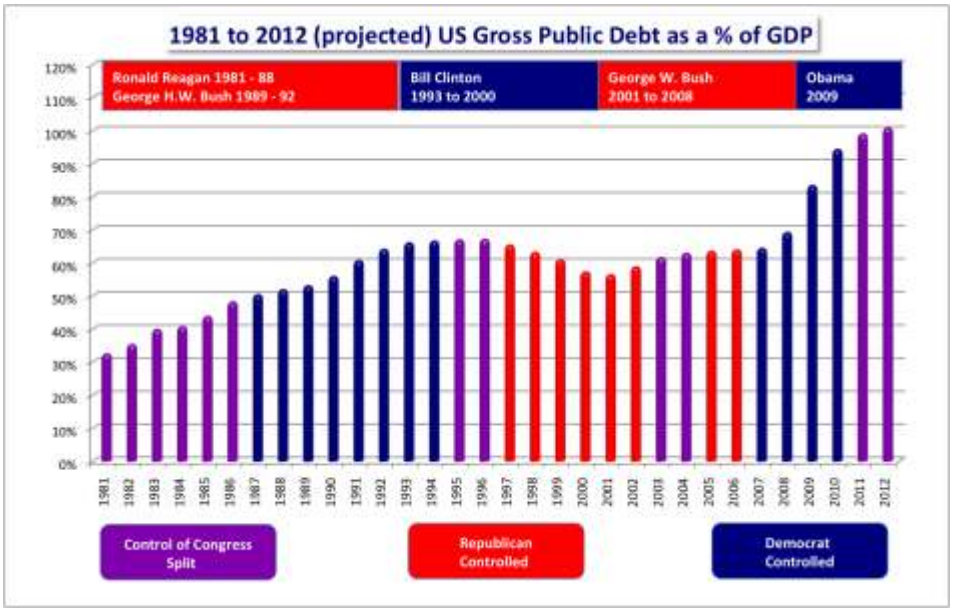

Taxpayer money is useful for buying the votes of dependent people
(Click for larger image)

More:

> Federal programs allow grad students to borrow essentially unlimited amounts—whatever their schools charge—while requiring only a scant credit check and no assessment of their ability to repay. Other government loan programs, such as those for undergraduate students and home buyers, set loan limits to prevent borrowers from getting too deep into debt. Undergraduates are capped at $57,500 total in federal loans.
>
> As graduate-school enrollment swelled over the past decade, the number of Americans owing at least $100,000 in student debt more than quintupled to 1.82 million as of Jan. 1, New York Federal Reserve data show. The number of all student borrowers nearly doubled to 43.34 million.
>
> […]The federal student-loan programs are designed to generate revenue for taxpayers, and they do. But surging enrollment in the debt-forgiveness programs recently prompted the government to increase by $22 billion its estimate of the long-term costs of the provisions. And a recent move to expand the most generous repayment program to millions more borrowers will cost an estimated $15.3 billion.
>
> Critics say offering unlimited loans to students, with the prospect of forgiveness, creates a moral hazard by allowing borrowers to amass debts they have little hope or intention of repaying, all while enriching institutions and leaving taxpayers to pick up the tab.

Moral hazard? What's that? Maybe Hillary Clinton knows.

She has announced an interesting plan about how to deal with people doing useless degrees that are really just a lot of drinking, partying and promiscuity. More spending to buy more votes – transfer well from responsible working families to drunken promiscuous

students studying non-STEM degrees, because STEM degrees that will actually get them jobs are *too hard*.

Excerpt:

> The hard truth on the student-loan crisis is that the problem is not being caused by a lack of money. It's quite the opposite. A recent study by the New York Federal Reserve validated the long-held concerns of many economists and policy analysts alike when it found that "on average, for a $1 increase in the subsidized-loan cap, tuitions rose by as much as 65 cents." In short, there is too much money available for the taking by colleges and universities because of generous government loans. This is driving up tuition prices. If the government just keeps increasing how much it is willing to lend students, where is the incentive for schools to control costs? Universities are currently engaged in an amenities arms race to attract students and their loan dollars. One need not look any further for evidence of this than ESPN on a Saturday afternoon in the fall or a student-life brochure. Texas Tech University has a waterpark on campus for goodness' sake, and LSU is racing to finish one as well. How is $350 billion more dollars for universities to waste a solution of any sort? Mrs. Clinton's preferred channels for delivering these funds are problematic as well. First, the plan calls for a cut in loan interest rates. Is this seriously something we're willing to let politicians continue to get away with? Did we learn nothing from the housing crisis? Interest rates aren't arbitrary figures without purpose — they are supposed to measure the risk of the borrower's not being able to repay the lender. Judging by the severity of the present student-loan crisis and the number of defaulters, it's safe to say interest rates are already too low. Additionally, interest rates are the price of borrowing money. Let's think back to Economics 101 and remember what happens to demand when prices go down. How do we solve the crisis of rampant student loan debt by making it easier and more attractive to get into? It doesn't matter if the interest rate on $150,000 is zero percent when you still owe $150,000 and you're unemployed. Students don't need a lower interest rate. They need colleges to constrain spending. Further, they need high-paying jobs. Of course, the Clinton plan only makes the latter problem worse as well. Under the Hillary's plan, states will be encouraged to offer "no loan" tuition at four-year universities and free two-year community college through the promise of federal tax dollars. Of course, those tax dollars will have to come from somewhere. This is yet another drain on private business whose resources could otherwise be creating jobs for existing unemployed and underemployed students and graduates. Some will say this part of the plan helps students, but on net the economic drag remains the same, with the burden of education inflation simply shifted from students to their potential employers.

She is obviously well-versed in how economics works, and not just some talentless clown who married a hot male slut and then turned a blind eye to his philandering so that she

could get affirmative action appointments on her way to an affirmative action presidency. Most sexually-transmitted diseases don’t affect your judgment at all. So stop worrying, America. Everything is going to be fine.

Why is it that whenever we have elections, people on the left have nothing more to offer us than schemes to buy votes by shifting money from winners to losers? They have no idea how to grow the economy, create jobs, promote marriage and families, and disincentivize irresponsible, reckless behaviors. It’s all about borrowing from people in the womb, to pay for free stuff for losers, in order to get their votes. This inter-generational theft is evil. It is enslaving the unborn to serve the whims of new masters. Slavery is wrong.

Tim McGrew debates Peter Boghossian on the definition of faith

August 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have tried very hard to avoid writing about Peter Boghossian because I kept hoping that someone would speak to him and set him straight before he went too far.

Basically, when you listen to the debate below, you'll find that Boghossian redefines the word faith so that it basically means "stupidity", and then he tries to get people of faith to accept that they are stupid according to his new definition of faith. The new definition is not found in any dictionary, and it's not used commonly, either.

Anyway, here are the details:

> This Week on Unbelievable : Peter Boghossian vs Tim McGrew – debate on 'A Manual For Creating Atheists"
>
> Peter Boghossian teaches philosophy and is the author of 'A Manual for Creating Atheists'. He believes that faith is a 'false epistemology' (way of knowing things) and even describes it as a 'virus of the mind'. Tim McGrew is a Christian philosophy professor specialising in epistemology. He contests Boghossian's definition of faith and debates the merits of his recent book. To cast your vote on the definition of faith visit www.facebook.com/unbelievablejb.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics: (I reserve the right to satirize Boghossian in this. Listen to the audio if you want his exact words)

- PB: My book tries to avoid the "obfuscations" of reputable, credentialed Christian scholars and discusses faith at my intellectual level
- PB: The goal of the book is to help people abandon the dictionary definition of the word "faith" and accept the definition I invented
- TM: Defining the word "faith" in the wrong way is not the right way to start an authentic, respectful conversation
- TM: Faith does not mean "pretending to know things you don't know" – that is not a standard definition
- TM: the only people who accept your definition of faith are you and the people who follow you online
- TM: your whole book is predicated on on a wrong definition of faith
- PB: that is my definition of faith based on my experience of talking to lots of people
- TM: He says this is how billions of people define faith – but not in my experience, maybe satirists like Ambrose Bierce and Mark Twain do
- TM: Your definition of faith is not in the Oxford English Dictionary and that definition is based on common usage of the word faith

- TM: The New Testament definition of faith “pistis” means trust
- PB: There are 50-100 people who use the term that way, and only in academia
- TM: How about “The Good Atheist” who interviewed you? He is not an academic or a theist, but he didn’t accept your definition
- PB: You are “extraordinarily isolated” from the real definition of faith
- TM: Faith is not belief without evidence, it is trust based on at least some evidence
- PB: Christian leaders use the word according my definition, I won’t name any or quote any, though
- JB: So you are basically saying that Christians are lying when they express their faith, since they know what they are saying isn’t true but they say it anyway
- PB: What percentage of Christians use the word faith to mean “belief without evidence”
- TM: Well below 1%. It may be the case that their evidence is not very good, but they do rest their beliefs on evidence
- TM: Faith is trusting, holding to, and acting on what one has good reasons to believe is true in the face of difficulties
- PB: That’s not what people mean by faith, they mean my definition
- JB: What do you mean when you say that faith is a “virus of the mind”, and a “mental illness”? School programs to remove faith?
- PB: Think about how atheists feel when they are told they will go Hell
- PB: Christians are hurting people, so that means they have a mental disorder that needs to be cured in a systematic way
- PB: Faith is an epistemic virus that hijacks the reasoning process

At that point I quit summarizing, because I didn’t think he was worth listening to any more.

He is clearly not aware of how even basic Christian apologetics books that are bestsellers cover evidences like the Big Bang, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, galactic habitability, stellar habitability, New Testament reliability, historical Jesus, philosophical arguments for theism, and so on. This is the bottom-shelf of Christian apologetics, widely read by rank-and-file Christians, but Boghossian seems to be completely unaware of it. He needs to get out more and talk to people outside of radical atheist circles. Maybe he needs to pick up a serious book like “Debating Christian Theism” and read it before he opens his mouth on topics he knows nothing about.

But that’s not all. As, I explained before, the concept of faith presented in the Bible agrees with what Dr. McGrew said – faith is trust based on evidence. That is the Biblical view.

And finally, this:

John 10:37-38: [NASB]

37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;

38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may

know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

The words of Jesus – he is saying: believe me because of the evidence I provide from miracles that you can see with your own eyes. Period. End of discussion.

So Boghossian's view of faith is nowhere except in his own mind. Not in the apologetics literature. Not in the writings of any reputable Christian scholar. Not in the Bible. Not in the words of Jesus. It's enough to make me think that this talk about "mental disorders" and "viruses of the mind" is just projection.

Vote in the poll

Please vote in this poll:

Thank goodness we have debates like this so that we can find out where Christians really come down on faith.

Should the Gospel of Thomas be included in the New Testament?

August 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

I was on a long distance drive Monday night. I finished listening to "God's Crime Scene", and started "The Case for the Real Jesus". Craig Evans' discussion about the Gospel of Thomas stuck in my mind, so I'm turning it into a post.

Should the Gospel of Thomas be included with the four canonical gospels? Is it early? Is it the same historical genre as the four gospels? Does it give us eyewitness evidence of the life and teachings of Jesus?

Here's an article about it that references the chapter from "The Case for the Real Jesus" that I was listening to.

First reason, Thomas has literary dependence on TONS of other New Testament books, which favors a date for Thomas AFTER the books it quotes:

> **The Gospel of Thomas Cites Too Much Of The New Testament.** Publishing writings in the first century was nothing like it is today. If you want a copy of something, you take a quill and some papyrus and you just copy it. That is how the books of the New Testament circulated. It was a very slow process. By the early second century, only a few of the books of the New Testament were in full circulation. Christians of that time only had a few of the books of the New Testament to reference. The epistles of Ignatious, written in AD 110, does not even quote half of the New Testament.
>
> But the gospel of Thomas shows familiarity with 15 of the 27 books of the New Testament! Doctor Craig Evans pointed out that he was not aware of any Christian writing which referenced this much of the New Testament prior to AD 150. The Gospel of Thomas simply references far too many books to be dated early. But despite that, the Jesus Seminar attempts to date Thomas between AD 60 and 70.

> Further, this gospel not only cites too much New Testament material. It cites the later New Testament material. Mark was not very strong in Greek grammar and etiquette, so when Matthew and Luke quoted Mark, they polished his wording. The gospel of Thomas quotes the polished wording, the later version. In fact, Thomas even has material from the gospel of John – penned in about AD 90. How can a book from AD 60 or 70 quote a book from AD 90? Thomas is not independent of the other gospels, it quotes the later ones and it is not early, it quotes too much of the New Testament to be considered early.

Second reason, Thomas shows signs of being based on a Syriac translation:

> **The Gospel of Thomas Shows Syrian Development.** The gospels are published in the Koine Greek language, which was the most conventiant language of that time if the goal was to spread them far and wide. But when Christianity began to spread eastward, the gospels were translated into Syriac. But this did not happen immediately.
>
> A student of Justin Martyr named Tatian compiled a Syriac translation of the four gospels in AD 175, which was named the Diatessaron (meaning 'through the four'). He made the four gospels available to those who spoke Syriac. What makes this significant is that the gospel of Thomas shows traces of the Syrian language forms! Indeed, the gospel of Thomas adopts concepts that were only found in the Syrian church. It refers to Thomas as Judas Thomas, which was a concept that began with the Syrian church. The Syrians did not like ascetics, wealth, businessmen, commercialism, and were interested in elitism and mysticism. Precisely everything that the Syrians were not interested in, the gospel of Thomas was not interested in, and that which they were interested in, the gospel of Thomas was interested in.
>
> Further, and critically, if we read the gospel of Thomas in English, it sort of looks like a non-contextual group of proverbs and sayings. It is just randomly assorted. It appears randomly assorted in Koine Greek as well. But if you translate it to Syrian, it is not random at all. There are literally hundreds of catchwords in Syrian that are meant to help people memorize the gospel. There are memory aids written in Syrian. The gospel of Thomas was written in Syrian.

Two other reasons would be:

- it contains gnostic overtones, and that movement started in the 2nd century
- none of the early Church Fathers quote it, but they quote the four gospels and the letters of Paul, etc.

Not sure why people get so interested in this Dan Brown hypothetical stuff, but my job is to share with you the things I'm reading that are relevant. By the way, the audio versions of the unabridged "Case For" books are read by Lee Strobel himself – HIGHLY recommended. You will not lose interest.

Eighth Planned Parenthood video: StemExpress working with nearly 100 abortion clinics

August 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Here's the latest video from the Center for Medical Progress:

And the story from Anika Smith writing for The Stream:

> Today the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) released video of an undercover lunch conversation with the CEO of fetal-tissue distributor StemExpress. This is the video footage that StemExpress tried to stop CMP from releasing by going to the courts in California. The temporary restraining order StemExpress filed against the Center for Medical Progress was dissolved on Friday, making this video one of the most anticipated — and possibly one of the most damaging.
>
> The video contains several admissions by Cate Dyer, StemExpress CEO, that StemExpress gets intact fetuses from the abortion clinics they work with shipped to their laboratory. From the transcript:
>
> **Dyer:** Realistically, if we were to do an agreement with you, what do we think you could get?
> **Buyer:** Volume-wise?
> **Dyer:** On specifically liver tissue, because that's such an area of demand for us.
> **Buyer:** So liver, and what about intact specimens, just—?
> **Dyer:** Oh, yeah, I mean *if you had intact cases, which we've done a lot, we sometimes ship those back to our lab in its entirety*.
> **Buyer:** Okay.
> **Dyer:** So that would also be great if you guys have those.
> **Buyer:** The entire case.
> **Dyer:** Yeah, yeah. Because it's just, and the procurement for us, I mean it can go

> really sideways, depending on the facility, and then our samples are destroyed, and we're like, "Really?" This was all so much work, and then just to have them be destroyed is awful. I mean we have researchers wait forever, and they want certain things, you know, perfectly done, so we started bringing them back even to manage it from a procurement expert standpoint.

Another interesting admission in the video is that the baby parts have to be checked for bacteria, because some of the clinics that supply the baby parts are not sanitary. Staph infection is mentioned specifically. Dyer also mentions that Planned Parenthood is profiting from the sale of unborn baby parts.

Another article from The Stream has a breakdown of the admissions in the 8th video.

Here's one more:

> **3) Cate Dyer estimates StemExpress is working with nearly 100 abortion clinics nationwide, and still can't get enough fetal liver:**
>
> **Buyer:** What would make your lab happy? What would make your lab happy?
> **SE:** Another fifty livers a week.
> **Buyer:** Ok, so you can handle that?
> **SE:** Yea. Just so you guys know, on the collection side for us, we're also — as you see Megan out there in the clinic, we're working with almost triple digit number clinics. So, it's a lot on volume a little more than what we do. It's a lot. So, I don't think you'll hit a capacity with us anytime in the next ten years. I think you'll feel solid with that standpoint. So, I think, with that you'll feel like doing an agreement with us. It will be consistent growth and our growth has been consistent, and it's going to continue to grow from that standpoint.

Nearly 100 abortion clinics – this is not an isolated problem, it's systemic. We need a massive federal investigation to find out what is really going on.

Related posts

- Democrats launch investigation of pro-life group that filmed Planned Parenthood videos
- Seventh Planned Parenthood video: cutting through living baby's face to get intact brain
- Sixth Planned Parenthood video: baby parts taken and sold without mom's consent
- Does Planned Parenthood do mammograms? Is abortion only 3% of their services?
- Fifth video: Planned Parenthood selling intact 20-week baby cadavers for profit
- Democrats defeat Republican bill to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood president visited White House 39 times since 2009
- Federal judge blocks release of future sting videos of Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood executive admits abortion victim is a baby in fourth video
- Third video of Planned Parenthood doctors discussing organ harvesting
- Obama administration refuses FOIA requests about Planned Parenthood

- Obama administration will investigate whistleblowers who filmed Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood senior executive in second video: “I want a Lamborghini”
- Republicans in Congress will investigate Planned Parenthood’s organ harvesting
- ABC, CBS, CNN, and MSNBC all ignore Planned Parenthood organ harvesting story
- Governor Bobby Jindal announces investigation of Planned Parenthood
- What does Hillary Clinton think of Planned Parenthood selling unborn baby parts?
- With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013
- Planned Parenthood, an abortion business, is in California schools teaching sex education
- Arizona Planned Parenthood clinic failed to report rapist
- Planned Parenthood must pay $1.4 million in Medicaid fraud settlement
- Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You
- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
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Bible study: It’s loving to warn someone who is about to make a mistake

August 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

A lesson in spiritual leadership, from the excellent Dr. Michael Brown, writing for Townhall.com. (H/T Think Apologetics)

He writes:

> [L]ove that does not warn is not love at all.
>
> The parent who doesn’t warn a chain-smoking child about the dangers of nicotine is not a loving parent.
>
> The doctor who doesn’t warn a morbidly obese patient about the dangers of overeating is not a loving doctor.
>
> The preacher who doesn’t warn his straying flock about the dangers of spiritual compromise is not a loving pastor.
>
> Love warns, and it warns loudly and clearly – but that does not mean harshly or with an angry, self-righteous spirit.
>
> Love warns with tears.
>
> Love warns with brokenness.
>
> Love warns with longsuffering.
>
> Love warns.
>
> That’s why Jesus wept in public as He warned Jerusalem about the terrible judgment that was at the door (Luke 19:41-45).
>
> That’s why Jeremiah wept in secret when the nation refused to hear his warnings of impending disaster (Jeremiah 13:17).
>
> That’s why Paul said to the elders of Ephesus, “I know that after my departure

> fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears" (Acts 20:29-31).
>
> When is the last time we warned someone with tears? When is the last time we cared enough to weep for them in private?
>
> May God break our hearts with the things that break His heart. May the Lord shatter our indifference.
>
> In the words of the Book of Proverbs, "Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy. . . . Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue" (Proverbs 27:5-6; 28:23).
>
> We are not called to tickle people's ears and make them feel good. We are called to speak the truth in love, to have hearts of compassion and backbones of steel, to emulate the true prophets not the false prophets, to do the right thing rather than the convenient thing.
>
> Oh that God would deliver us from a crippling, compromising, man-pleasing mentality!
>
> In your life or ministry, do you really want to be surrounded by a bunch of Yes-men who tell you what you want to hear rather than what you need to hear? Do you really want to work with a bunch of carnal prophets who say, "All is well, all is well," when nothing is well? (See Jeremiah 6:14.) Then do the same for others and save them from disaster and self-destruction by warning them when they are on the wrong path.
>
> Paul's final exhortation to Timothy rings as true today – if not even more true – than the day it was written: "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths" (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

Lots of good, challenging Bible verses there. It shows that telling people "watch out" is a real thing. First point I want to make is that you should use data when you warn people, if you can. Notice that in Dr. Brown's list, he talked about smoking and obesity, which doctors universally frown on. He wants to tell people the consequences for their health if they choose to smoke or be obese. A lot of moral issues are like that, where you want to tell someone the consequences, which they are often ignorant of – especially when they are young and foolish. So do use studies and papers to show the consequences.

I don't think it's something you can do flippantly. But if you have life experience in the area that you are warning about, then it is a good idea to tell what you learned to

someone who is about to make a mistake. For example, suppose you see someone about to move in with their boyfriend, and their boyfriend has no degree, delivers pizzas, has gaps in his resume, and has no savings. And he's 30. If you moved in with a deadbeat guy and it went nowhere, then you should tell this other person what happened to you, and what you learned from it. Don't be afraid to pull out studies about cohabitation to turn your personal experience into something more persuasive.

Even better than a bad experience is how-to knowledge. If you have tried to do something and been successful at it, then you are in a position to say what worked. Suppose you have good STEM degrees, a good long work history and lots of earned income that you've saved and invested. You see a guy who is about to do a degree in art history, then he wants to go on vacation for two years in Europe, before finally trying to find a full-time job. You know – based on your own success – that this is bad for his resume, bad for his career, bad for his future marriage (a lot of divorces happen because of money). Well, then say something to him. It's better to say something and risk losing him as a friend than for him to proceed in ignorance and make a mistake. It's better to tell the truth than to be liked for lying. That is the loving thing to do.

Finally, if you are the person who is being warned, then respect the people who try to tell you the truth. God knows, it is hard to be the person who speaks the truth in a day and age when people just want to be happy, and be surrounded with positive affirmation. What happens when you chase away the people who have the courage to tell you the truth is that you find yourself surrounded by liars. It's never going to be the case that you know everything about everything. There will always be people who know more than you. If you keep chasing them all away for disagreeing with you, you'll only be left with your own judgment and a crowd of people who either don't know the truth, or won't tell you it. Be careful how you treat the truth-tellers in your life.

How well are Democrat Party economic policies working out in Venezuela?

August 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think that when we discuss economics, we should try to identify where specific policies have been tried and then we should observe the consequences to the people who tried them. Often, in college and university classrooms, one view of economics is sold to students by professors as the "nice" view. The professors, many of whom have never worked in the private sector in their entire lives, tell the students that socialism is the "nice" point of view, and anyone who disagrees is "mean". Is that the right approach to teaching young people what to believe about economics?

Are Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez very different?

Let's take a look at this article from Yahoo News about socialist dictator Hugo Chavez's country of Venezuela, a country much admired by people on the socialist left.

It says:

> All the lady wanted was some chicken. But in shortage-plagued Venezuela, she waited in line five hours, only to go home empty-handed.
>
> "I got here at 5:30 am and came away with nothing! It is just not fair that you have to work so hard — and then put up with these lines," said an exasperated Lileana Diaz, a 49-year-old receptionist at a hospital emergency room. Venezuelans have been enduring shortages of the most basic goods, such as toilet paper, for more than a year.
>
> In Caracas, a cottage industry has emerged with people who will wait in line for you — at a price.
>
> But things are even worse outside the capital.
>
> The problems are staggering here in Valencia, an industrial city west of the

capital of this oil-rich country.

Valencia has big factories that produce food and other essentials. Still, the list of goods in short supply is long.

It includes coffee, cooking oil, cornmeal, soap, detergent, you name it.

Chicken is one of the most coveted.

Frustrated shoppers like Diaz are legion.

One tells the story of people who climbed over a fence to get a good place in line outside a store, prompting police to intervene and stop scuffles that broke out.

Another lady shopper shows off a nasty bruise on her right leg, thanks to a fight she got into as she tried to buy disposable diapers.

In recent weeks, the lines of people waiting hopefully outside supermarkets and stores have grown longer in cities away from the coast, such as Maracaibo, Puerto Ordaz and Cumana.

Venezuelan media have reported situations of nerves running very, very high and shoppers coming close to looting.

At times it has gotten that bad, in fact. In late January, one person died and dozens were arrested in the chaos of a looting outbreak at stores in the town of San Felix in the southern state of Bolivar.

[…]In another supermarket in Valencia, a line 50 meters (yards) long snakes away from the entrance.

"We call these 'holding out hope lines,' because once you get inside, there is nothing on the shelves," said Oscar Oroste, a 53-year-old chef.

Oroste said that until recently, people would wait in line knowing what was available to buy. "Now, people are in line but do not even know what they will be sold."

Venezuelans go from supermarket to supermarket, and store to store, clamoring for basic necessities which have prices regulated by the leftist government.

But some buy just to resell at a handsome profit, and economists say that is another source of the shortages.

Egne Casano, a 28-year-old homemaker, said things are a bit better in Caracas. "I went there not long ago and saw that there is a better supply," she said.

[…]In the long lines, people digest their woes with a mix of humor, resignation and anger.

At another supermarket in Valencia, a whopping 600 people stood in line under a blazing sun to buy powdered milk.

Graciela Duran, a retiree, got a kilo of it after waiting for four hours.

"I was lucky today, Sometimes I come and there is nothing," she said.

"Waiting in huge lines is what we do all day, every day," said Duran, shielding

> herself from the sun with an umbrella.
>
> A dozen police were stationed at the entrance of the store and around the parking lot through which the queue moved.
>
> A truck drove by and the driver shouted out sarcastically: “Homeland, homeland, beloved homeland.”
>
> That comes from a song that late president Hugo Chavez used to sing and is heard often on government-run media and at official events.

If you’re interested in real statistics on Venezuela, I recommend this recent article from The Economist, which is as far left as Venezuela is, and endorsed Barack Obama.

In socialism, the main purpose of policies is to make the leftist leaders at the top receive applause. They say things that will get them applause from the people. The policies are not intended to lift people out of poverty, otherwise Zimbabwe, North Korea, Cuba, Venezuela, etc. would all be rich and prosperous. The policies are intended to make the leaders feel good about themselves. “If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor”. “If you like your health plan, you can keep your health plan”. It’s not *true*, it’s just meant to make economically-illiterate people applaud.

So why do we keep voting for socialism, when we know it doesn’t work?

Related posts

- How well are Democrat economic policies working in Venezuela and Argentina?
- Marco Rubio’s speech exposing the horrors of socialism in Cuba and Venezuela
- Obama silent as Venezuelan government violently represses democratic opposition
- How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?
- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia’s economy to grow? What causes Venezuela’s economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama’s buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank

- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Are same-sex unions the same as heterosexual married unions?

August 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Note: I am re-posting this post because my friend Papa Giorgio informs me that the post is referenced in a new book on homosexuality and culture, authored by Dr. Michael Brown. Papa Giorgio says it's a good book so far, so I'm going to get it. In the meantime, here's the post Dr. Brown linked to.

I've written before about the differences between same-sex unions and opposite sex married couples.

Here's a post from Canon and Culture on the same topic by social scientist Glenn Stanton.

He finds two differences.

First, instability:

> [T]he research is strong and numerous enough that a recent and very provocative *Atlantic* cover story on what straights could learn from gay marriage couldn't ignore it. Liza Mundy, the article's author, doesn't appear to have a conservative bone in her body, yet she is fair and straight-up honest with the research on the nature of committed same-sex relationships.
>
> […]Mundy explains that studies have found "higher dissolution rates among same-sex couples" in Scandinavia – one of the world's most gay-friendly cultures — than married heterosexual couples. This study, published in *Demography*, found that even though same-sex couples enter their legal unions at older ages — a marker related to greater relational stability – male same-sex marriages break up at twice the rate of heterosexual marriages. And the break-up rate for lesbians? A stunning 77% higher than the same-sex male unions! When controlling for possible confounding factors, the "risk of divorce for female partnerships actually is more than twice than that for male unions."
>
> […]A study of two generations of British couples (one born 1958, the other 1970)

> in same-sex cohabiting, opposite-sex cohabiting and opposite-sex marriage relationships found the same-sex relationships dramatically more likely to break up than the opposite-sex cohabiting and married relationships.

According to that British study, only 25% of same-sex co-habitating couples are intact after 8 years. The stability number for married couples after 8 years is 82%. That's a big difference.

But there's more:

> Other studies – conducted by celebrated lesbian scholars – find notable instability in lesbian homes, even those with children. The current National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study (NLLFS) found "a significant difference" in family dissolution rates when comparing lesbian with mother/father headed families, 56% and 36% respectively. (p. 1201)
>
> Another research study by two celebrated gay-friendly scholars, highlights a major comparative study between hetero and lesbian homes where, in the 5-year period of the study, 6 of the 14 lesbian mother-headed homes had broken up compared to only 5 of the 38 mom/dad headed homes. (p. 11) These scholars creatively explains that this stability imbalance is likely due to the "high standards lesbians bring to their intimate unions…" (p.12)

Ever heard of lesbian bed death?

> And Mundy points something else predictable in lesbian relationships. In fact, its consistency has earned it a name in the LGBT community: *lesbian bed death*. Seriously. This is the truth that sexual interest and frequency in many long-term lesbian relationships tends to decline considerably and even die over the years.

Usually, in relationships, men tend to be the ones who want more frequent sex. What happens when you have no aggressors and two gatekeepers? Lesbian bed death.

Next up, something common in male homosexual relationships: infidelity.

Stanton writes:

> A noted 2010 study on non-monogamy in long-term gay relationships by two gay-affirming scholars — the Couples Study — observes in their report's first sentence: "…non-monogamous relationships are very common in the gay community…" Their data showed that of the non-monogamous, long-term couples in their study, 42 percent made an arrangement for outside-sexual relationships within the first three months of the relationship's beginning and by the end of the first year, that number increased to 49 percent. At the seventh anniversary mark, an additional 24 percent of gay couples adopted such agreements. So such agreements are increasingly made as these relationships grow longer.
>
> The *Atlantic* piece is notes this as well; explaining that after the AIDS crisis, "gay

> male couples are more monogamous than they used to be, but not nearly to the same degree as other kinds of couples." One study Mundy cites asked those in various relationships whether they had any agreed-upon rules permitting extra-curricular activities. The differences were astonishing. Only 4% of male/female couples had them compared to 40% of gay men in legally recognized unions and 49% in long-term cohabiting unions.
>
> Another widely respected investigation, found that only a third of gay couples had monogamous agreements and truly honored them with no outside sex. In fact, it found that in the openly nonmonogamous gay relationships, the frequency of extra-dyadic sex from its start ranged from 2 to a whopping 2,500 separate incidents. The median was a remarkable 41.5 extracurricular incidents since the relationship's beginning. Frequency in the last year was startling was well, ranging from 0 to 350 occurrences of outside sex, with a median of 8 incidences in the last twelve months. Even those who pledged true monogamy, the range was from 1 to 63 "slip-ups" with a median of 5. Five "slip-ups" are not slip-ups. The corresponding numbers for men in heterosexual marriages are microscopic in comparison.

So what does all this mean?

It means that if you are interested in a definition of marriage that involves stability and marital fidelity, then you shouldn't be in favor of legalizing gay marriage. When you open up the term marriage to include relationships that seem to be very unstable and/or very unfaithful, you change the definition of marriage. Marriage means life-long married love. If we just turn around and call any association of adults "marriage", then we are losing the distinctiveness of marriage in the process. Think about it. We did the same thing in the previous redefinition of marriage (no-fault divorce) which attacked the permanence of marriage. Marriage has a specific meaning and we should not be redefining it every few years for the benefit of selfish adults.

New study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others

August 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

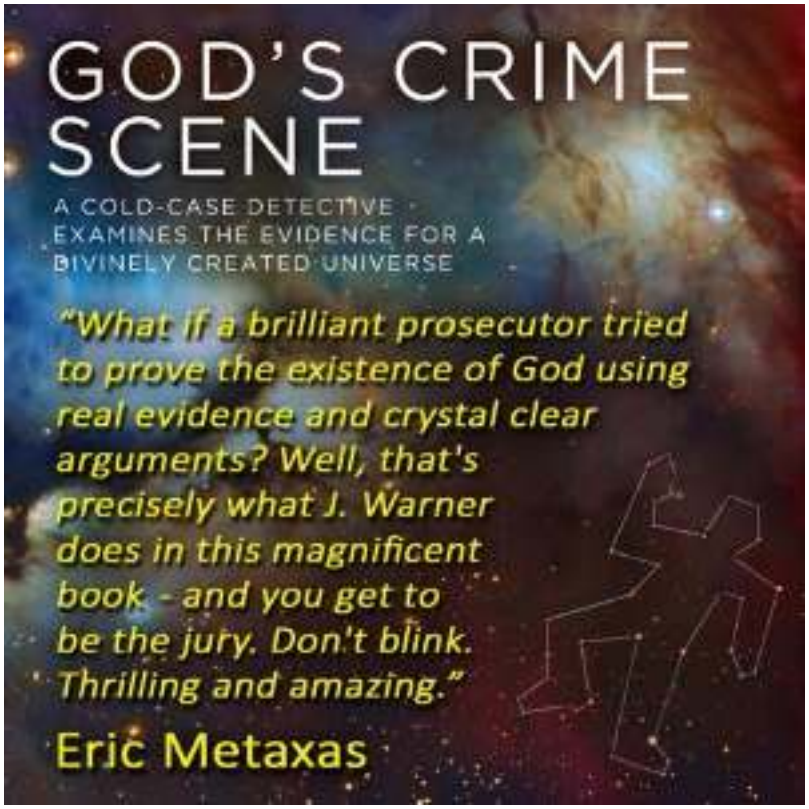

J. Warner Wallace: God's Crime Scene

So, Monday night I finally finished "reading" God's Crime Scene, the new book by J. Warner Wallace. I was listening to the audio book, because it is hard to speed along with the top down and read at the same time. For now, here's my one line review: this is a book for people who like evidence – he has collected a ton of evidence on everything people should be puzzling about, and sometimes on surprising topics. Anyway, I wanted to post something about some studies he mentioned in Chapter 6, on free will. This is one of the places where he found evidence in a surprising area.

Wallace says that free will makes more sense if theism is true, because we have non-material souls that interact with our bodies, but are not causally determined by them. On atheism, only matter exists, and you can't get free will (or consciousness) from matter. So atheists like Sam Harris and Alex Rosenberg, for example, deny free will, because they are materialists and atheists.

Anyway, here's what he writes on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating

> determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others." Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: "It seems that not only do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it."" The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here's the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons' belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you're an atheist, then your worldview is telling you that what you are doing now is the result of genetic programming and sensory inputs. You're not conscious. You can't reason. You make no free choices, including moral choices. Naturally, someone who believes this is going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when things start to get a bit uncomfortable. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time. What difference would it make if they did, anyway – there's no afterlife on atheism.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality. My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

Obama administration retaliates against Kansas for defunding Planned Parenthood

August 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama speaking to Planned Parenthood
Typical immature behavior from our petulant child-President.

This is from Life News.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has punished the state of Kansas for cutting taxpayer funds for the Planned Parenthood abortion business by cutting its federal Medicaid funding by the same amount.The moves comes at the same time the abortion giant is facing intense criticism over its sales of aborted babies and their body parts.
>
> In 2011, pro-life Governor Sam Brownback signed a bill signed into law a bill that would shift funding away from the Planned Parenthood abortion business and stops abortion funding in health insurance programs. The Kansas Senate passed the measure on a 28-10 vote and the state House followed suit with an 86-30 vote.
>
> The measure has the state budget directing over $300,000 in Title 10 money to local full-service health clinics instead of Planed Parenthood and it places $300,000 into the Stan Clark grant-matched fund for pregnancy support and adoption counseling.

> The funding cuts eventually resulted in the Planned Parenthood abortion business closing one of its centers.
>
> Now, the Obama administration, in the wake of additional states cutting Planned Parenthood funding following the massive scandal, is going after one state that already cut tax-funding to the abortion company. According to an AP report: "The federal government reduced its Title X funding to the state by about the $370,000 annually in Title X money that two Planned Parenthood facilities in Wichita and Hays and an unaffiliated clinic in Dodge City had been receiving."
>
> **While Kansas revoked taxpayer dollars for an abortion business, the Obama administration's decision hurts women's health and deprives them of legitimate medical and health care.**
>
> **As AP reports, "Medical providers say that means low-income patients are finding it harder to access birth control, cancer screenings and other reproductive health care services.**
>
> **"People have fewer places to go, and for those with limited means that may make utilizing those services even more difficult," said J'Vonnah Maryman, director for public health at the Sedgwick County Health Department.**

It's not that the Democrats care about just allowing women to abort the children they conceive after freely choosing to have irresponsible sex. It's that they want pro-life taxpayers to pay for it. If pro-life taxpayers don't "share the blame" with the people having the abortions, then they need to be punished some other way. And if the punishment falls on other women seeking non-abortion health care, then that's just too bad for them, Obama has decided.

Related posts

- Eighth Planned Parenthood video: StemExpress working with nearly 100 abortion clinics
- Democrats launch investigation of pro-life group that filmed Planned Parenthood videos
- Seventh Planned Parenthood video: cutting through living baby's face to get intact brain
- Sixth Planned Parenthood video: baby parts taken and sold without mom's consent
- Does Planned Parenthood do mammograms? Is abortion only 3% of their services?
- Fifth video: Planned Parenthood selling intact 20-week baby cadavers for profit
- Democrats defeat Republican bill to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood president visited White House 39 times since 2009
- Federal judge blocks release of future sting videos of Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood executive admits abortion victim is a baby in fourth video
- Third video of Planned Parenthood doctors discussing organ harvesting
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In Ohio, faithful Jews and Christians can no longer serve as judges

August 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

For the past few decades, we have been able to see what happens when the Christian church decides that piety and feelings are more important than truth and evidence. Gradually, pastors decided to eliminate any discussion of apologetics as well as any integration between the Christian worldview and other areas of knowledge, e.g. – economics, politics, science. What were the consequences of this emotionalization of Christianity? Well, we basically handed the commanding heights of the culture to the secular left – including furnishing them with new soldiers from our own pious families.

Consider this article in The Stream about a recent decision by the Ohio Supreme Court.

It says:

> The court's Board of Professional Conduct was responding to a request submitted by several lawyers and judges, including C. Allen McConnell, a municipal court Judge whose predicament we addressedin "The 'Soft' Beginning of the Post-Obergefell Persecution."
>
> Judge McConnell said that as a Christian, he could not officiate at same-sex weddings. The Board of Professional Conduct of the Ohio Supreme Court said he must. In other words: Christians, check your faith at the bench or you may not serve as a judge in the state of Ohio.
>
> It is helpful to go through the board's opinion because it reveals how they will treat complaints filed against judges in the future. If a judge is the subject of a complaint filed by a lawyer, fellow judge or member of the public, the board reviews the complaint. They will apply the strained analysis of this opinion in determining whether to sanction, suspend or remove the judge from the bench.

> In Ohio, judges are elected by the people, at every level, municipal, circuit court, appeals court or state Supreme Court. In many other states they are appointed. Where they are appointed there are growing efforts to weed out Christians. This advisory opinion presents a new way of removing Christians from the bench after the people have elected them to office.
>
> In this seven-page opinion the Board claimed that there is a "self-evident principle that the personal, moral and religious beliefs of a judicial officer should never factor into the performance of any judicial duty." In other words, Christians must check their faith at the bench if they serve as a judge in the state of Ohio.

So what we have now is a kind of "religious test" for judges. If you are a devout Christian or a devout Jew, then you can't be a judge in Ohio. Only people reject the Judeo-Christian ethics that founded this country can be judges.

So, if we go back 50 years, what were the churches doing to stop this? Were they educating people in apologetics? Were they encouraging people to stay married? Were they educating people about feminism, the sexual revolution and no-fault divorce? Were they paying attention to cosmology and fine-tuning discoveries and making them known to the flock? Were they teaching people about how to think Christianly about economics, foreign policy, free enterprise, and so on? Were they steering young people towards areas that are related to apologetics? Were they steering young people towards careers that would place them in positions of influence? No. We had other priorities – making people feel good, and avoid controversy and conflict.

Brett Kunkle, who works for Stand to Reason, posted an interesting commentary that I tweeted earlier this week. He talks about grilling a bunch of Christian parents by pretending to be an atheist professor.

He writes this:

> There was no surprise factor. The parents knew who I was and the Christian organization I represented. Indeed, I told the audience what I was about to do, turned my back on them for just a moment, and then turned round again in full atheist character. I jumped into my role and they jumped into theirs, attempting to defend the faith against atheist professor "Dr. Kunkle." Sadly, they were ill-equipped to handle my challenges. I was glad to see their fighting spirit, but their responses were only vigorous in style, not substance. After half an hour, many parents were exasperated and I ended the role-play.
>
> "How was that for you?" I asked. "Extremely frustrating," was the immediate parental consensus.
>
> "Why was it so frustrating?" I pressed. One mom blurted out, "Because I didn't have any good answers." As soon as the words left her mouth, tears began streaming down her cheeks. It was a painful recognition of her own inadequacy and she knew what was at stake. As I glanced around the room, other parents were nodding in agreement, eyes moist with their own tears.

> Caught off guard, I began to tear up, too. I felt such compassion for these good-hearted yet unequipped parents. Quickly gathering my emotions, I looked that mom in the eyes and gently replied, “I know exactly how you feel. I felt that way, too, when Dr. David Lane was dismantling my Christianity in front of my peers, in my college philosophy class.” I told the parents my story and encouraged them to prepare themselves so, in turn, they can prepare their own kids.
>
> Afterward, parent after parent thanked me. They expressed their deep appreciation for the wake-up call, despite the accompanying painful realizations. And the mom who burst into tears? She walked up and gave me a big hug. Then she shared how her 21-year-old son, a student at Duke University, had turned his back on Christ while at college. She was convicted to begin a dialogue with him, as well as with her second son, a junior at Village Academy. I encouraged her, shared some resources, and gave her my email address with an open invitation to contact me anytime.

Christian parents: we need to do what it takes so that OUR sons and daughters get on the Ohio Supreme Court. We need to be the ones making these decisions, not the people on the secular left. If you send your kid off to Duke University unprepared, you’re not doing a good job at parenting.

Does reading science fiction predispose people to atheism?

August 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

My friend ECM thinks that science fiction that people read when they are younger causes them to believe that the religion is anti-science and that the progress of science always disproves religion. The stories they read colors their views of science and religion for life, before they ever get to assessing evidence. And that's why when we produce evidence for them in debates, they will believe in speculations rather than go where the evidence leads. So they believe that maybe unobservable aliens caused the origin of life, and that maybe the untestable multiverse theory explains the fine-tuning of cosmological constants, and that maybe this universe has existed eternally despite the well-supported Big Bang theory which shows that the universe began to exist. Maybe, maybe, maybe. They seem to think that *untestable speculations* are "good enough" to refute *observational evidence* – and maybe it's because of all the science fiction that they've read.

Here's an article in the American Spectator that talks a bit about it.

Excerpt:

> A magazine I frequently write for (not this one) recently published a review of a book of essays advocating atheism. The reviewer pointed out with some enthusiasm that a large number of the contributors were science-fiction writers.
>
> This left me somewhat nonplussed. I publish a good deal of science fiction myself, I have also read quite a lot of it, and I am quite unable to see why writing it should be held to particularly qualify anyone to answer the question of whether or not there is a God.

> […]Historically the contribution of the Catholic Church to astronomy was massive and unequalled. Without it astronomy might very well never have grown out of astrology at all. Cathedrals in Bologna, Florence, Paris, Rome and elsewhere were designed in the 17th and 18th centuries to function as solar observatories. Kepler was assisted by a number of Jesuit astronomers, including Father Paul Guldin and Father Zucchi, and by Giovanni Cassini, who had studied under Jesuits. Cassini and Jesuit colleagues were eventually able to confirm Kepler's theory on the Earth having an elliptical orbit. J.L. Heilbron of the University of California has written:
>
> > The Roman Catholic Church gave more financial aid and social support to the study of astronomy over six centuries, from the recovery of ancient learning during the late Middle Ages into the Enlightenment, than any other, and, probably, all other, institutions.
>
> Science fiction is, by definition, fiction, that is, it deals with things which are the product of a writer's imagination and are not literally true. In any event, what is and what is not science fiction is hard to define. Simply to say it is about science is meaningless, and while some science-fiction writers are qualified scientists, many are not. Probably even fewer are trained theologians.

Science fiction makes the mysteries of the universe seem easy to an atheist. Everything can be easily explained with fictional future discoveries. Their speculations about aliens, global warming and eternal universes are believed without evidence because atheists *want* and *need* to believe in those speculations. In the world of science fiction, the fictional characters can be "moral" and "intelligent" without having to bring God or the evidence for God into the picture. That's very attractive to an atheist who wants the feeling of being intelligent and moral without having to weight actual scientific evidence or ground their moral values and behavior rationally. The science fiction myths are what atheists *want to believe*. It's a placebo at the worldview level. They don't want cosmic microwave background radiation – they want *warp drives.* They don't want WMAP satellite confirmation of nucleosynthesis – they want *holodecks.*

Why do people become atheists?

My theory is mainly that atheists adopt atheism because they want pleasure, especially sexual pleasure, without any restraints or guilt. They want to believe that sex without commitment has no consequences, especially a consequence like God judging them for it. Another contributing factor may be that atheists want to be thought of as smart by "the right people" – to sort of blindly accept whatever the "smart people" accept without really searching out reasons or dissenting views. They do this so that they are able to look down at some other group of people so they can feel better about themselves and be part of the right group – without actually having to weigh the evidence on both sides. And lastly, atheism may also be caused by weak fathers or abandoning fathers. But I think that ECM's science fiction theory has merit, as well. I think that all four of these factors help to

explain why atheists believe in a discredited worldview in the teeth of scientific progress.

I wonder if my readers would take some time out to investigate whether their atheist friends have been influenced by reading science fiction and whether they still read it.

Virginia shooter background includes gay rights activism and anti-white racism

August 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's just pull up some quotations from mainstream news sources and learn about what the Virginia reporter shooter believed.

First, the UK Telegraph on the shooter's home.

Gay pride flag and sex toys:

> […]In a raid on the apartment on Wednesday, police reportedly confiscated **a gay pride flag**. They also found "many" **sex toys**, which may have "human material" on them, the source told this newspaper.

Victim mindset and gay prostitution:

> In a "suicide note" sent to ABC news, Flanagan said **he was discriminated against in life for being gay** and said **he had sometimes worked as an escort for money**.

Here's another UK Telegraph article.

His motive was revenge against whites:

> In a 23-page document faxed to ABC News two hours after the shooting,Flanagan apparently said that the Charleston shooting in June of nine black people was his "tipping point".
> He said the church shooting by racist Dylann Roof in South Carolina "sent me over the top", after which he immediately bought a gun.
>
> "Why did I do it? I put down a deposit for a gun on 6/19/15. The Church shooting in Charleston happened on 6/17/15," he wrote.
>
> "What sent me over the top was the church shooting," he wrote. "And my hollow point bullets have the victims' initials on them."
>
> **"As for Dylann Roof? You —-! You want a race war —-? BRING IT THEN YOU WHITE —-!!!"**

Why was Alison his target?

> On his Twitter account, which has since been suspended, he wrote after the shooting that **"Alison made racist comments"** and "Adam went to (human resources) on me after working with me one time!!!"

And, of course, he is a Democrat:

> He was also apparently reprimanded for **wearing a sticker supporting President Barack Obama** while reporting on the 2012 US presidential election.

And his Twitter feed confirms his frustration with the lack of punishment for Alison's "racism":

Alison made "racist" comments, he says
I had to go to the UK mainstream media to get the full story – the US mainstream media isn't reporting a thing. Why?

PJ Media reports that ABC News still has not released the full text of his 23-page manifesto.

The same article mentions that CBS News is covering up his anti-white racist motives:

> A CBS report never mentioned the shooter's racial comments at all. The piece did tiptoe around the shooter's problems with race in two paragraphs, but never actually stated his race rhetoric seen in the explicit terms revealed in his manifesto.
>
> Then, a piece in the Chicago Tribune called the killer "off kilter" and "bizarre" but steered clear of fully reporting on his racist ideas.
>
> One reporter, The Washington Post's Dave Weigel, even took to Twitter to wring his hands over the reporting of Flanagan's racist manifesto, saying to Breitbart's John Nolte, "Do you worry at all that the 'race war' story does what the killer wanted?"
>
> To be sure, Weigel was far less worried about stirring racial strife when he wrote a Bloomberg piece dissecting the racial motives of Charleston killer Dylann Roof.

I wonder why the media is covering up for him? Could it be that they basically agree with his values and motives straight down the line?

By the way, you probably hadn't heard about this, but the driver of the Amtrak train was a gay rights activist, and he also felt that he was a victim of discrimination.

Excerpt:

> [Brandon] Bostian is a gay-rights activist who previously lived in San Francisco before moving to New York. In 2012, he was interviewed by the Midtown Gazette, which covers parts of Manhattan, during the campaign for marriage equality.

> He said: ‘It’s kind of insulting to have to beg people for my right to marry. I feel like we shouldn’t even have to have this fight.’

You probably had no idea. That’s how the mainstream media works.

Related posts

- Two Christian preachers brutally beaten at Seattle Gay Pride Festival
- Gay activist who vandalized Chick-Fil-A restaurant will not be charged
- Man who attacked Family Research Council pleads guilty to domestic terrorism charges
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council “hate group”
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- Hate crime: gay activists vandalize Mark Driscoll’s Mars Hill Church
- Human Rights Campaign leaks list of pro-marriage donors and their addresses
- Gay rights activists vandalize church for posting pro-marriage sign
- Brown University students attack pro-marriage sign at demonstration

Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy paper: gun control doesn't lower murder rate

August 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns provide effective self-defense against violent criminals

Doug Ross linked to this study published in the Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy.

He writes:

> The Harvard study attempts to answer the question of whether or not banning firearms would reduce murders and suicides. Researchers looked at crime data from several European countries and found that countries with **HIGHER** gun ownership often had **LOWER** murder rates.
>
> Russia, for example, enforces very strict gun control on its people, but its murder rate remains quite high. In fact, the murder rate in Russia is **four times higher** than in the "gun-ridden" United States, cites the study. "Homicide results suggest that where guns are scarce other weapons are substituted in killings." In other words, the elimination of guns does not eliminate murder, and in the case of gun-controlled Russia, murder rates are quite high.
>
> The study revealed several European countries with significant gun ownership, like Norway, Finland, Germany and France – had remarkably low murder rates. Contrast that with Luxembourg, "where handguns are totally banned and ownership of any kind of gun is minimal, had a murder rate **nine times higher** than Germany in 2002.
>
> The study found no evidence to suggest that the availability of guns contributes to higher murder rates anywhere in the world. "Of course, it may be speculated that murder rates around the world would be higher if guns were more available. But there is simply no evidence to support this."
>
> The authors also took a look at the effect of gun control laws in various U.S. states, gun ownership in rural and urban areas, and across racial lines. The long

> and short of it is that a small number of extremely active criminals with lengthy criminal records are responsible for the overwhelming super-majority of all gun crimes, and these criminals are psychopaths that ignore all laws.
>
> The study also cited a previous report that was unable to find a single gun control law implemented in the United States that is proven to have reduced violent crime.

This is not the first time that a study in a presitigious journal has challenged the liberal gun control narrative. People who oppose guns oppose them because of feelings. Guns are scary and guns are loud, they say. That's their reasoning. But if you actually look at the data, you'll find that guns do reduce crime rates.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at

> great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

If you still think that guns are somehow bad for reducing crime, why not check out a formal academic debate featuring 3 people on each side of the debate?

If you want to know why the Democrat parts of the United States have such high rates of violence, then you need to look at the enormously high out-of-wedlock birth rates in the Democrat parts of the United States. Democrats have no problem with having fatherless children, and they support paying people welfare in order to do it. No wonder they have a crime problem that's caused by the fatherlessness that is caused by their own values and policies. When Democrats stop paying single mothers money to have fatherless kids, then the crime rates in the Democrat parts of the United States will go down.

Quebec’s Bill 59 criminalizes speech or writings that hurt anyone’s feelings

August 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

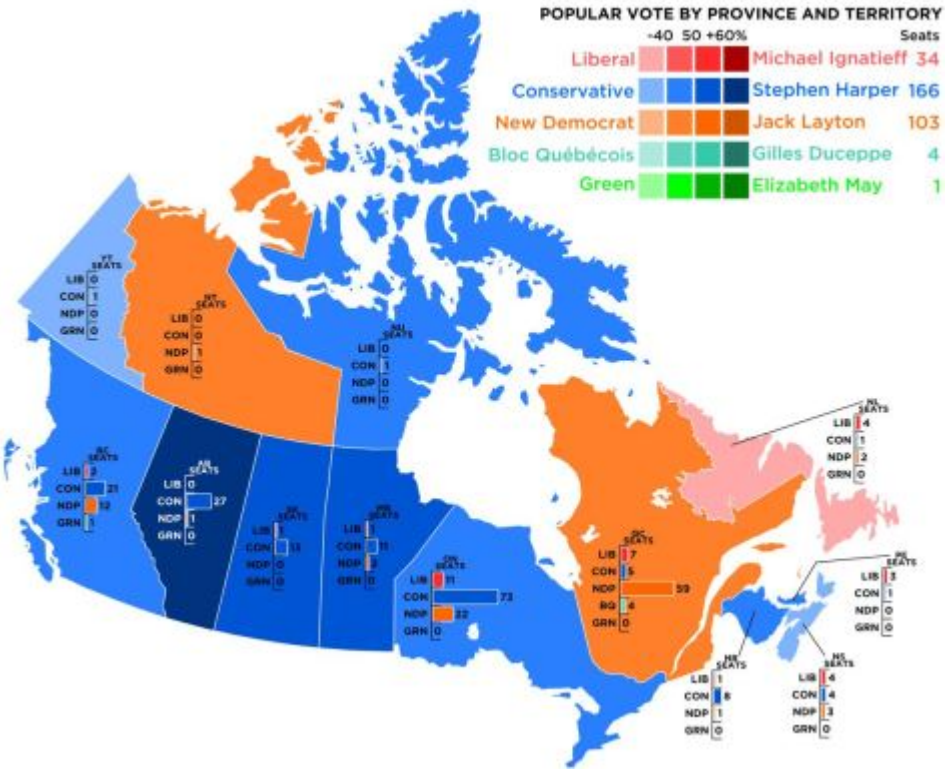

Canada federal election results 2011: Red = socialists, Blue = conservatives, Orange = English communists, Cyan = French communists, Green = Enviro-communists
(Note: in the image above, “QC” is the province of Quebec)

Here’s an article about the latest restrictions on free speech written by the editors of the centrist National Post, one of Canada’s two national newspapers.

Excerpt:

> In mid-June, when Quebecers’ thoughts were more attuned to summer plans than politics, Premier Philippe Couillard introduced two new bills in the National Assembly. One was long anticipated and non-controversial (in Quebec). The other was a bit of a bombshell.
>
> The first, Bill 62, would shore up “religious neutrality” in Quebec. Its principal provision, the proscription of face coverings in the public sector, is largely pointless but relatively mild, as curtailments on religious freedom go, compared to the broader ban on religious garb the Parti Québécois had contemplated.
>
> Bill 59, on which consultations are to start next week, is far more worrisome. Bill 59 assigns new powers to the Quebec Human Rights Commission (QHRC) to combat hate speech, as well as a variety of other provisions meant to protect against extremism, by censoring speech that promotes “fear of the other.” Ominously, the bill would allow the QHRC to pursue websites that in its

> estimation describe and denounce Islamism.
>
> […]The details of Bill 59 are chilling. Article 6 would "give the QHRC the power to initiate legal proceedings before the Quebec Human Rights Tribunal without having to wait for complaints from the public." Article 3 allows members of an identifiable group as well as people outside the group to make complaints triggering suits for hate speech before the Quebec Human Rights Tribunal.
>
> If this has a déjà vu quality to it, it should. Bill 59 would pave the same well-travelled road to suppression of speech and opinion that led, via the similar Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, to the infamous pursuit of journalists Mark Steyn and Ezra Levant by Muslim activists determined to stifle normative expressions of opinion. The public's disgust at such bureaucratic despotism happily led to its repeal at the federal level.

A Toronto Sun article talks about the driving force behind Bill 59 – to criminalize speech that offends Muslims, in particular:

> In plainspeak, the new bill, if passed, would give the QHRC the authority to commence witch hunts on its own accord, on the broadest and flimsiest of excuses, and hold people guilty based on someone's – anyone's – say-so that statements or postings caused fear for their equality.
>
> If this sounds like an ultra-progressive attempt to shut up any person or shut down any website that radical Muslims find offensive, that's because it is exactly that.
>
> Time and again commission President Jacques Frémont has said he believes Islamophobia is one of the greatest human rights scourges in Canada.
>
> He is convinced all sorts of people, groups and governments have used the 9/11 attacks as a pretense to single out Muslims and abuse their basic human rights.
>
> Fremont has even admitted (boasted?) that if the Quebec National Assembly passes Bill 59, he and his human rights police intend to use the law to convict "people who would write against … the Islamic religion … on a website or on a Facebook page."
>
> According to an analysis conducted for the Canadian Bar Association, "the Québec bill goes further than similar provisions in other provinces, such as that which the Supreme Court upheld in Saskatchewan v. Whatcott."
>
> The Quebec legislation even mimics recommendations to censor the Internet brought to the United Nations by the organization representing the world's Muslim-majority nations.

Now, it's true that Quebec is the ultimate have-not province. It is the least intelligent, least religious, least moral province in Canada, and it only survives because it collects money from provinces where people still have morality and a work ethic. But that doesn't stop them from digging their pit lower and lower. They are the Greece / Scotland of

Canada.

If you happen to find yourself living in Canada, and you value free speech and freedom of conscience, for goodness sake, get out now and stay out. There is no free speech, religious freedom or freedom of conscience in Canada. There is no First Amendment in Canada. Anything you say that anyone finds offensive is liable to land you in front of a kangaroo court run by the secular left.

By the way, if you worry that things like that are coming to the United States, then you are right to be worried. The secular left is taking aim at religious freedom, and their champion is Barack Obama. Canada is just 10 years ahead of us. These things are coming here.

Study by UCLA neuroscientist Jeffrey Schwartz falsifies materialist determinism

August 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Here's a summary of the research of UCLA professor Jeffrey Schwartz, authored by William Dembski.

Excerpt:

> Schwartz provides a nonmaterialist interpretation of neuroscience and argues that this interpretation is more compelling than the standard materialist interpretation. He arrived at this position as a psychiatrist specializing in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). OCD sufferers recognize obsessive-compulsive thoughts and urges as separate from their intrinsic selves. For instance, after a few washings, the compulsive hand-washer realizes that his hands are clean and yet feels driven to keep washing them. It was reflection on this difference between the obvious truth (the hands are clean) and the irrational doubts (they might still be dirty) that prompted Schwartz to reassess the philosophical underpinnings of neuroscience.
>
> From brain scans, Schwartz found that certain regions in the brain of OCD patients (the caudate nucleus in particular) exhibited abnormal patterns of activity. By itself this finding is consistent with a materialist view of mind (if, as materialism requires, the brain enables the mind, then abnormal patterns of brain activity are likely to be correlated with dysfunctional mental states). Nonetheless, having found abnormal patterns of brain activity, Schwartz then had OCD patients engage in intensive mental effort through what he called relabeling, reattributing, refocusing, and revaluing (the 4 Rs). In the case of compulsive hand-washing, this involved a patient acknowledging that his hands were in fact clean (relabeling); attributing anxieties and doubts about his hands being dirty to a misfunctioning brain (reattributing); directing his thoughts and actions away from handwashing and toward productive ends (refocusing); and, lastly, understanding at a deep level the senselessness of OCD messages

> (revaluing).
>
> **Schwartz documents not only that patients who undertook this therapy experienced considerable relief from OCD symptoms, but also that their brain scans indicated a lasting realignment of brain-activity patterns.** Thus, without any intervention directly affecting their brains, OCD patients were able to reorganize their brains by intentionally modifying their thoughts and behaviors. The important point for Schwartz here is not simply that modified thoughts and behaviors permanently altered patterns of brain activity, but that such modifications resulted from, as he calls it, "mindful attention"-conscious and purposive thoughts or actions in which the agent adopts the stance of a detached observer.

So mind-brain interaction is not a one-way street. Everyone knows that you can alter your consciousness, beliefs, moods, sensations, etc. by changing your brain, e.g. – with drugs. But it turns out that you can also will to focus your thoughts on certain things in order to change your brain chemistry. So the causation is not just bottom-up, but also top-down.

Now mindfulness therapies – which are documented in the research papers published by Schwartz (like this one and this one and this one)- assume the existence of *free will*. Naturalists don't like these scientific publications because naturalists don't believe in free will, as the famous naturalist philosopher Alex Rosenberg explained in his debate with William Lane Craig.

This post from Uncommon Descent explains the naturalist conundrum.

Excerpt:

> The issue, for Schwartz, turns on whether or not there is such a thing as free will. The assumption of free will is critical to mindfulness therapies *for practical purposes*.
>
> Philosophies and religions have various opinions about ultimate free will. **The therapist must ask, is my patient capable of carrying out a program that requires that he choose to focus his attention on A and not B? In practice, this turns out to be true for many patients, which makes the therapy useful. There is neuroscience evidence for brain reorganization as a result, showing that it is not merely an imagined effect.**
>
> **Now, if someone wishes to claim, as many outspoken advocates of Darwinian evolution have, for example, that free will is impossible, the only thing that a mindfulness therapist can say is, go away. Either they are mistaken or the research results from mindfulness therapies are.**

By the way, if you like this topic, and want a resource to show your friends, be sure and get a hold of the debate on mind vs. brain between Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Michael Shermer.

130 left-wing fascist groups petition Obama to end religious liberty in America

August 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Christian Daily has the story.

> A group of 130 organizations sent a letter to President Obama asking for a review of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), worried that a 2007 Justice Department memo allows for federally funded religious organizations to discriminate in the hiring process.
>
> The letter requests President Obama to direct Attorney General Loretta Lynch to reevalute a 2007 memo from the Justice Department that interprets the Religious Freedom Restoration Act as allowing for faith-based groups to be exempt from nondiscrimination laws.
>
> "RFRA was intended to provide protection for free exercise rights… to federal laws that substantially burden religious exercise. RFRA was not intended to create blanket exemptions to laws that protect against discrimination," the organizations contend in the letter to Obama.
>
> […]However, Derek Gaubatz of the Federalist Society asserted in a 2011 article that the decision on whether to reverse the 2007 memo or not "will affect the ability of faith-based providers who engage in religious hiring preferences to compete with secular and other faith-based organizations for federal social service grants."
>
> […]The Religious Freedom Restoration Act is a federal law that ensures the protection of religious freedom and had been enacted in 1993.

That story is also being reported in the mainstream media, e.g. – the Washington Post.

BuzzFeed has the full text of the letter and the list of organizations who signed it.

If Obama chooses to act on the letter, it would be a federal level fix which would expose Christians in the entire country to lawsuits of the kinds we are seeing in “non-discrimination” states, where Christian florists, bakers, photographers, etc. are being dragged before tribunals, forced to pay huge fines, forced into sensitivity training, and forced to celebrate things that are against their religious liberty and conscience.

Once again, here are the states where anti-Christian bigotry is legal:

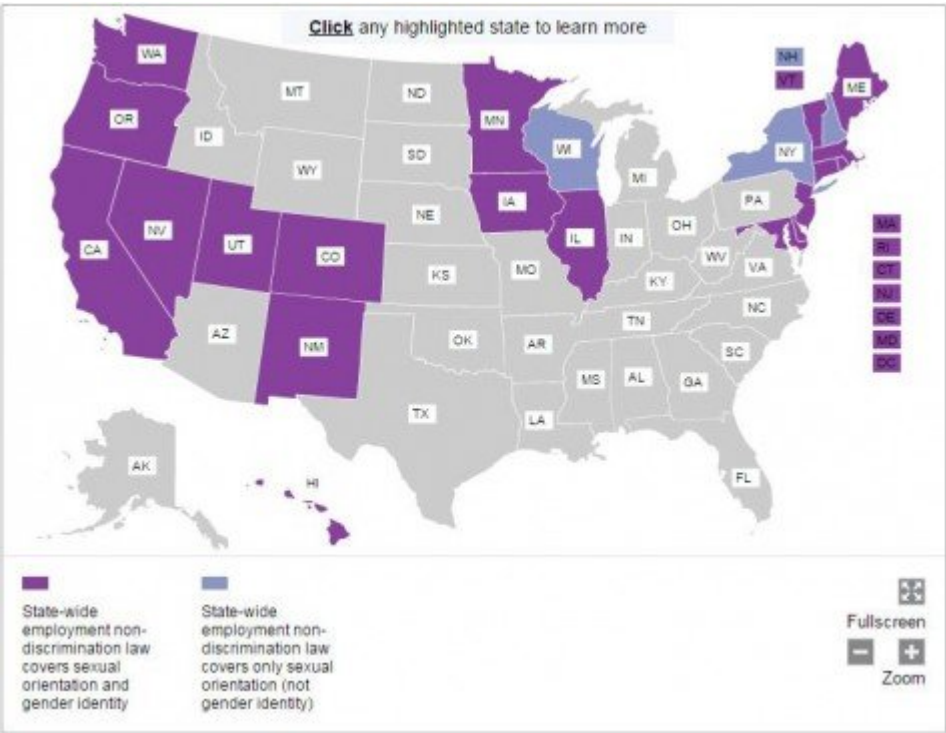

States with non-discrimination laws, which allow Christians to be put on trial

The 130 groups are going for a federal 50-state implementation of these laws. The Democrats have actually already introduced the “Equality Act”, which I wrote about before. This bill would achieve this goal, so the letter is really to get Obama to push for that and sign it. That goes to show you how the secular left feels about tolerance and diversity, by the way. They want to push their views and values on others, using the government, in all 50 states.

One of the groups, the Human Rights Campaign, had previously got caught trying to squelch the free speech of pro-marriage activists.

From the Daily Signal in June 2014.

Excerpt:

> Two years after activists for same-sex marriage obtained the confidential tax return and donor list of a national group opposed to redefining marriage, the Internal Revenue Service has admitted wrongdoing and agreed to settle the resulting lawsuit.
>
> The Daily Signal has learned that, under a consent judgment today, the IRS agreed to pay $50,000 in damages to the National Organization for Marriage as a result of the unlawful release of the confidential information to a gay rights

> group, the Human Rights Campaign, that is NOM's chief political rival.
>
> "Congress made the disclosure of confidential tax return information a serious matter for a reason," NOM Chairman John D. Eastman told The Daily Signal. "We're delighted that the IRS has now been held accountable for the illegal disclosure of our list of major donors from our tax return."

The have the background to this story as well:

> In February 2012, the Human Rights Campaign posted on its web site NOM's 2008 tax return and the names and contact information of the marriage group's major donors, including soon-to-be Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney. That information then was published by the Huffington Post and other liberal-leaning news sites.
>
> HRC's president at the time, Joe Solmonese, was tapped that same month as a national co-chairman of President Barack Obama's re-election campaign.
>
> […]HRC is among organizations and activists advocating same-sex marriage that routinely describe NOM as a "hate group" or "anti-gay" for making the case for preserving marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

The Human Rights Campaign is a group that had previously condemned the Family Research Council as a hate group. This is the same Family Research Council that was later attacked by a convicted domestic terrorist / gay activist. After the attack, the HRC continued to denounce the FRC as a hate group. This is the group that Obama hires out of.

Shouldn't there be criminal charges for whoever leaked the donor names to the gay activists? There should be, but…:

> Unauthorized disclosure of confidential tax information is a felony offense that can result in five years in prison, but the Department of Justice did not bring criminal charges.

The Department of Justice did not press charges because they are on the same team as the leakers.

New study: the majority (69%) of divorces are initiated by women

August 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this "I'll do what I want" attitude compatible with life-long married love?
This new report from Live Science gives us some numbers about who initiates divorces most frequently.

It says:

> Women are more likely than men to initiate divorce in the United States, but they are no more likely than men to initiate breakups in a dating relationship, a new study finds.
>
> "The breakups of nonmarital heterosexual relationships in the U.S. are quite gender-neutral and fairly egalitarian," study author Michael Rosenfeld, an associate professor of sociology at Stanford University, said in a statement. "This was a surprise because the only prior research that had been done on who wanted the breakup was research on marital divorces."
>
> Previous research had found that women are more likely to initiate divorce, at least in the United States, Europe and Australia. In the new study, Rosenfeld compared divorces to nonmarital breakups, in an effort to understand the driving forces behind each type of breakup.
>
> To investigate, he looked at data from the 2009 to 2015 waves of How Couples Meet and Stay Together, a nationally representative survey spearheaded by Rosenfeld and his colleagues. The new study includes 2,262 adults, ages 19 to 64, who reported having opposite-sex partners in 2009. By 2015, 371 of the participants had broken up or gotten divorced.

> Women initiated 69 percent of the 92 divorces, Rosenfeld found. But there was no statistically significant difference between women and men when it came to nonmarital breakups, regardless of whether they were living together, he said.

So I am seeing a couple of problems in young, unmarried women that might explain this.

Feminism is bad

First, there is the feminism. Feminism was the driving force behind no-fault divorce. Today, young unmarried women are being taught to view marriage as stifling to their freedom. So if they do get married, they are often resolved that marriage should not affect their freedom in any way. That is just not the way marriage works, though – both spouses need to be equally ready to have their freedom infringed upon by things that HAVE TO GET DONE. Lots of things that have to get done will not be fun, thrilling or amusing – and that's why it's good to be prepared to do them before you marry.

My friend Dina says that she only knows one happily married couple from among her friends. The most frequent case she sees is wife is working in order to pay for big house, two cars, etc. and wife is denying husband sex, which makes him disengage from the marriage. A working wife tends to not be as responsive to the needs of husband and kids as a non-working wife, probably in part due to work stress. There is an epidemic of sex-withholding by women, and it causes men to disengage from marriage because they feel unloved. Although women tend to rebel against the idea that the man's bad behavior is their fault, and that there is a "contractual" nature to marriage, that is how marriage works. You cannot stay married, women, by just doing whatever you feel like, and NOT doing whatever you DON'T feel like. Men will disengage when their needs are not supplied, and that's no fault of theirs. It's your fault. Denying relationship obligations causes men to underperform.

Feminism is often linked closely to "independence". There is a lot of confusion over what the word independence means among young, unmarried women. A man uses that word to mean "lack of financial dependence on parents, the state, etc. because of good decisions in education, career and finances". But a woman means "not having to care about the needs of a man and the leadership of a man, or the needs of children while still getting what I want from men and children". That's not compatible with life-long married love.

Emotions are bad

Second, emotions. In my experience, young, unmarried women are less likely to have reasoned out their own life plan in a practical step-by-step manner. (Although, all the women I advise have, but they are exceptional) Instead, they tend to do whatever makes them feel good moment-by-moment without any realistic plan. Peer-approval and culture play a large part in determining their goals and what they do day-to-day – and these day-to-day choices do not lead to achieving their goals. "Live in the moment", they often tell me. If you try to talk to them about roles and responsibilities in a marriage, they will withdraw and rebel. But marriage is about each spouse doing his or her job, and feeling content about what the couple is building together. You can't make life-long married love

from emotional craziness and pursuing fun and thrills. You can't make *anything* out of emotional craziness and pursuing fun and thrills.

How to pick a woman who won't divorce you

Young men, I advise you to choose wives who have had to do things that they did not feel like doing. That can involve things like getting a STEM degree, getting a job in STEM, moving out of her parents' house, getting a "boring" job that helps her pay off her debts, keeping commitments when she doesn't feel like it, and caring for other people and even animals.

Basically, the more the woman has ground down any narcissism and hedonism she may have, by having to do nasty calculus and horrid lab work, the better. The more accustomed she is to constraints, responsibilities, expectations and obligations, the less likely it is that she'll divorce you for unhappiness. And all of this goes for men, as well. STEM degree, STEM job, save money, serve others, give to charity.

Marriage is not the time for people to be carried away by their emotions. It's an enterprise, and it works when both people are rational, practical, hard-working and self-controlled.

My editors

My friend Dina edited this post. She has a hilarious line she tells me whenever I ask her why some feminists think that I am so demanding. She says "You are demanding, but nothing you ask me to do is as bad as what I had to do at work today". Her job is a billion times harder than mine. She has a BS and MS in a STEM discipline, and has been working full-time since she was 18. She owns her own car, her own home, and has loads of investments. Whatever I want from her (e.g. – play Orcs Must Die! 2 with me) is pretty minor. She is a tough girl, and that's what you want in a wife. Marriage is not happily ever after for the woman, it's actually a lot of work for her. Hard work before marriage prepares her for the responsibilities, expectations and obligations of marriage.

My friend Lindsay, who also has a STEM BS and MS and a resume, edited an early version of this post. She gave up her college teaching career to get married, have kids, and homeschool the kids. She sent me this story of a woman who abandoned her husband and 4 kids for a convicted rapist and serial killer. I think this story captures the radical feminism and emotional craziness that I am warning about in this post. Avoid women who run away from responsibilities and prefer men who meet their emotional needs without holding them accountable. Listen up, single women: you can't choose a bad man because he makes you feel good (by not demanding anything from you) and then expect him to perform husband and father duties. That's just causing your own divorce through your own poor choices.

Tactics: the worst mistake a Christian can make when doing apologetics

August 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian

worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important

for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it. I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a basket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within

his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent’s weakness.

Murder rates rising in U.S. cities as police respond to anti-cop rhetoric / violence

September 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rising Murder Rates in Big Cities

A sampling of cities where the number of murders so far this year is outpacing the same period last year.

	2014	2015	PERCENT CHANGE
Milwaukee	59	104	76 %
St. Louis	85	136	60
Baltimore	138	215	56
Washington	73	105	44
New Orleans	98	120	22
Chicago	244	294	20
Kansas City, Mo.	45	54	20
Dallas	71	83	17
New York	190	208	9
Philadelphia	165	171	4

Year-to-date time periods range from Aug. 11 to Aug. 31.

Source: City police departments

Crime rates in major cities, all Democrat-run

(Note: Chicago is one of the most anti-gun cities in the United States, if not the most anti-gun)

This is from the leftist New York Times, so I'll have to separate fact from fiction.

Here's some fact:

> Cities across the nation are seeing a startling rise in murders after years of declines, and few places have witnessed a shift as precipitous as this city. With the summer not yet over, 104 people have been killed this year — after 86 homicides in all of 2014.
>
> More than 30 other cities have also reported increases in violence from a year ago. In New Orleans, 120 people had been killed by late August, compared with 98 during the same period a year earlier. In Baltimore, homicides had hit 215, up from 138 at the same point in 2014. In Washington, the toll was 105, compared with 73 people a year ago. And in St. Louis, 136 people had been killed this year, a 60 percent rise from the 85 murders the city had by the same time last year.

Now, non-Americans might be tempted to think that America is filled with gun violence, but actually, the gun violence is relegated to the major cities, which are run by Democrats. And sometimes, like with Detroit, there has not been a Republican running things for years. Cities like Washington and Chicago have very, very anti-gun policies, so criminals understand that they can commit crimes with impunity – their victims are likely to be unarmed. The only thing standing between law-abiding citizens and crime are the police and the prisons. Unfortunately, liberals are opposed to both the police *and* the

prison system. They want to handicap the police by crying “racism” all the time, and they want to release criminals from the prisons. Bottom line: in cities run by Democrats, there is no deterrent.

President Obama has been particularly hard on police officers, claiming that their attempts to enforce the law are motivated by racism. And Obama’s supporters are getting the message.

Warning: Strong language here.

Let’s talk a look at some rhetoric from a radio show.

Breitbart News reports:

> One of the F***YoFlag organizers is called “Sunshine.” She has a radio blog show hosted from Texas called, “Sunshine’s F***ing Opinion Radio Show.”
>
> […]During the show, callers clearly call for “lynching” and “killing” of white people.

Callers:

> They conspired that if “cops started losing people,” then “there will be a state of emergency.”
>
> […]Another black man spoke up saying they needed to kill “cops that are killing us. The first black male said, “That will be the best method right there.”

So there are actually police officers getting killed. Here’s one story from Reuters:

> Houston-area officials on Saturday blamed the shooting death of a sheriff’s deputy on anti-police sentiment around the country over policing and race.
>
> […]Harris County deputy Darren Goforth, in uniform, was pumping gas into his patrol car on Friday night when the gunman approached from behind and fired several shots, sheriff’s officials said. No motive has been reported.
>
> […]”Our system of justice absolutely requires a law enforcement presence to protect our communities, so at any point where the rhetoric ramps up to the point where calculated cold-blooded assassination of police officers happen(s). This rhetoric has gotten out of control,” Hickman said.
>
> […]The suspect in video of the Goforth shooting appeared to be black. The deputy was white.
>
> Television stations showed footage provided by police, from a gas station surveillance video that caught the ambush of Goforth, a 10-year veteran of the sheriff’s department, who left behind a wife and two young children.

Now it’s important to note that in this Houston killing, we don’t have the clear motive yet that we had in the case of the two New York police officers who were murdered. In fact, the shooter here has a history of medical illness. Still, this event will have an affect on police.

What happens to police officers in the face of these murders, and in the face of this rhetoric, and in the face of these Democrat politicians like Obama and Holder blaming police for enforcing the law? Well, the police naturally start to wonder whether it's worth it to risk their lives so much.

In Alabama, one white police officer was so scared about being perceived as racist, that he let a black criminal take his gun and pistol whip him. The UK Daily Mail explains:

> Alabama police are outraged after photos of a detective beaten bloody by a suspect who stole his gun during a traffic stop were shared by witnesses and praised on social media.
>
> The suspect, 34-year-old Janard Cunningham, is charged with attempted murder for allegedly assaulting the six-year veteran following a traffic stop at a shopping center in Roebuck around 11am Friday.
>
> […]During the traffic stop, the detective pulled over Cunningham's SUV and told him to stay in the car while he waited for backup to arrive.
>
> Cunningham is said to have fled the scene after beating the officer until he didn't move anymore. A second suspect was released without any charges
>
> The suspect disobeyed that order, questioned why he had been stopped and then struck the officer in the head with his own weapon, AL.com reported.
>
> The beating reportedly continued until the officer was no longer moving, with Cunningham then fleeing the scene.
>
> […]After the arrest, photos of the bloodied detective began popping up on social media, with some commenters applauding what happened.
>
> Other Alabama officers were angered by the outpouring of support for the suspect.
>
> Birmingham police Sgt Heath Boackle, president of the Fraternal Order of Police, said: 'He was laying there lifeless and people were standing around taking pictures.
>
> 'If the tables were turned, and that was a suspect lying there, they would be rioting.'

So what does this all mean? Well, to me it means that I need to be very careful about where I am going to live, because I can't count on the police to come and rescue me as much as I could before. They are seeing what is happening, and they don't want to die for people who don't respect them. What is interesting is that the epidemic of black on black crime is going to get worse if police withdraw. And I think they should really think twice about stopping crimes in places where they are likely to get into trouble. Eventually, people will get the message. I would also say that now would be a good time to move to states that allow you to own firearms, and allow you to use them – i.e., states dominated by Republicans. The Democrat plan to control crime is this: you can't own guns, and the police need to be intimidated into not doing their jobs. And it doesn't help that Democrats

keep encouraging fatherlessness by paying women to have babies before they get married. Fatherless men commit more crimes.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott takes action to defund Planned Parenthood

September 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Governor Greg Abbott, a Republican

This story is from leftist ABC local news.

Excerpt:

> Gov. Greg Abbott launched a new set of proposals Friday to defund Planned Parenthood and pass restrictions on the collection of fetal tissue.
>
> […]On Friday, Gov. Abbott announced a new initiative in response under the acronym "LIFE."
>
> "Gruesome – and potentially illegal – harvesting of baby body parts by Planned Parenthood cannot be allowed in Texas," Abbott said in a statement accompanying the announcement. "Treating unborn children as commodities to be sold is an abomination. The barbaric practice of harvesting and selling baby body parts must end."
>
> The initiative states, "Laws must be changed to make it a felony under Texas law to perform a partial-birth abortion; and make it illegal for abortion doctors to risk a woman's health by altering the procedure to preserve fetal body parts."
>
> […]It further states, "Funding for Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers out of taxpayer money must be eliminated completely, both at the State and local levels." Public funding has already been cut off in Texas, where affiliates don't even participate in tissue donation.

> Finally, the governor proposes to “eliminate and criminalize any sale or transaction of fetal tissue by an abortion clinic for any purpose whatsoever,” which would restrict tissue collection largely to hospitals.

Texas is a red state, although they have lots of blue major cities with Democrat mayors – yuck.

Meanwhile, there’s more good news from Nebraska – another red state.

Here’s the story from the leftist Lincoln Journal Star.

Excerpt:

> Five state lawmakers already have approached Nebraska Right to Life this summer about sponsoring anti-abortion bills next year, according to Julie Schmit-Albin, the group’s executive director.
>
> “I’ve had more interest,” Schmit-Albin said last week.
>
> Among those is Bellevue Sen. Tommy Garrett’s planned measure to target so-called “dismemberment abortions,” a term used to describe a dilation and evacuation procedure that is standard practice in abortions beginning 12 weeks after conception.
>
> Schmit-Albin described so-called dismemberment abortion bans as “another chipping away” at the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade guaranteeing women the right to abortion.
>
> In 2010, Nebraska became the first state in the nation to ban most abortions beginning at 20 weeks. The change was based on the theory that by that point, a fetus has the capacity to feel pain. More than a dozen states have since passed similar bans.

Garrett is also a Republican.

LIfe News notes that Nebraska is not the first to propose a ban on dismemberment abortions:

> Earlier this year, Oklahoma became the second state in the nation to protect unborn children from dismemberment abortions that tear them apart limb from limb. Previous to that Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback signed similar legislation prohibiting dismemberment abortions in the state. Model legislation provided by National Right to Life is also under consideration in the legislatures of Missouri and South Carolina.

The Democrats would love to roll back all of these restrictions at the state and local level, but for now they don’t have control of the House and Senate to push their bill to do that through to Obama, who would undoubtedly sign such a bill.

How can we get single men and husbands to be interested in church and ministry?

September 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church is ineffective and impractical, and that's why men are bored there

Consider this passage from William Lane Craig's April 2013 newsletter, which made me very excited and happy. (H/T Triablogue)

Here it is:

> One overwhelming impression of these engagements is the way in which the intellectual defense of Christian faith attracts men. Both at Texas A&M and again at Miami every single student who got up to ask a question was a guy! I wondered if the girls are just shy. But then I remembered a lengthy clip Jan and I watched of cast members of Downton Abbey doing a Q&A with an audience in New York. Almost every person who came to the microphone at that event was a woman! It wasn't until late into the evening that a man finally asked a question, which was remarked by all the cast members. Why the difference between that session and the ones I experienced?—simply because the Downton Abbey program is highly relational, which is more appealing to women, whereas my talks were principally intellectually oriented, which is more appealing to men.
>
> Churches have difficulty attracting men, and the church is becoming increasingly feminized. I believe that apologetics is a key to attracting large numbers of men (as well as women) to church and to Christ. By presenting rational arguments and historical evidences for the truth of the Gospel, by appealing to the mind as well as the heart, we can bring a great influx of men into the Kingdom. I'm so pleased that the church in Canada seems to be awakening to this challenge! I'm convinced that we have the opportunity to revolutionize Western Christianity by

> reclaiming our intellectual heritage.

Now, I hear a lot of complaints from women in the church and pastors in the church about men not being interested in going to church. I think that the problem is that church is hostile to men's natures. Men thrive on conflict and competition. Men prefer strict rules and moral judgments. Men prefer to shame people who underperform, rather than coddle them. Men are practical and results focused. So how should the church accommodate the different nature that men have? Apologetics is one way to appeal to the male nature.

Let's take a look at it.

Pastors: church as it is now is abrasive to men's male nature

In William Lane Craig's most recent podcast, at time 8:47, the WLC tells Kevin Harris about how he and his wife Jan asked about six of the young men who attend his "Defenders" apologetics class which morning service they attended: traditional or contemporary. ALL of the young men said that they attended neither service, because they go to church to learn something and the service has no educational value to them. The only attend the Defenders class. The apologetics class taught them things they could actually use – things they could actually use to think better, and fight better. This is my experience as well, although I am looking for a better church that does have some appeal to men. I might even have to move to find a decent church that has apologetics.

There is absolutely nothing going on in most churches that is valuable to a man. Men, by and large, only pray as a last resort, after we have done everything we can to solve the problem ourselves. We pay the most attention to the parts of the Bible that help us debate with non-Christians, or that give us things to do. We like to find evidence in the real world that connects with what the Bible is saying. We are interested in planning, execution and results. We are not very interested in feelings, singing, devotions, or bending the rules to make people doing bad things feel good. Now that's not necessarily true for all men, but it is true for the majority of men.

And lest some people worry that fighting makes enemies, it doesn't. Fighting with non-Christians has two effects: 1) they respect Christianity more, and 2) they want to be your friends and talk to you about spiritual things. I just got an e-mail from Captain Capitalism this week (he is a non-Christian) expressing some interest in what it is that I am doing as a Christian. He reads the posts where I take on atheism, they don't make him respect me less as a Christian at all. He thinks that standing up for what you believe in and living consistently with it makes you *authentic*. That is not the exception, Christian women and pastors – *that is the rule*. Atheists don't think that standing up for what you believe in makes Christianity look *fake,* they think it makes Christianity look *authentic.* Well, at least the ones who you want to talk to think that.

Wives: don't choose men who had no interest in advocating for Christianity before you married them

A related problem I see is the problem of wives marrying the wrong men then complaining that the men they freely chose to marry are not interested in church. This is actually the woman's fault. Most women don't think about what is best for God when they

think about who to marry and have children with, they think about what makes them feel good. They don't have any kind of plan where they match the man's ability to the roles he will play as husband and father – they just pick who makes them feel good. This works about as well as buying and selling stocks based on which make you feel good, or choosing electronics and computers based on the color, or choosing a job or a church based on what the building looks like. The Bible lays out a few minimal requirements for a man: chastity, self-sacrificial love, providing for family, leading on moral and spiritual issues. Most young, unmarried women don't value those things. If a woman picks a man who doesn't make any demands on them, and who doesn't judge them, then she cannot depend on him to show spiritual and moral leadership later on in the marriage. So don't pick a man like that.

Wives: men respond to attention, recognition and approval from women

The reason that most husbands don't engage in Christianity is because most wives (not my married friends of course) haven't approached Christianity as something that is objectively true. Men don't create illusions for themselves in order to feel better – they are more practical than that. Men only invest in things that they think are true, and where they can see that their practical efforts will make a difference. Men are turned off by the view that Christianity is just something that helps families and communities bond, and makes people feel comfort. We think that's weakness, and we abhor weakness. Once men get the idea that a woman thinks of Christianity as feelings-fulfillment, we stop trying to achieve anything for the Kingdom of God. Men don't want to be roped into Christianity if all it means is helping people get along and feel good. But they very much want to be roped into a demanding relationship with God where their efforts to achieve results count with God *and* gets them recognition and approval from their wives.

So how do wives learn to recognize and approve of what men do as Christians? Well, women need to learn apologetics and they need to practice debating with non-Christians. That will teach them to value conflict and competition, and to see how engagement and authenticity drives relationships with non-Christians forward. If women show an interest in objective truth, moral goodness and theological correctness, then men will become interested in these things, too. They will do it because men are addicted to pleasing women, and they want to help women more than anything in the world, second only to pleasing God. Men will enthusiastically engage in whatever will get them praise and recognition from women, and that means that women have to care about Christianity beyond their personal emotional experience of it and beyond their social cohesion experience of it. Initially, wives must be ready to praise and encourage their husbands, and then once the husbands get it, then they will be self-motivated and move out on their own. It will be self-sustaining.

Ninth Planned Parenthood video: organ harvester frets over destruction of livers

September 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Here's the video:

Anika Smith writes about the video for The Stream.

She says:

> The latest Planned Parenthood sting video introduces us to a new player in the baby body parts industry: Advanced Bioscience Resources, Inc. (ABR), a small company that has trafficked human tissue from Planned Parenthood longer than any other entity.
>
> The most damning testimony in the video comes from Perrin Larton, the Procurement Manager at ABR, who describes ABR's fetal tissue harvesting practice to a prospective buyer. "I literally have had women come in and they'll go in the O.R. and they're back out in 3 minutes, and I'm going, 'What's going on?' Oh yeah, the fetus was already in the vaginal canal whenever we put her in the stirrups, it just fell out," she says, wide-eyed.
>
> **"Whenever we have a smooth portion of liver, we think that's good!" says Larton. She tells stories with gruesome images of doctors pulling babies out "by the abdomen" and tearing up their chests and stomachs, which is distressing to her because they're damaging that liver that she needs. "It really pisses me off."**
>
> Larton says she regularly gets specimens as late as 21, 20 weeks, and that 18–22 weeks is a workable range for the tissues the buyers want to procure.

According to the radically leftist New York Times, babies that get treatment can survive

outside the womb at 22 weeks.

Related posts

- Obama administration retaliates against Kansas for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Eighth Planned Parenthood video: StemExpress working with nearly 100 abortion clinics
- Democrats launch investigation of pro-life group that filmed Planned Parenthood videos
- Seventh Planned Parenthood video: cutting through living baby's face to get intact brain
- Sixth Planned Parenthood video: baby parts taken and sold without mom's consent
- Does Planned Parenthood do mammograms? Is abortion only 3% of their services?
- Fifth video: Planned Parenthood selling intact 20-week baby cadavers for profit
- Democrats defeat Republican bill to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood president visited White House 39 times since 2009
- Federal judge blocks release of future sting videos of Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood executive admits abortion victim is a baby in fourth video
- Third video of Planned Parenthood doctors discussing organ harvesting
- Obama administration refuses FOIA requests about Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration will investigate whistleblowers who filmed Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood senior executive in second video: "I want a Lamborghini"
- Republicans in Congress will investigate Planned Parenthood's organ harvesting
- ABC, CBS, CNN, and MSNBC all ignore Planned Parenthood organ harvesting story
- Governor Bobby Jindal announces investigation of Planned Parenthood
- What does Hillary Clinton think of Planned Parenthood selling unborn baby parts?
- With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013
- Planned Parenthood, an abortion business, is in California schools teaching sex education
- Arizona Planned Parenthood clinic failed to report rapist
- Planned Parenthood must pay $1.4 million in Medicaid fraud settlement
- Barack Obama to largest abortion provider Planned Parenthood: God Bless You
- Video: Planned Parenthood defends infanticide / post-birth abortion
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms
- 24-year old woman dies during abortion at Planned Parenthood clinic

New study: right-to-work laws do not lower wages

September 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama with some of his supporters from a labor union

I support right-to-work laws because I think people should be able to work without being forced to join a union and pay them union dues.

The study is discussed in the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Labor union activists often push back against right-to-work laws with the quip, "Right-to-work for less." Their claim that right-to-work lowers wages has made many state legislators hesitant to vote for the anti-union laws. But new research from the conservative Heritage Foundation counters the claim that right-to-work decreases wages.
>
> Right-to-work laws prohibit an employer from forcing employees to join a union or pay union dues.
>
> "When living costs are fully taken into account, private-sector workers in RTW states enjoy real wages equivalent to those in non-RTW states," Heritage Research Fellow James Sherk writes in an issue brief published Tuesday. "Policymakers considering RTW legislation may do so confident that it will have no negative impact on private-sector wages."
>
> A surface-level analysis may make it seem as if right-to-work leads to lower wages. States with right-to-work laws do have lower wages than non-right-to-work states, but right-to-work states also have lower costs of living. Virginia is the only right-to-work state with a higher cost of living than the national average.

> **After adjusting for differences in costs of living, private sector wages in right-to-work states and non-right-to-work states are virtually equal, according to Sherk's analysis.**

Here's the map of right-to-work states:

Right to work states (in red) as of March 2015

I don't really mind unions if they stay out of politics. My problem is when they get into politics and line themselves up with Democrats on issues like abortion and same-sex marriage. If the labor unions get involved in pushing for abortion and gay marriage, then it makes sense to pass these right to work laws. Every time a worker chooses not to join a union, it means that unions get less money to donate to Democrats at election time. Every little bit helps, and the workers can use the money better than any union executive can.

Angus Menuge’s ontological argument against naturalism

September 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Angus Menuge

(Note: this is NOT the ontological argument, which I do not use, and do not recommend. This is the ontological argument from reason, and it’s a good argument which I would use in a debate. If you’re not good at science, use the moral argument and this argument – you can do pretty well with them!)

Here’s some information about Dr. Menuge:

> Dr. Angus Menuge joined Concordia University Wisconsin in 1991. He earned his BA from the University of Warwick, England, and his MA and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he studied philosophy, computer science and psychology. Menuge’s dissertation was on the philosophy of action explanation, and his current research interests include philosophy of mind, philosophy of science and Christian apologetics.
>
> In 2003, Menuge earned a Diploma in Christian Apologetics from the International Academy of Apologetics, Evangelism and Human Rights, which meets each July in Strasbourg, France. His thesis, a critique of scientific materialism, went on to become the book *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).
>
> Menuge has also edited volumes on C. S. Lewis, Christ and culture and the vocation of scientist, and has written several Bible studies. He is currently working with Joel Heck (Concordia Texas) on a collection of essays defining Lutheran education for the 21st century, entitled *Learning at the Foot of the Cross* (Concordia University Press, forthcoming).
>
> A frequent speaker, Menuge has given presentations on Christianity and culture, science and vocation, philosophy of mind, C. S. Lewis, Intelligent Design and the

> case against scientific materialism. He is a member of the Evangelical Philosophical Society.

Dr. Menuge presented a paper at a recent Evangelical Philosophical Society conference for students and professors of philosophy, and you can download the paper here in Word format. (here's a PDF version I made). I got these straight from the source, and got permission to post them, too.

Here is the introduction to the paper that Dr. Menuge read at the EPS conference:

> The argument from reason is really a family of arguments to show that reasoning is incompatible with naturalism. Here, naturalism is understood as the idea that foundationally, there are only physical objects, properties and relations, and anything else reduces to, supervenes on, or emerges from that. For our purposes, one of the most important claims of naturalism is that all causation is passive, automatic, event causation (an earthquake automatically causes a tidal wave; the tidal wave responds passively): there are no agent causes, where something does not happen automatically but only because the agent exerts his active power by choosing to do it. The most famous version of the argument from reason is *epistemological*: if naturalism were true, we could not be justified in believing it. Today, I want to focus on the *ontological* argument from reason, which asserts that there cannot be reasoning in a naturalistic world, because reasoning requires libertarian free will, and this in turn requires a unified, enduring self with active power.
>
> The two most promising ways out of this argument are: (1) Compatibilism—even in a deterministic, naturalistic world, humans are capable of free acts of reason if their minds are responsive to rational causes; (2) Libertarian Naturalism—a self with libertarian free will emerges from the brain. I argue that neither of these moves works, and so, unless someone has a better idea, the ontological argument from reason stands.

The paper is 11 pages long, and it is awesome for those of you looking for some good discussion of one of the issues in the area of philosophy of mind. The thing you need to know about Dr. Menuge is that he is quite strong and forceful in his writing and presentation, and to me, that is an excellent thing for a scholar to be. Very direct, and very confrontational. You can even read an account of his debate with that radical atheist nutcase P.Z. Myers in 2008 here.

By the way, the epistemological argument from reason (P(R) on N & E is low) is the argument made by the famous Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga. I blogged about that argument before. It's good to know BOTH of these arguments. They both work, and they are both awesome. If you put these two arguments together with William Lane Craig's moral argument, that's three strong philosophical arguments that are easy to use, but backed by solid analytic philosophy.

Powerpoint slideshow

But there is more than just the paper! At the EPS apologetics conference, which is meant for lay people as well as scholars, he presented this Powerpoint slideshow, (here's a PDF version I made) . The slides are easier to understand than the paper, but the paper is not too bad.

And here is another article by Dr. Menuge on intelligent design.

Family of woman murdered by illegal immigrant sues sanctuary city

September 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is it time for justice for the victims of Democrat policies?
Investors Business Daily has some good news, something that makes me hopeful of the future.

Excerpt:

> The family of Kate Steinle, the young woman gunned down by an illegal alien in San Francisco, is suing the city and its enablers. How sad nothing's changed since her death, and lawsuits are all citizens have left.
>
> After enduring a round of crocodile tears and flapdoodle from city officials — and a noticeable silence from the White House — it was obvious to the family of Kathryn Steinle, the 32-year-old woman gunned down in broad daylight by a five-times-deported illegal, that the powers that be in the sanctuary city of San Francisco and in the federal government would try to ignore the death of their daughter.
>
> After all, the San Francisco and federal governments encouraged the non-enforcement of immigration laws and were banking on the public forgetting how illegal aliens are committing heinous crimes with impunity against Americans, shielded by sanctuary city policies.
>
> Business as usual could go on. Or so they hoped.

> Except that the Steinles have decided not to let this one go. On Tuesday, they filed a lawsuit against the city of San Francisco, its sheriff Ross Mirkarimi, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency and the Bureau of Land Management, whose insufficiently secured gun became the illegal's murder weapon.
>
> "We're frustrated," said Brad Steinle, the dead woman's brother, at a news conference on the steps of City Hall on Tuesday. "Because the system failed our sister. And at this point, nobody has taken responsibility, accountability. And nothing has changed."
>
> "We're here not only for Kate, we're here for every citizen of this country who comes to San Francisco," said her father, Jim Steinle. "If you think this can't happen to you, think again."
>
> He recalled how, strolling in broad daylight on a tourist pier in San Francisco last July, he watched as Juan Francisco Lopez Sanchez, with a long criminal career behind him, gunned his daughter down.
>
> The illegal later admitted to investigators that he was attracted to San Francisco for its sanctuary city policies.

So far, we have not seen a lot of progress in punishing Hillary Clinton for sending and receiving classified e-mails, and storing them on a thumb drive to give to her lawyer. We have not seen a lot of progress in investigating and de-funding Planned Parenthood for alleged criminal activities. We have not seen a lot of progress at punishing the IRS for persecuting conservative groups ahead of the 2012 election, in order to suppress their influence so that Obama could be re-elected. It sometimes seems impossible to hold the Democrats accountable for the harm they do with their delusional laws and policies. And the media successfully covers up the greed, corruption and destructive incompetence.

Until now.

This time, it's very clear that the Democrats are responsible for what happened to Kate Steinle. This criminal was released without informing the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. That refusal to follow the law cost Kate Steinle her life. And it showed the world the consequences of leftist ideology. The left is soft on illegal immigrants who commit crimes and/or take unfair advantage of social programs. The left is soft on crime – they would rather favor the criminal over the victim of the criminal. They don't like moral judgments. They don't like when people reap what they sow. They call evil good, and good evil, and they feel compassion when they fix the problems of evil people by taking away from what good people have earned.

So often, the public is deliberately deceived by the media about the effects of leftist policies. We won't see the consequences of Obama running up 10 trillion in new debt right away. We won't see the consequences to the crime rate for rewarding women who choose to create fatherless children. We don't see the consequences of redefining marriage on the next generation of taxpayers. We don't see the consequences of legalizing no-fault divorce right away. We don't see the effect on our social safety net

when we abort the next generation of taxpayers and create a demographic crisis. Liberals seem to be impossible to hold accountable. They just keep talking and talking about how generous they are with other people's money, and how compassionate they are to favor evildoers over innocent citizens.

But this time, the mask is off. Now we know the consequences of wanting to be generous with law-breakers. Now we realize that relaxing the rules in order to be "nice" actually does harm to innocent people. And if this lawsuit succeeds, and the Steinles get justice, maybe it will be the beginning of government becoming accountable to the people. The solution to bad government is holding the government leaders accountable for their mistakes right away. And I think the mistakes are going to become easier to spot as the money for welfare spending runs out, and people have to pay for their own poor decision-making.

New study: conservatives are more likely to be happily married than progressives

September 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

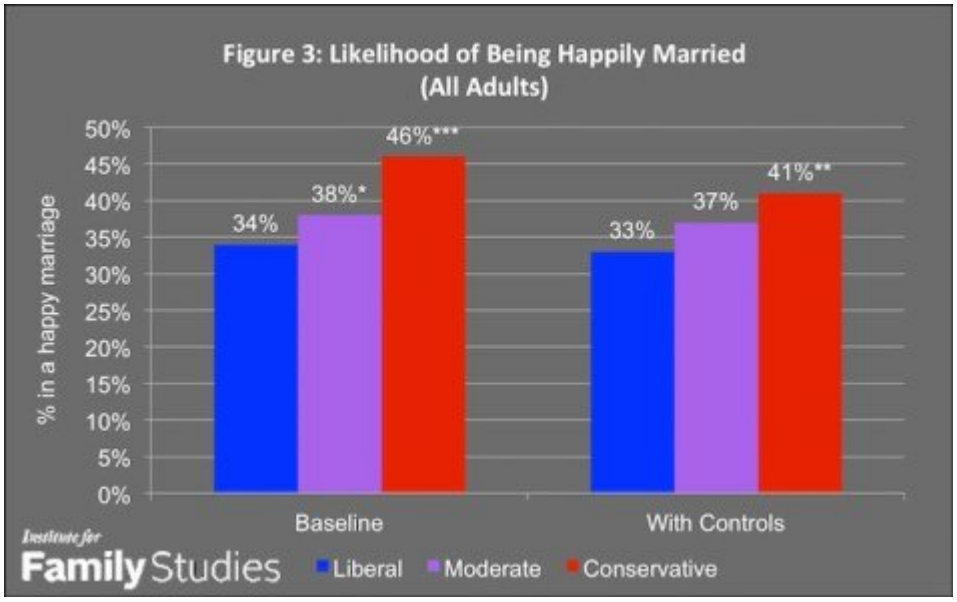

If you want a very happy marriage, don't be a progressive

New study from social science researchers W. Bradford Wilcox and Nicholas Wolfinger.

It's written up in The Federalist.

Excerpt:

> In the General Social Survey (GSS), one of the best barometers of American society, ideology is measured by asking respondents to rate their political attitudes on a liberal-conservative continuum (1 = extremely liberal, 7 = extremely conservative). We coded those men and women answering 1 to 3 as "liberal," those answering with a 4 as "moderate," and those answering 5 to 7 as "conservative."

> Figure 1 indicates that conservatives are significantly more likely to be married than are moderates and liberals. In fact, they are about 15 percentage points more likely to be married than their liberal fellow citizens. Moreover, this relationship remains strong after controlling for race or ethnicity, age, sex, and… income and education.
>
> […]Figure 3 examines the effects of political ideology on the chances of being in a very happy marriage among all Americans, not just those who are currently married, as Figure 2 depicted. Figure 3 shows that in the baseline model, conservatives are 12 percentage points more likely to be in happy marriages than are liberals. This gap persists, albeit to a diminished extent, after controlling for race or ethnicity, age, sex, income, and education. After adjusting for these differences between General Social Survey respondents, conservatives are about

> eight percentage points more likely than liberals to be in a happy marriage.

So basically, if you are a leftist, then you are much less likely to be happily married. And if you are a conservative, then you are much more likely to be happily married.

Why?

The answer lies in the design of marriage. Marriage is not about two people moving in together so that they can feel good about doing whatever they want to do. Marriage is a design that works best with a man and a women who are equipped at the worldview level with the capacity for resilient, self-sacrifice love.

Progressives are not equipped for the kind of self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice that marriage requires. They don't believe in God, generally, so they don't believe in objective morality. And if you don't believe in objective morality, then there is no foundation there for self-sacrificial love, and honoring moral obligations when it goes against your self-interest. Atheism as a worldview doesn't have the foundation for the kinds of behaviors that marriage entails. And that's why you see Peter Atkins, Richard Dawkins, Richard Carrier, Michael Shermer, etc. divorcing their wives. The atheist worldview and the atheist community do not enable the sort of character that is suited for the design of marriage.

In contrast, conservatives typically do have a rationally-grounded morality. They tend to believe in God, and so the rightness of following the moral law when it goes against their self-interest makes sense to them. They think that there is a design to marriage, and design for the flourishing of children. They are more likely to be able to compromise and solve problems in order to keep a commitment going. There is an "ought to do" there in the conservative worldview that is objective – it exists independent of their feelings. The obligations to override selfishness is there regardless of how unfair life seems – it is resilient to challenges.

One of the ways you can tell how serious someone is about their religion, and therefore their morality, is by looking at the person's church attendance. Church attendance is typically not as fun as other things you can do in life. So people who go are indicating that they put their relationship with God and their dedication to following the moral law *above their own self-interest*. So does that tendency help religious people to stay married?

Yes it does:

> Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there's been some confusion.
>
> "You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees," he said.
>
> **Wilcox's analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no**

> **religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.
>
> “There’s something about being a nominal ‘Christian’ that is linked to a lot of negative outcomes when it comes to family life,” Wilcox said.

So the bottom line is that marriage is a moral enterprise. It works better when each spouse has a worldview and a community that recognizes objective, prescriptive morality. And objective, prescriptive morality has no rational foundation in a non-theistic worldview. Progressives tend to be non-theists, so of course they are going to struggle with any enterprise that requires them to set aside their natural self-centeredness in order to honor moral obligations to another person.

Mark D. Linville: does Darwinian evolution make morality rational?

September 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Have you ever heard an atheist tell you that naturalistic evolution is an answer to the moral argument? I have. And I found a good reply to this challenge in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". The chapter that responds to the challenge is authored by Dr. Mark D. Linville. It is only 13 pages long. I have a link to the PDF at the bottom of this post.

First, a bit about the author:

> Blog: The Tavern at the End of the World
> Current positions:
>
> - PhD Research Fellow
> - Tutoring Fellow in Philosophy
>
> Education:
>
> - PhD in Philosophy with a minor in South Asian Studies and a specialization in Philosophy of Religion, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy of Religion, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
> - MA in Theology, Cincinnati Christian Seminary
> - BA in Biblical Studies, Florida Christian College

Here is his thesis of the essay:

> Darwin's account of the origins of human morality is at once elegant, ingenious, and, I shall argue, woefully inadequate. In particular, that account, on its

> standard interpretation, does not explain morality, but, rather, explains it away . We learn from Darwin not how there could be objective moral facts, but how we could have come to believe—perhaps erroneously—that there are.
>
> Further, the naturalist, who does not believe that there is such a personal being as God, is in principle committed to Darwinism, including a Darwinian account of the basic contours of human moral psychology. I'll use the term evolutionary naturalism to refer to this combination of naturalism and Darwinism. And so the naturalist is saddled with a view that explains morality away. Whatever reason we have for believing in moral facts is also a reason for thinking naturalism is false. I conclude the essay with a brief account of a theistic conception of morality, and argue that the theist is in a better position to affirm the objectivity of morality.

And here's a sample to get your attention:

> But even if we are assured that a "normal" person will be prompted by the social instincts and that those instincts are typically flanked and reinforced by a set of moral emotions, we still do not have a truly normative account of moral obligation. There is nothing in Darwin's own account to indicate that the ensuing sense of guilt—a guilty feeling—is indicative of actual moral guilt resulting from the violation of an objective moral law. The revenge taken by one's own conscience amounts to a sort of second-order propensity to feel a certain way given one's past relation to conflicting first-order propensities (e.g., the father's impulse to save his child versus his impulse to save himself). Unless we import normative considerations from some other source, it seems that, whether it is a first or second-order inclination,one's being prompted by it is more readily understood as a descriptive feature of one's own psychology than material for a normative assessment of one's behavior or character. And, assuming that there is anything to this observation, an ascent into even higher levels of propensities ("I feel guilty for not having felt guilty for not being remorseful over not obeying my social instincts…") introduces nothing of normative import. Suppose you encounter a man who neither feels the pull of social, paternal or familial instincts nor is in the least bit concerned over his apparent lack of conscience. What, from a strictly Darwinian perspective, can one say to him that is of any serious moral import? "You are not moved to action by the impulses that move most of us." Right. So?
>
> The problem afflicts contemporary construals of an evolutionary account of human morality. Consider Michael Shermer's explanation for the evolution of a moral sense—the "science of good and evil." He explains,
>
> By a moral sense, I mean a moral feeling or emotion generated by actions. For example, positive emotions such as righteousness and pride are experienced as the psychological feeling of doing "good." These moral emotions likely evolved out of behaviors that were reinforced as being good either for the individual or

> for the group.2
>
> Shermer goes on to compare such moral emotions to other emotions and sensations that are universally experienced, such as hunger and the sexual urge. He then addresses the question of moral motivation.
>
> In this evolutionary theory of morality, asking “Why should we be moral?” is like asking “Why should we be hungry?” or “Why should we be horny?” For that matter, we could ask, “Why should we be jealous?” or “Why should we fall in love?” The answer is that it is as much a part of human nature to be moral as it is to be hungry, horny, jealous, and in love.3
>
> Thus, according to Shermer, given an evolutionary account, such a question is simply a non-starter. Moral motivation is a given as it is wired in as one of our basic drives. Of course, one might point out that Shermer’s “moral emotions” often do need encouragement in a way that, say, “horniness,” does not. More importantly, Shermer apparently fails to notice that if asking “Why should I be moral?” is like asking, “Why should I be horny?” then asserting, “You ought to be moral” is like asserting, “You ought to be horny.” As goes the interrogative, so goes the imperative. But if the latter seems out of place, then, on Shermer’s view, so is the former.
>
> One might thus observe that if morality is anything at all, it is irreducibly normative in nature. But the Darwinian account winds up reducing morality to descriptive features of human psychology. Like the libido, either the moral sense is present and active or it is not. If it is, then we might expect one to behave accordingly. If not, why, then, as a famous blues man once put it, “the boogie woogie just ain’t in me.” And so the resulting “morality” is that in name only.
>
> **In light of such considerations, it is tempting to conclude with C. S. Lewis that, if the naturalist remembered his philosophy out of school, he would recognize that any claim to the effect that “I ought” is on a par with “I itch,” in that it is nothing more than a descriptive piece of autobiography with no essential reference to any actual obligations.**

When it comes to morality, we are not interested in mere descriptions of behavior. We want to know about prescriptions of behavior, and whether why we should care about following those prescriptions. We are interested in what grounds our sense of moral obligation in reality. What underwrites our sense of moral obligation? If it is just rooted in feelings, then why should we obey our moral sense when obeying it goes against out self-interest? Feelings are subjective things, and doing the right thing in a real objective state of affairs requires more than just feelings. There has to be a real objective state of affairs that makes it rational for us to do the right thing, even when the right thing is against our own self-interest. That’s what morality is – objective moral obligations *overriding* subjective feelings. I wouldn’t trust someone to be moral if it were just based on their feelings.

The PDF is right here for downloading, with the permission of the author.

Hillary Clinton supports jailing Christian clerk for dissenting from gay marriage

September 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

NBC News reports that a county clerk is now in jail for refusing to recognize gay marriage.

> A federal judge has ordered a Kentucky clerk to jail after she refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.
>
> Kim Davis, the Kentucky clerk who has turned away same-sex couples seeking marriage licenses, was found in contempt of court and taken into custody on Thursday.
>
> Davis, 49, was in federal district court to appear before a judge after refusing to issue licenses to gay and lesbian couples in Rowan County. Davis, an Apostolic Christian, has said doing so would "violate God's definition of marriage" and infringe on her personal religious beliefs.
>
> District Court Judge David Bunning said that she is bound by an oath of office to perform her duties under the law, and ordered her to jail.

Hillary Clinton tweets that Christians should be jailed for holding to the definition of marriage taught by Jesus:

Hillary Clinton tweets support for jailing Christians
Obviously, Clinton is as much a Christian as the atheist Obama: not Christian at all. And it turns out that all the talk of tolerance and diversity on the secular left was just lies.

Anti-marriage demonstrators cheer fascism

So the Christian woman is in jail. Here are some supporters of diversity and tolerance chanting their support for using the government to coerce someone against their religion and conscience:

They want to force us to agree with them, and our religious liberty is no defence to government coercion. Imagine this woman tried to run away from the police who were arresting her – what would happen then? This is the America we got for voting for the Democrats.

Some people who claim to be Christians actually think Jesus is a fool

You might think that jailing people for agreeing with Jesus would not be supported by many Christians, but actually, many people who claim to be Christian do disagree with Jesus on issues like marriage:

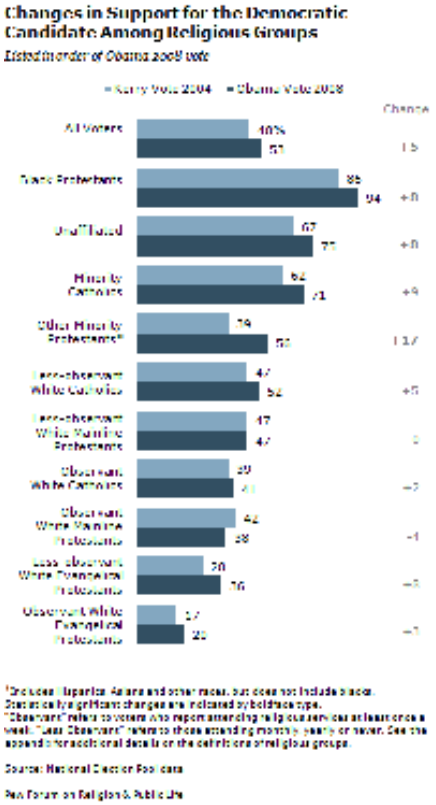

Which religions supported Obama most in 2008?
For some people, keeping the money coming from government is more important than actually following what the Bible teaches. That chart shows who is good at following the Bible and who is not.

What should she have done?

In this particular case the right course of action is civil disobedience until you are fired. It’s important to do this so that the public has a clear understanding of what is happening. If you substitute an example like Nazi Germany forcing a Christian in government to murder Jews, then you can see that there are some cases where Christans

have to refuse to do what the government wants them to do. Marriage is one of the cases where Christians should prefer to be fired rather than act against conscience.

Now, if you can get a conscientious objection that allows you to recuse yourself from duties that conflict with your duty to Christ, that is a good enough compromise. Because then you keep your influence in government (which is important!). But if there is no opt-out, then just let them fire you. I would say that you can resign, but in this case it's better to resist and let it become a news story. That way, in the next election, people will remember where the fascists stand on religious liberty. Maybe some of the fake Christians will actually vote the right way.

How to live your life in preparation for tyranny

I would suggest that Christians stop making bad decisions with their education and career. When things like this happen, it's important for you to have savings and skills, so you can find another job. In a very real sense, your ability to be a faithful Christian is going to hang on the decisions you make about school and work and spending vs saving your earnings. Jesus was not a person who pursued fun, thrills and travel for travel's sake. He did not go on adventures. I think it's time that we start to get serious about having an influence and making ourselves defensible against threats like this.

Right now, the fascists are running everything, and we seem to be disinterested in doing the degrees and careers necessary to have an influence. Some people like to think that God is speaking to them through their feelings, and telling them to have fun, go on adventures, and feel happy. But God is not your feelings. These threats are real. You need to start doing what actually solves the problem, instead of following your heart.

You want to plan your life out in a way that will allow you to defend against these threats and recover from losses. That means you don't get to do whatever you feel like. It means you study hard things, do hard work, pay off your debts, save and invest, and stop complaining that work is boring. Christianity is not about having fun.

Here are a couple more posts for you to read about this issue:

- The Federalist: Why the Left Hunts Kim Davis
- The Federalist: Kim Davis Uproar Shows That Breaking The Law Is Only Okay When Progressives Do It

Are young, unmarried women sincere about wanting to be married “some day”?

September 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This comment by Gaza on the Elusive Wapiti blog deserves a post of it’s own. The blog post is not online any more, but the commenter is talking about the video above.

He writes [in full]: (one part redacted)

> One thing that Helen seems to miss is how women value and prioritize marriage and what role this plays vis a vis the male corollary.
>
> The “story” isn’t just about men being “on strike” or even (to Helen’s credit) rationally choosing to delay and/or avoid; it must also include how women treat marriage WRT their own valuation and prioritization and life decisions (NOT merely stated desires).
>
> There are not swarms of 25 y/o female college-grads looking for a husband with no willing men within sight. There are, however, swarms of 25 y/o/ female college-grads looking to have fun, travel, chase dreams, build careers, and explore their options.
>
> I’ve “dated” a few of these women; most (and their social circles included) are so focused on the self-indulgence (“experience”) and the status associated with sexual conquest/power that any mention of marriage is usually as a joke (enter the “boyfriends/husbands are boring/stupid/lazy” meme); marriage is merely some distant thing to be acquired at some seemingly distant age.
>
> Sure, over time (cue: the wall), the distant thing becomes a stated desire, but the transition from stated-desire to behavioral change and actual prioritization often takes years. I meet women well into their 30’s who still can’t alter their behaviors to demonstrate congruence with their stated desires.
>
> But that is when we start to hear how important marriage is, how men are avoiding commitment, why men should value marriage. All bacon-wrapped in various shaming mechanisms. The women singing the “Man-up and marry me” tune are not the 25 y/o versions; they are too busy singing the “you go girl” showtunes, exactly as prescribed by the Sandberg, lean-in, [binge drinking, continuous alpha male hookups, alpha male cohabitation], [and later, jump off the carousel into a marriage to a beta provider that makes her perpetually feel that she married down compared to the alphas that she used to hookup with while drunk].

> So we can plainly see how something is valued based on the prioritization of one's choices. Most young women value marriage as an idea, as a capstone to her personal journey; an indicator of status and achievement but not as a goal in-of-itself and not as a life decision that supersedes the accumulation of personal experience, the flexing her sexual and relationship power, or the kindling her optionality.
>
> These women desire to "hang-out" with the most attractive men they can, under any number of relationship approximations while pursuing their personal journeys and then suddenly desire to elevate commitment and marriage as something paramount, right around the same time their ability to define and opt-in/out of those indulgent relationship approximations wanes. Hmm.
>
> After 10+ years of treating men and relationships as consumable commodities, marriage is now so valuable? So sacred that it will magically be more robust in the face of challenges, requiring more giving and less taking than those previous marital approximations, and yet because it is now a "Marriage", it won't be treated as merely a vehicle for the pursuit of her apparently perpetually fleeting "happiness"? Convince me.
>
> There is a false premise at work that assumes that it is men who are devaluing marriage. Sure, there is some truth to this, but woman are messaging their own valuation of marriage as well; in real-time, often in very overt means and often at the expense of men who are still clinging to some idealistic view of marriage.
>
> And likely those are the very men who are willing and able to be husbands at 25. The very same men who will grow to become self-sufficient 35 y/o men feeling their own blossoming optionality, harvesting their own "experiences" with the 25 y/o versions of the suddenly-marriage-minded women, while a decade of observational and experiential evidence of what women truly value buries what remains of their marital idealism.
>
> Tl:dr
> I'd consider marriage to a woman who has demonstrated through her choices, prioritization, sacrifice and delayed gratification that marriage is valuable to her and who can articulate how it would be valuable to me. [not holding breath]

What do you think? Is that something that you are seeing more of in the current generation of young, unmarried women? I have to confess, I see a lot of emphasis among Christian women on travel, missions trips and on careers, but not much planning on how to be prepared for marriage. In my experience, there is not much preparation work going on, and marriage is put off later and later. This is despite the fact that a woman's fertility declines starting at age 27 and is pretty much dead at 35. IVF is very expensive, but has

a higher risk of birth defects and and can often lead to too many embryos, some of which will then need to be aborted.

So, it's like there are two stages to a woman's life. From age 20-30, she wants to follow her heart. And all her friends, family and the culture urge her to do that. The result is that she makes herself unprepared for marriage by developing habits that are incompatible with marriage, e.g. – promiscuity, debt, selfishness, hedonism, frivolous divorce, abortion, single motherhood, etc. Then from age 30-40, the same friends and family who urged her to follow her heart turn to men and say "man up and marry her". What is disturbing is when the pious pastors – who had nothing to say to her when she was following her heart and dismissing the Bible's moral rules – now turn to men and make judgments and demands on them. Everyone views this as the man's problem to fix. They don't want to make her unhappy by confronting her with the consequences of her own choices, they just turn to the man and demand that he suck it up and make her life "work out".

But why would a man who has already fought through all the battles of life by himself want to knit his soul to a woman who hasn't practiced self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice in order to prepare herself to love him and raise children with her actions?

It would be nice if there were some wisdom being transferred from older, married women to young, unmarried women, but I don't see it happening. I get the impression that young, unmarried women think that marriage is "boring" and not the way to "make a difference", and so in practice, they are trying other things. They want to have adventures. It's unclear to me how having adventures turns into something that she can offer a man when she wants to get married. Where has the idea that women are men's helpers gone? Marriage is about both spouses taking responsibility, being comfortable with expectations, and performing obligations regardless of feelings.

Remember, the offer that a woman such as Gaza describes to a man is not the same as the offer of marriage that was made by 20-year-old women in the 1950s.

Marriage no longer means:

> - Being the legally and socially recognized head of the household.
> - An expectation of regular sex.
> - Legal rights to children.
> - Lifetime commitment.
> - That you are guaranteed a chaste bride on your wedding night.

Men liked the original version of marriage without the modern debasements. Should they feel obligated to settle for the new version of marriage which is influenced by radical feminism? I would have to be convinced.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

September 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism. (H/T Allen Hainline)

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining what was in the podcast. (I wish more people who put out podcasts would do that).

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an

> attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

Are gay relationships more stable than straight ones?

September 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

Let's look at this post from The Public Discourse and see if gay relationships are as stable, or even more stable, than straight ones.

Excerpt:

> The [NFSS] study found that the children who were raised by a gay or lesbian parent as little as 15 years ago were usually conceived within a heterosexual marriage, which then underwent divorce or separation, leaving the child with a single parent. That parent then had at least one same-sex romantic relationship, sometimes outside of the child's home, sometimes within it. To be more specific, among the respondents who said their mother had a same-sex romantic relationship, a minority, 23%, said they had spent at least three years living in the same household with both their mother and her romantic partner. Only 2 out of the 15,000 screened spent a span of 18 years with the same two mothers. Among those who said their father had had a same-sex relationship, 1.1% of children reported spending at least three years together with both men.
>
> This strongly suggests that the parents' same-sex relationships were often short-lived, a finding consistent with the broader research on elevated levels of instability among same-sex romantic partners. **For example, a recent 2012 study of same-sex couples in Great Britain finds that gay and lesbian cohabiting couples are more likely to separate than heterosexual couples.[3] A 2006 study of same sex marriages in Norway and Sweden**

> **found that "divorce risk levels are considerably higher in same-sex marriages"[4] such that Swedish lesbian couples are more than three times as likely to divorce as heterosexual couples, and Swedish gay couples are 1.35 times more likely to divorce (net of controls).** Timothy Biblarz and Judith Stacey, two of the most outspoken advocates for same-sex marriage in the U.S. academy, acknowledge that there is more instability among lesbian parents.[5]

This paper from the Family Research Council makes the same point:

> The 2003-2004 Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census surveyed the lifestyles of 7,862 homosexuals. Of those involved in a "current relationship," only 15 percent describe their current relationship as having lasted twelve years or longer, with five percent lasting more than twenty years.[4] While this "snapshot in time" is not an absolute predictor of the length of homosexual relationships, it does indicate that few homosexual relationships achieve the longevity common in marriages.
>
> In *The Sexual Organization of the City,* University of Chicago sociologist Edward Laumann argues that "typical gay city inhabitants spend most of their adult lives in 'transactional' relationships, or short-term commitments of less than six months."[5]
>
> A study of homosexual men in the Netherlands published in the journal *AIDS* found that the "duration of steady partnerships" was 1.5 years.[6]
>
> In his study of male homosexuality in *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, Pollak found that "few homosexual relationships last longer than two years, with many men reporting hundreds of lifetime partners."[7]
>
> In *Male and Female Homosexuality,* Saghir and Robins found that the average male homosexual live-in relationship lasts between two and three years.[8]

It's a Grindr lifestyle. And it's not a good environment for meeting the needs of children. (Example)

There is one study (Rosenfeld, 2014) that tries to argue against the conclusion of all these other studies, and the problems with it are discussed in this post.

The right way to think about gay marriage is to think about it as an extension of no-fault divorce. The same feminists and leftists who pushed for the legalization of no-fault divorce told us back then that the children would be fine, that children are resilient. No-fault divorce *was a change in the definition of marriage.* The leftists said that divorce would never become widespread, and that it would not harm children in any way. It was all a pack of lies. If the practices of the gay lifestyle become conflated with marriage, then marriage will come to denote relationships engaged in for "love" not children, such that unchastity, infidelity, increased domestic violence and frequent break-ups are incorporated back into the definition of marriage. Marriage is about permanence,

exclusivity and building an environment that can welcome children and supply for their needs. It’s not about government giving people respect for their romantic feelings. Those are volatile. What government ought to be rewarding is lifelong commitment.

What do men want from a marriage?

September 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A man leading a woman upward

Well, my friend Curby sent me this article from a very conservative Calvinist blog. It talks about one of the things that men want from a marriage. I thought I would post it here, and affirm its truth.

Excerpt:

> Men are created different than women. And man's priorities, deep in his very being, are very different from the woman's priorities.
>
> […]The family was created to be an institution, and that institution has a *purpose* and *function* in God's order for the things: to expand the dominion of God's people over the whole world (Gen. 1:27-28). The purpose and function were first given to the man, and he is supposed to be the chief carrier and executive of that function. And just as the woman was uniquely designed and gifted to discern and understand the issues of relationships, the man was uniquely designed and gifted to fulfill the purpose of taking dominion over the earth. **The father's and the husband's position of the man is not primarily focused on relationships – that's what he was given a wife for. That responsibility is given to man to ensure that his family fulfills its purpose in the plan of God in conquering the earth. Man's very being is *outward*-oriented, not inward-oriented. His interests would be in work and war, not in feelings and relationships.** While women also have their part in business (Prov. 31) and war (Judges 4), by creation ordinance it is man's realm and sphere of responsibility and authority.
>
> And therefore a church that preaches only relationships and no purpose, will tend to attract mostly women, not men. **And when the family is preached as mostly relationships but the purpose and the functions of the family are**

> **not preached, men influenced by that preaching won't be interested in having families.** That's just the created nature of things.

Men feel obligated to do something that is going to please God. And relationships and feelings are not the something they are trying to do:

> The Bible has little to say about a "relationship with Jesus." In fact, Jesus Himself speaks about a personal relationship between Him and His disciples only in two places, and He gives a very simple explanation of what a personal relationship with Him is: obedience to His will. In Matt. 12:46-50 He explains how one gets to be a member of Jesus's family: "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." And then again, in John 15:14, "You are My friends if you do what I command you." **There is no special theology of "personal relationship with Jesus" in the Bible; that personal relationship is very simple: do what He commands. It is not based on emotions or feelings. It is based on the self-conscious commitment to do what He commands.**
>
> But what He commands is given in the whole Bible. And it starts with the Dominion Mandate for man and his family to fill the earth, and subdue it. And this means that there is purpose and calling to man as a father and husband to work, fight, educate, care, build, lay foundations, protect, conquer, establish. **There is a purpose to man's life. And that purpose is matched by the inclination in the heart of man to do these things. A man's heart is thrilled by the possibility to work and conquer. And when the family is presented to him not as an institution of dominion – that is, an institution for work and conquering – but only as a place for "relationships," he won't get excited about it. He will leave the church and find another place to work and conquer.**

So let me say something about this, and please don't be offended. My views do go against the popular view of marriage today.

If I were to get married it would be to a woman who understood that my purpose in working from age 20 to age 60 is not primarily to provide a her with feelings and relationships and peer approval.

My purpose in marrying is to make the marriage promote the things that God likes, and oppose the things that God doesn't like.

In my case that means:

- impacting the university with apologetics and conservatism
- impacting the church with apologetics and conservatism
- impacting the public square to promote policies that enable Christian living
- producing as many effective, influential children as I can afford to raise

So if I were courting a woman interested in marrying me, then that would be my time to

persuade her that the areas I want to work on are important and suited to our skills. I would not be trying to put God on hold so that I could focus on giving her fun, thrills and happiness. Instead, I would be trying to convince her that we could do better for God as a pair than as two singles. And she would have the opportunity to listen to and improve our plans to serve God and decide whether to sign with me or not. No one is forcing her to marry me, she gets to choose if she thinks that my plan to make the marriage serve God is acceptable to her.

So, during the courting, we would look in the Bible together and then look at the culture and decide what areas needed our efforts and what would be the best way for us to impact those areas. But always with the goal of being effective on the things that God cares about. So, no expensive vacations to foreign countries every year just because she wants to travel, that money can be used to organize apologetics events. We have to agree that the purpose of the marriage is not to go have adventures abroad when there is a culture perishing right here at home.

That's what I mean when I say that men ought to lead in a marriage. I mean that men should have a plan for making the marriage serve God in a practical way. A man needs a wife in order to help him execute his plan to serve God, especially if the plan involves children and other relationships with people outside the home. I do think it is a good idea for a woman to get a degree and have some experience in the workplace before she marries, although she should stay home once children arrive. She should certainly make every effort to be debt free, moved out of her parents' house, and investing in a retirement fund. There should not be any fun-pursuing, or thrill-seeking going on unless the financial and professional situation is under control.

Now what shall I do if no woman accepts this idea that marriage is about negotiating a plan and then achieving it for God's benefit?

Well, that is fine with me. Although I budgeted for a stay-at-home wife and tuition for four PhD-credentialed children, if I cannot find such a woman, then I should take my earnings (after taxes) and spend them on Christian scholars instead. And I should use some of that money on blogging and other related activities that I can do myself. At least that way, I am going to get some sort of a return on my earnings for my client (God). So far, I've run into a lot of kickback from the single women I've approached because they want to sort of wing it, and make their feelings and their relationships the goal of the marriage. Very often, they consider their feelings God speaking to them. But what God is telling them is never good for God, and always for making themselves happy. But I want a wife who puts serving God above her feelings, and empowers me to serve him instead of trying to serve herself first and foremost.

Moreover, I would just add that any woman who accepts her husband's plan as her own, and develops the skills necessary to help him, is going to have more love than she can handle. The experience of being listened to, understood, respected and assisted by a woman produces lots of affection, devotion, protectiveness and desire from a man. Think of it this way. Very few people in this world care about what we are trying to do for God,

except potentially our wives, if we choose wisely. Right now, the environment is very much against the plans of Christian men. The experience of having a woman help a Christian man to execute his plan is Earth-shaking for him. After so many years of struggling to do everything himself for God, suddenly another human being comes along who can understand what he is trying to achieve and can freely choose help him to achieve the things he cares so much about. That is what a man really needs from a woman. Respect for his deepest aspiration – to serve God and to make his life count for the Kingdom. And when a woman gives a man that respect, she will have something much better than fun, thrills, and freedom from responsibilities and obligations. She will have love from a husband – love that lasts a lifetime.

Donald Trump should be running as a Democrat, he has no conservative views

September 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump should stick to Miss Universe pageants

I've been trying not to pay attention to the fact that a leftist is leading the Republican primary. You see, I'm actually familiar with Trump's previous positions on things like taxes (he's for raising them), partial-birth abortion, i.e. – infanticide (he supports it), amnesty (he's for that), government-run health care (he's for it)… and so on. In fact, Donald Trump's record is not conservative on a single issue. He has never advocated for conservative policies. Not one. He's a leftist, through and through.

What this 90-second video, showing Trump in his own words:

Leftist clowns like him do not change their positions short of some serious study, and there is *no evidence* that he has studied a thing.

Here's Jonah Goldberg writing in National Review to express how frustrating it is to people like me who prefer conservative candidates who have actual records of achievement on conservative issues.

Jonah says:

> Yes, I know Trump has declared himself pro-life. Good for him — and congratulations to the pro-life movement for making that the price of admission. But I'm at a total loss to understand why serious pro-lifers take him at his word. He's been all over the place on Planned Parenthood, and when asked who he'd like to put on the Supreme Court, he named his pro-choice-extremist sister.

Is that real? Yes, you can read about it here. Trump has no pro-life record. You cannot believe anything that a person running for office says during his campaign speeches. We already had that happen when Obama promised so many things in speeches that he never delivered on. And yet here we are in a GOP primary and a bunch of lazy Republican voters are just believing everything that a candidate says, and not looking at his actual

record.

More from Jonah:

> In his embarrassing interview with Hugh Hewitt last night, Trump revealed he knows less than most halfway-decent D.C. interns about foreign policy. Twitter lit up with responses about how it doesn't matter and how it was a gotcha interview. They think that Trump's claim that he'll just go find a Douglas MacArthur to fix the problem is *brilliant.* Well, I'm all in favor of finding a Douglas MacArthur, but if you don't know anything about foreign policy, the interview process will be a complete disaster. Yes, Reagan delegated. But he knew enough to know to whom to delegate.

Yeah, guess what? A clown like Donald Trump knows nothing about foreign policy. He could not tell the difference between Iran's Quds force and the Kurds in northern Iraq. I am only a software engineer, and even I have blogged about the Quds force, and their leader many, many times. I understand that lay people don't need to know about the Quds force, or the threat they pose to us, but presidential candidates do need to know. Trump's ignorance on national security and foreign policy ought to terrify us. We can't afford to elect someone completely unqualified.

More from Jonah:

> If you want a really good sense of the damage Donald Trump is doing to conservatism, consider the fact that for the last five years no issue has united the Right more than opposition to Obamacare. Opposition to socialized medicine in general has been a core tenet of American conservatism from Day One. Yet, when Republicans were told that Donald Trump favors single-payer health care, support for single-payer health care jumped from 16 percent to 44 percent.

I blogged before about the horrors of government-run health care in Canada and the UK. And yet the TV-watching clowns who support Trump cannot be bothered to look at the research. If Trump praises single-payer health care (and he has), does that one sentence from *a clown* override the good, solid data from studies? Are Republican voters too busy watching TV to do any research? Or do we just accept whatever a "confident" clown tells us without looking at the evidence for ourselves? Can facts be established by a clown's confident words?

You know, I really thought that we were electing the leader of the free world here. Someone who has a record of moving laws and policies that solve the actual problems we are facing: Iran nuclear weapons, loss of religious liberty, abortion, gay marriage, demographic crisis, $18.5 trillion dollar debt, record low labor force participation, aging ballistic missile submarine fleet, only 10 carrier strike groups, aggression from Iran, Russia and China, rising health care costs, rising tuition costs, poorly-educated young Americans who can't find work, aging Minuteman ICBMs, declining entrepreneurship because of over-regulation, Obamacare, Social Security funding, Medicare funding, welfare reform, Keystone pipeline, and on and on and on. I didn't realize that we were so

pleased with the last incompetent comedian we elected that we want to elect another one. Is this a serious country? Or do we think that presidential elections are for our amusement?

I really recommend that you take a look at this article from the leftist Washington Post, which looks over some of Trump's past words, past actions, and past affiliations. In it, you will find that Trump does not have any record of achievements as a Republican. He just hasn't moved the conservative ball forward in any way, shape or form.

Look:

> Abortion
> **Then:** On "Meet The Press" in 1999, Trump said he was "very pro-choice." "I hate the concept of abortion," he said. "I hate it. I hate everything it stands for. … but I just believe in choice."
> **Now:** In an interview with Bloomberg Politics in January, Trump said, "I'm pro-life and I have been pro-life." He said he believed there should be exceptions in cases of rape, incest or the life of the mother.
>
> Healthcare
> **Then:** In an interview with Larry King in 1999, Trump said he was "very liberal when it comes to health care" and that he believes in "universal healthcare."
> **Now:** During his announcement, he called Obamacare "a disaster called the big lie" and said the deductibles were so high they were "virtually useless."
>
> Hillary Clinton
> **Then:** Either Trump or his son donated to Clinton in 2002, 2005, 2006 and 2007, he invited her to his 2005 wedding in Florida, where she sat front row, and he's donated at least $100,000 to the Clinton Foundation. He also said in an appearance on the Howard Stern show in the mid-2000s that she was a fantastic senator.
> **Now:** On NBC on Wednesday, he called Clinton "the worst secretary of state in the history of our nation" and said she would be "a terrible president."

The Stream has an article talking about where candidates stand on de-funding of Planned Parenthood. All the Republican candidates who have addressed the issue are either clearly for de-funding Planned Parenthood (Cruz, Carson, Fiorina, etc.), or even better – *they've actually done it as governor* (e.g. – Jindal, Walker, Perry, Bush, etc.). Trump is the only one who has waffled on the issue, which is not surprising given his past statements on abortion. Republican voters – there is a huge difference between "I de-funded Planned Parenthood as governor" and clowning in front of cameras. When assessing candidates, we have to look at the past record of the candidates, not their words during a campaign.

Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less

September 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Buddy breathing

Note: I am re-posting a series of five Bible studies this week that I wrote last year. Every 2 PM post Monday to Friday this week will be a Bible study.

I have been getting into disagreements with the woman I am mentoring in apologetics, where she has been telling me that accurate assessments of my strengths are "proud" and that I need to be more humble. So I thought I would explain what I take humility to mean.

Here's something from J. I. Packer:

> "Being humble is not a matter of pretending to be worthless, but is a form of realism, not only regarding the real badness of one's sins and stupidities and the real depth of one's dependence on God's grace, **but also regarding the real range of one's abilities. Humble believers know what they can and cannot do. They note both their gifts and their limitations, and so are able to avoid both the unfaithfulness of letting their God-given powers lie fallow and the foolhardiness of biting off more than they can chew."**
>
> — J.I. Packer, "A Passion for Faithfulness: Wisdom From the Book of Nehemiah"

I think I can give an example here. Ever since I was young, I have wanted to do the PhD in computer science and become a Christian professor. I already have the BS and MS and I have been working in industry full-time for over 10 years. The money is there to do the PhD in computer science five times over, but I have not done it because I am not sure that I have what it takes to be a researcher. Sometimes people ask me what I studied and what I do for a living. I am accurate about my degrees, my resume and my savings, and what I am doing and can do with my resources. But I am also accurate in saying that

doing a PhD takes a whole different level of commitment and sacrifice. And I am humble enough to know that it is beyond me, at least at this time. I lack the support to do it. God hasn't given me a mentor or a wife. So I am humble about not "biting off more than I can chew". That is real humility. But trying to pretend I don't have any skills, haven't made any good decisions, or that I am lousy with money *is not humility.*

Here's her most favorite theologian, A. W. Tozer:

> **"The meek man is not a human mouse afflicted with a sense of his own inferiority. Rather he may be in his moral life as bold as a lion and as strong as Samson**; but he has stopped being fooled about himself. He has accepted God's estimate of his own life. He knows he is as weak and as helpless as God has declared him to be, **but paradoxically, he knows at the same time that he is of more importance than angels.** In himself, nothing; **in God, everything.** That is his motto. He knows well that the world will never see him as God sees him and he has stopped caring."
>
> — A. W. Tozer, "The Pursuit of God"

So let's talk about some cases where I feel I am humble, but my apologetics mentoree doesn't see it.

I know that there were things that I wanted, and things that I wanted to do in this life. Getting married early was one of them, and keeping chaste as my 20s passed by has been hard. I really wanted to be married by now and to have children and a home. If you are looking for some sort of evidence of humility in a person, that is a good place to look: how far has this person been willing to go along with God's purposes and rules, even when it meant not fulfilling their own needs and goals? Humility means not thinking of your own goals and needs. It means following the rules even when you know you aren't being fulfilled. Although I have the resources to just grab for happiness, I won't break God's rules to do it.

Let's get specific with that. There are lots of things that I would like to do for fun that cost money – like learning how to fly a plane, or buying an even faster car than I have now, or taking scuba diving lessons. For some people, it might be surfing, hang-gliding or skydiving. These entertainments cost money, but that money could just as easily be donated to a Ratio Christi event or a Faith Beyond Belief event. That's humility – putting God's needs above your own needs in stewardship of resources. Even though you have a right to be happy with what you earn, you can humble yourself and share and go without thrills and entertainment. I almost never spend money on entertainments. The argument "but you only live once, you have to experience this now" means nothing to me. I like to stay home.

Humility also comes into play when deciding what I should do with my life. I think all of us would like to be William Lane Craig or Stephen C. Meyer or Jay Richards or Michael Licona. Standing up on stage, smashing atheism into the floor with both hands. I would love to be that. To do that, though, I would have to go back to school and spend tens of

thousands of dollars on PhDs, and then write books and papers. That would eat up the savings that I need for a family. Then I could be famous and awesome, like my heroes. But I choose not to sacrifice tens of thousands of dollars on my dream, when my money and the money of other Christians who might support me could be better used for God's Kingdom by the more skilled scholars who already exist. Maybe there is someone getting a PhD in Biochemistry who I could help out instead, just by keeping my job and doing with a little less entertainment. Humility means being content with your part in the Kingdom, and not trying to be something you're not. Letting other people have the spotlight, while you just quietly help them from the shadows. It takes real faith in God to be that humble… to work in secret, and to depend *entirely* on Him for your accolades.

So how to be more humble? One good way is to sit down with someone you trust and confess things that you have done wrong, or things that you failed at. That's what I do with her, and it helps to remind me of my limitations. I try to confess my failures in achieving the things that I wanted to achieve all the time. I recommend that to everyone. It's not hard for me, I think a lot about my failures. The missed opportunities, the things I never got to do. Sometimes, you can have the best of intentions, and things just don't work out. It's good to confide in someone else when that happens. So if there is someone who you would like to be more humble, maybe the best thing to do is to ask them about their mistakes and regrets, and then just listen to them. That will work.

A possible reason why God permits suffering and evil: the soul-making theodicy

September 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Steve Hays has a post up at Triablogue about one my favorite defenses to the inductive problem of evil – the soul-making theodicy.

He writes:

> The soul-making theodicy was popularized by John Hick. In Augustinian anthropology, Adam and Eve were finished products. They fell from a state of moral perfection. Hick contrasted that with his own position, according to which Adam and Eve were created with the potential for moral growth. They were still in the process of creation. They had the potential for moral maturation. (Mind you, Hick denied the historicity of Adam and Eve.)
>
> There's some truth to this analysis, although it suffers from equivocation. To say unfallen Adam and Eve were morally "perfect" simply means they were sinless. It doesn't mean there was no room for moral improvement.
>
> Paradoxically, fallen humans can be both better and worse than unfallen humans. Inasmuch as they are sinners, they are worse. Yet Christians can have a moral grace that surpasses the mere sinlessness of Adam and Eve. Saints have virtues that angels lack.
>
> 3. Let's take an example: Suppose you have a family of five. Both parents are social climbers and overachievers. The husband is consumed with career advancement. The wife is a tiger mom. She makes sure the kids are enrolled in all the right student clubs and extracurricular activities that will look good on a college application. The two teenage sons and a daughter are into the usual things kids in their age-bracket are into. At dinner, each member of the family is

> glued to the display on their smart phone.
>
> The members of the family aren't Christian. Aren't into meaning-of-life questions. They lead superficial lives.
>
> One son starts to forget routine things. At first this is amusing. They think he's absent-minded. Distracted by too much multitasking. But he begins to complain about headaches.
>
> His parents take him to the doctor, and he's diagnosed with brain cancer. Suddenly their priorities come to a screeching halt.
>
> They now have a sick family member who will just get sicker. Their social world contracts. Their center of gravity shifts.
>
> Instead of being frivolous and self-absorbed, they make the most of the remaining time with their dying family member. The wrenching experience changes them. Deepens them. Makes them better people. Develops their unrealized moral potential.
>
> Perhaps, in their distress and despair, they turn to God. They regret the missed opportunities. Regret taking life for granted. Regret taking one another for granted. Regret all the things they should have said and done differently, in retrospect.
>
> That kind of regret can refine character. Moving forward, that prompts them to treat others with greater patience and understanding.
>
> This is hypothetical, but there are real life examples of Christians like Eric Liddell and Ernest Gordon who exhibit moral heroism in the face of extreme adversity.

The rest of the article considers some objections to this defense.

Have you ever had that happen to you? Where something terrible happened and you found yourself having to pray, and care for others, and drop all your plans, and be unselfish? It's happened to me. In fact, I think this is one of the main things that Christians should be doing. We ought to respond to setbacks as if they were opportunities for us to show our real character. Don't treat the needs and sufferings of others as something to avoid, treat it as your opportunity to be more like Jesus. I know that we all have dreams of things that we would like to do and achieve. But sometimes, an opportunity arises for us to imitate Jesus by being obedient with suffering, or by caring for the suffering of others by putting our own needs and desires second. It's tempting to think that our super-duper plan to change the world is the most important thing, but it really isn't. Don't miss the chance to form your character when you suffer, or when someone close to you is suffering.

I have to mention Dina, who has been busy visiting the elderly in a hospital for the last two weeks. She is a busy lady, and has things she would rather be doing. She hasn't done any cross-stitching in months, because she is so stressed with work. Nevertheless, she didn't take that as an excuse to put herself first. She found some people close to her who were suffering and thought "here is an opportunity for me to imitate Jesus by putting

myself second, and serving others first”. Evil and suffering gives you the opportunity to be who God wants you to be.

Intelligence review finds Hillary e-mails contain "highly classified information"

September 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does national security make?
This is from the radically leftist New York Times.

It says:

> A special intelligence review of two emails that Hillary Rodham Clinton received as secretary of state on her personal account — including one about North Korea's nuclear weapons program — has endorsed a finding by the inspector general for the intelligence agencies that **the emails contained highly classified information** when Mrs. Clinton received them, senior intelligence officials said.
>
> Mrs. Clinton's presidential campaign and the State Department disputed the inspector general's finding last month and questioned whether the emails had been overclassified by an arbitrary process. But the special review — by the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency — concluded that **the emails were "Top Secret,"** the highest classification of government intelligence, when they were sent to Mrs. Clinton in 2009 and 2011.
>
> On Monday, the Clinton campaign disagreed with the conclusion of the intelligence review and noted that agencies within the government often have different views of what should be considered classified.

So it's the Hillary Clinton campaign's word versus the words of the inspector general and the national security agencies. Well, Hillary would never lie to us about setting up a private e-mail server so that her e-mails would not be stored by her employer, would she?

But wait, there's news about this story. To be fair, it does strike me as suspicious that the person that she hired to run the secret private e-mail server is going to plead the fifth

when he has to testify, just like Lois Lerner did.

Investors Business Daily explains:

> The aide who set up Hillary Clinton's email server will reportedly **take the Fifth Amendment** rather than testify before Congress. Obviously, what he knows will hurt her.
>
> Bryan Pagliano was Clinton's director of information technology during her failed 2008 presidential run. After she became secretary of state in 2009, he followed her there.
>
> He's now known as the tech specialist who set up and maintained the Clinton server. Naturally, he has vital information Congress needs as it continues its probe.
>
> And just as naturally, he said he will invoke his Fifth Amendment right when called on to testify.
>
> While that's his constitutional right, we'd bet his testimony would be likelier to incriminate his former boss than him.

Oh. So, I guess that does kinda make it look like the inspector general and national security agencies might be telling the truth, and Hillary Clinton's campaign not telling the truth. Unexpected!

Learning about the importance of courage from the Bible

September 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: I am re-posting a series of five Bible studies this week that I wrote last year. Every 2 PM post Monday to Friday this week will be a Bible study.

Here are some of my favorite verses from the Bible on the topic of courage.

> "In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you…"
> (1 Pet 4:4)
>
> "But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled…"
> (1 Pet 3:14)

And a longer one:

> 1 This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed.
>
> 2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.
>
> 3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.
>
> 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.
>
> 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.
>
> (1 Cor 4:1-5)

Or this one:

> 12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.
>
> 13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.
>
> 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.
>
> (1 Cor 4:12-14)

Or this one:

> [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.
>
> [17] If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand.
>
> [18] But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."
>
> (Dan 3:16-18)

So often we have this very repressed view of Christianity as happiness, politeness and cleanliness. We don't want to offend anyone, or to be disliked by anyone, or to make anyone feel bad about not knowing God and not living in a way that respects him.

Here's John Piper explaining the importance of being "thick-skinned":

> One thing is for sure: if you begin to lead others you will be criticized. No one will be a significant spiritual leader if his aim is to please others and seek their approval. Paul said in Galatians 1:10, "Am I seeking the favor of men or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men I should not be a servant of Christ." Spiritual leaders do not seek the praises of men, they seek to please God. Dr. Carl Lundquist, former President of Bethel College and Seminary, said in his final report to the Baptist General Conference that there was hardly one of the 28 years in which he served the Conference that he was not actively opposed by many people.
>
> If criticism disables us, we will never make it as spiritual leaders. I don't mean that we must be the kind of people who don't feel hurt, but rather that we must not be wiped out by the hurt. We must be able to say with Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:8, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed." We will feel the criticism but we will not be incapacitated by it. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:16, "We do not lose heart."
>
> Leaders must be able to digest depression because they will eat plenty of it. There will be many days when the temptation is very strong to quit because of

> unappreciative people. Criticism is one of Satan's favorite weapons to try to get effective Christian leaders to throw in the towel.

And here is C.S. Lewis writing about courage:

> "Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means, at the point of highest reality. A chastity or honesty or mercy which yields to danger will be chaste or honest or merciful only on conditions. Pilate was merciful till it became risky."
>
> *– from "The Screwtape Letters" by C.S. Lewis*

In my life, I have had to say things like this: "I'm really sorry that you don't like me. I'm really sorry that my decision to honor God makes you uncomfortable. But I'm not going to change for you. I'm OK with being the underdog. I don't have to be happy right now. I don't need you to approve of what I am doing."

It makes me laugh that people think I care what they think of me just because I don't act against my conscience to approve of their sinning. I've thought through my views, and seen the evidence from peer-reviewed publications, and debated with people who disagree with me and I've won. I couldn't care less about their desire for me to approve their reckless, selfish behavior. I interpret their desire for approval as weakness and I scorn their weakness. If they were right, they wouldn't need my approval.

Every Christian comes to a point where the things we hoped that God would do for us do not happen, when our former allies fall away from us, when the people entrusted with caring for us failed in their obligations… at that point we have to decide what we are going to do with God. I think Psalm 27 is an excellent thing for people to read who are in that situation. It's my favorite Psalm – I used to read it when my life was very difficult. And if things got difficult again, that's where I'd go for comfort.

By the way, Christians should have an eye out for other Christians who are in distress while striving mightily for the Lord. Act self-sacrificially in a way that you strengthen their relationship with God in Christ. Make plans to support that person, and carry them out. Instead of reducing support for Christians to just private devotions, prayer and Bible reading, you ought to act to give them support that is calculated to solve the problem. That could involve the use of money, spending time, expending effort, resolving intellectual challenges, defeating a challenger in a discussion for them, writing them with advice… anything. Really, we need to stop turning inward when another Christian is in distress. Know what the Bible says first, pray second, then take action to solve the problem. Use your mind to think of what will get the job done. That is the goal, isn't it?

You may enjoy listening to this lecture entitled "Giants in the Land", by Dr. Walter Bradley. It talks about courage, and I would say that it is the lecture that best prepared me to not care what people would think of me. There's a Bible study in the lecture, so have your Bible ready.

Greg Koukl explains how to be a consistent moral relativist

September 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

The absolute easiest way to get into a good apologetics conversation with someone is to ask them what makes something right or wrong on their view.

Here's a paper by Greg Koukl from Stand to Reason, in which he critiques moral relativism. His paper is called "Seven Things You Can't Do as a Moral Relativist". First, let's see the list of seven things.

1. You can't make moral judgments about other people's moral choices
2. You can't complain about God allowing evil and suffering
3. You can't blame people or praise people for their moral choices
4. You can't claim that any situation is unfair or unjust
5. You can't improve your morality
6. You can't have meaningful discussions about morality
7. You can't promote the obligation to be tolerant

You'll have to read the paper to see how he argues for these, but I wanted to say a brief word about number 1.

> **Rule #1: Relativists Can't Accuse Others of Wrong-Doing**
>
> Relativism makes it impossible to criticize the behavior of others, because relativism ultimately denies that there is such a thing as wrong- doing. In other words, if you believe that morality is a matter of personal definition, then you can't ever again judge the actions of others. Relativists can't even object on moral grounds to racism. After all, what sense can be made of the judgment "apartheid is wrong" when spoken by someone who doesn't believe in right and

> wrong? What justification is there to intervene? Certainly not human rights, for there are no such things as rights. Relativism is the ultimate pro-choice position because it accepts every personal choice—even the choice to be racist.

In moral relativism, what you ought to do is totally up to you. Morality is just like a lunch buffet – you pick what you like based on your personal preferences.

I remember one particular discussion I had with a non-Christian co-worker. Both she and her live-in boyfriend were moral relativists. They were fighting because she was angry about his not having (or wanting) a job, and he was angry because when he asked her for space, she immediately ran out and cheated on him.

What's interesting is that both of these people chose the other in order to escape being judged themselves. I think this happens a lot in relationships today. Both people don't want to be judged by the other person, but they both want to the other person to treat them well and to honor moral obligations. Isn't that interesting? I don't think that you can have something like marriage work when neither person takes moral obligations to the other person seriously.

New study: social welfare programs encourage low-income Americans not to marry

September 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Does government provide incentives for people to NOT get married?

I don't think anyone disagrees that it's good for society if the next generation of young workers are raised in a home where their mothers and fathers are present in a stable, loving married home. And so, you would expect that no one would ever pay people money to not get married, and/or take away money from people who do get married. After all, if marriage is a good thing, why use money to discourage people from doing it?

Well, take a look at this article in the Wall Street Journal.

It says:

> When it comes to marriage, the U.S. tax code is roughly neutral: The number of people penalized for being married is roughly the same as the number who benefit from it.
>
> The same is not true for social welfare programs, such as Medicaid, food stamps or housing assistance, which can impose significant financial penalties on recipients who are married, according to new research from the R Street Institute, a Washington think tank.
>
> In some cases, that creates major disincentives for low-income couples—especially those who are already living together—to tie the knot.
>
> **"Historically, low-income couples have faced especially onerous marriage penalties, because most safety-net benefits are means-tested (with steep phase-out rates or even cliffs)" applied on those who are married, researchers Douglas J. Besharov and Neil Gilbert wrote.**

> **“Marriage could easily reduce or end the benefits of a single parent with children.”**
>
> The effects vary from state to state, and depend on the relationship between the couple living together, whether or not they have children, whether they share expenses and how much money they earn.
>
> In Arkansas, the state with the highest marriage penalties, if a nonparent marries a parent with two children and each adult earns $20,000, they would lose approximately $13,248 in benefits, or roughly a third of their total household income, according to the study.
>
> The effects also vary by program. In a paper released Tuesday, researchers at the Urban Institute found the additional-child tax credit and the earned-income tax credit had the largest effect on creating either marriage penalties or bonuses, depending on the state and how the earnings were divided among the couple.
>
> The penalties have become a growing issue in recent years as the size and coverage of means-tested welfare programs has swelled, and now includes more middle-income households. At the same time the stigma associated with living together out of wedlock has shrunk, leading to declining marriage rates.

The study’s authors claim:

> “The supposition that marriage penalties have an impact on decisions to marry gains credence from the simple fact that marriage rates are highest among higher-income groups that are less affected by them and for whom such penalties represent a smaller proportion of total income,” they wrote.

I think we want to guard against the situation where we are transferring money from people who do the right thing and get married to people who do the wrong thing and have children before they get married. It’s not good for anyone that single mothers do this. It’s not good for the children of single mothers, it’s not good for the single mothers, and it’s not good for the taxpayers who have to pay for these welfare programs. It’s not a good thing when a politician is generous at spending other people’s money.

Like it or not, taxes and welfare payments do communicate incentives to people… incentives that affect their decision-making. If we really care about kids getting the best environment to grow up in, then we ought to care that government does not tell people to not get married by how they tax and spend.

You can read this paper by Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to see why marriage is so good for children, when compared to a single mom on welfare.

Three ways that generosity makes sense in the Christian worldview

September 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: I am re-posting a series of five Bible studies this week that I wrote last year. Every 2 PM post Monday to Friday this week will be a Bible study.

First, let's look at a few passages from the Bible that show the importance of sharing generously with others. I also want to emphasize the need to work and to not be a burden to others, and to emphasize that the goal of sharing with others is to *build them up*.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-11: (Paul speaking)

10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

Acts 20:32-35: (Paul speaking)

32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

33 I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes.

34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me.

35 In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said,'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Philippians 4:14-18: (Paul speaking)

14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction.

15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

16 for even in Thessalonica you sent *a gift* more than once for my needs.

17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

Luke 21:1-4: (Jesus speaking)

1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury.

2 And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins.

3 And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all *of them*;

4 for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."

So in an effort to keep this post small, I'm going to be brief. And practical.

Make as much money as you can

The first point I want to make is that it is impossible to share with anyone else unless you have your own financial house in order. Don't borrow money. Don't ask for money. Study hard things (STEM and useful trades) so that you always have work and are always earning money. In the 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11 passage, we learn that able-bodied people need to be working. That is a practical pre-condition of sharing with others. The more money you make the more you have to share. If you want to advance the gospel and build up others, money is absolutely vital. Don't study crap subjects in school, don't take useless jobs, don't neglect the need to build a gapless resume of increasingly more challenging work, don't get tied down by worldly goods and recreational dating early – so you can finish your education as much as you can. Be practical – charitable giving doesn't come from nowhere. It comes from a person who is ordered and disciplined. Unless you are some sort of skilled Christian scholar, don't be flying all over the world willy-nilly on expensive mission trips, either – there is plenty of work to do right where God planted you. Be a good steward of your money, and the donations of other Christians.

Partnering with others for the gospel

The second point I want to contrast is the giving I prefer with the giving I do not prefer. The giving I prefer is to give to another Christian who I know personally who is involved in ministry that advances the gospel by arguing for the truth of the gospel using apologetics. So, I like to give to groups like Ratio Christi and to Christian scholars who have ministries or who are doing useful degrees. My goal is to spread the gospel in the only way it can be spread – by demonstrating the truth of it using arguments and evidence. I do not give money to anti-poverty groups like World Vision or to unskilled missionaries who just want an extended vacation in order to satisfy some childhood fancy animated by pride and/or vanity. When I give money to another Christian, my goal is to partner with them, not to feel good about myself. I am trying to get something done for the Lord, not to feel better or to make people think I am nice or to "balance the books" with God (which is heretical).

Building your rewards in Heaven

The third point I want to make is to emphasize that this is not a pointless exercise. Everyone who is a Christian accepts that reconciliation with God is achieved not by human efforts to be good, but by acknowledging and conforming your life to a free gift that was offered by Jesus Christ. Christ died in order to pay the penalty for every individual person's rebellion against God the Father. That atoning death is the basis for our reconciliation with God, and our eternal life with him. However, the passage in Philippians makes clear that our experience of Heaven after we have been saved by grace is affected by what we do here and now. So often, what you hear in church is do this, do that, and there is never any rationality to it, no emphasis on long-term planning

or wisdom in decision-making. It's all just ad hoc emotivism. But I am telling you something different today. You have a few years on Earth to understand the example of Christ, to follow him, and share in his sufferings as you imitate his obedience. You better have some sort of plan to produce a return on God's investment in you, and it has to be a good plan. Not one that makes you feel good, but one that is likely to achieve results. Plan your charitable giving like your life were an episode of Mission Impossible, and focus on outcomes, not feelings. That doesn't mean that results are the measure of success, because that's God's job. But it does mean that you should prefer the Thomas Sowell approach to the Disney Princess approach.

The soul-making theodicy

The fourth point I want to make is that one of the reasons why God allows evil and suffering in this world is to allow us the opportunity to be active partners with him in demonstrating the love of Christ to others. God's goal for us is *not* to make us safe and happy. God's goal for us is to get us to freely enter into and sustain a relationship with him – a relationship that includes an accurate knowledge of who he is, and a free response of love and obedience to him. With respect to that goal, God is fully justified in permitting all kinds of evil and suffering, which in turn provide opportunities for us to 1) enter in to his plan of love and redemption for others and 2) demonstrate his character to the watching world through our actions as his agents. The situation is identical to what parents do in allowing their children to be hurt while learning – God holds back from annihilating some evil and suffering so that we have an opportunity to step into the breach. This advances our relationships with him through shared purpose and shared experiences. This is *fellowship with God* – not just reading devotional, pious-sounding bilge, but active partnering and dangerous action in some non-trivial enterprise. Give him your best – the same best you bring to your work or anything else in your life that really matters.

J. Warner Wallace explains how to prepare young Christians for college

September 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a podcast from the master of evidence-gathering and case-making himself, J. Warner Wallace. In this episode, he tries to convince Christians to take the questions that young people ask seriously, and explains what is likely to happen to them in college.

The MP3 is here.

Topics:

- our nation is becoming more and more secular
- secularism makes it harder for us to defend our faith and values in public and influence the culture
- why is secularism happening? it's because young people are walking away from the faith
- young Christians are leaving the faith in high school and college
- this is where the real battleground is – and that's where apologists need to focus
- we need to be focused especially on junior high school and high school, and to a lesser degree college
- it's good that we have lots scholars working physics, philosophy and biology
- but what we really need is ordinary Christians to get serious about apologetics and work on young people
- some people believe that there is no great youth exodus problem: are they right to doubt the statistics
- it's undeniable that young people are inarticulate about their faith – that much is certain
- what young people in church actually believe is not Christianity, but moralistic therapeutic deism
- young people: life is about feeling good, being liked, and nice people of all religions are saved
- young people think that there is so little substance to Christianity that it can't even be discussed
- the focus among young people today is not on true beliefs, but on being kinds to others
- even in churches, there is higher respect for helping others than on having knowledge and evidence
- instead of focusing on the worldview that grounds good works, the focus is on good works
- young people have learned to minimize discussions about specifics of theology
- teachers and college professors are hostile to public expressions of evangelical Christianity

- television is also hostile and much less Christian than it used to be
- even if young people come back to the church, they come back for the wrong reasons
- the adults come back for tradition and comfort but they don't really believe Christianity is true
- they want to pick and choose what they believe based on what they like, like going to a buffet
- they return to church when they have kids so that their kids will absorb values – but not truth
- that's what we have sitting in the pews: people who think Christianity is false, but "useful"
- and that's why so many christians are so liberal on social values (abortion, same-sex marriage)
- they don't really accept the Bible as authoritative, they pick and choose what they like and don't like
- if Christianity is taught as "useful" then they will dump it when they find something more "useful"
- people who leave the church are exposed to Christianity, but it doesn't stick
- young people lose their faith before college, and then when they escape the nest, they act it out
- the disconnecting from the faith occurs in high school, but it only becomes public after they leave home
- young people are becoming more focused on redefining "the good life" with consumption and materialism
- the typical experience of young adults involves alcohol use, drug use, and recreational sex
- young people actually want more than niceness – they want real answers to serious questions
- young people have doubts and questions, but no one in the church or home is equipped to answer them
- adults have to be involved in the education of young people
- parents who are engaged in teaching their children Christian truths see much better retention rates
- we need to stop teaching people (one-way preaching) and start training them (two-way interactive)
- when you give a young person a definite goal – a fight with a date certain – then they will be engaged
- when people know that they will fail unless they can perform, then they will be more engaged in learning
- church needs to be in the business of scheduling battles, and then training young people for the battles
- there is no sense of urgency, risk and purpose in young people, so the teaching is not effective

I’m sure that you’ll enjoy this very practical podcast.

Ideas for higher education reform from a disillusioned professor

September 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We need to reform higher education

A friend of mine who is a full professor sent me this article from the radically leftist site Vox. I was so surprised to find that I agreed with the author – a university professor – pretty much across the board. See what you think of some of his points about how higher education needs to be reformed, and then I'll comment at the end.

He complains about the university bureacracy and the office politics, then says this:

> I realized not even students were too invested. When my best friend visited my campus to give a talk, he observed one of my lectures. I've got many shortcomings as an academic, but lecturing isn't one of them. I've been on TV, radio, podcasts — you name it. By professor standards, which admittedly aren't that high, I could rock the mic. But while my friend sat there, semi-engrossed in the lecture, he found himself increasingly distracted by the student in front of him. That student, who like all in-state students was paying $50 per lecture to hear me talk, was watching season one of Breaking Bad. In a class with no attendance grade, where the lectures were at least halfway decent, he was watching Breaking Bad.
>
> Later during that same visit, my friend asked me, in total sincerity, "Why aren't you doing something meaningful with your life?"
>
> "This is important," I insisted. But there was no passion behind my words. I was a priest who had lost his faith, performing the sacraments without any sense of their importance.

So why are there so many students who have no interest in university who nevertheless

attend in order to get the credential? After all, university is very expensive.

Here is his explanation:

> As recently as a year ago, I remained willing to work inside that fractured system of pay-to-play higher education. If students wanted to take out federal loans to buy degrees, who was I to stop them? Let the chips fall where they may; graduate them all and let the invisible hand sort them out.
>
> But that system is unsustainable. **Liberal arts programs, and the humanities in particular, have become a place to warehouse students seeking generic bachelor's degrees not out of any particular interest in the field, but in order to receive raises at work or improve their position in a crowded job market.**
>
> **Once upon a time, in a postwar America starved for middle managers who could file TPS reports, relying on the BA as an assurance of quality, proof of the ability to follow orders and complete tasks, made perfect sense. But in today's world of service workers and coders and freelancers struggling to brand themselves, wasting four years sitting in classes like mine makes no economic sense for the country or for the students — particularly when they're borrowing money to do so.**

See, this is not going to make any sense to my readers who have STEM degrees or vocational training. When STEM or vocational training students are in class, we learn, because we expect to have to do the job shortly after. We were not preparing for easy "talking" jobs, we were preparing for "doing" jobs. We were there to learn how to *do something for money*, not to have fun. We were there to learn how to produce value for customers, not to be indoctrinated by liberal professors holding red marking pens. Many liberal arts students are not there to learn to do a job, they are there to get a credential. In fact, many of the graduates of liberal arts programs these days have to be retrained by their employers.

The author of the Vox article has a solution:

> Our federally backed approach to subsidizing higher education through low-interest loans has created perverse incentives with disastrous consequences. This system must be reformed.
>
> When I started out, I believed that government regulation could solve every problem with relatively simple intervention. But after four years of wading though this morass, I'm convinced these solutions should be reevaluated constantly. If they're not achieving their objectives, or if they're producing too much waste in the process, they ought to be scrapped. We can start with federal funding for higher education.
>
> **The quickest and most painful solution to the crisis would involve greatly reducing the amount of money that students can borrow to attend college. Such reductions could be phased in over a span of years**

> **to alleviate their harshness, but the goal would remain the same: to force underperforming private and public universities out of business.** For-profit universities — notorious for their lack of anything resembling good academic intention — should be barred altogether from accessing these programs; let them charge only what consumers in a genuinely free market can afford to pay for their questionable services.
>
> **Without the carrot of easy access to student loans, enrollments would shrink. Universities would be forced to compete on a cost-per-student basis, and those students still paying to attend college would likely focus their studies on subjects with an immediate return on investment.** Lower tuition costs, perhaps dramatically lower at some institutions, would still enable impoverished students eligible for Pell Grant assistance to attend college. Vocational education programs, which would likely expand in the wake of such a massive adjustment, would offer inexpensive skills training for others. The liberal arts wouldn't necessarily die out — they'd remain on the Ivy League prix-fixe menu, to be sure, and curious minds of all sorts would continue to seek them out — but they'd no longer serve as a final destination for unenthusiastic credential seekers.

I agree with this idea, in fact I blogged about it before. This is the right solution to the problem. The problem of higher education costing too much will be solved when we stop attaching taxpayer money to students and urging them to attend university. If they want to get a job, then they should be trained to do a job. Only the students who are really interested in liberal arts should be there, and they should have to weigh the costs against the benefits. Maybe we should be taking the student loan decisions out of the hands of the government, and back in the hands of bankers who actually expect the money to be paid back. Or maybe we should give a tax credit to private sector businesses who agree to stake a student through his education, in exchange for working for them for some period after graduation. Anything is better than the mess we have now.

Love another Christian just because of the fellowship of the gospel

September 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Note: I am re-posting a series of five Bible studies this week that I wrote last year. Every 2 PM post Monday to Friday this week will be a Bible study.

Philippians is my favorite book of the Bible. When I study Philippians 1, I use D. A. Carson's "Basics for Believers" commentary.

Here is the part I want to talk about today:

Philippians 1:1-11:

> 1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:
>
> 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> 3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> 4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> 5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> 6 *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> **7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.**
>
> 8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
>
> 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Now just read that and reflect on how passionate, and even *unstable and emotional* Paul sounds about this love he has for this church. Ask yourself this: what is the basis for these feelings? Read it again, and write your answer down. I'll tell you mine in a minute.

Now here is D. A. Carson.

He writes:

> As often in his letters, Paul begins with a warm expression of thanks to God for something in the lives of his readers. Here the grounds of his thanksgiving to God

are three in number, though all three are tied to the same theme.

The first is their faithful memory of him. The NIV reads, “I thank my God every time I remember you” (1: 3). But others suggest “I thank my God every time you remember me,” or something similar. The original is ambiguous. For reasons I shall not go into, I think Paul is referring to their remembrance of him. Later on he will thank the Philippians for remembering him so warmly that they sent funds to support him in his ministry. **But here the vision is broader: he perceives that their interest in him is a reflection of their continued commitment to the gospel, and that is why he thanks God for them.**

The point becomes explicit in the second cause of his thanksgiving: “In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now . . .” (1: 4– 5). Their “partnership in the gospel” injects joy into Paul’s prayers of thanksgiving: “I always pray with joy,” he writes. The word rendered “partnership” is more commonly translated “fellowship” in the New Testament. What precisely does the word mean? In common use “fellowship” has become somewhat debased. If you invite a pagan neighbor to your home for a cup of tea, it is friendship; if you invite a Christian neighbor, it is fellowship. If you attend a meeting at church and leave as soon as it is over, you have participated in a service; if you stay for coffee afterward, you have enjoyed some fellowship. In modern use, then, fellowship has come to mean something like warm friendship with believers.

In the first century, however, the word commonly had commercial overtones. If John and Harry buy a boat and start a fishing business, they have entered into a fellowship, a partnership. Intriguingly, even in the New Testament the word is often tied to financial matters. Thus, when the Macedonian Christians send money to help the poor Christians in Jerusalem, they are entering into fellowship with them (Rom. 15: 26).

The heart of true fellowship is self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision. Both John and Harry put their savings into the fishing boat. Now they share the vision that will put the fledgling company on its feet. Christian fellowship, then, is self-sacrificing conformity to the gospel. There may be overtones of warmth and intimacy, but the heart of the matter is this shared vision of what is of transcendent importance, a vision that calls forth our commitment. So when Paul gives thanks, with joy, because of the Philippians’ “partnership in the gospel” or “fellowship in the gospel,” he is thanking God that these brothers and sisters in Christ— from the moment of their conversion (“ from the first day until now,” Paul writes)— rolled up their sleeves and got involved in the advance of the gospel. They continued their witness in Philippi, they persevered in their prayers for Paul, they sent money to support him in his ministry— all testifying to their shared vision of the importance and priority of the gospel. That is more than enough reason for

> thanking God.

> [..]Implicitly, such an apostolic stance asks us what gives us our greatest joy. Is it personal success? Some victory for our children? Acquisition of material things? "I have no greater joy," John writes, "than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." Paul reflects exactly the same attitude. Paul adds, "It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart . . ." (Phil. 1: 7). Probably this was written against the background of Stoic influence that was cautious about whole-life commitments, especially if they involved the "passions." Be cool; do not be vulnerable; do not get hurt. But that was not Paul's way. "It is right for me to feel this way about all of you," Paul insists, regardless of what the contemporary culture says. "I have you in my heart": my whole life and thought are bound up with you.

More:

> So strongly does he want the Philippians to recognize his devotion to them that Paul puts himself under an oath: "God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus" (1: 8). The significance of the oath is not that without it he might lie. Rather, he puts himself under an oath so that the Philippians might feel the passion of his truthfulness, in exactly the same way that God puts himself under an oath in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There the point is not that otherwise God might lie, but that God wants to be believed (Heb. 7: 20– 25). So Paul: God is my witness "how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus."
>
> Here is no mere professionalism. Nor is this an act, a bit of showmanship to "turn them on" to the apostle. Rather, it is something that repeatedly bubbles through Paul's arguments. It recurs, for example, in chapter 4: "Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!" (4: 1).
>
> **Both from Paul's example and from that of the Philippians, then, we must learn this first point: the fellowship of the gospel, the partnership of the gospel, must be put at the center of our relationships with other believers. That is the burden of these opening verses. Paul does not commend them for the fine times they had shared watching games in the arena. He doesn't mention their literature discussion groups or the excellent meals they had, although undoubtedly they had enjoyed some fine times together. What lies at the center of all his ties with them, doubtless including meals and discussion, is this passion for the gospel, this partnership in the gospel.**
>
> What ties us together? What do we talk about when we meet, even after a church service? Mere civilities? The weather? Sports? Our careers and our children? Our aches and pains? None of these topics should be excluded from the conversation

> of Christians, of course. In sharing all of life, these things will inevitably come up. But what must tie us together as Christians is this passion for the gospel, this fellowship in the gospel. On the face of it, nothing else is strong enough to hold together the extraordinary diversity of people who constitute many churches: men and women, young and old, blue collar and white, healthy and ill, fit and flabby, different races, different incomes, different levels of education, different personalities. What holds us together? It is the gospel, the good news that in Jesus, God himself has reconciled us to himself. This brings about a precious God-centeredness that we share with other believers.

Does what Carson writes make you think of the Lord of the Rings book 1? ("The Fellowship of the Ring") It sounds like Christians are supposed to band together in common purpose in order to complete a quest. They are not supposed to just be hanging out to pass the time. There is planning. There is cooperation. There is danger. There is achievement. There is adventure. I think that he loves the church in Philippi because they have entered into this fellowship of the gospel with him.

More:

> Already in verse 4 Paul has insisted that whenever he prays for the Philippians, he does so with joy and thanksgiving. Now he gives us the content of his prayers for them: "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ— to the glory and praise of God" (1: 9– 11).
>
> […]Second, what Paul has in mind is not mere sentimentalism or the rush of pleasure spawned, for example, by a large conference. "I pray," Paul writes, "that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight." The kind of love that Paul has in mind is the love that becomes more knowledgeable. Of course, Paul is not thinking of just any kind of knowledge. He is not hoping they will learn more and more about nuclear physics or sea turtles. He has in mind the knowledge of God; he wants them to enjoy insight into God's words and ways, and thus to know how to live in light of them.
>
> […]**Third, for Paul this prayer has a further end in view. He lifts these petitions to God, he tells the Philippians, "so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ" (1: 10). Clearly, Paul does not want the Philippian believers to be satisfied with mediocrity. He cannot be satisfied, in a fallen world, with the status quo. He wants these believers to move on, to become more and more discerning, proving in their own experience "what is best." He wants them to pursue what is best in the knowledge of God, what is best in their relationships with other believers, what is best in joyful obedience. For ultimately what he wants from them is perfection:**

> **he prays that they "may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ."**

Now for my thoughts.

I want all of you reading this to do one thing for me. I want you to completely abandon the criteria you are currently using for who you will be friends with and adopt Paul's criteria. I want you to put your gospel-related activities at the center of your life. Do not neglect your other practical duties like making money and saving money and so on, but when it comes to your passion, where you take risks, where your long-term goals are – I want you to put the gospel at the center. And I do not mean mere proclamation of simple statements, I mean apologetics and Christian worldview – including politics, economics, etc.

Now, that's not my main point. My main point is that I further want you to stop choosing who you will associate with based on worldly criteria. I want you to think about the people around you who are the most willing to put the gospel first and I want you to take up those people as friends. I want you to talk to them, to share with them, to encourage them, to confide in them, to listen to their confessions and to generally love them in the traditional ways that Christians love, e.g. – 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. You need to fellowship with them – invest in their enterprises, and let them invest in yours, too. This is *real love* according to the Bible.

We need to stop looking at other people on the surface level – age, skin color, wealth, clothes, etc. – and start to dig deeper underneath to find out where each person stands with respect to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our criteria should not be present ability. We should choose those with desire, intensity, and willingness to learn *hard things*. The first person you should invest in is the person who wants to learn to defend their faith to non-Christians using the best available evidence. If that person can demonstrate their desire to do grow in knowledge and depth of insight, you should be spending your time, money and effort with that person *first*.

Was Hitler a Christian? Is Nazism similar to Christianity?

September 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

One of the strangest things I have heard from atheists is the assertion that Christianity is somehow connected to the fascism, such as the fascism that existed under Adolf Hitler. Two posts by Jewish author Jonah Goldberg from National Review supply us with the facts to set the record straight.

Let's start with the first post.

Here are some of the points:

1) Hitler wanted Christianity removed from the public square

> Like the engineers of that proverbial railway bridge, the Nazis worked relentlessly to replace the nuts and bolts of traditional Christianity with a new political religion. The shrewdest way to accomplish this was to co-opt Christianity via the Gleichschaltung while at the same time shrinking traditional religion's role in civil society.

2) Hitler banned the giving of donations to churches

> Hitler banned religious charity, crippling the churches' role as a counterweight to the state. Clergy were put on government salary, hence subjected to state authority. "The parsons will be made to dig their own graves," Hitler cackled. "They will betray their God to us. They will betray anything for the sake of their miserable little jobs and incomes."

3) Hitler replaced Christian celebrations with celebrations of the state

> Following the Jacobin example, the Nazis replaced the traditional Christian

> calendar. The new year began on January 30 with the Day of the Seizure of Power. Each November the streets of central Munich were dedicated to a Nazi Passion play depicting Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch. The martyrdom of Horst Wessel and his "old fighters" replaced Jesus and the apostles. Plays and official histories were rewritten to glorify pagan Aryans bravely fighting against Christianizing foreign armies. Anticipating some feminist pseudo history, witches became martyrs to the bloodthirsty oppression of Christianity.

4) Hitler favored the complete elimination of Christianity

> When some Protestant bishops visited the Fuhrer to register complaints, Hitler's rage got the better of him. "Christianity will disappear from Germany just as it has done in Russia . . . The Germanrace has existed without Christianity for thousands of years . . . and will continue after Christianity has disappeared . . . We must get used to the teachings of blood and race."

5) Hitler favored the removal of mandatory prayers in schools

> In 1935 mandatory prayer in school was abolished…

6) Hitler favored the banning of Christmas carols and nativity plays

> …and in 1938 carols and Nativity plays were banned entirely.

7) Hitler abolished religious instruction for children

> By 1941 religious instruction for children fourteen years and up had been abolished altogether….

And now the second post.

8) Hitler opposed the ideas of universal truth and objective moral absolutes

> …Just as the Nazi attack on Christianity was part of a larger war on the idea of universal truth, whole postmodern cosmologies have been created to prove that traditional religious morality is a scam, that there are no fixed truths or "natural" categories, and that all knowledge is socially constructed.

Practically everything this man believed was 100% anti-Christian. But he fits in fine on the secular left.

Conclusion

Adolf Hitler was a man influenced by two big ideas: evolution and socialism. His party was the national SOCIALIST party. He favored a strong role for the state in interfering with the free market. He was in favor of regulating the family so that the state could have a bigger influence on children. And he favored the idea of survival of the fittest. His ideas are 100% incompatible with Christianity and with capitalism as well. Christians value individual rights and freedoms, small government and the autonomy of the family against the state. The differences are clear and significant.

New study: parents of four or more kids are happiest

September 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

When I was planning out my life, I did some research on how many kids I wanted to have. I love to plan and budget things out way in advance, because even if things don't go as planned, the planning phase helps you to improvise. According to my research, four was the right number. Of course, you can never be sure how many you'll get, but it doesn't hurt to make a budget for the number of kids you want and a plan to make them.

Anyway, here's a new study that says that four or more makes parents the most happy. Now, happiness may not be the goal of a relationship, but it definitely helps the spouses to apply themselves to the real goal of serving God. You can't get miserable people to achieve anything for God, and you have to be serious about what people need to engage.

Anyway, The Daily Signal reports:

> The happiest parents are—drumroll, please—parents with four or more kids.
>
> Parents of large families were found to have the most life satisfaction, according to a study by Australia's Edith Cowan University. Dr. Bronwyn Harman, of the psychology and social science school at the university, spent five years studying what types of families are most content.
>
> "[The parents] usually say they always wanted a large family, it was planned that way, and it was a lifestyle they'd chosen," Harman told The Sydney Morning Herald.
>
> During her five-year study, Harman interviewed hundreds of parents from different family makeups. Her findings are based on resilience, social support, self-esteem, and life satisfaction.
>
> Her research points out that parental happiness relates to how much effort has been put into growing the family.
>
> "What is important for kids are things like consistency, boundaries and [to] know that they are loved, no matter what," Harman tells ABC Australia.

> Prior to the study, Harman thought parents with more children would be less happy.
>
> Though larger families may have more chaos and expenses than a smaller family, Harman's research shows that these issues are balanced by the amount of joy received from having more children.
>
> Her findings show that children who grow up in large families learn independence at a young age and always have someone to play with.

I often get a lot of flak from single women who want to delay marriage, and/or not have so many children. Although many of the "rules" I have about where relationships should be headed seem arbitrary, there is actually data to back it up. I'm not trying to rush into marriage and four children for no reason, but because this is what makes people happiest in the long run. It makes for a better environment for achieving other things for God. I never do anything or ask others for anything without some evidence to back it up.

I think people tend to worry a lot about having kids, and that's because having kids is expensive. But that can easily be planned out if you earn and save to prepare. My plan was to raise the kids in the country and have a capable homeschooling mom teach them and build their resumes up. Having lots of kids is not a problem if you take care of the money requirement, and don't let them be spoiled all the time. Sometimes, they will just have to be patient and do things on their own and not be the center of attention. That's probably good for them in any case.

Three thoughts on forgiveness and reconciliation in Luke 15

September 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Note: I am re-posting a series of five Bible studies this week that I wrote last year. Every 2 PM post Monday to Friday this week will be a Bible study.

The Bible passage for this post – the last in the series of five – is in Luke 15.

Luke 15:1-10:

> 1 Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him.
>
> 2 Both the Pharisees and the scribes *began* to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."
>
> 3 So He told them this parable, saying,
>
> 4 "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?
>
> 5 When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.
>
> 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'
>
> 7 I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.
>
> 8 "Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?
>
> 9 When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!'
>
> 10 In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

And now we go to C.S. Lewis for this quote:

> "It may be possible for each [person] to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbor. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would strongly be tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some

> degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another…. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal…. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption."
>
> — C.S. Lewis "The Weight of Glory"

And then there is this from the biography of J. Warner Wallace:

> J. Warner Wallace was an atheist for 35 years. He was passionate in his opposition to Christianity, and he enjoyed debating his Christian friends. In debating his friends, J. Warner seldom found them prepared to defend what they believed. He became a Police Officer and eventually advanced to Detective. Along the way, he developed a healthy respect for the role of evidence in discerning truth, and his profession gave him ample opportunity to press into action what he had learned about the nature and power of evidence. Throughout all of this, he remained an "angry atheist", hostile to Christianity and largely dismissive of Christians.
>
> When J. Warner took time to be honest with himself, he had to admit that he never took the time to examine the evidence for the Christian Worldview without the bias and presupposition of naturalism. He never gave the case for Christianity a fair shake. When he finally examined the evidence fairly, he found it difficult to deny, especially if he hoped to retain his respect for the way evidence is utilized to determine truth. J. Warner found the evidence for Christianity to be convincing.
>
> J. Warner founded PleaseConvinceMe.com as a transparent resource that tracks his own spiritual journey. From angry atheist, to skeptic, to believer, to seminarian, to pastor, to author and podcaster, his journey has been assisted by his experience as a Detective. J. Warner wrote, "Cold-Case Christianity" with a desire to share those experiences with you, It's J. Warner's hope that his own efforts to detect and articulate the truth will help you to become a better Christian Case Maker.

In a recent podcast, I heard Wallace mention that he is now an adjunct professor in the apologetics program at Biola University. Adjunct professor.

And this from the biography of the fighting pastor, Pastor Matt Rawlings:

> Matt Rawlings is a Teaching Pastor at Christ's Community Church in Portsmouth, OH and State Director of Development for a Christian legal ministry.
>
> Matt has been married since 1998 to Emily Bennington and they have a son, Jackson who was born in 2003.

> Matt is a prodigal preacher's kid who ran away from home at 15, ended up in Hollywood at 17 where, among other things, he directed music videos for Latin MTV. He returned to his home town of Portsmouth, OH in 1991 and after a wasted year of college, he entered politics (which is just Hollywood for ugly people). Matt worked for 2 Congressional campaigns and spent 2 years working on Capitol Hill as a legislative aide during the "Gingrich Years" of 1995-1997.
>
> It was during this time that Matt was diagnosed with cancer and was saved. After graduating from Shawnee State University in 1998 with a B.A. in History, Matt studied New Testament Greek at Kentucky Christian University and then the Graduate School of Theology at Abilene Christian University where he earned a Master of Divinity.
>
> Matt then graduated from Cornell Law School in 2004 while pastoring a small church in Ithaca, New York. After a few years working in a large corporate law firm in West Virginia while serving as an interim pastor for small churches, Matt became a Teaching Pastor at Christ's Community Church in 2006. He then helped launch and lead Revolution, a Gen-X & Gen-Y ministry from 2008 to 2013.
>
> Matt earned a certificate in apologetics from BIOLA University. He also launched Free Seminary to train lay Christians to become disciple makers. When Matt isn't preaching or teaching, he is hanging out with his family or reading theology or detective novels, watching old movies or listening to really loud music.

Pastor Matt spent a period of time as an atheist, and he wrote about it candidly in several posts on his blog. But look at him now.

So here's what I want to say about all this.

The first point I want to make is that it's important to understand what human beings are in Christianity. We are not just lumps of meat who evolved by accident in an eternal, undesigned universe. Every single one of us is made in the image of God. We are embodied minds. When we die, our body stops working, but the mind/soul survives. God loves each of us equally and wants us all to come to know him and to have eternal life with him. Those who resist his loving but non-coercive drawing of us to him will spend eternity separated from him. Our lives do not end at the grave. Every single person you speak to was made to live on beyond the grave. And every moment you spend with them, (as a Christian operator, working as God's ambassador), is leading them to one eternal destination or another. It's part of God's plan for your santification that you participate in leading other people to Christ, and building them up once they've been led to Christ.

The second point I want to make is that you can know precisely nothing about what a person can accomplish for God from their present state of rebellion against God. Wallace and Rawlings were bold and determined atheists. To every prim and proper church Christian looking on then, they must have looked as if they would never come to faith in Christ, and certainly that they would never make contributions to the Kingdom like the ones they have. It would have been exactly the wrong thing to do, at that time, to count them out and to refuse to engage them. I meet Christians all the time who are regular

church-attenders and Bible-readers who I ask to engage with me to grow some of these lost-sheep or newly-found sheep, and I am so surprised to hear the pride in their voice as they dismiss these people as lost causes. *Don't do that!* You are not in a position to know what these people are capable of. And I can guarantee you that God hasn't given you so many people to mentor that you can just be cavalier about throwing some of them out that you deem to be unworthy of your time. Be careful about having *your* sins forgiven and then refusing to forgive *someone else's* sins. If someone needs your mentoring, you better put in the same effort that God put into rescuing you. God uses people to save other people, and God help the "Christian" who makes excuses for not being faithful when they are called. This is not optional.

The third point I want to make is that in the real world, we have to understand what works in order to convince someone to become a Christian or to return to the faith. Christianity is a truth-centered faith. It has certain propositions that must be affirmed as true. In order for those propositions to be *affirmed as true*, they have to be *demonstrated to be true*. The way the founder of the religion did this is by providing miracles to authenticate his claims, (just read the gospel of John). Jesus offered these miracles to unbelievers as evidence for them to then freely choose to believe his statements about himself. Here in this time and place, it falls to us to use logical arguments and evidence from nature and history to prove out these same propositions to unbelievers. If you want to be the one who is able to leave the 99 found sheep and save the 1 lost sheep, then you study apologetics and invest in relationships with people. If you want to be the one who is able to leave the 9 silver coins and save the 1 lost silver coin, then you study apologetics and invest in relationships with people. Christianity is an evidential faith. If you want to share your faith with the lost, you have to study the evidence for it.

How similar are human DNA and chimpanzee DNA?

September 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

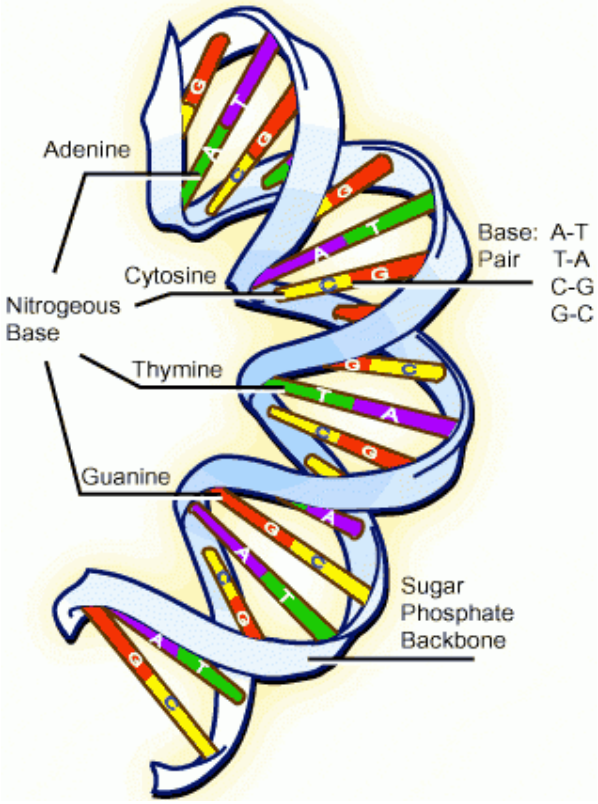

How did life begin?

Now, I'm not an expert in DNA sequencing similarities, here is paper from Nature which argued for more distance between human and chimp genomes than the 98% similarity commonly asserted by Darwinists.

Evolution News covered that one:

> A *Nature* paper from January, 2010 titled, "Chimpanzee and human Y chromosomes are remarkably divergent in structure and gene content," found that Y chromosomes in humans and chimps "differ radically in sequence structure and gene content," showing "extraordinary divergence" where "wholesale renovation is the paramount theme." Of course, the paper attributes these dramatic genetic changes to "rapid evolution during the past 6 million years."

> One of the scientists behind the study was quoted in a *Nature* news article stating, "It looks like there's been a dramatic renovation or reinvention of the Y chromosome in the chimpanzee and human lineages." The news article states that "many of the stark changes between the chimp and human Y chromosomes are due to gene loss in the chimp and gene gain in the human" since "the chimp Y chromosome has only two-thirds as many distinct genes or gene families as the human Y chromosome and only 47% as many protein-coding elements as humans." According to the news piece, "Even more striking than the

> gene loss is the rearrangement of large portions of the chromosome. More than 30% of the chimp Y chromosome lacks an alignable counterpart on the human Y chromosome, and vice versa, whereas this is true for less than 2% of the remainder of the genome."
>
> But not wishing to offend the "myth of 1%", the *Nature* news article carefully adds, "The remainder of the chimp and human genomes are thought to differ in gene number by less than 1%."

A more recent paper (PDF) from PNAS (edited by arch-evolutionist Francisco Ayala, no less) has more.

Here's the abstract:

> The rise of comparative genomics and related technologies has added important new dimensions to the study of human evolution. Our knowledge of the genes that underwent expression changes or were targets of positive selection in human evolution is rapidly increasing, as is our knowledge of gene duplications, translocations, and deletions. **It is now clear that the genetic differences between humans and chimpanzees are far more extensive than previously thought; their genomes are not 98% or 99% identical.** Despite the rapid growth in our understanding of the evolution of the human genome, our understanding of the relationship be-tween genetic changes and phenotypic changes is tenuous. This is true even for the most intensively studied gene, FOXP2, which underwent positive selection in the human terminal lineage and is thought to have played an important role in the evolution of human speech and language. In part, the difficulty of connecting genes to phenotypes reflects our generally poor knowledge of human phenotypic specializations, as well as the difficulty of interpreting the consequences of genetic changes in species that are not amenable to invasive research. On the positive side, investigations of FOXP2, along with genomewide surveys of gene-expression changes and selection-driven sequence changes, offer the opportunity for "phenotype discovery," providing clues to human phenotypic specializations that were previously unsuspected. What is more, at least some of the specializations that have been proposed are amenable to testing with noninvasive experimental techniques appropriate for the study of humans and apes.

Again, I'm not sure what the exact numbers are, this is not my area, but I think it's interesting. I know that ICR is doing some work on computing the average level of difference across both genomes.

How same-sex marriage will be used as a weapon against religious conservatives

September 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

This Public Discourse article talks about the new "Equality Act" proposed by Democrats who are anxious to destroy Judeo-Christian values by using the government as a weapon against faith-based organizations, and individuals.

Excerpt:

> So, in concrete terms, what would the proposed law do? Here are just a few of the potential areas of impact, given how the Equality Act would amend various provisions of the Civil Rights Act:
>
> **– Employment**: would amend Title VII to create new protected classes for "sexual orientation" and "gender identity," with no countervailing exemptions for faith-based organizations that maintain internal standards of sexual conduct rooted in longstanding religious tenets.
>
> **– Federal Programs**: would amend Title VI, historically limited to race, color, and national origin, to create new protected classes for "sex, sexual orientation, gender identity," with no countervailing protections for faith-based providers who willingly serve every program-eligible person but maintain internal standards of sexual conduct rooted in longstanding religious tenets.
>
> **– Public Accommodation**: would drastically expand the Title II definition of "public accommodation" to cover "gatherings" and facilities historically owned and operated by churches or religious organizations—"shelters," "food banks," and "care centers"—extending far beyond the categories at issue during the Civil Rights Movement: common carriers (bus, taxi, train, and air lines), public utilities, hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues.

> **– Public Education**: would amend Title IV definitions of "desegregation" to include new protected classes for "sexual orientation" and "gender identity," placing in the litigation crosshairs all sex-restricted facilities like dormitories, restrooms, or locker rooms.
>
> **– Religious Freedom Restoration Act:** would omit exemptions for religious organizations contained in prior drafts of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), and expressly state that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) may not be used as a defense or a basis for challenging the Equality Act.
>
> **– Sex:** would enter a congressional finding that "federal agencies and courts have correctly interpreted [] prohibitions on sex discrimination to include discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex stereotypes," thereby adopting the EEOC's most aggressively extra-textual recent rulings.
>
> **– Bona Fide Occupational Qualifications**: would amend Title VII exemptions for employers who have sex-based "bona fide occupational qualifications" (BFOQ) for specialized jobs—for example, male security guards in a maximum security prison or female undercover officers in a sex-trafficking sting operation—to require recognition of persons "in accordance with their gender identity."
>
> Unlike ENDA, the Equality Act does not even feign an equal balancing of sexual liberty and religious liberty. Like some voracious legal Pac-Man, the *Obergefell*-fueled Equality Act devours any preexisting constitutional rights that might impede absolute victory in the march for "marriage equality": speech, association, assembly, and the free exercise of religion. The Equality Act boldly declares that some constitutional rights are "more equal than others."

It seems like every day I am getting a messages from some Christian friend about how his or her co-workers, family or friends are attacking the traditional definition of marriage. And I tell them not to respond directly, but to instead write about it under an alias. It seems like we can no longer even speak in defense of traditional marriage without running into all kinds of legal problems from people who are "offended". Somehow, their offending us with their view doesn't draw any ire from the law. But the reverse is not true – it's open season on pre-sexual-revolution views of dating, sex and marriage.

Marriage is something I really believe in, and have always believed in. And I don't mean the new post-sexual-revolution definition of marriage. I mean the traditional view of marriage: chastity, courting, commitment, fidelity, parenting. It seems really obvious to me that marriage is something beautiful, something that is above our selfish desires, something that helps us to grow and love someone of a complementary nature self-sacrificially. There is a mystery in the way that a man and woman come together to make children and then raise them, balancing out their different male and female natures for a common purpose. But if I say anything like that in public under my real name in so many places where the topic comes up, then suddenly I would get into so much trouble.

We really need to be focused about restoring our freedom to express our support for traditional marriage, and the natural family in public.

South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley suspends licenses of two abortion clinics

September 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley

Good news from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> All three of South Carolina's abortion facilities have violated state law – and Gov. Nikki Haley has issued an order that could close two of them in just over two weeks. And their managers and employees may face criminal charges.
>
> Gov. Nikki Haley announced late Friday afternoon that she had issued Administrative Order of Suspensions against Planned Parenthood of South Atlantic in Columbia and Greenville Women's Clinic in Greenville and assessed more than $10,000 in fines so far.
>
> The state's Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) found 27 violations in those two offices – 21 at Planned Parenthood alone.

Nikki Haley is, of course, a Republican governor. There is not much enforcement against abortion clinics in Democrat-dominated states.

Although many Democrats have not seen the Planned Parenthood sting videos, Republicans are different. Although the Republican legislators in the House and Senate are dragging their feet, you can see real action from the governors. I wrote about what governors Scott Walker and Bobby Jindal did already.

What is so frustrating to me about the 2016 election is that so many low-information Republican voters are listening to what Donald Trump says during his media appearances about abortion, while ignoring his longstanding support for abortion. And these are not mere words, there are donations to many Democrat pro-abortion candidates, including many donations to Hillary Clinton.

This Hillary Clinton:

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Here's an article from the Washington Post about Trump.

It says:

> Abortion
>
> Then: On "Meet The Press" in 1999, Trump said he was "very prochoice." "I hate the concept of abortion," he said. "I hate it. I hate everything it stands for. … but I just believe in choice."
>
> Now: In an interview with Bloomberg Politics in January, Trump said, "I'm prolife and I have been prolife." He said he believed there should be exceptions in cases of rape, incest or the life of the mother.
>
> Hillary Clinton
>
> Then: Either Trump or his son donated to Clinton in 2002, 2005, 2006 and 2007, he invited her to his 2005 wedding in Florida, where she sat front row, and he's donated at least $100,000 to the Clinton Foundation. He also said in an appearance on the Howard Stern show in the mid 2000s that she was a fantastic senator.
>
> Now: On NBC on Wednesday, he called Clinton "the worst secretary of state in the history of our nation" and said she would be "a terrible president."

Another article from the Washington Post:

> Billionaire Donald J. Trump, an early presidential favorite among tea party activists, has a highly unusual history of political contributions for a prospective Republican candidate: He has given most of his money to the other side.
>
> The real estate mogul and "Celebrity Apprentice" host has made more than $1.3 million in donations over the years to candidates nationwide, with 54 percent of the money going to Democrats, according to a Washington Post analysis of state and federal disclosure records.

> Recipients include Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid (Nev.), former Pennsylvania governor Edward G. Rendell, and Rahm Emanuel, a former aide to President Obama who received $50,000 from Trump during his recent run to become Chicago's mayor, records show. Many of the contributions have been concentrated in New York, Florida and other states where Trump has substantial real estate and casino interests.

Should we really be watching TV in order to find out about a candidate's positions? Or should we instead be looking at their real-life achievements? Some of the achievements of governors like Scott Walker were multi-year fights. Isn't it better to pick someone who has fought the left hard on social issues and won victories, rather than someone who just speaks about social issues in sound bites? Trump has no pro-life record, and we cannot afford another 8 years of a pro-abortion president. You cannot know what a person really believes about something by listening to words during an election campaign. Barack Obama promised we could keep our doctors and keep our health plans. Those were lies. I know this is surprising to many Americans, but not everything that a political candidate says on TV is true. Sometimes, you have to put down the remote control and pick up a history book in order to find out where a candidate stands.

Should you marry a woman who is pro-choice, pro-divorce or pro-gay-marriage?

September 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young women celebrate gay pride: do they understand marriage? are they safe to marry? Let's take a closer look at what these three views mean for you as a future husband.

Pro-choice:

Let's start by talking about sex, because you can't have an abortion without sex. So, the right way to view sex is that it's something that should be confined to marriage. Sex is so non-trivial that it should only be done after a couple has committed to each other for life. Feelings of being "in love" cannot ground sex, because feelings come and go, but marriage is for life. The function that sex provides in a married home is that it relieves stress, affirms the unity of the marriage, and communicates love to the man in particular. Sex is not to be used before marriage as a way of getting what you want without having to promise to love the other person for a lifetime, no matter what.

Again, it's not how you feel about the other person that matters, because feelings change. What matters is whether you are willing to make that commitment to take responsibility for another person's needs, regardless of how you feel. Sex makes sense in a relationship where both people have promised to do that. And both people should have some kind of track record at doing that in their past, since accepting responsibilities, expectations and obligations is not something that just gets turned on and off by a wedding.

When a woman says that she is pro-choice, what she means is that sex is something completely different than what I just described. A pro-choice woman thinks it should be OK for a woman to have pre-marital sex for recreation – outside of the boundaries of a

lifelong, exclusive commitment to marry. Since people don't usually have pre-marital sex when they are sober, this is probably going to mean drinking a lot to break down her judgment, and to give her a way of getting out of the responsibility and feelings of guilt – "that wasn't me, it was the alcohol that I freely chose to drink". Premarital sex is about a woman choosing a man apart from his ability to commit to performing the roles of husband and father for her. She is not giving sex to a man who committed to her, she's giving sex to a man who is hot and fun and will give her thrills and tingles and will make her friends so envious.

So what happens when this recreational sex results in a pregnancy? A pro-choice woman believes that it's OK to murder another innocent human being in order to escape the normal, natural consequences of her own choices. Is this view of sex as recreational and commitment-free compatible with the needs and goals of a marriage-minded man?

Not only is this recreational, me-first, fun and thrills view of sex not compatible with marriage, but it's not compatible with having children either. A woman who thinks that murdering an innocent child is an acceptable way to insulate herself from obligations and responsibilities is not a good woman to marry. A pro-choice woman will not be able to handle the needs of a child, because she thinks that her happiness comes above self-sacrificial service to others.

Pro-no-fault-divorce:

The first redefinition of marriage before gay marriage was the enactment of no-fault divorce, which allows one spouse (the woman, 70% of the time) to exit the marriage for any reason, or no reason at all. These no-fault divorce laws were pushed through by two groups on the left: feminists and trial lawyers. They both stood to gain from no-fault divorce. Trial lawyers stood to make a ton of money from the divorce trials. Feminists objected to the traditional marital roles: sole male provider and stay-at-home wife and mother. By making it easier to divorce, they basically encouraged women to not think through who they were choosing to marry, since they could easily get out of it now. A woman who can get out of a marriage easily does not think rationally about whether the man can perform the traditional male roles. It enables her to reject her father's guidance and just marry based on her feelings – the man's appearance, peer-approval, cultural standards of what men ought to be, etc. No-fault divorce is like winning the lottery for a woman: she gets alimony AND child support.

If a woman supports no-fault divorce, it means that she does not want to be roped into responsibilities, expectations and obligations that require self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice. Women who support no-fault divorce typically have the view that life is too unpredictable to logically connect causes and effects. They think that the most reliable way to choose a man is through their feelings, not by measuring his abilities against objective criteria like the traditional set of {provider, protector, moral leader, spiritual leader}. What this means for you is that if their feelings change, then they will divorce you. A woman who thinks that her feelings can predict whether an enterprise like marriage is likely to succeed or fail is a divorce risk. She will rely on her feelings to

motivate her to perform in the marriage, and will expect you to make her feel like doing her jobs. You can't get involved with that. Your job as a man is to protect, provide, and lead on moral and spiritual issues, not to make her do her job by making sure she always feels like doing it.

What if a woman says she opposes divorce – can she still be a divorce risk? Yes. If she has an overriding desire to be happy in other areas of her life that is so strong that it causes her to avoid hard things. If she studies easy subjects, prefers easy jobs, spends more on vacations than investments, etc. Avoid women who prioritize thrill-seeking behavior, like going out, getting drunk, hooking up, or doing pointless, expensive activities like sky-diving, zip-lining or surfing. They are not going to be content with married life, because they don't value the end result of a good marriage over their own desire to be free of constraints and to have happy feelings. Whatever duties they have in the marriage will never get done, because they are not used to committing to do hard things, and then doing them, regardless of how they feel. Prefer women with a history of doing the right thing, even if they don't feel like it.

Pro-gay-marriage:

What does it mean to be in favor of removing the requirement for two complementary genders in marriage? Well, what it means is that there is no design to marriage such that the male and female nature need to balance each other out. Same-sex relationships tend to exhibit characteristics that not favorable for the needs of children, e.g. – higher rates of domestic violence, non-monogamy, etc. I don't think it's a good idea to redefine marriage in a way that undermines the norms of natural marriage, e.g. – pre-marital chastity, exclusivity, permanence, and focusing on stability for the sake of the children. If your candidate thinks that raising children without a father or without a mother is "marriage", they don't understand marriage.

Any children who are raised by a same-sex couple will be automatically deprived of either their biological mother, their biological father, or both. Biological parents are naturally going to have an additional interest in the child, since the child contains their genetic material. And of course children do better when they are raised in a stable home. Anyone one can see that children of divorce do worse without their father. And orphans who go without a mother during their childhood – especially the first 5 years – do much worse than children raised by stay-at-home moms. So, either way, same-sex unions impose a lot of stress and strain on kids.

So should should marry a woman who thinks that it is OK to put the needs of selfish adults over the needs of vulnerable children? The answer is no. Any woman who puts the needs of selfish adults over the needs of innocent, vulnerable children is certainly not going to treat YOU well as a man. You are much less adorable and cute than any child. You're big and hairy, and most women think you can take care of yourself. So naturally, a woman who thinks that children shouldn't get their needs met is certainly going to think that you shouldn't get your needs met, either. You want a woman who is prepared to put aside her own selfishness desires for the sake of the children. She has to believe in adults

sacrificing their own desires for the sake of the children. Otherwise, not only will your children suffer, but you will as well.

Conclusion:

So we have seen 3 character traits in women that marriage-minded men should avoid. I just want to tell you that I have seen all 3 of these beliefs in women who claimed to be Christians. You cannot take the words “I am pro-life” to be a sign that she is really pro-life. You have to go deeper, and look for an understanding of the logic of the pro-life case, and pro-life activism. You cannot take the words “I oppose divorce” as a sign that she really opposes no-fault divorce. If her life is focused on pursuing pleasure by relying on her emotions, and then breaking promises and dismissing obligations that don’t feel good, then she is a divorce waiting to happen. You cannot take the words “I oppose same-sex marriage” as proof that she opposes same-sex marriage. If her view of relationships is that adults should do what they want, and the kids just have to adjust, then the risk that she will put herself above the children’s needs – and your needs – is there, regardless of what she says.

Watch out for women who say that their emotions are “God speaking to them”. That is a huge red flag, especially if their past shows evidence of poor decision making, e.g. – debt, abortion, unemployment, drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, etc. You are looking for a past that shows long-term commitment that overrides feelings. This is not something that can be decided by will or emotions, it has to be a habit cultivated over a lifetime.

Eight years of socialism: more debt, more regulation, fewer Americans working:

September 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Has the economy been doing well lately? When I ask Democrats that question, they often point me to the stock market. I know that the stock market has done very well in the last 8 years. But I really question which Democrat policies have been responsible for this winfall.

Certainly, policies like Obamacare, Dodd-Frank, green energy subsidies, blocking Keystone XL, creating a student loan bubble, and even loosening mortgage lending again to create another housing bubble, cannot cause any economics growth. My personal opinion is that all the growth came from adding over $10 trillion dollars to the debt – a process that started with the election of Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid to the House and Senate majorities, respectively, in 2007.

Look at the national debt:

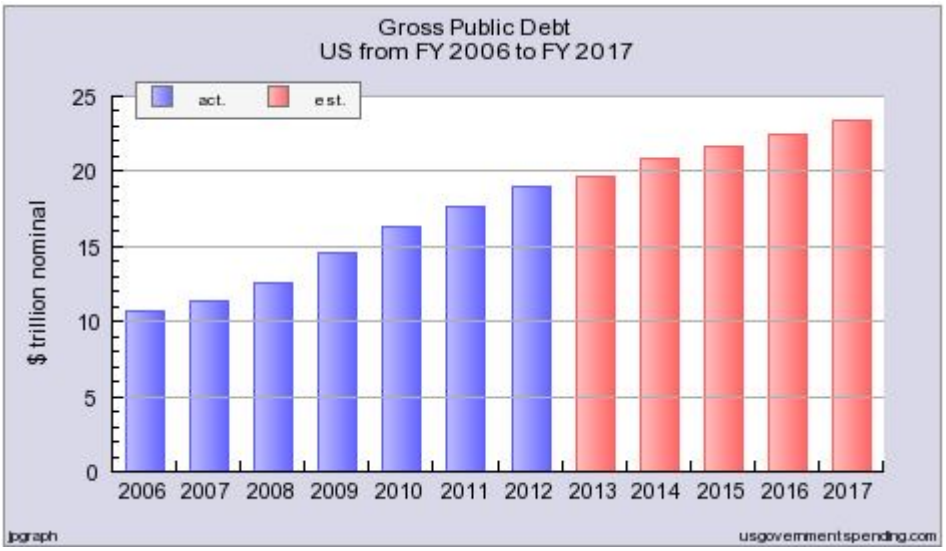

Gross public debt, Democrats control spending starting in 2007

If you add $10 trillion to the national debt in 8 years then OF COURSE the stock prices will go up. You would look richer too if you took your credit card balance from $8,500 to $18,500. But what is behind all this consumer spending and government spending? Just trillions of dollars of new debt.

I think a better measure of how the economy is doing is to ask job creators how it is doing. For example, we can ask small businesses, since they are responsible for so much of the job creation in this economy.

Here's an article from the Daily Signal about that.

It says:

> More than five years after the end of the "Great Recession," only 21 percent of small businesses* say they have fully recovered. During the recession, lack of sales ranked as the top problem small business faced. Taxes placed second, and

> “government regulations and red tape” placed third. And since 2012, at least one in five small business owners identify government regulations as their most important problem.
>
> The reason for this is simple—small business owners directly feel the impact of federal regulation in the daily life of their businesses. The small business owner is often the main person in a business who bears the burden of complying with regulations and paperwork requirements. According to a 2010 study, small businesses spend $10,585 per employee on regulation, which amounts to 36 percent more per employee than larger companies spend.
>
> With that as a backdrop, it is easy to see how small business owners continue to wonder why Washington just does not get it when it comes to regulation. For decades, Congress has sought to solve societal problems through mandates on business. Too many Americans without health insurance? Congress tries to solve that by requiring businesses to provide health insurance to their employees (regardless of whether or not they can afford it) or pay hefty penalties. Too many Americans unable to care for a sick relative? Congress seeks to address that by mandating that a business keep a position open three months out of every year for qualified employees, using a cumbersome reporting system.
>
> Always entrepreneurial, with a keen focus on the bottom line, the American small business owner looks for ways to minimize the time and money spent on things other than running his or her business. Since many of these regulations wisely exempt the smallest of small businesses, some employers purposefully do not increase hiring because they do not want to have to comply with the regulatory regimes that await businesses that expand to 10, 15, and 50 or more employees.

This might be why the labor force participation rate is at a 38-year low.

CNS News explains:

> A record 94,031,000 Americans were not in the American labor force last month — 261,000 more than July — and the labor force participation rate stayed stuck at 62.6 percent, a 38-year low, for a third straight month in August, the Labor Department reported on Friday, as the nation heads into the Labor Day weekend.
>
> […]In August, according to BLS, the nation’s civilian noninstitutional population, consisting of all people 16 or older who were not in the military or an institution, reached 251,096,000. Of those, 157,065,000 participated in the labor force by either holding a job or actively seeking one.
>
> The 157,065,000 who participated in the labor force equaled only 62.6 percent of the 251,096,000 civilian noninstitutional population — the same as it was in July and June. Not since October 1977, when the participation rate dropped to 62.4, has the percentage been this low.

So… do you still think that the economy is in good shape? Any economy is going to look better if you take an $8.5 trillion debt and run it up to $18.5 trillion. But if you look a little

closer, you see that small businesses are hard-pressed, and it’s affected the real unemployment rate.

Did Australia's ban on guns lower violent crime rates and lower suicide rates?

September 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

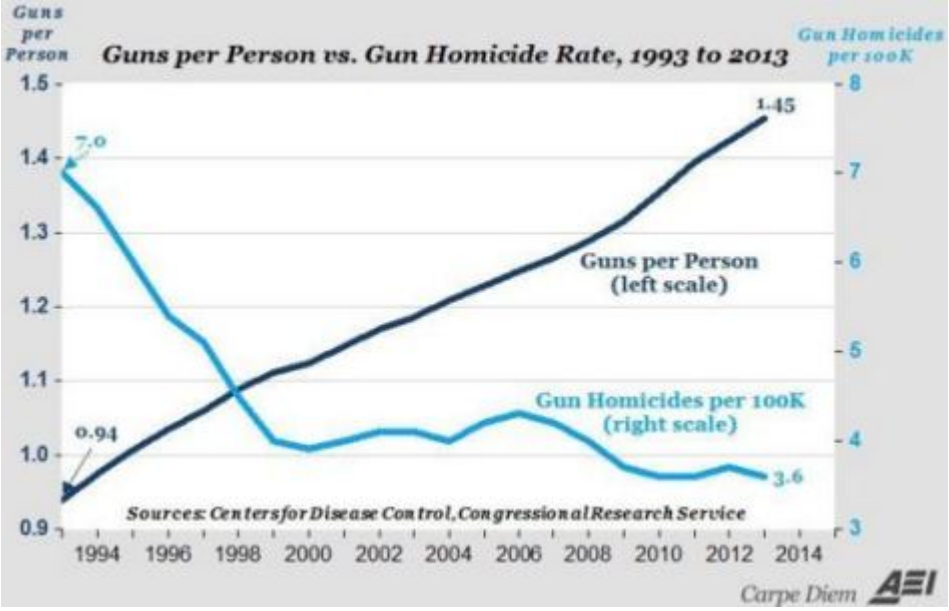

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

Someone asked me about what I thought of Australia's experience banning the use of handguns for self-defense against criminals, and so I thought I would link to an article from The Federalist, then explain what peer-reviewed studies say about the issue.

Let's start with The Federalist.

It says:

> The argument, as Vox's headline puts it, is "Australia confiscated 650,000 guns. Murders and suicides plummeted."
>
> The piece, along with many gun control advocates, cites a Harvard University study whose conclusion begins with this line: "It does not appear that the Australian experience with gun buybacks is fully replicable in the United States." Not a great start for Vox's angle, but I digress.
>
> The study doesn't conclude that "murders and suicides plummeted" in Australia after the 1996 gun ban, as Vox claims in its headline. Instead, it focuses solely on firearm-related murders and suicides.

After the gun ban, violent crime rates were up:

> Yes, as with the gun-happy United States, the murder rate is down in Australia. It's dropped 31 percent from a rate of 1.6 per 100,000 people in 1994 to 1.1 per 100,000 in 2012.But it's the only serious crime that saw a consistent decline post-ban.
>
> In fact, **according to the Australian government's own statistics, a number of serious crimes peaked in the years after the ban.**

> **Manslaughter, sexual assault, kidnapping, armed robbery, and unarmed robbery all saw peaks in the years following the ban, and most remain near or above pre-ban rates. The effects of the 1996 ban on violent crime are, frankly, unimpressive at best.**
>
> **It's even less impressive when again compared to America's decrease in violent crime over the same period.** According to data from the U.S. Justice Department, violent crime fell nearly 72 percent between 1993 and 2011. Again, this happened as guns were being manufactured and purchased at an ever-increasing rate.

So although you have fewer firearm-related deaths when you disarm law-abiding civilians, violent crime increases, because there is now NO deterrence to criminals. Even a criminal with a knife can rob, rape and murder someone who is unarmed.

What about suicide rates?

Look:

> The Australian gun ban's effect on suicide in the country isn't any better. While Vox repeats the Harvard study's claim that firearm-related suicides are down 57 percent in the aftermath of the ban, Lifeline Australia reports that overall suicides are at a ten-year high. The Australian suicide prevention organization claims suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians 15 to 44 years old. So, while Australians kill themselves with firearms less often, it seems they don't actually take their own lives any less often than before the ban.

So, overall suicides are not down, people simply found other ways to kill themselves. So the gun ban had no effect on the overall suicide rate. But it did raise the violent crime rate. Should we be surprised by this? Actually, this is consistent with peer-reviewed research.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and

> Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

For a couple of useful graphs, check out this post over at the American Enterprise Institute.

What is Jesus' view of the definition of marriage?

September 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is marriage as Jesus taught it, stupid Buzzfeed leftists

I noticed that there is some silly video put out by the atheists at BuzzFeed where a bunch of people claiming to be Christians deny that Jesus has any authority in their worldview.

Here's what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
>
> 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" 8
>
> He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

> 10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”
>
> 11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don’t overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are supposed to be willing to endure suffering rather than side with non-Christians against God’s authority. So really not sure what the BuzzFeed non-Christians are doing in that video.

Matt Walsh had a fine article about the Buzzfeed video.

He said:

> As Christians, our goal is not to avoid being like the big bad “other Christians,” but to strive to be like Christ Himself. This is one of the advantages to having an Incarnate God. He went around acting and speaking and teaching and generally functioning in our realm, thereby giving us a model to follow. This is the model of a loving and merciful man, and *also* a man of perfect virtue who fought against the forces of evil, condemned sin, defended his Father in Heaven with sometimes violent force, spoke truth, and eventually laid down His life for those He loved (which would be all of us).
>
> […]This is what it means to believe in Christ. Not just to believe that He existed, but to believe that Christ is Truth itself, and that everything He said and did was totally and absolutely and irreversibly true forever and always. Many Christians today — not only the ones in the video, but millions alongside them — seem to think we can rightly claim to have “faith” in Jesus or a “relationship” with Him while still categorically denying much of His Word. This is a ridiculous proposition. We can’t declare, in one breath, that Christ is Lord, and in the next suggest that maybe God got it wrong on this or that point. Well, we *can* make that declaration, but we expose our belief as fraudulent and self-serving. We worship a God we either invented in our heads, which is a false idol, or a God who is fallible, which is a false idol.

If you really accept Jesus as God, then you can’t think he is wrong when he explains what marriage is. Period. End of issue.

Real Christians don’t make excuses for sin. Real Christians present the gospel. The gospel is that all men have rebelled against God and fallen short of perfect submission to and obedience of him. For this, they deserve to be separated from God eternally. Jesus paid the price for this rebellion on the cross, and anyone who accepts him as Savior *and Lord* will be with God eternally after they die. There is no salvation apart from Jesus. That’s

what Christians say. And they say it regardless of how weird they look, and how many non-Christians don’t like them for saying it.

Scott Walker: eliminate NLRB, enact national right-to-work, ban federal public sector unions

September 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker

I hope that by the end of this post, everyone will consider whether it makes more sense to elect someone who says they will do something conservative as President that *they have already done in their state, as Governor*.

The story is from the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> Republican presidential hopeful Scott Walker promised Monday to go far beyond what he did to rein in union power in Wisconsin if elected to lead the country.
>
> The plan includes eliminating the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), eliminating federal employee unions and implementing a national right-to-work law. It will also do away with federal workers being allowed to do union work on taxpayer time.
>
> […]The plan would go far beyond the career defining reforms Walker pursued in 2011 during his first term as governor of Wisconsin. The changes to labor policy in the state, known as Act 10, mostly just outlawed mandatory union dues for state public employees.
>
> […]Critics have argued the NLRB unfairly benefits unions, often at the expense of employers and their workers. This includes changes to union elections, contracting and the franchise model. Walker also promised to outlawmandatory union dues for all public and private workers. A policy known as right-to-work.
>
> […]Walker also plans to end the policy which allows government workers to do union work on taxpayer time. The practice is known as “official time” on the federal level.

> "In 2012, taxpayers subsidized 3,395,187 hours of 'official time' time spent working for the union or lobbying," Walker noted. "That cost the taxpayers $156 million."
>
> "While the IRS was busy harassing conservative organizations they also had more than 200 federal employees whose only work was for the big government union bosses," Walker continued. "How about the Department of Veterans Affairs? While more than 600,000 veterans were facing delays for medical care in the VA system, more than 250 federal employees."

There's no question in my mind that Walker has the strongest record of activism as a fiscal conservative in the GOP primary. He is only proposing to do at the federal level what he already has done at the state level. No other candidate has the record of past performance that Walker has. Been there, done that – wrote a book about it. It's very important that we get the public sector unions out of politics, because they are always pushing for bigger and bigger government, which means higher taxes for you and your children. And of course the unions are pro-abortion and anti-natural-marriage. By the way, workers like right-to-work: a recent Gallup poll found that non-union workers are happier with their work than forced-unionized workers.

I expected Walker to do this if he were elected President, which is why he was my first choice for so long. (He is now #2, behind my #1 pick Bobby Jindal) It's a shame that he had to tip his hand, because it will make it harder for him to win in the general election, now. I really think I might have to put him back in as my #1 choice because I think that getting rid of NCLB and public sector unions would be such an Earth-shattering conservative move. This truly would be on the level of some of the radically leftist policies that Obama pushed for. I trust Walker to do what he says, because of his record of achievement in Wisconsin along these same lines. This is not just talk.

People should have understood what they were getting in Scott from his past record, but I fear that many Republican voters (not evangelicals, of course) are not looking into the candidates' backgrounds. They are being swayed by charismatic talk from leftist clowns like Donald Trump. They should be looking for proven leaders who have made good things happen at the state level – as governors, preferably.

By the way, Walker is one of one three candidates who has a plan to repeal *and replace* Obamacare. The other two are Jindal (of course) and Rubio.

Related videos

Anyway, for the rest of this post, I want to include a few short, 5-minute, videos on capitalism and unions. These are all from Prager University, and I hope they help you to understand why you need to support the free enterprise system, and oppose public sector unions.

George Mason University professor of economics Walter Williams on "Is Capitalism Moral?":

Entrepreneurship guru George Gilder on "Why Capitalism Works":

City College of New York professor of political science Daniel DiSalvo on how unions influence politics:

Stanford University professor of political science Terry Moe on how teacher unions oppose the interests of students:

Please look into these issues, and consider supporting either Scott Walker, Bobby Jindal or Ted Cruz for President in the general election. These guys understand economics, and will get good things done if elected President.

Related posts

- Governor Scott Walker signs ban on pain-capable abortions
- Scott Walker presidential announcement speech: video and transcript
- All he does is win: Governor Scott Walker's long record of pro-life victories
- Governor Scott Walker cuts wasteful spending on leftist university system
- Scott Walker's immigration plan is more conservative than Bush or Rubio
- Scott Walker discusses foreign policy and national security with Hugh Hewitt
- Scott Walker signs right-to-work: workers not forced to join a union in order to work
- Right-to-work states gained jobs three times faster than forced union states
- Scott Walker: if sent a bill banning abortions after 20 weeks, "I will sign that bill"
- Why didn't Scott Walker finish his fourth year of college at Marquette University?
- Scott Walker's new budget: tax cuts, spending cuts, school choice, smaller government
- Wisconsin governor Scott Walker draws standing ovations at Freedom Summit in Iowa
- Republican Scott Walker beats Mary Burke to win 2014 Wisconsin Governor race
- Wisconsin House passes Scott Walker's tax cut bill, headed to governor's desk
- Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker cuts taxes again, expects $1 billion surplus in 2015
- Wisconsin governor Walker's reforms hit the left in their wallets
- An interview with Wisconsin governor Scott Walker
- George Will: Governor Scott Walker is a good pick for Republicans in 2016
- Wisconsin abortions decline again by 4.4% after Governor Walker's pro-life laws
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker signs pro-life ultrasound bill
- Governors Bobby Jindal and Scott Walker refuse to implement Obamacare
- Scott Walker defeats Tom Barrett to win 2012 Wisconsin recall election
- Wisconsin Supreme Court strongly upholds Walker's union restrictions
- Wisconsin governor's union regulation bans automatic deduction of dues

Former inmate prays with the officer who arrested him eight years ago

September 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Former inmate prays with the police officer who arrested him

This story is from the Daily Caller. Let's take a look and then I'll link it back to Christianity and parenting.

Excerpt:

> Prompted by the slew of attacks on police officers, a former inmate who turned his life around, caused a social media frenzy by praying with the officer who arrested him eight years ago, asking God to protect police from violent criminals.
>
> Texas City patrolman Salvador "Sal" Chapa was attending a barbecue on Saturday when he was approached by Doc Amey, a man he arrested eight years ago for a gun offense. So disturbed by the attacks on police, Amey pulled Chapa to the side of the crowd, where the two joined hands and said a prayer for the officer's safety, according to ABC13.
>
> Fellow barbecue-goer Kevin Woods was so touched by Amey's prayer, that he snapped a picture of the pair and shared it on Facebook saying, "We should be seeing more of this in America. There shouldn't be race involved and this is living proof that color doesn't matter. This is a prime example. All lives matter ONE NATION UNDER GOD!"
>
> According to the now-viral post, Amey was arrested by Chapa on a gun charge, and received a five year sentence for the crime. **While in jail, Amey devoted his time to prayer and getting his life in order. He was released from**

> **prison after serving only a year and a half, and has since graduated from Bible college with perfect attendance.**
>
> According to Chapa, he and Amey had seen each other in town before, but never talked. Moved by the recent trend of attacks on police officers in America, the reformed criminal was compelled to approach the Chapa who arrested him nearly a decade ago, and ask God to protect the officer from the rampant crimes.
>
> The picture has received nearly 30,000 Facebook shares, including a share by the Texas City Police Department's official page.
>
> "After seeing the picture getting posted and all, I was overwhelmed but at the same time I was happy it happened. I hope whoever views it looks at police in a different aspect. We're here to help everybody," Chapa told ABC13.

I want to be friends with that man. He is a good man!

So I want to make two points, one theological and one about parenting.

First point, Christians who read the Bible carefully will develop a tolerance for God chastising them with suffering, because they know it shapes their character to be more like Christ. This is the process of sanctification, where a Christian is made more like Jesus through the process of encountering the moral law, and learning how to obey it. If a Christian makes a wrong decision, and God lets him suffer, he praises God for teaching him right and wrong. He does not turn away from God, block him out of sight, and then continue to make bad decisions as if nothing had ever happened. Christians, of all people, need to be reading the Bible practically. We need to make ourselves comfortable with being judged, and not be rebellious when it happens. We need to learn to respect God and his moral law, and not make the same mistakes over and over.

Second point, about parenting. I think that there is a lot of hostility on the secular left towards parents who want to discipline their children. This story shows how disciplining is supposed to be done, and what the right response is to being judged and having boundaries placed on you. When a child stays up late and then sleeps right through a test and fails it, the parent should ground the child so that the child associates staying up too late the night before a test with a punishment. Most parents today would be mad at the teacher and the school for bruising the ego of their child. That's wrong. It's much better for the child to suffer a trivial punishment now, and not make much bigger mistakes with much bigger punishments later. In computer science, it costs MUCH LESS to fix a defect when it is discovered by the project team in the early requirements elicitation phase than it does to fix it if it's discovered by customers after the deployment to production phase. Find the mistake early and fix it. The longer you wait, the more it costs to fix it.

Here's a good passage from the Bible about accepting the suffering God allows you to experience after making a bad decision:

2 Samuel 12:1-13:

> 1 And the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him,"There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor.

> [2] The rich man had very many flocks and herds,
>
> [3] but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him.
>
> [4] Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."
>
> [5] Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan,"As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die,
>
> [6] and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."
>
> [7] Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul.
>
> [8] And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more.
>
> [9] Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.
>
> [10] Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'
>
> [11] Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.
>
> [12] For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.'"
>
> [13] **David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die.**

This attitude of being grateful for judgment and boundaries is not popular on the left. The left is all about not judging, and especially about not punishing. They call it compassion – letting people who make mistakes get away with it instead of teaching people who make mistakes a lesson that will make their future decisions better. I often see Christians refuse to judge other Christians when they make mistakes. Instead of warning them, we want to pray that their mistake will "work out". My advice for people, and especially Christians, is to not run away from being judged and having boundaries placed on you – if they come from someone who is wiser and who loves you and is looking out for you on a long-term basis. Parents are like that, most of the time.

Did the eyewitness Peter influence the material in Mark's gospel?

September 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Today, I want to talk about the earliest gospel using a post and a podcast from J. Warner Wallace. When you are discussing the New Testament with non-Christians, you always want to go for the earliest sources. If you can find a fact in two independent sources, and at least one of them is early, then it's much easier to claim that this fact is historical. I.e. – that historical methods make it part of history, rather than something made up. Mark is typically dated early 60s, although the atheist historian James Crossley dates it 37-43 in his book. So Mark passes the early test.

You also want to be able to trace the material in the book back to as many eyewitnesses as you can find. The gospel of Matthew is supposed to be based on the eyewitness Matthew, and the gospel of John is supposed to be based on the eyewitness John. Luke's gospel is based on his traveling companion Paul – an eyewitness. And the gospel Mark is based on the eyewitness Peter. That means that Mark's gospel passes the eyewitness test, too.

There is a list of evidence for that last claim from a post on Cold Case Christianity.

Here are a few from the list:

> **Peter Is Mentioned Frequently**
>
> Peter is featured frequently in Mark's Gospel. As an example, Mark refers to Peter twenty six times in his short account, compared to Matthew who mentions Peter only three additional times in his much longer Gospel.
>
> **Peter Is Named By the Church Fathers**
>
> A number of early Church witnesses and authorities confirm Peter as the source for Mark's Gospel. Bishop Papias of Hierapolis (60-130AD) repeated the testimony of the old presbyters (disciples of the Apostles) who claimed Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome as he scribed the preaching of Peter (Ecclesiastical History Book

> 2 Chapter 15, Book 3 Chapter 30 and Book 6 Chapter 14). In his book, “Against Heresies” (Book 3 Chapter 1), Irenaeus (130-200AD) also reported Mark penned his Gospel as a scribe for Peter. Clement of Alexandria (150-215AD) wrote a book entitled “Hypotyposeis” (Ecclesiastical History Book 2 Chapter 15). In this ancient book, Clement confirmed Mark was the scribe of Peter in Rome. Early Christian theologian and apologist, Tertullian (160-225AD), also affirmed Peter’s contribution to Mark’s Gospel in “Against Marcion” (Book 4 Chapter 5). Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History Book 6 Chapter 25) also quoted a Gospel Commentary written by Origen (an early church father and theologian who lived 185-254AD) attributing the Gospel of Mark to Peter.
>
> **Peter’s Embarrassments Have Been Omitted**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter’s special input and influence,including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It’s important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It’s not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter’s standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters ‘indiscretions’ in their own accounts. See *Cold-Case Christianity* for a more detailed explanation).

The last one is my favorite, because it makes me laugh to imagine Peter looking over Mark’s shoulder and saying “no, don’t put that in it” and “no, don’t tell them I did that”. Funny!

If you want to listen to a podcast about this, where J. Warner Wallace goes over all the evidence, you can find the podcast here. It’s one of the older ones (I like them better) so it goes 90 minutes.

Bernie Sanders' $18 trillion spending plan will double the national debt

September 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

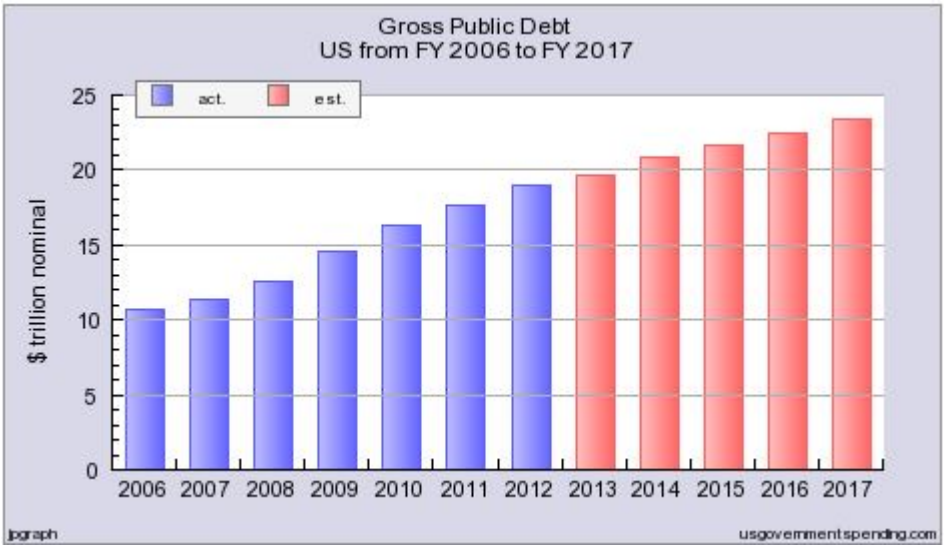

Gross public debt, Democrats control spending in 2007

It's election time, and Democrat politicians like Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders are busy promising the moon to their supporters.

Here's what Democrat voters want from their candidates:

Transcript:

> Let's go to audio sound bites, this week here's a portion of Ken Rogulski reporting on WJR in Michigan, two people here in line for Obama cash.
>
> ROGULSKI: Why are you here?
>
> WOMAN #1: To get some money.
>
> ROGULSKI: What kind of money?
>
> WOMAN #1: Obama money.
>
> ROGULSKI: Where's it coming from?
>
> WOMAN #1: Obama.
>
> ROGULSKI: And where did Obama get it?
>
> WOMAN #1: I don't know, his stash. I don't know. (laughter) I don't know where he got it from, but he givin' it to us, to help us.
>
> WOMAN #2: And we love him.
>
> WOMAN #1: We love him. That's why we voted for him!
>
> WOMEN: (chanting) Obama! Obama! Obama! (laughing)

The two women are from Detroit, Michigan. Surprised? Detroit has been run by Democrats for decades, and that's why it's bankrupt. It's not Republicans who run these

cities into the ground – it's Democrats, and their Democrat economic policies.

I don't think these women are any different than your typical Hollywood high-school dropout actress, or your typical trial lawyer, or your typical unionized auto worker, or your typical MSNBC news anchor, or your typical professor of Marxist Studies. Democrats across all education levels and professions and levels of income have literally no idea how jobs are created. They have no idea how wealth is created. They just want to steal money from their neighbors, money that they didn't earn themselves.

So it's no wonder that they love what socialist candidate Bernie Sanders is telling them.

The Wall Street Journal – which knows something about business and economics – has done an analysis of how much the socialist agenda of Bernie Sanders will cost. The final price tag? $18 trillion dollars!

Read it:

> Sen. Bernie Sanders, whose liberal call to action has propelled his long-shot presidential campaign, is proposing an array of new programs that would amount to the largest peacetime expansion of government in modern American history.
>
> In all, he backs at least $18 trillion in new spending over a decade, according to a tally by The Wall Street Journal, a sum that alarms conservatives and gives even many Democrats pause. Mr. Sanders sees the money as going to essential government services at a time of increasing strain on the middle class.
>
> […]To pay for it, Mr. Sanders, a Vermont independent running for the Democratic nomination, has so far detailed **tax increases that could bring in as much as $6.5 trillion over 10 years**, according to his staff.
>
> A campaign aide said additional tax proposals would be offered to offset the cost of some, and possibly all, of his health program. A Democratic proposal for such a "single-payer" health plan, now in Congress, would be funded in part through **a new payroll tax on employers and workers**, with the trade-off being that employers would no longer have to pay for or arrange their workers' insurance.

Investors Business Daily has more to say about Sanders' proposals:

> His "Medicare for All" single-payer health plan alone would cost roughly $15 trillion over a decade.
>
> He wants the government to provide "universal" child care and pre-kindergarten programs, along with free tuition at any public college, and proposes spending an additional $1 trillion on infrastructure and expanding Social Security by $1.2 trillion. Add up just these and a few other items on Sanders' list, and price tag tops $18 trillion over a decade.
>
> […]And this doesn't count the massive costs of mandates and regulations Sanders wants to impose on businesses, such as a $15 minimum wage, plus mandatory paid medical leave, vacations and sick days.
>
> He'd also make it far easier for unions to organize.

Keep in mind that when Obama became president, the national debt was about $8 trillion. Now it's $18.5 trillion, thanks to the Democrats. And if Bernie Sanders is elected, it will go to over $36.5 trillion! Who is going to pay for all this government spending? It won't be illegal immigrants and ISIS "refugees". It's going to be you, your spouse, and your kids.

I am really hoping I can retire to a less demanding job before the Democrats force plans like this on all of us. When people like Sanders are in control, the worse thing you can do is work hard for a high income. You don't want to be responsible for a homeschooling wife and mother, and a lot of kids that you are raising yourself. I understand that socialists want to take children away from parents as early as possible and communally raise them in day care and public schools. But that's not what I am going to work to pay for. I am going to work to pay for *my plan*. I am not going to work to pay secularists to indoctrinate my kids in their false worldview. I don't want to be a slave to the secular government. When I go to work, it's for my plan, not for tyrants like Bernie Sanders to run my life.

Baby elephant in China cries for 5 hours after being stomped by his mom

September 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

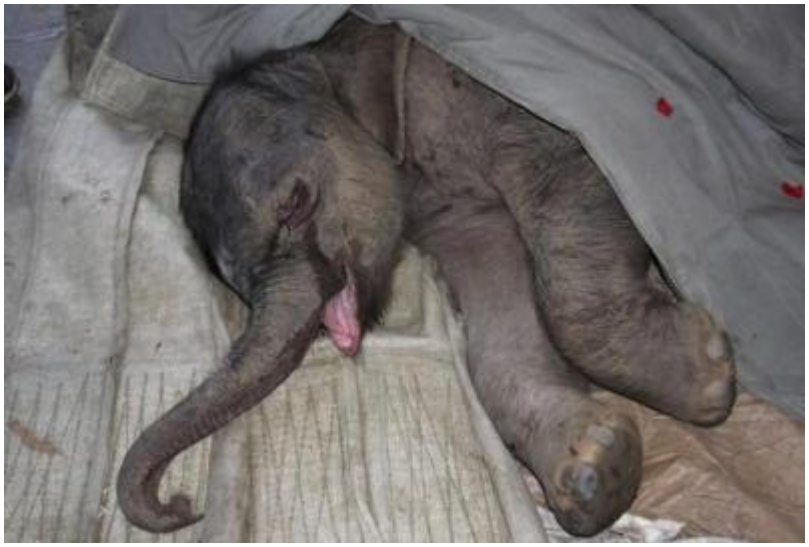

Baby elephant cries after being attacked by his own mother
From the New York Daily News. (Printable version linked)

Excerpt:

> Little Zhuangzhuang, a newborn elephant at a wildlife refuge in China, was inconsolable after his mother rejected him and then tried to stomp him to death.
>
> Tears streamed down his gray trunk for five hours as zookeepers struggled to comfort the baby elephant.
>
> They initially thought it was an accident when the mom stepped on him after giving birth, according to the Central European News agency.
>
> Employees removed him, cleaned him up and treated his injuries, then reunited the baby with his momma.
>
> But she was having none of it, and began stomping him again.
>
> So the game keepers stepped in once more and permanently separated the two.
>
> “We don’t know why the mother turned on her calf but we couldn’t take a chance,” an employee told CEN.
>
> “The calf was very upset and he was crying for five hours before he could be consoled,” he said.
>
> “He couldn’t bear to be parted from his mother and it was his mother who was trying to kill him.”
>
> The petite pachyderm, born in August, is now doing well. The zookeeper who rescued him from his violent mother adopted him and helped him thrive at the Shendiaoshan wild animal reserve in Rong-cheng, China.

I found another photo of the baby elephant here:

A baby elephant's birthday is supposed to be happy
And Sun News added this:

> Elephants rejecting their young is not uncommon, either in captivity or in the wild. In 2004, baby elephant Keemaya died at the Calgary Zoo after its mother refused to care for it.

I guess a lot of my views on ethics are rooted in the obvious needs that children have. When I look at an unborn baby, I can tell what it needs. So, I am careful not to cause a pregnancy before I can supply its needs. The needs of the little unborn creature are driving these moral boundaries on me. And the same with born children. I oppose gay marriage because when I look at little children, I want them to have a stable environment to grow up in with a mother and father who are biologically related to them (in the best case). I permit lots of arrangements, but I promote one arrangement over the others because that's what's best for children. Anyone can look at unborn and born children and see that, just like anyone can look at a crying baby elephant and understand – "I have to govern my behavior so that I don't hurt you". If that means cutting off the premarital sex and making decisions that are likely to produce a stable marriage, then that's what we should do.

Children cry too, you know. They cry when we hurt them. They cry when we make bad decisions and when we don't provide them with what they need. Children need mothers and fathers who care about them. Making a safe environment for a child isn't an accident. It isn't random and unpredictable. We have to control our desires before we have children, so that we provide children with what they need. It would be nice if men and women were more thoughtful and unselfish about *children* and *marriage* before they started in with sex.

Darrell Bock and Eric Chabot discuss the challenges of campus ministry

September 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

My good friend Eric Chabot did an episode of the The Table podcast, which is the culture podcast of Dallas Theological Seminary. Eric does campus ministry at Ohio State University, one of the largest universities in the United States. He has a frontline view of the challenges that Christians face on campus, which is a battle I am *so passionate* about.

Here's the podcast:

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- 00:15 What does a typical RC meeting look like at Ohio State?
- 02:44 Key social issues facing Ohio students
- 05:30 How do you engage with the same-sex issue on campus?
- 11:01 How do you engage with political issues on campus?
- 13:08 How do you engage with social justice issues on campus?
- 16:19 How would you describe the Christian environment on campus?
- 18:33 Advice for parents considering Ohio State for their child

I give this podcast and the discussion my highest recommendation. It's so practical, and so different from what you hear in church from pastors who seem to be totally unaware of how worldviews conflict on the university campus. This podcast is practical and hands-on.

There is also a transcript (PDF).

I just want to excerpt a few questions to get you interested enough to listen:

> Dr. Darrell Bock:

> Ok. Well, that's the intellectual background. Let's move on to the other questions I told you we were going to discuss. The social pressures of campus? This, and I've done a handful of these interviews, in fact I think you're the 5th or 6th campus that we've done.
>
> We've done UCLA, UC Irvine, California, San Diego, A&M and Princeton, and the interesting thing is that as we move from campus to campus and I go to social issues, that – those kind of are more varied than the intellectual stuff. The intellectual stuff seems to be pretty consistent from campus to campus.
>
> But the social challenges really are a reflection of the environment of the campus itself and certain emphasis are tied to certain campuses. So, what are the social challenges that students face in terms of their walk at Ohio State?

And:

> Dr. Darrell Bock:
>
> Ok. Well, let's turn our attention to the final two questions that I want to be sure and get through, and that is you're giving advice – let's start with parents – you're giving advice to parents. They're thinking about, you know, sending their kid to Ohio State.
>
> What do you regard as the, as keys for the preparation of that student that a parent should be thinking about? Perhaps in particular, thinking about their junior and senior years, they're getting ready to think about college and the way you prepare a student for college and the choices and the freedom that they're gonna fall into. How do you, what advice would you give to parents?

And:

> Dr. Darrell Bock:
>
> Ok. This may seem like a related question, but I do think the demands are slightly different and that is what advice do you give to youth leaders and to pastors as they are preparing kids who are going through their church programs for university?
> And here, I sorta have in mind what kinds of things would you hope a youth leader who's dealing with high school students, what kinds of issues do you hope that they're dealing with and treating so that the student is prepared for the campus experience?

That's why I focus so much on same-sex marriage and politics on this blog. We really have to explain to young people why natural marriage is best, and why the free enterprise system is best. We are seeing now the challenge that the combination of same-sex marriage and big secular government (socialism) poses for religious liberty.

Bobby Jindal won first CNN debate, Carly and Rubio win second CNN debate

September 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNN Debate at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

First of all, if you missed the two debates on CNN on Wednesday night, you missed two great political debates. Hugh Hewitt asked great questions of the candidates. Jake Tapper and Dana Bash were slightly biased against Republicans. Really both debates were so good, and a million times better than the two Fox News debates. There were no gotcha questions, there were plenty of issue-focused exchanges between the candidate.

First debate:

Here's an exchange between Jindal and Graham:

Jindal: "If we can't defund Planned Parenthood… It is time to be done with the Republican Party."

JIndal on Trump and Obama:

Jindal: "He's declared war on trans fats, and a truce with Iran. Think about that – he's more worried about Twinkies than he is about the Ayatollahs having a nuclear weapon!"

Jindal on the refugee crisis and illegal immigration:

Jindal: "Simply allowing more people into this country doesn't solve this problem."

Jindal on radical Islam, and discrimination against Christians in America:

Jindal: "In America … right now, the biggest discrimination going on is against Christian business owners and individuals who believe in traditional forms of marriage."

Here are my ratings, candidates in red are the ones I support.

First debate grades:

- **Bobby Jindal: A-**
- Lindsay Graham: B+
- Rick Santorum: C
- George Pataki: D

Jindal went after Trump hard, but didn't talk enough about policy and his own record. LIndsay Graham was solid on foreign policy. He is far too liberal on fiscal issues and social issues, and especially on illegal immigration. Graham is one of the most establishment RINOs in the Senate. It was fun watching Jindal take him on. Jindal is still my favorite candidate, and I hope he gets a bump in the polls from his debate performance.

Second debate:

Carly Fiorina on Planned Parenthood:

Marco Rubio on foreign policy:

If you watch only one clip, watch this one – Rubio and Christie on global warming:

Ted Cruz on illegal immigration:

Scott Walker on minimum wage, jobs and Obamacare:

Second debate grades:

- Carly Fiorina: A
- **Marco Rubio: A**
- Chris Christie: B+
- **Ted Cruz: B**
- **Scott Walker: B-**
- Ben Carson: C+
- Jeb Bush: C+
- Rand Paul: C
- Mike Huckabee: C
- John Kasich: D
- Donald Trump: F

Fiorina solid on the facts, but took a few hits on her record at Hewlett Packard, which was not good. She is much too liberal and inexperienced for me, but she talks about these issues very seriously. I am more conservative than she is on abortion, marriage, religious liberty, criminal justice, and many other issues. She has no record of achievement as a governor, either. Marco Rubio is amazing at foreign policy, and knocked a question on global warming out of the park. I love to see a Republican explain the global warming issue so that people understand what is at stake. Rand Paul made some great points about federalism, which I think was valuable in explain conservative principles to the CNN audience.

I'm glad to see that Erick Erickson of the grassroots site Red State agrees with me on the winner of the first debate, and the winners of the second debate.

For a good review of the second debate, here's something from The Weekly Standard and

a new episode of the The Weekly Standard podcast, as well.

My top 4 candidates are still Jindal, Walker, Cruz, Rubio.

Is Obamacare working? State exchanges losing enrollees in 29 states

September 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He’s better at golf than health care policy

This article is from the Daily Caller, and was pointed out to me by one of my secular leftist co-workers.

It says:

> Obamacare exchanges had a net loss total of 238,119 enrollees in 29 states and the District of Columbia within the three-month period between the end of March and end of June.
>
> According to analysis the Washington-based Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), numbers released from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) show that enrollment in all 50 states and DC as of June 31 is at 9.9 million. This number is down from 10.2 million on March 31.
>
> Florida lost 101,091 enrollees, Georgia 34,925, North Carolina 32,300, Pennsylvania 29,487, Texas 23,194, New Jersey 14,273, Indiana 13,268, and Arizona 10,905.
>
> “The poor performance of the program is bad news for the long-term sustainability of the federal and state Obamacare exchanges given their reliance on paying enrollees to meet costs,” ATR explained.
>
> “Exchanges typically fund their operations through a fee on premiums: the

> federal exchange that provides 37 states with coverage charges a 3.5 percent premium, while state exchanges are free to choose their own rate. Fewer enrollees could signal the beginning of a death spiral for the Obamacare exchanges," according to ATR.
>
> Many state exchanges, however, are also reportedly in disarray. Reason Magazine reports that while the federal government "spent billions on creating Obamacare's exchanges" it did not track the money appropriately, and many of the state-run exchanges are not working.
>
> According to a Government Accountability Office report, only Vermont completed work on technology to send data to the IRS, while only 10 other states were partially complete. Additionally, Hawaii and Minnesota performed no testing at all on their exchange systems.

Government shouldn't be running health care, that is something best left to health care specialists in the free market, who have skin in the game and have to compete with other providers in order to produce products and services that people actually want. It's not working, and it's costing us too much to move forward with a failed plan.

Are the poor in America really poor?

September 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at the data

This article is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Today, the Census Bureau will release its annual poverty report. It will almost certainly report that over 40 million Americans "live in poverty."
>
> But what does it mean to be poor in America? To the average American, the word "poverty" suggests significant material deprivation. But the actual living conditions of those the government defines as poor differ greatly from this perception.
>
> According to the government's own reports, the typical American defined as poor by the Census Bureau has a car, air conditioning, and cable or satellite TV. Half of the poor have computers, 43 percent have Internet, and 40 percent have a wide-screen plasma or LCD TV.
>
> Far from being overcrowded, poor Americans have more living space in their home than the average non-poor person in Western Europe. Some 42 percent of all poor households actually own their own homes; on average, this is a well-maintained three-bedroom house with one and a half baths, a garage, and a porch or patio.
>
> According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, only 4 percent of poor children were hungry for even a single day in the prior year because the family could not afford food. By its own report, the average poor person had sufficient funds to meet all essential needs and was able to obtain medical care for his family throughout the year whenever needed.
>
> The left likes to claim that the U.S. has far more poverty than other advanced nations. But those claims are based on comparisons that set a higher standard for escaping poverty in the U.S. than elsewhere.

> When a single uniform standard is used, the U.S. is shown to have poverty rates that are very similar to other advanced nations, slightly higher or lower depending on the exact measure used.

I think we definitely want to be careful about the outcry on the secular left about “poverty”. Their solution always seems to be that we need to move in the direction of socialism. And socialism means that the government gets bigger by taking money and liberty away from families, churches and businesses.

As a Christian, my goals are all gospel-centric. My interest in politics is because I want to live in a society that respects my right to work, earn and save, so that I can spend and give in a way that advances the gospel. My job is not to transfer my money to lazy people in their dependence on government. I go to work so that I can have the fuel I need to respect God in my decision-making. The secular government is interested in other goals – like getting elected. I don’t want them using my money for their goals. I have my own goals.

How Christianity shaped Margaret Thatcher's conservative politics

September 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan

This is from the Daily Signal, and is really recommended for Christians who are tempted by the policies of the left.

Check it:

> Few people are aware that former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, one of the foremost politicians of the 20th century, was a lay Methodist preacher before she entered politics.
>
> There has been very little examination into the role that her Christian faith played in her politics.
>
> "Economics is the method; the object is to change the soul," Thatcher once declared, revealing that the way she conceived her free-market ideology was as much about transforming values as about improving Britain's ailing GDP.
>
> More profoundly, there was a strong religious basis to Thatcher's politics—one that stemmed from her strict Methodist upbringing and, more specifically, the chief influence in her life, her father, who was a greengrocer, councilor, and Wesleyan lay preacher.
>
> In sourcing the origins of her free-market ideology, it is not in the pages of Frederick von Hayek's "Road to Serfdom" or Milton Friedman's monetarist theory where we find the answer, but in the sermon notes of her father, Alf Roberts.
>
> Contained within his sermons, one finds the theological basis of what would later become the cornerstones of Thatcherism: an individualistic interpretation of the Bible, a nod to the spiritual dangers of avarice, praise of the Protestant work ethic, virtues of thrift and self-reliance, and finally, a divine justification for

> individual liberty and the free market.
>
> In short, Thatcherism always owed more to Methodism than to Monetarism.
>
> Thatcher herself was a preacher before she formally entered politics while a student at Oxford University. Even though she later transferred this missionary energy from the pulpit to the podium, her religious values remained an underlying core.
>
> Indeed, on becoming leader of the Conservative Party in 1975, Thatcher (much like Ronald Reagan) saw it as her chief mission to completely undermine the moral credibility of socialism and communism and reconnect the broken link between Protestant and capitalist values in Britain.
>
> Preaching from the pulpit on several occasions, Thatcher unashamedly asserted the Biblical case for the sovereignty of individual liberty and the "invisible hand."
>
> "Do not be tempted to identify virtue with collectivism," she preached from the pulpit of St. Lawrence Jewry Church in London in 1978. "I wonder whether the State services would have done as much for the man who fell among the thieves as the Good Samaritan did for him." According to Thatcher, "[i]t was to individuals that the Ten Commandments were addressed." She continued, "We are called on to repent our own sins, not each others'."
>
> "What mattered," in her words, "was Man's relationship to God."
>
> Thatcher's interpretation was that as Christianity was a call to men individually, so it should follow that political choices reside with the citizen rather than the state.

"The Road to Serfdom" and "Free to Choose" are two of my favorite economics books, and very suitable for laymen. If an understanding of the free enterprise system isn't yet part of your Christian worldview, it might be a good idea to get studying! After all, Christians are not concerned with policies that make us *feel good* regarding the poor. We are concerned with policies that actually *do good* for the poor. There is a big difference.

Is Carly Fiorina conservative? How can you tell if a candidate is conservative?

September 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Carly Fiorina outperforms at first GOP primary debate

A lot of my friends are getting very excited about Carly Fiorina, and some of them are wondering why she is not on my list. Well, it's because this is the primary season, and I am looking for someone who 1) is as conservative as me, and 2) has got achievements at advancing a conservative agenda. The key point being that just because a person is outraged at Planned Parenthood cutting into live-born babies, that isn't the same as being pro-life through all 9 months of pregnancy, except for the case where the life of the mother is threatened.

To take one example, her view of religious liberty is not as conservative as mine, but it isn't horrible either. Here she is on the Hugh Hewitt show explaining her view:

> HH: And let me close our conversation by throwing a hard one at you. There's a Kentucky county clerk today. She's refusing to issue licenses to same-sex marriage couples. She's in comtempt of court in essence. What would your advice be to her?
>
> CF: First, I think that we must protect religious liberties with great passion and be willing to expend a lot of political capital to do so now because it's clear religious liberty is under assault in many, many ways. Having said that, when you are a government employee, I think you take on a different role. When you are a government employee as opposed to say, an employee of another kind of

> organization, then in essence, you are agreeing to act as an arm of the government. And, while I disagree with this court's decision, their actions are clear. And so I think in this particular case, this woman now needs to make a decision that's [about] conscience: Is she prepared to continue to work for the government, be paid for by the government in which case she needs to execute the government's will, or does she feel so strongly about this that she wants to severe her employment with the government and go seek employment elsewhere where her religious liberties would be paramount over her duties as as government employee.
>
> HH: You don't counsel that she continue civil disobedience?
>
> CF: Given the role that she's playing. Given the fact that the government is paying her salary, I think that is not appropriate. Now that's my personal opinion. Others may disagree with that, but I think it's a very different situation for her than someone in a hospital who's asked to perform an abortion or someone at a florist who's asked to serve a gay wedding. I think when you're a government employee, you are put into a different position honestly.

That's a view that I can vote for if she is the Republican candidate, but not a view that I prefer when we are still in the GOP primary election. There are better candidates who have stuck their necks out further to champion causes I care about, like religious liberty and natural marriage.

I took a look at Carly's record using this "On the Issues" web site and was surprised to see that Carly advocates positions more to the right than expected, but still to the left of my favored candidates. She is definitely a Republican, and her stated views are "good enough" for me to enthusiastically support her against any Democrat.

She's definitely more conservative on same-sex marriage, taxes, abortion, gun control, health care, energy policy than I thought, but not quite as conservative as Jindal, Walker, and Cruz on some of those issues. The only real red flag I saw was supporting the DREAM Act. But she is definitely a Republican, and much more so than people like Romney, Kasich, McCain,, Lindsay Graham.

I really wish that more Republican voters would look at sites like On The Issues, and other sites that grade conservatives like Club for Growth, National Taxpayer Union, the National Rifle Association, and the National Right to Life Committee (PDF), in order to see who the best candidates are from their actions – not from their words during debates, campaign ads, campaign stump speeches, etc. Even a libertarian site like the Cato Institute, which embraces immorality on social issues, has good ratings of governors on fiscal issues (PDF). A person is defined by how they engage in enterprises, not by what they say when asked. Where do you put your money and time? What have you fought for? What have you achieved? You can't judge a candidate by words and how the words are stated in campaign ads, campaign speeches, or debates – although debating and speaking are important for winning in the general election.

So, where do I stand? I am looking for conservatives who have won long, drawn out fights

to get conservative reforms passed. That’s why Carly Fiorina is not on my list of candidates – because I have not seen her leading and achieving in the areas I care about. Her stated views are conservative enough, but now is the time for me to push for the candidates I really want. I have nothing bad to say about her, though, and will support her if she is the GOP candidate. But for now, I’m pushing for Jindal, Walker, and Cruz. I am also OK with Rubio, mostly because, like Santorum, he is so good on foreign policy.

Barack Obama vows to veto any bill that cuts off funding for Planned Parenthood

September 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama speaking to Planned Parenthood

How radical are Democrats on making sure that pro-life taxpayers fund for-profit live-birth organ-harvesting operations? Very radical.

Life News reports on it:

> The White House has issued a Statement of Administration Policy vowing to veto a new pro-life bill the House of Representatives will vote on tomorrow that would hold the Planned Parenthood abortion business criminally liable for harvesting body parts from aborted babies who are technically still alive.
>
> The center for Medical Progress has released 10 videos catching and exposing Planned Parenthood officials selling aborted babies and their body parts. One of the most shocking videos caught the nation's biggest abortion business harvesting the brain of an aborted baby who was still alive.
>
> The Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, sponsored by pro-life Congressman Trent Franks would make failure to provide standard medical care to children born alive during an abortion a federal crime. It would also apply stronger penalties in cases where an overt act is taken to kill the abortion survivor.
>
> But the Obama administration says President Barack Obama would veto the

> measure.

Before he was elected in 2008, Obama had a record of supporting abortions for babies who were born alive.

More:

> As pro-life Congressman Chris Smith explains, this has Obama on record once again opposing care for babies born alive who survive abortions. Obama clearly either believes that killing babies after they are born is a reasonable part of an abortion or he fears that abortion companies like Planned Parenthood would stop doing abortions before they would be willing to comply with a requirement to save the babies that survive them.
>
> “Late yesterday the President demonstrated that his subservience to Planned Parenthood is absolute and without question,” said Smith. “Blindly following the orders of Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the country, the President issued an extreme unequivocal statement that he would veto the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, a bill that simply says a child that survives an abortion must be given the same care as any other premature baby born at the same gestational age and forbidding acts of lethal violence against such babies.”

Isn’t it strange how so many people who claim to be Christians could vote for a man who believes so strongly in abortion?

Look:

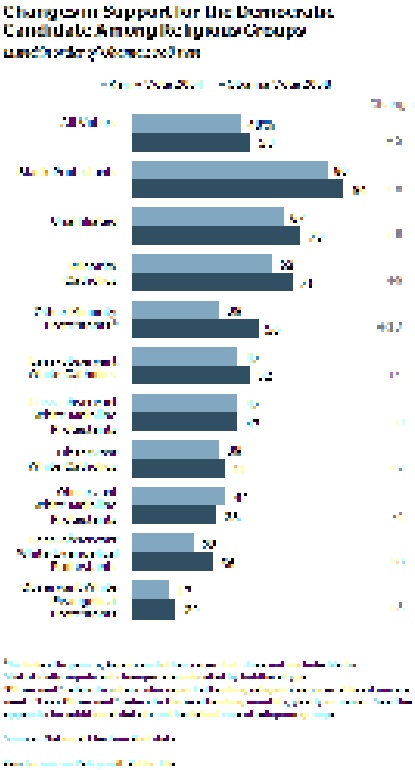

Which Religions Voted for Obama in 2008?

I guess we have to put these numbers down to the fact that for many people, religion is

about feeling good, and not about surrendering one's own selfishness in order to comply with the way the universe really is. "Thou shall not murder". Do we believe that? I think we believe in going church for fun and feelings, but when it comes to restricting our own selfishness in sexual areas, it's pretty clear that many people who claim to be Christians think that God's moral rules are just garbage. Barack Obama certainly believes that.

What does Obama's support for born-alive abortion and organ-harvesting say about his character? Well, it says that he is very comfortable with the idea of *slavery*, which is the idea that the strong should use and exploit the weak, and even kill the weak, if they get in the way of the strong enjoying themselves. He has no respect for the lives of other people if they get in his way, in short. Why did so many people who claim to be Christian for for such an extremist on abortion? If Obama had lived during the time of slaves, he would have owned slaves – it's very much in keeping with his character of exploiting the weak for profit, up to and including harvesting their organs – while they are still alive – for profit.

Anyway, that's interesting, but what's even more interesting is that both Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton won't watch the Planned Parenthood videos.

Barack Obama:

> At last night's Republican presidential debate, pro-life candidate Carly Fiorina dares pro-abortion President Barack Obama and abortion activist Hillary Clinton to watch the shocking expose' videos showing Planned Parenthood selling aborted babies and their body parts.
>
> "I dare Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama to watch these tapes," Fiorina said, referencing the 10 undercover videos that showed how Planned Parenthood sells aborted babies and their body parts.
>
> She continued: "Watch a fully formed fetus on the table, its heart beating, its legs kicking, while someone says we have to keep it alive to harvest its brain. This is about the character of our nation, and if we will not stand up in and force President Obama to veto this bill, shame on us."
>
> Today, White House spokesman Josh Earnest refused to say if Obama would watch the videos. Earnest says he has no reaction to the "dare" put up by Fiorina.
>
> Instead, according to a transcript LifeNews.com received of his comments to the press, Earnest defended taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood.

But he's not the only one.

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Hillary Clinton:

> Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton would not say if she has watched the graphic videos from Planned Parenthood.
>
> Clinton, appearing on “Situation Room With Wolf Blitzer” Thursday, instead dodged the question and insisted that Planned Parenthood “deserves not only our support but the continuing funding from the federal government so that these women and girls who are seeking the kinds of services that are provided will be able to achieve that.”

The other Democrats running for President are all strongly pro-abortion as well.

It’s important for us all to understand that Democrats are not nice people. They are nice to people who they want to vote for them, if you think that giving someone else’s money to Democrat voters is nice. But they are not nice to people in the womb, who have no value to them. If they can exchange the lives of unborn children for votes from those who value recreational sex without personal responsibility, they will do it.

Greg Koukl explains the right way to handle an angry, aggressive atheist

September 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Greg Koukl is one of the scholars who got me started in apologetics. In his "Solid Ground" newsletter for January/February 2009, he talked about dealing with angry, aggressive atheists.

Let's start with the question "what is a steamroller?":

> The defining characteristic of a "steamroller" is that he constantly interrupts, rolling over you with the force of his personality. Steamrollers are not usually interested in answers. They are interested in winning through intimidation.

Greg breaks down the techniques for handling steamrollers in 3 steps.

Step 1: Stop Him.

> Your first move when you find yourself in a conversation with a steamroller is a genial request for courtesy. Momentarily put the discussion on "pause." Ask to continue making your point uninterrupted.

One of the ways you can do that is using body language. You can raise your hand in the stop motion to emphasize your verbal attempt to pause the conversation so that you can finish responding. Ask for a specific amount of time to make your point, and make sure that you him to agree that you will get that time to respond! But the most important thing is to *not lose your temper.*

> Be careful not to let annoyance or hostility creep into your voice. That would be a mistake, especially with this kind of person. Don't let a steamroller get under your skin. Being defensive and belligerent always looks weak. Instead, stay

> focused on the issues, not on the attitude. Talk calmly and try to look confident.
>
> …don't take unfair advantage of the time you buy with this little negotiation. Make your point, then ask, "Does that make sense to you?" This invites him back into the conversation. Give him the courtesy of offering you a reply without interruption.

I hear J.P. Moreland saying "Does that make sense to you?" all the time in his lectures, and now I've started doing it too! And so should you! But what if "stopping him" doesn't work? Then we go on to step 2.

Step 2: Shame Him.

Suppose the steamroller interrupts you again during your negotiation response time. You want to gently draw attention to the fact that he is being rude and intimidating in the conversation. Again, the goal is not to show the slightest discomfort, but always to act with confidence.

Phase two of the Steamroller tactic is to shame him for his bad manners while maintaining your integrity. Stay on topic and don't follow any "rabbit trails" he may voice.

That point about not taking on any new questions until you finish answering the first one is vital. Every time you make a point about the progress of science, they start complaining about how cruel God is to allow evil and/or send people to Hell. You have to get them to be patient while you answer their first question, before they can move on to the next.

Below is example of how to do step 2:

> "Can I ask you a quick question? Do you really want a response from me? At first I thought you did, but when you continue to interrupt I get the impression all you want is an audience. If so, just let me know and I'll listen. But if you want an answer, you'll have to give me time to respond. Tell me what you want. I need to know before I can continue." Wait for an answer.

Part of becoming a good ambassador is knowing how to gauge your opponent, and how much force you should use. Practice, practice! But suppose even step 2 doesn't work. What should we do now?

Step 3: Leave Him.

The most difficult thing to do is to break off a defense, especially when there are people around listening in or even participating. Usually you do this when the person is moving the wrong way on the aggression scale. Greg cites a number of Bible verses to show that the Bible does support this kind of strategic withdrawal from an engagement that is going the wrong way.

Conclusion

The article concludes with some very useful points. First, you don't have to win every debate. Just make your point and then let the Holy Spirit handle it from there. It is a mistake to think that you can change people's minds just by talking to them at more and

more. Mind changing usually happens much later, as the person weights both sides of the issues. So don’t rush, and remember, God values free will.

Second, always give an aggressive challenger the last word.

And let me just reiterate – do not lose your cool. A lot of arguing relates to your attitude under fire, especially for beginners who judge debates not on the evidence, but on appearances. You need to spend time studying in advance in order to get this confidence, *and I do mean studying both sides, by studying debates.* Under fire, the confidence you’ve gained through study, especially the study of debates, is more effective than your words.

House Republicans pass bill to defund Planned Parenthood

September 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I support these two pro-life bills

Actually there are two bills. The first Republican bill blocks Planned Parenthood from getting federal funds, because they harvest organs from born-alive babies. The second Republican bill holds Planned Parenthood *criminally responsible* for born-alive abortions. The Democrats are opposed to both defunding Planned Parenthood and preventing born-alive abortions. So this is a real battle.

Anyway, let's see the first story, from Life News.

It says:

> The House of Representatives voted today for legislation that would temporarily de-fund Planned Parenthood while an investigation continues into it s sale of aborted babies and their body parts.
>
> **The House voted 241 to 187 for the bill with 239 Republicans voting for the bill to defund the Planned Parenthood abortion business and 3 Democrats joining them. Three Republicans voted against the defunding bill while 183 Democrats voted against it.** Republican Steve King of Iowa vote present.
>
> Rep. Diane Black, a Tennessee Republican who is the pro-life lawmaker sponsoring the legislation and a nurse for more than 40 years, sponsored the legislation. The bill would freeze Planned Parenthood funding for one year while

> Congress conducts an investigation into its sales of aborted babies. The House vote would follow one the Senate had weeks ago, which saw Senate Democrats filibuster and block legislation to revoke $550 million in taxpayer funding. The Senate is expected to vote soon on a second attempt to de-fund Planned Parenthood.
>
> A new Congressional report finds that de-funding the Planned Parenthood abortion business — even for one year — would save "several thousand" unborn babies from the nightmare of abortion. The report also finds de-funding Planned Parenthood would save the federal government $235 million.
>
> During the debate, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy spoke on the House floor in defense of innocent human life and urged his colleagues to put a moratorium on Planned Parenthood funding in light of its barbaric practices.
>
> "So if we know that this organization performs hundreds of thousands of abortions per year and we know that women have access to other sources for care, the question is, should we force taxpayers to fund a business that spends its money aborting 327,653 children per year? Should we force taxpayers to fund an organization whose barbaric practices, as vividly shown in those videos, disregard and devalue the sanctity of the most innocent human lives?" he asked.
>
> He added: "There is no reason—absolutely no reason—that we must choose between funding women's health and compelling taxpayers to support abortion."
>
> Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-Texas) talked about how Planned Parenthood is not in the business of women's health care and is really just an abortion company.
>
> […]"In the history of Planned Parenthood, they have never, ever, ever done one mammogram, because they are not certified to do mammograms. They bring people in and refer them out to get their mammograms. So, for those of us –like in my case, three daughters and a wife of 37 years –look, I want good women's healthcare. So, let's fund it," he said. "But, let's give it directly to the facilities that will do the mammograms and not Planned Parenthood – for them to take their cut."
>
> **President Barack Obama has already threatened to veto the bill.**

Hillary Clinton also spoke out in favor of for-profit organ-harvesting from born-alive children.

> After today's House vote to de-fund the Planned Parenthood abortion business, Hillary Clinton took to twitter to adamantly defend taxpayer funding for the abortion company.

The second bill is even stronger than the first. It will hold Planned Parenthood responsible for performing abortions on born-alive babies.

Life News reports:

> The House of Representatives today approved a pro-life bill that would hold the

Planned Parenthood abortion business criminally liable for harvesting body parts from aborted babies who are technically still alive.

The center for Medical Progress has released 10 videos catching and exposing Planned Parenthood officials selling aborted babies and their body parts. One of the most shocking videos caught the nation's biggest abortion business harvesting the brain of an aborted baby who was still alive.

The Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, sponsored by pro-life Congressman Trent Franks would make failure to provide standard medical care to children born alive during an abortion a federal crime. It would also apply stronger penalties in cases where an overt act is taken to kill the abortion survivor.

[…]Congressman Chris Smith implored the House to pass the bill.

"Undercover videos by the Center for Medical Progress have again brought into sharp focus that some babies actually survive abortion," the New jersey congressman said.

"Dr. Savita Ginde, Medical Director of Planned Parenthood Rocky Mountains says 'sometimes we get—if someone delivers before we get to see them for a procedure—they are intact…' that is, Madame Speaker, born alive. Breathing, crying, gasping for air. One fetal tissue broker describes on the video watching a 'fetus …just fall out.' And left to die."

"We have a duty to protect these vulnerable children from violence, exploitation and death. Humanitarian due diligence requires that born alive babies be taken to a hospital to obtain care and enhance prospects of survival," Smith added. "Abortion clinics have no incentive whatsoever to save the child. Abortion clinics do not have neonatal intensive care units—they are in the business of killing babies, not saving them."

"The Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (H.R. 3504), authored by pro-life champion Trent Franks simply says any child who survives an abortion must be given the same care as any other premature baby born at the same gestational age. This legislation builds on the landmark Born Alive Infant Protection Act of 2002 authored by Steve Chabot by adding important enforcement provisions," he concluded.

The House voted 248 to 177 for the bill with 239 Republicans voting for the bill and 5 Democrats joining them. No Republicans voted against the pro-life bill while 177 Democrats voted against it. One member voted present.

A pro-life Senator says he will introduce the Senate version of the bill on Monday. Senator Ben Sasse told LifeNews.com that he will introduce companion legislation in the Senate when Congress resumes its work on Monday.

He said: "If this isn't the most non-controversial sentence in American politics,

> it’s time to check our national conscience: newborn babies must receive care and attention. Societies are judged by how we care for the vulnerable and surely anyone with a heart— regardless of where they stand on the abortion debate— should be able to agree that our laws should protect newborns. I’m grateful that a bipartisan majority of the House stood up for babies and I look forward to introducing companion legislation in the Senate next week.”
>
> **Despite passage of the bill, the Obama administration says President Barack Obama would veto the measure.**

Every time stories about how Obama will veto pro-life bills comes out, it makes me think of all the “Christians” who voted for him in 2008 and again in 2012. What will happen to them when God gets his hands on them? It was known during the election of 2008 that Obama had voted against a ban on born-alive abortions *four times* as a State senator in Illinois. I just think about how God will deal out punishment to the “Christians” who voted for him. Will he be most angry with them for voting for him for whatever reason? (e.g. – skin color or welfare, etc.) Or will he be most angry with their pastors for misleading them? Or will he be most angry with the national news media (e.g. – MSNBC) for refusing to inform the people about their chosen leftist candidate? Slavery and murder are serious crimes. There is plenty of blame to go around.

The bottom line is clear though… not everyone who comforts themselves with the idea that “God is love” will find God loving on that day.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

September 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (30 MB)

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the

first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Why does God let people suffer? Why is there so much evil in the world?

September 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

I just wanted to draw your attention to this 4 page essay by Joe Manzari, which is the best darn summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen. The problem of evil is an objection to the existence of God based on the presence of evil or suffering in the world. The arguments basically infer that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then there should not *be* any evil or suffering.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An exampel of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate

free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omnipotent being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order for the character of humans to develop through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to*

show that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that premise 2 is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil that we observe more compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.
   Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life. And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.
2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   We humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. Part of knowing God is knowing what he designed us to do – to love him and to love others. And so, the less we know about God, the more we stray from his design for our lives.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.

(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.
(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That's right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I've been through… but then, that's why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

How tidal effects improve the habitability of a planet

September 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

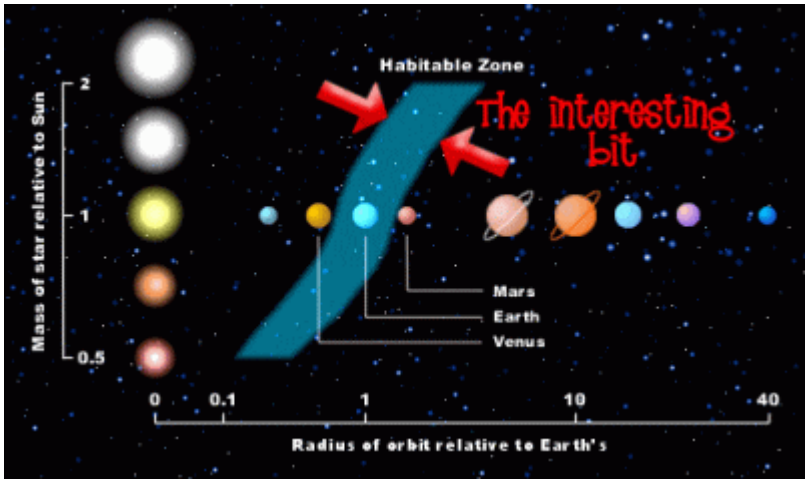

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

Science Daily reports on a new factor that affects planetary habitability: tides. Specifically, tides can affect the surface temperature of a planet, which has to be within a certain range in order to support liquid water – a requirement for life of any conceivable kind.

Excerpt:

> Tides can render the so-called "habitable zone" around low-mass stars uninhabitable. This is the main result of a recently published study by a team of astronomers led by René Heller of the Astrophysical Institute Potsdam.
>
> […]Until now, the two main drivers thought to determine a planet's temperature were the distance to the central star and the composition of the planet's atmosphere. By studying the tides caused by low-mass stars on their potential earth-like companions, Heller and his colleagues have concluded that tidal effects modify the traditional concept of the habitable zone.
>
> Heller deduced this from three different effects. Firstly, tides can cause the axis of a planet`s rotation to become perpendicular to its orbit in just a few million years. In comparison, Earth's axis of rotation is inclined by 23.5 degrees — an effect which causes our seasons. Owing to this effect, there would be no seasonal variation on such Earth-like planets in the habitable zone of low-mass stars. These planets would have huge temperature differences between their poles, which would be in perpetual deep freeze, and their hot equators which in the long run would evaporate any atmosphere. This temperature difference would cause extreme winds and storms.
>
> The second effect of these tides would be to heat up the exoplanet, similar to the tidal heating of Io, a moon of Jupiter that shows global vulcanism.
>
> Finally, tides can cause the rotational period of the planet (the planet's "day") to synchronize with the orbital period (the planet's "year"). This situation is identical

> to the Earth-moon setup: the moon only shows Earth one face, the other side being known as “the dark side of the moon.” As a result one half of the exoplanet receives extreme radiation from the star while the other half freezes in eternal darkness.
>
> The habitable zone around low-mass stars is therefore not very comfortable — it may even be uninhabitable.

Here is my previous post on the factors needed for a habitable planet. Now we just have one more. I actually find this article sort of odd, because my understanding of stars was that only high-mass stars could support life at all. This is because if the mass of the planet was too low, the habitable zone wouldbe very close to the star. Being too close to the star causes tidal locking, which means that the planet doesn’t spin on its axis at all, and the same side faces the star. This is a life killer.

This astrophysicist who teaches at the University of Wisconsin explains it better than me.

Excerpt:

> Higher-mass stars tend to be larger and luminous than their lower-mass counterparts. Therefore, their habitable zones are situated further out. In addition, however, their HZs are much broader. As an illustration,
>
> - a 0.2 solar-mass star’s HZ extends from 0.1 to 0.2 AU
> - a 1.0 solar-mass star’s HZ extends from 1 to 2 AU
> - a 40 solar-mass star’s HZ extends from 350 to 600 AU
>
> On these grounds, it would seem that high-mass starts are the best candidates for finding planets within a habitable zone. However, these stars emit most of their radiation in the far ultraviolet (FUV), which can be highly damaging to life, and also contributes to photodissociation and the loss of water. Furthermore, the lifetimes of these stars is so short (around 10 million years) that there is not enough time for life to begin.
>
> **Very low mass stars have the longest lifetimes of all, but their HZs are very close in and very narrow. Therefore, the chances of a planet being formed within the HZ are small. Additionally, even if a planet did form within the HZ, it would become tidally locked, so that the same hemisphere always faced the star. Even though liquid water might exist on such a planet, the climactic conditions would probably be too severe to permit life.**
>
> In between the high- and low-mass stars lie those like our own Sun, which make up about 15% percent of the stars in the galaxy. These have reasonably-broad HZs, do not suffer from FUV irradiation, and have lifetimes of the order of 10 billion years. Therefore, they are the best candidates for harbouring planets where life might be able to begin.

This guy is just someone I found through a web search. He has a support-the-unions-sticker on his web page, so he’s a liberal crackpot. But he makes my point, anyway, so that’s good enough for me.

Maybe the new discovery is talking about this now, but I already knew about the tides and habitability, because I watched The Privileged Planet DVD. Actually that whole video is online, and the clip that talks about the habitable zone and water is linked in this blog post I wrote before.

Scott Walker’s plan to reform public sector unions

September 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

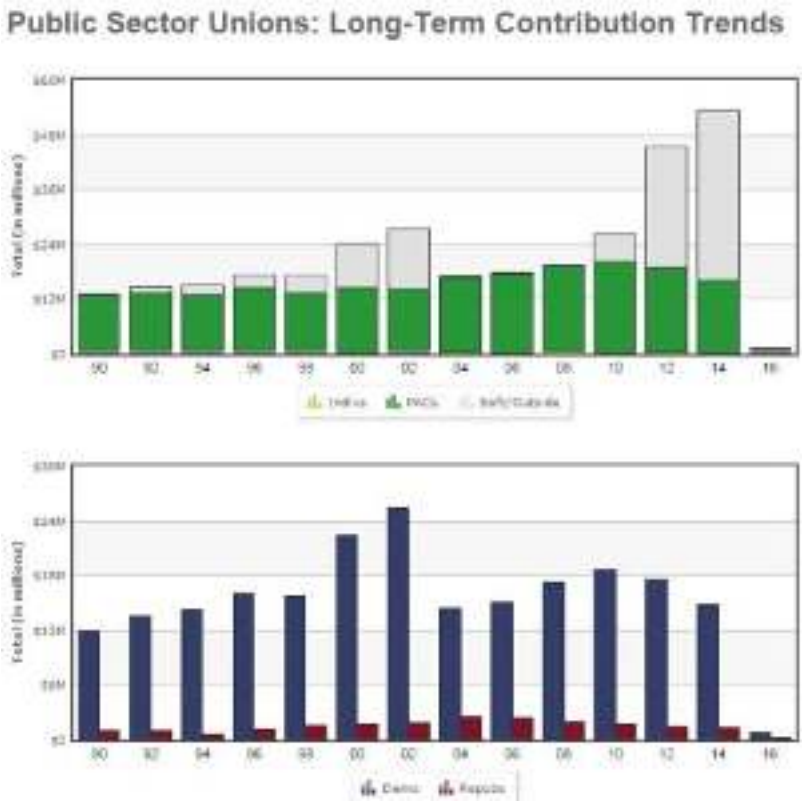

Political contributions to public sector unions (click for larger image)
(Source: OpenSecrets.org)

I am not sure if I really explained the importance of Scott Walker’s plan to rein in public sector unions in my last post.

Basically, public sector unions generate a lot of money from forced collection of union dues, and they turn around and use that money to donate to politicians who are in favor of growing government. Unions want bigger government, because they make more money if government grows.

This Wall Street Journal article explains that unions donate mostly to Democrats.

Excerpt:

> Corporations and their employees… tend to spread their donations fairly evenly between the two major parties, unlike unions, which overwhelmingly assist Democrats. In 2008, Democrats received 55% of the $2 billion contributed by corporate PACs and company employees, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Labor unions were responsible for $75 million in political donations, with 92% going to Democrats.

So how much money are we talking about?

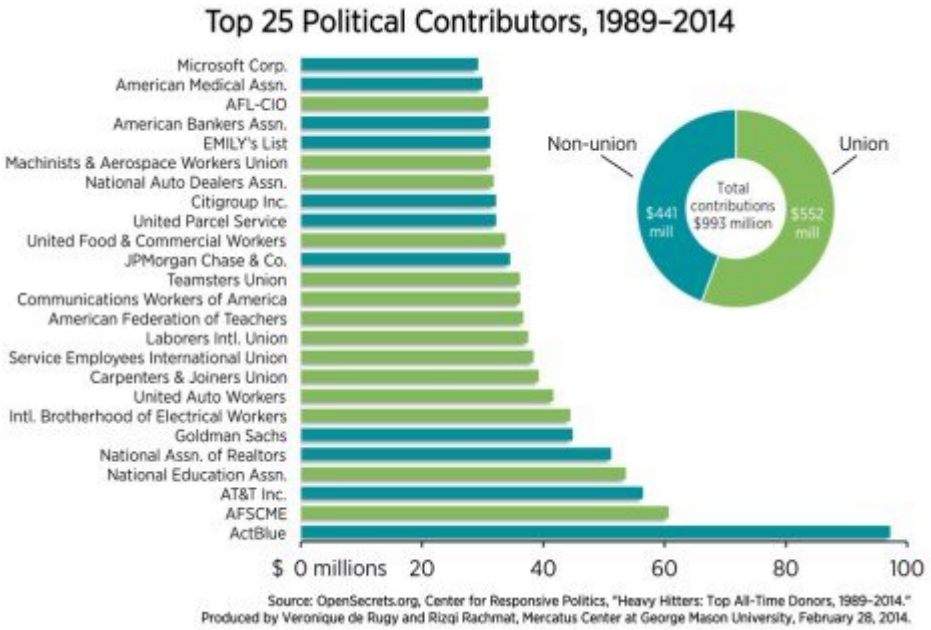

Total political contributions in 2014 election cycle (click for larger image)

To see how much unions control government, take a look at this story from National Review, written by economist Veronique to Rugy.

It says:

- The top campaign donor of the last 25 years is ActBlue, an online political-action committee dedicated to raising funds for Democrats. ActBlue's political contributions, which total close to $100 million, are even more impressive when one realizes that it was only launched in 2004. That's $100 million in ten years.
- Fourteen labor unions were among the top 25 political campaign contributors.
- Three public-sector unions were among the 14 labor groups: the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; the National Education Association; and the American Federation of Teachers. Their combined contributions amount to $150 million, or 15 percent of the top 25's approximately $1 billion in donations since 1989.
- Public- and private-sector unions contributed 55.6 percent — $552 million — of the top 25's contributions.

Where does the money go? The Daily Caller notes:

> "Nearly all of labor's 2012 donations to candidates and parties – 90 percent – went to Democrats," the report from CRP concluded. "Public sector unions, which include employees at all levels of government, donated $14.7 million to Democrats in 2014."

But someone has a plan to do something about this: Scott Walker.

This Investors Business Daily article by economist Veronique de Rugy explains what he would do to the unions if elected President in 2016.

She writes:

> Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker just proposed a plan to overhaul the country's labor laws, called "My Plan to Give Power to the People, Not the Union Bosses."
>
> It would do that by expanding employee choice and holding unions accountable to their members.
>
> One of the main underlying themes of the Republican presidential hopeful's private-sector reforms is transferring power and decision-making from unions to their members.
>
> For instance, the plan would guarantee employees' rights by strengthening secret-ballot elections. Under current law, unions have ways to work around the protections, making such elections less than secret. The change would protect workers from retaliation by not disclosing their choices to unions during workplace elections.
>
> Though federal laws outlaw extortion, the Supreme Court has ruled that they usually do not apply to unions. Walker's plan would change that to protect workers from threats, violence and extortion from unions.
>
> Similarly, his reforms would protect whistleblowers who report wrongdoing on the part of a union from being fired or discriminated against.
>
> […][Public sector unions]… also make the government less effective and more expensive.
>
> That's why a President Walker would work with Congress to prohibit public employee unions altogether. Meanwhile, he would implement taxpayer and paycheck protections.
>
> As Heritage Foundation labor economist James Sherk explained for National Review, "Walker proposes cracking down on the use of 'union time' — that is, allowing federal employees to work for their unions at taxpayer expense.
>
> "He also wants to stop unions from using federal resources to collect the portion of dues that they spend on political causes and lobbying."
>
> Walker's plan also would establish a nationwide right-to-work law, making voluntary union dues the default option for all private- and public-sector workers. It would give workers the freedom to choose whether they want to be in a union or not.
>
> States that want to take this freedom away from their workers would have to affirmatively vote to opt out of right-to-work status.
>
> […]The Walker plan includes many more reforms, such as a repeal of the Davis-Bacon wage controls, which alone could save taxpayers nearly $13 billion over the next 10 years. If implemented, it would be a giant step toward freeing businesses, employers, workers and taxpayers from the incredible burden imposed on them by federal labor laws and union bosses.

Why should we believe that he'll really do it? Well, unlike some of the talker candidates,

Walker has already done it in his state. And it worked – a $3.6 billion dollar deficit was erased.

If you are concerned about the growth of government, and all that that entails, e.g. – higher taxes, massive spending, bloated welfare state, huge levels of corruption, government waste, abortion, gay marriage, etc – then you should know that all of that is driven by the political donations of unions.

And I don't want anyone to think that union workers are the same as union bosses. In Wisconsin, as soon as the union workers got the right to work without having the pay union dues, the vast majority of them chose not to pay union dues.

Census data: more firearm ownership is not associated with higher rate of suicide

September 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

As famous evangelical theologian Wayne Grudem has discussed, the Bible provides strong support for self-defense.

Grudem looked at the following questions, before turning to the secular data to confirm the Bible:

- what about turning the other cheek? doesn't that undermine self-defense?
- what does Jesus say about the right to self-defense in the New Testament?
- did Jesus' disciples carry swords for protection during his ministry?
- why did Jesus tell his disciples to sell their cloaks and buy swords?
- what about Jesus stopping Peter from using force during Jesus' arrest?

Dr. Grudem concludes that the Bible does teach that self-defense is moral.

Unfortunately, that view is not often not popular in the culture as a whole. There is a large portion of the society that does not want law-abiding citizens to be able to defend themselves from criminals. Not only that, but there seems to be a lot of suspicion about law enforcement, now. We even seem to be losing the ability to see criminals as responsible for what they do, and wanting to protect innocent people from criminals. There are two cultural trends behind this – 1) the push for compassion and non-judgment, and 2) the tendency to turn evildoers into victims.

So, sometimes when the teachings of the Bible, e.g. – self-defense, fall out of respect in a society, it makes sense to defend what the Bible teaches using ordinary evidence from respected secular sources. And that's what I've done on this blog on so many issues where the secular culture disagrees with the Bible.

Regarding self-defense, I previously wrote about how the gun ban in Australia did not reduce suicide rates, because people who wanted to commit suicide simply found another way to commit suicide. On the broader issue of self-defense, I blogged about a recent study from Harvard University, and in that same post, I also linked books from Harvard University Press and Chicago University Press showing that banning guns raises rates of violent crime, and enacting concealed carry lowers rates of violent crime.

Today, though, I have another point about guns and suicide rates from the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data, which cover years 1981 through 2013—incidentally, a period in which Americans acquired an additional 195 million firearms—the firearm suicide rate (the number of suicides per 100,000 population) decreased five percent, while the non-firearm suicide rate increased 27 percent.

Although more law-abiding people got guns, the crime rates have been declining. We are now down to 1970s levels of violent crime. Part of that is due to tougher sentencing and more imprisonment of criminals, but part of that is due to more law-abiding citizens defending themselves from criminals. And if we want fewer prisons, a good way to achieve that cost-effectively would be to encourage more law-abiding people to own firearms, not less.

So, if the gun control crowd tries to make the case that more guns are causing more people to commit suicide, then we should be ready to answer with some data. Hope this data helps you to make your case.

Is belief in God compatible with belief in evolution?

September 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

What should we make of theistic evolutionists telling us that you can *believe* in God, while still *knowing* that matter, law and chance fully explain the development of all of biological life?

Consider this quotation from Phillip E. Johnson.

Quote:

> The National Academy's way of dealing with the religious implications of evolution is akin to the two-platoon system in American football. When the leading figures of evolutionary science feel free to say what they really believe, writers such as Edward O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Carl Sagan, Steven Pinker, Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Lewontin and others state the "God is dead" thesis aggressively, invoking the authority of science to silence any theistic protest. That is the offensive platoon, and the National Academy never raises any objection to its promoting this worldview.
>
> At other times, however, the scientific elite has to protect the teaching of the "fact of evolution" from objections by religious conservatives who know what the offensive platoon is saying and who argue that the science educators are insinuating a worldview that goes far beyond the data. When the objectors are too numerous or influential to be ignored, the defensive platoon takes the field. That is when we read those spin-doctored reassurances saying that many scientists are religious (in some sense), that science does not claim to have proved that God does not exist (but merely that he does not affect the natural world), and that science and religion are separate realms which should never be mixed (unless it is the materialists who are doing the mixing). Once the defensive platoon has done its job it leaves the field, and the offensive platoon goes right back to telling the public that science has shown that "God" is permanently out of business.

> (Phillip E. Johnson: “The Wedge of Truth”, IVP 2000, pp. 88-89).

So what naturalistic scientists believe is that God didn’t do anything to create the diversity of life – that nature does all of its own creating without God. In fact, it doesn’t matter if the best naturalistic explanation is improbable or implausible – naturalists *must* bitterly cling to materialistic explanations of natural phenomena. Any doubts about the efficacy of naturalistic mechanisms get met by “theistic evolutionists” – scientists who think that science shows that God didn’t do anything in the history of life.

When it comes to discussing origins, you have to be very careful with theistic evolutionists. The one question they want to avoid is whether science, done in the ordinary naturalistic way, can discover evidence of intelligent agency in the history of the development of life. And that’s why you have to ask them that question *first*. “Is there any scientific evidence that intelligent causes were active during the history of the development of life on this planet?” Their answer to that is the same as atheists, namely: “there is no scientific evidence that intelligent causes are responsible for the effects we see in the history of life on Earth”. Theistic evolutionists and atheists agree on that: as far as pure scientific evidence is concerned, nature can do its own creating without any intelligence writing genetic code or engineering animal body plans.

Now, take a look at this article by Jay Richards. He cites some theistic evolutionists.

Excerpt:

> Biologist Ken Miller:
>
> For his part, [Ken] Miller, a biologist, has no qualms about telling us what *God* would do: “And in Catholicism, he said, God **wouldn’t** micromanage that way. ‘Surely he **can** set things up without having to violate his own laws.'”
>
> I am unaware of any tenet of Catholic theology that requires God not to micromanage. It is, however, a tenet of deism.

Got that? What really happened is that God didn’t do anything. How does he know that? From the science? No. Because he assumes naturalism. Oh, it’s true that he *says* that God is lurking somewhere behind the material processes that created life. But God’s agency is *undetectable* by the methods of science. And he is hoping that you will accept his subjective pious God-talk as proof that a fundamentally atheistic reality is somehow reconcilable with a robust conception of theism.

More from Richards:

> Then we get Stephen Barr offering his private definition of “chance.”

> It **is possible** to **believe** simultaneously in a world that is shaped by chance and one following a divine plan. “God is in charge and there’s a lot of accident,” said Barr, also a Catholic. “It’s all part of a plan. . . . God **may have** known where every molecule was going to move.”

What does Barr really believe? He believes that what science shows is that nature created

life without any interference by an intelligent agent. Barr then offers believers his subjective pious God-talk to reassure them that evolution is compatible with religion. He has a *personal belief* – NOT BASED ON SCIENCE – that the material processes that created all of life are "all part of a plan". He cannot demonstrate that from science – it's his *faith commitment*. And more speculations: "God may have known…". He can't demonstrate that God did know anything *from science*. He is just offering a personal opinion about what God "could have" done. The purpose of these subjective opinions is to appease those who ask questions about what natural mechanisms can really create. Can natural causes really account for the development of functional proteins? Never mind that – look at my shiny spiritual-sounding testimony!

That's theistic evolution. What really happened is that no intelligent causes are needed to explain life. What they say is "God could" and "God might" and "I pray" and "I attend this church" and "I received a Christian award" and "I sing praise hymns in church". None of these religious opinions and speculations are relevant to the science – they are just opinions, speculations and biographical trivia. Atheists and theistic evolutionists agree on what science shows about the diversity of life – *intelligent causes didn't do anything*.

Front-loading?

One of the ways that theistic evolutionists try to affirm design is by insisting that the design is "front-loaded". The design for all the information and body plans is somehow embedded in matter.

Here is Stephen C. Meyer to assess that:

It's very important to understand that there is no *scientific evidence* for design (information) being front-loaded. So although the theistic evolutionists are talking about design, it's still in the realm of faith – not detectable to scientific investigation. And as Dr. Meyer explained, it doesn't work to explain design anyway.

I attended a Wheaton College philosophy conference where Dr. Michael Murray read a paper advocating for this front-loaded view of design. I raised my hand to ask him a question, "hey, philosophy guy, did God front-load the information in that paper you're reading, or did you write it yourself?" But the philosophy moderators must have known that I was an engineer, and would talk sense into him, because they never called on me. However, I did e-mail him later and asked him if he had any evidence for this front-loading theory, and couldn't God write sequence information in time the same way he had sequenced information in his essay. He replied and said that front-loading was more emotionally satisfying for him. That's philosophy, I guess. Thank goodness an engineer wrote his e-mail program so that he could at least come clean about his silly view.

The quickest way to disarm a theistic evolutionist is to ask them for a naturalistic explanation of the origin of life. And for a naturalistic explanation of the Cambrian explosion. And so on. Focus on the science – don't let them turn the conversation to their personal beliefs, or to the Bible, or to religion. No one cares about the psychology of the theistic evolutionist. We only care what science can show.

New study: government run child-care increases negative outcomes for kids

September 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Political Map

I've complained before about Quebec, the most liberal and secular province in Canada. Well, one of the things that makes them so crappy is their policy of encouraging women to abandon their young children to strangers in government-run daycare. The government takes a whole lot of taxpayer money, often from traditional single-earner homes, and uses it to subsidize government-run child care. Well, now we have a brand new fresh study to show how wrong this policy has been.

Canada's radically leftist CTV News reports on the study.

Excerpt:

> In a paper released Monday, a group of university researchers say that children exposed to the province's child-care system were more likely to have higher crime rates, worse health and lower levels of life satisfaction as they have aged than their counterparts in other provinces who didn't have access to the same type of system.
>
> […]In their paper made public Monday through the National Bureau of Economic Research, Kevin Milligan from the University of British Columbia, Michael Baker from the University of Toronto, and Jonathan Gruber from MIT in Cambridge, Mass., update work from 2008 to see if children in the Quebec care system kicked their troubling behaviours over time.
>
> To do that, they analyzed four different data sets from Statistics Canada that touched on child outcomes, health and crime rates and scores from standardized tests that are connected to the national Council of Ministers of Education.

> What the trio found instead was “striking evidence” that exposure to the program was associated with higher crime rates, with the effects most acutely seen in boys. Boys were more likely to have higher levels of hyperactivity and aggression, the researchers wrote, while girls showed declines in prosocial behaviour, which captures many altruistic activities like donating and volunteering. All of those behaviours fall under the heading of “non-cognitive” abilities, such as impulsiveness and emotional stability.
>
> Exposure to the program was also associated with “worsened health and life satisfaction,” the study says.
>
> There was no such lasting effects on math, science and reading abilities, the researchers write.

By the way, in case you are wondering – yes, that is the same Jonathan Gruber of MIT who was the architect of Obamacare. Surprising that he would be co-author on a study that dings big government.

Are these results unique to Canada? Let’s take a look at a recent study from the UK.

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Academics at Oxford University discovered that exposure to some forms of early education contributed to bad behaviour and could be linked to emotional problems.

> […]In the Oxford study, researchers recruited 991 families with children aged three months. Mothers had an average age of 30.

> Researchers assessed children at the age of four through questionnaires about their behaviour and emotions completed by teachers and parents. They also observed care provided by mothers and observed non-parental care for at least 90 minutes for those children placed in formal childcare settings.
>
> **The report, published in the journal Child: Care, Health and Development, said that “children who spent more time in group care, mainly nursery care, were more likely to have behavioural problems, particularly hyperactivity”.**
>
> **The study, led by Prof Alan Stein, of Oxford’s Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, found that “spending more time in day care centres, over the total period was a predictor of total problem scores”.**
>
> **“Children who spent more time in day care centres were more likely to be hyperactive,” it said. “Children receiving more care by childminders were more likely to have peer problems.”**
>
> The authors added: “The findings in relation to childminding suggest that it might be out of home care rather than group care that raises the risk of behavioural

> difficulties.”

Well, that’s only Canada and the UK. Maybe things are better in Sweden?

Here’s a second article from the National Post (one of Canada’s national newspapers) about Sweden’s government-run universal day care system.

Excerpt:

> True, parental leave in Sweden is a generous 16 months. There are no babies in daycare. But when parental leave ends, practically the reverse is true: A full 92% of all children aged 18 months to five years are in daycare. Parents pay only a symbolic amount for this; tax subsidies for daycare are $20,000 per child, annually. Swedish taxes are among the highest in the world, and the tax system was designed to make both parents seek employment in the work force.
>
> […]Then there are the questions about the social toll Sweden’s childcare system is taking. Sweden has offered a comprehensive daycare system since 1975; since the early ‘90s, negative outcomes for children and adolescents are on the rise in areas of health and behaviour. While direct causation has been difficult to prove, many Swedish health-care professionals point to the lack of parent involvement beyond the first 16 months as a primary contributing factor. Psychosomatic disorders and mild psychological problems are escalating among Swedish youth at a faster rate than in any of 11 comparable European countries. Such disorders have tripled among girls over the last 25 years. Education outcomes in Swedish schools have fallen from the top position 30 years ago, to merely average amongst OECD nations today. Behaviour problems in Swedish classrooms are among the worst in Europe.

Now this idea of government taking children away from families is very popular on the left, because they want children to be “equal”, and that means getting them away from their parents so that the government can raise them “equally”. You can even see Hillary Clinton pushing for it when she talks about “universal pre-K”. Well, maybe it’s time that someone showed her the studies. Not that she strikes me as someone who cares a lot about children, given her support for born-alive abortions and organ harvesting.

Scott Walker campaign leaders sign up with Marco Rubio

September 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

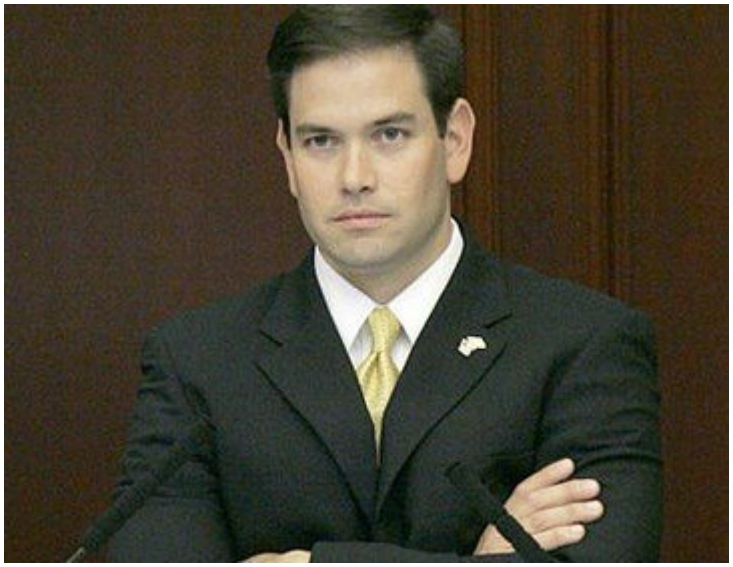

Florida Senator Marco Rubio

Story from the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> Four members of Scott Walker's Iowa campaign are now aligning with Marco Rubio. With the Wisconsin governor exiting the presidential race Monday, the Walker campaign's network of activist supporters in the early primary states are free to endorse other candidates.
>
> In Iowa, three county chairs and a university student leader are now supporting Rubio, the Florida senator. Melody Slater of Lee County, Matt Giese of Dubuque County, and Alan Ostergren of Muscatine County, have all shifted their support for Rubio.
>
> "While I am saddened by the news of Governor Walker's campaign ending, I am proud to join Senator Rubio's team. His conservative, positive vision is exactly what this country needs," said Slater in a statement to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.
>
> "Senator Rubio has the vision and ideas that are needed to lead us into the new American century," said Giese. "I'm looking forward to serving on Senator Rubio's Iowa team."
>
> "Marco's optimistic vision for the 21st century is exactly what our country needs. In the coming months, I look forward to helping Marco win the Iowa caucuses," said Ostergren.
>
> In addition, Brittany Gaura, an Iowa State University student who co-chaired Iowa Students for Walker, is also endorsing Rubio. "As much as I support Governor Walker, I know it is a critical time in this nation's history. I am supporting Marco

> for the positive vision and strong leadership he will bring to America's future," she said.
>
> Rubio has also picked up support from the chairman of Walker's New Hampshire campaign as well as an early supporter of Walker's in South Carolina.

Well, many of you sent me messages on Facebook and Twitter about the sad news that Walker, my #2 candidate, had dropped out of the race. This is a huge loss for America, since Walker's plan to reform public sector labor unions would have changed the direction of the country, given how labor unions donate so much money to Democrat candidates.

So where do I stand now? My favorite candidate is Bobby Jindal, then Ted Cruz, then Marco Rubio. That's strictly on conservative principles and conservative achievements. Rubio is the most electable, but I am angry with him for flirting with amnesty. However, he has repudiated his involvement with that movement. I would be happy with any of these three candidates.

These candidates are not conservative enough for me

These candidates are Republicans, but they are too liberal on fiscal issues:

- Jeb Bush (amnesty)
- John Kasich (Medicare funding, big government)
- Mike Huckabee (he is a tax and spend Democrat)
- RIck Santorum (not conservative enough)
- Christie (DREAM act, Medicare funding)
- Carly Fiorina (DREAM act, illegal immigration)

These candidates are Republicans, but they are too liberal on social issues:

- Rand Paul (crime, abortion & marriage)
- Jeb Bush (way too liberal on gay marriage and gay activism)
- Carly Fiorina (civil unions, religious liberty)
- Chris Christie (marriage)
- Lindsay Graham (liberal on abortion, marriage, SCOTUS judges)
- John Kasich (abortion, marriage and religious liberty)
- Carly Fiorina (soft on crime)

These candidates are Republicans, but they are too liberal on national security and foreign policy issues:

- Rand Paul (naive isolationist, wrong on every national security and foreign policy issue there is)
- John Kasich (he is John Kerry)
- Ben Carson (Iraq war opposition)
- Chris Christie (has a national security problem re: Muslims and CAIR, Iraq war opposition)

Donald Trump is not a Republican, he is too liberal on every single issue there is, regardless of his clown-talk. His unstable shrieking is just a baby squealing for attention, understanding nothing and with no awareness of facts. He is a nobody, and should not even be running for President.

Study: non-STEM college programs make students less religious

September 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Rice University reports on a new study conducted by sociologist Elaine Howard Ecklund.

Excerpt:

> The public's view that science and religion can't work in collaboration is a misconception that stunts progress, according to a new survey of more than 10,000 Americans, scientists and evangelical Protestants. The study by Rice University also found that scientists and the general public are surprisingly similar in their religious practices.
>
> The study, "Religious Understandings of Science (RUS)," was conducted by sociologist Elaine Howard Ecklund and presented today in Chicago during the annual American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) conference. Ecklund is the Autrey Professor of Sociology and director of Rice's Religion and Public Life Program.
>
> "We found that nearly 50 percent of evangelicals believe that science and religion can work together and support one another," Ecklund said. "That's in contrast to the fact that only 38 percent of Americans feel that science and religion can work in collaboration."
>
> The study also found that 18 percent of scientists attended weekly religious services, compared with 20 percent of the general U.S. population; 15 percent consider themselves very religious (versus 19 percent of the general U.S. population); 13.5 percent read religious texts weekly (compared with 17 percent of the U.S. population); and 19 percent pray several times a day (versus 26 percent of the U.S. population).
>
> [...]RUS is the largest study of American views on religion and science.

What would be interesting is to find out what specific arguments scientists who believe in God would appeal to, and which specific arguments scientists who don't believe in God

would appeal to. I actually know a professor who is trying to research this.

Meanwhile, Reasonable Faith has a podcast about the study, and what they discuss is how students who go into *non-STEM* university programs lose their interest in religion at a much higher rate than people who study STEM.

Here is the MP3 file.

And the relevant portion of the transcript:

> DR. CRAIG: Right. **If you look at their chart they give, where it shows the changes in religiosity by college major, it shows that in biology, engineering, and physical science and math they were mixed. The overall effect was neither negative nor positive. For some it was positive, some negative. But those majors did not seem to have a very significant effect upon the person's religious behavior. The majors that had a very positive impact on religiosity were education, vocational or clerical education, business, and what is classified as "other." All of those majors – whatever those are – have an overall positive impact upon students' religiosity.**
>
> KEVIN HARRIS: And attendance as well – attendance to church services.
>
> DR. CRAIG: Yes.
>
> KEVIN HARRIS: **The big fly in the ointment here is that "both the Humanities and the Social Sciences see dramatic declines in attendance and even more in religious beliefs." It lowers church attendance, synagogue attendance, and even more in religious beliefs.** What do we mean by the humanities and the social sciences?
>
> DR. CRAIG: Humanities would include your non-scientific areas; for example, literature (hence the title of the article), politics.[3] I don't know if they would include economics in this or not. Religious studies. In the social sciences are things like anthropology and sociology would be included there.
>
> KEVIN HARRIS: The study of art?
>
> DR. CRAIG: Yes, I suppose the arts would be in the humanities – that would be music and graphic arts. It is a big, big catch-all category.

And why does Dr. Craig think this is happening?

> DR. CRAIG: […]It could well be that it is because it is in the humanities that the radicals of the 1960s were able to find a place in the university and become ensconced as professors with the relativism that they were championing. In areas like anthropology and sociology you find tremendous relativism where you simply study these cultures and societies without making any sort of judgment as to truth with regard to what they believe. This leads to the belief that it is all relative; there isn't anything that is objectively true. John Searle is a very prominent philosopher at the University of California, Berkeley. Searle says that

> he believes that because of the commitment to the objectivity of truth and logic and the scientific method the hard sciences were barred to these radicals of the 1960s – getting into them and influencing them. But where they found an opening was in things like the Women's Studies Department, Religious Studies, Anthropology, Sociology. These soft sciences. He says the professors in these disciplines are the children of the 1960s that have carried into it their relativistic views of truth. I noticed here the conclusion by the researchers of the University of Michigan (apparently who did this study), "Our results suggest that it is Postmodernism, not Science, that is the bête noir [the black beast or the hated thing] of religiosity." The enemy of religiosity is postmodernism, not science.
>
> KEVIN HARRIS: Postmodernism, as you've pointed out, was mainly a thing confined to literature and the soft sciences.
>
> DR. CRAIG: Right. Women's Studies, Religious Studies is rampant with Postmodernist perspectives. That has a real ring of truth to it, and could be the reason behind these statistics.

And this is why I recommend that people not drop math in high school, and pick a STEM field to study in college (or a trade in trade school). You are wasting your money when you let people in non-STEM areas indoctrinate you in fact-free irrationality. By the way, I love business administration as a major, for those who do not want to do the lab work. It attracts a lot of conservatives and entrepreneurs.

You can see Ecklund's book about her research here on the Oxford University Press web site. You can also buy the book here from Amazon.com.

And here is a related lecture from Cambridge University featuring Dr. Ecklund.

Democrats defeat bill to ban abortions of babies who can feel pain

September 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Well, even with all the attention to the for-profit organ harvesting of born-alive babies, the Democrats went ahead and voted against a bill to stop late-term abortions in the Senate.

Life News has the story.

> Senate Democrats today blocked a vote on a pro-life Senate bill to ban late-term abortions — a bill that would save as many as 18,000 unborn babies form abortions each and every year.
>
> The Senate voted today to stop the Democrats' filibuster of the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, legislation that would ban abortions after 20 weeks — as neither Congress nor state legislatures can vote to ban all abortions under Roe v. Wade. The bill highlights how unborn babies feel intense pain when they are killed in abortions. The vote comes at a time when 10 expose' videos have exposed the Planned Parenthood abrogation business selling aborted babies and their body parts.
>
> "What I am asking every colleague is this: look in your hearts and help us stand up for the most innocent life," said Senate Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell in advance of the vote.
>
> But Democrats defeated the cloture vote 54-42, with pro-life Senate Republicans not getting the 60 votes needed to end debate and proceed to a vote on the pro-life bill itself. Three Democrats joined with Republicans to support the pro-life bill, including Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Bob Casey of Pennsylvania and Joe Donnelly of Indiana. Two pro-abortion republican, Susan Collins of Maine and

> Mark Kirk of Illinois — voted with Democrats to support late-term abortions.
>
> […]**Had the Senate approved the bill, President Barack Obama has issued a veto threat.** But pro-life groups hope to use the measure as an election tool in 2016 in an attempt to wrest control of the White House and approve a pro-life president who will sign it into law.

Now, I've written before about the science that shows that babies after 20 weeks can feel the pain of being torn limb from limb. And I also wrote about how babies as young as 22 weeks could survive outside the womb ("viable"). And that evidence was presented to Senate Democrats as part of the vote.

More:

> "Fresh impetus for the bill came from a huge study of nearly 5,000 babies—preemies—published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine. The next day, a New York Times article titled: "Premature Babies May Survive at 22 Weeks if Treated" touted the Journal's extraordinary findings of survival and hope," Congressman Smith continued. "Thus the babies we seek to protect from harm today may survive if treated humanely, with expertise and compassion—not the cruelty of the abortion."

A similar bill in the House did pass, even though almost all the Democrats voted against it, simply because so many Republicans were elected in the 2014 mid-term elections. And yet in the Senate, we were not able to elect enough Republicans to pass the bill. The article notes that the Senate bill was modeled after similar measures that have been passed in 12 states where Republicans control the legislatures.

Here's what a baby is like at 20 weeks

> You are 20 weeks pregnant. (fetal age 18 weeks)
>
> - Baby now weighs about 11 ounces and is roughly 7 inches long.
> - Baby is 17 cm long crown to rump, and weighs about 310 grams.
> - The baby can hear and recognize the mother's voice.
> - The mother will probably start feeling the first fetal movements.
> - The toenails and fingernails are growing.
> - The growth of hair on the rest of the body has started.
> - The skin is getting thicker.
> - The heart can now be heard with a stethoscope.
>
> Your baby may react to loud sounds. Baby can actually hear noises outside of the womb. Familiar voices, music, and sounds that baby becomes accustomed to during their development stages often are calming after birth. This is an important time for sensory development since nerve cells serving each of the senses; taste, smell, hearing, sight, and touch are now developing into their specialized area of the brain.

> Your baby now weighs about 11 ounces and at roughly 7 inches long they are filling up more and more of the womb. Though still small and fragile, the baby is growing rapidly and could possibly survive if born at this stage.

I understand why Democrats would vote to allow abortions on unborn children at this age. The abortionists make money off of these procedures, and they make more money off of the sale of organs, sometimes cut from babies who are still alive. Some of that money makes it's way back to the Democrats in the form of political contributions. It's similar to the way that slavers made money off of slaves… except they didn't torture the slaves and cut the organs out of them to sell. I guess someone standing in a slave plantation might have said to a slaver "you can't do that, they can feel pain". And Republicans are standing outside abortion clinics and saying "you can't do that, they can feel pain". But in both cases, the slavers and the abortionists are *making money* from their barbarism. So it doesn't make a difference to them whether they unborn can feel pain. The important thing to them is that they are *making money*.

Democrats are the heirs to the practice of slavery. They think that it's fine to declare an entire category of humans as non-persons and then chop them up like firewood to sell. And since most people who vote Democrat do so because they are voting to get more and more of their neighbor's money, none of this slavery is a concern to them. They care about getting their neighbor's money without having to earn it. That's what a Democrat is.

Who pays the scientist who wants global warming skeptics prosecuted?

September 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Global warming profiteer Jagadish Shukla

This is quite striking. The global warming alarmist who is leading the effort to criminally prosecute those who dissent from global warming alarmism is himself a global warming profiteer, according Climate Depot.

This article from Climate Depot explains:

> **From 2012-2014, the Leader of RICO 20 climate scientists paid himself and his wife $1.5 million from government climate grants for part-time work.**
>
> George Mason University Professor Jagadish Shukla (jshukla@gmu.edu) a Lead Author with the UN IPCC, reportedly made lavish profits off the global warming industry while accusing climate skeptics of deceiving the public. Shukla is leader of 20 scientists who are demanding RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act) charges be used against skeptics for disagreeing with their view on climate change.
>
> Shukla reportedly moved his government grants through a 'non-profit'. The group "pays Shukla and wife Anne $500,000 per year for part-time work," Prof. Roger Pielke Jr. revealed.
>
> "The $350,000-$400,000 per year paid leader of the RICO20 from his 'non-profit' was presumably on top of his $250,000 per year academic salary," Pielke wrote.

> “That totals to $750,000 per year to the leader of the RICO20 from public money for climate work and going after skeptics. Good work if you can get it,” Pielke Jr.added.

I think this fellow needs a RICO investigation himself, don’t you? And if found guilty, he should be put in jail. I think in general this story shows why we need to cut taxes, shrink government spending, and generally reduce the influence that government has on private businesses and individual consumers. Global warming alarmists don’t generate anything of value, they just collect taxpayers’ money in exchange for lying. And then the lies are used by the government to take measures that raise our electricity bills and increase the national debt. What sense does it make for voters to vote for that?

Marco Rubio was asked about global warming alarmism in the recent CNN GOP primary debate, and he answered thus:

Exactly. I have better things to do with my money than waste it on myths.

Shukla would be the second Indian guy to be implicated in these sorts of global warming intrigues. The first was the U.N. IPCC sexual harrasser Rajendra Pachauri, (on the right, above), who predicted that the Himalayas would melt. He later admitted that his predictions were false. And then his career melted after the victims of his sexual harassment came forward to accuse him.

Climate change science, for a change

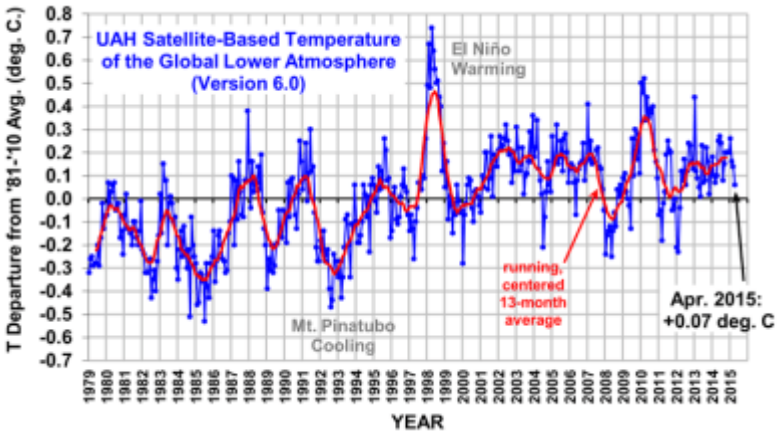

Atmospheric temperature measurements though April 2015
(Image source: Dr. Roy Spencer, University of Alabama – Huntsville)

The best measurements of the Earth's temperature are the atmosphere measurements, not the surface measurements, because those are more easily tampered with.

The Daily Caller summarizes the atmospheric measurements, which have not been changed to fit the global warming narrative.

Excerpt:

> […][N]ew satellite-derived temperature measurements show there's been no global warming for 18 years and six months.
>
> "For 222 months, since December 1996, there has been no global warming at all," writes climate expert Lord Christopher Monckton, the third viscount Monckton of Brenchley
>
> "This month's [satellite] temperature – still unaffected by a slowly strengthening el Niño, which will eventually cause temporary warming – passes another six-month milestone, and establishes a new record length for the Pause: 18 years 6 months," Monckton adds.
>
> […]Scientists have already pushed back against NOAA's new study. The news site Mashable interviewed about a dozen climate scientists not involved in the study, and nearly all of them said "the study does not support the authors' conclusion that the so-called warming pause never happened."
>
> "Instead, they said it simply proves that changing the start and end dates used for analyzing temperature trends has a big influence on those measurements, a fact that was already widely known," Mashable reported.

I think this important, because global warming alarmism is being pushed by the secular left, especially onto young people in public schools. This affects government spending, which is ultimately paid for by us – the taxpayers. I don't know about you, but as a Christian, my priorities for my money are much different than those of secular leftist bureaucrats and crooked "scientists". People who are taken in by global warming lies will vote for bigger government to limit industry (fewer jobs are created) and to regulate personal consumption (higher costs of gas, heating and cooling, electricity). This again

results in less money for me to run my life plan, which is focused on serving God. So, as a conservative and a Christian, I am all over this issue, and you should be as well. Show people the evidence, let them decide. Otherwise, the secular left will be making the rules that we have to live by.

John C. Sanford’s genetic entropy hypothesis

September 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

JoeCoder sent me a recent peer-reviewed paper by John C. Sanford, so I’ve been trying to find something written by him at a layman’s level so I could understand what he is talking about. (I am just a software engineer, not an expert in genetics). His CV is posted at the Cornell University web page.

I found this 20-minute video of an interview with him, in which he explains his thesis:

The most important part of that video is Sanford’s assertion that natural selection cannot remove deleterious mutations from a population faster than they arrive.

And I also found a review of a book that he wrote that explains his ideas at the layman level.

It says:

> Dr. John Sanford is a plant geneticist and inventor who conducted research at Cornell University for more than 25 years. He is best known for significant contributions to the field of transgenic crops, including the invention of the biolistic process (“gene gun”).
>
> […]Sanford argues that, based upon modern scientific evidence and the calculations of population geneticists (who are almost exclusively evolutionists), mutations are occurring at an alarmingly high rate in our genome and that the vast majority of all mutations are either harmful or “nearly-neutral” (meaning a loss for the organism or having no discernible fitness gain). Importantly, Sanford also establishes the extreme rarity of any type of beneficial mutations in comparison with harmful or “nearly-neutral” mutations. Indeed, “beneficial” mutations are so exceedingly rare as to not contribute in any meaningful way. [NOTE: “Beneficial” mutations do not necessarily result from a gain in information, but instead, these changes predominantly involve a net loss of function to the organism, which is also not helpful to [Darwinism]; see Behe, 2010, pp. 419-445.] Sanford concludes that the frequency and generally harmful or neutral nature of mutations prevents them from being useful to any scheme of

> random evolution.
>
> […]In the next section of the book, Sanford examines natural selection and asks whether "nature" can "select" in favor of the exceedingly rare "beneficial" mutations and against the deleterious mutations. The concept of natural selection is generally that the organisms that are best adapted to their environment will survive and reproduce, while the less fit will not. Sanford points out that this may be the case with some organisms, but more commonly, selection involves chance and luck. But could this process select against harmful mutations and allow less harmful or even beneficial mutations to thrive? According to Sanford, there are significant challenges to this notion.

Stanford is a co-author of an academic book on these issues that has Dembski and Behe as co-authors.

Now, I do have to post something more complicated about this, which you can skip – it's an abstract of a paper he co-authored from that book:

> Most deleterious mutations have very slight effects on total fitness, and it has become clear that below a certain fitness effect threshold, such low-impact mutations fail to respond to natural selection. The existence of such a selection threshold suggests that many low-impact deleterious mutations should accumulate continuously, resulting in relentless erosion of genetic information. In this paper, we use numerical simulation to examine this problem of selection threshold.
>
> The objective of this research was to investigate the effect of various biological factors individually and jointly on mutation accumulation in a model human population. For this purpose, we used a recently-developed, biologically-realistic numerical simulation program, Mendel's Accountant. This program introduces new mutations into the population every generation and tracks each mutation through the processes of recombination, gamete formation, mating, and transmission to the new offspring. This method tracks which individuals survive to reproduce after selection, and records the transmission of each surviving mutation every generation. This allows a detailed mechanistic accounting of each mutation that enters and leaves the population over the course of many generations. We term this type of analysis genetic accounting.
>
> Across all reasonable parameters settings, we observed that high impact mutations were selected away with very high efficiency, while very low impact mutations accumulated just as if there was no selection operating. There was always a large transitional zone, wherein mutations with intermediate fitness effects accumulated continuously, but at a lower rate than would occur in the absence of selection. To characterize the accumulation of mutations of different fitness effect we developed a new statistic, selection threshold (STd), which is an empirically determined value for a given population. A population's selection threshold is defined as that fitness effect wherein deleterious mutations are

> accumulating at exactly half the rate expected in the absence of selection. This threshold is mid-way between entirely selectable, and entirely unselectable, mutation effects.
>
> Our investigations reveal that under a very wide range of parameter values, selection thresholds for deleterious mutations are surprisingly high. Our analyses of the selection threshold problem indicate that given even modest levels of noise affecting either the genotype-phenotype relationship or the genotypic fitness-survival-reproduction relationship, accumulation of low-impact mutations continually degrades fitness, and this degradation is far more serious than has been previously acknowledged. Simulations based on recently published values for mutation rate and effect-distribution in humans show a steady decline in fitness that is not even halted by extremely intense selection pressure (12 offspring per female, 10 selectively removed). Indeed, we find that under most realistic circumstances, the large majority of harmful mutations are essentially unaffected by natural selection and continue to accumulate unhindered. This finding has major theoretical implications and raises the question, "What mechanism can preserve the many low-impact nucleotide positions that constitute most of the information within a genome?"

If you think all this is interesting, there is a much longer lecture here, which I have not watched. JoeCoder has watched it and he endorses it.

Now I have been told by JoeCoder that there are many critical responses to his hypothesis, most of which have to do with whether natural selection can overcome the difficulty he is laying out. But since this is not my area of expertise, there is not much I can say to adjudicate here, I won't be able to respond to these. I hope that I will have time to come back to this and read about it at some point. I do have an e-book of the that collection of papers book I linked to above.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Health premiums up $4,865 since Obama promised to lower them $2,500

September 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should we pick a candidate based on our emotional response to his confidence? Barack Obama had a lot of confident words and personal charisma during his campaign speeches in 2008. Many young people want to believe that their positive emotional reaction to confident words will somehow make plans "work out". But can you really compel the universe to give you goodies just by having positive feelings? Does your emotional response to handsome looks and confident words mean that somehow the universe will give you what you desire?

I want to use this article from Investors Business Daily to illustrate the importance of not picking a President based on confident words and personal charisma.

It says:

> Employer-based health insurance premiums climbed 4.2% this year for family plans, according to an annual Kaiser Family Foundation report. That's up from 3% the year before.
>
> Since 2008, average family premiums have climbed a total of $4,865.
>
> The White House cheered the news, saying it was a sign of continued slow growth in premium costs.
>
> […]"We will start," Obama said back in 2008, "by reducing premiums by as much as $2,500 per family."
>
> That $2,500 figure was Obama's mantra on health care. You can watch the video if you don't believe it.
>
> And Obama wasn't talking about government subsidized insurance or expanding

> Medicaid or anything like that. He specifically focused on employer provided health care.
>
> For "people who already have insurance, and the employers who are providing it," he said at one campaign event, "we will work to lower your premiums by up to $2,500 per family."

Let's watch the video. I want everyone to see how confident a clown can sound when he lies about being able to solve problems that he knows nothing about.

He had no record of achievement in this area. None, Zero, Zip. And the same goes for his claims about keeping your doctor, keeping your health care plan, and so on.

But America voted to elect him. There were a lot of voters who did not want to think too hard about economics in 2008, and again in 2012. They did not want to have to put in any work to study the achievements of the candidate in the area of health care policy, to see if he had actually done anything to reduce health care premiums. They had a problem: health care costs are too high. A charismatic clown stepped forward and made their fears go away with confident talk. They made a decision to believe him. They wanted to believe that serious problems could be solved by the words of a charismatic clown, so that they would then be saved from having to evaluate the records of the candidates, to see which of them had put in place policies that had solved similar problems in their past. That's too much work for the American voter. Better to just pick the one who seems to be able to solve the problem based on surface qualities, like confident words that produce emotional reactions. The universe will adjust because we have a positive attitude.

This is an attitude that no practical engineer like me could take. It's a recipe for disaster. Nothing important in life – from designing e-commerce web sites, to developing cures to sickness, to constructing jet fighters – is conducted in such a stupid, emotional way.

Now, I'm pretty angry that two of my candidates, Rick Perry and Scott Walker, are out of the 2016 election. And why? Because an unqualified leftist clown is ruining the process with brash, insulting confident talk. Again, we are dealing with a clown who has no record of actual problem-solving in the areas where the American people need problems solved.

This article from Investors Business Daily explains:

> Which of these two sounds like someone on an ego trip, someone content to let the Middle East go up in flames and, like Barack Obama, someone overconfident in his own abilities to persuade others? And which sounds like he would practice the sober, principled foreign policy of Ronald Reagan as president?
>
> Yet it is the latter, Scott Walker, who was just forced to drop out of the race, the reality TV star front-runner having sucked so much air out of the room that it was becoming impossible to survive. He laudably called it his patriotic duty to depart, thus consolidating the opposition to Trump.
>
> Walker is one of the most successful governors in the country, having brought unemployment down from over 8% to about 4.5%, and turning Big Labor's

> targeting him for destruction into three successive electoral victories in a blue state.
>
> A week ago a governor with a longer record of accomplishment, in a state Americans are flocking to for its vibrant jobs-rich economy, was also forced to drop out. In doing so, Rick Perry of Texas made a statement affirming his rock-ribbed commitment to free-market principles, traditional values and a strong America on the world stage.
>
> Perry and Walker are both leaders of substance. Eight years of the inexperienced, self-obsessed Obama had many Republicans concerned about 2016 looking to the governors' mansions for someone with a proven track record of actually solving crises and reversing misguided big-government policies. These two may have been the most accomplished figures in the nation in that regard. How is it that they are early dropouts?
>
> Political journalists are having a ball dissecting the ins and outs of fundraising and styles of campaign managing to explain Walker and Perry's exit. But there is no ignoring the 800-pound loudmouth in the room.
>
> In Donald Trump, the left's caricature of conservatism — the bombast, the misogyny, the hype-above-substance — is defeating the real thing.

I do hiring interviews in my company. I always make sure to ask questions to test the claims on the candidate's resume. It's not hard to find out whether a person knows how to do what they claim to know how to do. Many of the people who show up for interviews try to finesse their way through engineering questions with confident talk, and emotional appeals. We don't hire them. Why is it so hard for the American people to understand what is at stake here?

Pope meets with Fidel Castro, focuses on global warming

September 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama shakes hands with Pope Francis

The Pope came to America and he had a lot to say about economics and politics. In fact, he endorsed Barack Obama's plan to slow down our economy, so that Russia and China can catch up to us.

The Daily Signal explains:

> But experts at a Heritage Foundation event Monday painted a bleak picture of its adverse impact on the poor, warning that the shift away from natural energy sources would lead to skyrocketing electricity costs that will have "devastating" impacts on low-income families.
>
> Mario Lopez, president of the Hispanic Leadership Fund, cited a report from the National Black Chamber of Commerce that found that by 2030, the plan will increase electricity costs for consumers by $565 billion annually.
>
> "This makes it one of the costliest regulations in American history," he said.
>
> That cost, Lopez continued, will hit families directly through increased prices on nearly everything ranging from luxury items to everyday necessities like clothing and toothpaste.
>
> "When you reduce the annual income of the individual by hundreds of dollars, then you are going to have an impact, and especially a disproportionate impact on poor people," he said.
>
> The regulation will also directly hit businesses, forcing owners to cut costs through layoffs and reduced hiring, Lopez said. The Black Chamber of Commerce report found that these predicted job losses would disparately hit minority

> communities.
>
> By 2035, African-Americans are expected to lose nearly 7 million jobs because of the regulation, while Hispanics will lose over 12 million. The result is a projected 25-percent increase in total poverty.
>
> "These are real people we're talking about," Lopez said. "The EPA and the Obama administration sometimes forget that, unfortunately."

That response made me think of this clip of Marco Rubio from the CNN debate:

If you want to find out here "green energy" initiatives take a country, look no further than Germany. The electricity bills for consumers and businesses have been skyrocketing, damaging their entire economy. Oh well, it's not like they were facing any kind of demographic crisis or anything.

Anyway, back to the Pope. Apparently, he didn't have anything to say to Obama about abortion. The headline at The Federalist is "Pope Francis Visits White House South Lawn, Says Nothing About Abortion". I didn't see anything about him defending marriage either.

FrontPage magazine talks about how the Pope met with Fidel Castro, a brutal atheistic communist dictator, but declined to meet with Cuban pro-democracy dissidents.

Excerpt:

> In 1960, Cuban bishops declared that "Catholicism and Communism respond to two totally different concepts of man and the world which it will never be possible to conciliate." **Pope Francis however contends that Communism is really Christianity. "The Communists have stolen our flag," he said.**
>
> The Cuban bishops condemned Communism as "a system which brutally denies the most fundamental rights of the human being." Pope Francis' criticisms of the Castro regime were limited to oblique references, a plea for religious freedom for Catholics and general criticisms that could apply to Cuba or any one of a number of other places. He failed to even reiterate his old criticisms of the regime.
>
> Cuban dissidents were kept from meeting Pope Francis and even the "passing greeting" that had been planned was shut down when the Communist authorities detained political dissidents. When the protesters risked their freedom to get near him, they were arrested without receiving any acknowledgement from the pope. The Castros got their meetings and their publicity.
>
> The oppressed, whom Pope Francis claimed to speak for during his visit and during his international travels, were left out in the cold. They were treated to another oblique reference, as Pope Francis expressed his desire to "embrace especially all those who for various reasons I will not be able to meet."
>
> "It simply doesn't appear to us to be right or just that the pope doesn't have a little time to meet with those Cubans who are defending human rights," the head of the country's largest dissident organization said.
>
> Pope Francis spoke of Obama's deal with Castro as a "process of normalizing

> relations between two peoples following years of estrangement." But he knows quite well that it's nothing of the kind. The Cuban people are not estranged from the Cuban refugees in America by a lack of diplomatic relations, but by the brutal suppression of political and religious freedom by the Castro regime.
>
> The Obama deal doesn't bring the "two peoples" together; it puts money in the pockets of a regime that Pope Francis had once called corrupt and authoritarian. It allows American leftists to tour Cuba for the trade in underage prostitutes that it has become notorious for. This isn't reconciliation. It's exploitation.
>
> […]If Pope Francis really wished to speak for the oppressed, there are eleven million of them in Cuba. They are not oppressed by capitalism or by global warming. They are oppressed by that fear, the paralyzing anguish that it brings and the apathy that comes with it. They needed weapons against that fear.
>
> The pope's visit gave the Castros what they wanted, but failed to give the Cuban people what they needed.

Conservative radio show host Mark Levin asks why the Pope chose to talk about global warming instead of the plight of Christians being raped and murdered for their faith by ISIS.

I'm a Protestant evangelical Christian, and Bible-based. I'm pro-life, pro-marriage and I defend religious liberty and conscience rights. I'm not Roman Catholic.

Can you have eternal life with God by being sincere and doing good things?

September 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Here's an article from Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason.

He answers the question "Am I going to Hell if I don't believe in Jesus?".

Excerpt:

> Sometimes we have to reframe a critic's question in order to give an accurate answer. The questions, Am I going to Hell if I don't believe in Jesus?, is an example. As it is asked, it makes it sounds as though Jesus were the problem, not the answer. As though failing a theology quiz sends us to Hell. Instead, we need to reframe the question to answer accurately and show that sin is the problem, and Jesus is the only way because He alone has solved that problem. Sinners don't go to Hell for failing petty theology quizzes.
>
> While giving a talk at a local Barnes & Noble, someone asked why it was necessary for him to believe in Jesus. He was Jewish, believed in God, and was living a moral life. Those were the important things, it seemed—how you lived, not what you believed.
>
> To him the Christian message depicted a narrow-minded God pitching people into Hell because of an arcane detail of Christian theology. How should I answer?
>
> Remember that the first responsibility of an ambassador is knowledge—an accurately informed message. What is our message?
>
> One way to say it is, "If you don't believe in Jesus, you'll go to Hell. If you do believe, you'll go to Heaven."
>
> That's certainly true, as far as it goes. The problem is it's not clear. Since it doesn't give an accurate sense of why Jesus is necessary, it makes God sound

> petty.
>
> So how do we fix this? Here's how I responded to my Jewish questioner. I asked him two simple questions.

Read the rest of the article.

Christians all need to understand how to explain why sincere beliefs and good works are not enough to satisfy God's moral demands on us. God is *more concerned* that we understand the truth about his existence and character – that is the whole point of sending Jesus to die as an atonement for our rebellion. The problem isn't just that we lie, cheat, steal and murder. The problem is that we want to get our own happiness apart from God, without wanting to know him as he is, and without having to care about his goals and his character in the relationship.

Here's what God wants us to know about ourselves:

- we have to realize that what we really are is rebels against God
- rebels don't want God to be there
- rebels don't want God to have any goals or character different from their goals and character
- rebels don't want God to place any demands on them
- rebels don't want to have any awareness that God is real or that he is morally perfect
- rebels want to be liked as they are now – they don't want to change as part of a relationship
- rebels want to conceive of their own way to happiness, and to use other people and God for their own ends
- rebels don't want there to be a mind-independent objective reality, they want to invent their own reality that allows them to be praised and celebrated for doing whatever makes them happy at every point along their lives
- rebels would rather die that put their pursuit of happiness second
- rebels have no interest in rules, judgments, accountability or punishments

Here's what God wants for us to be saved from our rebelling:

- we have to know his real character so we have a genuine relationship with him
- the best way to know his character is by taking time to study what Jesus did in history
- what the incarnation tells us is that God is willing to humiliate himself by taking on a human nature
- what the crucifixion tells us is that God is willing to die in our place even though we're rebelling against him (Jesus is *Savior)*
- part of being saved is to trust God by allowing his character to transform our desires and actions (Jesus is *Lord*)
- as we grow in letting the character of Jesus inform our actions, we build a set of

experiences that are like Jesus' experiences – i.e. – we obey God rather than men, and we suffer for our obedience – just like Jesus

So don't Christians have to do good things? Yes. But a Christian's good deeds are the result of identifying Jesus as Savior and Lord, and then following him by making decisions that respect his character. God doesn't need you to solve all the world's problems – he could do that himself. It's not what you do, it's who you know and trust that counts. The good deeds are just your way of trying to be like him and trying to feel the same thing he felt when he gave his life for you. You have a friend and you want to be like him in order to know what he feels so you have sympathy with him.

The main point is that knowing Jesus as the revelation of God's character, and then following Jesus, is *more important* than doing "good things".

The first commandment, according to Jesus, is found in Matthew 22:34-38:

[34]Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.

[35]One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

[36]"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

[37]Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

[38]This is the first and greatest commandment.

The second commandment which comes after that one has to do with loving your neighbor. But the second one *is not the greatest commandment.* You can't love God unless you *know God*. That it, unless you make knowing about his existence and character a priority in your life to the point where you find out the truth about his existence and character. And not as your own opinion, or as the opinion of the people around you, or as the faith-tradition you were raised in. No. You have to value God enough to respond to his overtures to you. You have to know him in truth, not as a quick checkbox that you check off for an hour on Sundays to make your life "easier" because you are happier and the people around you like you. You have to know him before you can act to love him – who he is and what he's done.

The way that Protestants like me draw the line is as follows – justification (how your rebellion is canceled) is God's job. He draws you to him while you are still in rebellion, but you have a choice to resist him or not. If you resist his action to save you, then you are responsible for rejecting him. Sanctification (about doing good works) is not about canceling your rebellion, it's about the later step of re-prioritizing your life, so that you make decisions that reflect the character of Jesus, so that you become more like him. Even your desires change as the relationship progresses. It is something you work at – you study and experience, study and experience. The whole point of studying apologetics is to build yourself into a love machine that fears nothing and holds up under fire, because you know the truth and the truth makes you free to do what you ought to do regardless of the consequences (e.g. – failure to be recognized and requited by someone you loved well).

The most important relationship is not the horizontal relationship with your neighbor, it's the vertical relationship with God himself. And when you know God as he really revealed himself in history, then your desires – and consequently your actions – will change naturally. When you know God as a person, you freely make all kinds of sacrifices for him. You put yourself second because you want to *work on the relationship*. You start to believe that your own happiness isn't as as important as *working on the relationship.* It's like building a house. You don't notice the sacrifices.

Sometimes, I think that the whole point of Christianity and that vertical relationship is so that we know God better. We sympathize more with him than we do with ourselves, because of how unfairly people treat him, how good and loving he is, and how right his goals are. It's not that he needs help, because he's *God* – he's *sovereign*. But the relationship gets to the point where it becomes reasonable for you to put yourself second with God, and to let his goals become your goals – you want the relationship with a loving God *more* than you want to be happy. You get tired of ignoring the person who loves you most – you start to wonder what it would be like to actually respond to him. For Christians, the demands of this other being eventually seem to be not so terrible after all – and we try to put aside our own desires and to give him gifts and respect instead of worrying so much about being happy *all the time*.

It's not irrational to be kind to the person who loves you the most – who sacrificed the most for you.

Oregon bar owner forced to pay $400,000 for offending transsexuals

September 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young, unmarried women celebrate gay pride

The transsexuals were hurting his business, so he asked them to please stop, or he would go out of business. But instead, they complained to the government.

The Daily Caller has the story.

Excerpt:

> An Oregon bar has been ordered by a judge to pay $400,000 for telling a group of transgender customers not to come back to the bar because people were starting to think it was a "tranny bar."
>
> The Oregon Court of Appeals stood by a ruling Wednesday that Chris Penner, owner of the Portland bar Twilight Room Annex, had illegally discriminated against the transgender customers, Oregon Live reports.
>
> The transgender customers were part of a group called the Rose City T-girls who went to the bar regularly on Friday nights. Penner called them and left messages asking them to stop coming.
>
> "People are not coming in because they just don't want to be there on a Friday night now," Penner said in a message. "In the beginning sales were doing fine, but they've been on a steady decrease so I have to look at what the problem is, what the reason is and take care of it."
>
> An Oregon judge found that Penner had violated the Oregon Equality Act of 2007, which bans discrimination against people based on sexual orientation.

> Now he has to cough up $400,000.

Two points to make about this. First, note that Oregon is one of the liberal states in this map where such things are happening:

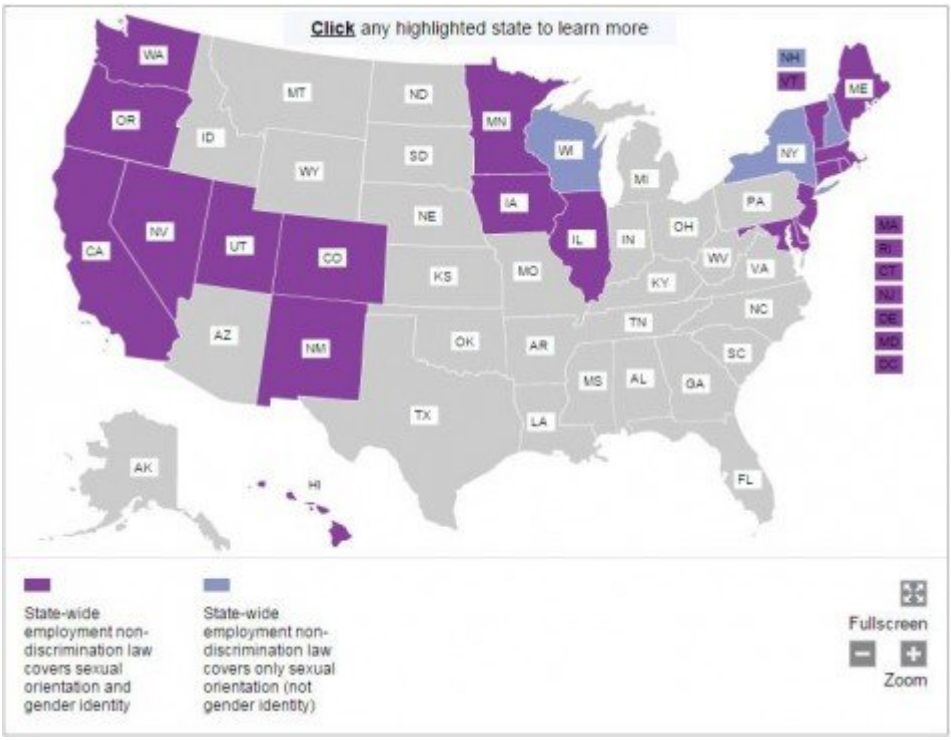

States with non-discrimination laws

These are the states where all the problems are happening with sexual minorities going to the government to compel celebration from businesses. Business owners are having to pay big fines, and/or go to jail. The judges and human rights commissions in these states are siding with the plaintiffs, and against freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and now even freedom of association.

And the Democrats want to push this up to the federal level, so that businesses can be sued in all 50 states. If they had a majority in the House, that's exactly what they would do.

What's interesting about this story is that now it's not just religious people who are going to get impacted by these changes. It's not just the florists, the bakers, the wedding photographers, the bed-and-breakfast owners. Now it's *bars*. And the objection is not religious liberty or conscience. And that's not surprising… if you looked up north to Canada, it started with the religious people, and then pretty soon bar owners, fitness club owners and other secular business owners were impacted, too.

Do husbands and wives have specific responsibilities in a marriage?

September 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage advice from someone who knows

I found another awesome post by Lindsay.

The post starts explaining how a woman supports a man in his role as spiritual leader of the home. I always talk about the responsibilities of a husband/father in the home being protecting, providing and leading on moral and spiritual issues. You'd be surprised how many Christian women are not OK with me claiming these roles. In fact, I am always getting criticism for buying too many gifts (providing), for being too concerned about the challenges of policies (protecting), and for being too rough on rebutting spiritual wolves – even after they admit they are wrong! (spiritual/moral leading). It is rare for me to find a Christian woman who accepts those male roles. Usually, I get attacked for all three of them. Women do not like to let me execute these tasks.

Lindsay is fine with men leading in all 3 of those roles, but this is the part of her post that I really liked:

> Once children arrive, it becomes pretty much impossible for her to work outside the home and still fulfill her duties at home. The funny thing about children is that they need constant care. One cannot care for children and work outside the home too. The choice once children come along is whether to outsource the care of the children to someone else or to do it yourself. I firmly believe that God entrusts children to a husband and wife because he wants them to be the primary influences in their children's lives. That doesn't happen if the children spend a majority of their waking hours in the care of someone else.

> Children don't just need food and shelter provided to them, they need love, teaching, discipline, a sense of security, and examples of how they are to live. All of those things are best done when the child spends time primarily with his or her parents. Daycare workers, school teachers, and even grandparents simply cannot provide them in the same way parents can. No one loves a child like his own parents do. No one has such a vested interest in ensuring that he grows up with the proper spiritual and moral training. Even if others care about the child, the responsibility for the training of a child belongs to his parents. Daycare workers and teachers and grandparents won't answer to God for the soul of that child. His parents will.
>
> So, given the needs of children, I am convinced that women are called to be with their children, training and caring for them as their primary caregiver. Does that mean a mother can't have any job outside the home? In theory, no. In practice, yes. A woman's priority must be her own family. If she can have her children with her or leave them for only a short time each day, she may still be able to provide the necessary training and care they need from their mother and earn some income. But in doing that, she needs to be sure she is not neglecting her husband's needs either. Theoretically, a woman can have it all – keeping a job and caring for her family too. The problem is that it is a very rare woman who has the energy to keep up with the constant needs of her children for care, training, discipline, and love and those of her husband for companionship, sex, and a partner in life as well as the logistics of running a household and still have something left for even a part-time job.
>
> What usually happens when a woman has an outside job is that her family simply suffers the lack. Either her children spend a lot of time with other caregivers or teachers or her husband does without the companionship and marital intimacy he needs or some of the household chores descend on the husband, taking away some of his time and energy to train his children spiritually and impact the world for Christ. Often it's a combination of these. A woman simply cannot meet all the needs of her family when she is spread that thin and, as a result, something important gets left undone.

I wish I could find women who had definite ideas about what they wanted to do with their children, but thinking back over previous relationships, what I usually hear is that they want to go on mission trips, do pro-life protests, have careers, etc. No one looks at these little kids with any sort of plan to grow them into anything. I just think it's depressing that kids are not part of most women's plans. If there is any plan at all it's that there should be no plan, and the kids can just do anything they want. How depressing for the man to think about when he has to pay all the bills to raise kids who are aiming at nothing, and will surely hit it. What kind of man is excited about having children when his wife is not on board with making them into anything special? It's depressing.

Does the Bible say that you should forgive someone who does not repent?

September 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Kevin Lewis, a professor of Theology and Law at the conservative Biola University, was asked this question:

> Recently, I was reading Dr. Kenneth Bailey's "Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes" (IVP press 2008). When commenting on Matthew 6:12-13, he writes,
>
> "It is a common human assumption that the violator of the rights of others must ask for forgiveness before the wronged party can be expected to accept the apology and grant forgiveness…But Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when when there is no confession of guilt… There is a voice from the cross that echoes across history to all saying 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' Neither Pilate nor the high priest nor the centurion offered any apology to Jesus, yet he prayed for divine forgiveness…(p.125)"

And here's his response in full, copied with permission from his Facebook note:

> Regarding Bailey's comments on Matthew 6:12, he errs by not considering the theological context of this statement and fails to consider any implied biblical conditions for forgiveness inherent in the statement. The text simply does not mean what he says it means. He is reading too much into the statement.
> Bailey states, "Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when there is no confession of guilt…"
>
> Bailey errs. Here, Jesus is giving a model for prayer commensurate with the way His Kingdom works. Jesus teaches them to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." This is a statement of the objective,

“forgiveness,” without a discussion of any express or implied conditions to accomplish the objective. It is also a statement of the proper attitude of the Christian, that is, that we must have a demeanor of being willing to forgive, just as God was willing to forgive us. Bailey’s assertion that there is no “confession of guilt” or repentance is merely an unwarranted assumption.

Moreover, the use of “as” (Grk. hos) in the passage introduces a comparison between the way we forgive and the way God forgives. This comparative phraseology is employed elsewhere on the subject of forgiveness. For example, Ephesians 4:32 states that we should be “forgiving each other just as God in Christ also has forgiven” us. Here, the comparative “just as” (Grk. kathos) is employed and indicates our forgiveness is to be just like God’s forgiveness of us, which flows from a loving disposition. So in the same manner that God forgives, we must forgive. We are to be “imitators of God” (Eph. 5:1). See also Matthew 5:48 and Luke 6:36 for exhortations to imitate God.

To ascertain whether the Scriptures describe any conditions for forgiveness, one must search elsewhere in the Scriptures for comment. This is the nature of systematic theology. We need to examine what the entire Bible says on a given topic, such as forgiveness. And the Bible contains ample support for the notion that there are conditions for forgiveness.

First, regarding God and His forgiveness, it is undisputed in orthodox Christian theology that God does not forgive everyone. The doctrine of Hell is a sufficient proof of the lack of universal forgiveness by God.

Next, it is clear that God does not forgive without repentance. This doctrine is taught in a number of texts. For example, in Luke 13:3 Jesus says, “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” In Mark 1:15 John the Baptist commands that we must “repent and believe the Gospel.” The connection between repentance and forgiveness of sins (i.e. “salvation”) is seen throughout the Scriptures. For example, in Acts 2:38 repentance is directly connected as a condition for the remission of sins. For additional examples of this connection see Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30-31; Romans 2:4-5; II Corinthians 7:10; II Tim. 2:25-26.

So since we are to be imitators of God and forgive in the same way God forgives, we would expect the Scriptures to be consistent, stating that the condition of repentance is required to be fulfilled before believers are required to forgive each other’s sins. It does.

Jesus stated in Luke 17:3, “If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.” Here, the meaning is clear. The word “if” (Grk. ean) introduces the condition for a rebuke and for granting forgiveness. If (subjunctive) a person sins, we must (imperative) rebuke him, and if (subjunctive) he repents, we must (imperative) forgive him. This is as clear a statement as you will find on the subject. Forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance—and this is one of the same

criteria that God requires before He forgives sin.

This principle of permitting believers to withhold forgiveness unless the condition of repentance is satisfied is also explicitly seen in Matthew 18:15-17. Compared with the Luke 17:3 text above, the situation is the same. If a brother sins, reprove him; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. Here, the word “reprove” is used rather than “rebuke” and the word “listen” is employed rather than “repent,” but the meaning is virtually identical to Luke 17:3. What we see in Matthew 18 is an escalation of the issue and the result if the person fails to repent (i.e. “listen”). If the person fails to repent, we are to shun him in all appropriate ways (v. 17).

These passages in Luke and Matthew give us the connection between sin, rebuke, repentance and forgiveness. Other biblical texts that merely mention “forgiveness” as a concept or an objective do not necessarily proffer every aspect of the doctrine of forgiveness. As such, they must be read in light of the clear conditions expressed in other passages.

Finally, I would make the case that it is harmful to a person to forgive him without requiring repentance. As seen above, the Bible is clear that sin requires a rebuke. Ignoring sin teaches sinners that sin does not bring consequences. This is harmful to their souls. Continuing to have the benefit of a righteous relationship with another and yet remain in sin against that person results in fostering a habituation of sinful inclinations in their soul, which God says brings about suffering and death.

Moreover, since the ultimate purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation, it is meaningless and harmful to forgive when no reconciliation may be had with the sinner. We cannot “walk together” in a biblical manner in righteous peace when the unrepentant sinner walks in unrighteousness. Necessarily, there is a conflict and a want of shalom. Their soul is headed in a different direction than the believer’s soul; they are walking away from God and we cannot have fellowship with darkness. God has no intimate fellowship with unrepentant people, and that is the model for Christians as well (See Matt. 18).

Regarding personal anger issues commonly raised by Christian psychologists, these types of psychologists unbiblically make unconditional forgiveness a part of therapy. By contrast, however, if a counselee will not forgive after the offending party has truly repented, the counselee sins, and this kind of unforgiveness may be one of the causes of his or her problems. But this is a separate issue from universal and unconditional forgiveness raised above.

Human beings in the image of God may be angry in appropriate ways (Eph.4:26, 31). There is a time to love and a time to hate (Ecclesiastes 3:8). The notion that Christians cannot ever hate, be angry, or lack forgiveness is an unbiblical concept. God Himself is eternally angry with sin, but He is certainly not a psychological basket case. He loves, hates, and is angry in appropriate ways. Our

> task as believers is to imitate this. Be angry with and hate sin appropriately (Rom. 12:9) and love what good appropriately. For example, righteous anger can evolve beyond the biblical limits to become malice, slander, and bitterness while, to give another example, an appropriate love of food can evolve beyond the biblical limits into gluttony.
>
> Psychological problems arise from many issues other than lack of forgiveness. For example, a lack of trust in God that He has a particular instance of evil under His sovereign control can cause undue anxiety in one's life. Also, if a counselee's self worth is grounded in the shifting sand of how others treat him (i.e., badly) rather than being grounded in the fact that he is a divine image bearer and inherently valuable no matter how badly anyone treats him, he will likely fall into anxiety, depression, and other sorts of psychological maladies. Changing the biblical doctrine of forgiveness will not truly help a counselee. It only makes it worse.
>
> Soli Deo Gloria

I agree with Kevin, and I think it is a helpful tool for people to insist on seeing some sort of repentance and restitution from someone who wrongs you before you trust them again. If they are not even sorry for what they've done, and they refuse to explain why what they did is wrong, then they can't be forgiven, and you can't trust them again.

I think this is the key passage – Luke 17:3-4:

Luke 17:3-4:

3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

That's Jesus speaking, there.

Also, I was having a debate with someone who disagrees with all this, and while debating with her, I thought of another example.

Luke 18:9-14:

9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

13 But the tax collector,standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So again, no forgiveness without repentance.

Forgiveness is what happens when someone who is sinned against treats the sinner as if he had never sinned. It is not on the balance sheet. It is not brought to mind. It is not held against them in the future. The forgiver trusts the sinner again as if the previous sin had never happened.

In divine (vertical) forgiveness, there is no forgiveness without repentance. There are Bible verses above to show that.

My argument is twofold. First, there is a clear teaching of Jesus explaining the sequence of sin and forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness, between humans (Luke 17:3). The verses cited by the forgive without repentance crowd don't show the mechanics of how to forgive, they are making the point that if you want God to forgive you, you should forgive others. The parable in Luke 18:9-14 affirms this again – repentance always precedes forgiveness.

Second, we have an obligation to imitate God, and that means imitating the way he forgives those who sin against him. When I raise that with the unconditional forgiveness crowd, they want to insist that there is a difference, that the word "forgive" means different things. I'm not convinced.

Finally, I do think that forgiving someone is obligatory if they sincerely repent, and even if they screw up again and again. So long as the repentance is sincere, (like if there is restitution and a genuine effort to show an understanding how the sin affected the wronged party in writing), then forgiveness should be automatic. Depending on how bad the sin is, there maybe be more to do than just say "I'm sorry". If the repentance is genuine, then I think the person who is sinned against must forgive, if they expect to be forgiven by God for the things they repent of.

Alan E. Kurschner adds one final point about the unconditional forgiveness view. He argues that there is serious textual doubt about the originality of Luke 23:34a, a text used by the pro-unconditional-forgiveness crowd.He has a journal article coming out on it, but a synopsis of his argument is here.

He also wrote this in a comment on this blog:

> Second, on Matt 6:15, this is what I have to say. Notice the then-clause: "neither will your Father forgive your sins." This would require universalism on the Father's part according to the unconditional interpretation given the first half: "But if you do not forgive others their sins." Since everyone has wronged the Father is the Father required to forgive everyone even if they are not seeking forgiveness?

So I think the case for the forgiveness being conditional on repentance is pretty strong, especially when serious harm has been caused.

Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas

September 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

The lecture: (from 2013)

Note: there is a period of 19 minutes of Q&A at the end of the lecture.

About the speaker:

His full biography is here.

Summary:

- It used to be true that most of the great scientists were believers in God
- But now science has advanced and we have better instruments – is it still true?
- Today, many people believe that science has shows that the universe and Earth are not special
- We used to believe that the Earth was the center of the universe, and Darwin showed we are not designed
- The problem with this view is that it is based on old science, not modern science
- Three topics: origin of the universe, fine-tuning of the universe, the Rare Earth hypothesis

Experimental evidence for the origin of the universe:

- #1: Hubble discovered that the universe expands because of redshifting of light from distant galaxies
- #2: Measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation show the universe had a beginnning
- #3: Measurements of the light element (hydrogen and helium) abundances confirm an origin of the universe
- The best explanation for an absolute origin of space, time, matter and energy is a supernatural cause

Experimental evidence for the design of the universe:

- #1: The amount of matter: a bit less = no stars and galaxies, a bit more = universe recollapses
- #2: The strong force: a bit more = only hydrogen, a bit more = little or no hydrogen
- #3: Carbon resonance level: a bit higher = no carbon, a bit lower = no carbon

Experimental evidence for galactic, stellar and planetary habitability:

- #1: Galaxy: produces high number of heavy elements and low radiation
- #2: Star: long stable lifetime, burns bright, bachelor star, third generation star (10 billion years must elapsed),
- #3: Planet: mass of planet, stable orbit, liquid water, tectonic activity, tilt, moon

Naturalistic explanations:

- Humans evolve to the point where they reach back in time and create finely-tuned universe
- Eternally existing multiverse

Hawking and Mlodinow response to Rare Earth:

- There are lots of planets so one must support life
- Odds of a planet that supports life are low even with 10^22 planets

Hawking and Mlodinow proposal of M-theory multiverse:

- There is no experimental evidence for M-theory being true
- M-theory is not testable now and is not likely to be testable in the future
- But science is about making testable predictions, not about blind speculation

Hawking and Mlodinow no-boundary proposal:

- This theory requires the laws of physics to exist prior to the universe
- But where do you get laws of physics before there is any physical world?
- There is no experimental evidence for no-boundary proposal
- All the evidence we have now (redshift, CMBR, H-He abundances) is for Big Bang

What science has revealed provide abundant evidence for a transcendent Creator and Designer

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information

- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
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- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Mulcair and Trudeau want convicted Canadian terrorists to retain citizenship

September 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper

This is from the National Post, one of Canada's two national newspapers.

Excerpt:

> The government used its new power to revoke the citizenship of convicted terrorists for the first time on Friday against the imprisoned ringleader of the 2006 al-Qaida-inspired plot to detonate truck bombs in downtown Toronto.
>
> Zakaria Amara was notified in a letter sent to the Quebec penitentiary where is he serving a life sentence that he is no longer a Canadian. He still holds citizenship in Jordan and could be deported there following his release from prison.
>
> […]Legislation that came into force in May, over the opposition of the NDP and Liberals, allows the government to revoke the citizenship of Canadians who have been convicted of terrorism offences — provided they hold citizenship in a second country.
>
> The law also applies to dual citizens convicted of treason and spying for foreign governments, as well as members of armed groups at war against Canada. A little more than half-a-dozen Canadians have been notified so far that the government was considering revoking their citizenship.

Now, you would think that a law like this would be common sense, but in Canada, you'd be wrong. Two-thirds of the electorate are pro-terrorism in Canada, owing largely to mass immigration from Muslim countries, and and an education system that is anti-Western

civilization in a suicidal way. And the leaders of the two socialist opposition parties reflect that suicidal view.

More:

> NDP leader Tom Mulcair has said he would scrap the citizenship revocation law, and on Friday Liberal leader Justin Trudeau repeated his pledge to repeal it. “The bill creates second-class citizens,” he said. “No elected official should ever have the exclusive power to revoke Canadian citizenship. Under a Liberal government there will be no two-tiered citizenship. A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.”

Let’s find out exactly who we are talking about here:

> Amara emerged in 2005 as one of two leaders of a terrorist group that trained on a rural property north of the city and, inspired by al-Qaida, began planning attacks they thought would convince Canada to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.
>
> Amara led a faction that was acquiring the components for large truck bombs that were to be detonated during the morning rush hour outside the Toronto Stock Exchange and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service office beside the CN Tower. An Ontario military base was also to be attacked.
>
> Justice Bruce Durno called the plot “spine chilling” and said “the potential for loss of life existed on a scale never before seen in Canada. It was almost unthinkable without the suggestion that metal chips would be put in the bombs. Had the plan been implemented it would have changed the lives of many, if not all Canadians forever.”

Under the liberal governments of the 1980s and 1990s, Canada experienced mass immigration from countries that had no understanding of nor allegiance to Western democratic ideals. This was desired in order to build a majority that would support bigger government, higher taxes, and more dependency. No effort was made to teach incoming immigrants to value democracy and Judeo-Christian values as the source of Canadian success. There were several terrorist attack in Canada during Harper’s 8 year run. If Canada elects leftists, these will continue. Only now, government will not have the tools they need to protect the public from their past immigration laxity. Be warned, Canadians.

Barna poll: what would people like to hear about in church sermons?

September 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church sucks, that's why men are bored there

This is from Glenn Beck, not someone I pay any attention to. But the poll was done by Barna, and the results are interesting.

Excerpt:

> An prominent Christian pollster joined Glenn on his T.V. program Tuesday night to unveil the findings from a new poll, which sought to identify the top issues church-goers want to hear about from their pastors. The findings fascinated Glenn, who has been saying for a long time the way to wake our country up should be through our churches.
>
> Joined by historian David Barton, pollster George Barna from the American Cultural & Faith Institute presented his research in which nearly 3,000 active church-goers were surveyed about the issues they want to hear about most in church.
>
> **Top 12 Issues the Church Wants to Hear:**
>
> 1. Abortion: Beginning of life, right to life, contraception, adoption, unwed mothers. 91%
>
> 2. Religious persecution/liberty: Personal duty, government duty, church response, global conditions. 86%
>
> 3. Poverty: Personal duty, government role, church role, homelessness, hunger, dependency. 85%
>
> 4. Cultural restoration: Appropriate morals, law and order, defensible values and

> norms, self-government. 83%
>
> 5. Sexual identity: Same-sex marriage, transgenderism, marriage, LGBT. 82%
>
> 6. Israel: Its role in the world, Christian responsibility to Israel, US foreign policy toward Israel and its enemies. 80%
>
> 7. Christian Heritage: role of Christian faith in American history, church role in US development, moder-day relevance. 79%
>
> 8. Role of Government: Biblical view, church-state relationship, personal responsibility, limitations. 76%
>
> 9. Bioethics: Cloning, euthanasia, genetic engineering, cryogenics, organ donation, surrogacy. 76%
>
> 10. Self-governance: Biblical support, personal conduct, impact on freedom, national sovereignty. 75%
>
> 11. Church in politics/government: Separation of church and state, legal boundaries, church resistance to government. 73%
>
> 12. Islam: Core beliefs, response to Islamic aggression, threat to US peace and domestic stability. 72%
>
> David Barton went on to present several Action Steps that church-goers can do right now, to help get their churches off the sidelines and their pastors preaching about these important issues.

Well, I certainly found these poll results interesting, and that's why I try to have a variety of topics on this blog.

The first thing I thought when I read that list is that pastors would have to be reading about things outside the Bible in order to know how to speak about them. For example, to talk about abortion, it helps to read books by Scott Klusendorf, Frank Beckwith, Robert George and Christopher Kaczor. Now, I've talked to some friends who have been through seminary, and it sounds to me that they read very little on the substance of these kinds of issues, and a lot about spiritual fluff. Maybe, instead of focusing so much on the packaging, they can focus more on the content. The list is pretty clearly a list of serious controversial issues. But in church I feel that the emphasis is always on feelings and agreement.

So, let's see. How should we go about getting the churches to speak about these issues? I really have no idea, and I'm not holding my breath waiting for them to start to talk about how the Bible is supported by evidence, or about what anti-Christians skeptics say, or about how the Bible applies to issues in the real world. The pastors just seem to be not interested in all the most interesting things in the world, for some crazy reason. I love the list – I wish I heard these things discussed in church.

Why fiscal conservatives should care about abortion rights

September 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this report

One reason to care is that abortion providers get taxpayer funds. Consider this report on Planned Parenthood funding, which was reported by Life News.

Excerpt:

> In a new report published by Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), the pro-life legal group lays out the various ways Planned Parenthood has engaged in abuse and potential fraud with American tax-dollars. The report alleges that 45 public audits of Planned Parenthood affiliates, and 57 known audits of state family planning programs, found that a "total of more than $129.7 million in waste, abuse, and potential fraud in federal and state family planning funding programs, the lion's share of which goes to Planned Parenthood."
>
> Additionally, the report says that $14.4 billion of Planned Parenthood's federal Medicaid expenditures were improper payments and the abortion company engaged in other billing violations, including "billing in excess of actual acquisition cost or other statutorily approved costs for contraceptives and Plan B products, inappropriately billing for services that were not medically necessary or not provided at all, and duplicate billing."
>
> ADF's report, *Profit. No Matter What*., reads, "Updates in this 2015 edition include a new federal audit of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission,

> specifically aimed at Planned Parenthood of North Texas; new federal audits of state family planning programs in California and Nebraska, totaling nearly $12 million; and more complete information on Planned Parenthood and other abortion and family planning facilities' other financial malfeasance."

Fiscal conservatives are opposed to government waste. We shouldn't be handing taxpayer money to organizations that engage in fraud and abuse. If you're against government waste and fraud, then you're against government waste and fraud *in abortion*. I know pro-choice libertarians who want to remove government funding for abortions for precisely this reason.

Now let me give a reason. Everyone understands that when you have this much debt, and so many entitlement programs going bankrupt, that we cannot afford to eliminate the next generation of works. Who will pay for these entitlement programs if there are no workers? We are competing with all the other left-leaning countries for skilled immigrants. That may be part of the solution, but it is not the full solution. Not only should we not be aborting the next generation of taxpayers who have to keep these programs afloat, we should also be encouraging natural marriage, since this is the best environment to raise future workers who are moral and well-adjusted. Divorce and single motherhood are not good for raising the next generation of productive workers. Many social issues play a part in the economy.

Former Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli: Hillary broke the law

September 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Hillary Clinton tweets support for jailing Christians who refuse to obey the law

Well, there were some more revelations on the weekend about Hillary's use of a private, unsecure e-mail server. She used the private e-mail server to bypass the security regulations of her employer, so that she could communicate secretly without having her e-mails be the subject of inquiries.

Here's the latest from leftist Reuters: (H/T JoeCoder)

> The U.S. Defense Department has found an email chain that Hillary Clinton did not give to the State Department, the State Department said on Friday, despite her saying she had provided all work emails from her time as secretary of state.
>
> The correspondence with General David Petraeus, who was commander of U.S. Central Command at the time, started shortly before she entered office and continued during her first days as the top U.S. diplomat in January and February of 2009.

You might remember that David Petraeus was critical of the administrations foreign policy decisions – at least until news of his affair with his biographer came to light, silencing him.

More:

> News of the previously undisclosed email thread only adds to a steady stream of revelations about the emails in the past six months, which have forced Clinton to revise her account of the setup which she first gave in March.
>
> [...]The email arrangement has drawn criticism from political opponents who accused the Democratic presidential front-runner of sidestepping transparency and record-keeping laws and of potentially exposing classified information to hackers.

Forget "potentially". As I pointed out before, every single e-mail on her server is in the hands of foreign governments who don't like us very much. That's not my opinion, that's

the opinion of a former Deputy Director of the CIA.

Anyway, more from the original article:

> […]As recently as Sunday, she told CBS when asked about her emails that she provided "all of them."
>
> […]The emails with Petraeus also appear to contradict the claim by Clinton's campaign that she used a private BlackBerry email account for her first two months at the department before setting up her clintonemail.com account in March 2009. This was the reason her campaign gave for not handing over any emails from those two months to the State Department.
>
> The Petraeus exchange shows she started using the clintonemail.com account by January 2009, according to the State Department.
>
> Clinton's spokesmen, who did not respond to questions, have acknowledged that other work emails from later in her tenure were also missing from the record Clinton handed over. They have declined to say why.
>
> The Federal Bureau of Investigation is now examining Clinton's server as it looks into the possible mishandling of classified information between Clinton and her staff.

Now, let's get a legal assessment of all of this from former attorney general of Virginia, Ken Kuccinelli.

He writes:

> Clinton originally denied that any of her emails contained classified information, but soon abandoned that claim. So far, 150 emails containing classified information have been identified on her server, including two that included information determined to be Top Secret.
>
> She then fell back on the claim that none of the emails in question was "marked classified" at the time she was dealing with them. The marking is not what makes the material classified; it's the nature of the information itself. As secretary of state, Clinton knew this, and in fact she would have been re-briefed annually on this point as a condition of maintaining her clearance to access classified information.
>
> Then there's location. Clinton knowingly set up her email system to route 100 percent of her emails to and through her unsecured server (including keeping copies stored on the server). She knowingly removed such documents and materials from authorized locations (her authorized devices and secure government networks) to an unauthorized location (her server).
>
> Two examples demonstrate this point.
>
> When Clinton would draft an email based on classified information, she was drafting that email on an authorized Blackberry, iPad or computer. But when she hit "send," that email was knowingly routed to her unsecured server — an

> unauthorized location — for both storage and transfer.
>
> Additionally, when Clinton moved the server to Platte River Networks (a private company) in June 2013, and then again when she transferred the contents of the server to her private lawyers in 2014, the classified materials were in each instance again removed to another unsecured location.
>
> Next we have the lack of proper authority to move or hold classified information somewhere, i.e., the "unauthorized location."
>
> While it's possible for a private residence to be an "authorized" location, and it's also possible for non-government servers and networks to be "authorized" to house and transfer classified materials, there are specific and stringent requirements to achieve such status. **Simply being secretary of state didn't allow Clinton to authorize herself to deviate from the requirements of retaining and transmitting classified documents, materials and information.**
>
> There is no known evidence that her arrangement to use the private email server in her home was undertaken with proper authority.
>
> Finally, there's the intent to "retain" the classified documents or materials at an unauthorized location.
>
> The very purpose of Clinton's server was to intentionally retain documents and materials — all emails and attachments — on the server in her house, including classified materials.
>
> The intent required is only to undertake the action, i.e., to retain the classified documents and materials in the unauthorized fashion addressed in this statute. That's it.
>
> It borders on inconceivable that Clinton didn't know that the emails she received, and more obviously, the emails that she created, stored and sent with the server, would contain classified information.

I have no doubt that Hillary Clinton would sell out the interests of her country in a heartbeat, if it meant improving her own political situation. We have to judge candidates by their past actions. That's what she's done, and that's what she'd do. I have friends in the military and in law enforcement who are impacted by politicians with loose lips. I don't want a traitor as commander-in-chief.

Public school punishes student for punching bully

September 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

According Wikipedia, "Huntington Beach High School (HBHS) is a public high school in Huntington Beach, California. Built in 1906, it is part of the Huntington Beach Union High School District. HBHS is a California Distinguished School. Huntington Beach High School is also the home of the Academy for the Performing Arts."

Consider this article from the UK Daily Mail.

It says:

> A California teenager has been hailed as a hero after he rushed to help a blind classmate being beaten up by a bully.
>
> Shocking footage of the attack, filmed by a bystander, shows the 'visually impaired' student being repeatedly hit round the head during lunch break at Huntington Beach High School, California on Wednesday.
>
> The assault only ends when the high school intervenes by knocking the bully to the ground with a single punch.
>
> A California teenager has been hailed as a hero after he rushed to help a blind classmate being beaten up by a bully.
>
> Shocking footage of the attack, filmed by a bystander, shows the 'visually impaired' student being repeatedly hit round the head during lunch break at Huntington Beach High School, California on Wednesday.
>
> The assault only ends when the high school intervenes by knocking the bully to the ground with a single punch.

Now why is this happening? Why is it that the use of force to resolve conflicts between good and evil are frowned upon in public schools?

I think there are two reasons. One, schools tend to frown on objective morality, and try to teach kids that everyone constructs their own moral view is as valid as anyone else's. In practice this means that might makes right, since there is no objective morality to appeal to in a relativistic system. The school doesn't want to step in and take a side here, because they don't believe that anyone is right or wrong. Second, there is a war against boys in the public schools. Teachers and administrators teach that the natural inclinations of boys to punish evil with force are bad. And they escalate that from the stomp-the-bully level to the anti-police level to the anti-war level. There is no good use of force ever, ever, ever, if you ask these teachers and administrators.

Why is there this emphasis on compassion over moral standards, and this war against male nature in the schools?

ABC News reports that there is a huge disparity between the numbers of male and female teachers.

Excerpt:

> For the past 20 years, the numbers of male teachers in elementary and middle school grades have stagnated at about 16 to 18 percent, according to MenTeach, an organization whose mission is to increase the number of males working with young children.
>
> There were no statistics for grades K-3, but in 2011, the most recent year for which there are data, only slightly more than 2 percent of kindergarten and preschool teachers were male.
>
> “The gap and discrepancy between girls’ performance and boys’ performance is growing ever more marked,” said Massachusetts psychologist Michael Thompson, co-author of the groundbreaking 2000 book “Raising Cain,” which argues that society shortchanges boys.
>
> “There are lots of explanations for it,” he said. “One is the nature of the elementary classroom. It’s more feminized and it does turn boys off, perhaps because they are in trouble more or because the teaching style is more geared to girls’ brains.

Some students go through public schools and never see a male teacher.

Men and women are different when it comes to moral judgments, and the use of force against evil, either in self-defense or in war. Men are traditionally more likely to see the use of force against evil as morally praiseworthy. Since there are few male teachers in the schools, naturally this sort of broad condemnation of *all* violence and *all* war as wrong is much more accepted – and taught to children. Either in the classroom, or through suspensions and other punishments. And the suspensions and other punishments are for things as small as drawing anything military, or chewing your sandwich into the shape of a gun, or… punching a bully who is attacking a blind kid.

When we as a nation wonder why people walk past others in distress instead of doing something, we should not underestimate the messages that children receive in public schools. The moral courage to oppose evil is beaten out of children in public schools, because they are being taught by those who see no moral value to self-defense against evil or any kind of use of force against evil. My advice is to not send your kids to public schools, especially boys.

An excellent resource to read about discrimination against boys and traditional boy behaviors is “The War Against Boys”, 2nd edition, by moderate feminist Christina Hoff Sommers.

Trump gets 5% in straw poll of informed voters at Values Voters Summit

September 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

I was actually thinking of going to this annual Washington conference of value voters, because the speakers line up so closely with my values. You might think that it's all social conservatism, but this is actually a really good place to find good talks on the free market system, as well as peace through strength foreign policy.

Anyway, they took a poll of the values voters, and Ted Cruz won:

> Sen. Ted Cruz won the Values Voter Summit straw poll for the third year in a row on Saturday, a strong showing of support from evangelical voters for his 2016 presidential bid.
>
> The firebrand Texas senator won a whopping 35 percent in the poll of summit-goers, ahead of runner-up Ben Carson's 18 percent. That margin is significantly wider than last year, where he edged out Carson by just 5 percentage points.
>
> Former Gov. Mike Huckabee (Ark.) took third with 14 percent, followed by Sen. Marco Rubio (Fla.) with 13 percent. Real estate magnate Donald Trump finished a distant fifth with 5 percent.
>
> Carson won the event's poll for vice president, his second consecutive win for that category.
>
> Family Research Council Action president Tony Perkins announced the results Saturday afternoon to applause from the conference's attendees. Perkins' group organized the three-day event.
>
> **Eight GOP presidential candidates took to the summit stage in order to**

> **make their case to the religious conservative audience—Cruz, Carson, Trump, Rubio, Huckabee, as well as Sens. Lindsey Graham (S.C.) and Rand Paul (Ky.), and Gov. Bobby Jindal (La.).**
>
> The results confirm Cruz, Carson and Huckabee's strength among religious conservative voters. Each rely on the voting bloc as a core piece of their electorate, but the huge win for Cruz is likely encouraging considering recent polls showing the senator outside of the top tier with evangelicals.
>
> But the figures are surprising for both Rubio and Trump. Rubio's finish shows him continuing to make gains with religious conservative voters as he rises in national polling. But the result is a disappointment for Trump, who had led with evangelicals in two recent polls.
>
> The Values Voter Summit though is Cruz country and several conference-goers mentioned his name first as the person they trust most on issues important to social conservatives when interviewed by The Hill during the event.
>
> […]A handful of candidates didn't attend the summit—Jeb Bush, Govs. Chris Christie (N.J.), John Kasich (Ohio) and Carly Fiorina.

The ones that didn't attend are, not surprisingly, the same ones I marked as social moderates. Better than a Democrat, not as good as real conservatives like Jindal or Cruz.

Anyway, Cruz's speech was awesome:

And his list of Day One promises was also amazing.

Sample:

> Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) electrified conservatives at the Values Voters Summit in Washington on Friday as he laid out plans for his first day in the White House.
>
> Cruz vowed to rescind all of President Obama's "illegal and unconstitutional executive actions," said he would order the Department of Justice to prosecute Planned Parenthood, instruct the DOJ and Internal Revenue Service to end religious persecution of citizens, "rip to shreds" the Obama administration's nuclear deal with Iran and move the U.S. embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.
>
> Upon each declaration, Cruz received huge applause and a standing ovation.
>
> "That's just day one," Cruz said. "There are 365 days in the year, four years in a presidential term, four years in a second term. By the end of eight years, this ballroom is going to be a whole lot bigger. By the end of eight years, there will be a whole lot of reporters and journalists who have checked themselves into therapy."

And if the idea of connecting with socially conservative voters is appealing to you, be sure to go to FRC.org and subscribe the daily and weekend podcasts. These podcasts are my favorites, along with The Weekly Standard podcast.

My original list of favorite candidates in the 2016 GOP primary:

1. ~~Walker~~
2. Jindal
3. ~~Perry~~
4. Cruz
5. Rubio

I really hope Jindal, Cruz or Rubio can take this thing, because I don’t want to have to be promoting someone I am not excited about.

Merkel’s decision to let in tons of “refugees” is backfiring in Germany

September 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of Europe

This is from the UK Daily Mail. A good article, that shows what happens when people make decisions with their hearts, and don’t use their heads to ask “what are the consequences for every group, going forward?” I actually thought that Merkel had backed off of her plan, but I guess I was wrong…

Excerpt:

> Mrs Merkel’s offer last month to accept all refugees from war-ravaged Syria opened the floodgates. More than a million migrants are expected this year alone, the bulk of them far from genuine asylum seekers. There is now deepening disquiet in this Christian country, dotted with churches, that it is being overwhelmed by people of a different religion and culture.
>
> […]Police in the Bavarian town of Mering, where a 16-year-old girl was reportedly raped this month, have warned parents not to allow their children outside unaccompanied.
>
> Girls and women have been told not to walk home alone from the railway station because it is near a migrant centre where the rapist may live.
>
> At Pocking, another well-kept Bavarian town, the headmaster of the grammar school wrote to parents telling them not to let their daughters wear skimpy clothing. This was to avoid ‘misunderstandings’ with 200 migrants who were put up in the school’s gymnasium over the summer, before being moved on this

> month.
>
> The letter to parents said the migrants were ‘mainly Muslim, and speak Arabic. They have their own culture. Because our school is directly next to where they are staying, modest clothing should be warn… revealing tops or blouses, short skirts or miniskirts could lead to misunderstandings.’

And by “misunderstandings”, they mean rape, child abuse and “forced prostitution” (in the words of the article).

But don’t worry, the government can be counted on to hush up any problems that might arise:

> At yet another migrant camp in Detmold, a city in central Germany, a 13-year-old Muslim girl was raped by a fellow migrant. The child and her mother had fled to Europe to escape a ‘culture of sexual violence’ in their own country.
>
> Astonishingly, police kept silent about the rape, which took place in June. Only this month, after a local newspaper revealed that it had happened — and claimed German authorities are not ‘going public’ about crimes involving migrants because they don’t want to ‘give legitimacy’ to critics of mass migration — did they confirm it had taken place.
>
> The area’s police chief, Bernd Flake, insists the official silence was meant to protect the rape victim. But he adds: ‘We will continue this policy (of not informing the public) whenever crimes are committed in migrant facilities.’

Multi-culturalism works so well. It has to work, because it makes the left feel so good to rush things along with unskilled immigrants from non-Western countries. You wouldn’t take away their good feelings from them, would you? You just have to take it, because they’re right and you’re wrong.

EPA: Obama's energy plan raises electricity rates but has no effect on climate

September 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

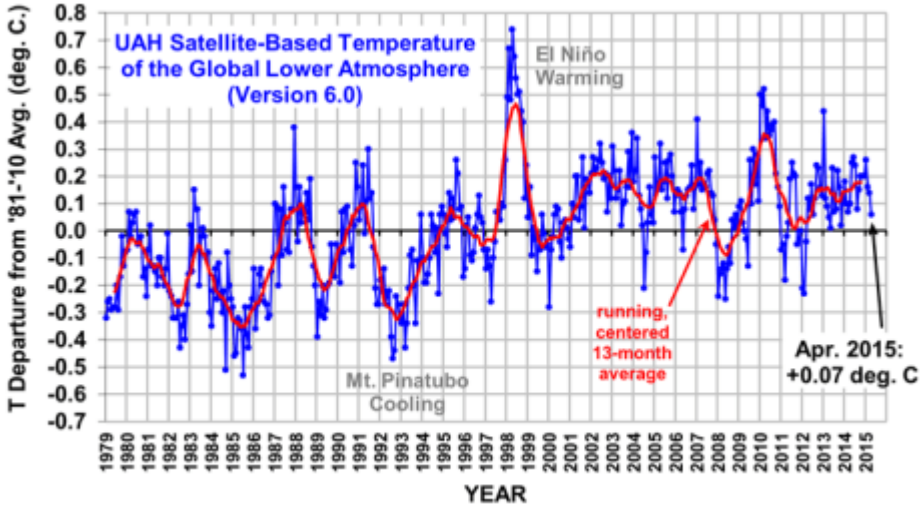

Atmospheric temperature measurements though April 2015

This article from Investors Business Daily. It talks about Obama's plan to save the planet from global warming. The plan is called the "Clean Power Plan".

Excerpt:

> Unveiled in August, this sweeping regulation will force states to slash their carbon dioxide emissions by between 7% and 48%, potentially costing families and businesses some $366 billion in higher electricity costs over the next 15 years. Yet EPA-funded models show that it will have no detectable impact on climate, if it has any impact at all.
>
> E&E Legal unearthed documents showing systemic collusion to promote this scheme. The coordination involves the White House, state governors and attorneys general, and a host of nongovernmental organizations affiliated with "major environmental donors" — especially billionaire Tom Steyer.
>
> The campaign quietly began in December 2013, when the White House met with aides to Gov. Jerry Brown, D-Calif.; Gov. Jay Inslee, D-Wash.; and then-Gov. John Kitzhaber, D-Ore. (Kitzhaber has since resigned following revelations about his office's unethical conduct while promoting green energy policies.)
>
> They wanted to ensure that states governed by Republicans felt significant pressure to implement this dubious federal mandate. They even hoped to "compel" utility companies operating across blue and red state lines to bring Republicans around.
>
> This plan required hiring so-called "orchestrators" in key states. These positions, underwritten by private benefactors, would be "closely tied to each governor." Their ultimate goal was to organize state-based campaigns involving renewable-

> energy companies, nongovernmental organizations, state officeholders and more.
>
> As the White House wrote at the time, “We’ve got a few other tracks with private sector and unusual allies.” They included an extended campaign to enlist public officeholders beyond coastal liberal enclaves — the “flyover states,” as one email called them. More than a dozen governors’ offices were brought on board. Some are particularly surprising.
>
> For example, Kentucky’s governor is now on record publicly saying that the president’s plan would be economically “disastrous,” yet the documents show his office among the “core group” and one of five that “welcomed quiet engagement” but couldn’t “commit … publicly.”
>
> Other states keeping their interest under wraps included Arkansas, Pennsylvania, Colorado and Tennessee.

Wow. If the global warming alarmists at the EPA don’t think that Obama’s plan will do anything to the climate, then why would we raise our own electricity rates to achieve nothing? What is most striking to me is some of the supposedly red states that are showing interest in this crap sandwich. Tennessee? Arkansas? Those two states have Republican governors. What is going on here?

What do skeptical ancient historians think of the earliest Christian creed?

September 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson solving a mystery

Here is a post from my friend Eric Chabot. He writes about the earliest historical source for the minimal facts about the resurrection, which is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Corinthians: 3-7.

1 Cor 15:3-7:

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Just in case you didn't know, Cephas is Peter, one of Jesus' closest followers.

The general consensus among scholars is the that creed goes back to within 1-3 years after the death if Jesus, when almost all the eyewitnesses were still around.

The creed

In Eric's post, he quotes very well-known skeptical historians who affirm each part of the creed.

First, the creed as a whole is respected, even by atheist scholars like John Dominic Crossan:

> Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that "I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received." The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition

> would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he "went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days" (3).

And atheist scholar Robert Funk:

> The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30 C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." — Robert Funk co-founder of the Jesus Seminar.(5)

Let's take a look at one of the parts of the creed that is respected by skeptical historians… namely, the early belief that Jesus was resurrected shortly after his death.

The early belief in the resurrection

Skeptical scholar E.P. Sanders:

> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. "I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: 'I saw him first!' 'No! I did.' Paul's tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus' followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions." "Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the 'resurrection': the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it. (14)

Skeptical scholar Bart Ehrman:

Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus' resurrection, since this is a matter of public record. (17)

> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don't doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don't have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don't think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19). (18)

You know, if all you did was give someone his post, I think that would be enough to show people that a more complete investigation of the historical Jesus was certainly a reasonable thing to do. It's amazing to me that people who grow up at this time when access to the data is so easy do not take the opportunity to look into Christianity.

List of virtually undeniable facts

Finally, below is a list of facts about the historical Jesus that are accepted by ancient historians – Christian, non-Christian, atheist.

These are compiled by non-Christian scholar E.P. Sanders:

From his book "Jesus and Judaism" (1985):

- Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.
- Jesus called disciples and spoke of there being twelve.
- Jesus confined his activity to Israel.
- Jesus was a Galilean who preached and healed.
- Jesus engaged in a controversy about the temple.
- Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem by the Roman authorities.
- After his death, his followers continued as an identifiable movement.
- At least some Jews persecuted at least parts of the new movement.

From his book "The Historical Figure of Jesus" (1993):

- Jesus was born c.4 BCE, near the time of the death of Herod the Great;
- He spent his childhood and early adult years in Nazareth, a Galilean village;
- He was baptized by John the Baptist;
- He called disciples;
- He taught in the towns, villages, and countryside of Galilee (apparently not the cities);
- He preached "the kingdom of God";
- Around the year 30 he went to Jerusalem for Passover;
- He created a disturbance in the temple area;
- He had a final meal with the disciples;
- He was arrested and interrogated by Jewish authorities, specifically the high priest;
- He was executed on the orders of the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate;
- His disciples at first fled;
- They saw him (in what sense is uncertain) after his death;
- As a consequence they believed he would return to found the kingdom;
- They formed a community to await his return and sought to win others to faith in him as God's Messiah.

The way the resurrection of Jesus is presented on TV, you would think that mythical stories about Jesus emerged decades and even centuries after the fact in other parts of the world from where the events happened. But the trouble is that no ancient historian thinks that. Only Hollywood TV producers and movie makers think that. Now, if you are getting your view of the historical accuracy of basic Christian beliefs from television and movies, then don't be surprised if you are wrong. No one is saying that you have to go to Christian pastors and preachers for the facts, but you should go to the historians. They at least know the minimal facts.

The best way for a skeptic to tackle these issues is, I think, to watch a decent debate on the resurrection of Jesus between two respected scholars. My favorite debate on the resurrection is William Lane Craig versus atheist historian James Crossley. I have a video and a summary already ready made just waiting for you to check it out. Don't worry, no one will be looking over your shoulder making you change everything your life should you be convinced. Just watch the debate and decide what you are going to do with it on your own. You don't have to change your whole life overnight. Becoming a Christian is instantaneous and easy to do. Living like a Christian is a process, and it's between you and God how fast you go. So just see what the facts are to start with and then take it from there.

Which candidate for Speaker of the House is the most conservative?

September 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Speaker John Boehner

I waited a couple of days to write about Speaker Boehner stepping down. I was supportive of him for a while, but even with the majority, nothing was getting done. I wanted to see bills passed that were popular with the American public, that would be voted against by Democrats, and vetoed by Obama. That would have made clear where Democrats stood. It turned out that he was more liberal than I thought.

Right now, there are 4 announced candidates to replace Boehner:

Kevin McCarthy, who is very similar to Boehner, maybe a bit more conservative. He would be a continuation of Boehner's "do nothing" legacy. According to the American Conservative Union, he has a lifetime rating of 90.43, and his most recent rating was 72, and prior to that 86. 100 is considered a perfect score. McCarthy IS considered good enough by Tea Party conservatives, but they would like someone better if they can get the votes.

Dan Webster is another moderate Republican who is running. I don't know much about him. According to the American Conservative Union, he has a lifetime rating of 81.11, and his most recent rating was 72, and prior to that 88. Not good enough.

Tom Price, is an ideas man in the vein of Paul Ryan. He has been endorsed by Paul Ryan and Jeb Hensarling – two gurus on economic policy. According to the American Conservative Union, he has a lifetime rating of 96.89, and his most recent rating was 92, and prior to that 100. He's my first choice.

Steve Scalise, who is a decent candidate, but he made the mistake of giving a speech to some weird racist group billions of years ago. A terrible mistake, because it is always being used against him no matter how sorry he says he is. Well, the truth is that you can be Obama and have a racist, America-hating pastor, but Republicans don't get forgiveness for their mistakes. According to the American Conservative Union, he has a

lifetime rating of 98.00, and his most recent rating was 100, and prior to that 100.

So, we have two good candidates. Price is my pick because we don't need a conservative purist bomb-thrower, we need a conservative purist policy wonk who can craft policies that get votes from Republicans AND moderate Democrats. Things that get moved, things that get signed. Things that solve problems.

There is some effort to draft Trey Gowdy, because of what a great job he's done on the Benghazi hearings.

The leftist Washington Post explains:

> Whispers are everywhere that South Carolina Rep. Trey Gowdy will enter — or be drafted into — the race to be House majority leader, the second most powerful job in the Republican-controlled House. And Republicans (at least those in Washington) should be rooting like crazy for that to happen.
>
> Here's why: As I noted yesterday, changing out John Boehner as speaker for Kevin McCarthy as speaker (McCarthy is currently the majority leader) isn't much of a change. Yes, McCarthy is younger and might be slightly more well-regarded among the younger and more conservative elements of the party than was Boehner. But that's not saying much. And no one would mistake McCarthy as *of* the tea party base. He's an institutionalist who is likely to face lots of the same challenges that led Boehner to call it quits.
>
> At the moment, the choices to replace McCarthy as majority leader are Rep. Tom Price (Ga.) and Rep. Steve Scalise (La.). Scalise is currently majority whip; Price is the chair of the Budget Committee. Both are well-liked by conservatives — and got their starts from the conservative sinecures within the GOP conference. **But both are already in prominent positions and neither is all that skilled as a television performer — a trait considered essential to jobs in leadership these days**. (Scalise was also recent enmeshed in a controversy over his having appeared in front of a white supremacist group in the past.)
>
> Gowdy is all the things Price and Scalise are not. He's a regular — and a star — on Fox News Channel thanks to his job as chairman of the House select committee investigating the attacks in Benghazi, Libya, on Sept. 11, 2012. He's seen as the latest (and best) iteration of the tea party movement in Congress, someone who is committed to core conservative principles but is also adept at knowing which levers of power to pull when. (Gowdy is a former federal prosecutor.)
>
> "If you want the best person to make the Republican case, if you want the best person to talk about why conservatism is the right answer for America, Trey Gowdy is our best foot forward," Utah Rep. Jason Chaffetz said during an interview on Fox News Channel on Tuesday morning.

But so far, Gowdy's not biting. His lifetime rating is 98.67, this year he is 100, last year he had 100. It's hard to say who I like better… Price or Gowdy. I'd have to give the edge to

Gowdy, because I think we need a fighter to inspire the base. Later on, with a Republican president, we can have good ideas then.

Report evaluates the claim that Planned Parenthood videos were highly edited

September 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

The Daily Signal reports.

Excerpt:

> A forensic analysis of undercover videos about Planned Parenthood's abortion practices are "authentic and show no evidence of manipulation or editing," according to a report released Tuesday by Alliance Defending Freedom.
>
> The analysis was completed by Coalfire, a digital security and forensics firm that has worked on civil and criminal investigations. The firm had access to all audio and video investigative footage recorded by the Center for Medical Progress.
>
> "The Coalfire forensic analysis removes any doubt that the full length undercover videos released by Center for Medical Progress are authentic and have not been manipulated," said Casey Mattox, senior counsel at Alliance Defending Freedom. "Analysts scrutinized every second of video recorded during the investigation and released by CMP to date and found only bathroom breaks and other non-pertinent footage had been removed."
>
> According to the report, the videos only omit footage irrelevant to the allegations such as bathroom breaks.
>
> […]The Daily Signal previously reported that the firm hired by Planned Parenthood, Fusion GPS, has ties to the Democratic Party, including an effort to expose a group of eight private citizens who donated to a super PAC supporting former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign.

How did Cecile Richards respond to the two audits? By saying that "everyone" agrees

that the videos were highly edited. This is how politicians talk. “Everyone agrees” but they can’t give an example of who is included in the everyone who agrees. Right now, I’m looking at the scoreboard, and it’s 2-0, with Planned Parenthood trailing. Our side has two reports, your side has none. You’re entitled to your own opinions, Cecile Richards, but not your own facts.

Meanwhile, Richards had to admit today under questioning that she lied about Planned Parenthood doing mammograms.

Excerpt:

> Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards stated “we do not have mammogram machines at our health centers” and “if you need a mammogram, you’re referred to a radiological clinic, and that’s what we do at Planned Parenthood” during testimony before Congress on Tuesday.
>
> Richards was asked, by Representative Rep. Mia Love (R-UT) “in the annual report, Planned Parenthood’s annual report, says that you are providing over 489,000 breast cancer screenings, and you’ve stated that none of your clinics actually have the mammogram machines. How many of the — how many of your affiliates have those mammogram machines?”
>
> Richards responded, “Well our health centers are part of our affiliates. We have more than 650 health centers. So an affiliate is simply the corporate structure for those health centers.”
>
> Love then cut in to ask “how many of them have mammogram machines?”
>
> Richards answered, “An affiliate isn’t a health center. … I think I spoke earlier, we do not have mammogram machines at our health centers. And we’ve never stated that we did. As I think has been — was mentioned earlier, for women who go for a breast exam, just as I got for my annual, you get a breast exam, and if you need a mammogram, you’re referred to a radiological clinic, and that’s what we do at Planned Parenthood.”

They don’t do mammograms. They do born-alive abortions, where they cut into the living babies to harvest their organs for profit.

Regarding the myth that abortion is “only 3% of what we do“, Cecile Richards also admitted:

> Planned Parenthood has long maintained that abortion is only a small part, 3% is typically the number the pro-aborts use, of its business.
>
> […]Yesterday, under questioning by Representative Rep. Cynthia Lummis (R-WY), Richards admitted that a staggering 86% of non-government revenue and revealed Planned Parenthood for what it is: an organization devoted to increasing the number of abortions in the United States.

Yes, it’s amazing what sorts of interesting facts come out when a person is under oath, and criminally liable for lies. Then suddenly we find out that everything we’ve been told

about Planned Parenthood from the mainstream media was lies.

Every Democrat voter is on board with what Planned Parenthood is doing, because this is a big part of what the Democrat Party stands for. It’s not a bug, it’s working as designed.

Speaker candidate Kevin McCarthy vows to repeal Obamacare, defund Planned Parenthood

October 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, this is unexpected good news.

The Daily Signal reports.

Excerpt:

> House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy further separated himself from outgoing Speaker John Boehner Tuesday night, vowing to fight to the end for conservative policies if he takes the chamber's top seat.
>
> Fox News' Sean Hannity pressed McCarthy hard on conservative frustration that accelerated Boehner's demise, repeatedly pointing to the House's failure to unravel Obamacare despite holding majorities in both chambers and its "power of the purse" authority.
>
> "You voted 50 times to repeal Obamacare, but there's a constitutional power you guys have that you don't use, and it seems all Obama has to do is mention, 'We're going to shut down the government and blame Republicans,'" Hannity said.
>
> **McCarthy promised a different course should he clinch the speakership in October.**
>
> **He committed to pursue the string of battles conservatives have waged against congressional Democrats and President Barack Obama, including defunding Obamacare, Planned Parenthood, and executive "amnesty" and stopping the Iran nuclear agreement.**
>
> **He did not detail specifics but said he would lead the fight with a "strategy" and a greater inclusion of the conservative lawmakers who helped topple Boehner from the speakership.**
>
> "Every Republican should have a voice here, and that's going to be the fundamental difference: I believe in the bottom-up strategy," McCarthy said.

This is not the first report I heard about his outreach to the most conservative Republicans when he was majority leader. Even the so-called Freedom Caucus that forced the more liberal Boehner to resign seemed to be OK with the conservative credentials of Kevin McCarthy.

The ultra leftist New York Times has more in this article from June 2014, when they were writing about his role as majority leader:

> When he was the leader of Republicans in the California State Assembly — an ideologically diverse group of lawmakers often choleric toward both Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Democrats who controlled the Legislature — Kevin

> Owen McCarthy was known as the guy who could help bring a bill across the finish line. Gently, almost as if no one could see it.
>
> […]Politically obsessed (Mr. McCarthy is known for lugging the 1,883-page Almanac of American Politics to read on his almost weekly flights back to California) and manically social (he cannot seem to eat dinner in Washington with fewer than eight guests), Mr. McCarthy is likely to be more focused on deal-making and elections than on pushing proscriptive policy from on high, as Mr. Cantor did.
>
> […]He keeps in close contact with other Republicans through phone calls, dinners and a strategically placed basketball hoop in his office that encourages drop-ins. "He understands how important family is," said Representative Renee Ellmers, Republican of North Carolina. "If our spouses are coming to Washington, he wants you to know he has an open door for them, too." He has the same policy for lawmakers who want to air a grievance, and has a good ear for knowing what their requirements are, reasonable or not, to get to yes on a bill.

So, he's not primarily a policy guy or a news media guy, he's a consensus builder. He seems to know how to talk to lots of people and get legislation passed. He seems to be very friendly with everyone, even Democrats. He's had to work with Democrats a lot. And he comes from a modest background. The only question is whether he wants to pass what the conservative wing of the party wants. What the grassroots voters want. His statements on Hannity make me optimistic.

Rick Santorum takes on liberal celebrities on The View

October 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn Baby – 10 weeks old

GOP presidential candidate Rick Santorum decided to go on a very liberal show called The View to talk about social issues. The View is a very popular show, and the hosts are very used to discussing all sorts of controversial issues. Would Rick Santorum be able to defend his views against the liberal hosts?

Here's the 7.5-minute clip:

And Life News has a transcript of the most interesting part of the discussion:

> WHOOPI GOLDBERG: So, Rick, you're one much the most conservative candidates in the race. You want to ban all abortions, defund Planned Parenthood, ban gay marriage. Oppose same-sex unions. And yet, you want to govern all of the folks in the United States? Or are you just governing from — [laughter]
>
> RICK SANTORUM: Well, my response is that people that have a different point of view, would you ask them the same question?
>
> GOLDBERG: Yes. I ask everybody —
>
> SANTORUM: But, I mean — but the point is, if someone has a different point of view, does that mean that they are only going to govern for people who support all those things?

> GOLDBERG: That's why I ask.
>
> SANTORUM: The answer is to, of course not.
>
> GOLDBERG: So, how will you say to your constituents who may be gay or may find themselves in a position with something like Planned Parenthood, what will you replace it with if you take it away?
>
> SANTORUM: Well, first off, I'm for reallocating every dollar that goes to Planned Parenthood and put them in women's health centers that actually provide more comprehensive services than Planned Parenthood does. Planned parenthood, for example, doesn't provide mammograms. Now, I know people say they do, but they don't. In fact —
>
> GOLDBERG: Yeah, they do.
>
> SANTORUM: In fact, Cecile Richards said yesterday in the hearing that, in fact, they do not. In fact, there are no Planned Parenthoods that provide any mammogram services. They basically provide abortion, contraceptive, STDs, things — and pregnancy tests. That's it. There are much more comprehensive women's health care centers. I spend a lot of time in Iowa. And in Iowa, there are 213 women health's centers. Thirteen Planned Parenthood centers. So, If you said we were going to take the Planned Parenthood money, reallocate it to, actually, clinics that do provide a whole host of other women's health services, women are probably going to get a more holistic health screening at those places than they would at Planned Parenthood.

What's neat about this is how Hollywood celebrities and journalists basically form their worldview by listening to the words of the people they agree with, and never checking anything out for themselves by listening to the other side. So, Goldberg walks into a debate talking about Planned Parenthood doing mammograms on camera, and is corrected by Rick Santorum quoting Cecile Richards, the CEO of Planned Parenthood. That's going to leave a mark.

To her credit, she is at least talking to people on the right. That's not something I that happens often in academia, where the professors went out of their way to not engage with scholars who disagreed with them. They seem to not be able to handle the strain of having to listen to views they don't hold. There seems to be a real dearth of critical thinking on the left, in general. But at least The View hosts had courage to listen to someone they didn't agree with, and to be civil.

Shooting at Oregon's Umpqua Community College occurred in gun-free zone

October 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

Another shooting in a gun-free zone.

The Federalist explains what happened:

> Although reports are highly fluid, it appears that at least 15 people are dead as a result of the massacre, with at least 20 individuals injured. The identities and motivations of those responsible for the mass shooting in Oregon are not yet known.
>
> White House demands for increased gun control ring hollow, however, given that Umpqua Community College, the site of the mass shooting, is a gun-free zone. School policy bans the possession of firearms on campus property. A cached web page of the school's safety and security policy, pictured below, states that "[p]ossession, use, or threatened use of firearms…on college property…is prohibited."
>
> Directly below the school's notice of its gun ban is a section entitled, "Don't Be a Victim," which includes advice such as "[w]alk in groups when possible" and "don't look like a victim[.]"

The shooter asked victims what religion they were.

Only law-abiding people obey gun-free zone signs, criminals obviously don't. If they are about to commit murder, they are not going to be deterred by a little poster telling them not to carry a gun into a gun-free zone. And the hypocrites in the White House use an ARMED Secret Service. Even they don't believe their own lies.

Shootings in gun-free zones

The most recent one prior to this was at Fort Hood, and I wrote about that in this post.

This article from National Review shows that multiple-victim public shootings are common in gun-free zones.

Excerpt:

> Gun-free zones have been the most popular response to previous mass killings. But many law-enforcement officials say they are actually counterproductive. “Guns are already banned in schools. That is why the shootings happen in schools. A school is a ‘helpless-victim zone,’” says Richard Mack, a former Arizona sheriff. “Preventing any adult at a school from having access to a firearm eliminates any chance the killer can be stopped in time to prevent a rampage,” Jim Kouri, the public-information officer of the National Association of Chiefs of Police, told me earlier this year at the time of the Aurora, Colo., Batman-movie shooting. Indeed, there have been many instances — from the high-school shooting by Luke Woodham in Mississippi, to the New Life Church shooting in Colorado Springs, Colo. — where a killer has been stopped after someone got a gun from a parked car or elsewhere and confronted the shooter.
>
> Economists John Lott and William Landes conducted a groundbreaking study in 1999, and found that a common theme of mass shootings is that they occur in places where guns are banned and killers know everyone will be unarmed, such as shopping malls and schools.
>
> I spoke with Lott after the Newtown shooting, and he confirmed that nothing has changed to alter his findings. He noted that the Aurora shooter, who killed twelve people earlier this year, had a choice of seven movie theaters that were showing the Batman movie he was obsessed with. All were within a 20-minute drive of his home. The Cinemark Theater the killer ultimately chose wasn’t the closest, but it was the only one that posted signs saying it banned concealed handguns carried by law-abiding individuals. All of the other theaters allowed the approximately 4 percent of Colorado adults who have a concealed-handgun permit to enter with their weapons.
>
> “Disarming law-abiding citizens leaves them as sitting ducks,” Lott told me. “A couple hundred people were in the Cinemark Theater when the killer arrived. There is an extremely high probability that one or more of them would have had a legal concealed handgun with him if they had not been banned.”
>
> Lott offers a final damning statistic: “With just one single exception, the attack on congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson in 2011, every public shooting since at least 1950 in the U.S. in which more than three people have been killed has taken place where citizens are not allowed to carry guns.”

Here’s Dr. John R. Lott to explain why gun-free zones should really be called “helpless victim zones”.

Excerpt:

> Contrary to public perception, Western Europe, most of whose countries have

> much tougher gun laws than the United States, has experienced many of the worst multiple-victim public shootings. Particularly telling, all the multiple-victim public shootings in Western Europe have occurred in places where civilians are not permitted to carry guns. The same is true in the United States: All the public shootings in which more than three people have been killed have occurred in places where civilians may not legally bring guns.
>
> Look at recent history. Where have the worst K–12 school shootings occurred? Nearly all of them in Europe. The very worst one occurred in a high school in Erfurt, Germany, in 2002, where 18 were killed. The second-worst took place in Dunblane, Scotland, in 1996, where 16 kindergartners and their teacher were killed. The third-worst, with 15 dead, happened in Winnenden, Germany. The fourth-worst was in the U.S. — Columbine High School in 1999, leaving 13 dead. The fifth-worst, with eleven murdered, occurred in Emsdetten, Germany.
>
> It may be a surprise to those who believe in gun control that Germany was home to three of the five worst attacks. Though not quite as tight as the U.K.'s regulations, Germany's gun-control laws are some of the most restrictive in Europe. German gun licenses are valid for only three years, and to obtain one, the person must demonstrate such hard-to-define characteristics as trustworthiness, and must also convince authorities that he needs a gun. This is on top of prohibitions on gun ownership for those with mental disorders, drug or alcohol addictions, violent or aggressive tendencies, or felony convictions.

Dr. Lott then lists about two dozen incidents – all occurring in gun free zones.

A quick refresher on why people own guns

People own guns so that they deter criminals and reduce the violent crime rate in their communities. The more guns there are in the hands of law-abiding citizens, the lower the violent crime rate goes, because criminals don't like being shot at by their crime victims.

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

The first book clearly shows that across all states who have adopted concealed-carry laws, the violent crime rate went down. When you let law-abiding citizens arm themselves, violent crime rates go down, because criminals don't know whether their victim will defend themselves, and they don't want to take the risk.

The second shows the flip side. In the UK, they banned hand guns in 1997. In the four years following the 1997 ban, violent crime rates DOUBLED. When you prevent law-abiding citizens from arming themselves, then criminals are emboldened to commit more crimes – they know there is no risk of getting shot by their victim.

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people.

A more recent study – from 2014

A new study that was in the news just last week confirms these findings. Newsmax reported on it.

Excerpt:

> A recent study showing a reverse correlation between concealed weapons and murder rates has renewed the contentious national debate about the effect of gun controls on violent crime.
>
> […]In research first published in Harvard's Journal of Public Law and Policy, criminologists Don Kates and Gary Mauser looked at the correlation between gun laws and death rates.
>
> "International evidence and comparisons have long been offered as proof of the mantra that more guns mean more deaths and that fewer guns, therefore, mean fewer deaths," the pair wrote in their introduction. "Unfortunately, such discussions [have] all too often been afflicted by misconceptions and factual error and focus on comparisons that are unrepresentative."
>
> The pair found "correlations that nations with stringent gun controls tend to have much higher murder rates than nations that allow guns."

It's not a reasonable position to think that disarming law-abiding citizens will reduce crime rates. The evidence is against it. It's all fine for clowns in the White House to get up and wring their hands for gullible voters who are more moved by feelings than by facts, but the data is clear. Disarming law-abiding citizens and promoting gun-free zones encourages and emboldens violent criminals. Period.

Mixed-race non-religious Oregon shooter singled out Christians for execution

October 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

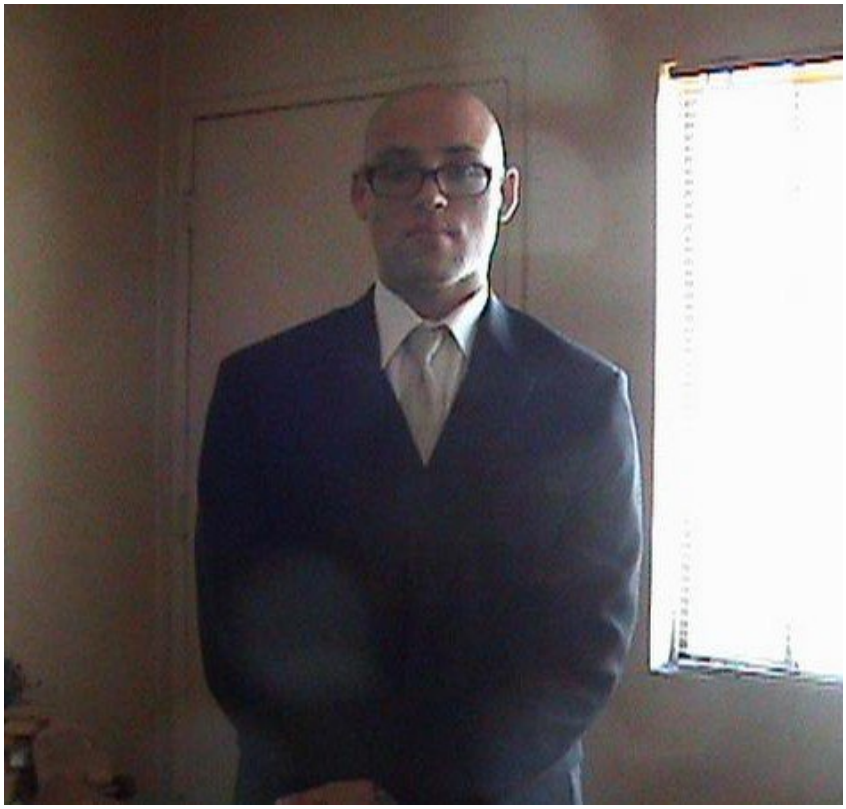

Non-religious Chris Harper Mercer doesn't like organized religion

Gateway Pundit is reporting that the Oregon shooter was an atheist, based on his MySpace page. And his unconfirmed dating profile says:

> Ethnicity: Mixed Race
>
> Religious Views: Not Religious, Not Religious, but Spiritual

And groups:

> Groups: Doesn't Like Organized Religion ; Left-hand Path ;Magick and Occult ; Meditation ; Not Religious, But Spiritual

In this case, "Doesn't like Organized Religion" means "Singles out Christians for execution-style murders". He didn't ask about anyone's politics, or race, or anything else, he just asked about their religion – that was his motivation.

This is from the New York Post.

Full text:

> **The gunman who opened fire at an Oregon community college was forcing people to stand up and state their religion before he began blasting away at them, survivors said Thursday.**
>
> A woman who claimed to have a grandmother inside a writing class in Snyder

Hall, where a portion the massacre unfolded, described the scene in a tweet.

“The shooter was lining people up and asking if they were Christian,” she wrote. “If they said yes, then they were shot in the head. If they said no, or didn’t answer, they were shot in the legs. My grandma just got to my house, and she was in the room. She wasn’t shot, but she is very upset.

The Twitter user, @BodhiLooney, then recalled how her grandmother attempted to save the life of one of her close classmates.

“She tried to perform CPR on her friend, but it was too late,” the woman said. “I hope nothing like this ever happens again.”

Kortney Moore, an 18-year-old student at Umpqua Community College who was also in the room, told Oregon’s News Review that the shooter was indeed on the hunt for Christians.

Moments after hearing a bullet come flying through a window, she said the 20-year-old shooter made his way inside and targeted their teacher, pumping a single round into their head.

As the young man ordered people to the ground, Moore laid patiently with her classmates and waited, according to the News Review.

Once they all got down, she said the gunman began asking people to rise and say what their religion was. After they stood and gave their answer, he started shooting.

As the chaos continued, students began scrambling “like ants,” according to Brady Winder, a 23-year-old student from Portland who was in the room next door.

“People (were) screaming, ‘get out!,” he told NRToday, adding that he witnessed a girl frantically swimming across a nearby creek to escape.

Hannah Miles, another Umpqua student, was also sitting in a class room next door and said she initially heard a pop that sounded like a yardstick slapping on a chalkboard when the shooting broke out.

She said that when her class heard the noise again, her teacher went to see if everything was all right. Minutes later, shots rang out repeatedly and they all fled, leaving their belongings behind.

Jared Norman, a nursing student, was locked down in the cafeteria with 50 other students when he heard gunfire — which prompted a mass panic, he said, with his voice trembling.

UCC Foundation Executive Director Dennis O’Neill was also on campus during the shooting and said him and other school officials were running around and securing classrooms as the gunman made his way through Snyder Hall.

“We locked our door and I went out to lock up the rest rooms and could hear four shots from the front of campus,” he recalled.

> Christian Bringhurst, a teacher at nearby Camas Valley Elementary School, said his daughter Justine was also on campus at time of shooting and was safely evacuated.
>
> "It's awful. The uncertainty of what is going on is tough to deal with,' he explained. "We have a dozen (Camas Valley) kids going to school out there. Trying to find out who is there and make sure everybody is OK. Our hearts going out to the victims."
>
> At around noon, officials sent out an automated phone call to parents at Roseburg School District, which referenced the shooting and assured the school was safe.
>
> Sometime later, students' cell phones were confiscated and they were escorted out of their buildings with their hands up as authorities patted them down and lined them up to be evacuated on buses, according to NRToday.
>
> Around 200 people were estimated to be waiting at the Douglas County Fairgrounds to pick up the students. Red Cross grief counselors were also on hand to provide care to anyone who needed it.

He didn't like organized religion – particularly Christian organized religion. Christians who vote and evangelize get in the way of non-religious people who want to pursue immorality and pleasure. We already see lots of coercion of Christians, even in America, from the secular left. Many of the people who command the culture – news media, celebrities, politicians, academics, etc. seem to be comfortable with expressing outright hatred of Christianity. This raging intolerance can easily spill over into violence, as it has in other times and places. If you look at less Christian atheist regimes in North Korea today, and in the past in the Soviet Union, the anger at Christians and our "organized religion" spills over into mass murder very naturally. Maybe the non-religious people at the top who oppose organized religion so strongly should choose to be a little bit less hateful, and a little more tolerant of differences?

Related posts

- Mark D. Linville: does Darwinian evolution make morality rational?
- New study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others
- Can evolution, empathy and well-being account for the existence of moral facts?
- William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech
- Utilitarianism and the Moral Life by J. P. Moreland
- Atheist Jerry Coyne explains why morality is impossible for atheists
- The drowning stranger illustration challenges atheistic morality
- Are atheists able to perform the greatest moral duty?
- Was Stalin an atheist? Is atheism or communism responsible for mass murders?
- Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral? Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong?
- Matt Dillahunty debates David Robertson on atheism, morality and evil

- Atheist Michael Shermer tries to rationally ground morality in debate with Frank Turek
- Atheist Richard Carrier, who divorced his wife to go polyamorous, seeks new sex partner

Remember when the progressive gunman attacked the Family Research Council?

October 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

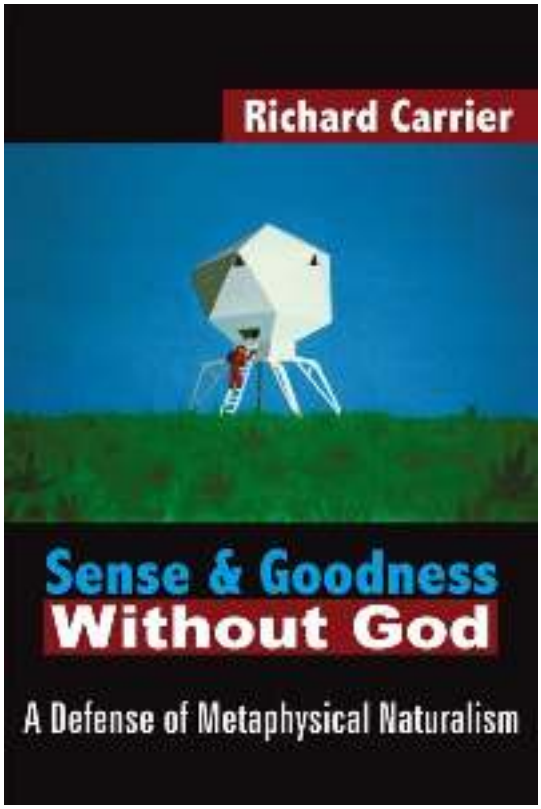

Goodness Without God: is it possible?

Let's walk down memory lane and remember what happens when "non-religious" people who don't like "organized religion" get hold of guns and decide to act on their non-religious convictions. In this case, the shooter was a gay activist who was a great admirer of Friedrich Nietzche, the atheist philosopher who proclaimed the death of God.

The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> The man accused of opening fire and shooting a security guard at the conservative Family Research Council headquarters last August plead guilty to three charges in a D.C. federal court Wednesday.
>
> Floyd Lee Corkins, II of Herndon, Virginia entered guilty pleas to a federal weapons charge as well as a local terrorism charge and a charge of assault with intent to kill, according to news reports.
>
> The Washington Post reports that, according to the plea agreement Corkins signed, he told FBI agents on the day of the shooting that he "intended to kill as many people as possible" and planned to "smother Chick-fil-A sandwiches in their faces."
>
> Investigators found additional magazines and 15 Chick-fil-A sandwiches in his

> backpack on the day of the shooting.
>
> Following the guilty plea the FRC issued a statement placing a large portion of the blame for the shooting at the feet of the liberal Southern Poverty Law Center, which had listed FRC as a hate group. FRC noted that prosecutors discovered Corkins identified his targets on the SPLC's website.
>
> "The day after Floyd Corkins came into the FRC headquarter and opened fire wounding one of our team members, I stated that while Corkins was responsible for the shooting, he had been given a license to perpetrate this act of violence by groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center which has systematically and recklessly labeled every organization with which they disagree as a 'hate group,'" FRC president Tony Perkins said in a statement, which went on to demand that SPLC stop attacking organizations that have a different opinion on gay rights.
>
> The shooting happened shortly after Chick-fil-A made headlines over the company president's disagreement with gay marriage.

Why does anyone think that people on the secular left are tolerant?

Related posts

- Gunman says he was acting on anti-white views that he learned in college
- Floyd Lee Corkins II is a left-winger, admired atheist philosopher Nietzche
- Even after Family Research Council shooting, leftists continue "hate" rhetoric
- The mainstream media's biased coverage of the Family Research Council shooting
- Southern Poverty Law Center called the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Family Research Council shooting suspect volunteered at gay community center
- White House and left-wing media take hours to comment on FRC shooting
- Shooting at Family Research Council being investigated as domestic terrorism
- Zeitgeist conspiracy movie had profound impact on Jared Loughner
- Atheist who shot Gabrielle Giffords read Communist Manifesto, liked flag burning
- Suicidal Florida school board gunman was a progressive atheist
- Eco-terrorist who shot up Discovery Channel building is a Darwinist
- Harvard-educated evolutionist arrested for multiple-victim school shooting
- The link between Darwinism, nihilism and public school shootings
- Democrats attacking campaign offices with guns and explosives
- Pro-abortion thugs arrested at McGill University pro-life event
- Pro-abortion shooter murders two people
- Pro-lifer dodges SUV driven by pro-abortionist

An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview

October 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

If you love to listen to the Cold Case Christianity podcast, as I do, then you know that in a recent episode, J. Warner Wallace mentioned a blog post on an atheistic blog that clearly delineated the implications of an atheistic worldview. He promised he was going to write about it and link to the post, and he has now done so.

Here is the whole the whole thing that the atheist posted:

> "[To] all my Atheist friends.
>
> Let us stop sugar coating it. I know, it's hard to come out and be blunt with the friendly Theists who frequent sites like this. However in your efforts to "play nice" and "be civil" you actually do them a great disservice.
>
> We are Atheists. We believe that the Universe is a great uncaused, random accident. All life in the Universe past and future are the results of random chance acting on itself. While we acknowledge concepts like morality, politeness, civility seem to exist, we know they do not. Our highly evolved brains imagine that these things have a cause or a use, and they have in the past, they've allowed life to continue on this planet for a short blip of time. But make no mistake: all our dreams, loves, opinions, and desires are figments of our primordial imagination. They are fleeting electrical signals that fire across our synapses for a moment in time. They served some purpose in the past. They got us here. That's it. All human achievement and plans for the future are the result of some ancient, evolved brain and accompanying chemical reactions that once served a survival purpose. Ex: I'll marry and nurture children because my genes demand reproduction, I'll create because creativity served a survival advantage to my

> ancient ape ancestors, I'll build cities and laws because this allowed my ape grandfather time and peace to reproduce and protect his genes. My only directive is to obey my genes. Eat, sleep, reproduce, die. That is our bible.
>
> We deride the Theists for having created myths and holy books. We imagine ourselves superior. But we too imagine there are reasons to obey laws, be polite, protect the weak etc. Rubbish. We are nurturing a new religion, one where we imagine that such conventions have any basis in reality. Have they allowed life to exist? Absolutely. But who cares? Outside of my greedy little gene's need to reproduce, there is nothing in my world that stops me from killing you and reproducing with your wife. Only the fear that I might be incarcerated and thus be deprived of the opportunity to do the same with the next guy's wife stops me. Some of my Atheist friends have fooled themselves into acting like the general population. They live in suburban homes, drive Toyota Camrys, attend school plays. But underneath they know the truth. They are a bag of DNA whose only purpose is to make more of themselves. So be nice if you want. Be involved, have polite conversations, be a model citizen. Just be aware that while technically an Atheist, you are an inferior one. You're just a little bit less evolved, that's all. When you are ready to join me, let me know, I'll be reproducing with your wife.
>
> I know it's not PC to speak so bluntly about the ramifications of our beliefs, but in our discussions with Theists we sometimes tip toe around what we really know to be factual. Maybe it's time we Atheists were a little more truthful and let the chips fall where they may. At least that's what my genes are telling me to say."

In his post, Wallace comments on the statement above, but for more, you should listen to the podcast.

This fellow is essentially expanding on what Richard Dawkins has said about atheism:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

And Cornell University atheist William Provine agrees: (this is taken from his debate with Phillip E. Johnson)

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and

> no free will for humans, either.

And what about Florida State University atheist Michael Ruse:

> "The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory." (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

I see a lot of atheists these days thinking that they can help themselves to a robust notion of consciousness, to real libertarian free will, to objective moral values and duties, to objective human rights, and to objective meaning in life, without giving credit to theism. It's not rational to do this. As Frank Turek said on the latest episode of "Cross Examined", atheists have to sit in God's lap to slap his face. We should be calling them out on it. I think it's particularly important not to let atheists utter a word of moral judgment on any topic, since they cannot ground an objective standard that allows them to make statements of morality. Further, I think that they should have every immorality ever committed presented to them, and then they should be told "your worldview does not allow you to condemn this as wrong". They can't praise anything as right, either. This is not to say that we should go all presuppositional on them, but if the opportunity arises to point out how they are borrowing from theism in order to attack it, we should do that *in addition* to presenting good scientific and historical evidence.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

October 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below, please find my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

Brian Auten has posted the MP3 audio of the debate at Apologetics 315.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates

- You didn’t need to come out on this cold night
- Craig’s arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn’t listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don’t require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that “every effect requires a cause”
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can’t see
- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism

6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said.

Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can’t God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus’ burial isn’t historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig’s concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg’s concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig’s arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don’t look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Alexander Vilenkin: “All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning”

October 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve decided to explain why physicists believe that there was a creation event in this post. That is to say, I’ve decided to let famous cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin do it.

From Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Did the cosmos have a beginning? The Big Bang theory seems to suggest it did, but in recent decades, cosmologists have concocted elaborate theories – for example, an eternally inflating universe or a cyclic universe – which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos. Now it appears that the universe really had a beginning after all, even if it wasn’t necessarily the Big Bang.
>
> At a meeting of scientists – titled “State of the Universe” – convened last week at Cambridge University to honor Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday, cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University in Boston presented evidence that the universe is not eternal after all, leaving scientists at a loss to explain how the cosmos got started without a supernatural creator. The meeting was reported in *New Scientist* magazine (Why physicists can’t avoid a creation event, 11 January 2012).
>
> […]In his presentation, Professor Vilenkin discussed three theories which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos.

The three theories are chaotic inflationary model, the oscillating model and quantum gravity model. Regular readers will know that those have all been addressed in William Lane Craig’s peer-reviewed paper that evaluates alternatives to the standard Big Bang cosmology.

But let’s see what Vilenkin said.

More:

> One popular theory is eternal inflation. Most readers will be familiar with the theory of *inflation*, which says that the universe increased in volume by a factor of at least 10^78 in its very early stages (from 10^−36 seconds after the Big Bang to sometime between 10^−33 and 10^−32 seconds), before settling into the slower rate of expansion that we see today. The theory of *eternal inflation* goes further, and holds that the universe is constantly giving birth to smaller “bubble” universes within an ever-expanding multiverse. Each bubble universe undergoes its own initial period of inflation. In some versions of the theory, the bubbles go both backwards and forwards in time, allowing the possibility of an infinite past. Trouble is, the value of one particular cosmic

parameter rules out that possibility:

> But in 2003, a team including Vilenkin and Guth considered what eternal inflation would mean for the Hubble constant, which describes mathematically the expansion of the universe. They found that the equations didn't work (Physical Review Letters, DOI: 10.1103/physrevlett.90.151301). "You can't construct a space-time with this property," says Vilenkin. It turns out that the constant has a lower limit that prevents inflation in both time directions. "It can't possibly be eternal in the past," says Vilenkin. "There must be some kind of boundary."

A second option explored by Vilenkin was that of a cyclic universe, where the universe goes through an infinite series of big bangs and crunches, with no specific beginning. It was even claimed that a cyclic universe could explain the low observed value of the cosmological constant. But as Vilenkin found, there's a problem if you look at the *disorder* in the universe:

> Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists – nothing like the one we see around us.
>
> One way around that is to propose that the universe just gets bigger with every cycle. Then the amount of disorder per volume doesn't increase, so needn't reach the maximum. But Vilenkin found that this scenario falls prey to the same mathematical argument as eternal inflation: if your universe keeps getting bigger, it must have started somewhere.

However, Vilenkin's options were not exhausted yet. There was another possibility: that the universe had sprung from an eternal cosmic egg:

> Vilenkin's final strike is an attack on a third, lesser-known proposal that the cosmos existed eternally in a static state called the cosmic egg. This finally "cracked" to create the big bang, leading to the expanding universe we see today. Late last year Vilenkin and graduate student Audrey Mithani showed that the egg could not have existed forever after all, as quantum instabilities would force it to collapse after a finite amount of time (arxiv.org/abs/1110.4096). If it cracked instead, leading to the big bang, then this must have happened before it collapsed – and therefore also after a finite amount of time.
>
> "This is also not a good candidate for a beginningless universe," Vilenkin concludes.

> So at the end of the day, what is Vilenkin's verdict?
>
> > "All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

This is consistent with the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin Theorem, which I blogged about before, and which William Lane Craig leveraged to his advantage in his debate with Peter Millican.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past. *No one* denies the expansion of space in our universe, and so we are left with a cosmic beginning. Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

Conclusion

If the universe came into being out of nothing, which seems to be the case from science, then the universe has a cause. Things do not pop into being, uncaused, out of nothing. The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

Now, let's have a discussion about this science in our churches, and see if we can't train Christians to engage with non-Christians about the evidence so that everyone accepts what science tells us about the origin of the universe.

The link between single mother welfare, fatherlessness, poverty, crime and school shootings

October 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Government pays people welfare not to get married before having kids

We now know that the shooter in the Oregon shooting did not have a close relationship with his father – he was fatherless.

> According to reports, Harper-Mercer was born in the UK to a British father before the family moved to the US in the mid-90s. His parents divorced in 2006 and he had lived most recently with his mother in Oregon, OregonLive reported.

My friends Patrick C. and William B. both messaged me about this article by sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, who points out the link between fatherlessness and crime.

The article appears in National Review.

Wilcox writes:

> Another shooting, another son of divorce. From Adam Lanza, who killed 26 children and adults a year ago at Sandy Hook School in Newtown, Conn., to Karl Pierson, who shot a teenage girl and killed himself this past Friday at Arapahoe High in Centennial, Colo., one common and largely unremarked thread tying together most of the school shooters that have struck the nation in the last year is that they came from homes marked by divorce or an absent father. From shootings at MIT (i.e., theTsarnaev brothers) to the University of Central Florida to the Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy in Decatur, Ga., nearly every shooting over the last year in Wikipedia's "list of U.S. school attacks" involved a young man whose parents divorced or never married in the first place.

> […]The social scientific evidence about the connection between violence and broken homes could not be clearer. My own research suggests that boys living in single mother homes are almost twice as likely to end up delinquent compared to boys who enjoy good relationships with their father. Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson has written that "Family structure is one of the strongest, if not the strongest, predictor of variations in urban violence across cities in the United States." His views are echoed by the eminent criminologists Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi, who have written that "such family measures as the percentage of the population divorced, the percentage of households headed by women, and the percentage of unattached individuals in the community are among the most powerful predictors of crime rates."
>
> Why is fatherlessness such a big deal for our boys (almost all of these incidents involve boys)? Putting the argument positively, sociologist David Popenoe notes that "fathers are important to their sons as role models. They are important for maintaining authority and discipline. And they are important in helping their sons to develop both self-control and feelings of empathy toward others, character traits that are found to be lacking in violent youth." Boys, then, who did not grow up with an engaged, attentive, and firm father are more vulnerable to getting swept up in the Sturm und Drang of adolescence and young adulthood, and in the worst possible way.

So where do fatherless children come from? It turns out that government programs incentivize women to make them.

Dr. Michael Tanner of the libertarian Cato Institute explains how welfare causes fatherlessness in his testimony to Congress:

> Welfare contributes to crime in several ways. First, children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. According to one study, children raised in single-parent families are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior.(3) Moreover, O'Neill found that, holding other variables constant, black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as black children from a family where the father is present. Nearly 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 percent of prison inmates.(4) Research indicates a direct correlation between crime rates and the number of single-parent families in a neighborhood.(5)
>
> As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her seminal article for The Atlantic Monthly:
>
> The relationship [between single-parent families and crime] is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family break

> up as the most important source of rising rates of crime.(6)
>
> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on family structure concluded that "providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women."(9)

The secular left in this country believes that fathers need to be separated away from their children, and that's why they support welfare programs that redirect money from husbands in intact families to single mothers. They believe that fathers are harmful because they set boundaries on children, and judge them and punish them when they act immorally. To the secular left, boundaries, judgments and punishments on children are bad, and must be stopped. So how can the secular left discourage men from marrying and teaching their own children morality? Well, they can tax married men, and they can give the money to single mothers.

Not only is crime caused by fatherlessness, but poverty is. as well.

Here is Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to explain:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that

> the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:
>
> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

People on the left claim that poverty causes crime, but they don’t look for the root cause of poverty. The root cause of poverty is the decline of marriage, which produces fatherless children.

Target acquisition and interception in dragonflies

October 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Here is a fascinating post about some of the capabilities of dragonflies from Evolution News.

Selective attention

First, dragonflies have "selective attention" – the ability to focus on a single prey and ignore other distractions:

> Dragonflies are among the best flyers in the insect world. Their twin pairs of paper-thin wings allow them to hover and move in all directions, even in mating. When the time comes to dart after prey at high speed, they rarely miss.
>
> What's their secret? One is "selective attention" — a trait previously known only in primates, according to new research from the University of Adelaide, Australia. Selective attention is the ability to focus on one object and exclude others. Just as a tennis player must focus on the ball and ignore the cheers of the crowd, a dragonfly must pick out one target from a swarm of insects and avoid being distracted by all the others.

Here's a snip from the research paper:

> Our data make a compelling case that CSTMD1 reflects **competitive selection of one target.** We emphasize "competitive," because the attended target is not always the same between trials or even within a trial, as seen in **strikingly perfect switches from one to the other**…. Competition is further suggested by rare examples where the activity observed under Pair stimulation initially lags both $T_1$and T_2 responses… **suggesting initial conflict** in the underlying neural network **before resolution of competition by a "winning" target.**
>
> We previously showed that CSTMD1 still **responds robustly to a target** even when it is embedded within a **high-contrast natural scene containing numerous potential distracters**. Taken together with recent evidence that the behavioral state of insects **strongly modulates responses of neurons**

> **involved in visuomotor control**, our new data thus suggest a **hitherto unexpected sophistication** in **higher-order control of insect visual processing, akin to selective attention in primates.**Perhaps the **most remarkable feature** of our data is that **once the response "locks" onto a target** (or following a switch), **the second target exerts no influence** on the neuron's response: the **distracter is ignored completely.**

In order to succeed at the task of catching its prey, the dragonfly has to tune out all other distractions.

Target selection

In addition, dragonflies have the ability to intercept a target in mid-air – similar missile defense systems on AEGIS cruisers and destroyers.

The Evolution News article explains:

> Another paper on dragonflies shows that these marvels of the insect world are equipped with navigational equipment that can do vector calculus. In the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Gonzalez-Bellido and a team at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute discerned "**Eight pairs of descending visual neurons in the dragonfly [that] give wing motor centers accurate population vector of prey direction.**"
>
> **Intercepting a moving object requires prediction of its future location.** This **complex task** has been **solved by dragonflies**, who **intercept their prey in midair with a 95% success rate**. In this study, we show that a group of 16 neurons, called target-selective descending neurons (TSDNs), **code a population vector** that reflects the direction of the target with **high accuracy and reliability across 360°**. The TSDN **spatial** (receptive field) and **temporal** (latency) properties matched the area of the retina where the prey is focused and the **reaction time**, respectively, during predatory flights. The **directional tuning curves** and morphological traits (3D tracings) for each TSDN type were consistent among animals, but spike rates were not. Our results emphasize that **a successful neural circuit for target tracking and interception** can be achieved with **few neurons** and that in dragonflies **this information is relayed from the brain to the wing motor centers in population vector form.**

What did I make of this? Well, evidence like this always causes me to think aboutthe reality of God, and the disturbing thought that we do not live in an accidental universe where I can do whatever I want and be accountable to no one. It's easier to believe that – it requires less work and it frees us to be our own boss and make our happiness the first priority. As individuals, it's very tempting for us to think that we are number one, and to resent our obligations to anyone else. The problem is that the scientific data doesn't support that worldview. The facts are what they are and it is up to us, now, to try to find out who the designer is and what he wants from us.

How the presence and quality of fathers affects belief in God

October 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A father in the home helps children to reconcile love and moral boundaries

Here's an article by Paul Copan which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own*rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of François-Marie Arouet.

> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence, but there is also statistical evidence.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was

> asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an enormously difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick

is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others. If you want your child to be religious and moral, you have to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he makes, he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading.

A child's relationship with God begins before he/she is even born. It begins with his/her mother's ability to control herself and choose the right man for the job of being a father. Note that superficial qualities like "deep voice", "broad shoulders", "expensive shoes", "likes dogs" and "makes me laugh" have no bearing on a man's ability to commit and lead on moral/spiritual issues. Christians don't really do a good job of showing the practical consequences of bad choices to women in the church. The ones I talk to impress on me how "unpredictable" men are, so that they are justified in choosing one that they like based on tingles, and hoping it will work out. We should be telling women that poor choices with men are wrong, and it leads to fatherlessness and abortion.

Bible study: the importance of gratitude, and making moral judgments

October 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

First, I'll start with a passage that makes it clear that it's good for Christians to make moral judgments when people do evil things.

2 Samuel 12:1-12:

> 1 And the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him,"There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor.
>
> 2 The rich man had very many flocks and herds,
>
> 3 but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him.
>
> 4 Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."
>
> 5 Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan,"As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die,
>
> 6 and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."
>
> 7 Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul.
>
> 8 And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would

> add to you as much more.
>
> 9 Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.
>
> 10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'
>
> 11 Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.
>
> 12 For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.'"

So, in this case Uriah had done his best to help David to achieve David's goals, even going so far as to fight for him against his enemies. And how did David repay him? David repaid him by orchestrating his death and stealing his wife. Uriah only had the one wife, and David had lots of wives. But that didn't stop David from going after Uriah's one wife – he just would not be satisfied. How did Nathan respond to this? Nathan went to David and made a moral judgment (verbal) against David. David responded well and said he was sorry. But that didn't get him out of punishment. A bit later in the book, David shows that he really is sorry for what he did. He doesn't try to get into a discussion about it with Nathan do determine whether he did something wrong to Uriah – he knows that he has done wrong. Although he got his forgiveness in exchange for his repentance, he still got hammered by God for what he did to Uriah. I guess God would have hammered him even more had he not repented at all, though.

Second passage, this one about being grateful. If someone you know has helped you out, then you should let the good thing they have done for you change your character – change the way that you treat others.

Matthew 18:21-35:

> 21 Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"
>
> 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.
>
> 23 "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.
>
> 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.
>
> 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.
>
> 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'
>
> 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave

> him the debt.
>
> 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’
>
> 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’
>
> 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.
>
> 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.
>
> 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.
>
> 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’
>
> 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.
>
> 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

What is really bad is when you treat someone well by performing X for them… assisting them financially, helping them to find a mate, helping them to achieve success, getting them a job, giving them gifts, serving them somehow, etc. and then they come back and actually undermine you in the exact same area where you helped them. That’s the really bad situation that you want to avoid. If someone helps you by doing X, make sure that you don’t turn around and hurt them by doing (not X) back to them – hurting them in the very area where they tried to help you.

I’m going to try to tie these two passages together. Imagine how this ingratitude would work in the David and Uriah case. Suppose Uriah helped David somehow to try to win the heart of a woman he really liked. Then David turns around and steals Uriah’s wife in response to being helped. You don’t want to be that guy who responds to kindness by doing the exact opposite of how you were helped. I think it’s important to respect the abilities of the people who help you and let the gratitude you should feel for them change your character. Don’t respond to them by doing the exact opposite for them or others that they did for you. And if you see someone doing that, give them the Nathan treatment – “you are the man!”. Awesome. Don’t be the guy who won’t make a moral judgment because he wants to be friends with David, even over the dead body of Uriah.

Obama borrowed $10 trillion and all we got was this horrible jobs report

October 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

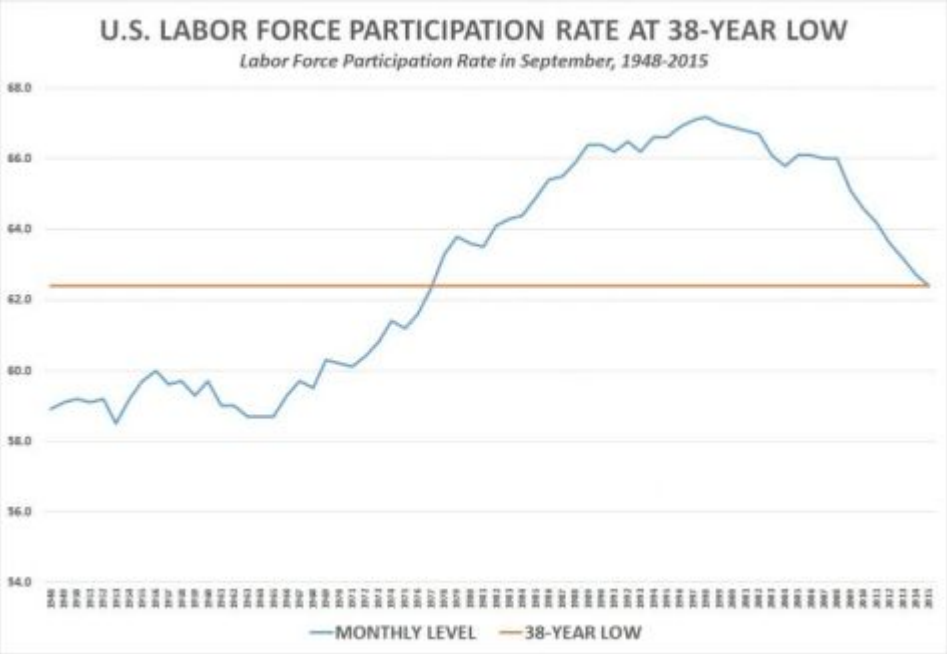

What kind of economic growth can you get from a community organizer?
Wow, you would think that there would be some organic economic growth after Obama added $10 trillion to the national debt, but the September jobs report looks more like a forecast for recession than anything else.

The Daily Signal reports:

> The Bureau of Labor Statistics' September jobs report showed unexpected weakness in the labor market.
>
> The payroll survey showed that employers created only 142,000 jobs in September. The economy created only 167,000 net new jobs a month in the 3rd quarter—a substantial drop from the 231,000 jobs a month pace in the 2nd quarter.
>
> **The numbers are even worse for private-sector job growth. Large expansions in government hiring boosted the August and September figures. Private-sector job growth dropped from 220,000 net new jobs a month in the 2nd quarter to 138,000 in the 3rd quarter.**
>
> […]The Household survey reported that the unemployment rate remained constant at 5.1 percent in September. Unfortunately, this happened only because almost 600,000 Americans left the labor force. People not looking for work do not count as unemployed, so the unemployment rate remained unchanged.
>
> However, the labor force participation rate dropped another 0.2 percentage points to 62.4 percent—its lowest level since 1977.

> […][**T]he September report follows a disappointing August report. Revisions also showed that employers created 60,000 fewer jobs in July and August than previously estimated.**

CNS News says that the number of Americans not in the workforce is at 94,610,000. The Weekly Standard says we are going in reverse: " For the last three months, average job growth comes in at 167,000. Nearly 100,000 below the average for 2014. We are going in reverse." and "Of the 142,000 new jobs, 24,000 are in government. "

The manufacturing sector is hardest hit, as Investors Business Daily explains:

> The anemic September jobs report was bad news for anyone hoping that the economy had turned a corner. But it was even worse news for manufacturing, which is on a two-month losing streak.
>
> Manufacturing shed 9,000 jobs last month on top of the 18,000 lost in August, completely erasing the gains made so far this year. Since January 2013, the industry has gained only 338,000.
>
> All this flies in the face of President Obama's repeated promise in 2012 that if reelected, he would create 1 million new manufacturing jobs by the end of his second term. Obama said that these new jobs would "put middle-class people back to work." To make it happen, he promised to aggressively pursue corporate tax reform and unfair trade practices by China, set up new community-college/employer partnerships and create up to 20 "manufacturing innovation institutes."
>
> Since then, he's done little if any of it.

The problem is big government regulations:

> A study by the National Association of Manufacturers found that regulations cost the industry nearly $20,000 per worker in 2012. At smaller firms, the cost is almost $35,000 per worker.
>
> It's only getting worse, as new or impending regulations on CO2 emissions, smog, etc. threaten hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs.

Investors Business Daily says:

> The biggest decline in the workforce has not been among the elderly, but the young, who just aren't jumping into starter jobs at the normal rate.
>
> […]The workweek shrank again — to 34.5 hours — largely due to the rise of part-time hiring. Thank you, ObamaCare.

Obamacare forces employers to make workers part-time, or else pay more to employ them if they stay full-time. It's a real genius-level policy.

More:

> Can we finally repeal the law requiring employers to provide health benefits to

> workers once they log 30 hours of work in a week? Workers can’t pay their bills and feed their families with 28-hour paychecks.
>
> Wages, which made decent gains over the previous several months, actually ticked down in September. So we are working less, for less.
>
> This is no accident; it’s policy-induced slow growth.
>
> It’s fitting that we get a disappointing jobs report in the very week that the administration says it will move forward with a new ozone containment rule that the National Association of Manufacturers says will be one of the biggest job-killing regulations in American history.
>
> Obama still won’t allow the Keystone Pipeline, or the exporting of oil, which would be a major job producer. He won’t cut the corporate tax, or roll back ObamaCare rules hindering employment. His grandiose plans to save the planet come before putting Americans to work.

This is serious. I know that a lot of people in the media, in academia, in Hollywood, etc. think that you can tax and regulate your way to prosperity with laws like Obamacare, but it’s not true. Massive expansions of government and massive borrowing depress economic growth and job creation. Jobs come from entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs do not like what they have seen from the government in the last 7 years under these Democrats.

Oregon begins seizure of $135,000 from Christians who refused to celebrate gay marriage

October 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

How would gay marriage affect your marriage? Well, not at all, as long as you have $135,000 kicking around to pay the government when gay couples are offended by your disagreement with their view of marriage.

The Daily Signal explains:

> The agency that ordered Aaron and Melissa Klein to pay $135,000 in damages for refusing to bake a cake for a same-sex couple began the legal process last week to seize the money the Oregon bakers are refusing to pay.
>
> "Our agency has docketed the judgment and is exploring collection options," Charlie Burr, communications director for the agency, told The Daily Signal. "They are entitled to a full and fair review of the case, but do not have the right to disregard a legally binding order."
>
> Docketing the judgment is a preliminary step the agency must take in order to seize the Kleins' house, property, or other assets in lieu of payment.
>
> On July 2, Brad Avakian, commissioner of the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, ordered the Kleins to pay $135,000 for the emotional, physical, and psychological damages they caused Rachel and Laurel Bowman-Cryer for refusing to make a wedding cake.

Meanwhile, up north from Oregon in Washington state, the ACLU and the Democrat-run state government are looking for another 6-figure payout.

Life Site News explains:

> A florist in Washington has appealed to the state's Supreme Court in a fight for her religious liberty.
>
> Barronelle Stutzman, who is represented by the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), has been fighting prosecution under a state law that denies religious liberty to businesses when it comes to participating in same-sex "marriages."
>
> Stutzman turned down a longtime customer when he asked her to produce a flower arrangement for his "wedding" to another man. She instead recommended several other area florists.
>
> That customer eventually sued Stutzman, as has the ACLU, but it has been the state's prosecution that has caused her the most difficulty.
>
> Stutzman is being sued both professionally and personally – meaning that her retirement savings and other personal assets are at risk.
>
> In March, Stutzman was fined $1,001 for not providing flowers for the ceremony. However, that may not be all of the financial penalties she faces. ADF Senior Legal Counsel Jeremy Tedesco told LifeSiteNews that "if she loses, the ACLU (and maybe the state) will ask for attorneys fees. Those fees will be in the six figures, at least."

Now, there was a time when the ACLU tried to pass themselves off as an organization that protected individuals from the state, but that time is long gone. Now they want to use the government as a tool to crush Constitutional liberties of individuals and groups that disagree with their values.

Four ways that the progress of experimental science conflicts with atheism

October 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

When people ask me whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism, I offer the following four basic pieces of scientific evidence that are more compatible with theism than atheism.

Here are the four pieces of evidence best explained by a Creator/Designer:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the biological information in the first replicator (origin of life)
4. the sudden origin of all of the different body plans in the fossil record (Cambrian explosion)

And I point to specific examples of recent discoveries that confirm those four arguments. Here are just a few of them:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (From an article from Caltech)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning to allow the existence of conscious, embodied life (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)
4. Evidence showing that Ediacaran fauna are not precursors to the Cambrian fossils, (from the journal Nature)

Atheists will typically reply to the recent scientific discoveries that overturned their speculations like this:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause

2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes
4. Maybe we will find a seamless chain of fossils that explain how the Cambrian explosion occurred slowly, over a long period time

Ever heard any of these responses?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the four responses of atheists to the experimental data.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
>
> †Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, USA
>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology

> Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.
>
> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is

> credible: ”Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities.”
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. There is no evidence for a multiverse, but there is evidence for fine-tuning. TONS OF IT.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can’t make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can’t make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth’s atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth’s interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of

> the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into meaningful words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them.

4) The best candidate to explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian era fossils was the Ediacaran fauna, but those are now recognized as not being precursors to the Cambrian fossils.

Science Daily reports on a paper from the peer-reviewed journal Science:

> Evidence of the single-celled ancestors of animals, dating from the interval in Earth's history just before multicellular animals appeared, has been discovered in 570 million-year-old rocks from South China by researchers from the University of Bristol, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Paul Scherrer Institut and the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.
>
> […]This X-ray microscopy revealed that the fossils had features that multicellular embryos do not, and this led the researchers to the conclusion that the fossils were neither animals nor embryos but rather the reproductive spore bodies of single-celled ancestors of animals.
>
> Professor Philip Donoghue said: "We were very surprised by our results — we've been convinced for so long that these fossils represented the embryos of the earliest animals — much of what has been written about the fossils for the last ten years is flat wrong. Our colleagues are not going to like the result."
>
> Professor Stefan Bengtson said: "These fossils force us to rethink our ideas of how animals learned to make large bodies out of cells."

The trend is that there is no evolutionary explanation for the body plans that emerged in the Cambrian era. If you want to make the claim that "evolution did it", then you have to produce the data *today*. Not speculations about the future. The data we have today says no to naturalism. The only way to affirm naturalistic explanations for the evidence we have is *by faith*. But rational people know that we need to minimize our leaps of faith, and go with the simplest and most reasonable explanation – an intelligence is the best explanation responsible for rapid generation of biological information.

Conclusion

I do think it’s important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see way too much G. K. Chesterton, Francis Chan and other untestable, ineffective jibber-jabber. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it’s too hard. It’s not too hard. Everyone can understand Lee Strobel’s “The Case for a Creator“. That’s more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works. You don’t want to be anti-science and pro-speculation like atheists are. I recommend reading Uncommon Descent and Evolution News every day for a start.

Democrats introduce bill to cover illegal immigrants under Obamacare

October 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

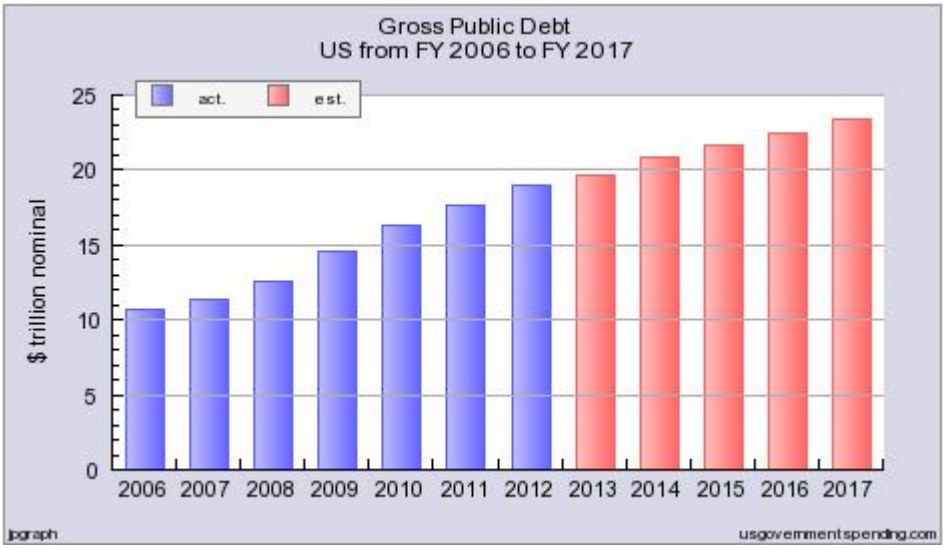

Gross public debt, Democrats control spending in 2007

This is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> The pope's reminder of the Golden Rule during his visit to Congress inspired a House Democrat to introduce legislation to expand the Affordable Care Act.
>
> Last week Rep. Luis Gutiérrez, D-Ill., introduced new legislation called the Exchange Inclusion for a Healthy America Act of 2015, which would allow illegal immigrants health care coverage under Obamacare.
>
> […]"The goal is to cover everyone in this country, regardless of immigration status, provided they establish state residency and file taxes (which most immigrants already do)," states the congressman's Facebook page. "We have to make sure it's accessible to everyone living here."
>
> […]The bill proposed by Gutiérrez and co-sponsor Rep. Judy Chu, D-Calif., would amend Obamacare to permit illegal immigrants to purchase health insurance through Obamacare exchanges (also termed health insurance marketplaces) **and receive coverage subsidies.**

Wow! Is there no limit to this view on the left that the people who earn money don't really have a right to spend it on the things they want to spend it on. I will never understand how it is that Democrats feel that they are being nice by spending other people's money. If they wanted to hand out free goodies to some group of people, why don't they use their own money? I need my money for the stuff I want to do. I guess they don't see me as very important, except as a cog in their vote-buying machine.

Two horror stories of women who put selfishness over responsibilities and obligations

October 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is it OK to tell women they are wrong?

This article from Life News is the kind of article that Dina loves to send me to try to break my idyllic picture of women as always right and never wrong.

It says:

> In 2014, wannabe model Josie Cunningham said she was getting an abortion so she could star on the reality television show Big Brother. However, she ended up rejecting abortion and having her third child.
>
> At that time she said, "I really thought I would be able to but I couldn't. I'd felt the baby kick for the first time 24 hours earlier and I couldn't get that feeling out of my head. I'd forgotten what the feeling was like. It was magical. It was like the baby was telling me not to go through with it."
>
> She added, "I was in the taxi driving to the clinic and felt physically sick. I was shaking. When the driver told me we were a minute away I burst into tears. I wanted to throw myself out of the moving car to get away. I had my hands on my bump and I had the strongest feeling I couldn't let anyone take my baby away."

Sounds very dramatic, doesn't it? She certainly got a lot of attention at the time.

More:

> Unfortunately, now the Daily Mail reports that Cunningham has aborted her fourth child because she wanted to get a nose job to further her career as a porn star.

> She told Sunday People the following about her decision: “I’d had the boobs done, I had the body, but I realized that to be really successful in the adult industry I needed the face too. People can hate me – but the pregnancy was going to ruin my chance of finally making it. Next year I’ll be posing for glamour shots instead of nine months pregnant lying on the sofa with fat ankles. That’s my decision and no one else’s.”
>
> Later Cunningham explained that her pregnancy was a “major obstacle” in her life and abortion was the answer because surgeons refused to operate on her since she was pregnant.
>
> She explained, “I spoke to the advisor at the cosmetic surgery clinic three weeks ago and she was telling me about the different kinds of surgery. I was getting really excited. But when I mentioned I was pregnant she immediately said the surgeon wouldn’t operate on me. I was told it could harm the baby and they even recommend waiting a year even after I gave birth before having it done. I called a few other clinics and they all said the same. My heart sank but I knew what I had to do.”
>
> Her decision to abort her child is confusing to some because in January she announced that she was pro-life. She said, “I did consider having an abortion with my third child, which I am ashamed to say. The way I saw it was that I’d rather be able to provide further for the two children I already had than not be able to provide for all three. It wasn’t an easy decision. But now I am anti-abortion, I came close to making the biggest mistake of my life.”
>
> Although Cunningham did give birth to a healthy child last year, she bragged about her unhealthy lifestyle during her pregnancy, which included smoking 20 cigarettes a day.

She’s not the only woman who just goes crazy of her own free will. I wanted to blog about Suzy Favor Hamilton for some time, so I’ll just add her story to this post:

> Three years ago, Suzy Favor Hamilton was best known as a three-time middle-distance Olympic runner, an all-American beauty with mainstream fame, sponsorships with Nike and promotional work with Disney, and a loving husband and daughter.
>
> […]Favor Hamilton, now 47, was born in Stevens Point, Wis., the youngest of five. She led a comfortable, middle-class existence and displayed a talent for running at just 9 years old. By high school, she was training for the Olympics.
>
> […]Favor Hamilton attended the University of Wisconsin on a full running scholarship, and there she met her future husband, Mark Hamilton, a freshman pitcher. By the time they graduated, Mark had switched to law, and Suzy had a six-year, five-figure contract with Reebok. By the spring of 1992, as she was going into the Olympic trials, she had been written up not just in Olympian magazine but Vogue, Elle and Rolling Stone. She loved the attention.

> **“Being a celebrity became more and more attractive to me,” she writes.**
>
> […]Her sister, Kris, she writes, “was generous enough to make sacrifices for me, but I never thought of doing so for her because I couldn’t focus on anything but crossing the finish line first.”
>
> […]In 2005, she got pregnant with their daughter, Kylie. **But Favor Hamilton was bored** and her husband annoyed by her entitlement. To alleviate the strain in their marriage, Favor Hamilton suggested celebrating their 20th anniversary with a threesome in Las Vegas. He was dubious.
>
> […]**“‘Flat and stale” is how she describes her life right after that trip. For Favor Hamilton, life with her husband and daughter in the Midwest was never going to be enough. She longed to be in Vegas, earning thousands of dollars, being paid for sex by rich and powerful men.**
>
> […]**“It was as if I’d suddenly become a teenager,” she writes. “I wanted what felt good and fun, all the time.”**
>
> […]Within a month, Favor Hamilton was consumed with her new life in Vegas. “I was barely there when I was in Madison,” she writes. “My concern was no longer making it easier for Mark to accept my next return trip to Vegas, but simply how soon I could get back there.” **She had hooked up with a chef who bought her $500 in clothes and jewelry for sex. She wanted more of that.**
>
> […]**When Mark told her he’d probably begin sleeping with other women, she was relieved. “It made me feel even more entitled to do what I wanted,” she writes.**
>
> […]As he opened the door, she realized the room “was full of men.” She wasn’t afraid — she was into it. “The only question on my mind,” she writes, “was how much sex, and with how many of these men.”
>
> […]Just a few months in, Favor Hamilton had all but abandoned her husband and child. They couldn’t compete with clients who bought her thousand-dollar meals, took her on shopping sprees, sent her for spray tans and manicures.
>
> […]When her daughter called her in Vegas, Favor Hamilton was annoyed.
>
> “‘I miss you, Mommy,’ she said, tears in her voice,” Favor Hamilton writes. “I didn’t want that . . . I needed a glass of wine and some of that Vegas glamour to feel like [her alter ego] again.”
>
> Favor Hamilton was picking up men on her own when she had a free hour or two between scheduled clients and specialized in threesomes. Her behavior was becoming wilder: She had sex in broad daylight on a golf course twice with one client.
>
> […]**“I can’t stop, Mark,” she said. “I’ve never been happier.”**
>
> […]**And she’s not sorry for any of it.**
>
> **“I cannot pretend to feel ashamed,” she writes, “for having done**

> **something I don't think is wrong."**

I think Dina and I agree that there is a lot of bad behavior going on in the world that can be attributed to selfish, reckless, emotional behavior by women. Dina thinks that men ought to be doing a better job of setting boundaries and talking to women about morality and the likely consequences of their poor choices. Well, I hope that by talking about these two stories, I encourage all the men to be more confident about telling women "NO" when they make bad decisions.

Here is what I would like Christian men to do when confronted with a woman who is making selfish decisions that are likely to harm her and those around her in the long term. I would like them to recognize when they are being manipulated by women, which younger men are especially prone to doing. They have to learn to do without attention from women if it means not being able to analyze and judge her actions. Men also need to be very skeptical of women who invoke God leading her through her feelings. As far as I'm concerned, God should always be leading women to do things they DON'T FEEL LIKE DOING. If the woman felt like doing something selfish when she was a non-Christian (e.g. – traveling to Europe for 2 years), then it can hardly be the case now that God is leading her to do exactly what she wanted to do when she was a non-Christian. She was already wanting to do that before she became a Christian. So men need to be careful about approving a bad plan just because the woman hollers Jesus over it. A bad plan is a bad plan, and hollering Jesus doesn't make it a good plan.

I would also like to see men understand that decisions about education, career and finances are best made by people who have degrees that led to good jobs, by people with gapless resumes, by people with high salaries, and by people with savings. I want to see men focus on getting STEM degrees, getting STEM jobs, and then saving and investing so that they have a quarter of a million dollars saved by age 30. I don't want to see unemployed students handing out advice to women about education, career and finances when they don't even know what they are talking about themselves. I don't want them accepting the pronouncements of a woman about education, career and finance when her own past shows that she has made poor choices in these areas. Newsflash: if a woman is 30, unemployed and living at home with thousands of dollars of debt from a degree she has never used, then anything she has to say about education, career and finance is literally garbage. I don't want to see you men approving of such clowning.

I also don't want to see men praying for women's crazy plans to succeed. If you find a woman who is uneducated, unemployed, in debt and living with her parents, then the thing to do is to encourage her to choose a plan that is reasonable likely to work on its own, not one that *requires God's intervention* in order to work. In my case, I found a woman a job in a Fortune 100 company that was related to her (unused) college degree in business. It would have got her out of debt, and out of her parents' house. Unfortunately, she turned it down because the job was "too boring and hard". I expect the men in her life to hold her accountable for putting fun and thrills over building up a resume and investing early. Young people seem to be completely unaware of the

advantages of investing early so they can retire early. I expect Christian men to be telling young women how important it is to save and invest as early as possible. I also want to see young men making moral judgments and sharing wisdom to women about the important of working, saving and investing. I want men to warn women about the delays of putting off marriage and child-bearing for too long, as well.

If even Christian men cannot speak up, then how much more cowardly and weak would non-Christian men be, especially when they are being pacified with sex? We have a crisis of masculinity, with men exchanging their leadership role in order to be liked by as many people as possible. Men have to have more courage.

There are Roman Catholics in my family but I'm not one: why not?

October 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

In this post, I have a couple of challenges to Roman Catholic doctrine. The point of this post is not to piss off my Roman Catholic readers, it's more to explain why I'm not Roman Catholic. And maybe to explain how Protestants like me think about religion.

Purgatory

Here's the first article from Cold Case Christianity, by the Master of the Evidence J. Warner Wallace. He writes about the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, and his experience with studying and then rejecting it.

Here is his introduction:

> The notion of purgatory assumes many of us die with unforgiven sins that need to be purged from our account; some of us are not good enough to go to heaven, but not bad enough to go to hell. Purgatory, therefore, is a temporary, intermediate place (or state of being) where good deeds and works can be performed in order to purge our impurity prior to our final destiny with God. Although millions of Catholics believe purgatory to be a reality, the idea needs to be tested in light of the Scripture. Is purgatory something we, as Bible believing Christians, should accept as true?

He's got a stack of Bible verses to make two points against Purgatory: first, that Jesus' death on the cross is sufficient to atone for *all* our rebellion against God, and we don't need to endure any suffering or punishment to supplement it. And second, the teaching about the afterlife in the Bible says that believers are immediately ushered into the presence of God after they die (without resurrection bodies, yet), while unbelievers are separated away from God.

Here’s what he says about the first point:

> **Our Salvation Isn’t Based On Our Good Works**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, forgiveness is not based on the good works of the believer. For this reason, deeds or works performed for those in purgatory are both unnecessary and ineffectual:
>
> **Romans 3:21-24, 27-28**
> But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus… Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.
>
> **Romans 8:1**
> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.
>
> **Our Salvation Is Based On Jesus’ Work on the Cross**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, Jesus’ work on the cross (His blood) purifies us from allsin. For this reason, there isn’t a lingering sin problem requiring the existence of a place like purgatory:
>
> **Titus 2:13-14**
> …we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.
>
> **1John 1:7b**
> …the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.
>
> **1John 1:9b**
> …he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
>
> **1John 2:2**
> He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.
>
> **Hebrews 10:14**
> …because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.
>
> **Our Salvation Has, Therefore, Already Been Guaranteed**

> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, Jesus has already purified and purged believers of sin based on our faith in Him. For this reason, there is no need for a place like Purgatory where additional purging must be performed…
>
> […]The Biblical doctrine of Salvation clearly eliminates the need for purgatory.

I was never able to find anything in the Bible to support purgatory. It's a very very late doctrine that was unknown to the early church until the late 2nd / early 3rd century, where it is spoken about by a handful of people. But lots of weird doctrines were creeping up on the fringe around that time, so we shouldn't be surprised… the point is that they have no support from the Bible, and not in the community of believers for the first 150 years after the death of Jesus.

The bodily assumption of Mary

Anyway, my turn now. The Roman Catholic church teaches that Mary was "bodily assumed" into Heaven after her death, i.e. – she didn't just stay in her grave. Let's see if that is in the Bible or in the early church.

Here's what I found:

1. To be a Roman Catholic, you need to believe in Papal infallibility in matters of dogma.
2. In 1950, the Pope pronounced the assumption of Mary to be infallible dogma.
3. This pronouncement was solicited by a petition featuring over 8 million signatures.
4. There is no historical record of this doctrine in the Bible.
5. No early church father mentions the assumption until 590 AD.
6. Documents dated 377 AD state that no one knows how Mary died.
7. The assumption appears for the first time in an apocryphal gospel dated about 495 AD.

Data

I only cite Roman Catholic sources for my facts.

6. "But if some think us mistaken, let them search the Scriptures. They will not find Mary's death; they will not find whether she died or did not die; they will not find whether she was buried or was not buried … Scripture is absolutely silent [on the end of Mary] … For my own part, I do not dare to speak, but I keep my own thoughts and I practice silence … The fact is, Scripture has outstripped the human mind and left [this matter] uncertain … Did she die, we do not know … Either the holy Virgin died and was buried … Or she was killed … Or she remained alive, since nothing is impossible with God and He can do whatever He desires; for her end no-one knows." (Epiphanius, Panarion, Haer. 78.10-11, 23. Cited by Juniper Carol, O.F.M. ed.,*Mariology*, Vol. II (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1957), pp. 139-40).

7. "The idea of the bodily assumption of Mary is first expressed in certain transitus–narratives of the fifth and sixth centuries. Even though these are apocryphal they bear witness to the faith of the generation in which they were written despite their

legendary clothing. The first Church author to speak of the bodily ascension of Mary, in association with an apocryphal transitus B.M.V., is St. Gregory of Tours." (Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*(Rockford: Tan, 1974), pp. 209–210).

It should be noted that the apocryphal gospel in which the doctrine of the assumption of Mary first appeared was condemned as heretical by two Popes in the 5th and 6th centuries. However, I was not able to find a CATHOLIC source for this fact, so I deliberately chose not to use it in my case.

Conclusion

The first thing I want to say is that the Bible is not the only place you look to decide these issues. You also look in church history, and you are looking for a clear chain of custody of the doctrine as far back as it can go. Purgatory and the perpetual virginity of Mary have some track record, but the bodily assumption of Mary is just nowhere – not in the Bible, not in the Early Church fathers. So that's the silver bullet against Roman Catholicism, since they made it "infallible".

This post is more directed to non-Christians to sort of show you how we do our homework. I am the first Protestant in my family. We have half the family who is Muslim, and the other half mostly Hindu, with some Catholic. I had to debate all these people growing up, and I wiped the floor with them. It was not even close. I simply settled on the beliefs that allowed me to win every argument, every time. That's how you do religion. If you have to go against your whole family in order to be right, you do it. It's not good to be wrong about things just because that's what your family believes. These things were not pushed hard on me by my parents, I studied them on my own in order to win arguments. After a while of winning, I found myself acting consistently with what I was arguing for. Although that might sound really weird to you, that's probably the right way to do this. Don't listen to parents and church, find your own way forward by winning arguments, and believing only what the evidence supports.

Although most people think that if I had kids, I'd bully them into my beliefs, I actually would not. Because that's not what worked on me. What really works is fighting about evidence, welcoming questions, and allowing differences of opinion. Being free to pursue truth is more important in the long run than coercing your kids to act nicely.

What Putin is teaching us about foreign policy: Obama's weakness provokes aggression

October 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Vladimir Putin and the Community Organizer of the United States

Other than Weekly Standard, my two favorite places to read about foreign policy are the Wall Street Journal and the UK Telegraph. And my favorite writer from all three of these is Bret Stephens, columnist at the Wall Street Journal.

Here is his latest article (click through to WSJ), then we'll go to the UK Telegraph after.

Stephens writes:

> David Petraeus testified last month to the Senate Armed Services Committee on U.S. policy in the Middle East. Regarding Syria, the former general and CIA director urged a credible threat to destroy Bashar Assad's air force if it continues to bomb its own people. He also recommended "the establishment of enclaves in Syria protected by coalition air power, where a moderate Sunni force could be supported and where additional forces could be trained, internally displaced persons could find refuge, and the Syrian opposition could organize."
>
> But Barack Obama does not agree. At his Friday press conference, the president described such views as "mumbo-jumbo," "half-baked ideas," "as-if" solutions, a willful effort to "downplay the challenges involved in the situation." He says the critics have no answers to the questions of "what exactly would you do and how would you fund it and how would you sustain it."
>
> America's greatest living general might as well have been testifying to his shower drain for all the difference his views are going to make in this

> administration.
>
> So it is with this president. It's not enough for him to stake and defend his positions. He wants you to know that he thinks deeper, sees further, knows better, operates from a purer motive. His preferred method for dealing with disagreement is denigration. If Republicans want a tougher line in Syria, they're warmongers.

Yes. Every time the President gives a speech on policy, you can count on him to present alternatives to his own very left-wing views as incredibly evil, incredibly stupid or both. He thinks that he knows everything, and that talking to people who disagree with him, no matter how qualified they are (e.g. – General Petraeus) would be a waste of time. Everyone who opposes his fact-free, pot-smoking, college dorm discussion view of reality is stupid or evil or both. And this man is President.

More:

> For a relatively trivial investment of some jet fighters and a brigade-sized support force, Moscow extends its influence in the eastern Mediterranean, deepens a commercially and strategically productive alliance with Iran, humiliates the U.S., boosts Mr. Putin's popularity at home, and earns a geopolitical card he can play in any number of negotiations—Ukraine, gas contracts, Mr. Assad's political future, you name it. If things don't work out, he can pull up stakes within a week without much loss of money, lives or prestige. It's a perfect play.

Now let's go to the UK Telegraph, and Matthew K. Lewis.

He writes:

> Russian warplanes began bombing American-backed Syrian opposition strongholds on Wednesday, a move that can be viewed as the latest example of American humiliation abroad.

> As was the case when Russians invaded Ukraine, the Russians cloaked their activity in lies.
>
> In the former example, Russian soldiers didn't wear uniforms, a thinly-veiled move meant to create the impression the fighters were merely Ukrainian "separatists."
>
> Likewise, Wednesday's bombings ostensibly targeted Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isil); in fact, the strikes were aimed at moderate rebels and civilians – part of a plan to take out any opposition to their client, Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad.
>
> […]This all comes on the heels of President Barack Obama's drawing of a "red line" regarding the use of chemical weapons, only to back down when the Assad regime – by most accounts – used them.
>
> Weakness invites provocation, and – never one to miss an opportunity to

> outmanoeuvre Mr Obama – Mr Putin provided a self-serving opportunity that would also allow the president to save face: Moscow would push Syria to put their chemical weapons under international control.
>
> […]It's also important to note that in the wake of the red line being trampled, Russia invaded Crimea. President Obama's legacy may be mixed, but one thing is for sure: Vladimir Putin is much more powerful and provocative than he was before Mr Obama took office, and Russia has only expanded its sphere of influence.
>
> […]For those paying attention, Mr Obama's foreign policy world-view has failed.

Russia is our enemy, and they are trying to undermine us everywhere they can. Obama is meeting this challenge with the typical weakness he has shown in negotiations and stand-offs since he went on his Worldwide Bow Down To Dictators tour. His priorities seem to be to cut military spending and impose political correctness on the armed services. His latest great achievement in that regard is to nominate a gay civilian who has never served in the military to be head of the entire U.S. Army. That's what he is most concerned about, political correctness. Not national security and not foreign policy.

New study: negative effects of day care on children not caused by quality of day care

October 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mom is staying home because Dad can afford to let her: do kids benefit?
New study using National Institute of Child Health and Human Development data is discussed on the Family Studies web site.

First, let's get the two views:

> Parents, policymakers, and academics interested in how day care and preschool affect child development often embrace one of two competing—and exaggerated—claims about the childrearing circumstances that are now normative in America: that of non-family care being initiated early in a child's first year of life on a full-time or near-full-time basis and continuing, in one form or another (e.g., family day care, center care, preschool), until the start of formal schooling.
>
> Critics of such arrangements highlight the fact that developmental risks, like increased rates of insecure attachment and elevated levels of aggressive behavior, have been found to be associated with the extensive use of non-family care in America. Advocates, in contrast, stipulate, usually without qualification, that if the quality of care is good, then children benefit; and, indeed, that it is the limited quality of care available to too many parents in the USA that is responsible for any negative effects on children that emerge in the research literature.

All right, so the big-government, anti-family people say that day care as such isn't bad for kids, the negative effects that are observed are not caused by too much day care, but by

the low quality of the day care. The conservative, pro-family, limited-government crowd thinks that quality doesn't matter as much as quantity – too much day care is bad for kids, regardless of quality.

The study details:

> […][T]he National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) funded, to the tune of at least $150 million, the NICHD Study of Child Care and Youth Development. It recruited more than 1,000 children (along with their mothers) in 1991 from 10 different research sites, and followed them from the first month of life to age 15. Among other purposes, the NICHD Study was designed to investigate the claim that long hours of day care initiated very early in life posed risks to children's social and emotional development; and, should this prove so, to evaluate the proposition that such negative effects would be due to the poor quality of care that children received, not the quantity of care they experienced across the first five years of life.

And the conclusion:

> NICHD Study's findings on the effects of day care proved more consistent than inconsistent with my "developmental risk" claim. And they provided virtually no support for the idea that it was poor quality care that accounted for the negative effects of "early, extensive, and continuous" care (initiated very early in life, for long hours, and continuing for many years).[2] Specifically, our many research reports revealed that the more time children spent in any kind of non-familial child care, and sometimes specifically in centers, the more aggressive and disobedient they proved to be at two (but not three) and 4.5 years of age, as well as across their elementary school years; and the more impulsive they proved to be at age 15, at which age they also engaged in more "risky" behavior than children who experienced far less non-familial care across their first five years of life. Critically, despite spending millions to carefully measure the quality of care, using methods and measures developed by the proponents of the "it's quality, stupid" view, the study never found that the quality of care accounted for these quantity-of-care effects. In other words, the problem behavior associated with early, extensive, and continuous care emerged irrespective of whether quality of care was good or bad.

Read the whole thing, and don't feel guilty if you can't do the best for your kids. I am sure that everyone reading this post is going to do the best they can for their kids. But for those who have not yet had kids, let this be a lesson to you about what you should be studying in school, where you should be working, how much you should borrow, how much you should spend. A stay-at-home mom is expensive. It cannot be finessed with feelings and following your heart to fun and thrills.

When it comes to children, money is important

I know there are lots of Christians around the world who read the Bible and understand

that there are certain goals laid out in the Bible for Christian parents who are raising their kids. As far as I can tell, young Christians seem to think that these goals will sort themselves out all by themselves through God's mysterious predestination, or some other such fideistic wishing. What it really boils down to is that young people want to do what they want to do, and they can sound pious about it by saying God will somehow make their crazy plan work out. Well, that's not effective, and young Christians would never act so ineffectively in any other area of their lives – ignoring how things really work.

Look the Bible has information about the specification that God expects you to implement. Part of that spec involves requirements for your kids. If you decide that the Bible is not trying to give you a spec, you'll fail to deliver. If you decide that you don't need to read studies to know how the world works, you'll fail to deliver. If you decide that following your heart is something that God rewards more than intelligent thought, you'll fail to deliver. You cannot feelings your way out of this assignment, you've got to solve the problem, and that means reading the studies and making a plan that delivers results.

So, young people. If you want to do the best for your kids, you better stop doing what feels good, and start engaging in some serious self-denial and self-sacrifice. Fumbling around chasing happy philosophy bubbles to Europe through your teens, 20s and 30s is not the right way to prepare professionally and financially for kids. Your love for your future kids begins with your decision to grow up and do hard, boring things that need to be done. You won't be able to fix the child care costs problem at the 11th hour if you follow your heart for the first 10 hours. Keep in mind what child care looks like in places like Ontario, and what your children would be learning, and who they would be learning it from. Make a plan now.

Ted Cruz questions Sierra Club President about global warming science

October 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Now, Ted Cruz is currently my #2 choice behind the excellent Governor of Louisiana, Bobby Jindal. However, this 10-minute video of Ted Cruz doing what I think he does best must be blogged.

Here is the video (10 minutes):

And the Daily Signal has the story.

Excerpt:

> Sen. Ted Cruz's questioning of Sierra Club President Aaron Mair turned contentious Tuesday, then went viral when the Texas Republican posted the nearly 10-minute exchange.
>
> Cruz repeatedly pressed Mair to address satellite data that found an 18-year pause in global warming, countering the Sierra Club's claim of a warming trend. He asked the green group to retract its assertion that the "planet is cooking" in light of scientific evidence suggesting the opposite.
>
> Mair stonewalled the question each time, answering only that his group supports the "97 percent of scientists that say the exact opposite."
>
> "So if the data are contrary to your testimony, would the Sierra Club issue a retraction?" Cruz asked.
>
> "Sir, we concur with the 97-percent scientific consensus with regards to global warming," Mair responded.
>
> The two battled back and forth in a contentious exchange until Cruz concluded in frustration that Mair was unwilling to rescind his claim.
>
> "You know, Mr. Mair, I find it striking that for a public policy organization that purports to focus exclusively on environmental issues, that you're not willing to tell this committee that you would issue a retraction if your testimony is objectively false under scientific data," Cruz said. "That undermines the credibility of any organization."

Now, the knock on Cruz is that he has not been able to accomplish much as a legislator. I am looking for someone who can craft legislation that gets enough votes between the two parties to move forward and either get vetoed, or get turned into law. Cruz sounds so good when he talks, but I want a candidate who has more policy accomplishments and has successfully defended his policies and decisions from attacks.

Bobby Jindal is my top pick for exactly that reason. Rather than merely saying the things I want to hear, he adds doing the things I want to be done to his words.

Take a look at this article from the Washington Post, which looks at which candidate was

the most effective at moving legislation, and getting bills turned into laws.

It says:

> Jindal got 1.7 laws passed for every year he spent in the House, far more than anyone else.
>
> By sponsored bills, he also comes out on top, though John Kasich also had a relatively high percentage of the bills he sponsored in the House see the president's pen.
>
> So who is the most effective legislator running for president? By this metric, we'll give it to Jindal.

Here's the graph:

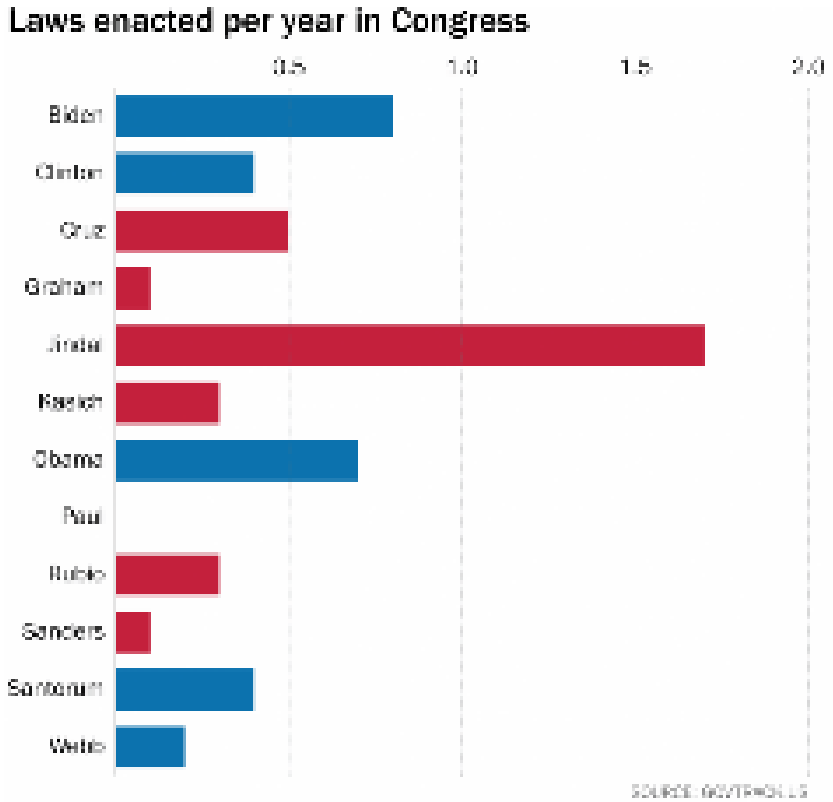

Governor Bobby Jindal is the best at getting things done

Let's look a bit more at the differences between Cruz and Jindal. First, Jindal is a policy guru, and has got things done in education and health care policy going back as far as 1996, when he was only 24 years old and go the job to take over state-level health care policy in Louisiana. He knocked it out of the park. As Governor of Louisiana, he put into place a state-wide voucher program and privatized many wasteful, bloated government programs. And he was willing to battle against the Obama administration to keep his "parent's choice" education plan. He is the only GOP primary candidate with a detailed plan to repeal and replace Obamacare, and because of his past success, we know that he is competent to do that job. We don't have to just believe his words, we can look at his accomplishments. And Jindal is the most socially conservative candidate in the race. Whether it's on abortion or gay marriage, we don't have to trust mere words. We have something better: actions. Cruz does not have the record on social issues that Jindal has.

And what’s more, I don’t think that Cruz is as conservative on social issues as Jindal is.

So, that’s why Jindal is my number one pick right now, and Cruz is number two. We are losing a lot of experience and achievements if we have to fall back to Cruz. He would make a good attorney general, but he is not the best qualified conservative in the primary. Jindal is.

New study: adopted kids struggle, even with well-educated, wealthy parents

October 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'll explain why I am posting this below, but for now, let's take a look at the study, which is discussed at Family Studies. (H/T Brad Wilcox tweet)

Excerpt:

> To expand what we know about adopted students, for this Institute for Family Studies research brief, I carried out a fresh analysis of data from a large longitudinal study of 19,000 kindergarten students that was conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics beginning in 1998.
>
> […]Kindergarten and first-grade teachers were asked to rate the classroom behavior of children in the ECLS-K sample—how well they got along with other children in a group situation. In both the fall of kindergarten and the spring of first grade, adopted children were more likely than biological ones to be reported to get angry easily and often argue or fight with other students.

Here's the first chart:

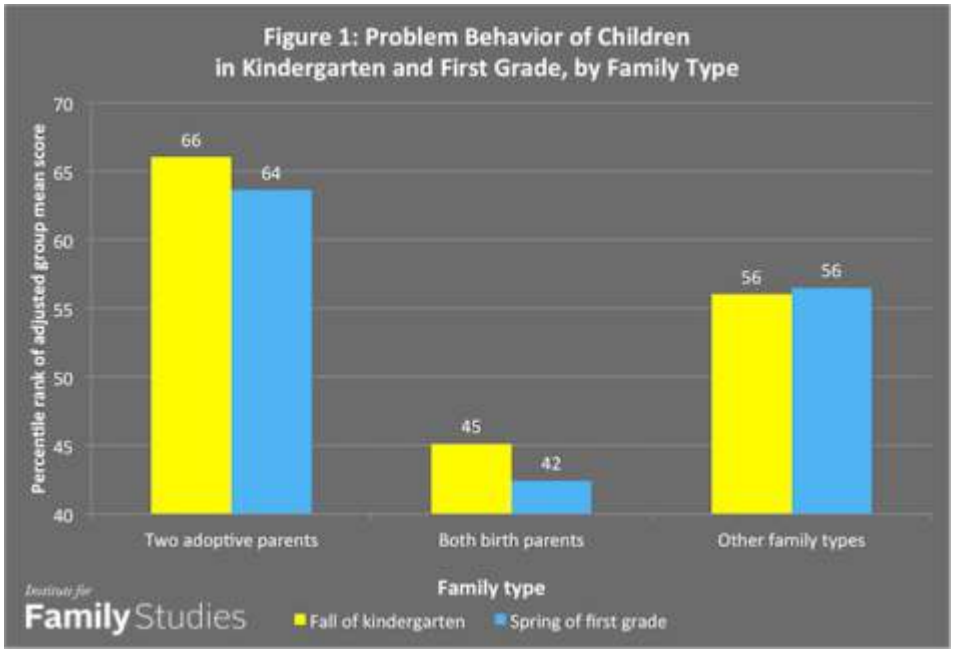

Adopted kids more likely to engage in problem behaviors

And more results:

> Children in the ECLS-K were also rated by their teachers on how well they paid attention in class, whether they seemed eager to learn new things, and whether they persisted at challenging learning tasks. Scores on these measures have proven to be predictive of later academic performance and career success beyond elementary school.[5] **Adopted children were rated less highly with respect to such positive approaches to learning than were children**

> **being raised by both birth parents.**

Here's the second chart:

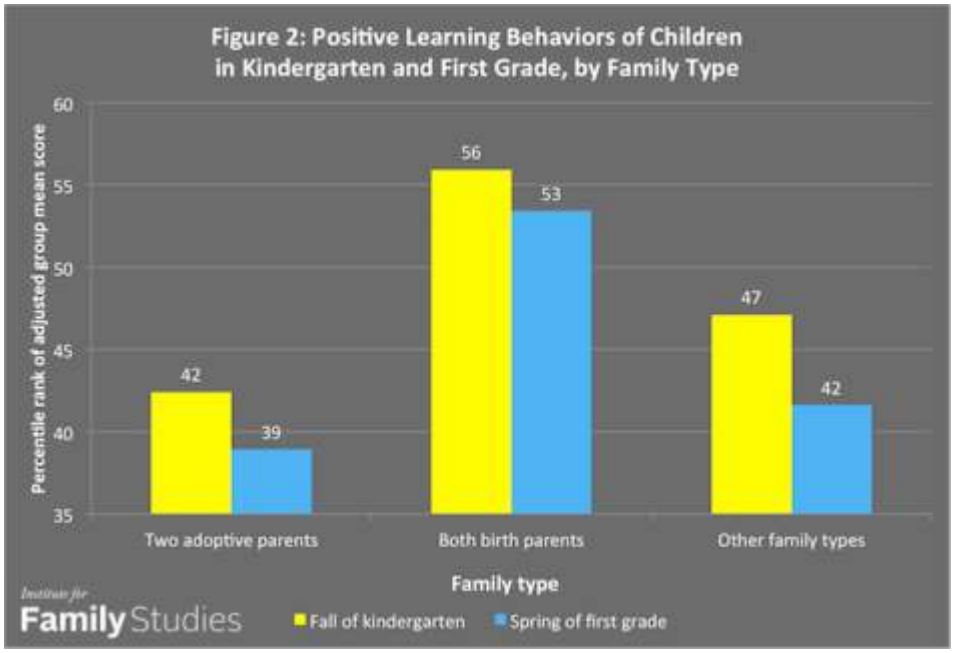

Adopted kids struggle to pay attention in class
And even more results:

> As the participating children began kindergarten, the ECLS-K assessed their pre-reading skills, such as recognizing letters by name, associating sounds with letters, identifying simple words by sight.

Here's the third chart:

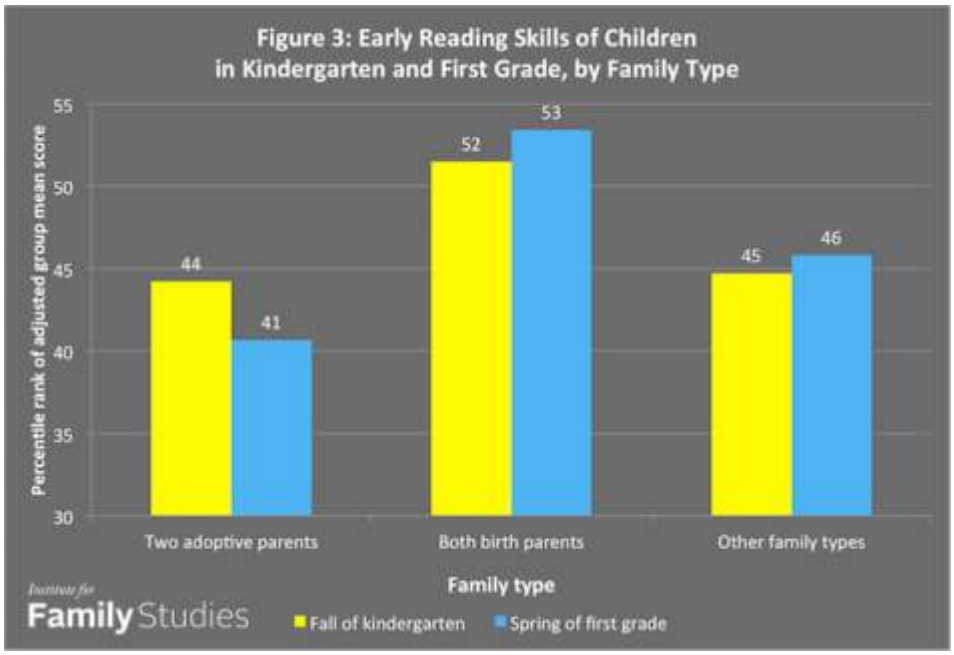

Adopted kids struggle with reading skills
And now math results:

> In the fall of their kindergarten year, the ECLS-K assessed children's pre-arithmetic skills like counting by rote, recognizing written numerals, and

> understanding greater, lesser, and equal relationships.

Here's the fourth chart:

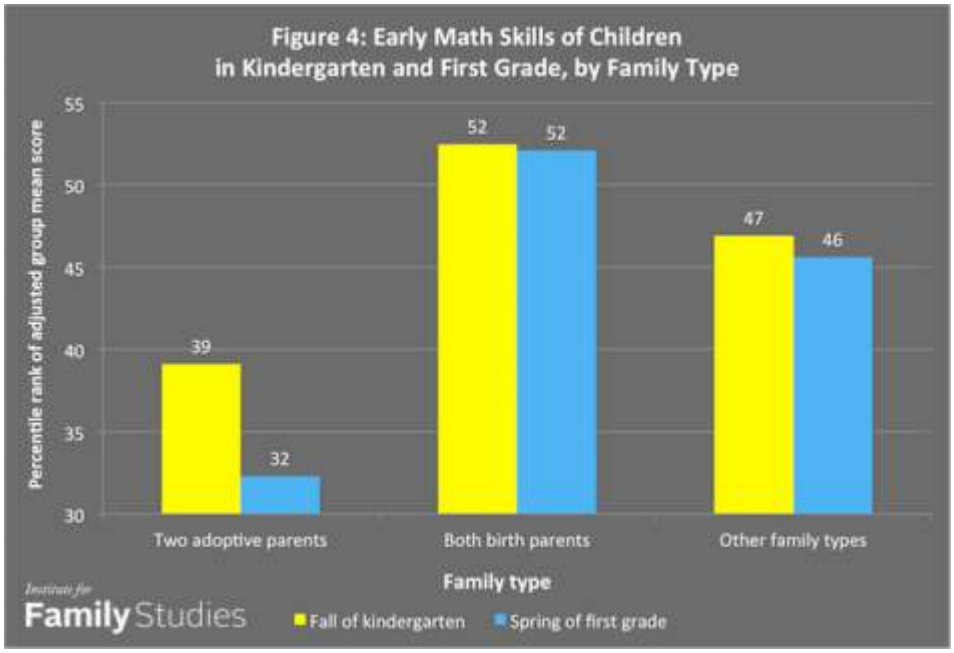

Adopted kids struggle with math skills

The article concludes:

> Attachment theory holds that a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with at least one adult, usually the mother, is essential for the mental health of infants and young children. Children who do not develop a stable and secure bond during early childhood, or have the bond disrupted, are subject to both short-term distress reactions and longer-term abnormalities in their feelings and behavior toward other people. Not having a stable maternal bond is apt to produce long-lasting deficits in the child's social development, deficiencies that are not easily remedied by a new home environment, no matter how favorable.
>
> Some adopted children experienced neglect, abuse, or other stressful events prior to their adoption. According to traumatic stress theory, the likelihood of long-term emotional scars depends on the intensity and duration of the stress. Severe or prolonged early stress can have long-lasting effects on a child's development, effects that a supportive adoptive family may only partly ameliorate.

So what do I want to say about this? I want to warn young women, especially young Christian women, that children work best when grown-ups plan their lives in such a way that they can provide for what the children need, at the time they need it. And if you miss the window of opportunity to have your own kids and raise them yourself, then you can't just fix it at the last minute with ad hoc alternatives.

But for some reason, I get a lot of kickback from young women when I tell them what studies say about things like marriage, premarital sex, cohabitation, infertility, day care, and on and on and on. The Christian women in particular dismiss all the facts with stuff

like:

> God is leading me to choose fun and thrills now. That's what my feelings say (and all my friends and family tell me that my feelings are God speaking to me). Tingles and peer-approval rationalize my choice to delay marriage and child-bearing. Who cares about stuff evidence? I don't like to hear about constraints and deadlines. So I'll just keep up this plan to run up debts, go on missionary trips, and have fun traveling till I'm 90 years old. God always calls people to do what feels good. I'm going on an adventure! And it will be easy to find a good husband and raise happy and effective kids later – whenever I feel like it. Er, I mean when God leads me to feel like it. Yeah.

So even though all of these studies show the need for timings, pre-conditions, best practices, and so on, that can all be dismissed because the feelings are God speaking to her, and God can somehow magically make all the data not apply to her. One of my married friends once wrote to a young, single fun-seeking feminist telling her about the risks of delaying marriage and child-bearing for too long, and the fun-seeker came back to me dismissing the whole letter because "I don't like the feeling that I am being constrained". So, the advice of old Christian women (Titus 2:4) can be dismissed because the young adventurous feminist didn't like the feeling of being confronted by reality by someone who had more wisdom and experience than she did.

What young children need is their mom, and a Dad who can provide for her to stay home during the crucial first 5 years of their lives. That is more important than pursuing fun and thrills, then grabbing for children as if they were handbags at the last second after natural child-bearing becomes impossible. The right thing to do is to use your 20s preparing financially and otherwise to have kids when you are young, and to be financially set up to stay home with them during the critical years. Choosing a man who can provide, and who understands the best practices for having and raising children is vital, if you want your children to be effective and influential for Christ and his kingdom.

I do think that if a couple is intentionally adopting because they want the challenge and want to help a child who really needs it, then it's praiseworthy to do that. I just don't want someone who isn't ready for the challenge thinking that adoption is the same, so they can delay marriage and children.I know that I am lazy, and I always want to do things the easy way. E.g. – I buy new cars, not used cars. I will buy hand-fed birds, not rescue birds. I would buy a new house, not a fixer-upper. I'm just not cut out for doing things that are hard. I have no ability to struggle through when there is resistance. When I face rejection or resistance to trying to grow or lead someone, I just give up. I think what I was saying to young women was – don't delay marriage and child-bearing, you'll get better results with less work.

Related posts

- New study: negative effects of day care on children not caused by quality of day care

- New study: government run child-care increases negative outcomes for kids
- New study: lack of secure attachment during early childhood harms children
- New study: separating from mother causes children to have higher anxiety and fear
- Study: non-family daycare linked to anti-social behavior in children
- Obama proposes new tax on stay-at-home moms in SOTU speech
- Obama on stay-at-home moms: “that’s not a choice we want them to make”
- Are young, unmarried women sincere about wanting to be married “some day”?
- New study: women seeking to have a child should start before age 32
- Top fertility specialist advises women: don’t wait till 30 to try to have children
- New study: marrying in your mid-to-late 20s confers benefits
- Fertility and pregnancy: how long can a woman wait before having a baby?
- Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sex and sexuality at Harvard University
- Study: recessions result in lower birth rates

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on basic economics

October 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Here is a podcast on basic economics from Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse.

About the speaker:

> Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D. is the founder and President of the Ruth Institute — a project of the National Organization for Marriage — which seeks to promote life-long married love to college students by creating an intellectual and social climate favorable to marriage.
>
> She is also the Senior Research Fellow in Economics at the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty.
>
> She is the author of Smart Sex: Finding Life-long Love in a Hook-up World, (2005) and Love and Economics: Why the Laissez-Faire Family Doesn't Work (2001), recently reissued in paperback, as Love and Economics: It Takes a Family to Raise a Village.
>
> Dr. Morse served as a Research Fellow for Stanford University's Hoover Institution from 1997-2005. She received her Ph.D. in economics from the University of Rochester in 1980 and spent a postdoctoral year at the University of Chicago during 1979-80. She taught economics at Yale University and George Mason University for 15 years.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- The study of economics is anti-postmodern – there is objective truth independent of what people think

- The study of economics believes in fixed principles of human nature
- Economics studies the allocation of scarce resources that have alternative uses
- Economics studies how people exchange resources
- How both people who engage in a voluntary trade always believe that they will be better off
- How both people who engage in a voluntary trade both benefit from the exchange
- How incentives motivate people to act
- Understanding supply and demand
- Understanding how “free” government services are rationed
- Understanding opportunity costs
- How prices signal producers to produce more or less, and consumers to buy or not buy
- Market-driven prices versus price controls
- The role of substitution
- The necessity of allowing failure in a free market

The requirements of economic growth:

- private property
- contracts
- the profit motive
- competition
- free trade
- entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation
- the rule of law

If you want to learn more about basic economics, I recommend picking up a book or two by Thomas Sowell – the first book I usually give away is “Intellectuals and Society”, and then next “Basic Economics”.

Asian-Americans being discriminated against by the secular left in academia

October 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Now for some of you, this post is going to be a surprise. Most of you will have learned in school that whites are racist against blacks, and that's why blacks underperform in education. What you probably didn't know is that Asians outperform in education, so that "racism" cannot possibly be what is holding back blacks. However, there is real racism and discrimination in education. It comes from the university admissions people, who want to *punish Asian-Americans for their academic success*. They want to keep them out of the best universities, because there are too many of them, and it threatens "diversity".

According to this very popular article in ultra-leftist The Economist, the Asian-Americans are pushing back against the progressive racists in academia.

The article says:

> MICHAEL WANG, a young Californian, came second in his class of 1,002 students; his ACT score was 36, the maximum possible; he sang at Barack Obama's inauguration; he got third place in a national piano contest; he was in the top 150 of a national maths competition; he was in several national debating-competition finals. But when it came to his university application he faced a serious disappointment for the first time in his glittering career. He was rejected by six of the seven Ivy League colleges to which he applied.
>
> "I saw people less qualified than me get better offers," says Mr Wang. "At first I was just angry. Then I decided to turn that anger to productive use." He wrote to the universities concerned. "I asked: what more could I have done to get into your college? Was it based on race, or what was it based on?" He got vague responses—or none. So he complained to the Department of Education. Nothing came of it. "The department said they needed a smoking gun."
>
> In May this year Mr Wang joined a group of 64 Asian-American organisations that made a joint complaint to the Department of Education against Harvard, alleging racial discrimination. That follows a lawsuit filed last year against Harvard and the University of North Carolina by a group of Asian-American students making similar charges. The department rejected the claim in July, but another two complaints have since been filed by Asian-Americans, one against Harvard and one against nine other universities.

The article points out that Ivy League universities are allowed to discriminate against Asians by race. So Asian admissions are flat. But at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), which is the top experimental science university in the United States, Asian admissions have been soaring. Why? California does not allow discrimination by race in admissions.

Here's the graph:

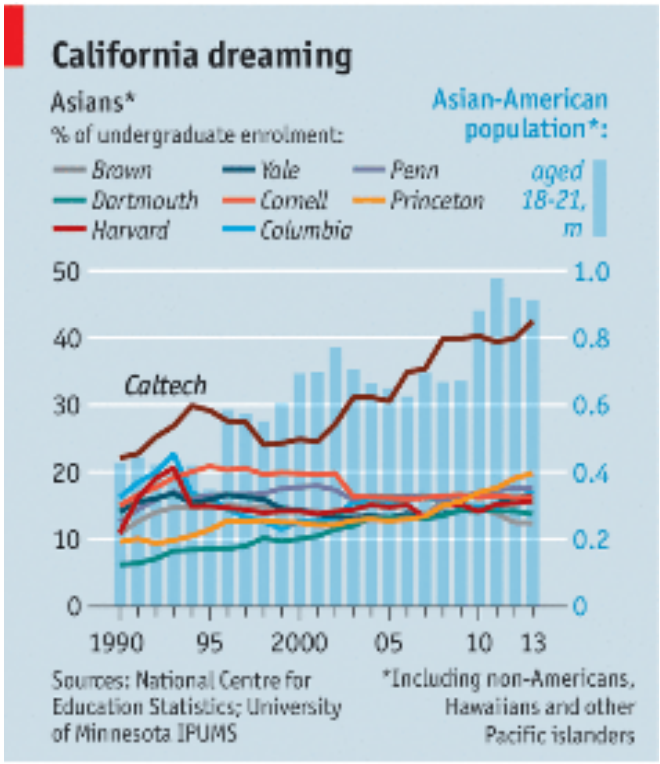

Economist.com

Admissions of Asian-Americans at Caltech compared to Ivy League

Read this:

> Some Asians allege that the Ivy Leagues have put an implicit limit on the number of Asians they will admit. They point to Asians' soaring academic achievements and to the work of Thomas Espenshade and Alexandria Walton Radford of Princeton, who looked at the data on admissions and concluded that Asian-Americans need 140 SAT points out of 1,600 more than whites to get a place at a private university, and that blacks need 310 fewer points. Yet in California, where public universities are allowed to use economic but not racial criteria in admissions, 41% of Berkeley's enrolments in 2014 were Asian-Americans and at the California Institute of Technology 44% were (see chart).
>
> […]For the moment the court has taken the view that universities may take race into account, but racial quotas are not on. The Ivies deny running a racial quota. But in its comment on the Asian groups' complaint, Harvard defends the use of race as a criterion in admission—"a class that is diverse on multiple dimensions, including on race, transforms the educational experience of students from every background and prepares our graduates for an increasingly pluralistic world"—and describes its admissions process as "holistic", meaning it takes into account considerations wider than mere test scores.
>
> Many Asian parents think this is wrong. They woke up a long time ago to the need to counter the stereotype of the maths-nerd Asian who does nothing but work, and encouraged their children to diversify—into music, debating, charity work, sports, everything that is supposed to increase students' chances of

> admission. But many who have excelled in those areas, including Mr Wang and Irene Liu, a student from Massachusetts with a similarly stellar CV, were rejected by the Ivy League. Ms Liu's mother, Tricia, says, "I feel angry about it. We came for the American dream: you work hard, you do well. This just doesn't add up." Irene has accepted a place at a top Canadian university, and is happy about it. Her mother isn't: "It breaks my heart that she's going abroad. If she had gone to Harvard, I could have brought her dumplings."

I often blog about depressing and negative things on this blog because there is so much going wrong in a world run by the secular left, especially because church pastors and Christian parents seem to be so committed to the idea that Christianity has nothing to do with anything outside of the church walls. But this topic is a big win for us. We should be open to presenting conservative ideas and values to Asian-Americans. We have BOTH of the Asian-American governors (Bobby Jindal and Nikki Haley) as conservative Republicans. We also favor more choice and competition in education. There is an opportunity for new alliances here. I am hopeful.

UPDATE: Asian friend writes this to me:

> I sounded the alarm on this years ago. But what has come of it? The lesson I have learned is that Asians don't count. Asians don't count as a minority, even though we are the smallest minority. Asians don't count as non-whites, even though liberals in particular are sexually aroused by the fantasy of the exotic in Asian culture, particularly women. Asians don't count as a governmentally oppressed group, even though the first racially specific legislation passed in Congress was the Chinese Exclusion act of 1882 and were targeted for internment camps during WWII. Asians don't count, because despite all hardships, Asians do not waste time trying to rectify the past but make a better lives for themselves. And in so doing, they make a better lives for their children and their community. The successes of Asians in America is a big negative pull on the narrative of the Left, but it has no effect. Why not? Because flouting the narrative renders Asians as a people group irrelevant, to be ignored over #blacklivesmatter or whatever.

Asian woes have been more recent than slavery, yet they seem to be doing fine. Maybe their strong views of marriage and family have something to do with it?

Should parents or the state be responsible for educating children?

October 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National Education Association

This article from the Public Discourse is interesting because it shows the very different views that big government people have of marriage and family.

It starts by talking about laws in North America, especially in more liberal areas:

> The view of marriage as a mere creature of the state to be redefined at will goes hand in hand with the idea that children "belong" primarily to the state, which then delegates (limited) childrearing authority to whomever the state defines as the child's parents.
>
> […]We also see the state encroaching on parental authority in order to enforce the new orthodoxy regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. "Equality" requires teaching that all family forms are equally good, and public schools do this by introducing "diversity-oriented" activities and readings – including books like *Mommy, Momma and Me* – across the curriculum.
>
> California, New Jersey and the District of Columbia have made it illegal to give counseling to minors who have sexual-identity issues that in any way discourages them from fostering those tendencies, regardless of whether or not the child would like to receive such counseling, and regardless of whether or not those issues seem to stem from earlier traumas such as sexual abuse. Similar bills are pending in fifteen other states. School guidance counselors are also frequently connected with Gay-Straight Alliances and similar organizations, often placing confused teenagers in contact with such organizations without the

> consent or even knowledge of the parents.
>
> In a particularly sad Massachusetts case, which I learned about from the parents involved, a teenager was sent by his guidance counselor to a gay youth organization. The organization then turned him against his family and encouraged him to stop seeing the therapist he had been seeing since childhood to deal with the effects of abuse by an older bully in school. As things escalated he was effectively kidnapped by the school guidance counselor and then taken from his home by the Department of Children and Families, without the parents ever having even been *accused* of abuse or neglect. The boy was eventually returned home after a second social worker investigated the case and deemed the parents to be exceptionally responsible and loving.
>
> There is reason to believe that what happened to this family was not an isolated incident. At their booth at the Massachusetts Gay Youth Pride Parade, Department of Children and Families officials boasted about how they routinely manipulate standard processes to remove children with sexual-identity issues from the homes of conservative and Christian parents.

Does that sounds OK to you? I know that in my case that would not be OK, because one of the main reasons why I am interested in marriage is so that my children will get their values from their parents, and not from, for example, the convicted child pornographer who wrote the gay-friendly curriculum in Ontario, Canada. If I have a choice between me and their mother, and this very liberal Minister of Education, then I choose us.

How far would the secular leftists go to stop me and my future wife from educating our kids? Well, it's always useful to look at what the secular left has done in countries where there is less of a Christian influence.

For example, the Public Discourse article talks about Germany and Sweden:

> The story of the Romeike family highlights the injustice of this situation. Uwe and Hannelore Romeike, along with their five children, lived in a southwest German town called Bietigheim-Bissinge, where their three oldest children attended the public schools. All was well until the parents began to noticedistressing changes in their children. After further investigation, Mr. Romeike was appalled to find that their son Daniel's health textbook used foul language to refer to sexual acts, and was concerned more generally that the values conveyed in his children's classes and readings conflicted with the Christian moral and religious values he and his wife strove to pass on to their children at home.
>
> In response, the Romeikes pulled their children out of the public schools and began educating them at home. A protracted battle with state authorities ensued, including police attempts to enter the Romeikes' home and bring the children to school by force, along with onerous fines adding up to 7,000 Euros. Fearing imprisonment and loss of custody of their children, the Romeikes moved to the United States where they would be free to educate their children as they

> thought best. Although their request for asylum was denied—a bad sign with regard to respect for parental rights on the part of the current United States government—they were granted permission to remain indefinitely in the country shortly before their scheduled deportation in 2014.
>
> The Johansson family in Sweden—where homeschooling has also been illegal since 2010—was not so fortunate. In 2009, when seven-year-old Domenic Johansson and his parents were on an airplane about to leave Sweden permanently for India (his mother's home country), armed Swedish police entered the plane and took Domenic into custody on the grounds that he was homeschooled, despite the facts that school was not in session and that homeschooling was still legal at the time. Social workers also claimed that the presence of some cavities in Domenic's baby teeth constituted evidence of physical neglect.
>
> Since then, Domenic has lived in a foster home, with state-supervised parental visitation for a mere hour every five weeks. A Swedish court definitively terminated the Johanssons' parental rights in 2012, primarily on the basis that their "isolation" of Domenic from other children his own age was psychologically harmful. The European Court of Human Rights upheld the decision in January 2015, but the Johanssons have not given up hope. They are bringing a new case to the Swedish courts in the hopes of finally being reunited with their now twelve-year-old son. Dozens of other Swedish families have fled the country in order to be able to homeschool their children.

The article mentions Bill 10, which was passed in Alberta, the most conservative province in Canada. That bill, "disallows parents from exempting their children from classroom discussions of homosexuality, and which requires all schools, including faith-based schools, to allow pro-homosexual student clubs like gay-straight alliances." Does that sound OK with you? Because I can promise you that the Ontario child pornographer Minister of Education is 100% on board with it. He loves that anything that gets your kids thinking about sex at earlier and earlier ages. He's a secular leftist. Strong families and respect for parental authority put the brakes on his agenda. But he is all for having the schools push sex on young children, and without informing parents. And this big-government education system is all taxpayer-funded. The taxes are mandatory, and there is NO opt-out.

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

October 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

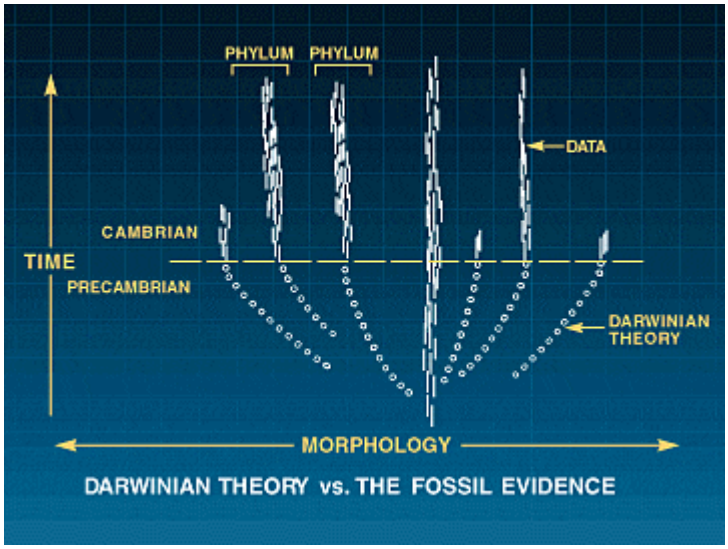

Cambrian Explosion

Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien "The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang" in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a

> unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and
> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

You can get a DVD of the lecture and other great lectures from Access Research Network. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will

prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

Stephen C. Meyer and Keith Fox debate intelligent design and evolution

October 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

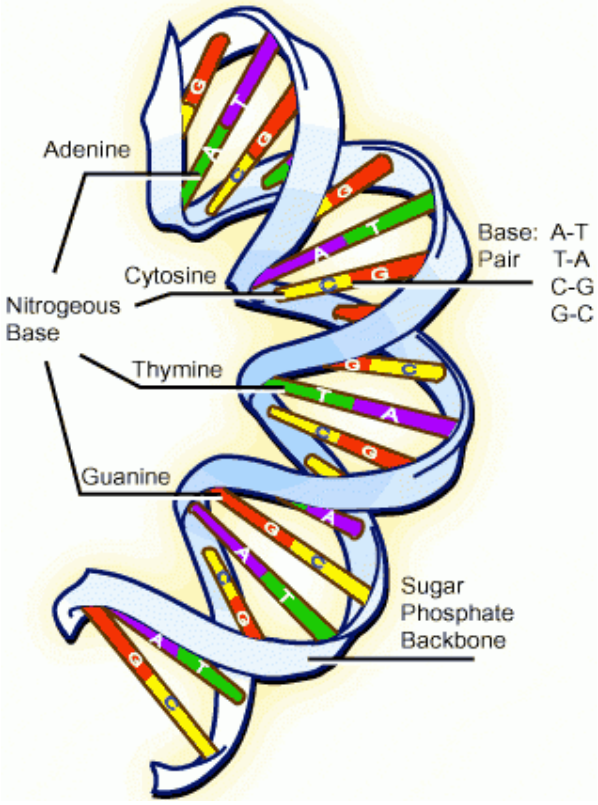

How did life begin?
From Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable" podcast.

Details:

> Stephen Meyer is a leading proponent of Intelligent Design who directs the Centre for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. His [first] book "Signature in the Cell" claims to show that the DNA code is the product of intelligent mind, not naturalistic processes. Keith Fox is Professor of Biochemistry at Southampton University. He chairs the UK Christians in Science network but disagrees strongly with ID. They debate how life could have originated and whether design is allowed as an explanation in science.

Summary: (stuff in italics is my snarky paraphrase)

Meyer:

- background and how he got interested in intelligent design
- his research focus is on the origin of life – the first replicator
- summarizes the history of origin of life studies
- authored the book "Signature in the Cell"
- the DNA enigma: where did the information in DNA come from?
- naturalistic explanations of the DNA information have failed

- but intelligent agents are known to be able to produce information
- the best explanation of the information in DNA is that an intelligent agent authored it
- Meyer's book was named by atheist philosopher of science Thomas Nagel as a Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year in 2010
- why is design so controversial? Many people think that Darwin explained why nature appears design
- the Darwinian view is that nature can create the appearance of design using mutation and selection
- however, Darwinian mechanisms cannot explain the origin of the first living cell, it assumes replication, and the origin of life is about where the first replicator comes from

Fox:

- Meyer's argument is not about the evolution of life after the first cell
- Meyer's case for design is about the origin of life
- naturalists do not know a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- there are a number of naturalistic hypotheses for the origin of life, like the RNA-first hypothesis
- maybe in a few years one of them will turn out to be correct
- what intelligent design is arguing from a gap in our current naturalistic knowledge to infer that God intervened in nature

Meyer:

- that's not what intelligent design is at all
- the approach ID theorists use is the inference to best explanation
- you evaluate all explanations, non-intelligent causes and intelligent causes
- you prefer the best possible explanation
- we know that minds are capable of producing information just like the information we find in DNA

Fox:

- living cells replicate, so they have the ability to introduce mutations as they replicate and then some of those mutations can be selected
- so maybe the process of replicating that living cells do created the first living cell
- maybe the first living cell created itself, X brought X into being, self-creation, what's irrational about that?

Meyer:

- the issue is the origin of life – where did the first living cell come from?
- you cannot appeal to the operations that a living cell can perform to explain the

origin of the first living cell
- there was no first living cell operating before the first living cell
- there was no replication, mutation or selection before the first living cell
- in fact, in my book I show that there is no known naturalistic mechanism that is able to produce the information needed for the first living cell
- *nothing can create itself, that is self-contradictory*

Fox:

- Well, you are just saying that because something is complex that God did it

Meyer:

- Sadly, no. What I actually said needed to be explained was the information, not complexity
- And we know from software engineering that the process of adding information to code is performed by programmers
- in the absence of any adequate naturalistic explanation for information, we are justified in taking the explanation that we are familiar with – namely, intelligent agency – based on our uniform, universal experience of what causes information

Fox:

- well, maybe we can appeal to the mutation and selection in existing living cells to explain the origin of the first living cell
- maybe there were living cells before the first living cell, and then these other living cells created the first living cell

Meyer:

- we can't keep invoking mutation and selection when those processes are not operating prior to the origin of the first living cell

Fox:

- well maybe some bare-bones self-replication molecule was a precursor to the first living cell

Meyer:

- even to generate very limited replicator would require a large amount of information
- the argument I am making is – where does the evolution come from?

Fox:

- well, maybe we will think of an explanation for information that is naturalistic in 20 years
- we've thought of explanations to things that were NOT information before

- so maybe we will be able to think of something to explain information based on our ability to explain NOT information before

Moderator: Change topics: the Dover decision

Meyer:

- the Discovery Institute opposed the policy that causes the trial
- the wording of the statute was poor
- the judge was completely wrong in his decision
- young earth creationists used the phrase “intelligent design” to cover their agenda
- intelligent design is an inference using the normal methods of science

Fox:

- intelligent design is a science stopper because it stops looking for a naturalistic explanation
- everything in nature must have a naturalistic explanation
- everything has to be explained using matter and time and chance
- it just has to be that way!!!!

Meyer:

- well, what luck would you have explaining an effect like Mt. Rushmore?
- can you explain that using matter,time and chance?
- Mt. Rushmore was the product of intelligence, not wind and erosion
- similarly, there is information in the cell, and we know that intelligence causes information

Fox:

- So you are saying that we don’t understand and therefore an intelligence is necessary?

Meyer:

- no I am saying we DO understand and we are making an inference based on that understanding
- you are the one who is insisting on a material explanation because you pre-suppose materialism
- we know that minds have causal powers, and we can infer mind as an explanation from information

Fox:

- well nature is a seamless chain of material causes and effects

Meyer:

- agents can act without violating the laws of nature
- even humans can act as intelligent agents to create information in books, and they don't violate the laws of nature
- intelligent causes are real, and they explain effects in nature

Fox:

- you're trying to impose on science something to do with meaning and purpose

Meyer:

- no that's not what we're doing, we're inferring from from the fact that we ourselves are known causes of information to the fact that an intelligence cause is the best explanation for information in the cell

Fox:

- *but I am a materialist*, I need a materialist explanation

Meyer:

- mind IS an answer to the how question
- we infer to mind in many other scientific disciplines, like cryptography, archaeology, etc.
- a materialist might accuse an archaeologist of engaging in a "scribe-of-the-gaps" argument, but the best explanation of an artifact with information is a scribe
- we are inferring that mind is the cause from the nature of the effect: information

Moderator: is it appropriate to call DNA "information"
Fox:

- well DNA is just a molecular polymer, any reference to information is just by analogy

Meyer:

- DNA is a molecular polymer, but it also exhibits the property of specified complexity
- the arrangement of bases, which function as machine instructions in a software program, for performings task in the cell
- we have observed that the property of specified complexity always comes from an intelligence

Fox:

- well, maybe there are other sequences that would work, so maybe it's really not uncommon to develop functioning sequences by chance alone, without an intelligence

Meyer:

- you can measure how precise the functional specificity is in DNA and proteins

Moderator: is Shannon information the same as functional information

Meyer:

- Shannon information refers to the sequences of digits or symbols that do not necessarily have any function, i.e. – a four character string QSZX has as much Shannon information as WORD. However, only the latter is functional against the pattern of the English language. There are arrangements of DNA bases and amino acids that have the same number of symbols/characters as a functional sequence would have, but they have no biological function – they do not exhibit specified complexity

Fox:

- Well, maybe there are lots and lots of sequences of DNA and proteins so that it is fairly easy to get a functional one by chance

Meyer:

- DNA sequences that are functional are extremely rare, protein sequences are even more rare
- this is not my opinion, this is what the research shows – functional protein sequences are rare

Fox:

- well maybe there are other functional sequences that are occur before the first functional sequence that are precursors to the first functional sequence
- maybe there are billions of years of replication, mutation and selection before the first replication, mutation and selection

Meyer:

- you can't get to the first selectable functional sequence by appealing to precursor selectable functional sequences – there are no selectable functional sequences before the FIRST one
- you have to get the first selectable functional sequence by chance alone, because there is nothing to mutate or select before the first replicator
- the chance hypothesis has been rejected because the minimal amount of information for the simplest replicator is too high to get by chance alone, given the resources, including time, that are available

Moderator: *Keith are you confident that naturalism will be able to substantiate these naturalism-of-the-gap speculations that you offer in response to Meyer's actual science that we have today?*

Fox:

- well, it is hard to know for sure because it was just a fluke event
- but there's nothing irrational or unscientific or miraculous about it – the fluke would have a material explanation
- there is nothing that we can detect that would implicate God, my speculations about a fluke which I cannot observe or measure or test would all be compatible with an atheistic worldview that omits God as a causal entity

Meyer:

- where are those material processes that could account for this fluke then?
- the whole point of this argument is that the information in DNA transcends the material components in the sequence
- it's the arrangement of the material parts/letters/characters/symbols/instructions that needs to be explained

Fox:

- Well, I just have a different philosophy of science that rules out intelligent causation a priori

Meyer:

- Yes, that's the difference between us – you pre-suppose that all explanations of natural phenomena must exclude intelligent causes

There is a bit more where Meyer talks about how parts of the cell are implementations of various design patterns (Gang of Four design patterns) that are used by software architects who design software.

Find more posts on Stephen C. Meyer here.

Should fascist Democrats allow Christians to work for a living in America?

October 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

The story is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Former Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran lived the American dream. That is, until he was fired from his childhood dream job for writing a book during his own private time.
>
> Cochran's book, published in 2013 and called "Who Told You That You Were Naked?," expresses a biblical view on marriage and addresses homosexuality from his Christian perspective.
>
> An active member in his church, he led a men's small group Bible study and, after discussion with his group on Adam's sin in the Book of Genesis, researched the words "naked" and "clothed" from the perspective of what the Bible says. He decided to write 162 pages about the topic in a men's devotional book.
>
> Cochran was reported to have asked the city's ethics officer for permission before publishing the book and gave a copy of the book to Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed in January of 2014.
>
> Fast-forward a few months, and Cochran received a 30-day suspension without pay, **after an LGBT activist group started to protest the book.**
>
> "LGBT citizens deserve the right to express their beliefs regarding sexual orientation, and deserve to be respected for their positions without hate and

> discrimination," Cochran said, according to a January article from The Atlanta-Journal Constitution. "But Christians also have the right to express their beliefs regarding sexual orientation and be respected for their position without hate and without discrimination."
>
> After 34 years as a firefighter, Cochran's fairy-tale career came to a halt in January due to his personal views on gay marriage.
>
> "I profoundly disagree with and am deeply disturbed by the sentiments expressed in the paperback regarding the LGBT community," Mayor Reed said in a statement. **"I will not tolerate discrimination of any kind within my administration."**
>
> […]"I want to be clear that the material in Chief Cochran's book is not representative of my personal beliefs and **is inconsistent with the administration's work to make Atlanta a more welcoming city for all citizens**," Reed stated after he had given Cochran a suspension.

Irony! And I'm sure that the Democrat Reed would say that he is as much a Christian as Cochran, even though he's not a Christian in any way shape or form. Many Democrats claim to be Christians and even attend churches where they sing and jump around waving their arms. But they're not authentic Christians.

More:

> Cochran had worked his way up, and out from the poverty he grew up in, to be named Atlanta fire chief in 2008. In 2009, he was appointed administrator of the United States Fire Administration under President Barack Obama. Less than a year later, he was back to his position as chief in Atlanta.
>
> Investigation into Cochran found that he did not show discrimination against anyone during employment, yet he was terminated anyway.
>
> […]"The part that got me in trouble was the fact that in the book I dealt with sexual challenges that Christian men have and spoke of biblical marriage and biblical sexuality," Cochran said in August while speaking at a religious libertyrally in Iowa.

There is something funny about sin. Not only do the people who do it want to be free to do it, but they also don't want you to disapprove of it. So, if they have to use government power to force you to approve of it, they will.

It never occurs to me to use the government to force people to approve of what I am doing with my life. I'm chaste, I don't believe in premarital sex. There is no support for this anywhere in the society, certainly not in the government, the education system, the mainstream media, Hollywood, and so on. There is not even support for this in the church. Yet, I don't insist that people celebrate me – I don't even feel ashamed of what I'm doing. It's not easy, but not hurting women and being able to look at them as people instead of objects is a pretty good balance to the social disapproval I get. I'm just not

interested in promiscuity, Tinder, Grindr, hooking up, monogamish, domestic violence, drug addiction, no-fault divorce, suicide, depression, sexually-transmitted diseases, abortions, and all the other things that the sexual revolutionaries push on me. Not interested.

So, that's the difference between sin and not sin. Sin requires you to get people to agree with you. You feel so bad inside that you want everyone to affirm you, hoping that the shame and guilt you feel because of what you are doing will go away. Hoping that if all the humans agree with you, and support you, then God will *have to* overlook what you are doing. Hoping that if everyone is as sinful as you, then all of you will get into Heaven somehow.

Here are two more things about me. First, I wouldn't be writing a thing about sexual issues unless I was using an alias. The champions of the sexual revolution occupy the commanding heights, and they are very happy to punish dissenters. Second, one of the big reasons why I am so picky about marriage is because I would rather save my money and make a difference by writing than get married and have kids and *be forced to go silent for fear of becoming unable to support my family*. The scarier these restrictions on open Christianity become, the more difficult the choice between making a difference and marrying becomes. Seems like I have to choose between speaking up and defending myself, or going silent and providing for a family.

A must-read series of posts on cosmic fine-tuning by Allen Hainline

October 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

There are four posts in the series, so far. I think Allen might be done, so I'm going to link to all four and snip something I like from each one.

The first post is on whether the fine-tuning is real, and whether a multiverse explains the fine-tuning so that there is no need for a cosmic Designer.

I just have to choose this quote from the atheist Stephen Hawking on the fine-tuning:

> The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life. For example, if the electric charge of the electron had been only slightly different, stars would have been unable to burn hydrogen and helium, or else they would not have exploded. It seems clear that there are relatively few ranges of values for the numbers [i.e. the constants of nature] that would allow for development of any form of intelligent life.

And from Luke Barnes, who I've mentioned before on this blog:

> In my years of researching this topic, I'm amazed at how few scientists who have studied the fine-tuning details disagree with this core claim that the subset of life-permitting physics is a tiny fraction among possibilities. Since Luke Barnes is a top researcher on this topic, consider his input on the level of acceptance of the fine-tuning claim: *"I've published a review of the scientific literature, 200+ papers, and I can only think of a handful that oppose this conclusion, and piles and piles that support it.*[3]*"*

And on the multiverse as a way to escape the fine-tuning:

> The key issue though is that for the multiverse to be an adequate explanation for the fine-tuning it requires the conjunction of several hypotheses for which we lack *any* empirical evidence:

> 1. A universe-generating mechanism that generates a plethora of universes
> 2. That this mechanism doesn't itself require fine-tuning
> 3. The many-worlds interpretation of quantum physics
> 4. The ability to *widely* vary constants in those universes. If you think that it's a foregone conclusion that String Theory/M-Theory[8] will come to the rescue in this area, you should watch this video clip by Oxford physicist Roger Penrose where he exclaims that "it's not even a theory … it's a collection of hopes".
>
> Occam's razor therefore does seem to favor design over the multiverse. When one accounts for the extensive problems in affirming premise 2 and how these multiverse theories make predictions incompatible with our universe, the hypothesis that God designed the physics of the universe to bring about life is more plausible.

Here's the second post, where he explains the fine-tuning argument philosophically, and gives an example of one of the constants that has to be fine-tuned in order to support complex, embodied intelligence of any kind.

The cosmological constant:

> The inference to design will be more easily recognized if we shed some light as to the specialness of the required values. Consider the size of the bull's eye and wall based on just 1 parameter – the cosmological constant. There is a natural range for possible values for this constant because there are known contributions that are 10^{120}times larger than the overall net value. (There is a near perfect but inexact cancellation of contributions accurate to 120 decimal places). Let's use the most conservative numbers in the physics literature that indicate a fine-tuning to 1 part in 10^{53}. If the cosmological constant, which governs the expansion rate of the universe, had been larger than its current value by this tiny fraction, then the universe would have expanded so fast that no stars or planets would have formed and therefore no life. If the value were smaller by this amount then the universe would have rapidly collapsed before the universe cooled sufficiently to allow for stable information storage which is required by any self-replicating system such as life.

In the third post, he responds to objections to the fine-tuning argument. One objection you hear from atheists who don't understand the science is that any selection of constants and quantities is as likely as any other, so our life-permitting set is just random. Now, first off, there are only 10 to the 80 atoms in the visible universe, so if the cosmological constant is fine-tuned to 1 in 10 to the 120, it's not rational to say "it just happened randomly".

But here is Allen's response:

> However, the assumption that any set of constants is just as likely as any other is

> the very thing that we want to know. Starting off with that as an *assumption* begs the question against design. As Luke Barnes articulates in this excellent podcast dealing with responses to the fine-tuning claim, suppose we're playing poker and every time I deal I get a royal flush. If this continues to happen, you become increasingly convinced that I'm likely to be cheating. If I responded to an accusation of cheating by just saying "well any set of 5 cards is just as likely as any other so you can't accuse me of cheating" you would be rational to reject this explanation. The question is not "how likely is any set of 5 cards?" but rather "how likely is it I'm cheating if I just dealt myself 10 straight royal flushes?" This question accounts for the possibility that I'm cheating which would almost certainly be true in this scenario. So the right fine-question is "given the fine-tuning evidence, how likely is it that the constants were set at random?" The values for physical constants conform to a very particular pattern – that which supports life. The fact that we have so many finely-tuned constants makes it unlikely that they were all set at random (at least in the single universe scenario and I've already shown some of the problems/challenges in multiverse explanations.)

Every 5-card hand that you draw is equally unlikely, but the royal flush is the highest hand in the game and *always wins.* Every hand you draw is unlikely, but whatever you draw is overwhelmingly likely to not be a royal flush.

Finally, the fourth post deals with the objection that the constants and quantities could not have been other than they are.

He quotes physicist John Barrow giving 5 reasons why the constants can vary, and then this:

> Even if the constants and laws of physics couldn't vary, there is even more reason to think that there were many physically possible sets of initial conditions. Paul Davies states this emphatically:
>
> "Even if the laws of physics were unique, it doesn't follow that the physical universe itself is unique…the laws of physics must be augmented by cosmic initial conditions…there is nothing in present ideas about 'laws of initial conditions' remotely to suggest that their consistency with the laws of physics would imply uniqueness. Far from it…it seems, then, that the physical universe does not have to be the way it is: it could have been otherwise.[4]"
>
> John A. Wheeler agrees: "Never has physics come up with a way to tell with what initial conditions the universe was started off. On nothing is physics clearer than what is not physics."

The constants and quantities are not determined by physics. They were *selected* by whoever created nature in the first place.

So that's the series. I noticed that he kept linking to this Common Sense Atheism podcast featuring famous cosmologist Luke Barnes. I grabbed it to listen this weekend, and you

might want to get it, too. It’s over an hour. It seems like it is one stop shopping to understand common objections to the fine-tuning argument, and how strong each one is.

William Lane Craig asks: are there objective truths about God?

October 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

In a lecture entitled “Are there Objective Truths About God?”, philosopher William Lane Craig discusses the problem that Christians face when they make truth claims about God. We thinkg that there are objective truths about God – that there are some propositions that describe the way God really is. We think that people who don’t believe in those objective are wrong. But some people want to say that every statement about God is true “for each person” – so that conflicting claims about God are fine and no one is wrong. This could only be the case if everyone is just describing their own preferences, though – if they are making subjective claims about themselves, and not objective claims about God. Unfortunately, Christianity claims to be true for everyone – (e.g. – God is three persons and one being), so that Christians are committed to defending the idea that there are objective truths about God.

Here’s the link to a page containing the lecture audio. (H/T Be Thinking)

The MP3 file is here.

So what questions does Bill answer in the lecture?

What is a self-refuting statement?

The main concept in the lecture is self-refutation. A self-refuting sentence is a sentence that, if true, makes itself false or meaningless. For example, suppose someone said to you: “there are no sentences longer than 5 words” then that would be self-refuting since it falsifies itself. Bill argues that objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God are all self-refuting.

What is truth?

Craig holds that “truth” is a property of a proposition such that a proposition is true if it corresponds to the external world. For example, if I claim that there is a crocodile in your closet and we find a crocodile in your closet, then my statement was true. If there is no crocodile in your closet then my statement was false. The real objective world out there is what makes propositional claims true or false – these are not claims about an individual’s preferences, they are claims about the world. Bill is concerned with truth claims about God that are objective – whether there are propositions about God that are true regardless of what anyone thinks.

Objections to objective truth

Bill discusses 3 objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God. Each objection seeks to make religion subjective, (true for each person, like food preferences or clothing fashion).

Objection #1:The Challenge of Verificationism

The first challenge is that religious claims cannot be verified using the 5 senses, and therefore religious statements are objectively meaningless.

Consider the statement “Only propositions that can be verified with the 5 senses are meaningful”. That statement cannot be verified with the 5 senses. If the statement is true, it makes itself meaningless. It’s self-refuting.

Objection #2: The Challenge of Mystical Anti-Realism

The second challenge is that religious claims, and claims about God, are neither true nor false.

Consider the statement “Propositions about God cannot be true or false”. Craig asks – why should we accept that? Any reason given would have to assert something about God that is true or false, and those reasons would contradict the original statement. For example, “God is too great to be grasped by human categories of thought” is a proposition about God that the speaker thinks is true, which contradicts the original assertion.

Objection #3: The Challenge of Radical Pluralism

The third challenge is that each person invents an entire reality of their own, and that there is no mind-independent objective world shared by individuals.

Consider the statement “There is no objective reality shared by all individuals”. That statement is a statement that applies to all individuals, regardless of what they think. It’s self-refuting.

Conclusion

Craig ends the lecture by arguing that it is OK for Christians to think that other people’s views are false. It does not follow that just because someone thinks other people’s views are wrong that they am going to mistreat other people. In fact, in Christianity it is objectively true that it is good for Christians to love their enemies. It is objectively true that all human beings have value, because human beings are made by God. So even if Christians disagree with others, they still treat them well, because they think that there

are moral truths that they have to conform to.

My thoughts

Sometimes, non-Christians think that it is dangerous to hold beliefs too strongly. But I think what really matters is the content of the belief – some beliefs are false and some are true – you want to believe the true beliefs as strongly as you can, as long as the evidence warrants it. In Christianity, I am absolutely obligated to treat people with whom I disagree with respect and gentleness (1 Pet 3:15-16). The more convinced I am about *that* belief, the *better* my opponents will be treated. A *stronger* belief in Christianity means *more* tolerance for those who disagree.

Why do non-Christians get so offended when Christians claim to be right about there being only one way to be rightly related to God? Well, for many it's because their worldview is a personal preference, and they feel uncomfortable having to defend it rationally and evidentially. For most people, religion is just their cultural preference – like cooking style, or favorite sport, or clothing style. That's why they respond to your truth claims with name-calling like "you're intolerant" and "you're judgemental" and "you're arrogant". These are just shorthand ways of saying, "I'm offended that you've thought things through more than I have, and that your careful arguments and evidence make me fee bad about not having any arguments and evidence for the customs and conventions I was raised in". My family is from a non-Christian culture, so I have to talk to my relatives about this all the time. They feel judged, but it's not my fault that they haven't done any homework to prove out their beliefs.

I got this "you're mean" reaction a lot from people who are raised to think that their religion is a racial, national or cultural identity. They think that if you tell them they are wrong *on matters of fact* that somehow this amounts to some sort of racism or prejudice. You make factual claims, and they hear discrimination. But that's not how Christians think of religion – we only care if it's true or not – just like we care whether the claims of history or science are true or not. We not trying to be mean, any more than it's mean to say things like "water boils at 100 C". That's just the way it is, and we're more than happy to discuss the reasons why we think that, and to look at your reasons to see why you don't think that.

For further study

A debate between a Christian and a postmodern, featuring Christian scholar Peter Williams and a very strange liberal person. This audio really makes it clear why people are opposed to objective truth claims about religion. Williams' opponent is the epitome of postmodern relativist irrational universalism.

Hate crime reported by gay man exposed as fraud after police investigation

October 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

This is from ABC News.

Excerpt:

> A monthlong police investigation has concluded that a gay man who reported being the victim of a hate crime at a University of North Dakota fraternity invented the story and actually instigated the fight.
>
> **Police recommended charging Haakon Gisvold, 18, who is not a UND student, with providing false information to police, but prosecutors declined.**
>
> "While probable cause may exist to conclude that such an offense took place, at this time there is not a substantial likelihood of conviction; as such, pursuing a criminal charge is not deemed to be in the interest of justice," Grand Forks County State's Attorney David Jones told WDAZ-TV.
>
> Gisvold did not immediately respond Friday to Associated Press requests for comment made by phone and social media.
>
> Gisvold told police in early September that he was the victim of homophobic taunting and an assault at the Lambda Chi Alpha house. He said he was called anti-gay slurs, choked and stripped of his clothes while attending a party.
>
> […]Authorities said their monthlong investigation, including interviewing 150 witnesses, concluded there was no evidence of a hate crime, and that Gisvold instigated a fight.

This is not the first time this has happened this year. Here's another one from July 2015,

reported in the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> A Utah man who claimed to be the victim of several dreadful anti-gay hate crimes could face criminal charges after confessing that he staged the attacks himself.
>
> Several weeks ago, 21-year-old Rick Jones from the small town of Delta grabbed national headlines after he said he was assaulted and had [an anti-gay slur] carved into his arm last April while closing up his family's pizzeria. Following that attack, Jones claimed his home was spray-painted and that somebody threw a Molotov cocktail through his bedroom window. Jones told the local media that he believed he was being targeted due to his homosexuality, and other media outlets quickly picked up the refrain.
>
> In response to these attacks, Jones' family started a GoFundMe campaign in mid-June that collected nearly $12,000.
>
> But now, police say inconsistencies in the evidence have led them to conclude the person behind these "attacks" was Jones himself. His attorneys say Jones has confessed and asked for the hate crime investigation to be terminated.

Why is this important? It's important because the mainstream media loves to use stories like this to drive public opinions against traditional Judeo-Christian moral values. They report the alleged crime, but don't report the retractions. The same thing happens with false rape accusations, like the one at the University of Virginia that was reported by Rolling Stone. These fake rape stories are useful because they cause the public to oppose groups, like college-aged men. And they decrease the credibility of women in real rape cases. I am for tougher sentences against any rapist who is convicted in a criminal courtroom, but I am suspicious of cases where the plaintiff does not go straight to the police to get them involved.

There is probably no better know case of a hate crime that wasn't a hate crime than the attack against Matthew Shepard in Wyoming. For years, the left wing media said that the attack was about the victim's homosexual behaviors. It was only much later that the true came out that this was just a robbery by two people he knew who needed money for drugs. What was amazing was that the truth was reported in "The Advocate" – a leading pro-homosexuality publication.

New study: a good credit score is a key performance indicator for marriage success

October 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

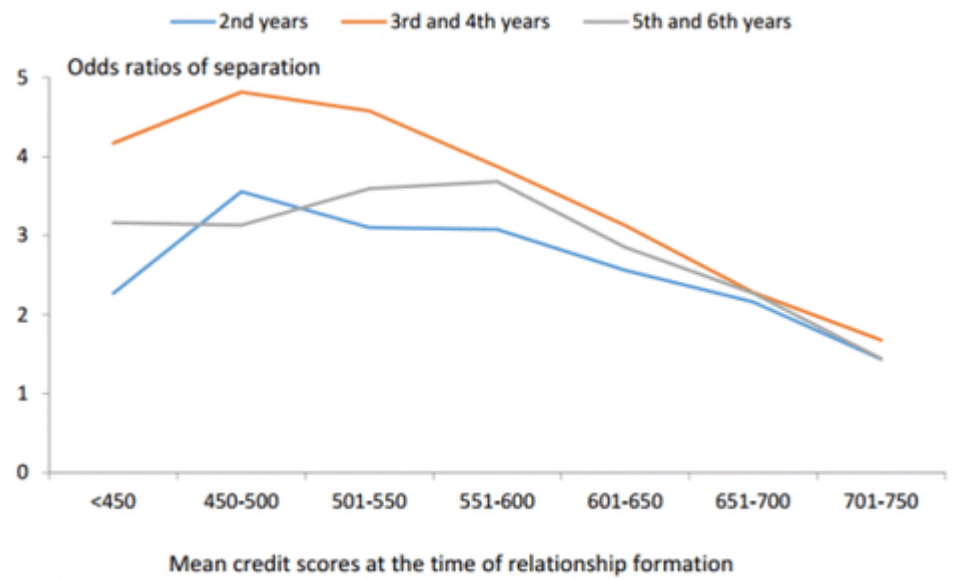

Financial responsibility is a key performance indicator for marriage success
Story from the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> When people are looking for a significant other, they often try to find someone whose values, education, earnings, hobbies and even height match their own. But new research suggests there's one promising measure for finding a committed partner that most daters overlook — credit scores.
>
> A credit score is a number that is supposed to reflect the risk of lending money to someone, based mostly on their past history of borrowing, repaying and defaulting on debt. Banks have long used credit scores to evaluate customers, but these days potential employers, landlords, insurance companies, cellphone companies and many other businesses do, too.
>
> A new working paper from the Federal Reserve Board that looks at what role credit scores play in committed relationships suggests that daters might want to start using the metric as well. The researchers found that credit scores — or whatever personal qualities credit scores might represent — actually play a pretty big role in whether people form and stay in committed relationships. People with higher credit scores are more likely to form committed relationships and marriages and then stay in them. In addition, how well matched the couple's credit scores are initially is a good predictor of whether they stay together in the long term.
>
> The paper analyzed a large proprietary data set of 12 million randomly selected U.S. consumers from the credit reporting agency Equifax over a period of about

> 15 years. Researchers used an algorithm to find a swathe of committed couples, including some who live together and are not legally married.
>
> They found that people with higher (i.e. better) credit scores are more likely to form a committed relationship, as the chart below shows. This was true even after controlling for other differences between partners, like education level, race or income.
>
> The researchers also found that having higher credit scores when they started the relationship meant that couples were less likely to separate over the next few years… In fact, for every extra 100 points in the couple's average credit score when beginning the relationship, their odds of splitting in the second year fell by around 30 percent.

So what do I want to say about this story? I want to tell you that marriage is not something that you just jump into when you feel like it, without any preparation. Relationships work well when both people have trained their character to be ready to do the most important thing in a relationship: *to commit*. And your credit score is a good measure of your ability to do that.

A high credit score is an excellent measure of a person's ability to be responsible with money, and to take their obligation to pay their money back seriously. Marriage is all about whether two people are comfortable with being responsible, and whether two people can put aside their desire for fun and thrills and meet their obligations, even when they don't feel like it. If a person is uncomfortable with marriage obligations, because it is too "transactional" and they want to be feelings-led, that's a clear sign they are not ready for a commitment through thick and thin. The credit score is a measure of one's ability to be responsible to others regardless of feelings and desires, and that's what you need to commit.

When I meet someone I am interested in for marriage, if they have problems with their education, career or finances, the first thing I do is to try to push them to study for a degree with a good employment rate, and good starting salaries. I push them to get good jobs with reputable companies, and to work in the summer if they are students. I push them to pay off their debts and start investing. I do this because I am trying to make them marriage-ready. That is, I am trying to get them to be comfortable with responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

One girl I used to mentor just got married. She started out living with her parents, doing degrees in English, and working minimum wage service jobs. Then something happened. She moved out of her parents house, got a real job, cut expenses, and married a non-student who works and saves. They are both paying down debt like crazy, and she has a plan to invest soon. Most of what she did was self-directed, all I did was cheer, make suggestions and send the occasional gift. But she never viewed this advising and rewarding as "manipulative". She was happy to get the opinion of someone with qualifications in those areas. She didn't rebel against people who were leading her upward, she embraced it. Now she's committed to a man for life and they are executing a

sound plan to have an influence as Christians. It has not been easy for her. She is punching well above her weight now, though.

If you want to get married, you need to develop the ability to commit. That means that you need to get comfortable with self-sacrifice and self-denial. You need to change your character through studying hard things, working boring jobs, saving instead of spending, and investing early. These are the life experiences that change your character so that you are able to commit to another person for life.

New study: 50 percent of divorced people wish they had never ended their marriage

October 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you are in a bad marriage then wait a little to divorce, it may get better
The study was reported in the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> The decision to divorce is always going to be difficult, and for many there can be good reason to end a marriage.
>
> Yet, 50 per cent of divorcees have regrets about their break-up, a study revealed. Researchers found that after the dust settled, 54 per cent experienced second thoughts about whether they had made the right decision, with many realising they miss or still love their ex-partner.
>
> For some, the regrets have been so severe that 42 per cent have had moments where they considered giving their relationship another go, with a large percentage actually making the effort to try again and 21 per cent of those still together now.
>
> […]A spokesman for the survey, who asked 2,000 UK men and women that have either divorced or called time on a long-term relationship of more than five years, says: 'Getting divorced is a huge step for any relationship, and sometimes, the words 'I want a divorce' can be said in the heat of an argument.
>
> But once you calm down and really think about things, many realise it's the last thing they want, but by then, you can feel it's too late to take it back.
>
> And even if you don't regret it immediately, dealing with the aftermath of a

> break-up can lead to more second thoughts. But it's great to see some have managed to talk about their regrets and give things another go.'
>
> The study found one in five said the regrets started straight away, with another 19 per cent having second thoughts within a week of saying the D-word.
>
> **TOP TEN REASONS FOR REGRETTING A DIVORCE**
>
> 1. Missing an ex-partner
> 2. Feeling like a failure
> 3. Still being in love with an ex-partner
> 4. Realising they were being unreasonable
> 5. Feeling lonely
> 6. Discovering the grass isn't always greener
> 7. An ex-partner finding someone new
> 8. Realising they are not better off on their own
> 9. Damaging the relationship with their children
> 10. Children's lives being affected
>
> But for some, it took longer with more than one in ten admitting it took a year or more for them to wish they hadn't left their partner.
>
> Others admitted they wished they could take things back when the divorce officially came through. Especially when they have worked to divide their assets or started telling people they were calling it quits.

This study fits together well with another study that I blogged about before.

The article is by Mona Charen, and the study is by the Institute for American Values. It's an older article, but I was reading a book that mentioned the study, so I thought I would blog on it.

Excerpt:

> Now, the Institute for American Values (www.americanvalues.org) has released a new study with some intriguing data about the effects of divorce on the unhappy couples themselves. It seems that another great myth is about to tumble – the myth that at least divorce makes unhappily married adults happier.

> According to the survey, conducted by a team of family researchers, unhappily married adults who divorced were no happier five years after the divorce than were equally unhappy couples who remained together. And two-thirds of unhappily married people who remained married reported marriages that were happy five years later. Even among those who had rated their marriages as "very unhappy," nearly 80 percent said they were happily married five years later. These were not bored or dissatisfied whiners. They had endured serious problems, including alcoholism, infidelity, verbal abuse, emotional neglect,

> depression, illness, and work and money troubles.
>
> Even more surprising, unhappy spouses who divorced actually showed slightly more depressive symptoms five years later than those who didn't. (They did, however, report more personal growth.) And – make of this what you will – the divorced sample reported a good deal more alcohol consumption than the married group.
>
> […]**The data show that if a couple is unhappy, the chances of their being happily married five years hence are 64 percent if they stay together but only 19 percent if they divorce and remarry. (The authors acknowledge that five years is a relatively short period and many divorced people will eventually remarry, some happily.)**
>
> How did the unhappy couples turn their lives around? The study found three principal techniques. The first was endurance. Many couples do not so much solve their problems as transcend them. By taking one day at a time and pushing through their difficulties, many couples found that time itself often improved matters. Moreover, these couples maintained a negative view of the effects of divorce. "The grass is always greener," explained one husband, "but it's Astroturf."
>
> Others were more aggressive. Those the researchers labeled the "marital work ethic" types tackled their problems by arranging for more private time with one another, seeking counseling (from clergy or professionals), receiving help from in-laws or other relatives, or in some cases, threatening divorce or consulting a divorce lawyer.
>
> In the third category were the "personal happiness seekers" who found other ways to improve their overall contentment even if they could not markedly improve their marital happiness.
>
> Certainly the survey found some marriages that were impossible to save and some divorced couples who were happier than those who had remained married. That is as one would expect.
>
> **But the most telling aspect of this research is the light it sheds on the importance of the attitude toward marriage. Those who enter marriage with a dim (some might say accurate) view of divorce and a strong religious or other motivation for avoiding it are not only less likely to divorce; they are also less likely to be unhappy. That is the arresting news here. We've known that commitment was good for the children of such marriages. We've known that commitment was good for society. But until now, it was not clear that commitment actually made married couples themselves more likely to be happy.**

I think the last point is a good point. Right now, a lot of young people are choosing mates based on superficial criteria (looks, money, popularity). The purpose of marriage is, in their opinion, to be happy. And their spouse's job is to make them happy. That's their

view of marriage. But this ignores the realities of what marriage is about. Marriage is not a contract, it’s a covenant. People who marry ought to be getting into it because they want the responsibility of loving another sinner in close quarters. It’s not about feelings and life enhancement. The most important thing to look for in a spouse is their ability to love self-sacrificially and to make and sustain long-term commitments. Both of these capabilities are damaged the more a person goes through painful serial break-ups, because people become unable to trust and instead withhold love and commitment for their own safety.

Democrat governor of California signs bill to register non-citizens to vote

October 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of sanctuary cities and states

Story from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> A bill signed Saturday by California Gov. Jerry Brown aimed at improving voter turnout has critics predicting that it will ramp up voter fraud by making it easier for noncitizens to cast ballots.
>
> The New Motor Voter Act automatically registers to vote all eligible voters when they obtain or renew their driver's licenses at the Department of Motor Vehicles instead of requiring them to fill out a form. Those eligible may opt out of voter registration.
>
> The goal is to ease barriers to voting, but election-integrity advocates warn that the measure could inadvertently add millions of illegal voters to the rolls given that California allows undocumented aliens to obtain driver's licenses.
>
> Anti-fraud groups True the Vote and the Election Integrity Project of California had urged Mr. Brown, a Democrat, to veto the bill, saying it would lead to "'state sanctioned' voter fraud" and pointing out that the legislation exempts from penalties ineligible voters who wind up being registered.
>
> "This bill is terrible. It makes an already bad situation much, much worse," True the Vote founder Catherine Engelbrecht said in a statement.
>
> Ms. Engelbrecht said California's registration databases "lack the necessary safeguards to keep noncitizens off the voter rolls."
>
> […]In California… state officials "specifically chose not to make noncitizen license holders searchable in their DMV database," said True the Vote spokesman Logan

> Churchwell, who called the newly signed bill "unprecedented."
>
> The measure, Assembly Bill 1461, "will effectively change the form of governance in California from a Republic whose elected officials are determined by United States citizens and will guarantee that noncitizens will participate in all California elections going forward," Election Integrity Project of California President Linda Paine said in a statement.

True the Vote was one of the organizations persecuted by the IRS while Obama was President. In addition, the Department of Justice sued Texas for passing laws designed to curb voter fraud. So this is something that Democrats really go to the mat for. This is a big deal to them.

Some of my readers in other countries often ask me – "if Obama is such a bad President, then how come the majority of Americans voted for him?"

Well, first of all, a lot of these people are simply voting for Obama in order to get a share of what their working neighbors earn. They aren't voting for the good of the country, or for principles of liberty, limited government, etc. They want the government to give them someone else's money, in short.

But voter fraud is important to them as well. People voting twice in two different states, dead people's names being used by fraudulent voters, etc. Voter fraud is a Democrat specialty. In fact, our current President did work for ACORN – an organization that specialized in promoting voter fraud. That's how mainstream this is in the Democrat party.

Ted Cruz raises $12 million in Q3, and another million in the first 9 days of Q4

October 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

First, the report from last quarter from U.S. News and World Report. (H/T Doug)

Excerpt:

> Ted Cruz raised $12.2 million in the past three months for his Republican presidential bid, about twice what competitor Marco Rubio collected in the same time period.
>
> […]So far it appears that another political outsider, retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, is leading in quarterly fundraising. His campaign said last week it raised $20 million between July 1 and Sept. 30.
>
> […]The Cruz campaign noted it raised more than $1 million in the final 24 hours of September.

That was for the quarter ending in at the end of September. So how is Cruz doing in the first 9 days of October?

Pretty good:

> Today, the Cruz for President campaign announced it raised $1 million in the first 9 days of the fourth quarter. Cruz's impressive haul in just over a week comes off his successful third quarter fundraising, in which he pulled in more than $12 million. The early start in the fourth quarter brings his campaign's total to more than $27.5 million.
>
> […]In 9 days, Cruz raised $1 million from roughly 20,000 donations of mostly $50

> or less. Cruz also recently revealed his campaign has more than 6000 "sustainers", donors who give monthly, that are able to fund his entire field operation across the country each month.

I saw another story that says that the Cruz campaign "has county chairs organizing in all 172 counties in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Nevada". This guy is making a serious push for the nomination, and he and Jindal are the last two strong conservatives standing.

Cruz has actually introduced a lot of legislation in the past, and his latest bill is very helpful for getting the Democrats to go on record on a very unpopular position that most Democrats hold.

Read this:

> This week U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) introduced as a lead cosponsor the Stop Sanctuary Policies and Protect Americans Act. The bill would withhold federal funds from sanctuary jurisdictions. The legislation also incorporates critical elements of Kate's Law, which Sen. Cruz introduced earlier this year, by imposing a five-year mandatory minimum sentence on any alien who illegally reenters the country after having been convicted of an aggravated felony or two prior illegal reentry offenses.
>
> […]"In light of the threat criminal aliens pose to the safety and security of our communities, we can no longer allow states and municipalities to take federal taxpayer money while turning a blind eye to the illegal aliens in their midst," said Sen. Cruz. "What happened to Kate Steinle is heartbreaking. And the heartbreak is even more tragic given the circumstances. Clearly, our laws are not adequately deterring those who have already been deported from illegally reentering the country. I'm proud to join with my colleagues in sending the message that defiance of our nation's laws will no longer be tolerated. Of course, stiff penalties alone will not suffice. Congress must hold this Administration accountable for its failure-if not its outright refusal-to enforce federal immigration laws and ensure the safety and protection of the American people."

That's what Republicans should be doing when there's a Democrat President. Pass bills that get vetoed, so you can define yourself and tell the voters where the other side really stands. Politicians love to speak about issues that are popular, as long as they don't have to alienate any voters by actually acting on it. Well, a veto of sanctuary cities tells everyone where Democrats stand on crimes committed by illegal immigrants. That's what we need to do – make them show their real views.

Making a difference as a Christian: advice on fundraising, ministry, and missions

October 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ratio Christi event at Ohio State University featuring Frank Turek (10/12/2015)

What's the ideal balance between work and missions? In this post, I will argue against going abroad to do full-time missions.

Do apologetics ministry in your spare time, and work full-time

A full-time job and part-time ministry makes the most sense from a cost-benefit point of view. I have friends who are software engineers who studied enough science, history, and philosophy part-time, who are able to do public debates with atheists, which influence many more people than one-on-one interactions. One of my friends has several Masters degrees, and is in a PhD program, but his full-time career is in software and network management. He is 100% self-funded. He has worked in a successful apologetics career with a full-time career in technology, and he is debt-free. This is the best option . Your debts get paid off. Your resume stays gap-free. You bring a nest egg to your future spouse. You can afford to have children. You can afford a stay-at-home mom. You can afford either homeschooling or private schools, should you decide to go that route.

You have to start saving and investing early if you want to be independent in your old age. With full-time work and part-time ministry, you still make a difference for Christ and His Kingdom over time, while avoiding a financial crisis that could cost you your family, your friends, *and even your faith*. This is an especially wise way to proceed, given the economic struggles we are likely to face from housing bubbles, student loan bubbles, rising interest rates, entitlement crises, state pension underfunding, environmental regulations, the ever increasing national debt, demographic crisis, etc. Read the culture

and be cautious about the future.

Use the Internet to make a difference in other countries for free

One cost-effective way to make a difference is by using the Internet to reach other countries. You can work full-time, and then use your spare time to blog. This blog gets an average of 24,000 page views per week. About 45% of that traffic comes from NON-USA countries. If you keep working full-time and just start a blog for free, then you can maintain your gap-free resume and have a much easier time marrying and raising children.

The university next door is a great place to have an influence

I do think full-time ministry is OK in two cases: if you don't go abroad, or if you go abroad with a full-time job or full-ride scholarship. My friend Eric Chabot was able to host Frank Turek at Ohio State University last night (see photo above), for example. He got a great crowd. He is donation-driven, but he runs a lean operation since he lives near the campus where he serves. When it comes to having an impact, the American university is the place to make a difference. We have enough trouble in our own country, especially in the universities, where so many young people lose the faith of their childhood – there's no need to travel and incur heavy expenses. I think it also makes sense financially to go abroad for missions, if you get a scholarship that pays your way or if you have a job offer where you can work full-time and do missions part-time. What does not make sense is sending an unskilled missionary to a foreign country at the cost of tens of thousands of dollars that could be used much more efficiently in smaller, effective Eric-Chabot-style operations.

Your feelings and desires are not God speaking to you

Now some people who want to go into overseas missions will tell me that they feel led to go. This method of decision making is not Biblical, as I explained in one of my previous posts. If you believe the Bible, then feelings are a pretty poor way of determining what God wants from you. In fact, left to themselves, humans typically choose what feels best for them, not what does best for God. If God really calls you to do something, like he called Jonah, then you probably won't feel like doing it. Missionary work is especially suspect when God is supposedly calling you to go to a country that you always dreamed of traveling to while you were a non-Christian. Normally, conversion causes you to have different desires – not the same desires you had as a non-Christian. Unless you hear an audible voice, like an Old Testament prophet would, then it's best not to think that God is speaking through your feelings and desires. A good book to read on this is "Decision Making and the Will of God", by Garry Friesen.

Don't go into missions in order to have fun or go on an adventure

I am suspicious of people who try to turn Christianity into a mechanism for achieving the same goals that non-Christians want to achieve. These days, it seems as if everyone wants to travel to exotic places. If there is evidence of hedonistic, fun-pursuing, thrill-seeking behavior in your past, then consider that you may just want an "adventure". I have a friend who went to Russia for a year just after graduating college, and she

admitted to me that she just went “to have an adventure”. To me, that’s not a good reason to spend thousands of dollars, and put gaps in your resume. It’s not a cost-effective way to make a difference, given the other alternatives. Your goal should be to make yourself defensible so that you can put out a sustained effort that lasts, not burn out and then be ineffective for the rest of your life. Think about what J. Warner Wallace says about living wisely and prudently so you position yourself to make a steady contribution in the second half of your life. Don’t wreck your long-term impact for short-term fun. God will not honor that.

Don’t go into missions to make up for an immoral past

Anyway, if you look in your past and see lots of wild behavior – drinking, drugs, premarital sex, cohabitation, abortions, gambling, divorces, etc., then consider that you may be interested in missions for the wrong reasons. You don’t need to go on a missions trip to dramatically declare to everyone that you are now completely reformed from your wild party days. I actually managed to talk a friend out of a short-term missions trip who felt that it was a good way to do something meaningful to “make up” for her past. By being responsible with her job and saving money, she’s managed to avoid burning out, and to instead put out a steady stream of effective activities. And she was financially stable enough to get married and have children, as well – another excellent way to make a difference.

Do not go into missions if your resume and balance sheet do not demonstrate maturity

We already talked about the need for sound planning in the Bible study we did with Wayne Grudem. The Bible praises hard work, stewardship, prudence and wisdom. And this is especially true for people who are getting older and need to be thinking about marriage, children and retirement. It’s not a good witness for Christians to be financially unstable. When you are able to stand on your own two feet financially, and help others from your earnings, you gain credibility with non-Christians. We don’t want people to think that we are doing this for the money. The best option is to be self-funded, like Paul and his tent-making-funded ministry.

By the way, if you’d like to read a related post by Eric Chabot, this one is a good one.

Democrat debate: spend more money, raise taxes, ban guns and fossil fuels

October 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's almost Hallowe'en, and this debate scared me

Here's Bernie Sanders explaining what the number 1 foreign policy threat to the United States is:

It's not Iran getting a nuclear weapon. It's not Russian aggression in the Ukraine. It's not the Middle East on fire after we retreated from Iraq. It's not China militarizing and stealing our military secrets by hacking our computers. Forget all that. The really big threat is the over 18 years of no warming that we've had, which is (to them) a sure sign that we're all going to die a fiery death.

Here's a review of the debate from National Review.

Excerpt:

> In one of the few surprises of the night, Bernie Sanders did his best to try to save her on her troubles with her personal e-mail server. He's an old fool if he thinks Hillary will return the favor when he needs it. Martin O'Malley, who sounded tough in cable-news interviews, wimped out in the end once he saw the audience's roaring applause to Sanders's declaration that the issue was settled and nobody needed to hear any more about "her damn e-mails."
>
> Sanders may rock the arenas when they're filled with progressive grassroots activists, but his style doesn't transfer well to a broader audience. He's the party guest whom you instinctively don't want to talk to, who begins shouting immediately, who grabs your lapel and spits a bit as he jabs his finger into your chest for emphasis. He's Senator Larry David. You want to get away from his perpetually irritated (and irritating) ranting, but he just won't stop talking, and he won't let you gently back away or escape the conversation. Every two-minute answer felt like ten minutes of shouting — and he had the audacity to give Hillary

> grief about shouting.
>
> Beyond his giant wimp-out on Hillary's e-mails, O'Malley was more pleasant to listen to but is ultimately going to be a non-factor in this race. When Sanders finished his call for a revolution, O'Malley turned to the camera and said with a big smile, "What we need is a green-energy revolution!" And for a moment, he waited for applause that didn't come. The Democratic audience wasn't in a mood for innovation. They are in a mood for populist revenge against people who have more than they do. Sanders shouts, O'Malley whispers.
>
> Jim Webb pointed out how affirmative action disadvantages poor whites, the need to respect the rights of gun owners, the seriousness of foreign-policy threats that Democrats rarely acknowledge — like cyber threats, hacking (ahem), and China. He was the lone voice of reality saying,"With all due respect to Senator Sanders, I don't think the revolution is going to come, and I don't think the Congress is going to pay for all this."
>
> Webb has a good chance of winning the Democratic nomination in 1948. You almost have to wonder how Webb would be doing in the GOP presidential primary, but at a key moment, Webb flinched, saying he wouldn't have a problem with extending Obamacare benefits to illegal immigrants.

So all the candidates on the stage proposed a lot of spending (e.g. – free college tuition) and paying for it by taxing the rich. As if the rich are going to stand there and take it, and not simply respond by laying off workers, outsourcing, and even moving their operations out of the country entirely. Should we really be giving free college degrees in English to people, and paying for it by taxing entrepreneurs and job creators? Can no one see the negative consequences of taxing the people who invent products, run companies and create jobs? Do people really continue to work as hard when you take more and more of their money, or do they not scale back their work or stop working entirely?

Should we really go "well beyond" what Obama did with his executive order amnesty? Should we really be covering illegal immigrants under Obamacare? All the candidates seemed to be fine with amnesty for millions of unskilled immigrants. Again, no worry about how to pay for a whole bunch of people who use more in government programs than they pay for in taxes. Where will the money come from? Will "the rich" just lie down and hand over their money and keep working like before as more and more of their money is taken from them and their families, and given to others? How did the Democrat candidates respond to the problem of illegal immigrants who are convicted of crimes being released to murder ordinary citizens? Their answer: disarm the ordinary citizens. Take their guns. And release the drug criminals from the jails.

New regulations were proposed. Glass-Steagall and restrictions on energy development. Only Webb had a sensible view of energy development, including nuclear power. The rest turned a blind eye to the massive pollution caused by India and China and promised to stop the global warming with expensive wind and solar power.

And what about all the wars created by our weakness with Russia, China, Iran, Islamic

State? Well, except for Webb, the candidates promised to end these wars, apparently unilaterally, and with a magic wand. Whoosh! There, all the wars are ended. Because that's what the Democrat voters want to hear. They want simplistic solutions, and they can't comprehend the motivations of other parties: job creators, banks, Russia, China, Iran, and so on. They just want what they want, and they have no idea what comes next as the other people in the room respond to the new rules.

Jim Webb

Webb was the only grown-up on the stage, and he is more like the old-style Democrat who actually was competent, and actually loved his country:

When asked whether only black lives matter, or whether all lives matter, Webb was the ONLY one to say that all lives matter. He was the only one was serious about foreign policy. And the only one who was serious about what all this spending would cost.

God help us all if anyone other than Webb is the nominee. I really was scared for my country listening to the other candidates pander to their clueless base.

To get another reaction to the first CNN debate, you can listen to the latest episode of the Weekly Standard podcast.

How well are Democrat Party policies working out in socialist Europe?

October 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

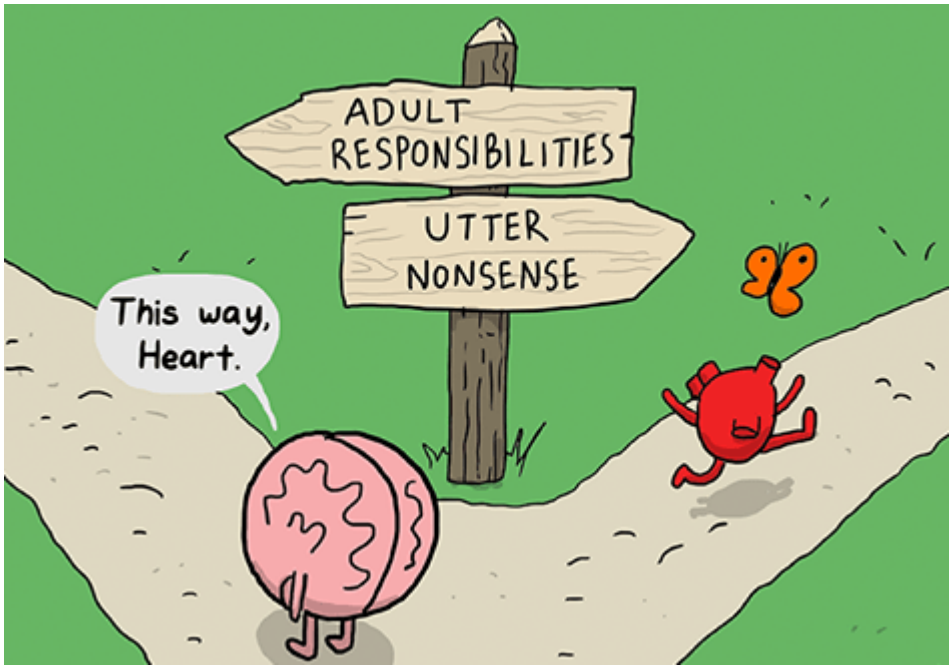

Brain vs Heart, from: theawkwardyeti.com

Last night, I watched the Democrat debate, and I saw a bunch of people "solve" all of the worlds problems with their hand-waving and happy-talk. Almost no evidence for the effectiveness of any policy was offered, and rarely did anyone pointed to numbers showing that their past actions had succeeded.

At one point, the King of the Clowns Bernie Sanders pointed to Denmark as proof that his socialist ideas would all work.

So I thought we might take a quick look at see how socialism is doing in Denmark, and in Europe more generally.

This is from the government-run news media in Canada, the CBC.

They write:

> More than a quarter of Japan's citizens are at least 65, making it the world's fastest aging country. In Canada, about 16.1 per cent of us are seniors.
>
> Right now in Japan, there's a higher demand for adult diapers than children's diapers, economist Michael Moffatt says, a "stunning statistic" that illustrates one of the main reasons why the country's economy has been treading water for the better part of two decades.
>
> "They haven't been able to find a way to get their economy to grow in a significant way while still being able to support an older population," the Richard Ivey School of Business professor said.
>
> Japan's GDP has grown at an average rate of 1.3 per cent for the past 25 years,

> according to the World Bank, dropping from averages of more than five per cent annual growth in earlier decades.

Yes, that's because Japan's solution to economic growth has been the Democrat solution: stimulus spending, massive borrowing, low (and decreasing) interest rates. It's Obamanomics, and guess what? It doesn't work there, either.

More:

> Sweden and Denmark are the "places we need to turn to," Foot said, in crafting economic and health policy to manage the shift in demographics. While the countries take different approaches, they all focus on health care, offering programs akin to pharmacare or following up with seniors in their homes after a visit to the hospital.
>
> And while Sweden's residents are not collectively older than Japan's, about a quarter of the country's 9.5 million residents are at least 60, according to Global Age Watch.
>
> The public purse covers most home-care and long-term care in both Sweden and Denmark.
>
> Unsurprisingly, they are among the highest taxed countries in the European Union, according to Eurostat. In 2013, Sweden topped the list, while in 2014 it was Denmark.
>
> Policy-makers in Canada will have to make similar choices when it comes to taxes, Foot said, arguing more tax revenue will be needed, although there may be alternative ways of collecting it.
>
> Foot said Ottawa and the provinces could look at taxing different sources, like foreign exchange or stock market transactions.
>
> "If the state or government doesn't step in, we'll see poverty rise amongst our senior population," he said. "We'll go back to the days when poverty rates in that population were upwards of 30 per cent."

So, massive government intervention in the free market in the areas of health care has not actually helped them, it has hurt them. And what happens to marriage rates and birth rates when you take 50-70% of a man's salary? Does it make him start a business and hire other people? Does it make him want to marry? Does it make him want to have children? Are men happy when their wives are forced to work, and when their children are taught by public school teachers and monitored by government social workers? Do men like it when they pay taxes to other people to decide what their family will amount to and what their children will believe? Big government has a corrupting influence on character, turning people away from marriage, family and work.

The Democrat candidates in the debate want to turn us into Greece. They assume (somewhat naively) that all other behaviors will remain constant as they ramp up government spending and then borrow and tax to pay for it. But anyone who thinks about

the problem for more than 5 seconds can see that businesses and individuals do not keep on doing what they were doing when spending and taxes increase. To be a Democrat is to not understand basic economics. It is to persist in childhood, having tantrums, ignoring how incentives change for everyone who is affected by childish policies.

Maybe the CBC is too conservative… let's go to the BBC, they are hard leftists. What does the BBC say?

They say this:

> As German Chancellor Angela Merkel is fond of repeating, the EU accounts for just 7% of the world's population and a quarter of its gross domestic product (GDP) but as much as half of its welfare spending.
>
> […]Social expenditure per person in the EU in 2012 (the most recent year available, using a harmonised definition) was €7,600 (£5,540), but with a range from €18,900 (£13,800) in Luxembourg to just €927 (£675) in Bulgaria. The UK figure was €8,700 (£6,340).
>
> Interestingly, average EU spending per citizen is almost the same as in the United States and well below that in Switzerland, after adjusting for price differences. Typically, poverty relief, health and pensions are much the biggest components of welfare spending, whereas unemployment benefits cost relatively less.

Sounds like a Democrat paradise, right? This is the Holy Grail to socialists like Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton.

More:

> Over the past 15 years, the average fertility rate (children per woman) in the EU has been 1.54, ranging from barely over 1.3 in Hungary and Spain, and 1.36 in Germany, to 1.8 in the UK and just under two in Ireland, France and Sweden.
>
> According to the "main scenario" of the latest Eurostat population projections, Germany's population has already started to shrink and is expected to fall from 82 million in 2013 to 74 million by 2050.

Well, wait now. Democrats told me that if we just nationalize everything that the private sector does, and raise tax rates on job creators and investors, and make all the women get out of their homes and work like men, and criminalize homeschooling, and marginalize Christianity, and abort the next generation of workers, and pay single mothers welfare to raise future criminals, and enact no-fault divorce to get men out of the homes, and teach children to have premarital sex at age 12 so that men get sex without having to marry first, then men and women would just be as interested in starting businesses, working hard, getting married and parenting as they were before? Are you telling me that letting the government control everything, and taking most of what people earn to pay for it, actually discourages people from starting businesses, working, marrying and having kids? Who is going to pay for all these expensive social programs,

then?

And this is what Democrats hold up as perfection – heaven on Earth. Instead of closing their eyes to reality and wishing we were Europe, why don’t they actually look at Europe first? And maybe take a first-year course in economics.

California Democrat Governor forces crisis pregnancy clinics to promote abortion

October 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

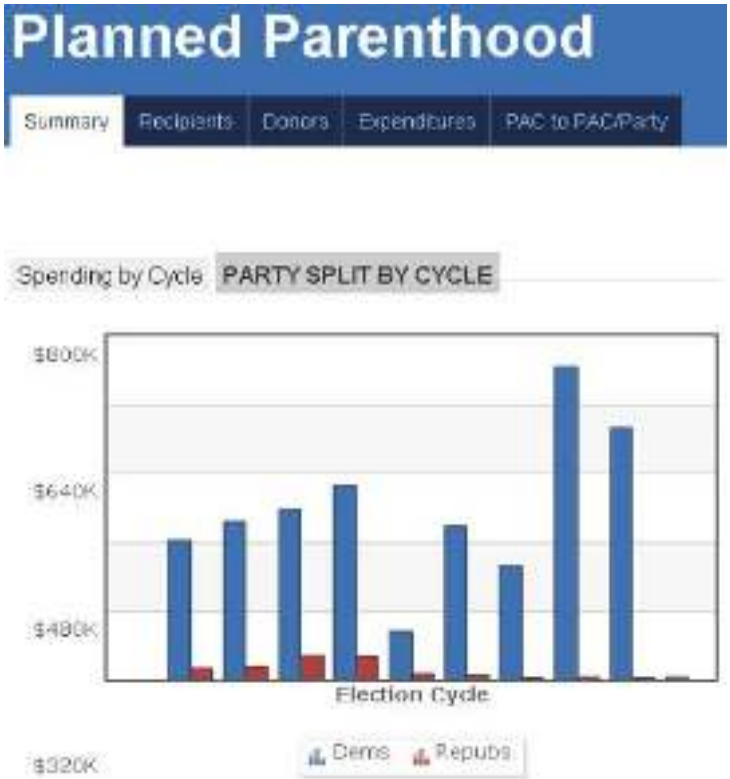

Planned Parenthood donations to Democrats

This story from CNS News.

Excerpt:

> Gov. Jerry Brown (D.-Calif.) signed a law on Friday mandating that all licensed pregnancy centers in the state "disseminate to clients" a message promoting public programs with "free or low-cost access" to abortion and contraceptive services.
>
> The new law makes no exception for pro-life and faith-based crisis pregnancy centers.
>
> Critics of the law say that it violates the right to freedom of speech, which is guaranteed by the First Amendment.
>
> AB 775, known in the state legislature as The Reproductive FACT Act, requires all pregnancy centers that are licensed as clinics to post the following notice:
>
> "California has public programs that provide immediate free or low-cost access to comprehensive family planning services (including all FDA-approved methods of contraception), prenatal care, and abortion for eligible women. To determine whether you qualify, contact the county social services office at [insert the telephone number]."

> According to the legislation, pregnancy centers that fail to disseminate this message “are liable for a civil penalty of five hundred dollars ($500) for a first offense and one thousand dollars ($1,000) for each subsequent offense.”

There’s a lesson here for the many Christians who see big government as a solution to real problems like rising health care costs and imaginary problems like man-made global warming. The bigger you grow government, the more power they have to control you. I know that Roman Catholics in particular have seen big government as an ally on issues like health care, amnesty and wealth redistribution. You might remember that it was Catholic bishops who supported Obama when passing his nationalization of health care.

Well, a funny thing about secular governments. If your religion gets in their way, they’ll squash you like a bug. If you morality gets in their way, they’ll squash you like a bug. That’s why we have this thing called the Constitution which restricts the governments exercise of power to specific areas that are supposed to be far, far, FAR away from your church, your family, your school, and your conscience. But what happens when we keep voting for more and more goodies? Government starts to leave their designated area, and starts to intrude into religious liberty and conscience.

Don’t try to solve poverty with government. It ends badly for you.

Information Enigma: 21-minute video explains intelligent design

October 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

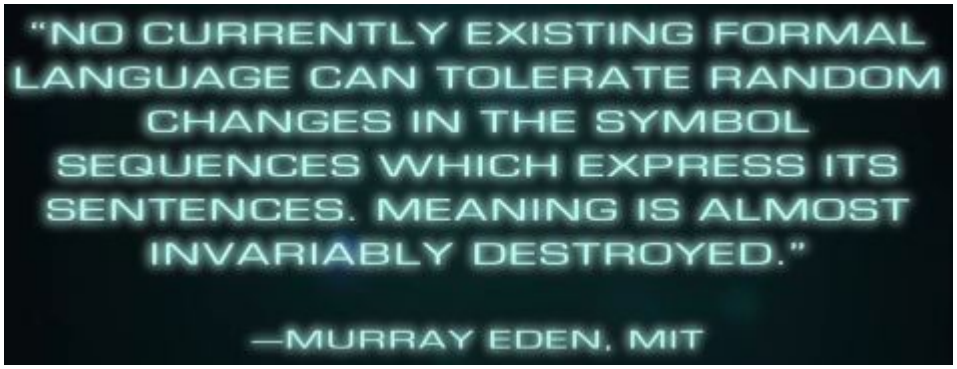

Can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
The video is here:

I have read and listened and watched a lot of material on intelligent design, but I have never seen so much value packed into such a short lecture. I really hope you'll watch this and that it's helpful to you.

Summary:

- the big question when discussing the origin of life: where did the information in living systems come from?
- Until 530 million years ago, the oceans were largely devoid of life
- In a 10 million year period, many new forms of animal life emerged
- New biological forms of life require new information
- the discovery of DNA shows that living systems work because cells have information that allows them to build the components of molecular machines: cell types, proteins, etc.
- can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
- normally, random mutations tend to degrade the functionality of information, e.g. – randomly changing symbols in an applications code does not usually introduce useful new functions, it usually renders what is there non-functional
- the majority of possible sequences will NOT have functions, so random mutations will more likely give you non-functional code, rather than functional code
- example: a bicycle lock with 4 numbers has many possible sequences for the 4 numbers, and only one of them has unlock functionality, the rest have no functionality
- if you have lots of time, then you might be able to guess the combination, but if the lock as has 10 billion numbers, and only one combination that unlocks, you can spend your whole life trying to unlock it and won't succeed
- how likely is it to arrive at a functional protein or gene by chance? Is it more like the 4-dial lock (can be done with lots of time) or the 10 billion dial lock (amount of time

required exceeds the time available)?
- the probability is LOW because there is only one sequence of numbers that has unlock function
- consider a short protein of 150 amino acids has 10 to the 195th power possible sequences
- if many of these sequences of amino acides had biological function, then it might be easier to get to one by random mutation and selection than it is with a lock that only unlocks for ONE sequence
- how many of the possible sequences have biological function?
- Thanks to research done by Douglas Axe, we now know that the number of functional amino acid sequences for even a short protein is incredibly small…
- Axe found that the odds of getting a functional sequence of amino acids that will fold and have biological function is 1 in 10 to the 77th power
- Is that number too improbable to reach by chance? well, there are 10 to 65th atoms in the entire Milky Way galaxy… so yes, this is a very improbable outcome
- can random genetic mutations search through all the sequences in order to find the one in 10 to the 77th power one that has biological function? It depends on how much guessers we have and how many guesses we get in the time available
- even with the entire 3.5 billion year history of life on Earth, only about 10 to the 40th organisms have ever lived, which far smaller fraction of the 10 to the 77th total sequences
- even with a very fast mutation rate, you would not be able to reach a functional protein even with all that time, and even with all those organisms

I was once having a discussion with a woman about the research that Axe did at the Cambridge University lab. He published four articles in the Journal of Molecular Biology. I held out one of the papers to her and showed her the numbers. She said over and over "I hate the Discovery Institute! I hate the Discovery Institute!" Well, yeah, but you can't make the Journal of Molecular Biology go away with hating the Discovery Institute. JMB is peer-reviewed, and this was experimental evidence – not a theory, not a hypothesis.

We have been blessed by the Creator and Designer of the universe in this time and place with *overwhelming evidence* – an abundance of riches. For those who have an open mind, this is what you've been waiting for to make your decision. For the naturalists who struggle so mightily to block out the progress of experimental science, they'll need to shout louder and shut their eyes tighter and push harder to block their ears. Maybe if they keep screaming "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" over and over to themselves, they will be able to ignore the real science a little longer.

Freeman Dyson: the last 10 years have proven climate change models wrong

October 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

This interview with liberal scientist Freeman Dyson appeared in the UK Register.

Introduction:

> The life of physicist Freeman Dyson spans advising bomber command in World War II, working at Princeton University in the States as a contemporary of Einstein, and providing advice to the US government on a wide range of scientific and technical issues.
>
> He is a rare public intellectual who writes prolifically for a wide audience. He has also campaigned against nuclear weapons proliferation.
>
> At America's Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Dyson was looking at the climate system before it became a hot political issue, over 25 years ago. He provides a robust foreword to a report written by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change cofounder Indur Goklany on CO_2 – a report published[PDF] today by the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF).
>
> An Obama supporter who describes himself as "100 per cent Democrat," Dyson says he is disappointed that the President "chose the wrong side." Increasing CO_2 in the atmosphere does more good than harm, he argues, but it is not an insurmountable crisis. Climate change, he tells us, "is not a scientific mystery but a human mystery. How does it happen that a whole generation of scientific experts is blind to obvious facts?"

Excerpt:

> **What has happened in the past 10 years is that the discrepancies between what's observed and what's predicted have become much stronger. It's clear now the models are wrong, but it wasn't so clear 10 years ago.** I can't say if they'll always be wrong, but the observations are

> improving and so the models are becoming more verifiable.
>
> […]It's very sad that in this country, political opinion parted [*people's views on climate change*]. I'm 100 per cent Democrat myself, and I like Obama. But he took the wrong side on this issue, and the Republicans took the right side.

Is carbon dioxide as bad as the politicians say?

Nope:

> **To any unprejudiced person reading this account, the facts should be obvious: that the non-climatic effects of carbon dioxide as a sustainer of wildlife and crop plants are enormously beneficial, that the possibly harmful climatic effects of carbon dioxide have been greatly exaggerated, and that the benefits clearly outweigh the possible damage.**
>
> I consider myself an unprejudiced person and to me these facts are obvious. But the same facts are not obvious to the majority of scientists and politicians who consider carbon dioxide to be evil and dangerous. The people who are supposed to be experts and who claim to understand the science are precisely the people who are blind to the evidence.
>
> […]The scientists and politicians who have been blindly demonizing carbon dioxide for 37 years will one day open their eyes and look at the evidence."

E. Calvin Beisner had more to say about beneficial effects of CO2 on agriculture in an article on the Stream.

He writes:

> To call CO2 "carbon pollution" is not only bad chemistry and bad toxicology but also bad biology. Carbon dioxide is essential to all plant growth. The higher its concentration, the better plants grow. Below 170 ppm, plants die. At the roughly 280 ppm at the start of the Industrial Revolution, plants are "sucking air," so to speak — barely getting enough. At today's 400 ppm, plants grow much better — so much better that a study by researchers at the Technische Universität München found forests around the world growing up to 70 percent faster today than 50 years ago because of it. Earth is literally greening because of added CO2.
>
> Plants will grow still better as CO2 concentration continues to rise. Thousands of empirical studies, as opposed to mere models, have found that, on average, for every doubling of CO2 concentration in the atmosphere, there is about a 35 percent increase in the efficiency of plant growth. Plants grow better in wetter and drier soils and in warmer and colder temperatures, widening their ranges and increasing their adaptability to climate changes, reducing the risk of biodiversity loss. They make better use of soil nutrients, better resist diseases and pests, and improve the ratio of fruit to fiber.
>
> The consequence is more food for plant-eaters and eaters of plant eaters — i.e.,

> for pretty much everything. Most importantly, it means more affordable food for the world's poor.
>
> A review of the refereed literature on the subject found "the … monetary value of this benefit amount[ed] to a total sum of $3.2 trillion over the 50-year period 1961–2011. Projecting the monetary value … forward … reveals it will likely bestow an additional $9.8 trillion on crop production between now and 2050."
>
> So honest, well-informed discussion of any policy — cap and trade, "carbon tax," renewable mandates, etc. — to reduce CO2 emissions should first recognize the *benefits* of increasing its concentration in the atmosphere, not just for people but for all animals. Any rationale for reducing emissions must prove that they exact a cost that outweighs this benefit.

Ah, but being honest about the benefits would not allow our democratic socialist betters to have the platform they need to convince us to let them rule us, and control our lives down to the temperatures in our homes, what cars we drive and how much we can drive.

Study: remaining a virgin longer leads to more satisfying relationships

October 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Boys and girls playing the famous co-operative board game "Pandemic"

OK, so this week I got to be a facilitator between a man and a woman in a relationship. I got to hear a bit about what they thought was appropriate in the area of physical touching. These two had made great decisions, and it protected them both. Anyway, thinking about them caused me to think about the studies I had posted about boundaries in sexual matters a few years back. So I'm going to re-post them to remind everyone not to be in a rush to say yes to premarital sex.

The first article from the UK Daily Mail is about study showing the benefits of abstinence for relationship quality.

Excerpt:

> People who lose their virginity later than their teenage years are more likely to enjoy satisfying relationships later in life, according to a new study.
>
> Researchers found that people who didn't have sex until they turned 20 or even later are more likely to end up in a happy relationship.
>
> […]Previous research suggests that there may be cause for concern, as timing of sexual development can have significant immediate consequences for adolescents' physical and mental health.
>
> However, until now little had been done to study long-term outcomes, and how early sexual initiation might affect romantic relationships in adulthood.
>
> Psychological scientist Paige Harden, of the University of Texas in the United

> States, set about changing this.
>
> She wanted to investigate whether the timing of sexual initiation in adolescence might predict romantic outcomes – such as whether people get married or live with their partners, how many romantic partners they've had, and whether they're satisfied with their relationship – later in adulthood.
>
> Doctor Harden used data from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health to look at 1,659 same-sex sibling pairs who were followed from around the age of 16 to about the age of 29.
>
> Each sibling was classified as having an 'early' (younger than 15), 'on-time' (age 15 to 19), or 'late' (older than 19) first experience with sexual intercourse.
>
> Those who lost their virginity later on in life were more likely to have a well-paid job.
>
> They found, as expected, later timing of first sexual experience was associated with higher educational attainment and higher household income in adulthood when compared with the early and on-time groups.
>
> People who had a later first sexual experience were also less likely to be married and they had fewer romantic partners in adulthood.
>
> Among the participants who were married or living with a partner, later sexual initiation was linked with significantly lower levels of relationship dissatisfaction in adulthood.

This sounds a lot like the results from the previous studies that were featured in this UK Daily Mail article.

Excerpt:

> "Courtship is a time for exploration and decision-making about the relationship, when partners assess compatibility, make commitments and build on emotional and physical intimacy."
>
> "The rapid entry into sexual relationships may, however, cut short this process, setting the stage for "sliding" rather than "deciding" to enter co-habiting unions."
>
> "Around a third of the men and women said they'd had sex within the first month of dating, while about 28 per cent waited at least six months, the Journal of Marriage and Family reported."
>
> "Analysis of the data clearly showed the women who had waited to have sex to be happier. And those who waited at least six months scored more highly in every category measured than those who got intimate within the first month. Even their sex lives were better."
>
> "The link was weaker for men. However, those who waited to get physically involved had fewer rows.

> […]'A strong sexual desire may thwart the development of other key ingredients

> of a healthy relationship such as commitment, mutual understanding or shared values,' the report said. 'Good sex is sometimes confused with love; some couples overlook problematic aspects of their relationship that ultimately matter more in the long run.'"

So, it looks like you lose some stability if you push too hard on the premarital sex. Is stability important to you? Well, divorce is a financial disaster for men and women – so that's one reason to care about stability. If your plan for marriage is to provide a stable environment for your kids, then that's another good reason to care about stability. If you are getting married in part to advance your cause through effective children, then you have to control yourself now in order to be the person who can give them what they need later. This is not out of your control, this is not unpredictable. There are best practices.

If you keep rushing into things and experiencing painful break-ups, you will naturally stop the behaviors that allow you commit out of self-preservation. You will begin to resent having to care for that other person, except maybe when it makes you feel good. When you invest a lot and break up, you become less willing to invest in that other person. You retreat into your shell. You resent having responsibilities and obligations to that other person. You expect things to work on their own, apart from your efforts to make them work, because that's how you avoid getting hurt. You try not to invest too much, because you imagine that things will fall apart and you'll get hurt again. You focus on just feeling good now, so that when the relationship fails, you come out "ahead". But this is not the way to make a stable marriage.

Marriage requires you to give 100% and regardless of how you feel. That's what a commitment is – it's a decision to perform regardless of feelings. To get stability, you want to be comfortable with investing in that other person – taking on responsibilities, satisfying expectations, performing obligations. Both of you have to be comfortable with the selflessness of commitment, and be ruled by your own decisions, instead of your feelings. And your goal here is not to find someone who gives you good feelings right now. Your goal is to find someone who *will not hurt you* the more that you give of yourself, up to an including marriage. It's not good feelings that you are looking for, it's the safety to commit everything you have to this other person, and not get hurt. The real joy of a relationship is not fun and thrills, it's giving everything you have to another person, and knowing that if you fall, they will catch you.

If you choose candidates carefully, involve wise mentors, and set proper boundaries, you'll find that relationships are a lot less painful, and that when you really want to commit, then you will be able to commit with your whole heart, and to be content with the commitment. There are plenty of ways to love and serve another person other than sex, as you both get to know each other and size each other up for a life-long commitment. Premarital sex is counterproductive… it's speaking in a language that is designed for two people who have already made a lifelong commitment to have a common plan and a common purpose. Sex makes sense when you have that commitment, but it undermines communication and objective evaluation if it's

done before that commitment commitment is in place.

The Wintery Knight’s favorite Bible verses

October 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Crusader performs “Zealous Accusation” attack in Darkest Dungeon

Dina asked me to post my favorite Bible verses, so here are 8 of my favorites.

Psalm 27:14:

> [11] Teach me Your way, O Lord,
> And lead me in a level path
> Because of my foes.
>
> [12] Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries,
> For false witnesses have risen against me,
> And such as breathe out violence.
>
> [13] *I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord
> In the land of the living.
>
> **[14] Wait for the Lord;**
> **Be strong and let your heart take courage;**
> **Yes, wait for the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**

> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.
>
> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

Matthew 5:13:

> 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
>
> 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
>
> **13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**
>
> 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
>
> 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

2 Timothy 2:4:

> 1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
>
> [2] The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
>
> [3] Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[4] No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.**
>
> [5] Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

Daniel 3:18:

> [13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.
>
> [14] Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?
>
> [15] Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is

> there who can deliver you out of my hands?”
>
> [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.
>
> [17] If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire;and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
>
> **[18] But *even* if *He does* not,let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”**

Esther 4:14:

> [10] Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai:
>
> [11] “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.”
>
> [12] They related Esther’s words to Mordecai.
>
> [13] Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> **[14] For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”**

Philippians 1:9:

> [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> [4] always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> [5] in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> [6] *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> [7] For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
>
> [8] For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> [10] so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
>
> [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus

> Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Numbers 13:30:

> [25] When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,
>
> [26] they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.
>
> [27] Thus they told him, and said, “We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.
>
> [28] Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.
>
> [29] Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.”
>
> **[30] Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.”**

Post your favorite verse in the comments – not too many! Be selective.

New study: fracking does not contaminate drinking water

October 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

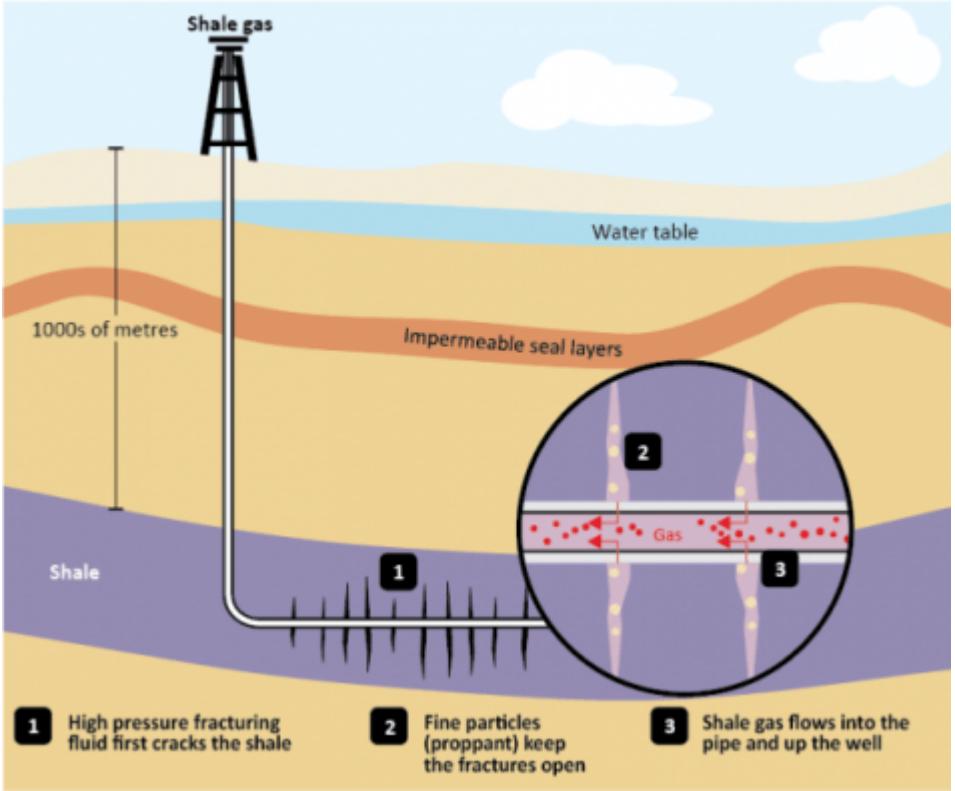

Hydraulic fracturing also known as "fracking"

The study comes out of Yale University, and was published in PNAS. Pretty good school, pretty good peer-reviewed journal.

Here's the introduction:

> Organic compounds found in drinking water aquifers above the Marcellus Shale and other shale plays could reflect natural geologic transport processes or contamination from anthropogenic activities, including enhanced natural gas production. Using analyses of organic compounds coupled with inorganic geochemical fingerprinting, estimates of groundwater residence time, and geospatial analyses of shale gas wells and disclosed safety violations, we determined that **the dominant source of organic compounds to shallow aquifers was consistent with surface spills of disclosed chemical additives. There was no evidence of association with deeper brines or long-range migration of these compounds to the shallow aquifers.** Encouragingly, drinking water sources affected by disclosed surface spills could be targeted for treatment and monitoring to protect public health.

So, the fracking – which happens deep below the earth – didn't introduce any new chemical additives into the water. Basically, fracking involves fracturing rocks using high pressure water, sand and chemicals. The question is whether chemicals and/or the

fracking fluid contaminate the water supply used by humans. The answer, according to this study, is no. The distance between the water supply and the shale is simple far, far, far too great for the cracks to traverse. The minor contamination from surface spills is easy to detect and cleanup. This is not what you see on far left web sites and Hollywood movies, but it is what you see in studies down by Yale University scientists published in prestigious peer-reviewed science journals.

Anyway, this study is consistent with a report from the far-left radically environmentalist Environmental Protection Agency.

This is reported in the radically leftist National Public Radio, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The Environmental Protection Agency says it finds no evidence that hydraulic fracturing — better known as fracking — has led to widespread pollution of drinking water. The oil industry and its backers welcome the long-awaited study while environmental groups criticize it.
>
> "We found the hydraulic fracturing activities in the United States are carried out in a way that has not led to widespread systemic impacts on drinking water resources," says Tom Burke, Science Advisor and Deputy Assistant Administrator of EPA's Office of Research and Development. "In fact, the number of documented impacts to drinking water resources is relatively low when compared to the number of fractured wells," he adds.
>
> The EPA's draft assessment was conducted at the request of Congress. "It is the most complete compilation of scientific data to date," says Burke, "including over 950 sources of information, published papers, numerous technical reports, information from stakeholders and peer-reviewed EPA scientific reports."
>
> Fracking has allowed drillers to tap oil and natural gas reserves once thought off-limits deep underground. That has led to drilling booms across the country and boosted the country's oil and natural gas production significantly. But environmental groups have long argued fracking comes with a cost to the environment, especially to water. Those groups have called for stronger regulations and even bans on fracking altogether.
>
> […]The American Petroleum Institute says the conclusions echo what the oil industry has argued all along. "Hydraulic fracturing is being done safely under the strong environmental stewardship of state regulators and industry best practices," says Erik Milito, API upstream group director.
>
> Acknowledging the potential vulnerabilities outlined in the EPA report, Milito says, "Continuous safety improvements have been an ongoing part of hydraulic fracturing for 65 years."

Indeed. This is not the first time that the radically leftist EPA has cleared the fracking industry, either. I blogged about the last one for Dimock, Pennsylvania.

Here’s an excerpt from the EPA press release that exonerates fracking:

> The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today that it has completed its sampling of private drinking water wells in Dimock, Pa. Data previously supplied to the agency by residents, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Cabot Oil and Gas Exploration had indicated the potential for elevated levels of water contaminants in wells, and following requests by residents EPA took steps to sample water in the area to ensure there were not elevated levels of contaminants. Based on the outcome of that sampling, EPA has determined that there are not levels of contaminants present that would require additional action by the Agency.
>
> […]Overall during the sampling in Dimock, EPA found hazardous substances, specifically arsenic, barium or manganese, all of which are also naturally occurring substances, in well water at five homes at levels that could present a health concern. In all cases the residents have now or will have their own treatment systems that can reduce concentrations of those hazardous substances to acceptable levels at the tap. EPA has provided the residents with all of their sampling results and has no further plans to conduct additional drinking water sampling in Dimock.

So, if you want to worry about fracking, it will have to be because of something other than facts. We have facts piled on facts piled on facts, and they all say that fracking is a great way for us to get cheap, clean energy that doesn’t pollute the environment or contaminate our water supply. You have to be anti-science to doubt this data. Democrats do oppose fracking. They don’t know about the science, they just oppose it because that’s what’s in the popular culture, in Hollywood movies, etc. We have to fight them with the science. Democrats are the anti-science party, so don’t expect this to alter their rhetoric.

White House threatens to veto legislation that cracks down on sanctuary cities

October 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of sanctuary cities

This article is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> The number of sanctuary cities in the United States has risen to 340, resulting in the release of roughly 1,000 detained illegal immigrants each month despite objections from the federal government, according to a new study.
>
> The Center for Immigration Studies, a nonprofit organization that advocates for decreased immigration, reported that local authorities acting in these sanctuary cities released more than 9,000 illegal immigrants whom the government was seeking to deport last year.
>
> The majority of those shielded from ICE had prior felony charges or convictions, including rape, battery, and drug violations, the analysis of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement data from January to September 2014 found.
>
> […]David Inserra, a policy analyst in homeland security at The Heritage Foundation, said such policies encourage further illegal immigration, degrade state and local budgets, and, in some cases, harm U.S. citizens.
>
> “Cities that actively work to shield illegal immigrants, especially those with a criminal record or those charged with a crime, do themselves no favors and only hurt their communities,” he said.
>
> Because those jurisdictions are not going to “fix themselves” and the Obama administration remains inactive, Vaughan said, action falls on Congress.
>
> The Senate is moving to vote on legislation next week that would withhold federal funds from cities that refuse to cooperate with federal immigration

> officials. **The White House already threatened to veto legislation that cracks down on sanctuary cities after the House passed a similar bill in July.**

Elsewhere, the Democrats also released 6000 criminals with drug convictions, including those who have prior convictions for illegal weapons, like guns. Why would the Democrats want more criminals on the streets?

Well, remember Fast and Furious? Fast and Furious was a Democrat-run operation that had the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms overseeing the trafficking of assault weapons to drug cartels across the Southern border. The Democrats later tried to cover all this up by withholding documents during the investigation. (See links below for details)

Why were the Democrats doing this? Well, the lead organizer was a well-known advocate of gun banning and gun confiscation. The point of Fast and Furious was to give criminals powerful assault weapons, have them commit crimes, and then use the dead bodies of the victims (including one Border Patrol agent) to advocate for confiscating the guns of law-abiding citizens. The operation was run by Eric Holder and the Department of Justice.

Democrats do not like the idea that citizens who own property can defend themselves from criminals who do not. It's "unequal" and an easy way to fix this "inequality" is by disarming the property owners so that the criminals can take some and then everyone is equal. They really are crazy enough about "inequality" that they will literally put guns in the hands of criminals to shoot civilians and border patrol agents in order to "solve" the inequality problem.

Related posts

- Justice Department's list of withheld Fast and Furious documents: 1,323 pages long
- Obama campaign contributor and gun control advocate ran Fast and Furious
- Obama covers-up DOJ operation that allowed gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Republicans prepare contempt citation for AG Eric Holder over Fast and Furious
- Fast and Furious' goal was to undermine legal firearm ownership
- Obama administration tries to cover up Border Patrol agent's murder
- Eric Holder testifies on Fast and Furious gun smuggling to Mexican drug cartels
- Fast and Furious assault weapons seized from drug cartel enforcer's home
- Republicans call for AG Eric Holder to resign over newly released e-mails
- Did attorney general Eric Holder lie to Congress about gun sales to drug cartels?
- New Operation Fast and Furious e-mails sent to White House official
- Janet Napolitano, Eric Holder and the plan to sell guns to Mexican drug cartels
- Did attorney general Eric Holder know about Operation Fast and Furious?
- Obama administration allowed American gun shipments to Mexican cartels
- Slain border agent's family unimpressed by Janet Napolitano's indifference

Iran test fires “Emad” long range surface-to-surface missile

October 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Iran fires a C-802 anti-ship cruise missile (SSM)

Is everything is going to be fine with this Iran deal? Because judging from their willingness to violate previous orders from the international community, they are not really serious about honoring international agreements.

Investors Business Daily explains:

> The terrorist state of Iran over the weekend successfully test-fired the Emad — which means pillar — its first precision-guided, long-range surface-to-surface missile. As the Center for Strategic & International Studies’ Anthony Cordesmannotes, the Emad “is essentially a Shahab-3, but with a maneuvering re-entry vehicle to improve system accuracy and complicate missile defense.”
>
> Iran’s Shahab-3 is based on North Korea’s Nodong-1, which in turn is based on the Soviet Scud — a tactical missile that was adapted to carry a nuclear warhead of up to 80 kilotons. **Its range exceeds 1,000 miles — meaning it can reach Israel, Saudi Arabia and NATO member Turkey — and its accuracy is within 600 yards of the target.**
>
> The Obama administration reacted by complaining that the test violated the 5-year-old U.N. Security Council resolution 1929, prohibiting Iran from any activities related to ballistic missiles, and the State Department warned it will raise the issue at the United Nations.

Anyway, it’s not a big deal because Obama complained, and that should fix it. Well, he thinks it will.

Global Warming

Anyway, this whole “nuclear missiles in the hands of terrorists” thing is just a distraction from the more pressing problem of global warming. That’s the real threat we need to be worried about.

Global warming is *a lot* hotter than a nuclear missile detonation. Pretty sure. The science is clear on this.

The liberal Huffington Post reports that Pew Research says that Americans don’t agree with Obama on his threat assessment:

> Americans are less concerned about climate change than they are about the Islamic State, Iran’s nuclear program and other threats, according to a new study released by the Pew Research Center on Tuesday.
>
> […]Pew asked respondents in 40 nations whether they were “very concerned” about climate change and six other major global issues, giving them the option to respond either “yes” or “no.” The study was conducted from March to May 2015.
>
> The Islamic State topped Americans’ list of concerns, with 68 percent of Americans reporting that they were “very concerned” about the militant group in Iraq and Syria. More than half of American respondents were also worried about Iran’s nuclear program (62 percent), cyber-attacks (59 percent), and global economic instability (51 percent).

It’s a good thing we have such a smart President, because he is able to focus on the real problems that are an immediate threat to our survival.

Book review of R.C. Sproul's "If there's a God, why are there atheists?"

October 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Brian Auten has a book review posted up at Apologetics 315.

The book is "If There's A God, Why Are There Atheists?", by theologian R.C. Sproul. R.C. Sproul is one of my favorite theologians. The book in question has a very, very special place in my heart, because I think that it is one of the major reasons why I was able to resist pernicious ideas like religious pluralism and postmodernism for so long. Once you put on the glasses of Romans 1 and see for the first time what man is really doing with respect to God, you can never see things the same again. I'll say more about this at the end, but let's see what Brian wrote first.

The review

So often, you hear atheists complaining about religion is nothing but wish-fulfillment or some sort of crutch for people who are frightened by a variety of things. They think that God is invented to solve several problems. 1) how does the world work?, 2) is there meaning to suffering and evil?, 3) why should I be moral?, and 4) what will happen to me and my loved ones when I die?. On the atheistic view, God is just a crutch that people cling to out of weakness and ignorance. But is this really the case?

Sproul starts the book by investigating three atheists who sought to explain religious belief as a result of psychological factors.

Brian writes:

Before tackling the psychology of atheism, Sproul spends a chapter on the psychology of theism, from the perspective of Freud's question "If there is no God, why is there religion?"11 What follows is an overview of various psychological explanations of theistic belief: Feuerbach's "religion is a dream of the human mind."12 Marx's belief that religion

is “due to the devious imagination of particular segment of mankind.”13 And Nietzche’s idea that “religion endures because weak men need it.”14 The author properly reiterates: “We must be careful to note that the above arguments can never be used as proof for the nonexistence of God. They can be useful for atheists who hear theists state that the only possible explanation for religion is the existence of God.”15 That being said, Sproul also reveals what these arguments presume:

> Their arguments already presupposed the nonexistence of God. They were not dealing with the question, Is there a God? They were dealing with the question, Since there is no God, why is there religion?16

Sproul points out the weaknesses of each of these approaches and says “there are just as many arguments showing that unbelief has its roots in the psychological needs of man.”

Wow, could that really be true? What are the real reasons why people reject God? Does the Bible have anything to say about what those reasons are?

Brian cites Sproul’s contention:

> The New Testament maintains that unbelief is generated not so much by intellectual causes as by moral and psychological ones. The problem is not that there is insufficient evidence to convince rational beings that there is a God, but that rational beings have a natural hostility to the being of God.
>
> […]Man’s desire is not that the omnipotent, personal Judeo-Christian God exist, but that He not exist.

In Romans 1:18-23, the apostle Paul explains what is really going on:

[18]The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

[19]since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

[20]For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

[21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[22]Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

[23]and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

On this blog, I regularly present many, many arguments for theism in general, and Christian theism in particular:

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Sproul explains why atheists cannot allow themselves to live according to the evidence that is presented to them:

> The cumulative effect of this knowledge that is clearly seen is to leave men 'without excuse.' Herein lies the basis of the universal guilt of man. No one can claim ignorance of the knowledge of God. No one can cite insufficient evidence for not believing in God. Though people are not persuaded by the evidence, this does not indicate an insufficiency in the evidence, but rather an insufficiency in man.
>
> […]The basic stages of man's reaction to God can be formulated by means of the categories of trauma, repression, and substitution.
>
> […]If God exists, man cannot be a law unto himself. If God exists, man's will-to-power is destined to run head-on into the will of God.

And this is the force that is animating atheists today. They don't want to be accountable to God in a relationship, no matter what the evidence is. They have to deny it, so that they can be free to get the benefits of a universe designed for them, without having to give any recognition or acknowledgement back. If they have to lie to themselves to deny the evidence, they will do it. Anything to insulate themselves from the Creator and Designer who reveals himself in Jesus Christ.

The rest of the book review, and the book, deals with explaining in detail how atheists respond to an all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator/Designer. I encourage you to click through and read the whole book review. You can read the review, and the book, and then investigate for yourself whether atheists really are like that.

My survey of atheists

By the way, did you all see my survey of atheists that I did a while back? It's relevant because one of the questions I asked to my volunteers was "How you begin to follow Christ if it suddenly became clear to you that Christianity was objectively true?". I got some very strange responses that dovetail nicely with Sproul's book.

Here are a few of the responses:

- I would not follow. My own goals are all that I have, and all that I would continue to

have in that unlikely situation. I would not yield my autonomy to anyone no matter what their authority to command me.
- I would not follow, because God doesn't want humans to act any particular way, and he doesn't care what we do.
- I would not follow. Head is spinning. Would go to physician to find out if hallucinating.
- I hope I would be courageous enough to dedicate my life to rebellion against God.
- I would not have to change anything unless forced to and all that would change is my actions not my values. I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran.
- He would have to convince me that what he wants for me is what I want for me.

This is all part of my series discussing whether morality is rationally grounded by atheism.

Well Spent Journey did a similar survey of atheists, inspired by mine, and got this result on the relevant question:

> ***12. How would you begin to follow Jesus if it became clear to you that Christianity was true?***
>
> *– Would follow (5)*
> *– Wouldn't follow (6)*
> *– Might follow the teachings of Jesus, but that isn't Christianity (2)*
> *– It would depend on how this truth was revealed (3)*
> *– Christianity can't be true (3)*
> *– No answer given (4)*
>
> **…What would be the hardest adjustment you would have to make to live a faithful, public Christian life?**
>
> *– Adjusting wouldn't be that difficult; would eagerly welcome knowing that Christianity was true (2)*
> *– Praying, since it seems weird, creepy, and strange*
> *– Trying to figure out how the Bible became so corrupted*
> *– Trying to convince myself that the God of the Bible is deserving of worship (2)*
> *– Don't think it would be possible to adjust*
> *– No clear response, or not applicable (16)*

Yes, they really think like that! Just *ask an atheist questions* and you'll see how "objective" they really are. Atheism is entirely psychological. It's adopted in order to feel sufficient and to operate with autonomy, with the goal of self-centered pleasure-seeking above all. Evidence has nothing to do with it.

UPDATE: Greg Koukl responded to concerns by Ed Feser, and Ed Feser posted his response here. I agree with Koukl.

Five liberal Democrat policies that hurt minorities

October 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

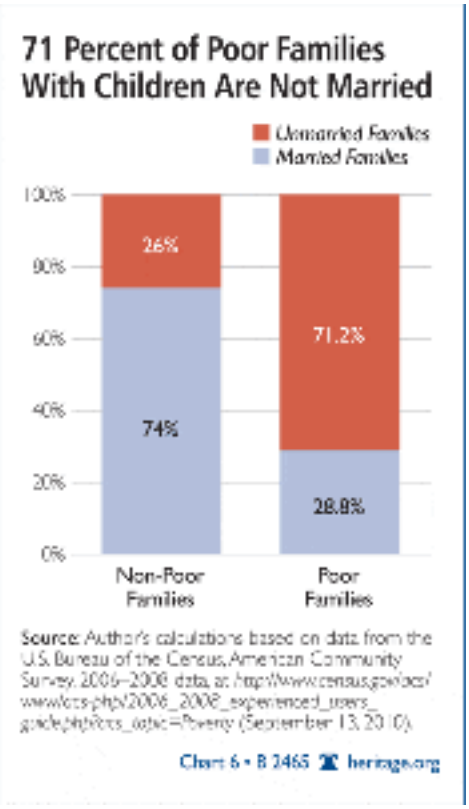

Marriage and Poverty

The five policies are:

- higher minimum wage rates
- opposition to school voucher programs
- releasing criminals from jail
- affirmative action
- single mother welfare

This article is by Jason L. Riley, and it appeared in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> At the urging of labor unions, President Obama has pushed for higher minimum wages that price a disproportionate percentage of blacks out of the labor force. At the urging of teachers unions, he has fought voucher programs that give ghetto children access to better schools.
>
> Both policies have a lengthy track record of keeping millions of blacks ill-educated and unemployed. Since the 1970s, when the federal government began tracking the racial achievement gap, black test scores in math, reading and science have on average trailed far behind those of their white classmates. And minimum-wage mandates have been so effective for so long at keeping blacks out of work that 1930, the last year in which there was no federal minimum-wage

> law, was also the last year that the black unemployment rate was lower than the white rate. For the past half-century, black joblessness on average has been double that of whites.
>
> Last week the Justice Department said it would release some 6,000 inmates from federal prison starting later this month. The goal, according to the White House, is to ease overcrowding and roll back tough sentencing rules implemented in the 1980s and ’90s.
>
> But why are the administration’s sympathies with the lawbreakers instead of their usual victims—the mostly law-abiding residents in low-income communities where many of these inmates eventually are headed? In dozens of large U.S. cities, violent crime, including murder, has climbed over the past year, and it is hard to see how these changes are in the interest of public safety.
>
> The administration assures skeptics that only “nonviolent” drug offenders will be released, but who pays the price if we guess wrong, as officials have so often done in the past?
>
> When Los Angeles asked the Rand Corp. in the 1990s to identify inmates suitable for early release, the researchers concluded that “almost no one housed in the Los Angeles jails could be considered non-serious or simply troublesome to their local communities” and that “jail capacity should be expanded so as to allow lengthier incarceration of the more dangerous.”
>
> A 2002 federal report tracked the recidivism rate of some 91,000 supposedly nonviolent offenders in 15 states over a three-year period. More than 21% wound up rearrested for violent crimes, including more than 700 murders and more than 600 rapes. The report also noted the difficulty of identifying low-risk inmates. Auto thieves were rearrested for committing more than a third of the homicides and a disproportionate share of other violent offenses.

Keep in mind that when criminals are release, they don’t go move into wealthy progressive neighborhoods. It’s not the wealthy leftists elites who have to deal with the released inmates. It’s the poor, low-income minority neighborhoods that have to deal with them.

By the way, I covered the minimum wage argument here, and I covered the school choice argument here.

That covers the first 3 policies. This article from The College Fix covers the fourth policy, affirmative action.

It says:

> A UCLA law professor critiques affirmative action as detrimental to the very people it strives to aid: minority students.
>
> Professor Richard Sander, though liberal-leaning, has deemed affirmative action practices as harmful, a notion that contradicts a liberal view in college admissions, said Stuart Taylor, a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings

> Institution.
>
> […]Sander began teaching law at UCLA in 1989. After a few years he garnered an interest in academic support and asked permission to analyze which strategies most effectively assist struggling students.
>
> After reviewing statistics on performance, especially those of students with lower academic merit, he noticed correlations between race and academic success.
>
> "I was struck by both the degree to which it correlated with having weak academic entering credentials and its correlation with race," Sander said in a recent interview with *The College Fix.* "And as I looked into our admissions process I realized that we were giving really a large admissions preference."
>
> Sander noticed that students admitted into the law school with lower academic credentials than their peers had significantly lower percentages of passing the Multistate Bar Examination, Sander said. This especially pertained to minority students who were given special consideration in the admittance process due to their race rather than their academic preparedness.
>
> He then began thinking about whether or not these students would have better chances of succeeding if they went to a less elite university, he said.
>
> He called this discrepancy a mismatch; when minority students with lower credentials than their peers are accepted into more challenging universities and then suffer academically as a result.

And the fifth policy is welfare. Welfare encourages women to not marry the men that they have sex with, since they will lose their single mother benefits if they do. Children who are raised fatherless are more likely to struggle in a number of areas, and they are especially likely to be poor. What we should be doing (if we really want to help the poor) is paying people to get married and stay married. But Democrats are opposed to that. The connection between welfare, fatherlessness, poverty and crime is explained in a previous post.

Why is the political left so committed to attacking Ben Carson?

October 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

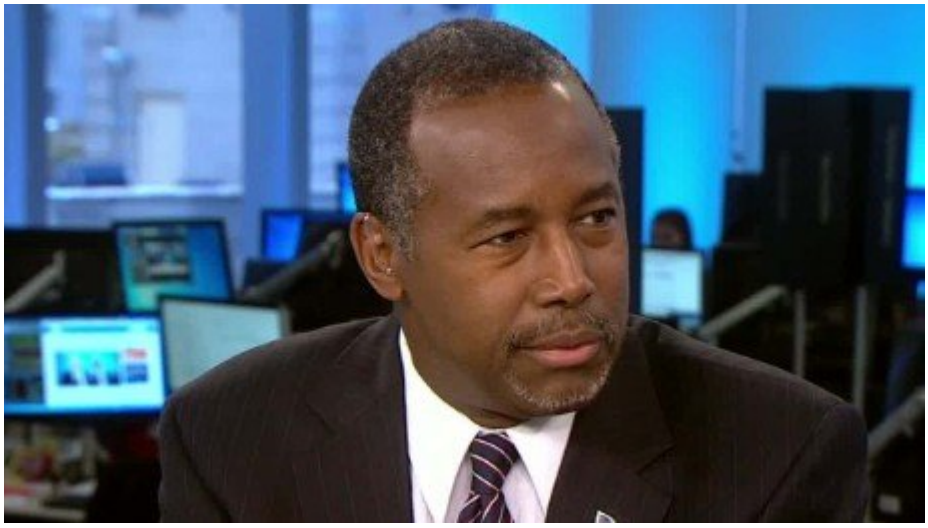

Pediatric surgeon Ben Carson

Jewish conservative Dennis Prager wrote a column about it, which was reproduced in the Stream.

Prager writes:

> The invective against Dr. Ben Carson coming from the left is extraordinary, even for the left. Now that Carson, one of the pre-eminent brain surgeons in America, has become a viable candidate for president, the left has labeled him everything awful it can come up with. One left-wing columnist, Charles Blow of *The New York Times*, even disparaged his intelligence.
>
> But there were two attacks made this past week that should be beyond the pale even for the left.

I want to focus on the second attack, because I actually heard Prager debate this with the writer from *The Forward* who attacked Carson in the most despicable way.

Prager explains:

> But even that libel might have even outdone by the reaction to Carson's comments about the Holocaust and guns: "The likelihood of Hitler being able to accomplish his goals would have been greatly diminished if the people had been armed."
>
> Those comments were actually labeled anti-Semitic.
>
> Now, while "greatly diminished" is debatable, the general view strikes me as simple common sense: Why wouldn't it have been a good thing if many Jews in 1930s Europe had had weapons? Of course it would not have prevented the Holocaust, but it might have saved some lives; and just as important, it would

> have enabled armed Jews to die fighting rather than to die unarmed and with no ability to fight. If Jews in Europe had been asked, “Would you like to be armed when the Nazis come to round you up?” what do Carson’s critics think the great majority of European Jews would have answered? Indeed, what would the critics themselves answer?
>
> No normal person thinks that armed Jews would have prevented the Holocaust (nor did Carson make such a claim). But no normal person should think that it would have not have been a good thing if many European Jews had weapons. The hallowed Warsaw Ghetto Uprising began with the Jews in the Ghetto possessing a total of 10 handguns. Imagine if they had a thousand.
>
> In *The Washington Post*, David Kopel of the Cato Institute, who teaches Advanced Constitutional Law at the University Denver Sturm College of Law, cited the diaries of Jews who died in the Warsaw Ghetto. They expressed unalloyed joy at being able to kill some of their Nazi tormentors, and deep regret about not having been armed and been able to fight back sooner than they did.
>
> But even if one believes that Carson and Kopel are wrong, how could one characterize Carson’s comments as “anti-Semitic” or “blaming the victims [the Jews]”? How could one label statements expressing the wish that the Jews of the Holocaust had been armed “anti-Semitic”? Yet, among others, a contributing editor to the *Forward*, a leading Jewish newspaper, wrote that these remarks were “profoundly anti-Semitic, immoral and disgusting.” And Carson was attacked by prominent Jews in *Time* and by the Anti-Defamation League.
>
> The left is in full-blown smear-Carson mode. He is, after all, the left’s worst nightmare — a black Republican who is brilliant, kind and widely admired, including by many blacks.
>
> It is a rule of left-wing life that black Republicans must have their names and reputations destroyed. The left knows that if blacks do not vote overwhelmingly Democrat, Democrats cannot win a national election.

Indeed.I think that what Carson said was 100% correct, and not offensive in the least. This shows you how far the left will go to trash conservatives – finding offensive where none was intended, and where there is no offense.

Now, Ben Carson is not my candidate, but that’s because he doesn’t have the accomplishments in the political arena that I look for. I preferred Walker, Jindal, Perry, Cruz, Rubio over Carson and Fiorina. The latter two are good, but they simply haven’t got the accomplishments to prove to me that they ought to win the primary. However, I certainly would never attack Fiorina or Carson the way the Democrats have. They simply cannot stand black conservatives. As soon as Democrats see a black conservative, they immediately heap all kinds of hatred on him or her, simply because of skin color. Democrats have a prejudice that black people should think a certain way, and when they don’t – look out, here comes hatred.

By the way, if you want to read a comprehensive article about how the Nazi Party

disarmed the Jews in the 1930s, the Stream has posted a great article about that. Interesting to note that the Nazis were also a socialist party – Nazi means national socialists. The believed in bigger government, and smaller individuals. It takes a bigger government in order to do what they did.

Canadian federal election is today: please vote for Stephen Harper!

October 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prime Minister Stephen Harper

I try to keep up with elections in the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, so I know that there is a Canadian election today. I want to encourage all my Canadian readers to vote, and to help me answer your concerns about Stephen Harper, I have an absolutely marvelous post from Catholic writer Denyse O'Leary.

She writes:

> Why are traditional religious communities dying?
>
> **[…][I]n a secular society, religious traditions are usually mediated through private institutions. Each decline in the importance of such institutions shuts off a passage to the life beyond that they mediate.**
>
> **A child can grow up in a religious home today and discover that there are really only two players that matter: himself and big government. The only mediator and advocate is his entitlement card.**
>
> **As he loses all interest in traditional spiritual life, he discovers the true faith of the progressive society:**
>
> **Government controls more and more important stuff, and free association controls less and less. Government grants "freedom" to indulge oneself, of course, but that is almost a sacrament, and one that tends to weaken the citizen.**
>
> The transformation does not happen all at once, but by degrees. Recently, I was informed by a woman who considers herself a Catholic that abortion and

euthanasia are mere “boutique issues,” compared to the awful things Stephen Harper is doing.

Just take in her basic idea for a moment:

The fundamental duty of government is to protect and advance human lives, but progressives know that their real business is currying favour with the growing numbers of fashionable identity groups. Increasingly, such groups will finance their advances on the public dollar. Some of the largesse may come from stripping traditional religious people and institutions of their property (possibly also in fines for non-compliance with some secularist belief). Most people we run into in the plaza will just be “nice” about the whole thing, no matter what is happening.

How do Christians respond?

Much as I sympathize, bracing for storms to come, I think Christians are mainly victims of ourselves.

Consider the excuses I hear (I am talking about legitimate Christian ones, not fundamentally anti-Christian ones, like the “boutique issue” claim above):

* *“But Harper did nothing about abortion!”*
Oh, for heaven’s sakes! As someone who dealt at close quarters with the abortion lobby for decades, I know they will gladly shut down free speech and freedom of conscience altogether to gain their ends. The euthanasia people will likely do the same. Until their fangs are drawn, nothing can really be done. Harper knows that drawing their fangs will be a serious struggle. And if you are not in it for the fight of your life, don’t interfere by demanding useless demonstrations of loyalty. Other parties will advance and cement their interests more than Harper’s will.

* *“A spell of persecution would do us good”*
Why is it always Western Christians who think this, not the Middle Eastern Christian and Yazidi girls sold into sex slavery, partly a result of the policy choices of progressive government? Reality check: Persecution causes the worst of human nature to flourish in our own communities as well as the best. Most communities cannot handle the strain. Do any of the Seven Churches of Asia exist today? Even one? Why is that?

[…]What should we do? It will take decades to send progressivism to its deserved reward. I will start by voting for the only party that is not actually hostile to our traditional values (like the right to live, and to speak freely).

[…]We need to grow up and stop funding, and voting for our enemies, and making excuses for anti-Christian bigots. (All the while making pathetic scolding noises.) If we need to change our bank accounts, our votes, our alumni donor policies, we do it individually because that is the responsible thing for an individual Christian adult to do.

And you don't have to take her word for it, you can just look over to Europe and see how things are going in left-turning countries that embrace social justice. It's a Christianity-killer.

Here's a fairly recent paper (PDF) that explains it:

> What accounts for cross-national variation in religiosity as measured by church attendance and non-religious rates? Examining answers from both secularization theory and the religious economy perspective, we assert that cross-national variation in religious participation is a function of government welfare spending and provide a theory that links macro-sociological outcomes with individual rationality. Churches historically have provided social welfare. As governments gradually assume many of these welfare functions, individuals with elastic preferences for spiritual goods will reduce their level of participation since the desired welfare goods can be obtained from secular sources. Cross-national data on welfare spending and religious participation show a strong negative relationship between these two variables after controlling for other aspects of modernization.

Kudos to Denyse for understanding what is happening in her country. At least one Canadian Christian understands the relationship between the Christian church's influence and the size of government.

Voter Guide

By the way, here is a voter guide to the positions of the 3 parties that will be of interest to voters:

ISSUES	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL	NDP
ABORTION	Will not initiate legislation on abortion but will allow caucus members to do so and to vote according to their consciences. Excludes abortion funding from foreign aid programs, including the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health program.	Refuses to allow any pro-life candidates to run for the Liberal Party. All MPs required to vote for abortion and against legal protection for the unborn.	Supports fully funded universal, accessible abortion. Supports the inclusion of abortion funding in foreign aid programs including Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.
PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE	Opposed to assisted-suicide. Established a commission to conduct public consultations on the Supreme Court of Canada decision legalizing assisted suicide. Seeking an extension of time from the Supreme Court in order to review questions surrounding the issue.	Supports assisted-suicide. Sought a Parliamentary committee to examine the issue and establish regulations and guidelines to decriminalize physician-assisted suicide and allow terminally ill Canadians to plan their own death.	Supports assisted-suicide. Demands the federal government abide by the Supreme Court of Canada decision on physician-assisted suicide. Opposed to the use of the Notwithstanding Clause to prevent the implementation of the Supreme Court of Canada decision.
CHILD CARE	Provides universal child care payments directly to parents. Opposed to a national daycare plan.	Access to affordable high quality child care in every region of the country. Eliminate shortage of childcare spaces and the high cost of childcare.	Provide a national child care plan costing $5 billion annually with parents to pay $15 a day.
FAMILY TAXATION	Income-splitting for families with minor children to a maximum benefit of $2,000 per family. Expanded family allowance (Universal Child Care Benefit), to $160 per month for children under 6 years, and a new benefit of $60 per month for each child 6 years through 17. Expanded Tax-Free Savings Account annual contribution limit to $10,000 from $5,500.	Cancel the Conservatives' income-splitting tax measure and their increase in the Tax-Free Savings Account contribution limit. Reduce income taxes for middle-class, defined as those with incomes between $44,700 and $89,400 a year. Create the Canada Child Benefit, combining the Conservatives' family allowance program and other federal assistance plans to increase overall family benefits for families earning less than $150,000.	Cancel income-splitting, and use funds to create a $15-a-day national daycare plan. Cancel the Conservatives' increase in the Tax-Free Savings Account annual contribution limit. Cancel Conservative plan to raise the age of eligibility for Old Age Security benefits from 65 years to 67 years (effective 2023 to 2029)
MARIJUANA	Supports legislation opposing marijuana use.	Supports decriminalizing marijuana allowing it to be readily available, but with some (undisclosed) restrictions.	Supports decriminalizing marijuana allowing it to be readily available, but with some (undisclosed) restrictions.
SAFETY-LAW AND ORDER	Increased mandatory minimum penalties and increased maximum penalties for sexual offences against children. Consecutive rather than concurrent sentences for such offenders. Eliminated conditional sentences (house arrest) for serious offenders.	Opposed to increased penalties against child sex abuse offenders.	Opposed to increased penalties against child sex abuse offenders.
UNIONS	Passed legislation to require unions to disclose their financial operations including disclosure of the salaries of union leaders and political donations paid from compulsory union dues.	Unions should not be required to publicly disclose financial information.	Unions should not be required to publicly disclose financial information.

Voter Guide (click for much larger image)

It was posted by my Canadian friend Coralie. She follows these things quite closely.

Notice that both the leftist parties want to get rid of income splitting and tax-free savings

accounts. Income-splitting for seniors allows one spouse to retire, and the income of the working spouse is split with the non-working spouse, so they pay less taxes. Families with young children also are eligible for income splitting, which is a boon to stay-at-home moms. And the tax-free savings account is like a ROTH IRA, except better – you can pull out all the tax-free gains at any time, for any reason, and the gains are NEVER taxed. We have nothing like that in the USA. It has changed the character of Canadians to value saving over spending, making them more responsible and independent from government. TFSAs are how you change the character of a nation.

Why vote for Stephen Harper?

My Canadian friend McKenzie is conservative now, but she was not always, and I remember her asking me a while back to explain what conservatives stand for. Well, I found an article that re-caps what Stephen Harper has achieved in the last 9 years. The article lists 100 accomplishments, with links to each one.

Here are some that stuck out to me:

- **Adoption Expense Tax Credit increased —** from a one-time $13,100 to 15,000 in 2014
- **Age of Consent Legislation** — raised from 14 to 16 effective May 1, 2008
- **Beyond the Border Agreement with the U.S.** — passed in late 2011, on perimeter security co-operation
- **Canada Apprentice Loan Program** — up to $4000 for those registered in any Red Seals apprenticeship training announced in January 2015
- **Canada/EU Trade Agreement** — although ratification still required, an `End of Negotiations`Agreement signed on September 26, 2014
- **Canadian Wheat Board Monopoly Ends** — Bill C18 removed the CWB's monopoly regarding decisions made by many Western farmers to market their wheat
- **Columbia Free Trade Agreement** — went into force on August 15th, 2011
- **Consumer Product Safety Act** — came into effect June 20, 2011 to ensure manufacturers do not market dangerous products
- **Corporate Tax Rate** — reduced from 18% to 16.5% effective January 2012, with another 1.5% reduction in 2012 to 15%
- **Corrupt Regimes Act (C-61)** – allows Canada to act upon the request of a foreign state to freeze the assets that their former leaders and members of their entourage, including family members, senior officials and associates, may have placed in Canadian financial institutions
- **Employment Insurance Premiums Reduced** — in the fall of 2014 by 15% for to encourage small businesses to hire
- **Exploited Persons Act** — legislation that received Royal Assent to protect against drug, organized or prostitution type of crime
- **Express Entry Immigration into Canada Program** — when skilled immigrants to Canada will get quick entry so that they can contribute to economy

- **Fairness at the Pumps Act (C-14)** – protects Canadian consumers from inaccurate measurements when purchasing gasoline effective August 2014
- **Family Caregiver Tax Credit** — Bill C-13 established a new $2000 tax credit on December 15, 2011 to help families dealing with challenging medical expenses
- **Family Income Splitting** — families with children under 18 will be allowed to split income beginning in 2014 up to $50,000 with credit capped at $2000.00
- **Federal Infrastructure Plan** — longest long-term plan in Canadian history supporting projects that enhance economic growth, job creation and productivity
- **Free Trade Agreement** — signed on July 2, 2009 — between Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland
- **Gun Registry Scrapped** — as the legislation passed Third Reading
- **GST /HST– Goods & Services Tax Cut** — From 7% to 6% and then to 5%
- **Honduras Free Trade Agreement** — completed and signed on November 5th, 2013 and will enter into force on June 19, 2014
- **Income Splitting for Canadian Seniors** — a change to the Income Tax Act for pensioners starting in 2006
- **Jordan Free Trade Agreement** — went into force on October 1st, 2012
- **Kid's sport tax credit** — up to $500 per child
- **Mission Against ISIL extended March 30, 2015** — to aid the people of Iraq and Syria
- **Ombudsman for Victims of Crime** — Established
- **Panama Free Trade Agreement** — went into force on April 1st, 2013
- **Peru – Canada Free Trade Agreement** — adopted by Parliament June 18, 2009
- **Protecting Victims from Sexual Offenders** — signed on December 15, 2010 to protect children against sexual predators
- **Safe Streets & Communities Act** — passed March June 13, 2012 to protect children and communities against terrorism
- **South Korea Free Trade Agreement Signed on September 22, 2014** — 1st Asia Pacific Agreement with final legislative steps for full implementation on November 26, 2014
- **Tax cuts made 160 Times** — since the Conservatives took office in 2006
- **Tax Free Savings Account with an initial annual limit of $5500.00 — which was raised to $10,000 in April 2015 budget**
- **Taxpayers Bill of Rights**
- **Taxpayers** Ombudsman
- **Temporary Foreign Workers Program** — reforms made so that Canadians are hired first
- **Universal Child Care Benefit** — in 2006 $1,200.00 per year for every child under age six
- **Universal Child Care Benefit Enhancement** — effective January 1st, 2015, beginning July 1st, 2015, parents will receive $160.00 per child per month up to age six and $60.00 for each child aged 6 to 17
- **Victims Bill of Rights** — Bill C-32 passed on June 18th, 2014

It’s important to know what you are voting for, not just what you are voting against.

Implications of the Supreme Court's "Obergefell v. Hodges" decision

October 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I am linking to an article posted at the Stream about an important new book by marriage defender Ryan T. Anderson, entitled "Truth Overruled". I have already bought myself a paperback copy of it.

Anyway, here's the excerpt:

> Anderson lays out soberly all the radical, counter-intuitive and just-plain-crazy implications of the Supreme Court decision in June, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, that overturned all state laws predicated on the natural, timeless structure of marriage as one man and one woman, hopefully till death:
>
> - Marriage is not about protecting children and helping to form future free citizens. It exists to cater to the fleeting emotional needs of adults.
> - The state recognizes marriages in order to validate the "dignity" of citizens — that is, to boost their self-esteem.
> - Men and women are exactly the same, and therefore completely interchangeable as parents.
> - Children do not need or deserve continuity of care from their biological parents. Any adult present will do.
> - The U.S. Constitution has no permanent, substantive meaning. It is instead a means by which social and legal elites can override democratic majorities whenever they feel that the time is ripe to impose new philosophical premises on the populace.
> - The free exercise of religion is no more extensive than simple free speech, and can be restricted when a religious group's views diverge from the

Court's majority view of what the Constitution means at the moment.
- The connection between sexual activity and human reproduction is simply accidental, a quirk of biology that has no implications for morality, law or society.
- Those who deny any of these points are morally equivalent to white racists, and will be treated by the government with no greater deference.

Anderson is not alone in recognizing the sheer radicalism of *Obergefell v. Hodges*; indeed, four justices of the Court, including its Chief Justice, John Roberts, issued a stinging dissent that raises most of the objections which Anderson coolly unpacks in the course of his book. Advocates of same-sex marriage were quick to brush such arguments aside, and cast their opponents as isolated, irrational extremists, motivated only by fideistic reliance on ancient religious texts. Anderson makes it clear that this tactic is fundamentally dishonest, expanding on the dissenters' points and fleshing each of them out with reference to history, biology, social science — and yes, even religion.

Anderson rightly avoids the temptation to simply play whack-a-mole with every specious argument offered by those who claim to advocate "marriage equality." While he answers such objections, he also does the reader the service of clarifying and simplifying the terms of the debate, showing how it is finally, starkly, the face-off between two irreconcilable views of marriage:

1. A "comprehensive — permanent and exclusive — union of sexually complementary spouses who engage in a comprehensive act that is inherently ordered toward a comprehensive good: the procreation and rearing of new human life."
   and
2. An "intense emotional union — a romantic, care-giving union of consenting adults."

As Anderson demonstrates, the first view is the one that has existed in every human society of which we have any record, even those that tolerated polygamy and extra-marital homosexual relationships. The second, impoverished view is the program of the Sexual Revolution, whose gradual implementation (beginning with no-fault, unilateral divorce) has seen the virtual collapse of marriage, the enormous suffering of children, the disappearance of two-parent families in large swathes of society — in other words, domestic chaos.

Anderson cites solid, peer-reviewed research to show the grave harm this social change has done to the most vulnerable people in America: the children of the poor. Our prisons are disproportionately full of boys who grew up without fathers, and our welfare rolls of young girls who were sexually exploited and made pregnant as young teenagers, in part because they had no father to protect them. They in turn are likely to raise children without their biological fathers. This

> cycle of dysfunction can all be traced to the loosening of the marriage bond, which is only further weakened when the law itself — and even the U.S. Constitution — is invoked by our nation's highest authorities to affirm that sex has no permanent unitive meaning, and that children's interests must play second fiddle to the emotional needs of adults.
>
> You might think that same-sex "marriage" could improve the well-being of children, but Anderson cites statistics showing a clear correlation between its legal adoption in particular polities, and declines in the marriage and even the birth rate.
>
> No man is an island, and no woman neither. But least of all are children, those fragile and needy creatures who depend on us for their present, who will populate our future. The acceptance of same-sex marriage, as Anderson doggedly demonstrates, is only the latest stage in our culture's narcissistic rejection of responsibility toward the vulnerable.
>
> Federal enforcement of a new, invented Constitutional "right" poses a threat to religious liberty and freedom of association. Anderson lays out the well-known (and some of the lesser-known) cases of same-sex marriage advocates using the state's coercive power to harm innocent citizens who were acting on their conscience, who declined to assist with same-sex marriages. He correctly notes the grave danger posed to churches, citing the now-infamous exchange between Obama's solicitor general and Justice Samuel Alito, in which the former admitted that churches who decline to perform same-sex marriages may well face the same legal and tax penalties applied in the past to segregationist sects.

This little excerpt is a very good summary of the issues, and how marriage fits into the overall fight to defend the rights of children to their moms and dads, and a stable childhood where both parents sacrifice themselves for the good of their children. We need to get that culture back. If you are pro-same-sex marriage, then you are part of the problem. It doesn't matter what you do in your personal life. If you are voting for this, you are harming society, and harming children, all for the self-esteem of self-centered grown ups. I urge all my readers to get informed about marriage and to be persuasive when talking about marriage to their neighbors.

Related posts

- Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters
- Ryan Anderson explains how gay marriage is already infringing on religious liberty
- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson debates gay marriage with S.E. Cupp on the Blaze
- Ryan T. Anderson explains marriage to Piers Morgan and Suze Orman
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense

- Frank Turek: is “equality” the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults “co-parenting” children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child’s perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

If unborn babies don’t have consciousness or don’t feel pain, may we kill them?

October 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about pro-life apologetics

Was having a conversation by e-mail yesterday with a pro-abortion atheist, and he gave two reasons why he supported abortion in the first and second trimester. First, he said that unborn babies can’t feel pain, so it’s OK to kill them. Second, he said that unborn babies don’t have consciousness, so it’s OK to kill them. I thought it might be useful to link to something that answers both of these objections.

Frank Beckwith is the author of “Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice“. He wrote that book for Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote four easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal. Part IV is the one that has the response to the two questions raised by my atheist friend.

Part I. The Appeal to Pity

Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem

Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?

Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Excerpt:

> Some ethicists argue that the unborn becomes fully human sometime after brain development has begun, when it becomes sentient: capable of experiencing

sensations such as pain. The reason for choosing sentience as the criterion is that a being that cannot experience anything (i.e., a presentient unborn entity) cannot be harmed. Of course, if this position is correct, then the unborn becomes fully human probably during the second trimester and at least by the third trimester. Therefore, one does not violate anyone's rights when one aborts a nonsentient unborn entity. [13]

There are several problems with this argument. First, it confuses harm with hurt and the experience of harm with the reality of harm. [14] One can be harmed without experiencing the hurt that sometimes follows from that harm, and which we often mistake for the harm itself. For example, a temporarily comatose person who is suffocated to death "experiences no harm," but he is nevertheless harmed. Hence, one does not have to experience harm, which is sometimes manifested in hurt, in order to be truly harmed.

Second, if sentience is the criterion of full humanness, then the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping would all have to be declared nonpersons. Like the presentient unborn, these individuals are all at the moment nonsentient though they have the natural inherent capacity to be sentient. Yet to countenance their executions would be morally reprehensible. Therefore, one cannot countenance the execution of some unborn entities simply because they are not currently sentient.

Someone may reply that while these objections make important points, there is a problem of false analogy in the second objection: the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping once functioned as sentient beings, though they are now in a temporary state of nonsentience. The presentient unborn, on the other hand, were never sentient. Hence, one is fully human if one was sentient "in the past" and will probably become sentient again in the future, but this cannot be said of the presentient unborn.

There are at least three problems with this response. First, to claim that a person can be sentient, become nonsentient, and then return to sentience is to assume there is some underlying personal unity to this individual that enables us to say that the person who has returned to sentience is the same person who was sentient prior to becoming nonsentient. But this would mean that sentience is not a necessary condition for personhood. (Neither is it a sufficient condition, for that matter, since nonhuman animals are sentient.) Consequently, it does not make sense to say that a person comes into existence when sentience arises, but it does make sense to say that a fully human entity is a person who has the natural inherent capacity to give rise to sentience. A presentient unborn human entity does have this capacity. Therefore, an ordinary unborn human entity is a person, and hence, fully human.

Second, Ray points out that this attempt to exclude many of the unborn from the class of the fully human is "ad hoc and counterintuitive." He asks us to "consider

> the treatment of comatose patients. We would not discriminate against one merely for rarely or never having been sentient in the past while another otherwise comparable patient had been sentient….In such cases, potential counts for everything." [15]
>
> Third, why should sentience "in the past" be the decisive factor in deciding whether an entity is fully human when the presentient human being "is one with a natural, inherent capacity for performing personal acts?" [16] Since we have already seen that one does not have to experience harm in order to be harmed, it seems more consistent with our moral sensibilities to assert that what makes it wrong to kill the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, the momentarily unconscious, and the presentient unborn is that they all possess the natural inherent capacity to perform personal acts. And what makes it morally right to kill plants and to pull the plug on the respirator-dependent brain dead, who were sentient "in the past," is that their deaths cannot deprive them of their natural inherent capacity to function as persons, since they do not possess such a capacity.

These four essays are a very good introduction to common responses to pro-abortion arguments. I recommend that people get familiar with this, as once you look into it, you will see that the abortion issue can be debated with as much confidence as William Lane Craig defends Christian theism. You will have the same access to scientific evidence and rational arguments on this topic, and so you will have the upper hand. And that's fun.

The best introductory book on the abortion / right to life issue is "The Case for Life" by pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf. The best comprehensive book is a tie between "The Ethics of Abortion" by Christopher Kaczor, and Frank Beckwith's "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice".

Bernie Sanders says his spending proposals will tax everyone, not just the rich

October 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

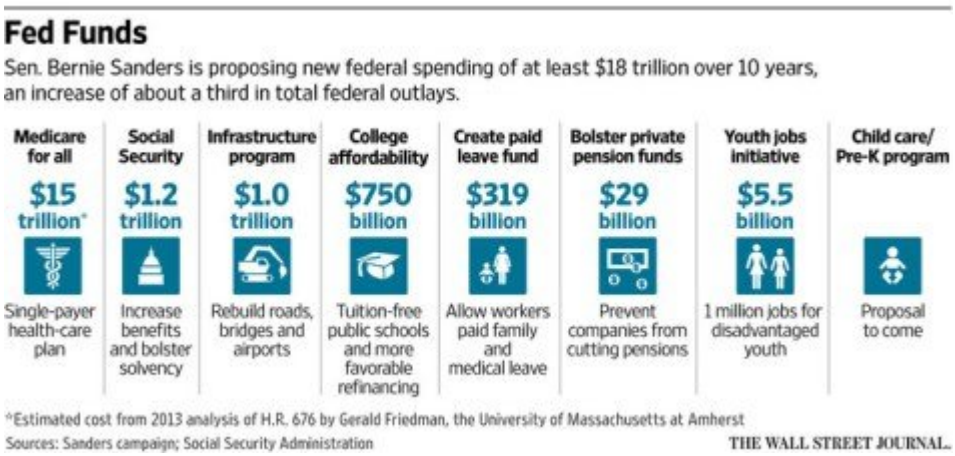

Wall Street Journal calculates the cost of Bernie Sanders' spending plan

This story is from ABC News.

Excerpt:

> Sanders is perhaps best known in political life for his efforts to champion the middle class, saying that in order to bridge the widening wealth and income inequality gap in America, the country needs a revamped tax policy that forces Wall Street, big corporations, millionaires and billionaires –like Trump – to pay up – and doesn't impose further taxes on the middle and working class.
>
> However, when pressed by Stephanopoulos about whether the proposed Senate tax legislation he backs, which would use a payroll tax to fund a mandate for 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave from all U.S. employers, Sander confirmed that the bill would require taxing all citizens -– not just the top 1 percent.
>
> "[The payroll tax] would hit everyone –- yeah, it would. But it would mean we would join the rest of the industrialized world and make sure that when a mom has a baby she can in fact stay home with that baby for three months, rather than going back to work at the end of one week," Sanders said.

What most Democrats (all?) don't understand, is that when you tax the rich, the costs filter down to consumers and employees. If a company is making a 5% profit (and Wal-mart makes a 3% profit), then slapping even a 5% tax increase on them will cause layoffs, outsourcing and other repercussions. We have a serious problem in this country with economic illiteracy – a widespread lack of familiarity with how the private sector works, and how jobs are created. For one thing, the public thinks that the average profit margin of companies is over 32%, when it fact it is much lower.

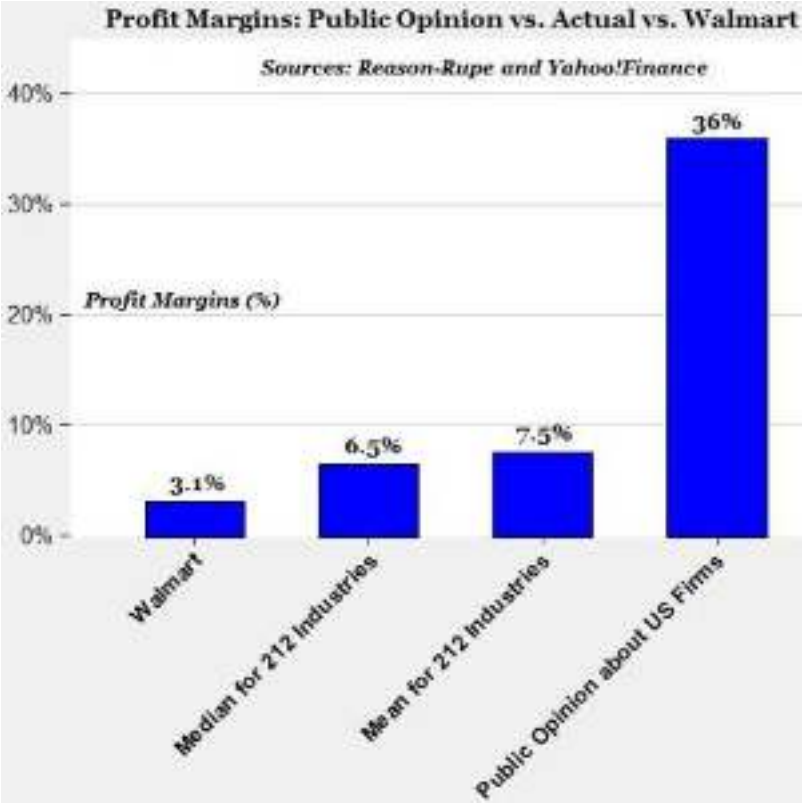

Public perceptions of corporate profit margins

So the real question is, how much does Bernie Sanders want to spend, and pass on to "the rich"? Because if it's more than a 1% or 2% increase in corporate taxes, we are all – *all of us* – going to feel the burn. And it's not going to a slight increase to our payroll taxes, it's going to be a huge number of people losing their jobs, and the prices of consumer goods and services rising to pay for the new taxes.

How much does all this Bernie Sanders spending cost?

The Wall Street Journal – which knows something about business and economics – has done an analysis of how much the socialist agenda of Bernie Sanders will cost. The final price tag? $18 trillion dollars!

Read it:

> Sen. Bernie Sanders, whose liberal call to action has propelled his long-shot presidential campaign, is proposing an array of new programs that would amount to the largest peacetime expansion of government in modern American history.
>
> In all, he backs at least $18 trillion in new spending over a decade, according to a tally by The Wall Street Journal, a sum that alarms conservatives and gives even many Democrats pause. Mr. Sanders sees the money as going to essential government services at a time of increasing strain on the middle class.
>
> […]To pay for it, Mr. Sanders, a Vermont independent running for the Democratic nomination, has so far detailed **tax increases that could bring in as much as $6.5 trillion over 10 years**, according to his staff.
>
> A campaign aide said additional tax proposals would be offered to offset the cost of some, and possibly all, of his health program. A Democratic proposal for such a "single-payer" health plan, now in Congress, would be funded in part through **a**

> **new payroll tax on employers and workers**, with the trade-off being that employers would no longer have to pay for or arrange their workers' insurance.

Investors Business Daily has more to say about Sanders' proposals:

> His "Medicare for All" single-payer health plan alone would cost roughly $15 trillion over a decade.
>
> He wants the government to provide "universal" child care and pre-kindergarten programs, along with free tuition at any public college, and proposes spending an additional $1 trillion on infrastructure and expanding Social Security by $1.2 trillion. Add up just these and a few other items on Sanders' list, and price tag tops $18 trillion over a decade.
>
> […]**And this doesn't count the massive costs of mandates and regulations Sanders wants to impose on businesses, such as a $15 minimum wage, plus mandatory paid medical leave, vacations and sick days.**
>
> He'd also make it far easier for unions to organize.

Keep in mind that when Obama became president, the national debt was about $8 trillion. Now it's $18.5 trillion, thanks to the Democrats. And if Bernie Sanders is elected, it will go to over $36.5 trillion. This is what Bernie Sanders expects to solve by "taxing the rich". And Hillary Clinton expects to get the money for her spending from "taxing the wealthy", as she said in the CNN debate. Do the rich have enough money lying around for the Democrats to confiscate?

Can we pay for it by "taxing the rich"?

A while back, the libertarian Cato Institute had an article talking about who would pay for Obama's $1 trillion health care plan. They asked whether Obama could pay for it by "taxing the rich".

The answer is no:

> Funding the new health-care plan on the backs of households making $200,000 or more per year would require permanently increasing their annual total tax payments by about 50 percent. So, for example, a household that currently pays $50,000 in federal income taxes would need to pay another $25,000. Remember, however, that Social Security and Medicare already face enormous shortfalls. Shoring up these programs — another Obama campaign promise — would require collecting 328 percent more tax revenue from the rich. No, we didn't forget a decimal point: That is three hundred and twenty-eight percent.

And what follows from taxing the rich?

> […]A major tax increase causes the tax capacity of the rich to shrink gradually as two factors kick in. First, many of the households falling into Obama's "rich" definition are married couples in which both partners are working professionals.

> When tax rates rise, the lower-earning spouses in these couples tend to work less. Often, they quit work entirely. Second, many of the “rich” are budding entrepreneurs and small-business owners. They finance their operations using their own after-tax income, or with after-tax resources from family and friends. Small-business innovation is the fuel for long-term economic growth. In fact, many of the largest companies in the United States today were either small or nonexistent just 25 years ago. Killing small business kills the American economy.

The rich in France abandoned France in droves when the socialist Francois Hollande passed a 75% top income tax rate. Why do Democrat voters think that this would not happen here? We have to learn economics by watching what happens after the policies are enacted, in other times and places. Higher taxes on the rich cause them to produce less, lowering tax revenues.

I myself have been planning to stop working within the next 5 years, exactly because I can see that the Democrat voters are taking us in the direction of massive taxes on employment. I don’t intend to be working when that happens. If enough people respond to higher tax rates like me, the Democrats are going to have an even bigger problem paying for their spending promises.

Philosopher Doug Groothuis explains the logic of the pro-life position

October 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this message

At Christian Post, an article by Douglas Groothuis. (H/T Mary)

Here's the most useful bit:

> When we separate personhood from humanity, we make personhood an achievement based on the possession of certain qualities. But what are these person-constituting qualities? Some say a basic level of consciousness; others assert viability outside the womb; still others say a sense of self-interest (which probably does not obtain until after birth). All of these criteria would take away humanity from those in comas or other physically compromised situations.4 Humans can lose levels of consciousness through injuries, and even infants are not viable without intense and sustained human support. Moreover, who are we to say just what qualities make for membership in the moral community of persons?5 The stakes are very high in this question. If we are wrong in our identification of what qualities are sufficient for personhood and we allow a person to be killed, we have allowed the wrongful killing of nothing less than a person. Therefore, I argue that personhood should be viewed as a substance or essence that is given at conception. The fetus is not a lifeless mechanism that only becomes what it is after several parts are put together—as is the case with a watch or an automobile. Rather, the fetus is a living human organism, whose

> future unfolds from within itself according to internal principles. For example, the fertilized ovum contains a complete genetic code that is distinct from that of the mother or father. But this is not a mere inert blueprint (which is separable from the building it describes); this is a living blueprint that becomes what its human nature demands.
>
> Yet even if one is not sure when personhood becomes a reality, one should err on the side of being conservative simply because so much is at stake. That is, if one aborts a fetus who is already a person, one commits a deep moral wrong by wrongfully killing an innocent human life. Just as we do not shoot target practice when we are told there may be children playing behind the targets, we should not abortion fetuses if they may be persons with the right not to be killed. As I have argued, it cannot be disputed that abortion kills a living, human being.
>
> Many argue that outside considerations experienced by the mother should overrule the moral value of the human embryo. If a woman does not want a pregnancy, she may abort. But these quality of life considerations always involve issues of lesser moral weight than that of the conservation and protection of a unique human life (which considers the sanctity or innate and intrinsic value of a human life).6 An unwanted pregnancy is difficult, but the answer is not to kill a human being in order to end that pregnancy.

I think that the real question in the abortion debate right now is whether a living organism with a human nature and a human genetic code that is distinct from its mother and father deserves the right to life, or whether it needs to develop some other capability in order to be worthy of protection from violence.

Consider something from philosopher Francis J. Beckwith.

Excerpt:

> Some argue that personhood does not arrive until brain waves are detected (40 to 43 days).[11]Others, such as Mary Anne Warren,[12] define a person as a being who can engage in cognitive acts such as sophisticated communication, consciousness, solving complex problems, self-motivated activity and having a self-concept. This would put the arrival of personhood at some time after *birth*. Still others, such as L. W. Sumner, [13] hold a more moderate position and argue that human personhood does not arrive until the fetus is sentient, the ability to feel and sense as a conscious being. This, according to Sumner, occurs possibly as early as the middle weeks of the second trimester of pregnancy and definitely by the end of that trimester.
>
> Although these criteria differ from each other in important ways, they all have one thing in common: each maintains that if and only if an entity *functions* in a certain way are we warranted in calling that entity a person. Defenders of these criteria argue that once a human being, whether born or unborn, acquires a certain function or functions–whether it is brain waves, rationality, sentience,

> etc.– it is then and only then that a person actually exists. Those who defend these personhood criteria typically make a distinction between “being a human” and “being a person.” They argue that although fetuses are members of the species *homo sapiens*, and in that sense are human, they are not truly persons until they fulfill a particular set of personhood criteria.
>
> Although functional definitions of personhood may tell us *some* conditions that are *sufficient* to say that a being is a person, they are not adequate in revealing to us all the conditions that are sufficient for a particular being to be called a person. For example, when a human being is asleep, unconscious, and temporarily comatose, she is not functioning as a person as defined by some personhood criteria. Nevertheless, most people would reject the notion that a human being is not a person while in any of these states. In other words, while personhood criteria, such as the ones presented by Warren can tell us that a being is a person, these criteria are not adequate to declare a being a non-person: The exercise of rational thought tells us that a being is a person; when that person is sleeping, and thus is not exercising rational thought, that lack of exercise of the thought function does not make her a non-person at that time. Consequently, it seems more consistent with our moral intuitions to say that personhood is not something that arises when certain functions are in place, but rather is something that grounds these functions, whether or not they are ever actualized in the life of a human being. Thus, defining personhood strictly in terms of function is inadequate.

If you are pro-life because of your feelings, or because someone told you to be, you ought to know that being pro-life is quite rational and supported by medical evidence. People who are pro-abortion are pro-abortion because they want recreational sex without the complications of having to care for the consequences (babies!) of their own actions. Even if they do not engage in the sex and the abortions themselves, they advocate for abortion rights, and they are guilty of encouraging a culture where 57 million unborn children have died since 1973. We’re long past Stalin numbers with this thing now.

We ought to care about not hurting other people. If grown-up’ selfish pursuit of happy feelings conflicts with another person’s right to life, then maybe we need to take a step back from being happy and start trying to be good instead.

Does gay marriage undermine the marital norms of monogamy and permanence?

October 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Does gay marriage undermine marital norms?

Let's see how gay marriage has changed the norms of natural marriage, using an interesting article by Ryan T. Anderson appeared on Ricochet.

First, a bit about the author.

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education as the William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society at The Heritage Foundation. He also has expertise in bioethics, marriage, religious liberty and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined Heritage's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work focuses on the moral and constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012). The three also co-wrote the article "What is Marriage?" in the winter 2011 issue of *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*.
>
> […]Anderson received his bachelor of arts degree from Princeton University, graduating*Phi Beta Kappa* and *magna cum laude.* He is a doctoral candidate in political philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, where he received his master's degree.

The point I wanted to pull out his piece on Ricochet was that gay activists admit that one of the motives for redefining marriage is to destroy central aspects of traditional marriage, such as monogamy, sexual exclusivity and pledged permanence.

He writes:

> Redefining marriage would abandon the norm of male-female sexual complementarity as an essential characteristic of marriage. Making that optional would also make other essential characteristics—like monogamy, exclusivity and permanency—optional, as my co-authors and I argue in our new book, *What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*. We also show how it is increasingly confirmed by the rhetoric and arguments of those who would redefine marriage ("revisionists") and by the policies that their more candid leaders increasingly embrace. Indeed, several commentators on Tuesday's post explicitly jettisoned monogamy, sexual exclusivity and pledged permanence as demands of marriage.
>
> Consider the norm of monogamy. In testifying before Congress against the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), prominent New York University professor Judith Stacey expressed hope that the revisionist view's triumph would give marriage "varied, creative and adaptive contours . . . [leading some to] question the dyadic limitations of Western marriage and seek . . . small group marriages."
>
> In their statement "Beyond Same-Sex Marriage," more than 300 self-styled LGBT and allied scholars and advocates—including prominent Ivy League professors—call for legally recognizing sexual relationships involving more than two partners. University of Calgary professor Elizabeth Brake argues in her book *Minimizing Marriage* that justice requires using legal recognition to "denormalize the ideal of heterosexual monogamy" and correct for "past discrimination against homosexuals, bisexuals, polygamists and care networks."
>
> And exclusivity? Andrew Sullivan, who has extolled the "spirituality" of "anonymous sex," writes in his book *Virtually Normal* that the "openness" of same-sex relationships could enhance the bonds of husbands and wives:
>
> Same-sex unions often incorporate the virtues of friendship more effectively than traditional marriages; and at times, among gay male relationships, the openness of the contract makes it more likely to survive than many heterosexual bonds. . . . [T]here is more likely to be greater understanding of the need for extramarital outlets between two men than between a man and a woman. . . . [S]omething of the gay relationship's necessary honesty, its flexibility, and its equality could undoubtedly help strengthen and inform many heterosexual bonds.
>
> Similarly, in a *New York Times* Magazine profile titled "Married, With Infidelities", Dan Savage encourages spouses to adopt "a more flexible attitude" about allowing each other to seek sex outside their marriage. A piece titled "Monogamish" in *The Advocate*, a gay-interest newsmagazine, supports this point still more candidly:

> Anti-equality right-wingers have long insisted that allowing gays to marry will destroy the sanctity of “traditional marriage,” and, of course, the logical, liberal party-line response has long been “No, it won’t.” But what if—for once—the sanctimonious crazies are right? Could the gay male tradition of open relationships actually alter marriage as we know it? And would that be such a bad thing?
>
> As the article’s blurb reads: “We often protest when homophobes insist that same-sex marriage will change marriage for straight people too. But in some ways, they’re right.”
>
> These are the words of leading supporters of same-sex marriage. If you believe in monogamy and exclusivity—and the benefits these bring to orderly procreation and child wellbeing—but would redefine civil marriage, take note.

So the question becomes, does it weaken marriage to introduce these ideas of non-monogamy and non-permanence, and call them “marriage”? The secular left already champions policies like no-fault divorce, single mother welfare, premarital sex, etc. that undermine marital stability. As a result of the ascendancy of the secular left and their Sexual Revolution (not pushed by Christians!), we have a 40% out-of-wedlock birth rate, and much higher in minority communities. And now we see that same-sex marriage, which is endorsed by the secular left, undermines traditional marriage norms even more, exposing children to even more harm.

No-fault divorce was the first redefinition of marriage. The secular left advocated for it, whether they actually did it themselves or not. It definitely harmed children. Sometimes, a person can do harm by advocating for views that cause harm, even if they don’t directly do the harm themselves. In that case, pointing to their own moral goodness does not take away the fact that they are pushing a moral order that is opposed to God’s intended moral design for us.

Senate Democrats block Republican bill to crack down on sanctuary cities

October 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of sanctuary cities

Now, you would think that when a 32-year-old woman is shot and killed by an illegal immigrant in a sanctuary city, that politicians would get serious about protecting law-abiding taxpayers from illegal immigrants who have a criminal record.

Well, the leftist Washington Post reports that the Republicans are serious about it, but the Democrats are not.

Look:

> Senate Democrats blocked legislation Tuesday that would crack down on local governments that refuse to fully cooperate with federal immigration authorities in order to protect illegal immigrants from deportation.
>
> The bill targeting so-called “sanctuary cities” failed in a 54 to 45 procedural vote. Sixty votes were necessary to advance the bill, which would block such jurisdictions from collecting some federal grants and would toughen criminal sentences for illegal immigrants who are convicted of a serious crime after being repeatedly deported.
>
> The House approved a similar bill in July, weeks after an illegal immigrant allegedly shot and killed 32-year-old Kate Steinle on a San Francisco pier, touching off a national firestorm about the immigration policies of that city and others like it who argue that threats of deportation make it harder to police immigrant communities.
>
> Steinle’s death continues to reverberate on Capitol Hill.
>
> “The city of San Francisco is proudly a sanctuary city. They say to illegal immigrants across the country and across the world, ‘Come to San Francisco. We

> will protect you from federal immigration laws,'" Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) said Tuesday on the Senate floor. "These policies are inexcusable."

Meanwhile, The Hill reports that the Obama White House also threatened to veto the bill, should it pass the Senate:

> The White House on Tuesday threatened to veto a Republican bill that cuts off federal funding for so-called sanctuary cities that refuse to help the government crack down on illegal immigration.

Interesting. So, on the one hand, the Democrats are very opposed to Kim Davis refusing to sign marriage certificates for gay couples, because that makes the gay couple feel bad. But, if an entire city wants to break federal law, and that makes someone like Kate Steinle DEAD, that's OK with them. That doesn't seem fair to me. Laws exist to protect the public, and that's why they need to be enforced. We can have an expanded guest worker program for people who can get with an employer to come here and work. But there's no excuse for allowing illegal immigrants with criminal convictions to live in sanctuary cities, where they can commit more crimes.

Is there any downside to raising the minimum wage to $15 an hour?

October 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

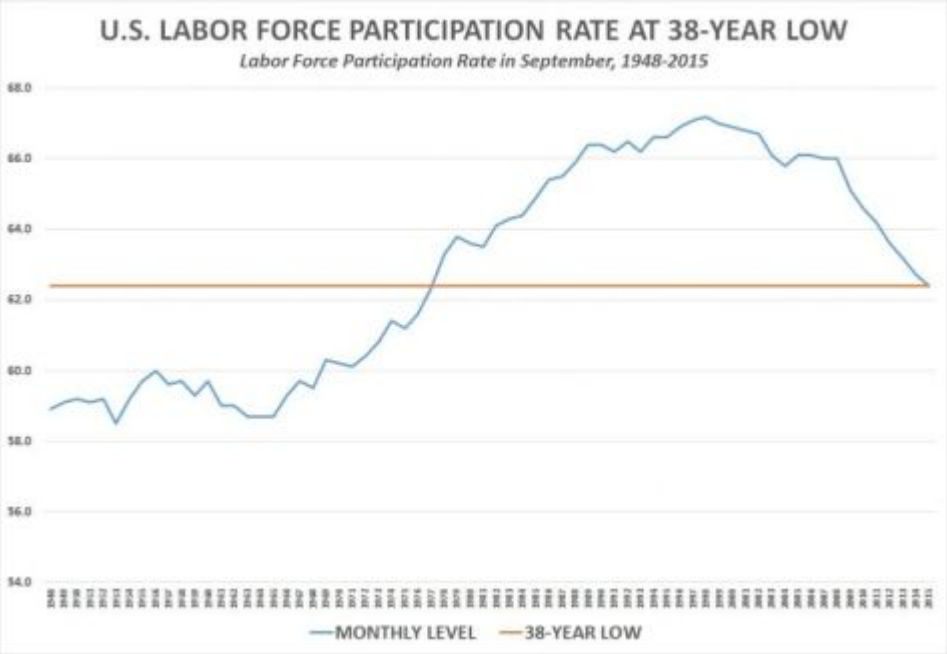

They told me if I voted Republican, we'd lose jobs, and they were right!

This article is from the libertarian Reason.com. They're terrible at social issues, but really really good at economics.

They write:

> Raising the minimum wage like this is an idea that's become increasingly common amongst more liberal Democratic politicians and policymakers: The city of Seattle, Washington passed a law raising its minimum wage to $15 last year, and the Los Angeles city council voted to follow suit. Soon after, New York state announced a plan to raise the minimum wage of all fast food workers to $15, and the state's governor, Andrew Cuomo, recently said he believes it should apply to all workers.
>
> Many of these plans start from the assumption, implicitly or explicitly, that these minimum wage hikes would be relatively cost-free, pointing to several studies seeming to show that increases in the minimum wage don't have much effect on jobs.
>
> Here is what the author of some of the most influential of those studies, former Obama administration economic adviser Alan B. Krueger, had to say about raising the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour in an op-ed for *The New York Times* last week:
>
> 15 an hour is beyond international experience, and could well be counterproductive. Although some high-wage cities and states could probably absorb a $15-an-hour minimum wage with little or no job loss, it is far from clear

> that the same could be said for every state, city and town in the United States.
>
> Krueger goes on to warn of greater risk, and the potential for "severe" trade-offs, if policymakers pursue a $15 minimum wage, warning that it would go beyond what any research supports. Ultimately, he concludes, it is "a risk not worth taking."
>
> Krueger wasn't disowning his own work or abandoning his position. He still supports raising the minimum wage to $12 an hour over a period of years, which he thinks could be done with essentially no job loss.
>
> There are some reasons to be skeptical of that claim too: The Congressional Budget Office, which generally tries to take a moderate approach to economic evidence and put its estimates right in the middle of the consensus range, found that even a more modest hike to $10.10 an hour nationally would most likely cost about a half a million jobs, and while it's possible such a raise might produce minimal job loss, it's equally possible that it would *cost* a million jobs.
>
> Overall, as David Neumark and William Wascher have found, the bulk of the evidence from research into the minimum wage suggests that hikes tend to decrease employment.

Let's review the facts on minimum wage.

Abstract from a National Bureau of Economic Research study:

> We estimate the minimum wage's effects on low-skilled workers' employment and income trajectories. Our approach exploits two dimensions of the data we analyze. First, we compare workers in states that were bound by recent increases in the federal minimum wage to workers in states that were not. Second, we use 12 months of baseline data to divide low-skilled workers into a "target" group, whose baseline wage rates were directly affected, and a "within-state control" group with slightly higher baseline wage rates. **Over three subsequent years, we find that binding minimum wage increases had significant, negative effects on the employment and income growth of targeted workers**.
>
> […]Over the late 2000s, the average effective minimum wage rose by 30 percent across the United States. **We estimate that these minimum wage increases reduced the national employment-to-population ratio by 0.7 percentage point.**

That comes out to 1.4 million workers who lost their jobs, thanks to minimum wage mandates. And those are primarily young, unskilled workers who are affected – people trying to get a start in the workplace and build their resumes, so they can move up.

Harvard economist Greg Mankiw explains the top 14 views that a majority professional economists agree on, and here's #12:

> 12. A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)

This is not controversial. This is the kind of basic “how America works” economics stuff that people used to learn in their civics classes before the schools became so politicized.

96% of political donations by Cornell University faculty go to Democrats

October 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

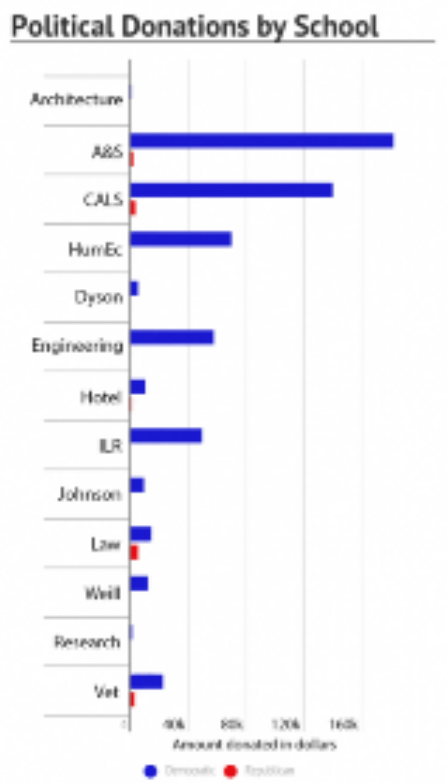

Political donations by Cornell University faculty

I'm going to introduce a lecture by Dr. George Yancey by linking to an article from the Cornell University campus newspaper. (H/T Dennis Prager)

It says:

> Of the nearly $600,000 Cornell's faculty donated to political candidates or parties in the past four years, over 96 percent has gone to fund Democratic campaigns, while only 15 of the 323 donors gave to conservative causes.
>
> The Sun's analysis of Federal Election Committee data reveals that from 2011 to 2014, Cornell's faculty donated $573,659 to Democrats, $16,360 to Republicans and $2,950 to Independents. Each of Cornell's 13 schools — both graduate and undergraduate — slanted heavily to the left. In the College of Arts and Sciences, 99 percent of the $183,644 donated went to liberal campaigns.

OK, now with that out of the way, let's watch a 28-minute lecture from Dr. George Yancey about bias against religion in academia:

If you watch 5 minutes, then you'll definitely stay and watch the whole thing. It's fascinating.

Details:

> Join Dr. George Yancey in an in depth discussion of the bias taking place within

> academia against religion in general, but more specifically Christianity. Within the discussion Dr.Yancey uses brief explanations of his previous book, Compromising Scholarship and many other excerpts of his past research as well as his forthcoming research to give us a new viewpoint on academia and religion.

I found a quick description of Dr. Yancey's work in this New York Times article from July 2011.

It says:

> Republican scholars are more likely than Democrats to end up working outside academia,as documented by Daniel Klein, an economist at George Mason University. Dr. Klein, who calls himself a classical liberal (a k a libertarian), says that the university promotes groupthink because its system of "departmental majoritarianism" empowers the dominant faction to keep hiring like-minded colleagues. And when a faculty committee is looking to hire or award tenure, political ideology seems to make a difference, according to a "collegiality survey" conducted by George Yancey.
>
> Dr. Yancey, a professor of sociology at the University of North Texas, asked more than 400 sociologists which nonacademic factors might influence their willingness to vote for hiring a new colleague. You might expect professors to at least *claim* to be immune to bias in academic hiring decisions.
>
> But as Dr. Yancey reports in his new book, "Compromising Scholarship: Religious and Political Bias in American Higher Education," more than a quarter of the sociologists said they would be swayed favorably toward a Democrat or an A.C.L.U. member and unfavorably toward a Republican. About 40 percent said they would be less inclined to vote for hiring someone who belonged to the National Rifle Association or who was an evangelical. Similar results were obtained in a subsequent survey of professors in other social sciences and the humanities.
>
> Dr. Yancey, who describes himself as a political independent with traditional Christian beliefs and progressive social values, advises nonliberal graduate students to be discreet during job interviews. "The information in this research," he wrote, "indicates that revealing one's political and religious conservatism will, on average, negatively influence about half of the search committee one is attempting to impress."
>
> Dr. Yancey's research was a survey, not a field experiment, so it's impossible to know how many of those academics who confessed to hypothetical bias would let it sway an actual decision. Perhaps they'd try to behave as impartially as the directors of graduate studies in Dr. Gross's experiment.

The lecture is a real eye-opener. It turns out that in academia, you are likely to be viewed the same way as blacks were viewed by slave-owners, and Jews were viewed by Nazis.

We have a lot of work to do to correct these perceptions, but that's not going to happen

unless churches and Christian parents start to take the life of the mind more seriously.

UPDATE: Papa Giorgio posts the Dennis Prager audio:

Why did Hillary Clinton blame the Benghazi terrorist attack on an "Internet video"?

October 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does national security make?
Who should I link to to prepare us to understand and discuss the showdown between the Benghazi Select Committee and Hillary Clinton? How about Stephen Hayes from the Weekly Standard – you can't do better than that.

He says:

> Critics of Clinton on Benghazi are most angry about the exchange she had with surviving family members at the solemn ceremony held to receive the bodies of the victims. Pat Smith, the mother of information specialist Sean Smith, who was killed in the attacks, says Clinton told her that the Obama administration would bring to justice the man who made the anti-Islam video that the administration initially blamed for the attacks. "She blamed the video just like all the rest of them did and she also told me she was going to get back to me."
>
> Charles Woods, father of Tyrone Woods, a NAVY Seal killed in the attacks, says Clinton told him the same thing. "She said we're going to have the person responsible for that video arrested. I knew she was lying. Her body language, the look in her eyes…I could tell she wasn't telling the truth."
>
> But contemporaneous documents and testimony from US officials who were in Libya during the attacks make no mention of the video that would become the centerpiece of the Obama administration's public narrative about the attacks. Indeed, in messages as the attacks unfolded and in the hours and days that followed, show security and intelligence officials immediately placing blame on al Qaeda and affiliated fighters and pushing back on suggestions from Washington that the video had played a role. Senior State Department officials, including Clinton's chief of staff, Cheryl Mills, were copied on emails indicating Ansar al

> Sharia had claimed responsibility for the attacks.
>
> Michael Morell, deputy CIA director at the time of the attacks, and a loyal water-carrier for the administration on Benghazi, testified that the video was simply not part of the intelligence picture during and after the attacks. "There was no mention of the video defaming the Prophet Muhammad as a motivation for the attacks in Benghazi. In fact, there was no mention of the video at all."
>
> Why did Clinton promise to pursue the filmmaker after the US government understood that the attacks were not a result of an out-of-control protest over the video?

Recall that Hillary Clinton blamed the Benghazi attack on "an Internet video":

However, we now know that the top Democrats knew from the beginning that this was a terrorist attack:

> Judicial Watch announced today that on February 11, 2015, it uncovered documents from the U.S. Department of State revealing that **top aides for then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, including her then-chief of staff Cheryl Mills, knew from the outset that the Benghazi mission compound was under attack by armed assailants tied to a terrorist group.** The documents were produced as a result of a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the State Department *(Judicial Watch v. U.S. Department of State* ((No. 1:14-cv-01511). **The documents make no reference to a spontaneous demonstration or Internet video, except in an official statement issued by Hillary Clinton.**

The Benghazi Select Committee was *finally* able to get 1300 e-mails sent by Ambassador Stevens (after two years of asking for them). Many of those e-mails requested additional security right before the attack, and they were ignored:

> Two months before the fatal 2012 terrorist attack on the U.S. compound in Benghazi, then-Ambassador Chris Stevens requested 13 security personnel to help him safely travel around Libya… but he was turned down.
>
> In the July 9, 2012 cable, Stevens reported that, "Overall security conditions continue to be unpredictable, with large numbers of armed groups and individuals not under control of the central government, and frequent clashes in Tripoli and other major population centers." The cable said 13 security personnel would be the "minimum" needed for "transportation security and incident response capability."
>
> **But a congressional source said Patrick Kennedy, a deputy to then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, turned down the request.**
>
> The cable sent under Stevens' electronic signature shows that he was advocating for additional security and warning that the set-up did not meet State Department standards, as conditions deteriorated in the run-up to the attack that

> killed Stevens and three other Americans.

This hearing is about finding out why four people were left to die, even after repeatedly requesting additional security from the State Department. The same State Department that Hillary Clinton was in charge of. I hope we can find out why Hillary had so much time to read e-mails from Sidney Blumenthal, and apparently no time to read e-mails from Ambassador Stevens.

UPDATE: The Weekly Standard has posted a new podcast episode with Stephen Hayes on this topic.

UPDATE: Trey Gowdy's opening statement:

Why did we need this investigation? Because previous "investigations" failed to find Ambassador Stevens' e-mails, failed to find Hillary Clinton's e-mails, and failed to interview people on the ground who had direct knowledge of the Benghazi security situation.

Related posts

- Hillary Clinton lied to CNN about not receiving a subpoena
- All evidence points to Hillary Clinton as source of internet video lie
- Former CIA deputy director: foreign countries have everything on Clinton's e-mail server
- Hillary Clinton deleted 32,000 e-mails, refuses to turn over her home-based server
- E-mails released by Clinton: there are "months, and months, and months" missing
- Hillary Clinton used her private e-mail account to conduct State Department business
- Clinton confidants were present to "separate" damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- E-mails: Susan Rice prepped to lie about Benghazi by White House
- Transcripts show that top U.S. military officials briefed Obama on Benghazi terrorist attack
- Benghazi liar Susan Rice to be appointed National Security Adviser by grateful Obama
- Released e-mails show that State Department edited terrorism out of talking points
- Obama: editing of talking points to cover-up of Benghazi terrorist attack is a "sideshow"
- BBC News covers whistle-blower testimony: "After Benghazi revelations, heads will roll"
- What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack "from the get-go"
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource

for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama’s Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama’s Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama’s security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

NYPD cop murdered by criminal who was released early

October 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rising Murder Rates in Big Cities

A sampling of cities where the number of murders so far this year is outpacing the same period last year.

	2014	2015	PERCENT CHANGE
Milwaukee	59	104	76 %
St. Louis	85	136	60
Baltimore	138	215	56
Washington	73	105	44
New Orleans	98	120	22
Chicago	244	294	20
Kansas City, Mo.	45	54	20
Dallas	71	83	17
New York	190	208	9
Philadelphia	165	171	4

Year-to-date time periods range from Aug. 11 to Aug. 31.

Source: City police departments

Crime rates in major cities, all Democrat-run

I keep hearing all these compassionate Democrats complaining that too many people are behind bars. The solution? Release lots and lots of prisoners.

The leftist Washington Post reports on efforts by the Obama administration to release harmless drug offenders at the federal level:

> The Justice Department is set to release about 6,000 inmates early from prison — the largest one-time release of federal prisoners — in an effort to reduce overcrowding and provide relief to drug offenders who received harsh sentences over the past three decades, according to U.S. officials.
>
> The inmates from federal prisons nationwide will be set free by the department's Bureau of Prisons between Oct. 30 and Nov. 2. About two-thirds of them will go to halfway houses and home confinement before being put on supervised release. About one-third are foreign citizens who will be quickly deported, officials said.
>
> […][Democrat Attorney General Eric]Holder supported the change, but he proposed more restrictive criteria that would exclude people who had used weapons or had significant criminal histories. But the Sentencing Commission decided to leave the decisions to individual judges.

It always seems to be the Democrats who want to release criminals and confiscate the guns of law-abiding civilians. The Republicans always want to put criminals in jail and let law-abiding civilians defend themselves.

Anyway, let's see what happened in New York where one of these harmless drug-offenders was allowed to go free, thanks to the rules made by one of the most Democrat-

dominated cities in the United States.

The Washington Times reports:

> The suspect in the fatal shooting of a New York police officer was only on the street because he was not sent to jail earlier this year for dealing crack as part of a diversion program for drug offenders.
>
> Tyrone Howard, 30, had a lengthy rap sheet featuring 28 arrests since age 13 when he pleaded guilty again in May to selling crack at an East Harlem public-housing complex. He was sentenced to two years in jail but rather than being sent behind bars, he was ordered into an outpatient drug-rehabilitation program for that period.
>
> **The diversion program is designed to reduce overcrowding in the city's jails, and courts in New York and across the country are increasingly turning to rehabilitation and treatment options rather than incarceration for drug offenses.**
>
> […][A] spokesman for the New York state court system said that Howard was an addict and thus should not be in jail for drug offenses.
>
> "Actually, he's the perfect candidate in many ways" for diversion programs, state court system spokesman David Bookstaver told The Associated Press in an interview.
>
> […]According to NYPD Chief of Department James O'Neill, Howard was wanted in connection with a gang-related shooting in Manhattan in September but police couldn't find him for arrest — even though he was on supervised release for two years.Howard didn't show up for status meetings and would not be home when investigators made repeated efforts to find him there.
>
> An arrest warrant was issued for Howard on Sept. 21.
>
> Howard's long criminal record included two terms in state prison since 2007 on drug-related charges. He also was arrested in connection with a 2009 shooting, but the AP said the disposition of that case was unclear.

OK so that's one measly case. Let's see the aggregate numbers so we can make a real conclusion here.

This is from the radically leftist BBC:

> Nearly half of prisoners released from prison go on to commit further offences, government figures indicate.
>
> The percentage re-offending went up for the second year on a row to 49.4% – but is lower than in 2002 when 55% of prisoners committed further crimes.
>
> The statistics show re-offending rates by women went up by four times that for men – by 16.4%, compared with 4.2%.
>
> The National Audit Office recently found reoffending in England and Wales costs

> the taxpayer up to £10bn a year.
>
> The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) assesses re-offending rates by measuring the number of further offences committed by a group of criminals in England and Wales within a year of their release.
>
> Those let out in the first three months of 2008 committed 37,178 offences within a year.
>
> Shadow justice secretary Dominic Grieve said the prison system was “dilapidated and overcrowded” and was “failing to turn offenders around”.
>
> He said: “Half of prisoners commit another recordable offence within a year of release.

If you don’t believe the BBC, believe the peer-reviewed academic study:

> This study explores the recidivism outcomes of 1,804 serious and violent delinquents sentenced under a blended sentencing statute and released early by juvenile correctional authorities without continuing their blended sentence in adult prisons. Released at an average age of 19, roughly 50% of releases were rearrested for a felony-level offense postrelease. The remaining 50% of all releases did not incur a postrelease arrest or were rearrested for an offense no higher than a misdemeanor. Measures for assaultive institutional misconduct and prior delinquent adjudications were predictive of recidivism in models examining rearrest for any offense and rearrest for a felony only. Substance abusers, gang members, those with a gang-related commitment offense, and homicide-related state commitments were significantly more likely to be rearrested for any offense postrelease. This article ends with a discussion of implications specific to this high risk cohort of released delinquent offenders.

If you really want to do something about the crime rate, then government needs to promote natural marriage and stability during parenting. That’s not what selfish adults want to hear, but it is what works to lower crime rates. Instead of paying women to have fatherless babies outside of marriage, we should pay them to get married and have kids and stay together to raise the kids. That’s what *REALLY* lowers the crime rates, and empties the prisons. It probably doesn’t help that we are throwing pastors out of the prisons, either.

Look. We all have to decide whether we have more sympathy for convicted criminals, or whether we have more sympathy for law-abiding taxpayers. Democrats are there to serve the criminals: give them goodies and disarm their victims. Republicans are there to serve the law-abiding taxpayers, and let them defend themselves from criminals. Please vote accordingly.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

October 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus in a debate by saying that the resurrection is the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. Minimal facts are the parts of the New Testament that meet a set of strict historical criteria. These are the facts that skeptical historians agree with, totally apart from any religious beliefs.

So what are the criteria that skeptical historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria

> are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."
>
> In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> (1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
>
> (2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
>
> (3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
>
> (4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
>
> (5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
>
> (6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.
>
> Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for

the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book.

Try this approach instead:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection

8. Don’t let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And remember that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. You have to use that – it’s the law.

Back to the minimal facts criteria. The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I’ve read is the one by Robert H. Stein in “Contending with Christianity’s Critics“. It’s a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion “God raised Jesus from the dead”. That whole book is really very, very good.

Hillary Clinton's State Department ignored 600+ requests for more security in Benghazi

October 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton bored by the deaths of 4 Americans who repeatedly asked for help

Moderate Republican Hugh Hewitt played the "smoking gun" clips on his radio show on Thursday night. The best questions came from Congressman Mike Pompeo and Congressman Jim Jordan.

CNS News has the full transcript of the Pompeo questions.

Mike Pompeo transcript:

> **POMPEO: "**Do you know how many security requests there were in the 1st quarter of 2012?"
>
> **CLINTON: "**For everyone or for Benghazi?"
>
> **POMPEO: "**I'm sorry, yes ma'am. Related to Benghazi and Libya. Do you know how many there were?"
>
> **CLINTON:** "No."
>
> **POMPEO:** "Ma'am, there were just over 100 plus. In the 2nd quarter, do you know how many there were?"
>
> **CLINTON:** "No, I do not."
>
> **POMPEO:** "Ma'am there were 172ish – might have been 171 or 173. … How many were there in July and August and then in that week and few days before the attacks? Do you know?"

> **CLINTON: "**There were a number of them. I know that."
>
> **POMPEO:** "Yes, ma'am – 83 by our count. That's over 600 requests. You've testified this morning that you've had none of those reach your desk. Is that correct also?"
>
> **CLINTON:** "That's correct."
>
> **POMPEO:** "Madam Secretary, Mr. Blumenthal wrote you 150 emails. It appears from the materials that we've read that all of those reached your desk.
>
> "Can you tell us why security requests from your professionals, the men that you just testified … are incredibly professional, incredibly capable people, trained in the art of keeping us all safe, none of those made it to you, but a man who was a friend of yours, who'd never been to Libya, didn't know much about it – at least that's his testimony – didn't know much about it, every one of those reports that he sent on to you that had to do with situations on the ground in Libya, those made it to your desk?
>
> "You asked for more of them. You read them. You corresponded with him, and yet the folks that worked for you didn't have the same courtesy."

Full recording (10 minutes):

Here are the details of Jim Jordan's questioning from the Washington Free Beacon:

> On the night of the attack, Jordan said, Clinton had a phone call with the president of Libya where she told him Ansar al-Sharia was claiming responsibility.
>
> The next day, Jordan said, Clinton told the Egyptian prime minister something "significant," where she acknowledged they knew the attack in Libya had nothing to do with any video.
>
> "We know the attack in Libya had nothing to do with the film," Jordan read out from Clinton's email. "It was a planned attack. Not a protest. Let me read that one more time. We know, not we think, not it might be, we know the attack in Libya had nothing to do with a film. It was a planned attack. Not a protest. State Department experts knew the truth. You knew the truth, but that's not what the American people got. Again, the American people want to know why. Why didn't you tell the American people exactly what you told the Egyptian prime minister?"
>
> […]**Jordan showed with other emails that her top staffers were already discussing the political ramifications of the attack and how to respond. He said Clinton picked the option of a "video narrative" "with no evidence" because she wanted the Libya situation to be a key success story for the Obama administration.**
>
> **"You did it because Libya was supposed to be this great success story for the Obama White House and the Clinton State Department, and a key campaign theme that year was GM's alive, bin Laden's dead, al-Qaeda's on the run," Jordan said. "Now you have a terrorist attack, and**

> **it's a terrorist attack in Libya and it's just 56 days before an election. You can live with the protest about a video. That won't hurt you, but a terrorist attack will. So you can't be square with the American people."**

Full recording (10 minutes):

Now, you will hear a lot in the mainstream media that Hillary Clinton took no damage and did a great job in the hearings. But that is a lie. And I'm going to cite Chuck Todd to explain what really happened in the hearings:

> NBC's Chuck Todd said former secretary of state Hillary Clinton "has no good answers" to offer Thursday on the Libya policy she was part of in the Obama administration when she testifies before the Benghazi Select Committee.
>
> […]"There's two tough things that she has to deal with," Todd said. "One is for 15 years, the State Department was told it had to improve embassy security. 15 years. This is four secretaries of state, and she along with three other secretaries of state didn't do that. And second, it's about Libya and the decision to go into Libya. That's where she has no good answers."

So two points. First, the State Department refused to respond to 600+ requests for additional security leading up to the attack. And even more important, Hillary Clinton told multiple people that the attack was a terrorist attack, days before she came out and said that the attack was a spontaneous demonstration caused by "an Internet video". She told this to the family of the victims, when she knew that the truth was different. Why is this woman leading the Democrat primary? Do Democrat voters not pay attention to national security and foreign policy?

UPDATE: Stephen Hayes has a Weekly Standard podcast episode to comment on the hearings.

Related posts

- Why did Hillary Clinton blame the Benghazi terrorist attack on an "Internet video"?
- Hillary Clinton lied to CNN about not receiving a subpoena
- All evidence points to Hillary Clinton as source of internet video lie
- Former CIA deputy director: foreign countries have everything on Clinton's e-mail server
- Hillary Clinton deleted 32,000 e-mails, refuses to turn over her home-based server
- E-mails released by Clinton: there are "months, and months, and months" missing
- Hillary Clinton used her private e-mail account to conduct State Department business
- Clinton confidants were present to "separate" damaging documents before Benghazi probe
- E-mails: Susan Rice prepped to lie about Benghazi by White House
- Transcripts show that top U.S. military officials briefed Obama on Benghazi terrorist attack

- Benghazi liar Susan Rice to be appointed National Security Adviser by grateful Obama
- Released e-mails show that State Department edited terrorism out of talking points
- Obama: editing of talking points to cover-up of Benghazi terrorist attack is a “sideshow”
- BBC News covers whistle-blower testimony: “After Benghazi revelations, heads will roll”
- What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
- Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
- Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack “from the get-go”
- Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
- Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
- Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
- Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
- White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
- Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
- CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
- Obama’s Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama’s Benghazi cover-up
- Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama’s security policy
- Obama justifies censorship by blaming a Youtube clip for a planned terrorist attack

Texas raids Planned Parenthood offices in Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio

October 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Governor Greg Abbott
This is from Life News. (H/T ECM)

Excerpt:

> After a Houston-based Planned Parenthood abortion clinic was caught selling aborted baby body parts, state investigators conducted a raid today on multiple Planned Parenthood abortion clinics across the state.
> Texas officials raided several Planned Parenthood facilities today in an unprecedented move that follows on the heels of pro-life Governor Greg Abbott announcing earlier in the week that the state would further de-fund the abortion business. Abbott said this week "the gruesome harvesting of baby body parts by Planned Parenthood will not be allowed," but so far the state has released no evidence of illegal activity by the group.
>
> The raids were carried out at Planned Parenthood abortion centers in Houston, Dallas and San Antonio by representatives from the Texas Office of the Inspector General and the state served subpoenas on five total Planned Parenthood centers. The Houston Chronicle has more:
>
> Officials with the inspector general's office at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission went to two facilities in Houston as well as clinics in Dallas, San Antonio and Brownsville. The Brownsville center does not perform abortions.

> Planned Parenthood was given 30 days to respond to the move; a legal challenge is likely.
>
> On Thursday, Planned Parenthood officials decried the subpoenas as politically-motivated, saying officials were “looking for an excuse to take health care away from thousands of women and men who rely on Planned Parenthood for preventive care.”
>
> “The investigators were seeking hundreds of pages of information, from patient records to employee home addresses, involving 10 Planned Parenthood facilities across the state” the Austin newspaper reported. “Officials would not confirm details of the investigation, but the sources said it’s related to suspicions of misspent Medicaid money.”

ECM was quite delighted with this story, and it does show why the United States of America is still a great country. My Canadian friends have been filling up my ears with laments. “Angry”, was how one Calgary man described his feelings to me. “I’m hiding under blankets” one Calgary woman told me. Well, yes. When the Liberal Party gets a majority in a country where federalism is severely crippled, then no matter where you live, you’re pretty much done for.

But that’s not the case in the USA, where a man can dream of living under Mary Fallin in Oklahoma, or Bobby Jindal in Louisiana, or under Sam Brownback in Kansas. Or even in Tennessee or Texas under other Republican governors. You have your pick. And when you open up the local newspaper, you are going to see things happening that don’t make you angry, or make you hide under blankets. What a country! We should be thankful for the boundary between federal and state governments, and seek to strengthen the jurisdiction of states.

By the way, Texas also defunded Planned Parenthood earlier this week.

Obama vetoes bill that “authorizes pay, benefits and training for U.S. troops”

October 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He’s better at golf than foreign policy, and he sucks at golf

Here’s the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> President Obama is playing politics with national defense, and in the process he is taking down the military’s welfare. In an act of partisan gamesmanship, the president on Thursday vetoed the National Defense Authorization Act, a bill that a bipartisan majority of Congress passed and that delivers the resources needed by troops to defend the nation.
>
> […]He has become the first commander in chief willing to sacrifice national security by vetoing a bill that authorizes pay, benefits and training for U.S. troops, simply because he seeks leverage to pursue his domestic political agenda.
>
> […]**President Obama’s veto was about broader spending issues that have absolutely nothing to do with defense. By vowing recently that he “will not fix defense without fixing nondefense spending,” the president is holding the military hostage to increase funding for Washington bureaucracies like the Environmental Protection Agency and the Internal Revenue Service.**

The Environmental Protection Agency is more important?:

EPA dumps 1 million gallons of mining waste into river
The Internal Revenue Service is more important?:

IRS Chief Fascist Lois Lerner
More Wall Street Journal:

> In vetoing this bill, the president imposes more harm and uncertainty on the military at a time when America faces dangerous and complex threats from around the world. He has prevented critical policies from taking effect that would immediately improve the lives of service members and military families while addressing needs of wounded, ill or injured service members. For example, President Obama has rejected measures that open service members' access to medical care; enhance protections for military sexual-assault victims; extend retirement benefits to more than 80% of service members; make significant, long-overdue reforms to the defense acquisition system; and authorize hundreds of other measures that are critical to national security.
>
> Perhaps most disturbingly, the president's veto has sent a message to America's enemies and allies alike that he is more concerned about funding broken Washington bureaucracies than he is about maintaining the nation's distinction

> for being defended by the world's greatest fighting force.
>
> That is the wrong message to send when America faces an array of crises that demand a strong national defense, including war in Afghanistan, China's illegal activities in the South China Sea, Islamic State's terrorist reign across Iraq and Syria, Bashar Assad's bombing campaign—now backed by Russia and Iran—against his own people in Syria,Vladimir Putin's annexation of Crimea and dismemberment of Ukraine, and Iran's malign activities propping up terrorist proxies destabilizing the Middle East.
>
> These and other threats make it clear that the U.S. faces more national-security threats than at any time since the end of World War II. It is reckless, cynical and downright dangerous for the president to veto the NDAA, denying the American military the authorizations it desperately needs.

We have to fund the EPA and the IRS, but we can't fund our armed forces. At a time where Russia, China and Iran are arming up and getting more aggressive, we can't fund our armed forces. Democrat Party priorities.

UPDATE: Reader tells me that it affects things like hazard pay, enlistment bonuses, not the annual pay increase:

> The Thursday veto will jeopardize a host of other specialty pays and bonuses, and has inflamed an already bitter budget standoff between Obama and congressional Republicans.
>
> But it does not alter plans for a 1.3 percent raise for troops effective Jan. 1, which is ensured regardless of how the veto fight shakes out.
>
> […]The defense authorization bill still affects things like enlistment bonuses, hazard pays, and other specialty compensation for which authorization must be renewed each year. If lawmakers has substituted their own pay raise or tried to supercede the presidential order in the bill, Obama's veto would have affected that, too.

Why is the universe so big, and why is so much of it hostile to life?

October 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Chris Kyle, Navy SEAL, can hit a very small target from a mile away – very improbable

Review: In case you need a refresher on the cosmological and fine-tuning arguments, as presented by a professor of particle physics at Stanford University, then click this link and watch the lecture.

If you already know about the standard arguments for theism from cosmology, then take a look at this post on Uncommon Descent.

Summary:

> In my previous post, I highlighted three common atheistic objections to to the cosmological fine-tuning argument. In that post, I made no attempt to answer these objections. My aim was simply to show that the objections were weak and inconclusive.
>
> Let's go back to the original three objections:
>
> 1. If the universe was designed to support life, then why does it have to be so BIG, and why is it nearly everywhere hostile to life? Why are there so many stars, and why are so few orbited by life-bearing planets? (Let's call this the *size problem*.)
>
> 2. If the universe was designed to support life, then why does it have to be so OLD, and why was it devoid of life throughout most of its history? For instance, why did life on Earth only appear after 70% of the cosmos's 13.7-billion-year history had already elapsed? And Why did human beings (genus Homo) only appear after 99.98% of the cosmos's 13.7-billion-year history had already elapsed? (Let's call this the *age problem*.)

> 3. If the universe was designed to support life, then why does Nature have to be so CRUEL? Why did so many animals have to die – and why did so many species of animals have to go extinct (99% is the commonly quoted figure), in order to generate the world as we see it today? What a waste! And what about predation, parasitism, and animals that engage in practices such as serial murder and infant cannibalism? (Let's call this the *death and suffering problem*.)
>
> In today's post, I'm going to try to provide some positive answers to the first two questions: the size problem and the age problem.

Here's an excerpt for the size argument:

> (a) The main reason why the universe is as big as it currently is that in the first place, the universe had to contain sufficient matter to form galaxies and stars, without which life would not have appeared; and in the second place, the density of matter in the cosmos is incredibly fine-tuned, due to the fine-tuning of gravity. To appreciate this point, let's go back to the earliest time in the history of the cosmos that we can meaningfully talk about: the Planck time, when the universe was 10^-43 seconds old. If the density of matter at the Planck time had differed from the critical density by as little as one part in 10^60, the universe would have either exploded so rapidly that galaxies wouldn't have formed, or collapsed so quickly that life would never have appeared. In practical terms: if our universe, which contains 10^80 protons and neutrons, had *even one more grain of sand* in it – or one grain *less* – we wouldn't be here.

If you mess with the size of the universe, you screw up the mass density fine-tuning. We need that to have a universe that expands at the right speed in order to form galaxies, stars and planets. You need planets to have a place to form life – a place with liquid water at the surface.

And an excerpt for the age argument:

> (a) One reason why we need an old universe is that billions of years were required for Population I stars (such as our sun) to evolve. These stars are more likely to harbor planets such as our Earth, because they contain lots of "metals" (astronomer-speak for elements heavier than helium), produced by the supernovae of the previous generation of Population II stars. According to currently accepted models of Big Bang nucleosynthesis, this whole process was absolutely vital, because the Big Bang doesn't make enough "metals", including those necessary for life: carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus and so on.

Basically, you need heavy elements to make stars that burn slow and steady, as well as to make PEOPLE! And heavy elements have to be built up slowly through several iterations of the stellar lifecycle, including the right kinds of stellar death: supernovae.

Read the rest! These arguments come up all the time in debates with village atheists like Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins. It's a smokescreen they put up, but you've

got to be able to answer it using the scientific evidence we have today. They always want to dismiss God with their personal preferences about what God should or should not do. But the real issue is the design of the cosmological constants that allow life to *anywhere*. That's the part that's designed. And that's not a matter of personal preference, it's a matter of *mathematics* and *experimental science.*

One last parting shot. If God made the universe have life everywhere, the first thing atheists would say is "See? Life evolves fine by itself without any God!" The only way to recognize a marksman is when he hits a narrow target (not hostile to life) from a wide range of possibilities that have no value (hostile to life). We don't credit Chris Kyle for hitting the wall above an Islamic terrorist from a mile away, we credit Chris Kyle for hitting an Islamic terrorist a mile away. The design is not how much of the universe is hospitable to life versus how much is hostile to life. The design is in the cosmological constants – where we are in the narrow band that is hospitable to life and not in the huge regions that are hostile to life.

You can read the best explanation of the design argument in this lecture featuring Robin Collins. That link goes to my post which has a summary of the lecture. He has a new lecture that I also blogged about where he extends the fine-tuning argument down to the level of particle physics. I have a summary of that one as well.

Five things to learn from “The Hobbit”

October 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gabriel Belmont looks up at his destination: Dracula’s castle (from Castlevania)

Since I mentioned “The Hobbit” in my biographical page at the top of the blog, I thought it might be worth linking to something about it.

This is from the Art of Manliness blog.

The 5 things:

1. You can aspire to and achieve greatness no matter who you are and no matter your stage in life
2. A great leader knows when it’s time to step back and let go
3. There are some things in life we just have to accomplish on our own
4. To simply continue on is one of the bravest things that can be done
5. A great story always has conflict or hardship

And my favorite of the five – the one that had meaning for me – is #5:

> **5. A great story always has conflict or hardship.** Imagine your life as a story. Not too long ago, we even had a guest post about this — our life is a journey, and a heroic one at that. Imagine yourself sitting down with your grandkids and telling them the story of you. “Well, I made some money, bought a few cars, sat around and watched TV for a few hours every night, and that’s about it.” Pretty boring, isn’t it? Now imagine that you can start hours worth of stories with, “I explored…I traveled…I fell in love…I fought and won…I overcame…I sweated…” Not only would the story be better, but you likely would be far more satisfied with the course of your life.
>
> J.R.R. Tolkien agrees. “Now it is a strange thing, but things that are good to have and days that are good to spend are soon told about, and not much to listen to; palpitating, and even gruesome, may make a good tale, and take a deal of telling anyways.” He is saying that a life of good ease is a boring one. It’s often what the

> American dream aspires to, but the reality is that personal growth, and even enjoyment, are things that come out of some kind of challenge. Whether it's huffing and puffing and groaning your way up a mountain for the view at the top, or getting laid off and finally realizing you don't want to be in a cubicle anymore, joy is often found after a bit of trudging. Don't shy away from challenge. Embrace it, and know that someday it'll make for a great story.

The Hobbit was the first big book that I ever read as a child, and I think that it inspired me to move far away from home as soon as I completed graduate school, so I could make my fortune. An adventurous spirit isn't free – it has to be put into a boy by what he reads. When I was young, I read "The Hobbit". You should make your children read "The Hobbit". Put into their minds at a young age the idea that life is an adventure, that dangers and hardships are normal, and that character counts. Put into their minds that all goodness requires sacrifice. I think that things are going to get harder for Christians going forward so it's better that they be ready for it.

Convergence detected in the genetic structure of bats and dolphins

October 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

We have to start this post with the definition of convergence in biology.

> In evolutionary biology, convergent evolution is the process whereby organisms not closely related (not monophyletic), independently evolve similar traits as a result of having to adapt to similar environments or ecological niches.
>
> It is the opposite of divergent evolution, where related species evolve different traits.
>
> On a molecular level, this can happen due to random mutation unrelated to adaptive changes; see long branch attraction. In cultural evolution, convergent evolution is the development of similar cultural adaptations to similar environmental conditions by different peoples with different ancestral cultures. An example of convergent evolution is the similar nature of the flight/wings of insects, birds, pterosaurs, and bats.
>
> All four serve the same function and are similar in structure, but each evolved independently.

Jonathan Wells explains the problem that convergence poses for naturalistic evolution:

> Human designers reuse designs that work well. Life forms also reuse certain structures (the camera eye, for example, appears in humans and octopuses). How well does this evidence support Darwinian evolution? Does it support intelligent design more strongly?
>
> Evolutionary biologists attribute similar biological structures to either common descent or convergence. Structures are said to result from convergence if they evolved independently from distinct lines of organisms. Darwinian explanations of convergence strain credulity because they must account for how trial-and-error tinkering (natural selection acting on random variations) could produce strikingly similar structures in widely different organisms and environments. It's

> one thing for evolution to explain similarity by common descent—the same structure is then just carried along in different lineages. It's another to explain it as the result of blind tinkering that happened to hit on the same structure multiple times. Design proponents attribute such similar structures to common design (just as an engineer may use the same parts in different machines). If human designers frequently reuse successful designs, the designer of nature can surely do the same.

I'm a software engineer, and we re-use components all the time for different programs that have no "common ancestor". E.g. – I can develop my String function library and use it in my web application and my Eclipse IDE plug-in, and those two Java programs have nothing in common. So you find the same bits in two different programs because I am the developer of both programs. But the two programs don't extend from a common program that was used for some other purpose – they have no "common ancestor" program.

Now with that in mind, take a look at this recent article from Science Daily, which Mysterious Micah sent me.

Excerpt:

> The evolution of similar traits in different species, a process known as convergent evolution, is widespread not only at the physical level, but also at the genetic level, according to new research led by scientists at Queen Mary University of London and published in Nature this week.
>
> The scientists investigated the genomic basis for echolocation, one of the most well-known examples of convergent evolution to examine the frequency of the process at a genomic level.
>
> Echolocation is a complex physical trait that involves the production, reception and auditory processing of ultrasonic pulses for detecting unseen obstacles or tracking down prey, and has **evolved separately** in different groups of bats and cetaceans (including dolphins).
>
> The scientists carried out one of the largest genome-wide surveys of its type to discover the extent to which convergent evolution of a physical feature involves the same genes.
>
> They compared genomic sequences of 22 mammals, including the genomes of bats and dolphins, which independently evolved echolocation, and found genetic signatures consistent with convergence in nearly 200 different genomic regions concentrated in several 'hearing genes'.
>
> […]Consistent with an involvement in echolocation, signs of convergence among bats and the bottlenose dolphin were seen in many genes previously implicated in hearing or deafness.
>
> **"We had expected to find identical changes in maybe a dozen or so genes but to see nearly 200 is incredible," explains Dr Joe Parker, from Queen Mary's School of Biological and Chemical Sciences and first**

> **author on the paper.**
>
> **“We know natural selection is a potent driver of gene sequence evolution, but identifying so many examples where it produces nearly identical results in the genetic sequences of totally unrelated animals is astonishing.”**

Nature is the most prestigious peer-reviewed science journal. This is solid material.

There is an earlier article from 2010 in New Scientist that talked about one of the previous genes that matched for hearing capability.

Excerpt:

> Bats and dolphins trod an identical genetic path to evolve a vital component of the complex sonar systems they use to pursue and catch prey.
>
> The finding is unusual, because although many creatures have independently evolved characteristics such as eyes, tusks or wings, they usually took diverse genetic routes to get there.
>
> Analysis of a specific gene has now demonstrated that although bats live in air and dolphins in water, where sound travels five times faster, they independently evolved a near-identical gene that allows them to accept high-frequency sound in the ear – vital for sonar.
>
> The gene makes prestin, a protein in hair cells of the cochlea, which is the organ in the inner ear where sonar signals are accepted and amplified. Prestin changes shape when exposed to high-frequency sound, and this in turn deforms the fine hair cells, setting off an electrical impulse to the brain. So the protein has the important jobs of detecting and selecting high-frequency sounds for amplification.
>
> **When researchers examined the molecular structure of the prestin gene from a range of animals, they found that the variants in echolocating bats and dolphins were virtually indistinguishable.**

Indistinguishable genes in animals that don’t share a common ancestor? Maybe a better explanation for the evidence we have is – *common designer.*

What are Boltzmann brains, and what challenge do they pose to the multiverse hypothesis?

October 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

I thought I would turn to the atheist theoretical physicist Sean Carroll, who has previously debated William Lane Craig, to explain to us what a Boltzmann brain is, and what threat it posts to the multiverse hypothesis.

Here is Sean Caroll, quoted by About.com:

> Ludwig Boltzmann was one of the founders of the field of thermodynamics in the nineteenth century.
>
> One of the key concepts was the second law of thermodynamics, which says that the entropy of a closed system always increases. Since the universe is a closed system, we would expect the entropy to increase over time. This means that, given enough time, the most likely state of the universe is one where everything is the in thermodynamic equilibrium … but we clearly don't exist in a universe of this type since, after all, there is order all around us in various forms, not the least of which is the fact that we exist.
>
> With this in mind, we can apply the anthropic principle to inform our reasoning by taking into account that we do, in fact, exist.
>
> Here the logic gets a little confusing, so I'm going to borrow the words from a couple of more detailed looks at the situation. As described by cosmologist Sean Carroll in *From Eternity to Here*:
>
> > *Boltzmann invoked the anthropic principle (although he didn't call it that) to explain why we wouldn't find ourselves in one of the very common equilibrium phases: In equilibrium, life cannot exist. Clearly, what we want to do is find the most common conditions within such a universe that are hospitable to life. Or, if we want to be more careful, perhaps we should look for conditions that are not only hospitable to life, but hospitable to the particular kind of intelligent and self-aware life that we*

> > *like to think we are….*
> >
> > *We can take this logic to its ultimate conclusion. If what we want is a single planet, we certainly don't need a hundred billion galaxies with a hundred billion stars each. And if what we want is a single person, we certainly don't need an entire planet. But if in fact what we want is a single intelligence, able to think about the world, we don't even need an entire person–we just need his or her brain.*
> >
> > *So the* reductio ad absurdum *of this scenario is that the overwhelming majority of intelligences in this multiverse will be lonely, disembodied brains, who fluctuate gradually out of the surrounding chaos and then gradually dissolve back into it. Such sad creatures have been dubbed "Boltzmann brains" by Andreas Albrecht and Lorenzo Sorbo….*
>
> In a 2004 paper, Albrecht and Sorbo discussed "Boltzmann brains" in their essay:
>
> > *A century ago Boltzmann considered a "cosmology" where the observed universe should be regarded as a rare fluctuation out of some equilibrium state. The prediction of this point of view, quite generically, is that we live in a universe which maximizes the total entropy of the system consistent with existing observations. Other universes simply occur as much more rare fluctuations. This means as much as possible of the system should be found in equilibrium as often as possible.*
> >
> > *From this point of view, it is very surprising that we find the universe around us in such a low entropy state. In fact, the logical conclusion of this line of reasoning is utterly solipsistic. The most likely fluctuation consistent with everything you know is simply your brain (complete with "memories" of the Hubble Deep fields, WMAP data, etc) fluctuating briefly out of chaos and then immediately equilibrating back into chaos again. This is sometimes called the "Boltzmann's Brain" paradox.*
>
> […]Now that you understand Boltzmann brains as a concept, though, you have to proceed a bit to understanding the "Boltzmann brain paradox" that is caused by applying this thinking to this absurd degree. Again, as formulated by Carroll:
>
> > *Why do we find ourselves in a universe evolving gradually from a state of incredibly low entropy, rather than being isolated creatures that recently fluctuated from the surrounding chaos?*
>
> Unfortunately, there is no clear explanation to resolve this … thus why it's still classified as a paradox.

Naturalists like to propose the multiverse as a way of explaining away the fine-tuning that we see, and explaining why complex, embodied intelligent beings like ourselves exist. But even if the multiverse hypothesis were true, we still would not expect to observe stars, planets, and conscious embodied intelligent beings. It is far more likely on a multiverse

scenario that any observers we had would be “Boltzmann” brains in an empty universe. The multiverse hypothesis doesn’t explain the universe we have, which contains “*a hundred billion galaxies with a hundred billion stars each*” – not to mention our bodies which are composed of heavy elements, all of which require fine-tuning piled on fine-tuning piled on fine-tuning.

William Lane Craig answered a question about Boltzmann brains a while back, so let’s look at his answer since we saw what his debate opponent said above.

He writes:

> Incredible as it may sound, today the principal–almost the only–alternative to a Cosmic Designer to explain the incomprehensibly precise fine tuning of nature’s constants and fundamental quantities is the postulate of a World Ensemble of (a preferably infinite number of) randomly ordered universes. By thus multiplying one’s probabilistic resources, one ensures that by chance alone somewhere in this infinite ensemble finely tuned universes like ours will appear.
>
> Now comes the key move: since observers can exist only in worlds fine-tuned for their existence, OF COURSE we observe our world to be fine-tuned! The worlds which aren’t finely tuned have no observers in them and so *cannot* be observed! Hence, our observing the universe to be fine-tuned for our existence is no surprise: if it weren’t, we wouldn’t be here to be surprised. So this explanation of fine tuning relies on (i) the hypothesis of a World Ensemble and (ii) an observer self-selection effect.
>
> Now apart from objections to (i) of a direct sort, this alternative faces a very formidable objection to (ii), namely, if we were just a random member of a World Ensemble, then we ought to be observing a very different universe. Roger Penrose has calculated that the odds of our solar system’s forming instantaneously through the random collision of particles is incomprehensibly more probable that the universe’s being fine-tuned, as it is. So if we were a random member of a World Ensemble, we should be observing a patch of order no larger than our solar system in a sea of chaos. Worlds like that are simply incomprehensibly more plentiful in the World Ensemble than worlds like ours and so ought to be observed by us if we were but a random member of such an ensemble.
>
> Here’s where the Boltzmann Brains come into the picture. In order to be observable the patch of order needn’t be even as large as the solar system. The most probable observable world would be one in which a single brain fluctuates into existence out of the quantum vacuum and observes its otherwise empty world. The idea isn’t that the brain is the whole universe, but just a patch of order in the midst of disorder. Don’t worry that the brain couldn’t persist long: it just has to exist long enough to have an observation, and the improbability of the quantum fluctuations necessary for it to exist that long will be trivial in comparison to the improbability of fine tuning.

> In other words, the observer self-selection effect is explanatorily vacuous. It does not suffice to show that only finely tuned worlds are observable. As Robin Collins has noted, what needs to be explained is not just intelligent life, but embodied, interactive, intelligent agents like ourselves. Appeal to an observer self-selection effect accomplishes nothing because there is no reason whatever to think that most observable worlds are worlds in which that kind of observer exists. Indeed, the opposite appears to be true: most observable worlds will be Boltzmann Brain worlds.

Allen Hainline explained some of the OTHER problems with the multiverse in a post on Cross Examined's blog. I recommend taking a look at those as well, because I feel funny even *talking* about Boltzmann brains. I would rather just say that there is no experimental evidence for the multiverse hypothesis, as I blogged before, and leave it at that. But if the person you are talking to fights you on it, you can disprove the multiverse with the Boltzmann brains.

If you want to know what’s ahead for America, look north to Canada

October 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

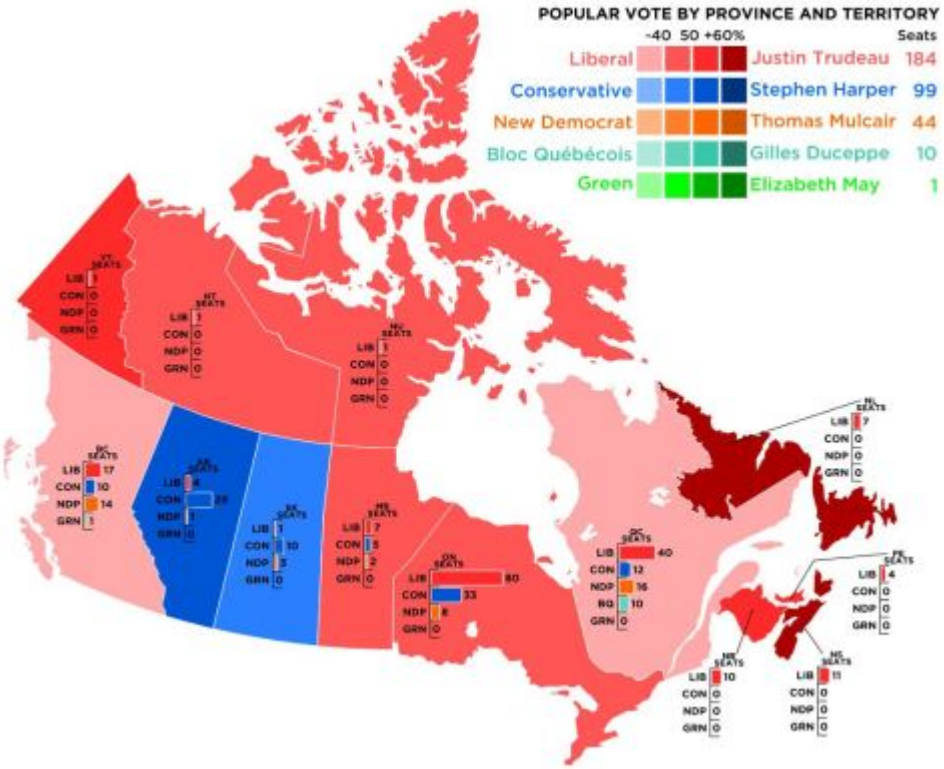

Canada election results 2015 (click for larger image)

A friend of mine pointed out this post by a pro-life woman based in Calgary, Alberta named McKenzie. As you all know, Canada lurched hard left last Monday, electing a strongly pro-abortion Liberal Party government, led by a man who insisted that candidates in his party swear their allegiance to abortion on demand, through all 9 months of pregnancy.

I took a look at some of the pro-life Members of Parliament and noticed that a bunch of them stepped down this election, and many others were defeated by Liberals. So, McKenzie is looking forward and seeing where the pro-abortion Liberal Party is going next now that they have a majority government.

She writes:

> As tempting as it is to write a semi-encouraging post about the state of affairs for the next two to four years, the reality is that the political sphere of the pro-life movement has been dealt a treacherous blow in seeking to protect the most defenseless lives among us.
>
> In the foreseeable future, here are **three possible federal pressures** we can expect from our Parliament over the next few months and years:
>
> **1. Legislation inhibiting, directly or indirectly, the freedom and mobility of life-affirming organizations, including pregnancy resource centres,**

> **and their ability to reach women seeking abortions.** We've had zero laws restricting abortion access throughout all nine months of pregnancy since 1988, but that hasn't stopped our new Prime Minister from enforcing a strictly pro-choice view among his party. The question at the front of their minds seems to be, "*how much further could we go in promoting abortion in our society – and overseas?*" A reasonable prediction is that the CRA and Human Rights Commissions will put additional pressure on Christian or pro-life charities to comply with any new laws enacted, regardless of their protections under the Charter – similar to our friends in California presently forced to give out abortion information alongside life-affirming options at pregnancy resource centres, though abortion clinics are not required to reciprocate.

CRA = Canada Revenue Agency, their IRS. We've already had a scandal where the IRS, probably under the direction of the White House, went after charities that were working against the Democrats on certain issues like stopping voter fraud. She is expecting to see the CRA used similarly to go after pro-lifers. As you know, the Human Rights Commissions are tools used by the secular left to punish conservatives for offending people on the secular left. The laws are only ever applied against conservatives, and they almost always lose their cases. Well, pro-lifers are offensive. McKenzie thinks that the HRCs are going to go after them.

Another one:

> **3. Economic policies directly and/or indirectly inhibiting our ability to donate towards charities and charitable causes, especially pro-life or pro-family causes.** Less money in the hands of private donors (especially those in the middle class) in a recession, coupled with higher redistribution through taxes, hits families the hardest when men and women are in their peak income-earning years. Less resources to go around means less charitable giving when mom and dad need to put their own needs for bills, food, and shelter first.

This is not surprising. The left is always anxious to go after charitable giving, because people are giving their money to causes they care about and the left doesn't get any benefit. What the left prefers is that they take the money from potential charitable donors and then use it to buy votes. Obama's latest budget of 2015 was the latest attempt to limit charitable contributions. She is expecting that pro-life donors will be targeted by the new Liberal majority government. And she undertstands that whatever impact she is going to have as a Christian is going to be funded by her own efforts to work for money, he husbands efforts to work for money, and the charitable donations she can get. The government *never* funds the efforts of Christians and/or conservatives to push Christian or conservative views. Which is why it makes zero sense for Christians to vote to expand the federal government outside of its Constitutional responsibilities.

So what are my thoughts on all this?

Well, I wish more pro-lifers down here were as aware of the effects of laws and policies on

life plans. If you read the rest of her post, McKenzie clearly has some kind of pro-life plan there, and it's a good one in that it's practical and evidence based. She intends to get results. But she's not looking inside at her own feelings and thoughts when she makes these life plans, she's looking at politics and laws and trying to anticipate where the threats will come from, and how to adjust. I wish pro-lifers here were more like that… especially when it comes to size of government. We need to keep our own money and not give it to the government. We need to keep the government away from our rights, e.g. – free speech and religious liberty.

Anyway, if you follow the gay rights vs religious liberties battles we are having now with florists, bakers, photographers, etc., then you might recall that similar things were happening in Canada 10-20 years ago. Canada was going through these problems in the late 90s, early 2000s, when the Liberals were in charge. It sort of died out when the Conservatives took over, but there's no reason I can see for it not to come back now that Canada has elected a Liberal majority. I'm going to be watching the situation closely up there, because whatever the Liberals do up there now is likely to make its way down here in the next 10-15 years – if we elect Democrats.

In fact, with respect to what she said about restricting pro-lifers, the Democrat Party already introduced a bill to remove all restrictions on abortion at the state and local levels. This is what they do. Laws, taxes and politics do matter.

House Republicans vote to repeal parts of Obamacare, defund Planned Plarenthood

October 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Congresswoman Mia Love

Great news from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> The House approved a budget reconciliation bill Friday that would repeal portions of Obamacare and cut federal funds to Planned Parenthood for one year.
>
> The legislation, called the Restoring Americans' Healthcare Freedom Reconciliation Act, was passed in a 240-189 vote.
>
> […]Rep. Tom Price, R-Ga., chairman of the House Budget Committee, said in a statement the bill "repeals the most coercive components of Obamacare—eliminating onerous taxes, the individual and employer mandates, an Obamacare slush fund, and lifting unnecessary burdens on employers and employees."
>
> Price noted the legislation would increase funding for community health centers while eliminating government support for Planned Parenthood, which is under investigation after a series of undercover videos related to its role with aborted baby body parts.
>
> Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List, a pro-life group, praised the House's efforts to defund Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider.

Naturally, Democrats voted for Obamacare and for Planned Parenthood. Because they love when people lose their doctors and health care, unless their doctor is an abortionist, and the health care is an abortion.

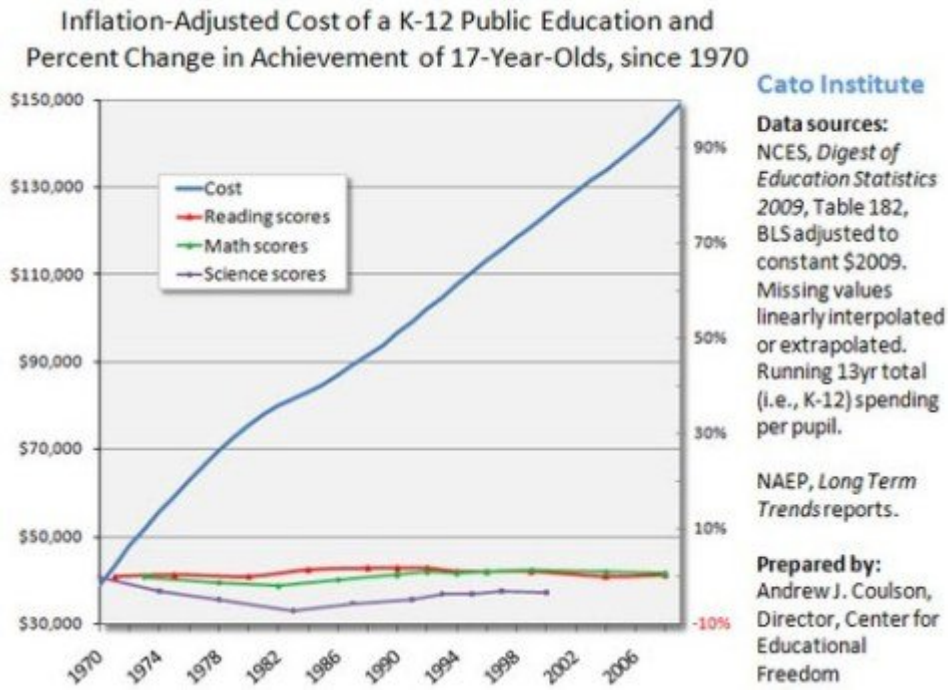

Cato Institute graphs education spending against student achievement

Meanwhile, House Republicans also voted to extend a school voucher program for low-income, minority students in Washington, D.C..

The Daily Signal reports on that, too:

> Speaker John Boehner cinched victory Wednesday as House Republicans smoothly extended his linchpin private school voucher program for low-income students through 2021.
>
> The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program provides students in Washington's struggling school districts with federally backed vouchers to attend a private school of choice. The House confirmed its reauthorization Wednesday evening in a near party-line vote of 240 to 191.
>
> […]Boehner, the product of Catholic school, helped begin the program in 2003 while he served as chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee. The program has operated as an alternative for parents who can't afford to transfer their kids out of a failing school district to a more effective private school.
>
> Over the past 10 years, more than 6,100 inner-city students have used the vouchers to "escape underperforming schools," Boehner noted.
>
> Proponents boast data finding that among those enrolled, 90 percent graduated from high school, and 88 percent of the class of 2015 moved on to pursue higher education. The average annual household income of the students enrolled falls around $20,575.
>
> Lindsey Burke, a fellow in education policy at The Heritage Foundation, previously told The Daily Signal the program marks a "beacon of education success" that has allowed other states to pursue similar school choice options.
>
> "You'd be hard-pressed to find many other education programs that can deliver

> those types of outcomes," Burke said.
>
> The $45-million program has faced Democratic pushback since its inception and will likely surface in the ongoing school choice battle between Republicans and President Barack Obama this fall.
>
> In anticipation of the program's reauthorization, the White House issued a statement Tuesday reaffirming the administration's "strong" opposition, but held back a veto threat.
>
> The president has attempted to defund the program every year, aligning with Democrats who argue that the scholarship funnels money out of D.C.'s public schools system.

It still has to make it through the Senate, and then Obama might veto it. But so what if he does, that just means we get a Republican president in 2016, when it comes out where Democrats really stand on providing quality education for poor, minority children. Republicans are all for it. Democrats oppose vouchers because they want to make sure that they have an ample supply of uneducated, dependent voters.

House Republicans create Select Committee to investigate Planned Parenthood

October 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tennessee Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn

So, last week we got some real answers from Hillary Clinton about Benghzi, namely, that she lied about the cause of the attack to the American people in order to avoid losing re-election in 2012.

What I would really like to see is a similar Select Committee on Planned Parenthood, and I would like to see it led by my favorite Congresswoman (since Michele Bachmann retired) Marsha Blackburn.

Well, guess what?

Life News has great news for pro-lifers.

> Several top pro-life members of Congress have been named to a new committee that will take the lead in investigating Planned Parenthood's sale of body parts from aborted babies. The new panel is the same kind of select committee that has been investigating the terrorist attack in Beghazi, Libya responsible for killing an American ambassador and security personnel.
>
> […]The following are the Republican members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee's new Select Investigative Panel. The panel incudes a number of pro-life women, pro-life champion Joe Pitts, and pro-life physician Andy Harris.
>
> - Rep. Marsha Blackburn, Chairman (R-TN)
> - Rep. Joe Pitts (R-PA)

> - Rep. Diane Black (R-TN)
> - Rep. Larry Bucshon (R-IN)
> - Rep. Sean Duffy (R-WI)
> - Rep. Andy Harris (R-MD)
> - Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO)
> - Rep. Mia Love (R-UT)
>
> Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler of Missouri told LifeNews.com she is proud to have been named ot the investigate committee.
>
> "I am proud to be appointed to the Select Investigative Panel and I thank the Speaker for asking me to serve," Hartzler said. "Much has been said on either side of this issue, and Americans are eager to uncover the truth regarding the trafficking of fetal body parts. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle as we seek the facts of this issue."
>
> "Ten videos were released since July showing high-level officials at organizations such as Planned Parenthood, Stem Express, and Advanced BioResources discussing actions that would potentially violate federal law. Moreover, their discussions imply that these criminal actions are widespread. This panel will be tasked with discovery as to the prevalence of these practices," she added.
>
> Rep. Diane Black, a nurse of more than 40 years and member of the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, said the new committee will engage in a "relentless pursuit of the facts."
>
> "I am grateful for the opportunity to bring my health care expertise to the critical work of this panel," she told LifeNews. "It is no secret that I am passionately pro-life and have long opposed the federal funding of Planned Parenthood, but every American deserves to know that our laws are followed and that taxpayer dollars are spent with integrity. This panel will help ensure that is the case. We will be relentless in the pursuit of the facts, we will bring the truth out into the light of day, and we will hold responsible parties accountable. This panel has an obligation to taxpayers to conduct a thorough investigation that produces real answers. I am ready to get to work.".

I had not heard of Vicki Hartzler before, but from this article, it looks like she will be a good addition to the team. She has a BS and MS, and she is an evangelical Christian. Former teacher.

So, I want to make a general point about these Select Committees. I think that these investigations are important. They allow us to find the facts that form the basis of our laws and policies. We have to know why terrorist attacks that kill our people happened, so that we can prevent it from happening again. We have to know whether the taxpayer money we give to certain organizations are being used appropriately, or whether they are being used in violation of American values. If we rely on the mainstream media to find these out, we'll be waiting forever.

Thoughts about atheist tweets, atheist memes and atheist YouTube rants

October 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I want to show you an atheist tweet, and then contrast the atheist tweet with some scientific evidence.

Look at this meme that was recently tweeted by a serious atheist:

Atheists believe nonsense, and they are proud of it

That's the tweet, now let's see the scientific evidence.

Look at this article from the Weather Channel which talks about the most recent NOAA hurricane estimates:

> A new hurricane season forecast issued by The Weather Channel on Tuesday says we can expect the number of named storms and hurricanes in the 2015 Atlantic season to stay below historical averages.

> A total of nine named storms, five hurricanes and one major hurricane are expected this season, according to the forecast prepared by The Weather Channel Professional Division. This is below the 30-year average of 12 named storms, six hurricanes and three major hurricanes.
>
> […]The Weather Channel forecast for below-average activity during the 2015 Atlantic hurricane season is consistent with what Colorado State University (CSU) said in its forecast issued on April 9. CSU's forecast called for seven named storms, including three hurricanes, one of which is predicted to attain major hurricane status.

> […]The 2014 season featured the fewest number of named storms in 17 years (eight storms), but also featured the strongest landfalling hurricane in the mainland U.S. in six years (Hurricane Arthur on the Outer Banks), and featured two back-to-back hurricane hits on the tiny archipelago of Bermuda (Fay, then Gonzalo).

Meanwhile, we should also be concerned about tornadoes, and here is a graph of that:

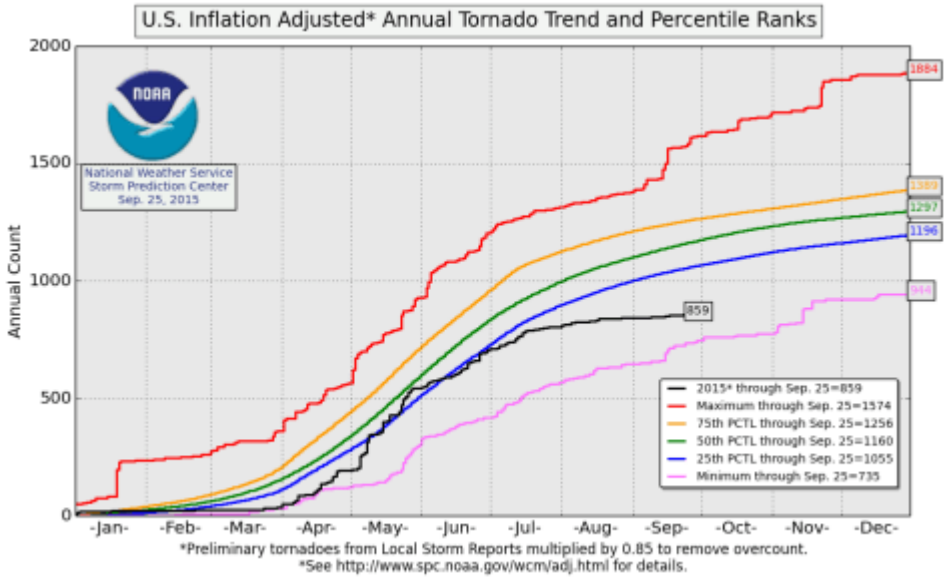

National Weather Service Tornado trend and averages (click for larger image)
As of September 25th, 2015 (the black line) is near the record low (the pink line).

By the way, the leftist Los Angeles Times is now reporting that the hurricane caused ZERO deaths. It was much less powerful than the hand-wringing global warmists wanted us to believe.

Previously, I blogged about how the reliable satellite measurements of global temperature show a 19-year pause in "global warming". And of course we have the Medieval Warming Period (MWP), a period from the 9th to 13th centuries when global temperatures were warmer than they are now. That's why there are viking villages encased in ice on Greenland. Changes in global temperatures occur naturally, most likely due to solar activity variations.

I understand that it's fun for atheists to send each other pictures that make them feel smarter than theists, but at the end of the day, we should care about the data, shouldn't we? I mean, we should be driving at truth using scientific evidence, and not just amuse ourselves with comforting myths that make us feel smug and self-assured.

Who's irrational now?

Now, let's take a more generalized look at which group, atheists or theists, are more likely to believe in ridiculous superstitions, using survey data from the center-left Pew Research Center (and not some meme tweeted on Twitter).

The Pew Research survey is here.

Here are the parts that I found interesting:

Beliefs of Demographic, Political and Religious Groups

	% who believe in...					
	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
	%	%	%	%	%	
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Male	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Female	38	37	37	38	8	1,141
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
White	31	32	34	32	4	1,927
Black	34	31	30	39	39	62
Hispanic	39	33	37	35	36	43
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
18-29	36	31	31	30	8	372
30-49	39	36	38	36	9	293
50-64	36	30	39	33	6	297
65+	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Democrat	30	31	30	31	9	528
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Conservative	8	9	8	6	7	517
Moderate	37	39	39	30	9	563
Liberal	33	39	39	30	7	414
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Protestant	30	8	30	31	6	1,039
White Evang.	1	2	9	3	2	462
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
White mainline	34	34	37	34	0	403
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Black Protestant	39	30	8	39	32	82
Catholic	38	37	39	39	7	437
White Cath. Hisp	39	34	34	39	2	338
[illegible]	31	9	32	6	2	62
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Unaffiliated	39	38	30	39	2	303
[illegible]						

More:

Supernatural Experiences

	Dreams		Feelings	
	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
	%	%	%	
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Male	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Female	31	[illegible]	[illegible]	1,141
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
White	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Black	41	[illegible]	[illegible]	78
Hispanic	30	30	9	43
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
18-29	38	30	1	372
30-49	31	8	7	293
50-64	32	31	6	297
65+	37	8	2	31
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Conservative	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Moderate	32	32	8	563
Liberal	39	30	31	414
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Protestant	30	7	3	1,039
White Evang.	30	9	0	462
White mainline	39	8	3	403
Black Protestant	37	8	9	82
Catholic	7	[illegible]	[illegible]	437
White Cath. Hisp	5	[illegible]	[illegible]	31
Unaffiliated	1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Bible is Literal	34	32	9	563
Bible is Inspired	38	33	6	20

Figures are not additive. [illegible] Rounding [illegible]

Notice the numbers for Republicans vs Democrats, conservatives vs. liberals, and church-attending vs non church-attending. The least superstitious people are conservative evangelical Republicans, while the most superstitious people are Democrat liberals who don’t attend church. I think there is something to be learned from that. It’s consistent with the results of a Gallup survey that showed that evangelical Christians are the most rational people on the planet.

Here's the Wall Street Journal article about the survey done by Gallup, entitled "Look Who's Irrational Now". Again, this is data, and not some meme tweeted on Twitter.

Excerpt:

> The reality is that the New Atheist campaign, by discouraging religion, won't create a new group of intelligent, skeptical, enlightened beings. Far from it: It might actually encourage new levels of mass superstition. And that's not a conclusion to take on faith — it's what the empirical data tell us.
>
> "What Americans Really Believe," a comprehensive new study released by Baylor University yesterday, shows that traditional Christian religion greatly decreases belief in everything from the efficacy of palm readers to the usefulness of astrology. It also shows that the irreligious and the members of more liberal Protestant denominations, far from being resistant to superstition, tend to be much more likely to believe in the paranormal and in pseudoscience than evangelical Christians.
>
> The Gallup Organization, under contract to Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion, asked American adults a series of questions to gauge credulity.
>
> […]The answers were added up to create an index of belief in occult and the paranormal. While 31% of people who never worship expressed strong belief in these things, only 8% of people who attend a house of worship more than once a week did.
>
> Even among Christians, there were disparities. While 36% of those belonging to the United Church of Christ, Sen. Barack Obama's former denomination, expressed strong beliefs in the paranormal, only 14% of those belonging to the Assemblies of God, Sarah Palin's former denomination, did. In fact, the more traditional and evangelical the respondent, the less likely he was to believe in, for instance, the possibility of communicating with people who are dead.

When I think of the "weird" things that evangelical Christians believe, I think of the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life and the sudden origin of animal body plans in the Cambrian. All of that science is superstition to an atheist, and yet all of it is rooted in mainstream science. Not just that, but support for our "weird" views has grown stronger as science has progressed.

There are many, many arguments for theism in general, and Christian theism in particular:

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The building blocks of life and the early Earth atmosphere
- The origin of life: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones

- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

I can accept the fact that an atheist may be ignorant of the science that defeats his atheism, but that’s something that has to be remedied with more studying of the evidence, not tweeting memes to each other and giggling like children. There is no science that supports atheism, just as there is no science that supports superstitions.

By any measure, Obamacare has been a disastrous failure

October 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, the law was supposed to take until now to come into full effect. Now that we are getting the full Obamacare, what are we seeing?

The Wall Street Journal says not enough of the young Democrats who voted for Obamacare are signing up for it:

> This month the Health and Human Services Department dramatically discounted its internal estimate of how many people will join the state insurance exchanges in 2016. There are about 9.1 million enrollees today, and the consensus estimate—by the Congressional Budget Office, the Medicare actuary and independent analysts like Rand Corp.—was that participation would surge to some 20 million. But HHS now expects enrollment to grow to between merely 9.4 million and 11.4 million.
>
> Recruitment for 2015 is roughly 70% of the original projection, but ObamaCare will be running at less than half its goal in 2016. HHS believes some 19 million Americans earn too much for Medicaid but qualify for ObamaCare subsidies and haven't signed up. Some 8.5 million of that 19 million purchase off-exchange private coverage with their own money, while the other 10.5 million are still uninsured. In other words, for every person who's allowed to join and has, two people haven't.
>
> Among this population of the uninsured, HHS reports that half are between the ages of 18 and 34 and nearly two-thirds are in excellent or very good health. The exchanges won't survive actuarially unless they attract this prime demographic: ObamaCare's individual mandate penalty and social-justice redistribution are supposed to force these low-cost consumers to buy overpriced policies to cross-subsidize everybody else. No wonder HHS Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell said meeting even the downgraded target is "probably pretty challenging."

The program doesn't work unless young, poor, healthy people are forced to pay for the health care of rich, older, sickly people.

The radically leftist New York Times reports that out of the 22 health insurance co-ops Obamacare created, nine of them have already closed – leaving customers *without coverage*.

Excerpt:

> The grim announcements keep coming, picking up pace in recent weeks.
>
> About a third, or eight, alternative health insurers created under President Obama'shealth care law to spur competition that might have made coverage less

> expensive for consumers are shutting down. The three largest are among that number. Only 14 of the so-called cooperatives are still standing, some precariously.
>
> The toll of failed co-op insurers, which were intended to challenge dominant companies that wield considerable power to dictate prices, has left about 500,000 customers scrambling to find health insurance for next year. A ninth co-op, which served Iowa and Nebraska, closed in February.
>
> At a time when the industry is experiencing a wave of consolidation, with giants like Anthem and Aetna planning to buy their smaller rivals, the vanishing co-ops will leave some consumers with fewer choices — and potentially higher prices.
>
> The failures include co-ops in New York, Colorado, Kentucky and South Carolina.
>
> The shuttering of these start-ups amounts to what could be a loss of nearly $1 billion in federal loans provided to help them get started. And the cascading series of failures has also led to skepticism about the Obama administration's commitment to this venture.

UPDATE: A day after this was posted, another IRS co-op has just closed, this time in Utah. Now we are up to 10 out of 22.

Cato Institute health care expert Michael Tanner talks about the increases in health care premiums caused by Obamacare at CNS News:

> For example, insurance companies have begun submitting their requests for rate increases for 2016, and those requests suggest that premiums could skyrocket next year. Already we've seen requests for increases for individual plans as high as 64.8 percent in Texas, 61 percent in Pennsylvania, 51.6 percent in New Mexico, 36.3 percent in Tennessee, 30.4 percent in Maryland, 25 percent in Oregon, and 19.9 percent in Washington. Those increases would come on top of premium increases last year that were 24.4 percent above what they would have been without Obamacare, according to a study from the National Bureau of Economic Research. At the same time, deductibles for the cheapest Obamacare plans now average about $5,180 for individuals and $10,500 for families.

Recall that on this blog, pretty much all of 2009 and 2010 was spent carefully explaining the moral hazards and other problems created by Obamacare. This was stuff that Republicans *knew would happen*. But on the other side of the aisle, there was too much naive, youthful exuberance from the secular left. Evidence was ignored, and feelings won the day. Obamacare was passed on the memes and tweets, while the studies reported by people like me went entirely unread.

Investors Business Daily just posted a list of 12 problems with Obamcare for the middle class:

Remember how many times I blogged about this one:

> **6. Shorter Workweeks**

> Because ObamaCare's employer mandate fines don't apply for workers who average fewer than 30 hours per week, the law gives companies an incentive to put a cap on workhours — particularly for low-wage workers who are less likely to be offered coverage.
>
> The impact isn't big enough to show up in economywide data, but there's little doubt that the employer mandate has hurt a lot of people. IBD found 450 employers that capped workhours, and Current Population Survey data show a dive in the share of workers clocking just above 30 hours per week.

And what about the penalty for not buying what the government tells you to:

> **7. Impact On Wages**
>
> In 2016, a company with 50 full-time-equivalent workers could face a penalty of $2,160 per employee (with 30 workers exempted). When the after-tax fine is converted to tax-deductible wages, it equates to $1.71 an hour for a full-time worker.
>
> Who will pay the penalty? For the most part, it won't be employers — at least not directly. The CBO expects that "the penalty will be borne primarily by workers in the form of reduced wages or other compensation."

Again, I want to emphasize that it is the evidence-hating secular left that is surprised by these "unexpected" problems with their childish policy. Those of us on the religious right predicted them, because we read the studies that were done before the 2012 election.

The Wall Street Journal reports that the economy's not doing so well, either:

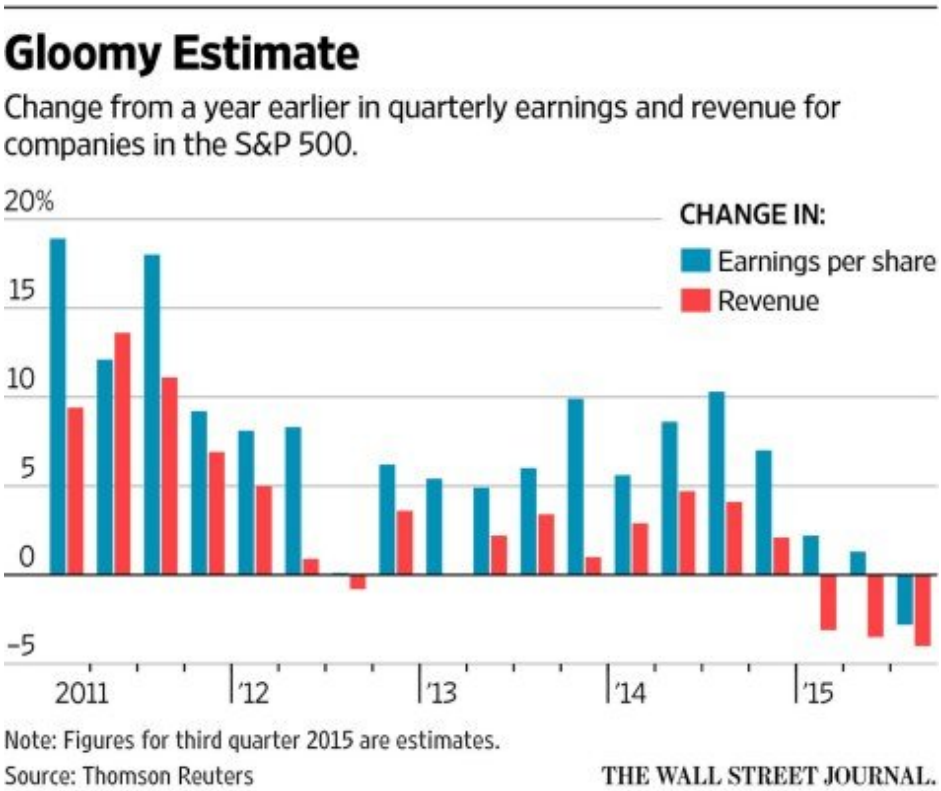

Changes in quarterly earnings and revenue for S&P 500 companies

In 2006, we handed both the House and Senate to Democrats. The national debt was $8.5

trillion. In 2008, we handed the Presidency to the Democrats. The national debt was $10 trillion. After 10 years of Democrats, we now have a national debt of $18.5 trillion. It has been a long, low-interest, no-growth Keynesian binge. The kind of economics you expect from a socialist community organizer.

New study: Tennessee pre-K program provides no educational benefit over control group

October 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the most thorough study that I have ever seen evaluating the effectiveness of pre-K programs. The study was done by researchers at Vanderbilt University. (H/T Brad Wilcox tweet)

The study was reported on by the well-respected but leftist Brookings Institute.

They write:

> State investments in center-based school readiness programs for preschoolers (pre-K), whether targeted for poor children or universally implemented, have expanded more rapidly than evaluations of their effects. Given the current interest and continuing expansion of state funded pre-K, it is especially important to be clear about the nature of the available evidence for the effectiveness of such programs. Despite widespread claims about proven benefits from pre-K, there is actually strikingly little credible research about the effectiveness of public pre-K programs scaled for statewide implementation.
>
> Like many states that became interested in scaling up a state funded pre-K program in the early 2000's, voluntary pre-K (TNVPK) was introduced in Tennessee in 1996 as a way to provide academic enhancement to economically disadvantaged children. It expanded in 2005 to an $85 million-plus statewide investment serving 18,000 Tennessee income-eligible children in 935 classrooms across all 95 counties.
>
> Launched in 2009, the TNVPK Effectiveness Study, a coordinated effort between Vanderbilt's Peabody Research Institute and the Tennessee Department of Education, is a five-year evaluation study funded by the US Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences. It includes the first randomized control trial of a scaled up state funded pre-K program and the first well-controlled comparison group study of the effects of program participation as children progress through elementary school..
>
> Policymakers and proponents often cite some of the famous early studies of pre-K programs that have shown long term benefits extending into adulthood for the participating children. But those were studies of especially complex programs that are unlike scaled-up public pre-K in many ways. **The Vanderbilt study is the first rigorous controlled longitudinal study to be conducted on a large-scale state-funded pre-K program.**

And here is a summary of the results:

> **Standard score results from pre-K through 3rd grade on a composite measure that averaged the six achievement subtests are presented**

> **from baseline forward in the graph below.**
>
> As is evident, pre-K and control children started the pre-K year at virtually identical levels. The TNVPK children were substantially ahead of the control group children at the end of the pre-K year (age 5 in the graph). By the end of kindergarten (age 6 in the graph), the control children had caught up to the TNVPK children, and there were no longer significant differences between them on any achievement measures. The same result was obtained at the end of first grade using two composite achievement measures (the second created with the addition of two more WJIII subtests appropriate for the later grades). In second grade, however, the groups began to diverge with the TNVPK children scoring lower than the control children on most of the measures. The differences were significant on both achievement composite measures and on the math subtests. Differences favoring the control persisted through the end of third grade.
>
> **In terms of behavioral effects, in the spring the first grade teachers reversed the fall kindergarten teacher ratings. First grade teachers rated the TNVPK children as less well prepared for school, having poorer work skills in the classrooms, and feeling more negative about school. It is notable that these ratings preceded the downward achievement trend we found for VPK children in second and third grades. The second and third grade teachers rated the behaviors and feelings of children in the two groups as the same; there was a small positive finding for peer relations favoring the TNVPK children by third grade teachers, which did not meet traditional levels of statistical significance.**

Results graph:

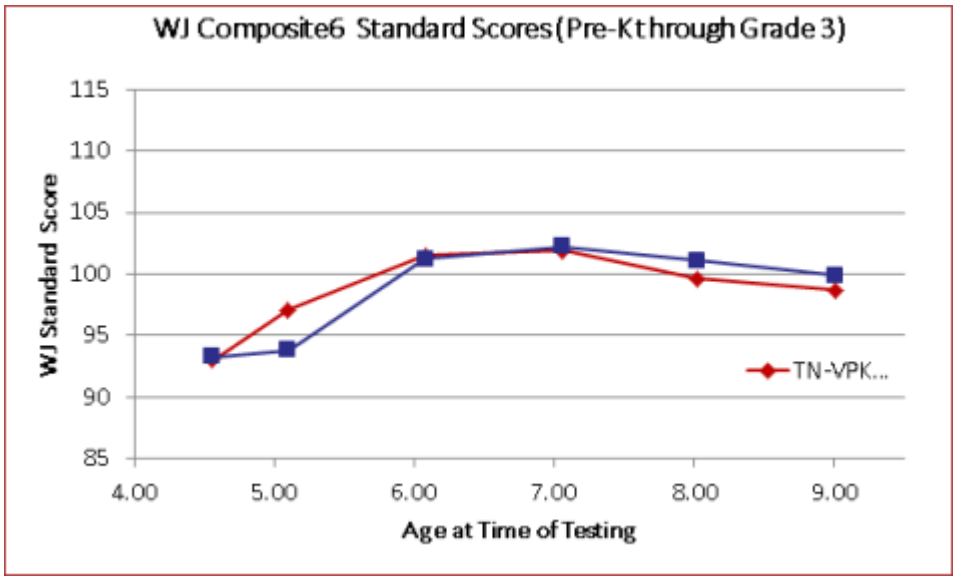

TNVPK data: pre-K program is in red, baseline is in blue

We are already seeing that cheap daycare in high-tax, big government provinces like Quebec cost a lot, and produce negative results. And of course Hillary Clinton is a longstanding advocate of universal pre-K. As a Senator of New York, she introduced a

universal pre-K plan that would cost $10 billion over 5 years. President Barack Obama's own Preschool for All plan would cost $75 billion over 10 years. This Vanderbilt study should cause us to question whether the policies of the secular left, pushed largely because of emotions and ideology, are worth the tens of billions of dollars they want to take from us. And if you take tens of billions of dollars out of families, then families on the margin will have to give their children to the state to raise. And that includes Christian families, who would no longer be able to *afford* a stay-at-home mother.

Now, taking children away from parents so that their mothers can work is seen as a worthy goal by those on the secular left. First, communally raising the children is "good" because it removes inequalities between single mothers and traditional working-husband homes. Second, making it easier for women to "go fatherless" is "good" because fathers are not to be trusted to teach their children about morality and religion. That is best left to secular government workers. Third, mothers who choose to marry good providers pay less in taxes if they choose to stay home with their kids and not work. That is "bad" because the government wants more taxes, so they can spend it on vote-buying social programs. Fourth, children who form stable bonds with their parents are less likely to become dependent on the government, meaning their allegiance cannot be bought with government handouts. That is also "bad". Fifth, it is also "bad" that children who grow up with stay-at-home mothers are more likely to develop empathy and morality, which gives them an independent standard by which to judge the government's actions.

Related posts

- New study: negative effects of day care on children not caused by quality of day care
- New study: government run child-care increases negative outcomes for kids
- Stay-at-home motherhood falls to record low in the UK
- New study: lack of secure attachment during early childhood harms children
- New study: separating from mother causes children to have higher anxiety and fear
- Obama proposes new tax on stay-at-home moms in SOTU speech
- Obama on stay-at-home moms: "that's not a choice we want them to make"
- New Oxford University study links non-family day care to anti-social behavior
- Feminist Nancy Pelosi pushes national daycare program
- How the UK government penalizes stay-at-home moms and pushes kids into daycare
- UK offers more money to working women and single mothers, nothing for stay-at-home moms
- Democrats want government social workers to visit children starting "at birth"

Bible study: Was the resurrection body of Jesus spiritual or physical?

October 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

So, everyone from left to right accepts the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 being dated to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, even atheists like Crossley, Ludemann and Crossan. The thing is, some people are not sure that the appearances of Jesus to individuals, groups, and skeptics really were physical appearances. They say "well, Paul's appearance was non-physical, so the other ones must have been, too".

Let's take a look.

Here's a paragraph from my friend Eric Chabot, from his blog Think Apologetics. He explains why Paul's use of the word "resurrection" to describe what the other witnesses saw means *bodily* resurrection.

He writes:

> If Paul did have a vision then the term "vision" is vague and must be defined. As Licona points out, visions are either objective (i.e., something that is seen without the use of our natural senses) or subjective (i.e., a product of our minds). The real problem is with the vision hypothesis is that it doesn't explain Paul's use of resurrection to explain what had happened to Jesus. The two words are used for resurrection in the New Testament "anastasis" (rising up) and "egersis" (waking up), both imply a physical body**.** Furthermore, the use of the word "opethe" (the Greek word for appeared) shows the Gospel writers did believe that Jesus appeared physically. "There you will see (opethe) him" (Matt. 28:7); "The Lord has risen and has appeared (opethe) to Simon" (Luke 24:24).

> When they used “opethe” here, it means that He appeared physically to them.

> So when Paul gives his list of appearances in 1 Cor. 15, the issues becomes whether the appearance to him is the same as it was to the disciples. There is no doubt the post resurrection body of Jesus (after the ascension) had to be somewhat different than the body the disciples saw. Also, whenever the New Testament mentions the word body, in the context of referring to an individual human being, the Greek word “soma” always refers to a literal, physical body.Greek specialist Robert Gundry says “the consistent and exclusive use of soma for the physical body in anthropological contexts resists dematerialization of the resurrection, whether by idealism or by existentialism.” [9] Furthermore, in N.T. Wright’s The Resurrection of the Son of God shows that the Greek word for resurrection which is “anastasis” was used by ancient Jews, pagans, and Christians as bodily in nature.

Now, I think my view on this, and I’m not sure if Eric would correct me, is that Paul got an objective but non-physical vision of Jesus. There was something there that everyone else could see and hear, in my view. But in my view Paul’s “veridical” vision was post-ascension, and so non-physical. Paul uses the word resurrection to describe what the other eyewitnesses saw (and he met them at least twice, according to Gal 1 and Gal 2), and that means physical resurrected body.

Eric Chabot writes this in another place:

> **Acts 9- Paul’s Damascus Road Experience**
>
> Here we see whatever happened, this was after the ascension. Hence, to say Paul saw the exact same Jesus before he ascended is hard to infer from the text. There simply isn’t enough information here. The Bible says, “they heard” the same voice Paul did ” (Acts 9: 7). But they “did not see anyone ” (Acts 9: 7). Notice Paul was physically blinded by the brightness of the light. One way or the other, the experience involved something that was external to Paul. It wasn’t something that was the same thing as a vision that Paul talks about in 2 Cor. 12:1. Furthermore, the phrase “he let himself be seen’” (ōphthē , aorist passive,), is the word Paul uses in 1 Cor. 15:7 to describe of his own resurrection appearance as the other ones in the creed. As Paul Barnett says:
>
> “It is sometimes claimed that the word appeared (ōphthē) means a mystical seeing, as of a vision, and that since this was what Paul “saw” it was what the other apostles “saw.” In other words, after death, Jesus was taken directly to heaven whence he “appeared” to various people, mystically, as it were. This however, is not all the meaning of Paul’s words. First, the word ōphthē, “appeared” is not limited to visionary seeing it is also used for physical seeing. Moreover, the verb raise used in the phrase ‘raised on the third day” is used elsewhere in combination with the words “from the dead” which literally means “from among the corpses.” Thus raised preceding appeared gives the latter a

> physical not a mystical meaning. Christ, as “raised from the dead” ….appeared.” Furthermore, when Paul asks “ Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?”(1 Cor. 9: 1), he is using the ordinary word horan, “to see” for physical sight. If “seeing” the Lord “raised from the dead” qualified others to be apostles, then Paul is, indeed, an apostle. It was no mere subjective vision that arrested Paul en route to Damascus. (8) .
>
> In the end, word studies can’t entirely resolve this issue. We need to remember the etymological fallacy as well. We would have to look at all the texts that speak of resurrection (including the entire 1 Cor. 15 chapter in their entire context as well as the anthropology of the New Testament. We also need to study the resurrection in light of the Second Temple Jewish period. See our reading list here for some resources that may help.

But conservative ancient historian Gary Habermas seems to think that Paul got the physical body as well.

He says:

> Now, I said before in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul could have chosen to only use the word *pneuma*. He doesn’t. He does say “spiritual,” but he’s got an adjective there. He also says, *soma*, “body.” What did Paul mean?

> Philippians Chapter 3. It’s a short chapter. There are 21 verses, but Paul says three things in one chapter that indicate he’s talking about a physical resurrection. In the opening verses he says, “I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews” and “as touching the law,” he says, “I was a Pharisee.” Now, it’s very well known that the Pharisee believed in a bodily resurrection. In fact, according to Acts 23, as Paul was being taken captive by the Romans to prevent his being killed, he shouted out to the group of people and said, “Why are you taking me? Because I believe in the resurrection of the dead?” He meant a literal resurrection.
>
> When the Pharisees heard that, they said there’s nothing wrong with this guy. But the Sadducees [who didn’t believe in the Resurrection] didn’t like it. So as a Pharisee, he’s agreeing with the Pharisees.
>
> So, the first evidence is from Philippians 3. As a Pharisee, Paul believes in a physical resurrection.
>
> Secondly, in verse 11 he says, “That I may attain the resurrection of the

> dead." Now, the normal Greek word for resurrection is *anastasis,* but in this passage, Philippians 3:11, he puts a prefix on there, ***ek*** *anastasis.* ***Ek****anastasis*, according to all Greek scholars that I know of, is translated in this passage: "The out resurrection from among the dead." Paul said, "I want to attain the out resurrection."
>
> Now, to a Jew, "out resurrection" means "what goes down is what comes up." You come out from death. And then just a few verses later, Philippians 3:20,21, he said, "From Heaven, we look for Jesus who will change our vile *soma* (body) to be like unto His glorious *soma* (or body)," when he should have said *pneuma*, according to this other view.
>
> So he's a Pharisee who believes in a physical resurrection. ***Ek*** *anastasis*—"resurrection from out among the dead ones."
>
> Thirdly, Paul says, "He Jesus will change ***my body*** to be like ***His body***."

> So right there in Philippians 3 alone, I think the picture of Jesus being some wispy spirit that appeared to him on the road to Damascus doesn't fit Paul's own data.

Yes, that's why Philippians is my favorite book. You can get so much useful theology out of it. Something about the resurrection in Phil 3, something about Jesus' divinity in Phil 2, and loads of practical advice on stewardship, charity, fellowship, endurance and practical love for others throughout. Some of it takes a little digging, but that's what commentaries are for, am I right? But I digress.

If you want to read something a little more challenging, I found a paper from the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) from their journal, where it talks more about soma and anastasis. If you want a bit of a challenge, download the PDF and read it. It's by Kirk R. MacGregor and the title is "1 Corinthians 15:3B–6A, 7 And The Bodily Resurrection Of Jesus".

New Planned Parenthood video shows doctor admitting to partial-term abortion

October 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video: (viewer discretion is advised)

Anika, writing over at The Stream, has the story.

She writes:

> The latest undercover Planned Parenthood video from the Center for Medical Progress shows Dr. Amna Dermish, the abortion provider for Planned Parenthood in Austin, TX, describing a partial-birth abortion procedure to terminate living, late-term fetuses.
>
> […]Dermish assures the potential organ buyer, "My aim is usually to get the specimens out pretty intact." She uses laminaria sticks to slowly dilate the cervix and prompt labor.
>
> Then, in an uncut sequence, Planned Parenthood's Dr. Dermish walks the organ buyer through the method she uses for infants older than 18 weeks.
>
> She uses ultrasound guidance to convert a second-trimester fetus to a feet-first breech presentation.
>
> "With a further gestation, I will sometimes do that [deliver breech] if it's a cephalic [head-first] presentation, just cause it's easier to get … convert to breech, grab the spine."
>
> This is a textbook description of partial-birth abortion, which is illegal. The baby is alive and mostly outside of the mother's body when it is killed.
>
> After this ghoulish walkthrough, Dermish admits to the buyer that she hasn't gotten an intact head. Yet.
>
> "I haven't been able to do that yet — to get the calvarium intact [the portion of the skull containing the brain] … Well, this will give me something to strive for," she laughs.
>
> Planned Parenthood's Dermish describes the difficulty of "getting around the cal" once the fetus is 20 weeks and presenting head first. "Especially the 20-weekers are a lot harder versus the 18-weekers, so at that point I'll switch to breech."
>
> Dr. Dermish told the organ buyer that a worker in her clinic, "one of our POC [product of conception] persons is really into organ development."
>
> "She'll pull out, like, kidneys, and like, heart, and heart we frequently see at nine weeks and she always looks for it."
>
> "Just like, for fun?" the buyer asks.
>
> The other doctor interjects. "Well, it's cute."

Well, it's cute.

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton is defending Planned Parenthood's organ harvesting for profit operation. And why not? They donate tons of money to Democrats.

Life News reports:

> Hillary Clinton has some pretty hard words for the new panel investigating Planned Parenthood.
>
> Clinton claims the creation of a special committee to investigate Planned Parenthood is "just code for a partisan witch hunt." She then pivots to the smaller amount of legitimate health care Planned Parenthood provides — as if helping women with a pap smear makes up for aborting babies and selling their hearts and livers.
>
> She claims pro-lifers upset with Planned Parenthood forget "the mom who caught her cancer early thanks to a screening at Planned Parenthood," and "the young woman who avoided an unintended pregnancy because she did have access to birth control."

It's a partisan witch hunt. Hillary says.

Related posts

- House Republicans create Select Committee to investigate Planned Parenthood
- House Republicans vote to repeal parts of Obamacare, defund Planned Plarenthood
- Texas raids Planned Parenthood offices in Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio
- Report evaluates the claim that Planned Parenthood videos were highly edited
- Democrats defeat bill to ban abortions of babies who can feel pain
- Barack Obama vows to veto any bill that cuts off funding for Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration retaliates against Kansas for defunding Planned Parenthood
- Democrats launch investigation of pro-life group that filmed Planned Parenthood videos

- Does Planned Parenthood do mammograms? Is abortion only 3% of their services?
- Democrats defeat Republican bill to defund Planned Parenthood
- Planned Parenthood president visited White House 39 times since 2009
- Obama administration refuses FOIA requests about Planned Parenthood
- Obama administration will investigate whistleblowers who filmed Planned Parenthood
- ABC, CBS, CNN, and MSNBC all ignore Planned Parenthood organ harvesting story
- With government subsidies, Planned Parenthood did 327,653 abortions in 2013
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- Abortion profiteers Planned Parenthood spending $12 million to re-elect Obama
- Planned Parenthood issues statement admitting that they do not offer mammograms

Hillary Clinton downplays VA scandal: 307,000 veterans died on VA waiting lists

October 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

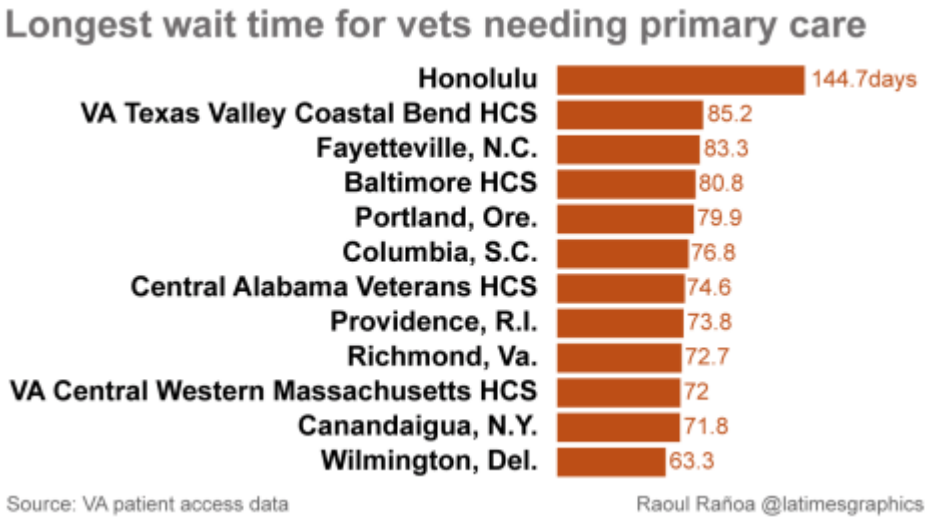

VA health care wait times

Before we find out what Hillary Clinton thinks of the Department of Veterans Affairs health care scandal, let's find out what the problem is, using this article from Breitbart News.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Veterans Affairs office Inspector General has released a report revealing that about 307,000 sick veterans have died while waiting for care on the VA's eligibility waiting list. In fact, the report finds that many have been dead for more than four years.
> The report confirms the worst-case scenarios about the long VA wait times that have made news reports and sparked questions in Congress since last year.
>
> On Wednesday, the OIG revealed that of the 800,000-some records stalled in the VA's health care enrollment system, 307,000 veterans have already died anywhere from months ago to more than four years ago.
>
> "As of September 2014, more than 307,000 pending [enrollment system] records, or about 35 percent of all pending records, were for individuals reported as deceased by the Social Security Administration," the report discovered.
>
> But even that number was disputable because the VA's databases are in such disarray.
>
> "[D]ue to data limitations, we could not determine specifically how many pending [enrollment system] records represent veterans who applied for health care benefits," the report continued. "These conditions occurred because the enrollment program did not effectively define, collect, and manage enrollment data."

> The study resulted after whistleblowers warned of the utter mismanagement at the Veteran Affairs offices that included incorrectly making unprocessed applications and the deletion of thousands of records over at least the last five years.
>
> The OIG found one veteran who had been on a waiting list for 14 years and another veteran who died in 1988 but still had unprocessed applications in the VA system.
>
> Scott Davis, a program specialist at the VA Health Eligibility Center, told CNN that millions of veterans are still at risk because of these failures.
>
> "People who fought, and who earned the right to VA health care were never given VA health care," Davis said. "They literally died while waiting for VA to process their health care application."

Now let's see what Hillary Clinton said about the VA scandal.

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help
Here she is, in her own words, before a friendly audience:

She says this about the VA problems: "It's not been as widespread as it has been made out to be".

Single-payer health care

This is health care policy expert Sally Pipes, writing in Investors Business Daily, about the VA single-payer health care system.

She writes:

> A new report from the Government Accountability Office has confirmed that the

> Department of Veterans Affairs can't take care of those it's supposed to serve.
>
> The GAO has placed the VA's health system on the "high risk" list of federal programs that are vulnerable to "fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement." The agency is still struggling to recover from an 8-month-old internal audit that revealed that returning soldiers had to wait more than 90 days for care. Some patients died while waiting.
>
> The GAO's findings apply far beyond the VA. The agency's problems — which include long wait-times and out-of-control costs — demonstrate what happens in any government-run, single-payer health care system.
>
> […]Defenders of government-run health care claim that it will control costs by cutting out middlemen such as insurance companies. The evidence shows otherwise. According to the GAO, the VA budget more than doubled between 2002 and 2013 even as enrollment increased by less than a third.Single-payer's "guarantee" of access to high-quality care is a myth, too.
>
> "Despite these substantial budget increases," the GAO report says, "for more than a decade there have been numerous reports … of VA facilities failing to provide timely health care."
>
> [..]Last summer, lawmakers allocated $10 billion to a program intended to reduce wait times by permitting veterans to see private doctors outside the VA system. So far, the agency has only authorized 31,000 vets to seek private care — out of a possible 8.5 million.That has to change — 88% of veterans say that they want the ability to choose where they receive their care.

The VA health care system is the purest single-payer health care system in the United States. Every claim billed and processed by the government. Customers have ZERO CHOICES if they want to go to a competitor for better service, or less cost. They pay their money to the government in mandatory taxes, and then take their places in line to wait for bureaucrats to act. Bureaucrats face no pressure from competitors to perform for their customers. They have already been paid, and their customers cannot go anywhere else.

In single-payer system, health care is doled out to those customers whose votes are desired by the government. And if you get to the point where you need more health care than you are paying for in your mandatory in taxes… well, that's what euthanasia is for. It's very popular in countries that have single-payer, as a way of cutting costs. Canada has a single-payer system, and they just legalized euthanasia.

Democrat DOJ declines to prosecute Democrat IRS officials who persecuted conservatives

October 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Catherine Engelbrecht of True the Vote testifies about being persecuted by the fascist IRS

The latest news on the IRS scandal; the corrupt Department of Justice is refusing to file charges against the corrupt Internal Revenue Service officials who persecuted conservatives.

Breitbart News reports:

> The Department of Justice (DOJ) announced Friday that Lois Lerner, and other IRS officials involved in targeting conservative groups' tax exempt applications, will not have criminal charges filed against them.
>
> […]In a statement responding to the DOJ, [House Judiciary chairman Rep. Bob] Goodlatte said, "At every turn President Obama and administration officials have repeatedly and publicly undermined the investigation into the IRS's targeting of conservative groups yet today's announcement from the Department of Justice is still very disturbing."
>
> The chairman continued:
>
> I repeatedly called on then Attorney General Holder to appoint a Special Counsel to conduct the investigation to ensure a fair and thorough process but instead the investigation was led by **a loyal Democratic donor**. Even as far back as last year unnamed DOJ officials leaked information to the media suggesting that the Department did not plan to file criminal charges over the IRS's targeting of

> conservative groups.
>
> […]When an Inspector General's audit found that IRS agents had targeted Tea Party and other conservative groups during the 2010 and 2012 elections in their applications for tax-exempt status, a firestorm ensued. Multiple investigations by congressional committees focused primarily on Lerner's part in the activities, with investigators discovering her emails that denigrated Republicans. Subsequently, the House voted to hold Lerner in contempt of Congress in 2014 following her refusal to answer the Oversight Committee's questions.
>
> In response to the DOJ's announcement, Tea Party Patriots CEO and co-founder **Jenny Beth Martin** said, "By failing to indict Lois Lerner, the Obama Justice Department – or, should we say, the Obama Injustice Department – is making a mockery of this 'investigation,' when countless American citizens, by Ms. Lerner's own admission, were persecuted by the Internal Revenue Service."
>
> "This is a woman, after all, who looked into the camera at a national television audience and directly at a congressional committee and refused to answer their questions for fear of incriminating herself," Martin continued in her statement. "This is just the latest evidence that the Justice Department, whether under Eric Holder or Loretta Lynch, has simply become the political hatchet-men for President Obama and his cronies throughout the administration."
>
> **Mark Meckler**, co-founder of the Tea Party movement and president of Citizens for Self Governance—a group that continues its class lawsuit against the IRS—said, "Lois Lerner made an entire career out of attacking conservatives and Christians starting with her time at the FEC. There is a reason the majority of Americans fear their government, and Lerner is the poster child for that reason."
>
> Meckler added that, via the DOJ's decision not to file charges, Lerner "has been rewarded for abusing her government positions to attack her fellow citizens. And until the Department of Injustice once again becomes the Department of Justice, Americans will live in fear."
>
> "It's no wonder why so many Americans have had it with Washington and the elite political class who can get away with something like this," he said. "We will continue to press our case in the courts to bring justice and to defend or protect our First Amendment rights and to preserve our democratic republic."

The article does not mention what happened to True the Vote, so I want to remind everyone what the IRS persecution of conservative groups really looks like.

Catherine Engelbrecht

Here is True the Vote's CEO reacting to the news that the mandatory taxes that she pays was used to pay the salaries of the corrupt IRS leaders who persecuted her:

And here is her testimony during the investigation of IRS corruption:

And of course, the mainstream media covered up for the IRS, because the laws don't protect everyone equally.

Elijah Cummings

Interesting that the loudest mouth at the Benghazi hearing was actually the driving force behind the use of the IRS as a weapon against Tea Party groups.

Katie Pavlich writes about it at Townhall:

> New IRS emails released by the House Oversight Committee show staff working for Democratic Ranking Member Elijah Cummings communicated with the IRS multiple times between 2012 and 2013 about voter fraud prevention group True the Vote. True the Vote was targeted by the IRS after applying for tax exempt status more than two years ago. Further, information shows the IRS and Cummings' staff asked for nearly identical information from True the Vote President **Catherine Engelbrecht** about her organization, indicating coordination and improper sharing of confidential taxpayer information.
>
> Chairman of the House Oversight Committee Darrell Issa, along with five Subcommittee Chairmen are demanding Cummings provide an explanation for the staff inquiries to the IRS about True the Vote and for his denial that his staff ever contacted the IRS about the group.
>
> "Although you have previously denied that your staff made inquiries to the IRS about conservative organization True the Vote that may have led to additional agency scrutiny, communication records between your staff and IRS officials – which you did not disclose to Majority Members or staff – indicates otherwise," the letter to Cummings states. "As the Committee is scheduled to consider a resolution holding Ms. Lerner, a participant in responding to your communications that you failed to disclose, in contempt of Congress, you have an obligation to fully explain your staff's undisclosed contacts with the IRS."
>
> The first contact between the IRS and Cummings' staffers about True the Vote happened in August 2012. In January 2013, staff asked for more information from the IRS about the group. Former head of tax exempt groups at the IRS Lois Lerner went out of her way to try and get information to Cummings' office.The information Cummings received was not shared with Majority Members on the Committee.

And this is why, when conservatives like me are asked which departments we would abolish at the federal level, so their responsibilities can be pushed down to the state level, we typically answer: The Department of Education, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Energy and the Internal Revenue Service. As for the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, we need a housecleaning of all the executives to ensure that they are professional and non-partisan in the execution of their duties.

There is some good news: The House Republicans are impeaching the Commissioner of the IRS John Koskinen.

Related posts

- Democrats launch investigation of pro-life group that filmed Planned Parenthood videos
- New report: IRS used hundreds of lawyers to hide IRS persecution of conservatives
- IRS auditing conservative news provider Breitbart.com
- IRS reveals that it has lost e-mails of 5 more employees
- Lois Lerner's Blackberry deliberately destroyed after start of congressional probe
- New e-mails: IRS official Lois Lerner called conservatives "a**holes" and "terrorists"
- IRS Lois Lerner pushed to have Republican senator Chuck Grassley audited
- IRS e-mail backups destroyed shortly after targeting of conservatives was discovered
- IRS required BY LAW to store hard copies of all e-mails they claim to have lost
- After a year of stalling, IRS blames loss of e-mails on "hard drive crash"
- Democrats refusing to comply with Freedom of Information Act requests
- House Republicans vote to hold Lois Lerner in contempt of Congress
- E-mails suggest Democrat congressman prompted IRS to target conservative group
- FBI declines to prosecute IRS for targeting Tea Party groups ahead of 2012 election
- IRS exchanged confidential taxpayer information with White House
- IRS fascist Lois Lerner pleads the fifth to avoid transparency and accountability

Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio won the debate against pro-Democrat CNBC “moderators”

October 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

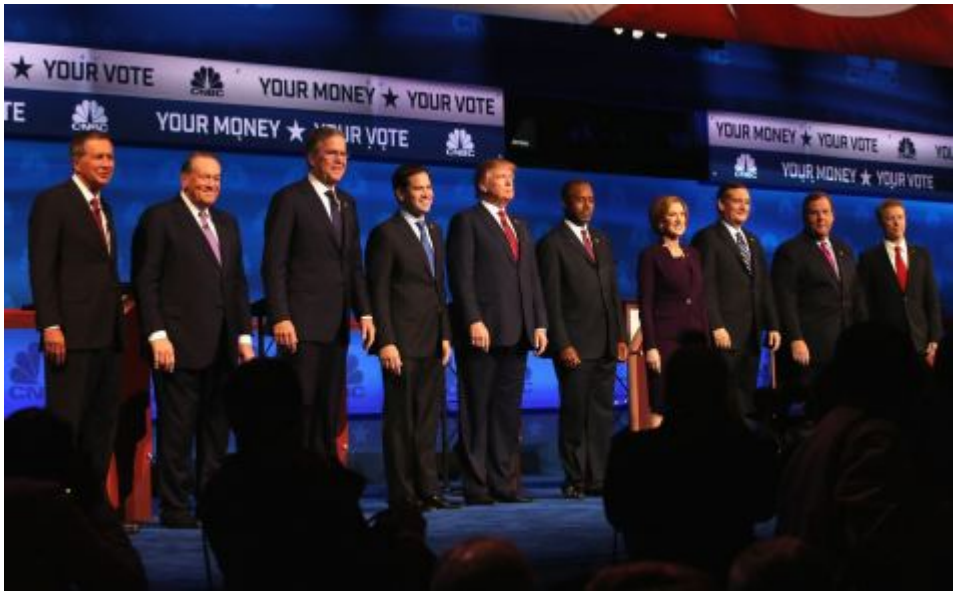

CNBC GOP primary debate candidates

The CNBC debate was a debacle. Leftist Democrat moderators tried desperately to make conservative ideas look as unpalatable as possible. Insults were phrased as questions, and substantive answers were constantly interrupted. But several of the debaters shined, in teeth of blatant media bias. The only questions that were not biased were those from Jim Kramer and Rick Santelli.

The best clip goes to Ted Cruz:

Transcript:

> CRUZ: The questions that have been asked so far in this debate, illustrate why the American people don’t trust the media. This is not a cage match. And if you look at the questions, Donald Trump, are you a comic book villain? Ben Carson, can you do the math? John Kasich, can you insult two people over here? Marco Rubio, why don’t you resign? Jeb Bush, why have your numbers fallen? How about talking about the substantive issues people care about —
>
> CNBC: Does this count? Do we get credit for this one?
>
> CRUZ: And Carl, I’m not finished yet. The contrast with the Democratic debate, where every fawning question from the media was, which of you is more handsome and wise?
>
> CNBC: Let me say, you have 30 seconds left to answer should you choose to do so.
>
> CRUZ: Let me be clear. The men and women on this stage have more ideas, more experience, more common sense, than every participant in the Democratic debate. That debate reflected a debate between the Bolsheviks and the

> Menchavicks. Nobody watching at home believes that any of the moderators have any intention of voting in a Republican primary. The questions being asked shouldn't be trying to get people to tear into each other, it should be what are your substantive solutions —
>
> CNBC: I asked you about the debt limit and got no answer.

As expected, the ever-agile Marco Rubio outperformed.

Marco Rubio answering a puerile question from one of the CNBC Democrat stooges:

Marco Rubio taking on media for being in the pocketsof the Democrat Party:

Carly Fiorina on big government and socialism:

Ben Carson on his flat tax plan:

Ted Cruz on the need to audit the Federal Reserve:

Marco Rubio on balancing *skilled* immigration with training up the next generation of American workers, including vocational education in trades:

Ben Carson answers a question on gay rights and political correctness:

So many good Republican candidates, it's hard to choose. I'm still liking Cruz and Rubio from this first-tier debate.

The Undercard / Second-Tier debate

I also watched the undercard debate, and Bobby Jindal won that one by a mile.

Here is his best clip, answering another biased question:

Jindal talks about his "everyone should pay something" tax plan:

Jindal was asked "Should for-profit schools be held accountable when they take taxpayer money and leave students deep in debt?" and he talked about his school choice policies in Louisiana, consumer-centered policies that promote choice and competition among education providers:

We always get a great post-debate podcast from the experts at The Weekly Standard. They agree with me that Cruz and Rubio won the debate. And they also think that CNBC lost the debate! Indeed. It's indubitable.

Also, see this late-breaking post at from the Weekly Standard's Jonathan Last. Last says that we are down to six candidates: "Trump, Carson, Rubio, Cruz, and maybe—just maybe—Fiorina and Christie".

Public schools received more money, but produced lower student test scores

October 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Now, we've already seen the dangers of Democrats like Hillary Clinton refusing to do her job at the State Deparment. During her term, she focused on promoting abortion abroad and on promoting LGBT rights, and neglected religious liberty and national security, i.e. – Benghazi and her insecure e-mail server. But what happens when Democrats in the education system focus on pushing a Democrat agenda, and neglect the task of teaching children the basic skills they will need to get jobs?

This article is from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> For the first time in many years, national math and reading test scores have dropped for elementary-school kids. Who's to blame? The better question is, who isn't?
>
> The biennial tests conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress measure reading and math comprehension among a sample of thousands of fourth- and eighth-graders.
>
> Math scores dropped two points among fourth-graders and three points among those in the eighth grade. Fourth-grade reading scores were up a point, but reading scores in eighth grade dropped three.
>
> Even the growth over the past two decades is unimpressive. The NAEP tests show that two-thirds of eighth-graders are less than proficient in math, and almost as many are below in reading. And proficiency levels in both subjects drop between fourth and eighth grades.
>
> Educrats have offered lots of excuses for this year's decline, but little explanation. It was the recession. It involved budget cuts. It's a mystery.
>
> But what the results show pretty clearly is that constant federal meddling and vast amounts of money have, if anything, impeded education progress, not spurred it on.
>
> Per-pupil spending on elementary and secondary education has more than doubled since 1992, while math and reading scores eked out gains of less than 5%, on average.
>
> Moreover, an endless series of Washington-based education changes have done little except cause disruption. In fact, Education Secretary Arne Duncan is now saying President Obama's Race to the Top and Common Core measures are to blame for the sag in scores because the "improvements" are so sweeping. "Big change," he said, "never happens overnight."
>
> Actually, when it comes to our centralized, bloated, bureaucratic, union-

> dominated public schools, big change never happens, period.

Spending on education has gone up a lot in the past decades, but test scores haven't budged:

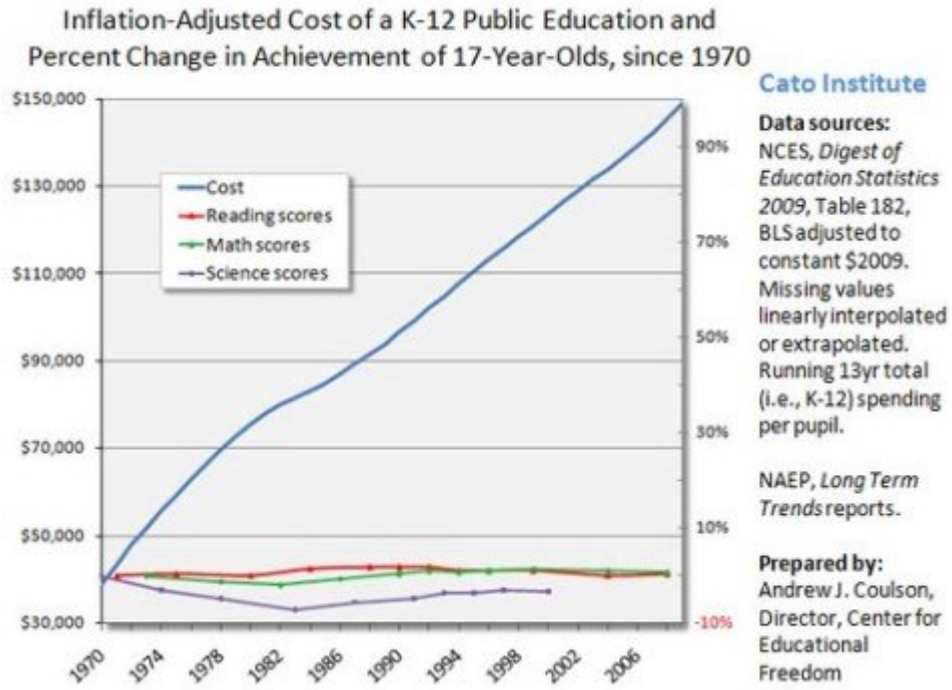

Cato Institute graphs education spending against test scores

Although test scores are not going up, the teacher unions are donating millions of dollars to the Democrats so that there is no accountability:

Party Split, 1990-2016

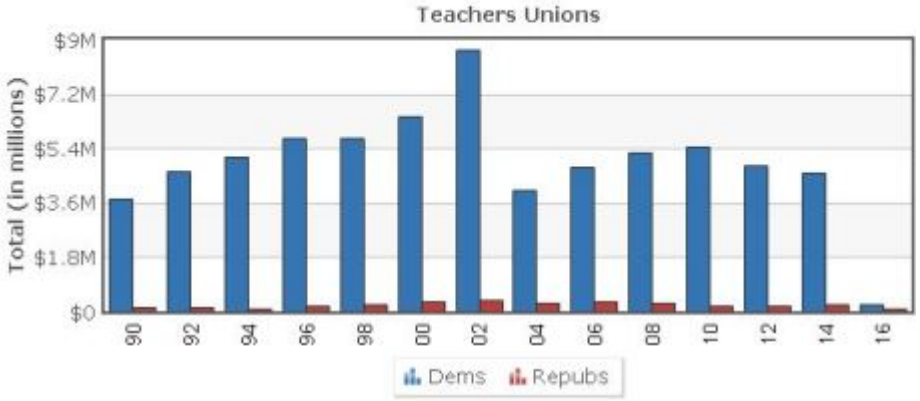

Top Recipients, 2015-2016

Candidate	Office	Amount
Clinton, Hillary (D)		$12,075
Sanders, Bernie (D)	Senate	$9,403

Don't expect Democrats to put children's education needs over teacher unions (Source: OpenSecrets.org)

But there is some hope… when politicians embrace school choice, parents get to pull their kids out of failing schools and put them into customer-focused schools. Check out

Bobby Jindal’s answer to a question about rising tuition costs in last night’s first CNBC debate:

Republicans should care about the education issue… because Democrats surely do not.

Five reasons why the multiverse is not a good explanation for cosmic fine-tuning

October 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

This post by J. Warner Wallace appeared at his Cold Case Christianity blog. It features 5 reasons why the multiverse hypothesis is not a good explanation for the astonishing degree of fine-tuning we find in the cosmic constants and quantities in the universe that allow complex, embodied intelligent life *of any conceivable kind.*

Here is the list:

1. **This Explanation Lacks Evidential Confirmation**
2. **This Explanation Requires Fine-Tuning**
3. **This Explanation Relies on Speculative Notions of Time**
4. **This Explanation Results in Absurdities Common to "Infinites"**
5. **This Explanation Acknowledges an "External" Creative Cause**

Let's take a closer look at numbers two and three:

> **This Explanation Requires Fine-Tuning**
> If there is a multiverse vacuum capable of such creative activity, it would be reasonable for us to ask*how* the physics of such an environment could be so fine-tuned to create a life-permitting universe. As Oxford philosopher Richard Swinburne observes, any proposed multiverse mechanism "needs to have a certain form rather than innumerable possible other forms, and probably constants too that need fine-tuning in the narrow sense . . . if that diversity of universes is to result." Theoretical physicist, Stephen Hawking, when assessing "eternal inflation" models as a source for the multiverse, admits the same problem of fine-tuning: "The problem is, for our theoretical models of inflation to work, the initial state of the universe had to be set up in a very special and highly improbable way. Thus traditional inflation theory resolves one set of issues but creates another—the need for a very special initial state."
>
> **This Explanation Relies on Speculative Notions of Time**

> Theorists who propose a pre-existing vacuum must account for the nature of *time* in this setting. All descriptions of this vacuum describe it as temporal (with bubble universes emerging or quantum events occurring over *time*). But the Standard Cosmological Model indicates time, as we know it,*began* with our universe. Physicist Alexander Vilenkin describes the dilemma this way: "There is no matter and no space in this very peculiar state. Also, there is no time . . . In the absence of space and matter, time is impossible to define. And yet, the state of 'nothing' cannot be identified with absolute nothingness." Multiverse explanations must provide an account for the temporal nature of the vacuum lying at the core of their theory.

Regarding Wallace's first point, here is MIT physicist Alan Lightman talking about the multiverse's evidential problems in Harper's Magazine.

He writes:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.
>
> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

It's not a good explanation of the data, it's just desperate speculation. Don't be one of these people that finds a way to believe what you want to believe. *Look through the telescope for yourself.* Believe what you can see with your own eyes – that's the right way to get to the truth.

J.P. Moreland lectures on “Love Your God With All Your Mind”

October 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

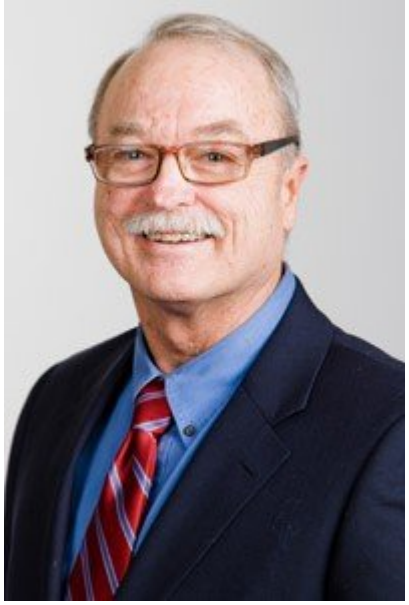

Dr. J.P. Moreland

If I had to pick a few lectures that really changed my life, then this lecture by J.P. Moreland would definitely be on that list.

The MP3 file.

Topics:

- How J.P. Moreland become a Christian
- How evangelism drove his efforts to answer skeptics
- How can evangelicals be so numerous, and yet have so little influence?
- When did the church stop being able to out-think her critics?
- How studying and thinking can be a way of worshiping God
- Romans 12:1-2 – what does this passage mean?
- Are your beliefs under the control of your will?
- Can you “try” to believe something by an act of will?
- If not, then how can you change your beliefs?
- Changing your mind is the only way to change your life
- Matthew 22:37 – what is this passage saying?
- How can you love God by using your intellect?
- How can you defend God’s honor, when it is called into question?
- In a debate, should you quote sources that your opponent doesn’t accept?
- Should you only study the Bible, or should you study rival worldviews?
- 1 Pet 3:15 – what does this passage mean?
- If you knew you were going to be in a debate, what should you do?
- How can you be bold in witnessing? Where does boldness come from?

- What should the church do to make bold evangelists?
- 2 Cor 10:5 – what is this passage talking about?
- The passage talks about destroying fortresses – what are the fortresses?
- List of some of the speculations that we are supposed to be destroying
- What does the phrase “spiritual warfare” really mean?

And here is a longer version of the same lecture (MP3) presented to an audience of university students and faculty.

By the way, the title of his lecture comes from a book that he wrote, which is now in its second edition.

My friend Shawn was telling me just last week that one of the speakers from Stand to Reason told him that if he had not read the “Love Your God With All Your Mind” book, then he could not be a real Christian apologist. Exaggeration? Maybe. But why take that chance?

New study: legalizing physician-assisted suicide increases suicide rates

October 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Ryan T. Henderson writes about it for the Daily Signal.

He writes:

> [T]he October issue of the Southern Medical Journal included a study examining the correlation between legalizing physician-assisted suicide and the overall suicide rate. The study, "How Does Legalization of Physician-Assisted Suicide Affect Rates of Suicide?", contradicts the notion that legalizing assisted suicide would reduce the total number of suicides by helping people cope with their declining condition.
>
> The study… showed that suicides increase when physician-assisted suicide is legalized: "Controlling for various socioeconomic factors, unobservable state and year effects, and state-specific linear trends, we found that legalizing PAS [physician-assisted suicide] was associated with a 6.3 percent increase in total suicides." Later, the researchers commented that "the introduction of [physician-assisted suicide] seemingly induces more self-inflicted deaths than it inhibits."
>
> The study was intended to determine whether or not the legalization of physician-assisted suicide provides an effective form of suicide prevention for those considering non-assisted suicide. Such is the claim of the Swiss group EXIT, which advocates for the legalization of physician-assisted suicide on the basis that "the option of physician-assisted suicide is actually an effective form of suicide prevention."
>
> To test this claim, researchers took suicide rates from states that have already

> legalized physician-assisted suicide—including Oregon, Washington, and Vermont—and compared them both to the suicide rates in the same states before physician-assisted suicide was legalized, and to suicide rates in states where physician-assisted suicide is not yet legal.
>
> According to the researchers, “There is no evidence that [physician-assisted suicide] is associated with significant reductions in nonassisted suicide for either older or younger people.” Furthermore, the data “do not suggest that on average PAS leads to delays in non-assisted suicide.”
>
> As one might suspect, the researchers found that instead of reducing suicides, legalizing physician-assisted suicide increases them. This uptick in suicides following the legalization of physician-assisted adds another reason to the already long list of reasons that physician-assisted suicide is bad policy.

I love this study, because this is the exact same methodology that economists like John Lott and Gary Beck use to analyze the effects of concealed carry laws on violent crime. This is the right way to explore how changes in the law change human behavior. You don’t want to just say what you think will happen, because it feels good to you. You want to look in other places and times where these laws have been tried, and then see the results. That’s the conservative approach to decision-making.

Thinking practically about the gospel with an illustration from a war movie

October 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The city of Mogadishu, in Somalia, Africa

First, let's get an overview that helps us understand the context and goals of the mission we are going to discuss.

The scene is set in Somalia, Africa, in 1992. There a civil war between two warlords: Ali Mahdi and Mohammed Farah Aidid. The war has destroyed agricultural operations, and the people are starving. The United Nations are trying to help, but Aidid hijacks the food from UN aircraft so that he can use the food to gain control of the people. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis are dying of starvation. The UN requests American military forces to secure the air-dropped supplies so they can be distributed to the starving people.

In December 1992, President George H.W. Bush answers the call, sending 25,000 troops to Somalia to protect the food from the Somali warlords. However, in 1993, Bill Clinton is elected. He orders that the number of U.S. troops be reduced to 12,000. Following an attack by Aidid on Pakistani peace-keepers, the U.N. issues a resolution to capture those responsible. The U.S. armed forces have the arms and training to battle evil, so they get the call to capture Aidid and his lieutenants.

In late August 1993, Task Force Ranger is deployed to Mogadishu to capture Aidid and his lieutenants at the Olympic Hotel. The U.S. force consists of 440 troops from the Army Rangers and Army Delta Force special forces, commanded by General William Garrison. Garrison requested light armored units (Bradley Infantry Fighting vehicles) that would offer more protection than the unarmored HMMWV Humvees. Garrison was denied the light armor by the Clinton administration. Garrison requested heavier air support (AC-130 Spectre gunships) that would offer better fire support than the UH-60 Blackhawk miniguns. Garrison was denied the air support by the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration did not want the American forces to appear too heavily armed for the peace-keeping role.

The actual mission turned out to be much harder than it needed to be, because of the resources denied by the Clinton administration. Although the Aidid lieutenants were

captured, Aidid himself escaped. Eighty-four American soldiers were wounded. Eighteen American soldiers were killed, and their bodies were dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. This was shown over and over by the media, and it undermined American resolve to help the Somali people. As a result, Clinton had the excuse he needed to retreat the American military.

(Source: Nova Online)

Two heroes lost their lives

Today, I want to talk about two of the men who lost their lives in Operation Gothic Serpent. They are Master Sergeant Gary I. Gordon and Sergeant First Class Randall D. Shughart – a Delta Force sniper team.

Here is a clip from the movie Blackhawk Down, which shows what happened to them:

The pilot of the downed Blackhawk was protected by the two men who volunteered to go in after him. They requested that they be inserted at the crash site, even though they knew that reinforcements were likely not going to be there in time to save them. They made the request to go and help the pilot *three times* before being allowed to go in. Their first two requests were denied by their commanding officer, because it the odds against their survival were so overwhelming. The rescued pilot was later released by his captors, and the two heroes were awarded the Medal of Honor for their brave actions.

A Congressional Medal of Honor

Here is a description of the requirements to be awarded a Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through **conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty**:

> - While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States;
> - While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
> - While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

You can read the official details of their actions.

The point of this post

It is important for Christians to be familiar with real-world examples of people giving their lives in order to save the lives of others. When we see real-world examples of self-sacrifice, it helps us to understand what Jesus really achieved for us, and what he must have felt making that hard choice to volunteer to go in and rescue us. In general, my philosophy when it comes to the Bible is to make every effort to connect what the Bible says to the real world. We must not push Christianity into some far-off world of piety and feelings. We must make connections to real evidence and real life, so that what the Bible says becomes practical, and so that we have a deep friendship with and sympathy for God revealed in Jesus Christ. In real life, being willing to give your life to save someone else is hard. Understanding how that really happens will help us to value what Jesus has done for us.

Bible verses

I saw this verse on the ground outside the Airborne & Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, NC, where I went for my summer vacation this year. (Thanks to my friend Curby who hosted me)

Isaiah 6:8:

> [8] Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
>
> And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Here is the picture I took (yes, that is my running shoe):

"Here am I, send me" Isaiah 6:8

When confronted with an opportunity to imitate Christ in his self-sacrifice, we should think less about ourselves and our own desires, and take the opportunity to serve others effectively. We do not do what makes us happy, and we do not pursue fun and thrills. We do what heals, we do what helps others. We do not push away our responsibility to imitate Christ by caring for those in danger. Christianity is not just about "not doing bad things". It's the good things you do because of your relationship with Jesus that show your real allegiance, and give you the experience of being a Christian in deed.

And here is another good verse:

John 15:13:

> [13] Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

If you get a chance to watch the movie Blackhawk Down, then do so. I highly recommend it. You can also read the book that the movie is based on.

I love the Medal of Honor books by Edward F. Murphy. He writes about all the people who have been awarded the Medal of honor in different wars: World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

Peer-reviewed paper: Michael Behe's "First Rule of Adaptive Evolution"

October 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

JoeCoder was writing some JavaScript code last night and he ran into a problem where a 3rd-party open source library was not performing as expected. So he got the non-minified version of the library and commented out two lines to get the behavior he wanted. He said this to me "Michael Behe's first rule of adaptive evolution has been confirmed once again." So, let's take a look at Mike Behe's first rule of adaptive evolution.

The paper was published in the Quarterly Review of Biology. I found it on PubMed.

Abstract:

> Adaptive evolution can cause a species to gain, lose, or modify a function; therefore, it is of basic interest to determine whether any of these modes dominates the evolutionary process under particular circumstances. Because mutation occurs at the molecular level, it is necessary to examine the molecular changes produced by the underlying mutation in order to assess whether a given adaptation is best considered as a gain, loss, or modification of function. Although that was once impossible, the advance of molecular biology in the past half century has made it feasible. In this paper, I review molecular changes underlying some adaptations, with a particular emphasis on evolutionary experiments with microbes conducted over the past four decades. **I show that by far the most common adaptive changes seen in those examples are due to the loss or modification of a pre-existing molecular function**, and I discuss the possible reasons for the prominence of such mutations.

By far the most common adaptive changes in the examples we have are due to loss of function or modification of pre-existing function?

Evolution News has a post up about the paper.

Excerpt:

> After reviewing the effects of mutations upon Functional Coding ElemenTs (FCTs),

> Michael Behe's recent review article in Quarterly Review of Biology, "Experimental Evolution, Loss-of-Function Mutations and 'The First Rule of Adaptive Evolution'," offers some conclusions. In particular, as the title suggests, Behe introduces a rule of thumb he calls the "The First Rule of Adaptive Evolution": "Break or blunt any functional coded element whose loss would yield a net fitness gain." In essence, what Behe means is that mutations that cause loss-of-FCT are going to be far more likely and thus far more common than those which gain a functional coding element. In fact, he writes: "the rate of appearance of an adaptive mutation that would arise from the diminishment or elimination of the activity of a protein is expected to be 100-1000 times the rate of appearance of an adaptive mutation that requires specific changes to a gene." Since organisms will tend to evolve along the most likely pathway, they will tend to break or lose an FCT before gaining a new one. He explains:

> It is called the "first" rule because the rate of mutations that diminish the function of a feature is expected to be much higher than the rate of appearance of a new feature, so adaptive loss-of-FCT or modification-of-function mutations that decrease activity are expected to appear first, by far, in a population under selective pressure.(Michael J. Behe, "Experimental Evolution, Loss-of-Function Mutations and 'The First Rule of Adaptive Evolution'," Quarterly Review of Biology, Vol. 85(4) (December, 2010).)

> Behe argues that this point is empirically supported by the research reviews in the paper. He writes:

> As seen in Tables 2 through 4, the large majority of experimental adaptive mutations are loss-of-FCT or modification-of-function mutations. In fact, leaving out those experiments with viruses in which specific genetic elements were intentionally deleted and then restored by subsequent evolution, only two gain-of-FCT events have been reported

> After asking "Why is this the case?" Behe states, "One important factor is undoubtedly that the rate of appearance of loss-of-FCT mutations is much greater than the rate of construction of new functional coded elements." He draws sound and defensible conclusions from the observed data:

> Leaving aside gain-of-FCT for the moment, the work reviewed here shows that organisms do indeed adapt quickly in the laboratory–by loss-of-FCT and modification-of-function mutations. If such adaptive mutations also arrive first in the wild, as they of course would be expected to, then those will also be the kinds of mutations that are first available to selection in nature. … In general, if a sequence of genomic DNA is initially only one nucleotide removed from coding for an adaptive functional element, then a single simple point mutation could yield a gain-of-FCT. As seen in Table 5, several laboratory studies have achieved thousand to million-fold saturations of their test organisms with point mutations,

> and most of the studies reviewed here have at least single-fold saturation. Thus, one would expect to have observed simple gain-of-FCT adaptive mutations that had sufficient selective value to outcompete more numerous loss-of- FCT or modification-of-function mutations in most experimental evolutionary studies, if they had indeed been available.

> But this stark lack of examples of gain-of-functional coding elements can have important implications:

> A tentative conclusion suggested by these results is that the complex genetic systems that are cells will often be able to adapt to selective pressure by effectively removing or diminishing one or more of their many functional coded elements.

> Behe doesn't claim that gain-of-function mutations will never occur, but the clear implication is that neo-Darwinists cannot forever rely on examples of loss or modification-of-FCT mutations to explain molecular evolution. At some point, there must be gain of function.

Now, there was a response to this paper from Jerry Coyne on his blog, and then a rebuttal from Mike Behe in a separate article on Evolution News.

Wage gap: are women paid less than men because of discrimination?

October 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton thinks that women are not paid fairly compared to men: is it true? Liberal feminist Hanna Rosin takes a look at this question in the far-left Slate, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The official Bureau of Labor Department statistics show that the median earnings of full-time female workers is 77 percent of the median earnings of full-time male workers. But that is very different than "77 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men." The latter gives the impression that a man and a woman standing next to each other doing the same job for the same number of hours get paid different salaries. That's not at all the case. "Full time" officially means 35 hours, but men work more hours than women. That's the first problem: We could be comparing men working 40 hours to women working 35.

> How to get a more accurate measure? First, instead of comparing annual wages, start by comparing average weekly wages. This is considered a slightly more accurate measure because it eliminates variables like time off during the year or annual bonuses (and yes, men get higher bonuses, but let's shelve that for a moment in our quest for a pure wage gap number). By this measure, women earn 81 percent of what men earn, although it varies widely by race. African-

> American women, for example, earn 94 percent of what African-American men earn in a typical week. Then, when you restrict the comparison to men and women working 40 hours a week, the gap narrows to 87 percent.

> But we're still not close to measuring women "doing the same work as men." For that, we'd have to adjust for many other factors that go into determining salary. Economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn did that in a recent paper, "The Gender Pay Gap.".”They first accounted for education and experience. That didn't shift the gap very much, because women generally have at least as much and usually more education than men, and since the 1980s they have been gaining the experience. The fact that men are more likely to be in unions and have their salaries protected accounts for about 4 percent of the gap. The big differences are in occupation and industry. Women congregate in different professions than men do, and the largely male professions tend to be higher-paying. If you account for those differences, and then compare a woman and a man doing the same job, the pay gap narrows to 91 percent. So, you could accurately say in that Obama ad that, "women get paid 91 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men."

I believe that the remainder of the gap can be accounted for by looking at other *voluntary* factors that differentiate men and women.

The Heritage Foundation says that a recent study puts the number at 95 cents per dollar.

Excerpt:

> Women are more likely than men to work in industries with more flexible schedules. Women are also more likely to spend time outside the labor force to care for children. These choices have benefits, but they also reduce pay—for both men and women. When economists control for such factors, they find the gender gap largely disappears.
>
> A 2009 study commissioned by the Department of Labor found that after controlling for occupation, experience, and other choices, women earn 95 percent as much as men do. In 2005, June O'Neil, the former director of the Congressional Budget Office, found that "There is no gender gap in wages among men and women with similar family roles." Different choices—not discrimination—account for different employment and wage outcomes.

A popular article by Carrie Lukas in the Wall Street Journal agrees.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Labor's Time Use survey shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. One would expect that someone who works 9% more would also earn more. This one fact alone accounts for more than a third of the wage gap.

> […]Recent studies have shown that the wage gap shrinks—or even reverses—when relevant factors are taken into account and comparisons are made between men and women in similar circumstances. In a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30, the research firm Reach Advisors found that women earned an average of 8% more than their male counterparts. Given that women are outpacing men in educational attainment, and that our economy is increasingly geared toward knowledge-based jobs, it makes sense that women's earnings are going up compared to men's.

When women make different choices about education and labor that are more like what men choose, they earn just as much or more than men.

Now back to Hillary Clinton. How much does she pay the women on her staff?

The Washington Times reports:

> During her time as senator of New York, Hillary Rodham Clinton paid her female staffers 72 cents for every dollar she paid men, according to a new Washington Free Beacon report.
>
> From 2002 to 2008, the median annual salary for Mrs. Clinton's female staffers was $15,708.38 less than what was paid to men, the report said. Women earned a slightly higher median salary than men in 2005, coming in at $1.04. But in 2006, they earned 65 cents for each dollar men earned, and in 2008, they earned only 63 cents on the dollar, The Free Beacon reported.
>
> […]Mrs. Clinton has spoken against wage inequality in the past. In April, she ironically tweeted that "20 years ago, women made 72 cents on the dollar to men. Today it's still just 77 cents. More work to do. #EqualPay #NoCeilings."

Think of this next time Hillary Clinton talks about "the wage gap". She is talking about the women on her staff, and no one else.

The scariest old time radio shows for Hallowe’en

October 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Arrrr! Lobster Pirate is pleased that it is Hallowe’en!
Here are some of the scariest old time radio shows EVER! These are MP3 files. Be careful, they are SCARY!

- The House in Cypress Canyon (Suspense)
- The Thing on the Fourble Board (Quiet, Please)
- Three Skeleton Key (Escape)
- Donovan’s Brain – part1, part 2 (Suspense)
- Sorry, Wrong Number (Suspense)
- The Country of the Blind (Escape)
- Ghost Hunt (Suspense)

Also, this, for a laugh:

Happy Hallowe’en!

Dennis Prager: does the Bible say do not kill or do not murder?

November 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager's column on the sixth commandment.

Excerpt:

> Here is the text of commandment six — explaining why the King James translation is wrong:
>
> You would think that of all the Ten Commandments the one that needs the least explaining is the sixth, because it seems so clear. It is the one that the King James Bible, the most widely used English translation of the Bible, translates as, "Thou shall not kill."
>
> Yet, the truth is the quite the opposite. This is probably the least well understood of the Ten Commandments. The reason is that the Hebrew original does not say, "Do not kill." It says, "Do not murder." Both Hebrew and English have two words for taking a life — one is "kill" (harag, in Hebrew) and the other is "murder" (ratzach in Hebrew).
>
> The difference between the two is enormous. Kill means:
>
> 1. Taking any life — whether of a human being or an animal.
> 2. Taking a human life deliberately or by accident.
> 3. Taking a human life legally or illegally, morally or immorally.
>
> On the other hand, murder can only mean one thing: The illegal or immoral taking of a human life. That's why we say, "I killed a mosquito," not, "I murdered a mosquito." And that's why we would say that "the worker was accidentally killed," not that "the worker was accidentally murdered."
>
> So why did the King James translation of the Bible use the word "kill" rather than "murder"? Because 400 years ago, when the translation was made, "kill" was synonymous with "murder." As a result, some people don't realize that English has changed since 1610 and therefore think that the Ten Commandments prohibits all killing.
>
> But, of course, it doesn't. If the Ten Commandments forbade killing, we would all have to be vegetarians, as killing animals would be prohibited. And we would all have to be pacifists — since we could not kill even in self-defense.
>
> However, you don't have to know how the English language has evolved to understand that the Ten Commandments could not have prohibited all killing.
>
> A correct understanding of the commandment against murder is crucial because, while virtually every modern translation correctly translates the commandment as "Do not murder," many people cite the King James translation to justify two

> positions that have no biblical basis: opposition to capital punishment and pacifism.The very same part of the Bible that contains the Ten Commandments — the Five Books of Moses, the Torah as it is known by Jews — commands the death penalty for murder, allows killing in war, prescribes animal sacrifice and allows eating meat.
>
> Regarding capital punishment and the Bible, as I note in my Prager University course on capital punishment, the only law that appears in each one of the Five Books of Moses is that murderers be put to death. Opponents of the death penalty are free to hold the view that all murderers should be allowed to live. But they are not free to cite the Bible to support their view.
>
> Yet, many do. And they always cite the Commandment, "Do not kill." But that, as should now be abundantly clear, is not what the commandment says, and it is therefore an invalid argument.

Read the rest (it's the same as the video).

This is related to his new video series for Prager University on the Ten Commandments. You can watch them all here. There's one for each commandment, and an introduction. Prager University always does a nice job on these videos, and they are a nice, quick way to find out exactly what traditionally-minded people really believe, and why. Most kids in college will never even hear the other side to what their liberal professors say.

A lesson about men for marriage-minded women from the movie “High Noon”

November 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marine prays with his wife on their wedding day

One of my favorite movies for explaining the differences between men and women is “High Noon” (1952).

Here’s the summary from IMDB:

> Former marshal Will Kane (Gary Cooper) is preparing to leave the small town of Hadleyville, New Mexico, with his new bride, Amy (Grace Kelly), when he learns that local criminal Frank Miller has been set free and is coming to seek revenge on the marshal who turned him in. When he starts recruiting deputies to fight Miller, Kane is discouraged to find that the people of Hadleyville turn cowardly when the time comes for a showdown, and he must face Miller and his cronies alone.

The main theme of the film concerns Amy’s decision to break her wedding vows the very day that she makes them. She tells her new husband that he must bow to her will, and give up his male role as protector. When he explains his reasons for standing his ground to her practically (Miller will hunt them down) and morally (he has a duty protect the town), she dismisses both. She tells him that if he doesn’t run away from Miller and his gang with her, that she will get on the train and leave town by herself.

The intro of film shows the member’s of Miller’s gang assembling, and the words of the song explain the central conflict between husband and wife:

Here's the part of the lyrics we care about:

The noonday train will bring Frank Miller.
If I'm a man I must be brave
And I must face that deadly killer
Or lie a coward, a craven coward,
Or lie a coward in my grave.

O to be torn 'twixt love and duty!
S'posin' I lose my fair-haired beauty!
Look at that big hand move along
Nearin' high noon.

He made a vow while in State's Prison,
Vow'd it would be my life or his'n
I'm not afraid of death, but O,
What will I do if you leave me?

Do not forsake me O my darlin'
You made that promise when we wed.
Do not forsake me O my darlin'
Although you're grievin', I can't be leavin'
Until I shoot Frank Miller dead.

What's interesting is that his new wife Amy apparently does not understand the meaning of wedding vows or the natural roles of good men as protectors of the weak, and fighters against evil. Although she vowed to stick by him and help him, the minute anything threatening appears that makes her feel unhappy, she abandons her vows and abandons her man. Let's break down her mistakes now, using actual conversations from the movie.

First, she doesn't understand or respect the man she married *as a man*:

> **Kane**: *[while riding out of town]* It's no good. I've got to go back, Amy.
>
> **Amy**: Why?
>
> **Kane**: This is crazy. I haven't even got any guns.
>
> **Amy**: Then let's go on. Hurry.
>
> **Kane**: No, that's what I've been thinkin'. They're making me run. I've never run from anybody before.
>
> **Amy**: I don't understand any of this.
>
> **Kane**: *[after looking at his vest watch]* Well, I haven't got time to tell ya.
>
> **Amy**: Then don't go back, Will.
>
> **Kane**: I've got to. That's the whole thing. *[He turns the buggy around and rides back into town]*

Her feelings and her desires for the world to be a happy place for her are so strong that they cloud her judgment.

Second, she doesn't understand the threat posed by evil men:

More:

> **Kane:** I sent a man up five years ago for murder. He was supposed to hang. But up North, they commuted it to life and now he's free. I don't know how. Anyway, it looks like he's coming back.
>
> **Amy:** I still don't understand.
>
> **Kane:** He was always wild and kind of crazy. He'll probably make trouble.
>
> **Amy:** But that's no concern of yours, not anymore.
>
> **Kane:** I'm the one who sent him up.
>
> **Amy:** Well, that was part of your job. That's finished now. They've got a new marshal.
>
> **Kane:** He won't be here until tomorrow. Seems to me I've got to stay. Anyway, I'm the same man with or without this. [He pins his badge on his vest]
>
> **Amy:** Oh, that isn't so.
>
> **Kane:** I expect he'll come lookin' for me. Three of his old bunch are waiting at the depot.
>
> **Amy:** That's exactly why we ought to go.
>
> **Kane:** They'll just come after us, four of 'em, and we'd be all alone on the prairie.
>
> **Amy:** We've got an hour.
>
> **Kane:** What's an hour?…What's a hundred miles? We'd never be able to keep that store, Amy. They'd come after us and we'd have to run again, as long as we live.
>
> **Amy:** No we wouldn't, not if they didn't know where to find us. Oh Will! Will, I'm begging you, please let's go.
>
> **Kane:** I can't.
>
> **Amy:** Don't try to be a hero. You don't have to be a hero, not for me.
>
> **Kane:** I'm not trying to be a hero. If you think I like this, you're crazy.

Instead of recognizing how her feelings are deceiving her about the threat and trusting her husband, she tries to force him to accept her mistaken view of reality by threatening to abandon him.

One of Kane's ex-girlfriends has a talk with Amy, which helps her to understand who Kane is, and what is expected of her:

> **Amy**: That man downstairs, the clerk, he said things about you and Will. I've been trying to understand why he wouldn't go with me, and now all I can think of is that it's got to be because of you…Let him go, he still has a chance. Let him go.
>
> **Helen**: He isn't staying for me. I haven't spoken to him for a year – until today. I

> am leaving on the same train you are…What kind of woman are you? How can you leave him like this? Does the sound of guns frighten you that much?
>
> **Amy**: I've heard guns. My father and my brother were killed by guns. They were on the right side but that didn't help them any when the shooting started. My brother was nineteen. I watched him die. That's when I became a Quaker. I don't care who's right or who's wrong. There's got to be some better way for people to live. Will knows how I feel about it.
>
> **Helen**: I hate this town. I always hated it – to be a Mexican woman in a town like this.
>
> **Amy**: I understand.
>
> **Helen**: You do? That's good. I don't understand you. No matter what you say. If Kane was my man, I'd never leave him like this. I'd get a gun. I'd fight.
>
> **Amy**: Why don't you?
>
> **Helen**: He is not my man. He's yours.

Helen understands the need for a wife to stand by her man. But Amy's response to evil is to shut her eyes and focus on feeling good and being happy. Notice that her "better way" is unspecified – it's just a feeling she has that pacificism and no-violence will somehow "work" to stop evil. But in reality, pacifism is not a "better way" of dealing with evil – it does not work. Her pacifist response not only does not make evil go away, it actually encourages more evil. Weakness emboldens evildoers, and laying down your arms provokes them to do more evil. Will Kane knows this, but she won't listen to him.

You can watch the final gunfight here, as well as Amy's final decision:

So, this is why I really recommend this movie as a discussion-starter when you like a girl and are thinking of marrying her. It clarifies the essential problem with many young women today not being ready for marriage. To be fair, most women come around to respect their husbands and his different roles after they get married. However, the risk of divorce is so dangerous that it makes sense to bring it up for discussion before the marriage happens. Marriage is supposed to be an engine to serve God, and the success of that enterprise cannot be left to chance. You can't just rely on the fact that she says the words of the vow, you have to check to see if she has a habit of keeping her promises when it goes against her own self-interest.

Ask yourself: Who are you, as a man? And does your woman accept that you have obligations to stand up to evil and do good ? Will she support you in your battle against evil, or will the marriage just be about her feelings and desires? I would especially beware of women who think that God is speaking to them through their feelings and desires. Look at her friends: are they practical and successful? Or are they irresponsible, unaccountable and reckless? Look at her father: does he have a plan for her, and does he lead her to be practical, frugal and hard-working? If you are not going to get an ally and a supporter in a wife, then you will not be able to serve God well, as a married man. Think about it.

New study: Average student loan balance at graduation hits record high under Obama

November 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

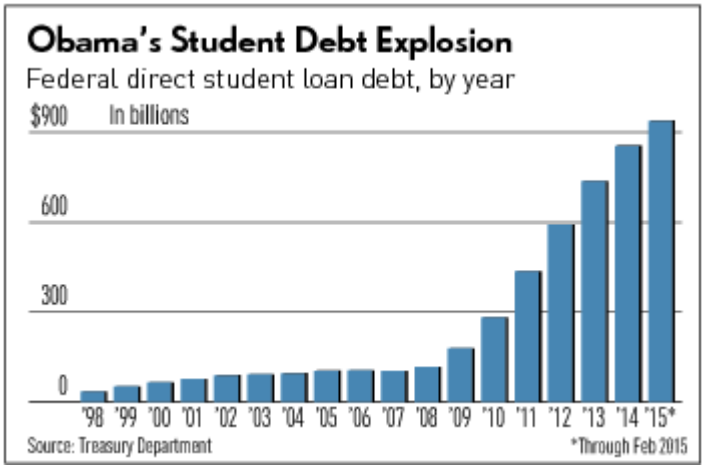

President Obama's student loan bubble

The new study is discussed in The Federalist.

Excerpt:

> Graduates from the class of 2014 can thank President Obama that they're exiting college with the highest student loan burden ever. They graduated with an average of $28,950 in student loans, according to a new study by the Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS).
>
> [...]A recent study from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York examining how student loans rose between 2001-2012 concluded that the more government subsidizes education, the more colleges raise their prices.
>
> The study explains:
>
> Yearly student loan originations grew from $53 billion to $120 billion between 2001 and 2012, with about 90% of originations in recent years occurring through federal student aid programs. Against this backdrop of increased borrowing, average sticker tuition rose 46% in constant 2012 dollars between 2001 and 2012, from $6,950 to $10,200.
>
> In the years examined, tuition increased about 55 to 65 cents for every dollar the federal government gave out in student loans or Pell Grants.
>
> Surprise! A government program designed to lower the cost of education actually did the opposite. Once colleges saw they could rake in money from helpless taxpayers, they figured: "Why stop now?" Consequently, tuition has skyrocketed due to government involvement.
>
> Under Obama's leadership, the U.S. Department of Education has increased the maximum Pell Grant award from $1,000 in 2008 to $5,730 for 2014-15. Additionally, it has doubled the number of students slated to receive these funds.

> If history is any indication, this expansion won't lower the cost of higher education. In fact, it will probably do the opposite.
>
> What's more, increasing numbers of these loans aren't getting repaid. Currently, about 40 million people owe about $1.2 trillion in student debt. Last year, 11.8 percent of student loans subsidized by the government fell into default, which is bad news for taxpayers, who are left holding the bag.

Well, if the rate of defaults is increasing, then how come bankers are still giving out these loans. Glad you asked. It's not bankers who is giving out these loans with bank money. It's Obama giving out these loans with *taxpayer* money. You see, Obama nationalized the student loan system in 2010, so that anyone can now get a loan no matter what they study, and no one has any requirement that they study something that allows them to *pay the money back*.

Investors Business Daily explains:

> In 2010, Obama eliminated the federal guaranteed loan program, which let private lenders offer student loans at low interest rates. Now, the Department of Education is the only place to go for such loans.
>
> Obama sold this government takeover as a way to save money — why bear the costs of guaranteeing private loans, he said, when the government could cut out the middleman and lend the money itself?
>
> The cost savings didn't happen. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office just increased its 10-year forecast for the loan program's costs by $27 billion, or 30%.
>
> What did happen was an explosive growth in the amount of federal student loan debt… The result of Obama's action is striking. In each of the past six years, federal direct student loan debt has climbed by more than $100 billion.
>
> And since Obama keeps making it easier and easier to avoid repaying those loans, it's a problem that taxpayers will eventually have to shoulder.

The radically leftist New York Times, of all places, supports this view that big government is behind the rise in the cost of higher education (student loan bubble), just like big government was behind the housing bubble.

This is by Paul F. Campos, law professor at the radically leftist UC Boulder.

He writes:

> > [P]ublic investment in higher education in America is vastly larger today, in inflation-adjusted dollars, than it was during the supposed golden age of public funding in the 1960s. Such spending has increased at a much faster rate than government spending in general. For example, the military's budget is about 1.8 times higher today than it was in 1960, while legislative appropriations to higher education are more than 10

> times higher.
>
> **[…][F]ar from being caused by funding cuts, the astonishing rise in college tuition correlates closely with a huge increase in public subsidies for higher education.**
>
> […]**As the baby boomers reached college age, state appropriations to higher education skyrocketed, increasing more than fourfold in today's dollars, from $11.1 billion in 1960 to $48.2 billion in 1975. By 1980, state funding for higher education had increased a mind-boggling 390 percent in real terms over the previous 20 years. This tsunami of public money did not reduce tuition: quite the contrary.**
>
> […]State appropriations reached a record inflation-adjusted high of $86.6 billion in 2009. They declined as a consequence of the Great Recession, but have since risen to $81 billion. And these totals do not include the enormous expansion of the federal Pell Grant program, which has grown, in today's dollars, to $34.3 billion per year from $10.3 billion in 2000.

The more money that is attached to students, the more money universities charge – simple. Taxpayers are on the hook for all these defaulted loans, as well as state funding of higher education, as well as the increase in Pell grants. And what is Hillary Clinton's response to all this? Why, to make taxpayers pay for college for everyone. Who do you think is going to pay for that?

Maybe we should be electing someone who actually knows how to make the costs of higher education *go down* so that students don't have to be stuck with these huge student loan balances.

Obama voters face choice between an expensive fine and an expensive Bronze plan

November 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should we pick a candidate based on our emotional response to his confidence? Obama told us during his election campaigns that health care premiums would go down an average of $2,500. How did he intend to achieve that? By reducing choice and competition, and require insurance companies to cover more stuff, like drug addiction therapy, onto every health care plan.

Here he is promising things to young voters:

So what happened? Health care premiums went up, because the more stuff that your health care plan has to cover (e.g. – drug addiction treatment) the more you have to pay for that health care plan. And so, as I blogged about before, health care premiums have actually gone up $4,865 on average, per year. Yes, this is another case of keep your doctor / keep your health plan lies.

Well, that's all fine and good, because this is America, and no one will be forced to buy these expensive plans that cover things that you don't want or need, right? Well, not so much. See, there is this Obamacare thing called the "individual mandate", and it says that everyone has to buy health care, or they have to pay a fine. Even single young men in their 30s who don't even need health care have to buy health care.

Investors Business Daily explains:

> Millions of people who will start shopping for ObamaCare plans as early as Sunday will have one question in mind: How much is the cheapest plan for avoiding a $695 individual mandate penalty?
>
> For the vast majority, that means the cheapest bronze plan. The next question

> they'll consider, taking into account the deductible that will rise as high as $6,850 in 2016, is whether they would be better off paying a penalty.
>
> A lot of factors will play into the decision, but for most relatively young and healthy adults, the biggest will be just how much more it will cost to get insurance than to go without coverage.
>
> An IBD review of 2016 rates in one major metro area in each of the 37 states using HealthCare.gov reveals where higher bronze-plan costs — even after subsidies — will make the mandate penalty look relatively attractive.

So you either have to pay a $695 or you have to buy a bronze plan with a $6,850 deductible. Most people never use that much health care, so they will be paying out of pocket for all their health care *anyway.* So, either you are paying a fine that covers nothing, or you are paying for a plan that covers nothing.

Here is the chart of bronze health care plans:

ObamaCare's Slippery Slope

As the cost of the cheapest plan rises in 2016 vs. the $695 individual mandate penalty, the more likely it is that the relatively young and healthy will opt out and pay a fine.

Cheapest bronze premium			
Atlanta	$2,232	All New Hampshire	$1,372
Jackson, Miss.	$2,232	Portland, Ore.	$1,360
Miami	$2,232	U.S. average	$1,320
Wichita, Kan.	$2,135	Salt Lake City	$1,324
Huntington, W.V.	$2,076	Sioux Falls, S.D.	$1,312
Birmingham, Ala.	$2,062	Omaha	$1,264
Portland, Maine	$2,062	Chicago	$1,234
Columbus, Ohio	$2,062	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	$1,234
All New Jersey	$2,016	Columbia, S.C.	$1,230
Las Vegas	$1,992	Nashville	$1,228
Philadelphia	$1,992	Fairfax County, Va.	$1,228
Little Rock, Ark.	$1,944	Phoenix	$1,216
Indianapolis	$1,944	Bozeman, Mont.	$1,204
Fargo, N.D.	$1,944	All Delaware	$1,228
Cheyenne, Wyo.	$1,944	Albuquerque, N.M.	$1,204
Houston	$1,920	New Orleans	$1,200
Detroit	$1,896	Oklahoma City	$1,148
Milwaukee	$1,884	Charlotte, N.C.	$1,116
St. Louis	$1,872	Anchorage	$400

Source: [illegible] lowest-cost bronze premium for 30-year-old earning $30,257

Obamacare Bronze plans (click for larger image)

More:

> The accompanying chart lists the after-subsidy cost of the cheapest bronze plan for a 30-year-old earning 257% of the poverty level, or about $30,000. At the top of the chart, young adults earning $30,000 in Miami, Atlanta and Jackson, Miss., would have to pay more than $2,200 for the cheapest exchange plan — or more than triple the mandate penalty.

What's nice about this is the justice of it. It's the young, hip, middle-class young people who are going to end up with the bill for their Democrat-voting in 2008 and 2012.

> The question is whether average moderate-earning 30-year-olds, assuming they have that much money available for insurance, will think it is better to pay an extra $1,130 or so for a plan with a huge deductible or whether it makes sense to hope for the best and hold on to that cash to pay any medical bills that arise.
>
> A logical goal of the individual mandate is to get young and healthy adults with moderate incomes to sign up for coverage, since low-income young adults get pretty big subsidies and may not need as much of a push to enroll. Yet ObamaCare's individual mandate does not seem well designed to achieve its goal, which helps explain why young-adult enrollment is somewhere around 2 million below target at this point.

Health care reform is a valid goal, and we do need health care to get cheaper. But the way to do that is not to elect someone who has not done it, but who just makes a lot of promises. The way to fix health care is by electing someone who has experience at fixing health care.

Christians have always believed in a romantic, committed, exclusive view of sex

November 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The natural family is the only place where sexual activity makes sense

Consider this post from Michael Krueger, and it's a must-read.

Excerpt:

> [I]n the second century, as Christianity emerged with a distinctive religious identity, the surrounding pagan culture began to take notice. And it didn't like what it saw. Christians were seen as strange and superstitious–a peculiar religious movement that undermined the norms of a decent society. Christians were, well, *different*.
>
> So, what was so different about Christians compared to the surrounding Greco-Roman culture?
>
> […]While it was not unusual for Roman citizens to have multiple sexual partners, homosexual encounters, and engagement with temple prostitutes, Christians stood out precisely because of their refusal to engage in these practices.
>
> For instance, Tertullian goes to great lengths to defend the legitimacy of Christianity by pointing out how Christians are generous and share their resources with all those in need. But, then he says, "One in mind and soul, we do not hesitate to share our earthly goods with one another. All things are common among us *but our wives*" (*Apol*. 39). Why does he say this? Because, in the Greco-Roman world, it was not unusual for people to share their spouses with each other.
>
> In the second-century *Epistle to Diognetus*, the author goes out of his way to

> declare how normal Christians are in regard to what they wear, what they eat, and how they participate in society. However, he then says, "[Christians] share their meals, *but not their sexual partners*" (*Diogn*. 5.7). Again, this is the trait that makes Christians different.
>
> We see this play out again in the second-century *Apology of Aristides*. Aristides defends the legitimacy of the Christian faith to the emperor Hadrian by pointing out how Christians "do not commit adultery nor fornication" and "their men keep themselves from every unlawful union" (15).
>
> A final example comes from the second-century apology of Minucius Felix. In his defense to Octavius, he contrasts the sexual ethic of the pagan world with that of Christians:
>
> Among the Persians, a promiscuous association between sons and mothers is allowed. Marriages with sisters are legitimate among the Egyptians and in Athens. Your records and your tragedies, which you both read and hear with pleasure, glory in incests: thus also you worship incestuous gods, who have intercourse with mothers, with daughters, with sisters. With reason, therefore, is incest frequently detected among you, and is continually permitted. Miserable men, you may even, without knowing it, rush into what is unlawful: since you scatter your lusts promiscuously, since you everywhere beget children, since you frequently expose even those who are born at home to the mercy of others, it is inevitable that you must come back to your own children, and stray to your own offspring. Thus you continue the story of incest, even although you have no consciousness of your crime. But we maintain our modesty not in appearance, but in our heart we gladly abide by the bond of a single marriage; in the desire of procreating, we know either one wife, or none at all (31).

I think that women should want men who believe in chastity before marriage and who believe in committing to you exclusively as protector and provider for a lifetime. And they should have to prove that they can be faithful and committed during the courtship, too. You can't just take their word for it, they have to work before the marriage to demonstrate their ability as a husband and father. It's not just that this is the way that we have always done it, it's that there are real reasons why chastity and fidelity are important for marriage success. You can't just have fun, pick anyone you like, and have marriage "work out". You have to be comfortable with chastity and fidelity, and the person you choose has to be comfortable with chastity and fidelity. It takes two people with self-control to make a stable, exclusive and committed marriage.

European leftists want to welcome in refugees, but can they handle it?

November 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

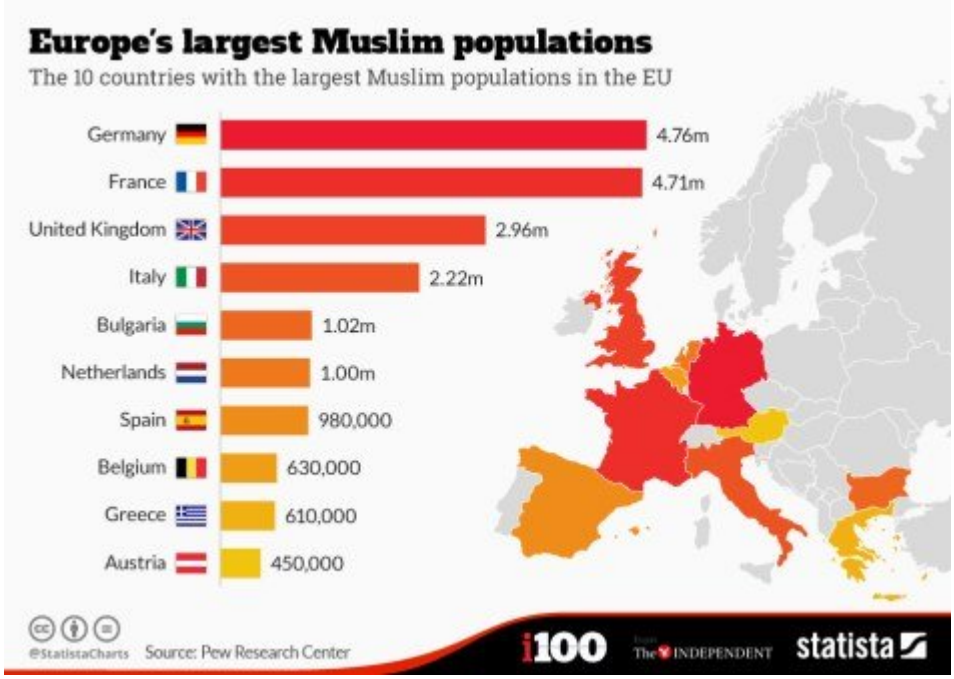

Muslim populations in Europe

Let's just take a look at a couple of European countries in this post, Germany and Sweden.

First, Germany.

Breitbart News reports:

> Germany will import 1.2 million completely unskilled migrants this year, many of whom will go straight onto unemployment benefits, according to a leaked government document.
>
> The Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, BA) October migration estimates document outlined a number of key statistics previously not in the public domain.
>
> Among the revelations is that fact over 80 per cent of migrants have no qualifications, the majority are under the age of 45, and the agency expects 400,000 new benefit claimants next year to be migrants.
>
> […]As the document explains, the sheer number of new unemployment benefit applications that will need processing and managing means the agency will have to employ 3,500 new staff.
>
> The new claimants and the staff come with a cost, estimated to stand at €855 million next year (£620 million) in addition to the €35 billion already budgeted for 2016. The additional cost includes €640 million for benefit payments and €65 million for new staff — convenient empire building for the agency at a time of

> national crisis.
>
> […]Just eight per cent of migrants have any kind of academic qualification, while 81 per cent have none at all. If Germany received 1.5 million migrants, as the present — if rapidly ascending — figure has it, that means some 1.2 million people will arrive in the country without a level of education even as high as a school leavers certificate.

Wow, everything is awesome! There will be lots of hiring of new government workers to process all of the new 400,000 people on welfare. See, letting in unskilled immigrants who cannot speak the language and do not accept Western laws and values pays for itself – it creates jobs! What could go wrong? Well, I guess someone has to pay for the welfare for all these people… but we can just add that to Germany's national debt, right?

Well, that's Germany, now on to Sweden.

Breitbart News again:

> Sweden is facing collapse thanks to the recent huge influx of migrants into the country, the Swedish foreign minister has said. As 190,000 migrants this year alone pour into the country, law and order is beginning to break down as the country plays witness to numerous arson attacks, stabbings and gang rapes.
>
> The Swedish foreign minister Margot Wallstrom has warned that Sweden, a country of just 9.8 million people, cannot continue to take migrants at the present rate without services breaking down. In an interview, Mrs Wallstrom said: "I think most people feel that we cannot maintain a system where perhaps 190,000 people will arrive every year – in the long run, our system will collapse.
>
> […]Once thought of as one of Europe's most peaceful nations, Sweden is rapidly becoming a fragmented nation, at war with itself. Almost 26.8 per cent of the population is now foreign born or has at least one foreign born parent. With no way to assimilate such large numbers, the outcome has been the creation of ghettos in which crime and extremism are allowed to flourish.
>
> Malmo, which just two years ago played host to that most unifying of events, the Eurovision Song Contest, now has "no-go zones." Last month, retired Chief Superintendent Torsten Elofsson told Breitbart London: "We have a number of no-go-zones in Sweden and they are expanding… police can go to these places, but you have to take precautions.
>
> "Years ago you could go with two officers, no problem. Now you have to send four officers and two cars – if the fire brigade want to go, they have to take a police escort. They throw stones and try to stop the fireman from putting out fires."
>
> He added: "Of the number of people arrested and dragged into police stations, the majority are of foreign origin to be honest. There is an over-representation of violent crimes committed by people from other countries".
>
> The city has also seen grenade attacks similar in style to those seen in the

> middle east,gang rapes, and fatal shootings.
>
> Two similar knife attacks, each of which claimed two victims, open a window into the cancer of liberalism eating away at the heart of Sweden: while a random stabbing of a Swedish mother and her son in Ikea by an Eritrean migrant who was angry at having his asylum claim refused was swept under the carpet by the establishment; yet the deaths of an immigrant teaching assistant and student by a native Swede frustrated by immigration were lamented by the media, politicians, and even the King, and labelled racist terrorism.

I am really glad that we have such wonderful, compassionate people in charge of spending our tax money. Obama has done a particularly good job of spending taxpayer money – it's just been reported that his new budget deal will drive the national debt up over $20 trillion before he leaves office! What a hero he is, especially to the young millenials who will be stuck with the bill.

Police car camera video undermines black professor's claim of discrimination

November 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

City of Corinth police vindicated by dashcam video

Another day, another hate crime hoax from the victim-mongers on the secular left.

Fox News reports:

> A Texas journalism professor's explosive charge that police hassled her for "walking while black," a claim lodged in a guest column in the state's biggest newspaper, doesn't square with the videotape, according to the police chief.
>
> The incident occurred when Dorothy Bland, dean of the journalism school at the University of North Texas, was taking a power walk on the morning of Oct. 24 in her neighborhood in the northeast Texas town of Corinth. In a column in the Dallas Morning News four days later, the former newspaper editor described her encounter with two local cops in terms that put the police in a bad light.
>
> **"Flashing lights and sirens from a police vehicle interrupted a routine Saturday morning walk in my golf-course community in Corinth," Bland writes in her column.** "Like most African-Americans, I am familiar with the phrase 'driving while black,' but was I really being stopped for walking on the street in my own neighborhood?
>
> […]Bland uses the column to lay out her case for allegations of being racially profiled claiming that she was not offered a reason.
>
> "I guess I was simply a brown face in an affluent neighborhood," Bland said in her column.
>
> But dashcam video provided by Corinth Police shows Bland walking in the middle of the street, and captures the two police officers politely advising her to stay on the side of oncoming traffic, so she can see approaching cars. After viewing the

> footage, Corinth Police Chief Debra Walthall told FoxNews.com she was proud of the way her officers behaved.
>
> "When I saw the video, those officers were nothing but professional," she said. "[The incident] just didn't lend itself to racial profiling.
>
> **"If we didn't have the video, these officers would have serious allegations against them," Walthall added. "It would be their word against hers. Every white officer that stops an African-American does not constitute racial profiling."**
>
> The video shows the two police officers as they get out of their squad car, without turning on the siren as the professor claimed in her column. After telling Bland it would be safer to stay to the side of the street, one cop explains how a truck had earlier tried to pass her but she did not notice that she was in the way.
>
> The officers ask Bland for her ID, which she did not have but she gave her name and date of birth after insisting that she take the officers' picture "for safety's sake." The policemen obliged her request.
>
> Walthall said the officers were correct to ask for identification because Bland had committed a Class C misdemeanor by impeding traffic.
>
> "It is part of the standard procedure," Walthall said. "There's a legitimate purpose for doing so. She [Bland] did commit a misdemeanor. I want our officers checking ID's on every person they encounter in situations such as this.
>
> Bland did not immediately return requests for comment.

Another liberal professor in a non-STEM field lying ("flashing lights and sirens") to advance her agenda. And for the record, my skin color is darker than hers.

Should she be charged for making a false charge against the police officers? I think prosecuting people who make false charges is the only way that it will stop happening.

In the rest of the post, let's look at a few fake hate crime stories where people on the left lied in order to push their secular left agenda.

The first one from last month is from the ultra-leftist Minneapolis Star-Tribune.

Excerpt:

> A monthlong police investigation has concluded that a gay man who reported being the victim of a hate crime at a University of North Dakota fraternity invented the story and actually instigated the fight.
>
> **Police recommended charging Haakon Gisvold, 18, who is not a UND student, with providing false information to police, but prosecutors declined.**
>
> "While probable cause may exist to conclude that such an offense took place, at this time there is not a substantial likelihood of conviction; as such, pursuing a criminal charge is not deemed to be in the interest of justice," Grand Forks

> County State's Attorney David Jones told WDAZ-TV.
>
> […]Gisvold told police in early September that he was the victim of homophobic taunting and an assault at the Lambda Chi Alpha house. He said he was called anti-gay slurs, choked and stripped of his clothes while attending a party.
>
> […]Authorities said their monthlong investigation, including interviewing 150 witnesses, concluded there was no evidence of a hate crime, and that Gisvold instigated a fight.

Here's another one from July 2015, reported in the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> A Utah man who claimed to be the victim of several dreadful anti-gay hate crimes could face criminal charges after confessing that he staged the attacks himself.
>
> Several weeks ago, 21-year-old Rick Jones from the small town of Delta grabbed national headlines after he said he was assaulted and had [an anti-gay slur] carved into his arm last April while closing up his family's pizzeria. Following that attack, Jones claimed his home was spray-painted and that somebody threw a Molotov cocktail through his bedroom window. Jones told the local media that he believed he was being targeted due to his homosexuality, and other media outlets quickly picked up the refrain.
>
> In response to these attacks, Jones' family started a GoFundMe campaign in mid-June that collected nearly $12,000.
>
> But now, police say inconsistencies in the evidence have led them to conclude the person behind these "attacks" was Jones himself. His attorneys say Jones has confessed and asked for the hate crime investigation to be terminated.

Why is this important? It's important because the mainstream media loves to use stories like this to drive public opinions against traditional Judeo-Christian moral values. They report the alleged crime, but don't report the retractions. The same thing happens with false rape accusations, like the one at the University of Virginia that was reported by Rolling Stone. These fake rape stories are useful because they cause the public to oppose groups, like college-aged men. And they decrease the credibility of women in real rape cases. I am for tougher sentences against any rapist who is convicted in a criminal courtroom, but I am suspicious of cases where the plaintiff does not go straight to the police to get them involved.

Greg Koukl debates Michael Shermer on God, atheism, meaning and morality

November 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The full transcript of a debate between Michael Shermer, editor of Skeptic magazine, and Greg Koukl, president of Stand to Reason. This debate occurred on Hugh Hewitt's radio show, and was moderated by Hugh Hewitt.

HH = Hugh Hewitt
GK = Greg Koukl
MS = Michael Shermer

Here is a 32-page PDF with the full debate transcript.

And here's an excerpt:

GK: Right. Actually, the big question here, Hugh, is whether it's possible to be good without God. Now I'm not talking about whether it's possible to be good without a belief in God. I certainly think that's possible, but be good without God. And the answer to that question hinges entirely on precisely what you mean by good. And so I was going to give an illustration. So a man drags a young girl into the alley, he sexually abuses her, strangles here, and tosses her into the dustbin. Is that act wrong? Now I think everybody listening is going to admit it is wrong. But here is the real question. What do we mean when we say that that act of rape and abuse and murder is wrong? Are we describing the action itself, the object? Are we saying that the object, the rape, the murder, has a quality of being wrong, and therefore, wherever that rape goes, the wrongness follows it, just like your height, 6' 2", or whatever it is, is an objective quality of you. Wherever you go, your height follows you in the same way. Does the wrongness follow the rape? Well, if it's a quality of the rape, if it's an objective quality of the rape, then it does. And it doesn't matter what people think about it, or what cultures decides, or what your evolutionary conditioning is. The rape is still wrong. The other alternative is that you're not talking about the rape. You're talking about yourself. You're talking about your genetic conditioning. You're talking about your culture's decision about that kind of thing. And if that's the case, then the truth of the wrongness of the rape is simply in the individual or the subject. And this is why philosophers distinguish between ethical objectivism and ethical subjectivism. Now there's lots of different subjectivisms in ethics. But simply put, if you're an ethical subjectivist, you're a relativist. And actual ethics don't exist. Ethics are an illusion. If you conclude that ethics are an illusion, there's lots of different ways to explain it. Michael's written a really great book, I think, called The Science Of Good And Evil. I've read most of it, and it's well written, and it's very compelling. But it's a description about how the illusion of ethics has taken place. If you want to go that route, you're welcome to go that route. But what you can't do is you can't then talk about morality as if it's objective when your explanations are subjective. So this is a problem that I think all atheists, including Michael, have to solve. Are ethics objective or relative?

And if they're relative, then how can we make moral judgments that are meaningful on other people?

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Wow, let's just get right into it. Well, I don't think it's quite so black and white. That is to say I think there are provisional moral truths that exist whether there's a God or not. In other words, it's wrong, morally, absolutely morally wrong to rape and murder. And that would be true whether there was a God or not. In other words, if…is God saying that it's wrong because it's really wrong, and He's instructing us in his Holy Scripture that it's wrong? Or is it only wrong because He said so? And if it turned out there wasn't a God, would that make it okay? And my answer is no, it really is wrong, whether God says it's wrong or not. That is to say I think it really exists, a real, moral standard like that. Why? Well, because first, you could ask the person who is being affected, we should always ask the moral recipient of the act, how do you feel about being raped or murdered or stolen from or lied to. And the moral actor will tell you, it doesn't matter whether, if I could use a current example, I haven't any idea if Tiger Woods and his wife are religious or not. But you can just ask his wife whether it was morally right or wrong, and she'll tell you. It doesn't matter whether there's a God or not. It's wrong. And so that's the first principle. Just ask. Ask the moral recipient of whether it's right or wrong. But I think Greg's after something deeper, that is to say is there something even deeper still behind the moral actor's feelings about how they're treated. And the answer is yes, I think so. We're a social species. We don't live in isolation. We live as members of a group. And as such, there's no possible way our group could survive, be cohesive, be a unit of any kind of solidarity against other groups, or against a harsh environment. If there were too much violations of social norms, that is if there were constant lying and cheating and raping and murdering, there's no way a social group could hang together. And as such, as we all know, we're very tribal. We're tribal against other groups, but within our groups, we're very pro-social, altruistic, cooperative. We have a good and evil in our nature. So to this extent, I find myself interesting often in agreement with my conservative friends on most of the things they consider morally, moral truths. That is, we share the same moral values, even though I come at it from a different perspective.

HH: Greg?

GK: Yeah, I'm actually not after something deeper here, Michael. At least to start out the discussion, I'm trying to be as simple and clear and precise as possible, because it's very easy to weave together a bunch of things that sound persuasive, but turn out to be different things. Like for example, Darwinian evolution, which is a materialistic process, and here I mean the blind watchmaker thesis, the neo-Darwinian synthesis, natural selection working on mutations, and a kind of a cultural evolution that Michael has just referred to as we work together as a group to survive as a group. Those are two entirely different things. One is materialistic, Darwinian, the other one is intelligent design, quite frankly, where the group gets together and makes some determinations to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What I'm trying to do is to be able to answer the question that came up initially, is God necessary for morality, which Michael denies. It's

to say well, what is it that morality, that we're trying to describe? It is either objective, and therefore an immaterial obligation that applies to certain behaviors, or it is subjective. The things that Michael described were variously subjective, evolutionary elements, subjective cultural elements, but then he affirmed that we all have good and evil in our nature, or an awareness of that. I agree with that entirely. We all are aware of those things. That's why even if we don't believe in God, we can still know morality and follow it. The question is what accounts for real, genuine objective morality?

HH: One minute to the break, Michael Shermer.

MS: I'm not arguing for cultural evolution. I'm actually arguing as part of our, what you described as materialistic, natural selection, Darwinian evolution, that it's not enough to just pretend or fake being a good group member. You actually have to believe it, feel it, and live it. So what I'm arguing is that natural selected certain moral sentiments, as Adam Smith called them, moral feelings, an actual empathy, Adam Smith talked about, we actually empathize with somebody else, we can put ourselves into their shoes and feel their pain, I'm arguing that's very real. It's every bit as real a part of our evolutionary heritage as our eyes and our hands.

– – – –

HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, you were saying that evolutionary biology has produced a real morality.

MS: Yeah, I think really, Adam Smith had it right in his very first book, The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, long before Darwin, that we actually have in our biological nature, our human nature, the capacity to feel other people's pain. He called it empathy, we think of it often either as empathy or sympathy. That is, we really do connect to other people. A lot of good research on this now, brain scans, you can show somebody a little video of somebody they know, or have feelings for, getting pricked with a pin, and the same areas of their brain light up, the pain receptors, as in the person getting the pin prick. In other words, we have an evolved tendency to really be deeply, emotionally connected to our fellow group members. And that's why I say groups like World Vision, where you want to adopt a child, it doesn't help to show a picture of 10,000 starving African kids. What does affect us is one child, a picture of one child with a little biography. That's how you get people to adopt a child to donate. The reason for that is because essentially they're tricking the brain, our brains into making that stranger an honorary family member, an honorary within group member, which is why I argue that free trade is one of the best ways of defusing normal tribal tensions between people. It makes them honorary friends, honorary members. Well, what's going on there is we're tricking the brain into sort of this evolutionary rule of thumb – be nice to people that are like you and that are related to you, and that you know, and that are fellow group members, and don't do what our natural tendency is, is to be tribal and xenophobic against those other guys. And free trade is one of the best things you can do for that. So I'm arguing that's actually tapping something deep within us.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, basically, I agree with Mike completely here. We do have this tendency, and it seems to be universal among humankind. The question is, what is that tendency, actually? And what is the best way to explain it? And I see like a handful of significant problems with using evolution to explain morality. The first one is that evolution is a materialistic process. And here, I'm going back to an original point, and I don't want people to lose it. There is no way that you can take molecules, and reorganize them in any fashion, over any length of time, and have pop out of the mixture an objective moral principle that's immaterial, and that applies to human beings. All you're going to get is a reorganization of the molecules. And what they can produce, and this is what Mike has done in his book, and he mentioned just s few moments ago, they can produce sentiments. They can produce feelings. They can produce behavior. But this leads us to the second problem of using evolution to explain morality, is that morality is more than sentiments, feelings and behavior. Morality entails things like motive and intention. I mean, you could have a guy walk into a garage, walk out with a hose, and is that wrong? Well, it depends. Is it his hose or somebody else's hose? Did he intend to take the other person's hose? Is he borrowing the hose? So we can see here are elements that are part of the moral thing that needs to be explained, that are immaterial, and therefore the Darwinian explanation can't even in principle go there. It can't do that job. But here's the worst problem. Regardless of what our sentiments happen to be regarding moral actions, we can feel good or feel bad or whatever, the problem is that morality is prescriptive, not merely descriptive. That is it tells us not just what we did, but what we ought to have done in the past, and what we ought to do in the future. That is not something that any Darwinian mechanism can describe, because nothing about my biology can inveigh upon me to act a certain way for moral reasons in the future. It doesn't tell me why I should be good tomorrow. This is a huge difference between these two views, the descriptive and the prescriptive. Prescriptive is part of morality, and can't even, in principle, be explained by an evolutionary materialistic system.

HH: Michael Shermer, I'll give you a start on that. We have about 45 seconds to the break, so you may want to…we'll come back after the break and pick up. But what's your start to that?

MS: Well, the start would be that again, let's not think of evolution just as nature red and tooth and claw, and it's nasty, brutish and short, but that in fact, we have this whole other social evolution. And I'm not talking about cultural evolution where we consciously make decisions, but subconsciously, because it's in part of our nature to actually, seriously, deeply feel for other people and their actions, and the consequences of our actions, so that we actually have a sense of right and wrong that we're born with, but then culture taps into and tweaks, one way or the other.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, Greg had made the argument that the Darwinian model simply cannot explain immaterial concepts like morality, that there's just no way you can rearrange the molecules to get there. You're saying well, yes you

can.

MS: Yeah, I think so, because if we think of morality as another suite of emotions that are involved with other people's behaviors, the consequences of our actions, how we feel about them, how people feel about us when we do these things, that's as every bit as important a biological part of our nature as anything else we talk about. So let's take a real simple emotion. When you're hungry, nobody does any calculations about the caloric input/output ratios of eating an apple versus an ice cream, although now it's posted on the walls for us to see. But we just feel hungry, and we feel hungry for certain kinds of foods. The feeling of hunger is a proxy for something else. Evolution's done the calculating for us. You need food, so we're going to, your hypothalamus is going to secrete these certain chemicals that causes your stomach to rumble and so on. When you're attracted to somebody else, a member of the opposite sex, nobody does the calculation by, let's say, a man finds a woman attractive who has a .67 hip to waist ratio, and an hourglass figure, although that is pretty much universal. Nobody walks about with calipers taking measurements of who they're going to want to date or ask out. You just look around, and you just go wow, I really find this woman attractive. It's a feeling you have, okay? So those are kind of simple emotions, but sliding up the scale, the moral emotions are really no different. When I lie to somebody, I've violated a social norm, and they respond in a very angry, hostile way. So those emotions that we both share, guilt, shame, anger, disgust, involved a social relationship that whether it was a norm violation, those are the kinds of emotions that are just like hunger and sexual attraction that are built into us by nature, by evolution. Or, if you wish, this is how God created the moral sentiments, just like He created everything else in the universe, through a process of nature. I think that's equally reasonable to argue. So I don't see that it has to be an atheistic viewpoint versus a theistic viewpoint to get to our moral sentiments. Why couldn't God have used evolution to create the moral sentiments as I've described them?

GK: Yeah, well, you don't actually believe that, I know, Mike, so this is kind of like adding God to the soup, you know, if it makes people feel better. But the basic argument is that evolution all by itself can do the trick. And I think if your listeners are listening carefully, what they're going to hear is Mike has just described, and if I'm being unfair to your assessment here, let me know, Mike, that moral feelings are simply that. They are sophisticated emotions that do some work for us for survival, and even on a group level. Now there's a name for this. It's called emotivism. A.J. Ayer, the famous atheist, offered this description of morality. It's a relativistic scheme of morality. Morality doesn't actually exist, Ayer argued. There is no objective right or wrong. Rape isn't wrong itself. What happens is, we have feelings about it, and we express it in moral language, but rape isn't really wrong. So your listeners are going to have to ask themselves the questions. When they just survey their own moral senses, and we all have access to this, do we want to believe that scientists have figured out that really what we're doing is feeling sophisticated, complicated emotions, and that the emotions are in us, and we are not seeing anything about the action? Or does it seem like rape is wrong? Look, when I say rape is wrong, I'm talking about the rape. When I say liver is awful, I'm talking about me.

I'm talking about my own tastes and preferences. It's interesting, as Michael has given his explanation, though, that he's doing, and I don't know if you are aware of this, Michael, but you're doing the very thing that I kind of warned against. You give a description of the foundations of morality that turn out to be relativistic, but then there's a smuggling of a more objectivistic morality in the back door, like when Michael says you don't have to do what your nature tells you to do, in other words, what you've been programmed by evolution to do. You can kind of rise above that. Well, now we're talking about a morality that isn't dictated by evolution, but a morality that we can employ through our acts of will, to rise above this kind of brutish evolutionary morality. And that sounds suspiciously like the very thing that I'm talking about here.

MS: But I don't mean, there's nothing to rise above by itself. Yes, we have to say rise above our tribal instincts to be xenophobic when we meet somebody who's a stranger, who's different from us. We all struggle against that, particularly in a black and white America, where there's always been this underlying tension. Indeed, so culture helps us do that – education, travel, diversity of exposure to different people. That makes you a little more tolerant. Okay, but I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about is tapping into the good part of our nature, the fact that in addition to that xenophobic tribalism we have, we also have this other side that almost never gets discussed in evolutionary…even in evolutionary circles, you'll still hear evolutionary biologists talking about, in a way that Huxley did, and Herbert Spencer did in Darwin's own time, that we have to somehow struggle mightily against our genes to overcome that nasty tendency we have to want to rape, kill, pillage and destroy. Well no, actually, we have this whole other side that's just as genetically programmed into our nature. And the point of culture – education, politics, economics and so on, is to tap into the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said.

GK: Okay, here's the question I have for you, Michael, then. You've identified that really, we have good and we have bad. That's part of, under your terms, that's part of our genetic nature, and we can choose to tap into what you call the good side. Why ever should we do such a thing if there is not a higher standard that directs our action to the better side, your words, than the bad side, your words, if really, ultimately, they are both the result of a genetic evolution, and from outside terms, neither is better than the other. Why should we do that, Michael?

MS: Yeah, well I don't see how entering God into the equation changes that problem at all.

GK: Well, that's the next step. What I'm trying to show is that the should comes from the outside, and if we can demonstrate that, then we can ask…

Read the rest by click here to get the PDF.

Dept. of Education: schools must allow men into women's bathroom and women's locker room

November 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Catherine Lhamon, the Education Department's assistant secretary for civil rights

Here's the raw story from the radically leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> Federal education authorities, staking out their firmest position yet on an increasingly contentious issue, found Monday that an Illinois school district violated anti-discrimination laws when it did not allow a transgender student who identifies as a girl and participates on a girls' sports team to change and shower in the girls' locker room without restrictions.
>
> […]In a letter sent Monday, the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Education told the Palatine district that requiring a transgender student to use private changing and showering facilities was a violation of that student's rights under Title IX, a federal law that bans sex discrimination. The student, who identifies as female but was born male, should be given unfettered access to girls' facilities, the letter said.
>
> "All students deserve the opportunity to participate equally in school programs and activities — this is a basic civil right," Catherine Lhamon, the Education Department's assistant secretary for civil rights, said in a statement. "Unfortunately, Township High School District 211 is not following the law because the district continues to deny a female student the right to use the girls' locker room."

Now remember, even if you pull your kids out of these schools, you are still paying for the public school system, and you are still paying the salaries of these left-wing activists.

Does it really help this young man to go along with his delusion. Shouldn't we be trying to help him by telling him the truth, and getting him counseling? That seems to me to be more reasonable.

Note that Catherine Lhamon was directing appointed by our far-left President, Barack Obama.

And she was also involved in the false rape charge scandal at the University of Virginia, as the Daily Caller reports:

> A top-ranking official at the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has emerged as a potentially key figure in Rolling Stone's false article, "A Rape on Campus."
>
> Catherine Lhamon, who heads the Department's civil rights wing, was identified in a letter sent last month by University of Virginia Dean of Students Allen Groves to Steve Coll and Sheila Coronel, the two Columbia Journalism School deans who conducted a review of the Nov. 19 article, written by disgraced reporter Sabrina Rubin Erdely.
>
> […]As the Rolling Stone article fell apart, Lhamon's involvement has gone virtually unmentioned. But a deeper look reveals her ties to Emily Renda, a University of Virginia employee and activist who put Erdely in touch with Jackie, the student whose claim that she was brutally gang-raped by seven members of a fraternity on Sept. 28, 2012, served as the linchpin for the 9,000-word Rolling Stone article.

These are the kinds of people that Obama appoints – radical leftists. They're using the power of government to push a left-wing agenda, and if they have to hurt a few people along the way, well, they are willing to do that. We need to be more careful about who we vote for.

Seven policies that conservatives oppose, because they cause poverty

November 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Women for bigger government, higher taxes

The list is from John Hawkins, who runs Right Wing News. It's posted at Townhall.com, though. (H/T Lindsay)

Intro:

> Keeping Americans poor in a prosperous country like America is not as easy as you think. After all, this is the "land of opportunity." Legal immigrants pay tens of thousands of dollars and wait years for the opportunity to come legally and illegal immigrants often risk their lives just so they can get here and do menial work. This is the country that made Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and even OPRAH into billionaires and it's a nation where you can have everything from hoverboards to medicine for your pet delivered right to your door. So when there's so much wealth and opulence everywhere, how do you lock Americans out of that success?
>
> No matter what you do, there will always be a few poor people around, but to really maximize those numbers there are very specific government policies abetted by a few cultural attitudes that will make all the difference.

Here's the list of policies that make people poor:

1. **Making Sure Taxes And Regulations Are Sky High**
2. **Encouraging Dependency**
3. **Encouraging People To Have Babies Out Of Wedlock**
4. **Demonizing Success**
5. **Screwing Up The Education System**
6. **Having Massive Immigration**

7. **Ratcheting Up Their Expenses**

I partially disagree with him on #6, where he goes after skilled immigrants. I think it's right to go after unskilled immigrants, and immigration through family sponsors, since those people may use more social programs than they pay for in taxes. I don't mind if they come, so long as they are barred from social programs. Failing that, we should only allow skilled immigrants to come – they pay in more than they use up.

However, if he was talking about illegal alias, and not skilled workers, I agree 100%. Everyone who is here should be here legally with a work permit, and there should be enforcement to punish employers who cheat.

Here's the one I really like, though – the one I think my Democrat co-workers would not be surprised by:

> **7. Ratcheting Up Their Expenses**: Of course, if you want to create more poor Americans, it's best to tax the middle class as much as possible, but in a country where they can vote you out of office, you have to be careful about directly reaching into their wallets. So, how do you take their money without their realizing that you're responsible?
>
> Have the Federal Reserve print money non-stop, which drives up inflation. Over time, that reduces the purchasing power of the middle class as the cost of everything seems to creep up. It's also important to go after cheap sources of energy like oil, coal, natural gas and nuclear power. Not only does that drive up the cost the middle class pays across the board for products, it also hits people directly when they heat and cool their homes. Exploding medical costs are also helpful and Obamacare has done an amazing job of this. Medical costs are skyrocketing for the middle class and helping to drive them towards poverty. As an extra added bonus, middle class Americans who can no longer afford to pay for their medical care because of Obamacare will also be hit with a tax penalty. If your goal is to hurt middle class Americans financially, you could not do much better than Obamacare.

There are many ways to impoverish working people more than just raising their taxes. Just make them pay more for everything by regulating and taxing the people who create the services and products that people buy.

What did early church fathers think about abortion and infanticide?

November 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about early church traditions

This is from Birds of the Air.

Summary:

> Recently I came across a reading of the Didache. "The *what*?" you may ask. The Didache is a book written somewhere in the first or second century. For a long time it was up for consideration as Scripture. It was believed to be the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Eventually it was agreed that the book was an excellent book, but not inspired Scripture. So I was pleased to be able to download this admirable book containing good teachings from the early Church fathers.
>
> The book seemed to be largely a lot of quotes from Scripture. You'll learn the basic rules of Christianity — "First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself." You'll learn that "grave sins" are forbidden, like adultery, murder, fornication, and so on. (They specifically include pederasty in the list.) There are instructions regarding teachers, prophets, Christian assembly, and so on. Lots of the normal, good stuff. But, since this was written sometime prior to 200 AD, I was somewhat surprised at this instruction: "You shall not murder a child by abortion" (Didache, Ch 2).

I got curious about what babies look like when they are just a few weeks old, so I went

looking for pictures of them.

This post from Life News has ten excellent pictures of life inside the womb.

Here's my favorite from 10 weeks:

Unborn Baby – 10 weeks old
This is a first trimester baby!

I decided to go hunting to see what is developed at this time, and found this list:

> - From this week until birth, the developing organism is called a fetus.
> - The fetus is now the size of a small strawberry.
> - The feet are 2mm long (one tenth of an inch).
> - The neck is beginning to take shape.
> - The body muscles are almost developed. Baby has begun movement.
> - While still too small for you to feel, your little one is wriggling and shifting.
> - The jaws are in place. The mouth cavity and the nose are joined.
> - The ears and nose can now be seen clearly.
> - Fingerprints are already evident in the skin.
> - Nipples and hair follicles begin to form.
>
> The unborn baby is now called a fetus. Though the fetus is constantly moving, you will not be able to actually feel fetal movement for several more weeks. All of the organs, muscles, and nerves are in place and beginning to function. As the hands and feet develop fingers and toes, they have lost their paddle like look. The touch pads on the fingers form and already have fingerprints.
>
> During this week of pregnancy the crown to rump length of the fetus is 0.9 inch to 1.2 inches (22 to 30mm), weight 0.07 ounce (2gm). They are now on the way

> to forming their testicles or ovaries, getting ready for the next generation. Until the ninth week of fetus development, the fetal reproductive apparatus is the same one for the both sexes. The head is still large and curves into chest.
>
> Each week your uterus grows larger with the baby growing inside it. You may begin to see your waistline growing thicker by this time. A pelvic exam will detect that your uterus has grown from it’s normal, size of your fist, to a little bigger than a grapefruit.

Fascinating!

All about Jenean Hampton, the new Lieutenant-Governor of Kentucky

November 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, there was an election for the governor of Kentucky on Monday, and all the polls said that the Democrat would win. In Kentucky, normally the Democrat does win. They only have had one Republican governor since 1971.

Kentucky.com reports:

> He never led until the end, and that's when it counted.
>
> Republican Matt Bevin, who trailed in every public poll since winning the Republican primary in May by 83 votes, shocked Democrat Jack Conway on Tuesday to become the next governor of Kentucky.
>
> […]Bevin was able to defy pundits, political insiders and polling — including one released by his own campaign in October that showed him losing — and emerge a winner Tuesday night.
>
> In the end, it wasn't even close. Bevin won 106 of the state's 120 counties on his way to a nine-point victory.
>
> […]He was quick to rush to the defense of Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis when she was jailed briefly for defying a federal judge's order to issue marriage licenses after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage.
>
> In the closing days of the race, Bevin focused on that saga and other social issues, honing in on rural voters' contempt for Obama and career politicians.

And this is the interesting bit:

> After being introduced by running mate, Lt. Gov.-elect Jenean Hampton — the first black person to win a statewide race in Kentucky — Bevin spoke of the challenges that lie ahead, saying it was time "to get the overalls on, get the boots on and get out of bed."

Here's her picture:

Kentucky Lt. Governor Jenean Hampton (in her USAF uniform)

Wow. Let's find out more about her.

National Review:

> Both Bevin and Hampton are Tea Party activists who have never held elective office. Hampton's path certainly represents triumph over adversity. Born in Detroit, the 57-year-old Hampton and her three sisters were raised by a single mom who lacked a high school education and couldn't afford a television or a car. But Hampton was determined to better herself. She graduated with a degree in industrial engineering and worked for five years in the automobile industry to pay off her college loans. She then joined the Air Force, retiring as a Captain. She earned an MBA from the University of Rochester, moved to Kentucky and became a plant manager in a corrugated packaging plant.

Daily Signal has more about her background:

> She grew up in inner-city Detroit, to parents who divorced when she was 7 years old. Her mother was left to raise her and three sisters.
>
> She vowed when young that she would not "live a life of poverty," she told the Courier-Journal. "A huge part of what formed my opinions was the peer pressure that I got to fail."
>
> After a liberal upbringing, Hampton connected with President Ronald Reagan's ideals and made a switch to conservative thinking.
>
> Hampton's mother has switched to the GOP, but Hampton's father (who died in 2014) never accepted his daughter's conservative views.
>
> […]She has been married for 14 years to Dr. Doyle Isaak, a retired Air Force flight

> surgeon.
>
> Hampton is a member of the Eleventh Street Missionary Baptist Church in Bowling Green, according to her campaign website.
>
> To pay for college, she worked for five years in the auto industry, including General Motors. She holds an industrial engineering degree from Wayne State University and a master of business administration from the University of Rochester.
>
> **At the beginning of her seven years of military service, she was a computer systems officer for the Air Force. Her job duties included writing code and testing software.**
>
> Hampton was deployed to Operation Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia, where she was an Air Force captain.

We actually had two victories in states where the left went after social conservatives. This Kentucky victory follows after the jailing of Kim Davis for civil disobedience against the Supreme Court. And then we had the rejection of a gay rights bill that would allow men to go into women's bathrooms, which followed the effort by the gay Houston mayor to persecute Houston pastors.

Social issues won in Kentucky and Houston

David French and Ryan T. Anderson both wrote articles talking about what these victories mean for social conservatives.

David French:

> In Houston, all the right celebrities and corporations endorsed the "HERO act" — an expansive city ordinance that among other things would have granted transgender men access to women's restrooms — but the celeb/corporate alliance failed. Voters decisively rejected dangerous sexual radicalism.
>
> […]One year ago, the activist, lesbian mayor of Houston subpoenaed the sermons and other communications of five pastors — men who opposed the city's expansive nondiscrimination ordinance. The subpoenas weren't limited to sermons about the so-called HERO act; they demanded "emails, instant messages, and text messages" on "equal rights, civil rights, homosexuality, or gender identity." Houston had launched a direct attack on religious freedom.

Ryan T. Anderson:

> As the Washington Post's "Daily 202" notes, a major factor in Bevin's victory—a Republican in a state that has elected Democrats as governor for 40 of the past 44 years—was "[f]ocusing on social issues, including promises to defund Planned Parenthood and defend Kim Davis, [which] helped drive the conservative base to turn out."
>
> No one was predicting that Bevin would win, especially not after he publicly defended Kim Davis and vigorously criticized the current governor for his

> handling of that situation.

It’s easy for me to keep blogging about bad news every day, we have so much of it. In particular, we haven’t done a good job of raising the next generation to respect marriage, family and children. But it’s not on us to gurantee outcomes. It’s on us to try be salt and light in a world that needs it. And sometimes, we win.

IPCC lead author: 25 years of failed global warming policies have made us poorer

November 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

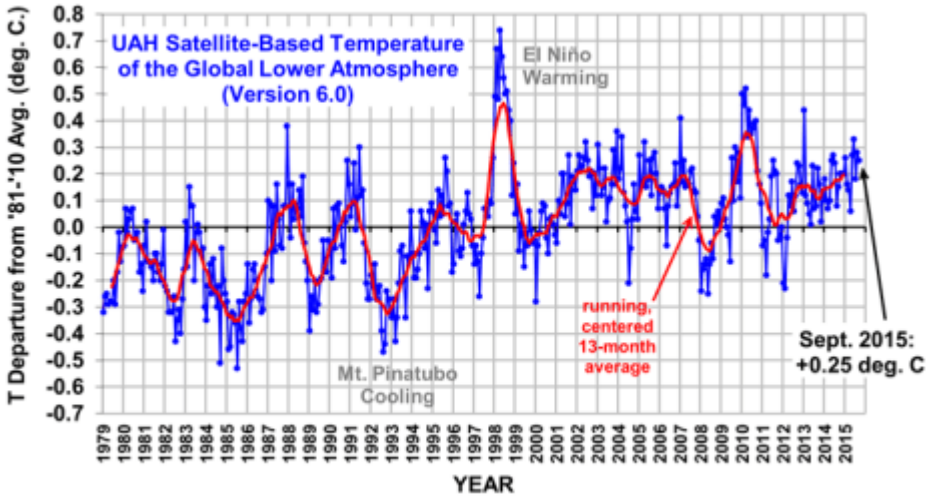

Atmospheric temperature measurements though Sept 2015

I found this article on The Stream, it's about environmental economist Richard Tol.

It says:

> Environmental economist Richard Tol wants the world to deal with global warming, but his data shows the past 25 years of climate policies in rich countries have done nothing to fundamentally tackle the issue.
>
> If anything, Tol argues, current and past climate policies have only served to make most people a little poorer while benefiting those in politically favored industries or with connections to powerful politicians.
>
> "Twenty-five years of climate policy has made most of us a little poorer," Tol told an audience gathered at the libertarian Cato Institute Friday, adding that such policies also made "some of us a little richer" — referring to those getting green energy subsidies and government grants.
>
> In Tol's view, climate policies have been more about "rewarding allies with rents and subsidies rather than emissions reduction."
>
> Tol, no skeptic of man-made global warming, argued current policies to cut emissions have done nothing to change the trend in carbon dioxide emissions reductions over the past 25 years. Basically, U.S. and European climate regulations have not caused emissions to be reduced any faster.
>
> "CO2 intensity in the economy has come down," Tol said, "but you can't really see a trend break in 1990. It just seems that the last 20 years were a continuation of the trends of the 20 years before."
>
> "And this is true for the United States, where there has been some climate policy,

> but it’s also true for some of the countries — Germany, Japan, United Kingdom — who have consistently claimed to be in climate policy and claim to have done a whole lot to reduce their emissions,” Tol said. “It’s just not visible in the data.”
>
> Tol is probably the world’s leading environmental economist and a lead author of a United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change working group, but that hasn’t stopped him from being criticized for his unorthodox opinions.
>
> Tol lashed out against the IPCC last year for exaggerating claims about global warming, by comparing it to an “apocalypse.” The economist also authored articles debunking the “97 percent” consensus claim often touted by environmentalists and politicians.

To be fair, though, he’s not a skeptic like me:

> On the other hand, Tol is no skeptic of man-made global warming. He favors taxing carbon dioxide emissions, but has admitted that global warming could initially result in economic benefits from enhanced plant growth, lower heating costs and fewer deaths from the cold.

It never ceases to amaze me how my secular leftist friends believe whatever they want to believe, because they want to believe it, regardless of evidence. I suppose that they will even reject this guy as being “in the pay of the Big Scary Oil Companies”.

Four ways the Earth is fine-tuned for life, and one more

November 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

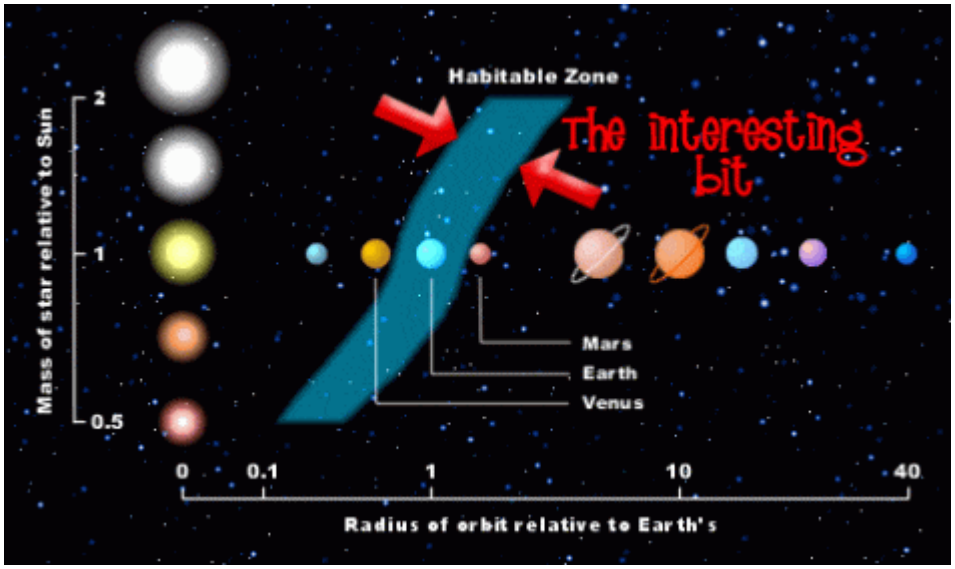

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

This is a post from J. Warner Wallace, over at Cold Case Christianity.

Let's see his four ways first, then I'll add one that I know.

He writes:

1. **The Earth's Relationship to the Sun Is Favorable to Life**
2. **The Earth's Atmospheric Conditions Are Favorable to Life**
3. **The Earth's Terrestrial Nature Is Favorable to Life**
4. **The Earth's Relationship to the Moon Is Favorable to Life**

I've blogged about the moon and plate tectonics before, so we won't pick #3 and #4 to look at. And I blogged about the stellar habitable zone before, so we won't pick #1, either.

Let's look at #2:

> **The Earth's Atmospheric Conditions Are Favorable to Life:**
> The surface gravity of Earth is critical to its ability to retain an atmosphere friendly to life. If Earth's gravity were stronger, our atmosphere would contain too much methane and ammonia. If our planet's gravity were weaker, Earth wouldn't be able to retain enough water. As it is, Earth's atmosphere has a finely calibrated ratio of oxygen to nitrogen—just enough carbon dioxide and adequate water vapor levels to promote advanced life, allow photosynthesis (without an excessive greenhouse effect), and to allow for sufficient rainfall.

Ok, that's very good.

Now here is one from me… well, it's from Science Daily, but I found it. Actually, ECM

found it. But he told me.

Excerpt:

> They suggest that the size and location of an asteroid belt, shaped by the evolution of the Sun's protoplanetary disk and by the gravitational influence of a nearby giant Jupiter-like planet, may determine whether complex life will evolve on an Earth-like planet.
>
> This might sound surprising because asteroids are considered a nuisance due to their potential to impact Earth and trigger mass extinctions. But an emerging view proposes that asteroid collisions with planets may provide a boost to the birth and evolution of complex life.
>
> Asteroids may have delivered water and organic compounds to the early Earth. According to the theory of punctuated equilibrium, occasional asteroid impacts might accelerate the rate of biological evolution by disrupting a planet's environment to the point where species must try new adaptation strategies.
>
> The astronomers based their conclusion on an analysis of theoretical models and archival observations of extrasolar Jupiter-sized planets and debris disks around young stars. "Our study shows that only a tiny fraction of planetary systems observed to date seem to have giant planets in the right location to produce an asteroid belt of the appropriate size, offering the potential for life on a nearby rocky planet," said Martin, the study's lead author. "Our study suggests that our solar system may be rather special."

So, that's 5 ways that the Earth and our solar system are fine-tuned to be habitable for complex, embodied minds. Somebody is looking out for you, so be thankful and recognize.

Actually, I was thinking about this today (Wednesday). At lunch, I was thinking about this girl I know who is very disrespectful of me, of what I've achieved, and she won't take my advice in the areas where I am experienced – education, career, saving, investing. I was fretting about it as I was about to start eating my lunch and suddenly it struck me that I don't give God enough credit for the many blessings I get from him. I don't mean things that "go my way", I mean big things like habitability, and so on. So I said a longer grace than normal today at lunch. I wonder if he sent me that rebellious girl so that I would know how he feels when I don't recognize and respect him, and just complain about the things he doesn't do for me.

Anyway, I hope this habitability post will give you something to be thankful for. Our God is an awesome God.

Dennis Prager: the feminization of America harms the whole world

November 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: “Godspeed” by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

A few days back, I wrote a post that I really enjoyed writing about the movie High Noon. In it, I talked about the conflict between Marshal Will Kane and his new wife. He wanted to stay and protect his home town against outlaws who are coming to kill him and raze the town. His new wife cannot understand why he has to stand and fight, she wants him to run away with her. In the end, she helps him to defeat the outlaws, saving his life.

That post was inspired by something I heard Dennis Prager talking about on his radio show. He was talking about a survey of boys and girls done by the toy company Mattel. Well, I wanted to blog about his comments, so I ended up writing the High Noon post. But then Dina found an article about the Mattel survey on National Review. I think this is one of the wisest and most perceptive articles I have ever read, and it will really help you to understand what has happened in the last 50 years to this country.

Prager writes:

> Last week the *New York Times* published an article, “Sweeping Away Gender-Specific Toys and Labels,” that contained three sentences that explain one of the most important phenomena in American life. In discussing the increasing move to do away with gender-specific toys — something the *New York Times* approves of — the article quoted Tania Missad, the “director of global consumer insights” at one of the world’s largest toy manufacturers, Mattel:

> **Mattel's research showed some differences in what girls and boys wanted in their action figures, Ms. Missad said. "For boys it's very much about telling a story of the good guy killing the villain. . . . [Girls] would tell us: 'Why does the good girl have to kill the villain? Can't they be friends in the end?'"**

Prager comments on the part in red:

> This difference may be the most important of all the sex differences. Indeed, it can actually shape the future of America and of the world.
>
> Of course, there are women who want evil destroyed — the late Margaret Thatcher, for example. And there are men who oppose confronting evil — the men who lead the modern Democratic party, for example. (One such man is the president of the United States, who has a feminized view of those who do evil — talk to them, but don't confront them, label them, or fight them.) But these exceptions happen in large numbers under two circumstances: when women get married and when men are feminized.
>
> When women get married, they are often influenced by their husbands with regard to political and moral issues, just as married men are influenced by their wives on a whole host of micro issues. As a result, married women are more likely than single women to prefer to fight villains than to befriend them. Unfortunately, more and more American women are single.
>
> **Meanwhile American boys are increasingly raised by single women and taught almost only by female teachers. In addition, they are often taught to be ashamed of their masculine natures and to reject traditional masculine virtues.**
>
> As a result of the above two trends, the amount spent on national defense will continue to decline (while the amount spent on welfare will continue to increase), and America will confront the world's evils less and less. The consequences will be disastrous for millions of people around the globe.
>
> When America retreats from killing bad guys, bad guys kill more innocent people. We are witnessing this right now as a consequence of America's abandoning Iraq and retreating from the world generally. Islamic State took over more and more territories as America abandoned them. Ironically, therefore, as American foreign policy becomes feminized, more Middle East females are raped.
>
> Whenever I see on a car the liberal bumper sticker "War Is Not the Answer," I look to see who is driving. In years of looking, I have seen one male driver.
>
> Both women and men have flawed natures. They share human nature, which is deeply flawed, and the sexes have their own particular natures, which are also flawed. That is one reason men need women and women need men. Men need women to soften their intrinsic aggressive nature and to help them control their predatory sexuality; and women need men to, among other things, better

> understand that evil people and regimes must be fought, not nurtured.

So, there is something in male nature that thinks that it is acceptable to use violence as a last resort in order to defeat evil. Evil might be things like criminals, terrorists… even wolves and bears, if they attacked innocent people.

So what are the solutions?

Here's what we should do:

- We should stop paying women money to have children before they are married, so that boys have fathers to raise them who have made a commitment before they got handed free sex.
- We should rollback no-fault divorce, which leads to fatherless children. People should be less emotional about who they marry, and not think "there's an escape hatch if I feel unhappy".
- We should try to get more male teachers into classrooms, and maybe allow parents to pull boys out of failing schools and put them into all-male schools if they think those work better.
- We should try to vote for policies that empower law enforcement, national security, and our armed forces to detect, attack and defeat evil. For example, we invest in defense spending, and avoid undermining the morale of police and armed forces with political correctness.

I guess the list could be longer, but that's a start for the issues that Prager raised.

We need to work against the forces that demean male nature and male roles, and work to promote male nature and male roles.

Who should you marry?

November 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

"Tristan and Isolde", by Marc Fishman

Dina found this article in the leftist Washington Post, of all places. The author explains how her husband lovingly helped her to recover from her Caesarian section. He actually had to to carry her to and from the bathroom, very slowly. Until she was better.

She writes:

> At the time, I thought: This is why I married this man. Not for his fabulous head of hair or his beautiful, light-brown eyes — though those things were certainly bonuses. But no. It was his gentleness, his thoughtfulness, his loving heart, his caring nature that sealed the deal for me.
>
> As a dating coach who works with singles in their 20s to 50s, I see a lot of people focusing on superficial things that have little to do with a potential partner's character. I get it — I once obsessed over those things, too.
>
> **Most of all, I see how the trap of chemistry can lead people astray. Chemistry is important, but as far as relationships go, it's only half the equation.**
>
> So how do you look for these deeper, more important qualities in the early stages of dating? Some might argue there's no way to tell in, say, the first several months of dating someone — after all, it is the honeymoon stage — if this is the type of person who will help you onto the toilet during times of trial. I disagree.
>
> Looking back to the early days of dating Dave, all the signs were there. He

> treated my friends with care and kindness, which showed me he had the ability to be compassionate. The way he scoured the Internet for the perfect gifts for my parents and nephews showed me his thoughtful, generous side. He rubbed my back and wiped my tears after I suffered a heart-wrenching squash match loss, showing me that validating my feelings was important to him (even if I'm the most competitive person alive and it was just a squash match). He listened to me vent after a difficult fallout with a colleague, showing me he was ready and willing to be a part of my support system.
>
> When he stayed up until the early hours of the morning, helping me with Web site issues relating to my coaching business, I knew I'd found someone who would support me in my professional goals as well as physically and emotionally. When he held my hands and said "We'll figure it out" while I was dealing with a frustrating medical situation, that was probably my biggest clue that he'd be so supportive in that hospital room years down the line.
>
> **Singles should keep their eyes open for these signs. They're more telling than a person's job, salary, ambition or education; whether he or she is the "right age"; has the perfect body; or can dazzle you with their charm and wit.**
>
> Keep your eyes open for the type of person who one day might lovingly help you onto the toilet.

When you are married, the amount of time you spend having fun and feeling thrilled is minuscule. The real problems you face are money problems, sex problems, in-law problems, holiday problems, parenting problems, etc. Most often in marriage hard stuff needs to get done. Compromises need to be made. There is actually very little fun and thrills. If you want to prepare for most of what marriage is about, then it's best to focus on responsibilities, expectations and obligations. Spouses need each other, and the ability to sense someone else's needs and to care for them, even when it's not fun for you, is non-negotiable.

Leftist POLITICO lies in order to smear black conservative Ben Carson

November 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

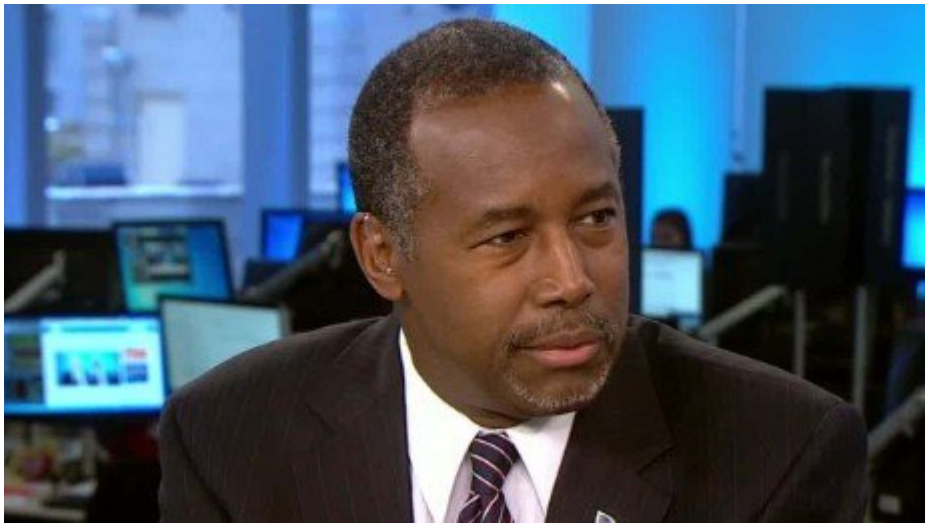

Pediatric surgeon Ben Carson

Well, we all knew that Politico was on the far-left. This time, they decided to smear black conservative Ben Carson.

Ben Shapiro explains how they did it:

> The story began with Politico, which ran with the audacious headline, "Ben Carson admits fabricating West Point scholarship." Even I was taken in by the headline – after all, that's a pretty bold claim!
>
> Politico began thusly:
>
> Ben Carson's campaign on Friday admitted, in a response to an inquiry from POLITICO, that a central point in his inspirational personal story was fabricated: his application and acceptance into the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.
>
> The key word here is "fabricated." Did the Carson campaign admit any such thing? Absolutely not. The facts reported by Politico don't even support this interpretation of the Carson campaign's response. According to Politico, Carson said in his 1992 memoir Gifted Hands that he was offered a "full scholarship" to West Point after dining with General William Westmoreland in 1969. Here's the relevant passage from Carson's autobiography:
>
> At the end of my twelfth grade I marched at the head of the Memorial Day parade. I felt so proud, my chest bursting with ribbons and braids of every kind. To make it more wonderful, We had important visitors that day. Two soldiers who had won the Congressional Medal of Honor in Viet Nam were present. More exciting to me, General William Westmoreland (very prominent in the Viet Nam war) attended with an impressive entourage. Afterward, Sgt. Hunt introduced me to General Westmoreland, and I had dinner with him and the Congressional

> Medal winners. Later I was offered a full scholarship to West Point. I didn't refuse the scholarship outright, but I let them know that a military career wasn't where I saw myself going.
>
> That's the entire relevant portion of Carson's account. He reiterated that account last month in an interview with Charlie Rose, when he said, "I was offered a full scholarship at West Point, got to meet General Westmoreland and go to Congressional Medal of Honor dinners. But decided really my pathway would be medicine."
>
> Politico followed up on this story. They reported one additional piece of information that seems to conflict with Carson's story: Carson never applied to West Point, and was never extended admission.
>
> But Carson never *said* he applied. He said he was extended a full scholarship offer. What's more, West Point doesn't offer scholarships: all admission is free contingent on serving in the military afterwards. It thus seems probable that Westmoreland or another military figure tried to recruit Carson, telling him that he wouldn't have to pay for his education – and that Carson read that as a "full scholarship," and never applied.
>
> In fact, that's exactly what Carson's campaign manager said to Politico in an email:
>
> Dr. Carson was the top ROTC student in the City of Detroit. In that role he was invited to meet General Westmoreland. He believes it was at a banquet. He can't remember with specificity their brief conversation but it centered around Dr. Carson's performance as ROTC City Executive Officer. He was introduced to folks from West Point by his ROTC Supervisors. They told him they could help him get an appointment based on his grades and performance in ROTC. He considered it but in the end did not seek admission.
>
> But here's how Politico editorialized: "When presented with this evidence, Carson's campaign conceded the story was false."

Just to be clear, that is the part where Politico lied. The Carson campaign *never* admitted that the story was false.

Shapiro continues:

> That's nonsense. They did no such thing. They provided details that corroborated Carson's story and explained his loose use of the language. If someone told you that you could go to college for free, you might reasonably conclude that you had been offered a full scholarship to attend that university. But Politico would call you a liar if you used such language to describe the exchange.
>
> Now, some on the right are saying that Carson should be held to a higher standard here than other candidates because he's running as an "outsider." But this is a basic case of misinterpreting facts, not an outright lie. Carson served in ROTC. Prominent people wanted him to go to West Point. He wouldn't have had

> to pay. He didn't apply because he didn't want to go. Those facts are not in dispute. It's the specific wording over which media have decided to crucify him.
>
> This is a textbook example of a left-wing media hit. Politico would never editorialize about any Democrat who issued such a response to a factual inquiry in this manner. **Politico won't even conclude that Hillary Clinton lied about her attribution of the Benghazi attacks to a YouTube video despite email evidence that she knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack entirely unrelated to a YouTube video.**
>
> But for Ben Carson, they'll make an exception.
> Vile.

Shapiro is updating the post as developments occur. For one thing, in the same book ("Gifted Hands") that Politico cites, Carson explicitly says that he NEVER applied nor was he accepted to West Point:

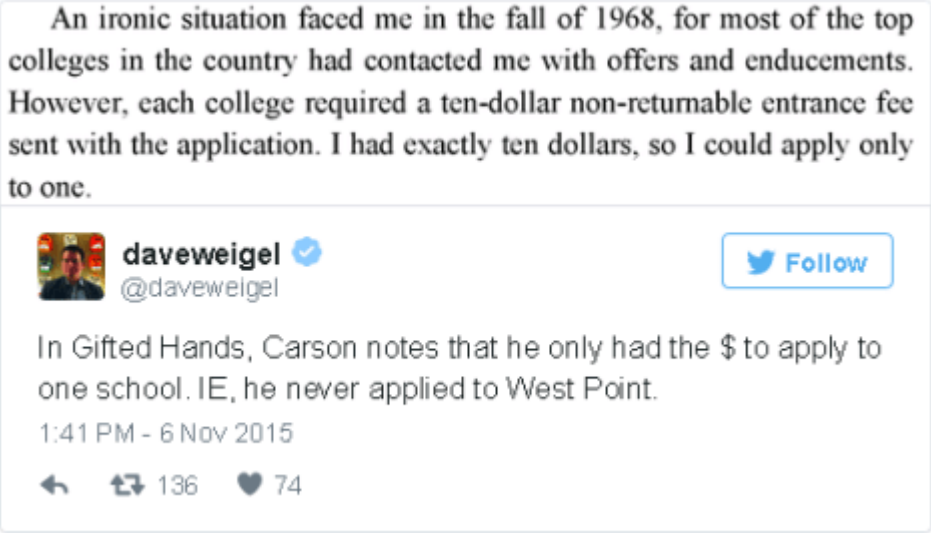

Washington Post journalist points out that Carson says he never applied to West Point Politico is accusing Carson of saying that he applied to West Point and was given a full scholarship, but Carson's own book says that he never applied and therefore was never given a full scholarship. The offer that he is talking about is an informal offer by General Westmoreland, saying that if he applied, then he would be given a full scholarship – because of his grades and other qualifications. Nowhere did Carson ever say that he made a formal application, and received a formal offer of a full scholarship. On the contrary, he makes clear in his book that it was an informal offer over dinner.

Ben notes that Carson's campaign has responded to the Politico smear via the New York Times:

> I don't remember all the specific details. Because I had done so extraordinarily well you know I was told that someone like me – they could get a scholarship to West Point. But I made it clear I was going to pursue a career in medicine. It was, you know, an informal 'with a record like yours we could easily get you a scholarship to West Point.'

Exactly.

The Carson campaign is calling the POLITICO story: "an outright lie". POLITICO needs to retract the story, apologize for their attack on a black conservative, and fire the journalist.

Dennis Prager previously wrote about attacks by the left against Carson, and I blogged about it here.

Prager said:

> The left is in full-blown smear-Carson mode. He is, after all, the left's worst nightmare — a black Republican who is brilliant, kind and widely admired, including by many blacks.
>
> It is a rule of left-wing life that black Republicans must have their names and reputations destroyed. The left knows that if blacks do not vote overwhelmingly Democrat, Democrats cannot win a national election.

Personally, I believe the smear was motivated by a desire to destroy Carson because he is a *black* conservative. Leftists cannot stand *black* conservatives. As a non-white conservative, I have often had to face the most vitriolic attacks from Democrats, and in my experience, the hatred is much worse for Republicans who don't fit their mold. Conservative blacks and conservative women mess up the liberal stereotype of conservatives being exclusively white and male, and so they must be destroyed by any means necessary.

Awakening the “moral sense” of the public in the abortion debate

November 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young pro-life women protest Planned Parenthood

Scott Klusendorf linked to this article from the Public Discourse. The article talks about the need to augment logical arguments in other ways in order to awaken the moral sense of the public so that they will support the pro-life cause and vote to repeal pro-abortion laws.

Excerpt:

> In a manner similar to the case of slavery as outlined by Douglass, there are two simple points that, once admitted, join to condemn clearly the practice of abortion: (1) the embryo is a human being from the moment of conception, and (2) all human beings have a natural right to life.
>
> The second point, as in the case of the natural right to liberty, doesn’t require serious argument on the level of ordinary judgment, even though many pro-choice philosophers have tried to argue that only persons have a right to life, and the unborn, in their view, aren’t persons. To make such arguments, however, requires choosing an arbitrary cut-off point for personhood, as pro-life philosophers such as George, Tollefsen, and Lee have shown.
>
> The first point is more often chosen as promising ground for challenges, but it too is plainly obvious to the unbiased mind.
>
> Once conception occurs, the embryo is something other than the woman who

carries it. The fact that the embryo requires the mother's body to live is no argument against this—dependence does not exclude otherness, otherwise none of us would be distinguishable from everyone and everything else in the world upon which we depend in innumerable ways. The embryo is obviously something other than a part of the mother, but what is it?

This is where it gets easy, despite the messy, abstract philosophical arguments. The more appropriate version of the question is the following: What else could it be besides a human being? Is there a single example in natural history of sexual intercourse between two individuals of the same species resulting in something other than another individual of that species? Is it plausible to guess that sexual intercourse between two human beings might result in a fish, at least initially? Or maybe a frog? Such speculation is entirely fanciful and runs directly contrary to our experience of the world since the beginning of recorded history.

It should be obvious to anyone that the two points hold, and that the embryo is a human being possessing a natural right to life from the moment of its conception. The problem is that the younger and less developed the embryo is, the less it excites what some have called our "moral sense," our sympathy with it as another human being like us. And as Hume correctly notes, human beings tend to be moved more by their passions and feelings, including the so-called "moral sense," than by their intellectual understanding of the world when determining their actions. Even if our reason and common sense tell us clearly—as they undoubtedly do—that the embryo is a human being with the right to life, our moral sense or sympathy lets us off the hook.

So where does this leave pro-life advocates? How can we bridge the Humean—and human—gap between intellectual understanding and actual practice in our nation? The answer lies in the parallel between the issue of abortion and those of slavery and subsequent civil rights. The pro-life movement needs to model more closely in its organization and practices the antebellum abolition movement and the civil rights movement in order to achieve similar success in ending the evil of abortion. It needs to take up the mantle of these causes in a manner beyond rhetorical parallel or intellectual analogy and be prepared to undergo similar hardships before achieving its goals.

Both of these historical movements ultimately succeeded not by winning arguments, but by awakening the moral sense or conscience of a majority of the nation. Legislation relating to the provision of an ultrasound prior to an abortion, currently in place in some form in more than twenty states, is very well suited to this purpose. The dissemination of graphic images relating to abortion procedures, though controversial in pro-life circles, is also highly appropriate to this purpose.

The civil rights movement was driven forward significantly by television and photographic coverage of the inhuman treatment of protestors, as well as the

> publication of vivid written reports of racially motivated cruelties. Moral senses or sympathies are sparked most effectively by distasteful, unsettling, and shocking information; and when intellectual argument has had its day in trying to awaken consciences and has shown itself insufficient, recourse must be had to the level of moral sense and feeling.

There can be no doubt that pro-lifers are the abolitionists of this generation, urging the powerful not to take advantage of the powerless.

This reminds me about the story of Emmett Till. Have you heard of that? Here it is explained in a letter from Gregg Cunningham of CBR, a pro-life group.

Excerpt:

> Many pro-lifers have heard about Emmett Till, the fourteen-year-old black boy from Chicago who, while visiting relatives in Mississippi, was tortured to death, allegedly for whistling at a white woman (or bidding her farewell with a flippant "bye baby" – accounts vary). But this tragic civil rights story offers more lessons for effective pro-life activism than is generally understood.
>
> BlackPressUSA.com, August 27, 2001, reported in a story entitled "1955 – Emmett Till Killed in Mississippi" that Emmett's mother "had insisted that the casket be opened when it arrived in Chicago, although it had been sealed when it left Mississippi." There was a reason that authorities in Mississippi did not want the world to see the body of Emmett Till.
>
> The Washington Post, August 28, 2005, published a story on the legacy of Emmett Till entitled "Dead End," with a subhead which read "On the Trail of a Civil Rights Icon, Starting Where He Did":
>
> …Ahmed A. Rayner Sr., … prepared Emmett's body for services after it was pulled from the Tallahatchie River – with a cotton-gin fan tied around his neck with barbed wire. Tortured and bruised, with most of his teeth missing, his remains were returned in a sealed box on a train to Chicago.
>
> Ahmed Rayner is dead and the family-owned funeral home is run by his granddaughter [Pamela Rayner].
>
> […]'I remember him saying that he had to do something because the way that he [Emmett] was brought up here, he looked so bad that it would probably scare most of the people,' says Rayner. There was the eye that her grandfather had to put back into Till's head and the fixing of his swollen tongue that hung out of his mouth – the stitching and patchwork to make the boy presentable in a glass-covered casket.
>
> There was also a reason that Emmett's mother demanded the unsealing of the crate in which the condition of her son's body had been hidden:
>
> 'After the body arrived I knew I had to look and see and make sure it was Emmett. That was when I decided that I wanted the whole world to see what I had seen. There was no way I could describe what was in that box. No way. And I

> just wanted the world to see.' (BlackPressUSA.com, February 21, 2001, 'A Disturbing Picture')
>
> Sounds a lot like abortion: no way it can be described; vital that we show the world how horrifying it looks.

I think the right approach is to give the arguments and the evidence first, and then to show the ultrasound images or the graphical images second (warning people to look away if they are squeamish, first). This is the way that moral people have always argued against injustices. If it worked to change minds then, then it will probably work to change minds now, too. For my own part, I've chose not to engage in sexual behavior at all until I am in a position where I can welcome a child into the world. I want to give my future children a safe environment with a committed mother and father. And if I have to give up short-term recreation in order to avoid putting myself in a situation where abortion might be a temptation, then that's what I'm going to do. It's called acting responsibly.

Are evangelism and human responsibility for sin rational in Calvinism?

November 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Here is a quote from Dr. Craig that seems to get Calvinists so angry:

> "The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom which confront Him are outside His control. He has to play with the hand He has been dealt."
>
> (Source)

Calvinists have told me that this quotation from Dr. Craig is "heretical" or "borderline heretical". They are claiming that Dr. Craig thinks that God is lacking in power somehow. But why is God's power limited, according to this quote?

Well, it's because God respects FREE WILL. That quote is simply Dr. Craig's way of saying that God does not override the free will of his creatures.

So let's make sense of Craig's statement. Either there is determinism and God causes people to act, or humans have free will and they cause themselves to do things. If you do not cause yourself to act, then you are not responsible for what you do. Just think for a minute. If I push you into someone and you fall into them and then they fall off a cliff, then are you a murderer? No – I would be, because I am the cause. The Bible teaches that God has chosen to limit his power so that that people have genuine responsibility for their actions, and that means they have genuine free will. Humans can only be responsible for their sins if they have the ability to do other than they do, and this is the traditional Christian view.

It's true that human beings are totally depraved as a result of the fall, and do not want God in their lives, but they are responsible because God wants them to be saved, and it is their free choice that prevents it. Rather than force humans to love him against their will, God lets them resist him, and so they are responsible for their sin.

Dr. Craig cites the famous Calvinist D. A. Carson (who I like) explaining some of the themes of the Bible that affirm robust free will and human responsibility:

> The classical Reformed [scholars]… acknowledge that the reconciliation of Scriptural texts affirming human freedom and contingency with Scriptural texts affirming divine sovereignty is inscrutable. D. A. Carson identifies nine streams of texts affirming human freedom: (1) People face a multitude of divine exhortations and commands, (2) people are said to obey, believe, and choose God, (3) people sin and rebel against God, (4) people's sins are judged by God, (5) people are tested by God, (6) people receive divine rewards, (7) the elect are responsible to respond to God's initiative, (8) prayers are not mere showpieces scripted by God, and (9) God literally pleads with sinners to repent and be saved (*Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension,* pp. 18-22). These passages rule out a deterministic understanding of divine providence, which would preclude human freedom.

On Calvinism, however, all of these 9 features of reality, supported by dozens and dozens of Bible passages, are all false. On Calvinism, God is the sole causal agent. There is no free will. People go to Heaven or Hell as a choice of God. People can only perform good actions if God acts unilaterally to "regenerate" them, making obedience to God possible. Calvinism teaches that God and his agents are constantly exhorting and commanding things that they literally cannot do because they are unregenerate, and the only way to get regenerate is for God to regenerate them, *against their will*. And they can't resist that.

So let's make sense of D.A. Carson's list of 9 items:

1. On Calvinism, when God or his agents exhort or command people to perform good actions, it's meaningless because God has to unilaterally regenerate them first, so that they can perform the good actions.
2. On Calvinism, when God or his agents tell people to obey, believe and choose God, it's meaningless because God has to unilaterally regenerate them first, so they can obey, believe and choose God.
3. On Calvinism, when people sin and rebel against God, it's like people are soda cans that God shakes up some of them, and then pops the tabs on all of them and the ones he shook up fizz.
4. On Calvinism, when God judges people for sinning, it's like God sends the cans who don't fizz to Hell for eternity, even though he unilaterally chose not to shake them, which is the only way they could fizz.
5. On Calvinism, when God tests people, it's meaningless, because there is no way they can pass the tests unless God unilaterally regenerates them first, so they can pass the test.
6. On Calvinism, when people receive divine rewards, it's meaningless, because all the credit goes to God for regenerating them. They are just fizzing because he shook

the can.

7. On Calvinism, when people respond to God's initiative, it's meaningless, because God's regeneration is irresistible and irrevocable. They can do nothing other than fizz when he shakes the can.
8. On Calvinism, when people pray, it's meaningless, because God unilaterally decides whether to regenerate people or not, and all their fizzing comes solely from his decision to shake or not shake the can.
9. On Calvinism, when God pleads with sinners to repent and be saved, it's meaningless, because God has to unilaterally regenerate them before they can repent.

Here's William Lane Craig to explain it further in an answer to a question of the week from Dr. Craig's Reasonable Faith web site.

5 problems:

1. *Universal, divine, causal determinism cannot offer a coherent interpretation of Scripture.*
2. *Universal causal determinism cannot be rationally affirmed*.
3. *Universal, divine, determinism makes God the author of sin and precludes human responsibility.*
4. *Universal, divine, determinism nullifies human agency*.
5. *Universal, divine determinism makes reality into a farce*.

If God's choice, to regenerate or not, causally determines whether we can respond to him, or not, then that is *determinism*. And it makes our lives *meaningless* because we are not responsible for anything we do. Life is a puppet show, and there is only one person pulling the strings. Evangelism makes no sense, because God decides unilaterally and irrevocably who is saved. When I explain this to Calvinists, their response is that God commands us to evangelize, so we must even if it *makes no sense on their view.*

A Calvinist might respond to this defense of free will and human responsibility with passages from Romans 8 and 9, but those are best understood as speaking about corporate election, rather than unilaterally-determined selection. Membership in the elect group is based on people responding to God's drawing of them to him. That interpretation fits with the rest of the Bible, which is uniformly affirmative of human free will and human responsibility. Concerns about diminished divine sovereignty are resolved by middle knowledge, in which God chooses to actualize exactly the world that achieves his sovereign will out of all the possible worlds, and he saves exactly the people he chooses to save – but without violating their free will. Yes, it's cosmic entrapment, but at least the cosmic entrapment does not violate the free will of the creatures, which would render then irresponsible for their own sins.

Disclaimer: I don't think that this is an issue that should divide Christians, and I do think that Calvinists are most definitely Christians. And that they are very devout and intelligent Christians, too.

If you are looking for a good book on this issue, I recommend Kenneth Heathley's "Salvation and Sovereignty", which is a thorough discussion of the problem of divine sovereignty and human freedom.

Christian day care workers in Texas fired for refusing to call a girl a boy

November 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I have a lot of friends who keep trying to convince me to move to Texas because it's so conservative, but I have to tell you that stories like this from **Houston** of all places realky make me think that Oklahoma, Kansas or even Tennessee would be a better bet.

Breitbart News has the story:

> Two daycare workers have been fired for refusing to go along with the center's transgender agenda.Madeline Kirksey, one of the workers who is an author of a Christian book, says her religious liberty rights have been violated. The two were fired after refusing to call a little girl a boy.
>
> The two male parents of a six-year-old little girl told employees at the school to refer to their daughter as a boy, and to call her by a new masculine name. The little girl's hair had also been cut like a boy's.
>
> Kirksey told Breitbart Texas in an interview, that the problem was not so much with the transgender issue as it was with telling young children that the little girl was a boy when she was not, and with calling her "John" (not the name given) when that was not her name.
>
> She, and another worker who does not want to be identified, were fired from the Childrens' Lighthouse Learning Center in Katy, Texas, a city just west of Houston.
>
> The school distributed guidelines to the teachers called "How to Handle Transgender Students." The printed guidelines were obtained from the internet and can be read at thislink.
>
> The guidelines and the instructions given the teachers included six rules, one of which was "Help defend their dignity." Another, was to "Educate yourself and

> your students." The Christian worker said she did not believe it "was our job," to thrust the issue on the small children of other parents. She said the school should not force their beliefs on the children, or on her, or upon other parents.
>
> The author of the Christian book, "In Pursuit of the Promise," said the other children should not be exposed at such an early age to the issue of transgender or "gender identity," and felt that the two male parents were imposing the issue on their little girl.
>
> "I don't think we should be talking to other people's children who are under the age of 18 about being transgender," Kirksey said in an interview with Fox26 in Houston. Both of the fired workers agreed on this point.
>
> Kirksey said that prior to this happening, she had been commended for the good work that she was doing at the school. After she refused to call the little girl by her new masculine name, and to tell the other children to do so, and to say that the little girl was a little boy, the daycare worker was written-up for alleged infractions that she did not believe were based in reality. She has worked at the school for over a year.
>
> The fired worker notified Child Protective Services that the little girl was being told that she is now a little boy. She believes that it is up to professionals to determine if the little girl is just confused, or if the new gender is being forced upon the little girl.
>
> Kirksey says sometimes the little girl refers to herself as a little boy, and sometimes she tells the other children to not call her a boy or to refer to her by her masculine name.
>
> The Childrens' Lighthouse in Katy is just one of the school franchise's that are all over the country. The company is based in Fort Worth and according to its website, there are 37 learning centers in seven states. The school cares for children ages six weeks to twelve years old.

Recall that Houston was the same city that elected a lesbian mayor who subpoena'd the sermons of pastors in order to find out if they were speaking against same-sex marriage in their churches. Apparently, that's not allowed in Texas any more.

Related posts

- Should fascist Democrats allow Christians to work for a living in America?
- Oregon bar owner forced to pay $400,000 for offending transsexuals
- Hillary Clinton supports jailing Christian clerk for dissenting from gay marriage
- In Ohio, faithful Jews and Christians can no longer serve as judges
- Colorado Court of Appeals rules that Christian must bake cakes for gay wedding
- Kentucky bans pastor from prison ministry because he disagrees with homosexuality
- Republicans introduce bill to protect natural marriage supporters
- In Canada, Trinity Western University's law school loses accreditation
- Couple fined $135,000 for declining to participate in gay marriage

- Ted Cruz shows how to answer questions on social issues from leftist reporter
- Republican Governor Mary Fallin defends religious liberty against gay marriage
- Christian florist Barronelle Stutzman explains what it is like to face persecution
- Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal to anti-marriage corporate bullies: “Save your breath”
- Colorado Civil Rights Commission: anti-conscience laws can only target Christians
- Hillary Clinton attacks Indiana’s religious liberty law
- Navy chaplain removed from unit for teaching Biblical views on sex and marriage
- Alliance Defending Freedom will defend Atlanta fire chief fired for his Christian faith
- Christian magistrate punished for saying children need a mother and a father
- Washington D.C. city council repeals protections for religious schools
- City of Houston demands that pastors hand over all sermons on homosexuality
- New Mexico Supreme Court rules that Christian photographer must affirm gay marriage

Sean Carroll debates William Lane Craig on cosmology and God's existence

November 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video of the debate:

Carroll was as good of a speaker as Craig in terms of style. Very easy to listen to, very quick on his feet, very civil. There was no clear winner on style.

It was difficult to assess the truth value of scientific points being made, especially for the layperson. I explained a few of them in my posts earlier this week, but I think laypeople might struggle with them if they are hearing about these things for the first time.

A couple of Craig's slides: (click for larger images)

Slide 1 of 2:

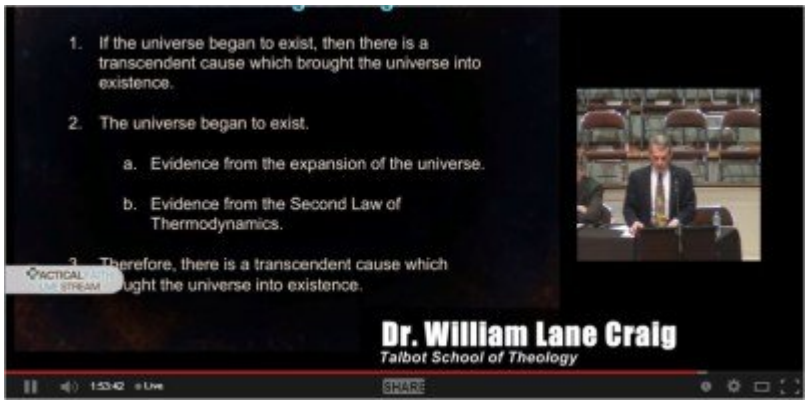

Dr. Craig slide #1 of 2

Slide 2 of 2:

Dr. Craig slide #2 of 2

Quick summary: (this is not complete, because I couldn't get everything they were saying noted)

Dr. Craig defended two arguments: 1) the kalam cosmological argument and the fine-tuning argument.

Dr. Craig supported the origin of the universe with 1) the expansion of the universe and 2) the second law of thermodynamics.

Dr. Craig said that the BGV theorem supports a beginning for the universe.

Dr. Craig said that the consensus of scientists did not accept Carroll's naturalistic cosmology, quoting Stephen Hawking in support.

Dr. Craig said that multiverse models fall victim to the Boltzmann brain problem, where we should observe Boltzmann brains coming into existence and then phasing out again far more probably than embodied minds. But we observe embodied minds, and no Boltzmann brains.

Dr. Carroll said that science cannot study metaphysical questions.

Dr. Carroll said that science is about making models that may or may not be consistent with the experimental data.

Dr. Carroll said that the BGV theorem does not support a beginning for the universe.

Dr. Carroll proposed 17 alternative cosmologies, but did not provide a shred of scientific evidence for any of them, the way that Craig did for the standard model.

Dr. Carroll refuted Dr. Craig's citation of Stephen Hawking, and Craig yielded the point.

Dr. Carroll speculated that science might progress to the point where the fine-tuning can be explained without an intelligent cause, and he gave an example of where that happened (inflation).

Dr. Craig argued that all 17 of the models suggested by Carroll either conflicted with evidence, had serious problems or did require a beginning.

Dr. Craig argued that Carroll's own model required a beginning.

Dr. Craig argued that Carroll's own model fell victim to the Boltzmann brain problem.

Dr. Craig argued that Carroll's own model violated the second law of thermodynamics.

Dr. Craig re-stated his point that the baby universe spawning in Carroll's model was speculative and incomplete, and cited Christopher Weaver's work.

Dr. Carroll denied that things that pop into being out of nothing require a transcendent cause.

Dr. Carroll reiterated that science can only make naturalistic models, and that he did not have to answer questions about ultimate causes.

Dr. Carroll showed a photo of Alan Guth expressing his opinion that the universe is "probably" eternal. No evidence was given for this assertion.

Dr. Carroll said that the fine-tuning was not done in an optimal way, because one fine-tuned value was lower than it needed to be, and it should be exactly what it needed to be if God did it.

Dr. Carroll said that a finely-tuned universe is more probably in naturalism than in theism, because God can do anything he wants and doesn't need a fine-tuned universe.

Dr. Carroll said he would stop defending his model now, and would instead defend Aguirre-Gratton.

Dr. Craig gave three reasons why the universe popping into being out of nothing requires a transcendent cause.

First, he said that nothing cannot cause anything to happen, because nothing is nothing.

Second, he said that if things pop into being out of nothing, then why don't we see it happening all the time with other things.

Third, he said that we have no reason to dismiss the causal principle, especially when it is the basis of scientific inquiry and has been so fruitful in the progress of science.

Dr. Craig reiterated that baby universes in Carroll's model would be dominated by Boltzmann brains, and we don't observe that.

Dr. Craig said that even on the quantum gravity models that Carroll mentioned, there would still be a beginning.

Dr. Carroll said that Craig mustn't say "popped into being" but instead that "there was a first moment of time".

Dr. Carroll said that his model does indeed violate the second law of thermodynamics "YES!".

At this point Carroll stopped talking about the topic of the debate and started expressing personal opinions about religion. It's funny how often atheists do this in debates.

Dr. Carroll said that most theists don't believe in God because of cosmology, but because of community and feelings.

Dr. Carroll said that science had learned a lot in the last 2000 years, so theism was false.

Dr. Carroll said that most philosophers don't think that God exists, so theism was false.

Dr. Carroll said microscopes and telescopes were absent 2000 years ago, so theism was false.

Dr. Carroll said that religion should be about community and feelings, not about what is true.

Conclusion:

My conclusion was that Carroll lost because he is just satisfied to throw theories out and not to argue that they are true by citing evidence. Carroll never seemed to be interested in finding out what is true, but instead he just wanted to tell a story that didn't include God, and assert that by Occam's Razor, his story was a better explanation. I am not impressed with theoretical speculations, although the layperson might be. I kept waiting for him to respond to Craig's points about how his model was falsified by experimental evidence and observations, e.g. – the Boltzmann brains or the baby universe generation, and he never cited the evidence I wanted him to cite. Craig did have some evidence for his views, but he could have been stronger in making his case. He could have shown the e-mail from Vilenkin that stated that he had understood the BGV theorem, and was using it correctly, for example.

For me the winning side comes down to evidence. The standard model is the standard model because of scientific evidence. Until that evidence is overturned, then speculative models are of no interest to anyone who is evidence-driven. Speculations are not science. A philosophical presupposition of metaphysical naturalism is not science.

If you want to see a good lecture on scientific evidence related to cosmology, then there is the particle physicist Michael Strauss lecture on cosmology and fine-tuning at Stanford University and his more recent lecture at the University of Texas. Note that Strauss is an experimental physicist, not a theoretical physicist like Carroll.

Here's another review of the debate by Randy Everist of Possible Worlds blog. He explains the back-and-forth over Boltzmann brains and the BGV theorem in more detail.

Incoming Kentucky Governor to EPA: we will not comply with your regulations

November 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is why I think that the real conservatism is always with the governors. When Republicans go to Washington, they often get so squishy that they are no use. If you're looking for real conservative actions that produce real results, look to the governors. They get things done.

Video:

Here's the article from The Blaze. (H/T ECM, who was suitably impressed)

Excerpt:

> Kentucky Gov.-elect Matt Bevin said in an appearance on The Glenn Beck Radio Program Friday that he will push back against the Environmental Protection Agency's efforts to regulate the coal industry, telling the EPA to "pound sand."
>
> Bevin's comments came after Glenn Beck asked, "Now that you're in, President Obama has said that he's going to destroy the coal industry. Kentucky is a coal state. What are you going to be doing specifically to push back on that?"
>
> In August, President Barack Obama unveiled his coal policy in partnership with the EPA, granting the agency authority over what is traditionally a state responsibility.
>
> According to Sam Batkins, director of regulatory policy at American Action Forum, the policy will cost $2.5 trillion and 125,800 jobs, along with shuttering 66 power plants.
>
> Bevin, a Tea Party favorite who became only the second Republican in four decades to win Kentucky's governorship Tuesday, vowed to stand against the EPA when it comes to protecting his state's large coal industry.
>
> "Why it is that we in Kentucky — that sit on two extraordinary basins, the Illinois basin and the Central basin, an abundance of this — how are we not participating in something that the world wants more of than they ever have?" Bevin asked. "And so, from my way of thinking, we will tell the EPA and other unelected officials who have no legal authority over us as a state, to pound sand."
>
> Bevin, a self-described "staunch conservative," told Beck he believes the 10th Amendment is "one of the most powerful tools" and that power not expressly given to the federal government is the responsibility of the states.
>
> The incoming Kentucky governor said the EPA has "no authority" and that its only recourse would be to "take us to court." Bevin said that, in the past, the agency has "bribed us with our own money," but he insisted that will not happen anymore under his leadership.

> "The EPA, for example, they don't have an enforcement arm," Bevin said. "They use federal dollars. They use our own money. They bribe us with our own money to stick it to ourselves. And we will not do that anymore in the state of Kentucky."

Recall that coal is cheap to produce compared to more politically correct energy sources like wind and solar:

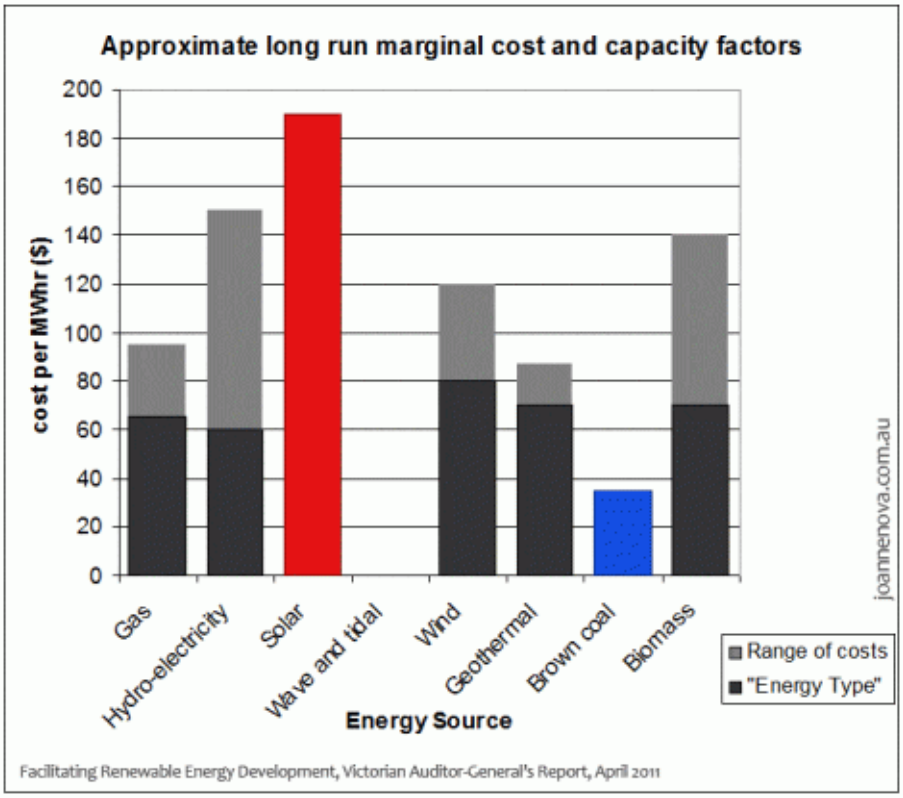

Cost of renewable wind and solar energy

Now, if the people of America really want to do something to draw America off of coal, then we should focus on nuclear power, instead of wasting money on solar and wind. But of course, the Democrats oppose nuclear power, too – despite the facts that scientists are in favor of it.

The left-leaning Pew Research reports:

> About half (51%) of Americans favor building more nuclear power plants to generate electricity, while 42% oppose this. Among the general public, a greater percentage of men (60%) than of women (43%) favor building additional nuclear power plants. More college graduates (59%) favor building nuclear power plants than do those with a high school education or less (46%). And larger shares of Republicans (62%) than independents (52%) or Democrats (45%) support expanding the use of nuclear power to generate electricity.
>
> When it comes to nuclear power, the views of scientists are closer to those of Republicans than Democrats nationwide. Seven-in-ten scientists favor building more nuclear power plants to generate electricity, while 27% are opposed. Among scientists, majorities in every specialty favor building more nuclear power plants, but support is particularly widespread among physicists and astronomers (88% favor). As with the public, far more men (76%) than women (55%) support

> the expansion of nuclear power.

We are bankrupting the country wasting money on green energy production that is not cost effective, and Democrats are opposed to clean energy production that is cost effective: fracking and nuclear. Then they complain about coal and try to regulate it out of existence. Unless and until Democrats come around on fracking and nuclear power, then they should not be regulating coal out of existence. All that will do is raise energy prices for all of us, which is exactly what we see happening in Germany. They are further along the green energy road, and we must learn from their mistake.

UK Guardian claim: religious children are meaner than non-religious children

November 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Here's what the the radically secular and leftist UK Guardian had to say about a recent study:

> Children from religious families are less kind and more punitive than those from non-religious households, according to a new study.
>
> Academics from seven universities across the world studied Christian, Muslim and non-religious children to test the relationship between religion and morality.
>
> They found that religious belief is a negative influence on children's altruism.
>
> "Overall, our findings … contradict the commonsense and popular assumption that children from religious households are more altruistic and kind towards others," said the authors of The Negative Association Between Religiousness and Children's Altruism Across the World, published this week in Current Biology.
>
> "More generally, they call into question whether religion is vital for moral development, supporting the idea that secularisation of moral discourse will not reduce human kindness – in fact, it will do just the opposite."

Now, whenever I read studies like this that trumpet how great secularism is, I always look more closely to see how they define the terms. Usually, what's been done is that the study will define the "good" behavior as "leftist" behavior. For example, "punitive" might mean "judging something morally wrong", which the secular left regards as bad. So, if your starting point is feelings of compassion, moral relativism, non-judgmentalism, then yes – religious people will look bad.

Anyway, here is a response to the Guardian's article, and the study they cite, from

statistician William Briggs.

He writes:

> Here's how to you can replicate their study at home. First, define *altruism*. Go on, I'll wait.
>
> Have a definition in mind? I'm sure it's correct and matches everybody else's definition in precise detail, details like no-greater-love, supreme sacrifice, kindness, patience, love, and so on, right? Well, maybe not, but never mind. Instead, think about how you would quantify your definition. Quantification makes your definition scientific. Science means unquestionable truth.
>
> Was your answer about quantification the "Dictator game"? Like this (from the Supplementary description)?:
>
> [C]hildren were shown a set of 30 stickers and told to choose their 10 favorite. They were then told "these stickers are yours to keep." Children were instructed that the experimenter did not have the time to play this game with all of the children in the school, so not everyone would be able to receive stickers. Children were finally shown a set of envelopes and informed that they could give some of their stickers to another child who would not be able to play this game by putting them in one envelope and they could put the stickers they wanted to keep in the other envelope. Experimenters turned around during the child's choice and children were instructed to inform the experimenter when they were finished. Altruism was calculated as the number of stickers shared out of 10.
>
> Yes, this scientifically captures every possible nuance of the scientific concept of altruism, doesn't it? Science science science science. Science. It must be science! Scientists wrote this, peer scientists reviewed it, and scientists nod sagely when reading it.
>
> Now define "religiosity" for kids. I'll wait again.
>
> Have it? Ha ha! That was a trick question. The authors never assessed the "religiosity" of kids; they did it for the kids' "caregivers" instead. How? The authors asked parents to name their religion. They also asked parents questions like "How often do you experience the 'divine' in your everyday life?" They took pseudo-quantified answers from these and combined them scientifically with a quantification of religious attendance and derived a complete scientific quantification of "religiosity." This was *assigned* to each kid in the study.

One of my friends in academia who publishes studies with regression analysis writes:

> [I] Don't buy all of his critiques of regression analysis but he is dead on in that the operationizing of the variables in that research is poor. I would also add that the regression model is underspecified.

So that's two scholars who deal in statistics who don't like the study. Sociologist Dr. George Yancey also responds to the study's methodology in detail over at The Stream.

So here are my thoughts: first of all, children typically are little monsters, and they do not understand religion enough to act consistently with it until much later. So it's a mistake to look at the religion of the parents and assume that in most cases, the children will have accepted that and be operating from that worldview. Second, if you were judging my religiosity at age 12 by talking to my parents, I would not have been considered religious at all, except I was. Third, giving stuff away to strangers is the *secular left's* definition of altruism. Earning things through work and then sharing with people you actually know is what conservatives consider "altruism". The study didn't ask about how many stickers the religious kids shared with their friends and family when they got home. Conservatives tend to not want to hand out goodies to strangers through some unknown intermediary like big government. We prefer to give to people we know or through private organizations we know. Government is known to waste money on nonsense.

Hypocrisy on the left

There's a lot of hypocrisy on the secular left. On the one hand, they want to give away lots of taxpayer money to the poor, on the other hand, they personally give far less in charity to the poor. I.e. – they are very generous with *other people's money* – especially when they can brag about it to others to appear generous. But in their personal lives, they are often much less generous about giving away their own money. In fact, Arthur Brooks did a study of non-religious and religious people and charitable giving, and he found that the religious people gave away much more than the non-religious people.

Take a look at this video to understand how secular leftists think about "morality" and giving away money:

So, yes – they may sound generous when they are talking about spending someone else's money, but they themselves are not generous. And that's not unexpected, since secular leftists believe that this life is all they have, and there is no objective moral standard, nor any accountability to a Creator / Designer when they die. How will you generate a robust notion of generosity, when your story of origins is "survival of the fittest"? You can't.

Stephen C. Meyer and Peter Atkins debate intelligent design

November 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This dialog occurred in 2010 on the Unbelievable radio show.

I made a rough transcript, so please see below for that.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

Details:

> The documentary film "Expelled" is presented by US Actor Ben Stein and makes the case that scientists who question Darwinian orthodoxy and support Intelligent Design are being "expelled" from academia.
>
> As the UK edition of the DVD is released we ask "Is freedom of thought at stake or is Intelligent Design out of bounds when it comes to biological science?"
>
> Stephen C Meyer is co founder of the Discovery Institute in the USA and a major proponent of Intelligent Design.
>
> Peter Atkins is Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University and an outspoken atheist.
>
> They both feature in "Expelled" and join Justin to debate the pros and cons of Intelligent Design theory.
>
> Mark Haville who is bringing the film to the UK also joins the discussion.

Note: The transcript below is quite snarky and may include paraphrases of Dr. Atkins for the sake of humor.

My rough transcript of the Meyer-Atkins debate

Stephen Meyer:
– started researching on ID while doing his PhD at Cambridge
– the question is whether the information-bearing properties in DNA require a designer
– what cause is adequate to explain the digital code that in the simplest living cell
– alternative explanations like self-organization and RNA-first have failed
– so the best explanation for functional sequences of parts is an intelligent designer
– Darwinists have responded to this argument with insults and suppression of dissent

Peter Atkins:
– intelligent design is creationism
– there is no science at all in it
– information can emerge without an intelligent designer
– structures emerge spontaneously, no agent is needed to generate the structure
– information in DNA is also a structure

Stephen Meyer:
– structure and information are two different things

– many structures emerge spontaneously
– structure may be like the vortex that occurs when water goes down a drain

Peter Atkins:
– the vortex is information

Stephen Meyer:
– structures are different from functionally-specified digital information
– in DNA, there is a 4-digit alphabet that is used to create code sequences
– the thing to be explained is where do the functional sequences come from

Peter Atkins:
– information can grow without an agent
– the second law of thermodynamics
– the universe is falling into disorder
– but there are local abatements of chaos that create information
– evolution can cause the amount of information to grow

Stephen Meyer:
– that's just an assertion
– I agree that energy flow through a system can produce spontaneous order
– but spontaneous order is not the same thing as information

Peter Atkins:
– spontaneous order is the same as information

Stephen Meyer:
– it's not order that needs to be explained it's specified complexity

Peter Atkins:
– what do you mean by specified complexity?

Stephen Meyer:
– the chemical bonds that connect to each letter do not determine the letter
– the chemical bonding sites will accept any letter as easily as any other
– any one of the 4 bases (letters) can attach at any place along the backbone

Peter Atkins:
– the selection of which letter comes next is determined by evolution

Stephen Meyer:
– that is just an assertion
– there is no physical process that sequences the letters to have a function

Peter Atkins:
– do you believe in evolution? YES OR NO!

Mark Haville:
– for him to answer the question you have to define the word
– do you mean macro or micro? biological or stellar? directed or undirected?

Peter Atkins:
– undirected molecules to man evolution by natural processes

Stephen Meyer:
– but even Dawkins doesn't believe in evolution then
– you're including the origin of life from non-living matter in evolution
– Dawkins says that there is no known naturalistic explanation for that

Mark Haville:
– you need to define your terms

[They discuss of the movie Expelled and the case of Richard Sternberg]

Stephen Meyer:
– the problem is people don't want to talk about the science
– they denounce dissent as unscientific
– they will not debate about whther natural causes can explain the information
– I want to talk about the science

Peter Atkins:
– ID people raise interesting questions for naturalists to work on
– but you want to tell us what the answer is (intelligence) before we begin
– you start from the idea that an intelligence was involved

Justin Brierley:
– but you start with the idea that natural mechanisms can explain everything!

Stephen Meyer:
– for Dr. Atkins, only explanations based on material processes are valid

Peter Atkins:
– that is correct

Stephen Meyer:
– but we think that the activities of mind can explain some effects
– e.g. – the best explanation of the Rosetta stone is a mind

Peter Atkins:
– but we naturalists think of minds as material as well

Stephen Meyer:
– that's a materialist pre-supposition on your part
– we would have to have a debate about mind and body

Mark Haville:
– I think that the materialist position is socially dangerous
– the problem with naturalism is that it is an ideology
– the ideology pushes absurdities, e.g. – the universe came from nothing uncaused
– and naturalists exert power over others to force them to believe nonsense

Stephen Meyer:
– science progresses as the result of scientists disagreeing
– both sides agree to the facts
– the debate is about the interpretation of those facts
– and one side is being ruled out a priori based on the pre-supposition of materialism

Peter Atkins:
– why do you say that an intelligence is involved in DNA but not general relativity

Stephen Meyer:
– it is always logically possible that intelligence can be invlved in any effect
– the main thing is that explanations based on intelligence should not be ruled out

Peter Atkins:
= well you can't appeal to any non-material process in expaining anything
– those are the rules

Moderator:
– what does intelligent design have to do with religion?

Stephen Meyer:
– creationism is about understanding the istory of life using the Bible
– intelligent design is about using the same method of inquiry as Darwin
– we know that information arises from intelligent causes
– humans create information all the time by using intelligence to sequence parts

Moderator:
– are intelligent design proponents disreputable?

Stephen Meyer:
– what's disreputable is shutting down debate by setting arbitrary rules

Peter Atkins:
– we are both interested in the same questions

Moderator:
– why won't you let Stephen publish his papers then?

Peter Atkins:
– because it breaks the pre-suppositions of naturalism and materialism

Stephen Meyer:
– you're shutting down inquiry by using an arbitrary definition of science

Mark Haville:
– we need to define the word science
– science should be based on what we can observe empirically
– we can observe micro-evolution empirically
– but Darwinism goes beyond what is observable to postulate macro-evolution

Peter Atkins:
– but paleobiology is replete with evidence

Stephen Meyer:
– paleobiology uses a method of inference that I think is valid
– but intelligent design uses the same mode of reasoning which is also valid

Peter Atkins:
= you're intellectually lazy

– we’re smart, we’re using our brains

Moderator:
– you’re saying that appeals to intelligent causes ends science?
– is ID the view that some things are too complex to be explained with naturalism?

Peter Atkins:
– yes, and to teach children that materialism is false is child abuse

Stephen Meyer:
– let’s drop the insults and the rhetoric and focus on the arguments
– the ID argument is not based on what we don’t know, it’s based on what we DO know
– first, we can ask what undirected natural processes can and cannot do
– second, we can ask what we know about intelligent causes from our own experience
– what we do know seems to me to require an intelligent agent as a cause

Peter Atkins:
– GOD! Do you mean God!? Do you mean God!?

Stephen Meyer:
– I personally mean God, but all that the arguments proves is a generic intelligent cause
– and I am using the same method of investigation that Darwin used to get there
– what we know from our experience is that a mind is needed to create information

Peter Atkins:
– NONSENSE! ABSOLUTE NONSENSE!

Stephen Meyer:
– in my book, I list 10 predictions made by ID, so it’s not a science-stopper
– furthermore, the enterprise of science began with th goal of understanding God
– consider the earliest scientists, people like James Boyler and Johannes Kepler

Peter Atkins:
– that was 300 years ago, we’ve moved on

Mark Haville:
– what about Max Planck then?

Stephen Meyer:
– how about James Clark Maxwell?

Mark Haville:
– we need to focus on the facts

Peter Atkins:
– what do you mean by the facts?

Mark Haville:
– well the fact is that Darwinism has no mechanism to produce new information

Peter Atkins:
– well copying errors introduces beneficial mutations

Stephen Meyer:

– let’s focus on where we get the first information from the simplest organism
– you can’t account for the first organism by appealing to copying errors
– to add functionality to a program, you need new lines codes from an intelligence
– once you have life, you can generate some new information
– but you can’t generate macro-evolution either

Peter Atkins:
– if we give you your explanation for teh origin of life, will you give this up

Stephen Meyer:
– of course! I’m a former theistic evolutionist
– but right now the evidence is not there for it
– we have to decide these questions based on what we see with our own eyes today

Peter Atkins:
– but I pre-suppose materialism as the starting point of all explanations
– you’re just intellectually lazy to abandon my pre-supposition

Stephen Meyer:
– why is it is less intellectually lazy to insist that materialism is true
– we are making plenty of predictions, and isn’t that what science is about?
– consider Junk DNA – you guys said it had no use
– now we know it has a use

Peter Atkins:
– naturalists were open to the idea that junk DNA might have a use before ID

Moderator:
– Dr. Meyer, what about the wall that locks out intelligence as an explanation?

Stephen Meyer:
– if these are interesting questions, then we should allow freedom of inquiry
– that’s how science advances

Peter Atkins:
– for all their science-talk really they are just saying God did it
– people who don’t agree with me are not using their brains, like I do
– to give up on my pre-supposition of materialism is a denial of humanity

Mark Haville:
– there are important issues that are affected by our view of origins
– everyone who hasn’t seen Expelled movie should definitely see it

Caffeinated Thoughts endorses Bobby Jindal because of his accomplishments

November 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal

Caffeinated Thoughts is run by Shane Vander Hart, a Christian blogger who is also interested in politics. Shane's post goes over many of Jindal's accomplishments.

In this post, I discuss 5 areas:

1. Defense of natural marriage
2. Cutting the size and scope of government
3. Defending the lives of unborn children
4. Defending the right of law-abiding citizens to own guns and defend themselves from criminals
5. Simplified, fair tax plan that favors job creation

The endorsement says:

> Caffeinated Thoughts is proud to endorse Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal for President of the United States.
>
> Governor Jindal has an impressive resume by any standard, but considering he is 44-years-old it is truly remarkable. Graduating from Brown University as a double major with honors at the age of 20, Jindal went on to study as a Rhodes scholar at Oxford University where he would later earn his master's degree. Jindal, at the age of 24, was appointed head of Louisiana's Department of Health and Hospitals. He was later appointed by President George W. Bush as Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services. He served two terms representing Louisiana's 1st Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives after

> which he was elected Governor of Louisiana and is currently serving his second term.

Let's start with the most important accomplishment:

> Jindal speaks of a seven-year long spiritual journey that began while he was in high school, and, at Brown University, culminated in a personal faith and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He freely speaks of the realization that he had that Christ died for sin not in some generic way, but for him and his sin personally. He points to the time of that realization as the "most important moment in my life." Having such a clear profession of faith in Christ is something that we are pleased to see in a presidential candidate.
>
> Jindal also makes it plain that his faith is not something that he keeps put away except for Sundays. His worldview is built upon his faith, and his governance is guided by his worldview. An example of that is his support of the Louisiana Marriage and Conscience Act, in which protections would be given to individuals or businesses who oppose same-sex marriage. A number of corporations opposing the bill expressed their disapproval to him, but his reply was firm: "They are free to voice their opinions, but they will not deter me."

Shocking. His religious convictions actually inform his policies.

Jindal is the only governor in the race to cut spending – and none of the non-governors were able to cut spending, since Obama would have vetoed any cuts in borrowing or spending.

> According to the Cato Institute, of the governors that were or still are GOP candidates for the presidential nomination, Jindal is the only one that has actually cut spending in his state. Cato Budget Analyst Nicole Kaeding wrote this: "Louisiana general fund spending has fallen during Bobby Jindal's tenure as governor. At a time when states were increasing spending, Jindal instituted reforms that cut the state workforce and lowered per capita spending. This feat makes Jindal unique among Republican contenders for the presidency." We are confident that when Jindal says he intends to reduce federal spending, he will succeed in getting it done. He has a unique credibility in that regard.

Cutting spending is good, but so is being solid on defending the lives of the unborn:

> Louisiana, under his leadership, was named by Americans United for Life as the most pro-life state in the nation six years in a row. He has signed numerous pro-life bills as Governor that led to his state's status. In light of recent videos exposing Planned Parenthood's involvement in harvesting fetal body parts for profit, Jindal ordered an investigation of Planned Parenthood. He also rescinded Medicaid contracts his state had with the abortion provider that fully defunded Planned Parenthood of all taxpayer funds that provided a model for governors in other states to follow. He has stood and fought in federal court over his decision,

> and we applaud the fortitude he has shown that is unfortunately rare among many governors and in Washington, DC.

He's willing to fight for the pro-life cause. Unlike many of the talk-only candiates in the GOP primary. And as far as self-defense goes, he's solid on that – which is a good thing, since the Democrats seem to be very committed to releasing criminals, and not cracking down on sanctuary cities and illegal immigrants who commit violent crimes, then take refuge in them:

> With Jindal at the helm, Louisiana has consistently been graded an A+ by the National Rifle Association. As Governor he signed legislation that strengthened Louisiana's stand your ground and castle doctrine laws. In 2012 Louisiana also passed its own constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to keep and bear arms. As a member of Congress, Jindal received the NRA's Harlon B. Carter award for working to address gun confiscations that took place in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in order to prevent them from happening again.

And he is solid on tax rate reduction and simplification, as well as spurring job creation by cutting taxes on job creators:

> For instance, his tax plan also has a unique feature: Everyone will pay some taxes. To use his words, everyone "will have skin in the game." Jindal's website says this: "The idea that half of American wage earners would pay no taxes at all only reinforces the fact that we are creating two classes in America, the tax paying class and the dependent class. Instead of fewer people paying more taxes, more people should pay fewer taxes." We heartily agree with this approach.
>
> Jindal's three-tiered personal income tax plan is both simple and fair. At the same time, his plan eliminates corporate income tax, making corporations globally competitive, encouraging investment in business expansion, and brings jobs and wealth back home from abroad.

The article also notes that Jindal is the only candidate running who has a detailed plan to replace Obamacare, and since Jindal's background is in health care policy, we can assume that he will achieve the goals he achieved when he reformed health care policies in Louisiana. The article did not mention Jindal's work in improving school choice and improving education in Louisiana, but it can't cover everything on his resume. Still, if you like accomplishments, Jindal is your candidate. He is everything that Obama was not in 2008.

I feel sorry for candidates like Scott Walker, Rick Perry and Bobby Jindal. These are the 3 candidates who actually have a record of achieving the things they talk about in campaign speeches. What I mean by that is that all 3 took action, and the action had an effect, and we can see the positive results. There is one other great conservative candidate: Ted Cruz. He would lead in a conservative direction if elected, I have no doubt. But Trump and Carson have neither the record of conservative accomplishments of Jindal,

nor the proven record of conservative advocacy of Ted Cruz. And why are American voters so willing to vote for two people who don’t have the achievements and results to point to?

On the issues: assessing the 2016 Republican presidential candidates

November 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Monday, November 9

Race/Topic (Click to Sort)	Poll	Results	Spread
2016 Republican Presidential Nomination	McClatchy/Marist	Trump 23, Carson 24, Rubio 12, Cruz 8, Bush 8, Paul 5, Kasich 4, Fiorina 3, Huckabee 3, Christie 2, Jindal 1, Santorum 1, Pataki 1, Graham 0	Carson +1

Wednesday, November 4

Race/Topic (Click to Sort)	Poll	Results	Spread
2016 Republican Presidential Nomination	FOX News	Trump 26, Carson 23, Rubio 11, Cruz 11, Bush 4, Paul 4, Kasich 4, Fiorina 3, Huckabee 4, Christie 2, Jindal 0, Santorum 0, Pataki 0, Graham 0	Trump +3
2016 Democratic Presidential Nomination	FOX News	Clinton 56, Sanders 31, O'Malley 2	Clinton +25
2016 Republican Presidential Nomination	Quinnipiac	Trump 24, Carson 23, Rubio 14, Cruz 13, Bush 4, Paul 2, Kasich 3, Fiorina 3, Huckabee 1, Christie 3, Jindal 0, Santorum 1, Pataki 0, Graham 0	Trump +1
2016 Democratic Presidential Nomination	Quinnipiac	Clinton 53, Sanders 35, O'Malley 0	Clinton +18

Tuesday, November 3

Race/Topic (Click to Sort)	Poll	Results	Spread
2016 Republican Presidential Nomination	NBC/WSJ	Trump 23, Carson 29, Rubio 11, Cruz 10, Bush 8, Paul 2, Kasich 3, Fiorina 3, Huckabee 3, Christie 3, Jindal, Santorum, Pataki, Graham	Carson +6
2016 Democratic Presidential Nomination	NBC/WSJ	Clinton 62, Sanders 31, O'Malley 3	Clinton +31

Latest Republican presidential primary polls (click for larger image)

The PDF is here. (50 pages, but you only have to read about the candidates you might consider voting for)

Unfortunately, radically leftist Politico is the only one with a write-up on it, so here goes:

> The hard-line conservative arm of the Heritage Foundation has tough criticism for much of the 2016 field, but high praise for the Texas senator.
>
> The political arm of The Heritage Foundation has released a detailed assessment of the 2016 Republican presidential field — and it offers harsh words for many candidates. But not for Sen. Ted Cruz.
>
> Cruz receives almost exclusively praise for his stances in the 50-page 2016 presidential policy scorecard, the first of its kind produced by Heritage Action. The report grades the candidates across six categories: growth, opportunity, civil society, limited government, favoritism and national security.
>
> Many of the lines in the scorecard appear destined for future attack ads.
>
> Jeb Bush, for instance, is accused of having "kowtowed to the state's environmental lobby" in Florida. Chris Christie "has shown favoritism toward well-connected real estate developers." Rand Paul's "views at times veer outside the conservative mainstream." And Donald Trump backs "massive tariffs that would damage the American economy."

> Cruz, by contrast, manages to emerge with barely a blemish, receiving only softly worded critiques of his adopting “sound policies advanced by others” rather than crafting his own.
>
> […]“Cruz has been willing to pay a political price for taking on government favoritism,” the report reads.
>
> The group even forgives Cruz for one of the few trespasses he has made against its positions, voting for a bill that served “as a bargaining chip for [Export-Import Bank] allies to secure reauthorization.” The report credits him for later switching his vote and then publicly attacking Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell for allegedly lying about his plans.
>
> Bobby Jindal, who is running hard to the right in Iowa, receives among the more glowing reviews. So does Marco Rubio, who angered the right with his pursuit of a comprehensive immigration plan after first being elected with tea party support.
>
> The two current front-runners in the polls, Ben Carson and Trump, were dinged for their lack of a record on conservative causes and a lack of specifics in their visions. “His unconventional foreign policy prescriptions raise more questions of significant consequence than they answer,” Heritage writes of Trump.
>
> Bush was singled out for some of the most biting critiques. “Has shown favoritism toward Florida special interests and supports amnesty” for undocumented immigrants, reads one bullet point.
>
> In its 2016 assessment, Heritage dings Bush for not supporting recent efforts to defund Planned Parenthood this fall because he said he opposed precipitating a government shutdown. The report accuses him of “playing to President [Barack] Obama’s talking points rather than reinforcing conservatives.”

No, everyone knows that my list of candidates favors governors who have a history of putting in place actual policies that actually affected real people in the real world and got real conservative results. So on that score, Cruz and Rubio way down the list because they have achieved very little:

1. ~~Scott Walker~~
2. Bobby Jindal
3. ~~Rick Perry~~
4. Ted Cruz
5. Marco Rubio

Ted Cruz’s Twitter feed and his overall feel to me is that all he does is talk, talk, talk. He just doesn’t have the record of Bobby Jindal at putting policies into place. For example, as governor, Jindal actually cut spending. He actually put in place pro-life measures that actually saved lives. He actually put in place a school choice program that helped low-income students get out of failing schools. He actually cut off funding for Planned

Parenthood. He actually defended religious liberty. Cruz is just a senator, so he hasn't got that proven record. I believe he would be conservative, but I feel safer trusting someone with experience.

Having said that, the more I read reports like this Heritage Action Scorecard report, I am finding out that Cruz has been willing to at least pay a price politically for doing the right thing at various times. So, although he does not have the accomplishments that the governors have, he has been willing to push conservative values when it was not to his advantage, politically. I have to admit, there is some value to this in one sense – we know that he would do what he says no matter what. But there is a problem with Cruz. We don't know whether he is able to create clever policies that will draw the votes of independents and even moderate Democrats. That's what Walker and Jindal were able to do. So, although I respect what the Heritage Action team have written, I am not changing my rankings.

Tonight's debate

Be sure and tune in to both debates tonight on Fox Business, as I am expecting Jindal and Cruz to outperform their competitors in their respective debates:

> Republican debate – Fox Business/Wall Street Journal
>
> Time – Primary: 9 p.m. ET. Secondary: 7 p.m. ET
>
> Location – Milwaukee Theater, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
>
> Moderators – Gerard Baker, Neil Cavuto, Maria Bartiromo
>
> Primary: All candidates averaging at least 2.5 percent in four most recent national polls by Nov. 4.
>
> Secondary: Remaining candidates averaging at least 1 percent in one of the four most recent polls.
>
> Primary: Donald Trump, Ben Carson, **Marco Rubio**, **Ted Cruz**, Jeb Bush, Carly Fiorina, John Kasich, Rand Paul.
>
> Secondary: Chris Christie, Mike Huckabee, **Bobby Jindal**, Rick Santorum.

Candidates on my list are in bold. The debate will be live-streamed, so you have no excuses for missing it. This one promises to be a good one. The moderators will not be amateurs as with the Democrat-biased CNBC debate.

Where the action is: Frank Turek speaks to U of M college students

November 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, Bible-believing Christians are doing lots of things in the world these days, and some are more useful than others. In my opinion, the most significant thing that a Christian can do is produce original research that leads to the development or improvement of arguments for the truth of Christianity. So, Douglas Axe's work showing that protein sequences that have biological function was significant. However, that kind of contribution going to be out of reach for most of us, because who has 6 years to waste on a PhD? But there is a next best thing, and that's sending scholars to the universities to speak to the college students.

Here's an account of Frank Turek speaking at the prestigious University of Michigan from The College Fix.

Excerpt:

> It's rare that college students are told on a university campus by someone holding a PhD that the universe is no accident, but rather designed by a loving creator.
>
> Perhaps that is why a visit to the University of Michigan by popular Christian apologist Dr. Frank Turek drew a standing room only crowd of about 500 students, filling the school's largest ballroom to capacity.
>
> Turek, a former aviator in the U.S. Navy who holds a master's degree from the George Washington University and doctorate from Southern Evangelical Seminary, offered students his blunt reasoning on why he believes Christianity is supported by science, not just faith, but the event last Thursday also delved into subjects such as radical Islam and homosexuality as well.
>
> Turek gave straight answers to touchy questions that flew in the face of political correctness and the academe. On the topic of homosexuality – which he says is the biggest question he gets – he maintained homosexual acts are sinful, per the Bible. On the topic of evolution, he denied "macro-evolution" in support of intelligent design.
>
> "You can breed all kinds of dogs from dogs," he said, "but can you can't get something that isn't a dog from a dog."

In case you're wondering about his being a naval aviator, what I heard is that he used to fly navigator and bombardier on the P-3C Orion. I use those to hunt Russian subs in the military simulator I play. Anyway, I digress.

More:

> The bedrock of Turek's lecture was one that many religious people can

> appreciate, that people must hold themselves to God's moral law. Turek attacked the materialistic determinism (the belief that there is no higher meaning to life) of scientists like Francis Crick. He attacked the way scientists deny there are such things as miracles.
>
> "People don't want morality and accountability," he said. "I was in college, too."
>
> "The greatest miracle in the Bible has already occurred and there's scientific evidence for it," he said, referring to the creation of the heavens and the Earth. "God is the unmoved mover, the one who is contingent for all his creation."

It's very important for Christians to be familiar with scientific arguments for God's existence. Here is a list for those who have not looked into it, so you can get a bird's eye view:

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Turek also nails what the problem is with students abandoning their faith and having no curiosity about ultimate questions:

> Turek also asked students if they thought religion was being marginalized on campus, to which a senior named Alexander answered that "university culture has become more hostile to religion and to the idea of faith."
>
> After the speech, Turek was asked by *The College Fix* about why the younger generation is leaving religion. As of two years ago, the largest religious denomination on campus is now the "nones" – people who do not identify with any religion at all.
>
> "It's the church's fault," Truck said bluntly. "If the church doesn't know how to defend itself, then people will leave."
>
> "Sex," he added, "is the new religion."

Right. No atheist in college is examining the claims of theism against the evidence rationally. The college students are seeking their own pleasure first and foremost, and to use others for that end. They adopt the lifestyle and worldview that allows them to feel

good about pursuing fun and thrills above all. But I do think that confronting them with the evidence for God's existence and character is the right move. At least then when they find out that pure selfish hedonism is a dead end, they will remember that there was another truth-focused approach that they never looked into.

In the meantime, we can help them along by writing and speaking about the harm caused by the Sexual Revolution. It never hurts to be familiar with studies that show what happens when people dump the Bible's approach to sex, and go their own way. On this blog, I try to post lots of studies about the perils of premarital sex, rapid relationship tempo, cohabitation, no-fault divorce, abortion, etc. It's important to share this research with young people so they can detect the threat before they walk blindly into it.

Bobby Jindal wins the Fox Business undercard #GOPDebate, Christie takes second

November 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bobby Jindal got the most interest in the GOP undercard debate

This was the best and most substantive debate so far. There was one silly question, and Jindal took the lead in dismissing it, the other candidates followed and talked about the issues. Great job, Fox Business channel!

Centrist The Hill reports:

> Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal ripped his Republican presidential rivals at Tuesday night's GOP debate, saying that no one but him is committed to cutting government spending.
>
> He singled out former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee after he defended his record, ticking off statistics that he said showed government spending increased during Huckabee's tenure in Arkansas.
>
> "During your time as governor spending in Arkansas went up 65 percent, the number of state workers went up 25 percent, the taxes on citizens went up 47 percent," Jindal responded. "That's not a record of cutting….wanting to cut is one thing, actually cutting is different, facts don't lie."
> Huckabe tried to respond but the moderator shut him down.
>
> The exchange began when Jindal touted himself as the only GOP governor in race who had actually cut government spending.

> “Everyone else talks about it, if they haven’t done it at their state capitols what makes us think they’ll do it if we send them to D.C.?…if Republicans want to win national elections, let’s be conservatives, let’s not be a second version of the liberal party, let’s cut government spending.
>
> Huckabee argued Jindal’s comments were inaccurate.
>
> “Ninety-one percent of our state budget was three things – educate, medicate and incarcerate – and we ended up cutting 11 percent out of the budget so we didn’t have to go in and raise a bunch of taxes,” Huckabee said. “So it’s just not accurate to say nobody else up here has cut.”
>
> The next question went to New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who won big applause for playing the uniter.
>
> “For the people who are out there right now, I want to guarantee you one thing,” Christie said. “If you think that Mike Huckabee won’t be a president who will cut spending, or Chris Christie or John Kasich, wait until you see what Hillary Clinton will do to this country and how she will drive us into debt. She is the real adversary and we need to stay focused as Republicans on her.”
>
> Jindal on Tuesday also criticized the Republican senators who are running for president.
>
> “We’ve got four senators running, they’ve never cut anything in D.C.,” he said. “They give these long speeches called filibusters. They pat themselves on the back. Nothing changes, when they go to relieve themselves, their calls and the toilets get flushed at the same time and the American people lose.”

Here’s Bobby Jindal talking on Chris Christie for being a big spender:

Notice how Jindal came at Christie with facts and figures, and Christie replied with deflections and opinions.

The leftist Washington Post had more on Jindal’s strong performance:

> Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal – now in his fourth undercard debate – went on the offensive Tuesday night, attacking both higher-performing rivals and the other low-performers standing on the stage next to him.
>
> At various points, Jindal called out Sen. Ted Cruz (Tex.) – though not by name – as all talk and no action. He called out former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, newly dropped to the early-evening debate, for being a big spender. And he zinged New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who had been the dominant figure in the debate’s first half, for doing too little to cut state spending.
>
> “Let’s not be a second liberal party,” Jindal said, talking about Christie. “Let’s just not beat Hillary. Let’s elect a conservative to the White House, not just any Republican.”
>
> Later, he seemed to taunt Christie for trying – but not succeeding, in Jindal’s view – to run New Jersey as a conservative state. “I’ll give you a ribbon for

> participation. And a juice box," Jindal said.
>
> Jindal, who rose in politics as a mild-mannered wonk, seems to believe his path to the nomination is to run as a conservative hard-liner, and a bit of a jerk. "I want to fire everybody in D.C.," he said.

The radically leftist Los Angeles Times had more of Jindal's attacks on Christie's record as governor of New Jersey:

> "I will give you a ribbon for participation and a juice box," Jindal said of Christie's record in New Jersey, as he sought to make the case that he's accomplished more than the others on stage. Jindal attacked his rivals relentlessly. He accused Christie and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee of allowing spending to continue to rise in their states unchecked. "Just sending any Republican [to Washington] is not enough," Jindal said. "Under your leadership in New Jersey, your budget has gone up 15%. You've had nine credit downgrades."

think the people who are giving the win to Christie are neglecting his big government record in New Jersey. Yes, Christie has charisma, but no, he is not a conservative. He does not have a conservative record. He is the epitome of RINO, and he did nothing to defend his record against Jindal's attacks, which were all about Christie's performance on the merits as governor of New Jersey. He had no defense, so he turned the conversation to someone slightly to the left of him – Hillary Clinton.

Please follow me on Twitter for #GOPDebate related tweets.

Ted Cruz wins Fox Business #GOPDebate, Fiorina and Rubio outperform

November 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

I think Cruz did the best, Rubio did well enough to take second place, and Fiorina was much improved, especially on foreign policy, where she gave a clear explanation of the doctrine of peace through strength. She did third best, but had the strongest moment of the debate when she schooled everyone on foreign policy. She really knows foreign policy cold.

Red State does a good job of providing unbiased opinion, here is their assessment:

> **The Winners**
>
> **1. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) –** While Cruz hit his talking points and made some great statements, like Jeb, he did not stand out. This isn't as big a problem for him as it is the others, because he has a natural base of conservative voters that will turn out for him no matter what. Bush doesn't have that, and that's why he's free-falling at his point. Cruz coming out swinging against the agriculture lobby could very well be his testing the water for corn subsidy talk in Iowa.
>
> **2. Carly Fiorina –** Carly showed why she should not be counted out yet. She speaks like a caring grandmother, and she has to be the calmest neoconservative I've ever seen on a stage speaking about the Middle East. She spoke calmly and coolly on every issue that came her way, and some issues that didn't. She cannot yet be counted out.
>
> **3. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) –** Rubio did not hurt himself tonight by any stretch of the imagination. He let Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) ruffle his feathers a little bit, but

> I think he overall hit his notes correctly. He is clearly courting the warhawks of the Republican Party right now. He hit on his family background only once, focusing instead on global affairs and fighting back against Paul.

They thought Carson and Trump did OK, and Kasich, Paul and Bush "lost". I think that Carson and Paul did OK, but Trump and Bush underperformed, and Kasich did the worst of all. Trump just has no ability in foreign policy, Bush is too liberal on immigration. Kasich is a big government liberal across the board.

Over at the more establishment Weekly Standard, Jonathan Last – who is a bit wild – said this:

> **Ted Cruz:** If you were forced to pick a winner, it would probably be Cruz. He picked the right fights—with Kasich and Paul. He gave a dynamite explanation of how illegal immigration impacts wage growth and was generally impressive. With each passing debate he looks more like a finalist.
>
> **Marco Rubio:** This performance wasn't as strong as his last. Rubio started out talking vocational training and the nexus of family stability, virtue, and economic growth—basically the Santorum 2012 playbook.
>
> **Carly Fiorina:** She probably had the single strongest moment of the night in her blistering, detailed, canny riff on how she would approach Putin. If she's going to get a third-look from voters, tonight might prompt it.

Ted Cruz attacks Hillary Clinton's failed policies:

Ted Cruz says no to bank bailouts, yes to FDIC reimbursing depositors:

Jeb Bush vs Ted Cruz on illegal immigration and LEGAL immigration:

Marco Rubio on the importance of strong families:

Marco Rubio vs Rand Paul on tax credits for families and defense spending:

Carly Fiorina on Putin and foreign policy:

Carly Fiorina on American entrepreneurship:

Ben Carson on the minimum wage:

Finally, there is the latest episode of the Weekly Standard podcast, which is my *favorite* political podcast, the one you should subscribe to if you subscribe to any. Bill Kristol, the editor of the Weekly Standard, thought that it was a good night for Ted Cruz. I agree.

I also love the Ben Shapiro podcast from the Daily Wire, and I am updating the post now to point to a new episode – episode 24. Shapiro agrees with me: Christie AND Jindal won the undercard debate, and Cruz did the best in the main event.

I spend the night reading and re-tweeting on Twitter – sorry to everyone for the huge number of tweets. What was striking to me was the juvenile nature of the Democrat tweets. Many of them came from professional comedians or Hollywood celebrities… but others came from liberal politicians, and even people from liberal think tanks. Yet not

ONE tweet from the left was anything of substance. It was all just dismissive mocking. Literally. Not one serious tweet. It's not surprising that they are so supportive of a clueless clown who added $10 trillion dollars to the national debt, and point that achievement as a great success. Oh well, that's why we have elections. I would be happy with any of Jindal, Cruz or Rubio right now. I would even take Fiorina in a pinch.

One final thing. Fox Business put on the fairest and most engaging debate yet. They set the standard for everyone else, and made CNBC look like incompetent college students. Every debate should run this smoothly – the moderators just disappeared, and they let the candidates talk to America, and talk to each other. I learned a lot about the candidate's views, and nothing at all about the moderator's views.

Veteran’s Day re-post: Navy SEAL Michael Murphy awarded Medal of Honor

November 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Navy SEAL Michael Murphy wins Medal of Honor

For Veteran’s Day, I am re-posting one of my favorite Medal of Honor stories.

Here is the story of a brave Navy SEAL named Michael Murphy.

Excerpt:

> Engaged in a frenzied firefight and outnumbered by the Taliban, Navy Lt. Michael Murphy made a desperate decision as he and three fellow SEALs fought for their lives on a rocky mountainside in Afghanistan’s Kunar Province in 2005.
>
> In a last-ditch effort to save his team, Murphy pulled out his satellite phone, walked into a clearing to get reception and called for reinforcements as a fusillade of bullets ricocheted around him. One of the bullets hit him, but he finished the call and even signed off, “Thank you.”
>
> Then he continued the battle.
>
> Dan Murphy, the sailor’s father, said it didn’t surprise him that his slain son nicknamed “The Protector” put himself in harm’s way. Nor was he surprised that in the heat of combat his son was courteous.
>
> “That was Michael. He was cool under fire. He had the ability to process information, even under the most difficult of circumstances. That’s what made him such a good SEAL officer,” Murphy said.

> A warship bearing the name of the Medal of Honor recipient will be christened Saturday — on what would have been Murphy's 35th birthday — at Bath Iron Works, where the destroyer is being built.
>
> Murphy, who was 29 when he died, graduated from Pennsylvania State University and was accepted to multiple law schools, but decided he could do more for his country as one of the Navy's elite SEALS — special forces trained to fight on sea, air and land — the same forces that killed Osama bin Laden this week in Pakistan.
>
> […]Murphy, of Patchogue, N.Y., earned his nickname after getting suspended in elementary school for fighting with bullies who tried to stuff a special-needs child into a locker and for intervening when some youths were picking on a homeless man, said Dan Murphy, a lawyer, former prosecutor and Army veteran who served in Vietnam.
>
> Maureen Murphy said he thought he was too young to take a desk job as a lawyer. Instead, he went to officer candidate school, the first step on his journey to become a SEAL officer. He was in training during the Sept. 11 attacks, which shaped his views.
>
> His view was that there are "bullies in the world and people who're oppressed in the world. And he said, 'Sometimes they have to be taken care of,'" she said.
>
> On June 28, 2005, the day he was killed, Murphy was leading a SEAL team in northeastern Afghanistan looking for the commander of a group of insurgents known as the Mountain Tigers.

What happened to Murphy?

> The Operation Red Wings reconnaissance team rappelled down from a helicopter at night and climbed through rain to a spot 10,000 feet high overlooking a village to keep a lookout. But the mission was compromised the following morning when three local goat herders happened upon their hiding spot.
>
> High in the Hindu Kush mountains, Murphy and Petty Officers Marcus Luttrell of Huntsville, Texas; Matthew Axelson of Cupertino, Calif.; and Danny Dietz of Littleton, Colo.; held a tense discussion of the rules of engagement and the fate of the three goat herders, who were being held at gunpoint.
>
> If they were Taliban sympathizers, then letting the herders go would allow them to alert the Taliban forces lurking in the area; killing them might ensure the team's safety, but there were issues of possible military charges and a media backlash, according to Luttrell, the lone survivor.
>
> Murphy, who favored letting the goat herders go, guided a discussion of military, political, safety and moral implications. A majority agreed with him.
>
> An hour after the herders were released, more than 100 Taliban armed with AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades opened fire, attacking from higher elevation, and maneuvering to outflank the SEALs, said Gary Williams,

> author of “Seal of Honor,” a biography of Murphy.
>
> […]As the only survivor, Luttrell has pangs of regret for voting to go along with Murphy, his best friend; he now believes the team could’ve survived if the goat herders were killed.

He wasn’t willing to kill unarmed civilians. That’s the difference between the United States and the Muslim terrorists. It’s a moral difference. Michael Murphy was a good man. He used guns and violence to protect others, and he was not willing to kill unarmed civilians.

Here are the requirements for the Army version of the Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is awarded by the President in the name of Congress to a person who, while a member of the Army, distinguishes himself or herself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. The deed performed must have been one of personal bravery or self-sacrifice so conspicuous as to clearly distinguish the individual above his comrades and must have involved risk of life. Incontestable proof of the performance of the service will be exacted and each recommendation for the award of this decoration will be considered on the standard of extraordinary merit.

The Navy decided to honor Murphy’s sacrifice by naming a ship after him. What kind of ship do you think would suit Michael Murphy?

USS Michael Murphy DDG 112 Arleigh Burke

Michael Murphy is getting a brand new Arleigh Burke guided missile destroyer! Arleigh Burke vessels have the AEGIS missile defense system and their role is to protect carrier strike groups from incoming SSMs and ASMs.

Excerpt:

> The Arleigh Burke Class destroyers are equipped with the Aegis combat system which integrates the ship's sensors and weapons systems to engage anti-ship missile threats.
>
> The Aegis system has a federated architecture with four subsystems – AN/SPY-1 multifunction radar, command and decision system (CDS), Aegis display system (ADS) and the weapon control system (WCS). The CDS receives data from ship and external sensors via satellite communications and provides command, control and threat assessment. The WCS receives engagement instruction from the CDS, selects weapons and interfaces with the weapon fire control systems.
>
> […]Lockheed Martin is developing the Aegis ballistic missile defence (BMD) capability for the Aegis combat system to engage ballistic missiles with the SM-3 missile. 15 Arleigh Burke destroyers have been fitted with the Aegis BMD system, which provides the capability for long-range surveillance, tracking and engagement of short and medium-range ballistic missiles. The system received US Navy certification for full deployment in September 2006. Work was completed on the 15 destroyers at the end of 2008 and the vessels, with three Ticonderoga cruisers, form the Aegis BMD fleet. On 30 July 2009 the Aegis BMD system was successfully tested by the US Navy on the USS Hopper (DDG 70).Aegis BMD is the main sea-based component of the US ballistic missile defence system.
>
> The weapons control systems include a SWG-1A for Harpoon, SWG-3 for Tomahawk, mk99 mod 3 missile fire control system, GWS34 mod 0 gun fire control system and mk116 mod 7 fire control system for anti-submarine systems.

Only two classes of warships that I know of have the AEGIS system. The DDG Arleigh Burke and the CG Ticonderoga.

Michael Murphy was a real hero. It makes me sad that he is gone. But his spirit will live on in the new warship that bears his name.

The FIVE departments that Ted Cruz would shut down if elected president

November 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

Wow, I only want to shut down three of them.

Here's Ted Cruz explaining his plan in National Review.

Tax plan:

> At the last Republican presidential debate, I presented the Simple Flat Tax — which, for a family of four, exempts the first $36,000 from all income tax, and above that amount collects one low rate of 10 percent for all Americans. It eliminates the death tax, the payroll tax, the corporate income tax, and the Obamacare taxes; ends the corporate carve-outs and loopholes; and requires every business to pay the same simple business flat tax of 16 percent. That plan will unleash unprecedented growth, create millions of new jobs, raise after-tax incomes for all income levels by double-digit percentages — and abolish the IRS as we know it.
>
> […]First, to begin the process of reducing the scope and cost of government, I have identified the *Five for Freedom*: During my first year as president, I will fight to abolish the IRS, the Department of Education, the Department of Energy, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. To do that, I will press Congress relentlessly. And I will appoint heads of each of those agencies whose central charge will be to lead the effort to wind them down and determine whether any of their programs need to be preserved elsewhere because they fall within the proper purview of the federal

> government. I do not anticipate the lists to be long.
>
> The IRS and these cabinet agencies are unnecessary and will be shuttered for the following reasons:
>
> • **Internal Revenue Service** – to dramatically simplify the tax code and enable everyone to fill out their taxes on a postcard or smartphone app.
>
> • **Department of Education** – to return education to those who know our students best: parents, teachers, local communities, and states. And to block-grant education funding to the states.
>
> • **Department of Energy** – to cut off the Washington cartel, stop picking winners and losers, and unleash the energy renaissance.
>
> • **Department of Commerce** – to close the "congressional cookie jar" and promote free enterprise and free trade for every business.
>
> • **Department of Housing and Urban Development** – to offer real solutions that lift people out of hardship, rather than trapping families in a cycle of poverty, and to empower hurting Americans by reforming most of the remaining programs, such as Section 8 housing.
>
> Second, besides these unnecessary cabinet agencies and the IRS, we will sharply reduce the agencies, bureaus, commissions, and other programs that are harming American households and businesses — including the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Together with the four departments and the IRS, our conservative estimate of the effects of these eliminations and reductions is a savings of over $500 billion over ten years. And that's just a start. The true savings — of scaling down the scope of the federal government, of restoring to the states their rightful authority, and of unleashing the people's ingenuity — cannot be measured by a number. We are uprooting the centralized power that we have lived under for far too long.

Even if he just pared them down, that would still be great. And he'll do it, too. I don't doubt that.

My list is just the Department of Education, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Internal Revenue Service. I guess I would be fine with getting rid of the Department of Energy, as well, a lot of good they do for economic growth. It's important to understand that America is a federalist system. We have layers of government. When something ceases to be the responsibility of the federal government, it doesn't just disappear, it gets pressed down to the state level, and perhaps even the local level. You can see how much sense that makes with something like environmental protection, energy and education. And for the IRS, we just need to simplify. They have to go, because they abused their power to go after conservatives. We should shut them down, and cancel the pensions and benefits of everyone above the level of resource manager.

One thing is for sure – if you eliminate 5 federal departments, then yes, you can afford to run a much lower flat tax rate. I don't think he can get down to 10%, but 15% is doable.

We really do have too much government, and taxes really are too high. We need to let families and workers and businesses *keep their own money*. Really not sure why so many young people want to keep borrowing, spending, and making government bigger and bigger. Doesn't government help you as much as private businesses? How about your employer… does government help you as much as your paycheck? Really don't understand young people. I suspect they don't even understand their own madness.

How to go to college without going into debt for the rest of your life

November 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

New Grad Average Starting Salary (By Major) : .

Rank	Major	Average Starting Salary
1	Computer Science	$66,800
2	Engineering	$65,000
3	Mathematics and Statistics	$60,300
4	Economics	$58,600
5	Finance	$58,000
6	Accounting	$52,900
7	Nursing	$50,600
8	Business	$49,900
9	Health Care	$48,300
10	Architecture and Planning	$47,400

Choosing the right major: study one of these, or learn a trade that pays well
First, watch this this 5-minute video that explains why college is so expensive:

This video clearly makes two points:

1. College costs more because of government subsidies
2. Only STEM degrees are worth taking out loans for, because there is a demand for STEM-degree holders

Now, in a previous post, I explained more about what's in the video, and linked to appropriate sources (the New York Times) for support.

But this time, I want to get some advice from a friend of mine, the famous Lindsay. She has a BS and MS in biology, was admitted to a PhD program in biology, but then decided to become a stay-at-home wife, and the best homeschooling mom in the whole world.

She writes:

> It is possible to go to college and get a degree that will prepare you for a job and to do it without drowning yourself in debt. I did it. I graduated with a Master's degree in Biology, with a 4.0 GPA throughout, with no debt, and got a job right out of college. But I'm the exception. You can't just do what everyone else is doing and expect things to work out well for you. You have to be smart and informed or you're likely to end up an unhappy statistic, paying down enormous debt on a degree you never use.

She has 5 pieces of advice for you young people.

Here's my favorite:

> 5) Remember that the proper amount of student loans is zero and any non-zero amount must be justified by careful study and number-crunching to make sure it is worth it. Your future is at stake. In my experience, the only time student loans

> are an acceptable investment is when you're going into a high paying field (think doctor, lawyer, or engineer), have very high graduation and employment potential (good grades and some work experience), and your realistic (not idealistic) future income will be sufficient to pay for your total student loans in less than 10 years while also allowing you to cover all your living expenses. You have to crunch the numbers and make sure the investment, including the interest you will pay, is worth it in better job prospects and pay than you could achieve without the degree. You can't rely on the system to check this for you. They are all too happy to mortgage your future for a degree you can't afford and that won't get you a job.

Straight talk from the Lindsay.

I guess I should say something about me. It's hard for me to remember the numbers exactly, but I think I finished my Bachelor of Computer Science with $9,000 in the black, and then graduated with a Masters of Computer Science with $16,000 in the black. As Lindsay advises in her point #4, I worked in the summers and took two semesters off (in my BS) to work full time. I went to a very ordinary school in my home town for both degrees, and chose all programming courses as much as I could. I stayed away from anything theoretical, and even niche courses. (At least until graduate school – then I went crazy and audited 5 theoretical courses in addition to my programming courses and thesis). I do recommend working in some work related to your degree, at least in the summer, even if you don't get paid. However, if you can't find paid work in the summer related to your degree, that's a pretty good sign that you're not in a program that is going to pay for itself.

I mentor a lot of young Christian men and women about their educations and careers. Of all the other young Christians I mentor, everyone is in a STEM program, except for these two girls in California who just started working on. One got a job on Monday night, and the other one (who is shy) is investigating getting a promotion at her current job, as well as adjusting the courses she is taking now. Parents really need to be on top of the education and career situation of their children. And older Christians like me, well we need to be taking an interest in young Christians… making sure they study apologetics, apply themselves in school, study for jobs that pay – either in vocational training or in a STEM college program. Something where they can find a job that pays. This is especially important for men, because they are tasked with the role of primary provider.

By the way, college is not for everyone. Previously, I blogged about the specialty welder who has struck it rich. There are many advantages to being in a field like that where you get to work as much or as little as you want, instead of working 40 hours a week regardless of money requirements. If you don't like welding, here's a list of blue-collar jobs that pay well.

Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger's critique of cosmic fine-tuning

November 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Victor Stenger is a famous "Internet Infidel" atheist, but what makes him different is that he is has a PhD in physics. He wrote a book published by the atheist publisher Prometheus Press where he explains why he thinks that the universe is not fine-tuned for embodied sentient life.

An Australian physicist named Luke Barnes decided to write a response to his book, and the response is summarized (without the math!) on Uncommon Descent. Barnes has a PhD in Astronomy from Cambridge. He did postdoctoral research in Switzerland at the Institute for Astonomy, and now he is doing more postdoctoral research at the University of Sydney . The response that he wrote does not talk about God, or explanations of why the fine-tuning happened. I have no idea where his convictions are on any of that, because his response just talks about the fine-tuning itself from a scientific point of view.

Here's how Uncommon Descent explains Barnes' response.

Summary:

> Professor Victor Stenger is an American particle physicist and a noted atheist, who popularized the phrase, "Science flies you to the moon. Religion flies you into buildings". Professor Stenger is also the author of several books, including his recent best-seller, The Fallacy of Fine-Tuning: How the Universe is Not Designed for Humanity (Prometheus Books, 2011). Stenger's latest book has been received with great acclaim by atheists: "Stenger has demolished the fine-tuning proponents," writes one enthusiastic Amazon reviewer, adding that the book tells us "how science is able to demonstrate the non-existence of god."
>
> Well, it seems that the great Stenger has finally met his match. Dr. Luke A. Barnes, a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute for Astronomy, ETH Zurich, Switzerland, has written a scathing critique of Stenger's book. I've read refutations in my time, but I have to say, *this one is devastating.*

> In his paper, Dr. Barnes takes care to avoid drawing any metaphysical conclusions from the fact of fine-tuning. He has no religious axe to grind. His main concern is simply to establish that the fine-tuning of the universe is real, contrary to the claims of Professor Stenger, who asserts that all of the alleged examples of fine-tuning in our universe can be explained without the need for a multiverse.
>
> Dr. Barnes' ARXIV paper, The Fine-Tuning of the Universe for Intelligent Life (Version 1, December 21, 2011), is available online, and I shall be quoting from it below. Since the paper is quite technical at times, I've omitted mathematical equations and kept the references to physical parameters to a minimum, since I simply wish to give readers an *overview* of what Dr. Barnes perceives as the key flaws in Professor Stenger's book.

First, the abstract:

> The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life has received a great deal of attention in recent years, both in the philosophical and scientific literature. The claim is that in the space of possible physical laws, parameters and initial conditions, the set that permits the evolution of intelligent life is very small. I present here a review of the scientific literature, outlining cases of fine-tuning in the classic works of Carter, Carr and Rees, and Barrow and Tipler, as well as more recent work. To sharpen the discussion, the role of the antagonist will be played by Victor Stenger's recent book *The Fallacy of Fine-Tuning: Why the Universe is Not Designed for Us*. Stenger claims that all known fine-tuning cases can be explained without the need for a multiverse. Many of Stenger's claims will be found to be highly problematic. We will touch on such issues as the logical necessity of the laws of nature; objectivity, invariance and symmetry; theoretical physics and possible universes; entropy in cosmology; cosmic inflation and initial conditions; galaxy formation; the cosmological constant; stars and their formation; the properties of elementary particles and their effect on chemistry and the macroscopic world; the origin of mass; grand unified theories; and the dimensionality of space and time. I also provide an assessment of the multiverse, noting the significant challenges that it must face. I do not attempt to defend any conclusion based on the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life. This paper can be viewed as a critique of Stenger's book, or read independently.

Here's a quote that I wanted to put out there from the paper about how widely accepted fine-tuning is among scientists:

> There are a great many scientists, of varying religious persuasions, who accept that the universe is fine-tuned for life, e.g. Barrow, Carr, Carter, Davies, Dawkins, Deutsch, Ellis, Greene, Guth, Harrison, Hawking, Linde, Page, Penrose, Polkinghorne, Rees, Sandage, Smolin, Susskind, Tegmark, Tipler, Vilenkin, Weinberg, Wheeler, Wilczek. They differ, of course, on what conclusion we should

> draw from this fact. Stenger, on the other hand, claims that the universe is not fine-tuned.

That is a very diverse list. I know that Sandage, Ellis, Page, Tipler and Polkinghorne are theists. But I also know that Weinberg, Rees, Hawking, Greene, and Dawkins are atheists. So scientists all across the spectrum of worldview admit that the fine-tuning is real.

Now, let's look at Barnes' paper and see why Victor Stenger disagrees with the view of those scientists.

1) Stenger doesn't show why the entropy at the beginning of the universe isn't a case of fine-tuning:

> Entropy
>
> We turn now to cosmology. The problem of the apparently low entropy of the universe is one of the oldest problems of cosmology. The fact that the entropy of the universe is not at its theoretical maximum, coupled with the fact that entropy cannot decrease, means that the universe must have started in a very special, low entropy state. (p. 23)
>
> Let's return to Stenger's proposed solution… Stenger takes it for granted that the universe is homogeneous and isotropic. We can see this also in his use of the Friedmann equation, which assumes that space-time is homogeneous and isotropic. Not surprisingly, once homogeneity and isotropy have been assumed, Stenger finds that the solution to the entropy problem is remarkably easy.
>
> We conclude that Stenger has not only failed to solve the entropy problem; he has failed to comprehend it. He has presented the problem itself as its solution. Homogeneous, isotropic expansion cannot solve the entropy problem – it is the entropy problem. Stenger's assertion that "the universe starts out with maximum entropy or complete disorder" is false. A homogeneous, isotropic spacetime is an incredibly low entropy state. Penrose (1989) warned of precisely this brand of failed solution two decades ago… (p. 26)

2) Stenger responds to calculations showing the need for fine-tuning by speculating that future calculations will overturn the ones we have now:

> The Cosmological Constant, Lambda
>
> The cosmological constant problem is described in the textbook of Burgess & Moore (2006) as "arguably the most severe theoretical problem in high-energy physics today, as measured by both the difference between observations and theoretical predictions, and by the lack of convincing theoretical ideas which address it". A well-understood and well-tested theory of fundamental physics (Quantum Field Theory – QFT) predicts contributions to the vacuum energy of the universe that are [approx.] 10^120 times greater than the observed total value. Stenger's reply is guided by the following principle:
>
> Any calculation that disagrees with the data by 50 or 120 orders of magnitude is

> simply wrong and should not be taken seriously. We just have to await the correct calculation. [FOFT p. 219]
>
> This seems indistinguishable from reasoning that the calculation must be wrong since otherwise the cosmological constant would have to be fine-tuned. One could not hope for a more perfect example of begging the question. More importantly, there is a misunderstanding in Stenger's account of the cosmological constant problem. The problem is not that physicists have made an incorrect prediction. We can use the term *dark energy* for any form of energy that causes the expansion of the universe to accelerate, including a "bare" cosmological constant (see Barnes et al., 2005, for an introduction to dark energy). Cosmological observations constrain the total dark energy. QFT [quantum field theory – VJT] allows us to calculate a number of contributions to the total dark energy from matter fields in the universe. Each of these contributions turns out to be 10^120 times larger than the total. There is no direct theory-vs.-observation contradiction as one is calculating and measuring different things. The fine-tuning problem is that these different independent contributions, including perhaps some that we don't know about, manage to cancel each other to such an alarming, life-permitting degree. This is not a straightforward case of Popperian falsification. (pp. 34-35)

3) Stenger doesn't consider the full range of values when deciding if something is fine-tuned or not:

> Protons, Neutrons, Electrons
>
> We turn now to the relative masses of the three most important particles in our universe: the proton, neutron and electron, from which atoms are made. Consider first the ratio of the electron to the proton mass, … of which Stenger says: "…we can argue that the electron mass is going to be much smaller than the proton mass in any universe even remotely like ours." [FOFT p. 164] (p. 50)
>
> The fact that Stenger is comparing the electron mass in our universe with the electron mass in universes "like ours" is all the evidence one needs to conclude that Stenger doesn't understand fine-tuning. The fact that universes like ours turn out to be rather similar to our universe isn't particularly enlightening. (p. 50)
>
> Finally, and most importantly, note carefully Stenger's conclusion. He states that no fine-tuning is needed for the neutron-proton mass difference in our universe to be approximately equal to the up quark-down quark mass difference in our universe. Stenger has compared our universe with our universe and found no evidence of fine-tuning. There is no discussion of the life-permitting range, no discussion of the possible range of [mass(neutron) – mass(proton)] (or its relation to the possible range of [mass(down quark) – mass(up quark)], and thus no relevance to fine-tuning whatsoever. (p. 51)

Those are just a few of the examples in the paper, highlighted in the Uncommon Descent

article (emphasis theirs).

Barnes' paper has now been published in a peer-reviewed journal. The journal is published by Cambridge University.

Tenured professor faces persecution for writing about being raised by two lesbians

November 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Here's the latest story of secular leftist coercion from Breitbart News.

Excerpt:

> The charges against Lopez shifted almost constantly and to this day he has never been shown the formal complaint from the still-unidentified former student. His understanding of the charges against him have been from meetings with university administrators and taking notes.
>
> Her first complaint centered around a conference called *The Bonds that Matter* that Lopez organized at the Reagan Library, a forty-minute drive from the UC-Northridge campus. The conference featured noted speakers on divorce, third party reproduction, and adoption.
>
> She says she was coerced into attending, that she was never informed of what the subject matter of the conference would be, and that she was offended by some of what she heard that day. She said the conference should have come with a trigger warning that it might cause trauma to gays and lesbians. She also said she broke down "in tears, crying."
>
> She says speakers explained that "all women who use sperm banks are evil" and that "gay people cannot be good parents." She also complained about a brochure produced by the Ruth Institute she picked up at the conference aimed at the "victims of the sexual revolution" including those who tried the gay life and now want out.
>
> Once the complaint was made, Lopez stepped beyond the Looking Glass and into the world of university investigations. For the next 378 days Lopez and his paid

> lawyers spent countless hours trying to keep up with the charges and investigations by multiple university administrates and their lawyers.
>
> […]He was formally charged with "discrimination," one of the few charges that can result in revocation of tenure and dismissal.
>
> […]It should be noted that the speakers at the conference, while controversial, are not considered wild-eyed radicals. Jennifer Lahl speaks on the dangers to women of selling their eggs or renting their wombs. She's from Berkley and is a frequent guest on liberal campuses. In fact, Lahl specializes in speaking to the left. Alana Newman spoke, a folk singer, who was born from surrogacy and is now an advocate against it. Perhaps the most controversial speaker was Jennifer Roback Morse who runs the Ruth Institute and who focuses broadly on what she calls the "victims of the sexual revolution."
>
> None of the speakers talked about gay issues and Lopez provided the tapes to prove it. There was one exchange between Newman and one student who asked about gays and surrogacy, but the student turned out to be the complainant. So, the only person who brought up the gay issue at the conference was the student who complained the conference slammed gays.
>
> Lopez provided documents that also showed the students were not coerced. In fact, they didn't even have to attend the conference. It was one of two options in the course. Most of the class chose the conference option.

The article alleges that the student was a plant by powerful LGBT groups who want to silence Lopez.

Marquette University

This reminds me of the other professor McAdams from Marquette who got into trouble for writing about how a student argued with his professor that he should be allowed to disagree with her about gay marriage. The left-leaning The Atlantic has the story, and surprisingly sides with professor McAdams.

Here are the details:

> The incident that McAdams blogged about happened on October 28, 2014. Cheryl Abbate, a graduate student in philosophy who was leading a class called Theory of Ethics, was teaching undergraduates about John Rawls. She asked for examples of current events to which Rawlsian philosophy could be applied.
>
> "One student offered the example of gay marriage as something that Rawls' Equal Liberty Principle would allow because it would not restrict the liberty of others and therefore should not be illegal," according to Holtz's version of events. "Ms. Abbate noted that this was a correct way to apply Rawls' Principle and is said to have asked 'does anyone not agree with this?' Ms. Abbate later added that if anyone did not agree that gay marriage was an example of something that fits the Rawls' Equal Liberty Principle, they should see her after class."

> Sure enough, a student approached her after class, and in what was arguably an ethical breach, surreptitiously recorded their exchange.
>
> […]At this point, both the undergraduate and the grad student instructor spoke to various "superiors" about the incident. And the undergrad talked to McAdams, who decided to blog about it. He has been stripped of tenure for that blog post.

Marquette is a "Catholic" university, except it obviously is not.

Vanderbilt University

Meanwhile, here is yet another recent example of a professor getting into trouble for going against the secular left. National Review has that story, written by the famous civil rights expert Peter Kirsanow.

He writes:

> The illiberal idiocy currently on display at the University of Missouri and Yale has now manifested itself at Vanderbilt, where an online student petition demanding the suspension of Professor of Law and Political Science Carol Swain for being "hateful" toward minorities has gotten more than 1,000 signatures. The fact that Professor Swain is black is no insulation from these charges.
>
> Swain's apostasy is that she has made politically incorrect statements about radical Islam and her traditional Christian beliefs, statements that the petitioners deem intolerant and which the University, therefore, must not tolerate — tolerance, of course, being a one-way street.

That's right. She's a female, black professor. No one is safe from the secular left inquisition. They own the university, and if you want to go there, you have to get in, do your STEM degree, get out, and get to work. And vote to defund them *completely* when it's election time.

The United States ought not have an official state church. But as Dennis Prager often says, universities and colleges are left-wing seminaries. They teach their secular left religious dogma, and God help you if you say one word to disagree with them. These are not people who handle disagreement and dissent well. These are not people who value free inquiry. These are not people who value truth.

Brainwashed by secular left radicals, college students reject freedom of speech

November 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

No media allowed, because it's a "safe space"

I can't link to every article I've read about this topic in the last few days, but I thought that I'd better put up something about what is happening on university campuses, now that Judeo-Christian values have been driven out.

Moderate conservative David French posts this message from the University of Missouri in National Review:

MU POLICE Today at 9:58 AM

To: MU POLICE

Reporting Hateful and/or Hurtful Speech

MP

To continue to ensure that the University of Missouri campus remains safe, the MU Police Department (MUPD) is asking individuals who witness incidents of hateful and/or hurtful speech or actions to:

- Call the police immediately at 573-882-7201. (If you are in an emergency situation, dial 911.)
- Give the communications operator a summary of the incident, including location.
- Provide a detailed description of the individual(s) involved.
- Provide a license plate and vehicle descriptions (if appropriate).
- If possible and if it can be done safely, take a photo of the individual(s) with your cell phone.

Delays, including posting information to social media, can often reduce the chances of identifying the responsible parties. While cases of hateful and hurtful speech are not crimes, if the individual(s) identified are students, MU's Office of Student Conduct can take disciplinary action.

The secular left's fascism on university campuses

So, if you feel offended by someone else's free speech, the laws of the United States do

not allow you to punish them. But university campuses are their own little fascist societies, run by secular leftist tyrants. They have ways of getting around the laws of the United States, even as they grow fat from taxpayer subsidies. It's just disgusting. This is why we need to either scale back non-STEM departments in universities. Indoctrination programs will stop when we remove all the subsidies they get. When students have to pay for an education that is actually *useful*, then these left-wing re-education camps will disappear.

What do students learn in these left-wing seminaries? How to earn a living by creating value for others? Oh no – they hate capitalism. They learn that the first amendment (free speech) is morally evil.

Here's Breitbart News reporting on one of the little brainwashed fascists:

> [University of Missouri Students Association Vice President Brenda Smith-Lezana] was asked, we have tensions simmering at Yale University, protests erupted at that university because an email was sent to students urging them not to wear racially offensive Halloween costumes, and one professor complained that universities are becoming places of 'censure and prohibition.' What's your feeling? Do you believe that that's a place that we're heading for [on] American campuses now, a place of censure and prohibition?"
>
> She responded, "I personally am tired of hearing that First Amendment rights protect students when they are creating a hostile and unsafe learning environment for myself and for other students here. I think that it's important for us to create that distinction and create a space where we can all learn from one another, and start to create a place of healing rather than a place where we are experiencing a lot of hate, like we have in the past."

Would you hire someone like that? I would not. But this is the kind of person the secular left produces. I cannot imagine that anyone in the private sector would want to hire someone like this who cannot bear to hear opinions that disagree with her own, and actually wants those who make her feel bad to be silenced, coerced and punished.

Who teaches these little secular left drones?

The US Herald reports:

> Sounding more like a 1970's version of teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa, then an assistant professor of communications, Melissa Click was caught on video harassing a young student journalist who was attempting to report on the ongoing protests taking place at the University of Missouri.
>
> Student Journalist Tim Tai, who was actually on assignment and freelancing for ESPN to cover the racially charged protests on Monday, was suddenly confronted by the agitated Assistant Professor Melissa Click blocking him from filming the protesters.
>
> Professor Click is heard yelling for protesting students to help her stop Tai from

> taking photos, as the protesters push Tai as he tries to explain how the First Amendment actually works in a free society.
>
> And Professor Click responds with a mind bogging retort; “I know, that’s a really good one, I’m a communication faculty and I really get that argument, but you need to go,” she says.
>
> Tai is seen and heard trying to talk his way through the recalcitrant crowd who shouted at him, chanted “hey, hey, ho, ho, journalists have got to go” and generally made it impossible for Tai to carry out his First Amendment-protected assignment from ESPN to photograph the tent city.
>
> The confrontation seems to heat up further as another student reporter, Mark Schierbecker, tries talking to Click. She tells him to “get out,” hits his camera and yells: “Who wants to help me get this reporter out of here?

Ah yes, an assistant professor of communications. A useless clown hiding from the demands of a private sector job in her “safe space” in academia. Unemployable as she is, she is still capable of forcing her mindless little captives to accept her own fascistic values. And at taxpayer’s expense. And if they don’t accept her secular leftist views, well, that’s what suspensions, expulsions and campus police are for.

The Wall Street Journal comments on the meaning of it all:

> What was evident at the University of Missouri, and in last weekend’s confrontation over free speech at Yale, is that political dialogue on universities is disintegrating to the level of 1968, when many schools became places of physical and intellectual chaos.
>
> Missing today, as then, is adult leadership. Too often university presidents, their boards of trustees and leading political figures default, and quickly, to the most reactionary progressives in modern student bodies. We want to be clear about this, because so many of these university leaders regard themselves as principled liberals. But their timidity is putting at risk the classical liberal values that are the essence of the idea of a university.
>
> Many of our readers by now have seen the video of the Missouri communications professor calling for “muscle” to ban a student reporter from covering their protest. Or last weekend’s video of a Yale student shrieking at a dean to resign for defending free speech. Professors increasingly acquiesce to student demands for “trigger warnings” about course material that might offend them. Small student minorities ban commencement speakers or boo them into silence.
>
> Today’s progressive activists, unlike their liberal antecedents, believe that ideas with which they disagree or which they deem morally repugnant don’t deserve to be heard. And so they shout them down or tell their speakers to “shut up” or “resign.” They believe that free-speech protection is a quaint obstacle to getting what they want, which is control.

Please remember to never vote for Democrats. They are the ones who inundate these leftist seminaries with taxpayer money. If secular leftist administrators, professors and students have to sink or swim on their own strength, they would be far less politicized. We have to starve the left-wing seminaries and force them to focus on preparing students to work, instead of indoctrinating them in hatred and intolerance.

What difference does the doctrine of humans being in “the image of God” make?

November 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s an article from the leftist The Week about how Christianity transformed our view of the value of children. (H/T Trina)

It says:

> We have forgotten just how deep a cultural revolution Christianity wrought. In fact, we forget about it precisely because of how deep it was: There are many ideas that we simply take for granted as natural and obvious, when in fact they didn’t exist until the arrival of Christianity changed things completely. Take, for instance, the idea of children.
>
> Today, it is simply taken for granted that the innocence and vulnerability of children makes them beings of particular value, and entitled to particular care. We also romanticize children — their beauty, their joy, their liveliness. Our culture encourages us to let ourselves fall prey to our gooey feelings whenever we look at baby pictures. What could be more natural?
>
> In fact, this view of children is a historical oddity. If you disagree, just go back to the view of children that prevailed in Europe’s ancient pagan world.
>
> As the historian O.M. Bakke points out in his invaluable book *When Children Became People*, in ancient Greece and Rome, children were considered nonpersons.

Here’s how children were viewed before Christianity:

> One of the most notorious ancient practices that Christianity rebelled against was the frequent practice of *expositio*, basically the abandonment of unwanted infants.
>
> […]Another notorious practice in the ancient world was the sexual exploitation of children. It is sometimes pointed to paganism’s greater tolerance (though by no means full acceptance) of homosexuality than Christianity as evidence for its higher moral virtue. But this is to look at a very different world through distorting lenses. The key thing to understand about sexuality in the pagan world is the ever-present notion of concentric circles of worth. The ancient world did not have fewer taboos, it had different ones. Namely, most sexual acts were permissible, as long as they involved a person of higher status being active against or dominating a person of lower status. This meant that, according to all the evidence we have, the sexual abuse of children (particularly boys) was rife.
>
> […]According to our sources, most abandoned children died — but some were “rescued,” almost inevitably into slavery. And the most profitable way for a small

> child slave to earn money was as a sex slave. Brothels specializing in child sex slaves, particularly boys, were established, legal, and thriving businesses in ancient Rome. One source reports that sex with castrated boys was regarded as a particular delicacy, and that foundlings were castrated as infants for that purpose.
>
> Of course, the rich didn't have to bother with brothels — they had all the rights to abuse their slaves (and even their children) as they pleased. And, again, this was perfectly licit. When Suetonius condemns Tiberius because he "taught children of the most tender years, whom he called his little fishes, to play between his legs while he was in his bath" and "those who had not yet been weaned, but were strong and hearty, he set at fellatio," he is not writing with shock and horror; instead, he is essentially mocking the emperor for his lack of self-restraint and enjoying too much of a good thing.
>
> This is the world into which Christianity came, condemning abortion and infanticide as loudly and as early as it could.

Here are a couple of stories that contrast the Christian view of children as made in the image of God with the secular leftist view that children, unborn and born, are basically just machines made out of meat.

First one from the Washington Times is on a wealthy Democrat donor named Jeffrey Epstein:

> **Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is incensed that her husband, former President Bill Clinton, has been tied to sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, who's also at the heart of an investigation into Prince Andrew's alleged sexual dalliances with a minor, the New York Post reported.**
>
> **[…]Court documents related to a suit filed by Virginia Roberts, who allegesMr. Epstein paid her $15,000 to have sex with the prince, also included several references to Mr. Clinton. The documents from 2011 show thatMr. Epstein had 21 different email and telephone numbers for Mr. Clinton and an aide in his directory.**
>
> The court documents also show Mr. Clinton "frequently flew" with Mr. Epstein on his private plane between 2002 and 2005. The court documents say that Mr. Clinton "suddenly stopped, raising the suspicion that the friendship abruptly ended, perhaps because of events related to Epstein's sexual abuse of children," the Post reported.
>
> Mrs. Clinton, widely considered the front-runner for the 2016 Democratic presidential bid, is reportedly outraged that her husband's name has again popped up in a sex scandal.

When I read the story about what allegedly happened to Virginia Roberts, I literally cried my eyes out. But then again, I'm coming at this from a Christian perspective where

selfish adults ought to give way to the needs of vulnerable children. Secular leftists don't have that view, so anything goes.

The second story is from Oregon Live and is about another wealthy Democrat donor:

> The former boyfriend of Terrence P. Bean was arrested early Thursday on sex abuse charges stemming from the same alleged 2013 encounter with a 15-year-old boy at a hotel in Eugene.
>
> Kiah Loy Lawson, 25, was arrested at 1:15 a.m. at the Portland Police Bureau's Central Precinct and booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center shortly after 2 a.m.
>
> […]Detective Jeff Myers from the Portland's Sex Crimes Unit made the arrest, hours after police took Lawson's ex-boyfriend, Portland developer Terrence Patrick Bean, into custody Wednesday morning.
>
> **Bean, 66, a prominent gay rights activist and major Democratic Party fundraiser, was arrested at his home in Southwest Portland and booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center at 10:12 a.m. Wednesday.**
>
> The indictment charges Bean with two counts of third-degree sodomy, a felony, and one count of third-degree sex abuse, a misdemeanor, police said.
>
> […]Both Bean and Lawson are accused of having a sexual encounter with the same 15-year-old boy in a hotel in Eugene last year. They had arranged the encounter with the teen after meeting him via a website, investigators allege.
>
> […]**Bean has been one of the state's biggest Democratic donors and an influential figure in gay rights circles in the state. He helped found two major national political groups, the Human Rights Campaign and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, and has been a major contributor for several Democratic presidential candidates, including Barack Obama. He's also a close friend of former Gov. Barbara Roberts.**

Children are weak and adults are strong. Secular leftists believe that selfish adults should be able to do whatever they want with children in order to gratify their own desires. This is the default "no God" view. I can guarantee you that no one who abuses children, unborn or born, expects to face God and be held accountable for what they did.

The secular left, which does not recognize that children are made in the image of God in order to know God, has discovered that it's easier to sexually abuse children if you separate them from their biological parents, especially their fathers. That's one of the reasons why they support no-fault divorce, single mother welfare, and now even same-sex marriage. Children who don't have biological parents are much easier to exploit sexually. And if the children find anything wrong with being sexualized at an early age and groomed for sexual exploitation, well, we have public schools to teach them that this is all perfectly normal. Public schools that are championed by Democrats, of course.

Planned Parenthood whistleblower: we billed Medicaid $35 for $3 pills

November 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

This is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> A little-known whistleblower lawsuit accuses Planned Parenthood clinics in Iowa of wrongly siphoning millions of American taxpayer dollars with a series of complicated billing schemes aimed at increasing profits.
>
> Among other dishonest practices, a former manager of the clinics alleges, Planned Parenthood staffers routinely purchased birth control pills for just under $3, billed Medicaid $35 for the same package of pills, and got reimbursed for $26.
>
> […]By privately negotiating a deal with Ortho Tri-Cyclen Lo, a birth control prescription manufactured by Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Thayer said the Iowa clinics were able to purchase birth control pills for $2.89 per 28-day cycle.
>
> […]Thayer then said Planned Parenthood of the Heartland would bill Medicaid $35 for each birth control package and be reimbursed about $26 by Iowa Medicaid authorities.
>
> Medicaid, a government-run health care program, provides free services to low-income families and individuals. When a patient on Medicaid seeks treatment at one of Planned Parenthood's more than 600 locations, the organization bills Medicaid on that patient's behalf.

Video:

Now recall that Planned Parenthood gives a cut of their profits to the Democrat Party, in

exchange for allowing them to butcher defenseless unborn children:

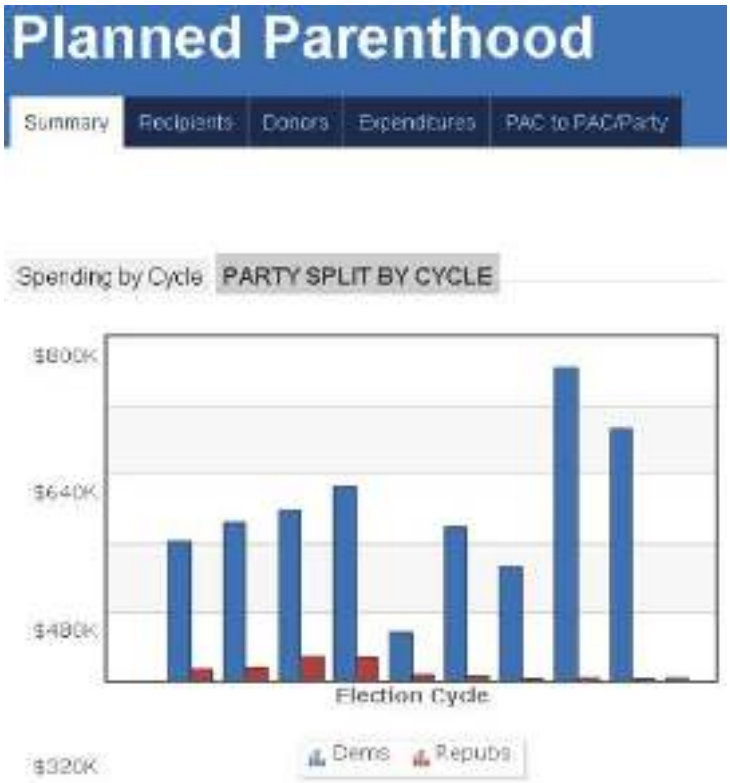

Planned Parenthood donations to Democrats

We already know that the Democrats give Planned Parenthood tons of money every year to subsidize their operations. Now, if these charges are true, the Democrats politicians are funneling taxpayer *even more* money to Planned Parenthood, by allowing them to overbill incompetent government agencies, and then some of that taxpayer money they are getting makes its way back to the Democrat politicians by way of political contributions. So, if you're paying taxes, you're actually giving money to people who kill unborn babies, as well as the Democrats who protect the abortion industry.

There is always a conflict between government and private sector businesses. The private sector businesses serve customers in exchange for money, and the government takes some money from the private sector businesses and gives it to low-information voters in exchange for votes. Conservatives know that the government wastes taxpayer money, and that's why we want to shrink government spending and instead let the efficient private sector handle things like health care. Liberals realize that the private sector cannot be fleeced as easily because they do business with *their own money*. Government spends taxpayer money – and that's why they aren't careful with it.

When we have more government, we get more government waste. The wasting is what gives the Democrat politicians the ability to help themselves to taxpayer money.

After confiscating guns, Australia sees rise in gun violence

November 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

The Washington Free Beacon reports.

Excerpt:

> Australia has seen a rise in gun crime over the past decade despite imposing an outright ban on many firearms in the late 1990s.
>
> Charges for crimes involving firearms have increased dramatically across the island nation's localities in the past decade according to an analysis of government statistics conducted by *The New Daily*. It found that gun crimes have spiked dramatically in the Australian states of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania. In Victoria, pistol-related offenses doubled over the last decade. In New South Wales, they tripled. The other states saw smaller but still significant increases.
>
> Experts said that the country's 1996 ban on most semi-automatic firearms has actually driven criminals to those guns. "The ban on semi-automatics created demand by criminals for other types of guns," professor Philip Alpers of the University of Sydney told *The New Daily*. "The criminal's gun of choice today is the semi-automatic pistol."
>
> […]Regardless of the reasons for the jump in gun crime, the numbers reveal the true size of Australia's illegal gun market. "Taken together, the data suggests that despite our tough anti-gun laws, thousands of weapons are either being stolen or entering the country illegally," *The New Daily* said. "The fourfold rise in handgun-related charges in NSW in the past decade points to the existence of a big illegal market for concealable firearms that seems to have been underestimated in the past."

If you take guns away from law-abiding people (which is what Australia did), then *only* criminals will have guns. And that means that the criminals will become bolder in the face of their disarmed victims.

Meanwhile, back in the United States, law-abiding citizens do own guns, and they do stop criminals from hurting them, by using their guns.

Here's an example from last week:

> Bunce, who is a combat medic for the National Guard, was feeding her baby when two suspects forced themselves into her home and shot at her from the stairwell before she managed to shoot back from her bedroom door. Her baby wasn't injured.
>
> […]The police report notes that there are two suspects in the case and one, Reco Latur Dawkins Jr., has been arrested. Lt. David Robinson said the investigation is still ongoing.
>
> Police have charged a 23-year-old man with attempted murder after a shootout with an Army National Guard combat medic in the stairwell of her home.
>
> Reco Latur Dawkins Jr turned himself in to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police on Sunday and was charged with attempted murder, felony breaking and entering and conspiracy to commit felony breaking and entering in connection to the Tuesday break-in.
>
> Bunce, 21, was at home breast-feeding her four-month-old son Bentley when the intruders arrived on Tuesday morning, according to CNN.
>
> The men knocked on the front door, rang the doorbell and kicked in the door of her home east Charlotte, North Carolina.
>
> The mother-of-two quickly took her son to the bedroom and placed him in the crib before grabbing her gun.
>
> Her husband Paul, a medical technician, told WSOCTV: 'I think it was a shock to the intruders just as much as it was to her.'.
>
> It was her military training that allowed her to remain calm during the gunfight, he added.

That kind of story now *never happens* in Australia. Because law-abiding citizens have been *disarmed* by well meaning liberals.

Learn about the issue

To find the about guns and self-defense, look in the academic literature. Here are two books I really like for that.

- More Guns, Less Crime by Dr. John R. Lott (University of Chicago Press, 3rd ed.)
- Guns and Violence by Dr. Joyce Lee Malcolm (Harvard University Press)

Both of those books make the case that permitting law-abiding citizens to own firearms

for self-defense reduces rates of gun violence.

Serial sexual relationships, multi-partner fertility, single motherhood and fatherlessness

November 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A man leading a woman upward

Here's an article from the policy journal National Affairs (editor is Yuval Levin) that has some statistics about single motherhood by choice. When you are reading the article, keep in mind that most people who lean left are so influenced by feminism that they seem to think that women trip and fall accidentally, and end up pregnant from random men. I don't think that we should minimize the fact that most women *freely choose* the men who treat them badly.

Excerpt:

> Pew Foundation and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention surveys indicate that, on a range of measures, a very large share of fathers who do not live with their children have virtually no meaningful relationship with their non-custodial children. More than one-half report that they had not shared a meal with their non-custodial children in the last four weeks, while nearly two-thirds had not read to their children and a full three-quarters had not done homework with them. Moreover, these are self-reported figures, so the share of fathers with no relationship to their non-custodial children is most likely even higher.
>
> When fathers form new romantic partnerships, their involvement with children from previous relationships declines. Jo Jones and William Mosher report that, while 39% of fathers in new romantic relationships had shared a meal with their non-custodial 5- to 18-year-old children at least once in the past month, 62% of those not in a new romantic relationship had. While 55% of fathers in a new romantic relationship had spoken with their 5- to 18-year-old non-custodial children, 77% of those not in a new romantic relationship had.
>
> In addition, men with less education are more likely to exhibit absent-father behavior. Whereas 70% of fathers with at least some college had talked to their

non-custodial 5- to 18-year-old children at least once in the past month, 59% of those with no more than a high-school degree had done so. While 74% of fathers with at least some college had played with their non-custodial child under 5 years old at least once in the past month, only 53% of those fathers with no more than a high-school degree had.

Multi-partner fertility is not only associated with father abandonment, it also adversely impacts child-maltreatment rates. Women attempting to balance work, the demands of new relationships, and the challenges of raising children are faced with a set of chronic stressors that often lead to child abuse and neglect. The shift from welfare to work increased these stresses. Partially as a result, between 1993 and 2005, the rate of overall abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and serious abuse, respectively, rose by 22%, 14%, 49%, and 34% for children living with single mothers. By contrast, for children living in two-parent households, child-abuse rates fell on each of the four measures (by 42%, 24%, 62%, and 37%, respectively). By 2005, the child-abuse rate was 2.9 per 1,000 for children living with married biological parents but 10.2 for those living with a single parent and no partner, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This disparity cannot be explained solely by socioeconomic status since the abuse rate for children in families *of all kinds* in the lowest socioeconomic group was still lower than that for children living in single-parent households.

Multi-partner fertility also increases child-abuse rates in a second way: the presence of non-biological fathers in the house. Child abuse in households with single mothers triples when they live with a man other than the child's father. Child-maltreatment rates are actually lower in black than white households when the mother lives alone. But unfortunately, many men bring their job and other frustrations into the home, creating abusive situations. As a result, when a partner is present, the black rates on all three measures of child maltreatment — emotional, physical, and endangerment — are almost double the white rates. In addition, rates of intimate violence are over 12 times higher for single mothers than for married mothers.

Edin and Nelson ignore the subject of abusive behavior in men. Instead, despite the fathers' caring attitudes, we are told, the mothers kick them out because they don't earn sufficient income. And on the impact of multi-partner fertility on children, *Doing the Best I Can* offers *one* benign sentence: "Kids are amazingly resilient, but the rate of family change among children of unwed fathers has become so rapid, and now leads to such complicated family structures, that kids might have a hard time adjusting."

Academic studies paint a much grimmer picture. After surveying the evidence, Sara McLanahan and Christopher Jencks concluded earlier this year,

> [A] father's absence increases antisocial behavior [among children], such

> > as aggression, rule breaking, delinquency, and illegal drug use. These antisocial behaviors affect high school completion independent of a child's verbal and math scores. Thus it appears that a father's absence lowers children's educational attainment…by disrupting their social and emotional adjustment and reducing their ability or willingness to exercise self-control.
>
> The effects of growing up without both parents when it comes to aggression, rule breaking, and delinquency are also larger for boys than for girls. Marianne Bertrand and Jessica Pan found in 2011 that the behavior of boys is far more dependent upon good parenting practices — spending time with a child, emotional closeness, and avoiding harsh discipline — than that of girls. Such parenting habits are far more common in two-parent families, which helps to explain why boys with absent fathers are more likely to be suspended and have other behavioral problems than boys who have both parents at home.
>
> The evidence also indicates that the outcomes are most negative when a man other than the biological father is present. Cassandra Dorius and Karen Guzzo found that "adolescents with a half-sibling with a different father are about 65 percent more likely to have used marijuana, uppers, inhalants, cocaine, crack, hallucinogens, sedatives, or other drugs by the time of their 15th birthday than those who have only full siblings." Cynthia Harper and Sara McLanahan reported in 2004 that, among fatherless boys, those who lived with stepfathers were at an even greater risk of incarceration than those who lived with a single mother.

I think in today's society, there seems to be a lot of fear and trembling to speak about moral standards. And it seems to be especially true that men are not allowed to tell women about their moral obligations. I know that at least when I speak to young women, they are often very rebellious. The attitude I encounter most often is that they feel that they should be able to trust their feelings and act in the way that their feelings dictate. Any destructiveness that results – which I warned them about – is dismissed as "unexpected".

I can clearly remember the first time this happened to me, when I was in high school. I was friends with a girl named Tara who would come over and speak to me before morning announcements. She would tell me about her stock car driving boyfriend. One day, she told me that she was moving in with him. I warned her against it, and listed off a bunch of statistics about how this would cause problems. She stopped coming to talk to me, and so did her best female friend. Well, a few years later I ran into her again at one of our local universities where I was an undergraduate. She filled me in on what had happened. He had cheated on her with her best friend in their house. He got her pregnant. She had an abortion. She knew better now, but back in high school I was easily dismissed, and all of her friends sided with her.

Whenever I try to produce evidence to say that something is likely to cause harm, the response is usually "well I know a person who broke the rules and nothing happened". I

produce statistics about some likely consequence of following your heart, and it's dismissed because some Hollywood celebrity managed to escape the probabilities. "Don't judge me!" they say. Happiness comes first, and the best way to decide how to be happy in the long-term is apparently to do what makes a person feel happy right now. But statistics are there to tell a story of how the world *normally* works – dismissing it all with individual cases is bad logic. There are consequences to following your feelings and dismissing moral obligations.

Mark Steyn on Paris terrorist attacks: the barbarians are inside the gates

November 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from Canadian writer Mark Steyn. The article's title is: "The Barbarians Are Inside, And There Are No Gates".

Steyn writes:

> As I write, Paris is under curfew for the first time since the German occupation, and the death toll from the multiple attacks stands at 158, the vast majority of them slaughtered during a concert at the Bataclan theatre, a delightful bit of 19th century Chinoiserie on the boulevard Voltaire. The last time I was there, if memory serves, was to see Julie Pietri. I'm so bloody sick of these savages shooting and bombing and killing and blowing up everything I like – whether it's the small Quebec town where my little girl's favorite fondue restaurant is or my favorite hotel in Amman or the brave freespeecher who hosted me in Copenhagen …or a music hall where I liked to go to hear a little jazz and pop and get away from the cares of the world for a couple of hours. But look at the photographs from Paris: there's nowhere to get away from it; the barbarians who yell "Allahu Akbar!" are there waiting for you …when you go to a soccer match, you go to a concert, you go for a drink on a Friday night. They're there on the train… at the magazine office… in the Kosher supermarket… at the museum in Brussels… outside the barracks in Woolwich…
>
> Twenty-four hours ago, I said on the radio apropos the latest campus "safe space" nonsense:
>
> This is what we're going to be talking about when the mullahs nuke us. Almost. When the Allahu Akbar boys opened fire, Paris was talking about the climate-change conference due to start later this month, when the world's leaders will fly in to "solve" a "problem" that doesn't exist rather than to address the one that does. But don't worry: we already have a hashtag (#PrayForParis) and doubtless there'll be another candlelight vigil of weepy tilty-headed wankers. Because as long as we all advertise how sad and sorrowful we are, who needs to do anything?
>
> With his usual killer comedy timing, the "leader of the free world" told George Stephanopoulos on "Good Morning, America" this very morning that he'd "contained" ISIS and that they're not "gaining strength". A few hours later, a cell whose members claim to have been recruited by ISIS slaughtered over 150 people in the heart of Paris and succeeded in getting two suicide bombers and a third bomb to within a few yards of the French president.

Now why was France attacked? France has been in the lead of all the other

"multicultural" European countries at welcoming in *unskilled* immigrants from countries that do not like Western values very much:

Muslim population in European countries

Mark Steyn continues:

> And then Europe decided to invite millions of Muslims to settle in their countries. Most of those people don't want to participate actively in bringing about the death of diners and concertgoers and soccer fans, but at a certain level most of them either wish or are indifferent to the death of the societies in which they live – modern, pluralist, western societies and those "universal values" of which Barack Obama bleats. So, if you are either an active ISIS recruit or just a guy who's been fired up by social media, you have a very large comfort zone in which to swim, and which the authorities find almost impossible to penetrate.
>
> And all Chancellor Merkel and the EU want to do is make that large comfort zone even larger by letting millions more "Syrian" "refugees" walk into the Continent and settle wherever they want. As I wrote after the Copenhagen attacks in February:
>
> *I would like to ask Mr Cameron and Miss Thorning-Schmidt what's their happy ending here? What's their roadmap for fewer "acts of violence" in the years ahead? Or are they riding on a wing and a prayer that they can manage the situation and hold it down to what cynical British civil servants used to call during the Irish "Troubles" "an acceptable level of violence"? In Pakistan and Nigeria, the citizenry are expected to live with the reality that every so often Boko Haram will kick open the door of the schoolhouse and kidnap your daughters for sex-slavery or the Taliban will gun down your kids and behead their teacher in front*

> *of the class. And it's all entirely "random", as President Obama would say, so you just have to put up with it once in a while, and it's tough if it's your kid, but that's just the way it is. If we're being honest here, isn't that all Mr Cameron and Miss Thorning-Schmidt are offering their citizens? Spasms of violence as a routine feature of life, but don't worry, we'll do our best to contain it – and you can help mitigate it by not going to "controversial" art events, or synagogues, or gay bars, or…*
>
> …or soccer matches, or concerts, or restaurants…

On Friday night, my Dad messaged me to tell me about the story. The first thing in my mind was Obama's comments about how we Christians needed to "get off our high horse" when we tried to judge Islamic terrorism, because of the Crusades (which were intended as a *defensive* reaction to Muslim expansion).

Investors Business Daily explains what Obama said:

> In remarks at a prayer meeting Thursday, President Obama implied Christianity, just like Islam, is filled with people who "hijack religion for their own murderous ends." This is the progressive disease of moral equivalence at its worst.
>
> In recent days and weeks, the world has watched grimly as the horrific barbarity of fundamentalist Islam has been put on full display.
>
> With routine beheadings, crucifixions, tortures, mass killings of civilians, burying children alive, and, most recently, burning a prisoner alive and filming his death agony to the approving yells of onlookers, it's clear something is horribly wrong within Islam.
>
> And yet, apart from rather routine denunciations of the savagery, Obama used his appearance at a National Prayer Breakfast to upbraid Christians for their sins.
>
> "Unless we get on our high horse and think this is unique to some other place, remember that during the Crusades and the Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ," Obama said. "In our home country, slavery and Jim Crow all too often was justified in the name of Christ."

Remember, the Obama administration describes Islamic terrorism as "senseless violence". Democrats describe shootings my Muslims at army bases as "workplace violence". Democrats describe attacks on Israeli civilians as "random violence". Democrats called shooting at Jews in France "random". Democrats describe investigations about the Benghazi terrorist attack a "sideshow", after they lied and tried to say the attack was a spontaneous reaction to a video. And this is the party that more than half of our country votes for at election time.The trouble with the Democrats is that they don't have the resources in their worldview to call evil evil, and good good. They just want to feel "nice", and be perceived by others as tolerant and non-judgmental. They want to be generous to enemies with your taxpayer dollars, and risk your lives in pursuit of their goal of watering down American exceptionalism and Western civilization.

If you want to know what Democrats *really* think of the Paris terrorist attacks, then all you have to do is look at their position on welcoming in Syrian refugees.

CBS Democrat debate: global warming causes terrorism, take in 65,000 Syrian refugees

November 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does national security make?
Here's a re-cap of the Democrat debate from Saturday night on CBS News.

On terrorism:

> DICKERSON: Senator Sanders, you said you want to rid the planet of ISIS. In the previous debate you said the greatest threat to national security was climate change. Do you still believe that?
>
> SANDERS: Absolutely. In fact, climate change is directly related to the growth of terrorism. And if we do not get our act together and listen to what the scientists say, you're going to see countries all over the world — this is what the CIA says — they're going to be struggling over limited amounts of water, limited amounts of land to grow their crops ask you're going to see all kinds of international conflict.

On Syrian refugees:

> O'Malley proposed allowing 65,000 Syrian refugees into the country, more than the 10,000 proposed by Obama, though he said they need "proper screening."
>
> Clinton also argued for a higher number, adding "I said we should go to 65, but only if we have as careful a screening and vetting process as we can imagine."

On amnesty and wages:

> 9: 53: Hillary is asked how she could "go further" than Obama on executive amnesty after the administration's setback this week. She insists, according to her reading of the law and the Constitution and not the court's, Obama has the "authority" to exercise his executive amnesty. She "any parent" would be

> "proud" of DREAMers and America should make it possible for illegal immigrants to come of of the shadows. No talk about the crimes committed by illegal immigrants.
>
> 9: 52: Democrats asked about immigration. O'Malley is asked if he is willing to compromise to focus on border security first to keep America face. O'Malley says that if more border/security and deportations were going to bring Republicans to the table, it would have happened a long time ago. He blasts Trump as an immigrant-bashing "carnival barker." O'Malley says giving amnesty to illegal immigrants would raise wages even though illegal immigrants would then be competing with Americans for jobs.

The pro-Democrat "debate" moderators were very careful to steer the discussion away from all of the Clinton scandals… nothing about the Clinton Foundation taking foreign donations, nothing about the hacked e-private homebrew e-mail server, nothing about Benghazi, nothing about Clinton's war in Libya, etc.

Liberal moderators

CBS moderator John Dickerson is a radical left-wing Democrat.

CBS moderator Nancy Cordes is a radical left-wing Democrat.

Dickerson also met privately with each of the candidates prior to the debate.

Syrian refugees

In case you're concerned about the refugees, in light of the Paris terrorist attacks, here's the current Democrat plan for that:

> The United States will take up to 100,000 refugees a year in 2017, a more than 40 percent increase that comes as growing numbers of people flee conflicts in Syria and other parts of the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.
>
> Secretary of State John Kerry announced the plans Sunday in Berlin, where German officials are scrambling to deal with a massive influx of migrants and where he met with some Syrians who had fled their country's civil war. He said the U.S. cap on refugees would be lifted in stages, going from 70,000 now to 85,000 in 2016 and 100,000 the following year.

Nothing to be concerned about, nothing to see here.

Vanderbilt University students try to get black conservative professor fired

November 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Carol M. Swain

This is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> A black conservative professor who found herself the latest target of student protests nationwide has one thing to say to those calling for her to be suspended from the university where she teachers: "Grow up."
>
> Among other allegations, students accused Carol Swain, a professor of law and political science Vanderbilt University for nearly 27 years, of "unprofessional intimidation on social media" and "discriminatory practices in the classroom."
>
> Swain actively posts her Christian conservative view points on her public Facebook page and website called BeThePeopleTV. She has authored numerous award-winning books and has been cited by the Supreme Court,according to her resume.
>
> But recently, her conservative values left her at odds with students on campus that started a petition demanding she be removed from the university.
>
> […]**Swain said the students behind the protests never took any of her classes, all of which are elective.**

The petition explains what exactly the black conservative has done to get herself fired: "unprofessional intimidation on social media, discriminatory practices in the classroom, and unclear representation as a Public Figure with invocations of the Vanderbilt name on her Facebook page."

And, "Over the past few years, Professor Carol Swain has become synonymous with bigotry, intolerance, and unprofessionalism…. Swain has let her hate-filled prejudices negatively impact her work, our student body, and Vanderbilt's reputation."

So, this is what students are learning how to do, even in a university in one of the most

conservative states in the union.

I think it's worth recalling the last story I posted about Vanderbilt at this time.

From Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> Vanderbilt University has decided that Christian student groups that hold traditional Christian religious views are not welcome on campus. They will no longer be recognized as valid student organizations. Vanderbilt's reason is that such groups require that their leaders *be Christian*—that is, that their leaders embrace certain core principles of Christianity and try to live according to these principles. In Vanderbilt's view, religious beliefs and standards "discriminate" against those students who do not subscribe to them. Therefore, student religious groups with religious beliefs and standards are banned.
>
> The situation would be unbelievable—were it not true. The issue came to a head this year when a student group at Vanderbilt Law School, the Christian Legal Society, submitted its "constitution" to the university. The constitution provided that the group's leaders should believe in the Bible and in Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior; that they should be willing to lead members in worship, prayer, and Bible study; and that they should "strive to exemplify Christ-like qualities." Vanderbilt's Director of Religious Life, Reverend Gretchen Person, replied that such views were forbidden. Vanderbilt's policies "do not allow" religious groups to have such an "expectation/ qualification of officers," she wrote. Last week, the administration officially declared the policy that Vanderbilt will exclude student religious groups that "impose faith-based or belief-based requirements for membership or leadership."

So what's the answer?

Well, it's important to understand that the university system, especially in non-STEM departments, is basically a place where people who cannot find work in the productive private sector get jobs indoctrinating the young in secular leftist values. They are basically secular leftist seminaries. And they often funded by taxpayers. So we need to vote for smaller government, less money for students and universities, and substitutes for higher education that are non-political, e.g. – vocational training, alternatives that focus on STEM fields like e-learning. In my case, I would recommend that young Christians try to avail themselves of free sources of learning, and learn how to program using online courses instead of attending universities like Vanderbilt. Just FYI, there are no conservative universities aside from maybe Hillsdale College and Grove City College.

You may also be interested in my earlier post about California State University professor Lopez, who is under fire from LGBT activists for promoting natural marriage. In that post I also talk about professor McAdams, who was sanctioned by Marquette University for upholding traditional marriage. Marquette is a "Catholic" university, i.e. – it's secular leftist.

Daily Signal also had recent articles about Lopez and McAdams.

Democrats admit 10,000 Syrian refugees to USA, with 200,000 more on the way

November 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On Saturday night, we heard from one of the Democrats that global warming causes terrorist attacks like the one in Paris. Although France is a world leader in letting in unskilled immigrants from Muslim countries, according to the Democrats, this could not have been the source of the terrorist attack. It had to be the global warming that caused it.

This strategy of blaming weather for terrorism is a bit different than their normal habit of calling terrorist attacks "senseless violence", "workplace violence", "random violence", and shooting up Jews in France as"random". Challenged to speak the phrase "radical Islam" in the debate, the Democrats declined to do so. How is that showing seriousness about national security?

Meanwhile, Democrats are already paving the way for the next terrorist attack on American soil, welcoming in Syrian refugees, most of which fit the profile of Islamic terrorists (male, age 18-45).

The first 10,000

Many of the Syrian refugees are being send to Governor Bobby Jindal's state, Louisiana.

Here's part of Jindals letter to Obama:

> Dear President Obama,
>
> In the wake of another round of appalling terrorist attacks, I write to express great sadness at the events in Paris, as well as my grave concern about the unreported diffusion of Syrian refugees in the United States.
>
> Last week, the city of New Orleans began receiving its first wave of Syrian refugees. As with former immigration crises and federal relocation policy, Louisiana has been kept in the dark about those seeking refuge in the state. It is irresponsible and severely disconcerting to place individuals, who may have ties to ISIS, in a state without the state's knowledge or involvement.
>
> As Governor of Louisiana, I demand information about the Syrian refugees being placed in Louisiana in hopes that the night of horror in Paris is not duplicated here. In the wake of these atrocities, I also ask for details on the below:
>
> What level of background screening was conducted prior to entry in the United States?
> In light of the fact that some of those responsible for last night's attacks held Syrian passports, what additional protections and screenings will be put in place?
>
> Will all Syrian refugees seeking relocation in the United States now be cleared by the Terrorist Screening Center?

> What degree of monitoring will be sustained after initial placement in Louisiana?
>
> As Americans, we embolden freedom and opportunity to the rest of the world, but by opening up our borders and refusing to collaborate or share information with states, you are threatening that reality.
>
> Mr. President, in light of these attacks on Paris and reports that one of the attackers was a refugee from Syria, it would be prudent to pause the process of refugees coming to the United States. Authorities need to investigate what happened in Europe before this problem comes to the United States.

If I were Jindal, I would just pack them up, and send them straight to Washington, D.C. to live with the Democrats there. But what is striking is that Jindal doesn't even know *who these people are.* He's been "kept in the dark" by the Obama administration.

Obama says: 200,000 more

Here's Obama tweeting happily about his plan to let in Syrian passport bearers:

Obama says: give them $4.5 billion in aid, and let in 200,00 Syrian refugees (Source)

Note that one of the terrorists who blew himself up outside the soccer stadium in Paris was carrying a Syrian passport.

Democrat delusions

Here's a Wall Street Journal article entitled "Wake Up, Mr. President" that makes the case that our president is delusional about national security threats:

> For seven years Mr. Obama has used the unpopularity of the Iraq war as a shield for his retreat from antiterror leadership and the Middle East. His periodic drone strikes and his most notable security success, the Osama bin Laden raid, obscured the jihadist danger growing in the wake of America's departure from Iraq and abdication in Syria.

> Mr. Obama also deposed Moammar Gadhafi in Libya but then did almost nothing to help Libyans restore order. Americans saw a glimpse of the gathering storm in the terror attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, but the White House blamed it on an obscure video.
>
> Now Americans can see clearly the spreading infection from Islamic State and a resurgent al Qaeda. It isn't merely a regional threat, as Mr. Obama once claimed. Its offshoots have spread into North Africa across the Middle East to Afghanistan. The civil war in Syria has spawned a refugee crisis that has descended on Europe and may have provided cover for at least one of the Paris jihadists.
>
> Islamic State also isn't the "jayvee" terror team, as Mr. Obama once claimed. Western intelligence believes its sympathizers in Sinai took down a Russian airliner. Its bombs explode day after day against civilian targets, this past week in Beirut and a Christian convent in Iraq.
>
> The Paris attack is in some ways even more alarming than 9/11. Airplane hijackings have largely been stopped through enhanced security. Paris suggests that Islamic State has embarked on a strategy of urban unconventional warfare wherever it is able across the West. And it is far harder to track and prevent suicidal jihadists with assault rifles and grenades who want to blow up a restaurant district or concert hall.
>
> France has been the target three times this year, counting the attack on a train foiled by three Americans, but America's day is coming. In May FBI Director James Comey said there are "thousands" inside the U.S. who are absorbing Islamic State propaganda on the Internet.

Now, if you try to judge Obama for not taking national security seriously, he will tell you to get off your high horse, stop offending radical Muslims, and to feel guilty about the Crusades. This is because in college, he learned the importance of not making moral judgments about evil, because it offends evil people. But he also learned that making moral judgments against good people is the height of morality. That's why he defends terrorists and criminals and lawbreakers, and imposes punishments and burdens on good people who are none of those things. That's why he handed "hundreds of billions of dollars" to help them along with their nuclear weapons program.

Back to the refugees. Every state except Wyoming and Montana is getting Syrian refugees. At what point does Obama's delusional views on the threat of Islamic terrorism become a concern to his base of low-information voters? Or does MSNBC – which they rely on for news – not tell them about things like Iran nuclear deals, Paris terrorist attacks and Syrian refugees?

Democrat policies hurt the poor, and actually increase income inequality

November 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two articles from Investors Business Daily. The first discusses how big government tax policies actually encourage poor people not to work. The second one looks at major cities, and finds that 9 out of the top 10 cities with the most "inequality" are run by Democrats.

Let's start with the first article.

It says:

> The nonpartisan Tax Foundation has put out a new report titled "Income Tax Illustrated ." OK, cue the jokes. But it isn't boring. Really.
>
> […]"As low-income households earn more money, not only do their tax burdens grow rapidly, but they also receive fewer benefits from federal social assistance programs," the report said. "In fact, individuals who move to higher-paying jobs sometimes end up with less overall disposable income, after taxes and transfers."
>
> The report uses two examples, as noted by the Washington Beacon. In one, a single parent earns $4,800 in salary before taxes. That's not much, but because of entitlements such as Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Children's Health Insurance Program, food stamps, and Housing Choice Vouchers, that person's take-home pay for the year jumps to $22,090 — not a lot, granted, but it's more than 4-1/2 times greater than what that person actually earned working.
>
> That compares to someone who earns $21,000 before taxes but, because of taxes and entitlements, takes home $24,057 for the year.
>
> Yes, that person earns $16,200 more from work, but takes home just $1,967 more, thanks to the tax code and generous benefits to those with less income.
>
> "As low-income households earn more money, not only do their tax burdens grow rapidly, but they also receive fewer benefits from federal social assistance programs," the report said.
>
> "In fact, individuals who move to higher-paying jobs sometimes end up with less overall disposable income, after taxes and transfers."
>
> […]Believe it or not, this bizarre distortion gets worse when you consider a married couple with two kids.
>
> Because the Earned Income Tax Credit is phased out at higher incomes, a family of four making $48,000 faces a marginal tax burden of 43.7% — an absurd disincentive to work harder and earn more for families.

When Republican presidential candidates like Jindal, Cruz and Rubio talk about simplifying

the tax code, their intent is to solve these perverse incentives that keep poor people dependent on government. We have make changes to the tax code so that people who are able to work can do better by working, rather than by not working. Republicans are in favor of encourage people to work, marry and have kids. Democrats… just want them to keep voting for dependence on big government.

On to the second article.

Which states have the most income inequality?

> The Washington Post looked into the numbers and found that 5 of the top 7 states are decidedly blue — New York, Connecticut, California, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.
>
> And Washington, D.C., which is ground zero of big government liberalism, has the highest level of income inequality of all.
>
> At the other end of the spectrum, the three states with the lowest levels of income inequality are solid red: Utah, Wyoming and Alaska. Nebraska comes in fifth and Nevada ninth.

And what about down at the city level?

> The liberal-leaning Brookings Institution looked at inequality by city, and the results show that 9 of the top 10 are run by Democratic mayors — including San Francisco, Boston, D.C., New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Baltimore.
>
> In contrast, 7 of the 10 least unequal cities are run by Republican mayors, and 9 of 10 are in red states.

And what about Obama, has he helped to reduce income inequality, or has it increased under his watch?

> Now take a look at the national level. As the chart above shows, income inequality as measured by the Census Bureau was flat over the course of the George W. Bush years. But under President Obama, it’s been on the rise.
>
> Under Obama, the poor have gotten poorer and the rich richer. Incomes for the bottom 20% have fallen in each of the past four years and are now 8% below where they stood when Obama took office. Meanwhile, incomes of the wealthiest 5% have climbed under Obama, after adjusting for inflation.

IBD had a nice graph for that last point:

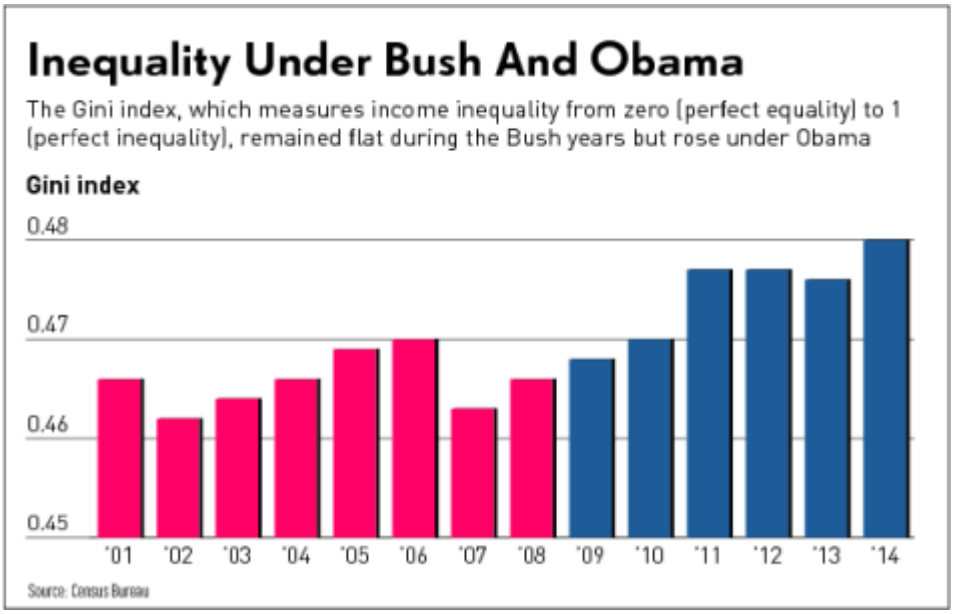

The Gini index measures income inequality

So, why is this happening? Why does taking money from “the rich” and giving it to “the poor” makes income inequality worse?

IBD explains:

> As we’ve seen over the past seven years, higher taxes, vast new regulations and sharp increases in spending primarily benefit a relatively small number of well-connected people and those companies that can afford an army of lobbyists. In other words, the rich.
>
> At the same time, higher taxes, more mandates and onerous new regulations stifle innovation and make it harder to start up new companies — the sort of companies that create new jobs and new opportunities. The Kauffman Index of business startups, for example, has been below average since 2011.

Incomes are down, because there aren’t enough job creators. We have a 38-year LOW in labor force participation. People rise when there are lots of job offers from job creators. The more people looking to hire, the more people can shop around and get the most salary and benefits for their labor. But wages have not gone up under Obama.

He punished job creators with taxes and regulations, so they are creating fewer jobs. Fewer jobs means less competition. Less competition means lower wages and fewer worker benefits.

William Lane Craig debates Peter Atkins: Does God Exist?

November 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics 315 posted the video of a debate from the Reasonable Faith speaking tour in the UK:

This is a must-see debate. It was extremely fun to watch.

Details:

> On Wednesday 26th October 2011 William Lane Craig debated Peter Atkins on the topic: *Does God Exist?* This debate took place at the University of Manchester as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig. The debate was chaired by Christopher Whitehead, Head of Chemistry School at the University. Post-debate discussion was moderated by Peter S Williams, Philosopher in Residence at the Damaris Trust, UK.

Dr. William Lane Craig:

> **William Lane Craig** (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich in 1984.

Dr. Peter Atkins:

> **Peter William Atkins** (born 10 August 1940) is a British chemist and former Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Lincoln College. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.
>
> Atkins studied chemistry at the University of Leicester, obtaining a bachelor's

> degree in chemistry, and – in 1964 – a PhD for research into electron spin resonance spectroscopy, and other aspects of theoretical chemistry. Atkins then took a postdoctoral position at the UCLA as aHarkness Fellow of the Commonwealth fund. He returned to Oxford in 1965 as fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, and lecturer in physical chemistry (later, professor of physical chemistry).

You can get the audio of the debate here, along with links to their previous debate from 1998. This debate is accessible and understandable to novice-level Christians.

I am happy when debates like this come out. I have friends who are Christians who doubt the importance of apologetics in evangelism, because they don't think that apologists can prove anything or win arguments. I have friends who are skeptical of using arguments that assume a 14-billion year old universe, because they think that the Big Bang is compatible with atheism (!). I have friends who think that philosophical arguments have no persuasive force. I have friends who think that nothing can be proven from history, beyond a reasonable doubt. I have co-workers who ask me whether anyone wins these debates. I think that this debate answers all of those questions.

This debate clearly shows why Christians should not shy away from studying science, philosophy and history. We will not discover anything that harms Christian theism by thinking logically and by looking at the evidence. To the contrary, it is the atheist who makes war on the progress of science, and who is forced to resist the clear experimental evidence, and to resort to baseless speculations and blind faith. If you want to see a good debate with an intelligent atheist, I recommend watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican instead. But if you want to see a really, really overwhelming defeat for atheism, watch this debate. It is very clear at the end of this debate why Richard Dawkins refused to debate William Lane Craig at Oxford.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING SPEECHES

I only had time to summarize the first two speeches. Keep in mind that Dr. Craig always shines in his rebuttals, and this debate is no different. So you'll want to watch those rebuttals. Dr. Atkins *literally* says in this debate in his first rebuttal "There was nothing here originally. There is nothing here now. But it is an interesting form of nothing which seems to be something." And the audience laughs nervously. This debate is like that. You will see a clear winner and clear loser in this debate. This fight is decided by knockout.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

1. the origin of the universe
2. the moral argument
3. the resurrection of Jesus

Peter Atkins opening speech:

1. Dr. Craig is stupid, lazy and evil:
– Dr. Craig's arguments are old: from the 11th century! Old arguments can't be true
– Dr. Craig is just asserting that "God did it" because he is lazy

– Dr. Craig feels pressured to agree with the theistic majority
– Dr. Craig needs a psychological crutch to comfort him
– Dr. Craig is fearful of death
– Dr. Craig is just wishing for an eternal life of bliss
– Dr. Craig is driven by his heart, and not by his head

2. Origin of the universe:
– Maybe the universe is eternal and has no beginning – we don't know
– Maybe mommy universes can give birth to daughter universes
– It is naive to think that a cause is needed to cause the creation of the universe from nothing
– Science is just about to show how it is possible that something appears out of nothing without cause
– Some scientists have already begun to speculate about about how something can come into being out of nothing
– Maybe nothing is not really nothing, but it is actually something
– It would be admitting defeat to say that God created the universe out of nothing

3. Fine-Tuning:
– It could be the case that the fundamental constants are not variable
– It could be the case that the fine-tuning of the cosmic constants is a happy accident
– It could be the case that there are billions of billions of unobservable universes that are not fine tuned
– It could be the case that the cosmic constants in these billions and billions of unobservable universes are all random so that some are fine-tuned
– Anyone who infers that an intelligence is the best explanation of a finely-tuned set of life-permitting cosmic constants is lazy

4. Purpose:
– Philosophers and theologians are stupid
– I don't think that there is purpose in the universe
– I think that the universe is more grand if there is no purpose, so there is no purpose

5. Miracles:
– I don't think that miracles happen
– The resurrection is a fabrication
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't exist
– It could be the case that Jesus wasn't really crucified
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't really die after being crucified
– It could be the case that the disciples stole his body
– It could be the case that the women went to the wrong hole in the ground
– the gospels are political propaganda written long after the events they are reporting on

6. Theodicy:
– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing humans to perform actions that result in suffering

– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing nature to cause suffering

7. Morality:

– customs and conventions emerges arbitrarily in different times and places based on an awareness of the consequences of actions, as well as various anecdotes and experiences

– these customs and conventions are decided based on the goal for survival, in much the same way as politeness and manners emerge for decorum and to avoid offense

– it is childish to presume that there is an umpire God who decides moral values and duties

8. Religious believers are stupid, lazy and evil:

– the notion of God has arisen because people are stupid and want to be comforted

– there are no arguments or evidences for belief in God

– people who believe in God do not think, but instead take refuge in incomprehensible nonsense

Republican governors refuse to accept Syrian refugees into their states

November 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama says let in 200,00 Syrian refugees

ABC News reports:

> At least half of the country's governors are refusing to take in Syrian refugees in their states amid heightened security concerns following Friday's terrorist attacks in Paris.
>
> Michigan and Alabama were the first states in the country to refuse relocating Syrian refugees on Sunday, and they have now been joined by Oklahoma, Nebraska, Idaho, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Indiana, Illinois, Massachusetts, Ohio, Arizona, North Carolina, Florida, Wisconsin, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Georgia, Maine, Kansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, South Carolina and Iowa, some of which say more information is needed before accepting more refugees.
>
> Govs. Rick Snyder of Michigan, Robert Bentley of Alabama, Greg Abbott of Texas, and Asa Hutchinson of Arkansas said in separate statements Sunday and today that their states would not be relocating refugees from the war-torn country until the U.S. Department of Homeland Security fully reviewed its screening procedures.
>
> "Michigan is a welcoming state and we are proud of our rich history of immigration," Snyder said. "But our first priority is protecting the safety of our residents."

So far so good, but:

> **However, State Department spokesman Mark Toner said refugee status**

> **gives individuals both legal status in the U.S. and freedom to move from state to state, making it unclear that the states refusing to take in Syrian refugees could in fact reject them.**

Oh great!

Remember, this whole refugee crisis was caused by OBAMA's decision to retreat American forces from Iraq. After George W. Bush defeated Al Qaeda in Iraq, we should have left a residual force to rebuild Iraq and protect our victory. But no – Obama decided that he could "end the war" by retreating our forces, turning a victory into a defeat. And that was the beginining of the Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) caliphate. Obama created it because of his pacifist isolationist foreign policy.

The Wall Street Journal notes that Obama is refusing to prioritize Christian refugees over Muslim refugees, even though that makes much more sense from a national security perspective:

> As France is learning, Islamic State is only too happy to use the Syrian diaspora to plant its agents to kill the French. At least one of the killers on Friday is believed to have migrated from Syria through Greece and into Paris. Nearly all of the other migrants, Muslim and Christian, have no such bloody intent. But can you blame the average American for refusing to volunteer as a next door neighbor?
>
> Mr. Obama was especially harsh on those, like Jeb Bush and Ted Cruz, who say Christian refugees should be a priority. "When some of those folks themselves come from families who benefitted from protection when they were fleeing political persecution, that's shameful," Mr. Obama said. "That's not American. That's not who we are. We don't have religious tests to our compassion."
>
> But Messrs. Bush and Cruz are right that Christians are under particular threat from Islamic State. If they aren't killed for jihadist sport, they must convert to Islam or die. Their daughters are raped and forced into Muslim marriages. Their churches are blown up. The U.S. would have been right to accept and save more Jews from Nazi genocide in the 1930s and 1940s. Syrian Christians are no different today.

This Daily Caller article is a nice reminder of what happens when generous socialists decide to take care of the nice unskilled immigrants from Muslim countries with taxpayer money.

It says:

> Sweden began opening its doors to Muslim immigrants in the 1970s. Today it pays a high price for having done so. The group suffering the severest consequences of such an open door policy has been Swedish women.
>
> […]A 1996 Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention report bears this out. It noted that Muslim immigrants from North Africa were 23 times more likely to

> commit rape than Swedish men. It is no wonder why today Sweden is deemed the rape capital of the Western world.
>
> Even more shocking, however, is the political correctness overshadowing the reporting of these crimes. Sensitive about accusations of Islamophobia, the Swedish press refuses to sound a warning alarm for native women about who these sexual predators are. Thus, when a Muslim commits a rape, the media only refers to him as a Swedish male.
>
> […]Interestingly, between 1995-2006, the Swedish government tracked gang rapes, identifying a drastically increasing trend. Unbelievably, after discovering the problem, it then adopted an ostrich-like "head in the sand" approach, terminating any further studies on them . Apparently the government's fear of being labeled Islamophobic proved greater than its concerns about warning Swedish women about the threat. While no studies on gang rape have been conducted since 2006, one can assume these numbers have continued to rise.

The political correctness is also at work in the UK. I blogged before about the Muslim grooming gangs, which prey on young women. Complaints about the rapists by the victims of the families were ignored by the police, who did not want to get into trouble for "discrimination" against the Muslim men.

Meanwhile, Obama is in the news for different reasons.

Neville Chamberlain Obama: peace in our time

The Washington Times explains:

> President Obama showed a flash of anger Monday with Republican critics of his anti-terrorism strategy, saying he is "too busy" to engage in a rhetorical debate

> with them.
>
> “What I’m not interested in doing is posing or pursuing some notion of American leadership, or American winning or whatever other slogans they come up with, that has no relationship to what actually is going to work to protect the American people” and America’s allies, Mr. Obama said at a news conference in Turkey. “I’m too busy for that.”
>
> The president was addressing a question about critics of his strategy for defeating the Islamic State, in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Paris last week.

The context was Islamic State, and what to do about their aggression and acts of terrorism. Obama’s answer: he’s not interested in America leading, or in America winning. This is the Democrat Party.

Neil Cavuto explains basic economics to college student who wants free tuition

November 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

She has $280,000 in student loan debt for "Chinese medicine"

The video, which goes about 10 minutes. This is a must watch.

The description of the video explains the contents:

> Keely Mullen, an organizer for the Million Student March movement, joined Fox Business Network anchor Neil Cavuto on the air Thursday to discuss the movement's demands for free public college, student debt cancelation and a $15-an-hour minimum wage for student workers. In the awkward 9-minute interview, Cavuto repeatedly cited facts and figures that seemed to fluster the student.
>
> When asked who would pick up the tab for the demands she listed, Mullen said, "The 1 percent of people who are hoarding the wealth and causing a catastrophe students are facing."
>
> "If the 1 percent just had their taxes raised a few years ago back to almost 40 percent then to pay for the healthcare law, they had them raised another few percentage points, then they had their deductions limited to raise another couple points — depending on the state or locality — they're pushing over about 50 percent in taxes," Cavuto told Mullen. "How much more do you think they should pay?"
>
> Cavuto's question, asked within the first two minutes of the interview, became the centerpiece of the entire discussion, as Mullen was unable to provide a clear answer.Mullen did say the rate should be raised to "enough until we have a

> system where not one in two families are threatened with poverty." And when asked if she and her friends and family would pay more in taxes for her demands, she said "we already are." However, according to Forbes, 45 percent of households pay no federal income taxes.
>
> Cavuto asked Mullen where the money would come from should "these 1 percent hoarders" leave the country, and Mullen insisted there would always be wealthy people in the U.S. However, later in the interview, Cavuto told his guest that countries around the world, using Greece as an example, have run out of money because the top earners are fleeing.
>
> When Cavuto asked her if she think the 1 percent could actually fund all her demands, Mullen said, "Absolutely." However, Cavuot claimed taxing the 1 percent at 100 percent wouldn't even fund Medicare for three years — let alone all of her demands for free services.
>
> "They've done studies on this, Keeley, I don't want to get boring here, but even if you were to take the 1 percent and take all of their money — tax it 100 percent — do you know that couldn't keep Medicare, just Medicare, in this country going for three years?" Cavuto asked. "Did you know that?"
>
> "Yeah, I don't believe that," Mullen said in response. "Yeah, I'm sorry, that just sounds completely ludicrous to me."
>
> Toward the end of the interview, Cavuto told Mullen taxing the 1 percent on 100 percent of their income would only yield "about one trillion" toward any entitlement program.

I took a look and found out that her father owns a million-dollar home. Also, she is studying two non-STEM subjects – political science and sociology. Both of these have some value, but they are also not the STEM areas that are in demand by employers.

By the way, Cavuto is not joking about how much money you can get by taking everything the 1% make.

The radically leftist New York Times explains how much you can get from "the rich" with a reasonably high tax rate:

> To get the most accurate picture possible, throw in all the scraps of income, from the most obvious (like wages, interest and dividends) to the least (like employer contributions to health plans, overseas earnings and growth in retirement accounts). According to that measure — used by the Tax Policy Center, a joint project of the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution — the top 1 percent includes about 1.13 million households earning an average income of $2.1 million.
>
> Raising their total tax burden to, say, 40 percent would generate about $157 billion in revenue the first year. Increasing it to 45 percent brings in a whopping $276 billion.

The Wall Street Journal has computed the costs of Bernie Sanders' spending plan, and it came out to $18 trillion. Getting rid of all the current outstanding student loan balances would cost $1.2 trillion alone. I've already talked about the consequences of raising the minimum wage for young, minority workers – they won't be able to find the entry level jobs they need to get their careers started, so they can move up.

The real question that needs to be asked is the one that Cavuto asked – do you expect the wealthy to continue producing at the same level when you take half or all of what they make. On the student's view, the rich would work just as hard even if you took all their money and gave it to students taking underwater basket weaving, medieval pottery and puppetry. This is the question that people on the left never ask – what are the consequences of these policies for ALL of the parties who will be affected. That's a simple question, but apparently not something that leftist professors teach their students to ask. College is generally little narcissists learning from big narcissists, at least in non-STEM programs. It certainly is not the place to learn basic economics and basic civics.

What percentage of Muslims approve of radical Islam and terrorism?

November 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

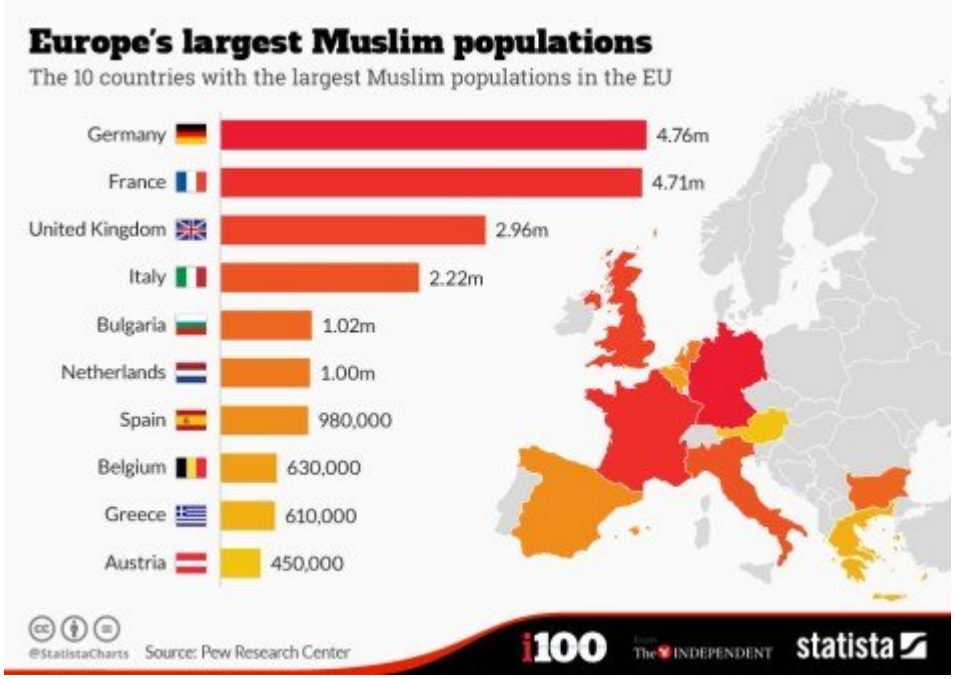

Muslim populations in Europe

Normally, when people ask me about this question, I go straight to the 2013 Pew Research survey which I blogged about before. But now I have something even better.

Here's a post from Ben Shapiro at Breitbart News which looks at several polls from several different countries.

Shapiro writes: (links to polls removed)

> So, here is the evidence that the enemy we face is not a "tiny minority" of Muslims, let alone a rootless philosophy unconnected to Islam entirely. It's not just the thousands of westerners now attempting to join ISIS. It's millions of Muslims who support their general goals, even if they don't support the group itself.
>
> **France.** A new, widely-covered poll shows that a full 16% of French people have positive attitudes toward ISIS. That includes 27% of French between the ages of 18-24. Anne-Elizabeth Moutet of *Newsweek* wrote, "This is the ideology of young French Muslims from immigrant backgrounds…these are the same people who torch synagogues."
>
> **Britain.** In 2006, a poll for the *Sunday Telegraph* found that 40% of British Muslims wanted shariah law in the United Kingdom, and that 20% backed the 7/7 bombers.Another poll from that year showed that 45% of British Muslims said that 9/11 was an American/Israeli conspiracy; that poll showed that one-quarter of British Muslims believed that the 7/7 bombings were justified.

Palestinian Areas. A poll in 2011 showed that 32% of Palestinians supported the brutal murder of five Israeli family members, including a three-month-old baby. In 2009, a poll showed that 78% of Palestinians had positive or mixed feelings about Osama Bin Laden. A 2013 poll showed 40% of Palestinians supporting suicide bombings and attacks against civilians. 89% favored sharia law. Currently, 89% of Palestinians support terror attacks on Israel.

Pakistan. After the killing of Osama Bin Laden, the Gilani Foundation did a poll of Pakistanis and found that 51% of them grieved for the terrorist mastermind, with 44% of them stating that he was a martyr. In 2009, 26% of Pakistanis approved of attacks on US troops in Iraq. That number was 29% for troops in Afghanistan. Overall, 76% of Pakistanis wanted strict shariah law in every Islamic country.

Morocco. A 2009 poll showed that 68% of Moroccans approved of terrorist attacks on US troops in Iraq; 61% backed attacks on American troops in Afghanistan as of 2006. 76% said they wanted strict sharia law in every Islamic country.

Jordan. 72% of Jordanians backed terror attacks against US troops in Iraq as of 2009. In 2010, the terrorist group Hezbollah had a 55% approval rating; Hamas had a 60% approval rating.

Indonesia: In 2009, a poll demonstrated that 26% of Indonesians approved of attacks on US troops in Iraq; 22% backed attacks on American troops in Afghanistan. 65% said they agreed with Al Qaeda on pushing US troops out of the Middle East. 49% said they supported strict sharia law in every Islamic country. 70% of Indonesians blamed 9/11 on the United States, Israel, someone else, or didn't know. Just 30% said Al Qaeda was responsible.

Egypt. As of 2009, 87% of Egyptians said they agreed with the goals of Al Qaeda in forcing the US to withdraw forces from the Middle East. 65% said they wanted strict sharia law in every Islamic country. As of that same date, 69% of Egyptians said they had either positive or mixed feelings about Osama Bin Laden. In 2010, 95% of Egyptians said it was good that Islam is playing a major role in politics.

United States. A 2013 poll from Pew showed that 13% of American Muslims said that violence against civilians is often, sometimes or rarely justified to defend Islam. A 2011 poll from Pew showed that 21 percent of Muslims are concerned about extremism among Muslim Americans. 19 percent of American Muslims as of 2011 said they were either favorable toward Al Qaeda or didn't know.

In short, tens of millions of Muslims all over the world sympathize with the goals or tactics of terrorist groups – or both. That support is stronger outside the West, but it is present even in the West. Islamist extremism is not a passing or fading phenomenon – it is shockingly consistent over time. And the West's attempts to brush off the ideology of fanaticism has been an overwhelming failure.

A more recent poll says that 13% of Syrian refugees support Islamic State:

> A first-of-its-kind survey of the hordes of Syrian refugees entering Europe found 13% support the Islamic State. The poll should raise alarms about the risks posed by the resettlement of 10,000 refugees in the U.S.
>
> The poll of 900 Syrian refugees by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies also found that another 10% of the displaced Syrians have a lukewarm, but not entirely negative, view of the terror group. That means 23% — or almost 1 in 4 — could be susceptible to ISIS recruitment.
>
> It also means as many 2,500 of the 10,000 Syrian refugees that the Obama administration is resettling inside American cities are potential terrorist threats.

Now contrast those facts with the views of Barack Obama and his allies in the mainstream media.

That video is from The Weekly Standard, here's the text:

> President Obama told CNN's Fareed Zakaria that 99.9 percent of Muslims reject radical Islam. He made the comments in response to a question about the White House avoiding using the phrase "Islamic terrorists."
>
> "You know, I think that the way to understand this is there is an element growing out of Muslim communities in certain parts of the world that have perverted the religion, have embraced a nihilistic, violent, almost medieval interpretation of Islam, and they're doing damage in a lot of countries around the world," said Obama.
>
> "But it is absolutely true that I reject a notion that somehow that creates a religious war because the overwhelming majority of Muslims reject that interpretation of Islam. They don't even recognize it as being Islam, and I think that for us to be successful in fighting this scourge, it's very important for us to align ourselves with the 99.9 percent of Muslims who are looking for the same thing we're looking for–order, peace, prosperity."

So Obama denies all of these surveys, and instead invents a view of the world that is consistent with his feelings. A true man of the secular left.

This gap between belief and reality explains why he is now bringing 200,000 Syrian Muslim refugees into America, keeping Syrian Christian refugees out of America, and generally underestimating Islamic State (ISIS / ISIL) because he cannot believe that radical Islam is anything for us to be concerned about.

Is the government capable of vetting Syrian refugees to find threats?

Not so much:

> The administration argues that it's conducting interviews with Syrians at camps in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. But without security forces on the ground in Syria who can verify details, there is no way to back-check a refugee's story to see if

> he is telling the truth and is, in fact, not a security threat.
>
> Even when we had people on the ground in Iraq to screen refugees, terrorists got through the safety net.
>
> In 2011, for instance, two Kentucky immigrants who had been resettled as Iraqi refugees were busted for trying to buy stinger missiles for al-Qaida.
>
> It turned out that their fingerprints matched those linked to roadside bombs in Iraq. It was a major red flag that should have barred their entry, but U.S. screeners failed to take note. And the terrorists slipped into the U.S.
>
> The administration's vetting process for the massive influx of Syrian refugees is completely unreliable, admits the FBI official in charge of such security background checks.
>
> "It's not even close to being under control," warned assistant FBI director Michael Steinbach.

We should not be believing the man who promised us that we could keep our doctor, keep our health plans, and that our health insurance premiums would go down $2,500. He is either lying, or he likes to speak on matters where he is not competent to know the truth of the matter.

UPDATE: ECM sends me this video from Ben Shapiro:

Awesome!

Planned Parenthood to spend $20 million to elect Hillary Clinton and Democrats

November 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Life News reports:

> The Planned Parenthood abortion business announced today that it plans to spend $20 million to elect pro-abortion Hillary Clinton president and take over Congress. This comes after the abortion giant has been caught up in a massive scandal involving its sales of aborted babies and their body parts.
>
> […]The abortion giant plans to spend lavishly for Clinton's campaign, or Bernie Sanders if he somehow captures the nomination, and it plans to take its efforts to swing states like New Hampshire, Ohio, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin that have both top Senate races as well as holding a status as a key presidential state.
>
> […]In an interview with Katie Couric this month, Planned Parenthood president and CEO Cecile Richards defended the abortion business' practice of selling aborted babies and their body parts. She grumbled about the pro-life activists who exposed the practice and called on them to quit "shaming" the Planned Parenthood abortion practitioners involved.

As you know, Planned Parenthood receives a lot of money from taxpayers, many of them pro-life. Last year (2014), Planned Parenthood received $528.4 million in taxpayer subsidies.

CNS News explains:

> Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider, received $528.4 million in taxpayer funding, according to its 2013-2014 annual report, which runs

> from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.
>
> The report shows that Planned Parenthood received $528.4 million in "government health services grants and reimbursements" during a one-year period, the latest figures available.

And previously, I blogged about a whistleblower report that stated that Planned Parenthood also overcharges Medicaid for the services it provides.

However, there is some good news in the Senate.

Life News reports on that:

> If you've heard rumors from the media or elsewhere that Senate Republicans are backing down on what would be a third vote in recent months to de-fund the Planned Parenthood abortion business, don't buy into them. Top Senate Republican leaders said today that, after the Thanksgiving holiday, they are bringing a third bill to the Senate floor to de-fund Planned Parenthood — and Senate Democrats can't filibuster this one.
>
> In August, Senate Democrats defeated an effort to revoke taxpayer funding for the Planned Parenthood abortion business by filibustering the bill and preventing a vote on it. Republicans were unable to secure the 60 voted needed to invoke cloture and stop debate on the bill, allowing an up or down vote. Republicans could only get 53 votes to shut off debate.
>
> Then, in September, Senate Democrats voted to defeat a government funding bill that would de-fund the Planned Parenthood abortion business after it was caught in a series of 10 videos selling aborted babies and their body parts. The Senate voted 52 to 47 against ending debate.
>
> Now, the Senate will vote on a reconciliation bill the House passed at the end of October that will use the reconciliation process to de-fund the abortion company caught selling the body parts of aborted babies. There had been question about whether the Planned Parenthood de-funding provisions could be included in the bill, but the Senate parliamentarian has indicated they can remain.

The bill has already passed the House. When it gets to the White House, Obama will veto it, and then we will have something to tell the people about where the Democrats stand on using taxpayer money to fund for-profit organ harvesting operations.

New study: evolutionary algorithms fail to produce meaningful change

November 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Dr. Ann Gauger has a short post at Evolution News about a new paper in the peer-reviewed journal BIO-Complexity.

She writes:

> Winston Ewert of Biologic Institute has just published a new article in the peer-reviewed journal *BIO-Complexity* ("Overabundant mutations help potentiate evolution: The effect of biologically realistic mutation rates on computer models of evolution").
>
> He and his colleagues have been engaged in a series of critiques of evolutionary algorithms for the last several years.
>
> […]The advantage of these computer simulations is that they can be run many, many times and thus approximate the long time necessary for biological evolution. The disadvantage is that they do not replicate true biological evolutionary processes, but use "analogous" algorithms. Typically these models, such as Ev and Avida, are purported to solve complex problems.
>
> Yet Ewert and his colleagues have shown that in every case the necessary information for the models to find their targets was smuggled in, whether intentionally or not, by the respective programmers.
>
> […]Ewert shows that even taking the models as they are, when they are tested using realistic scenarios they fail to accomplish their goals. In fact, they accomplish little beyond their starting positions. He determines the reason for this failure — the models can only go as far as one step will take them. They can't evolve anything that requires two or more mutations, unless mutation rates are unrealistically high.

Here's the abstract of the new paper:

> Various existing computer models of evolution attempt to demonstrate the efficacy of Darwinian evolution by solving simple problems. These typically use per-nucleotide (or nearest analogue) mutation rates orders of magnitude higher than biological rates. This paper compares models using typical rates for genetic algorithms with the same models using a realistic mutation rate. It finds that the models with the realistic mutation rates lose the ability to solve the simple problems. This is shown to be the result of the difficulty of evolving mutations that only provide a benefit in combination with other mutations.

This reminds me of William Dembski's "No Free Lunch" theorems, which show that you can never get information for free, through simple mechanisms like genetic algorithms. The only proven source of functional information is an intelligent agent.

Refugee system discriminates against Christians

November 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

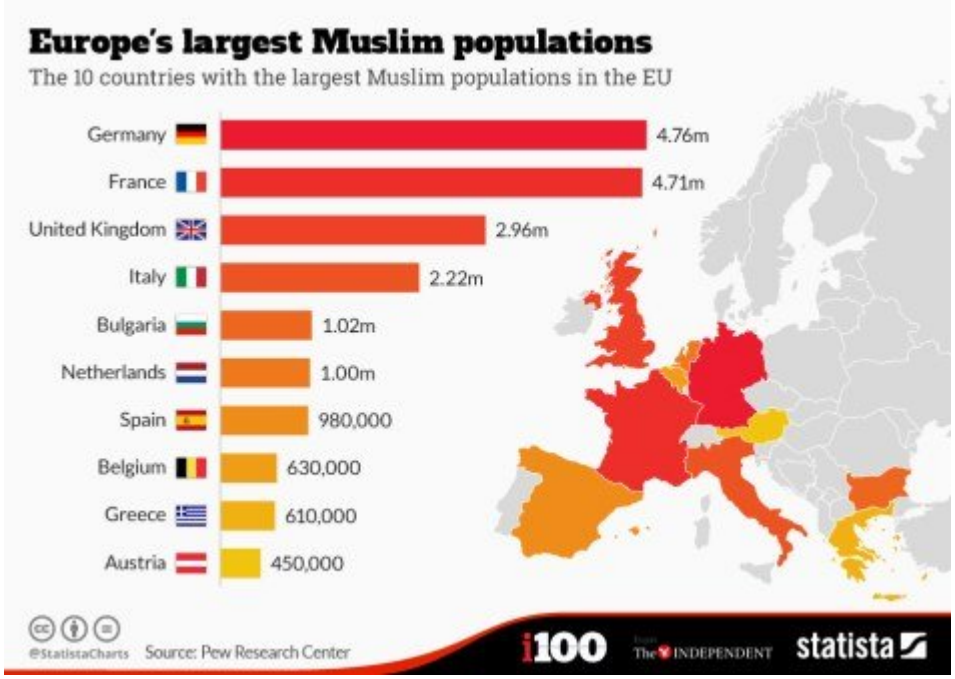

Muslim populations in Europe

Let's start with the Washington Times.

They write:

> Less than 3 percent of the Syrian refugees admitted to the United States so far are Christian and 96 percent are Muslim, the result of a referral system that Republican Sen. Tom Cotton says "unintentionally discriminates" against Christians.
>
> […]Figures from the State Department Refugee Processing Center updated Monday showed that 96 percent of the Syrian refugees accepted so far are Muslim, while less than 3 percent are Christian. The other 33 identified as belonging to smaller religious faiths or said they had no religion.
>
> […]The current system relies on referrals from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Syria's population in 2011 was 90 percent Muslim and 10 percent Christian, CNS said.

So, the population as a whole is 90% Muslim, 10% Christian, but the refugees we've accepted are 96% and 3% Christian. And this is despite the facts that Chistians are being treated far less well in Muslim-dominated countries like Syria. What accounts for this discrepancy?

Well, it turns out that the Obama administration is working with a system that favors Muslim immigrants over Christian immigrants.

CNS News explains:

> According to Patrick Sookhdeo, international director of Barnabas Fund, a charity

> campaigning to help rescue Christians from Syria, Christians fleeting ISIS "seldom go to the main refugee camps in neighboring countries because they are marginalized, abused, and at serious risk of violence in these Muslim-majority shelters."
>
> Sookhdeo says Western governments "must understand that vulnerable Christians are being overlooked in rescue program that take only those in the camps to safety. Fully aware of the victimization that is likely to await them in refugee camps, Iraqi and Syrian believers are mainly taking shelter in schools, churches, and apartments, or with relatives where possible."
>
> As a result, some refugee advocates say Western diplomatic missions should work through churches in urban areas in the countries neighboring Syria, to offer refuge for vulnerable Christians.

The Republicans are trying to do something about this, as usual:

> In September Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas), chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, introduced a bill that would give Congress an up-or-down vote on Obama's plan to resettle 10,000 Syrian refugees – and would also require the administration, when considering applicants from Syria and Iraq, to prioritize the resettlement of "persecuted" religious minorities.

So, in order to get after the Christian refugees, the Obama administration would have to go and find them in churches, schools, etc. But they seem content to just let the United Nations pick refugees from these camps that are hostile to Christian refugees.

Is government competent at security checks?

Well, maybe the system we have for security-checking Muslims is so good that we can take lots of them in, and no harm done. That's what Obama is telling us. Is he right?

Not so much:

> The administration argues that it's conducting interviews with Syrians at camps in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. But without security forces on the ground in Syria who can verify details, there is no way to back-check a refugee's story to see if he is telling the truth and is, in fact, not a security threat.
>
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>
> The administration's vetting process for the massive influx of Syrian refugees is completely unreliable, admits the FBI official in charge of such security

> background checks.
>
> “It’s not even close to being under control,” warned assistant FBI director Michael Steinbach.

We should not be believing the man who promised us that we could keep our doctor, keep our health plans, and that our health insurance premiums would go down $2,500. He is either lying, or he feel comfortable speaking confidently about matters where he is not competent to know whether what he is saying is actually true. Either way, we should not be believing him willy-nilly.

The “Christian” left’s Biblical argument for taking in Syrian refugees

November 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

A couple of my “Christian” friends are in favor of welcoming in Syrian refugees, because “the Bible says we have to be nice”. Does the Bible really support their view? Let’s take a look.

Wisdom requires us to avoid risks and threats

First, from Erick Erickson at Red State.

He writes:

> Imagine a scenario where a Christian watches arsonists burn down a neighbor’s home, then demands that you house the neighbor as their house is in smoldering rubble.
>
> **That is basically why we have a Syrian refugee crisis. A group of Christians and secularists demanded we do nothing while ISIS sacked, raped, and pillages across the Middle East, displacing millions of Syrians. Now, we are supposed to take them all in.**
>
> **[…][I]n addition to doing nothing as the situation worsened in the Middle East, the President has consistently refused to provide arms to Christian militias in the Middle East — Christians eager to protect and defend their homeland.**
>
> […][I]t does little good for Christians to quote scripture to claim their Christianity is better than ours and that we should go along with them to house and feed Syrian refugees. Christ did command us to be charitable and open our doors. But he did not command us to do so foolishly.
>
> In Judges 12:5-6 we find this:

> And the Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan against the Ephraimites. And when any of the fugitives of Ephraim said, “Let me go over,” the men of Gilead said to him, “Are you an Ephraimite?” When he said, “No,” they said to him, “Then say Shibboleth,” and he said, “Sibboleth,” for he could not pronounce it right. Then they seized him and slaughtered him at the fords of the Jordan. At that time 42,000 of the Ephraimites fell.
>
> **In the early Christian church the Christians used an ichthus as a secret symbol so Christians knew friend from foe. Both were bits of discernment to ensure the faithful were not slaughtered by their enemies.**
>
> If we can find a shibboleth or ichthus to separate friend from foe, bring in the friendly refugees. But if not, we ask to much of our fellow citizens in a time of war and subterfuge where evil masquerades as good.
>
> Christians and secularists using this issue to claim they are better, more sincere, more devout, or less racist than those who object should more readily be considered fools. Christ said to pick up our cross, not rush on out to the lions in the Coliseum.

Frankly, whenever “Christians” on the left talk to me about politics, I usually find that their compassionate approach (e.g. – retreating from Iraq, etc.) causes the very problems (e.g. – refugee crisis) that they now want to solve with more compassion. Guess what? A better way to fix problems in the world is by 1) naming and destroying evil and 2) encouraging people to adopt Western values, like capitalism and freedom. If you look at history (e.g. – World War 2), what you find is that it is always the weak, pacifist left that emboldens aggression from tyrants. Let him who desires peace prepare for war – because preparedness for war is a deterrent against aggression.

The difference between micro and macro

And the second article comes from legal rock star and moderate conservative David French, writing in National Review. (I don’t link to National Review any more, because the site is so cluttered it)

He writes:

> As a general matter, advocates of open borders often refer to Mosaic law requiring the Israelites to treat the “foreigner residing with you” as if foreigners were “native-born,” and to “Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt.” The laws of Israel, they point out, applied equally to the “foreigner” and the “native-born.”
>
> Putting aside that Mosaic Law would prohibit refugees from worshiping Allah, demand the death penalty for many of the core activities of the sexual revolution, and impose dietary restrictions that the latté Left might find a bit onerous, we can see that these critics are making a basic error: interpreting commands directed at individuals as mandates for national policy. Jesus

> commanded his followers to “not resist an evil person” — to turn the other cheek when struck and to hand over your coat when they demand your shirt. He did not mandate that we surrender New Mexico if an invader demands Texas, or capitulate to Japan when it bombs Pearl Harbor.

It’s very important to ask people who quote the Bible for one issue whether they consider the Bible an authority on other issues. In my view, Obama is an atheist, and does not respect the Bible on issues from definition of marriage, to flat taxes, to self-defense, to abortion. When a secular leftist quotes the Bible, always ask them if the Bible is an authority first, so yu can spot the hypocrisy.

More:

> Indeed, Scripture draws a clear line between the responsibility of the individual and the role of the state. Individuals are to forswear vengeance, leaving justice to earthly rulers as God’s “agents of wrath” who bring “punishment on the wrongdoer.” The state has an affirmative responsibility to protect its citizens, even to the point of bringing a sense of “terror” to those “who do wrong.” There is no contradiction between personally welcoming the “strangers” among us while our leaders endeavor to protect us from a genocidal terrorist force that uses refugee status as a shield and disguise to perpetrate brutal attacks against innocent civilians.
>
> This is not to say that Scripture creates a paradigm of compassionate individuals and heartless governments. Throughout the Bible, entire nations — not just individuals — are condemned for injustice, including unjust treatment of the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. But to say that the only way to meet that standard is to open our doors to migrants when we know our enemy intends to plant terrorists within their ranks is once again to read far too much into Scripture.

Christianity is not a worldview that just advocates for doing whatever makes us feel good, whatever makes us look nice to others. We have to think about actually DOING good – achieving good results. We don’t have enough money to solve poverty if all we do is encourage people to be poor. We don’t have to stop evil if we let it grow from a regional annoyance into a world-class threat. We should be acting to punish and deter evil, and we should only be giving to the poor only when it helps them to rise up out of poverty. If we condone evil and encourage people to make decisions that lead to poverty, it just makes the situation worse for everyone. Sometimes, Christians need to set moral boundaries on others, and vote for the state to punish evil, so that we don’t have to deal with expensive and painful consequences later on.

The costs of pacificism and compassion

By the way,the estimate for the cost of taking in 10,000 refugees is $6.5 billion. Did you know that money doesn’t grow on trees? We already have doubled our national debt under these Democrats to $20 trillion. The spending has to stop somewhere – and that

doesn't mean that individual Christians and charities cannot give to solve the problem. But government is run off of taxpayer money, and right now, WE DON'T HAVE ANY. Interesting that many of the people who want to spend more on these refugees live off of taxpayer money themselves.

And here are a couple of stories just from this morning about Christians suffering because of our military pullout:

- Syrian mother whipped and burned with hot coals by ISIS fighters' wives revealed the names of two women married to Syrian rebels under torture… and was then forced to watch them being beheaded
- Pregnant Yazidi sex slaves were forced to undergo barbaric abortions which left them unable to walk or talk, reveals freed ISIS captive who was told: 'Once ten of us rape you, you become Muslim'

I think it's important to ask the Christian left how they feel about their anti-war views now that we know the costs and also the results of their pacifism for Christians abroad. When we go into battle, we should stay the course until the battlefield stabilizes. That's what we did in Japan, South Korea and so many other places with cultures that were hostile to Western values. Western values do "take", but it takes patience and time.

Related posts

- Refugee system discriminates against Christians
- What percentage of Muslims approve of radical Islam and terrorism?
- Republican governors refuse to accept Syrian refugees into their states
- Democrats admit 10,000 Syrian refugees to USA, with 200,000 more on the way

J. Warner Wallace explains and defends the doctrine of Hell in five podcasts

November 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
Straight talk on the doctrine of Hell from cold case homicide detective J. Warner Wallace.

Number 1:

> *In the wake of Rob Bell's new book, "Love Wins," many people are beginning to question the nature and existence of Hell and how exactly God decides who must go there. For many,* the idea that our temporal, finite sin on earth should deserve an eternal punishment of infinite torment in hell is ridiculously inequitable. Why would God torture infinitely those who have only sinned finitely? *Jim addresses this objection and answers listener email.*
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 2:

> *A loving God would never create a place like Hell, would He? Any God that would send people to a place of punishment and torment is unloving by definition, right? In this podcast, Jim responds to these foundational objections to the existence of Hell. In addition, Jim comments on the Harris / Craig debate and answers listener email related to hearing God's voice.*
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 3:

> *In this podcast, Jim answers the objection that God would send people like Gandhi to Hell (simply because they are not Christians) alongside people like Hitler (who have committed unspeakable atrocities). How can a reasonable and*

> *just God be the source of such inequitable punishment? Also Jim answers listener email related to the power of prayer, the importance of evidential apologetics and the grounding for objective morality.*
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 4:

> Isn't it unfair for God to penalize people who are otherwise good, just because they haven't heard about Jesus? A good God would not send good people to Hell. Jim responds to this objection and answers listener email related to the Craig/Harris debate, pre-existing mythologies that are similar to Jesus, and the difficult, exclusive nature of "election".
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Number 5:

> If God is all-loving, why doesn't he "reform" people rather than simply "punish" them in Hell? Skeptics sometimes argue that a God who simply punishes his children in Hell is a sadistic and vengeful God, unworthy of our worship. Jim responds to this objection and answers listener email related to the nature of "election", the evidence for "annihilationism", and a political quote related to same sex marriage.
>
> The MP3 file is here.

Good listening to help you defend a doctrine that is very unpopular with people who think God should be their cosmic butler.

Gallup poll: Americans think health care is less affordable after Obamacare

November 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

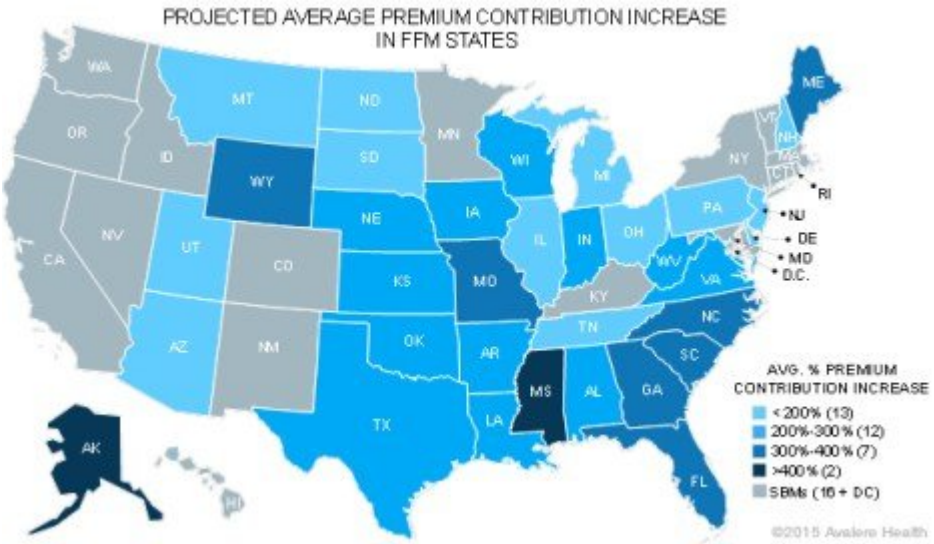

Obamacare premium increases by state

Investors Business Daily talks about the latest Gallup poll.

Excerpt:

> The official name of ObamaCare is the "Affordable Care Act." So, as it enters its third year, how is it living up to its moniker? Not every well, according to a new Gallup poll. Cost and access to care remain the top concern of 42% of Americans, which is actually up from 2013, the year before ObamaCare went into effect, when 39% cited these as top concerns. And it's far above 1997, when just 22% listed cost and access as top health concerns.
>
> Oops.
>
> It's not hard to understand why. Even those getting generous subsidies through ObamaCare exchanges often find that they can't afford treatments because of the health plans' high deductibles.
>
> The New York Times found that more than half the plans offered through the federal Healthcare.gov exchange had deductibles of $3,000 or more. In some states, the median deductible was $5,000 or more.
>
> Sky-high deductibles like that high used to come with extremely low premiums. But thanks to ObamaCare's many rules and regulations and fees, such plans are a thing of the past.
>
> The Times notes that an Albuquerque, N.M., woman pays $4,800 a year for a plan with a $6,000 deductible. Before ObamaCare, a plan with a $2,500 deductible was available in that state for just $1,625 a year, according to aGovernment Accountability Office review of pre-ObamaCare premiums.

> IBD's Jed Graham found that deductibles for the cheapest ObamaCare plans in 37 major markets climbed an average 7.4% to more than $5,600.
>
> Then, of course, there are the premium spikes many will find when they go to sign up or renew their ObamaCare polices. Not to mention the increasingly narrow doctor networks and other hidden costs imposed by insurers to keep premiums from going up even more.

Yes, health care premiums are way, way up. Obama told us during his election campaigns that health care premiums would go down an average of $2,500. How did he intend to achieve that? By reducing choice and competition, and require insurance companies to cover more stuff, like drug addiction therapy, onto every health care plan.

Here he is promising things to young voters:

The young people believed his honeyed words, and did not ask for evidence to prove the claims that made them feel good. After all, if the words made them feel good, then the words must be true, right?

Should we pick a candidate based on our emotional response to his confidence?
So what happened? Health care premiums went up, because the more stuff that your health care plan has to cover (e.g. – drug addiction treatment) the more you have to pay for that health care plan. And so, as I blogged about before, health care premiums have actually gone up $4,865 on average, per year. Yes, this is another case of keep your doctor / keep your health plan claims. Either Obama knows that what he says is false, and says it anyway (evil Obama) or he does not know what he is talking about, but says things that will make people like him anyway (imbecile Obama).

It's been a fun game for conservatives over the last 7 years to try to decide whether we elected an evil man or a stupid man. My view has always been that Obama is a stupid man, and that's because unlike every other politician, he's never released his transcripts. I can pretty much guarantee you that it is all Fs straight down the line. We elected a moron, who just says whatever makes him look good. He has no more idea what he is

talking about than a parrot trying to explain the stock market. But he made Democrat voters feel good – and that’s what mattered to them.

Are Christians who use other people's money to help others "generous"?

November 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

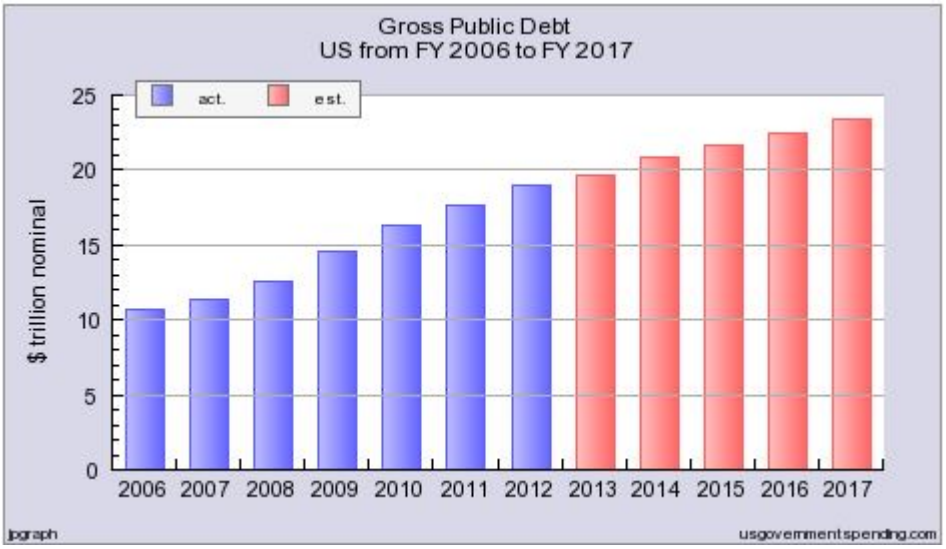

Gross public debt, Democrats control spending in 2007

Normal Americans who work for a living know that you cannot be generous with someone else's money – you have to earn your own money and give your own money away if you want to be "generous". And this is actually what the Bible says – be generous to others with your own money. There is no support in the Bible for discharging your obligations to people in need by having a secular leftist government subsidize their abortions, etc. But many Christians escape the need to be generous with their own money by voting for the secular government to take someone else's money. This way, they can have the feelings of being generous without having to make the sacrifice themselves.

So here are my points in response to this "stolen valor" view of generosity, which seems to be so popular with dependent professors and dependent pastors who do not work in the private sector.

First, illegal immigration and refugee asylum typically costs us money, since unskilled immigrants and asylum'd refugees do not typically pay as much in taxes as they using in taxpayer-funded benefits.

Evidence:

> - Under current law, all unlawful immigrant households together have an aggregate annual deficit of around $54.5 billion.
> - In the interim phase (roughly the first 13 years after amnesty), the aggregate annual deficit would fall to $43.4 billion.
> - At the end of the interim phase, former unlawful immigrant households would become fully eligible for means-tested welfare and health care benefits under the Affordable Care Act. The aggregate annual deficit would soar to around $106 billion.

> - In the retirement phase, the annual aggregate deficit would be around $160 billion. It would slowly decline as former unlawful immigrants gradually expire.
>
> These costs would have to be borne by already overburdened U.S. taxpayers. (All figures are in 2010 dollars.)

Meanwhile, the same people who want big government to help the poor probably do not even realize that the national debt has doubled under Obama to $20 trillion, as of January 2017. Now do the people who want to give away all these benefits via big government intend to pay for it with their own money as the Bible says? No, they intend to pass the costs onto generations yet unborn via the national debt. They want to feel generous themselves, but with someone else's money. There is a word for that – we call that *slavery*. It turns out that big government Christians really are in favor of slavery. They want to force the next generation to work tomorrow, so that they can feel generous today.

Government not serious about protecting the public

Second, we know that big government cannot be trusted to deport criminals, because we saw that on display in the Kate Steinle affair, where an illegal immigrant who had many prior convictions was released to commit worse crimes. If you think that illegal immgrants get deported after committing serious crimes, you really need to reconsider how trustworthy government is about border security.

For example, Senate Democrats blocked a bill to crack down on sanctuary cities. Although amnesty and asylum for refugees sounds good, it relies on big government being serious about enforcing the law, and protecting the public. During the Obama administration, we have seen the Snowden leak, the Clinton private e-mail server which was hacked by foreign governments, the Benghazi coverup, the arms smuggling to drug cartels by the ATF, the China hack, the wikileaks leak by gay private Bradley Manning who got a taxpayer funded sex change, etc.

Previously, we saw how the parents of the Boston bombers were granted asylum as Chechen refugees. That was a failure of national security. And the FBI has already explained that our procedures for vetting refugees is inadequate. The refugees, by the way, are selected by the United Nations and a Muslim organization affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. So it's just wishful thinking to think that this is a priority for the government. And recall that about 5 seconds after Obama bragged about how he had "contained" ISIS (Islamic State), the Paris attack happened. Democrats do not care about national security, so we cannot trust them to vet refugees. The people who want Syrian refugees to come in are depending on big government to take national security seriously. But we have zero evidence that they can do that.

Here's Hillary Clinton:

> Hillary Clinton focused on her real enemy – Americans who disagree with her – in a campaign speech on Thursday.

> In a statement her own campaign Tweeted out as her marquee comment, Clinton declared: “Let’s be clear: Islam is not our adversary. Muslims are peaceful and tolerant people and have nothing whatsoever to do with terrorism.”
>
> The UK Daily Mail describes Clinton as “reading her speech at a brisk clip from a teleprompter at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City,” but slowing down to mock Republicans over the phrase “radical Islamic terrorism,” which “Republicans often accuse President Barack Obama of purposefully avoiding.”
>
> The Daily Mail cheekily notes that Clinton “referred repeatedly to ‘radical jihadism’ as a global scourge, but didn’t explain how the concept of jihadism is consistent with the notion that adherents of the world’s second largest religion are wholly uninvolved.”

Remember, this is the person who sent and received classified e-mails on a private unsecure email server, and blamed a terrorist attack on a YouTube video – for political gain. And it’s people like her who are promising us that they are serious about deporting illegal immigrants who commit crimes, and vetting refugees who are coming from Muslim countries.

What I have found in asking people who want amnesty and asylum for refugees is that they are incredibly uninformed about things like the national debt, the costs, the risks, etc. I don’t see why people trust the government to enforce border security law, deport lawbreakers, and vet refugees carefully. I think people who clown around advocating for policies based on their feelings and a misreading of the Bible need to be more cautious and humble. You don’t know how the world works, so shut your ignorant mouths before you get more people killed, and pass more debt onto the next generation. If you want to do something for refugees, do it yourself. If you want to do something for the poor in other countries, do it with your own money.

Earth-like planet hyped by science-fiction-crazed atheists likely uninhabitable

November 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

I found this story on the Facebook page of my good friend William, who supplies so many of the stories I blog about.

This story is from the University of Warwick.

It says:

> The most Earth-like planet could have been made uninhabitable by vast quantities of radiation, new research led by the University of Warwick has found.
>
> The atmosphere of the planet, Kepler-438b, is thought to have been stripped away as a result of radiation emitted from a superflaring Red Dwarf star, Kepler-438.
>
> Regularly occurring every few hundred days, the superflares are approximately ten times more powerful than those ever recorded on the Sun and equivalent to the same energy as 100 billion megatons of TNT.
>
> While superflares themselves are unlikely to have a significant impact on Kepler-438b's atmosphere, a dangerous phenomenon associated with powerful flares, known as a coronal mass ejection (CME), has the potential to strip away any atmosphere and render it uninhabitable.
>
> The planet Kepler-438b, to date the exoplanet with the highest recorded Earth Similarity Index, is both similar in size and temperature to the Earth but is in closer proximity to the Red Dwarf than the Earth is to the Sun.
>
> Lead researcher, Dr David Armstrong of the University of Warwick's Astrophysics Group, explains:
>
> "Unlike the Earth's relatively quiet sun, Kepler-438 emits strong flares every few hundred days, each one stronger than the most powerful recorded flare on the Sun. It is likely that these flares are associated with coronal mass ejections,

> which could have serious damaging effects on the habitability of the planet.
>
> “If the planet, Kepler-438b, has a magnetic field like the Earth, it may be shielded from some of the effects. However, if it does not, or the flares are strong enough, it could have lost its atmosphere, be irradiated by extra dangerous radiation and be a much harsher place for life to exist”.
>
> Discussing the impact of the superflares and radiation on the atmosphere of Kepler-438b, Chloe Pugh, of the University of Warwick’s Centre for Fusion, Space and Astrophysics, says:
>
> “The presence of an atmosphere is essential for the development of life. While flares themselves are unlikely to have a significant impact on an atmosphere as a whole, there is another more dangerous phenomenon associated with powerful flares, known as a coronal mass ejection.
>
> “Coronal mass ejections are where a huge amount of plasma is hurled outwards from the Sun, and there is no reason why they should not occur on other active stars as well. The likelihood of a coronal mass ejection occurring increases with the occurrence of powerful flares, and large coronal mass ejections have the potential to strip away any atmosphere that a close-in planet like Kepler-438b might have, rendering it uninhabitable. With little atmosphere, the planet would also be subject to harsh UV and X-ray radiation from the superflares, along with charged particle radiation, all of which are damaging to life”.
>
> The research, The Host Stars of Kepler’s Habitable Exoplanets: Superflares, Rotation and Activity, is published by the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.

I would send this along to my atheist friends, but they will just wag their fingers at me and tell me that Star Trek and Star Wars have disproved all that experimental science “superstition”.

It’s Friday night, so it might be a good time for everyone to get up to speed with the habitability argument. And look, you can do that for free by watching the 90-minute documentary entitled “The Privileged Planet”. It’s free and it’s awesome!

Have fun!

Pro-lifers need to vote wisely, or they may strengthen abortion

November 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Election 2015: Socialists in red, Communists in Orange, Conservatives in blue

Here is an article written by a Canadian named Mike Schouten in Life News.

He wrote this prior to the Canadian federal election:

> The de facto position of Thomas Mulcair and Stephen Harper is, in principle, no different. When questioned directly by Trudeau last Friday, Harper said the same as he has been saying for years, “My position for 10 years has been I don’t intend to re-open this debate.”
>
> As yet, all three leaders have a realistic shot at making 24 Sussex their home after the October 19 election. And all three continue to treat pre-born children as a political liability.
>
> Messrs. Harper, Mulcair and Trudeau are without excuse. If elected, it is their duty to enact laws for the benefit of all Canadians. Their complete disregard for the human rights of any children in the womb effectually means that they are complicit in the deaths of 100,000 members of the human family every year.
>
> In effect Stephen Harper, Thomas Mulcair and Justin Trudeau all support sex-selective abortion. They care less about the fact that girls are targeted for abortion much more frequently than boys. Their refusal to act is a sign that they endorse this misogynistic practice in Canada.
>
> All three leaders also support late-term abortion. They show no regard for the reality that every year thousands of babies lose their lives by being aborted in

> the latter stages of pregnancy, after the stage when children of the same age are born, survive outside of the womb, and live productive lives as Canadian citizens.

Now, I can understand why Schouten is frustrated. But what he is saying above is going to have one of two effects on pro-life voters. Either pro-lifers will stay home and not vote, since there are no differences between the parties on the abortion issue, or they will waste their vote on a third-party candidate who cannot win.

During Harper's tenure as prime minister, abortion was never expanded, because Harper never made pushing leftward on social issues a priority. In fact, one could argue that his tax credits for married couples encouraged people to marry, which tends to push down the number of abortions. Married couples are better equipped to welcome into the world an unborn child, because there are two people, not just one. But Schouten did not foresee that things could actually get *worse* under a Liberal or NDP prime minister. He just didn't understand how radical the pro-abortion left really is compared to the center-right.

Then what happened?

Here is an article from Life Site News explaining what happened when Harper lost to the Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau, who also happens to be an extremist on abortion:

> Canada's new health minister promises to "equalize" access to abortion, especially for women living in rural areas, but won't give specifics. However, the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada has supplied LifeSiteNews a long shopping list for addressing the "problem."
>
> The ARCC wants more surgical time for abortions in rural hospitals, elimination of conscientious objection by pro-life doctors, screening out of pro-life ob-gyns at medical school, full funding for pharmaceutical abortion through so-called "emergency contraceptives," and withholding of federal funding to New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island if these provinces don't remove remaining restrictions on abortions.
>
> Canada's new health minister, Jane Philpott, made her comments in a written response to a query from the CBC, stating, "We know that abortion services remain patchy in parts of the country, and that rural women in particular face barriers to access. Our government will examine ways to better equalize access for all Canadian women."
>
> Responded the WeNeedALaw organization: "We could translate Minister Philpott's statement like this: 'It is completely unacceptable that pre-born children are killed with greater ease in Canada's urban centres than in rural communities.'"
>
> "Seriously? Of all the problems an aging demographic poses for our top-notch health care system the first thing the Liberals want to do is make it easier for pre-born babies to be dismembered, decapitated and disembowelled?" they asked.

> The CBC identified the what they deemed the most obvious culprit in limiting access: successive Prince Edward Island governments who have tried to balance pro-life and pro-abortion interests by funding abortions while sending the women out-of-province to have them.
>
> But P.E.I. pro-lifer Randy Anchikoski also told LifeSiteNews the abortion issue is a distraction from the province's real problems. "We have a big debt and aging population with all sorts of medical problems they face such as heart ailments and cancer. We have fewer women of childbearing age every year. From which part of our health budget is the money for an abortion clinic supposed to come?"
>
> New Brunswick also restricts abortions, still insisting that they be done in hospitals, but it dropped a second regulation that they be approved by two doctors as medically necessary late last year.
>
> Joyce Arthur, the executive director of the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, has put the two recalcitrant provinces at the top of her list of measures to "equalize" abortion access across Canada, calling on the federal government to, "arbitrate to resolve access/funding issues, and if the provinces still don't comply, withhold federal transfer payments."
>
> As far as the problems allegedly facing rural women wanting abortions, pro-life leaders say this a familiar theme the pro-abortion forces use to push for measures such as pharmaceutical abortions and so-called "web cam" abortions.
>
> […]As well, the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada wants medical schools to "screen out anti-choice medical students before they enter the Family Planning program or Obstetrics/Gynecology specialty" because their "inability to fulfill job requirements should make them ineligible."
>
> […]Arthur's wish list also includes a bonus system to attract abortion-doing doctors to rural areas, and the elimination of conscientious objection by pro-life doctors and nurses, requiring doctors at least to refer patients requiring abortions.

You might remember that I blogged about a Canadian pro-lifer a month ago who predicted that ALL of this was going to happen if Trudeau won. I told her how her predictions had come true, and in response she told me about the words of an American pro-lifer who we often feature on this blog who says this about Schouten's problem:

> Let me state it plainly: If you are pro-life and intend on casting a "conscience vote" for a third party candidate, you might as well be voting for the "pro-choice party." It will have the same ultimate impact on the safety of the unborn. Voting pro-life principles isn't always voting for a pro-life candidate; a principled vote might mean voting for the viable option that will either advance the pro-life cause better or hurt it the least.
>
> If you sleep more comfortably at night because you've voted your principles, then I believe your conscience is well-intended, though misinformed. You've

> chosen to make a moral statement instead of choosing to have a moral impact.
>
> **As one pundit put it, it's better to have a second class fireman than a first class arsonist.** There is no victory or honor in voting for the first-class fireman who had no chance of winning when, in the end, your "conscience vote" actually allowed the arsonist get elected.

American pro-lifers know that Democrats are always looking to overturn the many state-level restrictions on abortion… there is always a reason to keep the left out of power, even if the right drags their feet on social issues. The left can always make things worse than they are. It's *never* a good idea to tell pro-life voters anything that will cause them to stay home on election day. They need to get out there and vote for the most pro-life party – no two parties are exactly equal on the abortion issue.

If you want to read more about how pro-lifers ought to vote, you can read this article by Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Institute. And you can read about the pro-life strategy of the clever Canadian pro-lifer who predicted all of these things here. It's called "Save the Storks".

Wayne Grudem debates Richard Glover on the Bible, poverty and foreign aid

November 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

A great episode of the Unbelievable podcast. This is a great debate. I really enjoyed it. All three speakers were excellent putting forward their points. It's nice to hear an American voice, a British voice and an Australian voice debating an important issue. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Details:

> Wayne Grudem is a theologian known for his conservative approach to both doctrine and economics. His new book "The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution" (co-authored with economist Barry Asmus) makes the case that pouring aid into developing countries is a failed strategy. Grudem debates whether the Bible supports free market, capitalist economics with Australian economist and theologian Richard Glover who wrote a critique of the book for the Australian Bible Society.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

Grudem:

- The Bible speaks to all of life, including economics, stewardship, government
- The study of economics helps us to understand how to take care of the poor
- My job is to apply the teachings of the Bible to all of life

Brierley:

- What’s your thesis in the book?

Grudem:

- A good system is one where the poor have the opportunity to earn and save from their labor
- Book is a response to a Kenyan couple Grudem met at a London conference on business and Christianity
- Book is not concerned with how individuals and groups can do charity to help the poor
- Our church already does that and we support individuals and groups doing charity
- The book is concerned with how should nations be transformed in order to grow economically
- What should the laws, policies and cultural beliefs of a nation be in order for it to not be poor?
- The book lists factors that have moved nations from poverty to prosperity in different times and places
- The thesis of the book is this: government should set their people free to be able to produce more
- We advocate freedom in economics: freedom to work, freedom to save, freedom to start businesses
- We believe that this free enterprise view is consistent with the Bible in a number of places
- E.g. – private property is good for prosperity (thou shall not steal) but forbidden by communism

Brierley:

- What about the church sharing in communities in Acts 2 and Acts 4?

Grudem:

- That is not redistribution of wealth among individuals and businesses by a secular government
- Those passages showed that there was voluntary sharing among Christians, which is not communism

Brierley:

- What’s wrong with Grudem’s book?

Glover:

- The book emphasizes the Bible and the goal is to help the poor in poor countries
- Criticism 1: the book doesn’t engage with non-free-market perspectives on economics

- Criticism 2: the book doesn't survey all that the Bible says about economics

Brierly:

- For 1) what is one of the views that is not considered?

Glover:

- Jeffrey Sachs says that nations need a leg up before they can grow economically
- Ha-Joon Chang says that free enterprise was not how the wealthy nations became wealthy

Grudem:

- We do engage with other points of view, especially Jeffrey Sachs in the book
- The trouble with leftist views on economic development is that it does not work in practice
- NO COUNTRY has even been lifted out of poverty by foreign aid
- He says we don't cite enough from the wisdom literature: we have 64 citations in the index
- He says we don't cite enough from the gospels: we have 42 citations in the index
- He says we don't cite enough from the epistles: we cite 22 of 27 epistles in the index
- Some economists won't criticize cultural and moral values that hurt prosperity
- As Christians, we think that moral and cultural values are part of the problem that needs solving

Brierley:

- What about foreign aid?

Grudem:

- Foreign aid doesn't help: a lot of the money goes into government and rulers can be corrupt
- Instead of encouraging people to start businesses, it tells people to go into government to get aid money
- Economists (lists 3) are saying that foreign aid entrenches corrupt government in power, does no good

Brierley:

- If it's not working, should we keep doing it?

Glover:

- When there is an immediate need, we should do it, even if it is not a long-term

solution: we need both

Brierley:

- Should we stop foreign aid completely?

Grudem:

- Voluntary charitable giving from individuals and churches to help poor countries is good
- Me and my co-author are both active on our church board that helps poor countries with urgent needs
- Food and doctors are urgent needs, and we should help, but it doesn't lift countries out of poverty
- We need a long-term solution that helps poor countries produce their own food and doctors
- We are criticizing 1) government to government aid and 2) IMF/World bank to government aid
- We have had pushback because 500,000 people make a living from this foreign aid industry
- No country has ever been lifted out of poverty into sustainable prosperity
- That's the definition of insanity: continuing to do the same thing that has never worked

Brierley:

- Does the Bible support free enterprise as a way of creating sustainable prosperity?

Glover:

- When I said the Bible was absent from his book, absent was a bad choice of words
- But the hundreds of references he listed were not dealth with *in depth*
- In the Scriptures, God is the one who provides (e.g. – in Ephesians, Sermon on the Mount)
- The Bible is less focused on his people making money, and more focus on sharing basics, like food
- Secular governments should just take it from people who have food and give it to hungry people
- In 2 Cor 8-9, Paul talks about voluntary sharing so everyone will be equal

Brierley:

- Does 2 Cor 8-9 undermine the free enterprise system you champion in the book?

Grudem:

- The sharing in the Bible solves cases of urgent need, it does not lift countries from poverty to sustainable prosperity
- Some older translations say “equality” in 2 Cor 8:13-14, but newer translations (e.g. – ESV) say “fairness”
- The Greek word is translated as “fairly” the only other place it appears in the NT (Col 4:1), in every translation
- God uses the means of human work and productivity to provide (daily bread is baked, doesn’t just fall from Heaven)
- In general, there’s no provision in Scripture for a person to be dependent on donations for their entire lives
- God promises Israel fields and mountains to tend and mine, but prosperity is from work, not depending on others

Brierley:

- Does the Bible support this focus on work?

Grudem:

- Working is highly praised in Scripture, (lists Bible passages that favor work over dependency)
- Countries that were exposed to this notion of work and productivity have been more prosperous

Glover:

- Jeffrey Sachs and other development economists don’t say you can be prosperous through dependence
- They say that it is a necessary part of leading to nations out of poverty into poverty

Grudem:

- It’s never worked. What nation has become prosperous through foreign aid?

Glover:

- There are lots of nations, especially in Africa, where foreign aid has helped lift them out of poverty

Grudem:

- Name one country in Africa where foreign aud has lifted them out of poverty into sustainable prosperity

Glover:

- I can’t think of one right now.

Grudem:

- Our book contains a map of Africa and we looked at every nation's per capita income
- No nation has been able to rise out of poverty through dependence on foreign aid
- The only close one is Botswana, but they have abundant freedoms, Christian morals, less corrupt government
- So Botswana is the best case and they became prosperous through becoming productive, not foreign aid

Brierley:

- Is he right to say that charity is a short-term solution, but that it's not good long-term for prosperity?

Glover:

- Yes, and work is a very important focus in the Scriptures as he says.
- But since the Fall work has been much harder, and may not have the outcomes that we would like

Grudem:

- I also believe in emergency aid for when catastrophies happen, like floods and famines
- But dependence on foreign aid enriches corrupt rulers and does not create the productivity that leads to sustained prosperity

Brierley:

- Can foreign aid be used to give poor nations a leg up on becoming prosperous?

Grudem:

- Dambisa Moyo, Oxford-educated economist from Zambia, says stop the aid, it's doing more harm than good
- Jeffrey Sachs' view is that foreign aid hasn't worked yet, but just keep trying a bit more
- What works: limited government, rule of law, fair courts, documented property rights, low taxes, stable currency
- People are creative and want to work, we just have to get government out of the way and let people work, earn and save

Brierley:

- Is this free enterprise system supported by the Bible?

Glover:

- The wealthy nations of the world did not become wealthy through productive work and free enterprise policies
- Ha-Joon Chang: free enterprise policies have never brought a country from poverty to wealth
- E.g. – wealth is created through tariffs (not by innovating and by economic freedom?)

Grudem:

- I've read Ha-Joon Chang's book, and his examples are very selective and limited
- Index of Economic Freedom: the freest countries are the most prosperous, the least free countries are the most poor
- When you look at macro data, instead of very selective examples, the free enterprise system is best for prosperity

Glover:

- The book doesn't do enough to engage with leftist economists (he doesn't say which ones)
- Just because nations who are free are rich, doesn't mean freedom causes productivity
- There are parts of the Bible that doesn't support the free enterprise system (he names none)

Grudem:

- The Bible is focused on work not dependency, and charity not government redistribution
- The best way to help the poor in other countries is by encouraging work and productivity

Dr. George Yancey: The Nature and Consequences of Christianophobia

November 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. George Yancey did a presentation at the Reasonable Faith group at UT Dallas.

Here's the lecture: (40 minutes)

About the speaker:

> Dr. George Yancey is a Professor of Sociology at the University of North Texas. He is the author of Christian works such as One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches (InterVarsity Press), Beyond Racial Gridlock: Embracing Mutual Responsibility (InterVarsity Press), co-author of United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race (Oxford University Press) and co-author of Transcending Racial Barriers (Oxford University Press). He has also authored several research articles on the topics of interracial marriage and multiracial churches. Along those lines he is also the author of Multiracial Families (Routledge) which explores the current literature on different aspects of interracial families and Neither Jew Nor Gentile (Oxford University Press) which explores racial issues on Protestant college campuses.

His BS and MS are in economics. His PhD is in sociology.

Summary of the lecture:

- Is discrimination against Christians real?
- Which groups draw the most animosity?
- What are the characteristics of those who most oppose conservative Christians?
- What do cultural progressives think about conservative Christians?
- Is the animosity against conservative Christians reasonable, or is it hatred / fear?
- What kinds of stereotypes dominate animosity towards Christians?
- Does animosity towards Christians affect hiring decisions in academia?
- Why is the problem of Christianophobia not being addressed?

His latest book is So Many Christians, So Few Lions.

I was thinking about this lecture, and I was thinking, what would I do if I ran into one of these people who were really angry with me and wanted to feed me to lions, gas me, or murder me in other nasty ways. And I guess my only answer would be to speak to them and have them defend their beliefs without allowing them to pigeonhole me with a label. Maybe just focus on one particular issue like media bias or the origin of the universe, and try to focus on evidence rather than state my conclusion. Come to think of it, if you can name people on both sides and give evidence for both sides, that seems to work really well.

The more secular and left-wing the opponent, the more you have to stick with discussing

ONLY evidence, and never say your view. So, you can say “how do you work this cosmic microwave background radiation in with your worldview?” but you can’t say, “I’m a conservative evangelical Christian, and you should come to church with me”. The secular progressives seem to be very concerned that Christians vote blindly for political leaders that restrict their freedoms, so again, don’t talk about policies, talk about the reasons on both sides for those policies. For example, do this “what is the morally significant difference between an unborn human and a born human that confers a right to life?” rather than “I’m pro-life and you should be pro-life too, or I’ll put you in jail”.

I have had conversations with people on the secular left who could not name a single reason for any of my beliefs. For example, gun ownership – they had no idea that people own guns for self-defense. Or capital punishment – they had no idea that there is a deterrent effect on other people contemplating violence crimes. They simply cannot express the view of their opponents or the reasons why their opponents hold those views. Maybe that’s partly their fault for being lazy and insular, but it might also be our fault, too, for not knowing the reasons. I know that when I explain the reasons to them (on both sides) and say that this is the evidence that needs to be debated, then they do often calm down. I think that their perception that we are irrational and faith-based scares them.

I think it’s a good idea to become aware of what the research says about secular progressive attitudes towards Christians so that we know how to act around them to avoid setting them off. When you are dealing with people who have this extreme hatred of you, you probably want to chip away at them rather than just be who you are right up front. There doesn’t seem to be a lot of tolerance here, which is so strange coming from the crowd that talks the most about tolerance. We are the only ones who they think it’s ok to fire, fine, imprison, etc.

Does the New Testament book of James undermine salvation by faith alone?

November 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Are people brought into a right relationship with God because God provides for their salvation, or must we do works in order to earn our place with God in the afterlife?

The Bible is pretty clear that God provides our salvation from our rebellion by himself, all we have to do is accept it.

Look at Romans 3:21-30:

> [21] But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
>
> [22] even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;
>
> [23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
>
> [24] being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
>
> [25] whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;
>
> [26] for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
>
> [27] Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.
>
> [28] For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.
>
> [29] Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God*of Gentiles also? Yes, of

> Gentiles also,
>
> [30] since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

Here's theologian R.C. Sproul, to explain a passage from the Bible that seems to contradict the passages that teach that faith alone is sufficient for salvation.

Here's James 2:18-24:

> [18] But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."
>
> [19] You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.
>
> [20] But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?
>
> [21] Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?
>
> [22] You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;
>
> [23] and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God.
>
> [24] You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Sproul explains the apparent conflict:

> What James is saying is this: If a person says he has faith, but he gives no outward evidence of that faith through righteous works, his faith will not justify him. Martin Luther, John Calvin, or John Knox would absolutely agree with James. We are not saved by a profession of faith or by a claim to faith. That faith has to be genuine before the merit of Christ will be imputed to anybody. You can't just say you have faith. True faith will absolutely and necessarily yield the fruits of obedience and the works of righteousness. Luther was saying that those works don't add to that person's justification at the judgment seat of God. But they do justify his claim to faith before the eyes of man. James is saying, not that a man is justified before God by his works, but that his claim to faith is shown to be genuine as he demonstrates the evidence of that claim of faith through his works.

So yes, works are important as a sign to others that you believe what you say you believe, but not important for balancing your sins. Your sins are already paid for by Jesus, what you do in your life doesn't add or take away anything from that. But I will say that if you can see that a person is spending a great deal of their time performing actions that are consistent with a concern for God's purposes and reputation, then that's a good sign that his faith is in good shape. Yes, even if he doesn't do as much Bible study, devotions, singing and praying as he should. The important thing about actions (works) is that you

can look at a person’s life and see evidence that he is taking God seriously – that Jesus is his leader, and that Jesus’ character is informing their decision-making and prioritizing.

Surprise! Anti-war President blocked 75% of airstrikes on ISIS targets

November 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neville Chamberlain Obama: peace in our time

Washington Free Beacon reports.

Excerpt:

> U.S. military pilots who have returned from the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq are confirming that they were blocked from dropping 75 percent of their ordnance on terror targets because they could not get clearance to launch a strike, according to a leading member of Congress.
>
> Strikes against the Islamic State (also known as ISIS or ISIL) targets are often blocked due to an Obama administration policy to prevent civilian deaths and collateral damage, according to Rep. Ed Royce (R., Calif.), chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.
>
> The policy is being blamed for allowing Islamic State militants to gain strength across Iraq and continue waging terrorist strikes throughout the region and beyond, according to Royce and former military leaders who spoke Wednesday about flaws in the U.S. campaign to combat the Islamic State.
>
> "You went 12 full months while ISIS was on the march without the U.S. using that air power and now as the pilots come back to talk to us they say three-quarters of our ordnance we can't drop, we can't get clearance even when we have a clear target in front of us," Royce said. "I don't understand this strategy at all

> because this is what has allowed ISIS the advantage and ability to recruit."

A quick review… here's an article from earlier this year from the Wall Street Journal, about the low number of air strikes being conducted per day by President Pantywaist:

> While it is still too early to proclaim the air campaign against Islamic State a failure, it may be instructive to compare it with other campaigns conducted by the U.S. military since the end of the Cold War that were deemed successes. For instance, during the 43-day Desert Storm air campaign against Saddam Hussein's forces in 1991, coalition fighters and bombers flew 48,224 strike sorties. This translates to roughly 1,100 sorties a day. Twelve years later, the 31-day air campaign that helped free Iraq from Saddam's government averaged more than 800 offensive sorties a day.
>
> By contrast, over the past two months U.S. aircraft and a small number of partner forces have conducted 412 total strikes in Iraq and Syria—an average of seven strikes a day. With Islamic State in control of an area approaching 50,000 square miles, it is easy to see why this level of effort has not had much impact on its operations.
>
> Of course, air operations during Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom were each supported by a massive coalition force on the ground. Thus it may be more appropriate to compare current operations against Islamic State with the 78-day air campaign against Serbian forces and their proxies in 1999, or the 75-day air campaign in Afghanistan that was instrumental in forcing the Taliban out of power in 2001.
>
> Both campaigns relied heavily on partner forces on the ground augmented by a small but significant number of U.S. troops. These air campaigns averaged 138 and 86 strike sorties a day respectively—orders of magnitude greater than the current tempo of operations against Islamic State.

Now, Obama is fond of saying that he is very interested in alternatives to his plans, and in fact, such an alternative exists – from his former top intelligence official:

> Writing in Politico, Obama's former top intelligence official, Mike Vickers, thoroughly dismantled Obama's ISIS strategy, saying that "by any measure, our strategy in Iraq and Syria is not succeeding, or is not succeeding fast enough."
>
> Vickers' credentials on this matter are impeccable. Until earlier this year, he was undersecretary of defense for intelligence, overseeing the NSA and Defense Intelligence Agency. An Army Special Forces veteran, he's served as a key advisor to four presidents, and was the principal strategist behind the U.S. effort to defeat the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
>
> […]Whereas Obama insists that the attacks against ISIS must be "a long-term campaign," Vickers explains that "time is not on our side" and that "we are playing a long game, when a more rapid and disruptive strategy is required."

> Vickers says that, contrary to what Obama claims, ISIS “cannot be contained any more than al-Qaida could prior to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.”
>
> Obama dismisses ISIS as “killers with fantasies of glory who are very savvy when it comes to social media,” and who “pretend that they are a functioning state.”
>
> Vickers explains that ISIS “is a de facto state. It holds territory, controls population, and funds its operations from resources that it exploits on territory it controls.”
>
> While Obama seems to think that the best we can hope for is to someday “shrink” the territory ISIS controls “to defeat their narrative,” Vickers notes that Obama is needlessly handicapping the military: The “one thing the American military knows how to do is defeating an opposing force trying to hold ground.”
>
> According to Obama, the only alternative to his minimalist ISIS strategy is another Iraq quagmire. Not so, says Vickers. “There are a lot of operational options between what we did in Iraq and what we didn’t do in Libya.”
>
> Vickers says another leg of Obama’s “strategy” — namely that any resolution of the ISIS problem has to involve “a resolution to the Syria situation” — is wrong. On this point, in fact, he is emphatic. “We must not succumb to the false hope that ending the Syrian civil war is the key to defeating ISIS.”
>
> Vickers also rejects joining forces with Russia in this clash.
>
> In his press conference, Obama also complained that he hadn’t seen any “particular strategies that they would suggest that would make a real difference.”
>
> Well, Vickers has one. Follow the model used to defeat the Taliban, and the Soviet army before that, in Afghanistan.

So, suppose there is a Paris-style attack within the United States that is planned and led by Islamic State elements. Will we be able to say that Obama has done everything he could to keep us safe? We have a porous southern border, pulling our forces out of Iraq and Afghanistan, a nearly constant stream of security breaches, massive cuts to defense spending, $140 billion dollars for Iran, cuts in military pay, and military morale at an all-time low. This President has no interest in protecting the American people.

When we get whacked by our enemies, and innocent people die, remember that Obama coddled those same enemies and let them do that to us. He doesn’t think Islamic State is evil, he doesn’t think that America is good, he doesn’t see that it’s his job as defeating evil and protecting Americans from evil.

Pew Research: 40% of millenials oppose free speech

November 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

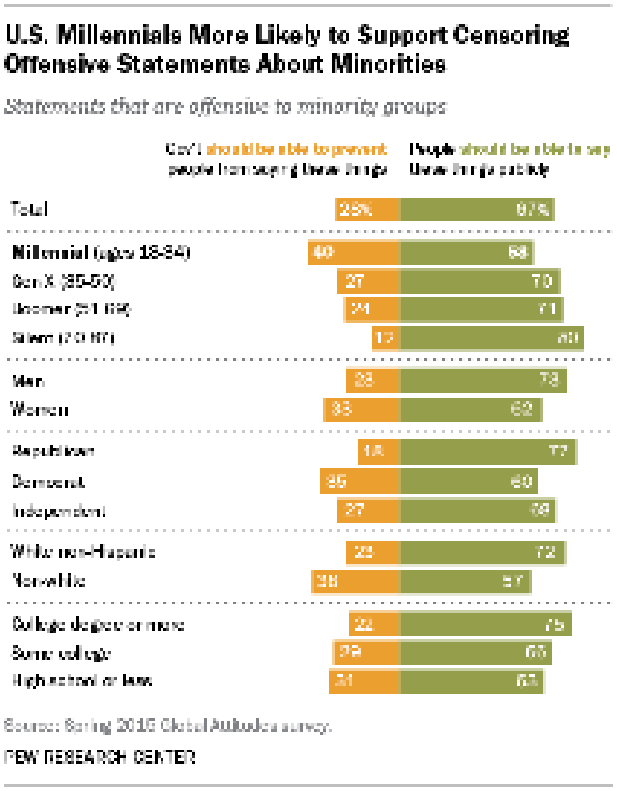

Pew Research: the next generation opposes free speech

First, let's see the data, then we'll talk about who made this happen, and what Christians can do about it.

This is the raw data is from the leftist Pew Research Center.

It says:

> American Millennials are far more likely than older generations to say the government should be able to prevent people from saying offensive statements about minority groups, according to a new analysis of Pew Research Center survey data on free speech and media across the globe.
>
> We asked whether people believe that citizens should be able to make public statements that are offensive to minority groups, or whether the government should be able to prevent people from saying these things. Four-in-ten Millennials say the government should be able to prevent people publicly making statements that are offensive to minority groups, while 58% said such speech is OK.
>
> […]In the U.S., our findings also show a racial divide on this question, with non-whites more likely (38%) to support government prevention of such speech than non-Hispanic whites (23%).
>
> Nearly twice as many Democrats say the government should be able to stop speech against minorities (35%) compared with Republicans (18%).

> Independents, as is often the case, find themselves in the middle. One-third of all women say the government should be able to curtail speech that is offensive to minorities vs. 23% of men who say the same.
>
> Furthermore, Americans who have a high school degree or less are more likely than those with at least a college degree to say that speech offensive to minority groups should be able to be restricted (a 9-percentage-point difference).

Now why is this happening? This is happening for two reasons.

First, we have a retreat from masculinity. A significant part of being a man is being able to tell the truth about good and evil, as well as telling the truth about spiritual things. That's why whenever I list the male roles, I start with protector and provider, but I also mention moral leader and spiritual leader. It's no accident that men are more conservative than women on issues like abortion and gay marriage, especially married men. Just look at the 75% of young, unmarried women who vote Democrat. Men are more comfortable with conflict, and more comfortable with expressing views that offend. Men are more likely to speak out for the truth regardless of how other people feel about it. Men are more likely to stick to their convictions in the face of peer-disapproval. But in a society where women dominate the education system, and discourage masculinity, the next generation is naturally going to shy away from speaking the truth on moral and spiritual issues, and everyone will focus more on feelings and compassion. One last point: we should not be supporting policies that get fathers out of their homes and away from their children, e.g. – no-fault divorce, single mother welfare benefits, sex education curriculum designed by Planned Parenthood, etc.

To illustrate this first point, recall a post that I wrote before about a day care worker who explained in the Washington Post how she teaches children, especially boys, not to make moral judgments, by shaming them.

Second, Christian parents retreated away from apologetics, and integrating Bible teaching with worldview concerns like politics, economics and current events. Parents, rather than fighting for policies and moral values that make Christianity viable, and focused on feelings and piety divorced from evidence.There is no emphasis on teaching that Christianity is true, nor that Christian teachings about morality are true. Without a focus on showing why speech is true, younger Christians start to believe that words are just things that make them feel good. They learn that speech is not true or false, but just about good feelings *from the parents.* And so, naturally, when someone from the secular left comes along and tells them that speech is not allowed if it makes someone feel bad, they go along with this. They don't see that speech is supposed to be about truth and falsehood, they learned from their parents dismissal of apologetics and worldview that it is about piety and feelings and peer-approval.

To illustrate, recall a post that I wrote before about my own journey to a robust, lasting Christianity, in which I gave the example of a Christian mother who thought that apologetics was pointless, and that's what she taught her kids.

So there are two solutions to this. First, we need to be mindful of how female-dominated

schools crush the ability of men to stand up for what they believe, and second, we need to be careful to teach our children about Christianity with an emphasis on truth and evidence, not on feelings and dogma.

Ben Shapiro speaks out against “microaggression” oversensitivity at U of Missouri

November 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Nearly 400 students showed up to hear Ben Shapiro speak

My favorite political podcast is The Weekly Standard, and my favorite cultural podcast is Ben Shapiro. I really recommend subscribing to both and listening to them. The video of this lecture shows you what makes Ben Shapiro special. (H/T Kevin the Super Husband)

Lecture:

Question and Answer:

And here’s a news article for those who cannot watch from Breitbart News.

Excerpt:

> Ben Shapiro’s speech Thursday evening at the University of Missouri was a galvanizing moment for the campus and community that became the national focus of media attention in early November after a group of radical black liberation activists, assisted by leftist faculty members, forced the resignation of the university’s president and chancellor.
> The event marked the first large, public backlash to the political correctness gone wild that had overtaken Mizzou in the past several months.
>
> Towards the end of his rousing speech, Shapiro discussed how the “micro aggression” culture of taking offense at minor, even unintended things leads to real aggression. Shapiro said, “There’s never been a bad person on planet Earth who has not felt justified in doing his or her bad thing. All colleges do now is give people reasons to feel justified in doing the bad things that they want to do.”

> Shapiro lit into the very real aggressions that had played out at the University of Missouri, including the story that Breitbart News covered of Mizzou faculty member Dr. Melissa Click, who blocked a student reporter with a camera when he attempted to enter a public space on campus that #ConcernedStudent1950 activists had declared a “safe space” for themselves.
>
> […]The audience of over 350 responded immediately with applause that lasted several seconds. The crowd’s applause showed the cathartic impact of someone speaking the truth out loud at the University of Missouri.

Shapiro was invited to speak by the Young America’s Foundation. My first thought when I see an event like this is why aren’t Christian churches more involved in applying the Bible and Christian theology to the culture. My pastor almost never applies the Bible to anything that is happening in real life. He almost never references anything that is happening in the culture, much less current events.

Thank goodness there are brave conservatives like Ben Shapiro who are willing to put rounds downrange onto the target, rather than focus on pious language doesn’t equip anyone to declare or defend their conservative beliefs. There are so many ideas that are undermining the life plans of Christian men these days – feminism, postmodernism, relativism, global warming alarmism, socialism, pacificism, unilateral surrender and appeasement, and so on. And yet so few pastors can see these threats and how they differ with the Bible’s teachings. Even those that see seem to lack the courage of those who speak out about them. We need to be talking about what is happening in politics and in the culture, so that we can make a world where it is safe to speak out about Christian things without fear – even if the truth makes people feel “offended”.

Why Democrat talk of taking in Syrian refugees infuriates me

November 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Women for bigger government, higher taxes

Obama wants to take in 10,000 Syrian refugees this year, then another 100,000 in 2016 and another 100,000 in 2017.

In previous posts, I have laid out several reasons for why we should not take in Syrian refugees. First and foremost is the cost of taking in Syrian refugees – pegged at $6.5 billion total for just the first 10,000 refugees. Canada is taking in twice that number, and their government costed their plan out at $1.2 billion for only six years. Obama himself doesn't earn any money, has never worked in the private sector. So he isn't going to pay for this with his own $6.5 billion with his own hard work. He's going to pass that bill onto young people to pay, but today he'll preen for the cameras and show how "generous" he is for spending other people's money. He already added $10 trillion onto the national debt, doubling it.

Second, we don't have the national security in place to vet the Syrian refugees. The news lately has been full of cases of people traveling with Syrian documents, and some of them trying to come into the USA through our porous Southern border. In general, we should assume from the many national security failures of the Democrats that they cannot be trusted on anything they say about things being safe. We have the Bradley Manning leak, the Snowden leak, the Hillary Clinton private unsecure e-mail server hack, the Benghazi cover-up, the gun-running to Mexican drug cartels, the leak of the planned Israeli strike on Iran, the leaking of the name of the British spy who foiled the airline bombing attack, and on and on and on. Although none of these are remembered by Democrat supporters of the President, they paint a picture of the administration's incompetence at protecting Americans. In fact, senior officials in Obama's own administration confirm that the vetting process is unreliable. They can't even ask them questions that would help to identify them as terrorist risks.

Third, although many of the refugees are women and children, we have to make two points about that. The first point is that women and children are frequently used in Islamic terrorist attacks. Here's an article tracing some of the recent Islamic terror attacks involving women and children. We need look no further than the Boston bombers to see how letting in Muslim children can turn into a terrorist risk. They were carefully vetted by the Democrats, and yet they murdered anyway. Second point, there is something to be said about letting in a lot of Muslim immigrants in any case, since a critical mass of Muslim immigrants can create the environment that allows terrorist attacks to be planned. Just read this article on how the Islamic "no go" zones in Paris played a part in the recent terrorist attacks there.

Fourth point is about stewardship. What should we do in order to help the refugees. I'm running short of space, so I'll just point you to this article that argues that it is a much better use of our money to help the refugees where they are. We can help many more refugees if we leave them over there than we can help if we only bring a few here, for the same cost. Although Democrats who are spending other people's money don't care to think of who is paying, it's always a good idea to spend taxpayer money wisely.

The fifth and final point is something I could not articulate, but that was behind my anger at the well-meaning but naive Christians who were calling for us to take on Syrian refugees on Biblical grounds. I think the real reason I was so angry is as follows:

- Naive Christians do not understand anything that is happening in the Middle East. They just don't follow it, they don't know the players, the previous attacks, the risks and threats, nothing.
- Naive Christians take their cues from a pacificist culture, the left-wing media, and their own fact-free emotions. So, they think that war is NEVER the answer to aggression from evildoers, e.g. – Assad and his controllers in Iran. They just don't have the understanding of good wars like World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the first Gulf War, etc. that were clearly wars that America undertook in order to help others from terror, torture, murder and rape. They don't understand that setting up Japan, South Korea, France, Germany, Kuwait, etc. with long-term protection and guidance is what allowed them to recover and become peaceful and democratic.
- Naive Christians had nothing to say about staying the course in Afghanistan and Iraq, invading Syria (which we should have done, instead of attacking Egypt and Libya, which was stupid and pointless) and NOT making a deal with Iran. In short, they have nothing to say about *preventing the situations where wars and refugees result in the first place*. They just want to ride in sanctimoniously after their benign neglect has failed to work, and then appear to be concerned about peace. But only by spending trillions of taxpayer dollars to clean up around the edges, while leaving the core problem intact.

So with all that said, here is the article that cured my anger once about this. It appears in The Weekly Standard, and it involves the indomitable Bill Kristol, quoting a journalist

named Walter Mussell Mead, who voted for Obama in 2008, who now writes about Obama's lack of seriousness about opposing evil with force, the disaster that resulted, and his attempt to paper over his stupidity with sanctimonious statements about taking in refugees *from the mess he himself created.*

Here it is:

> "To see the full cynicism of the Obama approach to the refugee issue, one has only to ask President Obama's least favorite question: Why is there a Syrian refugee crisis in the first place?
>
> "Obama's own policy decisions—allowing Assad to convert peaceful demonstrations into an increasingly ugly civil war, refusing to declare safe havens and no fly zones—were instrumental in creating the Syrian refugee crisis. This crisis is in large part the direct consequence of President Obama's decision to stand aside and watch Syria burn. For him to try and use a derisory and symbolic program to allow 10,000 refugees into the United States in order to posture as more caring than those evil Jacksonian rednecks out in the benighted sticks is one of the most cynical, cold-blooded, and nastily divisive moves an American President has made in a long time. . . .
>
> "To think that conspicuous moral posturing and holy posing over a symbolic refugee quota could turn President Obama from the goat to the hero of the Syrian crisis is absurd. Wringing your hands while Syria turns into a hell on earth, and then taking a token number of refugees, can be called many things, but decent and wise are not among them. You don't have to be a xenophobe or a racist or even a Republican to reject this President's leadership on Syria policy. All you need for that is common sense and a moral compass. . . .
>
> "For no one, other than the Butcher Assad and the unspeakable al-Baghdadi, is as responsible for the humanitarian catastrophe in Syria as is President Obama. No one has committed more sins of omission, no one has so ruthlessly sacrificed the well-being of Syria's people for his own ends, as the man in the White House. In all the world, only President Obama had the ability to do anything significant to prevent this catastrophe; in all the world no one turned his back so coldly and resolutely on the suffering Syrians as the man who sits in the White House today—a man who is now lecturing his fellow citizens on what he insists is their moral inferiority before his own high self-esteem."

Read the whole thing. Really. And remember than people on the Christian left are basically the same in terms of foolishness as people on the secular left. They are not guided by evidence, but by feelings. And they need to be told early and often how their feelings fail to work in real life. Otherwise, we will continue taking their compassionate naivete seriously, and go bankrupt paying for it, or maybe just get ourselves killed by the evil we allowed to fester. I know a lot of naive leftist Christians are trusting Think Progress and Huffington Post to tell us what the Bible says about refugees, but surprise! Think

Progress is not that good at Biblical exegesis.

Another good article about how our retreating from a war that was won caused a humanitarian disaster: “What Happens When America Retreats From The Middle East“.

Three men arrested for murder of Indianapolis pastor’s pregnant wife

November 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Blackburn murder mugshots

I was just reading about this story at the exact moment that Dennis Prager mentioned it, so I took that as a sign that I should mention it as well.

Here is the story from the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> A three-man crime spree on the morning of Nov. 10 ended in the murder of an Indianapolis pastor’s pregnant wife, according to a newly released legal filing.
>
> Officials on Monday announced murder charges against two men—Larry Jo Taylor, Jr., 18, and Jalen Watson, 21—in the shooting death of Amanda Blackburn in the Indianapolis home she shared with her husband Pastor Davey Blackburn. A third man, Diano Gordon, 24, faces related burglary charges.
>
> The Marion County prosecutor’s office announced the charges on Monday, hours after police announced Taylor’s arrest. He and Watson also face charges for felony burglary, theft, robbery and auto theft.
>
> […]The Blackburns moved to Indianapolis in January of 2012 “with a dream and a calling to start a life-giving church that would connect with people who normally wouldn’t connect with church,” the couple wrote on Resonate Church‘s Web site.
>
> […]But on the morning of Nov. 10, the couple’s seemingly perfect life shattered.
>
> […]Sometime before 5:30 a.m., police say, Watson, Taylor and Gordon embarked on a small crime spree in search of money that would end at the Blackburn residence.
>
> They allegedly broke into an apartment miles away from the Blackburns where

> they stole an iPhone from the sleeping occupant's bedroom, car keys, a laptop and a wallet, according to an account provided to the police by an unnamed "cooperating individual" and outlined in a probable cause affidavit.
>
> After discovering a security camera in the residence, Taylor wanted to kill the sleeping occupant, but Watson and Gordon talked him down, the account says. According to the affidavit, the trio then moved on to another house where they stole TV's and a laptop, loading them into the previously stolen car.
>
> In search of even more money, they finally arrived at the unlocked Blackburn residence, with Amanda, then 12 weeks pregnant, and her 15-month-old son inside. Authorities say Taylor hit Blackburn with his gun and stayed at the house while the other two drove off to retrieve money from an ATM using her card.
>
> Afterwards, Taylor reportedly told Watson, Gordon and two others that he killed Blackburn, authorities say.
>
> "Taylor stated that she charged at him and he shot her somewhere in the upper body so he would not be scratched," the document states. "Taylor then told them that he leaned over her body and shot her in the back of the head. He leaned further, looked at her face, and watched her bleed."
>
> Her husband returned home from the gym around 7:30 a.m. that morning, but remained on the phone with a friend in the driveway until about 8:20 a.m., according to the affidavit. When he entered the house, he found his wife nude and face down in blood on the living room floor.

I don't know what to say to this. It just made me angry how the media makes justified shootings of criminals by police into such a huge scandal, and then when actual law-abiding citizens get murdered, it's no big deal. Nothing for anyone to be upset about, apparently. Are we going to have a national movement over the murder of this pastor's pregnant wife? I think not. Instead, people on the left want to ban guns and disarm potential victims of crime so they can't resist criminals. Let me make this clear – police are good, criminals are bad, and law-abiding civilians owning guns to defend themselves from criminals is also good. Why are the Democrats on the wrong side of all three of these issues?

J. Warner Wallace: I am not a Christian because it works for me

November 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a must-read post from Cold-Case Christianity author J. Warner Wallace.

Excerpt:

> Life on this side of my decision hasn't always been easy. It's been nearly seventeen years since I first trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. I still struggle to submit my prideful will to what God would call me to do. Christianity is not easy. It doesn't always "work" for me. There are times when I think it would be easier to do it the old way; easier to cut a corner or take a short cut. There are many times when doing the right thing means doing the most difficult thing possible. There are also times when it seems like non-Christians have it easier, or seem to be "winning". It's in times like these that I have to remind myself that I'm not a Christian because it serves my own selfish purposes. I'm not a Christian because it "works" for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn't always been easy.
>
> I'm a Christian because it is true. I'm a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I'm a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative.

I think this is important. There are people who I know who claim to be Christian, but they are clearly believing that God is a mystical force who arranges everything in their lives in order to make them happy. They are not Christians because it's true, but because of things like comfort and community. But people ought to become Christians because they think it's true. Truth doesn't necessarily make you happy, though. Truth can impose

intellectual obligations and moral obligations on you. Seeing God as he really is doesn't help us to "win" at life, as the culture defines winning.

Winning in Christianity doesn't mean making lots of money, or being famous, or winning human competitions, or being approved of by lots of people. Winning for a Christian might involve things like building relationships with people and leading them to know that God exists and who Jesus is. That has no cash value, and it's not going to make you famous. Actually, it will probably cost you money and time, and make you unpopular with a lot of people.

The Bible doesn't promise that people who become Christians will be happier. Actually, it promises that Christians will suffer for doing the right things. Their autonomy will suffer, as they sacrifice their own interests and happiness in order to make God happy, by serving his interests. Christianity isn't something you add on to your before-God life in order to achieve your before-God goals. When you become a Christian, you get a new set of goals, based on God's character and his design for you. And although you might be very successful in the world as part of serving God, there is no guarantee of that. Christianity is not life enhancement.

27 Iraqi Christians face deportation, as Obama welcomes 200,000 Syrian Muslims

November 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He's better at golf than foreign policy

Story from Christian Today.

Excerpt:

> A small group of Iraqi Christians persecuted in their homeland are wondering why they are being deported from the U.S. while the Obama administration is trying its best to justify giving asylum to thousands of Muslim refugees from Syria.
>
> A total of 27 Chaldean Christians who have been driven from their homeland by Al Qaeda and ISIS militants managed to enter the U.S. from Mexico in April and May this year, Fox News reported.
>
> The Chaldeans are trying to join the thriving Iraqi Christian community in and around San Diego, California, but now they face an uncertain future as their applications for religious asylum have been rejected by U.S. authorities allegedly due to "technicalities."
>
> "These are families who were split up because of religious persecution, and now the government – which we love – is preventing them from being reunited," said Fr. Michael Bazzi, of St. Peter Chaldean Catholic Cathedral, in El Cajon, California. "We wonder why, for thousands of Muslims, the door is open to America, yet Christians are not allowed to come."

> The Chaldeans are among tens and possibly hundreds of thousands of Christians from Iraq and Syria who have been displaced by fighting in their respective countries and persecuted by Al Qaeda, Islamic State (ISIS) and even the Iraqi government, the Fox News report said.
>
> […]**Moreover, supporters said the Chaldean Christians will not be a burden to the U.S. government since they have family members in San Diego willing to take them in. San Diego is home to one of the largest Chaldean populations in the U.S.Republicans and Christian leaders say persecuted Christians should be afforded extra protection.**
>
> **"If the particular security threat you are concerned about is jihadist terror, there are no Christian jihadist terrorists," said Andrew McCarthy, the former assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York. "But for the purpose of asylum analysis, the question is likelihood of persecution. There is no question that Christians face more persecution in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East than Muslims do. We should acknowledge that Christians are being subjected to genocide and take steps to protect them," he told Fox News.**

They're not going to be dependent, they don't support abortion and gay marriage, they're not going to engage in terrorism, so that means they are not the kind of immigrant we want.

Meanwhile, regarding Clown President's comments that most of his refugees are Muslim women and children, and so are harmless, we have these facts to counter his rhetoric:

> […]French police launched a raid on an apartment associated with the Paris attacks, resulting in the death of a female jihadist inside the flat.
>
> Her name was Hasna Aitboulahcen, and what we know about her so far illustrates exactly what is so dangerous about the virulent ideology that is attacking Western civilization.
>
> Hasna was not exactly your stereotypical portrait of a terrorist. Her friends and family described her as a "party girl" who drank alcohol and had multiple boyfriends. As the Washington Post reports:
>
> "We saw her quite often and we called her 'The Cowgirl' because she was always wearing a large hat," one neighbor said. She rarely visited the mosque, and her brother told authorities that he had not once seen her open up a Koran, CNN reports …
>
> Lately, she had taken to calling herself a jihad fanatic. Last June, she posted a photo of herself in a niqab with the caption (using French shorthand): "I will soon go to syria [sic] inchallah [God willing] soon I will leave for turkey."
>
> That an "outgoing French girl" can turn quickly into a violent jihadist who apparently aided in the Paris attacks tells us how powerful and unpredictable the ideology can be — drawing in not just angry, young and underprivileged Middle

> Eastern men, but also Parisian girls who were thought to have “loved life.”
>
> President Obama was hardly on stronger ground when he mocked Americans for concerns about even children coming from Syria. The perpetrators of one of the most famous recent terror attacks on U.S. soil, Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev — Islamist terrorists who set off bombs at the Boston Marathon in 2013 — came to the United States as child asylum seekers. A relatively normal childhood in America did not prevent them from being radicalized.

Why doesn’t Obama know these things? Because his worldview only allows him to think that one religion can be terrorist: Christianity. He cannot imagine that the real villains really are evil. Perhaps that’s why the number of deaths due to terrorism has more than QUADRUPLED since we exchanged the hawkish George W. Bush for the anti-American defeatist Barack Obama in 2009. America can be a force for good in the world, when we are fund and deploy our military to deter aggression. Obama’s priorities have been cutting the military and turning victories into defeats by retreating.

Is Obama’s catastrophic failure as President due to incompetence or evil?

November 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trust Obama: his narcissism, mendacity and drug use ensures he will make a great President

We’re getting to the end of Obama’s regrettable Presidency and it’s a good time for us to take stock of what kind of man Obama is, now that we can look at his actual record and see the failure that results from electing a President by affirmative action.

To achieve this goal of calling Obama what he is, I have a debate for you between two sides of the question. Andrew Klavan defends the “Obama is incompetent” view and Bill Whittle defends the “Obama is evil” view. This was sent to me by my good friend William.

Here’s the debate (8-minutes):

For those who cannot watch the debate, Victor Davis Hanson has a good article you can read instead.

Here’s part of it:

> Obama certainly has doubled down going into his last year, most recently insisting on letting in more refugees from the Middle East, at a time when the children of Middle Eastern immigrants and contemporary migrants are terrorizing Europe. What remaining unpopular executive acts might anger his opponents the most? Close down Guantanamo, let thousands more refugees into the United States, free thousands more felons, snub another ally, flatter another enemy, weigh in on another interracial melodrama, extend amnesty to another million illegal aliens, make global warming laws by fiat, expand Obamacare, unilaterally impose gun control? In lieu of achievement, is the Obama theory to become relevant or noteworthy by offending the public and goading political enemies?

An Obama press conference is now a summation of all his old damn-you clichés — the fantasy strawman arguments; the caricatures of the evil Republican bogeymen; the demagogic litany of the sick, the innocent, and the old at the mercy of his callous opponents; the affected accentuation (e.g., Talîban; Pakîstan, Îslám, Latînos, etc.) that so many autodidacts parade in lieu of learning foreign languages; the make-no-mistake-about-it and let-me-be-clear empty emphatics; the flashing temper tantrums; the mangled sports metaphors; the factual gaffes; and the monotonous I, me, my, and mine first-person-pronoun exhaustion. What Obama cannot do in fact, he believes he can still accomplish through invective and derision.

In the 2016 election campaigns, most Democratic candidates in swing states will have distanced themselves from the last eight years. Otherwise, they would have to run on the patently false premise that American health care is more affordable and more comprehensive today than it was in 2009; that workforce participation is booming; that scandals are a thing of the past; that the debt has been addressed; that Obama has proved a healer who brought the country together; that immigration at last is ordered, legal, and logical; that the law has never been more respected and honored; that racial relations are calmer than ever; that the campuses are quiet; that the so-called war on terror is now over and won with al-Qaeda and ISIS contained or on the run; that U.S. prestige aboard has never been higher; that our allies appreciate our help and our enemies fear our wrath; that Iran will now not go nuclear; that Israel is secure and assured of our support; and that, thanks to American action, Egypt is stable, Libya is ascendant, Iraq is still consensual, and the Middle East in general is at last quiet after the tumultuous years of George W. Bush.

The hordes of young male migrants abandoning the Middle East for the West are merely analogous to past waves of immigrants and should be uniformly welcome. For Obama, there is no connection between them and his slashing of American involvement in the Middle East — much less any sense of responsibility that his own actions helped produce the crisis he now fobs off on others.

If an American president saw fit to attack fellow Americans from abroad, and lecture them on their illiberality, there are better places from which to take such a low road than from Turkey, the embryo of 20th-century genocide, and a country whose soccer crowds were recently shouting, “Allahu akbar!” during what was supposed to be a moment of silence offered to the Paris dead. Surely an American president might suggest that such grassroots religious triumphalism about mass death is much more reprehensible behavior than are his own fellow citizens’ demands to vet the backgrounds of refugees.

If you suggested to Obama that, in his search for a contrarian legacy, he should do something to stop the slaughter in the Middle East and be careful about letting in more unexamined refugees, in answer, he would be more likely to do less than nothing abroad and vastly expand the influx of migrants. Getting under

his critics' skin is about all that is left of a failed presidency.

Many of our observers still do not quite grasp that Obama will end his presidency by seeking to get his opponents' goat — and that his resentment will lead to some strange things said and done.

Few foresaw this critical element of the Obama character. The tiny number of prescient pundits who warned what the Obama years would entail were not the supposedly sober and judicious establishment voices, who in fact seemed to be caught up in the hope-and-change euphoria and missed entirely Obama's petulance and pique: the Evan Thomases ("he's sort of god"), or the David Brookses ("and I was looking at his pant leg and his perfectly creased pant, and I'm thinking, a) he's going to be president and b) he'll be a very good president." "It is easy to sketch out a scenario in which [Obama] could be a great president."), or the Chris Matthewses ("the feeling most people get when they hear Barack Obama's speech. My, I felt this thrill going up my leg. I mean, I don't have that too often."), or the Michael Beschlosses ("Uh. I would say it's probably — he's probably the smartest guy ever to become President."), or the Chris Buckleys ("He has exhibited throughout a 'first-class temperament,' *pace* Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.'s famous comment about FDR. As for his intellect, well, he's a Harvard man"), or the Kathleen Parkers (" . . . with solemn prayers that Obama will govern as the centrist, pragmatic leader he is capable of being"), or the Peggy Noonans ("He has within him the possibility to change the direction and tone of American foreign policy, which need changing; his rise will serve as a practical rebuke to the past five years, which need rebuking; his victory would provide a fresh start in a nation in which a fresh start would come as a national relief.").

In truth, it was the loud, sometimes shrill, and caricatured voices of talk radio, the so-called crazy Republican House members, and the grassroots loudmouths of what would become the Tea Party who had Obama's number. They warned early on that Barack Obama's record was that of a petulant extremist, that his writing presaged that he would borrow and spend like no other president, that his past associations gave warning that he would use his community-organizing skills cynically to divide Americans along racial lines, that nothing in his past had ever suggested anything other than radicalism and an ease with divisive speech, that his votes as a state legislator and as a U.S. senator suggested that he had an instinctual dislike of the entrepreneur and the self-made businessman, and that his past rhetoric advised that he would ignore settled law and instead would rule by fiat — that he would render immigration law null and void, that he would diminish the profile of America abroad, and that he would do all this because he was an ideologue, with no history of bipartisanship but a lot of animus toward his critics, and one who saw no ethical or practical reason to appreciate the more than 60 years of America's postwar global leadership and the world that it had built. Again, the despised right-wingers were right and the more moderate

> establishment quite wrong.
>
> Abroad, from Obama's post-Paris speeches, it is clear that he is now bored with and irritated by the War on Terror. He seems to have believed either that Islamist global terror was a minor distraction with no potential for real harm other than to bring right-wingers in backlash fashion out of the woodwork, or that it was an understandably radical manifestation of what was otherwise a legitimate complaint of Islam against the Western-dominated global system — thus requiring contextualization rather than mindless opposition.
>
> A lot of ambitious and dangerous powers are watching Obama assume a fetal position, and may well as a consequence act foolishly and recklessly this next year. Not only Russia, China, and North Korea, but also Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, ISIS, and assorted rogue states may take chances in the next 14 months that they would otherwise never have entertained (given that America is innately strong and they are mostly in comparison far weaker) — on the premise that such adventurism offers tangible advantages without likely negative consequences and that the chance for such opportunities will not present itself again for decades to come.

So is Obama a fool, or is he deliberately trying to destroy America and usher the world into war and terrorism?

My view is that Obama is an imbecile, and simply is not qualified intellectually to be President of the United States.

Presenting the ontological argument for God's existence

November 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

My friend Günter Bechly has started a new blog, and his first post is about the ontological argument. A lot of smart philosophers really like this argument, but it's out of favor with evidentialists like me, because… well, it's just the opposite of evidence in every possible way. And evidence is awesome. Evidence makes the world go round.

But if I'm going to take my philosophical medicine from anyone, I'm going to take it from Dr. Bechly. Because at least he has a doctorate in STEM, and that makes him not a squishy-head:

> I am a German scientist (paleo-entomologist), specialized on the fossil history, phylogeny, and evolution of insects, the most diverse group of animals.
>
> I am also a conservative evangelical Christian. I strongly reject atheism, materialism, naturalism, and scientism, and privately support Intelligent Design Theory.

Anyway, here is the new post from his new blog:

> The Ontological Argument is a highly sophisticated philosophical argument for the existence of God that is often poorly understood by believers and universally dismissed or even ridiculed by atheists, who usually do not properly grasp the argument either. In his anti-religious pamphlet "The God Delusion" Richard Dawkins made a complete fool of himself with the embarassing remark that the defendants of the Ontological Argument even "felt the need to resort to Modal Logic", which showed that he was completely ignorant of the fact that this argument simply is an exercise in modal logic (see this Q&A by William Lane Craig). The atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell once mocked the Ontological Argument as nothing but "a case of bad grammar". We will get back to him at the end of this post.

> With this very first posting on my new blog, I want to provide an introduction to the famous Ontological Argument, and show how simple but ingenious and unrefuted it really is. When I first truly understood this argument for God's existence, I was absolutely thrilled by its force, and I hope you will be too.
>
> If you do not like to read lengthy blog posts like this, you find an excellent introduction to the modern modal version of the Ontological Argument in these two short YouTube videos.

That's the intro, and here is the horrible argument, which contains no evidence, and is therefore evil.

> For the purpose of this essay, I reformulated the argument as follows:
>
> - Premise 1: If a maximally great being exists, it must exist necessarily.
> - Premise 2: If the existence of a being is necessary, it exists in all possible worlds.
> - Premise 3: If the existence of a being is possible, in exists in at least one possible world.
> - Premise 4: It is possible that a maximally great being, aka God, exists.
> - Conclusion: Therefore God exists in one possible world, which implies that he exists in all possible worlds, including the actual world.
> - Therefore, God exists!
>
> A greatly simplified version of the argument makes it even more obvious:
>
> - Premise A: If a being that has the essential property to "exist in all possible worlds" is demonstrated to exist in one possible world, than it must exist by definition in all possible worlds.
> - Premise B: The existence of a maximally great being that necessarily exists in all possible worlds is possible, so that it exists in at least one possible world.
> - Conclusion: Therefore, such a being exists in all possible worlds including ours.
>
> This argument is a deductive argument in the modus ponens and is universally accepted as logically valid (= properly formed according to the laws of logic). This means that the conclusions follow necessarily from the premises. Thus, our atheist friends cannot simply dismiss the argument because they do not like the conclusion. The only way to refute the argument is to show that one of the premises is false. Premise 1 has been established by Hartshorne and Plantinga as true. The truth of premises 3 and 4 (or of premise A in the simplified version) follows necessarily from modal logic and thus is undeniable.
>
> Therefore, the only chance for the atheist is to deny premise 4 (premise B in the simplified version), which means that he has to deny that God (a maximally great

> being) is possible. The atheist has to claim that God is logically impossible, because the concept of a maximally great being is incoherent or self-contradictory, like a “round square” for example.

I hope none of you will ever use this evil argument, even though it probably works, and smart people like Craig and Plantinga really like it.

I have been friends with Gunter since last year, when he was interested in intelligent design, which I like, but still not a theist. Then he became a theist, and now a Christian. So, I really like that. I hope everyone will click through and read his article, and then you can all annoy me by telling me how much you like the post, how great philosophy is, and why I need to add it to my list of arguments for Christian theism. It’s an argument tailor made for all you people who don’t like STEM. Sigh.

George Washington’s 1789 Thanksgiving Day proclamation

November 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

George Washington and his horse Old Nelson pray in the snow

To help us be thankful, here is a famous Thanksgiving day proclamation.

Here it is:

> PRESIDENTIAL THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATIONS
>
> 1789-1815 : George Washington, John Adams, James Madison
>
> THANKSGIVING DAY 1789
>
> BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION
>
> Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor – and Whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me “to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.”
>
> Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or

> that will be – That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks – for his kind care and protection of the People of this country previous to their becoming a Nation – for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his providence, which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war –for the great degree of tranquillity, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed – for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.
>
> And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions – to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually – to render our national government a blessing to all the People, by constantly being a government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed – to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord – To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and Us – and generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.
>
> Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.
>
> (signed) G. Washington

That’s from George Washington.

Happy Thanksgiving Day!

The miracle of Squanto’s path to Plymouth

November 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

“The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth” by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe (1914)

God’s providence in action, as reported by Eric Metaxas in the Wall Street Journal.

Full text:

> The story of how the Pilgrims arrived at our shores on the Mayflower—and how a friendly Patuxet native named Squanto showed them how to plant corn, using fish as fertilizer—is well-known. But Squanto’s full story is not, as National Geographic’s new Thanksgiving miniseries, “Saints & Strangers,” shows. That might be because some details of Squanto’s life are in dispute. The important ones are not, however. His story is astonishing, even raising profound questions about God’s role in American history.
>
> Every Thanksgiving we remember that, to escape religious persecution, the Pilgrims sailed to the New World, landing at Plymouth Rock in 1620. But numerous trading ships had visited the area earlier. Around 1608 an English ship dropped anchor off the coast of what is today Plymouth, Mass., ostensibly to trade metal goods for the natives’ beads and pelts. The friendly Patuxets received the crew but soon discovered their dark intentions. A number of the braves were brutally captured, taken to Spain and sold into slavery.
>
> One of them, a young man named Tisquantum, or Squanto, was bought by a group of Catholic friars, who evidently treated him well and freed him, even allowing him to dream of somehow returning to the New World, an almost unimaginable thought at the time. Around 1612, Squanto made his way to London, where he stayed with a man namedJohn Slany and learned his ways and language. In 1618, a ship was found, and in return for serving as an interpreter, Squanto would be given one-way passage back to the New World.
>
> After spending a winter in Newfoundland, the ship made its way down the coast

of Maine and Cape Cod, where Squanto at last reached his own shore. After 10 years, Squanto returned to the village where he had been born. But when he arrived, to his unfathomable disappointment, there was no one to greet him. What had happened?

It seems that since he had been away, nearly every member of the Patuxets had perished from disease, perhaps smallpox, brought by European ships. Had Squanto not been kidnapped, he would almost surely have died. But perhaps he didn't feel lucky to have been spared. Surely, he must have wondered how his extraordinary efforts could amount to this. At first he wandered to another Wampanoag tribe, but they weren't his people. He was a man without a family or tribe, and eventually lived alone in the woods.

But his story didn't end there. In the bleak November of 1620, the Mayflower passengers, unable to navigate south to the warmer land of Virginia, decided to settle at Plymouth, the very spot where Squanto had grown up. They had come in search of religious freedom, hoping to found a colony based on Christian principles.

Their journey was very difficult, and their celebrated landing on the frigid shores of Plymouth proved even more so. Forced to sleep in miserably wet and cold conditions, many of them fell gravely ill. Half of them died during that terrible winter. One can imagine how they must have wept and wondered how the God they trusted and followed could lead them to this agonizing pass. They seriously considered returning to Europe.

But one day during that spring of 1621, a Wampanoag walked out of the woods to greet them. Somehow he spoke perfect English. In fact, he had lived in London more recently than they had. And if that weren't strange enough, he had grown up on the exact land where they had settled.

Because of this, he knew everything about how to survive there; not only how to plant corn and squash, but how to find fish and lobsters and eels and much else. The lone Patuxet survivor had nowhere to go, so the Pilgrims adopted him as one of their own and he lived with them on the land of his childhood.

No one disputes that Squanto's advent among the Pilgrims changed everything, making it possible for them to stay and thrive. Squanto even helped broker a peace with the local tribes, one that lasted 50 years, a staggering accomplishment considering the troubles settlers would face later.

So the question is: Can all of this have been sheer happenstance, as most versions of the story would have us believe? The Pilgrims hardly thought so. To them, Squanto was a living answer to their tearful prayers, an outrageous miracle of God. Plymouth Colony Governor William Bradford declared in his journal that Squanto "became a special instrument sent of God" who didn't leave them "till he died."

Indeed, when Squanto died from a mysterious disease in 1622, Bradford wrote

> that he wanted “the Governor to pray for him, that he might go to the Englishmen’s God in heaven.” And Squanto bequeathed his possessions to the Pilgrims “as remembrances of his love.”
>
> These are historical facts. May we be forgiven for interpreting them as the answered prayers of a suffering people, and a warm touch at the cold dawn of our history of an Almighty Hand?

America is truly a blessed nation. Why this story is not taught in all the schools of the nation is beyond me.

The pilgrims experiment with communism before the second Thanksgiving

November 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

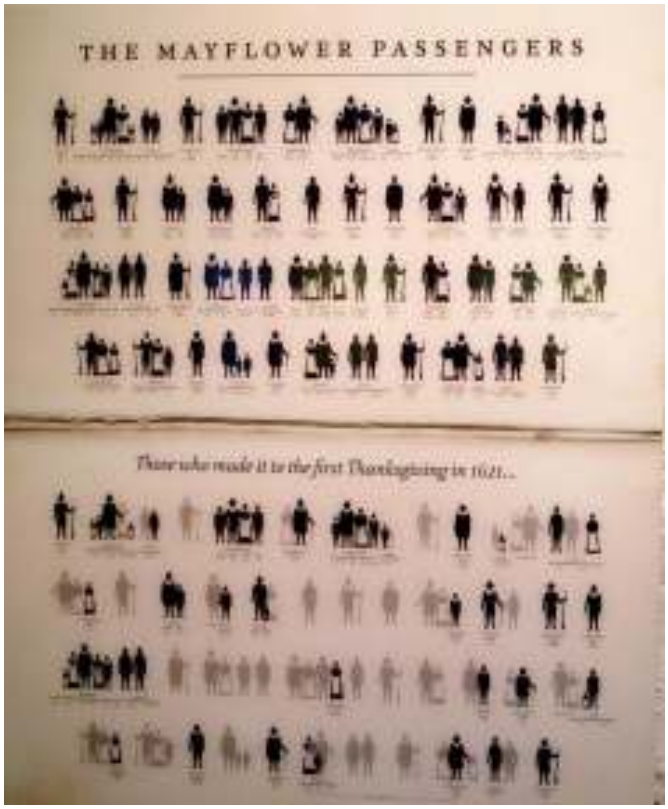

Less than half the original pilgrims made it to the the first Thanksgiving

Here's an article from The Stream about the second Thanksgiving, by Dante Witt. I like this article because it tells us so much about the character of the United States of America. Why are we so conservative about economics?

She briefly retells the story of how the pilgrims were helped by Squanto, which I blogged about in my previous post, then she talks about the troubles they had next.

Excerpt:

> Although Squanto's farming techniques worked better than their old ones, the pilgrims still could not produce enough food. Was it bad luck? Bad soil? No. The Mayflower pilgrims were part of a joint stock company which stipulated that the pilgrims would pool their resources, and receive a share of the profit.
>
> The strategy turned out to be deeply misguided, working about as well as various communist economic schemes hundreds of years later. The sad state of the colony after two years of communism, wrote William Bradford, "may well evidence the vanity of that conceit of Plato's and the other ancients applauded by some of later times; that the taking away of property and the bringing of community into a commonwealth would make them happy and flourishing; as if they were wiser than God" (p. 121).
>
> So the pilgrims amended their contract so that each family was now responsible

> for its own provision. The difference was stark. Bradford explained:
>
> This had good success, for it made all hands very industrious, so that more corn was planted than could have been by any other means the Governor could use, and saved him a great deal of trouble, and gave far better content. The women now went willingly into the field, and took their little ones with them to set corn; which before would allege weakness and inability; whom to have compelled would have been thought great tyranny and oppression.
>
> In fact, it's estimated the colonists planted about six times the crops they would have planted otherwise.

That shows where Americans get their views of economics, but what about the praying and the gratitude?

More:

> With new farming techniques and an amended government, the pilgrims did all they humanly could to ward off starvation. But they could not control the weather. A drought settled on the colony and threatened to kill the corn before the harvest. Recognizing with the Psalmist that "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it," the colonists turned to God. According to Bradford, they "set apart a solemn day of humiliation to seek the Lord by humble & fervent prayer, in this great distress." What was the outcome?
>
> And he was pleased to give them a gracious & speedy answer, both to their own & the Indians admiration, that lived amongst them. For all the morning, and greatest part of the day, it was clear weather & very hot, and not a cloud or any sign of rain to be seen, yet toward evening it began to overcast, and shortly after to rain, with such sweet and gentle showers, as gave them cause of rejoicing, & blessing God. It came, without either wind, or thunder, or any violence, and by degrees in that abundance, as that the earth was thoroughly wet and soaked therewith. Which did so apparently revive & quicken the decayed corn & other fruits, as was wonderful to see, and made the Indians astonished to behold. (p. 131)
>
> Seeing the speedy results of the Puritans' prayers, an Indian named Hobanak said, "Now I see that the Englishman's God is a good God, for he hath heard you, and sent you rain, and that without storms and tempests and thunder, which usually we have with our rain, which breaks down our corn, but yours stands whole and good still; surely your God is a good God." (pp. 64-5)
>
> Then William Bradford again proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving to God, the forerunner of the American tradition of Thanksgiving.

So, this story explains why the United States has this character that values the free enterprise system, hard work, individual achievement, prayer, and gratitude. These are the values that make us American, that made us into such a great nation.

Greed drives the advocacy of organizations on climate change

November 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

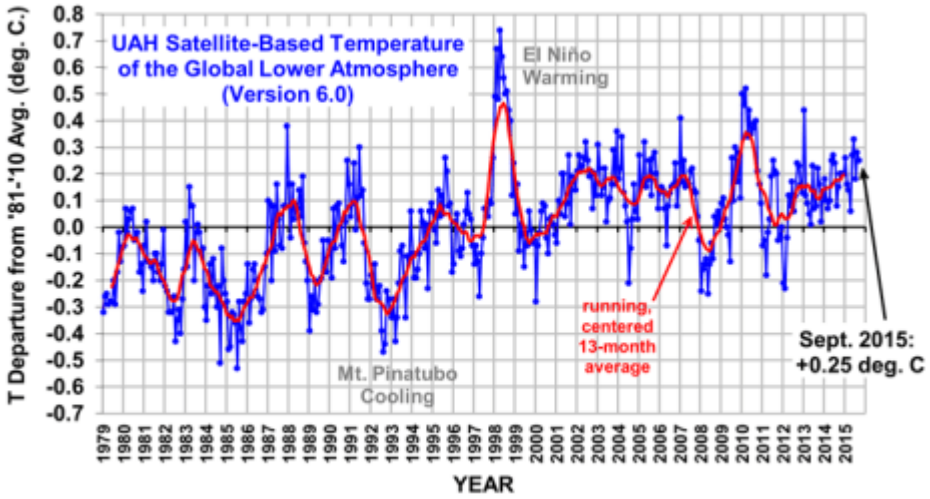

Atmospheric temperature measurements though Sept 2015
This article from the The Stream is helpful.

Excerpt:

> Global warming alarmism is big business. On one side you have Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, Environmental Defense Fund, The Climate Project and dozens upon dozens of other non-governmental organizations who solicit hundreds of millions from private donors and from government, and who in turn award lucrative grants to further their agenda.
>
> You also have the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Health, the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture, both Houses of Congress and many more government agencies, spraying global warming money at anything that moves and at staggering rates — *billions* of dollars.
>
> And then you also have every major and minor university — with contributions from every department, from Critical Literature Theory to Women's Studies — all with their hands out and eager to provide the support Greenpeace, the government and others desire. Add to that another two or three dozen think tanks which are also sniffing for grants or which support government intervention to do the impossible and stop the earth's climate from changing.
>
> Every scientific organization which is dependent on grant money has released a statement saying "something must be done" about global warming. They're supported, fawned over and feted by just about every news and media agency. And don't forget the leadership of most major organized religions have their own

> statements — and their hands out.
>
> We’re not done: we still have to add the dozens of Solyndra-type companies eager to sell the government products, to get “green” subsidies or to support its global-warming agenda. Included in that list are oil companies. Oil companies?

How much money are we talking about? Billions:

> Joanne Nova has documented the massive amount of money pouring from government into the pockets of individuals and groups associated with the environment. “The U.S. government has provided over $79 billion since 1989 on policies related to climate change, including science and technology research, foreign aid, and tax breaks.” $79 *billion*.

Now it’s important to note that when the government hands out money, they are not handing out part of their profits from the sale of useful products and services, the way a private company might. No. What government does is they borrow money from future taxpayers and add it to the national debt. That’s why our national debt has doubled under Obama and will be $20 trillion by the time he leaves office in January 2017. So, government is busy manufacturing support for government intervention and regulation of businesses and individuals using money that will be taken from future job creators and taxpayers.

Would you like to have your money back so you can support causest that you care about instead of global warming socialism? So would I. But that’s why people ought to support slimming down government and letting it only perform those minimalist duties that are laid out for it in the Constitution.

Survey: women explain why they avoid having children

November 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are women today genuinely interested in marriage and children, or do they have other plans?

This article comes from the leftist Huffington Post.

They write:

> The Huffington Post and YouGov asked 124 women why they choose to be childfree. Their motivations ranged from preferring their current lifestyles (64 percent) to prioritizing their careers (9 percent) — a.k.a. fairly universal things that have motivated men not to have children for centuries. To give insight into the complex, layered decisions women make, HuffPost asked childfree readers to discuss the reasons they have chosen not to have kids and gathered 270 responses here.

They grouped the responses into 5 categories:

1. I want to prioritize my career
2. I don't like children
3. I had a bad relationship with my parents
4. I don't want the financial responsibility
5. I like my life as it is

And here are some of the ones that I thought were the most interesting, and pay attention to the ones that include fear-of-missing-out travel, which I blogged about before:

Category 1:

> I am a first-generation college graduate in my family. My mother was a single mom my entire childhood, and I was there to see that struggle. Being a parent, for a woman, means for life. Being a parent, for men, seems to be something very different. I understand raising children is a big life change and I don't want to sell myself short on my potential to become something more and maybe even create change. **I am childfree because I want to travel, move, pursue my career wholly** and be able to push myself to be an inspiration to other women. If a child comes into my life, it won't be until I am happy and successful in my work life, and not until I am secure with my finances and a marriage. I don't want to one day wake up as an old woman wishing I had waited to have children so I could live my own life first, make mistakes, learn new things and find myself. Today kids are not for me.

Category 2:

> I'm nearly 47; my boyfriend (domestic partner) of 17 years is nearly 50. I've never been pregnant and have taken every precaution to remain childfree. I tolerate other people's children when I have to. I'm happiest when there are NO children around. I definitely don't want them in my home. I like my life as it is. My boyfriend and I are both scientists. We also raise snakes and spiders! **We like to travel. We travel to ride roller coasters (members of ACE — American Coaster Enthusiasts) and to attend rock concerts.** I am also a performer in a senior winter guard. My plate overfloweth! I see no reason to procreate. I would be unhappy. Why be unhappy?

Category 3:

> I have a great relationship with my husband. **We have the time and money to travel, and that gives us precious memories.** I had a bad relationship with my dad, and maybe I'm scared to treat my children like that. I'm very happy with my decision. I have a great relationship with myself too.

Category 4:

> My spouse and I have talked in depth about having children. However, **we both decided that our desire to travel the world is a financial burden in itself. If we have kids, we will never have the means to travel**, and at the end of our life, we would rather be 100 percent committed to fulfilling our own realistic dreams rather than only able to provide a subpar life for a child. Comes down to the fact we are selfish, but at least we recognize this and made the choice early enough to avoid damaging a kid

Category 5:

> The thought of having to do kiddie crap every weekend makes me want to shoot

> myself. I like having the extra money to save for retirement and not worry about braces, summer camp or college tuition. **I can travel on a moment's notice.** I can give my all to my job and not have to worry about daycare, sick days, or having to leave my co workers to pick up my slack. I'm the "cool aunt" to all my nieces and nephews. I have more time to do the things that make me happy and productive. My relationship with my guy is not strained due to the constant neediness of children. I don't want to put my body through pregnancy and childbirth. I can give my dog all the attention he needs and deserves.

If I had to choose one comment to represent the entire survey, it would be this one:

> The moment you have children, you're life ceases to be about yourself. Kids always take priority and I feel like I can do more for this world than just generate offspring.

Or maybe this one:

> I honestly feel too lazy. I haven't achieved enough, and if I had a child I would "just be a mom," which isn't enough for me or what I want out of life.

I think this is the real reason why young, unmarried women choose not to prepare or plan for marriage and children . Marriage and children "some day" is like planning for your retirement by winning the lottery. Marriage and children "some day" is an excuse to signal to family and friends that you will *eventually* want the responsibility of a husband and kids, but that you are justified in being self-centered *right now*.

We need to move beyond a survey to quantify this, and this U.S. Census data does that:

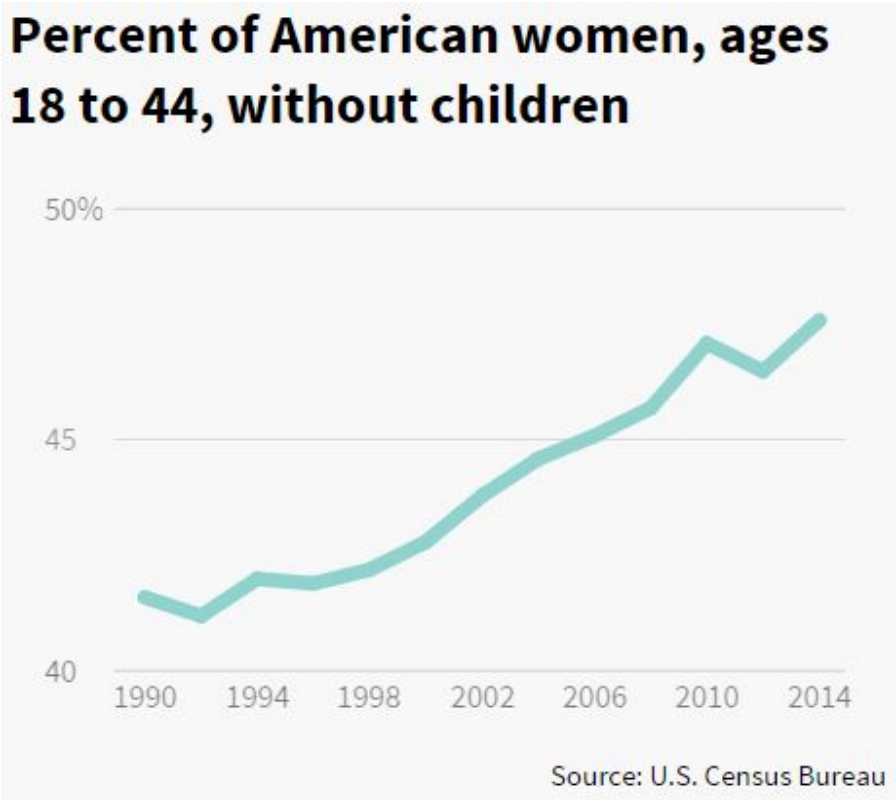

Childless by choice, not because of men failing to "man up"

These quotations are very troubling if you are a young man who has been serious about obtaining STEM degrees, saving money by *not traveling*, and making a plan to have a marriage and family that will serve God. I am seeing real hostility in young, unmarried Christian women to the idea that marriage will impose responsibilities, expectations and obligations on them. And their parents, relatives, friends and co-workers are doing nothing to detect and counter this attitude. As Lindsay argued on this blog before, the marriage / children plan is an excellent way for Christians to make a difference. It will take a lot of work, but it makes much more of a difference for the kingdom than just doing whatever makes you feel happy.

A friend of mine named Bee commented on an early version of this post::

> Sad to say this but many Christian voices are encouraging Christian women to travel, date around and delay marriage and childbirth. Here are several negative voices:
>
> Mandy Hale is a Christian woman who is mid 30's, never married and has wasted years in travel and bad relationships. She has a large twitter following. She promotes her travel oriented, feelings oriented lifestyle.
>
> http://thesinglewoman.net/about/
>
> Christian counselor Stephen Arteburn tells of encouraging his daughter to travel and date around and not think about marriage until her late 20's. Unfortunately, no one can flip a switch on their 28th birthday and quickly get married to a quality guy. Also, late marriage for women means having more than 1 or 2 children is risky.
>
> […]Bskillet81 found evangelical american princesses (EAP) obsessed with travel, entitlement, feelings, and personal fulfillment.
>
> https://societyofphineas.wordpress.com/2014/11/24/evangelical-american-princess/

I just read some of Mandy's quotes from GoodReads and she is certifiably nuts.

Can atheists help themselves to objective morality on atheism?

November 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Here's Dr. William Lane Craig explaining why you can't:

He presents 3 reasons why in the video, all of which are also discussed in his Defenders class:

> The mention of Plato brings to mind another possible atheistic response to the first premise of the moral argument that *if God does not exist, then objective moral values and duties do not exist*. Plato thought that the Good just exists as a sort of self-subsistent idea, as an entity in and of itself. Indeed, it is the most real thing in reality. The Good simply exists. If you find this difficult to grasp, join the company! Nevertheless, that is what Plato believed. Later Christian thinkers, like Augustine, equated Plato's Good with the nature of God. God's nature is the Good, and so it was anchored in a concrete object, namely, God. But for Plato, at least, the Good just sort of existed on its own as a kind of self-existent idea.
>
> Some atheists might say that moral values, like Justice, Mercy, Love, and Forbearance, just exist all on their own as sort of abstract moral objects. They have no other foundation; they just exist. We can call this view Atheistic Moral Platonism. According to this view, moral values are not grounded in God. They just exist all on their own.
>
> Unintelligibility of Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> What might we say by way of response to Atheistic Moral Platonism? Let me make three responses. First, it seems to me that this view is just unintelligible. I

> simply don't understand what it means. What does it mean, for example, to say that the moral value Justice just exists? I understand what it means to say that a *person* is just or that some *action* is just, but what does it even mean to say that in the absence of any persons or any objects at all, that Justice just exists? It is hard to understand even what this means. Moral values seem to be properties of persons, and so it is hard to understand how Justice can just exist as a sort of abstraction.
>
> Lack of Moral Obligation on Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> Secondly, a major weakness of this view is that it provides no basis for objective moral duties. Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that moral values like Justice, Love, Forbearance, and Tolerance just exist on their own. Why would that lay any sort of moral obligation upon me? Why would the existence of this realm of ideas make it my duty to be, say, merciful or loving? Who or what lays such an obligation upon me? Why would I have the moral duty to be merciful or loving? Notice that on this view moral vices like Greed, Hatred, and Selfishness presumably also exist as abstractions. In the absence of any moral law giver, what obligates me to align my life with one set of these abstract ideas rather than with some other set of abstract ideas? There just doesn't seem to be any basis at all for moral duty in this view. In the absence of a moral law giver, Atheistic Moral Platonism lacks any basis for moral obligation.
>
> Improbability of Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> Finally, thirdly, it is fantastically improbable that the blind evolutionary process should spit forth exactly those kinds of creatures that align with the existence of this realm of abstract values.1 Remember that they have no relationship with each other at all. The natural realm and this abstract moral realm are completely separate. And yet, lo and behold, the natural realm has by chance alone evolved exactly those kind of creatures whose lives align with these moral duties and values. This seems to be an incredible coincidence when you think about it. It is almost as if the moral realm knew that we were coming! I think it is a far more plausible view to say that both the natural realm and the moral realm are under the sovereignty of a divine being, who is both the creator of natural laws that govern the physical universe and whose commands constitute the moral laws that govern our ethical duties. This is a more coherent view of reality. Theism is a more coherent view because these two realms of reality don't fall apart in this disjointed way. They are both under the sovereignty of a single natural and moral law giver.
>
> For those three reasons, Atheistic Moral Platonism is a less plausible view than theistic based ethics such as I have been defending.

And now, I must be mean to the atheists, because I think this me too nonsense is just ridiculous, desperate intellectual dishonesty.

I remember having a conversation with one of my IT project managers who was an

atheist, and she asked me what I thought would happen to dogs when they died. I said "well they don't have an afterlife so they just rot away when we bury them and get eaten by worms". She was aghast and said "no they don't, they go to Heaven". And that's what morality on atheism is. It's just an appearance package that gets bolted on absolute meaninglessness and hedonism. And even if the atheist tries to make traditional decisions in their own lives, they typically push for full-on dismantling of Judeo-Christian values, especially in the sexual realm. And that spills over into abortion, divorce, same-sex marriage and government restraints on free speech, conscience and religious liberty.

Dear atheists: you cannot duct tape morality onto nihilism and have it be rational. We know you're doing it to feel good about yourselves and to appear normal instead of wearing your nihilism openly. But your faked morality is not even close to the morality of theists, and especially not of Christian theists. Christians go against their self-interest because we imitate the self-sacrificial love of Christ, who gave himself as a ransom to save others. That makes no sense on an atheistic worldview, since this life is all you have, and there is no afterlife where your actions are in the context of a relationship with that self-sacrificial Son of God. In any case, free will doesn't exist on atheism, so that means no moral choices regardless. These are the common sense implications of atheist first principles, and in fact that's what you hear expressed from the finest atheist scholars: no free will, no right and wrong, no life after death.

If you want to see what atheists really think about morality, then take a look at this post featuring Matt Dillahunty, where he is asked to condemn the Holocaust as objectively wrong, and he refuses to do it. That's intellectually consistent atheist morality right there. If the universe is an accident, and human beings evolved by accident, then there is way things ought to be, and no way we ought to act. And no one is there is no ongoing two-way relationship for our conduct to be part of, anyway. On atheism, human beings will die out individually and collectively in the heat death of the universe. Once the heat death of the universe arrives, there will be no one left to care how we lived after we're dead – there is no one waiting for us who cares how we act towards him and towards others. Atheists can arbitrarily put any limits they want on their actions, based on what makes them feel good, and what makes people like them, perhaps taking account the arbitrary customs and conventions of the time and place they find themselves in. But it's delusional and irrational make-believe for atheists to claim that morality is rational on their worldview.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines

- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Professor explains how his study of the historical Jesus made him leave atheism

November 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's investigate Jesus!

Dr. Michael F. Bird has a great article in Christianity Today. I've featured his debates with atheist historian James Crossley on this blog before, and I have the book they co-wrote.

In the article, Dr. Bird writes:

> I grew up in a secular home in suburban Australia, where religion was categorically rejected—it was seen as a crutch, and people of faith were derided as morally deviant hypocrites. Rates for church attendance in Australia are some of the lowest in the Western world, and the country's political leaders feel no need to feign religious devotion. In fact, they think it's better to avoid religion altogether.
>
> As a teenager, I wrote poetry mocking belief in God. My mother threw enough profanity at religious door knockers to make even a sailor blush.
>
> Many years later, however, I read the New Testament for myself. The Jesus I encountered was far different from the deluded radical, even mythical character described to me. This Jesus—the Jesus of history—was real. He touched upon things that cut close to my heart, especially as I pondered the meaning of human existence. I was struck by the early church's testimony to Jesus: In Christ's death God has vanquished evil, and by his resurrection he has brought life and hope to all.
>
> When I crossed from unbelief to belief, all the pieces suddenly began to fit together. I had always felt a strange unease about my disbelief. I had an acute suspicion that there might be something more, something transcendent, but I also knew that I was told not to think that. I "knew" that ethics were nothing more than aesthetics, a mere word game for things I liked and disliked. I felt conflicted when my heart ached over the injustice and cruelty in the world.

> Faith grew from seeds of doubt, and I came upon a whole new world that, for the first time, actually made sense to me. To this day, I do not find faith stifling or constricting. Rather, faith has been liberating and transformative for me. It has opened a constellation of meaning, beauty, hope, and life that I had been indoctrinated to deny. And so began a lifelong quest to know, study, and teach about the one whom Christians called Lord.

And now specifics:

> For many secularists, Ehrman is a godsend who propagates common misconceptions about Jesus and the early church. He believes there was a spectrum of divinity between gods and humans in the ancient world. Therefore, he asserts that the early church's beliefs about Jesus evolved: from a man exalted to heaven to an angel who became human to a pre-existent "divine" person who became incarnate to a subordinated or lesser god to being declared one with God.
>
> **My faith and studies have led me to believe otherwise. First-century Jews and early Christians clearly demarcated God from all other reality, thus leading them to hold to a very strict monotheism. That said, Jesus was not seen as a Greek god like Zeus who trotted about earth or a human being who morphed into an angel at death. Rather, the first Christians redefined the concept of "one God" around the person and work of Jesus Christ. Not to mention the New Testament writers, especially Luke and Paul, consistently identify Jesus with the God of Israel.**
>
> **Many people get the idea that Jesus was just a prophet and never claimed to be divine. But a careful look at the Gospels shows that the historical Jesus explicitly claimed to exercise divine prerogatives. He identified himself with God's activity in the world. He believed that in his own person, Israel's God was returning to Zion, just as the prophets had promised. And he claimed he would sit on God's throne. These claims, when studied up close, are de facto claims to divine personhood, the reasons religious leaders of the day were so outraged.**
>
> Evidence shows that Jesus claimed to be God incarnate, and within 20-some years after his death and resurrection, Christians were identifying him with the God of Israel, using the language and grammar of the Old Testament to do so.
>
> Sure, some sects in the first few centuries held heretical beliefs about Jesus. But the mainstream, orthodox view of Christ's identity was always consistent with and rooted in the New Testament, though orthodox Christology became more refined in the following centuries.

It's definitely true that you can recover a high Christology (a view of Jesus as divine) from the earliest gospel, Mark. I wrote about it in a previous post. But the earliest evidence for

Jesus is that creed in 1 Corinthians 15, that I blogged about recently.

Here is his conclusion:

> Some have great confidence in skeptical scholarship, and I once did, perhaps more than anyone else. If anyone thinks they are assured in their unbelief, I was more committed: born of unbelieving parents, never baptized or dedicated; on scholarly credentials, a PhD from a secular university; as to zeal, mocking the church; as to ideological righteousness, totally radicalized. But whatever intellectual superiority I thought I had over Christians, I now count it as sheer ignorance. Indeed, I count everything in my former life as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing the historical Jesus who is also the risen Lord. For his sake, I have given up trying to be a hipster atheist. I consider that old chestnut pure filth, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a CV that will gain me tenure at an Ivy League school, but knowing that I've bound myself to Jesus—and where he is, there I shall also be.

I recently led a Bible study on the passage he is paralleling there – it comes from my *favorite* book of the Bible, Philippians.

What I like about Bird's story is that he was a skeptic, and his study of history is what changed his mind. This contradicts a narrative that young people are sold at the university, which is that the more education you have, the more you turn away from theism in general, and Christianity in particular. I wouldn't even classify him as a super conservative scholar, by any means – he's just a good scholar who believes whatever he thinks is historically sound. It just turns out that you can recover enough historically to ground a commitment to Jesus Christ. You can't get *everything* as a historian, but you get enough to cause a change of mind about who Jesus was.

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- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

One college administrator who refuses to bow down to the #crybully mob

November 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students puking in toilet

Two people send me the following article by a conservative college President with balls of steel. (H/T Benoy and Scott)

Excerpt:

> **This is Not a Day Care. It's a University!**
>
> *Dr. Everett Piper, President*
>
> *Oklahoma Wesleyan University*
>
> This past week, I actually had a student come forward after a university chapel service and complain because he felt "victimized" by a sermon on the topic of 1 Corinthians 13. It appears that this young scholar felt offended because a homily on love made him feel bad for not showing love! In his mind, the speaker was wrong for making him, and his peers, feel uncomfortable.
>
> I'm not making this up. Our culture has actually taught our kids to be this self-absorbed and narcissistic! Any time their feelings are hurt, they are the victims! Anyone who dares challenge them and, thus, makes them "feel bad" about themselves, is a "hater," a "bigot," an "oppressor," and a "victimizer."
>
> I have a message for this young man and all others who care to listen. That feeling of discomfort you have after listening to a sermon is called a conscience!

> An altar call is supposed to make you feel bad! It is supposed to make you feel guilty! The goal of many a good sermon is to get you to confess your sins—not coddle you in your selfishness. The primary objective of the Church and the Christian faith is your confession, not your self-actualization!
>
> So here's my advice:
>
> If you want the chaplain to tell you you're a victim rather than tell you that you need virtue, this may not be the university you're looking for. If you want to complain about a sermon that makes you feel less than loving for not showing love, this might be the wrong place.
>
> If you're more interested in playing the "hater" card than you are in confessing your own hate; if you want to arrogantly lecture, rather than humbly learn; if you don't want to feel guilt in your soul when you are guilty of sin; if you want to be enabled rather than confronted, there are many universities across the land (in Missouri and elsewhere) that will give you exactly what you want, but Oklahoma Wesleyan isn't one of them.
>
> At OKWU, we teach you to be selfless rather than self-centered. We are more interested in you practicing personal forgiveness than political revenge. We want you to model interpersonal reconciliation rather than foment personal conflict. We believe the content of your character is more important than the color of your skin. We don't believe that you have been victimized every time you feel guilty and we don't issue "trigger warnings" before altar calls.
>
> Oklahoma Wesleyan is not a "safe place", but rather, a place to learn: to learn that life isn't about you, but about others; that the bad feeling you have while listening to a sermon is called guilt; that the way to address it is to repent of everything that's wrong with you rather than blame others for everything that's wrong with them. This is a place where you will quickly learn that you need to grow up!
>
> This is not a day care. This is a university!

That's exactly right.

Either we challenge these entitled little barbarians, or will find ourselves and the mercy of an irresponsible mob of cry-bullies in elections to come. Only give them money to commission them for earning their own income. Cut them off from all tuition if they refuse to study STEM. Refuse to co-sign for their loans. Cut the apron strings at age 18. Never give them a dime of help unless their politics favor free enterprise and free markets.

By the way, another friend of mine who likes Dave Ramsey sent me this Dave Ramsey rant against people who take out loans for college (it starts at 10:26, and it is awesome). Play that for your high school aged kids, and then make them read this Dave Ramsey article, too. No money for little entitled barbarians! And no bailout for their outstanding student loans, either. Do not let your kids go to college on loans to study for degrees that will not produce a return on investment.

Colorado Springs Planned Parenthood shooter: not a Republican, never talked about abortion

November 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

No Trespassing: crazy shack-dwelling hermit lives here
Round up of articles explaining what we know.

Leftist Washington Post:

> To neighbors, it looked like a "moonshine shack," a little yellow wooden hut, with overgrown weeds and no indoor plumbing, banged together by its owner, Robert Lewis Dear Jr.
>
> And whenever Dear came to stay in his shack in the woods, the neighbors in Anderson Acres, a community of about seven houses along a steep, gravel road here, kept their kids inside.
>
> "He was the kind of person you had to watch out for," one neighbor said. "He was a very weird individual. It's hard to explain, but he had a weird look in his eye most of the time."
>
> Dear, 57, the man in custody in connection with Friday's shooting at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, appears to have been a malcontent who drifted from place to place. In the past couple of years, in addition to the shack, he also lived in a mobile home in another town in North Carolina and a camper in Colorado, which he shared with a woman who moved with him from the East Coast.
>
> Some who knew him found him to be unremarkable, while others said that he seemed to be delusional and aggressive. He had a history of run-ins with neighbors and police, including arrests for alleged cruelty to animals and allegedly being a "peeping Tom." He was not convicted in either case.

> “It’s just too devastating; it’s just something you can’t fathom happening,” Pamela Ross, who was married to Dear nearly 20 years ago, said in a brief interview Saturday. She declined to comment further.
>
> Dear’s problems with the law date to 1997, when his then-wife reported to police that Dear had assaulted her, according to reports filed with the sheriff’s office in Colleton County, S.C., where Dear lived at the time. She declined to file charges against him but told police she reported the incident because she “wanted something on record.”
>
> Colleton County police released reports of at least seven other episodes in which Dear, who described himself to police as a self-employed art dealer, had disputes or physical altercations with neighbors or other residents.

Sounds like some crazy mountain man.

More from Life News:

> Meanwhile, Planned Parenthood officials have confirmed none of the people killed in the shooting or 9 victims who were injured were Planned Parenthood abortion clinic staff or patients and authorities have released no motive for the shooter as to whether or not he actually targeted Planned Parenthood.
>
> […]“We don’t have any information on this individual’s mentality, or his ideas or ideology,” Colorado Springs police Lt. Catherine Buckley said, according to the Associated Press.

Life News quotes Buzz Feed: (no link)

> Public records reviewed by BuzzFeed News indicate a Robert Lewis Dear Jr. has faced as many as nine criminal charges in North and South Carolina, including two misdemeanors for cruelty to animals (for which he was found not guilty during a bench trial) and for being a peeping tom (which was dismissed at a preliminary hearing).
>
> There are also voting records of a Robert Lewis Dear Jr. living in Hartsel, Colorado, as recently as 2014. The town lies in the middle of the state and is just over one hour’s drive from Colorado Springs.

Planned Parenthood says no motive is known:

> Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains issued a statement responding to the shooting, saying it doesn’t know if Planned Parenthood was the target of the attack.
>
> “We don’t yet know the full circumstances and motives behind this criminal action, and we don’t yet know if Planned Parenthood was in fact the target of this attack,” Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains President Vicki Cowart said in a statement. “We share the concerns of many Americans that extremists are creating a poisonous environment that feeds domestic terrorism in this country.”

The Family Research Council actually was the victim of an act of domestic terrorism by a gay activist a while back, and here is what their leader had to say about this crime:

> "While the investigation into the shooting at the Planned Parenthood center continues, regardless of what the motive is determined to be, we strongly condemn this violence. As the target of domestic terrorism inspired by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the staff of the Family Research Council empathize with all the victims of this violence. All of us at the Family Research Council join with the pro-life movement in praying for the injured officers and victims of these deplorable acts."
>
> "Only through peaceful means –not violence— can we truly become a nation that once again values all human life, born and unborn," concluded Perkins.

Life News concludes:

> Dear appears to have no association with the pro-life movement and those who know him say he is an awkward man who never discussed religion or abortion.

That's what we know as on Saturday night. Meanwhile, Obama is using the shooting to push for disarming law-abiding citizens, so that criminals have an easier time robbing, raping and murdering them. And Hillary Clinton is fundraising off the shooting, claiming that the abortion industry is under attack from a great and powerful and scary pro-life lobby.

Two peer-reviewed studies shed light on news media bias

November 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the left-wing media

Let's learn about media bias using these peer-reviewed studies.

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as

> ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an

> Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

Those are the facts.

So what?

Now consider this column from Brent Bozell, which explains the difference media bias makes to political intelligence.

Excerpt:

> **A 2008 survey by the Pew Research Center asked media consumers three questions: which party was in control of Congress (Democrats), who was the secretary of state (Condi Rice) and who was the prime minister of Britain (Gordon Brown).**
>
> **Let's document how the viewers of "Hannity & Colmes" were better informed than Stewart's "Daily Show" gigglers on basic political facts. Hannity viewers beat Stewart's on the Democratic majority (84 percent to 65 percent correct answers), Condi Rice (a dramatic 73 percent to 48 percent gap) and Gordon Brown (49 percent to 36). Overall, as a percentage getting all three questions right, Hannity won 42-30.**

Just keep that in mind when you are watching the mainstream media news shows. A very good site to bookmark and read is Newsbusters, which documents mainstream media bias daily.

Pro-life group targets Planned Parenthood's corporate donors

November 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this message

This is an article from the Daily Signal, and it shows the kinds of devious, mean tactics that those awful pro-lifers will stoop to, in order to stop the intentional killing of unborn children.

Look how awful:

> A pro-life group say it has convinced more than 300 companies to stop donating to Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider.
>
> The organization, Life Decisions International, tracks corporate sponsors of Planned Parenthood in an effort to encourage them to stop donating.
>
> In an interview with The Daily Signal, Doug Scott, president of Life Decisions International, said his group is "primarily an educational organization."
>
> Its aim, Scott said, is to educate companies and CEOs about Planned Parenthood's "real agenda."
>
> Using Planned Parenthood's own annual reports, newsletters and IRS documents, Life Decisions International determines which companies contribute funds. It adds the findings to a list of such donors, and encourages pro-lifers to use the list to boycott them.
>
> Discussions with each company are "kept completely confidential to spare them

> the backlash from pro-abortion people," Scott said.
>
> Tom Strobhar, chairman of Life Decisions International, told The Daily Signal that more than 300 companies "no longer give to Planned Parenthood" because of his organization.

Naughty! Anyway, let me think about the people I know of who are doing pro-life work. I know two people who are professional pro-life debaters, who debate university professors, etc. at open-to-the-public events at major universities. Another person I have heard of has a project where pregnant women can get a free ultrasound to help them to decide what to do with their babies. Another person sets up booths at her local university to answer questions from pro-life students. Another person who comments here regularly and is an expert in Christian apologetics regularly engages with pro-abortion activists while protesting outside of abortion clinics. We also have people who sneak into clinics and capture the words of pro-abortion people on video. And of course I know that politically, the big push right now is to de-fund abortion providers – cut off their taxpayer funding, especially. Dastardly pro-lifers!

Here's a recent story about wicked pro-lifers using their trickses to defeat abortion greed:

> Oklahoma Republican Gov. Mary Fallin ordered the Oklahoma Health Care Authority to terminate contracts with two Planned Parenthood affiliates Thursday, citing billing problems.
>
> Fallin said she made the decision because of problems with the two affiliates overcharging Oklahoma residents for services by 20 percent and 14 percent. She pointed out that there are about 120 other health care options for Oklahoma residents.
>
> […]Fallin asked for a state review of Planned Parenthood earlier this year which revealed the overbilling. There was not, however, misuse of Medicaid funds. "These results are alarming," Fallin wrote in the letter to Gomez. "These errors result in overbilling to the Oklahoma taxpayer. The lack of attention to the requirements imposed on a responsible provider is a continuing problem for these Planned Parenthood affiliates."

Why, they even have popularly-elected governors helping them! Sneaky, mischievous, under-handed villains! Working within the law to end abortion? It's inconceivable! (It's inconceivable to the anti-reality secular left, I mean).

And there was actually a good article on The Stream explaining why this is so, by John Zmirak, so let's link to that. I recommend that everyone who wants to know why pro-lifers are so busy using these cognitive / fiscal methods to address the abortion issue read that article, especially if your name is "Child of Ra" or if you attended college to obtain a non-STEM degree.

Tim Tebow chose his girlfriend for looks not character

November 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The glasses don't make you any smarter, Tim T-Bonehead

UPDATE: Report from TMZ says they never dated, but that Tebow did "show interest" in her, and so this post still works somewhat.

Everyone likes to pick on me because they say that I always blame women for their poor choices, when everything is really the fault of men. Well, that's not true. I love to blame men when it really is the man's fault. And we have a case now where it really *IS* the man's fault, and you'll never guess how all the Christian feminists are responding to me blaming the man.

Let's see the story, first, which is very important. It's from the UK Daily Mail.

It says:

> Tim Tebow has made a vow to stay chaste until marriage.
>
> But it seems as if Olivia Culpo just couldn't wait.
>
> The 23-year-old former Miss Universe has broken up with the hunky 28-year-old former professional American footballer due to his choice to stay abstinent according to a recent report.

Two points about this.

First, it's very improbable (but not impossible) that a Miss Universe is going to have Christian character enough to step into the roles of Christian wife and Christian mother. If her entire life is spent traveling around, putting on make-up and prancing up and down a stage, that's not going break her narcissistic, emotional spirit enough for her to orient herself in a Christian direction. Newsflash, T-Bonehead: just because a woman claims to

be a Christian doesn't make her a Christian.

Second, if you want to marry a real Christian women, I recommend looking for women whose lives show a consistent, multi-year record of studying apologetics and engaging for conservative causes in the public square. And again, it's just safer to prefer women with STEM degrees. Women with STEM degrees have the emotivism and narcissism drummed out of them. STEM graduates know that no amount of intuition and wishing will make a program compile and run and generate correct output.

The general point here is that men are stupid – especially when they are young and don't realize how important it is for them to choose wisely, when it comes to a bride. They imagine that because a woman is good looking, that must mean that she has a good Christian worldview – a worldview that includes a commitment to studying apologetics, and integrating Christianity with economics, politics, etc. Guess what, stupid men? Unless she has read people like Lee Strobel and J. Warner Wallace, she doesn't know whether her Christian faith is true or not. Unless she has read people like Thomas Sowell and Jay Richards, she has no idea how her Christian faith integrates with economics or politics. Unless she has read people like Scott Klusendorf and Ryan Anderson, she isn't *really* pro-life or pro-marriage – not beyond the level of feelings, she is not.You can't sing your way to a Christian worldview, Te-Beau. Somebody needs to hand T-Bonehead my list of courting questions. I can guarantee you that Miss Universe would not be able to answer any of them.

Pretty girls are always used to getting attention from men for free, they never have to do anything they don't feel like doing – and that is the exact opposite of what you need in a wife and mother of your children. Women who are less focused on their appearance actually have to care about helping and supporting a man in his plan to change the world with his marriage and family. So, they busy themselves before marriage getting STEM degrees, staying chaste, working with kids to practice, stay out of debt, building up a nest egg, and trying to make the society as Christian-friendly as possible through apologetics, activism, charity and political activism. She wants the world to be a safe place for a man to marry and raise a family in, and she wants to communicate to him through her serious decision-making that she will be a help to him, and not a loose cannon on deck.

Now I was going to tell you what all my good female friends on Facebook said, and here it is: all but one of them split the blame between Tebow and his girlfriend. They actually thought she was to blame in part!!!! That's ridiculous. Only one of them thought that he was entirely to blame and she is probably the smartest one. It goes without saying that she is studying computer science.

There is no shortcut to an effective Christian woman who takes the Bible seriously when making decisions about things like chastity. A marriage-minded man has to check her worldview and past actions, just like you check an job applicant's education and resume. Nobody hires a candidate to do a job based on attractiveness – not if the job is important. The job of a woman is not to make you feel good or to impress your friends with her looks. The job of a woman is wife and mother, and that is just as dependent on education

and resume as any other job. If a man is serious about getting a partner who will help help to actually accomplish something for God, he needs to do his thinking with his mind, not with his eyes.

William Lane Craig lectures on failure in the Christian life

November 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
I found this audio on Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 web site.

Here is the MP3 file.

And here is my summary.

Intro:

- the topic of failure is not one that is often discussed by Christians
- failure #1: failure in the Christian life which is the result of sin
- failure #2: when a Christian is defeated while trying to serve God
- the consequences for failure #1 can be worse for the Christian
- the consequences for failure #2 can be worse for the world as whole
- how is it possible for a person to fail when they are obeying God? (#2)
- how can it be that God can call someone to a task then let them fail?
- failure is not persecution – persecution is normal for Christians
- failure is not trials – testing is normal for Christians to grow

Bill's failure:

- Bill had submitted all the coursework for his second doctoral degree
- but he had to pass a comprehensive oral examination
- he failed to pass the comprehensive exam
- Bill and Jan and his supporters had all prayed for him to pass
- how could God allow this to happen?

Solution to the problem:

- God’s will for us may be that we fail at the things we try in life
- there are things that God may teach us through failure
- Bill learned that human relationships are more important than careers
- we need to realize that “success” in life is not worldly success
- true success is getting to know God well during your life
- and failure may be the best way to get to know God well
- it may even be possible to fail to know God while achieving a lot
- the real measure of a man is loving God and loving your fellow man

Practical:

- give thanks to God regardless of your circumstances
- try to learn from your failure
- never give up

The ending of Bill’s story:

- Bill spent an entire year preparing for a re-take of his exam
- Bill was awarded his second doctorate “magna cum laude” (with great distinction)
- Bill learned that American students are not well prepared for exams
- the year of studying remedied his inadequate American education
- in retrospect, he is thankful for the failure – he learned more

If you like this, you should pick up Craig’s book “Hard Questions, Real Answers“, which has a chapter on this problem.

Homeschooling family from Alabama gets 7 of their 10 kids into college by age 12

December 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

They call them the Brainy Bunch

Here's a wonderful story to cheer everyone up from the Christian Post.

They write:

> An impressive seven of 10 homeschooled children from a Christian family in Montgomery, Alabama, which now boasts a doctor and New York City architect among them, all started college by the time they were 12; and now their parents have written a book about how they managed to pull off such staggering academic success.
>
> The parents of the 10 children, Mona Lisa and Kip Harding, are described as high school sweethearts on a website dedicated to *The Brainy Bunch Book*.
>
> "After four kids, they decided to turn to homeschooling, and their success paved the way for their children to start college by the age of 12, and go on to great careers in medicine, engineering, architecture and more," explaines the website.
>
> **Hannah, 26, is the oldest Harding child. She earned her bachelor of science in mathematics from Auburn University Montgomery and a master's degree in mathematics by the time she was 19. She is now working on a PhD in material science.**
>
> **Rosanna, 24, is now an architect in New York City and became the youngest member in the American Institute of Architects at age 23. Serena, 22, earned her bachelor's degree in biology from Huntingdon College at 17, and became one of America's youngest female doctors at 22. She is now a resident at the Naval Hospital in Bethesda.**
>
> **Their brother Heath, 17, has an master's in computer science. He earned a BA in English at 15, and he is currently working at building his tutoring and online computer business. Keith, who is 15, is pursuing a**

> **bachelor's in music at Faulkner University. Seth, just 13, is a history major at Huntingdon College, while Katrinnah, 10, is a student at Faulkner University.**
> **Their other siblings, Mariannah, 8; Lorennah, 5, and Thunder, 3, are still being homeschooled.**
>
> In an interview with KSL Kip and Mona Lisa noted that their children aren't geniuses. They simply found a way to accelerate their learning by making it fun. One-on-one sessions with the mother who is working on her bachelor's degree at home also helped immensely.
>
> "One teacher has 30 students on average," said Kip. "We can do better than that. Kids get left behind in a classroom. … This is where homeschooling really takes off because those kids are getting extra attention. And who's more loving than a mom and dad teaching them things?"
>
> And for parents considering homeschooling, Mona Lisa had some sage advice.
>
> "I personally would like to tell the moms that if moms read, they can teach their child to read," she said.
>
> "Then their kids have the ability to teach themselves. I basically teach them to love reading and the basics of math, and from there, they can have a lot of their own answers. … The model at home is more a tutoring model."
>
> Despite their success, however, Kip acknowledged the importance of teachers in a traditional classroom setting.
>
> "Teaching is a hard job and teachers still have a place," said Kip. "But government money comes with strings attached. … We're just relying on God and he keeps coming through and it's working out well. Truly, we're just average."

Sigh! I would really like to have executed a plan like this, but before you can, you have to find a woman who thinks that marriage and children are more important than binge-drinking, hooking-up, and flying around the world to be photographed with malnourished children, etc. I think Christian men do have a plan for making their marriages into a project that gets results like this, but you can't do it unless you find a woman who is willing to do the work that's required. Finding one who wants to have kids and manage their progress so that they will have an influence in the world is much harder than it ought to be.

What's *your plan* to make a difference, Christian man?

Jay Richards: eight common myths about wealth, poverty and the free market

December 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Have you read Jay Richards' book "Money, Greed and God?" Because if you haven't, he's written a series of articles that summarize the main points of the book.

The index post is here.

Here are the posts in the series:

- Part 1: The Eight Most Common Myths about Wealth, Poverty, and Free Enterprise
- Part 2: Can't We Build A Just Society?
- Part 3: The Piety Myth
- Part 4: The Myth of the Zero Sum Game
- Part 5: Is Wealth Created or Transferred?
- Part 6: Is Free Enterprise Based on Greed?
- Part 7: Hasn't Christianity Always Opposed Free Enterprise?
- Part 8: Does Free Enterprise Lead to An Ugly Consumerist Culture?
- Part 9: Will We Use Up All Our Resources?
- Part 10: Are Markets An Example of Providence?

Parts 4 and 5 are my favorites. It's so hard to choose one to excerpt, but I must. I will choose… Part 4.

Here's the problem:

> **Myth #3: The Zero Sum Game Myth – believing that trade requires a winner and a loser.**
>
> One reason people believe this myth is because they misunderstand how

> economic value is determined. Economic thinkers with views as diverse as Adam Smith and Karl Marx believed economic value was determined by the labor theory of value. This theory stipulates that the cost to produce an object determines its economic value.
>
> According to this theory, if you build a house that costs you $500,000 to build, that house is worth $500,000. But what if no one can or wants to buy the house? Then what is it worth?
>
> Medieval church scholars put forth a very different theory, one derived from human nature: economic value is in the eye of the beholder. The economic value of an object is determined by how much someone is willing to give up to get that object. This is the subjective theory of value.

And here's an example of how to avoid the problem:

> How you determine economic value affects whether you view free enterprise as a zero-sum game, or a win-win game in which both participants benefit.
>
> Let's return to the example of the $500,000 house. As the developer of the house, you hire workers to build the house. You then sell it for more than $500,000. According to the labor theory of value, you have taken more than the good is actually worth. You've exploited the buyer and your workers by taking this surplus value. You win, they lose.
>
> Yet this situation looks different according to the subjective theory of value. Here, everybody wins. You market and sell the house for more than it cost to produce, but not more than customers will freely pay. The buyer is not forced to pay a cost he doesn't agree to. You are rewarded for your entrepreneurial effort. Your workers benefit, because you paid them the wages they agreed to when you hired them.
>
> This illustration brings up a couple important points about free enterprise that are often overlooked:
>
> **1. Free exchange is a win-win game**.
>
> In win-win games, some players may end up better off than others, but everyone ends up better off than they were at the beginning. As the developer, you might make more than your workers. Yet the workers determined they would be better off by freely exchanging their labor for wages, than if they didn't have the job at all.
>
> A free market doesn't guarantee that everyone wins in every competition. Rather, it allows many more win-win encounters than any other alternative.
>
> **2. The game is win-win because of rules set-up beforehand.**
>
> A free market is *not* a free-for-all in which everybody can do what they want. Any exchange must be free on both sides. Rule of law, contracts, and property rights are needed to ensure exchanges are conducted rightly. As the developer of the

> house, you'd be held accountable if you broke your contract and failed to pay workers what you promised.
>
> An exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game.

On this view, what you really need to fear as a consumer is government intervention that restricts your choices in the marketplace.

Free trade in the real world

This is not a theoretical problem, either. Millions of people in the Ukraine are protesting against Vladimir Putin and his restrictive Russian policies in order to get more economic freedom by signing a free trade deal with the European Union.

Rick Pearcey posted about it on the Pearcey Report:

> France24.com reports:
>
> Hundreds of thousands of protesters swarmed Ukraine's capital Kiev on Sunday, where the country's opposition leaders urged them to continue heaping pressure on President Viktor Yanukovich to sack his government and abandon plans for closer ties with Russia.
>
> Many of the demonstrators who gathered at the city's central Independence Square are furious with the government over its decision to back out of a historic agreement with the European Union in favour of a possible trade deal with Russia, Ukraine's Soviet-era ruler.
>
> The protest . . . is just the latest sign of mounting tensions in Ukraine over the past two weeks, raising fears over the country's political and economic stability.

That's a real crisis: freedom-loving people fighting for their right to be prosperous by adopting the economic policies that produce wealth.

If you care about poverty, it's often tempting to think that it can only be solved one way – by transferring wealth from the rich to the poor. But that is a very mistaken view, as any economist will tell you. The right way to create prosperity is by creating laws and policies that unleash individual creativity. Letting individuals create innovative products and services, letting them keep what they earn, making sure that the law doesn't punish entrepreneurs – that incentivizes wealth creation. Fixing poverty does not mean transferring wealth, it means giving people more freedom to create wealth on their own. Free trade between nations is an important way that we encourage people to create better products and services that what they have available in their own countries.

Economists agree on the benefits of free trade

Who could possibly disagree with free trade? Well, many people on the left do. They favor imposing restrictions on free trade. For example, people on the left favor making those who import goods pay tariffs, which makes it harder to trade with other nations. People on the left want to pass rent control laws to block landlords and tenants from trading more freely. People on the left want to pass minimum wage laws that block employers

and workers from trading wages for labor more freely. But economists generally don't agree with any of restrictions on free trade. In fact, *even across the ideological spectrum*, the majority of economists view free trade as a wealth creating policy, and restrictions on free trade as a wealth destroying policy.

Harvard economist Greg Mankiw explains what most professional economists agree on.

Excerpt:

> Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:
>
> 1. **A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)**
> 2. **Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)**
> 3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
> 4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
> 5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
> 6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
> 7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
> 8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
> 9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
> 10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
> 11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
> 12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
> 13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
> 14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

Now when you are talking to a Democrat, you are talking to someone who disagrees with most or all of those common sense economic policies. For example, Obama's backers in the labor movement inevitably endorse higher import tariffs, which discourage free trade between countries. No economist supports these tariffs on imports, because history has shown (e.g. – Smoot-Hawley Act) that tariffs destroy economic growth and reduce wealth creation. And that's what I mean when I talk about economic illiteracy – I mean ignoring

what we know from economics and our own experience with bad policies when we make policy.

Democrat economic policies don’t work because they are making policies that are based on economic myths. We know that these myths are myths because of economics is a mathematical science, and because we have tried good and bad policies in different times and places. We have calculations and we have experience to know what works and what doesn’t work. If you want to help the poor, you have to respect what economists know about how wealth is created. The solution is not to “spread the wealth around”, it’s to encourage people to create more wealth by inventing things that people freely choose to buy.

If you accept Jesus and become a Christian, will God make you happy?

December 1, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Navy SEAL Matthew "Axe" Axelson

This is a wonderful, wonderful post from Amy Hall, who writes for the Stand to Reason blog.

She writes:

> I had a brief interaction with an atheist on Twitter a couple of weeks ago that unexpectedly turned to the issue of suffering when she said:
>
> You clearly never had a time you were hurt. I don't mean sick. I don't mean heart broken. I mean literally a near death experience or rape or abusive relationship…. You can keep floating on a [expletive] cloud thinking Jesus will do everything for you but it's a lie. What makes you so special?
>
> That surprised me at first because it didn't seem to have anything to do with the tweet she was responding to, and I was confused as to why she would assume I'd never been through anything traumatic. But then in subsequent tweets, when she revealed she had been raped, it became clear that her trauma had played a central role in her becoming an outspoken, obviously angry "antitheist." She's a self-described antitheist now because she thinks Christianity teaches Jesus "will do everything for you" to give you a perfect life, and now she knows that's a lie. The rape proved her understanding of Christianity false.
>
> So it made sense for her to reason that since I believe Christianity is true, I must still be under the delusion that Jesus is making my life special, which means I obviously never encountered any evil or suffering to shake that delusion.

All right, readers. I don't want any of you to be thinking that if you become a Christian that these things should be expected to happen:

- you will feel happy all the time

- you will be able to sense God's secret plan for your life through your feelings
- God's secret plan for your life will automatically work, even though it's crazy
- God will give you a perfect spouse and lots of money without you having to do any work
- you get permission to do things that that make you happy, even if they are expressly forbidden by the Bible
- you don't have to do anything that makes you feel bad (e.g. – go to work), because God wants you to be happy

No! Where do people get this idea that if they convert to Christianity, then God will become their cosmic butler?

Amy has the answer: (emphasis mine)

> Hear me, everyone: **This is a failure of the church.**
>
> A friend of mine who was deeply suffering once said to me that many Christians are in for "an epic letdown" when they realize their preconceived notions about what God is expected to do for us are false. Pastors who preach a life-improvement Jesus are leading people down this precarious path to disillusionment.
>
> If suffering disproves your Christianity, you've missed Christianity. The Bible is filled with the suffering of those whom God loves. The central event of the Bible is one of suffering. Love involves suffering. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." That means suffering.

It's the church. It's all the singing about happy things and having of happy feelings and happy preaching designed to make us feel good. I would say the comforting devotional reading doesn't help to make us any tougher or more practical, either. People seem to use Bible study and devotion as a way to artificially create good feelings of happiness, peace and comfort, instead of just *doing hard things to serve God*. I don't think it's a "spiritual" Christian thing to read A. W. Tozer, etc. just so that you can feel comforted and spiritual. That stuff just gives you a false sense of safety about your precarious situation. God's job is not to prevent you from suffering. In fact, even if you make really smart, practical decisions, you can expect to get creamed *anyway*.

Please take 15 minutes and read the book of 1 Peter in the New Testament.

Here's a summary from GotQuestions.org:

> **Purpose of Writing:** 1 Peter is a letter from Peter to the believers who had been dispersed throughout the ancient world and were under intense persecution. If anyone understood persecution, it was Peter. He was beaten, threatened, punished and jailed for preaching the Word of God. He knew what it took to endure without bitterness, without losing hope and in great faith living an obedient, victorious life. This knowledge of living hope in Jesus was the message

> and Christ's example was the one to follow.
>
> **Brief Summary:** Though this time of persecution was desperate, Peter reveals that it was actually a time to rejoice. He says to count it a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ, as their Savior suffered for them. This letter makes reference to Peter's personal experiences with Jesus and his sermons from the book of Acts. Peter confirms Satan as the great enemy of every Christian but the assurance of Christ's future return gives the incentive of hope.
>
> **Practical Application:** The assurance of eternal life is given to all Christians. One way to identify with Christ is to share in His suffering. To us that would be to endure insults and slurs from those who call us "goodie two shoes" or "holier than thou." This is so minor compared to what Christ suffered for us on the Cross. Stand up for what you know and believe is right and rejoice when the world and Satan aim to hurt you.

Recently, I blogged about how suffering is compatible with an all-powerful God, so you might want to read that too if you missed it.

Is Donald Trump's claim about Muslims celebrating 9/11 in New Jersey accurate?

December 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump at a beauty pageant

Now, nobody is going to say that this blog or its author are soft on radical Islam. But that doesn't mean that every accusation against Muslims is automatically correct.

Donald Trump says that Muslims celebrated after the 9/11 terrorist attack in New Jersey. Is he right?

Well, here's the fact-check from the non-partisan The Hill.

Excerpt:

> As Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump continues to offer newspaper clippings and soundbites he says are proof of his claim that he saw "thousands and thousands" of Muslim Americans cheering the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, in the streets of New Jersey, the TV network responsible for the rumor is stepping in to debunk it.
>
> Digging deep into its archives, MTV News uncovered the Nov. 17, 2001, clip credited with launching the "celebrating Muslims" claim and re-released it in a short video titled "Trump Is Wrong About People 'Cheering' 9/11 In New Jersey — Here's The Evidence."
>
> In the footage, a young Patterson, N.J., resident named Emily Acevedo is seen describing a group of teenagers — "13, maybe 14 at most" — chanting and banging sticks and stones on public property in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. "They were saying 'burn Amerca' and, you know, all these things about America."
>
> […]Revisiting the events of that night 14 years later, Acevedo tells MTV what she saw was "not anything different than what would've happened on any other summer night, on any other day where school was let out early." She said she did not recall saying in 2001 that the teens were chanting "burn America."

> “I don’t recall them or hearing the kids say ‘burn America.’ If anything, they were problably saying ‘burn something’ but not ‘burn America.’ “

Why can’t Trump admit that he was wrong about this?

Trump did a radio interview with moderate Republican Hugh Hewitt on Tuesday night. I think the interview was a good opportunity for Trump to explain his knowledge of foreign policy. So how did it go?

The MP3 file is here.

And here is a sample from the transcript:

> HH: Let me switch over to national security. I always ask you this question, Donald Trump. Are you ready to roll out your national security advisory team, yet?
>
> DT: Well, I’m meeting with people. We’re going to let you know over the next two or three weeks who they are. I think they want to be known, but I’m meeting with people. I have, you know, I feel I have a very good grasp of national security. You know, and you and I have not discussed this, but I wrote a book, The America We Deserve. And in the book, I mentioned Osama bin Laden.
>
> HH: We did. We did talk about that once.
>
> DT: Okay.
>
> HH: And you were way ahead of the time.
>
> DT: And you know, a lot of people are saying well, Trump mentioned that in his book before the World Trade Center came down, two years before the World Trade Center came down. I said you’ve got to get him, and he was a guy that was just a nasty guy talking big stuff. And I said you’d better get him, you’d better watch out for him. I didn’t like him, and you know, it was mentioned. I talked about terrorism before terrorism was terrorism.
>
> HH: But I’d like to know your generals.
>
> DT: And that got some current from some people.
>
> HH: I’d love, you know, like Ben Carson has General Dees, and other people have different generals advising them. Have you got any two-stars, three-stars, four-stars that are going to sign up with Trump?
>
> DT: The answer is yes. Oh, yes, I do. Yes, I do.
>
> HH: And when do we get them, because I want to talk to them.
>
> DT: I would say within the next three to four weeks.
>
> HH: Terrific.
>
> DT: And I’m working with them, and I’m, you know, I feel I have a very good grasp. One of them said wow, you really understand foreign policy, and you really understand military policy. A general told me that. He was shocked, actually, if you want to know the truth, because he assumes that I’m, you know, really great

> at real estate, and really good at deals, but I really do have an understanding of that, and I know what to do. And I see what's happening, and I listen to some of our so-called experts on television, and it makes you nauseous to listen to them, because they don't know what they're talking about. So you know, I think it actually could end up, you know, every poll shows that I'm the best on leadership, I'm the best on the economy, I'm the best on the borders, and you know, and the best on terrorism. Some people have me as the best on the military. I think the military is going to be a very strong point if I win. I think the military is going to be a strong point, Hugh.

Hugh has been asking him that question for *months*, and the answer is always "soon, soon".

WhenI look at Trump's record, and I don't see actions that cause me to believe that he is interested in foreign policy. He acted on some TV shows, but he hasn't got the credibility on these issues that I am looking for in a President. The Presidency is not an entry-level job. There is no time for training. We already had 8 years of someone with no experience and no ability who could talk a good game, and that cost us dearly. Let's pick someone who actually has experience in these matters. Ted Cruz or Marco Rubio would both work for me, but I much prefer Ted Cruz.

Is Darwinist P.Z. Myers right to say that the appendix is vestigial?

December 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

First, let's hear prominent atheist P. Z. Myers, who believes in Darwinism, explain why he thinks that the appendix is a useless vestigial organ leftover from an unguided, random process of evolution:

> The appendix in humans, for instance, *is* a vestigial organ, despite all the insistence by creationists and less-informed scientists that finding expanded local elements of the immune system means it isn't. An organ is vestigial if it is reduced in size or utility compared to homologous organs in other animals, and another piece of evidence is if it exhibits a wide range of variation that suggests that those differences have no selective component. **That you can artificially reduce the size of an appendix by literally cutting it out, with no effect on the individual (other than that they survive a potentially acute and dangerous inflammation) tells us that these are vestigial.**

Got that? You can cut out the appendix and it has "no effect on the individual".

Now let's look at the peer-reviewed science, so we can get the truth of the matter.

My good friend Joe Coder told me about this article from the Melbourne Herald Sun.

Excerpt:

> MELBOURNE scientists have discovered new proof that the appendix — the often-removed organ once thought to be redundant — can be crucial to digestive health.
>
> Researchers from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute have shown how a group of immune cells team up with the appendix to protect the gut during infection.
>
> They work together during bouts of food poisoning and other bacterial illnesses, and also help boost the immune systems of cancer patients.
>
> Lead researcher Professor Gabrielle Belz, a laboratory head from WEHI's

> molecular immunology division, said about 70,000 Australians have their appendix removed every year — making it one of the most common surgical procedures.
>
> “Popular belief tells us the appendix is a liability,” Prof Belz said.
>
> “However, we may wish to rethink whether the appendix is irrelevant for our health.”
>
> Prof Belz said surgeons no longer removed the appendix “at the first drop of a hat”, reserving surgery for more serious cases of appendicitis.
>
> The new research, led by Prof Belz and leading French immunologist Prof Eric Vivier, has shown that innate lymphoid cells (ILCs) shield the appendix from harmful bacteria.
>
> This allows the small organ to act as a safe haven for “good” bacteria, which could then “reseed” the intestines and restore the health of the digestive system.
>
> Prof Belz, whose research was published today in *Nature Immunology* journal, said ILCs offered an added layer of immune protection for healthy people.
>
> But they were vital in fighting bacterial infections in people with compromised immune systems, such as cancer patients, Prof Belz said.
>
> “This is particularly important because ILCs are able to survive in the gut even during (cancer) treatments, which typically wipe out other immune cells,” she said.
>
> Prof Belz said that ability of ILCs to withstand chemotherapy also opened up “new avenues of investigation” for cancer treatment.

This expands on a previous study reported by the Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> The appendix “acts as a good safe house for bacteria,” said Duke surgery professor Bill Parker, a study co-author. Its location — just below the normal one-way flow of food and germs in the large intestine in a sort of gut cul-de-sac — helps support the theory, he said. Also, the worm-shaped organ outgrowth acts like a bacteria factory, cultivating the good germs, Parker said. That use is not needed in a modern industrialized society, Parker said. If a person’s gut flora dies, it can usually be repopulated easily with germs they pick up from other people, he said. But before dense populations in modern times and during epidemics of cholera that affected a whole region, it wasn’t as easy to grow back that bacteria and the appendix came in handy.

Evolution News comments:

> […][A] few months back David Klinghoffer reported that researchers in the journal *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology* found:
>
> > Individuals without an appendix were four times more likely to have a

> > recurrence of *Clostridium difficile*, [a pathogen common in hospitals,] exactly as Parker's hypothesis predicted. Recurrence in individuals with their appendix intact occurred in 11% of cases. Recurrence in individuals without their appendix occurred in 48% of cases.
>
> In other words, the appendix performs important immune-related functions. Thus, the appendix is not there to occasionally explode. With the appendix increasingly considered to be an important organ that you wouldn't want to lose, researchers have also found that antibiotics can cure many cases of appendicitis (see Eriksson *et al.*, 2006).

Look, everyone has to decide whether they want to believe in religion or whether they want to believe in science. I understand that some people want to assume a religion of naturalism, and then try to fit reality into that pre-supposed dogma. But I don't think that's the right way to develop an accurate view of reality. We should follow the scientific evidence wherever it leads, and we should seek the truth – no holds barred.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Robert Gagnon debates gay activist Jayne Ozanne on Bible vs homosexuality

December 2, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I am tempted to say that this is the best podcast I have ever heard on the Unbelievable show. Do anything you have to do in order to listen to this podcast.

Details:

> Prof Robert Gagnon has become a well-known voice advocating the traditional biblical view on sexuality. In a highly charged show he debates the scriptural issues on sexuality with Jayne Ozanne, the director of Accepting Evangelicals who came out as gay earlier this year.

The MP3 file is here.

If you can only listen for 15 minutes, then start at 49 minutes in and listen from there.

The following summary is rated MUP for made-up paraphrase. Reader discretion is advised.

Summary:

Intro:

- Speaker introductions
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree that the Bible doesn't support it
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree Jesus taught male-female marriage
- Ozanne: I went to the hospital because I was sick from trying to suppress my gay desires
- Ozanne: Doctors told me that I would die if I didn't act on my gay desires
- Ozanne: I decided to reinterpret the Bible to fit with my gay desires

- Ozanne: According to my new interpretation, Jesus actually supports my gay desires

Segment 1: Genesis

- Ozanne: In Genesis the Bible says that Adam needs a woman to complete him
- Ozanne: I reinterpret this to mean that Adam needed a “complementarian human being”
- Ozanne: Genesis doesn’t say whether Eve was complemented by Adam in that chapter
- Ozanne: It’s not critical that men are complemented by women, a man could complement a man
- Ozanne: Genesis 2 doesn’t talk about children, it’s all about adult needs from a relationship
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 has never been interpreted that way in all of history
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language specifically implies a human being who is opposite/different
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language translates to complement or counterpart
- Gagnon: Genesis as a whole teaches that the sexuality is for male and female natures
- Gagnon: The extraction of something from the man that is given to the woman is complementarian
- Ozanne: I think that people can be complementary outside of male-female Genesis language
- Ozanne: I don’t want to discuss specific words and texts and Greek meanings
- Gagnon: the text has always been read and interpreted to support male/female complementarity
- Gagnon: the male-female nature argument is made because the two natures are complementary
- Ozanne: the text was interpreted by patriarchal males who treated women like property, it’s biased
- Ozanne: what is important to me is how Christ interprets Genesis (?? how does she know that?)
- Ozanne: I am passionate about my interpretation of Scripture which supports my gay desires
- Gagnon: just because a person is passionate about their interpretation it doesn’t make it right
- Gagnon: I am not arguing for the male-female view based on passion, but on scholarship, evidence and history
- Ozanne: both sides are equally passionate about their interpretations (?? so both are equally warranted?)
- Ozanne: the real question is why God “allowed” two different interpretations of Scripture

Segment 2: Is homosexuality a sin?

- Gagnon: Jesus affirmed traditional sexual morality, which forbids homosexuality
- Gagnon: Jesus teaches that marriage is male-female, and limited to two people
- Gagnon: No one in history has interpreted the Bible to say that homosexuality was not immoral
- Ozanne: Jesus came to bring life, and that means he supports homosexuality
- Ozanne: I was dying, and embracing my gay desires allowed me to live, so Jesus approves of me
- Ozanne: God says "I am who I am" and that means he approves of me doing whatever I want
- Ozanne: There is an imperative to be who I am, and that means embracing my gay desires
- Gagnon: Jesus argued that the twoness of the sexual bond is based on the twoness of the sexes
- Gagnon: Jesus did not come to gratify people's innate desires, he called people to repent of sin
- Gagnon: Jesus did reach out to sinners but he never condoned the sins they committed
- Gagnon: Jesus' outreach to tax collectors collecting too much and sexual sinners is the same: STOP SINNING
- Ozanne: I don't think that Romans 1 is talking about homosexuality
- Ozanne: I think it's talking about sexual addiction, not loving, committed gay relationships
- Ozanne: Paul was condemning pederasty in Romans 1, not loving, long-term, consensual sexual relationships between gay adults
- Gagnon: nothing in the passage limits the condemnation to pederasty
- Gagnon: the passage was never interpreted to be limited to pederasty in history
- Gagnon: rabbis and church fathers knew about committed two-adult same-sex relationships, and said they were wrong
- Gagnon: the argument for marriage is based on the broad two-nature argument, with no exceptions
- Gagnon: the condemnation is not limited to exploitative / coercive / lustful / uncommitted relationships
- Gagnon: even pro-gay scholars agree the passage cannot be interpreted Ozanne's way (he names two)

Segment 3: The showdown (49:00)

- Ozanne: I don't care how many pages people have written on this
- Ozanne: God says that "the wisdom of the wise I will frustrate" so you can't use scholars, even pro-gay scholars, to argue against my passionate interpretation
- Ozanne: I am not interested in the text or history or scholarship or even pro-gay

scholars who agree with you
- Ozanne: what decides the issue for me is my mystical feelings about God's love which makes my sexual desires moral
- Ozanne: you are certain that this is wrong, but your view does not "give life" to people
- Ozanne: your scholarship and historical analysis is "a message of death" that causes teenagers to commit suicide (= you are evil and a meany, Robert)
- Ozanne: "I pray for you and your soul" (= opposing me will land you in Hell) and "I hope that listeners will listen with their hearts" (?? instead of their minds?)
- Ozanne: you can prove anything you want with research, even two mutually exclusive conclusions, so you shouldn't rely on scholarship and research since it could be used to prove my view as well
- Ozanne: instead of relying on research, you should rely on your heart and your feelings about God's love to decide what the Bible teaches about sexual morality
- Gagnon: you are distorting the gospel in order to make your case
- Gagnon: attacking my "certainty" is an ad hominem attack to cover your dismissmal of the scholarship and history
- Gagnon: you distort the gospel to make it seem like Christ just wants us to get what we want, when we want it, with who we want it with
- Gagnon: Christ calls us to take up our cross, to lose our lives and to deny ourselves
- Gagnon: you have a notion of what "fullness of life" is, but it's not reflective of the gospel
- Gagnon: Paul's life was much more troubling than yours, mine or anyone else around here
- Gagnon: Paul was beaten, whipped, stoned, poorly sheltered, poorly clothed, poorly fed, shipwrecked, and anxious for his churches
- Gagnon: on your view, he should have been miserable and angry with God all the time
- Gagnon: but instead Paul was constantly thankful and rejoicing to be able to suffer with Jesus and look forward to the resurrection
- Gagnon: I have suffered too, but the suffering we go through never provides us with a license to violate the commandments of God
- Ozanne: "the ultimate thing is what people feel God has called them to"
- Ozanne: My goal right now is to tell young people that homosexuality is fine so they don't commit suicide
- Ozanne: the view that homosexuality is wrong is "evil and misguided"
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm in the gay community are intrinsic to homosexual unions, not caused by external disapproval of homosexuality

Segment 4: Concluding statements

- Gagnon: gay male relationships on average have more sex partners and more STDs
- Gagnon: female relationships on average have shorter-length relationships and

more mental issues
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm are because there is no complementarity / balance in the relationships
- Gagnon: everyone has some disappointment or suffering in their lives that hurts them, and that they are tempted to break the rules to fix, but we should not break the rules in order to be happy
- Ozanne: both sides are passionate, so no one can be right, and evidence proves nothing
- Ozanne: only feelings about “what God is doing” can allow us to decide what counts as sin or not
- Ozanne: the main thing that is at stake here is to make people like us, not to decide what the Bible says about sin
- Ozanne: my message to people is to do whatever you want, and ignore mean people who don’t affirm you
- Ozanne: we should be more opposed to mean people who make non-Christians feel unloved than about doing what the Bible says

San Bernardino shooter indentified: Syed R. Farook

December 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Blaze says this is Syed Farook
(Photo credit: The Blaze, H/T Breitbart)

The Washington Times reports:

> Syed R. Farook has been identified by multiple news outlets as one of the suspects in the San Bernardino mass shooting that ended in the death of one male and one female suspect in a gunfight with police.
>
> A source told NBC News that Mr. Farook's brother also is believed to be a suspect.
>
> The Los Angeles Times, citing two law enforcement sources, reported that Syed Farook was the deceased male suspect, though the identity of the dead woman remained unknown.
>
> The paper, citing public records, wrote that a Syed R. Farook was an environmental health specialist for the San Bernardino County government, though the paper cautioned that it might not be the same person as the suspect.
>
> According to the New York Daily News, Mr. Farook's father, whom the paper did not name, confirmed in an interview that his son inspected restaurants and hotels for health violations, and was married with a child.
>
> **He also identified his son as "very religious. He would go to work, come back, go to pray, come back. He's Muslim."**

> Gunmen killed 14 people and wounded another 17 at an office party for the county's public health department. According to San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan, there was an altercation that prompted someone to leave in anger.
>
> Some news outlets reported that the angry person came back with one or more armed friends to carry out the attack.
>
> "Someone did leave, there was some type of dispute at the party but we have no idea if those are the people who came back," Chief Burguan said.
>
> It was unclear Wednesday night how many gunmen committed the attack — witness and victim accounts varied from one to three.

The leftist Daily Beast has more on the suspect:

> Farook, who also went by his middle name, Raheel, was a business taxes representative for the California State Board of Equalization, according to his LinkedIn profile. He is a 2003 graduate La Sierra High School, and most recently studied finance at California State University Fullerton until 2013.
>
> Records show Farook bought a two bedroom Corona home in March 2014. Farouk's social media profile shows he is married and has at least one young child. His wife did not return messages left on Wednesday.
>
> Farook lived at a home with his wife and children in Corona, California. The Daily Beast knocked on the home's door and was met by a man who said, "My name is Farook." When asked if he knew Sayed, the man said, "Of course I know him but I have nothing to say." When asked about Syed being named as a suspect, he said, "I have nothing to say."
>
> Behind Farook, was a brightly lit home with low-slung sectional couches and boxes for appliances. The smell of basmati rice cooking came wafting through the door. A set of womens sandals sat outside of the security door.
>
> Five minutes after he answered the door, Farook got into a white car and drove away, answering questions again with, "I have nothing to say."
>
> The Daily Beast contacted Farooq's sister, Saira Khan, by phone on Wednesday shortly after the shooting. She said the media was jumping to conclusions on identifying the suspect and said that her brother was at work. Khan said she would try to get in touch with her brother and pass along his contact information.

So, he has a degree, so he isn't uneducated. He has a job, so he isn't poor. He works for the government, so he's not some sort of anti-government person. It's possible that this could be an instance of workplace violence, but two factors seem to weigh against that. First, there were three people involved, and workplace violence almost always involves a lone bad actor. Second, workplace violence people don't have pipe bombs, AK-74 rifles and military clothing ready to go. It seems to me more likely that Syed was part of something bigger than mere workplace violence. How did he get his hands on AK-74 rifles

and pipe bombs? Where did he learn to make these explosives?

It will be interesting to see how the Democrats try to spin this one. Will they say that the violence was caused by global warming, as Democrat Bernie Sanders often argues? Or will they say that it was caused by unemployment, as the State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said? Maybe they will say that government needs to disarm law-abiding citizens, in order to protect them from criminals? Who knows, we'll have to see what they say tomorrow.

Related posts

- CNN: San Bernadino shooter in contact with suspected Islamic terrorists
- What percentage of Muslims approve of radical Islam and terrorism?
- Democrats admit 10,000 Syrian refugees to USA, with 200,000 more on the way
- Mark Steyn on Paris terrorist attacks: the barbarians are inside the gates
- Iran side deal allows Iran to inspect its own nuclear weapons site
- Islamic terrorists murder nearly 150 mostly Christian students in Kenya
- Obama traded 5 Taliban commanders for a soldier now accused of desertion
- Study: creating jobs in poor countries doesn't reduce terrorism
- Islamic terrorists murder hundreds of innocent people in Nigeria
- Should we use waterboarding to stop terrorist attacks against schools in Pakistan?
- Democrat leak of counter-terrorism secrets endangers Americans and alienates our allies
- Middle East charities pay bounties to the families of Muslim suicide bombers
- Christian woman tells Congress how Boko Haram murdered her father and brother
- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- At least 75 Christians killed by Muslim suicide bombers in Pakistan

Minnesota’s Somali population supplies Islamic State with fighters

December 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trust Obama with national security and foreign policy
This is from the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> If you get your news from the headlines, you can be excused for thinking that “Minnesota men” pose a special risk of taking up the terrorist jihad at home and abroad. As the *Wall Street Journal* reported this past April, for example, “U.S. charges six Minnesota men with trying to join ISIS.” The “Minnesota men” featured in such headlines are almost invariably drawn from Minnesota’s swelling population of Somali Muslim immigrants. The state—mostly the metropolitan Twin Cities area—is home to 35,000 such immigrants, the largest Somali population in North America.
>
> Starting in the 1990s, the State Department directed thousands of refugees from Somalia’s civil war to Minnesota. As Kelly Riddell pointed out in the *Washington Times*this past February, in Minnesota these refugees “can take advantage of some of America’s most generous welfare and charity programs.” Riddell quoted Professor Ahmed Samatar of Macalester College in St. Paul: “Minnesota is exceptional in so many ways but it’s the closest thing in the United States to a true social democratic state.” After a dip in 2008, the inflow of Somalis has continued unabated and augmented by Somalis from other states. If it takes a village, Minnesota has what it takes.
>
> **Unfortunately, according to a September report of the House Homeland Security Committee task force on combating terrorist and foreign fighter travel, Minnesota also leads the country in contributing foreign**

> **fighters to ISIS. Reviewing the public cases of 58 Americans who had joined or attempted to join ISIS, the task force found that 26 percent of them came from Minnesota. When it comes to exports to ISIS, we're number one.**

But I thought that the government was serious about terrorism, and we could trust them to do a great job of screening out terrorists? After all, isn't Obama doing a great job on illegal immigration? Isn't he doing a great job cracking down on sanctuary cities? He puts the security of ordinary Americans first – doesn't he?

Well….

> President Obama on Tuesday compared the threat posed by climate change to that of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), saying they require a similar kind of response.
>
> The comments, during a news conference at climate talks in Paris, double down on the controversial position of his administration that climate change is as bad as terrorism, if not worse.
>
> "In some ways, [climate change] is akin to the problem of terrorism and ISIL," Obama said, using an alternate acronym for the terror group.Both threats, Obama said, require a long, sustained effort by the United States to assess and neutralize them.
>
> The administration has long maintained that the effects of climate change — like rising sea levels, extreme weather, drought and crop problems — could create more harm and unrest than terrorism, and require a similar response.
>
> Republicans have overwhelmingly dismissed the idea and excoriated Obama for understating the threat of terrorism and not taking it seriously.
>
> Obama's comments came weeks after the ISIS killed 130 people in a series of coordinated gun and bomb attacks in Paris in one of the deadliest attacks perpetrated by the extremist group.

Oh dear. We really are being led by a deluded nutcase, aren't we? And yet, the geniuses on the secular left are 100% behind this unqualified, incompetent clown. They believe him. I guess they are used to deluding themselves… what's one more delusion?

CNN: San Bernadino shooter in contact with suspected Islamic terrorists

December 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is from the radically leftist CNN, of all places.

I heard CNN trying to blame the shooting on violent video games ("maybe he played too much Call of Duty") yesterday. But today they decided to do some journalism for a change:

> Syed Rizwan Farook — one-half of the couple behind the San Bernardino shooting massacre — was apparently radicalized and in touch with people being investigated by the FBI for international terrorism, law enforcement officials said Thursday.

> Farook's apparent radicalization contributed to his role in the mass shooting, with his wife Tashfeen Malik, of 14 people on Wednesday during a holiday party for the San Bernardino County health department, where Farook worked, sources said.
>
> **[…]Farook traveled to Saudi Arabia for several weeks in 2013 on the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca that Muslims are required to take at least once in their lifetime, which didn't raise red flags, said two government officials. It was during this trip that he met Malik, a native of Pakistan who came to the United States on a "fiancée visa" and later became a lawful permanent resident.**
>
> **Officials had previously said that neither Farook and Malik were known to the FBI or on a list of potentially radicalized people. Nor had they had any known interactions with police until Wednesday's deadly shootout that culminated in their deaths.**

> **Yet Farook himself had communicated by phone and via social media with more than one person being investigated for terrorism, law enforcement officials said. A separate U.S. government official said the 28-year-old has "overseas communications and associations."**

Breitbart News reports on Obama's reaction to these facts:

> President Barack Obama says that it's possible yesterday's attack in California, where two people killed 14 and injured 17 others, was terrorist related. But he's also holding out the possibility it was workplace violence.
>
> "It is possible that this is terrorist-related, but we don't know; it is also possible this was workplace-related," Obama said, adding, "we don't know why they did it."

> Obama added that it was important to understand the "nature of the workplace relationship" between the individuals to fully understand the attacks, raising the possibility that it could be "mixed motives" for the attacks.
>
> […]The president's remarks show he still hasn't changed his tone since he first reacted to the event as a another mass shooting in the United States.

Obama thinks it might be "workplace violence" again? That's what he said about Major Nidal Hasan, who was also in touch with radical Islamic terrorists before his terrorist attack at Fort Hood.

Workplace violence?

Time magazine reports that their house was full of bullets and explosives:

> The married couple whose shooting rampage left 14 dead and 21 wounded at a social work centerin San Bernardino, Calif. had filled their home with thousands of bullets and hundreds of tools to make bombs, authorities said Thursday.
>
> Syed Rizwan Farook and his wife Tashfeen Malik had enough ammunition to pose a further threat had they not been killed, according to San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan.
>
> "Clearly they were equipped and they could have done another attack," Burguan said.
>
> The couple had than 1,400 rifle rounds and 200 9-mm handgun bullets with them as police hunted them down. Authorities found 12 pipe bombs and "hundreds of tools" to make more explosives at their home at Redlands.
>
> Investigators also found nearly 5,000 more bullets and several hundred long-rifle rounds at the home, according to police.
>
> […]The FBI said it's investigating whether the suspects' IED designs came from Al-Qaeda's "Inspire" magazine.

Workplace violence? What planet is Obama living on? And this isn't the first time that he's pulled this stupidity, either.

Remember, the Obama administration describes Islamic terrorism as "senseless violence". Democrats describe shootings my Muslims at army bases as "workplace violence". Democrats describe attacks on Israeli civilians as "random violence". Democrats called shooting at Jews in France "random". Democrats describe investigations about the Benghazi terrorist attack a "sideshow", after they lied and tried to say the attack was a spontaneous reaction to a video. And this is the party that more than half of our country votes for at election time. The State Departmentsays that radical Islam's root cause is that we don't give them "job opportunities".

Meanwhile, the Democrats are hard at work protecting us from… global warming?

Barack Obama says that fighting global warming is a rebuke to Islamic terrorism

CNS News explains the Democrat response to Islamic terrorism:

> Not radical Muslim terrorism, not an unsecured border, not an ever-growing federal debt that now exceeds $18 trillion, not the fact that 109 million live in households on federal welfare programs. These are not the greatest threats facing us today.
>
> "No challenge–no challenge–poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change," President Obama declared in his State of the Union Address on Tuesday night.
>
> […]President Obama then said that the U.S. military is saying that "climate change" is causing immediate risks to our national security–although he did not explain exactly what this meant or how the "Pentagon" had arrived at this conclusion.
>
> "The Pentagon says that climate change poses immediate risks to our national security," said Obama. "We should act like it."

As Secretary of State in the Obama administration, Hillary Clinton pledged $100 billion a year of American taxpayer money to help other countries combat global warming. That's the real priority, you understand.

The cost of political correctness

And lest you think that it is harmless when Democrats call people "racist" for pointing out the links between Islam and terrorism, read this article from CBS News: (H/T Sooper Mexican)

> Neighbors in Redlands were shocked that the suspects had ties to their area.

> “I was in awe that it was happening four houses down from my property,” one neighbor said.
>
> A man who has been working in the area said he noticed a half-dozen Middle Eastern men in the area in recent weeks, but decided not to report anything since he did not wish to racially profile those people.
>
> “We sat around lunch thinking, ‘What were they doing around the neighborhood?’” he said. “We’d see them leave where they’re raiding the apartment.”

Should we really be trusting Democrats to keep us safe? Are they really capable of calling evil “evil”, or does their ideology force them to call Americans evil, and America’s enemies good?

Related posts

- Minnesota’s Somali population supplies Islamic State with fighters
- What percentage of Muslims approve of radical Islam and terrorism?
- Democrats admit 10,000 Syrian refugees to USA, with 200,000 more on the way
- Mark Steyn on Paris terrorist attacks: the barbarians are inside the gates
- Iran side deal allows Iran to inspect its own nuclear weapons site
- Islamic terrorists murder nearly 150 mostly Christian students in Kenya
- Obama traded 5 Taliban commanders for a soldier now accused of desertion
- Study: creating jobs in poor countries doesn’t reduce terrorism
- Islamic terrorists murder hundreds of innocent people in Nigeria
- Should we use waterboarding to stop terrorist attacks against schools in Pakistan?
- Democrat leak of counter-terrorism secrets endangers Americans and alienates our allies
- Middle East charities pay bounties to the families of Muslim suicide bombers
- Christian woman tells Congress how Boko Haram murdered her father and brother
- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- At least 75 Christians killed by Muslim suicide bombers in Pakistan

Who wrote the gospels? When were they written? Are they based on eyewitnesses?

December 3, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at the data

Mike Licona is one of my favorite Christian historians, and so I'm going to rely on him to answer the questions in this post. He explains why the four biographies in the New Testament should be accepted as historically accurate: (55 minutes)

Summary:

- What a Baltimore Ravens helmet teaches us about the importance of truth
- What happens to Christians when they go off to university?
- The 2007 study on attitudes of American professors to evangelical Christians
- Authors: Who wrote the gospels?
- Bias: Did the bias of the authors cause them to distort history?
- Contradictions: What about the different descriptions of events in the gospels?
- Dating: When were the gospels written?
- Eyewitnesses: Do the gospel accounts go back to eyewitness testimony?

This is basic training for Christians. They ought to show this lecture whenever new people show up, because pastors should not quote the Bible until everyone listening has this information straight.

I really hope you all have his big, awesome book on "The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach". This book is not for beginners, but it is comprehensive.

New book

Dr. Licona has a new book on the differences between the gospels coming out with Oxford University Press in 2016 (I just found out!), and so I thought it would be a good idea to re-post a lecture featuring the man himself.

He tweeted this about the new book:

> The manuscript for my new book pertaining to why there are differences in the

> Gospels is almost complete and is scheduled to be published by Oxford University Press sometime in 2016. This book will reflect my research in Plutarch during the past 7.5 years.

I’m excited! Will definitely get this! Oxford is the most prestigious academic press, so it must be good.

Senate Republicans vote to defund Planned Parenthood and repeal major parts of Obamacare

December 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama and Planned Parenthood

Life News reports on some very good news for conservatives.

Excerpt:

> The Senate voted today for a bill that would de-fund Planned Parenthood after it was caught selling the body parts of aborted babies. Hearings have exposed how the abortion company likely violated federal laws to sell the body parts.
>
> The bill would block, for one year, most federal payments to Planned Parenthood. At least 89% of federal funding of Planned Parenthood would be blocked by this bill. The bill would repeal a number of major components of the Obamacare health law, including two of the major provisions that will lead to rationing of lifesaving care — the "Independent Payment Advisory Board" and the "excess benefits tax."
>
> Senators voted 52-47 (see below for roll call) for the reconciliation bill which would de-fund Planned Parenthood and repeal major portions of Obamacare.
>
> The bill now goes back to the House and will head to President Barack Obama once the House approves the measure. Though Obama will veto the bill, the vote makes it clear that, under a pro-life president, Congress can get a de-funding bill approved with a majority vote that the president would sign into law.

Now, I actually don't want to look that far into the future, because as long as Mitch McConnell is Senate Majority Leader, nothing is for sure. However, there are immediate benefits to passing this bill and sending it to the White House in spite of that caution:

1. We now have all the Democrat senators on record about where they stand with respect to repealing major parts of Obamacare, and de-funding Planned Parenthood. This information can and will be used to defeat them in the 2016 Senate races.

Republicans face a major challenge to their Senate majority in 2016, and every little bit helps.

2. Republican candidates for President will be able to use the veto of health care reform and de-funding Planned Parenthood to distinguish themselves from Democrat presidential candidates. Obamacare and Planned Parenthood funding are both *really* unpopular. I personally know some Christians who think that Obama is pro-life and who think that Obama is in favor of fixing Obamacare. With this veto on record, Republican presidential candidates will be able to clearly show that a Republican president is *required* in order to fix health care and defund Planned Parenthood.

Look, if you don't like Obamacare – higher deductibles, higher premiums, fewer doctors, less health care – then Republicans are the only game in town. And now, everyone has shown whose side they are on with respect to funding abortion, too. Going forward, expect the Republicans to be reminding people about these votes and vetoes over and over again.

Study: Obama administration is “having trouble” detecting fraud in asylum requests

December 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neville Chamberlain Obama: peace in our time

This is an Associated Press article that I found in U.S. News & World Report.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration is having trouble detecting fraud in asylum requests from immigrants seeking to stay in the United States for their protection, according to a government study released Wednesday.
>
> The Government Accountability Office looked at asylum requests from immigrants who have already made it to the United States and are asking to stay to escape persecution. The report doesn’t address the refugee application process, which also is overseen by the Homeland Security Department but involves people not currently in the United States. The refugee process has become an issue in debate over Syrian refugees.
>
> The 96-page report concluded that neither U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Services nor the Executive Office for Immigration Review, the Justice Department agency that oversees immigration courts, conduct regular fraud risk assessments. The GAO recommended that both do so.
>
> At USCIS, a paper filing system that doesn’t capture key fraud-detection information electronically also is a problem, the study says.

> The GAO review found that more than 4,500 people were awarded asylum in 2014 despite being associated with lawyers or document preparers arrested that same year in an immigration fraud investigation in New York.
>
> […]"This new GAO report adds to mounting evidence that the Obama administration refuses to take the steps necessary to crack down on asylum fraud and protect the integrity of our immigration system," said Rep. Bob Goodlatte, the Virginia Republican who is chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

The Washington Times comments:

> GAO investigators found problems at nearly every step of the way: USCIS officers aren't properly trained to spot fraud; the agency's fraud-detection unit doesn't pre-screen applications to weed out potentially bogus ones beforehand; and neither USCIS, which is part of Homeland Security, nor EOIR, which is part of the Justice Department, have a sense for how big a risk fraud is anyway.
>
> More troubling still, the government rarely prosecutes those who commit fraud, so there's little downside to making an attempt, other than risking being sent back home.

OK, so the government system is broken – that much is clear. But what is the worst that could go wrong if we let a few bad apples in?

Consider this article from National Review.

It says:

> Senator Ted Cruz (R., Texas) and Senator Jeff Sessions (R., Ala.) want President Obama to release the immigration records of the San Bernardino shooters, arguing they should play a key role in the coming debate over funding the Syrian refugee resettlement& program.
>
> Their request comes as CBS reports that one of the shooting suspects passed the Department of Homeland Security's "counterterrorism screening as part of her vetting" for a visa. Federal officials maintain that they have a rigorous and effective screening process in place for people from countries such as Syria that have significant jihadist movements, making the immigration records of the San Bernardino shooters a potentially significant piece of the debate over refugee policy.
>
> "We are dealing with an enemy that has shown it is not only capable of bypassing U.S. screening, but of recruiting and radicalizing Muslim migrants after their entry to the United States," Cruz and Sessions wrote to Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, Secretary of State John Kerry, and Attorney General Loretta Lynch.
>
> The letter reiterates the lawmakers' longstanding request for the immigration records of twelve other terror suspects, which the Obama administration has

> failed to release even as the debate over the Syrian refugee crisis has heated up.
>
> "Congress is days away from consideration of an omnibus year-end funding bill that would set the U.S. on an autopilot path to approve green cards, asylum, and refugee status to approximately 170,000 migrants from Muslim countries during the next year," Cruz and Sessions wrote. "The security task involved is immense, and Congress must have the requested information if lawmakers are to act as responsible stewards of American immigration policy."

Look here. If you expect to be able to hold people accountable for failure to perform, that is much easier to do with the private sector than it is with government. There have been *plenty* of major screw-ups in the Obama administration. Massive security leaks, cover-ups, arms smuggling to Mexican drug cartels, Iran deal side deals, leaking the names of agents and the details of our allies' plans. And on and on and on. We have to learn from these failures not to put our trust in government promises about how serious they are with national security. Their lack of seriousness about criminal illegal immigrants killed Kate Steinle, for example. The only solution to their stupidity and carelessness is to not let them have the power to do anything.

Does God pose an authority problem for you?

December 4, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

I'm going to steal this entire post from Tough Questions Answered to get a conversation started:

> Many of the people I know who reject God or who have crafted a God that makes no demands on them have a fundamental problem with authority. They don't want anybody telling them what to do.
>
> For a person who wants complete autonomy, who chafes at the thought of anyone having authority over them, a creator God who makes demands is way inconvenient.
>
> Many people who believe in God, but also have this authority hang-up, create their own version of God. This God gives them what they want when they want it. He approves of everything they do, as long as they are just trying to be happy. He encourages them to follow their desires, wherever they lead. C. S. Lewis compared this God to a senile, old grandfather who never says "no" to his grandchildren. You want chocolate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? No problem!
>
> Is this the Christian God? Philosopher Paul Moser answers the question:
>
> It would be a strange, defective God who didn't pose a serious cosmic authority problem for humans. Part of the status of being God, after all, is that God has a unique authority, or lordship, over humans. Since we humans aren't God, the true God would have authority over us and would seek to correct our profoundly selfish ways.
>
> If you are "worshiping" a God who makes no demands on you, you're worshiping no God at all. You're just trying to find a deity to make you feel good about your

> selfish choices. What's the point?

I'm posting this because I'm looking for comments. Do you know anyone like this? I'll help by getting you started with some sample atheists.

Famous atheists agree: God is not the boss of them

Consider the words of Thomas Nagel, a famous atheist philosopher:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)"

And what about atheist Richard Lewontin: (and when he says "science" below, he means "naturalistic science")

> "Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science *in spite of* the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite of* its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite of* the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our own a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, not matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door." (Richard Lewontin in *New York Review of Books*, January 9, 1997, p. 28)

Interesting. He's willing to tell people lies to keep the Divine Foot outside the door.

And one last one from Aldous Huxley:

> "I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently

> assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way that they find most advantegous to themselves… For myself, the philosophy of meaningless was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political."
> — Aldous Huxley in Ends and Means, 1937

So this is pretty widespread among famous atheists. How about among ordinary atheists?

Survey says

Arthur Brooks' survey showed that atheists certainly give less in charity and do less community service as religious people on the right and left.

Quote:

> Drawing on some ten data sets, Brooks finds that religiosity is among the best predictors of charitable giving. Religious Americans are not only much more likely to give money and volunteer their time to religious and secular institutions, they are also more likely to provide aid to family members, return incorrect change, help a homeless person, and donate blood. In fact, despite expecting to find just the opposite, Brooks concluded: "I have never found a measurable way in which secularists are more charitable than religious people."
>
> Consider some examples. Religious citizens who make $49,000 gave away about 3.5 times as much money as secular citizens with the same income. They also volunteered twice as often, are 57 percent more likely to help homeless persons, and two-thirds more likely to give blood at their workplace. Meanwhile, those who insist that "beliefs don't matter as long as you're a good person" are not as good as those who do think beliefs matter. The former group gave and volunteered at much lower rates.
>
> Yet even these findings tend to obscure the impact of religion on charity. This is because some of the survey respondents that Brooks classified as secular are indirectly affected by religion if they were raised in a religious household.

Keeping the Divine Foot outside the door has advantages – you don't have to worry about giving away your own stuff to others.

Atheists also divorce more than committed Christians:

Quote:

> It's a number that is trumpeted from the rooftops — and the pulpit: Half of marriages among Christians and non-Christians alike end in divorce.
>
> But the reality is that Christians who attend church regularly get divorced at a much lower rate.
>
> Professor Bradley Wright, a sociologist at the University of Connecticut, found

> that among people who identify as Christians but rarely attend church, 60 percent have been divorced. Of those who attend church regularly, 38 percent have been divorced.
>
> W. Bradford Wilcox, a leading sociologist at the University of Virginia and director of the National Marriage Project, found a nearly identical spread between “active conservative Protestants” who regularly attend church and people with no religious affiliation.
>
> Professor Scott Stanley from the University of Denver, who is working on the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative, said couples with a vibrant religious faith have more and higher levels of the qualities that marriages need to avoid divorce.
>
> “Whether young or old, male or female, low-income or not, those who said that they were more religious reported higher average levels of commitment to their partners, higher levels of marital satisfaction, less thinking and talking about divorce and lower levels of negative interaction,” he said. “These patterns held true when controlling for such important variables as income, education and age at first marriage.”

Again, keeping the Divine Foot outside the door has advantages. You don’t have to make a commitment that goes against your self-interest. When you don’t feel good in a relationship, you can get out.

I have found that atheists think that even if Christianity were true, atheists have no intention of changing the way they live. Even if they don’t personally engage in tons of obvious immorality, they frequently advocate for a society where Judeo-Christian values have disappeared completely, e.g. – abortion, same-sex marriage. Atheism, if it means anything, means that the strong should be allowed to pursue their own pleasure at the expense of the weak. And God has to go, because he gets in the way of that unrestrained pursuit of pleasure.

I hope that more atheists look in the mirror and are honest with themselves about what’s really going on. Is it really such a terrible thing to have a relationship with the person who cares the most about you and wants the best for you? Is fun really that important that people have to push away the Creator of the universe just because he requires self-denial? You can’t get the experience of choosing to imitate God in order to be in solidarity with him if you shut him out because you want your autonomy. And that’s what we are all here to do – to know him, to be his friend, to act in a way that allows us to feel what he feels, and to have sympathy with him.

Remarkable: the Clark's nutcracker can remember up to 20,000 maps

December 5, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This handsome black and white bird is "The Clark's Nutcracker"

Well, it's time for me to celebrate birds again, my favorite creatures of all the creatures that God made. I'm going to use this article from National Geographic that Mackenzie (not McKenzie) found.

It says:

> It weighs only four or five ounces, its brain practically nothing, and yet, oh my God, what this little bird can do. It's astonishing.
>
> Around now, as we begin December, the Clark's nutcracker has, conservatively, 5,000 (and up to 20,000) treasure maps in its head. They're accurate, detailed, and instantly retrievable.
>
> It's been burying seeds since August. It's hidden so many (one study says almost 100,000 seeds) in the forest, meadows, and tree nooks that it can now fly up, look down, and see little x's marking those spots—here, here, not there, but here—and do this for maybe a couple of miles around. It will remember these x's for the next nine months.
>
> It starts in high summer, when whitebark pine trees produce seeds in their cones—ripe for plucking. Nutcrackers dash from tree to tree, inspect, and, with their sharp beaks, tear into the cones, pulling seeds out one by one. They work

> fast.One study clocked a nutcracker harvesting “32 seeds per minute.”
>
> These seeds are not for eating. They’re for hiding. Like a squirrel or chipmunk, the nutcracker clumps them into pouches located, in the bird’s case, under the tongue. It’s very expandable …
>
> The pouch “can hold an average of 92.7 plus or minus 8.9 seeds,” wrote Stephen Vander Wall and Russell Balda. Biologist Diana Tomback thinks it’s less, but one time she saw a (bigger than usual) nutcracker haul 150 seeds in its mouth. “He was a champ,” she told me.
>
> Next, they land. Sometimes they peck little holes in the topsoil or under the leaf litter. Sometimes they leave seeds in nooks high up on trees. **Most deposits have two or three seeds, so that by the time November comes around, a single bird has created 5,000 to 20,000 hiding places.** They don’t stop until it gets too cold. “They are cache-aholics,” says Tomback.
>
> When December comes—like right around now—the trees go bare and it’s time to switch from hide to seek mode. Nobody knows exactly how the birds manage this, but the best guess is that when a nutcracker digs its hole, it will notice two or three permanent objects at the site: an irregular rock, a bush, a tree stump. The objects, or markers, will be at different angles from the hiding place.
>
> Next, they measure. This seed cache, they note, “is a certain distance from object one, a certain distance from object two, a certain distance from object three,” says Tomback. “What they’re doing is triangulating. They’re kind of taking a photograph with their minds to find these objects” using reference points.

Behold the cuteness:

Monstrous!

I think now is the time to remind all my readers that birds have trouble finding food in the winter. Now is a good time to build or buy feeders for them, and a bag of seed. When things get very cold, it helps if they can find some comfortable trees to hide in, where there is not so much wind and snow. So, plant some trees, put up some feeders, and don’t let your cats out.

Why are Christians allowed to eat shellfish but not allowed to have sex before marriage?

December 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
Here's a wonderful article from Peter Saunders.

The challenge:

> An argument frequently advanced by those attempting to defend homosexual practice is that Christians 'cherry pick' the commands in the Bible – that is, they chose to emphasise some commands while ignoring others.
>
> The Old Testament may forbid homosexual acts (Leviticus 18:2; 20:13) but it also forbids eating seafood without fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9, 10).
>
> So how can Christians then justify upholding laws on sexual morality whilst at the same time ignoring the food laws from the very same books of the Bible? Why may they eat shellfish but not be allowed to have sex outside marriage? Isn't this inconsistent and hypocritical?

The solution is that God enters into "covenants" with his people, and the terms of those covenants change.

Especially dietary laws:

> The answer to this question lies in an understanding of biblical covenants.
>
> A covenant is a binding solemn agreement made between two parties. It generally leaves each with obligations. But it holds only between the parties involved.
>
> There are a number of biblical covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic (Old),

> Davidic and New.
>
> Under the Noahic covenant, which God made with all living human beings (Genesis 9:8-17), people were able to eat anything:
>
> *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Genesis 9:3).*
>
> But under the Sinaitic (Old) Covenant, which God made with the nation of Israel, people were able to eat certain foods, but not others.

Jesus clearly created a new covenant with his followers, where the dietary laws are lifted:

> Jesus said that he had come to fulfil the 'Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). He would establish this new covenant with new laws, with himself as high priest based on his own sacrificial death on the cross.
>
> This new covenant would completely deal with sin (Hebrews 10:1-18) and protect all those who put their faith in him from God's wrath and judgement…
>
> *[…]'In the same way, after the supper (Jesus) took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you"' (Luke 22:20). '…we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Hebrews 10:10)*
>
> People would come under the protection of this new covenant, not by virtue of belonging to the nation of Israel, but through faith in Christ. In fact the function of the Old Testament Law (Sinaitic covenant) was to point to Christ as its fulfilment.
>
> […]So what then did Christ say about foods? He pronounced all foods clean for his followers to eat:
>
> *' "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (Mark 7:18-23)*
>
> Jesus was making that point that under the new covenant God required purity of the heart. Internal thoughts and attitudes were as important as external actions.

Food is OK for Christians, but sexual immorality – which includes premarital sex and adultery – are NOT OK for Christians.

I think sometimes when you are talking to people whose motivation is just to get rid of any objective moral law entirely, they tend to ask questions without really wanting a good answer. This is especially true when it comes to the morality of sex. They ask the question not to get an answer, but to justify getting rid of the moral rules governing sexuality. The answers are there for people who are willing to respect God in their decision-making to find. The answers are not found only by people who have a

reason to not want to find them.

In case you're wondering, I am one of those Christian men who takes chastity seriously. Marriage is about having a close connection with your spouse. Sure, I could break the rules and have a lot of fun now. A lot of Christians have a hard time turning down fun. But when I look at Jesus, I don't see a man who is pursuing fun and thrills. I see a man who sees a need and then sacrifices his own interests to rescue others from peril.

The surprising pro-masculinity message in the “Far From the Madding Crowd” film

December 6, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A man leading a woman upward: another in a series of posts designed to defeat feminism So, I have about a half-dozen older and/or experienced Christian women who advise me and assist me in various ways. The wisest and most experienced is calm and thoughtful Dina. She has a very stressful job dealing with demanding women, and what she admires most in men is “masculinity”, which she defines as a man’s ability to tell a woman what is right and wrong, what God expects from her, what she should be doing with her life, and guiding her and providing for her through the steps to get there.

What makes Dina angry is when a man makes a fool of himself for youth and beauty, abdicating his role as moral and spiritual leader because of attraction / lust. According to Dina, men who have self-control think about what a woman should do that is morally right, with the goal of her producing a return for God. Men who are swayed by youth and beauty are willing to give up that leadership role in exchange for attention and/or sex.

So, with that said, Dina asked me to watch a recent movie called “Far From the Madding Crowd“, based on a novel by Thomas Hardy. I immediately said “no” because I know about Thomas Hardy from Tess of the D’Urbervilles, where he presents Tess as the helpless victim of Providence. I really hate that view of women, where they can do reckless, selfish things and then blame everyone but themselves for the destructive consequences of their own free-will decisions. But Dina said “wasn’t I right about the debate between David Robertson and Matt Dillahunty?” I said yes, and watched the movie. And of course, she was right, as she almost always is. This movie is a punch in the face to radical feminism, and the leading man is indeed a masculine leader, according to Dina’s definition of masculinity.

Here is a review of the movie by another lady I admire, Rebekah, up at her blog “The

Thoughtful Christian Parent".

Rebekah writes:

> What does this 19th century tale offer to modern audiences? This latest rendering emphasizes something actually surprising and unexpected given that it is made in our age of radical feminism. It is Gabriel Oak's character that shines the most, not the proto-feminist Bathsheba. […]In Bathsheba and Gabriel we see how men and women support one another in such a way as to ensure a flourishing in any role that fate might thrust on them.
>
> […]The relationship between Gabriel and Bathsheba, though unequal in earthly terms of authority and wealth, is one of mutual dependence. We see Oak taking on a role of both counselor and conscience with Bathsheba – roles that in her striving towards independence she struggles to admit her need for. She is not unlike the modern feminist in this regard, nor is she unlike all of us in our relationship with the Lord. Her struggle is best seen in the various times she repels Gabriel only to find herself in desperate situations in which only he can help. The filmmakers' clever use of a recurring theme of Bathsheba galloping after Gabriel on a horse when he is needed is particularly moving (and surprising) here. In the end, the film resists the urge to pander to our more extreme modern views on what women require to thrive.
>
> **Gabriel Oak also seems to be an embodiment of the biblical virtue of selflessness. We see in his actions towards Bathsheba the Philippians admonition to refrain from "being motivated by selfish ambition or vanity," but rather "in humility, be moved to treat one another as more important than yourself."** Indeed, vanity itself can be seen as a fateful character flaw of every major character apart from Gabriel. He alone is able to move past rejection and carry on. In fact, he is required to go so far as to be under the authority of the very woman who rejected his offer of marriage and, despite his continuing affections for her, witness her being courted and then married by another far less worthy man, Frank Troy. No other major character is able to accomplish this challenge to their pride. Though Bathsheba does eventually overcome the rejection of her husband, she only does so after tremendous tragedy and with the selfless and steady support of Gabriel.
>
> Gabriel respects her independence, but, like a good shepherd, stays close by to protect and guide her. Though he cannot protect her from her free-will choices, he does warn her. He then remains faithful to her in the midst of the trouble she brings upon herself. In this, he is not unlike our God, for he allows her to stray, all the while letting her know of a better course when asked. And, she does ask.
>
> In an important scene at a party, where Bathsheba must decide whether or not to marry a particularly obsessive suitor, when she asks, "Tell me what to do, Gabriel," he simply tells her to "Do what is right." Is that not like our Lord? Gentle shepherd, indeed, for our wild, independent hearts. In this, I see Gabriel

> as most suitable for the role as the husband written of in the epistle to the Ephesians. He loves Bathsheba "just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her…"

Men and women both struggle with self-centeredness, but men usually work themselves out of it by studying hard things in school, and doing hard work that pays. Men have a natural desire to provide for others, and it is actually a duty laid out for them in the Bible. As a result of studying and working at things they don't like, men typically are better at resisting their feelings and desires. In fact, if you ever want to make a woman less self-centered and emotional, leading her to study STEM and work a demanding job is a good plan. Both Dina and Rebekah – like all of my female advisors – have STEM backgrounds, and demanding work histories.

I would be suspicious of men who don't prioritize providing, especially as they get older, because it is the experience of self-denial and endurance that helps a man to want to lead a woman to do the same: deny her feelings and desires, and make prudent decisions that will allow her to love and serve others – including God – in a sustainable way. Over the long-term, this practice of effective, self-sacrificial love will be worth more to the woman than the short-term pursuit of fun and thrills. And men know this – we can look ahead and see where a woman needs to be, and then coach her on the interim steps, however difficult those may seem in the moment.

Dina's advice to young women

I asked Dina to take a look at the draft of this post before I hit "Schedule" and Dina said:

> What I would advise to all young women is not to expect a Gabriel Oak to be waiting for you at the end of your reckless years of hooking up, partying and wasting your youth on fun and men who have no desire to lead you to God or guide you to goodness. Don't expect the hot stud that your friends approve of to turn into someone with the character of Oak with the magic powers of your premarital sex life. **Find a man who doesn't give in to your every whim, because if he does, you will only resent him for it, and blame him, for being what you thought you wanted him to be.** Find a man who leads, one who demonstrates self control, self denial, who can provide and protect. And most importantly, respect him for doing it.

Emphasis mine.

Sound advice from the Dina, young ladies. By the way, Dina's favorite drama is the BBC production of "North and South" from 2004. I also give it a 10/10. If you're looking for a good movie to get for Christmas, I recommend asking for that one.

Rebekah's comments on the post

Rebekah wrote to me privately to react to the post:

> I think you've touched on something important that's a pitfall for women today – and really, men, too, but maybe less so – we live in a time of radical autonomy

> PLUS radical “feelings” orientation. Yes, I agree, women might be more prone to being affected by these because we do tend to be more feelings oriented. Plus, the pendulum has swung w.r.t. women’s rights compared to Hardy’s day.
>
> Yet, can I say that from my virtuous single women friends I hear that it is hard to find a man that acts like a grownup? They are finding that many men watch porn and play video games after work each evening. They are not being responsible with their hearts – porn WILL affect their marriage one day. It’s a huge temptation for them. I think this is a major pitfall that men face today.
>
> And, notice that each of these pitfalls – of men and women – feed and reinforce the other.
>
> I would recommend STEM for everyone since the humanities have become so radicalized. I wanted to be an English major, as well, but my father wouldn’t let me because of the leftist values in those departments. STEM is a much safer bet and much surer return for the $$ spent.
>
> That’s a generalization, though. I have a friend that majored in English at Hillsdale – a very conservative university. She’s amazing and brilliant. So, there are exceptions – I am sure you’d agree.
>
> I am glad you liked the movie. And, I agree “North and South” is excellent – one of my favorite books and movies.

There are exceptions, I do agree.

Finally, I have some advice for Christian men. If you pick women who will advise you, don’t pick women who just want attention and control over you. Pick women like Dina who understand your male nature and will attempt to persuade you with facts and arguments, not feelings and sex appeal. And whatever you do, don’t marry someone who cannot communicate and disagree with you in an analytical way. That becomes a nightmare when they have the leverage of no-fault divorce to hold over you.

Attorney General Loretta Lynch vows to crack down on anti-Muslim speech

December 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Don't worry, the real threat to America is climate change

Here are some more details about the murderers in the San Bernadino shooting that emerged on Friday and over the weekend.

From the radically leftist CNN:

> […]Farook traveled to Saudi Arabia for several weeks in 2013 on the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca that Muslims are required to take at least once in their lifetime, which didn't raise red flags, said two government officials.
>
> […]Farook himself had communicated by phone and via social media with more than one person being investigated for terrorism, law enforcement officials said. A separate U.S. government official said the 28-year-old has "overseas communications and associations."

No red flags, because they're not Christian pro-lifers or conservative Tea Partiers. That would raise red flags with this administration.

NBC News reported this:

> Tashfeen Malik pledged allegiance to the leader of ISIS just before she and her husband carried out the San Bernardino massacre, law enforcement sources told NBC News.
>
> Malik posted a statement of support for Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi on Facebook "just before the attack," one official familiar with the issue said.

And CBS News:

> A law enforcement source tells CBS News that the bombs found in the couple's home are near carbon copies of explosives shown in an issue of al Qaeda's on-line magazine "Inspire," which printed instructions on "how to build a bomb in the kitchen of your mom."

Fox News points out that the woman passed a screening from the Department of Homeland Security:

> Officials said Thursday that Malik underwent and passed a Department of Homeland Security counterterrorism screening as part of the process of getting the K-1 visa.

And it was unlikely that they could afford all of their weapons and explosives on their own:

> Among the weapons found were three rigged-together pipe bombs at the social service center, each equipped with a remote-control detonating device that apparently malfunctioned; more than 1,600 rounds of ammunition and multiple pipe bombs in the rented SUV where they died; and 12 pipe bombs, tools for making more, and over 3,000 additional rounds of ammunition at a family home in the nearby town of Redlands.
>
> […]As part of the complex investigation late Thursday, authorities were trying to piece together a money trail that would have enabled the suspects to acquire over $30,000 worth of guns and explosives. Public records show that Farook made approximately $51,000 per year as an employee of the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health, making it unlikely he could have afforded such an arsenal out of his own pocket. There is no evidence that Malik had a job.

So, does this sound like Islamic terrorism to you? If it does, then the Obama administration might have to prosecute you for hate speech. Let's see what the government thinks this attack was, then we'll see what they'll do to you if you disagree with them.

Is it workplace violence?

First, none of this evidence proves that it's Islamic terrorism, Obama says:

Maybe it's workplace violence, because get off your high horse and stop judging. Remember the Crusades? Yeah, so shut your racist mouth.

There was another attack at Fort Hood a while back, and it was proven that the attacker was in contact with Al Qaeda. Obama called that one "workplace violence" as well.

And then there was beheading by a radical Islamist in Oklahoma, and Obama called that one "workplace violence" as well.

And the attack on the recruiting station in Chattanooga, TN was never labeled as terrorism by the Obama administration, either.

I could go on and on and on, because we've had a lot of attacks by radicalized Muslims

under Barack Obama in the last few years, but everything is going to be fine now, because the Democrats have announced a bold new plan to fix everything.

The Obama administration's plan to protect us

So, there is a plan to protect us from these sorts of activities, and it was announced by Obama's attorney general, Loretta Lynch. Are you ready for the plan? This is the great plan that moral relativists on the secular left are offering to protect us. Are you ready?

Here it is from the Daily Wire:

> Speaking to the audience at the Muslim Advocates' 10th anniversary dinner Thursday, Lynch said her "greatest fear" is the "incredibly disturbing rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric" in America and vowed to prosecute any guilty of what she deemed violence-inspiring speech.
>
> "The fear that you have just mentioned is in fact **my greatest fear** as a prosecutor, as someone who is sworn to the protection of all of the American people, which is that the rhetoric will be accompanied by acts of violence," she said.
>
> […]After touting the numbers of "investigations into acts of anti-Muslim hatred" and "bigoted actions" against Muslims launched by her DOJ, Lynch suggested the Constitution does not protect "actions predicated on violent talk" and pledged to prosecute those responsible for such actions.

Obama has his global warming, and Lynch has her "greatest fear".

This is the same woman who declined to charge Lois Lerner for using the IRS as a weapon to persecute conservative groups in an election year.

Do you feel safe now? Do you think that the Democrats are serious about the threat of Islamic terrorism? Do you think that you should elect the Democrats again in November 2016?

Doug Wilson explains the meaning of love and respect

December 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Women need love, men need respect… what does it really mean?

So, Dina sent me an audio book called "Reforming Marriage" by that Calvinist weirdbeard Doug Wilson. It actually sat on my ironing board for some time not being listened to, (I don't iron, I have all wrinkle-free everything). I just finished listening to Bernard Cornwell's classic on the battle of Waterloo, so I decided to pick this one up next.

I listened to the first CD, and I found something amazing in chapter 2. I want to make two points about what I heard. Fortunately, I was able to find the entire passage at one of Doug's online haunts.

He writes:

> Now the Scripture plainly gives us our duties. Wives are to respect their husbands, and husbands are to love their wives. But there is more. When we consider these requirements and look at how men and women relate to one another, we can see the harmony between what God requires and what we need both to give and to receive.
>
> The commands are given to our respective weaknesses in the performance of our duties. Men need to do their duty with regard to their wives they need to love . Women need to do their duty in the same way they need to respect . But men are generally poor at this kind of loving. **C.S. Lewis once commented that women tend to think of love as taking trouble for others (which is much closer to the biblical definition), while men tend to think of love as not giving trouble to others. Men consequently need work in this area, and**

> **they are instructed by Scripture to undertake it.** In a similar way, women are fully capable of loving a man and sacrificing for him, while believing the entire time that he is a true and unvarnished jerk. Women are good at this kind of love, but the central requirement given to wives is that they respect their husbands. As Christian women gather together (for prayer? Bible study?), they frequently speak about their husbands in the most disrespectful way. They then hurry home to cook, clean, and care for his kids. Why? Because they love their husbands. It is not wrong for the wives to love their husbands, but it is wrong to substitute love for the respect God requires.
>
> We can also see the commands which are given have regard for our respective weaknesses in another way. Men have a need to be respected , and women a need to be loved . When Scripture says, for example, that the elders of a church must feed the sheep, it is a legitimate inference to say that sheep need food. In the same way, when the Scripture emphasizes that wives must respect their husbands, it is a legitimate inference to say that husbands need respect. The same is true for wives. If the Bible requires husbands to love their wives, we may safely say that wives need to be loved.
>
> But we are often like the man who gave his wife a shotgun for Christmas because he wanted one. When a wife is trying to work on a troubled marriage, she gives to him what she would like, and not what God commands, and not what he needs. She loves him, and she tells him so. But does she respect him and tell him so?
>
> We have difficulty because we do not follow the scriptural instructions. When a man is communicating his love for his wife (both verbally and non-verbally), he should be seeking to communicate to her the security provided by his covenantal commitment. He will provide for her, he will nourish and cherish her, he will sacrifice for her, and so forth. Her need is to be secure in his love for her. Her need is to receive love from him.
>
> **When a wife is respecting and honoring her husband, the transaction is quite different. Instead of concentrating on the security of the relationship, respect is directed to his abilities and achievements; how hard he works, how faithfully he comes home, how patient he is with the kids, and so forth.**
>
> The specifics may cause problems with some because he thinks he might not come home, and she thinks he doesn’t work nearly hard enough. But love is to be rendered to wives, and respect to husbands, because God has required it, and not because any husband or wife has earned it. It is good for us always to remember that God requires our spouses to render to us far more than any of us deserve.

So I bolded the two parts that I want to talk about.

First thing is about the removing troubles view of love. Now, I had never really

consciously thought of this before, but I was thinking about how I treat Dina and suddenly it became clear that this is exactly what I am trying to with her. She hurts her hands, has OCD, wants to vacuum up cat fur, has to lift a heavy vacuum up and down the stairs… I buy her a cordless hand vacuum! She likes to cook with a wok several times a week, uses a horrible, cheap broken-handle wok that has to be washed and dried *or it will rust*… I buy her a Circulon wok! She hates to iron, has to iron baskets and baskets of clothes with her hurt hands… I buy her a steam iron that makes quick work of ironing! And on, and on, and on. After all, why should she have to suffer when she is trying to do her work so she can clear her schedule in order to do other things, like care for the elderly as a volunteer? She already has a stressful job at work, she doesn't need more stress at home. My job is to make her life easier, and that shows that I care about what her life is like. I don't want her to be struggling, I want her to be able to do good for God without being burdened by troubles.

Second thing is about how a woman can give a man respect. Well, an important part of what a man does in a marriage is to give a woman *security*. And this is not something he can finesse at the end of his life, he has to be thinking about giving her that at the beginning of his life… when he is in school, when he is starting to work. The most praiseworthy way of getting money is by earning it in the private sector, by supplying the needs of consumers in a competitive free market. In order to learn how to do that, you have to study things that are valuable. to others, like mobile devices, petroleum engineering, etc. So when it comes to your education, you don't get to study what you like or what makes you feel good. You have to study things that will allow you to earn money, money that you can use to give your wife security and freedom. Money that is saved should be invested, so that you earn more than you can even get by working. When a woman comes along, she must recognize which men have done hard things to prepare for her – hard things that were not fun. Choosing a man who understands the role of *earned* money in a marriage is a way of according him respect. No, he did not do what he felt like. No, he did not win the lottery. No, he did not receive money from his parents. Recognizing those sacrifices and the value others get from them is respect.

I'm going to keep working through this book and see if there are any other secrets for me to find in it. So far, so good.

Is it wrong to pass incremental pro-life laws?

December 7, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and saving a life is a good thing

Pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf summarizes a recent debate between a pro-life incrementalist and a pro-life abolitionist. An incrementalist is a pro-lifer who wants to pass laws that save lives right now, while still working for a full ban on abortion. An abolitionist is a pro-lifer who does not want to pass laws that solve part of the problem, preferring to hold off on laws that save lives until they can get all abortions banned.

So there was a debate, and Scott watched it, and here is his review.

First, the intro:

> T. Russell Hunter issued a very public challenge calling for any pro-life leader to debate him on incrementalism. Gregg Cunningham, a former member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Executive Director of the Center for Bioethical Reform, accepted. The formal debate structure was as follows: 20-minute opening statements, 15-minute rebuttals, 15-minute cross-examination, 5-minute closing statements. An informal audience Q&A followed the formal debate.
>
> […]Gregg Cunningham won the formal exchange handily and he did so early by pointing out a fundamental flaw in Hunter's argument—namely, the mistaken claim that pro-lifers have the power to end abortion immediately but won't. Again and again, he exposed Hunter's fallacious either/or reasoning by demonstrating that pro-lifers don't have to choose between incremental legislation that saves

> some children right now or total abolition that saves all at a later time. Rather, they can advance both strategies simultaneously and save many lives in the process. Cunningham also demonstrated a superior grasp of social reform history, noting that while Wilberforce, Lincoln, and Martin-Luther King were in *principle* moral absolutists, in practice they *functioned* as strategic and tactical incrementalists—as do pro-lifers today. During cross-examination, Hunter stumbled badly when asked if those babies saved through incremental legislation should have been left to die. When he refused to give a clear answer—despite being repeatedly pressed to do so—the debate was effectively over. In short, Hunter could not preach his way to victory, even when invoking his understanding of Scripture. His claim that incrementalism is not found in the Bible was decisively refuted when Gregg cited three examples from Scripture where God dealt incrementally with His people.

I watched this video clip to get a feel for how it went down:

In the clip, Cunningham asks if the babies who are saved by incremental legislation should be allowed to die instead. He has some evidence from a law professor saying that incremental laws do save some lives, and he is asking the AHA person should we not enact these incremental laws that save the lives of unborn children.

Scott has the transcript:

> GC: I'd like to return to the question with which I began, which Russ hasn't answered. Should we allow these babies to die rather than enact incremental legislation?
>
> TRH: No.
>
> GC: I'm sorry?
>
> TRH: Like, should we allow – should we allow babies to die?
>
> GC: Should we allow these – because…
>
> TRH: The charade is – the charade is not even what we're talking about – the incrementalism/immediatism debate. Focusing the ax at the tree, getting all the people who follow incrementalism to become immediatists and help put that ax to the branch – to the root…
>
> GC: Would you answer this question?
>
> TRH & GC: [unintelligible]
>
> Moderator: That was the last question. Russ, go ahead and answer that, and then we're gonna end this.
>
> GC: Just for the record, Russ didn't answer the question: Should we have allowed these babies to die, which this university professor says would have died had that legislation not been enacted. Should we have allowed them to die rather than enact the incremental legislation?
>
> Moderator: Okay, Russ, answer that question, then we'll change.

> TRH: Um, well, I firmly believe that abortion is evil, and it is one of these things that the powers and principalities of darkness and high places are very in to. It's the crown jewel of darkness, and I actually believe that if they can keep abortion going by deceiving people into becoming gradualists, they will do it. And if to deceive them they have to give them empty, illusory victories, and law professors may claim that babies were saved, they'll do it. But I – if someone goes to an abortion mill and shoots a doctor, a baby might be saved that day, but that's not going towards abolishing abortion. It's not establishing justice that day [unintelligible] a baby that day.
>
> GC: May I ask for clarification for your answer? You're saying this guy's making this up?
>
> TRH: Uh, no, I have to read it. But I'm just saying that convincing people to be gradualists by saying, "Hey look, we saved some," while they're still being – I'm pretty sure that you can convince people to be gradualists for the next 40 years…
>
> GC: Hey Russell, let's do both. Let's do both. Let's do both.

Honestly, I am not sure why anyone pays these AHA people any mind. Just judging from that one clip, I don't think that Hunter has anything of value to say in this debate. His group seems to be more concerned with attacking other pro-lifers who actually are getting the job done than doing anything. In the real world, incremental pro-life laws save lives. To be persuasive on those incremental laws, you have to talk about the logic and science that supports the pro-life view. That will be persuasive to Christians as well as non-Christians. Building consensus for incremental pro-life laws by appealing to a bigger audience that includes non-Christians makes sense – it solves the actual problem.

If you see something, say something: so that Obama can prosecute you for hate speech

December 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

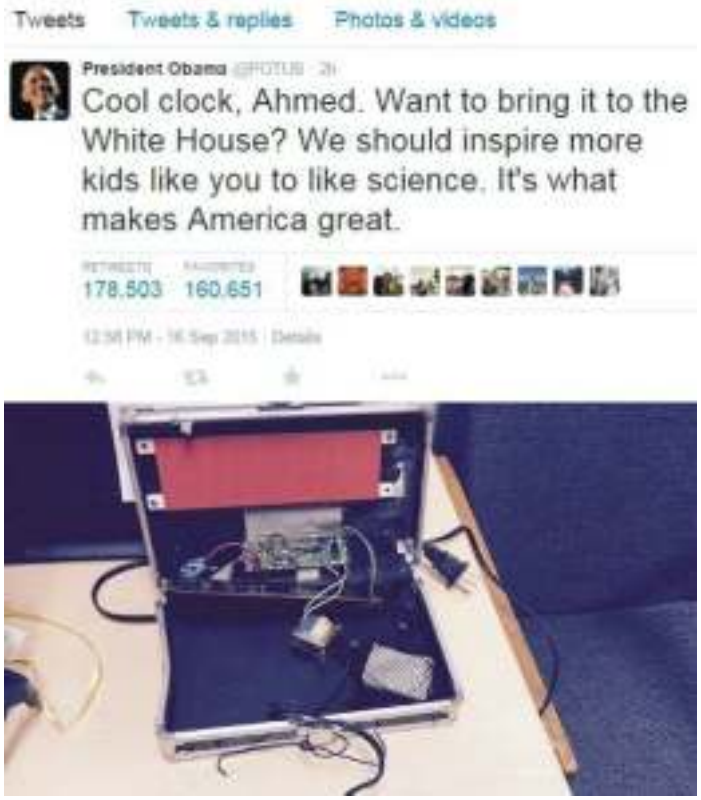

Obama thinks that bringing what looks like a bomb to school is “cool”

Does Obama really want Americans to say something when they see people acting suspiciously? Let’s take a look.

Here’s an article about that from The Stream.

Excerpt:

> “If you see something suspicious, say something,” said President Obama after the Paris massacre. He’s offered similar calls for vigilance after the terrorist attack in San Bernardino. But does he mean it?
>
> […]Remember the so-called “clock kid” in Irving, Texas? Teenager Ahmed Mohamed brought a homemade device to school that looked like a suitcase bomb. He ignored a teacher’s advice to stash the device, which he falsely claimed was an alarm clock he had built. He brought the device into another classroom, with the alarm clock set to go off in the middle of the lesson. When hauled off to the principal’s office his answers raised enough suspicion for the police to be called. His reticent answers to them raised further suspicions, enough to warrant a brief arrest. We don’t know exactly what he said because his family — which has a history of trouble with the school and curious connections — refused to give authorities permission to release the police report on the incident.

> **MacArthur High School saw something and said something. Were they praised? Acknowledged by the Administration for their vigilance? No, for weeks they were verbally slapped around by Obama and the media as haters and Islamophobes. Now comes the kicker: Last night the Justice Department confirmed that it is officially investigating the *school* for its actions.**
>
> **U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch told Muslim Advocates president Farhana Kher Thursday that it was "great to hear that the department has opened an investigation" into the school; that the "treatment" of Mohamed was an "issue of great concern and really struck a cord with many parents."**

So, there will definitely be a chilling effect from that investigation on others who might warn of suspicious behavior that could mean a terrorist attack.

And that's in fact what happened with the terrorist couple in San Bernardino:

> Several neighbors saw suspicious activity at the couple's apartment, but did nothing for fear of being accused of racial profiling. They now have to carry the awful burden of wondering, "How many died because I stayed silent?"
>
> Speaking of fear, Attorney General Lynch told the Muslim Advocates dinner Thursday night *her* "greatest fear" is anti-Muslim sentiment will lead to violence against Muslims in America. Even if she's reading doctored intelligence from the White House, surely she can turn on a TV. The Russian plane attack in Egypt, the Lebanon attack, the Paris attack, the Mali attack, the San Bernardino attack, the countless numbers on our shores getting inspiration and instruction from Islamist sites. Yet her "greatest fear" is a *possible* backlash against members of the very religion that hosts those responsible for all the carnage.
>
> Perhaps that attitude from the nation's top law enforcement official explains what's reportedly happening in Los Angeles, only an hour west of this week's terrorist attack.
>
> *TMZ* is reporting that "LAPD cops have been told not to single out Muslims in their hunt for terrorists," with one cop admitting, "It's a huge problem for us."
>
> According to the cops, LAPD brass doesn't want officers talking to people from the Middle East unless they're doing something "that arouses real suspicion." Officers are also telling *TMZ* that when they ask questions about unusual activity — such as "tourists" photographing electrical units on buildings — they are greeted with hostility.

Has the Obama administration done a good job of preventing terrorist attacks? Does his attitude of blaming America deter terrorist attacks, or does it embolden radical Islamists to perform more attacks?

This article from the Daily Caller lists 7 terrorist attacks that occurred during the 7 years

of the Obama presidency, as of July 2015.

Here is one:

> In November 2009, Army Major Nidal Malik Hasan opened fire in an attack at Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas. Hassan killed 13 people and wounded over 30 more.
>
> In a document dated Oct. 18, 2012 obtained by Fox News, Hasan wrote: “I, Nidal Malik Hasan, am compelled to renounce any oaths of allegiances that require me to support/defend man made constitution (like the constitution of the United States) over the commandments mandated in Islam.”
>
> The U.S. government has steadfastly refused to call Hasan’s militant slaughter a terrorist attack. Instead, federal officials have repeatedly characterized Hasan’s actions as “workplace violence.”
>
> A U.S. military court sentenced Hasan, a military psychiatrist, to death in 2013.

And here is another:

> In April 2013, Chechen brothers Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and Tamerlan Tsarnaev exploded two pressure cooker bombs near the finish line of the Boston Marathon.
>
> The bombings killed three people including an eight-year-old boy. Hundreds of runners and spectators were seriously injured. Seventeen people saw their limbs blown off.
>
> Three days later, the brothers ambushed and killed a Massachusetts Institute of Technology police officer.
>
> Tamerlan Tsarnaev died when his brother ran over him with a stolen Mercedes SUV in the midst of a shootout with police. In April, a jury found Dzhokhar Tsarnaev guilty of 30 criminal counts. He later received the death penalty.

These kinds of attacks have been occurring, but they are mostly ignored by a media that is desperate to cover up anything that might make the Obama administration look weak in the face of Islamic terrorism.

The Democrats’ priority is not to protect the law-abiding taxpayers who pay their salaries. Their priority is to live out their politically correct worldview, regardless of risks and threats to us. We have to remember these things in November when it is time to decide who will be in charge of national security.

Good news: Venezuela and Argentina eject socialist governments

December 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Political Map of South America

Investors Business Daily has some good news for us. The Democrat Party of Venezuela has been CRUSHED in a recent election.

Excerpt:

> Venezuela's voters delivered a sledgehammer blow to the country's ruling Chavista socialists Sunday, winning a likely supermajority in the National Assembly. It's a great awakening from a 17-year nightmare.
>
> Given the past two decades of near-victories, electoral fraud, chicanery and fractious political opposition mistakes, many Venezuelans are still in disbelief at the scale of the victory in the nation's legislative elections, which have decisively handed one of Venezuela's leading governing bodies over to the democratic, pro-free-market opposition.
>
> **As this was written, the opposition, known by its Spanish initials MUD, had declared a 112-seat, or two-thirds, supermajority in the National Assembly as a result of Sunday's vote. The Chavistas won just 46 seats.**
>
> It's total victory in legislative terms and will enable the legislature to throw out politicized Supreme Court justices and appoint honest ones.
>
> The new Congress can also boot corrupt election officials and appoint fair ones.

> And they will even be able to declare President Nicolas Maduro — the late dictator Hugo Chavez's hand-picked successor — mentally unstable and unfit for office, or remove him for incompetence. They can also stop his executive orders dead.
>
> The Congress also will have the power to free the 71 or so political prisoners now rotting in Chavista dungeons without trial, including top opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez. And Venezuela's central bank will stop destroying the country's money, now nearly worthless.
>
> […]Most important, the leftist government's mismanagement of the economy — through currency controls that prevented imports of spare parts, created shortages of basics such as toilet paper and devastated the health care system — and the central bank's infamous money-printing spree, which has pushed Venezuelan inflation to near 700%, made ordinary life for Venezuelans hellish. There also was corruption, with as much as 1 trillion dollars in oil earnings stolen or misappropriated over the years by high-living Chavista elites, whose lavish lifestyles mocked ordinary, poor Venezuelans.
>
> Top it with the monstrous infiltration of the country by the drug lords, and the likelihood of an electoral housecleaning was perfectly clear.
>
> Still, an element of disbelief remains, given how dirty the Chavista rulers have played their democracy game.
>
> They have broken election rules, violated ballot secrecy, shut voters out and banned popular candidates from running. Many of those dirty tricks were evident in this election, too — the Chavistas illegally extended voting hours and campaigned at polling stations, to cite just a couple of examples.
>
> But the opposition won anyway — with turnout so high, at 74.5%, and margins of victory so wide that the election was impossible to steal.
>
> It helped that the the opposition had the wind at its back with the disastrous result of socialism. But it also helped that MUD had improved its electoral game over the years, learning from each near-miss election.
>
> It also helped that MUD had strong leaders such as Maria Corina Machado and put out strong candidates with a clear, unified message — often summed up as "Down with the left." And with all the pain of 17 years, it helped most of all that they never lost heart.

There is literally no different between the socialists of Venezuela and the Democrat Party in the United States. They are in lock step on every issue. Should the Democrat Party continue to hold power in America, we can look forward to a reckoning like this one in the future.

Two socialists shake hands: Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez

The Wall Street Journal says that the whole country is basically in the grip of ignorant socialists at every level, so there is lots to do.

Excerpt:

> Pulling out of that death spiral, economists say, will require a series of painful and unpopular adjustments, rolling back more than a decade of populist and statist policies. Among the measures needed is raising the price of the world's cheapest gasoline—which goes for less than one U.S. penny a gallon—overhauling a cumbersome and inefficient foreign-exchange system, and cutting generous social programs on which Venezuela's poor depend.
>
> […]The government still controls more than 20 governorships, hundreds of mayors, the judiciary, much of the press and all auditing agencies. It will be up to Mr. Maduro whether to take steps to stabilize the economy, like loosening currency or price controls.

It's not just Venezuela that has hit bottom under socialism. Recently, the people of Argentina also threw out their socialists after years and years of disastrous leftist policies.

The Chicago Tribune reports on last month's election in Argentina.

Excerpt:

> Under the current president, Cristina Fernandez, Argentina has become an international financial pariah. The country defaulted on debt last year in a long-running feud with hedge funds — remarkably, that was the eighth default in Argentina's history.
>
> Fernandez refused to settle. That's left the country to squeak by in isolation, using protectionism and capital controls in a quixotic battle with globalism. The economy is stagnant, foreign currency reserves are dwindling and the inflation rate is around 30 percent. Last week, American Airlines said it stopped accepting pesos for ticket sales because it was tired of collecting revenue it couldn't

> convert to dollars.
>
> At times Argentina has embraced trade and economic openness, only to slip back into bad habits thanks to populist *Peronistas* like Fernandez. Macri, a conservative, wants to re-establish free market principles, but there are a lot of details he didn't fully explain before his November victory because they will require some short-term pain, and he wanted to win the election.
>
> Everything Macri is talking about makes sense. He says he will lift the capital controls that have wrecked the peso's credibility. Like other backwaters it shouldn't resemble, Argentina has a thriving black market because the government insists the peso is worth a lot more than its actual value. Freeing the currency would devalue it, a first step toward making Argentina more competitive.
>
> The next big step would be to negotiate a settlement with the hedge funds that bought up Argentina's debt after its previous default in 2002 and demand repayment. Fernandez got political mileage from attacking the "vultures," but Macri seems to understand Argentina can't get unstuck when it's essentially shut out of international capital markets. He sounds like he wants to do a deal.
>
> Macri's got a tremendous balancing act to pull off: He'll need to cut spending and reduce taxes without destroying the country's big social safety net, while walking the country through a devaluation.

This is how countries that are ruled for a prolonged period by the political left eventually end up. I know so many of you lose heart and think that there is no hope, but there is hope. Even in countries where the left is running everything from the universities, to the judiciaries, to the mainstream media, there is hope.

Over the last 7 years, Obama added $10 trillion to the national debt. And although few of his Democrat low-information voters know about that, they will be able to tell the difference between prosperity and poverty when the United States reaches the Venezuela / Argentina tipping point. There comes a time when there are no more bailouts for the economics deniers. Reality wins in the end.

Robin Collins lectures on the fine-tuning argument at Pepperdine University

December 8, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science
Details:

> Dr. Robin Collins is a Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Messiah College. Collins is the foremost defender of what is known as the teleological argument for the existence of God. He has a background in both physics and philosophy and will be discussing how the specific physical constants and conditions in the universe are finely-tuned for intelligent life and how this "fine-tuning" gives us reason to believe in a Creator.

Here is the video:

Topics:

- the constants and quantities set at the origin of the universe is fine-tuned for conscious, embodied intelligences like us
- three kinds of fine-tuning: 1) laws of nature, 2) constants, 3) quantities
- examples of 1): gravity, electromagnetism, strong force, quantization, Pauli exclusion principle
- examples of 2): **gravitational constant**, **cosmological constant**,
- examples of 3): initial distribution of mass-energy
- in addition to fine-tuning for life, there is also fine-tuning for discoverability
- Naturalistic response to the evidence: the multiverse hypothesis
- problems with the multiverse hypothesis
- additional topics

I put the ones I am ready to speak on in bold. I recommend you learn those as well in order to illustrate the fine-tuning with evidence when you present it. The evidence is important because I've never found a single atheist who I discussed this with who could properly state the argument or understand the evidence. They talk about it without really

understanding it, which is why we need to be ready to explain it to them.

War on women: Obama strategy lets ISIS rape, torture and murder women and girls

December 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hey Obama girls! I found your war on women… it's in Syria… you voted for it!

This is by foreign policy expert Rebeccah Heinrichs writing in The Federalist.

Excerpt:

> Women and girls in Nigeria who are murdered or held captive for the sadistic whims of their Boka Haram captors are just one example, but there are countless more. Al-Shabab regularly brutalizes, rapes, and murders women and girls. ISIS has sought out Yazidi women and girls for slaughter and has taken captive thousands who are now victims of torture, systemic rape, and forced abortions, among other horrors. Christian women are also raped and, when they refuse to convert to ISIS's Islam, are murdered, along with their Christian brothers.
>
> […]**[T]he Obama administration has failed to even begin to put together a serious military campaign to destroy the Islamic State, and the president and his supporters, including Hillary Clinton, are unwilling to identify the motivations of the global movement of Islamist groups. This is why it is fair to blame the administration for allowing the recent success and empowerment of these groups, and, consequently, the increased suffering of women and girls.**
>
> […]This became all the more evident right after the horrific November Paris attacks when the French retaliated by taking out ISIS sites. This caused many to ask the obvious question: Why hadn't the United States already included those

> specific targets on its list? In fact, if the United States were serious about taking out ISIS, it *would* have already destroyed those targets along with the rest of the infrastructure ISIS has come to rely on to operate as a government authority.
>
> But, exposing just how selectively limited the U.S. strikes remain, former Central Intelligence Agency Director Mike Morrell recently admitted, “We didn’t go after oil wells — actually hitting oil wells that ISIS controls because we didn’t want to do environmental damage, and we didn’t want to destroy that infrastructure.”
>
> **Let that sink in. These militants are brutally killing in ways to maximize suffering, selling children into slavery, raping young women and girls, torturing, recruiting citizens of Western countries to join their forces, gaining and holding territory, and exporting their terror in order to convert by the sword. And President Obama refuses to take out their oil wells out of concern for the environment.**

But it’s OK, because as we know from Bernie Sanders, global warming is actually the cause of Islamic terrorism. Obama and John Kerry say that global warming is the top national security threat. So who cares about actual girls and women? We have to be more concerned about global warming.

Ladies and gentlemen, the real war on women.

And one last point for all the compassionate leftists who are pushing for bringing in hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees. Why are there hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees? Why, because the leftists voted for a President who pulled our forces out of Iraq.

Retreat has consequences, ignorant leftists:

> The president’s inability to see how his policies share the responsibility for the instability and humanitarian crises is almost unbelievable. Perhaps there’s no better example of this than the way he has inflamed the debate over the Syrian refugees. Waves of suffering Syrian men, women, and children are fleeing their country for fear of their lives.

> But just a few years ago, before the refugee crisis, when Assad began terrorizing the Syrian people with chemical weapons and barrel bombs, President Obama could have decided then and there to hit back at Assad. President Obama chose not to empower what was then the more easily distinguishable moderate Syrian forces.

You can do foreign policy by substituting piety and feelings for rational thought. The goal is not to feel good, it is to do good, and retreating from a fight with evil does not do good.

Obama was elected to “end the wars”, but now we know how his deliberate weakness actually started a war on women. The REAL war on women, not the one that college students complain about when they demand free condoms and student loan forgiveness.

Pre-marriage counseling is good, and pre-engagement counseling is even better

December 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Painting: "Courtship", by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

OK, I was chatting with my friend McKenzie who recently got married to an amazing Christian man. She and I are both big believers in asking questions during the courtship. She sent me this article from Verily magazine that has a nice story, and lots of questions.

The article starts like this:

> When you know, you know. And with Zach, I knew. Just eleven months into dating, I knew this was the man I wanted to marry. Zach felt the same about me. But instead of putting a ring on it then and there, we decided to seek out a pastor for pre-engagement counseling. You read it right, pre-*engagement*.
>
> It might sound intense or premature at first, but I am here to tell you that it has been an awesome experience. Sure, the deal isn't sealed until you say "I do," but engagement is a huge decision, too. I don't want to get engaged and *then* deal with our baggage. When Zach proposes marriage to me, I want my "Yes!" to be with eyes wide open, and pre-engagement counseling has really helped us move in that direction.
>
> What has been so great about pre-marriage preparation? It's a structured way for us to explore the most important ideas that will be the foundation of our marriage. We have a session once every two weeks for about an hour and a half,

> during which we're working through the book *Preparing for Marriage* by Dennis Rainey with our pastor through homework assignments and discussing together. Of course, pre-marriage counseling can take many forms, but no matter where you might go to get pre-marriage counseling, there are certain things I think any couple should consider before truly committing. Whether you work through them pre-marriage or pre-engagement, like us, is up to you.

She has 4 sections and here they are:

1. PERSONAL HISTORY
2. FAMILY
3. EXPECTATIONS
4. MONEY MATTERS

The whole essay is very practical, but let me just quote the one that stood out to me:

> Few people enjoy talking about money, and Zach certainly did not look forward to this conversation. But money, how we think about it and what we do with it, plays a big part in marital happiness. In our pre-engagement sessions we were posed with great questions when talking about finances. Here are a few of the important questions to cover in a conversation about money:
>
> - Who will be the primary financial provider in the family?
> - How will you decide on major purchases?
> - Who will pay the bills, balance the checkbook, and keep track of expenses?
> - What is your philosophy of giving (charitable donations to your church or other organizations), and how will you make decisions about giving?
> - What is your conviction about debt and the use of credit cards?
>
> These were just a handful of the financial questions we were asked to think about. We also discussed how we want to handle our finances as a couple and individually (joint or separate bank accounts). It's a lot to think about, but the goal was to get on the same page.

What I am seeing a lot of these days – I am literally seeing this everywhere – is when older women prefer to date and marry younger men who do not have jobs and who either never did some sort of post-high-school job training or are still students into their mid-20s. And I know why they do that. Younger men who are not serious about providing are very, very easy for older women to manipulate. She can throw out pretty much any crazy plan she wants – and maybe say "God told me" – and he will have no authority from his own life experiences to second guess her. Because he is not responsible or disciplined himself. Young women not only struggle enormously with respecting men, they also prefer men who they do not have to respect, so they can run the relationship based on their own feelings and intuitions.

I have also encountered a very strange attitude among young women where they think

that hard work in an area that doesn't pay is as "promising" as hard work in an area that does. Actually, this isn't true. Some people work very hard at things that don't pay, and some people just choose things that do pay and don't work as hard at them. What matters is not how hard you work, it's what is in demand. An engineer working a 40 hour week is probably going to make a lot more than a graduate student working 80 hour weeks. Or an assistant professor working 80 hour weeks. The important thing is *not* to just be busy and organized. It's much safer to choose a field where you can earn a good salary without killing yourself. Work stress is a stress on the marriage, especially if both spouses have to work because the male provider isn't making enough.

There is no substitute for earning and saving money. You can't run a marriage without money – somebody has to pay the bills. Pre-engagement counseling is useful to find out whether one or both people has a proven record of being able to earn, save, and invest. If both people have never earned, saved, or invested, that's a pretty bad sign. Especially the way things are going with the economy and the national debt. Marriage poses serious financial challenges, and they cannot be wished away. If your plan for prosperity is to discern God's mysterious will through your feelings and intuitions, then you should make a new plan.

New study: scientists discover that inverted retina / blind spot is not a “bad design”

December 9, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Here’s what atheist Richard Dawkins says about the inverted retina:

> Any engineer would naturally assume that the photocells would point towards the light, with their wires leading backwards towards the brain. He would laugh at any suggestion that the photocells might point away from the light, with their wires departing on the side *nearest* the light. Yet this is exactly what happens in all vertebrate eyes. Each photocell is, in effect, wired in backwards, with its wires sticking out on the side nearest to the light. This means that the light, instead of being granted an unrestricted passage to the photocells, has to pass through a forest of connecting wires, presumably suffering at least some attenuation and distortion (actually probably not much but, still, it is the *principle* of the thing that would offend any tidy-minded engineer!)
>
> Source: Dawkins, Richard (1986). *The Blind Watchmaker*. London: Penguin Books; pp. 93-94.

Now let’s look at a new study reported in Science Daily.

They write:

> From a practical standpoint, the wiring of the human eye — a product of our evolutionary baggage — doesn’t make a lot of sense. In vertebrates, photoreceptors are located behind the neurons in the back of the eye — resulting in light scattering by the nervous fibers and blurring of our vision. Recently, researchers at the Technion — Israel Institute of Technology have confirmed the biological purpose for this seemingly counterintuitive setup.
>
> “The retina is not just the simple detector and neural image processor, as believed until today,” said Erez Ribak, a professor at the Technion — Israel Institute of Technology. “Its optical structure is optimized for our vision purposes.” Ribak and his co-authors will describe their work during the 2015

> American Physical Society March Meeting, on Thursday, March 5 in San Antonio, Texas.
>
> Ribak's interest in the optical structure of the retina stems from his previous work applying astrophysics and astronomy techniques to improve the ability of scientists and ophthalmologists to view the retina at high detail.
>
> Previous experiments with mice had suggested that Müller glia cells, a type of metabolic cell that crosses the retina, play an essential role in guiding and focusing light scattered throughout the retina. To test this, Ribak and his colleagues ran computer simulations and in-vitro experiments in a mouse model to determine whether colors would be concentrated in these metabolic cells. They then used confocal microscopy to produce three-dimensional views of the retinal tissue, and found that the cells were indeed concentrating light into the photoreceptors.
>
> "For the first time, we've explained why the retina is built backwards, with the neurons in front of the photoreceptors, rather than behind them," Ribak said.

You can read more on some other reasons why the inverted retina is not a bad design in this article by agnostic scientist Michael Denton. But this study is a good reminder of why Christians need to keep up with science and how we need to talk about science.

The importance of having a narrative

All Christians should be familiar with the following basic pieces of evidence which fit the war between science and naturalism narrative:

1. The origin of the universe
2. The cosmic fine-tuning
3. The origin of life (biological information)
4. The sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla
5. The habitability/observability correlation

It's very important to present these five basic evidences to non-Christians in the historical context. And here is the story you must tell: "In the beginning, there was the naturalism, and the naturalism tried to argue from ignorance that God was not Creator and God was not Designer. And then came the science, and now people have to give up their naturalism in order to not be crazy and irrational". That's the narrative you use when talking to non-Christians about science.

In the beginning was the naturalism:

1. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the universe was eternal
2. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that a life-permitting universe was as likely as a life-prohibiting universe
3. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the cell was a simple blob of jello that could spontaneously emerge in some warm pond
4. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the sudden origin of the Cambrian

phyla would be explained by subsequent fossil discoveries
5. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that there was nothing special about our galaxy, solar system, planet or moon

But then science progressed by doing experiments and making observations.

Here are some examples of discoveries that undermined the primitive atheism:

1. Scientists discovered redshift and the cosmic microwave background radiation (evidence for a cosmic beginning) and more!
2. Scientists discovered the fine-tuning of gravity and of the cosmological constant and more!
3. Scientists discovered protein sequencing and exposed the myth of "junk DNA" and more!
4. Scientists discovered an even shorter Cambrian explosion period and the absence of precursor fossils and more!
5. Scientists discovered galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones and more!

Atheism, as a worldview, is not rooted in an honest assessment about what science tells us about reality. Atheism is rooted in a religion: naturalism. And the troubling thing we learn from looking at the history of science is that this religion of naturalism is insulated from correction from the progress of science. Nothing that science reveals about nature seems to be able to put a dent in the religion of naturalism, at least for most atheists. Their belief in naturalism is so strong that it repels all scientific evidence that falsifies it. Atheists simply don't let science inform and correct their worldview.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

New study: Obamacare will decrease workforce by 2 million full-time worker's hours

December 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He voted for Obamacare, and he got it… good and hard!

The study was done by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), and reported by Fox News.

Excerpt:

> ObamaCare will reduce work hours equivalent to 2 million jobs in the next decade amid a host of incentives not to work or to work less, a new Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report says — the latest blow to President Obama's signature health insurance plan.
>
> **The report estimates the Affordable Care Act, or ACA, will make the labor supply shrink by 0.86 percent in 2025. This amounts to a shrinkage equivalent to approximately 2 million full-time workers.**
>
> The nonpartisan CBO estimates that the decline will come primarily due to workers responding to changes made by the law to federal programs and tax policy. The agency points to the introduction of health care subsidies tied to income as a key factor — which in turn raises effective tax rates as someone's earnings rise, therefore reducing the amount of work Americans choose to do.
>
> "Subsidies decline as income increases, reducing the return on earning additional income," the report says. "That decline is effectively an increase in recipients' effective marginal tax rate, so it generally reduces their work incentives through the substitution effect."
>
> **Since the subsidies also reduce the burdens attached to unemployment, the CBO predicts that the law will create additional "work disincentives" for those who are unemployed for part of the year. It concludes that the exchange subsidies will contribute to half of the overall reduction of the labor supply.**

> The report also points to direct taxes, such as ACA's hike of the payroll tax on high earners for Medicare's Hospital Insurance Program, as a reason for discouraging some from working. Another pressure on wages will come from the employer mandate, which imposes a penalty on employers if they have more than 50 employees and do not provide insurance. The CBO predicts that within a few years this charge will be passed on to employees in the form of lower wages.
>
> […]The report comes at an awkward time for the Obama administration: just days after the Senate passed a bill that would repeal key parts of the law. The White House has said that President Obama will veto the legislation.

Oh well. It's not like workers need to be paid fairly for their labor, right? I'm really not seeing how Obama expects the next generation to pay for the $10 trillion he's added onto the national debt. If they are working less, then they are paying less in taxes. It's fun to give speeches where you promise your gullible supporters a lot of goodies, but then, if the goodies discourage their employers from giving them work hours, then how will the spending be paid for?

More than anyone in modern politics, Barack Obama is a man who has perfected the art of sounding confident about things he literally knows nothing about. When elect a clown, you get failure. It doesn't matter how confident a candidate sounds. It matters whether he has a record of solving the problems that he is talking about. Results, not rhetoric.

Ted Cruz invites climate scientists to Washington, D.C. to discuss climate change

December 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

This is from the Daily Signal, and what is interesting is how the Democrats respond to the scientific evidence presented by the scientists.

Excerpt:

> Republican Sen. Ted Cruz convened a subcommittee hearing Tuesday to dispute the validity of research from climate "alarmists," whose findings have become central to crafting environmental policy.
>
> Cruz used his opening remarks to detail the 2013 expedition where a ship of 74 people sent into Antarctica to research climate change got stuck in ice, forcing an airlift rescue a week later.
>
> "This expedition was there to document how the ice was vanishing in the Antarctic, but the ship became stuck," Cruz said before the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Space, Science and Competitiveness. "It had run into an inconvenient truth, as Al Gore might put it."
>
> Cruz, who chairs the subcommittee, also noted Secretary of State John Kerry's 2009 claim that the Arctic would be "ice-free" by the summer of 2013—which was the same year the researchers became trapped in ice.
>
> Republicans on the committee said the hearing was intended to shed light on "opposing viewpoints in the field of climate science," which Cruz said are "reflexively" brushed aside by policymakers.
>
> **He repeatedly pointed to satellite data that found no significant global**

> **warming during the past 18 years, a slowdown often referred to as the warming "pause."**
>
> **"Global warming alarmists don't like these data. They are inconvenient to their narrative," Cruz said. "But facts and evidence matter."**
>
> **Judith Curry, former chair of Georgia Institute of Technology's School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, testified that while climate scientists uniformly agree that surface temperatures have increased during the past century, there is "considerable" disagreement about whether humans drive global warming and if warming is dangerous to the planet.**
>
> **Curry's research led her to findings that natural causes could be playing a larger role in warming than human activity, challenging what many consider "settled" conclusions in the climate debate.**
>
> But instead of leading to reignited deliberation, Curry said the science community quickly branded her a "heretic" for challenging the status quo.
>
> "In their efforts to promote their 'cause,' the scientific establishment behind the global warming issue has been drawn into the trap of seriously understating the uncertainties associated with the climate problem," she said, adding: "This behavior risks destroying science's reputation for honesty and objectivity. Without this objectivity and honesty, scientists become regarded as merely another lobbyist group."
>
> **Democrats denounced the four witnesses Republicans called to testify as climate change "deniers" in a press conference held prior to the hearing.**

Here are the satellite measurements:

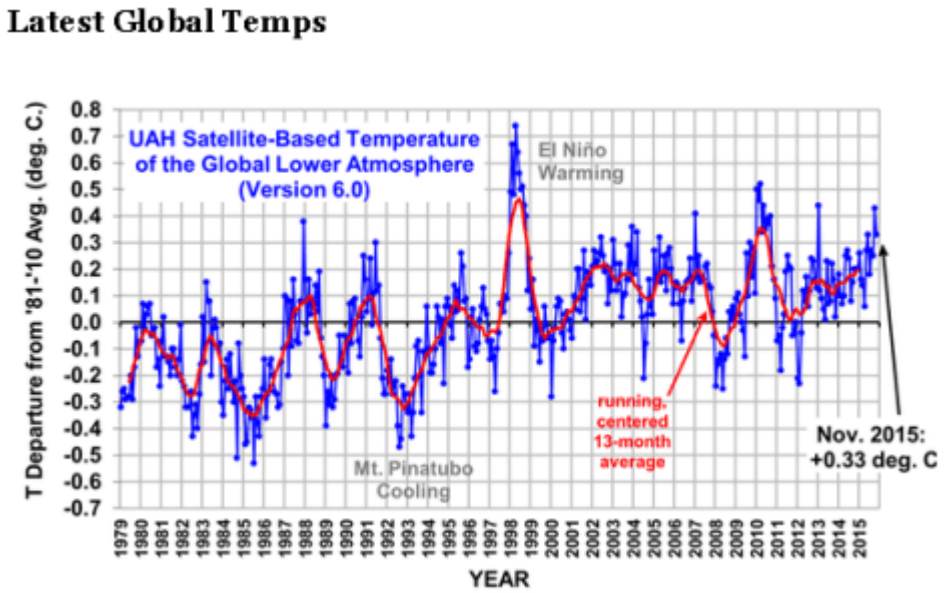

Satellite measurements of global temperature (University of Alabama – Huntsville) (Source)

I have blogged about the growing ice extents and the 18-year pause in global warming (according to atmospheric measurements, not Al Gore movies) before. I am glad that someone is trying to confront the Democrats with the experimental science.

More people are looking at the records of the presidential candidates on issues like global warming socialism, and as a result, Cruz is climbing in the polls:

> Thirty-five percent of Republican primary voters support Trump, up 13 points since October, and his highest level of support in CBS News polling. Ted Cruz (16 percent) has moved into second place, while Ben Carson, who led the October poll, has dropped to third.
>
> Marco Rubio is in fourth place with 9 percent. Jeb Bush is getting the backing of just 3 percent of Republican primary voters nationwide, his lowest percentage to date in CBS News polling. Carly Fiorina's support has also dropped; she is at just 1 percent now.
>
> Most of the interviews for this poll were conducted before Trump made statements concerning a ban on Muslims entering the United States.

I realize there is a certain segment of the population that is supporting Trump because they vote for people based on sound bites. A candidate who sounds tough excites them more than a candidate who has performed tough actions. It takes work to look into the candidate's past and see what actions they've taken to prove their conservative convictions. Trump supporters seem unwilling to put the work in. Trump is on record as being "very pro-choice" – he even supports partial-birth abortion. And and he also supports the DREAM act and amnesty. Some people might like to think that saying "I'm pro-life" makes you pro-life, but sane people think that pro-life credentials are established by pro-life actions. Trump has no pro-life actions. And border security credentials are established by border security actions. Trump has no border security actions. And of course, Trump considers gay marriage to be "the law of the land", because 5 judges said so.

Election time is not the time for people to be swayed by words. It's the time to look for actions.

Does archaeological evidence confirm names, dates and places in the Bible?

December 10, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

I spotted this post on Be Thinking by UK apologist Peter S. Williams. (H/T Eric Chabot at Think Apologetics)

So let me pick the ones I liked most for this post.

Here's a good one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Bethesda
>
> John 5:1-15 describes a pool in Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate, called Bethesda, surrounded by five covered colonnades. Until the 19th century, there was no evidence outside of John for the existence of this pool and John's unusual description *"caused bible scholars to doubt the reliability of John's account, but the pool was duly uncovered in the 1930s – with four colonnades around its edges and one across its middle."*[38] Ian Wilson reports: *"Exhaustive excavations by Israeli archaeologist Professor Joachim Jeremias have brought to light precisely such a building, still including two huge, deep-cut cisterns, in the environs of Jerusalem's Crusader Church of St Anne."*[39]

And this one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Siloam
>
> In the 400s AD, a church was built above a pool attached to Hezekiah's water tunnel to commemorate the healing of a blind man reported in John 9:1-7. Until recently, this was considered to be the Pool of Siloam from the time of Christ. However, during sewerage works in June 2004 engineers stumbled upon a 1stcentury ritual pool when they uncovered some ancient steps during pipe maintenance near the mouth of Hezekiah's tunnel. By the summer of 2005,

> archaeologists had revealed what was *"without doubt the missing pool of Siloam."*[40] Mark D. Roberts reports that: *"In the plaster of this pool were found coins that establish the date of the pool to the years before and after Jesus. There is little question that this is in fact the pool of Siloam, to which Jesus sent the blind man in John 9."*[41]

I just read this one because I am working my way through John. In case you haven't read John, you really should it's my favorite gospel.

Here's another one:

> ### Herod the Great
>
> We have a bronze coin minted by Herod the Great. On the obverse side (i.e. the bottom) is a tripod and ceremonial bowl with the inscription 'Herod king' and the year the coin was struck, 'year 3' (of Herod's reign), or 37 BC.
>
> In 1996 Israeli Professor of Archaeology Ehud Netzer discovered in Masada a piece of broken pottery with an inscription, called an ostracon. This piece had Herod's name on it and was part of an amphora used for transportation (probably wine), dated to c. 19 BC. The inscription is in Latin and reads, *"Herod the Great King of the Jews (or Judea)"*, the first such that mentions the full title of King Herod.
>
> Herodium is a man-made mountain in the Judean wilderness rising over 2,475 feet above sea level. In 23 BC Herod the Great built a palace fortress here on top of a natural hill. Seven stories of living rooms, storage areas, cisterns, a bathhouse, and a courtyard filled with bushes and flowering plants were constructed. The whole complex was surrounded and partly buried by a sloping fill of earth and gravel. Herod's tomb and sarcophagus were discovered at the base of Herodium by archaeologist Ehud Netzer in 2007.

And one more:

> ### The 'James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus' Ossuary
>
> James, the brother of Jesus, was martyred in AD 62. A mid-1st century AD chalk ossuary discovered in 2002 bears the inscription *"James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus"* ('Ya'akov bar Yosef akhui di Yeshua'). Historian Paul L. Maier states that*"there is strong (though not absolutely conclusive) evidence that, yes, the ossuary and its inscription are not only authentic, but that the inscribed names are the New Testament personalities."*[68] New Testament scholar Ben Witherington states that:*"If, as seems probable, the ossuary found in the vicinity of Jerusalem and dated to about AD 63 is indeed the burial box of James, the brother of Jesus, this inscription is the most important extra-biblical evidence of its kind."*[69] According to Hershel Shanks, editor in chief of the *Biblical Archaeological Review*: *"this box is [more] likely the ossuary of James, the*

> *brother of Jesus of Nazareth, than not. In my opinion … it is likely that this inscription* does *mention the James and Joseph and Jesus of the New Testament."*

And finally one short one:

> **Tiberius Caesar**
>
> The Denarius coin, 14-37 AD, is commonly referred to as the 'Tribute Penny' from the Bible. The coin shows a portrait of Tiberius Caesar. Craig L. Blomberg comments: *"Jesus' famous saying about giving to Caesar what was his and to God what* his *(Mark 12:17 and parallels) makes even more sense when one discovers that most of the Roman coins in use at the time had images of Caesar on them."*[48]

This is a good article to bookmark in case you are ever looking for a quick, searchable reference on archaeology and the Bible. There are many more examples in that post.

Who is more conservative on the marriage issue? Trump, Cruz, Carson or Rubio?

December 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

Let's see who is getting the endorsements of prominent social conservatives.

The first story is from the Washington Examiner.

It says:

> Ted Cruz picked up the endorsement of the National Organization for Marriage, an organization that opposes gay marriage, on Wednesday.
>
> In a statement, NOM president Brian S. Brown said endorsing Cruz was a difficult decision as so many other "tremendous candidates" remain, including Ben Carson, Mike Huckabee, Rick Santorum and Marco Rubio. But the group chose Cruz, Brown wrote, because he is a "proven champion" of marriage.
>
> **"We are endorsing Sen. Ted Cruz because of the urgent need for a marriage champion to emerge from the crowded field and capture the nomination," Brown wrote. "Unless conservatives come together behind a full-spectrum candidate — pro-marriage, pro-life, strong national defense, etc. — there is a real risk that someone like Donald Trump could win the nomination, which would be disastrous. We need a president with a proven track record of matching strong principles with concrete action, someone who will champion the fight for marriage, not walk away from it."**
>
> **Brown wrote that Trump "folded like a cheap suit" when it came to the issue of marriage, and that electing a "pro-marriage" president would**

> **mean NOM's supporters would have an excellent chance of reversing the Supreme Court's decision to legalize gay marriage nationwide.**

What I love about that is that unlike so many pro-life organizations, NOM is aware of these other issues (economics, foreign policy) and how they are all connected. Family Research Council is another organization that really undertstands how different issues are connected – they are not merely social conservatives.

NOM is the organization that is always going to bat for marriage against the Human Rights Campaign, the organization that was linked to convicted domestic terrorist and gay activist Floyd Lee Corkins.

Why would NOM endorse Cruz? Take a look for yourself:

Transcript from Real Clear Politics.

> SEN. TED CRUZ: Let me ask a question: Is there something about the left, and I am going to put the media in this category, that is obsessed with sex? Why is it the only question you want to ask concerns homosexuals? Okay, you can ask those questions over and over and over again. I recognize that you're reading questions from MSNBC…
>
> […]You're wincing. You don't want to talk about foreign policy. I recognize you want to ask another question about gay rights. Well, you know. ISIS is executing homosexuals. You want to talk about gay rights? This week was a very bad week for gay rights because the expansion of ISIS, the expansion of radical, theocratic, Islamic zealots that crucify Christians, that behead children and that murder homosexuals. That ought to be concerning you far more than asking six questions all on the same topic.
>
> REPORTER: Do you have a personal animosity against gay Americans?
>
> CRUZ: Do you have a personal animosity against Christians sir? Your line of questioning is highly curious. You seem fixated on a particular subject. Look, I'm a Christian. Scripture commands us to love everybody and what I have been talking about, with respect to same-sex marriage, is the Constitution which is what we should all be focused on. The Constitution gives marriage to elected state legislators. It doesn't give the power of marriage to a president, or to unelected judges to tear down the decisions enacted by democratically elected state legislatures.

Cruz has pledged to ignore the Supreme Court decision that redefined marriage, and he has written about various ways that conservatives could fight back in National Review. He's been critical of Obama's efforts to push gay and transgender issues in the armed forces. Anyone else saying things like that? Bobby Jindal was pretty good on gay marriage, but now the only two who are good on marriage are Cruz and Rubio. Cruz is by far the best, though – he graduated from Harvard Law, clerked for former Chief Justice Rehnquist, and has argued and won many cases at the Supreme Court. It's easy to see

why he was picked as the best person to defend marriage. He has the record of doing it.

Anyway, next up, the social conservatives in Iowa. Who do they like in the GOP primary?

The radically leftist CNN has the story.

Excerpt:

> Evangelical leader and powerbroker Bob Vander Plaats gave Ted Cruz's campaign a boost Thursday morning with an endorsement as the Texas Republican fights Donald Trump for the lead in Iowa.

> "The extraordinary leader that we need for these extraordinary times is U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz," Vander Plaats. the president and CEO of the conservative Family Leader organization, said at a press conference at the Iowa state Capitol.
>
> Vander Plaats is seen as one of the most influential kingmakers in the first-in-the-nation caucus state. His close alignment with political networks and activist followings could help tip the scales in the Iowa caucuses. Vander Plaats endorsed Iowa caucus winner Rick Santorum in 2012.
>
> […]Vander Plaats evaluated candidates on character, competence, the company that they keep, and an infrastructure "that can go the distance and become the nominee."

> "We will be going all in for Sen. Ted Cruz," Vander Plaats said. "We have found him as a man of deep character. A man that we can fully trust, who has a consistency of convictions, who loves his god, loves his spouse, and who loves his family. We also see him to be very, very competent. Not always popular, but very competent. He has challenged both sides of the aisle. He understands what it's going to take to get the country out of the mess that we're currently in. We believe that he is exceptionally competent and that adds to his extraordinary leadership."
>
> […]Cruz has also locked up the endorsement of Rep. Steve King, another influential Iowan among social conservative voters.

Cruz is doing pretty well in the latest national poll, as of Thursday night:

Latest Election Polls

Thursday, December 10

Race/Topic (Click to Sort)	Poll	Results
2016 Republican Presidential Nomination	CBS/NY Times	Trump 35, Cruz 16, Carson 13, Rubio 9, Bush 3, Christie 3, Paul 4, Kasich 3, Fiorina 1, Huckabee 3, Santorum 0, Pataki 0, Graham 0
2016 Democratic Presidential Nomination	CBS/NY Times	Clinton 52, Sanders 32, O'Malley 2
South Carolina Republican Presidential Primary	Winthrop	Trump 24, Carson 14, Cruz 16, Rubio 11, Bush 9, Fiorina 2, Graham 2, Huckabee 2, Kasich 1, Paul 1, Christie 1, Santorum 0, Pataki 0

Latest GOP primary poll has Cruz in second place

Now, I think everyone agrees that Bobby Jindal was the best on the pro-life issue and on the pro-marriage issue. Nobody fought harder for the unborn and for natural marriage. But Jindal is out, Cruz is the next best. I get the feeling that he would push to allow states to decide these issues, which would be a good compromise, at this point. At least Cruz is comfortable talking about these issues, which is more than most of the other candidates do.

Underage teen girl forced into daily sex by Muslim "grooming" gang in Rotherham, UK

December 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

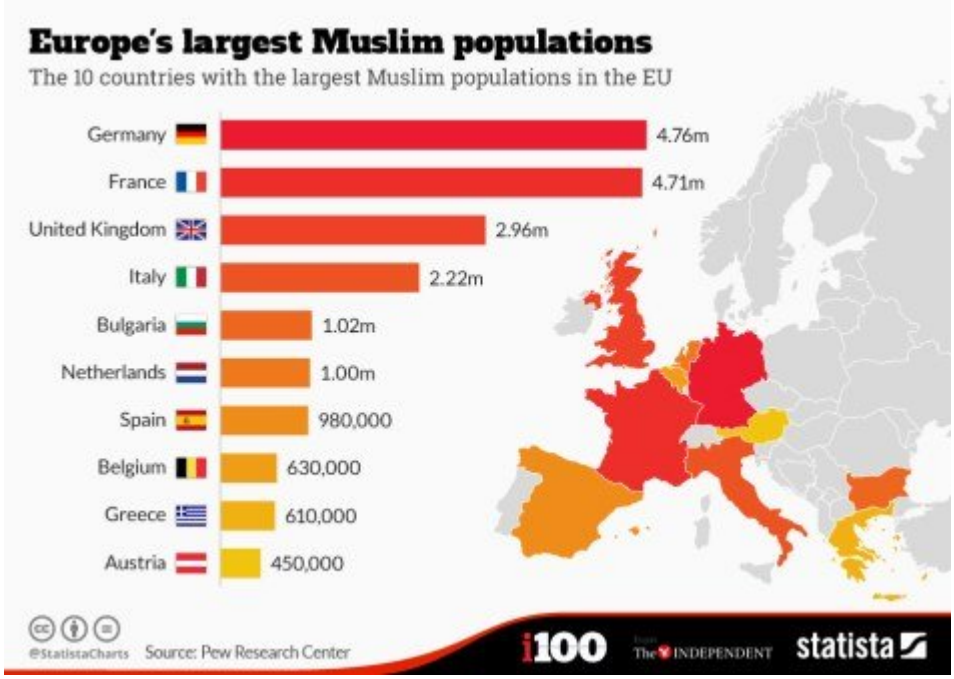

Muslim populations in Europe

I've covered this story before, but there are some new details about the alleged sexual abuse from the trial.

This was reported in the radically leftist UK Guardian, of all places. (H/T Ari)

Excerpt:

> A teenage girl abused by the Rotherham grooming ring was forced into daily sexual relations with men for years and used as a commodity to settle her abuser's debts, a court has heard.
>
> The girl, who was in and out of care from the age of 12, was allegedly taken around the country and made to perform sexual acts up to three times a day on different men, becoming pregnant twice, once when she was only 14.
>
> She had just turned 16, and was still in local authority care, when her abuse became a daily occurrence, the jury was told. She terminated the first pregnancy but later gave birth to a boy who was looked after by her mother.
>
> The girl is one of 12 allegedly groomed in a child sexual exploitation ring led by seven people, including two sets of brothers and two women, who between them are accused of 51 counts of abuse including rape, indecent assault, false imprisonment, abduction and procurement of girls for prostitution or for sex with another.
>
> **All of the girls were vulnerable to grooming and predatory behaviour, with unstable family backgrounds. "Some had unsettled home lives, had**

suffered previous ill treatment or abuse and some were in local authority care," said prosecutor Michelle Colborne QC.

They were deliberately "targeted, sexualised and in some instances subjected to acts of a degrading and violent nature", she said, adding that one girl was so terrified of her alleged abuser, Basharat Hussain, she feared for her life.

The jury heard on Thursday that one of the girls was 12 when she was first abused, while the grooming of another alleged victim started with treats of "sweets and pop" and progressed to gifts of perfume and a mobile phone.

The catalogue of alleged abuse, which spanned more than a decade from 1990 to 2003, was said to have been masterminded by Basharat's brother, Arshid Hussain, 40, who is facing 29 counts relating to nine girls. The court heard that he passed the lead victim to his brother and friends and arranged her abuse in flats, garages and houses in the Rotherham area and in London.

The violence against her allegedly became regular and no one in the victim's care home expressed concern when she returned bloodied or shaken from encounters, the jury was told. On one occasion, it is alleged she was bundled into the boot of a car and taken to a house in Tottenham, north London, where she was abused by five men, all in their 20s.

"Afterwards she was driven back to Rotherham and 'Mad Ash' [Arshid Hussein] told her he loved her," said Colborne. She tried to say no to the abuse, but eventually knew that to resist was to invite more violence and "protracted" attacks, the court heard.

"She was beaten, had a cigarette stubbed out on her chest, she was tied up, she was raped from a very young age, often by numerous men, one after the other, at the say-so of Arshid Hussain. She was insecure and vulnerable and believed he was her boyfriend," said Colborne. "He passed her to his brother and friends, and over time gave her as payment to men for debts he owed."

Also in the dock were brothers Sajid Bostan, 38, and Majid Bostan, 37, associates of the Hussain brothers, and two women, Karen MacGregor, 58, and Shelley Davies, 40, who associated with one another and with Ali and Arshid Hussain. All seven deny the charges.

One connecting feature in the case is a minicab firm, Speedline Taxis, owned by the Hussain's uncle and co-defendant, Qurban Ali. MacGregor worked there as a radio operator and one of the victims said the Hussain brothers visited the office regularly.

The jury heard how Arshid and Basharat plied some of the girls with alcohol or drugs after initially befriending them. They then dominated and controlled them and subjected them to horrific abuse.

Jurors also heard that five of the girls became pregnant through the abuse, two of them twice and two of them aged just 14. Both had a termination the first time

> but gave birth the second time.
>
> When one of the victims got pregnant she was persuaded by Basharat to have an abortion. “He told her Ash [Arshid] had children with seven English women already,” said Colborne.
>
> The jury heard the final victim “suffered years of mental and physical cruelty”. She was 15 when she met Basharat Hussain, then 24, and they quickly started having sex. Her mother was unhappy about the relationship and would confiscate her phone, but Basharat would replace it. “He would habitually be violent. He would slap, punch, kick and spit at her,” Colborne said.
>
> At one stage he became angry with her and called her a “slag”. He told her he had shovels in the boot of his car and she could dig her own grave, the prosecution said.
>
> **The girl went to the police on numerous occasions and asked to go into the witness protection programme, but Hussain allegedly told her he had a paid mole in the force and knew all about her plans, which she then abandoned.**
>
> **Another victim said she was taken to a house that was run like a brothel. She recognised one of the men there “as an MP or councillor from Rotherham” who she believed was “related to one of the defendants”.**
>
> The trial is the first to take place since the Jay report into child sexual exploitation in the Rotherham area was published last year.
>
> Explaining how the grooming allegedly worked, Colborne told the jury that one of the alleged victims, Girl A, lived in “squalid conditions” in the 1980s and was befriended by Davies, who was just three years older and took her to stay at MacGregor’s house. Girl A thought the house was “posh” and “she was made to feel welcome and was fed and clothed”.
>
> The prosecution said “there would always be Asian men in the house in the early hours” and abuse soon started.
>
> The girl, who was between 15 and 17 years old at the time and is now 43, told no one about the incident until she reported it this year after seeing allegations about MacGregor in the press and on Facebook, the court heard.

Notice how the Muslim men were (reportedly) able to *find English women to assist them with their abuse of English girls*. That part really sickens me – how could these grown women put their needs above an innocent child? Anyone can look at a little girl and know that what is best for her is education, care, chastity and marriage. Not sexual abuse! She was just a little girl! I guess I should expect this from a country where abortion is the law of the land… if they will murder innocent unborn children, then of course they’ll torture and abuse born children.

The problem of fatherless girls being vulnerable to abusers only gets worse as left-wing

policies eject more and more fathers from the home, e.g. – single mother welfare, no-fault divorce, etc. Those policies sound nice, but all they do is encourage reckless, irresponsible women to make babies before marriage with "fun" men, instead of getting married to "boring" good men. I am sure that if these girls had fathers, they would not have been easy victims.

I would think that in our own country, that teenage girl could expect as much protection from Democrats as they were willing to give Kate Steinle, when they voted against punishing sanctuary cities that provide safe harbor for violent criminals. Democrats don't care about the harm that can result to the most vulnerable in society when they refuse to punish criminals. In fact, siding with evil against the good is a virtue, on the secular left. Previously, I wrote about how the police had ignored complaints from the victims because they were afraid of being seen as racists. They get that idea from the left, which denounces anyone who tries to protect the innocent from evildoers as "intolerant". Well, I think that the rights of innocent children are more important than the feelings of criminals.

Related posts

- Attorney General Loretta Lynch vows to crack down on anti-Muslim speech
- What percentage of Muslims approve of radical Islam and terrorism?
- 373 children were victims of UK Muslim sex trafficking gang in Oxfordshire
- UK authorities ignored gang of Muslim pedophiles who raped more than 1400 children
- Middle East charities pay bounties to the families of Muslim suicide bombers
- Boko Haram Muslims murder 59 unarmed Christian students in Nigeria
- At least 75 Christians killed by Muslim suicide bombers in Pakistan
- Mainstream media silent as Muslim Brotherhood targets Christians in Egypt
- Police and social workers ignored sex-trafficking, rape and abuse by Muslims
- Muslim terrorists found guilty of plotting largest attack on UK soil
- Muslim leader of underage sex-trafficking gang gets 22-year sentence
- Islam, rape, and sex-trafficking in European countries
- UK police knew about Muslim child sex gang but refused to prosecute
- Six Montreal Muslims arrested in a case of human trafficking and prostitution
- Members of Canadian socialist parties oppose child sex-trafficking crime bill

Good news: B.C. Supreme Court rules in favor of Trinity Western University

December 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

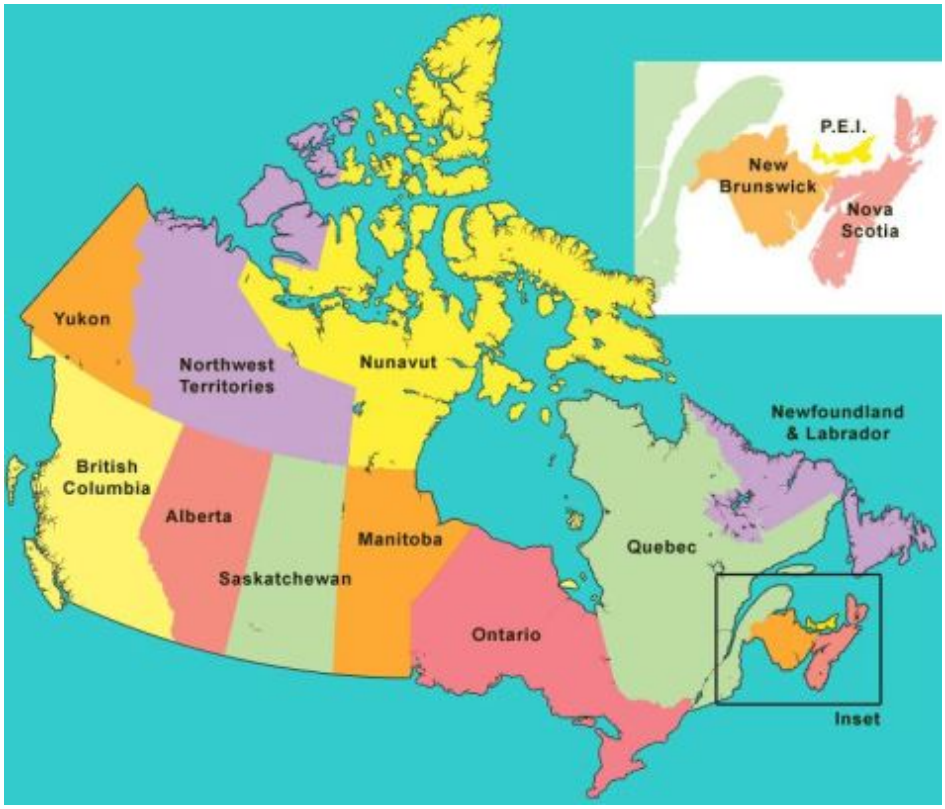

Map of Canadian provinces

Wow, I didn't expect this from the British Columbia Supreme Court.

Here's the press release from the Justice Center for Constitutional Freedoms:

> The Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (JCCF) today responded to the B.C. court ruling in *Trinity Western University v. Law Society of British Columbia*.
>
> The JCCF intervened in this court action, in support of freedom of association, as protected by Section 2(d) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.
>
> The B.C. Supreme Court today ruled against the Law Society of British Columbia (LSBC) refusing to recognize the law program of Trinity Western University (TWU), a private Evangelical Christian university in Langley, B.C.
>
> The Federation of Law Societies of Canada has approved the law program of TWU as meeting academic and professional standards. The LSUC admits there is nothing wrong with TWU's law program, but claim that TWU's Community Covenant discriminates against the LGBTQ+ community. The Community Covenant prohibits numerous legal activities such as vulgar or obscene language, drunkenness, viewing pornography, gossip, and sexual activity outside of the marriage of one man and one woman.
>
> The JCCF argued for the *Charter* section 2(d) right to freedom of association,

> including the right of every charity, ethnic and cultural association, sports club, temple, church, and political group to establish its own rules and membership requirements.
>
> "This Court's ruling in favour of procedural fairness and due process is a victory for the rule of law in Canada. The Court also held that the LSBC had an obligation to properly consider and balance the Charter rights in issue, but failed to do so," stated John Carpay, lawyer and President of JCCF.

This case is going to go to the Supreme Court, and since Stephen Harper was Prime Minister for some time, there is a chance they could win their case. Trudeau has not had a chance to pack the Supreme Court with liberal stooges yet. I'm not optimistic, but there's a chance. Canada's Supreme Court is notorious for blatant left-wing judicial activism.

The Rebel has a video clip about the decision, featuring John Carpay:

If this is something you care about, you can donate using the link on The Rebel's post about the decision.

Between 1993 and 2013, gun ownership soared, but gun violence declined

December 11, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from CNS News. I think it's important because this is one of those things that everyone thinks they know, yet the facts are completely different from what they think.

It says:

> According to data retrieved from the Centers for Disease Control, there were 7 firearm-related homicides for every 100,000 Americans in 1993 (see light blue line in chart). By 2013 (most recent year available), the gun homicide rate had fallen by nearly 50 percent to only 3.6 homicides per 100,000 population.

Here's the chart:

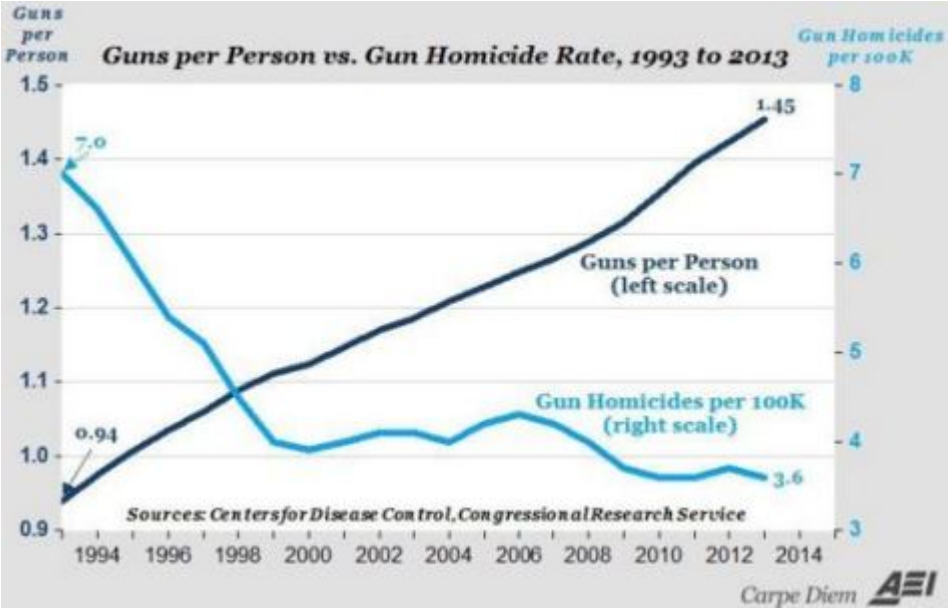

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

More: (links removed)

> Based on data from a 2012 Congressional Research Service (CRS) report… the number of privately owned firearms in U.S. increased from about 185 million in 1993 to 357 million in 2013. Adjusted for the U.S. population, the number of guns per American increased from 0.93 per person in 1993 to 1.45 in 2013, which is a 56 percent increase in the number of guns per person that occurred during the same period when gun violence decreased by 49 percent (see new chart below). Of course, that significant correlation doesn't necessarily imply causation, but it's logical to believe that those two trends are related. After all, armed citizens frequently prevent crimes from happening, including gun-related homicides, see hundreds of examples here of law-abiding gun owners defending themselves and their families and homes.

It turns out that criminals are rational – if they think that their victims are armed, then

they won’t try anything. The only places left where they can go on a shooting spree are gun-free-zones.

Makes you wonder why the Obama administration is so interested in taking the guns of law-abiding people, doesn’t it? Well, when crime goes down, the government can’t meddle as much in our lives, with security cameras, searches, etc. They can only justify taking our freedom away when there is lots of crime. That’s one reason why we should be detering crime ourselves, and vote to keep that right of self-defense.

Learn about the issue

To find the about guns and self-defense, look in the academic literature. Here are two books I really like for that.

- More Guns, Less Crime by Dr. John R. Lott (University of Chicago Press, 3rd ed.)
- Guns and Violence by Dr. Joyce Lee Malcolm (Harvard University Press)

Both of those books make the case that permitting law-abiding citizens to own firearms for self-defense reduces rates of gun violence.

Tad Hopp accumulates six figures of college debt, wants taxpayer bailout

December 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

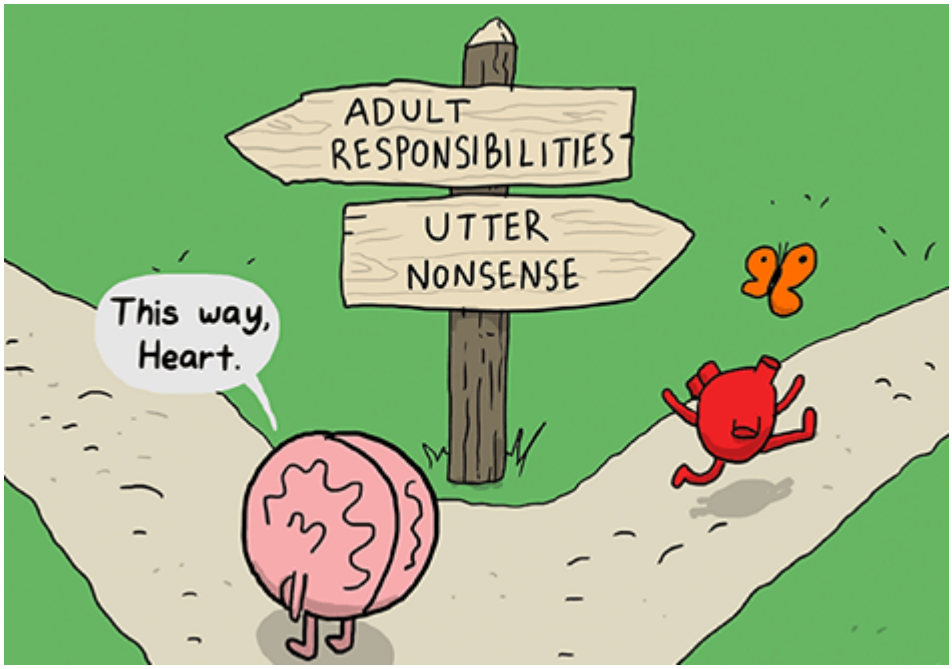

Brain vs Heart, from: theawkwardyeti.com

Here's an interesting editorial from a "Christian" left blog. (H/T Acton Institute via Lindsay)

The author, Tad Hopp is graduating a PCUSA seminary – an extremely liberal, left-wing denomination.

He writes:

> I graduated college in 2007.
>
> […] I majored in English, not exactly what most people consider a 'marketable' or 'practical' degree…
>
> […]I went to a somewhat expensive private school…
>
> […]I did what many students in their last year of high school do: I went to the school where I felt I was being called…
>
> […]I do not regret my four years at my undergraduate institution one bit.
>
> [….]When I graduated college, I owed nearly $50,000 in student loan debt and was unemployed for almost six months before I finally found a low-paying office job.
>
> […]"Can't find a job? Well, you should have majored in something more 'practical', like economics or business or medicine." Yeah, that *would* be great…if those were the subjects where my skills and passions lie. They're not.
>
> […]I felt called to go to seminary.

> […]I will graduate seminary with close to six figures worth of student loan debt.

Let's take stock of what he's said so far:

- he studied English, a language that he already spoke, which has one of the lowest employment rates
- he was warned by people who knew something about earning and saving money not to study English
- he went to a school he couldn't afford to go to, and he graduated with $50,000 in debt
- he went to seminary, another subject that doesn't pay, and added another $50,000 or so of debt
- he says that he doesn't have to study subjects that lead to a career because he isn't "passionate" about them
- he "followed his heart" by going to the school that he had mystical, emotional, intuitions about = "calling"

My advice to Tad at this point would be for him to take the Bible seriously when it says this:

2 Thessalonians 3:10:

10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

And 1 Timothy 5:8:

8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Now, for a Bible-believing Christian, these are inerrant and cannot be denied. But we have to go *outside the Bible* and learn how the world really works in order to figure out how to achieve those stated goals. Why should anyone hire us? What is working really about?

But even before looking at economics, Tad needs to push away all his friends who tell him to "follow his heart" and stick close by his friends who understand economics, who have jobs already, who have savings already, and so on. Don't look for advice from dreamers, you look to advice from doers – people who can read the times, run the numbers and who have *demonstrated* the ability to create plans that work to achieve *results* that please God. When it comes to planning about the future, look at the past accomplishments. Weaving a happy narrative sounds nice, but judge future predictions based on past performance.

I would recommend that Tad read an economist like Thomas Sowell, especially on work, prices, etc., and realize that work means providing value to others. It then follows that he is obligated by the Bible to NOT "follow his heart", but to instead do something that *offers value* to his fellow man. Prices are a way of determining what is most valued by your fellow man. And we know what careers have the highest starting salaries and mid-career

salaries:

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image) (Source)

Keep in mind that you also have to check to see what the unemployment rate for these fields is, but I think they are all very much in demand, hence the salaries.

I don't mind if a woman studies English and seminary, but Tad is a man – he has the Biblical obligation to be the primary provider, as we saw in the verses above.

More Tad:

> Is the PCUSA doing anything to address this crisis?
>
> […]What has our government done to address this issue?
>
> […]I, like so many in my generation, voted for Obama…
>
> […]It seems to me that we've bought into the lie that student loan debt is brought on by the individual person…
>
> […]You know what I think might stimulate the economy? Automatically cancelling every single outstanding student loan!
>
> […]If we can spend $640 billion dollars on defense spending, why can't we find the money to better support public education?

It's important to understand that an English degree and a seminary degree do not prepare a person to make statements on economics and government. Tad has never studied these things, has no experience in them. He cannot state what the impact of his suggestions would be to all groups, i.e. – he cannot answer "and then what happens?" for every impacted group. Thinking economically is a valuable skill, but as Tad's personal life shows, it's not an area he is really knowledgeable about. But he wants to shift money from defense spending (which he knows nothing about) so that he can have a personal

bailout. I personally doubt that taxpayers would be better served by paying for his English degree and liberal seminary degree than they would be if a peace-loving democracy could project power abroad to deter aggression from countries like North Korea, Iran, Russia, China and Syria.

Here is the solution to Tad's problems:

- we need to put Tad to work in a minimum wage job and confiscate his entire salary, until his loans are paid off.
- we need to put Tad on a watch list such that he is never allowed to borrow money from anyone ever again.
- once Tad's loans are paid off, he should be taxed on his future earnings at the top tax rate for the rest of his life. The money we tax from him can fund education – that's what he said he wanted.
- Tad and his household should all be barred from collecting any money for unemployment, welfare or other social programs.

That's the only bailout Tad should get. It would actually be in his best interest that he encounter real life as quickly as possible, because the longer he waits, the harder it's going to be for him to recover to independence. He needs to stop his crazy retreat from adult responsibilities, and start working and saving now. I would say that at this point, marriage and parenting is out of the question for him (in another post, he comes out as gay, so that also complicates things). And he can thank the politics of the secular left for marriage and family being less affordable now, thanks to laws like Obamacare, which *raised* the cost of health care by thousands of dollars. I found it interesting that he actually did work at some point but he mocked the job as a "dead-end job" – as if it was beneath him.

I know some of you will be thinking, "but God called him things and so of course God is going to bail him out with $100,000 for his student loans". But the thing is, God doesn't usually work like that. First, I don't accept that he is a Christian at all. Second, just because you have feelings that your plan will work, that isn't a calling. The truth is that you certainly can assess the feasibility of things that you feel "called" to do, and if the plan looks crazy, then don't do it. If you find yourself at odds with wise, practical people when explaining your calling to them, then you're probably doing it wrong.

Two examples of authentic love, one from a woman, one from a man

December 12, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Time for examples of real, self-sacrificial love

Actually, there are 3 stories – Dina added one in the comments which I have copied onto the bottom of the main post.

Let's start with the most self-sacrificial example first. This one made my toes curl in admiration.

From Life News:

> When St. Louis mother Cara Combs was diagnosed with stage IV melanoma while she was pregnant with her fourth child, she was given the choice of having treatment or saving her own life. She chose to save her baby. She decided to put off treatment in favor of giving birth at the 28th week to give her baby girl a chance to live.
>
> Sadly, Combs died Tuesday morning — three days after giving birth.
>
> In deciding to reject treatment, Combs posted the following on Facebook:
>
> I feel it's time to post this because I know a lot of information is going around. Last week I was diagnosed with stage IV melanoma. I am also 25 weeks pregnant. I can't begin treatment while pregnant so I have some tough decisions to make. Against the advice of my oncologist, I am choosing to delay my treatment for three weeks in order to get the baby to 28 weeks. There is no good decision here. We will both be fighting for our lives and I feel incredibly guiltily

> about that. I saw a dermatologist last year and she didn't find anything concerning. Even my oncologist can't find the source. At 38 you don't expect to find out that you are dying. It definitely puts things into perspective. All I can say is enjoy every minute with your kids and don't stress about little things. The baby will probably be born the first week of December and I will start treatment 48 hours later. I know we are in for some big upcoming battles. Thank you for all of the support we have received so far. It is very much appreciated!
>
> Tragically, Roy Combs had to post the message on the family's GoFundMe page this week about losing his wife:
>
> I wanted to let everyone know that we lost Cara Walters Combs this morning. I don't have to tell you how great of a person she was. She will be missed by all. I always knew she was destined for greater things. We all have a perfect angel looking over us. She was the strongest person I ever met and the best wife and mother. She sacrificed everything so her legacy could live on. Thank you all for your support and prayers. She was my everything and always will be.
>
> In similar cases, doctors often suggest an abortion, but, as studies show, there is typically no need for women to destroy the life of their unborn child to save their own. Her story story confirms what research has shown: women who are pregnant and battling breast cancer don't need to have an abortion.

She made the ultimate sacrifice for her unborn child – she wanted to be sure that she would not hurt her child with chemotherapy. Now, can we at least agree that this was a more noble choice than abortion? Not obligatory, for sure. *But heroic.* That's the kind of woman I would want to get up and go to work for every day. Someone who thinks about the needs of others – not someone like this woman who would not resist her own selfish desires.

Anyway, on to part two!

This one is from MercatorNet, and it's their most popular story for this week:

And they write:

> A few weeks ago Shannon mentioned the high numbers of divorces around the world. (She even included a colourful map – I'm such a cartophile…) She wisely noted that dedication is probably the key for a happy marriage, if you are prepared to be in for the long haul from the start then you're more likely to work through the hard times rather than cut and run.
>
> Along such lines, watch the above video entitled "What is love?". It shows the love of a man (Bill) for his wife of 50 years (Glad) who has advanced alzeihmer's disease. God forbid that anything should happen to her, but I hope that I will be able to serve my wife with the love, cheerfulness and dedication that Bill demonstrates in this video. If love is willing the good of another then Bill is a great exemplar of love. It is a great antitode to today's "me-first-and-foremost" mentality and culture. It is also the (hard) answer to today's high divorce rates.

> Perhaps with a few more Bills in the world that map in Shannon's post will become less red…just something to think about this Advent.

Indeed.

If you are looking for someone to marry, look for someone who is good at dealing with the needs of other people. Someone who doesn't mind responsibilities, expectations and obligations. Good news for those people, though. You can break that self-centeredness by doing things you don't feel like doing. You have to train yourself to not cut and run when things get difficult. Doing whatever you feel like doing is bad training for marriage. Doing things for others that you don't feel like doing is good training for marriage. Fortunately, there are lots of positive messages about self-denial and self-sacrifice in the Bible. Those can really help you if you are unable to resist the pull of fun and thrills.

Here is a comment that Dina (yes, *that* Dina) left on the post, which I have copied here:

> As you know, I am a midwife. I once looked after a woman with cancer that was diagnosed during the pregnancy. She refused treatment to help baby Grace come safely into the world. They had tried for 12 years to have a baby. The pregnancy made her cancer worse as it was an oestrogen based tumour, and she died when Grace was 10 days old and in the special care baby unit.
>
> I remember wheeling her through on her bed to the baby unit so she could have a cuddle with Grace. She said to me "I would save Grace's life over mine every time" the morning she died.
>
> I get a Christmas card and a picture of her every year. Grace is 11 now, and I will never forget her mother's determination, and the strength she found to live long enough to see her born safely.

Finally, here is some good advice from the Bible for everyone to think about:

Phil 2:3-8:

> [3] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.
>
> [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.
>
> [5] Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,
>
> [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
>
> [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.
>
> [8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Remember, everyone is made in God's image, and you can love them. It's easier if

they’re lovable, of course – not everyone is safe to love.

New study: father absence is a strong predictor of depression for young girls

December 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you want your children to grow up happy, commit yourself to marriage

The study is here on PubMed.

And here's an article about it posted at The Family in America, a public policy journal.

Excerpt:

> Who has benefitted from the war radical feminists have waged against marriage? Certainly not young women. A very large new Canadian study concludes that one of the strongest predictors of depression among young women is the loss of a biological parent. And it is the easy divorces that feminists have pushed for that have typically occasioned such a loss.
>
> Conducted by researchers at the University of Northern British Columbia, this new study isolates the factors predicting depression among Canadians ages 16 to 20. The researchers limn these factors by scrutinizing data collected between 1994 and 2007 from a nationally representative sample of 1,715 individuals tracked during this 13-year period.
>
> Predictably, the researchers adduce evidence that such things as parental rejection and childhood anxiety predict depression between a young person's 16th birthday and his or her 21st. But gender makes a difference: consistent with other inquiries, this study finds that "girls reported more [depression] than boys." However, not all girls are equally vulnerable: the data reveal that "The loss of a parent by the ages of 4 to 8 years predicted depression at ages 16 to 20 years for girls [p = 0.008] but not for boys."

> Of course, a girl can lose a parent through death. But the researchers realize that such tragedy occurs far less often than the trauma of parental divorce. Consequently, they know how to interpret parental loss as a predictor of girls' depression at the threshold between adolescence and young adulthood. This is a finding, they realize, that fits hand-in-glove with the results of a 2008 study establishing that "the effects of parental divorce . . . differ between genders in respect to the development of depression with risk increasing for girls but not for boys." They further realize that their study harmonizes with a 1997 study concluding that "young women whose parents had divorced reported higher levels of depression compared to young men from divorced families."
>
> Given the paralyzing effects of depression as "a leading cause of disability worldwide," the researchers hope their study will lead to "targeted, specific and personalized intervention" that will curb such depression. More particularly, they hope that "girls may benefit from interventions designed to address parental loss due to death, divorce, and other causes."
>
> But since nothing takes a parent away from a daughter more often in the 21st century than does parental divorce, it is very clear that the kind of intervention girls most need is the kind that will keep their parents together. Just how quickly that intervention comes will depend heavily on how much reality can puncture feminist ideology.

This study makes me think of the problems that we have these days getting married and staying married. I think that there are three kinds of challenges. The first challenge is ideology, e.g. – radical feminism. The second challenge is cultural, e.g. – the hook-up culture on campus. The third challenge is political, e.g. – no-fault divorce. It seems likes the odds are really stacked against marriage-minded people.

Most people like the idea of having someone of the opposite sex commit to them for life. I write a lot about what people should be looking for in a mate. Factors that predict a person's ability to commit, what their worldview should be, etc. But we also have to remember that we have to be turning ourselves into people who are suited to a lifetime commitment, involving self-denial and self-sacrifice.

A lot of people seem to think that if they meet the right person – the person who makes them feel good – then they won't have to do any self-denying or any self-sacrificing. But that's not true. Feelings change. It's possible for two serial killers to feel good about each other, and to having things in common, but marriage isn't about whether you "like" the other person and whether they "like" you. Marriage works when you have two people who are comfortable making commitments. Two people who are comfortable with responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

The point I am trying to make here is that not only must we be looking for someone who can be faithful, loyal, commitment through thick and thin, but we must also prepare to become a person like that. If we make choices for our own happiness every day – fun and thrills – then we are not making ourselves into the kind of people who take responsibility

and make commitments.

The strange thing is that those who choose fun over and over and over again seem to make the worst decisions when it comes to choosing mates. Of course it’s easier to pick someone who is not too moral and not too religious. Then they won’t be able to judge you. They’ll just let you do whatever you want and never shame you for anything.

The problem is that marriage works best when two people are comfortable with moral obligations to others. You have to be someone who is comfortable with obligations over the long term. And you have to choose someone who has a strong sense of morality, otherwise they won’t honor their moral obligations to others. Commitment means doing what is right regardless of how you feel about it, It means giving up on the pursuit of fun, in order to build something strong that will take you into your old age.

Cold Case Christianity podcast talks about lack of authenticity in the church

December 13, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Making church less boring for young people

Here's an episode of the Cold Case Christianity podcast that I really liked. This is one you definitely do not want to miss. I wanted to summarize the first topic of three that he covers, because it's something that's been coming up a lot lately. Topics 2 and 3 are worth listening to, as well.

You can grab the MP3 file here.

Topic #1: Why are young people leaving church?

- problem: not convinced Christianity is true
- problem: apparent conflict with science
- problem: unanswered questions
- problem: difficulties inside the church
- problem: the church's (correct) position on same-sex marriage

Jim's claim: if people do not think that the Bible is accurate and divinely inspired, then they are going to be tempted to pick and choose what to believe and what not to believe

Jim reads a blog post from a young lady who attends church, and here are *her* top problems with the church:

1. you can't ask questions
2. you can't voice your doubts
3. you can't explain your struggles
4. you can't confess your sins
5. you can't confide your fears

And she wants the leadership to be real and open about these things as well.

Wallace says that there here are two main problems that teens run into at college:

1. intellectual skepticism
2. selfish desires, especially in sexual areas

It's aggravated by the hostile university setting (skeptical professors), and a culture of drinking and sex.

The university culture is offering you a worldview that makes your selfish desires more permissible and normal. Unless people have a compelling reason not to reject that, they won't reject it. It's the path of least resistance to conform to the expectations of your peers and professors. Our aim should be to provide young people with evidence before they face the skepticism in college.

Another major problem facing young people is the Christian position on homosexuality and gay marriage. Christian teachings on sexuality in general are viewed with suspicion, and these things are not discussed or debated in the church. One way to respond to this is to defend the reliability of Scripture. (Note: I think another way to respond is to give *secular reasons* for what the Bible teaches, and to help young people link their decisions about sexuality with their larger life plan).

Topic 2 was about objective vs cultural moral standards, and topic 3 was about whether different denominations differ in essentials or in peripheral issues.

My thoughts on topic #1

This week I've been spending time with a younger Christian discussing apologetics with her and we have had some different life experiences and she sometimes asks me to explain what happened. So I've been telling about some of the problems I had trying to map what the Bible says onto real life. I'm not going to post them here, but there were definitely problems dealing with my parents, my peers in school, my co-workers and church people. I kept trying to do good things, like trying to talk about my faith at work, and sometimes, very unexpected things happened to me. So telling about these struggles does convey the sort of seriousness that I think is lacking in the church environment.

So my point here is this. If you are dealing with young people, it might be a good idea to not gloss over these problems and keep everything at the surface level. Talk to them about what a Christian life should look like and the struggles you had trying to live it out. Talk to them about their plans, and how different decisions are going to affect those plans. Talk to them about their grades. Talk to them about their future profession. Talk to them about apologetics. Talk to them about politics and economics, so they know how to vote for their futures. Basically, they should have the idea that you are interested in whether Christianity is true or not, and that you are interested in them make some sort of plan to serve God and making the decisions they need to get there. You should tell young people your plan and how you are funding it and working on it, in order to prod them to make their own plan.

So if the problem is perceived lack of authenticity, then the solution is to talk to young people like grown ups and give them insight. This is my plan to serve God. This is my plan for my marriage. This is why I think Christianity is true. This is what I want my kids to end up like. This is what I want my wife to do. This is how I intend to fund all this. These are the laws/public policies that help/hurt my plan. These are the problems and struggles I've had implementing my plan. Here is an area where my sinfulness is really messing up my plan. When I talk to other Christians, we talk about these issues relevant to my plan.

It's this kind of frank talk about what you are trying to do (and what role self-control plays in your plans) that helps young people to get serious about their beliefs. Don't reduce the whole religion to rituals and feelings – it's a mistake.

White House cannot name a mass shooting that would have been prevented by gun control

December 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

This is from the Washington Free Beacon.

Excerpt:

> White House spokesman Josh Earnest struggled to answer direct questions Thursday about whether any of President Obama's proposed gun control measure would have prevented the recent mass shootings seen in the U.S.
>
> Reporter Byron Tau brought up Sen. Marco Rubio's (R., Fla.) remark that no recent mass shootings would have been prevented by gun legislation, a statement rated "True" by the *Washington Post* fact-checker.
>
> […]"Can the White House point to a recent mass shooting that would have been stopped by a expanded assault weapons ban or stricter background checks?" Tau asked. "The evidence seems to be that in all these recent mass shootings, these folks either passed background checks or were very determined to circumvent the strict gun laws that are already on the books. Can you point to any that would have been prevented or stopped by the kind of proposals the White House is championing?"
>
> "Again, Byron, I think the same thing applies here, which is it's not our view that we should wait until somebody who's on the no-fly list walks into a gun store, legally purchases a gun and kills a bunch of innocent Americans before we pass a law preventing it," Earnest said. "That's a common-sense view. The president believes that's in our national security, and that's why we believe quite strongly that Congress should take action to address it and close the no-fly, no-buy loophole."
>
> Tau asked whether any of the mass shooters were on the no-fly list.

> "Not that I'm aware of," Earnest said.

Here's the the clip:

The Democrats want to prevent people from defending themselves against criminals and terrorists, but they don't have a plan to do anything to stop the criminals or the terrorists. Their focus is on disarming the law-abiding people, not detecting and punishing the law-breaking people.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in

> England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

Are pious pastors preparing young Christians to defend their moral values?

December 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

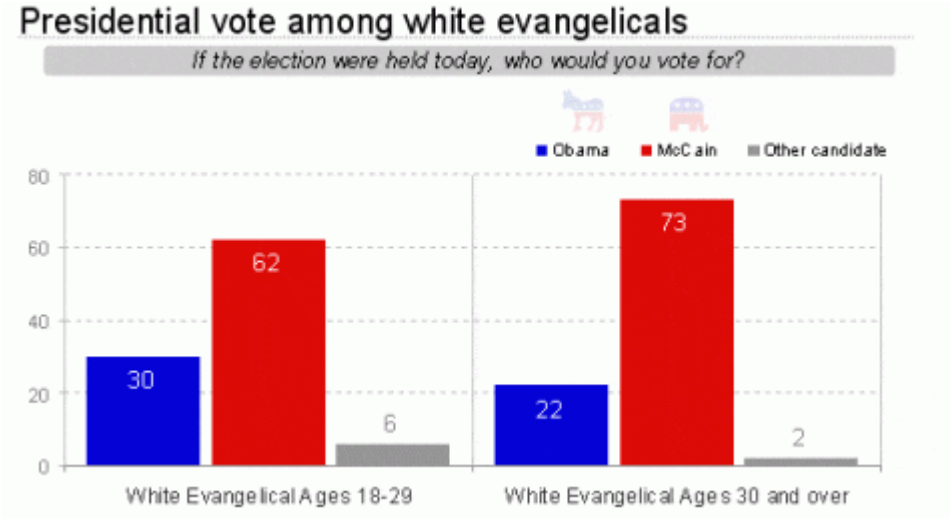

Voting for Obama means abortion, gay marriage and end of religious liberty

You might expect Christians to advocate for values like chastity, life-long natural marriage, protection for unborn and born children, right to work, low taxes, limited government, free speech, religious liberty, and so on. But today, many young evangelicals are embracing higher taxes, more spending, socialism, retreat from just wars against evil forces, abortion, gay marriage, global warming alarmism, etc.

Why is this happening?

Christianity should make me feel happy and be liked by others?

Here is the first problem. When you advocate for moral causes like protecting the unborn, or school choice, or freeing the slaves, a bunch of people are not going to like you. Christians in the time of Jesus knew that being bold about their Christian convictions would make a lot of people think bad things about them – they expected it. But young evangelicals have gotten the idea that being a Christian should not involve any sort of unhappiness and unpopularity. They've been told that God has a wonderful plan for their lives, and that plan involves happiness, fulfillment, travel and adventure. They wouldn't have learned this from the Bible, because the Bible emphasizes suffering and unpopularity as part of the normal Christian life. Christianity has always been opposed to abortion and homosexuality, but these things are not fun and popular today. Since these young Christians believe in a God of love – a cosmic butler who leads them to happiness through their feelings – of course they are going to find defending traditional Christian values too difficult.

Christianity should be about my private experience of belief?

What young evangelicals learn in many churches is that religion is something that is centered on the Bible and the church building – it is not something that flows into real life. This is actually the goal of the most pious, orthodox pastors, with the exception of

people like Pastor Wayne Grudem or Pastor Matt Rawlings who can integrate the Bible with real-world how-to knowledge. Pastors want to protect God from being "judged" by evidence, because they regard evidence as dirty, and unworthy of being allowed to confirm or deny blind faith / tradition. Pastors instead teach young people that you can't find out anything about God from things like the Big Bang, the DNA, the fossil record, or even from the peer-reviewed research on abortion, divorce, or gay marriage. And they don't respond to arguments and evidence from non-Christian skeptics, either. Their goal is to insulate belief from evidence. If the Bible says "do this" then they don't even want to study the way the world works in order to know the best way to do what the Bible asks.

For example, when it comes to politics and social activism, young evangelicals learn in church about helping the poor. But pastors never tell them anything about economics, which shows that the free enterprise system is the best at helping the poor. (Just compare the USA to North Korea or Venezuela or Argentina). Instead, young evangelicals blissfully accept the left's narrative that free markets and charity don't work, and that government must step in to redistribute wealth. Most pastors they never pick up an economic textbook to see *which economic system really helps the poor.* And that ignorance is passed on to gullible and sentimental young people, who jump on any slick politician who promises to help the poor through redistribution rather than economic growth and innovation. What you learn about in church is that religion is private and has no connection to reality whatsoever., so there is no point in learning anything – science, economics, philosophy. Pious pastors put Christianity outside the realm of truth.

The (young) people perish for lack of knowledge

What follows from having a view that Christianity only lives in the Bible and church, and not out there in the real world of telescopes and microscopes? Well, most young evangelicals will interpret what their pastor is telling them as "our flavor of ice cream" or "our cultural custom". They don't link Christianity to the real world, they don't think that it's true for everyone. They think that "people in church" just accept what the Bible says on faith, and that's all. So what happens when topics like abortion, marrige, economics, war, etc. come up in their daily conversations? Well, all the pastors have equipped them with is "the Bible says", and that's not enough to be persuasive with non-Christians. They have no way of speaking about their beliefs and values with anyone who doesn't already believe in the Bible. And that's why they go left… it's much easier to just go along with their secular left peers, professors and cultural heroes. And that's exactly what they do. Without facts and evidence – which they never taught or even mentioned in church – how can they be expected to stand up for Biblical Christianity? They can't.

If young Christians never learn how to present a case for traditional values and beliefs apart from the Bible for concepts like pro-life or natural marriage or religious liberty, then they will cave to the secular left culture. And this is exactly what the pious pastors have facilitated by "rescuing" the God and the Bible and the historical Jesus from evidence and knowledge. *Young people lack courage to take Biblical positions, because they first lack knowledge*. They don't know how to make the case using evidence that their opponents will accept – mainstream evidence from publicly accessible sources. And

that’s how the pastors want it – piety, not evidence.

Christianity is a knowledge tradition

No young evangelical is going to lift a finger to take bold moral stands if they think their worldview is just one option among many – like the flavors of ice cream in the frozen section of the grocery store. They have to know that what they are saying is true – then they will be bold. Boldness is easy when you are aware of facts and evidence for your view. Not just what the pastors and choirs accept, but facts and evidence that are widely accepted.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Can naturalism account for the origin of the 20 amino acids in living systems?

December 14, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

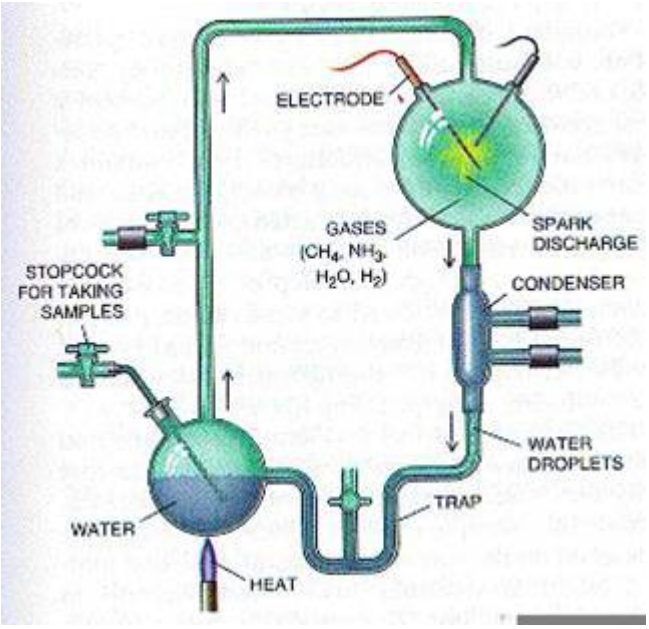

Do the Miller-Urey experiments simulate the early Earth?

The origin of life

There are two problems related to the origin of the first living cell, on naturalism:

1. The problem of getting the building blocks needed to create life – i.e. the amino acids
2. The problem of creating the functional sequences of amino acids and proteins that can support the minimal operations of a simple living cell

Normally, I concede the first problem and grant the naturalist all the building blocks he needs. This is because step 2 is impossible. There is no way, on naturalism, to form the sequences of amino acids that will fold up into proteins, and then to form the sequences of proteins that can be used to form everything else in the cell, including the DNA itself. But that's a topic for a separate post.

Today, let's take a look at the problems with step 1.

The problem of getting the building blocks of life

Now you may have heard that some scientists managed to spark some gasses to generate most of the 20 amino acids found in living systems. These experiments are called the "Miller-Urey" experiments.

The IDEA center has a nice summary of origin-of-life research that explains a few of the main problems with step 1.

Miler and Urey used the wrong gasses:

> Miller's experiment requires a reducing methane and ammonia atmosphere,[11, 12]

> however geochemical evidence says the atmosphere was hydrogen, water, and carbon dioxide (non-reducing).[15, 16] The only amino acid produced in a such an atmosphere is glycine (and only when the hydrogen content is unreasonably high), and could not form the necessary building blocks of life.[11]

Miller and Urey didn't account for UV of molecular instability:

> Not only would UV radiation destroy any molecules that were made, but their own short lifespans would also greatly limit their numbers. For example, at 100ºC (boiling point of water), the half lives of the nucleic acids Adenine and Guanine are 1 year, uracil is 12 years, and cytozine is 19 days[20] (nucleic acids and other important proteins such as chlorophyll and hemoglobin have never been synthesized in origin-of-life type experiments[19]).

Miller and Urey didn't account for molecular oxygen:

> We all have know ozone in the upper atmosphere protects life from harmful UV radiation. However, ozone is composed of oxygen which is the very gas that Stanley Miller-type experiments avoided, for it prevents the synthesis of organic molecules like the ones obtained from the experiments! Pre-biotic synthesis is in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. The chemistry does not work if there is oxygen because the atmosphere would be non-reducing, but if there is no UV-light-blocking oxygen (i.e. ozone – O_3) in the atmosphere, the amino acids would be quickly destroyed by extremely high amounts of UV light (which would have been 100 times stronger than today on the early earth).[20, 21, 22] This radiation could destroy methane within a few tens of years,[23] and atmospheric ammonia within 30,000 years.[15]

And there were three other problems too:

> At best the processes would likely create a dilute "thin soup,"[24] destroyed by meteorite impacts every 10 million years.[20, 25] This severely limits the time available to create pre-biotic chemicals and allow for the OOL.

> Chemically speaking, life uses only "left-handed" ("L") amino acids and "right-handed" ("R)" genetic molecules. This is called "chirality," and any account of the origin of life must somehow explain the origin of chirality. Nearly all chemical reactions produce "racemic" mixtures–mixtures with products that are 50% L and 50% R.

Two more problems are not mentioned in the article. A non-peptide bond anywhere in the chain will ruin the chain. You need around 200 amino acids to make a protein. If any of the bonds is not a peptide bond, the chain will not work in a living system. Additionally, the article does not mention the need for the experimenter to *intervene* in order to prevent interfering cross-reactions that would prevent the amino acids from forming.

Usually when you hear the origin of life debated, they sort of skirt about the problem of

where the amino acids come from, but there is no reason not to make that an issue. The naturalist has to explain how the first living cell could come about *naturalistically.*

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Was Barack Obama a successful President? What were his greatest accomplishments?

December 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

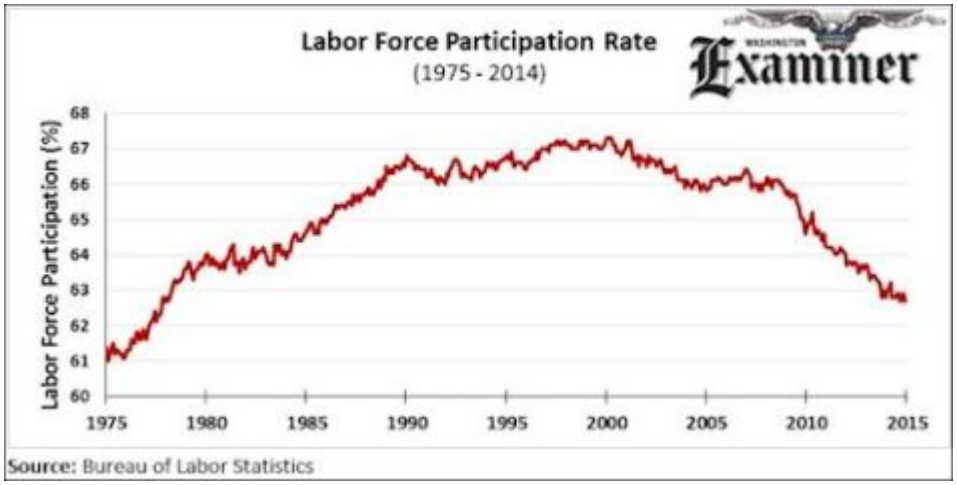

Labor Force Participation 2015

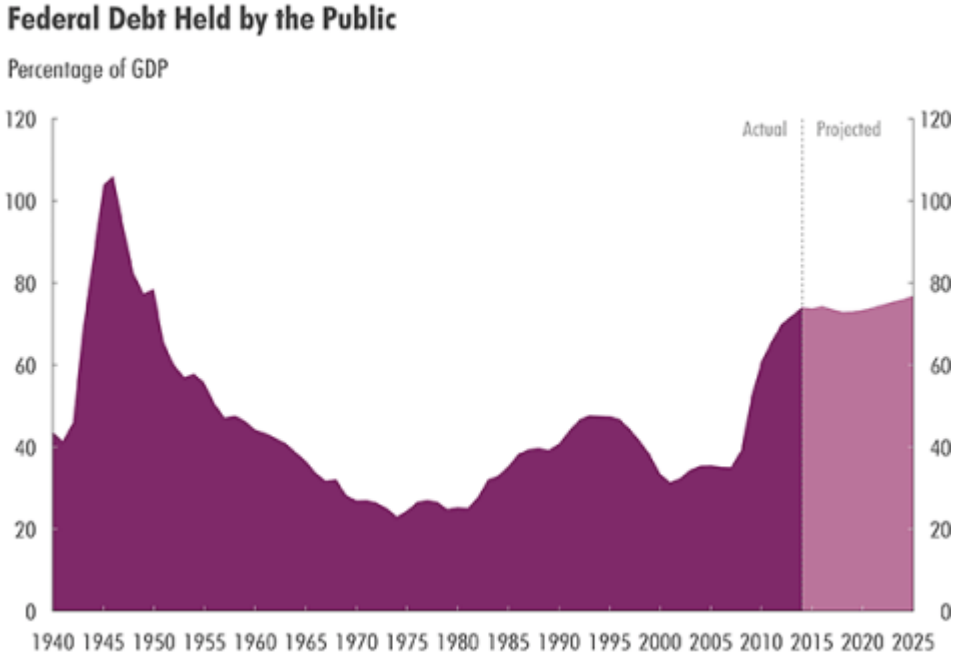

Congressional Budget Office: Federal Debt Held by Public to GDP ratio
(Source: Congressional Budget Office)

This National Review article is a summary of some of the things that we've been talking about on the blog over the past year. It's worth contrasting his confident words with the actual results he's achieved.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Begin with the continued rise of ISIS and an ISIS-inspired attack on American soil in San Bernardino.
>
> Obama's widely-panned Sunday evening speech on combating ISIS is fresh in our minds; he's haunted by the fact that the day of the attack, in an interview with CBS News, he declared, "Our homeland has never been more protected by more

effective intelligence and law-enforcement professionals at every level than they are now." In the weeks between the Paris attack and San Bernardino, Obama told the public there was no known "specific and credible threat" to the U.S. — a point that in retrospect only emphasized how blindsided authorities were by the San Bernardino attack.

[…]It's easy to forget that in mid November, after the Paris attacks, numerous congressional Democrats started publicly expressing doubts and frustration with the administration's approach to ISIS. **Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, the former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, told reporters that the Obama administration ignored the rise of ISIS in 2012 because it contradicted the narrative of the president's reelection campaign. More than 50 intelligence analysts working out of the U.S. military's Central Commandfiled formal complaints that their reports on ISIS and al-Qaeda's branch in Syria were being inappropriately altered by senior officials.**Elsewhere in the war on terror, a prisoner released from Guantanamo Bay in 2012 became one of the leaders of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Bowe Bergdahl, the Army soldier that Obama traded for five high-value Taliban prisoners in Guantanamo Bay, was charged with desertion and misbehavior before the enemy, did an interview where he compared himself to fictional heroic spy Jason Bourne.

It was a rough year for American national security. In addition to lingering questions about the security of classified and sensitive information on Hillary Clinton's personal e-mail server, the Office of Personnel Management revealed in June that it suffered two apparently separate breaches of its computer system, meaning the sensitive information of about 21.5 million current and former federal workers is now in the hands of foreign hackers. (The *Washington Post* reported that the breach forced the CIA to withdraw personnel from China, but Director of National Intelligence James Clapper disputed the report, without going into detail.)

[…]The new Republican-controlled Senate and House failed to repeal Obamacare, but the outlook for the president's signature domestic legislation grew considerably murkier in 2015. Twelve of the 23 health-insurance co-ops largely funded through Obamacare by federal loans failed; as a result roughly 700,000 Americans were told they needed to get a new insurance plan. In November, UnitedHealth Group, the biggest U.S. health-insurance company, said it had suffered major losses on policies sold on the Obamacare exchanges and would consider withdrawing from them.

The *New York Times* found that in many states, more than half the plans offered for sale through HealthCare.gov have a deductible of $3,000 or more — leaving many purchasers to conclude they can't actually afford to go to the doctor despite paying for insurance.

> […]Defenders of the president will be quick to point to the unemployment rate at 5 percent, contending he's presiding over a roaring economy. This year Democrat Bernie Sanders received some attention for echoing a point made by Republicans during the Obama era: The official unemployment rate excludes those working part time who want full-time work, and those who have stopped searching but if offered a job would take it. Sanders contended the "real" unemployment rate is higher than 10 percent; he pointed out that youth unemployment is particularly high. Wages remain mostly flat; when President Obama took office in January 2009, the average weekly earnings of rank-and-file workers in the private sector was $296.88. The preliminary figure for October 2015 is $306.80 — a 3 percent increase over seven years.

Mollie Hemingway has an article on Obama's failures up at The Federalist.

Here's a snip:

> Another claim made repeatedly by the Obama administration was that people were stupid idiots to be worried about terrorists exploiting entry pathways to the country on account of how good our vetting is. When the Republicans in Congress worked on a bill to improve the process of vetting refugees from Syria, the White House issued yet another — yet another! — veto threat. The statement began:
>
> > The Administration's highest priority is to ensure the safety and security of the American people. That is why refugees of all nationalities, including Syrians and Iraqis, considered for admission to the United States undergo the most rigorous and thorough security screening of anyone admitted into the United States…. The current screening process involves multiple Federal intelligence, security, and law enforcement agencies, including the National Counterterrorism Center, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS), State, and Defense, all aimed at ensuring that those admitted do not pose a threat to our country.
>
> [I]f poor, vulnerable refugees are vetted this much, surely we must be vetting regular immigrants even more, right? Bad news. One of the San Bernardino murderers came into the country on a fiancé visa. Her tough application included questions such as, and I'm not joking:
>
> - "Are you a member or representative of a terrorist organization?"
> - "Have you ever ordered, incited, committed, assisted or otherwise participated in genocide?"
> - "Have you ever committed, ordered, incited, assisted or otherwise participated in torture?"

> *[…]The New York Times* further reports that the murderer was openly calling for violence against the U.S., but we totally missed it because of how bad our vetting is:
>
> > WASHINGTON — Tashfeen Malik, who with her husband carried out the massacre in San Bernardino, Calif., passed three background checks by American immigration officials as she moved to the United States from Pakistan. None uncovered what Ms. Malik had made little effort to hide — that she talked openly on social media about her views on violent jihad. She said she supported it. And she said she wanted to be a part of it… Had the authorities found the posts years ago, they might have kept her out of the country. But immigration officials do not routinely review social media as part of their background checks, and there is a debate inside the Department of Homeland Security over whether it is even appropriate to do so.
>
> ABC News also reported that a "Secret US Policy Blocks Agents From Looking at Social Media of Visa Applicants, Former Official Says."

> [Obama] issued a veto threat after claiming we couldn't do any better at screening people. Turns out we're asking them to volunteer information about how bad they are and respecting the "privacy" of their public comments calling for violent jihad.

Andrew C. McCarthy also has a similar post up at Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> In his reluctant Dec. 6 Oval Office Address, Obama said things like: "Since the day I took this office, I've authorized U.S. forces to take out terrorists abroad precisely because I know how real the danger is."
>
> Inquiring minds wonder to what effect? How did terrorism's leadership, which he said was "decimated" in 2012, reconstitute itself so effectively? And why is Obama intellectually incapable of calling Islamic extremists what they are?
>
> He talks of increasing allied air assaults. But we're 17 months into the assaults. Why does it take new terrorist attacks to ramp up what he said we were already doing? And why do 75% of the sorties return without dropping their ordnance? (Hint: Obama's strict rules of engagement prohibit collateral casualties and require advance leaflet drop warnings.)
>
> In his weekly remarks Saturday Obama said "Our airstrikes are hitting ISIL harder than ever." Which wouldn't take much.
>
> He also stated, accurately, that Special Ops forces are in action, but neglected to mention they total about 250 against an ISIS army estimated at 40,000.
>
> […]Then, there's the Iran nuclear deal. You may recall, although you're not

> supposed to, the interminable negotiations were touted as preventing the world's largest national exporter of terrorism from developing nuclear weapons. We now know Iran hasn't even signed the agreement.
>
> And Iran has violated existing U.N. resolutions in recent weeks by testing not once, but twice, ICBMs capable of carrying nuke warheads. The second test came as the U.N. was still discussing the first violation.

So why is it that so many Americans voted for such a miserable failure?

Here is an illustration. Suppose you have someone who comes from a cultural background that is incompatible with American values. Her culture is much less successful than American culture, because their beliefs are all false. But she is loyal to her failed culture, and cannot bring herself to blame her own people for their failures.

Well, she will have to avoid all evidence that American policies work, such as the evidence from red states succeeding while blue states flounder. She refuses to read anything (e.g. – economics textbook, civics book, American history) that would overturn her misplaced loyalty to the failed values and policies or her community. She only listens to news sources that confirm her desire to blame America for her misfortunes and the misfortunes of the people from her culture.

Who will she vote for when it's election time? She will vote for someone who blames America for the failures of her community, too. Regardless of whether he is competent to be President or not. The desire to have someone who blames America for the failures of her own culture is so strong that she will not care if she votes for a President who fails horribly at everything he tries.

And that is why a buffoon like Obama can be elected and re-elected as President in America, even though he does such a poor job. There was no reason to believe that Obama could succeed in any of the things he talked about in his speeches. He had no demonstrated ability in any of the areas he campaigned on – *no achievements whatsoever*. The people who voted for him had no evidence that he was capable or competent.

Instead, they voted for him because it made them feel good about themselves, despite their failures. He blamed others for their failures, and they liked that. They did not want to take responsibility and adopt values and policies that worked – the *true* values and policies that made America great. They wanted to feel superior to those detestable Christians and those evil patriotic conservatives.

Thomas Sowell: does affirmative action help minorities to get ahead?

December 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Thomas Sowell – the best economist in the world

My favorite economist, Thomas Sowell has an article in Investors Business Daily that explains what affirmative action really does to minorities.

Excerpt:

> Affirmative action is supposed to benefit black and other minority students admitted with lower academic qualifications than some white students who are rejected.
>
> […]Despite much media spin, the issue is not whether blacks in general should be admitted to higher-ranked or lower-ranked institutions.
>
> The issue is whether a given black student, with given academic qualifications, should be admitted to a college or university where he would not be admitted if he were white.
>
> Much research over the years has confirmed… that admitting black students to institutions for which their academic preparation is not sufficient can be making them worse off instead of better off.
>
> I became painfully aware of this problem more than 40 years ago when I was teaching at Cornell University and discovered that half the black students there were on some form of academic probation.
>
> These students were not stupid or uneducable. On the contrary, the average black student at Cornell at that time scored at the 75th percentile on scholastic

> tests. Their academic qualifications were better than those of three-quarters of all American students who took those tests.
>
> Why were they in trouble at Cornell, then? Because the average Cornell student in the liberal arts college at that time scored at the 99th percentile. The classes taught there — including mine — moved at a speed geared to the verbal and mathematical level of the top one percent of American students.
>
> The average white student would have been wiped out at Cornell. But the average white student was unlikely to be admitted to Cornell in the first place. Nor was a white student who scored at the 75th percentile.
>
> That was a “favor” reserved for black students. This “favor” turned black students who would have been successful at most American colleges and universities into failures at Cornell.
>
> None of this was peculiar to Cornell. Black students who scored at the 90th percentile in math had serious problems trying to keep up at MIT, where other students scored somewhere within the top 99th percentile.
>
> Nearly one-fourth of these black students with stellar qualifications in math failed to graduate from MIT, and those who did graduate were concentrated in the bottom tenth of the class.
>
> There were other fine engineering schools around the country where those same students could have learned more, when taught at a normal pace, than at a breakneck speed geared to students with extremely rare abilities in math.
>
> […]Mismatching students with educational institutions is a formula for needless failures.
>
> The book “Mismatch” by Sander and Taylor is a first-rate study of the hard facts. It shows, for example, that the academic performances of black and Hispanic students rose substantially after affirmative action admissions policies were banned in the University of California system.
>
> Instead of failing at Berkeley or UCLA, these minority students were now graduating from other UC campuses. They were graduating at a higher rate, with higher grades, and now more often in challenging fields like math, science and technology.
>
> […]Does the actual fate of minority students not matter to the left as much as their symbolic presence on a campus?

Now, you might ask yourself on what basis Sowell makes all these assertions, so here are a few of his academic publications about affirmative action, which are state-of-the-art:

- Preferential Policies: An International Perspective, William Morrow & Co., 1990
- Affirmative Action Around the World: An Empirical Study, Yale University Press, 2005

Now, I was recently talking to a friend who has empirically false views on a number of

topics. He is opposed to capital punishment, opposed to gun ownership, supports affirmative action, and so on. When I ask him why he believes these things, he doesn’t point to any evidence. I offered to give him studies showing that capital punishment has a deterrent effect on crime, that concealed carry laws reduce violent crime rates, that affirmative action laws harm minorities, etc.

If we really want to help minorities, we have to do what makes sense according the evidence. We have to aim to do good, not just feel good.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

December 15, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference

between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.

But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.

There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that “There is no God” is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that “There is a God.” Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God’s existence. He confesses that he doesn’t know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term “atheist,” you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with “non-theist.” So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word ‘atheist’ has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix ‘a-’ being read in this same way in ‘atheist’ as it customarily is in . . . words as ‘amoral’ . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. “The Presumption of Atheism,” by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word “atheist” trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our

> **cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.**
>
> **One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.**
>
> So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, "So is there a God or not?"

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these "subjective atheists"?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says "I lack a belief in the gravitational force!". When you engage in serious discussions with people about God's existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don't care about a person's psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over "I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God"? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: "I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!" What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: "Wintery Knight won't listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!". I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that's why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don't *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I'm not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Related posts

- Is giving to charity more rational for religious people or atheists?
- An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview
- Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?
- Did Jesus exist? Agnostic historian Bart Ehrman debates Infidel Guy
- Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?
- Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong? Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral?
- Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?
- William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech
- Can atheists be moral? Sean McDowell and James Corbett debate
- If militant atheists could form a country, what would it look like?
- Chad Meister: can atheists make sense of morality?

CNN Debate: Ted Cruz hammers Marco Rubio over support for amnesty and Libya disaster

December 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The last GOP primary debate of 2015

Wow. If you missed tonight's two CNN debates, you missed two great debates. Wolf Blitzer and Dana Bash show very little if any liberal bias, and the most biased moderator was actually the moderate RINO Hugh Hewitt. Substance, substance, substance.

Let's look at the two biggest clashes of the night, both between Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio.

Cruz vs Rubio on amnesty and border security

The Washington Examiner was the most interesting exchange of the night between Cruz and Rubio, about Rubio's past support for amnesty.

Excerpt:

> Ted Cruz continued his fight with Marco Rubio over immigration and the Florida senator's initial support of the Gang of Eight bill, which died in 2013.
>
> The Texas senator told CNN's Dana Bash that "border security is national security."
>
> "He has attempted to muddy the waters," Cruz said of Rubio. "But I think that anyone who watched the battle that we had. … There was a time for choosing, as Reagan put it, where there was a battle over amnesty, and some chose to stand with Barack Obama and Chuck Schumer and support a massive amnesty plan. Others chose to stand with Jeff Sessions and Steve King and the American people and secure the border."
>
> Cruz then pivoted to tie the immigration issue to national security, arguing that the proposed immigration plan in 2013 had inadequate vetting, including the lack of mandated background checks for those entering the country.
>
> "This issue is directly connected to what we've been talking about because he front line with ISIS isn't just in Iraq and Syria, it's in Kennedy Airport and the Rio

> Grande," Cruz said. "Border security is national security, and one of the most troubling aspects of the Rubio-Schumer Gang of Eight bill is it gave President Obama blanket authority to admit refugees, including Syrian refugees, without mandating any background checks whatsoever. Now we have seen what happened in San Bernardino when you are letting people in and the FBI can't vet them, it puts American citizens at risk.
>
> "I tell you if i'm elected president, we will secure the border. We will triple the border patrol," Cruz said. "We will build a wall that works and I'll get Donald Trump to pay for it."

I have the video clip (7 minutes):

You can hear Fiorina trying to jump in there, and I think she hurt herself quite a bit in the debate with her frequent interruptions. Yes, she is well-informed on foreign policy, but no, interruptions did not make her look presidential.

Now, Rubio did try to attack Cruz, claiming that he supported amnesty, and Cruz said that it was false. Who is right?

According to Andrew C. McCarthy in National Review, Cruz is right, and Rubio is lying:

> Cruz has cast himself as the Republican field's most consistent voice against "amnesty" for illegal aliens. Yet Rubio, with an assist from former Senator Rick Santorum, claims that Cruz has actually advocated granting legal status to illegal aliens.
>
> Taken out of context, the charge seems colorable. But under the circumstances as they actually occurred, the proposal Cruz made was a case of intelligent legislating designed to expose the fraudulence of the pro-amnesty position. It was, in this way, reminiscent of smart legislating by Rubio (and, for that matter, by Cruz) that highlighted the folly of President Obama's Iran deal.

He explains the whole story in the article, and concludes:

> Cruz's objective was to illustrate the fraudulence of the "out of the shadows" blather. Obviously, if the Gang of Eight had been sincere, a grant of limited legal status would have accomplished their purported humanitarian objective. But Cruz knew the Left would bitterly object, revealing that the true "comprehensive immigration reform" agenda was to mint new Democratic voters.
>
> Indeed, Cruz made clear in proposing his amendment that the Gang of Eight would betray millions of legal immigrants who sought U.S. citizenship properly and that it therefore undermined the rule of law. And as the amnesty-friendly *Huffington Post* reported at the time, the point of Cruz's amendment was to "take away one of [the Gang of Eight bill's] central purposes: giving a pathway to citizenship to 11 million undocumented immigrants."
>
> It is thus remarkable to find Rubio, of all people, depicting Cruz as an amnesty supporter because of Cruz's attempt to expose the Democratic agenda that

> Rubio, whether out of naïveté or opportunism, was then promoting.

The troubling thing is that Rubio is lying about this *in televised ads*, which I think justifies my decision to drop him off my list of acceptable candidates for me. He is conservative on many other things, but when you take his liberal policies and add it to these lies about Cruz, he should not be elected President.

Cruz vs Rubio on the Obama-Clinton invasion of Libya

And here is is Cruz attacking Rubio on his support for the Obama administration's interventions in Libya:

I supported a boots-on-the-ground *invasion and occupation* of Syria to remove Assad when he crossed the red line. But Libya was a huge mistake that did more harm than good, and Rubio should not have supported the Obama-Clinton plan to invade Libya. I like projecting American military power and punishing evil, but not in Libya and not in Egypt. I disagree with Cruz on Syria, as he did not want to topple Assad. That would have been a huge win for us against Iran, which is the real power behind Syria – and Hezbollah, too. But that's a minor disagreement compared to the foul-up in Libya.

Cruz vs Rubio on defense spending

I could not find the video clip for Rubio's charge that Cruz did not vote for some defense spending bills, but this piece by Stephen Hayes in the Weekly Standard has more details about it. Those charges are damaging, but it turns out that Cruz is innocent of Rubio's charges. First of all, both Cruz and Rubio voted against those bills, according to Yahoo News. Lindsay, who I often link to on this blog, is a huge Cruz supporter, and she found an article in the Washington Free Beacon that clears Cruz of the charge of being an isolationist:

> Rubio said that Cruz's votes against the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) would defund programs vital to the security of the U.S. and its allies. Cruz was one of only two senators, along with libertarian Sen. Rand Paul (R., Ky.), to oppose that defense bill in October.
>
> "Three times he voted against the National Defense Authorization Act, which is a bill that funds the troops. It also, by the way, funds Iron Dome and other important programs," Rubio said, referring to Israel's air defense platform, which is supported with financial aid from the U.S.
>
> Cruz responded that he opposed the NDAA to fulfill a campaign promise about indefinite detention.
>
> "I voted against the National Defense Authorization Act because when I campaigned in Texas, I told voters in Texas that I would oppose the federal government having the authority to detain U.S. citizens permanently with no due process," Cruz said.
>
> Rubio responded that individuals who wage war against the U.S. forfeit the constitutional protections of civilians.

> “If you’re an American citizen and you decide to join up with ISIS, we’re not going to read you your Miranda rights. You’re going to be treated as an enemy combatant—a member of an army attacking this country,” Rubio said.
>
> While the candidates feuded over civil liberties, both expressed willingness to project power abroad.
>
> “Radical Islamic terrorism will face no more determined foe than I will be,” Cruz said.
>
> “We are the most powerful nation in the world. We need to begin to act like it again,” Rubio said.

However, Cruz introduced an amendment to the NDAA defense spending bill to remove the part about indefinite detention, so that he could go ahead and vote for the rest of the bill:

> Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Rand Paul (R-Ky.), both of whom are running for president, have joined up with other senators to introduce an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), currently before the Senate, that would ban indefinite detention of U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, without being charged or given a trial, unless authorized by Congress.
>
> Sens. Mike Lee (R-Utah), Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) also put their names on the provision.
>
> “The Constitution does not allow President Obama, or any President, to apprehend an American citizen, arrested on U.S. soil, and detain these citizens indefinitely without a trial,” Cruz said in a statement. **“While we must vigorously protect national security by pursuing violent terrorists and preventing acts of terror, we must also ensure our most basic rights as American citizens are protected.”**

The amendment had bi-partisan support, but it did not pass – that’s why Cruz voted against the bill. At least he tried to fix it so that he could vote for it while respecting the wishes of his constituents. I thought he came across as informed and hawkish in the debate on Tuesday night, which works for me, although I am all for the Patriot Act and collection of bulk data.

So it turns out that Cruz’s attitude towards Rubio’s dishonest attacks was warranted, and it falls to me to do the investigating that shows who was right and who was wrong. Cruz comes out of the debate squeaky clean, and Rubio comes out looking dirty.

Obama releases jihadists from Guantanomo, then misleads the public about it

December 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neville Chamberlain Obama: peace in our time

This is from the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> Consider the Taliban Five, released in exchange for Bowe Bergdahl. Although Obama administration officials initially downplayed the significance of these detainees, intelligence and military officials made it clear that they were high-risk transfers. Michael Leiter, the former head of the National Counterterrorism Center under Obama, said it was "very, very likely" that the five Taliban leaders would return to the fight. Rob Williams, the national intelligence officer for South Asia, who briefed Congress shortly after the transfer, testified that there was a high likelihood that at least four of the five freed detainees, and possibly all of them, would rejoin the fight.
>
> And what about Ibrahim al Qosi?
>
> […]Was he a "low-level" fighter, as Obama suggested?
>
> He is not. Qosi is now a senior leader in al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the group's public spokesman. AQAP has repeatedly attempted to attack the U.S., while taking over large parts of Yemen. The dossier compiled by U.S. officials for Qosi demonstrates that he served bin Laden in multiple roles because

> he was so trusted.
>
> A threat assessment of al Qosi prepared by the intelligence officials on the Joint Task Force Guantanamo (JTF-GTMO) reported that he would present a "high risk" of taking up arms against the United States or its allies if he were freed from the detention facility. "Detainee is an admitted veteran jihadist with combat experience beginning in 1990 and it is assessed he would engage in hostilities against US forces, if released."

Does this surprise you? It turns out that Obama regularly makes decisions that benefit America's enemies, and put America's allies and armed forces in harm's way. His job is to make us safe, but his ideology prevents him from doing that, apparently. He just doesn't have a sufficient grasp on reality that he is able to make decisions that produce good results for his clients – the American people. Instead, he wants to do things that make him feel good about himself – "look at me, I'm so merciful and compassionate" – and then when bad consequences occur, he tries to minimize the damage by lying about the harm he's caused to his gullible followers. As if lying to them about the mess he's made somehow makes the mess go away. I know that children sometimes do that, but this is the President of the United States. I expect more accountability.

And as for the misleading the American public:

> "I am absolutely persuaded, as are my top intelligence and military advisers, that Guantanamo is used as a recruitment tool for organizations like ISIS," Obama began. "And if we want to fight 'em, then we can't give 'em these kinds of excuses."
>
> There is no reason that Obama would need to be "persuaded" of something that can be easily demonstrated. Either Guantanamo is a major recruitment tool or it's not.
>
> Administration officials have been making this claim for years and it's not true.
>
> Guantanamo rarely appears in jihadist propaganda, whether ISIS or al Qaeda, and reviews of recent propaganda materials from ISIS and al Qaeda – online videos and audio recordings, glossy magazines, etc. – found very few mentions of the facility.
>
> "Keep in mind that between myself and the Bush administration hundreds of people have been released and the recidivism rate – we anticipate," Obama said. "We assume that there are going to be – out of four, five, six-hundred people that get released – a handful of them are going to be embittered and still engaging in anti-US activities and trying to link up potentially with their old organizations."
>
> A handful? Obama is woefully ill-informed or he's being dishonest. According to the most recent report on Guantanamo recidivism, prepared in September 2015 by James Clapper's office, Obama's own Director of National Intelligence, 196 former detainees are either confirmed (117) or suspected (79) of returning to the fight. That's a recidivism rate of more than 30 percent. Intelligence officials tell

> THE WEEKLY STANDARD that those numbers are almost certainly low, as they do not include jihadists the United States and its allies are no longer tracking.

How many times have you seen Obama assert that “all the experts agree with me” without naming any? Do you know why he does that? Because no one agrees with him, and that’s why he cannot name any names. The surprising thing is that his gullible supporters believe that, instead of saying “name one person who agrees with you”. We have stopped asking questions, apparently.

New study: fossil discovery adds a new phyla to the explosive Cambrian explosion

December 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

It's Wednesday, so that means another scientific discovery has been made to falsify atheism. Put it on the pile with the others, I guess.

The story from Science Daily reads like Darwinist propaganda, but you can get the main idea if you ignore the fawning naturalistic bias.

Excerpt:

> A team of Virginia Tech researchers have discovered fossils of kinorhynch worms — commonly known as mud dragons — dating back more than 530 million years.

> The historic find — made in South China — fills a huge gap in the known fossil record of kinorhynchs, small invertebrate animals that are related to arthropods, featuring exoskeletons and segmented bodies, but not jointed legs.
>
> The first specimen was unearthed in rocks in Nanjiang, China, in 2013 and more fossils were found later that year and in 2014.
>
> Helping lead the international team of scientists and biomedical engineers who unearthed, studied, and imaged the ancient, armored, worm-like creature is Shuhai Xiao, a professor of geobiology in the Department of Geosciences, part of the College of Science at Virginia Tech.
>
> Dubbed Eokinorhynchus rarus — or rare ancient mud dragon, the newly discovered animal dates back from the Cambrian period and contains five pairs of large bilaterally placed spines on its trunk. It is believed to be related to modern kinorhynchs.
>
> The group's findings were published in *Scientific Reports*, a Nature family journal.
>
> "Kinos represent an animal group that is related to arthropods — insects, shrimps, spiders, etc. — which are the most diverse group of animals on the planet," said Xiao, who refers to kinorhynchs as "kinos" for short. "Although

> arthropod fossils date back to more than 530 million years ago, no kino fossils have ever been reported. This is a huge gap in the fossil record, with more than 540 million years of evolutionary history undocumented. Our discovery is the first report of kino fossils."

I took a quick peek at Wikipedia to make sure, and yes, they really are their own phylum. So, brand new phylum.

Evolution News comments on the discovery:

> In Figure 2.5 of *Darwin's Doubt*, Steve Meyer reports that about 20 of 27 animal phyla with known fossil records appear in the Cambrian period. Prior to this find, phylum Kinorhyncha was not known to have a fossil record. Now we can update Meyer's tabulation to report that 21 of the 28 phyla with known fossil records apparently first appear — abruptly no less — in the Cambrian explosion of animal body plans.
>
> Despite this non-Darwinian pattern of origin, the papers' authors speculate that these ancient (and extant) kinorhynchs might shed light on the origin of arthropods, but that's largely only because they are segmented — as various other living phyla are as well. Given that kinorhynchs entirely lack limbs and also lack arthropod-like eyes, it seems that they aren't going to help us much towards understanding the unique defining characteristics of arthropods.
>
> The paper also explains that these fossils come from about 535 million years ago in a section of strata bearing the "small shelly fossils," in the early Cambrian period. As Meyer and I have discussed, some mistakenly cite the "small shelly fossils" (SSFs) as possible evidence of a gradual evolution of the Cambrian animals. But in this case, studies of the SSFs are showing the Cambrian explosion to be *more* explosive.

I blogged before about the Small Shelly Fossils that are hoped (by naturalists) to be ancestors of the Cambrian phyla, but as the Evolution News article stated, they're not. Too bad Darwinists!

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason

- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist

December 16, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

Dina sent me news of a cracking good episode of Unbelievable, which features Lawrence Krauss, who debated William Lane Craig. Krauss’ book was also reviewed in the New York Times.

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

> Lawrence Krauss is a Cosmologist at Arizona State University who describes himself as an “anti-theist”. His latest book “A Universe From Nothing” has received both acclaim and criticism for its attempt to answer the question “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Debating the issue with Krauss is Rodney Holder, Course director at the Faraday Institute, Cambridge. An astrophysicist and priest by background. In a lively exchange they debate whether Krauss’ “nothing” is “nothing”, fine tuning and multiverses, scientific knowledge, miracles and the usefulness of theology and philosophy.

This debate is quite entertaining, and do not be intimidated if your don’t understand science. You can understand pretty easily who is arguing based on facts and who is speculating about unobservable, untestable entities. At one point, Krauss actually denies that there is any fine-tuning in the universe, so please see this link to refute that claim as well as this podcast which explains some examples of fine-tuning. Krauss gets a bit angry at the beginning, but calms down.

Quotation marks are for direct quotes, italics is for made-up snark. See below the summary for more posts that are related to this one.

Summary of the discussion: (picked up at 9:30 when they start talking about the book)

Brierley:

- explain your theory of how the universe can come into being from nothing

Krauss:

- the nothing that preceded the universe is “no space, no time, no universe”
- theists say that God is responsible for creating the universe out of this nothing
- but the laws of nature can create the universe uncaused out of nothing

Holder:

- Krauss sometimes writes that the nothing is really a quantum vacuum, but that is not nothing
- He even acknowledges in his book that a quantum vacuum is not nothing
- He thinks that the nothing has properties, even though it has no being
- It has the property of being unstable
- It has the property of being acted on by quantum fields
- It has the property of being acted on by gravity

Krauss:

- But nothing can have the potential to do things inside it
- For example suppose you have an electron, *which is not nothing*
- If it jumps from one level to another, it emits light
- There was no potential for the light in the electron, but it was there as part of atomic structure

Holder:

- But in cases like that, there is something physical that has the potential

Krauss:

- Well, how did God makes the universe then if it had no potential?

Holder:

- God existed, and the potential for creating the universe in himself

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times

Krauss:

- It was written by a philosopher, so I dismissed it

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the Scientific American

Krauss:

- These book reviewers have not even read my book!

Krauss:

- Science will be able to figure out how to make something from nothing in the future
- We are even now speculating about interesting questions, like is there a multiverse?

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times
- The author of the review claims that you equivocate on the term "nothing"
- In order to get things to pop into being, you have to make "nothing" mean "something"
- Reviewer: none of Krauss' theories explain how something can come from actual nothingness

Krauss:

- In physics, something and nothing are not that different
- The reviewer doesn't understand the physics
- He doesn't understand quantum field theory
- You could call a quantum vacuum "nothing", *(this is the vacuum fluctuation model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*
- Maybe there is an eternally existing multiverse that we can't observe or test scientifically
- Maybe it has laws that we don't know about which allow our universe to pop into being
- Maybe this popping into being is uncaused
- (alarmed) Who made God? Who made God?

Holder:

- God is eternal and necessary

Krauss:

- (interrupting, angry) What does it mean for something to be necessary?

Holder:

- Basically, you have to decide whether there is more evidence that the necessary being God or a multiverse

Brierley:

- So Dr. Krauss are you willing to say that the universe is a brute fact, in some sense, and requires no explanation

Krauss:

- (angry) Religious people are stupid because they just assume brute facts, *not like me and my unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry) Religious people are against the progress of science, they don't want to figure out how things work

Brierley:

- But isn't it possible that naturalists can be opposed to the progress of science?
- What about the way the Fred Hoyle opposed the Big Bang because he wanted an eternal universe

Krauss:

- (angry) But naturalists like me let the facts determine our beliefs, *like the facts about the eternal unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry, shouting) Philosophers are stupid, they know nothing!

=== Break ===

Brierley:

- Do you see any evidence of purpose in the universe?

Krauss:

- Well maybe I would believe if the stars lined up to spell out a message from God

Brierley:

- Actually no, that wouldn't be evidence for God on your multiverse view
- if there an infinite number of universes existing for an infinite amount of time, then anything can happen no matter how unlikely it is
- therefore, no evidence could convince you that God exists, since the unobservable, untestable, eternal multiverse can make anything it wants

Krauss:

- That's a true statement, *and very convenient for atheists who don't want to be accountable to God, don't you think?*

Brierley:

- Back to the multiverse, how does it solve the fine-tuning?

Krauss:

- "We have no idea if the universe is fine-tuned for life", *even though the atheist Martin Rees who endorsed Krauss' book wrote his own book about the fine-tuning of the universe called "Just Six Numbers"*
- Inflationary theory does suggest a way to create multiple universes, *(this is the chaotic inflationary model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*

Brierley:

- But this theory is still very much a hypothesis, isn't it? We can't observe *or test* this hypothesis can we?

Krauss:

- "No, and that is really important to state"
- "I'm an empiricist, so if you can't falsify it and if you can't test it then it's not science"
- In my book, I speculate about a way that we could test the multiverse theory

Holder:

- Yes, in principle, the multiverse would be scientific if you could test it through other theories like inflationary theory
- There are a lot of speculations about multiverse theory, but no evidence from predictions that were validated in the lab

Krauss:

- "I agree completely with everything you just said"

Brierley:

- Roger Penrose agrees with Holder that the multiverse theory is too speculative
- (To Holder) Isn't the multiverse theory better than positing a completely different kind of being, which is God?

Holder:

- The multiverse theory is extremely speculative

- Even if the multiverse were true, you would still need to explain the multiverse

Krauss:

- People don't oppose my book because it's full of self-contradictory speculations
- People oppose my book because they are stupid and ignorant

Holder:

- There are things that exist that science cannot measure, like objective morality
- It's possible to give explanations for moral behavior by appealing to evolution
- But that does not ground self-sacrificial morality, such as what occurs in the Christian life

Brierley:

- Dawkins says there is no purpose or morality in in the universe, do you agree?

Krauss:

- "There is certainly no evidence of any of that"

Brierley:

- In the book, you talk about how we live in a special time in the universe's history to be able to do science, *(i.e. – The Privileged Planet hypothesis)*
- You also write about how all the discoveries were are making will not be communicated to anyone in other places in the universe
- So what is the meaning of doing science on your view? And why are you sad at the knowledge that will not be available to people in the future?
- Are you longing for some kind of purpose?

Krauss:

- No, I just get enjoyment from studying the universe with science to gain understanding

Holder:

- What do you make of Einstein's statement about the unexpected comprehensibility of the universe
- Theists would say that this is because God wanted us to study and understand and gain knowledge

Krauss:

- "It is remarkable that the universe is comprehensible"

Brierley:

- Why is the universe comprehensible?

Krauss:

- Well, maybe the universe just has to be that way

Brierley:

- What do you make of the heat death of the universe, when all life in the universe will die out?

Krauss:

- That's the way the universe is

=== BREAK ===
Krauss:

- I wouldn't want to live in a universe where there was a God
- God is a cosmic Saddam Hussein
- "Religious people turn their minds off" and believe in God for consolation

Holder:

- First, Jesus is the revelation of God and he is no Saddam Hussein
- Second, the Christian life is anything but easy, we are facing some persecution already in the UK
- Third, there is also the problem of being accountable to God when we die
- It's very much like science – Christianity is the way it is, not the way we want it to be

Krauss:

- "If you don't believe in him, you don't get any of the benefits, so you have to believe"
- "And then if you've done something wrong, you're going to be judged for it"
- "So I don't want to be judged by God, I want to be… that's the bottom line"

Holder:

- Well, Jesus has died to pay the price for those things we've done wrong
- Although we will have to face the charges for what we've done, believers will ultimately be forgiven

UPDATE: Peter Sean Bradley note that Krauss is now walking back his rhetoric in response to criticisms from people like atheist John Horgan.

Related posts

- Ed Feser takes on Lawrence Krauss and Victor Stenger
- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?
- Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist
- William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?
- Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument
- Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger’s critique of cosmic fine-tuning
- A review of Lawrence Krauss’ book “A Universe From Nothing”

Obama administration has admitted over 100,000 immigrants from Syria since 2012

December 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama doesn’t have time for national security

The Obama administration has admitted over 100,000 people from Syria since 2012.

Excerpt:

> A proposal to admit 10,000 Syrian refugees to the United States has ignited a bitter debate in Washington, but more than 10 times that number of people from the embattled country have quietly come to America since 2012, according to figures obtained by FoxNews.com.
>
> Some 102,313 Syrians were granted admission to the U.S. as legal permanent residents or through programs including work, study and tourist visas from 2012 through August of this year, a period which roughly coincides with the devastating civil war that still engulfs the Middle Eastern country. Experts say any fears that terrorists might infiltrate the proposed wave of refugees from United Nations-run camps should be dwarfed by the potential danger already here.
>
> […]Numbers obtained from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection show 60,010 Syrian visa holders have entered the U.S. since 2012, including 16,245 this year through August. Additional numbers provided by a Congressional source showed another 42,303 Syrians were granted citizenship or green cards during the same period.

Should we be concerned about letting in so many people from countries with high levels

of support for radical Islam? Let's take a look at some other news stories and get the facts.

This is from the radically leftist Reuters.

Excerpt:

> Two people have been arrested at a refugee center in the Austrian city of Salzburg on suspicion of being connected to last month's Paris attacks, the Salzburg prosecutors' office said on Wednesday.
>
> The two are men who are thought to have provided help to members of the group that carried out the attacks on Nov. 13 in which 130 people were killed, two Austrian newspapers reported.
>
> "Two people who arrived from the Middle East were arrested at the weekend in accommodation for refugees on suspicion of belonging to a terrorist organization," Robert Holzleitner, a spokesman for the Salzburg prosecutor's office, said.
>
> "As part of the preliminary investigation, evidence suggesting a connection with the Paris attacks is being verified," he added, declining to comment on the specifics of the newspaper reports.
>
> The men came into contact with the Paris attackers in Austria, local newspaper Salzburger Nachrichten reported, adding that they were found based on information provided by a foreign intelligence service.
>
> National tabloid Kronen Zeitung said they were French, of Algerian and Pakistani origin, and entered Europe through Greece on fake Syrian passports with members of the group that carried out the Paris attacks.
>
> An Austrian Interior Ministry spokesman and a Salzburg police spokeswoman declined to comment.

An article on Breitbart News that listed 30 recent immigrants who were implicated in terrorist attacks.

Here's are a few: (links to primary sources removed)

- A refugee from Uzbekistan was convicted of providing material support and money to a designated foreign terrorist organization. According to the Department of Justice, he also procured bomb-making materials in the interest of perpetrating a terrorist attack on American soil. (August 2015)
- An immigrant from India, who applied for and received Lawful Permanent Resident status by virtue of his marriage to an American citizen, was indicted in federal court on charges of conspiring to provide thousands of dollars to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in order to assist them in their global jihad, and on one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud. (November 2015)
- A second immigrant from India, who is married to a U.S. citizen, and who is the brother of the individual listed above, was also indicted on charges of conspiring to

provide thousands of dollars to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in order to assist them in their global jihad, and on one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud. (November 2015)
- An immigrant from Syria, who applied for and received Lawful Permanent Resident status, and then subsequently applied for and received U.S. citizenship, was charged with smuggling night-vision goggles and rifle scopes from America to a Syrian rebel group that fights alongside and allies itself with an al-Qaeda affiliate. (December 2015)
- The Boston Bombers were granted political asylum and were thus deemed legitimate refugees. The younger brother applied for citizenship and was naturalized on September 11th, 2012. The older brother had a pending application for citizenship. (April 2013)

I like skilled immigrants from countries that do not have a significant portion of radicalized Muslims. But the problem is that the Obama administration is too politically correct to filter immigrants by weighing the value they offer us as law-abiding taxpayers against the potential threat they pose. The Obama Department of Homeland Security admits people to the United States without even checking social media to see if they have made public statements in support of radical Islam! And in a recent hearing, a DHS official admitted that she had no idea how many Syrian refugees had been admitted to the US. The Democrats are obsessed with political correctness and leftist blame-America ideology – we simply cannot trust them to protect us from threats.

Do you feel safe?

Toronto pastor sentenced to life in prison in atheist North Korea

December 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Here's the story from the radically leftist CBC News.

Excerpt:

> North Korea's Supreme Court has sentenced a Canadian pastor to life in prison with hard labour for what it called crimes against the state.
>
> Hyeon Soo Lim, who is in his early 60s and is pastor at the Light Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto, was sentenced after a 90-minute trial. He had been in detention since February.
>
> Lim's relatives and colleagues have said he travelled on Jan. 31 as part of a regular humanitarian mission to North Korea where he supports a nursing home, a nursery and an orphanage. They said Lim has made more than 100 trips to North Korea since 1997, and that his trips were about helping people and were not political.
>
> […]Charges against him include:

> - Harming the dignity of the supreme leadership.
> - **Trying to use religion to destroy the North Korean system.**
> - Disseminating negative propaganda about the North to the overseas Koreans.
> - Helping U.S. and South Korean authorities to lure and abduct North Korean citizens, and aiding their programs to assist defectors from the North.
>
> **State prosecutors sought the death penalty.**

Now I would imagine that this is the kind of thing that our own radical atheist groups in America would celebrate, e.g. – the Freedom From Religion Foundation, the ACLU, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Human Rights Campaign, etc. They are very anxious to get rid of using public expressions of Christianity from the public square, and big government is their preferred weapon to achieve that. I would say that the opinion of Christianity among the North Korean elite is similar to the opinion of Christianity held by the secular elites in the Democrat Party, and I have blogged many times on their anti-Christian statements to that effect,here for example and here for another example and here for yet another example. Personally, I would think that in the Obama administration, more work is done spying on Christians, pro-lifers and conservatives than on radical Islamists and radical environmentalists. Which is why we need to vote the Democrats out – they are not serious about the real threats we face as a nation.

Atheist regimes

Let's go ahead and review what atheist regimes in other times and places are like.

Let's take a look at what Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

Let's see more from a peer-reviewed journal article authored by Crispin Paine of the University College, London:

> Atheist propaganda and the struggle against religion began immediately after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917. While social change would, under Marxist theory, bring religion to disappear, Leninists argued that the Party should actively help to eradicate religion as a vital step in creating 'New Soviet Man'. The energy with which the Party struggled against religion, though, varied considerably from time to time and from place to place, as did its hostility to particular faith groups. The 1920s saw the closure of innumerable churches and synagogues (and to a lesser extent mosques) and the active persecution of clergy and harassment of believers. From 1930, though, Stalin introduced a less aggressive approach, and wartime support for the government earned for the Russian Orthodox Church, at least, a level of toleration which lasted until Stalin's death. Under Khrushchev antireligious efforts resumed, if spasmodically, and they lasted until the end of

> the Soviet Union.

An article from the pro-communism Marxist.com web site says this about Stalin:

> During the ultra-left period of forcible collectivisation and the Five Year Plan in Four an attempt was made to liquidate the Church and its influence by government decree. Starting in 1929 churches were forcibly closed and priests arrested and exiled all over the Soviet Union. The celebrated Shrine of the Iberian Virgin in Moscow – esteemed by believers to be the "holiest" in all Russia was demolished – Stalin and his Government were not afraid of strengthening religious fanaticism by wounding the feelings of believers as Lenin and Trotsky had been! Religion, they believed, could be liquidated, like the kulak, by a stroke of the pen. The Society of Militant Atheists, under Stalin's orders, issued on May 15th 1932, the "Five Year Plan of Atheism" – by May 1st 1937, such as the "Plan", "not a single house of prayer shall remain in the territory of the USSR, and the very concept of God must be banished from the Soviet Union as a survival of the Middle Ages and an instrument for the oppression of the working masses."!

Take a look at this UK Daily Mail article about a great achievement of the atheist Josef Stalin, which occurred in 1932-1933.

Excerpt:

> Now, 75 years after one of the great forgotten crimes of modern times, Stalin's man-made famine of 1932/3, the former Soviet republic of Ukraine is asking the world to classify it as a genocide.
>
> The Ukrainians call it the Holodomor – the Hunger.
>
> Millions starved as Soviet troops and secret policemen raided their villages, stole the harvest and all the food in villagers' homes.
>
> They dropped dead in the streets, lay dying and rotting in their houses, and some women became so desperate for food that they ate their own children.
>
> If they managed to fend off starvation, they were deported and shot in their hundreds of thousands.
>
> So terrible was the famine that Igor Yukhnovsky, director of the Institute of National Memory, the Ukrainian institution researching the Holodomor, believes **as many as nine million may have died.**
>
> […]Between four and five million died in Ukraine, a million died in Kazakhstan and another million in the north Caucasus and the Volga.
>
> By 1933, 5.7 million households – somewhere between ten million and 15 million people – had vanished. They had been deported, shot or died of starvation.

This is what follows when you believe that the universe is an accident, that there is no objective good and evil, that human beings are just animals, that no God will hold us

accountable, and that human beings are not made in the image of God for the purpose of freely choosing to come into a relationship with him. The Ukrainian famine is an action that came from a man whose worldview was *passionate, consistent atheism.*

Related posts

- Woman who escaped from North Korea tells her story
- What North Korea teaches Christians about the importance of politics and economics
- Christian woman murdered by atheistic communist for distributing Bible

William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss in North Carolina: Does God Exist?

December 17, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two Rams butting heads: may the best ram win!

Would you like to hear a debate featuring the least intelligent atheist ever? Well, this is a good candidate.

The full transcript of the debate is here at the Reasonable Faith web site.

Audio of the William Lane Craig vs. Lawrence Krauss debate at North Carolina State University has now been posted at Apologetics 315. The people who recorded it did not do a good job, though.

And I also posted some background information on Craig's arguments.

And now for one of my snarkiest summaries, which is fitting for Lawrence Krauss. A less snarky summary is at J.W. Wartick's blog. And if you want to see a summary of a debate with a smart atheist, then here is the Craig-Millican debate summary.

William Lane Craig's case

William Lane Craig made 5 arguments for the existence of God:

- the contingency argument
- theargument from the origin of the universe (kalam)
- the argument from cosmic fine-tuning
- the moral argument
- the argument from the miracle of the resurrection

These arguments went unrefuted during the debate.

Lawrence Krauss's case

Lawrence Krauss made the following arguments in his first speech:

- Dr. Craig is a professional debater
- Dr. Craig is not a scientist
- Dr. Craig is a philosopher

- Disproving God’s is a waste of my valuable time
- Dr. Craig has the burden of proof to show evidence
- My job is not to present any evidence
- I think that “extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence” is a nice slogan, but I have no evidence for it
- I don’t like that God doesn’t appear on Youtube, therefore he doesn’t exist
- I don’t like that God didn’t appear to humans until recently, therefore he doesn’t exist
- I don’t like that the stars didn’t come together to spell “I am here”, therefore God doesn’t exist
- Dr. Craig has to supply extraordinary evidence, because my favorite slogan says he has to
- Dr. Craig talks about logic, but the universe is not logical
- Dr. Craig doesn’t have any arguments, just things he doesn’t like
- Dr. Craig doesn’t like infinity, and that’s why he believes in the Big Bang cosmology
- Dr. Craig doesn’t like chance, and that’s why he believes in cosmic fine-tuning
- Dr. Craig doesn’t like rape, and that’s why he believes in the ontological foundations of morality
- If people believe in logic, then they can’t do science
- The things that science discovers contradict the laws of logic
- For example, Dr. Craig doesn’t like infinity, so he believes in the experimental measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation
- For example, Dr. Craig doesn’t like chance, so he believes in the fine-tuning of the gravitational constant for the formation of stable stars
- Quantum mechanics shows that the universe is stranger than you think, therefore all of Craig’s arguments are false
- My t-shirt says 2 + 2 = 5, therefore all of Craig’s arguments are false
- Atheism may look ridiculous, but it’s true, and if you don’t like it, too bad – because the universe is very strange
- Accidents happen all the time, so that explains the cosmic fine-tuning
- We all have to convince ourselves of 10 impossible things before breakfast, and atheism is impossible, so you need to convince yourself of it
- I don’t know about the Big Bang, so Dr. Craig cannot use the Big Bang to to prove the universe began to exist
- I don’t know about the cosmic fine-tuning, so Dr. Craig cannot use the fine-tuning of cosmological constants to prove the fine-tuning
- I don’t know anything about science, so Dr. Craig cannot use science in his arguments
- Dr. Craig says that the universe is contingent because it began to exist 13.7 billion years ago based on the state-of-the-art scientific evidence for the Big Bang creation out of nothing from 1) red-shift of light from distant galaxies, 2) cosmic microwave background radiation, 3) helium-hydrogen abundances, 4) experimental confirmation of general relativity, 5) the second law of thermodynamics, 6)

radioactive element abundances, etc., but how does he know that? I don't know that
- It's fine not to know the answer to scientific questions like whether the universe began to exist, it's more exciting
- Thinking that the universe began to exist based on 6 pieces of scientific evidence is the "God-of-the-Gaps" fallacy, it's intellectual laziness
- But all kidding aside, the universe actually did begin to exist 13.72 billion years ago, exactly like Craig says in his argument
- I could argue that God created the universe 4.5 seconds ago with all of us sitting believing that we heard Dr. Craig, and how could you prove me wrong? It's not falsifiable
- Universes can spontaneously appear out of nothing, and in fact they have to appear out of nothing
- *Nothing is unstable*, and space and time can come into existence out of nothing, so that's not a problem
- Our universe could have appeared out of a multiverse, an unobservable, untestable multiverse that I have no way of observing or testing
- The universe is not fine-tuned for life, and no scientist says so, especially not Martin Rees, the atheist Astronomer Royal, and every other scientist
- What if God decided that rape was OK, would it be OK? God can change his moral nature arbitrarily, can't he?

Here are the arguments in Krauss' second speech:

- We don't understand the beginning of the universe
- We don't understand whether the universe had a cause
- Steven Weinberg says that science makes it possible to be an atheist, so therefore the universe didn't begin and didn't have a cause
- It's just intellectual laziness to say that the universe came into being 13.7 billion years ago, and that things that come into being of nothing have a cause
- Dr. Craig is an expert on nothing, ha ha ha!
- There are multiple versions of nothing, there's nothing, and then there is something, which is also nothing if I want it to be
- There was no space, there was no time, and then the space create the empty space
- I'm going to give Dr. Craig a break
- At least in the nothing there were laws like *F=ma*, and those laws created the empty space, because *descriptions of matter that does not even exist yet* can create space out of nothing
- Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin are good friends of mine and I talk to them all the time, unlike Dr. Craig
- Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin don't mention God in their scientific papers, therefore the universe didn't begin and didn't have a cause
- Maybe there is a multiverse that cannot be observed or tested? And my unscientific speculations are a refutation of Craig's scientific evidence for the fine-tuning

- Dr. Craig just doesn't like my speculations about the unobservable, untestable multiverse, and that's why he believes in the Big Bang cosmology
- And if you let me speculate about an unobservable, untestable multiverse, then maybe the inanimate invisible universes reproduce and compete for food and mutate like animals and then there is natural selection so that the finely-tuned universes survive and now we're in one!
- My cool animation of blue goo mutating proves that the multiverse is real! Empty space is not empty!
- Darwinism, which is a theory about the origin of species, explains the cosmic fine-tuning that occurred at the moment of creation
- The unobservable, untestable multiverse universes all have different laws, I believe
- We don't know what the right answer is, but we are willing to look at any possibility, as long as the possibilities we look at are not supernatural possibilities
- The discovery of the origin of the universe could be an accident, I don't know if the universe began to exist or not, maybe all the six scientific evidences are wrong because if I don't like the evidence we have, so I'll just wait for new evidence to overturn the evidence we have which I don't like
- Maybe there are other forms of life that are unobservable and untestable that are compatible with a universe that has no stable stars, no planets, no elements heavier than hydrogen, no hydrogen, no carbon, etc.

Here are the arguments in Krauss' third speech:

- Dr. Craig is stupid
- Why should we even care about Dr. Craig's arguments and evidence, we can just count the number of scientists who are atheists and decide whether God exists that way – I decided everything based on what my teachers told me to believe
- I actually know general relativity, not like Dr. Craig who co-wrote a book on general relativity published by Oxford University Press
- What quantum mechanics shows is that virtual particles come into being in a quantum vacuum, and then go out of existence almost immediately – and that is exactly like how a 13.7 billion year old universe came into being in a quantum vacuum, and we're going to disappear *very soon*
- Space and the laws of physics can be created, possibly, if you accept my speculations about an unobservable, untestable multiverse
- I don't like the God of the Old Testament, therefore he doesn't exist
- Groups of people can decide what they think is good and evil, like the Nazis and slave-owners did, and then that becomes good for them in that time and place, and that's what I mean by morality
- Here's something I studied that wasn't fine-tuned, therefore there is no fine-tuning of the universe
- Not knowing things is really exciting! Dr. Craig is not really exciting because he knows things – phooey!

Here are the arguments in Krauss' fourth speech:

- If you will just grant me an observable, untestable multiverse, then there must be some universe where intelligent life exists
- Infinite numbers of things exist everywhere in nature, you can see lots of infinite collections of things, like jelly beans and bumblebees and invisible pink unicorns
- I don't like the fine-tuning, but if my speculations about the multiverse are proven true, then I won't have to learn to live with the fine-tuning
- Inflation, the rapid expansion of the universe which occurs at some time after the the origin of the universe (t = 0), explains the absolute origin of time, space, matter and energy out of nothing that occurred at t = 0
- Physical processes that develop subsequent to the creation of the universe at t > 0 can explain the fine-tuning of quantities that are set at t = 0
- Morality is just a bunch of arbitrary conventions decided by groups of people in different times and places by an accidental process of biological and social evolution, but *that* practice over there by *those* people is *objectively* wrong!
- 1 Cor 15:3-7, which most scholars, even atheists like James Crossley, admit is dated to within 3 years of the death of Jesus, is actually dated to 50 years after the death of Jesus
- The historical case for the resurrection made by people like N.T. Wright in their multi-volume academic works is on par with the story of Mohammed ascending to Heaven on a horse

If you liked this, please check out my snarky summary of Christopher Hitchens' speeches in the Craig-Hitchens debate.

New study: parrots capable of using and sharing tools

December 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Greater vasa parrot using a tool

All right, well, awareness of my tremendous affection for all things bird-related has spread to all my friends, and now whenever there is an interesting bird study, (or funny video of owls blinking), I can expect to be informed about it.

My friend Melissa, who is doing a degree in STEM, and just got all As, sent me this new study from Science Daily.

It says:

> Psychologists at the University of York and University of St Andrews have uncovered the first evidence of tool use by greater vasa parrots (*Coracopsis vasa*).

> Studying ten captive parrots, researchers in the Department of Psychology at York observed the birds adopt a novel tool-using technique to acquire calcium from seashells and also the active sharing of tools among themselves.
>
> The birds used small pebbles or date pits to grind calcium powder from the shells or to break off small pieces of shell to ingest. This behaviour, never before seen in this species, is the first evidence of a nonhuman using tools for grinding, and one of the few reports of nonhuman animals sharing tools directly.
>
> Observing and filming the parrots over an eight month period (March to October), researchers documented their interactions with cockle shells on the floor of their aviary. Shells are a known source of calcium for birds.
>
> Five out of ten birds were documented using tools, placing either pebbles or date

> pits inside shells to grind against the shell, or using them as a we

Yes, this is actually really important if you are a bird owner, as I am. Male parrots tend to have problems that are specific to their breed, but female parrots of any breed seem to run into this egg-laying problem where they law so many eggs, that they run out of calcium to make the eggshells. This is called “egg binding” and it can kill your bird if it’s not caught early.

Now, what do you think that a ambitious and chivalrous male parrot would do about egg binding when courting a delightful female parrot?

This:

> Interest in the shells was greatest from March to mid-April, just before the breeding season — this may be due to calcium supplementation being critical for egg-laying. Researchers were therefore initially surprised to find that it was the males, not the females who showed the greatest interest in shells.
>
> **However, observation of the parrots’ breeding behaviour showed that males often engaged in regurgitative feeding of females before copulating with them, thus potentially passing on the calcium benefits.**
>
> Megan Lambert, PhD student in York’s Department of Psychology and lead author on the study, said: “The use of tools by nonhuman animals remains an exceedingly rare phenomenon. These observations provide new insights into the tool-using capabilities of parrots and give rise to further questions as to why this species uses tools.
>
> “Tool use could reflect an innate predisposition in the parrots, or it could be the result of individual trial and error learning or some form of social learning. Whether these birds also use tools in the wild remains to be explored, but ultimately these observations highlight the greater vasa parrot as a species of interest for further studies of physical cognition.”

That’s right!

Here is a video linked in the article:

Now, do you know what this reminds me of? It reminds me of that post on love that I wrote a while back. When a man loves a woman, he tries to take away her trouble, or to take trouble for her, so that she is protected and her life is easier. He does things that will help her because he cares about her. It would be nice if more men acted like these birds, and tried to show that they cared by protecting and providing. And it would be nice if more women looked for protecting and providing, and were attracted by them.

Humor: Urgent message from the safe-space-ship Enterprise

December 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why are millenials acting like children into adulthood?

My friend Steve shared this humor post from The Federalist on Facebook, and I thought it was hilarious.

It says:

> Dear Federation Personnel:
>
> Kirk here. Listen, I know I signed on for a five-year mission to boldly go where no man (or woman!) has gone before, but 34 weeks into this I'm on the verge of self-transporting into the sweet, deadly embrace of the Murderous Vacuum.
>
> Not sure where you assembled this menagerie of thin-skinned, self-important dandies, but the only one on this boat who doesn't come across as an imbecile is my science officer, Spock. He's level-headed, rational, doesn't reflexively post nonsense on Spacebook. He thinks things out before he says them.
>
> Crewmembers are protesting because the ship's controls are only in English. I told Spock I love Vulcans because he's responding rationally. Next thing you know, the rest are accusing me of being "Romulist." That's actually the word they used.
>
> My engineer? He mistakes yelling for winning an argument. With no salient point to make, he just shouts—then looks at me all confident like "I rest my case." In what world (and there are many) do you win arguments by increasing your volume? None! You win by defeating the other person's argument with facts and logic. Who teaches debate at the Academy? "The View"? My god.

> Oh god, that reminds me. A few weeks ago we're engaged in mortal combat with the vile Dahundi. In the middle of the firefight, half the crew demands I call the Dahundi by their original name, the Volkari. Others are telling me to call them Barna'hey because it means Dahundi in their language or something. Whatever. The fact of the matter is the Dahundi/Volkari/Barna'hey are firing lasers at us. Lasers!
>
> But that's beside the point. Our shields momentarily drop to zero. I say "Oh my god!" The shields pop back up again. I say, "Thank god!" Everyone's relieved not to die, right? No! They're not! I get lectured by a second officer because she feels "pressured into a belief system by those words." I tell her even Richard Dawkins might use such an expression under such circumstances. Does that placate her? No! For the rest of the battle she lies on the floor in protest.

Read the rest, and happy Friday!

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

December 18, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God

alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?

3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the

personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Is the text of the Bible we have today different from the originals?

December 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

First, let's introduce New Testament scholar Daniel B. Wallace:

> Daniel B. Wallace, Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary
>
> B.A., Biola University, 1975; Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; Ph.D., 1995.
>
> Dr. Wallace influences students across the country through his textbook on intermediate Greek grammar. It has become the standard textbook in the English-speaking world on that subject. He is a member of the Society of New Testament Studies, the Institute for Biblical Research, the Society of Biblical Literature, and the Evangelical Theological Society.
>
> […]He has been a consultant on four different Bible translations.
>
> […] He works extensively in textual criticism, and has founded The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (csntm.org), an institute with an initial purpose of preserving Scripture by taking digital photographs of all known Greek New Testament manuscripts.
>
> […]His postdoctoral work includes work on Greek grammar at Tyndale House in Cambridge, textual criticism studies at the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster, and the Universität Tübingen, Germany.

Eric Chabot, who blogs at Think Apologetics, found this interview that addresses the charge you often hear about how you can't get back to the original New Testament documents.

It talks about:

- textual criticism

- number of New Testament manuscripts
- earliest New Testament manuscripts
- the number and impact of textual variants
- responding to the "telephone game" objection
- responding to the scribes tampered with the text objection

And here is an article by Dr. Wallace that corrects other misconceptions about the transmission and translation of the Testament.

He lists five in particular:

- *Myth 1: The Bible has been translated so many times we can't possibly get back to the original.*
- *Myth 2: Words in red indicate the exact words spoken by Jesus of Nazareth.*
- *Myth 3: Heretics have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 4: Orthodox scribes have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 5: The deity of Christ was invented by emperor Constantine.*

Finally, a quote from skeptical historian Bart Ehrman, as reproduced in this post on the Christian Apologetics Alliance blog:

> The curious thing about Bart Ehrman is that the views he articulates in his popular-level work are not the same as those he espouses in his professional/scholarly publications. Indeed, readers may find this curious and very telling quotation, taken from the appendix (p. 252) of Misquoting Jesus, of interest:
>
> "Bruce Metzger is one of the great scholars of modern times, and I dedicated the book to him because he was both my inspiration for going into textual criticism and the person who trained me in the field. I have nothing but respect and admiration for him. And even though we may disagree on important religious questions – he is a firmly committed Christian and I am not – we are in complete agreement on a number of very important historical and textual questions. If he and I were put in a room and asked to hammer out a consensus statement on what we think the original text of the New Testament probably looked like, there would be very few points of disagreement – maybe one or two dozen places out of many thousands. **The position I argue for in 'Misquoting Jesus' does not actually stand at odds with Prof. Metzger's position that the essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament.**" [Emphasis added]

Finally, I think that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls shows us that religious texts don't change as much as we think they do over time.

Look:

> The Dead Sea Scrolls play a crucial role in assessing the accurate preservation of

> the Old Testament. With its hundreds of manuscripts from every book except Esther, detailed comparisons can be made with more recent texts.
>
> The Old Testament that we use today is translated from what is called the Masoretic Text. The Masoretes were Jewish scholars who between A.D. 500 and 950 gave the Old Testament the form that we use today. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947, the oldest Hebrew text of the Old Testament was the Masoretic Aleppo Codex which dates to A.D. 935.{5}
>
> With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now had manuscripts that predated the Masoretic Text by about one thousand years. Scholars were anxious to see how the Dead Sea documents would match up with the Masoretic Text. If a significant amount of differences were found, we could conclude that our Old Testament Text had not been well preserved. Critics, along with religious groups such as Muslims and Mormons, often make the claim that the present day Old Testament has been corrupted and is not well preserved. According to these religious groups, this would explain the contradictions between the Old Testament and their religious teachings.
>
> After years of careful study, it has been concluded that the Dead Sea Scrolls give substantial confirmation that our Old Testament has been accurately preserved. The scrolls were found to be almost identical with the Masoretic text. Hebrew Scholar Millar Burrows writes, “It is a matter of wonder that through something like one thousand years the text underwent so little alteration. As I said in my first article on the scroll, ‘Herein lies its chief importance, supporting the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition.'”{6}
>
> A significant comparison study was conducted with the Isaiah Scroll written around 100 B.C. that was found among the Dead Sea documents and the book of Isaiah found in the Masoretic text. After much research, scholars found that the two texts were practically identical. Most variants were minor spelling differences, and none affected the meaning of the text.
>
> One of the most respected Old Testament scholars, the late Gleason Archer, examined the two Isaiah scrolls found in Cave 1 and wrote, “Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”{7}
>
> **Despite the thousand year gap, scholars found the Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls to be nearly identical. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide valuable evidence that the Old Testament had been accurately and carefully preserved.**

I hope that this post will help those who think that we can’t get back to the text of the original New Testament documents.

Does the free market work to reduce poverty?

December 19, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Walter Williams
From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> There has never been a purely free market economic system, just as there has never been a purely communist system. However, we can rank economies and see whether ones that are closer to the free market end of the economic spectrum are better than ones that are closer to the communist end.
>
> Let's try it.
>
> First, list countries according to whether they are closer to the free market or the communist end of the economic spectrum. Then rank countries according to per capita gross domestic product. Finally, rank countries according to Freedom House's "Freedom in the World" report.
>
> People who live in countries closer to the free market end of the economic spectrum have far greater income than people who live in countries toward the communist end — and enjoy far greater human rights protection.
>
> According to the 2012 "Economic Freedom of the World" report by James Gwartney, Robert Lawson and Joshua Hall, nations ranking in the top quartile with regard to economic freedom had average per capita GDP of $37,691 in 2010 compared with $5,188 for those in the bottom quartile.
>
> In the freest nations, the average income of the poorest 10% of their populations was $11,382. In the least free nations, it was $1,209.
>
> Remarkably, the average income of the poorest 10% in the economically freer nations is more than twice the average of those in the least free nations.
>
> Free market benefits aren't only measured in dollars and cents.
>
> Life expectancy is 79.5 years in the freest nations and 61.6 years in the least

> free.
>
> Political and civil liberties are considerably greater in the economically free nations than in unfree nations.
>
> Leftists might argue that the free market doesn't help the poor. That argument can't even pass the smell test.
>
> Imagine that you are an unborn spirit and God condemned you to a life of poverty but gave you a choice of the country in which to be poor. Which country would you choose?
>
> To help with your choice, here are facts provided by Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield in their report "Understanding Poverty in the United States: Surprising Facts About America's Poor."
>
> - Eighty percent of American poor households have air conditioning.
> - Nearly three-fourths have a car or truck, and 31% have two or more.
> - Almost two-thirds have cable or satellite TV.
> - Half have one or more computers.
> - Forty-two percent own their homes.
> - The average poor American has more living space than the typical non-poor person in Sweden, France and the U.K. Ninety-six percent of poor parents stated that their children were never hungry; in other words, they could afford food.
>
> The bottom line is that there is little or no material poverty in the U.S.
>
> At the time of our nation's birth, we were poor, but we established an institutional structure of free markets and limited government and became rich.

This might be a good article send along to people who want to bash our free-market system. It's easy for them to make assertions that we have to do this or that policy to redistribute wealth. But the real solution to helping the poor is not to take from one and give to another, it's to put into place a system that causes wealth to be created for all. That's what happened in the United States, and you can see how it happened in other capitalist economies like Chile, Hong Kong and Singapore. Capitalism turns poor nations into rich nations.

J. Warner Wallace podcast: pluralism, relativism and postmodernism at the university

December 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

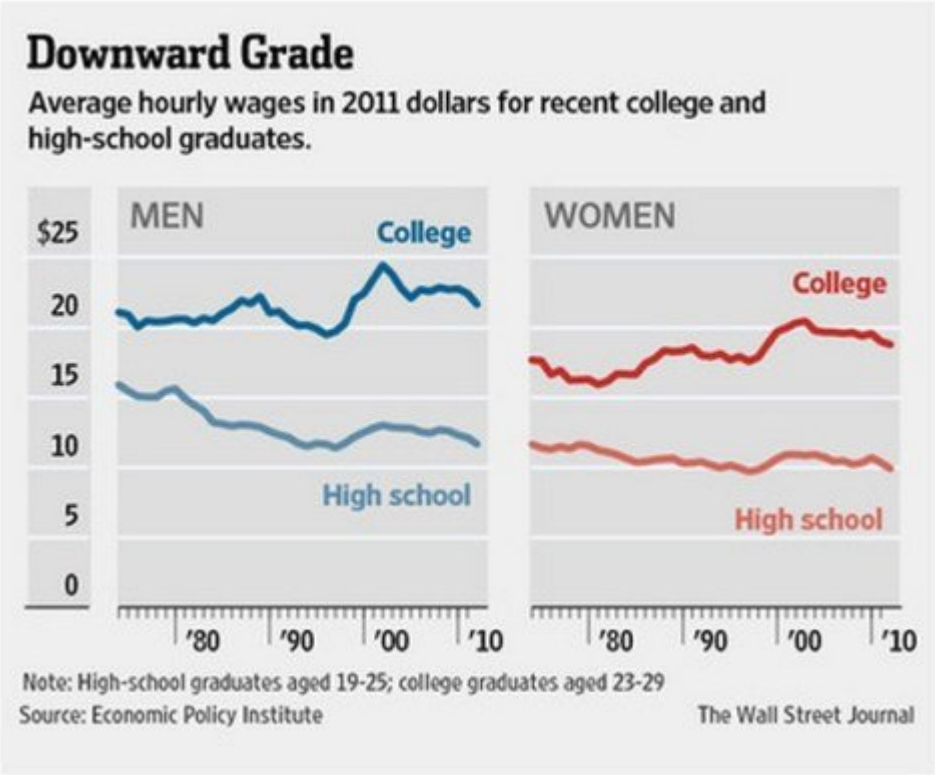

Students are learning less and less of value at college

The latest episode of the Cold Case Christianity podcast is useful to help parents understand what awaits their children at the university.

Details:

> In this episode of the Cold-Case Christianity Broadcast, J. Warner examines four popular misconceptions and misstatements about the nature of objective truth, tolerance and our over-reliance on science. If there are no objective truths (or they can't be known) there is little reason to examine the truth about God. We need to get to the truth about truth before we can ever know the truth about anything else.

The MP3 file is here.

Wallace does a lot of speaking on university campuses, so he gets to meet and talk with the college kids. It's interesting to hear what an evidence-driven cold case homicide detective thinks about the squishy postmodern views of the average college student.

Fertility and pregnancy: how long can a woman wait before having a baby?

December 20, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

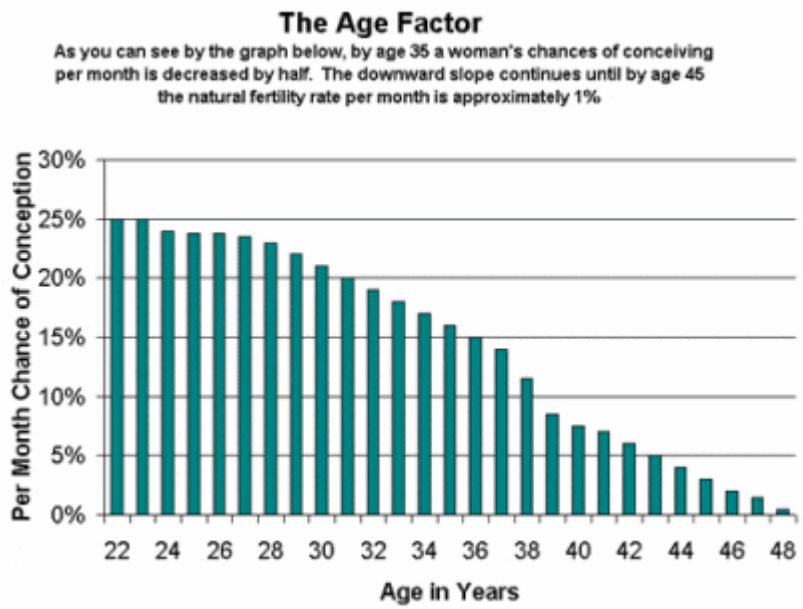

Woman's fertility by age

This is from Aeon magazine. The author writes for several ultra-leftist publications, including the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, Salon and Slate.

She writes:

> **Many studies show that women are not only woefully ignorant when it comes to fertility, conception and the efficacy of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) – but they overestimate their knowledge about the subject. For instance, a 2011 study in *Fertility and Sterility* surveyed 3,345 childless women in Canada between the ages of 20 and 50; despite the fact that the women initially assessed their own fertility knowledge as high, the researchers found only half of them answered six of the 16 questions correctly. 72.9 per cent of women thought that: 'For women over 30, overall health and fitness level is a better indicator of fertility than age.' (False.) And 90.9 per cent felt that: 'Prior to menopause, assisted reproductive technologies (such as IVF) can help most women to have a baby using their own eggs.' (Also false.) Many falsely believed that by *not* smoking and *not* being obese they could improve their fertility, rather than the fact that those factors simply negatively affect fertility.**
>
> Fertility fog infects cultures and nations worldwide, even those that place more of a premium on reproduction than we do in the West. A global study published for World Fertility Awareness Month in 2006 surveyed 17,500 people (most of childbearing age) from 10 countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and South

> America, revealing very poor knowledge about fertility and the biology of reproduction. Take Israel, a country that puts such a premium on children that they offer free IVF to citizens up to age 45 for their first two children. **According to a 2011 study in *Human Reproduction*, which surveyed 410 undergraduate students, most overestimated a women's chances of spontaneous pregnancy in all age groups, but particularly after receiving IVF beyond age 40. Only 11 per cent of the students knew that genetic motherhood is unlikely to be achieved from the mid-40s onward, unless using oocytes or egg cells frozen in advance. 'This can be explained by technological "hype" and favourable media coverage of very late pregnancies,' the authors concluded.**
>
> […]For a woman over 42, there's only a 3.9 per cent chance that a live birth will result from an IVF cycle using her own, fresh eggs, according to the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM). A woman over 44 has just a 1.8 per cent chance of a live birth under the same scenario, according to the US National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Women using fresh donor eggs have about a 56.6 per cent chance of success per round for all ages.
>
> Indeed, according to research from the Fertility Authority in New York, 51 per cent of women aged between 35 and 40 wait a year or more before consulting a specialist, in hopes of conceiving naturally first. 'It's ironic, considering that the wait of two years will coincide with diminished fertility,' the group says.
>
> […]**'No one talks about fertility,' said [reproductive endocrinologist Janelle Luk, medical director of Neway Fertility in New York City], who does not believe women are really open to hearing about it. 'I don't think women know that there's a limit: the message is equal, equal, equal. Women say: "We want to go to college, we want to work on our careers, we want to be equal to men." But our biological clock is not.'**
>
> […]**Another way women might even out the fertility playing field is by focussing on the so-called male biological clock.** But is there one? Although there have been recent news stories about how advanced age in men (over 40 or 50) increases time to conception and the incidence of autism and schizophrenia, the absolute risk is negligible. 'When you look at the numbers, you have to separate what the absolute risk and the increased risk is,' said Natan Bar-Chama, director of male reproductive medicine and surgery at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York. 'The absolute risk is still really very small.'

I think if I ever have a daughter, I will be sure to urge her to be skeptical of her emotions and intuitions, to learn how to assess probabilities, to disregard exceptional cases when making plans, to resist the feminism in the culture, to get wisdom from older married women with children instead of young unmarried childless women, to accept that she is not so special that laws and rules don't apply to her, and to accept that the universe is not malleable according to her needs and desires. I hope my wife will see the value of

reining our daughter in before the catastrophes like infertility happen.

Where does the organized opposition to educating young women about fertility facts come from?

> ‘We feel that women should be able to talk to their ob/gyn about fertility,’ said Sandra Carson, ACOG’s vice president for education. **‘We certainly want to remind women gently that, as they get older, fertility is compromised, but we don’t want to do it in such a way that they feel that it might interfere with their career plans or make them nervous about losing their fertility.’** In other words, there are no guidelines for talking to a woman about her fertility unless she herself brings it up.
>
> All this talk of ‘gentle’ reminders and ‘appropriate’ counselling has a history – a political one. Back in 2001, the ASRM devoted a six-figure sum to a fertility awareness campaign, whose goal was to show the effects of age, obesity, smoking and sexually transmitted diseases on fertility. **Surprisingly, the US National Organization for Women (NOW) came out against it. ‘Certainly women are well aware of the so-called biological clock. And I don’t think that we need any more pressure to have kids,’ said Kim Gandy, then president of NOW. In a 2002 op-ed in *USA Today*, she wrote that NOW ‘commended’ doctors for ‘attempting’ to educate women about their health, but thought they were going about it the wrong way by making women feel ‘anxious about their bodies and guilty about their choices’.**

We don’t want women to feel bad, so it’s best to let them follow their hearts. *That view is not helpful to women!* If we want to help women, we must tell them the truth, and take the consequences.

All this talk about fertility could be accompanied by a discussion of the hard fact that a woman’s attractiveness will decline as she ages. This is a troubling lesson that countless women have had to learn the hard way. When you are young, you stand a much better chance of finding a successful male with good values and who is willing to commit to marriage and parenting. Many women will testify that, as you get older, this convenience deteriorates quickly. The good men will be claimed by the responsible women who don’t waste their youthful years seeking thrills. Men who are contemplating marriage value a woman’s appearance, fertility, vulnerability and submissiveness to his leadership. Women need to be careful not to embark on a course that will reduce their ability in any of these areas that are important to men, e.g. – careerism, premarital promiscuity, etc.

Related posts

- Top fertility specialist advises women: don’t wait till 30 to try to have children
- Should Christians be motivated by the fear of missing out (FOMO)?
- New study: marrying in your mid-to-late 20s confers benefits
- Fertility and pregnancy: how long can a woman wait before having a baby?
- Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sex and sexuality at Harvard University

DHS whistleblower: Obama more concerned with protecting Islamists than Americans

December 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?

This PJ Media article is by Debra Heine.

Excerpt:

> Philip Haney, the Homeland Security whistleblower whose investigation into Islamic infiltration of the U.S. might have prevented the San Bernardino attack, has written an important op-ed for The Hill, warning of President Obama's misplaced priorities when it comes to national security. In brief, says Haney, "the Obama administration is more concerned with the rights of non-citizens in known Islamist groups than with the safety and security of the American people."
>
> There are terrorists in our midst and they arrived here using legal means right under the noses of the federal law enforcement agencies whose mission is to stop them. That is not due to malfeasance or lack of effort on the part of these officers; it is due to the restrictions placed on them by the Obama administration.
>
> Not only did the Obama administration shut down an important investigation that could have connected enough dots to prevent the San Bernardino terrorist attack, they went back and erased the dots Haney was "diligently connecting." Worse yet, when he complained to the DHS inspector general, the DHS and the Department of Justice subjected him "to a series of investigations and adverse actions, including one by that same inspector general."
>
> None of them showed any wrongdoing; they seemed aimed at stopping me from blowing the whistle on this problem.

Debra (Nice Deb) was one of the first people to blogroll me when I was first starting out with blogging.

She links to Gates of Vienna, another of my blogroll friends, and quotes them about that:

> The "behavioral indicators" listed to help DHS agents identify potential domestic terrorists include carrying around a copy of the Constitution, promoting First and Second Amendment rights, having a Gadsden flag sticker on one's car, and advocating for a minimal federal government.
>
> [The Obama administration's approach] is thus designed to serve a dual purpose: (1) to protect Muslim Brotherhood organizations and their operatives who have penetrated federal, state, and local governments, and (2) to help the Obama administration crack down on its real enemies, domestic conservatives who want to re-establish constitutional governance.

Debra wrote a couple of prior articles on this DHS whistleblower, one from 12/14 and one from 12/11.

So is it really true that the Obama administration – in their mad rush to let in immigrants from countries that don't like us very much – is not serious about keeping terrorists out?

CBS News reported that 5 different Obama administration agencies failed to detect one of the San Bernadino terrorists:

> Tashfeen Malik arrived in the United States with her fiance Syed Farook in July 2014. Just two months earlier, her U.S. government background check found no suspected ties to terrorism.
>
> She was granted a K-1 visa, even though the FBI now believes she was radicalized before she met Farook.
>
> The State Department says Malik was thoroughly questioned during an interview at the U.S. embassy in Pakistan.
>
> […]Five U.S. agencies also vetted her, checking her fingerprints against two databases. Neither her name nor image showed up on a U.S. terror watch list.

One can only imagine that the questions were like "do you believe in the Constitution?" or "do you attend a Christian church?" or "do you think that abortion should be restricted?". She would be rejected if she affirmed any of those, of course, but affirming Islamic jihad is nothing to be concerned about – if you're a Democrat.

Homeland Security's new enemy! This little girl who supports the Constitution.
It seems to me our national security agencies have been indoctrinated by their Democrat leaders to target conservative taxpayers instead of radicalized Islamists. And in fact we have evidence of that, reported in the Washington Times way back in 2009:

> The Department of Homeland Security is warning law enforcement officials about a rise in "rightwing extremist activity," saying the economic recession, the election of America's first black president and the return of a few disgruntled war veterans could swell the ranks of white-power militias.
>
> A footnote attached to the report by the Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis defines "rightwing extremism in the United States" as including not just racist or hate groups, but also groups that reject federal authority in favor of state or local authority.
>
> "It may include groups and individuals that are dedicated to a single-issue, such as opposition to abortion or immigration," the warning says.
>
> […]The nine-page document was sent to police and sheriff's departments across the United States on April 7 under the headline, "Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment."
>
> It says the federal government "will be working with its state and local partners over the next several months" to gather information on "rightwing extremist activity in the United States."
>
> The joint federal-state activities will have "a particular emphasis" on the causes of "rightwing extremist radicalization."

According to Democrats, radical Islam is not the real threat. American taxpayers who want to not pay for abortions are the real threat. And it turns out that many Democrat voters think that this is correct, even in an age of Islamic terrorism.

Nile Gardiner writes about a recent Rasmussen Reports poll in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> [A]mong those who approve of the president's job performance, just 29% see radical Muslims as the bigger threat. Twenty-six percent (26%) say it's the Tea Party that concerns them most. Among those who Strongly Approve of the president, more fear the Tea Party than radical Muslims.
>
> […]Twenty percent (20%) of government workers see the Tea Party as the nation's bigger terror threat.

That's what we voted for, when we voted for Barack Obama.

- Pro-lifers targeted in official FBI and DOJ training
- DOD brands evangelical Christians and Catholics as "extremists"
- DHS to counter global warming threat
- Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?
- DHS brands Tea Party conservatives as terrorists

Christina Hoff Sommers: helping boys succeed in school

December 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christina Hoff Sommers

An article from the leftist Time magazine by feminist Christina Hoff Sommers.

Excerpt:

> Being a boy can be a serious liability in today's classroom. As a group, boys are noisy, rowdy and hard to manage. Many are messy, disorganized and won't sit still. Young male rambunctiousness, according to a recent study, leads teachers to underestimate their intellectual and academic abilities. "Girl behavior is the gold standard in schools," says psychologist Michael Thompson. "Boys are treated like defective girls."
>
> These "defective girls" are not faring well academically. Compared with girls, boys earn lower grades, win fewer honors and are less likely to go to college. One education expert has quipped that if current trends continue, the last male will graduate from college in 2068. In today's knowledge-based economy, success in the classroom has never been more crucial to a young person's life prospects. Women are adapting; men are not.
>
> Some may say, "Too bad for the boys." The ability to regulate one's impulses, sit still and pay attention are building blocks of success in school and in life. As one critic told me, the classroom is no more rigged against boys than workplaces are rigged against lazy or unfocused workers. That is absurd: unproductive workers are adults — not 5- and 6-year-old children who depend on us to learn how to become adults. If boys are restive and unfocused, we must look for ways to help them do better.

She introduces three ideas to fix the problem, and here's the third one:

> In his delightful *Boy Writers: Reclaiming their Voices*, celebrated author and writing instructor Ralph Fletcher advises teachers to consider their assignments from the point of view of boys. Too many writing teachers, he says, take the "confessional poet" as the classroom ideal. Personal narratives full of emotion and self-disclosure are prized; stories describing video games, skateboard competitions or a monster devouring a city are not.
>
> Peg Tyre's *The Trouble With Boys* illustrates the point. She tells the story of a third-grader in Southern Californianamed Justin who loved *Star Wars*, pirates, wars and weapons. An alarmed teacher summoned his parents to school to discuss a picture the 8-year-old had drawn of a sword fight — which included several decapitated heads. The teacher expressed "concern" about Justin's "values." **The father, astonished by the teacher's repugnance for a typical boy drawing, wondered if his son could ever win the approval of someone who had so little sympathy for the child's imagination.**
>
> Teachers have to come to terms with the young male spirit. As Fletcher urges, if we want boys to flourish, we are going to have to encourage their distinctive reading, writing, drawing and even joke-telling propensities. Along with personal "reflection journals," Fletcher suggests teachers permit fantasy, horror, spoofs, humor, war, conflict and, yes, even lurid sword fights.

> I**f boys are constantly subject to disapproval for their interests and enthusiasms, they are likely to become disengaged and lag further behind. Our schools need to work with, not against, the kinetic imaginations of boys to move them toward becoming educated young men.**

There's a short video to go with the article:

Dr. Sommers participated in a recent debate where she argued in favor of allowing all-male schools against a radical feminist. That page has audio and a transcript as well.

My thoughts

I do think that women need to realize that boys have to be encouraged to do the different things that boys do, if we want boys to be engaged. The good things that boys do in society are not free – they need to be encouraged and not dismissed. Playing a wargame or an adventurous boardgame with a boy is good. Firing real guns with a boy is good. Playing adventurous role-playing games with a boy is good. Going to a war museum or on a camping trip with a boy is good. Watching patriotic war movies or adventurous movies with a boy is good. Reading military history and military biographies is good. Reading classical adventure novels with a boy is good. Listening to adventurous music with a boy is good. Even watching the news with a boy is good.

Nothing is free. We have to create the boys we want, and encourage them to be

aggressive, active and righteous.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

December 21, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society

web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, “This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology.” Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is “noise” leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent “noise” of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn’t radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out “urban interference”, and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. “To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It’s not something I’m happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma,” said Penzias.5 “And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction.”6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias’ and Wilson’s discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said “well boys, we’ve been scooped.”7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only

> Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Canada’s Liberal Party criminalizes spanking of children by parents

December 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Election 2015: Socialists in red, Communists in Orange, Conservatives in blue

Well, it didn’t take long for the Liberal majority to start discouraging men away from marriage and child-raising.

The leftist Globe and Mail reports:

> In promising to enact all of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the federal Liberals have agreed to remove a section of law that allows parents to spank their kids without fear of prosecution.
>
> […]Kathy Lynn, the chair of a British Columbia-based organization called Corinne’s Quest, which opposes legalized spanking, says her group is “thrilled” with the TRC’s recommendation.
>
> […][T]eachers fear taking away the law could leave them vulnerable to charges in cases in which they are required to use force – breaking up schoolyard fights, for instance.

Does this ban on spanking make sense, rationally? Let’s look at the evidence and then decide.

Consider this story from the the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> A study found that youngsters smacked up to the age of six did better at school and were more optimistic about their lives than those never hit by their parents.

> They were also more likely to undertake voluntary work and keener to attend university, experts discovered.
>
> The research, conducted in the United States, is likely to anger children's rights campaigners who have unsuccessfully fought to ban smacking in Britain.
>
> […]Those who had been smacked up to the age of six performed better in almost all the positive categories and no worse in the negatives than those never punished physically.
>
> Teenagers who had been hit by their parents from age seven to 11 were also found to be more successful at school than those not smacked but fared less well on some negative measures, such as getting involved in more fights.
>
> However, youngsters who claimed they were still being smacked scored worse than every other group across all the categories.
>
> Prof Gunnoe found little difference in the results between sexes and different racial groups.

By the way, this is not the worst crime against parenting to come out of Canada. Remember the case where the divorced woman got a female lawyer, went before a female judge, in order to get the court to overturn her ex-husband's grounding of their daughter for sending nude pictures from his computer? Yes. That's what you get when you live in Canada – a nanny state society run by the left. I remember in a previous story, a female judge actually convicted a man for spanking his child. They went to court, and the man was convicted for spanking an unruly child. Why would any man want to raise kids who could not be punished for misbehaving?

I personally don't like spanking as a way to discipline, but I can imagine situations where the behavior is so bad that a spanking might be necessary, e.g. – cruelty to pets, insulting their mother, etc. The point is that if I am the one getting up in the morning to go to work to earn the money, it's my family, and my decision about what I am trying to produce. Public school teachers, judges and politicians work for me – I pay their salaries. They need to butt out of my private life and mind their own business. No man should get involved in a family if all he is going to do is pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to produce children who lack self-control and responsibility.

The path to responsibility goes through hard work and accepting the consequences for bad behavior. It's much better to learn it when you are younger rather than older. Nobody likes spanking, but it's better for a child to learn that stealing is wrong when he is 5 than when he is 25. And maybe that's why so many boys who are raised fatherless become criminals. It is up to families to decide what punishment is best – not big government.

Pastor explains why the pulpit must address public policy issues

December 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Crusader knight prepares for battle

My friend Scott pointed out this brave and necessary article from pastor Michael Sherrard, who is currently studying for his PhD in New Testament.

Pastor Sherrard writes:

> […][P]astors are… watchmen. And when the enemy is before us, the watchmen better not have his head down wiping the eggnog off his ugly sweater as the walls are being scaled.
>
> Rather than be caught defenseless, pastors must equip their people to engage a culture that is becoming increasingly hostile toward Christianity. And so, the pulpit must be political. Yes, I know that Christ's kingdom is not of this world. Let's get that out of the way. I already hear your objection: *"We should care more about salvation than society."* Sure, I agree. It is better to lose the world than your soul. But if you think that society can go to hell as long as people don't, you've fallen for an old trick and you've misunderstood the nature of the gospel.
>
> A politically silent pulpit is one that is catering to the secularist's agenda: *"Keep your religious beliefs private. They are not wanted in society. They are no good to us."* And for some reason, we've bought into the propaganda of those that want to fashion a society after their own values. Somehow they have convinced us that the only good beliefs for society are the beliefs of atheists. But beliefs that are true are true for all and are good for all. It does not matter where they come from. And if the Christian message contains truth, the application of that truth is far reaching. It does not end at the capital steps.
>
> Christianity is an all-encompassing worldview. Meaning, it is a set of true beliefs

> that affect all of life. The gospel itself has implications that go beyond ones eternal destination. We see this truth in Paul's ethics. Pauline ethics might be summed up this way: because Christ humbled himself and died on a cross, so should you be humble and willfully offer up your life for the good of others (Phil 2:1-11). Our faith manifests itself in ways that benefit others, if it is a real faith. You must repress your hope in God to keep it private. I doubt you disagree with this.
>
> So why are politics off limits? Why is it right for us to sit back and allow harmful policies be legislated? Why shouldn't we expose candidates that seek to preserve the right to kill babies? Why do we think we have to let atheists run our country? Are Christian teachings not good? Do they not promote human flourishing? Why do we think a Christian influence equals a theocracy? How have we become so simple minded about our civil responsibility? Pastors we have failed our people. If it is not our job to instruct the people of God on these things, whose job is it?
>
> **When politics are ignored in the pulpit the message to the world and the church is clear: Christianity is irrelevant. It tells the world that what we care about is our little club, and it tells those in the club not to worry about what goes on outside.**

Yes, yes, yes!!!!! This is exactly what my main complaint about pastors is – that they are so contain to discuss castles in the sky and angels dancing on the head of a pin. They want to chase Christian theology into some far-off area where it has no connection with anything real. They want to make our happy feelings everything, and leave us with nothing hard to do for God. But being a partner means doing work that achieves goals, and politics is surely one of the areas where we can show God that we are with him, and that we love him.

Now, the pastor got a lot of flak from nitwits for that post, and so he wrote them a response, with the title "No, your'e right. We should let the atheists run the country".

Here's the best part:

> Oh and you're right, who cares who holds office. The Bible doesn't say anything about voting and our role in democracy. (You'll be happy to know I've also stopped teaching my kids math because Jesus didn't say anything about that either.) Who cares if there are candidates that would exclude us from the first amendment. Religious freedom is overrated. I mean look how the church is growing in parts of the world where Christianity is illegal. We could benefit from a dose of persecution. You know, I think I'll pray for it. Tonight I will huddle my family and pray that we will soon find ourselves in a country where I could lose my head for my faith. That sounds biblical.

Religious liberty is my most important concern. I would be willing to flee my country in order to get it back.

I think it's worth it to read both his posts in full. Why aren't more pastors like that? Why

all this focus on feeling good and being liked, and doing whatever we “feel led” to do? How about we do what is necessary, whether it makes us feel good or not?

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

December 22, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

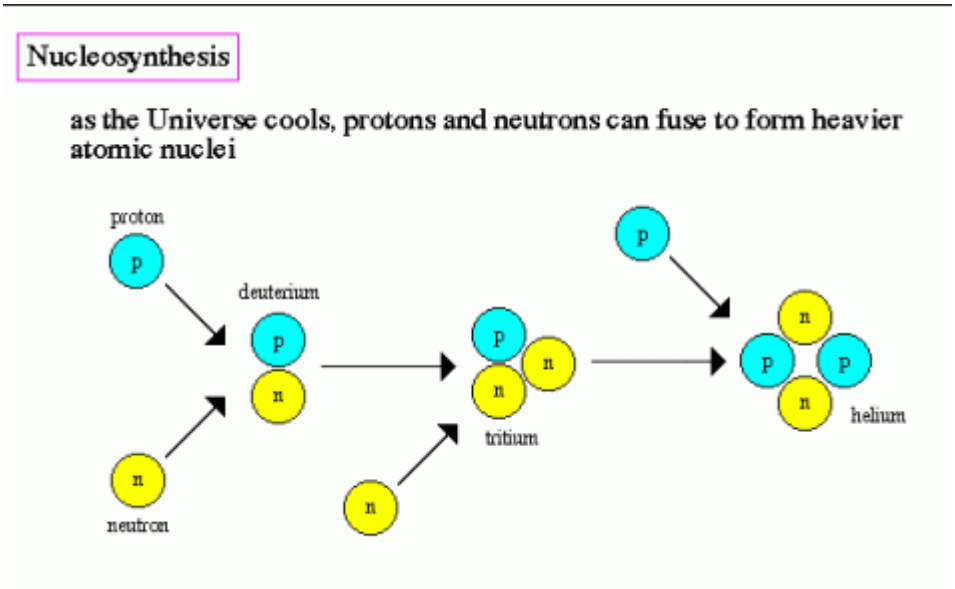

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 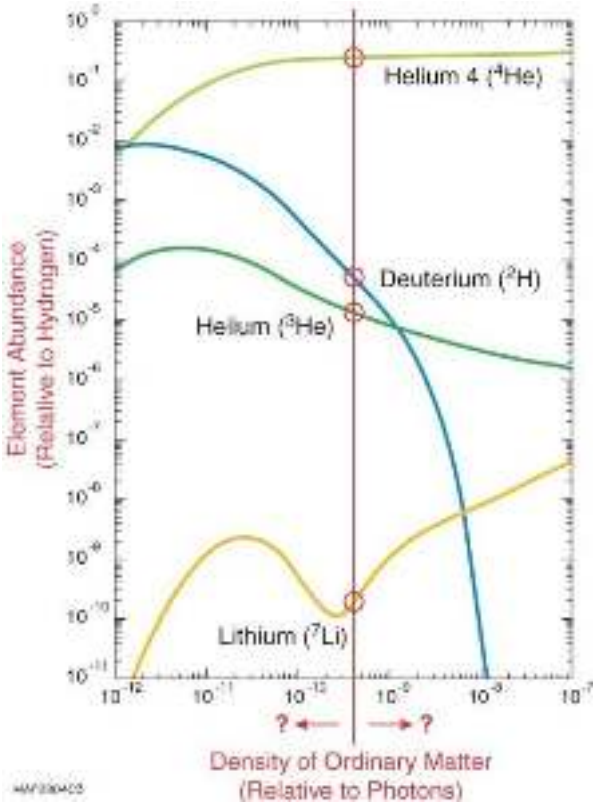
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the

elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Is asking “Am I going to Hell?” a good rebuttal to scientific arguments for theism?

December 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

I want to use this woman’s story to show how sensible atheists reach a belief in God.

Excerpt:

> I don’t know when I first became a skeptic. It must have been around age 4, when my mother found me arguing with another child at a birthday party: “But how do you know what the Bible says is true?” By age 11, my atheism was so widely known in my middle school that a Christian boy threatened to come to my house and “shoot all the atheists.” My Christian friends in high school avoided talking to me about religion because they anticipated that I would tear down their poorly constructed arguments. And I did.
>
> As I set off in 2008 to begin my freshman year studying government at Harvard (whose motto is *Veritas*, “Truth”), I could never have expected the change that awaited me.
>
> It was a brisk November when I met John Joseph Porter. Our conversations initially revolved around conservative politics, but soon gravitated toward religion. He wrote an essay for the *Ichthus*, Harvard’s Christian journal, defending God’s existence. I critiqued it. On campus, we’d argue into the wee hours; when apart, we’d take our arguments to e-mail. Never before had I met a Christian who could respond to my most basic philosophical questions: How does one understand the Bible’s contradictions? Could an omnipotent God make a stone he could not lift? What about the Euthyphro dilemma: Is something good because God declared it so, or does God merely identify the good? To someone like me, with no Christian background, resorting to an answer like “It takes faith” could

> only be intellectual cowardice. Joseph didn't do that.
>
> And he did something else: He prodded me on how inconsistent I was as an atheist who nonetheless believed in right and wrong as objective, universal categories. Defenseless, I decided to take a seminar on meta-ethics. After all, atheists had been developing ethical systems for 200-some years. In what I now see as providential, my atheist professor assigned a paper by C. S. Lewis that resolved the Euthyphro dilemma, declaring, "God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God."
>
> Joseph also pushed me on the origins of the universe. I had always believed in the Big Bang. But I was blissfully unaware that the man who first proposed it, Georges Lemaître, was a Catholic priest. And I'd happily ignored the rabbit trail of a problem of what *caused* the Big Bang, and what *caused* that cause, and so on.
>
> By Valentine's Day, I began to believe in God. There was no intellectual shame in being a deist, after all, as I joined the respectable ranks of Thomas Jefferson and other Founding Fathers.
>
> I wouldn't stay a deist for long. A Catholic friend gave me J. Budziszewski's book Ask Me Anything, which included the Christian teaching that "love is a commitment of the will to the true good of the other person." This theme—of love as sacrifice for true good—struck me. The Cross no longer seemed a grotesque symbol of divine sadism, but a remarkable act of love. And Christianity began to look less strangely mythical and more cosmically beautiful.

So, I want to point out the progression of her beliefs from atheist to deist to Christian. First, she listened to the scientific arguments for God's existence, which took her to deism, which is a variety of theism where God just creates the universe and then doesn't interfere with it after. Those arguments, the Big Bang and the cosmic fine-tuning, were enough for her to falsify atheism and prove some sort of theism. After that, she remained open to the evidence for Christian theism, and finally got there after looking at other evidence.

But this makes me think of how some of the atheists that I talk to do the exact opposite of what she did. I start off by explaining to them scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer. I explain the mainstream discoveries that confirm an origin of the universe (e.g. – light element abundance predictions and observations), and I cite specific examples of fine-tuning, (e.g. – the gravitational constant). I explain protein sequencing and folding, and calculate the probabilities of getting a protein by chance. I explain the sudden origin of the phyla in the Cambrian explosion, and show why naturalistic explanations fail. I talk about the fine-tuning needed to get galaxies, solar systems and planets to support life. But many of these atheists don't become deists like the honest atheist in the story. Why not?

Well, the reason why not is because they interrupt the stream of scientific evidence coming out of my mouth and they start to ask me questions that have nothing to do with what we can know through science. See, evangelism is like building a house. You have to

start with the foundation, the walls, the plumbing, the electricity, etc., but you can't know all the specific details about furniture and decorations at the beginning. But militant atheists don't care that you are able to establish the foundations of Christian theism – they want to jump right to the very fine-grained details, and use that to justify not not building anything at all. Just as you are proving all the main planks of a theistic worldview with science, they start asking "am I going to Hell?" and telling you "God is immoral for killing Canaanite children", etc. They want to stop the construction of the house by demanding that you build everything at once. But, it is much easier to accept miracles like the virgin birth if you have a God who created the universe first. The foundation comes first, it makes the later stuff easier to do.

So rather than adjust their worldview to the strong scientific evidence, and then leave the puzzling about Hell and Old Testament history for later, they want to refute the good scientific arguments with "Am I going to Hell?". How does complaining about Hell and unanswered prayer a response to *scientific evidence*? It's not! But I think that this does explain why atheists remain atheists in the face of all the scientific evidence against naturalism. They insulate their worldview from the progress of science by focusing on their emotional disappointment that they are not God and that God isn't doing what they want him to do. That's the real issue. Authority and autonomy. In my experience, they are usually not accountable to science, although there are, thank God, exceptions to that rule.

When is it appropriate for Christians to start dating?

December 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

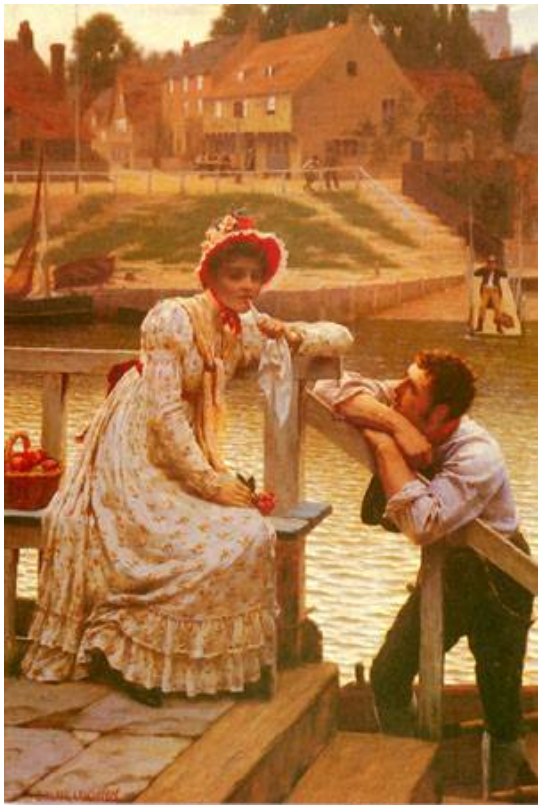

Painting: "Courtship", by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)
First, read this article from a Crisis Pregnancy Center worker.

Excerpt:

> I have a bone to pick with young, socially conservative Americans, and I know it's something that will get under your skin. Just sit tight, though, and hear me out, because the elephant in our tidy little room is starting to tear things up. It's time we acknowledge his existence, and maybe even call in some animal movers to take him back to the zoo.
>
> I currently live in a small community in the Bible-belt of the country and I have been given some opportunities to mentor young people from my area through different venues. I can count on one hand the kids I know from the local high school whose parents have never been divorced. I've witnessed reactions of genuine surprise and envy from students who hear that my parents are still together. In any given conversation with groups of youth, I can expect to hear continual references to step-parents, step-siblings, and half-siblings. Divorce is a way of life down here – albeit one that has taken its toll in the lives of the young people that will make up the next generation.
>
> However, while I could certainly write extensively on my experience with the negative effects of divorce on children and on society at large, I actually want to address something else entirely. I have concerns about the number one way that

> our culture chooses to perpetuate the cancer of broken marriages and failed relationships– underage dating.
>
> You can follow them on Facebook – the failed attempts at love, I mean. Somebody is always changing their status from “in a relationship” to “single.” Unfortunately, a huge number of these disappointed lovers are too young to be legally married. I wonder sometimes if I am the only one who winces to hear a thirteen-year old speak with cavalier abandon of his or her “ex?” Since when is it considered healthy and acceptable for underage people to be in “relationships?” Just what do parents and educators expect to be the result of the romantic conquests of these middle-school children and young high school students? The results I’ve witnessed personally are beyond disturbing; they are downright sinister, and have caused me to question whether or not those who claim to champion marital fidelity and family values are paying any attention at all to the standards we are passing to our children.
>
> The trouble with underage dating is that it presents an entirely faulty view of what interaction with the opposite gender should be about. Rather than placing emphasis on building one strong relationship with one person at a stage of life when a marital commitment is feasible, dating encourages young people to pour their energies into consistently seducing other young people at a time when neither of them are capable of making any long-term commitments. Their “relationships” are destined to fail from the get-go because they are founded on unhealthy perceptions of love and not backed by any real necessity to stick it out.
>
> The beauty of marriage, as it was intended to be, is that it teaches two people of opposite genders to learn to work through incompatibilities and give of themselves. In the same way, the great ugliness of dating as it is practiced by our culture and portrayed by our media, is that it teaches two people of opposite genders to be selfish by giving them an easy “out” when things don’t go according to their initial feelings. I believe it is fair to say that this form of dating is a training manual for divorce, because it encourages young people to grow accustomed to giving their hearts away and then taking them back.
>
> Sadly, parents who should know better continue to display shocking naïveté regarding the absurd practices of driving their twelve year olds out on a “date,” or purchasing provocative clothing for their sixteen-year-olds, or sympathizing with their broken-hearted fourteen-year-olds by assuring them that they’ll “find someone better.” “They’re just having fun,” they’ll tell us, rolling their eyes at what they consider to be our tightly wound principles. I work a volunteer shift at Crisis Pregnancy Clinic where I witness every week the ruined lives and broken dreams that “fun” has left with our youth.

And now here’s my take.

Basically, you can start dating as a prelude to courting when the woman and man are

able to demonstrate to the other person that they are ready to fulfill their roles in the marriage.

For example, the woman should be able to show that she has been able to maintain commitments to caring for others through some period of time, maybe with small children or pets. She should be voluntarily entering into relationships and responsibilities with other people where she is giving of herself – like volunteering at a crisis pregnancy center or caring for an ailing or elderly relative. That shows potential suitors that she has the right attitude to relationships – serving others self-sacrificially, and not looking for tingles and amusement. She should be able to show that she is good at making commitments and solving problems by studying hard subjects in school like nursing, economics, biology, chemistry, physics, engineering or computer science. That shows that she is able to do hard things that she doesn't feel like doing, and apply herself over time until she has a degree. Obviously being conservative politically and being good at apologetics are also important if she intends to raise children.

And for the man, he should be able to show that he is able to do his roles – protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. He should be able to prove that he is able to mentor and guide other people to learn things and do things that will make them more effective Christians. That's moral and spiritual leadership. He should have studied a subject that is going to allow him to find work. If he is committed to going to graduate school, then he can study philosophy and law and other "world-changing" subjects, like a William Lane Craig or a Ryan Anderson. Otherwise, he should study things like petroleum engineering, computer science, or other fields that will allow him to be stable and secure. It's not enough to be a hard worker, you have to be able to pull in the money and save it and still have time left over to care for your wife and lead the children. Again, conservative politics and apologetics are a must.

I think there are other ways for men and women to show that they are ready for marriage, but those are some ways. The key thing is that people shouldn't be dating until they are able to show that they know the roles that they are expected to fill in marriage as men and women. They should also be looking for the right things in others. They can't be looking for the shallow things that give them tingles, like looks, athleticism, etc. They can't be looking for sexual attraction, primarily. Marriage requires specific behaviors from men and women, which are derived from what men and women do in marriage. Before men and women start dating, they have to be able to show that they are working on being able to handle their responsibilities, and they have to show that their selection criteria for the opposite sex are at least partly based on the responsibilities that the opposite sex has in a marriage. Otherwise they are just training to be governed by their tingles and to be selfish and to break up when all that falls apart.

Can atheist Louise Antony rationally ground objective morality?

December 23, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews
The debate on video:

- Part 1 on YouTube
- Part 2 on YouTube

I read Dr. Craig's report of his debate with Louise Antony on the topic of God and morality. My impression from his review was that she hadn't prepared for the debate and didn't understand the moral argument at all.

My impressions of her were confirmed by J.W. Wartick's blog post.

Summary:

> Recently, I listened [again] to the debate between William Lane Craig and Louise Anthony. Some have lauded this debate as a stirring victory for secular ethics. (See, for example, the comments here–one comment even goes so far as to say "I swoon when someone evokes the Euthyphro Dilemma and frown at the impotent, goal-post-moving, 'Divine nature' appeal.") In reality, I think Louise Anthony did indeed present the case for secular metaethics. *The problem is that this case is utterly vacuous.*
>
> I'll break down why this is the case by focusing upon three areas of development in secular and theistic ethics: objective moral truths, suffering, and moral facts.

Here's the snarkiest part:

> Louise Anthony seems to be just confused about the nature of objective morality.

> She says in response to a question from the audience, “The universe has no purpose, but *I* do… I have *lots* of purposes…. It makes a lot of difference to a lot of people and to *me* what I do. That gives my life significance… The only thing that would make it [sacrificing her own life] insignificant would be if my children’s lives were insignificant. And, boy you better not say that!”
>
> Craig responded, “But Louise, on atheism, their lives *are* insignificant.” Anthony interjected, “Not to *me*!”
>
> But then she goes on to make this confused statement, “It’s an objective fact that they [her children] are significant to me.”
>
> Note how Anthony has confused the terms here. Yes, it is an objective fact that according to Louise Anthony, her children matter to her. We can’t question Anthony’s own beliefs–we must trust what she tells us unless we have reason to think otherwise. But that’s not enough. What Craig and other theists are trying to press is that that simple fact *has nothing to do with whether her children are actually valuable.* Sure, people may go around complaining that “Well, it matters *to me*, so it does matter!” But that doesn’t make it true. All kinds of things can matter to people, that doesn’t mean that they are ontologically objective facts.
>
> It matters to me whether the Cubs [an American baseball team] win the World Series. That hasn’t happened in 104 years, so it looks like it doesn’t matter in the overall scheme of the universe after all. But suppose I were to, like Anthony, retort, “But the Cubs matter *to me*! It’s an objective fact that them winning the World Series is significant to me!” Fine! But all the Cardinals [a rival team] fans would just laugh at me and say “*SO WHAT!?*“
>
> Similarly, one can look at Anthony with incredulity and retort, “Who cares!?” Sure, if you can get enough people around Anthony who care about her children’s moral significance, you can develop a socially derived morality. But that’s not enough to ground objective morality. Why should we think that her values matter to the universe at large? On atheism, what reason is there for saying that her desires and purposes for her children are any better than my desires and purposes for the Cubs?

She doesn’t even understand the difference between objective and subjective morality! Sigh. For her, it’s enough that people have feelings about what they like and don’t like, and that they have the feeling that they ought to act in line with their feelings. And if you challenge her about obviously evil people, e.g. – radical Islamists blowing up innocent children for their ideology, well she has no reason to say that their feelings-based morality is any more rationally grounded than her own. The problem with atheists is that they approach morality with the goal of explaining it away. They want to avoid having to comply with objective, prescriptive morality, but they also want to justify themselves to theists by saying “look at me, I have standards too, I’m not a sociopath!” So, they invent a subjective morality based on their need to feel good and get the praise of their peers

and congratulate themselves about acting according to a subjective standard. Problem solved! The fact is that there is no way to get to an objective moral standard that applies in all times and places on atheism. Accidental universe = anything goes. Period. End of issue.

William Lane Craig lectures on radical skepticism and the historical Jesus

December 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Brian Auten at Apologetics 315 posted a lecture by William Lane Craig on the historical Jesus.

In his post, Brian doesn't really say much about where or when the lecture was recorded. But I can tell you! This lecture has a special meaning for me because when I was just learning about apologetics, this was one of the first lectures I ordered. The lecture was delivered in 1996 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary as part of the distinguished Carver-Barnes Lecture Series. The title was "Re-Discovering the Historical Jesus". Hearing this again (I lent mine away and never got it back) was a real treat for me.

The MP3 file is here.

And here is a summary I made so you can follow along as you listen.

Lecture 1: the pre-suppositions of the Jesus Seminar
– the origins of the radically skeptical "Jesus Seminar" group
– what does the Jesus Seminar believe about Jesus?
– what is a pre-supposition?
– how do pre-suppositions affect the study of history?
– the Jesus Seminar's pre-supposition of naturalism (atheism)
– the Jesus Seminar's pre-supposition that the NT gospels are late
– the Jesus Seminar's pre-supposition of political correctness
– does the Jesus Seminar represent the consensus of NT scholars?

Lecture 2A: are the NT gospels historically reliable?
– should the gospels be assumed to be reliable or unreliable

– argument #1: insufficient time from events to written record
– argument #2: gospels contain very little legendary material
– argument #3: Jewish culture was good at oral transmission
– argument #4: eyewitness correction and apostolic supervision
– argument #5: the gospels are reliable where they can be tested
– #1: legendary elements only appear 1-2 generations after events
– but gospels were written within the lifetimes of the eyewitnesses
– sources for the gospels are even earlier, e.g. – 1 Cor 15:3-8
– on the other hand, the apocryphal gospels do contain legends
– #5: gospels are confirmed by history and archaeology were possible
– Luke includes details showing that he traveled with eyewitness Paul

Lecture 2B: the self-understanding of Jesus

– how early and reliable is believe in Jesus' divinity
– it would be hard to get monotheistic Jews to think Jesus was divine
– the only way this belief could have emerged is if Jesus taught it
– parable of the wicked tennants and vineyard – Jesus' self-understanding
– passage about no one knowing the father except the son, etc.
– passage about not knowing the date of his second coming
– the healings and exorcisms are well-attested and skeptics grant them

Lecture 2C: the trial and crucifixion of Jesus

– crucifixion is well-attested inside and outside the New Testament
– even the Jesus Seminar considers this an indisputable fact about Jesus
– Jesus was crucified for blasphemy – i.e. claiming to be divine

Lecture 2D: the minimal facts case for the resurrection

– minimal fact #1: the burial in a known location
– minimal fact #2: the empty tomb
– minimal fact #3: the appearances to individuals and groups
– minimal fact #4: the early belief that Jesus was resurrected
– the majority of scholars, including skeptics, accept the minimal facts
– naturalistic explanations are not able to account for these facts

There is a very noisy weird person in the audience who keeps shouting his approval. This lecture is almost identical to a lecture that Craig gave for Stand to Reason's Masters Series, on the pre-suppositions of the Jesus Seminar. There is no Q&A in this lecture, but there is Q&A in the STR version.

Did the city of Nazareth exist at the time of the birth of Jesus?

December 24, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Israeli archaeologist Yardena Alexandre inspects Roman 1st-century pottery found from the city of Nazareth.

I was discussing a recent debate that a friend attended between an atheist musician named Dan Barker and a Christian with a doctorate in New Testament Studies named Justin Bass.

According to my friend's report, the atheist questioned the existence of Nazareth, and then went on from there to assert that everything we know about Jesus is legendary.

This is what the atheist's argument sounds like:

1. If the New Testament contains reliable history about Jesus, then Nazareth must exist.
2. Nazareth does not exist.
3. Therefore, the New Testaments does not contain reliable history about Jesus. (M.T. 1,2)

I was able to find a web site where an atheist was making the claim that Nazareth did not exist at the time of Jesus. So this is not completely outside the realm of mainstream atheism. I doubled checked with two more people who attended the debate that Barker indeed made an argument like the one above.

Two things to say about this 3-step argument. First off, when speaking to atheists, Christians only care about making a case for the resurrection. This is for two reasons. One, our goal is to disprove atheism, and the historical argument for the resurrection is the most evidenced miracle claim in the New Testament. Nazareth is not part of that core of minimal facts about the resurrection of Jesus. Second, it's possible to be a Christian by

accepting a core of Christian dogma (e.g. – the Apostle's Creed), while remaining agnostic or even skeptical of other things in the Bible. Nazareth is not part of that core of minimal facts that must be affirmed in order to become a Christian.

The problem I have with atheists is that they pick and choose from the Bible according to their own agenda. Every Christian has read basic books on the resurrection by people like Lee Strobel, Michael Licona, William Lane Craig, J. Warner Wallace and so on. This is like table stakes for living a Christian life. We all know how to make a case based off of minimal facts for the resurrection. When Christians get into debates about Jesus, we want to make a case for the core of historical knowledge about him, minimal facts that almost no one disagrees with. But many atheists aren't like that. They want to pick and choose a few verses out of the Old Testament and the New Testament that they personally find distasteful *to them*, and then deny the minimal facts about Jesus on that basis. I don't think that it makes sense to deny evidence for widely-accepted facts by bringing up minor problems that are irrelevant to the well-attested core facts.

But it's worse than that – we actually DO know that Nazareth existed, and we know it not from some fundamentalist preacher, but from atheist Bart Ehrman.

Ehrman writes in his book:

> One supposedly legendary feature of the Gospels commonly discussed by mythicists is that the alleged hometown of Jesus, Nazareth did not exist but is itself a myth. The logic of this argument, which is sometimes advanced with considerable vehemence and force, appears to be that if Christians made up Jesus' hometown, they probably made him up as well. I could dispose of this argument fairly easily by pointing out that it is irrelevant. If Jesus existed, as the evidence suggests, but Nazareth did not, as this assertion claims, then he merely came from somewhere else. Whether Barack Obama was born in the U.S. or not (for what it is worth, he was) is irrelevant to the question of whether he was born.
>
> Since, however, this argument is so widely favored among mythicists, I want to give it a further look and deeper exploration. The most recent critic to dispute the existence of Nazareth is René Salm, who has devoted an entire book to the question, called The Myth of Nazareth. Salm sees this issue as highly significant and relevant to the question of the historicity of Jesus: "Upon that determination [i.e., the existence of Nazareth] depends a great deal, perhaps even the entire edifice of Christendom."

So that seems like a fair representation of the argument I outlined above.

Bart's response is long, but here's part of it:

> There are numerous compelling pieces of archaeological evidence that in fact Nazareth did exist in Jesus' day, and that like other villages and towns in that part of Galilee, it was built on the hillside, near where the later rock-cut kokh tombs were built. For one thing, archaeologists have excavated a farm connected with the village, and it dates to the time of Jesus. Salm disputes the

> finding of the archaeologists who did the excavation (it needs to be remembered, he himself is not an archaeologist but is simply basing his views on what the real archaeologists – all of whom disagree with him — have to say). For one thing, when archaeologist Yardena Alexandre indicated that 165 coins were found in this excavation, she specified in the report that some of them were late, from the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. This suits Salm's purposes just fine. But as it turns out, there were among the coins some that date to the Hellenistic, Hasmonean, and early Roman period, that is, the days of Jesus. Salm objected that this was not in Alexandre's report, but Alexandre has verbally confirmed (to me personally) that in fact it is the case: there were coins in the collection that date to the time prior to the Jewish uprising.
>
> Aalm also claims that the pottery found on the site that is dated to the time of Jesus is not really from this period, even though he is not an expert on pottery. Two archaeologists who reply to Salm's protestations say the following: "Salm's personal evaluation of the pottery … reveals his lack of expertise in the area as well as his lack of serious research in the sources." They go on to state: "By ignoring or dismissing solid ceramic, numismatic [that is, coins], and literary evidence for Nazareth's existence during the Late Hellenisitic and Early Roman period, it would appear that the analysis which René Salm includes in his review, and his recent book must, in itself, be relegated to the realm of 'myth.'"

Read Bart's whole excerpt from his book in his post.

I did a quick double check on the archaeologist Ehrman mentioned, and found an Associated Press story about another archaelogical discovery made by archaeologists in Nazareth. This time, it's not the coins, but pottery fragments. The date range on the pottery is 100 before Jesus' birth to 100 years after Jesus' birth.

Even though Ehrman is an atheist, I think that he understands how to do history. You can't be a credentialed historian and throw out the early proclamation of Jesus' resurrection because of doubts about Old Testament violence. You can't be a credentialed historian and throw out the conversions of Paul and James because you don't know whether there was one angel or two angels at the empty tomb. Denying the core facts about Jesus by bringing up concerns about peripheral issues is not a responsible way to investigate the historical Jesus.

One final point. This happens when discussing scientific evidence with atheists, too. I was discussing the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the cosmic fine-tuning with an atheist – mentioning names, dates and places related to the discoveries – and she cut me off with "Am I going to Hell?"

What is the meaning and significance of Christmas for Christians?

December 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s the time of year when we explain what Christianity is about.

God exists

Basically, we know from a variety of scientific arguments that the universe was created and fine-tuned for life by an intelligent agent that existed causally prior to the beginning of the universe, because this agent brought the universe into being. Our purpose as humans is to enter into a two-way loving relationship with this Creator/Designer of the universe. This is the only way that we can ultimately be happy and fulfilled.

We avoid God

Now, when you look at human experience, none of us is interested in finding out about the character of this Creator/Designer, because we are afraid that if we find out too much about him then we will have our freedom to do as we please constrained by the demands of a relationship with an all-powerful, all-good being. Just knowing that such a person exists and has a character distinct from our own is enough to cause us to flee from him so that we can stay autonomous from the obligations of the moral law that he expects us to follow.

Christians believe that this universal desire to avoid an all-powerful, all-good God who will judge us is a result of bad behaviors inherited by us from the very first rebellion against God by our ancestors. Ever since that rebellion, the capability for relating to God has been lost, because we no longer have the ability to stop our rebellion against God. Christians call the first rebellion of our ancestors “The Fall of Man”.

What does this rebellion look like for us today? Well, we want to do whatever we want, in

order to be happy, and to ignore God's demands. We want to have happy feelings, including security, community and being morally good, all without a relationship with God. We want to acquire and rearrange matter for our selfish ends without acknowledging and honoring the Creator/Designer of that matter. And, of course, we would like other people to affirm, voluntarily or involuntarily, that our rebellion against God is really the height of moral goodness.

Additionally, some people imagine that God, if he exists at all, must desire our happiness. And of course when their needs are not met by this invented God, then they become even more bitter at God, and eventually decide that God could not really exist since their selfish needs are not being met by him. It never seems to occur to us humans that some pain and suffering may be permitted by God in order to turn our attention away from pleasure and security in this life, and back towards a relationship with him.

This is the mess we find ourselves in. This propensity for turning away from God and trying to pursue selfish happiness and security apart from a relationship with God is what the Bible calls "sin". Every single one of us deserves severe punishment for refusing to pursue a genuine two-way love relationship with the God who is there. That is the mess we are in before Jesus appears to address this problem.

Jesus saves the day

I cannot say much about *how* Jesus solves the problem of rebellion against God, because that is really the story of Easter, and today we are dealing with the story of Christmas. But I can say that the solution to the problem requires that God step into history to communicate with his creatures and to perform actions in order to be reconciled with them. That is the message of Christmas: God is stepping into history to do something to end our rebellion. Easter is the story of *what he does*.

This is talked about in the Bible in John 1, for example.

John 1:1-5:

[1]In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[2]He was with God in the beginning.

[3]Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

[4]In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

[5]The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

You can substitute the word "Word" there for *Logos*, which really means *logic* or *reason* or *wisdom.* This is a person with a divine nature, identified with the eternal being of God, who exists causally prior to the creation of the universe, who is going to take on an additional human nature, including a human body. (Christians believe that there is one divine "what" being and three divine "who" persons). Software engineers, you can think of Jesus having two natures as multiple inheritance in C++.

And it continues in John 1:10-14:

[10]He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not

recognize him.

[11]He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

[12]Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

[13]children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

[14]The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Here the word grace doesn't mean like a graceful ballet dancer. It means an instance of mercy received from a superior. A person (a "who") identified with the divine being (a "what") has decided to make us a top-down offer of mercy.

The same message of God stepping into history is found in the Christmas carols that people sing at Christmas.

Christmas carols

Here's the best one, "O, Holy Night", and it says:

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining.
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

When we were in rebellion, we had lost our most valuable capacity – the capacity of being in a direct relationship with God. And if the newborn baby Jesus can accomplish his mission (and he did), then we are going to regain that capacity for a direct relationship with God.

Now look at "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", which one of my favorites:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

Basically, as I often say, there are only two kinds of people in the world. There are people who are willing to respond to the offer of a relationship with God, with all the little sacrifices and compromises that a relationship entails, and then there are people who are not willing to respond. For the people who are willing to respond, the appearance of Jesus is the best thing that could possibly happen, because now we are finally going to have a chance to deal directly with God, face-to-face, to find out what he is like, and change ourselves to be more like him, with his help.

And that is why people celebrate Christmas. It's the anniversary of the birth of Jesus. It is the story of God stepping into history to be reconciled with his rebellious creatures. It's the story of the divine *Logos* subjecting himself to the life of a creature in order to rescue us from our sinful, self-destructive rebellion. This love for undeserving creatures is above

and beyond the call of duty. We didn’t love him, but instead he loved us first, and he loved us enough to come down here and suffer with us so that we could be reconciled with God.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Did the early church invent the divinity of Jesus over a long period of time?

December 25, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

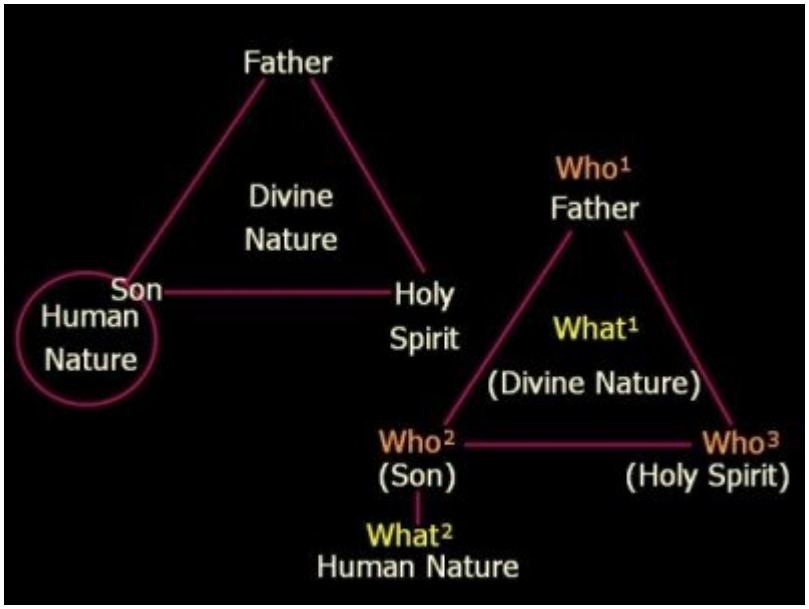

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time,

most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being “the power of God and the wisdom of God”. Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous “Shema“, which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here’s the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage “through whom all things came” foreshadows John identifying Jesus as “the Word

of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]“He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

[7]“But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]“What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God’s *unique* Son.

The “Q” source for Matthew and Luke

Here’s Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier “Q” source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Self-refuting statements defined and some common examples

December 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

A fine article by Aaron, who writes at Apologetics Junkie.

Excerpt:

> A self-defeating (or self-refuting) statement is one that fails to meet its own standard. In other words, it is a statement that cannot live up to its own criteria. Imagine if I were to say,
>
> I cannot speak a word in English.
>
> You intuitively see a problem here. I told you in English that I cannot speak a word in English. This statement is self-refuting. It does not meet its own standard or criteria. It self-destructs.
>
> The important thing to remember with self-defeating statements is that they are necessarily false. In other words, there is no possible way for them to be true. This is because they violate a very fundamental law of logic, the law of non-contradiction. This law states that A and non-A cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense. For example, it is not possible for God to exist and not exist at the same time and in the same sense. This would violate the law of non-contradiction. So if I were to say, “God told me He doesn’t exist” you would see intuitively the obvious self-refuting nature of this statement.

Aaron goes on to explain how to deal with self-refuting statements in the article.

Here are 20 examples of self-refutation, just to encourage you to click through and read it:

> 1. There is no truth.
> 2. You can’t know truth.
> 3. No one has the truth.
> 4. All truth is relative.
> 5. It’s true for you but not for me.
> 6. There are no absolutes.
> 7. No one can know any truth about religion.
> 8. You can’t know anything for sure.
> 9. You should doubt everything.
> 10. Only science can give us truth.
> 11. You can only know truth through experience.
> 12. All truth depends on your perspective.
> 13. You shouldn’t judge.
> 14. You shouldn’t force your morality on people.
> 15. You should live and let live.
> 16. God doesn’t take sides.
> 17. You shouldn’t try to convert people.
> 18. That’s just your view.
> 19. You should be tolerant of all views.
> 20. It is arrogant to claim to have the truth.

Aaron explains how to respond to each of those! Read them all – it’s important to know, because you hear these all the time.

Add yours in the comments!

Gay activist group tells Obama administration to bully religious schools

December 26, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and the Human Rights Campaign

This is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> The largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender activist group in the country is calling on the Department of Education to address what it calls a "disturbing trend" on college campuses.
>
> Specifically, the Human Rights Campaign is calling for more transparency towards what it sees as a trend of schools citing religious reasons for not adhering to Title IX.
>
> The Human Rights Campaign believes that in granting such exemptions, schools are given a "license to discriminate."
>
> Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs that receive federal funding. If schools are found in violation of the statute, their federal dollars could be at risk.
>
> To address these concerns, the Human Rights Campaign wants the Department of Education to issue public reports stating which institutions request or receive religious exemptions, and to detail the scope of those exemptions.

Conservatives reacted to this news so:

> Hunter Baker, a fellow for religious liberty at Union, told The Daily Signal that the

> erosion of religious liberty exemptions, would make it “illegal” for schools to operate in accordance to their religious beliefs.
>
> “If we were unable to choose faculty members who both live out and have a traditional view of Christian sexual morality, then that really damages our ability to pursue our mission as an institution,” Baker said. “You’re making it illegal for us to insist on a Christian life and worldview.”
>
> Baker said it would be a “major intrusion” on the school’s standards of conduct for its student body. Union University, a Baptist college in Jackson, Tenn., follows a traditional Christian view of marriage and sexuality, for example.
>
> “Any kind of activity that would occur between two same-sex individuals would be unacceptable by our standards of conduct,” he said.
>
> Roger Severino, director of the DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society at The Heritage Foundation, calls the Human Right Campaign’s requests an attempt to “blacklist religiously-affiliated schools.”

You might remember that the Human Rights Campaign previously denounced the socially conservative Family Research Council as a “hate group” after they were attacked by a gay activist who was later convicted of domestic terrorism. The Human Rights Campaign was never charged with hate speech by the Obama administration.

The Human Rights Campaign was also connected to the leaking of the names of pro-marriage donors by a gay activist inside the IRS. The IRS was able to settle that case, receiving only a slap on the wrist.

Unfortunately, the Human Rights Campaign enjoys broad support from many American companies, as well as prominent Democrats like Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. It’s difficult for me to see how religious liberty can survive if we keep electing Democrats who want to give gay activists what they want: an end to religious liberty and freedom of conscience.

Mike Licona lectures on historical methods and the New Testament

December 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a quick overview of Michael Licona's latest book on the resurrection, entitled "The Resurrection of Jesus".

60 minutes of lecture, 20 minutes of Q&A.

Summary:

- Dr. Licona's background and education
- The definition of history and philosophy of history
- Postmodern approaches to history
- Historical bedrock: facts that are historically demonstrable
- Historical criterion 1: Explanatory scope
- Historical criterion 2: Explanatory power
- Historical criterion 3: Plausibility
- Historical criterion 4: Ad Hoc / Speculation / non-evidenced assumptions
- Inference to the best explanation
- Investigating miracle claims: is it possible? How?
- Objection of James D.G. Dunn
- Objection of Bart Ehrman
- New Testament sources: Gospels and Paul's letters
- The Gnostic gospels: are they good sources?
- The minimal facts
- The hallucination hypothesis
- The best explanation

While watching this lecture, it struck what good preparation it was for understanding debates. This lecture is more about historical methods, but if you're interested in Mike's minimal facts case for the resurrection, here's a video on that:

This is the case he uses in his debates with Richard Carrier, Dale Allison, Bart Ehrman, etc.

Mike Licona's ministry is here: Risen Jesus.

If you are looking for a good book to read on the resurrection of Jesus, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

New study: cameras capture wild crows using tools they made to hunt for insects

December 27, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Crow using a tool he made to hunt for bugs

By now regular readers know that birds are my favorite creatures of all, especially parrots. Pretty much any new study about how great birds are will be blogged about here. Partly to bolster the argument for design in nature, and partly just because I think that birds are so awesome!

Here is the latest bird news from Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> Scientists have been given an extraordinary glimpse into how wild New Caledonian crows make and use ‘hooked stick tools’ to hunt for insect prey.

> Dr Jolyon Troscianko, from the University of Exeter, and Dr Christian Rutz, from the University of St Andrews, have captured first video recordings documenting how these tropical corvids fashion these particularly complex tools in the wild.
>
> The pair developed tiny video ‘spy-cameras’ which were attached to the crows, to observe their natural foraging behaviour.
>
> They discovered two instances of hooked stick tool making on the footage they recorded, with one crow spending a minute making the tool, before using it to probe for food in tree crevices and even in leaf litter on the ground.
>
> The findings are reported in the Royal Society’s journal *Biology Letters* on Wednesday, December 23.
>
> […]”In one scene, a crow drops its tool, and then recovers it from the ground

> shortly afterwards, suggesting they value their tools and don't simply discard them after a single use." According to Rutz, this observation agrees with recent aviary experiments conducted by his group: "Crows really hate losing their tools, and will use all sorts of tricks to keep them safe. We even observed them storing tools temporarily in tree holes, the same way a human would put a treasured pen into a pen holder."
>
> New Caledonian crows (*Corvus moneduloides*) are found on the South Pacific island of New Caledonia.
>
> **They can use their bills to whittle twigs and leaves into bug-grabbing implements; some believe their tool-use is so advanced that it rivals that of some primates.**

OK, that is pretty cool, but on crows are not the most cuddly birds. However, Goffin cockatoos are pretty cuddly, and there was a related story about them.

Goffin cockatoo using a tool he made to scoop up food through cage bars
First, this one from November 2012: (Science Daily)

> A cockatoo from a species not known to use tools in the wild has been observed spontaneously making and using tools for reaching food and other objects.

> A Goffin's cockatoo called 'Figaro', that has been reared in captivity and lives near Vienna, used his powerful beak to cut long splinters out of wooden beams in its aviary, or twigs out of a branch, to reach and rake in objects out of its reach. Researchers from the Universities of Oxford and Vienna filmed Figaro making and using these tools.
>
> How the bird discovered how to make and use tools is unclear but shows how much we still don't understand about the evolution of innovative behaviour and intelligence.
>
> A report of the research is published this week in *Current Biology…*

And then an update to the story – a new study showing that the cockatoo is actually able to teach other birds how to make tools as well: (Science Daily)

> Goffin's cockatoos can learn how to make and use wooden tools from each other, a new study has found.

> The discovery, made by scientists from Oxford University, the University of Vienna, and the Max Planck Institute at Seewiesen, is thought to be the first controlled experimental evidence for the social transmission of tool use in any bird species.
>
> Goffin's cockatoo (*Cacatua goffini*) is a curious species of Indonesian parrot not known to use tools in the wild. At a laboratory in Austria the researchers had observed a captive adult male Goffin's cockatoo named 'Figaro' spontaneously start to sculpt stick tools out of wooden aviary beams to use them for raking in nuts out of his reach. To investigate if such individual invention could be passed on to other cockatoos the team used Figaro as a 'role model', exposing other birds to tool use demonstrations, some with Figaro as 'teacher' and others without his 'students' seeing him at work.
>
> In the experiments one cockatoo group was allowed to observe Figaro skilfully employing a ready-made stick tool, while another could see what researchers called 'ghost demonstrations' — either seeing the tools displacing the nuts by themselves, while being controlled by magnets hidden under a table, or seeing the nuts moving towards Figaro without his intervention, again using magnets to displace the food. The birds were all then placed in front of an identical problem, with a ready-made tool lying on the ground nearby.
>
> Three males and three females that saw Figaro's complete demonstration interacted much more with potential tools and other components of the problem than those seeing ghost demos. They picked up sticks more than the ghost demo control groups and generally seemed more interested in achieving the result. Remarkably, all three males in this group acquired proficient tool use, while neither the females in the same group nor males and females in the ghost demo groups did.
>
> A report of the research is published in the journal *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*.

During the Christmas holidays, I've been working on a technical project that is now deployed and functioning on a cloud service, backed by a data store. One of the reasons I have been able to keep at it despite all the festivities going on, is because my pet bird has been flying and landing on top the computer monitor and urging me to get cracking on the next feature in the feature list. He is very bossy.

Related posts

- New study: parrots capable of using and sharing tools

- Remarkable: the Clark’s nutcracker can remember up to 20,000 maps
- Federal court cripples Obama administration’s bird-killing green energy agenda
- New study: tiny songbirds fly extremely long distances each year
- New study: Crows capable of analytical reasoning
- New study: bird origins poses a convergence challenge to common ancestry
- New study: another biological Big Bang, this time for bird development
- New study: how the hummingbird performs stunning feats of aerobatics
- New $2.2 billion solar plant kills one bird every two minutes
- The best explanation for the design of bird wings is intelligent design
- Are green energy sources like solar power and wind power good for the environment?
- Obama administration issues permits to wind energy companies to kill rare birds
- Obama administration won’t prosecute wind farms for killing thousands of endangered birds
- New peer-reviewed article argues for irreducible complexity in birds

U.S. taxpayers pay $3 billion to United Nations budget

December 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National Security Advisor Susan Rice, United States Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power, Secretary of State John Kerry

CNS News has the story on how much we give the United Nations.

Excerpt:

> American taxpayers will once again be liable for more than one-fifth of the United Nations' regular budget next year, as well as more than one-quarter of the much-larger peacekeeping budget – a total of approximately $2,957,000,000.
>
> […]U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power tweeted her congratulations to the U.S. team involved in committee haggling over the budget – or what she described as "tough negotiations to secure more fair UN budget to slow growing costs & take steps to streamline UN ops."
>
> […]There are 193 U.N. member-states. When decisions are made on the U.N. budget, the U.S. has the same (one) vote as does every other member, despite the size of its contribution. America's 22 percent contribution comes with no more weight in the budget process than the 0.001 percent paid by the lowest-assessed nations.

We're paying the bill, but other nations – often with gross human rights abuses – are calling the tunes. What kinds of tunes are they calling?

Well, they are promoting abortion, for one.

Life News explains:

> The United Nations' treaty monitoring body for the International Covenant on

> Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) ignored the pro-life laws of four countries under review during its recent 55th session and strongly urged the countries to change their laws or policies on abortion, despite the fact that the treaty does not mention abortion.

And the United Nations is very concerned with promoting gay rights, too.

Life Site News explains:

> UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon promised that homosexual and transgender rights would advance at the United Nations despite the strain it will cause within the organization and between states.
>
> […]"This is not just a personal commitment, it is an institutional commitment," he said, promising that he would "continue to fight" and that he would be the "first of many" Secretary Generals to take up LGBT rights, as part of the UN's "sacred mission" to promote human rights.

Now for those who are more concerned about fiscal issues than social issues, you shouldn't like the United Nations either.

Here's a column by Claudia Rossett in The Tower:

> The results range from Security Council paralysis to watered-down resolutions that too often fail to solidly reflect U.S. interests. This has not been helped by U.S. policies outlined by President Obama when he told the UN General Assembly in 2009 that "No one nation can or should try to dominate another nation" and "No balance of power among nations will hold." Far from taking this as an inspiration to live in brotherly peace and fill the communal pot, some of the more opportunistic UN member states appear to have received it as an invitation to grab whatever they can get. Russia and China have been ever more aggressively pursuing anti-American interests, including increasing engagement with terror-sponsoring Iran and actively preventing action to stop the atrocities in Syria. Following a spate of Security Council sanctions resolutions meant to stop Iran's rogue nuclear program, in 2006, 2007, and 2008, the Council has not produced another since 2010. When civil war engulfed Syria starting in 2011, Russia blocked Security Council action for more than two years, until finally, in Sept., 2013, the U.S. deferred to a Russia-brokered deal to relieve Syria's Assad regime of its chemical weapons in exchange for effectively shoring up Syria's President Bashar Assad—and allowing the killing to continue unabated.
>
> In the General Assembly, U.S. money has similarly not bought friendship. On the contrary, U.S. funding has fostered an entitlement culture, in which the U.S. is not only taken for granted as a cash dispenser, but also systematically denounced and defied. Nations deeply hostile to the U.S. have made an art of twisting the UN system, flush with U.S. resources, for their own aims. A prime exhibit is Iran's current three-year chairmanship (2012-2015) of the so-called Non-Aligned Movement, which with 120 members is the second-largest voting

> bloc in the UN General Assembly. At the UN's New York headquarters, the largest voting bloc, the Group of 77, with 133 members, is currently chaired by Bolivia—where the anti-American government maintains close ties to Iran.
>
> The practical results of such arrangements can be found in the annual reports submitted by the State Department to Congress on "Voting Practices in the United Nations." The most recent report, released last April and covering 2012, records that of all General Assembly resolutions put to a vote, fewer than half the UN member states—just 42.5 percent—aligned themselves with the U.S. For votes on resolutions the State Department judged "important," the coincidence of countries voting with the U.S. was even lower: a mere 35.4 percent.

We're not getting good value for money here… we'd be better off using that money on our own military and military alliances, e.g. – NATO.

And if you care most about foreign policy, well… the United Nations is still not for you.

Claudia Rossett reports on that in Forbes magazine:

> Founded in 1945 to promote global peace, human dignity and freedom, the United Nations is celebrating its 70th anniversary — with a parade of dictators. The ceremonies will peak on Monday, at U.N. headquarters in New York, when the General Assembly opens its annual debate with a lineup starring the presidents of such notorious tyrannies as China, Russia, Iran and Cuba.
>
> [..]Monday's opening of the U.N. general debate will also feature the despots who bestride such countries as Belarus, Turkmenistan, Zimbabwe, Kazakhstan, Qatar, Ethiopia and Gabon.
>
> […]Today, according to the rankings of Washington-based Freedom House, more than half the U.N.'s 193 member states are only partly free, or not free at all. During the entire general debate, a six-day marathon of speeches, from Sept. 28 – Oct. 3, all members get a 15-minute turn (though some take more) on the main stage.
>
> What's historic, however, is the procession of high-profile despots planning to appear in person in Monday's starting lineup, including Russia's Vladimir Putin, China's Xi Jinping and Cuba's Raul Castro… [M]aking his third appearance at the U.N. general debate, comes Iran's President Hassan Rouhani, clutching the freshly minted Iran nuclear deal and fronting as head of state for Tehran's terror-sponsoring tyranny run by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

That's right. The United States is handing billions of taxpayer dollars to an organization that has large numbers of dictators calling the shots. It's really time to cut off funding for this corrupt, anti-American organization. But that will never happen while the Democrats are in charge. Think of that when you are voting next November.

Ohio union employees paid twice the average salary of Ohio teachers

December 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

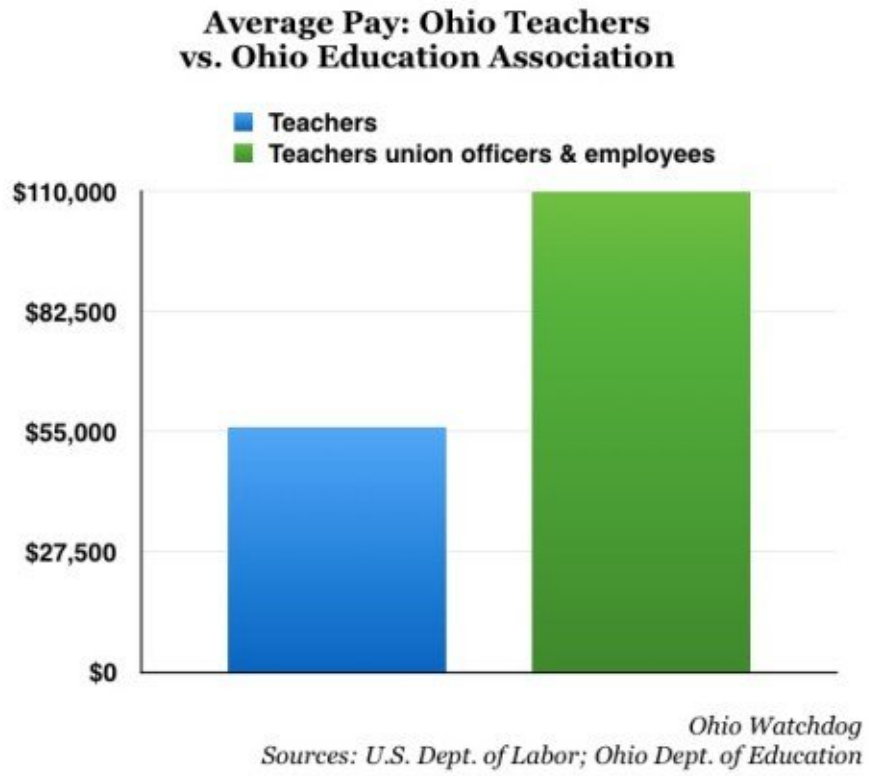

Ohio union officials make much more than Ohio teachers
Striking story from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Ohio's largest labor union is in the business of selling worker "solidarity," and for union bosses, business is good.
>
> Ohio Education Association president Becky Higgins was paid $209,039 to preside over a union that took member dues and mandatory fees from 121,625 teachers during the fiscal year ending Aug. 31.
>
> Regular OEA dues for full-time teachers are $504—$42 a month—in addition to local OEA chapter dues and $183 in National Education Association dues sent to NEA's Washington, D.C., headquarters.
>
> Union staff and officers working for OEA's Columbus headquarters were paid an average of $109,789 with money taken from teachers' paychecks; Ohio teachers were paid an average of $55,916 during the 2013-14 school year, according to the Ohio Department of Education.

For some reason, Ohio, under liberal governor John Kasich, has not yet followed other midwestern states and enacted a right to work law. Right to work laws allow teachers to work without being forced to pay dues to labor unions. Although Ohio doesn't have a

right to work law yet, one is being drafted now. Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and other states all have right to work laws already. Kentucky and West Virginia have laws in the works.

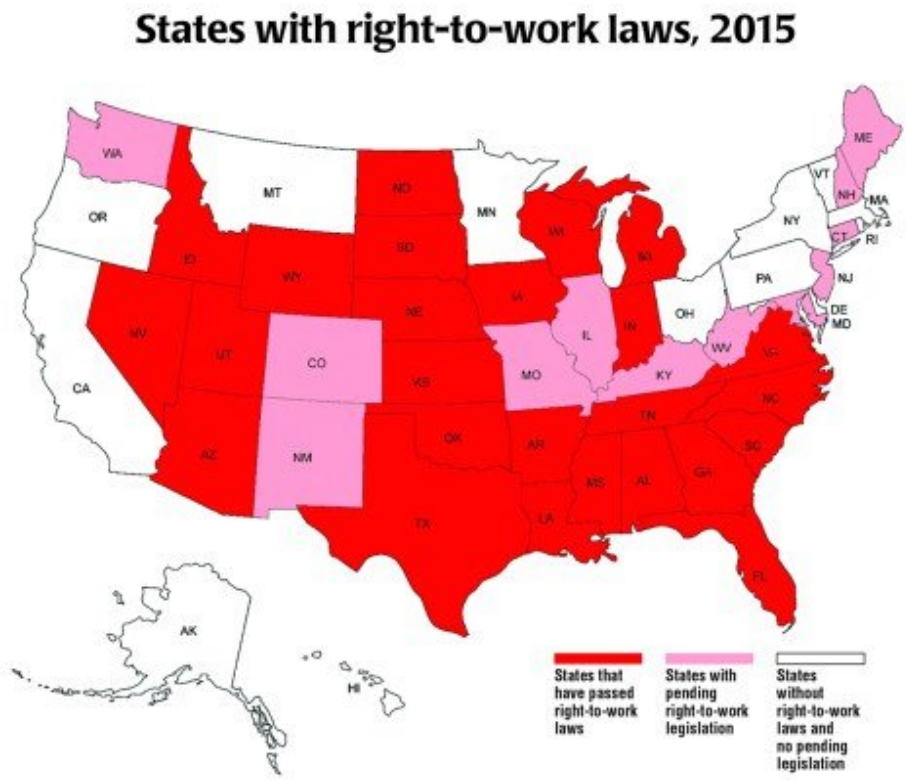

Right to work laws 2015

Why should Christians and conservatives care about all the money that is taken from the paychecks of teachers for their unions?

Most unions donate almost exclusively to Democrats

This Wall Street Journal article explains that unions donate mostly to Democrats.

Excerpt:

> Corporations and their employees… tend to spread their donations fairly evenly between the two major parties, unlike unions, which overwhelmingly assist Democrats. In 2008, Democrats received 55% of the $2 billion contributed by corporate PACs and company employees, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Labor unions were responsible for $75 million in political donations, with 92% going to Democrats.

So how much money are we talking about?

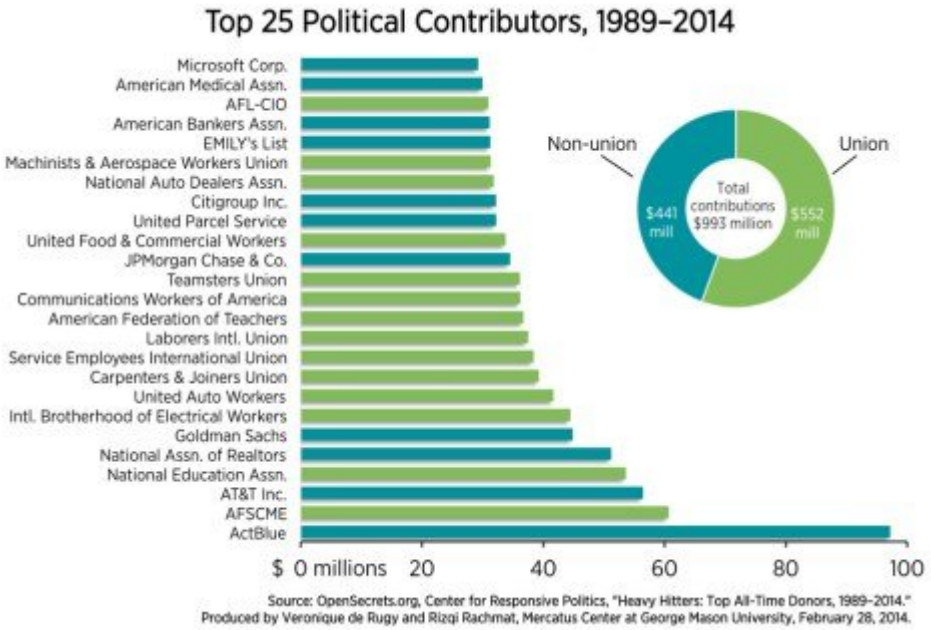

Total political contributions in 2014 election cycle (click for larger image)

To see how much unions control government, take a look at this story from National Review, written by economist Veronique to Rugy.

It says:

- The top campaign donor of the last 25 years is ActBlue, an online political-action committee dedicated to raising funds for Democrats. ActBlue's political contributions, which total close to $100 million, are even more impressive when one realizes that it was only launched in 2004. That's $100 million in ten years.
- Fourteen labor unions were among the top 25 political campaign contributors.
- Three public-sector unions were among the 14 labor groups: the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; the National Education Association; and the American Federation of Teachers. Their combined contributions amount to $150 million, or 15 percent of the top 25's approximately $1 billion in donations since 1989.
- Public- and private-sector unions contributed 55.6 percent — $552 million — of the top 25's contributions.

Where does the money go? The Daily Caller notes:

> "Nearly all of labor's 2012 donations to candidates and parties – 90 percent – went to Democrats," the report from CRP concluded. "Public sector unions, which include employees at all levels of government, donated $14.7 million to Democrats in 2014."

Although unions helped a great deal in the past to protect workers from unfair practices, their primary function now seems to be to confiscate money from their members to give to themselves and to Democrats. When we make the collection of union dues optional, then unions will have to be more responsive to their members, and less responsive to their Democrat allies.

Advice for pro-lifers who want to do sidewalk counseling

December 28, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this resource

Not from me, of course. I'm no lawyer. But here is a good resource about your legal rights, from the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF).

Description:

> Over the past 24 years, a surging pro-life movement has forced the closure of 75 percent of surgical abortion businesses in America. But the work is not done. Over 500 abortion facilities still exist in the United States.
>
> That's where you come in.
>
> As a sidewalk counselor, you can bring hope and clarity to women and men facing an unplanned or crisis pregnancy by connecting with them and empowering them to choose life. To do this work faithfully and effectively, however, you should familiarize yourself with your rights.
>
> Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) created this manual to educate you about your legal rights when engaging in sidewalk counseling. We pray this resource will help you be better equipped to serve the women and men entering abortion clinics every day.

ADF has taken on cases where the right to advise women considering abortion was attacked. For example, they had to fight the Democrat governor and attorney general of

Massachusetts at the Supreme Court:

> On Nov. 13, 2007, Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick signed into law S.B. 1353, which created the buffer zone. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear *McCullen v. Coakley* in June of last year.

Coakley is the Democrat attorney general of Massachusetts, one of the most liberal states in the nation.

Here's a snip from the decision:

> "It is no accident that public streets and sidewalks have developed as venues for the exchange of ideas," the Supreme Court wrote in its opinion. "Even today, they remain one of the few places where a speaker can be confident that he is not simply preaching to the choir…. In light of the First Amendment's purpose 'to preserve an uninhibited marketplace of ideas in which truth will ultimately prevail…,' this aspect of traditional public fora is a virtue, not a vice."

ADF won the case 9-0.

There is a bit more about the woman who brought the case against the pro-abortion Democrats in this post.

It says:

> The young married couple slide quickly out of their car and onto the busy sidewalk, eyes fixed on the dark glass doors of the huge Planned Parenthood abortion center. Half a block long and three stories high, its imposing facade looms over the busy stream of students milling up and down the mile-long stretch of Commonwealth Avenue near Boston University.
>
> Suddenly, a small figure nudges into the couple's tunneled vision, moving to engage them.
>
> "Good morning," she says, arms wide and inviting, in the cheerful tones of someone who actually believes that it is. "I'm Eleanor. How can I help you this morning?'
>
> They quickly brush past her and into the building. Minutes later, the husband comes back out to put money in the meter. The small woman is still there, still beaming. "Can I help you?"
>
> "You can't help me," he says, pulling change from his pocket. To her fine-tuned ear, he sounds as though he's trying to convince himself, more than her.
>
> "Well, okay. But I just want to ask you—do you know when the baby's heart starts beating?"
>
> He sighs, but he answers. "Three months."
>
> "No … not three months. Twenty-one days. Do you know when the brain waves begin to form?"
>
> Fishing for another quarter, he flashes her an expression that mingles surprise,

> annoyance, and curiosity in about equal measure. “Six months,” he guesses.
>
> “Ten weeks,” she tells him. Their eyes meet.
>
> “Really?”
>
> “Yes.”
>
> He turns back toward the building—then, almost in spite of himself, asks her a question … something about the baby’s DNA. In a moment, they’re deep in conversation. Too deep, to the woman’s mind. She is counting precious minutes, even as her genuine smile and tone warm and envelop the stranger. She fixes him with a clear, sober expression.
>
> “You have to go in there and get her.”
>
> He looks at her for a moment. “All right,” he says at last. “I will.” He runs for the door. Ten minutes later, he’s back, tears in his eyes.
>
> “She’s already in the back. I can’t get to her. They won’t let me speak to her.” He’s visibly upset. “I can’t believe I brought her here.”
>
> A thought seizes her: “Do you have a cell phone? Call her. Tell her there’s help out here and to stop this.”
>
> Incredibly, Planned Parenthood staff members have brought the woman into the procedure room with her cell phone. She answers his call. “You have to come out!” he cries, pleading.
>
> “And she did,” Eleanor says, with a smile that could light up the whole Boston skyline. “I have their little boy’s picture. It’s on my refrigerator.”
>
> There are a lot of pictures on Eleanor McCullen’s refrigerator. All of them children who owe their lives, in large measure, to this 78-year-old woman’s willingness to stand on a Boston curbside five hours a day, two days a week—rain, shine, snow, or sleet—for the last 14 years.

She’s got the facts, and she’s not afraid to use them.

So, if this sounds like something you would be interested in, then listen to the interview with Eleanor, download the ADF guide about legal issues for sidewalk counselors, and then get started saving lives.

Can you learn anything useful in a non-STEM program at a secular university?

December 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students puking in toilet

I'm really beginning to wonder. I subscribe to The College Fix and Campus Reform in my news reader. I get lots of news about how secular leftist political correctness has brainwashed the students to be very angry and self-indulgent. But whenever I read these stories, what I find is that they are almost never happening in STEM classrooms (science, technology, engineering, mathematics). It always seems to non-STEM professors (often feminists).

Here's the first story from The College Fix:

> The Muslim Student Association at San Diego State University is demanding that administrators combat Islamophobia by developing a "zero tolerance policy explicitly for Islamophobic speech and actions."
>
> […]They demanded that the university adopt a zero-tolerance policy toward "Islamophobic speech," mandatory bystander training, develop more courses on Islam, and increase funding for The Center for Intercultural Relations. Moreover, they demanded that "the SDSU administration address, alleviate, and eliminate systems of oppression that disproportionately target students of color, womyn, and all marginalized students on campus."
>
> Beth Chee, a representative for the university, told *The College Fix* in an email that the university has not issued a formal response to the demands, but

> members of the administration have reviewed the list and are currently "meeting internally and with the students to discuss their concerns."

No word on whether these Muslim students want bystander training for Muslims in Muslim countries so they know to intervene in the frequent murdering, torturing and raping that goes on there. That's what they are learning on college campuses – how to be offended and demanding, not how to battle real evil in countries where it really exists.

Here's another from The College Fix – this time native Americans:

> The latest example of an alleged "microaggression" hails from Syracuse University, where a student suggested her music scholar was guilty of one for not knowing the latest cultural music trends relevant to her heritage.
>
> "One student said a music faculty member was unaware of the latest musical trends in this student's culture. The student felt this was a micro-aggression against her," recalls Dr. David Rubin on Syracuse.com. Rubin, a longtime distinguished professor and dean, attended the workshop and reported his observations.
>
> […]Reached for comment by The College Fix on Sunday, Rubin said he believes the female student in question was Native American.

Yes, this student actually thought that it was the job of others to learn the things that she liked, rather than learning the best music. And if you didn't learn what she liked, then you were offending her, and she could call you out on it in public. I wonder if she will be able to get a job when she graduates with that attitude? I would not hire her.

Another from The College Fix, this time black students:

> Saying that black women are "not hot" got a Colorado College student suspended for six months – appealed down from 21.
>
> […]His friend Lou Henriques was expelled.
>
> Their jokes took place on a night where the Yik Yak conversation on campus was centered around the theme #BlackLivesMatter.
>
> […]"Some people screenshotted the most racial things said [from Yik Yak that night], and they blew them up onto banners and hung them up in the student center in front of the dean's office," Pryor said.
>
> One of the screenshots was his six-word post. A Student Life disciplinary panel brought Pryor in for questioning, where he learned that someone had reported him as the poster for almost all of the offensive posts.
>
> Senior Associate Dean of Students Rochelle Mason, Dean of Students Mike Edmonds and Assistant Dean of Students Cesar Cervantes decided in less than 24 hours that Pryor should be suspended for 21 months – the exact time it would take him to finish his degree – and prohibited from being on campus.
>
> In addition, Pryor was forbidden from taking courses for credit at other

> universities because of his crass remark. Because Henriques had a prior disciplinary record, he was expelled for a similar post, Pryor said.

Where do the students learn to get obsessed with things that have nothing to do with finding work in a competitive private sector economy? They learn it from non-STEM professors. Here's a professor of political science threatening students about global warming, and here's a professor of racial issues telling all the white people that they're racists. Can these non-STEM professors get real jobs in a competitive free market with skills like that? Of course not. They have jobs because the government hands stupid students free money, and tells them that a college degree in drinking and hooking up is the same as a college degree in biomedical engineering.

Most of these professors and college administrators that make the news seem to be people who would have nothing of value to offer customers in the private sector. And, unfortunately, they are teaching the students to have the same deluded, spoiled, entitled views that they have. I really think that we need to solve this problem by moving student loans back to the private sector. Instead of letting government officials buy votes with student loan generosity, we should let banks and private companies make the loans. Then there would be some expectation that the loans would be paid back. This would also reduce the cost of college, since the money would not just be a handout to the already extravagant colleges and universities.

We are $20 trillion in debt, thanks to Obama, and $1 trillion of that is outstanding student loans. We cannot afford to continue shoveling money to universities where spoiled brats are teaching the next generation of students to be spoiled brats.

Liberal Party has made Ontario's economy a disastrous failure

December 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Year/Incoming Premier			Liberal [A]	NDP [B]	Progressive Conservative [C]
2014		Kathleen Wynne	58	21	28
2011		Dalton McGuinty	53	17	37
2007			71	10	26
2003			72	7	24

Liberal Party has dominated Ontario since 2003

I like to follow the economic situations in the most liberal Canadian provinces to see how bad things can get when liberals are in charge. This article is by Joe Oliver, who I have mentioned before on this blog.

Here's the article from the Financial Post:

> **The numbers tell the story. Ontario is the largest sub-national debtor in the entire world, just one alarming distinction. Its debt is more than twice that of California, a state with three times the population and one that has its own severe fiscal problems. Its debt is $294 billion, or over $21,000 per capita. Net debt to GDP is up 48 per cent in the past 10 years to almost 40 per cent, second only to Quebec. Last year's interest obligations totalled $11.4 billion, about the same as the cost of community and social services. I doubt many Ontarians realize how much they are paying just in interest on the provincial debt. It averages $840 per person every year and rising. Not surprisingly, Standard and Poor's downgraded Ontario's bond credit from AA- to A+, citing a very high debt burden and very weak budgetary performance**

The energy sector is nationalized in Ontario – there is no free market competition, it's all government-run. Consumers have one choice when they want to purchase electricity – the provincial government. How well has nationalizing the energy sector ("Ontario Hydro") worked out?

> Some of its biggest problems are self-inflicted. Recently, we received a stunning revelation from Bonnie Lysyk, the province's Auditor-General. In the past eight years, electricity cost $37 billion above market price. Even more staggering, it will pay a further $132 billion above market by 2032. The by-now infamous Green Energy Act guaranteed the price for wind and solar, so that they cost double and

> 3.5 times the U.S. market price respectively. As a result, energy costs have skyrocketed by 70 per cent, a regressive tax that hurts lower income earners disproportionately and depresses personal consumption. Higher energy costs also render businesses less competitive, which discourages job-creating capital investment.

Surprise! Green energy doesn't lower electricity bills. But that hasn't stopped the Liberal government from jumping into it with both feet.

There is no respect for the taxpayer in Ontario… every dollar earned there is seen by the ruling elite as more fuel for her vote-buying schemes. They want to spend their way to prosperity, as if spending money in the right way will cause economic growth. Well, here's the truth: the government can never cause the people who start businesses and create value to produce more by taking more from them. The more the government takes from job creators, the more job creators scale back their productivity.

We should learn from the failure of socialism in other countries so that we don't repeat their mistakes here.

Related posts

- Architect of Kathleen Wynne's Ontario Liberal Party sex ed curriculum sentenced for child porn
- Left uses stories and peer-pressure to indoctrinate children to support same-sex marriage
- Will gay activists threaten this little girl for covering her eyes at a gay pride parade?
- Ontario Law Society bans graduates of Christian university from practicing law
- Ontario education minister wants to stop Catholic schools from teaching pro-life view
- Even in Canada, green energy socialism closes businesses and kills jobs
- Should this ad opposing gay activism in Ontario schools be censored?
- Ontario government gives IKEA $685,000 per year in solar power subsidies
- Ontario man arrested for defending his home with a firearm
- Liberal government in Ontario to introduce more explicit sex education in schools
- Mandatory curriculum in Ontario schools promotes homosexuality
- Ontario deficit to hit $25 billion as tax revenues plunge
- Ontario Human Rights Tribunal says that in vitro fertilization is a right

New study: children from broken homes more likely to have mental health issues

December 29, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do children do as well when they are raised by single parents or step families? This was reported in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Children brought up by single parents and in step families are three times as likely to suffer from mental health problems, a major study has found.

> Research on more than 10,000 children found that those brought up by both natural parents are far less likely to suffer severe emotional and behavioural problems.
>
> The major study by University College London shows large differences in the well-being of children, depending on their upbringing.
>
> Experts said the findings added to "a mountain of evidence" about the damage caused by family breakdown, with children left stressed by marital breakdowns, or falling into poverty which could increase their risk of psychiatric distress.
>
> The Millennium Cohort Study examined the mental health of 10,448 11-year-olds living in the UK.

> Overall, 6.6 per cent of children living with both natural parents were found to have severe mental health problems, compared with 15 per cent of those living with single parents, and 18.1 per cent of those living in step-families.
>
> […]Higher levels of mental health problems were found among boys, who were

> more likely than girls to suffer from conduct problems, hyperactivity and inattention.
>
> […]Children brought up in low income households were also more likely to suffer mental health problems, with a four-fold difference between the wealthiest and poorest households.

So, from a Christian perspective, here's what I want to say about the harm caused to children when men and women choose to make babies with people who are not capable of making a commitment.

Chastity

First, the Christian view of dating and courtship is not very popular today, even among conservative Christians. Instead, most people have embraced the "feelings-driven" model of dating and courtship, where relationships are viewed as a vehicle for experiencing fun and thrills. The Christian model stresses self-control, by requiring strict chastity – no sex before marriage. But, if you ask feminists, they will tell you that women *should* engage in premarital sex for recreational purposes, and that women should not think about the harm that could result from an unplanned pregnancy (abortion or fatherlessness). If a woman thinks that recreational sex is OK, then she will attract a man who thinks that relationships are about personal fulfillment, not about commitment. When you take premarital sex off the table, the focus of relationships becomes about making a match based on commitment, not fun. Men who get into relationships for recreational sex are the exact kind of men who want relationships to be about fun, not commitment. And that's why women should not choose them, because as the study shows, children suffer.

Stewardship

Second, the Christian model requires the man to provide financially for his family. Christian women are expected to favor men who focus on their studies, choose jobs that pay well, and save their money for their future families. In fact, fathers are supposed to guard their daughters from men who do not work, do not save and are not financially prepared for marriage. Again, this view is not embraced by most people. Most young women believe in feminism, which is the view that men and women are interchangeable, and men have no specific duty to provide for others. So, when women choose men, they are not choosing them according to this requirement to provide. Instead, they choose men who let them rule, or who are fun, or who don't expect anything out of the woman except sex. A man who makes no demands is valued higher than a man who earns money and requires emotional support for the stress he incurs from working and saving. And naturally, when children arrive, these women find that men who were unemployed or underemployed are not able to take responsibility for their children.

Commitment takes self-denial and self-control

So, there are two reasons why people are not staying together. And both of these are embraced by women today. Women see premarital sex as something they can give to a man to get his attention without having to support him in a feminine / supportive way. And women see a weak man who does not work and save as having no authority over

them to lead them. The desire to avoid the judgment and leadership of marriage-minded men causes women to choose losers who are easy to control and manipulate – men they won't have to listen to or support. The problem with those men is, of course, that they don't keep commitments. And that's why we have this problem of broken homes.

Welfare

It would probably help if we were not paying women welfare in order to have babies before they are married, too. After all, you get more of what you subsidize, especially when our new emotional view of morality makes moral judgment of single mothers impossible. Almost every single mother chose to have sex with a man who did not commit, the only exception being rape. But instead of blaming women for their poor choices, we pretend that they can do as they please, and that men must enable their irresponsible choices. When we cut off the funding for women who choose to become single mothers (by choosing to have sex with men who cannot commit) then children will do much better. Children are more important than women or men. We have to shame the grown-ups into restraining their wildness, so that children get what they need from both of their parents.

Every day in America law-abiding citizens use legally-owned guns to stop crimes

December 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

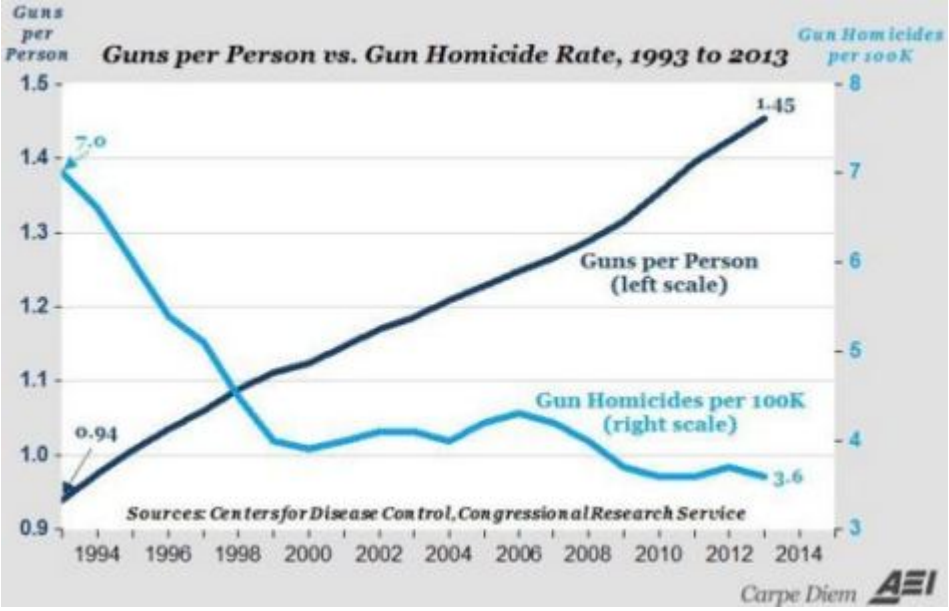

Gun ownership up, gun violence down (Source: Congressional Research Service)

I have some European friends on Facebook, and they cannot understand why Americans like to own guns as much as we do. Many of them are influenced by Hollywood movies that glamorize gun use. They perceive guns in a way that is different than the people who actually own them. So why do law-abiding Americans own firearms? It's a very simple and obvious reason, really. We own guns because we don't like criminals robbing us, raping us, murdering us, and damaging the property we bought with our own earned incomes.

Here are a couple of examples from earlier this week that illustrate this concept.

First one from Virginia, reported by local news:

> Neighbors are praising a Henrico man who took matters into his own hands when he noticed something wrong in his neighborhood. When the man saw another man looking into vehicles parked along Viking Lane, near Woodman Road, at about 8:30 Tuesday night — he confronted the individual, police said.
>
> "When the resident approached the suspect, the suspect drove a pickup truck right in the path of the resident until the resident drew a handgun, forcing the suspect to stop," Henrico Police spokesman Sgt. Colin Rooney said.
>
> Neighbor Theresa Strickland witnessed the tense situation.
>
> "I saw him demand that he get out of the truck and was standing in the path of the truck and I thought how in the world is he going to make this guy stop his vehicle," she said. "Apparently he did and I'm thankful he did."

In Europe, Canada, or other pro-criminal countries where the law-abiding populations are disarmed, this would never happen. Liberals run those countries, and they just don't see

the point of allowing taxpayers to prevent "redistribution of wealth" by criminals. After all, if criminals are poor, they should be allowed to take the property of their law-abiding neighbors. It's always the poorer law-abiding people who are the ones most threatened by crime… but liberals don't care about them – they care about the criminals.

Here's another from Ohio, reported by local news:

> Trotwood Police were called to a home at the dead end of Atlas Road around 6:00 Monday morning.
>
> Police tell FOX 45 three masked men armed with firearms forcibly entered and attempted to rob the homeowner.
>
> […]"I got my gun and I started shooting and they ran," the female caller told dispatchers. "They all three had guns, I'm confused … they must not have had bullets because after I pulled the trigger they just took off, instead of firing back. I don't know if I hit one or not, I don't see blood anywhere."
>
> The three suspects were caught on home surveillance outside the residence, before they kicked their way inside.
>
> Police say two kids were asleep inside the home in the room where the invaders kicked their way in.
>
> […]Trotwood Police said two of the suspects tried to steal a safe, while the third held the victim and two kids at gunpoint. They say the homeowner was able to get away and grab a gun she had hidden in the room, then started firing shots at the suspects.

Now, the response of most liberals, criminals and terrorists, and other predators to this story will be to say "she should just let the criminals assault her and the kids, steal her property, rape them all, and murder them all." That's the liberal view, after all – let the criminals do as they please while you wait for the police to arrive. In fact, in the UK, people who defend themselves with any weapon are usually arrested by the police, for example in this case or in this case. This makes sense to liberals – they want to arrest people who scare criminals off by defending themselves.

Learn about the issue

To find the about guns and self-defense, look in the academic literature. Here are two books I really like for that.

- More Guns, Less Crime by Dr. John R. Lott (University of Chicago Press, 3rd ed.)
- Guns and Violence by Dr. Joyce Lee Malcolm (Harvard University Press)

Both of those books make the case that permitting law-abiding citizens to own firearms for self-defense reduces the rate of violent crime.

Can blacks and Hispanics blame their troubles on racism by whites?

December 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The success of children is due to their parents' choices, not from outside racism

If the underperformance of blacks and Hispanics in America were caused by racism by whites, then it follows that Asian-Americans would be underperforming as well. But Asian-Americans are outperforming whites. Let's look at three reasons why, and see if blacks and Hispanics can learn how to succeed by looking at the Asian example.

Here is the summary of this post:

1. Asian Americans marry before they have children
2. Asian Americans save more of what they earn
3. Asian Americans monitor their children's educational progress

Now let's take a look at each of these in order.

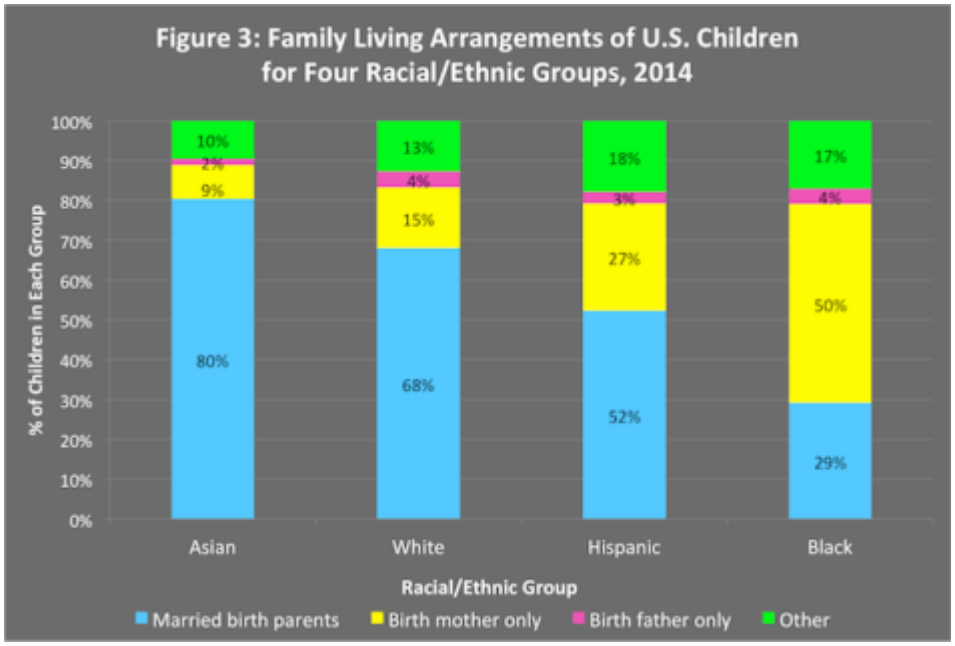

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

1. Asian Americans marry before they have children

This article is from Family Studies.

It says:

> Eight in ten Asian-American kids live with married birth parents, compared with about seven in ten European-American kids, five in ten Hispanic-American kids, and only about three in ten African-American kids. Half of black children live with their mothers only, compared to three in ten Hispanic children, less than two in ten white children and less than one in ten Asian children.

Naturally, children who have two parents to look after them do better, because one parent alone cannot work and do household chores and monitor the children as easily as two parents can. The decision about whether to have sex before marriage is entirely under the control of the grown-ups. It cannot be blamed on racism, poverty and other non-moral pre-occupations of the secular left. Marriage is a moral issue, and Asian-Americans do the moral thing, and marry before they have children.

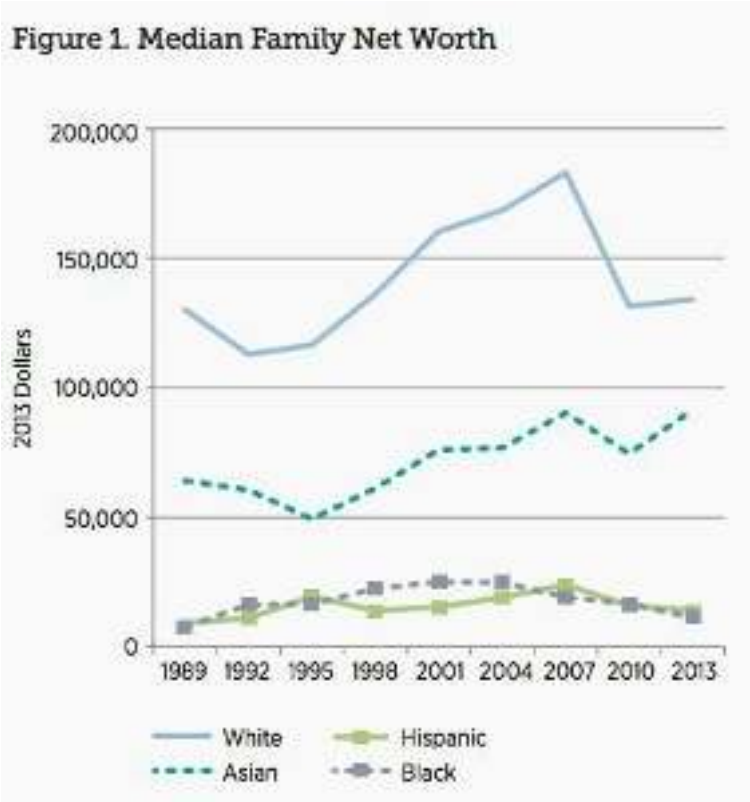

Asian household wealth set to surpass whites

2. Asian Americans save more of what they earn

This article from CNN Money explains:

> Asians have had higher median incomes than their white counterparts, according to a new study by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. The typical Asian family has brought home more money for most of the past two decades.
>
> […][Asians] will surpass whites in net worth in the next decade or two, Fed researchers said.
>
> […]In 1989, the median Asian family had about half the net worth of its white peer. By 2013, they had more than two-thirds.
>
> The gap between whites and blacks and Hispanics, meanwhile, remained little changed over that time period.
>
> Asians have similar financial habits to whites, in terms of investing and borrowing. Both groups are more likely than blacks and Hispanics to invest in stocks and privately-owned businesses and to have more liquid assets, which serves as a buffer against financial shocks. And, on average, the former have about half as much debt as the later.
>
> As a result, Asians and whites have more financial stability than blacks and Hispanics, which also allows the former to build more wealth.

Everyone has to earn and save money, but in some cultures, it becomes normal to not save part of what you earn. That needs to stop. But it has nothing to do with discrimination due to skin color. In Asian culture, there is no glorification of consumer spending on sparkles, bling and other ostentatious wealth. Asians don't want to *appear to*

be wealthy, they want to *actually be* wealthy – by saving money.

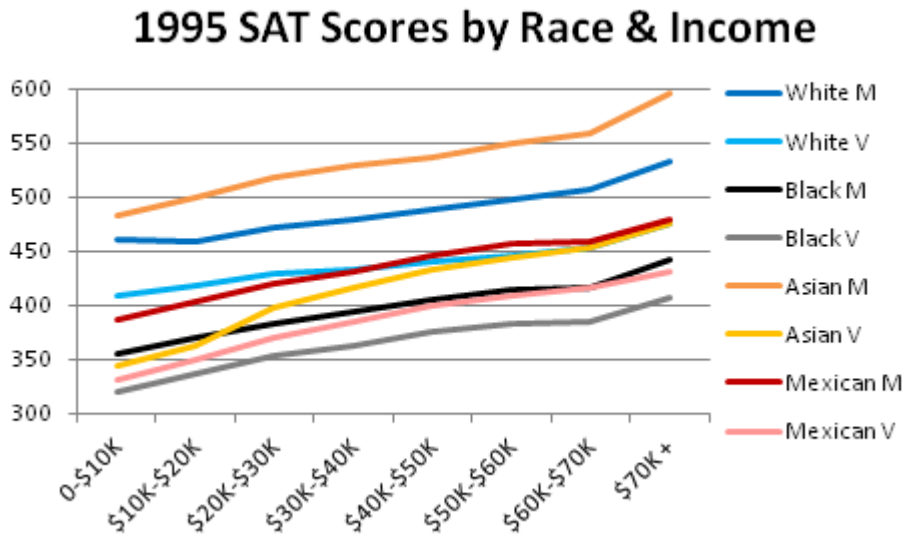

Composite SAT scores by race and income levels: Asians outperform at every income level

3. Asian Americans monitor their children's educational progress

This article from Investors Business Daily explains how Asian parents don't just make demands on their kids to learn, they actively monitor their progress and talk to their kids' teachers:

> Asian-American parents tend to oversee their children's homework, hold them accountable for grades and demand hard work as the ticket to a better life. And it pays off: Their children are soaring academically.
>
> […]As a group, Americans need to take a page from the Asian parents' playbook. American teens rank a dismal 28th in math and science knowledge, compared with teens in other countries, even poor countries.
>
> Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan are at the top. We've slumped. For the first time in 25 years, U.S. scores on the main test for elementary and middle school education (NAEP) fell. And SAT scores for college-bound students dropped significantly.
>
> […]Many [Asian students]from poor or immigrant families, but they outscore all other students by large margins on both tests, and their lead keeps widening.
>
> In New York City, where Asian-Americans make up 13% of overall students, they win more than 50% of the coveted places each year at the city's eight selective public high schools, such as Bronx Science and Stuyvesant.
>
> What's at work here? It's not a difference in IQ. It's parenting. That's confirmed by sociologists from City University of New York and the University of Michigan. Their study showed that parental oversight enabled Asian-American students to far outperform the others.
>
> No wonder many successful charter schools require parents to sign a contract that they will supervise their children's homework and inculcate a work ethic.

You can see an updated image with the latest scores here.

It’s not enough to just outsource the education of your children to a bunch of non-STEM education-degree-holding teachers. Teachers can be good, and some work very hard. But the Democrat teacher unions prevent the firing of teachers who underperform. This is especially true in non-right-to-work states (Democrat states). So, you cannot depend on teachers to educate your children, and Asian parents don’t. That’s why their kids learn. Performance of children in school is not affected by discrimination against skin color, it’s affected by the level of involvement of parents.

Conclusion

We have learned that the success of Asian-Americans in America is all earned. And this proves that there is no such thing as “racism” that holds back non-whites. If blacks and Hispanics imitated the behaviors of Asians (not whites, but Asians), then they would achieve just as well as Asians do. It’s not a race problem, it’s a behavior problem. It’s not a “racism” problem, it’s a behavior problem. It’s an *us* problem, it’s not a *them* problem.

Is there a downside to celebrating homosexuality as normal?

December 30, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When disagreements come up, it's good to look at what the evidence is
This article from Touchstone magazine has the numbers. The "CDC" is the government-run Centers for Disease Control.

It says:

> We don't hear much about the HIV/AIDS epidemic anymore. When was the last time you read an article either online or in a newspaper of general circulation, or saw a report on a television news program about HIV/AIDS? **And yet, with no media attention or public fanfare, Mr. Obama's proposed 2016 federal budget requests almost $32 billion for HIV/AIDS treatment and research, an increase of 3.1% over the prior year.** Notwithstanding the Supreme Court's recent decision finding a fundamental, constitutional "right" to homosexual and lesbian "marriage," there is a deeply dark and dangerous side to today's American homosexuality. Since the first cases of what would later become known as AIDS were reported in the United States in June of 1981, more than 1.8 million people in the U.S. are estimated to have been infected with HIV, of whom 658,507 have already died. Today, the Centers for Disease Control ("CDC") estimates that more than 1,218,400 people aged 13 years and older are living with HIV/AIDS in the United States. Of those, tragically, the CDC estimates that almost 1 in 8 (156,300 or 12.8%) are unaware of their infection. Homosexual and bisexual men who have sex with men, particularly young African-American men, continue to be the most seriously affected by HIV/AIDS. Over the past decade, approximately 50,000 people are newly infected *annually*. In 2013, the CDC estimated that 47,352 people were diagnosed with HIV infection, and an

> additional 26,688 people were diagnosed with full-blown AIDS in the United States. Again, according to the CDC, in 2012, notwithstanding medical advances, an estimated 13,712 people with AIDS died.
>
> Although African-Americans represent 12 percent of the U.S. population, but accounted for 44% of new HIV infections in 2012, and accounted for 41% of people living with HIV/AIDS. Hispanics/Latinos account for 20 percent of people living with HIV infection. Although homosexual and bisexual men who have exchanges of body fluids through anal intercourse and other sexual contact with other men represent a very small proportion of the male population in the United States, the CDC reports that they account for *78 percent of new HIV infections among males*, and 63 percent of all new infections. Importantly, in a typical year, the greatest number of new HIV infections occur in younger African-American males aged 13-24. Younger black men accounted for 45% of all new HIV infections among African-Americans, and *55% of new HIV infections among all younger homosexual and bisexual men*.

We can all think of behaviors that are not good for people. Suppose you notice your friend has started smoking, or maybe is eating too much and not exercising, or maybe's she's getting really thin and not eating enough – if you loved them, you would say something. What if they got defensive and they felt bad about being judged? I still think it's good to gently but firmly tell the truth.

In my office, I have leftists who often tell me to recycle cans. If I don't recycle cans, nothing bad will happen to me. But strangely enough, the leftists don't have anything to say about behaviors that really would hurt me, like homosexuality. Secondhand smoke? They will condemn that. But engaging in risky sexual activity? They want to celebrate that. What sense does this double standard make? Tell people the truth about what behaviors might hurt them, but do it in a gentle way. Don't just tell someone "it's wrong", either. Instead, show them the facts and the sources so they can check out the data for themselves.

Hate crime hoax: Houston Muslim arrested for setting his own mosque on fire

December 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Suspect arrested for arson of Houston mosque, liberals hardest hit

Here's the raw story from the leftist Houston Chronicle.

It says:

> A Houston man has been arrested in connection with a suspected arson at a mosque on Christmas Day, but the motive for the crime remains a mystery, with the suspect maintaining he was a regular at the mosque.
>
> A spokeswoman for the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives confirmed that the suspect, 37-year-old Gary Nathaniel Moore of Houston, was arrested early Wednesday. Moore appeared in court at 7 a.m., spokeswoman Nicole Strong said, and bond was set at $100,000.
>
> According to a charging instrument released by the Harris County District Clerk, Moore told investigators at the scene that he has attended the storefront mosque for five years, coming five times per day to pray seven days per week.
>
> Moore said he had been at the mosque earlier on Dec. 25 to pray, and had left at about 2 p.m. to go home, according to authorities and court papers. Moore said he was the last person to leave the mosque and saw no smoke or other signs of fire when he departed, authorities said. He maintained he had returned to the scene after hearing about the fire from a friend.

Now, I wouldn't post this if there was not something to learn from it at a higher level, and there is. There is something to learn about the left-wing, shame the good, praise the evil, mindset.

Breitbart News documents the initial reactions from the mainstream media to the story *before it was known who the guilty person was*.

Excerpt: (links to other sites removed)

> CBS News:
>
> Advocacy groups believe there has been a spike in anti-Muslim incidents across the United States in recent weeks that can be linked to the mass shooting in California and the inflammatory rhetoric of Donald Trump and other Republican presidential candidates. And they say that Muslims are fearful the backlash could lead to further harassment and violence.
>
> CNN:
>
> The Houston chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations called on authorities to investigate the fire for an anti-Muslim motive.
>
> "Because of the recent spike in hate incidents targeting mosques nationwide, we urge law enforcement authorities to investigate a possible bias motive for this fire," Mustafaa Carroll, the chapter's executive director, said in a statement.
>
> NBC News:
>
> The Houston chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations called on authorities to investigate a possible bias motive in the case, citing what it called a "recent spike in hate incidents targeting mosques nationwide.
>
> Now that a devout Muslim has been charged, the DC Media will forget all about the incident.
>
> The media's playbook is always to immediately use any disaster or crime as a means to make the GOP answer for it. Then, once the facts come out and point to a member of the Protected Class, the story is memory-holed and the accusation against the Republican lingers.

That was very bad, and it should teach you a lesson about how anxious the media is to make traditional groups (conservatives, Christians, orthodox Jews, etc.) feel ashamed, while protecting and praising radical Islamists. They want to force everyone to be "equal" on the moral scale, so that no one can judge anyone else. The problem is, as we see in this story, that not shaming evil causes evil people to *more* evil, not *less* evil.

Anyway, all that is well and good, but we haven't seen the *worst* media bias. That prize goes to the radically, radically leftist Salon, which not only put up a story blaming conservatives for the arson, but then took it down once the news came out about who was arrested for it: (H/T Weasel Zippers)

Salon took down their entire post to protect radical Islamists (click for larger image)

Why did they do it? Because the story only had value to them when it could give America, Christians, Republicans, etc. a black eye. When it gave radicalized Muslim terrorists a black eye, then Salon had to take it down. They didn't want to make their allies in the culture war look bad. And do you know what else Salon doesn't report on? Crucifixions, torture, rape and murder by radical Muslims (often against other Muslims!) in other parts of the world. That doesn't fit their narrative, either.

Do you ever wonder where so many people have an emotional reaction of sympathy for people who do evil? It's because they've been conditioned by the media to think that somehow, some way, evil people are actually justified in doing their evil. And somehow, some way, good people are all hypocrites who shouldn't judge anyone, because it is mean and makes people feel bad. If you went to public schools in America and listened to the mainstream media, you've been indoctrinated in that from birth to present day. It all comes from the shame that people on the left feel for their own immoral actions, and their desperate desire to *stop all moral judging* as a way of escaping from the misdeeds they committed in the past. This is their way of dealing with their own guilt – stopping everyone else from making moral judgments about anything.

To learn more about media bias from peer-reviewed studies that document it, click here.

Ten scientific problems with global warming alarmism

December 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

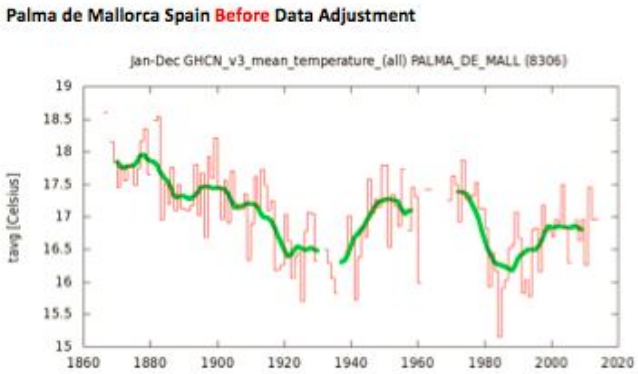

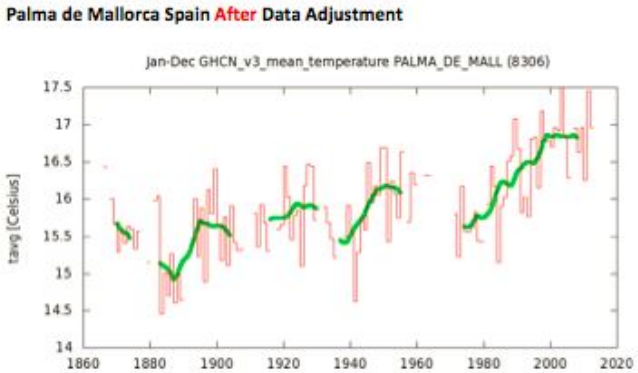

How climate scientists adjust the data to prove they need more grant money (see #10 in the list below)

My friend Bruce posted this article from the the Daily Wire, and I think it's a good summary of the scientific evidence against global warming alarmism. After we go over this, I'll take a stab at explaining why so many non-scientists desperately want to believe that global warming is true, and why they try to push everyone else to believe it, too.

First, the list:

1. Temperature records from around the world do not support the assumption that today's temperatures are unusual.
2. Satellite temperature data does not support the assumption that temperatures are rising rapidly
3. Current temperatures are always compared to the temperatures of the 1980's, but for many parts of the world the 1980's was the coldest decade of the last 100+ years
4. The world experienced a significant cooling trend between 1940 and 1980
5. Urban heat island effect skews the temperature data of a significant number of weather stations
6. There is a natural inverse relationship between global temperatures and atmospheric CO2 levels

7. The CO2 cannot, from a scientific perspective, be the cause of significant global temperature changes
8. There have been many periods during our recent history that a warmer climate was prevalent long before the industrial revolution
9. Glaciers have been melting for more than 150 years
10. "Data adjustment" is used to continue the perception of global warming

So, we can't look at all of these in one post. Obviously, the satellite measurements are the best thing to look at, since they cannot be tampered with as easily as the ground measurements, and they show no warming for 18 years.

But let's look at number 8 instead:

> Even in the 1990 IPCC report a chart appeared that showed the medieval warm period as having had warmer temperatures than those currently being experienced. But it is hard to convince people about global warming with that information, so five years later a new graph was presented, now known as the famous hockey stick graph, which did away with the medieval warm period. Yet the evidence is overwhelming at so many levels that warmer periods existed on Earth during the medieval warm period as well as during Roman Times and other time periods during the last 10,000 years. There is plenty of evidence found in the Dutch archives that shows that over the centuries, parts of the Netherlands disappeared beneath the water during these warm periods, only to appear again when the climate turned colder. The famous Belgian city of Brugge, once known as "Venice of the North," was a sea port during the warm period that set Europe free from the dark ages (when temperatures were much colder), but when temperatures began to drop with the onset of the little ice age, the ocean receded and now Brugge is ten miles away from the coastline. Consequently, during the medieval warm period the Vikings settled in Iceland and Greenland and even along the coast of Canada, where they enjoyed the warmer temperatures, until the climate turned cold again, after which they perished from Greenland and Iceland became ice-locked again during the bitter cold winters. The camps promoting global warming have been systematically erasing mention of these events in order to bolster the notion that today's climate is unusual compared to our recent history.

That's right, the world was much warmer than it is now during the Medieval Warming Period… so warm that you could actually farm on Greenland. But now it's all frozen over.

Bruce also posted this article from Forbes magazine about the so-called consensus about global warming among scientists.

It says:

> It is becoming clear that not only do many scientists dispute the asserted global warming crisis, but these skeptical scientists may indeed form a scientific consensus.

> […]Only 36 percent of geoscientists and engineers believe that humans are creating a global warming crisis, according to a survey reported in the peer-reviewed Organization Studies. By contrast, a strong majority of the 1,077 respondents believe that nature is the primary cause of recent global warming and/or that future global warming will not be a very serious problem.
>
> The survey results show geoscientists (also known as earth scientists) and engineers hold similar views as meteorologists. Two recent surveys of meteorologists (summarized here and here) revealed similar skepticism of alarmist global warming claims.
>
> According to the newly published survey of geoscientists and engineers, merely 36 percent of respondents fit the "Comply with Kyoto" model. The scientists in this group "express the strong belief that climate change is happening, that it is not a normal cycle of nature, and humans are the main or central cause."
>
> The authors of the survey report, however, note that the overwhelming majority of scientists fall within four other models, each of which is skeptical of alarmist global warming claims.
>
> […]Taken together, these four skeptical groups numerically blow away the 36 percent of scientists who believe global warming is human caused and a serious concern.

Many people listen to Obama, who never passed a science class in his life, talk about how most scientists support the idea of man-made global warming. But the truth is that his statements are just more "you can keep your health plan" and "you can keep your doctor". He says what he wants people to believe so they will like him and rely on him to save them. But he has no knowledge of climate science any more than he has knowledge of health care policy.

Why do people believe weird things?

So why do people believe these things? People believe these things for the same reason that primitive people would sacrifice animals in order to get a bountiful harvest or be spared being struck by lightning. They fear the future, and they want to believe that they are doing something in order to save themselves from doom. There is something credulous in us that seeks to know and control the future. When we are told a noble lie by grant-seeking, attention-craving academics, we believe it because we want to believe it. We want to believe that the future is going to be OK, especially when all we have to do to make it OK is recycle cans and turn off our lights when we are not using them.

This is the real psychological motivation behind the desperate desire to believe in the global warming myth. We are scared, and we want someone to save us from the future. And we jump at the chance of controlling the future, especially when it means recycling cans, rather than having to deal with our own sinfulness. We invent a new morality that justifies us rather than having to comply with the old morality. Freedom to commit adultery, as long as we recycle cans to save the planet. Sanctification through purchasing

carbon credits, instead of sanctification through chastity, sobriety and self-control.

What do ancient non-Christian sources tell us about the historical Jesus?

December 31, 2015 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

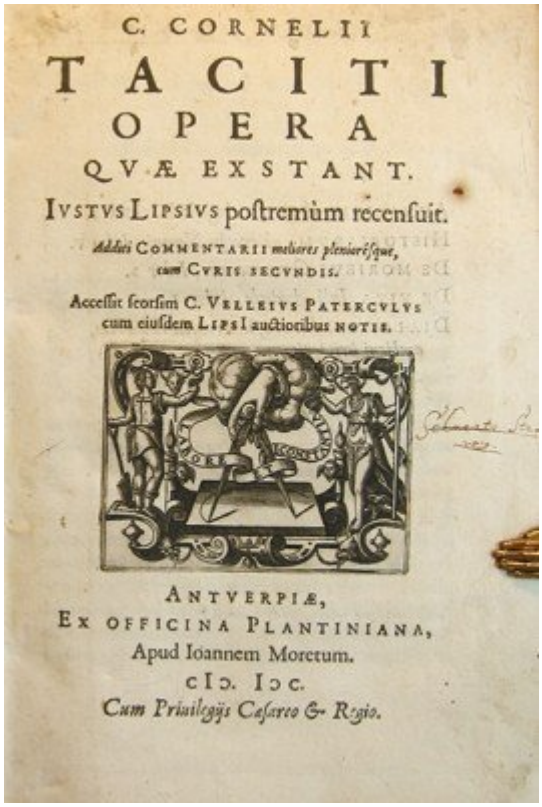
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TACITI
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Addit COMMENTARII meliores pleniorésque, cum CVRIS SECVNDIS.
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ANTVERPIÆ,
EX OFFICINA PLANTINIANA,
Apud Ioannem Moretum.
CIↃ. IↃC.
Cum Priuilegijs Cæsareo & Regio.

The Annals, by Roman historian Tacitus

This article from Biblical Archaeology covers all the non-Christian historical sources that discuss Jesus.

About the author:

> Lawrence Mykytiuk is associate professor of library science and the history librarian at Purdue University. He holds a Ph.D. in Hebrew and Semitic Studies and is the author of the book Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200–539 B.C.E. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004).

Here are the major sections:

- Roman historian Tacitus
- Jewish historian Josephus
- Greek satirist Lucian of Samosata
- Platonist philosopher Celsus
- Roman governor Pliny the Younger
- Roman historian Suetonius
- Roman prisoner Mara bar Serapion

And this useful excerpt captures the broad facts about Jesus that we get from just the

first two sources:

> We can learn quite a bit about Jesus from Tacitus and Josephus, two famous historians who were not Christian. Almost all the following statements about Jesus, which are asserted in the New Testament, are corroborated or confirmed by the relevant passages in Tacitus and Josephus. These independent historical sources—one a non-Christian Roman and the other Jewish—confirm what we are told in the Gospels:31
>
> 1. He existed as a man. The historian Josephus grew up in a priestly family in first-century Palestine and wrote only decades after Jesus' death. Jesus' known associates, such as Jesus' brother James, were his contemporaries. The historical and cultural context was second nature to Josephus. "If any Jewish writer were ever in a position to know about the non-existence of Jesus, it would have been Josephus. His implicit affirmation of the existence of Jesus has been, and still is, the most significant obstacle for those who argue that the extra-Biblical evidence is not probative on this point," Robert Van Voorst observes.32 And Tacitus was careful enough not to report real executions of nonexistent people.
>
> 2. His personal name was Jesus, as Josephus informs us.
>
> 3. He was called Christos in Greek, which is a translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, both of which mean "anointed" or "(the) anointed one," as Josephus states and Tacitus implies, unaware, by reporting, as Romans thought, that his name was Christus.
>
> 4. He had a brother named James (Jacob), as Josephus reports.
>
> 5. He won over both Jews and "Greeks" (i.e., Gentiles of Hellenistic culture), according to Josephus, although it is anachronistic to say that they were "many" at the end of his life. Large growth
> in the number of Jesus' actual followers came only after his death.
>
> 6. Jewish leaders of the day expressed unfavorable opinions about him, at least according to some versions of the Testimonium Flavianum.
>
> 7. Pilate rendered the decision that he should be executed, as both Tacitus and Josephus state.
>
> 8. His execution was specifically by crucifixion, according to Josephus.
>
> 9. He was executed during Pontius Pilate's governorship over Judea (26–36 C.E.), as Josephus implies and Tacitus states, adding that it was during Tiberius's reign.
>
> Some of Jesus' followers did not abandon their personal loyalty to him even after his crucifixion but submitted to his teaching. They believed that Jesus later appeared to them alive in accordance with prophecies, most likely those found in the Hebrew Bible. A well-attested link between Jesus and Christians is that Christ, as a term used to identify Jesus, became the basis of the term used to identify his followers: Christians. The Christian movement began in Judea, according to Tacitus. Josephus observes that it continued during the first century. Tacitus

> deplores the fact that during the second century it had spread as far as Rome.

I remember reading the 1996 book by Gary Habermas entitled "The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ". This book is a little before the time of most of you young Christian apologists, but back before the time of Lee Strobel and J. Warner Wallace, this is the stuff we all read. Anyway, in the book he makes a list of all that can be known about Jesus from external sources. And fortunately for you, you don't have to buy the book because you can read chapter 9 of it right on his web site.

From Tacitus he gets this:

> From this report we can learn several facts, both explicit and implicit, concerning Christ and the Christians who lived in Rome in the 60s A.D. Chronologically, we may ascertain the following information.
>
> (1) Christians were named for their founder, Christus (from the Latin), (2) who was put to death by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilatus (also Latin), (3) during the reign of emperor Tiberius (14 37 A.D.). (4) His death ended the "superstition" for a short time, (5) but it broke out again, (6) especially in Judaea, where the teaching had its origin.
>
> (7) His followers carried his doctrine to Rome. (8) When the great fire destroyed a large part of the city during the reign of Nero (54 68 A.D.), the emperor placed the blame on the Christians who lived in Rome. (9) Tacitus reports that this group was hated for their abominations. (10) These Christians were arrested after pleading guilty, (11) and many were convicted for "hatred for mankind." (12) They were mocked and (13) then tortured, including being "nailed to crosses" or burnt to death. (14) Because of these actions, the people had compassion on the Christians. (15) Tacitus therefore concluded that such punishments were not for the public good but were simply "to glut one man's cruelty."

And from Josephus he gets this:

> (1) Jesus was known as a wise and virtuous man, one recognized for his good conduct. (2) He had many disciples, both Jews and Gentiles. (3) Pilate condemned him to die, (4) with crucifixion explicitly being mentioned as the mode. (5) The disciples reported that Jesus had risen from the dead and (6) that he had appeared to them on the third day after his crucifixion. (7) Consequently, the disciples continued to proclaim his teachings. (8) Perhaps Jesus was the Messiah concerning whom the Old Testament prophets spoke and predicted wonders. We would add here two facts from Josephus' earlier quotation as well. (9) Jesus was the brother of James and (10) was called the messiah by some.

So when you are reading the New Testament, these facts are the framework that you read within. It's a good starting point when dealing with people who have never looked into who Jesus was and what he taught and what his followers believed about him, right from the start.

Ted Cruz improves quarterly fundraising from $12 million to $20 million

January 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

I think there are a lot of Cruz supporters who are worried about whether Cruz has the financial support to win this race. If we were voting with our hearts, we would pick Cruz because he is the most conservative. But we don't want to support someone who will run out of money and fold halfway through the campaign.

Well, I have some good news about that!

The Washington Examiner reports:

> Texas Sen. Ted Cruz's presidential campaign raised $20 million during the final three months of 2015, according to the Cruz campaign. The end of the year fundraising total represents a marked increase compared to his third quarter fundraising sum of $12.2 million.
>
> Cruz campaign manager Jeff Roe wrote a memo to campaign staff that details how the campaign hauled in $45 million during the 2015 calendar year. More than 300,000 supporters donated to the Cruz campaign, and the average donation amounted to $67.
>
> "Some campaigns are focused solely on a man, some on a movement. Ours is a hybrid of the two built to win," Roe wrote. "There's still plenty of work to be done to make Ted the Republican nominee and the next President, but as 2015 comes to a close, we are exactly where we want to be. Go. Fight. Win. This is OUR time!"
>
> Roe's memo also notes that the campaign has coordinators in each of the 163 congressional districts in the 24 states with nominating contests scheduled

> before March 15th. The campaign also boasts its success in recruiting more than 175,000 volunteers, and a donor base residing in two-thirds of all zip codes in the United States.
>
> Cruz ranks first in the *Washington Examiner*'s newest GOP presidential power rankings.

Cruz's rival Marco Rubio is getting a lot of big money from pro-gay-rights donors and pro-amnesty donors. He is the favored candidate of the Republican establishment. He is famous for trying to push through an amnesty deal. Cruz is the outsider, and he doesn't have the support of billionaire establishment donors. Cruz fought to stop Obama's executive amnesty, so the establishment Republicans hate him and they are giving him no support. That's why this donation-related news is so encouraging. Cruz is keeping up with the billionaire-backed candidates like Rubio because he has the support of so many individual conservative donors.

But there is even more good news if you look at the state of the PACs who are supporting Cruz.

The Hill reports:

> In the mid-year reports, Cruz's super-PACs disclosed nearly $38 million [in] donations, which put him second only to former Florida Gov. Bush in outside support.
>
> But unlike Bush's super-PAC Right to Rise — which has been spending its $103 million rapidly on TV advertising — Cruz's super-PACs have been sitting on their cash.

Bush isn't getting any kind of bump in the polls for all this spending by his PACs. Meanwhile, Cruz is in first or second place in so many states even though Cruz PACs have not been spending much money at all!

Here is the latest poll from Real Clear Politics that just came out on Wednesday:

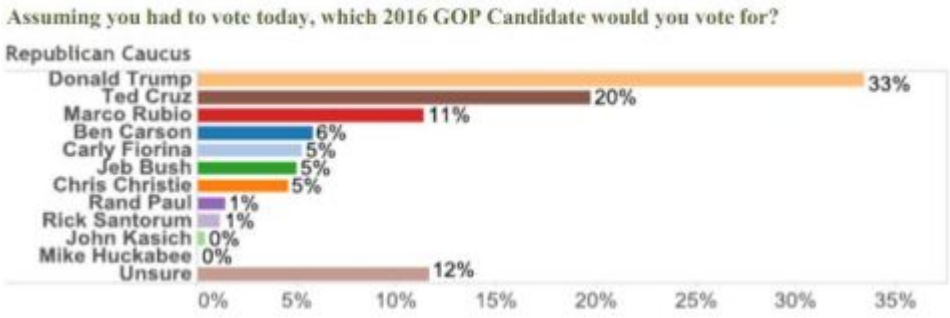

Latest poll for the Nevada Republican primary

I think for people who would like to vote for Cruz but are worried whether he can go the distance, the answer right now is a resounding YES. He's in a much better position financially than all of the other GOP candidates.

Study explores whether atheism is rooted in reason or emotion

January 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews
From First Things, based on research reported by CNN.

> A new set of studies in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* finds that atheists and agnostics report anger toward God either in the past or anger focused on a hypothetical image of what they imagine God must be like. Julie Exline, a psychologist at Case Western Reserve University and the lead author of this recent study, has examined other data on this subject with identical results. Exline explains that her interest was first piqued when an early study of anger toward God revealed a counterintuitive finding: Those who reported no belief in God reported more grudges toward him than believers.
>
> At first glance, this finding seemed to reflect an error. How could people be angry with God if they did not believe in God? Reanalyses of a second dataset revealed similar patterns: Those who endorsed their religious beliefs as “atheist/agnostic” or “none/unsure” reported more anger toward God than those who reported a religious affiliation.
>
> Exline notes that the findings raised questions of whether anger might actually affect belief in God’s existence, an idea consistent with social science’s previous clinical findings on “emotional atheism.”
>
> Studies in traumatic events suggest a possible link between suffering, anger toward God, and doubts about God’s existence. According to Cook and Wimberly (1983), 33% of parents who suffered the death of a child reported doubts about God in the first year of bereavement. In another study, 90% of mothers who had given birth to a profoundly retarded child voiced doubts about the existence of

> God (Childs, 1985). Our survey research with undergraduates has focused directly on the association between anger at God and self-reported drops in belief (Exline et al., 2004). In the wake of a negative life event, anger toward God predicted decreased belief in God's existence.
>
> The most striking finding was that when Exline looked only at subjects who reported a drop in religious belief, their faith was least likely to recover if anger toward God was the cause of their loss of belief. In other words, anger toward God may not only lead people to atheism but give them a reason to cling to their disbelief.

I think the best defense to this phenomena is for the church to not tell people that God's job is to make them happy in this life on Earth. I think if we spent less time selling Christianity to young people as life enhancement, we would have much fewer apostates. If young people get into their minds that God is their boss, not their waiter, then that is a good preparation for the real world. And all of the challenges that Christians face – from poverty, to peer pressure, to health problems to persecution. Stop expecting happiness, that is not God's goal for you.

I was blessed to have discovered apologetics at a very early age. This passage from C. S. Lewis' "The Screwtape Letters" always stood out to me back then:

> Do not be deceived, Wormwood. Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.

When I was young, I shortened this quote into my motto, which lasted until just a few years back when I finally started to feel some security. And that motto was "nothing works". Nothing works. That's right, so get used to it. Everything sucks, nothing works. *Nothing works.*

Stop expecting God to make you happy. You are a soldier, and your job is to fight to the last breath in your body for the General. Hold until relieved. You're damn right it's unfair. Your whole life is unfair and then you die. Get used to it. When I was in college, my Christian friends and I used to joke that even if we fought our entire lives for God and he tossed us into Hell like firewood, we would still do the same things. We were happy to serve and we didn't think about whether we were getting what we wanted. We did not take stupid chances, but we just didn't care about being happy. We felt that God was in the right, and sinful humans were in the wrong, and that it was enough for us to serve on the right side. We didn't expect anyone to care how we felt, we just expected to serve. And if our first plan failed, we went on to the next plan, and the next, until we found a way to serve in spite of the unfairness of it all.

Is the vastness of the universe evidence against God’s existence?

January 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science
Physicist Hugh Ross writes about it in Salvo Magazine.

First a quick blurb about Hugh Ross:

> Hugh Ross launched his career at age seven when he went to the library to find out why stars are hot. Physics and astronomy captured his curiosity and never let go. At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver’s Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or “quasars,” some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

Now back to the topic “Is the vastness of the universe incompatible with God’s existence?”

Here’s Ross’ introduction:

> Scientists seem more difficult to please than the golden-haired girl of fairy-tale fame. While Goldilocks troubled herself over the just-right porridge, chair, and bed, astronomers appear preoccupied with the size of the universe.
>
> In the days before telescopes, when an observer could count a few thousand stars in the night sky, many considered the universe too small and unimpressive to be the work of an almighty, all-knowing Creator. Only an infinite cosmos, they said, would befit an infinite deity. But then, others argued, an infinite cosmos might eliminate the need for a Creator.
>
> Thanks to the Hubble space telescope, scientists now see that the universe contains roughly 200 billion large- and medium-sized galaxies and about a

> hundred times as many dwarf galaxies. The stars in those galaxies add up to about fifty billion trillion, and they comprise a mere one percent of the mass of the observable universe.
>
> Because of the travel time of light, the universe humans can observe is really the universe of the past. What researchers know about the expansion and geometry of the universe informs us that the universe of today is at least several hundred times more enormous than the universe we can see. The universe is trillions of trillions of times larger and more spectacular than what the earliest astronomers presumed!
>
> And yet, this new knowledge of the vastness of the universe has led to new complaints. In his book, *God: The Failed Hypothesis,* Victor Stenger says, "If God created the universe as a special place for humanity, he seems to have wasted an awfully large amount of space." Stephen Hawking, in the best-selling science book of all time, *A Brief History of Time,* shares Stenger's view: "Our solar system certainly is a prerequisite for our existence. . . . But there does not seem to be any need for all these other galaxies." So now the universe is too big to befit the all-wise, all-powerful God of the Bible.

I like how he quotes an atheist physicist to get the challenge right. No sense in caricaturing the claim of your opponent.

I formalized Stenger's argument like this:

1. If all things in the universe are not done the way that Victor Stenger likes them, then there is no God.
2. All things in the universe were not done the way Victor Stenger likes them.
3. Therefore, there is no God.

I would deny premise 1, there, since there is no reason to believe that's it's true.

Anyway, let's see what Hugh Ross says:

> The hot big bang model (now firmly established by observations) tells us that at the moment of cosmic creation, the universe was infinitely or near-infinitely hot and compressed, and all the ordinary matter existed in the form of hydrogen. As the universe expanded, it cooled. The rate at which the universe expanded and cooled depended in large part on its mass—the greater the mass, the slower the expansion and cooling rate. The slower the expansion and cooling rate, the more time the universe would spend in the temperature range (13–150 million degrees Centigrade) at which nuclear fusion can occur.
>
> **Because of its mass, the universe spent about twenty seconds in the nuclear fusion temperature range when it was between three and four minutes old. As a result, 24.77 percent of the universe's hydrogen (by mass) fused into helium. Thus, when stars began to form—about 380,000 years later—they started off composed of about 75 percent**

> **hydrogen, 25 percent helium, and trace amounts of deuterium, lithium, and beryllium.**
>
> **In the nuclear furnaces of the stars themselves, more hydrogen fused into helium, and, in addition to the extra helium, all the rest of the elements that appear in the periodic table were synthesized (created). The capacity of stellar nuclear furnaces to produce an abundance of elements heavier than helium (all but two of the elements) depended critically on how much of the universe's initial hydrogen was fused into helium and heavier elements during the first several minutes after the cosmic creation event. How much fusion of the universe's primordial hydrogen actually occurred at this time depended, in turn, on the universe's mass or mass density.**
>
> If the universe's mass (or cosmic mass density) had been even the slightest bit less than a hundred times the fifty billion trillion stars occupying the observable universe, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes of its existence would have proceeded less efficiently. Thus, the cosmos would have been forever incapable of generating elements heavier than helium—elements such as carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, sodium, and potassium—all of which are essential for any conceivable kind of physical life.
>
> On the other hand, if the universe's mass had been even the slightest bit greater, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes after its beginning would have been too productive, and *all* the hydrogen in the universe eventually would have been fused (after just two generations of stars) into elements as heavy as iron or heavier. Again, all the most life-essential elements, including hydrogen itself, would have ceased to exist.

Basically, your body is made up of heavier elements, and if the universe was not as massive as it is (and as old as it is), then there would not be enough heavy elements to make you, or to make massive stars like our Sun which burn steady for long periods of time. We need the heavy elements and we need the steady source of heat.

Dr. Ross has another reason why God would use vast space and long periods of time, and if you want to read that, you can click here. I think that it's important for us all to get used to the idea that we all need to understand science apologetics. God put these evidences into the universe for us to discover and use.

Sociologist Rodney Stark discusses whether religion is good for society

January 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at the data

Mysterious Chris S. posted this interview with Baylor University sociologist / historian Rodney Stark.

About Rodney Stark:

> Rodney Stark grew up in Jamestown, North Dakota, and began his career as a newspaper reporter. Following a tour of duty in the U.S. Army, he received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, where he held appointments as a research sociologist at the Survey Research Center and at the Center for the Study of Law and Society. He left Berkeley to become Professor of Sociology and of Comparative Religion at the University of Washington. In 2004 he joined the faculty of Baylor University. He has published 30 books and more than 140 scholarly articles on subjects as diverse as prejudice, crime, suicide, and city life in ancient Rome. However, the greater part of his work has been on religion. He is past president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and of the Association for the Sociology of Religion. He also has won a number of national and international awards for distinguished scholarship. Many of his books and articles have been translated and published in foreign languages, including Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, and Turkish.
>
> Education:
>
> - B.A. University of Denver, 1959, Journalism.
> - M.A. University of California, Berkeley, 1965, Sociology.
> - Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, 1971, Sociology.

I don't count sociologists as non-STEM, since they have to know statistics, which is math.

Anyway, onto the interview.

Excerpt:

> **Q: After examining hundreds of relevant studies, what's the biggest misconception you've found about the typical religious believer?**
>
> **Rodney Stark:** Even some leading evangelical scholars take it for granted that religious Americans are lacking in appreciation for "high culture," for music, art, literature, and the like. Nothing could be further from the truth. The more often Americans attend religious services, the more likely they are to read newspapers, poetry, novels, and to admire writers. The same applies to liking classical music, to attending symphony concerts, operas, and stage plays, and to dislike rock 'n roll.
>
> **Q: Some recent books, like Christopher Hitchens' *God Is Not Great*, suggest that "religion poisons everything." But your book indicates that religious belief offers society many tangible benefits. What are some of these benefits?**
>
> **Rodney Stark:** Religious Americans are more law abiding, have superior mental and physical health, are far more generous vis-à-vis charities, have much better family life, are more successful, and religious couples even have more satisfactory sex lives!
>
> **Q: In the book's Conclusion you look at religion's effect on many areas of society—crime, schooling, health, employment, welfare—and you determine that, by a conservative estimate, religion saves America over $2.6 trillion each year. What are some of the biggest contributors to this savings?**
>
> **Rodney Stark:** The biggest by far has to do with the criminal justice system. If all Americans committed crimes at the same level as those who do not attend religious services, the costs of the criminal justice system would about double to, perhaps, $2 trillion annually. Second is health costs. The more often people attend religious services, the healthier they are. However, the net savings involved is reduced somewhat by the fact that religious Americans live, on average, seven years longer than those who never attend religious services.

Previously, I noted how people who attend church or synagogue have much better marriage stability than atheists.

Let's just review that with some research done by W. Bradford Wilcox:

> Married couples who attend church together tend to be happier than couples who rarely or never attend services, according to sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox of the University of Virginia.
>
> Using three nationally representative surveys – the General Social Survey (GSS), the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), and the National Survey

> of Family Growth (NSFG) – Wilcox found that married church-going Americans across denominational and racial classifications were more likely to describe themselves as "very happy" than their non-religious counterparts.
>
> Couples who attended church regularly were also less likely to divorce than couples who seldom attended church services, Wilcox found.
>
> "Attending church only seems to help couples when they attend together," Wilcox told **Cybercast News Service**. "But when they do, they are significantly happier in their marriages, and they are much less likely to divorce, compared to couples who do not attend church. I would say that church attendance is a beneficial component of marriage when it is done together."
>
> Wilcox explained that regular church attendance offers certain positive benefits to a married couple: "Churches supply moral norms like sexual fidelity and forgiveness, family-friendly social networks that lend support to couples facing the ordinary joys and challenges of married life, and a faith that helps couples make sense of the difficulties in their lives-from unemployment to illness-that can harm their marriages."
>
> "So, in a word, the couple that prays together stays together," said Wilcox.
>
> […]"Men and women who hold a religious faith and put that faith into practice by attending church on a regular basis do look different in the marital realm," Wilcox said.
>
> "At least in the marriage arena, faith alone doesn't work. You've got to combine faith and works to enjoy a happy and stable marriage. You need the consistent message, the accountability, and the support a church community can provide to really benefit from religious faith," he added.

This Wall Street Journal article from a while back, entitled "Look Who's Irrational Now" argues that atheists are less skeptical than believers.

Excerpt:

> The reality is that the New Atheist campaign, by discouraging religion, won't create a new group of intelligent, skeptical, enlightened beings. Far from it: It might actually encourage new levels of mass superstition. And that's not a conclusion to take on faith — it's what the empirical data tell us.
>
> "What Americans Really Believe," a comprehensive new study released by Baylor University yesterday, shows that traditional Christian religion greatly decreases belief in everything from the efficacy of palm readers to the usefulness of astrology. It also shows that the irreligious and the members of more liberal Protestant denominations, far from being resistant to superstition, tend to be much more likely to believe in the paranormal and in pseudoscience than evangelical Christians.
>
> The Gallup Organization, under contract to Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion, asked American adults a series of questions to gauge credulity. Do

> dreams foretell the future? Did ancient advanced civilizations such as Atlantis exist? Can places be haunted? Is it possible to communicate with the dead? Will creatures like Bigfoot and the Loch Ness Monster someday be discovered by science?
>
> The answers were added up to create an index of belief in occult and the paranormal. While 31% of people who never worship expressed strong belief in these things, only 8% of people who attend a house of worship more than once a week did.
>
> Even among Christians, there were disparities. While 36% of those belonging to the United Church of Christ, Sen. Barack Obama's former denomination, expressed strong beliefs in the paranormal, only 14% of those belonging to the Assemblies of God, Sarah Palin's former denomination, did. In fact, the more traditional and evangelical the respondent, the less likely he was to believe in, for instance, the possibility of communicating with people who are dead.
>
> […]Surprisingly, while increased church attendance and membership in a conservative denomination has a powerful negative effect on paranormal beliefs, higher education doesn't. Two years ago two professors published another study in Skeptical Inquirer showing that, while less than one-quarter of college freshmen surveyed expressed a general belief in such superstitions as ghosts, psychic healing, haunted houses, demonic possession, clairvoyance and witches, the figure jumped to 31% of college seniors and 34% of graduate students.

And naturally, studies show that religious people are both more generous than their secular counterparts.

Donald Trump would expand Obamacare into single-payer health care system

January 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at how well a policy he supports – single payer health care – is working in Canada, where it's been the law of the land for decades.

First, let's see Trump explain his view on single payer health care in his own words:

When government pays for all the health care provisioning, we call that a single-payer system. And Trump is for it – that clip is from September 27, 2015. In the Fox News debate in August, he said that single payer health care "works in Canada".

So, let's go and see what the Canadians are saying about their single payer system, by looking a wide variety of stories from last month from a wide variety of Canadian news sources, covering a wide variety of Canadian provinces.

First, let's start on the west coast, and then work our way east.

The Vancouver Sun reports on British Columbia wait times:

> Median waiting times from referral by family doctor to treatment are 22.4 weeks, or almost six months in B.C., longer than all provinces except those in Atlantic Canada, according to the 25th annual survey of 2,382 medical specialists.
>
> And waits between the first appointment with a specialist and getting treatment are 14 weeks in B.C., the highest since the survey began. The doctors who take the survey are asked to give their best estimates of waits for care.

The government-run CBC, reporting on Manitoba health care:

> Manitoba has been given a failing and a near-failing grade for prostate and breast cancer treatment wait times by Canada's Wait Times Alliance.
>
> The group released their annual wait time report card on Tuesday, giving Manitoba an F for wait times for radiation and curative care treatment for prostate cancer and a D for the same treatments for breast cancer.
>
> Manitoba has received an F for prostate cancer treatment wait times for more than five years, and a D in breast cancer treatment wait times for the past four years.

The Globe and Mail reports on the city of Winnipeg:

> New data shows Winnipeg hospitals still have the longest emergency room wait times in Canada.
>
> The Canadian Institute for Health Information says Winnipeg's six emergency rooms all came in below average on the time it takes 90 per cent of patients to see a doctor after they check into an emergency room.

> The average for the Winnipeg Health Region as a whole is 5.7 hours compared to the Canadian average of 3.1 hours.

And the Montreal Gazette reports on the province of Quebec:

> Quebec reported the steepest increase this year of any province in wait times for medical imaging scans in Canada — a finding that suggests the public system is being stretched to the limit, a national survey reveals.
>
> The 25th annual survey by the Fraser Institute found that the median wait time in hospital for a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan in Quebec jumped to 12 weeks this year from eight in 2014. By comparison, the median wait time for an MRI is five weeks in Ontario, unchanged from last year.
>
> Wait times increased slightly for other medical imaging in Quebec, going up from four to five weeks for both ultrasounds and CT (computerized tomography) scans.

Investors Business Daily also wrote about this and had a helpful chart breaking down how long people are waiting for treatment:

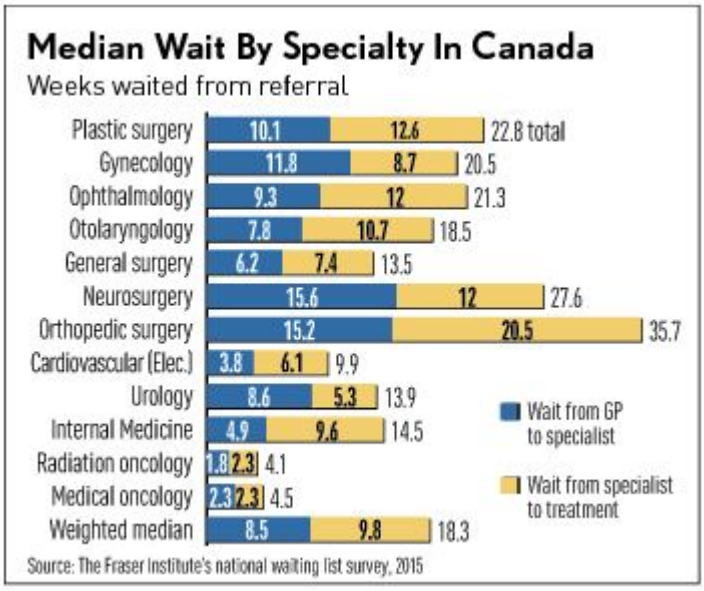

Single-payer health care wait times in Canada

Canada also has a well-known doctor shortage. Their way of controlling costs is to limit the number of people who can practice medicine, so less care can be billed to the government. Get in line, and if you die waiting for treatment, that's great for them – less money to pay. After all, they get to keep all the taxes they took from you during your life, and now they don't have to give you anything back since YOU'RE DEAD.

Trump says that single-payer "works in Canada". Does this look like it is working to you? Would you be willing to have 45% of your income go to federal, provincial, municipal income and sales taxes so that you could get in line in a system like this? This is Trump's ideal, is it your ideal?

If you want to see what Canadian health care is really like on the ground, check out this video of Steven Crowder trying to get health care in the province of Quebec:

That's what Donald Trump thinks is working. His past statements about being "very pro-

choice", and about same-sex marriage being "the law of the land" and about single payer and amnesty make him out to be a Democrat. He has never put effort into any conservative initiative on any conservative issue since the day he was born. He has been a Democrat, has donated to Democrats, including many, many donations to the Clintons. Only a complete idiot could support a Democrat in the Republican primary, especially when there were so many conservatives who fought and suffered for conservative issues in the past, e.g. – Perry, Jindal, Walker and Cruz.

As for his experience with making money, he inherited all his money, and he is worth $10 billion less today than he would have been if he had just invested his silver spoon inheritance in index funds. He knows less about politics than you do. He has gone bankrupt more times than you have. He is less good at making money than you are. He was born wealthy. He has no idea what conservatives believe. He is not conservative now, never has been conservative, and never will be conservative. You cannot choose a candidate by listening to mere words, you have to look at evidence, you have to look at accomplishments.

Are Latter Day Saints (LDS) doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

January 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out

> of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It is based on several lines of evidence, and is broadly compatible with Genesis. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that although Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri,

> scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

Further study

There is a very good podcast featuring J. Warner Wallace that summarizes some other theological problems with Mormonism that I blogged about before. And if you want a nice long PDF to print out and read at lunch (which is what I did with it) you can grab this PDF by Michael Licona, entitled "Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock".

Pro-gay web site tells real story of the Matthew Shepard murder

January 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
A fascinating article from the pro-gay The Advocate.

Excerpt:

> What if nearly everything you thought you knew about Matthew Shepard's murder was wrong? What if our most fiercely held convictions about the circumstances of that fatal night of October 6, 1998, have obscured other, more critical, aspects of the case? How do people sold on one version of history react to being told that facts are slippery — that thinking of Shepard's murder as a hate crime does not mean it was a hate crime? And how does it color our understanding of such a crime if the perpetrator and victim not only knew each other but also had sex together, bought drugs from one another, and partied together?
>
> None of this is idle speculation; it's the fruit of years of dogged investigation by journalist Stephen Jimenez, himself gay. In the course of his reporting, Jimenez interviewed over 100 subjects, including friends of Shepard and of his convicted killers, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, as well as the killers themselves (though by the book's end you may have more questions than answers about the extent of Henderson's complicity). In the process, he amassed enough anecdotal evidence to build a persuasive case that Shepard's sexuality was, if not incidental, certainly less central than popular consensus has lead us to believe.

And here are the details:

> But in what circumstances does someone slam a seven-inch gun barrel into their

victim's head so violently as to crush his brain stem? That's not just flipping out, that's psychotic — literally psychotic, to anyone familiar with the long-term effects of methamphetamine. In court, both the prosecutor and the plaintiffs had compelling reasons to ignore this thread, but for Jimenez it is the central context for understanding not only the brutality of the crime but the milieu in which both Shepard and McKinney lived and operated.

By several accounts, McKinney had been on a meth bender for five days prior to the murder, and spent much of October 6 trying to find more drugs. By the evening he was so wound up that he attacked three other men in addition to Shepard. Even Cal Rerucha, the prosecutor who had pushed for the death sentence for McKinney and Henderson, would later concede on ABC's *20/20* that "it was a murder that was driven by drugs."
No one was talking much about meth abuse in 1998, though it was rapidly establishing itself in small-town America, as well as in metropolitan gay clubs, where it would leave a catastrophic legacy. In Wyoming in the late 1990s, eighth graders were using meth at a higher rate than 12th graders nationwide. It's hardly surprising to learn from Jimenez that Shepard was also a routine drug user, and — according to some of his friends — an experienced dealer. (Although there is no real evidence for supposing that Shepard was using drugs himself on the night of his murder).

Despite the many interviews, Jimenez does not entirely resolve the true nature of McKinney's relationship to Shepard, partly because of his unreliable chief witness. McKinney presents himself as a "straight hustler" turning tricks for money or drugs, but others characterize him as bisexual. A former lover of Shepard's confirms that Shepard and McKinney had sex while doing drugs in the back of a limo owned by a shady Laramie figure, Doc O'Connor. Another subject, Elaine Baker, tells Jimenez that Shepard and McKinney were friends who had been in sexual threesome with O'Connor. A manager of a gay bar in Denver recalls seeing photos of McKinney and Henderson in the papers and recognizing them as patrons of his bar. He recounts his shock at realizing "these guys who killed that kid came from inside our own community."

Not everyone is interested in hearing these alternative theories.
When *20/20* engaged Jimenez to work on a segment revisiting the case in 2004, GLAAD bridled at what the organization saw as an attempt to undermine the notion that anti-gay bias was a factor; Moises Kaufman, the director and co-writer of *The Laramie Project,* denounced it as "terrible journalism," though the segment went on to win an award from the Writers Guild of America for best news analysis of the year.

There are valuable reasons for telling certain stories in a certain way at pivotal times, but that doesn't mean we have to hold on to them once they've outlived their usefulness. In his book, *Flagrant Conduct,* Dale Carpenter, a professor at the University of Minnesota Law School,

> **similarly unpicks the notorious case of *Lawrence v. Texas,* in which the arrest of two men for having sex in their own bedroom became a vehicle for affirming the right of gay couples to have consensual sex in private. Except that the two men were not having sex, and were not even a couple. Yet this non-story, carefully edited and taken all the way to the Supreme Court, changed America.**
>
> **In different ways, the Shepard story we've come to embrace was just as necessary for shaping the history of gay rights as *Lawrence v. Texas;* it galvanized a generation of LGBT youth and stung lawmakers into action. President Obama, who signed the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, named for Shepard and James Byrd Jr., into law on October 28, 2009, credited Judy Shepard for making him "passionate" about LGBT equality.**

I think that it's good that The Advocate posted this correction to the story. I admire them for being willing to tell the truth about the story. However, note that the author is not sorry that a fake version of the case was used to push the gay agenda forward. Now what if the same willingness to twist the truth was shared by the gay activists who are redefining the issues in the culture as a whole? What if the people who are pushing the gay agenda in schools, in the media, in the workplace, and elsewhere, had the same willingness to twist the truth in order to advance their cause?

It's also helpful to understand the media bias angle of this story. Are they really interested in telling the truth? Or is there something else going on there? How much of a story was the attack on the Family Research Council building by a gun-wielding gay activist compared to the Matthew Shepard story? How much of a story is the persecution of Christians in the Middle East compared to the Matthew Shepard story? How much of a story is the loss of basic human rights like free speech and religious liberty here at home when compared to the Matthew Shepard story?

Breitbart has more about what really happened to Matthew Shepard.

The real war on women: Hillary Clinton's record of defending a man accused of rape

January 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does rape make, as long as she gets her turn at President… it's her turn!!!

I think it's important, when we are considering who to elect as President, to look at ALL the information that we have about each candidate.

The pro-Clinton ABC News has the facts on the real Hillary Clinton:

> Hillary Clinton's successful 1975 legal defense of an accused rapist has surfaced again with the victim, angered over a tape of Clinton chuckling over her courtroom tactics in the case, lashing out at the potential Democratic presidential candidate.
>
> "Hillary Clinton took me through hell," the victim told the Daily Beast in an emotional interview published today. The woman said that if she saw Clinton today she would say, "I realize the truth now, the heart of what you've done to me. And you are supposed to be for women? You call that [being] for women, what you done to me? And I heard you on tape laughing."
>
> The name of the woman, who is now 52, was withheld for privacy reasons. She decided to speak out after hearing never-before-heard audio tapes released by the Washington Free Beacon earlier this week of Hillary Clinton talking about the trial. In the recordings, dubbed the "Hillary Tapes," Clinton is heard laughing as she describes how she succeeded at getting her client a lighter sentence, despite

> suggesting she knew he was guilty.
>
> "He took a lie-detector test! I had him take a polygraph, which he passed, which forever destroyed my faith in polygraphs," Clinton said about her client on the tapes, which were initially recorded, but never used, in the early 1980s.

You can listen to the audio from the Washington Free Beacon story here:

The Washington Free Beacon reports:

> The recordings, which date from 1983-1987 and have never before been reported, include Clinton's suggestion that she knew Taylor was guilty at the time. **She says she used a legal technicality to plead her client, who faced 30 years to life in prison, down to a lesser charge.** The recording and transcript, along with court documents pertaining to the case, are embedded below.

And this was not a false accusation on a university campus – the 12-year-old girl *was* admitted to a hospital and the police *were* involved:

> In the early hours of May 10, 1975, the Springdale, Arkansas police department received a call from a nearby hospital. It was treating a 12-year-old girl who said she had been raped.
>
> The suspect was identified as Thomas Alfred Taylor, a 41-year-old factory worker and friend of the girl's family.
>
> […]Describing the events almost a decade after they had occurred, Clinton's struck a casual and complacent attitude toward her client and the trial for rape of a minor.
>
> "I had him take a polygraph, which he passed – which forever destroyed my faith in polygraphs," she added with a laugh.
>
> **Clinton can also be heard laughing at several points when discussing the crime lab's accidental destruction of DNA evidence that tied Taylor to the crime.**
>
> From a legal ethics perspective, once she agreed to take the case, Clinton was required to defend her client to the fullest even if she did believe he was guilty.

Now, just understand that every single woman who will vote for Hillary Clinton in 2016 *stands by her actions in helping a man she knew was guilty of raping a 12-year-old to be be found not guilty.* If this is not the very definition of what radical feminists call "rape apologist", then I don't know what is.

You can read more about the rape victim here in the left-wing Daily Beast.

Bill Clinton's greatest defender

But that's not the only time that Hillary Clinton has gone to bat for powerful men who are accused of sexual assault and/or rape. She's actually done it many times, for her promiscuous Democrat slut of a husband, Bill Clinton.

Let's take a look at the many times that Hillary has stood by her man, and defended his Democrat political career from the accusations of rape and sexual assault from his alleged victims.

The Daily Wire lists *fourteen* women who alleged sexual abuse at the hands of Hillary's husband Bill.

Let's look at one of the fourteen:

> According to Breitbart News, Juanita Broaddrick, a gubernatorial campaign volunteer, accused Bill Clinton of rape in 1978:
>
> *Then he tries to kiss me again. And the second time he tries to kiss me he starts biting my lip … He starts to, um, bite on my top lip and I tried to pull away from him. And then he forces me down on the bed. And I just was very frightened, and I tried to get away from him and I told him 'No,' that I didn't want this to happen but he wouldn't listen to me. … It was a real panicky, panicky situation. I was even to the point where I was getting very noisy, you know, yelling to 'Please stop.' And that's when he pressed down on my right shoulder and he would bite my lip. … When everything was over with, he got up and straightened himself, and I was crying at the moment and he walks to the door, and calmly puts on his sunglasses. And before he goes out the door he says 'You better get some ice on that.' And he turned and went out the door.*

And another:

> Paula Jones claimed that Clinton exposed his penis to her and then asked "Would you kiss it for me?" She filed a sexual harassment claim against him soon after. She attested:
>
> *… He came over by the wingback chair close to where I was at. Then it's like he wasn't even paying attention to what I was saying to him. Then he goes, "Oh, I love the way your hair flows down your back. And I was watching you," and stuff like that. Downstairs. And then he did it again. Then he started — he pulled me over to him while he was leaning up against the wingback chair and he took his hands and was running them up my culottes. And they were long. They were down to my knees. They were long, dressy culottes. And he had his hand up, going up to my middle pelvic area, and he was kissing me on the neck, you know, and trying to kiss me on the lips and I wouldn't let him. And then I backed back. I said, "Stop it. You know, I'm not this kind of girl." I mean. And it still — and then I ran right over to where the couch was. I thought what am I going to do? I was trying to collect my thoughts. I did not know what to do. I was trying to collect my thoughts. I did not know what to do. After the second time — after the first time, I had rebuffed him. And then when I got over there and I kind of sat right there by the end of the couch on the — seemed like on the armchair part. And the next thing you know it, I turn around because he was kind of back over here, and he come over there, pulled his pants down, sat down and asked me to perform oral*

> *sex…He asked me would I kiss it. He goes — you know, I can see the look on his face right now. He asked me, "Would you kiss it for me?" I mean, it was disgusting.*

Now, what was Hillary Clinton's response to these accusations? Divorce her slut of a husband? Call the police and have him put in jail? Apologize to the women he attacked?

The Wall Street Journal explains what she did:

> Yet no one in American politics better personifies a war on women than Mrs. Clinton's husband. For readers too young to recall the 1990s, we aren't merely referring to Trumpian gibes about female looks or "Mad Men" condescension. Mr. Clinton was a genuine sexual harasser in the classic definition of exploiting his power as a workplace superior, and the Clinton entourage worked hard to smear and discredit his many women accusers.
>
> Start with "bimbo eruptions," the phrase that Mr. Clinton's Arkansas fixer Betsey Wrightused to describe the women who had affairs with Bill. Gennifer Flowers almost derailed his primary campaign in 1992, until Hillary stood by her man on CBS's "60 Minutes" and the media portrayed Ms. Flowers as a golddigger.
>
> **Many more would come forward, not least Paula Jones, an Arkansas state employee who testified that a state policeman working for then Governor Clinton invited her to Bill's hotel room where he exposed himself and sexually propositioned her. Ms. Jones filed a sexual-harassment lawsuit and Mr. Clinton lied under oath, resulting in his impeachment.**
>
> […]Then there was Monica Lewinsky, the White House intern whose story the Clintons want everyone to dismiss as a case of consensual sex and Bill's runaway libido. But no CEO in America would survive in his job if he had a publicly known affair with a subordinate, much less a 22-year-old.
>
> When news of that affair came to light, the Clintons also waged war on her reputation.
>
> […]Mrs. Clinton described Ms. Lewinsky as "a narcissistic loony toon," according to the personal papers of Diane Blair, a close friend of Mrs. Clinton from Arkansas. **This September Mrs. Clinton declared that "every survivor of sexual assault" has "the right to be heard. You have the right to be believed." But when her own access to political power was at stake, she dismissed the women and defended her husband.**

So what do we learn from this?

We learn that Democrat feminists are absolutely *fine* with rape, sexual assault and sexual harrassment. They are 100% in favor of things that horrify Republican conservatives like me. If I were in charge, I would prosecute Bill Clinton to the full extent of the law. But, Democrat feminists disagree with me on that – they don't care about rape, they just want

their free condoms and taxpayer-funded abortion. That’s why they are going to vote for Hillary Clinton. They’re not “feminists”, they’re just for promiscuity without costs or consequences – just like Bill Clinton.

Republican governor of blue state gets 70% of welfare recipients back to work

January 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder (R)

This article is from the Daily Signal, and it clearly explains what happens when a blue state hits rock bottom and has to elect a Republican governor to clean up the mess left by a Democrat. In this case, it's Republican governor Rick Snyder who had to come in and clean up the mess left by Democrat Jennifer Granholm.

Excerpt:

> Since Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder assumed office, the number of welfare recipients in the state has declined by a staggering 70 percent, according to a news report.
>
> A total of 64,492 individuals received cash assistance from the state this past August, down from 227,490 in 2011. Snyder, a Republican, took office in January 2011 and was re-elected in November 2014.
>
> Michigan Capitol Confidential, a news site, reported that the decline in welfare recipients could be due to new enforcement of limits on cash benefits. **The state has begun enforcing a 48-month lifetime limit for its cash assistance program and a 60-month federal time limit.**
>
> The spokesman for the state Department of Health and Human Services, Bob Wheaton, partially credited the drop in welfare recipients to the state's improving economy.
>
> In an email to Capitol Confidential, Wheaton said: "As the governor said at the time of the decision to enforce time limits, this was returning cash assistance to

> its original intent—a transitional program to help families as they work toward self-sufficiency while preserving the safety net for families most in need.”
>
> **Wheaton also said the program Michigan Works has helped recipients find jobs.**
>
> During Snyder’s time in office, the state’s economy has improved, and unemployment has decreased. The unemployment rate in Michigan dropped from 11.2 percent in December 2010 to 5 percent in September 2015.

Honestly, I don’t even think there should be such a thing as welfare. People should be able to put a voluntary contribution into an emergency account, and the government can match that, and if they ever lose their job, they can run their lives off their account. That’s fair. But instead, you have people going on welfare for well over a year, since Obama undid the Welfare Reform bill of 1996.

Maybe that’s why our labor force participation rate is at a 38-year low:

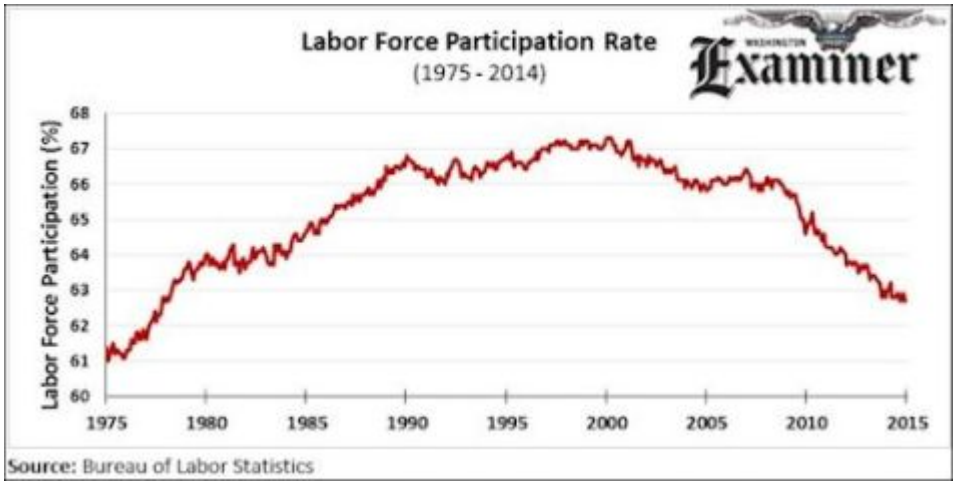

Labor Force Participation 2015

But in Michigan, things are much better. Because they have a Republican running the show. Republicans are not for welfare, they are for helping people back into the workforce. A hand up, not a hand out.

New study: cohabitation produces far inferior outcomes to marriage

January 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is cohabitation the same thing as a lifelong marriage commitment?
This study is from the American College of Pediatricians.

The Stream writes about the study:

> The American College of Pediatricians recently published a paper, *Cohabitation*, which cautions adolescents and young adults about the negative consequences of cohabitation for both themselves and their children, and urges parents to teach their children about the advantages of waiting until marriage.
>
> More young people are now first cohabiting than are marrying without prior cohabitation, yet research shows that, rather than being a stepping-stone to a healthy marriage, living together before marriage (cohabitation) makes couples more likely to break-up and more likely to divorce if they do marry. It results in lower marital satisfaction and increased negative communication. Cohabiting couples spend less time together; men are more likely to spend their time on personal pleasure than do married men.

Commitment failure:

> Cohabiting couples are now less likely to later marry than 40 years ago. Controlling for other factors that increase risk of divorce, marriages preceded by cohabitation are still **50 percent more likely to end in divorce**. (Some recent studies challenge this, but are scientifically flawed and omit the raw data.) **Also 27 percent of cohabitations dissolve without marriage in the first three**

> **years.**

Domestic violence:

> Cohabiters commit increased violence against their partner. Women are nine times more likely to be killed by a cohabiting partner than by their husband. Severe violence is four times as common among cohabiting couples; any violence is nearly 50 percent more common among couples cohabiting before marrying and doubled among couples continuing to cohabit after five years.

Alcohol abuse:

> Men who cohabit without marrying in 5 to 10 years have more than double the rate of alcohol abuse as married men; women who cohabit without marrying have 4 to 7 times the rate of alcohol abuse as married women.

Infidelity:

> Cohabiters, both men and women, have rates of infidelity in the preceding year more than triple that of married spouses. Among the married, those cohabiting prior to marriage were 50 percent more likely to be unfaithful as those marrying without cohabiting.

Poverty:

> Poverty is more common among cohabitating women and their children. Their male partners have both a higher unemployment rate (15 percent vs 8 percent), and work less hours if employed.

Abortion:

> Cohabitating women are ten times more likely to have an abortion than married women, and suffer from its associated mortality and morbidity. In fact, 89 percent of women who have had abortions have at one time cohabited; 40 percent have lived with three or more men. Abortion also puts future children at risk, especially from extremely premature birth.

Harm to children:

> Children who survive also suffer due to parental cohabitation. They have increased risk of losing a parent to divorce or separation, possibly multiple times. Children born of cohabiting parents are over four times more likely to suffer separation of their parents by their third birthdays (49 percent) than those born to married parents (11 percent).
>
> […]Nearly one-third of couples enter into cohabitation with a child from a previous relationship, as do half of those cohabitating for six years or longer. Children living with a parent and unmarried partner (live-in boyfriend) have 20 times the risk of sexual abuse and eight times the risk of all maltreatment

> compared to children living with married biological parents. Even if the couple marries, stepchildren have over eight times the risk of sexual abuse and triple the overall risk of abuse of neglect. Girls living with a stepparent had 60 percent higher risk of being raped than girls living with their biological parents.

Depression:

> Women in cohabiting relationships have more depression than married women, and poorer responsiveness to their children's emotional needs. Children whose mothers are depressed have increased cortisol responses to stress (which may explain their increased hypertension in adulthood). Children with unmarried mothers are half as likely to be breastfed, leading to higher rates of asthma, pneumonia, ear and intestinal infections, diabetes, obesity, and lower intelligence.

Please believe me when I say that you should click through to the Stream and read the entire article.

So what do I want to say about this in my 500 words? Well, I want to say that the cohabitation issue is a good opportunity for us to reason about whether there should be any rules around sexuality and relationships.

Our culture is absolutely poisoned right now with a kind of feelings-oriented non-judgmentalism that prevents debate. Everything has been reduced to people feeling "offended" and using the power of government to stifle debate. Nowhere is this more evident than on the university campus, which is the source of the problem. This hyper-tolerance and emotional non-judgmentalism leaves people open to making poor decisions that cause self-destruction and harm to others. As a result, young people are blindly accepting a script for sexuality and relationships from the culture, e.g. – Hollywood, celebrities, and ideologically-driven academics. A script made by professional story-tellers insulated from the consequences of their ideas.

As Christians, we seem to have so much trouble talking to young people about rules around sexuality and relationships. So many young people think that premarital sex is benign. That cohabitation is no big deal. And that redefining marriage cannot be opposed. Christian parents and pastors are not preparing themselves to discuss these things with young people. If there is a battle of ideas, and one side shows up with a bunch of feelings and lies, that side still wins – if the other side doesn't show up at all. Don't be so focused on your career and your own self that you fail your children by failing to discuss and debate with them about the issues. Don't assume that just because your children look OK on the surface that there are not serious questions underneath.

There is so much I could say about this problem of talking to young people. As I argued in a previous post, I truly believe that apologists should not neglect these social / cultural / fiscal issues. We have to study them and know how to argue for our values using secular arguments and evidence, such as you see in the study above. Once young people have decided that Christian teachings on sexuality (e.g. – chastity, courting) are primitive and

irrational, or worse, then getting them to accept Christianity becomes that much harder. And that goes double for marriage. If they think that cohabitation, no-fault divorce, same-sex marriage and gay adoption are opposed for no other reason than blind prejudice or even hatred, then we've lost before we even begin to make our first philosophical argument.

Planned Parenthood says that hiding HIV status from sex partners is a “right”

January 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

This is from The Federalist.

Excerpt: (link to PP removed)

> International Planned Parenthood Federation, of which Planned Parenthood Federation of America is an official affiliate, maintains it is a person’s “human right” *not* to tell their sexual partners they are HIV positive if they don’t want to.
>
> It’s all laid out in International Planned Parenthood Federation’s booklet for HIV-positive youth entitled “Healthy, Happy and Hot.” It says, “Young people living with HIV have the right to decide if, when, and how to disclose their HIV status.” It continues: “Sharing your HIV status is called disclosure. Your decision about whether to disclose may change with different people and situations. **You have the right to decide if, when, and how to disclose your HIV status.”**

> In other words, Planned Parenthood thinks it’s your human right to risk exposing other people to a potentially deadly disease without telling them.
>
> […]“Healthy, Happy and Hot” explains, “Some countries have laws that say people living with HIV must tell their sexual partner(s) about their status before having sex, even if they use condoms or only engage in sexual activity with a low risk of giving HIV to someone else. These laws violate the rights of people living with HIV by forcing them to disclose or face the possibility of criminal charges.”

> The pamphlet then gives tips to protect oneself from criminalization, and does say that the best way to protect yourself (which is apparently more important

> than protecting your partner) is to tell your partner that you are infected before you have sex. This section ends with the statement, “Get involved in advocacy to change laws that violate your rights.”

Did you know that the Obama administration gives taxpayer money to Planned Parenthood so that they can advocate for their warped view of sexuality to young people? Oh, and they do abortions too – we’re paying them to do it.

CNS News explains:

> Planned Parenthood says in its new 2014-2015 annual report, which was released this month, that its affiliates around the country did 323,999 abortion procedures in the fiscal year that ended on Sept. 30, 2014 and that those affiliates received $553.7 million in “government health services grants and reimbursements” in the year that ended on June 30, 2015.
>
> […]The amount of government money Planned Parenthood reported that its affiliates received increased in the latest annual report, climbing $25.3 million from $528.4 million in the year that ended on June 30, 2014 to the $553.7 million they received in the year that ended on June 30, 2015.

At least Planned Parenthood is grateful to the Obama administration for sending them tax dollars from pro-life taxpayers. They must be – that’s why they turn around and shuffle political contributions back into the pockets of their Democrat Party allies.

Top fertility specialist advises women: don’t wait till 30 to try to have children

January 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Dina sent me this UK Daily Mail article a while back, but I held onto it until I could find something to pair it with.

It says:

> One of Britain’s top NHS fertility specialists last night issued a stark warning to women: Start trying for a baby before you’re 30 – or risk never having children.
>
> In a strongly worded letter to Education Secretary Nicky Morgan, consultant gynaecologist Professor Geeta Nargund has also demanded that teenagers are taught about the dangers of delaying parenthood, because of the spiralling cost to the taxpayer of IVF for women in their late 30s and 40s.
>
> Professor Nargund cites the agony of a growing number of women left childless as a key reason why fertility lessons must be included in the national curriculum. Her controversial intervention – in which she warns Britain faces a ‘fertility timebomb’ – will fuel the debate over the best time to start a family, amid the rise in women delaying motherhood to pursue careers.
>
> […]Arguing passionately for fertility lessons, she tells Mrs Morgan: ‘Information is power and the best way to empower people to take control of their fertility is through education.’ Prof Nargund said last night: ‘Ideally, if a woman is ready for a child, she should start trying by the time she is 30. She should consider having a child early because as a woman gets older, her fertility declines sharply.’
>
> If a woman started trying early enough, doctors would still have time to diagnose problems and take action before it was too late, she said.
>
> Her comments were endorsed by Professor Allan Pacey, outgoing chair of the British Fertility Society.
>
> **‘You need to be trying by 30 because if there is a problem and you need**

> **surgery, hormones or IVF, then you've got five years to sort it out,' he said. 'If a woman starts trying at 35, doctors have got to sort it out when she is already on a slippery fertility slope'.**

Let's see how accurate women's beliefs about fertility and age are.

Consider this article from Aeon magazine.

It says:

> Many studies show that women are not only woefully ignorant when it comes to fertility, conception and the efficacy of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) – but they overestimate their knowledge about the subject. **For instance, a 2011 study in *Fertility and Sterility* surveyed 3,345 childless women in Canada between the ages of 20 and 50; despite the fact that the women initially assessed their own fertility knowledge as high, the researchers found only half of them answered six of the 16 questions correctly.** 72.9 per cent of women thought that: 'For women over 30, overall health and fitness level is a better indicator of fertility than age.' (False.) And 90.9 per cent felt that: 'Prior to menopause, assisted reproductive technologies (such as IVF) can help most women to have a baby using their own eggs.' (Also false.) Many falsely believed that by *not* smoking and *not* being obese they could improve their fertility, rather than the fact that those factors simply negatively affect fertility.
>
> […]**According to a 2011 study in *Human Reproduction*, which surveyed 410 undergraduate students, most overestimated a women's chances of spontaneous pregnancy in all age groups, but particularly after receiving IVF beyond age 40.** Only 11 per cent of the students knew that genetic motherhood is unlikely to be achieved from the mid-40s onward, unless using oocytes or egg cells frozen in advance. 'This can be explained by technological "hype" and favourable media coverage of very late pregnancies,' the authors concluded.

So, I guess now I'll issue my advice to women in their 20s on how to avoid infertility:

Money gives men confidence to pull the trigger on marriage, so you should focus your efforts on men with a solid balance sheet and a gap-less resume. Beware of men who paint a rosy picture of their finances in the future that makes you feel good, but who have not demonstrated their ability to earn or save. It's much better to focus your time on a man who can marry you *right now*. The best way to tell if a man is capable of marriage is not by listening to confident words, it's by looking to see how he has prepared to perform his roles, one of which is *provider*.

Be debt free. Study STEM in school, update your resume, and get a job that pays well. Jobs are not meant to be fun or fulfilling. You need to be preparing financially for marriage, and that means a normal 9-5 job in an office with 3% annual raises and 401K matching. The more you save to help your man with the down payment on your house,

the better. Pursuing fun and spending money on frivolous things like travel is not the way to prepare for marriage (unless you travel as part of your job, of course). *Don't* live in the moment, *do* sacrifice for the future. Believe me: a woman's debt is a *serious* damper on a man's willingness to marry her.

If you went to college, chances are that you absorbed a lot of feminism. Feminism emphasizes being free of constraints, feeling happy, having fun, career over family, and independence from the needs of men and children. You need to renew your mind in order to undo the cultural denigration of marriage and children. Get yourself a marriage mentor, ask for book recommendations that will educate you about the challenges and rewards of marriage. A good marriage mentor will explain to you why marriage is a better plan than the feminist plan, and will emphasize self-denial, self-sacrifice, self-control and serving others. It's only by getting specific about marriage and parenting that your heart will change to want to work on marriage rather than work on the things that the feminist culture prefers. I recommend Dr. Laura's book on husbands, and lectures by Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse.

I guess my closing advice would be to be careful about the things you hear about marriage in the culture. A lot of people have agendas that sound good, but ultimately, they don't satisfy. I really recommend that you read Philippians and mediate on Philippians 2 and 4, which talk about the importance of caring about other people (2) and sharing with other people (4).

Robin Collins lectures on fine-tuning for discoverability from particle physics

January 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture:

This lecture is 29 minutes long, the Q&A is 15 minutes. I highly recommend this lecture to *all audiences* of *all levels of ability*, for the simple reasons that apart from the content, this lecture is a how-to clinic in the tone, body language, slides and so on for you to use when trying to be persuasive when making your case. Science is king in this lecture. The scientific method is defined and applied in a winsome way. Making science understandable *should be* the bread and butter approach to Christian apologetics, and this lecture rivals the Mike Strauss lecture at Stanford University and the Mike Strauss lecture at the University of Texas – Dallas as the ideal lectures for showing that. It's not just the scientific material that makes this lecture by Collins work, it's the narrative and the style that make the lecture work.

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

His thesis in one slide:

Strongest Thesis

Thesis 2: Discoverability-Livability Optimality Thesis (DLO):
Within the range of values of a given fundamental parameter p that yield near-optimal livability, p will fall into that subrange of values that *optimize discoverability*.

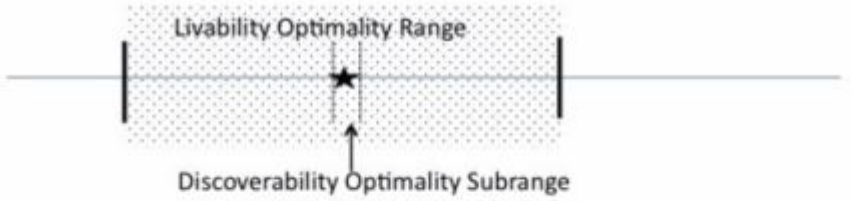

- ⋆ is actual value of parameter.
- Region between thick black lines is livability near-optimality range.
- Region between dashed lines is discoverability optimality subrange.
- DLO predicts ⋆ will fall between dashed lines.

Fine-tuning for discoverability – the DLO thesis
Summary:

- Thesis: the universe is more intelligible than we would expect it by chance
- The regular fine-tuning argument says that complex embodied observers are very rare
- But the number of highly-discoverable universes that have complex embodied observers is rarer still
- Why do we exist in a highly-discoverable universe?
- Can we quantify and test discoverability?
- Yes: by varying fundamental parameters and seeing how it affects discoverability
- Conclusion of his calculations: The Discoverability-Liveability Optimality range is an even smaller range within the Liveablity Optimality range of the standard fine-tuning argument
- Fine-tuning #1: the fine structure constant, governs the strength of the electro-magnetic force
- If larger, wood-burning fire becomes impossible because fires won't stay lit, and therefore forging metals becomes unlikely
- If smaller, wood-burning fires won't go out, e.g. – from lightning strikes, so that wood would be less accessible
- Other constraints: smaller value decreases effectiveness of light microscopes, drastically lowers efficiency of transformers and motors
- Fine-tuning #2: the cosmic microwave background radiation (CMBR), radiation left over from the Big Bang
- humans need to discover the CMBR in order to confirm the Big Bang creation out of nothing, and it depends on baryon/pothon ratio
- his calculations show that the actual value of CMBR is exactly at the peak for

detectability by humans
- if baryon/photon ratio larger, CMBR is less discoverable
- if baryon/photon ratio smaller, CMBR is less discoverable
- Fine-tuning #3: parameters related to subatomic particles are fine-tuned for their discovery and usefulness, e.g. – the bottom quark, the charm quark, the tau lepton and the Higgs Boson
- the lifetime of the particles affects their usefulness to scientists who want to investigate the Standard Model of physics
- decay rates of these subatomic particles are related to several of the finely-tuned parameters
- for example, the mass of the bottom quark is finely-tuned for its discoverability by scientists
- the tau lepton and the charm quark are similarly fine-tuned for disoverability
- the mass of the Higgs boson is finely-tuned for discoverability and for making further discoveries
- Conclusion: the DLO thesis is strongly confirmed – this is an even greater degree of fine-tuning that the already astonishing probabilities of the fine-tuning for complex, embodied intelligent beings
- The formalized version of the philosophical argument based on this evidence is impervious with some of the traditional objections to the standard fine-tuning argument
- #1 multiverse/selection effect: it is not subject to multiverse / observer selection objections
- #2 normalizeability: it is not subject to the McGrew-Vestrup objection because the range of possible values is *finite* not *infinite*
- #3 falsifiability: it makes falsifiable predictions, and in fact Collins' earlier calculations of the CMBR discoverability contained an error that falsified the thesis – until he found the error and corrected for it
- #4 usefulness: it gives clues about the Creator's purpose for us, namely that the universe was created for us to be able to do science and find evidence of the Creator's existence – there is no expectation for us to exercise blind faith, trust in God is meant to be a plausible deduction from the progress of experimental science

Sample slide:

Example: Ideal Lifetime of Bottom Quark

Particle Physicist Matt Strassler: "Bottom quarks . . . have lifetimes in a **"sweet spot"** . . . .*The distance that bottom quarks typically can travel [before they decay]. . . turns out to be* ***an ideal*** *distance for detection by the LHC detectors ATLAS and CMS, and the Tevatron detectors CDF and DZero, and many other experiments too."*

Bottom quark lifetime is finely-tuned for discoverability
And another:

Higgs Mass Ideal

- Particle Physicist Abdelhak Djouadi: "The Higgs particle was born under **a very lucky star** . . . the mass value $M_H \approx$ 125 GeV allows to produce the Higgs particle at the LHC in many redundant channels and to detect it in a large variety of decay modes."
- Particle Physicist Narei Lorenzo Martinez: "In this [low mass] region, most of the decay channels are accessible. An hypothetical Higgs boson at 125 GeV is then **an ideal scenario** for studying its couplings to other particles."

Higgs boson mass is finely-tuned for discoverability
Earlier, I blogged about a Robin Collins lecture on the fine-tuning that allows complex, embodied life to exist. Another must-see lecture. If you are looking for something to study in university, and you have funding, then physics, mathematics and philosophy are the best places to be for a Christian scholar.

As refugees rape and sexually assault German women, will pro-refugee Christians repent?

January 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

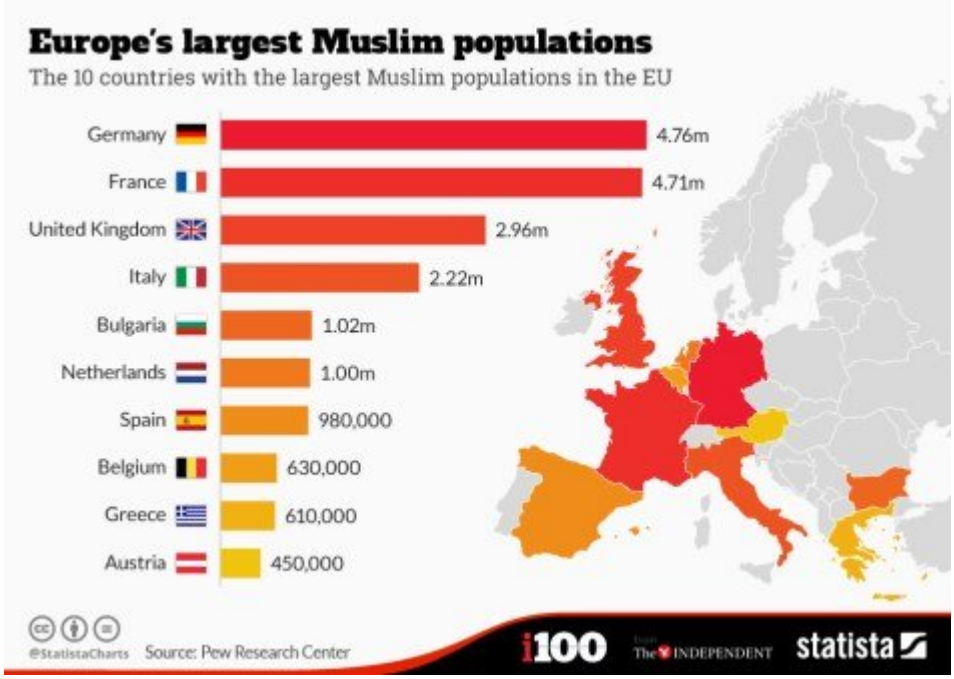

Muslim populations in Europe

First, let's get the facts from the Washington Free Beacon, which links to Der Spiegel and BBC.

They write:

> Dozens of reports of sexual assault perpetrated by Arab and North African men on New Year's Eve have shocked officials in Cologne, Germany.
>
> According to *Spiegel Online,* dozens of women reported being sexually assaulted by individuals belonging to a group of 1,000 young men gathered in a square near Cologne's main train station on New Year's Eve. The men were largely of Arab or North African descent, Cologne Police Chief Wolfgang Albers said, according to BBC.
>
> At least one women reported being raped. There were nearly 100 complaints filed about incidents last Thursday, about a quarter of them related to sexual assault and many other related to thefts.
>
> Albers said that the incidents last week in Cologne constituted "a completely new dimension of crime." Mayor Henriette Reker called the alleged crimes "monstrous."
>
> "We cannot allow this to become a lawless area," Reker said.
>
> The perpetrators of the assaults and thefts last week appeared to range from ages 15 to 35. Investigators have zeroed in on a group of men from North Africa who have been behind small thefts in Cologne recently.

> Germany received a record number of migrants last year, which has resulted in fierce debate surrounding the country's acceptance of migrants and refugees.

As everyone knows, Germany is taking in 800,000 primarily Muslim refugees. So naturally the authorities are hesitant to come clean and admit that the rapists and sexual assaulters were let in by their generous, compassionate government policy.

Now consider this article from the UK Guardian about the Muslim child-rape sex-trafficking gangs that exist everywhere in the UK, thanks to the Labour Party's generous immigration policy and generous welfare policies.

The article says:

> Police and social workers in Oxfordshire had a tainted perception that girls as young as 11 consented to sex with men who raped and brutalised them, an independent report into the failure to stop their exploitation has said.
>
> Throughout their interactions with six young girls in Oxford, professionals struggled with the law on consent, failing to understand that such was the power of the grooming process the children had no power to say no to gang rape, sexual torture and violence.
>
> […]The report called on the government to research why the perpetrators of this type of child abuse – which has been seen in Rochdale, Rotherham, Derby, Bristol and Oxfordshire – were predominantly from a Pakistani and/or Muslim heritage.
>
> Blyth said what the children were subjected to was "indescribably awful".

The number of children affected by the Muslim underage sex-trafficking is put at 1400 by the BBC. 1400 children raped and sex-trafficked, primarily by Muslims immigrants.

What is interesting about this is that I keep hearing about all of these compassionate Christians – mostly philosophers, missionaries and pastors and other wordsmiths – who keep telling me how important it is for the West to retreat from wars against radical Islam, and then welcome in predominantly Muslim immigrants who are displaced by our retreat. I ask them whether they understand that the Boston bomber's parents were let it by claiming to be refugees. I ask if they knew that the San Bernardino terrorist woman was background-checked by five different government agencies. And I ask them about the victims of crime by illegal immigrants who are convicted, but never deported. Their answer is that they didn't mean for it to happen. They thought that because they felt good supporting a policy, that meant that it would have good results.

I guess I have a simple question for the pro-refugee people. What would you say to the victims of this "generous" immigration policy? The ones who are blown up, shot up, raped, sexually assulted, intimidated? I think these kind, Bible quoting Christians want everyone to believe they are "nice". That's why they want to be so generous with other people's lives, other people's chastity, other people's modesty, other people's money. One wonders how a feelings-driven religious leader like Russell Moore, who supports illegal immigration and Muslim refugees, would handle it if he or someone close to him

were the victims of crimes committed by illegal immigrants or radical Muslims? I guess he probably hasn’t thought about that beyond the level of feelings and people-pleasing. Probably, he is not even aware of what is going outside the walls of his pious little church. Pastors are not the most reality-grounded people in the world, in most cases. Most are not good at thinking about consequences to policies. The important thing, they think, is how policies make them feel about themselves, and how it causes them to be seen by others in their pious little churches. What would a pious preacher like Russell Moore say to the victims of his religious blathering?

Are Campus Crusade and IVCF still Christian? Or are they just leftists?

January 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eagle eggs are protected, unborn babies are not

The latest news is about IVCF's rejection of the pro-life cause.

Here is an article from Touchstone magazine.

It says:

> Happy New Year, Everyone! Urbana 2015 ended on January 1, 2016. Urbana is a triennial major Christian (mostly Evangelical) student missions conference in St. Louis, Missouri, sponsored by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship ("InterVarsity"), primarily for college and graduate students.
>
> […][O]ne of the speakers prominently featured at Urbana was the "Rev." Michelle Higgins. "Rev." Higgins is the director of *Faith for Justice*, an advocacy group in St. Louis (she also serves as worship director at South City Church). Ms. Higgins is active in the #BlackLivesMatter movement in the St. Louis area.
>
> […]"Rev." Higgins… described the pro-life movement as merely "a big spectacle." In her remarks, she said:
>
> **We could end the adoption crisis tomorrow. But we're too busy arguing to have abortion banned. We're too busy arguing to defund Planned Parenthood. We are too busy withholding mercy from the living so that we might display a big spectacle of how much we want mercy to be shown to the unborn. Where is your mercy? What is your goal and only**

> **doing activism that is comfortable?**
>
> […]Government statistics estimate that more than 16 million black babies have been murdered in the womb since the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973, a number quite a bit larger than the number of unarmed black men killed by police.

Not to mention the racist origins of Planned Parenthood, which was born out of the eugenics movement. Keep in mind that Christians are supposed to speak out against premarital sex, and for taking in unwanted children – that's what the early church did. But at IVCF, we have women telling us that Planned Parenthood's views on premarital sex and abortion are not to be challenged. The Bible is wrong, and Planned Parenthood is right. Because feelings.

Its often the case that the pro-abortion activists like to slander pro-lifers for not caring about women and not caring about children after they are born. But it's not true of course, and you can read the reasons why in this Public Discourse post.

Campus Crusade, too

Previously, I wrote about how conservative professor Mike Adams is annoyed with Campus Crusade, let's see why.

He wrote his first article to complain that campus clubs like Crusade don't take stands on obvious moral issues like abortion.

He wrote:

> Several years ago, a good friend of mine named Dave Sterrett gave a pro-life speech to a Campus Crusade chapter at a state university in North Texas. He was invited to speak by a student. During the middle of his speech, he was arguing that the unborn are fully human and have souls by quoting from the Gospel of Luke. His talk was clearly Biblical and not political in nature.
>
> Nonetheless, when the Campus Crusade director arrived, he rudely shut the speech down.
>
> The Campus Crusade director told Dave to come out in the hall after he shut down his talk. The Crusade leader then began to yell at Dave and told him, "I don't know what your deal is talking about this issue. Get your books and get out of here." He went even further calling the headquarters of Crusade, which then demanded an apology from Sterrett.
>
> Shortly after I wrote about the incident, several members of Campus Crusade contacted me – but not to apologize for their mistreatment of Dave. They emailed to admonish me for writing about the incident – even though I did not call out the university or the chapter director by name. The fallout from the incident was revealing. It shows how far some campus ministries will go to avoid controversy – and that they often consider themselves to be above reproach.
>
> The original incident was also revealing. The censored speech was not political so

> the problem cannot be that Campus Crusade is not a "politically-based" organization. The speech was morally and Biblically based. Does the rejection of the speech mean that Campus Crusade is not a "morally-based" organization? Or does it mean they are not a "Biblically-based" organization?
>
> Of course it doesn't. **The incident merely shows that Campus Crusade has become a "comfort-based" organization. In other words, an over-riding priority is avoiding topics that might make people feel uncomfortable.**

Here is the second article. He writes about how Crusade made a deal to remove Christian elements from a gathering in order to get government funding, then writes about this lady who stood up for free speech:

> Subsequently, at the very school where Campus Crusade traded its religious freedom for student government funding, there was a lawsuit over a campus speech code. One of the plaintiffs was a fine Christian woman who fought to overturn a speech code that was being used to suppress conservative speech and which also posed a grave threat to religious organizations.
>
> After she sued, homosexual groups erupted in anger – falsely claiming that she was defending "hate speech" by opposing the speech code. They defamed her, physically threatened her, and verbally abused her –all in the name of tolerance and diversity.
>
> This time, Campus Crusade did not remain neutral. They weighed in. But, unbelievably, they weighed in *against* the Christian woman and *in favor* of those defending the speech codes.

This is the part I really think is important:

> Right after these unfortunate events unfolded I became embroiled in my own First Amendment lawsuit. In part, because I stood in unity with Christians and defended them against illegal policies, I was denied a promotion at my school.
>
> With the support of numerous Christian organizations, I eventually won the seven-year legal battle. Two Christian legal firms paid my legal bills and countless other Christian ministry and policy groups publicly backed me. But one Christian organization remained conspicuously silent. Of course, I am speaking of… the Crusade formerly named after Christ.
>
> For seven long years I heard not a single word of public support from a single member of Campus Crusade. When I won the case, I was deluged with calls and emails and handwritten letters from Christian leaders all across America.
>
> But I heard not a word from Campus Crusade for months in the wake of the verdict.
>
> Then, in mid-July, the final terms of my settlement were reached. It was reported in the local news that I would get a raise and a check for back pay while may attorneys would get a sum of $615,000. On August 1, 2014, I received the check

> from the State of North Carolina. On August 2, just 24 hours later, one of the local directors for Campus Crusade wrote me the following:
>
> "Hey Mike. I hope your summer is going well. Would you be interested in having coffee with me next week so I could talk to you about joining my ministry support team?"
>
> After I received that audacious email, I searched through my archives and read every single email correspondence I had received from that director over the course of seven years. There was no offer of prayer support in any of those emails. Nor was there any mention of the legal ordeal I was going through. He simply ignored the suit until the terms of the settlement became public.
>
> **In other words, your ministry and its leaders were never interested in unity. They never offered support in public or even in private. They only sought to profit financially from those who win battles Campus Crusade chooses to avoid.**

The reason I am linking to this is because I experienced this kind of behavior from IVCF and Campus Crusade as an undergraduate and later as a graduate student. They opposed the introduction of apologetics at every point, and they were both anxious to embrace the secular left, especially radical feminism, global warming alarmism, gay rights and socialism. It was depressing. If I were a student today, I'd head straight for the College Republicans and Ratio Christi if I wanted to get anything useful done. In fact, I started this blog partly as a way of discussing issues from a Christian point of view because I could not get anything done in IVCF and Campus Crusade.

I would not give money to IVCF or Crusade or any Christian missionary / relief organization right now. I would only give to individual chapters of Ratio Christi, and then only for specific lectures or debates. You have to watch your money like a hawk, because a lot of these leftist Christian do-gooder organizations have no Christian worldview based in the Bible.

What builds character? A job in a capitalist economy, or campus “safe spaces”?

January 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager liked this article so much that he discussed it on Friday AND Monday. A lot.

I read the article, too. And I think there is a lot to learn from it. Let’s take a look at some of it, and then I’ll make a point.

Excerpt:

> During Customs week, in PAF sessions, and in everyday discourse here at Haverford, we are taught to ask for help when we feel we need it, speak up when we feel uncomfortable, and prioritize our own well being over most other things. At McDonald’s, acting in this way could have cost me my job, a job I needed to afford college. There, I, as an individual, was insignificant: The most important thing was that the customer walks away satisfied, and it didn’t matter what I had to go through to make that happen. There is something ironic about this: In order to do what was necessary to be a Haverford student, I had to act in un-Haverford-like way.
>
> Because I worked the front counter, whenever there was a problem with an order — even though I never made the food — I was the one who was verbally abused. “One must never interrupt the customer,” and “The customer is always right,” so I would stand and listen to the entirety of elaborate rants, trying to put aside the attacks on myself, on McDonald’s, on America, and on capitalism, so that I could report the relevant details to those who actually had the power to correct the problem. These issues were usually simple, like a missing piece of cheese from a McDouble, or whipped cream on a milkshake when they hadn’t wanted any.

The customer is always right, and how you feel about the “injustice of it all” doesn’t matter. In fact, if you put your personal feelings about the need of the business owner to grow his business, you’ll probably get a talking to about how the customer is always right and to toughen up and take it.

She concludes:

> I’m grateful to have worked at McDonald’s: It taught me how better to handle my anxiety and how to put myself last in the name of efficiency and a common goal. McDonald’s strengthened my character, my work ethic, and expanded my capacity for resilience, valuable lessons which could not be learned in the “safe spaces” of Haverford’s campus. We must remember that putting oneself first is the essence of privilege, and that, in order to grow, we must leave this selfish mindset behind.

So what can we say about this?

In a free market, you can't get rich by greed alone

I don't know if most young people really understand that the essence of the free market / free enterprise / capitalist system is that in order for you to make money, you have to make something or do something for someone else that they find valuable. You cannot greed your way to a fortune. There is no filthy capitalist dog in a top hat, twirling his long mustache and laughing evilly as money magically appears. In a free market, you have to give something to someone to get their money. And you have to give them *more value for less cost than all the other competitors they can choose from*. So, people in businesses *have to be nice to you*. That's why Amazon and Costco don't ask questions when you return stuff. They want a relationship with you for life, and questioning you would make you go somewhere else. And all their employees are taught that – the customer is always right.

The opposite of free market competition is monopoly. Monopolies do exist in the world, but not usually in the free market. Where do monopolies exist? Well, they exist in the government. Think of what the service is like at the department of motor vehicles, or immigration office, or the social security office, etc. The customer service is lousy, the lines are long, the unionized government workers are uneducated and rude, and they get too many benefits and too much salary for the value they offer. How are they allowed to do that? Simple. You can't go anywhere else to get the stuff you need from them. That's why they can underperform, and you can't do a thing about it.

Anyway, the main point is that you should always encourage your children to take the most demanding job in the private sector they can handle. And by the way, if you know an irresponsible college student who insists on having fun, thrills and travel, the best thing you can do is encourage them to get a job that they hate. It will help them to grow their character and build their finances at the same time – making them ready for the

responsibilities and obligations they will face from marriage and parenting. Working in a capitalist system is magic for your character. Even if you didn’t have the best parents, you can still grow up right just by showing up for work every day.

In New York, you could be fined $250,000 for not using a transgender person's preferred pronoun

January 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and the Human Rights Campaign

This article from the Daily Signal makes me wonder why anyone would live in a garbage state like New York.

Excerpt:

> The new legal guidance, issued Dec. 21 by the New York City Commission on Human Rights, came as part of an expansion of the city's 2002 Human Rights Law, which protects against discrimination in a range of categories. The updated policy specifically protects transgender and gender non-conforming individuals from discrimination in areas of employment, public accommodation, and housing.
>
> […]Under the new policy, landlords, employers, and businesses can face civil penalties up to $125,000 per violation and up to $250,000 "for violations that are the result of willful, wanton, or malicious conduct."
>
> […]The guidance has the support of prominent LGBT groups, including the New York Civil Liberties Union, the New York City Anti Violence Project, and the National Center for Transgender Equality.
>
> […]New York City Human Rights Commissioner Carmelyn Malalis promised to "aggressively" enforce the protections in order to ensure the safety of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals.
>
> "Today's guidance makes it abundantly clear what the city considers to be discrimination under the law and the commission will continue to aggressively

> enforce protections to make that promise a reality," Malalis said. "Every New Yorker deserves to live freely and safely, free from discrimination."

Her undergraduate degree is in Women's Studies, I noticed. I wonder if that has anything to do with her sensitivity to feeling offended?

What would you have to do to get slapped with that fine?

This:

> **Intentionally failing to use an individual's preferred name, pronoun, or title**. For example, repeatedly calling a transgender woman "him" or "Mr." when she has made it clear that she prefers female pronouns and a female title.

Or this:

> **Refusing to allow individuals to use single-sex facilities, such as bathrooms or locker rooms, and participate in single-sex programs, consistent with their gender identity.** For example, barring a transgender woman from a women's restroom out of concern that she will make others uncomfortable.

Or this:

> **Failing to providing employee health benefits that cover gender-affirming care or failing to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals undergoing gender transition**, including medical appointments and recovery, where such reasonable accommodations are provided to other employees. (Federal and New York laws already require certain types of insurance to cover medically-necessary transition-related care.

Wow. This is what New York politicians think is a big problem? No wonder so many people are leaving their lousy state.

Look:

> More people move to Texas than any other state, according to data released by the Internal Revenue Service.
>
> The IRS collects data based on year-to-year address changes from tax returns to see which states individuals leave and where they subsequently move.
>
> From 2012 to 2013, which is the latest data available, Texas had the largest positive net migration of 152,477 individuals. This is calculated by subtracting the number of out-migrant tax returns from the number of in-migrant returns.
>
> Following Texas, Florida ranked second with a positive migration of 73,789 people. South Carolina was third with 28,905 people, Colorado fourth with 26,380, and North Carolina fifth with 25,911.
>
> Conversely, New York ranked last among the states with a negative net migration of 113,861 people. Following New York were Illinois, California, New Jersey, and

> Pennsylvania.

Look, Americans love America because they want freedom. Freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom to work and earn and run your business. New York thinks that they can take away that freedom, and that people will stay to live like that. But they don’t. They move to Texas. They move for freedom.

Did Jesus appeal to evidence when reaching out to skeptics?

January 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

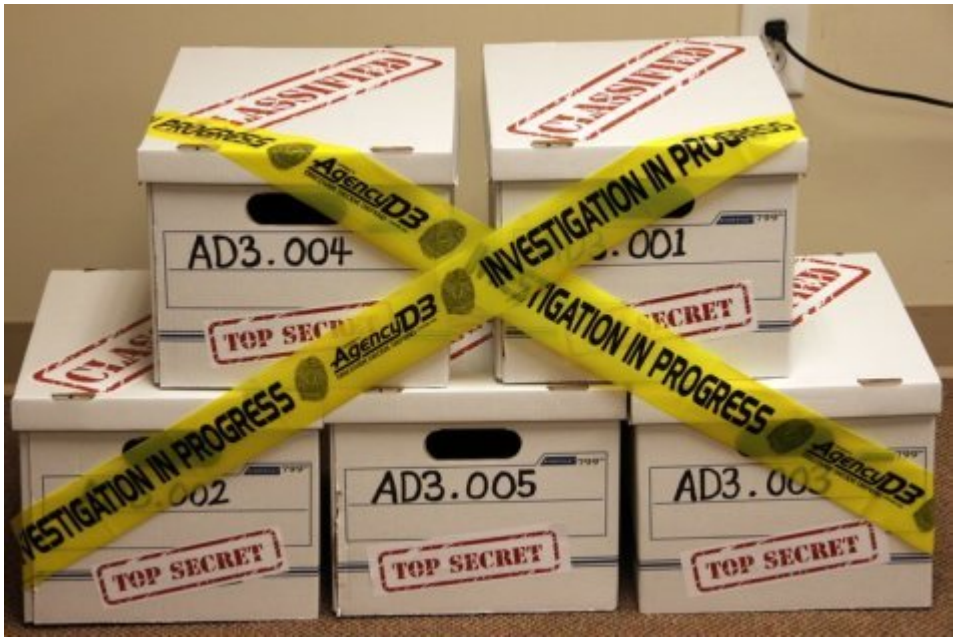

Investigation in progress

From Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi – Ohio State University.

He lists eight ways that Jesus makes his case.

Here's one of the ways:

> **2. Jesus Appealed to Evidence**
>
> Jesus knew He could not show up on the scene and not offer any evidence for His Messiahship. In his book On Jesus, Douglas Groothuis notes that Jesus appealed to evidence to confirm His claims. John the Baptist, who was languishing in prison after challenging Herod, sent messengers to ask Jesus the question: "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Matt. 11:3). This may seem an odd question from a man the Gospels present as the prophetic forerunner of Jesus and as the one who had proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah. Jesus, however, did not rebuke John's question. He did not say, "You must have faith; suppress your doubts." Instead, Jesus recounted the distinctive features of His ministry:
>
> "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me." (Matt. 11:4-6; see also Luke 7:22).
>
> Even in the Messiah Apocalypse, which is dated between 100 and 80 B.C.E mentions a similar theme as seen in Matt.11: 4-6: "He [God] frees the captives, makes the blind see, and makes the bent over stand straight…for he will heal the

> sick, revive the dead, and give good news to the humble and the poor he will satisfy, the abandoned he will lead, and the hungry he will make rich."
>
> Jesus' works of healing and teaching are meant to serve as positive evidence of His messianic identity, because they fulfill the messianic predictions of the Hebrew Scriptures. What Jesus claimed is this:
>
> 1. If one does certain kinds of actions (the acts cited above), then one is the Messiah.
> 2. I am doing those kinds of actions.
> 3. Therefore, I am the Messiah.

And:

> **5. The Miracles of Jesus**
>
> In the Bible, miracles have a distinctive purpose: they are used for three reasons:
> 1. To glorify the nature of God (John 2:11; 11:40)
> 2. To accredit certain persons as the spokesmen for God (Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3–4)
> 3. To provide evidence for belief in God (John 6:2, 14; 20:30–31). (3)
>
> Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, told Jesus, "'Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him' " (Jn. 3:1–2). In Acts, Peter told the crowd that Jesus had been "accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him" (Acts 2:22).
>
> In Matthew 12:38-39, Jesus says, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet." In this Scripture, God confirmed the Messianic claim when Jesus said the sign that would confirm his Messiahship was to be the resurrection.
>
> It is important to note that not all witnesses to a miracle believe. Jesus did not do His miracles for entertainment. They were done to evoke a response. So perhaps Paul Moser is right on target in what he calls "kardiatheology" – a theology that is aimed at one's motivational heart (including one's will) rather than just at one's mind or one's emotions. In other words, God is very interested in moral transformation.
>
> We see Jesus' frustration when His miracles did not bring the correct response from his audience. "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" (John 12:37). Jesus himself said of some, "They will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31). One result, though not the purpose, of miracles is condemnation of the unbeliever (cf. John 12:31, 37). (4)

I am forever pointing this out to people. Jesus didn't get people to follow him because he was nice. And he didn't just talk to people who agreed with him. He even promised "a

wicked generation” his resurrection as evidence for his claims. He called his resurrection “the sign of Jonah”, and it was meant for people who were looking for a “sign”. This is the way we should be – using whatever evidence we can dig up from science, history, law, and even the social sciences (when arguing moral issues).

Read the rest here. Surprise! Jesus loves to convince people, and not just by quoting the Bible to people who already accept the Bible, either.

The formation of the elements required for complex embodied life is fine-tuned

January 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Some atheists who don't understand the fine-tuning argument like to assert that the constants and quantities that are fine-tuned to allow for the existence of complex, embodied life can be changed arbitrarily, and life would still exist as it does now. They say that maybe we would have a ridges in our foreheads like Klingons, or maybe we would have longer ears like Vulcans or maybe green skin like Orions. The evidential support for this view seems to be grounded in Star Trek TV shows, not peer-reviewed evidence. Are atheists right to ground their rejection of a cosmic Designer in science fiction television shows? What does the peer-reviewed research say?

The fine-tuning argument

First, let's review the structure of the fine-tuning argument.

The argument goes like this:

1. The fine-tuning of the universe to support life is either due to law, chance or design
2. It is not due to law or chance
3. Therefore, the fine-tuning is due to design

Although each permutation of values for the constants and quantities is equally improbable, the vast majority of the permutations will not permit life.

Let's review:

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, a universal solvent, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.

- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the ratios between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible values spans 70 orders of magnitude.
- The constants are *selected* by whoever creates the universe. They are not determined by physical laws. And the extreme probabilities involved required put the fine-tuning beyond the reach of chance.
- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Now let's see a specific example: carbon and oxygen formation.

Carbon is that element that can serve as a hub for larger molecules, and oxygen is also a vital element, since it is a component of water, which is required for life (universal solvent). Both are required for complex life of any imaginable kind.

Now for the study.

Here is an article on Science Daily about the fine-tuning argument.

It says:

> Life as we know it is based upon the elements of carbon and oxygen. Now a team of physicists, including one from North Carolina State University, is looking at the conditions necessary to the formation of those two elements in the universe. They've found that when it comes to supporting life, the universe leaves very little margin for error.
>
> Both carbon and oxygen are produced when helium burns inside of giant red stars. Carbon-12, an essential element we're all made of, can only form when three alpha particles, or helium-4 nuclei, combine in a very specific way. The key to formation is an excited state of carbon-12 known as the Hoyle state, and it has a very specific energy — measured at 379 keV (or 379,000 electron volts) above the energy of three alpha particles. Oxygen is produced by the combination of another alpha particle and carbon.
>
> NC State physicist Dean Lee and German colleagues Evgeny Epelbaum, Hermann Krebs, Timo Laehde and Ulf-G. Meissner had previously confirmed the existence and structure of the Hoyle state with a numerical lattice that allowed the researchers to simulate how protons and neutrons interact. These protons and neutrons are made up of elementary particles called quarks. The light quark mass is one of the fundamental parameters of nature, and this mass affects particles' energies.
>
> **In new lattice calculations done at the Juelich Supercomputer Centre the physicists found that just a slight variation in the light quark mass will change the energy of the Hoyle state, and this in turn would affect the**

> **production of carbon and oxygen in such a way that life as we know it wouldn't exist.**
>
> […]The researchers' findings appear in *Physical Review Letters*.

There are many, many other examples of fine-tuning of the constants and quantities to permit complex, embodied life. And, as we'll see below, this evidence is admitted by atheists.

Atheists agree: the fine-tuning is a fact

Let me give you a citation from the best one of all, Martin Rees. Martin Rees is an atheist and a qualified astronomer. He wrote a book called "Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape The Universe", (Basic Books: 2001). In it, he discusses 6 numbers that need to be fine-tuned in order to have a life-permitting universe.

In chapter 1, Rees writes:

> Mathematical laws underpin the fabric of our universe — not just atoms, but galaxies, stars and people. The properties of atoms — their sizes and masses, how many different kinds there are, and the forces linking them together — determine the chemistry of our everyday world. The very existence of atoms depends on forces and particles deep inside them. The objects that astronomers study — planets, stars and galaxies — are controlled by the force of gravity. And everything takes place in the arena of an expanding universe, whose properties were imprinted into it at the time of the initial Big Bang.
>
> […]This book describes six numbers that now seem especially significant.
>
> […]Perhaps there are some connections between these numbers. At the moment, however, we cannot predict any one of them from the values of the others.
>
> […]**These six numbers constitute a 'recipe' for a universe. Moreover, the outcome is sensitive to their values: if any one of them were to be 'untuned', there would be no stars and no life.** Is this tuning just a brute fact, a coincidence? Or is it the providence of a benign Creator?

There are some atheists who deny the fine-tuning, but these atheists are in firm opposition to the progress of science. The more science has progressed, the more constants, ratios and quantities we have discovered that need to be fine-tuned. Science is going in a theistic direction. Next, let's see how atheists try to account for the fine-tuning.

Atheistic responses to the fine-tuning evidence

There are two common responses among atheists to this argument.

The first is to speculate that there are actually an infinite number of other universes that are not fine-tuned, (i.e. – the gambler's fallacy). All these other universes don't support life. We just happen to be in the one universe is fine-tuned for life. The problem is that there *is no way of directly observing these other universes and no independent evidence that they exist.*

Here is an excerpt from an article in Discover magazine, (which is hostile to theism and

Christianity).

> Short of invoking a benevolent creator, many physicists see only one possible explanation: Our universe may be but one of perhaps infinitely many universes in an inconceivably vast multiverse. Most of those universes are barren, but some, like ours, have conditions suitable for life.
>
> The idea is controversial. Critics say it doesn't even qualify as a scientific theory because the existence of other universes cannot be proved or disproved. Advocates argue that, like it or not, the multiverse may well be the only viable nonreligious explanation for what is often called the "fine-tuning problem"—the baffling observation that the laws of the universe seem custom-tailored to favor the emergence of life.

The second response by atheists is that the human observers that exist today, 14 billion years after the universe was created out of nothing, actually caused the fine-tuning by going back in time and causing the universe to be fine-tuned. This solution would mean that although humans did not exist at the time the of the big bang, they are going to be able to reach back in time at some point in the future and manually fine-tune the universe.

Here is an excerpt from and article in the New Scientist, (which is hostile to theism and Christianity).

> …maybe we should approach cosmic fine-tuning not as a problem but as a clue. Perhaps it is evidence that we somehow endow the universe with certain features by the mere act of observation… observers are creating the universe and its entire history right now. If we in some sense create the universe, it is not surprising that the universe is well suited to us.

So, there are two choices for atheists. Either an infinite number of unobservable universes that are not fine-tuned, or humans go back in time at some future point and fine-tune the beginning of the universe, billions of years in the past. I think I will prefer the design explanation to those alternatives.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason

- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

65-year-old woman uses legally-owned gun to deter 23-year-old man who tried to rob her

January 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

First, let's see this news story from the CBS local news.

Excerpt:

> Police say a 65-year-old woman shot a man who tried to rob her Monday night, leading to that man's arrest.
>
> Michael Bontaites, 23 of Manchester, was charged with attempted robbery and held on $5,000 bail. He was charged and arraigned Tuesday at Elliot Hospital, where he had gone for treatment after he was shot.
>
> The incident began after the woman noticed an unknown dark-colored sedan following her as she was driving home from her job around 11:30 p.m. Monday night, which she said gave her "heightened concern."
>
> "Your instincts will tell you. Your gut will tell you when something isn't right," the woman, who did not wish to be identified, told WBZ-TV.
>
> The Manchester grandmother said the sedan followed her into the parking lot of her apartment complex on South Porter Street and parked near her. When she left the car to walk into her building, she said a man in a dark hooded sweatshirt got out of the sedan, ran to block her path, and reached out to grab her.
>
> The woman, who holds a valid concealed carry gun permit, pulled a handgun from her pocket and shot the man once in the chest at close range.
>
> […]The woman tells WBZ she has had her permit to carry for 10 years.
>
> "No one has the right to do that to anybody," she said of the would-be robber. "And if you can defend yourself, all the power to you."

Now, over at the Manchester Union Leader, we find out that this guy was actually able to

avoid serious jail time for a previous crime:

> The alleged mugger shot on Monday by a Manchester grandmother once threatened a woman with a knife after an automobile accident, according to records.
>
> Michael Bontaites, 23, who is now in Valley Street Jail with a bullet wound in his chest, pleaded guilty to felony criminal threatening after a June 2012 traffic accident on Route 28 bypass in Derry, according to a Rockingham County prosecutor. Derry police say he got out of the car with a knife in hand, had words with the driver and passenger and then drove off.
>
> Bontaites was facing felony charges that could have landed him in prison for 3 1/2 to seven years. But as part of a plea bargain, he agreed to six months of incarceration at Rockingham County jail. The sentence also called for an anger management evaluation and a year of probation.

Liberals are always trying to release criminals early – in fact, Obama recently released a whole bunch of criminals. That's what Democrats do. The Obama administration has released convicted drug offenders. The Obama administration has released radical Islamic terrorists. The Obama administration ran guns to Mexican drug cartels. Criminals released early have murdered cops. Illegal immigrants with prior convictions murdered an innocent woman. Radical Islamic terrorists slipped through security screening to murder more innocent Americans. And so on.

Democrats are not serious about protecting the public – they even opposed sanctions against sanctuary cities. But now all that pro-criminal behavior is being taken a step further, and it has something to do with the self-defense story above.

Obama's gun ban

What if the old woman in the story was not allowed to own a firearm? Well, it turns out that this is exactly what Obama would like to do.

The leftist Washington Post explains:

> The most legally problematic part of the White House statement involves persons who are, in the terms of Gun Control Act, "adjudicated as a mental defective." 18 U.S. Code sect. 922(g)(4). Under the Social Security Act, a beneficiary can designate a personal representative to manage payments and interactions with the Social Security bureaucracy; for example, a widow who has no experience in financial affairs might designate a family member as her representative.
>
> Should any Social Security beneficiary who has designated a personal representative be considered "adjudicated as a mental defective"? This question was raised by an Obama administration proposal in 2015. It was resisted by a bill introduced in the U.S. Congress. Imposing a gun ban on Social Security beneficiaries who have designated a financial representative would contradict almost half a century of established interpretation of the Gun Control Act of

> 1968. Nobody who advocated for the 1968 gun law suggested that it would have any impact on Social Security beneficiaries.
>
> The Tuesday White House “executive action” regarding Social Security was simply an announcement of a plan to promulgate a regulation according to the ordinary process. Because a new regulation has not yet been published in the Federal Register, it is impossible to say whether the White House plan is constitutional. The devil will be in the details.

So, if you are collecting Social Security, and you have designated someone to be your personal representative, then the Obama administration thinks that maybe you shouldn’t own a gun, and be able to defend yourself from criminals. So I guess if the older lady in the news story happened to be in that situation, then maybe she should just let herself be robbed, raped and murdered, instead of fighting back.

ABC, CBS and NBC silent about bill that repeals Obamacare and defunds Planned Parenthood

January 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama and Planned Parenthood

Life News reports about an astonishing story of left-wing media bias in the mainstream media. (H/T Mary from Marin)

Excerpt:

> On Wednesday night, the major network evening newscasts all failed to cover the first full,successful Congressional vote to repeal of ObamaCare and defund of Planned Parenthood that will go to President Obama's desk where he'll likely veto the measures seeking to undo his health care law and strike federal funding from the nation's largest provider of abortions.
>
> Despite the final vote in the House coming late in the afternoon, ABC's *World News Tonight*, the *CBS Evening News*, and *NBC Nightly News* chose not to even muster a news brief informing their viewers of this action by the Republican-led Congress (with the Senate vote coming via reconciliation).
>
> Providing a more balanced contrast, FNC's *Special Report* had a full segment with host Bret Baier and chief congressional correspondent Mike Emanuel live on Capitol Hill providing the details.
>
> Baier returned from commercial break by noting that "Republicans are making history and making their point with their latest attempt to overturn the President's health care law, but they still are not actually successfully repealing ObamaCare."
>
> Emanuel mentioned that the House vote was 240-181 and while "House lawmakers have voted dozens of times to repeal ObamaCare," all the previous attempts ended because "Senate Democrats have successfully filibustered the measures."
>
> The FNC correspondent then explained how the legislation passed the Senate

> and that it also included language to defund Planned Parenthood: “But this time, the Senate used a procedure known as reconciliation to pass this bill. House leaders noted it would strip federal funding for Planned Parenthood and force the President to defend his signature law.”
>
> After soundbites from House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Speaker Paul Ryan, Emanuel ruled that Republicans “recognize the President will veto the bill and they’re not expected to have the votes to override it” as Speaker Ryan has instead “urg[ed] his colleagues to come up with an ObamaCare alternative to provide a contrast.”
>
> Instead of highlighting this story, ABC and NBC both devoted full stories to hyping the $500 million PowerBall jackpot set to be drawn late Wednesday night.

I am personally not a fan of Fox News, but there are two exceptions. Special Report with Bret Baier and Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace. The bipartisan panels on those shows is worth the time to watch it. But the main thing I want to say about this story is about the mainstream media’s silence. When you look in the mainstream media, you will not find any pro-life voices there. And this is despite the fact that half the country is pro-life. I just think it’s important for us to not sit there in front of the television and absorb the values of these carefully coifed and made-up “journalists”. They are there to promote secular leftism, and nothing more. So be critical when you watch.

What does the Bible say on the issue of self-defense vs gun control?

January 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Reformed Baptist theologian Wayne Grudem speaks on the Bible and the right of self-defense.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Topics:

- what about turning the other cheek? doesn't that undermine self-defense?

- what does Jesus say about the right to self-defense in the New Testament
- did Jesus' disciples carry swords for protection during his ministry?
- why did Jesus tell his disciples to sell their cloaks and buy swords?
- what about Jesus stopping Peter from using force during Jesus' arrest?
- shouldn't we rely on police instead of our own personal weapons?
- what about brandishing a handgun vs actually trying to shoot someone?
- what are violent crime rates in pro-gun USA and in the anti-gun UK?
- does outlawing guns cause violent crime to increase or decrease?
- do academic studies show that gun control decreases crime?
- do academic studies show that concealed carry laws decreases crime?
- what do academic studies show about defensive handgun usage?
- do many children die from guns in the home compared to other causes?
- doesn't the US Constitution limit the usage of guns to the army and police?
- what did the Founding Fathers believe about lawful ownership of firearms?
- What should be the goal of someone who uses a weapon in self-defense?

This is a good example of applying the Bible to real life. We need more of that!

Hillary Clinton told advisor to strip classified markings off document and e-mail it unsecured

January 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton: the affirmative action candidate for President of the United States

We have a lot of material showing that Hillary Clinton lacks the moral character and professional judgment to be President, but this latest revelation tops them all, in my opinion.

This is from the non-partisan The Hill.

> **In an email marked June 17, 2011, that was released by the State Department on Friday, Clinton informs aide Jake Sullivan that she has not yet received a set of talking points.**
>
> **"They say they've had issues sending secure fax," Sullivan says. "They're working on it.""If they can't, turn into nonpaper w no identifying heading and send nonsecure," Clinton responds.**
>
> […]The Clinton campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment.
>
> Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Ia.) chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, called the email "disturbing."
>
> "The State Department's latest Freedom of Information Act release contains a disturbing email that appears to show the former Secretary of State instructing a subordinate to remove the headings from a classified document and send it to her in an unsecure manner," he said in a statement on Friday.

> “It raises a host of serious questions and underscores the importance of the various inquiries into the transmittal of classified information through her non-government email server,” he added.
>
> […]The Democratic primary front-runner is under investigation by the FBI for using a private email server during her tenure at State.
>
> Republicans have accused Clinton of compromising classified data and putting national security at risk by using a non-governmental device to transmit and receive her emails.
>
> The State Department released a new batch of 3,007 emails on Friday, in which it said 66 were classified. The total number of classified messages received from Clinton’s server is now up to 1,340.

Reactions to this discovery from prominent conservatives show the impact of what she’s done to her presidential ambitions:

> Guy Benson adds at Town Hall:
>
> As Hillary herself has personally attested — is that none of the sensitive material that she wrongfully transmitted through her unsecure server was “marked classified” at the time. Again, this is meaningless, especially when it comes to highly secret material that she was obligated to recognize and protect as soon as it was produced. But the email chain referenced above includes an instruction from Hillary Clinton to a State Department aide (who now works on her campaign) to strip classified information — it remains redacted to this day — of its classified markings [“identifying heading”] and “send nonsecure.”
>
> Which leads us to Ed Morrissey at Hot Air:
>
> Has the State Department released a smoking gun in the Hillary Clinton e-mail scandal? In a thread from June 2011, Hillary exchanges e-mails with Jake Sullivan, then her deputy chief of staff and now her campaign foreign-policy adviser, in which she impatiently waits for a set of talking points. When Sullivan tells her that the source is having trouble with the secure fax, Hillary then orders Sullivan to have the data stripped of its markings and sent through a non-secure channel.
>
> That should be game, set, and match, yes?
>
> “If they can’t, turn into nonpaper w no identifying heading and send nonsecure.” That’s an order to violate the laws handling classified material. There is no other way to read that demand.
>
> Game, set, match, indeed. Every single one of Hillary’s excuses has now evaporated, and this email is a clear instance of giving an order in violation of national security clearance rules.
>
> Hillary Clinton, I don’t need to hasten to add, belongs in jail.

She really does have contempt for rules and regulations that are devised by experts for the good of her country. She does not understand things like encryption and information

security. She does not respect the need for national security. She is not qualified to be President. Her only reason for wanting to be President is personal ambition, not the good of her country.

I doubt that she could even survive on her own in this world, without her army of government handlers and assistants driving her around, buying her groceries and showing her how to operate the hardware and software that any teenager can operate. She just hasn't had the experience needed to be President – she doesn't know how to do the job. Running around the world trying to push abortion and gay rights on other countries is not good experience for the job.

She needs to retire with her charming husband Bill and talk about the good old days when she was protecting him from the women he assaulted and abused. If she refuses to take responsibility for the terrible harm that she's done to her country, then maybe she needs to spend the rest of her life in a federal prison.

Related posts

- The real war on women: Hillary Clinton's record of defending a man accused of rape
- Hillary Clinton downplays VA scandal: 307,000 veterans died on VA waiting lists
- Hillary Clinton's State Department ignored 600+ requests for more security in Benghazi
- Why did Hillary Clinton blame the Benghazi terrorist attack on an "Internet video"?
- Intelligence review finds Hillary e-mails contain "highly classified information"
- Secretary of State Hillary Clinton prioritized gay rights and abortion over national security
- Hillary Clinton walks out of press conference when questioned about e-mail server
- Hillary Clinton gives up her unsecure, home-brew server to the DOJ
- FBI conducting investigation of Hillary Clinton's private, secret e-mail server
- Hillary Clinton lied to CNN about not receiving a subpoena
- All evidence points to Hillary Clinton as source of internet video lie
- In one day, Bill and Hillary Clinton got over $1 million for four speeches
- Hillary Clinton: let's use government to force Christians to stop being pro-life
- Former CIA deputy director: foreign countries have everything on Clinton's e-mail server
- Only 10% of money given to Clinton Foundation goes to charity
- Mitt Romney: Hillary's Clinton Foundation Uranium One scandal "looks like bribery"
- "Dead broke" Hillary Clinton makes more money in an hour than top-paid CEO
- New book by Peter Schweizer: Clinton State Department favored foreign donors
- Largest individual donor to Clinton Foundation has trade ties to Iran
- Clinton Foundation continues to take donations from regimes that oppress women
- What are Hillary Clinton's views on amnesty and illegal immigration?
- Hillary Clinton deleted 32,000 e-mails, refuses to turn over her home-based server
- Clinton Foundation: all eight of the highest paid executives are men
- E-mails released by Clinton: there are "months, and months, and months" missing

- As senator, Hillary Clinton paid women 72 cents for every dollar she paid men
- Hillary Clinton’s fake Bosnia gunfire story and her abortion award
- Universities raise tuition while paying hundreds of thousands to Hillary Clinton to speak
- State Department ignored Boko Haram for two years, under Hillary Clinton
- Hillary Clinton opposes bill to cut taxpayer funding of abortions abroad

U.S. Marine Capt. William E. Barber earned the Medal of Honor fighting communists in North Korea

January 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's go from the top down to set the context for the profile of William E. Barber.

Map of the Korean War

In the summer of 1950, North Korean communists launch a completely unprovoked attack across the 38th parallel against their peaceful, democratic neighbors, the South Koreans. The Americans immediately sent an invasion force by sea to drive them out. The North Koreans easily manage to take over the capital Seoul, and the allies are left with only one port in the southeast – Pusan. In September of 1950, American forces land an invasion force at Inchon, cutting off the North Korean invasion force surrounding Pusan. The North Koreans retreat, and there is hope that American forces will be home by Christmas. But then, unbeknownst to the Americans, the Chines communists invade North Korea from the north and surround the American forces near the Chosin reservoir, threatening to annihilate an entire Marine division.

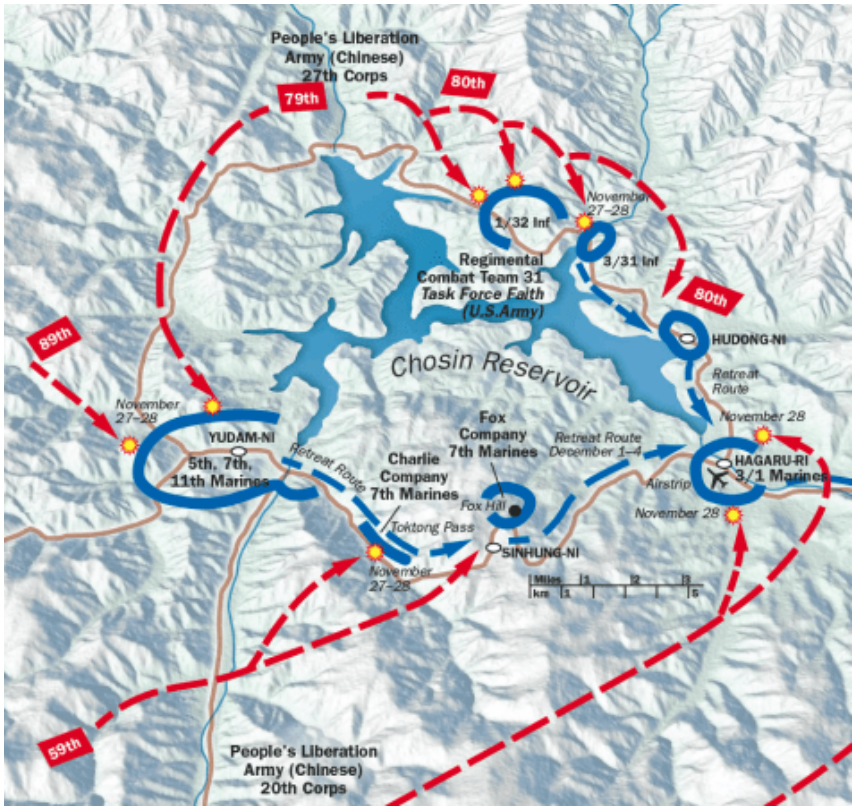

The Marines at Yudam-Ni are surrounded and must retreat to Hagaru-Ri

As you can see from the map, there are a whole bunch of American troops fighting to the north/east and south/west of the Chosin Reservoir. The marines near Yudam-Ni need to retreat along a road called the MSR (main supply road) back to Hagaru-Ri. But in order to conduct that retreat, they have to hold onto the vital Toktong pass, which is overwatched by Fox company from their position on Fox Hill. Can Charlie company and Fox company hold off the entire Chinese 59th division (10,000 men) with only two companies (about 250 men each)?

U.S. Marines “The Chosin Few”, December 1950

Well, the book I read (which Dina gave me for Christmas), was about Fox company and their defense of the Toktong pass. This is what the leftist New York Times had to say about the man in charge of Fox company (“F company”) in a 2002 article:

> Col. William E. Barber, who won the Medal of Honor for his leadership of a vastly outnumbered company under siege on a snowy hilltop in one of the worst defeats in Marine history, the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in 1950, died on April 19 at his home in Irvine, Calif. He was 82.
>
> The cause was bone-marrow cancer, said Jerry Courtier, a friend who hopes to write Colonel Barber’s biography.
>
> The reservoir is south of the Yalu River, which separates North Korea from China. After the Americans had pushed the North Koreans almost to the Yalu, 150,000 Chinese troops unexpectedly crossed the river into North Korea. Colonel Barber’s unit, Company F of the Second Battalion of the Seventh Marines, First Marine Division, was on a hill that commanded the Toktong Pass, a vital gap between Yudam Ni and Hagaru Ri, two towns separated by 78 miles.
>
> The stakes were huge. If F Company yielded its position, 8,000 marines at Yudam Ni would be cut off from the 3,000 at Haguru Ri by tens of thousands of Chinese troops.
>
> Through five days and six nights in subzero weather and often swirling snow, Colonel Barber, then a captain, inspired his men, outnumbered more than five to one, to cling to their tenuous positions. He was shot in a bone near his groin on the second day but continued to make the rounds of the hill. He likened the wound to a bee sting.
>
> When the unit was ordered to withdraw and fight its way to safety, Captain Barber refused. Three times, the enemy broke through the line, only to be repulsed.
>
> ”I knew that we could probably hold, and I knew that if we didn’t hold we could exact a very heavy toll,” he said in an interview in 1976 with The Los Angeles Times.
>
> His citation for the nation’s top medal said that he commanded his men from a stretcher. But Hector A. Cafferata Jr., who as a rifleman won the Medal of Honor in the same battle, insisted that Captain Barber refused the stretcher.
>
> ”He walked the line, he kept us together,” said Mr. Cafferata, who was beside Captain Barber when he was shot.
>
> In the mayhem, the Chinese blew whistles, beat cymbals and tooted bugles as they repeatedly attacked. Coffee froze before men could drink it, and some of the wounded died because plasma froze with no way to thaw it.
>
> When the battle was over, more than 1,000 enemy soldiers were dead. Of Captain Barber’s original 240 men, 82 were able to walk away.

> Gen. Raymond G. Davis, who was a lieutenant colonel in the Marines, received a Medal of Honor for leading the unit that rescued F Company.
>
> William Earl Barber was born on Nov. 30, 1919, in Dehart, Ky. He attended what is now Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky., for two years and enlisted in the Marines, at the age of 21, in 1940.
>
> He was so good at shooting a rifle that he was made a weapons instructor. After volunteering for parachute training, he demonstrated such proficiency that he became a parachute instructor.
>
> In World War II, he was promoted to sergeant in 1942 and commissioned a second lieutenant in 1943. He was a rifle platoon commander at Camp Pendleton, Calif., when his unit was shipped to the Pacific.
>
> Colonel Barber was in the first wave to hit Iwo Jima, where he was wounded twice. He received the Silver Star for bravery in addition to two Purple Hearts. At a ceremony on the 50th anniversary of the battle in 1995, he said:
>
> ”I am older now, as you are, but I can still see the colors of that February morning. The sky. The island. And sometimes I think I can hear the noise of battle.”
>
> He was treated in Japan for his wounds and returned to the United States, where he worked as a recruiter, among other positions. He was promoted to captain in 1949 and was in the force that occupied Japan.
>
> When he joined F Company in Korea, he saw a raggedy unshaven bunch and immediately ordered the the troops to shave, shine their shoes and look like marines. He suggested that his new charges resembled Pancho Villa’s bandits.
>
> ”He was one tough guy,” Mr. Cafferata said. ”He was by the book.”

He was by the book. He enlisted in the Marines because he was grateful to his country for allowing him to escape poverty and go into college, and he wanted to give something back.

You can read a review of the book I read about Fox company, and read about some of the details of what it was like for those men. You’ll never look at your own troubles the same way again. You can also read about Barber’s Medal of Honor citation here.

The Medal of Honor, Navy and Marines variant

So, now that I am done with that book, I have moved on to another Korean War book that Dina gave me, this one about George company. The Korean War might have been our most just war – defending a peaceful democratic ally from a totalitarian communist regime. You just have to compare North Korea and South Korea today to understand the stakes. North Korea is basically a godless concentration camp that tortures and murders its people if they so much as think the wrong thoughts about the atheist state. South Korea is free and prosperous, where the people have human rights, like the right to free speech and freedom of religion.

It's important for me to read about the hardships that real heroes face, so that I don't complain too much about my own tiny struggles. When you read about the struggles of great American soldiers, so many good things happen to you. Your own problems get smaller, your humility and gratitude get bigger. And you are reminded about why America is a great country, and what American character is really like. These things are not taught by leftists in the public schools. They are not talked about by leftists in the mainstream media. They are not presented by leftists in the Hollywood film industry. If you want to know the real America, you have to find it yourself.

Are illegal immigrants more likely to commit crimes than the general public?

January 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kathryn Steinle was murdered by an illegal immigrant.

So we had a case in the news where an illegal immigrant who had been arrested and deported numerous times was allowed to stay in the U.S. thanks to San Francisco's very Democrat "sanctuary city" policy. All the people running for the Democrat presidential nomination support sanctuary cities, and amnesty for illegal immigrants as well. But how do these policies affect American taxpayers?

Breitbart News has the numbers from the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

Excerpt:

> While illegal immigrants account for about 3.5 percent of the U.S population, they represented 36.7 percent of federal sentences in FY 2014 following criminal convictions, according to U.S. Sentencing Commission data obtained by Breitbart News.
>
> According to FY 2014 USSC data, of 74,911 sentencing cases, citizens accounted for 43,479 (or 58.0 percent), illegal immigrants accounted for 27,505 (or 36.7 percent), legal immigrants made up 3,017 (or 4.0 percent), and the remainder (about 1 percent) were cases in which the offender was either extradited or had an unknown status.
>
> Broken down by some of the primary offenses, illegal immigrants represented 16.8 percent of drug trafficking cases, 20.0 percent of kidnapping/hostage taking, 74.1 percent of drug possession, 12.3 percent of money laundering, and 12.0 percent of murder convictions.

Now a lot of those convictions will be related to immigration… what happens when we take those out?

The sentencing rate is still higher than normal:

> **Eliminating all immigration violations, illegal immigrants would account for 13.6 percent of all the offenders sentenced in FY14 following federal criminal convictions — still greater than the 3.5 percent of the population illegal immigrants are said to make up.**

All that crime is not only dangerous and expensive, but we have to pay for the fails and law enforcement to catch them, too. Now, let's review Hillary Clinton's views on illegal immigration.

The Washington Times reports that she favors amnesty:

> **Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Rodham Clinton vowed Tuesday that if elected, she would try to expand President Obama's deportation amnesty to more illegal immigrants, saying this administration has left out a number of aliens who deserve to be granted legal status.**
>
> Speaking in Las Vegas at a Cinco de Mayo meeting focused on immigration, Mrs. Clinton also called for granting attorneys to illegal immigrants facing the complex immigration system, and said she would like to re-examine detention to ensure more illegal immigrants are released as they await deportation.
>
> Mrs. Clinton delivered on just about every question from immigrant rights activists, who had been pressing her to reject Mr. Obama's detention policies and go beyond his amnesty.

The Daily Caller reminds us that she also supports sanctuary cities:

> Clinton last weighed in publicly on sanctuary cities during the 2008 presidential campaign.
>
> "You would allow the sanctuary cities to disobey the federal law?" Clinton was asked by Tim Russert during a Sept. 6, 2007, debate at Dartmouth College.
>
> "Well, I don't think there is any choice," she responded.
>
> Clinton said she backed the sanctuary city concept because without it, illegal immigrants refuse to cooperate with police because they are afraid of being deported.
>
> "Local law enforcement has a different job than federal immigration enforcement," Clinton said. "The problem is the federal government has totally abdicated its responsibility."
>
> Clinton again expressed her support for sanctuary cities in a 2008 interview with Fox's Bill O'Reilly.
>
> **"Are you going to crack down on the sanctuary cities?" O'Reilly asked.**
>
> **"No, I'm not," Clinton said, eliciting a shocked response from the host.**

I'm all for more skilled immigration, but that's not what is happening on our southern border. If Hillary becomes president, that situation will only get worse.

Is there any evidence to support the Bible's teaching about divorce?

January 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is there any evidence that supports the Bible's teaching about divorce?
So, the topic for this post is whether it's OK to get divorced.

What does the Bible say?

I noticed a lot of people getting divorced these days in the church, and trying to justify why they are allowed to divorce and why they should be allowed to pursue remarriage. So I'm first going to quote from an article from Focus on the Family by Amy Tracy.

She writes:

> God is very clear, however, that He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). He also says, "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matthew 19:6). According to the New Testament, there are two justifications for divorce: infidelity (Matthew 5:32) and desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15).

Now, I had always taken the rule of Dr. Laura for this. She says that you can get divorced for adultery and abandonment (as above), but she allows allows for physical abuse and drug addiction. But it looks like the Bible is more strict than Dr. Laura, even.

What does the evidence say?

So let's see if there is any reason outside the Bible that explains why the Bible tells people not to get divorced. The UK Daily Mail reports on a study on the effects of divorce.

Excerpt:

> Divorcing parents who try to maintain an amicable relationship for the sake of their children are doing nothing to help them, a major study suggests.
>
> The impact of the split on youngsters is the same whether or not the mother and father keep cordial links, it found.
>
> […]The new study, the first in 20 years to examine how the behaviour of separated parents affects their children, was carried out by US academics.
>
> It covered 270 parents who were divorced or separated between 1998 and 2004 in an unnamed US state that compels divorcees to take part in an education programme on 'co-operative co-parenting'.
>
> Of these, 31 per cent considered their relationship with their ex-spouse as 'co-operative and involved'; 45 per cent were 'moderately engaged' with their divorced partner, with some conflict between them; and 24 per cent said their co-operation was 'infrequent but conflictual'.
>
> They were asked to say how their break-up had affected the youngest child in their family. The average age of children involved was eight years.
>
> The study, published in the academic journal Family Relations, said that children of divorced parents are more likely than others to suffer 'external' symptoms such as behaviour problems or drug abuse, more likely to have 'internal' difficulties like anxiety or depression, and more likely to do badly at school.
>
> But the researchers, headed by Dr Jonathon Beckmeyer of Indiana University, found that these children's problems were no worse if their parents continued to row and bicker with each other after the divorce.
>
> The study said 'despite the expectation that children fare better' if their divorced parents develop a co-operative relationship, the behaviour of children as assessed by their parents 'did not significantly differ' between the friendly and the fighting groups of divorcees.

So the take-home lesson is this: there is no such thing as a divorce that doesn't hurt the children. If you're thinking of divorce and you have children, just don't do it. And the Bible sides with the children against the selfish desires of their parents – telling the parents to be careful who they marry, and to give up their happiness in order to provide stability for the children.

One more thing. I run into a lot of people who think that life is unpredictable, and that you just have to pursue happiness, fun and adventures and how that somehow the universe or God or whatever will make all the selfish hedonism "work out". That's false. Marriage is not like a slot machine. There are things you can do now to prepare your character for marriage. There are things that your marriage candidate should be able to do to be prepared for marriage as well. If both people practice self-control, self-denial and self-sacrifice before marriage, that's a good sign that they will be able to make a commitment that lasts. Indulging your desire to sky-dive, surf, zip-line and travel for adventure does nothing to prepare your character for what marriage will require of you.

Marriage is not an engine for personal fulfillment and happiness. You don’t get out of it when you don’t feel happy. Marriage is about changing your character to make you more mature, and providing a safe, stable environment for children to grow up in. The reason so many people are divorcing today is because they think that marriage is a consumer good – that it should be fun. But it’s not designed to be fun, it’s designed to be a challenge. If you stay committed to it, it does produce a return in the long run.

Accountability: VA officials who were suspended with pay return to work

January 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

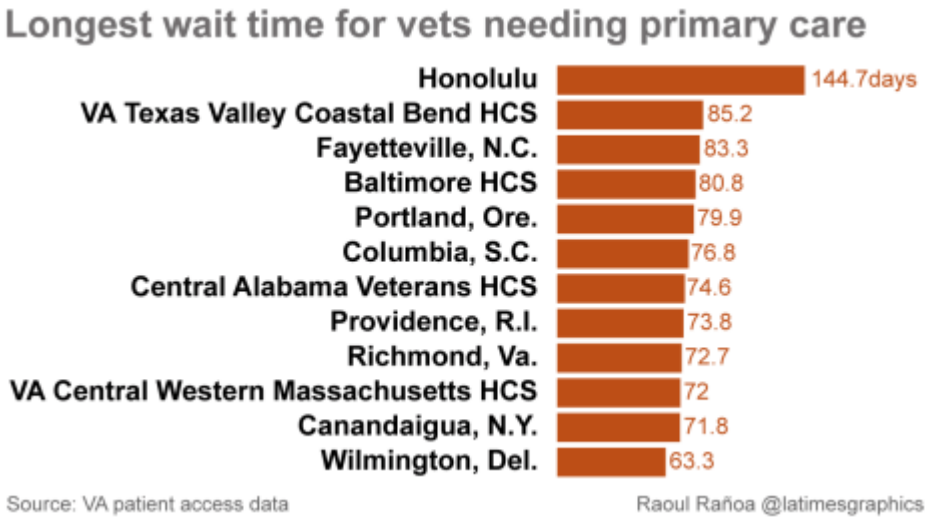

VA health care wait times

This is from the Washington Free Beacon.

Excerpt:

> Veterans' Affairs health system in Phoenix, Arizona, who were suspended following revelations of fake waitlists and delayed patient care will return to agency jobs Monday.
>
> The *Arizona Republic* reported:
>
> Lance Robinson, associate director of the Phoenix VA Health Care System, will be assigned as a planner at the VA's southwest regional office in Gilbert, known as VISN 18, according to spokeswoman Jean Schaefer. Brad Curry, the system's chief of Health Administration Services, will serve as a data analyst. The two men have been focal points in a controversy over the VA's perceived failure to hold leaders accountable for mismanagement and misconduct that caused a breakdown in care for veterans in Arizona and nationwide.
>
> Robinson and Curry were placed on paid leave and given termination notices in May 2014. **During their suspensions, they have been given hundreds of thousands of dollars in pay and benefits.**
>
> [...]Thousands of veterans were placed on fake waitlists at VA hospitals in recent years. Dozens of veterans died while waiting for care at the Phoenix hospital.

Let's review what the problem is, using this article from Breitbart News.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Veterans Affairs office Inspector General has released a report revealing that about 307,000 sick veterans have died while waiting for care on

> the VA’s eligibility waiting list. In fact, the report finds that many have been dead for more than four years.

Now, what does Hillary Clinton think of the VA scandal? Is it a serious issue?

Not so much:

She says: “It’s not been as widespread as it has been made out to be”.

New survey: ratio of liberal to conservative sociologists is 314 to 1

January 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new survey was reported at Heterodox Academy.

Excerpt:

> Bill von Hippel and David Buss surveyed the membership of the Society for Experimental Social Psychology. That's a professional society composed of the most active researchers in the field who are at least five years post-PhD. It's very selective – you must be nominated by a current member and approved by a committee before you can join. Von Hippel and Buss sent a web survey to the 900 members of SESP and got a response rate of 37% (335 responses). So this is a good sample of the mid-level and senior people (average age 51) who produce most of the research in social psychology.
>
> […]At the end of the survey, they happened to include a very good set of measures of political identity. Not just self-descriptions, but also whom the person voted for in the 2012 US Presidential election. And they asked nine questions about politically valenced policy questions, such as "Do you support gun control?" "Do you support gay marriage?" and "Do you support a woman's right to get an abortion?"

The results are interesting, here's the part I wanted to highlight:

> A third way of graphing the viewpoint diversity of these senior social psychologists is by computing an average score across all 9 of the politically valenced policy items. For each one, the 11 point response scale was labeled "strongly oppose" on the left-most point and "strongly support" on the right-most point. I converted all responses to the same 11 point scale used in figure 1 so that "strongly supporting" the progressive position (e.g., pro-choice) was scored as -5 and "strongly supporting" the conservative position (e.g., prayer in school) was scored as +5. That puts the leftists on the left and the rightists on the right of the graph. Here's the graph:

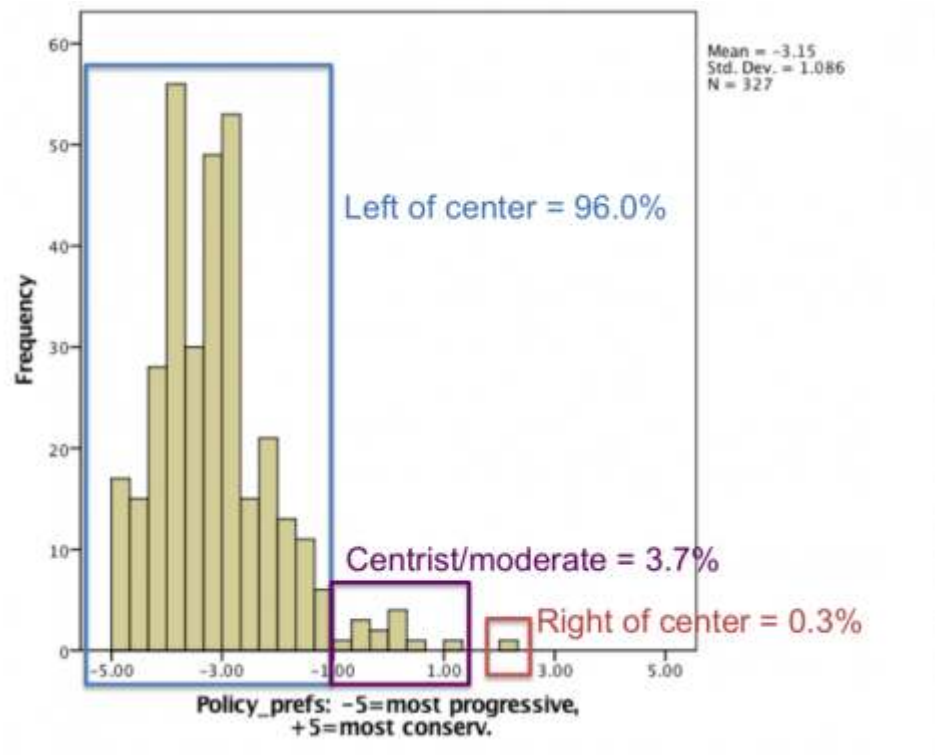

> Diversity of opinion in academia
> I counted anyone whose average score fell between -1.0 and +1.0 (inclusive) as a centrist. The graph shows that 314 of the 327 participants (96.0%) had an average score below -1.0 (i.e., left of center), one had an average score above +1.0 (i.e., right of center), and 12 were centrists. That gives us a Left to Right ratio of 314 to one.

The one right of center guy is not even that far right of center!

So what should we say about this? Well, I'll say this. Secular leftists in academia are the most narrow-minded, intolerant, bigoted people on the planet. They have all kids of hateful prejudices, and they are completely unable to consider any opinion that is different from their own. They only read material that they agree with, never anything they disagree with, because that causes them discomfort. They have no awareness of arguments and evidence from conservative or Christian viewpoints. All of this hateful bigotry does lead to active discrimination against Christians and conservatives in areas like hiring decisions, promotions, and so on. And what's more, this secular leftism is not the result of any honest investigation of arguments and evidence. It's just feelings-based nonsense.

Consider this post by moderate sociologist George Yancey.

He writes:

> It is well established that academics tend to be more politically progressive and secular than the general population. It is obvious that they are highly educated. So academia theoretically should be a place where we would find a higher than normal level of Christianophobia. This Christianophobia may manifest in discrimination against conservative Christians. A few years ago I conducted research suggesting that this is the case. I found that academics were willing to

> discriminate against a prospective candidate for an academic position if they found out that the candidate is a conservative Protestant. In fact, they were more willing to discriminate against conservative Protestants than against any other social group included in my survey. Their willingness to discriminate against those Protestants was even more powerful than their willingness to discriminate against political conservatives. Religious intolerance trumps potential political intolerance among academics.
>
> Of course simply because academics state that they are open to discriminating against conservative Protestants does not mean that they actually engage in such discrimination. A survey is not sufficient evidence. However, Rothman and Lichter conducted research documenting that academics with socially conservative beliefs tend to be located in lower status occupational positions even after controlling for demographic variables and their level of productivity. If conservative Protestants are more likely to have socially conservative beliefs than other academics, a reasonable belief, then this research suggests systematic evidence that there are occupational disadvantages in academia to having conservative Christian beliefs. Since academics have a willingness to discriminate against those Christians, this disadvantage cannot merely be due to their inability to do science, as the common stereotype of Christians seems to imply, but discrimination from academics who may be motivated by Christianophobia is likely an important factor.

So, do you still think it makes sense to take out loans to study subjects that are dominated by the secular left? They will literally deny you a degree that you earned, if you dissent from their radically leftist dogma at any point.

Should you borrow tens of thousands of dollars to be brainwashed by ivory-tower leftists? I think a better plan is to study something that pays – petroleum engineering, computer science, etc. It seems to me that it’s not really an education to spend four years learning the catechism of secular leftists. A real education should involve learning the arguments for both sides, in an environment that is open and truth-focused. The non-STEM departments of the university are not the place for learning. It’s just a secular leftist seminary.

Frank Turek lectures on the case against same-sex marriage

January 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker Frank Turek:

> Dr. Frank Turek is a dynamic speaker and award-winning author or coauthor of four books: Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to make their Case, I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, Correct, Not Politically Correct and Legislating Morality. As the President of CrossExamined.org, Frank presents powerful and entertaining evidence for Christianity at churches, high schools and at secular college campuses that often begin hostile to his message. He has also debated several prominent atheists including Christopher Hitchens and David Silverman, president of American Atheists.
>
> Frank hosts an hour-long TV program each week called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist that is broadcast Wednesday nights on DirecTV Channel 378 (the NRB Network). His radio program called CrossExamined with Frank Turek airs on 122 stations every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. eastern and is available continuously on the free CrossExamined App.
>
> A former aviator in the US Navy, Frank has a master's degree from the George Washington University and a doctorate from Southern Evangelical Seminary. He and his wife, Stephanie, are blessed with three grown sons.

He's one of my favorite speakers, and I admire him for being willing to take a public stand on controversial issues like gay marriage. He's actually had to pay a price for that in his professional life, and I blogged about that before.

Here's the lecture on gay marriage, featuring Christian apologist Frank Turek. It was presented in July 2015, after the Supreme Court decision.

[youtub=https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3YmHAIgVfg]

Outline:

Outline of Frank Turek's lecture on same sex marriage
Introduction:

- how to present your case against marriage safely
- Christians are required to go beyond tolerance
- loving another person can mean opposing the person when they want to do something wrong, even if they hate you
- what did Jesus say about marriage? (see Matt 19:4-6)
- what did Jesus say about sexual morality? (Matt 15, Matt 19)

Summary:

- the same-sex marriage debate is about whether to compel people who disagree with the gay lifestyle to validate and normalize it
- P1: the government has an interest in marriage because it perpetuates and stabilizes society – this is the purpose of marriage
- P2-4: government can take 3 kinds of stances towards behaviors: promote, permit or prohibit
- government promotes behaviors when it has an interest in them
- same-sex relationships should be permitted, but not promoted
- Q1: if same-sex marriage had serious negative consequences, would you reconsider their position?
- Q2: are heterosexual relationships the same as homosexual relationships?
- Q3: what would society be like if everyone married according to the natural marriage definition: one woman, one man, for life?
- Q4: what would society be like if everyone married according to the same-sex marriage definition: man/man and woman/woman?
- Should Christians care about law and politics? or should they just preach the gospel?
- They should care because people often get their cues about what is moral and

immoral based on what is legal and illegal
- Many of the social problems we see today can be traced back to problems with marriage and family
- Children do much better when they have a relationship with their mother and their father
- Same-sex marriage necessarily destroys the relationship between a child and its mother or its father
- When a country embraces same-sex marriage, it reinforces the idea that marriage is not about making and raising children
- same-sex marriage shifts the focus away from the needs of the children to the feelings of desires of the selfish adults
- does homosexuality impose any health and mental health risks?
- what has the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage been in Massachusetts to individuals, schools, businesses and charities?
- how same-sex marriage poses a threat to religious liberty
- how should you respond to the view that homosexuality is genetic?

My biggest concern is religious liberty, and we are seeing how same-sex marriage has proven to be incompatible with religious liberty. But I also care about children… I want them to have mothers and fathers who put their needs first. How did we ever get to this point where the ever-changing feelings and desires of adults are somehow linked to marriage? Marriage is about a commitment – it is the subjugation of feelings and desires to responsibilities and obligations. It is a promise. A promise to commit to love your spouse and children regardless of feelings and desires. It requires more self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice. Not less.

Mohamed Elmi and Mohamed Salad shoot at crowd of unarmed people in Calgary, Alberta

January 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Election 2015: Socialists in red, Communists in Orange, Conservatives in blue

Recently, Canada went to the polls and elected a very pro-Muslim substitute teacher named Justin Trudeau to be their Prime Minister.

Canada's Global News reports:

> U.S. commentators reporting on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's personal welcome of Syrian refugees are drawing comparisons with the angry anti-refugee politics in their own country.
>
> The story of Trudeau greeting refugees at the airport in Toronto Thursday night was the top story for awhile yesterday on the New York Times website.
>
> A video and similar items appeared on Newsweek, the BBC, NBC, Paris Match, and the UK Guardian, Independent and Daily Mail.
>
> […]The headline on the G-Q website was, "Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau Just Gave U-S Politicians a Refreshing Lesson in Compassion."

He welcomed in tens of thousands of Syrian refugees, as the leftist New York Times reported:

> Prime Minister Justin Trudeau greeted a planeload of weary Syrian refugees landing in Toronto early Friday, telling the first to disembark that "you're safe at home now" as he handed them winter coats.
>
> "Tonight they step off the plane as refugees, but they walk out of this terminal as

> permanent residents of Canada," Mr. Trudeau told government employees gathered at the airport.

Trudeau gave them full benefits as permanent residents – included access to the single payer health care system and retirement benefits.

And he also said this before the recent election:

The Liberal Party has always favored importing massive numbers of unskilled immigrants from foreign countries. They want them collecting welfare benefits right away, and to start voting right away, too. I wonder who these new immigrants vote for? The party of smaller government, or the party of a socialist welfare state?

A shooting in Calgary

Yesterday, this happened in Calgary, Alberta:

Here's the story from Breitbart News:

> Two men have been charged with attempted murder in the Canadian city of Calgary after a nightclub shooting early Sunday morning. Mohamed Elmi, 31, and Mohamed Salad, 29, also face a host of other charges, including unauthorised possession of a firearm, aggravated assault and possession of a firearm with an altered or defaced serial number.
>
> A 38-year-old man was sent to hospital immediately after the attack with serious soft tissue injuries to his torso.
>
> […]**Canadian media has been careful not to make any link between the suspects named and their religion. The word 'jihad' is conspicuously absent in media coverage, something that is irritating social media users who are openly speculating whether or not they have been banned from making any connection with radical Islam.**

Canada does not allow non-criminals to carry weapons – only criminals are allowed to carry them. Canadian politicians don't want to offend criminals by allowing their victims to shoot back at them when they're shot at.

Police office shot in Philadelphia

Last week, there was news about a shooting in Philadelphia:

Look at how the Democrat mayor responded to it:

Story here:

> On January 8, Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney (D) rejected ties to Islam in the ambush shooting of Philadelphia police officer Jesse Hartnett and suggested the big lesson is that we need more gun control.
>
> Hartnett was shot with a gun that was stolen from a police officer's house. And the suspected gunman, Edward Archer, "allegedly told authorities he targeted an officer because police defend laws that are contrary to the Quran."
>
> 6 ABC reports that Archer "confessed" to having carried out that attack "in the

> name of Islam" and that Archer "pledged his allegiance to ISIS."
>
> However, during Mayor Kenney's speech, while flanked by city and law enforcement officials, he said, "In no way, shape, or form does anyone in this room believe that Islam, or the teaching of Islam, has anything to do with [the shooting of Officer Hartnett]."
>
> Fox News reports that Kenney said the shooting shows the need for more gun control: "There are too many guns on our streets and I think our national government needs to do something about that."

The weapon was stolen from a police officer. And in the past we have seen how political correctness created new lower hiring requirements on police officers have resulted in criminals being able to overpower them and take their weapons, as in this case of a criminal overpowering a woman police officer and taking her weapon. The Obama administration is doing the same thing to integrate women into combat units, as well, which will reduce the combat effectiveness of our military forces. And the same thing is being done by fire departments. Political correctness is more important than effectiveness for the taxpayers who pay the bills.

The Obama administration

Now the Obama administration tends to describe attacks like this Philadelphia attack as "senseless violence", "workplace violence", and "random violence".

Here is how Obama responded to the recent San Bernadino terrorist attack:

The Obama administration did, however, announce a plan to respond to these attacks.

Here it is from the Daily Wire:

> Speaking to the audience at the Muslim Advocates' 10th anniversary dinner Thursday, Lynch said her "greatest fear" is the "incredibly disturbing rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric" in America and vowed to prosecute any guilty of what she deemed violence-inspiring speech.
>
> "The fear that you have just mentioned is in fact **my greatest fear** as a prosecutor, as someone who is sworn to the protection of all of the American people, which is that the rhetoric will be accompanied by acts of violence," she said.
>
> […]After touting the numbers of "investigations into acts of anti-Muslim hatred" and "bigoted actions" against Muslims launched by her DOJ, Lynch suggested the Constitution does not protect "actions predicated on violent talk" and pledged to prosecute those responsible for such actions.

This is the same woman who declined to charge Lois Lerner for using the IRS as a weapon to persecute conservative groups in an election year.

The ACLU

Here is a recent story about a Muslim ACLU leader, who said that she did not like being

asked to condemn terrorist attacks by radical Muslims:

> The deputy director of the ACLU of Michigan said in an op-ed Monday that she refuses to condemn radical Islamic terrorism in order to prove her allegiance to the United States.
>
> Rana Elmir wrote that she's "consistently and aggressively asked" to condemn Islamic terrorism, and is tired of having her religious views linked to atrocities like the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and in Paris and San Bernardino this year.
>
> "I emphatically refuse," she wrote in an opinion piece in The Washington Post.
>
> The op-ed was titled: "Stop asking me to condemn terrorists just because I'm Muslim."

I just want to say two things at the end of this post. First, half my relatives are Muslim, but they're the peaceful kind. Second, I'm all for welcoming in skilled immigrants who can work, follow the law, and avoid collecting government benefits.

Good news: a record 288 pro-life laws were enacted in the last 5 years

January 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Live Action reports on a good news story.

Excerpt:

> A report released Monday by pro-abortion research tank, Guttmacher Institute, reveals that states across the country passed nearly as many laws protecting preborn children in the last five years as in the last 15 years.
>
> Guttmacher's 2015 Year-End State Roundup details how states have enacted a record 288 restrictions on abortion since 2010 — including the 57 pro-life laws passed in 2015 — after a number of pro-life lawmakers secured wins in the 2010 midterm elections.
>
> […]Laws enacted include bans on abortion after a certain point in pregnancy, restrictions on abortion providers, counseling and waiting period legislation, and efforts to halt chemical abortions via telemedicine.
>
> In 2015, a handful of states attempted to defund abortion giant Planned Parenthood after a dozen videos released by the Center for Medical Progress revealed top-level Planned Parenthood officials discussing the harvesting of baby body parts.

Every one of those pro-life measures was pushed by Republicans, and opposed by Democrats. In fact, Democrats would love to roll back every single restriction on abortion at the state and local levels.

The Weekly Standard reports.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Is performing an abortion no different than pulling a tooth? The idea that there isn't a difference is the basis of a new federal bill that would wipe hundreds of state abortion laws off the books–striking down everything from late-term abortion limits to health and safety regulations in many states.
>
> **The Women's Health Protection Act, introduced by Democratic Connecticut senator Richard Blumenthal, would even invalidate a law used to convict Philadelphia abortionist Kermit Gosnell earlier this year, and it could potentially force taxpayers across the country to directly fund elective abortions for Medicaid recipients.**
>
> "The basic principle is that there can be no restriction that is not also imposed on a medically comparable procedure. If they single out abortion or reproductive rights, it's going to fall foul," Blumenthal said at a November 13 press conference. Blumenthal told THE WEEKLY STANDARD following his remarks that

> it's "for doctors to decide" what counts as a "medically comparable" procedure.
>
> Blumenthal specifically condemned health and safety regulations requiring that an abortion "doctor have admitting privileges" at a hospital "or that the hallways in a clinic be a certain width, which has no relation to health or safety."

The Democrats also responded to the videos showing Planned Parenthood officials discussing selling baby parts.

Life News reports:

> Just one day after Planned Parenthood was exposed cutting up a live baby for body parts for sale, Democrats in the House of Representative are launching their own investigation after the Planned Parenthood abortion business. Instead of looking into the abortion giant, they are probing the pro-life group behind the series of expose' videos.

And the Democrats voted against a bill to de-fund Planned Parenthood, too.

Excerpt:

> > The Senate voted today for a bill that would de-fund Planned Parenthood after it was caught selling the body parts of aborted babies. Hearings have exposed how the abortion company likely violated federal laws to sell the body parts.
> >
> > The bill would block, for one year, most federal payments to Planned Parenthood.
> >
> > […]Senators voted 52-47 (see below for roll call) for the reconciliation bill which would de-fund Planned Parenthood and repeal major portions of Obamacare.

Here are the no votes:

NAYs —47

Baldwin (D-WI)	Gillibrand (D-NY)	Murray (D-WA)
Bennet (D-CO)	Heinrich (D-NM)	Nelson (D-FL)
Blumenthal (D-CT)	Heitkamp (D-ND)	Peters (D-MI)
Booker (D-NJ)	Hirono (D-HI)	Reed (D-RI)
Boxer (D-CA)	Kaine (D-VA)	Reid (D-NV)
Brown (D-OH)	King (I-ME)	Schatz (D-HI)
Cantwell (D-WA)	Kirk (R-IL)	Schumer (D-NY)
Cardin (D-MD)	Klobuchar (D-MN)	Shaheen (D-NH)
Carper (D-DE)	Leahy (D-VT)	Stabenow (D-MI)
Casey (D-PA)	Manchin (D-WV)	Tester (D-MT)
Collins (R-ME)	Markey (D-MA)	Udall (D-NM)
Coons (D-DE)	McCaskill (D-MO)	Warner (D-VA)
Donnelly (D-IN)	Menendez (D-NJ)	Warren (D-MA)
Durbin (D-IL)	Merkley (D-OR)	Whitehouse (D-RI)
Feinstein (D-CA)	Mikulski (D-MD)	Wyden (D-OR)
Franken (D-MN)	Murphy (D-CT)	

Not Voting – 1

Sanders (I-VT)

47 senators voted against unborn children

Remember where the political parties stand on abortion in November.

New study: rising oxygen levels rejected as explanation of Cambrian explosion

January 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

So, just to refresh everyone, the Cambrian explosion was an event that occurred about 543 million years ago. In a very short period of time, less than 10 million years, probably 3-5 million, all of the major animal body plans emerged.

Here's what the Cambrian explosion looks like:

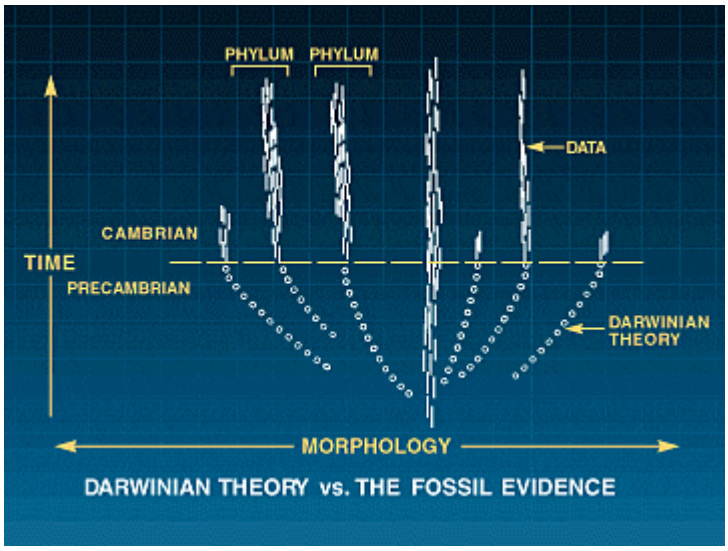

Cambrian Explosion

The Darwinian theory says that there should be precursors to all of the new phyla that appear. But we have never been able to find any precursors. We've been looking in the fossil record for the slow transition from simple life to complex life that Darwin predicted, but we've never been able to find anything that explains the sudden emergence of the body plans in the Cambrian explosion.

There is no known naturalistic explanation for the rapid emergence of these "phyla". But, naturalists were holding out hope that maybe a sudden rise in the level of oxygen might have "triggered" the required increase in complexity.

This is from Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> Oxygen is crucial for the existence of animals on Earth. But, an increase in oxygen did not apparently lead to the rise of the first animals. New research shows that 1.4 billion years ago there was enough oxygen for animals — and yet over 800 million years went by before the first animals appeared on Earth.

> Animals evolved by about 600 million years ago, which was late in Earth's history. The late evolution of animals, and the fact that oxygen is central for animal respiration, has led to the widely promoted idea that animal evolution corresponded with a late a rise in atmospheric oxygen concentrations.
>
> "But sufficient oxygen in itself does not seem to be enough for animals to rise. This is indicated by our studies," say postdoc Emma Hammarlund and Professor Don Canfield, Nordic Center for Earth Evolution, University of Southern Denmark.
>
> […]The new study is published in the journal *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences*.
>
> […]The results differ from other studies and raise several questions, such as: Why then did animals rise so late in Earth's history?
>
> "The sudden diversification of animals probably was a result of many factors. Maybe the oxygen rise had less to do with the animal revolution than we previously assumed," says Hammarlund.

Now look here. I don't see how a rise in oxygen level can create new body plans. Body plans are written in sequences of symbols – in proteins and DNA. I can no more believe that a rise in oxygen levels could create new animal body plans than I could believe that raising the level of oxygen in a computer lab could explain the new code that is being written by the software engineers. Body plans are information, and new body plans require new information. Information comes from software engineers – intelligent agents – not from rising oxygen levels.

In any case, the hypothesis was falsified. It isn't the first time a naturalistic hypothesis for the Cambrian explosion was shot down (see below) and it won't be the last.

Related posts

- New study: fossil discovery adds a new phyla to the explosive Cambrian explosion
- Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion
- How brief was the period in which the Cambrian phyla suddenly appeared?
- New study: ancient Cambrian-era fossils have similar brains to animals today
- New study: apoptosis is unchanged from Cambrian fossils to modern humans
- Fazale Rana responds to new paper claiming that rapid evolution explains Cambrian explosion
- New paper in Nature: Ediacaran fossils not ancestors of Cambrian fauna
- Nature publishes discovery of fossil with complex brain dated just after the Cambrian explosion

- Bad news for believers in naturalistic explanations of the Cambrian explosion
- Paul Chien interviewed on the Cambrian era fossils
- What is the best explanation for the Cambrian fossil record?
- The Cambrian explosion: biology’s Big Bang
- The Cambrian explosion is getting more explosive

Ted Cruz blasts Democrats for hiding immigration histories of terrorists in the USA

January 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

This story is from the Washington Free Beacon.

Excerpt:

> Leading senators on Monday petitioned multiple Obama administration agencies to stop stonewalling a congressional investigation into the immigration histories of at least 113 foreign-born individuals implicated in terrorist operations after legally entering the United States, according to a copy of the letters.
>
> The latest investigation comes just days after the *Washington Free Beacon* disclosed that an additional 41 foreign-born individuals who legally entered the United States had been arrested for planning a number of terror attacks.
>
> Sens. Ted Cruz (R., Texas) and Jeff Sessions (R., Ala.) disclosed Monday that they had been pressuring the Obama administration for months to disclose the immigration histories of these foreign-born individuals implicated in terror plots.
>
> Agencies including the Departments of State and Homeland Security have stonewalled these efforts, declining since mid-2015 to provide Congress additional information. This move has prompted speculation among lawmakers that the administration is withholding information to prevent the exposure of major gaps in the U.S. screening process for new immigrants.
>
> “The American people are entitled to information on the immigration history of terrorists seeking to harm them,” Cruz and Sessions wrote to the secretaries of State and Homeland Security and the attorney general.

> Similar requests for information issued sent in August and again in December have not been answered by the administration
>
> The letter cites a recent *Free Beacon* report detailing that an additional 41 foreign-born individuals had been snagged on terrorism-related charges since 2014. The disclosure of these previously unknown accused terrorists brings the total number of foreigners brought up on terrorism charges to 113.
>
> Sessions and Cruz note that at least 14 of those foreigners accused of terrorism were granted legal entrance to the United States as refugees.
>
> […]The letter comes amid a debate over immigration and an Obama administration plan to boost the number of refugees granted residence in the United States. Under the administration's plan, an additional 170,000 new migrants from Muslim-majority countries will enter the country in 2016.
>
> […]The United States has issued 680,000 green cards to immigrants from Muslim-majority nations during the past five years.

Something to think about, given the permissive attitude of members of the Democrat party when it comes to acts of terrorism committed by radical Islamists. It's almost as if they would rather punish people who have concerns about safety than do anything to make it harder for terrorists to harm us. Is this what we are paying taxes for? So that politicians can be nice to people who want to kill us? I understand that Democrats love to embrace evil and shame good, in order to achieve their goal of equality, but I don't think we should be paying them to do it. We're paying them to protect us, not to expose us to harm.

New study: in one year, gun owners stopped hundreds of crimes

January 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

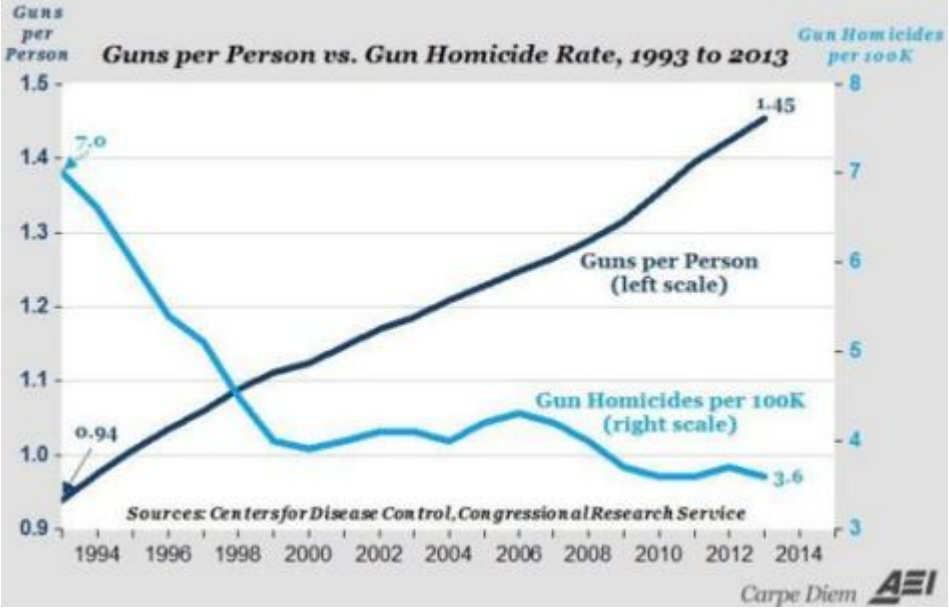

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

My friend Michael posted this article from the Daily Caller, and I think it will be helpful for people who support gun control to understand what the effects of disarming law-abiding people would really be.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Gun carrying, private citizens who used firearms to stop criminal attacks saved at least 283 potential victims in a period between July 2014 and July 2015, according to a Daily Caller News Foundation analysis.
>
> TheDCNF concluded its analysis as President Barack Obama announced Tuesday another push by his administration to tighten federal gun control laws in an attempt to curb gun violence.
>
> While Obama quotes the more than 30,000 gun deaths in a year — omitting that 60 percent are suicides, 6 percent are gang related, 3 percent are accidents, and the vast majority of the rest occur in urban areas — The DCNF found that a noteworthy number of kids, the elderly, and women successfully defended themselves against criminals by use of gun fire.
>
> The DCNF analyzed 195 random incidents where gun owners used firearms to save their lives, and often the lives of others. We wanted to know, not just how many perpetrators were killed, but how many potential victims were saved.
>
> […]Of the nearly 200 cases we analyzed, people carrying guns saved at least 283 potential victims, whether it was a man protecting his family from thugs or a 9mm-toting grandma warding off a burglar in her living room.

> In 60 of those cases, the single gun carrier was the only potential victim. In 43 cases, there were 2 potential victims. In nine cases there were three victims and in nine more cases there were four or more victims.
>
> In 74 cases, it was unknown how many potential victims were present but it can be assumed there was at least one. If the 74 potential victims followed the same distribution as the other cases, then the number of potential victims would actually be at least 335.
>
> In one case, four Florida men put on masks and grabbed weapons in a planned burglary attempt of a Melbourne home in June of 2015. When one of the men came inside, he held a woman and her child at gunpoint. As the woman protected her child with her own body, the homeowner pulled out his handgun and opened fire on the robbers. The criminals fled, one injured, and the three victims were left unharmed.
>
> **The data shows that little less than a third of the people defending themselves with guns were women. Of the 173 cases where gender is known, 133 were male and 40 were female.**

I'm all for gun ownership by law abiding citizens, but I am *really* for gun ownership by law-abiding *female* citizens. It is very important to me that women be encouraged to cancel out the disadvantage of lower upper body strength by carrying a concealed weapon. If a man tries to hurt a woman, she should be able to defend herself. Men need to learn to behave, and guns help women to teach them the lesson.

Consider this case:

> Young people used guns for self defense as well. In September of 2014, an 11-year-old Oklahoma girl awoke around 4 a.m. to find that a man had broken into her home and stabbed her mother. The girl grabbed a handgun and shot the man twice, saving her mother's life. The mother said she had just taught the daughter how to use the gun for self defense the week before.

I left the link in so that you can click it and read the news story.

Finally, I know that some of you will cringe at the idea of firing a weapon at another person. And I agree with you!!!! My hope is that many crimes will be avoided simply by displaying the gun in order to deter the attacker.

Look:

> Gun carriers were able to defend themselves usually without killing the suspect. Of 217 suspects in our analysis, 148 survived their encounter with a gun carrier, whether they survived a gunshot wound or simply fled. The remaining 69 were killed, so more than half the suspects involved survived.

According to John Lott's study (see below for link), it's actually very common for the gun owner to get the attacker to run away once the gun is displayed to the attacker. The gun

is rarely fired.

Now I'll tell you my story. I actually worked next to a building where a woman used a legally owned concealed carry weapon for self-defense. One of this woman's co-workers noticed that she had an expensive wedding ring and an expensive watch. The co-worker hired three people to rob the woman. She came into the office very very early in the morning (this was a Friday morning). When she arrived at the office, she got out of her car and walked towards the front door. She noticed a man in a hoody had gotten out of his car and was walking towards her. The engine of his car was still running and the door was open. He walked right past the front door of the building and kept coming towards her. She pulled out her handgun and pointed it right at him and told him to get back in the car and leave the parking lot. He did so… and later we found out that he actually had a gun in the hoodie. She wrote down the license plate number and all three of the people in the car were arrested and charged. No shots were fired.

What was interesting was the response of the politically correct people in my building. An e-mail went around warning us all that we were not allowed to carry guns and how it was much safer that we not carry guns, and so on. But it was obvious to everyone that this gun had saved the woman from being robbed, and possibly worse. We found out later that the person who hired the thugs were also brought to justice.

It is life experiences like this that caused me to change my position on guns. I actually used to be against them, until I read the John Lott books and studies, and had these experiences of seeing how people used guns to deter criminals. This was *not* part of the culture I grew up in, and neither my parents nor my family owned guns. It was just a case of changing my mind once I was confronted with the evidence. The people I know who are anti-gun never could answer the story of what happened to that woman. I would ask them – what would you do to save her? And they had no answer. There is no answer. Either she defends herself or she is robbed at gunpoint, and maybe raped, and maybe murdered. That's what gun control really means – the criminals do as they please, with impunity. Criminals don't care about the gun control laws. Only the law-abiding people are disarmed, and that causes more crime, not less crime. Which is why big Democrat cities like Chicago, New York and Baltimore, have the highest violent crime rates in the USA.

Rising Murder Rates in Big Cities

A sampling of cities where the number of murders so far this year is outpacing the same period last year.

	2014	2015	PERCENT CHANGE
Milwaukee	59	104	76 %
St. Louis	85	136	60
Baltimore	138	215	56
Washington	73	105	44
New Orleans	98	120	22
Chicago	244	294	20
Kansas City, Mo.	45	54	20
Dallas	71	83	17
New York	190	208	9
Philadelphia	165	171	4

Year-to-date time periods range from Aug. 11 to Aug. 31.

Source: City police departments

Crime rates in major cities, all run by anti-gun Democrat politicians

By the way, here's an example of a French citizen using a legal handgun to ward off a man with a baseball bat.

Again, no shots were fired. Nobody was hurt. That's why people own guns – to *avoid* violence, not to cause violence.

Learn about the issue

To find the about guns and self-defense, look in the academic literature. Here are two books I really like for that.

- More Guns, Less Crime by Dr. John R. Lott (University of Chicago Press, 3rd ed.)
- Guns and Violence by Dr. Joyce Lee Malcolm (Harvard University Press)

Both of those books make the case that permitting law-abiding citizens to own firearms for self-defense reduces the rate of violent crime.

Finally! Details about Michael Licona's new Oxford University Press book

January 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

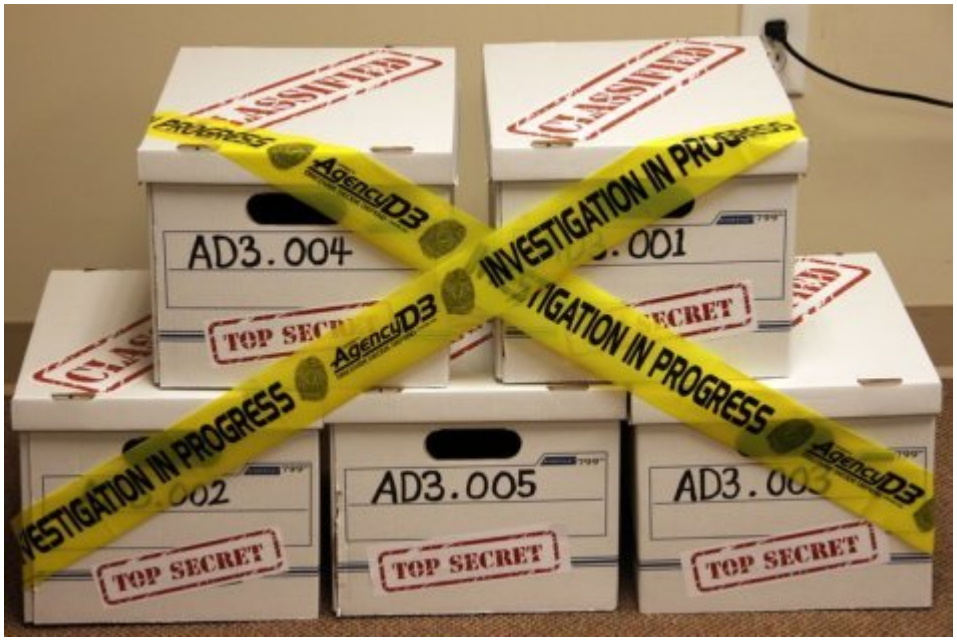

Investigation in progress

Here's a new interview between Sean McDowell and Michael Licona about his new book. The new book is coming out in 2016, and it's going to be published by Oxford University Press – probably the top academic press on the planet.

I found the interview on Sean McDowell's blog.

It says:

> Michael Licona is one of the world's leading experts on the historical evidence for resurrection. I use his book *The Resurrection of Jesus* in my Master's Level course atBiola. For the past few years, Dr. Licona has been working on some cutting-edge research related to Gospel contradictions. His research is both fascinating and groundbreaking. He answers a few of my questions:
>
> **SEAN MCDOWELL: Mike, what got you interested in the question of Gospel contradictions?**
>
> MIKE LICONA: Back in 2008 and 2009 I was publicly debating Bart Ehrman on the resurrection. He brought up Gospel contradictions as one of his major objections to the Gospels. I have noticed that this genuinely bothers many Evangelical Christians. As a result, I decided to look into it in more depth. I wasn't so much concerned about resolving them, because I understood that if Jesus rose from the dead, Christianity is true, regardless of any errors that might be present in the Bible. So, even if there are contradictions in the Gospels, it wouldn't negate the truth of Christianity. But it does bother a lot of Evangelicals, so that's what got me interested in the topic. And to be honest, it did make me question the

> historical reliability of the Gospels.
>
> **MCDOWELL: What makes your approach to Gospel contradictions unique?**
>
> LICONA: Most approaches involve trying to harmonize various passages to see if all the details can fit together. This can be a legitimate practice. But many times it can go way too far. Both Richard Burridge and more recently Craig Keener have shown that the Gospels belong to the genre of "ancient biography." If this is correct, it would be plausible that we would see the same amount of flexibility in the Gospels as we observe in other ancient biographies. So, I wanted to learn what those flexibilities were. By carefully reading ancient biographies written around the same time as the Gospels and comparing how they tell the same stories differently, I began to recognize that some of the differences resulted from compositional devices. Then when I went to the Gospels, I could see that the authors were probably employing the same compositional devices as other ancient biographers; specifically Plutarch. I began to realize that the differences across the Gospels are not so much contradictions but the result of compositional devices that were the standard practice in historical writing of that day.

So, this analysis of the genre of "ancient biography" might give us some useful tools for resolving passages that seem to be in conflict. For some reason, non-Christians want to ignore the main body of accepted facts about the historical Jesus, and focus on these minor details that seems to be in conflict. So I guess we need a book that explains them, and no one better than Mike Licona to do it.

On the other hand… I was actually talking about this with my best friends from my home town over the Christmas holidays. Before we broke out the Pandemic boardgame and the "Keep Talking and No One Explodes" computer game, Jen and Andrew wanted to know what was the most common thing that I was seeing from non-Christians. The most common thing I am seeing is that non-Christians are *woefully* out of touch with knowledge related to the worldview of Christian theism that are accepted by the broad spectrum of scholars.

To illustrate, I quoted from atheists who admit to the creation event, to the fine-tuning, to the problem of the origin of life, to the problem of the Cambrian explosion, to early dating of the gospels, early dating of the Pauline letters, minimal facts about the life of Jesus, and even minimal facts for an argument for the resurrection. I told Andrew and Jen the skeptics I encounter are intellectually dishonest. They don't accept the things that mainstream atheist scholars accept about science and historical Jesus and philosophy of religion. And yet they feel comfortable about being on the fringe, because they justify their fringe view by pointing to nitpicky details like apparent Bible contradictions. I.e. – they point to disagreement about one or two angels at the discovery of the empty tomb, and they turn that minor point into support for their fringe view that the gospels were made up completely in the second and third centuries.

So, I guess we do have to be ready to respond to this nitpicking, and Licona's book will

help with that. But I also think that we need to be ready to haul skeptics back to reality. There is a lot we can know about science, philosophy and the historical Jesus that supports Christian theism, and we should disagreements about details get people away from those main points that scholars across the board accept.

Harvard Law Review: Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen and is eligible to become President

January 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his third wife pose with his radical leftist Democrat friends

Donald Trump has been questioning whether Ted Cruz is eligible to run for President because he was born in Canada. I thought it might be worth it to look at the circumstances of Cruz's birth, then get an opinion from some legal experts.

So as far as I can tell, there are 3 people on the planet who think that Cruz is not eligible to run for President. Donald Trump, Rand Paul and Ann Coulter, a famous celebrity comedian who supported Mitt Romney, and now supports Donald Trump. She is very fond of getting attention by saying outrageous things, which she later claims are "jokes". This week, she wanted to have the Republican governor of South Carolina, Nikki Haley, deported. She later said she was joking.

Ted Cruz's mother was born in the USA

So, let's start with the facts:

> Eleanor Darragh, mother of Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), was born in Delaware on Nov. 23, 1934, establishing her citizenship by birth–and, according to U.S. law, that of her son, even though he was born in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, on Dec. 22, 1970.

You can look at her birth certificate on Breitbart News. This is the thing that all the birthers on Daily Kos and Democratic Underground denied the existence of, until it appeared. There is no doubt that Ted Cruz's mother is an American citizen, and she met the residency requirements to pass on birthright citizenship to baby Ted.

Ted Cruz's mother passes the residency requirement to pass on birthright citizenship

Former assistant U.S. attorney, and law professor Andrew McCarthy explains in National Review:

> Under the law in effect when Cruz was born in 1970 (i.e., statutes applying to people born between 1952 and 1986), the requirement was that, at the time of birth, the American citizen parent had to have resided in the U.S. for ten years, including five years after the age of fourteen. Cruz's mother, Eleanor, easily met that requirement: she was in her mid-thirties when Ted was born and had spent most of her life in the U.S., including graduating from Rice University with a math degree that led to employment in Houston as a computer programmer at Shell Oil.

Ted's mother registered baby Ted with the U.S. Consulate in Calgary. Cruz moved back to the USA when he was 4 years old. Cruz was able to get a U.S. passport to travel abroad in 1986. The U.S. government does not hand out U.S. passports to non-citizens.

A legal opinion from the Harvard Law Review

Now, I didn't think this topic was worth writing about. It was actually my friend Robb who urged me to do it.

Robb sent me this article from the Harvard Law Review, which is what made me decide to go ahead and write about it.

The article is written by two experts in the law:

> Neal Kumar Katyal is an American lawyer and chaired professor of law. He served as Acting Solicitor General of the United States from May 2010[2] until June 2011… Katyal was the Paul and Patricia Saunders Professor of National Security Law at Georgetown University Law Center and the lead counsel for the Guantanamo Bay detainees in the Supreme Court case Hamdan v. Rumsfeld. While serving at the Justice Department, he argued numerous cases before the Supreme Court.
>
> Paul Drew Clement is a former United States Solicitor General and current Georgetown University law professor. He is also an adjunct professor at New York University School of Law. He was nominated by President George W. Bush on March 14, 2005 for the post of Solicitor-General, confirmed by the United States Senate on June 8, 2005, and took the oath of office on June 13. Clement replaced Theodore Olson. Clement resigned on May 14, 2008, effective June 2, 2008, and joined the Georgetown University Law Center as a visiting professor and senior fellow at the Supreme Court Institute.

The article says:

> The Constitution directly addresses the minimum qualifications necessary to serve as President. In addition to requiring thirty-five years of age and fourteen years of residency, the Constitution limits the presidency to "a natural born Citizen." All the sources routinely used to interpret the Constitution confirm that the phrase "natural born Citizen" has a specific meaning: namely, someone who was a U.S. citizen at birth with no need to go through a naturalization proceeding

> at some later time. **And Congress has made equally clear from the time of the framing of the Constitution to the current day that, subject to certain residency requirements on the parents, someone born to a U.S. citizen parent generally becomes a U.S. citizen without regard to whether the birth takes place in Canada, the Canal Zone, or the continental United States.**
>
> While some constitutional issues are truly difficult, with framing-era sources either nonexistent or contradictory, here, the relevant materials clearly indicate that a "natural born Citizen" means a citizen from birth with no need to go through naturalization proceedings. The Supreme Court has long recognized that two particularly useful sources in understanding constitutional terms are British common law and enactments of the First Congress. **Both confirm that the original meaning of the phrase "natural born Citizen" includes persons born abroad who are citizens from birth based on the citizenship of a parent.**

"Natural born" means no naturalization process. Ted Cruz's mother was a citizen by birth. She meets the residency requirements to pass on birthright citizenship. We have her birth certificate. We also have Ted's birth certificate with her name on it as his mother. This ends the issue for all the people who are governed by reason and evidence.

Three logical prerequisites for biological evolution to work

January 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hummingbird in flight

Biologist, blogger and super-mom Lindsay has written a post that explains what supporters of Darwinian mechanisms have to prove in order to explain the origin and diversity of life.

Here are the three things that Darwinists must demonstrate:

1. **It is possible to add biological information.**
2. **There are more upward steps than downward steps (or at least a way to get more upward steps than downward steps at least some of the time).**
3. **There does exist a gradual genetic pathway that can be climbed in tiny, incremental steps.**

So first of all, the main two arguments for intelligent design and against naturalism are the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion. Both involve massive infusions of new biological information. So Lindsay is right to focus on whether Darwinism can add new biological information. But I wanted to focus on number three, because I really think that her post is about the burden of proof on Darwinists more than it is about *our* burden of proof. And we do need to get used to asking Darwinists for the evidence for their view.

Take a look at the detail on number three:

> In order for evolution to be true, not only does information have to be added over time, but each successive change must occur in a living organism and it must be conserved by being passed on to offspring. Thus, the change cannot kill the

> organism or seriously disable it, or the change will not be passed on. This must be the case for EVERY step in the entire evolutionary sequence, no matter how small. At every step you must have a functional organism. Thus, the changes must be gradual enough that the tiny upward steps (if they exist) can achieve each new level without killing or disabling the organism. To use a simplistic analogy, if one tries to change from one word to another by changing one letter at a time (cat to cot to dot to dog, for example), there must, at every step, be an actual word that can be reached by changing one letter. In the Mount Improbable analogy, this means that there can be no upward jumps in the trail. If the maximum possible upward step is 6 inches, then there can be no 6 foot cliffs along the trail, or even 7 inch steps. If ever there is a step which requires more information than unguided evolution can provide, then evolution is falsified in that instance. It cannot account for the change in information if that is the case.

Now I have never seen a gradual genetic pathway from one body plan (phyla) to another body plan (phyla) in any peer-reviewed paper. What I need to see to believe in the ability of Darwinian mechanisms to drive change from one body plan to another is that sequence of changes at the genetic level. And I don't just need to see the steps, I need to see the probabilities of getting the correct sequence of changes at the genetic level within the time available *by chance.* That's what Darwinists assert in their theory – that's what they need to prove. Talking about how one creature looks like another creature is irrelevant. My car looks like my Dads car, because we drive the same model, but different model years – and both cars are designed.

When people ask our side for evidence for our claims, we are able to produce the evidence to substantiate our claims, e.g. – cosmic fine-tuning factors or protein sequencing probabilities. I would like to see the other side do the same, and not just tell me a story. When I question people in the arts who accept Darwinism, they seem to be terribly disinterested in the details, and just want to jump to the conclusion shared by the smart people without thinking hard about all the steps in between. That's intellectually lazy. The same thing happens with global warming with the non-scientists – they are more concerned about jumping to the "smart people" position, so you think that they're smart. They aren't really interested in hearing both sides, or looking at the evidence. I think people need to take it slow and look at the evidence, instead of deciding what to believe based on how other people perceive them. No need to rush to agreement to build up your self-esteem without doing the hard work first.

If you are looking to understand what the other side has to prove, and in a concise way, read her post.

Where to get help if you have a selfish, absent or abusive mother or father

January 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Normally in my 6 PM post I like to write about something related to apologetics, because that's when people are done with their work and have time to think about the big questions. Today, I want to say something this article about lambs in Scotland, written by Sheila Walsh in the The Stream.

She writes:

> I am very fond of sheep. I grew up on the west coast of Scotland with sheep all around me, field after field of white wool and incessant crying when things seemed a little off.
>
> […]Of all the lessons I have learned from these defenseless, gentle animals, the most profound is the most painful. Every now and then, a ewe will give birth to a lamb and immediately reject it. Sometimes the lamb is rejected because they are one of twins and the mother doesn't have enough milk or she is old and frankly quite tired of the whole business. They call those lambs, *bummer lambs*.
>
> Unless the shepherd intervenes, that lamb will die. So the shepherd will take that little lost one into his home and hand feed it from a bottle and keep it warm by the fire. He will wrap it up warm and hold it close enough to hear a heartbeat. When the lamb is strong the shepherd will place it back in the field with the rest of the flock.
>
> "Off you go now, you can do this, I'm right here."
>
> The most beautiful sight to see is when the shepherd approaches his flock in the morning and calls them out, "*Sheep, sheep, sheep*!"
>
> The first to run to him are the bummer lambs because they know his voice. It's

> not that they are more loved — it's just that they believe it.
>
> I am so grateful that Christ calls himself the Good Shepherd.
>
> "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice." (John 10:3-4 NLT)

My older brother and I grew up with a mother who was very much focused on her career and earning and saving money for her retirement. We were both stuck in daycare very early after being born, so that she could go back to work right away. My older brother has shown the ill effects of our parents (especially our mother) not having any plan for us, especially morally and spiritually. He dropped out of college after failing his first year, never had a career. Although he has normal intelligence and mental health, he never could stick in any real job.

Although there were early warning signs when his grades started to drop in Grade 5, my parents never took responsibility to make a plan to solve it. Oh, they would yell and scream at him at report card time, but just for a day or two, and after that, nothing constructive. My brother decided that he could just ride out the flak my parents gave him on report card night, and keep going with his plan of having fun and being popular. My parents just forgot about it until the next report card day, because they did not want to be distracted from their careers, hobbies and retirement planning.

I had the exact same upbringing as my older brother. He actually did pretty well until Grade 5 just like me, but then our paths diverged. From Grade 5 on, his grades deterioriated. He got tired of having to study and he was more interested in the opinions of his peers and conforming to pop culture. In my case, from Grade 5 on, my grades were always high-90s. I remember taking the same classes as he did, in the same high school, with the same teachers. He got a 44 in data processing, I got a 96 with the same teacher and won the award for the entire grade. Every class I went to, the teachers would speak fondly of my older brother – he was a nice guy, very popular with his peers, good at sports, but not a very good student. How was it that I was winning awards when he had scored so poorly. Was I really his brother? How could we be so different?

The difference is that in Grade 5, he got a Gideon's New Testament and he read it and he didn't put it into practice, and in Grade 5, I got a Gideon's New Testament and I read it twice and I did put it into practice. That was the difference. I had the awareness of the moral law (i.e.- wisdom) that allowed me to judge my parents and judge my peers and judge my teachers and stand alone. When you cannot rely on anyone to lead you, judging others is critical. That is what allows you to maintain appropriate boundaries and minimize the influence of friends and family who do not have any plan to grow you. Awareness of the moral law is what allows you to stop trying to please people who do not want what is best for you. On the other hand, God is always willing to give you wisdom, and you can find out all about him because he has left plenty of evidence concerning his existence and character for you to find. It is in knowing God as he really is that you can find your sense of value, purpose and meaning.

For me, Christianity was a simple matter of being willing to go along with what was true, and not insisting having fun or conforming to peer expectations. The essential characteristic of my faith, in contrast to my older brother's lack of faith, was this – I did not mind being different, so long as I never lost a debate about what was true. My obedience to Christ has never been conditional on things going my way, on being liked, or anything like that. The only thing that mattered was being factually correct. It never bothered me what other people were doing, or what other people expected me to do, so long as as I was acting on what I knew to be true. And God helped me to find out what was true my motivating me to study, and leading me to him with good evidence, and good mentors.

How has this affected me? Well, this is the second thing I wanted to say about the bummer lamb analogy. Since I was a victim of this hands-off, me-first style of parenting, it's caused me to be extra sensitive about being a good spiritual leader to others in the same predicament.The people I mentor can see it in the way that I treat them the exact opposite of the way that my older brother and I were treated. I care what people read. I care what courses they choose. I care what they eat. I care how they feel. I care about their finances. I care about their plans to serve God. I care about their romantic relationships. I care whether they get recognition for doing good. I care whether their life is going in the right direction. One person I mentored who once considered taking her own life wrote to me when she graduated from a STEM program, and she said this: "I wish you could have been here at my graduation. My parents only paid for this degree. You were the one who got me through it". We have never met in person, but she is going to continue to make a huge difference for Christ and His Kingdom going forward.

I think when you have been a bummer lamb, you are extra careful to make decisions that will enable you to be a good shepherd to other lambs. Being a good shepherd does not mean being pious, spiritual, mystical, etc. Being a good shepherd does not mean making the lambs feel good about making bad decisions. Being a good shepherd means understanding what God has done to lead you, and then reflecting that love back to others *in practical, self-sacrificial actions that solve actual real-world problems for other people who want to know and serve God*. If you are about to jump off a cliff, the last thing you need is someone with no wisdom or experience telling you that God is OK with you doing whatever feels good to you. What you need is someone practical and competent to give you good advice, however much that advice may make you feel bad, or block your pursuit of fun.

One of my friends proof-read the draft of this post told me that it made her think of 2 Cor 1:3-5:

> [3] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
>
> [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.
>
> [5] For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort

> abounds through Christ.“

Nothing else I do in life matters to me as much as taking care of the people I mentor, especially the ones who are lost and lacking guidance and care. I have good health, good education, good career, and great finances. But by far the most important thing I do is following the example of the Shepherd by caring for other lambs.

Ted Cruz's scary, unreported, undisclosed Goldman Sachs loan

January 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

The New York Times reported that Ted Cruz borrowed money from his Goldman Sachs investment account to finance his Senate campaign, then didn't disclose it. Is their story correct? Let's see.

Caffeinated Thoughts explains:

> *The New York Times* "broke" a story yesterday about a Goldman Sachs loan that Ted and Heidi Cruz obtained during his run for U.S. Senate that wasn't reported properly on an FEC filing. I'vedefended Marco Rubio when *New York Times* fired garbage at him, and I'll do the same with Cruz.
>
> This story was one *discovered* from public disclosure forms, and it is a story that alreadyran in 2013. So the New York Times didn't run any new news here. All they did was run some opposition research that a rival campaign gave them. *Great* journalism.
>
> This is a non-story. Beyond the fact it is rehashed news taken from public records here are a couple reasons why there's nothing there.
>
> First, The loan was disclosed. It may not have been on the right FEC form at the right time, but it was made public and it was made public before Cruz's runoff election against then Texas Lt. Governor Dewey Dewhurst.

The Caffeinated Thoughts article has a public, federal reporting document filed on July 9th, 2012, that has the following entry: "Goldman Sachs Margin Loan". So this loan was not hidden and undisclosed and secret and scandalous. Cruz simply made an error and

didn’t disclose it on another public form.

Newsflash: borrowing on margin is normal

For those of you who invest, like me, you’ll know that anyone can borrow money on margin from their investment brokerage account, although it is not recommended. Goldman Sachs is an investment broker, and you can borrow money on margin if you have a brokerage account with them. You can do the same thing with E-Trade, Ameritrade, ScottTrade, etc. This is not some great mystery. This is a margin loan given to you by your investment brokerage firm, with collateral provided by your investment securities.

Anyway, let’s see Cruz explain it in his own words.

First, on CNN:

Second, here is Cruz’s 2-minute answer from last night

Now, that’s a simple answer that anyone can understand, but the left wants to make it seem sinister and sneaky. There is no question that the left, including the mainstream media, has it in for Cruz. The radically leftist New Republic entitled this story “Ted Cruz Defends His Undisclosed Loan from Goldman Sachs”. The radically leftist New York Times called it “Ted Cruz Didn’t Report Goldman Sachs Loan in a Senate Race”. Associated Press “Cruz Failed To Disclose Goldman Loan On Reports”. Secular Talk “Ted Cruz Took $500k From Goldman Sachs & Didn’t Disclose it”. They don’t have time to report on any of the scandals of the Obama administration – especially Hillary Clinton. But they do have time to make a mountain out of a mole hill about a simple thing like borrowing on margin.

I feel bad for Cruz in the way that he has to answer these deceptive attacks from the leftist media, and then again from Marco Rubio and Donald Trump, who parrot the stories they read in the leftist media. These things are easily explained, but you have to actually understand how real life works. It just depresses me when I think about how hard it is for an honest man to run for office in a world like this. You can’t fight back against these smears… the minute you respond to one, there’s another dozen lies to answer. It’s just depressing.

The best part of the debate

However, I will end this post on a high note. The highlight of the debate last night was that Cruz finally defended himself from Trump’s attacks.

Here is their entire exchange on Trump’s birther argument against Cruz:

Cruz graduated from Princeton and Harvard Law. He clerked for J. Michael Luttig in the 4th District Court of Appeals, then Chief Justice Earl Rehnquist at the U.S. Supreme Court. Two conservative justices. As Solicitor General of Texas, he defended religious liberty, gun rights and other conservative issues in front of the Supreme Court. The man understands Constitutional law.

Here is Frank Luntz’s focus group responding to the exchange:

You can read an assessment of the exchange in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places – which actually gets it right for a change. Headline is “Ted Cruz, Once Dismissed,

Emerges as a Slashing Debater". I'm not kidding.

In any case, I responded to the charge in detail here, citing legal experts on both sides of the political spectrum.

Is Marco Rubio right about his attacks on Ted Cruz's business tax plan?

January 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

Here's an article from Dan Mitchell of the Cato Institute, published with Forbes magazine. Cato economists are libertarians, so they are good at fiscal policy, but terrible at moral and social issues.

It says:

> But here's the part of Cruz's plan that raises a red flag. He says he wants a "business flat tax," but what he's really proposing is a value-added tax.
>
> His proposal is a VAT because wages are nondeductible. And that basically means a 16 percent withholding tax on the wages and salaries of all American workers (for tax geeks, this part of Cruz's plan is technically a subtraction-method VAT).
>
> Normally, I start foaming at the mouth when politicians talking about value-added taxes. But Senator Cruz obviously isn't proposing a VAT for the purpose of financing a bigger welfare state.
>
> **Instead, he's doing a swap, imposing a VAT while also getting rid of the corporate income tax and the payroll tax.**
>
> And that's theoretically a good deal because the corporate income tax is so senselessly destructive(swapping the payroll tax for the VAT, as I explained a few days ago in another context, is basically a wash).
>
> But it's still a red flag because I worry about what might happen in the future. If the Cruz plan is adopted, we'll still have the structure of an income tax (albeit a

> far-less-destructive income tax). And we'll also have a VAT.
>
> So what happens 10 years from now or 25 years from now if statists control both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue and they decide to reinstate the bad features of the income tax while retaining the VAT? They now have a relatively simple way of getting more revenue to finance European-style big government.
>
> And also don't forget that it would be relatively simple to reinstate the bad features of the corporate income tax by tweaking Cruz's business flat tax/VAT.
>
> […]**Notwithstanding my concern about the VAT, Senator Cruz has put forth a plan that would be enormously beneficial to the American economy.**
>
> Instead of being a vehicle for punitive class warfare and corrupt cronyism, the tax code would simply be the method by which revenue was collected to fund government.

Rubio ignored all of those details during the debate, and instead accused Cruz of bringing in a VAT tax that is the same as those in Europe, with no other taxes being lowered or eliminated to compensate. It's dishonest, but he was probably hoping that Cruz would not have time to respond.

Here's Cruz's response from the debate last night:

In Rubio's question, he deliberately misrepresented Cruz's proposal by neglecting to mention all the taxes that Cruz would eliminate. Dan Mitchell mentioned them. I don't understand why Rubio is smearing a fellow conservative with such attacks. Unless maybe Rubio is not a fellow conservative at all? I'll be looking at that more next week.

This is not the first time that Rubio has tried to distort facts in order to smear Ted Cruz. Honestly, I used to have Rubio listed as my 5th choice, but he keeps smearing Cruz with dishonest attacks that are easily cleared up with a little knowledge from experts. I have therefore removed Rubio from my list of candidates.

Debate evaluations

Google Trends shows that the debate was essentially a showdown between Trump and Cruz, based on search engine traffic during the debate:

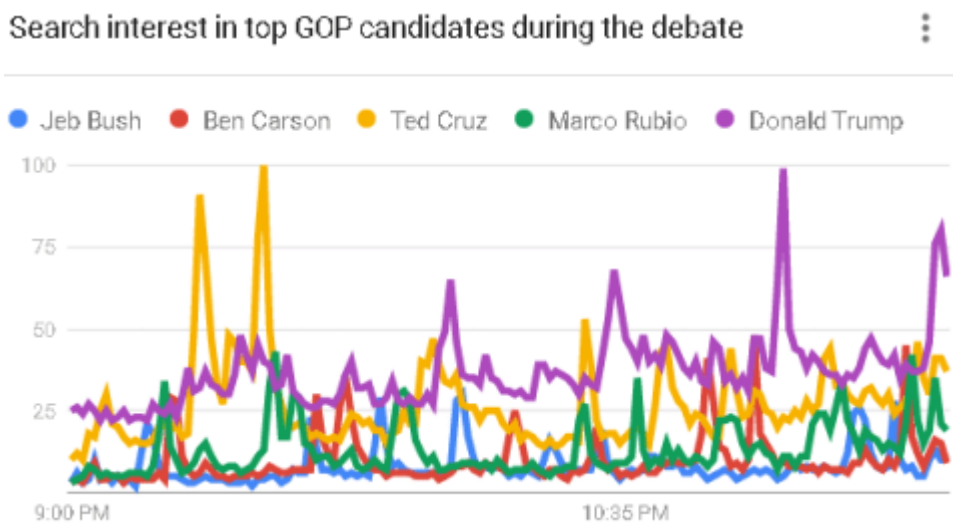

Google Trends analysis of search terms during Fox Business GOP primary debate
There are some reports out now on who did well in last night's debate.

- Ben Shapiro has one.
- Legal Insurrection has one.
- Red State has one.

And The Weekly Standard has a new podcast up.

It’s time for my annual trip to the movie theater… to see “13 Hours”

January 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi

Here’s the trailer:

I listened to an episode of of the Weekly Standard podcast featuring Stephen Hayes. No one has done more and better reporting on Benghazi than Stephen Hayes, and I’ve featured his work on it on this blog. I wanted to see what he thought of the movie. He loved it, and said it was accurate to the way it was reported by the Weekly Standard and elsewhere.

I looked at 3 reviews, and chose this one from the leftist Seattle Times to quote here.

Excerpt:

> Friend? Or foe?
>
> Those are the critical questions bedeviling the six main characters in “13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi.”
>
> Strangers in a strange land, unable to speak or understand Arabic, assigned to provide security at a secret CIA installation in the restive Libyan city of the title — for them, those questions have life and death implications when the nearby ambassadorial compound is overrun by jihadist attackers on the night of Sept. 11, 2012. The assault claims the lives of Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans.
>
> In Michael Bay’s gripping dramatization of that controversial event, the men, highly trained American private security operatives, can’t be sure if the figures they see moving toward them in the dark are jihadists or friendly Libyan militia

> members who are supposed to be the main protectors of the compound. The loyalty of those supposed allies is also questionable. It’s only when the shooting starts that the questions are answered, and then the six are in for the fight of their lives.
>
> The picture is reminiscent of “Black Hawk Down” and “American Sniper” in the way it marries visceral Hollywood-style filmmaking (a Bay trademark) with sober subject matter in a manner that doesn’t trivialize the seriousness of the story it’s telling.
>
> Based on Mitchell Zuckoff’s 2014 best-seller “13 Hours,” Bay’s movie is a ground-level depiction of heroism in the midst of the fog of war. Hewing closely to Zuckoff’s true-life account, Bay seems to have no political ax to grind, at least with respect to the role in the fiasco of then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, whose name is never mentioned.

I have heard the actual operators interviewed on TV and on several radio shows. They were heavily involved in the book and the movie. So, I’m going to do something that I really hate, and give the movie theater my money to see this thing. I am almost certain I won’t be disappointed. I loved Act of Valor, American Sniper and especially Lone Survivor, and people are comparing this movie to those movies. If you’re looking for something to see this weekend, try this one.

Study: early sexual activity has a negative impact on relationship quality and stability

January 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young people understand the long-term impact of premarital sex?

I've posted before about how premarital sex affects the stability of marriages by making divorce more likely. But there has been more research published since. Let's take a look.

Here a good study on relationship tempo and relationship quality.

Abstract:

> Rapid sexual involvement may have adverse long-term implications for relationship quality. This study examined the tempo of sexual intimacy and subsequent relationship quality in a sample of married and cohabiting men and women. Data come from the Marital and Relationship Survey, which provides information on nearly 600 low- to moderate-income couples living with minor children. Over one third of respondents became sexually involved within the first month of the relationship. Bivariate results suggested that delaying sexual involvement was associated with higher relationship quality across several dimensions. The multivariate results indicated that the speed of entry into sexual relationships was negatively associated with marital quality, but only among women. The association between relationship tempo and relationship quality was largely driven by cohabitation. Cohabiting may result in poorer quality relationship because rapid sexual involvement early in the romantic relationship is associated with entrance into shared living.

The authors are from Cornell University and University of Wisconsin – Madison. Prestigious schools, and very far to the left.

Here's another recent study that shows that if a woman has more partners than just her husband as a premarital sex partner, the risk of divorce increases.

Conclusion:

> Using nationally representative data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, I estimate the association between intimate premarital relationships (premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) and subsequent marital dissolution. I extend previous research by considering relationship histories pertaining to both premarital sex and premarital cohabitation. I find that premarital sex or premarital cohabitation that is limited to a woman's husband is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption. **However, women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship have an increased risk of marital dissolution.**

Here's another study that makes it even more clear.

Findings:

> Data from the 1988 US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) were utilized to assess the impact of premarital sexual activity on subsequent marital stability. **Among white NSFG subjects first married in 1965-85, virgin brides were significantly less to have become separated or divorced (25%) than women who had not been virgins at marriage (35%).**
>
> **[…]The lower risk of divorce on the part of white women with no premarital sexual experience persisted even after numerous intervening and background variables were controlled.**

And I am going to save the best study for last. This marvelous PDF is from August 2014, and is put out by the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia. It is comprehensive, and links to many papers from decades ago to the state of the art today. It seems like people are really rushing into sex these days, without much thought. They want to have fun, feel accepted, be like their friends, conform to the culture. But sometimes, it's better to be practical than to be governed by the desire for fun and thrills. If you want to do something, look at the research and find out what the consequences are before you do it. That's what a sensible person does.

When it comes to discussing the Bible's rules on sex, evidence is very important. Evidence is what convinces even non-Chrsitian people to take the Bible seriously when it comes to putting sex in its proper place. That's why we need to know what the Bible says, and we need to augment that with real-world evidence so that it is applied to our own decision-making, and so that we can be persuasive when discussing it with others.

Atheist Michael Shermer tries to rationally ground morality in debate with Frank Turek

January 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Shermer debates Frank Turek: atheism and morality

The topic of the debate was on the grounding of morality – which worldview (theism or atheism) is better at grounding morality?

And here is the MP3 for the cross-examination only, which is what I will be summarizing. (12.5 Mb)

The full debate can be seen here and can be heard here.

Turek's cross-examination period starts at 74m22s and ends at 89m20s.

Shermer's cross-examination period starts at 89m50s and ends at 105m0s.

Topics of Turek's cross-examination:

- evolution produces Shermer's moral sense and Hitler's moral sense
- why does Shermer think his is better than Hitler's, since both were produced by the same evolution?
- what makes right or wrong if evolution is the source of morality?
- why is Stalin's opinion of right and wrong less valuable than the herd's opinion of right and wrong?
- do the Founding Fathers ground inalienable rights in a Creator, or in evolution?
- can atheism ground the existence of inalienable rights?
- can you ground objective moral values and objective moral duties by asking people how they feel?
- can you ground objective human rights on atheism by shouting like a madman and interrupting?
- how can you trust your thinking if they are the result of an unguided, random process of evolution?
- how can you have rational thoughts if materialism is true, and you are a machine

made out of meat?
- can you ground objective moral values and objective moral duties on personal preferences?
- how do the personal preferences of some individuals create an objective moral duty for other individuals?
- does naturalistic evolution orient human beings toward survival or truth?
- on materialism, what is the chemical composition of justice?

Topics of Shermer's cross-examination:

- Radical muslims are exactly the same as evangelical Christians, and have the same God (Allah is the same as the Triune Christian God)
- Radical muslims would assert that their God is the same as the Triune Christian God, with Jesus and the Holy Spirit also being God
- Therefore, we can lay the blame for what radical muslims do on the backs of evangelical Christians
- Radical muslims and evangelical Christians are the same, because "you're enthusiastic, they're enthusiastic"
- The Bible's notion of indentured servitude to pay off debt is the identical to the idea of slavery based on race
- The Bible's notion that masters and slaves are equal in the sight of God forms a basis for thinking they are unequal
- The Bible teaches things that I disagree with, like the idea that marriage should provide children with a mother and a father
- Gay marriage is solidly grounded in evolution, even though the morality that evolution produces varies by time and place
- Atheists can ground objective moral values and objective moral duties by asking people how they feel
- Can atheists who want to legalize gay marriage because "they're in love" prohibit polygamy or incest as marriage?
- Is shouting "you're on the wrong side of history" a way to rationally ground morality in an accidental atheistic universe?
- Is it loving for atheists to celebrate a lifestyle that exposes gay men to sickness and premature death?
- Is it "bigotry" for the Center for Disease Control to warn men who have sex with men about higher health risks?
- How do Christians decide what is right and wrong when they are confronted with a moral dilemma?
- How do humans sense the objective moral standard that is required for them to make moral judgments
- Can enlightenment philosophers who merely *imagine* human rights actually *create* those human rights?
- If revelations change over time for Mormons, does that undermine the need for God

to ground objective morality?

I apologize for the poor quality of the video and audio. The moderator was extremely ineffective, letting Shermer go on and on making speeches instead of asking questions during his questioning time. Also, Shermer apparently thought that shouting at Turek and waving his finger at Turek was a good strategy to defend against Turek's use of logic and evidence.

My thoughts on Michael Shermer

I do want to make some general comments about what Shermer said. Shermer's view of morality is "what is best for the greatest number of people". There are no inalienable rights that act as a break on the will of the majority. Shermer has no objection to anything that the majority has decided in any time or in any place. If he were there, he would agree that whatever they decided was morally right.

Two hundred years ago, Shermer would have endorsed slavery. And if he were in Germany 50 years ago, he would have endorsed the Holocaust. If he lived in a Pakistan today, he would endorse stoning women for wearing the wrong clothes. Atheists always think that whatever the majority is doing in a particular time and place is right for them. There are no inalienable human rights that exist apart from human opinions, on atheism.

Another problem is that Shermer is constantly making moral judgments when his own view is that morality is constantly changing in different times and places. He condemns the moral values of other times and places without having any standard in his worldview that can decide between different moral values and duties. It is like saying that lunch is better than breakfast because lunch is here and now, and breakfast was then and there. That is literally what atheists do when they make moral judgments. They have no standard that applies to different times and places, just the ever evolving opinions of the majority of people in different times and places.

Is Michael Shermer concerned about morality?

Finally, I want people to understand what kind of person Michael Shermer is. You can read a post by PZ Myers on his blog Pharyngula to get the picture. I think it's useful to know about Shermer's own morality since he seems to like to make moral judgments so much during debates. In my own experience in dealing with atheists, although they will talk about slavery and the Crusades, there is nothing in an atheist's moral system that makes things wrong for all times and all places. They bring it up to stop you from judging them about the things that they care about. When an atheist says "the Crusades! Slavery!" what they really mean is "I need to shame you for having a basis for moral judgments against me, so that you won't say anything about me getting married women drunk then raping them". That's what atheistic use of moral language is really about.

What atheists really think about morality

Atheist Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any

> rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

So, when Shermer tries to shame Christians for behaviors in other times and places which our society here and now disagrees with, what he really means is "morality, objectively speaking, is nonsense, but I will use your moral sense that comes from your non-atheistic worldview to shame you, so that you won't have the confidence to judge me for my immoral behavior". And we need to get used to understanding this about atheists. Morality is nonsense to them, and their real goal is to get you off their back for their hedonism. For atheists, morality is just complying with arbitrary social customs which vary by time and place. There is nothing more to it than aping their neighbors (at least when their neighbors are watching). And they would have aped slave-owners, widow-burners and Nazi prison guards too, if they lived in that time and place. And shouted at Christians for disagreeing with them, just like Shermer did about gay marriage.

If you like the way that Frank Turek debates, then be sure and check out his new book "Stealing From God". I highly recommend it.

What are the “New York Values” that Trump’s evangelical Christian supporters admire?

January 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

So, I know that most of Trump’s supporters are in fact Democrats from blue states, because of this article from the New York Times.

> Donald Trump holds a dominant position in national polls in the Republican race in no small part because he is extremely strong among people on the periphery of the G.O.P. coalition.
>
> He is strongest among Republicans who are less affluent, less educated and less likely to turn out to vote. His very best voters are self-identified Republicans who nonetheless are registered as Democrats. It’s a coalition that’s concentrated in the South, Appalachia and the industrial North, according to data provided to The Upshot by Civis Analytics, a Democratic data firm.

Registered Democrats.

New York Values

Now, let’s see the New York values that Trump trumpeted in his recent debate with Ted Cruz.

Trump says this:

Now, what that short video carefully and you will find that New York Values mean the following:

- on gay marriage: “too premature for me to comment on”
- gays in the military: “not something that would disturb me”
- abortion: “I’m very pro-choice”
- partial-birth abortion: “No, [I would not ban partial birth abortion]”

Trump says SIX TIMES in that 1-minute video that these 4 points are “New York Values”. These are the New York Values that Ted Cruz disagreed with in their debate.

Trump’s donations to Democrats

Trump donated to Democrats, especially in the election that put Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid in power.

> Between 1989 and 2010, The Donald gave $314,300 to Democratic groups and candidates and $290,600 to Republicans, according to a Daily Caller analysis of records maintained by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> But Trump’s donation gap was even larger during the mid-2000s, which saw the end of Republican congressional majorities and the ascendance of the Democratic party.

So, Trump supporters support donating to Democrats, and they support Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid.

Trump supports New York City mayor Bill de Blasio

Trump also supports Bill de Blasio, the mayor of New York City:

> Business mogul Donald Trump is optimistic about the future of New York City if Democratic candidate Bill de Blasio wins the mayoral election.
>
> “I think pretty strongly that he’ll end up being a good mayor, maybe a very good mayor and I don’t think he’s going to want to kill the golden goose,” Trump told an Albany radio station Thursday, according to the New York Daily News.

Let’s find out what Bill de Blasio is like, so we can find out what policies Trump thinks would be good for New York city.

De Blasio supports universal pre-K:

> Establishing universal pre-K was a hallmark campaign pledge for de Blasio — an expansion he said could be achieved by raising taxes on New York’s wealthiest residents.

De Blasio opposes the police:

> Many are blaming the murder of two New York City cops on Saturday afternoon on Mayor Bill de Blasio following his recent support for protesters in the city marching in opposition to a grand jury’s decision to not indict the police officer who killed Eric Garner.
>
> Hundreds have taken to social media to say that de Blasio has ‘blood on his hands’ and should ‘be charged with murder’ after the two men were killed ‘execution style’ in Brooklyn.
>
> What’s more, many feel that de Blasio should not attend the officers’ funerals, this after many members of the NYPD signed a petition asking that the Mayor not attend their service should they be killed in the line of duty in light of his recent

> actions.

Donald Trump supports de Blasio, and so do his supporters. These are the views of Trump and of Trump’s supporters.

I hope everyone understands what New York values are now, and understands what Trump voters are supporting. This is what Trump voters believe.

13 Hours movie review, and my top 25 posts about the Benghazi cover-up

January 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi

I went to see the movie 13 hours on Saturday and found that it dovetailed nicely with all the stories that I had written on this blog about the events in Libya and the subsequent lies and cover-up by the Obama administration.

I was asked to review the movie and post all of the links to the previous stories by my friends Kevin and McKenzie, so that's what I'm going to do.

So, I am a huge war movie fan, and I read military biography and military history. The most frustrating thing in war movies and books about war is that the go too far down to the level of details, without providing the context. Very frustrating. I don't want movies to be too much about action and fancy animations. I want to learn something about the strategy and tactics in play. And 13 Hours does not disappoint.

You get a lot of exposure to the real world of espionage, black ops and drones for one thing. They show you the insides of a real CIA station in Libya, tell how it was acquired, and they show what goes on there. You also get to see what diplomats do, and who is responsible for keeping them safe. The battle scenes feature *a ton* of top down / map-like shots. There are shots of maps with the buildings and who will be deployed where, and for what reason.

Everything is called by its real name, e.g. – a technical is not called "a pickup truck with a heavy weapon", it's called a "technical". An AC-130 gunship is not "air support" it's an AC-130 gunship. A Predator drone is not a drone, it's a Predator. An F-16 is not a "fighter jet" it's an F-16. A QRF is not a "Quick Reaction Force", it's a QRF. Too bad for you if you don't read enough to know what these things are and how they work. Everyone should be

interested in these things, because these things matter for national security and foreign policy.

And the actual scenes of shooting is not mindless gunplay like in “Inception” or “The Matrix” – they try to show you the ranges, the cover, the concealment, the lines of sight, suppression, etc. There is realistic confusion about fog of war (FOW) and identifaction: friend of foe (IFF). The fact that this is a true story where the people involved all collaborated on the book and on the movie makes it really something if you like realism. This is how State Department and CIA work in other countries really goes down. If you liked “Act of Valor”, “American Sniper”, “Blackhawk Down”, “Lone Survivor” or the battle scenes in “Rules of Engagement”, then you need to see this movie.

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

What difference at this point does it make?

All right, now the politics was kept to a minimum in the movie, but I was asked to list out all the posts that I wrote about this.

The list of posts goes back in time from October 22, 2015 to September 13th, 2012 (the day after the terrorist attack):

1. Hillary Clinton’s State Department ignored 600+ requests for more security in Benghazi
2. Why did Hillary Clinton blame the Benghazi terrorist attack on an “Internet video”?
3. All evidence points to Hillary Clinton as source of internet video lie
4. E-mails: Hillary Clinton’s top aides knew in minutes that Benghazi was a terrorist attack
5. Clinton confidants were present to “separate” damaging documents before Benghazi probe

6. E-mails: Susan Rice prepped to lie about Benghazi by White House
7. Transcripts show that top U.S. military officials briefed Obama on Benghazi terrorist attack
8. Benghazi liar Susan Rice to be appointed National Security Adviser by grateful Obama
9. Released e-mails show that State Department edited terrorism out of Benghazi talking points
10. Obama: editing of talking points to cover-up of Benghazi terrorist attack is a "sideshow"
11. BBC News covers whistle-blower testimony: "After Benghazi revelations, heads will roll"
12. What we learned from the Benghazi whistle-blowers
13. Whistle-blower: State Department cut counterterrorism experts out of Benghazi decisions
14. Official: We knew Benghazi was a terrorist attack "from the get-go"
15. Benghazi whistle-blower: assets to protect the embassy were available
16. Obama administration refused to engage top counter-terrorism resource for Benghazi
17. Classified cable sent on August 16th warned of vulnerability of Benghazi consulate
18. Requests for support from Benghazi defenders denied by the Obama administration
19. White House told that terrorists took credit for Benghazi attack within two hours
20. Unmanned drone observed Benghazi attack, no help sent for 7 hours
21. CIA in Libya reported that Benghazi was a terrorist attack in first 24 hours
22. Obama's Watergate: State Department falsifies Obama's Benghazi cover-up
23. Benghazi attack was a massive failure of Obama's security policy
24. UK Independent: "America 'was warned of embassy attack but did nothing'"
25. Al Qaeda chief suspect in Libya terrorist attack, Obama flies to Las Vegas fundraiser

And of course the famous Hillary Clinton meltdown when questions about why she blamed a terrorist attack on a YouTube video, and why there was a stand down order to prevent help from being sent.

Hillary also lied to the families of the victims, telling the families that she blamed a YouTube video for protests that got out of hand.

To make a long story short, the Benghazi terrorist attack occurred two months before the 2012 re-election of Barack Obama. And that's why Obama, Hillary Clinton and Susan Rice lied to the American people about it – they did not want the American people to know how poorly their Libya intervention had worked out. An intervention that was strongly supported by easily-influenced moderate, establishment Republicans such as Marco Rubio, by the way. Everyone who voted for the Obama administration in the 2012 elections voted against the 4 Americans who were killed in that terrorist attack. As Secretary of State, Clinton did not prioritize national security. Her focus was on promoting abortion and gay rights abroad.

Searching by tag name

If you want to search the blog by tag, just add tag/<tagName> to the end of the web page address (URL). The list above was generated with: "https://winteryknight.com/tag/Benghazi". Use a dash for spaces in the tagName. For my other series of posts about Democrat scandals, such as Fast and Furious, just change the tag name: "https://winteryknight.com/tag/Fast-and-Furious". You can do the same thing with the e-mail scandal, the Clinton Foundation scandal, and all the other scandals of this corrupt Democrat administration.

New study: incomes of the poorest 20% of households are much lower than in 2007

January 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Does Barack Obama's knowledge of policy match his confidence?

Now, many American voters like to think that if the President expresses concern about things like poverty and income inequality, then that means that whatever he does to "fix" it will automatically work to benefit the poor. Is it true?

Here is an article from Investors Business Daily, which talks about a study from the respected, leftist Brookings Institute.

Excerpt:

> President Obama's upbeat assessment of the economy is not likely to sit well with low-income families living in major urban or metro areas. For them, economic decline is a harsh reality, not "fiction."
>
> In his State of the Union speech, Obama declared that "anyone claiming that America's economy is in decline is peddling a fiction."
>
> But a new report from the liberal-leaning Brookings Institution finds that incomes among the poorest fifth of households was significantly lower than it was in 2007. Of the 100 cities it examined, incomes fell an overall average of 12%, according to the report's data. In some, the drop was huge — 34% in Stockton, Calif., 31% in New Haven, Conn., and 30% in Lakeland, Fla.
>
> At the other end of the spectrum, the top 5% of households saw incomes climb, but not by much. The average income for this group was basically unchanged over those years.
>
> As a result, income inequality has increased, but not — as Obama, Bernie

> Sanders and the chorus of liberal Democrats would have you believe — because the rich are getting richer.
>
> “It’s really about the poor losing ground rather than these upper-class households pulling away,” Brookings senior fellow Alan Berube told AP.
>
> […]Added to this, many of the cities that saw the biggest increases in income inequality — like Boston; New Orleans; Providence, R.I.; New Haven, Conn.; San Francisco, Washington, D.C. — have been bastions of “spread the wealth around” liberalism.

Another example of this would be Obamacare. Obama got up in front of his teleprompters and told everyone that he was going to make changes to health care policy. He promised that it would not add one dime to the deficit, that we could keep our doctors, that we could keep our health plans and that our health insurance premiums would go down. Every single one of those promises were lies.

We don’t know if Obama knows that he is lying when he says these things. I prefer to think that he is just too stupid to know what he is talking about. He says things that make him feel good. Things that would have pleased his professors in college. But since he has no practical experience of achieving results in any of these areas, he fails again and again. He is confident because he assumes a knowledge of how to obtain results that he does not actually have, owing to his lack of experience. And yet we elected him, then re-elected him.

He is in his own little world, where the people around him carefully insulate him from a reality where all his confident prescriptions have failed to produce what he intended.

Could it be that the free enterprise system of economics that was “built in” to America at the founding actually works better than the failed systems of socialism and communism that Obama was taught in college? Could it be that if we just stuck with the free enterprise system that made us the most powerful economy in the world, that things would be better for the poor than in places where capitalism is rejected for socialism?

We don’t have to guess at what the economic policies of the left produce. You can see it with your own eyes in socialist countries like Venezuela, Cuba, North Korea, Argentina, and so on.

Marco Rubio’s billionaire hedge fund donor supports amnesty and gay marriage

January 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

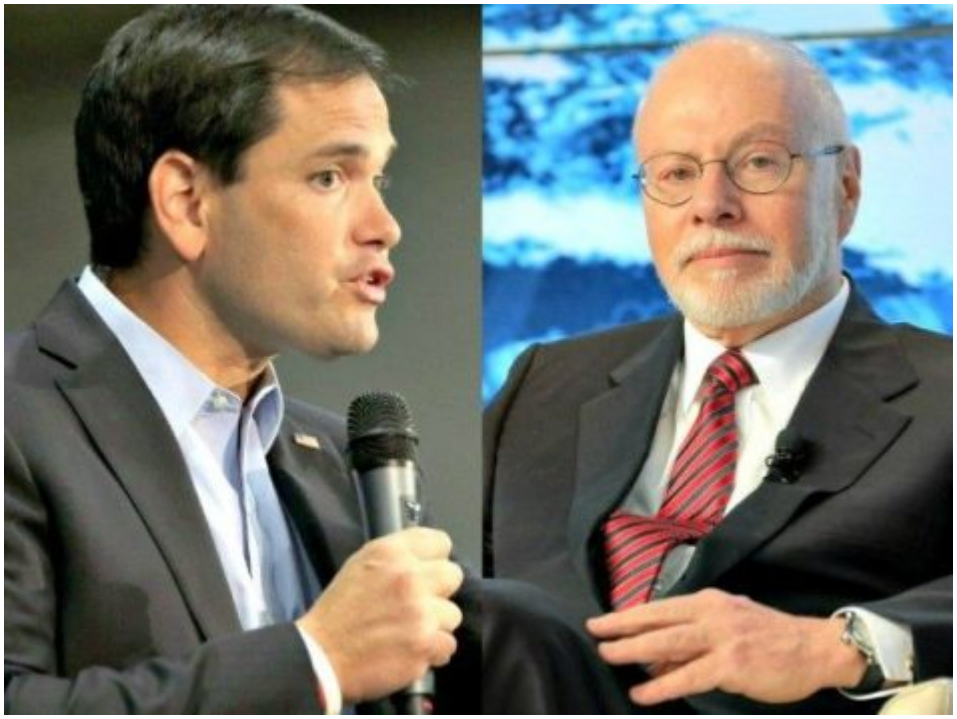

Marco Rubio and his billionaire puppet master Paul Singer

Every day of this week, I will be writing a post that explains why we should prefer Ted Cruz over Marco Rubio in the Republican primary. I have tried to be circumspect, in case Rubio is the nominee.

First article from CNBC.

Excerpt:

> Marco Rubio got some great news on with backing from influential hedge fund billionaire Paul Singer, who was heavily courted by multiple GOP presidential candidates, including former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.
>
> But Singer’s backing — while a huge positive for Rubio in the money race — does not come without some risks for the Florida senator. **Singer is distrusted in the conservative base of the GOP both for his support of same-sex marriage and his support of Rubio’s immigration reform efforts in the Senate. According to a person close to Singer, the hedge fund billionaire gave $100,000 to support immigration reform, which the right widely regards as “amnesty” for undocumented immigrants.**

A little more on the gay marriage issue from NewsMax:

> The news last week that Paul Singer, billionaire Republican fundraiser and unabashed advocate of same-sex marriage, will support Marco Rubio for president has drawn mixed reviews from state and national pro-family activists.

> […]A **billionaire hedge fund manager, Singer has been a major GOP donor – and has made quite clear that his priority issue has been support of gay rights in the Republican Party. Singer and his network of donors have steered millions to GOP candidates at the federal and state level who backed same-sex marriage.**

Now, if you ask me, this means that Marco Rubio will not be as good as Ted Cruz on issues like gay rights, gay marriage, religious liberty, border security and immigration.

After all, why would a man like Paul Singer, who knows how to make billions of dollars, throw his money away on a candidate who does not intend to give him what he is paying for?

Are crisis pregnancy centers equipped to discuss the issue of abortion rationally?

January 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this message

Consider this article from Stand to Reason, written by Greg Koukl. The title of the article is "The Vanishing Pro-Life Apologist". Koukl argues that crisis pregnancy centers are less interested in making the case for the right to life of the unborn child, and more interested in giving women who have already chosen life what they need, in terms of material support.

Koukl writes:

> The last few years have witnessed a stunning development in the pro-life movement. **More and more crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) refuse to discuss abortion.** A new wave of pro-life leaders insist that victory will not be gained in the court of public opinion if the debate centers principally on the morality of abortion.
>
> Paul Swope calls it "a failure to communicate" when right-to-lifers focus primarily on the unborn instead of on the felt needs of women. "The pro-life movement must show that abortion is actually not in a woman's own self-interest," he says, "and that the choice of life offers hope and a positive, expanded sense of self." Reframing the debate in these terms will enable the movement to "regain the moral high ground in the mind of the American public."
>
> […]Pro-life feminist Frederica Matthews-Green agrees. "Pro-lifers will not be able

> to break through this deadlock by stressing the humanity of the unborn….That is a question nobody is asking. But there is a question they are asking. It is, 'How could we live without it?' The problem is not moral, but practical."
>
> Swope and Matthews-Green are not suggesting we frame the debate in terms of the felt needs of women in the narrow context of crisis counseling. It's certainly appropriate to inform a woman of the physical and psychological consequences of choosing abortion. Rather, they insist the pro-life movement in general must speak less of the unborn and more of the woman in order to break the alleged deadlock.
>
> While it's true that appealing to self-interest might dissuade some abortion-minded women from killing their babies, it's hard to image how this could be an effective general strategy. Here's why: **It's almost always in a woman's short-term self-interest to abort. This is precisely why the pro-abortion side has been effective. A focus on felt needs favors death, not life.**
>
> How can we "regain the moral high ground in the mind of the public," to use Swope's words, if we retreat from the moral debate? The whole point of an ethical argument is to give reasons why a woman ought not pursue selfish interests. Felt needs are the problem, not the solution.
>
> This approach completely sabotages the pro-life position. Crisis pregnancy centers do not exist to handle pregnancy. Hospitals and clinics do that. CPCs handle crisis pregnancies, those that are vulnerable to termination by abortion. **In a sense, CPCs don't exist for the woman, but for the child whose life is in danger. The idea is to dissuade women from having abortions precisely because abortion is a moral tragedy. If not, then why oppose it?**
>
> What kind of morality does this tactic leave us with? Such a posture implicitly promotes the vice of selfishness instead of the virtue of sacrificial motherhood. Ideas have consequences, and this one may have, as Frank Beckwith observes, "the unfortunate consequence of increasing the number of people who think that unless their needs are pacified they are perfectly justified in performing homicide on the most vulnerable of our population."

I actually want to go even further than that.

I think that if CPCs refuse to speak up against abortion on on moral grounds, they are doing nothing at all to stem the flow of abortions. Today, men and women are increasingly choosing to have sex when they are not in any kind of committed relationship where a child would be welcome. There are two things we can do to stop this.

First, we can tell them about what abortion really is, and how it is morally wrong to take the life of another person without adequate moral justification. (And selfishness is not moral justification). Second, we can tell them to be more careful about who they choose for relationships, about what the goal of the relationship is (not fun, but marriage), and about making decisions that mature them as a couple so that they are ready to provide

for a child. Sex should not be seen as something recreational, and sex partners should not be chosen because of the fun you can have in the moment.

Now if CPCs do not want to tell people that abortion is wrong, and that relationships should be focused on commitment and providing for children, then we will never see fewer abortions. Our job is not to let people in this society think that unless someone else pays the bills, then abortion is OK. Abortion is only OK if the life of the mother is at risk – a very rare scenario. Our job is to educate men and women so that they understand how to have relationships that do not put them in a position where they have to take the life of an unborn child in order to make the lives of the grown-ups more satisfying.

We need to make the the safety of unborn children an issue that people consider when they choose who to have a relationship with, and when to have sex. In particular, women should choose men who value marriage before sex, and who make decisions to ready themselves for the man's role in marriage. And men should choose women who value chastity and providing above men who offer fun and thrills.

We don't have enough money to bail everyone out. We have to teach grown-ups moral boundaries, and give them a vision for relationships that is focused on commitment, and therefore safe for unborn children.

Conclusion

So here are my two points about CPCs and pro-life apologetics:

- **crisis pregnancy centers should be committed to defending the right to life of the unborn child in conversations with grown-ups, so that grown-ups police themselves in their relationship and sexual decision-making.**
- **crisis pregnancy centers should be working with organizations that use pro-life arguments and evidence to persuade people to value the unborn before the life decision has been made.**

And for everyone else, make sure that you're equipped to explain to others why you think that unborn children deserve full legal protection.

Here's a good video from Scott Klusendorf to help you do that:

This is an important moral issue, and we can't be persuasive unless we are equipped with logical arguments and evidence.

Clinton, Rubio, GOP establishment and leftist media defend Trump's New York Values

January 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, during the debate, Cruz responded to Trump's attacks on him by asking him about his New York values, and then Trump got all offended and pretended that he did not know what New York values are.

Well, I managed to dig up this video that shows what New York values are:

Yes, that's Donald Trump explaining what New York values are. So he actually does know what they are, and he embraced them.

Anyway, Trump is still feeling very offended by Cruz's disagreement with New York values, and so he has gone on a Twitter meltdown about it. And many of Trump's friends are backing him up.

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

The Hill reports that Hillary Clinton is backing Trump up:

> Hillary Clinton on Friday made the rare move of backing up Republican presidential rival Donald Trump amid an attack from fellow contender Ted Cruz on the real estate mogul's "New York values."
>
> "Just this once, Trump's right: New Yorkers value hard work, diversity, tolerance, resilience, and building better lives for our families," tweeted Clinton, a former New York senator whose campaign headquarters is in Brooklyn.

And why not? She's gotten so many donations from him. And he really really likes her:

The Hill article also notes that the socialist mayor of Bill de Blasio is backing Trump up:

> New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio (D) also backed up Trump, tweeting he agreed with the businessman's "love for NYC" and "appreciated his tribute to our city's

> heroic response to terrorism."

And why not? Trump said that de Blasio would be "good for New York".

The socialist governor of New York is backing Trump up:

> New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) also slammed Cruz's "anti-American" remarks in a series of interviews Friday morning, calling them "highly offensive" to several groups, including gays.

And why not? Trump is proud to defend New York state against conservatives like Ted Cruz.

The Republican establishment

National Review reports that the GOP establishment is backing Trump up:

> The developing feeling among House Republicans? Donald Trump is preferable to Ted Cruz.
>
> "If you look at Trump's actual policies, they're pretty thin. There's not a lot of meat there," says one Republican member in Ryan's inner circle, who requested anonymity to speak frankly about the two front-runners as leadership has carefully avoided doing all week. If Trump were to get the nomination, he would "be looking to answer the question: 'Where's the beef?' And we will have that for him," says the member.

Ted Cruz is bad, because he doesn't like the liberal policies of the establishment Republicans – such as the massive spending bill that Paul Ryan sent to Obama, or the debt limit increases, etc.

The far-left CNN reports that Marco Rubio, the candidate of the Republican establishment, is backing Trump up:

> Rubio also jabbed the Texas senator for his recent string of attacks on so-called "New York values." Cruz last week explained his terminology, describing New Yorkers as "socially liberal, pro-gay marriage, pro-abortion, focused on money and the media."
>
> Those comments, which critics in and out of the GOP contest have criticized, with some suggesting they amount to a dog whistle aimed at anti-Semitic voters or homophobic elements in the party, represent a deeper dishonest, Rubio claimed.

Andy why not? Rubio has the backing of a billionaire donor who favors amnesty and gay rights. Rubio has no problem with New York values.

I think by now, everyone understands who the real "outsider" candidate is. It's Ted Cruz. He is the one that the Democrats and elites hate and fear. They want to destroy him.

Trump lashes out at Cruz

In addition to the anti-Cruz meltdown on Twitter, Trump is whining about Cruz to his friends in the liberal media.

ABC News reports on Trump's comments to former Bill Clinton Senior Advisor George Stephanopolous:

> "I don't think Ted Cruz has a great chance, to be honest with you," Trump told ABC News Chief Anchor George Stephanopoulos in an interview on "This Week" Sunday. "Look, the truth is, he's a nasty guy. He was so nice to me. I mean, I knew it. I was watching. I kept saying, 'Come on Ted. Let's go, okay.' But he's a nasty guy. Nobody likes him. Nobody in Congress likes him. Nobody likes him anywhere once they get to know him. He's a very –- he's got an edge that's not good. You can't make deals with people like that and it's not a good thing. It's not a good thing for the country. Very nasty guy."

Trump is running to all his Democrat-Clinton friends in the news media and telling them how much Cruz hurt his feelings by criticizing Trump's New York values. Mayor de Blasio's New York values. Governor Cuomo's New York values. Hillary Clinton's New York values. Marco Rubio's New York values.

Bill Kristol, editor of the Weekly Standard, initially thought that Cruz had made a mistake in criticizing New York values. But the latest episode of the Weekly Standard podcast features Bill Kristol and the host now saying that Ted Cruz made a brilliant move to draw Trump into an attack that cannot win in most of the country outside of New York. And it also sets the GOP primary race as Trump vs not-Trump, with Cruz as the not-Trump. Trump is making Cruz into the not-Trump.

In my previous post, I explained all the liberal positions that Trump spoke out about before he decided to run for President as a Republican.

Amnesty: Marco Rubio sponsored a bill to give illegal immigrants a path to citizenship

January 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio with his allies: Democrat Chuck Schumer and RINO John McCain

Just two years ago, Marco Rubio sponsored a bill to give people who were in the country illegally a path to citizenship.

Here is the article from the non-partisan The Hill.

It says:

> Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) says Sen. Marco Rubio's "fingerprints are all over" a 2013 immigration bill with a path to citizenship, highlighting the Florida Republican's ties to a reform effort he has downplayed during his presidential campaign.
>
> "He was not only totally committed, he was in that room with us," Schumer told CNN when asked how committed Rubio was to the "Gang of Eight" immigration effort. "His fingerprints are all over that bill. It has a lot of Rubio imprints."
>
> Rubio has drawn fire from conservatives for his role in crafting the Senate's 2013 comprehensive immigration reform bill, a 1,200-page measure that would have put an estimated 8 million illegal immigrants on a path to citizenship and spent $46 billion to tighten border security.The bill passed the Senate but died in the House.
>
> […]Schumer suggested that Rubio didn't resist putting provisions in the legislation that would have allowed undocumented immigrants to gain citizenship

> — the aspect of the legislation that was denounced by the right.

> > "He understood it, he molded it, he made it a tough path to citizenship," Schumer, who is expected to be the next Democratic leader, told CNN. "But we all agreed to it, and it would have to be a tough path to citizenship. But he was all for it. "

And in comments made just this week, Rubio reiterated that people who are in the country illegally should get amnesty.

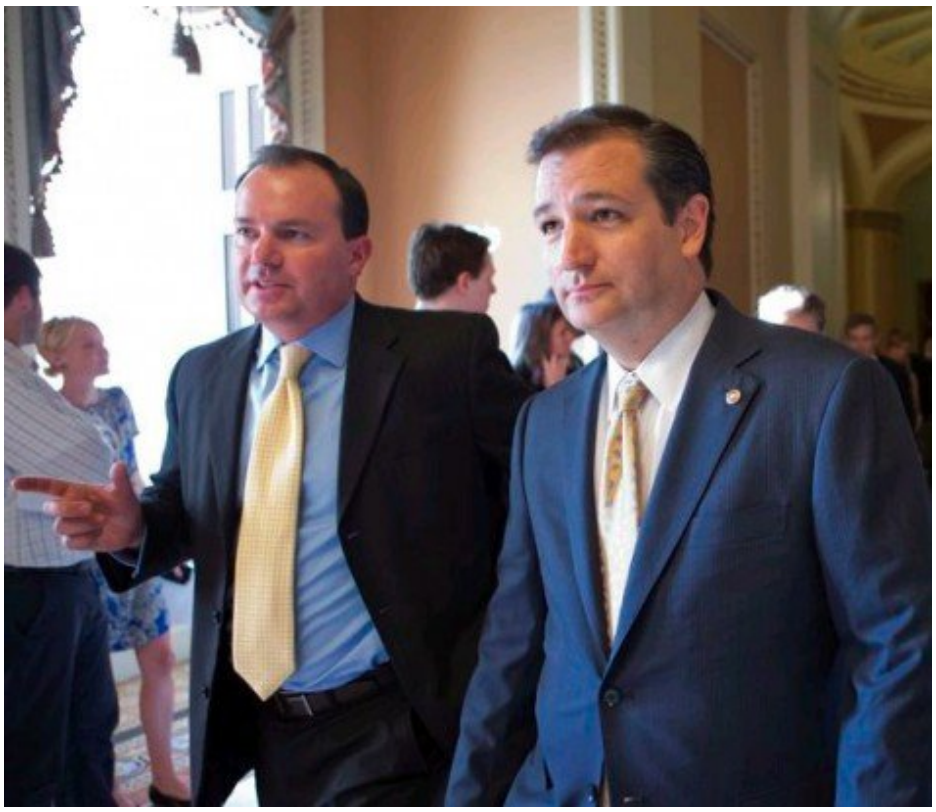

Ted Cruz and Mike Lee go to war against amnesty

What about Ted Cruz?

Ted Cruz actually fought a battle to stop Obama's executive order amnesty.

Excerpt:

> Republican Sens. Ted Cruz, Mike Lee, and Jeff Sessions are pushing for a vote to defund President Obama's executive amnesty in the "Cromnibus" spending bill Friday night, The Daily Caller has learned.
>
> The trio of conservative senators is hoping to get the defund vote onto the Senate floor as a "point of order," which would force a procedural vote on the issue without Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid having to introduce it.
>
> The senators are pushing hard on Capitol Hill for the measure as of early Friday afternoon. If successful, the vote would take place late Friday night, after planned deliberations on the defense budget.

Instead of joining up with the Democrat Chuck Schumer, Cruz joined up with the

Republicans. It’s not difficult to tell which person is serious about border security and illegal immigration. It may be that Rubio is the nominee in 2016. But we can do better if we choose Ted Cruz.

Abortion: Marco Rubio deliberately skips two votes to defund Planned Parenthood

January 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Planned Parenthood senior executive: organ harvesting so she can get a Lamborghini
This story is from Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio recently missed two significant opportunities in his role as U.S. senator to halt taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood, dismissing the two Senate roll calls as "show votes."
>
> […]The Florida senator was absent for the September 28 cloture vote, instead attending a private fundraiser for his presidential campaign in the exclusive Windermere, Florida, area.
>
> Rubio then showed up the following evening as a guest on Fox News Channel's "Hannity," criticizing Senate Republicans for not being strong enough in fighting Planned Parenthood.
>
> Rubio was again absent for the Senate's September 30 vote on final passage of the continuing resolution, which did not strip the abortion giant of taxpayer funding, as conservatives had been hoped.

Well, I guess he is not serious about going on record to de-fund Planned Parenthood. Rubio put campaign events ahead of voting to defund Planned Parenthood. And we already know about who his big billionaire backers are – social liberals.

Meanwhile, Ted Cruz did something very different than what Rubio did.

Excerpt:

> Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) is excoriating the Republican leadership in the House and Senate for failing to "lift a finger to defend life" by eliminating taxpayer funding of Planned Parenthood. Cruz's speech on the Senate floor comes as the lawmakers voted, 77-19, to advance a bill to authorize government spending that

> includes funding for Planned Parenthood.
>
> The 2016 Republican contender attempted to submit an amendment that would "restrict the use of Federal funds for Planned Parenthood Federation of America" as well as those to "implement the nuclear agreement with Iran or for assessed contributions to the United Nations until the President submits the agreement and all related materials to Congress."
>
> Senate Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) , however, "filled the tree" of amendments on this bill to fund the government, preventing any other senators from offering amendments to change the measure, a tactic used on numerous occasions by Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV) when he was the Majority Leader. The strategy would prevent any amendments to bills and keep Reid's Democrat members from having to be on record for difficult votes.

So, there is a real difference between the candidates on abortion. One candidate, when given the chance to vote against abortion, goes off to campaign events. The other stays where he is and walks the walk – fighting on behalf of the unborn, and taking the slings and arrows that he must from the mainstream media for his stand.

William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

January 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let’s take a look at the facts

Dr. Craig’s famous minimal facts case for the resurrection has been posted at the Christian Apologetics Alliance. He presents 4 facts admitted by the majority of New Testament historians, and then he supplies multiple pieces of evidence for each fact.

Here are the four facts:

- FACT #1: *After his crucifixion, Jesus was buried in a tomb by Joseph of Arimathea.*
- FACT #2: *On the Sunday following the crucifixion, Jesus’ tomb was found empty by a group of his women followers.*
- FACT #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.*
- FACT #4: *The original disciples believed that Jesus was risen from the dead despite their having every predisposition to the contrary.*

Here’s the detail on fact #3, the post-mortem appearances.

> FACT #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.*
>
> This is a fact which is almost universally acknowledged among New Testament scholars, for the following reasons:
>
> 1. The list of eyewitnesses to Jesus’ resurrection appearances which is quoted by Paul in I Cor. 15. 5-7 guarantees that such appearances occurred. These included appearances to Peter (Cephas), the Twelve, the 500 brethren, and James.
>
> 2. The appearance traditions in the gospels provide multiple, independent attestation of these appearances. This is one of the most important marks of

> historicity. The appearance to Peter is independently attested by Luke, and the appearance to the Twelve by Luke and John. We also have independent witness to Galilean appearances in Mark, Matthew, and John, as well as to the women in Matthew and John.
>
> 3. Certain appearances have earmarks of historicity. For example, we have good evidence from the gospels that neither James nor any of Jesus' younger brothers believed in him during his lifetime. There is no reason to think that the early church would generate fictitious stories concerning the unbelief of Jesus' family had they been faithful followers all along. But it is indisputable that James and his brothers did become active Christian believers following Jesus' death. James was considered an apostle and eventually rose to the position of leadership of the Jerusalem church. According to the first century Jewish historian Josephus, James was martyred for his faith in Christ in the late AD 60s. Now most of us have brothers. What would it take to convince you that your brother is the Lord, such that you would be ready to die for that belief? Can there be any doubt that this remarkable transformation in Jesus' younger brother took place because, in Paul's words, "then he appeared to James"?
>
> Even Gert Ludemann, the leading German critic of the resurrection, himself admits, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus' death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."3

Yes, Gerd Ludemann is actually an atheist new Testament historian, and he has even debated Dr. Craig on the resurrection – not once, but *twice*. That's the kind of evidence Dr. Craig uses in his case. Not just what your pastor will give you, but what atheists will give you. We need to learn to debate like that.

And, if you need a good book to help you do that, this is the best introductory book, and it's only 99 cents on Kindle right now. Not sure how long it will stay that way!

Under Obama's socialist policies, youth "Misery Index" reaches record high

January 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people usually only get one side of every issue – because we don't tell them the other side

Obama added $10 trillion to the national debt in his 8 years, doubling it from $10 trillion to $20 trillion. That will be placed on the backs of the next generation of younger Americans. But it turns out that they have many other problems as well.

This is from the College Fix.

Excerpt:

> In the last two presidential elections, young voters served as a key demographic that helped catapult Barack Obama to the White House. What has he done for millennials in return? According to a new analysis, made them more miserable than ever.
>
> Young America's Foundation on Wednesday released its annual Youth Misery Index, calculated by adding youth unemployment, student loan debt, and national debt (per capita) numbers.
>
> Today the youth unemployment rate exceeds 16 percent, and the average student in the class of 2015 graduated with a record $35,000 in student loan debt; national debt per capita, "a remarkable burden that will fall squarely on the shoulders of millennials," is just under $59,000, the foundation reports.
>
> With that, the index has spiked to a record high of 109.9 this year, up from 106.5 last January, and 83.5 in 2009 when President Obama took office, the foundation reports.

What about entitlement programs?

Business Daily reports on a Social Security problem:

> The Social Security Trust Fund just suffered its first annual decline since Congress shored up the retirement program in 1983.
>
> The unexpected $3 billion decline is an indication of the precarious state of Social Security's finances. Since 2010, the program has been paying out more in benefits than it gets in tax revenue, but the trust fund, which earns about $95 billion a year in interest, had kept growing, though a little less each year.
>
> […]Under current policies, the CBO says the trust fund will be gone by 2029.
>
> If nothing were done before that point, it would take an across-the-board 29% benefit cut — including on the oldest retirees and the disabled — to bring program costs in line with revenues.

Since we aborted the next generation of workers, we can't afford to keep paying out benefits at the current rate. There are more people retiring than entering the work force. I hope they start to invest early, but what I am seeing is that they want to take out loans and travel the world for fun and thrills.

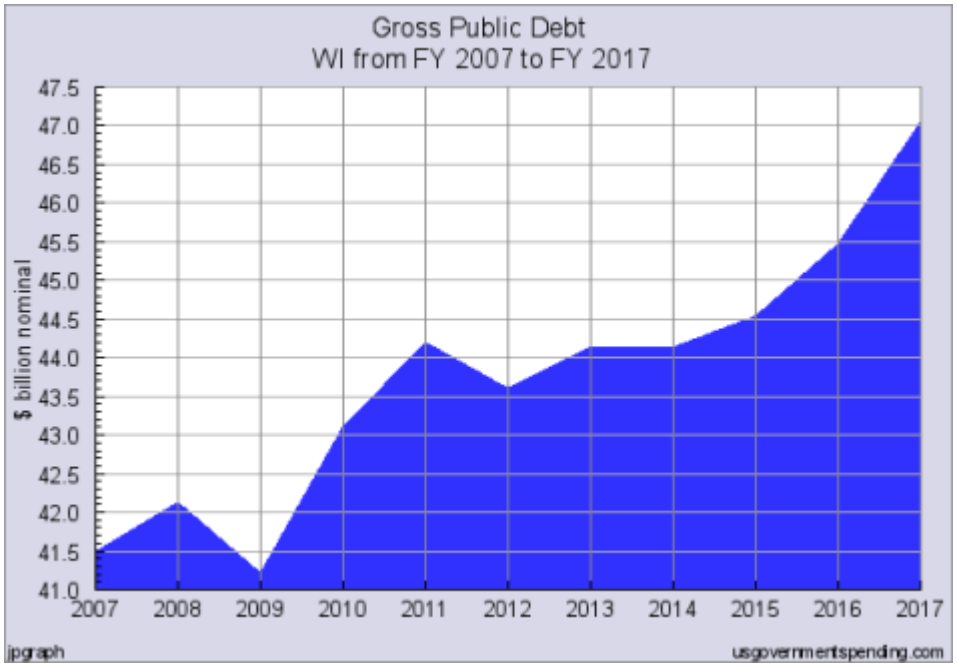

Obama doubled the national debt in 8 years

Anyway, on to the next problem, trillion dollar deficits. They're back!

Investors Business Daily explains:

> The federal budget deficit is back on the rise — by an expected $105 billion this year — the Congressional Budget Office said Tuesday, the first increase since fiscal 2009. Deficits topping $1 trillion will be back before you know it — three years sooner than expected.
>
> […]The CBO said the rise was primarily due to the year-end budget deal that extended, and in some cases expanded, corporate and individual tax cuts, as

> well as busting spending caps. The deficit-to-GDP ratio is expected to grow to 2.9% in fiscal 2016 from 2.5% last year. That would also be the first increase since 2009, with the trend getting worse in the years ahead.
>
> From 2016 to 2025, the CBO expects cumulative deficits of $8.5 trillion — $1.5 trillion more than it predicted in August.

This is the budget deal that establishment Republicans like Paul Ryan supported. Rubio didn't show up to vote against the Ryan deal. I assume that Rubio was OK with the spending bill passing, and these trillion dollar deficits returning. Cruz showed up to vote against the deal, of course.

And finally, the last problem – Obamacare is making health care more expensive than ever for the middle class.

Investors Business Daily again:

> People making just $36,000 a year can easily end up spending 22% of it on health costs, even if they are enrolled in a subsidized ObamaCare insurance plan, according to a report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Urban Institute.
>
> […]Individuals earning between 300% and 400% of the poverty level — which works out to roughly between $35,000 and $47,000 — will pay close to a median of 10% of their income on insurance premiums. (This group is eligible for ObamaCare insurance subsidies but at far lower levels than poorer people.)
>
> And because ObamaCare plans typically come with high deductibles and copays, they'll spend another 5% on out-of-pocket costs. For a worker making $36,000, the combined costs add up to $5,220.
>
> The report found, however, that these costs could easily double. One in 10 people in this income group will end up devoting 22% of their incomes to insurance and out-of-pocket costs.
>
> Even those in the lowest income group could get hit with big bills. One in 10 of those who make less than 200% of the poverty level will face health costs that eat up 18.5% of their income.

Obama likes to paint a rosy picture of the economy in his state of the union, but the real truth is not so rosy. Young people shouldn't have voted for him, they are not going to live as prosperously as their elders did under Reagan and George W. Bush.

Hillary Clinton and Marco Rubio's intervention in Libya created an ISIS caliphate

January 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio with his allies: Democrat Churck Schumer and RINO John McCain

First, let's review what happened in Libya, and who owns it. Then, we'll see where Marco Rubio stood on the issue.

The Daily Caller notes:

> Clinton is, undoubtedly, the person most responsible for getting America into the international effort that toppled the regime of Muammar Gaddafi. Prior to the Benghazi attack, she was happy to have it known as "Hillary's War" and touted it as a serious accomplishment.

Libya:

> **Libya is now a failed state where all types of Islamic extremists find safe haven and illegal migrants are able to pass through on their way to an over-burdened Europe. There are no signs of success at all in the beleaguered country as it has descended into total anarchy.**

Egypt:

> [Hillary] was a-ok with the toppling of Egyptian president and U.S. ally Hosni Mubarak. **But it wasn't hip liberals who came to power after Mubarak was deposed — it was the Muslim Brotherhood who took over the reins in Egypt** before a military coup ousted the Islamists in 2013.

Syria:

> Clinton was also the leading force in the Obama administration in backing rebels in Syria and wanted a more active role for America in that conflict. However, hardly any of the rebels seem much better than the current ruler Bashar al-Assad and many of them, such as ISIS, are far worse than the Iranian-backed despot.

So that's three foreign policy disasters for Hillary: Libya, Egypt and Syria. Sounds pretty bad. But the Daily Caller leans right. Let's see what the leftist Atlantic says about Hillary Clinton's foreign policy.

They say:

> In August, *TheNew Yorker's* John Lee Anderson described the gains made by the Islamists as well as the consequences of ISIS fighters controlling territory in Libya:
>
> Last November, battle-hardened Libyan Islamists, who had returned home from fighting in Iraq and Syria, along with Islamists from other countries, seized the eastern city of Derna and claimed it for ISIS. Emulating their comrades in Raqqa and Mosul, they stoned, shot, beheaded, and crucified people deemed guilty of espionage or 'un-Islamic' behavior. Last month, a rival militia loyal to Al Qaeda waged and won a battle for control of the city. The victors are said to have marched the captured ISIS commander through the streets naked before executing him. ISIS lost Derna, but in the past few months they have taken Qaddafi's home town of Sirte and surrounding areas in Libya's "Oil Crescent," and have begun attacks on the outer defenses of the city of Misrata.
>
> Alas, that's not all:
>
> For months, ISIS has been trumpeting its abduction and execution of African Christians in Libya. In February, a slick, ghoulish video showed twenty-one Egyptian hostages in orange jumpsuits being led along a beach by black-masked executioners, who forced them to kneel and then cut off their heads.
>
> In April, another video appeared, showing the execution of twenty-nine Ethiopians in Libya. Gunmen who trained with ISIS in Libya were involved in the murder of twenty foreign tourists, at a Tunis museum in March, and thirty-eight more tourists, most of them British, at a seaside resort in Tunisia in June. These attacks focused attention on the fact that Libya, a vast, oil-rich, underpopulated country with a long southern-Mediterranean coastline, has become part of the self-proclaimed ISIS caliphate. In a parallel phenomenon, armed trafficking gangs in Libya are driving most of Africa's illegal immigration to Europe. As many as a hundred and seventy thousand are thought to have made the crossing last year, with thousands dying en route. Unprecedented numbers are continuing to cross this year, taking advantage of the chaos in Libya.
>
> An unnamed Obama Administration official told Anderson, "We think that the threat from ISIL-affiliated groups in Libya is very serious and we're treating it that way."

> A strong case can be made that the war made Americans less safe.

Libya and Egypt were contained and peaceful before the U.S. Arab Spring interventions. After intervening in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood took over. After intervening in Libya, the Islamic State is rising. And after intervening in Syria, the Islamic State has a base there, too.

Do you know who backed Hillary in her Libya intervention plan?

MARCO RUBIO.

Here's an article from the Weekly Standard by Stephen Hayes, who is very favorable to Rubio, explaining how Rubio supported the Hillary-led intervention in Libya.

It says:

> Senator Marco Rubio offered his full-throated support Wednesday for the U.S. intervention in Libya and called on President Barack Obama to be clear that regime change is the objective of America's involvement.
>
> […]Last night, Rubio sent a letter to Harry Reid and Mitch McConnell, Democratic and Republican leaders in the Senate, calling for Congress to affirm Obama's policy by authorizing the use of the military force in Libya and to make explicit the goal of regime change. "This resolution should also state that removing Moamar Qadhafi from power is in our national interest and therefore should authorize the President to accomplish this goal. To that end, the resolution should urge the President to immediately recognize the Interim Transitional National Council as the legitimate government in Libya."

Qadhafi had voluntarily given up his weapons of mass destruction and invited inspectors in, after seeing Bush invade Afghanistan and Iraq. They were no threat to us, and there were no crucifixions of Christians, kidnappings, executions, etc. that we see now.

And now we have an Islamic State caliphate in Libya, as the UK Telegraph reported earlier this week:

> Yet this latest [execution] broadcast was shot not in the Isil strongholds of Raqqa [Syria] or Mosul [Iraq] but the terror group's new "caliphate" in Libya, where it now controls Colonel Gaddafi's home city of Sirte, just 350 miles south of Italy.
>
> […]Formed by a vanguard of just a few dozen fighters a year ago, Isil's Sirte chapter is now believed to be up to 3,000-strong, imposing a regime of beheadings and crucifixions.

Marco Rubio strongly supported the intervention in Libya, spurning conservatives and embracing Hillary Clinton and the far left. Now we have a caliphate in Islamic State in Libya. I'm a very hawkish person, and supported the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. But Libya and Egypt interventions made no sense, and no Republican should have backed either of them.

Walter Bradley lectures on the creation and design of the universe

January 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

This lecture is special to me, because I bought a VHS tape of it just after I started working full-time, and watched it a million times. It changed my life. The lecture was delivered at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Bradley received his B.S. in Engineering Science and his Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Texas in Austin.
>
> Dr. Bradley taught for eight years at the Colorado School of Mines before assuming a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1976.
>
> During his 24 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Bradley served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and as Director of the Polymer Technology Center, and received five College of Engineering Research Awards. He has received over $4,500,000 in research grants and has published over 140 technical articles and book chapters. He has also co-authored "The Mystery Of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Materials and of the American Scientific Affiliation and serves as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.
>
> He currently serves as Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University.

The lecture: (63 minutes lecture, 25 minutes audience Q&A)

Summary slide:

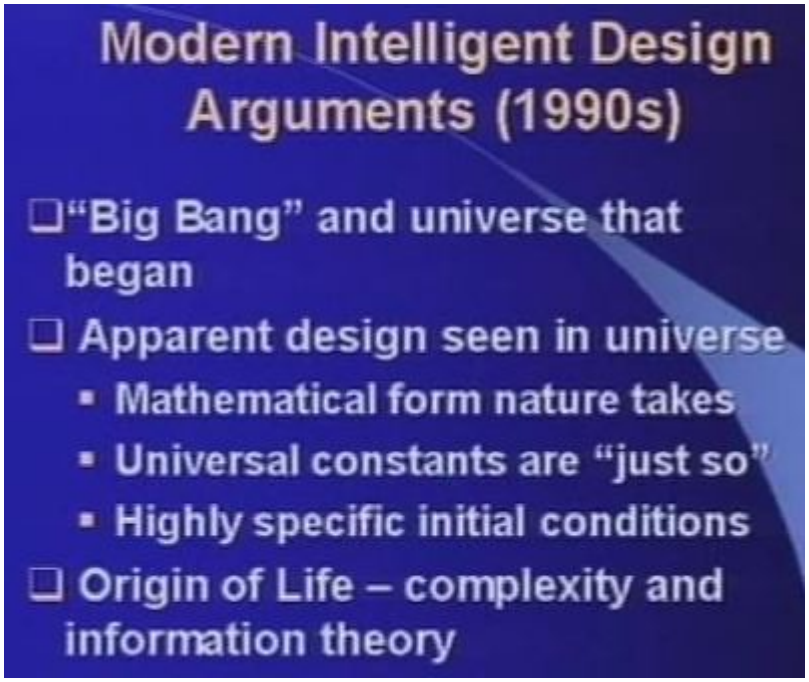

This slide summarizes the content of the lecture

Introduction:

- At the beginning of the 20th century, people believed that the progress of science was pointing away from an intelligent Creator and Designer, and towards naturalism
- A stream of new discoveries has shifted the support of science towards theism, and away from naturalism
- Richard Dawkins, an atheist, says that nature only has the appearance of design, but that if you look closer, naturalistic mechanisms can account for the appearance of design
- When deciding between design and apparent design ("designoid"), it matters whether you think there is an intelligence there to do the designing

Evidence #1: The Big Bang:

- an eternal "steady state" universe is more compatible with naturalism, but a created universe is more compatible with a Creator
- In 1929, Hubble used telescopes to observe that the light from distant galaxies was *redshifted.* The further away galaxies were, the faster they were moving away. Therefore, space is expanding in all directions, suggesting an explosive origin of the universe
- In 1965, the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation matched a prediction of the Big Bang cosmology, and of the creation event
- In 1992, the COBE space telescope allowed us to test four specific predictions of the Big Bang model, especially the predictions for light element abundances (hydrogen and helium), which matched the predictions of the creation model

Evidence #2: Simple mathematical structure of the physical laws

- the simple mathematical structure of natural laws allows us to understand these laws, make discoveries, and engineer solutions to problems
- early scientists saw the mathematical structure of the universe to mean that nature was designed by an intelligent to be understood
- the fundamental equations of the laws of the universe can be easily written on one side of one sheet of paper
- Eugene Wigner's famous paper, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Physical Sciences" makes the point that this simple structure is an unexpected gift that allows is to do science

Evidence #3: fine-tuning of the physical constants and quantities

- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stars that provide energy within specific ranges for long periods of time
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need planets with stable orbits that will not suffer from extreme temperature swings as it varies in distance from its star
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stable atomic structure
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need to have chemical diversity and correct relative abundances of each element
- organic life has minimum requirements: process energy, store information, replicate, and you can't fulfill those functions if there is only one element, e.g. – hydrogen
- the energy level from the photons from the sun have to match the energy levels of the different elements in order to drive the chemical bonding needed for life
- These requirements for life of any imaginable type depend on the values of the constants and quantities. The constants and quantities cannot vary much from what they are, or the universe will lose the characteristics (above) that allow it to support complex life of any imaginable time
- For example, ratio of strong force to electromagnetic force:
  – if 2% larger, then no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no compounds containing hydrogen, e.g. – water
  – if 5% smaller, no stable stars, heavy hydrogen would be unstable, few elements other than hydrogen

Evidence #4: initial conditions for habitability

- Universe: expansion rate of the universe must be fast enough to avoid a re-collapse, but slow enough to allow matter to clump together and form stars and planets for complex life to live on
- Planet: right distance from the star to get the right climate
- Planet: right mass to retain the right atmosphere

Evidence #5: origin of life and information theory

- It’s possible to explain every process in an automobile engine using plain old naturalistic mechanisms – no supernatural explanation is necessary to understand the processes
- But the existence of engine itself: engineering all the parts has to be explained by the work of an intelligence
- Similarly, we can understand how living systems work, but the existence of the living systems requires an intelligence
- Even the simplest living system has to perform minimal function: capture energy, store information and replicate
- Living systems are composed of objects like proteins that are composed of sequences of components complex such that the order of the components gives the overall structure function
- Developing the components for a simple living cell is very improbable – even given the large number of galaxies, stars and planets in the universe, it is unlikely that complex, embodied life would exist *anywhere* in the universe

Evidence #6: more initial conditions for habitability

- Location within the galaxy: you need to be away from the center of the galaxy, because the explosions from dying stars, and excessive radiation will kill life
- Location within the galaxy: you need to be close enough to the center in order catch the heavy elements you need for life from the explosions of other stars
- Location within the galaxy: the best location is between two arms of a spiral galaxy, where you can get the heavy elements you need from dying stars, but without being hit with explosions and harmful radiation
- Star mass: determines rate at which the sun burns, determines the energy level of photons that are used to drive chemical bonding reactions, determines the length of time the star will be stable
- Star mass: star mass must be the correct value in order to allow liquid water on the planet’s surface, while still preserving stable orbit

I wish there was more curiosity about science in churches, and young Christians understood *how critical science is* for grounding the rationality of the Christian worldview. We need to be training up more scientists who think about the big questions, like Dr. Walter Bradley.

Trump supported the bank bailout and auto bailout, Cruz opposes all bailouts

January 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

I have two friends who are Trump supporters. I've been going over Trump's record with them, and I thought that I would blog some of the evidence I presented here.

Now, the conservative view of bailouts is that we should not have them, because in a free market economy, companies that cannot serve customers efficiently (low price, high quality) must be allowed to go bankrupt. That includes banks and auto manufacturers.

Where does Trump stand? Here is a transcript of an appearance on Fox News from 2008, where he embraced the bank bailouts:

> NEIL CAVUTO, HOST: Well, Donald Trump saying, anything close to that $700 billion bailout would be a black eye for an economy he says rushing into one big depression.
>
> Real estate mogul Donald Trump joins me now on the phone.
>
> […]

> TRUMP: […]**Now, I did not know about a $700 billion bailout, in all fairness. And I think probably, it is something — it's sad, but, probably, it's something that has to get done, because your financial system is most likely going to come to a halt if it does not.** So, it is a pretty sad day for this country.

This Daily Caller article explains Trump's view on auto bailouts:

> Faced with crushing debts caused by poor management and high labor costs, GM and Chrysler requested federal assistance to keep the firms afloat, and were granted a $25 billion loan in the fall of 2008. President George Bush then secured

> more than $17 billion for the companies.
>
> This occurred months before the birth of the Tea Party, but conservatives were outraged.
>
> **Not Trump. A longtime advocate of sweetheart deals between corporation and state, the real-estate developer went all in for the deal.**
>
> **"[Y]ou have to try and save the companies," Trump said in a separate 2008 Fox News interview. "And I think you can easily save the companies."**

Ted Cruz opposes auto bailouts and bank bailouts.

Cruz was asked in a 2012 run-off debate if the federal government should have bailed out General Motors, and here is his answer:

> Of course we shouldn't have. We've got a problem in Washington. We've got career politicians in both parties that spend the taxpayer money. That's how we've gotten a $16 trillion dollar debt that is bankrupting our country. **I don't support bailouts, period. I don't support the bailout of the auto companies. I don't support the bailout of the banks.** Government shouldn't be in the business of spending taxpayer money to help private corporations. The role of government is to protect our rights, to protect our national security, to ensure rule of law and to stay out of the way and let entrepreneurs create jobs. And the problem with Washington is career politicians spending money and digging us into a hole that is threatening the economic future of our nation.

Cruz doesn't even like the government giving companies subsidies, much less bailouts. It's taxpayer money, it should not go to corporations that cannot compete fair and square.

Trump also supported Obama's pork-filled stimulus spending bill:

> President Obama held his first prime-time press briefing — designed to build support for the economic stimulus package that was his top priority upon taking office — on Feb. 9, 2009. Later that same night, real estate mogul Donald Trump took to the airwaves to sing the plan's — and the president's — praises.
>
> "I thought he did a terrific job," Trump told Fox News's Greta Van Susteren. "This is a strong guy knows what he wants, and this is what we need."
>
> "First of all, I thought he did a great job tonight," said Trump. "I thought he was strong and smart, and it looks like we have somebody that knows what he is doing finally in office, and he did inherit a tremendous problem. He really stepped into a mess, Greta."
>
> Van Susteren then asked Trump if a simple payroll tax holiday might be a better way to stimulate the flagging economy. Trump, however, held firm in his support for Obama's plan, which he praised for the wide breadth of approaches it took to combatting the crisis.

> […]"Well, I have analyzed the bill as closely as it can be analyzed in this quick a period of time, but he's really got a combination of both," Trump replied. "He is doing the taxes, he is doing rebates, and he is also doing lots of public works."

His support for public works spending reminded me of a chapter from Henry Hazlitt's "Economics in One Lesson" on public works, in which he explains that public works can never stimulate the economy, since it takes money out of the productive private sector and spends it in the wasteful and corrupt public sector. The chapter is entitled "Public Works Means Taxes".

It says:

> Two arguments are put forward for the bridge, one of which is mainly heard before it is built, the other of which is mainly heard after it has been completed. The first argument is that it will provide employment. It will provide, say, 500 jobs for a year. The implication is that these are jobs that would not otherwise have come into existence.
>
> This is what is immediately seen. But if we have trained ourselves to look beyond immediate to secondary consequences, and beyond those who are directly benefited by a government project to others who are indirectly affected, a different picture presents itself. It is true that a particular group of bridgeworkers may receive more employment than otherwise. But the bridge has to be paid for out of taxes. For every dollar that is spent on the bridge a dollar will be taken away from taxpayers. If the bridge costs $10 million the taxpayers will lose $10 million. They will have that much taken away from them which they would otherwise have spent on the things they needed most.

There is no free lunch. Someone has to pay.

Listen to me. This economy is not doing well. We are going to have more debt, higher taxes, and lower public services the further we go down the path of socialism. It's fun to spend money on all sorts of bailouts, but the money is not unlimited. Bailing out private businesses and giving them subsidies costs taxpayer money. Eventually, that runs out. We need a candidate who understands this, and that candidate is Ted Cruz, not Donald Trump.

Trump wants to increase taxpayer subsidies of ethanol, Cruz wants to end them

January 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump should stick to Miss Universe pageants

Donald Trump is pandering to ethanol special interests, trying to catch up to Cruz in Iowa.

The Wall Street Journal explains:

> Donald Trump, who is battling Sen. Ted Cruz (R., Texas), for the top spot in in corn-rich Iowa, is seeking to draw a contrast between the two candidates by catering to the state's corn ethanol industry more than any other top GOP candidate.
>
> […]"I am there with you 100%," Mr. Trump told a crowd of hundreds of Iowans whose livelihoods depend on the ethanol industry at a summit in Altoona, Iowa, on Tuesday. "You're going to get a really fair shake from me."
>
> Corn has long been king in Iowa, the nation's top corn-producing state, implanting in Iowa voters a sentiment that every candidate must cheer Washington's backing for ethanol. Since 2011, though, that universal backing has been eroding.
>
> Congress decided at the end of 2011 not to renew a tax credit that cost the government $6 billion a year. Critics of the government's ethanol policy then set their targets on the ethanol mandate, which requires refineries to blend an increasing amount of biofuels into the U.S. gasoline supply each year.
>
> At the ethanol summit Tuesday, Mr. Trump also read a prepared statement opposing Congress "changing any part of the RFS," or Renewable Fuel Standard, the mandate's formal name.

Trump doesn't just want to keep the subsidies as they are, he wants to raise them, according to this article from The Hill.

It says:

> Donald Trump said Tuesday that federal regulators should increase the amount of ethanol blended into the nation's gasoline supply.
>
> Speaking at an event hosted by the Iowa Renewable Fuels Association, Trump, a real estate mogul and the front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination, said the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ought to follow the ethanol volumes Congress set in 2007.
>
> "The EPA should ensure that biofuel … blend levels match the statutory level set by Congress under the [renewable fuel standard]," Trump said.
>
> The mandate is popular in Iowa, which hosts the nation's first caucuses.

He is pandering to the people he speaks to wherever he goes… he has no convictions.

Ethanol doesn't lower the price of gas, it actually raises the price of food, since some crops are being redirected to an inefficient process. It's a handout to ehtanol producers, at the expense of gas consumers who must pay more for an inferior product.

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

Ted Cruz is different:

> In a Des Moines Register op-ed Wednesday, Cruz said he would look to "phase out the Renewable Fuel Standard, end all energy subsidies, and ensure a level playing field for everyone," a move that would eventually end the mandate that requires oil refiners to mix biofuel into their gasoline supplies.
>
> "My view on energy is simple: We should pursue an 'all of the above' policy," he wrote. "We should embrace all of the energy resources with which God has blessed America: oil and gas, coal, nuclear, wind, solar, and biofuels and ethanol. But Washington shouldn't be picking winners and losers."Cruz has previously said he would look to end the mandate by 2022, phasing it out over five years, if elected to the Oval Office.
>
> Cruz leads Republicans in Iowa polls ahead the caucuses there next month, but

> his ethanol policies could hurt him in the state, which leads in the fuel's production.
>
> The senator from Texas has previously co-sponsored a bill to end the ethanol mandate immediately. Last spring, he sponsored a phase-out bill, and he says that plan is the best way to support fuel producers.

Going into Iowa and taking on the ethanol subsidy takes balls of steel. And Cruz has them. He is risking the entire election on doing the right thing for the country as a whole, instead of pandering.

Cruz is trying to shift the public to the right – explaining basic economics to them, and asking them to give up their special interests in order to return to the vision of the Founders for America. Will it work? I think someone ought to try to remind us what America is supposed to be like.

There is a very good explanation of why ethanol subsidies are crony capitalism, by conservative firebrand Mark Levin.

Here's a summary:

> Levin explained what crony capitalism is. That it is the state picking winners at the expense of others. In the case of ethanol they have made it mandatory in cars, even though it is proven that it does not reduce oil usage, because oil is needed for the production of ethanol. That it hurts engines.
>
> The most damaging thing that ethanol does, according to Levin is add to famine and poverty in the third world, by limiting the production of food crops, as the land is used to grow ethanol feedstock instead of food.
>
> Levin focused on the fact that Donald Trump is going all in for ethanol to pander to Governor Terry Branstad in Iowa. He told his audience that Branstad's son makes a living from the ethanol industry.

There are fundamental economic issues at play here. We are harming our economy and destroying our long-term prosperity the longer we allow socialists to run our economy. Things can be good in this economy. We can get the jobs we want, cheaper prices, higher quality. We can have social programs that work, and greater individual freedom. But we have to go back to our founding principles. That is what made us great, and what can return us to greatness. We did not become the wealthiest nation on the Earth by accident. When all else has failed, why don't we try doing what worked for the last 200 years?

Scott Klusendorf debates an abortion advocate on the Unbelievable radio show

January 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scott Klusendorf, Life Training Institute

Here are the details:

> The abortion debate reared its head again this summer after controversial tweets by Richard Dawkins made the news.
>
> Justin hosts a discussion between Mara Clarke of the Abortion Support Network and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Instititute. Mara believes women need to be decide whether to terminate a pregnancy, but Scott says that all depends on whether we are dealing with a human life in the womb.

The MP3 file is here.

My snarky paraphrase of the debate (not exact):

- Speaker introductions
- Klusendorf: no justification for abortion is necessary if the unborn are not human
- Klusendorf: we need to address the issue "what is the unborn?" Are the unborn human?
- Klusendorf: SLED: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency
- Klusendorf: None of these things affect the value of a human being
- Klusendorf: Even if we don't KNOW whether the unborn is human
- Mara: I'm not going to debate when life begins
- Mara: Women know when life begins by feelings
- Mara: The moral decision is "whether I can take care of this child?"

- Brierley: When is an unborn being human?
- Mara: I refuse to debate that – the real question is whether women want their babies or not
- Mara: Forced pregnancy is not OK
- Brierley: Could your justification for abortion (not wanting to care for a child) work through all 9 months?
- Mara: Late term abortions are rare, so I don't have to answer that question
- Mara: Abortion should be OK through all 9 months of pregnancy because women cannot be restricted
- Mara: Some women are poor, they need to be able to kill expensive babies at any time
- Klusendorf: although she says she won't debate the unborn, she does take a position
- Klusendorf: she assumes the unborn is not human, because she says that insufficient funds is justification for abortion
- Klusendorf: no one argues that you can kill a two year old because they cost money, because she thinks they are human
- Klusendorf: she is begging the question by assuming the unborn are not human, but that is the issue we must resolve
- Klusendorf: I am pro-choice on many other things, e.g. women choosing their own husbands, religion, etc.
- Klusendorf: Some choices are wrong – Mara might be right, but she needs to make the case for the unborn not being human
- Brierley: What is your reason for thinking that an unborn child is different from a 2-year old?
- Mara: An unborn child is not the same as a 2-year old, in my personal opinion
- Mara: I am not a debater, so I don't have to provide reasoning for my assertion, I just feel it
- Mara: Not everybody agrees with Scott, they don't have to have a rational argument, they just need to feel differently
- Mara: From my experience, when a woman doesn't want to be pregnant, then she should be able to not be pregnant
- Mara: Women shouldn't be punished with a baby that she doesn't want, even if she chooses to have recreational sex
- Brierley: What do you think of women who think the unborn is human and do it anyway?
- Klusendorf: It's interesting that they never kill their toddlers for those reasons
- Klusendorf: I layed out scientific and philosophical reasons for the humanity of the unborn
- Klusendorf: Her response was "but some people disagree with you"
- Klusendorf: People disagreed about whether slavery was wrong, or whether women should be able to vote
- Klusendorf: that doesn't mean there is no right answer – the right answer depends

on the arguments
- Klusendorf: if absence of agreement makes a view false, then it makes HER pro-choice view false as well
- Klusendorf: she did make an argument for the unborn child having no rights because of the location
- Klusendorf: she needs to explain to us why location matters – what about location confers value
- Mara: I'm not going to let Scott frame my debate for me!!!
- Mara: women get pregnant and they don't want their babies! should we put them in jail!!!!
- Klusendorf: I didn't just give my opinion, I had science and philosophy, the issue is "what is the unborn?"
- Mara: philosophical and scientific debates are unimportant, I am an expert in real women's lives
- Klusendorf: Which women? Women in the womb or only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Only those outside the womb
- Klusendorf: Only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Women living outside the womb have a right to kill women inside the womb – women have bodily autonomy
- Klusendorf: then does a pregnant woman with nausea have a right to take a drug for it that will harm her unborn child?
- Mara: Unborn children are only valuable if they are wanted, unborn children only deserve protection if they are wanted
- Mara: There are restrictions on abortion – you can't get an abortion through all nine months in the US
- Mara: There is a 24-week limit in the UK as well
- Klusendorf: There are no restrictions on abortion that conflict with "a woman's health" because Supreme Court said
- Mara: where are these late term abortion clinics?
- Klusendorf: (he names two)
- Mara: that's not enough!!! we need more! where is there one in Pennsylvania?
- Klusendorf: well, there used to be Gosnell's clinic in Pennsylvania, and you could even get an infanticide there….
- Brierley: What about Dawkins' view that it is moral to abort Down's Syndrome babies?
- Klusendorf: he is ignoring the scientific case and philosophical case for the pro-life
- Klusendorf: the pro-life view is a true basis for human equality

What I wanted Scott to ask was whether sex-selection abortions were OK with her. Since her reasoning is "if it's unwanted, it has no rights", then that would mean sex-selection abortions are just fine. That's what a UK abortion expert recently argued. It's always a great idea to show your opponent where their positions really lead. Most of the people you talk about abortion with will not have been exposed to a pro-life case. You can help

them to work through the issue.

What does it mean for a woman to respect a man?

January 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: “Godspeed” by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

Matt Walsh writes a popular blog where he sometimes talks about male-female relationships. I got the impression that he was writing too much about how to blame men, and not enough about the policies and practices that provide incentives for men to underperform, e.g. – mostly female teachers, unfair divorce laws, stimulus spending geared towards women, etc. So imagine my surprise when I came across this article about men and their need for respect.

Matt is concerned that men are hearing too many negative messages in the culture, and not getting enough respect for what they do right.

He writes:

> These cultural messages aren’t harmful because they hurt my manly feelings; they’re harmful because of what they do to young girls. Society tells our daughters that men are boorish dolts who need to be herded like goats and lectured like school boys. Then they grow up and enter into marriage wholly unprepared and unwilling to accept the Biblical notion that “wives should submit to their husbands” because “the husband is the head of the wife.” [Ephesians 5]
>
> It is a fatal problem, because the one thing that is consistently withheld from men and husbands — respect — is the one thing we need the most.
>
> Yes, *need*. We need respect, and that need is so deeply ingrained that a marriage cannot possibly survive if the man is deprived of it.

> Often, people will say that a husband should only be respected if he "earns" it. *This attitude is precisely the problem*. A wife ought to respect her husband because he is her husband, just as he ought to love and honor her because she is his wife. Your husband might "deserve" it when you mock him, berate him, belittle him, and nag him, but you don't marry someone in order to give them what they deserve. In marriage, you give them what you've promised them, even when they aren't holding up their end of the bargain.

OK really, one last quote from Matt:

> Respect is our language. If it isn't said with respect, we can't hear it. This is why nagging is ineffective and self defeating. This is why statements made in sarcastic tones, or with rolling eyes, will never be received well. We have a filter in our brains, and a statement made in disrespect will be filtered out like the poison it is.
>
> Men are notoriously reluctant to share feelings or display vulnerability. Many times, we keep those inner thoughts locked away — our feelings guarded and hidden — because we know we are not respected. A man will never be vulnerable to someone who doesn't respect him. Never.
>
> A man isn't satisfied or content if he isn't respected. If he can't find respect where he is, he will seek it somewhere else. This can have disastrous implications for a relationship, but it applies in other areas of life as well. A man is much more likely to stay in a low paying job, a physically demanding job, a dangerous job, or a tedious job, than a job where he isn't respected.
>
> I'm only emphasizing this because I think it might actually be news to some people. Society does not permit men to be vocal about their need for respect, so the need is often ignored.

What I've found in speaking to women about this is that all the married and divorced women know about this need that men have. And by and large, they agree with it, too. But that is much rarer among single women, which is why men need to be ready to explain their needs and feelings. And women need to allow them to do that and then provide what men need in order to keep them performing.

Let's take a quick look at the Bible, because that's always a good thing to do when you want the truth about these things.

Ephesians 5:22-33:

22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up

for her,

26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;

29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church,

30 because we are members of His body.

31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.

Some women get scared by that, but they shouldn't be, because women get to pick their husbands, so just pick someone whose leadership you actually respect. Believe it or not, it is actually very comforting to co-operate with someone who knows what he is doing, and has demonstrated that through his past decisions.

And now for my opinion about this topic.

To start, remember that men are supposed to be good at the following roles:

- protecting
- providing
- moral leader
- spiritual leader

If a woman sees a man – any man – working away at these tasks so that he can solve her problems with something more than *confident promises about the future*, that's the time to practice respecting him. All men need to be recognized and encouraged in these areas, by all woman who care that men are masculine.

When I think of protecting, there is obviously the physical protection, but there is also the protection from lies and bad decisions. For protection, what I end up doing most is analyzing decisions for women and then giving my recommendation. I have 12 young people I mentor, men and women, who are in undergraduate or graduate school. My job is to make sure that they are not studying garbage subjects, and not wasting their summers. I am proud to say that the 7 women I advise are all in STEM areas, and that took some convincing. Why is this protection? Because women need to not starve, and they need to not feel pressured to settle for a guy because they can't be financially independent by themselves. I am not a feminist, but I do think that women make better wives when they study hard subjects and do hard jobs. It shapes their character so that

they are easier to reason with, less fun-focused, and more able to perform hard work without complaint. I also advise women not to waste money of pursuing fun and thrills when they are young, and instead advise them to save and invest it early. One of the young ladies I mentor just finished her BS in computer science, and just finished her first semester of an MS in computer science, worked as a TA and in the summers as a software tester, got an internship with a great software company for the summer, and she has an account with Fidelity, just like me.

When I think of providing, I think of the man's ability to work for money. It starts in high school, in the summers or evenings and goes on right to retirement. I did a summer internship with a huge telecom firm when I was in my sophomore year of high school, so it is possible. A man should not rely on others for money, he needs to be independent. A man should not find paid work "boring" and "meaningless". In fact, part of what it means to be a man is to do things that you don't feel like doing, so that you can provide for others. A man does not spend his money on alcohol or travel or other entertainments. He will have plenty to spend it on when he gets older – his family or maybe charity. A man buys things for others that will help them achieve goals – solving problems for others with his earned income. For example, if a woman has surgery on both of her hands, and cannot lug the vacuum up and down the stairs to clean up her cat's fur, then the man buys her a corded hand vacuum, which is much lighter for her to use every day, (he knows she has OCD and wants everything clean). Money makes a woman's life easier, freeing her up to do more important things. It's important for a man to get started early earning money, because earnings can be invested to produce a return. A man's confidence about the future has no cash value. A woman's feelings about a man's potential future earnings has no cash value. Cash has cash value. There is no such thing as assumed future income, there is only a resume, which predicts future earned income based on *the reality* of past earned income.

A good moral leader is not just good at being moral and spiritual himself, but of convincing others to be moral and spiritual. He is able to present his views on moral issues in a convincing way, especially to non-Christians. He studies philosophy (in his spare time! not as a job because it does not pay!) and is aware of research that helps him to make his point about topics like abortion and marriage. He has an interest in current events and politics, and is able to talk about legislation, policies and court cases related to his worldview. He is able to solve problems that could impact a person's ability to be moral or spiritual in the future. For example, consider that some people really do lose their faith when experiencing evil and suffering. A good spiritual leader advises a woman to not make plans that are likely to fail, so that she will never blame God for her own poor decisions. A good moral leader convinces a woman to be serious about marriage early, so that she is not tempted to become a single mother by choice later. Those last two cases are cases I actually had to face, and I won the first one (she dumped a complete loser of a man and married a really great one), and lost the second (she became a single mother by choice and had a fatherless son). But the point is that there is more to being a moral leader than reciting moral rules. And there is more to being a spiritual leader than

reciting Bible verses. A good leader proves he can lead by pushing the people he leads into real world achievements.

These are the things that a good woman looks for in a man, and when she finds them, she accords a man respect in those areas.

Women, under the influence of feminism, are willing participants in the hook-up culture

January 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Another post in which I try to pull women out of the quagmire of radical feminism
Note: in this article, when I refer to women, I mean young, unmarried women who have been influenced by feminism. I do not mean all women, and especially not married women.

My good friend Tom sent me this article from the ultra left-wing Vanity Fair. Tom is a veteran of the New York City dating scene and has been telling me for years about the practices described in this article.

The article is very, very long, so I can only quote a little, and then I'll encourage you to read it, although be warned, it's filled with sex and bad language, and it tries to present women as victims.

Excerpt:

> It's a balmy night in Manhattan's financial district, and at a sports bar called Stout, everyone is Tindering. The tables are filled with young women and men who've been chasing money and deals on Wall Street all day, and now they're out looking for hookups. Everyone is drinking, peering into their screens and swiping on the faces of strangers they may have sex with later that evening.

Tinder is a hook-up app that people use to find people to have sex with, based solely on their photograph. This is actually what studies say about how women choose men – it's all physical appearance, and nothing that is learned subsequently alters that first impression.

The article says this:

> "Romance is completely dead, and it's the girls' fault," says Alex, 25, a New

> Yorker who works in the film industry. “They act like all they want is to have sex with you and then they yell at you for not wanting to have a relationship. How are you gonna feel romantic about a girl like that? Oh, and by the way? I met you on *Tinder.*”
>
> “Women do exactly the same things guys do,” said Matt, 26, who works in a New York art gallery. “I’ve had girls sleep with me off OkCupid and then just ghost me”—that is, disappear, in a digital sense, not returning texts. “They play the game the exact same way. They have a bunch of people going at the same time—they’re fielding their options. They’re always looking for somebody better, who has a better job or more money.” A few young women admitted to me that they use dating apps as a way to get free meals. “I call it Tinder food stamps,” one said.
>
> Even the emphasis on looks inherent in a dating game based on swiping on photos is something men complain women are just as guilty of buying into. “They say in their profiles, ‘No shirtless pictures,’ but that’s bulls**t,” says Nick, the same as above. “The day I switched to a shirtless picture with my tattoos, immediately, within a few minutes, I had, like, 15 matches.”
>
> And if women aren’t interested in being treated as sexual objects, why do they self-objectify in their profile pictures? some men ask. “There’s a lot of girls who are just like, Check me out, I’m hot, I’m wearing a bikini,” says Jason…
>
> Men talk about the nudes they receive from women. They show off the nudes. “T*t pics and booty pics,” said Austin, 22, a college student in Indiana. “My phone is full of ‘em.”

Although the article, and the women who are interviewed, try to pass themselves off as victims, it’s very clear that they are full participants in this hook-up culture. It’s “fun” for them to be free and independent – no responsibilities, expectations or obligations from a relationship.

Feminist writer Hanna Rosin says that this hook-up culture is great:

> Some, like *Atlantic* writer Hanna Rosin, see hookup culture as a boon: “The hookup culture is … bound up with everything that’s fabulous about being a young woman in 2012—the freedom, the confidence.”

The Vanity Fair author comments:

> “Short-term mating strategies” seem to work for plenty of women too; some don’t want to be in committed relationships, either, particularly those in their 20s who are focusing on their education and launching careers.

Previously, I quoted a feminist professor writing in the New York Times. She also thought that it was great that women were hooking up with hot guys for fun, but staying focused on their educations and careers.

Here's Amanda to explain it:

> "There is no dating. There's no relationships," says Amanda, the tall elegant one. "They're rare. You can have a fling that could last like seven, eight months and you could never actually call someone your 'boyfriend.' [Hooking up] is a lot easier. No one gets hurt—well, not on the surface."
>
> […]It's not, she says, that women don't want to have sex. "Who doesn't want to have sex? But it feels bad when they're like, 'See ya.' "

Who doesn't want to have sex? Well, me for one. At least, not till I'm married.

Amanda later explains that she doesn't want to care, because that would mean that she "somehow missed the whole memo about third-wave feminism". She has to be independent – able to dismiss responsibilities, expectations and obligations in a real relationship – because third-wave feminism tells her so. I know Christian women who think they are fundamentalists who have this exact same attitude. They think that relationships are somehow compatible with doing whatever they want to do – that doing whatever makes them happy each and every moment is compatible with a lasting relationship. Married people laugh at this, but this is what most young, unmarried women believe. And of course most men are only to happy to take advantage of this and treat women like objects.

Why don't women reject the men who use them like kleenexes? Why is the man's appearance so much more important than his character and suitability for the marriage roles of husband and father? Feminism tells women that gender distinctions are "sexist", that chivalry is "sexist", that chastity is "repressive" because it blocks having recreational sex, that marriage is boring and must be delayed, and that having lots of sexual experience makes you more attractive. All nonsense, but this is what the vast majority of American women believe. They measure men by how the man makes them *feel* and whether he will be impressive *physically* to their peers. They believe in feminism and the denial of specific male roles and male virtues. I can't speak for all the men, but all my male friends are either virgins or married, and we are horrified because we don't know who we are supposed to marry.

Probably the most traumatic experiences that I have ever heard in my life are the stories I hear from women who are raised in Christian homes, with two married Christian parents, who nevertheless dump their Christianity late in high school, or sometimes when they get to university. One minute, they are adorable little kids playing with teddy bears or riding horses. The next minute they are hooking up and shacking up and avoiding marriage and child-bearing in order to have as much fun as possible.

Two interesting things about this. First, their parents never find out what is really going on. The parents always believe that the daughters are as pure as the driven snow, no matter how long the "lost" period is, where their daughters went crazy. Second, the young woman's core desire to have fun and seek thrills never goes away. Conversion to Christianity doesn't make an irresponsible woman responsible. And she usually is careful

to surround herself with people who will affirm her in her recklessness, perhaps confidently calling her emotional desires “the voice of God speaking to her”. My friend Dina likes to tell me that these women do not want to be rescued – they are having a good time doing what they want to do, and they think it will go on forever – that the attention from men will always be there, and that chasing happiness will somehow “work out”.

What is interesting is how the parents don’t fix the problem when the girls are young. They are too busy with their careers, their own traveling and fun, etc. Usually, the girl’s mother has chosen a man who is not really strong on truth or moral convictions, because then he is easier to get along with and will not judge her. Women do not like being judged by men, either about factual claims or about moral claims. When the girl starts to act up, and the mother turns to the non-judgmental, postmodern relativist man she chose, and expects him to do something about it. Unfortunately, he does nothing to set boundaries on the daughter.

Finally, you might think that the pastors would be aware of this, and be doing something about restoring women back to the way they used to be. I was talking with a friend who is also in his 30s, also a virgin, also an engineer, and also went to graduate school. We both agreed that the church was doing *nothing* to counter the radical feminism that exalts this retreat from relationship, and denigrates chastity, marriage and child-bearing. There’s no response from the church to radical feminism.

As always, should you, as a young Christian man of some means, desire to get married, then I recommend using my checklist to validate your candidate. And remember, the right answers are unimportant – only the willingness to learn matters.

Bible study: It’s loving to warn someone who is about to make a mistake

January 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

A lesson in spiritual leadership, from the excellent Dr. Michael Brown, writing for Townhall.com. (H/T Think Apologetics)

He writes:

> [L]ove that does not warn is not love at all.
>
> The parent who doesn’t warn a chain-smoking child about the dangers of nicotine is not a loving parent.
>
> The doctor who doesn’t warn a morbidly obese patient about the dangers of overeating is not a loving doctor.
>
> The preacher who doesn’t warn his straying flock about the dangers of spiritual compromise is not a loving pastor.
>
> Love warns, and it warns loudly and clearly – but that does not mean harshly or with an angry, self-righteous spirit.
>
> Love warns with tears.
>
> Love warns with brokenness.
>
> Love warns with longsuffering.
>
> Love warns.
>
> That’s why Jesus wept in public as He warned Jerusalem about the terrible judgment that was at the door (Luke 19:41-45).
>
> That’s why Jeremiah wept in secret when the nation refused to hear his warnings of impending disaster (Jeremiah 13:17).
>
> That’s why Paul said to the elders of Ephesus, “I know that after my departure

> fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears" (Acts 20:29-31).
>
> When is the last time we warned someone with tears? When is the last time we cared enough to weep for them in private?
>
> May God break our hearts with the things that break His heart. May the Lord shatter our indifference.
>
> In the words of the Book of Proverbs, "Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy. . . . Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue" (Proverbs 27:5-6; 28:23).
>
> We are not called to tickle people's ears and make them feel good. We are called to speak the truth in love, to have hearts of compassion and backbones of steel, to emulate the true prophets not the false prophets, to do the right thing rather than the convenient thing.
>
> Oh that God would deliver us from a crippling, compromising, man-pleasing mentality!
>
> In your life or ministry, do you really want to be surrounded by a bunch of Yes-men who tell you what you want to hear rather than what you need to hear? Do you really want to work with a bunch of carnal prophets who say, "All is well, all is well," when nothing is well? (See Jeremiah 6:14.) Then do the same for others and save them from disaster and self-destruction by warning them when they are on the wrong path.
>
> Paul's final exhortation to Timothy rings as true today – if not even more true – than the day it was written: "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths" (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

Lots of good, challenging Bible verses there. It shows that telling people "watch out" is a real thing. First point I want to make is that you should use data when you warn people, if you can. Notice that in Dr. Brown's list, he talked about smoking and obesity, which doctors universally frown on. He wants to tell people the consequences for their health if they choose to smoke or be obese. A lot of moral issues are like that, where you want to tell someone the consequences, which they are often ignorant of – especially when they are young and foolish. So do use studies and papers to show the consequences.

I don't think it's something you can do flippantly. But if you have life experience in the area that you are warning about, then it is a good idea to tell what you learned to

someone who is about to make a mistake. For example, suppose you see someone about to move in with their boyfriend, and their boyfriend has no degree, delivers pizzas, has gaps in his resume, and has no savings. And he's 30. If you moved in with a deadbeat guy and it went nowhere, then you should tell this other person what happened to you, and what you learned from it. Don't be afraid to pull out studies about cohabitation to turn your personal experience into something more persuasive.

Even better than a bad experience is how-to knowledge. If you have tried to do something and been successful at it, then you are in a position to say what worked. Suppose you have good STEM degrees, a good long work history and lots of earned income that you've saved and invested. You see a guy who is about to do a degree in art history, then he wants to go on vacation for two years in Europe, before finally trying to find a full-time job. You know – based on your own success – that this is bad for his resume, bad for his career, bad for his future marriage (a lot of divorces happen because of money). Well, then say something to him. It's better to say something and risk losing him as a friend than for him to proceed in ignorance and make a mistake. It's better to tell the truth than to be liked for lying. That is the loving thing to do.

Finally, if you are the person who is being warned, then respect the people who try to tell you the truth. God knows, it is hard to be the person who speaks the truth in a day and age when people just want to be happy, and be surrounded with positive affirmation. What happens when you chase away the people who have the courage to tell you the truth is that you find yourself surrounded by liars. It's never going to be the case that you know everything about everything. There will always be people who know more than you. If you keep chasing them all away for disagreeing with you, you'll only be left with your own judgment and a crowd of people who either don't know the truth, or won't tell you it. Be careful how you treat the truth-tellers in your life.

Young women: one of the best things you can do with your life is care for kids

January 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should women postpone marriage and raising children for other things?
Super-mom Lindsay sent me this article about by a former feminist who was once opposed to children, then had 4 of them in 5 years.

Introduction:

> Up until my mid-20's I was firm in my belief that I never wanted to have kids. A combination of events made me reconsider the issue, and by the time we got married I was open to the idea of having some pre-set, small number of kids and had begun thinking about the precise timetables on which I would have them.
>
> […]It would have been inconceivable to me to imagine that constantly having my plans derailed by pregnancies and not even having any idea when I'd be done changing diapers would be an improvement over my fully controlled, well-ordered life, but it has been.
>
> […]Lately I've been imagining what I would say to 2003 Jen if I could go back in time and give her a crystal ball to show her what her future would be like. I've been trying to imagine how I would talk her down from the balcony ledge after the crystal ball got to the "four kids in five years — and doing NFP!" part, how I could possibly convince her that this life is not only not a recipe for misery, but the true fulfillment of everything she thought she wanted.
>
> I would love to tell you that I'd simply be able to explain that each child is such a joy and a blessing, but that would not have resonated with Old Jen; I might have agreed, but ultimately I would have said that those joys and blessing are just too

> much hard work. “I just don’t see how that kind of life could be anything but miserable for someone like me,” I would have said.

So how do you convince a woman that “hard work”, i.e. – self-denial, self-control, self-discipline, self-sacrifice – while caring for children could actually lead to a fulfilling life? And most importantly, that it should not be postponed in pursuit of something that appears more fun, more thrilling or more important (according to a feminist measure of fun, thrills and importance).

She makes 5 points in her post.

Here’s one:

> 3. “It’s not what you do, it’s whom you serve.”
>
> A product of secular society, I’d fallen into the common notion that the way to find true happiness is to focus on yourself more and other people less. It makes perfect sense, after all: doing pleasurable things for me is fun, sacrifice and hard work are not fun; ergo, the secret to happiness must be to live for myself as much as possible. Right?
>
> How shocked I was to discover that I was wrong — dead wrong. Part of fully understanding the concept of vocation was understanding that a vocation is not to be thought of as “what you do” as much as it is “whom you serve.” It was nothing short of revolutionary to hear the concept that God has called every one of us to serve others, that living for yourself is not a valid option; that the key to deep fulfillment, to finding your very purpose in life, is as simple as finding out the specific way in which you’re called to serve. Do that, and you will find peace.
>
> It sounded not only too simple to be true, but too difficult. As a spoiled only child the idea of living to serve sounded terrible. But once I actually took a leap of faith and tried it, I had no doubt that this was truth.

Next,I want to talk about one of the young Christians I mentor, and then about the woman I supported for President in the 2012 election.

I spent Friday night playing with one of the young women I mentor. This is the one who did the BS in computer science, and is now doing the MS in computer science. After playing a few rounds of “Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes”, she mentioned the salary from her internship this summer. She asked me “what am I going to do with so much money? I think I had better stop thinking so much about myself and find some people out there to help”. And I was so pleased. Because this woman, more than any of the other young people I mentor, is my replacement.

J. Warner Wallace likes to talk about training your replacement, and I have several replacements, but none better than her. I remember when she was younger, she was a bit more selfish than now. She still organized events, like bringing Frank Turek, Tim McGrew, etc. to speak on her campus. But she never showed much interest in one-on-one care for others. It was my hope that just like me, she would react to computer science

salary with a sense of obligation to others, and so she has. And that's how I think women ought to be. They should be educated, they should be successful – but they should be open to the needs of others.

Michele Bachmann

The woman I admire the most in the world is former GOP Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, who was my first choice for President in 2012. I had been following her for many years before that, when she was just a state senator. I liked her because of her interest in apologetics, as well as her focus on her family.

Marcus and Michele Bachmann and family

The radically leftist New York Times did a profile of her.

It says:

> Nearly two decades ago, a stay-at-home mother and onetime federal tax lawyer named Michele Bachmann felt a spiritual calling to open her clapboard home here to troubled teenage girls.
>
> "We had our five biological children that God gave to us, and then he called us to take foster children into our home," Mrs. Bachmann told a Christian audience in 2006. "We thought we were going to take unwed mothers in," she continued, adding, "We took 23 foster children into our home, and raised them, and launched them off into the world."
>
> **Today Mrs. Bachmann is Representative Bachmann, a Minnesota Republican, first elected to the House in 2006, and now a candidate for her party's nomination for president. In Washington, she has grabbed the spotlight as a staunch fiscal conservative and brash Tea Party leader. But a look at her life here shows that it was her role as a mother, both to her biological children and to her adolescent foster**

> **daughters, that spurred her to seek public office.**
>
> […]Mrs. Bachmann's political awakening began with her deep disenchantment with the public school system.
>
> […]By the late 1990s, with her own children enrolled in private Christian schools, Mrs. Bachman was upset by the education her foster children were getting in public school. Teachers gave them "little special attention," and many were "placed in lower-level classes, as if they were not expected to succeed," she told a House subcommittee in 2007.
>
> One brought home "an 11th-grade math assignment that involved coloring a poster," she testified. Another "spent an entire week watching movies." A third "remarked to me once that she was in 'stupid people math.' "
>
> So Mrs. Bachmann immersed herself in the minutiae of Minnesota's graduation requirements. She worked with a conservative researcher and began giving talks in church basements.
>
> […]The Rev. Marcus Birkholz, the pastor at Salem Lutheran Church, which Mrs. Bachmann attended for years, calls her "a lady with energy and a heart" whose uncompromising "support for the unborn" extends beyond fighting abortion. "She sees the whole picture," Pastor Birkholz said. "It's not just bringing a child into the world; that child has to be nurtured and educated."
>
> […]Mrs. Bachmann, whose biological children now range in age from 17 to 29, worked until her fourth child was born. (Her youngest, Sophia, is headed to college this fall, while the eldest, Lucas, is a medical resident at the University of Connecticut, pursuing a specialty in psychiatry.) Friends remember her planning neighborhood picnics and organizing bicycle parades.
>
> "I had all these balls in the air that I was juggling," she said in an interview with Minnesota Monthly last year. In choosing to leave work, she said, "I finally realized my dream, which was to be mom of a big, happy family."

What does it mean? It means that women ought not be horrified by husband needs or children needs. They should not be opposed to responsibilities, expectations and obligations in relationships. Sometimes, the path to greatness means taking a few years off from work to homeschool your kids. After all, isn't it better for God to have FIVE Christian kids who will surpass you in influence? Michele didn't get involved in politics by thinking of herself. She got involved in politics by thinking of her children, and her 23 foster children.

Here's my advice to young women: 1) Study something hard that pays. 2) Work a few years and get debt free. 3) Marry a good provider in your mid-to-late 20s. 4) Have as many children as your husband can support. 5) Be actively involved in the education of your kids (with apologetics, too). 6) Open your home to kids who don't have a mom or a dad. 7) Teach your kids the importance of caring for others. 8) Run for President (as a Republican).

Obama administration to assist gay rights group in targeting Christian schools

January 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

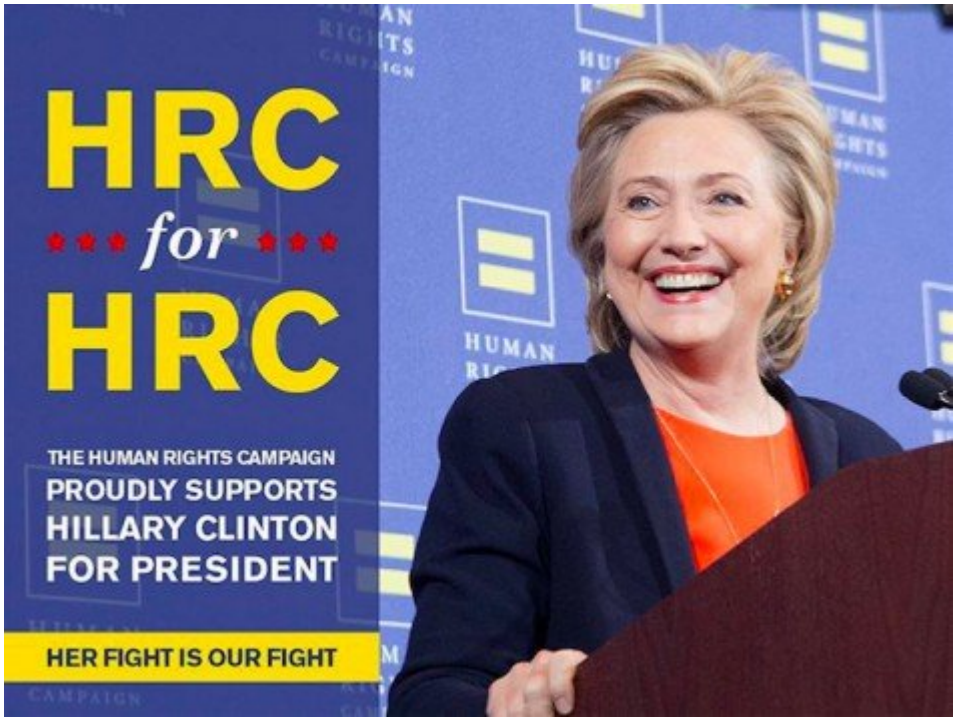

Hillary Clinton and her ally, the Human Rights Campaign
An article from the Daily Caller.

> The Human Rights Campaign — America's largest gay and transgender civil rights group — is celebrating this week's decision by the U.S. Department of Education to create a searchable database targeting faith-based colleges and universities that have sought exemptions from federal gay and transgender rights regulations because the regulations violate their religious beliefs.
>
> Clearly, the gay rights group commands the immediate attention of the Obama administration. The announcement that the Education Department will now pointedly identify such religious schools comes just a few weeks after the Human Rights Campaign released a Dec. 18 report naming and attempting to shame the schools.

The Human Rights Campaign is a curious organization. Their co-founder was charged by police for having sex with an underage teen. He is a big Democrat Party donor and supporter.

The Human Rights Campaign leaked the names of pro-marriage donors that were stolen by a gay activist from within the IRS. The IRS later had to pay a fine for leaking the names of the donors.

The Human Rights Campaign is a group that had previously condemned the Family Research Council as a hate group. This is the same Family Research Council that was

later attacked by a convicted domestic terrorist / gay activist. After the attack, the HRC continued to denounce the FRC as a hate group.

What did Jesus think?

Here's what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
>
> 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" 8
>
> He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."
>
> 11 But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

I should also note that one of the Republican candidates, Marco Rubio, has the backing of a supporter of the Human Rights Campaign. And I'm sure he expects a return on his investment in Marco Rubio.

This is from the Washingon Blade:

> In a three-page letter to dozens of donors obtained by The New York Times, New York-based hedge fund manager Paul Singer says Rubio "has been turning his campaign into a compelling argument for using conservative ideas to help America adapt and thrive in the 21st century."
>
> […]The endorsement from a high-profile donor like Singer, who backed Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney in 2012, is a major score for Rubio.
>
> **Alex Conant, a Rubio spokesperson, is quoted in The New York Times as welcoming the endorsement, adding, "We know we have a lot of work to do before Marco wins the nomination, but clearly this moves us in the**

> **right direction.”**
>
> Jimmy LaSalvia, author of “No Hope” and a gay political commentator who recently left the Republican Party, said Singer’s endorsement of Rubio isn’t surprising.
>
> “At the end of the day, Paul Singer is an establishment Republican,” LaSalvia said. “The GOP establishment has been looking for a candidate to fall in line behind, and it’s looking like that’s Rubio.”

Now, if you profess that view of marriage in public, you will find find yourself in opposition to the Human Rights Campaign, and their Democrat ally Hillary Rodham Clinton. Should you vote for her as President? It seems to me that there is a pretty clear conflict between the teachings of Jesus on marriage, and the teachings of the Human Rights Campaign and their political allies.

Trump, eminent domain, a widow's house, and a limousine parking lot

January 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

I saw a recent Ted Cruz ad that made some claims about his rival Donald Trump. I did some searching and found the facts behind the ad in the UK Guardian.

It says:

> Since he shot to the top of the presidential polls, Donald Trump's serial bankruptcies and bullying nature have made big headlines. But no one seems to have brought up a bullying business practice he's particularly fond of: eminent domain.
>
> The billionaire mogul-turned-reality TV celebrity, who says he wants to work on behalf of "the silent majority," has had no compunction about benefiting from the coercive power of the state to kick innocent Americans out of their homes.
>
> For more than 30 years Vera Coking lived in a three-story house just off the Boardwalk in Atlantic City. Donald Trump built his 22-story Trump Plaza next door. In the mid-1990s Trump wanted to build a limousine parking lot for the hotel, so he bought several nearby properties. But three owners, including the by then elderly and widowed Ms Coking, refused to sell.
> […]Trump turned to a government agency – the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) – to take Coking's property. CRDA offered her $250,000 for the property – one-fourth of what another hotel builder had offered her a decade earlier. **When she turned that down, the agency went into court to claim her property under eminent domain so that Trump could pave it and put up a parking lot.**
>
> […]Ms Coking and her neighbors spent several years in court, but eventually with

> the assistance of the Institute for Justice they won on July 20, 1998. A state judge rejected the agency's demand on the narrow grounds that there was no guarantee that Trump would use the land for the specified purpose.

But Trump is quite unrepentant:

> Trump consistently defended the use of eminent domain. Interviewed by John Stossel on ABC News, he said: "Cities have the right to condemn for the good of the city. Everybody coming into Atlantic City sees this terrible house instead of staring at beautiful fountains and beautiful other things that would be good." Challenged by Stossel, he said that eminent domain was necessary to build schools and roads. **But of course he just wanted to build a limousine parking lot.**
>
> […]When Donald Trump says: "I give to everybody. They do whatever I want," this is what he's talking about: well-connected interests getting favors from government. Vera Coking knows the feeling.

Here's the Ted Cruz ad summarizing the story above:

Donald Trump is a New York billionaire who inherited a fortune from his father. He brags about how he donated money to Democrat politicians. His view on eminent domain really shows what he thinks of ordinary Americans – and the Constitution.

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalism at the University of St. Andrews

January 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Note: even if you have heard Dr. Craig's arguments before, I recommend jumping to the 48 minutes of Q&A time, which starts 72 minutes in.

About Dr. William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich, Germany in 1984.

Dr. Craig was in Scotland to lecture at a physics conference, but a local church organized this public lecture at the University of St. Andrews.

Here is the full lecture with Q&A: (2 hours)

Summary:

- Naturalism defined: the physical world (matter, space and time) is all that exists
- Dr. Craig will present 7 reasons why naturalism is false
- 1) the contingency argument
- 2) the kalam cosmological argument
- 3) the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life
- 4) the moral argument
- 5) the ontological argument
- 6) the resurrection of Jesus
- 7) religious experience

Dr. Craig does mention an 8th argument early in the Q&A – the argument from the non-physicality of mental states (substance dualism), which is an argument that I find convincing, because a materialist conception of mind is not compatible with rationality, consciousness and moral agency.

Questions and Answers

He gets a couple of questions on the moral argument early on – one of them tries to put forward an evolutionary explanation for "moral" behaviors. There's another question the definition of naturalism. There is a bonehead question about the non-existence of Jesus based on a Youtube movie he saw – which Craig responds to with agnostic historian Bart Ehrman's book on that topic. There's a question about God as the ground for morality – does morality come from his will or nature.

Then there is a question about the multiverse, which came up at the physics conference Dr. Craig attended the day before. There is a good question about the Big Bang theory and the initial singularity at time t=0. Another good question about transfinite arithmetic, cardinality and set theory. One questioner asks about the resurrection argument. The questioner asks if we can use the origin of the disciples belief as an argument when other religions have people who are willing to die for their claims. One of the questioners asks about whether the laws of nature break down at 10^-43 after the beginning of the universe. There is a question about the religious experience argument, and Craig has the opportunity to give his testimony.

I thought that the questions from the Scottish students and faculty were a lot more thoughtful and respectful than at American colleges and universities. Highly recommended.

What did Goldman Sachs get in exchange for paying Hillary Clinton $200,000 an hour?

January 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

This article is from the Washington Free Beacon.

It says:

> Hillary Clinton could not help but laugh Friday when a reporter asked her to release the transcripts from her high-priced Goldman Sachs speeches at a rope line in New Hampshire.
>
> "Will you release the transcript of your paid speeches at Goldman Sachs?" a reporter from the *Intercept* asked Clinton at a campaign event, referring to the $675,000 she has earned in speaking fees from the bank.
>
> Clinton looked directly at the reporter, and after a pause, laughed in his face. She then carried on greeting supporters.
>
> "There's a lot of controversy over those speeches," the reporter said. "Secretary?"
>
> Clinton continued to speak over the reporter, drowning him out.
>
> "Hi! So glad to see you!" Clinton said.
>
> "Is that a no?" the reporter persisted.
>
> Clinton ignored his question and repeated a greeting to another supporter.

> "I am so happy to see you," Clinton said.
>
> "Secretary Clinton, will you release the transcript of your Goldman Sachs speeches?" the reporter said again. Clinton ignored him.
>
> Clinton has come under scrutiny for giving high-priced speeches, averaging $225,000 per gig, at big banks such as Goldman Sachs, all the while preaching about income inequality on the campaign trail. She and her husband have made more than $125 million in speaking fees since 2001.

Here is the video where she laughs at the questioner, and then ignores him, even after repeated attempts to get her to be accountable:

You might remember that Clinton often talks about how she is "dead broke". Is she really "dead broke"?

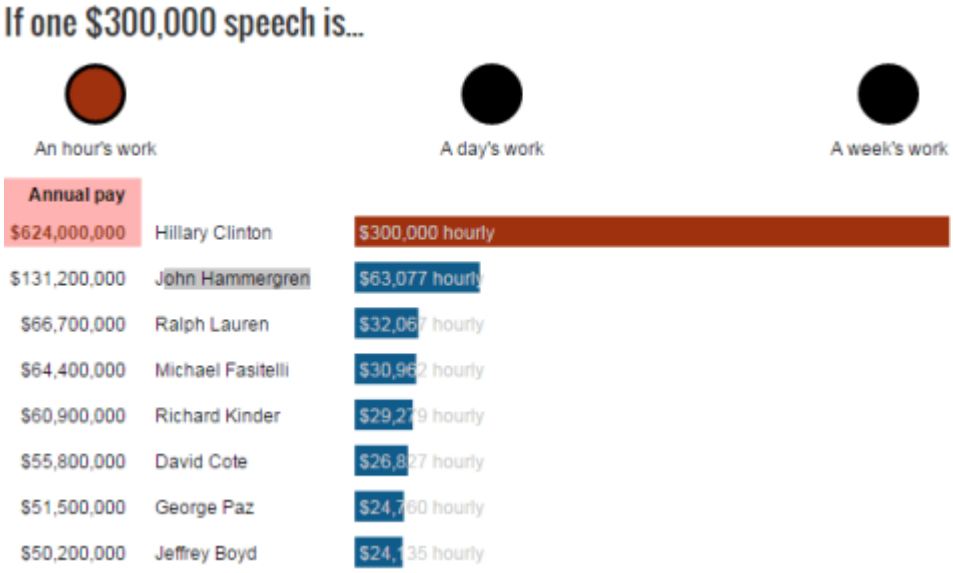

$300,000 an hour for a speech

Hillary Clinton's speech fees

The Weekly Standard reports:

> Disclosure forms filed with the Federal Election Commission by Hillary Clinton provide fascinating details of the remarkable money-making machine that is the once-and-possibly-future first couple. Between January 2014 and the filing of the forms on May 15, 2015 (up to and including a speech by Bill Clinton to the American Institute of Architects the day before the filing), the Clintons made about $30 million, approximately $25 million from speeches alone.
>
> Both of the Clintons have given speeches regularly in the 16-month period covered in the filing with rarely more than a few weeks off in between engagements. Often events are crowded together during a period of several days, sometimes with more than one speech on the same day. On a single day last October, Bill and Hillary delivered a total of four speeches, taking home over $1 million. Those four speeches fell in the middle of a three-day blitz that brought in a total of $1,511,000. (Mrs. Clinton edged out her husband $786,000 to $725,000.)

> […]Although the audiences for the Clintons vary widely, the actual content and duration of the speeches is not always revealed. However, a YouTube video of Bill Clinton's recent speech to the American Institute of Architects, apparently recorded by an attendee, shows that the $250,000 fee paid to Mr. Clinton purchased the group a 23 minute speech, an hourly rate of about $652,000.

On a per-hour basis, she makes more than all of the CEOs of the largest companies. Well, maybe not more than Donald Trump, though. New York values. Actually, Donald Trump donated *at least* $100,000 to the Clinton Foundation, so maybe he can tell us what people get for giving the Clinton's exorbitant sums of money.

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

Meanwhile, Ted Cruz had to liquidate assets and take out loans against his investments in order to run for Senate. Which of these people is more like you and I?

Where did Rubio, Cruz and Trump stand on amnesty before running for President?

January 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio with his allies: Democrat Churck Schumer and RINO John McCain

Here is an article from the non-partisan Roll Call, from way back in April 22, 2013. The title is "Rubio Targets Fellow Conservatives on Immigration".

Excerpt:

> Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., is running a campaign-style press operation to push an immigration overhaul, a fitting move for a politician who needs it to bolster a rumored 2016 presidential bid.
>
> […]According to multiple sources tracking the immigration debate, Rubio is perhaps the most important senator in lending the group's effort enough conservative credibility to result in a final bill. Because Rubio's future political aspirations will certainly be affected by the fate of the looming legislation, the proactive approach his team is taking is helping him take matters into his own hands.
>
> […]Of course, with each email, Rubio's commitment to the bill grows stronger. And in a town where perception is almost everything, a daily record of his defense of the bill and attacks on the conservatives trying to kill it is certainly building a perception.

Who were the "conservatives trying to kill it" mentioned in the linked article? Jeff Sessions, Chuck Grassley, Mike Lee *and Ted Cruz.* And now Rubio has the nerve to accuse Cruz of supporting amnesty, after Cruz led the fight against it.

So let’s see what Ted Cruz did to fight amnesty.

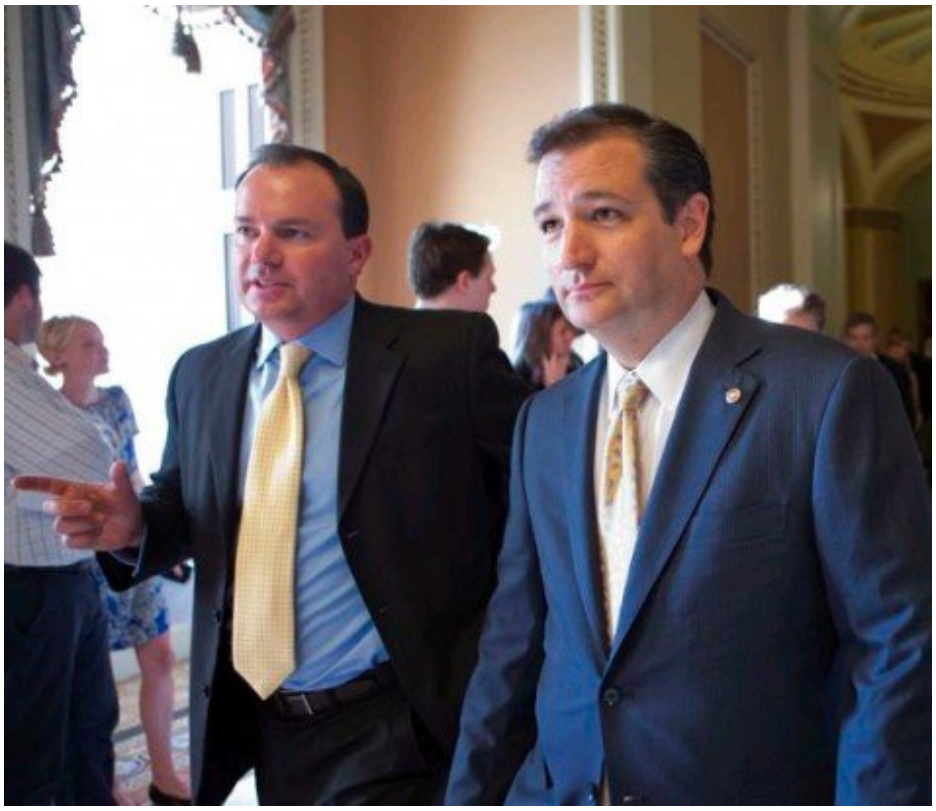

Ted Cruz and Mike Lee go to war against amnesty

Ted Cruz

Listen to Senator Jeff Sessions, a hawk on immigration, explain where Ted Cruz was when amnesty was being proposed by Rubio and his Democrat allies:

Legal Insurrection describes what Sessions says:

> Sessions states: “One of the things you’ve been hearing about somehow is a criticism of Ted and how he and what he did with regard to this massive [immigration bill] that they tried to ram through in 2013,” Sessions said. “Let me tell you, I was there. Every step of the way, Ted Cruz was on my side and fought this legislation all the way through.”
>
> Sessions makes an important point during this speech: “This presidential election is going to decide who runs the White House: the crowd that pushed this legislation or the crowd that opposed it.”
>
> And that, I think, is the crux of this issue . . . and, at least in part, of this election.

And what about Donald Trump? Does he have a record of opposing amnesty?

Donald Trump

Trump was for amnesty back in August of 2013 – according to his own tweet:

Donald Trump tweets about illegal immigration, circa August 2013

If illegal immigration and border security are important to you, then your candidate is Ted Cruz. He is the only one running with the record of fighting against illegal immigration, as well as taking in refugees from countries that are dominated by radical Islam.

William Lane Craig discusses faith and reason with university students

January 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students

This is an interview of Dr. William Lane Craig before college students at the University of Central Florida. (95 minutes)

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (33 MB)

Questions from the interviewer: (40 minutes)

- What started you on his journey of studying faith and reason?
- How would you define the word "faith"?
- Are faith and reason compatible? How are they related?
- How can reasonable faith help us to avoid the two extremes of superstition and nihilism?
- Who makes the best arguments against the Christian faith?
- Why are angry atheists like Dawkins and Hitchens more well known than better-informed academic atheists?
- Does the Bible require Christians to give the unbeliever reasons for their faith?
- How does faith spur Christians to think carefully about the big questions in life?
- Should the American church prod churchgoers to develop their minds so they can engage the secular culture?
- When talking about Christianity intellectually, is there a risk of neglecting the experience of being a Christian?
- Which Christian apologist has shaped your thinking the most?
- Which Christian philosopher has shaped your thinking the most?

- Does the confidence that comes from apologetics undermine humility and reverence?
- If you had to sketch out a 5 minute case for Christianity, what would you present?
- Can non-Christians use their reason to arrive at truth?
- Are there cases where atheists must affirm irrational things in order to remain atheists?
- Can the universe have existed eternal, so that there is no need to explain who created it?
- Even if you persuade someone that Christianity is true, does that mean they will live it out?

There is also a long period of questions, many of them hostile, from the audience of students (55 minutes).

- Haven't you said nasty things about some atheists? Aren't you a meany?
- What do you make of the presuppositional approach to apologetics?
- Can a person stop being a Christian because of the chances that happen to them as they age?
- Why did God wait so long after humans appeared to reveal himself to people through Jesus?
- Can a person be saved by faith without have any intellectual assent to truth?
- How do you find time for regular things like marriage when you have to study and speak so much?
- How would you respond to Zeitgeist and parallels to Christianity in Greek/Roman mythology?
- Do Christians have to assume that the Bible is inerrant and inspired in order to evangelize?
- If the universe has a beginning, then why doesn't God have a beginning?
- Can you name some philosophical resources on abstract objects, Platonism and nominalism?
- How can you know that Christianity more right than other religions?
- Should we respond to the problem of evil by saying that our moral notions are different from God's?
- Define the A and B theories of time. Explain how they relate to the kalam cosmological argument.
- How can Christians claim that their view is true in the face of so many world religions?
- What is the role of emotions in Christian belief and thought?
- Can evolution be reconciled with Christian beliefs and the Bible?
- When witnessing person-to-person, should you balance apologetics with personal testimony?
- Is there a good analogy for the trinity that can help people to understand it? [Note: HE HAS ONE!]

- How can Christians reconcile God's omniscience, God's sovereignty and human free will?

This is a nice introductory lecture that is sure to get Christians to become interested in apologetics. As you watch or listen to it, imagine what the world would be like if *every* Christian could answer the questions of skeptical college students and professors like Dr. Craig. What would non-Christians think about Christianity if *every* Christian had studied these issues like Dr. Craig? Why aren't we making an effort to study these things *so that* we can answer these questions?

It is really fun to see him fielding the questions from the skeptical university students. My favorite question was from the physics student who sounds really foreign, (at 1:19:00), then you realize that he is a Christian. I do think that Dr. Craig went a little far in accommodating evolution, but I put that down to the venue, and not wanting to get into a peripheral issue. I'm also surprised that no one asked him why God allows humans to suffer and commit acts of evil.

If you are looking for a good basic book on apologetics, then I would choose "Is God Just a Human Invention?" by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow. And you can even be part of a reading group that Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 just announced, that I will be participating in. We will all be reading the book together, chapter by chapter, and lots of people will be available to answer your questions.

Who is William Lane Craig?

About William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig’s list of publications is here.

William Lane Craig is, without a doubt, the top living defender of Christianity. He has debated all of the most famous atheists, including Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, etc. as well as academic atheists like Quentin Smith, Peter Millican, etc. if you search this blog, you’ll find many debates posted here, sometimes even with snarky summaries.

Texas prosecutor with link to Planned Parenthood charges pro-life whistleblowers

January 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Planned Parenthood senior executive: organ harvesting so she can get a Lamborghini

The Federalist has the story:

> Months after the release of undercover videos detailing Planned Parenthood's scheme to traffic aborted baby body parts, a grand jury has finally brought brought criminal charges. Not against Planned Parenthood, but against David Daleiden, the pro-life activist behind the undercover sting videos.
>
> A grand jury in Harris County, Texas, returned two charges on Monday afternoon against Daleiden, the activist who planned and organized the undercover sting videos. Although the grand jury allegedly investigated Planned Parenthood, no charges were brought against the nation's largest abortion provider, whose executives were shown in multiple videos attempting to sell trafficked organs and other body parts harvested from aborted babies. One Planned Parenthood executive, while haggling over the prices of aborted baby organs, noted that she needed to get the right price because, "I want to buy a Lamborghini."
>
> According to a press release from the office of Harris County district attorney's office which was provided to *The Federalist*, Daleiden was charged with the purchase and sale of human organs, a misdemeanor, and with tampering with a governmental record, a felony. Sandra Merritt, one of Daleiden's associates, was also charged with tampering with a governmental record.
>
> "For more than two months, the 232nd Grand Jury extensively reviewed the joint investigation into allegations of misconduct by PPGC," stated the press release. "This grand jury cleared PPGC of breaking the law. However, the grand jury did hand down indictments for two individuals who were involved in making the allegations against PPGC public via covert recordings made in April 2015."
>
> **Lauren Reeder, one of the prosecutors in the Harris County district**

> **attorney's office, revealed last August that she was a member of the board of directors for the Planned Parenthood affiliate that was targeted by Daleiden.**
>
> **Reeder's LinkedIn page indicates that she has been a Planned Parenthood board member since 2013 and a fundraiser for the abortion provider since 2009.**

The maximum sentence for "tampering with a governmental record" (using a fake ID, which almost every teen does) is 20 years.

Well, what happens next? This Houston Chronicle says:

> Days after Harris County District Attorney Devon Anderson announced that she was launching a criminal investigation into the Houston-area branch of Planned Parenthood, Anderson said she had learned one of her subordinates was on the board of directors of the agency.
>
> […]"She will not be involved in any manner in this investigation," Anderson said. "If at any time in the future, reliable and credible information is brought to my attention that would question our ability to continue to perform a fair, thorough and independent investigation of this matter due to her board membership, I will revisit the issue of seeking the appointment of an independent prosecutor and act accordingly."

Seems to me that there should be a special prosecutor, because the district attorney's office is obviously not going to be impartial. Even if the Planned Parenthood woman is not involved directly, she works with the people who are involved. The best thing to do is get a special prosecutor.

Meanwhile, the state of Texas is continuing to investigate Planned Parenthood as a result of the videos.

Cruz challenges Trump to one-on-one debate after Trump chickens out of Fox News debate

January 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think that this little cry-baby wants his pacifier

Story from the non-partisan The Hill.

Excerpt:

> Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) said late Tuesday that Donald Trump's fear of defending his record is behind the GOP front-runner's boycott of the next Fox News GOP presidential debate.
>
> "The reality is, the reason Donald is doing this – I actually don't think it's because of [Fox News host] Megyn [Kelly] at all," he said on Fox News's "Hannity."
>
> "I think it's because he's afraid to defend his record, that he knows he can't defend his record and he's trying to hide from the voters of Iowa," Cruz said six days from the early voting state's caucuses next Monday.
>
> "He's not willing to stand up and explain why he supports Bernie Sanders-style, full-on socialized medicine, expanding ObamaCare so the federal government is in charge of our healthcare," he said, tying Trump with the Democratic presidential contender.
>
> "He can't explain why today he supports taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood," the Republican White House hopeful added.
>
> "He can't explain why he supported [President] Obama's stimulus plan and supported Obama's TARP bail-out of the big banks. He doesn't want to answer those questions, and he refuses to show up."
>
> […]Trump announced late Tuesday that he is skipping the seventh GOP presidential debate in Des Moines, Iowa Thursday evening.

I really hope that Trump does agree to a formal debate with Cruz, but honestly, he doesn't have the balls for it.

Endorsements that matter

I don't usually blog about endorsements for any candidates, but I will note that Ted Cruz picked up the endorsement of the president of the conservative Family Research Council think tank.

Washington Times reports:

> Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, has endorsed Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas for president, calling Mr. Cruz "a constitutional conservative who will fight for faith, family and freedom."
>
> "I trust Ted to fight to pull America out of the political and cultural tailspin that President Obama's policies have put us in," Mr. Perkins said. "This is no normal election; this election is about the very survival of our Constitution and our republic."
>
> Mr. Cruz said he was "honored" to have Mr. Perkins' endorsement, calling him "a man of incredible principle and faith."
>
> Mr. Perkins is currently president of the FRC, which promotes socially conservative values and is one of the most influential conservative advocacy groups in the country.
>
> […]The Texas senator has also been endorsed by Dr. James Dobson, another social conservative leader, and past FRC President Gary Bauer.

Cruz also has the endorsement of Focus on the Family founder James Dobson. Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council are the groups that most informed my views on social issues, like marriage and right to life. They have an evidence-based approach to social issues. It's much easier to debate these issues if you use their studies and materials. I can only guess that they think that Cruz is the candidate who is most capable of this style in the public square.

Ted Cruz's achievements

For those looking for a good summary of Ted Cruz's achievements as a conservative, there was a good article at Legal Insurrection.

It says:

> Prior to winning that senate seat with conservative grassroots and TEA Party support and becoming the first Hispanic to serve as a senator from Texas, Cruz was also the first Hispanic—and the longest-serving person in Texas history—to hold the office of Solicitor General of Texas.
>
> Cruz joined the George W. Bush campaign in 1999 as a domestic policy adviser and advised then-candidate and Governor Bush on a wide range of policy and legal matters, including civil justice, criminal justice, constitutional law,

> immigration, and government reform.
>
> During the Bush administration, Cruz served as associate deputy attorney general at the DOJ and as a policy adviser on the Federal Trade Commission. While at the FTC, Cruz was an avid free-market crusader—an extension of his high school participation in the Houston-based Free Market Education Foundation, a program Cruz entered at the age of 13.
>
> At Princeton, where Cruz obtained his bachelor's degree in Public Policy and shone as a star debater, he wrote his senior thesis on the separation of powers in which he argued that the Founders provided a means, in the Ninth and Tenth Amendments, of protecting the people from a totalitarian central government.
>
> After graduating with honors from Princeton, Cruz attended Harvard Law School, where he not only served as an editor on both the *Harvard Law Review* and the *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* but was also a founding editor of the *Harvard Latino Law Review*.
>
> **In his role as Solicitor General of Texas, Cruz successfully defended the constitutionality of the Ten Commandments on the Texas capitol grounds, defended the Second Amendment by arguing that the DC handgun ban infringed on the rights of the people to bear arms, and he defended Texas against an attempt to re-open the cases of 51 Mexican nationals, all of whom were convicted of murder in the United States and were on death row.**
>
> […]**[H]e ably fought the Rubio-Schumer immigration bill, has repeatedly worked to repeal ObamaCare (including a memorable filibuster in the Senate), and has been vocal in calling out even other Republicans as "campaign conservatives."**

Let me tell you how I would like my life to be like. I would like it if I could open the newspaper and see someone articulate and intelligent advocating for the conservative principles that were built into this country at the Founding – federalism, freedom of speech, the rule of law, judicial restraint, limited government, and so on. I would like to see Supreme Court nominees who interpret the Constitution instead of legislating from the bench. I would like to see fewer regulations and a lower tax burden on working individuals and private sector job creators. I would like to see smaller government and the abolition of public sector unions. I would like to see respect for the religious liberty of Bible-believing Christians.

I don't think we are going to see any of these things if we nominate Donald Trump instead of Ted Cruz.

How do atheists try to accommodate the Big Bang in their worldview?

January 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

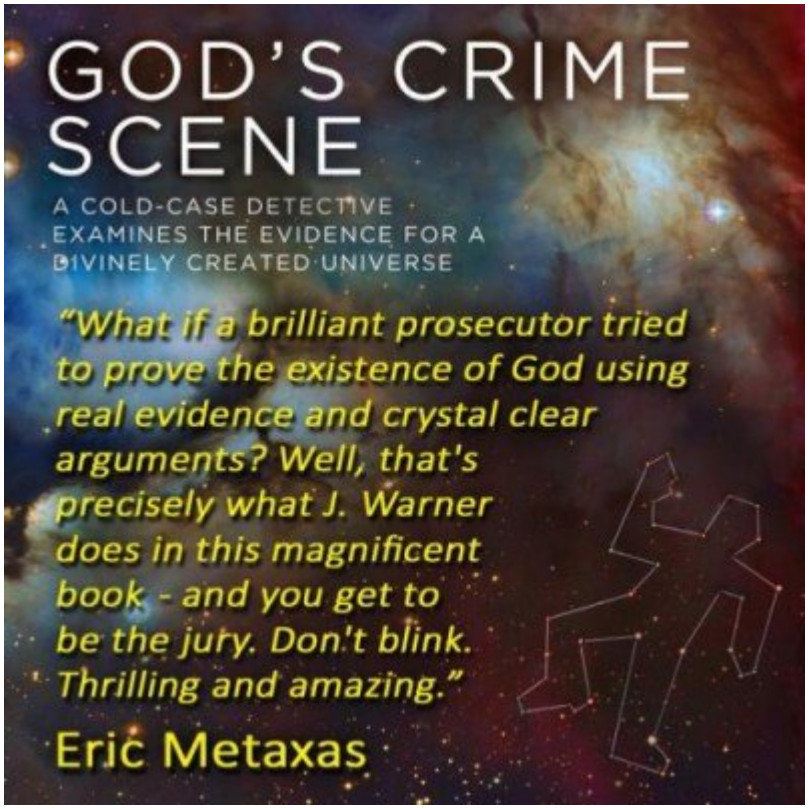

J. Warner Wallace: God's Crime Scene

OK, so J. Warner Wallace has a new book out and it's about science and God.

I wanted to link to something about Lawrence Krauss trying to accommodate the Big Bang within his worldview of atheism.

Wallace writes:

> One of the key pieces of evidence in the universe is simply it's origin. If our universe began to exist, what could have caused it's beginning? How did *everything* (all space, time and matter) come into existence from *nothing*? One way atheist physicists have navigated this dilemma has simply been to redefine the terms they have been using. What do we mean when we say "everything" or "nothing"? At first these two terms might seem rather self-explanatory, but it's important for us to take the time to define the words. As I've already stated, by "everything" we mean all space, time and matter. That's right, space is "something"; empty space is part of "everything" not part of "nothing". For some of us, that's an interesting concept that might be hard to grasp, but it's an important distinction that must be understood. When we say "nothing", we mean the complete absence of everything; the thorough non-existence of anything at all (including all space time and matter). These two terms, when defined in this way, are consistent with the principles of the Standard Cosmological Model, but

> demonstrate the dilemma. If everything came from nothing, what caused this to occur? What is the non-spatial, atemporal, immaterial, uncaused, first cause of the universe? A cause of this sort sounds a lot like a supernatural Being, and that's why I think many naturalists have begun to redefine the terms.
>
> Lawrence Krauss, Arizona State University Professor (School of Earth and Space Exploration and Director of the Origins Initiative) wrote a book entitled, *"A Universe from Nothing: Why There Is Something Rather than Nothing"*. As part of the promotion for the book, Krauss appeared on the Colbert Report where he was interviewed by comedian Stephen Colbert. During the interview, Krauss tried to redefine "nothing" to avoid the need for a supernatural first cause:
>
> *"Physics has changed what we mean by nothing… Empty space is a boiling, bubbling brew of virtual particles popping in and out of existence… if you wait long enough, that kind of nothing will always produce particles." (Colbert Nation, June 21st, 2012)*
>
> Now if you're not careful, you might miss Krauss' subtle redefinition. In describing the sudden appearance of matter ("particles"), Krauss assumes the prior existence of space ("empty space") and time ("if you wait long enough"). If you've got some empty space and wait long enough, matter appears. For Krauss, the "nothing" from which the universe comes includes two common features of "everything" (space and time), and something more (virtual particles). This leaves us with the real question: "Where did the space, time and virtual particles come from (given all our evidence points to their origination at the beginning of our universe)?" Krauss avoids this inquiry by moving space and time from the category of "something" to the category of "nothing".
>
> If you've got a teenager in your house, you might recognize Krauss' approach to language. I bet you've seen your teenager open the refrigerator door, gaze at all the nutritious fruits and vegetables on the shelves, then lament that there is "nothing to eat."

I used to say that when I was a teenager, but I grew out of it. I didn't go on the Comedy Channel and try to convince everyone that what I was saying about the refrigerator was scientifically accurate.

Anyway, here is a debate between William Lane Craig and Lawrence Krauss, if you want to see how Krauss defends his "refrigerator has nothing to eat" view of cosmology. I know everybody and even many Christians all think that we have something to hide when it comes to science, but if you would just watch these debates, you would see that there is nothing to fear from science at all. We own it.

Meanwhile, I want to show you that this is not at all rare among atheists.

Look, here is Peter Atkins explaining how he makes the Big Bang reconcile with his atheism – and notice that it's a completely different view than Krauss:

So, just who is this Peter Atkins, and why is he a good spokesman for atheism?

From his Wikipedia bio.

Peter William Atkins (born August 10, 1940) is an English chemist and a fellow and professor of chemistry at Lincoln College of the University of Oxford. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, 8th ed. (with Julio de Paula of Haverford College), *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*, 4th ed. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.

[…]Atkins is a well-known atheist and supporter of many of Richard Dawkins' ideas. He has written and spoken on issues of humanism, atheism, and what he sees as the incompatibility between science and religion. According to Atkins, whereas religion scorns the power of human comprehension, science respects it.

[…]He was the first Senior Member for the Oxford Secular Society and an Honorary Associate of the National Secular Society. He is also a member of the Advisory Board of The Reason Project, a US-based charitable foundation devoted to spreading scientific knowledge and secular values in society. The organisation is led by fellow atheist and author Sam Harris.

Now watch that 6-minute video above. Peter Atkins thinks that nothing exists. He thinks he doesn't exist. He thinks that you don't exist. This is how atheism adapts to a world where the Big Bang creation event is fact.

I think Peter Atkins should join Lawrence Krauss on the Comedy Channel and present that view. I would laugh. Wouldn't you?

CBO: national debt will rise to $30 trillion in the next decade

January 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

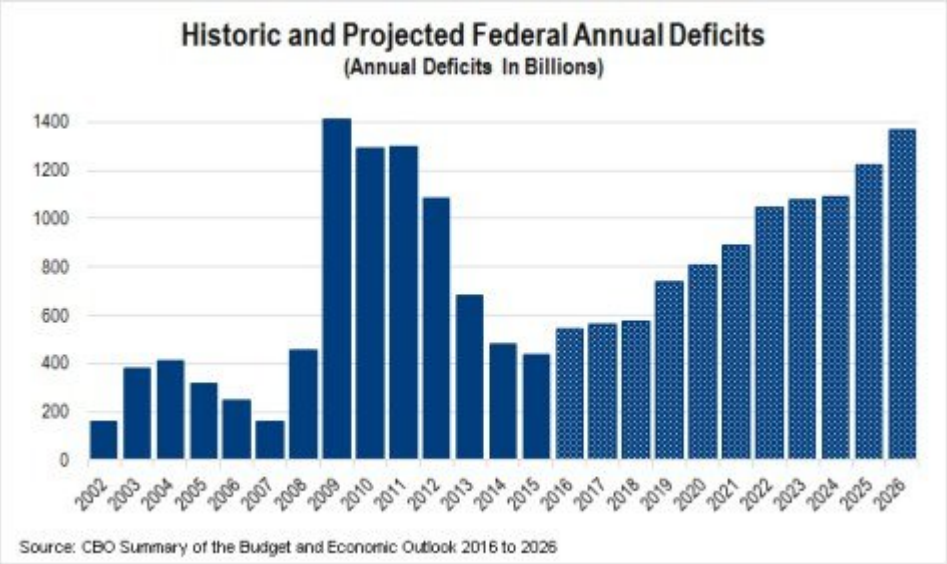

Democrats took control of government spending in 2007

The Washington Times has a warning for all the young voters who are freaking out over the spending promises of Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders.

Here it is:

> The federal government will be flirting with $30 trillion in debt within a decade, the Congressional Budget Office reported Monday, blaming an aging population, new spending and tax cuts approved on Capitol Hill, and the growing burden from Obamacare for erasing the progress Washington had made over the past few years.
>
> **Analysts said Obamacare will chase more workers out of the labor force over the next five years, adding pressure to an economy still struggling to spring to life more than seven years into the Obama recovery.**
>
> The Affordable Care Act itself is still struggling to attract a customer base, the CBO said, lowering its estimate for the number of people who will sign up for the exchanges from 21 million to 13 million — a drop of nearly 40 percent in projections. Customers collecting taxpayer subsidies this year will be 11 million, down from the 15 million the CBO projected a year ago.
>
> […]Deficits will continue to rise over the next 10 years, topping $1 trillion again in 2022 and reaching $1.4 trillion in 2026, the analysts said.

Basically, we've dug ourselves into a whole with all this spending – taking money out of the productive private sector and giving it to the wasteful public sector.

How wasteful?

This wasteful:

> The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is spending $80,000 to see what effects space flight has on oral herpes.
>
> The federal space agency has awarded multiple grants and contracts to a researcher at the University of Florida to determine the "Effect of Spaceflight on Herpes virus Genome Stability and Diversity," beginning last summer. The project recently received an additional $15,000 in December.
>
> "The goal of this study will be to determine the changes in the genomic and mutational diversity that is present in the Herpes virus virome present in astronaut saliva and urine samples collected before, during, and after space flight," according to NASA's description of the research. "Ground subjects will serve as the control group providing saliva and urine samples preflight and postflight during the same schedule as the astronauts."

That $80,000 was taken from private sector businesses and individual families. They could have spent it on jobs, innovation or consumer spending. But instead the government took it and wasted it on garbage.

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

There is someone who has a plan to deal with these deficits. And his plan is to shut down or scale back many government departments.

Ted Cruz:

> For the individual income tax under his tax reform, Cruz's plan provides for one flat rate of 10% on everything – wages, capital gains, dividends, personal business income, rent, interest, and all other forms of individual income. The corporate income tax would be abolished, and replaced with a 16% Business Flat Tax, which applies to sales of goods and services, minus all purchases and expenses for inputs for production. It automatically provides for immediate "expensing," or an immediate deduction for all purchases of plant and

> equipment, and all other capital investment, which inherently involves purchases of inputs from other businesses. It is essentially a consumption tax for business.
>
> That net business tax, which also automatically abolishes all special-interest, corporate-welfare loopholes, raises an enormous amount of revenue, $25.4 trillion over the first 10 years alone. This enables the plan to include abolishing the Social Security and Medicare payroll tax, which is the highest tax most working people pay, with Social Security and Medicare financed in full. It also enables the plan to include abolishing the death tax, the Alternative Minimum Tax, and all Obamacare taxes, as well as the corporate income tax. With a standard deduction of $10,000 per adult, and a $4,000 personal exemption, the first $36,000 of income for a family of four would be exempt from all significant federal taxes.
>
> Because such tax reform would be enormously pro-growth, the Tax Foundation scores it on a dynamic basis as a net tax cut of $768 billion over the first 10 years. The Tax Foundation, which has developed a formal, sophisticated, and thorough economic model of the economy, estimates Cruz's tax reform would create nearly 5 million new jobs, increase wages by 12%, and increase real economic growth over the next decade by nearly 14% more than under current tax policies. The after tax income of all workers would increase by 21.3% on average, with those in the bottom 20% of the income ladder seeing income increases of 15.3%.

Cruz intends to pay for these tax cuts by reducing the size and scope of government – pushing many federal responsibilities down to the state level, where there is more accountability to the people.

The four agencies are the standard four that most conservatives want to abolish or streamline:

- Department of Energy (raises energy prices for individuals and businesses)
- Department of Commerce (hands our taxpayer money to businesses favored by big government)
- Department of Education (indoctrinates children in big government dogma, e.g. – global warming)
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (caused the housing bubble recession by forcing banks to loan money to unqualified individuals, then bailed them out with taxpayer money)

Many other smaller government departments would be streamlined or eliminated. There would be a hiring freeze in the federal government, and pay increases would be based on merit, not tenure. Cruz would also save a trillion dollars over 10 years by repealing Obamacare, and replacing it with a consumer-driven alternative.

Although young people are in love with the idea that government will give them things by taxing others, that's not sustainable. They ought to be voting for someone who wants to

cut spending and cut government.

Who has done more on the pro-life and pro-marriage issues – Trump or Cruz?

January 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

This is from the non-partisan The Hill.

Excerpt:

> Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump defended Planned Parenthood during an interview Tuesday night, doubling down on his remarks that part of the group should be funded.
>
> "They do good things," Trump said during an interview with Sean Hannity that aired on Fox News.
>
> […]Planned Parenthood praised Trump's remarks earlier Tuesday when on the question of funding he said on CNN that he would look at other "good aspects" of Planned Parenthood.
>
> "Donald Trump seems to have realized that banning all abortions, shutting down the government, and defunding Planned Parenthood are extreme positions that are way too far outside the mainstream for even him to take," Eric Ferrero, vice president for communications, said in a statement shared with The Hill.

Now, Donald Trump was pro-abortion for his entire life, until he decided to run as Republican in the 2016 primary. Then he became pro-life. That's what he says, anyway. So what was his reasoning for becoming pro-life?

Live Action has the quote, and the problem with Trump's reasoning:

> Trump shared the reason behind his claimed pro-life conversion at the first GOP debate:
>
> "Friends of mine years ago were going to have a child, and it was going to be

> aborted. And it wasn't aborted. And that child today is a total superstar, a great, great child. And I saw that. And I saw other instances…I am very, very proud to say that I am pro-life."

Look here – a child's right to life does not depend on their ability to become a total superstar in the eyes of Donald Trump. He doesn't understand the logic of the pro-life position.

More Live Action:

> In January 2015, when he was asked to define what "pro-life" meant to him, he stated: "It means that it's an issue. It is an issue, and it's a strong issue." When asked if he believed abortion early in a pregnancy was murder, Trump said, "No." And then, when the questioner continued to press Trump, asking if he would be against abortion if the life of the mother was not at risk and if rape or incest were not involved (his exceptions), he stated, "It depends when," while continuing to repeat, "I'm pro-life."

Not convincing.

What about on gay marriage?

> Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump says he can see both sides in the case of Kim Davis, the Kentucky clerk who has been ordered to jail for refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, but that "the Supreme Court has ruled" on the issue and "it is the law of the land."

If 5 Justices on the Supreme Court redefine marriage, it's the law of the land . That's what Trump says.

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

What about Ted Cruz?

Cruz is pro-life:

- Cruz has received a 100% rating from the National Right to Life Committee.
- He voted for numerous defunding measures for Obamacare and Planned Parenthood since being voted in the Senate.
- He voted in favor of the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act.
- He voted for the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act which he co-sponsored.
- He is a co-sponsor of the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Act.
  Cruz said that the unborn are "absolutely" persons under the 14th Amendment.
- Cruz was endorsed by Georgia Right to Life and has signed their personhood pledge.

Here are a few more:

- In January 2015, Cruz co-sponsored a bill to create a federal ban on abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy and urged Congress to take up the legislation.
- In March 2015, Cruz introduced two resolutions of disapproval to the D.C. Ordinances, one, the Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act, could require pro-life organizations to fund abortion services in employee's health care and could force them to hire someone who supports abortion. The House passed the resolution, but unfortunately, the Senate failed to bring it before committee.
- In May 2013, Cruz co-sponsored Sen. Mike Lee's resolution to investigate abortion practices in the US in light of the Gosnell case. He spoke on the floor and condemned Gosnell's unspeakable crimes.
- Argued (successfully) before the Supreme Court in defense of the federal ban on partial-birth abortion.
- Successfully defended in federal court Texas's Rider 8, which prohibits state funds for groups that provide abortions.

Cruz has also been active on the marriage issue:

- In April 2015, Cruz introduced a marriage amendment and bill to defend states that define marriage as between one man and one woman.
  - The Restoration of Marriage Amendment amends the Constitution to guarantee the right of the people to define marriage in their laws as the union of one man and one woman and to prevent the courts from ever again misconstruing the Constitution to require that marriage or its benefits be extended to unions other than the union of man and woman.
  - The Protect Marriage from the Courts Act of 2015 bars federal courts from ruling on state marriage laws. Pursuant to Congress' power under Article III of the Constitution to limit the jurisdiction of the lower federal courts and to make exceptions to the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, this legislation restricts the jurisdiction of federal courts to determine the constitutionality of state laws defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman.
- In April 2015, Cruz joined an amicus brief supporting the right of states to define

marriage
    - Summary: defending states' marriage laws against the proposed right under the 14th amendment that all same-sex couples have the right to marriage
- In February 2015, Cruz reintroduced the State Marriage Defense Act. He originally introduced it in February, 2014.
- Cosponsored the First Amendment Defense Act, which would prevent any federal agency from denying a tax exemption, grant, contract, license, or certification to an individual, association, or business based on their belief that marriage is a union between a man and a woman.

Regarding that last item, Trump was asked whether he would pass Cruz's First Amendment Defense Act in his first 100 days in office, and he said no. Cruz said yes, by the way – which is not surprising since he sponsored the act in the first place.

And on the Kim Davis issue, Cruz put religious liberty above judicial tyranny.

Listen to him discuss it on the Mark Levin show:

And on the Megyn Kelly show:

Now listen to Donald Trump:

Does any Trump supporter really believe that he would defend religious liberty as well as Cruz?

Professor concerned by students who are unable to consider alternative views

January 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UVA students protesting a rape accusation that was later revealed to be a hoax

Consider this clip:

This is a post by Dr. George Yancey, and he's writing about the 5-minute video clip above.

Dr. Yancey writes:

> Here is a great example of what I term education dogma. Note that the students are chanting about not being silenced while they are obviously silencing the speaker. My understanding of this situation is that the speaker published something that challenges some of the assertions about a campus rape culture. Such a challenge is an affront to the dogma of the students. Therefore, these students do not feel that the speaker has a right to speak on a different topic. The violation of beliefs they accept without question or doubt creates their incentive to shut down the proceedings.
>
> […]For the dogmatic, ideas that violate the notions defended by education dogma are deemed "dangerous" and too much for the tender ears of our students. So in additional to shouting down speakers there have been calls for "trigger warnings" and "safe spaces" so that individuals do not have to listen to dangerous ideas. The true danger of these ideas is their threat to certain dogmatic beliefs of our students. These students are unwilling to consider the possibly that they are wrong, or perhaps not as right as they might believe. .
>
> […]**As I watch that video I did not see intellectual powerhouses but I symbolically saw individuals who were yelling nonsense with their hands over their ears so that they would not hear an idea that may confront their presuppositions about reality.**

Here, Dr. Yancey compares the secular leftist students to religious fundamentalists: (links

removed)

> For all practical purposes the students saw the speaker as a heretic. The use of the term heretic can bring up images of torturing, imprisoning and killing of those who disagree. This is not occurring. However, it is reasonable to ask whether the seemingly restraint of the students from such drastic actions is due to their moral compass or to the fact that they do not have the social power to engage in such actions. Education dogma has led to attempting to kick offending businesses off campus, attempts to fire professors, and the official "shunning" of students who hold the "wrong ideas." Those with education dogma do punish those who violate their beliefs to the highest extent possible given their current level of institutional powers.

So if the holding your hands over your ears and screaming doesn't work, there is always calling the police, or using other means of coercion. Scary, especially when you consider the history of the secular left in communist countries where God is dead, and the state is all-powerful. How far would these leftist students go to silence people who disagreed with them?

More:

> […][H]igher education occurs in a specific social institution that promotes certain subcultural values and beliefs. Participants in these institutions are expected to accept these values and beliefs without question. These beliefs are not the result of gaining more facts but instead are the dogmatic adaptation of certain social values provided to them by this subculture.

The trouble here is that they don't want more facts – that's why they are holding their hands over their ears and screaming.

It makes me think of my own intellectual journey… the way I got started in apologetics in college was by reading transcripts of William Lane Craig debates that I found on the Leadership University web site. What was exciting was reading *both sides* and seeing what each person would say to respond. Would you go to a football game where only one side showed up? What if you already knew the score in advance, would you still go? What if one team didn't play very hard, would that be worth watching? What makes intellectual inquiry fun and interesting is that two sides show up and play their best. Otherwise, it's just brainwashing, not a search for truth. When I write a summary with a good atheist like Peter Millican, I actually feel like I have learned something – I have learned how far I can push each of my arguments, and what I need to study going forward. I care to learn more about what is discussed in a real debate.

This is the striking part of his essay:

> Students are responsible for seeking out alternative perspectives and developing an attitude of inquiry allowing them to interrogate their own presuppositions. But their college and university teachers should be held to account since more than a

> few college professors have done a horrible job introducing critical thinking skills. These teachers come in with a certain set of assumptions and if students agree with those assumptions then they can leave college without any disturbance to their pre-college ideology. Then we have the gall to call that critical thinking. It is anything but critical thinking. It is confirmation thinking and we do our students a disservice with such an approach.

This is why I get so frustrated by non-STEM disciplines. I think those non-STEM areas are the places where what he described is most likely to happen. When you walk into a computer science classroom, you are there to learn something that you will be doing for money in a couple of years. You can go home and use what you just learned to write a sorting program, or improve the speed of your database queries, or write a mobile application and put it out for use. I just don't get that feeling of usefulness from non-STEM disciplines, aside from maybe analytical philosophy, which is just computer science anyway (symbolic logic). The critical thinking in computer science comes from trying things yourself and seeing what works and doesn't work in real life. Where is the testing against reality in non-STEM disciplines? There is none.

And then here is something hopeful for conservatives:

> Ironically a conservative Christian Republican has a better opportunity to learn critical thinking in college than a progressive humanist Democrat because of the opportunity he/she gains to consider new ideas. When we allow students with certain perspectives to go through college without challenging them we not only promote dogma, we also do those students the disservice of never helping them to engage in the critical thinking necessary to intellectually grow. They are reduced to being a sounding board that regurgitated the latest expression of political correctness.

This is where all my hope lies. I really hope that the leftists educate their next generation into imbecility by refusing to let them consider different points of view. We conservatives must be the ones who consider both sides, and then rise above the mob of fools. To innovate, you have to do things better, and to do things better, you have to do things differently.

As Speaker of the House in Florida, Marco Rubio pushed for cap and trade

January 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio with his allies: Democrat Churck Schumer and RINO John McCain

Somehow, I missed this story about Rubio's support for a radical anti-business policy that is pushed by global warming alarmists. (It came up in the Fox News debate last night)

Read this from Breitbart News:

> As the Speaker of the Florida state House of Representatives, now U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) was aggressively pushing for Florida to adapt to what he viewed as an inevitable "federal cap and trade program."
>
> In a politically damning video, Rubio backs cap and trade and argues that Florida—his state—should get in line to comply with the federal government rather than fight back.
>
> "Florida should do two things," Rubio said in 2008 on Florida television, in video discovered by Breitbart News.
>
> First, Florida should position itself for what I believe is inevitable and that is a federal cap and trade program. Florida should do everything it can to be an early complier so it can access early compliance funds and so that it can help influence what that cap and trade looks like at the federal level. So I'm in favor of giving the Department of Environmental Protection a mandate that they go out and design a cap and trade or a carbon tax program and bring it back to the legislature for ratification some time in the next two years.
>
> Cap and trade is an environmental system that hardcore liberals including former Vice President Al Gore support. A federal cap and trade program would be

> centered around a carbon tax.
>
> "It will be difficult for sure but we can back away from the fiscal cliff and the climate cliff at the same time," Gore said in 2012. "One way is with a carbon tax."
>
> Support for cap and trade is basically about as politically toxic a position as a Republican can take when it comes to the party's voters, and ranks up there among GOP base voters as about as unacceptable a position as support for amnesty for illegal aliens, government-run healthcare, restrictions against the Second Amendment or support for open borders style international trade policies.
>
> That Rubio has now racked up questionable behavior not just on immigration and international trade—which have been known quantities heading into this election cycle—but now questions about his Second Amendment stance, his actions on Obamacare, and even his work for cap and trade have conservatives questioning if there's anything Rubio agrees with them on.

Here's the video:

It looks like Rubio agrees with Barack Obama on this:

Yes – Rubio and Obama agree that your electricity prices should skyrocket, because we have to stop "global warming". So pay up, suckers. You have lots of money for global warming schemes, don't you?

In the past, I blogged about Marco Rubio's support for amnesty, his support for Hillary Clinton's disastrous Libya intervention, and his deliberate skipping of votes to defund Planned Parenthood to do campaign events instead. Rubio has a billionaire donor who is strongly in support of gay rights, gay marriage and amnesty – does anyone believe that he does not expect to get his money's worth if Rubio is elected President?

And in my afternoon post, I'll be blogging about ANOTHER time where Rubio sided with Democrats on their priorities – this time on removing the rights of people accused of rape and sexual assault on university campuses. Rubio just seems to always want to side with Democrats on their issues, and never with conservatives on our issues.

The good news about this is that we don't have to pick a pro-amnesty, pro-cap-and-trade, pro-Libya-debacle liberal in the GOP primary. We can vote for Ted Cruz, who has made none of these mistakes.

Marco Rubio co-sponsored a bill to remove due process for accused college students

January 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio with his allies: Democrat Churck Schumer and RINO John McCain

This is just shocking – it turns out that Marco Rubio supports a bill to presume that college students who are accused of rape are treated as guilty before any police involvement or any criminal trial.

National Review explains:

> When it comes to due process on campus, Republicans in Congress, who campaigned on vows to rein in the Obama administration's abuses of executive power, have largely acquiesced in its bureaucratic imposition of quasi-judicial tyranny. For more than four years, the White House and the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) have used an implausible reinterpretation of a 1972 civil-rights law to impose mandates unimagined by the law's sponsors. It has forced almost all of the nation's universities and colleges to disregard due process in disciplinary proceedings when they involve allegations of sexual assault. Enforced by officials far outside the mainstream, these mandates are having a devastating impact on the nation's universities and on the lives of dozens — almost certainly soon to be hundreds or thousands — of falsely accused students.
>
> **One might have expected an aggressive response by House Republicans to such gross abuses of power — including subpoenas, tough oversight hearings, and corrective legislation. Instead, most of them have been mute. In the Senate, meanwhile, presidential candidate Marco Rubio of**

> **Florida, Judiciary Committee chairman Charles Grassley of Iowa, and rising star Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire have teamed with Democratic demagogues Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and Claire McCaskill of Missouri in co-sponsoring a bill that would make matters even worse.**
>
> […]These Republicans are keeping bad company. Gillibrand, for example, published two statements branding a Columbia University student a "rapist" even though he had been cleared by the university and the police had found no basis for charging him. McCaskill, ignoring two generations of progress in the way police and prosecutors approach rape allegations, oddly asserted that "the criminal-justice system has been very bad, in fact much worse than the military and much worse than college campuses, in terms of addressing victims and supporting victims and pursuing prosecutions."

Does this remind you of anything? It reminds me of the time that Marco Rubio sided with Democrats to give (at least) 20 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship. It also reminds me of the time that Marco Rubio sided with Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton to intervene militarily in Libya. Libya is now a failed state, there is a civil war, Christians are being crucified and Islamic State has started another caliphate there.

So, think about that false rape accusation at UVA, where the accused was slimed and judged guilty, until we found out that the whole thing was a hoax. Apparently, Rubio is all in favor of enabling this sort of situation – enough that he would co-sponsor a bill to remove due process rights from accused college men.

Here's more from the libertarians at Reason.com:

> […]Rubio is a co-sponsor of the Campus Accountability and Safety Act, which would codify into federal law several of Title IX's most oppressive dictates. As The Washington Post's George Will put it:
>
> By co-sponsoring S. 590, Rubio is helping the administration sacrifice a core constitutional value, due process, in order to advance progressives' cultural aggression. The next Republican president should be someone committed to promptly stopping this disgrace, not someone who would sign S. 590's affirmation of it.
>
> The Washington Examiner's Ashe Schow attempted to get to the bottom of Rubio's support for CASA and discovered that the simplest answer was the right one: he just doesn't care very much about due process on campus. Schow writes:
>
> Rubio is the only GOP candidate that has seemingly taken a stance on this issue – and it is a bad one. He has co-sponsored a bill that codifies into law the overreach of the Education Department and ensures that accused students will not have a fair hearing.

In the past, I blogged about Marco Rubio's support for amnesty, his support for Hillary Clinton's disastrous Libya intervention, and his deliberate skipping of votes to defund Planned Parenthood to do campaign events instead. Marco Rubio also pushed for cap-

and-trade legislation as Speaker of the House in Florida. This would burden the energy sector with taxes and regulations, and raise the electricity bills of American consumers (who are already hard-pressed). Rubio has a billionaire donor who is strongly in support of gay rights, gay marriage and amnesty – does anyone believe that he does not expect to get his money's worth if Rubio is elected President?

I hope everyone understands that he has many, many problems. I like Marco Rubio. If he is the nominee, I will back him completely, as he is much better than our nominee in 2012. But right now, my vote goes to the most conservative candidate who can win. And that's Ted Cruz.

Tactics: the worst mistake a Christian can make when doing apologetics

January 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian

worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important

for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it. I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a basket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within

his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent’s weakness.

New study: the majority (69%) of divorces are initiated by women

January 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this "I'll do what I want" attitude compatible with life-long married love?
This new report from Live Science gives us some numbers about who initiates divorces most frequently.

It says:

> Women are more likely than men to initiate divorce in the United States, but they are no more likely than men to initiate breakups in a dating relationship, a new study finds.
>
> "The breakups of nonmarital heterosexual relationships in the U.S. are quite gender-neutral and fairly egalitarian," study author Michael Rosenfeld, an associate professor of sociology at Stanford University, said in a statement. "This was a surprise because the only prior research that had been done on who wanted the breakup was research on marital divorces."
>
> Previous research had found that women are more likely to initiate divorce, at least in the United States, Europe and Australia. In the new study, Rosenfeld compared divorces to nonmarital breakups, in an effort to understand the driving forces behind each type of breakup.
>
> To investigate, he looked at data from the 2009 to 2015 waves of How Couples Meet and Stay Together, a nationally representative survey spearheaded by Rosenfeld and his colleagues. The new study includes 2,262 adults, ages 19 to 64, who reported having opposite-sex partners in 2009. By 2015, 371 of the participants had broken up or gotten divorced.

> Women initiated 69 percent of the 92 divorces, Rosenfeld found. But there was no statistically significant difference between women and men when it came to nonmarital breakups, regardless of whether they were living together, he said.

So I am seeing a couple of problems in young, unmarried women that might explain this.

Feminism is bad

First, there is the feminism. Feminism was the driving force behind no-fault divorce. Today, young unmarried women are being taught to view marriage as stifling to their freedom. So if they do get married, they are often resolved that marriage should not affect their freedom in any way. That is just not the way marriage works, though – both spouses need to be equally ready to have their freedom infringed upon by things that HAVE TO GET DONE. Lots of things that have to get done will not be fun, thrilling or amusing – and that's why it's good to be prepared to do them before you marry.

My friend Dina says that she only knows one happily married couple from among her friends. The most frequent case she sees is wife is working in order to pay for big house, two cars, etc. and wife is denying husband sex, which makes him disengage from the marriage. A working wife tends to not be as responsive to the needs of husband and kids as a non-working wife, probably in part due to work stress. There is an epidemic of sex-withholding by women, and it causes men to disengage from marriage because they feel unloved. Although women tend to rebel against the idea that the man's bad behavior is their fault, and that there is a "contractual" nature to marriage, that is how marriage works. You cannot stay married, women, by just doing whatever you feel like, and NOT doing whatever you DON'T feel like. Men will disengage when their needs are not supplied, and that's no fault of theirs. It's your fault. Denying relationship obligations causes men to underperform.

Feminism is often linked closely to "independence". There is a lot of confusion over what the word independence means among young, unmarried women. A man uses that word to mean "lack of financial dependence on parents, the state, etc. because of good decisions in education, career and finances". But a woman means "not having to care about the needs of a man and the leadership of a man, or the needs of children while still getting what I want from men and children". That's not compatible with life-long married love.

Emotions are bad

Second, emotions. In my experience, young, unmarried women are less likely to have reasoned out their own life plan in a practical step-by-step manner. (Although, all the women I advise have, but they are exceptional) Instead, they tend to do whatever makes them feel good moment-by-moment without any realistic plan. Peer-approval and culture play a large part in determining their goals and what they do day-to-day – and these day-to-day choices do not lead to achieving their goals. "Live in the moment", they often tell me. If you try to talk to them about roles and responsibilities in a marriage, they will withdraw and rebel. But marriage is about each spouse doing his or her job, and feeling content about what the couple is building together. You can't make life-long married love

from emotional craziness and pursuing fun and thrills. You can't make *anything* out of emotional craziness and pursuing fun and thrills.

How to pick a woman who won't divorce you

Young men, I advise you to choose wives who have had to do things that they did not feel like doing. That can involve things like getting a STEM degree, getting a job in STEM, moving out of her parents' house, getting a "boring" job that helps her pay off her debts, keeping commitments when she doesn't feel like it, and caring for other people and even animals.

Basically, the more the woman has ground down any narcissism and hedonism she may have, by having to do nasty calculus and horrid lab work, the better. The more accustomed she is to constraints, responsibilities, expectations and obligations, the less likely it is that she'll divorce you for unhappiness. And all of this goes for men, as well. STEM degree, STEM job, save money, serve others, give to charity.

Marriage is not the time for people to be carried away by their emotions. It's an enterprise, and it works when both people are rational, practical, hard-working and self-controlled.

My editors

My friend Dina edited this post. She has a hilarious line she tells me whenever I ask her why some feminists think that I am so demanding. She says "You are demanding, but nothing you ask me to do is as bad as what I had to do at work today". Her job is a billion times harder than mine. She has a BS and MS in a STEM discipline, and has been working full-time since she was 18. She owns her own car, her own home, and has loads of investments. Whatever I want from her (e.g. – play Orcs Must Die! 2 with me) is pretty minor. She is a tough girl, and that's what you want in a wife. Marriage is not happily ever after for the woman, it's actually a lot of work for her. Hard work before marriage prepares her for the responsibilities, expectations and obligations of marriage.

My friend Lindsay, who also has a STEM BS and MS and a resume, edited an early version of this post. She gave up her college teaching career to get married, have kids, and homeschool the kids. She sent me this story of a woman who abandoned her husband and 4 kids for a convicted rapist and serial killer. I think this story captures the radical feminism and emotional craziness that I am warning about in this post. Avoid women who run away from responsibilities and prefer men who meet their emotional needs without holding them accountable. Listen up, single women: you can't choose a bad man because he makes you feel good (by not demanding anything from you) and then expect him to perform husband and father duties. That's just causing your own divorce through your own poor choices.

Why don’t men talk to women about commitment and marriage any more?

January 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

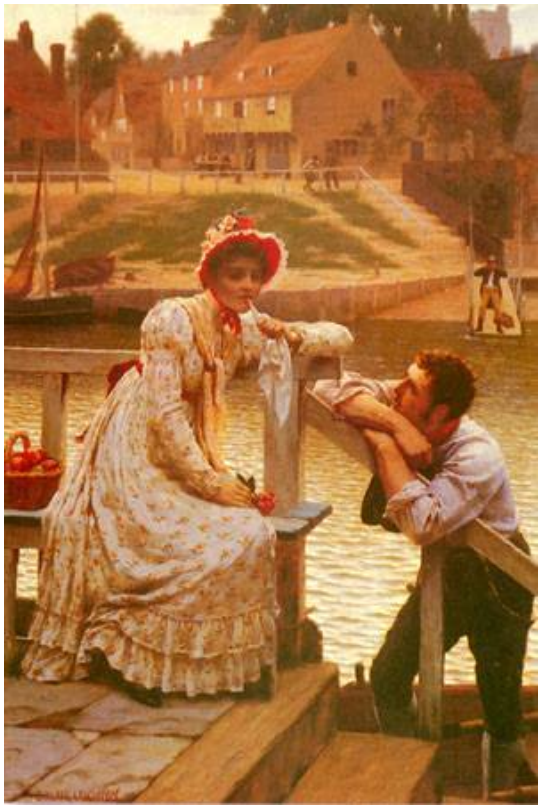

Painting: “Courtship”, by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

I saw this essay from a young woman named Jordana Narin who is explaining how she feels about not being able to talk seriously to a man she had sex with. She is a radical feminist and has a useless, easy degree in creative writing.

The essay was published in the radically leftist New York Times.

First kiss:

> I met [a guy] at summer camp in the Poconos at 14, playing pickup basketball by day and talking in the mess hall late into the night. Back home we lived only 30 minutes apart, but I didn’t see him again until 11th grade, when we ran into each other at a Halloween party in a Lower Manhattan warehouse.
>
> […]Under the muted flashes of a strobe light, we shared our first kiss.

She spent her first kiss on a guy she barely knew at a party, with no relationship context.

And this is how they talked:

> We stayed in touch for the rest of high school, mostly by text message.

> […]Every time his name popped up on my phone, my heart raced.
>
> Still, we were never more than semiaffiliated, two people who spoke and loved to speak and kissed and loved to kiss and connected and were scared of

> connecting.

Where is this relationship going? This boy has no job and no savings and no proven record of steady work – and therefore he *cannot marry anyone.*

More:

> Two years after our first kiss, we were exchanging "I've missed you" messages again. It was a brisk Friday evening in our first semesters of college when I stepped off a train and into his comfortable arms.
>
> He had texted weeks earlier on Halloween (technically our anniversary) to ask if I would visit. We had not talked since summer, and I was trying to forget him. We had graduated from high school into the same inexpressive void we first entered in costume, where an "I've missed you" was as emotive as one got.

Long gaps in between text messages – they have nothing to talk about, and there is no goal. Nevertheless, they are away from their parents, and so she had sex with him, losing her virginity to a man she was not married to.

And then:

> Naïvely, I had expected to gain clarity, to finally admit my feelings and ask if he felt the same. But I couldn't confess, couldn't probe. Periodically I opened my mouth to ask: "What are we doing? Who am I to you?" He stopped me with a smile, a wink or a handhold, gestures that persuaded me to shut my mouth or risk jeopardizing what we already had.
>
> On the Saturday-night train back to Manhattan, I cried. Back in my dorm room, buried under the covers so my roommates wouldn't hear, I fell asleep with a wet pillow and puffy eyes.
>
> The next morning I awoke to a string of texts from him: "You get back OK?" "Let's do it again soon :)"

Yes. She had sex with him because of text messages, Facebook comments and because he "missed her". Not because he had presented his resume and balance sheet to her father, dated her for many months, bought her an engagement ring, courted her for more months, bought her a wedding ring, then walked down the aisle with her.

Why is this happening?

There's an interview that goes with it on the radically leftist NPR web site, but I saved a copy of the MP3 file here in case it disappears.

Moderate Christian Rod Dreher comments on the interview:

> I wouldn't have understood the full scope of what this young woman is saying in her essay without the interview, which is short. In the segment, Narin says that men and women in her generation don't have actual romantic relationships anymore. It's all casual, non-committal sex. "Nobody knows whether their own

> feelings are real," she says.
>
> [..]She tells the interviewer that there's lots of making out and sex, but nobody wants to be emotionally vulnerable to anybody else.
>
> […]**"Everyone in college uses Tinder," she said, referring to the wildly popular dating and hook-up app. "You can literally swipe right and find someone just to hang out for the night. There's no commitments required, and I think that makes committing to someone even harder, because it's so normal, and so expected even, to not want to commit."**
>
> "**In a different time, my grandparents, my great grandparents, they might have thought they were missing out on casual sex**," she says. "But since my generation has been saddled down with that, we kind of look to the past and say well, wasn't that nice. I think both are optimal. **I'm a huge feminist, and I think women should be able to do whatever they want to do. If a woman wants to have tons of casual sex, she totally should.** But I think that there should be the option. And they shouldn't be gendered, women and men. But there should be the option of being in a relationship."

Right. Young women like her who have swallowed radical feminism hook, line and sinker don't want to "miss out" on casual sex right now, but they want to get married "some day" – after they have a lot of fun traveling and doing exciting, fun things.

But what do they think marriage is?

This:

Look at the lyrics:

> You got that 9 to 5
> But, baby, so do I
> So don't be thinking I'll be home and baking apple pies
> I never learned to cook
>
> After every fight
> Just apologize
> And maybe then I'll let you try and rock my body right
> Even if I was wrong
> You know I'm never wrong
>
> And know we'll never see your family more than mine
>
> Even when I'm acting crazy
> Tell me everything's alright

This is what women today understand marriage to be. They expect to be pursuing their own careers, not supporting their husbands and raising children. Most feminists view the roles of wife and mother as demeaning. They aren't interested in supporting or respecting a man who provides for them – they just want him to say yes to whatever they feel like doing – fun and thrills.

The woman singing expects to win every disagreement because, like the song says, she is never wrong. The lyrics also say that sex is conditional on whether the woman feels happy. When it comes to visiting family and holidays, she lets us know that her family is more important than his. And she is allowed to act crazy, which could involve a whole host of selfish, wasteful, narcissistic behaviors, (e.g. – skydiving, ziplining, surfing), and he is just supposed to celebrate and maybe pay for it. For the rest of his life.

How do men respond to these radical feminists?

Most men are not interested in committing to, or discussing commitment with, radical feminists. Men will have sex with a radical feminist, (not me, but other men), but they will never commit to them. Why not? If a man's role is just to please the "huge feminist", then there is no reason to commit to her. Radical feminists believe that relationships are about their plans and their needs. They are not interested in responsibilities, expectations or obligations to men or to children. But men, even secular men, understand that they must not marry a woman who thinks that relationships should impose no obligations on her. Men play dumb with women to keep the sex coming, but there is no way they would commit to such women.

Now there is one exception to this rule, and that's young, naive men. If a woman is a "huge feminist" then she might be able to get attention from a doormat man without having to give him sex. Typically, these men have no work experience, no savings, are much younger, and are so desperate for attention that they do what Meghan Trainor says in the song: apologize, grovel, condone craziness and selfishness, etc. Although a woman may think she wants a man like that in the short-term, in the long-term, those men prove unattractive and unsatisfactory.

In order to be masculine, a man needs to be a good moral leader and a good spiritual leader. And that means that he needs to call a woman higher, away from her self-centeredness, so she can serve God and serve other people. He cannot just agree with whatever crazy, emotional thing that she thinks up that is fun, thrilling and bound to fail. A good leader has *experience* as a provider, protector and leader that he brings to bear on decision-making, and proven ability achieving and leading others to greatness. I think women with low self-esteem will be interested in men who are doormats, but that is not the solution to the commitment problem. A doormat man does not have what it takes to provide and lead a family.

Pastor Matt discusses his past experiences as an atheist – part 1

January 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

Don't worry, he was an atheist then, and now he's pastor Matt, thanks to God's grace.

In this post Pastor Matt talks about why he was once an atheist.

Excerpt:

> I am sometimes asked, by both skeptics and believers alike, why I was once an atheist and what convinced me to become a Christian. I will answer the latter in another post but let me deal with the former now.
>
> I am a "PK" or "preacher's kid." My father served as the founding pastor of the largest church in southern Ohio. It is a non-denominational, evangelical congregation that grew very quickly.
>
> As a PK, I was privy to a lot of "inside information" and it was not encouraging. I learned men and women who sang hymns with passion and shouted "Amen!" with gusto during the sermon were cheating on their spouse or on their taxes.
>
> By the time I was a teenager I understood why those who called themselves Christians lived secret lives–they wanted to believe but really didn't. I understood because I became one of them.
>
> I was an active member of an '80′s evangelical youth group. So, I rocked out to Stryper, had comedian Pat Hurley tapes and volunteered for the children's ministry, which consisted of videotaping episodes of Superbook and The Flying House for the kids. However, I actually seriously doubted if God even existed.
>
> I was struggling with the normal sins of a teenager and begged for help in prayer.

> I also petitioned God on a regular basis to feel His presence but that didn't happen either.
>
> I eventually came to the conclusion that Christianity simply didn't work. I declared myself an atheist at age fifteen and remained an unbeliever for the next ten years.
>
> I ran away from home at age fifteen as well eventually making my way to Hollywood. During those days I partied like it was 1999 (until 1997) and like Aldous Huxley is quoted as saying decades before, I came to not even want God to be real because even the possibility interfered with my desire to create my own morality.

Christianity is not something where you just profess it and suddenly you are automatically perfect. You get the gift of eternal life immediately by faith in Christ, but becoming more like Christ takes time. It's easier to act consistently with the teachings of Christ if you have *spent the time* studying, practicing and growing as a Christian. You shouldn't expect perfect behavior on day one – that is crazy. You should expect that as your beliefs become more solid, then your outward actions will change naturally. And often what you hear at home and in the church is not the best for finding truth through investigation and debate.

It would be terrible to have to put out "good" actions when you never settled the questions of what is true and how are we going to apply what is true in our own decisions. Sometimes, I think that young Christians face too much pressure to appear to be perfect when no one has been willing to help them work through the grounding for the behaviors they are expected to display. And I think a lot of the behaviors they are expected to display are either not important or not Biblical. Behaving like a Christian should be natural – it should proceed from free inquiry, not dogmatism.

Now I'm skipping a lot, but here is his advice for people who were in his situation:

> I'll get to my conversion later but keep in mind: (1) just because a person attends a church, even if they are a PK, that he or she truly comprehends the Gospel because I didn't a full understanding; (2) pastors need to constantly remind their parishioners that sin is easy and living for Christ is difficult because believers are part of a cosmic struggle; (3) the spiritual disciplines are invaluable especially so for young people; and (4) there are many solid arguments for the existence of God and few for materialism and all Christians deserve to know them.

I've spent some time mentoring young Christians who had fallen away for some period of time, and I always make a point of asking them why. Their answer is usually something like this: "I knew that what I was doing was wrong, but I didn't care because no one else cared." The first thing to do with a person who is rebelling is to get in there and start to ask them questions and get involved in helping them to succeed in their lives. People do bad things because they feel that no one cares. So you better start caring for these young people, whether they are smart, dumb, pretty, ugly, poor, rich, popular, unpopular – it

doesn’t matter. They all have souls, and they were all made to know God. Get in there and be real with them before they make a mess of their lives.

Pastor Matt discusses his past experiences as an atheist – part 2

January 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

Here's another post from Pastor Matt that I think offers some more helpful insight into how we should approach young people with Christianity. The point of this post is that relationships matter.

Excerpt:

> When I was attending North Hollywood High in the fall of 1990, there was a kid in one of my classes who often followed me on my walk home to my apartment off of Magnolia Boulevard. He did the Four Spiritual Laws and Roman Road presentation. He spoke about he and his family's faith in Jesus and wanted to know if I would come with them to church. But he never asked a single question about me personally. I always declined his invitations and eventually he moved on to someone else.
>
> […]Looking back, I had a very fuzzy understanding of the Gospel. I (and I think many people who call themselves Christians) are what theologians call "semi-Pelagians." I believed anyone could come to the altar but if they wanted to continue to be welcomed in the pews, they had to clean up their act and do so almost overnight. The culture of Christianity at large appeared to me to be that if you came to faith and continued to struggle with lust, a foul mouth or whatnot then there was just something wrong with you. I felt the church was more about behavior modification than grace.
>
> I needed someone who I knew loved me to sit down with me long before all of these problems arose, look me in the eye and tell me how easy and how difficult

> it is to be a Christian. I needed someone cared for me to unpack 2 Corinthians 5:21 and point out that by being "in Christ" I would be judged by Christ's perfect life instead of my own. I needed to know that the faith is not about "keeping the rules" but about doing things and not doing certain things to show my love and gratitude to God for what He did for me. I needed to be able to read the Bible, especially the Old Testament, in a way that always pointed to Jesus Christ. I needed to understand that God has graciously given us the spiritual disciplines of fasting, prayer, serving the poor, worship, etc. to help me grow. I needed to hear that all Christians struggle with sin and will, to a certain degree, until they go to be with the Lord or He returns to be with us.
>
> I needed good theology, good spiritual practices, good apologetics and good relationships. I needed knowledge and it needed to come from someone who I knew loved me even though I was thoroughly unlovable. You can't just leave this to the church staff because they do not have to time to meet with everyone and people with a chip on their shoulder about the church (like I had) feel like they are just doing it as part of their job. All young people in the church, especially the "troubled kids" need this. It is a lot of work but anyone's eternity is worth it, isn't it?

I think that I do my best work away from the blog when I take on atheists or new Christians or Christians who want to grow one on one and focus on them for long periods of time. Sometimes, it's talking to them on Skype. Sometimes, it's rewards for doing well in school or in their Christian lives. But all the best work is done one on one. That's when you really get a chance to get to know people and to care about them.

I think the most important thing you can tell a young Christian is to focus less on mere following of the rules. I always ask them more about making a plan for their lives that achieves something amazing for God's kingdom, while still not breaking any of the rules. The following the rules is not the key thing to focus on. The key thing here is your relationship with God. So you should find out what needs doing, and just do it. If it's intelligent design research, then do it. If it's finding early NT manuscripts, then do it. If it's working for the ADF defending religious liberty at the Supreme Court, then do it. If it's becoming a Christian professor at a secular university, then do it. If it's debating an atheist cosmologist, then do it. If it's promoting the free market system which alleviates poverty, then do it. If it's protecting democratic countries from aggression by being a soldier, then do it. Stop making Christianity a dull prison, and start making it a blank canvas for a masterpiece.

State Dept: 22 “top secret” e-mails on Hillary’s unsecure private e-mail server

February 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Put an orange suit on her and ship her to Gitmo

This is from The Federalist.

Excerpt:

> Hillary Clinton’s email woes just got a whole lot worse Friday after the State Department announced it considers 22 of her emails to be “top secret.”
>
> Last week, Fox News reported that Clinton has shared extremely sensitive information, including intelligence obtained from human spying, which could have put lives at risk.
>
> Some information contained in the email was classified as “HCS-O,” an intelligence agency code for human spy operations on the ground, or “HUMINT Control System Operations.” **Additionally, several of her emails contained information for “special access programs” (SAP), which is a level of classification even higher than “top secret.”**
>
> **State Department spokesman John Kirby has confirmed that the 22 emails containing SAP information were indeed top secret, though he maintained that the documents were not deemed classified at the time they were sent, according to *Politico*.**

But I thought that Hillary said that there was only yoga routines and e-mails about her daughter’s wedding on her e-mail server?

Why did she do it?

This New York Post article explains why Hillary decided to create a parallel e-mail server system that was not under the control of the government:

> The State Department is lying when it says it didn’t know until it was too late that Hillary Clinton was improperly using personal e-mails and a private server to

> conduct official business — because it never set up an agency e-mail address for her in the first place, the department's former top watchdog says.
>
> **"This was all planned in advance" to skirt rules governing federal records management, said Howard J. Krongard, who served as the agency's inspector general from 2005 to 2008.**
>
> The Harvard-educated lawyer points out that, from Day One, Clinton was never assigned and never used a state.gov e-mail address like previous secretaries.
>
> **"That's a change in the standard. It tells me that this was premeditated. And this eliminates claims by the State Department that they were unaware of her private e-mail server until later," Krongard said in an exclusive interview. "How else was she supposed to do business without e-mail?"**
>
> He also points to the unusual absence of a permanent inspector general during Clinton's entire 2009-2013 term at the department. He said the 5½-year vacancy was unprecedented.
>
> "This is a major gap. In fact, it's without precedent," he said. "It's the longest period any department has gone without an IG."
>
> Inspectors general serve an essential and unique role in the federal government by independently investigating agency waste, fraud and abuse. Their oversight also covers violations of communications security procedures.
>
> "It's clear she did not want to be subject to internal investigations," Krongard said. An e-mail audit would have easily uncovered the secret information flowing from classified government networks to the **private unprotected system** she set up in her New York home.

When Hillary created a private unprotected e-mail system, she was pushing away all of the security measures that are in place on government e-mail systems.

So was she hacked?

This Post and Courier article explains:

> As for the Clinton camp's attempts to dismiss this scandal as election-year politics, consider the bipartisan credentials — and expert perspective — of Robert Gates.
>
> Mr. Gates has worked for presidents of both parties during a distinguished public service career, including tenures as Secretary of Defense under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Mr. Gates is not known for taking politically motivated shots at our nation's leaders. He has praised Mrs. Clinton's work as secretary of state in the past.
>
> But last week, Mr. Gates said he agreed with former CIA Deputy Director Mike Morrell that Mrs. Clinton's personal email account was probably hacked by Russia, China and Iran, among others.

So, Robert Gates and Mike Morell agree – foreign governments were reading the mail of our Secretary of State. *The Secretary of State!*

I think that's enough to indict her. Of course, when I ask my Democrat friends how much they know about the things I wrote about in this post, they have no idea. You don't learn a lot about reality by watching MSNBC and laughing at Trevor Noah tweets.

New study: Bernie Sanders' budget would raise taxes $13.6 trillion over a decade

February 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

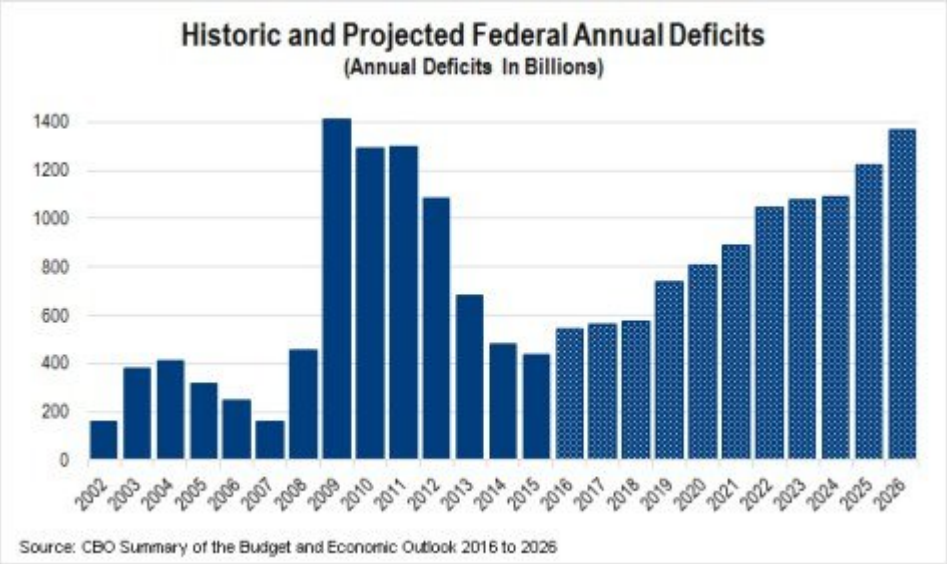

Democrats took control of government spending in 2007

It's very strange to me that young people seem to like Bernie Sanders' rhetoric so much. Have they really considered what his budget would require?

Here's an article from the Washington Free Beacon that talks about a non-partisan study from the Tax Foundation think tank.

Excerpt:

> (I., Vt.) proposed tax plan would raise taxes by $13.6 trillion over the next decade and reduce the economy's size by 9.5 percent, according to an analysis by the Tax Foundation.
>
> While on the campaign trail, the senator has proposed $18 trillion in spending over the next decade. His plan includes $15 trillion for a government-run single-payer health care plan and trillions more for Social Security, roads and bridges, higher education, paid family and medical leave, and private pension funds, to name just a few.
>
> Sanders' proposed tax plan will increase marginal tax rates and the cost of capital, a move that will significantly reduce GDP, lower wages, and eliminate jobs.
>
> According to the Tax Foundation, Sanders aims most of his tax provisions at high-income households, creating four new income tax brackets with rates of 37 percent, 43 percent, 48 percent, and 52 percent. Additionally, Sanders would tax capital gains and dividends for households with income over $250,000 and create a 2.2 percent income-based health care premium.
>
> However, as Sanders has admitted, his plan also includes tax increases on the

> middle class. “We will raise taxes. Yes, we will,” Sanders said at the CNN town hall last weekend.
>
> “A majority of the revenue raised by Sanders plan would come from a new 6.2 percent employer-side payroll tax, a new 2.2 percent broad-based income tax and the elimination of tax expenditures relating to healthcare,” the analysis explains.
>
> According to a recent report from the Congressional Budget Office, even without Sanders’ tax plan the nation’s economy is projected to expand at a rate much lower than in recent decades. Sanders’ plan would lower the growth rate further, as its proposed marginal tax rate increases on labor and capital would reduce GDP by 9.5 percent in the long term.
>
> “At the center of my campaign is how we’re going to raise wages,” Sanders said at the first Democratic debate. “Yes, of course, raise the minimum wage, but we have to do so much more, including finding ways so that companies share profits with the workers who helped to make them. And then we have to figure out how we’re going to make the tax system a fairer one.”
>
> “And in my view what we need to do is create millions of jobs by rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure; raise the minimum wage to $15 an hour; pay equity for women workers; and our disastrous trade policies, which have cost us millions of jobs; and make every public college and university in this country tuition-free,” he said.
>
> **After accounting for reductions in economic growth, Sanders’ plan would lead to 12.84 percent lower after-tax incomes for all taxpayers, 6 million fewer full-time jobs, and an 18.6 percent smaller capital stock.**

Let’s take a look at a few of these from the perspective of a non-clown.

Minimum wage

You know, you don’t have to be an economics genius to understand that this man is a fool – the equivalent of a clown trying to take control of a nuclear power plant. Just look at his position on minimum wage. Every economist understands that raising the minimum wage causes businesses to lay off workers. Why? Because they have to pay for the higher minimum wage somehow. Either they lay off workers and scale back their business, or they charge consumers more. When you charge consumers more, they buy less of what you’re selling. So, usually it means laying off workers.

This Daily Signal article explains what happened when liberal cities raised their minimum wage rates.

Payroll tax

Raising the rate o the employer payroll tax means that employers will basically have to pay more for the same labor. They X labor out of their employees now, and paying Y wages. After Sanders, they will be getting X labor still, but paying a higher Y in wages. What will they do? They will simply let go of their least productive employees and scale

back their business, maybe expanding abroad and sending jobs to a country where they are taxed less.

This article from the Fraser Institute explains what happens when companies have to pay more to employ workers.

Tariffs

Bernie Sanders thinks that consumers should pay more for consumer goods. That's what happens when you slap tariffs on goods manufactured in other countries. Consumers and businesses end up paying more for the same product, leaving less money for other things that you need for your family.

Here's a post that explains why free trade is best for consumers.

Single payer health care

Single payer health care is supported by economic illiterates in the Democrat and Republican parties – both Sanders and Trump support it. What single payer does is allow government workers to take a cut of every transaction between you and your doctor, effectively imposing a tax on medical treatment without adding any value. It would be as if every transaction between you and Amazon.com were to be funneled through the government to see if you were allowed to buy what you wanted, and for how much. Obviously, we would have to hire government workers to make decisions about your Amazon purchases, to make you wait in line behind others who wanted the same items, and to process payments to Amazon.

Just read this Boston Globe article about the costs of Vermont's (failed) proposal to have single-payer health care.

Public Works

Henry Hazlitt's book "Economics in One Lesson" explains the problem with taxing the private sector to build public works.

Henry Hazlitt's Economics in One Lesson, chapter 4, entitled "Public Works Mean Taxes".

Excerpt:

> Therefore, for every public job created by the bridge project a private job has been destroyed somewhere else. We can see the men employed on the bridge. We can watch them at work. The employment argument of the government spenders becomes vivid, and probably for most people convincing. But there are other things that we do not see, because, alas, they have never been permitted to come into existence. They are the jobs destroyed by the $10 million taken from the taxpayers. All that has happened, at best, is that there has been a *diversion* of jobs because of the project. More bridge builders; fewer automobile workers, television technicians, clothing workers, farmers.

And consider Chapter 5 as well, entitled "Taxes Discourage Production".

> In our modern world there is never the same percentage of income tax levied on everybody. The great burden of income taxes is imposed on a minor percentage

> of the nation's income; and these income taxes have to be supplemented by taxes of other kinds. These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to become employers at all. Improved machinery and better-equipped factories come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.
>
> There is a similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment that they profess to solve.

Why anyone would consider a man who has never held a private sector job for any length of time is beyond me. That article explains that Sanders has only ever collected unemployment or worked in government jobs. My cashier at Chick-Fil-A understands more about economics than this fool.

Michael Licona on ancient biography and harmonizing Bible contradictions

February 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Brian Auten posted the latest lecture by Dr. Michael Licona at Apologetics 315. Brian's site has the MP3 file (48 minutes, 44.5 Mb). I can make a smaller version for anyone who wants it.

Here is the video and my point-form summary.

The topic:

- Contradictions do not affect the minimum facts case for the resurrection, although they are troubling
- Most people respond to alleged contradictions by trying to harmonize them
- Most verses that appear contradictory can be harmonized successfully
- Some verses cannot be harmonized successfully without really damaging the texts
- Christians should not gloss over these few real contradictions nor pretend that they don't exist
- How should we respond to the verses that cannot easily be harmonized?

Genre considerations:

- The genre of the gospels is "ancient biography"
- Ancient biography is not the same genre as modern biography

Insignificant differences

1. Contradictions vs. Differences:

- In ancient biography, if a source mentions one person's name, it does not mean that other people were not present
- Example: one woman versus two women at the tomb, an account may only mention one woman when there are two
- That is a difference, not a contradiction

2. Time compression:

- in ancient biography, writers are allowed to leave out events in order to compress time
- Some gospels omit details (guy version) and other gospels give more details (girl version)
- For example, the cursing of the fig tree in Mark and Matthew

3. Narrative flow:

- the ancient biographer's style was to link together events into a narrative, even if they are slightly out of order
- This means that the ordering matters less to ancient biographers than forming a coherent narrative
- For example, the prediction by Jesus that Peter would deny him

Significant differences:

1. Biography allows for portrait painting

- When people paint portraits, they sometimes use illustrations or imagery to convey the person's character
- For example, Shakespeare adds things to his history of Julius Caesar to make it more dramatic
- For example, the genealogies in Matthew, the portrait of Jesus in the garden in John

2. Even if there are contradictions in an account it doesn't mean that the basic facts are undermined

- For example, even if we don't know for sure if one thief or two thieves cursed Jesus, no one doubts that he was crucified
- The basic details of the story are not affected by apparent contradictions

Then there is a period of Questions and Answers.

Watch Ted Cruz disagree with an Iowa farmer on the issue of ethanol subsidies

February 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

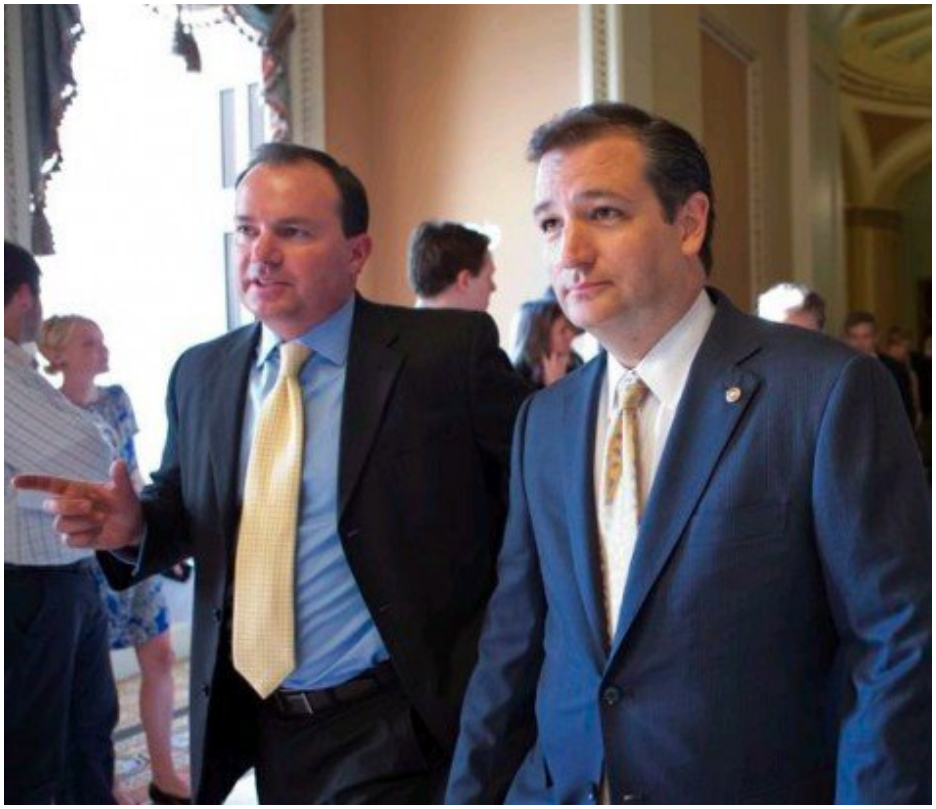

Ted Cruz and Mike Lee on their way to defeat an amnesty bill

My friend Bruce posted a dazzling video, which I have included below. It shows Ted Cruz at the Iowa caucuses having a tense discussion with an Iowa farmer who is opposed to Cruz's policy of repealing federal subsidies for ethanol, which is made from Iowa corn.

Notice how Cruz respects the man, looks him in the eye, and does not appear anxious to move on. He believes that he is right, and he respects the other man as a rational agent. He thinks that if he explains his view, then the other man will agree with him *on the merits of his argument*. The farmer's opposition is not a marketing problem to Ted Cruz. It's an evidence problem to Ted Cruz. Cruz doesn't think that there is any difference in the dignity or worth of himself and this man. He approaches him like an equal, and he believes that he owes this man an answer. He wants this man's vote, and he is not willing to bribe him with taxpayer money in order to get it. He is lifting the man upward – asking him "what kind of country do you want this to be?" instead of telling him what taxpayer money Cruz will give him for his vote. It is the complete opposite of what Trump, Clinton and Sanders do with voters.

The Resurgent has a story on it about what to notice in the video:

> People covering Ted Cruz say he doesn't leave any event until the last question has been answered. In this video, Cruz is confronted by an angry farmer questioning his stand against Ethanol subsidies.

> Cruz's deep knowledge of the topic, his ability to calm the man down and get him to really listen, combined with his confidence in his own solutions win the man over.
>
> Notice the constant eye contact. This is why Cruz can govern. On the stump, Washington fears him. On the floor of the Senate, the establishment hates him. But one-on-one, more often than not, Cruz can convince people he's right.

Here is the clip from the most recent debate where Cruz explained his policy to the people of Iowa:

This is not your typical politician. This is something different.

I have a number of friends who are supporters of Marco Rubio, the establishment GOP candidate.

Marco Rubio regularly teams up with Democrats:

- to pass amnesty – a path to citizenship for 20 million illegal immigrants – so they can vote to expand government
- to support the disastrous Obama/Clinton Libya intervention which created an Islamic State caliphate in Libya
- to strip accused students of due process rights in university trials
- to push cap and trade (a carbon tax that drives up electricity prices)
- to skip votes on de-funding Planned Parenthood in order to go to campaign fundraising events
- to take money from a billionaire gay-marriage activist who donates to the Human Rights Campaign group – a group which wants government to persecute Christians who dissent from celebrating gay marriage

What my Rubio-supporting friends are telling me is that all these past actions are no big deal. They say that America has become a less conservative country, so we need to run a less conservative establishment candidate like Marco Rubio in order to win. I understand and agree that America is a less conservative country. We've drifted away from our roots and lost the vision of the Founders, which made us so great. But I don't think that less conservative policies – be they social, fiscal or foreign policy policies – *produce better results* than more conservative policies.

Socialism doesn't work

Take a look at this article about Venezuela, which appeared in the radically leftist Washington Post.

It says:

> The only question now is whether Venezuela's government or economy will completely collapse first.
>
> The key word there is "completely." Both are well into their death throes. Indeed, Venezuela's ruling party just lost congressional elections that gave the opposition

> a veto-proof majority, and it's hard to see that getting any better for them any time soon — or ever. Incumbents, after all, don't tend to do too well when, according to the International Monetary Fund, their economy shrinks 10 percent one year, an additional 6 percent the next, and inflation explodes to 720 percent. It's no wonder, then, that markets expect Venezuela to default on its debt in the very near future. The country is basically bankrupt.
>
> That's not an easy thing to do when you have the largest oil reserves in the world, but Venezuela has managed it. How?
>
> **[…]The first step was when Hugo Chávez's socialist government started spending more money on the poor, with everything from two-cent gasoline to free housing.**
>
> […]**Chávez turned the state-owned oil company from being professionally run to being barely run. People who knew what they were doing were replaced with people who were loyal to the regime, and profits came out but new investment didn't go in.**

Do you know who supports spending tons of taxpayer money on public works projects and welfare, in order to buy votes? Democrats. Do you know who supports nationalizing private industry, especially health care and energy? Democrats. These are Democrat Party policies and they failed. They failed *spectacularly.* This failure is something that any ordinary American can understand, if anyone bothered to explain the cause and effect of economic policies to them.

And that's exactly what Ted Cruz is doing in that video, with that ordinary voter. And to the great credit of Iowa voters, they voted for Ted Cruz even when he didn't promise to give them taxpayer-funded goodies. That, my friends, is character. Iowa has character. They rose to his challenge, because they have Iowa values. Not New York Values.

Here is the real Donald Trump and his New York values, by the way:

Donald Trump promised *more subsidies for ethanol* to the people of Iowa, in order to get them to overlook his New York values. And the people of Iowa gave Ted Cruz the win.

So, the bottom line is this. I don't believe that the superiority of conservative policies is difficult to demonstrate to ordinary people. I think that the average, run-of-the-mill American adult in the political center can be persuaded, so long as they give us time, and so long as we have the right man or woman to do the persuading. Give Cruz a chance to persuade them. We don't have to take the American people as they are. We can try to shift them to the right, by listening to their concerns, and then persuading them with evidence.

Gay marriage collides with freedom of conscience and religious liberty in the UK

February 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

It's not just happening in Canada and the United States.

Here's the UK Telegraph article.

It says:

> The Christian bakers taken to court for refusing to make a cake promoting gay marriage say their experience is like living in a dystopian "science fiction" world where the state orders people to say things they do not believe.

> […]The family firm, based on Newtonabbey, near Belfast, found itself at the centre of an international storm in summer 2014 after cancelling an order for a cake featuring the Sesame Street characters Bert and Ernie with the slogan "support gay marriage".

> […]The McArthurs, who are evangelical Christians, said they could not in conscience make the cake because they believe same-sex marriage is against the teaching of the Bible.
>
> […]But Mr Lee, backed by the Equality Commission, a state-funded body which operates in Northern Ireland, said it amounted to discrimination under laws which ban refusing to provide services on grounds of religion, race or sexual orientation.
>
> […]**Judge Isobel Brownlie ruled that refusing to produce a cake calling for the change did amount to discrimination against Mr Lee.**
>
> **She said the McArthurs did not have the right to 'manifest' their belief**

> **in a commercial setting.**

You don't have a right to act like a Christian outside your church. When you are outside your church, you have to act like a progressive atheist. That's "neutrality". Progressive atheists have to act like progressive atheists in public, and Bible-believing Christians have to act like progressive atheists in public. That's "equality", according to the taxpayer-funded "Equality Commission". That's their job, actually – converting the taxes collected by Christian taxpayers into witch-hunts against those same Christian taxpayers.

But look, there is more hope in the UK than there is here:

> Speaking to The Telegraph, the couple said they had received hate mail and online abuse but had no regrets.
>
> It came as Peter Tatchell, the veteran gay rights campaigner, emerged as a surprise supporter for the McArthurs' appeal.
>
> He said that, while he totally disagreed with their views on gay marriage, it is a basic "infringement of freedom" to force people to promote ideas to which they conscientiously object.

See? Now look here. I have no problem with gay people living how they want, signing contracts about wills and hospital visitation, and so on. But what I do object to is their desire to redefine marriage for all of us, so that people like me who have a different view of what marriage is have to be fired, pay fines and go to jail – all for disagreeing with *their view.* Well, excuse me, but I am allowed to have a different view.

At least one gay activist (Tatchell) has sense enough to be tolerant of those who disagree with him. That's real tolerance, not like these secular leftist fascists in the UK government. I hope there are more like him.

Last point. How did the Christians feel about it?

Excerpt:

> Speaking to The Telegraph, the couple said they had received hate mail and online abuse but had no regrets.
>
> […]Mr McArthur said he had been bewildered to find himself up against the courts and a state equality body for supporting what is currently the law.
>
> […]He insisted that, rather than discriminating against a gay customer, the family were themselves effectively suffering discrimination by being denied the right to refuse to endorse gay marriage.
>
> "For us, I think it means you have to leave your Christianity at your house and in your church, once you go out the door in the morning you can forget about your Christian beliefs," he said.
>
> […]but [our faith affects] every part of our lives.
>
> **"It is impossible for us not to bring it with us during the day."**

> **He added: "It is our human right to live according to those beliefs and we can't do something that goes against those beliefs, we can't be forced to do it.**
>
> **"That is basically what the Equality Commission expect us to do, they expect us to go against our Christian beliefs despite how we feel."**
>
> **"It is like something out of a science fiction book: 'you have to do this, there is no choice … you must do this, no matter what your conscience tells you, no matter how hard, never mind that you couldn't do that, you have to do it we demand it of you'."**

So, UK taxpayers must pay taxes to the government that wants to silence and coerce them. I wonder that anyone who claims to be a Bible-believing Christian could support overreach by a bloated secular government. We need small, limited government where government is focused on its Constitutional responsibilities – not on using force to make us all think alike.

I don't think that most people of other religions, except perhaps Orthodox Jews, really understand what is required of Bible-believing Christians. We are expected to honor God in everything we do, and acknowledge him in all of our thinking and decision-making, including decision-making about morality. Although most secular people think morality is illusory and that truth takes a backseat to hedonism, that is not the Christian view.

Jesus says this:

Matthew 10:32-33:

> 32 "Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.
>
> 33 But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

You may not believe that, but don't push your views on us, using the power of government. Christians are not like you. We are not here to have a good time on Earth. Our religion is not a community activity that is engaged in for social cohesion of feelings of comfort. Bible-believing Christians think that Christianity is true – objectively true. You're not just trying to get us to try a different flavor of ice cream when you push your different morality on us – you're trying to get us to live a lie. And your "feeling offended" by our disagreement is not justification for using the government to coerce us (which is fascism, by the way). If we Christians are right, the worst thing that a non-Christian person can do is to discourage us from pursuing God in Christ. You do not want to face God if you are the person who causes a Christian to turn away from God. That is the worst thing you can do. And yet so many people on the secular left do exactly that… in the public schools, in the university, in the court rooms, in the media, in Hollywood, etc. Stop it.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

February 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What is marriage, and what is the essential public purpose of marriage?
Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view

- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude others
- It’s meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can’t say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Related posts

- Ryan Anderson explains how gay marriage is already infringing on religious liberty
- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson debates gay marriage with S.E. Cupp on the Blaze
- Ryan T. Anderson explains marriage to Piers Morgan and Suze Orman
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Frank Turek: is "equality" the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults "co-parenting" children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?

- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

Kentucky governor shuts down illegal, unlicensed Planned Parenthood clinic

February 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood
Story from Life News.

It says:

> A Louisville, Kentucky Planned Parenthood abortion clinic shut down Friday after pro-life Gov. Matt Bevin discovered the abortion clinic was operating without a license.
>
> The new abortion clinic opened in December and applied for a license to do abortions from the state; however, last week, Bevin's office found out that the abortion clinic began offering surgical and medical abortions in January without a license, LifeNews reported.
>
> […]New acting Kentucky Inspector General Stephanie Hold, who serves on pro-life Bevin's administration, said the state has not licensed the clinic because it found two deficiencies in Planned Parenthood's application. The abortion clinic does not have adequate written agreements with an acute care hospital or an ambulance service in case of emergencies, according to a letter from Hold.
>
> […]Last Thursday, Bevin called out the abortion business after his office discovered the violation. A Kentucky statute prohibits providing abortions without a license, and provides for penalties ranging from $500 to $10,000 for each violation, according to the governor's office.
>
> "They are openly and knowingly operating an unlicensed abortion facility in clear violation of the law," Bevin said in a statement. "We will use the full force of the commonwealth to put a stop to this. There is no room in Kentucky for this kind of

> blatant disregard for proper legal procedure."
>
> "It's that brazen disregard for the law that is going to be hammered down," Bevin continued. "There is no tolerance whatsoever for people in the Commonwealth of Kentucky disregarding the law. They are unlicensed. They are doing it knowingly, and they are going to brought to justice on this front."

Kentucky, what happened to you? You used to be liberal, now you have a conservative governor who defends natural marriage, opposes abortion, and wants to pass right-to-work! It is so important for people who want to protect the unborn from the selfish grown-ups to elect candidates with a pro-life record. It does matter who you elect – the right candidate does reduce the number of abortions.

New study: long-term marijuana use causes decline in memory in middle age

February 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
Cool new study reported by Reuters.

It says:

> As marijuana becomes more accessible to young and old alike in the U.S., researchers warn that long-term use of the drug may cause lasting harm to at least one type of brain function.
>
> A new study based on following thousands of young adults into middle age finds that long-term marijuana use is linked to poorer performance on verbal memory tests, but other areas of brain function do not appear to be affected.
>
> "We did not expect to find such a consistent association with verbal memory for chronic exposure to marijuana," especially since the link held even when other factors like cigarette smoking, alcohol use and other behavioral factors associated with marijuana use were accounted for, said lead author Dr. Reto Auer of the University of Lausanne, Switzerland.
>
> Auer and colleagues analyzed data from a 25-year U.S. study of young adults, which included repeated measures of marijuana exposure over time and a standardized test of verbal memory, processing speed and executive function in year 25. Almost 3,500 participants completed the standardized tests.
>
> At the beginning of the study period in the 1980s, participants were 18 to 30 years old and more than 80 percent reported past marijuana use. Just 12 percent continued to use marijuana into middle age, according to the results in JAMA Internal Medicine.

> Researchers found that as past years of marijuana use increased, verbal memory scores decreased. In practical terms, the results meant that for every additional five years of exposure, 50 percent of marijuana users would remember one less word from a list of 15 tested words.
>
> "Recreational marijuana users use it to get high, to benefit from the transient change it produces," Auer told Reuters Health by email. "But this transient effect might have long term consequences on the way the brain processes information and could also have direct toxic effects on neurons."

What I am finding out as I age is that I have to keep pushing back the date of my "retirement". I thought I could quit working at 30, then 35, then 40. Now I am thinking 45 before I can be more free. The point is that the world is becoming a more difficult place to be independent. A lot of government spending is going on, and a lot of debt is being added to our national debt. I may never be able to stop working. And it's a good thing that I will have all my faculties intact when I have to keep working. Be careful with exchanging short-term fun and thrills for long-term poverty. Things are not getting easier, you'll have to work just to get by.

Related posts

- After legalizing marijuana, Colorado sees higher number of "daily" users
- New 20-year study: long-term use of cannabis raises risk of mental health problems
- Report: Negative impacts from the legalization of marijuana in Colorado
- Welfare cash used to purchase marijuana in Colorado
- New study: even casual use of marijuana / cannabis alters brain
- New study: teen pot use could hurt brain and memory
- New study finds connection between early use of marijuana and mental illness
- New study: marijuana use by teens is linked to permanent brain abnormalities
- New study: smoking marijuana raises risk of having a stroke
- New study: smoking marijuana/cannabis permanently lowers IQ

Study by UCLA neuroscientist Jeffrey Schwartz falsifies materialist determinism

February 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Here's a summary of the research of UCLA professor Jeffrey Schwartz, authored by William Dembski.

Excerpt:

> Schwartz provides a nonmaterialist interpretation of neuroscience and argues that this interpretation is more compelling than the standard materialist interpretation. He arrived at this position as a psychiatrist specializing in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). OCD sufferers recognize obsessive-compulsive thoughts and urges as separate from their intrinsic selves. For instance, after a few washings, the compulsive hand-washer realizes that his hands are clean and yet feels driven to keep washing them. It was reflection on this difference between the obvious truth (the hands are clean) and the irrational doubts (they might still be dirty) that prompted Schwartz to reassess the philosophical underpinnings of neuroscience.
>
> From brain scans, Schwartz found that certain regions in the brain of OCD patients (the caudate nucleus in particular) exhibited abnormal patterns of activity. By itself this finding is consistent with a materialist view of mind (if, as materialism requires, the brain enables the mind, then abnormal patterns of brain activity are likely to be correlated with dysfunctional mental states). Nonetheless, having found abnormal patterns of brain activity, Schwartz then had OCD patients engage in intensive mental effort through what he called relabeling, reattributing, refocusing, and revaluing (the 4 Rs). In the case of compulsive hand-washing, this involved a patient acknowledging that his hands were in fact clean (relabeling); attributing anxieties and doubts about his hands being dirty to a misfunctioning brain (reattributing); directing his thoughts and actions away from handwashing and toward productive ends (refocusing); and, lastly, understanding at a deep level the senselessness of OCD messages

> (revaluing).
>
> **Schwartz documents not only that patients who undertook this therapy experienced considerable relief from OCD symptoms, but also that their brain scans indicated a lasting realignment of brain-activity patterns.** Thus, without any intervention directly affecting their brains, OCD patients were able to reorganize their brains by intentionally modifying their thoughts and behaviors. The important point for Schwartz here is not simply that modified thoughts and behaviors permanently altered patterns of brain activity, but that such modifications resulted from, as he calls it, "mindful attention"-conscious and purposive thoughts or actions in which the agent adopts the stance of a detached observer.

So mind-brain interaction is not a one-way street. Everyone knows that you can alter your consciousness, beliefs, moods, sensations, etc. by changing your brain, e.g. – with drugs. But it turns out that you can also will to focus your thoughts on certain things in order to change your brain chemistry. So the causation is not just bottom-up, but also top-down.

Now mindfulness therapies – which are documented in the research papers published by Schwartz (like this one and this one and this one)- assume the existence of *free will*. Naturalists don't like these scientific publications because naturalists don't believe in free will, as the famous naturalist philosopher Alex Rosenberg explained in his debate with William Lane Craig.

This post from Uncommon Descent explains the naturalist conundrum.

Excerpt:

> The issue, for Schwartz, turns on whether or not there is such a thing as free will. The assumption of free will is critical to mindfulness therapies *for practical purposes*.
>
> Philosophies and religions have various opinions about ultimate free will. **The therapist must ask, is my patient capable of carrying out a program that requires that he choose to focus his attention on A and not B? In practice, this turns out to be true for many patients, which makes the therapy useful. There is neuroscience evidence for brain reorganization as a result, showing that it is not merely an imagined effect.**
>
> **Now, if someone wishes to claim, as many outspoken advocates of Darwinian evolution have, for example, that free will is impossible, the only thing that a mindfulness therapist can say is, go away. Either they are mistaken or the research results from mindfulness therapies are.**

By the way, if you like this topic, and want a resource to show your friends, be sure and get a hold of the debate on mind vs. brain between Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Michael Shermer.

Self-defense: 71-year-old woman uses legally-owned gun to fight off robber

February 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

This story is from the Washington Free Beacon, and it's a good reminder why we should let law-abiding citizens own legally-purchased firearms.

Excerpt:

> A 71-year-old woman was able to fight off a man who tried to steal her car on Sunday.
>
> Janet Willis told a reporter a man entered her store around 5 a.m. and demanded she give him the keys to her car. "He said, 'I want your car,' I said, 'so do I,'" she told *the Morgan County Citizen*.
>
> Instead of handing over her keys Willis pressed a panic button under her counter. Unfortunately the assailant saw her press the button and became agitated. He then threatened to kill her.
>
> When the man became distracted by a customer Willis was able to grab her 9mm handgun. "When he turned around I said 'I'll blow your guts all over this store,'" she told the paper. "Then I led him out."
>
> She kept her gun pointed at the attempted robber as he ran out and got into a car he had apparently stolen at another point. That car had a flat tire and the sparks created by driving on the rim caused the stolen car to be set ablaze. Shortly thereafter the suspect, 21-year-old Prince William Dennis, was arrested by police.
>
> "I admire her for doing what she did to thwart the robbery," Captain Chris Bish of the Morgan County Sheriff's Office said of Willis. "I'm grateful for the outcome."
>
> Willis said this was not the first time she had defended herself with a firearm. Three decades ago a man had threatened her life but she was armed with her

> Colt .45. “I asked him, do you want this (the pistol) or do you want the door,” she said to the publication. “He chose the door.”

Indeed.

And notice that no shots were fired, in either of the cases she talked about. Guns are not owned by bloodthirsty people who are anxious to shoot other people. Guns are owned by normal law-abiding people who don’t want to be robbed, raped or murdered by criminals. It’s especially important for women and the elderly to own guns, because it equalizes the differences in physical strength between men and women, or younger people and the elderly. We have an entire political party that champions leniency for criminals. They want to let them out early, not punish them, let them do whatever they want. Law-abiding citizens have to have some way to defend themselves from the compassion of the pro-criminal party’s policies.

Learn about the issue

To find the about guns and self-defense, look in the academic literature. Here are two books I really like for that.

- More Guns, Less Crime by Dr. John R. Lott (University of Chicago Press, 3rd ed.)
- Guns and Violence by Dr. Joyce Lee Malcolm (Harvard University Press)

Both of those books make the case that permitting law-abiding citizens to own firearms for self-defense reduces the rate of violent crime.

A closer look at gender-reassignment surgery and psychological disorders

February 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

This article on The Public Discourse by Walt Heyer (H/T Katy), a form transgender woman, was tweeted to me multiple times, so I have to write something about it. It talks about the research on transgender people and the outcomes of gender-reassignment surgery.

Here is the part I thought captures the theme of the article:

> Studies show that the majority of transgender people have other co-occurring, or comorbid, psychological disorders.
>
> A 2014 study found 62.7% of patients diagnosed with gender dysphoria had at least one co-occurring disorder, and 33% were found to have major depressive disorders, which are linked to suicide ideation. Another 2014 study of four European countries found that almost 70% of participants showed one or more Axis I disorders, mainly affective (mood) disorders and anxiety.
>
> In 2007, the Department of Psychiatry at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, committed to a clinical review of the comorbid disorders of the last 10 patients interviewed at their Gender Identity Clinic. They found that “90% of these diverse patients had at least one other significant form of psychopathology . . . [including] problems of mood and anxiety regulation and adapting in the world. Two of the 10 have had persistent significant regrets about their previous transitions.”
>
> Yet in the name of “civil rights,” laws are being passed at all levels of government to prevent transgender patients from receiving therapies to

> diagnose and treat co-occurring mental disorders.
>
> The authors of the Case Western Reserve University study seemed to see this legal wave coming when they said:
>
> This finding seems to be in marked contrast to the public, forensic, and professional rhetoric of many who care for transgendered adults . . . Emphasis on civil rights is not a substitute for the recognition and treatment of associated psychopathology. Gender identity specialists, unlike the media, need to be concerned about the majority of patients, not just the ones who are apparently functioning well in transition.
>
> As one who went through the surgery, I wholeheartedly agree. Politics doesn't mix well with science. When politics forces itself on medicine, patients are the ones who suffer.
>
> Let's connect the dots. **Transgender people report attempting suicide at a staggering rate—above 40%. According to Suicide.org, 90% of all suicides are the result of untreated mental disorders. Over 60% (and possibly up to 90% as shown at Case Western) of transgender people have comorbid psychiatric disorders, which often go wholly untreated.**
>
> Could treating the underlying psychiatric disorders prevent transgender suicides? I think the answer is a resounding "yes."
>
> The evidence is staring us in the face. Tragically high numbers of transgender people attempt suicide. Suicide is the result of untreated mental disorders. A majority of transgender people suffer from untreated comorbid disorders—yet against all reason, laws are being enacted to prevent their treatment.

The article looks at different research and different scholars to make the case that just granting the people gender-reassignment surgery without trying to see what else might need fixing first is a mistake. A mistake that often results in suicides. We are *not* helping people who need help when we just take their desires at face value, without asking other questions.

Articles on The Public Discourse tend to be long and detailed, but this one is a must-read, because the topic is timely, and we should all have some sort of response ready when this topic comes up.

A Harvard University student explains how evidence changed her mind about God

February 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Harvard University student discovers apologetics

Here's a must-read article about the effectiveness of apologetics on college campuses in Christianity Today.

Excerpt:

> I don't know when I first became a skeptic. It must have been around age 4, when my mother found me arguing with another child at a birthday party: "But how do you know what the Bible says is true?" By age 11, my atheism was so widely known in my middle school that a Christian boy threatened to come to my house and "shoot all the atheists." My Christian friends in high school avoided talking to me about religion because they anticipated that I would tear down their poorly constructed arguments. And I did.
>
> As I set off in 2008 to begin my freshman year studying government at Harvard (whose motto is *Veritas*, "Truth"), I could never have expected the change that awaited me.
>
> It was a brisk November when I met John Joseph Porter. Our conversations initially revolved around conservative politics, but soon gravitated toward religion. He wrote an essay for the *Ichthus*, Harvard's Christian journal, defending God's existence. I critiqued it. On campus, we'd argue into the wee hours; when apart, we'd take our arguments to e-mail. Never before had I met a Christian who could respond to my most basic philosophical questions: How does one

> understand the Bible's contradictions? Could an omnipotent God make a stone he could not lift? What about the Euthyphro dilemma: Is something good because God declared it so, or does God merely identify the good? To someone like me, with no Christian background, resorting to an answer like "It takes faith" could only be intellectual cowardice. Joseph didn't do that.
>
> And he did something else: He prodded me on how inconsistent I was as an atheist who nonetheless believed in right and wrong as objective, universal categories. Defenseless, I decided to take a seminar on meta-ethics. After all, atheists had been developing ethical systems for 200-some years. In what I now see as providential, my atheist professor assigned a paper by C. S. Lewis that resolved the Euthyphro dilemma, declaring, "God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God."
>
> Joseph also pushed me on the origins of the universe. I had always believed in the Big Bang. But I was blissfully unaware that the man who first proposed it, Georges Lemaître, was a Catholic priest. And I'd happily ignored the rabbit trail of a problem of what *caused* the Big Bang, and what *caused* that cause, and so on.
>
> By Valentine's Day, I began to believe in God. There was no intellectual shame in being a deist, after all, as I joined the respectable ranks of Thomas Jefferson and other Founding Fathers.
>
> I wouldn't stay a deist for long. A Catholic friend gave me J. Budziszewski's book Ask Me Anything, which included the Christian teaching that "love is a commitment of the will to the true good of the other person." This theme—of love as sacrifice for true good—struck me. The Cross no longer seemed a grotesque symbol of divine sadism, but a remarkable act of love. And Christianity began to look less strangely mythical and more cosmically beautiful.

Now, I'm going to get into a lot of trouble for saying this, but I think that if you are a Christian and you are in a secular university, then you really need to have put in the effort to study the areas of science, history and philosophy that are relevant to the Christian faith. This is regardless of your personal abilities or field of study. We must all make an effort regardless of how comfortable we are with things that are hard for us to learn.

Granted, most people today are not interested in truth, because we just have this cultural preoccupation with having fun and feeling good and doing whatever we want to do whenever we want to do it. Most atheists I've met are like that, but some are more honest, open-minded, and they just have never encountered any good reasons or evidence to think that God exists and that Jesus is anything other than a man. There are a lot of atheists like that who are just waiting to hear some decent evidence. Our job is to prepare for them and then engage them, if they are willing to be engaged.

I think that definition of love she cited – self-sacrifice for the true good of another person – is important. I don't think that ordinary Christians like you or me spends time on apologetics because we "like" it. I know lots of Christians who are in tough, expensive

academic programs trying to get the skills they need to defend truth in areas that matter. They do this because they know that there are people out there who are interested in truth, and who are willing to re-prioritize their lives if the truth is made clear to them. We need to be willing to serve God by doing hard things that work.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

CNN was the first to run the story about Ben Carson's retreat to Florida

February 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Why do people think that CNN are biased leftist clowns?
I didn't want to write about this, but one of my Democrat co-workers who is always pestering me with any misstep by my favorite candidates (Jindal, Walker, Cruz) brought it up. I doubt he knows what the national debt is, but he is always very aware of all the latest nit-picky issues. Anyway, here we go with the post I did not want to write, and thanks to my friend Kris (who is not my evil co-worker) for encouraging me to write it.

So everyone knows the story. A staffer on the Cruz campaign sent out a message saying that Carson was going to be returning to Florida and skipping New Hampshire and South Carolina. The staffer forwarded this message to Cruz caucus-goers, and they used it to appeal to Carson supporters to vote for Cruz. So where did the story originate? Did the nasty Cruz campaign make it up?

No, it came from CNN.

Here's the post from Breitbart News containing the timeline, with screenshots of CNN tweets and videos of CNN anchors.

Breitbart says this:

> The following is a definitive timeline of events on Monday night. All times are local Iowa time–i.e. Central Standard Time (CST).
>
> **6:41-6:43 p.m. CNN's Chris Moody tweets news about Ben Carson (three tweets)**

The part we care about is this:

CNN Senior Reporter Chris Moody starts the story at 6:43 Central / 7:43 Eastern
No word about where the story came from, but the source seems to be Ben Carson, or someone representing his campaign. How else would Chris Moody get this information except from the campaign itself? And that would mean that Carson, who has never run for office before and has a disorganized campaign, just made a mistake. Or someone on

his campaign staff did.

Anyway, at 6:44 PM Iowa local time, CNN anchors ran with the story next, based on the tweet of their "Senior Reporter":

And here's the transcript:

> **Tapper:** Thanks, Wolf. Well, CNN has learned some news about the man who, at least according to polls, is in fourth place here in Iowa. Now, Dana, a week from tomorrow, we're all going to be doing this again for the New Hampshire primary. So almost every single candidate is going to be going directly from here to New Hampshire to campaign–except for the man in fourth place, who a few months ago was in first place here, Dr. Ben Carson. What have we learned?
>
> **Bash:** That's right. We should say that our Chris Moody is breaking this news, that Ben Carson is going to go back to Florida, to his home, regardless of how he does tonight here in Iowa. He's going to go there for several days. And then afterwards, he's not going to go to South Carolina. He's not going to go to New Hampshire. He's going to come to Washington, D.C., and he's going to do that because the National Prayer Breakfast is on Thursday. And people who have been following Ben Carson's career know that that's really where he got himself on the political map, attending that prayer breakfast, and really giving it to President Obama at the time. And he became kind of a hero among conservatives, among evangelicals especially.
>
> **Tapper:** But it's very unusual–
>
> **Bash:** Very unusual.
>
> **Tapper:** –to be announcing that you're going to go home to rest for a few days, not going on to the next site. Plus, he's already announced that he's going to be coming out and speaking at 9:15 local and 10:15 Eastern, no matter whether or not we know the results, because he wants to get home and get ahead of the storm.
>
> **Bash:** Look, if you want to be President of the United States, you don't go home to Florida. I mean, that's bottom line. That's the end of the story. If you want to signal to your supporters that you want it, that you're hungry for it, that you want them to get out and and campaign, you've got to be out there doing it too. And he's not doing it. it's very unusual.
>
> **Tapper:** Very unusual news that CNN has just learned. CNN's Chris Moody breaking the story. Wolf, back to you in Washington.

This was reported 16 minutes before the caucuses began. There is a ticker in the CNN video above. This was the origin of the story. The story did not originate with the Cruz campaign, it originated with the radical leftists on CNN.

Carson later tweeted that he was NOT suspending his campaign, that he was going home to Florida to "get fresh clothes". Oh yes, I always fly home to get fresh clothes. It is just a ridiculous thing to say. It is not at all clear that the Cruz or Rubio campaigns SAW this

tweet, which happened at 6:53 PM – their e-mail to their campaign workers came out a mere *three minutes later.*

In any case, at 6:56 PM, the Cruz campaign e-mails supporters what was reported on CNN, that Carson was “taking time off from the campaign trail”.

So, that’s how it went down, and as you can see, Cruz is innocent, and so is his staff. The guilty party is CNN for running the story that Carson had to correct for them. But before CNN could correct their mistake, the Cruz campaign had already acted on the CNN story. CNN didn’t even try to correct the story until after the Cruz campaign had sent out their messages. CNN did clarify their initial report, but much much later, around 7:30 PM. And this 7:30 PM tweet was the FIRST clarification that the Cruz campaign saw.

By the way, the only report that I have seen about the source of the rumor reported by CNN links the rumor to the MARCO RUBIO campaign, and you can read about that here. The tweet from the Rubio supporter has since been deleted, but the screenshot survives in the post I linked above.

Finally, one last thing. Cruz, being the man who stood up to big ethanol in Iowa and won, has already proved his integrity and character. But there’s more. The most obvious thing to do in the face of a made-up scandal like this is to pick a low-level staffer and punish them. But Cruz looked at the facts that I wrote above, and decided to stick by his staffer. This man always does the right thing – it’s like he doesn’t even care what happens to his whole campaign so long as he does the moral thing. And this is being noticed. Here is a post by a Trump supporter who switched his vote to Cruz, based on Cruz’s decision to stand by his innocent campaign staff.

If you like honor, Ted Cruz is your guy. I’m not going to regret supporting this guy.

Contrasting Ted Cruz's flaw with Marco Rubio's flaw

February 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

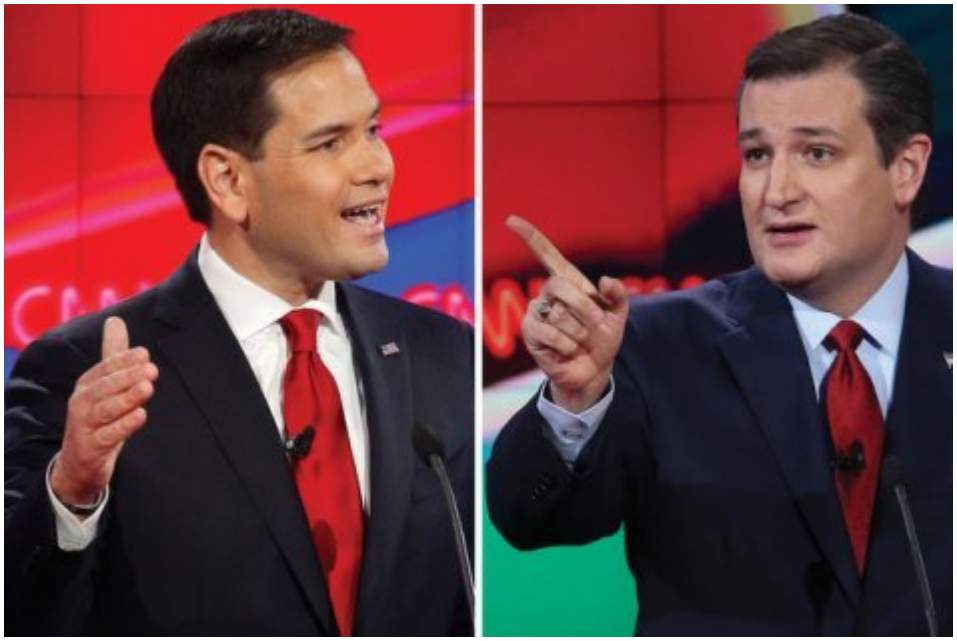

Marco Rubio vs Ted Cruz: the fatal flaws

This article from Asia Times was sent to me by my friend Patrick, and I really loved it. The article finds what's wrong with each of the candidates, and I agree with their assessment.

First Ted Cruz.

I guess I've said before that I disagree with Cruz on foreign policy. His record shows that he opposed data collection on Americans to toughen up national security, and that he opposed the interventions in Libya, Egypt and Syria.

Here's the excerpt:

> Cruz first drew the wrath of the Establishment in the fall of 2014 when he averred that the US had stayed too long in Iraq, adding that the US should not try to turn Iraq into Switzerland. That is not merely heresy, but an existential threat to an Establishment that went all in on the Bush Freedom Agenda, up through and including the abortive, misnomered "Arab Spring." Americans forgive a lot, but they don't easily forgive a leadership that sends American soldiers into harm's way on behalf of a failed social experiment.

Yes. All true. I don't agree with Cruz on most of those views. I wanted us to stay the course in Afghanistan and Iraq. I didn't want us in Libya or Egypt, but I wanted us to invade Syria after they crossed the red line and to stay there as long as it took to get Iranian influence out. I want our armed forces to destroy regimes that harbor terrorists and stay over there, even if we don't engage in nation-building. Also, I am all for warrant-less aggregate data collection and enhanced interrogation techniques. Now, I think I'm in the minority there, and more people agree with Cruz's libertarian streak, but I'm a hawk. I believing in projecting American power against our enemies.

I sent this post to Lindsay for validation, and she said that Cruz voted for expanding gathering information through cell phones and other communication, but no searches without a warrant. Cruz is a stickler for the Constitution, that's why he opposes warrant-less searches, but I don't think of aggregate data collection as a warrant-less search. To me, you gather the data, and then you restrict searches on it to specific numbers that you have a warrant for – but you gather the data first, so that it's there for you to search on it.

Now the author also says that "it is likely that Cruz would try to widen the gap between America's military technology and the rest of the world's." And that's correct. Cruz would do that. So I'm not in complete disagreement with him, only the things I said.

Now Marco Rubio.

OK, now, I've blogged before about Marco Rubio's mistakes:

- to pass amnesty – a path to citizenship for 20 million illegal immigrants – so they can vote to expand government
- to support the disastrous Obama/Clinton Libya intervention which created an Islamic State caliphate in Libya
- to strip accused students of due process rights in university trials
- to push cap and trade (a carbon tax that drives up electricity prices)
- to skip votes on de-funding Planned Parenthood in order to go to campaign fundraising events
- to take money from a billionaire gay-marriage activist who donates to the Human Rights Campaign group – a group which wants government to persecute Christians who dissent from celebrating gay marriage

And in addition to that, I found two more this week. Marco Rubio also supports sugar subsidies, which is just crony capitalism. And he got a D rating from pro-marriage activist Maggie Gallagher regarding his response to the Obergefell decision, which redefined marriage for all 50 states. (Cruz opposes all subsidies, e.g. – ethanol, and he got an A-rating on his response to the gay marriage Supreme Court decision).

The article explains the common thread in all 8 of these mistakes by Rubio.

It says:

> Endearing, boyish, photogenic and eloquent, Marco Rubio is the candidate that Central Casting sent the Establishment from the studio pool. Rubio, a middling student at university and a Florida machine politician throughout his career, says his lines well but does not have an original thought about foreign policy. That is why the Establishment likes him. Cruz knows that the Establishment is naked, and is willing to say so. That's why they don't like him. They aren't supposed to. They look at him the way a rice bowl looks at a hammer.

Marco Rubio just allows himself to get swept up in fashionable causes, and that's why he bands together with Democrats on their priorities so often.

This quotation from a recent Matt Walsh column hits the nail on the head about why some people prefer Rubio to Cruz:

> People say Ted Cruz is awkward, boring, weird looking, and lacks any semblance of style or charm. And they're right. I agree with those observations. The guy is a total bummer on a personality level. If we were in fifth grade I probably wouldn't invite him to my sleepover.

Rubio supporters dismiss the items in my list of Rubio failures with a shrug. Who cares, they say. They want to make the decision about who should be President as if they were having a sleepover. Who should I invite? I'll invite the guy isn't much smarter than me, and who goes along with me, when I want to be mischievous. Not that Ted Cruz, he went to Princeton and Harvard Law, and clerked for Justice J. Michael Luttig and Chief Justice William Rehnquist. He was Solicitor General of Texas, and argued and won cases that defended conservative causes at the Supreme Court – when it was majority liberal. He's too stuck-up, successful and strict for my sleepover. He worries too much about the Constitution and doing the right thing, and will never have any fun if it means breaking the rules. I'm voting for Rubio to come to my sleepover! Fun and thrills!

So, this is the core problem with Marco Rubio, and it explains why the establishment loves him. He has average intelligence, and limited accomplishments. He draws opinions from the people around him, and is driven by peer-pressure and media acclaim to act against conservative interests. That's why he sides with Democrats on issues like amnesty, Libya, campus due process, gay marriage, etc. It's popular, and Rubio does what the cool kids want him to do.

But we're not picking a kid to come to our sleepover, America. We're picking the President of the United States. I think Rubio would make a great Vice President under President Cruz, and then he can run for President again in 2024.

When talking with a non-Christian, make truth – not behavior – the main issue

February 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Pastor Matt posted about something that I think all Christian apologists believe, deep down. (H/T The Poached Egg)

He writes:

> Typically, the church has defined loving one's neighbor as in line with Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and Christ's teaching in passages such as Matthew 25:31-46, in which we are commanded to love the imprisoned, the homeless, the hungry, etc. as if they were Jesus himself. Of course all believers should do so whether by volunteering at a soup kitchen or donating money to ministries like World Help.
>
> But there is more to loving one's neighbor these days than caring for the poor, as important as that is. Those of us who live in a first world western country now dwell in a post-Christian society. Our neighbors are inundated with naturalism masquerading as good science and sound philosophy. Non-Christians believe the faith is intellectually vacuous.
>
> **It shocks many people when those trained in apologetics point out that atheists cannot answer questions like, "How did the universe come into existence?" "Why is our planet so finely tuned for life despite all the odds against it?" "How did life begin?" "Why do humans have consciousness?" "How is there truth or right and wrong without God?" "Why did the disciples die horrible deaths as impoverished traveling peasants rather than deny the resurrection of Jesus?", etc.**
>
> If we are to help bring our neighbors to saving faith, we must first destroy their

> false ideas of what Christianity is and is not. That means we must preach the Gospel (2 Cor. 5:21), knock down specious views of the faith and present the truth of what we believe.
>
> Apologetics is not just an intellectual exercise for nerds like me or a debate to be won on college campuses but an increasing tool in loving our neighbors. For if they do not understand the faith, they will likely not come to faith and that is what the God we love wants and how we must show love to our neighbors. So, let's study not just to win arguments but to love others.

That reminds me of 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Our job is to beat up on false ideas and speculations.

Pastor Matt's point is critical, I think. Just stop and think for a minute about your non-believing co-workers. Do they know that the universe began to exist? Do they know that the initial conditions and the cosmological constants have to be finely tuned to support things like galaxies, stars, planets and elements heavier than hydrogen? Do they know how much information is in a protein, and how many proteins would be needed to make the first living cell? Do they know what it takes to make a planet that can support life? What facts from the gospels and the Pauline letters pass the tests for historicity? What is the best explanation of those minimal facts?

These are the facts that we share when we discuss spiritual things with people. They are not Christian facts, they are public, testable facts. And yet, almost no one in the culture who is not already a believer is curious to find out these things on their own. But without the evidence, how are they supposed to take the first step towards a relationship with God through Jesus Christ? It's not possible. This is a propositional faith, and we know it's true by evidence. To share the evidence with someone so they can decide is as loving as sharing the evidence about retirement planning, or the evidence about nutrition, or the evidence about fitness and exercise, or the evidence about career planning. When you love someone, you tell them the facts, and then they decide. Evangelism is *the same thing*.

Here's something from a recent post by J. Warner Wallace, where he talks about doing apologetics with people who have not yet decided whether God exists or not.

> **The Undecided**
>
> In many ways, this group holds the most promise. People who are undecided usually fall into two categories. Some have never really given the issue much thought. They're neither for nor against; they've simply been living *unaware*. You may be the first person to introduce them to the issues you are trying to share. If so, remember the importance of a first impression. What you say or do will have an impact on the work of those who follow you. The second group of "undecideds" are people who have given the issue some thought, but are just beginning to make their decision. For this group of people, your defense of Christianity may very well be the deciding factor. The responsibility you and I

> have with the undecided is daunting, but it’s a privilege to play a small part in their decision.

OK, so I want to make a point about this. So often, I see Christian parents and leaders trying to focus on changing people’s behaviors, and not by giving them evidence. Instead of trying to convince them about what’s true, they tell them Bible verses, or maybe tell them they are going to Hell. But given what Matt and J. Warner said, I don’t want us to be focused on changing outward behavior. I want us to be focused on showing people what is true and showing our work – how we arrived at these true beliefs. You are doing Christianity wrong if you focus on getting behaviors from people by shaming them, overpowering them or scaring them.

So in my case, I’m not trying to get non-Christians to act like Christians when they have no reasons to be one. I’m trying to get them to settle on true beliefs – so that each of them and God can shake hands and be reconciled, responding to his drawing them of their own free will. Then, they can decide how they are going to act. And how they act might be even better than what we had in mind for them when all we wanted was for them to quit swearing and eat their vegetables. The Christian life is bigger than just making people do what we want them to do.

How can we get single men and husbands to be interested in church and ministry?

February 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church is ineffective and impractical, and that's why men are bored there

Consider this passage from William Lane Craig's April 2013 newsletter, which made me very excited and happy. (H/T Triablogue)

Here it is:

> One overwhelming impression of these engagements is the way in which the intellectual defense of Christian faith attracts men. Both at Texas A&M and again at Miami every single student who got up to ask a question was a guy! I wondered if the girls are just shy. But then I remembered a lengthy clip Jan and I watched of cast members of Downton Abbey doing a Q&A with an audience in New York. Almost every person who came to the microphone at that event was a woman! It wasn't until late into the evening that a man finally asked a question, which was remarked by all the cast members. Why the difference between that session and the ones I experienced?—simply because the Downton Abbey program is highly relational, which is more appealing to women, whereas my talks were principally intellectually oriented, which is more appealing to men.
>
> Churches have difficulty attracting men, and the church is becoming increasingly feminized. I believe that apologetics is a key to attracting large numbers of men (as well as women) to church and to Christ. By presenting rational arguments and historical evidences for the truth of the Gospel, by appealing to the mind as well as the heart, we can bring a great influx of men into the Kingdom. I'm so pleased that the church in Canada seems to be awakening to this challenge! I'm convinced that we have the opportunity to revolutionize Western Christianity by

> reclaiming our intellectual heritage.

Now, I hear a lot of complaints from women in the church and pastors in the church about men not being interested in going to church. I think that the problem is that church is hostile to men's natures. Men thrive on conflict and competition. Men prefer strict rules and moral judgments. Men prefer to shame people who underperform, rather than coddle them. Men are practical and results focused. So how should the church accommodate the different nature that men have? Apologetics is one way to appeal to the male nature.

Let's take a look at it.

Pastors: church as it is now is abrasive to men's male nature

In a recent William Lane Craig podcast, at time 8:47, the WLC tells Kevin Harris about how he and his wife Jan asked about six of the young men who attend his "Defenders" apologetics class which morning service they attended: traditional or contemporary. ALL of the young men said that they attended neither service, because they go to church to learn something and the service has no educational value to them. The only attend the Defenders class. The apologetics class taught them things they could actually use – things they could actually use to think better, and fight better. This is my experience as well, although I am looking for a better church that does have some appeal to men. I might even have to move to find a decent church that has apologetics.

There is absolutely nothing going on in most churches that is valuable to a man. Men, by and large, only pray as a last resort, after we have done everything we can to solve the problem ourselves. We pay the most attention to the parts of the Bible that help us debate with non-Christians, or that give us things to do. We like to find evidence in the real world that connects with what the Bible is saying. We are interested in planning, execution and results. We are not very interested in feelings, singing, devotions, or bending the rules to make people doing bad things feel good. Now that's not necessarily true for all men, but it is true for the majority of men.

And lest some people worry that fighting makes enemies, it doesn't. Fighting with non-Christians has two effects: 1) they respect Christianity more, and 2) they want to be your friends and talk to you about spiritual things. Atheists see your standing up for what you believe in and living consistently with it indicative of *authenticity*. That is not the exception, Christian women and pastors – *that is the rule*. Atheists don't think that standing up for what you believe in makes Christianity look *fake,* they think it makes Christianity look *authentic.* Well, at least the ones who are worth talking to think that.

Wives: don't choose men who had no interest in advocating for Christianity before you married them

A related problem I see is the problem of wives marrying the wrong men then complaining that the men they freely chose to marry are not interested in church. This is actually the woman's fault. Most women don't think about what is best for God when they think about who to marry and have children with, they think about what makes them feel good. They don't have any kind of plan where they match the man's ability to the roles he will play as husband and father – they just pick who makes them feel good. This works

about as well as buying and selling stocks based on which make you feel good, or choosing electronics and computers based on the color, or choosing a job or a church based on what the building looks like. The Bible lays out a few minimal requirements for a man: chastity, self-sacrificial love, providing for family, leading on moral and spiritual issues. Most young, unmarried women don't value those things. If a woman picks a man who doesn't make any demands on them, and who doesn't judge them, then she cannot depend on him to show spiritual and moral leadership later on in the marriage. So don't pick a man like that.

Wives: men respond to attention, recognition and approval from women

The reason that most husbands don't engage in Christianity is because most wives (not my married friends of course) haven't approached Christianity as something that is objectively true. Men don't create illusions for themselves in order to feel better – they are more practical than that. Men only invest in things that they think are true, and where they can see that their practical efforts will make a difference. Men are turned off by the view that Christianity is just something that helps families and communities bond, and makes people feel comfort. We think that's weakness, and we abhor weakness. Once men get the idea that a woman thinks of Christianity as feelings-fulfillment, we stop trying to achieve anything for the Kingdom of God. Men don't want to be roped into Christianity if all it means is helping people get along and feel good. But they very much want to be roped into a demanding relationship with God where their efforts to achieve results count with God *and* gets them recognition and approval from their wives.

So how do wives learn to recognize and approve of what men do as Christians? Well, women need to learn apologetics and they need to practice debating with non-Christians. That will teach them to value conflict and competition, and to see how engagement and authenticity drives relationships with non-Christians forward. If women show an interest in objective truth, moral goodness and theological correctness, then men will become interested in these things, too. They will do it because men are addicted to pleasing women, and they want to help women more than anything in the world, second only to pleasing God. Men will enthusiastically engage in whatever will get them praise and recognition from women, and that means that women have to care about Christianity beyond their personal emotional experience of it and beyond their social cohesion experience of it. Initially, wives must be ready to praise and encourage their husbands, and then once the husbands get it, then they will be self-motivated and move out on their own. It will be self-sustaining.

Donald Trump promises gay publication “forward motion” on gay rights issues

February 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Bay Windows, which bills itself as “serving New England’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities”.

Here’s what they wrote:

> The frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination today promised “forward motion” on gay and lesbian equality if he is elected.
>
> In an interview with NECN’s Sue O’Connell just days before the crucial New Hampshire primary, Trump cast himself as a uniter on LGBT issues.
>
> O’Connell, who is also Bay Windows’ Publisher, identified herself as a lesbian in a question that noted the progress the LGBT community has made in the last two decades and asked Trump if voters can expect him to continue that momentum if elected
>
> “When President Trump is in office can we look for more forward motion on equality for gays and lesbians?” O’Connell asked him.
>
> “Well, you can,” Trump answered. ” And look, again, we’re going to bring people together, and that’s your thing and other people have their thing. We have to bring all people together and if we don’t we’re not going to have a country anymore.”

Recall that during the Iowa primary, Trump declared how much he loves evangelicals, and even held up a Bible he supposedly got from his mother as evidence of his genuine, authentic Christian faith.

Trump holds up Bible he “received from his mother” to evangelicals

CBS News reports on how Trump pandered to evangelicals in Iowa:

> Just two days ahead of the first nominating contest in Iowa, Donald Trump is making a final attempt to court evangelical Christians.
>
> In a new video posted to Facebook Saturday, the billionaire businessman thanked evangelicals and promised to “never let you down.”
>
> “I really appreciate the support given to me by the evangelicals,” Trump said. “They’ve been incredible. Every poll says how well I’m doing with them.”
>
> Trump then held aloft a worn Bible, which he said his mother had given to him “many years ago.”
>
> “In fact, it’s her writing right here,” he added, flipping to the first page of the book. “She wrote the name and my address and it’s just very special to me.”
>
> This is not the first time the GOP front-runner has used the Bible as a prop on the campaign trail.
>
> In September, Trump waved the same copy of the book while giving a speech at the Values Voters Summit hosted by the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C.
>
> Trump has also repeatedly named the Bible as his favorite book — though he has often faced criticisms for his inability to name his favorite Bible verses.

He’s never going to let us down. That’s what he said in Iowa. But in New Hampshire, he is saying something else. That was then, this is now. His entire case to evangelical Christians was:

- I'm ahead in the polls
- I can hold up a Bible and say my mother gave it to me
- I can wave a Bible around
- "Two Corinthians" – that's your favorite verse, right?

Here is the real Donald Trump, for those who have eyes to see, and ears to hear:

As everyone knows, evangelicals are under attack from gay activists, who want to use the power of government to punish those who decline to celebrate gay marriage and participate in gay weddings. When religious liberty and freedom of conscience come up against a gay activists desire to not be offended by dissent, religious freedom and freedom of conscience are losing. Gay people have a right to live how they want, but they shouldn't be able to redefine marriage for all of us, and then force us to salute the new definition of marriage through coercion.

What about Marco Rubio?

I already blogged on Marco Rubio's billionaire donor Paul Singer, who donated to the Human Rights Campaign, the largest gay rights group in the United States. Here is an article by Maggie Gallagher that gave Marco Rubio a D rating on the gay marriage Supreme Court decision:

> **Marco Rubio: Grade D**
>
> Issuing only a *pro forma* statement, Rubio ran away, not towards, the media on this one: "While I disagree with this decision, we live in a republic and must abide by the law. As we look ahead, it must be a priority of the next president to nominate judges and justices committed to applying the Constitution as written and originally understood." He promised to "strive to protect the First Amendment rights of religious institutions and millions of Americans whose faiths hold a traditional view of marriage." But he appears to have laid out no concrete plans for doing so…

Cruz gets an A- rating from Gallagher and The Pulse – this is the highest rating of any candidate still running in the Republican primary.

What about Ted Cruz?

Let's take a look at Ted Cruz's position on marriage, now:

> U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, today released the following statement regarding a report in the New York Times addressing his support for traditional marriage:
>
> "It speaks volumes that the New York Times considers it newsworthy that a Republican who believes marriage is between a man and a woman would meet with people who hold a different view. The purpose of the meeting and the primary topics of conversation were national security, foreign policy, and America's commitment to standing with Israel. On the subject of marriage, when asked, I stated directly and unambiguously what everyone in the room already

> knew, that I oppose gay marriage and I support traditional marriage.
>
> “One person further asked how Heidi and I would react if we found out one of our (4 and 7-year-old) daughters were gay. My reply: ‘We would love her with all our hearts. We love our daughters unconditionally.’
>
> “A conservative Republican who is willing to meet with individuals who do not agree on marriage and who loves his daughters unconditionally may not reflect the caricature of conservatives promoted by the left, but it’s hardly newsworthy.
>
> “I know it’s been a long time since we’ve seen it, but this is what it means to truly be a ‘big tent Republican’ instead of a panderer. I’m happy to go anywhere to anyone to champion conservative values. We’re not always going to agree on everything, and I’m not going to change my fundamental values. But at the same time, I’m hoping to offer enough bold leadership on a broad slate of issues that many voters will decide we agree on far more than we disagree.”

Vote for Ted Cruz, if you are tired of politicians who say one thing, then do something else.

How pro-life apologetics helps strengthen your evangelism

February 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this message
From Scott Klusendorf's Life Training Institute.

Excerpt:

> Beyond the obvious obligation we have as thinking human beings to clarify the status, and defend the value, of innocent, unborn human life, engaging in the pro-life project is also a way to make the case for the truth of Christianity in general. It stands to reason that if the scientific, philosophical, and moral arguments we offer in defense of the humanity of the unborn also happen to align exactly with the biblical notion of what it means to be a human being made "in the image of God," then the Bible might also have something to say about other things of importance.
>
> This is a point Scott makes repeatedly but it was recently driven home in a very concrete way by, of all people, a hard core atheist in the most recent issue of ***Salvo*** magazine. A secular skeptic, law school professor, renowned blogger, and mocker of deluded "Godiots," the "Raving Atheist" attended a blogger party where he serendipitously sat next to a Catholic blogger named Benjamin. As the "Raving Atheist" explains:

> At one point the conversation turned to abortion, and I asked Benjamin's opinion of the practice. I was stunned. Here was a kind, affable, and cogently reasonable

> human being who nonetheless believed that abortion was murder. To the limited extent I had previously considered the issue, I believed abortion to be completely acceptable, the mere disposal of a lump of cells, perhaps akin to clipping fingernails.

> This unsettling exchange spurred me to further investigate the issue on Benjamin's blog. I noticed that pro-choice Christians did not employ scientific or rational arguments but relied on a confused set of "spiritual" platitudes. More significantly, the pro-choice atheistic blogosphere also fell short in its analysis of abortion. ***The supposedly "reality-based" community either dismissed abortion as a "religious issue" or paradoxically claimed that pro-life principles were contrary to religious doctrine. Having formerly equated atheism with reason, I was slowly growing uncertain of the value of godlessness in the search for truth.***

> Though the "Raving Atheist" continued to rave, there was now a stone in his God-rejecting shoe, placed there by a reasoned defense of the pro-life view. He couldn't disconnect himself from it and later admitted that the "selfless dedication [of pro-life advocates] to their cause moved [him] deeply." Later, he met a woman named Ashli whose work in pregnancy care drew him to further consider the pro-life position. Soon thereafter, the "Raving Atheist" became, in part, a pro-life blogsite …

Click here to read the astonishing conclusion. Then come back here.

Back? Ok, so what did we learn from this? Well, the moral of this story is that it is *very* important for Christians to have a good understanding of moral issues like abortion and same-sex marriage so that they can talk about these issues based on what they know. When someone can stake out a *moral* position on these kinds of issues, using science and history and other hard evidence – *not just the Bible* – then it helps non-Christians to take us seriously *as thinkers*.

Unless we demonstrate the ability to reason out there in the real world – outside the church – then we are not going to be viewed as authoritative on any subject – *especially* on spiritual subjects. We really need to study up on other issues, and show that we care about the unborn (abortion issue) and children (same-sex marriage issue). We have to show that there is more to us than just doing what feels good. We have to show that we are smart and that we are willing to be unpopular in order to do the right thing. That we didn't just inherit these views from our parents, or from our culture. That we have actually thought things through more than just reading the Bible, and that it makes a difference in how we view the world, and in how we live. We don't want people to continue in their perception that Christians are just people who play follow-the-leader – we want to show them how we have worked through these issues on our own.

Ignorance is never a good idea when you are trying to do good – and you can't know what is really good just by your feelings and intuitions. If you want to do good, you need to be

1) convincing and 2) effective. And that takes study. Don't choose policies based on what makes you feel good and what sounds good to others. Push for *effective* policies – what actually *does* good – and then have your arguments and evidence ready to convince people, using evidence from authorities *that they accept as non-Christians*. If you have the will to study a little, you can be passionate *and* convincing. Non-Christians respect passion and knowledge. They don't respect fideism and mysticism.

Scott Klusendorf is the author of the best introductory book on pro-life apologetics, entitled "The Case for Life".

Ted Cruz explains how heroine addiction killed his half-sister Miriam

February 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

Something that Ted Cruz said in the ABC News debate last night started me thinking about Bible study and being a prophetic voice to this generation on moral issues. I guess everybody knows that I have not been influenced by the spirit of the age – moral relativism. Everybody seems to be in favor of live and let live, not judging, compassion, diversity, etc. these days. There seems to be a lot of hedonism around, too – pursuing good feelings, fun and thrills in this life. Anyway, let's see Ted Cruz talk about a family member who made some very bad decisions on a moral issue.

Cruz said this in the debate:

Here's the transcript of what he said from the Red State:

> My older sister, Miriam, who was my half-sister, struggled her whole life with drug and alcohol addiction. My father and her mom divorced when she was a little girl and she was angry her whole life, and she ended up marrying a man who had been in and out of jail. She then became a single mom and she herself went to jail several times and she ended up spending some time in a crack house.
>
> I still remember my father and me driving up to get Myriam out of that crack house to try to convince her she needed to be a mom to — to my nephew Joey.
>
> She wasn't willing to listen. She was not willing to change the path she was on. She was angry. I was — had just gotten my first job coming out of law school. I took a $20,000 loan on a credit card to put my nephew, Joey, in Valley Forge Military Academy — he was in sixth grade at the time, to pay his way through

> that.
>
> And about five, six years ago, Miriam died of an overdose. It was — the coroner ruled it accidental. We don't know. She went to one night, had taken too many pills, and Joey walked in and found her dead.
>
> This is an absolute epidemic. We need leadership to solve it. Solving it has to occur at the state and local level with programs like A.A., and counseling, and churches and charities. But it also has to be securing the borders, because you have got Mexican cartels that are smuggling vast amounts of heroin into this country.
>
> We know how to secure the borders. What is missing is the political will to do it.
>
> And as president, I will secure the border, we will end this deluge of drugs that is flowing over our southern border and that is killing Americans across this country.

I know many of you might think that Cruz had an ideal upbringing, but those who have read his book know that his father abandoned the family, and only returned after becoming a Christian. His parents later divorced because they were both heavy drinkers. He hasn't had a happy life, but sometimes, unhappy lives make the best Christians – because they have the experience of tragedy that allows them to plead all the more earnestly with those about to make mistakes. I wrote before about how Christians who come from a rough upbringing and make bad decisions can turn into the most effective Christians, speaking from their experiences. The point is that we should not be annoyed with Christians who have a moral compass – the moral compass is there to save us from harm, not to make us feel bad for no reason.

OK, let's see what the Bible says about warnings and judging.

I have two wise Christian friends, both named Neil S., who both live in North Carolina.

My first friend Neil S. sent me this:

1 Samuel 8:10-20:

> [10] Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king.
>
> [11] He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots.
>
> [12] Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.
>
> [13] He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.
>
> [14] He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants.
>
> [15] He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials

> and attendants.
>
> [16] Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use.
>
> [17] He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves.
>
> [18] When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the Lord will not answer you in that day."
>
> [19] But the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us.
>
> [20] Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles."

And my *other* wise friend Neil S. sent me this listing of some the things that went wrong after Israel got King Solomon. Saul and David got Israel into a lot of trouble too. I think this story is one of the reasons why the Founders of the United States put in place a Constitution that is supposed to limit the power of the President, the federal government and the Supreme Court. Checks and balances. Today many Americans are clamoring for a King to rip up the Constitution.

Anyway, the point is that Christians need to understand that when the Bible tells us that something is morally wrong, that it is not "our belief" that has no applicability to others. We should always speak up from our experiences and from the publicly available evidence to warn people who are about to make mistakes or who are making mistakes. It's a loving thing to do, it's a Judeo-Christian thing to do. This is our heritage as Bible believers.

Robot Rubio parrots identical talking point 4 times at ABC News debate

February 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio with his allies: Democrat Chuck Schumer and RINO John McCain

The big exchange of the ABC News debate in New Hampshire last night was Chris Christie taking on Marco Rubio for his habit of using canned 25-second responses like some sort of conservative talking points robot. Basically, Chris Christie pointed out to the audience that Marco Rubio never speaks in specifics, but instead just repeats the same 25-second conservative talking point over and over. And, amazingly, Rubio immediately repeated the same talking point again, and again, and again. Christie kept interrupting to point it out to the audience.

Watch:

Even establishment RINO Hugh Hewitt could not defend Rubio:

> Radio talk show host Hugh Hewitt and MSNBC's Chris Matthews debate about Marco Rubio's debate performance on Sunday morning's *Meet The Press*. Hewitt, a Rubio supporter, says that after his talked-about over-repetition of a line about President Obama's nefarious intent in last night's New Hampshire debate, Rubio will be preparing for a "South Carolina brouhaha."
>
> Matthews challenges Hewitt on Rubio's performance: "Is there a logic to doing it four times in a row?" Matthews asked. "Why did he do it four times in a row?"
>
> Hewitt admits what Chris Christie said during the debate is true, Rubio's "staff had trained him" to say it that way.

FOUR TIMES IN A ROW:

Someone programmed Rubio bot to speak that line!

Rubio campaigned for the Senate in Florida saying that he was opposed to amnesty, then, when elected, he literally led the effort to give 20 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship – so they could vote for bigger government. When running, he was trained by his staff to speak anti-amnesty talking points, when elected he led the fight for amnesty.

Here's the full list of Rubio errors:

- Rubio led the effort to pass amnesty – a path to citizenship for 20 million illegal immigrants – so they can vote to expand government
- Rubio supported the disastrous Obama/Clinton Libya intervention which created an Islamic State caliphate in Libya
- Rubio introduced a bill to strip accused students of due process rights in university trials
- Rubio pushed push cap and trade (a carbon tax that drives up electricity prices)
- Rubio skipped votes on de-funding Planned Parenthood in order to go to campaign fundraising events
- Rubio takes money from a billionaire gay-marriage activist who donates to the Human Rights Campaign group – a group which wants government to persecute Christians who dissent from celebrating gay marriage
- Rubio supports sugar subsidies and ethanol subsidies, which is just crony capitalism
- Rubio got a D rating from pro-marriage activist Maggie Gallagher regarding his response to the Obergefell decision, which redefined marriage for all 50 states.

Cruz fought against amnesty, opposes all bailouts, opposes all subsidies, e.g. – ethanol, and he got an A- rating on his response to the gay marriage Supreme Court decision.

This talking point parroting mistake has really given me pause about Rubio. I know that when he was running for Senate in Florida, he parroted a lot of talking points against amnesty. Then he co-sponsored the bill to give citizenship and voting rights to 20 million illegal immigrants. It makes me question whether to believe him about anything else, e.g. – pro life. I know that he is being trained on pro-life rhetoric, but he's short on pro-life accomplishments. Fool me one, shame on you, fool me twice, shame on me.

Reactions to the Robot Rubio meltdown

I found several lists of "winners and losers" for Saturday's debate, as well. This one is from the Washington Post, no friend of Ted Cruz:

> **LOSERS**
>
> **Marco Rubio**: Where to start here? Rubio has been such a strong debater so far — and a steady hand on the campaign trail in general. And then he ran into Christie. The New Jersey governor hit Rubio for never having been a chief executive and for not having much to show for his time in the Senate. He seemed to knock Rubio off his game so much that Rubio wound up repeating a stock answer about President Obama — that Obama knows exactly what he's doing in

> driving the country to the left — three times. It was conspicuous and very not-smooth.

They also thought that Ted Cruz won the debate, and that his very unscripted, authentic answer about his half-sister, which I talked about in a previous post, was “memorable”.

I don’t want Rubio being the nominee and debating Hillary Clinton. He’s not ready to debate her, but Ted Cruz will wipe the floor with her. He excels at debate – he was national debate team champion, among other things.

Cruz breaks with Rubio, Bush and Christie: drafting women to fight is “nuts”

February 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas senator Ted Cruz, his wife Heidi Cruz, and their two daughters

There was a “should women register to be drafted to fight in a war?” question asked during the ABC News debate on Saturday. Surprisingly, only one candidate opposed it.

This is from the far-left Politico.

Excerpt:

> **Ted Cruz on Sunday said he opposes requiring women to register for a potential draft, breaking with Marco Rubio, Jeb Bush and Chris Christie, all of whom indicated support for opening up the Selective Service to women during Saturday night’s debate.**
>
> “I have to admit, as I was sitting there listening to that conversation, my reaction was, ‘Are you guys nuts?’” Cruz said Sunday, speaking at a town hall here. “Listen, we have had enough with political correctness, especially in the military. Political correctness is dangerous. And the idea that we would draft our daughters to forcibly bring them into the military and put them in close combat, I think is wrong, it is immoral, and if I am president, we ain’t doing it.”
>
> To applause, Cruz went on to note that he is a father to two daughters, and he wants them to follow their dreams.
>
> […]The previous night, at the presidential debate, Rubio said he had no problem with women in combat, and added, “I do believe Selective Service should be opened up for both men and women in the case a draft is ever instituted.”

Now might be the time to point out that of all the candidates running in the GOP primary, Ted Cruz is the candidate who is the least politically correct, and the most opposed by the

Washington establishment.

This is from the radically leftist CNN:

> Republican Party leaders and prominent senators are sharpening their knives against Ted Cruz, expressing growing alarm over his candidacy as he continues to mount a serious threat in Iowa.

> In interviews with CNN, a growing number of Republicans are beginning to echo remarks made by the likes of former Sen. Bob Dole and Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad…
>
> […]**[Cruz] famously led the charge to defund Obamacare in 2013, a battle that precipitated a 16-day government shutdown. He battled with his party's strategy on immigration, the debt ceiling and the budget, even one time pulling GOP senators into session on a Saturday during Christmas season.**
>
> **And Cruz's accusation earlier this year that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is a liar over his deal-making on the Export-Import Bank angered many Republicans.**
>
> "Ted Cruz has burned some bridges with some fellow senators," said Sen. Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia. "You do see people coming out with more aggressive comments" ahead of Iowa.

I actually think it's *a good thing* that Mitch McConnell and John McCain and Lindsey Graham don't like Cruz.

Oddly enough, he is also the most qualified candidate running.

Young Conservatives explains:

- Graduated valedictorian in 1988 from Second Baptist High School
- Graduated cum laude from Princeton University in 1992
- Graduated magna cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1995
- 1992 U.S. National Debate Champion representing Princeton
- 1995 World Debating Championship semi-finalist representing Harvard
- Served a law clerk to Chief Justice William Rehnquist, making him the first Hispanic ever to clerk for a Chief Justice of the United States
- Served as Solicitor General of Texas from 2003 to 2008, making him the first Hispanic Solicitor General in Texas, the youngest Solicitor General in the entire country and the longest tenure in Texas history
- Partner at the law firm Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, where he led the firm's U.S. Supreme Court and national appellate litigation practice
- Authored over 80 SCOTUS briefs and presented over 40 oral arguments before The Court
- Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, where he taught U.S. Supreme Court litigation

Smart guy.

Here are the specifically *conservative* achievements:

- In the landmark case of District of Columbia v. Heller, Cruz assembled a coalition of 31 states in defense of the principle that the 2nd Amendment guarantees an individual right to keep and bear arms
- Presented oral arguments before the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit
- Defended the Ten Commandments monument on the Texas State Capitol grounds,
- Defended the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools
- Defended the State of Texas against an attempt by the International Court of Justice to re-open the criminal convictions of 51 murderers on death row throughout the United States

He's 5 for 9 arguing cases before the Supreme Court. Cruz knows how to convince liberal scholars to come over to his side. That's what he enjoys – persuading people who disagree with him.

Here's some of the legislation he introduced:

- ObamaCare Repeal Act
- Disarm Criminals and Protect Communities Act
- Defund Obamacare Act of 2013
- A bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to permit States to require proof of citizenship for registration to vote in elections for Federal office
- State Marriage Defense Act of 2014
- A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the intentional discrimination of a person or organization by an employee of the Internal Revenue Service
- A bill to prohibit the Department of the Treasury from assigning tax statuses to organizations based on their political beliefs and activities
- American Energy Renaissance Act of 2014
- A bill to deny admission to the United States to any representative to the United Nations who has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity against the United States and poses a threat to United States national security interests
- SuperPAC Elimination Act of 2014
- Free All Speech Act of 2014
- A bill to prevent the expansion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program unlawfully created by Executive memorandum on August 15, 2012
- Sanction Iran, Safeguard America Act of 2014

He has done something to address so many of the things I've been writing about on this blog – voter fraud, IRS discriminating against conservatives, etc. I am a Cruz supporter because I like Cruz, not because I oppose Trump and Rubio.

Trump hasn’t got a single conservative achievement. I wrote before about how Rubio sponsors liberal legislation.

Although people present Cruz as a conservative firebrand, he actually got more legislation passed under a Democrat president than Marco Rubio, who rarely shows up to vote, much less introduce legislation.

The drowning stranger illustration challenges atheistic morality

February 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Learning about right and wrong, good and evil
This is by Matt from Well Spent Journey blog.

Excerpt:

> Here's a thought experiment.
>
> ———
>
> *Imagine that you're a healthy, athletic, 20-year-old male. It's the morning after a thunderstorm, and you're standing on the banks of a flooded, violently churning river.*
>
> *You notice an object floating downstream.*
>
> *As it moves closer, you suddenly realize that this object is a person. The head breaks the surface, and you see a panic-stricken elderly woman gasping for air. You've never met her before, but vaguely recognize her as an impoverished widow from a neighboring village.*
>
> *You look around for help, but there's no one in sight. You have only seconds to decide whether or not to jump in after her – recognizing that doing so will put your own life in significant peril.*
>
> ———
>
> Is it **rational** for you to risk your life to save this stranger? Is it **morally good** to do so?
>
> For the Christian, both of these questions can be answered with an emphatic **"yes"**.

> The Christian is called to emulate the example set forth by Jesus, who not only risked, but sacrificed his life for the sake of others. The Christian believes that the soul is eternal, and that one's existence doesn't come to an abrupt end with death. Additionally, he can point to the examples of countless Christian martyrs who have willingly sacrificed their own lives.
>
> For the secular humanist, the answers to these questions are much more subjective. When I previously asked 23 self-identifying atheists, *"Is it rational for you to risk your life to save a stranger?"* only 4 of them responded with an unqualified *"yes"*.
>
> Biologically speaking, the young man in our scenario has nothing to gain by jumping after the drowning woman. Since she's poor and elderly, there are no conceivable financial or reproductive advantages involved. Evolutionary biologists often speak of "benefit to the tribe" as a motivation for self-sacrifice…yet the young man's community would certainly place greater practical value on his life than that of a widow from a neighboring village.
>
> Secular humanists argue that people are capable of making ethical decisions without any deity to serve as Moral Lawgiver. On a day-to-day basis, this is undeniably true. We all have non-religious friends and neighbors who live extremely moral and admirable lives.
>
> In the scenario above, however, secular ethics break down. The secular humanist might recognize, intuitively, that diving into the river is a **morally good** action. But he has no rational basis for saying so. The young man's decision is between empathy for a stranger (on the one hand) and utilitarian self-interest & community-interest (on the other).
>
> In the end, there can be no **binding moral imperatives** in the absence of a Moral Lawgiver. If the young man decides to sit back and watch the woman drown, the secular humanist cannot criticize him. He's only acting rationally.

When I read this, I was of one of the questions from one of my earliest posts, where I list a dozen interview questions to ask atheists. His question is very much like one of my questions. You may like the others in my list, as well.

It seems to me that on atheism, the only answer you can give for why you would do the right thing is "because it makes me happy". And as we see with abortion – 56 million unborn children dead – it very often *doesn't* make atheists happy to save someone else's life. Not if it means any infringement on their own happiness. Every time an atheist votes Democrat, they are voting to declare that people who get in their way should not be saved. And atheists (the "nones", anyway) are one of the largest Democrat voting blocs. According to the 2012 Secular Census, 97% of secularists deny that unborn children have a right to life. And the 2013 Gallup poll found that "nones", people with no religion, are most likely to be pro-abortion. (Note that "nones" are not necessarily atheists, they may have some beliefs, but they are not observant). It's not rational to inconvenience yourself to save others on atheism. You have one life to live, be happy, survival of the fittest.

Ted Cruz emphasizes libertarian credentials to Rand Paul supporters in New Hampshire

February 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted Cruz meets the voters at a campaign stop

New Hampshire is well-known as one of the most secular states in the union. They are very liberal on social issues, and socialist candidate Bernie Sanders is polling about 15 points higher than socialist-lite candidate Hillary Clinton. Cruz is in a 4-way tie for second place right now with three moderate, establishment candidates: John Kasich, Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio.

Cruz is trying to emphasize his libertarian credentials so that be broadens his appeal to a different class of voters.

The Washington Post explains how he's doing it:

> Less than two days before the polls opened, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) was still working to land the libertarian-minded GOP presidential primary voters who were prodded into politics by Ron Paul and who are deeply unsure about what to do next. At Cruz's first post-church stop of the day, in the western New Hampshire town of Peterborough, his audience included more than a few voters who planned to support Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), and wanted to hear a specific pitch.
>
> Cruz aimed right at them, elongating his standard riff about the risks a Democratic president would pose to the Supreme Court, and saying that his justices would end eminent-domain abuse.
>
> "Many people here are familiar with the case of *Kelo v. New London*," Cruz said. "*Kelo* was a disgrace."
>
> This was not the first time Cruz had attacked *Kelo* and eminent domain in a New Hampshire speech, but a debate moment that Cruz had no part of seemed to give him an opening. In rival Jeb Bush's best moment from Saturday night, the former Florida governor tore into Donald Trump for his legal campaign to seize property from an elderly woman and use it to expand parking at one of his

> Atlantic City properties.

I blogged before about Donald Trump's support for eminent domain, which was used to try to seize an elderly woman's house so that Trump could put up a parking lot for his limousines.

Here was the exchange from the debate where Trump defended his support for eminent domain in the ABC News debate last Saturday night:

What a disastrous response from Trump – he got boo'd *multiple times* by the audience for it, and it rattled him.

Cruz is also a co-sponsor of Rand Paul's legislation to audit the Federal Reserve, something that I would like to see done, as well. There's too much meddling with the value of the dollar when the Federal Reserve prints money willy nilly.

The New Hampshire Union Leader reports that Cruz has had some success at winning over libertarians:

> Republican presidential hopeful Ted Cruz has won over five state representatives who were part of Rand Paul's New Hampshire leadership team.
>
> Paul, who ended his campaign last week, had amassed a large coalition of liberty Republicans and conservative activists who are now migrating to other candidates ahead of Tuesday's primary.
>
> The six state lawmakers endorsing Cruz are: Rep. Max Abramson of Seabrook, Rep. Eric Eastman of Nashua, Rep. Harold French of Franklin, Rep. Larry Gagne of Manchester, and Rep. Mark McLean of Manchester.

This outreach foreshadows how Cruz would appeal to the American people as a whole, should he win the nomination. He wouldn't have to become more liberal, he would just have to give the libertarians what they want in fiscal areas, and maybe in national security.

Ted Cruz meets voters at a campaign event

Cruz also has a solid ground game that may make a difference.

The Daily Caller reports:

> Former New Hampshire Republican Sen. Bob Smith, a Cruz campaign ally, expressed full confidence about the campaign's ground game overcoming present poll expectations.
>
> […]"We've been ID'ing voters who are leaners, people who are not sure, and we've been knocking on thousands and thousands of doors for literally months and I'll tell you it feels good out there."
>
> Smith says it is a tradition in New Hampshire to be on the ground and meet people. "And that's what Cruz has been doing now for several weeks. I've been on the bus with him all this week and a week or so a go, he was up for another five-day bus trip," he said.
>
> "He was meeting two three four hundred people one night. 1300 people at stop after stop after stop. So he's met thousands of voters here one on one," said Smith.
>
> […]Cruz surrogate Steve Lonegan, a New Jersey Republican activist, agreed with Smith telling TheDC Saturday night, "It's over a 100 people right now. I think we have more than any other candidate. Our headquarter phones are going non-stop. We're setting up 40 satellite offices in people's homes and around the state for election day to get out the vote. So this campaign is superb about building a grassroots movement and so we will outperform people's expectations."
>
> The Cruz campaign's volunteers include college students who often stay at the

> dormitories of Chester College, a now-closed school.
>
> “I came up this Friday but I was up a couple of weekends ago, so I’m going to stay here until the primary,” said Kareena, a 19-year old student at the University of Rhode Island.
>
> Kareena, like many of the students working on the campaign, are phone banking and door knocking for the first time on a political campaign.
>
> […]“We go door to door, and we have walk books for different cities in New Hampshire, so it’s really great. It’s incredible. You don’t have to carry around a bunch of papers and clip boards. So it’s really convenient,” she said.
>
> Fellow Cruz volunteer Mary Brown, an 18-year-old from the University of Tulsa, also enjoys door knocks.
>
> “It’s fun to see the different areas of New Hampshire. It’s kind of like phone banking. You get a lot of different answers. It’s kind of really exciting when you see someone with a Ted Cruz sign or Ted Cruz sticker,” she says.

I guess we’ll know tomorrow at this time how well this appeal to libertarians, coupled with this volunteer-driven ground game, worked out for Cruz. I’m hoping for third place, but it’s going to be tough. Kasich, Rubio and Bush have a lot of momentum.

Satellite missile launch proves that North Korea can hit United States with ICBM

February 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from the Daily Signal.

It says:

> North Korea has again successfully put a satellite into orbit, demonstrating the same technology needed to launch an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and showing that its long-range missile program is becoming increasingly reliable.
>
> In 2015, the U.S. commanders of U.S. Forces Korea, Pacific Command, and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) publicly assessed that North Korea has the ability to hit the United States with a nuclear weapon.
>
> Preliminary assessments indicate that the satellite was approximately 450 pounds, twice as heavy a payload as the previous successful satellite launch in Dec. 2012, and that the missile may have a range of 13,000 km, an increase from the previous estimated 10,000 km range.
>
> The longer range would put virtually the entire continental United States within range. Even at 10,000 km, approximately 38 percent of the United States, comprising 120 million people, was already within range.
>
> It is clear that North Korea's nuclear and missile tests are serious, irreparable violations of U.N. Security Council resolutions. This while the North Korean regime remains openly defiant of the international community despite countless attempts to reach a diplomatic resolution.

How did North Korea get nuclear weapons?

Hot Air explains how the North Korea deal was presented to the American people by Bill Clinton and his allies in the left-wing news media (note how similar it is to the way that Obama raved about his deal with Iran):

> "This is a good deal for the United States," said President Clinton. "North Korea will freeze and then dismantle its nuclear program. South Korea and our other allies will be better protected. The entire world will be safer as we slow the spread of nuclear weapons."
>
> This whole agreement collapsed in 2002, when the CIA discovered that North Korea was secretly enriching uranium for further weapons production. The country, which also carried the title of virtually being the world's largest prison, not only kept the nuclear weapons it already had at the time–which estimates said was to be just one–but they built more (shocker) and the geopolitical situation in Asia hasn't changed.

You can read about the full chronology for Clinton's North Korea deal, the subsequent CIA discoveries, and the missile launches that violated the United Nations resolutions. It's important for young people to know the history of the efforts by Democrats to give goodies to bad actors in the world. It never works, but young people are often not taught about these things in liberal schools. And they don't do much on their own to find the truth about these issues.

Where do Republicans stand on the threat from North Korea?

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

Texas senator Ted Cruz reacted to the North Korea missile launch in the ABC News debate last Saturday night, connecting it to the Democrat Party's previous deal with North Korea.

CNS News explains what Ted Cruz said about the missile launch:

> Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), asked to respond toNorth Korea's test of an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the United States, called for an expanded missile defense capacity and a "hardened" electrical grid.
>
> But first, he noted that President Bill Clinton relaxed sanctions against North Korea, just as President Obama has relaxed sanctions against Iran: "So, what we are seeing with North Korea is foreshadowing of where we will be with Iran."
>
> At Saturday's Republican debate in New Hampshire, moderator Martha Raddatz asked Cruz how he would respond as commander in chief to the North Korean missile launch:
>
> "Well, I would note initially, the fact that we're seeing the launch, and we're seeing the launch from a nuclear North Korea, is the direct result of the failures of the first Clinton administration. The Clinton administration led the world in relaxing sanctions against North Korea. Billions of dollars flowed into North Korea in exchange for promises not to build nuclear weapons. They took those billions

> and built nuclear weapons.
>
> “And, I would note also the lead negotiator in that failed North Korea sanctions deal was a woman named Wendy Sherman who Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton promptly recruited to come back to be the lead negotiator with Iran. So, what we are seeing with North Korea is foreshadowing of where we will be with Iran.”
>
> Cruz said one of the first things the U.S. should do is expand its missile defense capacity: “We ought to put missile defense interceptors in South Korea. South Korea wants them.
>
> “One of the real risks of this launch, North Korea wants to launch a satellite, and one of the greatest risks of the satellite is they would place a nuclear device in the satellite. As it would orbit around the Earth, and as it got over the United States, they would detonate that nuclear weapon and set of what’s called an EMP, and electromagnetic pulse, which could take down the entire electrical grid on the Eastern seaboard, potentially killing millions.
>
> “We need to harden the grid to defend ourselves, and we need missile defense to protect ourselves against North Korea.”

One of the first things that Barack Obama did when he became president was kill a deal to deploy missile defense interceptors to Poland and other European countries. He wouldn’t protect America from missile launches from nations that hate us, but he did release $100-150 billion dollars to Iran to continue their arms development. We can see where that leads by looking at where the Bill Clinton deal lead North Korea. We need to learn from history. Democrats don’t do foreign policy to protect America. Democrats do foreign policy so they can congratulate themselves on achieving “world peace” by giving away everything to aggressive regimes who want to destroy us.

Bible study: what difference does the resurrection of Jesus make?

February 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here's an article from Bible.org, written by famous New Testament manuscript expert Dan Wallace. (H/T Eric Chabot, Ratio Christi OSU)

There is a lot in this article, but I'll just snip out one that I think is interesting.

First, what does the Old Testament say about the doctrine of the resurrection in Judaism?

> The resurrection of the dead was not *plainly* revealed in the OT until very late in salvation history. It was not until the Jews were taken in captivity, in the sixth century BC, that this was clearly articulated. Daniel 12:1-2 is the principal text: it speaks of the resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous:
>
> At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (RSV)
>
> Why was it not *clearly* revealed till then? It was not revealed until there was a *felt* need for it. When the Jews had no present (because of the captivity) they had to look to the future. The revelation of the resurrection came at precisely the time when the people of God needed *hope* for the future.
>
> What is significant about this is how masterful are God's insights into human nature. In the NT era, one religious group in Palestine did not embrace the

> resurrection as a true doctrine: the Sadducees (cf. Mark 12:18)–that is why they were "sad, you see!" The Sadducees were in charge of the temple. They derived their income from the sacrifices. In a sense, they were the precursors to modern TV evangelists. They had it good! They were the rich aristocracy that ran the place.
>
> Those who have it good in this life don't often long for the next. The Sadducees illustrate this. The resurrection is a truth especially precious to those who are poor and those who are hopeless. It is precious to those who long for heaven enough that earth holds no sway over them.

Many things that I wanted to achieve in this life never happened. I wanted to do great things for God, not the least of which was getting married, having a family, getting a PhD and teaching computer science in a secular university. It seems like everything takes so long to do, and secular leftists in government keep making everything I wanted to try to do more expensive and more risky. I'll never have enough time to do everything!

I often find myself thinking of Heaven, and having that eternal perspective on this life. On Sunday, I was on the treadmill listening to 1st Corinthians, and Paul was talking about how difficult the Christian life is supposed to be because of negative reaction from the people around you. I'm glad my salvation doesn't depend on what people think of me, or whether I was able to get enough done for God.

Significance for apologetics

Did you know that Jesus provided the resurrection as evidence for those who were skeptical of his claims to be God stepping into history?

Here's an article from Got Questions? on the "Sign of Jonah", which appears in the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

It says:

> The phrase "sign of Jonah" was used by Jesus as a typological metaphor for His future crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Jesus answered with this expression when asked by the Pharisees for miraculous proof the He was indeed the Messiah. The Pharisees remained unconvinced of Jesus' claims about Himself, despite His having just cured a demon-possessed man who was both blind and mute. Shortly after the Pharisees accused Jesus of driving out demons by the power of Satan, they said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here" (Matthew 12:38–41).
>
> To fully appreciate the answer that Jesus gave, we must go to the Old Testament

> book of Jonah. In its first chapter, we read that God commanded the prophet Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and warn its people that He was going to destroy it for its wickedness. Jonah disobediently ran from the Lord and headed for the city of Tarshish by boat. The Lord then sent a severe storm that caused the crew of the ship to fear for their lives. Jonah was soon thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish where he remained for “three days and three nights” (Jonah 1:15–17). After the three-day period, the Lord caused the great fish to vomit Jonah out onto dry land (Jonah 2:10).
>
> It is this three days that Jesus was referring to when He spoke of the sign of Jonah.

I often bring up the Sign of Jonah when I am dealing with Christians who don’t want to learn how to explain their faith to non-Christians persuasively. I’m glad that story is in there!

The resurrection is a very important part of the life of the Christian. I argued in this post that it makes a difference to your feelings about your own life, and it makes a difference to your case-making with non-Christians.

Bush, Rubio and Christie spent $70 million in NH – Cruz beat them and spent $580 thousand

February 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

	Donald Trump	John Kasich	Ted Cruz	Jeb Bush
Votes	94,821	42,699	31,425	29,851
%	35%	16%	12%	11%
Delegates	10	3	2	2

	Marco Rubio	Chris Christie	Carly Fiorina	Ben Carson
Votes	28,353	20,152	11,248	6,149
%	11%	7%	4%	2%
Delegates	0	0	0	0

NH primary results early Wednesday morning with 95% counted
(Source: Fox News)

According to this tweet from the Weekly Standard's Stephen F. Hayes, here are the totals of combined candidate/Super PAC spending in the New Hampshire primary:

- **$36 Million Jeb Bush**
- **$18.5 Million Chris Christie**
- **$15.2 Million Marco Rubio**
- $12.1 Million John Kasich
- $3.7 Million Donald Trump
- $1.8 Million Carly Fiorina
- **$580 Thousand Ted Cruz**

Here are the results of the election with 95% counted:

- Trump 94,821 (35%)
- Kasich 42,699 (16%)
- **Cruz 31,425 (12%)**
- **Bush 29,851 (11%)**
- **Rubio 28,353 (11%)**
- **Christie 20,152 (7%)**

- Fiorina 11,248 (4%)

And this is how much each candidate spent per vote:

- **Bush: $1206 per vote**
- **Christie: $918 per vote**
- **Rubio: $536 per vote**
- Kasich: $283 per vote
- Fiorina: $160 per vote
- Trump: $39 per vote
- **Cruz: $18 per vote**

Here are the most recent "cash on hand" numbers for the campaigns:

Cash on Hand (12/31/2015)

1. **Ted Cruz $18,734,794.46**
2. Marco Rubio $10,398,592.91
3. Jeb Bush $7,589,858.03
4. Donald Trump $6,964,324.88
5. Ben Carson $6,567,647.25
6. Carly Fiorina $4,484,307.21
7. John Kasich $2,537,300.60
8. Chris Christie $1,126,158.09

Cruz is backed primarily by individual small donors.

So what does it mean?

It means that you can tell a lot about a candidate from the way they spend money that is entrusted to them. You can tell a lot about a candidate by how much they can get done with the least possible expense. These are useful skills.

Ted Cruz meets voters at a campaign event

Ted Cruz's record of conservative achievements

Ted Cruz is also the most qualified candidate running.

Young Conservatives explains his achievements:

- Graduated valedictorian in 1988 from Second Baptist High School
- Graduated cum laude from Princeton University in 1992
- Graduated magna cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1995
- 1992 U.S. National Debate Champion representing Princeton
- 1995 World Debating Championship semi-finalist representing Harvard
- Served a law clerk to Chief Justice William Rehnquist, making him the first Hispanic ever to clerk for a Chief Justice of the United States
- Served as Solicitor General of Texas from 2003 to 2008, making him the first Hispanic Solicitor General in Texas, the youngest Solicitor General in the entire country and the longest tenure in Texas history
- Partner at the law firm Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, where he led the firm's U.S. Supreme Court and national appellate litigation practice
- Authored over 80 SCOTUS briefs and presented over 40 oral arguments before The Court
- Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, where he taught U.S. Supreme Court litigation

Smart guy.

Here are the specifically *conservative* achievements:

- In the landmark case of District of Columbia v. Heller, Cruz assembled a coalition of 31 states in defense of the principle that the 2nd Amendment guarantees an individual right to keep and bear arms
- Presented oral arguments before the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit
- Defended the Ten Commandments monument on the Texas State Capitol grounds,
- Defended the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools
- Defended the State of Texas against an attempt by the International Court of Justice to re-open the criminal convictions of 51 murderers on death row throughout the United States

He's 5 for 9 arguing cases before the Supreme Court. Cruz knows how to convince liberal scholars to come over to his side. That's what he enjoys – persuading people who disagree with him.

Here's some of the legislation he introduced:

- ObamaCare Repeal Act
- Disarm Criminals and Protect Communities Act
- Defund Obamacare Act of 2013
- A bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to permit States to require proof of citizenship for registration to vote in elections for Federal office
- State Marriage Defense Act of 2014
- A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the intentional discrimination of a person or organization by an employee of the Internal Revenue Service
- A bill to prohibit the Department of the Treasury from assigning tax statuses to organizations based on their political beliefs and activities
- American Energy Renaissance Act of 2014
- A bill to deny admission to the United States to any representative to the United Nations who has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity against the United States and poses a threat to United States national security interests
- SuperPAC Elimination Act of 2014
- Free All Speech Act of 2014
- A bill to prevent the expansion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program unlawfully created by Executive memorandum on August 15, 2012
- Sanction Iran, Safeguard America Act of 2014

And he has gotten more legislation passed than Marco Rubio in the Senate:

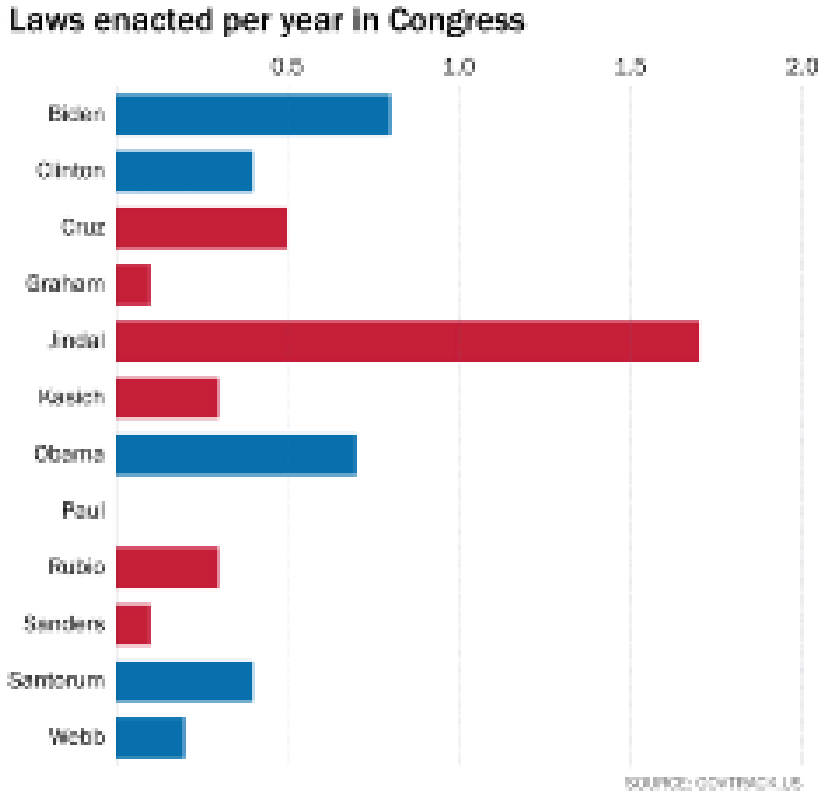

Laws enacted per year in Congress

He has done something to address so many of the things I've been writing about on this blog – voter fraud, IRS discriminating against conservatives, etc. I am a Cruz supporter because I like Cruz, not because I oppose Trump and Rubio.

Does Bernie Sanders know a lot about business, finance and economics?

February 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

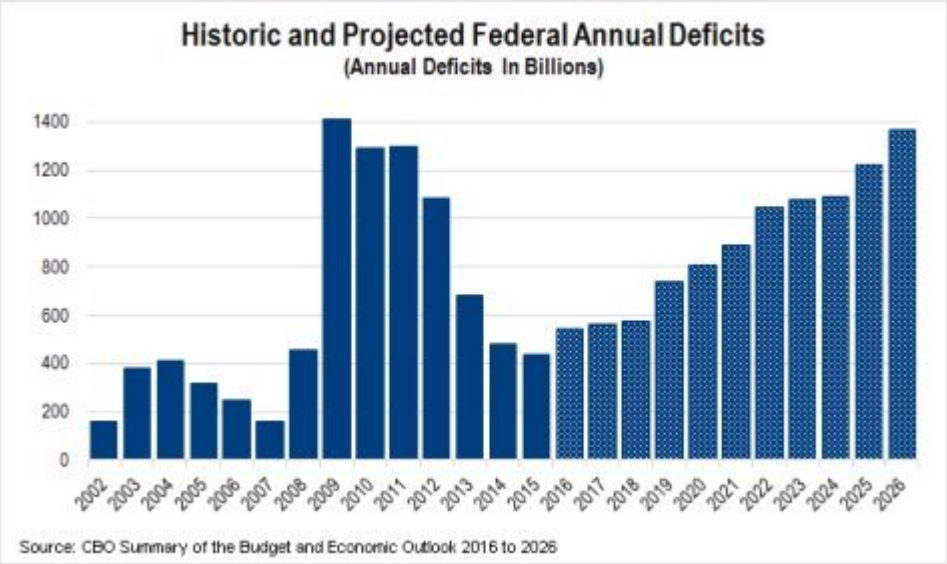

Democrats took control of government spending in 2007

This article from Investors Business Daily takes a look at his record and experience in the areas that are relevant to economic growth.

It says:

> Democratic presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders said Monday his parents would never have thought their son would end up in the Senate and running for president.
>
> […]He explained his family couldn't imagine his "success," because "my brother and I and Mom and Dad grew up in a three-and-a-half-room rent-controlled apartment in Brooklyn, and we never had a whole lot of money."
>
> It wasn't as bad as he says. His family managed to send him to the University of Chicago. Despite a prestigious degree, however, Sanders failed to earn a living, even as an adult. It took him 40 years to collect his first steady paycheck — and it was a government check.
>
> "I never had any money my entire life," Sanders told Vermont public TV in 1985, after settling into his first real job as mayor of Burlington.
>
> Sanders spent most of his life as an angry radical and agitator who never accomplished much of anything. And yet now he thinks he deserves the power to run your life and your finances — "We will raise taxes;" he confirmed Monday, "yes, we will."
>
> One of his first jobs was registering people for food stamps, and it was all downhill from there.
>
> Sanders took his first bride to live in a maple sugar shack with a dirt floor, and

> she soon left him. Penniless, he went on unemployment. Then he had a child out of wedlock. Desperate, he tried carpentry but could barely sink a nail. “He was a shi**y carpenter,” a friend told Politico Magazine. “His carpentry was not going to support him, and didn’t.”
>
> Then he tried his hand freelancing for leftist rags, writing about “masturbation and rape” and other crudities for $50 a story. He drove around in a rusted-out, Bondo-covered VW bug with no working windshield wipers. Friends said he was “always poor” and his “electricity was turned off a lot.” They described him as a slob who kept a messy apartment — and this is what his friends had to say about him.
>
> The only thing he was good at was talking … non-stop … about socialism and how the rich were ripping everybody off. “The whole quality of life in America is based on greed,” the bitter layabout said. “I believe in the redistribution of wealth in this nation.”
>
> So he tried politics, starting his own socialist party. Four times he ran for Vermont public office, and four times he lost — badly. He never attracted more than single-digit support — even in the People’s Republic of Vermont. In his 1971 bid for U.S. Senate, the local press said the 30-year-old “Sanders describes himself as a carpenter who has worked with ‘disturbed children.’ ” In other words, a real winner.

This is the man that so many Democrats want to put in charge of our economic policy. He’s never run a damned thing in his entire life, but his words sound nice if you have no understanding of how the world works. Besides, doesn’t a person’s good intentions automatically mean that he will achieve good results? He doesn’t have to know anything if his heart is in the right place, does he?

Here’s an article from the Washington Free Beacon that talks about a non-partisan study from the Tax Foundation think tank, which analyzes Sanders’ plans for the US economy.

Excerpt:

> Bernie Sanders proposed tax plan would raise taxes by $13.6 trillion over the next decade and reduce the economy’s size by 9.5 percent, according to an analysis by the Tax Foundation.
>
> […]**After accounting for reductions in economic growth, Sanders’ plan would lead to 12.84 percent lower after-tax incomes for all taxpayers, 6 million fewer full-time jobs, and an 18.6 percent smaller capital stock.**

That’s who just won the Democrat primary in the Live-Free-Or-Die state of New Hampshire on Tuesday night. They used to want freedom in New Hampshire, now they just want free stuff. Free stuff that their neighbor has to pay for. Or maybe their neighbor’s children.

The problem with all these new taxes ($13.6 trillion) is that you can’t get that money

from ONLY “the wealthy”. Although ignorant college kids may think that you can get $13.6 in tax revenue from the rich, the truth is that the so-called 1% don’t make that much money.

Let’s say that $13.6 trillion is $1.36 trillion per year.

John Stossel explains why you can’t make $1.36 trillion per year from taxing the rich:

> Progressives say, if you’re so worried about the deficit, raise taxes! There are lots of rich people around, squandering money. On my show, David Callahan of the group Demos put it this way: “Wealthy Americans who have done so well in the past decade should help get us out.”
>
> But it’s a fantasy to imagine that raising taxes on the rich will solve our deficit problem. If the IRS grabbed 100 percent of income over $1 million, the take would be just $616 billion.
>
> […]My $616 billion assumption above is absurd. Rich people wouldn’t work if government takes all their earnings.
>
> Progressives claim an increase in tax rates won’t stop producers from producing. But they presumably understand that people don’t work for free. When the top marginal rate was 90 percent, actor Ronald Reagan worked just half the year. As soon as he made enough money such that every additional dollar was taxed at 90 percent, he stopped working and went off to ride horses. Reagan later said that woke him up to the damage that high taxes impose.
>
> Maryland created a special “tax on the rich” that legislators said would bring in $106 million. Instead, the state lost $257 million. Some of Maryland’s rich just left the state. When New York state hiked its income tax on millionaires, billionaire Tom Golisano moved to Florida, which has no personal income tax. “[M]y personal income tax last year would’ve been $13,800 a day,” he told us. “Would you like to write a check for $13,800 a day to a state government, as opposed to moving to another state?”

That $13.6 trillion in taxes cannot come from the rich – they will stop producing, or more likely move their production to another country with more reasonable taxes. (Canada’s corporate tax rate is 15% – less than half our 36% corporate tax rate). The tax money Bernie wants is going to have to come out of the pockets of middle-class families, small businesses and other job creators.

Now think, Democrats: how well can your employer afford to employ you if they have to pay much higher taxes? They can’t, and you won’t have a job. Everything doesn’t stay the same when you make these changes to go in a socialist direction. People react to the changes. We have to think beyond stage one. What comes next, for ALL the people who are impacted by the change?

Correcting four myths about the history of the Crusades

February 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Crusader

Here is an interesting article from First Principles Journal.

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

If you asked me what are the two best books on the Crusades, I would answer God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades by Baylor professor Rodney Stark and The Concise History of the Crusades by Professor Thomas F. Madden. If you get this question a lot from atheists, then I recommend you pick these up. Anything by Rodney Stark is useful for Christians, in fact.

DHS whistleblower was ordered to scrub records of Muslims with terror ties

February 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?
This is from The Hill.

Full text:

> Amid the chaos of the 2009 holiday travel season, jihadists planned to slaughter 290 innocent travelers on a Christmas Day flight from the Netherlands to Detroit, Michigan. Twenty-three-year old Nigerian Muslim Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab intended to detonate Northwest Airlines Flight 253, but the explosives in his underwear malfunctioned and brave passengers subdued him until he could be arrested. The graphic and traumatic defeat they planned for the United States failed, that time.
>
> Following the attempted attack, President Obama threw the intelligence community under the bus for its failure to "connect the dots." He said, "this was not a failure to collect intelligence, it was a failure to integrate and understand the intelligence that we already had."
>
> Most Americans were unaware of the enormous damage to morale at the Department of Homeland Security, where I worked, his condemnation caused. His words infuriated many of us because we knew his administration had been engaged in a bureaucratic effort to destroy the raw material—the actual intelligence we had collected for years, and erase those dots. The dots constitute the intelligence needed to keep Americans safe, and the Obama administration was ordering they be wiped away.

> After leaving my 15 year career at DHS, I can no longer be silent about the dangerous state of America's counter-terror strategy, our leaders' willingness to compromise the security of citizens for the ideological rigidity of political correctness—and, consequently, our vulnerability to devastating, mass-casualty attack.
>
> Just before that Christmas Day attack, in early November 2009, I was ordered by my superiors at the Department of Homeland Security to delete or modify several hundred records of individuals tied to designated Islamist terror groups like Hamas from the important federal database, the Treasury Enforcement Communications System (TECS). These types of records are the basis for any ability to "connect dots." Every day, DHS Customs and Border Protection officers watch entering and exiting many individuals associated with known terrorist affiliations, then look for patterns. Enforcing a political scrubbing of records of Muslims greatly affected our ability to do that. Even worse, going forward, my colleagues and I were prohibited from entering pertinent information into the database.
>
> A few weeks later, in my office at the Port of Atlanta, the television hummed with the inevitable Congressional hearings that follow any terrorist attack. While members of Congress grilled Obama administration officials, demanding why their subordinates were still failing to understand the intelligence they had gathered, I was being forced to delete and scrub the records. And I was well aware that, as a result, it was going to be vastly more difficult to "connect the dots" in the future—especially beforean attack occurs.
>
> As the number of successful and attempted Islamic terrorist attacks on America increased, the type of information that the Obama administration ordered removed from travel and national security databases was the kind of information that, if properly assessed, could have prevented subsequent domestic Islamist attacks like the ones committed by Faisal Shahzad (May 2010), Detroit "honor killing" perpetrator Rahim A. Alfetlawi (2011); Amine El Khalifi, who plotted to blow up the U.S. Capitol (2012); Dzhokhar or Tamerlan Tsarnaev who conducted the Boston Marathon bombing (2013); Oklahoma beheading suspect Alton Nolen (2014); or Muhammed Yusuf Abdulazeez, who opened fire on two military installations in Chattanooga, Tennessee (2015).
>
> It is very plausible that one or more of the subsequent terror attacks on the homeland could have been prevented if more subject matter experts in the Department of Homeland Security had been allowed to do our jobs back in late 2009. It is demoralizing—and infuriating—that today, those elusive dots are even harder to find, and harder to connect, than they were during the winter of 2009.

Has the Obama administration done a good job of preventing terrorist attacks? Does his attitude of blaming America deter terrorist attacks, or does it embolden radical Islamists to perform more attacks?

The Daily Caller lists 7 terrorist attacks that occurred during the 7 years of the Obama presidency, as of July 2015.

Here is one:

> In November 2009, Army Major Nidal Malik Hasan opened fire in an attack at Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas. Hassan killed 13 people and wounded over 30 more.
>
> In a document dated Oct. 18, 2012 obtained by Fox News, Hasan wrote: "I, Nidal Malik Hasan, am compelled to renounce any oaths of allegiances that require me to support/defend man made constitution (like the constitution of the United States) over the commandments mandated in Islam."
>
> The U.S. government has steadfastly refused to call Hasan's militant slaughter a terrorist attack. Instead, federal officials have repeatedly characterized Hasan's actions as "workplace violence."
>
> A U.S. military court sentenced Hasan, a military psychiatrist, to death in 2013.

And another:

> In April 2013, Chechen brothers Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and Tamerlan Tsarnaev exploded two pressure cooker bombs near the finish line of the Boston Marathon.
>
> The bombings killed three people including an eight-year-old boy. Hundreds of runners and spectators were seriously injured. Seventeen people saw their limbs blown off.
>
> Three days later, the brothers ambushed and killed a Massachusetts Institute of Technology police officer.
>
> Tamerlan Tsarnaev died when his brother ran over him with a stolen Mercedes SUV in the midst of a shootout with police. In April, a jury found Dzhokhar Tsarnaev guilty of 30 criminal counts. He later received the death penalty.

There is a plan to protect us from these sorts of activities, and it was recently announced by Obama's attorney general, Loretta Lynch.

The Daily Wire reports:

> Speaking to the audience at the Muslim Advocates' 10th anniversary dinner Thursday, Lynch said her "greatest fear" is the "incredibly disturbing rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric" in America and vowed to prosecute any guilty of what she deemed violence-inspiring speech.
>
> "The fear that you have just mentioned is in fact **my greatest fear** as a prosecutor, as someone who is sworn to the protection of all of the American people, which is that the rhetoric will be accompanied by acts of violence," she said.
>
> […]After touting the numbers of "investigations into acts of anti-Muslim hatred" and "bigoted actions" against Muslims launched by her DOJ, Lynch suggested the Constitution does not protect "actions predicated on violent talk"

> and pledged to prosecute those responsible for such actions.

This is the same woman who declined to charge Lois Lerner for using the IRS as a weapon to persecute conservative groups in an election year.

Do you feel safe now? Do you think that the Democrats are serious about the threat of Islamic terrorism? Do you think that you should elect the Democrats again in November 2016?

Twelve Pakistani immigrant men get 143 years in jail for gang-raping 13-year-old girl

February 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

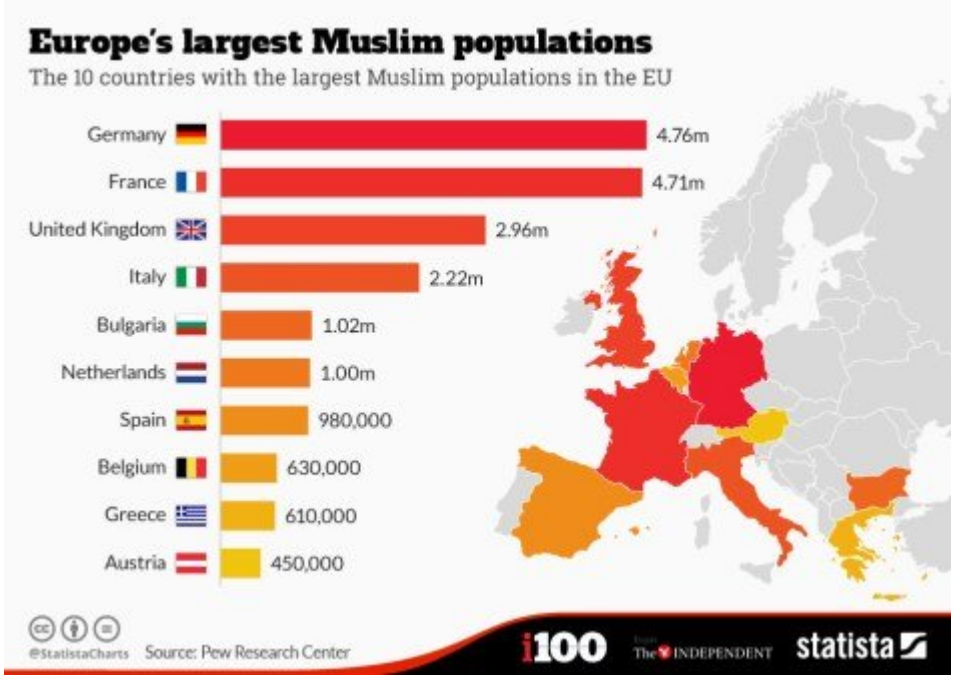

Muslim populations in Europe

This story is from the UK Daily Mail, and I think it shows the problem with the compassionate "open borders" view of immigration advocated by some people on the religious left.

WARNING: This story is for mature readers, reader discretion is advised.

It says:

> […]12 men were jailed for gang-raping a 13-year-old white girl in West Yorkshire.
>
> The gang of men from Pakistani origin were jailed for a total of 143 years at Bradford Crown Court today, for 13 months of horrendous abuse of the British white girl in 2011 and 2012.
>
> […]Eleven of the men were today jailed for rape and a twelfth man was jailed for sexual activity with a child under 16 today at Bradford Crown Court, but the ringleader has fled to Bangladesh.
>
> **West Yorkshire Police confirmed that the men jailed were of Pakistani origin.**
>
> […]Arif Chowdhury, 20, allegedly left for Bangladesh during the investigation after he was arrested in 2012 in connection to the raping of the schoolgirl, Bradford crown court heard last year.
>
> He is also accused of pimping her out to his contacts in Keighley when he was just 15.

> Louise Blackwell QC described Chowdhury, a convicted drug dealer, as being 'evil' and violent.
>
> A jury heard how Chowdhury first raped the girl, who cannot be named, behind a church when he was 15.
>
> He had previously got to know her when she was 13 after persuading her to do drug runs in Keighley.
>
> She had attempted to stop helping the drugdealer, revealing to police how he had racially abused her and then raped her.
>
> Chowdhury subjected her to regular beatings and made her have sex with other men in a year-long ordeal.

The judge's comments are interesting:

> During the case, the Recorder of Bradford, Judge Roger Thomas QC, said their behaviour throughout the trial was the worst he had seen in 40 years of legal practice.
>
> Judge Roger Thomas QC condemned the 'insolent and disrespectful behaviour' the accused showed in court which he said reflected their treatment of their victim.
>
> He told them: 'The attitudes of the majority of you have so clearly demonstrated to these proceedings has been contemptuous, disrespectful and arrogant on a scale that I have hardly seen before in many years of practice in criminal law.
>
> 'Exactly the same attitude to the 13/14 year old girl who you all sexually abused and exploited for your own selfish gratification.'
>
> **He added: 'None of these defendants had any concern for the victim.**
>
> **'They were totally uninterested in her welfare and what damage they were causing her.**
>
> **'The victim clearly demanded pity and understanding but their view of her was heartless and demeaning.**
>
> **'They saw her as a pathetic figure who had no worth and who served no purpose than to be an object that they could sexually misuse and cast aside.**
>
> **'They showed her no shred of decency or humanity when as a vulnerable child she so needed care and understanding.'**
>
> **The court heard their victim now has post-traumatic stress disorder and clinical depression.**

Now, this crime is not like these fake rape accusations that you see on college campuses, where the alleged victim never goes to the police and never goes to the hospital. This crime really happened. And it was investigated by the police. And the facts were determined in a real criminal trial In my view, the offenders got off too lightly – they

should all have received the death penalty. That would have sent a message to others not to do such things to children. Yes, a 13-year-old girl is a child, and she ought to be protected and nurtured, not abused and degraded. If a girl is fatherless and has no protector, that is all the more reason for good men to be *more* protective of her innocence and dignity – not less protective. We have to have a vision for what a girl's life should be like – education, work, marriage, a loving faithful husband, children, a home of her own. Dignity and value.

Christianity is different

That girl was known by God and made by God in order to reach out to him and to know him as he really is. Nothing about her origins, finances, family situation is relevant to the purpose for which she was made, which is the same purpose that we are all made for – to know God in Christ. On the Christian view, there is no room for looking at other people in distress and taking advantage of them. We should always be looking to others as equal in dignity and value, and made to know God. The Muslim men convicted of raping her were not doing what they were designed to do, because they followed a false religion, with false moral values. Christianity is true, and it rationally grounds the duty to love and serve others, and even to give up our lives to save others. That is the example of the founder that Christians are to emulate. Where was that example in the conduct of these Muslim men towards this little girl?

Russell Moore

One last thing I want to say is about Christian leaders who are very generous about welcoming in refugees from Muslim countries. Well, I mean they are generous with using taxpayer money to do this, not with their own money. One of these people is Russell Moore, who was interviewed by the radically left-wing BuzzFeed.

BuzzFeed was very sympathetic with Russell Moore's left-of-center view on this issue, and excited to be able to bash conservatives by using Moore as the club.

Excerpt:

> **Moore was also critical of candidates like Ted Cruz who are now arguing that the U.S. should only accept Christian refugees from Syria, not Muslims.**
>
> "I don't think we ought to have a religious test for our refugee policy," Moore said, adding that a rigorous vetting process could still make room for innocent Muslims. "We really don't want to penalize innocent women and children who are fleeing from murderous barbarians simply because they're not Christians," he said, though he added that persecuted Christians in the region haven't received enough attention from the U.S.

Moore wants to give interviews to leftist publications, where they will publicly praise him for his generosity and compassion, while shaming conservatives politicians who have a duty to protect the public. My priority is to protect that little girl from harm, not hand out goodies to grown-ups at taxpayer expense. The UK didn't have to take in refugees and

unskilled immigrants willy nilly, but they did it because they were more motivated by the desire to appear generous with other people's money than by the desire to protect innocent victims from harm. As long as it's not their money being spent, and their daughter being raped, people who talk for a living can seem very generous. What happened to this little girl is clearly horrendous, and it's not the first or last event of its kind. People like Moore who feel we need to be more compassionate and less cautious are effectively turning a blind eye to the reality of the concern.

I support a legal immigration process that has some sort of requirement for some period of following the laws or learning Western customs, e.g. – legal immigration for those who come here to do college degrees and/or get work permits. But Moore wants take in refugees who have no education, no work history, and no idea what our Western values are. Immigrants from Muslim countries who apply to attend school and/or work legally, and go through a process where they follow the law, pay their taxes, and so on, are much safer to allow in than refugees. We need legal immigrants to prove over a long period of time that they can survive without resorting to criminal activity (drug-dealing, sex-trafficking, etc.) or collecting welfare. But refugees are not like that. And we don't have adequate security screening. We can be generous, but prudent about protecting innocence, too. I don't want to be responsible for letting in people who rape little kids.

Disclaimer: Half my family is Muslim, and my parents immigrated legally via college degrees and work permits. Legal immigration process. Law abiding. Continuous work history. No collecting welfare. None of us has ever been charged with anything worse than a speeding ticket or parking ticket.

William Lane Craig and atheist Daniel Dennett discuss cosmology and fine-tuning

February 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Bf 109 locked in a dogfight

Here is audio of a very interesting exchange between William Lane Craig and leading atheist Daniel Dennett.

This audio records a part of the Greer-Heard debate in 2007, between prominent atheist Daniel Dennett and lame theistic evolutionist Alister McGrath. Craig was one of the respondents, and this was the best part of the event. It is a little bit advanced, but I have found that if you listen to things like this over and over with your friends and family, and then try to explain it to non-Christians, you'll get it.

By the way, this is mostly original material from Craig, dated 2007, and he delivers the speech perfectly, so it's entertaining to listen to.

Craig presents three arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe:

- the contingency argument
- the kalam cosmological argument
- the teleological argument

He also discusses Dennett's published responses to these arguments, and that's what I want to focus on, since most of you are already familiar with Craig's philosophical arguments for the existence of God.

Dennett's response to Craig's paper

Here is my snarky paraphrase of Dennett's reponse: (this is very snarky, because Dennett was just awful)

- Craig's three arguments are bulletproof, the premises are plausible, and grounded by the best cutting edge science we know today.
- I cannot find anything wrong with his arguments right now, but maybe later when I go home it will come to me what's wrong with them.
- But atheism is true even if all the evidence is against it today. I know it's true by my blind faith.
- The world is so mysterious, and all the science of today will be overturned tomorrow so that atheism will be rational again. I have blind faith that this new evidence will be discovered any minute.
- Just because the cause of the beginning of time is eternal and the cause of the beginning of space is non-physical, the cause doesn't have to be God.
- "Maybe the cause of the universe is the idea of an apple, or the square root of 7". (HE LITERALLY SAID THAT!)
- The principle of triangulation might have brought the entire physical universe into being out of nothing.
- I don't understand anything about non-physical causation, even though I cannot even speak meaningful sentences unless I have a non-physical mind that is causing my body to emit the meaningful sentences in a non-determined manner.
- Alexander Vilenkin is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- Alan Guth is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- This science stuff is so complicated to me – so Craig can't be right about it even though he's published about it and debated it all with the best atheists on the planet.
- If God is outside of time, then this is just deism, not theism. (This part is correct, but Craig believes that God enters into time at the moment of creation – so that it is not a deistic God)
- If deism is true, then I can still be an atheist, because a Creator and Designer of the universe is compatible with atheism.
- I'm pretty sure that Craig doesn't have any good arguments that can argue for Christianity – certainly not an historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus based on minimal facts, that he's defended against the most prominent historians on the planet in public debates and in prestigous books and research journals.

This is a very careful treatment of the arguments that Dr. Craig goes over briefly during his debates. Recommended.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information

- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Why is college so expensive?

February 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

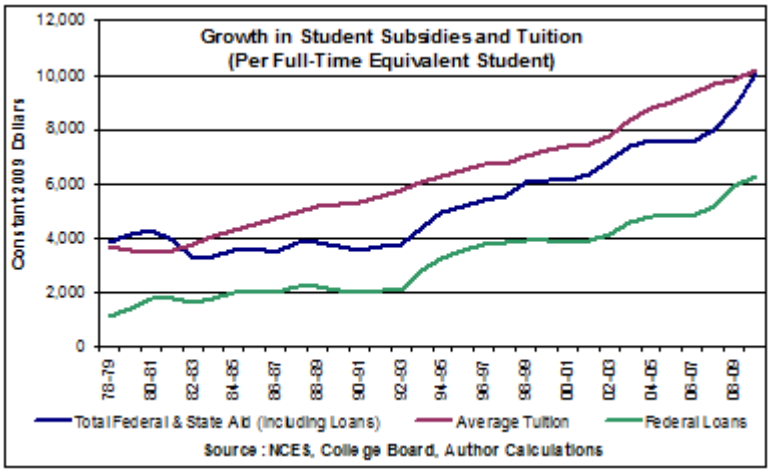

As subsidies increase, so do tuition costs

This article from Investors Business Daily is very helpful.

It says:

> Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton and the rest of the Democratic leadership are constantly complaining that college education costs too much. What they never bother to explain, however, is why.
>
> Two economists set out to do so, and Bernie and company will not like what they found.
>
> Grey Gordon and Aaron Hedlund, economists at Indiana University and the University of Missouri, developed a method to test various explanations for the share rise in tuition costs. Is it state funding cuts? Or the increased wage premium for a college degree? Or is it related to general cost increases in the services industries?
>
> Not exactly. In a working paper published by the National Bureau of Economic Research the economists report that these factors contributed insignificantly to the rapid rise in tuition between 1987 and 2010.
>
> What did account for almost all of it was, ironically enough, the massive explosion in federal aid over the past several decades. Federal aid — in the form of subsidized loans, grants and tax credits — shot up 134% in the past 15 years, according to the College Board. It's climbed 22% just under President Obama.
>
> Combined with state aid, the government is pouring more than $239 billion a year into programs designed to make college less expensive.
>
> What the authors found is that all this aid money has simply let college administrators spend more and jack up tuition to pay for it, without hurting enrollment. The result is there to see for anyone who visits a college campus these days — gourmet kitchens, luxurious dorms, shiny new administrative

> buildings, beautiful landscapes, state of the art workout facilities, etc.
>
> The authors call this the "Bennett hypothesis," after former Education Secretary William Bennett, who wrote in 1987 that "increases in financial aid in recent years have enabled college and universities blithely to raise their tuitions."
>
> Not only does the increased federal aid lead to higher tuition, the authors found, but it perversely leads to "more debt, and in the absence of higher labor market returns, more loan default inevitably occurs."
>
> In other words, the Democrats' plan to provide still greater amounts of federal aid will only make matters worse.
>
> Basically, college administrators know that people are willing to pay X to go to university.

This hypothesis – that it is government subsidies that drive up tuition rates – is supported in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

This is by Paul F. Campos, law professor at the radically leftist UC Boulder.

He writes:

> […][T]he astonishing rise in college tuition correlates closely with a huge increase in public subsidies for higher education. If over the past three decades car prices had gone up as fast as tuition, the average new car would cost more than $80,000.
>
> […]As the baby boomers reached college age, state appropriations to higher education skyrocketed, increasing more than fourfold in today's dollars, from $11.1 billion in 1960 to $48.2 billion in 1975. By 1980, state funding for higher education had increased a mind-boggling 390 percent in real terms over the previous 20 years. This tsunami of public money did not reduce tuition: quite the contrary.

The more money that is attached to students, the more money universities charge – simple.

But where is the money going? Is it mostly going to research? To the classroom? To hire more and better professors?

No:

> Interestingly, increased spending has not been going into the pockets of the typical professor. Salaries of full-time faculty members are, on average, barely higher than they were in 1970. Moreover, while 45 years ago 78 percent of college and university professors were full time, today half of postsecondary faculty members are lower-paid part-time employees, meaning that the average salaries of the people who do the teaching in American higher education are actually quite a bit lower than they were in 1970.
>
> **By contrast, a major factor driving increasing costs is the constant**

> **expansion of university administration. According to the Department of Education data, administrative positions at colleges and universities grew by 60 percent between 1993 and 2009, which Bloomberg reported was 10 times the rate of growth of tenured faculty positions.**
>
> **Even more strikingly, an analysis by a professor at California Polytechnic University, Pomona, found that, while the total number of full-time faculty members in the C.S.U. system grew from 11,614 to 12,019 between 1975 and 2008, the total number of administrators grew from 3,800 to 12,183 — a 221 percent increase.**

Do you wonder why college is so liberal? It's because instead of hiring professors to teach you how to do useful work for money, they are hiring useless administrators who just enforce politically correct secular leftism onto the students.

UPDATE: My friend Drew posted this in the comments:

What should young people considering college do? If you're going to college or trade school, go to a low-cost school. Do a STEM degree or do a trade that pays well. Try to get tuition assistance even if it means going to a less prestigious school. And work at every opportunity you get in the most serious job you can find. Don't spend your money – save it. Especially don't spend your money on fun, vacations and alcohol. As soon as you grow up, you're going to wish you could have it all back.

Tim McGrew lectures on undesigned coincidences in the Bible

February 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Tim McGrew

I have an interesting lecture for you to listen to today, by Dr. Tim McGrew. He is a professor of philosophy at Western Michigan University.

The MP3 file is here.

I do not have a summary of the lecture, but I do have an article that explains what undesigned coincidences are.

Lydia McGrew explains the concept of undesigned coincidences on her blog:

> Undesigned coincidences in the Gospels … is an argument that was well-known in the nineteenth century but has, for no really clear reason, simply been forgotten as time has gone on. It is a cumulative case argument that the Gospels reflect, to an important extent, independent knowledge of actual events. Please note that this argument is quite independent of one's preferred answer to the synoptic question. That is to say, even if, e.g., Mark was the first Gospel and others had access to Mark and show signs of literary dependence on Mark, the argument from undesigned coincidences provides evidence for independent knowledge of real events among the Gospel writers. There are many more of such coincidences beyond those given in the talk.

Basically, this argument finds cases where the same story is in two sources, but where some important detail is left out of one account so that something about the story seems out of place. But the other source has the missing detail that unlocks the mystery. This supports the view that the sources are independent witnesses of the same events. Multiple attestation is an indicator that the material is historical.

My favorite example of undesigned coincidences is the Philip example from John 6. Lydia explains that example here:

> As I was listening to Tim's examples, I was struck by all the reasons there might be for a real eyewitness not to fill out the *explanation for* a detail. Think for example how tedious it is to listen to someone who goes back to explain every little detail he mentions in a story.
>
> […]Similarly, as John is telling the story about the feeding of the five thousand, it would be quite natural for him to say that Jesus asked Philip where they could buy bread if he were really an eyewitness–that is, because he remembered that Jesus *did* ask Philip. (Tim talks about why it was Philip in the interview.) But John himself might have had to stop and think for a moment if someone had asked him, "Why did Jesus ask Philip rather than any of the other disciples?" Presumably when John told the story, he wasn't particularly thinking about some special reason for Jesus to select Philip for the question. But if someone were forging the story as fiction, he would have a reason for choosing to use a given disciple as a character at that point in his fictional narrative, and therefore he would be unlikely to choose that character without making the reason clearer to his readers.
>
> All sorts of such things can happen when one is telling a true story, especially a story one has witnessed. One gets caught up in what one actually remembers and drops in incidental references to small facts, which facts are to some extent selected randomly by the memory as one brings the scene back to memory. This is typical of real memoirs but not of elaborate forgeries.

If you think this is interesting and useful, then give the lecture a listen.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

February 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism. (H/T Allen Hainline)

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining what was in the podcast. (I wish more people who put out podcasts would do that).

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an

> attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

William Lane Craig explains the faith enterprise in an 8-minute video

February 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

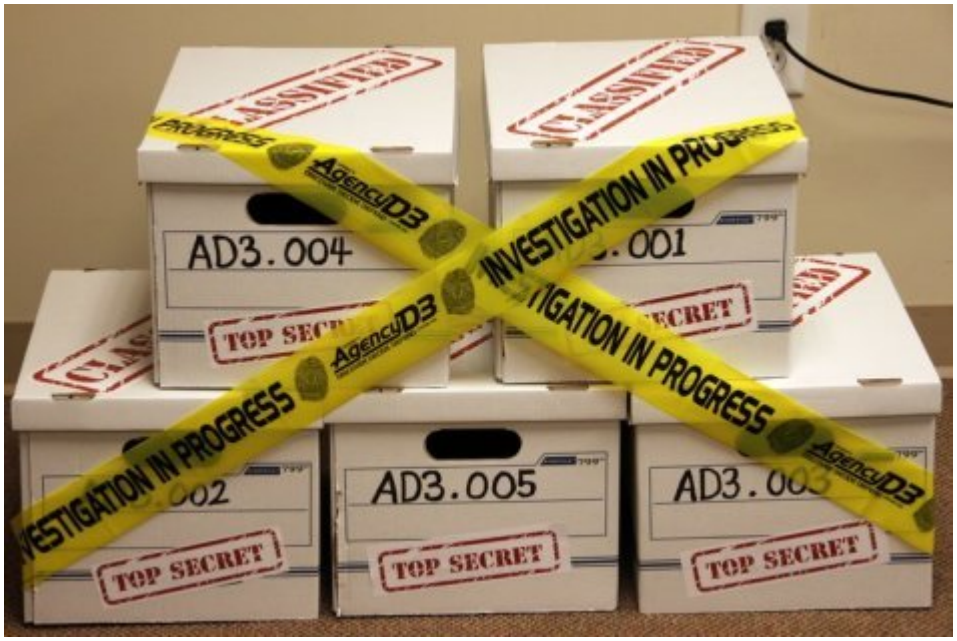

Investigation in progress

I found the video below on the blog of my friend Eric Chabot, who just recently hosted Michael Licona at the Ohio State University. I am hopeful we will get the recording of that soon, and I heard it was a very good lecture and a good turnout.

Here is the video, featuring Dr. William Lane Craig:

When I was doing my undergraduate degree, I had an atheist friend who was super smart, and he once surprised me by announcing that he had read the gospel of John. Flabbergasted, I asked him why. He said "I just wanted to see what all the fuss was about". Indeed. And this video from Dr. Craig explains to you what all the fuss is about. This is basically everything that everyone – Christian or non-Christian – should know about what Christianity is about. This is what I wish all my co-workers knew about me.

I really wish that non-Christians could understand how different Christianity is is from other religions, because it is true. Half my family is Muslim, the other half is Hindu and some Catholic. There is literally *nothing cognitive going on* in the spiritual journeys of my Muslim and Hindu friends and family members. But Christianity is so different from that – it is truth-centered. Anyway, in the rest of this post, I'll describe three striking things about the Christian worldview.

Christianity is testable

First, the Christian worldview is testable scientifically and historically. There are claims made about the external world in Christianity. For example, creation is a major doctrine in the Bible, and in Romans 1, Psalm 19 and other places, God explains to us through his human scribes that the nature of the world (created, designed) is there to prove to us that there is a Creator and Designer. If the universe were eternal, and complex embodied

life common for any permutation of the constants and quantities that are built into the fabric of the universe, that would be evidence for atheism. And the same with history. As 1 Corinthians 15 says, if the historical person of Jesus did not die and was not seen alive after by *large numbers of* friends, skeptics, and enemies, then there is no point in being a Christian. Christianity started out as a movement in the very time and place where the events that make it significant happened. There was no long delay between the central events, and the earliest proclamation of those events. So, you can test scientifically and historically. If the universe did not begin to exist, and if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Christianity would be disproved. These are things that anyone can investigate, but some people do not because they are afraid about what they will find, and how much they will have to adjust to God's existence and character.

Christianity is hard

Second, Christianity is not something that you get into because you need a crutch or because it enhances your life. It is not done in order to fit in with your family or with your culture or with your nation's dominant religion. Christianity is designed to not be fun, to not be easy, to not make you popular. In fact, one of the ways that you know that you are a real Christian and that God is leading you, is *because* God allows you to suffer, and *because* some people around you don't like you, and *because* your career and finances and so on are a little harder because now there is God to worry about in the decision-making, and not just you. It's like being married. A good marriage takes work because it is a commitment to another person. The more you learn about God through your study of science, history, theology and apologetics, the more you love him. And the more you love him, the more you *choose* to adjust your priorities and actions in a way that will invest in the relationship, instead of just what is best for you.

Christianity is effective

Third, Christianity is not about just being passive, having feelings and doing private things like prayer, singing and attending church. Christianity, when done right, involves projecting your beliefs outward. Evangelism, the practice of telling non-Christians the truth about Christianity, is not optional for Christians. Although many other religions dislike Christians for evangelizing, and some even use coercion and force to stop us, it is our responsibility. Many Christians seek to augment their evangelism by learning how to answer objections to Christianity, and how to make a case for the truth of core Christian beliefs. This involves studying philosophy, as well as scientific and historical evidence. And then there are other things to do – like organizing talks with good scholars on university campuses, and funding them through your job. Giving to charities that protect religious liberty, promote the pro-life message, and natural marriage. Those last two are important, because Christians care about children, since they are made by God, in order to know God, and selfish adults must be convinced control themselves. Christians often get involved in politics, seeking to limit the power of the secular government to infringe on human rights, to promote economic growth and to support the military when they engage in just wars. Christians often serve in the police force or the military, because we

seek to restrain and destroy evil and protect the good.

You should use this video as a way to think again about what your life is about. Have you investigated the evidence for Christianity? Have you made an effort to find answers to your objections to Christianity? Have you thought about how to live out your Christianity and make a difference for Christ and his Kingdom? What's your plan?

Let's get started

Two good Kindle books are on sale right now, for those who want to investigate the claims of Christianity:

- God's Crime Scene: A Cold-Case Detective Examines the Evidence for a Divinely Created Universe
- Contending with Christianity's Critics: Anwering New Atheists and Other Objectors

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

William Lane Craig's secret weapon is his amazing wife Jan

February 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: "Godspeed" by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

I want to draw your attention to a talk on "Vision in Life" given by Dr. William Lane Craig. Dr. Craig is the ablest defender of the Christian faith operating today. He has done formal academic debates with all of the best known atheists on major university campuses in front of *thousands* of university students.

It turns out that he owes a lot of his success to his amazing wife Jan.

The MP3 file is here. (32 minutes)

This talk was Dr. Craig's chapel address to Biola University students.

About 11 minutes into the talk, Bill describes what happened after he finished his Bachelor's degree at Wheaton:

> And so I joined the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for 2 years, and was assigned to Northern Illinois University. And that was where I met my wife Jan. She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota where she had come to faith in Christ. And she had a similar vision for her life of evangelism and discipleship.
>
> And as we worked at NIU together, she with gals and I with the guys, leading students to Christ and discipling them to walk with the Lord, we fell in love. And we decided that we would be more effective if we joined forces and became a

> team.

So their reason for getting together was because they thought that they would be more effective in evangelism and discipleship if they worked as a team.

It is at this point in the talk where Bill begins to explain just how Jan molded him into the lean, mean debating machine that travels the world striking terror into the hearts of atheists.

Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

In an article on his web site, he talks about how Jan encouraged him to do his first Ph.D:

> As graduation from Trinity neared, Jan and I were sitting one evening at the supper table in our little campus apartment, talking about what to do after graduation. Neither of us had any clear leading or inclination of what we should do next.
>
> So Jan said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really like to do next?"
>
> I replied, "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to England and do a doctorate under John Hick."
>
> "Who's he?" she asked.
>
> "Oh, he's this famous British philosopher who's written extensively on arguments for the existence of God," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a cosmological argument for God's existence."
>
> But it hardly seemed a realistic idea.
>
> The next evening at supper Jan handed me a slip of paper with John Hick's address on it. "I went to the library today and found out that he's at the University of Birmingham in England," she said. "Why don't you write him a letter

> and ask him if you can do a doctoral thesis under him on the cosmological argument?"
>
> What a woman! So I did, and to our amazement and delight Professor Hick wrote back saying he'd be very pleased to supervise my doctoral work on that subject. So it was an open door!

And in the same article, he explains how Jan encouraged him to get his second Ph.D:

> As Jan and I neared the completion of my doctoral studies in Birmingham, our future path was again unclear to us. I had sent out a number of applications for teaching positions in philosophy at American universities but had received no bites. We didn't know what to do.
>
> I remember it like yesterday. We were sitting at the supper table in our little house outside Birmingham, and Jan suddenly said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really *like* to do next?"
>
> I laughed because I remembered how the Lord had used her question to guide us in the past. I had no trouble answering the question. "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to Germany and study under Wolfhart Pannenberg."
>
> "Who's he?"
>
> "Oh, he's this famous German theologian who's defended the resurrection of Christ historically," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus."
>
> Our conversation drifted to other subjects, but Jan later told me that my remark had just lit a fire under her. The next day while I was at the university, she slipped away to the library and began to research grants-in-aid for study at German universities. Most of the leads proved to be defunct or otherwise inapplicable to our situation. But there were two grants she found that were possibilities. You can imagine how surprised I was when she sprung them on me!

Both of these Ph.D experiences are also described in the talk. And the talk concludes as follows:

> **I am so thankful to be married to a woman who is tremendously resourceful, tremendously talented and energetic, who could have pursued an independent career in any number of areas, but instead, she has chose to wed her aspirations to mine, and to make it her goal to make me the most effective person I can be, for Christ. And she has been like my right arm in ministry over these many years. And it is a tremendous privilege to be a team with a person like that.**
>
> **And you young men, I would encourage you, if you marry, to find a gal who shares your vision, not some independent vision, but who is interested in aligning herself with you, and pursuing together a**

> **common vision and goal that will draw you [together], so that you will avoid the growing separateness that so often creeps into marriages.**

And now you know the rest of Bill's story. *The person you marry will have an enormous influence on the impact you will have for Christ and his Kingdom.* It is up to you to decide whether that influence is going to be positive or negative, by deciding if you will marry, and if you do marry, by deciding whom you will marry.

You may also be interested in this talk given by William Lane Craig, entitled "Healthy Relationships" (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008) (audio here) In that talk, he offers advice to Christians who want to have a marriage that is consistent with their Christian faith.

Meet Ted Cruz's secret weapon: his supportive and loving wife Heidi Cruz

February 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas senator Ted Cruz, his wife Heidi Cruz and their two daughters

For Valentine's Day, I thought it would be a good idea to post something about the power behind GOP presidential candidate Ted Cruz. I read a half-dozen articles for this post about Heidi, as well as Ted Cruz's book where he talks about her. But this article from the Texas Tribune basically captures the point that I wanted to make about what makes a woman great.

The article says:

> [Heidi] Cruz, 43, grew up in San Luis Obispo, Calif., the daughter of a dentist and dental hygienist who are Seventh-day Adventists.
>
> When she was 5, Heidi's parents signed her up for piano lessons, and she insisted on practicing an hour and sometimes two each night. At age 8, when her parents first enrolled her in school, a family trip to Washington sparked an interest in politics. By fifth grade, Heidi announced she wanted to go to Harvard Business School.
>
> "I don't even know how she knew about Harvard Business School. It wasn't in our world at all," her mother, Suzanne Nelson, said in an interview. "A good word to describe her is 'driven.' I don't really know what has made her so driven."
>
> […]Cruz went to Claremont McKenna College and was active in the college Republicans and interested in appointive political office, said her mentor, Edward Haley. She also was intent on a career in business first. She moved to New York after graduation and worked on emerging markets at J.P. Morgan, an area in which she was interested after spending summers in Africa doing missionary

work with her parents. She was put on the Latin America desk and taught herself to speak Spanish between 18-hour work days.

Cruz achieved her dream of attending Harvard Business School but turned down a job at Goldman Sachs to work on George W. Bush's 2000 presidential campaign.

[…][S]he met Ted Cruz, who by his own admission turned off campaign colleagues with what he described as a "cocky" attitude. But not Heidi Nelson. She said he reminded her of "a 1950s movie star." He grilled her on her hopes, aspirations and dreams during their first date. They were married the following year.

She was the star when the couple arrived in Washington, netting jobs at the Treasury Department and then the White House, working as a Latin America director on the National Security Council. Ted Cruz was floundering, and he moved back to Texas to become the state's solicitor general with hopes of launching a political career. They lived apart for more than a year, until she gave up her job and moved to Texas.

After the move, she suffered through a period of depression.

"When I moved to Texas, it really was for Ted, and I wasn't comfortable with that," she told The Washington Post in September. She said she recovered with spiritual counseling. She started working at Goldman Sachs in Houston; she was promoted to managing director.

And she began to apply her talents to her husband's political career.

[…]She now holds her own campaign events, talking up her husband's values and laying out what the campaign sees as a grass-roots path to victory.

[…]She remains the campaign's top fundraiser, now making many calls from the road instead of from the campaign's airy Houston headquarters, where she installed a playroom with pillows decorated with raspberry prints for the girls. Cruz said she aims to make 30 calls a day but typically averages about 20 to 25; she is calling from the campaign and super PAC lists and trying to persuade donors to give the maximum allowed under federal election law.

"I don't want to say it's easy, and I don't close every deal," she said. "I think people want to be a part of something that addresses the main issue of the day, number one, which is Washington versus the people."

[…]**Ted Cruz told an audience in Winterset, Iowa, on Monday that the couple's decision to run for president was difficult for his wife.**

"Heidi spent a lot of years building a very, very successful career. And when we were deciding whether to run, particularly when you're parents of young girls, that's not an easy decision. And she was struggling with it," he said.

Ted Cruz said his wife was driving, listening to a CD of Christian music

> **sent by her sister-in-law. She was struck by a song about seeking the face of the Lord and pulled over on the freeway and started crying, he said. That moment, he said, "changed her heart," and she decided that the race was about God, the country and the future.**
>
> **Now, Heidi Cruz says her main job is to bolster her husband's candidacy.**
>
> **"There are women who use their husband's candidacies for their own" purposes, she said recently while being driven to yet another airport. "I love my life. I love my career. This is not for me. This is for our country."**

She has a great education and work experience. And she wants to use that to help her husband. It hasn't been easy, but in the end, she chose her husband's plan over her own.

How to get kissed by a man who loves you: Heidi Cruz helping her husband

Here is one more quote from a 2013 article on Heidi Cruz, from the radically leftist New York Times, of all places:

> In a glimpse into their marriage that Mr. Cruz called "illustrative," he recalled saying to his wife in the weeks before his Senate primary, when he was still behind in the polls, "Sweetheart, I'd like us to liquidate our entire net worth, liquid net worth, and put it into the campaign."
>
> "What astonished me, then and now, was Heidi within 60 seconds said, 'Absolutely,' with no hesitation," said Mr. Cruz, who invested about $1.2 million — "which is all we had saved," he added — into his campaign.

A lot of that money was money she had earned, working those 18-hour-days at J.P. Morgan. All that education, all that hard work – she sacrificed it all because her husband was running for the Senate to make a difference.

It was a good idea for her to go and do those difficult degrees and take those difficult

jobs, otherwise, she would not have the background and skills necessary to be effective for her husband. But, when push comes to shove and her husband gets himself mixed up in something important, then she drops *everything* to support him. That’s what a Christian wife ought to do.

Is Trump right to say that Bush lied about the Iraq war, and there were no WMDs?

February 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There was a debate on Saturday night, and Donald Trump started screaming like an unhinged psychopath not once, not twice, but THREE TIMES.

Red State introduces the meltdowns:

> In Saturday's CBS Republican presidential debate Donald Trump was the biggest loser. It wasn't even close. Worse, the Donald was whiney, uncivil and so very un-presidential. He threw Trumpertantrum after Trumpertantrum, interrupted again and again and was booed over and over.

Here they are:

- Trump's support for Vladimir Putin, an aggressive dictator who murders journalists, murders critics, and invaded Ukraine
- Trump says G.W. Bush lied to get us into the Iraq war, but three investigations found Bush didn't lie, and we found WMDs there
- Trump says he opposes Planned Parenthood, but this video shows him saying that they do good things and deserve partial funding

You can listen to all three meltdowns and read the transcripts in the Red State article. Let's look at them.

The third statement about Planned Parenthood has already been turned into an ad by Ted Cruz, who was called a liar by Trump in the debate. The new Cruz ad shows Trump saying exactly what Cruz said that he said about Planned Parenthood on the Sean Hannity show.

I'm going to cover the "George W. Bush lied us into war and there were no WMDs there" statement below, and then this afternoon, I'll cover the "Putin is a leader and there's no evidence that he assassinated anyone" statement.

Here's the part of the transcript that's relevant:

> DICKERSON: … On Monday, George W. Bush will campaign in South Carolina for his brother. As you've said tonight, and you've often said, the Iraq war and your opposition to it was a sign of your good judgment. In 2008, in an interview with Wolf Blitzer, talking about President George W. Bush's conduct of the war, you said you were surprised that Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi didn't try to impeach him. You said, quote: "Which, personally, I think would have been a wonderful thing." When you were asked what you meant by that and you said: "For the war, for the war, he lied, he got us into the war with lies." Do you still believe President Bush should have been impeached?
>
> […]TRUMP: You do whatever you want. You call it whatever you want. I want to

> tell you. They lied. They said there were weapons of mass destruction, there were none. And they knew there were none. There were no weapons of mass destruction.

Two points to make about this.

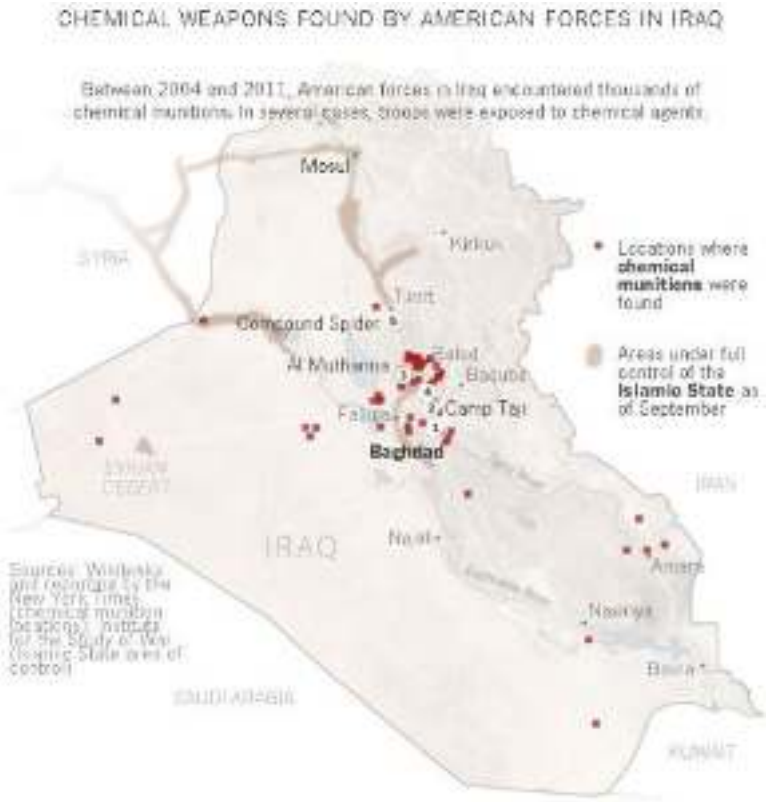

Chemical weapons found in Iraq

First, we did find WMDs in Iraq – lots of them. And this was reported in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

Read it:

> Five years after President George W. Bush sent troops into Iraq, these soldiers had entered an expansive but largely secret chapter of America's long and bitter involvement in Iraq.
>
> From 2004 to 2011, American and American-trained Iraqi troops repeatedly encountered, and on at least six occasions were wounded by, chemical weapons remaining from years earlier in Saddam Hussein's rule.
>
> In all, American troops secretly reported finding roughly 5,000 chemical warheads, shells or aviation bombs, according to interviews with dozens of participants, Iraqi and American officials, and heavily redacted intelligence documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

Second point, three different reports found that George W. Bush did not lie about the WMDs, nor did he pressure the intelligence agencies.

Excerpt:

> Everyone was convinced that Saddam had WMDs. It remains a fact Saddam used

> WMDs against and his own people. The intelligence and common wisdom that Iraq still possessed such weapons at the time we liberated Iraq proved to be wrong, but that doesn't equate to a lie. So lets go over the facts again.
>
> The Bipartisan Senate Select Committee Report On The U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments On Iraq found no evidence of political pressure to change the intelligence community's judgments related to Iraq's weapons programs. At pages 284-285 the report states:
>
> Conclusion 83. The Committee did not find any evidence that Administration officials attempted to coerce, influence or pressure analysts to change their judgments related to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capabilities.
>
> [Redacted]
>
> Conclusion 84. The Committee found no evidence that the Vice President's visits to the Central Intelligence Agency were attempts to pressure analysts, were perceived as intended to pressure analysts by those who participated in the briefings on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs, or did pressure analysts to change their assessments.
>
> Besides that report, two other independent investigations came to the same conclusion.
>
> The Robb-Silberman Commission On The Intelligence Capabilities Of The United States Regarding Weapons Of Mass Destruction likewise found "no evidence of political pressure." At pages 50-51 the Robb-Silberman report states: The Commission found no evidence of political pressure to influence the Intelligence Community's pre-war assessments of Iraq's weapons programs. As we discuss in detail in the body of our report, analysts universally asserted that in no instance did political pressure cause them to skew or alter any of their analytical judgments. We conclude that it was the paucity of intelligence and poor analytical tradecraft, rather than political pressure, that produced the inaccurate pre-war intelligence assessments.
>
> The British Butler Report, Review Of Intelligence On Weapons Of Mass Destruction similarly "found no evidence of deliberate distortion."

Trump can say anything he wants, but the facts are what they are.

Trump supporters in denial

I know 3 Trump supporters, and I've tried to speak to them about things like eminent domain, support for bank bailouts, single payer health care, touchback amnesty, Planned Parenthood support, support for Vladimir Putin, adultery and divorce, support for the gay rights agenda, four bankruptcies, etc. Their response has been do deny the evidence. Trump never did those things, all the news articles are lies, and all the videos of Trump saying those things are fake. I expect better than that from Trump supporters. This time, the stakes are as high as they could be: 4-5 Supreme Court picks. This is the ballgame for America.

Is Trump right to praise Putin's leadership abilities?

February 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

In my previous post, I took on a couple of the meltdowns that Trump had in the CBS News debate Saturday night. Let's look at another one.

Let's first see what Trump said in this article from the leftist CNN.

Excerpt:

> Donald Trump on Friday praised Vladimir Putin and appeared to defend the autocratic Russian president when pressed about his alleged killing of journalists and political opponents critical of his rule.

> One day after Putin called Trump a "bright and talented" and the "absolute leader of the presidential race," the Republican presidential front-runner returned the compliments, hailing Putin as a "leader" and pointing to his high favorability numbers in Russia.
>
> "He's running his country and at least he's a leader, unlike what we have in this country," Trump said when asked by "Morning Joe" Republican host Joe Scarborough about Putin's alleged killing of journalists and political opponents.
>
> "I think our country does plenty of killing also, Joe, so you know. There's a lot of stupidity going on in the world right now, a lot of killing, a lot of stupidity," he said.

And from the leftist Washington Post:

> On Sunday, Trump took the opportunity to defend himself. "Nobody has proven that he's killed anyone. … He's always denied it. It's never been proven that he's killed anybody," the American billionaire explained during an appearance on ABC's "This Week." He added: "You're supposed to be innocent until proven

> guilty, at least in our country. It has not been proven that he's killed reporters."

OK, so Trump thinks that Putin is a great leader.

Three points in response to that:

- Putin kills people who criticize him in the Kremlin
- Putin kills journalists who criticize him
- Putin initiated a completely unprovoked invasion of peaceful Ukraine

Let's look at them in order.

First point, from the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Gaunt and frail, his organs succumbing to the cruelly destructive power of radioactive poisoning, Alexander Litvinenko lay in a London hospital bed in November 2006 and identified the man responsible for his impending demise: Vladimir Putin.
>
> Nearly a decade later, an exhaustive inquiry by a British judge concluded on Thursday that the dying former KGB operative was probably right. For the first time, the Russian president was officially implicated in a murder that seemed plucked from the pages of a Cold War spy novel but actually played out in the bar of a posh hotel in 21st-century London.
>
> The victim: an outspoken Kremlin critic who had defected to Britain, joined the payroll of British intelligence and accused Putin of vices including corruption and pedophilia. The killers: a pair of assassins who, the report found, were almost certainly acting on orders from the Russian spy service, the FSB, and who left a trail of radioactive evidence strewn across London. The weapons of choice: one teacup and one massive dose of a rare nuclear isotope, polonium.

Second point, from the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> A 2009 investigation by the International Federation of Journalists reported 96 killings of journalists between 1991 and 2009, by far the highest number among the 20 richest countries in the world.
>
> Another rolling report from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) collects data of journalists killed in each nation from 1992 on. Only cases where the motive has a clear correlation to the victim's work as a journalist make the lists.
>
> There have been 56 such cases in Russia since CPJ started collecting data, with 25 deaths after Putin took office in May 2000. This means the frequency of deaths went down significantly after Putin's inauguration, with less deaths during Putin's 15 years as president or prime minister, than in the previous eight combined.

Third point, from the Washington Free Beacon.

Excerpt:

> Russia has deployed as many as 10,000 troops in eastern Ukraine for more than a year and has actively sought to hide the deaths of its soldiers, according to a new report that provides a comprehensive assessment of the Kremlin's invasion of its neighbor.
>
> The report was published Thursday by the Interpreter, a daily online journal that translates Russian media and reports on Russian affairs, also detailed the Kremlin's provision of increasingly sophisticated weaponry and vehicles to separatists in Ukraine. Nearly 8,000 people have been killed in the Ukrainian conflict since April 2014.
>
> The conflict originated in March 2014 when unmarked Russian soldiers seized the Crimean peninsula in Ukraine, an invasion that followed Ukraine's ousting of a pro-Moscow leader. Despite denials from Russian President Vladimir Putin at the time that the troops belonged to Russia, he later admitted that he deployed them.
>
> Following Russia's annexation of Crimea, Putin escalated support to separatists in eastern Ukraine that resided in areas with a majority of ethnic Russians. Reserve officers in the Russian military, who also had ties to the Russian military intelligence agency known as the GRU, commanded the rebels in attacks. By June 2014, the Ukrainian military said that Russia had massed more than 40,000 troops on Ukraine's border and deployed about 7,000 to 10,000 Russian soldiers inside Ukraine.

Aside from complete ignorance about anything related to the job of being President of the United States, Trump has two other qualities that worry me. First, his temperament during the debate – the unhinged screaming and calling people liar about things he said *on video* – is disturbing. Second, I have no doubt that Trump would go from praising Putin to attacking him for killing journalists, if Putin made the slightest criticism of Trump. Perhaps by mocking Trump's short, stubby fingers.

Trump supporters in denial

I know 3 Trump supporters, and I've tried to speak to them about things like eminent domain, support for bank bailouts, single payer health care, touchback amnesty, Planned Parenthood support, support for Vladimir Putin, adultery and divorce, support for the gay rights agenda, four bankruptcies, etc. Their response has been do deny the evidence. Trump never did those things, all the news articles are lies, and all the videos of Trump saying those things are fake. I expect better than that from Trump supporters. This time, the stakes are as high as they could be: 4-5 Supreme Court picks. This is the ballgame for America.

Gary Habermas and James Crossley discuss the minimal facts case for the resurrection

February 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two ninjas face off at sundown

James Crossley is my favorite atheist ancient historian, such a straight shooter. He's on the skeptical left, but he has a no-baloney way of talking that I really like. I was so excited to summarize this, and there's not a speck of snark in this summary. Crossley dates the gospel of Mark 37-43 A.D., far earlier than most scholars. Justin Brierley does a great job as moderator. Gary Habermas is OK, but he is not familiar with any useful arguments for God's existence, (kalam, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, etc.), and that is a problem in this debate.

Here are the details of the debate:

> Christian philosopher and historian Gary Habermas has been at the forefront of the 'minimal facts' approach as evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.
>
> He debates the commonly agreed facts with agnostic New Testament scholar James Crossley and they discuss whether the miracle of the resurrection can be a historically valid explanation of the evidence.

Note: this is the first of two shows they are doing together!!

The MP3 file is here. (If this disappears, tell me, I have a copy)

There is also a video on YouTube:

This non-snarky summary starts at 10:52.

Summary:

- Habermas: the minimal facts are the facts that even the majority of *skeptical* scholars will accept

Habermas list of minimal facts: (near universal acceptance)

1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion
2. After his death, his disciples had experiences that they believed were appearances of the risen Jesus
3. The disciples were transformed by their experiences and proclaimed his resurrection and were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection
4. The proclamation of his resurrection was early
5. James was converted by a post-mortem experience
6. Paul was converted by a post-mortem experience

Habermas list of widely-accepted facts:

1. Burial for Jesus in a private tomb
2. The private tomb found empty
3. The disciples despaired after Jesus was crucified
4. The proclamation of the resurrection started in Jerusalem
5. Changing the worship day from Saturday to Sunday

Crossley's views on the minimal and widely-accepted facts:

- Crossley: I am in broad agreement with what Gary said
- Crossley: "the resurrection appearances are some of the hardest, best evidence we have" because it's in early 1 Cor 15:3-8 creed
- Crossley: people were convinced that they had seen the risen Christ

The burial in a private tomb:

- Crossley: I have my doubts about the private tomb burial and the empty tomb
- Crossley: Mark's gospel has the burial in a private tomb by Joseph of Arimethea, and Mark is the earliest gospel
- Crossley: I don't have a doubt, it's just that there are other possible alternatives, and then the tradition was invented later – but that's just a possibility
- Crossley: there is not enough evidence to make a decision either way on the burial

The empty tomb:

- Habermas: there are multiple lines of evidence for the empty tomb
- Habermas: the reason it's not one of my minimal facts is because a quarter to a third of skeptical scholars reject it

The transformation of the followers of Jesus:

- Crossley: "yes, clearly, I don't think you can argue with that, it's fairly obvious"

The conversions of James and Paul:

- Crossley: “yes, because it’s based on 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, that report, that was handed on to him”

Where Habermas and Crossley agree:

- Habermas: you agree with the 6 facts in the minimal facts list, and you have problems with 2 of 5 facts from the widely accepted list
- Crossley: Yes

The empty tomb:

- Crossley: Two problems: first, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 doesn’t mention it, but it “probably assumes the idea that Jesus left behind an empty tomb when resurrected, I am convinced by some of the conservative arguments on that one, but it’s not hard evidence for there actually being an empty tomb”
- Crossley: Second, “the other early source we have ends with no resurrection appearances”, it makes him a bit skeptical of the empty tomb
- Habermas: the empty tomb is not a minimal fact, I want 90% agreement by skeptical scholars for it to be a minimal fact
- Habermas: I have never included the empty tomb in my list of minimal facts
- Brierley: William Lane Craig puts it in his list of minimal facts
- Habermas: It is very well attested, so if that’s what you mean, then it’s a minimal fact, but it doesn’t have the 90% agreement like the other minimal facts
- Habermas: I have 21 arguments for the empty tomb, and none of them require early dating of sources or traditional authorship of the gospels, e.g. – the women discovered the empty tomb, the pre-Markan source, the implications of 1 Cor 15 has some force, the sermons summary in Acts 13 which Bart Ehrman dates to 31 or 32 A.D. has putting a body down and a body coming up without being corrupted

Why is 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 more respected as a source than the gospels?

- Habermas: There is a unanimous New Testament conclusion, across the board, from conservative to liberal, that in 1 Cor 15:3-8 Paul is presenting creedal data, Richard Bauckham says that this goes back to the early 30s A.D., Paul got this from the eyewitnesses he mentions in Galatians 1 and 2
- Crossley: [reads 1 Corinthians:3-8 out loud], now that’s a tradition that’s handed on, this is Paul, we know this is Paul, writing mid-50s, this is kind of gold, this is the evidence I wish we had across the board

Why doesn’t James accept the resurrection:

- Crossley: Historians should not conclude that the supernatural is real, concluding the supernatural is outside of history
- Crossley: I am more interested in what people believed at that time
- Brierley: as a historian, are you required to give an explanation of the commonly-

accepted facts
- Crossley: yes, historians must give their explanation for the facts
- Crossley: we know people have visions, and how the cultural context determines the content of visions, e.g. – the background of martyrdom
- Brierley: so you would go for the hallucination hypothesis?
- Crossley: yes, but I prefer not to use that word

Should historians rule out the supernatural?

- Habermas: let's not ask what caused the event, let's just see if the disciples thought they saw him before he died, that he died on the cross, and then believed they saw him after he died, like you might see someone in the supermarket
- Habermas: I'm not asking whether a miracle occurred, I just want to know whether Jesus was seen after he died on the cross
- Crossley: that sounds like the angle I'm coming at this from
- Crossley: the problem is that there is a supernatural element to some of the appearances, so it's not a supermarket appearances
- Brierley: it's not angels and hallelujah in the sky
- Habermas: nothing like that, no light in the early accounts, fairly mundane

Does James agree that people believed they saw Jesus after his death?

- Crossley: yes, I think that's fairly clear that we do
- Crossley: but historians cannot prove claims that what happened to Jesus was supernatural
- Brierley: your view is so far from what I see on Internet atheists sites, where they say it's all legendary accumulation, fairy tales
- Crossley: I'm perfect comfortable with the idea – and I think it happened – that people created stories, invented stories
- Crossley: there are too many cases where people are sincerely professing that they thought they saw Jesus after his death

Would you expect the disciples to have visions of a resurrected Jesus if nothing happened to him?

- Habermas: the dividing line is: did something happen to Jesus, or did something happen to his disciples?
- Habermas: the view that people were seeing a kind of ghostly Jesus (non-bodily) – a Jedi Jesus – after his death is a resurrection view, but I hold to a bodily resurrection view
- Brierley: N.T. Wright says a resurrected Jesus was contrary to expectations – should we expect the disciples to have a vision of Jesus as resurrected?
- Crossley: Wright generalizes too much thinking that there was a single view of the resurrection (the general resurrection at the end of the age), there are a variety of

views, some are contradictory
- Crossley: Herod Antipas thought that Jesus might be John the Baptist returned from the dead, and he knew Jesus was flesh and blood, there is the story of the dead rising in the earthquake in Matthew, there are stories of the resurrection in Maccabees, and this would influence what people expected
- Habermas: the earliest Christian view was *bodily* resurrection
- Crossley: yes, I think that's right
- Crossley: In Mark 6, they thought Jesus was a ghost, so there is room for disagreement

Why should a historian not rule out a supernatural explanation?

- Habermas: to get to supernatural, you have to go to philosophy – it's a worldview problem
- Habermas: he predicted his own death and resurrection
- Habermas: one factor is the uniqueness of Jesus
- Habermas: the early church had belief in the bodily resurrection, and a high Christology out of the gate
- Habermas: you might look at evidence for corroborated near-death experiences that raise the possibility of an afterlife
- Crossley: I'm content to leave it at the level of what people believe and not draw any larger conclusions
- Crossley: regarding the predicting his own death, the gospels are written after, so it's not clear that these predictions predate Jesus' death
- Crossley: it's not surprising that Jesus would have predicted his own death, and that he might have foreseen God vindicating him

If you admit to the possibility of miracles, is the data sufficient to conclude that the best explanation of the facts is resurrection?

- Crossley: If we assume that God exists, and that God intervenes in history, and that this was obvious to everyone, then "of course"
- Brierley: Are you committed to a naturalistic view of history?
- Crossley: Not quite, broadly, yes, I am saying this all I can do
- Brierley: should James be open to a supernatural explanation?
- Habermas: if you adopt methodological naturalism,it colors how look at the data is seen, just like supernaturalism does

Marco Rubio co-sponsored a bill to give 20 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship

February 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio with his allies: Democrat Chuck Schumer and RINO John McCain

In the next three days, I'll be taking a look at three elements of Rubio's record on illegal immigration:

1. Rubio co-authored a bill to give 20 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship: voting and access to welfare payments
2. Rubio promised a Spanish-speaking audience that he would not rescind Obama's executive action amnesty if elected President
3. Rubio co-sponsored a bill to give illegal immigrants in-state tuition in Florida, to be paid for by Florida taxpayers

I'll do the first one on Tuesday morning, and the second one on Wednesday morning, and the third one on Thursday morning.

The amnesty bill of 2013

Marco Rubio was a co-author of a 2013 bill that would give illegal immigrants permanent residency, as well as a path to citizenship. This would allow them to vote in future elections. There are currently 20-30 *million* illegal immigrants in the United States who would be affected by this law.

CNN explains what part of the bill that Rubio worked on:

> As he has risen in the polls, Rubio has methodically sought to distance himself from the comprehensive immigration bill he coauthored more than two years ago. But Schumer, the veteran New York Democrat, is dragging him back into the

> fray, shining a spotlight on one of the 44-year-old's biggest vulnerabilities with the right as top Democrats seek to undermine the GOP senator's surging candidacy.

> "He was not only totally committed — he was in that room with us, four Democrats, four Republicans," Schumer told CNN Thursday in an interview in his Senate office. "His fingerprints are all over that bill. It has a lot of Rubio imprints."
>
> Schumer is… saying **Rubio was the main architect of the provision to provide a pathway to citizenship for the nation's 11 million undocumented immigrants**, something bound to give ammunition to his primary foes who call the measure "amnesty."

So, Rubio's part of the bill was the pathway to citizenship. At the very least, he co-authored the bill, and viciously attacked conservatives who spoke out against his path to citizenship bill.

Keep in mind that CNN is factually incorrect about the number of illegal immigrants. The number is not 11 million. The correct number, according to the Border Patrol, is 18-20 million – and that was back in 2013. Would Republicans ever win another election if 18-20 million Democrat voters (unskilled immigrants tend to overwhelmingly vote Democrat) were added to the electorate?

By the way, Marco Rubio reiterated his support for full path-to-citizenship amnesty last month to Chuck Todd on NBC News.

I hope all the Marco Rubio voters will see this post and engage with the details of this man's record. He swore up and down during his 2010 election campaign that he was "strongly against amnesty" (his own words!), then he went to Washington and led the push for amnesty.

I am not even sure that he is pro-life. He says he is pro-life, but then he told Florida voters that he was not pro-amnesty. If he betrays his supporters on amnesty, then he could easily betray them on defending the unborn, as well. *We just don't know where he stands on anything.* He says one thing while campaigning and then leads the fight to do the exact opposite once elected. This was not done in a corner, folks.

Here's the full list of Rubio errors:

- Rubio got a D rating from pro-marriage activist Maggie Gallagher regarding his response to the Obergefell decision, which redefined marriage for all 50 states.
- Rubio supports sugar subsidies and ethanol subsidies, which is just crony capitalism
- Rubio takes money from a billionaire gay-marriage activist who donates to the Human Rights Campaign group – a group which wants government to persecute Christians who dissent from celebrating gay marriage
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- Rubio co-sponsored a bill to give illegal immigrants in-state tuition in Florida, to be paid for by Florida taxpayers

Ted Cruz fought Rubio's amnesty in 2013 and fought Obama's executive amnesty in 2014

February 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

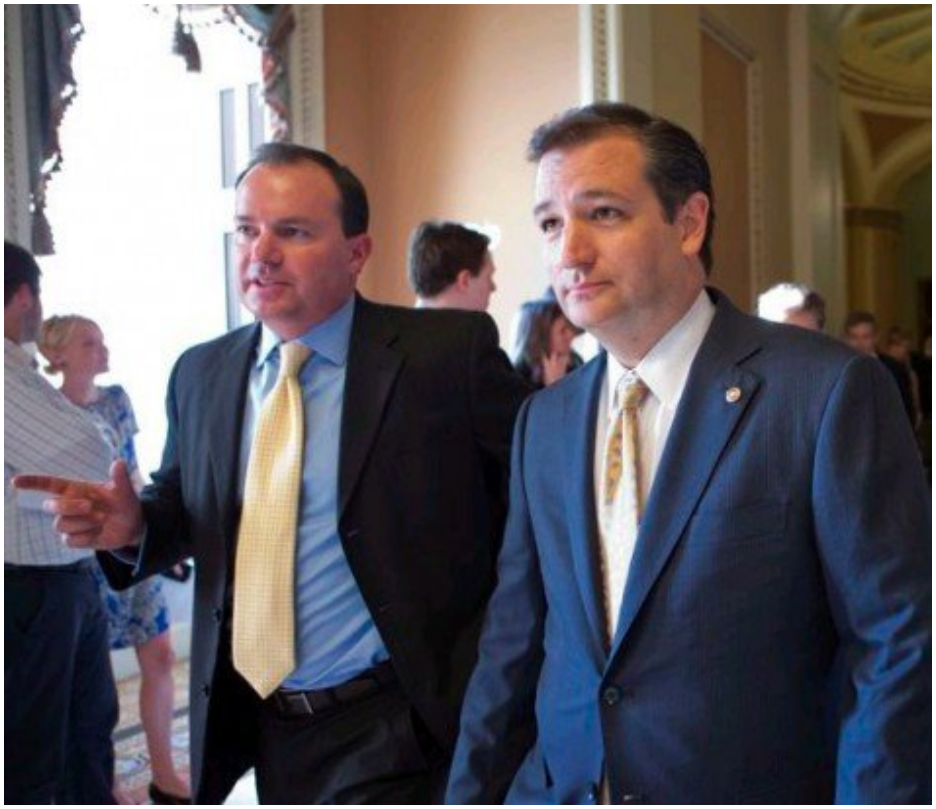

Ted Cruz and Mike Lee go to war against amnesty
Let's do the 2013 Rubio amnesty first.

The leftist Washington Post reports on how Cruz tried to stop the Rubio amnesty by introducing amendments that would undermine support for the bill, or weaken the bill if it did get passed.

Excerpt:

> Cruz has been a staunch opponent of giving a pathway to citizenship for immigrants who entered the United States illegally. In 2013, Cruz introduced five amendments:
>
> - Cruz 1: To triple the number of Border Patrol agents and quadrupling the equipment along the border.
> - Cruz 2: To deny means-tested government benefits to those who entered illegally.
> - **Cruz 3: To strip away the pathway to citizenship.**
> - Cruz 4: To expand legal immigration, by increasing employment-based immigration from 140,000 to 1,012,500 per year.
> - Cruz 5: To raise the H-1B high-skilled worker cap from 65,000 visas to 325,000 per year.

Note that “legalizing” someone can mean just giving them a temporary work permit, so that they are in the country legally, but have no permanent right to stay, much less get citizenship. The thing is, it’s not even clear that Cruz would have voted for the bill with his amendments. His goal was to derail the bill by embedding things in it that the supporters did not want. Like the “no path to citizenship” that Rubio wanted. And this is exactly how Democrats saw his amendments.

Here’s what happened:

> When pressed about his 2013 statements and the citizenship amendment after the GOP debate, Cruz said: “It’s called calling their bluff.”
>
> And in a Dec. 16, 2015, interview with Bret Baier on Fox News: “You’ve been around Washington long enough. You know how to defeat bad legislation, which is what that amendment did, is it revealed the hypocrisy of Chuck Schumer [D-N.Y.] and the Senate Democrats and the establishment Republicans who were supporting them because they all voted against it.”
>
> […]Current and former Democratic Senate staffers familiar with the negotiations confirmed to The Fact Checker that Cruz’s bill was, indeed, viewed as a poison pill in 2013. Consider the impact some of his amendments would have had on the fragile agreements the coalition negotiated:
>
> - **Tripling Border Patrol agents:** The Senate ultimately approved an amendment to double the number of Border Patrol agents. But tripling the number would’ve gone too far and lost the support of some immigration groups, which believed an even bigger increase would be badly received by border communities and the public.
> - **Expanding legal immigration:** Such a dramatic increase in employment-based immigration and H-1B visas went far beyond the coalition’s negotiated cap at 65,000. As The Washington Post’s Paul Kane reported, Democrats, Republicans and their allies in the labor movement and corporate America worked for months to agree on this number, which was backed by the AFL-CIO and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. A slight increase or decrease would have jeopardized support from either the AFL-CIO or the Chamber of Commerce; Cruz’s proposal was a 400 percent increase from the negotiated cap.
> - **Removing pathway to citizenship:** This was the major negotiation point for the Gang of Eight, and would have killed the bill.
>
> **In reference to the citizenship amendment, then-Senate Judiciary Chairman Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.) said during the 2013 hearing: “My concern with this, I feel it would virtually gut the bill … and gut what has been a very careful balance by Republicans and Democrats and the sponsors of it.”**
>
> **Sen. Charles E. Schumer, a Gang of Eight Democrat, echoed the concern**

> **at the hearing: "If we do not have a path to citizenship, there is no reform, many of us feel. That is a bottom line here." The Gang of Eight Republicans on the Judiciary Committee sided with Democrats in rejecting this amendment.**
>
> **In a statement to The Fact Checker, Schumer confirmed Cruz's bill was viewed as a poison pill: "This was an attempt to kill the bill, and there was no doubt at the time that Senator Cruz knew it would do exactly that."**

This is what Marco Rubio is getting angry with Cruz about in the debates. Cruz introduced 5 amendments meant to destroy the agreement among supporters of the bill. And the bill died. Rubio actually voted against Cruz's amendment that would have taken citizenship off the table. He also opposed poison pill amendments by amnesty opponents Mike Lee and Jeff Sessions.

Conservative Mark Levin recently interviewed Jeff Sessions about Ted Cruz's role in the battle over amnesty, and you can read about it here on the Daily Wire.

The second amnesty battle

Rubio's amnesty was defeated in 2013, but there was another amnesty to come in 2014. This time, from the pen of Barack Obama.

The Blaze reports:

> On Saturday night, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) won a battle, but not the war, against President Barack Obama's executive action on immigration.
>
> Cruz led the fight to force a Senate vote on Obama's immigration plans, as a condition of approving a massive, $1.1 trillion spending bill for 2015. He was able to make that vote happen by arguing that the spending bill violated the Constitution because it would fund Obama's plan — a plan Cruz and other Republicans say is illegal because it rewrites immigration law without any input from Congress.
>
> "Tonight is the first opportunity that Congress has to express its disapproval," Cruz said late Saturday of Obama's immigration plan.
>
> Cruz lost the vote, as expected in a Senate that is still controlled by Democrats for a few more weeks. But Cruz's tactics — which forced the Senate to work unexpectedly late into Saturday night — also drew criticism from Republicans, and several GOP senators vote against Cruz.
>
> In the final vote, the Senate decided 22-74 against Cruz — less than half of the Senate's 45 Republicans voted with Cruz.
>
> […]Cruz raised his constitutional argument against the bill on Friday night, a move that surprised both Republicans and Democrats and forced the Senate back into the office for a rare Saturday session. After several hours of negotiating, Democrats finally agreed to give Cruz his vote.

> The vote itself was a victory — many Republicans have been begging for either the House or Senate to go on the record about Obama's unilateral immigration decision.

This is why Cruz has few friends in the Senate. It's not because he is a mean person, it's because he fights hard for what is right. And few stand with him.

Cruz keeps telling the truth, and people keep calling him a liar for citing their actual words and actions:

It's important to understand that on Washington, most of the politicians in both parties want amnesty. And that's why they hate Cruz so much. It's not his personality, it's his conservatism.

William Lane Craig talks about the book “Contending With Christianity’s Critics”

February 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to students and faculty at Purdue University

Note: This book is currently on sale for only 99 cents (Kindle edition). Get it! Sorry if the price has changed by the time you read this post.

A series of three interviews from the “Reasonable Faith” podcast about the essay collection “Contending with Christianity’s Critics: Answering New Atheists and Other Objectors“.

Here is the first MP3 file.

Topics:

- About the editor Paul Copan, (the nicest Christian apologist)
- 1: Responding to Dawkins’ argument “Who designed the designer?”
- 2: Responding to the multiverse counter to the fine-tuning argument
- 3: The argument that rationality and consciouness require theism
- 4: The evidence for humans being hard-wired for belief in God
- 5: Responding to naturalism’s claim to rationally ground morality
- 6: Responding to Dawkins’ idea that the universe looks undesigned

Here is the second MP3 file.

Topics:

- 7: The criteria that historians use to establish historical reliability
- 8: Did Jesus think that he was the Son of Man in Daniel
- 9: A time line for the resurrection of Jesus from the early sources

- 10: Responding to scholarly distortions of the historical Jesus
- 11: Responding to Bart Ehrman's claim that the NT text is corrupted
- 12: The evidence for Jesus divine self-understanding

Here is the third MP3 file.

Topics:

- 13: The logical coherence of the concept of God
- 14: The logical coherence of the doctrine of the Trinity
- 15: The logical coherence of the doctrine of the Incarnation
- 16: The logical coherence of the doctrine of the Atonement
- 17: The logical coherence of the doctrine of the Hell
- 18: Responding to objections to God's knowledge of the future

My favorite chapters in this book are the ones by Mark Linville on evolution and morality, and the chapter by Robert H. Stein on historical criteria and methodology. This is not an introductory book, this book is an intermediate-level book. You want to read the two Jim Wallace books and the Lee Strobel "Case For" books before you tackle this one.

Much of the book is philosophy and philosophy of religion and philosophical theology. Well, I guess everyone knows that I hate non-STEM disciplines, and I only read philosophy because it's useful for Christian apologetics. If you are like me, and think that only STEM disciplines have value, then this book is for you. You will be able to make use of it in your case-making adventures. It. Works. This is the stuff that gets William Lane Craig invited to all the best universities to debate against all the best atheists. And he beats them all up with it, too.

Rubio promised Spanish-speaking audience not to rescind Obama's executive action amnesty

February 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio with his allies: Democrat Chuck Schumer and RINO John McCain

I'm taking a look at three elements of Rubio's record on illegal immigration:

1. Rubio co-authored a bill to give 20 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship: voting and access to welfare payments
2. Rubio promised a Spanish-speaking audience that he would not rescind Obama's executive action amnesty if elected President
3. Rubio co-sponsored a bill to give illegal immigrants in-state tuition in Florida, to be paid for by Florida taxpayers

I'll do the first one on Tuesday morning, and the second one on Wednesday morning, and the third one on Thursday morning.

Refusal to rescind executive amnesty

Breitbart News notes that Rubio told a Spanish language audience in Spanish that he *would not* rescind Obama's executive action amnesty.

Excerpt:

> In response to attacks leveled against him by Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), Rubio made a demonstrably and provably false declaration about his position on President Obama's executive amnesty. Rubio even accused Cruz of "telling lies" about his position on executive amnesty– even though nationally-televised video footage of Marco Rubio confirms Cruz's allegation, and reveals that Rubio lied in front of a

> nation-wide viewing audience during tonight's debate.
>
> Cruz said: "Marco right now supports citizenship for 12 million people here illegally. I oppose citizenship… Marco has a long record when it comes to amnesty. In the state of Florida, as Speaker of the House, he supported in-state tuition for illegal immigrants. In addition to that, Marco went on Univision in Spanish and said he would not rescind President Obama's illegal executive amnesty on his first day in office. I have promised to rescind every single illegal executive action, including that one."
>
> Cruz was referring specifically to President Obama's 2012 executive amnesty for illegal immigrants who allegedly came to the country as minors. The unconstitutional amnesty known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals– or DACA– remains fully operational to this day. DACA not only gives illegal immigrants immunity from deportation, but also grants them work permits and access to federal benefits.
>
> Indeed, video footage of Sen. Rubio confirms Cruz's assertion. In an April Spanish-language interview, Rubio told Univision's Jorge Ramos: "I wouldn't undo it [DACA] immediately." Rubio elaborated in English, telling Ramos: "I don't think we can immediately revoke that [DACA]… I'm not calling for it to be revoked tomorrow, or this week, or right away."

Ted Cruz has a new ad up about it, with the actual video and the translation of what Rubio actually said:

Rubio is marketing himself to Republican voters as strong on border security and enforcing current immigration laws, but his actual record shows that he is in lockstep with the liberal Democrats on illegal immigration. He is actually further to the left than mainstream Democrats on illegal immigration. We are $20 trillion in debt, and expected to go to $30 trillion in the next decade. We cannot afford Marco Rubio's "compassion" with taxpayer money.

Here's the full list of Rubio errors:

- Rubio got a D rating from pro-marriage activist Maggie Gallagher regarding his response to the Obergefell decision, which redefined marriage for all 50 states.
- Rubio supports sugar subsidies and ethanol subsidies, which is just crony capitalism
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Marco Rubio’s dishonesty about Ted Cruz’s votes on NDAA defense appropriations bills

February 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio with his allies: Democrat Chuck Schumer and RINO John McCain

Shane Vander Hart who blogs at Caffeinated Thoughts wrote a post about how Marco Rubio is taking up his previously-discredited attack on Cruz’s votes on NDAA defense appropriations.

He writes:

> South Carolina is a major military state with two Air Force bases, an Army base, two Marine bases, a Navy weapons station and two naval hospitals located in the state. U.S. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) gave a policy speech today in Charleston, SC that unveiled his plan to invest in rebuilding the armed forces.
>
> His opponents, mainly U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), have tried to discredit Cruz’s resolve in this issue. One of the chief ways they have attempted to do this is by pointing out his no votes on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

He found articles by Rubio supporters in National Review and Weekly Standard that echo Rubio’s charge.

Shane explains the truth:

> Ok here are some pertinent facts that the Rubio camp has withheld. First it is a policy bill,**not** an appropriations bill. What the Rubio camp doesn’t tell you is that he voted against it because certain language in the bill was unconstitutional. Namely, it authorized indefinite detention of American citizens accused of terrorism. That is a clear violation of the 5th Amendment.

> Cruz promised his constituents that if he was elected to the U.S. Senate he would vote against any bill that violated the Constitution. He keeps his campaign promise and establishment Republicans criticize him for it. They should learn from his example instead of taking pot shots at him for it. This is one of the reasons he is so popular among grassroots conservatives and Republicans in his state. Apparently Rubio is in favor of violating the Constitution by detaining American citizens accused of terrorism indefinitely without due process. Which law school did Rubio attend again? He should ask for a tuition refund.
>
> Second in regards to criticism that he supported cuts in defense spending the Rubio camp has neglected to share another pertinent fact to his supporters and the media. **Cruz voted for the last defense appropriations bill and Rubio was a no show.**
>
> The saying those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones comes to mind.
>
> Rubio couldn't bother showing up to vote for the appropriations bill he claims (and I agree) is vitally important.

Lindsay found an article in the Washington Free Beacon that explains how Cruz introduced an amendment to the NDAA defense spending bill to remove the part about indefinite detention, so that he could go ahead and vote for the rest of the bill.

Look:

> Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Rand Paul (R-Ky.), both of whom are running for president, have joined up with other senators to introduce an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), currently before the Senate, that would ban indefinite detention of U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, without being charged or given a trial, unless authorized by Congress.
>
> Sens. Mike Lee (R-Utah), Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) also put their names on the provision.
>
> "The Constitution does not allow President Obama, or any President, to apprehend an American citizen, arrested on U.S. soil, and detain these citizens indefinitely without a trial," Cruz said in a statement. **"While we must vigorously protect national security by pursuing violent terrorists and preventing acts of terror, we must also ensure our most basic rights as American citizens are protected."**

Cruz's amendment had bi-partisan support, but it did not pass – that's why Cruz voted against the bill. He wanted to vote for it, he tried to get the issue he was concerned about addressed, but he would not go against what he promised his constituents. Marco Rubio, and his supporters, conveniently leave that part out, so that they can can accuse Cruz of being weak on foreign policy.

How many times do we have to catch Marco Rubio behaving dishonestly before he is disqualified as a Republican candidate? The man has low moral character, and he's

proven it again and again. He promised his supporters in 2010 that he would be strongly opposed to amnesty, then when he got to Washington, he introduced a bill to give 20 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship. We cannot, therefore, trust a word that comes out of his mouth about what he would and would not do if elected. Rubio doesn't have the moral character to be President.

By the way, Cruz fought the 2013 Rubio amnesty, and the 2014 Obama executive action amnesty, too.

Here's the full list of Rubio errors:

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Richard Bauckham defends the divinity of Jesus against James Crossley

February 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

Richard is very thorough and works only with minimal facts that skeptical scholars will agree with. James Crossley is an excellent atheist, knowledgeable and respectful.

The debate goes for 80 minutes. I wrote a summary so you can follow along as you listen. This summary is rated "N" for Not Snarky.

Summary

Main topic:
– was belief in Jesus' divinity develop late, or was it there from the beginning?
– how did the early Jewish community reconcile the idea of Jesus' divinity with monotheism?

Moderator:
– was the the worship of Jesus as God a late development in history
– was it accepted by converts from the Jewish community

Bauckham:
– high Christology was not a result of pagan influences
– Jews reconciled Jesus' divinity with their Jewish monotheism

Moderator:
– is the degree of Christology a historian is willing to accept just the result of bias?

Crossley:
– bias is always a factor in what individual people think
– but in a public discussion, what matters is the evidence

Moderator:

– High-Christology is used by Christians as an argument for the resurrection
– Christians ask: what cause could account for the effect of early high Christology?

Crossley:
– we agree that the first Christians witnessed something after Jesus' death
– what they witnessed had a role in their forming their high opinion of Jesus
– the high opinion was because they believed he had been resurrected (1 Cor 15)
– whether he was or not is a separate question

Moderator:
– is a high Christology a good argument for inferring the resurrection?

Bauckham:
– the resurrection makes people think Jesus is unique, but not necessarily divine
– it was really the belief in the exaltation of Jesus to God's right hand that did it
– what God does in Judaism is to create the universe and rule over the universe
– if Jesus is seated at God's right hand, then is participating in ruling creation
– so Jesus is being identified with God very early
– the exaltation might have been caused by post-mortem visions of Jesus, e.g. – Stephen

Moderator:
– how were early monotheistic Jews able to reconcile the divinity of Jesus with monotheism?

Crossley:
– the high Christology may not be early because disputes about it are going on in John
– there were other figures in Judaism like the Word of God and Wisdom that were very high
– maybe Paul's Christology is not as high and he is thinking something high but not deity
– and in John the Christology is being pushed higher to deity, and then there are disputes

Moderator:
– Phillipians and 1 Corinthians are the first evidences of what people thought about Jesus
– John is actually much later

Crossley:
– it may be that Paul's Christology is high and that he just never got into any disputes

Bauckham:
– in Phillipians, Paul incorporates Jesus into the shema, the core of Jewish monotheism
– in 1 Corinthians, he does the same thing

Moderator:
– is this evidence consistent with the idea that Jesus is more like Wisdom or the Word of God

Crossley:
– in Paul's letters, there are no conflicts about Jesus' divinity, they appear later in John
– if Paul's letters taught a divine Jesus, there would be conflicts in the letters
– so there is possibly an evolving Christology from very high to divine

Bauckham:
– the Word and Wisdom of God are different from exalted figures – they are separate
– the Word and Wisdom of God are intrinsic to God's own identity
– and so Word and Wisdom are divine in the sense that they below to God's identity

Moderator:
– is Jesus an exalted human figure or someone identified with God?
– is the identification of Jesus with divinity compatible with Jewish monotheism?
– or was this concept developed later in a pagan context where one more God would not matter?

Bauckham:
– NT scholars typically separate functional Christology and ontic Christology
– but I say that there is no such disctinction
– if Jesus does the functions of God (like ruling), then it means he is identified with God
– there is a distinction between who God is (identity) and what God is (nature)
– Jews were not as concerned with the identification of a man with the God
– Jews were disturbed by the idea that THIS shamed and crucified man would be identified with God

Moderator:
– is this high Christology too much of a sharp break with Jewish monotheism to have been early?

Crossley:
– the Phillipians passage is a strong early passage for Richard's view
– definitely the crucifixion is a major problem for the early Jewish monotheists
– but the deification of a human being is also a strong problem in spite of what Richard says
– both Jews and Muslims will have objections to identifying Jesus with the divine

Moderator:
– How can Paul write something like this when he was such a high-ranking Jew?

Bauckham:
– Jewish monotheism could accomodate something surprising like this without surrendering anything
– John starts his gospel at the creation of the universe to say Jesus was there as "the Word"

Moderator:
– was the early church thinking of Jesus the same way that the church today does?

Crossley:
– it's hard to say because the language today reflects a lot of development
– in the early church people were still thinking about what to make of Jesus

Moderator:
– what about in the other gospels, do they indicate a strong notion of Jesus as divine?

Crossley:
– nothing as strong as Paul's letters and John, especiall the disputes with the Jews

Moderator:
– so did the writers of the other gospels have different views of Jesus' divinity than Paul and John?

Crossley:
– well the same claims are not there in the text, the claims are not as grand as in Paul and John

Bauckham:
– but in Mark, the earliest gospel, Jesus forgives sins and calms storm – acting as God acts
– Jesus also asks "why do call me good, only God is good"
– the "seated at the right hand of God" and "coming on the clouds" passages

Crossley:
– I don't think those claims are as high as John, because Moses controls nature as well
– the other actions may be more that Jesus has authority to do these things

Moderator:
– but the author of Mark writes that the disciples are catching on that Jesus was more than a man

Bauckham:
– Jews were not as concerned with the unitary nature of God, but there is only one God (being)
– there can't really be any evolution from Jesus as a created being to Jesus as divine
– in paganism, there are lower divinities, but that is not the case in Jewish monotheism

Moderator:
– the fact that Jesus was worshiped by Jews means he was already viewed as divine

Crossley:
– that point is debatable, but can be sustained with a careful exegesis like Richard does
– there is some room there for an evolving Christology – the gap may not be as big as Richard says

Moderator:
– do you think that the worship of Jesus was the result of increasing Christology over time?

Crossley:
– it may not have been conscious, but John is the clearest statement and it is the latest gospel
– it may be that a dispute with Jews was required to spell it out even if it was present before

Moderator:
– what about idea that the early church worshiped him because they just though it was a new revelation?

Bauckham:
– the early Christians worshiped as Jews and then met separately afterward to worship Jesus
– worship is about distinguishing God from the created world
– you wouldn’t worship Jesus without some idea of what you were doing

Crossley:
– other things that set Jesus apart were the exorcisms and the vision to Paul that converted him

Rubio co-sponsored a bill to give illegal immigrants in-state tuition in Florida

February 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's the story from the radically leftist Huffington Post.

They say:

> Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) is standing by a bill he co-sponsored during his time in the Florida Statehouse that provided in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants
>
> The 2004 law, Rubio told ABC's "This Week" on Sunday, was specifically tailored to only allow undocumented immigrants with a certain GPA and who graduated from a Florida high school to benefit from in-state tuition. They also had to have lived in the U.S. for a long time.

> Rubio said he “absolutely” stood by his support of the bill, which was passed after he left the statehouse.
>
> “It was very narrowly tailored to high-performing students who found themselves in a situation where they were brought here by their parents when they were 5, didn’t even speak another language except English and therefore couldn’t attend college because they were being charged like they were from out of state,” Rubio said.
>
> The decision to provide in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants became an issuefor then-Texas Gov. Rick Perry during the 2012 Republican presidential primary.

So, Rubio doesn’t want natural born Americans to get the in-state tuition discount. Rubio doesn’t want law-abiding skilled immigrants who went through the long, arduous process of legal immigration to get the in-state tuition discount. No! Rubio wants illegal immigrants to get a break on their tuition costs, and let the taxpayers of Florida pick up the bill for the difference.

Here’s the full list of Rubio errors:

- Rubio got a D rating from pro-marriage activist Maggie Gallagher regarding his response to the Obergefell decision, which redefined marriage for all 50 states.
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The seven fatal flaws of moral relativism

February 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

The book discussed in this post, "Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air", is now $1.99 for the Kindle edition! (H/T Brian Auten tweet)

Moral relativism is the view that moral values and moral duties do not exist in reality, but only exist as opinions in people's minds. When you ask a moral relativist where the belief that stealing is wrong comes from, he may tell you that it is his opinion, or that it is the opinion of most people in his society. But he cannot tell you that stealing is wrong independent of what people think, because morality (on moral relativism) is just personal preference.

So what's wrong with it?

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Salvo magazine web site.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient,

> unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like “It’s wrong to push your own morality on others”. This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don’t let them make any moral statements without asking them first to ground morality on their worldview. And that’s because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can’t answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people’s personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It’s all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be “it depends”. It depends on the person who is speaking because it’s a subjective claim, not an objective claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

So, practically speaking, everyone has to decide whether right and wrong are real – objectively real. If they are objectively real, that means that there is a right way for human beings to behave, and a wrong way for human beings to behave. It means that things like rape are wrong for all times and all places, regardless of what individuals and societies might think of it. In order to rationally ground that kind of morality, you have to bring a cosmic Designer who decides for all times and places what the conduct of his creatures ought to be. And then our moral duties are duties that are owed to this Designer. It is like playing football or playing a boardgame – the person who invents the game decides the rules. But if there is no designer of the game, then there are no rules. Without a designer, how we ought to act is decided by people – specifically, by the people who have power.

If you're going to be a Christian, you need to be as smart as you can be

February 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

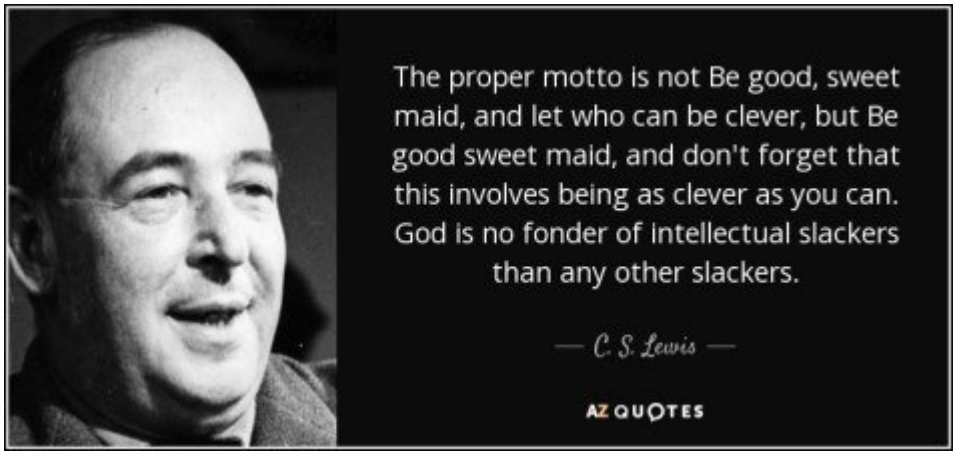

C.S. Lewis has some words to live by for you

I guess I will start this post by linking to something a friend of mine named Joel Furches wrote about an atheist engineer.

He writes:

> As an Aerospace Engineer for the U.S. Navy, Jason Pratt is not inaccurate when he describes himself as a rocket scientist for the government. He has flown F-14 Tomcats and the F/A-18F Super Hornet. He was a test pilot of the FA-18B and D Hornet, the FA-18F Super Hornet, and the T-45 Goshawk. His pedigree with all things aeronautical is well established. As was his atheism.
>
> Pratt grew up in a single parent home. He and his sister were raised by their mother, who felt it was her duty to introduce them to church in their teenage years. The church Pratt attended was a religious shell: a ritualistic facade with little reference to actual scriptural teachings. He went through the ceremonial steps as a matter of form, and the moment he was confirmed by the church, *he* confirmed himself an atheist, and left the church in his dust. His family took this with barely a nod, and as soon as she was confirmed, his sister followed his example.
>
> After High School, Pratt entered college to study engineering. Academically, he proved himself quite brilliant, and flaunted that brilliance at every opportunity. He describes himself as very much a "self-righteous atheist" in college.
>
> He found his atheism very freeing, morally, living by the code of "do whatever you want as long as nobody gets hurt."
>
> Says Pratt:
>
> "I started to meet other students, and some of them were claiming to be Christians. I even had some of them as roommates. Having had some church background, I knew the type. They were hypocrites, deluded by the silly book

> that they claimed they believed in. And so I frequently took pleasure in ridiculing them. I would mock them. I would look for any reason to bring out things that they would claim they believe and I would just make fun of them, and mock their God and the Bible that supposedly guided them.
>
> "I generally enjoyed playing the intellectual superior, and I enjoyed challenging what they believed."
>
> Not much surprise to Pratt, most of the Christians he met had no ability to defend their faith against his ridicule.
>
> […]One day, however, Pratt met a fellow engineering student named John Thatcher. Thatcher had a perfect GPA, which was somewhat intimidating to someone like Pratt, who took such pride in his own intellect. Thatcher was a very likable guy. He was also a Christian. This made things difficult for Pratt.
>
> At the same time, Pratt discovered that his Academic Adviser – a leading authority in the field of Thermodynamics – was a Christian. This discovery was made when Pratt went to his adviser's office one day in order to request some help from the brilliant man. As Pratt approached his office, he was shocked to find a scientific article, arguing Thermodynamics from a Christian perspective, hanging from his office door. Pratt was so infuriated, he stormed away and never spoke to his adviser again.
>
> Confused and upset that these two very intelligent men would believe in superstitious nonsense, Pratt made it his goal to truly examine the claims of Christianity for the first time.

This reminded me of a quote from atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel.

He says this:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."
>
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

I think in general, it's a good thing when Christians strive to be different from the culture around them. Obviously, that means having different moral values and different goals than what's popular and acceptable for non-Christians. It means not openly engaging in activities that are forbidden to Christians, like not getting drunk, not having premarital/extra-marital sex, etc. And I think it also means being as smart as you can possibly be about about areas that touch on your Christian worldview. Why? Because like the story above says, being informed and having the answers is attractive to people who are searching.

I say stuff to my co-workers

I'm going to give an example of a conversation I had recently with a co-worker, which he started.

Many of my co-workers know my politics and my religious views. I keep books on apologetics and economics, etc. on my desk from all the good academic publishers. So they know that I am informed and I do have reasons for believing what I say. My co-workers sometimes come to me and ask me questions about moral issues, science news, foreign policy and other things like that.

Just recently, one of our senior engineers asked me how can it be that people who are for limited government can be opposed to abortion, because wouldn't stopping abortion require government to intrude into people's lives.

Well, we had a wonderful conversation about how to restrict abortion without growing the government, and I was ready for this because I love to read current events about pro-life legislation in various states, as well as the writings of people like Francis J. Beckwith and Robert P. George. It went on for 15 minutes or so. And because we are seated in an Agile pod, everyone got to hear, too. If you are reading about these issues at a high level, you have confidence in what you say, which is why you should always be reading AND talking about what you read with other people who are studying, too. It's in the talking with others (and watching debates) that you learn what you can and can't say, and what you should and shouldn't say when you have limited time to respond.

Frankly, I think a lot of people abandon Christianity in college and in the workplace *precisely because* they do not want to be thought stupid by their peers. And they also engage in a lot of "normal" behaviors, like drinking, partying, getting drunk, premarital sex just because they want to fit in with their secular peers. The solution to having confidence in the face of peer pressure is to know that you're right about what you believe, and right about what actions you are taking. You need to situate your principles within a larger plan that is aimed at some goal, and be able to demonstrate to others that the steps you are taking to get there are likely to get the job done.

It doesn't help God for you to be wild and stupid

Last point. In my life, I have sometimes tried to lead other Christians to study harder things and to get better jobs. Most of the time, this works. I can get young Christians to not study English or Drama or Art History, and instead get them to study Engineering or Computer Science or Nursing. And if they already are studying hard things, then I

encourage them, I buy them books, I play games with them and ask them how things are going. Once they have the degrees, I encourage them to get jobs, to work in the summers, to open investment accounts, and pay off their loans.

The point is this – what you study and what you do for work and how good you are at your job plays a *massive* role in whether you will get into conversations with non-Christians at all. I can guarantee you that Jason Pratt would not listen to someone who was in their 30s, in debt, living at home with their parents, with only entry-level work on their resume at age 33.

It is not good service to God to bungle your education and career because you were more interested in feeling good, having fun and seeking thrills. You will lose opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others that way. Although skydiving, ziplining, surfing and flying off to Europe to help poor people might be fun when you are a teen, it makes you look foolish to non-Christians when you are still doing that into your 30s.

Managing your money – paying off debts and investing early and often – is part of that signal of maturity that you send to others. And don't underestimate the importance of marriage and children – something I don't have. If I had a successful marriage, and lots of well-behaved children, that would help a lot as well. Especially if people could come over to a warm and happy home. It sends a message. However, if you're going to stay single, then keep your self-control and be content with it. That sends a message, too.

Life is short. Don't do what feels good. Do what works.

Ted Cruz introduces new bill to help ICE Agents enforce immigration laws

February 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Senator Ted Cruz and Senator Jeff Sessions

This story is from Ted Cruz's U.S. Senate web site.

It says:

> On Wednesday, U.S. Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) introduced the ICE Agent Support Act of 2016 (S. 2538), which would provide U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with necessary resources to help the agency enforce our nation's immigration laws. This legislation would provide ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations with dedicated, substantial revenue from statutory fines and penalties for illegal aliens that are not currently being enforced by the Obama administration, but would generate hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue each year. The relevant statutory provisions call for fines and civil penalties for refusing to leave the United States after being ordered or agreeing to do so, using false documents, or engaging in marriage fraud.
>
> Sen. Cruz said, "For far too long, the Obama administration has discouraged enforcement of our nation's immigration laws. President Obama has even personally threatened 'consequences' for the dedicated men and women who try to follow the law." Sen. Cruz continued, "This legislation sends a clear signal of support to the ICE agents who risk their lives on a daily basis to enforce our nation's immigration laws. The next administration must support the people who protect us from illegal immigration and punish those who break our laws."
>
> In part, Cruz has introduced this legislation to address the requests of ICE Director Sarah Saldaña during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing in December of last year. At that hearing, Saldaña indicated that the overwhelming

> volume of illegal immigration in the United States and the lack of adequate resources prevent ICE from fulfilling its core immigration enforcement mission. This legislation will guarantee that ICE agents have the funding and resources necessary to enforce the law as required by Congress. Sen. Cruz looks forward to working with the administration to ensure that the men and women of ICE receive the support they deserve.

Now, I blogged before about Ted Cruz's actions in 2013 to stop Marco Rubio's amnesty bill, and in 2014 to stop Barack Obama's executive amnesty. But it's important to understand that Cruz is not against immigration, particularly skilled immigration. His record shows that he is in favor of expanding work permits for those who can find a willing employer, but those work terms will be strictly enforced with e-verify and an entry/exit tracking system. He's not closing the country off to immigrants who want to come here to follow the law, work their tails off and never touch a dime of welfare.

Let's take a closer look at Cruz's immigration plan.

Here are the parts I care about most:

> **Build a wall that works.** The unsecured border with Mexico invites illegal immigrants, criminals, and terrorists to tread on American soil. I will complete the wall.
>
> **Triple the number of Border Patrol agents.** Securing the border is the federal government's obligation. I will dedicate the force necessary to do that.
>
> **Finish the biometric tracking system at our nation's ports of entry.** It is disgraceful that our federal government cannot keep track of those who enter the country. I will complete a biometric entry-exit tracking system.
>
> **End President Obama's illegal amnesty.** President Obama has issued over 20 illegal executive memoranda rewarding illegality. I will rescind each and every one on my first day in office.
>
> **End sanctuary policies, sign Kate's Law, and deport criminal immigrants.** There are about 340 sanctuary jurisdictions in the United States. They make a mockery of our laws and endanger our citizens. I will end support for these jurisdictions.
>
> **Prohibit illegal immigrants from receiving financial benefits and strengthen E-Verify.** American taxpayers should not be funding benefits for those who are here illegally, and American jobs should not go to those who are here illegally. I will protect Americans' wellbeing by stopping the flow of taxpayer dollars and instituting a strong e-verify system.

In a Ted Cruz administration, America will be *more* open to immigrants who want to come here to work hard, play by the rules and avoid collecting. But America *will not* be open to illegal immigrants who want to break the law as their first act on American soil. And if employers have people working for them without the proper work permit, those

employers will be prosecuted. Illegal immigrants will very quickly find themselves out of work. They can go home and come back, but this time, they'll have to do it legally, and pay income taxes, just like everyone else who works in America.

We are $20 trillion in debt right now, and we cannot afford to take money out of the pockets of young Americans – born and unborn – in order to fix poverty in other countries. Instead of importing those who tend to prefer big government, we should be exporting our values – low taxes, limited government, free trade, and the rule of law. That's what made us great, and that's what other countries should want from us most of all.

Ted Cruz explains his position on the issues of abortion and right to life

February 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted Cruz meets voters at a campaign event

A new 6-minute video was released earlier this week, and I heard about it from my friend Chad.

Videos are nice, but we probably shouldn't believe anything that Cruz says in campaign speeches and campaign ads. Politicians say anything in election years in order to get elected. What would really be interesting would be to see what the pro-life organizations rate this guy, and whether he has any kind of record fighting for the lives of the unborn.

Fortunately, I have one article that answers both questions… from Charisma News.

Excerpt:

> On Saturday, Texas Senator Ted Cruz received a ringing endorsement from Georgia's largest pro-life organization. "Senator Cruz has an unblemished record of standing up for innocent life," said Ricardo Davis, the director of Georgia Right to Life's Political Action Committee (GRTL PAC).

And here are the pro-life achievements:

> Senator Cruz's pro-life record includes the following:
>
> - Leading the charge on behalf of 13 states in successfully defending the federal Partial Birth Abortion Act before the U.S. Supreme Court;

> - Joining 18 states in successfully defending New Hampshire's Parental Notification Act before the U.S. Supreme Court;
> - Successfully defending a Texas law that prevents state funds from being sent to organizations that perform abortions; and
> - Calling for the defunding of Planned Parenthood amid charges that the abortion giant sells aborted body parts.

The Washington Times reports that Cruz has also been endorsed by the pro-life leaders I most respect, Tony Perkins and James Dobson.

Excerpt:

> Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, has endorsed Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas for president, calling Mr. Cruz "a constitutional conservative who will fight for faith, family and freedom."
>
> "I trust Ted to fight to pull America out of the political and cultural tailspin that President Obama's policies have put us in," Mr. Perkins said. "This is no normal election; this election is about the very survival of our Constitution and our republic."
>
> Mr. Cruz said he was "honored" to have Mr. Perkins' endorsement, calling him "a man of incredible principle and faith."
>
> Mr. Perkins is currently president of the FRC, which promotes socially conservative values and is one of the most influential conservative advocacy groups in the country. Mr. Perkins said on Fox News' "The Kelly File" it was a personal endorsement and not from any of the nonprofits he leads.
>
> Mr. Cruz has been jockeying with 2016 GOP rival Donald Trump for support from social conservatives ahead of the Iowa caucuses on Monday.
>
> The Texas senator has also been endorsed by Dr. James Dobson, another social conservative leader, and past FRC President Gary Bauer.

I think anyone whose main issue is protecting the unborn from the use of force for selfish adults should give Cruz a look. I personally don't trust any other candidate running on the pro-life issue. Trump is pro-abortion, and there's no evidence he's changed his mind except his words form like 5 minutes ago. Rubio can't be trusted on anything he says – he lied to Florida voters about his intention to oppose amnesty, and when he got to Washington, he sponsored a bill to give 20 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship. We can't trust anything that Trump or Rubio say on any issue, in my opinion. In any case, we don't have to settle for "maybe pro-life, if it's popular". We can pick Ted Cruz and get "pro-life regardless of whether it's popular or not".

Ted Cruz has a record of defending unpopular positions, and trying to explain conservative values to others. In Iowa, he was the only candidate to stand up to the power ethanol lobbies and their crony capitalism. Marco Rubio and Donald Trump sided with the ethanol crony capitalists, because they were afraid to lose votes. And Cruz won

Iowa.

He is not afraid to defend conservative values. When it comes to the life issue, we should look for the candidate with the proven record of fighting for conservative values: Ted Cruz.

Related posts

- Ted Cruz fought Rubio's amnesty in 2013 and fought Obama's executive amnesty in 2014
- Meet Ted Cruz's secret weapon: his supportive and loving wife Heidi Cruz
- Watch Ted Cruz disagree with an Iowa farmer on the issue of ethanol subsidies
- Is Marco Rubio right about his attacks on Ted Cruz's business tax plan?
- Ted Cruz's scary, unreported, undisclosed Goldman Sachs loan
- Harvard Law Review: Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen and is eligible to become President
- Ted Cruz blasts Democrats for hiding immigration histories of terrorists in the USA
- CNN Debate: Ted Cruz hammers Marco Rubio over support for amnesty and Libya disaster
- Ted Cruz invites climate scientists to Washington, D.C. to discuss climate change
- The FIVE departments that Ted Cruz would shut down if elected president

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

February 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science
A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (30 MB)

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require

an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Marco Rubio: skipped NDAA votes, supported Libya intervention, weak on border security

February 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marco Rubio with his allies: Democrat Chuck Schumer and RINO John McCain

Former Georgia Congressman has seen something in Marco Rubio's record that causes him concern, and he's written about it over at the grassroots conservative web site Red State.

There are three problems:

- Rubio has been absent for National Defense Authorization Act votes
- Rubio was supportive of Hillary Clinton's failed intervention in Libya
- Rubio is not serious about border security and other immigration-related risks

He says:

> On the campaign trail, Senator Marco Rubio has been pushing a media narrative that he is the most "serious" foreign policy candidate. I**t's an odd position since he missed all but one of the 19 votes connected to the National Defense Authorization Act last year!** But far more damaging than his missed votes is his inability to learn from our past national security mistakes. **Whether it's Libya, border security, or major security gaps in our visa and refugee programs, when he has voted, it's often on the side of misplaced liberal ideals and illegal immigrants instead of America's safety.**
>
> One disturbing example is Rubio's support for the Obama-Clinton intervention in Libya in 2011. As a member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I

> traveled to Sigonella Navy base to meet with our military commanders who were conducting our military intervention. Our briefings were shocking. It was clear we had no end game or definition of success. That is to say the decisions and confused strategy was the product of Obama's misunderstanding of the middle east. **Yet in a speech at the Brookings Institution in 2012, after complaining that Republicans were so bad on foreign policy that he was forced to work on his policies with Democrats, Senator Rubio said the Libya regime change "turned out fine." Senator Rubio had been in the Senate for two years at the time, and should have had some understanding of the conditions on the ground. In fact, our people were already being attacked in the region.** In a month, Ambassador Chris Stevens would be pleading with Secretary Clinton for more security. And in less than five months, Ambassador Stevens and three other Americans would stop complaining – because they were killed in the utter disaster that was the radical Islamic terrorist attack on Benghazi.

I blogged before about how the failed Libya intervention has resulted in an Islamic State caliphate starting up in Libya, not to mention much violence and atrocities. New Clinton e-mails confirm that this was Hillary Clinton's war, and Marco Rubio sided with Hillary.

More:

> Even today, Senator Rubio refuses to learn the lesson of Libya. For most Americans, the situation in Iraq and Syria—as Benghazi tragically showed us—is proof that the enemies of our enemies are not necessarily our friends. The result of not properly scrutinizing such movements is often more chaos, and the death toll, like our enemies, often multiplies. Just ask the ISIS brigades rolling around in our tanks and Humvees—and read about their victims.
>
> That Marco Rubio still thinks we should fight both Bashir al Assad and ISIS, while supporting some nebulous factions that he's confident will never turn on us but will turn Syria into a democratic utopia, demonstrates the depth of his naiveté when it comes to military adventurism.
>
> And while fighting both sides of a civil war is bad enough, these mistakes are doubly harmful when we don't carefully watch who is coming into our own country.
>
> Too often, immigration is considered a solely domestic issue. But border security is the first and necessary step to securing our nation against the jihadists who are not content to kill each other abroad—they want to kill Americans here at home. **And when politicians insist on intervening around the world while voting to grant amnesty, expand refugee admittance – all the while not securing the border — we get the worst of both worlds: thousands of people coming to America from war-torn countries, and no system to tell the innocent from the terrorists. This why a major campaign issue has become the Rubio-Schumer Gang of 8 amnesty bill which prioritizes**

> **illegals over the safety of Americans.** This isn't a new problem – we need look no further than the evil perpetrators of 9/11. The lesson should have been learned more than a decade ago.
>
> Even as Europe reaped the bloody consequences of a borderless welcome-mat policy that led to the Paris atrocity, Sen. Rubio refused to stop the flood of un-vetted Syrian refugees. **When Senators like Ted Cruz and Rand Paul called to stop waving in thousands from Syria and other countries with murderous jihadist movements, Rubio did not join them.**

There's an astonishing article up at Breitbart News which talks about how Rubio misled the law enforcement leaders from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) regarding his amnesty bill.

Excerpt:

> **BNN: What happened in the meeting? Did Sen. Rubio make any promises to you? Did he keep them?**
>
> CRANE: To start, even though I had requested to bring someone with me, Sen. Rubio denied the request and demanded that I come alone, which I still believe was highly peculiar and inappropriate.
>
> He, of course, had what appeared to be his entire staff in his office with me. Most of his staff stood behind me as there was no place for them to sit. I raised a series of strong concerns with the bill, and as I raised each issue, Sen. Rubio would look to his staff and ask if that was what the bill said. Each time his staff agreed with my interpretation, and Sen. Rubio would shake his head in disbelief and indicate the bill had to be changed.
>
> Sen. Rubio talked very specifically and very directly to me and his staff saying that the changes I suggested had to be made and specifically said that other Gang of Eight members wouldn't be happy, but "Oh well." Obviously the changes I suggested were all serious enforcement related issues, such as establishing a biometric entry-exit system, and cracking down on sex offenders, gang members, violent criminals and other criminal aliens.
>
> When I walked out of his office that night I definitely thought the bill would undergo significant changes, but of course absolutely no changes were made.
>
> **BNN: Almost immediately after you met with Sen. Rubio, he introduced bill. Did it include any of the changes you asked for?**
>
> CRANE: Not one of the changes we suggested was made to the bill before Sen. Rubio introduced it.
>
> All of his strong statements during our meeting about making the changes we suggested were apparently all just a dodge to get rid of me. It quickly became obvious why he didn't permit me to take anyone with me to the meeting— he didn't want any witnesses.

So, there are two problems with Marco Rubio that surface here. First, he is young, and he has romantic notions about the use of force. He supported Libya and it failed. He thinks it succeeded, but actually it failed. Second, he is easily influenced by peer approval to get caught up in liberal priorities. We've seen that with his support for amnesty, his support for Libya, his support for removing due process rights for students accused with little or no evidence on campus (think University of Virginia hoax), and so on. He is just not mature enough to be President, and his lack of maturity could really hurt us.

Here's the full list of Rubio errors:

- Rubio got a D rating from pro-marriage activist Maggie Gallagher regarding his response to the Obergefell decision, which redefined marriage for all 50 states.
- Rubio supports sugar subsidies and ethanol subsidies, which is just crony capitalism
- Rubio takes money from a billionaire gay-marriage activist who donates to the Human Rights Campaign group – a group which wants government to persecute Christians who dissent from celebrating gay marriage
- Rubio skipped votes on de-funding Planned Parenthood in order to go to campaign fundraising events
- Rubio voted for a gun ban in Florida public parks
- Rubio introduced a bill to strip accused students of due process rights in university trials
- Rubio supported the disastrous Obama/Clinton Libya intervention which created an Islamic State caliphate in Libya
- Rubio led the effort to pass amnesty – a path to citizenship for 20 million illegal immigrants – so they can vote to expand government
- Rubio promised a Spanish-speaking audience that he would not rescind Obama's executive action amnesty if elected President
- Rubio co-sponsored a bill to give illegal immigrants in-state tuition in Florida, to be paid for by Florida taxpayers

A closer look at the beliefs and habits of Major Richard Winters

February 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

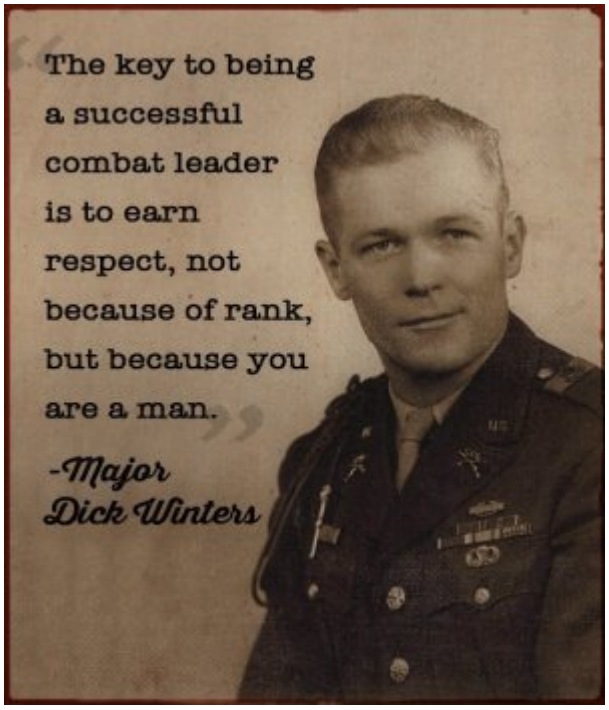

Major Richard Winters, U.S. Army Airborne

This post came to me from Brian, and it's from the Art of Manliness blog. I blogged about Winters on D-Day and here is that post.

Let's find out what made Dick Winters tick.

Excerpt:

> Growing up, Dick Winters was by temperament and intention a self-described loner. In high school and college, he was content to focus less on his social life and more on his personal development. Sports, work, and especially his studies took priority over "running around." Simplifying his life in this way allowed him "time to spend with my inner thoughts and ideas stimulated by reading."
>
> Winters took a similar approach to serving in the Army, eschewing social pursuits in favor of studying military manuals and critically thinking through life and leadership. While training stateside, he "preferred a quiet evening in the barracks to the nightlife" of cities close to camp, and he abstained from joining "in the parties and social gatherings in which most officers participated."
>
> After their paratrooper training was complete, Easy Company deployed to the quaint English village of Aldbourne for nine months of preparation preceding the invasion of Normandy. On his first Sunday there, Winters attended a church service and then visited a small adjoining cemetery, where he "sat on a bench and took time for personal reflection and simply to enjoy some solitude." It was there he met Mr. and Mrs. Barnes, who proved crucial in extending such

> opportunities for private contemplation.
>
> The Barneses, who had already lost a son in the war, took an immediate liking to Dick, and when the Army asked who among the natives of Aldbourne might be willing to billet pairs of its officers, they volunteered their home — as long as Winters was one of the two.

Winters preferred planning to passion and spontaneity, because he believed that preparing in advanced trained him to make better decisions on the fly:

> The Barneses adopted Dick as one of their own, and provided him with a quiet refuge in which to hone his martial monasticism. While other officers and troops hung out at the village pub, and enjoyed the social life in neighboring towns, Winters rarely left Aldbourne, choosing instead to pore over tactical manuals and plan for D-Day. In preparing to lead men in combat, he felt his time to be extremely precious and thus devoted as much of it as possible to becoming "totally proficient in tactics and technology" and developing his own "personal perspective on command."
>
> Major Winters ultimately found that his "intense study paid huge dividends in Normandy." Not only did he have ready solutions to the challenges he and his men faced in combat, but his hours of quiet reflection proved invaluable in another way.
>
> **As the famous saying goes, "No plan survives first contact with the enemy," and Major Winters encountered many scenarios to which there was no textbook answer as to how to proceed. In such situations he proved able to deftly improvise. The months of stillness to which Winters had exposed his mind left it keenly responsive to insights and intuitions — giving him what he termed a true "sixth sense" when it came to making decisions.**

Winters was careful to not let women interfere with his mission:

> Most monks take a lifetime vow of chastity; Dick Winters didn't extend it that far, but he did put the pursuit of women on hold for a season.
>
> To Winters, romantic relationships were another distracting entanglement that would prevent him from fully developing himself and following the way of the monastic warrior. As is true of many eminent men, in his youth he made going after girls a low priority, and went on "only a handful of dates."
>
> When Winters went off to war, he and a female acquaintance became pen pals. She developed romantic feelings for the strapping officer, but he steadfastly kept her at arm's length. In observing the men of Easy Company, he had found that those with romantic attachments were more susceptible to combat fatigue and shell shock.
>
> […]Bachelors have less to lose and are therefore able to more fearlessly throw

> themselves into the fight. Thus, desiring to detach himself from anything that would inhibit his focus on the task at hand, Winters was committed to remaining in full-on monk mode for the duration…

Winters writes:

> "under fire in combat, whether it's rifle fire or artillery, the men who seemed to have their eyes glazed over quickest and put their heads down and kept their heads down, were those who were married. Either they were married or in love or had a fiancée back home. They were the first to show fear. Those who hadn't fallen in love or who weren't engaged seemed to be able to hold on longer."
>
> […]"As a matter of fact, I wouldn't even kiss a girl's hand, for as a soldier, I don't want any more people than necessary to even know me. It's no good. If a soldier lives, O.K., get out of the army and forget it. If he doesn't, O.K., there are just that fewer people who feel the toll of the war."

Isn't it amazing that in today's society, it's just the opposite. The "best" men are the ones who are able to get the largest number of attractive women to have recreational sex with them before marriage. It didn't used to be that way.

The article talks about how Winters was very serious about physical fitness. He felt that his mental ability and his moral courage was based on being physically fit.

But I want to focus on his moral character:

> Winters believed that the cornerstone of character was honesty, and that from there you worked to develop a moral compass that was guided by the virtues of courage, fairness, consistency, selflessness, and respect for your fellow men. He felt that integrity was paramount as well, noting that "it is easier to do the right thing when everyone is looking," but "more difficult to do what you should do when you are alone."
>
> To these core values, Winters added his own ascetic precepts, choosing to abstain from canoodling with women, drinking alcohol (he was a lifelong teetotaler), and, as we shall see, swearing.

Winters says that the most important part of being a leader is sharing the burden of risk and danger with his men:

> "The intensity of a fire, or a heavy concentration, to be a leader, you have to be able to concentrate on that fire and move just as soon as it stops or the last round hits. Move. Get up. Start circulating among your men. Is everybody okay? Let's get up. Let's move. Keep your eye open for an attack. Get their attention. Move among your men as quickly as possible. And moving among them—the fact that they see you and they're talking to you—they know that you are there and you are talking to them, and it makes all the difference in the world to know that you are not in this thing by yourself. That's what officers must do—break the cycle of fear. If a soldier is concentrating on his own feelings and on his own fear,

> and he sees you moving around, he realizes that you're sharing the burden with him. That's why he can then move."

His morality was rationally grounded in a Christian worldview:

> For Major Winters, his spirit-maintaining ritual was church attendance. Very few soldiers attended religious services while overseas, even in the anxious days leading up to the invasion of Normandy. But for Winters, going to church "became the bedrock of [his] character" and he only missed 3 services in the 9 months he lived in Aldbourne. As he explained to his pen pal, "The way I feel about it, it is a very special privilege to be able to go at all and I don't want to miss a chance."

The article is definitely worth a read. We are surrounded by so many celebrities and athletes with low moral character that it is nice to go back in time and learn what Americans used to be like. You could do much worse than learning from Richard Winters.

Previously, I blogged about Winters' heroism at Brecourt Manor and Nijmegen, as well as another famous airborne officer, Ronald Speirs, at the Battle of Foy.

Are Christians cherry-picking which verses to obey from the Old Testament?

February 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here's a wonderful article from Peter Saunders.

The challenge:

> An argument frequently advanced by those attempting to defend homosexual practice is that Christians 'cherry pick' the commands in the Bible – that is, they chose to emphasise some commands while ignoring others.
>
> The Old Testament may forbid homosexual acts (Leviticus 18:2; 20:13) but it also forbids eating seafood without fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9, 10).
>
> So how can Christians then justify upholding laws on sexual morality whilst at the same time ignoring the food laws from the very same books of the Bible? Why may they eat shellfish but not be allowed to have sex outside marriage? Isn't this inconsistent and hypocritical?

The solution is that God enters into "covenants" with his people, and the terms of those covenants change.

Especially dietary laws:

> The answer to this question lies in an understanding of biblical covenants.
>
> A covenant is a binding solemn agreement made between two parties. It generally leaves each with obligations. But it holds only between the parties

> involved.
>
> There are a number of biblical covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic (Old), Davidic and New.
>
> Under the Noahic covenant, which God made with all living human beings (Genesis 9:8-17), people were able to eat anything:
>
> *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Genesis 9:3).*
>
> But under the Sinaitic (Old) Covenant, which God made with the nation of Israel, people were able to eat certain foods, but not others.

Jesus clearly created a new covenant with his followers, where the dietary laws are lifted:

> Jesus said that he had come to fulfil the 'Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). He would establish this new covenant with new laws, with himself as high priest based on his own sacrificial death on the cross.
>
> This new covenant would completely deal with sin (Hebrews 10:1-18) and protect all those who put their faith in him from God's wrath and judgement…
>
> *[…]'In the same way, after the supper (Jesus) took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you"' (Luke 22:20). '…we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Hebrews 10:10)*
>
> People would come under the protection of this new covenant, not by virtue of belonging to the nation of Israel, but through faith in Christ. In fact the function of the Old Testament Law (Sinaitic covenant) was to point to Christ as its fulfilment.
>
> […]So what then did Christ say about foods? He pronounced all foods clean for his followers to eat:
>
> *' "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (Mark 7:18-23)*
>
> Jesus was making that point that under the new covenant God required purity of the heart. Internal thoughts and attitudes were as important as external actions.

So, for Christians, the dietary / ceremonial laws don't apply, but the moral laws do apply. Food is OK for Christians, but sexual immorality – which includes premarital sex and adultery – are NOT OK for Christians.

I think sometimes when you are talking to people whose motivation is just to get rid of any objective moral law entirely, they tend to ask questions without really wanting a good answer. This is especially true when it comes to the morality of sex. They ask the

question not to get an answer, but to justify getting rid of the moral rules governing sexuality. The answers are there for people who are willing to respect God in their decision-making. The answers are not found only by people who have a reason to not want to find them.

Should Christians seek to help the poor by growing a secular government?

February 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Major Welfare Programs, 2012

Medicaid	$296 bil
Unemployment Insurance	$126
Disability	$124
Food Stamps	$75
Supplemental Security Income	$60
Earned Income Tax Credit	$56
Pell Grants	$41
Section 8 housing/rental assistance	$28
Drug Benefits	$23
Education for Disadvantaged	$14
School Lunches	$10
S-CHIP	$9
Head Start	$8
TANF Cash Aid	$7

Sources: Congressional Research Service, Congressional Budget Office

Major welfare programs as of 2012

I was asked a question by e-mail by Kerri about why some Christians like Bernie Sanders and his plan for big government, more spending, higher taxes and more debt.

I found a paper (PDF) on the University of Washington web site that makes the case for why Christians ought to care about more than just social issues when it comes to politics and elections.

Here's the abstract:

> What accounts for cross-national variation in religiosity as measured by church attendance and non-religious rates? Examining answers from both secularization theory and the religious economy perspective, we assert that cross-national variation in religious participation is a function of government welfare spending and provide a theory that links macro-sociological outcomes with individual rationality. Churches historically have provided social welfare. As governments gradually assume many of these welfare functions, individuals with elastic preferences for spiritual goods will reduce their level of participation since the desired welfare goods can be obtained from secular sources. Cross-national data on welfare spending and religious participation show a strong negative relationship between these two variables after controlling for other aspects of modernization.

Here's the conclusion:

> It is quite apparent that there is a strong statistical relationship between state social welfare spending and religious participation and religiosity. Countries with

> higher levels of per capita welfare have a proclivity for less religious participation and tend to have higher percentages of non-religious individuals. People living in countries with high social welfare spending per capita even have less of a tendency to take comfort in religion, perhaps knowing that the state is there to help them in times of crisis.34 As laid out in the theory above, there is likely a substitution effect for some individuals between state-provided services and religious services. Religion will still be there to serve the spiritual needs of people seeking answers to the philosophic mysteries of life, but those who value those spiritual goods less than the tangible welfare benefits churches provide will be less likely to participate in religious services once secular substitutes become available. Given that religious practice and values are often passed down from generation to generation, the weakening of practice in one generation will likely translate into weaker practice in subsequent generations. Does this mean that secularization theory is correct in its prediction that religion will gradually fade away? Doubtful. Realizing that there is still a yearning among many people to understand the mysteries of life, religion is not likely to dissipate at any time soon. Government simply cannot offer credible substitutes for these less tangible, supernatural goods. The explosion in spirituality once religion was made legal in former Soviet bloc countries lends credence to this assertion (Greeley 1994). As religious markets become more deregulated in various parts of the world, it is likely that new religious movements will take advantage of increased liberty and discover ways to expand.
>
> Perhaps one of the most important lessons from the findings above is that the religiosity of a society is not simply determined by sociological factors. Government policy can play an important role in shaping the religiosity of a nation. Policies aimed at regulating the activities of religious organizations — from tax laws to zoning regulations — have important effects on the firms that supply religious goods and services. Many of these policies are designed consciously to promote or inhibit religious practice. Alternatively, welfare policy has been shown here to unintentionally affect the demand for religious services, likely over the course of generations. And, finally, since an extensive welfare state is considered by many to be a hallmark of modernized societies, the microfoundational analysis presented above provides a way of incorporating a component part of the secularization thesis (which relies heavily on notions of modernization) into the religious economy perspective.

Have you ever heard a sermon that addresses the size of government and individual liberty and prosperity? I haven't. You'd have to be reading Christian scholars like Wayne Grudem or Jay Richards to find that. The typical church you attend either praises big government or says nothing about it. After all, we can keep making withdrawals on the liberties we have *right now* without ever worrying about having to make any deposits, right? Everything will be fine, and it's easier not to have to think about what's down the road to serfdom, so long as the scenery is nice for us right now. Religion is primarily

about comfort, not truth. Right?

The truth is that religious liberty and freedom of conscience works better in societies where individuals are large, and government is small. We can do more as Christians to help others and draw attention to Christ when we are allowed to keep our own money, and make our own lives the way we want. When a secular government takes half our money to buy the votes of people who just want money and not a transformed life, we lose. It’s our job to attach wisdom and goodness to our giving when we give of ourselves to others. In the long run, that wisdom and goodness rubs off on the people we give to, reducing the need for them to be dependent on others. Government just takes our money and sends it to people who are living unwisely, with no strings attached. That will never get people out of dependency. It’s a mistake for Christians to use government as a substitute for doing the work of charity. That’s our job.

Man claims new transgender law allowed him to change in women's changing room

February 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

He actually changed in the women's changing room twice. This happened in liberal, secular Seattle, of course.

Kokomo News reports.

Excerpt:

> A man who attempted to use a women's locker room at a Seattle swimming pool told employees he had the right to use the bathroom of his choice under state law.
>
> David Takami with the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department said a man arrived at the Evans Pool in Greenlake Monday afternoon and paid to use the lap pool.
>
> Takami said the man then entered the women's locker room and took off his shirt in front of a local girls swimming team, which had just finished practicing. Several parents and other women using the locker room became alarmed and alerted pool staff.
>
> When staff members confronted the man, he left the locker room and went swimming.
>
> When he was done, Takami said the man went back into the women's locker room and was again asked to leave. The man resisted, telling staff members the law had changed and he now had the right to use the locker room of his choice, according to Takami.
>
> **The man was likely referring to a new rule created by the Washington**

> **State Human Rights Commission that requires buildings open to the public to allow transgender people to use restrooms and locker rooms of the gender they identify with.**
>
> The man left the pool and staff members didn't call police.

Very important to understand what these LGBT laws mean for you and your family, before the secular left votes them into law, and you have no recourse.

Life Site News reports on another example of this, also from the Seattle area:

> A similar incident occurred in Olympia in 2012, when a 45-year-old biological male who calls himself Colleen Francis lounged naked in a women's locker room, in an area frequented by girls as young as six. According to the police report an eyewitness stated, "There were girls 6 to 18 years of age and they were not used to seeing individuals in situations like this." But the facility gave him the right to continue using its facilities as he wished.
>
> Those who oppose adding gender identity to non-discrimination ordinances and civil rights legislation have long warned the ordinances would be used specifically for that purpose.
>
> But LGBT political activists dismissed such concerns, calling opponents' warnings that such a thing could occur overblown at best, entirely fictitious at worst.

This why the people of Houston fought so hard against the effort by secular leftists to prohibit discrimination against transgendered people. They knew what the law would do.

Atheist gets her PhD in astronomy and astrophysics and finds evidence for God

February 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Christian apologist Terrell Clemmons tweeted this testimony by Sarah Salviander, a research scientist in astronomy and astrophysics at the prestigious University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Salviander writes:

> I was born in the U.S., but grew up in Canada. My parents were socialists and political activists who thought British Columbia would be a better place for us to live, since it had the only socialist government in North America at the time. My parents were also atheists, though they eschewed that label in favor of "agnostic." They were kind, loving, and moral, but religion played no part in my life. Instead, my childhood revolved around education, particularly science. I remember how important it was to my parents that my brother and I did well in school.

I just want to point out that I hope that all you Christian parents are taking seriously the obligation to make your kids do well in school, because even if they start out as atheists when they are young, they can still find their way back to God through study, as Sarah did.

She had a bad start, that's for sure:

> I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, a time when science fiction was enjoying a renaissance, thanks largely to the popularity of *Star Wars*. I remember how fascinated I was by the original *Star Wars* trilogy. It had almost nothing to do with

> science—it's more properly characterized as space opera—but it got me thinking about space in a big way. I also loved the original *Star Trek*, which was more science fiction. The stoic and logical character of Mr. Spock was particularly appealing to me. Popular science was also experiencing a renaissance at that time, which had a lot to do with Carl Sagan's television show, *Cosmos*, which I adored. The combination of these influences led to such an intense wonder about outer space and the universe, that by the time I was nine years old I knew I would be a space scientist someday.
>
> Canada was already post-Christian by the 1970s, so I grew up with no religion. In retrospect, it's amazing that for the first 25 years of my life, I met only three people who identified as Christian. My view of Christianity was negative from an early age, and by the time I was in my twenties, I was actively hostile toward Christianity. Looking back, I realized a lot of this was the unconscious absorption of the general hostility toward Christianity that is common in places like Canada and Europe; my hostility certainly wasn't based on actually knowing anything about Christianity. I had come to believe that Christianity made people weak and foolish; I thought it was philosophically trivial. I was ignorant not only of the Bible, but also of the deep philosophy of Christianity and the scientific discoveries that shed new light on the origins of the universe and life on Earth.

She documents a phase of following Ayn Rand and embracing "Objectivism", but eventually she rejects it for failing to answer the big questions of life.

More:

> I began to focus all of my energy on my studies, and became very dedicated to my physics and math courses. I joined campus clubs, started to make friends, and, for the first time in my life, I was meeting Christians. They weren't like Objectivists—they were joyous and content. And, they were smart, too. I **was astonished to find that my physics professors, whom I admired, were Christian. Their personal example began to have an influence on me, and I found myself growing less hostile to Christianity.**

This is why I think it is so important for Christian parents to raise their children to get advanced degrees… either to become professors themselves, or to finance others (e.g. – our own children) to do advanced degrees. It is so important for university students to see Christian professors on campus. And failing that, it's important that we bring Christian speakers in to debate non-Christian speakers on the important issues. This will not happen unless we recognize how important it is, and then make a plan to achieve it.

More:

> **I had joined a group in the Center for Astrophysics and Space Sciences (CASS) that was researching evidence for the big bang. The cosmic background radiation—the leftover radiation from the big bang—provides the strongest evidence for the theory, but cosmologists**

> **need other, independent lines of evidence to confirm it. My group was studying deuterium abundances in the early universe. Deuterium is an isotope of hydrogen, and its abundance in the early universe is sensitive to the amount of ordinary mass contained in the entire universe. Believe it or not, this one measurement tells us whether the big bang model is correct.**
>
> **If anyone is interested in how this works, I'll describe it, but for now I'll spare you the gruesome details. Suffice it to say that an amazing convergence of physical properties is necessary in order to study deuterium abundances in the early universe, and yet this convergence is exactly what we get. I remember being astounded by this, blown away, completely and utterly awed. It seemed incredible to me that there was a way to find the answer to this question we had about the universe. In fact, it seems that every question we have about the universe is answerable. There's no reason it has to be this way, and it made me think of Einstein's observation that the most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it's comprehensible. I started to sense an underlying order to the universe. Without knowing it, I was awakening to what Psalm 19 tells us so clearly, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."**
>
> That summer, I'd picked up a copy of T*he Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas and was reading it in my off hours. Previous to this, I'd only known it as an exciting story of revenge, since that's what the countless movie and TV adaptations always focused on. But it's more than just a revenge story, it's a philosophically deep examination of forgiveness and God's role in giving justice. I was surprised by this, and was starting to realize that the concept of God and religion was not as philosophically trivial as I had thought.
>
> All of this culminated one day, as I was walking across that beautiful La Jolla campus. I stopped in my tracks when it hit me—I believed in God! I was so happy; it was like a weight had been lifted from my heart. I realized that most of the pain I'd experienced in my life was of my own making, but that God had used it to make me wiser and more compassionate. It was a great relief to discover that there was a reason for suffering, and that it was because God was loving and just. God could not be perfectly just unless I—just like everyone else—was made to suffer for the bad things I'd done.

The Count of Monte Cristo is one of my favorite, favorite books as well, and had the same impact on me as it did on her.

OK, that's enough for this post. Go read the rest, and please share it. This woman is an expert Christian apologist and her life will have an influence. Are you going to be like her? Will you mentor others to be like her? Will you marry someone like her? Will you raise children who are like her (which is my plan)? We really need everyone to pull their

weight now, because everywhere you look, the truth of Christianity is under attack.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

What is the criterion of embarrassment, and what are some examples of it?

February 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

The criterion of embarrassment is just one of the historical criteria used to select the parts of a piece of ancient literature that is likely to be historical. Other things in the source may have happened, but we can't know them as history. If significant parts of a text are historical, it is possible to accept it as historical until there are specific reasons to say that some part of it is NOT historical.

Here is William Lane Craig's list of criteria for a saying or event to be historical:

1. Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
2. Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
3. Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
4. Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
5. Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
6. Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.

The criteria is the same for liberal historians and conservative historians, although some historians weight one criteria more than others when trying to evaluate the historicity of

different New Testament parts.

Here's Christian apologist Dr. Frank Turek explaining what the criterion is, and some examples:

Franks's a great speaker, you should watch that.

What's amazing is that even liberal historians will give you facts that are embarrassing to the authors as "historical".

Anyway, here are 8 examples of parts of the New Testament that exhibit the criterion of embarrassment, thanks to theologian C. Michael Patton.

1. Jesus' Baptism
2. Jesus' Family Did Not Believe
3. John the Baptist's Doubt
4. The Disciples Doubted After the Resurrection
5. Jesus Does not Know the Time of His Coming
6. Women are the First to Witness the Resurrection
7. Jesus Cursed a Fig Tree
8. Death and Resurrection of Christ

I think 6 and 8 are the ones I want you to take away with you when you finish this post.

Here they are:

> Women are the First to Witness the Resurrection
>
> This is one that is often brought up. Craig Keener puts it well enough: "The witness of women at the tomb is very likely historical, precisely because it was so offensive to the larger culture — not the sort of testimony one would invent. Not all testimony was regarded as being of equal merit; the trustworthiness of witnesses was considered essential. Yet most of Jesus' Jewish contemporaries held much less esteem for the testimony of women than for that of men; this suspicion reflects a broader Mediterranean limited trust of women's speech and testimony also enshrined in Roman law." (Keener, The Historical Jesus, 331)

And:

> Death and Resurrection of Christ
>
> This easily escapes our notice since the basic story of Christ is so well known. However, both the death and resurrection of Christ are, from the standpoint of the culture of the day, embarrassing and damaging. Concerning the death of Christ on a cross, Paul sees this problem: "But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Cor. 1:23). The word used for "stumbling block" is skandalon. Louw-Nida defines this as "that which causes offense and thus arouses opposition." Why? Because the Jews would never have thought their Messiah would have been hung on a tree. "Cursed is one who hangs on a tree" (Gal. 3:13; Deut 21:23). The Greeks thought of the resurrection

> as foolishness as they were dualist, essentially believing that the material world was evil and the spiritual world good. They would have scoffed at the idea that Christ returned to physical form. This is why later Greeks attempted to adapt the Christ story, doing away with the physical resurrection. Marcion is the most famous promoter of this view (see Docitism).

Now, when you are talking about the New Testament to your non-believing friends, you definitely want to draw attention to passages that are embarrassing to the authors. It will help you to be more convincing when you explain the New Testament like a historian.

By the way, you can read an entire post I did on *all the criteria* that historians use to evaluate ancient historical documents.

Ted Cruz's plan to lower taxes and simplify the process for filing tax returns

February 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How to get kissed: Heidi Cruz helping her husband

Ted Cruz is very upset with the IRS for discriminating against conservative groups and Christian groups in order to get Barack Obama re-elected in 2012. So, he's come up with a plan to drastically reduce their influence – and their cost to taxpayers.

Here he is talking about the plan with Megyn Kelly on Fox News.

And he has posted something about the plan on his web site:

> Under the Simple Flat Tax, the current seven rates of personal income tax will collapse into a single low rate of 10 percent. For a family of four, the first $36,000 will be tax-free. The Child Tax Credit will remain in place, and the Simple Flat Tax Plan expands and modernizes the Earned Income Tax Credit with greater anti-fraud and pro-marriage reforms.
>
> […]The IRS will cease to exist as we know it, there will be zero targeting of individuals based on their faith or political beliefs, and there will be no way for thousands of agents to manipulate the system.
>
> For businesses, the corporate income tax will be eliminated. It will be replaced by a simple Business Flat Tax at a single 16 percent rate. The current payroll tax system will be abolished, while maintaining full funding for Social Security and Medicare.
>
> The convoluted tax code will be replaced with new rules of the game – so simple, in fact, that individuals and families could file their taxes on a postcard or phone app. The Death Tax will be eliminated. The Alternative Minimum Tax will be eliminated. The tax on profits earned abroad will be eliminated. And of course,

> the Obamacare taxes will be eliminated. Also gone will be the unending loopholes in the current code, the stacks of depreciation schedules for businesses, and the multi-tiered rates on income and investments. Under the Simple Flat Tax, the Internet remains free from taxes.

Simple.

The Tax Foundation, which is the leading non-partisan think tank that deals with the issue of taxation, scored Cruz's plan.

They say:

- > Senator Cruz's plan would cut taxes by $3.6 trillion over the next decade on a static basis. However, the plan would end up reducing tax revenues by $768 billion over the next decade when accounting for economic growth from increases in the supply of labor and capital and the much broader tax base due to the new value-added tax.
- > According to the Tax Foundation's Taxes and Growth Model, the plan would significantly reduce marginal tax rates and the cost of capital, which would lead to a 13.9 percent higher GDP over the long term, provided that the tax cut could be appropriately financed.
- > The plan would also lead to a 43.9 percent larger capital stock, 12.2 percent higher wages, and 4.8 million more full-time equivalent jobs.
- > On a static basis, the plan would cut taxes by 9.2 percent, on average, for all taxpayers.
- > Accounting for economic growth, all taxpayers would see an increase in after-tax income of at least 14 percent at the end of the decade.

They conclude:

> Senator Cruz's tax plan would significantly alter the federal tax code. It would completely repeal the corporate income tax and all payroll taxes and enact a 10 percent income tax and a 16 percent "business transfer tax" or value-added tax. These changes to the tax code would increase the incentives to work and invest and would greatly increase the U.S. economy's size in the long run, leading to higher incomes for taxpayers at all income levels. The plan would also be a large tax cut, which would increase the federal government's deficit by over $3.6 trillion on a static basis. Accounting for the growth caused by the plan, federal revenues would decline by $768 billion over the next decade.

The non-partisan The Hill says that another major think thank for fiscal conservatism also likes Cruz's plan:

> Ted Cruz's tax plan would cost less and stimulate the economy more than Donald Trump's, a recent analysis found.
>
> "Of the two proposals that we have examined so far, those by Trump and Cruz, we find the Cruz proposal to be the better of the two," said David Tuerck, executive director of the Beacon Hill Institute and senior fellow at the National Center for Policy Analysis. The free-market groups released a report comparing the economic effects of the tax plans from the two Republican presidential candidates.
>
> […]Cruz's plan would also increase business investment and personal income more than Trump's plan would, the report found.

I want a higher personal income, and I want more money invested into the business that employs me – so I can keep my job, or maybe find a better one. It's very important to my life plan that I be able to earn money, and keep what I earn. I have a use for that money, whether I marry or not. And that use is not to give it to the government so they can buy people condoms and abortions in exchange for their votes. I have a better plan for the money I earn than what a secular government wants to do with it.

Now, Ted Cruz will have to come up with $768 billion in revenue to balance his plan, but that's why he has promised to abolish or significantly reduce FIVE government departments. Don't worry, they aren't the useful ones. We have too much government, and we can get rid of some, and return the money to the people.

Related posts

- Ted Cruz explains his position on the issues of abortion and right to life
- Ted Cruz introduces new bill to help ICE Agents enforce immigration laws
- Ted Cruz fought Rubio's amnesty in 2013 and fought Obama's executive amnesty in 2014
- Meet Ted Cruz's secret weapon: his supportive and loving wife Heidi Cruz
- Watch Ted Cruz disagree with an Iowa farmer on the issue of ethanol subsidies
- Is Marco Rubio right about his attacks on Ted Cruz's business tax plan?
- Ted Cruz's scary, unreported, undisclosed Goldman Sachs loan
- Harvard Law Review: Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen and is eligible to become President
- Ted Cruz blasts Democrats for hiding immigration histories of terrorists in the USA
- CNN Debate: Ted Cruz hammers Marco Rubio over support for amnesty and Libya disaster
- Ted Cruz invites climate scientists to Washington, D.C. to discuss climate change
- The FIVE departments that Ted Cruz would shut down if elected president

New study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others

February 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

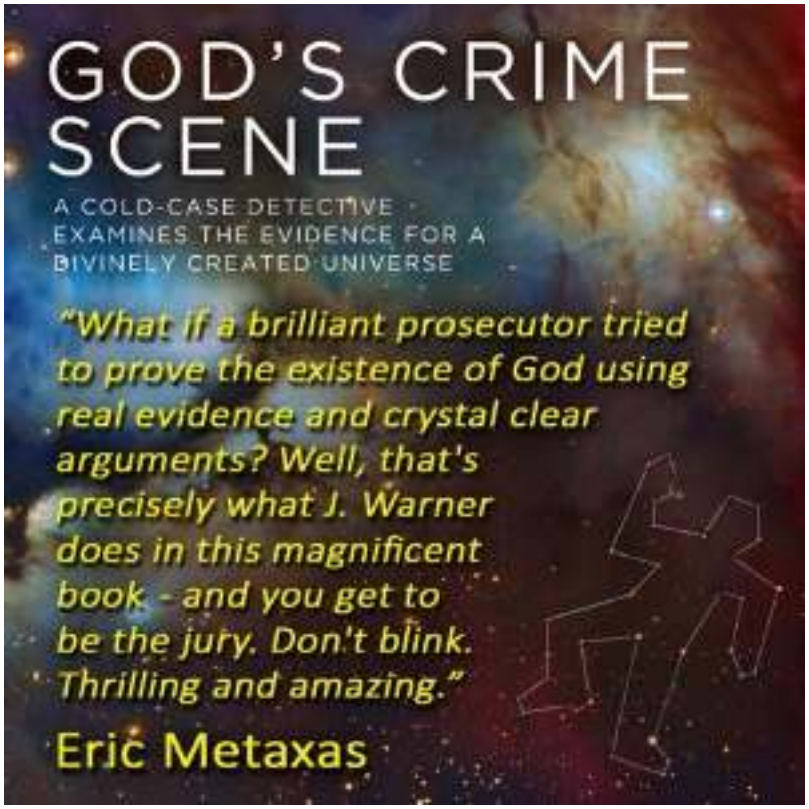

J. Warner Wallace: God's Crime Scene

A while back I finished reading "God's Crime Scene", the new book by J. Warner Wallace. I wanted to post something about some studies he mentioned in Chapter 6, on free will. This is one of the places where he found evidence in a surprising area.

Wallace says that free will makes more sense if theism is true, because we have non-material souls that interact with our bodies, but are not causally determined by them. On atheism, only matter exists, and you can't get free will (or consciousness) from matter. So atheists like Sam Harris and Alex Rosenberg, for example, deny free will, because they are materialists and atheists.

Anyway, here's what he writes on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and

> the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others." Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: "It seems that not only do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it."" The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here's the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons' belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you're an atheist, then your worldview is telling you that what you are doing now is the result of genetic programming and sensory inputs. You're not conscious. You can't reason. You make no free choices, including moral choices. Naturally, someone who believes this is going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care

and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when things start to get a bit uncomfortable. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time. What difference would it make if they did, anyway – there's no afterlife on atheism.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality. My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

John C. Sanford’s genetic entropy hypothesis

February 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

JoeCoder sent me a recent peer-reviewed paper by John C. Sanford, so I’ve been trying to find something written by him at a layman’s level so I could understand what he is talking about.

Dr. Sanford’s CV is posted at the Cornell University web page.

I found this 20-minute video of an interview with him, in which he explains his thesis:

The most important part of that video is Sanford’s assertion that natural selection cannot remove deleterious mutations from a population faster than they arrive.

And I also found a review of a book that he wrote that explains his ideas at the layman level.

It says:

> Dr. John Sanford is a plant geneticist and inventor who conducted research at Cornell University for more than 25 years. He is best known for significant contributions to the field of transgenic crops, including the invention of the biolistic process (“gene gun”).
>
> […]Sanford argues that, based upon modern scientific evidence and the calculations of population geneticists (who are almost exclusively evolutionists), mutations are occurring at an alarmingly high rate in our genome and that the vast majority of all mutations are either harmful or “nearly-neutral” (meaning a loss for the organism or having no discernible fitness gain). Importantly, Sanford also establishes the extreme rarity of any type of beneficial mutations in comparison with harmful or “nearly-neutral” mutations. Indeed, “beneficial” mutations are so exceedingly rare as to not contribute in any meaningful

> way. [NOTE: “Beneficial” mutations do not necessarily result from a gain in information, but instead, these changes predominantly involve a net loss of function to the organism, which is also not helpful to [Darwinism]; see Behe, 2010, pp. 419-445.] Sanford concludes that the frequency and generally harmful or neutral nature of mutations prevents them from being useful to any scheme of random evolution.
>
> […]In the next section of the book, Sanford examines natural selection and asks whether “nature” can “select” in favor of the exceedingly rare “beneficial” mutations and against the deleterious mutations. The concept of natural selection is generally that the organisms that are best adapted to their environment will survive and reproduce, while the less fit will not. Sanford points out that this may be the case with some organisms, but more commonly, selection involves chance and luck. But could this process select against harmful mutations and allow less harmful or even beneficial mutations to thrive? According to Sanford, there are significant challenges to this notion.

Stanford is a co-author of an academic book on these issues that has Dembski and Behe as co-authors.

Now, I do have to post something more complicated about this, which you can skip – it’s an abstract of a paper he co-authored from that book:

> Most deleterious mutations have very slight effects on total fitness, and it has become clear that below a certain fitness effect threshold, such low-impact mutations fail to respond to natural selection. The existence of such a selection threshold suggests that many low-impact deleterious mutations should accumulate continuously, resulting in relentless erosion of genetic information. In this paper, we use numerical simulation to examine this problem of selection threshold.
>
> The objective of this research was to investigate the effect of various biological factors individually and jointly on mutation accumulation in a model human population. For this purpose, we used a recently-developed, biologically-realistic numerical simulation program, Mendel’s Accountant. This program introduces new mutations into the population every generation and tracks each mutation through the processes of recombination, gamete formation, mating, and transmission to the new offspring. This method tracks which individuals survive to reproduce after selection, and records the transmission of each surviving mutation every generation. This allows a detailed mechanistic accounting of each mutation that enters and leaves the population over the course of many generations. We term this type of analysis genetic accounting.
>
> Across all reasonable parameters settings, we observed that high impact mutations were selected away with very high efficiency, while very low impact mutations accumulated just as if there was no selection operating. There was always a large transitional zone, wherein mutations with intermediate fitness

> effects accumulated continuously, but at a lower rate than would occur in the absence of selection. To characterize the accumulation of mutations of different fitness effect we developed a new statistic, selection threshold (STd), which is an empirically determined value for a given population. A population's selection threshold is defined as that fitness effect wherein deleterious mutations are accumulating at exactly half the rate expected in the absence of selection. This threshold is mid-way between entirely selectable, and entirely unselectable, mutation effects.
>
> Our investigations reveal that under a very wide range of parameter values, selection thresholds for deleterious mutations are surprisingly high. Our analyses of the selection threshold problem indicate that given even modest levels of noise affecting either the genotype-phenotype relationship or the genotypic fitness-survival-reproduction relationship, accumulation of low-impact mutations continually degrades fitness, and this degradation is far more serious than has been previously acknowledged. Simulations based on recently published values for mutation rate and effect-distribution in humans show a steady decline in fitness that is not even halted by extremely intense selection pressure (12 offspring per female, 10 selectively removed). Indeed, we find that under most realistic circumstances, the large majority of harmful mutations are essentially unaffected by natural selection and continue to accumulate unhindered. This finding has major theoretical implications and raises the question, "What mechanism can preserve the many low-impact nucleotide positions that constitute most of the information within a genome?"

Now I have been told by JoeCoder that there are many critical responses to his hypothesis, most of which have to do with whether natural selection can overcome the difficulty he is laying out. But since this is not my area of expertise, there is not much I can say to adjudicate here. Take it for what it is.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds

- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Detainee released by the Democrats is now top recruiter for Islamic State (ISIS)

February 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neville Chamberlain Obama: peace in our time

Since the prison at Guantanamo Bay is in the news lately, it might be worth reviewing the Obama administrations actions related to radical Islamic terrorism to see whether Democrats can be serious about protecting America.

Here is a typical case of the Obama administration releasing radical Islamist terrorists from Gitmo.

Investors Business Daily explains:

> Last year, the president claimed he only freed five Taliban leaders to free "POW" Bowe Bergdahl, whom he portrayed as a hero. But now the Army says Bergdahl's a deserter. We smell a rat, and it's not just Bergdahl.
>
> The Army on Wednesday charged Sgt. Bergdahl with desertion and endangering the safety of a command, which carries a life prison term.
>
> The findings of the military's six-month investigation corroborate an internal 2009 Army report that found Bergdahl had a history of walking off his post and more than likely deserted. That's why the Pentagon never listed him as a POW.
>
> The report said he shipped his laptop back home to Idaho, and left a note expressing his disillusionment with the war, before ending up in the arms of the Taliban.

> Obama had access to this intelligence long before he made his Taliban deal. So why did he trade a known deserter — and likely enemy sympathizer, if not collaborator — for five enemy commanders that he acknowledged posed a national security risk? And why did he glorify Bergdahl as a war hero?
>
> To justify the release from Gitmo of five hardened terrorists who would never have been released otherwise and to help close down Gitmo.

The goal is not to improve security, it's to make it easier to close the prison.

And here's another case reported by the Weekly Standard from earlier this week:

> A former detainee hold at Gitmo has been arrested for ties to the Islamic State.
>
> "Spanish and Moroccan police on Tuesday arrested four suspected members of a jihadi cell that sought to recruit fighters for the Islamic State group, including one described as a former Guantanamo detainee who once fought with militants in Afghanistan," reports the Associated Press.
>
> "Three people were arrested in Spain's North African enclave city of Ceuta while a Moroccan was arrested in the Moroccan border town of Farkhana, next to Melilla, Spain's other North African enclave, statements from the two nations' interior ministries said.
>
> "One of those detained in Ceuta was the former Guantanamo detainee who was not named by Spanish authorities but described as 'a leader who was trained in handling weapons, explosives and in military tactics.' After being captured in 2002 and held in Guantanamo, he was returned to Spain in 2004, said Interior Minister Jorge Fernandez Diaz."

Obama says that closing Gitmo would actually strengthen our national security. He cites no experts for this, and he has no evidence that it's true – it just sounds nice to him, is all. The truth is that releasing Islamic terrorists actually drives up recruitment of more terrorists.

Here's Andrew C. McCarthy to explain, in National Review:

> The second driver of terrorist recruitment is the perception that the jihadists are winning, the conviction that they will ultimately prevail. Osama bin Laden wooed young Muslims with the wisdom that people are always drawn to the strong horse and shun the weak one. While Islamic State "caliph" Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi follows up each jihadist atrocity by seizing more territory and enslaving more subjects, the president of the United States follows each jihadist atrocity — Benghazi, Paris, and now San Bernardino — by releasing more jihadists from Gitmo.
>
> It's not Gitmo driving recruitment. It's our president.
>
> In truth, Muslims don't care a whit about Guantanamo Bay. I prosecuted one of the world's most notorious terrorists in the mid '90s, the "Blind Sheikh," Omar Abdel Rahman, who formed the cell that carried out the 1993 World Trade Center

> bombing in New York. He got the gold-plated due process of a civilian trial and all the trimmings of top-shelf civilian prison — no Gitmo for him. And you know what? Islamic supremacists continue to condemn his incarceration and jihadists have killed scores of people to try to extort his release. They don't care *where* we detain jihadists; they care *that* we detain jihadists.
>
> Does Obama think we should release all the terrorists in federal penitentiaries, too? You know, to depress recruitment . . .
>
> Because it is Islamic supremacism and the perception of victory that draws young Muslims to the jihad, the brute fact is: It's not detaining terrorists at Gitmo that spurs recruitment; it's releasing them. Muslims who wage war against America and are held in our prisons become icons of the jihad. They rise from obscurity to legend, and their status imbues them with authority to command attacks, raise funds, and attract recruits.

The real concern of the left in all of this is NOT to protect America from threats such as radical Islamic terrorism. The real desire is to attack and punish those who make radical Islamists feel bad about what they are doing. Obama wants everyone to accept terrorists as just as moral as we are. Releasing them is his way of saying that they did nothing wrong – which is what he really believes. If anyone is in the wrong, Obama thinks, it's we Americans. We somehow provoked these innocent terrorists… get off your high horse, and remember the Crusades. That's his worldview. Terrrorism is your fault, and these innocent terrorists are the real victims, and that's why we need to release them.

Democrats changes immigration rules to admit people with multiple STDs

February 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?

The Daily Caller reports:

> The Obama administration will no longer ban immigrants with three sexually transmitted diseases and bacterial infections from entering the country, the Center for Immigration Studies noted.
>
> The Department of Health and Human Services announced the rule Jan. 26, and it goes into effect on March 28.
>
> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, within HHS, decided to remove chancroid, granuloma inguinale, and lymphogranuloma venereum from the list of inadmissible diseases for an immigrant seeking to enter the country. The Obama administration estimates that the change would not cost more than $100 million.
>
> In President Barack Obama's first year in office, the Department of Health and Human Services decided that HIV was no longer a "communicable disease of public health significance."
>
> […]The U.S. has the highest rate of HIV infection of any developed nation. More than 1.2 million people in this country are HIV positive.

Is HIV infection a serious problem?

The Washington Examiner explains:

> "Despite the declaration that HIV was no longer a communicable disease of public health significance, the CDC estimates that approximately 50,000 people

> in the United States are newly infected with HIV each year and that over 1.2 million persons in the country are HIV positive. The United States has the highest prevalence of HIV infection of any developed country," said CIS in a report released at midnight.
>
> […]Feere, the Center's legal policy analyst, added, "This change in policy illustrates, once again, that increased immigration is the main goal of the Obama administration, no matter the costs. **The administration itself estimates that more people will become infected and that there will be increased health care costs as a result of these changes.** But obviously these are considerations that have little relevance for those with an open-border perspective."

Democrats never want to shame people for bad behaviors like promiscuity. They think that it's better if we reward them by giving them admission to the USA, even if it puts innocent people who are already here at risk. Just ask Kate Steinle how good it is that the Obama administration does not deport illegal immigrants who commit serious crimes, once they are released from prison. Or ask the victims of the San Bernardino terrorists how good it is that the Obama administration doesn't screen out radical Islamists.

The important thing (to Democrats) is not that the American public is protected, it's that immigration of big-government supporters increases. That's why the Democrats want to let in more and more unskilled immigrants – they are future Democrat voters. They have to change the electorate so that people who behave morally, understand the Constitution, and believe in the free market system become a minority. Skilled immigrants are bad because they won't look to bigger government to save them from their own poor decisions. But unskilled immigrants – especially ones who need free health care for their sexually-transmitted diseases – are perfect Democrat voters. And they can infect other people, some of whom will also need free health care.

Big government to the rescue – to solve a crisis they created.

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

February 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here's a debate with a well-qualified atheist and Dr. Craig.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any

errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It's not

just that the settings are unlikely, it's that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a "herd morality" that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved "herd morality". However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are

true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It’s possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It’s also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is “Does God Exist?”. If Dr. Millican answers “no” then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God’s existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don’t see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the

need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to

nothing.

We don’t have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can’t be an abstract object because they don’t cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we’ve never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have “algorithmic properties” as well as physical properties, it doesn’t mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that’s not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God’s goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God’s goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can’t translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can’t be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can’t be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don’t permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Concealed-carry permit holder rescues woman from stabbing attack

February 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Didarul Sarder, legal gun owner, concealed carry permit holder

Here's a story of how guns save lives by stopping crimes – a story not often told to Americans by the mainstream media.

There's a short 2-minute news report:

The Washington Times reports:

> A Michigan man lost his job after he pulled a gun to rescue a woman who was being stabbed to death, but he said he does not regret his split-second decision.
>
> "I would do it all over again," Didarul Sardertold a local Fox affiliate. "If I could save this woman's life over a job. I can get another job."
>
> Now he won't have to look for another job. Mr. Sarder's bosses reversed their unpopular decision and offered the 32-year-old his old job back as a valet service supervisor at a General Motors Technical Center in Warren, Michigan, The Washington Post reported.
>
> Warren Mayor Jim Flouts praised the decision in a Facebook post, calling Mr. Sarder a "hero" and saying he "probably saved" a "woman from being murdered." **He noted that Mr. Sarder has a valid concealed pistol license.**
>
> "Had he not legally exercised his Second Amendment rights, this woman would probably not be with us today," Mr. Flouts wrote. "He is employed by a GM-contracted valet service. **Right after it happened, someone in authority asked him off the premises because he violated company rules with a gun. That was absolutely the wrong response to this hero. However that decision was over-ruled by higher ups and he now has his job back.**
>
> "Heroes should be rewarded not terminated," he added. "Didarul is a resident of

> Warren and a resident that we can all be proud of!"
>
> On Wednesday morning, Mr. Sarder was heading into work as usual when he heard a woman crying for help.
>
> "The lady kept saying, 'I'm dying, someone help,' and it was just a natural reaction," Mr. Sarder told Fox. "I just see this lady getting stabbed. I only had like half a second to think, and I unholstered my firearm and pointed it at her to drop the knife."
>
> The woman, another employee at the GM center, was stabbed right outside the main entrance of the building. Warren police said the suspect, a 32-year-old woman, came to see the employee. The two argued in the lobby, then went outside. The suspect is accused of pulling a knife and stabbing the victim multiple times in the neck, back and abdomen. The suspect has since been identified as the daughter of the victim, Fox reported.
>
> **Mr. Sarder told the suspect to stay put until she was arrested by police.**
>
> **Officials said the victim, who has been identified as Stephanie Kerr, was in critical condition and was lucky the stabbing didn't continue any longer, Fox reported.**
>
> **But Mr. Sarder was fired on the spot and then escorted off the property.**
>
> **"He said, 'You shouldn't have had a firearm here. After this is done he needs to be escorted off the property. He's not welcome back here.' I was really bummed out. I got a little emotional," Mr. Sarder told Fox of the ordeal.**

Again, as in the vast majority of defensive handgun usages, no shots were fired. Instead, the gun was displayed to the criminal and the criminal stopped committing the crime. That is the *normal case* of defensive handgun usage by a concealed carry permit holder.

The Washington Free Beacon reports that the hero was *happy* not to have had to fire any shots:

> Sarder said he was glad he didn't have to shoot the attacker.
>
> "If I can neutralize the threat without having to fire, get to save the victim's life and the suspect's life," Sarder said.

I like this part of the Washington Times story the best:

> "I would do it all over again," Didarul Sardertold a local Fox affiliate. "If I could save this woman's life over a job. I can get another job."

This is something that I think is quintessentially masculine. I am not saying that a woman could or would not say those words. I am saying that this is something that every man is expected to say. This is the true definition of manliness – using strength to defeat evil, and then refusing to bow down to the politically correct, moral relativist, moral

equivalence, gun-grabbers on the secular left. Men know right from wrong. Men use force to protect the weak. Men don't apologize for being men. Period.

I guess we live in a world now where it's considered a bad thing by the secular left to battle against evil. Somehow, this compassionate, non-judgmental, tolerant nanny instinct to make everyone be friends at the end has taken over, and we are no longer confident about condemning evil, and praising good.

Learn about the issue

To find the about guns and self-defense, look in the academic literature. Here are two books I really like for that.

- More Guns, Less Crime by Dr. John R. Lott (University of Chicago Press, 3rd ed.)
- Guns and Violence by Dr. Joyce Lee Malcolm (Harvard University Press)

Both of those books make the case that permitting law-abiding citizens to own firearms for self-defense reduces the rate of violent crime.

How Google, Facebook and Twitter brainwash users against conservatism

February 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Be careful with the liberal media
Here's a story from Rachel Alexander, writing at The Stream. I cannot cut and past the whole article, but I can excerpt a sample of what she found.

She writes about Google:

> Ever notice when you search for news or politics on Google News that the majority of search results tend to be articles from left-leaning publications? A search on Hillary Clinton today returns almost entirely articles by left-leaning publications on the first page of results. But is that just because liberals are more likely to search for stories about Hillary and are also more likely to prefer liberal sources? Maybe the Google result is just reflecting user preferences. Well, let's try it for Donald Trump. I just did and got a similar result.
>
> *Fox News* didn't show up in either search, never mind that it's a top ten news website with the most most popular television news network in America, and one that has been covering Trump's presidential campaign obsessively. Only after clicking "Explore In-Depth" and scrolling well down the page did a *Fox News* story appear, in the 12th position, just below an article by Bloomington, Indiana's *Herald Times*.

It's well-known that Facebook is biased to the left, as well.

She writes:

> Facebook's Trending News feature is also biased. John Jalsevac at *Live Action News* observed how the undercover Planned Parenthood videos were featured in Trending News, but not in a way that readers would click and go to the videos themselves. Instead, readers were routed to two articles Planned Parenthood had posted on its Facebook page.
>
> "Someone at Facebook's headquarters is responsible for coming up with a one-line description of why a particular term is 'trending,'" Jalsevac writes, "and then (it would appear), choosing which posts to give pride of place when a user clicks on that trending topic." By now it should surprise no one that the Facebook employee apparently chose to direct people to Planned Parenthood to get the organization's spin on the videos rather than to the videos themselves or to some news site that was at least attempting to offer an objective description of the controversial videos and Planned Parenthood's reaction.
>
> Facebook frequently removes conservative posts and bans conservatives,

> drawing a line where it thinks content is too extreme.

Here's an example of how Facebook censors viewpoints that conflict with their secular leftist values.

Rachel talks about Twitter, too:

> Twitter also frequently bans conservative users, known as "Twitter Gulag." Left-wing activists target outspoken conservatives and report them en masse to Twitter, claiming they are abusing its policies — usually claiming "harassment" — and Twitter often complies and deactivates their accounts. One conservative who was banned, Todd Kincannon, fought back in 2013 by forming the Twitter Gulag Defense Network and creating a list of tips to avoid being banned. He is still banned from Twitter three years later. Another outspoken conservative, Robert Stacy McCain, was just banned this past week, with no explanation given.
>
> Prominent conservatives Milo Yiannopoulos, tech editor at Breitbart, and John Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary*, recently lost their verified checks (a blue checkmark that indicates the account of a public figure is authentic), which is considered a step toward eventually banning an account. The conservative actor Adam Baldwin was temporarily banned after joking about #GamerGate, a hashtag he created for gamers fed up with political correctness.

Robert Stacy McCain and I are on each other's blogrolls. If you want to support him, you can tweet something with the hastag #FreeStacy. I did. He's a good man, and fearless about what he writes.

But I do have a response to this.

First of all, I don't recommend that you have a TV in your home, even if the only news that you get is Fox News. TV is a delivery mechanism for the thought of secular leftists. You're better off just buying or renting the programs you want, rather than uncritically taking in the opinions of uneducated clowns on CNN, MSNBC, the Comedy Channel, etc.

You should instead read a balance of left, center and right news sites. For example, on this blog, I will frequently link to the New York Times and the Washington Post, and sometimes the Los Angeles Times. Those are the sites I read on the left. On the right, I read the Washington Times, the Washington Free Beacon and Investors Business Daily.

Also, it's a good idea to get yourself set up with conservative voices, that will balance out the liberal garbage that you will undoubtedly be confronted with by co-workers, etc. I recommend listening to the Ben Shapiro podcast and the Dana Loesch podcast. Ben Shapiro has no commercials. Dana has some short commercials. I also like the Weekly Standard podcast, but they are more establishment. And I love Washington Watch with Tony Perkins – president of the Family Research Council. My favorite podcasting app for my phone and tablet is Player FM. It's free, has no ads, and works really well.

New study: survey of 700 quintillion terrestrial exoplanets suggests Earth is special

February 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

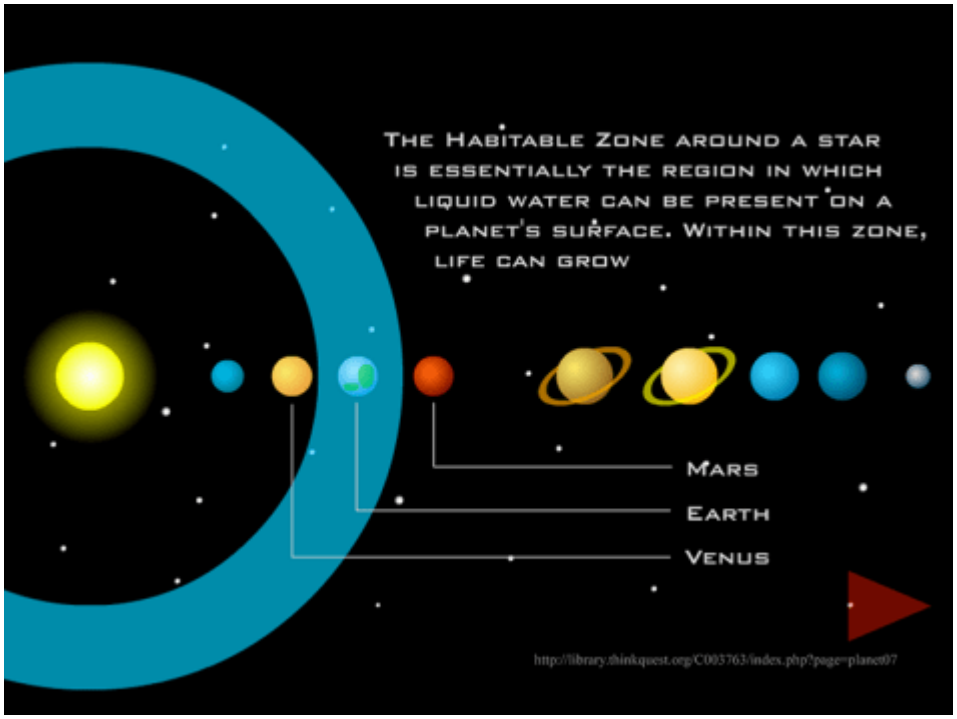

The Circumstellar Habitable Zone, where liquid water could potentially exist
This is from Scientific American. (H/T William)

Excerpt:

> More than 400 years ago Renaissance scientist Nicolaus Copernicus reduced us to near nothingness by showing that our planet is not the center of the solar system. With every subsequent scientific revolution, most other privileged positions in the universe humans might have held dear have been further degraded, revealing the cold truth that our species is the smallest of specks on a speck of a planet, cosmologically speaking. A new calculation of exoplanets suggests that Earth is just one out of a likely 700 million trillion terrestrial planets in the entire observable universe. But the average age of these planets—well above Earth's age—and their typical locations—in galaxies vastly unlike the Milky Way—just might turn the Copernican principle on its head.
>
> Astronomer Erik Zackrisson from Uppsala University and his colleagues created a cosmic compendium of all the terrestrial exoplanets likely to exist throughout the observable universe, based on the rocky worlds astronomers have found so far. In a powerful computer simulation, they first created their own mini universe containing models of the earliest galaxies. Then they unleashed the laws of physics—as close as scientists understand them—that describe how galaxies grow, how stars evolve and how planets come to be. Finally, they fast-forwarded through 13.8 billion years of cosmic history. Their results, published to the

> preprint server arXiv (pdf) and submitted to *The Astrophysical Journal*, provide a tantalizing trove of probable exoplanet statistics that helps astronomers understand our place in the universe.

Discover magazine, which is all in for Darwinism and aliens everywhere, says this about the study:

> Zackrisson found that Earth appears to have been dealt a fairly lucky hand. In a galaxy like the Milky Way, for example, most of the planets Zackrisson's model generated looked very different than Earth — they were larger, older and very unlikely to support life.
>
> […]Zackrisson's work suggests an alternative to the commonly held assumption that planets similar to Earth must exist, based on the sheer number of planets out there.
>
> […]**One of the most fundamental requirements for a planet to sustain life is to orbit in the "habitable zone" of a star — the "Goldilocks" region where the temperature is just right and liquid water can exist. Astronomers have, to this point, discovered around 30 exoplanets in the habitable zones of stars. Simply extrapolating that figure based on the known number of stars suggests that there should be about 50 billion such planets in the Milky Way alone. Probability seems to dictate that Earth-twins are out there somewhere.**
>
> **But according to Zackrisson, most planets in the universe shouldn't look like Earth. His model indicates that Earth's existence presents a mild statistical anomaly in the multiplicity of planets. Most of the worlds predicted by his model exist in galaxies larger than the Milky Way and orbit stars with different compositions — an important factor in determining a planet's characteristics. His research indicates that, from a purely statistical standpoint, Earth perhaps shouldn't exist.**

Time for me to list out some of the things that are required for a galaxy, solar system and planet to support complex embodied life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind given these laws of physics.

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation

- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

It’s not easy to make a planet that supports life. For those who are interested in reaching out to God, he has left us an abundance of evidence for his existence – and his attention to detail.

Related posts

- How tidal effects improve the habitability of a planet
- The connection between our moon, plate tectonics and habitability
- Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on the corelation between habitability and discoverability
- New paper finds that mass of asteroid belts affect habitability of planets
- New study on tidal heating strengthens stellar habitability argument
- Walter Bradley lectures on the creation and design of the universe
- Earth-like planet hyped by science-fiction-crazed atheists likely uninhabitable
- Four ways the Earth is fine-tuned for life, and one more
- Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas
- Fine-tuning the habitable zone: tidal-locking and solar flares
- Is silicon-based life a possible alternative for carbon-based life?
- Jupiter deflects comets and asteroids that might otherwise hit Earth
- How common is it for a star to support complex, embodied life?
- Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University
- Scientists troubled by lack of simple explanation for our life-permitting moon

New study: parents of four or more kids are happiest

February 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Here's a new study that says that four or more children makes parents the most happy.

The Daily Signal reports:

> The happiest parents are—drumroll, please—parents with four or more kids.
>
> Parents of large families were found to have the most life satisfaction, according to a study by Australia's Edith Cowan University. Dr. Bronwyn Harman, of the psychology and social science school at the university, spent five years studying what types of families are most content.
>
> "[The parents] usually say they always wanted a large family, it was planned that way, and it was a lifestyle they'd chosen," Harman told The Sydney Morning Herald.
>
> During her five-year study, Harman interviewed hundreds of parents from different family makeups. Her findings are based on resilience, social support, self-esteem, and life satisfaction.
>
> Her research points out that parental happiness relates to how much effort has been put into growing the family.
>
> "What is important for kids are things like consistency, boundaries and [to] know that they are loved, no matter what," Harman tells ABC Australia.
>
> Prior to the study, Harman thought parents with more children would be less happy.
>
> Though larger families may have more chaos and expenses than a smaller family, Harman's research shows that these issues are balanced by the amount of joy received from having more children.
>
> Her findings show that children who grow up in large families learn independence at a young age and always have someone to play with.

Now, happiness of the parents may not be the main goal of a relationship, but it definitely helps the spouses to apply themselves to the real main goal of serving God. You can't get miserable people to achieve anything for God, and you have to be serious about what people need in order to feel happy, so that they will be able to engage.

So, I've always planned for have four children in my decisions about education, career, etc. I often get a lot of flak from a few single women who wanted to delay marriage, and/or not have so many children. I am glad to see this study, because it's a confirmation of the idea that more children makes for a happier family. I'm not trying to rush into marriage and four children for no reason, but because this is what makes people happiest in the long run. It makes for a better environment for achieving other things for God.

I think people tend to worry a lot about having kids, and that's because having kids is expensive. But that can easily be planned out if you earn and save to prepare. My plan was to raise the kids in the country and have a capable homeschooling mom teach them and build their resumes up. Having lots of kids is not a problem if you take care of the money requirement, and don't let them be spoiled all the time. Sometimes, they will just have to be patient and do things on their own and not be the center of attention. That's probably good for them in any case.

New study: scientists and the general public similar in religious practices

February 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Rice University reports on a new study conducted by sociologist Elaine Howard Ecklund.

Excerpt:

> The public's view that science and religion can't work in collaboration is a misconception that stunts progress, according to a new survey of more than 10,000 Americans, scientists and evangelical Protestants. The study by Rice University also found that scientists and the general public are surprisingly similar in their religious practices.
>
> The study, "Religious Understandings of Science (RUS)," was conducted by sociologist Elaine Howard Ecklund and presented today in Chicago during the annual American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) conference. Ecklund is the Autrey Professor of Sociology and director of Rice's Religion and Public Life Program.
>
> "We found that nearly 50 percent of evangelicals believe that science and religion can work together and support one another," Ecklund said. "That's in contrast to the fact that only 38 percent of Americans feel that science and religion can work in collaboration."
>
> The study also found that 18 percent of scientists attended weekly religious services, compared with 20 percent of the general U.S. population; 15 percent consider themselves very religious (versus 19 percent of the general U.S. population); 13.5 percent read religious texts weekly (compared with 17 percent of the U.S. population); and 19 percent pray several times a day (versus 26

> percent of the U.S. population).
>
> […]RUS is the largest study of American views on religion and science.

What would be interesting is to find out what specific arguments scientists who believe in God would appeal to, and which specific arguments scientists who don't believe in God would appeal to.

Personally, I think the scientific evidence is there for people who are open-minded, and who do not have a pre-commitment to behaviors that would have to change, should they become a Christian. Most of the atheists I know are atheists because they don't want to live like Christians. And even if they don't have major adjustments to make, they don't want to live in a society where Judeo-Christian values dominate. So, for example, a successful, married atheist with children who lives mostly like a Christian still will champion abortion and gay marriage, because he simply doesn't want Judeo-Christian values to dominate in a society.

Atheism is the "anything goes" worldview. Do what pleases you, squash those who get in your way, like unborn babies or Christian business owners who don't want to celebrate your gay wedding. It is a major adjustment for atheists to start living like Christians. And it is these behavior concerns that motivate their refusal to wrestle with and accept the abundant scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer. Atheism makes life easier – you get to do what you want to feel good, and moral oughts are just fashions and customs, that vary by time and place. Nothing to be concerned about. And when you die, there's no judgment. What's not to like? It's easier. As long as you are able to ignore / deny the progress of science.

On the flip side of the issue, no Bible-believing Christian chooses Christianity because it's easier (especially the Christians in China, Africa, Muslim countries and atheist countries like North Korea). The founder of the religion gives his life for others, in obedience to God. That does not sound like fun to anyone. People become Christians because it's true. It's actually not very fun at all compared to what the atheists get to do with their lives.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

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- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
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- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

What was the Jesus Seminar? Should anyone have taken them seriously?

February 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Jesus Seminar and their pre-suppositions

A friend of mine was asking me about the "Jesus Seminar", which is a group of people who claim to be able to speak for broad spectrum of scholars about who Jesus really was. She was telling me that someone's child went to college, heard about the Jesus Seminar, and lost their faith because of their writings. I wanted to find a good article for her on this, and since Dr. William Lane Craig has debated most of the leading scholars in the Jesus seminar, (e.g. – John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, Roy Hoover, Gerd Ludemann, Robert Price, John Shelby Spong, etc.), I chose an article by Dr. Craig. I also link to two debates that Dr. Craig did with Jesus Seminar people below.

First a short video (4 minutes):

If you can't watch anything long, then watch that.

Here is the article, on the Reasonable Faith web site.

Intro:

> In 1985 a prominent New Testament scholar named Robert Funk founded a think tank in Southern California which he called the Jesus Seminar. The ostensible purpose of the Seminar was to uncover the historical person Jesus of Nazareth using the best methods of scientific, biblical criticism. In Funk's view the historical Jesus has been overlaid by Christian legend, myth, and metaphysics and thus scarcely resembled the Christ figure presented in the gospels and worshipped by the Church today. The goal of the Seminar is to strip away these layers and to recover the authentic Jesus who really lived and taught.

Excerpt:

> The number one presupposition of the Seminar is *antisupernaturalism* or more simply, *naturalism.*Naturalism is the view that every event in the world has a natural cause. There are no events with supernatural causes. In other words, miracles cannot happen.
>
> Now this presupposition constitutes an absolute watershed for the study of the gospels. If you presuppose naturalism, then things like the incarnation, the Virgin Birth, Jesus' miracles, and his resurrection go out the window before you even sit down at the table to look at the evidence. As supernatural events, they *cannot* be historical. But if you are at least open to supernaturalism, then these events can't be ruled out in advance. You have to be open to looking honestly at the evidence that they occurred.
>
> […][T]he second presupposition which I wanted to discuss, namely, sceptical critics presuppose that our most primary sources for the life of Jesus are not the Gospels, but rather writings outside the New Testament, specifically the socalled apocryphal gospels. These are gospels forged under the apostles' names, like the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Philip, and so forth. These extrabiblical writings are said to be the key to correctly reconstructing the historical Jesus.

In addition to that, there seems to be a third presupposition – radical religious pluralism. John Dominic Crossan closed his opening speech in his debate with Dr. Craig with this:

> When I look a Buddhist friend in the face, I cannot say with integrity, "Our story about Jesus' virginal birth is true and factual. Your story that when the Buddha came out of his mother's womb, he was walking, talking, teaching and preaching (which I must admit is even better than our story)—that's a myth. We have the truth; you have a lie." I don't think that can be said any longer, for our insistence that our faith is a fact and that others' faith is a lie is, I think, a cancer that eats at the heart of Christianity.

But of course, he thinks that *all* miracle claims are lies, because of his supernaturalism. What he is really trying to do here is redefine these claims so they are not truth claims at all, but personal preference claims.

But the main point is that the co-chair of the Jesus Seminar pre-supposes that nothing that Christianity claims that offends people in other religions can be true. Before he sits down to look at the evidence. I'm not saying that these guys can't do history, I'm saying that the real debate with these guys should not be about history. The real debate should be about their presuppositions. We should work to defeat their pre-supposition naturalism with good scientific arguments like the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability-discoverability argument, etc. And we should work to defeat their pre-supposition of pluralism by just asking them to defend it, and maybe point out that a person's being offended by some claim about reality being true

does not make that claim false. Logic requires that people who make claims that are made false by reality are *wrong* and no amount of crying and sobbing can change that.

The second article in the series that Dr. Craig mentioned in the article I linked above is a generic article on the evidence for the historical Jesus. If you have not read a case for the resurrection of Jesus, then read it, too. Or you can check out this lecture by Dr. Craig on the Jesus Seminar and the historical Jesus:

If you want to see a good debate between Dr. Craig and Marcus Borg, here it is:

Dr. Borg is one of the more respected Jesus Seminar people, and a really nice guy. But also, a really wrong guy.

The key thing to know about them is that they presuppose naturalism (miracles never happen) and radical pluralism (no exclusivist religion can be correct, because that would make people in the other religions feel bad).

Now is this the right way to do history? Suppose a historian began with the presupposition that the North and South never engaged in any battles and interpreted all of the Civil War history through that lens. Would he arrive at an accurate understanding of what happened?

The presuppositions are key to understanding the “historical work” of the Jesus Seminar.

New study: government run child-care increases negative outcomes for kids

February 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Political Map

I've complained before about Quebec, the most liberal and secular province in Canada. Well, one of the things that makes them so crappy is their policy of encouraging women to abandon their young children to strangers in government-run daycare. The government takes a whole lot of taxpayer money, often from traditional single-earner homes, and uses it to subsidize government-run child care. Well, now we have a brand new fresh study to show how wrong this policy has been.

Canada's radically leftist CTV News reports on the study.

Excerpt:

> In a paper released Monday, a group of university researchers say that children exposed to the province's child-care system were more likely to have higher crime rates, worse health and lower levels of life satisfaction as they have aged than their counterparts in other provinces who didn't have access to the same type of system.
>
> […]In their paper made public Monday through the National Bureau of Economic Research, Kevin Milligan from the University of British Columbia, Michael Baker from the University of Toronto, and Jonathan Gruber from MIT in Cambridge, Mass., update work from 2008 to see if children in the Quebec care system kicked their troubling behaviours over time.
>
> To do that, they analyzed four different data sets from Statistics Canada that touched on child outcomes, health and crime rates and scores from standardized tests that are connected to the national Council of Ministers of Education.

> What the trio found instead was “striking evidence” that exposure to the program was associated with higher crime rates, with the effects most acutely seen in boys. Boys were more likely to have higher levels of hyperactivity and aggression, the researchers wrote, while girls showed declines in prosocial behaviour, which captures many altruistic activities like donating and volunteering. All of those behaviours fall under the heading of “non-cognitive” abilities, such as impulsiveness and emotional stability.
>
> Exposure to the program was also associated with “worsened health and life satisfaction,” the study says.
>
> There was no such lasting effects on math, science and reading abilities, the researchers write.

By the way, in case you are wondering – yes, that is the same Jonathan Gruber of MIT who was the architect of Obamacare. Surprising that he would be co-author on a study that dings big government.

Are these results unique to Canada? Let’s take a look at a recent study from the UK.

From the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Academics at Oxford University discovered that exposure to some forms of early education contributed to bad behaviour and could be linked to emotional problems.

> […]In the Oxford study, researchers recruited 991 families with children aged three months. Mothers had an average age of 30.

> Researchers assessed children at the age of four through questionnaires about their behaviour and emotions completed by teachers and parents. They also observed care provided by mothers and observed non-parental care for at least 90 minutes for those children placed in formal childcare settings.
>
> **The report, published in the journal Child: Care, Health and Development, said that “children who spent more time in group care, mainly nursery care, were more likely to have behavioural problems, particularly hyperactivity”.**
>
> **The study, led by Prof Alan Stein, of Oxford’s Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, found that “spending more time in day care centres, over the total period was a predictor of total problem scores”.**
>
> **“Children who spent more time in day care centres were more likely to be hyperactive,” it said. “Children receiving more care by childminders were more likely to have peer problems.”**
>
> The authors added: “The findings in relation to childminding suggest that it might be out of home care rather than group care that raises the risk of behavioural

> difficulties.”

Well, that’s only Canada and the UK. Maybe things are better in Sweden?

Here’s a second article from the National Post (one of Canada’s national newspapers) about Sweden’s government-run universal day care system.

Excerpt:

> True, parental leave in Sweden is a generous 16 months. There are no babies in daycare. But when parental leave ends, practically the reverse is true: A full 92% of all children aged 18 months to five years are in daycare. Parents pay only a symbolic amount for this; tax subsidies for daycare are $20,000 per child, annually. Swedish taxes are among the highest in the world, and the tax system was designed to make both parents seek employment in the work force.
>
> […]Then there are the questions about the social toll Sweden’s childcare system is taking. Sweden has offered a comprehensive daycare system since 1975; since the early ‘90s, negative outcomes for children and adolescents are on the rise in areas of health and behaviour. While direct causation has been difficult to prove, many Swedish health-care professionals point to the lack of parent involvement beyond the first 16 months as a primary contributing factor. Psychosomatic disorders and mild psychological problems are escalating among Swedish youth at a faster rate than in any of 11 comparable European countries. Such disorders have tripled among girls over the last 25 years. Education outcomes in Swedish schools have fallen from the top position 30 years ago, to merely average amongst OECD nations today. Behaviour problems in Swedish classrooms are among the worst in Europe.

Now this idea of government taking children away from families is very popular on the left, because they want children to be “equal”, and that means getting them away from their parents so that the government can raise them “equally”. You can even see Hillary Clinton pushing for it when she talks about “universal pre-K”. Well, maybe it’s time that someone showed her the studies. Not that she strikes me as someone who cares a lot about children, given her support for born-alive abortions and organ harvesting.

Are atheists right to say that you can’t prove a universal negative?

February 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I hear a lot of atheists complaining that they shouldn’t have any burden of proof because it is impossible to prove a universal negative, i.e. – “there is no God”.

Here’s a post from William Lane Craig about it.

Excerpt:

> The first claim is, ironically, usually found on the lips of atheists, who thereby seek to excuse themselves from bearing any share of the burden of proof in the discussion. Usually, the claim is that a universal negative cannot be proved, and therefore the claim that “There is no God” is unprovable. The second claim is typically given as the reason why a universal negative cannot be proved: no matter how much knowledge you have acquired, there will always be more facts that you do not yet know, and perhaps the exception is among them. So one can never prove that there is no God. Perversely, this is somehow interpreted, not as an admission that atheism is indefensible, but as a demonstration that it is in no need of defense!
>
> Unfortunately, the argument is misconceived on a couple of counts.
>
> First, *negative, universally quantified statements can be proved*. We do this all the time. When we make statements about “all” or “none,” we are speaking about what is the case with respect to a certain domain. We are saying that all or none of the members of that domain have or has a certain property. If the domain is not too large, I can confidently make universally quantified affirmative

> and negative statements. For example, I am quite confident that "No U.S. Senator is a Muslim." Or again, if I have a typical sample of the domain, I can make inductive inferences on the basis of the evidence from the sample to the whole, even if the whole domain is too large for me to canvass; for example, taking as my domain all the microbes on Earth, I can confidently assert, "No microbes have brains."
>
> Now someone might say that while it is admittedly true that negative, universal statements can sometimes be proven, still the point remains that in the case of God, the domain is too large and our sample too small to come to any negative conclusion. But those who propound this argument seem to think that the way one determines whether God exists is by taking a sort of universal survey to see if anything answering to the description of God exists somewhere out there. There are, however, other ways of coming to a knowledge of negative, universally quantified statements than doing an inductive survey.
>
> For example, we can have knowledge of negative, universally quantified statements on the basis of things' essential properties; for example, "No water molecules are composed of CO2." (Even if something looked and behaved just like water but was made of CO2 , it still would not be water but just a look-alike substance.) Or if we could show that a notion is logically impossible, we would know that it does not exist; for example, "There are no married bachelors." Significantly, many atheists have tried just this route to proving that God does not exist, arguing that the idea of a being which is all-powerful or all-knowing is logically incoherent.
>
> […]Second, *the statement that "God does not exist" is not a universally quantified statement*. When the theist asserts that "God exists," the word "God" is being used as a proper name, not as a common noun. It is not a statement like "Dogs exist" but rather like "Lassie exists." In order to prove that God does not exist, one need not prove that there are no gods whatsoever. Our interest is in one specific being, not in all the other beings which may have been imagined or worshipped throughout the world. So the claim that "God does not exist" is really a singular claim, like "Sherlock Holmes does not exist" or "Harry Potter does not exist." No one thinks that negative, singular claims cannot be proven.

So there are two ways to disprove a universal negative. Look where you expect the thing to be evident, and show that the evidence is not there. For example, show evidence that the universe is eternal. You can't have a Creator if you can show evidence that the universe is eternal. The second way is to show that the concept of God is logically contradictory, e.g. – that the concept of a "timeless person" is self-contradictory. Scholarly atheists try to do this, but this has not filtered down to the rank and file, which is why they still hold to these atheist slogans like "you can't prove a universal negative". Of course you can.

And finally, Craig concludes with some good advice:

> The bottom line is that we have no choice but to go on the basis of the knowledge and evidence that we do have—just we do in all other affairs of life.

WorldGoneCrazy found a video of William Lane Craig answering the universal negative objection:

Rank and file atheists seem to be very keen on holding out for today's scientific and historical data to be overturned by Star Trek theories of the future. But the more we study the good, scientific arguments for God's existence, the harder it is for naturalism to account for it. I am talking about the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the habitability argument, the origin of life, the origin of phyla, scientific evidence for consciousness and free will (e.g. – mental effort) and so on. Not to mention other arguments like the moral argument and the minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus.

We have to decide on the data we have *now.* And the data we have now fits better with a theistic worldview than an atheistic worldview. I can imagine all kinds of data that would argue against Christian theism. Finding the bones of Jesus. The universe being eternal. Experimental evidence for the multiverse. A probable naturalistic scenario for the origin of life. Etc. Arguing against Christian theism is not hard, it just takes work. That's why intelligent and informed atheists like Peter Millican and Austin Dacey can do it, but rank and file atheists want to talk about "I lack a belief in God" and "I can't prove a universal negative".

No one is asking atheists to *prove* anything, just as theists don't *prove* anything. We are asking them to give logical arguments with premises that are supported by the evidence. And that's what we expect theists to do, too. Once we have all the arguments and evidence on both sides, then people can decide for themselves. You don't have to "prove" anything in a debate, you just have to state your case as persuasively as possible and the other side does the same, then people decide. Simple.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

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Which candidate is best at working with Democrats to get things done?

February 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican voters need to go beyond the surface level in assessing candidates

I have a few friends who I know are supporting either Donald Trump or Marco Rubio in the election. I have asked them specifically what policies, accomplishments and past battles they like best about their candidate.

Donald Trump supporters say this:

- he's leading in the polls (vs Republicans)
- he tells it like it is
- he's going to build a fence and make Mexico pay for it
- he's a businessman

Marco Rubio supporters say this:

- he's leading in the polls (vs Democrats)
- he's handsome
- I like the way he talks
- his wife was a Miami Dolphins cheerleader, so she is prettier and funner than nerdy workaholic Harvard MBA Heidi Cruz

My candidate is Ted Cruz, and the Trump supporters tend to have no problem with him. But the Rubio supporters don't like Cruz. So I made a list of their objections to Cruz.

The Rubio supporters say this:

- (quoting Donald Trump) not one of his colleagues in the Senate has endorsed him
- he won't be able to convince other people to get things done

- I don't like the way he talks
- he has a pickle nose
- he said he wanted to make Marco Rubio's amnesty bill "better" but his amendment actually killed the amnesty bill – that means he's a liar because his amendment didn't make the bill better

Regarding the point about Ted Cruz not being able to get along with his colleagues in the Senate, that's actually false. First, Cruz and Rubio came into the Senate at the same time, and Cruz has passed more legislation than Rubio. That might be because Rubio has the worst attendance record in the Senate.

When Rubio works together with people, he authors an amnesty bill, he supports the failed Libya invasion, he gives in-state tuition to illegal immigrants, he weakens border security, he authors a bill to remove the due process rights of men falsely accused of rape on campus, he skips votes to defund Planned Parenthood, he is liberal on the issue of gay marriage, his deputy campaign manager is a gay activist, and so on. In short, he works with liberals on liberal priorities – that's why he is likable to them.

Ted Cruz gets into trouble with his colleagues, because he tries to stop the spending, stop amnesty, stop the military interventions in Syria, Libya and Egypt, etc. That's why he is not likable to them.

What about the point that Cruz would not be persuasive to Democrats, and so would not be able to get anything done? Well, we already saw that Cruz has passed more legislation than Rubio, despite having a pickle nose. But he's also shown the ability to pull Democrats towards his point of view.

Here's an article from PJ Media to explain:

> Now that Cruz regularly polls toward the top of an ever-shrinking field, his early tenure bears closer scrutiny. Cruz has gained fame as a social conservative and an unwavering opponent of Obamacare. **In his first major leadership role, however, he developed economic policy as the director of the Federal Trade Commission's Office of Policy Planning.**
>
> At the FTC, Cruz's agenda could have been written by Milton Friedman.
>
> Cruz promoted economic liberty and fought government efforts to rig the marketplace in favor of special interests. Most notably, Cruz launched an initiative to study the government's role in conspiring with established businesses to suppress e-commerce. This initiative ultimately led the U.S. Supreme Court to open up an entire industry to small e-tailers. Based on his early support of disruptive online companies, Cruz has some grounds to call himself the "Uber of American politics."
>
> Moreover, and perhaps surprising to some, **Cruz sought and secured a broad, bipartisan consensus for his agenda. Almost all of Cruz's initiatives received unanimous support among both Republicans and Democrats.**

> Ted Cruz a consensus-builder? He was, at the FTC.
>
> […]Beyond the e-commerce initiative, Cruz also reoriented the FTC's use of antitrust laws.
>
> […]Cruz also sent dozens of letters to states to fight new efforts to enshrine crony capitalism.
>
> […]Perhaps surprisingly, Cruz secured a high degree of consensus in pursuing his agenda.
>
> As an independent agency, the FTC has five commissioners, and during Cruz's tenure, two of them had served in President Clinton's administration. **All five commissioners voted to support almost all of Cruz's proposals.**
>
> **Cruz achieved this consensus by listening to policy experts and political opponents. He listened to the FTC's economic experts and marshaled empirical economic analysis to support his policy objectives. He solicited input from prominent Democrats, including the late Senator Howard Metzenbaum, who spoke at the e-commerce conference. In addition, Cruz worked to develop personal relationships across the aisle. He regularly met with Democratic commissioners and incorporated their ideas into his policy proposals.**

The article explains Cruz's conservative agenda in detail; increasing competition, protecting consumers, and so on. But he wasn't likable in the way that Marco Rubio was likable – by pushing a Democrat agenda. He was likable by convincing Democrats to push a conservative agenda. He did it by gathering evidence and making his case. And that's what you expect from a lawyer who wins cases for conservatives at the Supreme Court.

Report: how Donald Trump used illegal immigrants to build Trump Tower

February 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

The Daily Beast explains how Trump used illegal immigrant labor to build his Trump Tower.

Excerpt:

> Thirty-five years ago, a small army of illegal immigrants was used to clear the site for what became the crown jewel of Donald Trump's empire.

> The 200 demolition workers—nicknamed the Polish Brigade because of their home country—worked 12-hour shifts, seven days a week with no overtime to knock down the old Bonwit Teller building and make room for Trump Tower on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan.
>
> **According to testimony in a protracted civil suit in federal court, the laborers were paid $5 an hour or less when they were paid at all. Some went unpaid after the contractor had financial troubles. A few never received even the paltry sum that was owed them for their dirty and hazardous efforts preceding the construction of Trump's monument to his own wealth.**

> **"They were undocumented and worked 'off the books,'" Manhattan federal Judge Charles Stewart said of the workers after they became the subject of a 1983 lawsuit. "No records were kept, no Social Security or other taxes were withheld.**"

I am for work permits for foreign workers who can find a willing employer here, but those employers should not be allowed to work without paying taxes, and for less than the

minimum wage. That’s not fair to all the American workers who do pay taxes and who do play by the rules. It seems to me that you cannot really be against illegal immigration if you are benefiting from it. Is this how Donald Trump intends to bring jobs back to America?

Is Donald Trump a successful businessman? Let's look at his record

February 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

This post is from Daily Wire, and it lists a number of Donald Trump's business misadventures:

- **United States Football League**
- **Trump Steaks**
- **Trump Vodka**
- **Trump's board games**
- **Trump Airlines**
- **Trump Mortgage**
- **GoTrump.com**
- **Trump Magazine**
- **Trump hotels and casinos (four bankruptcies)**
- **Trump University**

But most interesting of all is the Trump University case.

Here's an article from National Review about that:

> Many people believe that higher education is a de facto scam. Trump University, Donald Trump's real-estate institution, was a de jure one.
>
> First thing first, Trump University was never a university. When the "school" was established in 2005, the New York State Education Department warned that it was in violation of state law for operating without a NYSED license. Trump ignored the warnings.
>
> [...]Trump University is currently the defendant in *three* lawsuits — two class-

> action lawsuits filed in California, and one filed in New York by then-attorney general Eric Schneiderman, who told CNN's *New Day* in 2013: "We started looking at Trump University and discovered that it was a classic bait-and-switch scheme. It was a scam, starting with the fact that it was not a university."
>
> Trump U "students" say the same. In his affidavit, Richard Hewson reported that he and his wife "concluded that we had paid over $20,000 for nothing, based on our belief in Donald Trump and the promises made at the [organization's] free seminar and three-day workshop." But "the whole thing was a scam."
>
> In fact, $20,000 is only a mid-range loss. The lead plaintiff in one of the California suits, yoga instructor Tarla Makaeff, says she was "scammed" out of $60,000 over the course of her time in Trump U.
>
> How could that have happened? The New York suit offers a suggestion:
>
>> The free seminars were the first step in a bait and switch to induce prospective students to enroll in increasingly expensive seminars starting with the three-day $1495 seminar and ultimately one of respondents' advanced seminars such as the "Gold Elite" program costing $35,000.
>>
>> At the "free" 90-minute introductory seminars to which Trump University advertisements and solicitations invited prospective students, Trump University instructors engaged in a methodical, systematic series of misrepresentations designed to convince students to sign up for the Trump University three-day seminar at a cost of $1495.
>
> […]But according to the New York complaint, none of the instructors was "handpicked" by Trump, many of them came from fields having nothing to do with real estate, and Trump "'never' reviewed any of Trump University's curricula or programming materials." The materials were "in large part developed by a third-party company that creates and develops materials for an array of motivational speakers and seminar and timeshare rental companies."
>
> Furthermore, Trump's promises that the three-day seminar ($1,495) would include "access to 'private' or 'hard money' lenders and financing," that it would include a "year-long 'apprenticeship support' program," and that it would " improve the credit scores" of students were empty.

How is it that the mainstream media never told us about this? I suspect they will – once Trump is declared the Republican nominee. For now, they prefer to keep it hidden.

Donald Trump inherited a lot of money from his father. Should we assume that he knows something about business just because he did? Or should we look at his record and see how good of a businessman he really is?

Do supporters of Donald Trump really support what Trump believes?

February 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

My friend Doug wrote a post addressed to all the evangelical Christians and Tea Party conservatives who support Trump, to ask them if they really support the actual policies and record of the man.

Doug writes:

> Do you support Planned Parenthood, and do you approve of your tax dollars going to fund the abortion giant?
>
> If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [1] [2] [3] [4]
>
> I am not.
>
> Do you identify with the Tea Party movement?
>
> If your answer is, Yes, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook the fact that Donald Trump does not and has actively tried to defeat it? [5] [6] [7]
>
> I am not.
>
> Would you ever under any circumstance help the Democrats retake Congress from the Republicans?
>
> If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [8]
>
> I am not.
>
> Do you like the idea of socialized, single-payer, government-run healthcare?
>
> If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that

shortcoming in Donald Trump? [9] [10]

I am not.

Do you support amnesty for those who are residing in our country illegally?

If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [11] [12]

I am not.

Do you like the ObamaCare mandate?

If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [13] [14]

I am not.

Do you want to see another liberal judge placed on the Supreme Court?

If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [15]

I am not.

Do you support Israel in the Israel-Palestinian conflict?

If your answer is, Yes, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook the fact that Donald Trump does not? [16] [17] [18] [19]

I am not.

Do you support gun control?

If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [20]

I am not.

Do you support the unconstitutional abuse of eminent domain?

If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [21] [22]

I am not.

Do you believe that Bush intentionally lied about Iraq?

If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [23]

I am not.

Do you approve of casinos, strip clubs, and extramarital affairs?

If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [24] [25]

I am not.

Would you ever under any circumstance donate money to Nancy Pelosi or Harry Reid?

If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that

> shortcoming in Donald Trump? [26]
>
> I am not.
>
> Do you like the idea of more “forward motion on gay rights”?
>
> If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [27] [28] [29]
>
> I am not.
>
> Do you support the legality of partial birth abortion?
>
> If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [30] [31] [32]
>
> I am not.
>
> Do you consider yourself a conservative on the most important political matters?
>
> If your answer is, Yes, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [33]
>
> I am not.
>
> Do you think it’s OK to ban U.S. citizens from entering this country based on religion?
>
> If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [34]
>
> I am not.
>
> Do you think that U.S. citizens should be required to register their religion with the government?
>
> If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [35]
>
> I am not.
>
> Do you want a President who flip flops on important issues?
>
> If your answer is, No, then you must ask yourself, Are you willing to overlook that shortcoming in Donald Trump? [36] [37] [38]
>
> I am not.
>
> But then, I am a Christian, an evangelical, and a consistent Constitutional conservative, and consequently, I do not support Donald Trump.
>
> The question is, Do you? Do you really support the things that Donald Trump supports?

You can find the footnotes in the original post.

I’ve had conversations with Trump supporters about some of these issues, and the response I get is that Trump is leading in the polls. I actually sent one Trump supporter who told me this to Real Clear Politics, which catalogs all the polls that are done nationally and at the state level. The polls clear show that Trump does not win against

Clinton nationally, and he does even worse against Bernie Sanders. The response of the Trump supporter? All the polls are biased. So, the polls that show Trump in the lead in the Republican primary are not biased, but the polls showing Trump losing to Clinton and Sanders are biased.

I've tried to speak to the Trump supporters about things like eminent domain, support for bank bailouts, single payer health care, touchback amnesty, Planned Parenthood support,support for Vladimir Putin, adultery and divorce, support for the gay rights agenda, four bankruptcies, etc. Their response has been do deny the evidence. Trump never did those things, all the news articles are lies, and all the videos of Trump saying those things are fake.

Anyway, I like listening to Ben Shapiro and Ben has a new 6-minute video where he makes the case against Trump:

Doug, Ben, and myself are all supporters of Ted Cruz. I would urge Trump voters to reconsider their vote. Please share this post, and share the Ben Shapiro video, as well.

Students who alleged racial attack disproved by video of actual event

March 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students puking in toilet
This is from the College Fix.

It says:

> A trio of black SUNY-Albany students, who alleged they had been attacked and subjected to racist slurs by a group of white men on a bus at the end of January, have now been charged with assault *themselves.*
>
> All three face misdemeanor assault charges, while two also are dealing with "falsely reporting an incident."
>
> "Multiple videos of the incident" showed no evidence of the students' claims, instead proving *they* were the antagonists. This included the "assault [of] a 19-year-old white woman."
>
> Fox News reports:
>
> The women [Ariel Agudio, Asha Burwell, Alexis Briggs], all 20 years old, claimed they were attacked early on the morning of Jan. 30 while riding a bus. They claimed that they were called racial slurs and were physically attacked while bystanders looked on.
>
> Police said surveillance and cellphone video, as well as eyewitness testimony, contradicted the women's account. The white men Agudio, Burwell and Briggs

> claimed assaulted them were actually trying to break up the fight.

The article notes that Hillary Clinton hastily tweeted her support for the 3 students. Well, of course.

Wow, it seems like a really scary thing to have to hire college students these days. They don’t seem to be learning anything useful, they just seem to learn how to be divide other people up into groups and complain that they are being discriminated against. What good is that to an employer?

Pro-lifers win: abortion clinics closing at record pace

March 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this report

Today is likely to be a rough day for conservatives in the election, as many "evangelical Christians" and "conservatives" elect a con man who openly supports funding Planned Parenthood, and who describes himself as "very pro-choice". Depressing.

Well, there is good news on the abortion front, from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Abortion clinics are closing at a record pace across the country as they fail to meet new health and safety requirements and the demand for their business drops, according to a Bloomberg analysis.
>
> While abortion activists blame the closures on laws that require basic health and safety protections for patients, the report indicates that many factors are involved, including the lack of business and fewer doctors willing to do abortions. These numbers, coupled with plunging national abortion statistics, point to the fact that fewer women actually want abortions. As modern technology shows clear pictures of unborn babies in the womb, and as more pro-life groups offer women alternatives to abortion, more women have access to the education and resources to choose life for their unborn babies.
>
> Since 2011, at least 162 abortion clinics have shut or stopped doing abortions; 21 new abortion clinics opened in that same time period, the report states. The top four states that saw abortion clinics close were Texas with 30-plus, Iowa with 14,

> Michigan with 13 and California with 12, according to the report. A report from Operation Rescue also showed 53 abortion clinics closed in 2015 alone.
>
> Lack of business has been a major factor in the closing of abortion clinics, according to the Bloomberg report. The news group found that of the 162 abortion clinics that closed, 19 percent were in counties with fewer than 100,000 people. This seems to indicate that rural abortion clinics aren't doing as well financially. Last week, a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic in Blacksburg, Virginia announced that it was closing for this very reason, LifeNews reported. A Bridgeport, Connecticut abortion clinic also told Bloomberg it closed in 2015 because of reduced demand.

I think the pro-life movement has a lot to do with this success – everything from pro-life sidewalk counselors to the CMP sting videos helped. But Republican lawmakers helped, too – by passing laws that regulated abortion clinics:

> Abortion clinic regulations, such as those currently being challenged in Texas, also have played a major factor in the closing of abortion clinics. In March, the Supreme Court plans to hear a lawsuit bought by abortion businesses against the pro-life Texas law responsible for closing abortion clinics that could not guarantee they could protect the health of Texas women. The law has been credited with saving the lives of more than 10,000 unborn children. Abortion clinic regulations in other states also have resulted in dozens of abortion clinics closing, according to the report.

Here's an article from The Blaze that talks about how many pro-life laws have been enacted:

> According to a new report by the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, states have enacted 288 restrictions on abortion since 2010.
>
> The "2015 Year-End State Roundup" also shows that almost as many pro-life laws were passed in the last five years as were passed in the previous 15 years.
>
> In 2015, 17 states enacted 57 new pro-life laws.
>
> **According to the report, states implemented a variety of regulations on the abortion industry, such as requiring an ultrasound, counseling or a waiting period prior to a procedure, or limiting abortion to the first trimester of pregnancy.**
>
> Thirty-one states enacted at least one new pro-life law in the last five years. Ten states enacted more than 10 new regulations. Those 10 states are responsible for 60 percent of the new regulations.
>
> Four states — Arkansas, Indiana, Kansas and Oklahoma — each enacted more than 20. Kansas has enacted 30 pro-life laws since 2010, the most of any state.

Now we have to be vigilant, because pro-abortion judges are always anxious to strike down pro-life laws. And of course the Democrats are trying to pass a bill at the federal

level that will neutralize all restrictions on abortion at the state and local levels. But for now things look pretty good.

Why does God let people suffer? Why is there so much evil in the world?

March 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

I just wanted to draw your attention to this 4 page essay by Joe Manzari, which is the best darn summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen. The problem of evil is an objection to the existence of God based on the presence of evil or suffering in the world. The arguments basically infer that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then there should not *be* any evil or suffering.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An exampel of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate

free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omnipotent being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order for the character of humans to develop through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to*

show that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that premise 2 is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil that we observe more compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.
   Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life. And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.
2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   We humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. Part of knowing God is knowing what he designed us to do – to love him and to love others. And so, the less we know about God, the more we stray from his design for our lives.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.

(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.
(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That's right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I've been through… but then, that's why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

After a poor Super Tuesday showing, is it time for Marco Rubio to drop out?

March 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

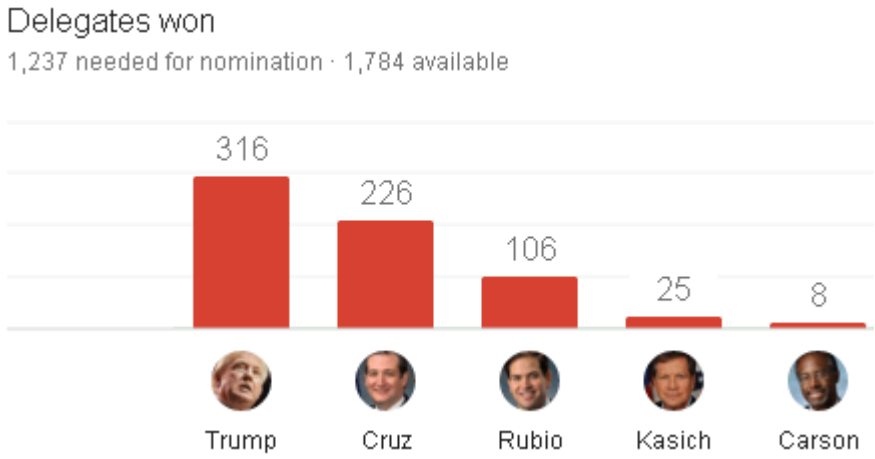

GOP primary delegate count after Super Tuesday

I actually thought that grassroots conservative leader Erick Erickson was a supporter of Rubio for the longest time, but I guess he did pretty badly in the Super Tuesday primaries, because now Erickson is calling for him to drop out, and accept the Vice Presidency.

Erickson writes:

> I have tried very hard to be neutral in the race between Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio. They are both friends. But reality dawns. Rubio has won only a single state (Minnesota), and even then not all the delegates, and tells us we must wait until Florida on March 15th. Cruz is already winning states more solidly and leads in delegates.
>
> In 1980, as the nation was falling apart, Ronald Reagan as the outsider and George H. W. Bush as the insider were willing to set aside personal and policy differences to unite for the good of the country. Reagan had attacked Bush on his illegal immigration position. Bush had coined the term “voodoo economics” to describe Reagan’s economic policies. But they overcame that, they united, and they not only beat Jimmy Carter, but a third party bid by John Anderson.
>
> It is time for Rubio to accept he will not be the nominee. He keeps telling us he will pay the bill tomorrow, but tomorrow has not yet come and he is behind by double digits in his home state.
>
> It is time for Ted Cruz to accept we need a unity ticket and for Rubio to agree to be Cruz’s Vice Presidential pick, uniting the outsider and insider factions of the party and stopping Trump in the process.
>
> Cruz has won three states. Rubio won Minnesota with split delegates. The non-Trump faction has the delegates to stop Trump. But now there must be unity.

> It is time to divide the map, combine the campaigns, and fight Trump state by state all the way to the convention as if a single ticket.
>
> True, Rubio will say the map moving forward is more favorable to him. But that excludes voter expectations and perceptions. The reality is that Cruz is winning states, Rubio is not, and together they could dominate. Outside groups should concentrate all fire on Trump while Cruz and Rubio show the country that they can pull America from the brink.
>
> Ted Cruz has stopped Trump in three states. It is time for Team Rubio to acknowledge that.

Actually, Ted Cruz has stopped Trump in FOUR states. Alaska also went for Cruz, but those results came out after Erickson's post was already posted. That's 4 states to Rubio's 1.

I used to blog a lot about Marco Rubio, before he championed the 2013 amnesty. I remember the moment I discovered that he was one of the Gang of Eight like most people remember where they were on 9/11. I remember the story, and the picture of Rubio standing in with radical leftists Republican moderates like John McCain and Lindsay Graham. People who had stabbed us in the back so many times before on important things like Supreme Court judicial nominations. I remember thinking: "what is Marco doing with them?"

That was the end of my interest in Marco Rubio. And he's not going to win this election, given his record on amnesty and so many other liberal policies and priorities. If Donald Trump stands for anything, he stands for border security. And Marco Rubio is the opposite of that. There is just no way that Marco Rubio would be able to get the support of the Republican electorate. He's even down 20 points in his home state of Florida. Trump's popularity is due in large part because of the betrayal of moderate, establishment Republicans like Marco Rubio. The Washington elites need to realize that this time it is their turn to fall in line with Cruz, even if they can't fall in love with Cruz.

When Rubio was elected to political office, he authored an amnesty bill, he supported the failed Libya invasion, he gave in-state tuition to illegal immigrants, he weakened border security, he authored a bill to remove the due process rights of men falsely accused of rape on campus, he skipped votes to defund Planned Parenthood, he has a billionaire pro-gay-marriage donor, and is very friendly with gay activists who are opposed to religious liberty and conscience protections for Christians, and so on. We can't have the Republican nominee be a liberal moderate in the mold of Bob Dole, John McCain and Mitt Romney. The establishment has had a good long run at ignoring the base and now it's come to an end. We need a real conservative this time: Ted Cruz.

Trump donated to group that promotes homosexuality to 5-year-olds

March 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

So I blogged a bit about Trump on Monday, listing out all of his positions, and I want everyone to understand what I think of people who vote for Trump.

What I infer that Trump supporters believe:

- They are in favor of adultery and frivolous divorce, they don't think it's anything that needs to be repented of.
- They think that a person can be a Christian without ever having read the Bible or attended a theologically-sound church.
- They think that constantly bragging about wealth is consistent with Christianity.
- They are in favor of abortion through all 9 months of pregnancy, including partial-birth abortion.
- They are in favor of funding Planned Parenthood, because they do "wonderful things".
- They are in favor of using taxpayer money to bailout banks.
- They are in favor of tariffs, which raise prices for consumers.
- They are in favor of using government to seize private property to benefit private businesses.
- They think that dictators who murder journalists and dissenters are "strong leaders".
- They support single-payer universal healthcare, even though this leads to rationing and waiting lists in Canada and the UK.
- They support making "forward motion" on the gay agenda.
- They think that someone who fails constantly at business, including four

bankruptcies and lawsuits claiming fraud is a “successful businessman”.
- They think that someone who donates huge amounts of money to Democrats like Harry Reid, Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton is sincere when he speaks conservative-sounding words, while having nothing at all in the way of a conservative record.
- They think that Bush lied us into the Iraq war, and that WMDs were never found in Iraq.
- They think in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there is no right or wrong party.
- They don’t want to condemn white supremacy or David Duke.
- They want to see radical pro-abortion judges nominated to the Supreme Court of the United States.
- They belief that taxpayer money should be distributed to certain businesses that lobby the government for handouts, e.g. – the ethanol lobby.

I assume that Trump supporters agree with most or even all of these things, and surprisingly, under questioning, they often admit to it.

And here’s the latest thing that I assume most Trump voters support – promoting homosexuality to 5-year-olds in the public schools.

Life Site News explains:

> Donald Trump donated $30,000 to homosexual activists, including a $20,000 grant to an organization that promoted “fisting” to middle school students, recommended books excusing homosexual pedophilia, and proclaimed its mission is “promoting homosexuality” in the public schools to children as early as kindergarten.
>
> According to a 990 form filed with the IRS, the Donald J. Trump Foundation donated $20,000 to the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) in 2012 and another $10,000 to Gay Men’s Health Crisis.
>
> Kevin Jennings founded GLSEN (originally the Gay and Lesbian School Teachers Network) in 1990. He and other homosexual teachers formed Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) nationwide and drew up curricula that began shaping children’s values in accordance with the LGBT perspective from the age of five.
>
> GLSEN has been upfront about its goals and desire for mainstream respectability. In 1997, Jennings said, “I can envision a day when straight people say, ‘So what if you’re promoting homosexuality?’”
>
> GLSEN recommends children face “saturation” in its viewpoint beginning in kindergarten. GLSEN activist Jaki Williams taught a workshop on “Inclusive Kindergartens” at a 1997 regional conference. “Children in the kindergarten age are ‘developing their superego’…That’s when the saturation process needs to begin,” Williams, a New York teacher, said.

They go into all the details of what GLSEN does. They basically market homosexuality to young children in the schools, when their parents are not there to counter any of it.

I will mention one thing from the post – "fisting", since it has to do with the Planned Parenthood that Trump *and all of his supporters* support:

> But at the 2001 GLSEN conference, Planned Parenthood distributed "fisting kits."

Why else would people be supporting him for President when there are more conservative candidates like Ted Cruz, who have a proven record?

By they way, I actually asked one of my evangelical Christian friends who is a Trump supporter whether he supported the practice known as "fisting". He never denied it. I'm not sure if that means that he and all the other Trump supporters are engaging in fisting with each other, or whether they merely donate money to encourage others to do it, or whether they just support it verbally. It seems to me that it has to be something along those lines.

I'll never forget how one Trump supporter implied that there was something wrong with my chastity after I asked him whether adultery was wrong. That's why I just assume that Trump supporters are into all the same stuff he is. I think now that Trump's record is out in the open, it's safe to assume that they know about these things *and support them.*

My candidate is Ted Cruz:

How to get kissed: Heidi Cruz helping her husband

Ted Cruz married one woman – a Harvard Business graduate, who works harder than practically anyone reading this blog. That's why he chose her – for her ability and character. Does character matter to Christians and conservatives any more? Or are we all in for the hedonistic Playboy Sexual Revolution culture, now?

Related posts

- Is Donald Trump a successful businessman? Let's look at his record
- Report: how Donald Trump used illegal immigrants to build Trump Tower
- Is Trump right to praise Putin's leadership abilities?
- Is Trump right to say that Bush lied about the Iraq war, and there were no WMDs?

- Donald Trump promises gay publication “forward motion” on gay rights issues
- Who has done more on the pro-life and pro-marriage issues – Trump or Cruz?
- Where did Rubio, Cruz and Trump stand on amnesty before running for President?
- Trump, eminent domain, a widow’s house, and a limousine parking lot
- Trump wants to increase taxpayer subsidies of ethanol, Cruz wants to end them
- Trump supported the bank bailout and auto bailout, Cruz opposes all bailouts
- Should evangelical Christians prefer Donald Trump on moral grounds?
- Clinton, Rubio, GOP establishment and leftist media defend Trump’s New York Values
- What are the “New York Values” that Trump’s evangelical Christian supporters admire?
- Donald Trump would expand Obamacare into single-payer health care system
- Who is more conservative on the marriage issue? Trump, Cruz, Carson or Rubio?
- Is Donald Trump’s claim about Muslims celebrating 9/11 in New Jersey accurate?

William Lane Craig on the unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

March 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

You might remember that Dr. Craig used a new argument in his debate with Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia.

My notes on the debate record it thus:

> The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
>
> - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
> - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
> - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
> - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see

And now Dr. Craig has expanded on it in the Q&A section of his Reasonable Faith web site.

The question:

> Dear Dr Craig
>
> Firstly can I thank you for all your work. My faith in Christ has been enormously strengthened through studying your work in apologetics in particular and I have grown in confidence in my Christian witness.

> My question relates to numbers and mathematics as a whole. On the Defenders podcast you state that as God is the only self-existent, necessary being, numbers and mathematical objects, whilst being useful, don't actually exist as these too would exist necessarily and independently of God. If this is the case, how can it be that mathematics is so easily applied to the natural world? Surely if mathematics only existed in our minds, we would expect to see no correlation between it and how the physical world actually is?
>
> Michael
>
> United Kingdom

Excerpt from the answer:

> As philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng points out, for the non-theistic realist, the fact that physical reality behaves in line with the dictates of acausal mathematical entities existing beyond space and time is "a happy coincidence" (*Mathematics and Reality* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 239). Think about it: If, *per impossibile*, all the abstract objects in the mathematical realm were to disappear overnight, there would be no effect on the physical world. This is simply to reiterate that abstract objects are causally inert. The idea that realism somehow accounts for the applicability of mathematics "is actually very counterintuitive," muses Mark Balaguer, a philosopher of mathematics. "The idea here is that in order to believe that the physical world has the nature that empirical science assigns to it, I have to believe that there are causally inert mathematical objects, existing outside of spacetime," an idea which is inherently implausible (*Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 136).
>
> By contrast, the theistic realist can argue that God has fashioned the world on the structure of the mathematical objects. This is essentially what Plato believed. The world has mathematical structure as a result.

This argument was also made by mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley in a lecture he gave on scientific evidence for an intelligent designer. You can read an essay that covers some of the material in that lecture at Leadership University.

Excerpt:

> The physical universe is surprising in the simple mathematical form it assumes. All the basic laws of physics and fundamental relationships can be described on one side of one sheet of paper because they are so few in number and so simple in form (see table 1.1).
>
> […]It has been widely recognized for some time that nature assumes a form that is elegantly described by a relatively small number of simple, mathematical relationships, as previously noted in table 1.1. None of the various proposals presented later in this chapter to explain the complexity of the universe address

> this issue. Albert Einstein in a letter to a friend expressed his amazement that the universe takes such a form (Einstein 1956), saying:
>
> You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world to the degree that we may speak of such comprehensibility as a miracle or an eternal mystery. Well, a priori one should expect a chaotic world which cannot be in any way grasped through thought. . . . The kind of order created, for example, by Newton's theory of gravity is of quite a different kind. Even if the axioms of the theory are posited by a human being, the success of such an enterprise presupposes an order in the objective world of a high degree which one has no a priori right to expect. That is the "miracle" which grows increasingly persuasive with the increasing development of knowledge.
>
> Alexander Polykov (1986), one of the top physicists in Russia, commenting on the mathematical character of the universe, said: "We know that nature is described by the best of all possible mathematics because God created it." Paul Davies, an astrophysicist from England, says, "The equations of physics have in them incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe" (Davies 1984). Successful development of a unified field theory in the future would only add to this remarkable situation, further reducing the number of equations required to describe nature, indicating even further unity and integration in the natural phenomena than have been observed to date.

The whole paper that started this off is called "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics", and it is a must read for advanced Christian apologists. You can read the whole thing here.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Texas clinic injures woman in botched abortion

March 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

So, there's a *very important case* before the Supreme Court to decide whether Texas is allowed to regulate abortion clinics to make sure that they are safe for women. The Texas Republicans want abortion clinics to be inspected and regulated. But this reduces the profit margiun of the abortion clinic, because they cannot operate willy nilly.

Life News reports on what's at stake.

Excerpt:

> Less than 48 hours before the U. S. Supreme Court will hear a pivotal Texas abortion case focused on women's safety, an ambulance transported a woman from Southwestern Women's Surgery Center, an abortion clinic in Dallas, Texas.
>
> The ambulance was photographed by a pro-life activist at Southwestern Surgery Center on Monday, February 29, 2016, at about 1:06 p.m.
>
> "This latest medical emergency at a Texas abortion facility only emphasizes abortion risks and how important it is for abortionists to maintain minimum safety standards and hospital privileges within 30 miles of their abortion facilities," said Operation Rescue President Troy Newman.
>
> Southwestern Women's Surgery Center is one of a handful of Texas abortion facilities that have been able to comply with ambulatory surgical center licensing requirements, which include the hospital privilege requirement that is being challenged by another Texas abortion business, Whole Women's Health.
>
> But even licensing as an ambulatory surgical center has not diminished the risk of complications to abortion that frequently send women to hospital emergency room for treatment that abortion facilities are not equipped to provide.

Life News reports on another case of this from Cleveland, OH:

> When he saw the ambulance pull up to the Pre-term abortion facility in Cleveland, Ohio, Frank Kosmerl pulled off his gloves despite the sub-freezing temperatures and hit the record button on his camcorder.
>
> It was the frigid morning of February 13, 2016, when Kosmerl, a long-time pro-life activist, captured alarming images showing EMS responders slowly wheeling out a patient covered tightly over the head with a doubled-over pink blanket.
>
> […]A new 911 audio recording just obtained by Operation Rescue has revealed that the woman on the gurney was a 22-year old patient who suffered a life-threatening medical emergency during late-term abortion Preterm, the same abortion center that inflicted a fatal abortion on another 22-year old woman, Lakisha Wilson, nearly two years ago.
>
> This young woman was 21.3 weeks pregnant, according to the Preterm worker that dialed 911. Such late-term abortions are inherently risky, yet Preterm is inadequately equipped to handle complications that seem to arise there on a regular basis.
>
> Curiously, while the Preterm employee who called 911 knew details of the patient's care, she did not know — or would not say — exactly what "went wrong" during the late-term abortion.
>
>> **Dispatcher:** Tell me exactly what happened.
>>
>> **Preterm:** We're an abortion facility. She was in the middle of an abortion. She's 21.3 weeks. And something went wrong during the procedure.
>
> Moments later the dispatcher again asked what happened.
>
>> **Dispatcher:** What went wrong? Does she like have — Is she awake still?
>>
>> **Preterm:** I don't know, ma'am. I'm not in the room. So I'm assuming bleeding. Maybe a perforation? I don't know.
>
> […]In the video, emergency workers are seen struggling to push the gurney from the rear of the icy, snow-packed parking lot.
>
> This young woman was 21.3 weeks pregnant, according to the Preterm worker that dialed 911. Such late-term abortions are inherently risky, yet Preterm is inadequately equipped to handle complications that seem to arise there on a regular basis.

Now, if women's health were so important to the pro-abortion crowd, then they would have no problems with inspections and regulations, right? After all, we don't want a repeat of what happened to women at the Kermit Gosnell clinic, right? But no, the left is taking the law designed to protect women to the Supreme Court to have it overturned.

Democrats and abortion

Although Republicans have been busy passing pro-life laws, Democrats want to get rid of them all.

National Review explains.

Excerpt:

> Readers will recall, though they will not enjoy it, the details of Dr. Gosnell's case, the transcript of which reads like the screenplay for a Rob Zombie horror flick: the illegal abortions; the newborns who survived botched abortion attempts only to have their spinal cords severed with scissors; the obscenely unhygienic conditions, with free-ranging cats using the clinic as an open-air litter box; the dead patient and subsequent manslaughter conviction; and, finally, the murder convictions. The Gosnell gore-fest was a direct consequence of the elevation of abortion to divine office: Neither the local authorities in Democrat-dominated Philadelphia nor the Democrat-dominated statewide bureaucracies in Pennsylvania were much inclined to exercise basic oversight of abortion clinics. Even after a woman died under Dr. Gosnell's knife, there was little interest in investigating his practice: It took allegations of illegal prescription-drug use and the piqued interest of the DEA to put Gosnell on the radar.
>
> Senator Blumenthal proposes to apply the Philadelphia model to the nation at large. Under his bill, states would have effectively no power even to ensure that abortions are performed by licensed physicians — surely the most minimal standard of medical responsibility that there is. Laws covering grisly late-term abortions would be forcibly overturned and fetal viability would be redefined according to the subjective whim of the abortionist. While the Democrats are bemoaning a fictitious war on women, their bill would provide federal protection to sex-selective abortions — the barbaric practice under which generations of girls have been decimated in such backward jurisdictions as China and Azerbaijan, a practice *The Economist* describes as "gendercide." Laws restricting taxpayer funding of abortion would be overturned. Laws protecting the consciences of physicians who choose not to perform abortions would be overturned.

That's one of the reasons that it's important for us to elect a pro-lifer as President. Because the ability to pass common sense restrictions and regulations on abortion is threatened by the judicial activism of liberal judges.

Cruz wins primaries that are “closed” for Republican voters only

March 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

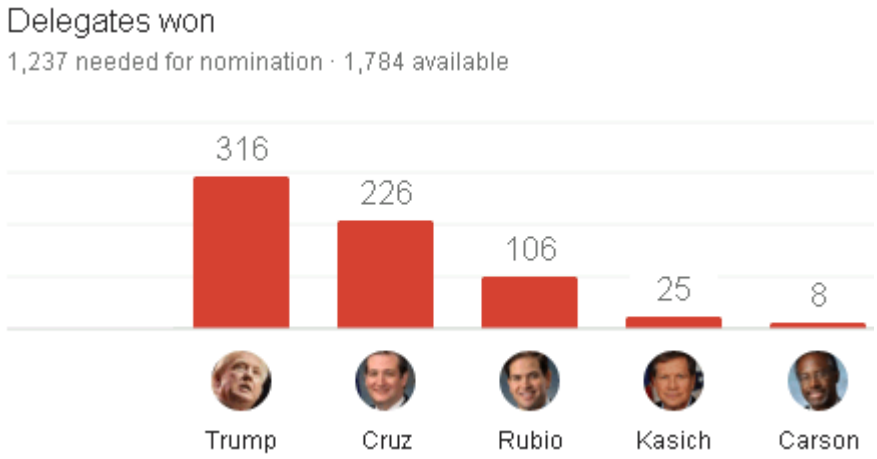

GOP primary delegate count after Super Tuesday

I have some great news. I found out why Cruz unexpectedly lost South Carolina. It turns out that in states that have “open” primaries, that anyone can vote – *including Democrats!* Cruz is losing some states because Democrats are declining to vote in their own primary, and instead voting in the Republican primary. They are voting for the Republican who is the easiest to beat in head-to-head polls: Donald Trump.

Here’s what the Boston Herald reported:

> Nearly 20,000 Bay State Democrats have fled the party this winter, with thousands doing so to join the Republican ranks, according to the state’s top elections official.
>
> Secretary of State William Galvin said more than 16,300 Democrats have shed their party affiliation and become independent voters since Jan. 1, while nearly 3,500 more shifted to the MassGOP ahead of tomorrow’s “Super Tuesday” presidential primary.

So that explains why Cruz is not winning everything. Cruz wins primaries that are closed, so that only people who register as Republicans can vote – not registered Democrats.

But some states allow Democrats to vote in Republican primaries without any change in registration.

Look at how it’s explained in the leftist Washington Post:

> Following the South Carolina primary, an interesting article by Michael Harrington went around Facebook that speculated that Donald Trump’s victory in the South Carolina primary was attributable to Democrats voting in the Republican (open) primary. One of the good things about Harrington’s article is that he put out a testable hypothesis — that turnout in the Democratic primary a few days later would be less than 390,000. In fact, it was 367,000. **Harrington concludes that**

> **had South Carolina had a closed primary, Ted Cruz would have won the primary there.** I don't know him and the author seems to be anti-Trump based on other things he has written — but the fact that his prediction was borne out adds some independent verification to his thesis. So that got me to thinking.
>
> […]**[S]o far the primary calendar has been heavily tilted toward open primaries. But there have been four closed elections: the Iowa caucus, the Nevada caucus, and Super Tuesday's Oklahoma primary and Alaska caucus. Ted Cruz won three of those four closed elections.**
>
> […]**[T]here are four Republican primaries/caucuses: Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana and Maine. All are closed.**
>
> **Then, once the winner-takes-all states begin, a large number of those are closed primaries and caucuses as well (including Florida, for what it's worth).**
>
> […]First, the fact that South Carolina and most of the SEC primaries were open primaries may very well explain why those states did not turn out to be Ted Cruz's firewall or launch states as he had predicted. Oklahoma did perform as expected, being a fairly comfortable win for Cruz.

This is something that the Republican National Committee really needs to fix, along with requiring photo identification and proof of residency in order to vote. We can't allow a bunch of Democrats to come in and pick a raving con man as our candidate, in order to make it easier on their candidate in November. No wonder we haven't been winning elections!

Anyway, there is more good news. Shane Vander Hart has it up on his Caffeinated Thoughts blog.

He writes:

> The next few contests on March 5 are ones where Cruz could do well Kansas and Kentucky which are both caucus states that rely upon organization. Cruz could also do well in Louisiana which is a closed primary. On March 8th you have Idaho Primary which is a closed primary that doesn't favor Trump. Mississippi has an open primary, but I suspect Cruz will be competitive. Michigan on March 8th is an open primary which favors Trump.

So not only are there more upcoming closed primaries, but some of the states are caucus states, where having a good ground game makes a difference. We should be optimistic about Cruz's chances in the next week.

Darwinian fundamentalists threaten boycott of science journal for paper mentioning “Creator”

March 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

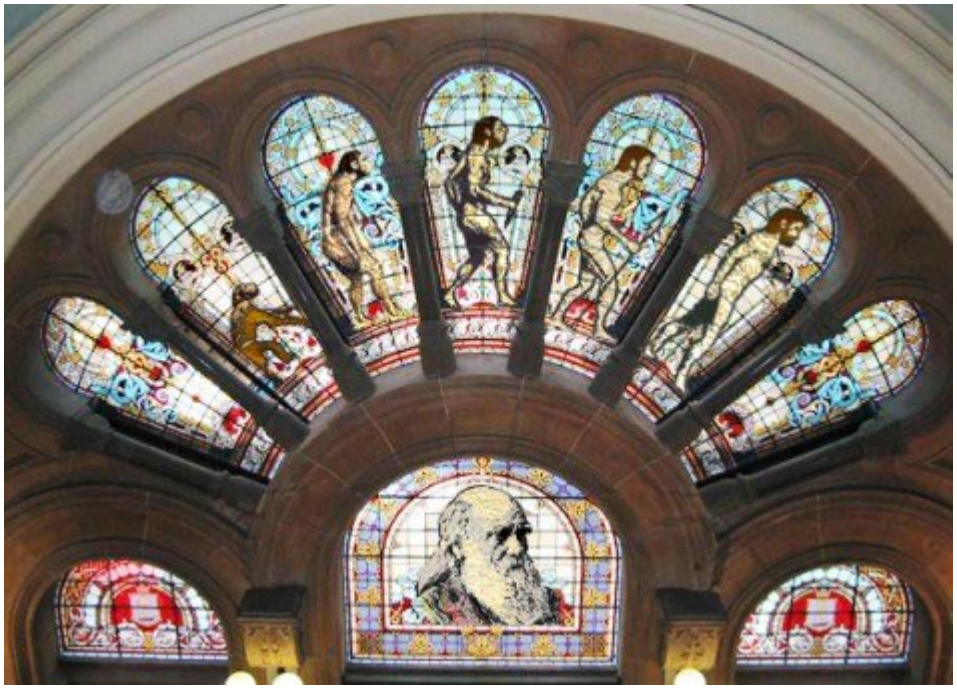

The Church of Naturalism says turn or burn, heretic!

So, there was a peer-reviewed paper that appeared in the PLOS peer-reviewed journal that made reference to a Creator in the abstract. The scientific work of the paper had no problems.

I saved a copy of the post and the comments. Let’s look at some of the comments.

Comments by editors of the journal

Michael Sears:

> The article should be retracted and the handling editor should be dismissed. As an Editor for this journal, I am appalled.

Ricard Sol:

> I think that pretending to defend a creationist argument (non-science) in a science journal raises serious doubts about the whole enterprise. The paper should be retracted. As a PLOS ONE editor I believe accepting this situation would seriously damage our credibility.

Dante Chialvo:

> […]I am ashamed that the journal staff, the editor responsable for the paper, the reviewers, all ignored this more than obvious red flag resulting on a creationist argument embedded on a scientific paper. I will consider resigning unless exemplary actions are taken by Plos.

Angel Sánchez:

> As I have said in a separate post, I will resign as an editor of PLOS ONE if this paper is not retracted immediately. PLOS ONE is a scientific journal and I don't want to have anything to do, not even my name related to a journal tha publishes about superstition and supernatural entities. I will stop editing and I will stop submitting, and I'll recommend everybody never to submit again to PLOS ONE. I hope we don't have to go there.

So, you can see that science – as the naturalists conduct it – is not really the search for truth, no holds barred. It's the attempt to explain nature without reference to a Creator and Designer. Whatever the experiments show must conform to a philosophical assumption (a religion), called naturalism. And the religion of naturalism determines what can and cannot be accepted as science. You can see the same principle at work in the denial of the Big Bang cosmology despite evidence such as the cosmic microwave background radiation, the light element abundances, and the redshifting of light from distant galaxies. Science has shown we live in a created universe that began about 13.7 billion years ago, but here we have atheists in denial of science sitting in positions of power deriding the Creator who has been revealed by experimental science. That's the power of the naturalistic dogma. And it turns out that the most powerful argument for Darwinian evolution is this: "believe it, or I'll have you fired, and ruin your career". This is how Darwinism propagates from old to young – through coercion, and not through real science.

Other comments

Zach Throckmorton:

> As others have noted, utilization of an intelligent design creationism framework for explaining human anatomy is not acceptable for a scientific journal.

Jorge Soberon:

> I find the use of religious language in a scietific paper totally unacceptable. I will be watching this paper closely, and distributing it to colleagues. If PLOS ONE does not do something about it, like asking the authors to retratct the paper, or at the very least publishing an explanation, I will stop reviewing papers for PLOS ONE. I do hope the editors of PLOS ONE realize what a huge mistake was to accept publication of a paper with this wording. It says a lot about the care with which a paper is edited.

Adam Hartstone-Rose:

> This article proves that there is something SERIOUSLY wrong with the journal. If the paper isn't retracted, my students, collaborators and I will have no choice but to refrain from submitting to this once respectable journal. I'm embarrassed for you and embarrassed that some of my proudest papers are in your journal.

> […]This requires a ballistic reaction, not a considered “looking into” the problem!

Enrico Petretto:

> This is outrageous. If PLOS ONE does not do something about it, i.e., ask the authors to retract the paper, and in any case, if the paper isn’t retracted, my students, collaborators and I will have no choice but to refrain from considering (i..e, reading, reviewing and citing) papers published in PLOS ONE.

Luigi Maiorano:

> Quote totally!! outrageous is the minimum! I published 3 of my papers in PlosOne, but I will never do it again. I’m actually telling all my students and colleagues to boycott the journal and never consider it again!

Jean-Michel Heraud:

> I have no knowledge to judge this article…
>
> […]I would recommend to the editor of the journal to exclude definitely the two reviewers that have accepted this manuscript.

Oliver Rauhut:

> As noted by many comments below, this is not a matter of inappropriate wording! This rather seems to be a (successfull) attempt to place an intelligent design argument in a (so far) respected scientific journal. Thus, the only solution is the immediate retraction of this paper! Unless this step has been done, my workgroup and me will refrain from publishing further papers in PLoS!

Harry Noyes:

> Changing Creator to Nature will not solve the problem since it still implies a fundamental misunderstanding of evolution. That is there is no design process, no outcome is foreseen. Anything that works better tends to have a selective advantage but that is not a product of design it is a product of selection working on random events. The paper clearly needs a substantive rewrite quite apart from the concerns raised about the significance of the results raised by other comments.

Carl Schmidt:

> A more important issue is the review process that allowed such nonsense as “Creator” to appear in a journal purportedly devoted to science.

The article has now been retracted.

Evolution News comments:

> This would seem to bear out a remark by Chinese paleontologist J.Y. Chen, recounted in *Darwin’s Doubt*, “In China we can criticize Darwin, but not the

> government; in America, you can criticize the government, but not Darwin."

So what's really behind all this fascism?

Consider this quote from famous population geneticist (and Darwinian fundamentalist) Richard Lewontin. And note that he equates science with his chosen religion of naturalism, he doesn't accept science in the traditional sense of the word, where there is no metaphysical baggage.

He says:

> Our willingness to accept scientific [i.e. – naturalistic] claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science [i.e. – naturalism] and the supernatural. We take the side of science [i.e. – naturalism] *in spite* of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite* of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite* of the tolerance of the scientific [i.e. – naturalistic] community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science [i.e. – naturalism] somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, **on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.**
>
> "Billions and Billions of Demons" by Richard Lewtontin. (Link)

"A priori" means before seeing the facts, before seeing the evidence.

And what is behind the choice of naturalism as the preferred religion? Consider this quote from atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel.

He says this:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that

> I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."
>
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

The days of Isaac Newton are long gone, and another Newton will not emerge while the Naturalistic Church is in power. And it's a taxpayer-funded church, too. Think about that next time you vote for bigger or smaller government.

Positive arguments for theism

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Who won the debate last night? Winners and losers from the Fox News debate

March 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted Cruz explains public policy to little girl who wants to be President

The Weekly Standard, which I think favors Rubio slightly over Ted Cruz, posted this:

> What Cruz did at the debate was make three parallel cases:
>
> 1. Trump is a fraud who can't be trusted to keep his word.
> 2. Trump is not either conservative or Republican in any meaningful way.
> 3. Trump actually ***is*** the corruption that he decries.
>
> He advanced these arguments not one at a time, but by interweaving them with specific attacks:
>
> * He positively crushed Trump on the use of foreign labor at Mar-a-Lago. He didn't just bring up the fact that hundreds of applicants applied for these jobs but that Trump prefers to hire foreigners instead, but included Trump's line from the last post-debate interview where he claimed that these were jobs American workers couldn't and wouldn't do.
>
> * He thoroughly prosecuted Trump on the question of Trump's off-the-record *New York Times* interview, which Trump steadfastly refuses to release.
>
> * At the end of the segment on Trump University—where Trump's best defense was telling voters that they should "wait a few years" to see whether or not he committed fraud, Cruz flashed in with a rapier: "Megyn, let me ask the voters at home, is this the debate you want playing out in the general election?" It was brutal.
>
> * When Trump went to his poll numbers—as he always does—Cruz was ready. Trump touted a terrible CNN poll showing him at 49 percent support. Cruz waited

> for Trump to double down and defend the integrity of the poll. And then he noted that this same poll also showed Trump losing to Clinton and Cruz beating her.
>
> * When the Second Amendment came up, Trump made a gauzy statement of general support. Cruz then dropped the hammer:
>
> It is easy for political candidates to have rhetoric and say, "I support the Second Amendment." But you cannot say that and at the same time say what Donald just said, which is that on the question of Supreme Court nominees he wants to compromise and reach a middle ground with Harry Reid and Chuck Schumer. That's what he said in the last debate. . . . And I would point out, Harry Reid and Chuck Schumer are both Democrats that Mr. Trump has written checks to repeatedly. Any justice that those two sign off on is going to be a left-wing judicial activist who will undermine religious liberty, and we are one vote away from the Heller decision being overturned, which would effectively erase the Second Amendment from the Bill of Rights. Amendment rights, but when you say you'd compromise with Harry Reid, you put that in jeopardy.
>
> * Cruz's most devastating line was probably this summation:
> I understand the folks who are supporting Donald right now. You're angry. You're angry at Washington, and he uses angry rhetoric. But for 40 years, Donald has been part of the corruption in Washington that you're angry about. And you're not going to stop the corruption in Washington by supporting someone who has supported liberal Democrats for four decades, from Jimmy Carter to John Kerry to Hillary Clinton. You're not going to stop the corruption and the cronyism by supporting someone who has used government power for private gain.
>
> The question is what Cruz's performance gets him. Maybe nothing. The terrain ahead could simply be too tough. But maybe not.

Watch this:

Someone has been teaching Cruz how to speak more concisely. Ted and Marco didn't attack each other much last night, just like in the last debate. And it worked!

Red State, which is a grassroots conservative web site whose contributors back all different candidates, said:

> **WINNERS**
>
> **Senator Ted Cruz:** Tonight's big winner was clearly and indisputably Ted Cruz. Cruz showed the most substance and had the strongest answers. His line about charging Snowden with treason, like his answers on ethanol before the Iowa caucus, showed he's able to give tough, definitive answers to questions that are controversial even within the party. His touting of his Supreme Court credentials was not only a great case but a timely one.
>
> And when Megyn Kelly eviscerated Trump over his disastrous Trump University failure, it seemed the smoking corpse couldn't possibly suffer more abuse. But Ted Cruz stepped in and in a few sentences buried that corpse, salted the earth,

> and wiped the name and location from this history books. Utterly. Destroyed.
>
> But best of all was that Cruz masterfully avoided being in the line of fire, and above the fray in Trump and Rubio's heated exchanges. Sometimes that doesn't play well. Sometimes it makes you the winner. This is one of the latter times.
>
> **Senator Marco Rubio:** Rubio was also a winner tonight. He has proved beyond the shadow of doubt how weak Donald Trump is before attacks on his tremendous, yuge vanity. He crumples. He falls apart. He talks about his ding dong. The extent to which Marco can easily send Trump into a panic by mentioning his hands or tan is just a shadow of how easily the Democrats will handle him. They won't have to mention policy. Just his hair. Or his stump fingers. He'll fall apart.
>
> Marco also crushed Trump's lack of substance on foreign policy, asking him if he would ever offer any policy details in answer to a foreign policy question. Predictably, Trump responded by taking a petty swipe at Rubio. Yet another point for Marco and against Donald.
>
> **LOSERS**
>
> **Donald Trump**: Trump is the obvious, clear loser tonight. It wasn't even close. He was clownish, he changed his mind over the course of the debate, he had his butt handed to him over and over by both Marco and Ted. He was found to be making false statements, his economic policy was proved not only to be a disaster, but it was shown that he himself couldn't even articulate it, much less a defense of it. He couldn't even muster a strong response to the Romney question. On the scale of fail he hit a solid ten: total dumpster fire.
>
> Except for one thing. Donald promised to support the nominee of the party no matter who it is. That was a good line for him, even if he doesn't mean it, and will play well for him.

And Erick Erickson, another grassroots conservative, says at The Resurgent that Cruz was the clear winner of the debate:

> Wow. That was one heck of a debate performance by Ted Cruz. That was just amazing. He ran circles around Trump. Trump looked like he was worn out. He was low energy. He was a loser.
>
> In the last debate, Rubio was assisted by Cruz. In this debate, Cruz was assisted by Rubio. It shows what a unity ticket between the two could do.
>
> It was a remarkable performance that had Cruz and Rubio shaking hands during commercial break.
>
> Tonight was Ted Cruz's night and it was a nearly flawless debate on his part.

PJ Media listed out 5 of Cruz's best moments in the debate.

Here's one of them:

> **5. Detroit…Has Been Utterly Decimated By Failed Left-Wing Policies**
> Although most of Cruz's standout moments came in opposition to Trump, one of his finest successes centered around discussing the city of Detroit. "Detroit is a great city, with a magnificent legacy, that has been utterly decimated by 60 years of failed left-wing policies," Cruz declared. He praised Detroit for "funding the arsenals of democracy" in World War II, and added that "in the 1960s, Detroit was the Silicon Valley of America — it had the highest per capita income in the country." Then the kicker: "And then for 50 years, left-wing Democrats have pursued destructive tax policies, weak crime policies, and have driven the citizens out." Cruz then detailed how he would bring manufacturing jobs back to the U.S. and Detroit specifically. This strong answer bolstered Cruz in the eyes of Luntz's focus group, scoring a 96 percent.

Trump tried to get Marco and Ted off his chest by citing GOP primary poll numbers, but Cruz had an answer for that, too. Trump cited a poll from CNN showing him in the lead. Cruz responded by pointing out that the CNN poll also shows Trump losing to Hillary Clinton by 8 POINTS. The same poll shows Cruz beating Hillary Clinton head-to-head. I have never met a Trump supporter who was aware of these head-to-head polls that show Trump losing to Clinton. But the liberal media is well aware of them, and that's why they are so supportive of Trump – they want the weakest candidate to be the Republican nominee.

One of the differences between Trump and Cruz is that Trump talks about himself and makes promises without providing details. He oversimplifies problems, and has more confidence than experience. Cruz talks about specific policies and the results of those policies in different times and places. He actually knows what works and what doesn't work, and has a record of solving actual problems.

New study: galactic habitable zone depends on fine-tuning of cosmological constant

March 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

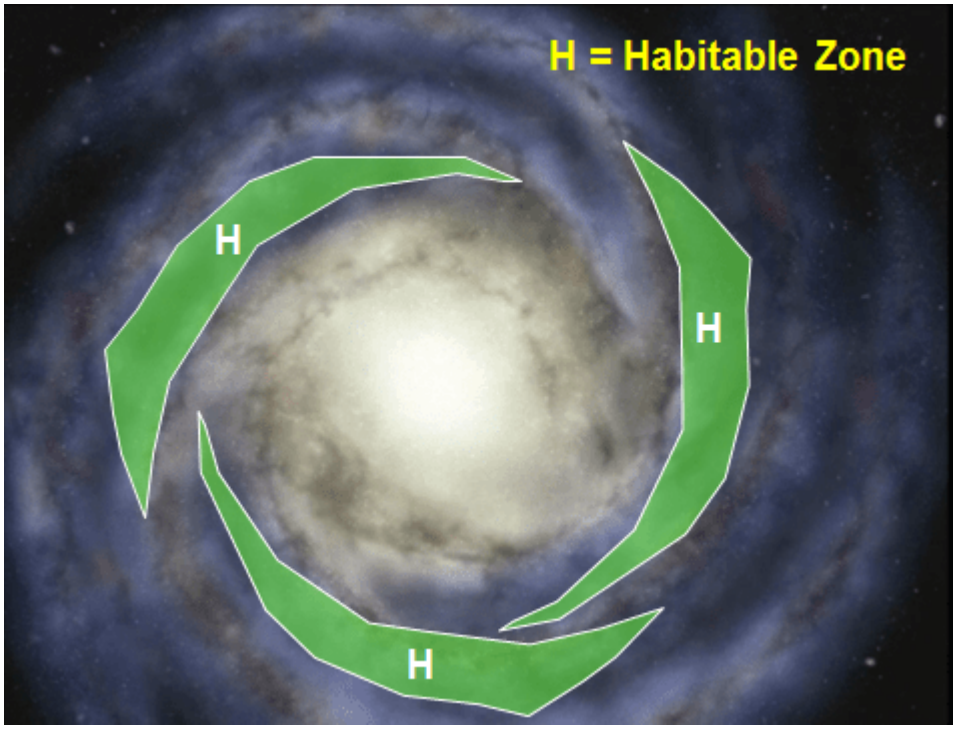

The galactic habitable zone (GHZ) is shown in green superimposed on a spiral galaxy

This is going to be old news to readers of this blog who are familiar with the Michael Strauss, Walter Bradley and Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on habitability and fine-tuning. But, it's nice to see these ideas show up in one of the most presitigious peer-reviewed science journals in the world (if not *the* most presitigious).

Here's the article from Science. (H/T Gunter)

It says:

> Scientists have known for several years now that stars, galaxies, and almost everything in the universe is moving away from us (and from everything else) at a faster and faster pace. Now, it turns out that the unknown forces behind the rate of this accelerating expansion—a mathematical value called the cosmological constant—may play a previously unexplored role in creating the right conditions for life.
>
> That's the conclusion of a group of physicists who studied the effects of massive cosmic explosions, called gamma ray bursts, on planets. They found that when it comes to growing life, it's better to be far away from your neighbors—and the cosmological constant helps thin out the neighborhood.
>
> "In dense environments, you have many explosions, and you're too close to them," says cosmologist and theoretical physicist Raul Jimenez of the University of Barcelona in Spain and an author on the new study. "It's best to be in the

> outskirts, or in regions that have not been highly populated by small galaxies—and that's exactly where the Milky Way is."
>
> Jimenez and his team had previously shown that gamma ray bursts could cause mass extinctions or make planets inhospitable to life by zapping them with radiation and destroying their ozone layer. The bursts channel the radiation into tight beams so powerful that one of them sweeping through a star system could wipe out planets in another galaxy. For their latest work, published this month in *Physical Review Letters*, they wanted to apply those findings on a broader scale and determine what type of universe would be most likely to support life.
>
> The research is the latest investigation to touch on the so-called anthropic principle: the idea that in some sense the universe is tuned for the emergence of intelligent life. If the forces of nature were much stronger or weaker than physicists observe, proponents note, crucial building blocks of life—such fundamental particles, atoms, or the long-chain molecules needed for the chemistry of life—might not have formed, resulting in a sterile or even completely chaotic universe.

Basically, the best place for a galaxy that permits complex, embodied life to exist is one where you can pick up enough heavy elements from dying stars nearby, but not be in an area that is so crowded by stars that you will be murdered by intense gamma radiation when they die.

The cosmological constant has to be set just right that we spread out enough to make space between spiral arms for life-permitting solar systems, but no so spread out that we cannot pick up the heavy elements we need for a metal-rich star, a moon, and the bodies of the intelligent agents themselves.

More:

> **As it turns out, our universe seems to get it just about right. The existing cosmological constant means the rate of expansion is large enough that it minimizes planets' exposure to gamma ray bursts, but small enough to form lots of hydrogen-burning stars around which life can exist. (A faster expansion rate would make it hard for gas clouds to collapse into stars.)**
>
> Jimenez says the expansion of the universe played a bigger role in creating habitable worlds than he expected. "It was surprising to me that you do need the cosmological constant to clear out the region and make it more suburbanlike," he says.

Remember, this is only one of many characteristics that must obtain in order for a have a location in the universe that can support complex, embodied life of any conceivable kind.

Let's review the big picture

Time for me to list out some of the things that are required for a galaxy, solar system and

planet to support complex embodied life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind given these laws of physics.

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

It's not easy to make a planet that supports life. For those who are interested in reaching out to God, he has left us an abundance of evidence for his existence – and his attention to detail.

And remember, these requirements for a habitable planet are downstream from the cosmic fine-tuning of constants and quantities that occurs at the Big Bang. No point in talking about the need for plate tectonics if *you only have hydrogen in your universe.* The habitability requirements are a *further* problem that comes after the fine-tuning problem.

Resources

The best book to read on this topic is "The Privileged Planet", by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards. The latter is one of my absolute favorite Christian scholars, a real renaissance man. If the book is too much, there is a DVD by the same name that covers everything you need to know at a high level. Just FYI, Gonzalez made the cover of Scientific American in 2001, for his research on habitable zones. This is real evidence you can discuss with anyone, anywhere.

You can also watch the DVD for FREE on YouTube. Not sure how long that will be there. If you like it, buy the DVD, so you can show your friends.

Related posts

- New study: survey of 700 quintillion terrestrial exoplanets suggests Earth is special
- How tidal effects improve the habitability of a planet
- The connection between our moon, plate tectonics and habitability
- Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on the corelation between habitability and discoverability
- New paper finds that mass of asteroid belts affect habitability of planets

- New study on tidal heating strengthens stellar habitability argument
- Walter Bradley lectures on the creation and design of the universe
- Earth-like planet hyped by science-fiction-crazed atheists likely uninhabitable
- Four ways the Earth is fine-tuned for life, and one more
- Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas
- Fine-tuning the habitable zone: tidal-locking and solar flares
- Is silicon-based life a possible alternative for carbon-based life?
- Jupiter deflects comets and asteroids that might otherwise hit Earth
- How common is it for a star to support complex, embodied life?
- Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University
- Scientists troubled by lack of simple explanation for our life-permitting moon

What will God do with people who have never heard about Jesus?

March 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm baby octopus, and I approve this message

The baby octopus is there for no particular reason, because this is a theology post. Still, he is quite cute, don't you think?

One of the most difficult questions for Christians to answer, especially when posed by adherents of other religions, is the question of what happens to those who have never heard of Jesus? In this post, I will explain how progress in the field of philosophy of religion has given us a possible (and Biblical) solution to this thorny question.

First, Christianity teaches that humans are in a natural state of rebellion against God. We don't want to know about him, and we don't want him to have any say in what we are doing. We just want to appropriate all the gifts he's given us, do whatever we want with them, and then have eternal bliss after we die. We want to do whatever we want and then be forgiven, later.

Along comes Jesus, who, through his sinless life and his death on the cross, heals that rift of rebellion between an all-good God and rebellious man. Now we have a real understanding of the fact that God is real, that he has power over death, and that he has very specific ideas on what we should be doing. If we accept Jesus' atoning sacrifice and follow his teachings, we can avoid the penalty of our rebellion.

The only problem is that in order to appropriate that free gift of reconciliation, people need to actually *know* about Jesus. And there are some people in the world who have not even *heard* of him. Is it fair that these other people will be eternally separated from God,

just because they happened to be born in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Enter famous Christian apologist William Lane Craig to save the day. His solution is that God orders the world in such a way that anyone who would freely choose to acknowledge Jesus and appropriate his teachings in their decision-making *will* be given eternal life. God knows in advance who would respond, and chooses their time and place of birth, and he supplies them with the amount of evidence they need.

And this agrees with what the Bible teaches. The apostle Paul says this in his apologetic on Mars Hill in Acts 17:22-31:

> 22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.
> 23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ' N D ' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.
> 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;
> 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;
> 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, **having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,**
> **27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;**
> 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'
> 29 "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.
> 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,
> 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

This passage is not difficult to understand, although some may find it difficult to accept. According to the Bible, God puts us in the best possible place for us to respond to him, and if we don't, we are responsible. We decide how to respond to God's efforts to make himself known to us. We would never find him ourselves, but he takes the initiative to reveal himself, without being coercive. It falls to us to investigate and find the clues, and re-prioritize our lives according to what we find.

In this research paper, Craig explains in detail how God foreknows how people will choose in every set of circumstances, and how God uses that knowledge to get everyone where they need to be *without violating their free will.* God wants the best for everybody, and has ordered to whole universe in order to give each of us our best opportunity for eternal

life.

Here is a summary of the what is in his paper:

> The conviction of the New Testament writers was that there is no salvation apart from Jesus. This orthodox doctrine is widely rejected today because God's condemnation of persons in other world religions seems incompatible with various attributes of God.
>
> Analysis reveals the real problem to involve certain counterfactuals of freedom, *e.g.*, why did not God create a world in which all people would freely believe in Christ and be saved? Such questions presuppose that God possesses middle knowledge. But it can be shown that no inconsistency exists between God's having middle knowledge and certain persons' being damned; on the contrary, it can be positively shown that these two notions are compatible.

Go read this paper and equip yourself to answer this common question!

Oxford University Press book: is religion responsible for wars and violence in history?

March 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

J.W. Wartick posted a review of a book called "The Myth of Religious Violence", and written by Dr. William T. Cavanaugh.

Let's take a look at some of the review.

Here, J.W. quotes from the book:

> The story goes that, after the Protestant Reformation divided Christendom along religious lines, Catholics and Protestants began killing each other for holding to different doctrines. The wars of religion… demonstrated to the West the inherent danger of public religion. The solution to the problem lay in the rise of the modern state, in which religious loyalties were marginalized and the state secured a monopoly on the means of violence…
>
> This story is more than just a prominent example of the myth of religious violence. It has a foundational importance for the secular West, because it explains the origin of its way of life and its system of governance. It is a creation myth for modernity (123).

Then writes this:

> Following the lines of thinking of Voltaire, John Locke, and others, Cavanaugh argues that the myth of religious violence is perpetuated in order to marginalize that which is considered religious and give rise to the nation-state. According to this myth, "All theological religions are to be tolerated, provided they do not interfere with the obligations of citizens to the state…" (129). The myth is that religion is divisive and that they "fight over doctrines or 'religious creeds'" so that "the state steps in to make peace" (130).
>
> Cavanaugh shows that this myth is indeed false. The "wars of religion" had any number of motivating factors. The use of this story is not so much to tell a truth

> as it is a means by which to legitimize the nation-state. He argues towards these conclusions by showing that many "wars of religion" were in fact wars of economy, wars of power structures, and the like. He notes four primary factors for this myth to work: that combatants were motivated by religious difference, that the primary cause of war was religion, that religious causes are analytically separable from political, economic, and social causes at the time of the wars, and that the rise of the modern state was not a cause of the wars (141-142). He then analyzes each of these in turn based upon the historical record and shows that these all fail to account for the actual history of the "wars of religion." In fact, the opposite is true in each case (142-177).
>
> "We must conclude that the myth of the wars of religion is finally incredible, which is to say, false" (177).

> […]Perhaps the most challenging and paradigm-shifting portion of the book is that which focuses upon the uses of the myth of religious violence. Cavanaugh argues that the myth is so perpetuated because of its usefulness.

Cavanaugh has his BA from the University of Notre Dame, his MA from Cambridge University, and his PhD from Duke University.

Regarding religion and wars, consider this post from Well Spent Journey:

> **The Claim:** *"Religion has been the primary cause of war and oppression throughout the history of mankind."*
>
> **The Truth:** In their comprehensive Encyclopedia of Wars, Phillips and Axelrod document the recorded history of warfare. Of the 1,763 wars presented, a mere 7% involved a religious cause. When Islam is subtracted from the equation, that number drops to 3.2%.
>
> In terms of casualties, religious wars account for only 2% of all people killed by warfare. This pales in comparison to the number of people who have been killed by secular dictators in the 20th century alone.

So let's take a look at those secular dictators.

According to the The Black Book of Communism, published by Harvard University Press, over 100 million innocent people were killed in atheistic, communist regimes in the last century. In the past, consistent atheists like Stalin who had power enough to ignore objective morality caused millions of innocent deaths. And you can even see atheism killing lots and lots of people in countries like North Korea today – where the official state religion is atheism. Why is that? It's because the worldview of atheism teaches that the universe, and human beings, are here by accident. We are all just molecules in motion, and there is no inherent dignity or purpose to any of our lives that would obligate others to treat us a certain way.

On the Christian view, every single person has dignity because they are made in the image of God, and made to know him. Christians can never treat another person (of any

religion or no religion) in any way that would discourage them from knowing God and experiencing his love for us. We could never hurt anyone in a way that causes them to turn against God. We are careful with people, because we want to act towards them in a way that helps them to accomplish this purpose.

Of course there are lots of atheists in the Judeo-Christian West who live more peacefully, because they are living in a background of objective morality and human rights provided by Western religions. But in countries like North Korea, with a state religion that cannot ground free will or objective morality or human rights or judgment after death, there are fewer restraints.

Even here, we have already seen over 50 million unborn children killed since abortion became legal. And I can guarantee you that it's not authentic, Bible-believing Christians who are having these abortions. People who think they are going to face God when they die do not treat their fellow humans like machines made out of meat. As a group, atheists tend to be among the most radical in favor of abortion rights. The Secular Census of 2012 found that 97% of atheists vote for abortion. And of course today in the news we got the second video of Planned Parenthood top brass explaining how they sell the body parts of unborn babies to the highest bidder. I wrote about the first video here.

The idea of the strong killing the weak for their own advantage is the law of the jungle, and it's not surprising to me that those who think that humans *are just animals* would act this way with vulnerable children. If you only have 80 years to be happy in an accidental universe, then anything goes. No one is there to hold you accountable when you die. If the weak get in your way, kill them all. Just don't get caught. That's what atheist morality teaches.

Here's famous atheist Richard Dawkins explaining why infanticide is OK:

And here's what he thinks of objective moral values and duties:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.
>
> –Richard Dawkins, (River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

You can read more about the morality of atheists likeRichard Dawkins here.

In a previous post, I looked at an article by an atheist who explained what it meant to live consistently with atheism. I really recommend reading that in order to understand what is rational within that worldview.

Feminism triumphant: day care workers convicted of abusing children

March 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Children need their mothers for at least two years after birth, and five years is best
Northern Virginia is one of the wealthiest areas of the country, because so many rich government workers live there and work in Washington, D.C.. Housing prices are high, and women often join their husbands in the workplace, in order to afford more and better things to show off to the neighbors.

But what happens to the young pre-school children? No problem, say Hillary Clinton and the radical feminists: we can just hand them off to strangers to raise, because children don't really need a mother in the home in order to do well. After all, we have to make men and women identical, because feminism! No gender distinctions, because that would be sexism, and sexism is bad.

NBC News reports on what happened next:

> Previously happy children became aggressive, were afraid of water and even stopped talking after they were abused at a day care center in Northern Virginia, emotional parents testified Monday in Manassas.
>
> The trial of Sarah Jordan began Monday. Jordan is one of two women accused of abusing children age 16 months to 2 years old at Minnieland Academy at The Glen in Woodbridge. Jordan faces 37 charges in the alleged abuse of 13 toddlers.
>
> Ten parents spoke Monday, some in tears, about seeing dramatic changes in their children after they joined Jordan's classroom.
>
> One after the other, parents testified about troubling behavior that emerged when their little ones were moved into Jordan's class of toddlers,

> nicknamed “The Monkey Room.”
>
> Parents said their children became aggressive at home, stomped on their parents toes and became afraid of water. Some refused to bathe, their parents said, and most cried when they were dropped off at the center.
>
> Police say the behavior is the result of Jordan and Kierra Spriggs, who also is accused of abuse, spraying children with a hose and encouraging them to bite and fight each other.
>
> One father, Adam Smith, testified that his daughter “completely stopped talking” once she was in Jordan’s care.

And there are updates on the trials of the two women who were accused of abusing the children.

This one from the Washington Post:

> A judge on Wednesday found a former day-care worker guilty of emotionally and physically abusing seven toddlers who were in her care at the Minnieland Academy in Woodbridge.
>
> Sarah A. Jordan, 31, of Woodbridge, was convicted of seven felony counts of child cruelty and six misdemeanors in a bench trial before Prince William County Circuit Court Judge Tracy C. Hudson.
>
> She faces a maximum sentence of 41 years and is being held without bail until her sentencing, set for May 6.
>
> Jordan showed no emotion as the verdict was rendered. Parents of some of the children wept in the courtroom.
>
> **Jordan had pleaded not guilty and denied all accusations** that she sprayed children full force with a hose and pitted some children against each other to fight, among other acts.
>
> Jordan worked at the day-care center until August 2013 and was arrested three months later.

Here’s the latest news from NBC News:

> A Virginia daycare teacher accused of turning her classroom of 2-year-olds into a “baby fight club” was knocked out by a jury on Thursday.
>
> Kierra Spriggs was convicted of child cruelty and other abusive behavior charges after a two-week trial in the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C.
>
> She was found guilty of four felony counts of child cruelty and two misdemeanor counts of assault and battery, according to NBC Washington. She could get up to five years in prison on each of the felony count convictions and a year for each misdemeanor count.
>
> […]At trial, witnesses described how Spriggs forced twin sisters to fight each other. They said Spriggs regularly mistreated the kids by stomping on bares toes,

> dunking them in cold water, and throwing them on cots.
>
> […]Shanna Greisen said she pulled her 21-month-old son out of Minnieland because dreaded going to daycare.
>
> "He would just cry," she told NBC Washington. "He would throw himself on the floor, you know. Just, 'No mommy, no mommy.'"

Ah, but the show must go on, mothers of young children, so no use crying about it. The important thing is that mothers of young children keep on paying taxes to big government. Big government needs their tax money to buy other people's votes.

Christians on board with feminism

The Gospel Coalition, which has embraced radical feminism for some time, celebrates daycare for 3-month-old children:

> After 12 weeks of glorious (and delirious) maternity leave, I returned to my job. I worked out a solution with my boss to return in a capacity my husband and I felt would be wise for our family. While my work may look different than some other moms, I believe I am serving God faithfully in it, by his grace.

Three months, then back to work. All you have to do is claim that God is leading you to do it, (through your feelings), and poof! Divine approval for radical feminism.

My friend McKenzie, who sent me that article, wondered if the Gospel Coalition was just becoming Salon.com for Christians. All you have to do is take an article from a radically leftist publication, add a few Bible verses, and you have something to post on the Gospel Coalition. That's how far radical feminism has spread, I guess. Once upon a time, women used to value men who had good practical degrees, good resumes, and good jobs – so that they could be stay-at-home moms and meet their childrens' needs. Now, it's just follow your heart. There's no planning for the needs of children.

Related posts

- New study: Tennessee pre-K program provides no educational benefit over control group
- New study: negative effects of day care on children not caused by quality of day care
- New study: government run child-care increases negative outcomes for kids
- Stay-at-home motherhood falls to record low in the UK
- New study: lack of secure attachment during early childhood harms children
- New study: separating from mother causes children to have higher anxiety and fear
- Obama proposes new tax on stay-at-home moms in SOTU speech
- Obama on stay-at-home moms: "that's not a choice we want them to make"
- New Oxford University study links non-family day care to anti-social behavior
- Feminist Nancy Pelosi pushes national daycare program
- How the UK government penalizes stay-at-home moms and pushes kids into daycare
- UK offers more money to working women and single mothers, nothing for stay-at-

home moms
- Democrats want government social workers to visit children starting “at birth”

Is belief in a Creator / Designer compatible with belief in Darwinian evolution?

March 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

What should we make of theistic evolutionists telling us that you can *believe* in God, while still *knowing* that matter, law and chance fully explain the development of all of biological life?

Consider this quotation from Phillip E. Johnson.

Quote:

> The National Academy's way of dealing with the religious implications of evolution is akin to the two-platoon system in American football. When the leading figures of evolutionary science feel free to say what they really believe, writers such as Edward O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Carl Sagan, Steven Pinker, Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Lewontin and others state the "God is dead" thesis aggressively, invoking the authority of science to silence any theistic protest. That is the offensive platoon, and the National Academy never raises any objection to its promoting this worldview.
>
> At other times, however, the scientific elite has to protect the teaching of the "fact of evolution" from objections by religious conservatives who know what the offensive platoon is saying and who argue that the science educators are insinuating a worldview that goes far beyond the data. When the objectors are too numerous or influential to be ignored, the defensive platoon takes the field. That is when we read those spin-doctored reassurances saying that many scientists are religious (in some sense), that science does not claim to have proved that God does not exist (but merely that he does not affect the natural world), and that science and religion are separate realms which should never be mixed (unless it is the materialists who are doing the mixing). Once the defensive platoon has done its job it leaves the field, and the offensive platoon goes right back to telling the public that science has shown that "God" is permanently out

> of business.
>
> (Phillip E. Johnson: “The Wedge of Truth”, IVP 2000, pp. 88-89).

So what naturalistic scientists believe is that God didn’t do anything to create the diversity of life – that nature does all of its own creating without God. In fact, it doesn’t matter if the best naturalistic explanation is improbable or implausible – naturalists *must* bitterly cling to materialistic explanations of natural phenomena. Any doubts about the efficacy of naturalistic mechanisms get met by “theistic evolutionists” – scientists who think that science shows that God didn’t do anything in the history of life.

When it comes to discussing origins, you have to be very careful with theistic evolutionists. The one question they want to avoid is whether science, done in the ordinary naturalistic way, can discover evidence of intelligent agency in the history of the development of life. And that’s why you have to ask them that question *first*. “Is there any scientific evidence that intelligent causes were active during the history of the development of life on this planet?” Their answer to that is the same as atheists, namely: “there is no scientific evidence that intelligent causes are responsible for the effects we see in the history of life on Earth”. Theistic evolutionists and atheists agree on that: as far as pure scientific evidence is concerned, nature can do its own creating without any intelligence writing genetic code or engineering animal body plans.

Now, take a look at this article by Jay Richards. He cites some theistic evolutionists.

Excerpt:

> Biologist Ken Miller:
>
> For his part, [Ken] Miller, a biologist, has no qualms about telling us what *God* would do: “And in Catholicism, he said, God **wouldn’t** micromanage that way. ‘Surely he **can** set things up without having to violate his own laws.'”
>
> I am unaware of any tenet of Catholic theology that requires God not to micromanage. It is, however, a tenet of deism.

Got that? What really happened is that God didn’t do anything. How does he know that? From the science? No. Because he assumes naturalism. Oh, it’s true that he *says* that God is lurking somewhere behind the material processes that created life. But God’s agency is *undetectable* by the methods of science. And he is hoping that you will accept his subjective pious God-talk as proof that a fundamentally atheistic reality is somehow reconcilable with a robust conception of theism.

More from Richards:

> Then we get Stephen Barr offering his private definition of “chance.”

> It **is possible** to **believe** simultaneously in a world that is shaped by chance and one following a divine plan. “God is in charge and there’s a lot of accident,” said Barr, also a Catholic. “It’s all part of a plan. . . . God **may have** known where every molecule was going to move.”

What does Barr really believe? He believes that what science shows is that nature created life without any interference by an intelligent agent. Barr then offers believers his subjective pious God-talk to reassure them that evolution is compatible with religion. He has a *personal belief* – NOT BASED ON SCIENCE – that the material processes that created all of life are "all part of a plan". He cannot demonstrate that from science – it's his *faith commitment*. And more speculations: "God may have known…". He can't demonstrate that God did know anything *from science*. He is just offering a personal opinion about what God "could have" done. The purpose of these subjective opinions is to appease those who ask questions about what natural mechanisms can really create. Can natural causes really account for the development of functional proteins? Never mind that – look at my shiny spiritual-sounding testimony!

That's theistic evolution. What really happened is that no intelligent causes are needed to explain life. What they say is "God could" and "God might" and "I pray" and "I attend this church" and "I received a Christian award" and "I sing praise hymns in church". None of these religious opinions and speculations are relevant to the science – they are just opinions, speculations and biographical trivia. Atheists and theistic evolutionists agree on what science shows about the diversity of life – *intelligent causes didn't do anything*.

Front-loading?

One of the ways that theistic evolutionists try to affirm design is by insisting that the design is "front-loaded". The design for all the information and body plans is somehow embedded in matter.

Here is Stephen C. Meyer to assess that:

It's very important to understand that there is no *scientific evidence* for design (information) being front-loaded. So although the theistic evolutionists are talking about design, it's still in the realm of faith – not detectable to scientific investigation. And as Dr. Meyer explained, it doesn't work to explain design anyway.

I attended a Wheaton College philosophy conference where Dr. Michael Murray read a paper advocating for this front-loaded view of design. I raised my hand to ask him a question, "hey, philosophy guy, did God front-load the information in that paper you're reading, or did you write it yourself?" But the philosophy moderators must have known that I was an engineer, and would talk sense into him, because they never called on me. However, I did e-mail him later and asked him if he had any evidence for this front-loading theory, and couldn't God write sequence information in time the same way he had sequenced information in his essay. He replied and said that front-loading was more emotionally satisfying for him. That's philosophy, I guess. Thank goodness an engineer wrote his e-mail program so that he could at least come clean about his silly view.

The quickest way to disarm a theistic evolutionist is to ask them for a naturalistic explanation of the origin of life. And for a naturalistic explanation of the Cambrian explosion. And so on. Focus on the science – don't let them turn the conversation to their personal beliefs, or to the Bible, or to religion. No one cares about the psychology of the theistic evolutionist. We only care what science can show.

Where does Bernie Sanders stand on gay rights vs religious liberty?

March 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Here's an article from Robert Gagnon from the American Spectator. Dr. Gagnon is someone I trust on the gay marriage / homosexuality / gay rights issues. In this post he makes a list of all the things Sanders is doing and intends to do on the gay rights vs religious liberty issue.

He writes:

> I have encountered a fair number of persons holding a more or less traditional view of marriage who are warming up to Sanders because Sanders strikes them as a "nice man" who just wants to "help the poor." Pay attention, please, for Sanders has told us exactly what he would do to you as President (rest assured that Hillary Clinton would do the same):

First, Sanders will kill any sort of religious liberty legislation, such as the the "First Amendment Defense Act":

> 1. "Veto any legislation that purports to 'protect' religious liberty at the expense of others' rights" (the scare quotes are his). In other words, he is going to get you, you hateful, ignorant bigots who have a problem with supporting directly with your talents, goods, and money the full homosexual and transgender lifestyle.

Second, if anyone in your office finds out that you oppose gay marriage, Sanders is authorizing your pro-gay co-workers to have you fired on the spot:

> 2. "Sign into law the Equality Act," of which he "is currently a cosponsor," "which would expand the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other anti-discrimination laws to

> include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity." This would include a so-called "employment nondiscrimination" legislation that renders you the moral equivalent of a racist should you utter in or out of the workplace the view that homosexual activity is harmful or immoral. Think of it as anti-Christian (and anti-Muslim and anti-Orthodox Jewish) employment discrimination legislation.
>
> Expect lots of firings and terminations to take place. Imagine your workplace as a sort of "secret police" state, except the policing won't be so secret. Expect there to be a full-court federal push to punish with hefty fines those who do not want to contribute their talents and goods directly to "gay weddings" (bakers, florists, photographers, caterers). Churches that allow non-parishioners to use any of their facilities will have to offer these to "gay weddings" and any other homosexual or transgender activities. In some cases white-collar employees who outside the workplace write in favor of a male-female foundation for marriage (even on a Facebook post) could be charged with creating a hostile work environment and terminated.

Pro-gay indoctrination of police officers into the gay agenda:

> 4. "Require police departments to adopt policies to ensure fairer interactions with transgender people, especially transgender women of color …, and institute training programs to promote compliance with fair policies." This is a mandate to indoctrinate forcibly police departments along the lines of "progressive" sexual ideology. Either they learn to advance the transgender cause or face discipline and termination. That means converting law enforcement into the most active enforcers of a homosexual and transgender agenda against the citizenry. You have no rights, except the right to remain silent.

Pro-gay indoctrination of young children in the schools:

> 5. Pass "anti-bullying" legislation requiring indoctrination of children in the schools into the LGBT agenda. Your children will be taught to regard you as a "bully" and a "homophobic bigot" if you don't affirm homosexual and transsexual identities. Your children will be given exercises that will urge them to declare their affinity with the LGBT cause. "If you believe that sexual orientation is not a choice, walk across the room to us, where these treats are waiting." If your children don't comply, they will be ostracized.

Dr. Gagnon lists a few policies favored by Sanders, and takes a look at his record on gay rights issues in Vermont. Suffice to say that if this man is elected President, religious liberty and freedom of conscience for Christians will be finished. Some voters think that forced redistribution of wealth by a secular government is more important than the right to live by Biblical sexual ethics. For myself, I'm not for redistribution of wealth by a secular big government. I believe in Biblical sexual ethics, and I believe in natural marriage. I don't want to elect someone who would punish me for being supportive of

natural marriage and traditional morality.

How well did Donald Trump do in the hotel and casino business?

March 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump should stick to Miss Universe pageants

This story from CBS Marketwatch looks at the only period of Trump's career for which we have the numbers.

It says:

> [T]he only part of his business track record for which we have the full picture shows that Trump wasn't a successful executive but an absolute catastrophe.
>
> For 10 years between 1995 and 2005, Donald Trump ran Trump Hotels & Casino Resorts — and he did it so badly and incompetently that it collapsed into Chapter 11 bankruptcy. His stockholders were almost entirely wiped out, losing a staggering 89% of their money. The company actually lost money every single year. In total it racked up more than $600 million in net losses over that period.
>
> Trump was chairman of the board throughout the entire time, and CEO as well for about half of it.
>
> Meanwhile, over the same period, all his competitors were enjoying an enormous boom. Take a look at our chart.
>
> While Trump was running Trump Hotels & Casino Resorts into the ground, the Dow Jones index of gambling stocks — the index that Trump himself cited in public filings as his best benchmark — soared 160%. Investors in Harrah's saw their stake go up by nearly 150%. MGM MGM, -2.56% quintupled. These people were making out like bandits.
>
> Donald Trump ran the worst performing casino company on the stock market. This isn't a matter of "opinion." This isn't speculation or politics. It's a matter of plain fact.
>
> However, one person associated with Trump Hotels & Casino Resorts did make

> money:
>
> Donald J. Trump.
>
> A review of the company's public filings show that over that period, while his ordinary investors were getting hosed, Trump himself was siphoning millions out of Trump Hotels & Casino Resorts through salary, "bonuses" — yes, really — and cozy "service agreements" or side deals with his private corporations.

Here's the chart with the info from Trump's public filings:

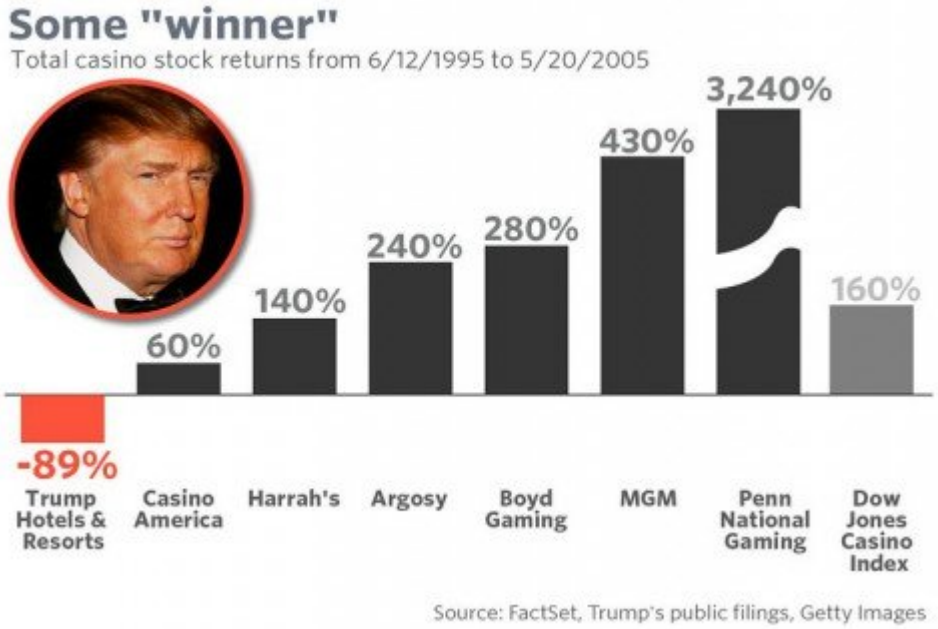

Trump casino and hotels performance

You can read more about his four bankruptcies on CNN Money, too.

It says:

Here's a look at Trump's bankruptcy track record.

> 1. Trump Taj Mahal, 1991
>
> To come up with the funds he needed, he sold a 282-foot yacht, as well as the Trump Shuttle, the airline he operated at the time that flew between Washington, D.C., New York and Boston, according to media reports at the time. He had to give up half of his ownership stake in the Trump Taj Mahal, but he did retain control of the property. His largest creditor was financier Carl Icahn, who held $400 million in bonds. **Now Icahn is Trump's pick for Treasury secretary should he be elected.**
>
> 2. Trump Castle Associates, 1992
>
> In less than a year he was back in bankruptcy court for his other Atlantic City casinos. This bankruptcy included the Trump Plaza Hotel in New York, the Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City as well as the Trump Castle Casino Resort. He gave up half his interest in the New York Plaza to Citibank, but retained his stake in the casinos.
>
> 3. Trump Hotel & Casino Resorts, 2004

> Trump didn't go back to bankruptcy court again until November 2004, when he filed to shed debt at his various Atlantic City casinos and a riverboat in Indiana. It was another quick trip through bankruptcy court; the company shed $500 million in debt and emerged from bankruptcy the following May. Trump turned over majority control of the company to his bondholders but remained the largest single shareholder, and he once again kept control of the casinos.
>
> 4. Trump Entertainment Resorts, 2009
>
> His most recent bankruptcy came in 2009, after the company missed a $53.1 million bond payment. That was pretty much the end of the road for Trump in Atlantic City. While his name remained on three casinos**,** he resigned from the board and gave up his remaining stake in the company.

What if this guy is not a good businessman at all? His tax returns would help us decide, but he won't release them. Everyone else has released their tax returns, but not Trump. Why not? He says that he is being audited, so the IRS won't let him. But the IRS came out and said that he can go ahead and release them.

So what's stopping him? What has he got to hide?

Related posts

- Trump donated to group that promotes homosexuality to 5-year-olds
- Do supporters of Donald Trump really support what Trump believes?
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- Who is more conservative on the marriage issue? Trump, Cruz, Carson or Rubio?
- Is Donald Trump's claim about Muslims celebrating 9/11 in New Jersey accurate?

Conservatives in Ohio don’t support John Kasich

March 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

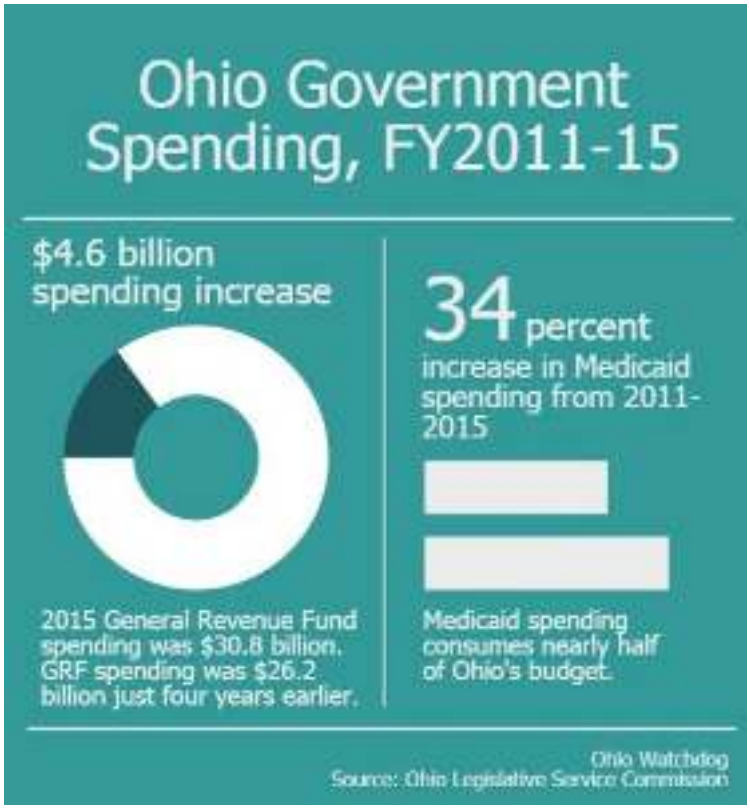

John Kasich: dependency on big government is “compassionate”

I see that some people are voting for John Kasich, and I just thought that I should let people know that John Kasich is very far to the left on fiscal, social and foreign policy issues – the left of someone like Mitt Romney or Jeb Bush across the board.

I was going to write something about it, but then I found this article by a leader of the conservatives of Ohio.

The thing that everyone knows about Kasich is that he is a huge proponent of spending taxpayer money to “help” poor people. He’s never met a big government solution to a problem that he didn’t heartily embrace. He thinks that the right way to help the poor is not to use his own money to do it, it’s to take money from the private sector and redistribute it to others, after the unionized government workers take their cut out first.

Here’s an example, John Kasich supports expanding the role of government in providing health care:

> 1. **Governor Kasich on Obamacare:** You advanced Obamacare in Ohio, turning over 600,000 healthy, working age adults into government dependents, costing taxpayers billions of dollars and expanding the largest long term obligation in Ohio history – all against the will of the Republican controlled Ohio House and Senate.
>
> **Given that these 600,000 Ohioans would not be government dependents**

> **had you not bypassed the legislature and vetoed their wishes so you could accept Obamacare funding and conditions – how can you say you oppose Obamacare while unilaterally championing its single biggest component?**
>
> […]Ohioans, let's be brutally honest about this Kasich decision to expand Obamacare in Ohio. You and your children are being indebted by billions of dollars all to redistribute this money to healthy, working age adults. Not children, pregnant mothers or truly medically fragile people, no. The people Kasich added as government dependents were healthy adults.

Kasich likes to talk a lot about helping the poor through big government, and he does that by increasing spending:

> **2. Governor Kasich on Spending:** You talk about balancing the state budget, but every Ohio Governor balances the budget every year as it's a Constitutional requirement in your state. Democrat or Republican – every Ohio Governor does this, as it is regular and expected. This is not a unique accomplishment.
>
> Of greater interest is that Ohio's job and economic growth has lagged behind the national average during your time in office. As we all know, the national economy has improved since the crash of 2008, so tax revenues have increased in both Ohio and across the US. But, as Ohio state tax revenues increased, curiously, so did your spending at a much faster pace.
>
> **Governor Kasich, how can you justify increasing spending by greater amounts than any Ohio Democrat or Republican Governor since 1990, outpacing both inflation and population growth, but still call yourself fiscally responsible?**

If there is one thing that conservatives stand for, it's limiting the power of the liberal labor unions to influence government. But John Kasich loves unions, and opposes right-to-work legislation:

> **3. Governor Kasich on Unions and Big Labor:** Every US state with a Republican Governor and Republican controlled Legislature has ended compulsory payment of fees to unions and become a "right to work" state with the exception of Ohio.
>
> As the Ohio border states of Indiana, Michigan and West Virginia have all become "right to work" states during your time as Ohio Governor, not only have you failed to make Ohio a "right to work" state, but you actively pushed Michigan's Governor Snyder to oppose right to work legislation, you have killed Ohio right to work legislation in committees multiple times and you proactively worked to stop Ohio donors from funding a citizen's initiative to make Ohio a right to work state through a vote of the people at the ballot.
>
> ***Ohio's current ranking is a dismal 38Th in job creation,* so while you**

> **fought against ending forced union dues payments, right to work states dominated job growth across the country. How can you call yourself someone committed to an environment conducive to job creation when your *actions and results* in Ohio have protected unions and inhibited job growth?**

The rest of the article talks about many other minor problems with Kasich. Initially, it seemed to me that he was going to champion the same kinds of things that Governor Walker championed in Wisconsin, or that Governor Pence championed in Indiana, or that Governor Bevan championed in Kentucky, or that Governor Snyder championed in Michigan. But he's been nothing like them – he's been more like a big-spending, pro-dependency Democrat.

Religious liberty

Kasich considers same-sex marriage to be the law of the land, and he opposes legal protections for Christians who are sued by gay activists.

He gets an F on marriage from pro-marriage activist Maggie Gallagher for his stance on same-sex marriage:

> The Supreme Court overturns the marriage laws of your state and many others by inventing a new right? That gets a big yawn from John Kasich: "I do believe in the traditional sense of marriage—that marriage is between a man and a woman. But I also respect the Supreme Court of the United States. The Supreme Court of the United States made the decision, and as I have said repeatedly we'll honor what the Supreme Court does—it's the law of the land."

And he opposes protections for Christians who are sued by gay activists:

> What will you do, Gov. Kasich, to protect the rights of gay marriage dissenters?
>
> The other three men on the stage have all indicated support for the First Amendment Defense Act, which protects gay marriage dissenters from discrimination by the federal government, including by the IRS (Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio strongly, Donald Trump half-heartedly).
>
> Gov. Kasich has refused to say whether he would support FADA.
>
> And while we can all applaud the fact that at last night's debate Kasich no longer actively sided with those stripping Christians (and other traditional believers) of their family's livelihoods, he also refused to commit to doing anything about it.
>
> No wonder, as he said last night, he's the Democrats' favorite Republican.

I do have to say that the one issue where Kasich does perform as expected is on the pro-life issue. There, he has a moderate record of pro-life actions. Nothing as good as people like Rubio or Cruz, though. We can do better than John Kasich.

New study: open relationships in the gay community

March 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties
Story from the San Francisco Chronicle.

Excerpt:

> A new study released this week by the Center for Research on Gender & Sexuality at San Francisco State University put statistics around what gay men already know: Many Bay Area boyfriends negotiate open relationships that allow for sex with outsiders.
>
> […]"I think it's quite natural for men to want to continue to have an active and varied sex life," said 50-year-old technology consultant Dean Allemang from Oakland, who just ended a 13-year-open relationship and has begun another with a new boyfriend.
>
> "I don't own my lover, and I don't own his body," he said. "I think it's weird to ask someone you love to give up that part of their life. I would never do it."
>
> Hoff, who just received a $3.5 million grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to continue the study for five more years, initially started her research based on findings that HIV infection is on the rise among male couples.
>
> "So much of the HIV prevention effort is aimed at a different set – men in dance clubs or bathhouses having anonymous sex," she said. "HIV prevention might want to expand its message to address relationships; we have to look at risk in a greater context."
>
> In her study of gay couples, 47 percent reported open relationships. Forty-five percent were monogamous, and the remaining 8 percent disagreed about what

> they were.

Another researcher quoted in the story explains how same-sex marriage is compatible with an "open relationship", and that this interpretation of marriage *would* be a redefinition of traditional marriage.

Related to that, there is this radio interview with a gay activist.

Excerpt:

> "It's a no-brainer that (homosexual activists) should have the right to marry, but I also think equally that it's a no-brainer that the institution of marriage should not exist. …(F)ighting for gay marriage generally involves lying about what we are going to do with marriage when we get there — because we lie that the institution of marriage is not going to change, and that is a lie.
>
> The institution of marriage is going to change, and it should change. And again, I don't think it should exist. And I don't like taking part in creating fictions about my life. That's sort of not what I had in mind when I came out thirty years ago.
>
> I have three kids who have five parents, more or less, and I don't see why they shouldn't have five parents legally… I met my new partner, and she had just had a baby, and that baby's biological father is my brother, and my daughter's biological father is a man who lives in Russia, and my adopted son also considers him his father. So the five parents break down into two groups of three… And really, I would like to live in a legal system that is capable of reflecting that reality, and I don't think that's compatible with the institution of marriage."

To me, making a relationship "open" puts an emphasis on each person feeling good, rather than each person committing to love the other self-sacrificially. I wonder if young people understand that. What would be interesting, I think, would be to ask all the young people – especially young women – how they would feel if their partner's idea of marriage involved having an open relationship. How do they feel about non-exclusivity incorporated into the new definition of the word "marriage".

It seems to me that it's one thing to say that marriage is a man and a woman committing to love each other through to old age, regardless of changing feelings and unmet desires. A relationship based on the natural definition of marriage is focused on commitment, and not fulfillment of desires. And that works well for children, who need stability, even if the desires of adults are not met. If marriage is about people abandoning exclusivity and permanence in order to get what they need to be happy "in the moment", then neither person will be able to depend on the other when they are old, ugly and sickly.

Here's a video that explains the basics of why people like me support natural marriage:

The word marriage means, one man, one woman, for life. And both parents sacrifice to raise the children they create. And no frivolous divorce, either. And if you ask me, it should also mean no sex before marriage, formal courtship, approval of both sets of parents, and the wife stays home when the children under five.

Is Donald Trump right to order U.S. troops to commit war crimes?

March 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

David French, who served in the military with distinction, takes a look at Trump's statements for National Review.

He writes:

> Donald Trump fundamentally misunderstands the American military. He sees it as an instrument of savage brutality, restrained only by political correctness. There is no honor. There is no law. If only the military were free to torture, murder, and blaspheme, then America would win its wars. By believing that American soldiers would follow those orders — or would want to follow those orders — he slanders the character of the American military.
>
> For months, he has promised that he would order the military to commit war crimes, torturing militants and targeting their families for execution. He was just as emphatic in promising that those orders would be followed.
>
> He was wrong. There is no scenario under which the military would ever follow directives so offensive to its honor and so blatantly illegal. No man I served with in Iraq would comply with an order to intentionally kill an innocent woman or child, and no officer with a shred of decency or honor would give such an order. The Pentagon has many flaws, but truly bad soldiers are few and far between, and the military is institutionally hard-wired to resist exactly this kind of corruption. Trump would instantly sever the relationship between America's armed forces and their commander-in-chief just by asking them to do such things.
>
> As Lieutenant General James Mattis put it in a 2005 memorandum to the United

> States Marine Corps, “Marines fight only enemy combatants.” It should go without saying that the same principle applies to soldiers, sailors, and airmen. Our men and women in uniform do not fight innocent civilians and they do not assault prisoners in their custody. Both the War Crimes Act of 1996 and the Uniform Code of Military Justice bind American soldiers to the laws of war, which prohibit such actions.
>
> Donald Trump promised that American soldiers — at the very least — violate Articles 93, 118, and 128 of the UCMJ. Article 93 prohibits “cruelty and maltreatment,” while Articles 118 and 128 prohibit murder and assault.

Here he is explaining his views:

I’m not sure what Donald Trump is thinking by making these sorts of claims about what he can and cannot make the military do. I know people in the military, and they are the opposite of “hired muscle”. Many of them hold to Judeo-Christian values, and they go into the military in order to serve their country *honorably*. They see their service as a matter of honor and devotion to the country that has allowed them to live free and be prosperous. Character is at the center of their service, in short. They are trained to think not about themselves, but to think of others first. Acts of self-sacrificial heroism are *celebrated* in the military. Acts of cruelty and barbarism are *shamed.*

All you have to do to see this is to read the citations for people who win the Medal of Honor… it shows you what the U.S. Military holds in the highest regard.

Look:

> The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through **conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty**:
>
> - While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States;
> - While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
> - While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

That’s what serving in the military is about. It’s not about obeying orders, it’s about moral virtues – courage, bravery, selflessness – tested under the most extreme conditions. Military people are who are trained to do the moral thing when their lives are endangered.

If our men and women in uniform were ordered to besmirch their honor in order to serve, they would almost universally disobey orders. The intentional targeting of civilians is something that we do not do. The other side (radical Islamists) targets civilians, but we do not. If Trump were elected, and ordered our fighting men and women to commit war crimes, you could expect a mass exodus of our most patriotic Americans from the armed forces.

Suppose God had coffee with Donald Trump… how would that go?

March 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his evangelical Christian supporters

My friend William shared this post by well-known social conservative Matt Barber. Barber imagines a conversation between Trump and God.

Excerpt:

> **The following statements attributed to Mr. Trump are not fabricated. The man truly uttered them. Those attributed to God are likewise genuine.**
>
> […]The discussion begins.
>
> Trump: "I am a really smart guy. I'm intelligent. Some people would say I'm very, very, very intelligent. I know what sells, and I know what people want."
>
> God: "[I] oppose the proud, but give grace to the humble. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (James 4:6 and Luke 14:11).
>
> Trump: "Nothing wrong with ego. Show me someone without an ego, and I'll show you a loser. Sorry losers and haters, but my I.Q. is one of the highest – and you all know it!"
>
> God: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches. When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom. But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil" (Jeremiah 9:23, Proverbs 11:2, James 4:16).
>
> Trump: "If you don't tell people about your success, they probably won't know

> about it.”
>
> “Part of the beauty of me is that I am very rich. I’m really rich. Cash is king, and that’s one of the beauties of the casino business. And while I can’t honestly say I need an 80-foot living room, I do get a kick out of having one.”
>
> God: “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10).
>
> Trump: “Fighting for the last penny is a very good philosophy to have. I have black guys counting my money. … I hate it. The only guys I want counting my money are short guys that wear yarmulkes all day. Who the f–k knows? I mean, really, who knows how much the Japs will pay for Manhattan property these days?”
>
> God: “Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24).
>
> The conversation moves on to Mr. Trump’s boasting of his many adulterous affairs.
>
> God: “Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?” (Proverbs 5:20)
>
> Trump: “Nice t-ts, no brains. A person who is very flat-chested is very hard to be a 10. Oftentimes when I was sleeping with one of the top women in the world, I would say to myself, thinking about me as a boy from Queens, ‘Can you believe what I am getting?’”
>
> God: “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Peter 3:7).
>
> Trump: “[Women:] You have to treat ’em like s—t.”
>
> “When a man leaves a woman, especially when it was perceived that he has left for a piece of a– – a good one! – there are 50 percent of the population who will love the woman who was left.”
>
> “If I get my name in the paper, if people pay attention, that’s what matters. You know, it really doesn’t matter what they write as long as you’ve got a young and beautiful piece of a–.”
>
> “It’s all in the hunt, and once you get it, it loses some of its energy. I think competitive, successful men feel that way about women. Don’t you agree? Really, don’t you agree?”
>
> God: “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for [I] will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous” (Hebrews 13:4).

I have to skip a bit… can’t quote the whole thing!

Trump holds up Bible he “received from his mother” to evangelicals
More:

> Trump: “For many years I’ve said that if someone screws you, screw them back. When somebody hurts you, just go after them as viciously and as violently as you can.”
>
> God: “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 5:44, Matthew 6:15).
>
> Trump: “I don’t like to have to ask for forgiveness. Why do I have to repent or ask for forgiveness, if I am not making mistakes?”
>
> God: “If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

You know, when I think of the people I really admire in this world, I think of people like Jay Wesley Richards, Michael Licona, J. Warner Wallace, Bruce Gordon, Paul Copan, Scott Klusendorf, Tim McGrew, etc. If you asked me who takes the Bible seriously, I’d point to them. I can see how a thorough understanding of the Bible’s teaching has affected their character and behavior. I cannot imagine why anyone who claims to be a Bible-believer would support a man like Trump. It’s not that I insist on someone who agrees with me on every point of theology. My favorite podcast is the Ben Shapiro show, and he’s an Orthodox Jew! It’s that I expect that people who claim to take the Bible seriously to show it in their character and their behavior. Don’t hold up the Bible and claim to respect it when there isn’t anything in your life to show it.

Related posts

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Evaluating the evidence for and against common descent

March 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

An article from Evolution News that takes a statement from an evolutionist who supports common descent, and then then refutes it point by point.

Here's the case for common descent:

> UCA is now supported by a wealth of evidence from many independent sources, including: (1) the agreement between phylogeny and biogeography; (2) the correspondence between phylogeny and the palaeontological record; (3) the existence of numerous predicted transitional fossils; (4) the hierarchical classification of morphological characteristics; (5) the marked similarities of biological structures with different functions (that is, homologies); and (6) the congruence of morphological and molecular phylogenies.
>
> (Douglas L. Theobald, "A formal test of the theory of universal common ancestry," *Nature*, Vol. 465:219-222 (May 13, 2010).)

And here's a response to each of those points from the Evolution News post:

- (1) Phylogeny and biogeography don't always agree.
- (2) Phylogeny and paleontology don't always agree.
- (3) Transitional fossils are often missing (or the "predicted" transitional fossils fall apart on closer inspection).
- (4) Hierarchical classifications often fail.
- (5) "Homologous" structures often have different developmental pathways or different structures often have "homologous" developmental pathways.
- (6) Morphological and molecular phylogenies are often incongruent.

Before I read this post, I only knew about 3, 4, 5 and 6.

A related podcast

Casey Luskin did a good podcast explaining a problem with two kinds of evidence commonly used to argue for common ancestry.

Details:

> On this episode of **ID the Future**, Casey Luskin takes a keen-eyed look at Darwin's tree of life and finds that common descent, far from being confirmed by the data, is actually contradicted by it, as *New Scientist* pointed out in their cover story, "Why Darwin was wrong about the tree of life."
>
> Listen in to learn how the data is challenging Darwinist assumptions, and check out "A Primer on the Tree of Life" for more information.

The MP3 file is here.

The paper linked above seems to be exactly what he read out loud in the podcast.

Here is one section from the paper that summarizes everything:

> One authoritative review paper by Darwinian leaders in this field stated, "**As morphologists with high hopes of molecular systematics, we end this survey with our hopes dampened. Congruence between molecular phylogenies is as elusive as it is in morphology and as it is between molecules and morphology.**"
>
> Another set of pro-evolution experts wrote, "That molecular evidence typically squares with morphological patterns is a view held by many biologists, but interestingly, by relatively few systematists. Most of the latter know that the two lines of evidence **may often be incongruent.**"

The two methods of determining ancestry are "often incongruent". What I am looking for in order to be convinced of common ancestry is substantial agreement between morphological phylogenies and molecular phylogenies. I don't see that, so I am still skeptical of common ancestry. Especially with all the examples of convergence that I keep finding out about.

What happens when Christians vote to put secular government in charge of health care?

March 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Election 2015: Socialists in red, Communists in Orange, Conservatives in blue

No need to wonder, just look north to Canada. Wesley J. Smith explains in First Things.

Excerpt:

> Last year, the Canadian Supreme Court created a right to euthanasia and assisted suicide. To qualify for death, the court ruled unanimously, one must be a competent adult with a medically diagnosed condition causing "irremediable suffering"—a circumstance wholly determined *by the patient* and including "psychological suffering."
>
> The decision went well beyond mere legalization. Indeed, the court manufactured an *enforceable legal right* for qualified patients to receive what Canadian policymakers are euphemistically calling "medical aid in dying" (MAID).
>
> But what about doctors opposed to euthanasia? The court left with Parliament and the medical colleges (associations) the decision of whether and how to accommodate doctors with conscience objections, granting a one-year (now extended) period within which to enact laws to govern the practice. Since then, civil liberties groups, provincial medical colleges, and official government commissions have urged Parliament … to pass laws that would coerce doctors who are religiously or philosophically opposed to euthanasia to *cooperate actively* in mercy killings by forcing them to procure death doctors for their patients.

But isn't there a "Constitution" in Canada? Yes, but it's interpreted by unelected judges:

> All of this would seem to fly in the face of Canada's 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms,which states, "Everyone has the fundamental freedom of conscience and religion." Illustrating the utter lack of regard that secularized Canada now has for religious liberty, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association—that country's counterpart to the ACLU—applauded the parliamentary committee's call to stomp upon religious conscience as a "promising step forward."
>
> Doctors aren't the only ones threatened with religious persecution under Canada's looming euthanasia regime. Provincial and federal commissions have both recommended that nurses, physician's assistants, and other such licensed medical practitioners be allowed to do the actual euthanizing under the direction of a doctor.

Voting for a single-payer health care system, such as the one praised by Donald Trump, makes the situation much worse:

> Even Catholic and other religious nursing homes and hospices may soon be required by law to permit euthanasia on their premises, for the federal commission recommended that federal and provincial governments "ensure that all publicly funded health care institutions provide medical assistance in dying." That is a very broad category. **Canada has a single-payer, socialized healthcare financing system that permits little private-pay medical care outside of nursing homes.** Not only that, but as Alex Schadenberg, director of the Canada-based Euthanasia Prevention Coalition told me, "religiously-affiliated institutions [in Canada] have become the primary care facilities for elderly persons, those requiring psychiatric care, and dying persons. They are now being told that as a condition of providing those services they will be required to permit doctors to kill these very patients by lethal injection. If they refuse, they will find themselves in a showdown with the government."

The more people who opt to kill themselves, the less the government has to pay in health care. Naturally, the secular government looks at euthanasia as a great way to cut the costs of taxpayers who have paid into the single-payer system their whole lives, and now want to make withdrawals. If the government kills them now, they get to keep all the money, and not give any of it back.

The rights to religious liberty and conscience protections are put at risk everywhere that the secular government takes over the private sector. Christians need to be careful what they vote for at election time. Small government is best for religious liberty and conscience protections.

New York church makes space for non-Christians to ask questions

March 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is church boring? How can you make it more interesting for people?
This is from the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

It says:

> When Craig Ellis was growing up, he picked up the sort of adventure book meant for a boy looking to serve God. The book, "Shadow of the Almighty," told the story of Jim Elliot, a young American evangelist killed while doing mission work in Ecuador.
>
> The narrative of this Christian martyr did for Mr. Ellis what a superhero comic might have done for his peers: It got him pondering purpose, struggle and sacrifice. The book also provided a model for how a Christian should spread the news of salvation while working in treacherous territory, at great personal risk.
>
> Very little in "Shadow of the Almighty," however, prepared Mr. Ellis for where he stood on a recent Tuesday, in a room with industrial carpet and a dropped ceiling at Redeemer Presbyterian Church on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, where people lined up on Sunday morning are more likely awaiting a table for brunch than taking communion.
>
> Mr. Ellis, 39, welcomed the dozen men and women seated before him. "This is a space," he said, "for people who consider themselves non-Christian and are coming in from the outside."
>
> His weekly sessions, called the WS Café in a reference to the neighborhood, are at a new frontier of evangelism, one that seeks converts among a fervent and growing number of atheists in this country. The sessions started in September as

> a push by Redeemer Presbyterian's prominent pastor, the Rev. Tim Keller, to preach the gospel to skeptics.

How are they doing it?

By not quoting the Bible as if it were inerrant to people who don't think it is. But using evidence from outside the Bible to explain what's in the Bible.

More:

> On that recent Tuesday evening, Mr. Ellis, the pastor's assistant, was sharing a lectern with the Rev. Bijan Mirtolooi, the assistant pastor for the 83rd Street church. In the chairs around them sat people like Frank Ying, 33, who works for a technology start-up. Brought up in the Dallas area by immigrant parents who had been raised amid the official atheism of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Ying tried exploring Christianity with his high school classmates, even accompanying them to megachurches, only to be put off by their fundamentalism.
>
> "You have all these questions," he recalled. "And you have all these long, drawn-out conversations. 'What do you believe? How much of the Bible do you take literally?' And these people stop short and say, 'You've just got to have faith.' But I've always been more pragmatic, so that wasn't good enough."
>
> Mr. Ying heard about Redeemer Presbyterian from a few acquaintances after moving to Manhattan several years ago. He dipped his toe slowly, watching a YouTube video of Dr. Keller in conversation with a journalist and a historian, emissaries of the secular world. By now, Mr. Ying is a regular at the WS Café, not because he believes, but because his doubts get heard.
>
> Each session has a central topic, and on the recent Tuesday it was about why Jesus needed to be crucified. As part of framing a wide-open conversation, a list of quotations on the subject even included this zinger from Mr. Hitchens: "I find something repulsive about the idea of vicarious redemption."
>
> Mr. Ellis and Mr. Mirtolooi cited popular culture (movies like "The Revenant," "Inside Out") and real-life examples (the way a parent sacrifices free time to raise a child) in order to make palpable the concept of suffering leading to the remission of sin. **Very deliberately, they did not lean heavily on Scripture.**
>
> **"The difference with the Café is what you're using as your authorities," Mr. Ellis said later. "Typically, in a Christian class, the Bible is your authenticity. To this group, the Bible is just another book. You can use it, but it's just one piece of the puzzle. You rely on those your listeners would find credible — scientists, philosophers, authors — and you show how Christianity makes sense."**
>
> […]The point of their exchange was not winning a soul now as much as keeping a mind open to the possibility someday. "Now I find that I'm very comfortable going to church on a Sunday, listening to the sermons," Mr. Ying said. "I can explore more and not have religious people put down their foot and say, 'This is

> how it is.’ ”

This reminds me of the conversation I had when I went to work for a tech start-up right out of college. You had to have a graduate degree to work in this company. I remember talking to a buy who had a PhD from Northwestern, and my boss who had his undergrad from UIUC and his Masters from Purdue. I had just answered one of their questions, and then apologized for taking the conservative point of view – hoping I hadn’t offended them. I said “I’m a fundamentalist”. And the PhD guy said, “you’re not a fundamentalist. You have your view, but you know all the other views, too”.

I think that in the workplace or in the school, it’s important to know all the other views, too. We don’t want to play into this stereotype that the secular leftists have of us. We should be able to sit still and listen, and put their view forward better than they can themselves. You won’t learn how to do that in church, though. Church teaches you to only be able to talk to people about your faith if they assume that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God (which it is, but non-Christians don’t believe that!) You have to learn how to speak to non-Christians effectively on your own, by reading and watching debates. Sad, but true.

Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage

March 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What effects does redefining marriage have on society?

I spend Tuesday night working through 3 chapters of Anderson's book "Truth Overruled", so I thought I would re-post this old post on marriage.

A must-read long paper from the Heritage Foundation. It's a great concise presentation of the reasons why the United States should not redefine marriage. (H/T A tweet from Ryan T. Anderson)

Abstract:

> *Marriage is based on the truth that men and women are complementary, the biological fact that reproduction depends on a man and a woman, and the reality that children need a mother and a father. Redefining marriage does not simply expand the existing understanding of marriage; it rejects these truths. Marriage is society's least restrictive means of ensuring the well-being of children. By encouraging the norms of marriage—monogamy, sexual exclusivity, and permanence—the state strengthens civil society and reduces its own role. The future of this country depends on the future of marriage. The future of marriage depends on citizens understanding what it is and why it matters and demanding that government policies support, not undermine, true marriage.*

Excerpt:

> Supporters of redefinition use the following analogy: Laws defining marriage as a union of a man and a woman are unjust—fail to treat people equally—exactly like

> laws that prevented interracial marriage. Yet such appeals beg the question of what is essential to marriage. They assume exactly what is in dispute: that gender is as irrelevant as race in state recognition of marriage. However, race has nothing to with marriage, and racist laws kept the races apart. Marriage has everything to do with men and women, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers and children, and that is why principle-based policy has defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman.
>
> Marriage must be color-blind, but it cannot be gender-blind. The color of two people's skin has nothing to do with what kind of marital bond they have. However, the sexual difference between a man and a woman is central to what marriage is. Men and women regardless of their race can unite in marriage, and children regardless of their race need moms and dads. To acknowledge such facts requires an understanding of what, at an essential level, makes a marriage.

And a bit later:

> If the law taught a falsehood about marriage, it would make it harder for people to live out the norms of marriage because marital norms make no sense, as matters of principle, if marriage is just intense emotional feeling. No reason of principle requires an emotional union to be permanent or limited to two persons, much less sexually exclusive. Nor should it be inherently oriented to family life and shaped by its demands. This does not mean that a couple could not decide to live out these norms where temperament or taste so motivated them, just that there is no reason of principle to demand that they do so. Legally enshrining this alternate view of marriage would undermine the norms whose link to the common good is the basis for state recognition of marriage in the first place.
>
> Insofar as society weakens the rational foundation for marriage norms, fewer people would live them out, and fewer people would reap the benefits of the marriage institution. This would affect not only spouses, but also the well-being of their children. The concern is not so much that a handful of gay or lesbian couples would be raising children, but that it would be very difficult for the law to send a message that *fathers matter* when it has redefined marriage to make *fathers optional*.

And one last one:

> In fact, much of this is already occurring. Heritage Foundation Visiting Fellow Thomas Messner has documented multiple instances in which redefining marriage has already become a nightmare for religious liberty.[48] If marriage is redefined to include same-sex relationships, then those who continue to believe the truth about marriage—that it is by nature a union of a man and a woman—would face three different types of threats to their liberty: the administrative state, nondiscrimination law, and private actors in a culture that is now hostile to traditional views.[49]

> After Massachusetts redefined marriage to include same-sex relationships, Catholic Charities of Boston was forced to discontinue its adoption services rather than place children with same-sex couples against its principles.[50] Massachusetts public schools began teaching grade-school students about same-sex marriage, defending their decision because they are "committed to teaching about the world they live in, and in Massachusetts same-sex marriage is legal." A Massachusetts appellate court ruled that parents have no right to exempt their children from these classes.[51]
>
> The New Mexico Human Rights Commission prosecuted a photographer for declining to photograph a same-sex "commitment ceremony." Doctors in California were successfully sued for declining to perform an artificial insemination on a woman in a same-sex relationship. Owners of a bed and breakfast in Illinois who declined to rent their facility for a same-sex civil union ceremony and reception were sued for violating the state nondiscrimination law. A Georgia counselor was fired after she referred someone in a same-sex relationship to another counselor.[52] In fact, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty reports that "over 350 separate state anti-discrimination provisions would likely be triggered by recognition of same-sex marriage."[53]

This article is long and comprehensive. It will take some time to read. It's includes logical arguments as well as empirical evidence from research – with footnotes. I really recommend taking a look at the article. Even if it takes a long time to read, it will definitely expand your mind to think about why we had a definition of marriage in the first place, and what we would lose by changing that definition. When you debate people who want to redefine marriage, it's very important to appeal to logical arguments and evidence from studies. Get the conversation away from emotions and instead introduce facts and arguments.

You can get an even longer treatment in the new book by Ryan T. Anderson and his co-authors Sherif Girgis and Robert P. George. This is *the* book to get on the marriage issue.

David French: it’s time for Rubio and Kasich to drop out

March 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve always been a bit annoyed at David French for backing that horrible RINO Mitt Romney in 2012. It made me think that he was very liberal, because Mitt Romney is moderate. But lately, I’ve been reading David French columns, and I’m not so sure that he is moderate.

Look at this one from National Review. You would expect him to back a moderate conservative like Rubio or a moderate liberal like Kasich, if he was moderate, right?

Well, he doesn’t:

> […][B]ecause normal political rules didn’t apply to Trump, other candidates falsely believed they were immune as well. But it turns out that when you don’t attack the front-runner, he tends to remain the front-runner. It turns out that when you start an epic losing streak, it’s virtually impossible to come back. It turns out that when you make crass personal attacks, it diminishes you more than the target. It turns out that math is still math, and building strategies around winning your *first* big state halfway through the primaries looks not just foolish, but vain.
>
> Can we wake up yet? Can we do math? Can we do politics? Here’s what our actual political experience tells us: Donald Trump is not going to beat himself, he will win a four or even a three-man race, and he is entirely capable of winning the GOP nomination with roughly 35 percent of the vote — indeed, he’s doing it now.
>
> Here’s what the math says: John Kasich and Marco Rubio, you have no hope of becoming the GOP nominee. Even if you win your home states, the *only thing* that will do is maintain the four-person dynamic under which Trump thrives. Even if you are fortunate enough to work cooperatively to deny Trump an absolute majority of delegates, do either of you — in your right mind — believe that a convention dominated by Trump and Cruz delegates is going to unite behind you? They’d sooner riot (and I’m only partially joking).
>
> We’ve given the multi-candidate “blind ambition tour” exactly 23 states and one territory to work, and here’s the score: Trump 15, Cruz 7, Rubio 2, and Kasich . . . zero. I think that’s a sufficient sample size. **Let’s try something else. Let’s try uniting around the person who’s beaten Trump more than anyone else — a person who happens to be a constitutional conservative, who would replace Justice Scalia with a judicial superstar, who is unquestionably pro-life, who is unyielding in his defense of religious liberty, and who actually understands the dynamics of the global economy, trade policy, and national security.**

> […]After 24 contests, the pattern is emerging. Cruz battles Trump for first, while Rubio and Kasich tend to battle each other for last. This is true in the South, the West, the Northeast, and the Midwest. Can conservatives finally get serious? Can we finally unify, now, before Trump starts sweeping winner-take-all states with 35 percent of the vote? If not, then a foolish GOP will richly deserve its fate.

This seems to make sense to me. And it's likely that Rubio and Kasich voters would break for Cruz more than they would for Trump.

A recent Monmouth poll said this:

> With all the discussion about hands in this election, Monmouth decided to test how Rubio and Cruz would do mano a mano against Trump. Although Rubio is struggling to make the delegate threshold in a four-way race, he would virtually tie Trump in a hypothetical two-person contest – 46% for Rubio and 45% for Trump. **Cruz, though, does better, beating Trump 48% to 41% head to head.** In the Rubio-Trump contest, both Cruz and Kasich voters would split at more than 2-to-1 for Rubio. **However, in the Cruz-Trump matchup, Rubio voters would go 3-to-1 for Cruz, while Kasich voters would split at half for Cruz and less than 1-in-5 for Trump with another 1-in-4 saying they would not vote at all.**

Seems to me that if Kasich, and especially Rubio, dropped out, then we could get a real conservative to run against Hillary. And Cruz does *much better* against Hillary than Trump does.

Two polls from Wednesday show that:

General Election: Trump vs. Clinton	NBC News/Wall St. Jrnl	Clinton 51, Trump 38
General Election: Cruz vs. Clinton	NBC News/Wall St. Jrnl	Cruz 45, Clinton 47
General Election: Rubio vs. Clinton	NBC News/Wall St. Jrnl	Rubio 46, Clinton 46
General Election: Trump vs. Sanders	NBC News/Wall St. Jrnl	Sanders 55, Trump 37
General Election: Trump vs. Clinton	ABC News/Wash Post	Clinton 50, Trump 41

Trump performs poorly against Clinton in the general election

If we were really serious about beating Hillary in November, seems to me that we should be putting pressure on Rubio and Kasich to get out. This isn't the time for big egos. We need to beat Hillary.

Is government good at spending taxpayer money to stimulate the economy?

March 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Election 2015: Socialists in red, Communists in Orange, Conservatives in blue

I've been seeing a lot of talk up north in Canada from the substitute drama teacher they elected about how he wants to stimulate the economy by taking money out of the productive private sector and putting into the inefficient, wasteful public sector.

Here's an example of how he intends to stimulate the economy, as reported by Life Site News. (H/T Kevin the Super-Husband)

It says:

> The Liberal government is pledging $81.5 million to the United Nations' Population Fund to fund "sexual and reproductive health services and rights," International Development Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau announced Monday.
>
> And that could include access to abortion in countries where it is legal, according to a "senior government official," who told iPolitics reporter Amanda Connelly that the individual countries in the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) are free to allocate funding to provide access to abortion.
>
> "Sexual and reproductive health services and rights" is well-known UN-speak for contraception and abortion on demand, noted Campaign Life Coalition's Matt Wojciechowski, who represents CLC at the United Nations.
>
> The Liberals' decision is a reversal of the Conservatives' stated ban on abortion funding as part of international aid in the 2010 Muskoka Initiative on Maternal Health.

> At that time, the Conservatives pledged $2.8 billion over five years towards improving maternal health and the lives of newborn infants in developing countries, but the initiative, including the Tories apparent refusal to fund abortion, was subject to ongoing criticism.
>
> The Conservatives pledged a further $3.5 billion from 2015 to 2020 for maternal, newborn and child health care projects in developing nations in May 2014, at which time Harper was again criticized when he reiterated that his government would not fund abortion overseas as part of that initiative.
>
> The Liberals promised during the October 2015 election campaign that they would "cover the full range of reproductive health services as part of the [Muskoka] initiatives," which a Liberal Party official at the time confirmed included abortion where legal, reported Connelly.
>
> "Canada is committed to universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights," Bibeau stated in a press release Monday. "We also believe that programming decisions on these matters should be driven by evidence and outcomes, not ideology."

Trudeau has been very energetic about how he is going to stimulate the economy by taking money from job creators in the private sector and spending it to "create jobs". Well, this is what happens when Christians vote for government to "create jobs" by "infrastructure spending". And they are going to be running budget deficits much worse than what they promised. This is what the vast majority of Canadians voted for in their last election.

But we also waste money down here in the United States, too. Do you ever wonder what happens to the cut that the government takes out of your pay for your private sector activities? The Constitution sets out areas where the federal government is authorized to spend money. But the Democrat Party doesn't believe in the Constitution, they believe in buying votes and pushing the culture to the left.

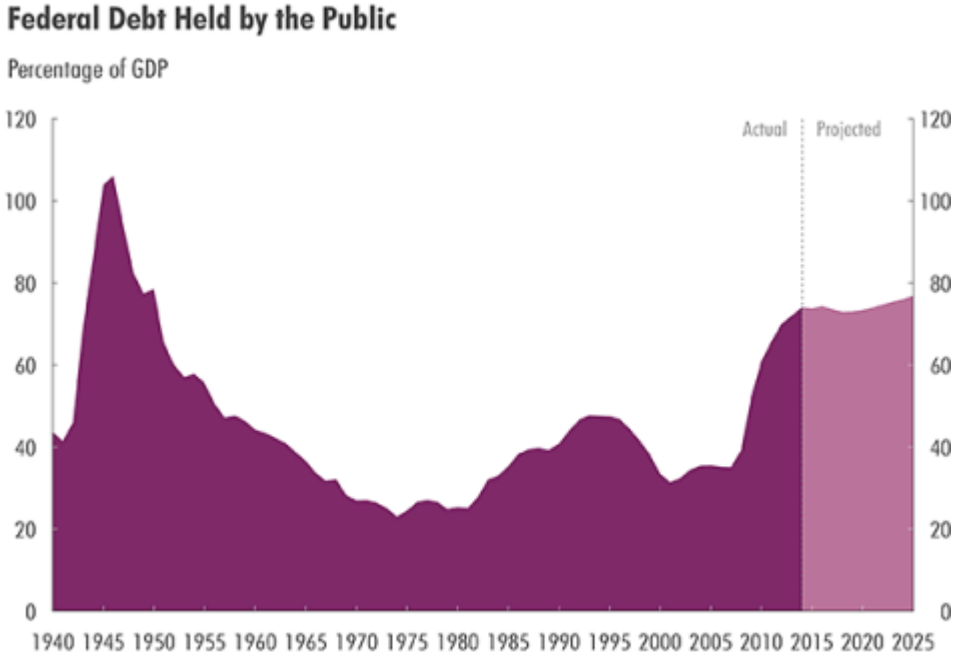

Congressional Budget Office: Debt to GDP ratio
Here's a story from the Daily Caller to explain what stimulating the economy looks like in the United States. (H/T Dad)

Excerpt:

> Academics at the University of Oregon have determined that glaciers and the science that studies them are deeply sexist.
>
> "Merging feminist postcolonial science studies and feminist political ecology, the feminist glaciology framework generates robust analysis of gender, power, and epistemologies in dynamic social-ecological systems, thereby leading to more just and equitable science and human-ice interactions," reads the paper's abstract. The research was published in the peer-reviewed journal Progress in Human Geography in January.
>
> The study, by historian Dr. Mark Carey and some student researchers, was financially supported by taxpayer dollars. The National Science Foundation (NSF) gave Carey a five-year grant which he used to write his "feminist glaciology" paper. Carey has received $709,125 in grants from the NSF, according to his curriculum vitae.
>
> "Most existing glaciological research – and hence discourse and discussions about cryospheric change – stems from information produced by men, about men, with manly characteristics, and within masculinist discourses," Carey wrote. "These characteristics apply to scientific disciplines beyond glaciology; there is an explicit need to uncover the role of women in the history of science and technology, while also exposing processes for excluding women from science and technology."
>
> Carey concluded glacier research is intertwined with gender relations, masculine culture, geopolitics, institutional power and racism — these apparently led to to glacier-related academic and governmental jobs being predominantly filled by men. Damages from melting glaciers target women and ethnic minorities, who "are more vulnerable to glacier changes and hazards than are men," according to Carey.

That's a shovel ready project, right there. That will create jobs for sure. And no wonder that people in academia tend to support Democrats. They support Democrats for the same reason that people on welfare support Democrats – because that's where they get their money for sitting around doing nothing. Private sector research into new products and services is more useful, and doesn't cost taxpayers a dime.

Public Works

Henry Hazlitt's book "Economics in One Lesson" explains the problem with taxing the private sector to build public works.

Henry Hazlitt's Economics in One Lesson, chapter 4, entitled "Public Works Mean Taxes".

Excerpt:

> Therefore, for every public job created by the bridge project a private job has been destroyed somewhere else. We can see the men employed on the bridge. We can watch them at work. The employment argument of the government spenders becomes vivid, and probably for most people convincing. But there are other things that we do not see, because, alas, they have never been permitted to come into existence. They are the jobs destroyed by the $10 million taken from the taxpayers. All that has happened, at best, is that there has been a *diversion* of jobs because of the project. More bridge builders; fewer automobile workers, television technicians, clothing workers, farmers.

And consider Chapter 5 as well, entitled "Taxes Discourage Production".

> In our modern world there is never the same percentage of income tax levied on everybody. The great burden of income taxes is imposed on a minor percentage of the nation's income; and these income taxes have to be supplemented by taxes of other kinds. These taxes inevitably affect the actions and incentives of those from whom they are taken. When a corporation loses a hundred cents of every dollar it loses, and is permitted to keep only fifty-two cents of every dollar it gains, and when it cannot adequately offset its years of losses against its years of gains, its policies are affected. It does not expand its operations, or it expands only those attended with a minimum of risk. People who recognize this situation are deterred from starting new enterprises. Thus old employers do not give more employment, or not as much more as they might have; and others decide not to become employers at all. Improved machinery and better-equipped factories come into existence much more slowly than they otherwise would. The result in the long run is that consumers are prevented from getting better and cheaper products to the extent that they otherwise would, and that real wages are held down, compared with what they might have been.
>
> There is a similar effect when personal incomes are taxed 50, 60 or 70 percent. People begin to ask themselves why they should work six, eight or nine months of the entire year for the government, and only six, four or three months for themselves and their families. If they lose the whole dollar when they lose, but can keep only a fraction of it when they win, they decide that it is foolish to take risks with their capital. In addition, the capital available for risk-taking itself shrinks enormously. It is being taxed away before it can be accumulated. In brief, capital to provide new private jobs is first prevented from coming into existence, and the part that does come into existence is then discouraged from starting new enterprises. The government spenders create the very problem of unemployment that they profess to solve.

We need to realize that outside of Constitutional spending authority, taxes are a waste of money. We're $19 trillion in debt. We can't afford talk of "stimulating the economy" through government spending. It's a lie. Government spending kills job creation. They can hide the impact by adding the spending to the debt, but eventually, we do feel the

impact of wasting money. Especially the foolish young socialists, who are going to have to pay it all back.

Andy Bannister and Michael Ruse discuss how atheists find meaning in life

March 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, and may the best horse win!
I'm summarizing the most recent episode of the Unbelievable show.

Details:

> Atheist philosopher Michael Ruse joins Justin as we spend a second week looking at Andy Bannister's new book 'The atheist who didn't exist'.
>
> Its amusingly titled chapters include 'The Peculiar Case of the Postmodern Penguin (or: Why Life without God is Meaningless). Michael and Andy debate whether it's a problem that atheists can't have meaning with a 'capital M'.

Here is a summary of the discussion between Ruse and Bannister, and my comments below the summary.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- Ruse: ultimate questions are serious questions, and some religions are attempting to provide serious answers to those questions
- Ruse: there is a psychological element to belief in God but it's not a complete explanation, but it can apply to non-belief as well
- Bannister: there are psychological reasons why people would prefer unbelief (quotes Thomas Nagel and Aldous Huxley)
- Bannister: (to Ruse) what do you think would follow next if you got new information that caused you to believe in God?
- Ruse: I'd feel scared, I'd think of all the reasons that God would dislike me, rather

than any reasons why God would save me
- Bannister: according to the Bible, God is not so much interested in mere belief, but in active trust in him
- Ruse: without being smug, I just completed 50 years as a college professor of philosophy, and I have a sense of worth from that
- Ruse: if God turns up, and says that 50 years of being a professor is not good enough, well, I don't know God, I'm sorry, I did my best
- Brierley: Andy, explain to us this story of how a penguin explained to you how he invented a subjective meaning in life for himself?
- Brierley: (reads the story)
- Bannister: when it comes to reading a book, the real meaning is the meaning the author intended the book to have
- Bannister: readers can inject their own meaning into the book that has nothing to do with it, but the author gives the real meaning
- Bannister: meaning in life is like reading a book – you can make up your own meaning, but the author's meaning is the real meaning
- Brierley: (to Ruse) on atheism, is there any objective meaning?
- Ruse: "obviously, someone like myself cannot have meaning with a capital M in that sense"
- Ruse: the real question is and atheist can find a sense of self-worth, "I find that I'm happier within myself, I can find meaning"
- Bannister: what would you say to someone who drinks away the family inheritance and gets the same sense of happiness you have?
- Bannister: what would you say to all the people who are unable to get "a sense of self-worth" from their career, because of where they are born, sickness, etc.
- Ruse: I have nothing to offer them, some people are born into such awful situations that they are bound to be bad people
- Ruse: these unfair accidents of birth, etc., fits with atheism better
- Ruse: what we should do is change society so that more people can build a sense of self-worth through achievements
- Ruse: that way, they can say to God "I used my talents" so they can create feelings of self-worth and happiness (apart from God)
- Bannister: meaning in life cannot be answered without answering questions related to identity, value, which are rooted in the overall worldview
- Bannister: on the Christian worldview, you have an infinite worth, your value isn't determined by circumstances, earnings, friends, etc.
- Bannister: your value comes from what Jesus was willing to pay to save you, namely, giving his own life for you
- Bannister: when I travel to meet other Christians in other parts of the world, they have a happiness that should not be there if they are getting happiness from wealth, fame, achievements, etc.
- Bannister: but when you come to the West, many people who have wealth, fame, achievement, etc. are unhappy

- Ruse: well maybe who look after a flock of sheep every day may get a sense of self-worth from that, or from other jobs
- Ruse: I do take Christianity very seriously, it is a grown-up proposal to answer grown-up questions – it works if it is *true*
- Ruse: we don't have to follow Nietzche's statement that if there is no God, there is no meaning in life – we can find a middle way, we can achieve meaning in life by using our talents to achieve things
- Bannister: I disagree with Michael, I don't think that the meaning you invent for yourself is authentic meaning
- Bannister: distracting yourself with amusing things and happiness is not an answer to the problem
- Brierley: (to Ruse) are you saying that you have searched for ultimate meaning, and you are settling for subjective meaning?
- Ruse: my subjective meaning is not second class to objective meaning, "I feel a real deep sense of achievement, of meaning, of self-worth, of having used my talents properly, and I don't feel in any sense a sense of regret" (what matters to him is how he feels)
- Bannister: notice how Michael keeps bringing in value judgments. e.g. – "use my talents well", that implies that there is a right way and a wrong to use your talents, which assumes an objective scale of right and wrong, which makes no sense in atheism
- Bannister: an atheist can sit in a sun room and enjoy the feelings of happiness generated by the light and heat of the Sun, without asking whether there is a Sun out there
- Bannister: ultimately, at the end of the day, my concern is not whether something makes me happy or makes me feel fulfilled
- Bannister: ultimately, at the end of the day, I think there is only one real reason to wrestle with these questions of meaning, and that is to find truth
- Ruse: sometimes we reach a point where we cannot get to true answers to some questions, sometimes we look for truth, but then give up and confess "I cannot find it" and then move on from there

Is it possible to dispense with God's advice on your decision-making and achieve something that affects a lot of people, or makes people like you, or makes you famous, etc., and then have *that* please God? "Look, God, I did something I liked that affected a lot of people, and made them feel happy as they were on their way to Hell because they rejected you". Will rap musicians answer God by pointing to 50 years of leading people away from chastity with godless music? A lot of people went to see the "NWA" movie that celebrated musicians who have an anti-Christian view of women and violence. Can NWA present their "artistic work" to God and claim that God should be pleased with their successful efforts to get rich and famous? Having feelings of achievement doesn't mean anything to God.

So what is the standard? How you imitate Jesus – *self-control, self-denial and self-sacrifice*

to honor God – that is the standard. If I had to choose between giving up two hours of my life to summarize this discussion for my readers, and all the fame and fortune that people who make godless TV shows, movies and music have, I would choose to make this debate summary. My goal in life is not to have fun, thrills, travel and feel happy *in this world*. I have a Boss. Doing without fun, thrills, travel and happy feelings in order to put points on the board for my Boss is objectively meaningful. It's may not seem like much compared to what James Bond does in million-dollar movies, but at least I am wearing the right uniform, and playing for the right team.

I was telling Dina recently, isn't it remarkable how rarely in our culture that people actually talk about the big questions? If you look out at the culture, everything seems to be about feeling good, having fun, being liked by others. Not much about ultimate questions, and certainly not a truth-based assessment of the alternatives. .

Donald Trump’s plan to introduce tariffs is just a tax on consumer goods

March 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
What are the consequences of adopting tariffs for all of the people who are affected?
What happens next, after stage one?

Here’s a lesson in basic economics from Joe Carter, writing for the Acton Institute.

He writes:

> Both Sanders and Trump propose increasing tariffs on goods imported from other countries — and increase them significantly.* This isn’t that surprising for Sanders, a socialist who, on the issue of economics, is one of the most ill-informed candidates in modern history. But Trump should (and probably does) understand the detrimental impact tariffs have on the poor. And yet he has proposed an economy-crippling, poverty-increasing tariff.
>
> In 2012, Trump proposed a tariff on China of 25 percent. In 2016 he bumped it up to 45 percent. (He later tried to lie and say he never proposed the 45 percent increase, but there is audio of him making the proposal.) A tariff is simply a tax on imports or exports, so Trump is proposing to raise taxes on imported goods by 25 to 45 percent. (To keep this point in mind, I’ll hereafter refer to tariffs as “taxes.”)
>
> You might be thinking, “ So what? That’s a tax the Chinese have to pay.” But that’s not the way tariffs works. China doesn’t pay the tax — you do. If a tariff on Chinese goods is increased by 25 to 45 percent then you pay 25 to 45 percent more for those goods.
>
> Here’s a way to think about it. Imagine there are two hamburger stands in town. One is owned by the mayor’s wife, Veronica, and one is owned by a woman who

> lives in the next town over, Betty.
>
> Of the two, Betty makes the tastier burger. She is also able to charge $1 a burger since she is able to buy her supplies in her own hometown for much cheaper. Veronica's burgers aren't quite as good and cost more to make. She has to charge $1.30 per burger.
>
> The mayor decides to implement a new tax of 45 percent on producers (like Betty) who don't live in the city limits. Since Betty's profit margin is already low, she has to pass the bulk of the 45-cent tax on to her customers. Instead of $1 she now has to charge $1.35.
>
> So who is better off in this scenario? The only winner is Veronica. Since her burgers are now cheaper, she is likely to sell more. And who is worse off? The customers who now have to pay 30 to 35 cents more for every burger. That is money they could have used to buy other products or services. Now they have to spend additional money on this new tax.
>
> The same principle applies to taxes on goods and services imported from other countries. Customers simply have to pay more for goods and services they used to get much cheaper.
>
> To understand how Trump's tax increase would affect consumers, take a trip to Target or Wal-Mart and add 45 percent to almost all the prices. That's money that comes directly out of your pocket into the hands of the federal government — all to punish you for buying goods that are cheaper to make in China.

Harvard University economist Greg Mankiw explains what most professional economists agree on. The economic benefit of free trade tied for first place, with 93% agreement:

> The recent debate over the stimulus bill has lead some observers to think that economists are hopelessly divided on issues of public policy. That is true regarding business cycle theory and, specifically, the virtues or defects of Keynesian economics. But it is not true more broadly.
>
> My favorite textbook covers business cycle theory toward the end of the book (the last four chapters) precisely because that theory is controversial. I believe it is better to introduce students to economics with topics about which there is more of a professional consensus. In chapter two of the book, I include a table of propositions to which most economists subscribe, based on various polls of the profession. Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:

1. > **A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)**

2. > **Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)**

He is the author of his “favorite textbook”, which is published by Harvard University Press.

This is not controversial among professional and academic economists. Economists across the ideological spectrum understand that free trade lowers the prices of consumer goods, and allows individuals, families and businesses to get more quality for their dollars. We can do better than Donald Trump and his naive, populist economic pablum.

Related posts

- Suppose God had coffee with Donald Trump… how would that go?
- Is Donald Trump right to order U.S. troops to commit war crimes?
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- What are the “New York Values” that Trump’s evangelical Christian supporters admire?
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- Who is more conservative on the marriage issue? Trump, Cruz, Carson or Rubio?
- Is Donald Trump’s claim about Muslims celebrating 9/11 in New Jersey accurate?

If Sweden and Germany became US states, they would be among the poorest states

March 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

There seems to be a lot of talk among Democrats and native young people to the effect that European countries have less "income inequality" thanks to bigger government, higher taxes, and more social spending. Is there a downside to this?

The Mises Institute takes a look at it:

> The battle over the assumed success of European socialism continues. Many European countries like Sweden have gained a reputation as being very wealthy in spite of their highly regulated and taxed economies. From there, many assume that the rest of Europe is more or less similar, even if slightly poorer. But if we look more closely at the data, a very different picture emerges, and we find that the median household in the US is better off (income-wise) than the median household in all but three European countries.
>
> […]Using the BEA's regional price parity index, we can take now account for the different cost of living in different states…
> […]We now see that there's less variation in the median income levels among the US states. That makes sense because many states with low median incomes also have a very low cost of living. At the same time, many states with high median incomes have a very high cost of living.
>
> Now that we've accounted for the low cost of living in Mississippi, we find that Mississippi ($26,517) is no longer the state with the lowest median income in real terms. New York ($26,152) is now the state with the lowest median income due

> to its very high cost of living.
>
> This has had the effect of giving us a more realistic view of the purchasing power of the median household in US states. It is also more helpful in comparing individual states to OECD members, many of which have much higher costs of living than places like the American south and midwest. Now that we recognize how inexpensive it is to live in places like Tennessee, Florida, and Kentucky, we find that residents in those states now have higher median incomes than Sweden (a place that's 30% more expensive than the US) and most other OECD countries measured.
>
> Once purchasing power among the US states is taken into account, we find that Sweden's median income ($27,167) is higher than only six states: Arkansas ($26,804), Louisiana ($25,643), Mississippi ($26,517), New Mexico ($26,762), New York ($26,152) and North Carolina ($26,819).
>
> We find something similar when we look at Germany, but in Germany's case, *every single* US state shows a higher median income than Germany. Germany's median income is $25,528. Things look even worse for the United Kingdom which has a median income of $21,033, compared to $26,517 in Mississippi.
>
> Meanwhile, Colorado ($35,059) has a median income nearly identical to Switzerland ($35,083), and ten states (Connecticut, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, and Washington State) show higher median incomes than Switzerland. Luxembourg ($38,502), on the other hand, shows a median income higher than every state except New Hampshire ($39,034).
>
> None of this analysis should really surprise us. According to the OECD's own numbers (which take into account taxes and social benefits, the US has higher median disposable income than all but three OECD countries. Sweden ranks below the US in this regard, as does Finland and Denmark.
>
> The fact that the median level in the US is above most OECD countries thus makes it no surprise that most of these countries then rank below most US states. The US states that have income level above the median US level will, not surprisingly, outpace many OECD countries by a considerable margin.

What's going on here? Well, it turns out that when you have fewer regulations on business, lower business taxes, and an emphasis on working rather collecting welfare, that people have more money in their pockets and a better standard of living. The trouble with Europe is that too many able-bodied people can get by without working. In the United States, we put more emphasis on making your own way, earning your own pay, and spending or saving your money as you please.

In America, the system is geared towards equipping each person to serve their fellows in the private sector workplace. More people working means more wealth is produced, and more wealth produced means that people have a higher standard of living. You wouldn't have a higher standard of living in a country where most people didn't work, and just

relied on the few who did work. There isn’t enough to go around in society where most people don’t work.

Study: the early Earth's atmosphere contained oxygen

March 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Here's a paper published in the prestigious peer-reviewed science journal *Nature*, entitled "The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere". This paper is significant because it undermines naturalistic scenarios for the origin of life.

Evolution News explains what the paper is about.

Excerpt:

> A recent *Nature* publication reports a new technique for measuring the oxygen levels in Earth's atmosphere some 4.4 billion years ago. The authors found that by studying cerium oxidation states in zircon, a compound formed from volcanic magma, they could ascertain the oxidation levels in the early earth. Their findings suggest that the early Earth's oxygen levels were very close to current levels.
>
> […]Miller and Urey conducted experiments to show that under certain atmospheric conditions and with the right kind of electrical charge, several amino acids could form from inorganic compounds such as methane, ammonia, and water. Several experiments have been done using various inorganic starting materials, all yielding a few amino acids; however, one key aspect of all of these experiments was the lack of oxygen.
>
> If the atmosphere has oxygen (or other oxidants) in it, then it is an oxidizing atmosphere. If the atmosphere lacks oxygen, then it is either inert or a reducing atmosphere. Think of a metal that has been left outside, maybe a piece of iron. That metal will eventually rust. Rusting is the result of the metal being oxidized. With organic reactions, such as the ones that produce amino acids, it is very important that no oxygen be present, or it will quench the reaction. Scientists, therefore, concluded that the early Earth must have been a reducing environment when life first formed (or the building blocks of life first formed) because that was the best environment for producing amino acids. The

> atmosphere eventually accumulated oxygen, but life did not form in an oxidative environment.
>
> The problem with this hypothesis is that it is based on the assumption that organic life must have formed from inorganic materials. That is why the early Earth must have been a reducing atmosphere. Research has been accumulating for more than thirty years, however, suggesting that the early Earth likely did have oxygen present.
>
> […]Their findings not only showed that oxygen was present in the early Earth atmosphere, something that has been shown in other studies, but that oxygen was present as early as 4.4 billion years ago. This takes the window of time available for life to have begun, by an origin-of-life scenario like the RNA-first world, and reduces it to an incredibly short amount of time. Several factors need to coincide in order for nucleotides or amino acids to form from purely naturalistic circumstances (chance and chemistry). The specific conditions required already made purely naturalist origin-of-life scenarios highly unlikely. Drastically reducing the amount of time available, adding that to the other conditions needing to be fulfilled, makes the RNA world hypothesis or a Miller-Urey-like synthesis of amino acids simply impossible.

So here's where we stand. If you are a materialist, then you need a reducing environment on the early Earth in order to get organic building blocks (amino acids) from inorganic materials. However, the production of these organic building blocks (amino acids) *requires* that the early Earth atmosphere be oxygen-free. And the problem with this new research, which confirms previous research, is that the early Earth contained huge amounts of oxygen – the same amount of oxygen as we have today. This is lethal to naturalistic scenarios for creating the building blocks of life on the Earth's surface.

Other problems

If you would like to read a helpful overview of the problems with a naturalistic scenario for the origin of life, check out this article by Casey Luskin.

Excerpt:

> The "origin of life" (OOL) is best described as the chemical and physical processes that brought into existence the first self-replicating molecule. It differs from the "evolution of life" because Darwinian evolution employs mutation and natural selection to change organisms, which requires reproduction. Since there was no reproduction before the first life, no "mutation – selection" mechanism was operating to build complexity. Hence, OOL theories cannot rely upon natural selection to increase complexity and must create the first life using only the laws of chemistry and physics.
>
> There are so many problems with purely natural explanations for the chemical origin of life on earth that many scientists have already abandoned all hopes that life had a natural origin on earth. Skeptical scientists include Francis Crick (solved

> the 3-dimensional structure of DNA) and Fred Hoyle (famous British cosmologist and mathematician), who, in an attempt to retain their atheistic worldviews, then propose outrageously untestable cosmological models or easily falsifiable extra-terrestrial-origin-of-life / panspermia scenarios which still do not account for the natural origin of life. So drastic is the evidence that Scientific American editor John Horgan wrote, "[i]f I were a creationist, I would cease attacking the theory of evolution … and focus instead on the origin of life. This is by far the weakest strut of the chassis of modern biology."[3]

The article goes over the standard problems with naturalistic scenarios of the origin of life: wrong atmosphere, harmful UV radiation, interfering cross-reactions, oxygen levels, meteorite impacts, chirality, etc.

Most people who are talking about intelligent design at the origin of life talk about the information problem – how do you get the amino acids to form proteins and how do you get nucleotide bases to code for amino acids? But the starting point for solving the sequencing problem is the construction of the amino acids – there has to be a plausible naturalistic scenario to form them.

UK district judge fired for saying that adopted children do better with a mom and a dad

March 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

This UK Daily Mail story was sent to me by Dina, and it shows what happens in countries where gay marriage and the gay rights agenda are a little more advanced than what we have here, under the Democrats. (Note that UK expressions like "sacked" and "struck off" mean termination of employment)

Excerpt:

> A Christian judge has been struck off after claiming during a BBC interview that adopted children were better off with a man and a woman as parents than with a gay couple.
>
> Magistrate Richard Page, 68, was sacked after 15 years at Maidstone and Sevenoaks courts, in Kent, after objecting to a gay couple adopting a child live on air.
>
> The Judiciary Conduct Investigations Office confirmed that the father-of-three has been removed from the magistracy as a district judge.
>
> They said that the grounds for his dismissal result from comments made on national television which a reasonable person would conclude he is bias against single sex adopters.
>
> The interview came after Mr Page had spoken out against a child being adopted by a gay couple, and would be better placed 'with a mother and father' in 2014.
>
> He was disciplined for his remarks, which were made in private to colleagues behind closed doors during an adoption case.
>
> But during an interview, which aired in March 2015, Mr Page repeated his

> opinion.
>
> He was recorded saying: ‘My responsibility as a magistrate, as I saw it, was to do what I considered best for the child, and my feeling was therefore that it would be better if it was a man and woman who were the adopted parents.’

Yeah, in the politically correct UK, that’s grounds for dismissal. Basically, this is the continuation of a long line of changes in marriage-related policy that were meant to privilege the rights of selfish adults over the rights of children.

It all started with no-fault divorce laws, which allowed spouses who were not “happy” in their *life-long self-sacrificial commitments* to easily get out of it by filing for divorce for any reason, or for no reason at all. This law was championed by trial lawyers and feminists, who think that marriage is about the needs, feelings and desires of selfish adults. They wanted to make it easier to get out of commitments that were entered into lightly, and they didn’t care about the children.

The next change to marriage policy was making cohabitation equivalent to marriage. Again, feminists and other liberals did not want to undertake a lifelong commitment that would be hard to get out of. They wanted the same tax benefits that marriage allows for temporary arrangements like living together. But living together temporarily is nowhere near as good for children as life-long, self-sacrificial married love.

The next change to marriage policy was redefining marriage to remove the complimentary genders norm, which further disenfranchised children to benefit self-centered adults. Instead of making the central purpose of marriage based on two complimentary sexes creating and nurturing new life, marriage is now about two people having intense emotional feelings of pleasure. Feelings which, by their very nature, *cannot provide a stable, lasting environment for raising children.*

And now we have gay adoption, which continues the privileging of selfish adults over the needs of vulnerable children. ALL of the social science evidence shows that male-female relationships are more stable over the long-term than same-sex relationships. There is less domestic violence, more monogamy, more fidelity and more stability. All of which are better for children. Children benefit from growing up in a home where a man loves a woman and is faithful to her, and where a woman respects a man, and is faithful to him.

And now we see how far the marriage redefiners on the secular left are willing to go to put the selfish desires of adults above the needs of children for stability. They are willing to terminate the employment of anyone who dares to speak out on behalf of children.

We really need Christians to be diligent in learning how to defend marriage, and to get married and stay married and model successful, loving, stable marriages to the culture as a whole. We need pro-marriage apologetics, and we need marriages that are focused on self-sacrificial love. We need marriages that focus on responsibilities, obligations and expectations, not on fun and thrills.

Woman uses legally-owned handgun to defend herself from robber

March 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

It's very important that everyone remember what the second amendment is used for in the United States. The second amendment allows law-abiding people to purchase firearms in order to defend themselves from criminals.

This story is from ABC News shows how law-abiding Americans use their legally-owned firearms to prevent crimes and deter criminals.

It says:

> It was a suspenseful January night as a man suspected of trying to rob a woman at knife point was instead shot by the would-be victim in Louisville, Kentucky.
>
> Police said a man was captured on surveillance camera stalking the woman. He eventually follows right behind as she heads into an elevator at a parking garage.
>
> There is no surveillance camera rolling when he eventually attacks her in the parking lot.
>
> Police said she got in her car, he pushed in right behind her and put his hand over her mouth before pulling out a knife.
>
> A violent struggle ensued, causing the car's windshield to crack. It was in that moment that the woman reached into her purse and pulled out a gun.
>
> The would-be victim shot the suspect in the neck.
>
> The attacker was later seen on a surveillance camera coming down the parking structure's stairs and bleeding from the neck.
>
> A man who saw him quickly called 911 and alerted authorities.
>
> Police arrested John Ganobick and charged him with attempted murder, kidnapping and criminal mischief.

> The woman he attacked suffered multiple injuries but was expected to be OK.

Although there is opposition to gun ownership in certain circles, the academic literature is quite clear and decisive. Legal ownership of firearms reduces rates of violent crime. Whenever laws that allow law-abiding citizens to carry firearms for self-defense, violent crime rates decrease. Whenever laws are passed that restrict law-abiding citizens from owning and carrying firearms for self-defense, violent crime rates increase.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in

> England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

Pastor Matt: What happens when you die?

March 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle
This post is from Pastor Matt's blog.

Excerpt:

> Michael Bird breaks it all down as follows:
>
> 1. Prior to Christ's ascension, all who died descended to Sheol/Hades, which was divided into two parts, one for the wicked and one for the righteous.
>
> 2. At Christ's ascension, he went into heaven and took with him all of the saints in the paradisal part of Sheol/Hades, while the wicked remain in Sheol/Hades, waiting for judgment.
>
> 3. Upon death new covenant believers go to be with Christ in heaven ahead of the general resurrection, while the wicked descend to Sheol/Hades waiting for judgment.
>
> 4. Eventually Sheol/Hades will be thrown into hell and all believers will share in the new heavens and new earth.
>
> See Evangelical Theology p. 323.

I've featured some debates with Michael Bird before, he is a famous evangelical historian.

It's important to understand that the Christian view of humans is that we have a material part and a non-material part. When you die, the material part goes into a tomb. The non-material part goes on to be with God, until the day when you get a new resurrection body.

Earlier, I blogged about some philosophical arguments for the existence of souls and some scientific evidence for the existence of souls, and it's worth looking over in order to

move beyond mere opinions. Like it or not, this is the way we are! Not just bodies, but souls.

Does the Bible say that you should forgive someone who does not repent?

March 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Kevin Lewis, a professor of Theology and Law at the conservative Biola University, was asked this question:

> Recently, I was reading Dr. Kenneth Bailey's "Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes" (IVP press 2008). When commenting on Matthew 6:12-13, he writes,
>
> "It is a common human assumption that the violator of the rights of others must ask for forgiveness before the wronged party can be expected to accept the apology and grant forgiveness…But Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when when there is no confession of guilt… There is a voice from the cross that echoes across history to all saying 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' Neither Pilate nor the high priest nor the centurion offered any apology to Jesus, yet he prayed for divine forgiveness…(p.125)"

And here's some of his response copied with permission from his Facebook note:

> First, regarding God and His forgiveness, it is undisputed in orthodox Christian theology that God does not forgive everyone. The doctrine of Hell is a sufficient proof of the lack of universal forgiveness by God.
>
> Next, it is clear that God does not forgive without repentance. This doctrine is taught in a number of texts. For example, in Luke 13:3 Jesus says, "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." In Mark 1:15 John the Baptist commands that

we must “repent and believe the Gospel.” The connection between repentance and forgiveness of sins (i.e. “salvation”) is seen throughout the Scriptures. For example, in Acts 2:38 repentance is directly connected as a condition for the remission of sins. For additional examples of this connection see Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30-31; Romans 2:4-5; II Corinthians 7:10; II Tim. 2:25-26.

So since we are to be imitators of God and forgive in the same way God forgives, we would expect the Scriptures to be consistent, stating that the condition of repentance is required to be fulfilled before believers are required to forgive each other’s sins. It does.

Jesus stated in Luke 17:3, “If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.” Here, the meaning is clear. The word “if” (Grk. ean) introduces the condition for a rebuke and for granting forgiveness. If (subjunctive) a person sins, we must (imperative) rebuke him, and if (subjunctive) he repents, we must (imperative) forgive him. This is as clear a statement as you will find on the subject. Forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance—and this is one of the same criteria that God requires before He forgives sin.

This principle of permitting believers to withhold forgiveness unless the condition of repentance is satisfied is also explicitly seen in Matthew 18:15-17. Compared with the Luke 17:3 text above, the situation is the same. If a brother sins, reprove him; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. Here, the word “reprove” is used rather than “rebuke” and the word “listen” is employed rather than “repent,” but the meaning is virtually identical to Luke 17:3. What we see in Matthew 18 is an escalation of the issue and the result if the person fails to repent (i.e. “listen”). If the person fails to repent, we are to shun him in all appropriate ways (v. 17).

[…]Finally, I would make the case that it is harmful to a person to forgive him without requiring repentance. As seen above, the Bible is clear that sin requires a rebuke. Ignoring sin teaches sinners that sin does not bring consequences. This is harmful to their souls. Continuing to have the benefit of a righteous relationship with another and yet remain in sin against that person results in fostering a habituation of sinful inclinations in their soul, which God says brings about suffering and death.

Moreover, since the ultimate purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation, it is meaningless and harmful to forgive when no reconciliation may be had with the sinner. We cannot “walk together” in a biblical manner in righteous peace when the unrepentant sinner walks in unrighteousness. Necessarily, there is a conflict and a want of shalom. Their soul is headed in a different direction than the believer’s soul; they are walking away from God and we cannot have fellowship with darkness. God has no intimate fellowship with unrepentant people, and that is the model for Christians as well (See Matt. 18).

> Regarding personal anger issues commonly raised by Christian psychologists, these types of psychologists unbiblically make unconditional forgiveness a part of therapy. By contrast, however, if a counselee will not forgive after the offending party has truly repented, the counselee sins, and this kind of unforgiveness may be one of the causes of his or her problems. But this is a separate issue from universal and unconditional forgiveness raised above.
>
> Human beings in the image of God may be angry in appropriate ways (Eph.4:26, 31). There is a time to love and a time to hate (Ecclesiastes 3:8). The notion that Christians cannot ever hate, be angry, or lack forgiveness is an unbiblical concept. God Himself is eternally angry with sin, but He is certainly not a psychological basket case. He loves, hates, and is angry in appropriate ways. Our task as believers is to imitate this. Be angry with and hate sin appropriately (Rom. 12:9) and love what good appropriately. For example, righteous anger can evolve beyond the biblical limits to become malice, slander, and bitterness while, to give another example, an appropriate love of food can evolve beyond the biblical limits into gluttony.

I agree with Kevin, and I think it is a helpful tool for people to insist on seeing some sort of repentance and restitution from someone who wrongs you before you trust them again. If they are not even sorry for what they've done, and they refuse to explain why what they did is wrong, then they can't be forgiven, and you can't trust them again.

I think this is the key passage – Luke 17:3-4:

Luke 17:3-4:

3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

That's Jesus speaking, there.

Also, I was having a debate with someone who disagrees with all this, and while debating with her, I thought of another example.

Luke 18:9-14:

9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

13 But the tax collector,standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who

exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So again, no forgiveness without repentance.

Forgiveness is what happens when someone who is sinned against treats the sinner as if he had never sinned. It is not on the balance sheet. It is not brought to mind. It is not held against them in the future. The forgiver trusts the sinner again as if the previous sin had never happened.

In divine (vertical) forgiveness, there is no forgiveness without repentance. There are Bible verses above to show that.

My argument is twofold. First, there is a clear teaching of Jesus explaining the sequence of sin and forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness, between humans (Luke 17:3). The verses cited by the forgive without repentance crowd don't show the mechanics of how to forgive, they are making the point that if you want God to forgive you, you should forgive others. The parable in Luke 18:9-14 affirms this again – repentance always precedes forgiveness.

Second, we have an obligation to imitate God, and that means imitating the way he forgives those who sin against him. When I raise that with the unconditional forgiveness crowd, they want to insist that there is a difference, that the word "forgive" means different things. I'm not convinced.

Finally, I do think that forgiving someone is obligatory if they sincerely repent, and even if they screw up again and again. So long as the repentance is sincere, (like if there is restitution and a genuine effort to show an understanding how the sin affected the wronged party in writing), *then forgiveness should be automatic*.

Alan E. Kurschner argues that there is serious textual doubt about the originality of Luke 23:34a, a text used by the pro-unconditional-forgiveness crowd. He has a journal article coming out on it, but a synopsis of his argument is here.

He also wrote this in a comment on this blog:

> Second, on Matt 6:15, this is what I have to say. Notice the then-clause: "neither will your Father forgive your sins." This would require universalism on the Father's part according to the unconditional interpretation given the first half: "But if you do not forgive others their sins." Since everyone has wronged the Father is the Father required to forgive everyone even if they are not seeking forgiveness?

So I think the case for the forgiveness being conditional on repentance is pretty strong, especially when serious harm has been caused.

Ted Cruz trails Donald Trump by 4 points in deep blue Illinois

March 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

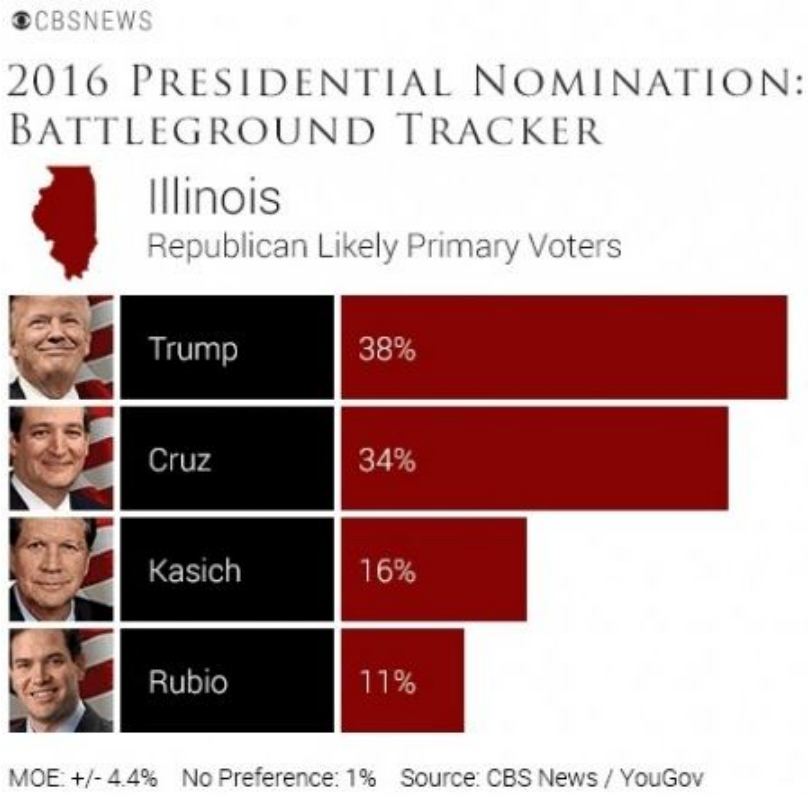

Latest CBS news / YouGov poll has Cruz just behind Trump

Wow, this is unexpected. A new CBS News poll released Sunday has Ted Cruz trailing trailing Donald Trump by 4 points in Illinois.

Excerpt:

> Donald Trump keeps his lead in winner-take-all Florida, at 44 percent over Ted Cruz's 24 percent and Marco Rubio's 21 percent. In Ohio, Governor John Kasich is tied with Trump 33 percent to 33 percent, in two of the big winner-take-all delegate prizes up on Tuesday.
>
> In Florida, home-state Sen. Marco Rubio has been trying to get traction against Trump, but still trails. Sen. Ted Cruz has overtaken Rubio in Florida. In Illinois Trump also leads, 38 percent to 34 percent over Cruz, who is in striking distance, with Kasich back at 16 percent. **The findings across the three states may suggest Cruz is emerging more generally in the minds of many non-Trump voters as the alternative to the frontrunner.**

Cruz is in second place in Florida, while Rubio is in third place. I have to think that a poll like this two days before the Florida primary would cause Rubio to drop out and endorse Cruz. Rubio is just trailing by too much to catch Trump.

Red State is reporting that Cruz plans to do FIVE rallies in Illinois on Monday, the final day

of campaigning before a number of significant state-level elections on Tuesday.

> According Teddy Schleifer of CNN, Ted Cruz's team has scheduled five separate rallies in Illinois tomorrow as the Senator looks to make one last push in the state. With his surprise second place showing in Michigan, the Cruz team must have seen something in their numbers to think Cruz could do well enough in IL to grab a chunk of delegates away from Donald Trump.
>
> Ted Cruz will rally in:
>
> — Rockford, IL
> — Glen Ellyn, IL
> — Peoria, IL
> — Decatur, IL
> — Springfield, IL
>
> — Teddy Schleifer (@teddyschleifer) March 13, 2016

This Tuesday, we'll see elections from Florida (99), Illinois (69), Missouri (52), North Carolina (72), the Northern Mariana Islands (9) and Ohio (66).

Ted Cruz's record of conservative achievements

Ted Cruz is also the most qualified candidate running.

Young Conservatives explains his achievements:

- Graduated valedictorian in 1988 from Second Baptist High School
- Graduated cum laude from Princeton University in 1992
- Graduated magna cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1995
- 1992 U.S. National Debate Champion representing Princeton
- 1995 World Debating Championship semi-finalist representing Harvard
- Served a law clerk to Chief Justice William Rehnquist, making him the first Hispanic ever to clerk for a Chief Justice of the United States
- Served as Solicitor General of Texas from 2003 to 2008, making him the first Hispanic Solicitor General in Texas, the youngest Solicitor General in the entire country and the longest tenure in Texas history
- Partner at the law firm Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, where he led the firm's U.S. Supreme Court and national appellate litigation practice
- Authored over 80 SCOTUS briefs and presented over 40 oral arguments before The Court
- Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, where he taught U.S. Supreme Court litigation

Smart guy.

Here are the specifically *conservative* achievements:

- In the landmark case of District of Columbia v. Heller, Cruz assembled a coalition of 31 states in defense of the principle that the 2nd Amendment guarantees an

individual right to keep and bear arms
- Presented oral arguments before the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit
- Defended the Ten Commandments monument on the Texas State Capitol grounds,
- Defended the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools
- Defended the State of Texas against an attempt by the International Court of Justice to re-open the criminal convictions of 51 murderers on death row throughout the United States

He's 5 for 9 arguing cases before the Supreme Court. Cruz knows how to convince liberal scholars to come over to his side. That's what he enjoys – persuading people who disagree with him.

Here's some of the legislation he introduced:

- ObamaCare Repeal Act
- Disarm Criminals and Protect Communities Act
- Defund Obamacare Act of 2013
- A bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to permit States to require proof of citizenship for registration to vote in elections for Federal office
- State Marriage Defense Act of 2014
- A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the intentional discrimination of a person or organization by an employee of the Internal Revenue Service
- A bill to prohibit the Department of the Treasury from assigning tax statuses to organizations based on their political beliefs and activities
- American Energy Renaissance Act of 2014
- A bill to deny admission to the United States to any representative to the United Nations who has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity against the United States and poses a threat to United States national security interests
- SuperPAC Elimination Act of 2014
- Free All Speech Act of 2014
- A bill to prevent the expansion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program unlawfully created by Executive memorandum on August 15, 2012
- Sanction Iran, Safeguard America Act of 2014

And he has gotten more legislation passed than Marco Rubio in the Senate:

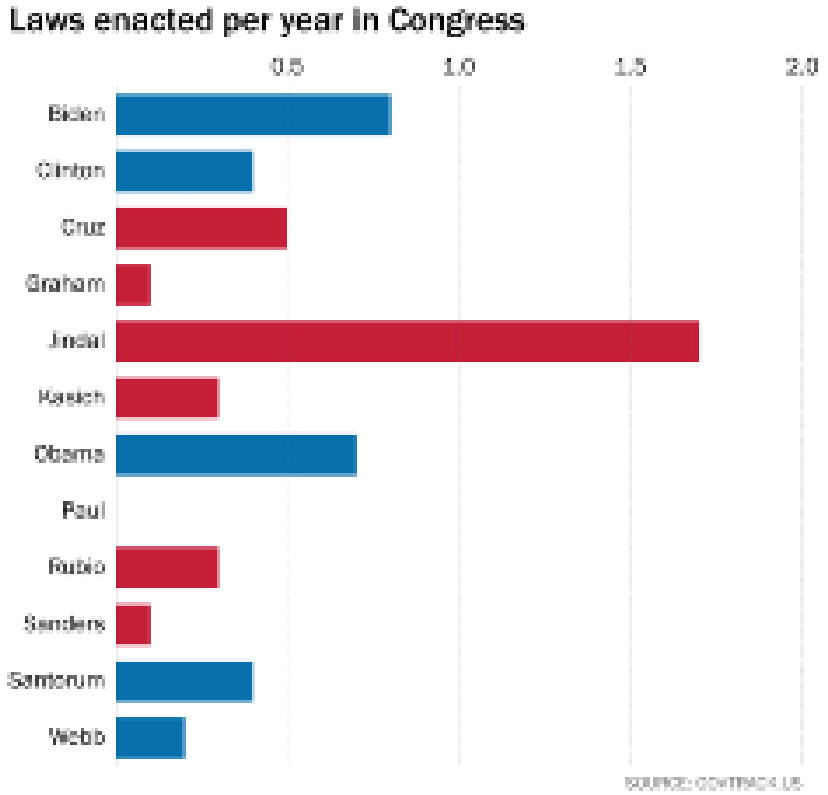

Laws enacted per year in Congress

He has done something to address so many of the things I've been writing about on this blog – voter fraud, IRS discriminating against conservatives, etc. I am a Cruz supporter because I like Cruz, not because I oppose Trump and Rubio.

Related posts

- Which candidate is best at working with Democrats to get things done?
- Ted Cruz's plan to lower taxes and simplify the process for filing tax returns
- Ted Cruz explains his position on the issues of abortion and right to life
- Ted Cruz introduces new bill to help ICE Agents enforce immigration laws
- Ted Cruz fought Rubio's amnesty in 2013 and fought Obama's executive amnesty in 2014
- Meet Ted Cruz's secret weapon: his supportive and loving wife Heidi Cruz
- Watch Ted Cruz disagree with an Iowa farmer on the issue of ethanol subsidies
- Is Marco Rubio right about his attacks on Ted Cruz's business tax plan?
- Ted Cruz's scary, unreported, undisclosed Goldman Sachs loan
- Harvard Law Review: Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen and is eligible to become President
- Ted Cruz blasts Democrats for hiding immigration histories of terrorists in the USA
- CNN Debate: Ted Cruz hammers Marco Rubio over support for amnesty and Libya disaster
- Ted Cruz invites climate scientists to Washington, D.C. to discuss climate change
- The FIVE departments that Ted Cruz would shut down if elected president

Reporter Michelle Fields files criminal charges against Trump's campaign manager

March 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump holds up Bible he "received from his mother" to evangelicals

David French writes about it for National Review.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Yesterday, I wrote a lengthy post outlining the charges and countercharges between *Breitbart's* Michelle Fields and the Donald Trump campaign. Fields claimed that Trump's campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, yanked her away from Trump when she tried to ask him a question about affirmative action, bruising her arm and almost causing her to fall. Fields tweeted a photo of the bruises, and a*Washington Post* reporter backed her account — as did an audio recording of the event.
>
> The Trump campaign responded with scorched earth. Not only did it release a statement falsely claiming that no other reporter witnessed the incident, Lewandowski himself spewed forth a vile series of tweets that not only implied Fields was a fabulist, he also implied that she'd made up a sexual harassment charge in the recent past. The campaign demanded to see video evidence.

Here's the video – the reaching for the reporter occurs at the 8-second mark:

French continues:

> **Slowed-down video shows Lewandowski reaching more clearly, and now**

> **Fields has filed a criminal complaint.** As I said before, the Trump campaign's behavior has been reprehensible. When faced with a credible, corroborated claim of mistreatment, a responsible campaign pledges to investigate and treats the alleged victim with respect. Instead, the campaign chose to lie and — even worse — to attempt to ruin Fields's reputation.

This is no surprise, since Trump's rhetoric is borderline fascistic, and this staff and supporters have obviously picked up on it and putting it into practice. In talking with Trump supporters, what I've found is that they are angry, low-information voters. When confronted with the facts about their candidate, they resort to name calling, coercion and even violence.

One of my best friends was confronting a "Christian" supporter of Trump recently. The Trump supporter paralleled Trump with Jesus. My friend spoke up and listed out some of Trump's immoral behavior, e.g. – adultery, frivolous divorce, abortion, strip clubs, casinos. She linked to evidence for all of these things. The Trump supporter responded by literally threatening her with damnation. He literally said "You are a liar. God damn you." The person who this happened to can comment if she likes, I know she's a reader of the blog.

Now some of the people who comment here don't strike me as that crazy, but this is what I am seeing from Trump supporters in social media. He's probably the most immoral candidate to run as a Republican, and yet his supporters will do anything to protect him.

Related posts

- Donald Trump's plan to introduce tariffs is just a tax on consumer goods
- Suppose God had coffee with Donald Trump… how would that go?
- Is Donald Trump right to order U.S. troops to commit war crimes?
- How well did Donald Trump do in the hotel and casino business?
- Trump donated to group that promotes homosexuality to 5-year-olds
- Do supporters of Donald Trump really support what Trump believes?
- Is Donald Trump a successful businessman? Let's look at his record
- Report: how Donald Trump used illegal immigrants to build Trump Tower
- Is Trump right to praise Putin's leadership abilities?
- Is Trump right to say that Bush lied about the Iraq war, and there were no WMDs?
- Donald Trump promises gay publication "forward motion" on gay rights issues
- Who has done more on the pro-life and pro-marriage issues – Trump or Cruz?
- Where did Rubio, Cruz and Trump stand on amnesty before running for President?
- Trump, eminent domain, a widow's house, and a limousine parking lot
- Trump wants to increase taxpayer subsidies of ethanol, Cruz wants to end them
- Trump supported the bank bailout and auto bailout, Cruz opposes all bailouts
- Should evangelical Christians prefer Donald Trump on moral grounds?
- Clinton, Rubio, GOP establishment and leftist media defend Trump's New York Values
- What are the "New York Values" that Trump's evangelical Christian supporters admire?

- Donald Trump would expand Obamacare into single-payer health care system
- Who is more conservative on the marriage issue? Trump, Cruz, Carson or Rubio?
- Is Donald Trump’s claim about Muslims celebrating 9/11 in New Jersey accurate?

Stephen C. Meyer debates intelligent design with two scientists on NPR

March 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Evolution News reported on a 27-minute debate featuring Dr. Stephen C. Meyer – probably the best proponent of intelligent design there is.

Description:

> We often say that Darwinists are reluctant to debate advocates of intelligent design, but here are two who deserve a tip of the hat. Keith Pannell is a chemist at the University of Texas at El Paso who hosts a program, *Science Studio*, on the NPR station there. He invited Stephen Meyer on to talk about the science of ID, pegged to the *Dover* anniversary.
>
> Clearly Pannell is an ID critic so he gets kudos for being willing to have a civil and informative conversation. Perhaps feeling insecure about facing the author of *Darwin's Doubt* by himself, Dr. Pannell invited a biologist colleague, Ricardo Bernal, to serve as "co-host."
>
> So it was two against one, but no worries. Meyer is, as always, superb, and the discussion sounds like it was an education for the two Texas scientists. Listen and enjoy.

I took a back-up of the MP3 file here.

Summary:

- How did Dr. Meyer get interested in science?
- What is intelligent design? (origin of life, fine-tuning)

- What is creationism? (young Earth, different epistemology)
- Who does Dr. Meyer think the intelligent designer is?
- Finding the best explanation from multiple competing hypotheses
- Critic: aren't you arguing for a designer from ignorance, then?
- The importance of naturalists acknowledging what they do and do not know about the origin of life
- We do have experience with intelligent causation, whenever we sequence symbols to have meaning and purpose, e.g. – writing
- Critic: information in DNA is not digital information, is it?
- Information in the cell follows a 4-character alphabet
- the sequences are composed of many parts / symbols
- the sequences themselves are specified to have function
- Critic: the complexity just emerges from change over time
- the origin of the first life is immune to explanation of change over time, because there is no replication – this is the first replicator
- Critic: but isn't it just ignorance about the origin of life?
- what we do is look at a number of competing hypothesis and what they are capable of, and see whether each cause is capable of generating the effects we observe in nature
- Critic: where is the experimental verification of your theory?
- well, in the appendices of Signature of the Cell, we predicted that the non-coding regions of DNA (junk DNA) would be found to have function, and that was later proven out
- the Darwinists said that non-coding regions of the DNA was junk, but that's not what has been proven experimentally
- Critic: where was this prediction written up, who wrote it?
- intelligent design theorists predicted it: Dembski, Kenyon, Mims, Sternberg
- Critic: but we used the scientific method to disprove the Darwinian predictions, you don't like the scientific method
- intelligent design proponents love science, and the scientific method, and they do work in labs to confirm their hypotheses, (WK:for example, the probability of generating a protein by chance)
- Critic: what about the Dover court case that you lost?
- the Discovery Institute objected to actions taken by the Dover school board
- Critic: what about the molecular machines, how are they related to intelligent design?
- even in the simplest living organisms, there are tiny machines that are tightly integrated, and cannot be built up in a stepwise fashion
- Critic: I've worked with the ATP-synthase and other molecular machines, but "you can kind of begin to tease how some of these molecular machines have come about" – pieces have multiple functions, and they are co-opted into larger systems
- the problem with the co-option argument breaks down when you look at the specific details of different machines

- for example – the type III secretory system cannot be an precursor to the bacterial flagellum, it is younger, not older than the bacterial flagellum
- Critic: what would it take for your view to be falsified?
- demonstrable undirected processes that are capable of creating functional information in DNA, or processes that can build up an irreducibly complex molecular machine within the time available with a decent probability

If you like this debate, check out Stephen C. Meyer's two books: "Signature in the Cell" and "Darwin's Doubt".

How well does socialism work in countries and cities that adopt it?

March 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Socialism in Venezuela

I noticed this article by Frank Luntz in USA Today, which talks about the political views of young people.

Excerpt:

> If you want to understand today's young Americans, consider this: 58% of them think "socialism" is the most compassionate political system, compared with just 33% who pick "capitalism." Heck, 9% even voted for "communism."
>
> That's right: Two-thirds in a poll I did last month say socialism or communism is more compassionate than capitalism.
>
> […]In our recent national survey of 1,000 first- and second-time voters ages 18 to 26, Republicans weren't just off on the wrong track. They were barely on the radar with this Snapchat generation, as it is sometimes called.

> […]The younger generation and the Republican Party simply see the world, and America, very differently. For instance, 58% in our poll say that "America isn't any better or worse than most other countries,"compared with a 42% minority that believes "America is exceptional. It's better than every other country in the world."

So how to respond to this? Well, I think it is important for us to be aware of how other countries are doing, especially the ones that are implementing socialism.

Socialism abroad

Take Venezuela for example. They've had socialism for a good long time under Hugo

Chavez, and now his socialist successor Nicolas Maduro.

The left-leaning The Economist explained what's happening there:

> The regime has greatly compounded the damage with policies that, though designed to favour the poor, end up impoverishing them and the state. Price controls—along with the shortage of foreign exchange—have led to acute shortages of basic goods, forcing people to queue for hours to buy necessities. Inflation is officially running at 141% as of September last year (the latest available figure). Analysts believe the true figure is at least 200% a year; some predict hyperinflation in 2016. The massive budget deficit, which the Central Bank finances by printing money, contributes to that risk.
>
> […]Recent surveys have shown that alongside the economy and shortages, security is a major concern. The government stopped publishing comprehensive crime statistics in 2005, though it does admit there is a problem. The attorney-general has said that Venezuela's murder rate last year was 62 per 100,000 people, ten times the global average. The Venezuelan Violence Observatory, an independent research institute, says the rate is higher. The murder rate in Caracas is the highest in the region for a country's biggest city. Countrywide, 90% of murders go unpunished.

Radically leftist NPR notes:

> Last week, opposition lawmakers in Venezuela declared a "food emergency." That's because Venezuela is facing widespread shortages of milk, meat, bread and other staples. Critics blame the government's socialist economic policies. But instead of changing course, President Nicolás Maduro is calling on Venezuelans to help feed themselves — by starting urban gardens.
>
> […]In addition, falling prices for oil — Venezuela's main export — mean the government has fewer dollars to import food. There's also a severe shortage of imported farm machinery and supplies, says Vicente Perez, director of FEDEAGRO, Venezuela's main farm organization.
>
> "There is nothing — just like there's no food, there are no seeds, no herbicides … and no medicines to vaccinate farm animals," says Perez.
>
> Phil Gunson, who is based in Caracas for the International Crisis Group, warns of a pending humanitarian crisis.
>
> "At least one in 10 people is eating two meals a day or less. There isn't starvation. We are not talking about famine," Gunson says. "But we are talking about malnutrition, particularly in the case of children."

If you're looking for a country that's embraced socialism, you can't do much better than Venezuela. Maybe Argentina, but they are also in serious economic trouble. Do you know any young people who are not being told about that?

Well, what about closer to home? How are the major cities in the United States doing?

Socialism at home

This article from Investors Business Daily takes a look at it.

Excerpt:

> America is awash with troubled, dysfunctional cities that have been electing Democratic mayors for decades.
>
> - Detroit last elected a Republican mayor in 1957. It is now the model of urban failure — it's recognized more for its poverty, crime, rot and bankruptcy than the great cars that it turned out into the early 1970s. It is the poorest big city in the nation, with almost 40% of the population living below the poverty line. The website Law Street actually ranks Detroit ahead of Flint as the country's most dangerous city. Either way, it's clear that both cities have institutionalized crime problems.
>
> Detroit is also a pit of political corruption. Just in recent years, one mayor, Kwame Kilpatrick, was convicted of corruption and sent to federal prison for 28 years, while building inspectors have been indicted on federal felony bribery charges and a former city council member was investigated in a bribery and kickback scandal.
>
> - Chicago's last GOP mayor was elected in 1927. The nation's third-largest city is home to some of the worst inner-city violence imaginable. More than 2,300 people were shot there last year, and nearly 400 lost their lives to homicides.
>
> Its finances are just as grim. "Chicago is so broke," IBD contributor Stephen Moore explained months ago, "that its bonds are junk status, and Mayor Rahm Emanuel had to go hat in hand last week to the state capital, Springfield, for bailout money to pay the bills." Things have been rotten enough, Moore said, to send "a record number of people … fleeing Cook County, home to Chicago." Only a little more than half of the city's pension liabilities are funded.
>
> - St. Louis has been electing Democratic mayors since 1949. The Gateway to the West has become the gateway for crime. Law Street says that it's the fourth most dangerous city in the country, Forbes says it's the second. It had the sixth-highest poverty rate among big cities in 2014.
> - The last GOP mayor of Philadelphia left office in 1952. A few years ago, Moore identified it as a favorite to follow Detroit into bankruptcy.
> - Both Baltimore and Oakland had Republican mayors as late as the 1960s. In the era of Democratic rule, both are now more well known for their crime and poverty problems than for their charm and character.
> - Newark, N.J., hasn't had a GOP mayor in more than a century. It was ranked as the fifth-worst city to live in in 2015. Detroit, of course, was first.

> **When Democrats are in control, cities tend to go soft on crime, reward cronies with public funds, establish hostile business environments, heavily tax the most productive citizens and set up fat pensions for their union friends. Simply put, theirs is a Blue State blueprint for disaster.**

If you want to know how well Democrats do at running things, why not look to the places where Republicans have been out of power for decades and decades?

If you don't tell the young people you know about socialist countries and socialist cities, then how will they ever learn how socialism actually works in practice? They are learning that socialism is wonderful from their unionized public school teachers, Hollywood elites, the mainstream media, artists and musicians and Democrat politicians. Are you doing your part to educate them with real facts?

Is dependency on welfare good for people? Or is it better for people to work?

March 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Major Welfare Programs, 2012

Medicaid	$296 bil
Unemployment Insurance	$126
Disability	$124
Food Stamps	$75
Supplemental Security Income	$60
Earned Income Tax Credit	$56
Pell Grants	$41
Section 8 housing/rental assistance	$28
Drug Benefits	$23
Education for Disadvantaged	$14
School Lunches	$10
S-CHIP	$9
Head Start	$8
TANF Cash Aid	$7

Sources: Congressional Research Service, Congressional Budget Office

Major welfare programs as of 2012

What's best for poor people – to remain dependent on government, or to be encouraged to work for their own money so they can be independent?

Consider this article from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Earned success means defining your future as you see fit and achieving that success on the basis of merit and hard work. It allows you to measure your life's "profit" however you want, be it in money, making beautiful music, or helping people learn English. Earned success is at the root of American exceptionalism.
>
> The link between earned success and life satisfaction is well established by researchers. The University of Chicago's General Social Survey, for example, reveals that people who say they feel "very successful" or "completely successful" in their work lives are twice as likely to say they are very happy than people who feel "somewhat successful." It doesn't matter if they earn more or less income; the differences persist.
>
> The opposite of earned success is "learned helplessness," a term coined by Martin Seligman, the eminent psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania. It refers to what happens if rewards and punishments are not tied to merit: People simply give up and stop trying to succeed.
>
> During experiments, Mr. Seligman observed that when people realized they were powerless to influence their circumstances, they would become depressed and had difficulty performing even ordinary tasks. In an interview in the New York Times, Mr. Seligman said: "We found that even when good things occurred that

> weren't earned, like nickels coming out of slot machines, it did not increase people's well-being. It produced helplessness. People gave up and became passive."
>
> Learned helplessness was what my wife and I observed then, and still do today, in social-democratic Spain. The recession, rigid labor markets, and excessive welfare spending have pushed unemployment to 24.4%, with youth joblessness over 50%. Nearly half of adults under 35 live with their parents. Unable to earn their success, Spaniards fight to keep unearned government benefits.
>
> Meanwhile, their collective happiness—already relatively low—has withered. According to the nonprofit World Values Survey, 20% of Spaniards said they were "very happy" about their lives in 1981. This fell to 14% by 2007, even before the economic downturn.
>
> That trajectory should be a cautionary tale to Americans who are watching the U.S. government careen toward a system that is every bit as socially democratic as Spain's.
>
> Government spending as a percentage of GDP in America is about 36%—roughly the same as in Spain. The Congressional Budget Office tells us it will reach 50% by 2038. The Tax Foundation reports that almost 70% of Americans take more out of the tax system than they pay into it. Meanwhile, politicians foment social division on the basis of income inequality, instead of attempting to improve mobility and opportunity through education reform, pro-growth policies, and an entrepreneur-friendly economy.
>
> These trends do not mean we are doomed to repeat Spain's unhappy fate. But our system of earned success will not defend itself.

How do we make government promote "earned success" over dependency on welfare?

Investors Business Daily reports on one state that decided to encourage people to get off of welfare, and to get back to work.

Excerpt:

> The number of childless, able-bodied adult food stamp recipients in a New England state fell by 80% over the course of a few months. This didn't require magic, just common sense.
>
> From December 2014 to March 2015, the caseload of able-bodied Maine adults with no dependents crashed from 13,332 recipients to 2,678, says the Heritage Foundation. This is a remarkable change and needs to be repeated in government programs across the country.
>
> How Maine achieved this is no mystery. Gov. Paul LePage simply established work requirements for food stamp recipients who have no dependents and are able enough to be employed. They must, write Heritage policy analysts Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield, "take a job" — just 20 hours a week — "participate in training, or perform community service" for a mere 24 hours a week.

> Recipients who do none of those are stripped of their food stamp benefits after three months.
>
> This isn't a radical new idea. Rector and Sheffield cite a successful historical precedent:
>
> "When work requirements were established in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program in the 1990s, nationwide caseloads dropped by almost as much, albeit over a few years rather than a few months."
>
> In the Obama era, "the food stamp caseload of adults without dependents who are able-bodied has more than doubled nationally, swelling from nearly 2 million recipients in 2008 to around 5 million today" across the country, Rector and Sheffield report. That's far too many Americans who can take care of themselves living at the expense of others. The situation cries out for reform.
>
> The Heritage report says that if the Maine policy were repeated nationally, and the caseload dropped "at the same rate it did in Maine (which is very likely), taxpayer savings would be over $8.4 billion per year."
>
> "Further reforms could bring the savings to $9.7 billion per year: around $100 per year for every individual currently paying federal income tax."
>
> […]The success in Maine is but a blip, affecting only a thin slice of the nation's welfare rolls. Yet it is a model, a prototype for reforming welfare programs in need of change or elimination, which is all of them. Policymakers at all levels should be rushing to adopt it, then adapt it.

Now, do you think that the governor of Maine is a Republican, or a Democrat? Republicans want people to be independent of government, and productive, because that makes them more free. Democrats want people to be unproductive and dependent, because that makes them easier to control.

Stephen C. Meyer and Keith Fox debate intelligent design and evolution

March 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

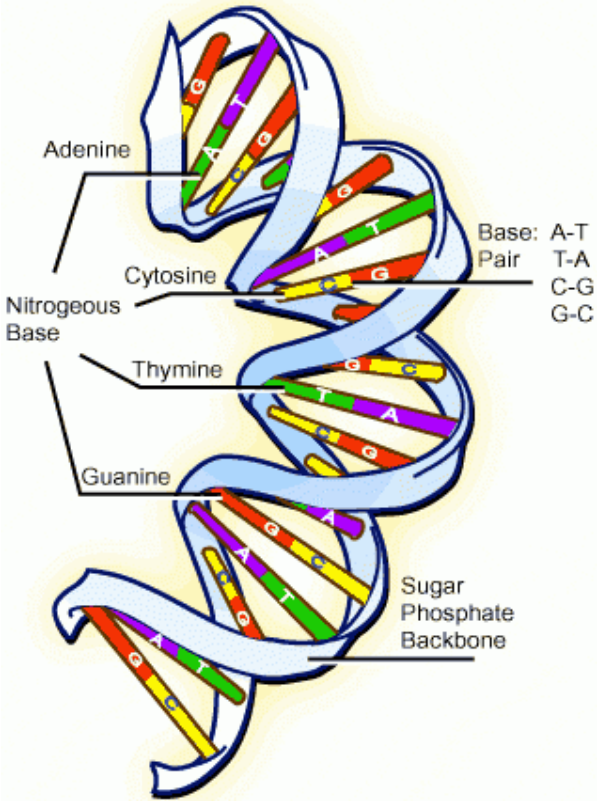

How did life begin?
From Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable" podcast.

Details:

> Stephen Meyer is a leading proponent of Intelligent Design who directs the Centre for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. His [first] book "Signature in the Cell" claims to show that the DNA code is the product of intelligent mind, not naturalistic processes. Keith Fox is Professor of Biochemistry at Southampton University. He chairs the UK Christians in Science network but disagrees strongly with ID. They debate how life could have originated and whether design is allowed as an explanation in science.

Summary: (stuff in italics is my snarky paraphrase)

Meyer:

- background and how he got interested in intelligent design
- his research focus is on the origin of life – the first replicator
- summarizes the history of origin of life studies
- authored the book "Signature in the Cell"
- the DNA enigma: where did the information in DNA come from?
- naturalistic explanations of the DNA information have failed

- but intelligent agents are known to be able to produce information
- the best explanation of the information in DNA is that an intelligent agent authored it
- Meyer's book was named by atheist philosopher of science Thomas Nagel as a Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year in 2010
- why is design so controversial? Many people think that Darwin explained why nature appears design
- the Darwinian view is that nature can create the appearance of design using mutation and selection
- however, Darwinian mechanisms cannot explain the origin of the first living cell, it assumes replication, and the origin of life is about where the first replicator comes from

Fox:

- Meyer's argument is not about the evolution of life after the first cell
- Meyer's case for design is about the origin of life
- naturalists do not know a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- there are a number of naturalistic hypotheses for the origin of life, like the RNA-first hypothesis
- maybe in a few years one of them will turn out to be correct
- what intelligent design is arguing from a gap in our current naturalistic knowledge to infer that God intervened in nature

Meyer:

- that's not what intelligent design is at all
- the approach ID theorists use is the inference to best explanation
- you evaluate all explanations, non-intelligent causes and intelligent causes
- you prefer the best possible explanation
- we know that minds are capable of producing information just like the information we find in DNA

Fox:

- living cells replicate, so they have the ability to introduce mutations as they replicate and then some of those mutations can be selected
- so maybe the process of replicating that living cells do created the first living cell
- maybe the first living cell created itself, X brought X into being, self-creation, what's irrational about that?

Meyer:

- the issue is the origin of life – where did the first living cell come from?
- you cannot appeal to the operations that a living cell can perform to explain the

origin of the first living cell
- there was no first living cell operating before the first living cell
- there was no replication, mutation or selection before the first living cell
- in fact, in my book I show that there is no known naturalistic mechanism that is able to produce the information needed for the first living cell
- *nothing can create itself, that is self-contradictory*

Fox:

- Well, you are just saying that because something is complex that God did it

Meyer:

- Sadly, no. What I actually said needed to be explained was the information, not complexity
- And we know from software engineering that the process of adding information to code is performed by programmers
- in the absence of any adequate naturalistic explanation for information, we are justified in taking the explanation that we are familiar with – namely, intelligent agency – based on our uniform, universal experience of what causes information

Fox:

- well, maybe we can appeal to the mutation and selection in existing living cells to explain the origin of the first living cell
- maybe there were living cells before the first living cell, and then these other living cells created the first living cell

Meyer:

- we can't keep invoking mutation and selection when those processes are not operating prior to the origin of the first living cell

Fox:

- well maybe some bare-bones self-replication molecule was a precursor to the first living cell

Meyer:

- even to generate very limited replicator would require a large amount of information
- the argument I am making is – where does the evolution come from?

Fox:

- well, maybe we will think of an explanation for information that is naturalistic in 20 years
- we've thought of explanations to things that were NOT information before

- so maybe we will be able to think of something to explain information based on our ability to explain NOT information before

Moderator: Change topics: the Dover decision

Meyer:

- the Discovery Institute opposed the policy that causes the trial
- the wording of the statute was poor
- the judge was completely wrong in his decision
- young earth creationists used the phrase “intelligent design” to cover their agenda
- intelligent design is an inference using the normal methods of science

Fox:

- intelligent design is a science stopper because it stops looking for a naturalistic explanation
- everything in nature must have a naturalistic explanation
- everything has to be explained using matter and time and chance
- it just has to be that way!!!!

Meyer:

- well, what luck would you have explaining an effect like Mt. Rushmore?
- can you explain that using matter,time and chance?
- Mt. Rushmore was the product of intelligence, not wind and erosion
- similarly, there is information in the cell, and we know that intelligence causes information

Fox:

- So you are saying that we don’t understand and therefore an intelligence is necessary?

Meyer:

- no I am saying we DO understand and we are making an inference based on that understanding
- you are the one who is insisting on a material explanation because you pre-suppose materialism
- we know that minds have causal powers, and we can infer mind as an explanation from information

Fox:

- well nature is a seamless chain of material causes and effects

Meyer:

- agents can act without violating the laws of nature
- even humans can act as intelligent agents to create information in books, and they don't violate the laws of nature
- intelligent causes are real, and they explain effects in nature

Fox:

- you're trying to impose on science something to do with meaning and purpose

Meyer:

- no that's not what we're doing, we're inferring from from the fact that we ourselves are known causes of information to the fact that an intelligence cause is the best explanation for information in the cell

Fox:

- *but I am a materialist*, I need a materialist explanation

Meyer:

- mind IS an answer to the how question
- we infer to mind in many other scientific disciplines, like cryptography, archaeology, etc.
- a materialist might accuse an archaeologist of engaging in a "scribe-of-the-gaps" argument, but the best explanation of an artifact with information is a scribe
- we are inferring that mind is the cause from the nature of the effect: information

Moderator: is it appropriate to call DNA "information"
Fox:

- well DNA is just a molecular polymer, any reference to information is just by analogy

Meyer:

- DNA is a molecular polymer, but it also exhibits the property of specified complexity
- the arrangement of bases, which function as machine instructions in a software program, for performings task in the cell
- we have observed that the property of specified complexity always comes from an intelligence

Fox:

- well, maybe there are other sequences that would work, so maybe it's really not uncommon to develop functioning sequences by chance alone, without an intelligence

Meyer:

- you can measure how precise the functional specificity is in DNA and proteins

Moderator: is Shannon information the same as functional information

Meyer:

- Shannon information refers to the sequences of digits or symbols that do not necessarily have any function, i.e. – a four character string QSZX has as much Shannon information as WORD. However, only the latter is functional against the pattern of the English language. There are arrangements of DNA bases and amino acids that have the same number of symbols/characters as a functional sequence would have, but they have no biological function – they do not exhibit specified complexity

Fox:

- Well, maybe there are lots and lots of sequences of DNA and proteins so that it is fairly easy to get a functional one by chance

Meyer:

- DNA sequences that are functional are extremely rare, protein sequences are even more rare
- this is not my opinion, this is what the research shows – functional protein sequences are rare

Fox:

- well maybe there are other functional sequences that are occur before the first functional sequence that are precursors to the first functional sequence
- maybe there are billions of years of replication, mutation and selection before the first replication, mutation and selection

Meyer:

- you can't get to the first selectable functional sequence by appealing to precursor selectable functional sequences – there are no selectable functional sequences before the FIRST one
- you have to get the first selectable functional sequence by chance alone, because there is nothing to mutate or select before the first replicator
- the chance hypothesis has been rejected because the minimal amount of information for the simplest replicator is too high to get by chance alone, given the resources, including time, that are available

Moderator: *Keith are you confident that naturalism will be able to substantiate these naturalism-of-the-gap speculations that you offer in response to Meyer's actual science that we have today?*

Fox:

- well, it is hard to know for sure because it was just a fluke event
- but there's nothing irrational or unscientific or miraculous about it – the fluke would have a material explanation
- there is nothing that we can detect that would implicate God, my speculations about a fluke which I cannot observe or measure or test would all be compatible with an atheistic worldview that omits God as a causal entity

Meyer:

- where are those material processes that could account for this fluke then?
- the whole point of this argument is that the information in DNA transcends the material components in the sequence
- it's the arrangement of the material parts/letters/characters/symbols/instructions that needs to be explained

Fox:

- Well, I just have a different philosophy of science that rules out intelligent causation a priori

Meyer:

- Yes, that's the difference between us – you pre-suppose that all explanations of natural phenomena must exclude intelligent causes

There is a bit more where Meyer talks about how parts of the cell are implementations of various design patterns (Gang of Four design patterns) that are used by software architects who design software.

Find more posts on Stephen C. Meyer here.

New report: Americans rank last in problem solving using technology

March 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wall Street Journal reports on a new analysis of problem solving skills.

Excerpt:

> A new report finds U.S. workers rank dead last among 18 industrial countries when it comes to “problem solving in technology-rich environments,” or using digital technology to evaluate information and perform practical tasks. The consequences of that emerging competitive disadvantage is energizing the volatile undercurrent of this year’s presidential race, some observers say.
>
> If the problem-solving deficit is bad, the reasons for it may be worse, said Stephen Provasnik, the U.S. technical adviser for the International Assessment for Adult Competency: flagging literacy and numeracy skills, which are the fundamental tools needed to score well on the survey.
>
> […]The results build off a global survey conducted in 2012 by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. To better compare the skills of younger and older adults and the unemployed, researchers did additional surveys in 2014. The countries that scored the highest on the problem-solving with technology criteria were Japan, Finland, Sweden and Norway. Poland scored second to last, just above the U.S.
>
> One stark revelation is that about four-fifths of unemployed Americans cannot figure out a rudimentary problem in which they have to spot an error when data is transferred from a two-column spreadsheet to a bar graph. And Americans are far less adept at dealing with numbers than the average of their global peers.

Why is that a problem? It’s a problem because the best jobs all require proficiency in math.

Consider these starting salaries and mid-career salaries for various majors:

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image) (Source)

The common denominator in all these degrees is *mathematics*, which is out of favor with many Americans. But clearly learning math would enable them to get the highest paying jobs – private sector STEM jobs. So why aren't they learning math?

People drop math because it's too hard

People who drop math typically do so because they want to focus on other things that are less difficult. Most of them just want to have fun… sometimes with watching TV all day, sometimes with premarital sex, sometimes with alcohol and drugs. Families break down as women choose hot, irresponsible men and have babies with them out of wedlock. And those kids learn less than their parents knew. There just isn't any interest in much of America about learning hard things like math, so you can get those private sector STEM jobs that pay well.

Consider this post by Kevin Williamson in National Review magazine:

> The white middle class may like the idea of Trump as a giant pulsing humanoid middle finger held up in the face of the Cathedral, they may sing hymns to Trump the destroyer and whisper darkly about "globalists" and — odious, stupid term — "the Establishment," but nobody did this to them. They failed themselves.
>
> **If you spend time in hardscrabble, white upstate New York, or eastern Kentucky, or my own native West Texas, and you take an honest look at the welfare dependency, the drug and alcohol addiction, the family anarchy — which is to say, the whelping of human children with all the respect and wisdom of a stray dog — you will come to an awful realization. It wasn't Beijing. It wasn't even Washington, as bad as Washington can be. It wasn't immigrants from Mexico, excessive and problematic as our current immigration levels are. It wasn't any of that.**

> **Nothing happened to them. There wasn't some awful disaster. There wasn't a war or a famine or a plague or a foreign occupation. Even the economic changes of the past few decades do very little to explain the dysfunction and negligence — and the incomprehensible malice — of poor white America.** So the gypsum business in Garbutt ain't what it used to be. There is more to life in the 21st century than wallboard and cheap sentimentality about how the Man closed the factories down.
>
> The truth about these dysfunctional, downscale communities is that they deserve to die. Economically, they are negative assets. Morally, they are indefensible. Forget all your cheap theatrical Bruce Springsteen crap. Forget your sanctimony about struggling Rust Belt factory towns and your conspiracy theories about the wily Orientals stealing our jobs. Forget your goddamned gypsum, and, if he has a problem with that, forget Ed Burke, too. The white American underclass is in thrall to a vicious, selfish culture whose main products are misery and used heroin needles. Donald Trump's speeches make them feel good. So does OxyContin. What they need isn't analgesics, literal or political. They need real opportunity, which means that they need real change, which means that they need U-Haul.

Polling Data						
Poll	Date	Sample	MoE	Clinton (D)	Trump (R)	Spread
RCP Average	2/11 - 3/6	--	--	47.3	41.0	Clinton +6.3
NBC News/Wall St. Jrnl	3/3 - 3/6	1200 RV	2.8	51	38	Clinton +13
ABC News/Wash Post	3/3 - 3/6	864 RV	4.0	50	41	Clinton +9
Rasmussen Reports	2/29 - 3/1	1000 LV	3.0	41	36	Clinton +5
CNN/ORC	2/24 - 2/27	920 RV	3.0	52	44	Clinton +8
FOX News	2/15 - 2/17	1031 RV	3.0	47	42	Clinton +5
USA Today/Suffolk	2/11 - 2/15	1000 LV	3.0	43	45	Trump +2
All General Election: Trump vs. Clinton Polling Data						

Trump vs Hillary head-to-head: Trumpkins lack the math skills to make sense of this table
David French, who grew up in Kentucky, and then attended Harvard Law School, adds this in National Review:

> These are strong words, but they are fundamentally true and important to say. My childhood was different from Kevin's, but I grew up in Kentucky, live in a rural county in Tennessee, and have seen the challenges of the white working-class first-hand. **Simply put, Americans are killing themselves and destroying their families at an alarming rate. No one is making them do it. The economy isn't putting a bottle in their hand. Immigrants aren't making them cheat on their wives or snort OxyContin. Obama isn't walking them into the lawyer's office to force them to file a bogus disability claim.**
>
> For generations, conservatives have rightly railed against deterministic progressive notions that put human choices at the mercy of race, class, history,

> or economics. Those factors can create additional challenges, but they do not relieve any human being of the moral obligation to do their best.
>
> **Yet millions of Americans aren't doing their best. Indeed, they're barely trying. As I've related before, my church in Kentucky made a determined attempt to reach kids and families that were falling between the cracks, and it was consistently astounding how little effort most parents and their teen children made to improve their lives. If they couldn't find a job in a few days — or perhaps even as little as a few hours — they'd stop looking. If they got angry at teachers or coaches, they'd drop out of school. If they fought with their wife, they had sex with a neighbor. And always — always — there was a sense of entitlement.**
>
> And that's where disability or other government programs kicked in. They were there, beckoning, giving men and women alternatives to gainful employment. You don't have to do any work (your disability lawyer does all the heavy lifting), you make money, and you get drugs. At our local regional hospital, it's become a bitter joke the extent to which the community is hooked on "Xanatab" — the Xanax and Lortab prescriptions that lead to drug dependence.
>
> Of course we should have compassion even as we call on people to do better. I have compassion for kids who often see the worst behavior modeled at home. I have compassion for families facing economic uncertainty. But compassion can't excuse or enable self-destructive moral failures.

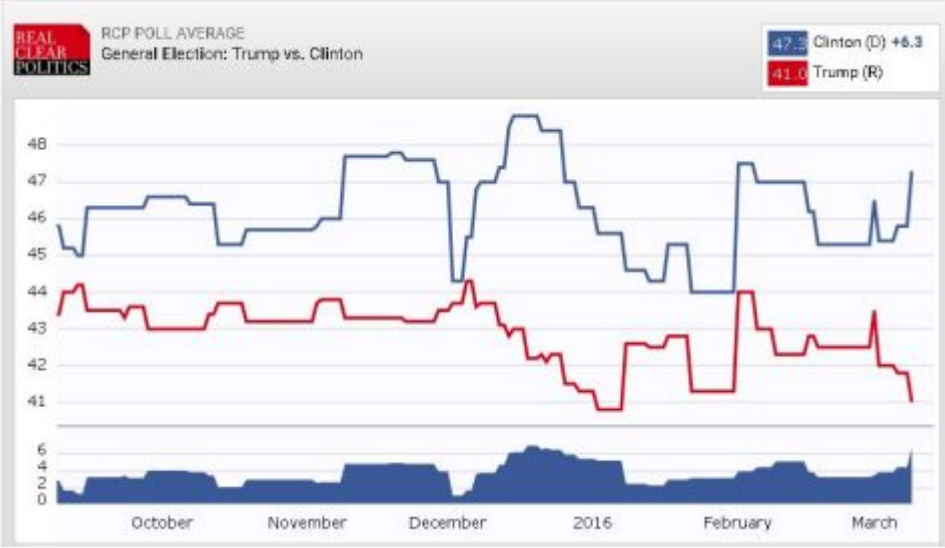

Chart showing Trump vs Clinton: Trumpkins can't read this chart, because it requires math skills

I have compassion for the kids, too. But not for the grown-ups, who seem to think that the world owes them a living even if they avoid learning hard things like math, and behave immorally. But there is no guarantee of success for people who don't learn math, and who don't behave morally. And it's not anyone else's fault.

Related posts

- Donald Trump’s plan to introduce tariffs is just a tax on consumer goods
- Suppose God had coffee with Donald Trump… how would that go?
- Is Donald Trump right to order U.S. troops to commit war crimes?
- How well did Donald Trump do in the hotel and casino business?
- Trump donated to group that promotes homosexuality to 5-year-olds
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- Who has done more on the pro-life and pro-marriage issues – Trump or Cruz?
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- Trump wants to increase taxpayer subsidies of ethanol, Cruz wants to end them
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- Should evangelical Christians prefer Donald Trump on moral grounds?
- Clinton, Rubio, GOP establishment and leftist media defend Trump’s New York Values
- What are the “New York Values” that Trump’s evangelical Christian supporters admire?
- Donald Trump would expand Obamacare into single-payer health care system
- Who is more conservative on the marriage issue? Trump, Cruz, Carson or Rubio?
- Is Donald Trump’s claim about Muslims celebrating 9/11 in New Jersey accurate?

New study: a good credit score is a key performance indicator for marriage success

March 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

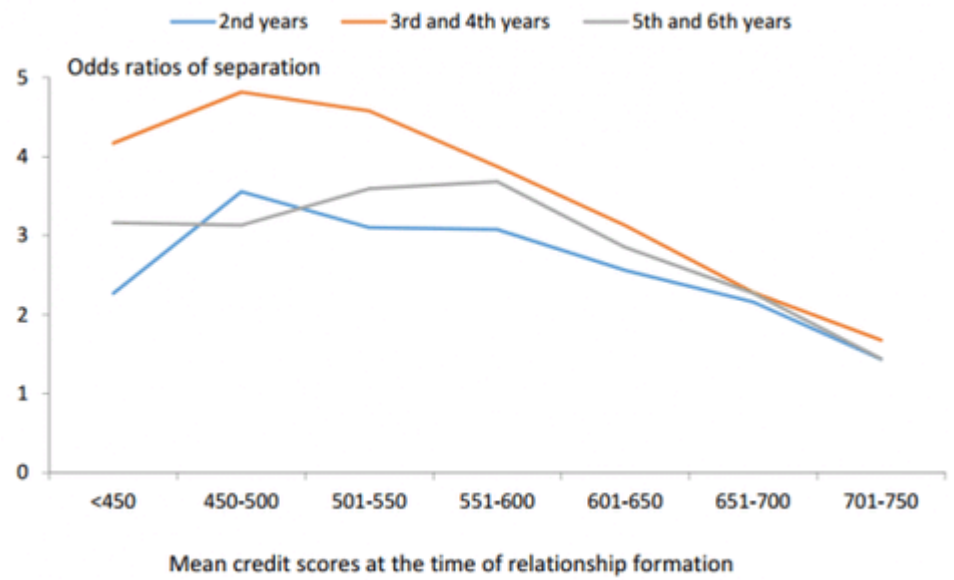

Financial responsibility is a key performance indicator for marriage success
Story from the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> When people are looking for a significant other, they often try to find someone whose values, education, earnings, hobbies and even height match their own. But new research suggests there's one promising measure for finding a committed partner that most daters overlook — credit scores.
>
> A credit score is a number that is supposed to reflect the risk of lending money to someone, based mostly on their past history of borrowing, repaying and defaulting on debt. Banks have long used credit scores to evaluate customers, but these days potential employers, landlords, insurance companies, cellphone companies and many other businesses do, too.
>
> A new working paper from the Federal Reserve Board that looks at what role credit scores play in committed relationships suggests that daters might want to start using the metric as well. The researchers found that credit scores — or whatever personal qualities credit scores might represent — actually play a pretty big role in whether people form and stay in committed relationships. People with higher credit scores are more likely to form committed relationships and marriages and then stay in them. In addition, how well matched the couple's credit scores are initially is a good predictor of whether they stay together in the long term.
>
> The paper analyzed a large proprietary data set of 12 million randomly selected U.S. consumers from the credit reporting agency Equifax over a period of about

> 15 years. Researchers used an algorithm to find a swathe of committed couples, including some who live together and are not legally married.
>
> They found that people with higher (i.e. better) credit scores are more likely to form a committed relationship, as the chart below shows. This was true even after controlling for other differences between partners, like education level, race or income.
>
> The researchers also found that having higher credit scores when they started the relationship meant that couples were less likely to separate over the next few years… In fact, for every extra 100 points in the couple's average credit score when beginning the relationship, their odds of splitting in the second year fell by around 30 percent.

So what do I want to say about this story? I want to tell you that marriage is not something that you just jump into when you feel like it, without any preparation. Relationships work well when both people have trained their character to be ready to do the most important thing in a relationship: *to commit*. And your credit score is a good measure of your ability to do that.

A high credit score is an excellent measure of a person's ability to be responsible with money, and to take their obligation to pay their money back seriously. Marriage is all about whether two people are comfortable with being responsible, and whether two people can put aside their desire for fun and thrills and meet their obligations, even when they don't feel like it. If a person is uncomfortable with marriage obligations, because it is too "transactional" and they want to be feelings-led, that's a clear sign they are not ready for a commitment through thick and thin. The credit score is a measure of one's ability to be responsible to others regardless of feelings and desires, and that's what you need to commit.

When I meet someone I am interested in for marriage, if they have problems with their education, career or finances, the first thing I do is to try to push them to study for a degree with a good employment rate, and good starting salaries. I push them to get good jobs with reputable companies, and to work in the summer if they are students. I push them to pay off their debts and start investing. I do this because I am trying to make them marriage-ready. That is, I am trying to get them to be comfortable with responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

One girl I used to mentor just got married. She started out living with her parents, doing degrees in English, and working minimum wage service jobs. Then something happened. She moved out of her parents house, got a real job, cut expenses, and married an employed non-student who works and saves money. They are both paying down debt like crazy, and she has a plan to invest soon. Most of what she did was self-directed, all I did was cheer, make suggestions and send the occasional gift. But she never viewed this advising and rewarding as "manipulative". She was happy to get the opinion of someone with qualifications in those areas. She didn't rebel against people who were leading her upward, she embraced it. Now she's committed to a man for life and they are executing a

sound plan to have an influence as Christians. It has not been easy for her. She is punching well above her weight now, though.

If you want to get married, you need to develop the ability to commit. That means that you need to get comfortable with self-sacrifice and self-denial. You need to change your character through studying hard things, working boring jobs, saving instead of spending, and investing early. These are the life experiences that change your character so that you are able to commit to another person for life.

Before you marry, have enough money saved to keep your kids out of public schools

March 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend William shared this excellent article from The Federalist, which talks about how public schools, under the influence of Common Core, are exposing children to pornography in order to advance a leftist culture agenda. The article has the stories of several heroic mothers who stood up to the school system and got the pornographic materials removed. Let's look at one of them, and then I'll comment on how public school administrators and teachers should be viewed, then I'll comment on the issue of financing these public schools, then I'll talk about planning for schooling of your children.

Excerpt:

> In 2012, Lebanon, Oregon, mother of two Macey France began studying the nationwide implementation of Common Core. While looking through a document titled "Common Core Appendix B" that contained reading exemplars, Macey found the book, "The Bluest Eye" listed as an example of appropriate assigned literature for eleventh- and twelfth-grade students.*
>
> France, a contributor to the website PolitiChicks, took to her keyboard and typed up a scathing condemnation of the book as not high-school appropriate, including quotes directly from the book, such as:

I am not putting pornographic excerpts from public school books on this blog, duh.

We continue:

> As a result, her article "Common Core-Approved Child Pornography" was viewed and shared hundreds of thousands of times and Macey was nominated for a CPAC blogger award for Best Sunlight Post of 2013.
>
> "This is when I first became a 'target' for the progressives who support public education and minimize parental rights," said France, who had a hard time understanding how her well-researched, truthful article could make her the target of the kind of emotional, hateful rhetoric she experienced. It frustrated her to be personally attacked for wanting to protect her kids. It also frustrated her to find many parents who weren't concerned about their teens reading "The Bluest Eye" because they believed school officials knew more about what was best for their children than they did.
>
> "I was called names, accused of being backwards, racist [Toni Morrison is a black woman], ignorant, a flat-earther, and even received private messages on Facebook telling me how hateful I was," France said. "I was first introduced to the phrase 'white privilege.' At one point, I was called Hitler. I was misunderstood and accused of wanting to ban and burn books [even though] I went out of my way to convey that I am *not* an advocate for banning literature. I am a *huge*

> parental rights advocate. I got the distinct impression I was not supposed to question the manner in which they [educators] related to my kids."

My problem with public school is not that education school graduates are selecting high brow reading material that is above me. I love Shakespeare and Spenser and Dickens and Austen and other classical writers. The problem I have with public schools is that some of the teachers, and most of the administrators, have this agenda to break down traditional morality and sexualize children at earlier and earlier ages. This is part of the secular progressive agenda – they know that sexualizing children makes them less likely to become conservative, less likely to marry, less likely to have children who are raised by a mom and dad, and who are therefore more resistant to the will of the secular leftist government.

Public schools are leftist indoctrination seminaries

A good example of how this works can be found in the province of Ontario, Canada. There, the Liberal Party government is led by a lesbian woman who left her husband and children to move in with her lover. The Liberal Party decided to re-write the education curriculum so that it would be more in line with their supporters in the Sexual Revolution crowd, e.g. -secularists, LGBT activists, abortion providers, etc. And so, they hired a convicted child pornographer to re-write the curriculum. They didn't see the public school's priority as teaching children how to get the skills needed to find jobs that pay. They wanted the public schools to make children non-judgmental about the immoral behaviors of the selfish adults.

It's very important for parents to understand that people don't just find themselves in education programs and then in public schools by accident. Sometimes they are in there because they couldn't find real work in the private sector. Sometimes they are there because they want to indoctrinate your kids with their left-wing ideology. You can't assume that the people in public schools want to partner with you to pass on prudent and practical Judeo-Christian wisdom to your children. The public school monopoly attracts those who are looking for job security and insulation from the disapproval of their customers. It's true that some teachers are there to educate students so they have useful skills in order to find good jobs. But in my experience, many of teachers aren't, and most of the administrators aren't.

Note: private school teachers and administrators have to compete with other schools, so they are sensitive to meeting the needs of parents. At least you have a choice about where you send your kids, so they have to care what you want for your kids, and how much you are able to pay.

Don't vote for bigger government if you value quality education

So how do these public schools get their funding? Well, it's simple. They appeal to voters by saying that the more they spend on public schools, the more children will learn. This actually works on voters who don't bother to familiarize themselves with the facts:

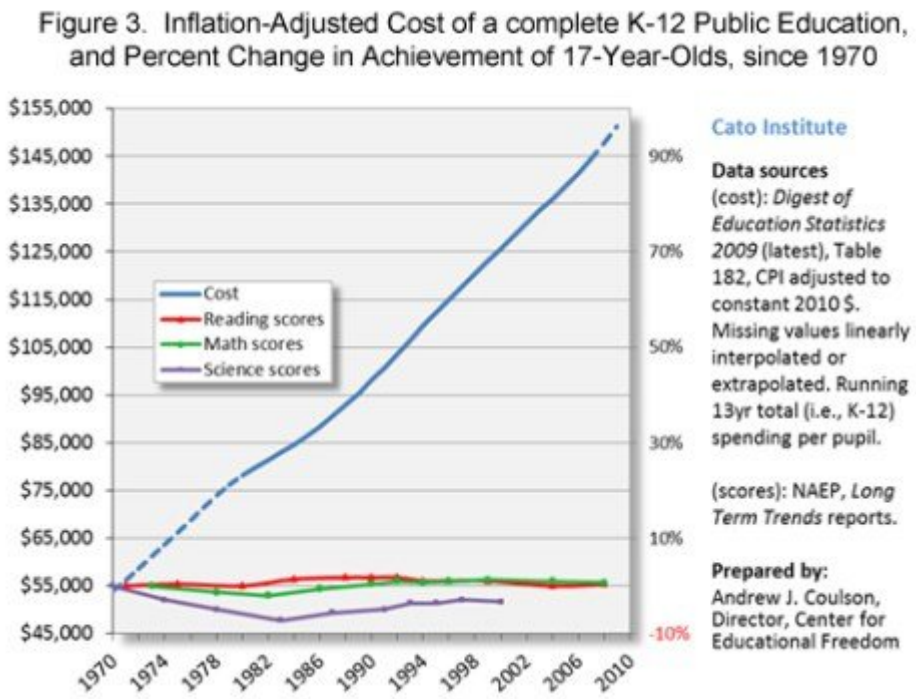

Education spending has tripled since 1970

The truth is that parents who want children to do well should always vote for smaller government, lower taxes, and the pushing down of decision-making in education policy to the state and local level. We shouldn't be swayed by "it's for the children" rhetoric, because throwing more money at the problem only gives us more sexual revolution indoctrination and more gay rights agenda. Most of the new money goes to administrators anyway – not to the teachers in the classrooms. You might think that the public schools are there to help your children to get a job, but that's not what they public school administrators think they are there for.

Getting married? Make a plan to provide for your kids' education

One final point. I am finding myself surrounded by male Christian apologists who want to get married, and who are not interested in being providers. They've spend their entire 20s in school as students, they've taken money from their parents, they've never worked a day in their lives, they have outstanding student loans, they have no savings, and yet they all talk to women they like about marriage. My view is that Christian men should not be allowed to talk to women – even to ask them the time of day or for directions – until they have a STEM degree, 2 years of private sector work experience, all debts paid off, a car and some savings. And why not? Well, for reasons like this article on the public schools.

The public schools are what they are, and Christian parents cannot rely on them to educate our kids. If a man is talking about marriage without having taken steps to get a STEM degree, STEM private sector work history, and an investment account that is added to every month, then he has no business talking to a woman about marriage. He has to be able to show her that he is serious about providing the children with homeschooling or a private school education. How parents plan to educate their kids is a major issue in marriage – it affects whether the children will be effective and influential, or not. A woman should not trust the promises of any man who has not taken practical steps in the

past to prepare for the needs of his children in the future. She cannot accept intentions and promises that make her feel good, she has to see evidence of his ability to put aside his ambitions in order to provide for her and the children – that is his obligation as a man (1 Tim 5:8). A man who wants marriage should prepare *well in advance* for it by having a career that will allow him to earn and save so that his wife and children will not be threatened in their worldview more than they can bear. If he has to give up some student stuff and some ministry stuff in order to prepare for husband / father responsibilities, then he should do that – before the wedding day.

Purdue University proposes alternative to student loans: income sharing

March 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Terrell sent this article to me from the Lafayette Journal & Courier. It talks about a change to Purdue's student assistance program that will help students to think twice about what they are majoring it, and whether it will pay off.

Excerpt:

> Purdue University is close to bringing income share agreements to campus by the next academic year.
>
> Purdue Research Foundation is finalizing a contract with a partner firm that will fund student tuition in return for a percentage of income for several years after graduation, Brian Edelman, PRF's chief financial officer, said Tuesday.
>
> Purdue announced in August it was seeking a partner to launch the agreements as an alternative to student loans. The university received seven "expressions of interest" and narrowed the search down to one finalist, although Edelman said it's too early to identify the firm and how the partnership might work.
>
> But more details about how Purdue might implement the alternative have come available. PRF will complete a sample term sheet in the next few weeks and begin planning with a pilot of 100-300 students as early as this spring, Edelman said. Those students could receive funding for the entire 2016-17 year.
>
> During a University Senate meeting Monday, Edel estimated what a contract might look like for students: A $10,000 investment might cost 3 percent to 5 percent of income for five to seven years. An individual earning $48,500 a year — the median income among college graduates in 2013, according to the National Center for Education Statistics — would be on the hook for as little as $7,275 or as much as $16,975, depending on the terms.

This part made me laugh:

> Other faculty members expressed concern that such agreements might favor STEM or business students, who typically have higher incomes and better job prospects after graduation, and steer the university and faculty toward producing graduates who earn more income.

Well of course the faculty don't want students to think about getting a return on their degree – because then most of them would be out of a job! College education only makes sense if you can get a return on your investment. In theory, you could study anything and get a return on your investment. In practice, you're better off with STEM degrees – lower post-graduation unemployment, and better starting and median salaries.

Look:

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image)

I love this idea by Purdue, it will really help students to think about what they are studying, and that is good for taxpayers, because something tells me that we are going to get the bill for the $1 trillion in outstanding student loans.

Man uses legally-owned concealed carry handgun to prevent robbery

March 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

Another in my series of posts to help non-Americans understand why Americans are passionate about the Second Amendment to the Constitution and the right to bear arms.

The news story is from the Washington Free Beacon:

> A good samaritan saved a 7-11 clerk on Sunday by shooting a hatchet-wielding man who had attacked the store.
>
> A 60-year-old man with a valid concealed carry license was drinking his morning coffee when a masked man, later identified as 43-year-old Steven Blacktongue, entered the convenience store and began attacking the clerk, Kuldeep Singh. The attacker slashed Singh across the stomach several times without saying a word. At that point the concealed carrier drew his firearm and shot Blacktongue, killing him.
>
> Police said that the concealed carried did nothing wrong and ended up saving lives.
>
> "This could have been disastrous. Had this [customer] not shot, who knows what would've happened," King County Sergeant Cindi West told KIRO. "We might have a dead clerk right now and instead, we have a dead bad guy. We do not see any wrongdoing on the part of the customer."
>
> "In fact, he probably saved lives in this case."
>
> Singh said he feared for his life during the attack and is glad to be alive. A friend of his, who also works at the convenience store, told the news station that the concealed carrier was a "good guy" for intervening and stopping the attack. The concealed carrier was not expected to face any charges.

Here's the news report from KIRO 7 News:

This happened in ultra-leftist King County, Washington, of all places. I'm surprised they even let law-abiding people who pass a background check carry firearms, there. But at least this story leaves no doubt about why concealed carry permits exist.

Merrick Garland and the Second Amendment

This might be a useful story to send to Obama's latest Supreme Court nominee – a radically leftist who opposes the second amendment.

Washington Free Beacon again:

> Merrick Garland, President Obama's nominee to replace Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, has a record of opposing gun rights as a federal judge, which includes a vote to undo a landmark gun rights ruling.
>
> Garland was one of four judges who voted to rehear the case of *Parker v. District of Columbia* with a full ten-judge panel after a smaller panel struck down the District of Columbia's total ban on handguns. Garland's vote for this en banc hearing indicates that he may believe the decision to strike down the city's gun ban was mistaken.
>
> The other six judges on the appeals court voted not to rehear the case, and the Supreme Court went on to rule in *District of Columbia v. Heller* that the Second Amendment guarantees an individual's right to bear arms in the case.

So, he's a radical on gun control, well outside the mainstream.

As usual, we end all second amendment posts with an examination of the peer-reviewed literature on gun ownership and rates of violent crime. This evidence is not generally understood by people on the left, who tend to be guided more by emotions and peer approval than evidence when forming their views on controversial issues.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and

> Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

Desiring God asks: is socialism in conflict with Christianity?

March 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

My friend Kevin sent me this amazing article about socialism, which appeared at Desiring God (!!!), of all places. It was authored by Phillip Holmes, who – I see from his picture -has dark skin like me, which is awesome!

In the past, I have given Desiring God and John Piper a lot of heat for not connecting Christianity to the real world. This was especially annoying to me during elections, or when legislation of interest to conservatives was being debated. But I've noted that Piper is now much better than he was before.

Anyway, here's the intro to the article:

> Socialism is trending in the minds of many Americans. Some love it, some hate it, and others are indifferent to it. Some Christians argue that it's evil, while others argue that it's morally good or neutral. Those that argue for its wickedness often fail to condemn the crony capitalism and corporate welfare that is widespread in the United States; therefore, their arguments often fall on deaf ears with socialist sympathizers. The arguments for its moral good or neutrality typically appeals to emotion, rather than evidence, which is considered insufficient for those that oppose it.

Then they quote John Piper for the definition of socialism – and it's a great definition, it really captures what is interesting for us as Christians about socialism:

> A social and economic system that through legal or governmental or military

> coercion — in other words, you go to jail if you don't do this — establishes social ownership at the expense of private or personal ownership and/or you could say where coercion is used to establish social control — if not ownership, at least control of the means of production in society. And thus, through control, you effectively eliminate many of the implications and motivations of private ownership.
>
> In other words, Socialism borrows the compassionate aims of Christianity in meeting people's needs while rejecting the Christian expectation that this compassion not be coerced or forced. Socialism, therefore, gets its attractiveness at certain points in history where people are drawn to the entitlements that Socialism brings, and where people are ignorant or forgetful of the coercion and the force required to implement it — and whether or not that coercion might, in fact, backfire and result in greater poverty or drab uniformity or, worse, the abuse of the coercion as we saw in the murderous states like USSR and Cambodia.

F. A. Hayek says that the rule of law and private property are the foundations for all other rights, even religious liberty. So, Piper's focus on property rights is right on the money. This is what we should care about when it comes to socialism, because it impacts our other liberties. The more free the free market is, the most Christians can follow their consciences. But the more the government takes hold of private industry, the harder it is for Christians to earn a living without toeing the secular government's line. Take a look at what is happening to doctors and nurses in socialist countries like Canada. They are forced to perform abortions, they are forced to assist with assisted suicide. Why? Because government is running the health care system, and there is no other company you can run to that will respect your views. There is no escape when a secular government takes over large parts of the private sector.

This part is my favorite part, the author quotes my favorite economist, Thomas Sowell:

> Despite the good they seem to do in some cases, I can't in good conscience embrace them as a necessary means to escaping poverty. In my experience, I've witnessed it hinder more families than it has helped. We give social programs too much credit and the importance of family and faith too little. As a matter of fact, some economists assert that it was during the welfare state the condition of a particular group of its recipients began to decelerate. As the black economist Thomas Sowell pointed out:
>
> The black family, which had survived centuries of slavery and discrimination, began rapidly disintegrating in the liberal welfare state that subsidized unwed pregnancy and changed welfare from an emergency rescue to a way of life.
>
> Sowell continues to attack the myth that social programs improved the conditions of blacks in America:
>
> The economic rise of blacks began decades earlier, before any of the legislation

> and policies that are credited with producing that rise. The continuation of the rise of blacks out of poverty did not — repeat, did not — accelerate during the 1960s.
>
> The poverty rate among black families fell from 87 percent in 1940 to 47 percent in 1960, during an era of virtually no major civil rights legislation or anti-poverty programs.
>
> Evidence seems to suggest that the families that have eliminated the poverty cycle while on social programs would have very likely done the same without the programs. While there have been numerous instances of grave injustices towards minority groups in our country that have hindered progress (slavery, Jim Crow), social programs don't seem to be the cause of any significant improvements. Therefore, I want to humbly provide three practical reasons, based on my Christian worldview, why more social programs could actually substitute the family, empower the government, and hinder the church.

This is correct. Attempts to help the poor by redistributing wealth from those who produce to those who cannot or will not actually make things worse – by drawing more people "on the margin" into dependency.

One last snip:

> Social programs are a slippery slope that could lead to unjust governments, more broken homes, and dead churches. Therefore, I simply can't embrace them. A free society under a just government gives us plenty of options. We love our neighbors by starting non-profits, building hospitals, and opening schools that address the needs of the people without using the force of the government. What I'm proposing is not easy, but it is a biblical alternative that will require sacrifice, vision, newfound conviction, and a radical shift in how we view church, family, and government.

See, he sees private, voluntary charity as an option to government-run redistribution. An option that encourages economic growth, while safeguarding liberty and conscience for Christians.

I really love this article. The problem with me is that I don't think enough about how to make my views palatable to well-meaning people on the other side. The author of this article does know how to defuse potential objections gently and graciously.

Ted Cruz's panel of foreign policy advisers represent diverse perspectives

March 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted Cruz meets voters at a campaign event

Well, I sometimes listen to the Hugh Hewitt show, and since foreign policy is his thing, I get to hear pretty much every foreign policy point of view there is. Imagine how surprised I am to find that practically everyone that Hugh has on as a guest is on Cruz's foreign policy advisory panel.

This article from NewsMax explains:

> Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz unveiled his national security team, which includes former Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, former Missouri Sen. Jim Talent and former U.S. Attorney Andrew McCarthy.
>
> […]Abrams, who served Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, praised the senator's support for Israel, saying that "he has made it clear that he believes a strong Israel is America's key ally and asset in the Middle East.
>
> "He understands the power relationships in that region and he will put an end to the tensions of the Obama years that have weakened the U.S.-Israel alliance," Abrams added. "He is very clearly the most pro-Israel candidate in the race today."
>
> Other members of Cruz's team include:
>
> - Stewart Baker, former assistant secretary for policy at the Department of

> Health and Human Serves and general counsel of the National Security Agency.
> - Ilan Berman, vice president of the American Foreign Policy Council.
> - Retired Army Lt. General William Boykin, executive vice president of the Family Research Council.
> - Fred Fleitz, a former Central Intelligence Agency analyst.
> - Randy Fort, who has served in senior intelligence positions in the Reagan, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush administrations.
> - Frank Gaffney Jr., president and CEO of the Center for Security Policy.
> - Nile Gardiner, a former aide to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.
> - Mike Gonzalez, a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation.
> - Katharine Gorka, president of the Council on Global Security.
> - Steven Groves, a senior research Fellow at the Heritage Foundation.
> - Mary Habeck, a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.
> - Kristofer Harrison, a co-founder of the China Beige Book who once served in the George W. Bush White House.
> - Jerry Hendrix, a retired Navy captain.
> - Michael Ledeen, an author who serves at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.
> - Clare Lopez, a vice president at the Center for Security Policy.
> - Robert O'Brien, a partner at the Larson O'Brien LLP law firm in Los Angeles.
> - Michael Pillsbury, who was a Reagan campaign advisor in 1980.
> - Charles Stimson, the senior legal fellow and manager of National Security Law Program at the Heritage Foundation.
> - Daniel Vajdich, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council.
> - Christian Whiton, a former State Department senior advisor in the Bush administration.

My favorite guys on that panel are Frank Gaffney, Andrew McCarthy, Nile Gardiner, William Boykin and Michael Ledeen. Gaffney is probably the most hawkish of all of them, so I was surprised that Cruz put him in there. I always thought that Cruz was more libertarian on foreign policy than I am. And maybe he is, but he put all my favorite hawkish guys on his panel anyway. I don't know the specific people they listed from the Heritage Foundation, but it is my favorite think tank, so they have to be good. And I see someone named Mary Habeck from the American Enterprise Institute – my second favorite think tank. My favorite defense analyst from AEI is Mackenzie Eaglen, but they didn't pick her, oh well.

This article from the radically leftist Bloomberg View notes that Cruz has a whole ton of moderate conservative voices on his foreign policy advisor panel to balance out the hawks that I like so much.

It says:

> […]Cruz's team includes former officials who reject Gaffney's broad view that any

> Muslim who believes in Sharia law by definition believes in a totalitarian and violent ideology at war with America.
>
> "We're at war with a coalition of radical Islamists and radical secularists. It's not all one thing, nor is Islam all one thing," Michael Ledeen, a former Reagan administration official and a Cruz campaign adviser, told me.
>
> Jim Talent, a former Missouri Republican senator who was a key adviser to Romney in 2008 and 2012, is signed up for the Cruz team. So is Mary Habeck, a former staffer on George W. Bush's national security council, who is an expert on jihadi organizations and has warned against demonizing the entire religion of Islam.
>
> Another Cruz adviser, Elliott Abrams, helped craft Bush's policy to empower moderate Muslims in the Middle East against radicals. He told me he feels much the same way as Habeck. "It's now 15 years since 9/11, and I think it's obvious that Muslim citizens in the U.S. and Muslim leaders abroad have an absolutely critical role to play in fighting jihadis and other Muslim extremists," Abrams said. "This is partly a battle within Islam that they are going to have fight and win. Alienating these potential allies is the kind of foolish policy that the Obama administration has engaged in when it comes to Arab states that are our allies."
>
> **Victoria Coates, who has been Cruz's main adviser on national security since he came to the Senate, told me this tension on the policy team "is by design and not an accident."** She added: "Both Frank and Elliott are people I went out of my way to set up meetings with the Senator. He has met with both of them individually for years."
>
> […]His new team of national security advisers, in this respect, has something for everyone.

I think this balanced approach matches Cruz's approach in other areas. He isn't looking for mediocre people who are loyal to him above all. He has hawkish people in his panel, but he also has respected moderates. I have heard Andrew McCarthy, Michael Ledeen and Jim Talent on Hugh Hewitt's show many times. Victoria Coates is highly respected by everyone when it comes to foreign policy. The moderate people are the best at putting forward their view, just as Gaffney is the best at putting forward the hawkish view. Cruz's approach will lead to good discussions, which will lead to smart policies. We certainly can do a lot better than the Obama administration's "screw up then cover up" approach.

In contrast to Cruz, who does have good advisers on foreign policy, we are hearing this from Trump:

He says: "I'm speaking with myself, I have a very good brain". That might for for Scrabble or balancing your check book, but we are talking about foreign policy and national security, here.

Related posts

- Which candidate is best at working with Democrats to get things done?
- Ted Cruz's plan to lower taxes and simplify the process for filing tax returns
- Ted Cruz explains his position on the issues of abortion and right to life
- Ted Cruz introduces new bill to help ICE Agents enforce immigration laws
- Ted Cruz fought Rubio's amnesty in 2013 and fought Obama's executive amnesty in 2014
- Meet Ted Cruz's secret weapon: his supportive and loving wife Heidi Cruz
- Watch Ted Cruz disagree with an Iowa farmer on the issue of ethanol subsidies
- Is Marco Rubio right about his attacks on Ted Cruz's business tax plan?
- Ted Cruz's scary, unreported, undisclosed Goldman Sachs loan
- Harvard Law Review: Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen and is eligible to become President
- Ted Cruz blasts Democrats for hiding immigration histories of terrorists in the USA
- CNN Debate: Ted Cruz hammers Marco Rubio over support for amnesty and Libya disaster
- Ted Cruz invites climate scientists to Washington, D.C. to discuss climate change
- The FIVE departments that Ted Cruz would shut down if elected president

Does more relationship experience lead to better relationship success?

March 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

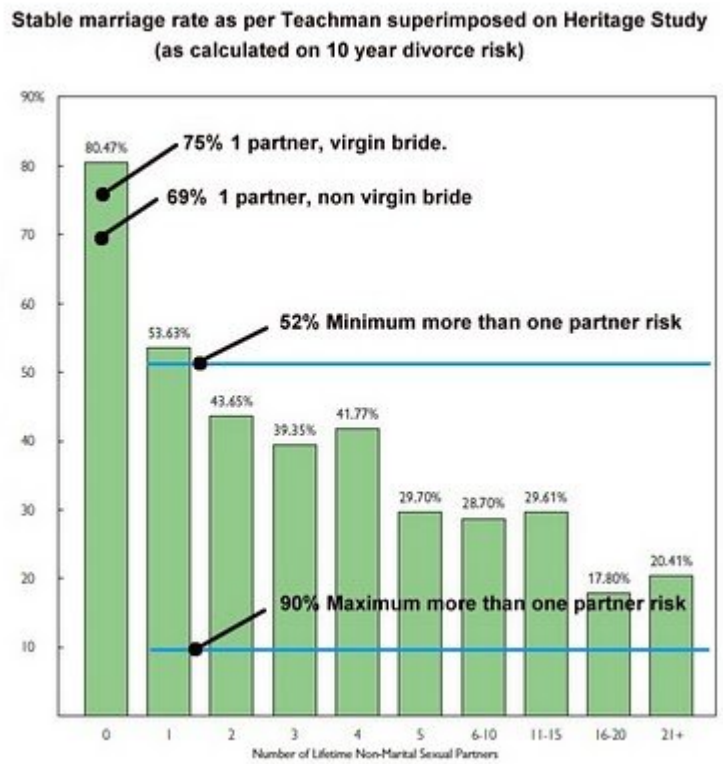

Published in the Journal of Marriage and Family

Marriage expert Brad Wilcox tweeted this article from the Institute for Family Studies.

It says:

> In most areas of life, having more experience is good. Want to be great in your chosen field? Sustained experience is essential. Want to be great at a sport? There's no substitute for practice. And anyone who runs a business can tell you that their best employees are those who have been in the job long enough to have learned how to handle the normal well and the unexpected with wisdom.
>
> While more experience is often beneficial in life, the story looks different when it comes to some types of experience before marriage. For example, in our *Before "I Do"* report, we surveyed a national longitudinal sample of young adults about their love lives prior to marriage to examine factors associated with future marital quality. **We found that having more sexual and cohabiting partners before marriage is associated with lower relationship quality once married. In particular, having only ever lived with or had sex with one's spouse was associated with higher marital quality. Our findings are consistent with other studies showing that cohabiting with more partners before marriage is associated with greater likelihood of divorce[1] and that a higher number of sexual partners before marriage is**

> **associated with lower marital quality and greater likelihood of divorce.**[2]
> As we noted, what happens in Vegas may not always stay in Vegas. But why?
>
> There are many reasons why having more romantic partners before marriage may put one at higher risk of difficulties in marriage. One of the most important explanations comes under the heading of what some call selection effects. For many people, an elevated risk of difficulties in marriage was present before they had their first relationship experience. Background characteristics such as parental divorce, low education, and economic disadvantage are associated both with having more sexual and cohabiting partners and also with lower marital quality and/or divorce.[3]So it may not be that having more sexual or cohabiting partners causes further risk because a lot of risk was already in motion. Selection is a big part of how relationships unfold, but is it the whole story? We believe that, in addition to selection, behavior matters and has plausible connections to marital outcomes. We are going to explain four reasons why having more relationship experience before tying the knot might make it harder to succeed in marriage.

Here are the 4 reasons:

1. **More Awareness of Alternatives**
2. **Changed Expectations: The Perfect Sexual Lover (in Your Mind)**
3. **More Experience Breaking It Off**
4. **Babies**

I have to quote the one that I've personally encountered in my mentoring – number three: more experience breaking it off. I've seen this commitmentphobia in two women who had "wild" periods in their past who had broken up with cohabitating boyfriends.

It says:

> Cohabitation has characteristics that seem paradoxical. Living with a partner makes it harder to break up than dating, all other things being equal, and often now comes at a time in relationship development where people have not really chosen each other for the future.[8] And yet, cohabiting couples frequently break up, and they are more likely than any other time in history not to end up marrying.[9]
>
> These days, cohabitation has become more a part of the dating scene than a lead-up to marriage. Let's call the phenomenon cohabi*dating*. In this context, some people are getting a lot of experience at leaving serious relationships (or surviving being left). Just as with our prior point, that does not sound bad in one way—at least insofar as people are breaking off relationships that had no future. But it's also true that people tend to get good at things they have a lot of experience doing. People can get good at moving out and moving on.
>
> How does that impact marriage? Some people probably so deeply learn that they

> can survive leaving a relationship when they are unhappy with it that they leave reasonably good marriages that would have given them and their children the best outcomes in life. They bail too quickly.
>
> Obviously, many others leave very poor or even dangerous marriages only after a lot of agonizing and effort. We’re not suggesting divorce is ever easy or that it is not sometimes the best course. But in a day and age when people get so much experience moving out and moving on, we think many may learn to do so too rapidly, and to their detriment.

If you want to get good at relationships, experience may not be the answer. Reading good studies like this, and making decisions that line up with the research is much wiser. As always, never follow your heart. Always follow rational arguments and evidence, and keep connected to a good panel of advisors who have had long-term relationships success. That’s the best way to avoid disaster.

Dr. Tim McGrew on alleged historical errors in the gospels

March 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I see that Brian Auten of Apologetics 315 is posting a lot of Tim McGrew material on his channel. Timothy J. McGrew (University of Scranton BA Philosophy 1988; Vanderbilt University PhD Philosophy 1992) is a Professor of Philosophy at Western Michigan University.

Here are a couple of Dr. McGrew's videos – with slides! – on alleged errors in the gospels.

Alleged errors in Mark and Matthew:

In this lecture, entitled Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels, Dr. Timothy McGrew critiques seven of the strongest objections to the historical reliability of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. This is about 55 minutes of content followed by fifteen minutes of Q&A.

More on this talk here. (including MP3)

Alleged errors in Luke and John:

In this lecture, entitled Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels, Dr. Timothy McGrew critiques the strongest objections to the historical reliability of the Gospels of Luke & John. This is about 55 minutes of content followed by thirty minutes of Q&A.

More on this talk here. (including MP3)

Bio of Tim McGrew:

> Dr. Timothy McGrew is Professor of Philosophy at Western Michigan University. He specializes in theory of knowledge, logic, probability theory, and the history and philosophy of science, and he has published in numerous journals including Mind, The Monist, Analysis, British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, and Philosophia Christi. His most recent publications include the article on "Evidence" in The Routledge Companion to Epistemology (forthcoming), a co-authored anthology in The Philosophy of Science (Blackwell, 2009), and a paper (with Lydia McGrew) on the the argument from miracles in The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology (Blackwell, 2009).

Always remember not to get bogged down in these low-level issues, though, until you have agreement from the skeptic about the higher order issues, e.g. – does God exist? etc. Scientific arguments first, historical and philosophical arguments second, Bible "errors" last of all.

The Muratorian fragment, dated 170 A.D., affirms 22 out of 27 New Testament books

March 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

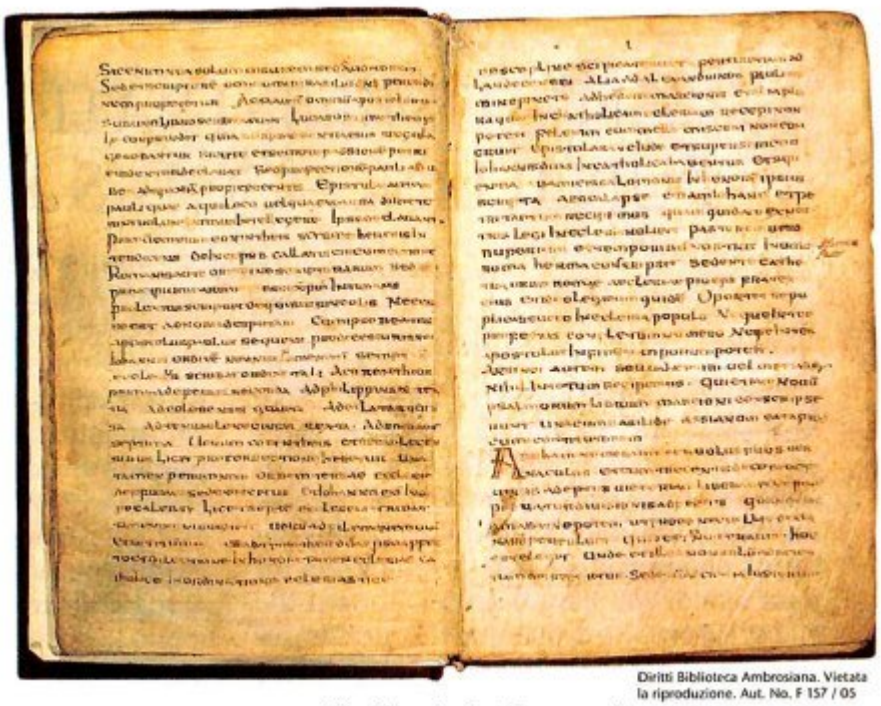

The Muratorian Fragment

Lines 32-85

The Muratorian fragment / The Muratorian canon (click for larger image)

I sometimes hear this odd objection that the books that were to be included in the Bible were not decided until the 4th century. I think it comes from some Hollywood movie, or maybe a TV show. Anyway, this post should help fix that myth.

I'm going to quote from New Testament expert Dr. Michael J. Kruger from his blog.

He writes:

> One of the key data points in any discussion of canon is something called the Muratorian fragment (also known as the Muratorian canon). This fragment, named after its discoverer Ludovico Antonio Muratori, contains our earliest list of the books in the New Testament. While the fragment itself dates from the 7th or 8th century, the list it contains was originally written in Greek and dates back to the end of the second century (c.180).
>
> […]What is noteworthy for our purposes here is that the Muratorian fragment affirms 22 of the 27 books of the New Testament. These include the four Gospels, Acts, all 13 epistles of Paul, Jude, 1 John, 2 John (and possibly 3rd John), and Revelation. This means that at a remarkably early point (end of the second century), the central core of the New Testament canon was already established and in place.

Although there is still dispute about some books, that does not negate the fact that the main books we use (the gospels, Acts, the letters of Paul) are all considered to be canon by 180 A.D., much before any famous church councils ever happened. And those books were decided on because they were in widespread use and respected by everyone.

What about the books that were in dispute? Do they throw any core doctrines into doubt?

> Second, if there was a core collection of New Testament books, then the theological trajectory of early Christianity had already been determined prior to the debates about the peripheral books being resolved. So, regardless of the outcome of discussion over books like 2 Peter or James, Christianity's core doctrines of the person of Christ, the work of Christ, the means of salvation, etc., were already in place and already established. The acceptance or rejection of books like 2 Peter would not change that fact.

By the way, I'd actually heard that the date for this fragment was 170 A.D., so it might even be earlier than Dr. Krueger says.

I did search around a bit for something to break the tie between me and Krueger, because I couldn't remember my source for the date. I found this book "Jesus, Gospel Tradition and Paul in the Context of Jewish and Greco-Roman Antiquity" by David E. Aune, and he writes on p. 22:

> The four Gospels are also referred to in the Canon Muratorianus, a seventh or eighth century manuscript originally translated from Greek into a deponent form of Latin and widely regarded as having been produced ca. 170 CE. Though the beginning of this canonical list is fragmentary (though obviously referring to Mark), the first two clear references to New Testament books are to Luke and John (lines 2, 9): tertio euangelii librum secando Lucan guard evangeliorutn Iohannis ex decipolis." ("The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke … The fourth of the Gospels is that of John, [one) of the disciples").

So, that's why the date in the title of this post is 170 A.D., and not the later 180 A.D. he mentions. And that's why there's no reason to be skeptical that the Bible we have today is any different than the Bible that everybody in the early church had.

Ted Cruz, Rick Perry and Carly Fiorina discuss the 2016 election with Sean Hannity

March 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rick Perry, Carly Fiorina and Ted Cruz appear on Fox News with Sean Hannity

Ted Cruz was on Fox News yesterday for a one-hour townhall meeting in Arizona with Sean Hannity, a Trump supporter.

I noted that the Republican National Committee posted that video on Youtube. Is that a sign the establishment is coming over to support the rebel candidate?

Summary:

- Should Ohio Governor John Kasich drop out of the race?
- What will happen if no one gets 1,237 delegates before the GOP convention to choose the nominee?
- What is a brokered convention?
- What is a contested convention?
- Is Donald Trump going to get to 1,237 delegates before the GOP convention?
- Is Ted Cruz going to get to 1,237 delegates before the GOP convention?
- Why does the establishment refuse to get behind candidates who are strong on legal immigration and border security?
- What did Ted Cruz see on the border with Mexico?
- Why aren't Republicans concerned about border security?
- What would Ted Cruz do about sanctuary cities?
- What would Ted Cruz do about e-verify?
- What would Ted Cruz do about tracking entry / exit of people who are given visas?
- What would Ted Cruz do about welfare benefits given to illegal immigrants?
- If Donald Trump is tough on border security, then why did he donate so much money to open borders / pro-amnesty Democrats?

- Has Donald Trump released the New York Times tape where he explained that his real views on border security are much more moderate than he tells the public?
- What would Ted Cruz do to encourage job creators to create more jobs, and rein in government spending?
- What would Ted Cruz do to fix the regulations that are stifling small businesses?
- What would Ted Cruz do to make health care more affordable?
- Surprise guest: why does former CEO of Hewlett-Packard Carly Fiorina support Ted Cruz for President?
- Surprise guest: why does former Governor of Texas Rick Perry support Ted Cruz for President?

Leftist Politico reports that the Cruz Campaign is not wasting any time going after Marco Rubio supporters:

> In Utah, his leadership team moved to lock down the Florida senator's lengthy list of legislative endorsements before next Tuesday's caucus. Cruz is planning to meet with Gov. Gary Herbert Saturday at a campaign kickoff event for Utah Sen. Mike Lee, another Cruz ally. In Washington, several of Rubio's national security advisers signed on with Cruz — after, in part, courting from [Victoria] Coates. And nationally, Cruz's money team is making the case to Rubio's former donors that Cruz's time has come.
>
> Their message: The party is running out of time to stop Donald Trump — and Cruz is the only one who can do it.
>
> […]The broad-based, national effort comes as Cruz seeks to consolidate the anti-Trump wing of the GOP behind his campaign. He lags well behind Trump in delegates, but his team is hopeful that with a united party behind him, he'll turn that deficit into a lead by the time the he heads to the Republican National Convention in July. They insist he could do even better: assemble enough delegates to score an outright win — though that's a path that has narrowed dramatically and remains a long-shot for Cruz.
>
> A win in Utah on Tuesday, however, would be a significant first step toward catching up in the delegate count, and Cruz enjoyed a boost toward that goal Friday when former GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney—whom Cruz has frequently criticized– said he would vote for Cruz in Utah over Trump and over Ohio Gov. John Kasich.
>
> "A vote for Governor Kasich in future contests makes it extremely likely that Trumpism would prevail," Romney wrote in a Facebook post, echoing Cruz's argument. "I will vote for Senator Cruz and I encourage others to do so as well, so that we can have an open convention and nominate a Republican."

Leftist USA Today reports that Marco Rubio effectively endorsed Ted Cruz earlier this week:

> Marco Rubio hasn't endorsed Ted Cruz, but he seemed to come awfully close

> during a conference call with supporters this week.
>
> Cruz is “the only conservative left in the race,” Rubio told supporters in Minnesota, according to a tape obtained by the Twin Cities *Pioneer Press*.

Meanwhile, leftist CNN reports that even liberal RINO Lindsey Graham is throwing his support behind Ted Cruz:

> In a sign of just how much the Republican presidential primary has turned the party on its head, Sen. Lindsey Graham will headline a fundraiser on Monday in support of Ted Cruz.

> […]Support for Cruz is an about-face for the South Carolina senator, who compared nominating GOP front-runner Donald Trump or Cruz to being shot or poisoned. **He recently mocked Cruz’s unpopularity among his colleagues, saying earlier this month: “If you killed Ted Cruz on the floor of the Senate, and the trial was in the Senate, nobody would convict you.”**

> “He’s certainly not my preference, but he’s a reliable Republican, conservative, which I’ve had many differences with,” the South Carolina Republican said.
>
> When asked about his dramatic change in stance toward Cruz, Graham admitted that his Senate colleague is “not well liked,” but said, “I have doubts about Mr. Trump, I don’t think he’s a Republican, I don’t think he’s a conservative, I think his campaign’s built on xenophobia, race-baiting and religious bigotry, I think he’d be a disaster for our party and as Senator Cruz would not be my first choice, I think he is a Republican conservative who I could support.”
>
> **On specific issues, Graham said he believes Cruz would be a reliable partner for Israel, would build the Keystone XL pipeline extension, would repeal and replace Obamacare and would nominate a true conservative to be on the Supreme Court.**
>
> Still, Graham said he believes that the third remaining Republican candidate for president, Ohio Gov. John Kasich, would be “the most viable general election candidate,” but that he does not see how Kasich can win the primary.
>
> The move is also a sign that Cruz might be starting to gain traction with his colleagues in the Senate.
>
> Cruz picked up his first Senate endorsement from Utah Sen. Mike Lee last week.

I think it’s amazing that Ted Cruz has actually gotten the liberal Republican establishment to come over and support him, and all without compromising a thing. In my lifetime, I’ve witnessed the slide of the Republican party to the moderate middle. I never thought I would see the day when the moderate middle had to come over to the conservative right. And yet here we are! I pray it’s not too late.

William Lane Craig debates atheist Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?

March 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here is the video from the third debate from Dr. William Lane Craig's speaking tour in Australia.

Format:

- William Lane Craig (15 min)
- Lawrence Krauss (15 min, but was actually 21:40)
- Moderated discussion
- Question and answer

Dr. Graham Oppy, the moderator, is a well-known atheist philosopher. He let Dr. Krauss speak for 21 minutes and 40 seconds, which is why my summary of Krauss is so long.

The video:

Summary

After careful consideration, I decided not to be snarky at all in this summary. What you read below is what happened. There may be some small mistakes, but I will fix those if people tell me about them. I also included some quotes and timestamps for the more striking things that Dr. Krauss said.

The debate itself starts at 4:50 with Dr. Craig's opening speech. He does use slides to show the structure of his arguments.

Dr. Craig's opening speech. (4:50)

1. The kalam cosmological argument:
    - God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe
    - The Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem supports the absolute beginning of the universe
    - Even if our universe is part of a multiverse, the multiverse itself would have to have an absolute beginning
    - Speculative cosmologies try to challenge the Big Bang theory, but none of them – even if true – can establish that the past is eternal
    - Only two types of things could explain the origin of spece, time, matter and energy – either abstract objects or minds
    - Abstract objects do not cause effects, but minds do cause effects (we do it ourselves)
    - A mind is the best explanation for the origin of the universe
2. The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
    - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
    - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
    - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
    - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see
3. The cosmic fine-tuning for the existence of intelligent life
    - There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) cosmological constants and 2) quantities
    - These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life
    - There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design
    - Law is rejected because they are put in at the beginning or matter – they don't emerge from matter
    - Chance must be rejected, because they odds are just too long unless you appeal to a world-ensemble
    - We do not observe what the world ensemble hypothesis predicts that we should observe
    - Design is the best explanation for finely-tuned constants and quantities
4. The existence of objective moral values and duties
    - Our experience of morality (values and duties) is that it is objectively real and incumbent on us
    - When someone goes into a classroom and shoots at innocent children, that is objectively wrong
    - On naturalism, moral values and moral duties do not exist – they are conventional and variable by time and place
    - The best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties is that God exists

5. The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus
    - There are three widely-accepted facts that are best explained by the resurrection hypothesis
    - 1) the empty tomb, 2) the post-mortem appearances, 3) the early church's belief in the resurrection
    - Naturalistic attempts to explain these 3 boilerplate facts fail
    - The best explanation of the 3 minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead
6. The immediate experience of God
    - Belief in God is a "properly basic" belief – rational even without arguments because of experience of God

Dr. Krauss' opening speech. (21:12)

Slides: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

1. Religious pluralism I
    - There have been lots of different gods created by people through history
    - We've gotten rid of all of them by understanding how the universe works by doing science
    - Religion is just stories, and the stories are inconsistent with how the universe works
2. Progress of naturalistic science I
    - Newtonian physics refutes the idea that angels push planets around
    - Darwinian evolution refutes design arguments, including the one that Dr. Craig presented (24:10)
    - Biochemistry hasn't explained how life originated, but we will have the solution soon
    - Physics shows us that matter can be created and destroyed without need a God
    - Physics shows us that universes can be created and destroyed "no problem"
3. Religious pluralism II
    - Since we have been able to disprove all the gods we've invented, why hang on to the last one
    - It's unlikely that the God that Dr. Craig presented exists, because we disproved all the others he didn't present
4. Hiddenness of God
    - There is a complete lack of evidence for the other 999 gods, so how likely is it that the God Dr. Craig presented exists
5. Religious pluralism III
    - There are inconsistencies between various religions, so therefore there can be no religion that is right
6. Progress of naturalistic science II
    - Peasants had a very low level of knowledge about the world and they believed

in God
    - But our level of knowledge has increased over time, so we shouldn't believe in God now
    - Peasants thought that the Earth orbited the Sun, but this is now known to be false
    - The Scriptures said that the Earth orbited the Sun, but now we know that's false from science
7. Christianity plagiarizes from other religions I
    - There is nothing new or special about Jesus
    - He's just as unpleasant as all the other gods
    - Everything particular to Jesus occurs in other religions
8. Catholics are inconsistent about what they believe
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in transubstantiation
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in the virgin birth
9. The resurrection is copied from many other religions
    - Dionysus, Osiris, etc.
10. There is no evidence for the resurrection
    - The stories about Jesus were written "decades or hundreds of years after the fact"
    - The stories are inconsistent with each other
    - Dr. Craig tells me that historical Jesus scholars all accept that the resurrection happened
    - That's like saying that all alien abductions experts agree that alien abductions happened
    - It's unreasonable to think that the resurrection happened because no one saw it happen
    - I accept that people reported on appearances, but hallucination theory can explain that
11. The timeline for the creation and incarnation are all wrong
    - The creation, planet formation, hominids, incarnation, etc. all take place in the wrong times
    - If God knew what he was doing, he would done everything at better times to be more efficient
12. David Hume's argument against miracles is sound
    - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – nothing wrong with this argument
    - Miracles are really just coincidences
    - Catholic apparitions at Lourdes disprove the historical argument that Dr. Craig made for the resurrection
13. God is petty and jealous
    - God shouldn't demand that we trust him, esteem him and consider his character when we make decisions
    - The atoning death of Jesus for the sins of the world also makes no sense

14. Belief is based on geography
    - What you believe is clearly correlated with where you are born
    - There is even an Islamic clone of Dr. Craig who “uses the exact same arguments” that he does to prove Islam
    - Belief in God is decreasing in the Internet-accessible world
15. Science can develop morals without God
    - Reason is able to guide our actions to be moral
    - Morality evolves over time, so there is no objective morality
    - Catholicism teaches things that are immoral
    - Some things are prohibited by biological revulsion, such as incest
    - But if a brother and sister have sex using condoms “is that morally wrong? I can’t say it is frankly” (37:24)
16. Dr. Craig is irrational
    - “I came here convinced based on my past interactions and his writing that Dr. Craig was a dishonest Charlatan”
    - “Any argument that validates God is reasonable to him”
    - “And any argument against it is not only unreasonable but wrong and worth distorting”
    - “Because it must be wrong – he’s decided the answer in advance”
17. Dr. Craig is immoral
    - Dr. Craig thinks it is OK for God to command that Canaanite children are killed
    - “So in fact if they were Canaanite children in that schoolroom that he talked about then it would be OK”
    - It’s not reasonable to justify genocide in that way, but Dr. Craig is willing to go to those lengths
18. The cause of the origin of the space time universe need not be God
    - Dr. Craig says that if there is an explanation for the origin or space, time, matter and energy it must be God
    - But it could just as easily be turtles or Zeus
19. Dr. Craig misrepresents the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem
    - Alexander Vilenkin wrote me an e-mail that says that the theorem doesn’t work in all cases
    - “Dr. Craig is so convinced that these arguments must be true that he won’t listen to the fact that they’re not”
20. Darwinian evolution explains the fine-tuning
    - “Life was fine tuned – we got rid of it with Darwin”
    - Mutation and natural selection explain the cosmic fine-tuning argument that Dr. Craig presented
21. Suboptimal design disproves the fine-tuning argument
    - “We get back aches” therefore “This argument that [the universe] is fine-tuned for life is nonsense”
22. William Lane Craig can be proven to exhibit homosexual behavior using logical arguments

    - Look, you can construct arguments that are clearly wrong
    - Premise 1: “All mammals exhibit homosexual behavior”
    - Premise 2: “William Lane Craig is a mammal”
    - Seems to be saying that logical arguments can prove false things “it’s nonsense”
23. Dr. Craig distorted a podcast that some group made on pain receptors
    - Dr. Craig’s faith is so strong that it causes him to distort what this group said

Discussion: (44:35)

I will not be summarizing everything that was said, just a few main points.

The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can’t even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don’t work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don’t have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) “All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON’T KNOW!!!!!!!” (raising his voice)
- Craig: I’m not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has

been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"
- Craig: "I wonder what you deleted from the original letter"
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "I just told you!"
- Craig: "Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) 'You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.'
- Craig: "That's Vilenkin."
- Krauss: "In this paper, that's absolutely right"
- Krauss: But it's ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it's unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: "Isn't it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?"
- Krauss: "No"
- Craig: "Well, can you give us one then"
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) "In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong"
- Krauss: "You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it's hard"
- Craig: "Right"

I noticed that a huge number of atheist web sites are taking the Vilenkin quote that Krauss used out of context, like this one and this one. There are probably a lot more of them like that, which I think is interesting. That's why we have these debates, I guess. To set the record straight about who accuses people of being dishonest, and who is actually dishonest.

Fine-tuning:

- Krauss tried to argue that he had explained the fine-tuning with the Higgs particle, but Dr. Craig said that only applied to the cosmological constant, not all the other examples of fine-tuning. Krauss said that it wasn't impressive that this universe permitted life and that "It would have been much more surprising if we evolved in a universe in which we couldn't live". Krauss argued the fine-tuning was only for "Life

like us". But Dr. Craig explained that the fine-tuning is what allows us to have the basics of any kind of life, like slow-burning stars, chemical diversity, etc. – things that are required for basic minimal life functions in any living system. Craig said that he was working with the current physical laws of this universe (F = ma, etc.) and that he was looking at what changed if we changed those even slightly. Krauss tried to say that if he changed things like the mass of particles then the strength of forces would change. (But the forces aren't laws!) Krauss argued that the cosmological constant would be even better for life if it was zero, and Craig said that the life permitting range did include zero, but that the range of life-permitting values was narrow.

Jesus' existence:

- Craig reponded to the mystery religions charge, the charge that the evidence for the minimal facts is too late/too weak, the charge that grief visions explained the evidence better, and Hume's argument against miracles. Craig brought up the early creed from 1 Cor 15:3-7 and explained to Krauss that it was 5 years after the events, and that Jewish standards of oral transmission were strong enough to ensure that the creed was reliable, and most of the eyewitnesses would still have been alive.

Audience Q and A: (1:21:09)

The first topic is the grounding of morality. Krauss agrees that there is no objective morality and no objective moral oughts. He also said that that standards of behavior are arbitrary, and that they change over time and they are adopted for promoting social order. Dr. Craig pressed the point that science itself would collapse without ethical values. It assumes them, but cannot ground them.

The next topic was free will. Krauss is a determinist. Craig asked him how he could reconcile moral responsibility with determinism.

The next topic was the effectiveness of mathematics. Krauss didn't have an explanation for it and didn't think it needed one. Then they got into whether the Genesis has been verified by science and whether it is meant to be taken literally.

The next topic was whether philosophy makes any progress. Craig gave the example of verificationism being rejected as too narrow, and self-refuting. Krauss: "I'm going to come to the defense of philosophy for the first time". Craig: "That's amazing!" Krauss said that science provides new knowledge. Craig said there were some things that could be known apart from science.

Simon Brace on the nature of spiritual warfare and a plea to churches

March 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

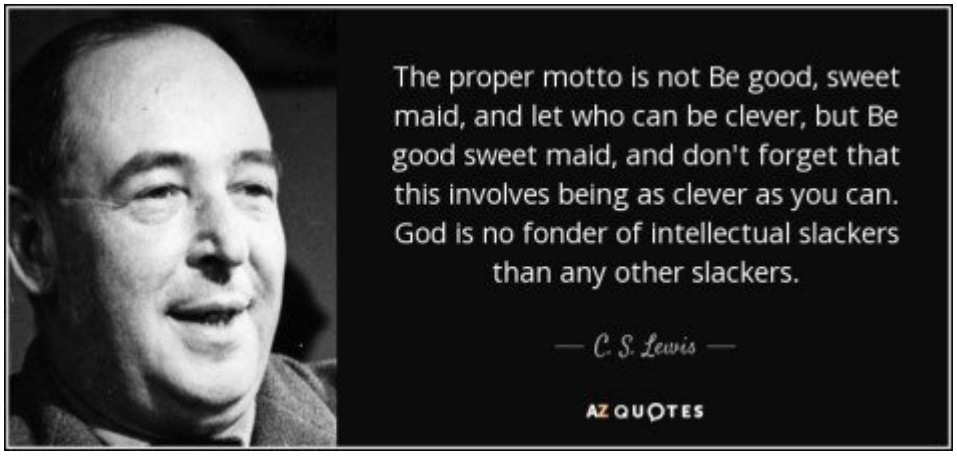

C.S. Lewis has some words to live by for you

This passionate, challenging lecture has been getting shared a lot on Facebook, so I thought that I would do a summary of it.

First, you can grab the MP3 file here.

Note that this talk is given by a very conservative evangelical Christian who is speaking to Christians. So this is not intended for a non-Christian audience. However, non-Christians are free to tune in if you want to hear a really passionate, fire-breathing conservative evangelical go non-linear over the superficial turn that the evangelical church has taken. If you are familiar with J.P. Moreland's view that spiritual warfare is really about disputing speculations and falsehoods using logic and evidence, then you'll know the meaning of the term "spiritual warfare" he has in mind. When he says spiritual warfare, he means apologetics: knowledge and preparation.

I would really caution you not to listen to this if you are not passionate about defending God's honor. It will overwhelm and upset you. Having said that, this lecture reflects my convictions about the churches need to drop anti-intellectualism and take up apologetics. And not pre-suppositional apologetics, which I think is ineffective, but *evidential* apologetics. Evidential apologetics is effective, which is why everyone in the Bible used it.

About the speaker:

> **Simon Brace** is the Director of Evangelism of Southern Evangelical Seminary. Simon was born in Zimbabwe and grew up in South Africa. Simon has a construction background and has lived in a number of countries and travelled extensively. He has a MA in Apologetics and BA in Religious Studies and is currently working on an MA in Philosophy at SES. Simon leads TEAM which is the missions program of SES on local, national, and international trips. In addition, Simon has worked with Ratio Christi at SES, and has an extensive knowledge of Ratio Christi's history and operation. Simon currently resides in North Carolina

> with his wife Nel and children, Eva and Olivia.

I liked the second part of the lecture more than the first part, so there is less summarizing of the first part.

Topics:

- What does the New Testament say about spiritual warfare in Ephesians?
- Christian slogans about spiritual warfare sound pious, but they are mistaken
- Today, Christianity is focused on piety and zeal, not on study and knowledge
- The result is that Christianity in the West is in a state of erosion and decline
- What we are doing about spiritual warfare is not working to stop the decline
- Preaching, publishing, programs, retreats, etc. are not very useful for spiritual warfare
- Enthusiasm and passion without knowledge are not very useful for spiritual warfare
- The Church has a theoretical understanding of spiritual warfare, but no real capability
- Doesn't work: trying to make Christianity seem popular and cool
- Doesn't work: making Christian music and art that non-Christians will like
- Doesn't work: pastors trying to be relevant by having cool clothes and cool haircuts
- Doesn't work: fundamentalists getting angry about peripheral issues
- Doesn't work: not read things apart from the Bible and sound foolish when speaking in the public square
- Doesn't work: church leaders think that careful exegesis and expository preaching is a good answer to skeptics
- What works: we need to train people who are prepared and willing to defend the truth of the Christian faith
- Evangelicalism has a deep suspicion of reading things outside the Bible, so they are unable to refute anything
- Evangelicals are hyper-spiritualized and hysterical, focusing on demons, prophecy and end-times, etc.
- Evangelicals have a pagan view of using their minds to alter reality, which is irrational and superstitious
- Evangelicals like conservative celebrity preachers who do *nothing* to correct anti-intellectualism in the church
- Evangelicals are focused on their personal relationships with Jesus instead of their whole worldview
- Evangelicals focus too much on homeschooling and not enough on how to impact the secular universities
- Church programs for youth are about "strumming guitars and eating pizza once a week", not apologetics
- Evangelicals have an over-inflated view of the effectiveness of their (non-intellectual) evangelism methods
- The primary focus and primary responsibility in spiritual warfare is not dealing with

supernatural evil
- The real focus and responsibility in spiritual warfare is specified in 2 Cor 10:3-5
- What we ought to be doing is defeating speculations (false ideas), using logical arguments and evidence
- Defending the faith is not memorizing Bible verses and throwing them out randomly
- Defending the faith is not just preaching the gospel
- Demolishing an argument requires understanding arguments: premises, conclusions, the laws of logic
- We should exchange our pious Bible memorizing skills and the like for a class in critical thinking
- The New Testament requires that elders be capable of *refuting* those who oppose sound doctrine (Titus 1:9)
- It is not enough to preach a good sermon, elders have to be able to defend the Christian faith as well
- People who run conservative seminaries do not mandate that M.Div graduates study apologetics
- Famous pastors like Driscoll, Begg, etc. need to teach other pastors to emphasize apologetics in church
- People in church won't engage the culture unless they have reasons and evidence to believe Christianity is true
- We need a balance of both piety and intellectual engagement
- We need to make our evangelism rooted in the intellect in order to have an influence at the university
- Mission organizations also have a responsibility to defend the faith and not merely preach (1 Peter 3:15)

And here is his closing quote from C.S. Lewis:

> To be ignorant and simple now not to be able to meet the enemies on their own ground would be to throw down our weapons and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.

I was really humbled by this, because I sort of knew that the church was anti-intellectual, but I didn't really reflect on how everyone else in society thinks that we are anti-intellectual. It's troubling. The quickest way to make Biblical Christianity respectable again is to hit the books and defeat all comers in intellectual disputations. Are we ready to make the sacrifices to do that?.

New poll: Ted Cruz poised to sweep Utah delegates, leading with 53%

March 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted Cruz meets the voters at a campaign stop

The Salt Lake City Tribune reports:

> Texas Sen. Ted Cruz has zoomed to a commanding lead in Utah's GOP caucuses, according to a new poll released Saturday. It also gave a glimpse into how frustrated the state's Republicans are with Donald Trump's candidacy.
>
> The Y2 Analytics survey shows Cruz with 53 percent support among likely Republican caucus-goes and if that matches Tuesday's caucus vote, he'd win all of the state's 40 GOP delegates.
>
> Coming in second is Ohio Gov. John Kasich with 29 percent, while Trump, the national front-runner, was a distant third at 11 percent.
>
> The Y2 Analytics poll was conducted from Thursday to Saturday and included 500 respondents, capturing some of the reaction from public events held by all three of the Republican candidates. Cruz held three public events in Utah on Saturday with Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, commentator Glenn Beck and former presidential candidate Carly Fiorina. Kasich and Trump held events on Friday.
>
> […]This is the first poll released in the state in over a month, and the only one since the field narrowed to just three candidates.
>
> It showed that Cruz performed even better among "very likely" caucus attendees, coming in at 57 percent.
>
> **Scott Riding with Y2 Analytics said it appears that a bulk of Florida Sen. Marco Rubio's supporters went to Cruz after he dropped out earlier this week.**
>
> "It is fascinating to see how close Cruz is to wrapping it up," he said. "It is also surprising how discouraged Republicans are with the direction of the national

> party.”

Time to review Cruz’s achievements to see why he’s the best candidate still running.

Ted Cruz’s record of conservative achievements

Ted Cruz is also the most qualified candidate running.

Young Conservatives explains his achievements:

- Graduated valedictorian in 1988 from Second Baptist High School
- Graduated cum laude from Princeton University in 1992
- Graduated magna cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1995
- 1992 U.S. National Debate Champion representing Princeton
- 1995 World Debating Championship semi-finalist representing Harvard
- Served a law clerk to Chief Justice William Rehnquist, making him the first Hispanic ever to clerk for a Chief Justice of the United States
- Served as Solicitor General of Texas from 2003 to 2008, making him the first Hispanic Solicitor General in Texas, the youngest Solicitor General in the entire country and the longest tenure in Texas history
- Partner at the law firm Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, where he led the firm’s U.S. Supreme Court and national appellate litigation practice
- Authored over 80 SCOTUS briefs and presented over 40 oral arguments before The Court
- Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, where he taught U.S. Supreme Court litigation

Smart guy.

Here are the specifically *conservative* achievements:

- In the landmark case of District of Columbia v. Heller, Cruz assembled a coalition of 31 states in defense of the principle that the 2nd Amendment guarantees an individual right to keep and bear arms
- Presented oral arguments before the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit
- Defended the Ten Commandments monument on the Texas State Capitol grounds,
- Defended the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools
- Defended the State of Texas against an attempt by the International Court of Justice to re-open the criminal convictions of 51 murderers on death row throughout the United States

He’s 5 for 9 arguing cases before the Supreme Court. Cruz knows how to convince liberal scholars to come over to his side. That’s what he enjoys – persuading people who disagree with him.

Here’s some of the legislation he introduced:

- ObamaCare Repeal Act
- Disarm Criminals and Protect Communities Act
- Defund Obamacare Act of 2013
- A bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to permit States to require proof of citizenship for registration to vote in elections for Federal office
- State Marriage Defense Act of 2014
- A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the intentional discrimination of a person or organization by an employee of the Internal Revenue Service
- A bill to prohibit the Department of the Treasury from assigning tax statuses to organizations based on their political beliefs and activities
- American Energy Renaissance Act of 2014
- A bill to deny admission to the United States to any representative to the United Nations who has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity against the United States and poses a threat to United States national security interests
- SuperPAC Elimination Act of 2014
- Free All Speech Act of 2014
- A bill to prevent the expansion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program unlawfully created by Executive memorandum on August 15, 2012
- Sanction Iran, Safeguard America Act of 2014

And he has gotten more legislation passed than Marco Rubio in the Senate:

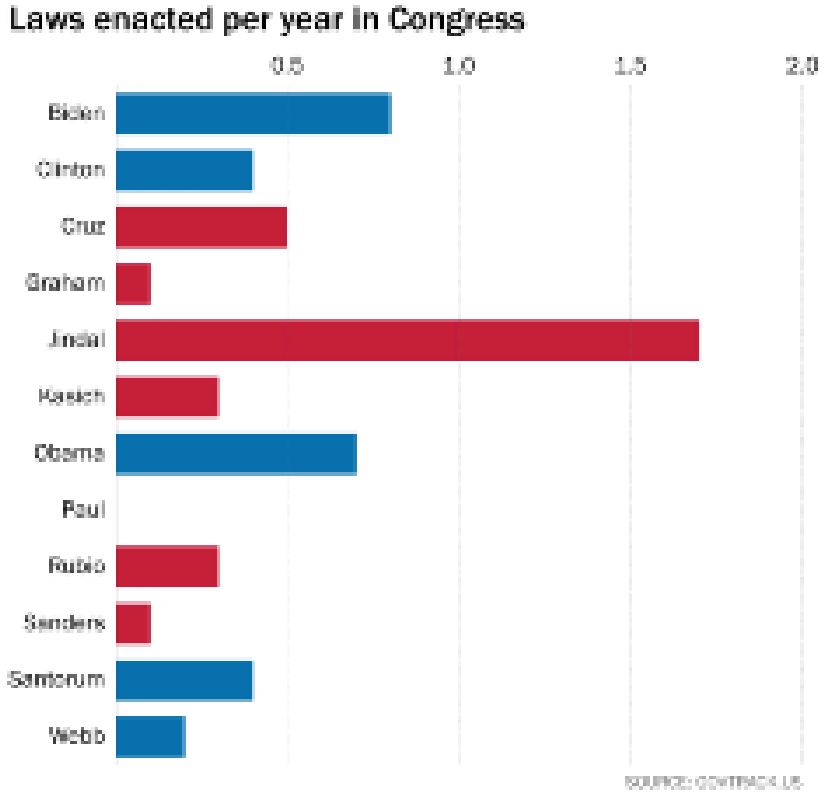

Laws enacted per year in Congress

He has done something to address so many of the things I’ve been writing about on this blog – voter fraud, IRS discriminating against conservatives, etc. I am a Cruz supporter

because I like Cruz, not because I oppose Trump and Rubio.

Related posts

- Ted Cruz's panel of foreign policy advisers represent diverse perspectives
- Which candidate is best at working with Democrats to get things done?
- Ted Cruz's plan to lower taxes and simplify the process for filing tax returns
- Ted Cruz explains his position on the issues of abortion and right to life
- Ted Cruz introduces new bill to help ICE Agents enforce immigration laws
- Ted Cruz fought Rubio's amnesty in 2013 and fought Obama's executive amnesty in 2014
- Meet Ted Cruz's secret weapon: his supportive and loving wife Heidi Cruz
- Watch Ted Cruz disagree with an Iowa farmer on the issue of ethanol subsidies
- Is Marco Rubio right about his attacks on Ted Cruz's business tax plan?
- Ted Cruz's scary, unreported, undisclosed Goldman Sachs loan
- Harvard Law Review: Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen and is eligible to become President
- Ted Cruz blasts Democrats for hiding immigration histories of terrorists in the USA
- CNN Debate: Ted Cruz hammers Marco Rubio over support for amnesty and Libya disaster
- Ted Cruz invites climate scientists to Washington, D.C. to discuss climate change
- The FIVE departments that Ted Cruz would shut down if elected president

Should a man go into full-time apologetics ministry if he intends to marry?

March 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

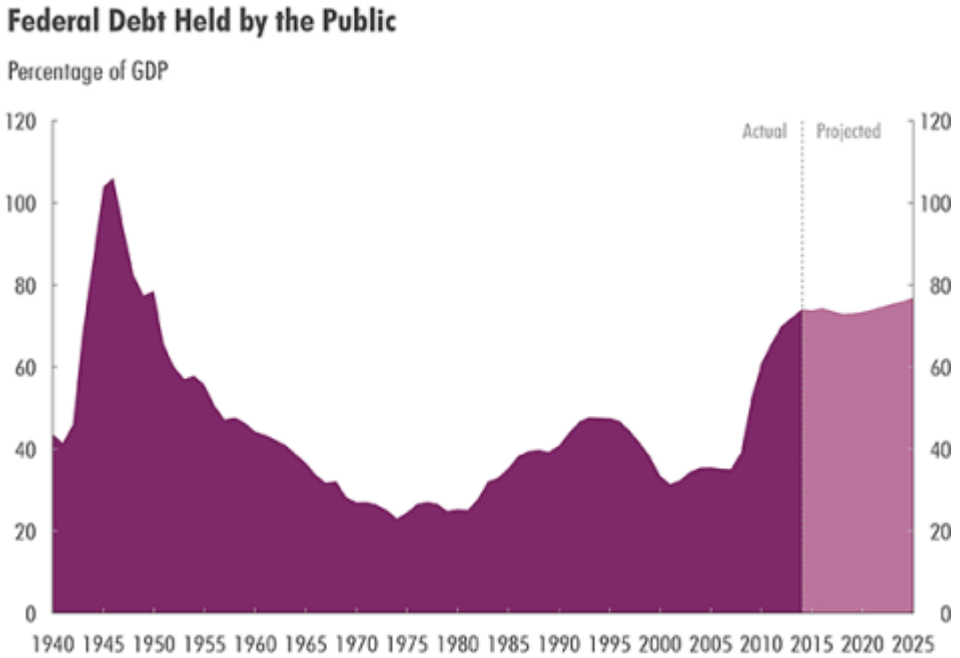

Congressional Budget Office: Debt to GDP ratio

Lydia McGrew has a post up at What's Wrong With the World blog that is just excellent.

Excerpt:

> Apologetics is wonderful and incredibly important. It's a wonderful thing that a revival of specifically evidentialist apologetics is happening in the United States and even, to some extent, in the Anglophone world at large.
>
> Unfortunately, this revival of interest in apologetics and in being Christian philosophers is coming at a very bad time, economically. Even if you are a genius, your chances in 2013 and following of getting a stable job by the route of going to graduate school in philosophy (or almost any area of the humanities) are pretty darned slim. If you're not a genius, fuhgetaboutit. Nor were there ever all that many jobs in philosophy. It was always an iffy proposition, but it's much worse now than it was even twenty years ago.
>
> As for starting ministries, a poor economy makes it extremely hard to do that, too, because people don't have as much disposable income to donate. Moreover, even in a more robust economy, if all the eager young apologists were to flock to start apologetics and/or campus ministries, they would be competing among themselves for a finite number of available dollars from donors. So that's not the best idea either.
>
> **Let me speak very bluntly here: In my opinion, God doesn't need a whole raft of impractical idealists out there getting themselves into debt or half starving (or really starving) with no idea of how in the**

> **world they are ever going to support even themselves, much less a family, out at the other end of their education. That just burdens the church with a large number of able-bodied but needy Christians who are in a seemingly unending stage of transition, "getting an education for the kingdom" or "hoping to do work for the kingdom" without a viable plan in mind or any fiscal light at the end of the tunnel.**
>
> **Instead, I believe that we need an army of tentmakers. If you have a job or a marketable skill, for heaven's sake (literally), don't quit that job and join the ranks of starving students. Keep your day job, but enrich your mind and prepare yourself to answer people's questions about Christianity by studying on your own time. If you have entrepreneurial abilities and the capital, start a business. That will support not only yourself but others you employ, and if successful, you will have more money to give to Christian ministries.**
>
> **But even if you aren't the entrepreneurial type or don't have that opportunity, at least make sure (to the extent that one can in today's world) that you can pay the rent and put food on your own table as well as supporting whatever number of additional people you plan to take on. (In other words, if you are a guy who would like to get married and have children, bear that in mind.) This will inevitably mean spending time at all that distasteful stuff like networking and making a resume. Bookish types don't enjoy that stuff, because it seems bogus, but it can't be helped. It will undoubtedly mean, for most people, not being full-time students beyond the undergraduate level, especially not in the humanities, not trying to become full-time academics as a life work, and not going into full-time ministry, even if you would ideally like to do one or more of those three things.**
>
> In the end, if we can have this army of tentmakers, there will be (Lord willing) money to allow some people to work in full-time ministry. But it's going to be quite a small proportion of those who are interested or would ideally like to do so.
>
> […]Inevitably, the course of action I am suggesting will mean a bifurcation for many between their day job and what they are most passionately interested in. So be it. Indeed, so it has ever been in the world. What proportion of people at any moment in human history have been blessed enough to spend most of their time working on what they are most passionately interested in? The question answers itself. So I think that bifurcation has to be accepted by a great many people and that doing so will lead to what I might call a healthier "Christian economy" among committed Christians than what we could otherwise end up with.

So let's see her advice in bullet-point form:

- The job market for philosophers is very bad
- A bad economy means less support money is available
- It's important to have a plan to fund your ministry
- Leverage your full-time job to fund your ministry

So I want to make two comments.

Making bad decisions because you think God is telling you to

I often find that when I talk to Christians, there is this sort of hyper-spiritualized way of deciding what to do, and I've written about this in one of my favorite posts. Hyper-spiritual Christians read the Bible, which is good, but then they don't tend to also look at practical things like economics, science and public policy when making their decisions. The Bible doesn't say much about what to study or what job to get, but there is an example of Paul working at tent-making in order to fund his ministry. So there is precedent for the idea of learning a trade and working to earn enough money to support our families, our ministry and even other people's ministries.

I think we have an obligation to take the Bible seriously when it tells us what we can do to please God, but coming up with a plan to please God most effectively is our job. We have to make the plans to serve God. Our plans must be within the bounds of Biblical morality, but they should also reflect our knowledge of how the world really works, too. We'll be more successful with a good plan and some hard work. It's very easy to be deceived by our feelings about what we would like to do with our lives. And many people who listen to their feelings and find other impractical people to echo and affirm those feelings make many mistakes in life. I would advise people to be very careful about calling their feelings the voice of God speaking to them, then getting into trouble when their lack of wisdom blows up in their faces.

Christian men who want marriage without having to get a job

So that brings me to the concern that I have that I've been thinking about for the last week or so. I have been thinking about a couple of Christian apologists I know who are interested in marriage, but unwilling to prepare themselves to prepare for a wife and children. They are both very unaware of the economic and political challenges that they are likely to face, which makes the need to prepare financially even more pressing.

One of the Christian men is getting a BA and is in his early 30s. He says that marriage would have to come second to his ministry. He has never worked a full-time job his entire life, and considers getting a full-time job to be beneath him. The other one is in his late 20s and is in a PhD program. He wants marriage right away, but he has never worked in a real job his entire life, either. Both of these Christian apologists are in debt – they have zero assets and negative net worth. How can it be that they can even be considering marriage? Don't they realize what a man's role in marriage is? He is the provider, and that means that he has to have a record of steady work, saving money and being generous at sharing with others. Neither of these men have shown any ability in those areas. Neither of them seems willing to get started on a regular, full-time, private sector job. And neither seems to want to take Lydia's advice and finance their ministry /

marriage from a regular, full-time job. Neither of these students can even afford a wedding or even a wedding ring. Do they even understand what a woman needs from her husband?

So what's the problem? I talked this over with a wise friend and she said that feminism has become so widespread in this society that a lot of men think that they can contemplate marriage without having a record of earning and saving. They don't see that men have any distinct "provider" role in a marriage. They sort of expect to get the benefits of marriage with none of the "provider" responsibilities. Many women have also been taken in by feminism, and cannot evaluate men to see which ones are able to work and save and provide, and which ones aren't. I don't think young people are being taught how to apply the Bible to the practical challenges of marriage, or how to recognize the challenges of the times we live in.

Stephen C. Meyer debates Charles Marshall on the Cambrian explosion

March 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Here is a summary of recent podcast of Unbelievable between intelligent design proponent Stephen C. Meyer and UC Berkeley evolutionary biologist Charles Marshall. Dr. Marshall had previously reviewed Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt" in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal "Science".

Details:

> Stephen C Meyer is the world's leading Intelligent Design proponent. His new book Darwin's Doubt claims that the Cambrian fossil record, which saw an "explosion" of new life forms in a short space of time, is evidence for ID.
>
> Evolutionary biologist Charles Marshall of the University of California, Berkeley has written a critical review of the book. He debates Meyer on whether Darwinian evolution can explain the diversity of life in the Cambrian rocks.
>
> For Meyer & Darwin's Doubt:
> http://www.darwinsdoubt.com/
>
> For Charles Marshall's review:
> http://www.sciencemag.org/content/341/6152/1344.1.full

You can get the MP3 file here.

The brief summary this time is not provided by me, it's from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> This past weekend Britain's Premier radio network broadcast a debate between

> Stephen Meyer and UC Berkeley paleontologist Charles Marshall, recorded at the beginning of November. As David Klinghoffer noted yesterday, the subject of the debate was Meyer's book *Darwin's Doubt*. Yes, that's the same Charles Marshall who reviewed *Darwin's Doubt* in *Science* back in September. See here for our multiple responses.
>
> It was an excellent debate, with both participants offering important insights and good arguments, though in my opinion Meyer unquestionably had the better of it, especially concerning the key scientific question of the origin of the information necessary to build the Cambrian animals. Nevertheless, both parties came to the table ready to engage in serious, thoughtful, and civil discussion about the core issues raised in *Darwin's Doubt*, and we commend Marshall not only for participating, but for focusing his critique of the book on the central scientific issues, something other critics have conspicuously failed to do.
>
> The debate was consequently both constructive and civil. Both parties complimented, as well as critiqued, the work of the other. Marshall, for example, described the first third of *Darwin's Doubt* — the section that discusses the Cambrian and Precambrian fossil record, Marshall's own area of principle expertise — as "good scholarship." He also said it "looks like good science" and that Meyer "writes well," and that he (Marshall) "really enjoyed reading"*Darwin's Doubt*. Meyer, for his, part expressed his admiration for Marshall's many scientific papers in paleontology and noted that he had been looking forward to the conversation because he and Marshall clearly "shared a passion for the same subject," despite their different perspectives. Of course, Marshall is not pro-ID and both men expressed spirited disagreements, but they did so in a mostly respectful way that made the debate all the more interesting and engaging to listen to.

I was very impressed with Dr. Marshall's performance during the debate, although he did try to poison the well a bit against ID at the beginning, and he got nasty at the end. It's amazing how Dr. Meyer was able to get him to stop it with the politics and get serious, just by sticking to the science. Even when Marshall got insulting at the end, it was still valuable to see how the other side has to abandon rational argument and scientific evidence once they see that they can't win on the merits. It's "Inherit the Wind" in reverse.

Evolution News also posted a more complete guide to the debate in this post, and I recommend that you read that post before listening to the debate if you are not familiar with the science.

This is a great debate, and you definitely ought to listen to it. I hope I've posted enough here to convince you. If you haven't yet bought "Signature in the Cell" and "Darwin's Doubt", then I urge you to get them, although they are intermediate/advanced level books. The two books are the state of the art in intelligent design research, good enough to be debated with a University of California, Berkeley professor of biology. Dr. Meyer is

the real deal, and if you want to be convincing on these important scientific issues, you need to learn the scientific evidence from his books.

If you are not a regular reader of the Evolution News blog, you really should be. It’s also a good idea to subscribe to the Intelligent Design: The Future podcast.

Ted Cruz raised $12 million dollars last month alone

March 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas senator Ted Cruz, his wife Heidi Cruz and their two daughters

This article from the left-leaning Houston Chronicle has some amazing news about Cruz's fundraising.

It says:

> Big money flew through the checking account of Texas Sen. Ted Cruz's presidential campaign in February, when it reported its highest monthly income and expenditures to date, soaring above the GOP pack. And for the first time, the Cruz campaign spent more than it took in.
>
> Fresh federal filings posted Sunday show a dramatic uptick in campaign costs and contributions for the period that spanned from Cruz's unexpected win in Iowa, the nation's first primary contest, to the day before his momentum seemed to fall behind frontrunner Donald Trump in a string of Super Tuesday votes on March 1.
>
> Cruz's Houston-based campaign took in $12 million in February, according to Federal Elections Commission records, compared in $7.6 million in January and $20.5 million in the last three months of 2015 combined.

The article also notes that Trump is lying about his campaign being self-funded – he takes donations, just like all the other candidates:

> Trump has collected $7.7 million in contributions since he launched his campaign in June, in spite of his repeated assertion that he self-funds the operation. He has lent his campaign $17.5 million.

I don't think it's a good idea to support a candidate who says things that are not true,

then has to back away from them after. If he lies about silly stuff like this, then what will happen when he has to tell the truth about something important?

It's a good thing that Cruz is surging, because the polls show that Trump cannot beat Hillary Clinton:

General Election: Trump vs. Clinton	CNN/ORC	Clinton 53, Trump 41	Clinton +12
General Election: Trump vs. Sanders	CNN/ORC	Sanders 58, Trump 38	Sanders +20
General Election: Cruz vs. Clinton	CNN/ORC	Clinton 48, Cruz 48	Tie
General Election: Cruz vs. Sanders	CNN/ORC	Sanders 55, Cruz 42	Sanders +13

Latest polls show Trump losing to Clinton head-to-head, but Cruz ties with Clinton

I'm really hoping that Cruz can pull off a winner-take-all victory in Utah, which he will if he gets over 50% of the vote. And if Cruz wins in Arizona, that could mean that he will have more delegates than Trump at the time of the GOP convention.

Related posts

- Donald Trump's plan to introduce tariffs is just a tax on consumer goods
- Suppose God had coffee with Donald Trump… how would that go?
- Is Donald Trump right to order U.S. troops to commit war crimes?
- How well did Donald Trump do in the hotel and casino business?
- Trump donated to group that promotes homosexuality to 5-year-olds
- Do supporters of Donald Trump really support what Trump believes?
- Is Donald Trump a successful businessman? Let's look at his record
- Report: how Donald Trump used illegal immigrants to build Trump Tower
- Is Trump right to praise Putin's leadership abilities?
- Is Trump right to say that Bush lied about the Iraq war, and there were no WMDs?
- Donald Trump promises gay publication "forward motion" on gay rights issues
- Who has done more on the pro-life and pro-marriage issues – Trump or Cruz?
- Where did Rubio, Cruz and Trump stand on amnesty before running for President?
- Trump, eminent domain, a widow's house, and a limousine parking lot
- Trump wants to increase taxpayer subsidies of ethanol, Cruz wants to end them
- Trump supported the bank bailout and auto bailout, Cruz opposes all bailouts
- Should evangelical Christians prefer Donald Trump on moral grounds?
- Clinton, Rubio, GOP establishment and leftist media defend Trump's New York Values
- What are the "New York Values" that Trump's evangelical Christian supporters admire?
- Donald Trump would expand Obamacare into single-payer health care system
- Who is more conservative on the marriage issue? Trump, Cruz, Carson or Rubio?
- Is Donald Trump's claim about Muslims celebrating 9/11 in New Jersey accurate?

Pediatricians warn against indoctrinating kids in transgenderism

March 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

The American College of Pediatricians, an organization that values the needs of vulnerable children above the desires of selfish adults, has issued a statement about teaching children about transgenderism. (H/T George, Katy, Kevin, William)

Intro:

> The American College of Pediatricians urges educators and legislators to reject all policies that condition children to accept as normal a life of chemical and surgical impersonation of the opposite sex. Facts – not ideology – determine reality.

They have 8 points, here they are:

1. **Human sexuality is an objective biological binary trait: "XY" and "XX" are genetic markers of health – not genetic markers of a disorder.**
2. **No one is born with a gender. Everyone is born with a biological sex. Gender (an awareness and sense of oneself as male or female) is a sociological and psychological concept; not an objective biological one.**
3. **A person's belief that he or she is something they are not is, at best, a sign of confused thinking.**
4. **Puberty is not a disease and puberty-blocking hormones can be dangerous.**
5. **According to the DSM-V, as many as 98% of gender confused boys and 88% of gender confused girls eventually accept their biological sex after naturally passing through puberty.**

6. **hildren who use puberty blockers to impersonate the opposite sex will require cross-sex hormones in late adolescence. Cross-sex hormones (testosterone and estrogen) are associated with dangerous health risks including but not limited to high blood pressure, blood clots, stroke and cancer.**
7. **Rates of suicide are twenty times greater among adults who use cross-sex hormones and undergo sex reassignment surgery, even in Sweden which is among the most LGBQT – affirming countries.**
8. **Conditioning children into believing a lifetime of chemical and surgical impersonation of the opposite sex is normal and healthful is child abuse.**

Number 7 is the one that I thought was the most interesting:

> **Rates of suicide are twenty times greater among adults who use cross-sex hormones and undergo sex reassignment surgery, even in Sweden which is among the most LGBQT – affirming countries.**[11] What compassionate and reasonable person would condemn young children to this fate knowing that after puberty as many as 88% of girls and 98% of boys will eventually accept reality and achieve a state of mental and physical health?

The source for that 88% of girls and 98% of boys is the American Psychiatric Association's DSM, 5th edition. Seems to me that it doesn't make any sense to steer these children towards something irreversible, (surgery!), when they will reverse themselves in a few years. Especially when giving them the drugs and performing the surgery can increase the risk of suicide – even in countries that are more affirming of the gay agenda.

It turns out that being "nice" by lying to someone doesn't always lead to that person's happiness. Sometimes, telling someone a hard truth that they don't want to hear is the best thing for them. A lot of things we do when we are young are not good for us, and the longer it gets dragged out, the more harm is caused.

Professor explains how his study of the historical Jesus made him leave atheism

March 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Dr. Michael F. Bird has a great article in Christianity Today. I've featured his debates with atheist historican James Crossley on this blog before, and I have the book they co-wrote.

In the article, Dr. Bird writes:

> I grew up in a secular home in suburban Australia, where religion was categorically rejected—it was seen as a crutch, and people of faith were derided as morally deviant hypocrites. Rates for church attendance in Australia are some of the lowest in the Western world, and the country's political leaders feel no need to feign religious devotion. In fact, they think it's better to avoid religion altogether.
>
> As a teenager, I wrote poetry mocking belief in God. My mother threw enough profanity at religious door knockers to make even a sailor blush.
>
> Many years later, however, I read the New Testament for myself. The Jesus I encountered was far different from the deluded radical, even mythical character described to me. This Jesus—the Jesus of history—was real. He touched upon things that cut close to my heart, especially as I pondered the meaning of human existence. I was struck by the early church's testimony to Jesus: In Christ's death God has vanquished evil, and by his resurrection he has brought life and hope to all.
>
> When I crossed from unbelief to belief, all the pieces suddenly began to fit together. I had always felt a strange unease about my disbelief. I had an acute suspicion that there might be something more, something transcendent, but I also knew that I was told not to think that. I "knew" that ethics were nothing more than aesthetics, a mere word game for things I liked and disliked. I felt conflicted when my heart ached over the injustice and cruelty in the world.

> Faith grew from seeds of doubt, and I came upon a whole new world that, for the first time, actually made sense to me. To this day, I do not find faith stifling or constricting. Rather, faith has been liberating and transformative for me. It has opened a constellation of meaning, beauty, hope, and life that I had been indoctrinated to deny. And so began a lifelong quest to know, study, and teach about the one whom Christians called Lord.

And now specifics:

> For many secularists, Ehrman is a godsend who propagates common misconceptions about Jesus and the early church. He believes there was a spectrum of divinity between gods and humans in the ancient world. Therefore, he asserts that the early church's beliefs about Jesus evolved: from a man exalted to heaven to an angel who became human to a pre-existent "divine" person who became incarnate to a subordinated or lesser god to being declared one with God.
>
> **My faith and studies have led me to believe otherwise. First-century Jews and early Christians clearly demarcated God from all other reality, thus leading them to hold to a very strict monotheism. That said, Jesus was not seen as a Greek god like Zeus who trotted about earth or a human being who morphed into an angel at death. Rather, the first Christians redefined the concept of "one God" around the person and work of Jesus Christ. Not to mention the New Testament writers, especially Luke and Paul, consistently identify Jesus with the God of Israel.**
>
> **Many people get the idea that Jesus was just a prophet and never claimed to be divine. But a careful look at the Gospels shows that the historical Jesus explicitly claimed to exercise divine prerogatives. He identified himself with God's activity in the world. He believed that in his own person, Israel's God was returning to Zion, just as the prophets had promised. And he claimed he would sit on God's throne. These claims, when studied up close, are de facto claims to divine personhood, the reasons religious leaders of the day were so outraged.**
>
> Evidence shows that Jesus claimed to be God incarnate, and within 20-some years after his death and resurrection, Christians were identifying him with the God of Israel, using the language and grammar of the Old Testament to do so.
>
> Sure, some sects in the first few centuries held heretical beliefs about Jesus. But the mainstream, orthodox view of Christ's identity was always consistent with and rooted in the New Testament, though orthodox Christology became more refined in the following centuries.

It's definitely true that you can recover a high Christology (a view of Jesus as divine) from the earliest gospel, Mark. I wrote about it in a previous post. But the earliest evidence for

Jesus is that creed in 1 Corinthians 15, that I blogged about recently.

Here is his conclusion:

> Some have great confidence in skeptical scholarship, and I once did, perhaps more than anyone else. If anyone thinks they are assured in their unbelief, I was more committed: born of unbelieving parents, never baptized or dedicated; on scholarly credentials, a PhD from a secular university; as to zeal, mocking the church; as to ideological righteousness, totally radicalized. But whatever intellectual superiority I thought I had over Christians, I now count it as sheer ignorance. Indeed, I count everything in my former life as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing the historical Jesus who is also the risen Lord. For his sake, I have given up trying to be a hipster atheist. I consider that old chestnut pure filth, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a CV that will gain me tenure at an Ivy League school, but knowing that I've bound myself to Jesus—and where he is, there I shall also be.

I recently led a Bible study on the passage he is paralleling there – it comes from my *favorite* book of the Bible, Philippians.

What I like about Bird's story is that he was a skeptic, and his study of history is what changed his mind. This contradicts a narrative that young people are sold at the university, which is that the more education you have, the more you turn away from theism in general, and Christianity in particular. I wouldn't even classify him as a super conservative scholar, by any means – he's just a good scholar who believes whatever he thinks is historically sound. It just turns out that you can recover enough historically to ground a commitment to Jesus Christ. You can't get *everything* as a historian, but you get enough to cause a change of mind about who Jesus was.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Which government policies enable terrorist attacks like the one in Belgium?

March 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, there was another terrorist attack in Belgium, and before I have a stab at explaining what caused it, I want to hear from 5 prominent Democrats about what they think about terrorism.

Here's Bernie Sanders explaining his view:

And here's Hillary Clinton explaining her view:

And here's Obama and John Kerry explaining their view:

And Obama's attorney general Loretta Lynch explaining her view:

Well, that's what Democrats think about radical Islamic terrorism.

But what is the real cause of the frequent terrorist attacks in Europe that are committed by radicalized Muslims?

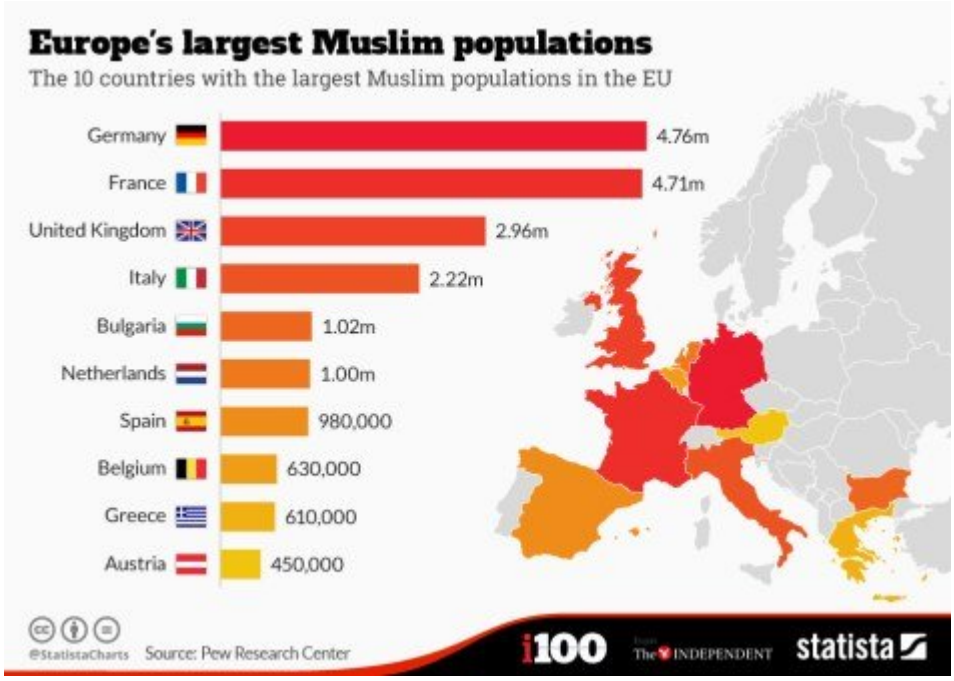

Muslim populations in Europe

The left-leaning The Atlantic has an article that talks about radical Islamic terrorism in Belgium:

> French authorities say they believe Abdelhamid Abaaoud, a 27-year-old Belgian man, masterminded the November 13 attacks in Paris.
>
> The focus on Abaaoud helps emphasize how tiny Belgium has taken on an oversized role in the European theater of jihad. The country has provided a steady flow of fighters to ISIS in the Middle East—including Abaaoud—and has been the site of planning of attacks in Europe. (*The Daily Beast* has a good timeline of incidents involving Belgian militants.)

> Abaaoud was already suspected of planning a prior attack that was foiled by Belgian authorities in the days after January's *Charlie Hebdo* attacks in Paris. Two suspects were killed in the operation. At the time, *Slate*'s Joshua Keating warned: "The Belgian police may claim today to have 'averted a Belgian Charlie Hebdo,' but it's clear that the country's radicalization problem is much larger, and will take more than police raids to address." Those words proved prophetic.
>
> Belgium has just 11 million people, and Pew estimated that about 6 percent of the population was Muslim as of 2010. But Belgian and French nationals make up around a quarter of the Europeans who went to fight in Iraq in the mid-2000s. While the government has acknowledged that hundreds of Belgians have gone to fight with ISIS or for other groups in the Syrian civil war, Pieter Van Ostaeyen, an independent researcher, calculated in October that 516 Belgians had fought in Iraq or Syria, far higher than the government's figures. Based on his numbers, Belgium has contributed more fighters per capita to the fight in the Levant than any other European country.
>
> […]**Belgian jihadism seems to mimic French Islamist militancy, only more concentrated—as befits the smaller country. Both have large numbers of immigrants who are poorer and isolated from the dominant culture.**

So, it's not just that the generous European socialists in Belgium took in lots and lots of Muslim immigrants, it's that they took in lots and lots of *unskilled* Muslim immigrants, who struggle to integrate because they struggle to find work. Belgium, like other socialist countries in Europe, offers generous welfare programs to those who do not work. That's a big draw to people in Middle Eastern countries.

The problem with offering generous welfare programs and welcoming in millions of illegal immigrants who cannot easily assimilate is twofold. First, eventually, socialists run out of other people's money with which to bribe their unskilled immigrants. Second, everyone knows that making your own way through your own work is what makes people happiest. No one who is dependent on others (via social welfare programs) can truly be content. All of us deep down have a desire to be the author of our own success – to eat the food that we have earned with our own productive labor. Skilled immigrants can make their own way, but unskilled immigrants cannot.

It is good to have a system of legal immigration, in order to attract the a few of the best and brightest from other countries. If we take in a few at a time, then there is time for them to assimilate. And they can earn their own pay because they are skilled immigrants who came into the country to work. But it's a mistake to let in millions and millions of unskilled immigrants who often cannot even speak the languages of Western nations.

So why did so many European countries import so many unskilled immigrants? The answer is simple.

Consider this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> Ministers today faced calls for an inquiry into claims that their open-door immigration policy was designed to make Britain more multicultural and allow Labour to portray the Tories as racists.
>
> A former Labour adviser alleged that the Government opened up Britain's borders in part to try to humiliate Right-wing opponents of immigration…
>
> The Daily Mail reported on Saturday the controversial claims by Andrew Neather, who worked for Tony Blair and Jack Straw.
>
> He said Labour's relaxation of immigration controls in 2000 was a deliberate attempt to engineer a 'truly multicultural' country and plug gaps in the jobs market.
>
> He said the 'major shift' in immigration policy was inspired by a 2001 policy paper from the Performance and Innovation Unit, a Downing Street think-tank based in the Cabinet Office…
>
> Ministers were reluctant to discuss the move publicly for fear that it would alienate Labour's core working-class vote, Mr Neather said. But they hoped it would allow them to paint the Conservatives as xenophobic and out of touch.
>
> 'I remember coming away from some discussions with the clear sense that the policy was intended – even if this wasn't its main purpose – to rub the Right's nose in diversity and render their arguments out of date,' Mr Neather added.

The parties of the left in Europe viewed mass immigration of unskilled immigrants as a way of creating a voting bloc that could be counted on to vote for bigger government, higher taxes, and more spending. The frequent terrorist attacks that we are seeing now are nothing but the outworking of this policy of deliberately bringing in millions of *unskilled immigrants* in order to get their votes for more welfare spending when they could not find jobs and pay their own way. We should be very careful about doing the same here. We must learn from the mistakes of leftist policies that have been tried in other places, in other times. We have to look beyond the compassionate rhetoric and ask "then what happened next?".

Michigan public schools to let students choose gender, name and bathroom

March 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National Education Association

Do you think that the decision described in this Daily Caller article was made by parents or local school boards? (H/T Kris)

Excerpt:

> Michigan's State Board of Education has drafted a guidance that would push the state's schools to allow all students, regardless of parental or doctoral input, to choose their gender, name, pronouns, and bathrooms.
>
> Spearheaded by board president John C. Austin and signed by state superintendent Brian Whiston, the guidance informs **Michigan public schools** that only the students themselves–i.e. not their parents or doctors–can determine what their individual gender identities are.
>
> "The responsibility for determining a student's gender identity rests with the student. Outside confirmation from medical or mental health professionals, or documentation of legal changes, is not needed," the guidance states.
>
> Gender identity is defined in the guidance as "a person's deeply held internal sense or psychological knowledge of their own gender, regardless of the biological sex they were assigned at birth."
>
> **Notably, the guidance makes no mention of a student's age affecting whether or not they can pick a gender without their parent or doctor.**
>
> **In fact, the guidance seems to intentionally cut parents out of the**

> **process.**
>
> The guidance states: “School staff should address students by their chosen name and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity, regardless of whether there has been a legal name change.”
>
> Students can even ask to have their chosen name and gender “included in the district’s information management systems, in addition to the student’s legal name.”
>
> **But what about when school staff members are speaking with parents about their son or daughter?**
>
> **The guidance states that “Transgender and GNC [gender nonconforming] students have the right to decide when, with whom, and to what extent to share private information.”**
>
> **Accordingly, the board makes clear, “When contacting the parent/guardian of a transgender or GNC student, school staff should use the student’s legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student’s assigned sex at birth, unless the student or parent/guardian has specified otherwise.”**
>
> **In other words, a boy named “Jake” could become a girl named “Jane” at school, seemingly without his parents ever knowing.**
>
> Names, pronouns, and genders aren’t the only things the board wants students to choose.
>
> The guidance informs schools that “Students should be allowed to use the restroom in accordance with their gender identity.”
>
> […]Locker rooms also should become inclusive of students’ many gender identities. “A student should not be required to use a locker room that is incongruent with their gender identity,” the guidance states. “Locker room usage should be determined on a case-by-case basis, using the guiding principles of safety and honoring the student’s gender identity and expression.”
>
> […]The board quietly issued the statement and guidance on February 23rd, without a press release.
>
> […]Board president John Austin did not immediately reply to The Daily Caller’s request for comment.

Previously, I wrote a post explaining why young Christians who are considering getting married and having children need to prepare themselves to bypass the public school sytem. It’s becoming increasingly clear that Christian parents cannot look to the public schools as allies in parenting their children in a way that respects the Christian convictions of the parents. The public schools are not allies.

Since Christian parents are forced to pay for public schools whether they use them or not, Christian parents should be voting for the political party that seeks to lower taxes, shrink

government, and push control of education down to the state and local levels. Christian parents should also support politicians who are in favor of school choice – giving parents vouchers that allow parents to use the money for private schools or homeschooling options.

We need to get a lot smarter and vote for smaller government, local control of education and accountability to parents. The public schools are basically controlled by the sexual revolutionaries, e.g. – abortion providers, gay activists, etc. And that's not even to mention the socialists, the global warming alarmists, the moral relativists, etc. If your goal for your children is to teach them marketable skills and basic moral values, then you need to get as far away from the public schools as possible. Including mandatory funding of them.

By the way, I should note that among his many other excellent qualifications, Ted Cruz also plans to abolish the federal Department of Education and push control of education down to the state and local levels. That would be a good start. He also plans to abolish four more federal departments, and push control down to the state and local level there, as well.

Related posts

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Nabeel Qureshi: the Quran inspires radical Muslims to commit Islamic terrorism

March 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Dr. Nabeel Qureshi, a former Muslim, explains which verses of the Qu'ran are linked to Islamic terrorism in a USA Today editorial.

Excerpt:

> As a Muslim growing up in the United States, I was taught by my imams and the community around me that Islam is a religion of peace. My family modeled love for others and love for country, and not just by their words. My father served in the U.S. Navy throughout my childhood, starting as a seaman and retiring as a lieutenant commander. I believed wholeheartedly a slogan often repeated at my mosque after 9/11: "The terrorists who hijacked the planes also hijacked Islam."
>
> Yet as I began to investigate the Quran and the traditions of Muhammad's life for myself in college, I found to my genuine surprise that the pages of Islamic history are filled with violence. How could I reconcile this with what I had always been taught about Islam?
>
> […]The Quran itself reveals a trajectory of jihad reflected in the almost 23 years of Muhammad's prophetic career. As I demonstrate carefully in my book, *Answering Jihad: A Better Way Forward*, starting with peaceful teachings and proclamations of monotheism, Muhammad's message featured violence with increasing intensity, culminating in surah 9, chronologically the last major chapter of the Quran, and its most expansively violent teaching. Throughout history, Muslim theologians have understood and taught this progression, that the message of the Quran culminates in its ninth chapter.

> **Surah 9 is a command to disavow all treaties with polytheists and to subjugate Jews and Christians (9.29) so that Islam may "prevail over all religions" (9.33). It is fair to wonder whether any non-Muslims in the world are immune from being attacked, subdued or assimilated under this command. Muslims must fight, according to this final chapter of the Quran, and if they do not, then their faith is called into question and they are counted among the hypocrites (9.44-45). If they do fight, they are promised one of two rewards, either spoils of war or heaven through martyrdom. Allah has made a bargain with the *mujahid* who obeys: Kill or be killed in battle, and paradise awaits (9.111).**
>
> Muslim thought leaders agree that the Quran promotes such violence. Maajid Nawaz, co-founder of the Quilliam Foundation in the United Kingdom, has said, "We Muslims must admit there are challenging Koranic passages that require reinterpretation today. … Only by rejecting vacuous literalism are we able to condemn, in principle, ISIS-style slavery, beheading, lashing, amputation & other medieval practices forever (all of which are in the Quran). … Reformers either win, and get religion-neutral politics, or lose, and get ISIL-style theocracy." In other words, Muslims must depart from the literal reading of the Quran in order to create a jihad-free Islamic world.
>
> This is not at all to say that most Muslims are violent. The vast majority of Muslims do not live their lives based on chapter 9 of the Quran or on the books of jihad in the hadith. My point is not to question the faith of such Muslims nor to imply that radical Muslims are the true Muslims. Rather, I simply want to make clear that while ISIL may lure youth through a variety of methods, it radicalizes them primarily by urging them to follow the literal teachings of the Quran and the hadith, interpreted consistently and in light of the violent trajectory of early Islam. As long as the Islamic world focuses on its foundational texts, we will continue to see violent jihadi movements.

So, any attempt to engage with Muslims will require us to address the texts that they appeal to when they justify their actions. Both Republicans and Democrats try to gloss over the specific passages of the Qu'ran which are troublesome. They claim that Islam, interpreted literally, is a religion of Peace. And they claim that distorting the words of the Qu'ran results in a Jihadi ideology. That's not accurate. It's not distortion of the Qu-ran that is causing the problems, it's taking those passages literally.

There are troubling passages in the Bible, as well, where God is in a theocratic relationship with the Jewish people and commands them to attack their enemies. But the difference is that those verses are not effective in the present day, for present day Christians. Christians are under a new Covenant with a new High Priest, Jesus. This new covenant tells Christians to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. Are moderate Muslim scholars and Western politicians ready to face the real challenge?

Latest poll shows Ted Cruz leading Trump 36% to 35% in Wisconsin

March 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How to get kissed: Heidi Cruz helping her husband

Grassroots conservative web site Red State reports on the latest Monmouth poll of Wisconsin voters from Wednesday night.

Excerpt:

> We're two weeks away from the Wisconsin primary, which is shaping up to be pretty close to a must-win for Ted Cruz.
>
> […]That's why this new Monmouth poll is huge news for Cruz, if true:
>
> BOSTON, MA – As establishment Republicans look for ways to slow Donald Trump's relentless march toward the party's presidential nomination, Wisconsin's winner-take-all GOP primary contest on April 5 offers some intriguing possibilities. In a statewide Emerson College poll released today, Texas Senator Ted Cruz is not only leading Trump 36% to 35% in the upcoming primary, but Cruz is only trailing Hillary Clinton by one point in a hypothetical general election matchup, 46% to 45%. In contrast, Trump is trailing both Clinton and her Democratic rival, Bernie Sanders, by the same 9-point margin of 47% to 38% in a potential general election match-up.
>
> This is the first time this race has been polled since before Super Tuesday, so it is the only accurate picture of the race we have at all.

Unfortunately, Wisconsin has an open primary, so Cruz will have to beat not just leftist Republican voters, but also registered Democrats who cross over to vote for Trump.

Scott Walker to endorse Cruz?

My original first pick in the primary was Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker. Walker fought and defeated the big labor unions in Wisconsin, so that he could balance the budget for taxpayers without raising taxes on them.

The Wisconsin State Journal reports this from him:

> Texas Sen. Ted Cruz is the only viable alternative to front-runner Donald Trump in the Republican presidential primary, Gov Scott Walker said Wednesday hinting at a possible endorsement.

> "If you're someone who is uneasy with the front-runner right now, there's really only one candidate," Walker said in a taped interview that aired on WTMJ Wednesday morning. "Ted Cruz is the only one who's got a chance other than Donald Trump to win the nomination statistically, and my friend Gov. (John) Kasich cannot."

I really hope that Walker endorses Cruz, and that the people of Wisconsin vote for substance. Let's take a look at some reasons why people should prefer Ted Cruz to Donald Trump in this election.

Ted Cruz's record of conservative achievements

Young Conservatives explains his achievements:

- Graduated valedictorian in 1988 from Second Baptist High School
- Graduated cum laude from Princeton University in 1992
- Graduated magna cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1995
- 1992 U.S. National Debate Champion representing Princeton
- 1995 World Debating Championship semi-finalist representing Harvard
- Served a law clerk to Chief Justice William Rehnquist, making him the first Hispanic ever to clerk for a Chief Justice of the United States
- Served as Solicitor General of Texas from 2003 to 2008, making him the first Hispanic Solicitor General in Texas, the youngest Solicitor General in the entire country and the longest tenure in Texas history
- Partner at the law firm Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, where he led the firm's U.S. Supreme Court and national appellate litigation practice
- Authored over 80 SCOTUS briefs and presented over 40 oral arguments before The Court
- Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, where he taught U.S. Supreme Court litigation

Smart guy.

Here are the specifically *conservative* achievements:

- In the landmark case of District of Columbia v. Heller, Cruz assembled a coalition of 31 states in defense of the principle that the 2nd Amendment guarantees an individual right to keep and bear arms

- Presented oral arguments before the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit
- Defended the Ten Commandments monument on the Texas State Capitol grounds,
- Defended the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools
- Defended the State of Texas against an attempt by the International Court of Justice to re-open the criminal convictions of 51 murderers on death row throughout the United States

He's 5 for 9 arguing cases before the Supreme Court. Cruz knows how to convince liberal scholars to come over to his side. That's what he enjoys – persuading people who disagree with him.

Here's some of the legislation he introduced:

- ObamaCare Repeal Act
- Disarm Criminals and Protect Communities Act
- Defund Obamacare Act of 2013
- A bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to permit States to require proof of citizenship for registration to vote in elections for Federal office
- State Marriage Defense Act of 2014
- A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the intentional discrimination of a person or organization by an employee of the Internal Revenue Service
- A bill to prohibit the Department of the Treasury from assigning tax statuses to organizations based on their political beliefs and activities
- American Energy Renaissance Act of 2014
- A bill to deny admission to the United States to any representative to the United Nations who has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity against the United States and poses a threat to United States national security interests
- SuperPAC Elimination Act of 2014
- Free All Speech Act of 2014
- A bill to prevent the expansion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program unlawfully created by Executive memorandum on August 15, 2012
- Sanction Iran, Safeguard America Act of 2014

And he has gotten more legislation passed than Marco Rubio in the Senate.

I have to be fair on this blog, so if we are going to look at the record of Ted Cruz, we should also look at the record of Donald Trump.

Related posts

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Disney, Marvel, NFL and Apple threaten to boycott Georgia over religious freedom bill

March 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

This story is from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> Walt Disney Co. and its subsidiary Marvel are threatening not to shoot films in Georgia if the governor signs a religious liberty bill that the opponents say is discriminatory against gays and the transgendered.
>
> "Disney and Marvel are inclusive companies, and although we have had great experiences filming in Georgia, we will plan to take our business elsewhere should any legislation allowing discriminatory practices be signed into state law," a Disney spokesman said in a statement.
>
> The boycott threat comes after Human Rights Campaign President Chad Griffin issued a clarion call for Hollywood to stop doing business in Georgia after the legislature passed the Free Exercise Protection Act.
>
> Republican Gov. Nathan Deal has not indicated whether he will sign the bill.

The bill would originally have protected religious liberty and conscience over the demand of gay activists that anyone who disagrees with them be punished:

> […]The bill initially would have allowed Georgians to decline service for same-sex weddings if doing so violated their religious beliefs. But, sensing the coming storm, Mr. Deal urged lawmakers to make substantial changes to the legislation before passing it.

But then protections for religious liberty and conscience were removed:

> "I know there are a lot of Georgians who feel like this is a necessary step for us to take," Mr. Deal said during deliberations over the bill. "I would hope that in the process of these last few days, we can keep in mind the concerns of the faith-based community, which I believe can be protected without setting up the situation where we could be accused of allowing or encouraging discrimination."
>
> The new version of the bill says the protections do not apply in cases of "invidious discrimination," which could mean religious wedding vendors would not be protected from declining to service same-sex marriage ceremonies.
>
> The Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau said this week that it has heard from at least 15 companies that are considering pulling convention business out of Atlanta if the legislation becomes law. ACVB President and CEO William Pate said the loss of that business could cost the city up to $6 billion, the Atlanta Business Chronicle reported.
>
> Conservatives accused Georgia of gutting the bill's primary purpose.
>
> "It is unfortunate that the Georgia legislature caved to pressure from big business and special interests to water down their weakened bill even further," wrote the Heritage Foundation's Roger Severino and Ryan Anderson at the Daily Signal. "Other states must stand vigilant against such cultural cronyism."

And for me, this story just reinforces why I don't have a television, why I don't go to movies in the theater, and why I don't buy comic books or other products from entertainment companies.

I also don't follow American football because the NFL has been anti-Christian and anti-family for some time.

The Daily Signal explains:

> A CBS News/Associated Press story Sunday, headlined "NFL warns state of Georgia over 'religious freedom' bill," reported that "the NFL acknowledged that the religious exemptions bill … could have an impact on the selection process for the championship game in 2019 and 2020." Atlanta is one of four cities up for the next two Super Bowls.
>
> […]"NFL policies emphasize tolerance and inclusiveness, and prohibit discrimination based on age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other improper standard," spokesman Brian McCarthy said in a statement, adding that the NFL may evaluate "whether the laws and regulations of a state and local community are consistent with these policies" when looking at Super Bowl contenders.
>
> Yes, because tolerance and inclusiveness require making sure people of faith who don't support same-sex marriage have no freedom to live in accordance with their beliefs.

ESPN is also on record as being anti-Christian and anti-family, which is why I never tune

them in. Why would I choose to be influenced by people who disagree with free speech, religious liberty and conscience protections?

I've blogged before about Apple's opposition to religious liberty and conscience rights. And they are involved in the Georgia legislation as well:

> "We urge Gov. Deal to veto the discriminatory legislation headed to his desk and send a clear message that Georgia's future is one of inclusion, diversity, and continued prosperity," said Apple in a statement. Hundreds of companies are part of Georgia Prospers, a coalition that told The New York Times that the bill "could harm our ability to create and keep jobs that Georgia families depend upon."

I don't use Apple products, not even if they are given to me for free.

Atlanta fire chief Kelvin Cochran

This might be a good time to recall what happened to the Atlanta fire chief Kelvin Cochran with this story is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Cochran's book, published in 2013 and called "Who Told You That You Were Naked?," expresses a biblical view on marriage and addresses homosexuality from his Christian perspective.
>
> […]Fast-forward a few months, and Cochran received a 30-day suspension without pay, **after an LGBT activist group started to protest the book.**
>
> "LGBT citizens deserve the right to express their beliefs regarding sexual orientation, and deserve to be respected for their positions without hate and discrimination," Cochran said, according to a January article from The Atlanta-Journal Constitution. "But Christians also have the right to express their beliefs regarding sexual orientation and be respected for their position without hate and without discrimination."
>
> After 34 years as a firefighter, Cochran's fairy-tale career came to a halt in January due to his personal views on gay marriage.

Just to refresh your memory, this is what religious freedom laws are supposed to defend against:

Everyone knows that big government and big labor unions are opposed to conservative values. Big business, contrary to popular myth, is also not conservative. Small businesses are conservative, but big businesses are not conservative. It's very important for Christians to understand who is opposed to religious liberty so that we can vote accordingly. The right to behave as a Christian in public should be our number one concern.

Is cohabitation a better way to prepare for marriage than courting?

March 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

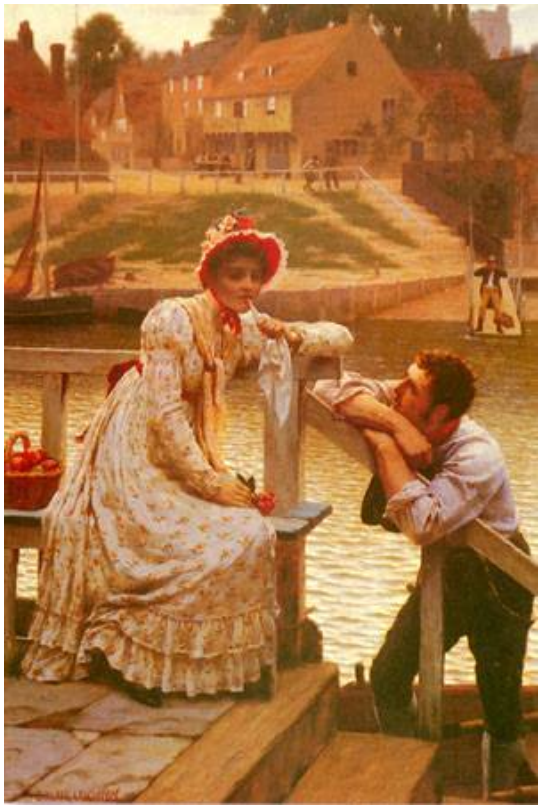

Painting: "Courtship", by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)
Consider this assessment of cohabitation from the liberal New York Times.

Excerpt:

> AT 32, one of my clients (I'll call her Jennifer) had a lavish wine-country wedding. By then, Jennifer and her boyfriend had lived together for more than four years. The event was attended by the couple's friends, families and two dogs.
>
> When Jennifer started therapy with me less than a year later, she was looking for a divorce lawyer. "I spent more time planning my wedding than I spent happily married," she sobbed. Most disheartening to Jennifer was that she'd tried to do everything right. "My parents got married young so, of course, they got divorced. We lived together! How did this happen?"
>
> Cohabitation in the United States has increased by more than 1,500 percent in the past half century. In 1960, about 450,000 unmarried couples lived together. Now the number is more than 7.5 million. The majority of young adults in their 20s will live with a romantic partner at least once, and more than half of all marriages will be preceded by cohabitation. This shift has been attributed to the sexual revolution and the availability of birth control, and in our current economy, sharing the bills makes cohabiting appealing. But when you talk to people in their 20s, you also hear about something else: cohabitation as

> prophylaxis.
>
> In a nationwide survey conducted in 2001 by the National Marriage Project, then at Rutgers and now at the University of Virginia, nearly half of 20-somethings agreed with the statement, "You would only marry someone if he or she agreed to live together with you first, so that you could find out whether you really get along." About two-thirds said they believed that moving in together before marriage was a good way to avoid divorce.

That's a nice idea – wanting protection against divorce. But I think these hopeful attitudes that young people have about cohabitation and the utility / harmlessness of premarital sex, is so much whistling past the graveyard. The fact is that cohabitation does not improve marital stability.

The New York Times author assesses the evidence about cohabitation:

> Couples who cohabit before marriage (and especially before an engagement or an otherwise clear commitment) tend to be less satisfied with their marriages — and more likely to divorce — than couples who do not. These negative outcomes are called the cohabitation effect.
>
> **Researchers originally attributed the cohabitation effect to selection, or the idea that cohabitors were less conventional about marriage and thus more open to divorce. As cohabitation has become a norm, however, studies have shown that the effect is not entirely explained by individual characteristics like religion, education or politics. Research suggests that at least some of the risks may lie in cohabitation itself.**
>
> As Jennifer and I worked to answer her question, "How did this happen?" we talked about how she and her boyfriend went from dating to cohabiting. Her response was consistent with studies reporting that most couples say it "just happened."
>
> "We were sleeping over at each other's places all the time," she said. "We liked to be together, so it was cheaper and more convenient. It was a quick decision but if it didn't work out there was a quick exit."
>
> She was talking about what researchers call "sliding, not deciding." Moving from dating to sleeping over to sleeping over a lot to cohabitation can be a gradual slope, one not marked by rings or ceremonies or sometimes even a conversation. Couples bypass talking about why they want to live together and what it will mean.

Cohabitation is associated with *higher risks of divorce* because it works to undermine the need for quality communication during courting and the need for commitment that is based on discipline, instead of pleasure. People slide into something that looks like marriage because the sex pulls them in. But they've never taken the time to talk about what the relationship is really about, and whether they are intending to commit to the other person for life, and on what terms, and for what reason. Young people find these

conversations difficult and scary for a reason – they are not capable of discussing relationships in terms of self-sacrifice, self-control, and self-denial.

The focus on early sex is caused by a focus on wanting to get to pleasure right away. They want relationships to be like a consumer good, where they get their needs met without having to talk about suitability for roles, and acceptance of responsibilities and obligations. In my experience, young people are terrified of the responsibilities, obligations and expectations of a real commitment. They want relationships to be free,easy and fun – where they just get to do whatever they feel like, moment by moment. And somehow, it's all supposed to work out, without anyone talking seriously about roles and responsibilities and commitment.

But of course that doesn't work as well as keeping your distance and getting to know each other first. It's not just compatibility that is important, though – it's that both people need to prepare for the roles and responsibilities they will have in a marriage, and demonstrate to each other that each is capable of performing those roles.

What's the answer?

Research has shown that pre-marital chastity produces more stable and higher quality marriages. And that's because chastity helps people to focus on *conversations and obligations* instead of the *recreational sex* which clouds the judgment and glosses over the seriousness of marriage. Premarital sex rushes the relationship to the point where it is harder to break it off because of the sunk costs of sex and the pain of the break-up. Courtship is the time to discuss the things that break up marriages, like finances and division of labor. It is the time to demonstrate self-control and fidelity. Courting doesn't allow either person to get control of the relationship through sex, so that they can get their needs met without having to care about the other person. When sex is ruled off the table, the only way to have the relationship go on is by serving the other person and showing them that you have what it takes to do the marriage role you're assigned. That's hard work, but young people need to accept that and get on with preparing for and practicing their marriage responsibilities.

Why not go back to courting?

If you asked me, I would tell you that courting is protection against a painful break-up as well as protection against a bad marriage. And the aim of courting is to interview the other person so that you can see whether they understand the demands of the marriage and whether they can perform their duties to their spouse and children. In particular, men should investigate whether the woman has prepared (or is willing to prepare now) to perform her roles as wife and mother, and women should investigate whether the man has prepared to perform his roles as protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader (or is willing to prepare now). Courting is not designed to be fun, although it can be fun. It is not meant to make people feel happy, it is mean to prepare them for marriage. And this is because you cannot translate fun and happy into marriage, because marriage is about well-defined roles, self-sacrifice and commitment. Marriage is about following through for the other person, whether you get what you want or not. You'd be surprised how often

people give up on courting and show that their real goal for a relationship is not lifelong self-sacrificial love at all, but just using other people for their own happiness while they keep their distance from the responsibilities, obligations and expectations of the marriage covenant.

And that’s why I encourage men to very gently and subtly guide the relationship in a way that will allow both the woman and the man to practice their expected marital duties, see how they feel about their duties and get better at being able to perform them. Men have the most to lose from the divorce courts, if things go south. That’s why it is the man’s the responsibility to detect and reject women who are only interested in fun and thrills.

Todd Starnes: Ted Cruz is the best candidate to defend religious liberty

March 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted Cruz explains policy to little girl who wants to be President

Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council, my second favorite think tank behind the Heritage Foundation, is advising the Ted Cruz campaign about religious liberty issues. They've actually made a list of things for him to do if he is elected President. Since this issue is the core of my being – it animates my whole life plan – I was curious to see what Cruz intends to do about religious liberty.

Here is Todd Starnes of Fox News writing about it:

> America's Christian bakers and florists and wedding planners will be safe under a Ted Cruz presidency.
>
> "I am absolutely convinced in my discussions with the senator that religious liberty will be a lot better off in America with a Cruz administration," said Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council and Chair of Cruz's Religious Liberty Advisory Council.
>
> The council released exclusively to me its initial recommendations for both legislative and executive actions that will restore the nation's First Freedom – the freedom of religion.
>
> […]The council, made up of prominent religious leaders, recommended 15 action items that will protect Americans from discrimination by the federal government on the basis of their view of marriage and also protect employers threatened by the HHS contraception mandate.
>
> […]The council is also calling on Cruz to direct a review of the IRS' treatment of religious organizations and to direct federal agencies to respect the free exercise of religion.

The list includes measures to promote religious liberty at the Department of Education, the IRS, the Department of Health and Human Services, the armed forces, and in the federal government as a whole.

Cruz has a record on defending religious liberty:

> **Cruz has been a passionate advocate of religious liberty for years. He's been in the front line trenches defending our First Freedom – helping secure courtroom victories to preserve the Texas Ten Commandments monument and the Mojave Desert Veterans Memorial.**
>
> "As president, I have pledged on my first day in office to rescind every single one of President Obama's unconstitutional executive actions, and to direct every federal agency to respect and protect the religious liberty of every American," Cruz said.
>
> His vow is certainly welcome news to American Christians who have been subjected to eight years of vicious attacks by militant LGBT and atheist groups – not to mention the Obama administration.
>
> "Our constitutional liberties should not be subject to the whims of the current administration, and – whether Hobby Lobby or the Little Sisters of the Poor – people of faith should not be made to bow down at the altar of political correctness," Cruz said.

I took a look over the names of the people on his panel of policy advisors, and was surprised to see people I actually know on it. You probably know these names as well: Jay Wesley Richards, Everett Piper, Bishop Harry Jackson, Ken Blackwell, and Jason Benham. Jason Benham has had to face discrimination himself, when his show was pulled because of his Christian worldview. If I had to pick a scholar who has the same interests as me across the board, it would probably be Jay Richards. So, needless to say, I'm pretty pleased with this. Seems to me like we have been losing, losing, losing at religious liberty for the last 8 years under Obama and his Democrat allies in the House, Senate, federal government and Supreme Court. If Cruz wins, thins are going to change for us on this all-important issue. I just want to be free to be me, and not to be punished for disagreeing with other people on issues of morality and conscience.

I guess it goes without saying that Donald Trump is the polar opposite of Cruz on all of these issues. That's why it's important to me that someone with a record of standing up for religious liberty at the Supreme Court wins the nomination. I don't want someone who only has talk – and Trump's talk isn't even that encouraging. He's promised gay rights activists "forward motion" on gay rights. I think we've had enough of #NewYorkValues already under Obama, Mr. Trump.

By the way, if you're not listening the Family Research Council Washington Watch Weekly podcast, please subscribe. They cover everything from social issues, to fiscal issues, to foreign policy. One of their frequent guests is retired Lt. General William G. Boykin, who is also on Cruz's foreign policy advisory committee, which I blogged about before.

Related posts

- Which candidate is best at working with Democrats to get things done?
- Ted Cruz's plan to lower taxes and simplify the process for filing tax returns
- Ted Cruz explains his position on the issues of abortion and right to life
- Ted Cruz introduces new bill to help ICE Agents enforce immigration laws
- Ted Cruz fought Rubio's amnesty in 2013 and fought Obama's executive amnesty in 2014
- Meet Ted Cruz's secret weapon: his supportive and loving wife Heidi Cruz
- Watch Ted Cruz disagree with an Iowa farmer on the issue of ethanol subsidies
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- Ted Cruz's scary, unreported, undisclosed Goldman Sachs loan
- Harvard Law Review: Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen and is eligible to become President
- Ted Cruz blasts Democrats for hiding immigration histories of terrorists in the USA
- CNN Debate: Ted Cruz hammers Marco Rubio over support for amnesty and Libya disaster
- Ted Cruz invites climate scientists to Washington, D.C. to discuss climate change
- The FIVE departments that Ted Cruz would shut down if elected president

Republican governors signing pro-life legislation in several states

March 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of red state legislatures and governors
For the rest of Easter weekend, I have scheduled 5 posts on the resurrection. But this post is all about the wonderful pro-life legislation that our Republican governors and legislatures are enacting into law in red states.

Let's start with something from last month, with Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin.

Life Site News reports:

> Kentucky governor Matt Bevin promised to make pro-life issues a top priority, and Tuesday he made good on his promise.
>
> Matt Bevin signed an informed consent bill requiring that biological facts and medical information be given to mothers in person or by real-time video at least 24 hours before an abortion.
>
> "The overwhelming support for Senate Bill 4 in the Kentucky legislature is a positive step toward protecting the emotional and physical health and safety of women," Bevin said in a statement before signing the bill.
>
> Bill supporters say the reason the bill was necessary is because many abortionists circumvent the law by having mothers listen to a prerecorded message over the phone.
>
> […]Gov. Bevin chose this as the very first bill he signed into law. He put his

> signature to it as soon as legislators delivered it to him. The bill informing mothers of the medical and biological facts related to gestation and abortion becomes the Bluegrass State's first new pro-life law in twelve years.
>
> Pro-life legislation was previously roadblocked by the Democrat-controlled state House.

Here's one from earlier this month, from South Dakota Governor Dennis Gaugaard.

Life News reports:

> South Dakota just became the next state to protect unborn babies from painful, late-term abortions.
>
> On Thursday, Gov. Dennis Gaugaard signed into law a bill to ban abortions after 20 weeks and penalize doctors who do late-term abortions in non-emergency situations, the Argus Leader reports. Penalties for violations of the law include up to a year in jail and a $2,000 fine, according to the report. The only exceptions would be in certain medical emergency cases, the report states.
>
> […]The state House passed the pro-life measure last week, LifeNews reported.
>
> South Dakota has one abortion clinic left, a Planned Parenthood in Sioux Falls that does abortions up to 14 weeks; however, the new bill would ensure that later abortions will not be done in the future in the state. More than 18,000 very late-term abortions are performed every year on perfectly healthy unborn babies in America.
>
> […]The bill is modeled after the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which has become law in 12 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

The next one is from Indiana, where pro-life Governor Mike Pence signed a pro-life bill into law this week. This bill will prevent abortions of babies who are the "wrong sex", the "wrong race", or who have disabilities such as Down syndrome.

Life News reports:

> Indiana has become the second state in the nation, following North Dakota, to ban abortions on babies who are diagnosed in the womb as having Down syndrome. Gov. Mike Pence signed the bill today to protect unborn babies from being aborted simply because of a disability, race or sex.
>
> Pence signed House Bill 1337, which would ban abortion doctors from knowingly aborting an unborn baby solely because of a genetic disability such as Down syndrome, the unborn baby's race or sex. The bill also has several other abortion-related measures, including a requirement that aborted or miscarried babies' bodies be cremated or buried and another requirement that abortionists who have hospital admitting privileges renew them annually. The burial/cremation requirement backs up a law passed in 2015 by Gov. Pence

> requiring that aborted babies' bodies be disposed of in a humane way.
>
> "Throughout my public career, I have stood for the sanctity of life. HEA 1337 is a comprehensive pro-life measure that affirms the value of all human life, which is why I signed it into law today," Governor Pence said in a statement.
>
> Pence continued: "I believe that a society can be judged by how it deals with its most vulnerable—the aged, the infirm, the disabled and the unborn. HEA 1337 will ensure the dignified final treatment of the unborn and prohibits abortions that are based only on the unborn child's sex, race, color, national origin, ancestry, or disability, including Down syndrome."

The next one concerns Arizona, where pro-life Governor Doug Ducey is set to sign three pro-life bills into law.

Life News reports:

> Three pro-life bills are on their way through the Arizona legislature and soon could be on Gov. Doug Ducey's desk.
>
> On Wednesday, the Arizona House gave preliminary approval to the bills, and a final vote is expected on Thursday, according to the Arizona Daily Star. The bills, already passed in the state Senate, would regulate the use of dangerous chemical abortion drugs, ban the trafficking of aborted babies' body parts and remove abortion groups from the state employee charitable giving program.
>
> Specifically, state Senate Bill 1324 would ban dangerous chemical abortions after the seventh week of pregnancy, as the drug label recommends. Abortion clinics often use the chemical abortion drug regimen RU-486 later in pregnancy and give smaller doses than recommended, likely in an effort to save money.
>
> […]The second bill, state Senate Bill 1474, would end the inhumane treatment of aborted babies' bodies by abortion clinics and research facilities. Arizona state Sen. Nancy Barto, R-Phoenix, introduced the bill earlier this year, saying she was "shocked" by the undercover videos by the Center for Medical Progress showing top Planned Parenthood officials selling aborted babies' body parts.
>
> […]The final bill, Arizona Senate Bill 1485, would ban abortion groups from the state employee charitable giving program. The ban is a continuation of a move last year by Gov. Ducey to kick out Planned Parenthood from the program.
>
> […]State legislators in the Senate also are considering a separate bill that would make it easier to defund the Planned Parenthood abortion business.

The fourth story is about South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, who recently endorsed Ted Cruz for President.

The Daily Wire reports:

> South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, who is openly pro-life, will sign a bill into law that would ban killing babies in the womb after 20 weeks of pregnancy.

> The bill, titled the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, was already passed by the South Dakota legislature on March 9; it has already been made law in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin. Nebraska was the first state to pass the law, in 2010.
>
> Last September, Senate Democrats blocked the Senate's version of the bill, as the vote was in favor, 54-42, but fell short of a 60-vote sum that would have prevented a filibuster. Ted Cruz voted for the bill while Bernie Sanders opposed the bill; Hillary Clinton has opposed the measure.
>
> […]In 2012, Haley signed the Opt Out of Abortion Act and the Born-Alive Infant Protection Act. The Born-Alive Infant Protection Act would protect unborn children who are born alive after a failed abortion but would be left to die afterward.

And finally, for those who like some religious liberty along with their defending the lives of unborn children, Campus Reform reports that Kansas Governor Sam Brownback signed into law a bill to protect the religious liberty of student groups on public university campuses.

It was a great week!

What’s the earliest historical report of the resurrection of Jesus?

March 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let’s take a look at the facts

First, the creed – which is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8:

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Almost all historians accept this creed as dating back to within 5 years of the death of Jesus. But why?

Here’s an article about this early creed from ancient historian Gary Habermas.

Quote:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: “However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul’s.”[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul’s own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to

many witnesses, both individuals and groups.

Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: "It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition."[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]

The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]

Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]

Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.

> (3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]
>
> These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.
>
> (4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

Here's a great article from Eric Chabot, director of Ratio Christi Apologetics Alliance, The Ohio State University to explain who accepts this creed. It's not just conservatives!

Excerpt:

> Even the co-founder Jesus Seminar member John Dominic Crossan, writes:

> "Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that "I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received." The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he "went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days" (11).
>
> This comment by Crossan makes sense because within the creed Paul calls Peter by his Aramic name, Cephas. Hence, if this tradition originated in the Aramaic language, the two locations that people spoke Aramaic were Galilee and Judea. (12) The Greek term "historeo" is translated as "to visit" or "to interview." (13) Hence, Paul's purpose of the trip was probably designed to affirm the resurrection story with Peter who had been an actual eyewitness to the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:5).

Now the Jesus Seminar was a radical group of scholars – these were not moderates. Crossan himself admitted to being an atheist in his debate with William Lane Craig. So

here you have an atheist admitting that 1 Cor. 15:3-8 is early and in contact with eyewitnesses.

What are the historical arguments for the empty tomb story?

March 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead

> man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

A few quotes from atheist historians not from Dr. Craig's article: (thanks to Eric of Ratio Christi OSU)

> Michael Goulder (Atheist NT Prof. at Birmingham) "…it goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion." ["The Baseless Fabric of a Vision," in Gavin D'Costa, editor, Resurrection Reconsidered (Oxford, 1996), 48.]
>
> Gerd Lüdemann (Atheist Prof of NT at Göttingen): "…the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus…not later than three years… the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE." [The Resurrection of Jesus, trans. by Bowden (Fortress, 1994), 171-72.]

> Robert Funk (Non-Christian scholar, founder of the Jesus Seminar): "…The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30 C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." [Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, The Acts of Jesus, 466.]

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s. For example, the atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark some time in the 40s. (See the debate below)

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say "The President is hosting a dinner at the White House" and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the "high priest" as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus' death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

So we are dealing with very early sources for the empty tomb.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as "Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women" and "Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female."
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these

> facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

Why does atheist historian Gerd Ludemann accept the post-mortem experiences of the risen Jesus?

March 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

William Lane Craig explains why even atheist historians like Gerd Ludemann accept that the earliest followers of Jesus had experiences in which Jesus appeared to them as resurrected Lord.

Excerpt:

> Fact #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead*. This is a fact which is almost universally acknowledged among New Testament scholars, for the following reasons:
>
> 1. The list of eyewitnesses to Jesus's resurrection appearances which is quoted by Paul in I Cor. 15. 5-7 guarantees that such appearances occurred.
>
> 2. The appearance traditions in the gospels provide multiple, independent attestation of such appearances.
>
> With respect to the first supporting line of evidence, it is universally accepted on the basis of the early date of Paul's tradition as well as the apostle's personal acquaintance with many of the people listed that the disciples did experience postmortem appearances of Christ. Among the witnesses of the resurrection appearances were Peter, the immediate circle of the disciples known as "the Twelve," a gathering of 500 Christian believers (many of whom Paul evidently knew, since he was aware that some had died by the time of his writing), Jesus's younger brother James, and a wider group of apostles. "Finally," says Paul, "as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me" (I Cor. 15.8).

> The second supporting line of evidence appeals again to the criterion of multiple attestation. The Gospels independently attest to postmortem appearances of Jesus, even to some of the same appearances found in Paul's list. Wolfgang Trilling explains,
>
> From the list in I Cor. 15 the particular reports of the Gospels are now to be interpreted. Here may be of help what we said about Jesus's miracles. It is impossible to 'prove' historically a particular miracle. But the totality of the miracle reports permits no reasonable doubt that Jesus in fact performed 'miracles.' That holds analogously for the appearance reports. It is not possible to secure historically the particular event. But the totality of the appearance reports permits no reasonable doubt that Jesus in fact bore witness to himself in such a way.38
>
> The appearance to Peter is independently attested by Paul and Luke (I Cor. 15.5; Lk. 24.34), the appearance to the Twelve by Paul, Luke, and John (I Cor. 15.5; Lk. 24:36-43; Jn. 20.19-20), the appearance to the women disciples by Matthew and John (Mt. 28.9-10; Jn. 20.11-17), and appearances to the disciples in Galilee by Mark, Matthew, and John (Mk. 16.7; Mt. 28. 16-17; Jn. 21). Taken sequentially, the appearances follow the pattern of Jerusalem-Galilee-Jerusalem, matching the festival pilgrimages of the disciples as they returned to Galilee following the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread and traveled again to Jerusalem two months later for Pentecost.
>
> Lüdemann himself concludes, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus's death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."39 Thus, we are in basic agreement that following Jesus's crucifixion various individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Christ alive from the dead. The real bone of contention will be how these experiences are best to be explained.

Triablogue notes that most historians accept these post-mortem experiences of the risen Jesus:

> In their 2004 book, Gary Habermas and Michael Licona mention five facts accepted by the large majority of scholars:
>
> 1. Jesus died by crucifixion.
> 2. Jesus' disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them.
> 3. The church persecutor Paul was suddenly changed.
> 4. The skeptic James, brother of Jesus, was suddenly changed.
> 5. The tomb was empty.
>
> Habermas and Licona write:
>
> "On the state of Resurrection studies today, I (Habermas) recently completed an overview of more than 1,400 sources on the resurrection of Jesus published since 1975. I studied and catalogued about 650 of these texts in English, German, and

> French. Some of the results of this study are certainly intriguing. For example, perhaps no fact is more widely recognized than that early Christian believers had real experiences that they thought were appearances of the risen Jesus. A critic may claim that what they saw were hallucinations or visions, but he does not deny that they actually experienced something….roughly 75 percent of scholars on the subject accept the empty tomb as a historical fact." (The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2004], pp. 60, 70)
>
> Habermas and Licona explain that even "the majority of nonbelieving scholars" (p. 149) accept such facts, not just Christian scholars. And even many professing Christian scholars are Christian in name, but reject much of what Christians have traditionally believed. Skeptics sometimes suggest that a scholarly consensus on facts related to Jesus' resurrection isn't of much significance, because so many of the scholars are Christians, but *traditional* Christians make up only a small percentage of scholarship.

When talking about the appearances, the challenge is always to make the move from "through they saw" to "they actually saw". In chapter 6 of their introductory book on the resurrection of Jesus, "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus", Mike Licona and Gary Habermas give some reasons why the post-mortem appearances of Jesus were not hallucinations. First, they argue that hallucinations are had by individuals, not groups. Second, they argue that the hallucination hypothesis leaves the empty tomb unexplained. It also doesn't explain the appearances to skeptical James and antagonistic Paul. Finally, the appearance narratives are too varied to be hallucinations, i.e. – individuals, groups, friends, enemies, different times and different places.

If you want to read a scholarly response to the hallucination hypothesis, it's right in the article by Dr. Craig that I was quoting from above. He assesses the hallucination hypothesis as put forward by atheist scholar Gerd Ludemann against the standard criteria for judging multiple competing historical explanations. It's too much to quote here, but click through and read it when you can. If you want to see a good summary of the arguments for the empty tomb, go right here.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

Bible study: Was the resurrection body of Jesus spiritual or physical?

March 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

So, everyone from left to right accepts the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 being dated to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, even atheists like Crossley, Ludemann and Crossan. The thing is, some people are not sure that the appearances of Jesus to individuals, groups, and skeptics really were physical appearances. They say "well, Paul's appearance was non-physical, so the other ones must have been, too".

Let's take a look.

Here's a paragraph from my friend Eric Chabot, from his blog Think Apologetics. He explains why Paul's use of the word "resurrection" to describe what the other witnesses saw means *bodily* resurrection.

He writes:

> If Paul did have a vision then the term "vision" is vague and must be defined. As Licona points out, visions are either objective (i.e., something that is seen without the use of our natural senses) or subjective (i.e., a product of our minds). The real problem is with the vision hypothesis is that it doesn't explain Paul's use of resurrection to explain what had happened to Jesus. The two words are used for resurrection in the New Testament "anastasis" (rising up) and "egersis" (waking up), both imply a physical body**.** Furthermore, the use of the word "opethe" (the Greek word for appeared) shows the Gospel writers did believe that Jesus appeared physically. "There you will see (opethe) him" (Matt. 28:7); "The Lord has risen and has appeared (opethe) to Simon" (Luke 24:24).

> When they used “opethe” here, it means that He appeared physically to them.

> So when Paul gives his list of appearances in 1 Cor. 15, the issues becomes whether the appearance to him is the same as it was to the disciples. There is no doubt the post resurrection body of Jesus (after the ascension) had to be somewhat different than the body the disciples saw. Also, whenever the New Testament mentions the word body, in the context of referring to an individual human being, the Greek word “soma” always refers to a literal, physical body.Greek specialist Robert Gundry says “the consistent and exclusive use of soma for the physical body in anthropological contexts resists dematerialization of the resurrection, whether by idealism or by existentialism.” [9] Furthermore, in N.T. Wright’s The Resurrection of the Son of God shows that the Greek word for resurrection which is “anastasis” was used by ancient Jews, pagans, and Christians as bodily in nature.

Now, I think my view on this, and I’m not sure if Eric would correct me, is that Paul got an objective but non-physical vision of Jesus. There was something there that everyone else could see and hear, in my view. But in my view Paul’s “veridical” vision was post-ascension, and so non-physical. Paul uses the word resurrection to describe what the other eyewitnesses saw (and he met them at least twice, according to Gal 1 and Gal 2), and that means physical resurrected body.

Eric Chabot writes this in another place:

> **Acts 9- Paul’s Damascus Road Experience**
>
> Here we see whatever happened, this was after the ascension. Hence, to say Paul saw the exact same Jesus before he ascended is hard to infer from the text. There simply isn’t enough information here. The Bible says, “they heard” the same voice Paul did ” (Acts 9: 7). But they “did not see anyone ” (Acts 9: 7). Notice Paul was physically blinded by the brightness of the light. One way or the other, the experience involved something that was external to Paul. It wasn’t something that was the same thing as a vision that Paul talks about in 2 Cor. 12:1. Furthermore, the phrase “he let himself be seen’” (ōphthē , aorist passive,), is the word Paul uses in 1 Cor. 15:7 to describe of his own resurrection appearance as the other ones in the creed. As Paul Barnett says:
>
> “It is sometimes claimed that the word appeared (ōphthē) means a mystical seeing, as of a vision, and that since this was what Paul “saw” it was what the other apostles “saw.” In other words, after death, Jesus was taken directly to heaven whence he “appeared” to various people, mystically, as it were. This however, is not all the meaning of Paul’s words. First, the word ōphthē, “appeared” is not limited to visionary seeing it is also used for physical seeing. Moreover, the verb raise used in the phrase ‘raised on the third day” is used elsewhere in combination with the words “from the dead” which literally means “from among the corpses.” Thus raised preceding appeared gives the latter a

> physical not a mystical meaning. Christ, as “raised from the dead” ….appeared.” Furthermore, when Paul asks “ Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?”(1 Cor. 9: 1), he is using the ordinary word horan, “to see” for physical sight. If “seeing” the Lord “raised from the dead” qualified others to be apostles, then Paul is, indeed, an apostle. It was no mere subjective vision that arrested Paul en route to Damascus. (8) .
>
> In the end, word studies can’t entirely resolve this issue. We need to remember the etymological fallacy as well. We would have to look at all the texts that speak of resurrection (including the entire 1 Cor. 15 chapter in their entire context as well as the anthropology of the New Testament. We also need to study the resurrection in light of the Second Temple Jewish period. See our reading list here for some resources that may help.

But conservative ancient historian Gary Habermas seems to think that Paul got the physical body as well.

He says:

> Now, I said before in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul could have chosen to only use the word *pneuma*. He doesn’t. He does say “spiritual,” but he’s got an adjective there. He also says, *soma*, “body.” What did Paul mean?

> Philippians Chapter 3. It’s a short chapter. There are 21 verses, but Paul says three things in one chapter that indicate he’s talking about a physical resurrection. In the opening verses he says, “I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews” and “as touching the law,” he says, “I was a Pharisee.” Now, it’s very well known that the Pharisee believed in a bodily resurrection. In fact, according to Acts 23, as Paul was being taken captive by the Romans to prevent his being killed, he shouted out to the group of people and said, “Why are you taking me? Because I believe in the resurrection of the dead?” He meant a literal resurrection.
>
> When the Pharisees heard that, they said there’s nothing wrong with this guy. But the Sadducees [who didn’t believe in the Resurrection] didn’t like it. So as a Pharisee, he’s agreeing with the Pharisees.
>
> So, the first evidence is from Philippians 3. As a Pharisee, Paul believes in a physical resurrection.
>
> Secondly, in verse 11 he says, “That I may attain the resurrection of the

> dead." Now, the normal Greek word for resurrection is *anastasis,* but in this passage, Philippians 3:11, he puts a prefix on there, ***ek*** *anastasis.* ***Ek****anastasis*, according to all Greek scholars that I know of, is translated in this passage: "The out resurrection from among the dead." Paul said, "I want to attain the out resurrection."
>
> Now, to a Jew, "out resurrection" means "what goes down is what comes up." You come out from death. And then just a few verses later, Philippians 3:20,21, he said, "From Heaven, we look for Jesus who will change our vile *soma* (body) to be like unto His glorious *soma* (or body)," when he should have said *pneuma*, according to this other view.
>
> So he's a Pharisee who believes in a physical resurrection. ***Ek*** *anastasis*—"resurrection from out among the dead ones."
>
> Thirdly, Paul says, "He Jesus will change ***my body*** to be like ***His body***."

> So right there in Philippians 3 alone, I think the picture of Jesus being some wispy spirit that appeared to him on the road to Damascus doesn't fit Paul's own data.

Yes, that's why Philippians is my favorite book. You can get so much useful theology out of it. Something about the resurrection in Phil 3, something about Jesus' divinity in Phil 2, and loads of practical advice on stewardship, charity, fellowship, endurance and practical love for others throughout. Some of it takes a little digging, but that's what commentaries are for, am I right? But I digress.

If you want to read something a little more challenging, I found a paper from the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) from their journal, where it talks more about soma and anastasis. If you want a bit of a challenge, download the PDF and read it. It's by Kirk R. MacGregor and the title is "1 Corinthians 15:3B–6A, 7 And The Bodily Resurrection Of Jesus".

N.T. Wright lectures on the seven mutations caused by resurrection of Jesus

March 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's a video of his case for the resurrection:

You can read a written version of the lecture here.

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable* apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an

invented exaltation was already available to do the job.

3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.
5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

Against misogyny: why every conservative should #DumpTrump #NeverTrump

March 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Heidi Cruz, a beautiful, intelligent, hard-working, successful woman

So, last week early Thursday morning, Donald Trump tweeted out a picture of his wife juxtaposed with a picture of Heidi Cruz that made her look very ugly.

In this post, I want to respond to Trump's attack on Heidi, and urge Trump supporters to reconsider their support for Trump.

All about Heidi Cruz

Consider this Texas Tribune article about Heidi Cruz.

It says:

> [Heidi] Cruz, 43, grew up in San Luis Obispo, Calif., the daughter of a dentist and dental hygienist who are Seventh-day Adventists.
>
> […]Cruz went to Claremont McKenna College and was active in the college Republicans and interested in appointive political office, said her mentor, Edward Haley. She also was intent on a career in business first. She moved to New York after graduation and worked on emerging markets at J.P. Morgan, an area in which she was interested after spending summers in Africa doing missionary work with her parents. **She was put on the Latin America desk and taught herself to speak Spanish between 18-hour work days.**
>
> Cruz achieved her dream of attending Harvard Business School but turned down

> a job at Goldman Sachs to work on George W. Bush's 2000 presidential campaign.

She later met and married Ted Cruz, and she has now put her career on hold to help her husband run for President.

More:

> She now holds her own campaign events, talking up her husband's values and laying out what the campaign sees as a grass-roots path to victory.
>
> […]She remains the campaign's top fundraiser, now making many calls from the road instead of from the campaign's airy Houston headquarters, where she installed a playroom with pillows decorated with raspberry prints for the girls. Cruz said she aims to make 30 calls a day but typically averages about 20 to 25; she is calling from the campaign and super PAC lists and trying to persuade donors to give the maximum allowed under federal election law.
>
> "I don't want to say it's easy, and I don't close every deal," she said. "I think people want to be a part of something that addresses the main issue of the day, number one, which is Washington versus the people."
>
> […]**Ted Cruz told an audience in Winterset, Iowa, on Monday that the couple's decision to run for president was difficult for his wife.**
>
> **"Heidi spent a lot of years building a very, very successful career. And when we were deciding whether to run, particularly when you're parents of young girls, that's not an easy decision. And she was struggling with it," he said.**
>
> **Ted Cruz said his wife was driving, listening to a CD of Christian music sent by her sister-in-law. She was struck by a song about seeking the face of the Lord and pulled over on the freeway and started crying, he said. That moment, he said, "changed her heart," and she decided that the race was about God, the country and the future.**
>
> **Now, Heidi Cruz says her main job is to bolster her husband's candidacy.**
>
> **"There are women who use their husband's candidacies for their own" purposes, she said recently while being driven to yet another airport. "I love my life. I love my career. This is not for me. This is for our country."**

Here is one more quote from a 2013 article on Heidi Cruz, from the radically leftist New York Times, of all places:

> In a glimpse into their marriage that Mr. Cruz called "illustrative," he recalled saying to his wife in the weeks before his Senate primary, when he was still behind in the polls, "Sweetheart, I'd like us to liquidate our entire net worth, liquid net worth, and put it into the campaign."

> “What astonished me, then and now, was Heidi within 60 seconds said, ‘Absolutely,’ with no hesitation,” said Mr. Cruz, who invested about $1.2 million — “which is all we had saved,” he added — into his campaign.

Here she is going door to door in New Hampshire in the winter:

Heidi Cruz waits for a New Hampshire voter to answer the door

The description of the photo by the person who posted it says:

> Here’s a photo from the campaign trail that I’ve never shared. This is Heidi Cruz waiting in the cold to talk to a New Hampshire voter. She did this campaign work with me and three other kids. It was unglamorous: no media, no crowds, just a woman canvassing a neighborhood with a couple volunteers, trying to find someone to talk to about why she believed in her husband. Kind, genuine, humble: when the cameras she knows about are off, this is who Heidi Cruz is.

That’s a great wife.

Donald Trump’s attack on Heidi Cruz

It’s a shame that Donald Trump misses all the great things that Heidi has done and attacks her for her appearance. But this is what he values most in women, and this is why he keeps committing adultery on his wives as they age, and then divorcing them to trade them in for younger women. He thinks that a woman’s value is all in her appearance, so he thinks that Heidi is a loser.

Ted Cruz wasn’t born rich. He has had to work his way up to get where he is. Ted knows the value of a woman as a helper, so when it came time to get married, Ted chose the best helper he could find to help him do the big things that he wanted to do. Donald Trump inherited millions and millions of dollars. When it came time for him to choose a wife, he chose supermodel after supermodel. He has no idea what most wives really do to help their husbands, he doesn’t need the help of a woman, which is why he doesn’t value

them *as women*.

Look at what he says:

> "You know, it doesn't really matter what they write as long as you've got a young and beautiful piece of *ss."
>
> "You have to treat [women] like sh*t."
>
> "A person who is very flat-chested is very hard to be a 10. Oftentimes when I was sleeping with one of the top women in the world, I would say to myself, thinking about me as a boy from Queens, 'Can you believe what I am getting?'"

The "top women" are the ones who are "10s". And what do you do with these women? You have sex with them. You don't commit to loving and serving a woman for life. You just use them, and throw them away. That's his view of women. That's his record.

Mona Charen wrote in defense of Heidi Cruz in National Review.

She says:

> Heidi Cruz happens to be an attractive woman, but that's beside the point. Trump is such a shallow, low human being that he cannot get beyond judging others on their appearance. Basic decent manners forbid commenting on others looks except in the mildest way. "What a lovely dress!" or "That color suits you." Polite people remember to see others in full — as professionals, wives, mothers, sisters, volunteers, patients, teachers and so forth. Trump is obsessed with people's looks. He has disdained countless formidable and impressive women for their looks (remember what he said about Carly Fiorina?), and even when searching for kind things to say about his late brother, he lingered quite a while on how handsome he was. At a meeting with the editorial board of the Washington Post, after being asked about using tactical nuclear weapons against ISIS, Trump offered that "this is pretty great looking group." As with other Trump traits, this is disturbing.

When I first saw Trump's tweet comparing Heidi Cruz against Trump's third wife, my first response was to immediately unfriend all of the Trump supporting "friends" on Facebook. That's how much I hate this idea that a woman has no value unless she is young and beautiful. For some reason, I regard this blindness / dismissiveness about the value of women as complementary to men as misogyny. I think deep down, there is something in me that recognizes that a man's job is to give a woman security. And what security can a man give a woman when she knows that her value to him is all tied up in her youth and beauty? Trump is an adulterer. He divorced his two wives when they lost their youth and beauty, and he re-married younger women who had better appearances. But what security is there for a woman in a man who sees her contribution to the marriage as youth and beauty? I don't want Trump's example to become widespread.

Youth and beauty cannot last – women know that. If we as a society decide to communicate Trump's message to women, that they only have value if they are young

and beautiful, it creates a situation where women will disengage from marriage, because they know they will be abandoned. Trump's attack on Heidi Cruz is especially devastating in communicating that message. What he is really saying is that women just need to look hot and be good at sex. He is saying that they don't need to go to school, they don't need to work hard, they don't need to save money. These are all the things that Heidi did in order to make a difference, and to be a good helper to her husband.

The more that women get their idea of value from born-rich promiscuous womanizers like Donald Trump, the more women will be depressed that they cannot give anything to a man that will make him stick around. We need to be teaching women how much value they have as supporters, listeners, nurturers and teachers in the home. We need to be teaching men that women who understand male nature and know how to use their feminine gifts remain valuable through changes in age and appearance. Men have a deep need for women as companions. Ted Cruz chose Heidi Cruz because she had the knowledge, wisdom and character to be a suitable companion and confidante for him. We need to be celebrating women like Heidi Cruz, not attacking them for their looks.

Trump has strong links to National Enquirer and David Pecker #TrumpLovesPecker

March 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump with some of his supporters

I'm just going to go through a few links so that we get the complete picture of the connection between Donald Trump and his good friend David Pecker, and Pecker's trashy tabloid publication.

This article from the New York Daily News is from August 2015.

It says:

> Former Donald Trump allies like Fox News and NBC have been taking shots at the presidential hopeful since his bid began — but he has at least one staunch media ally.
>
> Industry insiders tell us Trump is "very close" with David Pecker, head of The National Enquirer and CEO and chairman of American Media, which means the outlet is unlikely to dig too deeply into his personal life as he campaigns.
>
> […]"Trump is a big friend of Pecker," says our insider.
>
> […]Our source says that with Trump "protected" by the tabloid, "Some of the staff are furious. Trump's such fertile ground, and it drives them crazy to not only be staying away from it, but running puff pieces for him."
>
> Trump and Pecker have certainly been known to scratch each other's backs.
>
> This week's Enquirer features a piece under the screaming red banner: "Charismatic billionaire Donald Trump writes exclusively for the Enquirer." In the column, entitled "America is being laughed at … and things must change!"

> Trump outlines his qualifications for the White House, including the fact that in his view, wife Melania "would make a terrific first lady!"
>
> In 2010, Trump tweeted, "David Pecker would be a brilliant choice as CEO of TIME Magazine — nobody could bring it back like David!"

New York Magazine also notes the connection between Trump and David Pecker of the National Enquirer, in an article from October 2015, when Carson and Trump were fighting for the lead i the GOP primary.

Excerpt:

> […][A]s Carson overtakes Trump as the GOP front-runner, it appears Trump is getting help from a media outlet known for ending presidential candidacies: the *National Enquirer*. Earlier this month, the *Enquirer* published a cover story on Carson headlined "Bungling Surgeon Ben Carson Left Sponge in Patient's Brain!" The article called Carson a "White House wannabe" and claimed he "brandished a scalpel like a meat cleaver!" It went on to quote angry former patients saying he botched surgeries that left them disfigured and in pain; one patient who sued Carson said he forgot to remove a surgical sponge from her brain after a procedure. "His presidential campaign should be dead on arrival!" *Enquirer* reporter Sharon Churcher wrote.
>
> […][Their source] **also said that Trump's campaign was a source for the article:** "His campaign provided information that was used," he explained. A Trump friend said that in the days leading up to the article's publication Trump was telling people that Carson "had a lot of medical malpractice suits" and "almost killed a guy."
>
> […]Whether or not Trump has been a source for the *Enquirer*, his friendship with Pecker has paid dividends. At key moments during the GOP primary the *Enquirer* has helped boost Trump's campaign by attacking his rivals and fawning over him. Two weeks after Trump launched his campaign in mid-June, the *Enquirer* reported that Jeb Bush was "involved in the drug trade in Florida" in the '80s and that, as governor, he was plagued by "sleazy cheating scandals … [with a] Playboy Bunny turned lawyer." In September, the *Enquirer* published an unflattering photograph of Bush's adult daughter apparently taking cigarette breaks at her office. The article hit just days after Jeb told Americans they needed to work longer hours.
>
> Carly Fiorina has also been slimed. After the former Hewlett-Packard CEO bested Trump at the second GOP debate last month, the *Enquirer* ran an article headlined "Homewrecker Carly Fiorina Lied About Druggie Daughter." The article attacked one of Fiorina's best moments at the debate: her emotional account of her daughter's struggle with drug addiction. "The *National Enquirer* has exclusively learned that Lori Ann Fiorina, who died in October 2009, was in fact Carly's stepdaughter," the tabloid reported. "She was brought up not by Carly but by her biological mom, Patricia Fiorina, whose marriage allegedly was

> wrecked by the 61-year-old White House hopeful who is determined to knock Donald Trump from his superior front-runner status!"
>
> […]Meanwhile, Trump has been exclusively celebrated in the *Enquirer*'s pages. As talk of a Trump candidacy heated up last winter, the tabloid published an article headlined "Trump's the One!" that reported him leading in the polls. In September, the *Enquirer* published a three-part series by Trump himself under the headline "The Man Behind the Legend!"
>
> Trump's scandal-filled personal life would be *yuge!* for the supermarket tabloid, but to the *Enquirer*, it seems, friendship is forever.

They certainly are very good friends.

National Enquirer: "Trump Must Be President!", and Rubio has sex & drug secrets

The Daily Beast notes that Trump has also been endorsed by the National Enquirer.

Excerpt:

> The full endorsement… includes a list of "10 reasons The Donald is the ONLY choice for the White House."
>
> […]Along with conservative website Breitbart, the *Enquirer* often reads like a political ally of Team Trump. And if it sounds like that endorsement was authored by Trump's friends, that is because, well, it sort of was.
>
> […]Meanwhile, Trump's other political enemies, such as Carly Fiorina, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz (called "Boozin' Ted" by the tabloid), and Jeb Bush have been absolutely savaged in the pages of the *Enquirer*. The supermarket tabloid reported that Bush, as governor of Florida, was embroiled in "sleazy cheating scandals…[with a] Playboy Bunny turned lawyer," a rumor Bush had publicly denied over a decade ago.
>
> […]The unvarnished look at, say, Rubio has consisted of the Florida senator's alleged past attendance at "gay [foam] parties" (the "Rubio is gay!" conspiracy theory is emerging asthe next big meme within certain pro-Trump and far-right communities), and a story on "NERDY" Marco Rubio's "SEX & DRUG SECRETS."

> The latter ran directly to the right of the publication's recent endorsement of The Donald (pictured above).
>
> [...]Trump became a *National Enquirer* contributor in August, writing an op-ed on his greatness. (It would not be the last time the *Enquirer* would bear his byline.)

Trump writes articles for the National Enquirer? Hmmmn. I wonder if he writes anonymous articles for the National Enquirer that insinuate nasty things about Ted Cruz, but have no evidence or statements from witnesses.

And along came a smear

I ask that because there is a National Enquirer story out now that smears Ted Cruz.

Here is Ted Cruz's response to the National Enquirer story:

Everyone has to decide who to believe on their own.

Ron Fournier and Chuck Todd

I was surprised to see this tweet from Ron Fournier, who is a person on the far left who gets respect from conservatives like me:

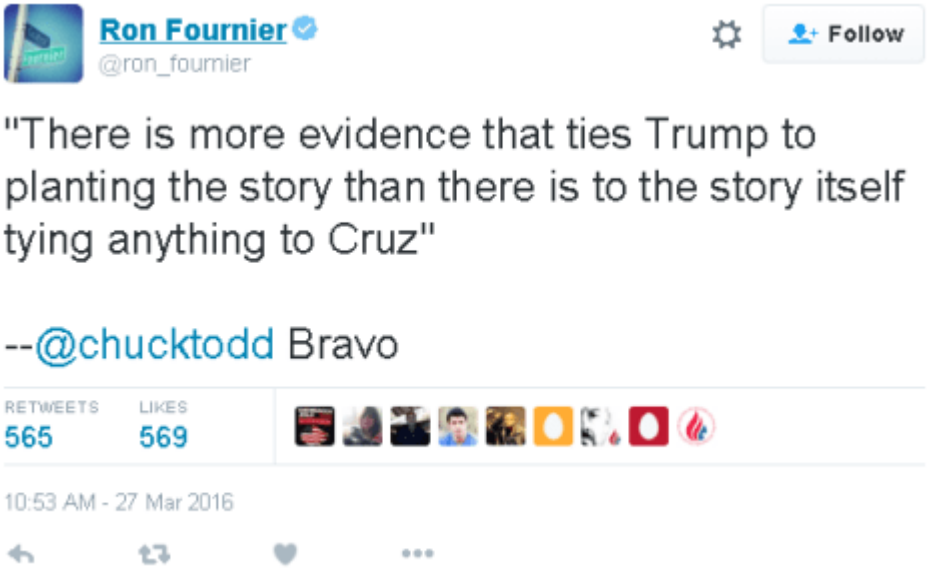

Ron Fournier of National Journal re-tweets Chuch Todd and says "Bravo"
Here is the link to Chuck Todd's comments: (link has the video)

> Yesterday on Meet The Press Chuck Todd pointed out that Trump used an LBJ tactic of suggesting he hoped the National Enquirer story wasn't true while trying to fan the flames of the smear.
>
> But Todd says there's simply more evidence that ties Trump to planting the story in the National Enquirer than there is to the story itself tying anything to Cruz...
>
> Andrea Mitchell emphasized how close Trump's relationship is with the National Enquirer, pointing out that they've even endorsed him.

When you have MSNBC saying that the story's claims are less credible than the claim that Donald Trump deliberately planted the story in the National Enquierer, thanks to his good

friend David Pecker, then you know the story is suspect. No one in the mainstream media has confirmed it, because there is no confirmation for it.

Michael Savage

The National Enquirer story so ridiculous that one of Trump's biggest supporters – national radio show host Michael Savage – has threatened to yank his endorsement of Trump.

The Right Scoop has the transcript and audio.

Transcript:

> Michael Savage said today on his radio show that the National Enquirer story smearing Ted Cruz is completely false, and he knows this based on a source he says he would trust with his life. Savage points out that Cruz is rightly offended over this utter garbage.
>
> But even more so, Savage says that he abhors these attempts of *assassination by innuendo*, as it has been done to him, and while he doesn't blame Trump for the story, he threatens to withdraw his support of Trump if he doesn't completely disavow the story and the man who owns the National Enquirer, David Pecker.

Now that Ted Cruz is gaining in the polls, I have to wonder about any National Enquirer articles that attempt to smear Cruz the same way that previous articles smeared Rubio, Bush, Carson, Fiorina, etc. Seems to me that Trump might be able to recover his lead if he could convince his good friend David Pecker to let him write an article about Ted Cruz – one with no evidence and no named witnesses. It might work to convince Trump's supporters to return to him so that he doesn't lose the primary to a surging Ted Cruz.

New study: regular churchgoers and married people most satisfied with their love life

March 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family
This article from Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> Regular churchgoers, married people or those who enjoy harmonious social ties are most satisfied with their love life. This also goes for people who are currently in love or who experience the commitment and sexual desire of their partners, says Félix Neto and Maria da Conceição Pinto of the Universidade do Porto in Portugal. Their findings, published in an article in Springer's journal *Applied Research in Quality of Life,* look at the influences on love life satisfaction throughout one's adult life.

> The researchers associate love with the desire to enter into, maintain, or expand a close, connected, and ongoing relationship with another person. In turn, love life satisfaction is a purely subjective, overall measurement of someone's actual enjoyment of love. To investigate the factors that influence this across various age groups, 1,284 adult Portuguese women and men ranging between 18 and 90 years old were asked to evaluate and weigh specific facets of their own love lives by using the Satisfaction With Love Life Scale.
>
> […]**While education does not impact a person's love life satisfaction, religious involvement does. The finding that believers and regular churchgoers are positive about their love lives is in line with previous studies that associate religious involvement with better mental health and greater satisfaction with life and sexual relationships in general.**

Previously, I blogged about a study reported in USA Today, which showed that people who attend church have lower divorce rates than those who don't attend church.

Excerpt:

> It's been proclaimed from pulpits and blogs for years — Christians divorce as much as everyone else in America.
>
> But some scholars and family activists are questioning the oft-cited statistics, saying Christians who attend church regularly are more likely to remain wed.
>
> […]The various findings on religion and divorce hinge on what kind of Christians are being discussed.
>
> **Wright combed through the General Social Survey, a vast demographic study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and found that Christians, like adherents of other religions, have a divorce rate of about 42%. The rate among religiously unaffiliated Americans is 50%.**
>
> **When Wright examined the statistics on evangelicals, he found worship attendance has a big influence on the numbers. Six in 10 evangelicals who never attend had been divorced or separated, compared to just 38% of weekly attendees.**
>
> […]Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there's been some confusion.
>
> "You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees," he said.
>
> **Wilcox's analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.
>
> "There's something about being a nominal 'Christian' that is linked to a lot of negative outcomes when it comes to family life," Wilcox said.

Whenever I talk to atheists about marital satisfaction and marital stability, they always tell me these myths about how atheists divorce less and are happier in their marriages than religious people. But when I ask them for studies, they don't have any, or they start to talk about the Discovery Channel or Star Trek or something. It's like they believe things without any evidence at all. Meanwhile, one also has to note that atheists have much lower rates of marriage than church-attending believers.

Now clearly, there are going to be atheists with great marriages that never break up. But individual cases do not overturn peer-reviewed research studies. The fact is that marriage

is an institution that is soaked through with moral values and moral obligations. If you think that morality is just arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place, as is logically consistent with atheism, then the odds are that you won’t be able to stay married for long – if you even get married at all.

Georgia governor sides with big business and gay rights lobby against religious liberty

March 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

The Republicans in the Georgia House and Senate authored and passed a bill which would protect the citizens of Georgia from being forced to affirm and participate in same-sex marriage ceremonies, as has happened in other states like Washington (florist), New Mexico (photographer), Oregon (baker) and New York (property owner).

The bill went to the governor's desk, and he vetoed it – siding with the big corporations and the gay activists.

The Washington Times reports:

> The influence of the entertainment and business lobbies were powerfully felt Monday when Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal knuckled under to a tidal wave of pressure by vetoing a religious liberty bill.
>
> […]He vetoed the bill after several major corporations, including Walt Disney Co., the National Football League and Intel, made clear that it would impair their ability to do business in Georgia.
>
> A spokesman for Disney… said the company would "plan to take our business elsewhere should any legislation allowing discriminatory practices be signed into state law."
>
> The NFL hinted that the measure could threaten any Atlanta bid to host a Super Bowl. Other companies that urged Mr. Deal to veto the legislation included Apple, Time Warner and Salesforce.

The bill that was vetoed was re-written to remove almost all the religious protections in the original bill.

Just as an aside, big corporations are also threatening North Carolina for preventing men from using women's washrooms, and vice versa:

> North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory, a Republican, has invited the censure of several blue-chip corporations by signing into law a bill that says sex-specific public restrooms and changing facilities must be used according to biological sex, not a person's preferred gender identification.
>
> The bill was passed in a single-day special session to strike down a Charlotte city ordinance to the contrary and prevent any other local government from following suit.
>
> […]Several companies based in North Carolina, such as PayPal, Bank of America and Dow Chemical have denounced the law, while the National Basketball Association is threatening to move the 2017 All-Star Game, now scheduled to be played in Charlotte, in the wake of the legislation.

This is the 4th time that a state has backed off of defending religious liberty against the gay rights activists who put the right of gay people not to be offended above the right of religious people not to violate their conscience by performing actions that they believe are immoral. It happened before in Indiana, Arizona and Arkansas, and now Georgia.

I found two great articles by two articulate defenders of religious liberty, David French and Ryan T. Anderson, to respond to Deal's decision.

Ryan T. Anderson at the Daily Signal:

> The bill that the Deal vetoed was the result of a series of compromises that significantly watered down the original version. It did not offer protections to bakers, florists and similar wedding professionals, and it adopted a very narrow definition of faith-based organizations, covering only churches, religious schools, and "integrated auxiliaries"—the same unacceptable definition used by the Obama administration to exclude the Little Sisters of the Poor.
>
> Yet liberals demagogued these very limited protections—and got the governor to veto it.

David French at National Review:

> The Georgia bill that Deal refused to defend was modest in scope, protecting the right of clergy to solemnize marriages consistent with their religious beliefs, protecting the right of faith-based institutions to use their property and resources to advance their religious mission, protecting their rights to hire and fire employees on grounds consistent with religious belief and practice, and protecting a person's free exercise of religion from a "substantial burden" unless the protected person was engaged in "invidious discrimination on any grounds prohibited by federal or state law."
>
> In other words, the bill as drafted could not be used to "bring back Jim Crow," nor could it offer any person, outside clergy and faith-based employers, any effective

> defense against the enforcement of state anti-discrimination laws. It wouldn't block a single gay marriage. It wouldn't deny a single gay person access to the marketplace. Instead, it would merely offer a bare minimum of legal protections to Georgia citizens who are already confronting anti-Christian bigotry and discrimination.
>
> That small amount of protection was too much not only for Apple, Disney, Salesforce.com, and a host of multinational corporations who are quite comfortable doing business in places like the People's Republic of China and Saudi Arabia.

French has a solution to the problem of Republican leaders siding with corporations over the people who elected them:

> Donald Trump, of course, has probably given less than nine seconds of thought to religious liberty. He's been too busying enjoying the full benefits of the sexual revolution to think even for a moment about the conflict between sexual hedonism and religious freedom. Ted Cruz, however, has been stalwart in defense of the faithful. He is the anti-establishment politician who actually understands the role of faith in our national history and culture and understands the direct threat from the "social justice" left. Cruz would call Disney's bluff.

Indeed, and I wrote about Cruz's strength on the religious liberty issue. If this is your issue, then Cruz is your candidate.

There is supposedly a First Amendment right in this country that protects religious liberty and conscience from coercion and threats. There is no such protection in Constitution from being "offended" when someone disagrees with you on a moral question.

So what do we learn from this? What I learned is that I need to start thinking about states to live in where I can find a way to work and earn money without having to have my conscience violated by people who think that their views on moral issues are so correct that they need to force me to agree with them using fines and imprisonment. And it's clear from the past that the correct state will be a state where there is a conservative governor, a conservative House and Senate, and no big multinational corporations who cave in to the demands of gay rights lobbying groups like the Human Rights Campaign. Indiana, Georgia, Arizona and Arkansas are off my list. Especially Georgia.

The biggest driver of income inequality is single motherhood

March 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Does government provide incentives for people to NOT get married?
Indian economist Aparna Mathur, whose work I've featured here before, writes about it in Forbes magazine.

Excerpt:

> The fabric of our society is changing. In 1980, approximately 78 percent of families with children were headed by married parents. In 2012, married parents headed only 66 percent of families with children. In a new report, Bradford Wilcox and Robert Lerman explore the role of family structure with new data and analysis, and document how this retreat from marriage is not simply a social and cultural phenomenon. It has important economic implications for, amongst others, men's labor force participation rates, children's high school dropout rates and teen pregnancy rates. **Since these factors are highly correlated with economic opportunity and the ability to move up the income ladder, this suggests that income inequality and economic mobility across generations are critically influenced by people's decisions and attitudes towards marriage.** Understanding the role of family structure is therefore key to understanding the big economic challenges of our time.
>
> […]Wilcox and Lerman document how the shift away from marriage and traditional family structures has had important consequences for family incomes, and has been correlated with rising family-income inequality and declines in men's labor force participation rates. Using data from the Current Population

> Survey, the authors find that between 1980 and 2012, median family income rose 30 percent for married parent families, For unmarried parents, family incomes rose only 14 percent.
>
> These differential patterns of changes in family income have exacerbated family-income inequality. **Since unmarried parent families generally expand the ranks of low-income families, while high-income, high-education adults increasingly marry partners from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, inequality trends are worsened.**
>
> […]The authors estimate that approximately 32 percent of the growth in family-income inequality between 1979 and 2012 is associated with changes in family structure. Other research, studying the period 1968-2000, finds that the changing family structure, accounted for 11 percent of the rise widening of the income gap between the bottom and top deciles.

So, what specific policies discouraged people from marrying, especially before they have children? Was it conservative policies or liberal policies?

Robert Rector explains in The Daily Signal.

He writes:

> It is no accident that the collapse of marriage in America largely began with the War on Poverty and the proliferation of means-tested welfare programs that it fostered.
>
> When the War on Poverty began, only a single welfare program—Aid to Families with Dependent Children —assisted single parents.
>
> Today, dozens of programs provide benefits to families with children, including the Earned Income Tax Credit, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Women, Infants and Children food program, Supplemental Security Income, food stamps, child nutrition programs, public housing and Section 8 housing, and Medicaid.
>
> Although married couples with children can also receive aid through these programs, the overwhelming majority of assistance to families with children goes to single-parent households.
>
> **The burgeoning welfare state has promoted single parenthood in two ways. First, means-tested welfare programs such as those described above financially enable single parenthood. It is difficult for single mothers with a high school degree or less to support children without the aid of another parent.**
>
> **Means-tested welfare programs substantially reduce this difficulty by providing extensive support to single parents. Welfare thereby reduces the financial need for marriage.** Since the beginning of the War on Poverty, less-educated mothers have increasingly become married to the welfare state

> and to the U.S. taxpayer rather than to the fathers of their children.
>
> **As means-tested benefits expanded, welfare began to serve as a substitute for a husband in the home, and low-income marriage began to disappear.** As husbands left the home, the need for more welfare to support single mothers increased. The War on Poverty created a destructive feedback loop: Welfare promoted the decline of marriage, which generated a need for more welfare.
>
> A second major problem is that the means-tested welfare system actively penalizes low-income parents who do marry. All means-tested welfare programs are designed so that a family's benefits are reduced as earnings rise. In practice, this means that, if a low-income single mother marries an employed father, her welfare benefits will generally be substantially reduced. The mother can maximize welfare by remaining unmarried and keeping the father's income "off the books."
>
> For example, a single mother with two children who earns $15,000 per year would generally receive around $5,200 per year of food stamp benefits. However, if she marries a father with the same earnings level, her food stamps would be cut to zero.

I blogged recently about a study that was done to make sure that welfare programs really do discourage young people from marrying, and that's exactly what the study found.

The authors of that study found that penalties to marriage "on the margin", i.e. – at lower income levels where welfare could substitute for a husband – caused lower rates of marriage:

> "The supposition that marriage penalties have an impact on decisions to marry gains credence from the simple fact that marriage rates are highest among higher-income groups that are less affected by them and for whom such penalties represent a smaller proportion of total income," they wrote.

So you see, the thing the left complains about (income inequality) is actually the thing they do the most to cause. Their big spending on welfare programs for the poor makes it easier for them not to get married and stay married before they have children. This is true across all races, too. It's an economic issue, not a race issue. People on the left are all about taxpayer-funded welfare programs and growing government to make more and more people dependent. They are causing the income inequality, and then complaining about what they have caused.

So what's the answer? It seems to me that we should be paying people to do what is best for children – marriage. People do more of what they get rewarded for doing. Right now, we're taking money from high-earning married couples, and paying people to have fatherless children. This creates more dependency, more poverty, and more income inequality. If we want to reduce income inequality, and for children to be happier, we should be encouraging people to marry.

Matt Dillahunty debates David Robertson on atheism, morality and evil

March 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

OK. So I think it's safe to say that of all the Christian apologists out there, David Robertson is my least favorite debater. Why? Many reasons, but mostly because he does not bring in evidence, especially scientific evidence. And he seems to make these clever quips like G. K. Chesterton. I like evidence. I would rather that he talk about scientific and historical evidence.

Dina asked me to listen to this debate a while back, between David Robertson and agnostic Matt Dillahunty (he's not an atheist, he's just an agnostic). I went in absolutely convinced that Robertson was going to have his ass handed to him by Matt Dillahunty. And I could not have been more wrong.

Here's the debate posted on YouTube (audio only):

This snarky summary is just a paraphrase from certain parts of the debate, *it is not designed for accuracy*, but for fun – to make you listen to the debate. Listen to the debate to get the exact words in context.

Summary:

- Matt Dillahunty: he's an agnostic who calls himself an atheist
- David Robertson: he's from Scotland, could we not get someone better?
- Robertson opening statement is incredibly weak, as you might expect, he only had two arguments embedded in a long list of nonsense: 1) origin and design of the universe 2) reality of evil requires objective morality

1) Creation/Design:

Robertson: The fact is that matter exists. There are 3 views that could account for this fact: 1) created, 2) eternal, 3) self-generated out of nothing. Option 3) is self-contradictory, 1) requires a Creator, and 2) is falsified by the Big Bang cosmology. So what's your view?

Dillahunty: You're trying to get me to say what my view is, but I can just say "I don't know" and get out of having to take any position on how matter got here. I can say "I don't know" to all the scientific evidence for the Big Bang cosmology, too!

2) Evil requires objective morality, requires a moral lawgiver:

Robertson: evil exists, e.g. – the Holocaust. If atheism is true, objective morality is impossible. Richard Dawkins agrees. Therefore, theism is the best explanation for the existence of evil.

Dillahunty: In my opinion, morality means doing what helps people have well-being. And I think that the Holocaust is obviously bad, because it hurts the well-being of the victims.

Robertson: The problem is that on your view, different people decide what well-being is to them. If you were raised in the Social Darwinism of the Nazi regime, you would believe that the Holocaust was the best for the well-being of the society as a whole.

Dillahunty: Isn't it obvious that killing people is bad for their well-being?

Robertson: Is it bad for the well-being of unborn children to kill them?

Dillahunty: Yes

Robertson: So you're against abortion, then?

Dillahunty: No

Robertson: So you think that killing the child in the womb is against the well-being of the child, but you're for that?

Dillahunty: I don't know! I don't know!

Then Dillahunty tried to claim Hitler was a Christian:

Dillahunty: here is a quote by Hitler saying that secular schools are bad, and religious schools are good – see, he's a Christian!

Robertson: when was that said and to whom?

Dillahunty: I don't know, I don't know!

Robertson: It was said in 1933, during an election campaign, to Catholic authorities – he was a politician, looking for votes from Catholics so he could become Chancellor.

Good and evil on atheism:

Dillahunty: good actions results in states with more well-being, and evil actions result in states with less well-being.

Brierley: but when the Nazis slaughtered all those people, they believed they were increasing well-being

Dillahunty: But you could demonstrate to them that their action is not going to increase well-being. Survival of the fittest is descriptive of what happens, but it's not prescriptive.

Robertson: Whose well-being will human beings think about most, if not their own? Do you really think that you can stop people like Charles Manson from being evil by sitting down and trying to prove to them that they are not helping their victim's well-being?

(A BIT LATER)

Robertson (to Dillahunty): Is it a fact that Dachau (a concentration camp) was morally wrong?

Dillahunty: (literally, not a paraphrase) I DON'T KNOW

My thoughts:

When I listened to this debate, the overwhelming conviction that emerges is that Matt Dillahunty is not someone who forms his worldview based on evidence. His rejection of the Big Bang cosmology with "I don't know" is just atrocious. His comments about slavery in the Bible and Hitler being a Christian show that his investigations of these issues is far below the level of a responsible adult. His dallying with the Jesus-never-existed view just shows him to be fundamentally anti-intellectual, as even atheist historian Bart Ehrman denies that view. His definition of faith has nothing to do with the Bible, or Christian authorities, or Christian scholars – he invented a definition of faith that allows him to mock Christians as morons. That's just irresponsible – letting the desire to mock others cause you to distort the definition of a word. When asked to state his positions or respond to specific evidence, his response is very often "I don't know". It seems to me that atheism, to him, means not pursuing truth with the aim of grasping it. He wants to keep reality at a safe distance – that's why he says "I don't know" so often.

On morality, it's even worse. It's not surprising to me that he is pro-abortion and has no opinion about concentration camps being objectively evil. Most atheists are pro-abortion, by the way. When it comes to morality, Dillahunty only has his own personal opinions, and they refer to nothing outside his own mind. (His opinion of morality as related to well-being is utilitarianism – a very problematic view – but moreover, it is *his subjective view* – he isn't offering it as any sort of objective moral system that would be prescriptive instead of descriptive. Without an after-life, there is no reason for anyone to care about the moral point of view when it goes against their self-interest, anyway. Atheists use moral language, but their statements are not referring to any objective, prescriptive moral reality. Atheism is materialistic and therefore deterministic – it does not even ground the free will that is needed to make moral choices. Their view is Darwinian survival of the fittest, that's what emerges from their origins story – and it does not rationally ground morality. The strong kill the weak, if they can. I've written before about how difficult it is for atheists to *rationally* condemn things like slavery, and nothing in Dillahunty's presentation led me to believe that he had solved that problem.

Anybody can be an intellectually-satisfied atheist with an empty head – it's *knowledge* that causes people to conform their beliefs to *reality*. If one strives to keep one's head as empty as possible, then of course one can believe anything one wants. I'm glad, speaking as a Christian theist, that I get to follow the evidence wherever it leads. It seems to me that we should do that, rather than decide how we want to live first, and

then invent a worldview to justify our desires.

Positive arguments for theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds

What’s the best book a woman can read to prepare herself for marriage?

March 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A good marriage is more than fun and feelings – it takes planning and work

I found a great lecture by Sue Bohlin, who works at Probe Ministries. The lecture is about the book “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands” by Dr. Laura Schlessinger. I recommend this book more highly than any other book to Christian women. It really does a lot to give young women a different perspective on men and marriage. Don’t be thrown off by the funny title, it’s really good.

The MP3 file is here. (48 minutes)

Here is a blog post that Sue wrote that captures most of the material in the lecture.

Here’s the introduction:

> Talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written a book that is improving thousands of marriages: *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands.* We need this book because millions of wives either don’t know how to love their husbands wisely and well, or they’re too self-centered to see it as important. Dr. Laura credits this dismal condition to forty years of feminist philosophy, “with its condemnation of just about everything male as evil, stupid, and oppressive, and the denigration of female and male roles in families.” While the women’s movement certainly had a hand to play in the disintegration of relationships and the family, I believe the core cause is our sinful self-centeredness, just as the Bible says.
>
> Which is why we need help, and God instructs older women to train younger women to love their husband and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be

> busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* is a great resource for learning these important values and skills.

And here's the first part I thought was most important:

> A listener to Dr. Laura's radio show named Edgar wrote, "There are a few things that men want so bad they would do anything for it. I think a good number of men want respect more than love. They like to feel they have some power. I nearly cry when you tell a woman caller to respect her husband. There is so much selfishness in the world—in marriages. Prosperity has allowed women to be so independent, and thus so selfish. I always feel as though I come last—my feelings come last, my needs come last."
>
> *"A good number of men want respect more than love."* God knew this when He made us. His commands to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:33 reflects each one's deepest needs: "Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." Dr. Emerson Eggerichs of LoveandRespect.com points out that this verse commands a husband to love his wife. Why? She needs love like she needs air to breathe. This same verse commands a wife to respect her husband. Why? He needs respect like he needs air to breathe.
>
> - Respect means treating someone in a way that builds him up and doesn't tear him down, never denigrating or attacking.
> - Respect means always treating the other person with the dignity they deserve as a person made in the image of God.
> - Respect means grasping that a man's needs and wants are every bit as valid and important as a woman's needs and wants.
> - Respect means not venting to others, *especially* the children. One woman wrote to Dr. Laura, "No emotional outlet is worth damaging my husband's reputation."
>
> There are three A's that men long for from their wives: attention, affection, and affirmation. Respect involves paying attention to what they do simply because they're the ones doing it.

Yes, respect is very important to men, but the thing is, a woman can't respect every man equally. She should choose a man who does things that are respectable. Then respecting him will be easy. Sometimes, women overestimate how easy men are to change after marriage. It's better to just pick one who does all the important things instead of thinking that you can pick a good-looking one and make him do the important stuff like be faithful to you, hold a steady job, save money, argue without getting angry, etc. later. Men don't change much, so pick one who does things that you respect and then give him respect.

And this part also seemed important to me:

> A man named Roy wrote to Dr. Laura with some good advice for wives: “If you can’t accentuate the positive, at least acknowledge it. The world is full of messages to men that there are standards we don’t meet. There is always another man who is more handsome, more virile, or more athletic than we are. None of that matters if the most important person in our life looks up to us, accepts us as we are, and loves us even though we aren’t perfect. . . . All I know is that the husband who has a wife who supports him and praises him for the positive things he does is the envy of all the other men who have to live with criticism, sarcasm, and constant reminders of their failures.”
>
> Men desperately want and need the support of their wives. This is reflected in what God reveals in His Word when He says, “It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” And through the apostle Paul, God instructs wives to relate to their husbands in a way that meets this need when He says, “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.”
>
> Submission is basically giving support with a willing, cooperative heart.
>
> A wife’s submission includes knowing her gifts and strengths, and using them to serve her husband and family.
>
> Service has a bad name, but both husbands and wives are called to serve God first and then each other; husbands are called to sacrificially love and serve their wives with Jesus as their pattern.
>
> So what does support look like?
>
> - Believing in him. Telling him, “You have what it takes.” Being his #1 fan.
> - Cultivating a cooperative heart.
> - Being generous and openhearted—willing to use your gifts and strengths to help him succeed.
> - Understanding the importance of making him look good: never saying anything negative in public.
> - Creating a home that’s a safe haven from the world.
> - Having a warm heart with a positive, cheerful demeanor. Women set the temperature of the home; we are thermostats, not thermometers, of the family. (On the other hand, Proverbs says “A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day; restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.”)
> - Being interested in him and his life.
> - Showing thoughtfulness. What does he like? Do it.
> - And though by no means exhaustive, it also means being a person of faithfulness and integrity. That means keeping your promises and being dependable. As Proverbs 31 puts it, “Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.”

Support and encouragement is SO important to a man. A man can continue to function

fine if the whole world opposes him, but not if the woman he loves doesn't support him. When a man falls in love, a woman has to realize the enormous power she has over him, and be careful not to hurt him. Men are vulnerable to the woman they choose. Although they look pretty tough on the outside, they can easily be hurt by insults or discouragement.

Parting thoughts

So, this lecture and the book are good, but young women should also seek out the advice of older Christian women who have been married successfully for some time. Read Titus 2:3-4 – the Bible encourages older women to mentor younger women! This is really important because we are in a time where young women are often pulled by the culture in many wrong directions, and they need help from people who know what they are doing.

One last point – I actually bought the audio version of the Dr. Laura book and noticed that it was just over two hours long. It turns out that the audio version is *abridged* – it is not as complete as the actual book. I noticed that Sue was quoting from the book passages that I had not heard in the audio recording. So, if you want the full content, get the book, not the audio recording.

Scott Walker endorses Ted Cruz for President, Cruz trails Trump by 1 in California

March 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker endorses Texas Senator Ted Cruz

The big news, which was reported *everywhere*, is that Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, who was my first choice in the primary early on, has endorsed my current first choice in the Republican primary: Ted Cruz.

The Washington Times reports:

> Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker endorsed Sen. Ted Cruz for president Tuesday, giving Mr. Cruz a major boost ahead of the April 5 GOP primary in the Badger State.
>
> "I am proud to endorse Ted Cruz," Mr. Walker said on WTMJ radio. "After a lot of time looking at speeches, looking at the records, looking at what the candidates not only say but what they have done in the past, it was an easy call for me to support Ted Cruz."
>
> Many Republicans in recent weeks who have endorsed or supported Mr. Cruz have cited stopping GOP front-runner Donald Trump as part of their calculus. But Mr. Walker said he wanted to make sure he was supporting someone and that he wasn't against something or someone.
>
> Mr. Walker, who called Mr. Cruz a "constitutional conservative" capable of taking on special interests, said the Texas senator is best positioned both to win the GOP nomination and defeat Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton in the fall.
>
> Mr. Walker said he got to know Mr. Cruz a bit better during the campaign.
>
> "He is a decent man, he loves his family, he loves his wife — he adores his children," Mr. Walker said. "He loves his country. He and I are both preacher's kids, so I certainly can appreciate and feel strongly about the impact that his father had on him as a minister."

> […]In a statement, Mr. Cruz said Mr. Walker has been "an outstanding leader in the conservative movement."
>
> "Gov. Walker courageously stood up to special interests and won in a bitter fight in Wisconsin," Mr. Cruz said. "His leadership has made a profound impact on the people of Wisconsin and I welcome his advice on how we can unite the Republican party and defeat Hillary Clinton in November."
>
> Mr. Cruz, along with Mr. Trump and Ohio Gov. John Kasich, are in Wisconsin this week trying to build support ahead of the state's primary next Tuesday.
>
> Mr. Walker said he does anticipate campaigning with Mr. Cruz ahead of the primary next week.

Here's the actual radio recording of Walker endorsing Cruz (4 minutes):

This endorsement will help Cruz a ton in Wisconsin, because Walker has a very high approval rating among Wisconsin Republicans:

> "While Walker's approval numbers have hovered below 40 percent statewide in polling after his exit from the 2016 race, his rating among Republicans is 85 percent, according to a Marquette University Law School poll taken last month. And his actions still attract attention from conservatives across the country."

And more:

> Walker was viewed favorably by 88% of all Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (a total of 9,725 voters) surveyed by Marquette between 2012 and 2014 — and unfavorably by just 10%. His popularity is highest on the right, but his negatives are low among almost all Republican groups:
>
> - he has a 95% favorability rating among "very conservative" Republicans, a 91% favorability rating among "conservative" Republicans and a 78% favorability rating among "moderate" Republicans (pooling Marquette' s 27 surveys since 2012).
> - he has a 96% favorability rating among Republicans who like the tea party and a 75% favorability rating among Republicans who don't like the tea party.
> - he has a 90% favorability rating among Republicans who are frequent churchgoers (Walker is the son of a minister and an evangelical Christian) and an 85% favorability rating among Republicans who seldom or never go to church.
> - he has a 92% favorability rating among Republicans who are opposed to abortion (Walker is staunchly "pro-life") and an 86% rating among Republicans who favor abortion rights.
>
> "It does bolster his claim to unify the party and appeal across lines," says Marquette pollster Charles Franklin, who provided the polling data. While

> moderates and tea party opponents give Walker his lowest ratings among Wisconsin Republicans, “even they are three-quarters favorable,’ says Franklin. “They’re just not at 95%.”

Cruz is doing well in other state polls, too. In a poll of likely voters in deep blue California, conducted by the radically leftist Los Angeles Times, Cruz trails Trump by 1 point.

The Hill reports:

> Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump holds a razor-thin lead over rival Ted Cruz in California, according to a new USC Dornsife/Los Angeles Times statewide poll.
>
> Among likely June primary voters, Trump leads Cruz by just 1 point, 36 to 35 percent. John Kasich falls far behind, at 14 percent.
>
> In all, about 75 percent of voters who were surveyed in California had an unfavorable view of Trump. Among Republicans, 43 percent had an unfavorable impression, while 51 percent had a favorable view of the front-runner.

Why is Cruz surging in the polls? Well, I think part of it is that people are realizing that Donald Trump is in no way, shape or form a conservative – not in his personal life, not in his political record. He’s been a Democrat all his life, and he’s a Democrat playing a Republican now. But I think the change in poll numbers has something to do with Trump’s constant stream of abuse against women, and in particular, against Heidi Cruz, as I blogged about before. Women voters are turning away from Trump.

But what can Ted Cruz do to convince those women voters who won’t vote for Trump to vote for him instead? That question was asked of Cruz in a town hall forum last night on CNN.

Watch Cruz respond to her:

There is a lot about his family background described in his bookI do think that you can look at a person’s family history and choice of spouse to find out more about them. Ted Cruz married a skilled, accomplished, hard-working woman – Heidi Cruz. And his mother studied math and then got a degree in computer science from Rice University.

Obviously, I think that women should stay home with young children when they arrive – that’s what is best for the children and for the marriage. But it helps a man a lot when the woman who makes that decision to put family first has a good education, good experience and maybe even some savings to help with the downpayment on the first home. And I have to say that Heidi Cruz is doing a great job of helping her husband with this election. Her education and skills are assets, not liabilities.

Trump campaign manager charged with battery after video evidence emerges

March 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump with some of his supporters

So there is some news about the Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski's assault of journalist Michelle Fields.

Here is what the Trump campaign manager claimed after the assault occured:

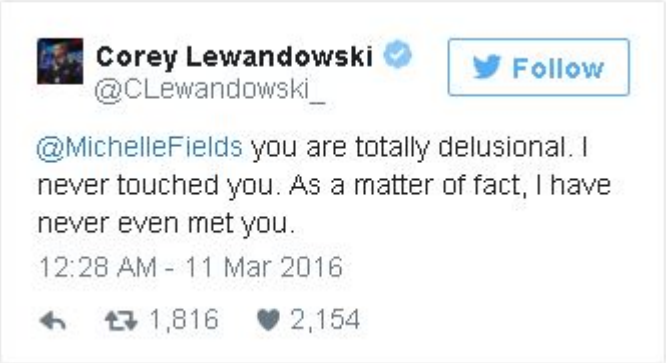

The Trump Campaign smearing and mocking women again

Trump himself backed Lewandowski's story up.

The Daily Wire has a video posted where Trump says the attack never happened:

> Upon being apprised of Fields' accusation, here was Trump's response:
>
> "Nobody saw it happened. Nobody complained….I think [she] made it up."

In this interview on the TODAY show, Trump clear says "She made up this story" and "She's got no evidence":

Basically, Trump thought he could cover up what happened by repeating the lies over and over and insulting and smearing the people who told the truth. And this refusal to admit fault and apologize went on and on and on.

The Washington Post reported:

> He retweeted news stories casting doubt on Fields's story, aided by the fact that the only footage that existed was, at best, sketchy. (He was also aided by exaggerations of Fields's original claim; at no point was it suggested that she'd been pulled to the ground.)
>
> Police in Jupiter appear to have obtained surveillance footage from inside the ballroom where the event and the incident occurred. There's no question that Fields was not, in fact, "delusional."

The video clearly shows Corey grabbing Michelle's arm and jerking her away from Trump, which resulted in bruises on her arm.

Here is an eyewitness corroboration of Michelle Field's initial report, reported by Ben Terris in the leftist Washington Post:

> As security parted the masses to give him passage out of the chandelier-lit ballroom, Michelle Fields, a young reporter for Trump-friendly Breitbart News, pressed forward to ask the Republican front-runner a question. I watched as a man with short-cropped hair and a suit grabbed her arm and yanked her out of the way. He was Corey Lewandowski, Trump's 41-year-old campaign manager.
>
> Fields stumbled. Finger-shaped bruises formed on her arm.
>
> "I'm just a little spooked," she said, a tear streaming down her face. "No one has grabbed me like that before."
>
> She took my arm and squeezed it hard. "I don't even want to do it as hard as he did," she said, "because it would hurt."

The leftist Washington Post reports on the video, and the charge of battery:

> Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump defended his campaign manager as a "very decent man" Tuesday, hours after the staffer was charged with battery in Florida for allegedly grabbing a reporter and yanking her away from Trump.
>
> Corey Lewandowski, 42, faces one misdemeanor count of battery as a result of the March 8 incident. He voluntarily went to police headquarters in Jupiter, Fla., and signed paperwork ordering him to appear in court May 4.
>
> **The police also released a video of the primary-night news conference, taken from the security cameras at Trump's own golf club. It directly contradicted what Trump and Lewandowski said about the incident in the past.**
>
> **They had asserted that Lewandowski never touched the reporter,**

> **Michelle Fields.**
>
> **In the video, he does — grabbing her hard enough to pull her backward.**
>
> In the past, campaign staffers have been fired for far less. But Trump did not dismiss Lewandowski on Tuesday, and neither apologized. “I don’t discard people. I stay with people,” Trump said.
>
> It was an extreme example of Trump’s approach to campaigning, one apparently based on the idea that the only mistake in politics is to apologize.

After news of the criminal charge came out, Trump didn’t apologize – he went right back to trying to smear Fields as a delusional liar.

> As the day went on, Trump offered increasingly strident defenses of Lewandowski. All ran counter to his earlier statements that the contact never occurred. Trump conceded that Lewandowski had touched Fields but implied that it was Fields’s fault for “grabbing” at the candidate — although the photo Trump posted didn’t show a grab but rather the reporter brushing the candidate with the back of her hand.
>
> Then Trump wondered whether he could file charges against the reporter.
>
> And then, at the end of the day, Trump was back to implying that Fields had lied about the incident — if the grab was as bad as she said, he said, why hadn’t she screamed?
>
> “How do you know those bruises weren’t there before? I’m not a lawyer,” Trump told reporters on his plane, referring to finger-shaped bruises that Fields showed to the police. “Wouldn’t you think she would have yelled out a scream or something if she has bruises on her arm?”
>
> In an interview with Sean Hannity on Fox News on Tuesday, Trump said that Lewandowski was merely protecting him against a potential, unidentified threat.
>
> “She grabbed me and she had something in her hand. I don’t know what it was,” he told Hannity. “It looked like it could have been a pen. But you know, from the standpoint of where we are, who knows what it is.”

Ben Shapiro notes in this interview that slandering women is is a pattern for the Trump campaign:

The Daily Wire concludes:

> Trump supporters have accused virtually every powerful anti-Trump conservative woman of some nefarious sexual activity with a rival candidate. And of course Trump himself has attacked prominent media females including Dana Perino and most egregiously Megyn Kelly (“blood coming out of her wherever”). Some of those attacks are purely political and within normal boundaries. But many of them are far more personal, obviously. This is a pattern, now, not merely a few isolated events.

Previously, I blogged about how Trump had attacked Heidi Cruz because she is supposedly not as pretty as his supermodel wife (wife number three). This seems to be a pattern that Trump has – to insult women publicly in order to shame them for opposing him.

Trump lies all the time

Earlier this week, Trump tried to argue that ads placed in Utah by a Super PAC that does not support Cruz were actually Cruz's fault. He went on mainstream media everywhere, and blamed Cruz for the ads. That turned out to be another lie, that was disproved by sources on the right (The Weekly Standard) and the left (The Washington Post) and every source in between. Trump lied again. This is what he does. If he's not insulting women, bragging about his penis, or giving childish answers to serious policy questions, then he's probably lying. *He's not fit to pump gas or pack bags at a grocery store.* He has one accomplishment in life – being born to a rich father. That's it. And he used that inheritance to live a life as devoid of Christian convictions and conservative actions as could be.

For a quick 6-minute listing of some of Trump's previous lies, please see this video featuring Ben Shapiro, who recently resigned from the Trump-supporting Breitbart News (following the Michelle Fields assault):

I would like to think that some Trump supporters would wake up to reality, but my experience with most of them is that they believe what they want to believe, regardless of the evidence. Whenever I present facts to them, they have some excuse why they get to retain their positive view of Trump.

Trump supporters cannot be persuaded with facts. They make decisions about who to hire as President with their feelings. They measure a man by his confidence, instead of by his record of accomplishments that are relevant for the job for which he is being interviewed. It's like Americans have lost the ability to make a moral assessment of a man – they just want to choose based on feelings. We are truly living in the age of moral relativism and postmodernism.

Related posts

- Trump has strong links to National Enquirer and David Pecker #TrumpLovesPecker
- Against misogyny: why every conservative should #DumpTrump #NeverTrump
- Donald Trump's plan to introduce tariffs is just a tax on consumer goods
- Suppose God had coffee with Donald Trump… how would that go?
- Is Donald Trump right to order U.S. troops to commit war crimes?
- How well did Donald Trump do in the hotel and casino business?
- Trump donated to group that promotes homosexuality to 5-year-olds
- Do supporters of Donald Trump really support what Trump believes?
- Is Donald Trump a successful businessman? Let's look at his record
- Report: how Donald Trump used illegal immigrants to build Trump Tower
- Is Trump right to praise Putin's leadership abilities?

- Is Trump right to say that Bush lied about the Iraq war, and there were no WMDs?
- Donald Trump promises gay publication “forward motion” on gay rights issues
- Who has done more on the pro-life and pro-marriage issues – Trump or Cruz?
- Where did Rubio, Cruz and Trump stand on amnesty before running for President?
- Trump, eminent domain, a widow’s house, and a limousine parking lot
- Trump wants to increase taxpayer subsidies of ethanol, Cruz wants to end them
- Trump supported the bank bailout and auto bailout, Cruz opposes all bailouts
- Should evangelical Christians prefer Donald Trump on moral grounds?
- Clinton, Rubio, GOP establishment and leftist media defend Trump’s New York Values
- What are the “New York Values” that Trump’s evangelical Christian supporters admire?
- Donald Trump would expand Obamacare into single-payer health care system
- Who is more conservative on the marriage issue? Trump, Cruz, Carson or Rubio?
- Is Donald Trump’s claim about Muslims celebrating 9/11 in New Jersey accurate?

The connection between our moon, plate tectonics and habitability

March 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

I found an interview with Peter Ward (atheist) and Donald Brownlee (agnostic) discussing astrobiology in Forbes magazine. They were asked about how important plate tectonics are for a planet to be able to support complex life.

Excerpt:

> **Astrobiologists often cite the sheer numbers of stars and galaxies as evidence that complex life elsewhere must surely have evolved somewhere. But is probability enough?**
>
> Without a moon, we don't have any idea of how commonly a planet could have the long-term stability needed for complex life. Until we "get" that, going to the sheer numbers argument is useless. Without that moon-forming collision, we wouldn't have plate tectonics. Without plate tectonics, we might have microbes but we'd never get to animals.
>
> **What about the rarity of earth's crustal dichotomy of oceans and continents?**
>
> If you can't make granite, you're not going to have continents. But granite formation is a consequence of our moon-forming collision. That scrambled the entire density of our crust. Mars doesn't have granite; all it's got is this volcanic basalt. To build granite you need a planetary subduction [or plate tectonic] process.
>
> **In triggering complex life, how important were plate tectonics' role in**

> **the continual recycling of earth's atmosphere?**
>
> It's this recycling that allows for a very rich planetary atmosphere with an extended life. Photosynthesis gets you oxygen, but how do you get enough photosynthesis to get oxygen at 10 to 20 percent? You've got to have a shoreline next to a rich sea with rocks eroding into it in order to provide the nitrogen and phosphates for [plant] photosynthesis.

This article from Astrobiology explains more about the importance of plate tectonics.

Excerpt:

> Plate tectonics is the process of continents on the Earth drifting and colliding, rock grinding and scraping, mountain ranges being formed, and earthquakes tearing land apart. It makes our world dynamic and ever-changing. But should it factor into our search for life elsewhere in the universe?
>
> Tilman Spohn believes so. As director of the German Space Research Centre Institute of Planetary Research, and chairman of ESA's scientific advisory committee, he studies worlds beyond our Earth. When looking into the relationship between habitability and plate tectonics, some fascinating possibilities emerged.
>
> It is thought that the best places to search for life in the Universe are on planets situated in "habitable zones" around other stars. These are orbital paths where the temperature is suitable for liquid water; not so close to the star that it boils away, and not so far that it freezes. Spohn believes that this view may be outdated. He elaborates, "you could have habitats outside those, for instance in the oceans beneath ice covers on the Galilean satellites, like Europa. But not every icy satellite would be habitable. Take Ganymede, where the ocean is trapped between two layers of ice. You are missing a fresh supply of nutrition and energy."
>
> So planets and moons that lie beyond habitable zones could host life, so long as the habitat, such as an ocean, is not isolated. It needs access to the key ingredients of life, including hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorous and sulphur. These elements support the basic chemistry of life as we know it, and the material, Spohn argues, must be regularly replenished. Nature's method of achieving this on the Earth appears to be plate tectonics.
>
> Spohn found that the further he delved into the issue, the more important plate tectonics seemed to be for life. For example, it is believed that life developed by moving from the ocean to the kind of strong and stable rock formations that are the result of tectonic action. Plate tectonics is also involved in the generation of a magnetic field by convection of Earth's partially molten core. This magnetic field protects life on Earth by deflecting the solar wind. Not only would an unimpeded solar wind erode our planet's atmosphere, but it also carries highly energetic particles that could damage DNA.

> Another factor is the recycling of carbon, which is needed to stabilize the temperature here on Earth. Spohn explains, “plate tectonics is known to recycle carbon that is washed out of the atmosphere and digested by bacteria in the soil into the interior of the planet from where it can be outcast through volcanic activity. Now, if you have a planet without plate tectonics, you may have parts of this cycle, but it is broken because you do not have the recycling link.”
>
> It has also been speculated that the lack of tectonic action on Venus contributed to its runaway greenhouse effect, which resulted in the immense temperatures it has today.

Most planets don’t have a moon as massive as ours is, and the collision that formed the moon is very fine-tuned for life. This is just one of the many factors that needs to be present in order to have a planet that supports complex, carbon-based life.

If you want to learn more about this data, I recommend watching “The Privileged Planet” DVD, and someone posted it on YouTube:

If you haven’t seen it, and have 90 minutes, this is time well-spent.

Convicted sex offender crafted North Carolina LGBT bathroom bill

March 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Chad Sevearance-Turner, former president of the Charlotte LGBT Chamber of Commerce

The Charlotte Observer reports:

> The former president of Charlotte's LGBT Chamber of Commerce has resigned after he came under fire from a conservative group, which noted that he is on a sex offender list and questioned his role in supporting the city's expanded nondiscrimination ordinance.
>
> Chad Sevearance-Turner had been the president of the chamber, which supported the newly expanded ordinance that gives legal protection for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals.
>
> At a City Council meeting Feb. 8, Mayor Jennifer Roberts cited a survey that showed discrimination was a real problem for the LGBT community. During the meeting, she said the survey was conducted by the LGBT Chamber.
>
> That prompted questions from the N.C. Values Coalition, which opposes the new LGBT protections in the ordinance.
>
> Tami Fitzgerald, who leads the Raleigh-based coalition, first mentioned Sevearance-Turner's record at a Feb. 8 news conference outside the Government Center, which Sevearance-Turner attended. On Feb. 18, the coalition issued a news release further questioning the chamber's role in the survey.
>
> Because of his record, "any supposed evidence provided by the group is discredited," she wrote.
>
> […]**Sevearance-Turner was arrested in 1998, when he was 20, and**

> **charged in Cherokee County, S.C., with a "lewd act, committing or attempting a lewd act upon a child under 16."**
>
> **A 2000 story in the Spartanburg Herald-Journal said Sevearance-Turner had been a youth minister at a church in Gaffney. A jury there found him guilty of fondling a 15-year-old teenage church member while the boy slept**.

Charlotte's bathroom ordinance was overturned by the state. And North Carolina now requires people with male equipment to use the male washroom, and people with female equipment to use the female washroom.

National Review explains the problems with this sex-offender-designed law.

Here's one:

> The Left likes to pull out the statistic that no transgender individual has ever assaulted someone in a restroom, locker room, etc. That's great. Good for the transgendered: There are no transgender rapists. But there are plenty of other kinds who would not hesitate to take advantage of this situation.
>
> Under the Charlotte ordinance, transgender people weren't the only ones allowed to use the restroom of the opposite sex. Anyone could. All he had to do was assert that his true gender wasn't his biological gender. "Transgender" is a tricky word; it's not like "transsexual," which refers to someone who has had an operation or taken large doses of hormones. "Transgender" means simply experimentation with the stereotypes of the opposite biological gender. So a clever (or not so clever) rapist could smear on some lipstick, call himself transgender, and waltz right into a locker room full of half-dressed teenage girls.
>
> People have already taken advantage of these kinds of laws to put other people in compromising situations. In February, after the city of Seattle passed an ordinance similar to Charlotte's, a man (not transgender) entered a girls' locker room twice in one day. His goal? To "test" the limits of the new rule. An advocate of the ordinance said that the ordinance itself wasn't a problem; the man was "just taking advantage of a loophole."

People like Sevearance-Turner are backed up by some of our largest companies, as the leftist Washington Post noted:

> Companies and organizations like American Airlines, Wells Fargo, Apple, Microsoft, Dow Chemical and the NCAA — many of which have a significant presence in North Carolina — have strongly opposed North Carolina's law.

Now that we know that a convicted sex offender crafted the law, we understand what those big companies think about the safety of children compared to the desires of selfish adults. Given the choice between the sex offender agenda and the pro-child agenda, the big corporations side with the sex offender.

When you do something really, really bad and run up against the moral law, the thing to

do is to realize that what you did was wrong. The thing you shouldn’t do is to change the laws of the nation (which are lower than the moral law), so that you can force all the moral people to celebrate the wrong things you did. Sin is scary not just because of the harm it causes to the victims, but because the sinners are tempted to coerce acceptance from others (by exerting force against them) rather than admit their guilt and repent of the sin.

Ted Cruz and Mike Lee go after Obama administration for intimidating pro-lifers

March 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

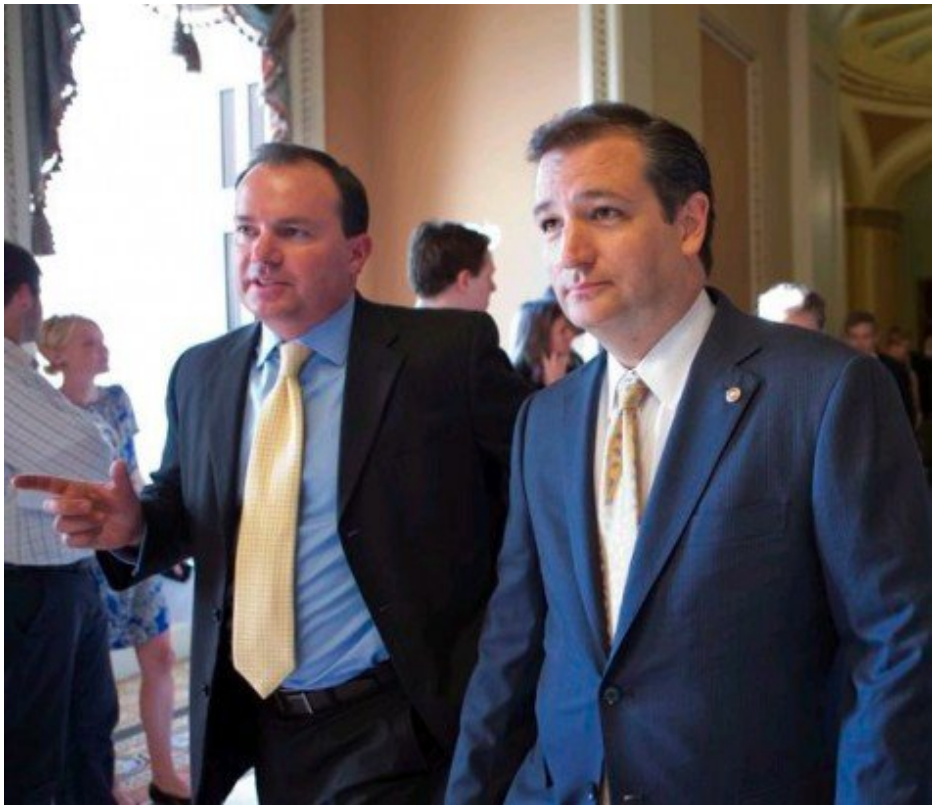

Ted Cruz and Mike Lee
This is from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas and Mike Lee of Utah are accusing the Justice Department of pursuing "frivolous prosecutions" against the pro-life movement and having, according to the senators' offices, "what appears to be an exceptionally heavy bias" in favor of abortion clinics over houses of worship in a letter sent to U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch Tuesday.
>
> The letter concerns the Justice Department's enforcement of the 1994 Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, a law that prohibits any use or threat of force and physical obstruction outside abortion clinics and places of religious worship. The law, however, does not criminalize peaceful protests or other First Amendment-protected activities outside abortion facilities or places of worship.
>
> In the letter, obtained by The Daily Signal, the Republican senators write:
>
> The [Justice Department's] brazen pursuit (and subsequent online promotion) of—at best—frivolous prosecutions in the abortion context, combined with its failure to list any prosecutions or enforcement activities in the religious worship context, gives the distinct impression of a warped and biased enforcement of

> FACE by the [Justice Department].
>
> Cruz and Lee reference the Civil Rights Division's web page, which cites "more than 15 FACE actions in more than a dozen states" that the Justice Department has filed. The website also notes "ongoing investigations in other states," along with "several FACE cases and settlement agreements concerning abortion clinic workers or abortion facilities."
>
> "Interestingly, it does not list a single case concerning the freedom of religious exercise at houses of worship," Cruz and Lee write.
>
> To further investigate the alleged double standard, Cruz and Lee are demanding that Lynch hand over a broad range of documents pertaining to the FACE Act dating back to January 2009.

Cruz has a good long record on pro-life issues – lots of pro-life actions in the past to show that the pro-life words of today can be believed.

Charisma News talked about Cruz's pro-life achievements.

Excerpt:

> On Saturday, Texas Senator Ted Cruz received a ringing endorsement from Georgia's largest pro-life organization. "Senator Cruz has an unblemished record of standing up for innocent life," said Ricardo Davis, the director of Georgia Right to Life's Political Action Committee (GRTL PAC).

And here are the pro-life achievements:

> Senator Cruz's pro-life record includes the following:
>
> - Leading the charge on behalf of 13 states in successfully defending the federal Partial Birth Abortion Act before the U.S. Supreme Court;
> - Joining 18 states in successfully defending New Hampshire's Parental Notification Act before the U.S. Supreme Court;
> - Successfully defending a Texas law that prevents state funds from being sent to organizations that perform abortions; and
> - Calling for the defunding of Planned Parenthood amid charges that the abortion giant sells aborted body parts.

That was Georgia Right to Life, but Wisconsin is the next GOP primary state. And in Wisconsin, Ted Cruz just picked up another pro-life endorsement.

Charisma News reports:

> Wisconsin and its 42 delegates are up for grabs on Tuesday in a contest where the top vote getter wins all of the delegates in each congressional district, as well as statewide. Cruz already has the endorsement of Gov. Scott Walker, who dropped out of the GOP presidential race prior to the votes being cast in neighboring Iowa.

> The Texas senator has picked up two more endorsements that could be critical to his winning the Badger State. The first was from Wisconsin Right to Life:
>
> Wisconsin Right to Life's Political Action Committee supports Ted Cruz as the only presidential candidate with a proven record on life who can win.
>
> "There has never been an election more important than this election, and the stakes have never been higher when it comes to protecting the unborn," stated Chelsea Shields, PAC Director of Wisconsin Right to Life. "There is only one candidate for president who has always been pro-life, who has a 100-percent pro-life voting record with National Right to Life and Wisconsin Right to Life, and who can win the Republican nomination and defeat pro-abortion Hillary Clinton in November. And that candidate is Ted Cruz."
>
> […]Cruz also picked up the personal endorsement of a key evangelical pro-family leader in Wisconsin. Julaine Appling, president of Wisconsin Family Action, said Wednesday that Cruz is a man of integrity who has kept the promises he made when he ran for Senate.

> […]In addition to Appling's personal support, Cruz also picked up Wisconsin Family Action PAC's official endorsement. The organization has the ability to immediately reach out to hundreds of thousands of evangelicals in the Badger State.

He has a 100% pro-life voting record, and specific pro-life actions in his record. We don't have to take his word for it, like we do with other candidates who say they are pro-life, but have a record of donations to pro-abortion Democrats, and a record of being "very pro-choice" and supporting partial birth abortion.

What about Donald Trump?

What about a person who has never thought about the pro-life view before, and who has no pro-life actions in his record? What happens when they are asked about abortion?

The Wall Street Journal reports on the latest Trump blunder:

> The first-time candidate showed how little he understands about the politics of abortion by suggesting that "there has to be some kind of punishment" if abortion were made illegal.
>
> "For the woman?" asked progressive partisan Chris Matthews of MSNBC. Mr. Trump: "Yeah, there has to be some form." He added that men who impregnate women who have an abortion should not be punished.
>
> **[…]Not even the most fervent abortion opponent favors punishing a woman who has one. If *Roe v. Wade* were overturned, opponents would try to pass laws that punish abortion providers or the clinics where they take place.** Mr. Trump's remarks were thus a political gift to Democrats and the left, who would like nothing better than to stereotype abortion opponents as misogynists who want to put women in jail.

> […]Mr. Trump’s loyal GOP partisans have been willing to ignore his rhetorical mistakes and excesses, but Democrats will be merciless. So will the media if he secures the GOP nomination. His abortion blunder is doubly troubling because it will reinforce his growing unpopularity among women voters in both parties. Imagine his Wednesday remarks playing as part of a national advertising loop from June to November.

Anyone who has thought about the pro-life issue for more than 2 minutes knows the answer to the question: “who should be punished if abortion becomes illegal?” Answer: the person who provided the abortion, of course. That’s why pro-lifers want to regulate and defund abortion providers.

New study: natural selection can act to impede speciation

March 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Australian Walking Stick

My friend KL sent me this press release from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

It says:

> An intriguing study involving walking stick insects led by the University of Sheffield in England and the University of Colorado Boulder shows how natural selection, the engine of evolution, can also impede the formation of new species.
>
> The team studied a plant-eating stick insect species from California called *Timema cristinae* known for its cryptic camouflage that allows it to hide from hungry birds, said CU-Boulder Assistant Professor Samuel Flaxman. *T. cristinae* comes in several different types — one is green and blends in with the broad green leaves of a particular shrub species, while a second green variant sports a white, vertical stripe that helps disguise it on a different species of shrub with narrow, needle-like leaves.
>
> While Darwinian natural selection has begun pushing the two green forms of walking sticks down separate paths that could lead to the formation of two new species, the team found that a third melanistic, or brown variation of *T. cristinae* appears to be thwarting the process, said Flaxman. The brown version is known to successfully camouflage itself among the stems of both shrub species inhabited by its green brethren, he said.
>
> Using field investigations, laboratory genetics, modern genome sequencing and computer simulations, the team concluded the brown version of *T. cristinae* is shuttling enough genes between the green stick insects living on different shrubs

> to prevent strong divergent adaptation and speciation. The brown variant of the walking stick species also is favored by natural selection because it has a slight advantage in mate selection and a stronger resistance to fungal infections than its green counterparts.
>
> "This is one of the best demonstrations we know of regarding the counteractive effects of natural selection on speciation," said Flaxman of CU-Boulder's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, second author on the new study. "We show how the brown population essentially carries genes back and forth between the green populations, acting as a genetic bridge that causes a slowdown in divergence."
>
> A paper on the subject appeared in a recent issue of the journal *Current Biology.*
>
> […]"This movement of genes between environments slows down the genetic divergence of these stick insect populations, impeding the formation of new species," said Aaron Comeault, a former CU-Boulder graduate student and lead study author who conducted the research while at the University of Sheffield.

So, in the past I had read that natural selection can act as a stabilizing force in nature – keeping the organism operating within a type. This study seems to be confirmation of that. That's a problem for naturalists, who believe that mutations and selection can drive evolution of new body plans or organ types (macro-evolution). I could even agree that mutation and selection drives changes within a kind, but that still wouldn't explain how one kind changes into another kind.

But there are other problems with generating macro-evolutionary change.

Also related to the problem raised by the study is this problem of genetic drift, which also works against the preservation of beneficial mutations.

Evolution News explains the genetic drift problem:

> Evolutionary biologists often assume that once mutations produce a functionally advantageous trait, it will easily spread (become "fixed") throughout a population by natural selection. For example, imagine a population of brown-haired foxes that lives in a snowy region. One fox is born with a mutation that turns its fur coat white, rather than brown. This fox now has an advantage in hunting prey and escaping predators, because its white fur provides it with camouflage. The white fox survives, passing its genes on to its offspring, which are also adept at surviving and reproducing. Over time, the white-haired trait spreads throughout the population.
>
> This is how it's supposed to work — in theory. In the real world, however, merely generating a functionally advantageous trait does not guarantee it will persist, or become fixed. For example, what if by chance the white fox trips, breaks a leg, and gets eaten by a predator — never passing on its genes? Random forces or events can prevent a trait from spreading through a population, even if it provides an advantage. These random forces are lumped together under the

> name “genetic drift.” When biologists run the mathematics of natural selection, they find that unless a trait gives an extremely strong selective advantage, genetic drift will tend to overwhelm the force of selection and prevent adaptations from gaining a foothold in a population.
>
> This underappreciated problem has been recognized by some evolutionary scientists who are skeptical of the ability of natural selection to drive the evolutionary process. One of those scientists is Michael Lynch, an evolutionary biologist at Indiana University, who writes that “random genetic drift can impose a strong barrier to the advancement of molecular refinements by adaptive processes.”[2] He notes that the effect of drift is “encouraging the fixation of mildly deleterious mutations and discouraging the promotion of beneficial mutations.”[3]

I guess the point of this is that if someone wants to convince you that macro-evolution is possible through the mechanisms of random mutation and natural selection, then they have some work to do. And it’s more work than just asserting that it happened.

People who are technical may benefit from reading Michael Behe’s book “The Edge of Evolution”, which studies how likely it is to get several positive adaptations in a row within a reasonable period of time.

UPDATE: A biologist friend tells me that “whether natural selection is driving speciation or preventing it, in neither case is it explaining how these organisms came to be in the first place. It only explains how existing organisms interact with their environment. And this can be explained at least as well through intelligent design as through naturalistic processes.” She also says that natural selection can drive speciation, but still within a kind.

Which candidate is the best at defending religious liberty: Trump or Cruz?

April 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

First, let's see a story is from the Business Insider, about the latest attack on religious liberty. Then we'll compare the candidates on religious liberty.

Excerpt:

> An Illinois inn that refused to allow a same-sex couple hold their civil union ceremony on the property was fined more than $80,000 by the **Illinois Human Rights Commission** on Tuesday.
>
> An administrative law judge with the commission ordered TimberCreek Bed & Breakfast to pay $15,000 each to Todd and Mark Wathen for emotional distress.
>
> […]TimberCreek, located about 100 miles south of Chicago, must also pay $50,000 in attorneys' fees and $1,218.35 in costs.
>
> **"We are very happy that no other couple will have to experience what we experienced by being turned away and belittled and criticized for who we are," Todd Wathen said in a statement.**

Ah, yes. The "Human Rights Commissions" that only ever go after Christians and conservatives, never secularists and liberals. It's now more important that gays not feel "belittled and criticized" than that Christians have their religious liberty respected. Christians must be forced by the government to act like non-Christians – that's apparently the law. A law that many Christians voted for when they voted for Democrats.

OK, now let's see what the presidential candidates think about the issue of gay rights vs religious liberty. Let's start with Ted Cruz.

Ted Cruz

Pro-marriage activist Maggie Gallagher reports on what Ted Cruz said about the Georgia governor's decision to side with gay rights over religious liberty:

> Ted Cruz once again proved he has the courage to go up against the GOP establishment in the person of Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal, who sided with leftists, big business and Hollywood by claiming conscience protections for gay marriage dissenters are "discrimination":
>
> "I thought that was very disappointing to see Gov. Deal of Georgia side with leftist activists and side against religious liberty," Cruz said. "It used to be, political parties, we would argue about marginal tax rates and you could have disagreements about what the level of taxation should be. But on religious liberty, on protecting the rights of every American to practice, live according to our faith, live according to our conscience, we all came together. That ought to be a bipartisan commitment and I was disappointed not to see Gov. Deal not defend religious liberty."
>
> Now will any reporters ask John Kasich, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump the same question?

No need to ask Hillary Clinton what she thinks, she been endorsed by the Human Rights Campaign – she's a hardcore gay activist who opposes religious liberty 100%. Bernie Sanders is the same – 100% opposed to religious liberty.

But what about Donald Trump?

Donald Trump

This is from Bay Windows, which bills itself as "serving New England's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities".

Here's what they wrote:

> The frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination today promised "forward motion" on gay and lesbian equality if he is elected.
>
> In an interview with NECN's Sue O'Connell just days before the crucial New Hampshire primary, Trump cast himself as a uniter on LGBT issues.
>
> O'Connell, who is also Bay Windows' Publisher, identified herself as a lesbian in a question that noted the progress the LGBT community has made in the last two decades and asked Trump if voters can expect him to continue that momentum if elected
>
> "When President Trump is in office can we look for more forward motion on equality for gays and lesbians?" O'Connell asked him.
>
> "Well, you can," Trump answered. " And look, again, we're going to bring people together, and that's your thing and other people have their thing. We have to bring all people together and if we don't we're not going to have a country anymore."

Recall that during the Iowa primary, Trump declared how much he loves evangelicals, and even held up a Bible he supposedly got from his mother as evidence of his genuine, authentic Christian faith. But the Iowa primary is over now, so no more Bible prop needed.

What about John Kasich?

John Kasich

Kasich considers same-sex marriage to be the law of the land, and he opposes legal protections for Christians who are sued by gay activists.

He gets an F on marriage from pro-marriage activist Maggie Gallagher for his stance on same-sex marriage:

> The Supreme Court overturns the marriage laws of your state and many others by inventing a new right? That gets a big yawn from John Kasich: "I do believe in the traditional sense of marriage—that marriage is between a man and a woman. But I also respect the Supreme Court of the United States. The Supreme Court of the United States made the decision, and as I have said repeatedly we'll honor what the Supreme Court does—it's the law of the land."

And he opposes protections for Christians who are sued by gay activists:

> What will you do, Gov. Kasich, to protect the rights of gay marriage dissenters?
>
> […]Gov. Kasich has refused to say whether he would support [the First Amendment Defense Act].

Ted Cruz has pledged to sign the First Amendment Defense Act, and quickly, too. No hesitation, because religious liberty is in the Constitution, and Ted Cruz is *crazy* about the Constitution!

The latest Wisconsin polls

A Marquette University poll from Wednesday found Ted Cruz up by 10 points against Donald Trump.

That poll might have been seen as an outlier, but then a new Fox Business poll with twice the number of people polled was released Thursday:

> Cruz garners 42 percent among Wisconsin likely GOP primary voters, while Trump receives 32 percent. John Kasich comes in third with 19 percent.
>
> Among just those who say they will "definitely" vote, Cruz's lead over Trump widens to 46-33 percent, and Kasich gets 16 percent.
>
> **There is a big gender gap. Women back Cruz over Trump by a 19-point margin (46-27 percent).** The two candidates are much closer among men: Cruz gets 40 percent to Trump's 35 percent.
>
> **Cruz's advantage over the real estate mogul also comes from self-described "very" conservative voters, who give him a 36-point lead (61**

> **percent Cruz vs. 25 percent Trump).**
>
> **White evangelical Christians voting in the GOP primary prefer Cruz over Trump by 49-28 percent.**
>
> […]Cruz is ahead of Trump among those with a college degree (42-30 percent) as well as those without a degree (44-34 percent).
>
> Independents can vote in Wisconsin's open primary — and are more inclined to back Trump (37 percent) than Cruz (26 percent) or Kasich (26 percent).

Independents are typically socially liberal, so naturally they prefer Trump and his New York values, e.g. – eliminating religious liberty.

What happens when socialist governments runs out of other people's money?

April 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The real face of socialism

Which socialist nation ran out of money? Brazil.

Investors Business Daily explains what happened next:

> Back to the wall, Brazil's biggest socialist manque, Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva, has issued a loud call for tax cuts to revive his nation's moribund economy. Why is it it takes a depression and impending political doom for socialists to recognize the truth about tax relief?
>
> Newly named as cabinet chief by embattled President Dilma Rousseff, the once-popular and much-hailed former socialist president told a press conference Monday that he wanted tax cuts (and more consumer credit) to revive Brazil's economy. He's got no support from Dilma's finance chief, and he won't improve anything with more consumer credit. But on taxes, you heard right, a heavy-duty socialist had just embraced supply-side economics as a proven means of reviving economic growth.
>
> And no question he believed it: "I am convinced that I can contribute, and it will be possible to change the mood in this country in a few months," Lula declared. Such a transformation could only come of a near-death experience. Which is about economic situation in Brazil right now.
>
> The country isn't just experiencing a bad recession. It's heading for what qualifies as a depression — a third year of economic contraction, with another negative 3.66% of GDP forecast in 2016. Inflation has topped 10% and unemployment is above 18%. Both huge industries and small businesses have gone belly-up. More

> than half of Brazil's 95 million consumer credit accounts are delinquent, and sovereign debt has been cut to junk.

Do tax cuts work? Only about every time they are tried. But what about raising taxes – what does that do?

> According to the Tax Foundation's William McBride, citing an aggregation of 26 studies, 26 tax hikes slashed economic growth in all but three instances, while cutting taxes consistently sets the stage for economic growth. McBride found that in one study, a 1% tax hike slashes GDP by 1.3%, while a 1% tax cut yields a 1.4% rise the first year and another 1.8% gain in the second.
>
> McBride also found that the most powerful impact comes from cutting the corporate tax, which mainly affects investment and capital formation, the very thing Lula said Brazil needs. Corporate tax cuts also fuel startups and entrepreneurial activity. Brazil's corporate income tax is 34%, the 16th highest in the world last year.

The U.S. corporate tax rate is the third highest in the world, 39.1%. And we just got a number for the most recent GDP change in the US economy – 1.4%. The average GDP growth under Obama is much lower than under George W. Bush.

Real Clear Markets explains:

> Right now, the nation is probably already in a recession. The BEA's first estimate of 4Q2015 RGDP growth was only 0.69%, and there is mounting evidence that this will later be revised downward. However, making the wildly optimistic assumption that 2016 RGDP growth will come in at the CBO's current forecast (2.67%), Obama will be the only U.S. president in history that did not deliver a single year of 3.0%+ economic growth.
>
> Again, assuming 2.67% RGDP growth for 2016, Obama will leave office having produced an average of 1.55% growth. This would place his presidency fourth from the bottom of the list of 39*, above only those of Herbert Hoover (-5.65%), Andrew Johnson (-0.70%) and Theodore Roosevelt (1.41%)
>
> No matter what happens in 2016, Obama's record on economic growth will be considerably worse than that of the much-maligned George W. Bush. Bush 43 delivered RGDP growth averaging 2.10%, with two years (2004 and 2005) above 3.0%.

You might remember that Bush cut taxes by over $2 trillion, and that created 8.1 million new jobs before the Democrats took over the House and Senate in January of 2007. Obama? Our labor force participation is around a 38-year low. Economic growth creates jobs, and we haven't had any under the socialist Barack Obama.

Anyway, enough of that. We're hearing a lot about socialism these days, and how great it is. The young people have been taught by their public school teachers and others about how great socialism is. But is it really? It seems to me that in order to make that decision,

we should look at countries like Brazil and Argentina and Venezuela and Cuba – where socialism has been tried – and then decide based on their experiences. We know what creates economic growth, and that’s leaving the money in the hands of the people who earn it.

Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on marriage and family

April 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

I am sure you will all LOVE this lecture delivered by Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse at Houston Baptist University. (60 minutes, *start listening at 11:15 though!*)

Topics:

- what is the purpose of marriage in society?
- do children really need a mother and a father?
- is each child entitled to a relationship with their 2 bio-parents?
- how is the purpose of marriage being re-defined today?
- how does same-sex marriage redefine traditional marriage?
- should the state be able to determine who counts as a parent?
- are mothers and fathers interchangeable?
- how did no-fault divorce redefine marriage?
- does the government provide an incentive to divorce?
- are men interchangeable with women?
- where did feminism come from? how did it start?
- how does the Marxist worldview view marriage and family?
- who do feminists believe should be raising the children?
- how Christianity conflicts with Utopian views
- what can a Christian university do to turn the tide?

This is a fun lecture to watch, because she's very articulate, informed, and passionate. She's an excellent speaker, because she taught economics at Yale University and George Mason University.

I’ve learned a ton about marriage and economics by listening to Jennifer Roback Morse. I like to complain a lot about women today not thinking much about love, marriage and parenting. But Dr. J knows *everything* about those topics. It’s useful stuff for young people to know – it’s never a bad idea to think deeply about marriage as an enterprise, and to understand the challenges to marriage.

William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech

April 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Making sense of the meaning of atheism
This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can grab the MP3 file of the lecture, or read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video. The essay is for Christians already familiar with basic apologetics.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Here's a quick couple of quotes from the essay for those who cannot watch:

> If there is no God, then any ground for regarding the herd morality evolved by homo sapiens as objectively true seems to have been removed. After all, what is so special about human beings? They are just accidental by-products of nature which have evolved relatively recently on an infinitesimal speck of dust lost somewhere in a hostile and mindless universe and which are doomed to perish individually and collectively in a relatively short time. Some action, say, incest, may not be biologically or socially advantageous and so in the course of human evolution has become taboo; but there is on the atheistic view nothing really wrong about committing incest. If, as Kurtz states, "The moral principles that govern our behavior are rooted in habit and custom, feeling and fashion,"[5] then the non-conformist who chooses to flout the herd morality is doing nothing more serious than acting unfashionably.
>
> The objective worthlessness of human beings on a naturalistic world view is

> underscored by two implications of that world view: materialism and determinism. Naturalists are typically materialists or physicalists, who regard man as a purely animal organism. But if man has no immaterial aspect to his being (call it soul or mind or what have you), then he is not qualitatively different from other animal species. For him to regard human morality as objective is to fall into the trap of specie-ism. On a materialistic anthropology there is no reason to think that human beings are objectively more valuable than rats. Secondly, if there is no mind distinct from the brain, then everything we think and do is determined by the input of our five senses and our genetic make-up. There is no personal agent who freely decides to do something. But without freedom, none of our choices is morally significant. They are like the jerks of a puppet's limbs, controlled by the strings of sensory input and physical constitution. And what moral value does a puppet or its movements have?
>
> […]Moreover, if atheism is true, there is no moral accountability for one's actions. Even if there were objective moral values and duties under naturalism, they are irrelevant because there is no moral accountability. If life ends at the grave, it makes no difference whether one lives as a Stalin or as a saint. As the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky rightly said: "If there is no immortality, then all things are permitted."

If you want to show this lecture and Q&A to your apologetics group, you can find the DVD here.

You can also read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor.

Ryan Bell’s year of atheism testimony shows need for apologetics

April 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Christian life requires a certain degree of mental toughness and non-conformity
Are you interested in knowing how to avoid losing your Christian faith? Well, an episode of the Unbelievable show featuring well-known apostate Ryan Bell will give you some clues.

But before we go to the podcast, I want to recap some reasons why people think that God exists.

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

In addition to these arguments for theism, Christians should be able to make a minimal facts case for the resurrection, one that leverages the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

And some sort of case for the belief that Jesus was divine using only the earliest sources.

In addition to those positive evidences, there would be informed defenses to other questions like the problem of evil, the problem of suffering, religious pluralism, the hiddenness of God, materialist conceptions of mind, consciousness and neuroscience, the justice of eternal damnation,sovereignty and free will, the doctrine of the Incarnation, the doctrine of the Trinity, and so on.

I listed these out so that you can see how many of these positive arguments and defenses that Ryan Bell wrestles with in his deconversion testimony.

The podcast

Details:

> Ryan J Bell is a former pastor who has decided to try being an atheist for a year. He explains why and interacts with New Zealand apologist Matt Flannagan.

The MP3 file is here. (We only care about the first 45 minutes)

Matt Flanagan and Justin Brierley do a great job in this debate getting the real issues on the table, although you have to wait until about 20 minutes in. Quick note about Bell. He has a BA in Pastoral Ministry, an MDiv, and a doctorate in Missional Organization. Now I have a suspicion of people with a background like that – my view is that they are more likely to be impractical and/or insulated from real life.

I also noticed that his politics are liberal, and that he is featured on the web site of GLAAD, a gay rights organization, for supporting gay marriage. Why do people support same-sex marriage? I think the most common reason is because they care more about the needs of adults than they care about the needs of children for a mother and a father. That's where this guy is coming from – he is a people-pleaser, not someone who promotes the needs of children over the needs of adults.

Summary:

At the start of the podcast, we learn that Bell was in the Seventh Day Adventist church, which is strongly invested in young-Earth creationism. Depending on how strict his young Earth view was, this closes off many of the best arguments for theism from science, such as the cosmological argument, the cosmic fine-tuning argument, the stellar habitability argument, the galactic habitability argument, the Cambrian explosion argument, and even the origin of life argument (to a degree). These are the arguments that make theism *non-negotiable*.

When he started his journey to atheism, he says that he was reading a book called "Religion Without God" by Ronald Dworkin.I was curious to see what view of faith was embraced by this book. Would it be the Biblical view of faith, trust based on evidence? Or the atheist view of faith, belief without evidence? I found an excerpt from the book in the New York Times, which said this:

> In the special case of value, however, faith means something more, because our convictions about value are emotional commitments as well and, whatever tests

> of coherence and internal support they survive, they must feel right in an emotional way as well. They must have a grip on one's whole personality. Theologians often say that religious faith is a sui generis experience of conviction. Rudolf Otto, in his markedly influential book, *The Idea of the Holy*, called the experience "numinous" and said it was a kind of "faith-knowledge." I mean to suggest that convictions of value are also complex, sui generis, emotional experiences. As we will see… when scientists confront the unimaginable vastness of space and the astounding complexity of atomic particles they have an emotional reaction that matches Otto's description surprisingly well. Indeed many of them use the very term "numinous" to describe what they feel. They find the universe awe-inspiring and deserving of a kind of emotional response that at least borders on trembling.

The excerpt quotes William James, who reduces religion to non-rational emotional experiences. I don't know about you, but I don't think that view of faith is Biblical at all. Biblical faith is rooted in evidence. So clearly, what is important to this Dworkin is not objective evidence, it's feelings. And this is what Bell was reading. He was not reading academic books like "Debating Christian Theism" to get the best arguments pro-and-con. He was looking for something that "resonated" with his feelings.

His journey was prompted by a female Episcopal priest friend who was asked by an atheist "what difference does religion make in my life?". So, the framework of his investigation is set by a question that is not focused on truth, but is instead focused on emotions and life enhancement. Now Christianity might be a real stinker of a worldview for life enhancement, and the Bible warns us not to expect a bed of roses in this life. Christianity is not engineered to make you feel good or to make people like you, especially people like female Episcopal priests and GLAAD.

When talking about atheism, he is not concerned with whether atheism is logically consistent or consistent with objective evidence. He is concerned by whether atheists can have the experience of being moral without God. He sees an atheist who has moral preferences and seems like a good person by our arbitrary social standards, and he finds that as "valid" as religion. He is judging worldviews by whether people have their needs met, not by truth.

He says that as a pastor, his method of evangelizing atheists was to encourage them to "try on faith" "go through the motions" "participate in social justice outreach events", etc. His goal was that they would "step into the stream of the Christian narrative and discover that it held value and meaning to them, and find that they actually believed it". So his method of recommending Christianity to others has nothing to do with logic, evidence or truth. He is offering Christianity as life enhancement – not knowledge but a "narrative" – a story. If it makes you feel good, and it makes people like you, then you can "believe" it. He says that he was "a Christian by practice, a Christian by tradition". Not a Christian by truth. Not a Christian by knowledge. He just picked a flavor of ice cream that tasted right to him, one that pleased his parents, friends and community. And

now he has new friends and a new community, and he wants to please them and feel good about himself in this new situation.

He says that the Christian worldview is “a way of approaching reality” and “creating meaning” and “identifying meaning in the experiences we have”. And he says that there are “other ways of experiencing meaning”. He talks a lot about his correspondence with people and reading atheists, but nothing about reading Christian scholars who deal with evidence, like William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer or Mike Licona.

Literal, literal quote: (23:35) “Well I think the only access we have to the question of God’s existence or not is how we feel. I mean there’s no falsifiable data that says God either exists or doesn’t exist. It’s all within the realm of our personal experience”. “If living as though God exists makes you happy and comforts you, then by all means, go for it”. This attitude is so popular in our churches today, and where does it end? In atheism. I had a fundamentalist woman telling me just last night how this feelings mysticism approach was the right approach to faith, and that the head knowledge approach was bad and offensive.

I’m going to cut off my summary there, but the podcast goes on for 45 minutes. Matt Flannagan is brilliant, and went far beyond what I wanted to say to this guy, but in such a winsome way. I recommend listening to the whole thing, and be clear where this fideistic nonsense ends – in atheism.

My thoughts

This podcast is a great warning against two views: 1) faith is belief without evidence and 2) religion not about truth, but about life enhancement. Three other related stories might also help: the story of Dan Barker, the story of Nathan Pratt and the story of Katy Perry. I think the Christian life requires a commitment to truth above all. If you think that you can get by as a Christian relying on hymn singing, church attending, mysticism and emotional experiences, you have another thing coming. This is a different time and a different place than 50 years ago, when that sort of naivete and emotionalism might have been safe. Now we have many challenges – some intellectual and some not. To stand in this environment, it’s going to take a little more than piety and emotions.

People today are very much looking for religion to meet their needs. And this is not just in terms of internal feelings, but also peer approval and mystical coincidences. They expect God to give them happy feelings. They expect God to give them peer approval. They expect God to make every crazy unBiblical, unwise selfish plan they invent “work out” by miracle. They feel very constrained by planning and moral boundaries, believing in a “God of love” who is primarily concerned with their desires and feelings, not with rules and duties. Nothing in the Bible supports the idea that a relationship with God is for the purpose of making us feel happy and comfortable. When people realize that they will be happier in this life without having to care what God thinks, they will drop their faith, and there are plenty of non-Christians to cheer them on when they do it.

I would say to all of you reading that if the opinions of others causes you to stumble then meditate on the following passage: 1 Cor 4:1-4 too. There is only one person’s opinion

that matters, ultimately.

Marquette University threatens professor with termination for helping pro-marriage student

April 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I hope everyone remembers the case of Marquette University professor John McAdams. McAdams was punished severely by the "Catholic" university for blogging about a pro-gay-rights instructor (Cheryl Abatte) who told a pro-marriage student that if he disagreed with gay rights, then he must drop her class.

Here is the latest about the university's final decision about what to do with professor McAdams from David French of National Review.

French writes:

> There's nothing like a good show trial to build confidence in the academy's commitment to academic freedom. Marquette University is demanding that embattled professor John McAdams apologize for criticizing a colleague as a condition for keeping his job. And what outrage did McAdams commit? He tried to protect the academic freedom and free speech of conservative students:
>
> On November 2014, McAdams, a tenured associate professor of political science, posted an entry on his Marquette Warrior blog describing a recorded conversation between an undergraduate student and the instructor for his "Theory of Ethics" philosophy course. The instructor, Cheryl Abbate, was recorded telling the student that the expression of certain opinions in class was inappropriate because those opinions may be considered offensive to other listeners. Abbate specifically cited the student's stated opposition to same-sex marriage as a problem.
>
> Abbate's actions were criticized by readers of McAdams' blog entry, and her alleged actions received widespread attention from national media. In response,

> Richard C. Holz, dean of Marquette's Klingler College of Arts and Sciences, suspended McAdams.
>
> You read that correctly. Rather than discipline the instructor who silenced a conservative student, the university suspended the whistleblower. Now it's reportedly extending the suspension through the fall 2016 semester and demanding that he apologize as a condition of returning to work. My former colleagues at the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) are right to label the forced apology "an age-old inquisitorial tactic used to violate freedom of conscience through compelled speech."

So, you might think that a "Catholic" University would punish the anti-marriage instructor, instead of the professor who defended the pro-marriage student, but you'd be wrong. I sure hope that none of you ever give money to Christian organizations that are not solid on issues like abortion and marriage. Because there are tons of "Christian" organizations who are aligned with the secular left on many cultural issues. It's probably a good idea to cut off this institutions from taxpayer funding until they stop discriminating against Christians and conservatives.

David French also reports on McAdams' response to the fascist college administators:

> McAdams — to his immense credit — is not backing down.
>
> Here's his response:
>
> > The addition of a demand that we abase ourself and issue an apology and sign a loyalty oath to vaguely defined "guiding values" and to the University's "mission" is obviously a ploy by Marquette to give the administration an excuse to fire us. They have calculated, correctly, that we will do no such thing.
>
> I would say that it's astonishing that a Catholic university punish a professor for *defending* the right of students to advocate the church's teaching on marriage, but politically correct nonsense is par for the course even (especially) at many religious colleges. McAdams should be applauded — and supported — for his lonely, courageous stand.

David French also wrote an article in National Review on Friday about how universities weed out conservatives who apply to be teachers and administrators. It turns out that they are not interested in diversity at all.

French writes:

> According to data compiled by the Higher Education Research Institute, only 12% of university faculty identify as politically right of center, and these are mainly professors in schools of engineering and other professional schools. Only 5% of professors in the humanities and social-science departments so identify.
>
> A comprehensive study by James Lindgren of Northwestern University Law School

> shows that in a country fairly evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans, only 13% of law professors identify as Republican. And a recent study by Jonathan Haidt of New York University showed that 96% of social psychologists identify as left of center, 3.7% as centrist/moderate and only 0.03% as right of center.

He's not kidding. Consider this article from the Cornell University campus newspaper. It says:

> Of the nearly $600,000 Cornell's faculty donated to political candidates or parties in the past four years, over 96 percent has gone to fund Democratic campaigns, while only 15 of the 323 donors gave to conservative causes.
>
> The Sun's analysis of Federal Election Committee data reveals that from 2011 to 2014, Cornell's faculty donated $573,659 to Democrats, $16,360 to Republicans and $2,950 to Independents. Each of Cornell's 13 schools — both graduate and undergraduate — slanted heavily to the left. In the College of Arts and Sciences, 99 percent of the $183,644 donated went to liberal campaigns.

So how do we fix it? Well, I already mentioned that Christians should not give any money to universities, unless they are named Hillsdale College, Biola University, Grove City College, Patrick Henry College, etc. And I mentioned that Christians should not be voting for bigger government. We don't want universities to get taxpayer money that has no strings attached. They should have to please customers instead of getting taxpayer money with no accountability.

In his second article, French lists some ideas for getting universities to not discriminate against Christians and conservatives. And maybe he we elect real conservatives, instead of Democrats pretending to be conservatives, then something will be done about it.

What percentage of Muslims approve of radical Islam and terrorism?

April 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

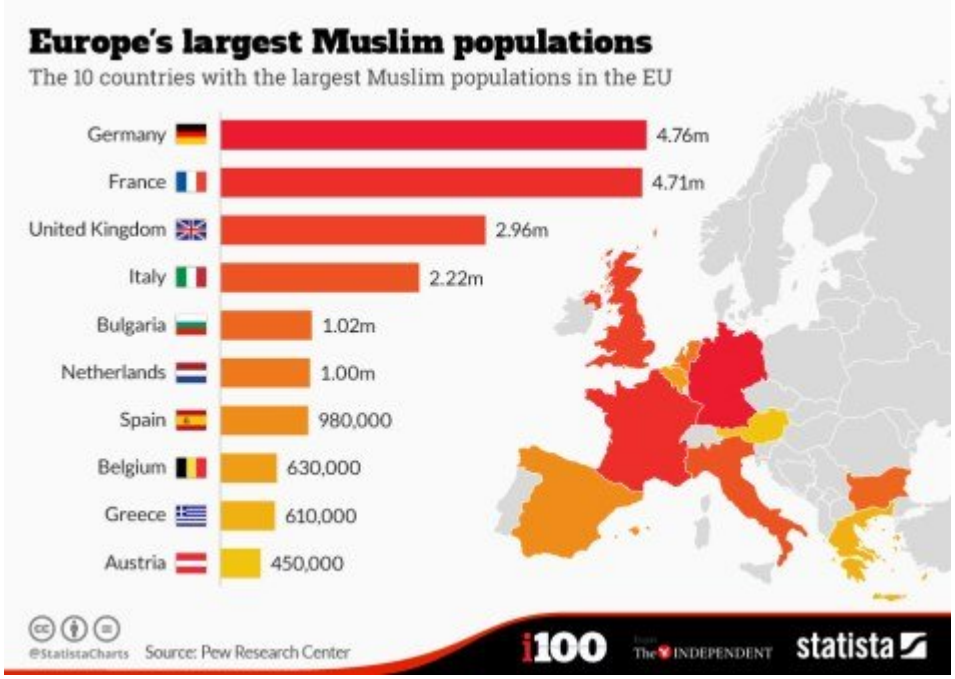

Muslim populations in Europe

Normally, when people ask me about this question, I go straight to the 2013 Pew Research survey which I blogged about before. But now I have something even better.

Here's a post from Ben Shapiro at Breitbart News which looks at several polls from several different countries.

Shapiro writes: (links to polls removed)

> So, here is the evidence that the enemy we face is not a "tiny minority" of Muslims, let alone a rootless philosophy unconnected to Islam entirely. It's not just the thousands of westerners now attempting to join ISIS. It's millions of Muslims who support their general goals, even if they don't support the group itself.
>
> **France.** A new, widely-covered poll shows that a full 16% of French people have positive attitudes toward ISIS. That includes 27% of French between the ages of 18-24. Anne-Elizabeth Moutet of *Newsweek* wrote, "This is the ideology of young French Muslims from immigrant backgrounds…these are the same people who torch synagogues."
>
> **Britain.** In 2006, a poll for the *Sunday Telegraph* found that 40% of British Muslims wanted shariah law in the United Kingdom, and that 20% backed the 7/7 bombers.Another poll from that year showed that 45% of British Muslims said that 9/11 was an American/Israeli conspiracy; that poll showed that one-quarter of British Muslims believed that the 7/7 bombings were justified.

Palestinian Areas. A poll in 2011 showed that 32% of Palestinians supported the brutal murder of five Israeli family members, including a three-month-old baby. In 2009, a poll showed that 78% of Palestinians had positive or mixed feelings about Osama Bin Laden. A 2013 poll showed 40% of Palestinians supporting suicide bombings and attacks against civilians. 89% favored sharia law. Currently, 89% of Palestinians support terror attacks on Israel.

Pakistan. After the killing of Osama Bin Laden, the Gilani Foundation did a poll of Pakistanis and found that 51% of them grieved for the terrorist mastermind, with 44% of them stating that he was a martyr. In 2009, 26% of Pakistanis approved of attacks on US troops in Iraq. That number was 29% for troops in Afghanistan. Overall, 76% of Pakistanis wanted strict shariah law in every Islamic country.

Morocco. A 2009 poll showed that 68% of Moroccans approved of terrorist attacks on US troops in Iraq; 61% backed attacks on American troops in Afghanistan as of 2006. 76% said they wanted strict sharia law in every Islamic country.

Jordan. 72% of Jordanians backed terror attacks against US troops in Iraq as of 2009. In 2010, the terrorist group Hezbollah had a 55% approval rating; Hamas had a 60% approval rating.

Indonesia: In 2009, a poll demonstrated that 26% of Indonesians approved of attacks on US troops in Iraq; 22% backed attacks on American troops in Afghanistan. 65% said they agreed with Al Qaeda on pushing US troops out of the Middle East. 49% said they supported strict sharia law in every Islamic country. 70% of Indonesians blamed 9/11 on the United States, Israel, someone else, or didn't know. Just 30% said Al Qaeda was responsible.

Egypt. As of 2009, 87% of Egyptians said they agreed with the goals of Al Qaeda in forcing the US to withdraw forces from the Middle East. 65% said they wanted strict sharia law in every Islamic country. As of that same date, 69% of Egyptians said they had either positive or mixed feelings about Osama Bin Laden. In 2010, 95% of Egyptians said it was good that Islam is playing a major role in politics.

United States. A 2013 poll from Pew showed that 13% of American Muslims said that violence against civilians is often, sometimes or rarely justified to defend Islam. A 2011 poll from Pew showed that 21 percent of Muslims are concerned about extremism among Muslim Americans. 19 percent of American Muslims as of 2011 said they were either favorable toward Al Qaeda or didn't know.

In short, tens of millions of Muslims all over the world sympathize with the goals or tactics of terrorist groups – or both. That support is stronger outside the West, but it is present even in the West. Islamist extremism is not a passing or fading phenomenon – it is shockingly consistent over time. And the West's attempts to brush off the ideology of fanaticism has been an overwhelming failure.

A more recent poll says that 13% of Syrian refugees support Islamic State:

> A first-of-its-kind survey of the hordes of Syrian refugees entering Europe found 13% support the Islamic State. The poll should raise alarms about the risks posed by the resettlement of 10,000 refugees in the U.S.
>
> The poll of 900 Syrian refugees by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies also found that another 10% of the displaced Syrians have a lukewarm, but not entirely negative, view of the terror group. That means 23% — or almost 1 in 4 — could be susceptible to ISIS recruitment.
>
> It also means as many 2,500 of the 10,000 Syrian refugees that the Obama administration is resettling inside American cities are potential terrorist threats.

Now contrast those facts with the views of Barack Obama and his allies in the mainstream media.

That video is from The Weekly Standard, here's the text:

> President Obama told CNN's Fareed Zakaria that 99.9 percent of Muslims reject radical Islam. He made the comments in response to a question about the White House avoiding using the phrase "Islamic terrorists."
>
> "You know, I think that the way to understand this is there is an element growing out of Muslim communities in certain parts of the world that have perverted the religion, have embraced a nihilistic, violent, almost medieval interpretation of Islam, and they're doing damage in a lot of countries around the world," said Obama.
>
> "But it is absolutely true that I reject a notion that somehow that creates a religious war because the overwhelming majority of Muslims reject that interpretation of Islam. They don't even recognize it as being Islam, and I think that for us to be successful in fighting this scourge, it's very important for us to align ourselves with the 99.9 percent of Muslims who are looking for the same thing we're looking for–order, peace, prosperity."

So Obama denies all of these surveys, and instead invents a view of the world that is consistent with his feelings. A true man of the secular left.

This gap between belief and reality explains why he is now bringing 200,000 Syrian Muslim refugees into America, keeping Syrian Christian refugees out of America, and generally underestimating Islamic State (ISIS / ISIL) because he cannot believe that radical Islam is anything for us to be concerned about.

Is the government capable of vetting Syrian refugees to find threats?

Not so much:

> The administration argues that it's conducting interviews with Syrians at camps in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. But without security forces on the ground in Syria who can verify details, there is no way to back-check a refugee's story to see if

> he is telling the truth and is, in fact, not a security threat.
>
> Even when we had people on the ground in Iraq to screen refugees, terrorists got through the safety net.
>
> In 2011, for instance, two Kentucky immigrants who had been resettled as Iraqi refugees were busted for trying to buy stinger missiles for al-Qaida.
>
> It turned out that their fingerprints matched those linked to roadside bombs in Iraq. It was a major red flag that should have barred their entry, but U.S. screeners failed to take note. And the terrorists slipped into the U.S.
>
> The administration's vetting process for the massive influx of Syrian refugees is completely unreliable, admits the FBI official in charge of such security background checks.
>
> "It's not even close to being under control," warned assistant FBI director Michael Steinbach.

We should not be believing the man who promised us that we could keep our doctor, keep our health plans, and that our health insurance premiums would go down $2,500. He is either lying, or he likes to speak on matters where he is not competent to know the truth of the matter.

UPDATE: ECM sends me this video from Ben Shapiro:

Awesome!

Ted Cruz courts delegates in Colorado and North Dakota, ahead of Wisconsin stand

April 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Conservative women rallying to Cruz in Wisconsin

Let's start with an article about Cruz's get-out-vote plan in Wisconsin, from the radically leftist Politico.

Excerpt:

> Just as in Iowa, Cruz arrived in Wisconsin before Trump, has worked it harder and stayed longer. He's delivered speeches at rallies across the state, shaken hands at a sandwich shop, fought for votes at a fish fry and promised to bring back American jobs at a factory in Oshkosh.
>
> Cruz has opened a "Camp Cruz" to provide free housing for volunteers who make the trek to the voter-rich Milwaukee region, as he did in Des Moines; he has again slammed Trump for refusing to debate him; and he has tried to fend off a third candidate (then Marco Rubio, now John Kasich) from serving as a spoiler.
>
> […]Cruz has the backing of one of the state's leading right-wing talk radio hosts (Charlie Sykes in Wisconsin, Steve Deace in Iowa), one of the state's leading social conservative groups (Wisconsin Family Action PAC now, The Family Leader in Iowa) and another extensive and deeply organized grass-roots network fueled by county chairs blanketing the state and a long list of supportive faith leaders. He spent Saturday night here in Ashwaubenon, screening a Christian film — just as he did in West Des Moines last fall.

The Christian film this time was "God's Not Dead 2", and it features two well-known Christian apologists – J. Warner Wallace and Lee Strobel. You can read more about what Ted thought of the movie.

The Politico article continues:

> [T]he biggest differences between Iowa and Wisconsin appear only to benefit

> Cruz. Then, he was under fire from the political establishment — from the popular Republican governor there (Terry Branstad) to national leaders like Bob Dole. Now, Cruz has the backing of Wisconsin's popular governor, former rival Scott Walker appears in one of his closing TV ads, as well as support from key figures in the state Legislature, including the majority leader and the Assembly speaker, both of whom previously supported Rubio.

The local conservative talk show hosts love Cruz, and they are attacking Trump for attacking Walker's successful conservative reforms:

> Local talk-radio hosts have pilloried the front-runner for denigrating Walker when he was still in the race and in recent days.
>
> "When Donald Trump comes into Wisconsin, knows nothing about our state, trashes all the work we've done, trashes our governor, trashes our party, we take it personally," said Vicki McKenna, another prominent conservative radio host. "It's just spectacularly stupid."
>
> Cruz, on the other hand, has taken full advantage of the two weeks leading into Wisconsin that are uninterrupted by any other primary or caucus, McKenna said.
>
> "He's actually got people here in Wisconsin advising his campaign; he's made an effort to understand even district to district, county to county," she said.
>
> […][Governor Scott] Walker and Carly Fiorina spent days crossing the state stumping for Cruz. Walker's wife, Tonette, joined Cruz's wife, Heidi, for a Saturday sprint, hitting three stops along with Utah Sen. Mike Lee.

Wisconsin votes on Tuesday, but there is more going on with the delegates from states that have voted already.

Delegates and the GOP Convention

Even though the delegates who attend the conference from each state are bound in the first round(s) to vote according to the primary / caucus election results for their state, they are released to vote how they want in later rounds of voting. If Trump shows up at the convention in Cleveland and doesn't have 1,237 votes, then he won't win the nomination in the first round. If no one gets 1,237 votes, then the convention becomes a "contested" convention. That's when having true conservative delegates become crucial, because delegates vote according to their conscience in the 2nd round and later. (Some unbound delegates can even vote their conscience in the first round).

The Cruz campaign knows this, and they are trying to make sure that the delegates who picked are genuine conservatives and are members of the Republican Party.

Conservative Review reports on North Carolina delegates:

> In North Carolina, Donald Trump won 30 bound delegates at the primary, and Ted Cruz won 27. That is for the first ballot, where delegates are officially bound. District Conventions were held in four of the state's thirteen congressional districts last weekend. A grassroots activist in North Carolina provided

> Conservative Review with the results of those districts. Nine of the 12 delegates elected yesterday are definitely Cruz supporters and have worked to elect Cruz for a significant period of time. Two others identified themselves as Cruz supporters at the convention so that 11 of the 12 are Cruz supporters.

The Washington Times reports on Colorado delegates:

> Ted Cruz on Saturday picked up the first six of 37 Colorado delegates to be chosen before the Republican National Convention, giving his candidacy a boost entering this week's Wisconsin primary. The six delegates, three each from 1st and 6th congressional districts, shut out would-be delegates for businessman Donald Trump and Ohio Gov. John Kasich at party assemblies.
>
> […]Delegates from Colorado's other five congressional districts are to be selected at assemblies leading up to Saturday's Colorado Republican Convention in Colorado Springs, which Mr. Cruz is expected to attend.

Leftist CNN reports on North Dakota delegates:

> Ted Cruz claimed a majority of delegates in North Dakota on Sunday — though the delegates are not bound to him, so their loyalty remains uncertain.
> North Dakota Republicans selected 25 national delegates and, of those, 18 were on a list of preferred delegates that Cruz circulated — a clear win for the Texas senator.

North Dakota delegates are "unbound", so they get to vote however they want from the first round on at the convention.

Related posts

- Which candidate is the best at defending religious liberty: Trump or Cruz?
- Ted Cruz and Mike Lee go after Obama administration for intimidating pro-lifers
- Scott Walker endorses Ted Cruz for President, Cruz trails Trump by 1 in California
- Todd Starnes: Ted Cruz is the best candidate to defend religious liberty
- Which candidate is best at working with Democrats to get things done?
- Ted Cruz's plan to lower taxes and simplify the process for filing tax returns
- Ted Cruz explains his position on the issues of abortion and right to life
- Ted Cruz introduces new bill to help ICE Agents enforce immigration laws
- Ted Cruz fought Rubio's amnesty in 2013 and fought Obama's executive amnesty in 2014
- Meet Ted Cruz's secret weapon: his supportive and loving wife Heidi Cruz
- Watch Ted Cruz disagree with an Iowa farmer on the issue of ethanol subsidies
- Is Marco Rubio right about his attacks on Ted Cruz's business tax plan?
- Ted Cruz's scary, unreported, undisclosed Goldman Sachs loan
- Harvard Law Review: Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen and is eligible to become President
- Ted Cruz blasts Democrats for hiding immigration histories of terrorists in the USA

- CNN Debate: Ted Cruz hammers Marco Rubio over support for amnesty and Libya disaster
- Ted Cruz invites climate scientists to Washington, D.C. to discuss climate change
- The FIVE departments that Ted Cruz would shut down if elected president

Colorado preschool kicks 4-year-old out when her parents question LGBT indoctrination

April 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National Education Association

The radically leftist Denver Post has the story:

> A 4-year-old Aurora girl was kicked out of a preschool last month when her parents raised questions about books read in her class, including ones that told the stories about same-sex couples and worms unsure about their gender.
>
> Her mother, R.B. Sinclair, sees it as sex education and wanted to opt her daughter out of those discussions.
>
> **Instead, school officials from Montview Community Preschool & Kindergarten in Denver — run as a private, parent cooperative — explained the stories were part of the school's anti-bias curriculum, and because the discussions are embedded through the day, they told her that opting out was not possible.**
>
> **The school's anti-bias curriculum is part of a growing push in public and private school classrooms where educators use more diverse depictions of families and gender roles to expose students to differences before children have a chance to form negative opinions.**
>
> "Biases start as kids get older and start to see differences as negative. At a young age, kids are exploring all different kinds of things," said Kim Bloemen, director of early childhood education for the Boulder Valley School District. "It's about just providing them with all these experiences."

> In a letter sent home to Montview parents, the school defended the books and in a newsletter suggested ways for parents to discuss the topics at home.
>
> **School officials refused to comment for this story or answer questions about their curriculum or the goals they set.**
>
> […]**In Boulder's public preschools, all teachers were trained this year to integrate a broader type of diversity to include gender and sexual differences and to have conversations with young children.**

So, who is doing the training of the teachers in the public schools?

These guys:

> A Queer Endeavor, an initiative started in the School of Education at the University of Colorado at Boulder, has helped train 2,500 teachers over the past three years, including those in Boulder and in the St. Vrain Valley School District.
>
> […]The initiative helps teachers keep the focus on family structures and on being positive about differences.

More about "A Queer Endeavor" from their web site:

> Housed in the CU-Boulder School of Education and led by Bethy Leonardi, PhD, and Sara Staley, PhD, A Queer Endeavor is an initiative focused on supporting teachers and school communities around topics of gender and sexual diversity.
>
> […]The work of A Queer Endeavor is made possible through a partnership between the School of Education at the University of Colorado Boulder and the generous support of the Twisted Foundation.

And it's not just the gay activists who get into the schools to push their agenda. Schools who refuse to toe the line on gay activism will not be accredited:

Back to the Denver Post article:

> Kristen Johnson, senior director of the Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, a nonprofit that accredits preschools, said the organization's standards require schools in some way to include depictions of nonstereotypical gender roles and families.
>
> "The early-childhood years are the prime time to help children develop healthy self-identities **as well as learn to respect and interact positively with people who are different from themselves**," Johnson said. "Reading books that are inclusive of diverse characters is an essential strategy for supporting self-esteem in children who are part of these families, as well as teaching children about the diversity of all families."

So let's see what happened:

- public school teachers were trained by gay rights groups in LGBT propaganda

(undermining heterosexual norms like monogamy and exclusivity, and undermining natural marriage)
- four-year-old child indoctrinated to approve of redefinition of natural marriage and family, so that she won't judge the selfish adults for redefining marriage
- parents try to protest the LGBT propaganda, but they are told there is no opt-out, and their daughter is kicked out

Keep in mind that the parents of this four-year-old girl are taxpayers – they are forced to pay taxes that go to these public school teachers. There is no opt out of the lessons, and there is no opt-out of paying taxes for these public schools. And there is no transparency to parents or to voters – that's the whole point of it.

Team LGBT wants children to adopt an anything-goes approach to relationships and sex, so that these children have a knee-jerk reaction against natural marriage as the best arrangement for children and for society.

The problem is that moral norms around natural marriage are there for a reason. By teaching children to "celebrate diversity", they are removing the moral boundaries reduce harm in adults and in their vulnerable children. I understand what the gay activists want. They want to make a world where *no one objects* to a woman leaving husband, taking her 3 children, and moving in with her lesbian lover. They want children to think that is as good as lifelong married love between one man and one woman. But that woman's children will be raised fatherless, which is bad for them. The gay activists and their allies in the public schools do not want selfish adults shamed or offended by anyone who articulates that natural marriage is best for kids and society. That's why they are indoctrinating your kids – for *their* benefit. They want to be selfish, and not be disagreed with.

Here's the end game of the gay activists, explained by a gay activist, and reported by The Blaze:

> A 2012 speech by Masha Gessen, an author and outspoken activist for the LGBT community, is just now going viral and it includes a theory that many supporters of traditional marriage have speculated about for years: The push for gay marriage has less to do with the right to marry – it is about diminishing and eventually destroying the institution of marriage and redefining the "traditional family."
>
> […][T]hose advocating for gay marriage have long stated that the issue will not harm traditional marriage. Ms. Gessen's comments on the subject seem to contradict the pro-gay-marriage party lines.
>
> Gessen shared her views on the subject and very specifically stated;
>
> - "Gay marriage is a lie."
> - "Fighting for gay marriage generally involves lying about what we're going to do with marriage when we get there."
> - "It's a no-brainer that the institution of marriage should not exist." (This

> statement is met with very loud applause.)
>
> As mentioned above, Gessen also talked about redefining the traditional family. This may have something to do with the fact that she has “three children with five parents”:
>
> “I don’t see why they (her children) shouldn’t have five parents legally. I don’t see why we should choose two of those parents and make them a sanctioned couple.”

That’s the real goal of these gay activists and their public school allies. Getting children to not see natural marriage as normal. Getting children to not condemn selfish adults who don’t give children access to their biological mom and biological dad for life. The gay activists don’t want the obligations to do relationships and marriage in a way that benefits children. They want to make a world where the next generation of children won’t judge them for depriving kids of their mom and their dad. They don’t want kids to expect that men and women commit to each other self-sacrificially, monogamously and faithfully. They don’t want kids to expect that adults put their kids above their feelings and desires, for the benefit of the kids.

The end goal is to get rid of moral values and moral boundaries in romantic and sexual relationships, so that adults can never be judged for taking actions and living lifestyles that harm themselves and/or others – especially children who need a mom and a dad. We can allow people to live differently while still promoting natural marriage as the best environment for having and raising children. It is more important that selfish adults give children a mom and a dad, than that selfish adults indoctrinate children to affirm selfish adults who deny children a mom and a dad.

I hope everyone read my recent post about the dangers of public schools. Christians should make a plan to keep their kids away from these government-run schools. But the real solution is to stop the funding of these schools by taxpayer dollars. Parents should be able to buy the instruction they want for their kids, not be forced to pay for schools and teachers that do not reflect their values.

UK woman explains why she chose a man who savagely attacked her

April 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this man a good candidate for father/husband roles?

Trina sent me this astonishing post about a woman whose boyfriend literally gouged her eyes out. The article is written by one of my favorite authors, Dr. Theodore Dalrymple. It appears in City Journal, the famous journal of the centrist Manhattan Institute.

There are no graphic images in the article, but there is very vulgar and violent language in some parts. The author of the article is sympathetic with her suffering, but we can learn a lot from her story about how to choose a good man.

Fatherless

First, we learn that Ms. Nash grew up fatherless and the bills were paid by the state – she had *no idea* that women should prefer men who work hard, self-sacrificially, to be able to provide for a family:

> Nash was born in Cornwall, one of six children to a mother whose relationships with men were tumultuous. "I'd seen my mum go through hundreds of break-ups and be badly treated by men," she tells us. The mother's complex love life left little time for her children, for, as Nash observes, "I was much closer to [my grandmother] than my mum, who never seemed to have time for us." How many of the six children shared the same father we never learn, and indeed Nash makes no mention of a father of any of them, including her own. It appears that she came into a radically fatherless world, and though she does not say so, it is

> likely that at least some of her brothers and sisters were half-siblings; and again, though she does not say so, it is likely that the principal economic support of the family was the state, whose paid-out benefits meant that it was, in effect, father to the children. Nash grew up in public housing and seems to have lived in such subsidized housing all her life.

Not seeing her father providing for the family and loving her mother left her with no way to tell good men apart from bad men:

> She tells us early in the book that she is a single mother of two children. Speaking of her first child, she says, "I may have had [him] when I was very young but my kids mean the world to me and not for one moment did I regret becoming a mum at sixteen."
>
> […]The next sentence reads: "My choice in men, however, left a lot to be desired." And when she reaches the beginning of the narrative of her blinding, she writes, "I had [moved back to my town of birth] with two sons by different dads and a series of dead-end relationships." **It is obvious that the suitability of men to be fathers to her children arose for her neither before nor after their births, because she deemed fathers inessential or even useless, as economically they obviously were, given her likely financial support from the state. That is why her choice in men "left a lot to be desired": nothing of long-term significance for her hung on it, or seemed to hang on it, so that the only criterion of choice was immediate attraction—commonly known as lust.**

This is the problem with feminism that I am always warning you all about. If women are taught that there are no *specific* behaviors that men are responsible for, (because that's sexist), then they will prefer men solely on surface criteria like appearance, feelings and peer-approval. They will not choose men who can actually do the jobs that men do: protect, provide, lead on moral and spiritual issues.

Alcohol

Drinking too much contributed to her poor choices with men:

> We arrive now at her choice of Jenkin as consort. As it happened, Nash had met him at a party some years previously, just following his release from prison after serving four and a half years "for stomping on a guy's head and giving him brain damage," as her best friend put it—adding that "he's a bloody psycho." And Nash's first experience of him was not altogether favorable: after they spent hours talking about music and "our mutual love of rapper 2pac," he tried to force himself sexually upon her. It was not love at first sight, therefore: it was love at second sight.
>
> That second sight came when "I'd had a few glasses of wine" at a restaurant and a "few shots of tequila" at a nightclub, where she ran into him again, so that she "could barely hear in my head those words of warning [about Jenkin by her best

> friend years earlier] for all the alcohol I had knocked back."
>
> […]When he asked for her telephone number, "I didn't hesitate for a second. **I felt I could trust him.**"

She felt (feelings) that she could trust him. But there was no evidence that he could be a good father and husband.

Lust

So, why did she feel she could trust him?

> **What was so attractive about Jenkin? It was his size and muscles. He was six feet, four inches tall, and "his chest was so big his T-shirt clung to him like cellophane, highlighting his pectoral muscles. His blue jeans molded to his thighs, showing off his pert bum." Nash's subsequent rationalizations for staying with him were but a smokescreen for the rawness of her desire.**

> […]But Jenkin struck Nash as a "great big teddy bear" with "puppy-dog eyes." On waking up after her first night of sex with him, however, she noticed the tattoos on his chest and arms: "Down his right arm was an image of a hooded executioner raising his sword like he was about to slaughter someone. . . . On his left chest was a tattoo of a tiger ripping someone's head off. Down his left arm was OUTLAW in big bold black letters." Still, though she knew he had served a long prison sentence for seriously injuring someone, she "chuckled at the thought that Shane fancied himself as a bit of an outlaw." His night of love with her resulted in him failing to get up in the morning, whereupon he lost his job as a painter and decorator, and he never found, or sought, another.

No woman who believed in traditional gender roles could ever think that this man would make a good husband. He is unemployed, unchaste, a convicted violent criminal, a drunkard and a brute.

Violence

The article then talks for a while about the drinking, partying and domestic violence between Nash and Jenkin. He accuses her of cheating, spits in her face repeatedly, throws a brick through her car window.

There were plenty of signs:

> **Jenkin exhibits almost every conceivable warning sign of vicious future violence. He takes anabolic steroids. He arrives one day with a crossbow—a formidable weapon—claiming that some Lithuanians with whom he has had a dispute want to kill him. He spends his days playing violent video games and his nights watching horror films of terrible sadism, including some that graphically depict people having their eyes gouged out with bare hands—scenes that obviously excite him and that he demands Nash watch with him. Nash learns that Jenkin had stabbed**

> **his own dog to death—a Rottweiler, needless to say—when he grew tired of it.**

Jenkin actually attacked her before the eyes were gouged out. And she lied in court saying he was innocent and that she fallen down the stairs. And she took him back after he was acquitted of the first attack. The second time he attacked, it cost her her eyes. And all was done in front of her children.

The article ends with this:

> In her book, Tina Nash describes how she tried bravely to get on with life after being blinded. After she finished the book, she found a new boyfriend. He has just been sent to prison for assaulting her.

Here's a news story about the new boyfriend.

The point of me posting this is as a warning to those who believe that there are no differences between men and women – no specific things that men are supposed to do for a woman that she should choose him for. A man has to be able to work in order to provide. He should be protective and gentle with women, children and animals. He should be loving and caring. He should know God and be prepared to defend God. He should have strong convictions about theology and the moral law.

A woman learns about the qualities of good men by reading stories about good men, e.g. – Austen, Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, etc., and also from watching her father be a protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader in the home. It is very important that her father perform the standard male roles for her mother in front of her. That's how daughters learn what it means to be a good man, and how men are supposed to love women well. It doesn't mean letting a woman be spoiled and selfish all the time. But she should always feel safe and loved, no matter what she does.

By the way, you can read Dalrymple's first book for free online. All the chapters are linked in this post.

How well is Obamacare working, and will Ted Cruz or Donald Trump fix health care?

April 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

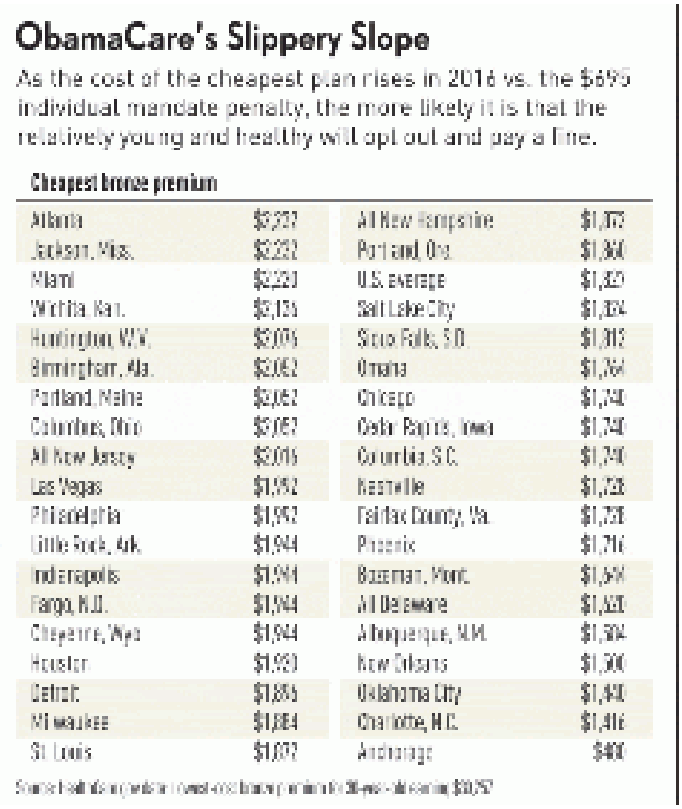

ObamaCare's Slippery Slope

As the cost of the cheapest plan rises in 2016 vs. the $695 individual mandate penalty, the more likely it is that the relatively young and healthy will opt out and pay a fine.

Cheapest bronze premium			
Atlanta	$2,237	All New Hampshire	$1,372
Jackson, Miss.	$2,232	Portland, Ore.	$1,360
Miami	$2,223	U.S. average	$1,320
Wichita, Kan.	$2,135	Salt Lake City	$1,324
Huntington, W.V.	$2,075	Sioux Falls, S.D.	$1,313
Birmingham, Ala.	$2,062	Omaha	$1,264
Portland, Maine	$2,062	Chicago	$1,234
Columbus, Ohio	$2,057	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	$1,234
All New Jersey	$2,015	Columbia, S.C.	$1,230
Las Vegas	$1,992	Nashville	$1,228
Philadelphia	$1,992	Fairfax County, Va.	$1,228
Little Rock, Ark.	$1,944	Phoenix	$1,216
Indianapolis	$1,944	Bozeman, Mont.	$1,169
Fargo, N.D.	$1,944	All Delaware	$1,128
Cheyenne, Wyo.	$1,944	Albuquerque, N.M.	$1,304
Houston	$1,933	New Orleans	$1,300
Detroit	$1,885	Oklahoma City	$1,248
Milwaukee	$1,884	Charlotte, N.C.	$1,216
St. Louis	$1,877	Anchorage	$400

Source: Health insurance exchanges [illegible] 28-year-old earning $30,257

Obamacare Bronze plans

Two stories, then we'll see whether Trump or Cruz is more likely to repeal Obamacare.

The Daily Signal lists 4 problems with Obamacare:

1. Rising Costs
2. Higher Taxes
3. Unstable Enrollment
4. Hostility to Personal Liberty

Let's look at the first two:

> Rising Costs
>
> Contrary to repeated administration promises, Obamacare has not only failed to lower costs, but has also imposed additional expenses on millions of already over-stretched individuals and families.
>
> Premiums in the government created exchanges were an initially jolting experience for Americans who did not qualify for taxpayer subsidies, and it appears that in 2016 premium increases in the government's health insurance exchanges will again hit enrollees in the double digit range.
>
> **When it comes to average job-based premiums, the Congressional**

> **Budget Office (CBO) says that they, too, are climbing, and will rise almost 60 percent between now and 2025. Deductibles in the Affordable Care Act exchanges have also jumped higher than officials anticipated, discouraging the purchase of the Obamacare coverage among the poor and the young.**
>
> […]Today, based on CBO data, the net cost of Obamacare's coverage provisions—subtracting the taxes and penalties—will amount to over $1.4 trillion over the next ten years.
>
> Higher Taxes
>
> Obama promised he would not raise taxes on the middle-class. But Congressional Budget Office data indicates that Obamacare's numerous taxes, fees, and penalties will cost about $832 billion over the years 2016 – 2025. And middle-class Americans are going to be hit—directly and indirectly.
>
> Even lower-income workers will get hit by Obamacare taxes, including the so-called Cadillac tax on expensive health plans offered by large firms, as well as the individual mandate tax penalty.
>
> For 2016, that mandate tax penalty for a single adult is $695 and up to $2,085 for a family.

We also need to remember how many companies took their employees off of the full-time work week to keep them below the 30 hours, so that they wouldn't have to buy them this expensive health care with all the new minimum coverages (drug addiction therapy coverage is mandatory now?) that raised the price of health care insurance premiums.

But there's more than just more government spending, higher premiums, higher deductibles and higher tax penalties for those who opt out of the individual mandate. There's also the regulation side of things. Doctors are now being regulated by the government to the point where they are dropping out of the field. And there are fewer people who want to become doctors, because of the regulations.

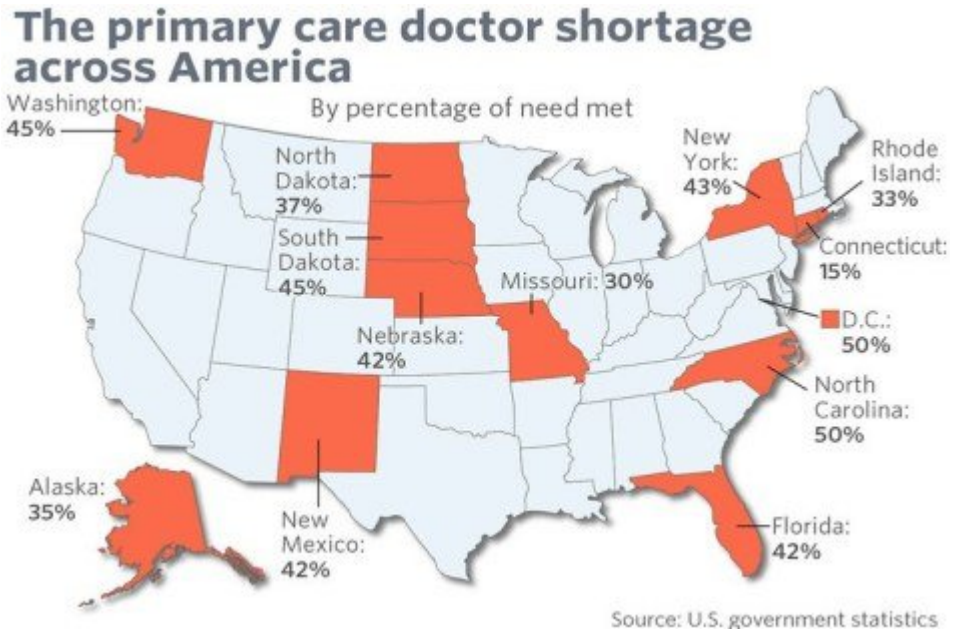

Primary care doctor shortage

So, how do we fix it? Well, one person who will not fix it is Donald Trump. Trump isn't aware of any of the problems with Obamacare – he wants to *expand* government control of health care. Make it cover more people, for more mandated coverages (toupees, wigs, Viagra, hair replacement surgery?)

When government pays for all the health care provisioning, we call that a single-payer system. And Trump is for it – that clip is from September 27, 2015. In the Fox News debate in August, he said that single payer health care "works in Canada".

Do you think more government-control of health care will make things better? Look at how things are going in the single-payer system for our armed forces veterans in the VA single-payer system – they are dying while bureaucrats collect fat bonuses for concealing the waiting lists. Just as in Canada and the UK, the patients are dying on waiting lists while waiting for care. They pay into the Trump health care system their whole lives, then when they are old and of no use to the government, they are denied care and left to die.

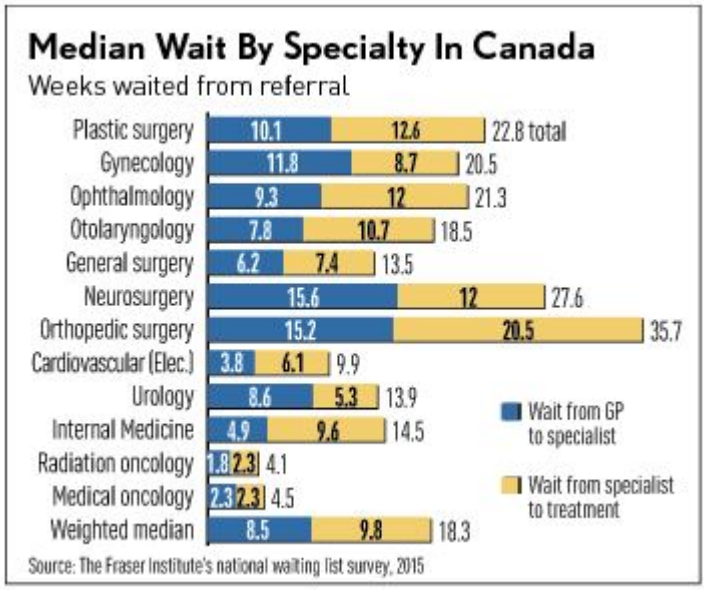

Single-payer health care wait times in Canada

How much do Canadians pay in taxes, in order to wait on waiting lists for the government to decide to give them health care?

This Toronto Sun article explains:

> Canadians retain just 21% of their income after paying the taxman and covering the cost of necessities, according to a Fraser Institute study.
>
> Taxes gobble up a whopping 42% of the average Canadian family's income. About 37% of income goes to cover housing, food and clothing.
>
> "We've found … that over the last five decades or so, the tax bill for the average Canadian family has grown dramatically," said study coauthor Charles Lammam.

Well, what about Ted Cruz? Has he got any sort of plan for Obamacare and consumer-centered health care reform?

Ted Cruz

Yes, he's going to repeal Obamacare on day one, and then work to replace it with this:

Main points:

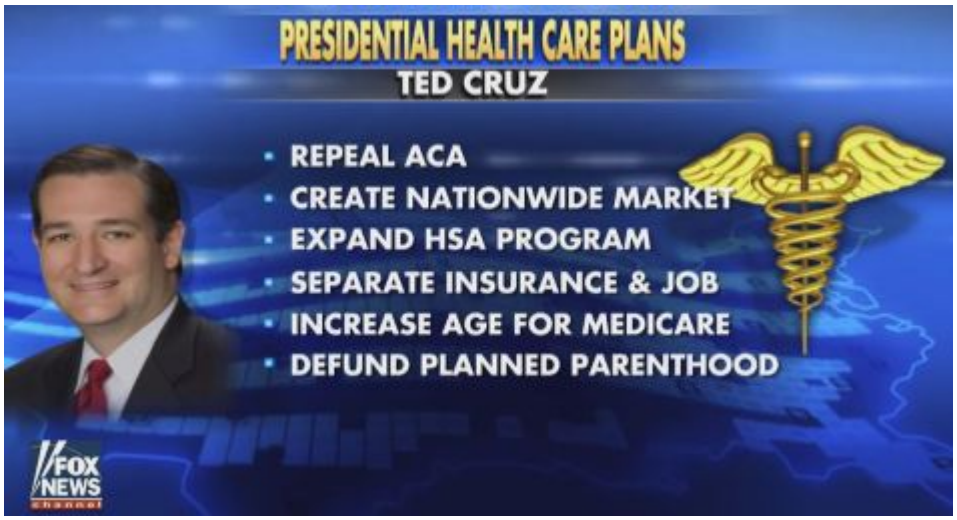

Ted Cruz's health care plan: choice and competition

Cruz explains it himself here:

> At the eighth Republican presidential primary debate on February 6, 2016, Ted Cruz discussed repealing Obamacare: "Socialized medicine is a disaster. It does not work. If you look at the countries that have imposed socialized medicine, that have put the government in charge of providing medicine, what inevitably happens is rationing. … If I'm elected president, we will repeal every word of Obamacare. And once we do that, we will adopt common sense reforms, number one, we'll allow people to purchase health insurance across state lines that will drive down prices and expand the availability of low cost catastrophic insurance. We'll expand health savings accounts; and we will de-link health insurance from employment so that you don't lose your health insurance when you lose your job, and that way health insurance can be personal, portable and affordable and we keep government from getting in between us and our doctors."

Those of you who like to read consumer-centered health care policy scholars like me (Sally C. Pipes, Regina Herzlinger, Michael D. Tanner, Michael F. Cannon, John C. Goodman, Ilya Shapiro, Avik Roy, etc.) will recognize a lot of what he is proposing – he stole it all from the conservative and libertarian policy experts.

To me, that sounds better than Trump's plan of expanding government-run health care into universal government-run health care. If I wanted that, I'd go to Canada or the UK, and just die on a waiting list after paying 42% of my salary into the system for my whole working life.

Getting to know the real Ted Cruz, an account from his close friend Jay Nordlinger

April 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted Cruz meets voters at a campaign event

There was a three-part series in National Review which I found just fascinating, and a good antidote to the hit pieces you see from the Republican establishment, which they attack Cruz for "likability". As regular readers of National Review know, Jay Nordlinger is more of an establishment type. But he backed Cruz from the beginning in the GOP primary, because he has known Cruz personally for a long time.

Here are the three parts:

- A Friend in the Arena, Part I
- A Friend in the Arena, Part II
- A Friend in the Arena, Part III

From part 1:

> I met Ted Cruz on the presidential campaign of George W. Bush in 2000. I had taken a leave of absence from NR to assist that campaign. This was in mid-September, for the last six or seven weeks of the campaign. […]Ted was a domestic-policy advisor on the campaign.
>
> We bonded, as they say. We had many a late-night discussion at Earl Campbell's barbecue joint and other choice spots.

On judges:

> Ted had a fancy education. He went to Princeton University, where he was a debate champion, and to Harvard Law School, where he was an editor on several publications, including the *Law Review*.
>
> But I noticed something on the campaign — the campaign in 2000: He had a scrappy, outsider's heart.
>
> More on his background: He clerked for Judge Mike Luttig, on the Fourth Circuit. In fact, Ted made me aware of Luttig, and I came to admire this judge almost as much as Ted did. Then Ted clerked for the chief justice of the United States: William Rehnquist.
>
> In fact, I think Ted learned to play tennis just to play with the chief. I'll have to check with Ted on that.
>
> An additional note on Mike Luttig: When a Supreme Court seat came open in 2005, Ted pushed for Luttig's nomination. So did I, in my capacity as an opinion journalist (not that I had great pull). When John Roberts got the nod, we supported this nomination, of course, as all conservatives did. But our heart was with Luttig.

I back Edith Hollan Jones and Janice Rogers Brown for Supreme Court picks, but J. Michael Luttig is on my list, further down.

On school choice:

> Tell you a story. Ted was, and is, an impassioned advocate of school choice. He thinks it's shocking — immoral — that poor kids are trapped in hopeless, violent schools. One day, he was telling me about lawyers in the opposite camp: the camp of the education establishment. (For once, I think the word "establishment" is appropriate. Or Bill Bennett's word: "Blob.")
>
> "You could practically smell the sulfur coming off them," said Ted.
>
> I don't have permission to tell that story. But what the hell. It's done. (Ted can sue me!)

Promoting school choice is the civil rights issue of our time. We have to get the money out of the government, and back into the hands of parents, so that they are free to choose schools that serve their children, instead of indoctrinating their children. We need kids who can get private sector jobs, not recite global warming dogma and put condoms on cucumbers.

On the free enterprise system:

> Ted was exceptionally versatile. He knew a lot about the law, of course. And about domestic policy, of course. He was a domestic-policy adviser. He had Medicare Part B and all that jazz down pat. I am still a little hazy about these things, never being able to get through a white paper. Even the abstract …

> He knew a lot about economics, and was a big free-marketeer. When he was in high school, he took part in something called the Free Enterprise Institute. They read Hayek, Friedman, Bastiat, everything. Ted imbibed. And saw the reason of.
>
> He knew a lot about foreign policy, and was a hawk. Also, he was a "social conservative." That term is weak, but it will have to do. Ted opposed abortion, for example — and knew why.
>
> This is important: Ted was amazingly free of cynicism. What do I mean by that? I mean, he really*believed* in America, free enterprise, and all that rah-rah stuff. Other people feel the need to roll their eyes a bit. Not Ted.

Here's something from part two, now:

> Ted worked at the Justice Department and at the Federal Trade Commission. Then he was solicitor general of Texas (under the attorney general, Greg Abbott, who would become governor). Frankly, I didn't know that states had solicitors general until Ted became one.

I blogged before about Ted's experience pushing for free-market policies at the Federal Trade Commission, and for gun rights and religious liberty as Solicitor General of Texas. Everywhere he has gone, he has pushed conservative positions. If you were hiring a candidate and went strictly off of resume, this would be the guy you would hire. Trump would not get an interview – he has no resume.

Cruz's record in the Senate:

> Ted has a wider libertarian streak than I do. (Bill Buckley: "Within every conservative is a streak of libertarianism.") Also, he has less patience for the "establishment" than I do. But, you know? He was the one who got elected, and you know what else? He kept his promises to the voters.
>
> Some may not have liked those promises. But, by golly, he kept them. Which is refreshing in a politician.
>
> And he did not sit around. Oh, no. He did not mark time. A senator observed, "Ted has done more in a couple of years here than some of our colleagues have done in *decades*."

Cruz got a lot of legislation passed, more than Rubio.

And from the third part:

> Obviously, the Cruz style is not for everyone. But I can say this, to conservatives (and to anyone else, for that matter): If he is president, he will do everything humanly possible to repeal Obamacare. And to prevent Iran from going nuclear. And to do other hard, vital things. I don't know if these things can be done. But I feel sure that, if they can, Ted will do them. He will go the last mile, and beyond.
>
> Like everyone else, he likes popularity more than unpopularity. But if popularity clashes with the right course of action, popularity will have to go. Ted is used to

> opposition and scorn. And he would do anything — walk through fire, chew on glass — to keep this country free.

You can read more about Cruz's achievements in this post.

Related posts

- Which candidate is the best at defending religious liberty: Trump or Cruz?
- Ted Cruz and Mike Lee go after Obama administration for intimidating pro-lifers
- Scott Walker endorses Ted Cruz for President, Cruz trails Trump by 1 in California
- Todd Starnes: Ted Cruz is the best candidate to defend religious liberty
- Which candidate is best at working with Democrats to get things done?
- Ted Cruz's plan to lower taxes and simplify the process for filing tax returns
- Ted Cruz explains his position on the issues of abortion and right to life
- Ted Cruz introduces new bill to help ICE Agents enforce immigration laws
- Ted Cruz fought Rubio's amnesty in 2013 and fought Obama's executive amnesty in 2014
- Meet Ted Cruz's secret weapon: his supportive and loving wife Heidi Cruz
- Watch Ted Cruz disagree with an Iowa farmer on the issue of ethanol subsidies
- Is Marco Rubio right about his attacks on Ted Cruz's business tax plan?
- Ted Cruz's scary, unreported, undisclosed Goldman Sachs loan
- Harvard Law Review: Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen and is eligible to become President
- Ted Cruz blasts Democrats for hiding immigration histories of terrorists in the USA
- CNN Debate: Ted Cruz hammers Marco Rubio over support for amnesty and Libya disaster
- Ted Cruz invites climate scientists to Washington, D.C. to discuss climate change
- The FIVE departments that Ted Cruz would shut down if elected president

Thinking practically about the gospel with an illustration from a war movie

April 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The city of Mogadishu, in Somalia, Africa

First, let's get an overview that helps us understand the context and goals of the mission we are going to discuss.

The scene is set in Somalia, Africa, in 1992. There a civil war between two warlords: Ali Mahdi and Mohammed Farah Aidid. The war has destroyed agricultural operations, and the people are starving. The United Nations are trying to help, but Aidid hijacks the food from UN aircraft so that he can use the food to gain control of the people. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis are dying of starvation. The UN requests American military forces to secure the air-dropped supplies so they can be distributed to the starving people.

In December 1992, President George H.W. Bush answers the call, sending 25,000 troops to Somalia to protect the food from the Somali warlords. However, in 1993, Bill Clinton is elected. He orders that the number of U.S. troops be reduced to 12,000. Following an attack by Aidid on Pakistani peace-keepers, the U.N. issues a resolution to capture those responsible. The U.S. armed forces have the arms and training to battle evil, so they get the call to capture Aidid and his lieutenants.

In late August 1993, Task Force Ranger is deployed to Mogadishu to capture Aidid and his lieutenants at the Olympic Hotel. The U.S. force consists of 440 troops from the Army Rangers and Army Delta Force special forces, commanded by General William Garrison. Garrison requested light armored units (Bradley Infantry Fighting vehicles) that would offer more protection than the unarmored HMMWV Humvees. Garrison was denied the light armor by the Clinton administration. Garrison requested heavier air support (AC-130 Spectre gunships) that would offer better fire support than the UH-60 Blackhawk miniguns. Garrison was denied the air support by the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration did not want the American forces to appear too heavily armed for the peace-keeping role.

The actual mission turned out to be much harder than it needed to be, because of the resources denied by the Clinton administration. Although the Aidid lieutenants were

captured, Aidid himself escaped. Eighty-four American soldiers were wounded. Eighteen American soldiers were killed, and their bodies were dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. This was shown over and over by the media, and it undermined American resolve to help the Somali people. As a result, Clinton had the excuse he needed to retreat the American military.

(Source: Nova Online)

Two heroes lost their lives

Today, I want to talk about two of the men who lost their lives in Operation Gothic Serpent. They are Master Sergeant Gary I. Gordon and Sergeant First Class Randall D. Shughart – a Delta Force sniper team.

Here is a clip from the movie Blackhawk Down, which shows what happened to them:

The pilot of the downed Blackhawk was protected by the two men who volunteered to go in after him. They requested that they be inserted at the crash site, even though they knew that reinforcements were likely not going to be there in time to save them. They made the request to go and help the pilot *three times* before being allowed to go in. Their first two requests were denied by their commanding officer, because the odds against their survival were so overwhelming. The rescued pilot was later released by his captors, and the two heroes were awarded the Medal of Honor for their brave actions.

A Congressional Medal of Honor

Here is a description of the requirements to be awarded a Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through **conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty**:

> - While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States;
> - While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
> - While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

You can read the official details of their actions.

The point of this post

It is important for Christians to be familiar with real-world examples of people giving their lives in order to save the lives of others. When we see real-world examples of self-sacrifice, it helps us to understand what Jesus really achieved for us, and what he must have felt making that hard choice to volunteer to go in and rescue us. In general, my philosophy when it comes to the Bible is to make every effort to connect what the Bible says to the real world. We must not push Christianity into some far-off world of piety and feelings. We must make connections to real evidence and real life, so that what the Bible says becomes practical, and so that we have a deep friendship with and sympathy for God revealed in Jesus Christ. In real life, being willing to give your life to save someone else is hard. Understanding how that really happens will help us to value what Jesus has done for us.

Bible verses

I saw this verse on the ground outside the Airborne & Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, NC, where I went for my summer vacation in 2015. (Thanks to my friend Curby who hosted me)

Isaiah 6:8:

> [8] Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
>
> And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Here is the picture I took (yes, that is my running shoe):

"Here am I, send me" Isaiah 6:8

When confronted with an opportunity to imitate Christ in his self-sacrifice, we should think less about ourselves and our own desires, and take the opportunity to serve others effectively. We do not do what makes us happy, and we do not pursue fun and thrills. We do what heals, we do what helps others. We do not push away our responsibility to imitate Christ by caring for those in danger. Christianity is not just about "not doing bad things". It's the good things you do because of your relationship with Jesus that show your real allegiance, and give you the experience of being a Christian in deed.

And here is another good verse:

John 15:13:

> [13] Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

If you get a chance to watch the movie Blackhawk Down, then do so. I highly recommend it. You can also read the book that the movie is based on.

I love the Medal of Honor books by Edward F. Murphy. He writes about all the people who have been awarded the Medal of honor in different wars: World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

Ted Cruz rides pro-life endorsements to huge 48.4 to 35.0 victory in Wisconsin

April 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I endorse Ted Cruz for President

Townhall reports that Ted Cruz got the endorsement from National Right to Life on Tuesday:

> National Right to Life announced that they will be throwing their support behind Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) for the upcoming primaries. NRL believes that Cruz has a stronger pro-life record and credentials than Donald Trump, and also that he has the best chance to defeat Hillary Clinton.
>
> An average of seven recent national political polls shows that Mr. Trump trails Hillary Clinton by 11.2%.
>
> In those same seven polls, Sen. Cruz trails Mrs. Clinton by an average of 3%.
>
> National Right to Life believes Sen. Cruz is the only candidate for president who has always been pro-life, who has a 100% pro-life voting record with National Right to Life, who can win the Republican nomination, and who can defeat pro-abortion Hillary Clinton in November.
>
> National Right to Life was one of the many pro-life organizations that slammed Trump for his (since-rescinded) comments that women who have abortions should be punished.

That NRLC endorsement undoubtedly helped him to a 13-point victory over Donald Trump

in Wisconsin, on Tuesday night:

updated 1:40 am et, apr 6, 2016

april 5 primary	delegate allocation: hybrid

pledged	total delegates	unpledged
42	42	0

status: projected winner | est. % in: 99%

candidate	votes	%	pledged delegates
cruz ★	517,050	48.4%	36
trump	374,623	35.0%	3
kasich	150,182	14.0%	0

Ted Cruz wins Wisconsin, which will likely lead to a contested convention

So why did Ted Cruz get this NRLC endorsement on Tuesday? I think it might have something to do with an answer that he gave to a tough abortion question from Megyn Kelly on Monday night. Cruz was asked about his opposition to rape and incest exceptions to the pro-life view. His answer sounded like something Scott Klusendorf would say.

The Daily Wire reports:

> Stating his belief that all unborn children's lives should be protected, Senator Ted Cruz expressed his opposition to exceptional access to abortion for pregnancies resulting from rape or incest. Joining Fox News Channel's Megyn Kelly for a town hall event in Madison on Monday, Cruz made a pitch to Wisconsin voters before the Badger's State's Republican primary on Tuesday.
>
> "You don't favor rape or an incest exception to abortion," said Kelly, speculating that Cruz's position on abortion might be "too far-right" for voters.
>
> Recalling his former role as the Solicitor General for Texas, Cruz described his experience from the side of law enforcement in redressing rape.
>
> "When it comes to rape, I've spent a lot of year in law enforcement. I was the Solicitor General for the state of Texas, and I have handled horrific cases of rape, people who had committed child rape. I went before the U.S. Supreme Court and argued in defense of state laws imposing capital punishment for the very worst of child rapists," said Cruz.
>
> Cruz then expressed the logically consistent position of opposition to abortion grounded in the belief that unborn children are persons entitled to the protections of life and security of person, opting not to carve out exceptions to

> this position for conceptions resulting from rape or incest.
>
> **“When it comes to rape, rape is a horrific crime against the humanity of a person, and needs to be punished, and punished severely. But at the same time, as horrible as that crime is, I don’t believe it’s the child’s fault, Said Cruz. “I don’t believe it makes sense to blame the child.”**

Watch:

Are you ready to have *that guy* explain to the media and the public why the pro-life view makes sense? I am.

Ted Cruz is consistently pro-life. He’s not scared to defend the pro-life view that you or I would defend. He thinks his view is the right view, and he wants to defend the right view. He thinks that Roe v. Wade was a bad judicial decision, and he wants to go back to the way things were before that bad decision, such that each state would decide the life issue for themselves. That’s a moderate position, well suited to the general election. As for himself, he has supported pro-life laws and policies in his career, and achieved many pro-life victories.

If socialism is so great, why are people moving from blue California to red Texas?

April 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

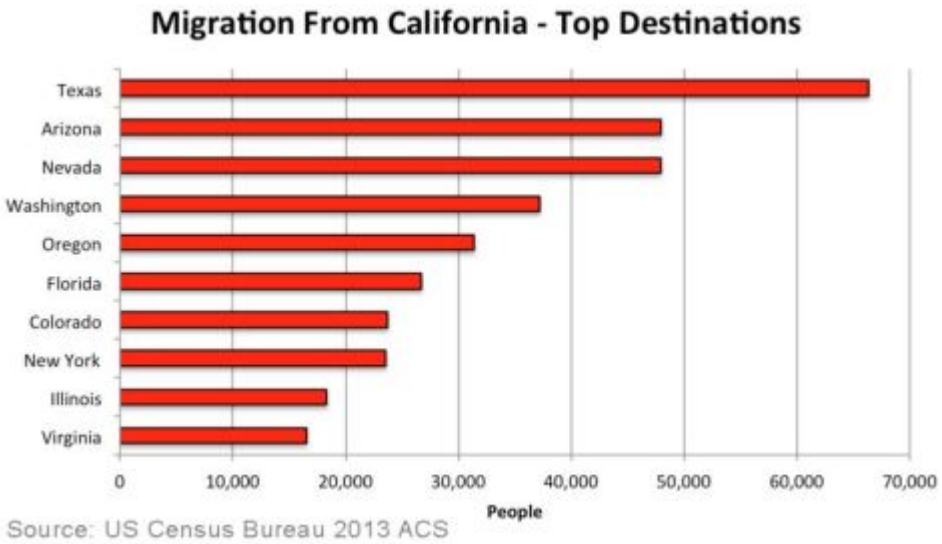

Migration from California to other states – top 3 states are conservative states

A lot of young people seem to be really excited about socialism, and they want the United States to give it a try. They don't know where socialism has been tried, and they don't know what happens with it is tried. It just sounds nice to them.

Well, if you were going to pick one of the most socialist states in the United States, no one would fault you for picking California, where Democrats are running everything, and have been for a long time.

The Washington Free Beacon explains what happened next:

> The number of Californians leaving the state and moving to Texas is at its highest level in nearly a decade, according to data from the Internal Revenue Service.
>
> According to IRS migration data, which uses individual income tax returns to record year-to-year address changes, over 250,000 California residents moved out of the state between 2013 and 2014, the latest period for which data was available. The tax returns reported more than $21 billion in adjusted gross income to the IRS.
>
> Of the returns, 33,626 reported address changes from California to Texas, which has been the top destination for individuals leaving California since 2007. Californians who moved to Texas between 2013 and 2014 reported $2.19 billion in adjusted gross income.
>
> […]"California's taxes and regulations are crushing businesses, and there are more opportunities in Texas for people to start new companies, get good jobs, and create better lives for their families," said Nathan Nascimento, the director of state initiatives at Freedom Partners. "When tax and regulatory climates are bad,

> people will move to better economic environments—this phenomenon isn't a mystery, it's how marketplaces work. Not only should other state governments take note of this, but so should the federal government."
>
> According to Tom Gray of the Manhattan Institute, people may be leaving California for the employment opportunities, tax breaks, or less crowded living arrangements that other states offer.
>
> "States with low unemployment rates, such as Texas, are drawing people from California, whose rate is above the national average," Gray wrote. "Taxation also appears to be a factor, especially as it contributes to the business climate and, in turn, jobs."
>
> "Most of the destination states favored by Californians have lower taxes," Gray wrote. "States that have gained the most at California's expense are rated as having better business climates. The data suggest that may cost drivers—taxes, regulations, the high price of housing and commercial real estate, costly electricity, union power, and high labor costs—are prompting businesses to locate outside California, thus helping to drive the exodus."

Just recently, I heard some of my Democrat co-workers laughing to each other about "trickle-down economics", which is the "ridiculous" idea that if you allow businesses and workers to keep what they earn, then you'll get more economic growth than if the government takes the money to study the drug use patterns of sex workers in the far East. Actually, we've been trying socialism-lite in this country for the past 7 years. How has it worked? Well, Obama has averaged 1.2% GDP growth through his presidency, far below average. And in order to get even that little growth, Obama will double the debt from 10 to 20 trillion in just 8 years.

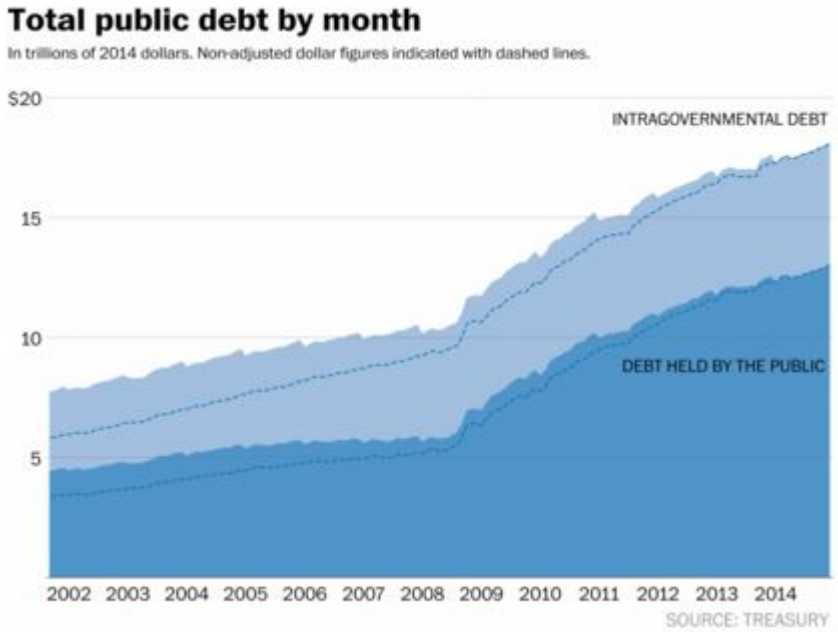

Debt increase under Barack Obama

But what about tax cuts? Do tax cuts create economic growth?

The conservative Heritage Foundation think tank describes the effects of the Bush tax

cuts.

Excerpt:

> > President Bush signed the first wave of tax cuts in 2001, cutting rates and providing tax relief for families by, for example, doubling of the child tax credit to $1,000.
>
> > At Congress' insistence, the tax relief was initially phased in over many years, so the economy continued to lose jobs. In 2003, realizing its error, Congress made the earlier tax relief effective immediately. Congress also lowered tax rates on capital gains and dividends to encourage business investment, which had been lagging.
>
> > It was the then that the economy turned around. Within months of enactment, job growth shot up, eventually creating 8.1 million jobs through 2007. **Tax revenues also increased after the Bush tax cuts, due to economic growth.**
>
> > […]The CBO incorrectly calculated that the post-March 2003 tax cuts would lower 2006 revenues by $75 billion. Revenues for 2006 came in $47 billion above the pre-tax cut baseline.
>
> > Here's what else happened after the 2003 tax cuts lowered the rates on income, capital gains and dividend taxes:
>
> > - GDP grew at an annual rate of just 1.7% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the six quarters following the tax cuts, the growth rate was 4.1%.
> > - The S&P 500 dropped 18% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts but increased by 32% over the next six quarters.
> > - The economy lost 267,000 jobs in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the next six quarters, it added 307,000 jobs, followed by 5 million jobs in the next seven quarters.
>
> > The timing of the lower tax rates coincides almost exactly with the stark acceleration in the economy. Nor was this experience unique. The famous Clinton economic boom began when Congress passed legislation cutting spending and cutting the capital gains tax rate.

Regarding the "Clinton economic boom", that was caused by supply-sider Newt Gingrich passing tax cuts through the House and Senate. Bill Clinton merely signed the bills into law.

Very important to compare times and places where socialism has been tried to times and places where free enterprise and limited government have been tried. We know what works. It may not be what makes us feel smug, but we know what works.

What are all the big liberal corporations trying to protect in North Carolina?

April 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

So, North Carolina passed a law that says that in the state of North Carolina, people with male equipment have to use a male bathroom, and people with female equipment have to use a female bathroom.

Lots of corporations have come out against this law, as AMAC explains:

> Here's a list of companies that have come out against the newly signed law:
>
> Salesforce, Bank of America, American Airlines, Microsoft, Apple, RedHat, PayPal, Google, Lowe's Home Improvement, NBA, NCAA, MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America), Disney, ESPN, Marvel, Facebook, Charlotte Motor Speedway, BB&T Ballpark, Biogen, DOW Chemical Company, Citrix, Bayer, NC Policy Watch, IBM, Burt's Bees, Duke University, Wake Forest University, SAS Institute.

And here is one typical response from one company – Pay Pal. The leftist Washington Post reports:

> The backlash against a North Carolina law that bars local governments from extending civil rights protections to gay and transgender people continued Tuesday, with PayPal saying it is abandoning plans to expand into Charlotte in response to the legislation.
>
> This decision came just weeks after PayPal, the California-based online payments firm spun off from eBay, said it would open a global operations center in Charlotte, a move that state officials said would bring millions to the local economy and employ 400 people.

I note that Pay Pal does business in many, many countries where homosexuality is illegal, and many, many other countries where homosexuality is punishable by death. They aren't making a fuss about those countries, though. They're just making a fuss in North Carolina. That's called hypocrisy, and most big corporations are actually like Pay Pal – not conservative in any way shape or form.

The WaPo article also notes:

> This law could also cost the state federal funding. At least five federal agencies are debating whether to withhold money because of the law.

So, that's what happens when you pay taxes to the federal government, and why we need to get the government out of anything that is not explicitly laid out in the Constitution.

The champion of the big pro-gay corporations

Anyway, now that we understand what those big corporations stand for, let's take a look at who they are enabling. Let's go to Canada, which is further down the road of sexual anarchy and moral relativism, and see how things are working out there.

Here is the article from the Toronto Sun:

> A sexual predator who falsely claimed to be transgender and preyed on women at two Toronto shelters was jailed indefinitely on Wednesday.
>
> Justice John McMahon declared Christopher Hambrook — who claimed to be a transgender woman named Jessica — was a dangerous offender.
>
> The judge said he imposed the indefinite prison sentence because there's a great risk that Hambrook will commit more sex crimes and require strict supervision if he returns to the community.
>
> […]He noted the Montreal man, 37, attacked four vulnerable females between the ages of five and 53 in Montreal and Toronto over the past 12 years.

How could a man dress up as a woman and be allowed into a women's space with women's bathrooms and women's showers?

Life Site News explains:

> Ontario amended its Human Rights Code to make "gender identity" and "gender expression" prohibited grounds for discrimination in 2012.
>
> […]Family advocates argued at the time that the NDP sponsored bill would create a legal right for a man who calls himself 'transgender' to use rooms and facilities intended for women so as to exploit women.
>
> The bill was subsequently dubbed the "bathroom bill" by its critics.

And what did the transgender man do with that law? This:

> [The] Court also heard evidence of Hambrook terrorizing a deaf woman living in the shelter. "The accused grabbed the complainant's hand and forcibly placed it

> on his crotch area while his penis was erect," court heard.
>
> The same deaf women reported that Hambrook would peer at her through a gap between the door and its frame while she showered.

And you can see similar problems already in liberal states like Washington:

> In 2012 a college in Washington state decided it would not prevent a 45-year-old man who presents himself as a transgender "female" from lounging naked in a women's locker room in an area frequented by girls as young as six. Teenage girls on a high school swim team were using the facilities when they saw "Colleen" Francis deliberately exposing male genitalia through the glass window in a sauna. Police told one outraged mother that the university could not bar the biological male from the premises.

The Daily Wire reports that the University of Toronto, which is a city in the province of Ontario, is now partially reversing itself on their transgender agenda:

> The University is temporarily changing its policy on gender-neutral bathrooms after two separate incidents of "voyeurism" were reported on campus September 15 and 19. Male students within the University's Whitney Hall student residence were caught holding their cellphones over female students' shower stalls and filming them as they showered.

Conservatives like me try to say that it's a bad situation when men can walk into women's change rooms, and walk around naked near women who are showering, going to the bathroom or changing clothes. But the big corporations disagree, they want biological men in women's spaces, and all the better if clothes are coming on and off. When the big corporations make these sorts of stands in favor of "inclusiveness" and "diversity", it's important to know what it is they really value. And what they don't value, too.

In a previous post, I explained that the lead architect (pictured above) of the Charlotte legislation that allowed men to walk around naked in women's bathrooms and showers was himself on a sex-offender registry. And that's where all of these big corporations out to be put as well. On the sex-offender registry.

Pro-abortion attorney general raids home of Planned Parenthood whistleblower

April 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Planned Parenthood senior executive: organ harvesting so she can get a Lamborghini

LIfe News reports:

> The pro-abortion California attorney general's office raided on Tuesday the home of the undercover investigator who exposed Planned Parenthood's trafficking of aborted babies' body parts, according to the Center for Medical Progress.
>
> David Daleiden, the head of the Center for Medical Progress, has been a target of abortion activists and their political friends ever since he released the first undercover video last summer showing a top Planned Parenthood official discussing the sale of aborted babies' body parts. Since then, CMP has released a dozen undercover videos of the abortion giant's employees and partner research groups, exposing their horrendous baby body parts trade. However, pro-abortion politicians have been ignoring the evidence of wrong-doing at Planned Parenthood and attacking CMP instead.
>
> Daleiden released the following statement about the raid of his California home:
>
> Today (Tuesday), the California Attorney General's office of Kamala Harris, who was elected with tens of thousands of dollars from taxpayer-funded Planned Parenthood, seized all video footage showing Planned Parenthood's criminal trade in aborted baby parts, in addition to my personal information.
>
> Ironically, while seizing my First Amendment work product, they ignored documents showing the illicit scheme between StemExpress and Planned Parenthood. This is no surprise–Planned Parenthood's bought-and-paid-for AG has steadfastly refused to enforce the law against the baby body parts traffickers in our state, or even investigate them–while at the same time doing their bidding to harass and intimidate citizen journalists. We will pursue all remedies to vindicate our First Amendment rights.

> Rachele Huennekens, a spokeswoman for state Attorney General Kamala Harris, told CBS DFW that she could not comment on any ongoing investigation.
>
> Harris, a Democrat who is running for U.S. Senate, is endorsed by the pro-abortion National Organization for Women. NOW describes her as a "longtime, vocal supporter of Planned Parenthood" who promised to investigate the Center for Medical Progress and fight for taxpayer funding of the abortion business.

This story reminds me of how the IRS treated conservative and Christian groups differently from liberal groups. It's not the big oil company who hold up your application for non-profit status because you're a conservative. It's big government. That's who has real power over you.

What is the solution?

One question you have to ask yourself is why the Democrats are so interested in helping out Planned Parenthood. The answer to that question is simple. The Democrats give the Planned Parenthood the taxpayer money. The Planned Parenthood uses the taxpayer money to start the abortion clinics to make more money. The Planned Parenthood gives the Democrats some of their profits as political contributions. If the Planned Parenthood goes out of business, then the political donations to the Democrats will stop. So, when the investigative journalists threaten the flow of political contributions to the Democrats, then the Democrats attack the investigative journalists.

Who is trying to solve the problem?

The Republican party tries to de-fund Planned Parenthood so that they don't have any more money to perform abortions and then give the Democrats political contributions.

Here was a recent attempt described in Life News.

It says:

> The House of Representatives voted today for legislation that would temporarily de-fund Planned Parenthood while an investigation continues into it s sale of aborted babies and their body parts.
>
> **The House voted 241 to 187 for the bill with 239 Republicans voting for the bill to defund the Planned Parenthood abortion business and 3 Democrats joining them. Three Republicans voted against the defunding bill while 183 Democrats voted against it.**
>
> Rep. Diane Black, a Tennessee Republican who is the pro-life lawmaker sponsoring the legislation and a nurse for more than 40 years, sponsored the legislation. The bill would freeze Planned Parenthood funding for one year while Congress conducts an investigation into its sales of aborted babies. The House vote would follow one the Senate had weeks ago, which saw Senate Democrats filibuster and block legislation to revoke $550 million in taxpayer funding. The Senate is expected to vote soon on a second attempt to de-fund Planned Parenthood.

> A new Congressional report finds that de-funding the Planned Parenthood abortion business — even for one year — would save "several thousand" unborn babies from the nightmare of abortion. The report also finds de-funding Planned Parenthood would save the federal government $235 million.
>
> During the debate, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy spoke on the House floor in defense of innocent human life and urged his colleagues to put a moratorium on Planned Parenthood funding in light of its barbaric practices.
>
> "So if we know that this organization performs hundreds of thousands of abortions per year and we know that women have access to other sources for care, the question is, should we force taxpayers to fund a business that spends its money aborting 327,653 children per year? Should we force taxpayers to fund an organization whose barbaric practices, as vividly shown in those videos, disregard and devalue the sanctity of the most innocent human lives?" he asked.
>
> He added: "There is no reason—absolutely no reason—that we must choose between funding women's health and compelling taxpayers to support abortion."
>
> Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-Texas) talked about how Planned Parenthood is not in the business of women's health care and is really just an abortion company.
>
> […]"In the history of Planned Parenthood, they have never, ever, ever done one mammogram, because they are not certified to do mammograms. They bring people in and refer them out to get their mammograms. So, for those of us –like in my case, three daughters and a wife of 37 years –look, I want good women's healthcare. So, let's fund it," he said. "But, let's give it directly to the facilities that will do the mammograms and not Planned Parenthood – for them to take their cut."
>
> **President Barack Obama has already threatened to veto the bill.**

Hillary Clinton also spoke out in favor of for-profit organ-harvesting from born-alive children.

> After today's House vote to de-fund the Planned Parenthood abortion business, Hillary Clinton took to twitter to adamantly defend taxpayer funding for the abortion company.

The Republicans also want to hold Planned Parenthood criminally responsible for performing abortions on born-alive babies.

This was also reported on by Life News:

> The House of Representatives today approved a pro-life bill that would hold the Planned Parenthood abortion business criminally liable for harvesting body parts from aborted babies who are technically still alive.
>
> The center for Medical Progress has released 10 videos catching and exposing Planned Parenthood officials selling aborted babies and their body parts. One of the most shocking videos caught the nation's biggest abortion business

harvesting the brain of an aborted baby who was still alive.

The Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, sponsored by pro-life Congressman Trent Franks would make failure to provide standard medical care to children born alive during an abortion a federal crime. It would also apply stronger penalties in cases where an overt act is taken to kill the abortion survivor.

[…]Congressman Chris Smith implored the House to pass the bill.

“Undercover videos by the Center for Medical Progress have again brought into sharp focus that some babies actually survive abortion,” the New jersey congressman said.

“Dr. Savita Ginde, Medical Director of Planned Parenthood Rocky Mountains says ‘sometimes we get—if someone delivers before we get to see them for a procedure—they are intact…’ that is, Madame Speaker, born alive. Breathing, crying, gasping for air. One fetal tissue broker describes on the video watching a ‘fetus …just fall out.’ And left to die.”

“We have a duty to protect these vulnerable children from violence, exploitation and death. Humanitarian due diligence requires that born alive babies be taken to a hospital to obtain care and enhance prospects of survival,” Smith added. “Abortion clinics have no incentive whatsoever to save the child. Abortion clinics do not have neonatal intensive care units—they are in the business of killing babies, not saving them.”

“The Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (H.R. 3504), authored by pro-life champion Trent Franks simply says any child who survives an abortion must be given the same care as any other premature baby born at the same gestational age. This legislation builds on the landmark Born Alive Infant Protection Act of 2002 authored by Steve Chabot by adding important enforcement provisions,” he concluded.

The House voted 248 to 177 for the bill with 239 Republicans voting for the bill and 5 Democrats joining them. No Republicans voted against the pro-life bill while 177 Democrats voted against it. One member voted present.

A pro-life Senator says he will introduce the Senate version of the bill on Monday. Senator Ben Sasse told LifeNews.com that he will introduce companion legislation in the Senate when Congress resumes its work on Monday.

He said: “If this isn’t the most non-controversial sentence in American politics, it’s time to check our national conscience: newborn babies must receive care and attention. Societies are judged by how we care for the vulnerable and surely anyone with a heart— regardless of where they stand on the abortion debate—should be able to agree that our laws should protect newborns. I’m grateful that a bipartisan majority of the House stood up for babies and I look forward to

> introducing companion legislation in the Senate next week."
>
> **Despite passage of the bill, the Obama administration says President Barack Obama would veto the measure.**

There were a lot of "pro-life" people who voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012. I personally spoke to young evangelicals who claimed to be pro-life who but voted for Obama to stop global warming and to get condoms and free health care. Maybe next time we have an election, the pro-life people can vote pro-life for a change. Even if the Democrat is really, really good-looking, and has likability, and a nice way of speaking – let's still vote pro-life, even then.

Will there be a contested convention in Cleveland? Will Ted Cruz win it?

April 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, Texas Senator Ted Cruz, and Heidi Cruz

A lot of people are asking me what Cruz chances are to defeat Trump and win the nomination. I'm going to look at three columns, one from radically leftist CNN, one from the radically leftist Washington Post, and one from National Review. I found both of these stories at the Conservatives 4 Ted Cruz news aggregator, by the way. I check that site at least twice a day, and so should you.

The first one is from David Gergen at CNN. David Gergen is a senior political analyst for CNN and has been a White House adviser to four presidents. A graduate of Harvard Law School, he is a professor of public service and co-director of the Center for Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School.

His headline is "Ted Cruz: Now the odds-on favorite":

> With his decisive victory in Wisconsin, Sen. Ted Cruz has not only shaken up the Republican presidential race, but heading into the homestretch, he has suddenly become the odds-on favorite to win the nomination in Ohio.
>
> With 16 primaries and caucuses remaining, Donald Trump has to win 70% of the delegates to secure the 1,237 needed to win a first ballot at the Republican convention. Several states are coming up that are more favorable territory for Trump than Cruz, especially New York and Pennsylvania where Trump still has significant leads.
>
> Even so, winning more than two thirds of the remaining delegates is a daunting challenge for him. In the 36 primaries and caucuses leading up to Wisconsin, Trump won only 46% of the delegates. And now he heads down a tough

> homestretch with Cruz seizing the momentum.
>
> In a year crammed with surprises, no one can say for sure what will unfold in Cleveland, Ohio. But there are two likely outcomes: First, Cruz and Trump have each vowed to vote against a change in the GOP's Rule 40. That's an obscure provision that requires any candidate to win at least eight primaries and caucuses before he or she can be nominated.
>
> Trump and Cruz will be the only two people in Cleveland with that distinction. They should also have enough delegate strength between them to block a rewrite of Rule 40. In other words, potential candidates like John Kasich, Paul Ryan and Mitt Romney won't be eligible even if many delegates think them likely to fare better against Hillary Clinton — the race could narrow to Trump vs. Cruz.
>
> If Trump then falls short on the first ballot, there will be a donnybrook. But it is now becoming apparent that Cruz is much better prepared to win that fight. Trump has run a campaign long on the outside game of televised rallies but short on the inside game of quietly piling up delegates.
>
> By contrast, Cruz has been superlative playing to the inside. Just look at how craftily he captured delegates away from Trump a few days ago in North Dakota. (The capacity of the Obama team to play the inside game so well helped to propel them past Hillary Clinton in 2008.)
>
> In a first ballot, delegates must vote for the candidate to whom they are pledged but thereafter, of course, may vote for someone else. Signs increasingly point to the fact that Republican party regulars pledged to Trump are ready to bolt on a second or third ballot. With Cruz the only other man in the race, that almost certainly means they will drift — rush? –toward the Texan, and he will take the crown.

That's an accurate analysis. The most likely scenario now is that Cruz capitalizes on his momentum to deny Trump the delegates he needs to get to 1,237 before the convention, then wins the nomination on round 2 or later, when the GOP delegates from each state become "unbound". And Cruz is already reaching out to the delegates to make sure that they choose him in round 2 and later rounds, as they free up.

Can Cruz win a contested convention?

Now, I'm going to balance that with something *hilarious* from moderate conservative Pulitzer Prize–winning syndicated columnist George Will, writing in National Review.

Will's column is entitled "Ted Cruz Is Surging by Design":

> People here at Ted Cruz's campaign headquarters are meticulously preparing to win a contested convention, if there is one. Because Donald Trump is a low-energy fellow, Cruz will be positioned to trounce him in Cleveland, where Trump's slide toward earned oblivion would accelerate during a second ballot.

> […]For months Cruz's national operation has been courting all convention delegates, including Trump's. Cruz aims to make a third ballot decisive, or unnecessary.
>
> On the eve of Wisconsin's primary, the analytics people here knew how many undecided voters were choosing between Cruz and Trump (32,000) and how many between Cruz and John Kasich (72,000), and where they lived. Walls here are covered with notes outlining every step of each state's multistage delegate-selection process. **(Cruz's campaign was active in Michigan when the process of selecting persons eligible to be delegates began in August 2014.)** Cruz's campaign is nurturing relationships with delegates now committed to Trump and others. In Louisiana's primary, 58.6 percent of voters favored someone other than Trump; Cruz's campaign knows which issues are particularly important to which Trump delegates, and Cruz people with similar values are talking to them.
>
> […]Usually, more than 40 percent of delegates to Republican conventions are seasoned activists who have attended prior conventions. A large majority of all delegates are officeholders — county commissioners, city council members, sheriffs, etc. — and state party officials. They tend to favor presidential aspirants who have been Republicans for longer than since last Friday.
>
> Trump is a world-class complainer (he is never being treated "fairly") but a bush-league preparer. A nomination contest poses policy and process tests, and he is flunking both.
>
> **Regarding policy, he is flummoxed by predictable abortion questions because he has been pro-life for only 15 minutes, and because he has lived almost seven decades without giving a scintilla of thought to any serious policy question. Regarding process, Trump, who recently took a week-long vacation from campaigning, has surfed a wave of free media to the mistaken conclusion that winning a nomination involves no more forethought than he gives to policy. He thinks he can fly in, stroke a crowd's ideological erogenous zones, then fly away. He knows nothing about the art of the political deal.**
>
> **The nomination process, says Jeff Roe, Cruz's campaign manager, "is a multilevel Rubik's Cube. Trump thought it was a golf ball — you just had to whack it." Roe says the Cruz campaign's engagement with the granular details of delegate maintenance is producing a situation where "the guy who is trying to hijack the party runs into a guy with a machine gun."**

Cruz graduated at the top of his classes at Princeton and Harvard Law. He clerked for Court of Appeals Justice J. Michael Luttig and Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist. Insofar as this primary election is a contest based on hard work and preparation, Cruz will win it. And then he's going to beat Hillary.

What difference does believing in evolution make?

April 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

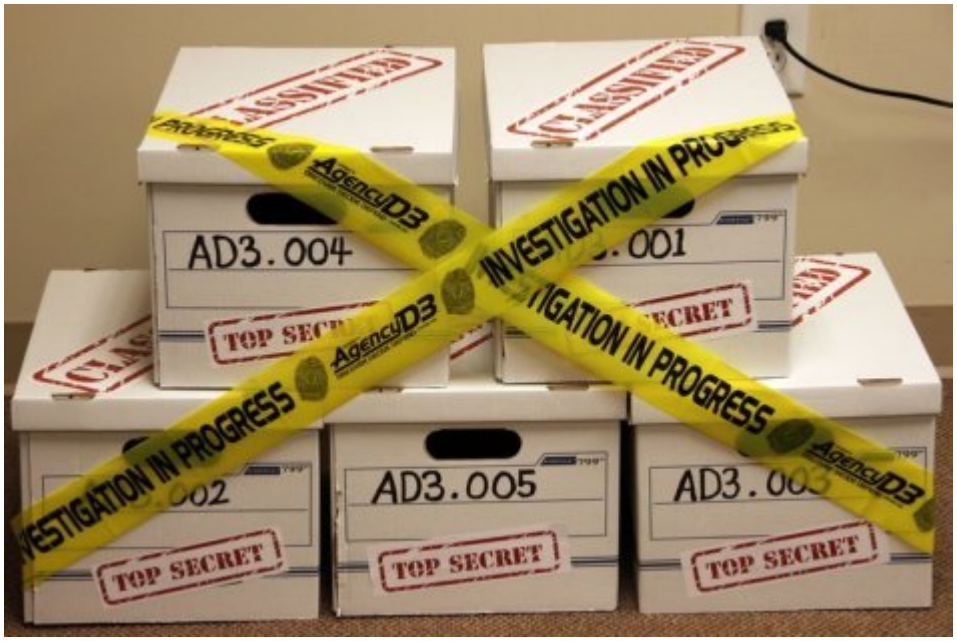

Investigation in progress

In this post, the word evolution refers to the theory that unguided natural forces such as mutation and natural selection can explain the emerge of life from non-life, as well as the diversification of simple single-celled organisms in the diversity of animal life that we observe today, and in the fossil record. mean merely change over time, or variations within types "micro-evolution". I mean molecules-to-man evolution, with nothing detectable done to guide any part of the process by any outside intelligence, be it natural or supernatural.

What else do people believe when they accept evolution as true?

Evolution News reports on a new poll:

> From the earliest days of civilization, humans have considered themselves exceptional among living creatures. But a new survey by Discovery Institute of more than 3,400 American adults indicates that the theory of evolution is beginning to erode that belief in humanity's unique status and dignity.
>
> According to the survey, 43 percent of Americans now agree that "Evolution shows that no living thing is more important than any other," and 45 percent of Americans believe that "Evolution shows that human beings are not fundamentally different from other animals."
>
> The highest levels of support for the idea that evolution shows that humans aren't fundamentally different from other animals are found among self-identified atheists (69 percent), agnostics (60 percent), and 18 to 29 year-olds (51 percent).
>
> The theory of evolution is also reshaping how people think about morality. A majority of Americans (55 percent) now contend that "Evolution shows that moral

> beliefs evolve over time based on their survival value in various times and places."
>
> "Since the rise of Darwin's theory, leading scientists and other thinkers have insisted that human beings are just another animal, and that morality evolves based on survival of the fittest," says historian Richard Weikart, author of the new book *The Death of Humanity: And the Case for Life* (Regnery).
>
> What this new survey shows is just how pervasive these ideas have become in our culture. Many people no doubt continue to believe that humans are unique, but most do not think that evolution supports that position. Many critics of my earlier scholarship will be disconcerted to see this data, which powerfully supports my arguments about the way that Darwinism devalues human life, a key point I explain further in my new book.
>
> Weikart is a professor of history at California State University, Stanislaus, and a Senior Fellow with Discovery Institute's Center for Science & Culture.

So, it definitely makes a difference whether you believe in evolution or not. I have found that even Christians who believe in evolution have some very weird things going on elsewhere in their worldviews. Let's just say that I don't know any *conservative* Christians who accept evolution.

Take a look at Howard Van Till, who taught at a seminary for many years. He always asserted that evolution and Christianity were compatible. That's what he told his students. He was regarded as one of the foremost proponents of theistic evolution – the view that God exists and sits around doing nothing while animal diversity appears without any detectible design work on his part.

Take a look at this event that Van Till did for a FREETHOUGHT group a while back.

Excerpt:

> FROM CALVINISM TO FREETHOUGHT: The Road Less Traveled
> by Howard J. Van Till
>
> Professor of Physics and Astronomy, Emeritus
> Calvin College
> Presented 5/24/2006 for the Freethought Association of West Michigan
> Lightly edited 5/26/2006
>
> Precis: Born into a Calvinist family, shaped by a Calvinist catechism training, educated in the Calvinist private school system, and nurtured by a community that prized its Calvinist systematic theology, I was a Calvinist through and through. For 31 years my teaching career was deeply rooted in the Calvinism I had inherited from my community.
>
> During most of that time it was a fruitful and satisfying experience. Nonetheless, stimulated in part by the manner in which some members of that community responded to my efforts to practice what I had learned from my best teachers, I eventually felt the need to extend my intellectual exploration into

> philosophical territories far outside the one provided by Calvinism. Did I complete the lengthy journey from Calvinism to Freethought? The listener will be the judge.

Freethought is a politically correct happy-clappy term for atheism, by the way. Trying to put a positive spin on it, I guess.

Evolution means unguided evolution. It means that natural processes do all the work, and there is nothing required from any supervening intelligence – natural or supernatural. That idea has consequences for your worldview.

One last point, and this is important. I don't reject evolution because I find the consequences of the idea distasteful. I reject it because it is not supported by the evidence in two crucial areas: the origin of the simplest living replicating organism, and the sudden appearance of a wide variety of body plans in the Cambrian explosion within a very short period of time. I have no problem with science challenging my interpretation of the Bible – that's why I am for an old universe and an old Earth. But evolution is not scientifically grounded – it's really a philosophical speculation that is required by a metaphysical assumption called naturalism. And since I am an adherent of experimental science, and not theoretical speculative philosophy, I reject it. And so should you.

Related posts

- Stephen C. Meyer debates Charles Marshall on the Cambrian explosion
- Stephen C. Meyer and Keith Fox debate intelligent design and evolution
- Stephen C. Meyer debates intelligent design with two scientists on NPR
- Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life
- Stephen C. Meyer and Peter Atkins debate intelligent design
- Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion
- Michael Ruse debates Stephen C. Meyer on intelligent design and evolution on NPR
- Robin Collins lectures on fine-tuning for discoverability from particle physics
- Robin Collins lectures on the fine-tuning argument at Pepperdine University

Christian NHS worker who gave a book to Muslim co-worker loses her appeal

April 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Judge Jennifer Jane Eady, Queens Counsel

The UK Telegraph reports on the state of religious liberty in the United Kingdom.

Excerpt:

> A Christian NHS worker suspended for giving a religious book to a Muslim colleague has lost her appeal against a ruling that the decision to discipline her was lawful.
>
> Victoria Wasteney, 39, was found guilty by her NHS employer in 2014 of "harassing and bullying" a work friend for giving her a book about a Muslim woman's encounter with Christianity, praying with her and asking her to church.
>
> She was suspended for nine months and given a written warning, even though the woman had been happy to discuss faith with her and never gave evidence about her allegations to the NHS.
>
> Ms Wasteney, a senior occupational therapist, challenged the decision by East London NHS Foundation Trust at an employment tribunal last year, but it ruled that her employer had not discriminated against her.
>
> A judge gave her the chance to appeal against that decision, saying it should consider whether the original ruling had correctly applied the European Convention on Human Rights' strong protection of freedom of religion and expression.
>
> But at a hearing in central London on Thursday, Her Honour Judge Eady QC dismissed the appeal.

> **Following the decision, Miss Wasteney, from Epping, Essex, said: "What the court clearly failed to do was to say how, in today's politically correct world, any Christian can even enter into a conversation with a fellow employee on the subject of religion and not, potentially, later end up in an employment tribun**al.
>
> **"If someone sends you friendly text messages, how is one to know that they are offended? I had no idea that I was upsetting her."**
>
> **[…]The woman, who quit her job shortly after making the complaints, never gave any evidence about her allegations to the NHS or later to the employment tribunal.**

It sounded to me like the Muslim woman encouraged the Christian woman and the Christian woman was later surprised by the complaints. I think most Christians can take no for an answer, but Christians are caring, and they see offering to pray and offering to bring someone to church as a caring thing to do. If they don't hear a no, then they keep right on doing what comes naturally to Christians – talking about spiritual things and trying to lead others to the Lord.

It was much easier to do this in the past, before people got more concerned about not feeling offended than they were about discussing what is or is not true. So now, even in a country like England, you can be anything you want to be as long as you're not behaving like a Christian in public. I think this is especially the case when the people who adjudicate these cases are more focused on feelings… the person who feels the most offended seems to win all the time.

Before I had an alias, I had experience dealing with co-workers who did not much like me talking about spiritual things at work. Some types of people are more risky than others, I've found. That's when I started to make rules based on my experiences, about who was and who was not safe to talk to. And that's when I decided that to really say what I wanted to say, I'd have to get an alias, and not tell too many co-workers about it.

So who is dangerous? Obviously, people who are committed to a sinful lifestyle already are dangerous to talk to. I don't talk to people about anything interesting if they are committed to a sinful lifestyle, because they will feel obligated to discuss issues defensively, rather than in a truth-focused way. I also avoid people who are more focused on feelings, family and community above truth. They tend to be more focused on feeling good and getting along, and they are the worst people to disagree with. The safest people are people who like to argue about what is true, and who respond to evidence.

So how to detect who is safe? Well, If the person talks about themselves a lot, and about their feelings, and happy experiences, and their vacations, their families and popular culture fluff, then I would avoid them. Don't say a word to them. The ones who are safer are the ones who accept disagreements and don't just rush to agree with you while hiding their own opinions in order to be liked. You also want to avoid people who take everything personally, instead of debating the outside world with a focus on what is true.

I am terrified of people who try to agree with me on everything, or who cannot explain both sides of an issue respectfully. I watch what people watch on TV in the gym – if it's sports, housewives of beverly hills, or other shallow life enhancement fluff, then I don't talk to them. If it's news or business, then it's safer to talk to them – because then you can talk about facts. Beware of people who try to jump to agreement quickly, without showing any evidence or reasons for their view. It's always better to talk about issues in the abstract, rather than offering to pray or asking someone to church. For example, you can discuss whether the universe had a beginning, or which books of the Bible were written early. Christians need to learn how to do that – how to talk about facts.

A good question to ask to test a person is to ask where they get their news. If there is no balance there, then it's a good sign to avoid them. Two of my leftist co-workers this week asked me why I thought that the Washington Post and the New York Times were "radically leftist". I asked them to name conservative columnists at either paper. They couldn't name a single one. One tried to google it right in front of me! I named Arthur Brooks, Ross Douthat, Jennifer Rubin, etc. and explained why they weren't conservative. Then I listed off a half-dozen liberal names at the Washington Post. If the person you are talking to is in a bubble, then they are too risky to talk to. Pretty much everyone on the secular left is that way, and you should check first by seeing what they read for news. If they're not safe, then get yourself an alias and write something online, instead.

Woman invents hunky man character for her book, then leaves her husband for him

April 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Child grabs for his mom, who is leaving for work

My good friend Dina sent me this article about a very crazy, irrational woman who does not value marriage at all.

Excerpt:

> Her steamy, bestselling novels and strong male characters have seduced hundreds of thousands of female readers worldwide.
>
> But Jodi Ellen Malpas has revealed she has split from her own Mr Right – because he no longer lives up to the fantasy she created.
>
> The 34-year-old, whose This Man trilogy has sold more than 500,000 copies, has left her husband of ten years after 'falling in love' with one of her characters.
>
> **Ms Malpas, from Northampton, says: 'All my fictional men are strong, successful, sophisticated and enigmatic. I guess it's hard for any living, breathing man to live up to such a fantasy.**
>
> **'In This Man I created Jesse Ward, whose forceful personality was appealing to me. There is no denying I fell in love with him.**
>
> **'After all, I created him and I made him the way he is for a reason. Every woman needs some fantasy lover to spice up the dull reality of her real life. I wanted to create my perfect love story.**
>
> 'But the success of my books and the popularity of my male character led to the breakdown of my marriage. Sadly it was not solid enough to withstand the changes success has brought to my life.'

> The mother of two, whom many believe is the new E. L. James, the housewife who wrote the Fifty Shades Of Grey trilogy, became a self-publishing sensation last year, swiftly rising to the top of the New York Times Best Seller List.
>
> The This Man trilogy explores the love affair between young interior designer Ava O'Shea and playboy Jesse Ward. The second part of her new trilogy, One Night, has just been published by Orion.
>
> **'I was 23 when Aaron and I got married, so we were both very young,' she says. 'I didn't really know who I was. I got on with being a wife and mother.**
>
> **'But over time I started to feel that something was missing – my normal everyday life had become a routine. I was bored. I guess that is what couples mean when they say they've grown apart. Aaron couldn't understand why I wanted to write my fiction and I couldn't understand why he didn't understand.'**
>
> **The couple have two children, Alfie, 14, and Patrick, ten.** But although they divorced in August last year, Ms Malpas says their relationship remains amicable. She is currently single and insists that she has no time to get involved in a relationship.
>
> **'My children and my writing are enough for the moment,' she adds. 'In any case, I suspect some men might be a little intimidated by my independence and my success.'**
>
> **And she insists she has no regrets. 'It's been crazy, but I'm loving the stronger more liberated me,' she says.**

They are "her" children. Not her husband's and hers. And they don't need a father – because children don't have needs distinct from her own needs. Her husband doesn't have needs distinct from her own needs. In her own mind, men are "intimidated" by her success. But that's not true – they are intimidated because she is insane and irrational and self-centered. She is not capable of relationships, and that's the main thing that a man wants from a woman. They avoid her because she divorced her husband of 10 years (with children) for a *fictional character!!!!!*

Good Lord. What have women come to under the influence of feminism? The feministy ones seem to place no value on what a married couple can do together. They place no value on the needs of children. Everything is about getting their own fulfillment through worldy "success" and experiences; traveling, feeling good and taking pointless risks. When I think of the men that these feministy women seem to really want (at least when they are in their teens, 20s and 30s) it really scares me. I used to think that most young, unmarried women were sensible and thought that being a wife and mother was a good way to make a difference. Now so many of them are influenced by feminism and they seem to be avoiding it in favor of making lots of money. As if that were an end in itself.

What is so boring about marriage that women no longer find it fulfilling? I go to work every day and damned if I think that is more fulfilling that loving a wife and fathering children. I don't think any man would think that. We work because that's how we relate to our wives and children, by providing for them and leading them. And work is not meant to be fun or fulfilling. It's WORK. Nowadays, I am seeing a lot of men who are interested in the idea of marriage and becoming a father. But I also see more and more women more interested in careers and travel than they are in marriage and becoming a mother. Men avoid women like that – we don't want to be accessories to a self-centered career woman, we want a partnership and a home and children raised by a mother.

Scott Klusendorf defends the pro-life view on the Unbelievable radio show

April 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of this debate
Here are the details:

> The abortion debate reared its head again this summer after controversial tweets by Richard Dawkins made the news.
>
> Justin hosts a discussion between Mara Clarke of the Abortion Support Network and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Instititute. Mara believes women need to be decide whether to terminate a pregnancy, but Scott says that all depends on whether we are dealing with a human life in the womb.
>
> MP3 of this show:
>
> http://cdnapi.kaltura.com/p/618072/sp/61807200/playManifest/entryId/1_ggc953xi/flavorId/1_vto2eisb/protocol/http/format/url/a.mp3?clientTag=feed:1_jlj47tkv

My snarky paraphrase of the debate (not exact):

- Speaker introductions
- Klusendorf: no justification for abortion is necessary if the unborn are not human
- Klusendorf: we need to address the issue "what is the unborn?" Are the unborn human?
- Klusendorf: SLED: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency

- Klusendorf: None of these things affect the value of a human being
- Klusendorf: Even if we don't KNOW whether the unborn is human
- Mara: I'm not going to debate when life begins
- Mara: Women know when life begins by feelings
- Mara: The moral decision is "whether I can take care of this child?"
- Brierley: When is an unborn being human?
- Mara: I refuse to debate that – the real question is whether women want their babies or not
- Mara: Forced pregnancy is not OK
- Brierley: Could your justification for abortion (not wanting to care for a child) work through all 9 months?
- Mara: Late term abortions are rare, so I don't have to answer that question
- Mara: Abortion should be OK through all 9 months of pregnancy because women cannot be restricted
- Mara: Some women are poor, they need to be able to kill expensive babies at any time
- Klusendorf: although she says she won't debate the unborn, she does take a position
- Klusendorf: she assumes the unborn is not human, because she says that insufficient funds is justification for abortion
- Klusendorf: no one argues that you can kill a two year old because they cost money, because she thinks they are human
- Klusendorf: she is begging the question by assuming the unborn are not human, but that is the issue we must resolve
- Klusendorf: I am pro-choice on many other things, e.g. women choosing their own husbands, religion, etc.
- Klusendorf: Some choices are wrong – Mara might be right, but she needs to make the case for the unborn not being human
- Brierley: What is your reason for thinking that an unborn child is different from a 2-year old?
- Mara: An unborn child is not the same as a 2-year old, in my personal opinion
- Mara: I am not a debater, so I don't have to provide reasoning for my assertion, I just feel it
- Mara: Not everybody agrees with Scott, they don't have to have a rational argument, they just need to feel differently
- Mara: From my experience, when a woman doesn't want to be pregnant, then she should be able to not be pregnant
- Mara: Women shouldn't be punished with a baby that she doesn't want, even if she chooses to have recreational sex
- Brierley: What do you think of women who think the unborn is human and do it anyway?
- Klusendorf: It's interesting that they never kill their toddlers for those reasons
- Klusendorf: I layed out scientific and philosophical reasons for the humanity of the

unborn
- Klusendorf: Her response was “but some people disagree with you”
- Klusendorf: People disagreed about whether slavery was wrong, or whether women should be able to vote
- Klusendorf: that doesn’t mean there is no right answer – the right answer depends on the arguments
- Klusendorf: if absence of agreement makes a view false, then it makes HER pro-choice view false as well
- Klusendorf: she did make an argument for the unborn child having no rights because of the location
- Klusendorf: she needs to explain to us why location matters – what about location confers value
- Mara: I’m not going to let Scott frame my debate for me!!!
- Mara: women get pregnant and they don’t want their babies! should we put them in jail!!!!
- Klusendorf: I didn’t just give my opinion, I had science and philosophy, the issue is “what is the unborn?”
- Mara: philosophical and scientific debates are unimportant, I am an expert in real women’s lives
- Klusendorf: Which women? Women in the womb or only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Only those outside the womb
- Klusendorf: Only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Women living outside the womb have a right to kill women inside the womb – women have bodily autonomy
- Klusendorf: then does a pregnant woman with nausea have a right to take a drug for it that will harm her unborn child?
- Mara: Unborn children are only valuable if they are wanted, unborn children only deserve protection if they are wanted
- Mara: There are restrictions on abortion – you can’t get an abortion through all nine months in the US
- Mara: There is a 24-week limit in the UK as well
- Klusendorf: There are no restrictions on abortion that conflict with “a woman’s health” because Supreme Court said
- Mara: where are these late term abortion clinics?
- Klusendorf: (he names two)
- Mara: that’s not enough!!! we need more! where is there one in Pennsylvania?
- Klusendorf: well, there used to be Gosnell’s clinic in Pennsylvania, and you could even get an infanticide there….
- Brierley: What about Dawkins’ view that it is moral to abort Down’s Syndrome babies?
- Klusendorf: he is ignoring the scientific case and philosophical case for the pro-life
- Klusendorf: the pro-life view is a true basis for human equality

What I wanted Scott to ask was whether sex-selection abortions were OK with her. Since her reasoning is “if it’s unwanted, it has no rights”, then that would mean sex-selection abortions are just fine. That’s what a UK abortion expert recently argued. And I also posted recently about how sex-selection abortions are not prosecuted in the UK. If you’re looking for a war on women, there it is.

William Lane Craig asks: are there objective truths about God?

April 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

In a lecture entitled "Are there Objective Truths About God?", philosopher William Lane Craig discusses the problem that Christians face when they make truth claims about God to non-Christians. We think that there are objective truths about God – that there are some propositions that describe the way God really is, in reality. We think that people who don't believe in those objective are factually wrong, in the same way that someone who thinks that Toronto is the capital of Canada is factually wrong.

But some people want to say that every statement about God is true "for each person" – so that conflicting claims about God are fine and no one is wrong. This could only be the case if everyone is just describing their own preferences, though – if they are making subjective claims about themselves, and not objective claims about God. Unfortunately, Christianity claims to be true for everyone – (e.g. – God is three persons and one being), so that Christians are committed to defending the idea that there are objective truths about God.

Here's the link to a page containing the lecture audio. (H/T Be Thinking)

The MP3 file is here.

So what questions does Bill answer in the lecture?

What is a self-refuting statement?

The main concept in the lecture is self-refutation. A self-refuting sentence is a sentence that, if true, makes itself false or meaningless. For example, suppose someone said to you: "there are no sentences longer than 5 words" then that would be self-refuting since it falsifies itself. Bill argues that objections to the idea that there are objective truths

about God are all self-refuting.

What is truth?

Craig holds that “truth” is a property of a proposition such that a proposition is true if it corresponds to the external world. For example, if I claim that there is a crocodile in your closet and we find a crocodile in your closet, then my statement was true. If there is no crocodile in your closet then my statement was false. The real objective world out there is what makes propositional claims true or false – these are not claims about an individual’s preferences, they are claims about the world. Bill is concerned with truth claims about God that are objective – whether there are propositions about God that are true regardless of what anyone thinks.

Objections to objective truth

Bill discusses 3 objections to the idea that there are objective truths about God. Each objection seeks to make religion subjective, (true for each person, like food preferences or clothing fashion).

Objection #1:The Challenge of Verificationism

The first challenge is that religious claims cannot be verified using the 5 senses, and therefore religious statements are objectively meaningless.

Consider the statement “Only propositions that can be verified with the 5 senses are meaningful”. That statement cannot be verified with the 5 senses. If the statement is true, it makes itself meaningless. It’s self-refuting.

Objection #2: The Challenge of Mystical Anti-Realism

The second challenge is that religious claims, and claims about God, are neither true nor false.

Consider the statement “Propositions about God cannot be true or false”. Craig asks – why should we accept that? Any reason given would have to assert something about God that is true or false, and those reasons would contradict the original statement. For example, “God is too great to be grasped by human categories of thought” is a proposition about God that the speaker thinks is true, which contradicts the original assertion.

Objection #3: The Challenge of Radical Pluralism

The third challenge is that each person invents an entire reality of their own, and that there is no mind-independent objective world shared by individuals.

Consider the statement “There is no objective reality shared by all individuals”. That statement is a statement that applies to all individuals, regardless of what they think. It’s self-refuting.

Conclusion

Craig ends the lecture by arguing that it is OK for Christians to think that other people’s views are false. It does not follow that just because someone thinks other people’s views are wrong that they am going to mistreat other people. In fact, in Christianity it is

objectively true that it is good for Christians to love their enemies. It is objectively true that all human beings have value, because human beings are made by God. So even if Christians disagree with others, they still treat them well, because they think that there are moral truths that they have to conform to.

My thoughts

Sometimes, non-Christians think that it is dangerous to hold beliefs too strongly. But I think what really matters is the content of the belief – some beliefs are false and some are true – you want to believe the true beliefs as strongly as you can, as long as the evidence warrants it. In Christianity, I am absolutely obligated to treat people with whom I disagree with respect and gentleness (1 Pet 3:15-16). The more convinced I am about *that* belief, the *better* my opponents will be treated. A *stronger* belief in Christianity means *more* tolerance for those who disagree.

Why do non-Christians get so offended when Christians claim to be right about there being only one way to be rightly related to God? Well, for many it's because their worldview is a personal preference, and they feel uncomfortable having to defend it rationally and evidentially. For most people, religion is just their cultural preference – like cooking style, or favorite sport, or clothing style. That's why they respond to your truth claims with name-calling like "you're intolerant" and "you're judgmental" and "you're arrogant". These are just shorthand ways of saying, "I'm offended that you've thought things through more than I have, and now I look dumb". My family is from a non-Christian culture, so I have to talk to my relatives about this all the time. They feel judged, but it's not my fault that they haven't done any homework to prove out their beliefs.

I got this "you're mean" reaction a lot from people who are raised to think that their religion is a racial, national or cultural identity. They think that if you tell them they are wrong *on matters of fact* that somehow this amounts to some sort of racism or prejudice. You make factual claims, and they hear discrimination. But that's not how Christians think of religion – we only care if it's true or not – just like we care whether the claims of history or science are true or not. We not trying to be mean, any more than it's mean to say things like "water boils at 100 C". That's just the way it is, and we're more than happy to discuss the reasons why we think that, and to look at your reasons to see why you don't think that.

Why are social conservatives unable to exert political pressure?

April 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

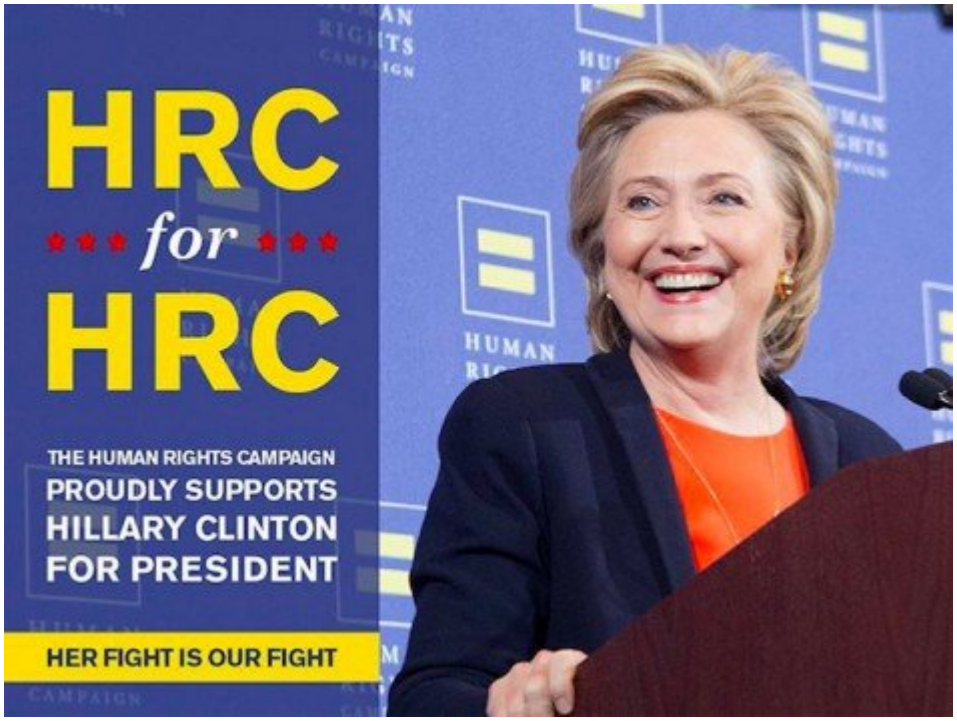

Hillary Clinton and her ally, the Human Rights Campaign

Right now, social liberals are having great success pushing through their agenda. Social conservatives seemed to be getting coerced and/or punished so effectively that many are wondering whether the tide can be turned at all.

Ben Shapiro, who writes at the Daily Wire, explains what's been happening lately:

> Leftists, the most tolerant people in America, are now demonstrating their tolerance by boycotting entire states that do not govern in accordance with leftist social policy. On Tuesday, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that he would bar non-essential state-funded travel to Mississippi after the state passed a bill re-enshrining First Amendment protections for freedom of religion and association. Cuomo, who termed the law "sad, hateful," isn't the only big government leftist to utilize the power of taxpayer-funded nastiness: the mayor of San Francisco, Ed Lee, did the same.
>
> Lee and Cuomo also announced travel bans to North Carolina, where the governor recently signed a bill that mandates that local governments may not allow people to use single-sex bathrooms based on subjective gender identity rather than biological sex; that bill also makes state anti-discrimination law supreme and exclusive over local anti-discrimination laws that would compel businesses to hire people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
>
> It's not just government, either. Icons like the wildly overrated Bruce Springsteen are cancelling concerts in North Carolina; businesses like PayPal, which do

> business in countries like Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, which actually prosecute homosexuality. States like Virginia and Georgia have vetoed similar legislation out of fear of corporate and governmental blowback from companies ranging from Apple to Disney.
>
> The left has ratcheted up their pressure on states to crack down on Americans who don't want their daughters peeing next to grown men, to prosecute businessowners who don't want to cater same-sex weddings. They've utilized their economic power to punish *private actors* who may or may not even *agree with the left* in an attempt to coax those actors into putting indirect pressure on their representatives.

Maggie Gallagher, a pro-marriage activists who has written some great books on marriage that I really liked, has some practical advice for social conservatives in National Review.

She has five points – here are four and five:

> ***4) Social conservatives aren't doing politics.***
>
> Before I explain what I mean, let me ask you to answer a simple question: What is the national organization that fights for religious-liberty protections by spending money in federal elections? Currently, there is none. There are many good nonprofits who issue voter guides or get pastors together. There are public-interest law firms galore. These are all good things to have — but there is a hole in the center of our movement.
>
> How big is the hole? For my own amusement, I tried to figure out how much money social conservatives (excluding pro-life groups) spent in national elections in 2014 compared to what they spend on 501(c)3 and other nonprofit strategies. I looked for every organization I could find that has marriage or religious liberty in its mission statement and then compared it with election expenditures by either c(4)s or political-action committees (PACs). Then I asked around to major social-conservative donors I know to see if I had overlooked any major organization.
>
> How big is the hole in the center of our movement?
>
> In 2014 pro-family social conservatives invested $251,633,730 in tax-deductible 501(c)3 efforts (excluding pro-life efforts).
>
> How much was spent on direct political engagement, counting both state and federal organizations? $2,484,359.
>
> That 100-to-one ratio of doing politics by indirect versus direct means explains a lot about the relative powerlessness of social conservatism.
>
> Social conservatives can't get much out of politics because we aren't in politics. We just talk like we are on television, when the Left allows us to get on television. Meanwhile, we don't build political institutions that matter.
>
> Social conservatives need to think like a minority and organize politically to

> protect our interests. Which leads me to Maggie's fifth Big Truth of social-conservative politics:
>
> ***5) The most important thing social conservatives could do in the 2016 cycle is to demonstrate to Democrats that extremism in pushing unisex showers on public schools or oppressing gay-marriage dissenters will cost them the White House.***
>
> In theory, this shouldn't be hard to do: A July 2015 Associated Press–GFK poll showed that 59 percent of independents and 32 percent of Democrats agree that when gay rights and religious liberty conflict, religious liberty should have priority. Social conservatives should use the issue on offense — not just to gin up "the base," but to persuade soft Democrats to abandon the party of anti-religious aggression. If intensive messaging to Democratic voters in a key swing state could move just 10 percent of them to switch their votes, the whole political dynamic of this issue would change.
>
> But proving that would require raising a significant amount of money — say at least $2 million — and demonstrating in a key swing state, such as Ohio or Pennsylvania or Florida, that the Democrats' anti-religion intolerance against gay-marriage dissenters could cost them something they care about: The White House. Power.
>
> I see no signs yet that any such thing is happening among social conservatives.
>
> But it could.
>
> We should fill the hole in the center of the social-conservative movement by getting into politics for the first time in 50 years. It could happen.

I noticed that Maggie's web site "The Pulse" is very pro-Cruz. They do not like John Kasich at all on social issues, and they were not fans of Marco Rubio's tepid response to the gay marriage ruling.

Robin Collins explains two kinds of cosmic fine-tuning

April 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

I was busy working my way through "Debating Christian Theism", a book published by Oxford University Press in August 2013. It features about 20 different topics from science, to philosophy, to history. For each topic, there is an essay by a world-class scholar in favor, and one opposed. So you get both sides of many interesting issues, at a very advanced level. The section on cosmic fine-tuning features a chapter written by Dr. Robin Collins.

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-

> Tempered Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

The fine-tuning argument

Here's a short article where Collins gives TWO examples of the fine-tuning. He is very modest in his argument, merely asserting that the fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than it is with atheism.

Excerpt:

> Science is commonly thought to have undercut belief in God. As Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg famously remarked, "the more we find out about the universe, the more meaningless it all seems." Yet, the discoveries of modern physics and cosmology in the last 50 years have shown that the structure of the universe is set in an extraordinarily precise way for the existence of life; if its structure were slightly different, even by an extraordinarily small degree, life would not be possible. In many people's minds, the most straightforward explanation of this remarkable fine-tuning is some sort of divine purpose behind our universe.

> This fine-tuning falls into three categories: the fine-tuning of the laws of nature, the fine-tuning of the constants of physics, and the fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe. "Fine-tuning of the laws of nature" refers to the fact that if the universe did not have precisely the right combination of laws, complex intelligent life would be impossible. If there were no universal attractive force (law of gravity), for example, matter would be dispersed throughout the universe and the energy sources (such as stars) needed for life would not exist. Without the strong nuclear force that binds protons and neutrons together in the nucleus, there would not be any atoms with an atomic number greater than hydrogen, and hence no complex molecules needed for life. And without the Pauli-exclusion principle, all electrons would fall to the lowest orbital of an atom, undercutting the kind of complex chemistry that life requires.

> Some fundamental physical numbers governing the structure of the universe—called the constants of physics—also must fall into an exceedingly narrow range for life to exist. For example, many have estimated that the cosmological constant—a fundamental number that governs the expansion rate of empty space—must be precisely set to one part in 10^{120} in order for life to occur; if it were too large, the universe would have expanded too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form, and if it were too small, the universe would have collapsed back on itself. As Stephen Hawking wrote in his book A Brief History of Time, "The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life." Finally, the initial distribution of mass energy at the time of the big bang must have an enormously special configuration for life to occur, which Cambridge University mathematical physicist Roger Penrose has

> calculated to be on the order of one part in $10^{10^{123}}$. This is an unimaginably small number.

I know what you're thinking: How do we know that non-Christian scientists acknowledge the fine-tuning of gravity in the way that Collins describes?

Well, the New Scientist actually talks about the fine-tuning of the force of gravity. And they're not Christians.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe's birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Here's a very long paper by Collins on the fine-tuning argument, where he answers several objections to the argument, including the multiverse/many-universe hypothesis.

As Christianity declines in Europe, churches are put up for sale

April 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
This sad story is from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Two dozen scruffy skateboarders launched perilous jumps in a soaring old church building here on a recent night, watched over by a mosaic likeness of Jesus and a solemn array of stone saints.
>
> This is the Arnhem Skate Hall, an uneasy reincarnation of the Church of St. Joseph, which once rang with the prayers of nearly 1,000 worshipers.
>
> It is one of hundreds of churches, closed or threatened by plunging membership, that pose a question for communities, and even governments, across Western Europe: What to do with once-holy, now-empty buildings that increasingly mark the countryside from Britain to Denmark?
>
> […]The closing of Europe's churches reflects the rapid weakening of the faith in Europe, a phenomenon that is painful to both worshipers and others who see religion as a unifying factor in a disparate society.
>
> […]The Church of England closes about 20 churches a year. Roughly 200 Danish churches have been deemed nonviable or underused. The Roman Catholic Church in Germany has shut about 515 churches in the past decade.
>
> But it is in the Netherlands where the trend appears to be most advanced. The country's Roman Catholic leaders estimate that two-thirds of their 1,600 churches will be out of commission in a decade, and 700 of Holland's Protestant churches are expected to close within four years.

> […]As communities struggle to reinvent their old churches, some solutions are less dignified than others. In Holland, one ex-church has become a supermarket, another is a florist, a third is a bookstore and a fourth is a gym. In Arnhem, a fashionable store called Humanoid occupies a church building dating to 1889, with racks of stylish women's clothing arrayed under stained-glass windows.
>
> In Bristol, England, the former St. Paul's church has become the Circomedia circus training school. Operators say the high ceilings are perfect for aerial equipment like trapezes.
>
> In Edinburgh, Scotland, a Lutheran church has become a Frankenstein-themed bar, featuring bubbling test tubes, lasers and a life-size Frankenstein's monster descending from the ceiling at midnight.
>
> Jason MacDonald, a supervisor at the pub, says he has never heard complaints about the reuse. "It's for one simple reason: There are hundreds and hundreds of old churches and no one to go to them," Mr. MacDonald said. "If they weren't repurposed, they would just lie empty."
>
> Many churches, especially smaller ones, are becoming homes, and that has spawned an entire industry to connect would-be buyers with old churches.
>
> The churches of England and Scotland list available properties online, with descriptions worthy of a realty firm. St. John's church in Bacup, England, for example, is said to feature "a lofty nave as well as basement rooms with stone-vaulted ceilings," and can be had for about $160,000.

There are many reasons why Christianity has declined in Europe, but surely the widespread embrace of left-wing economic policies – even by evangelical Christians – is one of the largest.

Here's a fairly recent paper (PDF) that explains it:

> What accounts for cross-national variation in religiosity as measured by church attendance and non-religious rates? Examining answers from both secularization theory and the religious economy perspective, we assert that cross-national variation in religious participation is a function of government welfare spending and provide a theory that links macro-sociological outcomes with individual rationality. Churches historically have provided social welfare. As governments gradually assume many of these welfare functions, individuals with elastic preferences for spiritual goods will reduce their level of participation since the desired welfare goods can be obtained from secular sources. Cross-national data on welfare spending and religious participation show a strong negative relationship between these two variables after controlling for other aspects of modernization.

I have many friends in the UK who classify themselves as evangelical Christians. They almost all embrace moderate to leftist economics, and they complain to me about why the church is in decline, why there is no interest in apologetics, why they can't find

Christian girlfriends, why they can't get speaking engagements. The answer is, of course, that by majoring only in theology and apologetics, they have crafted the rope that their secular allies in government are using to hang them. Leftism is embraced by European Christians in part because they don't want to be like those dastardly Americans with their free enterprise system and their rule of law and their private property and their law-abiding gun ownership.

It just goes to show you why Christianity suffers when we focus on piety at the expense of practicality. Too much A. W. Tozer, not enough F.A. Hayek. I doubt my well-meaning UK Christian friends – who are *so proud* of their laughable NHS health care – even know who F.A. Hayek is. To think that Lady Thatcher ones brandished "The Constitution of Liberty" by F.A. Hayek and declared "this is what we believe!". But ordinary UK Christians do not believe what she believes, and now they must reap what they sowed with their knee-jerk rejection of the free enterprise system. Ignorance of economics killed Christianity in Europe, and pious, risk-averse Christians were willing participants in the murder.

Cruz continues to win delegates in Colorado and Iowa

April 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, Texas Senator Ted Cruz, and Heidi Cruz

Colorado doesn't have a primary like other states. Delegates are elected at a convention. Colorado has 37 delegates in total, so let's see what happened with them.

Leftist CNN reports:

> Ted Cruz on Saturday clinched the support of every pledged delegate in Colorado, capturing all of the final 13 delegates who will go to the national convention in July and demonstrating his organizational strength in the all-important delegate race.
>
> Even though voters didn't head to the polls Saturday, Cruz's strength here could help deny Donald Trump the 1,237 delegates that he needs to clinch the nomination.
>
> Cruz's victory Saturday, combined with delegates he had already earned, hands him 30 of the 37 delegates across the state who are legally bound to support him on the first ballot at the convention, along with four other delegates who gave him verbal commitments of support.
>
> […]In this first round for the GOP, Team Cruz once again proved its mettle — far outpacing the efforts of Trump and Kasich in the scramble for delegates at each of the congressional district gatherings this week.

How come Cruz gets all the delegates? Is he cheating?

CNN explains that he is not cheating:

> In yet another sign of his airtight ground game, Cruz spoke before a huge screen

> displaying his slate of delegates for the final 13 spots, and he noted that his slate was also printed on the bright orange T-shirts that his many volunteers were wearing on the state convention floor.
>
> **Trump's campaign, by contrast, initially distributed fliers listing the campaign's national delegate candidates that were riddled with errors. The flier displaying the Trump slate is supposed to be the tip sheet that party members use to fill out their ballot. But on the first slate that the Trump campaign was giving out, more than a half dozen of their delegate candidates were listed with the wrong delegate number. At least one of the delegate numbers corresponded to a delegate supporting Cruz.**
>
> **The Trump campaign reprinted the flier, but the second flier also included several errors.**

I saw somewhere that the Trump campaign is accusing the Cruz campaign of stealing all the delegates, but the CNN report shows why that's not true. Trump is losing the delegates because his campaign is not working as hard nor as intelligently as the Trump campaign.

What about Iowa?

Meanwhile, delegates were also being selected in Iowa on the weekend.

The leftist Des Moines Register reports:

> Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz captured 11 of the 12 national party convention delegates chosen at four party meetings held across Iowa on Saturday.
>
> The near-sweep in Iowa's four congressional districts is the latest evidence of a well-organized national effort by Cruz to secure support from the activists who will formally nominate a Republican presidential candidate later this year in Cleveland.
>
> That support could be crucial in the event that no Republican candidate clinches the nomination before convention — an increasingly likely prospect as the race between Cruz, Donald Trump and John Kasich drags on.

Well, this time Cruz cheated for sure, how else can we explain his getting 11 out of 12 delegates?

The Des Moines Register says no, though – no cheating again:

> **The Cruz campaign's successes on Saturday come at the expense of Trump, the Republican race's putative front-runner, whose campaign had vocal groups of supporters at each convention but showed little organizational prowess and will send zero committed delegates to Cleveland.**
>
> Delegates' supported candidate will not matter in the national convention's first

> round of balloting, but it could be decisive in subsequent rounds, as delegates are unbound from the results of their states' primaries and caucuses and allowed to vote their conscience.
>
> **[…]The Cruz campaign demonstrated a strong organization from the outset of Saturday's contests, peppering convention attendees with pro-Cruz text messages throughout the day and handing out half-sheets of paper at all four convention sites identifying slates of Cruz-aligned candidates for national convention delegate, national convention alternate and the nominating committee.**

And there are still more delegates to go, and the Cruz campaign is working on them as well:

> Iowa will send a total of 30 delegates to the national convention — the 12 selected on Saturday, 15 "at-large" delegates elected as a slate at next month's state convention and three statewide party leaders.

These delegates are not able to vote for Cruz in the first round, life the Colorado ones can. Still, if we end up with a contested convention, most of them will go for Cruz. I have to say, it's nice to have such a smart candidate who is so organized. I like having the smartest person – it's like having William Lane Craig in the debate.

It seems to me that the more "closed" the process is for selecting delegates – Democrats and Independents cannot cross the aisle to vote – the better Cruz does. The exit polls show that Trump does very well with people who are liberal on fiscal, social and foreign policy. If the liberals and moderates are not allowed to pick the candidate, then Cruz does really well. Maybe in 2020, we should have only closed primaries?

Attorney general declares war on speech critical of liberal ideology

April 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Painting: “Freedom of Speech” by Norman Rockwell
This is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Last week, a line was crossed in the ongoing campaign of liberals to criminalize freedom of expression. The attorney general of the U.S. Virgin Islands subpoenaed a decade of materials and work by a private advocacy group that had dared to question the orthodoxy of climate change.
>
> The group is the Competitive Enterprise Institute, and the attorney general is Claude E. Walker, who had recently signed on to a campaign of over a dozen attorneys general to ferret out so-called climate change “deniers.” It is possible that CEI was being targeted by Walker precisely because one of its attorneys, Hans Bader, had criticized New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, who was leading the campaign.
>
> This is all part of growing chorus of officials willing to use their powers to condemn climate change skeptics. A few weeks ago, for example, U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch had asked the FBI to look into the matter of whether climate change-denying scientists could be accused of fraud for not toeing the line.
>
> There is no other way to characterize these moves. They are blatant attempts to

> bend the law—in Schneiderman's case, by using consumer protection and securities laws—to shut down free and open research. It is but another example of the new illiberal attempt by progressive liberals to use the power of the law to intimidate and coerce those with whom they disagree.
>
> […]According to this mindset, it would be a "thoughtcrime" merely to question why the real-world results of global temperature change don't match up with predictions by computer models.
>
> What's going on here? The problem is that progressive liberals see too much freedom of speech as injurious to their cause. It's not only the egregious abuses that happen regularly on college campuses. It's increasingly mainstream liberals who are surrendering to a "yes but" strategy on freedom of expression—saying, in effect, "yes, we support it in principle, but not so much when it conflicts with our ideology."

Is this going to get better in time? Only if the next generation of college graduates respect free speech and disagreement. Well, do they?

This is the raw data is from the leftist Pew Research Center.

It says:

> American Millennials are far more likely than older generations to say the government should be able to prevent people from saying offensive statements about minority groups, according to a new analysis of Pew Research Center survey data on free speech and media across the globe.
>
> We asked whether people believe that citizens should be able to make public statements that are offensive to minority groups, or whether the government should be able to prevent people from saying these things. Four-in-ten Millennials say the government should be able to prevent people publicly making statements that are offensive to minority groups, while 58% said such speech is OK.
>
> […]In the U.S., our findings also show a racial divide on this question, with non-whites more likely (38%) to support government prevention of such speech than non-Hispanic whites (23%).
>
> Nearly twice as many Democrats say the government should be able to stop speech against minorities (35%) compared with Republicans (18%). Independents, as is often the case, find themselves in the middle. One-third of all women say the government should be able to curtail speech that is offensive to minorities vs. 23% of men who say the same.
>
> Furthermore, Americans who have a high school degree or less are more likely than those with at least a college degree to say that speech offensive to minority groups should be able to be restricted (a 9-percentage-point difference).

Why are the students do opposed to free speech that they disagree with? It's because

that’s what their professors are teaching them.

The Wall Street Journal notes that the professors teaching the impressionable, captive students are almost all on the secular left:

> According to data compiled by the Higher Education Research Institute, only 12% of university faculty identify as politically right of center, and these are mainly professors in schools of engineering and other professional schools. Only 5% of professors in the humanities and social-science departments so identify.
>
> A comprehensive study by James Lindgren of Northwestern University Law School shows that in a country fairly evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans, only 13% of law professors identify as Republican. And a recent study by Jonathan Haidt of New York University showed that 96% of social psychologists identify as left of center, 3.7% as centrist/moderate and only 0.03% as right of center.

I spent a few hours on the weekend talking to a reader of the blog who is in graduate school. She was told in her classroom by a liberal professor that all the students will be taught liberal views of economics, that classroom participation will be required, and that no dissenting views will be tolerated. I spent 4 hours on Sunday digging up information for her to counter a liberal text book she was assigned, which was written by two non-experts and misused statistics to push a liberal agenda. She was told all these things about forced participation and no dissent only after she had already paid for her tuition, of course. That’s what happened to free speech and tolerance.

Dept. of Energy report: fracking lowers energy prices and carbon emissions

April 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

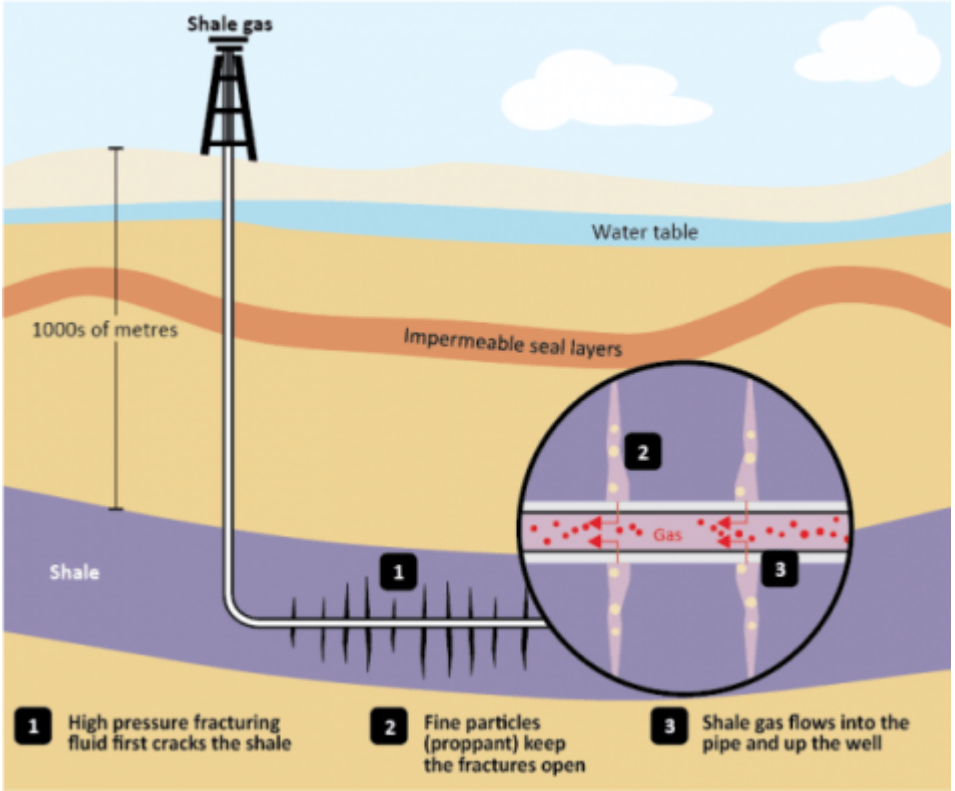

Famous economist Dr. Stephen Moore comments on a new Department of Energy report in Investors Business Daily.

He writes:

> The U.S. Department of Energy published data last week with some amazing revelations — so amazing that most Americans will find them hard to believe. As a nation, the United States reduced its carbon emissions by 2% from last year. Over the past 14 years, our carbon emissions are down more than 10%. On a per-unit-of-GDP basis, U.S. carbon emissions are down by closer to 20%.
>
> Even more stunning: We've reduced our carbon emissions more than virtually any other nation in the world, including most of Europe.
>
> How can this be? We never ratified the Kyoto Treaty. We never adopted a national cap-and-trade system, or a carbon tax, as so many of the sanctimonious Europeans have done.
>
> The answer isn't that the EPA has regulated CO2 out of the economy. With strict emission standards, the EPA surely has started to strangle our domestic industries, such as coal, and our electric utilities. But that's not the big story here.
>
> The primary reason carbon emissions are falling is because of hydraulic

> fracturing — or fracking. Some readers now are probably thinking I've been drinking or have lost my mind. Fracking technology for shale oil and gas drilling is supposed to be evil. Some states have outlawed it. Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders have come out against it in recent weeks. Schoolchildren have been bombarded with green propaganda about all the catastrophic consequences of fracking.
>
> They are mostly lies. Fracking is simply a new way to get at America's vast storehouse of tens of trillions of dollars worth of shale oil and gas that lies beneath us, coast to coast — from California to upstate New York. Fracking produces massive amounts of natural gas and, as a consequence, natural gas prices have fallen in the past decade from above $8 per million BTUs to closer to $2 this year — a 75% reduction — due to the spike in domestic supplies.
>
> This free fall in prices means that America is using far more natural gas for heating and electricity and much less coal. Here is how the International Energy Agency put it: "In the United States, (carbon) emissions declined by 2%, as a large switch from coal to natural gas use in electricity generation took place."
>
> It also observes that the decline "was offset by increasing emissions in most other Asian developing economies and the Middle East, and also a moderate increase in Europe." We are growing faster than they are and reducing emissions more than they are, yet these are the nations that lecture us on polluting. Go figure.

The article goes on to note that green / environmentalists groups continue to oppose fracking.

Now, you might still say "but fracking is unsafe. I saw it in a Michael Moore documentary that they showed in my Foundations of Political Correctness class in graduate school!" Yes, well, I have something even more authoritative than such documentaries. I have peer-reviewed studies.

From Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Whether naturally occurring or not, environmentalists claim that fracking would release huge amounts of what they consider the most potent heat-trapping greenhouse gas, far outweighing the value of producing huge quantities of clean-burning natural gas.
>
> **Now comes a study, conducted by scientists at the University of Texas and published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences — and co-financed by one of the highest-profile environmentalists in the country — that shows much smaller amounts of methane emissions associated with fracking, far less than environmentalists and the Environmental Protection Agency have contended.**
>
> […]The study, billed as the first to measure the actual emissions of methane from

> natural gas wells, finds these emissions were, in some cases, only about 2% of the most recent national estimate by the EPA in 2011. An upcoming EPA rule, effective January 2015, requires all methane to be captured when liquids are removed after drilling.
>
> […]“For those wells with methane capture or control, 99% of the potential emissions were captured or controlled,” the study notes.
>
> […]Thanks in large part to fracking, energy-related carbon dioxide emissions in 2012 were the lowest in the U.S. since 1994, at 5.3 billion metric tons. With the exception of 2010, emissions have declined every year since 2007.

OK, so now that we know that the radical environmentalists are wrong, let’s ask why they are wrong. And here, I can only speak from my experience of dealing with secular leftist co-workers at work, and young evangelical leftists in church.

What I have found is that environmental extremism functions as a kind of substitute religion for the secular left, including young evangelicals on the political left. They like environmentalism as a substitute religion, because they get to do behaviors that most religions would call “sinful”, while still feeling all clean and good because they recycle cans. Instead of having to actually be morally good, they can just turn their lights off for an hour per year during “Earth Hour”. Much less constraining than traditional morality.

Ryan Anderson debates Alastair Gamble on marriage at Arizona State University

April 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Details:

> A debate about what marriage is, hosted by the Federalist Society at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, featuring Ryan T. Anderson and Alastair Gamble.

The debate took place at the law school at Arizona State University.

Ryan T. Anderson:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon senior research fellow in American principles and public policy at The Heritage Foundation.
>
> Anderson is the author of the "Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense."
>
> Anderson received his bachelor's degree from Princeton University, graduating Phi Beta Kappa and magna cum laude. He holds a doctoral degree in political philosophy from the University of Notre Dame. His dissertation was titled: "Neither Liberal nor Libertarian: A Natural Law Approach to Social Justice and Economic Rights." He also holds a master's degree from Notre Dame.

Alastair Gamble:

> Alastair Gamble is an attorney in the firm's Litigation group and focuses his practice on Labor and Employment at both the trial and appellate level.
>
> From 2008 – 2012, Mr. Gamble practiced in Los Angeles, California, where he

> focused on Labor and Employment and Securities litigation. Before that, he served as a law clerk to Hon. Andrew Hurwitz of the Arizona Supreme Court and as a judicial extern to Hon. Michael Daly Hawkins of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.
>
> Mr. Gamble holds the J.D., Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University and the B.A., History, Emory University, 2000.

The video is 70 minutes:

The format is 15 minute opening speeches, 5 minute rebuttals, then Q&A.

Obama administration threatens landlords who screen tenants for felonies

April 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?
Amazing article about the pro-criminal Democrats, from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration has just made it easier for felons to move in next door. Landlords who don't want tenants who are going to mug their neighbors or deal drugs will now be treated as racists and potentially sued.
>
> Last week, the Department of Housing and Urban Development issued new guidelines to landlords, warning that bans against renters with criminal convictions violate the Fair Housing Act because they disproportionately affect minorities.
>
> In effect, the Obama regime is now outlawing criminal background checks for apartment rentals, even though such screening is critical for the protection and security of tenants and property, and serves a legitimate business need.
>
> In a newly released 10-page missive, HUD warns landlords they can be held liable for discrimination if they deny housing over criminal records.
>
> "HUD will use the full force of the law to protect the fair housing rights of folks who've been arrested or who're returning to their communities after serving time in jail or prison," HUD Secretary Julian Castro warned.
>
> By "full force," he means the "disparate impact" theory of civil-rights enforcement, which HUD claims is written into the Fair Housing Act even though the phrase appears nowhere in the statute.

> Disparate impact holds businesses liable for colorblind policies and practices that may have adverse outcomes for minorities — in this case, screening all apartment applicants for criminal histories. It doesn't matter if there is zero intent to discriminate in carrying out such polices. The policies will be condemned as racist regardless.

This isn't surprising, because the Obama administration has a long history of favoring criminals' rights over the rights of law-abiding taxpayers.

Consider these numbers from CNS News.

They write:

> According to weekly detention and departure reports from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, there were 167,527 non-detained convicted criminal aliens in the United States as of Jan. 26 of this year, a congressional hearing revealed Thursday.
>
> House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah.) read the statistic aloud Thursday durin a hearing examining ICE's priorities and procedures for removing criminal aliens currently living in the United States.
>
> "In that report, it said that there are 167,527 non-detained, final-order convicted criminals on the loose in the United States," Chaffetz pointed out while questioning ICE Director Sarah Saldana."These are people that are here illegally, get caught, convicted, and you release back out into the public," he said, adding that some of the crimes committed by those who have been released include homicide, sex crimes, child pornography, drunk driving, robbery and kidnapping.
>
> The federal government announced Wednesday that ICE had released about 30,000 convicted criminal aliens from ICE custody in 2014 alone, according to The Washington Times, which first reported the statistic.

Meanwhile, the Washington Times reports on some criminals who were amnestied by Obama's executive action.

Excerpt:

> Nearly two dozen of the illegal immigrants picked up in a nationwide sweep for criminal aliens earlier this month had previously been approved for President Obama's deportation amnesty, the Homeland Security Department said Wednesday.
>
> All 23 were part of Mr. Obama's original program for so-called Dreamers, which began in 2012 and which had granted tentative legal legal status to nearly 640,000 as of the end of last year.
>
> Of the 23, 15 were still actively part of the amnesty, while eight had been approved once but had not gotten their status renewed after the first two-year period expired.
>
> […]Homeland Security spokeswoman Marsha Catron said 14 of the 15 Dreamers

> who were still part of “deferred action” were convicted of their crimes after they were approved. The other one had a has a pending criminal charge but hadn’t yet been convicted or acquitted.

This is all part of the Democrat tendency to criminalize law-abiding Americans, and de-criminalizing real criminals. They think it’s better to let the guilty go free, even if the innocent are put at risk. If you want a tough on crime government policy, then you need to vote Republican.

Christian student expelled for quoting the Bible on marriage on Facebook page

April 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Anti-marriage gay activists vandalize church

This article is from the Christian Post, and I'm blogging about it to warn you all about Facebook, and how to use it.

Story first, though:

> A Christian student expelled from England's Sheffield University because he quoted the Bible's stance on homosexuality in a Facebook post supportive of controversial Kentucky clerk Kim Davis has lost his appeal.
>
> Felix Ngole, a 38-year-old in his second year of study for a master's degree in social work at the University of Sheffield in South Yorkshire was told that he is no longer a student at the university after a committee ruled he "may have caused offense to some individuals" by issuing a Facebook post last September quoting Leviticus on the Bible's condemnation of homosexuality.
>
> Ngole's post came in defense of Davis, the clerk of Rowan County, Kentucky, who became the center of a media firestorm last year when she refused to allow her office to issue same-sex marriage licenses with her name and title on them because of her religious objection to same-sex marriage.
>
> **Although Ngole's Facebook page is private and can only be seen by his friends, his post was brought to the attention of administrators at the university months later.**
>
> **Ngole's future at the university was then subjected to the "Fitness to Practice" committee, which ruled that his conservative Christian beliefs about marriage would negatively impact his "ability to carry out a role**

> **as a social worker" and that his post "transgressed boundaries which are not deemed appropriate for someone entering the social work profession."**
>
> **The committee ruled that Ngole was to be "excluded from further study on a program leading to a professional qualification." In late February, the school informed Ngole that he would no longer be recognized as a university student.**
>
> **"Your student record will be terminated shortly and your library membership and university computer account withdrawn," Ngole was told. "You may wish to contact your funding body for advice on your financial position."**

That's actually not such a strange thing, as similar things have happened in the United States. Alliance Defending Freedom has a post up about one case from Eastern Michigan University.

Secret Agent John Drake

So what's the solution to this?

Three points:

1. Don't post anything publicly on your Facebook account.
2. Don't use your real name on your Facebook account, use an alias instead.
3. Don't friend everyone who sends you a friend request unless you know them personally and know that they are sympathetic to your views on controversial issues.

Obviously, there are degrees of risk. Someone in an academic environment who doesn't

follow the news about what Christians are facing in different countries is the most at risk, especially compared to working in a private company. Not only are Christians in academia mingling with intolerant secular leftists, but you pay your money up front when you go to school, and getting into another school after being expelled is much harder than finding another job.

I actually have a friend who is a Christian apologist. He writes all about controversial subjects like intelligent design, gay marriage and Islam under his real name. And he friends pretty much anyone who sends him a friend request, including people who disagree with him on controversial issues. He likes to have a lot of friends, although I wouldn't classify him as someone who invests deeply in other people's lives. Publishing controversial views under his own name has actually caused him some trouble academically, where he lost a world-class PhD supervisor. And he has ignored all my warnings. Don't be like that guy. The goal of your life is not to behave recklessly, and then get destroyed before you accomplish anything. The goal of your life is to accomplish a lot over the long term, and pray that the other side never lays a finger on you.

I used to attend an Anglican church in my home town when I was an undergraduate student. The church (St. Alban's) was a wonderful stone building in the middle of downtown, with a frightfully small parking lot. The pastor (George) was excellent, and I remember many one-off things that he said. But most of all I remember this statement that George got out of the Book of Common Prayer:

> O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee, we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

And he would always dismiss us with this blessing:

> May the road rise up to meet you.
> May the wind be always at your back.
> May the sun shine warm upon your face;
> the rains fall soft upon your fields
> and until we meet again,
> may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

When I was in my early 20s, I used to scoff at this talk of "rest and quietness" and "wind always at your back". I had already experienced persecution twice by that time – once in the workplace, and once at school. But I thought I was invincible. However, even back then I was tracking the censorship and persecution of Christians in countries like Canada. As time passed, I saw more cases in more countries where the secular left expelled students, got people fired, vandalized churches and private property, put people on trial, and I watched the government fine Christians for offending others with unwelcome speech. The limits on their desire to be praised for sinning disappeared. Every act of

coercion became permissible in order to take away the shame and guilt.

Now that things have accelerated out of control, and even the pious pastors in their comfortable churches finally understand that secular leftism is on a collision course with free speech and freedom of religion, I find myself wishing more and more to pass my life in rest and quietness. I was careful to make a difference starting when I was young. But now rest and quietness seems like a wonderful idea as I get older. A word to the wise for you youngsters who think that you will never face persecution. Take it from someone who has faced it: it’s something to be avoided if you can, so long as you can still make a difference.

New study: literacy more widespread around ancient Israel than previously thought

April 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

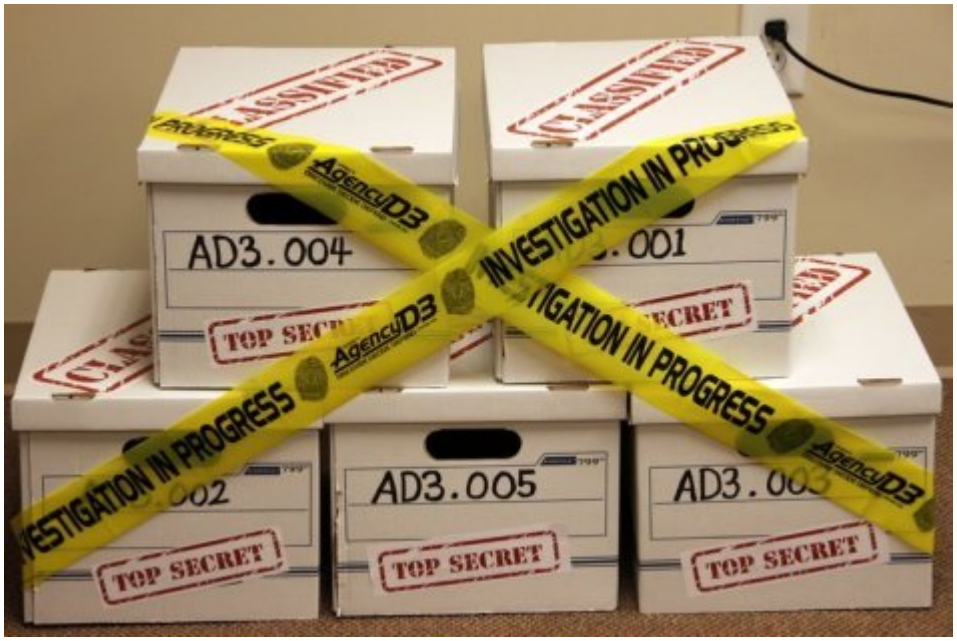

Investigation in progress

Some skeptics like to attack the traditional authorship of the gospels by arguing that the gospels couldn't have been written by anyone close to Jesus, because they were all illiterate. The impression I get from the skeptics is that they think that illiteracy was widespread in and around ancient Israel.

But then, in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places, there is news about a new peer-reviewed study:

> Eliashib, the quartermaster of the remote desert fortress, received his instructions in writing — notes inscribed in ink on pottery asking for provisions to be sent to forces in the ancient kingdom of Judah.
>
> The requests for wine, flour and oil read like mundane, if ancient, shopping lists. But a new analysis of the handwriting suggests that literacy may have been far more widespread than previously known in the Holy Land around 600 B.C., toward the end of the First Temple period. The findings, according to the researchers from Tel Aviv University, could have some bearing on a century-old debate about when the main body of biblical texts was composed.
>
> […]The new study, published on Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, combined archaeology, Jewish history and applied mathematics, and involved computerized image processing and the development of an algorithm to distinguish between the various authors issuing the commands.
>
> Based on a statistical analysis of the results, and taking into account the content

> of the texts that were chosen for the sample, the researchers concluded that at least six different hands had written the 18 missives at around the same time. **Even soldiers in the lower ranks of the Judahite army, it appears, could read and write.**
>
> […]The study was based on a trove of about 100 letters inscribed in ink on pieces of pottery, known as ostracons, that were unearthed near the Dead Sea in an excavation of the Arad fort decades ago and dated from about 600 B.C. That was shortly before Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah, and the exile of its elite to Babylon — and before many scholars believe the major part of the biblical texts, including the five books of Moses, also known as the Pentateuch, were written down in any cohesive form.
>
> The Arad citadel was small, far-flung and on an active front, close to the border with the rival kingdom of Edom. The fort itself was only about half an acre in size, and probably would have accommodated about 30 soldiers. The wealth of texts found there, recording troop movements, provisions and other daily activities, were created within a short time, making them a valuable sample for looking at how many different hands wrote them.
>
> […]**One of the longstanding arguments for why the main body of biblical literature was not written down in anything like its present form until after the destruction and exile of 586 B.C. is that before then there was not enough literacy or enough scribes to support such a huge undertaking.**
>
> **But if the literacy rates in the Arad fortress were repeated across the kingdom of Judah, which had about 100,000 people, there would have been hundreds of literate people, the Tel Aviv research team suggests.**
>
> **That could have provided the infrastructure for the composition of biblical works that constitute the basis of Judahite history and theology including early versions of the books of Deuteronomy to II Kings, according to the researchers.**

I just heard a debate on the weekend in which atheist historian Bart Ehrman made the argument that around the time of Jesus, almost no one was literate. Therefore, it's unlikely that anyone who was an eyewitness to Jesus' would have been able to write anything down about it.

I think this evidence does have some bearing on that question, because it shows that literacy of at least Hebrew was more widespread in the area than previously thought. That means that the people around Jesus are more likely to be able to keep their own notes, and then pass those notes off to a writer of Greek. Instead of having stories being circulated for the 30-35 years between the death of Jesus and the writing of Mark (note: I think Mark was written much earlier than that), you would have written notes by the eyewitnesses that could then be translated into Greek.

But there's more interesting stuff about Bart Ehrman's charge of widespread illiteracy.

Consider this post that I found on Catholic apologist Jimmy Akin's blog, where he makes the case that Bart Ehrman is even wrong about his estimate of illiteracy. And when I say wrong, I mean it looks like Ehrman deliberately misrepresents a primary source that he quotes in order to make his point. Maybe that will be fixed in a future edition of his book, but it wasn't fixed in the debate on Saturday – he used the same botched quote then.

Planned Parenthood declares Ted Cruz top threat to their abortion business

April 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Here is a story that Jay Richards tweeted from Life News.

Excerpt:

> The Planned Parenthood abortion business is emailing its members warning that Ted Cruz is the biggest pro-life threat the abortion business faces from the Republican presidential candidates.
>
> In the email seeking funds for its political campaign supporting Hillary Clinton, Dawn Laguens, Executive Vice President of Planned Parenthood, says "every Republican candidate for president this year would be a complete disaster" but explains "Cruz could very well be the biggest threat we face."
>
> Laguesns says Cruz would be the biggest threat to the abortion corporation because "unlike Trump and Kasich, who are more or less in line with the Republican Party's already terrible positions on reproductive rights, Cruz takes things much, much further."
>
> "And he has the fan base to prove it. About 50% of Trump's and Kasich's supporters think abortion should be illegal in all or most cases, but a whopping 73% of Cruz's supporters want to ban abortion in all or most cases," the Planned Parenthood VP complains.
>
> Laguesns gripes that Cruz "consistently says he will open an investigation into Planned Parenthood on his first day in office. But maybe that's less surprising when you see some of the people who have endorsed him — people like Troy Newman, the notorious anti-abortion extremist."

> She says Cruz has “a real shot at the nomination and the presidency” and then makes up a false attack saying, “We can’t let anyone near the White House who would force a woman to carry a dangerous or unwanted pregnancy.”
>
> Ted Cruz continues to stake out a pro-life position on the issue of abortion in cases of rape.In a new interview, the pro-life Texas senator said he doesn’t think it’s fair to “blame the child” who is conceived in rape.

Interesting. One thing you can say about Planned Parenthood – they are not swayed by charisma or rhetoric. They’ve taken a good hard look at Cruz’s record and the views of the people who support him, and they’ve decided that he is the most pro-life of all the candidates running. This is their business, and they are calling out the biggest threat to their business to their donors.

But’s not just the pro-abortion side that sees Cruz as the most solid on social issues – it’s the pro-life side, too.

Rick Perry, Carly Fiorina and Ted Cruz appear on Fox News with Sean Hannity

Consider this story from Life News about an upcoming primary state – Oregon:

> The leading pro-life group in Oregon today issued its endorsement for pro-life Republican candidate Ted Cruz for President. Oregon Right to Life says Cruz has a sterling pro-life record that it described as “impeccable.”
>
> “ORTL PAC is pleased to endorse Senator Cruz,” said Gayle Atteberry, executive director of ORTL. “His record on pro-life issues is impeccable. We can trust that as president, he will do all he can to protect unborn babies. That includes the all-important decisions he would make in nominating new Supreme Court justices.
>
> “Both Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders,” said Atteberry, “support abortion on demand, from conception to birth, as well as continued taxpayer funding of abortion and Planned Parenthood.”
>
> Atteberry told LifeNews that the stakes in Oregon’s primary election are higher than usual as every delegate counts in the battle for the Republican nomination.

> She said “Oregon Right to Life PAC encourages pro-life voters across Oregon to vote early for Ted Cruz to ensure that Oregon plays its part in electing a pro-life president.”
>
> In fact, Cruz has a 100% pro-life voting record during his tenure in the Senate.
>
> When it comes to the issue of abortion, Cruz has compiled a 100% pro-life voting record during his tenure in the Senate. On 16 total votes on pro-life issues taken while has has served in the Senate, Cruz voted pro-life every single time.
>
> The votes tallied by the national Right to Life Committee include multiple votes supporting a bill to de-fund the Planned Parenthood abortion business over the years, votes to repeal or de-fund Obamacare, which uses taxpayer funds to pay for abortions as well as votes to protect the conscience rights of pro-life Americans.
>
> The tally of 8 votes below does not include two additional votes in August and September to end debate and stop the Democrats’ filibuster of measure that would de-fund Planned Parenthood. The August and September votes Cruz cast to defund Planned Parenthood brings the total tally to 10 pro-life votes cast during his Senate tenure.

If protecting the unborn is an important issue to you, there is one candidate still running who will move the ball forward for you. That man is Ted Cruz.

Related posts

- Will there be a contested convention in Cleveland? Will Ted Cruz win it?
- Ted Cruz rides pro-life endorsements to huge 48.4 to 35.0 victory in Wisconsin
- Getting to know the real Ted Cruz, an account from his close friend Jay Nordlinger
- Which candidate is the best at defending religious liberty: Trump or Cruz?
- Ted Cruz and Mike Lee go after Obama administration for intimidating pro-lifers
- Scott Walker endorses Ted Cruz for President, Cruz trails Trump by 1 in California
- Todd Starnes: Ted Cruz is the best candidate to defend religious liberty
- Which candidate is best at working with Democrats to get things done?
- Ted Cruz’s plan to lower taxes and simplify the process for filing tax returns
- Ted Cruz explains his position on the issues of abortion and right to life
- Ted Cruz introduces new bill to help ICE Agents enforce immigration laws
- Ted Cruz fought Rubio’s amnesty in 2013 and fought Obama’s executive amnesty in 2014
- Meet Ted Cruz’s secret weapon: his supportive and loving wife Heidi Cruz
- Watch Ted Cruz disagree with an Iowa farmer on the issue of ethanol subsidies
- Is Marco Rubio right about his attacks on Ted Cruz’s business tax plan?
- Ted Cruz’s scary, unreported, undisclosed Goldman Sachs loan
- Harvard Law Review: Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen and is eligible to become President
- Ted Cruz blasts Democrats for hiding immigration histories of terrorists in the USA

- CNN Debate: Ted Cruz hammers Marco Rubio over support for amnesty and Libya disaster
- Ted Cruz invites climate scientists to Washington, D.C. to discuss climate change
- The FIVE departments that Ted Cruz would shut down if elected president

Should the secular left allow Christians to be social workers?

April 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

This is from religious liberty rock star David French, writing in National Review. He writes about a new Tennessee bill that protects Christian social workers from having to violate their consciences when doing their jobs.

He says:

> The Tennessee legislature has passed a bill protecting from liability "counselors and therapists who refuse to counsel a client as to goals, outcomes, or behaviors that conflict with a sincerely held religious belief of the counselor or therapist."
>
> […]Two legal cases I worked on immediately come to mind. The first involved a young woman named Emily Brooker, a social-work student at Missouri State University. Emily's academic "crime" was refusing a professor's demand that she sign her name to a letter to the state legislature advocating gay adoption.
>
> Rather than recognizing that teachers can't compel students to engage in political advocacy, the professor accused her of a "Level 3" grievance (the university's most serious academic offense). The department then subjected Emily to a Star Chamber–style political inquiry, where a panel of professors demanded to know whether she was a "sinner" and kept her from having a lawyer, an advocate, or even her own mother in the room. The panel convicted her of the offense and required her to change her beliefs as a condition of graduation.
>
> In the second case, I represented Julea Ward against Eastern Michigan University. Julea was in the final stages of her graduate counseling program when she was asked to counsel a gay man about his same-sex relationship. She declined and

> referred the file to another counselor who had no moral objections. The client was counseled without incident. Indeed, he didn't even know his file had been referred.
>
> The university, however, found her referral intolerable and subjected Julea to a "formal review," accusing her of "imposing values that are inconsistent with counseling goals" and of discrimination based on sexual orientation. Once again, a student was summoned to the Star Chamber, and once again public officials probed a private citizen's religious beliefs. One university official actually held it *against* her that she "communicated an attempt to maintain [her] belief system." She was expelled from the program just weeks before graduation.

David French used to work at the Alliance Defending Freedom, but now he works for the American Center for Law and Justice.

I noticed that Casey Mattox at the Alliance Defending Freedom has a warning for Christians who think that the advance of the sexual revolutionaries won't affect them.

Mattox writes:

> While the anti-conscience activists pretend that conscientious objectors are declining goods or services because of sexual orientation, every case disproves that characterization. These creative professionals serve all persons. They object only to facilitating and celebrating a particular event that would require them to advance a message contrary to their religious convictions.
>
> The left had historically mocked suggestions that any pastor would ever be forced to perform a same sex wedding in violation of their faith. But the mask is slipping. See the hysterical response to a Georgia law that would have done little more than protect pastors, churches and other nonprofit religious organizations from hosting and solemnizing a same-sex marriage. Indeed, the left has already attempted to force a pastor to perform a same-sex wedding that would violate his faith. And within hours of the Supreme Court's decision finding a constitutional right to same-sex marriage, activists were urging termination of tax exemptions for churches that decline to perform same-sex weddings.
>
> Not every same-sex wedding is a church wedding, but some are. If Christian videographers, wedding coordinators, musicians, and othercreative professionals – let alone pastors themselves – are required to provide their services for same-sex weddings, some will even have to be physically present, even participating in religious worship where they believe the prayers prayed, hymns sung, and scriptures read in support are actually blaspheming their own God.
>
> The opponents of RFRA and like religious freedom protections are still quick to deploy their "separation of church and state" cliché, but one side is demanding that the state fine people for declining to participate in a religious service. It isn't mine. It's the ACLU and its allies who are ready to use the power of the state to compel unwilling people to participate in religious services.

> […]Of the same-sex marriage agenda, Erick Erickson has coined the phrase, “You will be made to care.” But in some cases this is insufficient. You must participate. Even if the left must use the power of the government to fine you if you refuse, you will be made to worship their god.

I think a lot of Christians sort of don’t think it’s a problem if they keep their faith in a box and only let it out to see the light of day for purposes of feeling good, or having community. But Christianity isn’t like that. It’s not something for the benefit of the Christian, it’s a worldview. And part of that worldview is not only doing the things that God wants us to do as individual, but also declaring and defending God’s values and character to others, when the subject comes up for discussion. We are not free to promote things that God does not agree with.

Stephen Baskerville: five myths about no-fault divorce

April 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family
From the Catholic News Agency.

Introduction:

> Almost four decades after the "no-fault" divorce revolution began in California, misconceptions abound. Even the many books about divorce, including myriad self-help manuals, are full of inaccurate and misleading information. No public debate preceded the introduction of no-fault divorce laws in the 1970s, and no debate has taken place since.
>
> Yet divorce-on-demand is exacting a devastating toll on our children, our social order, our economy, and even our constitutional rights. A recent study estimates the financial cost of divorce to taxpayers at $112 billion annually. Recent demands to legitimize same-sex marriage almost certainly follow from the divorce revolution, since gay activists readily acknowledge that they only desire to marry under the loosened terms that have resulted from the new divorce laws. Divorce also contributes to a dangerous increase in the power of the state over private life.

Here are the five myths about no-fault divorce:

- No-fault divorce permitted divorce by mutual consent, thus making divorce less acrimonious
- We cannot force people to remain married and should not try
- No-fault divorce has led men to abandon their wives and children

- When couples cannot agree or cooperate about matters like how the children should be raised, a judge must decide according to “the best interest of the child”
- Divorce must be made easy because of domestic violence

And the details about number three:

> Myth 3: No-fault divorce has led men to abandon their wives and children.
>
> Fact: This does happen (wives more often than children), but it is greatly exaggerated. The vast majority of no-fault divorces — especially those involving children — are filed by wives. In fact, as Judy Parejko, author of Stolen Vows, has shown, the no-fault revolution was engineered largely by feminist lawyers, with the cooperation of the bar associations, as part of the sexual revolution. Overwhelmingly, it has served to separate large numbers of children from their fathers. Sometimes the genders are reversed, so that fathers take children from mothers. But either way, the main effect of no-fault is to make children weapons and pawns to gain power through the courts, not the “abandonment” of them by either parent.

Al Mohler wrote about the history of no-fault divorce a while back, and I think it’s worth reviewing why we have this lousy law.

> The story behind America’s love affair with no-fault divorce is a sad and instructive tale. As Baskerville documents, no-fault divorce laws emerged in the United States during the 1970s and quickly spread across the nation. Even though only nine states had no-fault divorce laws in 1977, by 1995, every state had legalized no-fault divorce.
>
> Behind all this is an ideological revolution driven by feminism and facilitated by this society’s embrace of autonomous individualism. Baskerville argues that divorce “became the most devastating weapon in the arsenal of feminism, because it creates millions of gender battles on the most personal level.” As far back as 1947, the National Association of Women Lawyers [NAWL] was pushing for what we now know as no-fault divorce. More recently, NAWL claims credit for the divorce revolution, describing it as “the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken.”
>
> The feminists and NAWL were not working alone, of course. Baskerville explains that the American Bar Association “persuaded the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws [NCCUSL] to produce the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act.” Eventually, this led to a revolution in law and convulsions in society at large. This legal revolution effectively drove a stake into the heart of marriage itself, with inevitable consequences. In effect, no-fault divorce has become the catalyst for one of the most destructive cultural shifts in human history. Now, no-fault divorce is championed by many governments in the name of human rights, and America’s divorce revolution is spreading around the world under the banner of “liberation.”

And note that Democrats oppose any effort to reform laws that make it easy to break up marriages:

> A basic dishonesty on the question of divorce pervades our political culture. Baskerville cites Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm as referring to divorce as a couple's "private decision." Granholm's comments came as she vetoed a bill intended to reform divorce law in her state. The danger and dishonesty of referring to divorce as a couple's "private decision" is evident in the fact that this supposedly private decision imposes a reality, not only on the couple, but also on children and the larger society. Indeed, the "private decision" is really not made by a couple at all–but only by any spouse demanding a divorce.

So, no-fault was pushed by two groups: feminists and trial lawyers.

There's a lot of talk these days about gay marriage and how it undermines marital norms and normalizes raising children without either their biological father or biological mother. But before there was gay marriage, there was no-fault divorce, which deprives children of their biological father. There is no provision for no-fault divorce in the Bible, so it seems to me that Christians should be against frivolous divorce just like we are against same-sex marriage.

Canadian Liberal Party introduces bill to legalize euthanasia

April 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jody Wilson-Raybould, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada (right)

Life Site News has a story about Canada's new assisted suicide bill:

> The Liberal government's euthanasia bill introduced Thursday will not protect vulnerable Canadians or the conscience rights of physicians, say anti-euthanasia activists.
>
> While Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould's Bill C-14 is more restrictive than the legislative framework the special joint parliamentary committee recommended in its February 2016 report, it essentially provides "a perfect cover for acts of murder, absolutely," says Alex Schadenberg, executive director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition.
>
> The draft legislation restricts eligibility for euthanasia and assisted suicide to competent patients 18 years of age and older who have "an incurable serious and incurable illness, disease or disability" which "causes them enduring physical or psychological suffering that is intolerable to them and that cannot be relieved under conditions," who are in "an advanced state of decline in capability" and whose "natural death is reasonably foreseeable."
>
> The legislation mandates that a patient request assisted suicide or voluntary euthanasia in writing, and that this request be approved by two independent medical practitioners, or nurse practitioners.
>
> It mandates a 15-day waiting period after the request is approved, but that period can be waived if the two medical practitioners deem the patient's condition will deteriorate before that time is up.

> […]Schadenberg says the bill "does not provide effective oversight in the law," because while it calls for two independent physicians or nurse practitioners to approve a request for euthanasia, "this is the system where the doctor or nurse practitioner who does the act also does the reporting."
>
> The legislation also provides "legal immunity for anyone, anyone who does anything at a person's request, under Sections 241.3, 241.5," he said.
>
> […][W]hile the bill acknowledges conscience rights in its preamble, it "provides no protection for conscientious objectors," according to Albertos Polizogopoulos, a constitutional lawyer for Canadian Physicians for Life.

Canadian doctors are already forced to perform abortions against their conscience, so this last point is no great surprise.

In a country that has single payer health care, all medical care is paid for by the federal government. You pay into the system your whole life (at an average of 42% of your income, in Canada) and then at the end, you get in line and hope that the government will treat you. It is *extremely convenient* for the government to kill off patients who are elderly. Elderly patients won't be able to vote in many more elections, but they will want to draw away funds that could be used to buy the votes of young people who want "free" breast enlargements, plastic surgery, sex changes and IVF treatment. So the government has every incentive to cut loose the old people and then buy the votes of young people with the taxpayer money they save. Single payer health care is a scam to help politicians stay in power.

Similar laws in places like Belgium and Netherlands have been used to cut down on the medical bills that the government must pay.

A Parliamentary committee brief that I found on the Canadian government web site says this:

> A study published in the NEJM entitled: Recent Trends in Euthanasia and Other End-of-Life Practices in Belgium (March 19, 2015) found that 4.6% of all deaths in the first six months of 2013, in the Flanders region of Belgium, were by assisted death and **1.7% of all deaths were assisted deaths without explicit request representing more than 1000 assisted deaths without explicit request in 2013.**
>
> The supplemental appendix in the study informs us how the researchers classified the data.
>
> It states: "If in the latter case the drugs had been administered at the patient's explicit request, the act was classified as euthanasia or assisted suicide depending on whether the patient self-administered the drugs. If drugs were used with the same explicit intention to hasten death but without the patient's explicit request, the act was classified as hastening death without explicit patient request. **This can include cases where a patient request was not judged as explicit by the physician, where the request came from the family or**

> **where the physician acted out of compassion."**
>
> This research study confirms that many intentional hastened deaths are occurring without the explicit request of the patient which contravenes the Belgian assisted death law and medical ethics.

Previously, I blogged about how the UK government provides bonuses to hospitals who put elderly patients on an end-of-life pathway.

Ethicist Wesley J. Smith comments on the Canadian law in National Review.

Excerpt:

> The Canadian government has tabled its new euthanasia bill–and as expected, it will be the most radical in the world.
>
> Since the death doctor need not be present at the demise, the bill creates an unprecedented license for family members, friends–heck, a guy down the street–to make people dead.
>
> […]In short, this provision is *the perfect defense for the murder* of sick and disabled people who requested lethal drugs.
>
> The George Delury case is an example of what I mean: Delury said he assisted wife, Myrna Lebov's suicide out of "compassion" and at her request due to MS.
>
> But his real hope was not only to be free from care giving, but become famous writing a book about her death. (He did, *What If She Wants to Die?*)
>
> It almost worked. But because assisted suicide was a criminal offense, authorities conducted an investigation and discovered his diary. It showed that contrary to the compassionate face Delury was conjuring, in reality, *he emotionally pressured Myrna into wanting to commit suicide*, telling her, for example, that she was a burden and ruining his life.
>
> He also withheld full dosage of antidepressants so he could use those drugs to kill her. And, he but put a plastic bag over her head to make sure she died.
>
> If euthanasia Canada's bill had been the law of New York when Delury killed Myrnov, he might have been able to coerce her into asking for lethal drugs. At that point, he could have killed her any time he wanted and there wouldn't have been a criminal investigation to find his diary.
>
> Canada has just paved the way for a person, hungry for an inheritance or ideologically predisposed, to get away with the perfect murder.

In the last election, the Liberal Party promised the Canadian voters the moon, in terms of new spending. They said it would only add 10 billion to the deficit this year. But now (after the election) the number has exploded to 30 billion this year and over 100 billion over the next five years. Could this euthanasia plan be the first step in balancing the books, so they can win re-election?

How exposed is your state to the problem of underfunded pensions?

April 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am thinking about moving to a new state in the future, and one of the factors I am considering is underfunded pension liabilities. This basically refers to the ability of a state to pay out pensions to retiring public sector employees going forward. I'm going to tell you everything you need to know to solve this problem in this post.

First, Investors Business Daily explains the problem:

> A new report by Hoover Institution Senior Fellow Joshua Rauh shows that, unless action is taken soon, many local governments could face bankruptcy because they can't meet their pension obligations.
>
> […]The problem is surprisingly simple: States and cities overestimate returns on their pension fund investments, while systematically underfunding them. The result is a growing deficit that will require massive tax hikes or dramatic and painful cuts in government services and promised pensions to public workers.
>
> Rauh's study looked at 564 state and local pension systems, representing $4.8 trillion in pension liabilities and $3.6 trillion in assets — for an apparent current deficit of just $1.19 trillion.
>
> So far, so good. But Rauh notes the average *expected* return on pension assets is about 7.6% — which means a doubling every 9.5 years. He calls that assumption "wildly optimistic," and says a more realistic assumption would be the Treasury bond rate of 3% or lower — less than half the expected return.
>
> Unless pension managers, politicians and voters do something now, the unfunded liabilities of the national system will continue to grow out of control, reaching $3.4 trillion in just 10 years. States and cities across the country would have to raise taxes massively to keep from becoming insolvent.
>
> **Right now, state and local governments set aside about 7.3% of revenues for public pensions. To keep the funding gap from exploding and taking down governments across the nation, pension spending would have to rise to 17.5% of revenues on average — roughly equal to a 240% tax increase.**
>
> How did things get so bad? Generations of feckless politicians have refused to face down public employee unions, which have negotiated massively expensive pensions for their members while concealing their true cost. Politicians have gone along with it because, heck, it's not their money and anyway, the problems will take place long after they're out of office. That's where we are now.
>
> States and cities will come under intense pressure to raise taxes on local citizens to pay for this travesty. Instead, they should get rid of the public employee

> unions that have plundered the public for too long and have made local government inefficient, expensive and dysfunctional. If not, they can expect to face the same economy-crippling effects as Detroit, San Bernardino and a number of other cities have — financial insolvency.

Now, obviously states with kick-ass governors like Scott Walker of Wisconsin are not going to have the same exposure to such problems as incompetent governors like Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire. Scott Walker know how to rein in public sector unions.

Let's get the numbers to confirm this hypothesis.

Bloomberg has the numbers:

> Bloomberg ranked 49 U.S. states based on their pension funding ratios in 2014 under GASB 25. (Delaware is not included because of insufficient data for GASB 25.)

Here are the best states… Wisconsin is 100% funded:

Rank	State	Funding ratio 2014
28	Oklahoma	73.0%
29	Arizona	73.5
30	Ohio	74.9
31	Minnesota	76.1
32	Arkansas	78.1
33	Missouri	79.2
34	Georgia	79.4
35	Texas	79.9
36	Wyoming	80.0
37	Utah	80.2
38	Florida	81.8
39	Iowa	82.4
40	Maine	83.2
41	Nebraska	84.7
42	Washington	88.3
43	New York	88.7
44	Idaho	93.1
45	Tennessee	93.6
46	Oregon	95.9
47	North Carolina	96.0
48	South Dakota	100.0
48	Wisconsin	100.0

States with the best-funded pension liiabilities

And actually there is a comprehensive analysis of the fiscal solvency of all the states right here from George Mason University.

Here's the map:

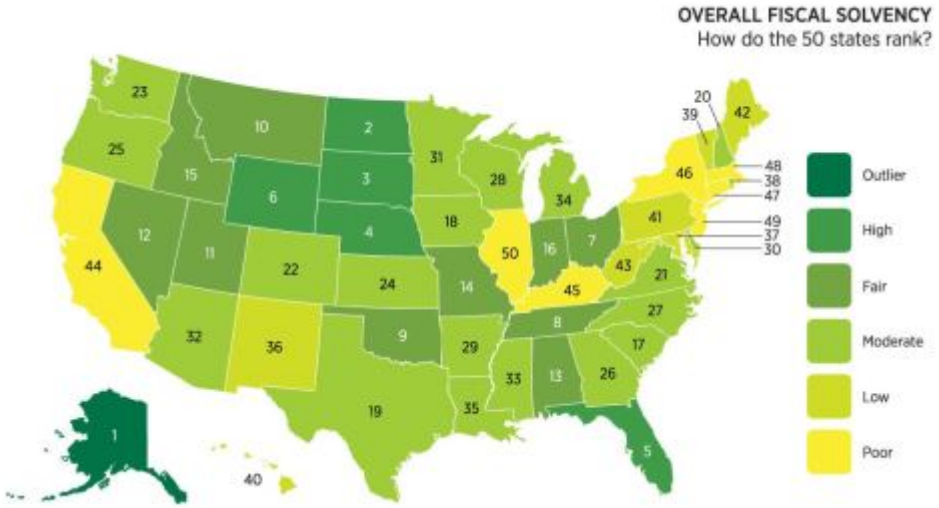

Overall fiscal solvency by state

I notice that the deep blue states like California, Massachusetts, Illinois, Connecticut, New Jersey, etc. are just horrible states. No wonder everyone is fleeing them in droves. Socialism doesn't work. Eventually, the money runs out.

So, if you're thinking of moving to a new state, look at that. And if you don't want to move, then vote for governors like Scott Walker who will take on public sector unions – otherwise, you're headed for a big tax hike in the future, to pay for the big spending liberals of the past.

Is it brave to quote the Bible to atheists who want to silence you?

April 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

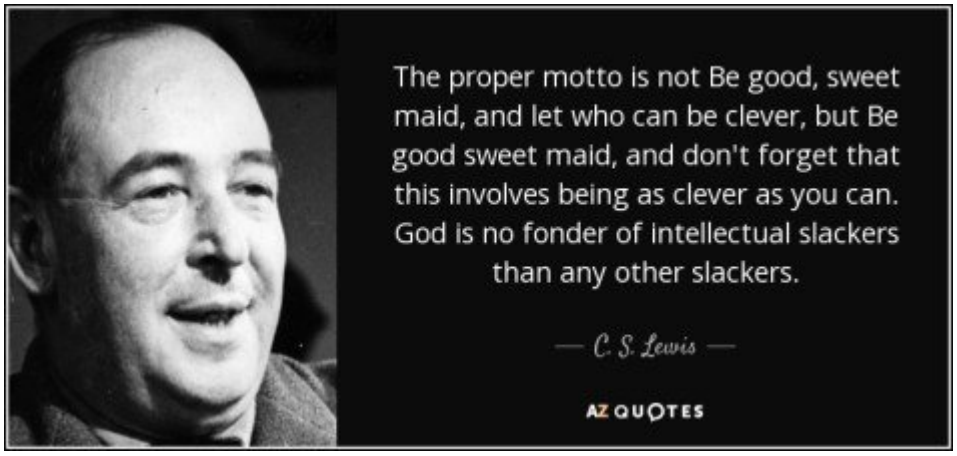

C.S. Lewis has some words to live by for you

I was asked by a commenter whether my advice in a previous post was mistaken. I advised people not to make comments on issues under their real names, where the opposition is irrational and dangerous. I said that you should use an alias so that you can write frequently and effectively about controversial issues, without being subject to threats, intimidation, vandalism, violence, loss of employment etc. – common tactics of the unthinking mobs on the secular left.

So here is what I replied to him in a comment:

> I didn't advise people to be silent at all. Obviously, I have been blogging on this issue for the last 7 years – before it ever entered the radar of most Christians. So I haven't been silent. I have blogged debate summaries, secular arguments against same-sex marriage, horror stories about gay adoption and child abuse, peer-reviewed papers about the impact of no-mom or no-dad parenting, CDC health data about HIV and STIs, the impact of donor-conception on children, specific laws related to the gay agenda, and every specific case where Christian business owners were punished – in America and across the world.
>
> My alias has given me protection from the bad guys so that I could be FAR more productive and effective than the Bible-quoters who jump up in front of machine guns and call that feelings-driven irresponsibility "piety". When did being INEFFECTIVE become a Christian virtue? Seems to me that people who address the issues of the day by repeating Bible verses to people who don't accept the Bible aren't being effective. My goal is to reach more people with arguments they will actually change their minds. My blog post on a secular case against same sex marriage was linked by the Secular Outpost, a major atheist blog – THOSE are the people we need to be reaching. And so what if they were offended? Because of my alias, they couldn't get me.

> Christianity is about making a difference. It is not about being feeling holier-than-thou. It's about defending Christ's honor effectively and efficiently. It's about getting the job done.
>
> Here is what doesn't work: e-mailing Bible verses to the Human Rights Campaign along with the name of your employer and your home address. That will get you out of the game really fast. What does work is doing what Ryan T. Anderson is doing – getting a PhD and debating the issue with professors on college campuses. Or you could get a law degree and fight out the issue at the supreme court. But trying to spout Bible verses to people who don't believe the Bible who can then get you fired is not the answer – that doesn't work.
>
> Suppose we are playing baseball. Your team is down by 1 run and there is a runner on third and no outs. Suppose you go up to the plate and swing for the fences at the first three pitches that the pitcher throws – all of which were obvious unhittable. You get out and you hurt your team. I guess you could brag later about "I would never do anything other than try to hit a home run every time" and then claim that those who didn't were cowards. But that wouldn't change the fact that you would be out and you would have let your team down.
>
> Similarly, when you are on your own 20 yard line, down by 6 with 5 minutes left in the 4th quarter, you don't get out on the field and throw four hail mary passes and then turn the ball over on downs. Expecting Jesus to bail you out when you act recklessly doesn't work in any area of life.
>
> The best thing is to be intelligent. What should I study to help Jesus that will work? What job should I get to help Jesus that will work? How can I have an influence to help Jesus that will work? Doing what feels good and expecting a bailout is reckless and doesn't do anything to help Jesus. When you hand the other side your employer and your place of business and your home address, you are handing them things that they can use to hurt you. Why would you let them have something they can use to stop you from having an influence, when you can withhold that information and strike at them with impunity? These are not difficult things for a rational person to understand.

Frankly, I am at the point now where I view the spouting of Bible verses to dangerous, destructive people as a mental disorder, as much as I would view it as a mental disorder if someone decided to travel to North Korea and do street evangelism. I would urge all the Bible-quoting martyr wannabes to prove their bravery to me by doing that, if they think that the point of Christianity is to be feelings-led and reckless about the consequences of actions. Or maybe they can travel to Saudi Arabia and evangelize the people there. On the bible-quoting rule, to not do this is "cowardice". I think we are reaching the point where the sexual revolutionaries are just as dangerous as militant atheists in North Korea, or radical Islamists in Saudi Arabia.

Studying all of these issues the way I do and then writing about them costs me about 3-4 hours a night – and that's every day that I've been writing this blog. I have had 6.2 million

hits in 7 years of writing. My goal is to influence people to make better decisions. And I think I've been able to be more effective at doing that when I don't hand my enemies personal information that they can use to neutralize my influence. Why would I make it easy for them to stop me from having an influence? No Christian should deny Christ when asked directly. But that doesn't mean that you should make it easy for them to destroy you.

Ted Cruz’s roommate at Princeton: Craig Mazin or David Panton?

April 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

David Panton and Ted Cruz do Princeton and Harvard conservative-style

My Dad asked me last night why Ted Cruz’s roommate doesn’t like him, and I couldn’t understand who he was talking about, because I know that Cruz’s roommate at Princeton and Harvard is a big success and a great friend of Ted Cruz.

A little research resolved the issue. Ted Cruz had a liberal artist / comedian roommate from Brooklyn, NY in his first year at Princeton, and then a black conservative roommate from Jamaica as a roommate for his remaining years at Princeton and then again at Harvard Law School.

Here is an article in the Jamaica Observer about the second roommate from 2015.

It says:

> AS Jamaica welcomes US President Barack Obama on his first visit to the island, former Jamaica Labour Party senator David Panton is backing Republican candidate Ted Cruz to become the next American president.
>
> Republican senator Cruz became the first US politician to announce his candidacy for the American presidency recently. Widely viewed as an ultra-conservative, he has the full support of his close friend, Panton — now chairman of his own PCH holdings, an investment company based in Atlanta, Georgia.
>
> Outside of politics, Obama, Cruz and Panton all share at least one thing in common — they worked for the prestigious and influential Harvard Law Review. Obama was the first black president of that institution, while Panton was the second, and Cruz was a primary editor.
>
> “I support Ted’s candidacy not only because of our close friendship, but because I

believe he has the bold, consistent, principled leadership that America needs. He is also the most brilliant person I know," Panton told the Jamaica Observer.

Politically, Panton has donated more than US$150,000 to Cruz in various capacities — when he was running for the Senate, and to support his bid for the presidency.

Panton, a former Rhodes Scholar and the first head of Generation 2000 (G2K), the group of young professionals affiliated with the JLP, believes that much of what the media has reported about Cruz is wrong.

Cruz and Panton started their friendship decades ago, when they were roommates first at Princeton University in New Jersey (for four years) and then at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts (for one year).

The two were also debate partners, and were named the number one team for the American Parliamentary Debate Association, with Cruz declared the number one speaker and Panton number two.

At Princeton, both were involved in student politics. Panton first entered student politics at Belair School in Mandeville where he won election as president of the student council. He built upon that victory at Princeton, by winning election as the president of the Undergraduate Student Government. Meanwhile, Cruz was chairman of the Council of the Princeton University Community (CPUC), where we worked closely on undergraduate student affairs.

Cruz was also elected president of the Cliosophic Society, a conservative political organisation at Princeton, and appointed Panton as his whip (deputy). Both worked closely on conservative politics on campus.

As President Obama gets ready for his first visit, Cruz has visited Jamaica on several occasions — including as the guest speaker for a G2K event, where former Prime Minister Edward Seaga was present, and also spoke.

Cruz also attended the wedding of Panton to current minister of youth, Lisa Hanna. Cruz is godfather to their son, Alexander, and he came to Jamaica to attend the christening. Panton was Cruz's best man at his wedding to Heidi Cruz.

Cruz has also invested in Jamaica, and was a partner in the firm that Panton, Nigel Clarke, and Jeffrey Hall formed to invest in the Caribbean.

"I speak with, and see Ted frequently as a close friend, but deliberately do not discuss his campaign strategy," Panton told the Business Observer.

"As an active supporter of a SuperPac that supports him, I am not able to discuss campaign strategy with him.

"Unlike the media portrayal of him as a firebrand, Ted is one of the kindest and most caring people I know. He cares deeply about other people and making a difference in their lives, as he did in mine, as a loyal friend, strong supporter, and committed mentor.

"When I was elected as president of the Harvard Law Review, my first call was

> not to my parents or family members, but to Ted, who at the time was clerking for Judge Michael Luttig, prior to his clerkship on the Supreme Court, as the first Hispanic clerk to Chief Justice William Rehnquist," Panton said.
>
> Although the first out of the blocks, Cruz currently has an approval rating of only about two per cent among the presumed Republican candidates. But that in itself may not overly concern him, as when Cruz ran for senator in Texas, he was also at two per cent in the polls — and joked that the margin of error was three per cent.
>
> Cruz ran against the establishment, his opponent being David Dewhurst — the multi-millionaire incumbent lieutenant governor of Texas, who was endorsed by the governor, Rick Perry, and most of the Republican establishment in Texas.
>
> But, like Obama, Cruz ran a grassroots campaign that focused on the base, and, even though he was heavily outspent, he defeated Dewhurst in a run-off by 14 points and won the general election by 26 points.
>
> During that election he received about 40 per cent of the Latino vote on the same ballot where Latinos gave then-candidate Mitt Romney 27 per cent of their vote.
>
> "I believe that — like when the voters of Texas got to know Ted, the person, not the caricature — the American people will also eventually recognise that as a Hispanic with a Cuban father who fled oppression, and as a principled, experienced, eloquent advocate for the Constitution, he has the background, skills, and abilities to be an outstanding president of the United States," Panton said.

So, who is the roommate we should care about? The Hollywood liberal who tweets vulgarities at a third-grade level against a sitting U.S. senator and candidate for President? Or should we care more about the close friendship of the black conservative from Jamaica, who has a stellar education and career in areas that *actually matter*.

Hollywood is a clown industry. People dress up in costumes, and recite make-believe in order to entertain. We should not care what a little liberal perverted clown from Hollywood thinks of Ted Cruz. But we should care about what a black conservative immigrant who achieved great success thinks of Ted Cruz.

Organized Cruz wins 14 delegates in Wyoming, delegate rules in place since 2004

April 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump with some of the "very best people" who are running his campaign Trump's "very good brain" fails him again. So frustrating when tweeting abuse doesn't substitute for a ground game in all 50 states.

The leftist Washington Post explains:

> Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) continued his romp through the Republican Party's state conventions Saturday, winning 14 delegates in Wyoming to complete a near-sweep of the state. At the same time, in conventions in Virginia, Georgia and South Carolina, Cruz-friendly activists won delegate slots in congressional districts that had voted for someone else in the primaries.
>
> The events capped off three remarkable weeks for Cruz in the sort of cloistered party meetings where grass-roots organizers can dominate. Cruz, the only Republican candidate to campaign in Wyoming, told delegates here that their votes could help him win "a battle in Cleveland," where the party may host its first contested convention in 40 years.
>
> "If you don't want the convention in Cleveland to hand the election to Hillary Clinton — which is what a Donald Trump nomination does — I ask you to support this slate," Cruz said.
>
> These conventions came after Trump had spent much of the week panning Colorado for using a similar system to award 34 total delegates. As in Wyoming, activists had gathered at little-hyped local conventions, won places at the state

> convention, then voted for the national delegates — all while giving Cruz nine of the Wyoming delegates available in the March 1 county caucuses.
>
> **The GOP front-runner complained that the contest had been "rigged" against him, a charge that Colorado Republican leaders strongly denied, noting that they'd been using the same system since the 2004 presidential election.**
>
> **[…]In Wyoming, Trump's local operation was clearly outmatched, even though a number of attendees said they supported him.**
>
> **[…]Trump's campaign was late to recognize the importance of the state conventions, much less the local contests that determined who could vote at those state conventions. In Wyoming, that effectively meant that Trump's supporters were arriving at a marathon where Cruz had already run the first 25 miles.**

Trump doesn't think that TWELVE YEARS of no rule changes is enough time for him to understand how things work. His "very good brain" cannot understand state-specific rules, and he isn't allowing his "very best people" to make any decisions. Cruz's campaign has been on the ground in Wyoming *for months*. Trump cannot even find Wyoming on a map of the United States. And since he insists on controlling everything himself, rather than hiring people who know about these things, and letting them work on it, he keeps losing. He's too full of himself to delegate to experts who aren't clowns.

Polling Data

Poll	Date	Clinton (D)	Trump (R)	Spread
RCP Average	**3/16 - 4/13**	**49.0**	**39.1**	**Clinton +9.9**
FOX News	4/11 - 4/13	48	41	Clinton +7
CBS News	4/8 - 4/12	50	40	Clinton +10
McClatchy	3/29 - 3/31	50	41	Clinton +9
IBD/TIPP	3/28 - 4/2	47	35	Clinton +12
PPP (D)	3/24 - 3/26	48	41	Clinton +7
Bloomberg	3/19 - 3/22	54	36	Clinton +18
Quinnipiac	3/16 - 3/21	46	40	Clinton +6

Trump vs Clinton: General election match-up polls

How is he supposed to beat Hillary Clinton when all he can do is clown around in front of crowds of people who are more impressed with his charisma than detailed policy proposals? If you're hiring someone for a job, they have to do more than entertain you with talk. They have to know the rules in the different states, and be organized enough to win them. Trump HAS no organization , and that's another reason to think that he can't win against Hillary, as if his 70% disapproval rate and 11-point deficit in the head-to-head polls against Clinton were not enough of an indicator.

I do expect Trump to do well in the near-term in Democrat states, and that's because he is a Democrat, and Democrats vote for him. They are supportive of his "very pro-choice" views, his promises of "forward motion" on gay rights, his support for tariffs, and his intent to appoint liberal judges like his sister.

Related posts

- How well is Obamacare working, and will Ted Cruz or Donald Trump fix health care?
- Which candidate is the best at defending religious liberty: Trump or Cruz?
- Against misogyny: why every conservative should #DumpTrump #NeverTrump
- Donald Trump's plan to introduce tariffs is just a tax on consumer goods
- Suppose God had coffee with Donald Trump… how would that go?
- Is Donald Trump right to order U.S. troops to commit war crimes?
- How well did Donald Trump do in the hotel and casino business?
- Trump donated to group that promotes homosexuality to 5-year-olds
- Do supporters of Donald Trump really support what Trump believes?
- Is Donald Trump a successful businessman? Let's look at his record
- Report: how Donald Trump used illegal immigrants to build Trump Tower
- Is Trump right to praise Putin's leadership abilities?
- Is Trump right to say that Bush lied about the Iraq war, and there were no WMDs?
- Donald Trump promises gay publication "forward motion" on gay rights issues
- Who has done more on the pro-life and pro-marriage issues – Trump or Cruz?
- Trump, eminent domain, a widow's house, and a limousine parking lot
- Trump wants to increase taxpayer subsidies of ethanol, Cruz wants to end them
- Trump supported the bank bailout and auto bailout, Cruz opposes all bailouts
- Should evangelical Christians prefer Donald Trump on moral grounds?
- What are the "New York Values" that Trump's evangelical Christian supporters admire?
- Donald Trump would expand Obamacare into single-payer health care system
- Is Donald Trump's claim about Muslims celebrating 9/11 in New Jersey accurate?

Who suffers the most from the trend of extended adolescence?

April 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

My friend Tracy sent me this interesting post. As I read it, I thought I was going to disagree with him about who is to blame for the mess he describes, but as we'll see in a bit, I don't.

Here's his intro, which pretty much everyone agrees on:

> **The Five Traditional Milestones of Adulthood**
>
> Something magically happens between adolescence and young adulthood. There are five traditional milestones of that mark entrance into adulthood that sociologists, psychologists, and the general population have used as a proxy to determine when someone has reached that tipping point of maturity. It is at this time adolescence is shed and emotional maturity comes to full fruition.
>
> These are:
>
> - Leaving Home
> - Becoming Financially Independent
> - Completing School
> - Marrying
> - Starting a Family

I hate not being married and not having any children, but I can't marry a feminist and that's all the church seems to be producing these days. The other ones I had finished by age 23 (debt-free).

He has some examples to illustrate who is and isn't mature:

> ***Examples of Adults:***
>
> - A 25-year old teacher with a college degree, who works full time, is married, has a child, owns her own home, and pays for her own living expenses
> - A 65-year old janitor with a high school diploma, who works full time, is married or widowed, has children, owns his own home, and pays for his own living expenses
>
> ***Examples of Extended Adolescence:***
>
> - A 30-year old who has part of their rent and bills covered by parents, endlessly enrolls in colleges or universities seeking additional degrees or credentials, single, without children.
> - A 45-year old high-school dropout living on social welfare programs who spends his days getting drunk in bars

OK, then he talks about who suffers the most from this, and it's women:

> What is particularly interesting is the interaction between biology and the paradigm shift that has occurred with so much of the younger generation suffering from extended adolescence. **Women have a specific, limited window of time in which they can genetically reproduce and to which they are attractive to potential mates**. This so-called "biological clock", written into the code at the very deepest core of our DNA, puts a limit on childbearing for females.
>
> - **Fertility:** Female fertility peaks at 20 to 30 years old. After 30 years old, fertility drops by 20%. After 35, it drops 50%. After 40, it drops 95%. As for in vitro fertilization, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine states that women in their early 40's have, on average, only a 3% to 5% chance of having a baby through this method.
> - **Down Syndrome:** At 25, a woman has about 1 chance in 1,250 of having a baby with Down Syndrome; at age 30, a 1-in-1,000 chance; at age 35, a 1-in-400 chance; at age 40, a 1-in-100 chance; and at 45, a 1-in-30- chance.
> - **Miscarriage:** Only 9 percent of recognized pregnancies for women aged 20 to 24 end in miscarriage; 15 percent of women aged 25-30 miscarry; 40 percent of women over 40 do and more than 50 percent miscarry at 42 years of age.
>
> These limitations do not apply to men (an 80 year old man can still reproduce). Men have virtually no opportunity cost to waiting to find a mate. If they want to spend their twenties working their way up their field, putting money in the bank, playing video games, and hanging out with friends, they can always wake up one

> morning and decide they are ready to settle down, get married, and have kids. As such, the biological cost of extended adolescence is significantly and substantially higher for women than it is for men. Females suffer from a Mother Nature-induced "use it or lose it" policy.

I don't think that a Down syndrome child is insurmountable, but it's more challenging.

So, should men be expected to ride to the rescue at the last minute, to make things "work out" for women who refused to marry when they were in their 20s, when they were fertile and attractive?

Nope:

> This fear was encapsulated by Kay Hymowitz in a book called Manning Up: How the Rise of Women Has Turned Men Into Boys.
>
> […]As one reviewer somewhat critically noted of the book, "Hymowitz wants the child-men [those suffering from extended adolescence] to man up so that women don't have to become spinsters or "choice mothers" at the expense of their careers. Might women alter their own behavior? "[T]he economic and cultural changes are too embedded, and, for women especially, too beneficial to reverse." So the answer is no. Although it is women who are becoming disenchanted with the way things are, and although it is women who have created this situation, it is [in her opinion] men who ought to change. And they are to change precisely when women are ready."
>
> The reviewer is correct because *men **are** acting rationally within the confines the new paradigm.* In today's world, men are presented no social, financial, emotional, or reproductive advantage by adjusting their own life to the ticking of a potential mate's biological clock. It is for the woman, to borrow a phrase, "too damn bad". It may not be fair, but in a finite world, there is an opportunity cost to every decision we make. That has always been one of the central themes of this blog. Incentive systems drive nearly everything in civilization from the type of people we attract into certain industries to the kind of behavior we reward. The incentive system for men has changed and society now reflects this reality.

I actually blame the pastors and parents for this. Pastors and parents don't challenge women's feelings with the truth about what she ought to be doing in order to grow up and be well-positioned in the future. They want to let women decide what to do at every point in their lives, based on their feelings in the moment. The refusal to make judgments leads to women having delusions like "I can have children when I'm 35" and "I can change a bad man into a good man after I marry him" and "a degree in English is as worthwhile as a degree in computer science".

Feminism has a lot to do with it. Women used to be taught by pastors and parents that they should choose chaste men with good jobs, work histories and savings. But feminism says that men don't have any special provider role, and now the main things that women look for in a man is that he is attractive, fun, and lets her do whatever she feels like doing

– no matter how crazy and irrational it is.

One woman recently told me that a friend of ours who is dating a penniless 28-year-old student who has never worked a day in his life need not worry, because “if they marry, he’ll drop out of school and start to work and provide for her”. She is 33, and she thinks that marrying a full-time student is a good idea, because he enthusiastically supports her crazy plans to pursue fun, thrills and travel into her mid-30s. She tells him that God is telling her (through her feelings) to pursue fun and thrills through travel – a position she held when she still an atheist in college, mind you. And he, in response, is both unwilling to, and incapable of, questioning her plan from a practical point of view. She likes that he lets her fly the plane, even it it means she’ll crash it and kill them both.

Pastors and parents don’t dare hurt the self-esteem of sensitive little girls by telling them to study hard things, get full-time jobs, move out of the house and focus on marrying a man who can provide during their 20s. And what happens when the “fun-thrills-travel until you’re 35” plan explodes and no one wants to marry her except losers? Well, then, all pastors and parents blame men for not wanting to marry her. But men don’t marry 35-year-old women when the value proposition of marriage has been greatly diminished by age and infertility. (Or worse: by promiscuity, cohabitation, divorce, and children from other men)

Women who think that they can play the fool through their 20s and early 30s, calling their feelings the voice of God, and being affirmed by parents and pastors in their crazy views, are in for a surprise. Men have needs and feelings too. Men respond to incentives. Marriage-minded women need to actively repudiate feminism, or they must live with the consequences of their failure to engage.

Mississippi Republican governor signs ban on dismemberment abortions

April 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this law

Great news from Life News about another pro-life measure signed into law by a Republican governor.

Excerpt:

> Mississippi is the latest state to approve legislation that would ban dismemberment abortions tearing unborn babies limb from limb. Today, pro-life Governor Phil Bryant signed the bill into law.
>
> House Bill 519 authored by Rep. Sam Mims, R-McComb had overwhelming support in the legislature passing the House on a vote of 85-32 and in the Senate 40-6.
>
> Dismemberment abortion, performed on a fully-formed, living unborn baby, is a barbaric and dangerous procedure in which the unborn child is literally ripped apart in the womb and pulled out in pieces. The law embodies model legislation from the National Right to Life Committee that would ban "dismemberment abortion," using forceps, clamps, scissors or similar instruments on a living unborn baby to remove him or her from the womb in pieces. Such instruments are used in dilation and evacuation procedures.
>
> […]"Dismemberment abortion kills a baby by tearing her apart limb from limb," said National Right to Life Director of State Legislation Mary Spaulding Balch, J.D.

> “Before the first trimester ends, the unborn child has a beating heart, brain waves, and every organ system in place. Dismemberment abortions occur after the baby has reached these milestones.”
>
> […]“When abortion textbooks describe in cold, explicit detail exactly how to kill a human being by ripping off arms and legs piece by piece, civilized members of society have no choice but to stand up and demand a change,” added Spaulding Balch. “When you think it can’t be uglier, the abortion industry continues to shock with violent methods of abortion.”

I read a couple of mainstream news articles (e.g. – ABC News) about this story, and they basically read like they were written by Planned Parenthood. Everything about the woman, and nothing about the unborn baby. So, I always end up linking to Life News instead of the mainstream media, at least there, they talk about the issue considering the unborn child and the mother.

I don’t think that it’s normal or natural to be tearing unborn humans up with instruments because we don’t want responsibility for our actions. If you consent the the actions that result in conception, you have to take responsibility for what you’ve done. You can’t commit murder in order to get out of it. You have to think of that unborn person above yourself. Our laws should protect that unborn person, and Mississippi did the right thing.

Which presidential candidate will simplify the tax code and create jobs?

April 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How can we make the complicated tax code simpler?

Steve Forbes explains what would work, in Forbes magazine.

He writes:

> NEXT TO THE UNSTABLE DOLLAR, the biggest deadweight today on the American economy is the horrific federal income tax code. It is past time we junked this incomprehensible, opportunity-killing and corrupting monstrosity and replaced it with a simple flat tax. The returns we, the people, must file by today (even if you file for an extension, you have to pay what you owe Uncle Sam by this date) should be the last time we have to suffer through this ordeal.
>
> **More than 40 countries and jurisdictions (such as Hong Kong) have variations of a flat tax, and those systems have worked well.**
>
> For those unfamiliar with the concept, a flat tax is a single-rate income tax system that has few or no deductions. You could literally fill out your return on a single sheet of paper or with a few keystrokes on your computer.
>
> The most basic and profound argument for a flat tax is moral.
>
> The IRS estimates we spend 6 billion hours a year filling out tax forms. Experts calculate we spend over $200 billion a year complying with the income tax code.

The nice thing about the flat tax is that you can already see what happens in countries that have adopted it, by looking at the change in GDP growth in the years before the flat tax was adopted compared to the years after the flat tax was adopted.

Here’s a comparison of 3 countries that adopted flat tax rates at different times:

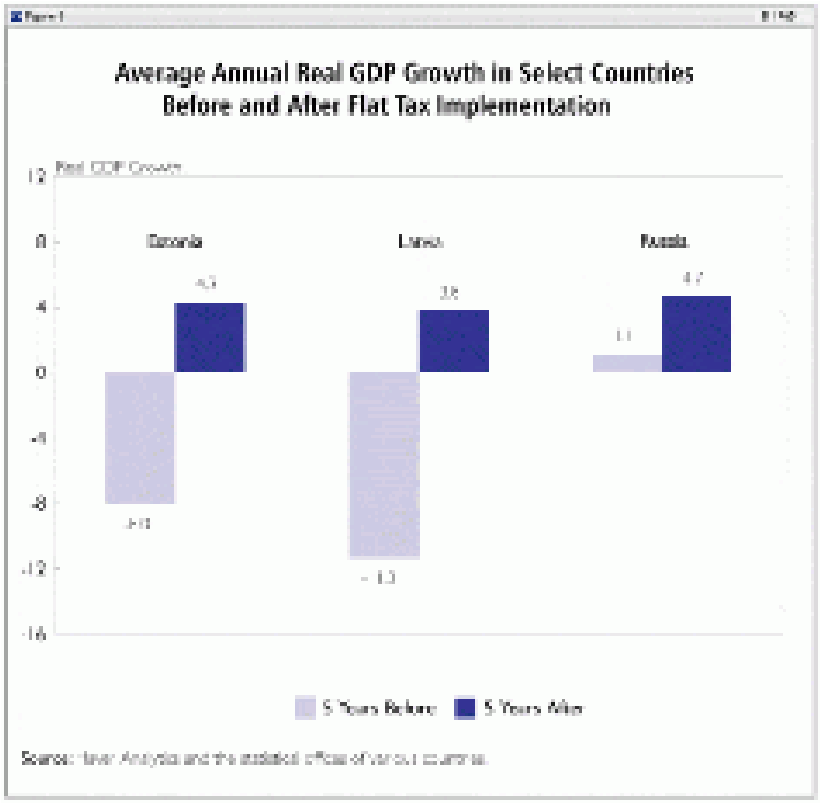

Forget the rhetoric: what happens to GDP growth after enacting a flat tax policy? (Source)

As you can see, when people waste less time filling in their taxes, they have more time for productive activities. And don't let anyone fool you: a productive economy creates more jobs, and builds the resumes of the workers so that they can be resilient to layoffs and other challenges to their peace of mind and security.

So which candidate is going to give us a flat tax, and the economic growth that goes with it?

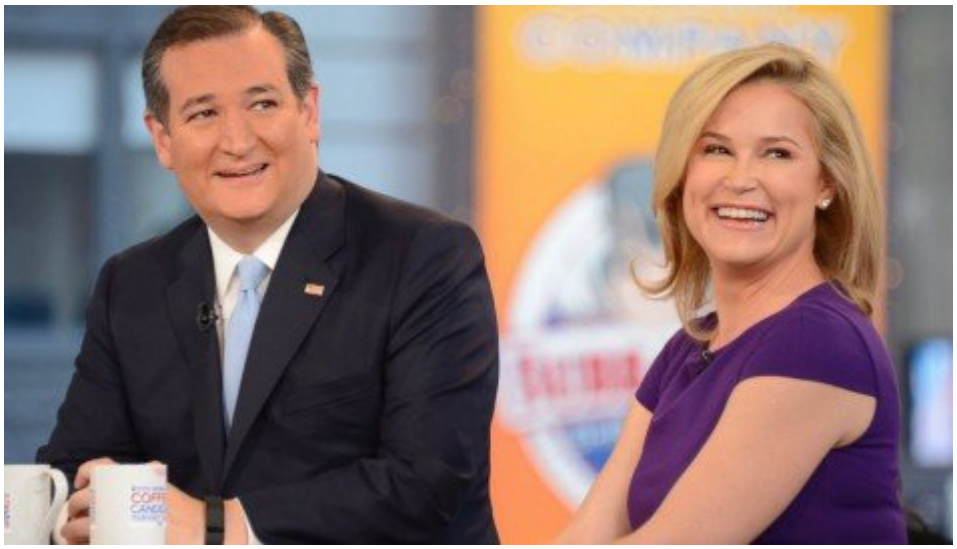

Ted and Heidi Cruz have a plan to simplify the tax code

The centrist Forbes magazine summarizes Cruz's flat tax plan:

> Ted Cruz claims that his tax plan would supercharge economic growth, boosting GDP by as much as 5% a year for a decade or more. That's, umm, an ambitious goal to be sure. However, there is actually good reason to believe that he's right.

> As long as we're careful about how we define GDP growth and also as long as we consider all the ways in which his plan will change the economy. This does mean being a little perverse in our assumptions: but also correct in our assumptions.
>
> The basics of the plan are that income taxes will be cut for all. Also, that pretty much all business taxation will be replaced with a 16% flat tax. It is claimed (and Cruz has Art Laffer there claiming it with him) that such a relief from the burdens of taxation will produce an explosion of economic growth. This is not, I feel, entirely believable to put it mildly. While there may well be specific bottlenecks in the taxation system the total take, at 35 to 36% of GDP, isn't large enough for it to be causing a general lack of economic growth. Not in my opinion at least and in the opinion of vanishingly few economists too.

Conservative economist Stephen Moore says this about the Cruz plan in The American Spectator:

> Senator Ted Cruz has a flat tax plan borrowed from a blueprint in a book by Arthur Laffer and me called, *Return to Prosperity*.
>
> […]Conservatives should be excited about the Cruz flat tax. It's what tax filers have been waiting decades for:
>
> First, the Cruz plan would give America the lowest tax rates since the income tax was devised 100 years ago. For this reason, these plan are estimated by the Tax Foundation to grow the economy by a gigantic $2 trillion extra GDP per year after 10 years. That's exactly the opposite effect of the Hillary and Bernie show plans.
>
> Second, Cruz's plan eliminates almost all deductions and credits — which is how they get the rate so low. The IRS could be dramatically shrunk in size. Don't forget, when there are fewer deductions, there are fewer ways to cheat on your taxes. The lower the tax rate, the less incentive to cheat, which means greater voluntary compliance.
>
> Third, because the Cruz plan is "border adjustable," imports are taxed at the flat rate when they are brought into the U.S., but American products sold abroad are not taxed at all. This would level the global playing field for American manufacturers, tech firms, and drug companies and bring these jobs scampering back to the U.S. Blue collar union workers should love this.
>
> […]Some conservatives complain that the tax is *too* efficient and so it will raise too much money.

Moore works for the Heritage Foundation, the number one conservative think tank, which features conservative policy on social, fiscal and foreign policy issues. My favorite think tank.

And famous economist Art Laffer says this: (H/T Dad)

Art Laffer is a speaker for the American Enterprise Institute, which is a champion of the free enterprise system.

Forbes, Moore and Laffer are my three favorite authorities on tax policy and economic growth.

If you are nervous about the economy, you need to vote for Ted Cruz and get this plan enacted. Imagine not having to worry about losing your job, losing work hours, and so on. I would like to get in on a stock market boom so that I can pay off my mortgage faster. If you all join me in voting for Ted Cruz, we can all stop worrying about money for the next 10 years. But we need people to get behind economic policies that work. Steve Forbes, Stephen Moore and Art Laffer are experts in tax policy. We need to listen to the experts, and we need to do what has been proven to work, not what sounds good.

Ted Cruz discussing the plan on CNBC:

This is the United States of America – we are not some third world country that elects a charismatic socialist dictator who attacks job-creating businesses. Our country is founded on limited government, federalism, and low taxes. We need to vote for economic growth and free enterprise. If people want to punish the rich, they should move to Cuba, Venezuela, Argentina and North Korea, and get their income inequality there.

Biomimetics again: scientists reverse engineer the design of snake scales

April 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Today, I have an example of biomimetics.

But first, here's what that is:

> Biomimetic refers to human-made processes, substances, devices, or systems that imitate nature. The art and science of designing and building biomimetic apparatus is called biomimetics, and is of special interest to researchers in nanotechnology, robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), the medical industry, and the military.

This is from Science Daily. (H/T Fuz Rana)

It says:

> A snake moves without legs by the scales on its belly gripping the ground. It generates friction at the points needed to move forwards only and prevents its scales from being worn off by too much friction. Researchers of KIT have found a way to transfer this feature to components of movable systems. In this way, durability of hip prostheses, computer hard disks or smartphones might be enhanced.
>
> "Friction and wear are two of the biggest challenges in systems of several individual components," Christian Greiner of the Institute for Applied Materials says. A solution is found in nature: Snakes, such as the ball python, or lizards, such as the sandfish skink, use friction to move forwards, but can reduce it to a minimum thanks to their scales. Together with Michael Schäfer, Greiner

> developed a process to transfer the scale structure of reptiles to components of electromechanical systems: With a fiber laser, they milled scales into a steel bolt of 8 mm in diameter.
>
> With the help of two different structures, the materials researchers tested whether the distance of the scales influences friction behavior. In the first structure, the scales overlap and are located very closely to each other, such as the scales on the belly of a ball python. The second structure consists of scales arranged in vertical rows at a larger distance, such as the skin of a sandfish skink. “The distance between the rows in our experiment was the smallest possible distance we could produce with the laser. The structure, hence, does not entirely correspond to that of the sandfish skink,” Greiner says. In the future, however, the researchers plan to produce structures that are closer to the original in nature.
>
> […]To find out whether scales reduce friction, Greiner and Schäfer fixed the structured surface of the bolts to a rotating plate. The experiments were carried out without and with a lubricant (1 ml of mineral oil). For the experiments with oil as lubricant, the scientists used steel disks. Under dry sliding conditions, sapphire disks were applied. The disk diameter was 50 mm.
>
> Experiments under lubricated conditions revealed that both narrow and wide arrangements of the scales increase friction compared to the unstructured bolt: By the wide scales, friction is increased by a factor of 1.6. The narrow scales increase friction by a factor of 3. In the non-lubricated state, the wide scale structure reduced friction by more than 40 percent, while friction was reduced by 22 percent in case of a narrow scale structure.
>
> The finding that the narrow scale structure increases friction under both lubricated and non-lubricated conditions had not been expected by the researchers: “We assumed that the narrow structure is more effective, as it is closer to nature,” Greiner says.

See the related posts for more examples of humans learning from the engineering designs in nature.

Related posts

- Define biomimetics and give two examples from peer-reviewed science journals?
- New study: how the hummingbird performs stunning feats of aerobatics
- Shorebird’s beak inspires researchers to design new water collection strategy
- Target acquisition and interception in dragonflies

Ted Cruz's position on gay marriage will work in the general election

April 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted Cruz meets voters at a campaign event

Some of you may be worried that Cruz is "too conservative" to win the general election, because he is indeed very conservative. One area where this is a concern is on the gay-marriage issue.

Is Cruz's position on the same-sex marriage issue "too conservative" for the general election.

Take a look at how he answers this question:

Transcript:

> "I am a constitutionalist and under the Constitution, marriage is a question for the states. That has been the case from the very beginning of this country- that it's been up to the states. And so if someone wants to change the marriage laws, I don't think it should be five unelected lawyers down in Washington dictating that. And even if you happen to agree with that particular decision, why would you want to hand over every important public policy issue to five unelected lawyers who aren't accountable to you, who don't work for you— instead if you want to change the marriage laws, convince your fellow citizens to change the laws. And by the way, it may end up that–we've got 50 states– that the laws in one state may be different than another state and we would expect that. We would expect the people of New York to adopt different laws than perhaps the

> people of Texas or California and that's the great thing about a big, diverse country is that we can have different laws that respect different values."

Part of me is so angry at losing the culture wars that I long for the President to push back against the leftists like a lawless dictator. Of course, that wouldn't be Constitutional. And Ted Cruz is a Constitutional conservative. That means that he will appoint judges to the Supreme Court who do not make law from the bench, but he'll leave decisions about controversial issues like the definition of marriage at the state level. That's not as far as I would go, but it is Constitutional.

Besides, I could never get elected with my crazy top-down pro-marriage view. My conservative dictator view won't fly in a general election, but Cruz's Constitutional view will. If he wins and picks justices to reverse Obergefell, then people in red states will pass legislature that they want, people in blue states will pass what they want, and people who don't want to be bullied by gay activists for disagreeing with redefining marriage will move to red states.

I'm sure I will be able to find a nice red state to live in that has the correct definition of marriage. I'm looking forward to a Cruz victory and no more threats to my religious liberty from the federal government.

Does God have a soul mate picked out for you to marry?

April 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Does God tell you through your feelings who you should marry?
OK, let's start this post with a hilarious satire from the Babylon Bee.

It says:

> Stressing the precariousness of the situation, inside sources confirmed Monday that a gridlock has been reached in the social lives of David Gall, 23, and Mark Cormier, 26, as both men are absolutely, 100% certain that God has personally instructed them to date local 22-year-old Stephanie Fair.
>
> "I sought God's will and He told me to date Stephanie," Gall confidently declared to sources. "I know He did—there's not a doubt in my mind."
>
> "God definitely told me to date Stephanie," Cormier similarly asserted. "The signs He gave me were crystal-clear. What am I supposed to do, disobey God?"
>
> Three discussion attempts between the two men have reportedly made no headway and have simply reinforced each man's belief that the other lacks godliness and is possibly being influenced by demonic forces.
>
> At publishing time, a fourth discussion was underway, and while neither man was open to the slightest possibility that perhaps God did not tell them to date Miss Fair, they seemed to be making a bit of progress as they collectively considered reexamining the Bible's teachings on polygamy.

With that said, let's look at this article from the leftist Huffington Post, of all places, which talks about what's behind this soul-mate view of marriage.

Excerpt:

> As millennial women, we were groomed for a white knight fantasy. From childhood favorites such as *Snow White* to adult rom-com staples such as *How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days* or *Sleepless in Seattle*, the media perpetuates a romantic storyline in which compatibility and lasting romance is something effortless, built on chance, sustained by good looks, fun dates and electric sexual chemistry. These story lines shape our expectations for romantic happiness. It is not enough to find someone with whom we are mostly compatible, who would make a good parent, with whom we could learn and grow wrinkly; now, we expect a perfect fit and an easy, instantaneous "connection." In short, we want a soul mate. But it is this desire for a soul mate that is actually the undoing of our happy ending.
>
> A "soul mate" is defined as one who is ideally suited to us, perfectly completes us, one with whom the relationship feels easy and natural. With them, a relationship is just "meant to be"…

Wow. That doesn't sound like a good approach to me. Soul mate people want relationships to be free and easy. They never have to grow up, or give up anything. It's just a transparent attempt to get out of the real work of self-sacrificial love. But real relationships involve responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

Does the "soul mate" approach work?

> We heard that those who get married later and possess a college degree have fewer divorces and more stable marriages. So we spend our twenties trying to find ourselves through travel, accumulating degrees and building a career. Marriage will be the capstone of our achievements, and nothing less than tying the knot with a soul mate will suffice. **But the tragic irony is that soul mate thinking makes us increasingly likely to divorce. A study of 1,400 married men and women shows that people who hold soul mate orientations are 150% more likely to end up divorced than those who do not.**
>
> **The widespread cultural belief in "soul mate ideology" undermines our chances at happiness because it makes us passive receivers of idyllic romantic expectations. Further, it fosters self-centeredness; one rarely longs to be a soul mate for someone *else*, which would require effort. For this reason, believing in soul mates is one of the most dis-empowering belief systems we can adopt. As millennials, we pride ourselves on actively pursuing the life we want to live, rather than simply accepting whatever hand we are dealt. We are innovative, passionate, proactive and not afraid to take risks. Yet, there is a disconnect when it comes to our desire for lasting love. Though there are prospects around us, we forgo taking the concrete steps needed to build happy compatible relationships because we do not "feel a spark."**

> **We are passively waiting on the sidelines for love to “happen,” and then wonder why it is so difficult.**

I’ve always felt that the soul mate approach was the exact opposite to my noble plan-based approach. The soul-mate view won’t let you have a plan at all. And no one has any work to do as part of the plan.

Their solution is for people to work at compatibility:

> Compatibility is something co-created through intentionality and conscious choice. It involves mutual sacrifice, effort and commitment for the sake of the other’s benefit. A recent study found that of the couples who demonstrate above average daily generosity, 50% of them report being “very happy” in marriage; among the low generosity scores, only 14% can say the same. As studies indicate, selflessness is required to create mutual compatibility. It is not instantaneous, nor does it usually begin with true love’s kiss.
>
> We both know from experience that there are some you naturally connect with and others you do not. This is not a call towards forced attraction or companionship. But, our romantic futures should not be placed in the hands of blind chance. It is time we roll up our sleeves and shift our expectations from unattainable perfection to realistic romance, one that accounts for imperfection. We must understand that work in a relationship is a necessary key to success, rather than an indication of imminent failure. We will be letting go of a tired plot line that sets us up for disappointment and embracing an active role in our own unique story.
>
> How refreshing to know that we do not have to be perfect to be lovable, and that our romantic success is not solely dependent on finding the “right” fit, but instead built through cultivating daily moments of generosity, sacrifice and conscious coupling.

I don’t think there is such a thing as a relationship that proceeds by magic, rather than by the hard work of the two people involved.

Stefan Molyneux: “why I was wrong about atheists”

April 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long, lonely journey through the night

This guy has one of the sharpest channels on YouTube, very un-PC. I don’t agree with him on everything, but he is outrageously popular.

Watch: (20 minutes) (H/T William)

This might be a very useful thing to show to pastors who favor socialist policies and big government redistribution. He actually says that the conservative policies that conservatives embrace *attracted him to theism.* I just think that is so hilarious… because all the pastors seem to want to embrace left-wing causes. Especially things like global warming, illegal immigration, redistribution of wealth, single payer health care, etc. Well, the kinds of atheists we like – the ones who believe in liberty, prosperity, security – don’t hold our small government politics against us.

No Christian presents their views through government – that’s why we are all crazy about apologetics. We love apologetics as much as secular leftists love big government. At least apologetics is non-coercive he says. But when atheists enforce their view through big government, backed by prisons and guns, that is coercive. His arguments about demographics, and being willing to marry, have kids for the good of society are terrific to illustrate the value of *self-sacrifice* within the Christian worldview. Far from being a liability, devotion to small government, low taxes and individual liberty is actually an asset when evangelizing. Just as pious pastors are all rushing to join the open borders, global warming, single-payer health care, radical feminism team, we find out that principled atheists are uncomfortable with many of those things. Maybe we should take note of that, instead of just blindly following the crowd.

Have a look at this video, and put THIS apologetic argument into your quiver. There is much, much more to evangelism and apologetics than what you read in books on

apologetics. And this is why I work so hard to connect the Christian worldview to every other area of knowledge. You don’t always have to talk about old, boring William Lane Craig style apologetics with atheists. Sometimes, you can just talk to them about tax policy and free speech. Why not? Atheists are sometimes complicated people.

How can a successful writer who “is true to himself” end up poor?

April 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Lindsay sent me this article about a very successful writer who has trouble making ends meet.

The story appeared in left-leaning The Atlantic. I don’t want to rehash the whole thing, because I want to make a point.

So, first thing to quote, this guy looks like a success to others, even though he is actually really struggling:

> The Fed asked respondents how they would pay for a $400 emergency. The answer: 47 percent of respondents said that either they would cover the expense by borrowing or selling something, or they would not be able to come up with the $400 at all. Four hundred dollars! Who knew?
>
> Well, *I* knew. I knew because I am in that 47 percent.
>
> […]You wouldn’t know any of that to look at me. I like to think I appear reasonably prosperous. Nor would you know it to look at my résumé. I have had a passably good career as a writer—five books, hundreds of articles published, a number of awards and fellowships, and a small (very small) but respectable reputation. You wouldn’t even know it to look at my tax return. I am nowhere near rich, but I have typically made a solid middle- or even, at times, upper-middle-class income, which is about all a writer can expect, even a writer who also teaches and lectures and writes television scripts, as I do.

The thing I like about this guy is that he doesn’t blame anyone else but himself – he thinks that his own decisions led him to poverty. Rod Dreher has a nice list of the mistakes at American Conservative:

> **1) He chose to live in New York, which is one of the most expensive places to live in the country;**
> **2) He chose to be a writer, not the most lucrative and stable career;**
> 3) He and his wife chose to put their kids in private school, something they felt was necessary in their Brooklyn neighborhood, but an expense they could have avoided or dramatically lessened had they lived in another part of the country (they eventually moved to the Hamptons to get out of paying that tuition);
> 4) He and his wife believed their two children had “earned” the right to go to very expensive universities, and they spent everything they had, and the inheritance his parents planned to leave for him, on educating the girls;
> 5) They got caught in the housing crash and had to sell a Manhattan apartment they owned at fire sale prices;
> 6) Given the way his income as a writer is structured, taxes were a bitch (as a

> writer, trust me, this is true).

Pay close attention to 1 and 2. I would NEVER live in a garbage blue state like New York. I would rather be dead in a ditch than live in a state that is run by Democrats. I hate the high taxes and high spending of blue states. Blue states are great places to go if you want to work and have someone else steal all of your money to buy votes from lazy losers. I'm actually planning a move to a red state right now, and believe me, low taxes and low cost of live are high on my list of requirements. Oklahoma and Tennessee, I'm looking at you two, especially.

And as far as 2 goes, I don't think that I need to repeat my warnings to everyone about non-STEM fields.

Well, OK, I will:

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image)

Regarding the housing crash that he mentioned, Democrats caused that, by forcing banks to loan money to people who couldn't afford to pay it back. If he voted for the Democrats, then he screwed himself again.

Now, you might think that people end up poor because they want to do work that is fun and enjoyable. And that's true, I've seen that. But this guy's problem was that he just spent beyond his means. Why? Well, the writer explains that he *is compelled* to spend the money, because spending money defines who he is. He can't say no, because he thinks that he has one life, and one chance to define himself. He can't think about the future, because he has to spend every last dime today in order to be who he really wants to be.

Dreher comments:

> He felt that to choose otherwise would have made him inauthentic, untrue to himself. He felt that he deserved the life he had, and could not choose otherwise without betraying himself. I think this must be an extraordinary thing, in terms of

> history: people who spend recklessly to give themselves the lives they think they deserve. If you think about it, though, our culture, which valorizes Authenticity, encourages this.

I have to tell you, I just don't understand this. I define myself by Christian virtues – self-control, self-sacrifice, concern for others who I know personally and in my community. I'm not a spender. I am a saver by nature, and the older I get, the more grateful that I am closer to retirement than I was before. Working gets harder as you get older, even for jobs that don't require physical labor.

If you plan ahead, you can get all your working and saving done before you're 50. That was my approach. But I see other people who haven't started working full-time by 30 and even by 35. Every day when you are in school instead of working full-time in your field is a wasted day. With few exceptions, you will learn more on the job than in the classroom. You want get out of school and get working as soon as possible, with an eye to getting married as soon as possible – since marriage is a wealth building engine. The faster you start investing, the more time your money has to grow through interest and dividends.

The bottom line is that my obligation as a Christian is not to be true to myself, or anything weird like that. My obligation is to make sure I don't starve, and then to turn to the people around me and make sure that they don't starve. Sometimes, that means giving them good advice. Sometimes, it means recognizing their achievements with little gifts. But the main thing is that the world isn't safe enough for you to put off earning so that you can do what you feel is the "real you". Being independent and then serving others is more important than being the "real you".

New $15 minimum wage causing apparel companies to outsource manufacturing

April 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people usually only get one side of every issue – because we don't tell them the other side

This story is from the radically leftist Los Angeles Times, of all places.

They write:

> Los Angeles was once the epicenter of apparel manufacturing, attracting buyers from across the world to its clothing factories, sample rooms and design studios.
>
> But over the years, cheap overseas labor lured many apparel makers to outsource to foreign competitors in far-flung places such as China and Vietnam.
>
> Now, Los Angeles firms are facing another big hurdle — California's minimum wage hitting $15 an hour by 2022 — which could spur more garment makers to exit the state.
>
> Last week American Apparel, the biggest clothing maker in Los Angeles, said it might outsource the making of some garments to another manufacturer in the U.S., and wiped out about 500 local jobs. The company still employs about 4,000 workers in Southern California.
>
> "The exodus has begun," said Sung Won Sohn, an economist at Cal State Channel Islands and a former director at Forever 21. "The garment industry is gradually shrinking and that trend will likely continue."

But some lucky people are going to get an exemption from the new minimum wage law – even though they lobbied hard in favor of it.

The radically leftist UK Guardian explains:

> Los Angeles city council will hear a proposal on Tuesday to exempt union members from a $15 an hour minimum wage that the unions themselves have spent years fighting for.
>
> The proposal for the exemption was first introduced last year, after the Los Angeles city council passed a bill that would see the city's minimum wage increase to $15 by 2020. After drawing criticism last year, the proposed amendment was put on hold but is now up for consideration once again.
>
> […]The amendment was originally proposed by Rusty Hicks, executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO. AFL-CIO is the largest federation of labor unions in the US, with about 12.5 million members. Hicks is also the co-convener of the Campaign to Raise the Wage.
>
> At the time of its passage, Hicks lauded the $15 minimum wage.
>
> "We are one step closer to making history in Los Angeles by adopting a comprehensive minimum wage policy that will change the lives of hundreds of thousands of hard-working Angelenos," said Hicks. "The city council's action today creates a path for workers to succeed and gives our economy the boost it needs to grow."
>
> Hicks did not respond to a request for comment.

Union leaders have a reputation for being just terrible at economics. And when I say "terrible", I mean they are more ignorant of economics than inanimate objects.

I actually remember far back to when Obamacare was being passed. The big labor unions lobbied for the passage of Obamacare. And when it was passed, they lobbied the Democrats for exemptions to it for the big labor unions. Exemptions from fees, as well as exemptions from taxes. Basically, the big labor unions wanted to screw all the non-union companies with higher health care costs. Unite Blue! Socialism for thee, but not for me. That's hypocrisy.

Peer-reviewed paper: Michael Behe's "First Rule of Adaptive Evolution"

April 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

JoeCoder was writing some JavaScript code last night and he ran into a problem where a 3rd-party open source library was not performing as expected. So he got the non-minified version of the library and commented out two lines to get the behavior he wanted. He said this to me "Michael Behe's first rule of adaptive evolution has been confirmed once again." So, let's take a look at Mike Behe's first rule of adaptive evolution.

The paper was published in the Quarterly Review of Biology. I found it on PubMed.

Abstract:

> Adaptive evolution can cause a species to gain, lose, or modify a function; therefore, it is of basic interest to determine whether any of these modes dominates the evolutionary process under particular circumstances. Because mutation occurs at the molecular level, it is necessary to examine the molecular changes produced by the underlying mutation in order to assess whether a given adaptation is best considered as a gain, loss, or modification of function. Although that was once impossible, the advance of molecular biology in the past half century has made it feasible. In this paper, I review molecular changes underlying some adaptations, with a particular emphasis on evolutionary experiments with microbes conducted over the past four decades. **I show that by far the most common adaptive changes seen in those examples are due to the loss or modification of a pre-existing molecular function**, and I discuss the possible reasons for the prominence of such mutations.

By far the most common adaptive changes in the examples we have are due to loss of function or modification of pre-existing function?

Evolution News has a post up about the paper.

Excerpt:

> After reviewing the effects of mutations upon Functional Coding ElemenTs (FCTs), Michael Behe's recent review article in Quarterly Review of Biology, "Experimental Evolution, Loss-of-Function Mutations and 'The First Rule of Adaptive Evolution'," offers some conclusions. In particular, as the title suggests, Behe introduces a rule of thumb he calls the "The First Rule of Adaptive Evolution": "Break or blunt any functional coded element whose loss would yield a net fitness gain." In essence, what Behe means is that mutations that cause loss-of-FCT are going to be far more likely and thus far more common than those which gain a functional coding element. In fact, he writes: "the rate of appearance of an adaptive mutation that would arise from the diminishment or elimination of the activity of a protein is expected to be 100-1000 times the rate of appearance of an adaptive mutation that requires specific changes to a gene." Since organisms will tend to evolve along the most likely pathway, they will tend to break or lose an FCT before gaining a new one. He explains:

> It is called the "first" rule because the rate of mutations that diminish the function of a feature is expected to be much higher than the rate of appearance of a new feature, so adaptive loss-of-FCT or modification-of-function mutations that decrease activity are expected to appear first, by far, in a population under selective pressure.(Michael J. Behe, "Experimental Evolution, Loss-of-Function Mutations and 'The First Rule of Adaptive Evolution'," Quarterly Review of Biology, Vol. 85(4) (December, 2010).)

> Behe argues that this point is empirically supported by the research reviews in the paper. He writes:

> As seen in Tables 2 through 4, the large majority of experimental adaptive mutations are loss-of-FCT or modification-of-function mutations. In fact, leaving out those experiments with viruses in which specific genetic elements were intentionally deleted and then restored by subsequent evolution, only two gain-of-FCT events have been reported

> After asking "Why is this the case?" Behe states, "One important factor is undoubtedly that the rate of appearance of loss-of-FCT mutations is much greater than the rate of construction of new functional coded elements." He draws sound and defensible conclusions from the observed data:

> Leaving aside gain-of-FCT for the moment, the work reviewed here shows that organisms do indeed adapt quickly in the laboratory–by loss-of-FCT and modification-of-function mutations. If such adaptive mutations also arrive first in

> the wild, as they of course would be expected to, then those will also be the kinds of mutations that are first available to selection in nature. … In general, if a sequence of genomic DNA is initially only one nucleotide removed from coding for an adaptive functional element, then a single simple point mutation could yield a gain-of-FCT. As seen in Table 5, several laboratory studies have achieved thousand to million-fold saturations of their test organisms with point mutations, and most of the studies reviewed here have at least single-fold saturation. Thus, one would expect to have observed simple gain-of-FCT adaptive mutations that had sufficient selective value to outcompete more numerous loss-of- FCT or modification-of-function mutations in most experimental evolutionary studies, if they had indeed been available.

> But this stark lack of examples of gain-of-functional coding elements can have important implications:

> A tentative conclusion suggested by these results is that the complex genetic systems that are cells will often be able to adapt to selective pressure by effectively removing or diminishing one or more of their many functional coded elements.

> Behe doesn’t claim that gain-of-function mutations will never occur, but the clear implication is that neo-Darwinists cannot forever rely on examples of loss or modification-of-FCT mutations to explain molecular evolution. At some point, there must be gain of function.

Now, there was a response to this paper from Jerry Coyne on his blog, and then a rebuttal from Mike Behe in a separate article on Evolution News.

Some tips to social justice warriors on how to fake a hate crime

April 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

First, let's double-check the details of the latest hate crime hoax by a gay activist.

CNS News explains:

> The image of a cake reading "Love Wins ***" caused a stir of social media recently after an openly homosexual pastor posted a video online, but the company that sold the cake says the claim is fraudulent and they are countersuing.
>
> KEYE-TV is reporting, the attorney for Pastor Jordan Brown says he ordered a cake from the Whole Foods store in Austin, Texas with the personalized message "Love Wins," but when he received it read "Love Wins ***."
>
> […]On Tuesday, Whole Foods released store security video and a statement on the cake purchase, and they claim the cake box was altered.
>
> "Mr. Brown admits that he was in sole possession and control of the cake until he posted his video, which showed the UPC label on the bottom and side of the box." the statement reads.
>
> "After reviewing our security footage of Mr. Brown, it's clear that the UPC label was in fact on top of the cake box, not on the side of the package. This is evident as the cashier scans the UPC code on top of the box.
>
> "After a deeper investigation of Mr. Brown's claim, we believe his accusations are fraudulent and we intend to take legal action against both Mr. Brown and his attorney."
>
> Whole Foods Market has filed a defemation lawsuit against Brown and his

> attorney seeking $100,000 in damages.

You'll notice that I blanked out the curse word, because I think it's horrible to make people that I disagree with uncomfortable with curse words. I don't like what some gay activists are doing with respect to using the education system and government coercion to push an agenda against natural marriage and first amendment right, but I don't want to say anything intimidating. I just want to disagree.

Apparently, the hate crime guy is short of money:

> On Wednesday, Fox 7 Austin reported that Brown was sued just one month ago for nearly $30,000.
>
> The complaint was filed on March 11, 2016 for breach of contract by the National Collegiate Student Loan Trust for unpaid student loans related to his education at Slippery Rock University, a public, master's level university in Pennsylvania. Brown is being sued for an unpaid student loan balance of $24,885.25 and unpaid interest of $3,030.26, for a total of $27,915.51.
>
> Fox 7 Austin also reported that the Facebook page of Brown's church, the "Church of Open Doors," was soliciting donations claiming that they are moving to a new location and expanding, but when they visited the address listed, they "found nothing, just an apartment complex."
>
> A Google search for the address listed on the Facebook page brings up the AMLI South Shore apartments. A nearby address listed on the Church of Open Doors' website isn't a church either, but a postal/courier businesst hat also rents U-Haul trucks.

Anyway, so it looks like another fake hate crime. Here are some tips from The Federalist about how to commit a successful fake hate crime.

List:

1. Pick A Believable Villain
2. A Good Witness
3. Pick Better Ironclad Proof Than An Easily-Resealable Adhesive Sticker.
4. Make Your Victimization As Anonymous As Possible
5. Know What You Don't Know

Here is the most important one:

> **#4 Make Your Victimization As Anonymous As Possible**
>
> A good social justice hoax will just blame "Christians who came into my restaurant" or "someone in my town, don't know who." In these examples, you're claiming to have been victimized by someone in a pool of tens of thousands to millions of people. In the case of Brown, he named the specific Whole Foods, where specific people are on record as having decorated specific cakes. Probably with video evidence.

> **The specific employee who was accused of bigotry, it turns out, is, in the parlance of 2016 America, a "member of the LGBTQ community."** And the record shows, according to Whole Foods, that the cake was made as requested, with "Love Wins" written on the tip top of it.
>
> It can't be said enough: Never pin your hoax on an actual, specific person who can be questioned and who can refute your dumb story.

Dear, oh dear. The person who baked the cake is gay. That won't work for this hate crime.

I blogged before about several other fake hate crimes in this post, this post and this post. It happens a lot. It might be a good idea to assume that hate crimes committed against the secular left are false unless they are proven true. There is a lot of mental illness in the secular left crowd.

What do men want from a marriage?

April 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

Well, my friend Curby sent me this article from a very conservative Calvinist blog. It talks about one of the things that men want from a marriage. I thought I would post it here, and affirm its truth, so that all my feminist readers can have steam shoot out of their ears.

Excerpt:

> Men are created different than women. And man's priorities, deep in his very being, are very different from the woman's priorities.
>
> […]The family was created to be an institution, and that institution has a *purpose* and *function* in God's order for the things: to expand the dominion of God's people over the whole world (Gen. 1:27-28). The purpose and function were first given to the man, and he is supposed to be the chief carrier and executive of that function. And just as the woman was uniquely designed and gifted to discern and understand the issues of relationships, the man was uniquely designed and gifted to fulfill the purpose of taking dominion over the earth. **The father's and the husband's position of the man is not primarily focused on relationships – that's what he was given a wife for. That responsibility is given to man to ensure that his family fulfills its purpose in the plan of God in conquering the earth. Man's very being is *outward*-oriented, not inward-oriented. His interests would be in work and war, not in feelings and relationships.** While women also have their part in business (Prov. 31) and war (Judges 4), by creation ordinance it is man's realm and sphere of responsibility and authority.
>
> And therefore a church that preaches only relationships and no purpose, will tend to attract mostly women, not men. **And when the family is preached as**

> **mostly relationships but the purpose and the functions of the family are not preached, men influenced by that preaching won't be interested in having families.** That's just the created nature of things.

Men feel obligated to do something that is going to please God. And relationships and feelings are not the something they are trying to do:

> The Bible has little to say about a "relationship with Jesus." In fact, Jesus Himself speaks about a personal relationship between Him and His disciples only in two places, and He gives a very simple explanation of what a personal relationship with Him is: obedience to His will. In Matt. 12:46-50 He explains how one gets to be a member of Jesus's family: "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." And then again, in John 15:14, "You are My friends if you do what I command you." There is no special theology of "personal relationship with Jesus" in the Bible; that personal relationship is very simple: do what He commands. It is not based on emotions or feelings. It is based on the self-conscious commitment to do what He commands.
>
> But what He commands is given in the whole Bible. And it starts with the Dominion Mandate for man and his family to fill the earth, and subdue it. And this means that there is purpose and calling to man as a father and husband to work, fight, educate, care, build, lay foundations, protect, conquer, establish. **There is a purpose to man's life. And that purpose is matched by the inclination in the heart of man to do these things. A man's heart is thrilled by the possibility to work and conquer. And when the family is presented to him not as an institution of dominion – that is, an institution for work and conquering – but only as a place for "relationships," he won't get excited about it. He will leave the church and find another place to work and conquer.**

So let me say something about this, and please don't be offended. My views do go against the popular view of marriage today.

If I were to get married it would be to a woman who understood that my purpose in working from age 20 to age 60 is not primarily to provide a her with feelings and relationships and peer approval.

My purpose in marrying is to make the marriage promote the things that God likes, and oppose the things that God doesn't like.

In my case that means:

- impacting the university with apologetics and conservatism
- impacting the church with apologetics and conservatism
- impacting the public square to promote policies that enable Christian living
- producing as many effective, influential children as I can afford to raise

With goals like that, it is important for me to find a woman with a good education (STEM

degree) and some work experience, because understanding education and career will help her to lead the children and mentor others effectively.

So if I were courting a woman interested in marrying me, I would be trying to convince her that we could do better for God with this plan, working as a pair than as two singles. And she would have the opportunity to listen to and improve the plan and decide whether to sign with me or not. No one is forcing her to marry me, she gets to choose if she thinks that my plan to make the marriage serve God is acceptable to her. We would look in the Bible together and then look at the culture and decide what areas needed our efforts and what would be the best way for us to impact those areas.

That's what I mean when I say that men ought to lead in a marriage. I mean that men should have a plan for making the marriage serve God in a practical way. He needs a wife in order to help him execute his plan to serve God, especially if the plan involves children and other relationships with people outside the home.

Now what shall I do if no woman accepts this idea that marriage is about negotiating a plan and then achieving it for God's benefit?

Well, that is fine with me. Although I budgeted for a stay-at-home wife and tuition for four PhD-credentialed children, if I cannot find such a woman, then I should take my earnings (after taxes) and spend them on other things, like helping young Christians to grow and become influential. And I should use some of that money on blogging and other related activities that I can do myself. At least that way, I am going to deliver some sort of a return for my client – or Client, rather.

Should taxpayer-funded universities allow conservative professors to work?

April 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is expelled

I guess everyone knows that conservatives are discriminated against at liberal universities. But I thought this Wall Street Journal article had some interesting insights about how far conservative professors have to go to hide their views from their colleagues on the secular left.

It says:

> Everyone knows that academia is predominantly liberal: Only 6.6% of professors in the social sciences are Republicans, according to a 2007 study. But what is life like for the pioneering conservatives who slip through the ivory tower's gates? We decided to find out by interviewing 153 of them.
>
> Many conservative professors said they felt socially isolated. A political scientist told us that he became a local pariah for defending the Iraq war in his New England college town, which he called "Cuba with bad weather." One sociologist stated the problem well: "To say a strong conservative political opinion with conviction in an academic gathering is analogous to uttering an obscenity." A prominent social scientist at a major research university spoke of the strain of concealing his political views from his colleagues—of "lying to people all the time."
>
> Some even said that bias had complicated their career advancement. A historian of Latin America told us that he suffered professionally after writing a dissertation on "middle-class white guys" when it was fashionable to focus on the "agency of subaltern peoples." Though he doesn't think the work branded him as a

> conservative, it certainly didn't excite the intellectual interest of his peers.
>
> A similarly retrograde literature professor sought advice from a colleague after struggling to land a tenure-track job. He was told that he had "a nice resume for 1940."

Let's put some numbers to these stories, with an article from the Washington Times. Excerpt:

> It's not every day that left-leaning academics admit that they would discriminate against a minority.
>
> But that was what they did in a peer-reviewed study of political diversity in the field of social psychology, which will be published in the September edition of the journal Perspectives on Psychological Science.
>
> Psychologists Yoel Inbar and Joris Lammers, based at Tilburg University in the Netherlands, surveyed a roughly representative sample of academics and scholars in social psychology and found that "In decisions ranging from paper reviews to hiring, many social and personality psychologists admit that they would discriminate against openly conservative colleagues."
>
> […][C]onservatives represent a distinct minority on college and university campuses. A 2007 report by sociologists Neil Gross and Solon Simmons found that 80 percent of psychology professors at elite and non-elite universities are Democrats. Other studies reveal that 5 percent to 7 percent of faculty openly identify as Republicans. By contrast, about 20 percent of the general population are liberal and 40 percent are conservative.
>
> Mr. Inbar and Mr. Lammers found that conservatives fear that revealing their political identity will have negative consequences. This is why New York University-based psychologist Jonathan Haidt, a self-described centrist, has compared the experience of being a conservative graduate student to being a closeted gay student in the 1980s.
>
> In 2011, Mr. Haidt addressed this very issue at a meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology — the same group that Mr. Inbar and Mr. Lammer surveyed. Mr. Haidt's talk, "The Bright Future of Post-Partisan Social Psychology," caused a stir. The professor, whose new book "The Righteous Mind" examines the moral roots of our political positions, asked the nearly 1,000 academics and students in the room to raise their hands if they were liberals. Nearly 80 percent of the hands went up. When he asked whether there were any conservatives in the house, just three hands — 0.3 percent — went up.
>
> […]"Because of the way the confirmation bias works," Mr. Haidt says, referring to the pervasive psychological tendency to seek only supporting evidence for one's beliefs, "you need people around who don't start with the same bias. You need some non-liberals, and ideally some conservatives."

But that’s not all – those findings are confirmed by other studies of campaign donations by professors:

> Professors, administrators and others employed at the eight universities of the Ivy League have given $375,932 to Obama and $60,465 to Romney, according to data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics, a Washington watchdog group that tracks campaign finance issues.
>
> […]The president’s academic advantage extends behind the Northeast’s ivied walls and into the Midwest.
>
> At Ohio State University in Columbus, for example, Obama has raised $18,230 from faculty and staff, compared with Romney’s $3,500.

How did this massive imbalance happen? Answer: active discrimination against minority viewpoints. Secular leftists discriminate against conservatives in hiring and employment decisions. This is because liberalism is a false ideology, and the only way to maintain it is to punish anyone who disagrees with it. Allow any sort of open, rational discussion of methodology or evidence undermines the delusion that the elites are trying to maintain.

The kalam cosmological argument defended in a peer-reviewed science journal

April 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the peer-reviewed article. It appears in a scientific journal focused on astrophysics.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

Here's an excerpt in which the author, Dr. William Lane Craig, explains the Big Bang cosmology:

> The monumental significance of the Friedman-Lemaitre model lay in its historization of the universe. As one commentator has remarked, up to this time the idea of the expansion of the universe "was absolutely beyond comprehension. Throughout all of human history the universe was regarded as fixed and immutable and the idea that it might actually be changing was inconceivable."{8} But if the Friedman-Lemaitre model were correct, the universe could no longer be adequately treated as a static entity existing, in effect, timelessly. Rather the universe has a history, and time will not be matter of indifference for our investigation of the cosmos. In 1929 Edwin Hubble's measurements of the red-shift in the optical spectra of light from distant galaxies,{9} which was taken to indicate a universal recessional motion of the light sources in the line of sight, provided a dramatic verification of the Friedman-Lemaitre model. Incredibly, what Hubble had discovered was the isotropic expansion of the universe predicted by Friedman and Lemaitre. It marked a veritable turning point in the history of science. "Of all the great predictions that

> science has ever made over the centuries," exclaims John Wheeler, "was there ever one greater than this, to predict, and predict correctly, and predict against all expectation a phenomenon so fantastic as the expansion of the universe?"{10}
>
> As a GTR-based theory, the Friedman-Lemaitre model does not describe the expansion of the material content of the universe into a pre-existing, empty, Newtonian space, but rather the expansion of space itself. This has the astonishing implication that as one reverses the expansion and extrapolates back in time, space-time curvature becomes progressively greater until one finally arrives at a singular state at which space-time curvature becomes infinite. This state therefore constitutes an edge or boundary to space-time itself. P. C. W. Davies comments,
>
> > An initial cosmological singularity . . . forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity. . . . On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.{11}
>
> The popular expression "Big Bang," originally a derisive term coined by Fred Hoyle to characterize the beginning of the universe predicted by the Friedman-Lemaitre model, is thus potentially misleading, since the expansion cannot be visualized from the outside (there being no "outside," just as there is no "before" with respect to the Big Bang).{12}
>
> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"{13}
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Every theist should be able to understand and defend this argument. It is a scientific refutation of materialism, and it is supported by six lines of scientific evidence – all of which emerged as science has progressed.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe

3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

Those are the scientific discoveries that have led us to the beginning of the universe, which support's Dr. Craig's argument.

Here's a re-cap of the three main evidences for the Big Bang cosmology from Caltech. (Numbers 2, 3 and 5 from the list above)

Excerpt:

> Until the early 1900s, most people had assumed that the universe was fixed in size. New possibilities opened up in 1915, when Einstein formulated his famous general relativity theory that describes the nature of space, time, and gravity. This theory allows for expansion or contraction of the fabric of space. In 1917, astronomer Willem de Sitter applied this theory to the entire universe and boldly went on to show that the universe could be expanding. Aleksandr Friedmann, a mathematician, reached the same conclusion in a more general way in 1922, as did Georges Lemaître, a cosmologist and a Jesuit, in 1927. This step was revolutionary since the accepted view at the time was that the universe was static in size. Tracing back this expanding universe, Lemaître imagined all matter initially contained in a tiny universe and then exploding. These thoughts introduced amazing new possibilities for the universe, but were independent of observation at that time.
>
> **Why Do We Think the Big Bang Happened?**
>
> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

The article goes into detail about each of these three evidences.

This is the kind of evidence I expect all Christian theists to be using when discussing the question of whether God exists. Scientific evidence. When talking to non-Christians, we first need to show that we understand science, because science is a reliable and

respected way of getting knowledge about the universe. Non-Christians do not accept the Bible, but they do accept science, so we begin evangelism with science. Science (experimental, testable, repeatable science) should set limits on what anyone can believe – including non-Christians, who might otherwise not be inclined to listen to Bible verses and theology.

The Big Bang is not compatible with atheism

According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by the atheistic worldview.

You should definitely print out both articles and get familiar with the arguments and the evidence. I have tried this argument out on atheists, and the response I usually get is that scientific discoveries will soon emerge that falsifies all of these six scientific discoveries. That sounds more like faith than reason to me. And we have to make it clear to others who are still deciding that there is a conflict between science and religion. Just not the one they're expecting. Let's make our decisions about what to believe based on what science is telling us today. Let's hold accountable people who want to have a worldview that is based on speculations.

Georgia goes after Christian medical doctor over the content of his sermons

April 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I had friends who have been trying to get me to move to Georgia. Sure glad I didn't listen to them – it's turning out to be a very bad state for liberty.

Here's the latest from religious liberty hero David French, writing at National Review.

He writes:

> This morning, the First Liberty Institute filed a lawsuit in federal court that makes chilling claims against Georgia's Department of Public Health, claims backed by a host of damaging documents. The Institute represents Dr. Eric Walsh, a California physician and former director of public health for the city of Pasadena, Calif. Walsh is also a devout Christian, a Seventh-day Adventist who sometimes preaches in his spare time.
>
> Walsh, a former member of the President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, had accepted a job in Georgia as a district health director when Georgia officials became aware that he'd delivered a number of "controversial" sermons on his own time — sermons where he articulated orthodox Seventh-day Adventist positions on, among other things, human sexuality, Islam, evolution, and the corrupting influence of pop culture.
>
> In California, Walsh had been attacked by student activists who objected to his selection as a commencement speaker at Pasadena City College. To these activists, working for former president Bush and President Obama to combat AIDS, serving as a board member of the Latino Health Collaborative, and starting California's first city-run dental clinic for low-income families dealing with HIV/AIDS wasn't sufficient to overcome the horror at Walsh's Christian views.

> Under fire, Walsh canceled his commencement speech — while the city, incredibly, put him on administrative leave. The college replaced him with a gay screenwriter.
>
> When Georgia officials learned of Walsh's California controversy, they responded by immediately violating the law. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits government employers from considering an applicant's religion in employment decisions, but Georgia officials not only evaluated Walsh's religious views, the director of human resources wrote an e-mail to department employees giving them the "assignment" of listening to his sermons.
>
> And so they did. E-mails indicate that health-department employees split the sermons up, listened to Walsh's religious views, and took notes. Walsh asserts that one department official called and told him that "you can't preach that and work in the field of public health."
>
> […][T]wo days after health-department officials carried out their "assignment" to watch his sermons, they terminated Walsh — informing him through a mocking voice-mail message that a termination letter was on its way.

Previously, I wrote about how Georgia fired their highly-respect Fire Chief, because he wrote a book in which he supported moral views consistent with the Bible in areas of sexual behavior.

The story is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Former Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran lived the American dream. That is, until he was fired from his childhood dream job for writing a book during his own private time.
>
> Cochran's book, published in 2013 and called "Who Told You That You Were Naked?," expresses a biblical view on marriage and addresses homosexuality from his Christian perspective.
>
> […]Fast-forward a few months, and Cochran received a 30-day suspension without pay, **after an LGBT activist group started to protest the book.**
>
> […]After 34 years as a firefighter, Cochran's fairy-tale career came to a halt in January due to his personal views on gay marriage.
>
> […]Cochran had worked his way up, and out from the poverty he grew up in, to be named Atlanta fire chief in 2008. In 2009, he was appointed administrator of the United States Fire Administration under President Barack Obama. Less than a year later, he was back to his position as chief in Atlanta.

Investigation into Cochran found that he did not show discrimination against anyone during employment, yet he was terminated anyway.

[…]"The part that got me in trouble was the fact that in the book I dealt with sexual challenges that Christian men have and spoke of biblical marriage and biblical sexuality,"

Cochran said in August while speaking at a religious liberty rally in Iowa.

Pretty every day now I am getting a message from someone who is asking me how to have an alias, whether they need an alias, and so on. I hope that these cases show you that no amount of excellence in education or ability or work history will protect you from the fascists of the secular left. They don't care whether you are the best at doing this job or that job – it's more important to them that you share their personal opinions on moral issues. Specifically, it's more important to them that you believe that when it comes to sexuality, there are no rules. That is, that the selfishness of the adults must override all moral rules, especial moral rules around sexual behavior. There are no marriage rules, there are no children's needs, there is no chastity, there is no fidelity, there is no self-control.

When it comes to expressing your views in order to have an influence, my advice is simple. First, don't listen to anyone who is reckless about the consequences and is more interested in prancing around praising their own supposed bravery. The object of this game is to share your views with the right people as persuasively as you can, and not to find yourself silenced or sidelined because the other team hammers you and undermines your ability to be effective. Handing the other side your real name, real address, and so on, undermines your effectiveness with no compensating increase in effectiveness. It's a net loss, and not one that you should choose to take.

ESPN fires Curt Schilling for saying that men shouldn’t use women’s bathrooms

April 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I noticed that the NCAA, NFL and NBA have been very energetic at promoting the gay agenda, lately – ramming gay rights down the throats of Christians and conservatives in states like Indiana, Arizona, Georgia and North Carolina. Not a problem for me, since I don’t watch American professional sports of any kind, nor do I have a television. I don’t give them a dime. And a new story reinforces my no-sports policy.

Here is the latest, as reported by Fox News:

> Schilling shared a photo of a portly man dressed in women’s clothing – wearing a wig and holding a purse. The man’s ample bosom protruded from two strategically-placed holes. Alongside the eyebrow-raising photo was a message:
>
> “LET HIM IN! to the restroom with your daughter or else you’re a narrow minded, judgmental, unloving, racist bigot who needs to die.”
>
> Schilling followed up with statement of his own:
>
> “A man is a man no matter what they call themselves. I don’t care what they are, who they sleep with, men’s room was designed for the penis, women’s not so much. Now you need laws telling us differently? Pathetic.”
>
> Schilling’s common-sense post sent liberals scampering for safe spaces all across the fruited plain.
>
> The left-leaning sports network swiftly gave Schilling the heave-ho – much to the delight of LGBT activists and their cronies in sports journalism.
>
> “ESPN is an inclusive company,” they wrote in a statement to The New York Times. “Curt Schilling has been advised that his conduct was unacceptable and

> his employment with ESPN has been terminated."

ESPN is an inclusive company, which is why they need to exclude Curt Schilling.

Last year, Schilling was suspended from ESPN when he tweeted something against radical Islam.

Fox News reported on that, as well:

> ESPN says commentator Curt Schilling won't appear on the air for the next month in the wake of his anti-Muslim tweet.
>
> ESPN said Thursday that Schilling won't be on telecasts for the rest of the regular season or the American League wild-card game on Oct. 6.

The Daily Wire had a list of 5 people who were not fired for making comments critical of Christians and conservatives.

Consider this one:

> **Tony Kornheiser.** Kornheiser still co-hosts his leftist propaganda sports program *Pardon The Interruption* with fellow approved opinionsayer Michael Wilbon, despite the fact that in October, he compared the Tea Party to ISIS – on ESPN Radio. Speaking with *Huffington Post*'s Howard Fineman, Kornheiser said of Tea Partiers in Congress, "Are they like ISIS trying to establish a caliphate here?!" No problem. Kornheiser was suspended for two weeks back in 2010 for ripping an outfit worn by Hannah Storm: "She's got on red go-go boots and a Catholic school paid skirt…way too short for somebody in her 40s or maybe early 50s by now. She's got on her typically very, very tight shirt."

Yeah, that's not a firing offense, because it's OK to insult conservatives, but not Islamic State. Because come on, Tea Party is much more evil than Islam State, right? That's what ESPN thinks.

Seems to me that it's pretty clear that ESPN supports the gay agenda and radical Islam, since they go after people who criticize them. Why are you watching ESPN on TV, and why do you have a TV at all? Be a good steward of your money, don't hand it to the people who want to punish you for your core values.

New study: couples that delay sexual activity experience higher quality relationships

April 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Relationship stability, quality, communication, satisfaction
From Family Studies, news about TWO new studies.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> [T]wo recently published studies call into question the validity of testing sexual chemistry early in dating.
>
> My colleagues and I published the first study a few years ago in the American Psychological Association's *Journal of Family Psychology*. This study involved a national sample of 2,035 married individuals who participated in the popular online couple assessment survey called "RELATE." **We found that the longer a dating couple waits to have sex, the better their relationship is after marriage. In fact, couples who wait until marriage to have sex report higher relationship satisfaction (20% higher), better communication patterns (12% better), less consideration of divorce (22% lower), and better sexual quality (15% better) than those who started having sex early in their dating (see Figure 2). For couples in between—those that became sexually involved later in their dating, but prior to marriage—the benefits were about half as strong.**
>
> […]These patterns were statistically significant even when controlling for a variety of other variables such as respondents' number of prior sexual partners, education levels, religiosity, and relationship length.
>
> **The second study, by Sharon Sassler and her colleagues at Cornell University, also found that rapid sexual involvement has adverse long-term implications for relationship quality.** Using data from the Marital and Relationship Survey, which provides information on nearly 600 low- to moderate-income couples living with minor children, their study examined the tempo of sexual intimacy and subsequent relationship quality in a sample of married and

> cohabiting men and women. Their analyses also suggest that delaying sexual involvement is associated with higher relationship quality across several dimensions.
>
> They discovered that the negative association between sexual timing and relationship quality is largely driven by a link between early sex and cohabitation. Specifically, sexual involvement early in a romantic relationship is associated with an increased likelihood of moving more quickly into living together, which in turn is associated with lower relationship quality. This finding supports Norval Glenn's hypothesis that sexual involvement may lead to unhealthy emotional entanglements that make ending a bad relationship difficult. As Sassler and her colleagues concluded, "Adequate time is required for romantic relationships to develop in a healthy way. In contrast, relationships that move too quickly, without adequate discussion of the goals and long-term desires of each partner, may be insufficiently committed and therefore result in relationship distress, especially if one partner is more committed than the other" (p. 710).

The rest of the post talks about two reasons why this works: improved partner selection and prioritizing communication and commitment. Improved partner selection occurs because you haven't committed too much too soon (sexually) and you have time to let things play out to see if you really fit with the other person. And if you take sex off the table, then you have to use other means in order to build emotional intimacy – communication, service, support, etc.

That's two studies, and there's a third. Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail about a new study showing the importance of chastity for relationship quality and stability.

Excerpt:

> New couples who jump into bed together on the first date do not last as long in relationships as those who wait a new study has revealed.
>
> Using a sample of almost 11,000 unmarried people, Brigham Young University discovered a direct correlation between the length and strength of a partnership and the amount of time they took to have first have sex.
>
> **The study showed that those who waited to initiate sexual intimacy were found to have longer and more positive outcomes in their relationships while those who couldn't help themselves reported that their dalliances struggled to last more than two years.**
>
> 'Results suggested that waiting to initiate sexual intimacy in unmarried relationships was generally associated with positive outcomes,' said the report authored published by the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health.
>
> 'This effect was strongly moderated by relationship length, with individuals who reported early sexual initiation reporting increasingly lower outcomes in

> relationships of longer than two years.'
>
> The study examined four sexual-timing patterns: Having sex prior to dating, initiating sex on the first date or shortly after, having sex after a few weeks of dating, and sexual abstinence.
>
> Each one of these fields yielded different results in relationship satisfaction, stability and communication in dating situations.

Here's another recent study that shows that if a woman has more than her husband as a premarital sex partner, her risk of divorce increases.

His findings:

> Using nationally representative data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, I estimate the association between intimate premarital relationships (premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) and subsequent marital dissolution. I extend previous research by considering relationship histories pertaining to both premarital sex and premarital cohabitation. I find that premarital sex or premarital cohabitation that is limited to a woman's husband is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption.**However, women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship have an increased risk of marital dissolution.**

Here's another study that makes it even more clear.

Findings:

> Data from the 1988 US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) were utilized to assess the impact of premarital sexual activity on subsequent marital stability. **Among white NSFG subjects first married in 1965-85, virgin brides were significantly less to have become separated or divorced (25%) than women who had not been virgins at marriage (35%).**
>
> **[…]The lower risk of divorce on the part of white women with no premarital sexual experience persisted even after numerous intervening and background variables were controlled.**

This study supports what the Bible says about chastity and premarital sex:

> 1 Cor. 7:8-9:
>
> 8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to stay single as I am.
>
> 9 But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.
>
> The idea of "burning" here has to do with sexual desire. Here Paul tells all unmarried people that if they cannot control their sexual desires, they need to get married. Why? Because Paul assumes that one cannot fulfill this sexual desire outside of the marital bed. While Paul would love for them to remain single (1

> Cor. 7:7), he believes that sex outside of marriage is a destructive sin and *cannot* be used as a gratifying release of our sexual passions.

If you’re going to talk to a young person about sex, it’s a good idea to use these studies to explain what you lose by having sex too early in the relationship. Although they may respond with anecdotes to refute studies, studies are important because they represent LOTS of data points, not just one or two cherry-picked cases. My view on all this is the Bible’s view – no sex before marriage. But when talking to people about this issue, I find it useful to have evidence ready in order to be convincing in every way possible.

Democrat Governor of Virginia decides to allow 206,000 convicted felons to vote

April 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Which states allow felons to vote? (before this decision of course)

Hans sent me a post he wrote from Liberty Unyielding about a story from Virginia.

It says:

> Democratic "Gov. Terry McAuliffe of Virginia will use his executive power on Friday to restore voting rights to more than 200,000 convicted felons, circumventing his Republican-run legislature. The action will overturn a Civil War-era provision in the state's Constitution," reported the New York Times earlier today. "The sweeping order, in a swing state that could play a role in deciding the November presidential election, will enable all felons who have served their prison time and finished parole to register to vote. Most are African-Americans, a core constituency of Democrats, Mr. McAuliffe's political party." **Even murderers and rapists are now allowed to vote.**

Naturally, convicted criminals vote almost entirely for Democrats, since Democrats are soft on criminals.

Consider this study reported in the Washington Examiner:

> A new study of how criminals vote found that most convicts register Democratic, a key reason in why liberal lawmakers and governors are eager for them to get back into the voting booth after their release.
>
> "Democrats would benefit from additional ex-felon participation,"said the

> authoritative study in The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.
>
> The authors, professors from the University of Pennsylvania and Stanford University, found that in some states, felons register Democratic by more than six-to-one. In New York, for example, 61.5 percent of convicts are Democrats, just 9 percent Republican. They also cited a study that found 73 percent of convicts who turn out for presidential elections would vote Democrat.

I would imagine that most criminals who have not yet been caught also vote Democrat. That's the point of this action by the Democrat governor – to get more votes cast for Democrats.

More from Hans' article:

> Gov. McAuliffe's action also allows felons to "serve on juries." Do we really need violent felons, perjurers, and thieves serving on juries? And voting on ballot initiatives in Virginia that make law? Is lawmaking a function to be performed by law breakers? Or by law-abiding people?

Good Lord. And to think that Virginia used to be a conservative state.

Judge serves day in jail with veteran, waitress pays bill of grieving police officers

April 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two sweet stories to brighten up your Saturday.

First one is about a North Carolina judge, reported in the Washington Post.

It says:

> The judge knew that Sgt. Joseph Serna had been through a lot.
>
> The former Special Forces soldier did four combat tours in Afghanistan over a nearly two-decades-long career with the U.S. Army. Through those years, the Fayetteville Observer reported, Serna was almost killed three times: once, by a roadside bomb, then again by a suicide bomber.
>
> During a tour in 2008, Serna and three other soldiers were driving down a narrow dirt road in Kandahar when their armored truck toppled into a canal, the Associated Press reported. As water filled the vehicle, Serna struggled to escape.
>
> It was his fellow soldier, Sgt. James Treber, who saved him.
>
> "I felt a hand come down and unfasten my seat belt and release my body armor," Serna recalled to the AP. "Sgt. Treber picked me up and moved me to a small pocket of air. He knew there was not enough room for both of us to breathe so he went under water to find another pocket of air."
>
> Treber died from the accident, but Serna survived. He was the only one who did.
>
> While Serna's years in combat earned him three Purple Hearts and other military accolades, like many combat vets, he's been unable to leave the battlefield behind him. Since returning to the U.S., the decorated Green Beret has suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, WTVD reported, and been charged with driving under the influence.
>
> He entered the veteran's treatment court program in Cumberland County, N.C., over which state District Court Judge Lou Olivera presides.
>
> Serna has fought to stay sober, appearing before Olivera 25 times to have his progress reviewed. He confessed to Olivera that he lied about a recent urine test last week, according to WRAL.
>
> In response, Olivera sentenced Serna to one day in jail.
>
> The judge drove Serna to the jail in a neighboring county.
>
> "When Joe first came to turn himself in, he was trembling," Olivera told the Fayetteville Observer. "I decided that I'd spend the night serving with him."
>
> "Where are we going, judge?" Serna asked, the Observer's Bill Kirby Jr., reported Wednesday.

> “We’re going to turn ourselves in,” the judge said.
>
> As Serna sat down on the cot in his cell, WRAL reported, he heard the door rattle open again and saw Olivera standing before him. Olivera sat down beside him. Someone came and locked the door.
>
> “This was a one-man cell so we sat on the bunk and I said, ‘You are here for the entire time with me?’” Serna told WTVD. “He said, ‘Yeah that’s what I am doing.’”

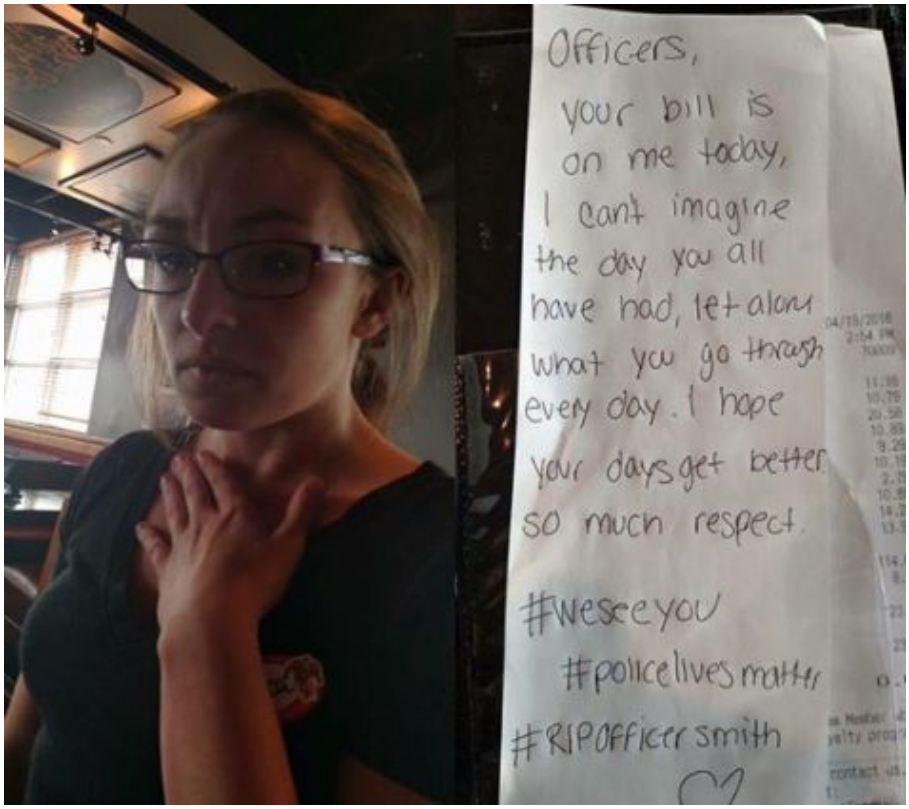

Waitress Jessica Dunbar

Second story is about a waitress who served police officers returning from a funeral, and it’s reported by NBC News.

It says:

> After Columbus SWAT officer Steven Smith’s funeral on Tuesday, a group of police officers went to the Red Robin in Polaris for something to eat.
>
> But they didn’t have to pay a thing, thanks to a server who gave them all their meals for free.
>
> The server, whose name is Jessica Dunbar, left a note on the back.
>
> “Officers,” she wrote, “Your bill is on me today. I can’t imagine the day you all have had, let alone what you go through every day. I hope your days get better. So much respect. #WeSeeYou #PoliceLivesMatter #RIPOfficerSmith”
>
> “I just wanted to do something nice,” Dunbar said. “You can’t put a dollar amount on making somebody happy.”
>
> Lt. Jeff Shelton, with the Wellington Police Department, was one of those at the restaurant.

> “It really touched all of our hearts,” Wellington said. “We weren’t expecting to be treated any different than normal, and just for somebody to come and do that, it really made our day.”
>
> Dunbar’s father is a retired Blendon Township police officer. She says the death of Officer Smith made her think about her own family.
>
> “He [Officer Smith] left behind a wife and kids. It could’ve been me. It could’ve been my dad.
>
> “People look up to them [the police]. To have them shake my hand and say ‘thank you’ to me, that was incredible.”

It’s always a good idea to be supportive of those who protect us from enemies like Islamic State, and criminals here at home.

Pro-abortion students shout abuse at black pro-life speaker at Harvard University

April 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

More than 160 students attended a Harvard University forum featuring Ryan Bomberger

Bound 4 Life reports on a recent pro-life event at Harvard University, of all places.

It says:

> On Tuesday, Ryan Bomberger of The Radiance Foundation addressed a student forum at Harvard University, a 90-minute discussion on abortion in the black community that turned hostile when students began shouting and walking out during the Q & A portion.
>
> In an event co-sponsored by Law Students for Life and Harvard Black Law Students Association, Bomberger spoke opposite Professor Diane Rosenfeld, lecturer and director of the Gender Violence Program at Harvard Law School. As students filed in, the auditorium at the historic Austin Hall neared capacity.

This is pretty cool:

> A black man who recently won a lawsuit brought against him and his wife by the NAACP, Bomberger explains that abortion in the black community is a personal issue for him. "I was once considered black and unwanted. It was very hard, at the time I was born, to place black children for adoption; so few families were available, because they used same-race criteria."
>
> He continues, "Today, abortion has a hugely disproportionate impact on the black community. Part of addressing this is dispelling the myth that black children are less than others. Regardless of pigmentation or any other traits, injustice should be a concern to everyone."

To be clear: being pro-abortion means being in favor of aborting children who have an unwanted race, or an unwanted sex. And don't kid yourself, pro-abortion people – that

happens a lot, according to a recent study. Every pro-abortion student who attended the event was in favor of aborting babies who are the "wrong color" or the "wrong sex". Abortion means a woman's right to choose to abort her offspring, through all 9 months of pregnancy, for any reason, *or for no reason at all.* The pro-abortion position ignores the rights of the innocent baby, who did nothing wrong to be put in this position.

Ryan faced a lot of opposition from pro-abortion students:

> Multiple sources confirm that, once the forum opened for questions following opening remarks, students repeatedly addressed Bomberger using profanity. The *New Boston Post* noted the event shifted to a "confrontational tone."
>
> Chrystal Benedict, who attended the event after a friend invited her, was disappointed many students refused to hear differing opinions. "I was surprised that what was meant to be a 'safe space for students to hear different perspectives' wasn't that at all. If you disagreed with the pro-choice opinion, you had to prepare for a verbal attack of outrage."
>
> When Bomberger began to respond to a question but was continually interrupted, he asked, "Do you want to hear my answer?" The interrupting student replied, "No! No, I don't want to hear your answer."
>
> Caleb Wolanek, Harvard J.D. candidate and Vice President of Law Students for Life, noted that Bomberger addressed students with respect despite not always being given the same courtesy. "Even when asked difficult questions, Ryan gave thoughtful, well-researched responses."

And:

> […][A] visibly angry student representing Reproductive Justice confronted the guest speaker. "The language you use is so offensive—for instance, we are not *pro-abortion*," she said. "So you're not *for* abortion?" Bomberger asked.
>
> The student retorted: "That's not what *pro-abortion* means; it implies we want everyone to have an abortion, when in fact we are *pro-choice*." Bomberger replied, "Language matters. It defines situations and brings clarity. *Pro-choice* doesn't bring any clarity to what you're talking about, while *pro-abortion* does because you are advocating for the legal right to abortion."
>
> "It's about as ridiculous as saying, those who were *pro-slavery* were *pro-jobs*," Bomberger continued, as his detractors responded with outrage. He raised his voice to be heard above the uproar: "I'm applying your same logic! *Pro-jobs* is nebulous and it doesn't mean anything. How is it any different?" The student walked out of the forum with two other Reproductive Justice activists.
>
> Bomberger commented later on the incident, "They couldn't say anything. These Harvard Law School students couldn't respond at all."

That's what students are taught at Harvard University, and nearly every university – the pro-abortion view, and how to scream insults and walk out if the pro-life view is

presented. And where do they learn this intolerance? Why, from their pro-abortion professors, of course.

The Washington Times noted that the white feminist professor dismissed his concerns about abortion disproportionately affecting black children, and even suggested that Bomberger himself should have been aborted because he was conceived in rape:

> One might think an invocation of Martin Luther King Jr. commonplace at an event titled "Abortion in Black Communities," but not Harvard Law School professor Diane L. Rosenfeld, who is white.
>
> The gender-violence professor mocked her debate adversary, pro-life leader Ryan Bomberger, who is black, when he showed video clips of the civil rights leader and cited statistics showing disproportionate rates of abortions in black communities.
>
> […]When Mr. Bomberger, who was conceived by rape, shared his personal story, he said Ms. Rosenfeld continued to harp on the rape scenario to defend abortion rights.
>
> "What happens if one of his victims, after she got raped, got pregnant?" Ms. Rosenfeld said at the event. "First, there's the lack of choice of who has access to your body — and then what to do about that horrible consequence."

According to her, Bomberger should just be killed, because he is not a person, he's just a "horrible consequence". To say that to a person – that they should have been aborted… you would have to be some sort of sociopath, I guess. Her attitude towards the black victims of abortion seems to be very similar to what white slaver owners must have thought of their slaves. And indeed, the same arguments that were used by whites to justify slavery are now brought forth to justify abortion: "They're not persons, they have no rights, they're just my property".

People need to realize that sexual autonomy has to be voluntarily controlled and restrained, because of the harm that it can potentially do to unborn children. I'm sure that people who have recreational sex have just as much fun doing it as people who get drunk and then drive, but someone has to make laws based on the rights of the victims. Not every choice is moral. We can do better than selfishness. We can do better than abortion.

You can watch a clip of Ryan making his case here.

Government investigates women for letting her children play in fenced-in backyard

April 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Winnipeg mother Jacqui Kendrick investigated by the government for unlicensed parenting

McKenzie tweeted this story from CTV News in Canada, and I had to blog it.

Excerpt:

> A Winnipeg mother says she was investigated by Child and Family Services simply for letting her children play in her backyard.
>
> Jacqui Kendrick, a stay-at-home mom, says a CFS worker showed up unexpectedly at her door in early April. The worker told her they were doing a "well-being check" after receiving a complaint about her children being left unsupervised.
>
> Kendrick has three children ages two, five and 10, who love to play in the family's backyard after school. The backyard is fully fenced in, with a wood fence covering three sides, and a portion of the front covered by a chain link fence and gate.
>
> Kendrick told CTV Winnipeg she's always either with her kids or looking in on them from her living room windows.
>
> […]Still, the worker with the CFS — the the provincial body that apprehends abused and neglected children — insisted she was obligated to investigate and ask a few more questions.
>
> "We had to go through a whole interview asking so many questions — asking me about if we've ever dealt with CFS before, what my childhood was like, how I punish my children, whether we drink or do drugs… She had to look to see where my kids slept. She had to see if we had enough food in the house," Kendrick said.
>
> "The whole time I'm sitting there, pretty much in tears, because I couldn't

> understand what was going on."

Well, this is just one big misunderstanding, so there will be no permanent record in government files, right? Wrong:

> Manitoba's Child and Family Services says it will not erase the file of a Winnipeg mother who was investigated for letting her children play in her backyard.
>
> The agency would not comment on the specifics of the case of Jacqui Kendrick, a stay-at-home mother of three. But regardless of the results of their investigation, the agency said it would not erase the file because all documentation and records need to be accessible in the event that another concern arises in the future.

This is the kind of thing that parents should know about when there are deciding where to live. I can guarantee you that the person who called the government is no conservative. Now imagine a nosy neighbor decided that your views on social issues, e.g. – the definition of marriage, shouldn't be passed on to your children. Or suppose a nosy neighbor didn't like the church that your children attended. Or the yard sign for a conservative candidate in your yard. There are government agencies out there to help them to make sure that your children believe the "right" views – the things that the secular left want them to believe.

What secular leftism teaches people on the left is that some opinions and values are so wrong that they are 100% justified in using the government to stamp them out. Something to think about when you are deciding where to live and how open to be with your neighbors about what you believe. By all means, make a big impact. But be aware of what the other side thinks about what you're doing.

Cruz campaign outmaneuvers Trump again in Maine

April 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

The Week reports on yet more bungling from the disorganized Trump campaign.

Excerpt:

> Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) snagged at least 65 of the 94 delegates awarded Saturday, boosting his shot at winning the Republican National Convention's hypothetical second ballot, should Donald Trump not secure the Republican Party's nomination outright.
>
> The senator picked up 19 of 20 delegates in Maine, 36 of 37 in Utah, nine in Minnesota, and one in South Carolina, *Politico* reports. Kentucky delegates did not reveal their leanings.

How did he do it? Was it witchcraft? That's what that clown Trump says. It's voodoo! And the media repeats everything he says, because they want the Republicans to nominate a clown.

So what really happened?

Cruz volunteer hands out signs at the Maine GOP Convention

Bangor Daily News explains:

> In a blow to Gov. Paul LePage, supporters of Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz took at least 19 of Maine's 23 delegates to the party's national convention on Saturday.
>
> They outmaneuvered front-runner Donald Trump — who is endorsed by the governor — on the floor of Maine's state convention with an eye toward a potential contested national convention in July between Trump, Cruz and Ohio Gov. John Kasich.
>
> "The grass-roots here is unbelievable," said Senate Majority Leader Garrett Mason, R-Lisbon Falls, one of the leaders of Cruz's Maine campaign. "I've honestly never seen anything like it in my tenure in politics."
>
> The Texas senator won 12 of 23 national convention delegates at Maine's March caucuses, with Trump winning nine and Kasich two. But they're only bound to their candidates on a first ballot at the convention in Cleveland. On subsequent ballots, they can vote for anyone.
>
> Trump is in front, but he isn't on track to have enough delegates to win the nomination outright before the convention. If he falls short, it would likely go to a second ballot for the first time since 1948, leaving an opening for Cruz and Kasich.
>
> Cruz's campaign used majority support at the Maine convention to install 19 supporters — some of whom would vote for other candidates, then switch to Cruz on a second ballot — as delegates.
>
> It was a big loss for Trump and LePage, even though the governor was elected as

> a delegate from Maine on Saturday, overcoming an effort from Cruz supporters to reject his bid.
>
> […]**[Cruz's] campaign circulated a slate of Cruz-approved delegate candidates earlier this week and during voting, Cruz activists paced the convention floor with posters showing it, with Trump and Kasich supporters aligning behind LePage's unsuccessful ticket.**

Witchcraft!

Things will be difficult for Cruz in the near term, as Donald Trump always does well in states that are more liberal, since he is a liberal. And the next few states are filled with liberals like Trump.

As the election race continues, though, more and more of Trump's real liberal positions are coming back. Well, I mean he believed them all up until just before he decided to run, but he had to hide them to fool his gullible supporters. Last week, he came out in favor of rape and incest exceptions to the pro-life view – a position which the Republican Party does not hold. He also expressed his support for men using women's bathrooms, if they feel that is appropriate. And he wants to raise taxes.

Cruz is even running an ad about Trump's new position:

So how does the race look? This article on Soshable explains:

> Here's the reality. If Cruz can win Indiana and stay close or even beat Trump in California, it's **virtually impossible for Trump to get 1,237 delegates on the first ballot**. If it goes to a second ballot, Cruz's chances of getting to 1,237 are much higher than Trump's. New York didn't change that. Trump's upcoming victories in the Northeast states on Tuesday won't change that, either. Indiana will decide whether the race continues. After that, California will decide the outcome.
>
> Cruz will win Indiana unless the media can make their false narrative stick. Polls show it to be close. In fact, they're very similar to Iowa before Cruz came in and won. That was a caucus state, so we can't really count on the same results, but the most demographically similar state to Indiana is Wisconsin which Cruz won handily.
>
> California is a different story, but at this point in the race the polls are worthless. We have over a month until then. Early voting starts shortly after Indiana results are in, so a win becomes even more important for Cruz.
>
> With all of this understood, there's only one conclusion for Cruz supporters: keep fighting tooth and nail. Don't listen to the mainstream media's narrative. Don't lose hope. Cruz has run an incredible campaign and his strength in delegates will result in the nomination as long as we can keep the pressure up, win in Indiana, and do well in California. All of the other states are pretty much set.
>
> As Trump's policies keep shifting to the left, Republicans are starting to realize that he's a Democrat clothed in the singular conservative principle of building a

> wall (which Cruz has wanted to do since 2012). We need to persevere through the lies being told by the media and remain resolute in our convictions to make the last conservative in the race the next GOP nominee.

Well, Cruz himself is very busy running ads and doing interviews.

Here’s one of his latest ads:

Pretty slick. And here he is on the Mark Levin show:

It all comes down to Indiana and California now, and Cruz has been in there organizing for months already.

Women verbally abuses man for refusing to have sex with her on the first date

April 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

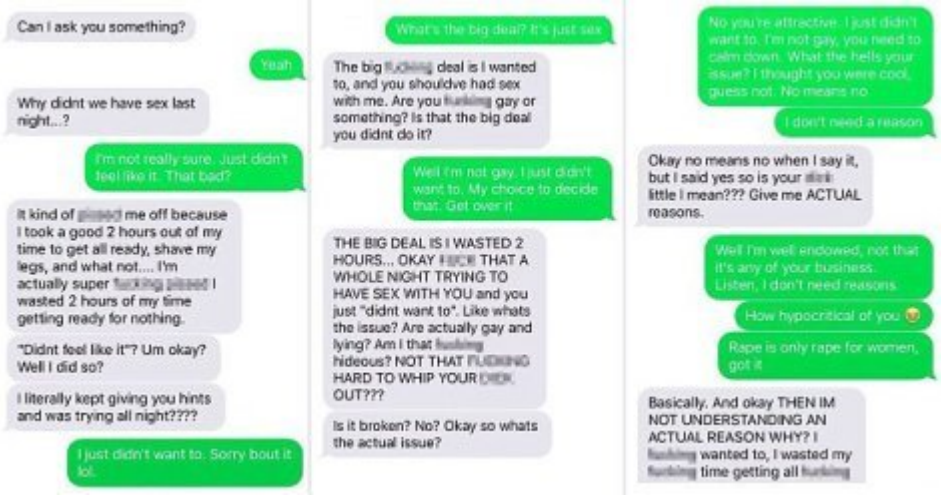

Click for larger image of chat between a sensible man and a crazy woman

Dina sent me this horrifying article from the UK Daily Mail.

It says:

> A man received a barrage of abuse over texts after refusing to sleep with a woman during a date.
>
> The screenshots of the messages, which were posted to image sharing site Imgur last night, show the man's female date initiate conversation before launching into an angry rant.
>
> The unnamed woman even goes so far as to suggest that her date had no right to turn down the opportunity to sleep with her, asking him whether he was gay and telling him no only means no when a woman says it.
>
> 'Can I ask you something?' the woman says.
>
> Once her unnamed date from the the night before agrees she continues. 'Why didn't we have sex last night?'
>
> The rational man writes, 'I'm not really sure. Just didn't feel like it. That bad?'
>
> It seems as though, according to the woman, it certainly is bad, as she goes on to send some foul-mouthed messages.
>
> 'It kind of ****** me off because I took a good 2 [sic] hours out of my time to get all ready, shave my legs, and what not… I'm actually super ******* ****** I wasted 2 hours of my time getting ready for nothing.'
>
> The confused woman goes on to add, 'I literally kept giving you hints and was trying all night.'
>
> However, the man stands his ground and replies: 'I just didn't want to. Sorry bout it lol. What's the big deal, it's just sex [sic].'

> But the woman just can't accept no for an answer and loses her cool completely at his response, as she writes: 'The big deal is I wasted 2 [sic] hours…Okay **** that a whole night trying to have sex with you and you just 'didn't want to.'
>
> 'Like what's the issue? Are you actually gay and lying? Am I that ******* hideous? Not that ******* hard to whip your **** out???'
>
> **And she even argues with the man's protestations of 'no means no' as she claims that the anti-rape catchphrase only has significance when she uses it.**
>
> **However, the man still manages to keep his composure and cooly answers the message, calling the woman 'hypocritical' and repeatedly telling her that he 'didn't need reasons' to not want to have sex with her.**
>
> **He also sarcastically remarked: 'Rape is only rape for women, got it.'**
>
> **Taking the comment seriously and without any explanation, the woman replies: 'Basically.'**

Read that part in bold carefully. She thinks that if she asks for sex, then the man has no right to tell her no. Compare that with the hysteria we are seeing from feminists over the "rape culture" on university campuses, where an unwanted kiss can now be prosecuted as sexual assault, and speech that offends a woman is "sexual harrassment". Where is the chastity and the modesty that we should expect from women? Is anyone brave enough to tell this woman that her approach to relationships is destructive and harmful?

The real underlying problem is feminism

I am seeing a lot of people trying to blame men for the way that the culture has gone ever since feminists pushed the sexual revolution on us. I think we should be blaming feminism. Feminism is the idea that there are no differences whatsoever between men and women. As such, the feminist prescription for the culture is that women start to work like men, drink like men, and have sex without feel bad afterwards like men. That's what they've been teaching women to do in the schools for some time, and guess what… young women believe this and they are acting on it. The normalization of fatherlessness through the generous single mother welfare programs pushed by Democrats just makes the problem worse.

Young women these days want to get attention from men, but they don't want to be saddled with the responsibilities, expectations or obligations of a relationship with him. So, they are very proud about not listening to a man, not caring for him, not investing in him, not auditioning for the role of stay at home wife and mother in any way. They try to get attention from men who have no interest or aptitude for marriage by showing skin and jumping into bed on the first date. They have been taught that their selfishness, i.e. – career, travel, fun, etc., is more important than pursuing marriage. Marriage-minded men are avoided because they are "sexist" for expecting her to develop the skills necessary to actually perform as a wife and mother. The feminist approach of promiscuity-not-

marriage basically ruins the woman's ability to commit to a man for life in the way a non-promiscuous woman could.

Women have a narrow window from 18-35 where they can invest their youth and beauty into the life of marriage-minded man, in order to build relationship capital with him that will keep him committed to her as she ages and loses her looks. Obviously, the more she focuses on learning useful skills, both professional and domestic, the more she will be able to attract a good man – a man with a long-term plan who is prepared to commit to a woman through all the stages of her life. Her late teens and 20s is the time to demonstrate ability to be a wife and mother. But a feminist woman's purpose for a man has nothing to do with marriage. She doesn't look for men who want to get married, she avoids them. She just wants to get attention and to show off the handsome men she can attract to her friends.

Older women seem to be telling younger women to not marry too soon. Older women tell the younger women to have fun with their sexuality, to focus on fun and thrills and travel and having experiences. Don't worry about marriage, have fun with hot guys. But the truth is that women cannot waste a moment of time finding a good man early and building her value with him by investing in him. From the time a man starts to work, he can benefit from a woman's support. As this Washington Post article notes, a wife can have an enormously positive impact on her husband's income, career and health, during these early years. When a woman decides not to make it a priority to find a man early and apply her youth, beauty and femininity to encourage and motivate him, she is losing out on being married to a strong man who will be there for her as she ages. Men do fall in love with women who invest in them – if they are good men. It's her job to find a good man, and to make good decisions with her life in order to attract him.

Marriage to a man is not something that a woman can "put off" with impunity. The choice to party and travel and have fun in her youth comes at a price. What sort of person would put off investing into a retirement fund early so she can waste the money of thrill-seeking and adventures? Everyone knows that sooner you find something worth investing in and start investing in it, the more of a return you will get over the long term. You can't just hope and pray for a retirement fund to materialize at age 35, after you spent all the years before having fun and traveling around. You have to build it up over a long period of time. Similarly, you can't just find a perfect husband at age 35 when you are ready to stop all your selfish fun-seeking and travel. You have to build that man into a competent husband, by helping him with his health, career, saving, and so on. Men and women benefit from each other, and they do better as a unit. The sooner they start to function as a unit, the more they can help each other, the more wealth they can build, the more of an influence they can have.

When you present the need to rollback feminism to man-blaming pastors and parents, typically, they will tell you that we have to keep the feminism intact, and men simply have to marry women who are acting like the women in our news story (until they reach age 35). I have had Christian men tell me that although I was chaste and industrious in my youth, I must now lower my criteria and continue to pursue marriage to women who,

like the woman in the story, have not prepared themselves in any way to be content with the roles of wife and mother. I'm sorry, pious parents and pastors, but I am not on board with your "make it work out for her so she'll be happy" plan. Women like the ones in the news story are not prepared for a life-long commitment. Pursuing fun for the first 35 years of one's life does not prepare a woman for marriage. Feminism is not compatible with self-sacrificial love for a husband. The time to fix the new generation of young women is now, though, so you all should get started with them. Get started rolling back their feminism instead of taking it as a given. Don't talk to me about my obligation to marry, you need to focus on producing marriage-minded women who reject feminism. Then we'll talk.

Can atheists help themselves to objective morality on atheism?

April 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Here's Dr. William Lane Craig explaining why you can't:

He presents 3 reasons why in the video, all of which are also discussed in his Defenders class:

> The mention of Plato brings to mind another possible atheistic response to the first premise of the moral argument that *if God does not exist, then objective moral values and duties do not exist*. Plato thought that the Good just exists as a sort of self-subsistent idea, as an entity in and of itself. Indeed, it is the most real thing in reality. The Good simply exists. If you find this difficult to grasp, join the company! Nevertheless, that is what Plato believed. Later Christian thinkers, like Augustine, equated Plato's Good with the nature of God. God's nature is the Good, and so it was anchored in a concrete object, namely, God. But for Plato, at least, the Good just sort of existed on its own as a kind of self-existent idea.
>
> Some atheists might say that moral values, like Justice, Mercy, Love, and Forbearance, just exist all on their own as sort of abstract moral objects. They have no other foundation; they just exist. We can call this view Atheistic Moral Platonism. According to this view, moral values are not grounded in God. They just exist all on their own.
>
> Unintelligibility of Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> What might we say by way of response to Atheistic Moral Platonism? Let me make three responses. First, it seems to me that this view is just unintelligible. I simply don't understand what it means. What does it mean, for example, to say

> that the moral value Justice just exists? I understand what it means to say that a *person* is just or that some *action* is just, but what does it even mean to say that in the absence of any persons or any objects at all, that Justice just exists? It is hard to understand even what this means. Moral values seem to be properties of persons, and so it is hard to understand how Justice can just exist as a sort of abstraction.
>
> Lack of Moral Obligation on Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> Secondly, a major weakness of this view is that it provides no basis for objective moral duties. Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that moral values like Justice, Love, Forbearance, and Tolerance just exist on their own. Why would that lay any sort of moral obligation upon me? Why would the existence of this realm of ideas make it my duty to be, say, merciful or loving? Who or what lays such an obligation upon me? Why would I have the moral duty to be merciful or loving? Notice that on this view moral vices like Greed, Hatred, and Selfishness presumably also exist as abstractions. In the absence of any moral law giver, what obligates me to align my life with one set of these abstract ideas rather than with some other set of abstract ideas? There just doesn't seem to be any basis at all for moral duty in this view. In the absence of a moral law giver, Atheistic Moral Platonism lacks any basis for moral obligation.
>
> Improbability of Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> Finally, thirdly, it is fantastically improbable that the blind evolutionary process should spit forth exactly those kinds of creatures that align with the existence of this realm of abstract values.1 Remember that they have no relationship with each other at all. The natural realm and this abstract moral realm are completely separate. And yet, lo and behold, the natural realm has by chance alone evolved exactly those kind of creatures whose lives align with these moral duties and values. This seems to be an incredible coincidence when you think about it. It is almost as if the moral realm knew that we were coming! I think it is a far more plausible view to say that both the natural realm and the moral realm are under the sovereignty of a divine being, who is both the creator of natural laws that govern the physical universe and whose commands constitute the moral laws that govern our ethical duties. This is a more coherent view of reality. Theism is a more coherent view because these two realms of reality don't fall apart in this disjointed way. They are both under the sovereignty of a single natural and moral law giver.
>
> For those three reasons, Atheistic Moral Platonism is a less plausible view than theistic based ethics such as I have been defending.

And now, I must be mean to the atheists, because I think this me too nonsense is just ridiculous, desperate intellectual dishonesty.

I remember having a conversation with one of my IT project managers who was an atheist, and she asked me what I thought would happen to dogs when they died. I said

“well they don’t have an afterlife so they just rot away when we bury them and get eaten by worms”. She was aghast and said “no they don’t, they go to Heaven”. That was just her wishful thinking, there. And that’s what morality on atheism is: wishful thinking. It’s just an appearance package that gets bolted on absolute meaninglessness and hedonism. And even if the atheist tries to make traditional decisions in their own lives, they typically push for full-on dismantling of Judeo-Christian values, especially in the sexual realm. And that spills over into abortion, divorce, same-sex marriage and government restraints on free speech, conscience and religious liberty.

Dear atheists: you cannot duct tape morality onto nihilism and have it be rational. We know you’re doing it to feel good about yourselves and to appear normal instead of wearing your nihilism openly. But your faked morality is not even close to the morality of theists, and especially not of Christian theists. Christians go against their self-interest because we imitate the self-sacrificial love of Christ, who gave himself as a ransom to save others. That makes no sense on an atheistic worldview, since this life is all you have, and there is no afterlife where your actions are in the context of a relationship with that self-sacrificial Son of God. In any case, free will doesn’t exist on atheism, so that means no moral choices regardless. These are the common sense implications of atheist first principles, and in fact that’s what you hear expressed from the finest atheist scholars: no free will, no right and wrong, no life after death.

If you want to see what atheists really think about morality, then take a look at this post featuring Matt Dillahunty, where he is asked to condemn the Holocaust as objectively wrong, and he refuses to do it. That’s intellectually consistent atheist morality right there. If the universe is an accident, and human beings evolved by accident, then there is way things ought to be, and no way we ought to act. And no one is there is no ongoing two-way relationship for our conduct to be part of, anyway. On atheism, human beings will die out individually and collectively in the heat death of the universe. Once the heat death of the universe arrives, there will be no one left to care how we lived after we’re dead – there is no one waiting for us who cares how we act towards him and towards others. Atheists can arbitrarily put any limits they want on their actions, based on what makes them feel good, and what makes people like them, perhaps taking account the arbitrary customs and conventions of the time and place they find themselves in. But it’s delusional and irrational make-believe for atheists to claim that morality is rational on their worldview.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines

- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Minnesota parents sue to force teachers and students to celebrate transgender child

April 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

It's not about acceptance, now you have to forced to affirm and celebrate other people's moral views – or else.

The Federalist reports:

> **Parents of a 5-year-old "transgender child" have filed a complaint against a St. Paul charter school, alleging it failed to protect him from bullying and refused to teach all the students their preferred transgender-awareness curriculum.**

> **David and Hannah Edwards, whose child was born a boy but now thinks he's a girl, has filed with the city's Department of Human Rights, claiming their child "wasn't able to take full advantage of Nova's educational opportunities because of her gender identity and expression. This violated her rights."**
>
> When the boy showed up at school wearing pink tennis shoes and wanting to wear a jumper like the girls in gym class, other children reportedly pointed and laughed at him. **The parents contacted the school and wanted something done to protect their child from bullying, despite the fact that the school currently has an anti-bullying policy.**
>
> Nova Classical Academy's executive director, Eric Williams, told 5 Eyewitness News the school has a mandatory policy, called the Bullying Prohibition Policy, which they are simply trying to follow. "He says that means providing a safe and welcoming environment for all students, regardless of their status."

> **The Edwardses, however, wanted more—for the school to teach only their views of human sexuality and to be engaged in helping their five-year-old boy transition to a girl.**

When it comes to the secular left, reality itself is no defense to their need to feel good about whatever it is that they decide they want to do. You better bake them a cake, or else. You better call them the sex they want you to, or else. You better let them use the bathroom they want, or else.

Meanwhile, in Colorado

ABC News reports that the appeal filed by Christian baker in Colorado has been dismissed, meaning that he will be forced to violate his conscience and participate in gay wedding ceremonies.

So, the ACLU and the Colorado Supreme Court decided that:

- Christians do not have a right to own and run their own businesses in accordance with their conscience
- Christians do not have a right to their personal beliefs, they must act as if they share the secular leftist beliefs of the ACLU and Colorado Democrats
- Christians do not have the same right to equality and fairness as other minority groups favored by the secular lefist elites, including the ACLU
- it is OK to use the law to discriminate against Christians and to punish Christians for acting on their religious beliefs
- The right of LGBT people not to feel offended overrides the right of Christians to have freedom of speech and freedom of religion – in America

You will be made to care.

Boys are falling further and further behind girls in UK public schools

April 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

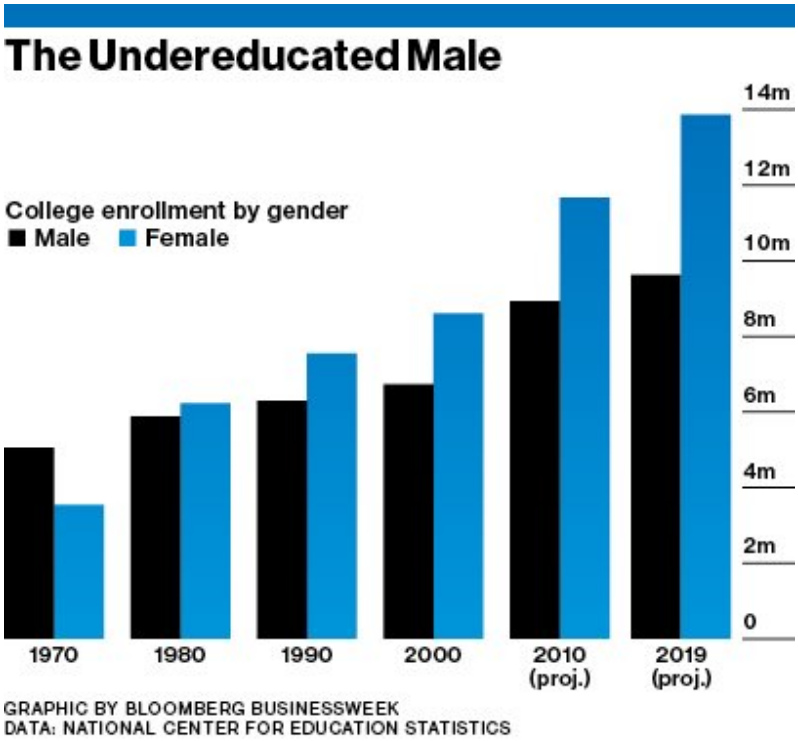

Boys are enrolling in university at a much lower rate than girls
This story is from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Each time UCAS releases statistics on equality of access to university in the UK, the gap between the entry rates for girls and boys gets a bit worse.
>
> Just before Christmas, our 2015 End of Cycle Report revealed that young women in the UK are now 35pc more likely to go to university than young men, and 52pc more likely when both sexes are from disadvantaged backgrounds.
>
> Today we publish data on the sex balance in specific degree courses, which shows that there are more women than men accepted to most subject areas.
>
> This highly entrenched trend is not just a reflection of the preferences of young men and women when it comes to making decisions about their lives after school or college. It is a direct consequence of years of lower educational achievement by boys, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, throughout primary and secondary education.
>
> At the end of primary education (age 11), only 22pc of boys achieve Level 5 or better in reading, writing and maths compared to 27pc of girls.
>
> By the age of 16, girls are over 20pc more likely to achieve five GCSEsincluding

> English and Maths at Grade C or better.
>
> By age 18, only 47pc of students studying for pre-university level qualifications are boys. 30,000 more girls than boys are studying for A levels or other academic qualifications which best support progression to higher tariff universities. Some 5,000 more boys than girls are doing vocational qualifications, but girls are outperforming boys in both academic and vocational qualifications at this level. The only exception seems to be that slightly more of the boys who are doing A levels get the very highest A* grades, and they still do rather better at maths than girls.
>
> Degrees supporting traditionally male-dominated professions such as medicine, law and dentistry now all recruit more female students than male. And move over James Herriot – 80pc of students accepted to veterinary medicine last year were female.
>
> The UCAS figures today also show that there are more women than men across a range of subjects including, pathology and anatomy, biology, genetics, nursing, social work, and English. Two years ago women overtook men in Philosophy, and the same happened with history subjects in 2011. Given that there are more men than women in the population, to achieve equality, there would need to be around 5pc more men than women across the board.

Why is this happening? Well the author of the piece nails the cause of the problem:

> **So what is going wrong? Does lower achievement for boys have anything to do with the 80pc female dominated state schools' workforce, which includes 85pc female teachers in primary schools and 62pc in secondary? Would boys respond and learn better with more male teachers and role models?**
>
> **[…]What about the curriculum and qualifications? In all the heated debates about the primary curriculum, I don't recall hearing anything about the different impacts on teaching and learning for girls and boys.**

If we were serious about fixing this, we would hire more male teachers and administrators in the schools. Boys do better studying material that is boy-friendly, and when the material is taught by male teachers. Boys tend to underperform in mixed-gender classrooms, too. But there is no effort in the schools to fix that, because men can never be victims – only women. No one in the education system wants to fix problems for boys. No one wants to speak up for boys for fear of being perceived as insufficiently feminist.

Are the UK schools doing anything to address these problems?

Of course not:

> **[…][A]lthough most schools will track the achievement of their boys and girls, there seems to be little focus on the gender gap in education**

> **policy. A recent FOI request by the men's human rights group, MRA-UK, asked the Department for Education if it recognized boys' underachievement, what initiatives are in place, and how much is budgeted for them in 2015/16. The response in July 2015 was "The Department does not fund any initiatives that just focus on addressing boys' underachievement".**

My advice to young men is to hit the math and STEM hard, and understand that the odds are stacked against you. You have to take your education seriously, because if you don't no one else will. You have to take your career seriously, because if you don't no one else will. The system isn't there to help boys. You'll have to make your own way on your own strength, and the system is there to fight you all the way.

Are the Galapagos finch beaks evidence of Darwinian evolution?

April 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
Jonathan Wells has an article about it at Evolution News.

It says:

> When Charles Darwin visited the Galápagos Islands in 1835, he collected specimens of the local wildlife. These included some finches that he threw into bags, many of them mislabeled. Although the Galápagos finches had little impact on Darwin's thinking (he doesn't even mention them in *The Origin of Species*), biologists who studied them a century later called them "Darwin's finches" and invented the myth that Darwin had correlated differences in the finches' beaks with different food sources (he hadn't). According to the myth, Darwin was inspired by the finches to formulate his theory of evolution, thoughaccording to historian of science Frank Sulloway "nothing could be further from the truth."
>
> In the 1970s, biologists studied a population of medium ground finches on one of the islands in great detail. When a severe drought left only large, hard-to-crack seeds, 85 percent of the birds perished. The survivors had beaks that were about 5 percent larger than the average beak size in the original population. The biologists estimated that if similar droughts occurred once every ten years, the population could become a new species in only 200 years. In a 1999 booklet defending evolution, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences called the finches "a particularly compelling example" of the origin of species.
>
> **But after the drought, birds with smaller beaks flourished again, and the average beak size of the population returned to normal. No net evolution had occurred.** No matter; Darwin's finches became an icon of

> evolution that is still featured in most biology textbooks.
>
> In the 1980s, a population of large ground finches, with larger beaks than the medium ground finches, migrated to the island. When a drought in 2004-2005 again reduced the food supply, the medium and large ground finch populations both declined. But since even the largest beaks among the medium ground finches were no match for the beaks of the large ground finches, the latter pretty much monopolized the larger seeds and the former had to make do with smaller seeds. This time, the medium ground finches that survived the drought had beaks that were *smaller* than the average size in the original population. Biologists studying the finches argued that birds with smaller beaks were better able to eat the tiny seeds that were left after the large ground finches ate the big ones, and they concluded that this was again an example of "evolutionary change."
>
> **[…]Wait a minute. Average beak size increased slightly during one drought, only to return to normal after the rains return. Then average beak size decreased slightly during another drought. A region of DNA is correlated with beak size. And somehow that tells us how finches evolved in the first place?**

There is an important distinction to make between micro-evolution and macro-evolution. Changes within a type is micro-evolution. Evolving a new organ type or body plan is macro-evolution. There is plenty of evidence for micro-evolution, but no evidence for macro-evolution.

What needs to be proven by the Darwinists is that the same process that results in different average beak size in a population of finches after a drought can create the finches in the first place. I think that Darwinists are credulous – they believe what they want to believe because they want to believe it, even if the evidence is incredibly weak. Darwinists must demonstrate that *heritable variations can result in the generation of new organ types and body plans.* Changes in average beak size is not interesting. What is needed is to show how the beaks, much less the wings, evolved in the first place.

Icons of Evolution

Jonathan has actually written about a number of misleading things that you may mind in Biology textbooks.

Here are the sections in his book "Icons of Evolution":

- The Miller-Urey Experiment
- Darwin's Tree of Life
- Homology in Vertebrate Limbs
- Haeckel's Embroys
- Archaeopteryx–The Missing Link
- Peppered Moths
- Darwin's Finches

- Four-Winged Fruit Flies
- Fossil Horses and Directed Evolution
- From Ape to Human: The Ultimate Icon

Dr. Wells holds a Ph.D in Molecular and Cell Biology from the University of California at Berkeley.

Kansas enacts law to attach work requirement to welfare benefits

April 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kansas governor Sam Brownback

This story is from the Daily Signal, and it's about a new (April 2015) Kansas law that produced great effects in the last year.

It says:

> Over the past several years, the number of Americans on food stamps has soared. In particular, since 2009, the number of "able-bodied-adults" without dependents receiving food stamps more than doubled nationally. Part of this increase is due to a federal rule that allowed states to waive food stamps' modest work requirement. However, states such as Kansas and Maine chose to reinstate work requirements. Comparing and contrasting the two approaches provides powerful new evidence about the effectiveness of work.
>
> **According to a report from the Foundation for Government Accountability, before Kansas instituted a work requirement, 93 percent of food stamp recipients were in poverty, with 84 percent in severe poverty. Few of the food stamp recipients claimed any income. Only 21 percent were working at all, and two-fifths of those working were working fewer than 20 hours per week.**
>
> **Once work requirements were established, thousands of food stamp recipients moved into the workforce, promoting income gains and a decrease in poverty. Forty percent of the individuals who left the food stamp ranks found employment within three months, and about 60 percent found employment within a year. They saw an average income increase of 127 percent. Half of those who left the rolls and are working**

> **have earnings above the poverty level. Even many of those who stayed on food stamps saw their income increase significantly.**
>
> Work programs provide opportunities such as job training and employment search services. For example, in Kansas, workfare helped one man, who was unemployed for four years and on food stamps, find employment in the publishing industry where he now earns $45,000 annually. Another Kansan who was also previously unemployed and dependent on food stamps for over three years, now has an annual income of $34,000.
>
> Furthermore, with the implementation of the work requirement in Kansas, the caseload dropped by 75 percent. Previously, Kansas was spending $5.5 million per month on food stamp benefits for able-bodied adults; it now spends $1.2 million.

So, I am doing a hunt to find the best states to live in, and Kansas is in my top 5. They have Governor Sam Brownback, and he has just done a magnificent job pushing conservative policies – not just social policies, but fiscal too. It's a great state, but still edged out by Oklahoma and Tennessee, in my opinion. We'll see what else Governor Brownback has in store, though.

You might think that all the news is bad, and that no one is putting into place any conservative policies. Well, of course the good red states are putting in these policies, and of course these policies are achieving the desired objectives. If you elect Democrats, you get Detroit. If you elect Republicans, you get welfare reform that lifts people out of dependency and into earned success. I'm sure that they feel better about not being dependent, too.

Mark D. Linville: does Darwinian evolution make morality rational?

April 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Have you ever heard an atheist tell you that naturalistic evolution is an answer to the moral argument? I have. And I found a good reply to this challenge in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". The chapter that responds to the challenge is authored by Dr. Mark D. Linville. It is only 13 pages long. I have a link to the PDF at the bottom of this post.

First, a bit about the author:

> Blog: The Tavern at the End of the World
> Current positions:
>
> - PhD Research Fellow
> - Tutoring Fellow in Philosophy
>
> Education:
>
> - PhD in Philosophy with a minor in South Asian Studies and a specialization in Philosophy of Religion, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy of Religion, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
> - MA in Theology, Cincinnati Christian Seminary
> - BA in Biblical Studies, Florida Christian College

Here is his thesis of the essay:

> Darwin's account of the origins of human morality is at once elegant, ingenious, and, I shall argue, woefully inadequate. In particular, that account, on its standard interpretation, does not explain morality, but, rather, explains it away . We learn from Darwin not how there could be objective moral facts, but how we could have come to believe—perhaps erroneously—that there are.
>
> Further, the naturalist, who does not believe that there is such a personal being as God, is in principle committed to Darwinism, including a Darwinian account of the basic contours of human moral psychology. I'll use the term evolutionary naturalism to refer to this combination of naturalism and Darwinism. And so the naturalist is saddled with a view that explains morality away. Whatever reason we have for believing in moral facts is also a reason for thinking naturalism is false. I conclude the essay with a brief account of a theistic conception of morality, and argue that the theist is in a better position to affirm the objectivity of morality.

And here's a sample to get your attention:

> But even if we are assured that a "normal" person will be prompted by the social instincts and that those instincts are typically flanked and reinforced by a set of moral emotions, we still do not have a truly normative account of moral obligation. There is nothing in Darwin's own account to indicate that the ensuing sense of guilt—a guilty feeling—is indicative of actual moral guilt resulting from the violation of an objective moral law. The revenge taken by one's own conscience amounts to a sort of second-order propensity to feel a certain way given one's past relation to conflicting first-order propensities (e.g., the father's impulse to save his child versus his impulse to save himself). Unless we import normative considerations from some other source, it seems that, whether it is a first or second-order inclination,one's being prompted by it is more readily understood as a descriptive feature of one's own psychology than material for a normative assessment of one's behavior or character. And, assuming that there is anything to this observation, an ascent into even higher levels of propensities ("I feel guilty for not having felt guilty for not being remorseful over not obeying my social instincts…") introduces nothing of normative import. Suppose you encounter a man who neither feels the pull of social, paternal or familial instincts nor is in the least bit concerned over his apparent lack of conscience. What, from a strictly Darwinian perspective, can one say to him that is of any serious moral import? "You are not moved to action by the impulses that move most of us." Right. So?
>
> The problem afflicts contemporary construals of an evolutionary account of human morality. Consider Michael Shermer's explanation for the evolution of a moral sense—the "science of good and evil." He explains,
>
> By a moral sense, I mean a moral feeling or emotion generated by actions. For example, positive emotions such as righteousness and pride are experienced as

> the psychological feeling of doing "good." These moral emotions likely evolved out of behaviors that were reinforced as being good either for the individual or for the group.2
>
> Shermer goes on to compare such moral emotions to other emotions and sensations that are universally experienced, such as hunger and the sexual urge. He then addresses the question of moral motivation.
>
> In this evolutionary theory of morality, asking "Why should we be moral?" is like asking "Why should we be hungry?" or "Why should we be horny?" For that matter, we could ask, "Why should we be jealous?" or "Why should we fall in love?" The answer is that it is as much a part of human nature to be moral as it is to be hungry, horny, jealous, and in love.3
>
> Thus, according to Shermer, given an evolutionary account, such a question is simply a non-starter. Moral motivation is a given as it is wired in as one of our basic drives. Of course, one might point out that Shermer's "moral emotions" often do need encouragement in a way that, say, "horniness," does not. More importantly, Shermer apparently fails to notice that if asking "Why should I be moral?" is like asking, "Why should I be horny?" then asserting, "You ought to be moral" is like asserting, "You ought to be horny." As goes the interrogative, so goes the imperative. But if the latter seems out of place, then, on Shermer's view, so is the former.
>
> One might thus observe that if morality is anything at all, it is irreducibly normative in nature. But the Darwinian account winds up reducing morality to descriptive features of human psychology. Like the libido, either the moral sense is present and active or it is not. If it is, then we might expect one to behave accordingly. If not, why, then, as a famous blues man once put it, "the boogie woogie just ain't in me." And so the resulting "morality" is that in name only.
>
> **In light of such considerations, it is tempting to conclude with C. S. Lewis that, if the naturalist remembered his philosophy out of school, he would recognize that any claim to the effect that "I ought" is on a par with "I itch," in that it is nothing more than a descriptive piece of autobiography with no essential reference to any actual obligations.**

When it comes to morality, we are not interested in mere descriptions of behavior. We want to know about prescriptions of behavior, and whether why we should care about following those prescriptions. We are interested in what grounds our sense of moral obligation in reality. What underwrites our sense of moral obligation? If it is just rooted in feelings, then why should we obey our moral sense when obeying it goes against out self-interest? Feelings are subjective things, and doing the right thing in a real objective state of affairs requires more than just feelings. There has to be a real objective state of affairs that makes it rational for us to do the right thing, even when the right thing is against our own self-interest. That's what morality is – objective moral obligations *overriding* subjective feelings. I wouldn't trust someone to be moral if it were just based

on their feelings.

The PDF is right here for downloading, with the permission of the author.

Conservative speakers take on political correctness at U Mass

April 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Conservative speakers face liberal students on campus

My friend N. sent me this video of a campus event at the EXTREMELY liberal University of Massachusetts. This is the center of the leftist universe, the worst place in the world for conservatives students.

WARNING: this video contains the most horrible swearing and language you can possibly imagine, and it will scar you for life. But it is really interesting to see how non-leftist ideas are received on a liberal university campus. It's just incredible, the screaming, shouting, insults, threats of violence – all from the secular left. It is so bad that even I cringed at some of the un-PC talk and thought the mean conservatives went too far at times. Even I was offended!

Here's the video:

Do not watch this with little kids or even teens around, it's just horrible, like watching a train wreck with everyone on fire and screaming and dying. I really feel bad about posting it, but my friend loved it so much, and I was permanently scarred by it. Holy snark, have the universities ever become radicalized by the secular left.

Speakers:

- Milo Yiannopoulos
- Christina Hoff Sommers
- Steven Crowder

Summary:

Feminism:

- Milo: feminism is cancer
- Sommers: feminist theory is put forward with lies, misrepresentations and false statistics
- Steven: the leftist students are shouting down the speakers because they are spoiled, entitled brats

Political correctness:

- Milo: etiquette is good for discussions, but political correctness undermines the pursuit of truth, and can even have deadly consequences, e.g. – citizens refusing to report the Muslim rape gangs in the UK because of fear of political correctness
- Sommers: etiquette is good for discussions, but political correctness is a way of pushing one set of political views and shutting down discussions
- Steven: political correctness is a tool for shutting down discussions used by people who don't have reason or evidence on their side

Hate speech:

- Milo: we should allow people who are extremists on either side to speak, because that allows people to hear them and reject them
- Sommers: some students are shouting down speakers because they oppose intellectual diversity, and are afraid that conservative views are correct and others will be persuaded if they are allowed to hear them
- Steven: leftists fear intellectual diversity, they shout down conservative speakers because they live in a bubble where they never hear libertarian or conservative points of view
- Milo: leftists are guilty of the worst kind of bigotry: they insist that gay people be leftists, that black people be leftists and women be leftists, they treat conservatives in these minority groups horribly

Is there a wage gap between men and women?

- Sommers: the evidence shows that the differences in pay are explained by what women choose to study, time women take time off for babies, how many hours women work, and other choices
- Sommers: women should major in things like economics and engineering, not feminist dance therapy

Are 1 in 5 women sexually assaulted on campus?

- Steven: a lot of these sensationalized rape claims later turn out to be false, e.g. – Columbia mattress girl, Virginia Rolling Stone girl

- Sommers: this is another example of how feminists advance an agenda by misusing statistics, but the number from real government studies is 1 in 53

This ends the panel discussion. I cannot write what the questions are, because the questioners were almost entirely rude, and just stood up and said lots of swear words, which you can apparently get credit for at the University of Massachusetts.

Several of my friends posted this video clip, taken from a member of the audience, which gives you a close up view of how indoctrinated in leftism the students are:

It seems to me that the barbarians are inside the gates, and the zombie apocalypse is nearly upon us. Can you imagine living next to one of these little psychopaths?

Ted Cruz picks Carly Fiorina for his running mate

April 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Your 2016 GOP ticket: Ted Cruz and Carly Fiorina

All my Facebook friends except Doug were thrilled with this pick, especially the Republican women. Let's look at some articles to see what we are getting with this pick.

Let's start with the radically leftist Washington Post, and socially liberally columnist Jennifer Rubin.

She gives 10 reasons why the selection of Fiorina will help Cruz:

> Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) announced his VP pick, Carly Fiorina, in Indiana this afternoon, taking his best shot to rouse the GOP and stop Donald Trump. Watching first Cruz and then Fiorina, one could see why this *might* work:
>
> […]2. She, in a somewhat convincing fashion, lumped Trump and Hillary Clinton together, saying they are not going to change the system. "They are the system," she said with great deliberateness. That's a plausible argument, actually. They are two very privileged, ideologically slippery candidates who've worked the system to their advantage. Cruz has tried to convey the same, but her delivery was simply better.
>
> […]5. She is making a straight play for female voters. She stressed her own experiences in the workplace. Cruz stressed them. Cruz recounted her standing up to Trump's insult about her face. Many women will perk up and listen to that message.
>
> […]7. She tried her best to humanize Cruz, mentioning they watched the Final Four together (this is*Indiana*, folks) and singing (yeah, *singing*) one of her made-up songs to the Cruz daughters. Women, especially younger moms, are likely to

> find that endearing. At least it was unexpected. The campaign can use some spontaneity.
>
> […]9. She and Cruz reinforce one another's mental agility. These people are smart, whip smart.

I can't help but think that every woman who has ever struggled in the workplace is going to have some sympathy for a Cruz-Fiorina ticket. Everybody resonates with the story of the woman who starts of as a receptionist and then rises to the level of CEO. It's important that conservative women be presented to contrast with radical feminist rhetoric.

Remember how Cruz talked about his mother Eleanor and his wife Heidi as "strong women"?

Picking Fiorina reinforces that this is something important to him, and creates a clear contrast with the promiscuous, pro-abortion, twice-divorced, adulterous misogynist scumbag that he is running against.

Jim Geraghty at National Review likes the pick, but for different reasons:

> She's strong and polished on the stump, equally at home giving a big policy speech, answering questions at a town hall, or offering one-liners on a late-night talk show. She's an outsider, in a year when political neophytes are all the rage. And most important of all, she has the best chance of any potential running mate to negate presumptive Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton's political strengths.
>
> "She tweets about women's rights in this country and takes money from governments that deny women the most basic human rights," Fiorina said at last year's CPAC, referencing the Clinton Foundation's unsavory donors. "I come from a world where speeches are not accomplishments. Activity isn't accomplishment. Title isn't accomplishment. I come from a world where you have to actually do something; you have to produce results."
>
> Fiorina can rip into Clinton without fear of being called sexist. She can also coopt Clinton's message to female voters, letting them know that she's been through exactly the same aggravations and indignities they've experienced in their everyday lives. She made a point of claiming the feminist mantle away from Democrats even as she announced that she was suspending her campaign:
>
> Do not let others define you. Do not listen to anyone who says you have to vote a certain way or for a certain candidate because you're a woman. That is not feminism. Feminism doesn't shut down conversations or threaten women. It is not about ideology. It is not a weapon to wield against your political opponent. A feminist is a woman who lives the life she chooses and uses all her God-given gifts.

If I had to summarize Fiorina in one sentence, it's that she is *competent.* She is the polar opposite of the clown Trump. She answers policy questions with so many details and so

much evidence, that even an anti-feminist like me thinks “gee, I’m glad that she is up there to put forward conservative views and not someone who doesn’t know what he is talking about”. I never feel that she is a shrill-shrieking harpy like Hillary Clinton when she talks. In fact, when she talks, I want her to keep talking. She has a way of being strong and earnest that is feminine, if that makes any sense. I enjoy hearing her speak, I enjoy that she is on the conservative team.

Related posts

- Ted Cruz’s position on gay marriage will work in the general election
- Which presidential candidate will simplify the tax code and create jobs?
- Ted Cruz’s roommate at Princeton: Craig Mazin or David Panton?
- Planned Parenthood declares Ted Cruz top threat to their abortion business
- Will there be a contested convention in Cleveland? Will Ted Cruz win it?
- Getting to know the real Ted Cruz, an account from his close friend Jay Nordlinger
- Which candidate is the best at defending religious liberty: Trump or Cruz?
- Ted Cruz and Mike Lee go after Obama administration for intimidating pro-lifers
- Scott Walker endorses Ted Cruz for President, Cruz trails Trump by 1 in California
- Which candidate is best at working with Democrats to get things done?
- Ted Cruz’s plan to lower taxes and simplify the process for filing tax returns
- Ted Cruz explains his position on the issues of abortion and right to life
- Ted Cruz introduces new bill to help ICE Agents enforce immigration laws
- Ted Cruz fought Rubio’s amnesty in 2013 and fought Obama’s executive amnesty in 2014
- Meet Ted Cruz’s secret weapon: his supportive and loving wife Heidi Cruz
- Watch Ted Cruz disagree with an Iowa farmer on the issue of ethanol subsidies
- Ted Cruz’s scary, unreported, undisclosed Goldman Sachs loan
- Harvard Law Review: Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen and is eligible to become President
- Ted Cruz blasts Democrats for hiding immigration histories of terrorists in the USA
- Ted Cruz invites climate scientists to Washington, D.C. to discuss climate change
- The FIVE departments that Ted Cruz would shut down if elected president

New Age expert explains his journey from new age mysticism to Christianity

April 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

I'm always cautious about people who convert to Christianity, because I want to make sure that they are going about their investigation the right way. I watched the testimony and when he started to talk about watching tons and tons of William Lane Craig debates, I got very interested.

I'm very skeptical of people claiming to be Christians who are raised in the church and never encounter the evidence for theism and the resurrection, and have to lookup the philosophical debate about problems like evil, suffering, hiddenness. I think the church generally does a poor job of producing converts who understand what they believe and why they believe it. In my thinking, unless you are watching debates and hearing the back and forth, and then reading about these things later on your own, you're probably not going to grasp the enormity of what Christianity is so that it will affect your priorities and decision-making.

Anyway, here is his testimony: (H/T Blake, JoeCoder, William)

I think that there is a lot of cultural Christianity and people think they can claim the label of "Christian" without re-reprioritizing, and taking some losses. All the Christians I know have things that they have had to give up, wounds that they have had to live with, problems that won't go away, hurts that are not being cared for. And yet we continue, because God is not seen as our cosmic butler. Most of the atheists I know rejected God because he interfered with their pursuit of pleasure, made them unpopular, or refused to give them what they needed to be happy. This guy is beyond all of that. He is not afraid to re-prioritize his entire life in a way that complies with the truth yet goes against his

self-interest. I was not raised in the church, so I don't normally say "praise God" at every little thing, but when I finished this video, that was my first thought. We sure could use more Christians who have that understanding of Christianity.

If you grew up around Christians, and learned about what Christianity is from your parents, peers and pastors, then may I just recommend to you that you watch one or two William Lane Craig debates, then work your way through a book like "Is God Just a Human Invention?" or "God's Crime Scene". If you're not a Christian now, and all you know about Chrisitanity was what you read in the Bible, and what other Christians told you, then you aren't in a position to assess the value of what was presented to you. Every day people are giving up their pre-Christian lives because they evaluate and accept the truth of Christianity. If you haven't looked into it at the level of reason and evidence, then you haven't looked into it at all. It's on you to puzzle out these things for yourself, and adjust.

By the way, Steve's web site is Spirit Science and Metaphysics.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Paul Helm debates William Lane Craig on Calvinism and Molinism

April 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

I listened to this excellent discussion between Dr. William Lane Craig and Oxford University Calvinist philosopher Dr. Paul Helm. I think this is a useful discussion in general because atheists often bring up problems with Calvinism as objections to Christianity in general, such as:

- If God exists, then he controls everything and I don't have free will
- If God knows the future, then I don't have free will
- If God controls everything, then I am not responsible for my sinning
- If God has to choose me to be saved, then I am not responsible for my damnation

Details:

> If God ordains the future, can humans have free will? Are people predestined for salvation? And what does the Bible say on the matter? William Lane Craig is a Christian philosopher and leading proponent of Molinism, a view of divine sovereignty that seeks to reconcile God's fore-ordination with human free will. Paul Helm is a leading Calvin Scholar. He defends the view that God predestines the future, limiting human freedom.
>
> MP3 of this show: http://cdnapi.kaltura.com/p/618072/sp/61807200/playManifest/entryId/1_jn0bdo52/flavorId/0_002f1k0d/protocol/http/format/url/a.mp3?clientTag=feed:1_jlj47tkv
>
> For William Lane Craig: http://www.reasonablefaith.org

> For Paul Helm: http://paulhelmsdeep.blogspot.co.uk/

I was surprised because my Calvinist friend Dina thought that Dr. Helm won this debate, but I thought that Dr. Craig won. So without further ado, here is the snark-free summary of the discussion. I also sent the summary to Dina to make sure that it was reasonably fair and accurate. She said it was biased, but she was predestined to say that. Anyway, there's a commentary on the debate over at Michael's Theology blog. And Calvinist Remington has a podcast review in parts. Part 1 is here.

Summary:

JB: Has Lewis had any impact on your apologetics?

Craig: Not as a scholar, but more as a model of a scholar who leaves a legacy through his published work

JB: How did you become interested in Calvinism?

Helm: Starting from childhood, and lately writing more on Calvinism from a philosophical point of view

JB: How do you view God's sovereignty?

Helm: Strong view of divine sovereignty, God is sovereign over all events, but that doesn't mean that they are determined by him

JB: What is Calvin's legacy?

Helm: He amplified an existing concept of predestination, and wrote on many other topics

JB: What is Molinism?

Craig: Molina affirms divine sovereignty as Paul Helm does, but he also affirms libertarian free will

Craig: Every event that occurs happens by God's will or by God's permission

JB: What about open theism?

Craig: Paul and I both oppose open theism

JB: How does Molinism reconcile human free will and divine sovereignty

Craig: God has knowledge of what would happen under any set of circumstances

Craig: God has knowledge of everything that COULD happen, and he has knowledge of everything that WILL happen

Craig: God knows what each person freely choose to do in any set of circumstances and he can place people in times and places where he is able to achieve his ends without violating creaturely freedom and creaturely responsibility

JB: How does this apply to the issue of salvation?

Craig: The circumstances in which God puts a person includes God leading people to him and he foreknows who will respond to his leading

Craig: God has ordered the world in such a way that he foreknows the exact people who will free respond to his leading if he puts them in certain circumstances

JB: Does God want to save the maximum of people?

Craig: My own view is that God does order the world in such a way that the maximum number of people will respond to God's drawing them to himself

JB: Is the Molinist view gaining ground?

Craig: Yes, Calvinists and open theists are both moving towards it, and Molinism is the dominant view among philosophical theologians

JB: Why has Molinism not convinced you?

Helm: It's an unnecessary theory, God's natural knowledge and free knowledge covers what middle knowledge covers

Helm: Calvinism has a stronger view of sin, such that God has to act unilaterally and irrestibly to save them

JB: Are creatures free on your view?

Helm: My view of free will is weaker than Craig's view of free will

Craig: For the Calvinist, grace is irresistible, but for the Molinist, grace is effective when it is met with a response from the creature

Craig: The Bible affirms the strong view of free will, when it says that in certain circumstances people can freely choose to do other than they do

Helm: But if a person is in circumstances X and they are free, then why don't they choose something that isn't what God can foresee

Craig: In identical circumstances, a person has the freedom to choose, and God doesn't determine what they choose, he just foreknows what they choose

Helm: How can God foreknow what people will freely do if people have this strong view of freedom that allows them to do anything? God would not know what people can freely do if they really are free

Craig: God has knowledge of what his creatures would freely do in any set of circumstances, he has knowledge of subjunctive statements

Craig: The Scripture is filled with statements that show that God has this knowledge of what people would do in other circumstances (e.g. – 2 Cor 2:8)

Helm: I am not denying that the Bible is full of subjunctive statements, but if humans have real libertarian free will, then God cannot know what they will do

Craig: I think God does preordain everything, Molinism has a strong sense of divine sovereignty BUT the foreordaining is done with the knowledge of what humans would do in any circumstances, so that what God ordains achieves his ends, but without violating creaturely free will

Craig: I take at face value the passages of the Bible where it says that God wants all persons to be saved

Craig: When the Bible says that God wants ALL persons to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), the Bible means that God wants ALL persons to be saved

Craig: So either universalism is true OR there is something that stops all from being saved outside of God

Craig: the something that prevents all from being saved is creaturely free will

Helm: Most people don't have the opportunity to hear the gospel, so God doesn't want all to be saved

Helm: People can still be responsible for what God "fore-ordains"

JB: Can a person really be responsible for wickedness if they didn't freely choose it?

Helm: Even though God is the only one who can act unilaterally to make save people, the people who act wickedly are still responsible

Craig: Molinism provides an answer to the problem of why not all people have heard the gospel, because by using middle knowledge he is able to know who would respond to the gospel if they heard it and he places those people in the times and places where they will hear it

Craig: That solution means that NO ONE is lost because they have not heard the gospel

Craig: There is Biblical support for (Acts 17:27) God choosing the times and places where people will live SO THAT they will be led by him and be able to respond to his leading

JB: Is God the author of sin, on Calvinism?

Craig: If Calvinists define providence to mean causal determinism, then he is the cause of every effect including human actions, and he is the one who causes people to sin

Craig: This view (determinism) impugns the character of God

Helm: I don't think that sovereignty requires determinism

Helm: God has mysterious resources – which I cannot specify – that reconcile his sovereignty with human responsibility for wickedness

JB: But if God is the cause of people doing wrong things, then how can they be responsible for it?

Helm: Well, humans do cause their own actions

Craig: Helm is right to say that God has resources to reconcile God's sovereignty with free will and human responsibility, and that resource is not an unknown mystery, it's middle knowledge

Craig: I can affirm everything in the Westminster Confession except for the one clause where they expressly repudiate middle knowledge as the mechanism for reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

Helm: Well, Calvinists have a strong view of sin so that humans cannot respond to God's leading

Craig: Yes, and that's why humans need prevenient grace in order to respond to him

Craig: God has to take the initiative and draw people to himself or they cannot be saved, but that grace is resistible, and that's what the Bible teaches (Acts 7:51), so humans are still responsible if they resist God

Helm: My view of grace is that it is monergistic and irrestible, it is a unilateral action on the part of God, like pulling someone out of an icy pond which they can't get out of

JB: If humans freely choose to respond to God's drawing and leading, does that diminish grace?

Helm: Many are called but few are chosen

Craig: Molinism does not require synergism – which is the idea that humans are partly responsible for their salvation

Craig: In Eph 2:8, Scripture is clear that faith opposite to works, and responding to God's drawing is not meritorious

JB: So receiving a gift is not meritorious?

Craig: It's the passive acceptance of what someone else has done for you

Helm: But doesn't this mean that you can lose your salvation, because you can accept and resist the gift of salvation?

Craig: That's a separate question that Christians can differ on, but if the Holy Spirit indwells a person and seals them, then that would argue for the view that salvation cannot be revoked

JB: Doesn't Romans 8 teach Calvinism pretty clearly?

Helm: This is called the "golden chain", and it does support Calvinism

Craig: Actually, this text is no problem for Molinists because the first link in the chain is foreknowledge, which, if it incorporates middle knowledge, is no problem for Molinists

Craig: What God is electing in Romans 8 is a specific group of people that he knows in advance of creating the universe will freely respond to his drawing them to him

Craig: In Acts 4:27-28, it is talking about God's foreknowledge, which involves and incorporates knowledge of what any individual would freely choose if placed in those circumstances

JB: If God actualizes a set plan with set circumstances for everyone, isn't that very similar to Calvinism?

Craig: Yes! It's a strong statement of divine sovereignty

Helm: Foreknowledge doesn't mean that God knows what people would do, it's just refering to God "knowing his own mind" about what he wants to do

JB: How do you respond to the fairness of God unilaterally and specifically choosing some people for salvation and choosing other people for damnation (because he refuses to act unilaterally for them)?

Helm: God ordinarily bypasses other people in the Bible, like when he chooses the Jews as his chosen people

Craig: The problem with that is that the Bible clearly teaches that God has a genuine will that all will be saved and he makes a genuine offer of salvation to all people

Craig: Also, just being a Jew and a member of the chosen people doesn't mean you were

saved, because some Jews rebelled against God

Craig: And there were also people outside of the Jewish people who were righteous and in a relationship with God, like Job

Helm: “the fabric of our faith” depends on God’s choice and his not-choice, it is fundamental to the Bible and to God’s character, and choosing them “effectively” (irrestibly and unilaterally)

Helm: The idea of God considering “possible worlds”, some of which are feasible and not feasible, with conflicts between the wills of free creatures in different circumstances, and then actualizing one world that achieve these ends is very messy

Craig: Some worlds may not feasible for God to create, for example a world in which everyone is saved – it is logically possible, but may not be feasible

Craig: God will not exercise any divine coercion to force people to go to Heaven against their own will

Helm: If God chooses a world because it is feasible, then he doesn’t love me directly, he is choosing a world, not individuals

Craig: Well, when God actualizes a world, he specifically knows which individuals will be saved within that world, but without disrespecting free will

Craig: The world isn’t primary, the individuals are primary

Helm: I think that middle knowledge can he included in God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge

Craig: The knowledge of what people would do in different circumstances is based on the freedom of the individuals

JB: Make your conclusions!

Craig: Molinism is a Biblical model for reconciling divine sovereignty with human freedom

Helm: It is intellectually mystifying to introduce this strong view of human freedom and it is not Biblical

Tennessee governor signs bill to protect freedom of conscience

April 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I like the state of Tennessee, it's probably the best state in the union overall, but their governor is such a moderate squish. Or, at least that's what I thought until story this happened.

Charisma News reports:

> Wednesday, Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam signed Senate Bill 1556, which provides for "freedom of conscience" protections for counselors and therapists, into law.
>
> The bill had been blasted by the American Counseling Association, as well as a number of LGBT "rights" groups. But Haslam said in an official statement after signing SB 1556 into law that he felt it offered key protections that weren't being reported by the media.
>
> "Although Senate Bill 1556 has received attention for its perceived focus, my job is to look at the actual substance of the legislation," he said. "After considerable thought and discussion with counselors both for and against the bill, I have decided to sign Senate Bill 1556.
>
> "There are two key provisions of this legislation that addressed concerns I had about clients not receiving care. First, the bill clearly states that it 'shall not apply to a counselor or therapist when an individual seeking or undergoing counseling is in imminent danger of harming themselves or others.' Secondly, the bill requires that any counselor or therapist who feels they cannot serve a client due to the counselor's sincerely held principles must coordinate a referral of the client to another counselor or therapist who will provide the counseling or therapy.

> "The substance of this bill doesn't address a group, issue or belief system. Rather, it allows counselors—just as we allow other professionals like doctors and lawyers—to refer a client to another counselor when the goals or behaviors would violate a sincerely held principle. I believe it is reasonable to allow these professionals to determine if and when an individual would be better served by another counselor better suited to meet his or her needs."

The Family Research Council, the premier think tank for social conservatives, had this to say:

> "Tennessee lawmakers are right in acting to protect the ability of therapists and counselors to continue serving in their helping profession in a manner that does not conflict with their religious beliefs. America has a long and storied history of respecting Americans' freedom to believe and actually live their lives according to those beliefs. It was this tolerance and understanding that led the first Congress and the American people to enshrine religious freedom in our Constitution.
>
> "Senate Bill 1556 is an important first step in preserving this fundamental freedom for those who do not agree with the Left's radical ideology. Tennessee joins North Carolina and Mississippi in the growing list of states refusing to criminalize people whose beliefs about sexuality and marriage are at odds with President Obama's extreme political and social agenda.
>
> "The response from the Left to this modest bill once again reveals the absolute intolerance of those seeking to redefine human relationships and sexuality. It is clear that their goal is not access to services, it's forcing all Americans to accept their system of beliefs or face government imposed penalties. They believe that a therapist or counselor who can't in good conscience violate their deeply held beliefs should not be allowed to continue to serve. They believe that counseling students like Julea Ward should be forced to violate their conscience or be blocked from practicing.
>
> "Many therapists and counselors are motivated to serve by sincerely held religious beliefs, they and everyone else are entitled to First Amendment protections," concluded Perkins.

There was a separate press release by the FRC regarding the case of Julea Ward, in case you want to double-check the details about what universities due to Christian students when laws like this one are not in place.

Like I said, I am really surprised at Governor Bill Haslam – he has a reputation as a social moderate, fiscal conservative. It will be interesting to see how the fascists on the secular left respond to this. Tennessee does not have as many big corporations as Georgia or North Carolina do, which makes them a safer state to live in if you value your religious liberty. They might just let this one go.

Studies show: families that pray together are stronger and closer

April 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible (not sure what the baby is thinking though)
Here's an article that I found on the Family Studies blog.

It says: (links to studies removed)

> A lot of research has been devoted to the question of whether religion is a force for good among today's families, and while the findings are mixed, studies have found plenty of reason to believe that faith can be a powerful adhesive for families working hard not to come undone. Regular religious service attendance is tied to lower divorce rates, for example, and religious institutions can be powerful intermediaries in helping families in crisis and promoting chastity and fidelity, which in turn affect social ills like out-of-wedlock childbearing and divorce.
>
> […]That individual prayer can improve the lives of those who undertake it is a well-documented fact supported by even the secular, medical world. Its benefits can include reduced stress, increased self-awareness, better communication, and a more empathetic and forgiving attitude towards others.
>
> It's hardly a stretch to suggest those benefits would expand to families that then pray together. For starters, family prayer time is quality time together, time not spent in front of the television or a smartphone, but rather, time spent communicating on a deeply personal level. One study found that children with parents who pray more than once daily report better relationships with their parents, even if that prayer is not done with their children, implying that there is something contagious about the positive effects of prayer in family life. Another study found a positive correlation between increased trust and prayer time

> between couples.
>
> Other sociologists have argued that joint prayer can be a powerful mediation tool that leads couples to be more forgiving. As Mark Butler, a professor of marriage and family therapy at Brigham Young University, put it: “When people pray (about tensions in their relationship) they are helped to see their part in the problem. They’re helped to see what they can do themselves to make a difference. And they are helped to soften. All these things help with conflict resolution.”

The nice thing about prayer and church attendance is that it is an opportunity for people to tune the world out and think about the big things. It’s a time to think about other people, for one thing. It’s also a good time to be humble and acknowledge the things that are out of your control.

Right now, a few of my friends have been telling me about some of the problems they are facing as a result of the declining economy. We had only 0.5% GDP growth last quarter – awfully close to a recession. I have friends who have lost work hours, friends who have lose their health care, friends who are facing liberal professors in graduate school, friends who either cannot find work or whose spouses cannot find work. And *lots* of friends who have projects and exams. That’s a lot of people to think about and care about. I frequently talk to God about the problems that other people are facing and try to urge him to give them some help.

In case you are wondering how to pray to God, there is a good article about it on the Cold Case Christianity blog.

Here’s the practical part:

> If you are a follower of Christ, you can have confidence that God will always say “yes” to the following requests:
>
> **Requests for Wisdom**
> “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” (James 1:5)
>
> **Requests for Forgiveness**
> “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)
>
> **Requests for Salvation**
> “…for ‘whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.’” (Romans 10:13)
>
> While God says “yes” to these kinds of requests, He often says “no” or “not yet” to other kinds of requests.

The most frequent thing I ask for is wisdom. Wisdom for me, wisdom for my friends. I like praying for wisdom for myself and others because it’s a sure thing, and I hate doing something that comes back to bite me later. I ask for God to help me to understand and accept the moral law, so that I make decisions that don’t come back to hurt me later.

The other thing I pray for a lot is forgiveness. This is a big no-no for atheists, because they don't like to feel ashamed or obligated or "bad" because they are immature. But the truth is that God is knocking on the door of our hearts, each one of us, and we are not responding as much as we should. I often think of how much good I could do if I were not so selfish. I often choose to to do things that are fun instead of taking time to read the Bible or doing other things to learn more about who God is. And I don't think that I am doing as much to defend God's interests as I could be doing. I have regrets about this, and I when I pray, I tell God about how I feel about not being as faithful to him as I wish I could be.

The most frequent way that I am thankful is by thanking God for the people who do things that are consistent with a Christian worldview. I like that Steven Crowder spoke to liberal students at the University of Massachusetts. I like that conservative Republicans introduce pro-life and pro-religious-liberty laws. I like that my friends in Ratio Christi do a good job at organizing apologetics events on university campuses. I try to pay attention to all this good news and I run down the list to God when I pray, reminding him to be looking out for those who are committed to sticking by him against the selfish secular leftists.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

April 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!
Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change

> his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

Who should you marry?

April 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Painting: “Tristan and Isolde”, by Marc Fishman

Dina found this article in the leftist Washington Post, of all places. The author explains how her husband lovingly helped her to recover from her Caesarian section. He actually had to to carry her to and from the bathroom, very slowly. Until she was better.

She writes:

> At the time, I thought: This is why I married this man. Not for his fabulous head of hair or his beautiful, light-brown eyes — though those things were certainly bonuses. But no. It was his gentleness, his thoughtfulness, his loving heart, his caring nature that sealed the deal for me.
>
> As a dating coach who works with singles in their 20s to 50s, I see a lot of people focusing on superficial things that have little to do with a potential partner’s character. I get it — I once obsessed over those things, too.
>
> **Most of all, I see how the trap of chemistry can lead people astray. Chemistry is important, but as far as relationships go, it’s only half the equation.**
>
> So how do you look for these deeper, more important qualities in the early stages of dating? Some might argue there’s no way to tell in, say, the first several months of dating someone — after all, it is the honeymoon stage — if this is the type of person who will help you onto the toilet during times of trial. I disagree.
>
> Looking back to the early days of dating Dave, all the signs were there. He

> treated my friends with care and kindness, which showed me he had the ability to be compassionate. The way he scoured the Internet for the perfect gifts for my parents and nephews showed me his thoughtful, generous side. He rubbed my back and wiped my tears after I suffered a heart-wrenching squash match loss, showing me that validating my feelings was important to him (even if I'm the most competitive person alive and it was just a squash match). He listened to me vent after a difficult fallout with a colleague, showing me he was ready and willing to be a part of my support system.
>
> When he stayed up until the early hours of the morning, helping me with Web site issues relating to my coaching business, I knew I'd found someone who would support me in my professional goals as well as physically and emotionally. When he held my hands and said "We'll figure it out" while I was dealing with a frustrating medical situation, that was probably my biggest clue that he'd be so supportive in that hospital room years down the line.
>
> **Singles should keep their eyes open for these signs. They're more telling than a person's job, salary, ambition or education; whether he or she is the "right age"; has the perfect body; or can dazzle you with their charm and wit.**
>
> Keep your eyes open for the type of person who one day might lovingly help you onto the toilet.

When you are married, the amount of time you spend having fun and feeling thrilled is minuscule. The real problems you face are money problems, sex problems, in-law problems, holiday problems, parenting problems, etc. Most often in marriage hard stuff needs to get done. Compromises need to be made. There is actually very little fun and thrills. If you want to prepare for most of what marriage is about, then it's best to focus on responsibilities, expectations and obligations. Spouses need each other, and the ability to sense someone else's needs and to care for them, even when it's not fun for you, is non-negotiable.

The bottom line for people to understand is that you can't be a selfish fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, FOMO-traveling hedonist all your life, and then jump into marriage at the last minute. You have to mature and grow your character so that you are ready for the responsibilities, expectations and obligations that marriage requires. If you go through your 20s and 30s always doing what feels good "in the moment", then don't expect that any last-second desperate marriage will last. You are are the person who makes all the decisions before you marry. If your repeated pattern of decision making is to do what feels good "in the moment", then you won't suddenly be able to turn into a person who is *comfortable* with doing what marriage requires of you. You have to form your character first so that you are comfortable with what marriage requires of you.

Believe me when I tell you that some women who hate the things I write are now divorced, unemployed and running short of money because they thought that following their heart was the right approach to life. If you're not practicing how to deny your own

self-interest and practicing how to build up the people around you to practice for marriage, then your marriage won’t last. If you push away people who are wiser than you are, so that you can follow your heart, your marriage won’t last. If you think that you have to delay marriage in order to tick off items on a list of impressive, fun things that the feminist culture says are “more important” than marriage, then your marriage won’t last. The prerequisite to a successful marriage is growing up.

Arthur Brooks: why is the American public shifting from optimism to envy?

April 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

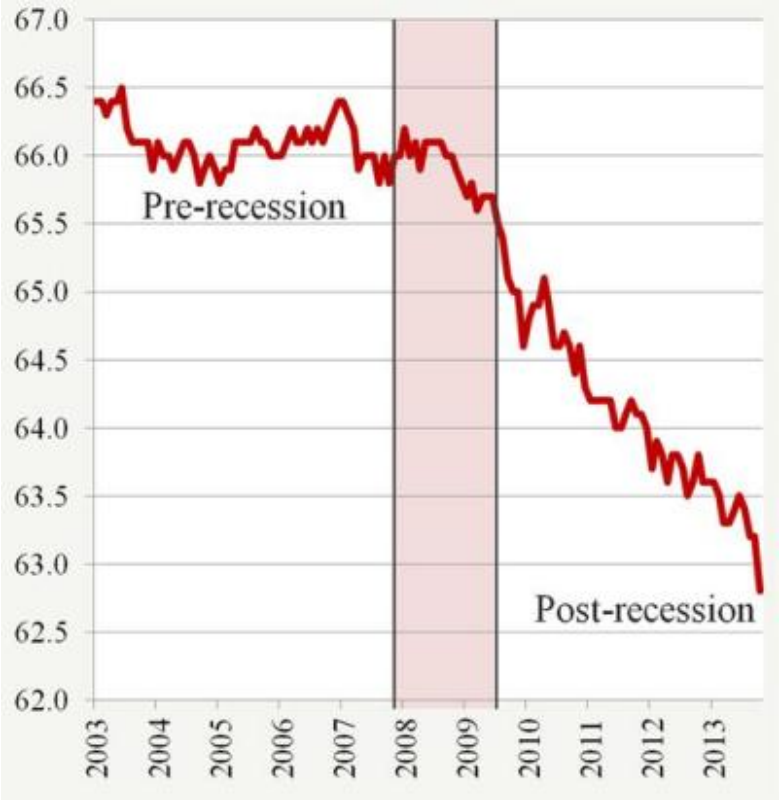

Labor Force Participation down to 62.8%

An editorial by Arthur Brooks appeared today in the leftist New York Times. His topic is the shift from optimism to envy, why it is happening, and whether envy makes us happier than optimism.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> The Irish singer Bono once described a difference between America and his native land. “In the United States,” he explained, “you look at the guy that lives in the mansion on the hill, and you think, you know, one day, if I work really hard, I could live in that mansion. In Ireland, people look up at the guy in the mansion on the hill and go, one day, I’m going to get that bastard.”
>
> […]Unsurprisingly, psychologists have found that envy pushes down life satisfaction and depresses well-being. Envy is positively correlated with depression and neuroticism, and the hostility it breeds may actually make us sick. Recent work suggests that envy can help explain our complicated relationship with social media: it often leads to destructive “social comparison,” which decreases happiness. To understand this, just picture yourself scrolling through your ex’s wedding photos.
>
> My own data analysis confirms a strong link between economic envy and unhappiness. In 2008, Gallup asked a large sample of Americans whether they

> were “angry that others have more than they deserve.” People who strongly disagreed with that statement — who were not envious, in other words — were almost five times more likely to say they were “very happy” about their lives than people who strongly agreed. Even after I controlled for income, education, age, family status, religion and politics, this pattern persisted.
>
> It’s safe to conclude that a national shift toward envy would be toxic for American culture.
>
> Unfortunately, in the wake of the Great Recession, such a shift may well be underway, given the increasing anxiety about income inequality and rising sympathy for income redistribution. According to data from the General Social Survey, the percentage of Americans who feel strongly that “government ought to reduce the income differences between the rich and the poor” is at its highest since the 1970s. In January, 43 percent of Americans told the Pew Research Center that government should do “a lot” to “reduce the gap between the rich and everyone else.”
>
> Why the shift? The root cause of increasing envy is a belief that opportunity is in decline. According to a 2007 poll on inequality and civic engagement by the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, just 30 percent of people who believe that everyone has the opportunity to succeed describe income inequality as “a serious problem.” But among people who feel that “only some” Americans have a shot at success, fully 70 percent say inequality is a major concern.
>
> People who believe that hard work brings success do not begrudge others their prosperity. But if the game looks rigged, envy and a desire for redistribution will follow.
>
> This is the direction we’re heading. According to Pew, the percentage of Americans who feel that “most people who want to get ahead” can do so through hard work has dropped by 14 points since about 2000. As recently as 2007, Gallup found that 70 percent were satisfied with their opportunities to get ahead by working hard; only 29 percent were dissatisfied. Today, that gap has shrunk to 54 percent satisfied, and 45 percent dissatisfied. In just a few years, we have gone from seeing our economy as a real meritocracy to viewing it as something closer to a coin flip.

There is a good lesson in this for people who want what is best for the poor. Simply receiving money from others is not going to make poor people happy. What we need to focus on is providing the poorest people with opportunities.

One way to help the poor is by giving poor children a better education. Conservatives support school choice, which takes money away from government and puts it back in the hands of parents, letting them choose the best school for their child. Schools have to produce good outcomes in order to earn the money, just like private businesses have to compete for customers. But Democrats oppose school choice, as when they killed the

D.C. voucher program that helped poor black students. Less school choice helps public schools to be insulated from competition, which provides worse outcomes to students, especially poor minority students. If we really cared about poor, minority students, we would put pressure on public schools to compete with private schools. But the Democrats don't want that, they prefer to give favors to their teacher union allies.

Democrats also want to punish job creators with high taxes and burdensome regulations. Democrats passed Obamacare, which punishes businesses with taxes if they allow part-time workers to work for more than 30 hours a week. Many jobs were lost because of this, and many people are now struggling to pay higher premiums for plans with higher deductibles and co-pays. Obamacare is a nightmare of intrusive regulations, too. Now the Democrats are talking about raising the minimum wage, which is going to put even more pressure on employers to lay off workers, because they can't afford to pay them more money for the same work. For Democrats, this is all to the good, though. Because if the poor don't have jobs, or can't work enough hours, they start to see the economic game as "rigged" and they are more responsive to "envy rhetoric". They start to look to big government for handouts, rather than trying to prevent the government from taxing and regulating job creators.

What we need to see is that it's not the Democrats' objective to help people find jobs. They gain when people become more envious, like in European countries, and start to vote to grow the size and power of government to redistribute wealth. Speeches about income inequality never have the goal of giving people jobs. None of Obama's policies aim to do that. That's why he won't build the Keystone XL pipeline, or boost domestic energy development here at home. Instead, they want to extend unemployment benefits and pass the costs on to the next generation. Their goal is to get you unemployed or on disability or on welfare, so that you will vote for the government to continue to take your neighbor's money to give it to you. That manufactured envy is what keeps the Democrats in power.

This plan to borrow from young people to buy the votes of old people today works for a while, until the money runs out. But by then, the politicians who put in place the redistribution programs are usually long gone .

A lesson about men for marriage-minded women from the movie “High Noon”

May 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marine prays with his wife on their wedding day

One of my favorite movies for explaining the differences between men and women is “High Noon” (1952).

Here’s the summary from IMDB:

> Former marshal Will Kane (Gary Cooper) is preparing to leave the small town of Hadleyville, New Mexico, with his new bride, Amy (Grace Kelly), when he learns that local criminal Frank Miller has been set free and is coming to seek revenge on the marshal who turned him in. When he starts recruiting deputies to fight Miller, Kane is discouraged to find that the people of Hadleyville turn cowardly when the time comes for a showdown, and he must face Miller and his cronies alone.

The main theme of the film concerns Amy’s decision to break her wedding vows the very day that she makes them. She tells her new husband that he must bow to her will, and give up his male role as protector. When he explains his reasons for standing his ground to her practically (Miller will hunt them down) and morally (he has a duty protect the town), she dismisses both. She tells him that if he doesn’t run away from Miller and his gang with her, that she will get on the train and leave town by herself.

The intro of film shows the member’s of Miller’s gang assembling, and the words of the song explain the central conflict between husband and wife:

Here's the part of the lyrics we care about:

The noonday train will bring Frank Miller.
If I'm a man I must be brave
And I must face that deadly killer
Or lie a coward, a craven coward,
Or lie a coward in my grave.

O to be torn 'twixt love and duty!
S'posin' I lose my fair-haired beauty!
Look at that big hand move along
Nearin' high noon.

He made a vow while in State's Prison,
Vow'd it would be my life or his'n
I'm not afraid of death, but O,
What will I do if you leave me?

Do not forsake me O my darlin'
You made that promise when we wed.
Do not forsake me O my darlin'
Although you're grievin', I can't be leavin'
Until I shoot Frank Miller dead.

What's interesting is that his new wife Amy apparently does not understand the meaning of wedding vows or the natural roles of good men as protectors of the weak, and fighters against evil. Although she vowed to stick by him and help him, the minute anything threatening appears that makes her feel unhappy, she abandons her vows and abandons her man. Let's break down her mistakes now, using actual conversations from the movie.

First, she doesn't understand or respect the man she married *as a man*:

> **Kane**: *[while riding out of town]* It's no good. I've got to go back, Amy.
>
> **Amy**: Why?
>
> **Kane**: This is crazy. I haven't even got any guns.
>
> **Amy**: Then let's go on. Hurry.
>
> **Kane**: No, that's what I've been thinkin'. They're making me run. I've never run from anybody before.
>
> **Amy**: I don't understand any of this.
>
> **Kane**: *[after looking at his vest watch]* Well, I haven't got time to tell ya.
>
> **Amy**: Then don't go back, Will.
>
> **Kane**: I've got to. That's the whole thing. *[He turns the buggy around and rides back into town]*

Her feelings and her desires for the world to be a happy place for her are so strong that they cloud her judgment.

Second, she doesn't understand the threat posed by evil men:

More:

> **Kane:** I sent a man up five years ago for murder. He was supposed to hang. But up North, they commuted it to life and now he's free. I don't know how. Anyway, it looks like he's coming back.
>
> **Amy:** I still don't understand.
>
> **Kane:** He was always wild and kind of crazy. He'll probably make trouble.
>
> **Amy:** But that's no concern of yours, not anymore.
>
> **Kane:** I'm the one who sent him up.
>
> **Amy:** Well, that was part of your job. That's finished now. They've got a new marshal.
>
> **Kane:** He won't be here until tomorrow. Seems to me I've got to stay. Anyway, I'm the same man with or without this. [He pins his badge on his vest]
>
> **Amy:** Oh, that isn't so.
>
> **Kane:** I expect he'll come lookin' for me. Three of his old bunch are waiting at the depot.
>
> **Amy:** That's exactly why we ought to go.
>
> **Kane:** They'll just come after us, four of 'em, and we'd be all alone on the prairie.
>
> **Amy:** We've got an hour.
>
> **Kane:** What's an hour?…What's a hundred miles? We'd never be able to keep that store, Amy. They'd come after us and we'd have to run again, as long as we live.
>
> **Amy:** No we wouldn't, not if they didn't know where to find us. Oh Will! Will, I'm begging you, please let's go.
>
> **Kane:** I can't.
>
> **Amy:** Don't try to be a hero. You don't have to be a hero, not for me.
>
> **Kane:** I'm not trying to be a hero. If you think I like this, you're crazy.

Instead of recognizing how her feelings are deceiving her about the threat and trusting her husband, she tries to force him to accept her mistaken view of reality by threatening to abandon him.

One of Kane's ex-girlfriends has a talk with Amy, which helps her to understand who Kane is, and what is expected of her:

> **Amy**: That man downstairs, the clerk, he said things about you and Will. I've been trying to understand why he wouldn't go with me, and now all I can think of is that it's got to be because of you…Let him go, he still has a chance. Let him go.
>
> **Helen**: He isn't staying for me. I haven't spoken to him for a year – until today. I

> am leaving on the same train you are…What kind of woman are you? How can you leave him like this? Does the sound of guns frighten you that much?
>
> **Amy**: I've heard guns. My father and my brother were killed by guns. They were on the right side but that didn't help them any when the shooting started. My brother was nineteen. I watched him die. That's when I became a Quaker. I don't care who's right or who's wrong. There's got to be some better way for people to live. Will knows how I feel about it.
>
> **Helen**: I hate this town. I always hated it – to be a Mexican woman in a town like this.
>
> **Amy**: I understand.
>
> **Helen**: You do? That's good. I don't understand you. No matter what you say. If Kane was my man, I'd never leave him like this. I'd get a gun. I'd fight.
>
> **Amy**: Why don't you?
>
> **Helen**: He is not my man. He's yours.

Helen understands the need for a wife to stand by her man. But Amy's response to evil is to shut her eyes and focus on feeling good and being happy. Notice that her "better way" is unspecified – it's just a feeling she has that pacificism and no-violence will somehow "work" to stop evil. But in reality, pacifism is not a "better way" of dealing with evil – it does not work. Her pacifist response not only does not make evil go away, it actually encourages more evil. Weakness emboldens evildoers, and laying down your arms provokes them to do more evil. Will Kane knows this, but she won't listen to him.

You can watch the final gunfight here, as well as Amy's final decision:

So, this is why I really recommend this movie as a discussion-starter when you like a girl and are thinking of marrying her. It clarifies the essential problem with many young women today not being ready for marriage. To be fair, most women come around to respect their husbands and his different roles after they get married. However, the risk of divorce is so dangerous that it makes sense to bring it up for discussion before the marriage happens. Marriage is supposed to be an engine to serve God, and the success of that enterprise cannot be left to chance. You can't just rely on the fact that she says the words of the vow, you have to check to see if she has a habit of keeping her promises when it goes against her own self-interest.

Ask yourself: Who are you, as a man? And does your woman accept that you have obligations to stand up to evil and do good ? Will she support you in your battle against evil, or will the marriage just be about her feelings and desires? I would especially beware of women who think that God is speaking to them through their feelings and desires. Look at her friends: are they practical and successful? Or are they irresponsible, unaccountable and reckless? Look at her father: does he have a plan for her, and does he lead her to be practical, frugal and hard-working? If you are not going to get an ally and a supporter in a wife, then you will not be able to serve God well, as a married man. Think about it.

Cruz out-organized Trump again in Arizona and Virginia

May 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump with some of his registered Democrat supporters

Leftist Politico reports on the battle for GOP delegates.

Excerpt:

> Donald Trump's campaign got burned again Saturday in the hunt for loyal delegates to the Republican national convention — this time on turf where he'd recently trounced his rivals in primary elections.
>
> […][H]e walked away in defeat in Arizona — losing about 40 of the 55 delegate slots that were up for grabs on the day.
>
> […]Though all of Arizona's delegates are bound to vote for Trump on the first vote at the national convention, most are likely to flip to Cruz if Trump is unable to clinch the nomination.
>
> And Cruz wasn't done racking up victories on Trump's turf. In Virginia, where Trump beat Cruz by a two-to-one margin in a March 1 primary, Cruz's forces captured at least 10 of the 13 delegates on the ballot. The Texas senator won 18 of 24 delegates in local Missouri conventions, even though Trump won that state on primary day as well.
>
> In all, Cruz won about 80 delegate slots on the day of the more than 170 up for grabs. Another handful went to Ohio Gov. John Kasich, and even Marco Rubio — who dropped out of the race on March 15 — scored about seven supportive delegates. Another dozen haven't revealed who they support yet.

What's amazing is that the Cruz campaign could have had all 13 delegates in Virginia, but the campaign let Donald Trump have 3 delegates.

ABC News explains:

> Cruz surrogate Ken Cuccinnelli argued that the outcome today was not out of line, because Trump only won 38 percent of the vote in Virginia.
>
> "Ted is successfully coalescing — unifying, most of the rest of the party and that's the only way we can do this, that's the only way we can win a vote like this," he told ABC after the vote.
>
> "That and having a good grassroots is why we're doing so well in these events all around the country," he added.
>
> Cuccinelli went on to say the slate was an "olive branch" to Trump supporters.
>
> "If we wanted a 13-0 slate, we could have had it. Instead we supported the mixed slate that was a unity slate, and that's an effort we're trying to make all around the country," he said.

Incredible. I don't know if you guys remember Ken Cuccinelli, but I am a huge admirer of that man. He lost the race to be governor because the GOP establishment did absolutely nothing to back him in the election, because he was seen as "too conservative". Too much of a Tea Party outsider. Cuccinelli has made positive comments about intelligent design – that's how I know of him. And he is very strong against global warming socialism, as well. Nice to see people I respect on Team Cruz-Fiorina. We have all the real conservatives.

Today, Chris Wallace interviewed Trump about his incredibly high unfavorable numbers among Hispanics and women:

I for one am not surprised that someone so self-contradictory cannot win any delegates at the state level.

Related posts

- How well is Obamacare working, and will Ted Cruz or Donald Trump fix health care?
- Which candidate is the best at defending religious liberty: Trump or Cruz?
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- Trump supported the bank bailout and auto bailout, Cruz opposes all bailouts
- Should evangelical Christians prefer Donald Trump on moral grounds?
- What are the “New York Values” that Trump’s evangelical Christian supporters admire?
- Donald Trump would expand Obamacare into single-payer health care system

Which presidential candidate will simplify the tax code and create jobs?

May 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How can we make the complicated tax code simpler?

Steve Forbes explains what would work, in Forbes magazine.

He writes:

> NEXT TO THE UNSTABLE DOLLAR, the biggest deadweight today on the American economy is the horrific federal income tax code. It is past time we junked this incomprehensible, opportunity-killing and corrupting monstrosity and replaced it with a simple flat tax. The returns we, the people, must file by today (even if you file for an extension, you have to pay what you owe Uncle Sam by this date) should be the last time we have to suffer through this ordeal.
>
> **More than 40 countries and jurisdictions (such as Hong Kong) have variations of a flat tax, and those systems have worked well.**
>
> For those unfamiliar with the concept, a flat tax is a single-rate income tax system that has few or no deductions. You could literally fill out your return on a single sheet of paper or with a few keystrokes on your computer.
>
> The most basic and profound argument for a flat tax is moral.
>
> The IRS estimates we spend 6 billion hours a year filling out tax forms. Experts calculate we spend over $200 billion a year complying with the income tax code.

The nice thing about the flat tax is that you can already see what happens in countries that have adopted it, by looking at the change in GDP growth in the years before the flat tax was adopted compared to the years after the flat tax was adopted.

Here’s a comparison of 3 countries that adopted flat tax rates at different times:

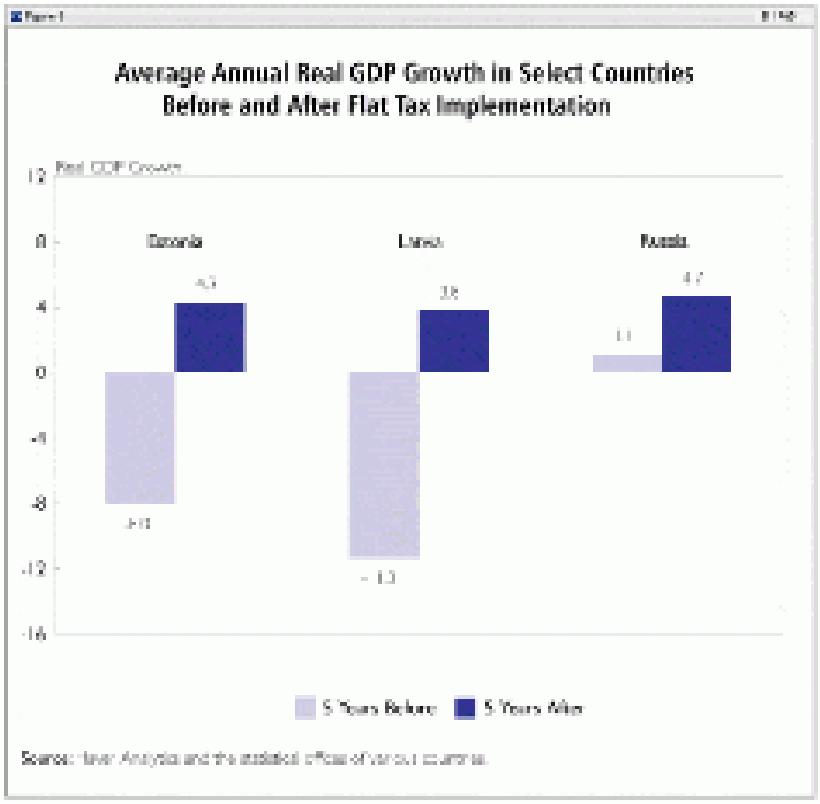

Forget the rhetoric: what happens to GDP growth after enacting a flat tax policy? (Source)

As you can see, when people waste less time filling in their taxes, they have more time for productive activities. And don't let anyone fool you: a productive economy creates more jobs, and builds the resumes of the workers so that they can be resilient to layoffs and other challenges to their peace of mind and security.

So which candidate is going to give us a flat tax, and the economic growth that goes with it?

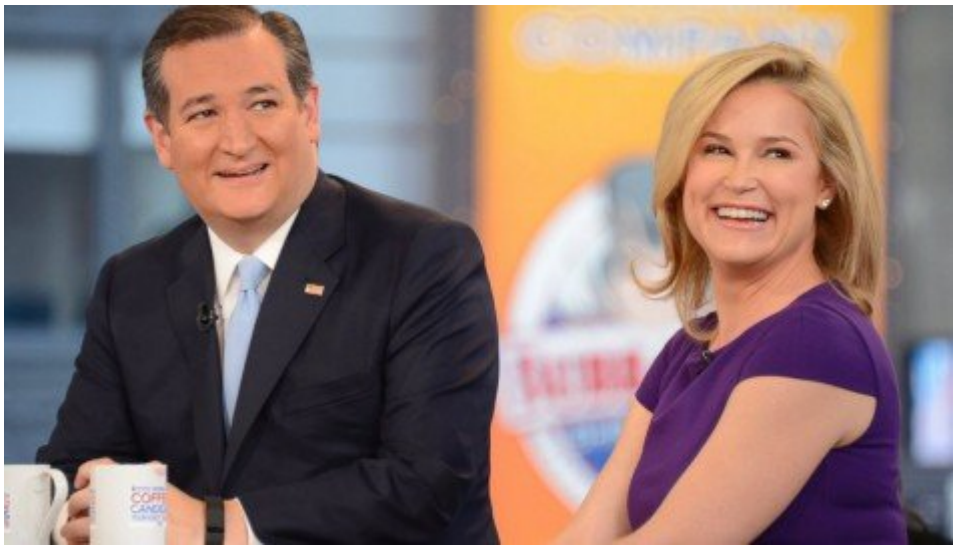

Ted and Heidi Cruz have a plan to simplify the tax code

The centrist Forbes magazine summarizes Cruz's flat tax plan:

> Ted Cruz claims that his tax plan would supercharge economic growth, boosting GDP by as much as 5% a year for a decade or more. That's, umm, an ambitious goal to be sure. However, there is actually good reason to believe that he's right.

> As long as we're careful about how we define GDP growth and also as long as we consider all the ways in which his plan will change the economy. This does mean being a little perverse in our assumptions: but also correct in our assumptions.
>
> The basics of the plan are that income taxes will be cut for all. Also, that pretty much all business taxation will be replaced with a 16% flat tax. It is claimed (and Cruz has Art Laffer there claiming it with him) that such a relief from the burdens of taxation will produce an explosion of economic growth. This is not, I feel, entirely believable to put it mildly. While there may well be specific bottlenecks in the taxation system the total take, at 35 to 36% of GDP, isn't large enough for it to be causing a general lack of economic growth. Not in my opinion at least and in the opinion of vanishingly few economists too.

Conservative economist Stephen Moore says this about the Cruz plan in The American Spectator:

> Senator Ted Cruz has a flat tax plan borrowed from a blueprint in a book by Arthur Laffer and me called, *Return to Prosperity*.
>
> […]Conservatives should be excited about the Cruz flat tax. It's what tax filers have been waiting decades for:
>
> First, the Cruz plan would give America the lowest tax rates since the income tax was devised 100 years ago. For this reason, these plan are estimated by the Tax Foundation to grow the economy by a gigantic $2 trillion extra GDP per year after 10 years. That's exactly the opposite effect of the Hillary and Bernie show plans.
>
> Second, Cruz's plan eliminates almost all deductions and credits — which is how they get the rate so low. The IRS could be dramatically shrunk in size. Don't forget, when there are fewer deductions, there are fewer ways to cheat on your taxes. The lower the tax rate, the less incentive to cheat, which means greater voluntary compliance.
>
> Third, because the Cruz plan is "border adjustable," imports are taxed at the flat rate when they are brought into the U.S., but American products sold abroad are not taxed at all. This would level the global playing field for American manufacturers, tech firms, and drug companies and bring these jobs scampering back to the U.S. Blue collar union workers should love this.
>
> […]Some conservatives complain that the tax is *too* efficient and so it will raise too much money.

Moore works for the Heritage Foundation, the number one conservative think tank, which features conservative policy on social, fiscal and foreign policy issues. My favorite think tank.

And famous economist Art Laffer says this: (H/T Dad)

Art Laffer is a speaker for the American Enterprise Institute, which champions the free enterprise system that made America great.

If you are nervous about the economy, you need to vote for Ted Cruz and get this plan enacted. Imagine not having to worry about losing your job, losing work hours, and so on. I would like to get in on a stock market boom so that I can pay off my mortgage faster. If you all join me in voting for Ted Cruz, we can all stop worrying about money for the next 10 years. But we need people to get behind economic policies that work. Steve Forbes, Stephen Moore and Art Laffer are experts in tax policy. We need to listen to the experts, and we need to do what has been proven to work, not what sounds good.

Related posts

- Ted Cruz's position on gay marriage will work in the general election
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- Ted Cruz explains his position on the issues of abortion and right to life
- Ted Cruz introduces new bill to help ICE Agents enforce immigration laws
- Ted Cruz fought Rubio's amnesty in 2013 and fought Obama's executive amnesty in 2014
- Meet Ted Cruz's secret weapon: his supportive and loving wife Heidi Cruz
- Watch Ted Cruz disagree with an Iowa farmer on the issue of ethanol subsidies
- Ted Cruz's scary, unreported, undisclosed Goldman Sachs loan
- Harvard Law Review: Ted Cruz is a natural born citizen and is eligible to become President
- Ted Cruz blasts Democrats for hiding immigration histories of terrorists in the USA
- Ted Cruz invites climate scientists to Washington, D.C. to discuss climate change
- The FIVE departments that Ted Cruz would shut down if elected president

Bible study: Paul’s continuing effort to disciple the Thessalonians

May 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

U.S. Marines “The Chosin Few”, Dec. 1950 (Chosin Reservoir, North Korea)

I was asked by my friend Kevin to do more Bible study, and two of the books he asked me to do are 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians. He had reason for asking this, and I found out after I sent him my reflections. So, I thought I’d better write these up so that you all get something out of this, too.

Background

You can read more about the author, background and dating of 1st Thessalonians.

You can read more about the author, background and dating of 2nd Thessalonians.

Obviously, go and read both letters. Why not, it’s the Bible. You’re supposed to be reading it anyway.

The relevant parts

See if you can guess the point I want to make from what I cite from each book before you read my conclusion.

1 Thessalonians 2:3-12:

> 3 For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit;
>
> 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.
>
> 5 For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for

> greed—God is witness—
>
> 6 nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.
>
> 7 But we proved to be gentle among you,as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.
>
> 8 Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.
>
> 9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.
>
> 10 You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;
>
> 11 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,
>
> 12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

1 Thessalonians 2:17-20:

> 17 But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face.
>
> 18 For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us.
>
> 19 For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?
>
> 20 For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-3,6-13:

> 1 Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone,
>
> 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,
>
> 3 so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.
>
> 6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you,
>
> 7 for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith;
>
> 8 for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord.

> 9 For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account,
>
> 10 as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?
>
> 11 Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you;
>
> 12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you;
>
> 13 so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4:

> 3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater;
>
> 4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13:

> 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.
>
> 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you,
>
> 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you;
>
> 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.
>
> 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.
>
> 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.
>
> 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.
>
> 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

OK that's all I want to quote, but do read both letters. It's good for you to read the Bible and to know what the priorities of Christians used to be. This is the real Christian deal,

and you ought to be informed about it, so that you know how to make your own decisions that reflect the concerns and priorities of the first Christians.

My thoughts

I'm at the 1000-word limit now, so this one will go long. I don't think that quoting the Bible should count anyway, you all should be reading that all the time. Anyway, what is the point?

Well, Kevin wanted me to read this because he thinks that I hover around young Christians a lot and fuss about whether they are going to church, whether they are reading apologetics, whether they are doing their homework, and passing their exams. You would not believe some of the things happening in the lives of my Christians friends! Every day, I hear new things:

- my dog died
- my professor is a liberal bully
- I'm starting university
- I got a new job
- I am starting an internship
- I got 95+ on all my exams
- I opened an account with Fidelity
- my grandmother died
- I missed a final exam
- I cried in class
- I broke up with my boyfriend / girlfriend
- I moved into a new house
- my work hours are being reduced
- my husband can't find a job
- I hate my job
- I can study the Bible with you on Friday night
- I got a new Beta fish and here's a video of him swimming
- my team members aren't working on our course project

And more. I think Kevin wanted me to know that he was glad that I was meddling in the lives of all of these people, and that it was similar to what Paul does. Paul does not preach to people so that he will think that he is important or clever. He likes to debate and persuade, but he's not a silver-tongued orator. Paul isn't just swooping by to solicit donations or preen about how great he is and then leave. He actually has an interest in the lives of other Christians. He actually tries to live among them and set an example for them of how to live. He wants the people to follow his lead, not follow his words. He always says "do what I do" not "do what I say". His emphasis is on doing as an example, and having ongoing relationships with the people he gave an example to. He doesn't just do a big public event and then forget about the people that he spoke to. He's not doing what he's doing for himself – he has a genuine interest in the people he speaks to. He

wants them to know God, and to do what God wants. And although he does want these people to love one another, that doesn't mean that he is on board with affirming sins or sinful lifestyles – especially sexual sins. He really wants people to stop sexual sins, and other sensual sins like drunkenness.

So, my point in this is for you to read the two letters to the Thessalonians closely, and don't be like these parents, pastors, apologists and celebrities who just speak and leave. Don't look to the people you have influence over as a source of money or approval. Challenge those people to change, built them up, share with them, give them gifts. Instead of telling them how to live, tell them to follow your example. And watch out for their daily struggles and troubles. Make sure you know who else is influencing them, and have your say to persuade them that your Christian viewpoint is right. Don't just talk. Don't try to just sound pious. Don't appear so perfect like you are high above the others. Instead, make your whole life an example of what you want to convince them of. Show them your plans and goals and sacrifices, don't just pontificate piously. And be willing to let them tell you the really dirty details of what they are doing. Don't be such a high-and-mighty pious fundamentalist that you are above getting down there with them and playing a video game or getting dirty with gardening or auto maintenance or upgrading a computer. Get involved in their lives and in their relationships with other people.

Ted Cruz crosses the street and confronts Trump mob in Indiana

May 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted Cruz meets voters at a campaign event

Everything you need to understand about the 2016 election is in one video.

First, the back story from the New York Times: (H/T Mysterious H.)

> Senator Ted Cruz of Texas had a date with a waiting car.
>
> It was the second of five stops on Monday, the eve of Indiana's critical primary, and the event at a restaurant here had been billed as little more than a meet-and-greet.
>
> When he got back outside, a half-dozen protesters who supported Donald J. Trump were waiting across North Washington Street, some holding signs.
>
> "Vote Trump!" one shouted.
>
> "Say something really funny!" a Cruz supporter replied.
>
> "Ted Cruz is going to win!" a Trump fan in dark sunglasses shot back.
>
> Then Mr. Cruz did something unusual: He crossed the street.

Then the video:

Here is the rest of the New York Times article, which has additional material about the confrontation:

> With a phalanx of aides and reporters trailing him, Mr. Cruz approached his critics

with a question.

“What do you like about Donald Trump?” he asked.

“Everything,” said the man in the sunglasses, who later refused to give his name.

When the protester mentioned the Second Amendment, Mr. Cruz said he had defended gun rights in front of the Supreme Court. The man appeared unimpressed.

When he mentioned immigration, Mr. Cruz was ready with a bit of opposition research.

“May I ask you something?” the Texas senator said. “Out of all the candidates, name one who had a million-dollar judgment against them for hiring illegal immigrants. Name one. Donald Trump.”

“Self-funding,” the man replied.

“O.K.,” Mr. Cruz said, “so you like rich people who buy politicians?”

The man asked Mr. Cruz where his “Goldman Sachs jacket” was, alluding to the employer of Mr. Cruz’s wife, Heidi, who took a leave from her job for the campaign.

Mr. Cruz responded that he had attracted more than a million campaign contributions, with an average of $60. He was interrupted sporadically by shouts of “Lyin’ Ted” from the protester’s peers.

“Sir, with all respect,” Mr. Cruz said, “Donald Trump is deceiving you. He is playing you for a chump.”

Mr. Cruz conjectured that Mr. Trump would not have walked over to meet the protesters.

“If I were Donald Trump, I wouldn’t have come over and talked to you,” he said. “You know what I would have done? I would have told the folks over there, ‘Go over and punch those guys in the face.’ That’s what Donald does to protesters.”

The catcalls of “Lyin’ Ted!” returned.

“O.K., stop,” Mr. Cruz said. “What word did I say was a lie?”

“About Donald telling people to punch people,” the man said.

“O.K., let me ask you, sir,” Mr. Cruz responded. “Just go home and Google ‘Donald-punched-in-the-face-protester.’ This is on national television.”

The man ignored him to make a conjecture of his own: “You’ll find out tomorrow. Indiana don’t want you.”

Mr. Cruz turned toward the cameras, as if making a closing argument in court.

“A question that everyone here should ask,” he began.

“Are you Canadian?” the man interjected.

“Do you want your kids,” Mr. Cruz continued, “repeating the words of Donald Trump?”

> Mr. Cruz said he respected the man and believed in the people of Indiana to show good judgment. He started walking to his car.
>
> **A television reporter asked why he had bothered to engage.**
>
> **“Because I believe in the democratic process,” he said.**
>
> […]Moments later, when the cameras cleared out, the man strolled east, crossing railroad tracks with his peers in tow. He reached for a cigarette.
>
> Mr. Cruz’s nerve had surprised him, he allowed, but failed to impress him.
>
> “Anything that Donald Trump talks about,” he said, “that’s what I’m about.”

What you see in the video is a microcosm of this entire election.

Ted Cruz is a Princeton and Harvard educated Tea Party conservative who has a record of conservative achievements that runs all the way back to his days in high school, when he traveled around giving lectures on the Constitution and fiscal conservatism to different groups in his community. Ted Cruz has a 100% conservative record from Heritage Action and he has been endorsed by the National Right to Life because of his record of pro-life actions. He defended the second amendment and religious liberty at the Supreme Court and won. And there are many, many more conservative achievements. Ted Cruz is a man who is confident in his views, and he believes that he can win over the average American voter if he is able to dialog with them, and compare arguments and evidence. He respects the American voter.

The Trump supporters know absolutely nothing about Senator Cruz’s career, and his record of going against the Republican establishment. And everything they know about Donald Trump’s record was what they saw when they watched him clowning around on reality TV shows and beauty pageants. In short, they know literally nothing about his past positions and past actions. They like him because he talked about his penis size in a national debate. They think that is “telling it like it is” and “not being politically correct”. They don’t know that he has always been a Democrat, and that he has always donated to Democrat causes. To them, entertaining words have more value than the patterns of past actions.

Trump supporters have done literally no homework at all in trying to look into the past actions and achievements of the candidates. The only thing they know how to do when confronted with Trump’s liberal record, and Cruz’s conservative record, is to try to drown out the truth with slogans that they obtained from the liberal media, or from their idol Trump himself. The reason why they support an airhead leftist con man like Donald Trump is because they are just not willing to invest the time to know what the candidates have done. They want to figure out who to vote for by watching television, not by researching or reading.

Trump supporters like Trump because they want to blame others for their own failure to grow up and achieve the American dream. America is a country where penniless first-generation immigrants who could not even speak English were able to come here and raise children who would later run for President, e.g. – Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz.

Unfortunately, America is a country where too many who are born here think that they are entitled to such success without having to do any work to earn it. But I suspect that this failure has more to do with an attitude that disrespects knowledge and dismisses hard work.

By the way, this isn't a one-off video… this happens all the time. One previous example occurred in Iowa, where Cruz took time to talk with an angry Iowa farmer about why he opposed ethanol subsidies:

Donald Trump not only supports ethanol subsidies, he pandered to Iowans and offered to raise them – passing the costs of this vote buying on to other taxpayers.

If Ted Cruz loses this election, it will be because too many natural-born Americans abandoned learning about their own history and heritage. To learn those things, they would have to turn off the TV and do their own research. One thing is for certain – if you meet a Trump supporter, you can absolutely assume about that person that he knows literally knows nothing about the Constitution, economics, American history, foreign policy, or anything else that matters.

Related posts

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Which candidate will defend religious liberty as President: Trump or Cruz?

May 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

First, let's see a story is from the Business Insider, about the latest attack on religious liberty. Then we'll compare the candidates on religious liberty.

Excerpt:

> An Illinois inn that refused to allow a same-sex couple hold their civil union ceremony on the property was fined more than $80,000 by the **Illinois Human Rights Commission** on Tuesday.
>
> An administrative law judge with the commission ordered TimberCreek Bed & Breakfast to pay $15,000 each to Todd and Mark Wathen for emotional distress.
>
> […]TimberCreek, located about 100 miles south of Chicago, must also pay $50,000 in attorneys' fees and $1,218.35 in costs.
>
> **"We are very happy that no other couple will have to experience what we experienced by being turned away and belittled and criticized for who we are," Todd Wathen said in a statement.**

Ah, yes. The "Human Rights Commissions" that only ever go after Christians and conservatives, never secularists and liberals. It's now more important that gays not feel "belittled and criticized" than that Christians have their religious liberty respected. Christians must be forced by the government to act like non-Christians – that's apparently the law. A law that many Christians voted for when they voted for Democrats.

OK, now let's see what the presidential candidates think about the issue of gay rights vs religious liberty. Let's start with Ted Cruz.

Ted Cruz

Pro-marriage activist Maggie Gallagher reports on what Ted Cruz said about the Georgia governor's decision to side with gay rights over religious liberty:

> Ted Cruz once again proved he has the courage to go up against the GOP establishment in the person of Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal, who sided with leftists, big business and Hollywood by claiming conscience protections for gay marriage dissenters are "discrimination":
>
> "I thought that was very disappointing to see Gov. Deal of Georgia side with leftist activists and side against religious liberty," Cruz said. "It used to be, political parties, we would argue about marginal tax rates and you could have disagreements about what the level of taxation should be. But on religious liberty, on protecting the rights of every American to practice, live according to our faith, live according to our conscience, we all came together. That ought to be a bipartisan commitment and I was disappointed not to see Gov. Deal not defend religious liberty."
>
> Now will any reporters ask John Kasich, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump the same question?

No need to ask Hillary Clinton what she thinks, she been endorsed by the Human Rights Campaign – she's a hardcore gay activist who opposes religious liberty 100%. Bernie Sanders is the same – 100% opposed to religious liberty.

But what about Donald Trump?

Donald Trump

This is from Bay Windows, which bills itself as "serving New England's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities".

Here's what they wrote:

> The frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination today promised "forward motion" on gay and lesbian equality if he is elected.
>
> In an interview with NECN's Sue O'Connell just days before the crucial New Hampshire primary, Trump cast himself as a uniter on LGBT issues.
>
> O'Connell, who is also Bay Windows' Publisher, identified herself as a lesbian in a question that noted the progress the LGBT community has made in the last two decades and asked Trump if voters can expect him to continue that momentum if elected
>
> "When President Trump is in office can we look for more forward motion on equality for gays and lesbians?" O'Connell asked him.
>
> "Well, you can," Trump answered. " And look, again, we're going to bring people together, and that's your thing and other people have their thing. We have to bring all people together and if we don't we're not going to have a country anymore."

Recall that during the Iowa primary, Trump declared how much he loves evangelicals, and even held up a Bible he supposedly got from his mother as evidence of his genuine, authentic Christian faith. But the Iowa primary is over now, so no more Bible prop needed.

What about John Kasich?

John Kasich

Kasich considers same-sex marriage to be the law of the land, and he opposes legal protections for Christians who are sued by gay activists.

He gets an F on marriage from pro-marriage activist Maggie Gallagher for his stance on same-sex marriage:

> The Supreme Court overturns the marriage laws of your state and many others by inventing a new right? That gets a big yawn from John Kasich: "I do believe in the traditional sense of marriage—that marriage is between a man and a woman. But I also respect the Supreme Court of the United States. The Supreme Court of the United States made the decision, and as I have said repeatedly we'll honor what the Supreme Court does—it's the law of the land."

And he opposes protections for Christians who are sued by gay activists:

> What will you do, Gov. Kasich, to protect the rights of gay marriage dissenters?
>
> […]Gov. Kasich has refused to say whether he would support [the First Amendment Defense Act].

Ted Cruz has pledged to sign the First Amendment Defense Act, and quickly, too. No hesitation, because religious liberty is in the Constitution, and Ted Cruz is *crazy* about the Constitution!

New study: Taxing top earners will not reduce wealth inequality

May 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

New study! Here's a report on it from Real Clear Markets:

> The top 10% of Americans control roughly three-quarters of the nation's wealth, and the minority of Haves are continuing to accumulate more than the majority of Have-Nots.
>
> This is wealth inequality in the United States. And though it doesn't attract as much attention as income inequality, it's arguably far more important, imposing economic instabilities and social strife.
>
> To decrease wealth inequality, pundits, politicians, and economists often suggest raising income tax rates on top earners to as high as 50, 70, or even 90 percent.
>
> The idea sounds plausible, but according to a new study published to *PLoS ONE* it probably won't work in practice.
>
> […]In their model, income inequality was tied to a metric called the Gini index, a statistical measure of inequality used for decades. They found that altering income inequality to a Gini index of 0.1 (very low inequality) resulted in the top 10% controlling 78.6% of wealth in 2030, while raising income inequality to a Gini index of 0.9 (very high inequality) resulted in the top 10% controlling 79.3% of wealth in 2030, hardly a significant difference.

Do you know what does work to help people – growing the economy so that everyone can find work. It's actually been done before.

The conservative Heritage Foundation describes the effects of the Bush tax cuts from

2001 and 2003.

Excerpt:

> President Bush signed the first wave of tax cuts in 2001, cutting rates and providing tax relief for families by, for example, doubling of the child tax credit to $1,000.
>
> At Congress' insistence, the tax relief was initially phased in over many years, so the economy continued to lose jobs. In 2003, realizing its error, Congress made the earlier tax relief effective immediately. Congress also lowered tax rates on capital gains and dividends to encourage business investment, which had been lagging.
>
> It was the then that the economy turned around. Within months of enactment, job growth shot up, eventually creating 8.1 million jobs through 2007. Tax revenues also increased after the Bush tax cuts, due to economic growth.
>
> In 2003, capital gains tax rates were reduced. Rather than expand by 36% as the Congressional Budget Office projected before the tax cut, capital gains revenues more than doubled to $103 billion.
>
> The CBO incorrectly calculated that the post-March 2003 tax cuts would lower 2006 revenues by $75 billion. Revenues for 2006 came in $47 billion above the pre-tax cut baseline.
>
> Here's what else happened after the 2003 tax cuts lowered the rates on income, capital gains and dividend taxes:
>
> - GDP grew at an annual rate of just 1.7% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the six quarters following the tax cuts, the growth rate was 4.1%.
> - The S&P 500 dropped 18% in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts but increased by 32% over the next six quarters.
> - The economy lost 267,000 jobs in the six quarters before the 2003 tax cuts. In the next six quarters, it added 307,000 jobs, followed by 5 million jobs in the next seven quarters.
>
> The timing of the lower tax rates coincides almost exactly with the stark acceleration in the economy.

Please note: revenues actually went up as a result of the tax cuts, because more economic growth means more taxes are collected on the income that is generated.

Whenever people with savings take risks to grow their wealth, there will be jobs created. The solution to helping the poor isn't giving them someone else's money. The solution to helping the poor is to let productive job creators keep their own earnings, so that they use their money to create more jobs. That way, people who want to work have multiple job offers and can pick the best one. Productive people are not the enemy. Productive

people give you money to work for them. That’s good for you.

Ted Cruz suspends campaign: what next for conservatives? #NeverTrump

May 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump with some of his supporters

I'll comment after quoting some of this brief message from Ben Shapiro, posted at Daily Wire.

Excerpt:

> So, Donald Trump is the nominee.
>
> After all the fighting, after all the lies, after all the conspiracy theories and bloviating and position-shifting and progressivism, after all the insults and racist pandering and economic illiteracy, after all the cruelty and full-fledged stupidity, Donald Trump is the nominee.
>
> What does this mean?
>
> It means that standing against Trump means more than ever.
>
> Early in this race, I stated repeatedly that the way to defeat Trump would be to point out to Republican primary voters that he wasn't conservative. After all, I reasoned, conservative voters were outraged with the Republican establishment that had caved over and over to President Obama; they'd want to nominate someone who wouldn't cut deals with the wild leftists of the Democratic Party.
>
> I got it wrong.
>
> It turns out that a huge bulk of Trump supporters don't care that he's a leftist. They think he's a tough guy who will fight for them; they think he'll fulfill the promise emblazoned on his ridiculous red "Make America Great Again" hats.

> They buy his two-bit promises, his stripper glitter showmanship, his foghorn bravado. And they do so because they don't give two good damns about conservatism.
>
> […][T]he Trump movement rejects conservatism. They don't care about the Constitution – it's a passé document that must be discarded in favor of a Dear Leader who can lead America back to Greatness. They don't care about the Declaration of Independence – they are an interest group, and they want their payoff. They don't care about traditional concepts of negative rights, or economic freedom, or foreign policy strength.
>
> They don't care about conservatives.
>
> So conservatives must stand against them.
>
> […]Trump's "something new" is something quite old, and quite un-American. If conservatives want a future, they must stand against him and his corrupt, bankrupt philosophy.
>
> 2016 could have been a time to reap the harvest of conservatism. Instead, Trump burned down the field.
>
> It's time to plant anew. We should do so with alacrity rather than embracing the man holding the match.

Right. There is not a single authentic conservative that voted for Trump. Trump is not a conservative, in any way, shape or form – on any issue. We should stay home during the general election and let him lose rather than let the label "conservative" be connected to a clownish liberal sociopath.

UPDATE: Don't stay home, go vote in the other races, and just write someone in or leave it blank for President. (I stand corrected on this)

The people who voted for Trump were basically idiots who had failed in their own lives, and wanted to blame someone other than themselves. That's what Trump promises: he will help the losers who want to win vicariously through him. Most of his support came from white registered Democrats who never completed college, and probably had never held a decent job in their lives for any length of time. But there are enough self-made losers in America, apparently, that a clown can be selected as the nominee of a major party.

Consider this post by Kevin Williamson in National Review magazine:

> The white middle class may like the idea of Trump as a giant pulsing humanoid middle finger held up in the face of the Cathedral, they may sing hymns to Trump the destroyer and whisper darkly about "globalists" and — odious, stupid term — "the Establishment," but nobody did this to them. They failed themselves.
>
> **If you spend time in hardscrabble, white upstate New York, or eastern Kentucky, or my own native West Texas, and you take an honest look at the welfare dependency, the drug and alcohol addiction, the family**

> **anarchy — which is to say, the whelping of human children with all the respect and wisdom of a stray dog — you will come to an awful realization. It wasn't Beijing. It wasn't even Washington, as bad as Washington can be. It wasn't immigrants from Mexico, excessive and problematic as our current immigration levels are. It wasn't any of that.**
>
> **Nothing happened to them. There wasn't some awful disaster. There wasn't a war or a famine or a plague or a foreign occupation. Even the economic changes of the past few decades do very little to explain the dysfunction and negligence — and the incomprehensible malice — of poor white America.** So the gypsum business in Garbutt ain't what it used to be. There is more to life in the 21st century than wallboard and cheap sentimentality about how the Man closed the factories down.
>
> The truth about these dysfunctional, downscale communities is that they deserve to die. Economically, they are negative assets. Morally, they are indefensible. Forget all your cheap theatrical Bruce Springsteen crap. Forget your sanctimony about struggling Rust Belt factory towns and your conspiracy theories about the wily Orientals stealing our jobs. Forget your goddamned gypsum, and, if he has a problem with that, forget Ed Burke, too. The white American underclass is in thrall to a vicious, selfish culture whose main products are misery and used heroin needles. Donald Trump's speeches make them feel good. So does OxyContin. What they need isn't analgesics, literal or political. They need real opportunity, which means that they need real change, which means that they need U-Haul.

David French, who grew up in Kentucky, and then attended Harvard Law School, adds this in National Review:

> These are strong words, but they are fundamentally true and important to say. My childhood was different from Kevin's, but I grew up in Kentucky, live in a rural county in Tennessee, and have seen the challenges of the white working-class first-hand.**Simply put, Americans are killing themselves and destroying their families at an alarming rate. No one is making them do it. The economy isn't putting a bottle in their hand. Immigrants aren't making them cheat on their wives or snort OxyContin. Obama isn't walking them into the lawyer's office to force them to file a bogus disability claim.**
>
> For generations, conservatives have rightly railed against deterministic progressive notions that put human choices at the mercy of race, class, history, or economics. Those factors can create additional challenges, but they do not relieve any human being of the moral obligation to do their best.
>
> **Yet millions of Americans aren't doing their best. Indeed, they're barely trying. As I've related before, my church in Kentucky made a determined attempt to reach kids and families that were falling**

> **between the cracks, and it was consistently astounding how little effort most parents and their teen children made to improve their lives. If they couldn't find a job in a few days — or perhaps even as little as a few hours — they'd stop looking. If they got angry at teachers or coaches, they'd drop out of school. If they fought with their wife, they had sex with a neighbor. And always — always — there was a sense of entitlement.**
>
> And that's where disability or other government programs kicked in. They were there, beckoning, giving men and women alternatives to gainful employment. You don't have to do any work (your disability lawyer does all the heavy lifting), you make money, and you get drugs. At our local regional hospital, it's become a bitter joke the extent to which the community is hooked on "Xanatab" — the Xanax and Lortab prescriptions that lead to drug dependence.
>
> Of course we should have compassion even as we call on people to do better. I have compassion for kids who often see the worst behavior modeled at home. I have compassion for families facing economic uncertainty. But compassion can't excuse or enable self-destructive moral failures.

We have Trump as the nominee because there are just too many of these low-information voters voting. Some of my friends are blaming the public school system, for destroying the quality of American education. Others are blaming the churches, for focusing on feelings rather than intellect. Those are both true, but I think we should blame the TV-watching Trump cultists themselves: first for failing at life, second for voting. If you're an illiterate loser who cannot hold a job and you blow all your money on alcohol, drugs and cigarettes, then you should not be voting.

Sadly, there is no job interview for voting. Any imbecile who knows more about sports than policy can vote. The way forward is simple. We need to play defense more than ever before, because things are going to get worse. And we need to continue to argue and explain why conservative principles and policies work better than the policies of liberal Democrats like Trump and Clinton.

Related posts

- Is Donald Trump a Christian? Is Donald Trump a moral person?
- How well is Obamacare working, and will Ted Cruz or Donald Trump fix health care?
- Which candidate is the best at defending religious liberty: Trump or Cruz?
- Against misogyny: why every conservative should #DumpTrump #NeverTrump
- Donald Trump's plan to introduce tariffs is just a tax on consumer goods
- Suppose God had coffee with Donald Trump… how would that go?
- Is Donald Trump right to order U.S. troops to commit war crimes?
- How well did Donald Trump do in the hotel and casino business?
- Trump donated to group that promotes homosexuality to 5-year-olds
- Do supporters of Donald Trump really support what Trump believes?

- Is Donald Trump a successful businessman? Let’s look at his record
- Report: how Donald Trump used illegal immigrants to build Trump Tower
- Is Trump right to praise Putin’s leadership abilities?
- Is Trump right to say that Bush lied about the Iraq war, and there were no WMDs?
- Donald Trump promises gay publication “forward motion” on gay rights issues
- Who has done more on the pro-life and pro-marriage issues – Trump or Cruz?
- Trump, eminent domain, a widow’s house, and a limousine parking lot
- Trump wants to increase taxpayer subsidies of ethanol, Cruz wants to end them
- Trump supported the bank bailout and auto bailout, Cruz opposes all bailouts
- Should evangelical Christians prefer Donald Trump on moral grounds?
- What are the “New York Values” that Trump’s evangelical Christian supporters admire?
- Donald Trump would expand Obamacare into single-payer health care system

This suprises no one: Trump won Indiana with votes from fake Christians

May 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

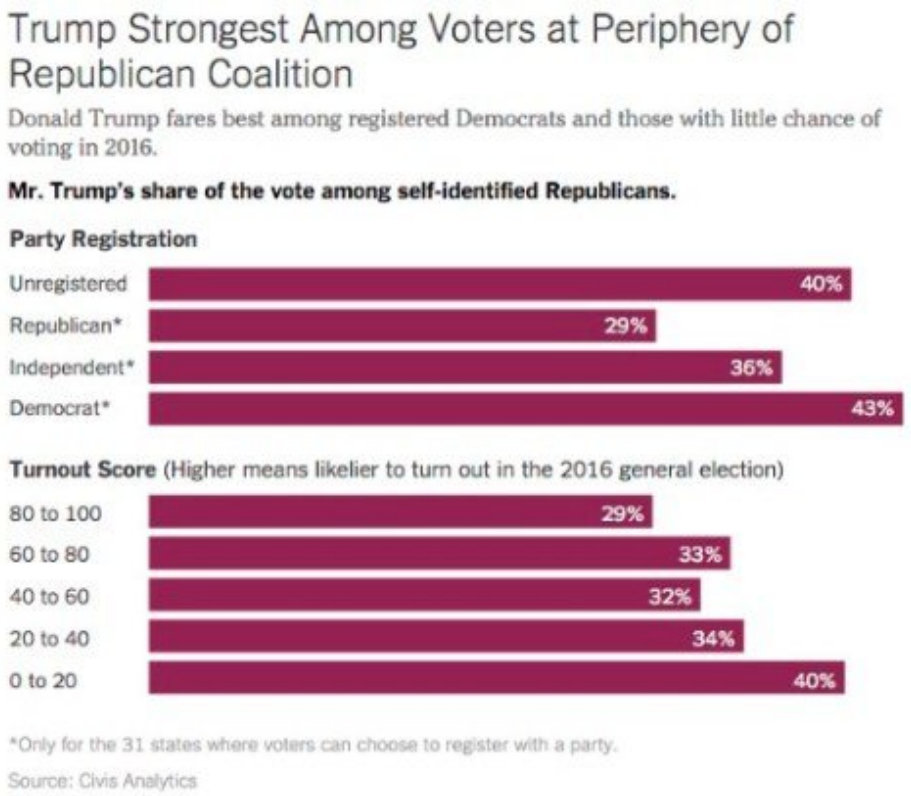

Trump does best with registered Democrats, and in states run by Democrats
Here is an interesting article from The Stream.

Excerpt:

> Last night's Indiana primary was the final showdown for the GOP nomination, and unfortunately for #NeverTrump, Ted Cruz lost to Donald Trump. Trump won half the self-identified evangelical vote (though he did better with those who weren't evangelicals).
>
> A CBS exit poll shows how the votes played out and brings one striking feature of this race to light: the less frequently a Republican voter went to church, the more likely he or she was to vote for Trump, and vice versa.
>
> Cruz won those who attend church weekly (which includes more than once a week), while Trump won occasional churchgoers. As Ross Douthat has explained, active Christians aren't going for Trump — but cultural Christians are.

Trump also does well with registered Democrats, and he outperformed in blue states like New York – where his favored policies have been in effect for some time.

One woman who supports Trump is divorced from an adulterous ex-husband, with several fatherless children and is currently sexually involved with a non-Christian man. The non-Christian man has no college degree and is unemployed, so it's no surprise that he is a

Trump supporter. The woman also has no college degree, but she fancies herself a serious Catholic. If you actually ask her questions about her faith, you'll find that her Catholicism is just "cosmic butler" Catholicism. Her "faith" is all non-cognitive spirituality and mysticism. She hopes that God will give her goodies in this life and imagines that her poor life choices result in "unexpected" disasters because the Devil is after her. Do what you feel like, act surprised when it all explodes and you go on welfare, and pray that God will help you to win the lottery, so that all the craziness works out in the end.

I think a lot of people who make poor judgments about others based on appearances and emotions, like this divorced woman, are very impressed with Trump. He looks good, he's confident, he says entertaining things. Who needs to look for past achievements? If he says he everything will be great, then his words are better than actual demonstrated ability. Confidence and inherited wealth matters more to them than achievements. His sinfulness is not a problem to them – they're embroiled in the same sin themselves. Christianity is just a label they thrown on an otherwise non-Christian life. If they are willing to slap the label on themselves, then what's wrong with slapping the "Christian" label on Trump? Or the "conservative" label? They have no ability to make judgments about someone else's fruits, since they aren't Christian or conservative themselves. It's not a surprise to me that fake Christians and fake conservative voters cannot spot a fake Christian and a fake conservative like Trump. If they could, they would be impugning their own selves.

Related posts

- Ted Cruz suspends campaign: what next for conservatives? #NeverTrump
- Is Donald Trump a Christian? Is Donald Trump a moral person?
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Department of Justice goes after North Carolina

May 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Fox News reports:

> The U.S. Justice Department says a North Carolina law that limits protections to LGBT people violates federal civil rights laws.
>
> The Obama Administration agency on Wednesday put North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory on notice that that state officials must confirm by Monday that they will not comply with or implement the law called House Bill 2.
>
> A letter from the Justice Department obtained by The Associated Press said the law violates Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, which bars discrimination in education based on sex. That could lead to North Carolina losing hundreds of millions of dollars in federal school funding.

That's what people who voted for Obama voted for.

Let's review the North Carolina law again, since the mainstream media has been deliberately misrepresenting it to push the gay agenda.

Here are a couple of myths about the law that everyone should know about:

> **The law affects all public bathrooms in North Carolina.**
>
> Mainstream media reporting about North Carolina's HB 2 has largely stated that the law prevents transgender individuals from using public bathrooms throughout the state that don't correspond with the gender on their birth certificates.
>
> Although the law does affect state government-managed bathrooms, many media organizations have not noted in their reporting that businesses and other private institutions across the state are still free to create their own bathroom policies.

> A New York Times report following the passage of the law in March states that the legislation is a “wide-ranging bill barring transgender people from bathrooms and locker rooms that do not match the gender on their birth certificates.”
>
> Apparently that statement alone was enough to fool the Acton Institute’s Peter Johnson, a libertarian-leaning conservative who wrote an op-ed published by The Federalist on Monday. Johnson’s op-ed implied that the law applies to all public restrooms in the state.
>
> After getting much heat for mischaracterizing the law from conservatives like Heritage Foundation’s Ryan Anderson, Johnson wrote a follow-up piece to explain that he was led to a faulty conclusion about the law thanks to the wording in the aforementioned New York Times article
>
> “I formed my opinion based on mainstream media characterizations of the law,” Johnson wrote in his follow-up post.
>
> He also included excerpts from The Washington Post and CNN. CNN reported that the law “puts in place a statewide policy that bans individuals from using public bathrooms that do not correspond to their biological sex.”
>
> **The law forces businesses to comply.**
>
> In his initial op-ed, Johnson also wrote that one of the reasons he opposed the law was because businesses should be allowed to set their own bathroom policies.
>
> However, the law explicitly protects businesses’ rights to create their own bathroom policies and protects businesses from being punished by local governments for not allowing biological men into women’s restrooms or vice versa.
>
> This means that the Planet Fitness in Charlotte is still free to open its men’s and women’s locker rooms to transgender individuals.
>
> “In the [first] article, I stated that the bill ‘bars people in North Carolina from using bathrooms that do not match their birth sex,'” Johnson explained in his correction piece. “This is incorrect. The law only regulates bathroom usage in public facilities — not in private businesses.”

That sounds like a sensible law to me. But now the federal government is going use our taxpayer dollars to punish North Carolina, because there’s not much else going on and these government workers need something to do other than surf porn at work all day.

Will Trump cultists apologize for their laziness and ignorance, as Trump reverts to leftism?

May 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

Here is the latest from The Hill.

Excerpt:

> In a reversal, Donald Trump expressed openness to raising the federal minimum wage during an interview on Wednesday.
>
> "I'm looking at that, I'm very different from most Republicans," the presumptive GOP presidential nominee told CNN Wednesday about the prospect of increasing wages.
>
> "You have to have something you can live on. But what I 'm really looking to do is get people great jobs so they make much more money than that, much more money than the $15."
>
> The federal minimum wage is $7.25, but labor groups have been pushing for it to be raised to $15.
>
> During a November debate, Trump voiced opposition to raising the minimum wage.
>
> "I hate to say it, but we have to leave it the way it is," he said during the debate.

Who expected Trump to be a leftist on economic issues? Anyone with two brain cells to rub together, that's who. You could tell from his record, from his political donations, and other indicators that the man was a Democrat on economic issues. Everyone who did their homework on the candidates knew that. We all knew that he wanted to raise taxes on the most productive people, that he wanted to raise minimum wage, that he didn't want to reform the entitlements that are bankrupting the country, he thinks using

eminent domain to take private property to benefit big business is a great idea, he wanted to increase agricultural subsidies, and so on. **Conservatives reject Trump, and continue to reject Trump, because Trump takes the wrong positions on economic issues.**

Here is Dr. Greg Mankiw, a professor of economics at Harvard University, explaining what economists across the ideological spectrum agree on.

He writes:

> The recent debate over the stimulus bill has lead some observers to think that economists are hopelessly divided on issues of public policy. That is true regarding business cycle theory and, specifically, the virtues or defects of Keynesian economics. But it is not true more broadly.
>
> My favorite textbook covers business cycle theory toward the end of the book (the last four chapters) precisely because that theory is controversial. I believe it is better to introduce students to economics with topics about which there is more of a professional consensus. In chapter two of the book, I include a table of propositions to which most economists subscribe, based on various polls of the profession. Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:
>
> 1. A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)
> 2. **Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)**
> 3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
> 4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
> 5. **The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)**
> 6. **The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)**
> 7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
> 8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
> 9. **The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)**
> 10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
> 11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
> 12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**

> 13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
> 14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)
>
> If we could get the American public to endorse all these propositions, I am sure their leaders would quickly follow, and public policy would be much improved. That is why economics education is so important.

The ones in bold are the ones that Trump denies.

A person cannot be a conservative and a supporter of Donald Trump – the two are mutually exclusive. Conservatives are people who do understand basic economics, and Trump supporters are people who do not understand basic economics. There is no overlap.

A friend of mine who is being asked by Trump supporters why she will not support Trump posted this article from the American Thinker.

It says:

> […]I am not over the Constitution, although apparently many are, because they have thrown in with a man who never mentions it and often runs afoul of it. Donald Trump was born "over" the Constitution and still is. He's never been concerned with it. New York values don't intersect with the Constitution. No, I am not over the idea of liberty, and thus I'm not quite over the fact that the Republican nominee is a man totally unfamiliar with this concept and a man who never ever looks at increased liberty as the answer for out of control government. *Ever.*
>
> **[…]When crony capitalism is destroying our free market, does Donald want to stop government from picking winners and losers? NO! He doubles down on ethanol subsidies. He obfuscates the issue of eminent domain. And he rails against trade, not even considering the obvious conclusion that the big stick of tariffs is centralized planning and government picking winners and losers on steroids.**
>
> **[…]Trump *is* the establishment. His big check to party boss and establishment poster child Mitch McConnell has barely even cleared yet — a donation he followed up by insulting on Twitter those stupid Kentuckians who were willing to forgo McConnell's crony gravy train to his home state in favor of a principled man like Matt Bevin. Trump brags he has been giving to Republicans lately, but these donations are to establishment Republicans running against outsiders!**
>
> […]Alexander Hamilton said "if we must have an enemy at the head of Government, let it be one whom we can oppose, and for whom we are not responsible, who will not involve our party in the disgrace of his foolish and bad measures." He was right. Many of you haven not heeded that lesson. I have,

> and I am proudly not over the nomination of big government New York liberal Donald J Trump.

In order to support Trump, conservatives would have to value insults and clowning above the Constitution and economics. We're not willing to do that – although apparently many others are.

Is Matthew Vines twisting Scripture to justify sinful sexual behavior?

May 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Here's a post from Christian apologist Terrell Clemmons about efforts by gay activists to redefine Christianity so that it is consistent with homosexual behavior. This particular post is focused on Matthew Vines.

She writes:

> In March 2012, two years after having set out to confront homophobia in the church, Matthew presented the results of his "thousands of hours of research" in an hour-long talk titled "The Gay Debate." The upshot of it was this: "The Bible does not condemn loving gay relationships. It never addresses the issues of same-sex orientation or loving same-sex relationships, and the few verses that some cite to support homophobia have nothing to do with LGBT people." The video went viral (more than three quarter million views to date) and Matthew has been disseminating the content of it ever since.
>
> In 2013, he launched "The Reformation Project," "a Bible-based, non-profit organization … to train, connect, and empower gay Christians and their allies to reform church teaching on homosexuality from the ground up." At the inaugural conference, paid for by a $104,000 crowd-funding campaign, fifty LGBT advocates, all professing Christians, gathered for four days in suburban Kansas City for teaching and training, At twenty-three years of age, Matthew Vines was already becoming a formidable cause célèbre.

Terrell summarizes the case he makes, and here is the part I am interested in:

Reason #1: *Non-affirming views inflict pain on LGBT people*. This argument is

undoubtedly the most persuasive *emotionally*, but Matthew has produced a Scriptural case for it. Jesus, in his well-known Sermon on the Mount, warned his listeners against false prophets, likening them to wolves in sheep's clothing. Then switching metaphors he asked, "Do people pick grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?" The obvious answer is no, and Jesus's point was, you can recognize a good or bad tree – and a true or false prophet – by its good or bad fruit. From this, Matthew concludes that, since non-affirming beliefs on the part of *some* Christians cause the bad fruit of emotional pain for*other* Christians, the non-affirming stance must not be good.

Terrell's response to this is spot on, and I recommend you read her post to get the full response.

She writes:

> Matthew Vines in particular, and LGBTs in general, appear to be drivingly fixated on changing other people's moral outlook. But *why*? Why are they distressed over the shrinking subset of Christianity that holds to the traditional ethic of sex? Note that Matthew found an affirming church in his hometown, as can most any LGBT-identifying Christian. Affirming churches abound. Gaychurch.org lists forty-four affirming denominations – *denominations*, not just individual churches – in North America and will help you find a congregation in your area. Why, then, given all these choices for church accommodation, are Matthew and the Reformers specifically targeting churches whose teachings differ from their own?
>
> One gets the sense that LGBTs *really*, *really need* other people to affirm their sexual behavior. Certainly it's human to *want* the approval of others, but this goes beyond an emotionally healthy desire for relational comity. Recall Matthew's plea that non-affirming views on the part of *some* Christians cause emotional pain for *others*. He, and all like-minded LGBTs, are holding *other people* responsible for their emotional pain. This is the very essence of *codependency*.
>
> The term came out of Alcoholics Anonymous. It originally referred to spouses of alcoholics who enabled the alcoholism to continue unchallenged, but it has since been broadened to encompass several forms of dysfunctional relationships involving pathological behaviors, low self-esteem, and poor emotional boundaries. Codependents "believe their happiness depends upon another person," says Darlene Lancer, an attorney, family therapist, and author of *Codependency for Dummies*. "In a codependent relationship, *both* individuals are codependent," says clinical psychologist Seth Meyers. "They try to control their partner and they aren't comfortable on their own."
>
> Which leads to an even more troubling aspect of this Vinesian "Reformation." Not only are LGBT Reformers *not* content to find an affirming church for themselves and peacefully coexist with everyone else, *everyone else must change* in order to be correct in their Christian expression.
>
> This is the classic progression of codependency, and efforts to change everyone

> else become increasingly coercive. We *must* affirm same-sex orientation, Matthew says. If we don't, we are "tarnishing the image of God [in gay Christians]. Instead of making gay Christians more like God … embracing a non-affirming position makes them less like God." "[W]hen we reject the desires of gay Christians to express their sexuality within a lifelong covenant, we separate them from our covenantal God."
>
> Do you hear what he's saying? LGBTs' relationships with God are dependent on Christians approving their sexual proclivities. But he's *still* not finished. "In the final analysis, then, it is not gay Christians who are sinning against God by entering into monogamous, loving relationships. It is *we* who are sinning against them by rejecting their intimate relationships." In other words, non-affirming beliefs stand between LGBTs and God. Thus sayeth Matthew Vines.

The rest of her article deals with Vines' attempt to twist Scripture to validate sexual behavior that is not permissible in Christianity.

Vines seems to want a lot of people to agree that the Bible somehow doesn't forbid this sexual behavior so that the people who are doing it won't feel bad about doing it. If he can just silence those who disagree and get a majority of people to agree, then the people who are doing these things will feel better.

Well. I am a chaste man now in my late 30s. I have not so much as kissed a woman on the lips. There is no societal celebration for what I am doing, not even in the church. But you don't see me complaining that people need to validate my choice to be chaste. And the reason is, that even if the entire world were against me, the morality of chastity is self-authenticating. It doesn't matter how many people make me feel bad about what I am doing, I have the direct experience of doing the right thing. Being chaste allows me to love women upward by treating them like equal partners in the gospel, and expecting them to work for the gospel like any man would.

Matthew Vines is annoyed that we expect homosexuals to work through their same-sex attractions, abstain from premarital sex, and then either remain chaste like me, or marry one person of the opposite sex and then confine his/her sexual behavior to his/her marriage. But how is that different than what is asked of me? I have opposite sex-attractions (boy, do I!), but I am also expected to abstain from premarital sex, and either remain chaste, or marry one woman for life, and confine my sexual behavior to that marriage. **If I have to exercise a little self-control to show God that what he wants from me is important to me, then I am willing to do that.** I'm really at a loss to understand why so many people take sexual gratification as a given, rather than as an opportunity for self-denial and self-control. I am especially puzzled by sinful people demanding that other celebrate their sin – and using the power of the government now to compel others to celebrate their sin.

Believe me, I understand what it is like to be without a woman's love and support. I started out with a cold, distant, selfish, career-oriented mother. I dreamed about marriage since I was in high school – I remember praying about my future wife, even

then. No one that I know has a stronger need for validation and encouragement from a woman than I do. Yet if I have to let that go in order to let God know that what he wants matters to me, then I will do it.

My service to God is not conditional on me getting my needs met. And my needs and desires are no less strong than the needs of people who engage in sex outside the boundaries of Christian teaching. We just make different decisions about what/who comes first. For me, Jesus is first, because I have sympathy with Jesus for loving me enough to die in my place, for my sins. I am obligated to Jesus, and that means that my responsibility to meet expectations in our relationship comes above my desire to be happy and fulfilled. For Matthew, the sexual desires come first, and Scripture has to be reinterpreted in light of a desire to be happy. I just don't see anything in the New Testament that leads me to believe that we should expect God to fulfill our desires. The message of Jesus is about self-denial, self-control and putting God the Father first – even when it results in suffering. I take that seriously. That willingness to be second and let Jesus lead me is what makes me an authentic Christian.

There is a good debate featuring Robert Gagnon and a gay activist in this post, so you can hear both sides.

Trump reveals that he was lying to his gullible supporters all along

May 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

Surprise, Trump cultists! You've been had by a con man.

Let's get right to the details, thanks to this article from the Daily Wire:

> So, you're suckers.
>
> Yes, you conservatives who keep waiting for Donald Trump to turn into Ronald Reagan, who hope to unify behind him thinking that he'll surround himself with good people and that they will guide him to all the best decisions. Yes, you conservatives who bought into the Trumpian nonsense that he would blow up the system and change things in politics. In the last 24 hours Trump has indeed pivoted – directly against all of his supposedly conservative positions. Here are four examples:
>
> **[…]Trump Won't Be Self-Funding.** Remember that time Trump said he'd self-fund, unlike his rivals? Even as donors signal that they won't be opening their pocketbooks for Trump, Trump announced that he won't self-fund his campaign. "I'll be putting up money," he said, "but won't be completely self-funding." Instead, Trump said he would build a "world-class finance organization." So all that talk about how people who take donations are being bribed to shill for donors – yeah, all that was patented Trump garbage.
>
> **Trump Hires A Former Goldman Sachs Fundraiser Who Managed Money For George Soros.**Remember that time Donald Trump suggested that Ted Cruz was in the pocket of Goldman Sachs ("I know the guys at Goldman Sachs, they have total, total control over him")? Remember Snaggletooth The Trumper™ who told Ted Cruz that Cruz should be wearing his "Goldman jacket"? Now Trump has

> hired Steve Mnuchin, chairman and CEO of Dune Capital Management LP and former Goldman Sachs partner, to head up his fundraising team. Mnuchin also worked at Soros Fund Management LLC. Yes, that Soros. George Soros. Mnuchin also donated thousands of dollars to Hillary Clinton, among other Democrats; since 1998, he's donated twice as much money to Democrats as Republicans.
>
> **[…]**So this is the new general election Trump. He looks just as dishonest and scheming as the old Trump, just with a fresh leftist taste sure to please the most ardent Bernie Sanders supporters. Conservative Trump voters – this is your Great Hope.

The article also mentions that Trump is open to raising the minimum wage, and that his tax plan and border security plan are just an opening statement, subject to negotiations. Two more minor things that don't matter, right?

Elsewhere, at Conservative Review:

> We've experienced this rodeo show for decades.
>
> The media picks our nominee – whether it's for president, Senate, or governor. That lucky individual has never fought a single battle for conservatives on a single issue in his entire life and has even carried water for the other side on some critically important issues. Yet, he ran as a conservative in the primary and railed against the Democrats. The media, whether local or national, anointed this individual and helped him run a dehumanization campaign against his opponent. Not surprisingly, that man wins the primary and the other man – irrespective of his lifelong reputation – is left with the image of a dirt bag in the minds of most voters by the end of the election.
>
> […]Just within the first 24 hours of becoming the presumptive nominee, Trump has floated Portman and Kasich as potential VP candidates, echoed the worst of the liberal talking points on minimum wage, and walked back his promise to self-fund his campaign – one of his most appealing taking points of the campaign.

Portman and Kasich are leftist establishment Republicans. You might remember that Portman embraced gay marriage and Kasich is opposed to protecting religious liberty from lawsuits and punishments by gay activists. Surprise! That's who Trump is, too. A New York liberal pretending to be a Republican for his gullible TV-watching followers.

Trump supporters have never looked into Trump's past positions, his political contributions, his bankruptcies, etc. They learned about Trump by watching him laugh and joke on their televisions. And their hatred for other candidates like Walker and Cruz isn't based on any knowledge of Walker and Cruz – it's just repeating the sound bites about Walker and Cruz uttered by Trump, and dutifully played over and over again by the mainstream media.

Here is what Trump would say if he were honest: "Believe me! I'm a liberal Democrat pretending to be a Republican! I can tell you that!" Just imagine that line spoken in Trump's charismatic voice, over and over, Trump supporters. Maybe then you'll realize

what your laziness and ignorance cost us.

Related posts

- Will Trump cultists apologize for their laziness and ignorance, as Trump reverts to leftism?
- This suprises no one: Trump won Indiana with votes from fake Christians
- Ted Cruz suspends campaign: what next for conservatives? #NeverTrump
- Is Donald Trump a Christian? Is Donald Trump a moral person?
- How well is Obamacare working, and will Ted Cruz or Donald Trump fix health care?
- Which candidate is the best at defending religious liberty: Trump or Cruz?
- Against misogyny: why every conservative should #DumpTrump #NeverTrump
- Donald Trump's plan to introduce tariffs is just a tax on consumer goods
- Suppose God had coffee with Donald Trump… how would that go?
- Is Donald Trump right to order U.S. troops to commit war crimes?
- How well did Donald Trump do in the hotel and casino business?
- Trump donated to group that promotes homosexuality to 5-year-olds
- Do supporters of Donald Trump really support what Trump believes?
- Is Donald Trump a successful businessman? Let's look at his record
- Report: how Donald Trump used illegal immigrants to build Trump Tower
- Is Trump right to praise Putin's leadership abilities?
- Is Trump right to say that Bush lied about the Iraq war, and there were no WMDs?
- Donald Trump promises gay publication "forward motion" on gay rights issues
- Who has done more on the pro-life and pro-marriage issues – Trump or Cruz?
- Trump, eminent domain, a widow's house, and a limousine parking lot
- Trump wants to increase taxpayer subsidies of ethanol, Cruz wants to end them
- Trump supported the bank bailout and auto bailout, Cruz opposes all bailouts
- Should evangelical Christians prefer Donald Trump on moral grounds?
- What are the "New York Values" that Trump's evangelical Christian supporters admire?
- Donald Trump would expand Obamacare into single-payer health care system

Kansas enacts law to permanently de-fund Planned Parenthood

May 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this legislation

Happy Friday!

Good news from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Kansas Governor Sam Brownback today signed a bill that would ensure that no taxpayer dollars are going to fund the abortion industry.
>
> Kansas Senate Bill 436 would prioritize Title X grants, which are taxpayer-funded, by awarding them to full-service public health clinics and hospitals first. Planned Parenthood, which often receives these grants from various states, would be pushed to the end of the list because it does not provide comprehensive health care and, essentially, defunded.
>
> Here's more:
>
> Gov. Sam Brownback vowed in his State of the State speech in January to make sure that "not a single dollar of taxpayer money goes to Planned Parenthood" through the Kansas Medicaid program.
>
> But reimbursements continued. In early March, the state Department of Health and Environment said it was continuing to work on the termination of Planned Parenthood's Medicaid funding "in accordance with the law."

> The termination letter came Tuesday from the department, Planned Parenthood officials said.
>
> The letter from the state informing Planned Parenthood that it could no longer serve as provider under the state's Medicaid program cited several reasons, including "noncompliance with applicable state laws" and "unethical or unprofessional conduct." The organization has about a month to request a review of the decision.
>
> The bill would make permanent a statute in the annual Kanasas budget that gives higher priority to comprehensive health care providers, according to Kansans for Life.

That's good news for a Friday, but if the Obama administration's response to states like Louisiana (school choice) or Tennessee (bathroom privacy) is any indicator, then they will go after Kansas as well. Because that's what Democrats believe in: top-down control of states by an intrusive federal government. Still, Kansas can fight that.

Should Christians be motivated by the fear of missing out (FOMO)?

May 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

My best friend Dina and I recently spent some time talking over some articles that we found on the culture. We specifically talked about what is motivating young people, so I wanted to write something about that.

FOMO: Fear Of Missing Out

Here's a leftist New York Times article explaining where FOMO comes from:

> It's known as FOMO, or "fear of missing out," and refers to the blend of anxiety, inadequacy and irritation that can flare up while skimming social media like Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare and Instagram. Billions of Twitter messages, status updates and photographs provide thrilling glimpses of the daily lives and activities of friends, "frenemies," co-workers and peers.
>
> […]When we scroll through pictures and status updates, the worry that tugs at the corners of our minds is set off by the fear of regret, according to Dan Ariely, author of "Predictably Irrational" and a professor of psychology and behavioral economics at Duke University. He says we become afraid that we've made the wrong decision about how to spend our time.
>
> […]A friend who works in advertising told me that she felt fine about her life — until she opened Facebook. "Then I'm thinking, 'I am 28, with three roommates, and oh, it looks like you have a precious baby and a mortgage,' " she said. "And then I wanna die."

It’s like they want to run a race to do fun and exotic things with their peers, and not finish last.

Anyway, I want to begin this post with examples of FOMO behavior I have personally encountered.

FOMO Travel

Dina and I read and discussed this article by Alain de Botton in *The European* – notice the emphasis on travel and having fun, sophisticated experiences:

> We’re continually being bombarded with suggestions about what we might do (go jet skiing, study in Colorado, visit the Maldives or see the Pyramids). We’re always hearing of the amazing things friends have done or are going to do: ‘there was this great bar we all went to …’; ‘she’s getting married in a little country church, then we’re having a picnic…’; ‘the sun was glinting on Sydney Harbour…’ There are endless hints of the allure of life in other places: an article about family-friendly restaurants in Brooklyn, a crime novel set in Trieste, the departure board at the airport with its list of places only a plane trip away: Moscow, Bangkok, Addis Ababa… The modern world makes sure we know at all times just how much we’re missing. It is a culture in which intense and painful doses of FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) are almost inevitable.

What’s interesting is this – how does FOMO travel affect young, unmarried Christians?

Travel through missions work seems to be the FOMO activity of choice for at least a few young, unmarried Christians. One of my best friends who is married to another of my best friends told me about her missions trip to a European country. I asked her why she did it, since it meant lost savings, lost earnings, lost work experience, etc. (She gave up a year of earnings, and she had a great job in engineering). Her answer was that she did it for the adventure. I have a hard time hearing Jesus say that he was going to do something because he was bored and wanted an adventure. Especially when it’s $30,000 in costs, $60,000 of lost income, and lost work experience – per year. This was before the time of the Internet, though, when missionary work actually made sense. I just don’t think it’s worth spending that kind of money for the impact you make. The people I know who went on missionary trips just wanted to feel spiritual, look spiritual, and have a fun “life experience” vacation. One missionary told me that she was desperate to get away from her boring mid-Western roots.

If you really want to share Christ effectively with people in other countries, then you can start a blog and pay the tiny costs for it out of your earnings from your day job – that’s what I do. I get more people from Europe reading my blog than I could contact in a year of missionary work. I Skype with the people who are interested in Christianity from these countries (Scotland, Northern Ireland, England, Canada, etc.), as well. Meanwhile, I keep working my not-exciting job, so my savings increase, and my resume remains gap-less. This is good stewardship of finances, and self-denial prepares your character for the hard work of marriage and parenting. The Bible says that those who do not work should not

eat. And Paul says that he built tents so that no one could accuse him of taking on missionary work for financial gain.

You can tell whether a person is sincere in their missionary intentions by looking at how responsible they've been in their decision-making. If a person has gone into debt paying for fun, thrilling activities like skydiving, ziplining, surfing, etc., then it's FOMO travel. We must look past the spiritual smokescreen, and tell young people to grow up.

After all, if defending God's honor was the missionary's main goal, then the real battlefield would be the university.

Bill Craig puts it best:

> **William Lane Craig** (Famed Christian apologist and philosopher): "It is at the university that [our most influential people] will formulate or, more likely, simply absorb the worldview that will shape their lives. And since these are the opinion-makers and leaders who shape our culture, the worldview that they imbibe at the university will be the one that shapes our culture. If we change the university, we change our culture… If the Christian worldview can be restored to a place of prominence and respect at the university, it will have a leavening effect throughout society."[3]

If serving God is your goal, look to the university

There is already a perfectly fine university right next door – no need to fly to Europe to find one! Remember, the university that took your faith away, or maybe the faith of someone you cared about? Yeah, *it's still sitting there in your home town!* And it's still ruining the lives of thousands of young people, by peer-pressuring them into secular, liberal views – *and behaviors*. It seems to me that it's better stewardship to stay here and work, then give money to groups like Reasonable Faith. And you can start a blog, teach in church and invite scholars to the local university, too. That costs almost nothing, and it produces better results.

What about Jesus?

Sometimes, it's a good idea to look beyond the words of the Bible and reflect on the overall message of it at a higher level. When I look in the Bible, I see that Jesus went through a lot of suffering in obedience to God in order to secure the salvation of people who did not even like him. And it's from this sacrifice on our behalf that his claim on our obedience comes. There are things that I don't like to do that I do anyway because they work to serve God. Jesus life's ambition was not to do things that were easy, or that made him happy. Experienced Christians do things that are not fun, because these things are right and *because they solve the real problem*.

Dennis Prager: the feminization of America harms the whole world

May 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: “Godspeed” by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

A few days back, I wrote a post that I really enjoyed writing about the movie High Noon. In it, I talked about the conflict between Marshal Will Kane and his new wife. He wanted to stay and protect his home town against outlaws who are coming to kill him and raze the town. His new wife cannot understand why he has to stand and fight, she wants him to run away with her. In the end, she helps him to defeat the outlaws, saving his life.

That post was inspired by something I heard Dennis Prager talking about on his radio show. He was talking about a survey of boys and girls done by the toy company Mattel. Well, I wanted to blog about his comments, so I ended up writing the High Noon post. But then Dina found an article about the Mattel survey on National Review. I think this is one of the wisest and most perceptive articles I have ever read, and it will really help you to understand what has happened in the last 50 years to this country.

Prager writes:

> Last week the *New York Times* published an article, “Sweeping Away Gender-Specific Toys and Labels,” that contained three sentences that explain one of the most important phenomena in American life. In discussing the increasing move to do away with gender-specific toys — something the *New York Times* approves of — the article quoted Tania Missad, the “director of global consumer insights” at one of the world’s largest toy manufacturers, Mattel:

> **Mattel's research showed some differences in what girls and boys wanted in their action figures, Ms. Missad said. "For boys it's very much about telling a story of the good guy killing the villain. . . . [Girls] would tell us: 'Why does the good girl have to kill the villain? Can't they be friends in the end?'"**

Prager comments on the part in red:

> This difference may be the most important of all the sex differences. Indeed, it can actually shape the future of America and of the world.
>
> Of course, there are women who want evil destroyed — the late Margaret Thatcher, for example. And there are men who oppose confronting evil — the men who lead the modern Democratic party, for example. (One such man is the president of the United States, who has a feminized view of those who do evil — talk to them, but don't confront them, label them, or fight them.) But these exceptions happen in large numbers under two circumstances: when women get married and when men are feminized.
>
> When women get married, they are often influenced by their husbands with regard to political and moral issues, just as married men are influenced by their wives on a whole host of micro issues. As a result, married women are more likely than single women to prefer to fight villains than to befriend them. Unfortunately, more and more American women are single.
>
> **Meanwhile American boys are increasingly raised by single women and taught almost only by female teachers. In addition, they are often taught to be ashamed of their masculine natures and to reject traditional masculine virtues.**
>
> As a result of the above two trends, the amount spent on national defense will continue to decline (while the amount spent on welfare will continue to increase), and America will confront the world's evils less and less. The consequences will be disastrous for millions of people around the globe.
>
> When America retreats from killing bad guys, bad guys kill more innocent people. We are witnessing this right now as a consequence of America's abandoning Iraq and retreating from the world generally. Islamic State took over more and more territories as America abandoned them. Ironically, therefore, as American foreign policy becomes feminized, more Middle East females are raped.
>
> Whenever I see on a car the liberal bumper sticker "War Is Not the Answer," I look to see who is driving. In years of looking, I have seen one male driver.
>
> Both women and men have flawed natures. They share human nature, which is deeply flawed, and the sexes have their own particular natures, which are also flawed. That is one reason men need women and women need men. Men need women to soften their intrinsic aggressive nature and to help them control their predatory sexuality; and women need men to, among other things, better

> understand that evil people and regimes must be fought, not nurtured.

So, there is something in male nature that thinks that it is acceptable to use violence as a last resort in order to defeat evil. Evil might be things like criminals, terrorists… even wolves and bears, if they attacked innocent people.

So what are the solutions?

Here's what we should do:

- We should stop paying women money to have children before they are married, so that boys have fathers to raise them who have made a commitment before they got handed free sex.
- We should rollback no-fault divorce, which leads to fatherless children. People should be less emotional about who they marry, and not think "there's an escape hatch if I feel unhappy".
- We should try to get more male teachers into classrooms, and maybe allow parents to pull boys out of failing schools and put them into all-male schools if they think those work better.
- We should try to vote for policies that empower law enforcement, national security, and our armed forces to detect, attack and defeat evil. For example, we invest in defense spending, and avoid undermining the morale of police and armed forces with political correctness.

I guess the list could be longer, but that's a start for the issues that Prager raised.

We need to work against the forces that demean male nature and male roles, and work to promote male nature and male roles.

Four ways the Earth is fine-tuned for life, and one more

May 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

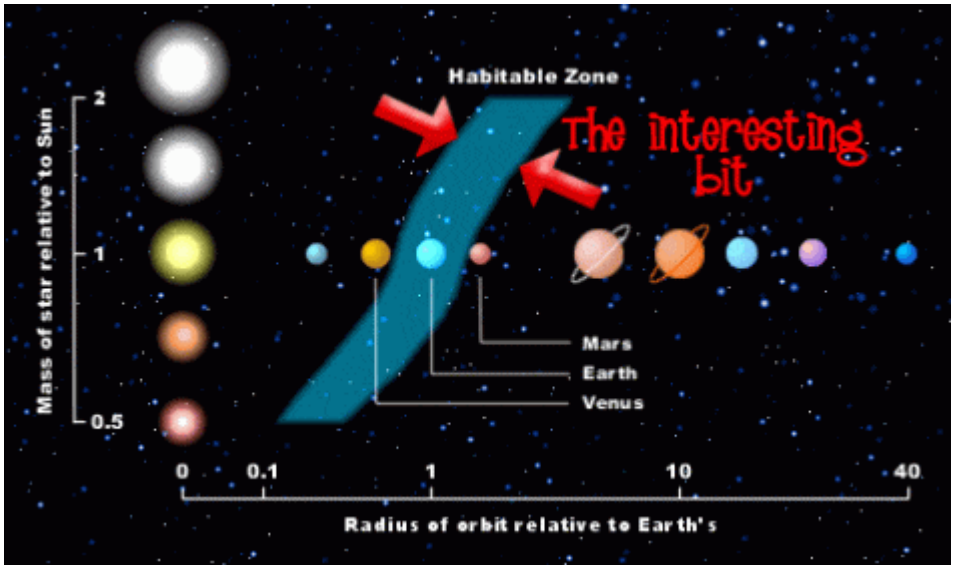

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

This is a post from J. Warner Wallace, over at Cold Case Christianity.

Let's see his four ways first, then I'll add one that I know.

He writes:

1. **The Earth's Relationship to the Sun Is Favorable to Life**
2. **The Earth's Atmospheric Conditions Are Favorable to Life**
3. **The Earth's Terrestrial Nature Is Favorable to Life**
4. **The Earth's Relationship to the Moon Is Favorable to Life**

I've blogged about the moon and plate tectonics before, so we won't pick #3 and #4 to look at. And I blogged about the stellar habitable zone before, so we won't pick #1, either.

Let's look at #2:

> **The Earth's Atmospheric Conditions Are Favorable to Life:**
> The surface gravity of Earth is critical to its ability to retain an atmosphere friendly to life. If Earth's gravity were stronger, our atmosphere would contain too much methane and ammonia. If our planet's gravity were weaker, Earth wouldn't be able to retain enough water. As it is, Earth's atmosphere has a finely calibrated ratio of oxygen to nitrogen—just enough carbon dioxide and adequate water vapor levels to promote advanced life, allow photosynthesis (without an excessive greenhouse effect), and to allow for sufficient rainfall.

Ok, that's very good.

Now here is one from me… well, it's from Science Daily, but I found it. Actually, ECM

found it. But he told me.

Excerpt:

> They suggest that the size and location of an asteroid belt, shaped by the evolution of the Sun's protoplanetary disk and by the gravitational influence of a nearby giant Jupiter-like planet, may determine whether complex life will evolve on an Earth-like planet.
>
> This might sound surprising because asteroids are considered a nuisance due to their potential to impact Earth and trigger mass extinctions. But an emerging view proposes that asteroid collisions with planets may provide a boost to the birth and evolution of complex life.
>
> Asteroids may have delivered water and organic compounds to the early Earth. According to the theory of punctuated equilibrium, occasional asteroid impacts might accelerate the rate of biological evolution by disrupting a planet's environment to the point where species must try new adaptation strategies.
>
> The astronomers based their conclusion on an analysis of theoretical models and archival observations of extrasolar Jupiter-sized planets and debris disks around young stars. "Our study shows that only a tiny fraction of planetary systems observed to date seem to have giant planets in the right location to produce an asteroid belt of the appropriate size, offering the potential for life on a nearby rocky planet," said Martin, the study's lead author. "Our study suggests that our solar system may be rather special."

So, that's 5 ways that the Earth and our solar system are fine-tuned to be habitable for complex, embodied minds. Somebody is looking out for you, so be thankful and recognize.

In California, even non-members of labor unions pay to advance secular left causes

May 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Most people know that public sector unions are among the largest donors of the secular left. But most people don't know that Christians and conservatives are often forced to join unions in order to work in a particular job, and that some of their salary is automatically taken to push causes favored by the secular left.

Here is an article from the Daily Signal:

> A large California teachers union and its national affiliate are forcing nonunion teachers to pay for political activism, according to a disclosure form acquired by The Daily Signal.
>
> Under a category called "human rights," both the National Education Association and the California Teachers Association require nonunion teachers to finance LGBT leadership training and other political goals that may run counter to the teachers' convictions, The Daily Signal's analysis of the disclosure form shows.
>
> The form shows that unions charged $1.1 million in "human rights" costs to nonunion teachers as well as members in 2013-14, while identifying another $1.2 million in the same category as not chargeable to those who weren't members.
>
> A separate page lists $20,228 in chargeable costs for "Women and LGBT Issues" as a line item under the category of human rights. The same page includes a line item on "unconscious bias training" for which nonmembers must cover $5,436.
>
> The teachers unions also spend a pretty penny on annual conferences described as focused on education, some of which appear designed instead to further political causes.
>
> For the 2013-14 school year, the teachers unions charged nonmembers as well as members a total of $49,739 for an "Equity Human Rights Conference," nearly twice as much as the $25,622 deemed not chargeable to nonmembers, the disclosure form shows.
>
> **The unions charged nonmembers as well as members a total of $17,108 for an "LGBT Conference," referring to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender movement, with a lower amount, $11,358, that wasn't charged to nonmembers.**

The only way out of paying for secular left causes seems to be passing right-to-work laws, but those are strongly opposed by the Democrat Party. Why would the Democrats be in favor of forcing people to pay unions money and not letting them opt out?

Most unions donate almost exclusively to Democrats

This Wall Street Journal article explains that unions donate mostly to Democrats.

Excerpt:

> Corporations and their employees… tend to spread their donations fairly evenly between the two major parties, unlike unions, which overwhelmingly assist Democrats. In 2008, Democrats received 55% of the $2 billion contributed by corporate PACs and company employees, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Labor unions were responsible for $75 million in political donations, with 92% going to Democrats.

So how much money are we talking about?

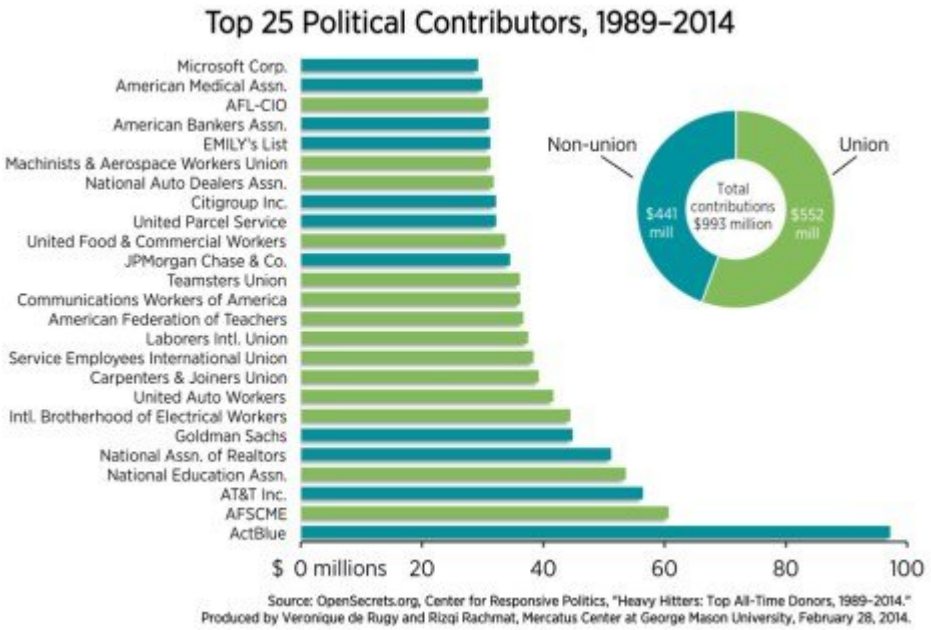

Total political contributions in 2014 election cycle (click for larger image)

To see how much unions control government, take a look at this story from National Review, written by economist Veronique to Rugy.

It says:

- The top campaign donor of the last 25 years is ActBlue, an online political-action committee dedicated to raising funds for Democrats. ActBlue's political contributions, which total close to $100 million, are even more impressive when one realizes that it was only launched in 2004. That's $100 million in ten years.
- Fourteen labor unions were among the top 25 political campaign contributors.
- Three public-sector unions were among the 14 labor groups: the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; the National Education Association; and the American Federation of Teachers. Their combined contributions amount to $150 million, or 15 percent of the top 25's approximately $1 billion in donations since 1989.
- Public- and private-sector unions contributed 55.6 percent — $552 million — of the top 25's contributions.

Where does the money go? The Daily Caller notes:

> "Nearly all of labor's 2012 donations to candidates and parties – 90 percent – went to Democrats," the report from CRP concluded. "Public sector unions, which include employees at all levels of government, donated $14.7 million to Democrats in 2014."

Although unions helped a great deal in the past to protect workers from unfair practices, their primary function now seems to be to confiscate money from their members to give to themselves and to Democrats. When we make the collection of union dues optional, then unions will have to be more responsive to their members, and less responsive to their Democrat allies.

NC governor files suit against Obama administration

May 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

NBC News reports:

> North Carolina on Monday filed a lawsuit against the federal government in response to a letter from the Justice Department that gave the state until the end of the day to scrap a controversial law regarding access to public bathrooms or risk losing hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding.
>
> Gov. Pat McCrory was given until Monday to notify the Justice Department that he would not enforce House Bill No. 2, which the federal government says limits protections for LGBT people. The measure has drawn a firestorm of protest from across the country.
>
> The suit filed against the federal government, which lists McCrory and other state officials as plaintiffs, called the Justice Department's position on the law "baseless and blatant overreach."
>
> North Carolina's suit said that Title VII, which the Department of Justice said House Bill No. 2 violates, doesn't recognize transgender status as a protected class. "If the United States desires a new protected class under Title VII, it must seek such action by the United States Congress," the suit said.
>
> McCrory had already indicated that he wasn't going to back down, saying on Sunday: "It's the federal government being a bully. It's making law."
>
> [...]House Speaker Tim Moore said, "That deadline will come and go. We don't

> ever want to lose any money, but we're not going to get bullied by the Obama administration to take action prior to Monday's date. That's not how this works."
>
> […]In letters, federal civil rights enforcement attorneys focused on provisions requiring transgender people to use public restrooms that correspond to their biological sex.
>
> **[…]If the federal government yanked funding, the 17-campus UNC system could lose more than $1.4 billion in public money.**
>
> **[…]Another $800 million in federally backed loans for students who attend the public universities also would be at risk if it's found that enforcing the law violates Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, which bars discrimination based on sex.**
>
> **A federal lawsuit against the state is also possible, the Justice Department said.**

In America, we have set up a system where the states are supposed to have jurisdiction over certain things that the federal government cannot control. We call this idea "federalism". And it is a major reason why we are more prosperous than other nations. We believe in pushing decision-making down to the lowest level where a problem can be solved, because then it will be solved efficiently. But apparently, the socialists in the federal government – whose salaries are paid by our taxes – have decided that they know best and must force their views down onto the states. And what view are they forcing? They want private businesses in North Carolina to be forced to allow men into women's bathrooms.

Do we not have other more pressing problems for the Obama administration to solve? Perhaps they can work on the IRS targeting of conservatives? Or perhaps they can work on the $20 trillion dollar debt, which has doubled since the Democrats took over the budget. Or perhaps they can back out of their deal to give Iran nuclear weapons? Or perhaps they can investigate their trafficking of assault weapons to Mexican drug cartels? Or perhaps they can fix the small problem of the labor force participation plunging to 62.8%? Or perhaps they can repeal Obamacare, which is set to raise health insurance premiums again by double digits in the coming year? Or perhaps they can repeal Dodd-Frank, which did nothing to fix the mortgage lending crisis that was caused in part by the two authors of the bill? Or perhaps they can privatize student loans and defuse the $1.3 trillion student loan bubble? Or perhaps they can get to work on modernizing our military – particularly our aging ballistic missiles submarines and our decrepit intercontinental ballistic missiles?

Or they could just focus on pushing a gay rights agenda down onto North Carolina. This is what you get when you elect an incompetent clown for a President, I guess.

J. Warner Wallace: I am not a Christian because it works for me

May 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a must-read post from Cold-Case Christianity author J. Warner Wallace.

Excerpt:

> Life on this side of my decision hasn't always been easy. It's been nearly seventeen years since I first trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. I still struggle to submit my prideful will to what God would call me to do. Christianity is not easy. It doesn't always "work" for me. There are times when I think it would be easier to do it the old way; easier to cut a corner or take a short cut. There are many times when doing the right thing means doing the most difficult thing possible. There are also times when it seems like non-Christians have it easier, or seem to be "winning". It's in times like these that I have to remind myself that I'm not a Christian because it serves my own selfish purposes. I'm not a Christian because it "works" for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn't always been easy.
>
> I'm a Christian because it is true. I'm a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I'm a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative.

I think this is important. There are people who I know who claim to be Christian, but they are clearly believing that God is a mystical force who arranges everything in their lives in order to make them happy. They are not Christians because it's true, but because of things like comfort and community. But people ought to become Christians because they think it's true. Truth doesn't necessarily make you happy, though. Truth can impose

intellectual obligations and moral obligations on you. Seeing God as he really is doesn't help us to "win" at life, as the culture defines winning.

Winning in Christianity doesn't mean making lots of money, or being famous, or winning human competitions, or being approved of by lots of people. Winning for a Christian might involve things like building relationships with people and leading them to know that God exists and who Jesus is. That has no cash value, and it's not going to make you famous. Actually, it will probably cost you money and time, and make you unpopular with a lot of people.

The Bible doesn't promise that people who become Christians will be happier. Actually, it promises that Christians will suffer for doing the right things. Their autonomy will suffer, as they sacrifice their own interests and happiness in order to make God happy, by serving his interests. Christianity isn't something you add on to your before-God life in order to achieve your before-God goals. When you become a Christian, you get a new set of goals, based on God's character and his design for you. And although you might be very successful in the world as part of serving God, there is no guarantee of that. Christianity is not life enhancement.

Donald Trump plans to default on our debt and/or embrace hyper-inflation

May 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump meeting with some of his alt-right economic policy advisers

In the past, I've given reasons to social conservatives to explain why no social conservative could vote for Donald Trump, even to stop Hillary. Trump is "very pro-choice", favors partial birth abortion, is liberal on gay rights, is an unrepentant adulterer and a serial divorcer.

But, fiscal conservatives can't vote for Trump either, and that's because Trump knows less about *basic economics* than what you flush down the toilet. This is because inheriting wealth from Daddy does not give you an understanding of basic economics.

The radically leftist New York Times reports: (H/T ALL MY DEMOCRAT CO-WORKERS)

> After assuring Americans he is not running for president "to make things unstable for the country," the presumptive Republican nominee, Donald J. Trump, suggested that he might reduce the national debt by persuading creditors to accept something less than full payment.
>
> Asked on Thursday whether the United States needed to pay its debts in full, or whether he could negotiate a partial repayment, Mr. Trump told the cable network CNBC, "I would borrow, knowing that if the economy crashed, you could make a deal."

You could make a deal with creditors – you could offer them less than what they borrowed – declare bankruptcy, in effect. That's just what he did as a businessman – over and over and over.

More:

> **Such remarks by a major presidential candidate have no modern precedent. The United States government is able to borrow money at very low interest rates because Treasury securities are regarded as a safe investment, and any cracks in investor confidence have a long history of costing American taxpayers a lot of money.**
>
> Experts also described Mr. Trump's proposal as fanciful, saying there was no reason to think America's creditors would accept anything less than 100 cents on the dollar, regardless of Mr. Trump's deal-making prowess.

The Weekly Standard notes who will bear the brunt of the damage:

> It's odd for the candidate who promises, seriously, to eliminate the $19 trillion national debt in eight years—without reforming entitlements—to tell America's creditors (read: mostly Americans) to accept less than they were promised.
>
> If it weren't a sad-but-true situation, that could be a more honest Trump campaign slogan: Accept Less Than Promised.
>
> **Seniors, of course, being savers, would bear the brunt of a Trump debt writedown—if such a thing could happen. But the real losers would be, well, everyone. Were Trump elected, ignoring the market shocks that the likelihood of that would bring, signalling that the U.S. might hedge on repaying its sovereign debt in full would be, effectively, a default on our debt.**

He's a lunatic. Defaulting on our debt would not just destroy the wealth of Americans, it would disrupt the world economy. But since he was on "The Apprentice", I guess Trump supporters think we can let it slide.

Oh, but his ignorance of basic economics is much worse than that.

Here is the latest Trumpfoolery reported by CNN:

> Donald Trump declared Monday the U.S. never has to default on debt "because you print the money," while trying to clarify his strategy for managing the national debt.

Got that? He's decided now that he's not going to default on our debt, he's going to print more money so he can buy back all our debt with printed money.

So, now, we're going to inflate our way out of a $20 trillion debt. Why not? It worked in Germany with the Weimar Republic. It worked more recently in Venezuela, Argentina and Zimbabwe. Why not elect a cretin to the highest office in the land? He's confident, and he has orange skin and hot supermodel wife.

We can blame the low-achieving college drop-outs who voted for Trump for this. They own it. Their stupidity caused this.

The New York Times discovers that universities discriminate against conservatives

May 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

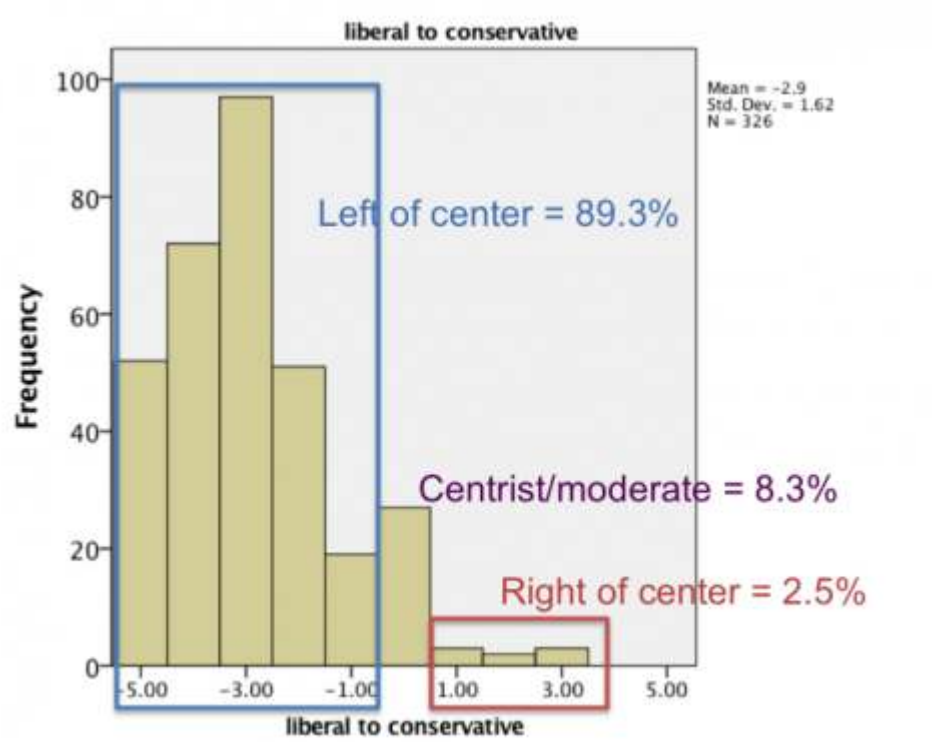

Academic diversity: ratio of liberals to conservatives is 36 to 1
Wow! And from that radical leftist Nicholas Kristof, of all people.

Here is the New York Times:

> We progressives believe in diversity, and we want women, blacks, Latinos, gays and Muslims at the table — er, so long as they aren't conservatives.
>
> Universities are the bedrock of progressive values, but the one kind of diversity that universities disregard is ideological and religious. We're fine with people who don't look like us, as long as they think like us.
>
> […]Four studies found that the proportion of professors in the humanities who are Republicans ranges between 6 and 11 percent, and in the social sciences between 7 and 9 percent.
>
> Conservatives can be spotted in the sciences and in economics, but they are virtually an endangered species in fields like anthropology, sociology, history and literature. One study found that only 2 percent of English professors are Republicans (although a large share are independents).
>
> In contrast, some 18 percent of social scientists say they are Marxist. So it's easier to find a Marxist in some disciplines than a Republican.
>
> […]The scarcity of conservatives seems driven in part by discrimination. One peer-reviewed study found that one-third of social psychologists admitted that if

> choosing between two equally qualified job candidates, they would be inclined to discriminate against the more conservative candidate.
>
> Yancey, the black sociologist, who now teaches at the University of North Texas,conducted a survey in which up to 30 percent of academics said that they would be less likely to support a job seeker if they knew that the person was a Republican.
>
> The discrimination becomes worse if the applicant is an evangelical Christian. According to Yancey's study, 59 percent of anthropologists and 53 percent of English professors would be less likely to hire someone they found out was an evangelical.
>
> "Of course there are biases against evangelicals on campuses," notes Jonathan L. Walton, the Plummer Professor of Christian Morals at Harvard. Walton, a black evangelical, adds that the condescension toward evangelicals echoes the patronizing attitude toward racial minorities: "The same arguments I hear people make about evangelicals sound so familiar to the ways people often describe folk of color, i.e. politically unsophisticated, lacking education, angry, bitter, emotional, poor."
>
> A study published in The American Journal of Political Science underscored how powerful political bias can be. In an experiment, Democrats and Republicans were asked to choose a scholarship winner from among (fictitious) finalists, with the experiment tweaked so that applicants sometimes included the president of the Democratic or Republican club, while varying the credentials and race of each. Four-fifths of Democrats and Republicans alike chose a student of their own party to win a scholarship, and discrimination against people of the other party was much greater than discrimination based on race.
>
> "I am the equivalent of someone who was gay in Mississippi in 1950," a conservative professor is quoted as saying in "Passing on the Right," a new book about right-wing faculty members by Jon A. Shields and Joshua M. Dunn Sr. That's a metaphor that conservative scholars often use, with talk of remaining in the closet early in one's career and then "coming out" after receiving tenure.

I often get asked by people why I push your Christians and conservatives so hard towards STEM fields, especially math and engineering and technology. The answer is simple. For Christians, this is the safest way to get a degree that will pay for itself. The risk you take when you borrow money to go into a non-STEM field is that you will face discrimination, be graded down, and be denied your degree. Every other minority gets affirmative action on the university campus except for evangelical Christians and Constitutional conservatives. And the worst thing that you can be is what I am, a black conservative male evangelical.

I was talking to one of my mentorees who is an graduate program in computer science the other day. I said to her that I find it more difficult to get motivated to keep up with the latest programming technologies than to keep up with apologetics and politics. She asked

me why I chose computer science, then. And I said “because I was good at it, and I needed a way to be able to support a wife and four children”. I was interested in English and criminal law when I was younger, but I saw that those departments were among the most liberal by taking night classes at the local universities while I was still in high school. I actually got into trouble with the law professors because I always wanted the stiffest sentences for criminals.

So this is why I push young people to STEM, or more accurately, TEM. It’s because to come out of university as a Ted Cruz, you have to be the best *by far*. You have to be ten times as smart as the typical pot-smoking, drunken, promiscuous leftist college student. They get As just for parroting what the professors indoctrinate them with. It really is much safer to stick with quantitative fields, especially engineering.

Obama DOJ moving fast against NC HB2 but slowly on Clinton investigation

May 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

Here is what your taxpayer dollars are going to pay for at the Department of Justice.

Religious liberty champion David French writes about it at National Review:

> At an afternoon news conference, Attorney General Loretta Lynch announced a "significant law enforcement" action — its own lawsuit. At the same time, Lynch indicated that the DOJ retained the authority to federal funding to key state entities, issuing a not-so-veiled threat of dramatic action *before* the courts issue a definitive ruling. At the same time, she preposterously compared the act of preserving bathrooms for people of the same sex to, of course, "Jim Crow" and hearkened back to the days of segregated water fountains.
>
> A public-relations battle over bathrooms and showers has transformed into a fight over the meaning and indeed authority of the Constitution itself. In its zeal to advance the sexual revolution, the Obama administration has defied the will of Congress, unilaterally rewritten federal law without even bothering to go through a statutory rulemaking process, and now seeks to bring a sovereign state to heel through a combination of threats and lawsuits.

French explains that there is no support for what the DOJ says in federal law:

> Title VII prohibits private and public employers (including state governments)

> from discriminating on the basis of "race, color, religion, sex, and national origin." Title IX prohibits federally funded educational institutions from discriminating on the basis of "sex." Neither statute prohibits sexual-orientation or gender-identity discrimination. For more than 20 years, LGBT activists have sought to amend federal law through the so-called Employment Non-Discrimination Act, a bill that would essentially add sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes within federal nondiscrimination law. For more than 20 years, LGBT activists have failed. ENDA hasn't passed even when Democrats controlled the presidency and both houses of Congress.
>
> Rather than wait for the law to change, however, federal regulators and lawless federal judges have incrementally changed it by executive and judicial fiat, steadily expanding the scope of Title VII until July 2015, when the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission unilaterally amended the statute. In a document entitled "What You Should Know about EEOC and Enforcement Protections for LGBT Workers," the Commission declared that it interprets and enforces Title VII's prohibition of sex discrimination as forbidding any employment discrimination based on " (boldface in original).
>
> At a stroke, the EEOC decided that it was going to essentially enforce ENDA — a statute that doesn't exist. Democracy wasn't working fast enough for the Obama administration, so it decided to give authoritarianism a try.

So why exactly are social conservatives fighting the gay activists on this? Simple. We want to protect people's right to privacy, as well as protect them from sexual assaults.

Here's a case of privacy violated from last week, as reported by CBS News:

> Frisco police are looking for a man they say photographed a young girl in a Target changing room.
>
> Benito Valdez with police says it happened at the Super Target on Preston Road. "The man was in a female dressing room at the Target and was seen by the victim, over the wall with his cell phone, taking photos of the victim."

It occurred at Target, of course- they let you use any bathroom you feel comfortable with, regardless of your sex.

The Toronto Sun reported on an example of sexual assault:

> A sexual predator who falsely claimed to be transgender and preyed on women at two Toronto shelters was jailed indefinitely on Wednesday.
>
> Justice John McMahon declared Christopher Hambrook — who claimed to be a transgender woman named Jessica — was a dangerous offender.

Gay rights activists like to ask how many sexual assaults have been committed by transgendered people. The answer is none or few, but no social conservative is worried about that – we are worried about cases like the one above, where a real predator pretends to be trans in order to get access to bathrooms, showers and yes, women's

shelters. But none of this is a problem for the Department of Justice, and besides, they would probably be more considered about the criminal rather than the victim anyway. That's how liberals think.

But gay rights is a priority for the Department of Justice, under Barack Obama. Do you know what isn't a priority? Criminal investigations.

This post is from Conservative Review.

Excerpt:

> President Obama's top law enforcement officer declined to give a firm answer on whether or not her department would take any action on the Hillary Clinton email scandal investigation before the end of election season.
>
> At a press conference held to announce the Department of Justice's lawsuit against the state of North Carolina over its controversial bathroom safety legislation, Attorney General Loretta Lynch was asked why the DOJ was able to move so quickly on the latter of the two cases and slowly, in contrast, on the former. When pressed, Lynch would only say that the investigation against the former Secretary of State was simply still "ongoing."

No need to investigate the IRS for persecuting conservative groups, or to investigate Hillary Clinton's unsecure private e-mail server in a timely fashion. No! The priority is to make sure that private businesses are forced to allow biological men into women's bathrooms, because that's what the gay activists want. Remember that Lynch is also passionate about prosecuting anyone who is critical of radical Islam. Not radical Islamic terrorists, but people who are critical of radical Islamist terrorists.

Can we raise declining marriage rates by telling men to “man up”?

May 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marine prays with his wife on their wedding day

The latest Prager University video features pro-marriage scholar Brad Wilcox:

I watched this video, and, as a card-carrying member of the Christian men’s rights movement, I was concerned that nothing was said about how radical feminism has weakened the attractiveness of marriage to men. I mean specifically things like women carrying debt, having liberal political views, being unchaste and even promiscuous, initiating the majority of divorces (70%), withholding sex if they do marry, and denying men child visitation if they divorce, single mother welfare making men superfluous, big government replacing men as providers, etc. The consequences of divorce for men are catastrophic, and I don’t just mean financially, but emotionally as well.

I contacted Wilcox to ask him why he did not recognize how radical feminism undermines the value of marriage to men, and he pointed me to this article he wrote in the leftist Washington Post.

He writes:

> These days, 20something marriage has gotten a reputation for being a bad idea. That’s partly because parents, peers, and the popular culture encourage young adults to treat their twenties as a decade for exploration and getting one’s ducks in a row, not for settling down. In the immortal words of Jay-Z, “Thirty’s the new twenty.”

> Indeed, the median age-at-first marriage has climbed to nearly 30 for today's young adults, up from about 22 in 1970. Of course, there's an upside to that. As my coauthors and I report in Knot Yet: the Benefits and Costs of Delayed Marriage in America, women who put off marriage and starting a family earn markedly more money than their peers who marry earlier.

And here he sort of takes on my concerns about chastity, delayed marriage, and fertility:

> First, you are more likely to marry someone who shares your basic values and life experiences, and less likely to marry someone with a complicated romantic or family history. Those who marry in their twenties, for instance, are more likely to marry someone who isn't previously married and shares their level of educational attainment as well as their religious faith. Marrying at this stage in your life also allows couples to experience early adulthood together. In the words of Elizabeth Gilbert, a 31-year-old woman who married in her mid-twenties, "My husband and I got to grow up together—not apart. We learned sacrifice, selflessness, compromise, and became better people for it."
>
> Women who marry in their 20s generally have an easier time getting pregnant, and having more than one child, than their peers who wait to marry in their thirties. You'll also be around to enjoy the grandchildren for longer.

> You're less likely to lose the best possible mate for fear of getting started too young on the adventure that is married life. One single, thirtysomething woman struggling to find a good partner put it this way to psychologist Meg Jay, the author of The Defining Decade: Why Your Twenties Matter and How to Make the Most of Them Now, and whose TED Talk on twentysomethings has garnered 6.9 million views: "The best boyfriend I ever had was in my mid-twenties. I just didn't think I was supposed to be [married] with someone then." And as psychotherapist Lori Gottlieb explains in her book, Marry Him, there's a higher likelihood of finding a true peer and more appealing partner-for-life in one's twenties, before those most appealing potential mates marry somebody else by their thirties.

I cannot fault Wilcox or Prager for being ignorant of the social changes that have undermined the value proposition of marriage for men, and that have also undermined men's ability to fulfill their roles. Far from being a man-blamer, Prager is a warrior against radical feminism, and just today Wilcox tweeted a study showing the boys benefit from single-sex education – a position I favor myself. But I do want to head off the common "men need to man up" objection made by those who deny that the real problem is radical feminism.

Contrary to the "be a man / man up" crowd, my objections to marriage don't come from a desire to be lazy about education, career and finance. Rest assured that I have a BS and MS in STEM, and nearly two decades of STEM work experience (internships, summer jobs, full-time employment). I do make six figures, like the person Wilcox discussed in the

video, and I have the savings you would expect with a gapless STEM resume. So, complaining about “man up” isn’t going to work on me, and probably not on most men who have concerns about marriage.

Radical feminism causes women to delay marriage in order to have fun, travel and ride the carousel of promiscuity in their 20s. Women have been told that they will have more fun by delaying marriage and staying single in their 20s. Church leaders, friends and family should be discussing and demonstrating the value of marriage to women, and showing them how the lasting contentment of marriage is better than the temporary fun of drinking, sex, travel and career. Marriage is a better platform for lasting joy and for quality relationships. It’s up to the woman’s friends and family to make the case for marriage as more fun and fulfilling than the alternatives offered by radical feminism. Her friends and family need to be countering the feminist message that is everywhere in the culture: marriage is boring, children are a burden, and that husbands are needy and demanding fools. And women need to be told how spending a decade being selfish in their 20s undermines their suitability for marriage.

A woman’s friends and family should train her not to view the moral and spiritual leadership of a man as threatening and dangerous, just because it disagrees with her feelings and desires. Instead of recoiling in horror when a well-educated, successful, wealthy man tells a woman with a history of poor decision-making to get a full-time job, pay off her debts, and start investing, her friends and family ought to welcome it. A good man’s practical advice should not be seen as stifling a woman’s freedom to “follow her heart”. And her friends and family certainly should not celebrate when she chooses a penniless, unemployed, empty-resume man who never questions her reckless decisions. Women should be encouraged to choose men who have demonstrated ability as protectors, providers and moral and spiritual leaders, even if she would rather have a doormat who lets her be wild, selfish and irresponsible. Doormats are not intimidating, but they are also not decisive about marriage. When a man wants to marry a woman, he is very interested in encouraging her to be practical and responsible. This is a good thing.

Lesbian relationships are the most unstable and shortest-lived relationships. This suggests that there is a tendency in women to reject commitment when it goes against their feelings and self-interest. Women’s emotions can make them unstable, and less capable of commitment. Friends and family need to recognize that tendency, and help women to learn practicality, responsibility and unselfishness at a young age, so that they are capable of making commitments.Men look for women who have demonstrated that they are able to complete things that they start. We know that women initiate 70% of divorces, and mostly because of feelings of unhappiness. Finish a tough STEM degree, work a tough job for a few years, pay off debts, pay off a car loan, etc. Men look for women who can make and keep commitments through good times and bad times, even when it goes against their self-interest.

A good basic book to read on this issue is Helen Smith’s “Men On Strike“.

Here’s a short video about her book:

A longer interview from News Max:

And an even longer interview with a homeschooling man:

Some men are ignorant of how radical feminism makes women less suitable for marriage while simultaneously making school and work more difficult to boys and men. It is these men who need to “man up” and “be a man” by challenging women to reject radical feminism and embrace early marriage to strong men who lead. If you’re not willing to fight the radical feminism that causes the underlying problems, then you can’t complain when men wisely reject marriage to women who aren’t ready to be wives and mothers.

Fifteen reasons why Donald Trump is a liberal

May 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

In National Review, David French lists 15 reasons why Donald Trump is a crazy liberal.

Here are the topics:

1. government-provided health care
2. raising taxes
3. touchback amnesty
4. protectionism / tariffs
5. seizing private property (eminent domain)
6. liberal judicial nominees
7. opposition to first amendment
8. raising minimum wage
9. praising Planned Parenthood
10. transgenders use bathroom / shower of their choice
11. Bush-Iraq conspiracy theories
12. bomb oil fields to stop Islamic State
13. order American troops to commit war crimes
14. 9/11 conspiracy theories
15. Cruz father conspiracy theories

These are all from the time of Donald Trump's campaign – we are not even going back to when he was "very pro-choice".

I've covered most of these already, but this one was new to me:

> 15. Finally, there is this now-infamous bit of lunacy, which can't be stressed enough: Trump tied Ted Cruz's father to John F. Kennedy's assassin:

> "His father was with Lee Harvey Oswald prior to Oswald's being — you know, shot. I mean, the whole thing is ridiculous," Trump said Tuesday during a phone interview with Fox News. "What is this, right prior to his being shot, and nobody even brings it up. They don't even talk about that. That was reported, and nobody talks about it."
>
> "I mean, what was he doing — what was he doing with Lee Harvey Oswald shortly before the death? Before the shooting?" Trump continued. "It's horrible."

Yes, really:

His source for that conspiracy theory is – of course – the National Enquirer, which is run by his very good friend Mr. Pecker. And I expect that in a Trump administration, he would put more trust in stories from the National Enquirer than Presidential Daily Briefings produced by the FBI, CIA, etc.

Trump believes this:

The National Enquirer again

This is not Trump's first brush with conspiracy theories. Nor the second. Nor the third. Nor even the fourth. And I guess that a fair number of his supporters will believe this, because maybe they consider the National Enquirer to be a reputable news source.

I wonder what would have happened to Ted Cruz if he had cited the National Enquirer as an authority when he was defending the Second Amendment before the U.S. Supreme Court. He probably wouldn't have won the case if he had, so it's a good thing he is a serious intellectual, and he won the case.

Related posts

- Donald Trump plans to default on our debt and/or embrace hyper-inflation

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- Will Trump cultists apologize for their laziness and ignorance, as Trump reverts to leftism?
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- Ted Cruz suspends campaign: what next for conservatives? #NeverTrump
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- How well is Obamacare working, and will Ted Cruz or Donald Trump fix health care?
- Which candidate is the best at defending religious liberty: Trump or Cruz?
- Against misogyny: why every conservative should #DumpTrump #NeverTrump
- Donald Trump's plan to introduce tariffs is just a tax on consumer goods
- Suppose God had coffee with Donald Trump… how would that go?
- Is Donald Trump right to order U.S. troops to commit war crimes?
- How well did Donald Trump do in the hotel and casino business?
- Trump donated to group that promotes homosexuality to 5-year-olds
- Do supporters of Donald Trump really support what Trump believes?
- Is Donald Trump a successful businessman? Let's look at his record
- Report: how Donald Trump used illegal immigrants to build Trump Tower
- Is Trump right to praise Putin's leadership abilities?
- Is Trump right to say that Bush lied about the Iraq war, and there were no WMDs?
- Donald Trump promises gay publication "forward motion" on gay rights issues
- Who has done more on the pro-life and pro-marriage issues – Trump or Cruz?
- Trump, eminent domain, a widow's house, and a limousine parking lot
- Trump wants to increase taxpayer subsidies of ethanol, Cruz wants to end them
- Trump supported the bank bailout and auto bailout, Cruz opposes all bailouts
- Should evangelical Christians prefer Donald Trump on moral grounds?
- What are the "New York Values" that Trump's evangelical Christian supporters admire?
- Donald Trump would expand Obamacare into single-payer health care system

Courageous pro-life student organizes her own conservative “Sex Week”

May 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ratio Christi event at Ohio State University featuring Frank Turek

I always enjoy hearing news of events on the university campuses where conservative and/or Christian viewpoints get a hearing.

The College Fix reports: (H/T Terrell)

> After eight long months of planning, Students for Life UNM brought “The Real Sex Week” to the University of New Mexico in March.
>
> We began with a workshop discussing the male and female body, the biology behind intercourse, and how the act of sex affects our minds and relationships, linking humans chemically and contrasting the notion that one-night stands have no impact on women’s psyches.
>
> Our second workshop was packed with STD education and information on contraception from a local OBGYN, Dr. Ann Church. We discussed the success and failure rate of different contraception (did you know that condoms have a 18 percent failure rate?) and looked at how hormonal contraception negatively affects the body, because those who use oral contraceptives have up to ten times the risk of developing breast cancer as does a non-user.
>
> We also taught about other forms of contraception, such as Natural Family Planning, which is an umbrella term for different methods used to cause and prevent pregnancies, all based on the observation of the naturally occurring signs of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman’s menstrual cycle. The A-word, abstinence, was also touted. Students learned that avoiding sex before

> marriage actually has positive effects, such as lower exposures to an STD and more positive thoughts about life in general.
>
> […]During our “Pregnant and Parenting Support” workshop, we heard from a local pregnancy center, Women’s Pregnancy Options, as well as testimonies from five mothers who are recent graduates or still in school. The advice they doled to female students who find themselves pregnant? Stick it out – there’s support available, such as pregnancy resources centers and the national Students for Life of America initiative, Pregnant On Campus.
>
> […]Our next night offered healing from sexual assault with counselor Rebecca Frock, as well as healing from abortion with the help of Surrendered Hearts.
>
> […]We concluded “The Real Sex Week” with a women’s self-defense class offered by MMA fighters Jesonna Ollis and Greg Mundth. Instead of hearing that most college men are rapists who need to be taught to control themselves, females in our workshop gained empowerment by learning how to fight off would-be attackers.

I really like her focus on getting people to be responsible *before* they have to make a tough decision.

So, most of you know that I support apologetics events on campuses, especially debates and lectures by scholars I like. But I also support pro-life events, as well. It’s very important for older Christians to keep an eye on what younger Christians are doing on university campuses and be there to help them out. It’s important for us to connect with college kids and give them guidance and support. They do much better when they feel that a grown-up cares about what they are doing and planning.

I recently had my annual check up, and my doctor checked my blood pressure. It was 110 over 76. My resting heart rate was 60 beats per minute. He asked me how I managed to have such low blood pressure when I am always upset about secularism, feminism, socialism, etc. I told him that the best thing to do when you are upset about something is to do something about it. Obviously, writing this blog is my effort to do something about whatever is upsetting me. I know a lot of Christians and conservatives do more than me, too – which is very good. Think of all the people who are in Ratio Christi, or the people who counsel people considering abortion outside of abortion clinics, or the people who went door to door for Ted Cruz.

I really recommend to people that they get focused on doing something positive instead of complaining, or believing conspiracy theories that just make you feel more powerless. What you do doesn’t have to be anything big, and you’ll feel a lot better when you do it. And remember, you’re not responsible for results, you’re just responsible for doing things that are likely to move the ball forward.

Hillary and Bill Clinton collected $100 million in donations from Middle East leaders

May 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

This is from Investors Business Daily.

It says:

> A new investigation reveals that Bill and Hillary Clinton took in at least $100 million from Middle East leaders. Can such a financially and ethically compromised candidate truly function as our nation's leader?
>
> The investigation by the Daily Caller News Foundation has uncovered a disturbing pattern of the Clintons' raising money for the Clinton Foundation from regimes that have checkered records on human rights and that aren't always operating in the best interests of the U.S. By the way, the $100 million we mentioned above doesn't appear to include another $30 million given to the Clintons by two Mideast-based foundations and four billionaire Saudis.
>
> All told, it's a lot of money.
>
> "These regimes are buying access," Patrick Poole, a national security analyst who regularly writes for PJ Media, told the DCNF. "You've got the Saudis. You've got the Kuwaitis, Oman, Qatar and the UAE (United Arab Emirates). There are massive conflicts of interest. It's beyond comprehension."
>
> […]Meanwhile, former U.S. Attorney Joseph E. diGenova told the Caller that he

> believes the FBI has launched a second, possibly more serious investigation into possible political corruption involving the Clinton Foundation. This is potentially explosive, given that the Clintons seem to have run their charity in a way that lines their own pockets.
>
> The question is an open one: Did the oil-rich Mideast nations give lavishly to the Clinton Foundation in an effort to influence future U.S. policy? And what about Bill Clinton's business partnership with Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai's authoritarian ruler, from 2003 to 2008? Clinton took away some $15 million in "guaranteed payments" from the deal, his tax records show.
>
> […]In just the past three years, after her stint as the nation's top diplomat, Hillary Clinton spoke to dozens of deep-pocket firms on Wall Street, typically charging $250,000 a pop to hear her wit and wisdom — despite her bitter condemnations of Wall Street during her campaign.
>
> All told, she took in an estimated $22 million from these speeches — an extraordinary amount, given the growing consensus among foreign-policy thinkers that Clinton was one of the worst secretaries of state *ever*.

Now, I thought that Hillary Clinton was supposed to be all concerned about women's rights and blah blah blah. Why then is she taking in all this money from the leaders of all these Middle East (Muslim) countries, some of whom do not treat women very well at all? And why isn't the mainstream media covering this story?

Greg Koukl and Michael Krueger discuss Bart Ehrman's skepticism of the gospels

May 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a recent episode that I'm sure you'll enjoy.

Details:

> Michael Kruger on Bart Ehrman's claim we can't trust the Holy Week Gospel accounts (April 1, 2016)

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Who is Bart Ehrman? What are his books about?
- Conservatives tend to agree with Ehrman on the facts, not on his interpretation of the facts
- Ehrman has an article claiming that the Holy Week gospel accounts are untrustworthy
- do the variants in the NT texts undermine the reliability of the texts?
- the difference between reasonable scholar-Bart and hyper-skeptical popularizer-Bart
- where does Ehrman's view of gospel reliability fit in the broad spectrum of NT scholars?
- there are 200,000 to 400,000 variants in the copies of the gospels: what is a "variant"?
- can a person be an authentic Christian if the gospels are not actual historical events?
- Ehrman's view: Christians can have feelings about events that never happened = not Biblical
- was Jesus just an itinerant preacher who spoke pithy slogans? what about his Jewish background?
- is there scholarly agreement regarding the minimal facts underlying the resurrection of Jesus?
- is there a disconnect between uneducated eyewitnesses and educated Greek gospel authors?
- is the early church an "oral culture" or a "textual culture"? Is oral transmission reliable?
- was text of the New Testament was inspired by God or dictated by God?
- do we have any reasons to think that the gospel authors were in contact with eyewitnesses?
- should be be hyper-skeptical of the gospels when we have an early creed in 1 Cor 15:3-8?

Stand to Reason does a nice job with their podcast. Not only can you download the MP3, but they have a transcript, and links to resources mentioned in each episode. First class!

Obama administration forces transgender bathroom access in all public schools

May 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

This is from The Stream:

> Public schools must permit transgender students to use bathrooms and locker rooms consistent with their chosen gender identity, according to an Obama administration directive issued amid a court fight between the federal government and North Carolina.
>
> The guidance from leaders at the departments of Education and Justice says public schools are obligated to treat transgender students in a way that matches their gender identity, even if their education records or identity documents indicate a different sex.
>
> “There is no room in our schools for discrimination of any kind, including discrimination against transgender students on the basis of their sex,” Attorney General Loretta Lynch said in a statement accompanying the directive, which is being sent to school districts Friday.
>
> In issuing the guidance, the Obama administration is wading anew into a socially divisive debate it has bluntly cast in terms of civil rights. The Justice Department on Monday sued North Carolina over a bathroom access law that it said violates the rights of transgender people, a measure that Lynch likened to policies of racial segregation and efforts to deny gay couples the right to marry.

> **“We must ensure that our young people know that whoever they are or wherever they come from, they have the opportunity to get a great education in an environment free from discrimination, harassment and violence,” [Education Secretary John B.] King said.**

Ah yes – the students get their educations in the bathrooms, changerooms and showers. So that’s where they have to be free to pretend to be a sex they are not, or they won’t learn anything in there. It’s part of their education, what goes on in bathrooms, changerooms and showers.

In any case, things are going so well academically in our schools, that of course we can focus on these human rights issues instead. Our public schools are the best in the world, and our students are the most educated, right?

OK, so who is behind this power play? The largest gay activist group in the United States, of course:

> The move was cheered by Human Rights Campaign, a gay, lesbian and transgender civil rights organization, which called the guidelines “groundbreaking.”
>
> “This is a truly significant moment not only for transgender young people but for all young people, sending a message that every student deserves to be treated fairly and supported by their teachers and schools,” HRC President Chad Griffin said in a statement.

All of this Obama administration activity is being down with taxpayer dollars. Even if you disagree with it, you’re paying for it. The solution is to shrink the size of government by voting for people who want the federal government to only focus on the responsibilities outlined for it in the Constitution, and push the other responsibilities down to the state level. I can guarantee you that if you live in a red state, you would never have your state government forcing gay activist legislation down your throat. But even then, at least you could move to a more conservative state. When the federal government does it, you’re stuck.

Think of the things that the federal government should be working on like fighting wars, building up our armed forces, detecting and neutralizing terrorists, securing the border, and lowering taxes and regulations on business. But they do none of those things, and instead just do whatever the Human Rights Campaign wants them to do. And this is what people who vote for the Democrat party want.

Ted Cruz campaigned on abolishing the federal department of education, precisely because education is something that should be left to the states. But, unfortunately the Republican primary voters were not looking for someone with good policies. So this isn’t going to get fixed, no matter who wins the election in 2016. It might get fixed in 2020, if we elect a Constitutional conservative.

Sex abuse survivors discuss consequences of transgender bathroom laws

May 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

In this latest video from Alliance Defending Freedom:

The Daily Signal explains the new video:

> Policies allowing a person who is biologically male to access women's restrooms and locker rooms can create negative, unintended consequences, according to some sexual abuse survivors.
>
> "The presence of a male of any variety, whether he's somebody who identifies as a trans or not, whether he has deviant motives or not, that's irrelevant to the reality that for survivors of sexual trauma to just turn around and to be exposed to that is an instant trigger," Kaeley Triller, a sexual trauma survivor, said in a video created by Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative, Christian legal organization.
>
> The video explains from a first-hand perspective how unintended victims are the consequence of open restroom and locker room policies in place at some companies like Target and in schools, such as in Fort Worth, Texas.
>
> […]"People are afraid, and with good reason, because they've had experiences where they were in places where they were vulnerable and someone hurt them," a woman named Autumn Bennett said in the video.

> […]Janine Simon, a sexual assault victim, shared her thoughts in the video.
>
> "I've only been telling my personal story publicly for a few months," Simon said. "I do it because I know there are so many kids out, there are so many kids out there already being abused. There's so many kids out there that pedophiles, they're just looking for a chance… We've just created a law that makes it easier for them to access their victims."
>
> […]This year in Washington state, a man was reported to have undressed in front of girls in a women's locker room.
>
> "As long as the person says, 'I identify as a woman,' and they're not doing something criminal like actually assaulting somebody, this rule gives them the legal right to be present," Joseph Backholm, executive director of the Family Policy Institute of Washington, told The Washington Times in February.

And as I blogged before, the Obama administration, which is in the back pocket of the gay rights lobby, has ordered all the public schools in the nation to implement transgender bathroom access. Even if you pull your kids out of the public schools, you are still paying for the public schools to be run the way that the gay rights lobby wants them to be run. You can't opt out of paying taxes to the Democrat Party.

Fort Worth, TX

What is scary is how this is even happening at the state and local level, in states that are supposedly conservative.

Look at this:

> The public schools in Fort Worth — *Fort Worth* — are going trans-positive. Here's a link to the new school policy, [UPDATE: Link corrected. Sorry! — RD] which is based on the new federal interpretation of Title IX. It's in Scribd, so I can't quote excerpts. Highlights include:
>
> - There doesn't need to be a medical or mental health diagnosis involved. If a male student says he's a girl, then he's a girl, and vice versa.
> - Schools are instructed to keep the student's asserted gender identity hidden from parents unless authorized to share that information with them.
> - School personnel are to consider themselves to be allies of a student undergoing gender transitioning. That means not telling their parents or guardians.
> - Transgender students must have the opportunity to participate in school sports as the gender they claim to be, though they are not guaranteed this as a right.
>
> But there's more. The Fort Worth schools are now compelling teachers and others to teach gender ideology to students. Highlights:
>
> - Teachers are no longer to call their students "boys" and "girls," but to use

> gender-neutral language to refer to them, e.g., “students”
> - Classrooms are to “feature diversity” in their classroom materials
>
> So, let’s recap: public school teachers and personnel in the Fort Worth Independent School District are now required by policy to instruct students that gender can be whatever you want it to be. And they are required to keep parents in the dark about their kids transitioning or presenting themselves as the opposite gender at school.
>
> Not in Austin. In Fort Worth.

Where are the people in Fort Worth supposed to go to get their kids away from this? And where do they get the tax money they paid into the system back, if they do pull their kids out of these public schools?

My solution to this is to allow the victims of anything that follows from this to sue the public school administrators and the Democrat Party officials who put the policy in place, and make it very expensive for them. They understand lawsuits. But we’ll have to wait for a real conservative to be elected President before that happens.

Oklahoma attorney general signals resistance against DOJ transgender decree

May 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

President Obama issued a Kingly decree to his subjects that all public schools in the land are to allow men to use women's bathrooms, showers, change rooms, etc., because it is part of their rigorous public school education, and will prepare them to compete for jobs.

The Weekly Standard reports:

> Late Friday afternoon Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt wrote a letter to the Justice and Education officials advising that "if you attempt to enforce this . . . letter on schools in the State of Oklahoma, we will vigorously defend the State's interests." Pruitt's letter sets forth the grounds of defense: That without warrant the administration has redefined "sex" to mean "gender identity"; that it has forced this definition on parents, students, and communities because it has "deemed unjustifiable any discomfort that [transgender students] may express," thus elevating "the status of transgender students over those who would define their sex based on biology and who would seek to have their definition honored in the most private of places"; and that it compels schools to enforce the new definition of sex "by conditioning receipt of federal funds on compliance" with the letter—"an ultimatum: take it or lose it," which is not a "real choice" for many schools.
>
> Pruitt concludes by saying that the administration's actions are unlawful and

> "represent the most egregious administrative overreach to date. You have taken a public policy issue that must, by our constitutional design, be worked out in the laboratory of democracy and enforced it on all people. And you have done so through a misuse of the spending power."
>
> **State attorneys general in the age of Obama have devised state coalitions to challenge federal overreach. Most notably, 26 states have joined in taking on the president's executive action on immigration, now before the Supreme Court. Watch for a new coalition to be formed, in the event of actions taken to enforce the guidance letter.**

Are you feeling sad? Then read the letter (PDF) from the Oklahoma attorney general.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott defies the tyrant

Meanwhile, the Washington Post reports on Texas' response to Obama's Kingly decree:

> Texas Lieutenant Gov. Dan Patrick said on May 13 the state will "not yield to blackmail" after the Obama administration announced a directive to public schools to give transgender students access to facilities, including bathrooms that match their chosen gender identity.
>
> [...]Just hours after news outlets reported on the directive, which will be sent to all public schools across the country Friday, Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick offered a doomsday outlook.
>
> "This will be the beginning of the end of the public school system as we know it," he told NBC 5.
>
> Patrick and other top Republicans in America's largest conservative state, had spent the day listening to Gov. Greg Abbott's vows to unite with the state of North Carolina as it wages a legal battle with the federal government over the

> Tar Heel state’s new law requiring people to use the bathroom that aligns with the gender on their birth certificate.
>
> And just this week, Patrick called for the resignation of a Fort Worth schools superintendent after he proposed policies more inclusive of transgender students.

For those of you looking for a good state to move to, Oklahoma and Texas.

Do young Americans know how well socialism is working in Venezuela?

May 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two socialists shake hands: Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez

I'm very interested in how economic policy in different times and places affects the ability of Christians to carry out their Christian life plans. What economic policies should Christians support in order to be able to carry out their lives? Do Christians need to eat? Do they need to be safe from criminals? Do they need to be able to work or run a business without violating their consciences? Can a Christian be as charitable when he cannot even feed himself or his family?

When I talk to young evangelicals, they seem to be pretty in lockstep with the left on policies like raising the minimum wage, having government take over health care, environmental regulations on private sector energy companies to stop global warming, etc.

So, it's worth it to look at how things work in places where socialism is actually being tried.

Here is an article from March 2013 from the radically leftist Slate. The headline is "Hugo Chavez's economic miracle: The Venezuelan leader was often marginalized as a radical. But his brand of socialism achieved real economic gains". The author is "a senior writer for the International Business Times".

He writes:

> Chavez became the bugaboo of American politics because his full-throated advocacy of socialism and redistributionism at once represented a fundamental critique of neoliberal economics, and also delivered some indisputably positive results. Indeed, as shown by some of the most significant indicators, Chavez racked up an economic record that a legacy-obsessed American president could

> only dream of achieving.

What did Chavez do, precisely, that caused the Venezuelan economic to boom? Well, he nationalized private industry and redistributed wealth from job creators and entrepreneurs to the poor.

> As The Week correctly put it, while "Chavez's policies of redistribution and nationalization of oil assets endeared him to Venezuela's working class" and produced many laudable results, the country's "oil-centric economy has taken away resources from other areas that are badly in need of development."

Well, what happened next?

Consider this long and detailed article from the left-leaning The Atlantic. I can only quote part of it, but you really need to read this to understand what happens when country attacks all the people who were creating wealth and jobs with regulations, taxes, price controls and property seizure.

It says:

> In the last two years Venezuela has experienced the kind of implosion that hardly ever occurs in a middle-income country like it outside of war. Mortality rates are skyrocketing; one public service after another is collapsing; triple-digit inflation has left more than 70 percent of the population in poverty; an unmanageable crime wave keeps people locked indoors at night; shoppers have to stand in line for hours to buy food; babies die in large numbers for lack of simple, inexpensive medicines and equipment in hospitals, as do the elderly and those suffering from chronic illnesses.
>
> But why? It's not that the country lacked money. Sitting atop the world's largest reserves of oil at the tail end of a frenzied oil boom, the government led first by Chavez and, since 2013, by Maduro, received over a trillion dollars in oil revenues over the last 17 years. It faced virtually no institutional constraints on how to spend that unprecedented bonanza. It's true that oil prices have since fallen—a risk many people foresaw, and one that the government made no provision for—but that can hardly explain what's happened: Venezuela's garish implosion began well before the price of oil plummeted. Back in 2014, when oil was still trading north of $100 per barrel, Venezuelans were already facing acute shortages of basic things like bread or toiletries.
>
> **The real culprit is chavismo, the ruling philosophy named for Chavez and carried forward by Maduro, and its truly breathtaking propensity for mismanagement(the government plowed state money arbitrarily into foolish investments);institutional destruction (as Chavez and then Maduro became more authoritarian and crippled the country's democratic institutions); nonsense policy-making (like price and currency controls); and plain thievery (as corruption has proliferated**

> **among unaccountable officials and their friends and families).**
>
> **A case in point is the price controls, which have expanded to apply to more and more goods: food and vital medicines, yes, but also car batteries, essential medical services, deodorant, diapers, and, of course, toilet paper. The ostensible goal was to check inflation and keep goods affordable for the poor, but anyone with a basic grasp of economics could have foreseen the consequences: When prices are set below production costs, sellers can't afford to keep the shelves stocked. Official prices are low, but it's a mirage: The products have disappeared.**
>
> When a state is in the process of collapse, dimensions of decay feed back on each other in an intractable cycle. Populist giveaways, for example, have fed the country's ruinous flirtation with hyperinflation; the International Monetary Fund now projects that prices will rise by 720 percent this year and 2,200 percent in 2017. The government virtually gives away gasoline for free, even after having raised the price earlier this year. As a result of this and similar policies, the state is chronically short of funds, forced to print ever more money to finance its spending. Consumers, flush with cash and chasing a dwindling supply of goods, are caught in an inflationary spiral.

The rest of the article has horrifying details about what socialism really means: businesses shut down, shortages of food and medicine, government waste, skyrocketing crime, failing education system, Zika epidemic, water rationing, blackouts, and so on.

There was even an article this weekend in the radically leftist New York Times about the horrifying conditions of hospitals in Venezuela:

> By morning, three newborns were already dead.
>
> The day had begun with the usual hazards: chronic shortages of antibiotics, intravenous solutions, even food. Then a blackout swept over the city, shutting down the respirators in the maternity ward.
>
> Doctors kept ailing infants alive by pumping air into their lungs by hand for hours. By nightfall, four more newborns had died.
>
> "The death of a baby is our daily bread," said Dr. Osleidy Camejo, a surgeon in the nation's capital, Caracas, referring to the toll from Venezuela's collapsing hospitals.
>
> The economic crisis in this country has exploded into a public health emergency, claiming the lives of untold numbers of Venezuelans. It is just part of a larger unraveling here that has become so widespread it has prompted President Nicolás Maduro to impose a state of emergency and has raised fears of a government collapse.
>
> Hospital wards have become crucibles where the forces tearing apart Venezuela have converged. Gloves and soap have vanished from some hospitals. Cancer

> medicines are often found only on the black market. There is so little electricity that the government works only two days a week to save what energy is left.
>
> At the University of the Andes Hospital in the mountain city of Mérida, there was not enough water to wash blood from the operating table. Doctors preparing for surgery cleaned their hands with bottles of seltzer water.
>
> "It is like something from the 19th century," said Dr. Christian Pino, a surgeon at the hospital.
>
> The figures are devastating. The rate of death among babies under a month old increased more than a hundredfold in public hospitals run by the Health Ministry, to just over 2 percent in 2015 from 0.02 percent in 2012, according to a government report provided by lawmakers.
>
> The rate of death among new mothers in those hospitals increased by almost five times in the same period, according to the report.
>
> Here in the Caribbean port town of Barcelona, two premature infants died recently on the way to the main public clinic because the ambulance had no oxygen tanks. The hospital has no fully functioning X-ray or kidney dialysismachines because they broke down long ago. And because there are no open beds, some patients lie on the floor in pools of their own blood.

This is not happening because of capitalism and the greedy rich. It is happening because of hatred and persecution of entrepreneurs and job creating private businesses. But, if you read books on economic policy like "The Spirit Level", which is written by socialists, countries like Venezuela that have lower income inequality have lower infant mortality, lower crime rates and better health care. Socialism works great in academia, not so well in a North Korean work camp.

It's not just Venezuela. This article from Investors Business Daily covers how well socialism is going in countries like France, Brazil and Argentina. It never works.

Now, in most churches, pastors are more concerned with making people feel good so that the coins continue to fall into the offering plate. Therefore, they carefully stay clear of topics like economics, business and entrepreneurship. The question that we need to ask ourselves is this: how easy is it for you to live out a Christian life in a country where poverty, crime, and government suppression of free speech and religious liberty are rampant? Shouldn't part of being a Christian mean voting for public policies that actually help poor people have opportunities, children in broken homes and victims of crime, instead of just embracing what sounds nice and makes us feel good?

In case I need to be clearer, I mean that Christians who embrace socialism are taking us down the road to serfdom because of their ignorance of economics. And it's not just the Democrats. Christians who support Donald Trump are embracing import tariffs, opposing free trade, raising taxes, raising the minimum wage, government seizing private property, and so on. That's socialism, too. And we won't escape the consequences of our economic ignorance anymore than the well-meaning Venezuelan voters did when they

elected their strong man to rescue them.

Supreme Court vacates lower court ruling against religious liberty

May 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama speaking to Planned Parenthood

Life News explained what was at stake in the "Little Sisters of the Poor" case decided yesterday by the Supreme Court:

> The Little Sisters of the Poor are asking the nation's highest court to ensure they do not have to comply with Obamacare's abortion mandate. The mandate compels religious groups to pay for birth control and drugs that may cause abortions.
>
> Without relief, the Little Sisters would face millions of dollars in IRS fines because they cannot comply with the government's mandate that they give their employees free access to contraception, sterilization, and abortion-inducing drugs.

Religious liberty champion David French writes about the decision in National Review.

Excerpt:

> First, the Supreme Court vacated the lower court ruling holding that the Little Sisters had to facilitate access to contraceptives and denied that the mandate substantially burdened their religion. Speaking as a person who's argued a few cases in courts of appeal — when the court vacates the ruling you're challenging, that's a win.

> Second, the Supreme Court provided a roadmap for an excellent resolution to the case…
>
> […]the Court suggested an accommodation that was far more respectful of the Little Sisters' religious liberty than the challenged Obamacare regulations, and the government will now have extreme difficulty credibly arguing in lower courts that the Supreme Court's *own suggested compromise* should be set aside.
>
> **Third, this ruling was unanimous. That means the DOJ should be far from confident that it can simply wait out the new presidential election and pursue its original claims with the same hope for success — especially if it spent the intervening years rejecting a compromise that it already seemed to accept.**
>
> Fourth, we can't forget the context. This the second time a unanimous Supreme Court has turned back the Obama administration's regulatory efforts to restrict religious freedom (*Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. EEOC* was the first), and it represents yet another setback for the administration's contraception/abortifacient mandate. The Obama administration has pushed hard against religious liberty — on occasion too hard even for the Supreme Court's more liberal justices.

The case will now go back to the lower courts again, but SCOTUS was clear on what they expect the ruling to be – a compromise that protects religious liberty and achieves the administration's goal of providing contraception and abortifacient drugs. Unfortunately, that's what a Democrat administration thinks is a priority.

It's not a complete victory, but an 8-0 decision should be solid until Trump or Hillary packs the court with pro-abortion liberals. I expect either candidate will do that, since both candidates are "very pro-choice", and both favor partial-birth abortion.

Gay activist apologizes after faking hate crime against himself

May 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

This is from the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The case of the chocolate cake slur, it seems, was simply a hoax.
>
> An openly gay Texas pastor who had accused Whole Foods of defacing his cake with an anti-gay slur dropped his lawsuit against the grocery chain on Monday, issuing an apology that said he was wrong to "perpetuate this story."
>
> "The company did nothing wrong," the pastor, Jordan Brown, said in a statement. "I was wrong to pursue this matter and use the media to perpetuate this story."
>
> […]Mr. Brown's apology represented a remarkable about-face from his remarks last month, delivered at a news conference alongside his lawyer, during which he choked back tears as he told the story.
>
> […]But a day after Mr. Brown's legal salvo, Whole Foods denounced the pastor as a fraud, vowing to press a countersuit that sought $100,000. At the same time, the grocery chain released surveillance footage of Mr. Brown's purchase that it said proved that the cake had not been tampered with.

I was a little worried about using a headline like that, but the Washington Post headline is "Gay pastor admits he faked homophobic slur on Whole Foods cake". So, yeah – faked.

The New York Times declined to mention a possible motive for the fake hate crime – his

outstanding student loans.

But CBS News did:

> Last week, Brown said a Whole Foods baker put a gay slur on a cake he ordered.
>
> Whole Foods says Brown is lying and is suing him for defamation.
>
> The company says the accused bakery worker is part of the LGBT community.
>
> The Austin pastor who is suing Whole Foods over a cake he says contained a gay slur, has money troubles.
>
> Court documents show Jordan Brown is being sued for defaulting on nearly $28,000 in student loans.

I doubt that this will be the basis of a plot on Glee or Will and Grace or the other TV shows that seek to change public opinion on gay rights issues.

I blogged before about several other fake hate crimes in this post, this post and this post. It happens a lot. It might be a good idea to assume that hate crimes committed against the secular left are false unless they are proven true. There is a lot of mental illness in the secular left crowd.

New book on intelligent design by molecular biologist Douglas Axe

May 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

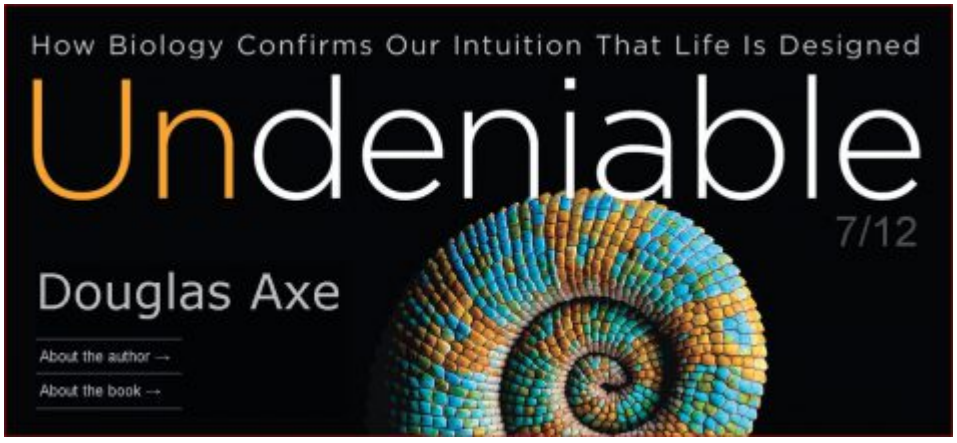

Undeniable: How Biology Confirms Our Intuition That Life Is Designed

It's not out yet, but the Kindle edition is only $12.99, so I pre-ordered it. That helps to get the book up in the bestseller lists. I'll add it to my list of books that I am reading for the third quarter later, and maybe feature it in the coveted spot in the right column of the blog.

Anyway, here is the description:

> Throughout his distinguished and unconventional career, engineer-turned-molecular-biologist Douglas Axe has been asking the questions that much of the scientific community would rather silence. Now, he presents his conclusions in this brave and pioneering book. Axe argues that the key to understanding our origin is the "design intuition"—the innate belief held by all humans that tasks we would need knowledge to accomplish can only be accomplished by someone who has that knowledge. For the ingenious task of inventing life, this knower can only be God.
>
> Starting with the hallowed halls of academic science, Axe dismantles the widespread belief that Darwin's theory of evolution is indisputably true, showing instead that a gaping hole has been at its center from the beginning. He then explains in plain English the science that proves our design intuition scientifically valid. Lastly, he uses everyday experience to empower ordinary people to defend their design intuition, giving them the confidence and courage to explain why it has to be true and the vision to imagine what biology will become when people stand up for this truth.
>
> Armed with that confidence, readers will affirm what once seemed obvious to all of us—that living creatures, from single-celled cyanobacteria to orca whales and human beings, are brilliantly conceived, utterly beyond the reach of accident.
>
> Our intuition was right all along.

Trailer is here:

Evolution News has a deal for those who pre-order:

> A remarkable thing about evolutionary theory is the way it demands that we deny our intuition at almost every step. Evolutionists then assure us that the science is all figured out, so we needn't trouble our silly heads about the relevant biology.
>
> In a new book, Douglas Axe of Biologic Institute turns this standard assurance on its head. In *Undeniable: How Biology Confirms Our Intuition That Life Is Designed*, Dr. Axe restores the place of intuition alongside intellect in considering the question of life's origins.
>
> *Undeniable* will be published on July 12 by HarperOne, but you can **pre-order before then and participate in an exclusive, private conference call with Dr. Axe and talk- show host Michael Medved**. You'll also receive **digital versions of three complete books** from Discovery Institute Press: *Debating Darwin's Doubt*, *The Unofficial Guide to Cosmos*, and *Science & Human Origins*. **See here for easy instructions**.

And now, I have a secret story to tell you. I met Doug Axe face to face way back in the late 1990s. He told me and some other people about the post-doctoral work he was doing at Cambridge University on the probabilities of getting a functional protein by chance. He made me promise not to tell anyone, and I never did. It was from conversations like that with the intelligent design scholars that I decided to start using an alias.

From his research at Cambrudge, Dr. Axe found that the number of functional amino acid sequences is tiny:

> Doug Axe's research likewise studies genes that it turns out show great evidence of design. Axe studied the sensitivities of protein function to mutations. In these "mutational sensitivity" tests, Dr. Axe mutated certain amino acids in various proteins, or studied the differences between similar proteins, to see how mutations or changes affected their ability to function properly. He found that protein function was highly sensitive to mutation, and that proteins are not very tolerant to changes in their amino acid sequences. In other words, when you mutate, tweak, or change these proteins slightly, they stopped working. In one of his papers, he thus concludes that "functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences," and that functional protein folds "may be as low as 1 in 10^77."
>
> The problem of forming DNA by sequencing nucleotides faces similar difficulties. And remember, mutation and selection cannot explain the origin of the *first* sequence, because mutation and selection require replication, which does not exist until that first living cell is *already in place*.

He published his findings in four separate publications with the prestigious Journal of Molecular Biology, and got his PhD with it. To get a PhD from Caltech, and then do post-

doctoral work at Cambridge, you have to be good. And Dr. Axe is very, very good.

I have used the papers he wrote in many, many conversations with engineers in different companies where I have worked. He hit a home run with that research. You could never look at the evidence for intelligent design the same way again. Christian parents, if you have any children, be sure that you tell them about Doug Axe’s story.

Bible study: Esther as an example of bravery and God’s providence

May 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

I’ve been listening to this FREE two-volume series on the book of Esther featuring pastor Alistair Begg. A whole bunch of interesting things stuck out to me, so I’ll write about one of them today.

First, Esther is a Jewish woman whose father or mother died when she was young. She was adopted by Mordecai, another Jew. She was very beautiful, so she was picked to be part of the Persian King’s harem. In fact, she is so beautiful that the King chooses her to be the Queen.

Now there is an enemy of the Jews in the King’s court named Haman, and he manages to get the King to create an edict that says that all the Jews will be killed. Mordecai calls Esther to tell her that she has to stop the King from ordering this edict.

But Esther is out of favor with the King, and hasn’t been asked to come in to visit him for some time. To go in and see the King without being summoned is a capital offense. Unless the King gives permission, she would be killed for intruding on the King. But in the end, she agrees to speak up and say something.

It all gets resolved in Esther chapter 4.

Esther 4:1-17:

> 1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly.

> 2 He went as far as the king’s gate, for no one was to enter the king’s gate clothed in sackcloth.
>
> 3 In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.
>
> 4 Then Esther’s maidens and her eunuchs came and told her, and the queen writhed in great anguish. And she sent garments to clothe Mordecai that he might remove his sackcloth from him, but he did not accept them.
>
> 5 Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king’s eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her, and ordered himto go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.
>
> 6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king’s gate.
>
> 7 Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king’s treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.
>
> 8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people.
>
> 9 Hathach came back and related Mordecai’s words to Esther.
>
> 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him to reply to Mordecai:
>
> 11 “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.”
>
> 12 They related Esther’s words to Mordecai.
>
> 13 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”
>
> 15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai,
>
> 16 “Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.”
>
> 17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

What Mordecai is saying here is that God is sovereign over the events that are taking place, and that even if Esther makes a free decision to not intercede to save her people,

then God will do something else. Somehow, telling her that makes her agree to take the risk and go in to see the King. Even though it is illegal to go in to see the King, she is going to risk her life and do it. And the message there is that God made her beautiful, and placed her in the palace, for exactly this purpose. Her beauty has a purpose.

Before then, she may not have been the most morally pure Jew, nor the most faithful Jew, nor some great authority on theology or apologetics. She was probably keeping her faith pretty hidden. But in that one moment, she rises above being an orphan, above being a harem girl, and above being just a pretty face. God can use anyone – even a silly girl who spends all day in front of a mirror playing with cosmetics – to achieve his ends. She is not Daniel. But today she is getting the call, anyway. It's on her.

What is the lesson here? God can use *anybody.* It doesn't mean that you shouldn't be moral, study theology, and study apologetics, and keep your character clean so you have self-control. It means that any believer is just one step away from glory, no matter what they did in the past. That's how God rolls.

Further study

If you are interested in the story of Esther, then you should listen to the entire series by Alistair Begg.

- Volume 1 is here (download all in a zip file)
- Volume 2 is here (download all in a zip file)

The point I am making in this post is in this lecture.

Esther is about two themes: 1) how should a believer in God live in a society where believers are a minority? and 2) even when things look really out of control, God is in control, and is never more than one step away from saving his people.

I have a lot of Christian apologist friends who struggle to go to church, and struggle to read the Bible. The links above will take you to some great preaching on one of the most interesting books of the Bible. Go there, grab the MP3s, and listen to them with no distractions.

Does archaeological evidence confirm names, dates and places in the Bible?

May 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

I spotted this post on Be Thinking by UK apologist Peter S. Williams. (H/T Eric Chabot at Think Apologetics)

So let me pick the ones I liked most for this post.

Here's a good one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Bethesda
>
> John 5:1-15 describes a pool in Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate, called Bethesda, surrounded by five covered colonnades. Until the 19th century, there was no evidence outside of John for the existence of this pool and John's unusual description *"caused bible scholars to doubt the reliability of John's account, but the pool was duly uncovered in the 1930s – with four colonnades around its edges and one across its middle."*[38] Ian Wilson reports: *"Exhaustive excavations by Israeli archaeologist Professor Joachim Jeremias have brought to light precisely such a building, still including two huge, deep-cut cisterns, in the environs of Jerusalem's Crusader Church of St Anne."*[39]

And this one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Siloam
>
> In the 400s AD, a church was built above a pool attached to Hezekiah's water tunnel to commemorate the healing of a blind man reported in John 9:1-7. Until recently, this was considered to be the Pool of Siloam from the time of Christ. However, during sewerage works in June 2004 engineers stumbled upon a 1stcentury ritual pool when they uncovered some ancient steps during pipe maintenance near the mouth of Hezekiah's tunnel. By the summer of 2005,

> archaeologists had revealed what was *"without doubt the missing pool of Siloam."*[40] Mark D. Roberts reports that: *"In the plaster of this pool were found coins that establish the date of the pool to the years before and after Jesus. There is little question that this is in fact the pool of Siloam, to which Jesus sent the blind man in John 9."*[41]

I just read this one because I am working my way through John. In case you haven't read John, you really should it's my favorite gospel.

Here's another one:

> ### Herod the Great
>
> We have a bronze coin minted by Herod the Great. On the obverse side (i.e. the bottom) is a tripod and ceremonial bowl with the inscription 'Herod king' and the year the coin was struck, 'year 3' (of Herod's reign), or 37 BC.
>
> In 1996 Israeli Professor of Archaeology Ehud Netzer discovered in Masada a piece of broken pottery with an inscription, called an ostracon. This piece had Herod's name on it and was part of an amphora used for transportation (probably wine), dated to c. 19 BC. The inscription is in Latin and reads, *"Herod the Great King of the Jews (or Judea)"*, the first such that mentions the full title of King Herod.
>
> Herodium is a man-made mountain in the Judean wilderness rising over 2,475 feet above sea level. In 23 BC Herod the Great built a palace fortress here on top of a natural hill. Seven stories of living rooms, storage areas, cisterns, a bathhouse, and a courtyard filled with bushes and flowering plants were constructed. The whole complex was surrounded and partly buried by a sloping fill of earth and gravel. Herod's tomb and sarcophagus were discovered at the base of Herodium by archaeologist Ehud Netzer in 2007.

And one more:

> ### The 'James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus' Ossuary
>
> James, the brother of Jesus, was martyred in AD 62. A mid-1st century AD chalk ossuary discovered in 2002 bears the inscription *"James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus"* ('Ya'akov bar Yosef akhui di Yeshua'). Historian Paul L. Maier states that*"there is strong (though not absolutely conclusive) evidence that, yes, the ossuary and its inscription are not only authentic, but that the inscribed names are the New Testament personalities."*[68] New Testament scholar Ben Witherington states that:*"If, as seems probable, the ossuary found in the vicinity of Jerusalem and dated to about AD 63 is indeed the burial box of James, the brother of Jesus, this inscription is the most important extra-biblical evidence of its kind."*[69] According to Hershel Shanks, editor in chief of the *Biblical Archaeological Review*: *"this box is [more] likely the ossuary of James, the*

> *brother of Jesus of Nazareth, than not. In my opinion … it is likely that this inscription* does *mention the James and Joseph and Jesus of the New Testament."*

And finally one short one:

> **Tiberius Caesar**
>
> The Denarius coin, 14-37 AD, is commonly referred to as the 'Tribute Penny' from the Bible. The coin shows a portrait of Tiberius Caesar. Craig L. Blomberg comments: *"Jesus' famous saying about giving to Caesar what was his and to God what* his *(Mark 12:17 and parallels) makes even more sense when one discovers that most of the Roman coins in use at the time had images of Caesar on them."*[48]

This is a good article to bookmark in case you are ever looking for a quick, searchable reference on archaeology and the Bible. There are many more examples in that post.

Now some people might be wondering why archaeology doesn't confirm *every detail* in the New Testament. And here's what J. Warner Wallace has to say about that:

> But what are we to say to those who argue the Biblical archeological record is incomplete? The answer is best delivered by another expert witness in the field, Dr. Edwin Yamauchi, historian and Professor Emeritus at Miami University. Yamauchi wrote a book entitled, *The Stones and the Scripture*, where he rightly noted that archaeological evidence is a matter of "fractions":
>
> *Only a fraction of the world's archaeological evidence still survives in the ground.*
>
> *Only a fraction of the possible archaeological sites have been discovered.*
>
> *Only a fraction have been excavated, and those only partially.*
>
> *Only a fraction of those partial excavations have been thoroughly examined and published.*
>
> *Only a fraction of what has been examined and published has anything to do with the claims of the Bible!*
>
> See the problem? In spite of these limits, we still have a robust collection of archaeological evidences confirming the narratives of the New Testament (both in the gospel accounts and in the Book of Acts). We shouldn't hesitate to use what we do know archaeologically in combination with other lines of evidence. Archaeology may not be able to tell us everything, but it can help us fill in the circumstantial case as we corroborate the gospel record.

I think you can form an opinion about the whole New Testament based on the record of confirmations. The verdict is in: the New Testament should be presumed trustworthy.

Bible study: the importance of truth in religion

May 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here's an interesting passage of the Bible. What do you all think the practical value of this passage is?

[1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

[2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

[3] he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

[4] Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

[6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

[7] Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[8] Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

[9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

[10] The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king

asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

[11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.”

[12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king’s guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king’s officer, “Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?” Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.”

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

[27] Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

[29] “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

[30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

This passage is interesting to me because it shows the kind of attitude that God answers. The King in this passage was tired of hearing man-made stories from his servants – stories that were undoubtedly influenced by the servants desire to survive the King’s wrath. The servants would only have told the King things that were vague and happy, so that they could never be proved wrong or found to be judgmental or offensive. But the King was tired of that. He wanted someone with authority to tell him the truth about the way the world was.

In the rest of the chapter, Daniel interprets the dream, and concludes by saying this: “The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”. The King replies: “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

I think it is is going to be difficult for Christians living today to be able to tell people their dreams like that. But what we can do is talk about God’s miracles as revealed by science and history. We can study astrophysics, biochemistry and history and we can explain what God did in creating and fine-tuning the universe for life, in sequencing amino acids into functioning proteins, in creating brand new body plans in the Cambrian explosion, in raising Jesus from the dead as a matter of historical record, and so on. We have to show how great God is to people who do not even think he exists, and without assuming that they believe in the Bible.

There are still people out there like the King who are looking for someone who can speak to them with authority. All it takes from us is a little studying, and we can be like Daniel, too. But we have to know what God has done from science and history, and speak with authority about how we can know that God has acted *supernaturally*. Authority to speak comes from having knowledge about what we are talking about, and knowledge comes from studying and debating with people we disagree with. Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer in the God of Israel, but he was still interested in truth. That won’t always be the case, but it is the case for some people.

Obama administration orders all hospitals to perform abortions and sex changes

May 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama speaking to Planned Parenthood

This is up at The Pulse.

Wow:

> Last Friday, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a new rule in relation to Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, which will require all hospitals to perform abortions and sex change operations under the auspice of Title IX protections, or lose their federal funding, which includes Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements.
>
> The rule did not include an exemption for religious freedom, although HHS does admit that "existing protections for religious freedom and conscience" may still apply — an ironic admission given the administration's unwillingness to compromise with the Little Sisters of the Poor.
>
> […]What are the real world consequences of this?
>
> Well, to start, a substantial portion of hospital revenue comes from Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements. A hospital simply can't function without this funding. It's not possible. So by potentially forcing religious hospitals to perform abortions and sex change operations against their beliefs, which most will not do, the HHS hospital mandate could effectively shut them all down.

> Sixty-two percent of all hospitals in the U.S. are non-profit hospitals, and the vast majority of those have religious affiliations. A mass exodus of religious hospitals would completely shake the health care system, destroy communities, ruin livelihoods, and put thousands of lives at risk.

Right now, we live in a time where health care is under the control of the federal government. Many, many people of faith voted for a secular government to be in control of health care. They thought that it would be more “fair” than letting people control health care at the state or local level. Now they are finding out what happens when you let a big secular government take over huge parts of the economy. There are people of faith working in hospitals. If only their employer forced them to do a sex change or an abortion, they could move to another employer, perhaps in another state. But when you put the control up at the federal level, there is nowhere to run. You have to comply, or lose your job. And no matter how tough a Christian talks, no one can survive without food to eat and water to drink. We have to earn a living, and this President is making it impossible to work and be an authentic Christian at the same time.

Are we ready for pastors to talk about serious matters in church, now? Or is it still going to be the singing, the feelings, the piety? Maybe spiritual leadership needs to be expanded to include practical issues.

Is the text of the Bible we have today different from the originals?

May 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

First, let's introduce New Testament scholar Daniel B. Wallace:

> Daniel B. Wallace, Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary
>
> B.A., Biola University, 1975; Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; Ph.D., 1995.
>
> Dr. Wallace influences students across the country through his textbook on intermediate Greek grammar. It has become the standard textbook in the English-speaking world on that subject. He is a member of the Society of New Testament Studies, the Institute for Biblical Research, the Society of Biblical Literature, and the Evangelical Theological Society.
>
> […]He has been a consultant on four different Bible translations.
>
> […] He works extensively in textual criticism, and has founded The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (csntm.org), an institute with an initial purpose of preserving Scripture by taking digital photographs of all known Greek New Testament manuscripts.
>
> […]His postdoctoral work includes work on Greek grammar at Tyndale House in Cambridge, textual criticism studies at the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung in Münster, and the Universität Tübingen, Germany.

Eric Chabot, who blogs at Think Apologetics, found this interview that addresses the charge you often hear about how you can't get back to the original New Testament documents.

It talks about:

- textual criticism

- number of New Testament manuscripts
- earliest New Testament manuscripts
- the number and impact of textual variants
- responding to the "telephone game" objection
- responding to the scribes tampered with the text objection

And here is an article by Dr. Wallace that corrects other misconceptions about the transmission and translation of the Testament.

He lists five in particular:

- *Myth 1: The Bible has been translated so many times we can't possibly get back to the original.*
- *Myth 2: Words in red indicate the exact words spoken by Jesus of Nazareth.*
- *Myth 3: Heretics have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 4: Orthodox scribes have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 5: The deity of Christ was invented by emperor Constantine.*

Finally, a quote from skeptical historian Bart Ehrman, as reproduced in this post on the Christian Apologetics Alliance blog:

> The curious thing about Bart Ehrman is that the views he articulates in his popular-level work are not the same as those he espouses in his professional/scholarly publications. Indeed, readers may find this curious and very telling quotation, taken from the appendix (p. 252) of Misquoting Jesus, of interest:
>
> "Bruce Metzger is one of the great scholars of modern times, and I dedicated the book to him because he was both my inspiration for going into textual criticism and the person who trained me in the field. I have nothing but respect and admiration for him. And even though we may disagree on important religious questions – he is a firmly committed Christian and I am not – we are in complete agreement on a number of very important historical and textual questions. If he and I were put in a room and asked to hammer out a consensus statement on what we think the original text of the New Testament probably looked like, there would be very few points of disagreement – maybe one or two dozen places out of many thousands. **The position I argue for in 'Misquoting Jesus' does not actually stand at odds with Prof. Metzger's position that the essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament.**" [Emphasis added]

Finally, I think that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls shows us that religious texts don't change as much as we think they do over time.

Look:

> The Dead Sea Scrolls play a crucial role in assessing the accurate preservation of

> the Old Testament. With its hundreds of manuscripts from every book except Esther, detailed comparisons can be made with more recent texts.
>
> The Old Testament that we use today is translated from what is called the Masoretic Text. The Masoretes were Jewish scholars who between A.D. 500 and 950 gave the Old Testament the form that we use today. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947, the oldest Hebrew text of the Old Testament was the Masoretic Aleppo Codex which dates to A.D. 935.{5}
>
> With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now had manuscripts that predated the Masoretic Text by about one thousand years. Scholars were anxious to see how the Dead Sea documents would match up with the Masoretic Text. If a significant amount of differences were found, we could conclude that our Old Testament Text had not been well preserved. Critics, along with religious groups such as Muslims and Mormons, often make the claim that the present day Old Testament has been corrupted and is not well preserved. According to these religious groups, this would explain the contradictions between the Old Testament and their religious teachings.
>
> After years of careful study, it has been concluded that the Dead Sea Scrolls give substantial confirmation that our Old Testament has been accurately preserved. The scrolls were found to be almost identical with the Masoretic text. Hebrew Scholar Millar Burrows writes, “It is a matter of wonder that through something like one thousand years the text underwent so little alteration. As I said in my first article on the scroll, ‘Herein lies its chief importance, supporting the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition.'”{6}
>
> A significant comparison study was conducted with the Isaiah Scroll written around 100 B.C. that was found among the Dead Sea documents and the book of Isaiah found in the Masoretic text. After much research, scholars found that the two texts were practically identical. Most variants were minor spelling differences, and none affected the meaning of the text.
>
> One of the most respected Old Testament scholars, the late Gleason Archer, examined the two Isaiah scrolls found in Cave 1 and wrote, “Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”{7}
>
> **Despite the thousand year gap, scholars found the Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls to be nearly identical. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide valuable evidence that the Old Testament had been accurately and carefully preserved.**

I hope that this post will help those who think that we can’t get back to the text of the original New Testament documents.

Scott Klusendorf: 10 Things You Should Know about Abortion

May 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn Baby – 10 weeks old

Here are the 10 things:

1. Pro-life advocates present a formal case for their position.
2. A pro-life advocate can defend that syllogism in 1 minute or less.
3. That abortion intentionally kills an innocent human being is conceded by many who perform and defend the practice.
4. The Bible is pro-life even if the word "abortion" does not appear.
5. The Bible's alleged silence on abortion does not mean that its authors condoned the practice.
6. Preaching on abortion is not a distraction from the Great Commission responsibilities of the local church, but integral to it.
7. The pro-life position does not rely on personal perspectives.
8. Pro-life Christians tell a better equality story.
9. Abortion-victim photography changes the narrative.
10. The remedy for post-abortion guilt is not avoidance. It's forgiveness.

I have to share #6 here:

> 6. Preaching on abortion is not a distraction from the Great Commission responsibilities of the local church, but integral to it.

> P1: In the Great Commission, Christ charged the church to go make disciples.
> P2: The way we make disciples is to “teach them to obey” his commands.
> P3: One of those commands is that we are not to shed innocent blood.
> P4: Abortion is the shedding of innocent blood.
> C: Therefore, preaching on abortion relates to the Great Commission responsibilities of the local church.

There is more to spiritual leadership than just fussing about Bible verses, prayers, Bible studies, and other private, pious feelings-oriented things. To make a disciple of a person, you have to teach them right and wrong persuasively. Abortion is one of those issues that we are confronting today. People spiritualize spiritual leadership, but it’s more practical than just having feelings.

You should read all 10 points – it’s a short article, and well worth your time.

What do ancient non-Christian sources tell us about the historical Jesus?

May 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

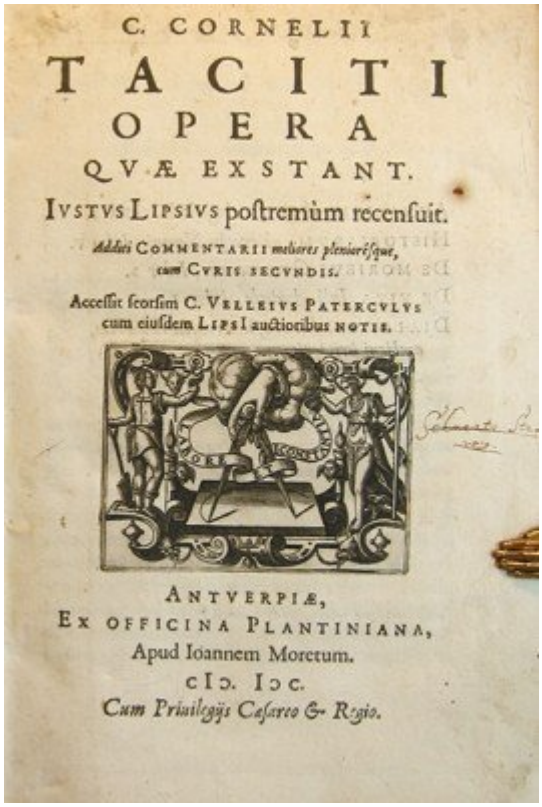
C. CORNELII
TACITI
OPERA
QVÆ EXSTANT.
IVSTVS LIPSIVS postremùm recensuit.
Addit COMMENTARII meliores pleniorésque, cum CVRIS SECVNDIS.
Accessit seorsim C. VELLEIVS PATERCVLVS cum eiusdem LIPSI auctioribus NOTIS.
ANTVERPIÆ,
EX OFFICINA PLANTINIANA,
Apud Ioannem Moretum.
CIↃ. IↃC.
Cum Priuilegijs Cæsareo & Regio.

The Annals, by Roman historian Tacitus

This article from Biblical Archaeology covers all the non-Christian historical sources that discuss Jesus.

About the author:

> Lawrence Mykytiuk is associate professor of library science and the history librarian at Purdue University. He holds a Ph.D. in Hebrew and Semitic Studies and is the author of the book Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200–539 B.C.E. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004).

Here are the major sections:

- Roman historian Tacitus
- Jewish historian Josephus
- Greek satirist Lucian of Samosata
- Platonist philosopher Celsus
- Roman governor Pliny the Younger
- Roman historian Suetonius
- Roman prisoner Mara bar Serapion

And this useful excerpt captures the broad facts about Jesus that we get from just the

first two sources:

> We can learn quite a bit about Jesus from Tacitus and Josephus, two famous historians who were not Christian. Almost all the following statements about Jesus, which are asserted in the New Testament, are corroborated or confirmed by the relevant passages in Tacitus and Josephus. These independent historical sources—one a non-Christian Roman and the other Jewish—confirm what we are told in the Gospels:31
>
> 1. He existed as a man. The historian Josephus grew up in a priestly family in first-century Palestine and wrote only decades after Jesus' death. Jesus' known associates, such as Jesus' brother James, were his contemporaries. The historical and cultural context was second nature to Josephus. "If any Jewish writer were ever in a position to know about the non-existence of Jesus, it would have been Josephus. His implicit affirmation of the existence of Jesus has been, and still is, the most significant obstacle for those who argue that the extra-Biblical evidence is not probative on this point," Robert Van Voorst observes.32 And Tacitus was careful enough not to report real executions of nonexistent people.
>
> 2. His personal name was Jesus, as Josephus informs us.
>
> 3. He was called Christos in Greek, which is a translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, both of which mean "anointed" or "(the) anointed one," as Josephus states and Tacitus implies, unaware, by reporting, as Romans thought, that his name was Christus.
>
> 4. He had a brother named James (Jacob), as Josephus reports.
>
> 5. He won over both Jews and "Greeks" (i.e., Gentiles of Hellenistic culture), according to Josephus, although it is anachronistic to say that they were "many" at the end of his life. Large growth
> in the number of Jesus' actual followers came only after his death.
>
> 6. Jewish leaders of the day expressed unfavorable opinions about him, at least according to some versions of the Testimonium Flavianum.
>
> 7. Pilate rendered the decision that he should be executed, as both Tacitus and Josephus state.
>
> 8. His execution was specifically by crucifixion, according to Josephus.
>
> 9. He was executed during Pontius Pilate's governorship over Judea (26–36 C.E.), as Josephus implies and Tacitus states, adding that it was during Tiberius's reign.
>
> Some of Jesus' followers did not abandon their personal loyalty to him even after his crucifixion but submitted to his teaching. They believed that Jesus later appeared to them alive in accordance with prophecies, most likely those found in the Hebrew Bible. A well-attested link between Jesus and Christians is that Christ, as a term used to identify Jesus, became the basis of the term used to identify his followers: Christians. The Christian movement began in Judea, according to Tacitus. Josephus observes that it continued during the first century. Tacitus

> deplores the fact that during the second century it had spread as far as Rome.

I remember reading the 1996 book by Gary Habermas entitled "The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ". This book is a little before the time of most of you young Christian apologists, but back before the time of Lee Strobel and J. Warner Wallace, this is the stuff we all read. Anyway, in the book he makes a list of all that can be known about Jesus from external sources. And fortunately for you, you don't have to buy the book because you can read chapter 9 of it right on his web site.

From Tacitus he gets this:

> From this report we can learn several facts, both explicit and implicit, concerning Christ and the Christians who lived in Rome in the 60s A.D. Chronologically, we may ascertain the following information.
>
> (1) Christians were named for their founder, Christus (from the Latin), (2) who was put to death by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilatus (also Latin), (3) during the reign of emperor Tiberius (14 37 A.D.). (4) His death ended the "superstition" for a short time, (5) but it broke out again, (6) especially in Judaea, where the teaching had its origin.
>
> (7) His followers carried his doctrine to Rome. (8) When the great fire destroyed a large part of the city during the reign of Nero (54 68 A.D.), the emperor placed the blame on the Christians who lived in Rome. (9) Tacitus reports that this group was hated for their abominations. (10) These Christians were arrested after pleading guilty, (11) and many were convicted for "hatred for mankind." (12) They were mocked and (13) then tortured, including being "nailed to crosses" or burnt to death. (14) Because of these actions, the people had compassion on the Christians. (15) Tacitus therefore concluded that such punishments were not for the public good but were simply "to glut one man's cruelty."

And from Josephus he gets this:

> (1) Jesus was known as a wise and virtuous man, one recognized for his good conduct. (2) He had many disciples, both Jews and Gentiles. (3) Pilate condemned him to die, (4) with crucifixion explicitly being mentioned as the mode. (5) The disciples reported that Jesus had risen from the dead and (6) that he had appeared to them on the third day after his crucifixion. (7) Consequently, the disciples continued to proclaim his teachings. (8) Perhaps Jesus was the Messiah concerning whom the Old Testament prophets spoke and predicted wonders. We would add here two facts from Josephus' earlier quotation as well. (9) Jesus was the brother of James and (10) was called the messiah by some.

So when you are reading the New Testament, these facts are the framework that you read within. It's a good starting point when dealing with people who have never looked into who Jesus was and what he taught and what his followers believed about him, right from the start.

The Democrat war on clean coal makes us all pay more for electricity

May 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

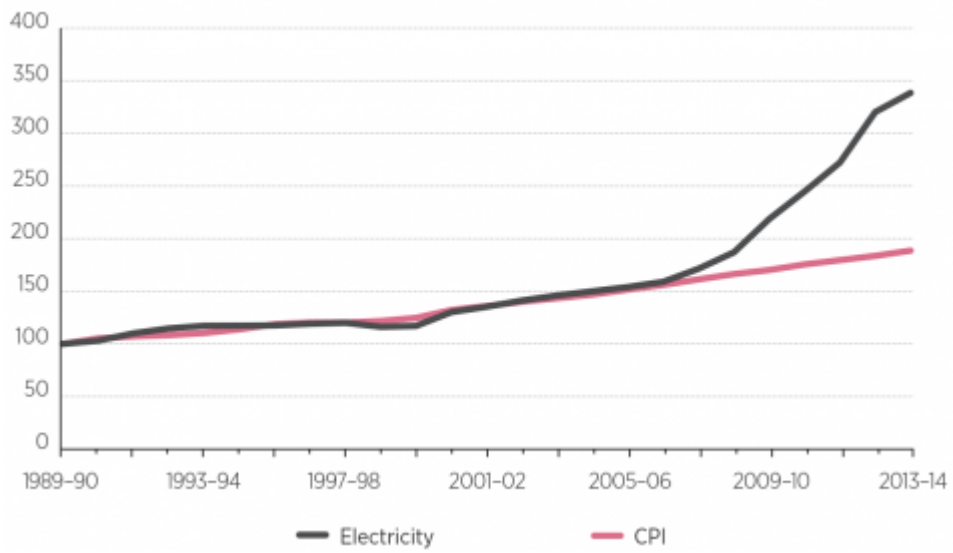

National Electricity Price Index vs CPI
This is from Investors Business Daily.

Excerpt:

> Another coal giant in America, Peabody Energy Corp., declared bankruptcy this week. This bankruptcy filing follows similar actions by Arch Coal Inc., Alpha Natural Resources Inc., and other coal producers that have filed for Ch. 11 protection from creditors.
>
> The ideologues in the White House must be uncorking the champagne. They *wanted* this to happen. It was the intended result of lawsuits and burdensome regulations by the Obama-era Environmental Protection Agency, which declared war on coal from the day Obama entered office. This was a key component of the anti-carbon agenda of the climate change fanaticism that pervades this White House.
>
> Ideas have consequences. Obama has succeeded in decimating whole towns across America — from Wyoming to Virginia to Pennsylvania — dependent on coal. An estimated 31,000 coal miners, truckers, engineers, construction workers and others have lost their jobs since 2009 as a result of this global warming jihad. Another 5,000 or so could be given pink slips at Peabody. To the left, these lives ruined is acceptable collateral damage for their utopian dream of saving the planet.
>
> The victims here aren't rich fat cats. They are middle class workers whose lives have been turned upside down by the Big Green Machine.
>
> Investors have gotten crushed too as a result of coal's demise. The coal industry has lost more than $30 billion in stock value since 2009 — with many of these

> losses in pension funds and 401(k) plans.
>
> What is maddening about these developments is that coal is much, much cleaner than ever before. EPA statistics show that emissions of sulfur, lead, carbon monoxide, and smog from coal plants have been reduced by more than 50% in the last 40 years. Clean coal is a reality — but that never slowed the greens down. The Natural Resources Defense Council now wants the EPA to slap $700 million in environmental fines on Peabody. These people just never stop.
>
> America is the Saudi Arabia of coal. We have an estimated 500 years supply of that energy source. Our coal is cleaner and our environmental laws are much stricter than in other nations. So for economic and ecological reasons, we should want American coal to dominate the world market.
>
> The demise of coal could lead to major disruptions in America's electric power supply. Before Obama entered office in 2009, America got half its electric power from coal. Coal still supplies more than one-third of our electricity, because it is cheap and highly reliable, but that percentage continues to shrink.

Higher energy prices is no problem for Democrats:

They are pretty bold about wanting to bankrupt the coal industry, and push us all onto more expensive forms of energy like wind and solar:

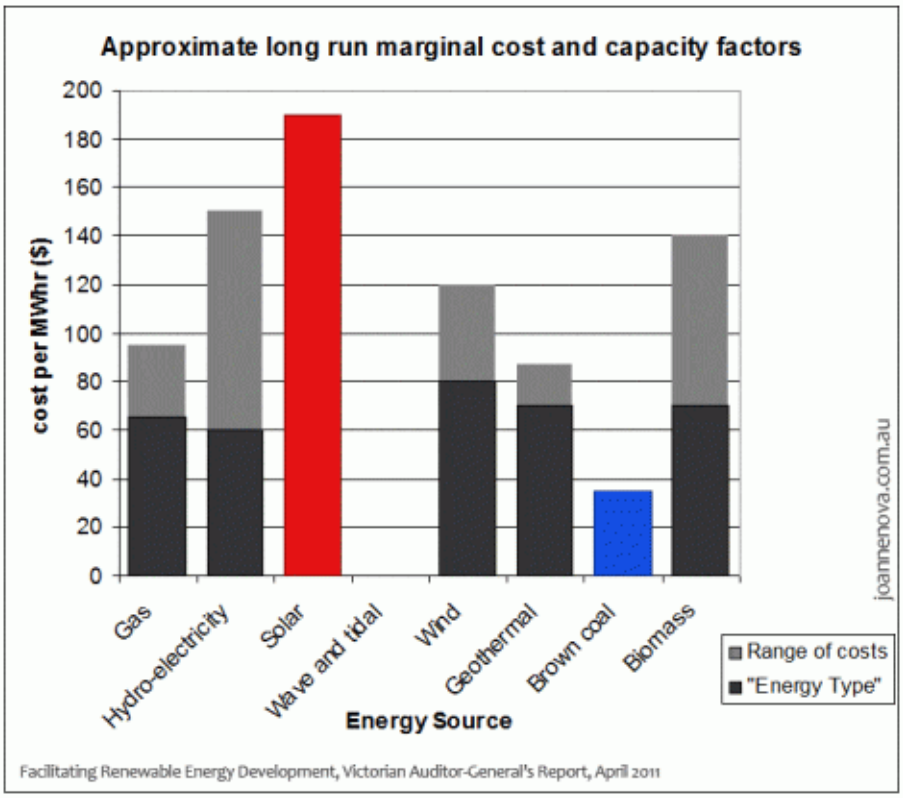

Cost of renewable wind and solar energy

Do you need to be paying more for electricity? Could you find something else to spend it on? How much is there left over for charity if you have to pay more for electricity?

And do you know who else pays for higher electricity prices? Your employer. Attacking cheap, clean energy puts more economic stress on the person who employs you. Think

about that.

How do you respond to the conquests and wars in the Old Testament?

May 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

John Berea has an article about it on his web site.

Here's his overview:

> In the Old Testament are the military campaigns of Israel inconsistent with being led by a just and loving God, and inconsistent with his own commands? Here, I would like to make the case for consistency and justness.
>
> 1. **The nations of Canaan were evil, harming others, and needed to be stopped.** They had carried out incest with children/grandchildren and performed child sacrifice by fire. (Lev 18:6-30, Deut 12:31, Deut 18:9-10, Psalm 106:35, 37-38) They launched unprovoked attacks on Israel (Ex 17:8-9, Num 21:1, Num 21:2-23, 33) and even guerrilla attacks against Israel's "stragglers in the rear of the march when you were exhausted and tired." (Deut 25:18)
>
> **2. Warfare language was likely rhetorical.** There are five reasons to support the rhetorical nature of language such as "completely destroy" (Hebrew תחרימו, literally "ban") in Deut 20:17. It likely meant a destruction of armed soldiers, buildings, and religious icons.
>
> 1. Semitic language professor and NIV, NAB, and ESV bible translator Richard Hess argues that Hebrew "ban" is "stereotypical for describing all the inhabitants of a town or region, without predisposing the reader to assume anything further about their ages or even their genders" and "need not require that there really were children, senior citizens, or women there who

were put to death” even when followed by the terms “men and women” (Joshua 8:25) or “young and old” (Joshua 8:25).

2. In Israel’s destruction of enemies we see phrases like “left no survivor” and “utterly destroyed all who breathed” (Joshua 10:40, Judges 1:8). But in Joshua 21:12-13 the author has no problem telling us these people were still there afterward: “if you ever turn away and make alliances with these nations that remain near you… God will no longer drive out these nations”. In 1 Sam 15:3-4 Israel was to “strike down the Amalekites. Destroy everything that they have. Don’t spare them. Put them to death–man, woman, child, infant, ox, sheep, camel, and donkey alike.” In 15:8 Saul “executed all Agag’s people” and Agag himself was killed in 15:33. But later in 1 Sam 27:8 we’re told they’re still there and ” had been living in that land for a long time”. Hundreds of years later in Esther 3:1 we’re even told Haman was an Agagite, a descendant of the Amalekite king Agag.
3. Most verses on the subject speak of “driving out” and “dispossessing” the land rather than language suggestive of genocide. E.g. Num 33:51-53, in “the land of Canaan, you must drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images, all their molten images, and demolish their high places. You must dispossess the inhabitants of the land and live in it, for I have given you the land to possess it.” It’s the same story in Lev 18:25, Num 23:31-32, Deut 6:19, 9:4, 18:12, Joshua 3:10, and 23:9.
4. Jer 4:20 suggests inhabitants fled before armies arrived: “At the sound of the horseman and bowman every city flees; They go into the thickets and climb among the rocks”
5. Deut 7:22 specifically says that Israel was forbidden to “destroy them all at once” and instead they would be expelled “little by little”.

So either all of these verses contradict one another, or the conquest language was rhetorical.

3. Many of the “cities” were probably military outposts. For example with Jericho and Ai, Richard Hess argues there are no references to noncombatants (apart from Rahab), no archaeological evidence of non-military use, the term melek (Hebrew מלכי) for “king” of the cities often meant mean a military leader in Canaan (e.g. in Joshua 2:2), they were located at defensive positions, and Jericho and Ai weren’t described as a large city as Gibeon and Hazor explicitly were.

4. A just God requires wrath. It’s not possible to have a God who is just but not wrathful–otherwise wrongdoers continue unabated. Paranormal investigator James Randi wrote in Skeptic Magazine, “I accuse the Christian god of murder by allowing the Holocaust to take place” yet Dawkins and Hitchens condemn God for judgment against the Canaanites. Which is it? Ultimately the

> the problem is we view death as the ultimate judgment, when in the theological context of the bible it’s only a graduation to what’s next with accountability for what we’ve done with what we were given.

The four points are developed with links for support. If you get this question a lot, it’s a good resource to bookmark.

Alliance Defending Freedom files brief to defend pro-marriage Wyoming judge

May 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Although you might think that Wyoming is conservative, it's actually quite socially liberal. Check out this story from The Stream.

It says:

> A beloved judge in a whisper of a town in Wyoming faces being thrown off the bench for stating she wouldn't be able to perform same-sex weddings due to her religious beliefs.
>
> The Wyoming Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics is recommending the removal of Municipal Judge and Circuit Court Magistrate Ruth Neely. The Commission also wants her to pay up to $40,000 in fines. This despite the fact Judge Neely is neither required to perform weddings, nor has even been asked to perform a same-sex wedding. Still, in the Commission's view, by stating her commitment to natural marriage, she has "manifested a bias" and is permanently unfit to serve as a judge.
>
> The troubles for Judge Neely of Pinedale, Wyoming (pop. 2030) began in 2014 after a Federal judge struck down Wyoming's ban on same-sex marriage. When asked about the decision by a reporter for the local *Pinedale Roundup,* Judge Neely responded that she wouldn't be able to perform a same-sex marriage. "When law and religion conflict, choices have to be made," she said.
>
> The Commission launched a formal investigation in 2015, and according to the *Casper Star Tribune*, accused Judge Neely of violating six rules of judicial conduct, including prejudice based on sexual orientation, acting improperly and refusing to uphold the rule of law.

> According to a brief filed by her attorneys, the Commission first told Judge Neely it wouldn't prosecute if she would agree to resign, admit wrongdoing and never again seek judicial office in Wyoming. Judge Neely refused.
>
> Then this February, reports the *Casper Star Tribune*, the Commission told Judge Neely she could stay on the bench if she publicly apologized and agreed to perform same-sex marriages. The judge responded that doing so would violate her religious convictions.
>
> The Commission then filed its recommendation to the Wyoming Supreme Court that Ruth Neely be ousted. According to the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which today filed a brief on her behalf, "This would be the first time in the country that a judge was removed from office because of her religious beliefs about marriage."

The heroic Alliance Defending Freedom has filed a brief in defense of the judge:

> In a recently filed brief Judge Neely's attorneys from the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) asked the state Supreme Court to reject the Commission's recommendation. Among the points argued by the ADF:
>
> - The Commission's actions violate Judge Neely's constitutional rights to free speech and free exercise of religion.
> - Judge Neely has discretion when exercising her authority to perform marriages and could refuse to do so for any number of reasons.
> - Judge Neely has been suspended from her role as magistrate and is not currently performing any marriages.
> - Any question over her authority to perform marriages has no bearing on her ability to perform her duties as a municipal court judge, of which there is no accusation she has violated any judicial rules.

You would think that at least in Wyoming, that a Christian would be allowed to serve in public office, but actually no. If you are a Christian or a Torah-believing Jew, then you are not allowed to be a judge in Wyoming. It's not a good place to live for conservatives.

The Wintery Knight’s favorite Bible verses

May 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Crusader performs “Zealous Accusation” attack in Darkest Dungeon

Dina asked me to post my favorite Bible verses, so here are 8 of my favorites.

Psalm 27:14:

> [11] Teach me Your way, O Lord,
> And lead me in a level path
> Because of my foes.
>
> [12] Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries,
> For false witnesses have risen against me,
> And such as breathe out violence.
>
> [13] *I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord
> In the land of the living.
>
> **[14] Wait for the Lord;**
> **Be strong and let your heart take courage;**
> **Yes, wait for the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**

> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.
>
> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

Matthew 5:13:

> 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
>
> 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
>
> **13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**
>
> 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
>
> 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

2 Timothy 2:4:

> 1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
>
> [2] The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
>
> [3] Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[4] No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.**
>
> [5] Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

Daniel 3:18:

> [13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.
>
> [14] Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?
>
> [15] Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is

> there who can deliver you out of my hands?”
>
> [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.
>
> [17] If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire;and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
>
> **[18] But *even* if *He does* not,let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”**

Esther 4:14:

> [10] Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai:
>
> [11] “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.”
>
> [12] They related Esther’s words to Mordecai.
>
> [13] Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> **[14] For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”**

Philippians 1:9:

> [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> [4] always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> [5] in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> [6] *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> [7] For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
>
> [8] For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> [10] so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
>
> [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus

> Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Numbers 13:30:

> [25] When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,
>
> [26] they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.
>
> [27] Thus they told him, and said, “We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.
>
> [28] Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.
>
> [29] Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.”
>
> **[30] Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.”**

Post your favorite verse in the comments – not too many! Be selective.

Canada's Justice Minister calls for two-year prison sentence for critics of transgenderism

May 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kathleen Wynne and Justin Trudeau of the Liberal Party, marching in a gay pride parade

Bill Muehlenberg documents a few headlines from just the last week about the transgender movement's latest concerns: (H/T Dr. Michael Brown)

> **Canada Prepares Nationwide Ban on Anti-Transgender Propaganda**
> May 18, 2016
> Citing the need to make transgender people "feel safe and secure in who they are," Canada's Minister of Justice Jody Wilson-Raybould introduced legislation Tuesday that would prohibit discrimination on the basis of "gender identity" or "gender expression" and make anti-transgender "hate propaganda" punishable by up to two years in prison.
>
> **New York City imposes fines up to $250,000 for refusing to call trans person 'ze' or 'hir'**
> May 19, 2016
> New York City's human rights commission says it will fine New York employers and landlords up to $250,000 for using the wrong pronoun to refer to a transgender person.
>
> **Female security guard arrested, faces hate charge for removing man from women's restroom in D.C.**
> May 19, 2016

> **Girls must get over their 'discomfort' at seeing male genitals in locker room:** *Charlotte Observer*
> May 20, 2016
> Girls need to get over the "discomfort" they may feel at seeing male genitalia in the locker room, the editorial board of one of North Carolina's largest newspapers wrote in a piece supporting the Obama administration's transgender school facilities edict.
>
> **The most dangerous, and underreported, part of Obama's transgender edict**
> May 20, 2016
> School districts must allow biological males and females to spend the night together in the same hotel room on field trips; Colleges must let men who say they are transgender be roommates with one or more women; and School officials cannot even tell those young women or their parents in advance that their new roommate is a man, without risking a federal lawsuit.

Bill is in Australia, so he has a few cases listed in his post that I hadn't heard of. To be honest, their stories seemed tame compared to the Canadian story.

Let's look at the Canadian story more closely (Daily Caller):

> **Citing the need to make transgender people "feel safe and secure in who they are," Canada's Minister of Justice Jody Wilson-Raybould introduced legislation Tuesday that would prohibit discrimination on the basis of "gender identity" or "gender expression" and make anti-transgender "hate propaganda" punishable by up to two years in prison.**
>
> The proposed legislation — which was unveiled on the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia — would amend the Canadian Criminal Code to expand existing "hate speech" prohibitions to include any public speech or communication that "promotes hatred" on the basis of "gender identity" or "gender expression."
>
> An identical ban on anti-gay "hate propaganda" has been in place for several years and has caused problems for Christians who oppose gay marriage. In 2013, the Canadian Supreme Court upheld the conviction of a Christian street preacher for distributing fliers denouncing homosexual behavior.
>
> The court justified the preacher's conviction on the grounds that he used "vilifying and derogatory representations to create a tone of hatred" against homosexuals. The court held that the pastor's religious freedom did not excuse him from violating "hate propaganda" laws.
>
> […]Prime Minister Justin Trudeau — who ideologically leans far to the left — championed the bill as a much-needed step for transgender rights in Canada. "We must continue to demand true equality," he said at a news conference.

> Wilson-Raybould was similarly enthusiastic about the bill. “We live in a time when discrimination in any form is completely unacceptable,” she said.

Two years in prison, under the Criminal Code, for speech that offends the government’s favored group. That’s what Canadian taxpayers are paying their Liberal Party government to do. They elected them in a majority, so this is going to happen. No one can stop them.

You might remember that the Justice Minister is the same woman who introduced the euthanasia bill. Euthanasia is Canada’s preferred method of reducing costs in their single-payer health care system. After all, they need to save money for the abortions, IVF and sex changes they cover. Canada represents the triumph of compassion over moral boundaries. “Let’s not make judgments that make people feel bad” won out over “let’s have moral rules that protect the weak and innocent, preserve our liberties and conscience rights, and reduce the costs to taxpayers of expensive choices made by individuals”. They wanted to let everyone do what they wanted and pass the costs to taxpayers. Anyone who dissents has to be silenced or imprisoned, because dissent is judgment, and and judgment makes people feel bad.

Why is this push on transgender priorities happening? For those who have a sense of history, it’s very clear that the sex-differences denying of the gay activists is nothing more than an extension of the sex-differences denying of the radical feminists. Those who looked favorably on the demands of the radical feminists in order to appear chivalrous (to the wrong kinds of women) should have expected this. It turns out that if you really believe that a woman is identical to a man, and all differences between them are cultural, then… a woman really is identical to a man, and all differences between them really are cultural. I know many pastors who were unwilling to take on radical feminism, because they wanted to appear chivalrous. Sometimes, it is more important to say “no” than it is to be liked.

If unborn babies don’t have consciousness or don’t feel pain, may we kill them?

May 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about pro-life apologetics

Was having a conversation by e-mail yesterday with a pro-abortion atheist, and he gave two reasons why he supported abortion in the first and second trimester. First, he said that unborn babies can’t feel pain, so it’s OK to kill them. Second, he said that unborn babies don’t have consciousness, so it’s OK to kill them. I thought it might be useful to link to something that answers both of these objections.

Frank Beckwith is the author of “Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice“. He wrote that book for Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote four easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal. Part IV is the one that has the response to the two questions raised by my atheist friend.

Part I. The Appeal to Pity

Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem

Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?

Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Excerpt:

> Some ethicists argue that the unborn becomes fully human sometime after brain development has begun, when it becomes sentient: capable of experiencing

sensations such as pain. The reason for choosing sentience as the criterion is that a being that cannot experience anything (i.e., a presentient unborn entity) cannot be harmed. Of course, if this position is correct, then the unborn becomes fully human probably during the second trimester and at least by the third trimester. Therefore, one does not violate anyone's rights when one aborts a nonsentient unborn entity. [13]

There are several problems with this argument. First, it confuses harm with hurt and the experience of harm with the reality of harm. [14] One can be harmed without experiencing the hurt that sometimes follows from that harm, and which we often mistake for the harm itself. For example, a temporarily comatose person who is suffocated to death "experiences no harm," but he is nevertheless harmed. Hence, one does not have to experience harm, which is sometimes manifested in hurt, in order to be truly harmed.

Second, if sentience is the criterion of full humanness, then the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping would all have to be declared nonpersons. Like the presentient unborn, these individuals are all at the moment nonsentient though they have the natural inherent capacity to be sentient. Yet to countenance their executions would be morally reprehensible. Therefore, one cannot countenance the execution of some unborn entities simply because they are not currently sentient.

Someone may reply that while these objections make important points, there is a problem of false analogy in the second objection: the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping once functioned as sentient beings, though they are now in a temporary state of nonsentience. The presentient unborn, on the other hand, were never sentient. Hence, one is fully human if one was sentient "in the past" and will probably become sentient again in the future, but this cannot be said of the presentient unborn.

There are at least three problems with this response. First, to claim that a person can be sentient, become nonsentient, and then return to sentience is to assume there is some underlying personal unity to this individual that enables us to say that the person who has returned to sentience is the same person who was sentient prior to becoming nonsentient. But this would mean that sentience is not a necessary condition for personhood. (Neither is it a sufficient condition, for that matter, since nonhuman animals are sentient.) Consequently, it does not make sense to say that a person comes into existence when sentience arises, but it does make sense to say that a fully human entity is a person who has the natural inherent capacity to give rise to sentience. A presentient unborn human entity does have this capacity. Therefore, an ordinary unborn human entity is a person, and hence, fully human.

Second, Ray points out that this attempt to exclude many of the unborn from the class of the fully human is "ad hoc and counterintuitive." He asks us to "consider

> the treatment of comatose patients. We would not discriminate against one merely for rarely or never having been sentient in the past while another otherwise comparable patient had been sentient….In such cases, potential counts for everything." [15]
>
> Third, why should sentience "in the past" be the decisive factor in deciding whether an entity is fully human when the presentient human being "is one with a natural, inherent capacity for performing personal acts?" [16] Since we have already seen that one does not have to experience harm in order to be harmed, it seems more consistent with our moral sensibilities to assert that what makes it wrong to kill the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, the momentarily unconscious, and the presentient unborn is that they all possess the natural inherent capacity to perform personal acts. And what makes it morally right to kill plants and to pull the plug on the respirator-dependent brain dead, who were sentient "in the past," is that their deaths cannot deprive them of their natural inherent capacity to function as persons, since they do not possess such a capacity.

These four essays are a very good introduction to common responses to pro-abortion arguments. I recommend that people get familiar with this, as once you look into it, you will see that the abortion issue can be debated with as much confidence as William Lane Craig defends Christian theism. You will have the same access to scientific evidence and rational arguments on this topic, and so you will have the upper hand. And that's fun.

The best introductory book on the abortion / right to life issue is "The Case for Life" by pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf. The best comprehensive book is a tie between "The Ethics of Abortion" by Christopher Kaczor, and Frank Beckwith's "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice".

Texas and Oklahoma sue Obama administration over transgender public school decree

May 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

The Daily Signal reports:

> Texas, joined by eight other states and officials from two other states, sued President Barack Obama's administration on Wednesday over the president's national school bathroom directive that threatens to take away federal school funding for districts that do not follow new transgender student guidance.
>
> "This is an overreach of the federal government," Harrold Independent School District Superintendent David Thweatt told The Daily Signal in a phone call Wednesday afternoon.
>
> Texas and the Harrold Independent School District in Texas were joined by the states of Alabama, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Utah, and Georgia, as well as the Arizona Department of Education, Heber-Overgaard Unified School District in Arizona, and Maine Governor Paul LePage, a Republican, in the lawsuit filed in the Northern District of Texas, Wichita Falls Division U.S. district court.
>
> **"This federal money obviously is our money to start with," Thweatt said. "It's coming from income taxes, et cetera and [the Obama administration] is taking this and using our own money against us to try to blackmail us into some kind of social engineering and social**

> **experimentation in public schools."**
>
> […]Superintendent Thweatt expressed concern to The Daily Signal that Obama administration's directive creates security and safety issues for the "privacy and dignity" of the approximately one hundred kindergarten through 12th grade students that attend and use restrooms at Harrold Independent School District.
>
> **"Not only do we have students in these restrooms, but we are also having visitors to our schools at programs and sporting events," Thweatt said. "If we open our restrooms, we could very well have grown men in our restrooms with young girls."**

If you live in Texas or Oklahoma, then congratulations – your states are actually doing something about the problem:

> **Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, a Republican, along with Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt and West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, sent a letter on May 17 to the Obama administration expressing legal concern over the transgender student directive.**
>
> "The president of United States has no authority under the Constitution to change the law," Paxton told The Daily Signal in a phone call Wednesday afternoon.
>
> Paxton says that his state will wait to hear if there is a response from the Obama administration and "hopefully they'll back off."
>
> "If not, we'll go to the court and we'll put our case in front of a judge and we'll let the court decide," Paxton said.
>
> The lawsuit is filed against the Education and Justice Departments, the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Department of Labor, and officials at the respective agencies.

I doubt that people who voted for Obama are bright enough to explain what the concept of federalism is, or why it is responsible for our special success as a nation. People don't seem to care much for the Constitutional limits on power any more. They just vote for the party that hands them goodies, and to Hell with morality and protecting the vulnerable.

New study: father absence is a strong predictor of depression for young girls

May 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you want your children to grow up happy, commit yourself to marriage

The study is here on PubMed.

And here's an article about it posted at The Family in America, a public policy journal.

Excerpt:

> Who has benefitted from the war radical feminists have waged against marriage? Certainly not young women. A very large new Canadian study concludes that one of the strongest predictors of depression among young women is the loss of a biological parent. And it is the easy divorces that feminists have pushed for that have typically occasioned such a loss.
>
> Conducted by researchers at the University of Northern British Columbia, this new study isolates the factors predicting depression among Canadians ages 16 to 20. The researchers limn these factors by scrutinizing data collected between 1994 and 2007 from a nationally representative sample of 1,715 individuals tracked during this 13-year period.
>
> Predictably, the researchers adduce evidence that such things as parental rejection and childhood anxiety predict depression between a young person's 16th birthday and his or her 21st. But gender makes a difference: consistent with other inquiries, this study finds that "girls reported more [depression] than boys." However, not all girls are equally vulnerable: the data reveal that "The loss of a parent by the ages of 4 to 8 years predicted depression at ages 16 to 20 years for girls [p = 0.008] but not for boys."

> Of course, a girl can lose a parent through death. But the researchers realize that such tragedy occurs far less often than the trauma of parental divorce. Consequently, they know how to interpret parental loss as a predictor of girls' depression at the threshold between adolescence and young adulthood. This is a finding, they realize, that fits hand-in-glove with the results of a 2008 study establishing that "the effects of parental divorce . . . differ between genders in respect to the development of depression with risk increasing for girls but not for boys." They further realize that their study harmonizes with a 1997 study concluding that "young women whose parents had divorced reported higher levels of depression compared to young men from divorced families."
>
> Given the paralyzing effects of depression as "a leading cause of disability worldwide," the researchers hope their study will lead to "targeted, specific and personalized intervention" that will curb such depression. More particularly, they hope that "girls may benefit from interventions designed to address parental loss due to death, divorce, and other causes."
>
> But since nothing takes a parent away from a daughter more often in the 21st century than does parental divorce, it is very clear that the kind of intervention girls most need is the kind that will keep their parents together. Just how quickly that intervention comes will depend heavily on how much reality can puncture feminist ideology.

This study makes me think of the problems that we have these days getting married and staying married. I think that there are three kinds of challenges. The first challenge is ideology, e.g. – radical feminism. The second challenge is cultural, e.g. – the hook-up culture on campus. The third challenge is political, e.g. – no-fault divorce. It seems likes the odds are really stacked against marriage-minded people.

Most people like the idea of having someone of the opposite sex commit to them for life. I write a lot about what people should be looking for in a mate. Factors that predict a person's ability to commit, what their worldview should be, etc. But we also have to remember that we have to be turning ourselves into people who are suited to a lifetime commitment, involving self-denial and self-sacrifice.

A lot of people seem to think that if they meet the right person – the person who makes them feel good – then they won't have to do any self-denying or any self-sacrificing. But that's not true. Feelings change. It's possible for two serial killers to feel good about each other, and to having things in common, but marriage isn't about whether you "like" the other person and whether they "like" you. Marriage works when you have two people who are comfortable making commitments. Two people who are comfortable with responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

The point I am trying to make here is that not only must we be looking for someone who can be faithful, loyal, commitment through thick and thin, but we must also prepare to become a person like that. If we make choices for our own happiness every day – fun and thrills – then we are not making ourselves into the kind of people who take responsibility

and make commitments.

The strange thing is that those who choose fun over and over and over again seem to make the worst decisions when it comes to choosing mates. Of course it’s easier to pick someone who is not too moral and not too religious. Then they won’t be able to judge you. They’ll just let you do whatever you want and never shame you for anything.

The problem is that marriage works best when two people are comfortable with moral obligations to others. You have to be someone who is comfortable with obligations over the long term. And you have to choose someone who has a strong sense of morality, otherwise they won’t honor their moral obligations to others. Commitment means doing what is right regardless of how you feel about it, It means giving up on the pursuit of fun, in order to build something strong that will take you into your old age.

State Department Inspector General: Clinton e-mail use violated Federal Records Act

May 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

The Weekly Standard reports:

> A State Department watchdog denounced Hillary Clinton's lax use of a private email server Wednesday, writing that Clinton did not properly preserve correspondence and subjected herself to security risks without seeking counsel.
>
> The report revealed that the former secretary of state did not comply with the Federal Records Act.
>
> […]"Secretary Clinton should have preserved any Federal records she created and received on her personal account by printing and filing those records with the related files in the Office of the Secretary," the report said, according to *Politico*. "At a minimum, Secretary Clinton should have surrendered all emails dealing with Department business before leaving government service and, because she did not do so, she did not comply with the Department's policies that were implemented in accordance with the Federal Records Act."
>
> […]The IG also condemned Clinton for not seeking counsel on whether to handle work-related emails on her cell phone. Information officers "would have refused the request because of security risks," according to the Associated Press.
>
> NBC's Ken Dilanian said that the IG report shows that "key information technology officials" were "not aware" of Clinton's use of the server, though the

> former secretary of state's office has claimed otherwise.
>
> "They had never approved it, she never asked them. And they're saying that she should have gotten approval from them, they probably wouldn't have granted it actually," Dilanian said.

Another Weekly Standard article lists EIGHT TIMES where Clinton said everyone knew about her private e-mail server.

And her "fact sheet" on her campaign web site says this:

> "Her usage was widely known to the over 100 State Department and U.S. government colleagues she emailed, consistent with the practice of prior Secretaries of State and permitted at the time. […] The laws, regulations, and State Department policy in place during her tenure permitted her to use a non-government email for work."

Whenever a politician says that "everyone" knows something, or "everyone" believes something, it's a good idea to ask them for one name. Because once they give you a name, they are opening themselves up to fact-checking. This also works when you're discussion the Christian worldview with a skeptic. Skeptic: "I have read so many smart people with so many arguments against Christianity that I can't believe in it". You: "OK, go ahead and name your best argument and tell me who wrote it".

Now, the obvious question is this – why did Hillary want to have a private e-mail server? All of my e-mails are on my company's corporate server, and if I leave, they keep them. Why? Because it is important to company business that a record be kept, in case I was taking bribes, or exchanging favors for money. Clinton decided not to let her employers see her e-mails, or have records of them. Why do you think she did that? Remember that all the time that she was Secretary of State, she was taking donations to her "Clinton Foundation" from foreign donors. Do you think that maybe she was exchanging political favors for donations, and didn't want anyone else to have a record of her communication about that?

What difference does national security make?

Look at this article from the leftist Washington Post, of all places.

They write:

> The Clinton Foundation accepted millions of dollars from seven foreign governments during Hillary Rodham Clinton's tenure as secretary of state, including one donation that violated its ethics agreement with the Obama administration, foundation officials disclosed Wednesday.
>
> […]In one instance, foundation officials acknowledged they should have sought approval in 2010 from the State Department ethics office, as required by the agreement for new government donors, before accepting a $500,000 donation from the Algerian government.
>
> […]**Some of the donations came from countries with complicated diplomatic, military and financial relationships with the U.S. government, including Kuwait, Qatar and Oman.**
>
> […]**The Washington Post reported last week that foreign sources, including governments, made up a third of those who have given the foundation more than $1 million over time. The Post found that the foundation, begun by former president Bill Clinton, has raised nearly $2 billion since its creation in 2001.**
>
> […]**Foreign governments and individuals are prohibited from giving money to U.S. political candidates, to prevent outside influence over national leaders. But the foundation has given donors a way to potentially gain favor with the Clintons outside the traditional political limits.**
>
> […]Foreign governments had been major donors to the foundation before President Obama nominated Clinton to become secretary of state in 2009. **When the foundation released a list of its donors for the first time in 2008, as a result of the agreement with the Obama administration, it disclosed, for instance, that Saudi Arabia had given between $10 million and $25 million.**
>
> […]**Qatar, for instance, spent more than $5.3 million on registered lobbyists while Clinton was secretary of state, according to the Sunlight Foundation.The country's lobbyists were reported monitoring anti-terrorism activities and efforts to combat violence in Sudan's Darfur region. Qatar has also come under criticism from some U.S. allies in the region that have accused it of supporting Hamas and other militant groups. Qatar has denied the allegations.**

Now I know that Hillary Clinton says that she is very concerned about women's rights, but then one has to wonder how well she translates those happy sounding words in her speeches into actions with these nations like Saudi Arabia. I don't think that the women in these countries saw much help from Hillary when she was Secretary of State.

Why sexual permissiveness is not compatible with the welfare of children

May 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

Here is a striking essay from the Public Discourse. It talks about how we, as a society, have generally taken on an anything-goes approach with respect to sex. The one exception (for now) is pedophilia, which is the sexual abuse of children by adults. The essay points out that there is no moral reason for having this one exception, on secularism. The exception exists because of a sort of "ick" factor – not because we have a moral framework that makes anything right or wrong objectively. The essay argues that we are not shy about harming children in a million other ways, and lists some examples. I just want to quote a few and then I'll comment about my own moral views around sexuality.

Quick summary of his argument:

> The moral structure of pedophilia is simply this: the welfare of children is subordinate to the sexual gratification of adults.
>
> […]We should be thankful that the Sanduskys and Laheys are still considered monstrous. But in contemporary America that condemnation rests on sentiment and not on moral reasoning. No one can simultaneously explain *why* their actions were so vile and uphold the first commandment of the sexual revolution: fulfill thy desires.
>
> […]No, it isn't *how* Sandusky and Lahey did what they did, or under what circumstances, that explains the disgust. It's *what* they did—but nobody wants to acknowledge that.
>
> The reason for that reluctance becomes clear, if we keep in mind the moral

> structure of pedophilia. Sexual gratification trumps. Thank goodness that for now, there aren't many men who are sexually attracted to youngsters. In that single case, we raise the banner for the children. But in no other case.

That's his argument.

Now, a quick excerpt:

> If we altered the question, and asked not how many people have done sexually abusive things with children, but how many people have done sexual things that redounded to the suffering of children, then we might confess that the only thing that separates millions of people from Jerry Sandusky is inclination. Everything that was once considered a sexual evil and that is now winked at or cheered, everything without exception, has served to hurt children, and badly.
>
> We might point here to divorce. Unless it is necessary to remove oneself and one's children from physical danger and moral corruption, the old wisdom regarding divorce should hold, if children themselves have anything to say about it. Parents will say, "My children can never be happy unless I am happy," but they should not lay that narcissistic unction to their souls. Children need parents who love them, not parents who are happy; they are too young to be asked to lay down their lives for someone else. It is not the job of the child to suffer for the parent, but the job of the parent to endure, to make the best of a poor situation, to swallow his pride, to bend her knees, for the sake of the child.
>
> We might point to births out of wedlock. The child has a right to enter more than a little nursery decorated with presents from a baby shower. He should enter a human world, a story, a people. He should be born of a mother and a father among uncles and aunts and cousins and grandparents, stretching into the distant past, with all their interrelated histories, with his very *being* reflected in all those mirrors of relation, not to mention his eyes and his hair, the talents in his fingers and the cleverness in his mind. This *belonging* to a big and dependable world can be secured only in the context of the *permanent* love of his mother and father, declared by a vow before the community and before the One in whom there is no shadow of alteration.

And now my comments about this article.

So pretty much all my regular readers know that I take extremely conservative views on social issues, since I am an evangelical Protestant Christian. But I don't just have conservative views – I am also chaste at a personal level. I am not one of these re-virgins – I have never had sex. Not once. And I don't mean I have never had sexual intercourse only, I mean that I have never even kissed a woman on the lips. I am a radical on the issue of chastity. I don't view chastity as depriving oneself of something good, I view it is as a thing that serious Christian men do when we want to enable and develop other capabilities. It's my conviction that chastity enables the capability to see women as God sees them, which is a precursor to growing them up to serve him. That's what women are

for, on my view – exactly like men are for knowing and serving God. It's my belief that once a man has premarital sex, it becomes much harder for him to view women that way.

So, I am really really really against any kind of sexual activity of any kind prior to marriage. I think that if a man wants to show affection to a woman, then sex before marriage is not the way to do that. There are other ways, and men ought to know how to speak the language of love to a woman in many different ways apart from sex, assuming that this is his goal for her. A man needs to create a context for sex before he can have it. Marriage is how a man provides a context for sex. Not just by giving a woman safety, but by specifying a shared vision which the woman agrees to support when she agrees to marriage. Men shouldn't have intimate experiences with women who are not committed to a constructive partnership with specific goals, e.g. – birthing or adopting children in order to give them a stable, loving *sane* environment to grow up in. That is so rare nowadays, especially on college campuses which are inundated with sexual liberalism, thanks to radical feminism. My conviction that sex is not something that should be done before marriage emerges partly from a concern that children should have the best opportunity for that stable environment. And that's what I want to focus on – sexual restraint as a means of providing for children and protecting children.

First, premarital sex creates a situations where abortion happens. Men and women should not engage in activities for recreational reasons that could possibility lead to the death of another human being, period. I am not one of these people who thinks "oh, poor woman who is pregnant, what a beastly man who did that to her – but she can do the right thing and keep the baby". I think that women are equally to blame with men for even having sex before marriage – the mistake was having sex in the first place. So getting pregnant and keeping the baby is good, but preventing fatherlessness and not putting burdens on taxpayers is much, much better. People who engage in premarital sex are not only selfish, immature and irresponsible, but they are actually acting in a *negligent* fashion towards the child that may result from their *choices*. We should not make choices that put innocent children at risk. Premarital sex can be compared with driving while drunk in that regard. You might think it's fun, but it's not a good, moral thing to do because of the harm that may result. Saying "but I didn't mean to" after the fact doesn't change the harm.

Second, I've blogged before about many studies (like this one) that show that premarital sex reduces relationship stability, duration, and quality. Another study I blogged about showed that the number of sexual partners that a man or woman has before marriage directly affects the probability that the relationship will provide a stable environment for raising children. So one of my reasons for being chaste is to maximize the probability of giving my future children that stable environment. Another reason to be chaste is to give my future wife that gift of fidelity. When a man has proven that he has the ability to restrain himself with his wife during the courtship, that is a signal to her that he is good at self-control. The ability to court without premarital sex shows her that he is able to think about her as a person, and that he is able to evaluate her objectively for the purpose of filling the roles of wife and mother. And that this is, in fact, his whole purpose for her. A

purpose that will survive the decline of her appearance and youth. Security is another gift that a chaste man gives his wife, so that she can age confidently.

Thirdly, I have in the past blogged about research on gay unions showing how various factors that are more probable in gay relationships, (e.g. – elevated rates of domestic violence, low relationship stability, drug abuse, high rates of promiscuity, etc.), undermine the stability of the environment in which children grow up. More here. Dr. Ryan Anderson has argued that the norms present in gay relationships will undermine the norms of traditional marriage, (permanence, sexual exclusivity, etc.), if marriage is redefined to eliminate the gender requirement. I think we need to keep the traditional definition of marriage because it's better for children if we do (and there are other reasons to prefer natural marriage, as I've written about before).

I think I've said enough here to show that very often when it comes to sexual activity what is driving my conservative views is concern for others. Concern not just for the future children, but for the future wife. And not just for them, but for society as a whole, who would have to pay the social costs of things like divorce, and the social costs of children of divorce, etc. And not just for society, but also for God, who intends sexuality for a very specific purpose – it is a form of communication for two people who have been bonded to each other for life. Marriage has to count for God and achieve his goals. One of those goals is raising up children well for his sake. And adults need to control themselves in order to provide children with what they need.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

May 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference

between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.

But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.

There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that “There is no God” is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that “There is a God.” Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God’s existence. He confesses that he doesn’t know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term “atheist,” you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with “non-theist.” So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word ‘atheist’ has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix ‘a-’ being read in this same way in ‘atheist’ as it customarily is in . . . words as ‘amoral’ . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. “The Presumption of Atheism,” by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word “atheist” trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our

> **cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.**
>
> **One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.**
>
> So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, "So is there a God or not?"

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these "subjective atheists"?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says "I lack a belief in the gravitational force!". When you engage in serious discussions with people about God's existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don't care about a person's psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over "I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God"? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: "I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!" What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: "Wintery Knight won't listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!". I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that's why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don't *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I'm not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Related posts

- Is giving to charity more rational for religious people or atheists?
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- Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong? Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral?
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Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

May 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they

take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.” And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What’s harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I’ll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, “In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home.” And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase “In order that you may know”. Same message, right?

3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don’t know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It’s really great. Acts 2:36. I’ve been a Christian 20 years and I didn’t see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can’t exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” There it is again. “Know for certain.”

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition “Christ rose from the grave,” for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, “I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave.”

3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be

> transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Let’s celebrate our heroes for Memorial Day

May 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

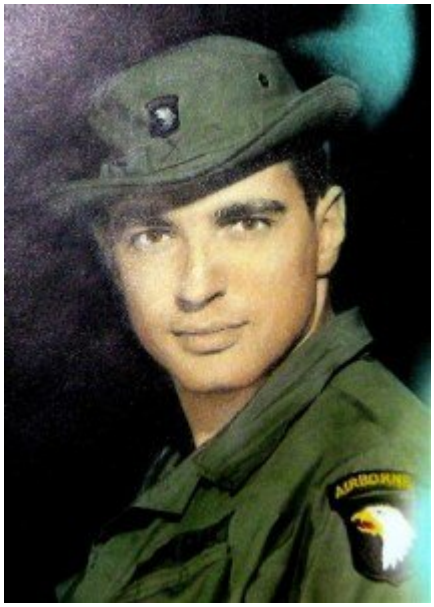

Leslie Sabo

Here’s a story of heroism from Investors Business Daily.

It says:

> Leslie Sabo was killed during the Vietnam War’s 1970 Cambodian Campaign. He was nominated for the Medal of Honor, but the records were lost until a veteran rediscovered them in 1999. In 2012, Sabo’s widow received the nation’s highest military award on his behalf, the 249th for Vietnam.
>
> Sabo’s platoon and another had been ambushed from all sides by a large and well-entrenched force of communist soldiers.
>
> He repeatedly attacked and killed enemy soldiers, was wounded by a grenade as he shielded a comrade, and then was fatally shot as he provided covering fire for a medevac helicopter.
>
> “His indomitable courage and complete disregard for his own safety saved the lives of many of his platoon members,” said the Medal of Honor citation. “Spc. 4 Sabo’s extraordinary heroism and selflessness, above and beyond the call of duty, at the cost of his life, are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, and the United States Army.”
>
> Leslie Jr. was born in 1948 in Kufstein, Austria, where his well-to-do family had moved after the Soviet occupation of Hungary at the end of World War II, leaving almost everything behind.
>
> They moved to America when he was 2. They lived in Youngstown, Ohio, and then Ellwood City, Pa.
>
> Leslie Sr., a lawyer in Hungary, retrained as an engineer, and both parents taught

> their two remaining sons (another was killed by a bomb during the war) patriotism for their adopted country.

Here are some more details from the Army web site:

> 4 Leslie H. Sabo Jr. distinguished himself, May 10, 1970, in Se San, Cambodia, while serving as a rifleman in Company B, 3d Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division.

> Members of B. Co. were ambushed by a large enemy force. While conducting a reconnaissance patrol, 22-year-old Sabo, charged an enemy position, killing several enemy soldiers. Immediately thereafter, he assaulted an enemy flanking force, successfully drawing their fire away from friendly soldiers and ultimately forcing the enemy to retreat.
>
> When a grenade landed nearby a wounded comrade, Sabo picked up the grenade threw it away while shielding his buddy with his own body, thus absorbing the brunt of the blast and saving the man's life.

> Seriously wounded by the blast, Sabo, nonetheless, retained the initiative and single- handedly charged an enemy bunker that had inflicted severe damage on the platoon. He received several serious wounds from withering automatic weapons fire in the process. Despite being mortally injured, he crawled towards the enemy emplacement and, when in position, threw a grenade into the bunker. The resulting explosion silenced the enemy fire, but also ended Spc. 4 Sabo's life.

He gave his life to save his friends.

Check out some of my Medal of Honor posts:

- Navy SEAL Michael Murphy awarded Medal of Honor
- How Sal Giunta earned a Medal of Honor and lived to tell about it
- What can Christians learn from Rob Miller's Medal of Honor story?

God bless our soldiers, airmen and sailors!

Trying to make Christianity entertaining makes people think that it's fake

May 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church sucks, that's why men are bored there

My friend Bruce shared this article from the leftist The Atlantic on Facebook. It's written by Larry Taunton of Fixed Point Foundation. Larry surveyed some people who had left the church, and I thought it was worth it to look at this case of Phil.

Larry writes:

> "Church became all about ceremony, handholding, and kumbaya," Phil said with a look of disgust. "I missed my old youth pastor. He actually knew the Bible."
>
> […]Phil was in my office as part of a project that began last year. Over the course of my career, I have met many students like Phil. It has been my privilege to address college students all over the world, usually as one defending the Christian worldview. These events typically attract large numbers of atheists. I like that. I find talking to people who disagree with me much more stimulating than those gatherings that feel a bit too much like a political party convention, and the exchanges with these students are mostly thoughtful and respectful.
>
> […]A smart, likable young man, he sat down nervously as my staff put a plate of food before him. Like others after him, he suspected a trap. Was he being punk'd? Talking to us required courage of all of these students, Phil most of all since he was the first to do so. Once he realized, however, that we truly meant him no harm, he started talking — and for three hours we listened.
>
> Now the president of his campus's SSA, Phil was once the president of his Methodist church's youth group. He loved his church ("they weren't just going through the motions"), his pastor ("a rock star trapped in a pastor's body"), and,

> most of all, his youth leader, Jim ("a passionate man"). Jim's Bible studies were particularly meaningful to him. He admired the fact that Jim didn't dodge the tough chapters or the tough questions: "He didn't always have satisfying answers or answers at all, but he didn't run away from the questions either. The way he taught the Bible made me feel smart."
>
> Listening to his story I had to remind myself that Phil was an atheist, not a seminary student recalling those who had inspired him to enter the pastorate. As the narrative developed, however, it became clear where things came apart for Phil. During his junior year of high school, the church, in an effort to attract more young people, wanted Jim to teach less and play more. Difference of opinion over this new strategy led to Jim's dismissal. He was replaced by Savannah, an attractive twenty-something who, according to Phil, "didn't know a thing about the Bible." The church got what it wanted: the youth group grew. But it lost Phil.
>
> An hour deeper into our conversation I asked, "When did you begin to think of yourself as an atheist?"He thought for a moment. "I would say by the end of my junior year."
>
> I checked my notes. "Wasn't that about the time that your church fired Jim?"
>
> He seemed surprised by the connection. "Yeah, I guess it was."

A couple of years ago, I was talking to a woman who grew up in a Christian home that was very focused on externals. There was a lot of bullying to get her to comply with expected Christian behavior, although the expected Christian behavior was often arbitrary, and had nothing to do with Christianity and more with just appearing "nice". There was no discussion of the evidence, no talking through objections. No focus on truth at all. She was always very curious about me, and how come I didn't drink, and how come I was able to stay a virgin through college, grad school, to the present day when many people who were raised in the church fell away from it in college. My answer was simple. I never grew up in a Christian home so I was never bullied into acting like a Christian beyond what I was convinced of myself. There was no rebellion, I just took my time and proved everything out before I had to act any particular way.

I didn't ever have to go to church. I didn't go to church until was comfortable going, and I would say that I still am not comfortable in church – ever. If I felt bored in church, I read an apologetics book, and I did this openly. If I didn't like the words of a song, then I didn't sing. I liked to read apologetics books from the beginning, and when I talked to church Christians, I just classified the ones who didn't read apologetics as non-Christians – as fakes. So I never felt like there was anything wrong with me because I didn't sing, pray, read the Bible or do more church stuff. To me, if you didn't like apologetics, you were a fake and you were faking behaviors that you had no way of verifying. Apologetics is the baseline activity of church, and only fakers try to skip over it. From the existence of God, we move on to the accuracy of the Bible, and on to theology, and then and only then do we start the outward behaviors of a Christian. If you skip to the behaviors, that is unnatural – like acting a part of a doctor when you have never been to medical school.

It’s morally wrong to try to pretend to be something you are not.

Bruce commented this above the post:

> When authentic conviction is lacking in your words and actions–or your “zeal” lacks the requisite knowledge to back it up–your teenager knows it.

Right. Young people in the church can tell when old people are more interested in feelings and posing. All they have to do is ask you how much you have done to study whether the things you believe are true. If you have read more devotional literature than you have read apologetics, then you’re a fraud. And that, more than anything, is what causes young people to step away from a two-way relationship with God.

My friend Stephen Bedard tweeted this, recently:

> “Frankly, I find it hard to understand how people today can risk parenthood without having studied apologetics.” – William Lane Craig

I think you have to blame parents and the pastors when young people reject Christianity. They are the ones who focus on outward behaviors, feelings and rituals instead of frank discussions about truth where reason and evidence are center stage.

It also might also be a good idea to have an occasional sermon on morality, where we talk about how the Bible condemns premarital sex, drunkenness and divorce. Maybe quote some studies on the harm of premarital sex and single motherhood. Maybe talk about how the divorce laws and divorce courts encourage women to initiate divorces. Something practical about moral issues, and not just the ones that are politically correct. We should be speaking out against sinful behaviors. Setting up moral boundaries against hedonism and peer pressure is an important way to protect children, for one thing. And I don’t think that religious liberty can survive in a society that affirms sinful behaviors like drunkenness, premarital sex and divorce as normal. Is there a pastor alive who has ever preached against radical feminism, and how radical feminism caused the sexual revolution: premarital promiscuity, unilateral divorce and abortion?

If I had to rely on deciding what Christianity was from looking at people in the church, or from looking to my parents or peers, I would never be where I am today. I can barely tolerate church, especially the singing. Pastors who assume the Bible is true. Pastors who never connect their preaching to historical context, historical evidence, philosophical arguments or scientific evidence. Pastors who try to make me feel things, instead of engaging with non-Christian critics. Pastors who never mention current events or public policy. Christianity ought to be more like engineering or lab work if you want to appeal to young people – testable, repeatable, practical. Think back to math class, and how teachers would insist that students show their work, instead of just writing the answer down. Instead of just saying “the Bible says”, pastors and parents really need to show young people their work – how did they arrive at their worldview? It’s not respectable to be ignorant about these things – there should be no respect in the church for people who put piety above truth.

Katie Courie defends deceptive editing in her pro-gun-control documentary

May 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Don't believe the liberal media
This story from the Washington Free Beacon is very useful for explaining what happens when a person relies on the leftist mainstream media to tell them about reality.

It says:

> The makers of a new Katie Couric documentary on gun violence deceptively edited an interview between Couric and a group of gun rights activists in an apparent attempt to embarrass the activists, an audio recording of the full interview shows.
>
> At the 21:48 mark of Under the Gun a scene of Katie Couric interviewing members of the Virginia Citizens Defense League, a gun rights organization, is shown.
>
> Couric can be heard in the interview asking activists from the group, "If there are no background checks for gun purchasers, how do you prevent felons or terrorists from purchasing a gun?"
>
> The documentary then shows the activists sitting silently for nine awkward seconds, unable to provide an answer. It then cuts to the next scene.
>
> **However, raw audio of the interview between Katie Couric and the activists provided to the Washington Free Beacon shows the scene was deceptively edited. Instead of silence, Couric's question is met immediately with answers from the activists. A back and forth between a number of the league's members and Couric over the issue of background checks proceeds for more than four minutes after the original question is asked.**

It's impossible to purchase a gun in the United States without a background check, unless it is a person to person private sale. Even if you order a gun on the Internet, it has to be shipped to a store where you pick it up – after the background check has been run. However, people on the left love to lie about gun purchases.

Now, the deceptive editing was pointed out to Katie Couric, and what do you think that she did? Did she apologize and pull the documentary?

Of course not, as David French explains in National Review:

> At this point, a responsible documentarian either immediately apologizes, promises to investigate exactly how the deception occurred, and pledges to re-

> edit the film — or they contest the VCDL's evidence. Instead, Soechtig issued this statement:
>
> There are a wide range of views expressed in the film. My intention was to provide a pause for the viewer to have a moment to consider this important question before presenting the facts on Americans' opinions on background checks. I never intended to make anyone look bad and I apologize if anyone felt that way.
> The Washington Post's Erik Wemple's response was exactly right, saying that he's "scarcely seen a thinner, more weaselly excuse." But, as he notes, it's not just an excuse, it reads as an admission. She's not contesting the VCDL's claims.
>
> This is exactly the point where a former network anchor — a person who still enjoys respect in the news business — should step in and impose adult supervision. But in her own comment on the controversy, Couric not only said that she was "proud of the film" she also supported Soechtig's statement.
>
> Dear Yahoo, let me put this in plain English for you. Your premier news personality is "proud" of lying. She "supports" a statement that purports to justify those lies as a form of creative "pause." This would be a firing offense at any decent opinion journal, much less an organization that purports to objectively report the news. Americans can no longer trust a single news report or a single interview from Couric. They now know that she will unashamedly and proudly deceive them to advance her own ideological agenda.

Previously, I blogged about studies that actually document how far the media is biased to the left. I understand that people on the left want to be lied to, and they are entitled to consume reports from sources that affirm the lies they want to believe. But those who prefer truth should be wiser.

New study: DNA requires maintenance from surrounding cell

May 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

My friend Bruce shared this post from Reasons to Believe about some recent research on DNA.

Naturalists like to argue that DNA somehow came into existence randomly, but it turns out that not only is DNA marvelously improbable for even the simplest living organism, but it also requires a lot of support from other areas of the cell in order to remain stable.

It says:

> In 2015, three scientists won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for decades of research into DNA—research that reinforces the idea that evolution is mythology and makes the modern evolutionary theory of abiogenesis seem more and more indefensible. It turns out that DNA is inherently unstable, and the preservation of genetic information requires a complex symbiotic relationship between the cell and DNA that is so interdependent that neither could have arisen independently of the other.
>
> DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) is the giant organic molecule which carries and preserves an organism's genetic information. DNA is essential to the growth and reproduction of life-forms because precise copying and self-replication of DNA is a critical part of the process of cell division.
>
> Tomas Lindahl, the first Nobel laureate, has demonstrated that the rate at which DNA decays should have made the development of life on Earth impossible.[1] The Nobel Committee expresses this on a personal level: "you ought to have been a

> chemical chaos long before you even developed into a foetus."[2]
>
> So why doesn't our genetic material disintegrate into complete chemical chaos? It is because of molecular repair mechanisms within the cell. The three Nobel laureates "mapped, at a molecular level, how cells repair damaged DNA and safeguard the genetic information."[3] They found that a multitude of molecular systems constantly monitor the genome and repair any damage.
>
> One such mechanism discovered by Lindahl is base excision repair, which explains why our DNA doesn't collapse. A base of a nucleotide often loses an amino group and becomes unable to form a base pair, thus breaking the DNA chain. But an enzymedetects the error, and other enzymes repair it so that the DNA can replicate properly.
>
> Paul Modrich, the second laureate, discovered another molecular mechanism calledmismatch repair. Replication errors often occur as the DNA is copied, but Modrich found that enzymes continually detect most of these errors, and other enzymes repair them. The Nobel Committee says this "reduces the error frequency during DNA replication by about a thousandfold."[4]
>
> One further issue that DNA must contend with is mutations, caused by DNA damage due to radiation and a variety of mutagenic substances. For example, radiation might make two base pairs bind to one another incorrectly. But the third laureate, Aziz Sancar, discovered that through a mechanism called nucleotide excision repair, enzymes will cut out, remove, and replace a damaged DNA strand.
>
> **We have long known that the cell could not reproduce without DNA, but we now know that DNA would self-destruct without the cell. It is this complex symbiotic relationship between a cell and its DNA that makes the modern evolutionary theory more difficult to defend.**
>
> […]This research shows that for abiogenesis to occur, undirected, random processes must have anticipated the inherent instability of DNA and assembled the cell with the variety of enzymes necessary to prevent the self-destruction of DNA. Additionally, the cell's chemistry, the self-preservation instinct, and anticipatory DNA repair mechanisms must have all come together at the same instant in time within only 1 billion years; otherwise, any nascent life could not have survived. If the probability barrier to evolution seemed like climbing Mount Improbable before, it has now become climbing Mount Impossible.
>
> Could simple single-celled life-forms emerge and evolve into more complex life? Single-celled life-forms are not so simple. For example, the genome of an aerobic hyper-thermophilic crenarchaeon (a thermophilic archaea, a type of bacteria) consists of 1.7 billion base pairs, which is almost 60 percent of the 2.9 billion base pairs in thehuman genome.[5]

So, not only is it fantastically improbably to 1) get the building blocks of life, and 2) build

the sequence of base pairs in DNA, but 3) you also have to have supporting systems to maintain the DNA in the cell: even more specified complexity.

Study: biological convergence found in human and squid eye genes

June 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

We have to start this post with the definition of convergence in biology.

> In evolutionary biology, convergent evolution is the process whereby organisms not closely related (not monophyletic), independently evolve similar traits as a result of having to adapt to similar environments or ecological niches.
>
> It is the opposite of divergent evolution, where related species evolve different traits.
>
> On a molecular level, this can happen due to random mutation unrelated to adaptive changes; see long branch attraction. In cultural evolution, convergent evolution is the development of similar cultural adaptations to similar environmental conditions by different peoples with different ancestral cultures. An example of convergent evolution is the similar nature of the flight/wings of insects, birds, pterosaurs, and bats.
>
> All four serve the same function and are similar in structure, but each evolved independently.

With that being said, here is an article from Real Clear Science with me.

> Eyes and wings are among the most stunning innovations evolution has created. Remarkably these features have evolved multiple times in different lineages of animals. For instance, the avian ancestors of birds and the mammalian ancestors of bats both evolved wings independently, in an example of convergent evolution. The same happened for the eyes of squid and humans. Exactly how

> such convergent evolution arises is not always clear.
>
> In a new study, published in *Nature Scientific Reports*, researchers have found that, **despite belonging to completely different lineages, humans and squid evolved through tweaks to the same gene.**
>
> Like all organs, the eye is the product of many genes working together. The majority of those genes provide information about how to make part of the eye. For example, one gene provides information to construct a light-sensitive pigment. Another gene provides information to make a lens.
>
> Most of the genes involved in making the eye read like a parts list – this gene makes this, and that gene makes that. But some genes orchestrate the construction of the eye. Rather than providing instructions to make an eye part, these genes provide information about where and when parts need to be constructed and assembled. In keeping with their role in controlling the process of eye formation, these genes are called "master control genes".
>
> The most important of master control genes implicated in making eyes is called *Pax6*. The ancestral *Pax6* gene probably orchestrated the formation of a very simple eye – merely a collection of light-sensing cells working together to inform a primitive organism of when it was out in the open versus in the dark, or in the shade.
>
> **Today the legacy of that early *Pax6* gene lives on in an incredible diversity of organisms, from birds and bees, to shellfish and whales, from squid to you and me. This means the *Pax6* gene predates the evolutionary diversification of these lineages – during the Cambrian period, some 500m years ago.**

This is an example of convergence because the same gene is present in animals that DO NOT SHARE A RECENT COMMON ANCESTOR. In short, this is exactly identical to the case where a computer programmer reuses the same library of functions in two completely different programs. Software engineers re-use libraries all the time in different programs. It makes sense in an software engineering paradigm.

But this example of convergence makes no sense on naturalistic evolution – random mutation and selection does not create the same design in two animals with no common ancestry. It screams out design.

Related posts

- Convergence detected in the genetic structure of bats and dolphins
- How biological convergence falsifies Darwinian evolution
- Science Daily reports on genetic convergence in bats and whales
- What kinds of predictions does intelligent design theory make?
- Is universal common ancestry based on established facts?

The surprising pro-masculinity message in the “Far From the Madding Crowd” film

June 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

So, I have about a half-dozen older and/or experienced Christian women who advise me and assist me in various ways. The wisest and most experienced is calm and thoughtful Dina. She has a very stressful job dealing with demanding women, and what she admires most in men is “masculinity”, which she defines as a man’s ability to tell a woman what is right and wrong, what God expects from her, what she should be doing with her life, and guiding her and providing for her through the steps to get there.

What makes Dina angry is when a man makes a fool of himself for youth and beauty, abdicating his role as moral and spiritual leader because of attraction / lust. According to Dina, men who have self-control think about what a woman should do that is morally right, with the goal of her producing a return for God. Men who are swayed by youth and beauty are willing to give up that leadership role in exchange for attention and/or sex.

So, with that said, Dina asked me to watch a recently-made movie called “Far From the Madding Crowd“, based on a novel by Thomas Hardy. I immediately said “no” because I know about Thomas Hardy from Tess of the D’Urbervilles, where he presents Tess as the helpless victim of Providence. I really hate that view of women, where they can do reckless, selfish things and then blame everyone but themselves for the destructive consequences of their own free-will decisions. But Dina said “wasn’t I right about the debate between David Robertson and Matt Dillahunty?” I said yes, and watched the movie. And of course, she was right, as she almost always is. This movie is a punch in the face to the radical feminism that seems to have infected so many young women, even in the church.

Here is a review of the movie by Rebekah, posted at her blog.

Rebekah writes:

> What does this 19th century tale offer to modern audiences? This latest rendering emphasizes something actually surprising and unexpected given that it is made in our age of radical feminism. It is Gabriel Oak's character that shines the most, not the proto-feminist Bathsheba. […]In Bathsheba and Gabriel we see how men and women support one another in such a way as to ensure a flourishing in any role that fate might thrust on them.
>
> […]The relationship between Gabriel and Bathsheba, though unequal in earthly terms of authority and wealth, is one of mutual dependence. We see Oak taking on a role of both counselor and conscience with Bathsheba – roles that in her striving towards independence she struggles to admit her need for. She is not unlike the modern feminist in this regard, nor is she unlike all of us in our relationship with the Lord. Her struggle is best seen in the various times she repels Gabriel only to find herself in desperate situations in which only he can help. The filmmakers' clever use of a recurring theme of Bathsheba galloping after Gabriel on a horse when he is needed is particularly moving (and surprising) here. In the end, the film resists the urge to pander to our more extreme modern views on what women require to thrive.
>
> **Gabriel Oak also seems to be an embodiment of the biblical virtue of selflessness. We see in his actions towards Bathsheba the Philippians admonition to refrain from "being motivated by selfish ambition or vanity," but rather "in humility, be moved to treat one another as more important than yourself."** Indeed, vanity itself can be seen as a fateful character flaw of every major character apart from Gabriel. He alone is able to move past rejection and carry on. In fact, he is required to go so far as to be under the authority of the very woman who rejected his offer of marriage and, despite his continuing affections for her, witness her being courted and then married by another far less worthy man, Frank Troy. No other major character is able to accomplish this challenge to their pride. Though Bathsheba does eventually overcome the rejection of her husband, she only does so after tremendous tragedy and with the selfless and steady support of Gabriel.
>
> Gabriel respects her independence, but, like a good shepherd, stays close by to protect and guide her. Though he cannot protect her from her free-will choices, he does warn her. He then remains faithful to her in the midst of the trouble she brings upon herself. In this, he is not unlike our God, for he allows her to stray, all the while letting her know of a better course when asked. And, she does ask.
>
> In an important scene at a party, where Bathsheba must decide whether or not to marry a particularly obsessive suitor, when she asks, "Tell me what to do, Gabriel," he simply tells her to "Do what is right." Is that not like our Lord? Gentle shepherd, indeed, for our wild, independent hearts. In this, I see Gabriel as most suitable for the role as the husband written of in the epistle to the

> Ephesians. He loves Bathsheba "just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her…"

Men and women both struggle with self-centeredness, but men usually work themselves out of it by studying hard things in school, and doing hard work that pays. Men have a natural desire to provide for others, and it is actually a duty laid out for them in the Bible. As a result of studying and working at things they don't like, men typically are better at resisting their feelings and desires. In fact, if you ever want to make a woman less self-centered and emotional, leading her to study STEM and work a demanding job is a good plan. Dina has multiple STEM degrees, and a very difficult, challenging work history.

I would be suspicious of men who don't prioritize providing, (as in 1 Tim 5:8), because working and saving gives a man practical experience at self-denial. When a man gets accustomed to working to share with others, it helps helps him to lead a woman to do the same: deny her feelings and desires, and make prudent decisions that will allow her to love and serve others – including God – in a sustainable way. Over the long-term, this practice of effective, self-sacrificial love will be worth more to the woman than the short-term pursuit of fun and thrills. To provide for a woman means to look into her future, and make a decision today to set aside something that will help her to deal with what the future has in store for her.

Dina's advice to young women

I asked Dina to take a look at the draft of this post before I hit "Schedule" and Dina said:

> What I would advise to all young women is not to expect a Gabriel Oak to be waiting for you at the end of your reckless years of hooking up, partying and wasting your youth on fun and men who have no desire to lead you to God or guide you to goodness. Don't expect the hot stud that your friends approve of to turn into someone with the character of Oak with the magic powers of your premarital sex life. **Find a man who doesn't give in to your every whim, because if he does, you will only resent him for it, and blame him, for being what you thought you wanted him to be.** Find a man who leads, one who demonstrates self control, self denial, who can provide and protect. And most importantly, respect him for doing it.

Emphasis mine.

Sound advice from the Dina, young ladies. By the way, Dina's favorite drama is the BBC production of "North and South" from 2004. I also give it a 10/10.

Report: Republican-governed states score highest on fiscal measures

June 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

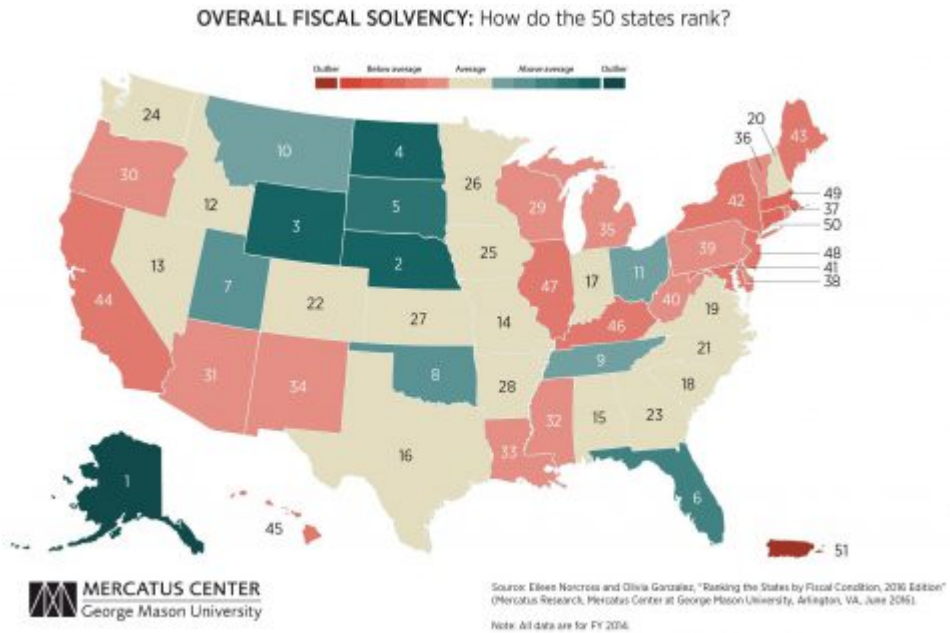

Ranking of states by overall fiscal solvency
(Click here for larger map image)

A new report prepared by the Mercatus Center at George Mason University finds that Republican-governed states are the strongest according to five fiscal measures. Democrat-governed states lag far behind. (H/T William)

The report says:

> The financial health of each state can be analyzed through the states' own audited financial reports. By looking at states' basic financial statistics on revenues, expenditures, cash, assets, liabilities, and debt, states may be ranked according to how easily they will be able to cover short-term and long-term bills, including pension obligations.
>
> This ranking of the 50 states and Puerto Rico is based on their fiscal solvency in five separate categories:
>
> - *Cash solvency.* Does a state have enough cash on hand to cover its short-term bills?
> - *Budget solvency*. Can a state cover its fiscal year spending with current revenues, or does it have a budget shortfall?
> - *Long-run solvency.* Can a state meet its long-term spending commitments? Will there be enough money to cushion it from economic shocks or other long-term fiscal risks?
> - *Service-level solvency.* How much "fiscal slack" does a state have to increase spending if citizens demand more services?

> - *Trust fund solvency.* How much debt does a state have? How large are its unfunded pen-sion and healthcare liabilities?

If you look at the map, you'll notice that most the worst states are run by Democrats, while the best states are run by Republicans.

Investors Business Daily explains:

> [W]hile Mercatus makes no mention of the states' political leanings, every state in the top 10 except for Florida is solidly red, meaning those states voted for the Republican in each of the past four presidential elections (see table). And Florida has had a Republican governor since 1999, and the state House and Senate are both controlled by Republicans.
>
> At the other end of the spectrum, except for Kentucky, the 10 worst states are all solidly blue. And all but two of the governors since 1947 have been Democrats.
>
> Politicians, especially the "pragmatic" ones, are always talking about how they are just interested in what works. When it comes to keeping spending, debt and long-term liabilities under control, the place to look seems obvious.
>
> The conservative approach of lower taxes and limited government is a winner, while big-spending liberalism invariably leads to financial ruin.

Kentucky, of course, is the home state of Mitch McConnell, and only just elected a Republican governor (Matt Bevin) who is a fiscal conservative. Every previous governor of Kentucky since 1971 was a Democrat, except for Ernie Fletcher.

The point here is that the real reason that some Democrat states look good is because they are borrowing money to stay afloat, an piling up debt. The same is true with our illustrious President Obama. He doubled the national debt from 10 to 20 trillion, and he has managed to deliver below average GDP growth and a 38-year-low labor force participation rate. He was the worst President in the history of the country (not just on fiscal issues, but on social issues and foreign policy, too). But, since he added 10 trillion to the debt, he looks OK. We would have had better fiscal performance in the last eight years if we had elected a honeydew melon as President.

Thomas Sowell: does affirmative action help minorities to get ahead?

June 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Thomas Sowell – the best economist in the world

My favorite economist, Thomas Sowell has an article in Investors Business Daily that explains what affirmative action really does to minorities.

Excerpt:

> Affirmative action is supposed to benefit black and other minority students admitted with lower academic qualifications than some white students who are rejected.
>
> […]Despite much media spin, the issue is not whether blacks in general should be admitted to higher-ranked or lower-ranked institutions.
>
> The issue is whether a given black student, with given academic qualifications, should be admitted to a college or university where he would not be admitted if he were white.
>
> Much research over the years has confirmed… that admitting black students to institutions for which their academic preparation is not sufficient can be making them worse off instead of better off.
>
> I became painfully aware of this problem more than 40 years ago when I was teaching at Cornell University and discovered that half the black students there were on some form of academic probation.
>
> These students were not stupid or uneducable. On the contrary, the average black student at Cornell at that time scored at the 75th percentile on scholastic

> tests. Their academic qualifications were better than those of three-quarters of all American students who took those tests.
>
> Why were they in trouble at Cornell, then? Because the average Cornell student in the liberal arts college at that time scored at the 99th percentile. The classes taught there — including mine — moved at a speed geared to the verbal and mathematical level of the top one percent of American students.
>
> The average white student would have been wiped out at Cornell. But the average white student was unlikely to be admitted to Cornell in the first place. Nor was a white student who scored at the 75th percentile.
>
> That was a "favor" reserved for black students. This "favor" turned black students who would have been successful at most American colleges and universities into failures at Cornell.
>
> None of this was peculiar to Cornell. Black students who scored at the 90th percentile in math had serious problems trying to keep up at MIT, where other students scored somewhere within the top 99th percentile.
>
> Nearly one-fourth of these black students with stellar qualifications in math failed to graduate from MIT, and those who did graduate were concentrated in the bottom tenth of the class.
>
> There were other fine engineering schools around the country where those same students could have learned more, when taught at a normal pace, than at a breakneck speed geared to students with extremely rare abilities in math.
>
> […]Mismatching students with educational institutions is a formula for needless failures.
>
> The book "Mismatch" by Sander and Taylor is a first-rate study of the hard facts. It shows, for example, that the academic performances of black and Hispanic students rose substantially after affirmative action admissions policies were banned in the University of California system.
>
> Instead of failing at Berkeley or UCLA, these minority students were now graduating from other UC campuses. They were graduating at a higher rate, with higher grades, and now more often in challenging fields like math, science and technology.
>
> […]Does the actual fate of minority students not matter to the left as much as their symbolic presence on a campus?

Now, you might ask yourself on what basis Sowell makes all these assertions, so here are a few of his academic publications about affirmative action, which are state-of-the-art:

- Preferential Policies: An International Perspective, William Morrow & Co., 1990
- Affirmative Action Around the World: An Empirical Study, Yale University Press, 2005

Now, I was recently talking to a friend who has empirically false views on a number of

topics. He is opposed to capital punishment, opposed to gun ownership, supports affirmative action, and so on. When I ask him why he believes these things, he doesn’t point to any evidence. I offered to give him studies showing that capital punishment has a deterrent effect on crime, that concealed carry laws reduce violent crime rates, that affirmative action laws harm minorities, etc.

If we really want to help minorities, we have to do what makes sense according the evidence. We have to aim to do good, not just feel good.

Hillary Clinton e-mail administrator to plead the fifth

June 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

This is from The Hill.

Excerpt:

> The man believed to have set up and maintained Hillary Clinton's private email server will assert his Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination and refuse to answer questions as part of an open records lawsuit against the State Department.
>
> **Bryan Pagliano will decline to answer questions from Judicial Watch, the conservative legal watchdog group, during a deposition scheduled for Monday, his lawyers wrote in a court filing on Wednesday afternoon.**
>
> The move forecloses the possibility that Pagliano would break his months of silence about the server issue, even as scrutiny has intensified on his role.
>
> Pagliano's lawyers told Judicial Watch more than a week ago that he would not be answering any questions, they claimed in their filing on Wednesday, and asked that it drop its subpoena. The organization refused.
>
> In the filing, Pagliano's lawyers tried to have a federal judge block Judicial Watch from recording his deposition, given his planned refusal to answer questions.
>
> […]"Given the constitutional implications, the absence of any proper purpose for video recording the deposition, and the considerable risk of abuse, the court should preclude Judicial Watch … from creating an audiovisual recording of Mr.

> Pagliano’s deposition,” they wrote.
>
> Videotaped depositions “pose a serious danger to deponents invoking the Fifth Amendment,” the lawyers added, pointing to past court decisions warning that the video makes a good “soundbite.”
>
> […]The IT expert has previously refused to answer questions on Capitol Hill, invoking his Fifth Amendment rights before the House Select Committee on Benghazi and rejecting requests from leaders of the Senate Judiciary and Homeland Security committees to answer their questions.
>
> Last month, the State Department said that it had lost the backup archive of Pagliano’s emails from his time at the department. However, it had been able to cobble together some emails through the accounts of other officials.

The sound bite of the IT administrator pleading the fifth would make a wonderful ad against Hillary. And don’t forget how Lois Lerner of the IRS also pleaded the fifth about the Obama administration’s persecution of conservative and Christian groups in an election year. These Democrats wouldn’t want to incriminate themselves and go to jail, would they? Better to plead the fifth and avoid being held accountable for what you did. It’s the Democrat way.

New study: women who attend church regularly are healthier, and live longer

June 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church is good for you

CNS News reports on a new Harvard study that was published in JAMA Internal Medicine.

It says:

> A new study by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and published online in JAMA Internal Medicine found that women who attended religious services more than once a week were more than 30% less likely to die during a 16-year-follow-up than women who never attended.
>
> The study also found that compared with women who never attended religious services, women who attended more than once per week had a decreased risk of both cardiovascular mortality (27%) and cancer mortality (21%).
>
> "Our results suggest that there may be something important about religious service attendance beyond solitary spirituality," said Tyler VanderWeele, professor of epidemiology at Harvard Chan School and senior author of the study. "Part of the benefit seems to be that attending religious services increases social support, discourages smoking, decreases depression, and helps people develop a more optimistic or hopeful outlook on life."
>
> […]Most of the women in the study were Protestant or Catholic. The baseline age of the participants was 60 years or older – and "therefore the study cannot be generalized to men or young adults."

Now, note: this is not an apologetics argument, it's just something interesting to get a discussion started. Obviously, we don't believe things *just* because they make us happier or healthier. I would raise this to get a discussion started about whether a secular life that suppresses questions of meaning and purpose can really be satisfying at all. My goal is truth, though. Not life enhancement. We have to keep the focus on truth.

Obama administration gave Planned Parenthood $550 million in 2015

June 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama speaking to Planned Parenthood

The Daily Signal reports:

> Whether you're a painter, pastor, lawyer, or laborer (pro-life or pro-abortion), you work for Planned Parenthood. A portion of every paycheck goes to the world's leading abortion business through the federal and state taxes allocated by your elected representatives and the unelected bureaucrats they empower.
>
> For the fiscal year ending in June 2015 (just before the Center for Medical Progress videos were released), over $550 million of your hard-earned tax dollars went to Planned Parenthood.

Bad, especially if you are a pro-life taxpayer.

But there is good news – in the United States, we have federalism, and individual states have acted to stop the funding of abortion providers.

> Since the authenticated Center for Medical Progress videos were released showing Planned Parenthood officials bartering over the prices of baby body parts, 15 states have taken action to end or limit its taxpayer subsidies.
>
> Here are just a few examples of what state legislatures and governors have done:

> - New Hampshire canceled over $600,000 in annual state grants to Planned Parenthood.
> - Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas moved to exclude Planned Parenthood from the states' Medicaid programs "for cause," citing its waste, abuse, and potential fraud and the evidence of violations of the law and ethics demonstrated in the Center for Medical Progress videos.
> - Wisconsin and Arizona have slashed the Medicaid reimbursement for certain drugs for entities like Planned Parenthood that receive them at artificially low rates under a federal government program, denying them windfall profits and making those funds available to more women and families.
> - Ohio, Florida, Utah, and Wisconsin have also eliminated Planned Parenthood from other federal and state grant programs administered by the state.
>
> These actions have potentially eliminated tens of millions in annual taxpayer subsidies going to Planned Parenthood. This represents a small part of the hundreds of millions that it receives, but it is a solid start. And these efforts may at least cut into the $59 million in "excess revenue" the abortion outfit reported last year alone.

Now, I read the $59 million in "excess revenue" figure as Planned Parenthood's PROFIT off their terminations, and selling the body parts of the unborn victims to the highest bidder.

Remember the Republican bill to de-fund Planned Parenthood? The Democrat President Obama vetoed that bill. It was passed by a majority of Congressmen and Senators, but Obama is a Democrat, and he vetoed the bill. Do you know anyone who claims to be pro-life who voted for Obama? Maybe you should ask them about that veto, and about the $550 million subsidy.

New study: women seeking to have a child should start before age 32

June 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

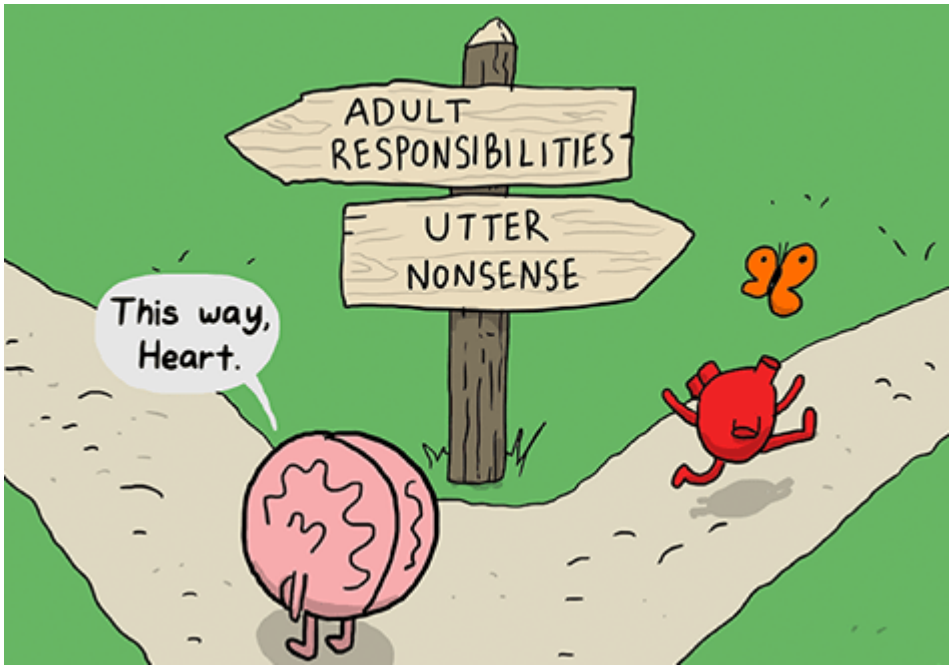

Brain vs Heart, from: theawkwardyeti.com

Dina sent me this sobering piece of research from the New Scientist which is perfect for all the young feminists who have been taught in college that marriage should be put off, and women can easily get pregnant after age 40.

Excerpt:

> It's a question many people will ask themselves at some point in their lives: when should I start a family? If you know how many children you'd like, and whether or not you would consider, or could afford, IVF, a computer model can suggest when to start trying for your first child.
>
> Happy with just one? The model recommends you get started by age 32 to have a 90 per cent chance of realising your dream without IVF. A brood of three would mean starting by age 23 to have the same chance of success. Wait until 35 and the odds are 50:50 (see "When to get started").
>
> The suggestions are based on averages pulled from a swathe of data so don't give a personal prediction. And of course, things aren't this simple in real life – if only family size and feelings about IVF were the only factors to consider when planning a family. But the idea behind the model is to help people make a decision by condensing all the information out there into an accessible form.
>
> "We have tried to fill a missing link in the decision-making process," says Dik Habbema at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, one of the creators of the model. "My son is 35 and many of his friends have a problem deciding when to have children because there are so many things they want to

> do.”
>
> It’s a scenario that will be familiar to many; the age at which people have their first child has been creeping up over the last 40 or so years. For example, the average age at which a woman has her first child is 28 in the UK and has reached 30 in Italy, Spain and Switzerland. In the US, the birth rate for women in their 20s has hit a record low, while the figures for those over 35 have increased over the last few decades.
>
> The decision is more pressing for women thanks to their limited supply of eggs, which steadily drop in quantity and quality with age. Female fertility is thought to start declining at 30, with a more significant fall after the age of 35.
>
> […]The new model incorporates data from studies that assess how fertility naturally declines with age. The team took information on natural fertility from population data collected over 300 years up to the 1970s, which includes data on 58,000 women.

I have often tried to talk to young women about the need to get their lives in gear. I advise them to work summers during high school, obtain a STEM degree in university, minimize borrowing money by going to community college for the generic prerequisites, don’t have premarital sex, get a job related to their STEM field straight out of college, pay off their debts, move out of their parents’ house, start investing from the first paycheck, marry between age 25-30, and then start having children after the first two “stabilizing” years of marriage. This is sound advice, rooted in my careful reconnaissance of the things that human beings care about and need in their old age. This advice is not bullying, it comes from reading many, many relevant papers. It comes from putting the knowledge gained from reading the papers into practice, and seeing results where appropriate.

I am giving you the numbers. Straight out of a peer-reviewed study. Don’t follow your heart. Don’t listen to your friends. Follow the science. Make your decisions within the boundaries of reality. God will not save you from foolish decisions.

Related posts

- Top fertility specialist advises women: don’t wait till 30 to try to have children
- Should Christians be motivated by the fear of missing out (FOMO)?
- New study: marrying in your mid-to-late 20s confers benefits
- Fertility and pregnancy: how long can a woman wait before having a baby?
- Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sex and sexuality at Harvard University

Remembering Lt. Richard Winters on D-Day: The Battle of Brecourt Manor

June 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Richard D. Winters Monument

The caption says, “Wars do not make men great, but they do bring out the greatness in good men.” Now let’s see what Dick Winters did during World War II.

Mission: locate and destroy enemy artillery

Brecourt Manor

I want to link to this article from Investors Business Daily about Lt. Winters action at Brecourt Manor.

> Here’s the summary of what Dick Winters did on the morning of June 6th, 1944:
>
> First Lt. Dick Winters leapt into leadership on D-Day, June 6, 1944. His commander’s aircraft was shot down as the men parachuted at 600 feet. When Winters headed to earth, he was in charge of a small platoon.

> When he landed, he had to command Company E with 148 men, because his commander had been lost along with the plane.
>
> Yet in the chaos, Winters could locate only a dozen other soldiers for their first task: take out a 50-man German artillery battery.
>
> “Winters ordered his assault force to strip down to only essential weapons — guns and grenades — to use against the well-prepared defenses, then deployed his machine guns to cover his advances,” Keith Huxen, senior director of research at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, told IBD. “Waiting for the proper moment, he led a charge across an open field, gaining the first gun placement, and then they moved down the trenches, systematically destroying each gun.
>
> “In the process, Winters discovered a map detailing all German gun positions to kill American soldiers coming up from Utah Beach, which saved many lives.”
>
> Joined by five reinforcements during the fight, Winters lost four dead and six wounded. The Yanks managed to kill 15 Nazis, capture 11 and wound many others.
>
> Winters’ maneuvers are still studied at West Point as a case of successfully attacking a fixed position, despite being outnumbered.
>
> Winters (1918-2011) was born in Ephrata, Pa., and the family moved to Lancaster when he was 8.
>
> He later attributed his character and desire to go to church regularly to his mother.
>
> Winters attended local Franklin & Marshall College and earned an economics degree with top honors in 1941. He enlisted in the Army in August to shorten his service time, rather than wait to be drafted if America was to join the war.

The diagram below shows where everything was positioned. The Rangers attacked through the trenches containing the four guns, while being raked with fire from multiple MG42 heavy machine guns across the open field.

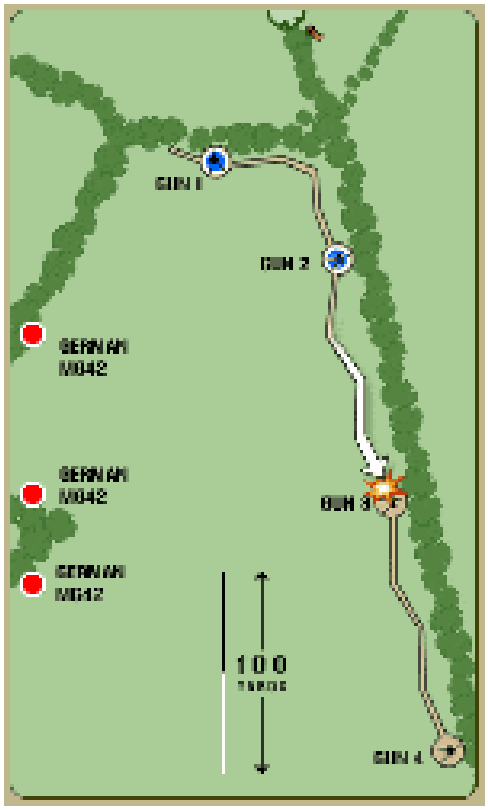

Assaulting the guns at Brecourt Manor

The operation was one of the most famous actions in the Normandy invasion, and you may have seen it portrayed in the Band of Brothers DVD series. But the article notes that when Dick Winters read the script for that series, “he asked that the profanity be cut from the dialogue of his character, since he never swore”. When the producers told him it was too late to change it, he wrote them a letter of resignation from the production, because “I don’t want these boys and girls thinking it is acceptable using profanity”. In the end, the movie makers removed the swearing by the actor portraying Winters.

If you are looking for a reason to buck the culture and stop swearing, there’s a good reason for you right there – Dick Winters never used profanity.

You can watch the scene from Band of Brothers in low resolution here:

If you play Combat Mission, like I do, you can watch a 28 minute AAR from the simulation of the battle.

Operation Market Garden

More from the article I linked above, this time from Operation Market Garden:

> Near Nijmegen on Oct. 5, Winters’ platoon was a position where any movement carried risks. Rather than retreat when fired on by a larger force behind a dike, he led a charge to the top and on the other side discovered a company of 150 Nazi SS troops. Despite having only 40 men, the Americans opened up with everything they had, then shot up a company of enemy reinforcements.
>
> The fray ended with 50 Germans dead, 11 POWs and countless wounded, with few casualties among the Americans.
>
> “This was Easy Company’s crowning achievement of the war and my apogee as a

> company commander," Winters told Kingseed. "This demonstrated its overall superiority, of every soldier, of every phase of infantry tactics: patrol, defense, attack using a base of fire, withdrawal and, above all, superior marksmanship with rifles, machine guns and mortar fire."

Dick Winters is a brave man, someone I admire him very much. And I am grateful for men like him.

I blogged about another hero of the 101st Airborne Division, Ronald Speirs, in a previous post.

New study: Asian students outperform white students because they work harder

June 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

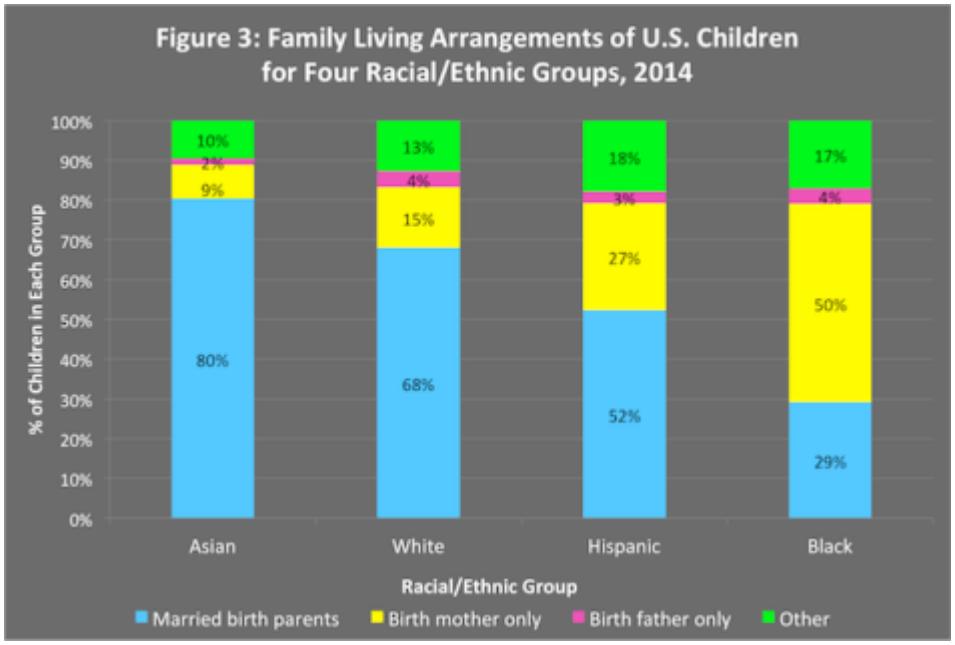

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents
This is from Science, one of the top peer-reviewed journals.

Excerpt:

> When it comes to academic achievement, Asian-Americans outclass every other ethnic group, with more than half over age 25 holding a bachelor's degree—well above the national average of 28%. To find what gives Asian-Americans a leg up, a team of sociologists scoured two long-term surveys covering more than 5000 U.S. Asian and white students. After crunching test scores, GPAs, teacher evaluations, and social factors such as immigration status, the team reports a simple explanation online today in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*: Asian-American students work harder.
>
> The team found that students from all Asian ethnic groups put greater importance on effort than on natural ability. This outlook, the team argues, causes students to respond to challenges by trying harder and has a greater impact on Asian-Americans' academic achievement than does cognitive ability or socioeconomic status. However, the team says Asian-American students reported lower self-esteem, more conflict with their parents, and less time spent with friends compared with their white peers. The team suspects the high academic expectations or their "outsider" status in American society could be to blame.

I know this will come as a shock to people on the left, but race has literally nothing to do with academic achievement. If non-whites work harder than whites, then they outperform whites. Period. What matters is how hard you work.

Let’s go into detail to see why Asian children are so much better than non-Asian children. It starts with their mothers.

Consider this article in the Wall Street Journal.

The article is written by Amy Chua:

> Amy Chua is the John M. Duff Professor of Law at Yale Law School. Her first book *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability* was a *New York Times* bestseller, was selected by both the *Economist* and the *Guardian* as one of the Best Books of 2003 and translated into eight languages. Her second book,*Day of Empire: How Hyperpowers Rise to Global Dominance – and Why They Fall* was a critically acclaimed Foreign Affairs bestseller. Amy Chua has appeared frequently on radio and television on programs such CNN Headline News, C-Span, The Lehrer News Hour, Bloomberg Television, and Air America. Her writings have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Financial Times, Harvard Business Review*, and the *Wilson Quarterly*. She lives with her husband, two daughters, and two Samoyeds in New Haven, Connecticut.

And now, an excerpt from the piece itself:

> A lot of people wonder how Chinese parents raise such stereotypically successful kids. They wonder what these parents do to produce so many math whizzes and music prodigies, what it’s like inside the family, and whether they could do it too. Well, I can tell them, because I’ve done it.
>
> […]Despite our squeamishness about cultural stereotypes, there are tons of studies out there showing marked and quantifiable differences between Chinese and Westerners when it comes to parenting. **In one study of 50 Western American mothers and 48 Chinese immigrant mothers, almost 70% of the Western mothers said either that “stressing academic success is not good for children” or that “parents need to foster the idea that learning is fun.” By contrast, roughly 0% of the Chinese mothers felt the same way. Instead, the vast majority of the Chinese mothers said that they believe their children can be “the best” students, that “academic achievement reflects successful parenting,” and that if children did not excel at school then there was “a problem” and parents “were not doing their job.” Other studies indicate that compared to Western parents, Chinese parents spend approximately 10 times as long every day drilling academic activities with their children. By contrast, Western kids are more likely to participate in sports teams.**
>
> What Chinese parents understand is that nothing is fun until you’re good at it. To get good at anything you have to work, and children on their own never want to work, which is why it is crucial to override their preferences. This often requires fortitude on the part of the parents because the child will resist; things are

> always hardest at the beginning, which is where Western parents tend to give up.

And here are her three main points:

> **Chinese parents demand perfect grades because they believe that their child can get them. If their child doesn't get them, the Chinese parent assumes it's because the child didn't work hard enough.** That's why the solution to substandard performance is always to excoriate, punish and shame the child. The Chinese parent believes that their child will be strong enough to take the shaming and to improve from it. (And when Chinese kids do excel, there is plenty of ego-inflating parental praise lavished in the privacy of the home.)
>
> […]Chinese parents believe that their kids owe them everything. The reason for this is a little unclear, but it's probably a combination of Confucian filial piety and the fact that the parents have sacrificed and done so much for their children. (And it's true that Chinese mothers get in the trenches, putting in long grueling hours personally tutoring, training, interrogating and spying on their kids.) Anyway, the understanding is that Chinese children must spend their lives repaying their parents by obeying them and making them proud.
>
> […]Chinese parents believe that they know what is best for their children and therefore override all of their children's own desires and preferences. That's why Chinese daughters can't have boyfriends in high school and why Chinese kids can't go to sleepaway camp. It's also why no Chinese kid would ever dare say to their mother, "I got a part in the school play! I'm Villager Number Six. I'll have to stay after school for rehearsal every day from 3:00 to 7:00, and I'll also need a ride on weekends." God help any Chinese kid who tried that one.

Then she tells a story about how she coerced one of her children into playing a difficult piece on the piano.

Now you go read the whole article to read the coercion story. Read the coercion story now, I coerce you!

And what do we learn from it? Well, what I learned is that if we Christians want to have any hope of having an influence in the public square, then we will have to marry well, and we will have to train our children like Amy does. We should not be thinking of marriage as a way to have feelings and to gain happiness and fulfillment. Marriage should be about service to God. And one of the ways we serve is by producing children who will have an influence. I think that parents in the West tend to have the idea that the world is a safe place, and that we should try to please our children and make them like us – so that everyone will be happy. But there is one person who will not be happy if we focus on ourselves instead of serving God. Do you know who that might be?

One thing I would say in criticism of Amy is that she seems to only care about grades – which are assigned by teachers who are not necessarily going to have the same goals as a Christian parent. Liberal public schools teachers will grade conservative children down, while grade liberal children up – at least in non-STEM classes. If the class is math or

computer science, then your children should be required to be the best. Honestly, public school is child abuse, you should not send your kids there except as a last resort. If you have to budget your whole pre-marriage life to have the money to keep your kids out of public schools, then do it.

Government-run healthcare: transgender surgeries first, the rest wait in line

June 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

How well is 100% government-run health care working in the United States? Well, the Veteran's Administration is 100% government-run health care. Let's see how it works.

The Stream explains:

> The number of veterans waiting more than a month for care just passed the 500,000 mark, according to new data on patient wait times released by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
>
> Patient data, current up through May 15, shows that the number of veterans waiting more than 30 days jumped by 10,000 in just two weeks, to exactly 505,880.
>
> And over the course of a month, the number of veterans waiting more than 30 days surged by 23,000. The average number of days to wait for a primary care appointment saw an increase to an average of 6.89 days. For days to get specialty care, the average bumped up to 10.15.
>
> The VA also provided data on vets who have had to wait for 1-2 months. There are 297,013 vets who have waited that time period, a figure which increased by 5,000. For vets in the 3-4 month category, the number jumped by 2,000 to 46,672.

> Although the new wait time data is not encouraging, VA Secretary Robert McDonald recently downplayed the importance of that metric, instead preferring to cite other apparently superior figures like overall veteran satisfaction with the experience. To justify his prioritizing the "satisfaction" metric, McDonald said that Disneyland does the exact same thing and doesn't place a whole lot of importance on wait times for rides as such, but rather how much its patrons enjoy their experience at the amusement park as a whole. Citing Disneyland plays to McDonald's philosophy of bringing corporate management techniques to the VA from his private sector experience as CEO of Procter & Gamble.
>
> "When you got to Disney, do they measure the number of hours you wait in line? Or what's important? What's important is, what's your satisfaction with the experience?" McDonald said, according to *The Washington Examiner*. "And what I would like to move to, eventually, is that kind of measure."

Shut up and wait, he says. Be happy you even get a place in line at Disneyland at all. And they get big fat bonuses for this, as I blogged previously. We are being forced to pay taxes to pay this clown's salary.

But there is one kind of treatment that is a top priority for the Democrat VA administrators.

This is from the Daily Wire.

Excerpt:

> A reported 307,000 veterans have died while awaiting health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs. In May of 2015, 53-year-old military veteran Thomas Murphy pulled into a VA parking lot, put a gun up to his head and pulled the trigger. The incident is suspected to have been done in the VA parking lot to bring awareness to the department's unacceptable shortcomings. Again, in July of 2015, 30-year-old military veteran Tom Young killed himself after being sent to voicemail when he called the VA's suicide hotline. In as recent as March of this year, another veteran set himself on fire outside a VA clinic in New Jersey.
>
> And the list, sadly, goes on.
>
> While the VA lets countless brave men and women who have served our country die due to their utter incompetence, bureaucrats from the department are focusing their attention on paying for highly controversial sex-reassignment surgeries for self-identified transgenders. As reported by the*Military Times*, a new rule proposed by the department "would remove a long-held ban on the surgery."
>
> The proposal claims that "increased understanding of both gender dysphoria and surgical techniques in this area have improved significantly, and surgical procedures are now widely accepted in the medical community as medically necessary treatment for gender dysphoria."
>
> "Gender dysphoria," states the proposal, "is a serious condition that has had

> severe medical consequences for certain patients if transition-related surgeries and procedures are not provided."
>
> It should be noted that though the VA is claiming that sex-reassignment surgery is the proper response to the mental illness of transgenderism, many in the medical field have warned against such action. One of the more vocal is former Chief of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Hospital Dr. Paul R. McHugh, a man who has studied transgenderism and sex-reassignment surgeries for 40 years, who said that those who push for such surgeries which enable the mentally ill are simply "collaborating with madness."
>
> Johns Hopkins Hospital eventually stopped providing such surgeries after psychiatrists' research led them to conclude that the hospital was "fundamentally cooperating with a mental illness."

The government controls health care for veterans – it is 100% government-controlled. Should we give them control of the res of health care? It seems to me that government-run health care is basically mandatory taxation, followed by doling out health care to those who are most likely to vote for the radical leftists who now control health care. Don't allow them to do take it over.

In other news, Obama has declared June to be gay pride month. This is what we voted for in 2008 and 2012, people. This is not an accident. All of Obama's supporters are on board with putting the gay agenda above common sense. That's what they voted for.

New study: women who have fewer premarital sex partners have lower risk of divorce

June 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

Brad Wilcox tweeted this article from Family Studies that talks about how the number of pre-marital sex partners that a woman has increases her risk of divorce.

It says:

> American sexual behavior is much different than it used to be. Today, most Americans think premarital sex is okay, and will have three or more sexual partners before marrying. What, if anything, does premarital sex have to do with marital stability?
>
> This research brief shows that the relationship between divorce and the number of sexual partners women have prior to marriage is complex. I explore this relationship using data from the three most recent waves of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) collected in 2002, 2006-2010, and 2011-2013. For women marrying since the start of the new millennium:
>
> - Women with 10 or more partners were *the most likely* to divorce, but this only became true in recent years;
> - Women with 3-9 partners were *less likely* to divorce than women with 2 partners; and,
> - Women with 0-1 partners were the *least likely* to divorce.
>
> Earlier research found that having multiple sex partners prior to marriage could lead to less happy marriages, and often increased the odds of divorce.
>
> […]Even more noteworthy has been the decline in the proportion of women who get married having had only one sex partner (in most cases, their future

> husbands). Forty-three percent of women had just one premarital sex partner in the 1970s.
>
> […]By the 2010s, only 5 percent of new brides were virgins. At the other end of the distribution, the number of future wives who had ten or more sex partners increased from 2 percent in the 1970s to 14 percent in the 2000s, and then to 18 percent in the 2010s. Overall, American women are far more likely to have had multiple premarital sex partners in recent years (unfortunately, the NSFG doesn't have full data on men's premarital sexual behavior, and in any event they recall their own marital histories less reliably than do women).

Here's the change:

Table 1: The Distribution of Women's Premarital Sex Partners, by Marriage Cohort					
	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
0 partner	21%	17%	14%	12%	5%
1 partner	43%	36%	26%	21%	22%
2 partners	16%	15%	13%	13%	12%
3 partners	8%	11%	11%	11%	11%
4-5 partners	6%	12%	16%	17%	18%
6-9 partners	4%	5%	11%	13%	14%
10+ partners	2%	4%	10%	14%	18%
total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	268	1,921	4,312	3,598	273

Women have freely chosen to dismiss the Bible and the moral law

And the problem with this, of course, is that more premarital sex partners means a higher risk of divorce:

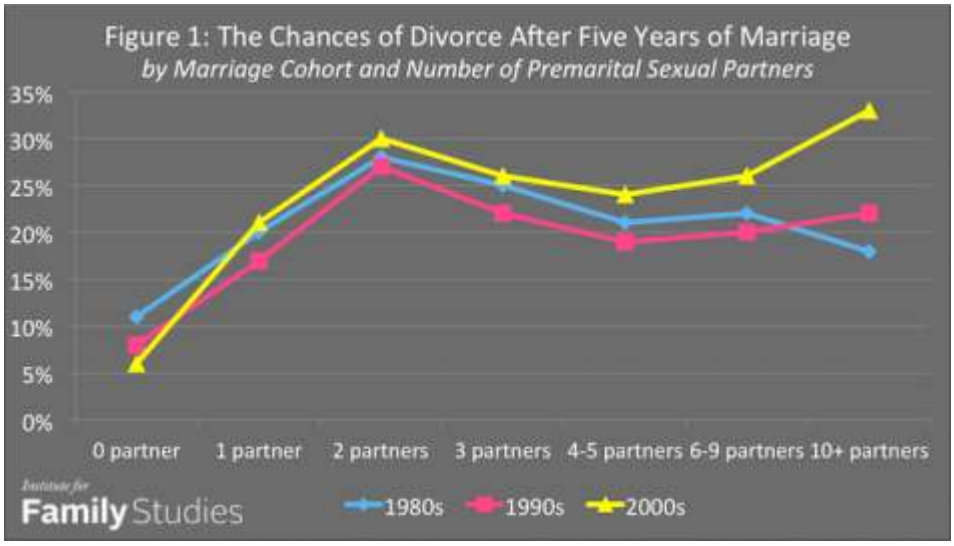

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

Why is the 2-partner number so high?

> In most cases, a woman's two premarital sex partners include her future husband and one other man. That second sex partner is first-hand proof of a sexual alternative to one's husband. These sexual experiences convince women that sex outside of wedlock is indeed a possibility. The man involved was likely to have become a partner in the course of a serious relationship—women inclined to hook up will have had more than two premarital partners—thereby emphasizing the

> seriousness of the alternative.

The woman has an alternative, the woman makes comparisons, the woman has firsthand experience of sex with someone other than her eventual husband. This is not trivial, it should not be dismissed by men who are evaluating marriage candidates.

I was really glad to see Dr. Wilcox tweet this article, because a lot of men's rights people judge him unfairly for being blindly pro-marriage, as if he doesn't see the risks to men. No, he sees those risks, and he warns men about them, and he holds women accountable. He is saying to women: if you want your marriage to last, you are responsible to study this research, to say no to your heart, to resist the culture, and to make wise decisions to protect your future husband and children.

Now, many traditional marriage people will tell young men "feminism and the sexual revolution change nothing, go out there and get married to these women anyway". No one condemns women for their unilateral decision to believe in radical feminism, and their decisions to act against the moral laws by having premarital sex. It's like the Bible has no authority for men – it can only be used to tell men what to do. I have met pastors and parents who have this double standard that excuses women from everything, and blames and shames men for everything. Even if the men are virgins, they are blamed and shamed by pastors and parents when the woman's poor choices do not "work out" for her.

The culture is filled with voices who rationalize women who choose to get drunk and hook up with good-looking men, including from the pulpits of churches. Few people are aware of the logical consequences of selfish actions. There is just this view that it is a terrible, horrible thing to stifle the freedom of women to "follow their hearts". Pastors and Christian parents feel that it is *wrong* to tell young women that the Bible somehow should act as a brake on their desires to have feelings with a man, and to show off a boyfriend to their friends, and to have fun – to have a good time now, in the moment. I have seen these conversations happening, where grown-ups who claim to be Bible believing Christians condemn men for not manning-up to rescue women in one breath, and then admit that those women should not be shamed or judged for not having any moral compass. It's enough that the women look pretty – that makes them "Christian", regardless of their past selfishness. No one cares about the risks that a man will face by having to take on that damage.

Previously, I blogged about how most divorces are initiated by women. If you are a man who has made good decisions with his education and finances, you need to be aware of this research. Although you may think that it's harmless that the woman you want to marry has had multiple premarital sex partners, it's not. It will affect her ability to be attracted to you, and to be satisfied by you. According to my friend Dina, previous cohabitations should be treated by men as a previous divorce. And previous divorces make a woman more unstable for marriage – that's a fact. And divorce is risky for men financially and emotionally – another fact. Men didn't ask to live in a world where they can lose all their savings, future income, and access to their children should their wives

become unhappy and decide to divorce them – but that is the world that men live in.

I would like to see women make better decisions with men before they marry, rather than be influenced by their peers and culture to give themselves to men who are not marriage-minded. Maybe a little skepticism should be shown to “follow your heart”? Women need to understand what they are losing when they choose to have premarital sex.

In my group of friends, the men are aware of the Biblical prohibition on premarital sex. My friends know about the research on marriage, and what it takes to make a marriage work. We don’t follow our hearts, because we do what we know will work to achieve the results we want. We don’t listen to the culture, and we don’t listen to radical feminists. Men generally take an engineering approach to marriage – we want to know what the best practices and tradeoffs are, and then we plan and act to succeed.

School sends sheriff to child's home to stop him from sharing Bible verses

June 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Anti-marriage gay activists vandalize church
In California, of course.

This is from Todd Starnes, writing at Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Mrs. Zavala made it a practice of including a Bible verse and encouraging note in her son's lunch bag. The boy would tell his friends about the note and read them aloud at the lunch table.
>
> It wasn't long before children asked for copies of the notes and Mrs. Zavala obliged – including a brief note to explain the daily Bible verse.
>
> On April 18 a teacher called Mrs. Zavala and said her son would no longer be able to share the Bible verses because he was "not allowed to share such things while at school."
>
> […]They say the teacher told Mrs. Zavala that her son "could no longer read or share Bible verses or stories at lunch" – citing "separation of church and state."
>
> So, Mr. and Mrs. Zavala complied with the school's clearly unconstitutional edict.
>
> But on May 9, the school's principal decided to implement a complete ban on the Bible verse sharing.
>
> Liberty Counsel alleges the boy was ordered to stop handing out notes because "it was against school policy." The principal told the boy and his father to move to a public sidewalk. They complied with the principal's demand.
>
> It would be just a few hours later – when the Zavala family heard a knock at their

> front door.
>
> “The deputy sheriff said he had been sent by the school,” Liberty Counsel attorney Richard Mast told me. “The deputy went on to tell the parents that the school was worried that someone might be offended by the Bible verses.”

People on the secular left often like to talk about tolerance and diversity, but, they are not tolerant of any views that challenge their own, and they don’t support diversity of opinion. The truth is that they get offended very easily when anyone disagrees with them, because they often take care to isolate themselves from different points of view. And, as the story shows, that can even involve using the force of law to threaten others who disagree with them. It’s very natural for people on the secular left to resort to threats and coercion. You can see it happening all the time with secular groups and groups who promote immorality. They like to use threats and punishments to get their way. It’s very natural to them to stamp out different people and different values.

Did the city of Nazareth exist at the time of the birth of Jesus?

June 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Israeli archaeologist Yardena Alexandre inspects Roman 1st-century pottery found from the city of Nazareth.

A while back, I was discussing a recent debate that a friend attended between an atheist musician named Dan Barker and a Christian with a doctorate in New Testament Studies named Justin Bass.

According to my friend's report, the atheist questioned the existence of Nazareth, and then went on from there to assert that everything we know about Jesus is legendary.

This is what the atheist's argument sounds like:

1. If the New Testament contains reliable history about Jesus, then Nazareth must exist.
2. Nazareth does not exist.
3. Therefore, the New Testaments does not contain reliable history about Jesus. (M.T. 1,2)

I was able to find a web site where an atheist was making the claim that Nazareth did not exist at the time of Jesus. So this is not completely outside the realm of mainstream atheism. I doubled checked with two more people who attended the debate that Barker indeed made an argument like the one above.

Two things to say about this 3-step argument. First off, when speaking to atheists, Christians only care about making a case for the resurrection. This is for two reasons. One, our goal is to disprove atheism, and the historical argument for the resurrection is the most evidenced miracle claim in the New Testament. Nazareth is not part of that core of minimal facts about the resurrection of Jesus. Second, it's possible to be a Christian by

accepting a core of Christian dogma (e.g. – the Apostle's Creed), while remaining agnostic or even skeptical of other things in the Bible. Nazareth is not part of that core of minimal facts that must be affirmed in order to become a Christian.

The problem I have with atheists is that they pick and choose from the Bible according to their own agenda. Every Christian has read basic books on the resurrection by people like Lee Strobel, Michael Licona, William Lane Craig, J. Warner Wallace and so on. This is like table stakes for living a Christian life. We all know how to make a case based off of minimal facts for the resurrection. When Christians get into debates about Jesus, we want to make a case for the core of historical knowledge about him, minimal facts that almost no one disagrees with. But many atheists aren't like that. They want to pick and choose a few verses out of the Old Testament and the New Testament that they personally find distasteful *to them*, and then deny the minimal facts about Jesus on that basis. I don't think that it makes sense to deny evidence for widely-accepted facts by bringing up minor problems that are irrelevant to the well-attested core facts.

But it's worse than that – we actually DO know that Nazareth existed, and we know it not from some fundamentalist preacher, but from atheist Bart Ehrman.

Ehrman writes in his book:

> One supposedly legendary feature of the Gospels commonly discussed by mythicists is that the alleged hometown of Jesus, Nazareth did not exist but is itself a myth. The logic of this argument, which is sometimes advanced with considerable vehemence and force, appears to be that if Christians made up Jesus' hometown, they probably made him up as well. I could dispose of this argument fairly easily by pointing out that it is irrelevant. If Jesus existed, as the evidence suggests, but Nazareth did not, as this assertion claims, then he merely came from somewhere else. Whether Barack Obama was born in the U.S. or not (for what it is worth, he was) is irrelevant to the question of whether he was born.
>
> Since, however, this argument is so widely favored among mythicists, I want to give it a further look and deeper exploration. The most recent critic to dispute the existence of Nazareth is René Salm, who has devoted an entire book to the question, called The Myth of Nazareth. Salm sees this issue as highly significant and relevant to the question of the historicity of Jesus: "Upon that determination [i.e., the existence of Nazareth] depends a great deal, perhaps even the entire edifice of Christendom."

So that seems like a fair representation of the argument I outlined above.

Bart's response is long, but here's part of it:

> There are numerous compelling pieces of archaeological evidence that in fact Nazareth did exist in Jesus' day, and that like other villages and towns in that part of Galilee, it was built on the hillside, near where the later rock-cut kokh tombs were built. For one thing, archaeologists have excavated a farm connected with the village, and it dates to the time of Jesus. Salm disputes the

> finding of the archaeologists who did the excavation (it needs to be remembered, he himself is not an archaeologist but is simply basing his views on what the real archaeologists – all of whom disagree with him — have to say). For one thing, when archaeologist Yardena Alexandre indicated that 165 coins were found in this excavation, she specified in the report that some of them were late, from the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. This suits Salm's purposes just fine. But as it turns out, there were among the coins some that date to the Hellenistic, Hasmonean, and early Roman period, that is, the days of Jesus. Salm objected that this was not in Alexandre's report, but Alexandre has verbally confirmed (to me personally) that in fact it is the case: there were coins in the collection that date to the time prior to the Jewish uprising.
>
> Aalm also claims that the pottery found on the site that is dated to the time of Jesus is not really from this period, even though he is not an expert on pottery. Two archaeologists who reply to Salm's protestations say the following: "Salm's personal evaluation of the pottery … reveals his lack of expertise in the area as well as his lack of serious research in the sources." They go on to state: "By ignoring or dismissing solid ceramic, numismatic [that is, coins], and literary evidence for Nazareth's existence during the Late Hellenisitic and Early Roman period, it would appear that the analysis which René Salm includes in his review, and his recent book must, in itself, be relegated to the realm of 'myth.'"

Read Bart's whole excerpt from his book in his post.

I did a quick double check on the archaeologist Ehrman mentioned, and found an Associated Press story about another archaelogical discovery made by archaeologists in Nazareth. This time, it's not the coins, but pottery fragments. The date range on the pottery is 100 before Jesus' birth to 100 years after Jesus' birth.

Even though Ehrman is an atheist, I think that he understands how to do history. You can't be a credentialed historian and throw out the early proclamation of Jesus' resurrection because of doubts about Old Testament violence. You can't be a credentialed historian and throw out the conversions of Paul and James because you don't know whether there was one angel or two angels at the empty tomb. Denying the core facts about Jesus by bringing up concerns about peripheral issues is not a responsible way to investigate the historical Jesus.

Bisexual Latino professor chased out of CSU Northridge for being too conservative

June 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

This College Fix article is a must read. Don't just read my excerpt, you need to click through and read it all. (H/T Katy)

Excerpt:

> Even when one can check off a few "minority" or "marginalized" boxes, if they have their own opinions that run afoul of the party line, they're the enemy.
>
> Case in point: Professor Robert Lopez of California State University Northridge, who has been harassed and vilified by students and peers to the point that he can't stand his work environment anymore and he is leaving his position as an English professor — and the safety of tenure with it.
>
> […]As Lopez explained on *American Thinker* on May 26, he was also the target of frivolous student complaints, "including charges that I 'had erections while teaching,' called Helen of Troy 'promiscuous,' and said that liberals were 'nutjobs.'"
>
> As for the administrative Title IX probe into his decision to allow students to attend the pro-traditional family conference at the Reagan Presidential Library, the investigation remains "open and undecided after 600 days."
>
> "The case was based on a gay student claiming he had a nervous breakdown because of anti-gay 'targeting' at the Reagan Library and a woman who claimed I did not nominate her for an award because she alleged that the five female

> speakers at the Reagan Library were 'anti-female,'" Lopez explained, adding:
>
> By 2014 I could no longer trust any of my students. I was teaching like a robot: come in, hook up the laptop, give one of my canned lectures, tell the jokes at all the right junctures, try not to screw up, and get out before students can get into any unsupervised conversations. I had an inkling which of my colleagues were planting students in my class to annoy me – at first I thought I was crazy to suspect it – but when it was clear that most of the people lodging weird complaints had the same few professors as mentors, I knew that there were no real coincidences anymore. You don't try to guess who the snipers are; just assume they are all out to get you, and never get close.
>
> In the end, it was all too much for Lopez.
>
> "I had served for eight years under a dean trained in Women's Studies, surrounded in her executive suite by lesbians and feminists, who hated me for celebrating the beauty and glory of chastity and Biblical love. I could not have my relationship with Jesus Christ and this job simultaneously. The choice was not that difficult," Professor Lopez explained in a June 7 op-ed in *The Daily Caller*. "It is a rare thing for a relatively young scholar to walk away from tenure after three years. But salvation is also a rare thing. So is happiness."

Tenure did not protect the professor at Marquette university either. This is one of the reasons that I decided to abandon my plan to go for a PhD. If tenure only protects liberals, then there is no point wasting time and money on a PhD in order to teach at a secular university. Black conservative professors face similar hatred. As the article shows, there is no tolerance or diversity at the modern secular university. Secularism doesn't produce open-mindedness, it produces fascistic bigotry.

So what do we learn? This is yet more evidence for the advice that I give the young Christians who I mentor about what to study. If you are going to blow $15,000 a year on a university education, you cannot study politicized brainwashing nonsense that teaches you nothing useful for getting a job. You need to stick with STEM degrees – especially math, engineering, physics, chemistry, etc. Get in, keep your mouth shut, get a job, and then when you vote, vote to cut off all subsidies for state universities.

New study: fatherlessness linked to negative outcomes

June 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

The paper is posted at NCBI NIH.

The abstract says:

> The literature on father absence is frequently criticized for its use of cross-sectional data and methods that fail to take account of possible omitted variable bias and reverse causality. We review studies that have responded to this critique by employing a variety of innovative research designs to identify the causal effect of father absence, including studies using lagged dependent variable models, growth curve models, individual fixed effects models, sibling fixed effects models, natural experiments, and propensity score matching models. Our assessment is that studies using more rigorous designs continue to find negative effects of father absence on offspring well-being, although the magnitude of these effects is smaller than what is found using traditional cross-sectional designs. The evidence is strongest and most consistent for outcomes such as high school graduation, children's social-emotional adjustment, and adult mental health.

I was curious to see what specific problems fatherlessness causes for children, according to this redo of previous studies.

The conclusion explains:

> The body of knowledge about the causal effects of father absence on child well-being has grown during the early twenty-first century as researchers have

> increasingly adopted innovative methodological approaches to isolate causal effects. We reviewed 47 such articles and find that, on the whole, articles that take one of the more rigorous approaches to handling the problems of omitted variable bias and reverse causality continue to document negative effects of father absence on child well-being, though these effects are stronger during certain stages of the life course and for certain outcomes.
>
> We find strong evidence that father absence negatively affects children's social-emotional development, particularly by increasing externalizing behavior. These effects may be more pronounced if father absence occurs during early childhood than during middle childhood, and they may be more pronounced for boys than for girls. There is weaker evidence of an effect of father absence on children's cognitive ability.
>
> Effects on social-emotional development persist into adolescence, for which we find strong evidence that father absence increases adolescents' risky behavior, such as smoking or early childbearing. The evidence of an effect on adolescent cognitive ability continues to be weaker, but we do find strong and consistent negative effects of father absence on high school graduation. The latter finding suggests that the effects on educational attainment operate by increasing problem behaviors rather than by impairing cognitive ability.
>
> The research base examining the longer-term effects of father absence on adult outcomes is considerably smaller, but here too we see the strongest evidence for a causal effect on adult mental health, suggesting that the psychological harms of father absence experienced during childhood persist throughout the life course. The evidence that father absence affects adult economic or family outcomes is much weaker. A handful of studies find negative effects on employment in adulthood, but there is little consistent evidence of negative effects on marriage or divorce, on income or earnings, or on college education.
>
> Despite the robust evidence that father absence affects social-emotional outcomes throughout the life course, these studies also clearly show a role for selection in the relationship between family structure and child outcomes. In general, estimates from IFE, SFE, and PSM models are smaller than those from conventional models that do not control for selection bias. Similarly, studies that compare parental death and divorce often find that even if both have significant effects on well-being, the estimates of the effect of divorce are larger than those of parental death, which can also be read as evidence of partial selection.

Something to think about when people on the left tell you that children don't need a father. And remember, increasing welfare payments for single mothers just encourages them to have more children, and to delay marriage. Big government takes the place of a man, and allows them to pursue men who make them feel good, rather than men who can actually do the job of being a father and a husband. The single mothers I've spoken to like government stepping in, because it allows them more freedom to follow their

hearts, rather than having to give to and invest in a man. We are paying them to do this when we give them money, making fathers optional. It’s child abuse, aided and abetted by government.

How the gay agenda changes the norms of long-term relationships

June 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people celebrating gay rights: but can you have lasting love without self-control? When are adultery and divorce good things?

Michael Brown comments:

> Consider this scenario. A married man and father announces that he is leaving his wife and children in order to be "true to himself." He has found another love, the most genuine love he has ever known, and he has already moved in with his new lover.
>
> How would society react to him? —
>
> "You, sir, are an unfaithful, disloyal adulterer. You should be ashamed of yourself, leaving your wife and kids for another woman."
>
> He replies, "But it's not for another woman. It's for another man. I'm gay and I've come to terms with my identity. I won't go on with the charade any longer, and I'm proud of my decision."
>
> How does society react now?
>
> "You, sir, are a courageous hero. You have set an example for others to follow, and you should be commended for your boldness and integrity."
>
> So, if you commit adultery and abandon your family out of heterosexual desires, you are a despicable human being. But if you do it out of homosexual desires, you are a hero and champion. You even become an international celebrity, albeit not without some controversy.

And he provides some examples. Do you doubt his story? Look what happened to this formerly-Christian entertainer.

Look:

> During an appearance on ABC's "The View" on Friday, Everyday Sunday's Trey Pearson, who released a letter last week to fans in which he came out as a homosexual, outlined that he has left his wife after deciding to no longer fight against having feelings for men.
>
> […]On "The View" on Friday, Pearson suggested that he divorced his wife and moved out, as he referred to his wife of seven years as his "ex-wife," and said that he meets with her and his two children once a week.
>
> […]He said he wants the Church to accept homosexuality.
>
> "I want to see my church change. I want to see our denomination change," Pearson said. "I want to see people to be willing to have the conversation in an open way where they are willing to listen to people's stories."
>
> The musician, who is scheduled to perform at a homosexual pride event next week, said that he finds it "damaging" when ministers call homosexuality a choice.

Yay! Everyone cheer! Hurray, for adultery and divorce! He gets to go on TV and be celebrated by leftists on "The View". We've changed as a society – now chastity and fidelity are out, and divorce and adultery are in.

This story does nothing to correct my bias against artists and entertainers, by the way.

New study: Tennessee pre-K program provides no educational benefit over control group

June 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is the most thorough study that I have ever seen evaluating the effectiveness of pre-K programs. The study was done by researchers at Vanderbilt University.

The study was reported on by the well-respected but leftist Brookings Institute.

They write:

> State investments in center-based school readiness programs for preschoolers (pre-K), whether targeted for poor children or universally implemented, have expanded more rapidly than evaluations of their effects. Given the current interest and continuing expansion of state funded pre-K, it is especially important to be clear about the nature of the available evidence for the effectiveness of such programs. Despite widespread claims about proven benefits from pre-K, there is actually strikingly little credible research about the effectiveness of public pre-K programs scaled for statewide implementation.
>
> Like many states that became interested in scaling up a state funded pre-K program in the early 2000's, voluntary pre-K (TNVPK) was introduced in Tennessee in 1996 as a way to provide academic enhancement to economically disadvantaged children. It expanded in 2005 to an $85 million-plus statewide investment serving 18,000 Tennessee income-eligible children in 935 classrooms across all 95 counties.
>
> Launched in 2009, the TNVPK Effectiveness Study, a coordinated effort between Vanderbilt's Peabody Research Institute and the Tennessee Department of Education, is a five-year evaluation study funded by the US Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences. It includes the first randomized control trial of a scaled up state funded pre-K program and the first well-controlled comparison group study of the effects of program participation as children progress through elementary school..
>
> Policymakers and proponents often cite some of the famous early studies of pre-K programs that have shown long term benefits extending into adulthood for the participating children. But those were studies of especially complex programs that are unlike scaled-up public pre-K in many ways. **The Vanderbilt study is the first rigorous controlled longitudinal study to be conducted on a large-scale state-funded pre-K program.**

And here is a summary of the results:

> **Standard score results from pre-K through 3rd grade on a composite measure that averaged the six achievement subtests are presented**

> **from baseline forward in the graph below.**
>
> As is evident, pre-K and control children started the pre-K year at virtually identical levels. The TNVPK children were substantially ahead of the control group children at the end of the pre-K year (age 5 in the graph). By the end of kindergarten (age 6 in the graph), the control children had caught up to the TNVPK children, and there were no longer significant differences between them on any achievement measures. The same result was obtained at the end of first grade using two composite achievement measures (the second created with the addition of two more WJIII subtests appropriate for the later grades). In second grade, however, the groups began to diverge with the TNVPK children scoring lower than the control children on most of the measures. The differences were significant on both achievement composite measures and on the math subtests. Differences favoring the control persisted through the end of third grade.
>
> **In terms of behavioral effects, in the spring the first grade teachers reversed the fall kindergarten teacher ratings. First grade teachers rated the TNVPK children as less well prepared for school, having poorer work skills in the classrooms, and feeling more negative about school. It is notable that these ratings preceded the downward achievement trend we found for VPK children in second and third grades. The second and third grade teachers rated the behaviors and feelings of children in the two groups as the same; there was a small positive finding for peer relations favoring the TNVPK children by third grade teachers, which did not meet traditional levels of statistical significance.**

Results graph:

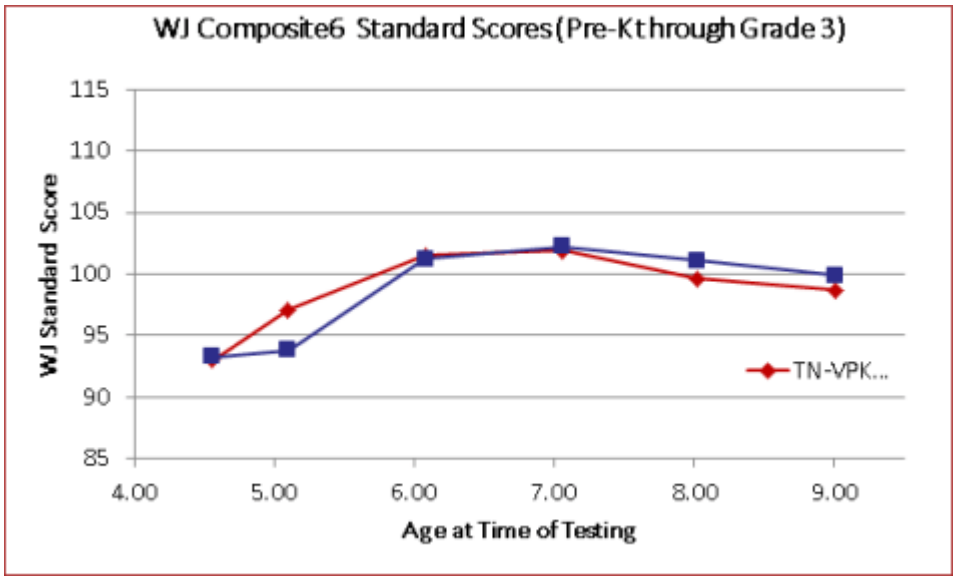

TNVPK data: pre-K program is in red, baseline is in blue

We are already seeing that cheap daycare in high-tax, big government provinces like Quebec cost a lot, and produce negative results. And of course Hillary Clinton is a longstanding advocate of universal pre-K. As a Senator of New York, she introduced a

universal pre-K plan that would cost $10 billion over 5 years. President Barack Obama's own Preschool for All plan would cost $75 billion over 10 years. This Vanderbilt study should cause us to question whether the policies of the secular left, pushed largely because of emotions and ideology, are worth the tens of billions of dollars they want to take from us. And if you take tens of billions of dollars out of families, then families on the margin will have to give their children to the state to raise. And that includes Christian families, who would no longer be able to *afford* a stay-at-home mother.

Now, taking children away from parents so that their mothers can work is seen as a worthy goal by those on the secular left. First, communally raising the children is "good" because it removes inequalities between single mothers and traditional working-husband homes. Second, making it easier for women to "go fatherless" is "good" because fathers are not to be trusted to teach their children about morality and religion. That is best left to secular government workers. Third, mothers who choose to marry good providers pay less in taxes if they choose to stay home with their kids and not work. That is "bad" because the government wants more taxes, so they can spend it on vote-buying social programs. Fourth, children who form stable bonds with their parents are less likely to become dependent on the government, meaning their allegiance cannot be bought with government handouts. That is also "bad". Fifth, it is also "bad" that children who grow up with stay-at-home mothers are more likely to develop empathy and morality, which gives them an independent standard by which to judge the government's actions.

Related posts

- New study: negative effects of day care on children not caused by quality of day care
- New study: government run child-care increases negative outcomes for kids
- Stay-at-home motherhood falls to record low in the UK
- New study: lack of secure attachment during early childhood harms children
- New study: separating from mother causes children to have higher anxiety and fear
- Obama proposes new tax on stay-at-home moms in SOTU speech
- Obama on stay-at-home moms: "that's not a choice we want them to make"
- New Oxford University study links non-family day care to anti-social behavior
- Feminist Nancy Pelosi pushes national daycare program
- How the UK government penalizes stay-at-home moms and pushes kids into daycare
- UK offers more money to working women and single mothers, nothing for stay-at-home moms
- Democrats want government social workers to visit children starting "at birth"

Study: women who lose their virginity in their teens are more likely to divorce

June 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students puking in toilet

The UK Daily Mail reports on a study that shows that women who lose their virginity as teenagers are more likely to divorce.

Excerpt:

> Women who lost their virginity as young teenagers are more likely to divorce – especially if it was unwanted, according to new research.
>
> The University of Iowa study shows that 31 per cent of women who had sex for the first time as teens divorced within five years, and 47 per cent within 10 years.
>
> Among women who delayed sex until adulthood, 15 per cent divorced at five years, compared to 27 per cent at 10 years.
>
> The findings were published in the April issue of the Journal of Marriage and Family.
>
> Author Anthony Paik, associate professor of sociology in the university's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, examined the responses of 3,793 married and divorced women to the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth.
>
> The study showed, however, that if a young woman made the choice to lose her virginity as a teenager, there was no direct link to a marital split later in life.

> If the sexual act took place before the age of 16 women were shown more likely to divorce, even if it was wanted.
>
> Thirty-one percent of women who lost their virginity during adolescence had premarital sex with multiple partners, compared to 24 per cent of those who waited.
>
> Twenty-nine percent experienced premarital conceptions, versus 15 percent who waited.
>
> One in four women who had sex as a teen had a baby before they were married, compared to only one in ten who waited until adulthood.
>
> Only one per cent of women surveyed said they chose to have sex at age 13 or younger, compared to five per cent at age 14 or 15, and 10 per cent at age 16 or 17.
>
> Forty two per cent reported that their first sexual intercourse before age 18 that was not completely wanted.
>
> Fifty eight per cent of the group waited until age 18 or older to have sex. Of those, 22 per cent said it was unwanted, compared to 21 per cent who said it was wanted.
>
> Researchers concluded sex itself may not increase the probability of divorce, while factors such as a higher number of sexual partners, pregnancy, or out-of-wedlock birth increased the risk for some.

If you want a stable marriage, then you don’t have sex before you’re married. There are tons of virgins out there, and there is a huge difference in the quality of romantic relationships when both parties exercise self-control with physical touching. Don’t let it go too far – you lose some of what love and marriage can be.

Study of elementary school children finds entrenched discrimination against boys

June 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The study is here (PDF), and Susan Walsh writes about the study on her blog.

Excerpt:

> A new study of nearly 6,000 elementary school children has found that boys are discriminated against beginning in kindergarten. Christopher Cornwell, an economics professor at the University of Georgia, says that "gender disparities in teacher grades start early and uniformly favor girls."
>
> Despite having higher scores on standardized tests, boys get lower grades than girls. Why? Because teachers are basing grades at least partly on classroom behavior, and the standards are very much geared to female norms.
>
> […]Here's what the disparity looks like for kindergarten boys:

Std. Deviation	Test Scores	Grades
Reading	-.017	-.27
Math	+.02	-.15
Science	+.035	-.14

> (Note: Values are approx., gauged visually from study graphic.)
>
> Another interesting finding was that boys who adhere to female norms on non-cognitive skills were not penalized. Effectively, the more female behavior was rewarded with a grade "bonus" for males.
>
> The implications of this are obvious. Masculinity, even normal maleness, is being punished in schools from a very young age. Only the most female-acting boys are rewarded with a fair assessment.

I found this story on Stuart Schnederman's blog, and this is what he had to say about it:

> The results demonstrated that schoolteachers are prejudiced against boys. When teachers do not just grade on performance, but include a number of intangible qualities that girls are more likely to possess, they are acting as bigots.

I recommend that everyone pick up a copy of "The War Against Boys" by AEI scholar Christina Hoff Sommers to learn more about this anti-male discrimination problem.

I see a lot of people raving at men to "man up" these days. Many of those people are pastors who remain ignorant about the real, systemic causes of male underachievement. Even very obvious factors – like the dominance of female teachers and administrators in schools – are ignored by the blame-men crowd. Boys generally learn better when they learn from male teachers in all-male classrooms. But unfortunately for boys, there are

people who don’t want to do what works for men, especially when it doesn’t fit with feminist ideology.

ACLU lawyers blame Christians for Orlando attack committed by Islamic terrorist

June 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Omar Mateen, the Islamic Terrorist Who Attacked Orlando Gay Club

Everyone has heard the news about the latest Islamic terror attack in Orlando.

A few quick things about it before I make my main point:

First, it was another gun-free zone, and the majority of multiple-victim public shootings happen in gun-free zones. This is because attackers know that their law-abiding victims will be unarmed.

Second, Islamic terrorists have had an easy time under President Obama, who likes to blame Islamic terrorism on anyone except Islamic terrorists. This Democrat Party moral relativism has led to a staggering 85 Islamic terrorist plots since 9/11.

Third, we know that Obama has been pulling punches against Islamic terrorism throughout the last 8 years. A perfect example of this the fact that the Orlando attacker was a "person of interest" to the FBI in 2013 and 2014. But nothing was done.

Fourth, former Muslim Nabeel Qureshi what Muslims are taught about this issue:

> Islam itself has always taught that gays should be executed. Muhammad commanded: "If you find anyone doing as Lot's people did, kill the one who does it, and the one to whom it is done" (Sunan Abu Daud 4447). Imams who have been trained in these Islamic teachings are teaching in our communities. Just three months ago, an imam who is well known for proclaiming Muhammad's teachings on homosexuality spoke in Orlando. In a prior speech about homosexuals he was noted to have said, "Let's get rid of them now" (video and news article). The imam spoke at an Islamic center that is less than 20 miles from the site of today's atrocities. Some American-born Muslims, such as Omar, are taking teachings like these at face value, listening to their imams and following Muhammad.

The Obama administration is still "working to determine a motive", despite the fact that the attacker is known to have pledged allegiance to Islamic State. Of course they are. It's probably just workplace violence.

The ACLU lays the blame on…

But here is what I wanted to write about this time – something that my friend William found and posted, from The Daily Caller.

It's about the ACLU, which is a group that opposes civil liberties, such as religious liberty. They also oppose national security measures designed to protect the public from terrorist threats.

It says:

> Several American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) attorneys took to Twitter to blame the "Christian Right" for Sunday's deadly terrorist attack at a nightclub in Orlando, Fla., which left 50 dead and 53 injured.
>
> Chase Strangio, a staff attorney with the ACLU's LGBT and AIDS Project, claimed the social and political environment cultivated by Christian conservatives in recent months was to blame for the shooting at Pulse, a nightclub popular with Orlando's LGBT community.
>
> Strangio also called for solidarity between American Muslims and LGBT communities, arguing both are maligned and oppressed by the religious right.

Isn't that interesting? After trying to stop common sense measures to prevent terrorist attacks, the ACLU doesn't blame themselves for what happened. They blame their enemies – the Bible-believing Christians. Bible-believing Christians respond to the gay agenda by using words to express disagreement, not by violence. The violence is done by the Islamic terrorists.

What do I think about the tweets by the ACLU attorney? Well, the ACLU is an organization that hates religious liberty, and public expressions of Christian belief and convictions. When a person denies God, they lose the rational ground for object morality, and moral reasoning becomes impossible. Anything becomes morally permissible, including lying. Some people are so deep in a sinful lifestyle, that aren't able to think clearly about facts that are plain to everyone else. The hate just dominates them to such a degree that rational thought becomes impossible.

ADF offers advice on SCOTUS marriage redefinition ruling

June 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

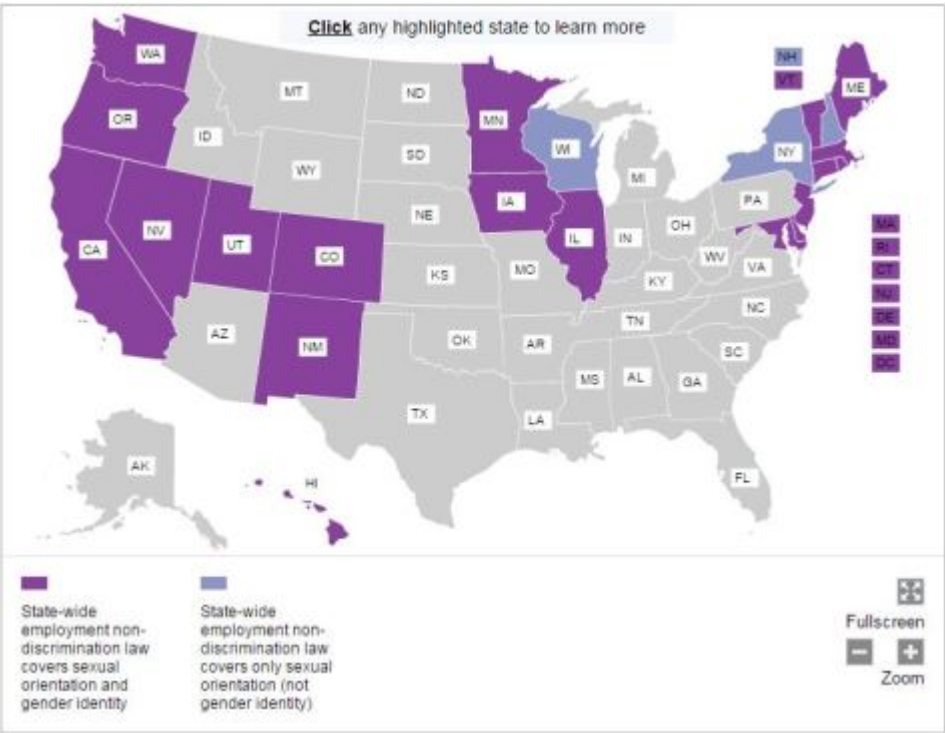

States with non-discrimination laws
(Source: ACLU)

Erik Stanley of the Alliance Defending Freedom offers advice to churches on how to respond to the Supreme Court's decision to redefine marriage to remove the gender requirement.

He says:

> […][T]he greatest threat for churches lies in the application of the Court's decision to believers who live in jurisdictions covered by so-called "non-discrimination" laws and ordinances. Everywhere that marriage has been redefined in the last several years has seen an awakening of non-discrimination laws that prohibit discrimination in employment, housing, or places of public accommodation on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. These laws are peppered throughout the states and local governments and are a linchpin of the sexual revolution's broader legal and political strategy: to establish non-discrimination laws at all levels throughout the country and to to "ensure that religion is not used as an excuse to discriminate."
>
> In coming days, the threat from these non-discrimination laws will materialize in numerous ways as same-sex couples marry. But there are proactive steps your church can take to protect itself.

I put the map from the ACLU above. I think that's what he is talking about when he says

non-discrimination states. Keep in mind that the ACLU supported redefining marriage, and opposes religious liberty.

Erik's article covers 3 areas:

1. Church's statement of faith
2. Pastors officiating same-sex marriage ceremonies
3. Church's facility usage policy

Part 3) was the most interesting to me:

> **3. Churches should ensure their facilities usage policies are revised to allow only uses consistent with the church's religious beliefs.**
>
> In the wake of the Supreme Court ruling, some churches may be approached by same-sex couples seeking to be married in the church facility. Churches should not feel as if they have to close their doors to the community just to prevent wedding ceremonies with which they disagree. Churches must continue to be a welcoming presence in the community and can do so through updating or revising their facility usage policy. The key point is to tie usage of the church's facility to the statement of faith and religious beliefs of the church. And then to make clear that uses inconsistent with those religious beliefs will not be allowed. Alliance Defending Freedom has a sample facilities usage policy available in our Protecting Your Ministry manual.

So you update your statement of faith, and then tie usage of the the facility to that statement of faith. Simple.

I took a quick look at the booklet, and it also talked about tying employment within the church and church membership to the statement of faith.

Denny Burk summarizes those:

> **2. Religious Employment Criteria**
>
> Your church can best avail itself of the First Amendment's protection in employee disputes if you create and faithfully enforce religious employment criteria for every employee. That requires churches to do at least two things: (1) require all employees and volunteers to sign a statement affirming the church's statement of faith and standards of conduct, and (2) create written job descriptions for every employee and volunteer position.
>
> **4. Formal Membership Policy**
>
> If your church does not have a membership policy, you need to change that. Biblically, this should already be a priority for your church. You need to specify what the requirements for membership are, how one joins, how one resigns, and the procedures for church discipline. If all of this isn't spelled out up front, your church could be exposed (see ADF guide pp. 17-18).

So what to make of this? Well, the ADF is an organization that I admire and trust. I cannot

abide Christians who do not want to understand the details of what is happening with religious liberty in their country. The ADF has first class lawyers from the top law schools, and they defend religious liberty at every level of our justice system, up to and including the Supreme Court. If you want to help your church protect itself from prosecution, then you must point them to the ADF booklet linked above.

And this is especially true if you are in one of those states in the map above. In looking over the map, I noticed that much of the trouble we have been having with Christian businesses getting sued are in states that have these laws… Oregon, Washington, New Mexico, New York, and so on. Pay attention to that map and make decisions about where to live accordingly.

Obama administration knew about Orlando Islamic terrorist back in 2013

June 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats think that the real threat to America is not radical Islamic terrorism

The Democrat Party likes to bash conservatives for being too tough on national security, national defense and law enforcement. And that desire to coddle criminals and terrorists naturally results in more risk and danger to the law-abiding taxpayers who pay Democrat salaries.

Investors Business Daily explains:

> FBI Special Agent in Charge Ronald Hopper told ABC News that the FBI had twice looked into Mateen: In 2013, after he made what Hopper called "inflammatory" comments to co-workers, and again in 2014, after he was linked to Moner Mohammad Abu-Salha, another American who became a radicalized Muslim, who became a suicide bomber in Syria.
>
> Given that Mateen worked for G4S, a Department of Homeland Security contractor, shouldn't this have raised significant questions?
>
> **One of Mateen's co-workers at G4S, Daniel Gilroy, told the Tampa Bay Times: "He talked about killing people all the time."**

Yes, but Americans can't say anything about potential Muslim terrorists, or Democrat Attorney General will persecute them for anti-Muslim discrimination. She says that is her top priority, in fact. Not law enforcement. Not investigating the IRS persecution of conservative groups in an election year. No – her top priority is prosecuting those who raise the alarm about potential Islamic terrorists for "hate speech". This is the Democrat Party.

More:

> Mateen was interviewed by investigators three times in relation to those probes, but the FBI determined Mateen was no threat, Hopper said.
>
> Finally, on Monday, FBI Director James Comey said Mateen showed "strong indications of radicalization" and was likely inspired by foreign terrorist organizations.
>
> In short, he was a "known wolf," not a "lone wolf." This is a disturbing pattern with terrorist mass murders, whether in Boston, San Bernardino or Ft. Hood, Texas. A pattern of behavior emerges, and is ignored. Ties to extremists are viewed as harmless. Then people are slaughtered.
>
> This problem will not go away. Indeed, the world has been repeatedly drenched with the blood of radical Islam's victims since 9/11 and before. As the observant Roger L. Simon noted, "Total deadly terror attacks in the name of Allah since 9/11 stand at 28,576 with who-knows-how-many corpses."

Recall that the FBI was infiltrated by secular leftist groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center. The secular leftist FBI "partners" teach the FBI that the real threats to America are conservatives, Christians, pro-lifers, law-abiding gun owners, veterans, and those who believe in traditional marriage. That's where the FBI's attention has been for the last 8 years. Not on radical Islam, which they take to be as peaceful as the Boy Scouts. Obama told them so, and they believe it. All of our national security, national defense and law enforcement organizations believe it.

Is the Democrat President Obama serious about protecting taxpayers from terrorist threats?

Of course not:

> […]President Obama's response after the attacks was not only disappointing in its failure to recognize the ongoing threat from radical Islam, but likely endangered future American lives with its obtuseness. He couldn't even bring himself to use the most obvious words of all to describe what happened: "Radical Islamic terrorism."
>
> "I think we don't yet know the motivations" of the murder, Obama said. Except, as Britain's Daily Mail points out, the terrorist "pledged his loyalty to ISIS in a 911 call as he carried out the attack." The loyalty wasn't one way: Islamic State radio called the terrorist, Omar Mateen, a "soldier of the Caliphate."

Maybe the attack was "workplace violence" again? Obama likes to call attacks that are clearly Islamic terrorism "workplace violence".

There was another attack at Fort Hood a while back, and it was proven that the attacker was in contact with Al Qaeda. Obama called that one "workplace violence".

And then there was beheading by a radical Islamist in Oklahoma, and Obama called that one "workplace violence" as well.

And the attack on the recruiting station in Chattanooga, TN was never labeled as

terrorism by the Obama administration, either. Maybe it was “workplace violence”?

And of course, long after the San Bernadino terrorist attack occurred, Obama couldn’t figure out what the motive of the attack was. Probably it was “workplace violence”.

You can be sure that the Obama administration will spare no expense in trying to link the Orlando attack to Tea Party groups, or, failing that, to evangelical Christians. We hired people who sympathize more with our enemies than us to protect us.

Is the Human Rights Campaign blaming Christians for Orlando terrorist attack?

June 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

My Christian friends who follow these things and try to read the times are telling me that they are seeing a lot of articles blaming Christians for the recent terrorist attack committed by an Islamic terrorist.

National Review reports:

> Well, that didn't take long. It was just a matter of time before opposition to the Obama administration's transgender bathroom policies was linked to the massacre at an Orlando gay bar, committed by a shooter who took time out from his horrific killing spree to pledge allegiance to ISIS.
>
> And sure enough, this morning's *New York Times* reports that gay rights "movement leaders" wonder whether "high-profile policy fights like the one over the Obama administration's recent directive requiring schools to allow transgender students to use the bathrooms of their choice" is increasing violence against gays. The *Times*'s article, by reporter Sheryl Gay Stolberg, offers potential frames for the mass murder, none of which include Islamic terrorism: "What did it mean that it happened in June, Gay Pride Month? Was it a hate crime against gay people or simply evidence that gun violence is out of control — or both? Gay rights have been advancing at a rapid clip. Has that lessened homophobia? Or maybe made it worse?"

> *The Atlantic*'s religion reporter, Emma Green, posited a "loose connection" between what she called "anti-trans rhetoric" and the Orlando violence, during a segment on WNYC's *Brian Lehrer Show* this morning entitled "Orlando and the State of the Gay Bar": "There is a loose connection that is very difficult to pin down between some of the anti-gay and anti-trans rhetoric that we've seen in the U.S. not primarily from Muslim groups but from Christian groups that have laid a foundation for homophobia and transphobia. Although most of the groups that are supporting that type of rhetoric would not condone the type of violence we saw in Orlando, it does create an environment of bigotry and acceptance of homophobia against LGBT people." (Green went on to say that some people who hold "sincerely held beliefs" about homosexuality can "still extend messages of love and fellowship.")
>
> **Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, told MSNBC today that what happened in Orlando was an example of the toxic mix that occurs when a "deranged, delusional person is taught to hate" by a "preacher on Sunday morning in church or by a politician." Actually, no "Sunday preacher" taught mass murderer Omar Mateen to hate; we can be sure, however, that radical Islamic propaganda did.**

You might remember that the Human Rights Campaign has been featured on this blog a number of times, because they are the leading group seeking to silence, coerce and otherwise suppress Judeo-Christian values in the public square.

Let's review the history the Human Rights Campaign to discover their agenda from actual actions:

- the wealthy co-founder of the Human Rights Campaign Terry Bean was arrested for sex with an underage teen
- called the Family Research Council a "hate group", after the FRC was attacked by a gun-wielding gay rights activist, who was later convicted of domestic terrorism
- leaked the names of pro-marriage donors to the Huffington Post, names that were supplied to them by a gay rights activist working for the IRS
- published a report on Christian schools and universities who dissent from the gay agenda, in order to intimidate and coerce them into rejecting traditional Christian teachings on sexuality
- calling the employers of Christians in order to get them fired from their jobs

And so on.

A friend of mine pointed out that if you Google "Human Rights Campaign", Google displays a special rainbow colored banner to celebrate their group. That's not surprising since many large corporations are on board with the Human Rights Campaign agenda of anti-Christian bigotry.

Here are their Platinum corporate partners:

Human Rights Campaign Platinum Partners

Here is Hillary Clinton, being endorsed by the Human Rights Campaign:

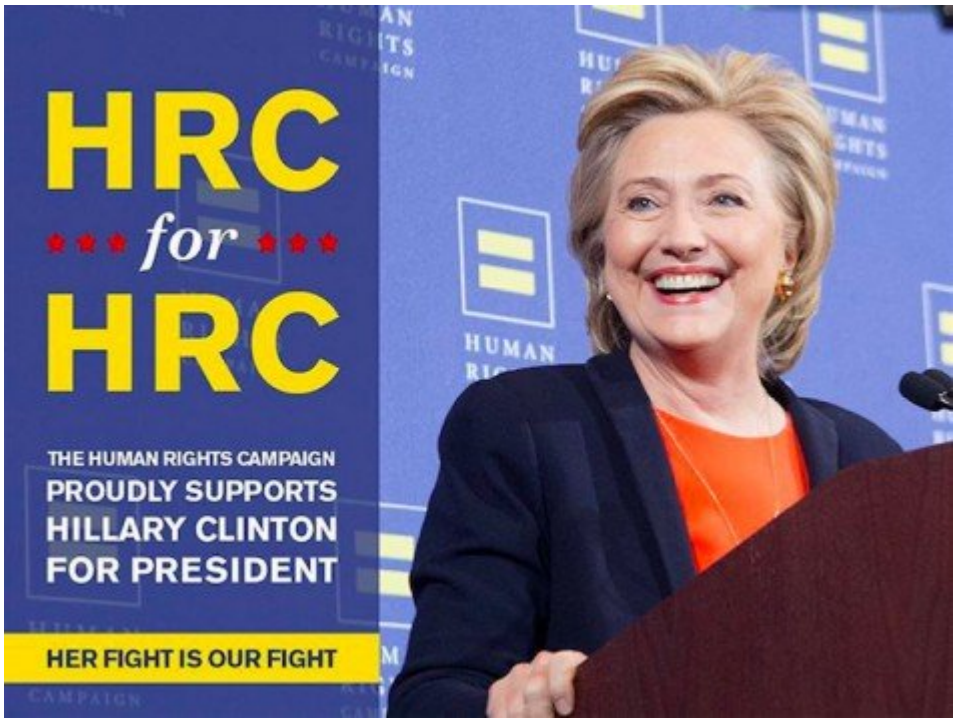

Hillary Clinton and her ally, the Human Rights Campaign

Having strong allies in the White House will enable them to destroy his “religious right” enemies all the more effectively. How far would the Human Rights Campaign go to achieve their ends? We’re going to find out, because lots of Democrats who falsely claim to be Christians keep voting for the Democrat Party.

By the way, the Orlando Islamic terrorist was a registered Democrat.

One charge against David Daleiden dropped by Texas judge

June 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Planned Parenthood senior executive: organ harvesting so she can get a Lamborghini
Great news about the man who discovered the trafficking of human organs by abortion providers.

Life News reports:

> Undercover investigator David Daleiden has been vindicated. Today, a Harris County, Texas judge dismissed the bogus misdemeanor charge against David Daleiden for allegedly trying to buy body parts from the Planned Parenthood abortion business he was exposing for selling them as a part of the Center for Medical Progress' undercover investigation.
>
> Daleiden has maintained from the beginning that he and the Center for Medical Progress followed all applicable laws in the course of its investigative journalism and that the indictments were politically motivated.
>
> […]CMP responded to the dismissal in a statement to LifeNews:
>
> Judge Diane Bull's swift dismissal of the bogus charge against CMP founder David Daleiden of trafficking human organs is the latest confirmation that the indictments from a runaway grand jury in Houston were a politically-motivated sham all along. In finding that the indictment was void on its face, Judge Bull's ruling directly contradicts the District Attorney's argument that the indictment was valid despite the DA's collusion with Planned Parenthood.
>
> […]District Attorney Devon Anderson's office has indicated it will not appeal the dismissal.
>
> […]Daleiden still faces bogus charges alleging he used a false ID to gain access to a Planned Parenthood clinic for a meeting with staff.

That's good news, and nice rebuke to the district attorney Devon Anderson. You'll

remember that she is alleged to be working closely with Planned Parenthood to persecute David, because they didn't like their organ trafficking operation being exposed.

The Federalist reported on that:

> Lauren Reeder, one of the prosecutors in the Harris County district attorney's office, revealed last August that she was a member of the board of directors for the Planned Parenthood affiliate that was targeted by Daleiden.
>
> Reeder's LinkedIn page indicates that she has been a Planned Parenthood board member since 2013 and a fundraiser for the abortion provider since 2009.

The maximum sentence for "tampering with a governmental record" (using a fake ID, which almost every teen does) is 20 years. That's a serious charge that's still outstanding.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

June 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates).

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it!

The MP3 file is here.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see

the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

Obamacare in action: health insurance premiums rising by 25% in 30 states

June 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama capable of doing what he claims in his speeches?
What happens when you let someone who knows nothing about economics or healthcare push through socialist health care policies?

NBC News reports:

> Millions of people who pay the full cost of their health insurance will face the sting of rising premiums next year, with no financial help from government subsidies.
>
> Renewal notices bearing the bad news will go out this fall, just as the presidential election is in the home stretch.
>
> […]Obama's health law provides income-based subsidies for consumers who buy individual policies on HealthCare.gov and state insurance markets. About 10 million people get assistance, helping reduce the uninsured rate to a historically low 9 percent.
>
> […]But there's no subsidy for those making more than $47,520 for an individual and $97,200 for a family of four – cutoffs that represent four times the federal poverty level. Also, subsidies are not available for consumers at any income level who purchase outside of HealthCare.gov or a state marketplace. Those who remain uninsured risk fines.
>
> **Premiums are expected to climb next year in many areas because major insurers have taken significant financial losses under the health law. Enrollment has been lower than anticipated, new customers were sicker**

> **than expected and a government system to stabilize the markets had problems.**

Investors Business Daily says 30 states will face an average increase of 25%:

> Insurers covering more than half the U.S. are seeking average premium hikes of 25% for 2017 for ObamaCare policies sold on and off the public exchanges.
>
> Although the requests are preliminary and filings for 20 more states are still due, there's now little doubt that individual market premiums are set for a shockingly large jump next year.

We are losing taxpayer money subsidizing the costs of the bloated Obamacare health care plans. But there are also bailouts of big insurance companies at taxpayer expense, as well.

The Fiscal Times explains:

> Some lawmakers are still seething over an administration decision nearly two years ago that has shortchanged the Treasury of billions of dollars by shifting the funds to an obscure Obamacare program aimed at protecting insurers against major losses.
>
> The so-called Transition Reinsurance Program was designed as a three-year experiment to help guard against major premium hikes by offsetting the high cost to insurers of providing health care coverage to the least healthy Americans. Essentially, it helps to "smooth out losses" for insurance companies operating in the Obamacare individual market.
>
> But a tax imposed on all insurers in the country to fund the TRP and simultaneously bolster the U.S. Treasury has proven to be grossly inadequate. And an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services decided in 2014 to shift most of the funds to the reinsurance program without consulting Congress.

Senate Republicans are trying to block the bailout. And this is in addition to all the cost overruns of the Obamacare web site that taxpayers had to cover. Remember that?

Big government is inefficient and it costs taxpayers – not just the taxpayers of today, but the taxpayers who are not yet born. Obama doubled the national debt from 10 to 20 trillion, adding more to the debt than ALL the other Presidents put together. It was a mistake to elect this man, and then to re-elect him. We are paying for it now.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

June 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below, please find my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates
- You didn't need to come out on this cold night

- Craig's arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn't listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don't require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that "every effect requires a cause"
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can't see
- There are things we can't see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato's dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don't require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig's three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid

argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism

7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said. Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a

vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

DHS whistleblower: Obama administration not serious about Islamic terrorist threat

June 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?

This PJ Media article is by Debra Heine.

Excerpt:

> Philip Haney, the Homeland Security whistleblower whose investigation into Islamic infiltration of the U.S. might have prevented the San Bernardino attack, has written an important op-ed for The Hill, warning of President Obama's misplaced priorities when it comes to national security. In brief, says Haney, "the Obama administration is more concerned with the rights of non-citizens in known Islamist groups than with the safety and security of the American people."
>
> There are terrorists in our midst and they arrived here using legal means right under the noses of the federal law enforcement agencies whose mission is to stop them. That is not due to malfeasance or lack of effort on the part of these officers; it is due to the restrictions placed on them by the Obama administration.
>
> Not only did the Obama administration shut down an important investigation that could have connected enough dots to prevent the San Bernardino terrorist attack, they went back and erased the dots Haney was "diligently connecting." Worse yet, when he complained to the DHS inspector general, the DHS and the Department of Justice subjected him "to a series of investigations and adverse actions, including one by that same inspector general."
>
> None of them showed any wrongdoing; they seemed aimed at stopping me from blowing the whistle on this problem.

Debra links to Gates of Vienna and quotes them about that:

> The "behavioral indicators" listed to help DHS agents identify potential domestic terrorists include carrying around a copy of the Constitution, promoting First and Second Amendment rights, having a Gadsden flag sticker on one's car, and advocating for a minimal federal government.
>
> [The Obama administration's approach] is thus designed to serve a dual purpose: (1) to protect Muslim Brotherhood organizations and their operatives who have penetrated federal, state, and local governments, and (2) to help the Obama administration crack down on its real enemies, domestic conservatives who want to re-establish constitutional governance.

Debra wrote a couple of prior articles on this DHS whistleblower, one from 12/14 and one from 12/11.

So is it really true that the Obama administration – in their mad rush to let in hundreds of thousands of immigrants from countries that don't like Western civilization very much – is not serious about keeping terrorists out?

Remember the recent San Bernadino attack?

CBS News reported that 5 different Obama administration agencies failed to detect one of the San Bernadino terrorists:

> Tashfeen Malik arrived in the United States with her fiance Syed Farook in July 2014. Just two months earlier, her U.S. government background check found no suspected ties to terrorism.
>
> She was granted a K-1 visa, even though the FBI now believes she was radicalized before she met Farook.
>
> The State Department says Malik was thoroughly questioned during an interview at the U.S. embassy in Pakistan.
>
> […]Five U.S. agencies also vetted her, checking her fingerprints against two databases. Neither her name nor image showed up on a U.S. terror watch list.

It seems to me our national security agencies have been indoctrinated by their Democrat leaders to target conservative taxpayers instead of radicalized Islamists. And in fact we have evidence of that, reported in the Washington Times way back in 2009:

> The Department of Homeland Security is warning law enforcement officials about a rise in "rightwing extremist activity," saying the economic recession, the election of America's first black president and the return of a few disgruntled war veterans could swell the ranks of white-power militias.
>
> A footnote attached to the report by the Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis defines "rightwing extremism in the United States" as including not just racist or hate groups, but also groups that reject federal authority in favor of state or local authority.

> "It may include groups and individuals that are dedicated to a single-issue, such as opposition to abortion or immigration," the warning says.
>
> […]The nine-page document was sent to police and sheriff's departments across the United States on April 7 under the headline, "Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment."
>
> It says the federal government "will be working with its state and local partners over the next several months" to gather information on "rightwing extremist activity in the United States."
>
> The joint federal-state activities will have "a particular emphasis" on the causes of "rightwing extremist radicalization."

The attacks by radical Islamic terrorists are happening because the Obama administration has taken their eyes off the threat from radical Islam, and has instead focused on YOU – the Christian conservative taxpayer who disagrees with abortion and gay marriage and big government socialism. You are the enemy they are watching. That's why the attacks that actually happen catch them by surprise.

We have terrorist attacks like San Bernadino and Orlando because the government we elected is led by moral relativists – secularist leftists who deny the reality of objective morality. Their primary objective is not to protect the taxpayers who pay their salaries and pensions. Their primary objective is to praise moral evil, and shame moral goodness. That's why they have nothing to say about the danger of radical Islam, and instead prefer to talk about expressing peaceful disagreement to their desire to redefine marriage. We are being governed by atheistic sociopaths who cannot reason about morality. And we elected them.

Related posts

- Pro-lifers targeted in official FBI and DOJ training
- DOD brands evangelical Christians and Catholics as "extremists"
- DHS to counter global warming threat
- Has political correctness made the FBI impotent against real terrorist threats?
- DHS brands Tea Party conservatives as terrorists

Democrat weakness on national security and immigration causes terrorist attacks

June 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats think that the real threat to America is not radical Islamic terrorism

This is from David French in National Review.

Excerpt:

> Somehow, Omar Mateen's massacre has put American Christians on the defensive.

> We are now fully through the looking glass. A Muslim man walked into a gay nightclub and gunned down 49 men and women, most of them gay or lesbian. He paused in the middle of his massacre to call 911 and a local television station, making clear that he wanted the world to know he had pledged allegiance to ISIS. There are no dog whistles here. This is a textbook example of jihadism in action, plain and simple.
>
> Yet somehow, Omar Mateen's massacre has put American *Christians* on the defensive.
>
> Yesterday, Anderson Cooper grilled Florida attorney general Pam Bondi, accusing her of hypocrisy for expressions of support for slain Floridians. Why was she hypocritical? Because she opposed same-sex marriage:

Here's the video of that:

More from David French:

> Today, the *New York Times* editorialized about the domestic threat to LGBT Americans and declared that they were "casualties of a society where hate has

> deep roots." The "society" the *Times* condemned wasn't the ISIS caliphate — it was America, and specifically states such as Texas and North Carolina that are fighting federal edicts that demand that men should have access to women's restrooms. The *Times* couldn't bring itself to condemn Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, but it attacked North Carolina governor Pat McCrory and Texas governor Greg Abbott.
>
> Even well-meaning Christians are adopting the secular-progressive line. In a viral Facebook post, popular writer and speaker Jen Hatmaker declared, "We cannot with any integrity honor in death those we failed to honor in life." She then proceeded to offer a standard leftist broadside against Evangelicals, arguing that *Christian* "anti-LGBTQ sentiment has paved a long runway to hate crimes."

A lot of Christians tend to go along with cultural trends because of emotions and peer pressure, especially if they haven't read anything on the issues. I expect that's what happened with Jen Hatmaker. Lack of knowledge lets emotions and peer approval dominate over Biblical convictions.

His conclusion:

> The principles, such as they exist, seem to be this: If you oppose same-sex marriage or mixed-gender bathrooms, then you not only can't legitimately grieve the loss of gay lives, you're *partially responsible* for the massacre in Orlando. Conservative efforts to protect religious freedom and freedom of association from unprecedented infringement will *kill people*. Never mind that all the actual evidence in the case points to Islamic motivations extrapolated from well-known and widely shared interpretations of Shariah law, somehow those darn Baptists are to blame.
>
> […]I don't have the words adequate to express my contempt for this view. Does any living, sentient being believe that if a Christian had launched this attack, these same liberals wouldn't blame his religious beliefs? The so-called "reality-based community" ignores the actual evidence in the attack — Mateen's own loudly declared jihadist beliefs — in an attempt to shame a community whose primary "sin" is opposing the sexual revolution.
>
> But there is something even more sinister at work than garden-variety anti-Christian bigotry, aided and abetted by gullible believers such as Hatmaker: Americans are being purposefully and intentionally distracted from our true enemies. Once again, the jihadist threat is being minimized.
>
> Some on the left simply refuse to believe what terrorists say about themselves and about their intentions. Osama bin Laden couldn't have *really* attacked the World Trade Center in part out of a desire to avenge Christians' 15th-century conquest of Muslim Spain. Iranian leaders don't *really* mean "death to America." Muslim nations that mandate the death penalty or other draconian criminal punishments for homosexuality don't *truly* express the will of their people.

> The result is bigotry running two ways — an unreasoning, irrational hatred of American Christians and a comprehensive denial of Muslim moral agency. American Christians are responsible for things they don't believe. Sharia-observant Muslims, by contrast, aren't responsible for the things they do believe.
>
> And make no mistake, said Muslims don't care a whit what the *New York Times*, Anderson Cooper, Jen Hatmaker, or any other anti-Evangelical terror apologist has to say. To them, one American life taken is as good as any other. They will attack again, maybe at another gay bar, or another office Christmas party, or a coffee house, or a sporting event, or a church. And when they do, there will surely be some Americans who excuse their actions out of eagerness to blame other Americans, instead.

I'm quoting a lot there, I really think it is appropriate that you read it if you feel anything like how I feel about this.

Let me make it clear. Democrats have been understating the threat of radical Islam for years. Importing radical Muslims by the bushel, appeasing Hamas, Hezbollah, etc., supporting the Muslim Brotherhood, opposing Israel, handing out billions to Iran to build nuclear bombs. They own the Orlando shooting. They own the San Bernadino shooting. They own the Boston marathon bombing. And so on. They caused all of it, and they are blaming the Christians just like Nero did, for problems they caused themselves. The Orlando shooter himself was a registered Democrat.

I feel that this foreshadows a time when Christians will be treated the same way by Democrats as the Jews were treated by the National Socialist party in 1930s Germany. It's in the ballpark. The irrational hatred and scapegoating is similar to what we've seen before from moral relativists in other times and places.

A must-read series of posts on cosmic fine-tuning by Allen Hainline

June 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

There are four posts in the series, so far. I think Allen might be done, so I'm going to link to all four and snip something I like from each one.

The first post is on whether the fine-tuning is real, and whether a multiverse explains the fine-tuning so that there is no need for a cosmic Designer.

I just have to choose this quote from the atheist Stephen Hawking on the fine-tuning:

> The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life. For example, if the electric charge of the electron had been only slightly different, stars would have been unable to burn hydrogen and helium, or else they would not have exploded. It seems clear that there are relatively few ranges of values for the numbers [i.e. the constants of nature] that would allow for development of any form of intelligent life.

And from Luke Barnes, who I've mentioned before on this blog:

> In my years of researching this topic, I'm amazed at how few scientists who have studied the fine-tuning details disagree with this core claim that the subset of life-permitting physics is a tiny fraction among possibilities. Since Luke Barnes is a top researcher on this topic, consider his input on the level of acceptance of the fine-tuning claim: *"I've published a review of the scientific literature, 200+ papers, and I can only think of a handful that oppose this conclusion, and piles and piles that support it.*[3]"

And on the multiverse as a way to escape the fine-tuning:

> The key issue though is that for the multiverse to be an adequate explanation for the fine-tuning it requires the conjunction of several hypotheses for which we lack *any* empirical evidence:
>
> 1. A universe-generating mechanism that generates a plethora of universes
> 2. That this mechanism doesn't itself require fine-tuning
> 3. The many-worlds interpretation of quantum physics
> 4. The ability to *widely* vary constants in those universes. If you think that it's a foregone conclusion that String Theory/M-Theory[8] will come to the rescue in this area, you should watch this video clip by Oxford physicist Roger Penrose where he exclaims that "it's not even a theory … it's a collection of hopes".
>
> Occam's razor therefore does seem to favor design over the multiverse. When one accounts for the extensive problems in affirming premise 2 and how these multiverse theories make predictions incompatible with our universe, the hypothesis that God designed the physics of the universe to bring about life is more plausible.

Here's the second post, where he explains the fine-tuning argument philosophically, and gives an example of one of the constants that has to be fine-tuned in order to support complex, embodied intelligence of any kind.

The cosmological constant:

> The inference to design will be more easily recognized if we shed some light as to the specialness of the required values. Consider the size of the bull's eye and wall based on just 1 parameter – the cosmological constant. There is a natural range for possible values for this constant because there are known contributions that are 10^{120}times larger than the overall net value. (There is a near perfect but inexact cancellation of contributions accurate to 120 decimal places). Let's use the most conservative numbers in the physics literature that indicate a fine-tuning to 1 part in 10^{53}. If the cosmological constant, which governs the expansion rate of the universe, had been larger than its current value by this tiny fraction, then the universe would have expanded so fast that no stars or planets would have formed and therefore no life. If the value were smaller by this amount then the universe would have rapidly collapsed before the universe cooled sufficiently to allow for stable information storage which is required by any self-replicating system such as life.

In the third post, he responds to objections to the fine-tuning argument. One objection you hear from atheists who don't understand the science is that any selection of constants and quantities is as likely as any other, so our life-permitting set is just random. Now, first off, there are only 10 to the 80 atoms in the visible universe, so if the

cosmological constant is fine-tuned to 1 in 10 to the 120, it's not rational to say "it just happened randomly".

But here is Allen's response:

> However, the assumption that any set of constants is just as likely as any other is the very thing that we want to know. Starting off with that as an *assumption* begs the question against design. As Luke Barnes articulates in this excellent podcast dealing with responses to the fine-tuning claim, suppose we're playing poker and every time I deal I get a royal flush. If this continues to happen, you become increasingly convinced that I'm likely to be cheating. If I responded to an accusation of cheating by just saying "well any set of 5 cards is just as likely as any other so you can't accuse me of cheating" you would be rational to reject this explanation. The question is not "how likely is any set of 5 cards?" but rather "how likely is it I'm cheating if I just dealt myself 10 straight royal flushes?" This question accounts for the possibility that I'm cheating which would almost certainly be true in this scenario. So the right fine-question is "given the fine-tuning evidence, how likely is it that the constants were set at random?" The values for physical constants conform to a very particular pattern – that which supports life. The fact that we have so many finely-tuned constants makes it unlikely that they were all set at random (at least in the single universe scenario and I've already shown some of the problems/challenges in multiverse explanations.)

Every 5-card hand that you draw is equally unlikely, but the royal flush is the highest hand in the game and *always wins.* Every hand you draw is unlikely, but whatever you draw is overwhelmingly likely to not be a royal flush.

Finally, the fourth post deals with the objection that the constants and quantities could not have been other than they are.

He quotes physicist John Barrow giving 5 reasons why the constants can vary, and then this:

> Even if the constants and laws of physics couldn't vary, there is even more reason to think that there were many physically possible sets of initial conditions. Paul Davies states this emphatically:
>
> "Even if the laws of physics were unique, it doesn't follow that the physical universe itself is unique…the laws of physics must be augmented by cosmic initial conditions…there is nothing in present ideas about 'laws of initial conditions' remotely to suggest that their consistency with the laws of physics would imply uniqueness. Far from it…it seems, then, that the physical universe does not have to be the way it is: it could have been otherwise.[4]"
>
> John A. Wheeler agrees: "Never has physics come up with a way to tell with what initial conditions the universe was started off. On nothing is physics clearer than what is not physics."

The constants and quantities are not determined by physics. They were *selected* by whoever created nature in the first place.

So that's the series. I noticed that he kept linking to this Common Sense Atheism podcast featuring famous cosmologist Luke Barnes. I grabbed it to listen this weekend, and you might want to get it, too. It's over an hour. It seems like it is one stop shopping to understand common objections to the fine-tuning argument, and how strong each one is.

William Lane Craig debates Peter Atkins: Does God Exist?

June 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of a debate with Peter Atkins, from the Reasonable Faith speaking tour in the UK:

This is a must-see debate. It was extremely fun to watch.

Details:

> On Wednesday 26th October 2011 William Lane Craig debated Peter Atkins on the topic: *Does God Exist?* This debate took place at the University of Manchester as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig. The debate was chaired by Christopher Whitehead, Head of Chemistry School at the University. Post-debate discussion was moderated by Peter S Williams, Philosopher in Residence at the Damaris Trust, UK.

Dr. William Lane Craig:

> **William Lane Craig** (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich in 1984.

Dr. Peter Atkins:

> **Peter William Atkins** (born 10 August 1940) is a British chemist and former Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Lincoln College. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.
>
> Atkins studied chemistry at the University of Leicester, obtaining a bachelor's

> degree in chemistry, and – in 1964 – a PhD for research into electron spin resonance spectroscopy, and other aspects of theoretical chemistry. Atkins then took a postdoctoral position at the UCLA as aHarkness Fellow of the Commonwealth fund. He returned to Oxford in 1965 as fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, and lecturer in physical chemistry (later, professor of physical chemistry).

You can get the audio of the debate here, along with links to their previous debate from 1998. This debate is accessible and understandable to novice-level Christians.

I am happy when debates like this come out. I have friends who are Christians who doubt the importance of apologetics in evangelism, because they don't think that apologists can prove anything or win arguments. I have friends who are skeptical of using arguments that assume a 14-billion year old universe, because they think that the Big Bang is compatible with atheism (!). I have friends who think that philosophical arguments have no persuasive force. I have friends who think that nothing can be proven from history, beyond a reasonable doubt. I have co-workers who ask me whether anyone wins these debates. I think that this debate answers all of those questions.

This debate clearly shows why Christians should not shy away from studying science, philosophy and history. We will not discover anything that harms Christian theism by thinking logically and by looking at the evidence. To the contrary, it is the atheist who makes war on the progress of science, and who is forced to resist the clear experimental evidence, and to resort to baseless speculations and blind faith. If you want to see a good debate with an intelligent atheist, I recommend watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican instead. But if you want to see a really, really overwhelming defeat for atheism, watch this debate. It is very clear at the end of this debate why Richard Dawkins refused to debate William Lane Craig at Oxford.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING SPEECHES

I only had time to summarize the first two speeches. Keep in mind that Dr. Craig always shines in his rebuttals, and this debate is no different. So you'll want to watch those rebuttals. Dr. Atkins *literally* says in this debate in his first rebuttal "There was nothing here originally. There is nothing here now. But it is an interesting form of nothing which seems to be something." And the audience laughs nervously. This debate is like that. You will see a clear winner and clear loser in this debate. This fight is decided by knockout.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

1. the origin of the universe
2. the moral argument
3. the resurrection of Jesus

Peter Atkins opening speech:

1. Dr. Craig is stupid, lazy and evil:
– Dr. Craig's arguments are old: from the 11th century! Old arguments can't be true
– Dr. Craig is just asserting that "God did it" because he is lazy

– Dr. Craig feels pressured to agree with the theistic majority
– Dr. Craig needs a psychological crutch to comfort him
– Dr. Craig is fearful of death
– Dr. Craig is just wishing for an eternal life of bliss
– Dr. Craig is driven by his heart, and not by his head

2. Origin of the universe:
– Maybe the universe is eternal and has no beginning – we don't know
– Maybe mommy universes can give birth to daughter universes
– It is naive to think that a cause is needed to cause the creation of the universe from nothing
– Science is just about to show how it is possible that something appears out of nothing without cause
– Some scientists have already begun to speculate about about how something can come into being out of nothing
– Maybe nothing is not really nothing, but it is actually something
– It would be admitting defeat to say that God created the universe out of nothing

3. Fine-Tuning:
– It could be the case that the fundamental constants are not variable
– It could be the case that the fine-tuning of the cosmic constants is a happy accident
– It could be the case that there are billions of billions of unobservable universes that are not fine tuned
– It could be the case that the cosmic constants in these billions and billions of unobservable universes are all random so that some are fine-tuned
– Anyone who infers that an intelligence is the best explanation of a finely-tuned set of life-permitting cosmic constants is lazy

4. Purpose:
– Philosophers and theologians are stupid
– I don't think that there is purpose in the universe
– I think that the universe is more grand if there is no purpose, so there is no purpose

5. Miracles:
– I don't think that miracles happen
– The resurrection is a fabrication
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't exist
– It could be the case that Jesus wasn't really crucified
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't really die after being crucified
– It could be the case that the disciples stole his body
– It could be the case that the women went to the wrong hole in the ground
– the gospels are political propaganda written long after the events they are reporting on

6. Theodicy:
– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing humans to perform actions that result in suffering

– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing nature to cause suffering

7. Morality:

– customs and conventions emerges arbitrarily in different times and places based on an awareness of the consequences of actions, as well as various anecdotes and experiences

– these customs and conventions are decided based on the goal for survival, in much the same way as politeness and manners emerge for decorum and to avoid offense

– it is childish to presume that there is an umpire God who decides moral values and duties

8. Religious believers are stupid, lazy and evil:

– the notion of God has arisen because people are stupid and want to be comforted

– there are no arguments or evidences for belief in God

– people who believe in God do not think, but instead take refuge in incomprehensible nonsense

Obama administration will scrub “Islamic State” from Orlando terrorist’s 911 transcripts

June 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Don’t worry, the real threat to America is climate change

So, Attorney General Loretta Lynch says that all references to Islamic motivations for the Orlando attack have to be removed from the 911 transcript, lest the public understand that this attack was actually another instance of radical Islamic terrorism.

Real Clear Politics reports:

> In an interview with NBC’s Chuck Todd, Attorney General Loretta Lynch says that on Monday, the FBI will release edited transcripts of the 911 calls made by the Orlando nightclub shooter to the police during his rampage.
>
> “What we’re not going to do is further proclaim this man’s pledges of allegiance to terrorist groups, and further his propaganda,” Lynch said. “We are not going to hear him make his assertions of allegiance [to the Islamic State].”

The Obama administration does not want any connection made by the public between this terrorist attack and radical Islam – even though the terrorist himself made them. It all has to be covered up, because the first duty of the Democrat Party is not to protect you from crime or terrorism. Their job is to make radical Islamic terrorists look as peaceful as the Girl Scouts. That’s what you’re paying them taxpayer dollars to do, isn’t it?

The Obama administration’s plan to protect us

So, there is a plan to protect us from terrorist attacks, and it was announced by Obama’s attorney general, Loretta Lynch. Are you ready for the plan? This is the great plan that moral relativists on the secular left are offering to protect us. Are you ready?

Here it is from the Daily Wire:

> Speaking to the audience at the Muslim Advocates' 10th anniversary dinner Thursday, Lynch said her "greatest fear" is the "incredibly disturbing rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric" in America and vowed to prosecute any guilty of what she deemed violence-inspiring speech.
>
> "The fear that you have just mentioned is in fact **my greatest fear** as a prosecutor, as someone who is sworn to the protection of all of the American people, which is that the rhetoric will be accompanied by acts of violence," she said.
>
> […]After touting the numbers of "investigations into acts of anti-Muslim hatred" and "bigoted actions" against Muslims launched by her DOJ, Lynch suggested the Constitution does not protect "actions predicated on violent talk" and pledged to prosecute those responsible for such actions.

Attorney General Loretta Lynch declined to charge Lois Lerner for using the IRS as a weapon to persecute conservative groups in an election year.

What did the IRS do?

Wall Street Journal explains:

> Three years on, the Internal Revenue Service has finally handed over its list of the organizations the agency's tax-exempt division targeted for their political views. All it took to shake the disclosure from the agency were dozens of lawsuits and a federal appeals-court order.
>
> In a court filing last month, the IRS produced a list of 426 groups that were singled out for special scrutiny and in some cases had approval of their application for tax-exempt status delayed. The filing was in response to a lawsuit by NorCal Tea Party Patriots, which has struggled for three years to get the agency to acknowledge the names of those it mistreated, so that the targets have the option of joining the litigation. The targets run the gamut from big outfits such as the Tea Party Patriots to local groups that used the "tea party" moniker.
>
> The list doesn't include 40 groups that have already opted out of the suit, so the actual number targeted is 466. The lawsuit's goal is to find out how the targeting occurred and to seek damages for "viewpoint discrimination," among other legal violations.

So, no prosecution for the IRS fascists, but you'll likely be prosecuted by the government if you report suspicious behavior by radicalized Muslims.

Do you feel safe now? Do you think that the Democrats are serious about the threat of Islamic terrorism? Do you think that you should elect the Democrats again in November 2016?

Southern Baptists stand up for traditional marriage, freedom of conscience and religious liberty

June 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Winston Churchill on appeasement

Life Site News reported on a resolution by the largest Protestant denomination.

Excerpt:

> Southern Baptists voted to officially defend marriage, religious freedom and natural gender at their annual meeting this week, making strong statements against controversial measures over the last year that pose a threat to each.
>
> In addition to laying out the definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) passed a resolution specifically rejecting last year's Supreme Court Obergefell decision redefining marriage, along with Barack Obama's "guidance" requiring public schools to provide transgender bathroom access, handed down last month.
>
> "The Supreme Court's Obergefell decision in 2015 purporting to redefine marriage does violence to the Constitution and is contrary to the Bible and natural order," the resolution states. "The Obama Administration's recent 'guidance' requiring transgender access in public school bathrooms and locker rooms based on itsunauthorized redefinition of 'sex' in federal law rejects God's design of male and female."
>
> The declaration, titled, "On Biblical Sexuality and the Freedom of Conscience," was adopted with overwhelming support from the more than 7000 conference participants, Juicy Ecumenism reports, part of what led to made many there terming the gathering a historic event.
>
> "We dissent from the Obergefell opinion that purports to redefine the institution of marriage created by God," the Baptist resolution states, along with pledging to strengthen Biblical marriage in homes, schools and communities. "We applaud and support the efforts of eleven state attorneys general in their challenge to the Obama Administration's transgender 'guidance.'"

> The nation's largest Protestant denomination affirmed the Biblical definition of marriage at its conference last year, just prior to the Obergefell ruing being released in late June.
>
> The year prior at the annual meeting the SBC voted to oppose "sex reassignment" surgery, urging transgender people to "trust in Christ and to experience renewal in the Gospel," and affirming "God's good design that gender identity is determined by biological sex and not by one's self-perception."
>
> Baptists met for this year's conference Tuesday and Wednesday this week in St. Louis, reaffirming love for individuals identifying as transgender in their convention statement, "seeking their good always," and offering them welcome in Baptist churches.
>
> "God alone is Lord of the conscience," Baptists said in their resolution, making several references supporting religious freedom protection and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).
>
> "Any law that directly contradicts natural law and biblical truth is an unjust law," it states. "Our highest respect for the rule of law requires that we not affirm an unjust law that directly contradicts higher law."
>
> **They also made mention of recent religious liberty attacks suffered by U.S. citizens targeted for their biblical values, stating, "Business owners and employees of various faiths are increasingly faced with decisions to submit to unjust laws about marriage and sexuality or violate their consciences."**
>
> **"Experience and recent history have shown that when the government redefines marriage as anything other than between a man and a woman, the police power of the state is brought to bear to enforce that redefinition," their resolution continued, "resulting in an inevitable collision with religious freedom and conscience rights."**
>
> **Baptist convention attendees also voted to call on the U.S. Congress to pass the First Amendment Defense Act, along with civic leaders at all levels to pass legislation supporting religious freedom, and stated their unity with those persecuted for their religious convictions on marriage.**

The First Amendment Defense Act is our best chance at stopping the attacks by the Democrats on free speech and religious liberty. Ted Cruz had vowed to pass the First Amendment Defense Act – he is the co-sponsor of the legislation. If we had selected Cruz as the nominee, we would have got this passed. But, we selected Donald Trump, who promised gay activists "forward motion" on gay rights issues. He gets an F from marriage rights activists on gay rights issues, which is not surprising given his history of political donations to Democrats and sexual immorality. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton are (of course) champions of gay marriage and the gay rights movement, and they oppose free speech, freedom of conscience and religious liberty.

California legislature seeks to shut down Christian colleges and universities

June 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

This is from Mere Orthodoxy, and it concerns Biola University, an evangelical university that specializes in Christian apologetics.

Excerpt:

> Biola University, located in Southern California and one of the country's most well-known and prestigious evangelical colleges, now finds itself arguing for its right to be evangelical. The state legislature is seeking to amend a non-discrimination law which would stipulate that the only schools that can be granted religious exemptions to the non-discrimination statutes are schools that exist for the training of pastors and theological educators. Schools that offer more general programs—like a degree in humanities, engineering, or public education—would be required to submit to the non-discrimination law, effectively ending any legal protection for colleges and universities that want to only admit professing Christians or maintain campus-wide spiritual life programs.
>
> The effect of the amendment would be to redefine religious liberty so as to make a clear distinction between institutions that integrate religious faith and public vocation and those that focus only on parochial training. Conceivably, supporters of the bill are fine with the idea of students receiving a religious education that teaches that marriage is the union of a man and a woman, and that sexual expressions outside this category are morally problematic—**as long as this education is clearly not intended to go beyond the walls of a church**

> **service or a seminary lecture hall.** Pastors and polemicists, yes. Business managers and brain surgeons, not so much.
>
> Such a distinction is one that owes much to a faulty understanding, increasingly common on the Left, of what it means to be "religious." Conservatives have warned for some time now of a serious attempt by sexual revolutionaries to make religious belief synonymous with religious worship; ergo, the private ritual of religion is what's protected by "free exercise," not the living out of such beliefs in the public square. The language desired by the California legislature feels like a clear substantiation of this concern.
>
> Would the amendment protect students from discrimination? Certainly, the amendment would probably initiate the shuttering of several California colleges that LGBT activists would consider "discriminatory." Because the non-discrimination law applies just as much to religion as it does to sexual orientation or gender identity, the language would essentially force Christian schools to relinquish their confessional identity—they could be sued, for example, for refusing to hire an atheist to teach sociology, or denying tenure to a New Age transcendentalist professor of comparative religion. What sounds like fairness to many progressives is in reality the dismantling of the idea of Christian education.

The California Democrats don't want people to have a Christian worldview outside of the doors of the church or school. You might remember that Obama himself has tried to push this view that there is no knowledge content to Christianity, that it's just about church worship and having feelings of comfort. Democrats are fine with privatized religion like that, but not with practical application of what the Bible says, across all disciplines, out in the real world. They want to stop that, because they want to rule everything outside of the church walls.

What was really interesting to me is how the article noted that even at Biola University there are gay activist groups pushing the gay agenda. It can be very tempting to people to swing towards liberal opinions when they don't have any grounding in facts. Is Biola doing a good job of sharing pro-marriage arguments and evidence to students? Why not make it mandatory that every student has to read books like "Truth Overruled?" by Ryan Anderson? If Christianity is just about reading the Bible and being nice to others, then there will be a falling away from Biblical moral values. Those values are not popular with the feelings crowd, and "the Bible says" does not stand up to the hurt feelings of sinners in a culture obsessed with feelings over moral obligations. A Christian has to be informed to stand up for what the Bible says. Does Biola have a plan to connect the Bible to arguments and evidence when it comes to moral issues?

New study: birds are as intelligent as macaques and other mammals

June 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Female cockatiel lets a trusted friend spread her wing for inspection

Evolution News reports on a new study about my favorite creatures of all: birds!

It says:

> Next time someone calls you a birdbrain, smile and say "thank you." Our feathered friends come well equipped with hardware and software for complex behaviors. A new study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* puts birds on par with macaques and other mammals, and even suggests they can think.
>
> Here's what the news from Vanderbilt University says about the results of a detailed study by researchers primarily from the University of Prague, with additional team members from Austria, Brazil, and the United States:
>
> The macaw has a brain the size of an unshelled **walnut**, while the macaque monkey has a brain about the size of a **lemon**. Nevertheless, the macaw has **more neurons** in its **forebrain** — the portion of the brain associated with intelligent behavior — than the macaque.
>
> That is **one of the surprising results** of the **first study to systematically measure the number of neurons in the brains of more than two dozen species of birds** ranging in size from the tiny zebra finch to the six-foot-tall emu, which found that they**consistently have more neurons packed into their small brains**than are stuffed into mammalian or even primate brains of the same mass. [Emphasis added.]
>
> How is this possible? The answer includes miniaturization and efficient packaging:
>
> That is possible because the **neurons** in avian brains are **much smaller and**

> **more densely packed** than those in mammalian brains, the study found. **Parrot and songbird** brains, for example, contain about **twice as many neurons as primate brains of the same mass and two to four times as many neurons as equivalent rodent brains.**
>
> Not only are neurons packed into the brains of parrots and crows at a much higher density than in primate brains, but the **proportion of neurons in the forebrain** is also **significantly higher**, the study found.
>
> The scientists note that even despised birds like pigeons show much the same brain power. Powered flight, obviously, takes a lot of hardware and software to operate in any bird; how much so in the supreme flyers Illustra Media showed in *Flight: The Genius of Birds*: starlings, Arctic terns, and especially the tiny hummingbirds? […]The small heads of birds belie the observations of complex behaviors they perform.
>
> But it's not just routine tasks the brains must perform. Some birds can remember where they stored hundreds of seeds. Birds have been observed to hide a seed while another bird is watching, then move it when the neighbor is gone — indicative of a possible 'theory of mind' that shows planning and recognizing what the other bird is thinking.
>
> The study provides a straightforward answer to a **puzzle** that comparative neuroanatomists have been wrestling with for more than a decade: **how can birds with their small brains perform complicated cognitive behaviors?**
>
> The conundrum was created by a series of studies beginning in the previous decade that **directly compared the cognitive abilities of parrots and crows with those of primates.** The studies found that the **birds could manufacture and use tools**, use insight to **solve problems**, make **inferences about cause-effect relationships**,**recognize** themselves in a mirror and **plan** for future needs, among other cognitive skills previously considered the exclusive domain of primates.
>
> Indeed, crows have shown the ability to solve a puzzle made famous in an Aesop's fable (*Reuters*): dropping stones in a pitcher to raise the water level in order to get a drink. New Caledonian crows have shown the ability to use three tools in succession to reach a food source (*BBC News*). Owners of parrots know the cleverness of their pets; their ability to mimic human speech and singing is astonishing. Some cockatiels can even do the Riverdance.

I love cockatiels and green cheek conures, they are my absolute favorite birds. Absolutely adorable creatures!

Anyway, the rest of the Evolution News post notes that this intelligence is a problem for naturalistic evolution. Specifically, it's a convergence problem – the same capabilities being evolved independently, without recent shared common ancestry. How can birds and mammals, who don't share recent common ancestors, have evolved the same capabilities, e.g. – vocal learning pathways, by chance? There is an explanation that does

explain the observations, however – common designs made by a single designer.

Related posts

- New study: tiny songbirds fly over the Atlantic ocean and back each year
- New study: bird origins poses a convergence challenge to common ancestry
- New study: another biological Big Bang, this time for bird development
- New study: how the hummingbird performs stunning feats of aerobatics
- Shorebird's beak inspires researchers to design new water collection strategy
- The best explanation for the design of bird wings is intelligent design
- Scientists trying to mimic the design of hummingbirds with nanorobots
- New peer-reviewed article argues for irreducible complexity in birds

Report: Common Core does not prepare students for college

June 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

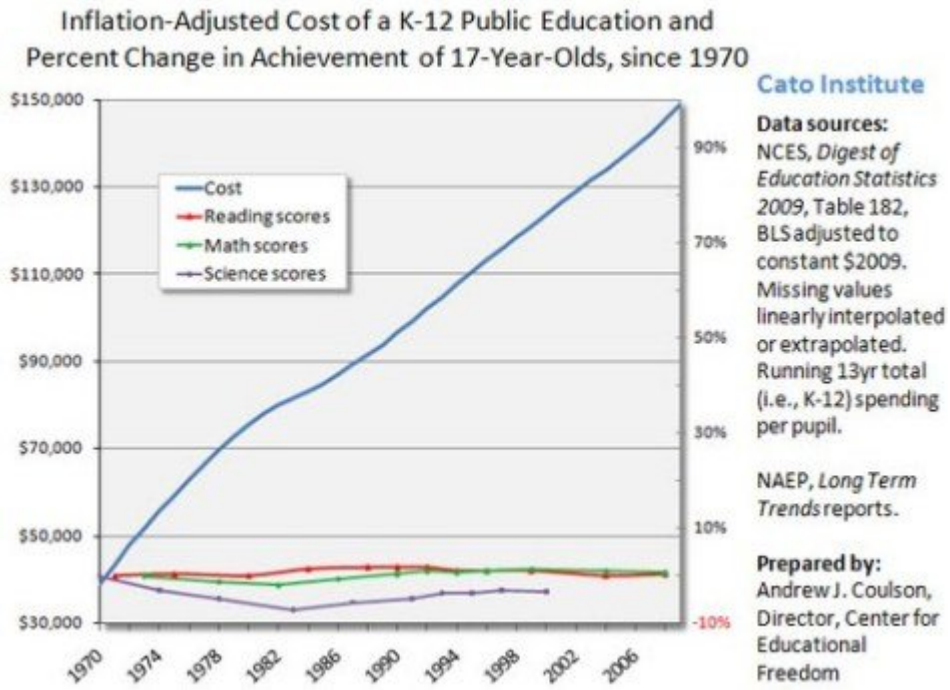

Cato Institute graphs education spending against test scores

First, let's recall why Common Core was enacted by the Democrats by excerpting this post from The Pulse.

It says:

> When Common Core was sprung on the whole nation in 2010, it promised that every kid graduating high school will be "career- and college-ready." Career-readiness was quickly left by the wayside — nobody, including the NAGB [National Assessment Governing Board], could figure out what it means — but college-readiness remained the "chicken in every pot" promise of Common Core.

The Daily Signal reports on a new report by the American College of Testing, the group behind the ACT college readiness test.

Excerpt:

> A recently released report confirms what Common Core critics have suspected all along: Common Core State Standards do not adequately prepare students for college-level work.
>
> The ACT report finds many concerning shortcomings in the Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by most states. Notably, the report reveals:
>
> - "While secondary teachers may be focusing on source-based writing [essays written about source-based documents], as emphasized in the

> Common Core, college instructors appear to value the ability to generate sound ideas more than some key features of source-based writing.
> - "Some early elementary teachers are still teaching certain math topics omitted from the Common Core standards, perhaps based on the needs—real or perceived—of students entering their classrooms.
> - "In addition, many mathematics teachers in grades 4–7 report including certain topics relevant in STEM coursework in their curricula at grades earlier than they appear in the Common Core."
>
> Teachers who must adjust their curriculum to fit Common Core aligned state tests now find themselves in a bind. As the report finds, the Common Core math standards do not adequately provide a child with the skills needed to succeed in the classroom, forcing teachers to add on extra material to their limited instruction time.
>
> Additionally, high school English teachers must now emphasize material that leaves students lacking in original thought and analytical skills, according to many college professors. For example, only 18 percent of college professors surveyed rated their students as prepared to distinguish between opinion, fact, and reasoned judgement—a skill determined to be important for college-level work.
>
> The "one-size-fits-all" national standards are underserving American children. It is nearly impossible, and does a great disservice to future generations, to demand uniformity and place restrictions on the classroom that assumes one "best practice."

Common Core was designed to better prepare students for college, but now we know that it had the exact opposite effect from what the leftists intended – and what the leftists promised us. Just like Obamacare, we elected people who didn't know what they were doing, did something that made the problem worse, and wasted a ton of taxpayer money in the process. Failure across the board.

One obvious point to make about Common Core is that conservatives are right when we say that education is a state and local issue. It shouldn't be a federal level issue. Ted Cruz was going to abolish the Department of Education at the federal level and push it down to the states, so that we wouldn't have screw-ups like this. Just think of all the money that's been wasted on Common Core, and now we find out that it's a disaster, just like Head Start.

Big government liberals like the idea of making everything equal, but if everything is equally *bad* then we really should let parents decide how to educate their kids. They'll make better choices than secular leftist educrats anyway. The right solution is to give the parents a voucher, and let them choose which school to send their child to – and homeschooling parents should not have to pay into a system that they don't even use.

Information Enigma: 21-minute video explains intelligent design

June 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

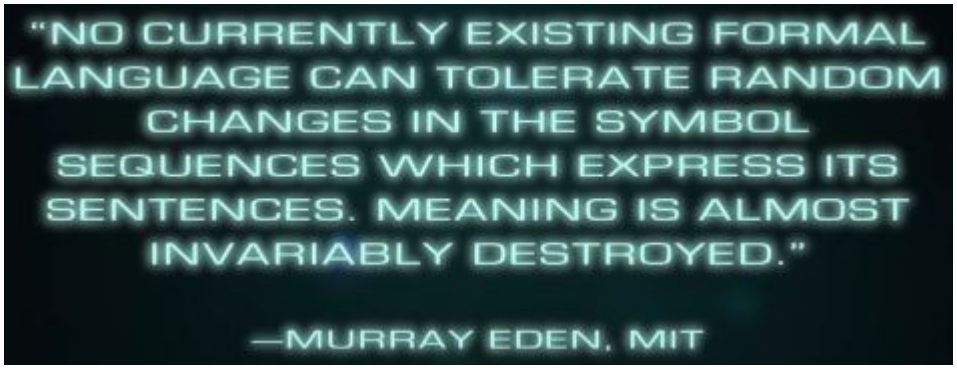

Can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
The video is here:

I have read and listened and watched a lot of material on intelligent design, but I have never seen so much value packed into such a short lecture. I really hope you'll watch this and that it's helpful to you.

Summary:

- the big question when discussing the origin of life: where did the information in living systems come from?
- Until 530 million years ago, the oceans were largely devoid of life
- In a 10 million year period, many new forms of animal life emerged
- New biological forms of life require new information
- the discovery of DNA shows that living systems work because cells have information that allows them to build the components of molecular machines: cell types, proteins, etc.
- can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
- normally, random mutations tend to degrade the functionality of information, e.g. – randomly changing symbols in an applications code does not usually introduce useful new functions, it usually renders what is there non-functional
- the majority of possible sequences will NOT have functions, so random mutations will more likely give you non-functional code, rather than functional code
- example: a bicycle lock with 4 numbers has many possible sequences for the 4 numbers, and only one of them has unlock functionality, the rest have no functionality
- if you have lots of time, then you might be able to guess the combination, but if the lock as has 10 billion numbers, and only one combination that unlocks, you can spend your whole life trying to unlock it and won't succeed
- how likely is it to arrive at a functional protein or gene by chance? Is it more like the 4-dial lock (can be done with lots of time) or the 10 billion dial lock (amount of time

required exceeds the time available)?
- the probability is LOW because there is only one sequence of numbers that has unlock function
- consider a short protein of 150 amino acids has 10 to the 195th power possible sequences
- if many of these sequences of amino acides had biological function, then it might be easier to get to one by random mutation and selection than it is with a lock that only unlocks for ONE sequence
- how many of the possible sequences have biological function?
- Thanks to research done by Douglas Axe, we now know that the number of functional amino acid sequences for even a short protein is incredibly small…
- Axe found that the odds of getting a functional sequence of amino acids that will fold and have biological function is 1 in 10 to the 77th power
- Is that number too improbable to reach by chance? well, there are 10 to 65th atoms in the entire Milky Way galaxy… so yes, this is a very improbable outcome
- can random genetic mutations search through all the sequences in order to find the one in 10 to the 77th power one that has biological function? It depends on how much guessers we have and how many guesses we get in the time available
- even with the entire 3.5 billion year history of life on Earth, only about 10 to the 40th organisms have ever lived, which far smaller fraction of the 10 to the 77th total sequences
- even with a very fast mutation rate, you would not be able to reach a functional protein even with all that time, and even with all those organisms

I was once having a discussion with a woman about the research that Axe did at the Cambridge University lab. He published four articles in the Journal of Molecular Biology. I held out one of the papers to her and showed her the numbers. She said over and over "I hate the Discovery Institute! I hate the Discovery Institute!" Well, yeah, but you can't make the Journal of Molecular Biology go away with hating the Discovery Institute. JMB is peer-reviewed, and this was experimental evidence – not a theory, not a hypothesis.

We have been blessed by the Creator and Designer of the universe in this time and place with *overwhelming evidence* – an abundance of riches. For those who have an open mind, this is what you've been waiting for to make your decision. For the naturalists who struggle so mightily to block out the progress of experimental science, they'll need to shout louder and shut their eyes tighter and push harder to block their ears. Maybe if they keep screaming "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" over and over to themselves, they will be able to ignore the real science a little longer.

Obama administration rejects “right of conscience” complaint from pro-life groups

June 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama speaking to Planned Parenthood

This is from the radically leftist Los Angeles Times.

They write:

> Thee Obama administration on Tuesday rejected a “right of conscience” complaint from anti-abortion groups in California who objected to the state’s requirement that health insurance plans include coverage for elective abortions.
>
> The civil rights office at the Department of Health and Human Services said it had completed an investigation and dismissed several complaints after concluding California’s policy did not violate a decade-old rule adopted by Congress, known as the Weldon Amendment.
>
> The office said the provision, which protects doctors, nurses, hospitals and other healthcare providers who object to performing abortions, does not extend to health insurance firms that have no moral objection to providing abortion coverage and instead are acting on the request of religious-minded customers.
>
> The decision upholds a move by the California Department of Managed Care, which notified seven insurance providers in 2014 that state law does not allow them to offer coverage that limits or excludes abortions for some employers. The issue arose when faculty members at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and Santa Clara University objected to this limitation in their insurance

> plans.

So, the religious schools and institutions cannot have plans that exclude abortion, because the Obama administration does not recognize the right of religious organizations to refuse to fund abortion. But the Obama administration *does recognize* the obligation of pro-life taxpayers to continue to pay the salaries and benefits of their Democrat overlords. You must pay the taxes for government, you just don't get a say in what government does.

Alliance Defending Freedom reacted to the decision so:

> Lawyers for the Alliance Defending Freedom, which filed one of the complaints, denounced the HHS decision.
>
> "The Obama administration is once again making a mockery of the law," said Casey Mattox, senior legal counsel for the alliance. "The state of California has ordered every insurer, even those insuring churches, to cover elective abortions in blatant violation of the law. We will continue to defend churches from this clear violation of the 1st Amendment and federal law and call on Congress to hold HHS accountable."

I know that sometimes people vote for bigger government because they want a handout taken from their neighbors. But money isn't everything – some things are more important. Like not violating the consciences of Christians. Don't make Christianity harder for Christians to practice.

New study: working longer hours harms women, but protects men

June 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: "Godspeed" by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

This is from the UK Telegraph, and it's a nice confirmation of sex differences.

Excerpt:

> Women who put in long hours in their careers greatly increase their risk of developing life-threatening illnesses, including heart disease and cancer, a new study has shown.
>
> Work weeks that averaged 60 hours per week or more over three decades were found to triple the risk of diabetes, cancer, heart trouble and arthritis, according to new research from The Ohio State University.
>
> The risk begins to climb when women put in more than 40 hours and takes a decidedly bad turn above 50 hours, researchers found.
>
> Crucially the same pattern was not seen in men. In fact, they got healthier the longer they worked.
>
> […]Men who worked long hours had a higher incidence of arthritis, but none of the other chronic diseases.
>
> Surprisingly, those men who worked moderately long hours, 41 to 50 hours weekly, had lower risk of heart disease, lung disease and depression than those who worked 40 hours or fewer.

> […]The research was published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

Recently, I was very much in love with a woman I'll call Gertrude and I can remember thinking often about how much I wanted to work so that she wouldn't have to work. I wanted to go out there every day and make money for us both, so that she wouldn't have to face the world and all the pressures and difficulties of a job. I wanted her to stay safe at home and make the home comfortable and raise children who would respect their father and know and serve the Lord. There is something inside a man that translates love into "wanting to take away trouble from his woman", and that was a very strong feeling for me at the time. I did not mind that she worked before we married and before children arrived. I did not mind that she pursued advanced degrees after marriage, did things in the community, or organized Christian events at the university. I just didn't want her to have to face work. I wanted to protect and provide for her, and rescue her from work.

I think more women are expected to work today because government is so big that more taxes and more debt are needed to fund all the programs. That makes marriage and family harder to do on one man's salary. This also might be one reason why men are reluctant to marry. Every man knows for certain that a woman who does not work makes a gentler and more faithful wife and mother. A woman who works is inevitably going to have more stress, which makes being a good wife and mother harder. Women who work also cheat on their husbands more than women who don't work. My friend Dina tells me that about 90% of the women she works with withhold sex from their husbands, and many of those husbands have tuned out of the marriage, as a result of not getting their needs met. Some have gone on to have affairs, and that's to be expected, especially if the woman chose a man who had recreational premarital sex before she married him.

The bottom line is that through their voting and life decisions, women often create the very problems that they later blame on men. A little wisdom would go a long way.

Supreme Court upholds court of appeals ruling against Obama's executive amnesty

June 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people? The Weekly Standard explains.

Excerpt:

> The Court's annual term is drawing to a close, and the most closely watched case was, far and away,U.S. v. Texas—the Obama administration's attempt to overturn the lower courts' decisions blocking the administration's policy of non-enforcement of federal immigration laws.
>
> This case raised technical legal issues: whether the administration violated basic requirements of federal administrative law by failing to subject the policy to public notice and comment proceedings before adopting the policy; and whether Texas and other states have legal "standing" to challenge this policy in federal court.
>
> But above all else, this case drew attention because of the basic constitutional issue: namely, whether the president was violating his constitutional duty to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed," a duty reflected in the oath each president swears to "faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States," and "to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." (Or, in the case of President Obama's first inauguration, an obligation to which he nearly swore an oath, before swearing the full oath a day later.)
>
> Those basic constitutional principles made U.S. v. Texas not just the biggest

> constitutional case of the year, but the most significant separation-of-powers case in recent memory. Court watchers have been waiting for the Justices' opinions, although always under the risk that Justice Antonin Scalia's passing might leave the Court deadlocked four to four.
>
> Today, the Court issued its decision—or, more specifically, its non-decision. The Justices published no opinions. In a one-page, one-sentence order, the Court announced, simply, that "[t]he judgment is affirmed by an equally divided Court." The order was unsigned, and we don't know how the eight justices voted on the issues at hand—although one would begin by guessing that the Court broke along familiar lines, with Justices Ginsburg, Breyer, Sotomayor, and Kagan generally favoring the administration, and Chief Justice Roberts and Justices Thomas, Kennedy, and Alito favoring Texas. (The breakdown may well have been quite different on the question of Texas's standing to sue.)
>
> As a result, the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals' ruling against the administration stands, making today's immediate winners Texas and its fellow states. The litigation will return to the lower courts, where the case is still technically at a preliminary stage—that is, the courts granted Texas a "preliminary injunction" freezing the law while the case can be fully litigated. Yet the lower courts' decisions, while technically preliminary, were sufficiently firm in declaring the administration's policy unlawful that the Obama administration enjoys little hope of rescuing the policy before the end of President Obama's term.

Well, that's some good news, and this was an important non-decision. This isn't the first time that the President has broken the law – not by a long shot. His entire administration has been lawlessness after lawlessness. The refusal to defend the Defense of Marriage Act is one case, the persecution of conservative and Christian groups using the IRS is another. There are many more. This time, the SCOTUS finally stopped his abuse of power one time.

I wish we had a candidate running in this election who could be counted on to respect the Constitution and the rule of law, which Obama never did. Unfortunately, no matter which candidate wins, I think we can look forward to executive branch overreach.

Wayne Grudem explains male leadership in marriage

June 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

I'm not willing to take advice on this from most pastors, but Wayne Grudem is someone I respect because he does such a good job of applying the Bible to political issues. So he's practical.

Anyway, here is something he wrote that was shared by a newlywed couple I am friends with.

Excerpt:

> Someone might say, "Well, okay, fine. There's a leadership role for Adam, and I guess that means husbands should have a leadership role in their marriage of some sort. But how does it work? How does it work in practice?"
>
> In our own marriage, Margaret and I talk frequently and at length about many decisions. I can tell you that I wouldn't be here tonight unless Margaret and I had talked about this and asked the Lord about it, and she had given blessing to it, and said, "Yes, I think that's right." Sometimes we make large decisions such as buying a house or a car, and sometimes they are small decisions like where we should go for a walk together. I often defer to Margaret's wishes, and she often defers to mine because we love each other.
>
> In almost every case, each of us has some wisdom and insight that the other does not have. Usually, we reach agreement on the decisions that we make. Very seldom will I do something that she doesn't think is wise–I didn't say never. She prays; she trusts God; she loves God. She is sensitive to God's leading and direction, but in every decision, whether it large or small and whether we have reached agreement or not, the responsibility to make the decision still rests with me.

Now, I am not talking about every decision they make individually. Margaret controls a much larger portion of our budget than I do because all the things having to do with the household and food and clothing and house expenses and everything . . . she writes the checks and pays the bills. I take care of buying books and some things about the car. I have appointments during the day with students. She doesn't get involved in that. She has her own appointments. She has her own calendar. I don't get involved in trying to micromanage all of that. We have distinct areas of responsibility. I am not talking about those things. I don't get involved in those things unless she asks my counsel.

But in every decision that we make that affects us together or affects our family, the responsibility to make the decision rests with me. If there is genuine male headship, I believe there is a quiet acknowledgement that the focus of the decision making process is the husband, not the wife. Even though there will often be much discussion and there should be mutual respect and consideration of each other, ultimately the responsibility to make the decision rests with the husband. And so, in our marriage the responsibility to make the decision rests with me.

This is not because I am a wiser or more gifted leader. It is because I am the husband. God has given me that responsibility. It is very good. It brings peace and joy to our marriage, and both Margaret and I are thankful for it. Now, I need to add very quickly, men, this does not mean that a husband has the right to be a selfish leader.

Just about three years ago, maybe four years ago now, we started the decision making process. Margaret had been in an auto accident in Chicago. As part of the aftermath of that accident, she was experiencing some chronic pain that was aggravated by cold and humidity, and Chicago is cold in the winter and humid in the summer. Chicago was not a good place for that. Some friends said to us, "We have a second house in Mesa, Arizona, if you would ever like to go there and just use it as a vacation place, we would like you to do that."

So we did. We visited Arizona. Mesa is a suburb of Phoenix. Margaret felt better. It was hot, and it was dry. And so I said, "Wow, Margaret I would love to move here, but I am only trained to do one thing; I can teach at a seminary and that is it. There aren't any seminaries here." The next day Margaret was looking in the yellow pages–literally. She said, "Wayne, there's something here called Phoenix Seminary." One thing led to another and God was at work in that seminary, and it was starting to grow.

Then we went through a decision making process. When we were in the middle of that decision making process, on the very day that we were focusing on that, I came in my normal custom of reading through a section of scripture each day, I came to a Ephesians 5:28, "Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies."

> I thought if I would move to take a job in another city for the sake of my body, if I were experiencing the pain that Margaret had, and husbands should love their wives as their own bodies–then shouldn't I move? Shouldn't I be willing to move for Margaret's sake? That was really why we moved to Phoenix.

Anyway, Dina and I were talking the other night about what would happen if – hypothetically – we suddenly found ourselves stuck with a child and responsible for it's education. I said to Dina that I would have a meeting with her, and ask her to research all of the alternative forms of schooling, and look over the research on education and then come back with her recommendation about what would get us the most effectiveness for the least cost and risk. Dina said that she thought that was an excellent plan, but being the kind of person she is, she would not wait to be asked to do this, but would instead pro-actively go and do the work and then present it to me to make the decision. A wife is a chief of staff, she does the research. She has to know all the politics. She has to do the face to face conversations. She has to make all the calculations. She has to be good at putting aside her feelings and being logical and analytical, in order to get results.

I think a lot of people worry that male headship means that husbands will micromanage like a tyrant, but that's just wrong. That's not at all what a man learns about how to lead others, in his workplace. A man looks for a wife with skills and experience to solve these sorts of problems for him while he is out working, and without needing a lot of guidance or monitoring from him. Micromanaging makes them both less efficient and more stressed. The more education and work history she has before she marries, the better she will be at solving problems on her own initiative. I always encourage young women to study hard things and to do hard jobs, but to stop working when young children appear (the first five years of the child's life are critical). Learning hard things and doing hard jobs makes them more prepared for the roles of wife and mother.

Similarly, a wife does not want to choose a poor leader for a husband. She wants to choose someone who makes good decisions, and follows a plan through to a result. She should be looking at his decision making, especially in education, work and finances, and deciding whether he can do the male roles in a marriage. She should be looking at his leadership style and communication ability. These things are well-defined, and she should be able to assess his ability by looking at his life to see if anyone follows his lead at work or outside of work on anything that matters. Does he reach the goals that he plans to reach? Is he realistic about risks and costs? She has to do an assessment of his leadership ability, because if she marries him, he will be leading her. Naturally, she will have to know something about leadership first, and know something about men, and what men expect to achieve with their marriages. What is his plan?

The easiest way for a man to avoid marrying a woman who resists his leadership is to not marry her. And the easiest way for a woman to avoid marrying a man who does not delegate tasks to her that she is better at is to not marry him. We are responsible for these decisions. As long as you don't follow your feelings and intuitions, you'll be fine. Don't marry someone unless you have observed them demonstrating their ability to

do the marriage roles cheerfully and well.

Walt Russell explains how to read the Bible effectively

June 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Dr. Walt Russell's book on the subject of interpreting the Bible is called "Playing With Fire: How the Bible Ignites Change in Your Soul". I like that book, but I found four articles that summarize the main points of the book so people can understand how to read the Bible at a high livel.

Here is part one which talks about how postmodern relativism is at odds with discovering the original intent of an author.

Excerpt:

> Twenty-four year-old "Janet" (not her real name) was angry at my emphasis on seeking to discover authors' intentions when we read their texts. She was an evangelical Christian and a second grade teacher in a public school. She prided herself in helping her 20 students learn to love literature. She would read them a story as they gathered around her, and then ask each child, "What does the story mean to you?" She prodded them to come up with their own unique meanings. With such strong encouragement, the class of 20 would eventually have 20 different meanings for the one story. Janet sensed that I was a naysayer about such "love of literature." Pouring a little emotional gasoline on the fire, I said, "Janet, you're certainly doing your part to insure that these 7 year-olds will never recover from a radically relativistic view of meaning!" Now I had her full attention.

Here is part two which talks about the importance of knowing the genre of a text before

you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> “INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!” — the newspaper headline virtually screams out at you. The thought of something being slain is repulsive. You’re gripped by a mental image of southern India’s Bengal tiger. You imagine its beautiful face, its stripes and piercing eyes. Then your image is shattered by the sudden blast of a high-powered rifle. You see the exquisite creature writhe in pain, fall gracelessly in its tracks and die. Having read no further than the headline, you feel sick, as if you’ve witnessed something tragic.
>
> But *should* you feel this way? The slaughter of an endangered species — especially one as magnificent as the Bengal tiger — is horrifying, no doubt. But suppose you failed to notice that the headline “INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!” appeared in the *sports page* of the morning paper. Clearly enough, it now refers to different Indians, different Tigers and a different manner of slaying than you originally thought. And is it really that tragic that the Cleveland Indians badly beat the Detroit Tigers in a major league baseball game last night? Not unless you’re a long-suffering Detroit Tigers’ baseball fan. But how do you now know that the headline is about baseball and not tiger-slaying in India? You look at the words “INDIANS SLAY TIGERS” and you know exactly what each word means. When you combine these words, how can they not mean exactly what you first thought they did — that *Indians slay tigers*? Answer: because their meanings are communicated (as the meanings of *all* words are) through *genres*!

Here is part three which talks about the importance of reading the context of a verse before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> “Never Read a Bible Verse!” That’s the title of a little booklet my friend and Christian radio personality, Gregory Koukl, has written to help people read the Bible well. What great advice. “That’s right, never read a Bible verse. Instead, always read a paragraph — at least.” But the current is flowing the other way in our popular sound-bite culture. Not to be left out (or left behind!), the Church has its own version of sound-bite culture: *verse-bite culture*. In verse-bite culture we take a sentence or sentence-fragment from a biblical paragraph, memorize it out of context, write it on a little card, put it on a billboard, a plaque, a rock, etc. Somehow we think that just because this little chunk of Scripture has a verse number in front of it, it was meant to be a free-standing unit of thought. Nothing could be further from the truth.
>
> Apart from the fact that chapter and verse divisions weren’t added to the New Testament text until 1560 — long after the New Testament’s inspired authorship — there is a more important reason for never reading just a Bible verse, and instead reading at least the paragraph that contains it.

Here is part four which talks about the importance of applying the words of the Bible to your life.

One verse that is often misinterpreted is missing from the articles, but present in the STR lecture. It's Philippians 1:6 that says "6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus". Russell says in the lecture that this promise is specifically intended for the church in Philippi, to whom Paul is writing, not necessarily to all Christians. He is giving them a promise just after directly referring to their good work in supporting him in his ministry. Some verses are just not meant for us, and the context reveals it.

Author of Alberta's gay rights policy tweets anti-Christian hate propaganda

June 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley participating in the Edmonton Pride Parade

Watch this video from The Rebel Media about a story from Alberta, formerly known as the most conservative province in Canada.

There is a story up about it on The Rebel's web site:

> Kris Wells is an Assistant Professor and Faculty Director at the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services at the University of Alberta. […]Wells is also the author of the Alberta Government's controversial new homophobic and transphobic bullying and gay-straight alliance resources. He's a high profile activist the media's "go to" guy for everything LGBTQ.
>
> **Wells tweeted and soon deleted a cartoon that depicted Christians as the mass beheaders of gay people.** It was truly shocking. A week ago an Islamic terrorist shot 101 people, killing 49, in a gay bar. Not a Christian, but an Islamist. But the self appointed spokesperson for the LGBTQ community in Edmonton is so delusional [with] hate [for] Christians that he put them in the role of the ISIS murderer.
>
> Here's where it gets worse. The tweet Wells sent was even more reprehensible than just passing the blame for Islamic terror on to innocent Christians. The cartoon Wells tweeted was altered. The original cartoon was a Christian being beheaded by an ISIS fighter. Wells made the victims into the perpetrators and proudly tweeted it.
>
> But it's worse than that, if that's even possible. The cartoon, before it was shamefully doctored, was originally drawn to honour 21 real Coptic Christian

> Martyrs who were beheaded on a beach in Libya by ISIS fighters in 2015. The martyr's' last words were reportedly "Lord Jesus Christ" and the water on the beach ran red with their blood. And Kris wells, this self professed, anti bullying activist, co opted their memory, their victimhood, their bravery, their Christian martyrdom for himself and his cause. Then put these Christians who died for their faith at the hands of ISIS in the role of ISIS. Deranged.

Well, how did the Canadian news media react to anti-Christian hate speech by a prominent and politically-connected gay rights activist?

> **The media is dead silent.**
>
> Kris Wells is the man who drew up the government's anti bullying, anti homophobia literature that arguably violates religious freedoms in religious schools all across the province. And he hates Christians. That's clear.

He hates Christians, and he's teaching his beliefs at a major university, and writing government policy for a whole province.

You'll recall that over in Ontario, a more liberal province, their sex education curriculum was authored by a convicted child pornographer. The Governor of Ontario is a gay activist named Kathleen Wynne. Here she is marching in a gay pride parade with the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau:

Premier Kathleen Wynne and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

Previously, I blogged about how the Liberal government of Canada wants to imprison those who dissent and disagree with the transgender agenda for up to two years. There is no right to free speech in Canada. There is no right to free speech enshrined in their founding documents. Speech critical of the secular left's favored groups is criminalized.

Just ask Mark Steyn and Ezra Levant about being called before a “human rights” tribunal by the Canadian government, merely for speaking words that caused people on the left to feel bad. And of course, the system does not work in reverse – people who are religious or conservative have *never* had their complaints adjudicated. Because the laws and the courts don’t work for the “wrong” side. The money that Christians and conservatives pay in taxes is accepted, but the laws are not there to protect them.

Texas has sued the Obama administration 44 times for federal government overreach

June 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Governor Greg Abbott – "Broken But Unbowed"

Here is a left-leaning article from the Wall Street Journal about a Governor and an Attorney General who are not just marking time while in office.

Excerpt:

> When a deadlocked Supreme Court on Thursday blocked President Barack Obama's plan to give millions of illegal immigrants a temporary reprieve from deportation, it marked a pivotal victory for the administration's most relentless legal adversary: the state of Texas.
>
> The president "is not a king who can unilaterally change and write immigration laws," responded Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, whose myriad lawsuits against the Obama administration, including the state's lead role in the immigration case, have been a trademark of his political career.
>
> During Mr. Abbott's first term as governor, and while he was state attorney general before that, Texas has challenged the president's signature issues in court—tougher carbon-emission standards, health-care reform, transgender rights and others.
>
> Texas has sued the Obama administration at least 44 times since the president took office—more than any other state over the same period.
>
> The collective, long-term impact of all the lawsuits is uncertain. But legal scholars say the aggressiveness with which Texas under Mr. Abbott's watch has fought White House policies and regulations points to a major shift in how political fights are waged.

> Amid congressional gridlock, arguably the most consequential power struggles are no longer fights between executive and legislative branches—but legal battles between states and the federal government.
>
> “The action is in the courts, and it’s cases brought by the states. And Texas is almost always at the table,” said Case Western Reserve University law professor Jonathan Adler.
>
> Texas’ legal assault is part of a sweeping wave of state-level Republican activism that has marked the Obama years. Compared with the Clinton era, Republican attorneys general have been far more active in challenging federal polices, according to a recent Marquette University study on Supreme Court litigation.
>
> […]Most of the cases filed by Mr. Abbott and his Republican successor as attorney general,Ken Paxton, have turned on a broad theme of federalism: that the Obama administration has encroached on Texas’ right to manage its own affairs.
>
> […]In February, Texas scored another major victory when the Supreme Court blocked the administration’s marquee climate policy, halting enforcement of rules limiting carbon emissions from existing power plants.
>
> […]The most recent legal action came last month after the Obama administration directed public schools to let transgender students use the bathroom of their choice. Texas accused the administration of unlawfully rewriting federal discrimination law.
>
> […]“I like playing offense more than defense,” said Mr. Abbott in a recent interview while crisscrossing Texas aboard a private jet for various political events.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is also a hero. Here he is explaining to the Daily Signal his latest broadside against overreach by the liberal federal government;

Abbott is a former Texas Supreme Court Justice, and served 3 terms as Texas attorney general, so he is no stranger to the law. Although sometimes people get the perception that the Obama administration is not being challenged, that’s not true. You just have to know where to look for the people challenging him.

Ted Cruz holding Obama administration accountable for covering up Islamic terrorism

June 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Senator Ted Cruz

Last week, Ted Cruz decided to go after the Obama administration for covering up their deliberate weakness on Middle East foreign policy.

The Conservative Review reported on that:

> **Next Tuesday, June 28, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), who chairs the Judiciary Subcommittee on Oversight, Agency Action, Federal Rights and Federal Courts, will conduct a hearing investigating the willful blindness on the part of the relevant law enforcement agencies to domestic Islamic terror networks. The subject of the hearing is "Willful Blindness: Consequences of Agency Efforts To De-emphasize Radical Islam in Combating Terrorism."**
>
> […]This hearing will likely focus on which figures within the federal government worked to squelch any research connecting the dots between local Muslim Brotherhood officials, these individual terrorists, and foreign terror networks. Senators on the committee now have an opportunity to expose the Muslim Brotherhood influence within DHS and the FBI, their invidious "Countering Violent Extremism" Agenda, and their hand in covering up counter-terrorism investigations. They can demonstrate how the federal government has hamstrung local law enforcement by refusing to cooperate and share information regarding jihadists living in their communities.

That hearing is happening tomorrow. If you want more details on what Cruz will talk

about, you can read an op-ed that he wrote detailing his views here.

He writes:

> President Obama's politically correct reluctance to attribute the terrorist threat we face with radical Islam hobbles our ability to combat it by discouraging counterterrorism agents from taking radical Islam into account when evaluating potential threats. The examples of Fort Hood, Boston, San Bernardino, and Orlando demonstrate the harmful consequences of this administration's willful blindness.
>
> For example, before the **Fort Hood** massacre, the Obama administration knew that Nidal Hasan had been in communication with a radical Islamic cleric, Anwar al-Awlaki. The Obama administration knew that Nidal Hasan had asked al-Awlaki about the permissibility of waging jihad against his fellow soldiers. All of that was known beforehand, and yet the administration did nothing. Nidal Hasan went on to murder 14 innocent souls, yelling "Allahu Akbar" as he pulled the trigger. And yet, just to underscore the blindness of this administration, even after the terror attack, the administration insisted on characterizing the attack as "workplace violence."
>
> With respect to the **Boston bombing**, Russia had informed the Obama administration that the Tsarnaev brothers were connected with radical Islamic terrorism. The administration knew that. The FBI had even gone and interviewed them. And yet once again, the administration dropped the ball. It stopped monitoring them, so the government wasn't even aware when the elder Tsarnaev brother posted a public call to jihad on YouTube.
>
> **San Bernardino** is yet another example of the administration's abhorrent handling of the threat of radical Islamic terrorism. Once again, the administration had ample information about the individuals in question. The female terrorist had given the administration a fake address in Pakistan, and yet the so-called vetting that this administration tells us it did had failed to discover that it was a fake address. She had made calls for jihad, and yet the administration failed to discover that.

> And finally, as far as the events in **Orlando** last weekend, Omar Mateen was reportedly interviewed not once, not twice, but three times by the FBI in 2013 and 2014. The FBI interviewed him because he was talking at his place of employment, which, ironically, was a contractor to the Department of Homeland Security about his connection to terrorist organizations.

I've blogged about all four of these before, but no one is confronting the Obama administration about them, and making them pay for their moral relativism in the court of public opinion. Now Ted Cruz is going to hammer them at the highest level.

But that's not all. Here's another story from Conservative Review.

It says:

> One week after Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) introduced legislation to fine the State Department for delaying its annual report on Iran's human rights record, the Obama administration is acceding to his demand and finally producing the report.
>
> After delaying the release of the report since late February, apparently in an effort to play nice with Iran, the State Department is scheduled to release the report on Thursday. This comes just one week after Cruz introduced the *Human Rights Accountability Act*, which would have cut the State Department's budget by 5% for every month they continued to delay release of the report. Cruz's tactic of shaming the administration for their appeasement and enacting deserved consequences has similarly netted results earlier this month when the Department of Defense was forced to release the annual report on the military power of Iran – another report they delayed for months.

Now, I have some Democrat friends at work, and I asked them what the Obama administration was doing specifically to protect taxpayers from the threat of radical Islamic terrorism. And they had no answer. What we've seen instead is a concerted effort by the Obama administration to cover up the connections between actual terrorist attacks and radical Islam, to punish those who point out the facts linking terrorism and radical Islam, and to shame those who had nothing to do with the attacks as being somehow guilty of them. I would like to see some light shed on how far up the chain these attitudes go, so we can get some accountability.

Study: government-run pre-school programs fail to produce expected results

June 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

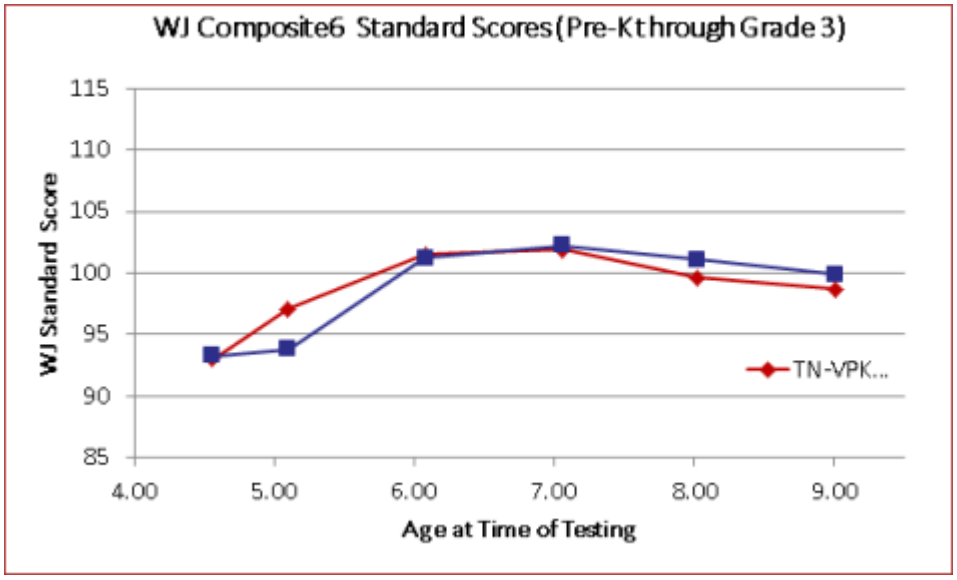

TNVPK data: pre-K program is in red, baseline is in blue

The Heritage Foundation talks about three recent studies on government-run pre-K programs.

> **The Head Start Impact Study.** In late 2012, the Department of Health and Human Services released the Head Start Impact Study, a scientifically rigorous evaluation that tracked 5,000 three-year-old and four-year-old children through the end of third grade. The study found little to no impact on the parenting practices or the cognitive, social-emotional, and health outcomes of participants. Notably, on a few measures, access to Head Start had harmful effects on participating children.[7] For both the three-year-old and four-year-old cohorts, access to Head Start had no statistically measurable effects on any measure of cognitive ability, including reading, language, and math.[8] In other words, by the time they finished third grade, there was no difference between those children who attended Head Start and the control group of their peers who did not.
>
> **Vanderbilt Tennessee Voluntary Pre-K Study.** In 2015, a team of researchers from Vanderbilt University released an evaluation of Tennessee's Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) Program, a state-subsidized preschool program open to low-income children in the state. Some 18,000 children participate in the program, which was introduced in 1996. Proponents have long claimed Tennessee's VPK program is a model state-based preschool program, with standards aligned to the Obama Administration's Preschool for All initiative.[9] Teachers must be licensed, the child-adult ratio is limited to 10:1, and a structured "age-appropriate" curriculum must be used in classrooms. The program is available first to children from low-income Tennessee families, and

then, space permitting, to children with special needs and children with limited English proficiency, among other children deemed “at-risk.” An earlier evaluation found that gains made by participating four-year-olds had faded by kindergarten. In a follow-up evaluation released in September 2015, Mark Lipsey, Dale Farrar, and Kerry Hofer reported that there were no sustained benefits for the same children through the end of third grade.[10]

[…]The authors analyzed the VPK program’s impact on children’s math skills, emergent literacy, and language skills, as well as the program’s impact on non-cognitive measures, such as behavior. “By the end of kindergarten, the control children had caught up to the TN-VPK children and there were no longer significant differences between them on any achievement measures. The same result was obtained at the end of first grade using both composite achievement measures.” And notably, by second grade, “the groups began to diverge with the TN-VPK children scoring lower than the control children on most of the measures. The differences were significant on both achievement composite measures and on the math subtests.” “Pre-K was generally thought to be better than Head Start, but that doesn’t seem to be the case in Tennessee,” stated University of California, Berkeley professor David L. Kirp in *The New York Times*.[11]

The findings of the TN-VPK program were not limited to academic outcomes. As Lipsey et al. explain:

In terms of behavioral effects, in the spring the first grade teachers reversed the fall kindergarten teacher ratings. First grade teachers rated the TN-VPK children as less well prepared for school, having poorer work skills in the classrooms, and feeling more negative about school. It is notable that these ratings preceded the downward achievement trend we found for VPK children in second and third grades.[12]

Quebec’s Negative Non-cognitive Results. The province of Quebec introduced universal low-cost day care for children through age four beginning in 1997. The program has had a large impact: privately funded child care arrangements have almost disappeared, and Quebec has the highest rate of subsidized child care in Canada, at 58 percent in 2011.[13] The program caused a 14.5 percent increase in the share of mothers of young children working outside the home.[14] The Quebec experience offers more guidance for the potential introduction of universal child care than small, targeted programs, because it implicitly includes indirect effects on non-participants and any general equilibrium effects due to the drastic shift in the way child care was funded and conducted.

Regrettably, new research has found that children who became eligible for the program in Quebec were more anxious as children and have committed more crimes as teenagers. The availability of day care clearly worsened children’s non-cognitive “soft” skills.

> Michael Baker, Jonathan Gruber, and Kevin Milligan found that children exposed to the program were 4.6 percent more likely to be convicted of a crime and 17 percent more likely to commit a drug crime. Their health and life satisfaction were worse.

The programs are sold as a way of improving children's abilities, but the studies show that it doesn't work that way. So why do we have these programs?

Democrats like these programs because they transfer wealth from taxpayers to government, hire more government workers, and get children away from the "harmful" influence of their parents. It allows the government workers to push the agenda of the wealthy donors who back the Democrat politicians, e.g. – the abortion providers, the gay rights activists, the terrorism apologists, the global warming alarmists, the radical feminists, the socialist wealth redistributors, etc.

Is the probability of getting a universe that supports complex life 100%?

June 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

Let's have a quick review of the famous fine-tuning argument to start.

The argument from cosmic fine-tuning looks at various constants and quantities in our universe that are set at particular values and notes that if any of the values of these constants and quantities were to change, then complex embodied life of any kind could not exist. The argument is fully in line with the standard Big Bang cosmology, and is based on mainstream science.

There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) constants and 2) quantities. These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life. There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design. Law is rejected because the numerical values of constants and quantities are set at the beginning of the universe – when there was no matter, space or time. The values of the constants and quantities were not determined by anything causally prior to the moment the universe began to exist. Chance is not a good explanation, because the probabilities are far, far too small for us to reasonably believe them (e.g. – the chance is 1 in X, where X is much higher than the number of subatomic particles in the visible universe). Since the fine-tuning is not due to law or chance, it must be due to design.

Here's one example of something that is set correctly to allow complex, embodied life from The New Scientist:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe's birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If

> the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Changing the value at all means there would be no complex, embodied life of any kind anywhere in this universe.

Here's a quick video clip to explain what The New Scientist is saying:

Now, this is going to surprise you, but there are some non-theists who try to argue that the finely-tuned constants and quantities that were set up at the beginning of the universe – long before we ever existed – are actually explained by our existence *today.*

Atheist Jeffery Lowder summarizes a debate between William Lane Craig and Doug Jesseph, and Jesseph says something like this:

> Craig's argument is like asking the question, "What are your chances of landing in a universe hospitable to life, assuming you were tossed into any old universe whatever." That is precisely not the point. It's presupposed in the question that you're already in a universe which favors life. Confuses conditional probability with unconditional probability.

Unlike me, Lowder is never snarky in his summaries, so this is guaranteed to be accurate.

Here's what Dr. William Lane Craig says to that idea that our being here explains the fine-tuning:

> Now some people have tried to avoid this conclusion by saying that we really shouldn't be surprised at the enormous improbability of the fine-tuning of the universe because, after all, if the universe were not fine-tuned then we wouldn't be here to be surprised about it. Given that we are here we should expect the universe to be fine-tuned. But I think the fallacy of this reasoning can be made clear simply by a parallel illustration. Imagine that you were traveling abroad in a third world country and you were arrested on trumped up drug charges, and you were dragged in front of a firing squad of 100 trained marksmen, all with rifles aimed at your heart to be executed. And you hear the command given – "Ready, aim, fire!" And you hear the deafening roar of the guns. And then you observe that you are still alive, that all of the 100 marksmen missed! Now, what would you conclude? Well, I guess I really shouldn't be surprised that they all missed; after all, if they hadn't all missed I wouldn't be here to be surprised about it. Given that I am here, I should expect them all to miss. Of course not. You would

> immediately suspect that they all missed on purpose. That the whole thing was a set up engineered by some person for some reason. And in exactly the same way, given the incomprehensible improbability of the fine-tuning of the initial conditions for intelligent life, it is rational to believe that this is not the result of chance but of design.

Does it make sense? It's true that any arrangement of bullet holes in a condemned spy is as unlikely as any other, but the vast majority of possible arrangements of 100 bullet holes result in you being dead. Being marksmen, the shooters definitely know how to hit a target at close range. It doesn't matter if some hit your head and some hit your heart and some hit your throat – the most common consequence of a hundred bullets fired by expert marksmen at you is "dead you" – regardless of the specific arrangement of bullet holes. If you find yourself not dead, that requires an explanation. The explanation is design.

Study: relationship problems, not family rejection, leading cause of higher gay suicides

June 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Life Site News reports.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> While many assume that family rejection is the leading cause of depression among LBGTI individuals, a new study has found that in fact the problem appears to stem predominantly from the higher incidence of relationship problems among homosexuals.
>
> Dr. Delaney Skerrett led a team of researchers from the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP) in studying suicides in Queensland. He found that a leading cause of suicide among "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex" (LGBTI) people is stress from their romantic partners.
>
> "We tend to assume that the psychological distress LGBTI people are often going through is due to family rejection. But it seems that's not so much the case. The conflict seems to be largely related to relationship problems, with partners," Dr. Skerrett said.
>
> In fact, he said, "The numbers are telling us there's a general acceptance at the family level," something he said is "great" and "really heartening!"
>
> Instead, the study, which was published on April 2 in *Asia Pacific Psychiatry*, found that "LGBT individuals experienced relationship problems more often" than heterosexuals, "with relationship conflict also being more frequent than in non-LGBT cases."

> That confirms previous studies finding that homosexuals also face higher rates of intimate partner violence than heterosexuals. A 2007 study in the *Journal of Urban Health*, which is published by the New York Academy of Medicine, found that 32 percent of homosexuals have been abused by at least one partner during their lifetime.
>
> The researchers with AISRAP also found that a higher percentage of homosexuals took their lives [out] of despondency, rather than other psychological illnesses. While one-eighth of all Queensland suicide victims had been diagnosed with a psychosis that impaired their judgment, Skerrett reports "there were no such diagnoses among LGBT individuals." The conclusion adds to the consensus that depression disproportionately besets active homosexuals.

Previously, I blogged about a gay activist who thought that disagreement with gay rights caused gays to commit suicide. I wonder what he would do with a study like this? I also blogged previously about the "epidemic" of domestic violence among gays, and the article I linked to for that was from the left-leaning Atlantic Monthly.

But there's more to say – let's look at an individual case now, which will put some meat on the bones of the studies.

Here's an article from the liberal New York Times.

Here's the set up:

> BOB BERGERON was so relentlessly cheery that people sometimes found it off-putting. If you ran into him at the David Barton Gym on West 23rd Street, where he worked out nearly ever morning at 7, and you complained about the rain, he would smile and say you'd be better off focusing on a problem you could fix.
>
> That's how Mr. Bergeron was as a therapist as well, always upbeat, somewhat less focused on getting to the root of his clients' feelings than altering behavior patterns that were detrimental to them: therapy from the outside-in.
>
> Over the last decade, he built a thriving private practice, treating well-to-do gay men for everything from anxiety to coping with H.I.V. Mr. Bergeron had also begun work as a motivational speaker, giving talks at gay and lesbian centers in Los Angeles and Chicago. In February, Magnus Books, a publisher specializing in gay literature, was scheduled to print a self-help guide he had written, "The Right Side of Forty: The Complete Guide to Happiness for Gay Men at Midlife and Beyond."
>
> It was a topic he knew something about. Having come out as gay in the mid-1980s, Mr. Bergeron, 49, had witnessed the worst years of the AIDS epidemic and emerged on the other side. He had also seen how few public examples there were of gay men growing older gracefully.
>
> He resolved to rewrite the script, and provide a toolbox for better living.
>
> "I've got a concise picture of what being over 40 is about and it's a great perspective filled with happiness, feeling sexy, possessing comfort relating to

> other men and taking good care of ourselves," Mr. Bergeron said on his Web site. "This picture will get you results that flourish long-term."
>
> But right around New Year's Eve, something went horribly wrong. On Jan. 5, Mr. Bergeron was found dead in his apartment, the result of a suicide that has left his family, his friends and his clients shocked and heartbroken as they attempt to figure out how he could have been so helpful to others and so unable to find help himself.

Look:

> To his friends, Mr. Bergeron maintained a positive tone. He went on vacation, dated some, visited museums.
>
> Still, he privately expressed misgivings about what the future held. Olivier Van Doorne, a patient of Mr. Bergeron and the creative director of SelectNY, a fashion advertising firm, recalled Mr. Bergeron telling him that every gay man peaks at one point in his life.
>
> "He said a number of times: 'I peaked when I was 30 or 35. I was super-successful, everyone looked at me, and I felt extremely cool in my sexuality.' "
>
> Mr. Siegel, the therapist who supervised Mr. Bergeron in the early days of his career, said: "Bob was a very beautiful younger man, and we talked a lot about how that shapes and creates a life. The thesis of his book is based very much on his own personal experience with that. And the book also emphasized what to do when you're not attractive or you no longer have the appeal you once had. The idea was to transcend that and expand your sexual possibilities."

And:

> With the book about to be printed, Mr. Bergeron became convinced that he'd written too much about the shame and isolation involved with hooking up online; that people weren't even really doing that anymore, now that phone apps like Grindr and Scruff had come along.
>
> His book, he felt, had become antiquated before it even came out.
>
> […]Though some of his friends, Mr. Rappaport among them, wondered whether drugs were involved, leading to a crash Mr. Bergeron did not anticipate, the suicide seemed to have been carried out with methodical precision. On an island in the kitchen, Mr. Bergeron had meticulously laid out his papers. There was a pile of folders with detailed instructions on top about whom to call regarding his finances and his mortgage. Across from that he placed the title page of his book, on which he also wrote his suicide note. In it he told Mr. Sackheim and Mr. Rappaport that he loved them and his family, but that he was "done."
>
> As his father remembered it, Mr. Bergeron also wrote, "It's a lie based on bad information."
>
> An arrow pointed up to the name of the book.

> The inference was clear. As Mr. Bergeron saw it at the end of his life, the only right side of 40 was the side that came before it.

I think that the problem is that in the gay lifestyle, you have a typically male emphasis on physical appearance, sex and pleasure. There is none of the moderating influence of women, which tends to push men into commitments, responsibility and stability. Stuff that provides fulfillment and meaning and purpose after you lose your youth and appearance.

If you really love a person, then you don't tell them that the dangerous thing they want to do is not dangerous. That's not love. It's easier for you to approve of them and be liked by everyone, but it's not love.

Are young, unmarried women sincere about wanting to be married “some day”?

June 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students puking in toilet

Here’s a useful video for learning about what men think of marriage now that radical feminism has redefined it:

This comment about the video by Gaza on the Elusive Wapiti blog deserves a post of it’s own, so here it is:

> One thing that Helen seems to miss is how women value and prioritize marriage and what role this plays vis a vis the male corollary.
>
> The “story” isn’t just about men being “on strike” or even (to Helen’s credit) rationally choosing to delay and/or avoid; it must also include how women treat marriage WRT their own valuation and prioritization and life decisions (NOT merely stated desires).
>
> There are not swarms of 25 y/o female college-grads looking for a husband with no willing men within sight. There are, however, swarms of 25 y/o/ female college-grads looking to have fun, travel, chase dreams, build careers, and explore their options.
>
> I’ve “dated” a few of these women; most (and their social circles included) are so

focused on the self-indulgence ("experience") and the status associated with sexual conquest/power that any mention of marriage is usually as a joke (enter the "boyfriends/husbands are boring/stupid/lazy" meme); marriage is merely some distant thing to be acquired at some seemingly distant age.

Sure, over time (cue: the wall), the distant thing becomes a stated desire, but the transition from stated-desire to behavioral change and actual prioritization often takes years. I meet women well into their 30's who still can't alter their behaviors to demonstrate congruence with their stated desires.

But that is when we start to hear how important marriage is, how men are avoiding commitment, why men should value marriage. All bacon-wrapped in various shaming mechanisms. The women singing the "Man-up and marry me" tune are not the 25 y/o versions; they are too busy singing the "you go girl" showtunes, exactly as prescribed by the Sandberg, lean-in, [binge drinking, continuous alpha male hookups, alpha male cohabitation], [and later, jump off the carousel into a marriage to a beta provider that makes her perpetually feel that she married down compared to the alphas that she used to hookup with while drunk].

So we can plainly see how something is valued based on the prioritization of one's choices. Most young women value marriage as an idea, as a capstone to her personal journey; an indicator of status and achievement but not as a goal in-of-itself and not as a life decision that supersedes the accumulation of personal experience, the flexing her sexual and relationship power, or the kindling her optionality.

These women desire to "hang-out" with the most attractive men they can, under any number of relationship approximations while pursuing their personal journeys and then suddenly desire to elevate commitment and marriage as something paramount, right around the same time their ability to define and opt-in/out of those indulgent relationship approximations wanes. Hmm.

After 10+ years of treating men and relationships as consumable commodities, marriage is now so valuable? So sacred that it will magically be more robust in the face of challenges, requiring more giving and less taking than those previous marital approximations, and yet because it is now a "Marriage", it won't be treated as merely a vehicle for the pursuit of her apparently perpetually fleeting "happiness"? Convince me.

There is a false premise at work that assumes that it is men who are devaluing marriage. Sure, there is some truth to this, but woman are messaging their own valuation of marriage as well; in real-time, often in very overt means and often at

> the expense of men who are still clinging to some idealistic view of marriage.
>
> And likely those are the very men who are willing and able to be husbands at 25. The very same men who will grow to become self-sufficient 35 y/o men feeling their own blossoming optionality, harvesting their own "experiences" with the 25 y/o versions of the suddenly-marriage-minded women, while a decade of observational and experiential evidence of what women truly value buries what remains of their marital idealism.
>
> Tl:dr
> I'd consider marriage to a woman who has demonstrated through her choices, prioritization, sacrifice and delayed gratification that marriage is valuable to her and who can articulate how it would be valuable to me. [not holding breath]

What do you think? Is that something that you are seeing more of in the current generation of young, unmarried women? I have to confess, I see a lot of emphasis among Christian women on short-term missions trips and on careers, but not much planning on how to be prepared for marriage. In my experience, there is not much preparation work going on, and marriage is put off later and later. This is despite the fact that a woman's fertility declines starting at age 27 and is pretty much dead at 35. IVF is very expensive, but has a higher risk of birth defects and and can often lead to too many embryos, some of which will then need to be aborted. Men respond to incentives, and they have certain things they are looking for out of a wife and marriage.

It would be nice if there were some wisdom being transferred from older, married women to young, unmarried women, but I don't see it happening. What I see happening is young women, including ones raised in Christian homes, going off to college to binge drink and hookup and cohabitate, and always expressing the desire for marriage "some day". But marriage is something you prepare for early with every decision. Some decisions are not good preparation for marriage. I get the impression that young, unmarried women think that marriage is "boring" and not the way to "make a difference", and so in practice, they are trying other things.

Remember, the offer that a woman such as Gaza describes to a man is not the same as the offer of marriage that was made by 20-year-old women in the 1950s.

Marriage used to mean:

> - Being the legally and socially recognized head of the household.
> - An expectation of regular sex.
> - Legal rights to children.
> - Lifetime commitment.
> - That you are guaranteed a chaste bride on your wedding night.

Men liked the original version of marriage without the modern debasements. Should they

feel obligated to settle for the new version of marriage which is influenced by radical feminism? I would have to be convinced. Women are kidding themselves if they think that they can do anything they want and wait as long as they want and still be as attractive to men.

Supreme Court upholds vicious anti-Christian decision by 9th Circuit CA

June 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama speaking to Planned Parenthood

Free speech and religious liberty hero David French wrote about the Stormans family case on Tuesday, in National Review.

Just as a preliminary comment, I really like how upset David French is sounding lately. I have written posts in the pasts where I was upset, and said things that I wanted to take back. And I have a whole herd of editors who regularly tell me if the drafts that I send them are "too mean". But this article by Mr. French has some comments that were I think a little over the edge, but that's just fine with me. I liked it a lot. It's time to be direct and say what is really motivating the secular left.

He says:

> Today the Supreme Court declined to hear one of the most extraordinary and plainly vicious anti-Christian cases I've ever seen. My friends and colleagues at the Alliance Defending Freedom represent the Stormans family, owner's of an Olympia, Washington, pharmacy called Ralph's Thriftway. The Stormans — like many Christians pharmacists — decline to fill prescriptions for abortifacients (drugs that can kill a fertilized egg, often by preventing implantation). When customers request abortifacients, the Stormans decline to fill the prescription and then refer them to one of "more than 30 other pharmacies within five miles of Ralph's."

> This process is entirely conventional and normal. Indeed, it was so mundane that the state of Washington stipulated that "facilitated referrals do not pose a threat to timely access to lawfully prescribed medications." In other words, the fact that the Stormans refuse to sell abortifacients didn't cause a single person to lose access to the drug of their choice. But to anti-Christian bigots, it is intolerable that Christian professionals exist unless they bow the knee to the Baal of the sexual revolution, so Washington's governor took action — demanding that the Washington State Board of Pharmacy issue regulations that required pharmacists to issue abortifacients regardless of religious or moral objections. In his dissent from the Court's denial of certiorari, Justice Alito described the state's anti-religious motivations:
>
> The District Court found that the regulations were adopted with "the predominant purpose" to "stamp out the right to refuse" to dispense emergency contraceptives for religious reasons. Among other things, the District Court noted the following. When the Board began to consider new regulations, the Governor of the State "sent a letter to the Board opposing referral for personal or conscientious reasons." The State Human Rights Commission followed with "a letter threatening Board members with personal liability if they passed a regulation permitting referral" for religious or moral reasons. And after the Board initially voted to adopt rules allowing referrals for reasons of conscience, the Governor not only sent another letter opposing the draft rules but "publicly explained that she could remove the Board members" if need be.

Ah, yes. The "Human Rights Commissions" that exist in so many countries, whose primary purpose is to stamp out the basic human rights of Bible-believing Christians using the power of the state.

The governor in question, by the way, is Christine Gregoire, who narrowly defeated a wonderful conservative a while back named Dino Rossi in 2004, and then defeated him again by a larger margin in 2008. I wonder how many "Christians" voted for Gregoire in Washington state in those elections. Rossi favors an exception for the Christian pharmacists.

More:

> Christian pharmacists could either comply with state demands or close their pharmacies — an action that could actually "reduce patient access to medication by forcing some pharmacies—particularly small, independent ones that often survive by providing specialty services not provided elsewhere—to close."
>
> **Predictably, the Ninth Circuit sided with the state. Just as predictably, our pitiful Supreme Court let the ruling stand. So Washington gets away with its pure anti-Christian animus, and it establishes a state religion to the god of sex. While Washington is an outlier (for now), it is showing Blue America the path forward — and any red state governor who refuses to defend religious liberty is completely without excuse. They**

> **can’t rely on federal courts to cover for their own lack of courage and conviction. As for the church? If it keeps gutlessly delegating defense of its liberties entirely to lawyers and politicians, then it will richly deserve its legal fate. It’s time to take a stand.**

So, in the state of Washington, one of the most liberal and secular states in the union, you can’t be a Christian and be a pharmacist.

I think what French is trying to say there is that groups like the ADF and the ACLJ have been a thin line of resistance to judicial tyranny for many years, but Christians are not helping things by voting for Democrats – usually because they are looking for a handout from the government at their neighbor’s expense. Remember, Obama got Supreme Court picks when he was elected and then re-elected. People who voted for Obama voted for a more liberal Supreme Court – and the persecution of real Christians, like the Stormans.

You can read more about the case from the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) web site. And the Daily Signal has more about the history of the case.

Now, keep in mind that this is the same state that is going after a Christian florist who referred her a gay customer to another florist for their wedding. She had served him faithfully for years, but when she turned him away for their wedding, then the state decided to go after her for her life savings and business. Never live in this immoral state.

Canadian court rules that Christian university cannot uphold Christian moral values

June 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Election 2015: Socialists in red, Communists in Orange, Conservatives in blue

This article about religious liberty in Canada is from Vancouver Sun. (H/T Glenn)

Excerpt:

> Ontario's top court has dismissed an appeal from a private Christian university that forbids sexual intimacy outside heterosexual marriage, denying its proposed law school accreditation in the province.
>
> The ruling from the Ontario Court of Appeal on Wednesday dealt a significant blow to Trinity Western University in a legal battle which pitted freedom of religion against equality rights.
>
> A panel of three appeal court judges found that while the university's religious freedom had been infringed upon, the institution discriminated against the LGBTQ community.
>
> Trinity Western — which is fighting similar cases at appeal courts in Nova Scotia and British Columbia — expressed disappointment at the ruling, saying it would be taking its fight to the Supreme Court of Canada.
>
> The Ontario case saw the Evangelical Christian institution based in Langley go up against the Law Society of Upper Canada after the regulatory body voted not to accredit the university's planned law facility.
>
> At the heart of the dispute was Trinity Western's "community covenant" or code of conduct, which all students are required to agree to.

The key point about the code of conduct is that it doesn't discriminate against any particular group, e.g. – LGBT. It also forbids excessive drinking and premarital sex by heterosexuals:

> **It includes requiring students to abstain from gossip, obscene language, prejudice, harassment, lying, cheating, stealing, pornography, drunkenness and sexual intimacy "that violates the sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman."**

Now read this next part carefully. Although there was no legal support for denying a Christian university religious liberty and freedom of association, there was the hurt feelings of the LGBTQ community:

> **"The part of TWU's Community Covenant in issue in this appeal is deeply discriminatory to the LGBTQ community, and it hurts," the appeal court ruling said. "The LSUC's decision not to accredit TWU was indeed a reasonable conclusion."**

In Canada "it hurts" means the end of human rights like religious liberty and freedom of association. Why? Because the Christian community in Canada has – for decades – voted to increase the size of government at the expense of liberty, in order to get free stuff. It doesn't matter if the Christians who wanted a Christian university are hurt. Or that the Christian students at TWU are hurt. Only the hurt of the LGBT community matters, and their hurt changes laws, criminalizes dissent and annihilates natural rights. There are no such things as freedom of religion and freedom of conscience in Canada. There never was free speech, either. Anything that might hurt the feelings of left-wing groups has to be made criminal.

I'll put this as plainly as anyone can: Canadian "Christians" have been voting to transfer wealth and power to a big secular government for years. They wanted government to cover health care, and now the government thinks that health care is providing free sex changes, free IVF and free abortions. Canadian "Christians" wanted their 30 pieces of silver more than they wanted the freedom to act as if the Bible was true in public. It turns out that the more wealth and power that you transfer to a secular government, the more likely they are to abuse that wealth and power in trampling out any ideology that interferes with their buying votes from their favored special interest groups.

Are Christians responsible for making plans and making good decisions?

July 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful post on decision making and the will of God posted on Neil's blog. In his post, Neil explains the Biblical model for making good decisions.

Excerpt:

> **Really short version:** Aside from direct and clear personal revelation from God, you don't have access to his sovereign will when making decisions. Therefore you must look at other factors. **If it isn't moral, don't do it. If it is moral but not wise, don't do it. If it is moral and wise, then use your personal preferences.**
>
> Using this model you can end up with a wise and biblical decision, but you have avoided the traps of the "God told me to ____" routine. People who run around saying that God told them this and that convey a super-spirituality that can leave less mature believers wondering if they really have a relationship with God (i.e., "God doesn't tell me every little thing to do, so maybe I don't really know him.").

He has a helpful picture posted as well:

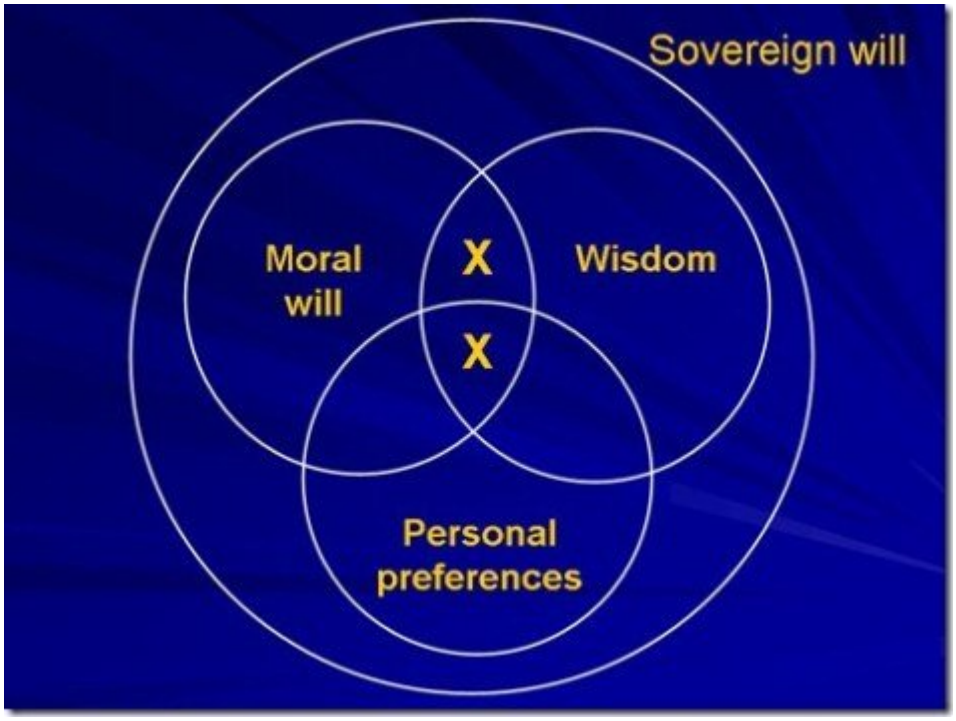

This is actually a very important topic for me, because I like making plans and making good decisions. I like being the quarterback or squad leader of my own life. I like to pick objectives and then make plans to achieve them. (Nothing too exotic, just simple stuff like saving money or reading more books)

Actually, I really oppose the idea that God has a magical fairy tale will for each person that will make them happy and fulfilled. For me, life isn't like that. I don't expect God to

lead me along like a child at a scavenger hunt. I expect to survey the battlefield where I am and then *do something* to make a difference. There are lots of things you can do that will please God. Should you focus on your career and sponsor apologetics conferences? Or should you use your spare time preparing Sunday school lessons? *There are lots of good things you could do to please God*. Your job is to pick the one that will be the most effective. It doesn't matter if it makes you happy, it only matters if it's effective and if you are good at it.

Who is Rifleman Dodd?

A while back, I was busily working my way through the U.S. Marine Corps Official Reading List, and I came across a book by C.S. Forester called *Rifleman Dodd*, or alternatively titled *Death to the French*. It's a work of historical fiction that takes place during the Napoleonic wars. The story is about a British marksman named Dodd, who is cut off from his own lines during a withdrawal maneuver. He is subsequently left to fend for himself behind enemy lines. An ordinary man might be full of despair and forget about his mission entirely. But Dodd is no ordinary man. Not only does he find a way to survive by finding food to eat, water to drink and places to sleep, but he also tries to remember his orders and to think about what he can do to advance the cause of his General, the Duke of Wellington.

Here's an excerpt from a gritty book review:

> It's about a green-coated British infantry rifleman in the Napoleonic Wars, an age when rifles were a novelty and most of the army was red-coated and carried muskets. Private Matthew Dodd gets separated from his regiment during a retreat and finds himself stranded behind enemy (French) lines in Portugal. With the occasional aid of some natives, but mostly on his own, he harasses the French with his rifle and tries to prevent them from building a bridge across the Tagus River. It's a remarkable tale of survival and solitary achievement, of a rank-and-file soldier who lives by his wits and slowly learns to make plans without orders, and shows leadership qualities and a knowledge of warfare.

I think we're in the same situation as Dodd.

There is no point in us looking for breadcrumb trails to happiness at this point. That's not the point of Christianity. The point of Christianity is friendship with God, imitation of Christ, honoring moral obligations, self-sacrificial love for your neighbor (and even your enemies!), and dedication to the truth – whether anyone else likes you or not. It's not supposed to make you happy, and it's not necessarily going to be a normal life like everyone else has. Things may not work out the way you'd like them to.

We seem to be making such a big deal about compassion and forgiveness in the Christian life these days – such a big emphasis on our feelings. Almost like we have forgotten that we have obligations to our friend – and his objectives. A relationship doesn't mean that one person completely disregards the character and goals of the other person and then is automatically granted forgiveness whenever they want it. That's not a friendship – that's

using someone else for your own ends. Maybe it’s time to remember what this is all about.

Alistair Begg preaches on practicality and initiative in the story of Ruth

July 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

I finished listening to Alistair Begg's series on Esther, and I'm now on to his series on Ruth. Sermon #3 stood out to me, because it touches on the important issues of free will vs determinism as well as the two methods of seeking God's will: mysticism vs wisdom.

The discussion centers around Ruth's decision to go to the barley fields to work, in order to get something to eat.

The MP3 file is here.

Here is the description:

> When we're facing a future devoid of prospects or possibilities, it's easy to become overwhelmed and discouraged. Ruth could relate. She was a penniless widow in a foreign land seeking a way to provide for herself and her widowed mother-in-law. Her future was totally dependent upon someone showing her unmerited grace and favor. Instead of giving up, she gives us an example of humility, initiative and faith as she seeks work and sustenance.

As things in the world spin out of control, it's important to remember that you must always have a plan and be working on that plan. Even when things look very bleak, you have to do something reasonable and practical, and then pray to God for "favor". That God will do something unexpected that will make your reasonable action bear unexpected fruit.

If you want to listen to sermons #1 and sermon #2 in the series on Ruth, you can find the

whole series here. So far, I have listened to 5. The first two were also very good, so if you listen to the first 3, you will definitely benefit. Each one is 35 to 40 minutes.

Virginia governor vetoes religious liberty bill, calls freedom of religion an “oxymoron”

July 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

The Weekly Standard reports:

> Governor Terry McAuliffe of Virginia decried having to “veto a so-called ‘religious freedom’ bill. It’s such an oxymoron,” on WTOP radio Wednesday.
>
> The bill that McAuliffe vetoed is a short one, and simply states that religious organizations or clergy should not be required to participate in the solemnization of marriages and should not be penalized for their refusal to do so. Its language specifically aimed to protect the actions of those “*with a sincerely held religious belief or moral conviction that marriage is or should be recognized as the union of one man and one woman.”*
>
> It is not uncommon for Democrats to question religious freedom legislation, saying that it goes beyond defending religious freedom and into anti-LGBT discrimination.
>
> […]Upon celebrating the Supreme Court’s blocking of Texas abortion restrictions, McAuliffe said that Virginia was a few years ahead of the Supreme Court, and that these laws were enacted to shut down “women’s health clinics,” which, according to Gov. McAuliffe, “operate with no profit margin as it is.”
>
> “I’m a very fiscally conservative, pro-business Democrat,” McAuliffe said directly before rebuking a bill passed by the Virginia General Assembly to scuttle government funding for Planned Parenthood.

Every day, it seems like some new assault on Constitutional freedoms by secular leftist fascists who want to force their views on others using the power of the government.

Here’s what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?”
>
> 4 He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”
>
> 7 They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” 8
>
> He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”
>
> 11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

Terry McAuliffe thinks Jesus is wrong about that, and everyone who votes for Democrats like Terry McAuliffe affirms that Jesus has no authority on moral issues.

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don’t overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. But I do think that we need to do everything that is legal to protect our religious liberty, so that being faithful is no harder for us than it needs to be.

Ontario government-run schools deny parents opt-out from pro-gay curriculum

July 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kathleen Wynne and Justin Trudeau march in gay pride parade

Remember the curriculum that was designed by the Liberal Party child pornographer? Well, Ontario premier Kathleen Wynne isn't going to give parents any opt out from it for their children.

Life Site News explains: (H/T Tim and William)

> If anyone doubts that Kathleen Wynne's Liberal government will overrule parental rights in favour of its inclusivity agenda on behalf of LGBTTIQ — lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, intersex, queer and questioning — students and parents, the evidence — literally — points clearly and abundantly to the fact that it will, and is.
>
> And if anyone doubts that teachers in the public school system are encouraged to bring up references to LGBTTIQ issues in any and all subjects at their discretion, because equity and inclusivity is embedded in the curriculum, again, the evidence is in.
>
> That evidence is found in the opposition factums in the Steve Tourloukis case, heard June 23 by Ontario Superior Court Justice Robert Reid, and in which the Wynne Liberal government intervened on behalf of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, as did the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario.
>
> "Requests to exempt students from the very portions of the curriculum that

> promote diversity, inclusivity and acceptance cannot be granted without the risk of appearing to endorse the non-acceptance of students of other races, sexual orientations, family backgrounds, gender expression and gender identities," states the Attorney General of Ontario's factum.
>
> […]"Children who are themselves LGBT, who had LGBT parents, family or friends, or who had experienced homophobic or transphobic bullying based on being perceived as LGBT, could feel less valued and accepted if the Applicant's children left the room every time people like them or their family or friends were discussed," stated the document, submitted by lawyers Josh Hunter and Emily Bala.
>
> The government lawyers argued that, given "the Legislature's pressing and substantial objective of ensuring that public schools are accepting, inclusive, and diverse," it follows that "permitting the Applicant's children to leave the classrooms whenever planned lessons communicate acceptance of different family backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities or gender expression would undermine that Legislative purpose."
>
> HWDSB lawyer Mark Zega argued much the same.
>
> "How could the Board provide an accommodation that would forbid a teacher from stating that there is nothing wrong with same-sex marriage and allowing a child to leave class every time such a topic arises, when the Board is required to discourage homophobia in schools?"
>
> This, he stated, "would amount to an implicit condemnation of person who have suffered prejudice and stereotyping, and who have been singled out on the basis of their sexuality."

Christian parents are allowed (and even required by law) to pay taxes that pay the salary of the Ontario premier, the Ontario attorney general, the Ontario judges, the Ontario lawyers, the Ontario school administrators and the Ontario teachers. Their money is good enough for the Liberal Party and for the government-run public schools that serve the Liberal Party. But their human rights are not good enough for the Liberal Party. Only the human rights of the Liberal Party and their allies matter.

Let's look at the particular case where this all came out:

> Tourloukis, as readers may know, is the Hamilton dentist and father of two who asked his public school to give him advance notice when teachers would be presenting on a number of sensitive subjects, so he could decide if his children could opt out, if they risked being exposed to "false teaching" according to their Greek Orthodox faith.
>
> These topics included, among others, "discussions or portrayals of sexual conduct that he determines to be unnatural/unhealthy (anal sex, oral sex, sadism, masochism, fetishes, bondage, etc.)," and "discussions or portrayals of homosexual/bisexual conduct and relationships and/or transgenderism as

> natural, healthy."
>
> When Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board refused his request, Tourloukis launched a legal action in 2012, asking for court declarations that he has final say over what his kids are taught in school, and that the school board's refusal to give him advance notice violates his Charter rights.
>
> […]Tourloukis was informed "that **all** educational materials could potentially conflict with his stated objective, as equity and inclusivity principles are integrated and embedded within Ontario public education and within the Board," noted the board's factum (emphasis added).
>
> The Ontario government argued the same.
>
> If the Tourloukis children were permitted to opt out at their father's request, they could end up "missing a substantial portion of the school year given the breadth of the Applicant's religious objections, including in particular the fact that **principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded throughout the curriculum** the Board is mandated to teach to all its students" (emphasis added).
>
> That LGBTTIQ issues could be raised in any subject is clear from the 2014 update of the Equity and Inclusive Strategy (EIE), first introduced in 2009 under then education minister Kathleen Wynne, herself a lesbian "married" to another woman.
>
> The EIE Strategy aims to help school boards move "beyond tolerance and celebration to inclusivity and respect," stated the Attorney General's factum.
>
> The updated guidelines "note that the principles of equity and inclusivity need to be reflected throughout the curriculum and learning materials so that students can 'see themselves reflected in the curriculum'." One example is "using texts written by gay/lesbian authors."

As I said before, this was all done with the consent of false Christians over the last few decades – when economically illiterate "Christians" became obsessed with feelings and peer approval to the point where they were willing to vote to expand a secular leftist government in order to get free health care – which now means free sex changes, free IVF, free birth control, free abortions, etc. This was more important to Canadian "Christians" than their own freedom of conscience and religious liberty. In Canada, Christianity is shallow, anti-intellectual and disconnected from practical realities.

If you want to know how things will go in the United States, you should look north to Canada. They are about 5-10 years ahead of us. It's very important for Christians to take note of what gay activists and their allies in secular leftist parties like the Liberal Party or the Democrat Party are doing to put gay rights above religious liberty rights.

Happy Independence Day 2016!

July 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

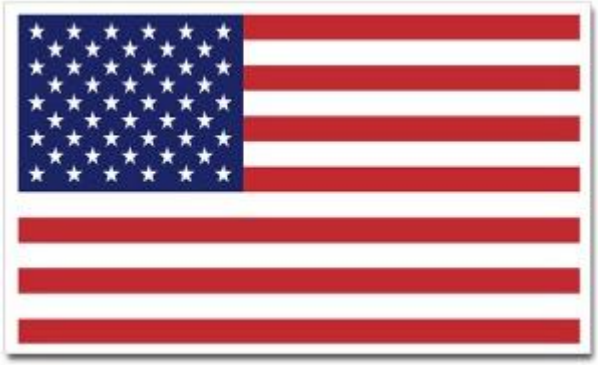

The Stars and Stripes

The Declaration of Independence

Here's the complete text of the Declaration of Independence here.

And now let's take a look at an article at The Federalist which talks about what the Declaration of Independence tells us about the character of America.

It says:

> The Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson famously wrote, was "intended to be an expression of the American mind." Although not intended as such, it was also an expression of the American character. Woven throughout the text are insights into the minds and virtues of those Lincoln called the "once hardy, brave, and patriotic, but now lamented and departed race of ancestors" who fought for the independence we still enjoy.

> This aspect of the Declaration of Independence receives scant attention from scholars and citizens, yet it must be understood. The theory of government elaborated in that text presupposes the existence of citizens who know how to govern themselves and are willing to assert their rights. The American character is the unstated premise of the argument, without which the theory, though still true, doesn't work in practice.

So, what's the American character?

> What sets us Americans apart is that we do not merely declare for liberty. We staunchly stand for it. To be an American is not only to know that you are born free, it is to have the courage to defend your freedom. This admirable aspect of the American character is evident in the fifth grievance the Declaration levels against the king.

> It reads: "He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing, with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people." The king acted as monarchs are wont to do. Our forefathers, although they were subjects, did not

> take his abuses passively. They resisted—with manly firmness.
>
> Today, King George III is long gone. Our representative houses are no longer dissolved at will (although they have unconstitutionally been declared to be in recess). Our rights, however, are still encroached upon, whether by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Environmental Protection Agency. Thankfully, courageous Americans still push back, like the Green family, who challenged Obamacare's abortifacient mandate, or the Sacketts, who fought the EPA's effective seizure of their property.
>
> No charter of liberties or Constitution—not even one handed down by God himself—could ever, on its own, protect the rights of the people. James Madison, the father of our own Constitution, was not so foolish as to place his trust in mere "parchment barriers against the encroaching spirit of power."
>
> In Federalist No. 57, Madison takes up the question of "what is to restrain the House of Representatives from making legal discriminations in favor of themselves and a particular class of the society?" His answer: "the genius of the whole system; the nature of just and constitutional laws; and *above all*, the vigilant and manly spirit which actuates the people of America—a spirit which nourishes freedom, and in return is nourished by it."
>
> The 56 men who signed our Declaration of Independence set the example for their fellow countrymen and for future generations. They did not simply proclaim the universal rights of man. They also pledged "to each other, our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor." And they meant it. Twelve served as combat commanders during the Revolutionary War. Five were captured and imprisoned by the British. Seventeen lost part of their fortunes.

> America is not a country for servile men and women. We not only have a *right* to be free, but a *duty* to be free. For "when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it *is their right, it is their duty*, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security." Free as we are, we have no liberty to choose despotism—even if it is sugarcoated, as it is today, with material comfort and license.
>
> […]Two centuries later, the American character endures, battered and bruised though it may be. It has been corroded by the Progressive faith in government, the sixties ethos of "if it feels good, do it," and the mindlessness and vulgarity of pop culture. But we can still readily discern among many Americans the habits of mind and the virtues of a free people. For this, we should be grateful on this Fourth of July.

To love liberty means to be willing to stand up for liberty, and that can mean something as simple as 1) not voting for bigger government just because they are handing out money to you and 2) not voting for bigger government because they are letting you do

immoral things.

Standing up for liberty means standing up for your own personal responsibility. It means looking primarily to yourself for earning a living. It means choosing to behave morally so that you don’t create a situation where you need the government to bail you out of your own immoral decisions with someone else’s money.

Gay rights movement is killing religious liberty and conscience protection in America

July 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

I wrote a couple of posts last week about how gay rights was destroying religious liberty in Canada. The first was about how Christian colleges and universities are being made illegal, the second about how parents were being prevented from opting out of gay indoctrination in public schools (schools run by the government, that the parents pay for).

But it's not just happening in Canada, there is a lot of bad news down here as well.

Ben Shapiro, an orthodox Jew and a conservative, writes about the latest at the Daily Wire:

> In the latest sign that the judiciary has gone completely off the rails, a judge has now forced the owners of ChristianMingle.com, Spark, to include same-sex matches on their website. Two gay men decided that there simply weren't enough gay dating websites on the internet, and sued ChristianMingle.com in 2013. Now, under the settlement agreement, the webpage asks merely whether you are a man or a woman, rather than a "man seeking a woman" or a "woman seeking a man." According to *The Wall Street Journal*, "Spark agreed that within two years, it would adjust other searching and profile features to give gay and lesbian singles a more tailored experience." The terms of the settlement also open up CatholicMingle.com, AdventistSinglesConnection.com, and BlackSingles.com to same-sex searches.

> […]**The lawsuit and settlement reveal one fundamental truth: for the LGBT community, acceptance and tolerance aren't enough. They want full-scale approval of their activity from religious Americans, and they won't stop until government shoves that approval down religious throats at point of bayonet.**

This column by Dr. Michael Brown examines several relevant items in an article posted at The Stream, most of which have been discussed on this blog before.

Here's a new one:

> Sadly, rather than refuse to comply with this ungodly and unjust ruling, *ChristianMingle.com* has agreed to introduce same-sex searches within the next two years, with Shapiro noting that the "terms of the settlement also open up*CatholicMingle.com*, *AdventistSinglesConnection.com*, and *BlackSingles.com* to same-sex searches." As he correctly states, "This is pure insanity."
>
> From a scriptural point of view, this is what Jesus warned about when He said, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt. 16:25). Unless *ChristianMingle.com* agreed to these terms simply to buy time, they have now sold their Christian soul in order to save their business, which is the guaranteed path to spiritual suicide.
>
> But it gets worse.
>
> If gay activists like Dan Savage have their way (and remember that Savage's allies include the current president of the United States), Christians will not be allowed to hold to biblical morality in any setting, since our alleged homophobia is directly linked to a radical Muslim slaughtering gays and lesbians in a gay bar. In the aftermath of the Orlando massacre, Savage wrote, "Love is the cure—love and gun control and fully funded mental-health services and zero tolerance for anti-gay and anti-trans bigotry with no exceptions for 'religious beliefs,' sincerely held or otherwise.
>
> "No sanctuary for liars, no safe place for bigots, no refuge for haters." That means "zero tolerance" for people like you and me because of our "sincerely held religious beliefs."
>
> In his podcast, Savage makes himself perfectly clear: It is time to make "demands" on our society, including "an end to homophobia and to transphobia and a demand for accountability for those who promote it whether they're promoting it in a church or a mosque or a legislature" — and bear in mind that Savage and his allies characterize traditional Judeo-Christian teaching on LGBT issues to be homophobic and transphobic.
>
> Yes, a gay activist is demanding that Christians be held accountable for believing the Bible.

In the Daily Wire article I linked above, Ben Shapiro had this to say about what comes

next:

> The next steps for the left include removing non-profit status for any religious institution that “discriminates” against same-sex marriage, then suing those institutions under “anti-discrimination” laws; removing accreditation from schools that refuse to teach the beauty and joy of homosexuality and transgenderism; and finally, targeting parents who homeschool by refusing their legitimacy and calling their children truant.
>
> All of this is coming, and it’s coming soon.
>
> We’d better start preparing the resistance. We’re already late in starting.

What I’m seeing in the church, especially among young, unmarried happy-clappy Christian women, is a complete lack of awareness of the threats outlined by Shapiro and Brown. They aren’t following the news, and they often support the secular left, for causes like universal health care (= universal abortion) and to stop “global warming”. Everything is decided based on emotions and peer approval – no Christian wants to be the “bad guy” who sticks up for the Christian worldview, and keeps informed by reading and studying. Almost nothing is being done by young Christians to prepare educationally, professionally and financially for these challenges. Almost no one is planning to have an influence, either as singles or through a carefully-planned marriage that results in influential, effective children.

Eat, Pray, Love author divorces man she married after leaving her first husband

July 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

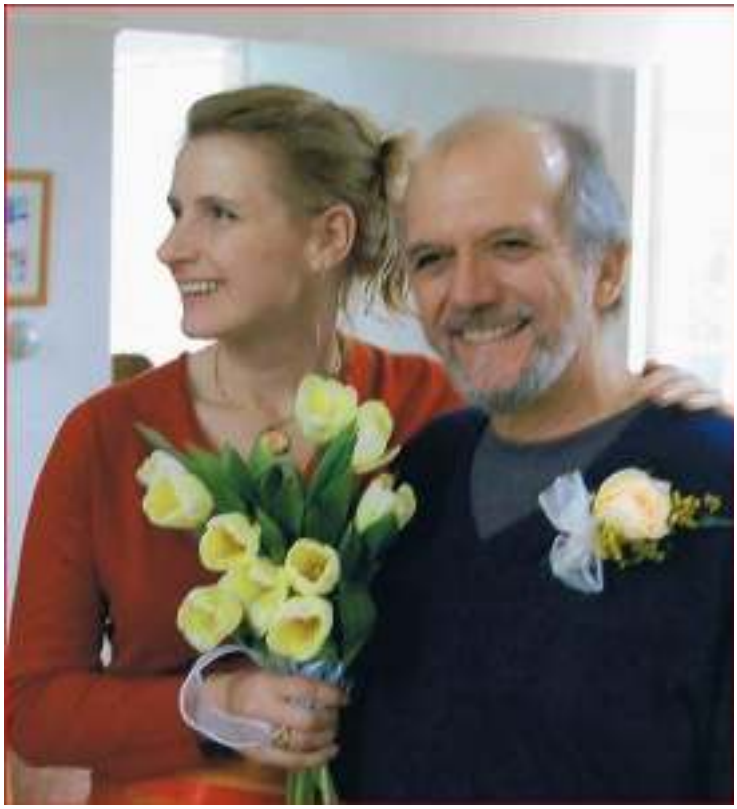

Eat, Pray, Love: Elizabeth Gilbert and her Brazilian stud

Does abandoning your marriage in order to travel the world indicate that a woman has the character necessary for a life-long married love? Let's look at a case in which a famous feminist abandoned her husband to travel to have adventures.

The New York Times writes:

> Elizabeth Gilbert, whose best-selling 2006 memoir, "Eat Pray Love," traced a journey of self-discovery around the world that continues to resonate with fans, announced a new chapter on Friday.
>
> […]Ms. Gilbert, speaking directly to her readers in a Facebook post, said that after 12 years she was separating from José Nunes, the Brazilian importer whom she met during her travels and later married, and who was a central character in the book.
>
> "I am separating from the man whom many of you know as 'Felipe,' " she wrote of her husband, referring to his pseudonym in the book. "Our split is very amicable. Our reasons are very personal." She also asked for privacy, saying she would be "a bit absent from social media during this sensitive moment."
>
> "Eat Pray Love," a sumptuous tale of escape, self-discovery and romance, quickly became a cultural phenomenon, though not one without criticism, with some noting that not every woman who wished to escape would have the privilege to

> live as sumptuously as Ms. Gilbert did on her sojourn through India, Italy and Bali.
>
> The book, however, drew praise from Oprah Winfrey and was made into a 2010 film starring Julia Roberts and Javier Bardem. The tale also resonated with fans, mostly women, who either identified with being in an unhappy relationship or had managed to artfully escape one.
>
> The phenomenon has endured over the past decade: The travelogue touched so many readers that it eventually spawned a book, "Eat, Pray, Love Made Me Do It," comprising 47 essays from inspired fans who had written their own tales of escape and discovery. That book was released in April.
>
> […]In April, Ms. Gilbert said that she missed travel: "I've never been to Japan, Iceland, South Africa and other places that it would be a pity to come to this earth and miss."

Adventures, escape and discovery – that's what young women want today. Not marriage, and not motherhood. They believe that they can find lasting happiness through travel and adventures. Even if they change their minds later, and want to marry, repeated acts of self-centered behavior do not prepare a woman for life-long self-sacrificial married love. Promiscuity and hedonism do not prepare a woman's character to be content with the roles of wife and mother.

Here is Gilbert writing in the New York Times about her priorities:

> It started with a boy I met at summer camp and ended with the man for whom I left my first husband. In between, I careened from one intimate entanglement to the next — dozens of them — without so much as a day off between romances. You might have called me a serial monogamist, except that I was never exactly monogamous. Relationships overlapped, and those overlaps were always marked by exhausting theatricality: sobbing arguments, shaming confrontations, broken hearts. Still, I kept doing it. I couldn't not do it.
>
> […]If the man was already involved in a committed relationship, I knew that I didn't need to be prettier or better than his existing girlfriend; I just needed to be different.
>
> […]Soon enough, and sure enough, I might begin to see that man's gaze toward me change from indifference, to friendship, to open desire. That's what I was after: the telekinesis-like sensation of steadily dragging somebody's fullest attention toward me and only me. My guilt about the other woman was no match for the intoxicating knowledge that — somewhere on the other side of town — somebody couldn't sleep that night because he was thinking about me. If he needed to sneak out of his house after midnight in order to call, better still. That was power, but it was also affirmation. I was someone's irresistible treasure. I loved that sensation, and I needed it, not sometimes, not even often, but always.
>
> […]In my mid-20s, I married, but not even matrimony slowed me down. Predictably, I grew restless and lonely. Soon enough I seduced someone new; the

> marriage collapsed. But it was worse than just that. Before my divorce agreement was even signed, I was already breaking up with the guy I had broken up my marriage for.
>
> […][I]f you asked me what I was up to, I might have claimed that I was a helpless romantic — and how can you judge that? If really cornered, I might have argued that I was a revolutionary feminist, taking brazen agency over my own sexuality…

She didn't want to commit and love others self-sacrificially. That's boring! She wanted to get attention and drama. Men liked her because she was easy to use and easy to throw away. She wasn't anyone's "irresistible treasure", because she didn't have enough value for any of these men to commit to her for life and take care of her as she aged. The men she chose wanted sex, but they were not going to actually provide for her or protect her when she reached her 70s, 80s and 90s. The question that we need to ask is whether a woman like this can stay married. Is she capable of doing the work that ordinary wives and mothers do in a married home – the work that wins a man's loyalty for life? Is she capable of behaving in a way that leads a man to commit to caring for her when she is no longer young and pretty?

Let's review what happened after Elizabeth Gilbert divorced her first husband for travel and adventures.

Christian men's rights blogger Dalrock explains:

> Having written a book on divorce, Elizabeth decided to write a book on marriage titled *Committed*.
>
> From the *Publishers Weekly* review on Amazon:
>
> > How did a woman who didn't want children land the only Latino hottie with a vasectomy in all of Indonesia?
>
> […][I]t turns out **he needed a visa to get into the US, so he asked Elizabeth to marry him**. After a year of bickering and unhappiness together, she finally said yes after he explained it to her.
>
> From the *Publishers Weekly* book review on Amazon.com:
>
> > > When are you going to understand? As soon as we secure this bloody visa and get ourselves safely married back in America, we can do whatever the hell we want.
>
> You couldn't make stuff this romantic up!

That was 6 years ago, Elizabeth is about 47 now and divorced again. I wonder how well her plan of "seducing" men and getting no commitment in return will work over the next 40 years? Tramp stamps and belly-button rings seem fun when you are 17, but are not so fun when you are 71. Hooking up, cohabitating, traveling and having adventures seems

to make sense when you are 17, but they don't result in a man standing by you when you are 71. A woman needs to invest in a marriage-minded man early, and sustain this investment if she expects him to stick around when she loses her youth and beauty. Not every man will respond to this investment, but it is her job to choose one who will – with the help of wise advisers.

UPDATE:

In early September 2016, it emerged that she is now in a relationship with her best female friend.

FBI: if other people do what Hillary did then they will be prosecuted, but she won't be

July 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help
A round-up of reactions from around the Internet, on the right and on the left.

First, here's radical leftist Chris Cilliza, writing in the radically leftist Washington Post, of all places:

> FBI Director James B. Comey dismantled large portions of Clinton's long-told story about her private server and what she sent or received on it during a stirring 15-minute news conference, after which he took no questions. While Comey exonerated Clinton, legally speaking, he provided huge amounts of fodder that could badly hamstring her in the court of public opinion.
>
> Most importantly, Comey said the FBI found 110 emails on Clinton's server that were classified at the time they were sent or received. That stands in direct contradiction to Clinton's repeated insistence she never sent or received any classified emails. And it even stands in contrast to her amended statement that she never knowingly sent or received any classified information.
>
> […]Comey said Clinton had used not one but multiple private email servers during her time at State. He said Clinton used multiple email devices during that time. (She had offered her desire to use a single device for "convenience" as the main reason she set up the private server.)
>
> […]**It's hard to read Comey's statement as anything other than a**

> **wholesale rebuke of the story Clinton and her campaign team have been telling ever since the existence of her private email server came to light in spring 2015. She did send and receive classified emails. The setup did leave her — and the classified information on the server — subject to a possible foreign hack. She and her team did delete emails as personal that contained professional information.**
>
> **Those are facts, facts delivered by the Justice Department of a Democratic administration. And those facts run absolutely counter to the narrative put forth by the Clinton operation: that this whole thing was a Republican witch-hunt pushed by a bored and adversarial media.**

Andrew McCarthy in National Review:

> There is no way of getting around this: According to Director JamesComey (disclosure: a former colleague and longtime friend of mine), Hillary Clinton checked every box required for a felony violation of Section 793(f) of the federal penal code (Title 18): With lawful access to highly classified information she acted with gross negligence in removing and causing it to be removed it from its proper place of custody, and she transmitted it and caused it to be transmitted to others not authorized to have it, in patent violation of her trust. Director Comey even conceded that former Secretary Clinton was "extremely careless" and strongly suggested that her recklessness very likely led to communications (her own and those she corresponded with) being intercepted by foreign intelligence services.
>
> Yet, Director Comey recommended against prosecution of the law violations he clearly found on the ground that there was no intent to harm the United States.
>
> **In essence, in order to give Mrs. Clinton a pass, the FBI rewrote the statute, inserting an intent element that Congress did not require.**

David French in National Review:

> […]Comey noted that her personal e-mail server was less secure than Google's Gmail:
>
> None of these e-mails should have been on any kind of unclassified system, but their presence is especially concerning because all of these e-mails were housed on unclassified personal servers not even supported by full-time security staff, like those found at Departments and Agencies of the U.S. Government — or even with a commercial service like Gmail.
>
> […]**I defy any member of the military or any civilian not directly affiliated with Hillary Clinton to engage in such conduct and get away with it. The first thing that would happen is you would lose your security clearance. Next, you would lose your job. Finally, good luck escaping prosecution. Comey claims that prior FBI prosecutions**

> **included "some combination of: clearly intentional and willful mishandling of classified information; or vast quantities of materials exposed in such a way as to support an inference of intentional misconduct; or indications of disloyalty to the United States; or efforts to obstruct justice."**

I blogged previously about how Clinton's private unsecure e-mail server was was definitely compromised by foreign governments and hackers. She was the top diplomat of the United States of America. Clandestine agents and their sources would undoubtedly have been compromised.

The FBI has been focusing its attention on Christians and conservatives for quite some time, and letting the real criminals on the secular left go Scot free. So their refusal to enforce the law here is no surprise. It's not the first time, it won't be the last time.

At the Daily Wire, Ben Shapiro notes that the timing of this non-prosecution is suspect:

> Just days after the Attorney General of the United States Loretta Lynch held a secret meeting aboard a plane with former President Bill Clinton – whose wife was under FBI investigation; just the day after Hillary leaked that she'd want Lynch for her own administration; just hours after the President of the United States Barack Obama flew Hillary – still under FBI investigation – down to North Carolina on Air Force One; just two hours before Obama was to open his campaign on behalf of Hillary Clinton, FBI Director James Comey announced that while Hillary Clinton had clearly engaged in criminal activity worthy of prosecution, he had recommended that she not be prosecuted.

James Taranto in the Wall Street Journal:

> After announcing his no-charge recommendation, Comey added:
>
> **To be clear, this is not to suggest that in similar circumstances, a person who engaged in this activity would face no consequences. To the contrary, those individuals are often subject to security or administrative sanctions. But that is not what we are deciding now.**
>
> In other words, laws are for little people.

So let's take stock. Nobody was prosecuted for the Clinton Foundation donations from foreign sources. Nobody was prosecuted for Fast and Furious gunrunning to Mexican drug cartels. Nobody was prosecuted for Benghazi. Nobody was prosecuted for the IRS persecution of Christians and conservatives. And nobody was prosecuted for the Clinton unsecure e-mail server.

New study: children raised by same-sex parents have twice the risk of depression

July 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like to care for the needs of children

A new peer-reviewed study published in the journal Depression Research and Treatment confirms that children do better when raised by their mother and father.

Here's the abstract:

> The relationship of elevated depression risk recently discovered among adult persons raised by same-sex parents with possible precipitating conditions in childhood has not previously been acknowledged. This study tests whether such inattention is supportable. Logistic regression based risk ratios were estimated from longitudinal measures of mental health outcomes observed in three waves (at ages 15, 22, and 28) of the US National Survey of Adolescent to Adult Health (,701). At age 28, the adults raised by same-sex parents were at over twice the risk of depression (CES-D: risk ratio 2.6, 95% CI 1.4–4.6) as persons raised by man-woman parents. These findings should be interpreted with caution. Elevated risk was associated with imbalanced parental closeness and parental child abuse in family of origin; depression, suicidality, and anxiety at age 15; and stigma and obesity. More research and policy attention to potentially problematic conditions for children with same-sex parents appears warranted.

The Federalist commented on the new study:

> Children of same-sex parents also reported more violence, having a parent slap,

> hit, or kick them, or saying "things that hurt your feelings or made you feel you were not wanted or loved," or "touched you in a sexual way, forced you to touch him or her in a sexual way, or forced you to have sex relations."
>
> In conclusion:

> The emergence of higher depression risk in early adulthood, coupled with a more frequent history of abuse victimization, parental distance, and obesity, suggests that the inattention of research and policy to the problems of children with same-sex parents is unwarranted.
>
> > As initial results, the present findings should be interpreted with caution and balance, based on the limited evidence presented, and (it is hoped) neither exaggerated nor dismissed out of hand on preconceived ideological grounds. However, well-intentioned concern for revealing negative information about a stigmatized minority does not justify leaving children without support in an environment that may be problematic or dangerous for their dignity and security.
>
> Sullins' study is not alone in suggesting more research needs to be done in this area. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published an extensive study proving the importance of *biological* fathers in the "healthy development of children." In addition, "the most careful, rigorous, and methodologically sound study ever conducted" on the issue of homosexual parenting found "numerous and significant differences" between children raised by biological parents and children of homosexuals, "with the outcomes for children of homosexuals rated 'suboptimal' in almost every category."

Very important to understand that same-sex couples who bring children into their relationship are intentionally depriving the child of a relationship with one or more of her biological parents. Just imagine growing up in the world and not having access to the people who made you. It's not fair, and adult selfishness should have to give way to the needs of vulnerable children. Motherlessness is bad for children, and fatherlessness is bad for children.

Let's go back and look at a previous study from Canada.

The Public Discourse reported on it.

Excerpt:

> A new academic study based on the Canadian census suggests that a married mom and dad matter for children. Children of same-sex coupled households do not fare as well.
>
> There is a new and significant piece of evidence in the social science debate about gay parenting and the unique contributions that mothers and fathers make to their children's flourishing. A study published last week in the journal *Review of the Economics of the Household*—analyzing data from a very large, population-

> based sample—reveals that the children of gay and lesbian couples are only about 65 percent as likely to have graduated from high school as the children of married, opposite-sex couples. And gender matters, too: girls are more apt to struggle than boys, with daughters of gay parents displaying dramatically low graduation rates.
>
> Unlike US-based studies, this one evaluates a 20 percent sample of the Canadian census, where same-sex couples have had access to all taxation and government benefits since 1997 and to marriage since 2005.
>
> […]Three key findings stood out to Allen:
>
> children of married opposite-sex families have a high graduation rate compared to the others; children of lesbian families have a very low graduation rate compared to the others; and the other four types [common law, gay, single mother, single father] are similar to each other and lie in between the married/lesbian extremes.
>
> Employing regression models and series of control variables, Allen concludes that the substandard performance *cannot* be attributed to lower school attendance or the more modest education of gay or lesbian parents. Indeed, same-sex parents were characterized by higher levels of education, and their children were more likely to be enrolled in school than even those of married, opposite-sex couples. And yet their children are notably more likely to lag in finishing their own schooling.
>
> […]The truly unique aspect of Allen's study, however, may be its ability to distinguish gender-specific effects of same-sex households on children. He writes:
>
> the particular gender mix of a same-sex household has a dramatic difference in the association with child graduation. Consider the case of girls. . . . Regardless of the controls and whether or not girls are currently living in a gay or lesbian household, the odds of graduating from high school are considerably lower than any other household type. Indeed, girls living in gay households are only 15 percent as likely to graduate compared to girls from opposite sex married homes.
>
> Thus although the children of same-sex couples fare worse overall, the disparity is unequally shared, but is instead based on the combination of the gender of child and gender of parents.
>
> […]Thus the study undermines not only claims about "no differences" but also assertions that moms and dads are interchangeable. *They're not*.

Here's the study.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington. A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more shorter times). Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships

have much higher rates of domestic violence. Neither of these factors is good for children. So we have three reasons to think that normalizing gay relationships as "marriage" would not be good for children.

Related posts

- New study: children of same-sex parents have twice as many emotional problems
- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

Why does the law say that killing an unborn child is OK, but not a born child?

July 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this message

This article from Nancy Flory in The Stream really caused me to stop and think about the plight of unborn children in our age of selfishness.

Nancy starts her piece like this:

> As someone who's faced an unexpected pregnancy — and now has a rambunctious two-year-old — I came across two stories in the last week that stopped me cold. As I explained in an earlier article, I faced uncertainty, financial hardships and downright fear when I discovered I was pregnant. I know what it's like not to know what the future holds, not to know how I'm going to buy food for my children, to know I'm going to lose my car and go for months without gainful employment, all while unexpectedly pregnant. So I can speak with candor about the two mothers who made headlines this week regarding what they chose to do when faced with an unexpected pregnancy.

I'm just going to quote the second one, you can click through for the first.

She writes:

> **Emile Weaver — Having Too Much Fun to Stop for Parenthood**
>
> An Ohio judge this week sentenced sorority girl Emile Weaver to life in prison without parole for throwing away her newborn baby girl after giving birth in her

> sorority house's restroom. The 20-year-old texted her boyfriend following the child's death, saying, "No more baby," and "taken care of."
>
> **Prosecutors made the case that Weaver knew all along she wasn't going to keep the baby and engaged in risky behaviors such as drinking, smoking marijuana and playing in a volleyball tournament while pregnant, reported *The Blaze*.**
>
> Although she apologized during her trial for killing her child and testified that she thought the baby was dead before she put her in the trash, she made legal moves to plead not guilty by reason of insanity and, after the trial, vowed that she would appeal.
>
> The judge did not believe that she was remorseful and handed down the stiff sentence.

Nancy goes on to make the point about abortion. Why is it OK for a woman to kill her unborn child in its 6th, 7th, 8th month of gestation but it suddenly becomes wrong after the child is born? Why is abortion morally right 5 minutes before birth, but morally wrong 5 minutes after birth? What is it that the baby acquires after passing through the birth canal a few inches that gives them the right to life?

Or, isn't it the case the the location of the child is meaningless, and the child had all the value in the world the moment it was conceived, and a new DNA signature of a human being was created that is distinct from the mother and the father. A new person was made. That new person is not the father, and is not the mother. It's a new person. And it's not right to kill innocent people just because the mother wants to have fun and thrills, and escape the responsibility for her actions. That's really what abortion is – two unmarried people get drunk, have sex for fun and thrills, and then they kill the child because they don't want their pursuit of fun and thrills to be impacted with expectations, responsibilities or obligations.

This is why I am so suspicious of the women I knew when I was younger who pushed me to have fun, and who hated expectations, responsibilities and obligations. There is a lot of drinking and pleasure-seeking that goes on with young women, and I didn't want anything to do with it. Fun makes me suspicious. For young people, it seems to go along with playing the victim, avoiding responsibility, and running away from moral obligations. So many young, unmarried women seem to have this desperate desire for fun, thrills and travel. And they are revolted by expectations, responsibilities and moral obligations. Not me – I am deeply suspicious of fun and thrills. It strikes me as childish, and when I read stories about women who have had abortions, I understand what is behind my suspicion.

I'm not killing any unborn children, not for any fun in the world. Not for the best fun the world has to offer. Fun isn't that important to me, not if I have to break moral laws and even be complicit in murder. No way.

Atheist Jerry Coyne explains why morality is impossible for atheists

July 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson about to do philosophy

Let's review what you need in your worldview in order to have a rationally grounded system of morality.

You need 5 things:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you

just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Theism rationally grounds all 5 of these. Atheism cannot ground *any of them.*

Let's take a look at #4: free will and see how atheism deals with that.

Atheism and free will?

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality.

Here are some more atheists to explain how atheists view morality.

William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud

> and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

When village atheists talk about how they can be moral without God, it's important to ask them to justify the minimum requirements for rational morality. Atheists may act inconsistently with their worldview, believing in free will, expecting praise and blame for complying with the arbitrary standards of their peer group, etc. But there is nothing more to morality on atheism that imitating the herd – at least when the herd is around to watch them. And when the herd loses its Judeo-Christian foundation – watch out. That's when the real atheism comes out – the atheism that we've seen before in countries that turned their backs on God, and the moral law. When God disappears from a society, anything is permissible.

17-year-old girl uses firearm to defend herself from burglar

July 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

My friend Terrell posted this story from Fox 59 local news.

Excerpt:

> A 17-year-old girl in Franklin Township is safe after a scary brush with a burglar at her family's home on Knapp Road Wednesday.
>
> Faith Shilkett was home alone around 2 p.m., when her dog Duke started barking. She walked out of her room and saw a man knocking on the front door.
>
> "He was big. He was muscular. He looked like he could do damage if he got a hold of you," said the teen. "I was scared if he got in, he could've hurt me."
>
> Faith then took off through the house to lock the other doors. When she did that, she got a glimpse of the man at a deck door. She says the man then went to the garage door and jiggled the handle, trying to get in, and even peered in the window. Faith then ran to her mom's room and pulled out a gun.
>
> "I stayed back here and I started yelling 'I'm here. I have a gun. I'm going to shoot,'" she said.
>
> Faith called for help and waited. She said she heard rustling in the garage and the man took off in a white van.
>
> […]Faith says the man was roughly six feet tall, white, and had brown hair.

Guns are a great equalizer for a contest between a 17-year-old girl and a 6-foot-tall man.

It's very important that everyone remember what the second amendment is used for in the United States. The second amendment allows law-abiding people to purchase firearms in order to defend themselves from criminals.

Although there is opposition to gun ownership in certain circles, the academic literature is

quite clear and decisive. Legal ownership of firearms reduces rates of violent crime. Whenever laws that allow law-abiding citizens to carry firearms for self-defense, violent crime rates decrease. Whenever laws are passed that restrict law-abiding citizens from owning and carrying firearms for self-defense, violent crime rates increase.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were

> committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

Reasonable Faith podcast: the real consequences of atheism

July 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

If you love to listen to the Please Convince Me podcast, as I do, then you know that in a recent episode, J. Warner Wallace mentioned a blog post on an atheistic blog that clearly delineated the implications of an atheistic worldview. He promised he was going to write about it and link to the post, and he has now done so.

The latest episode of Reasonable Faith discusses the post mentioned in the episode.

Details:

> An atheist blogger gets brutally honest about his view and tells other atheists to quit fooling themselves!

The MP3 file is here on the Reasonable Faith web site. (23 minutes)

Kevin Harris (KH) and William Lane Craig: (WLC) discuss this post on the Wintery Knight blog.

Summary:

- KH: New Atheists always try to portray themselves as having meaningful lives, and good without God
- WLC: Exactly, they would say you don't nee God to do positive things, so God makes no difference
- KH: but what happens when an atheist explains the real consequences of atheism?

KH then reads a quote by an atheist blogger:

> "[To] all my Atheist friends.

> Let us stop sugar coating it. I know, it's hard to come out and be blunt with the friendly Theists who frequent sites like this. However in your efforts to "play nice" and "be civil" you actually do them a great disservice.
>
> We are Atheists. We believe that the Universe is a great uncaused, random accident. All life in the Universe past and future are the results of random chance acting on itself. While we acknowledge concepts like morality, politeness, civility seem to exist, we know they do not. Our highly evolved brains imagine that these things have a cause or a use, and they have in the past, they've allowed life to continue on this planet for a short blip of time. But make no mistake: all our dreams, loves, opinions, and desires are figments of our primordial imagination. They are fleeting electrical signals that fire across our synapses for a moment in time. They served some purpose in the past. They got us here. That's it. All human achievement and plans for the future are the result of some ancient, evolved brain and accompanying chemical reactions that once served a survival purpose. Ex: I'll marry and nurture children because my genes demand reproduction, I'll create because creativity served a survival advantage to my ancient ape ancestors, I'll build cities and laws because this allowed my ape grandfather time and peace to reproduce and protect his genes. My only directive is to obey my genes. Eat, sleep, reproduce, die. That is our bible.
>
> We deride the Theists for having created myths and holy books. We imagine ourselves superior. But we too imagine there are reasons to obey laws, be polite, protect the weak etc. Rubbish. We are nurturing a new religion, one where we imagine that such conventions have any basis in reality. Have they allowed life to exist? Absolutely. But who cares? Outside of my greedy little gene's need to reproduce, there is nothing in my world that stops me from killing you and reproducing with your wife. Only the fear that I might be incarcerated and thus be deprived of the opportunity to do the same with the next guy's wife stops me. Some of my Atheist friends have fooled themselves into acting like the general population. They live in suburban homes, drive Toyota Camrys, attend school plays. But underneath they know the truth. They are a bag of DNA whose only purpose is to make more of themselves. So be nice if you want. Be involved, have polite conversations, be a model citizen. Just be aware that while technically an Atheist, you are an inferior one. You're just a little bit less evolved, that's all. When you are ready to join me, let me know, I'll be reproducing with your wife.
>
> I know it's not PC to speak so bluntly about the ramifications of our beliefs, but in our discussions with Theists we sometimes tip toe around what we really know to be factual. Maybe it's time we Atheists were a little more truthful and let the chips fall where they may. At least that's what my genes are telling me to say."

Back to the summary:

- WLC: this quote explains that on naturalism, moral values and duties are just the by

products of biological evolution
- WLC: he is deriding other atheists who put on a civil facade, and that the superior atheist is the one who acts openly like an atheist
- KH: he wants atheists to stop acting like Christians (being outwardly nice)
- WLC: there is no evidence for atheism presented in the quote, so why should he think that morality and meaning are illusory
- WLC: he is saying that morality is not real because our beliefs form by Darwinian evolution
- WLC: even if those beliefs formed that way, that doesn't mean that our moral judgments are not true (genetic fallacy)
- KH: the moral judgments are only false if naturalism is true, and he didn't defend that
- WLC: if objective moral values and duties exist, then naturalism is false

KH quotes Richard Dawkins:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.

More:

- WLC: yes, that's his view, but what reason is there to accept the naturalism that requires all that?
- KH: yet he pushes various moral judgments
- WLC: yes, in his book, he pushes a bunch of moral judgments in his book, all of which are invalid on naturalism?
- KH: he wants humans to choose to show pity, even though nature is pitiless
- WLC: he thinks that these altruistic behaviors can emerge because humans are sociable beings
- WLC: but this "herd morality" is just an evolved convention, there are not objective moral truths

KH quotes Will Provine:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

More:

- WLC: it's his naturalism that is causing him to say that, theistic evolution is compatible with morality
- WLC: naturalism is what conflicts with objective morality, science doesn't invalidate objective morality
- KH: atheists deny objective meaning, but atheists can invent subjective meanings and purposes
- WLC: yes, but these invented subjective meanings and purposes are illusory
- WLC: I don't think that anyone can live happily by think

KH quotes Michael Ruse:

> "The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory."

- WLC: again, science is neutral against morality, it's the philosophy of naturalism that is inconsistent with objective morality
- KH: just because theists and atheists get along, it's still important to remind atheists of the consequences of their view
- WLC: I do that in my work on the absurdity of life without God, and in the moral argument for God's existence
- WLC: I love it when they say things like this, because it supports the first premise in Craig's moral argument
- KH: even if the evidence were 50-50, why would atheists lean towards the meaningless view
- WLC: yes, if the evidence is 50-50, then people ought to prefer life, significance and moral value
- KH: you're not saying that people ought to the believe that in theism because it's more palatable to us
- WLC: right, I am saying that naturalism should be rejected on the evidence, including our experience of moral values

If you like this podcast, the RSS feed for the Reasonable Faith podcast is here. I subscribe to it. If you liked the post they were discussing, please click here and share and/or tweet it.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

July 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus in a debate by saying that the resurrection is the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. Minimal facts are the parts of the New Testament that meet a set of strict historical criteria. These are the facts that skeptical historians agree with, totally apart from any religious beliefs.

So what are the criteria that skeptical historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria

> are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."
>
> In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> (1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
>
> (2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
>
> (3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
>
> (4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
>
> (5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
>
> (6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.
>
> Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for

the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book.

Try this approach instead:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection

8. Don’t let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And remember that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I’ve read is the one by Robert H. Stein in “Contending with Christianity’s Critics“. It’s a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion “God raised Jesus from the dead”. That whole book is really very, very good.

How do atheists try to accommodate the Big Bang in their worldview?

July 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

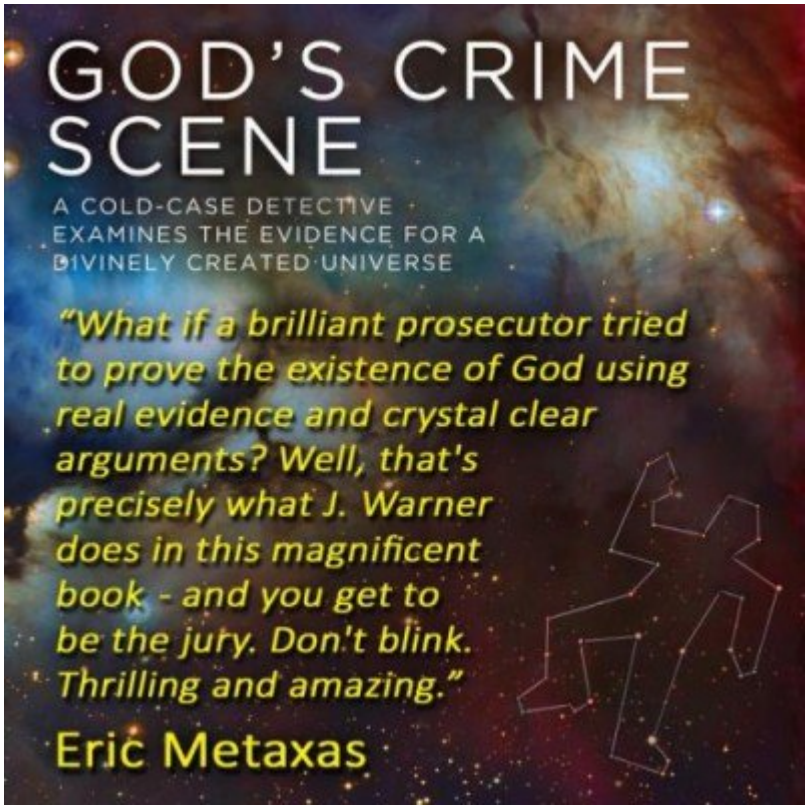

J. Warner Wallace: God's Crime Scene

OK, so J. Warner Wallace has a new book out and it's about science and God.

I wanted to link to something about Lawrence Krauss trying to accommodate the Big Bang within his worldview of atheism.

Wallace writes:

> One of the key pieces of evidence in the universe is simply it's origin. If our universe began to exist, what could have caused it's beginning? How did *everything* (all space, time and matter) come into existence from *nothing*? One way atheist physicists have navigated this dilemma has simply been to redefine the terms they have been using. What do we mean when we say "everything" or "nothing"? At first these two terms might seem rather self-explanatory, but it's important for us to take the time to define the words. As I've already stated, by "everything" we mean all space, time and matter. That's right, space is "something"; empty space is part of "everything" not part of "nothing". For some of us, that's an interesting concept that might be hard to grasp, but it's an important distinction that must be understood. When we say "nothing", we mean the complete absence of everything; the thorough non-existence of anything at all (including all space time and matter). These two terms, when defined in this way, are consistent with the principles of the Standard Cosmological Model, but

> demonstrate the dilemma. If everything came from nothing, what caused this to occur? What is the non-spatial, atemporal, immaterial, uncaused, first cause of the universe? A cause of this sort sounds a lot like a supernatural Being, and that's why I think many naturalists have begun to redefine the terms.
>
> Lawrence Krauss, Arizona State University Professor (School of Earth and Space Exploration and Director of the Origins Initiative) wrote a book entitled, *"A Universe from Nothing: Why There Is Something Rather than Nothing"*. As part of the promotion for the book, Krauss appeared on the Colbert Report where he was interviewed by comedian Stephen Colbert. During the interview, Krauss tried to redefine "nothing" to avoid the need for a supernatural first cause:
>
> *"Physics has changed what we mean by nothing… Empty space is a boiling, bubbling brew of virtual particles popping in and out of existence… if you wait long enough, that kind of nothing will always produce particles." (Colbert Nation, June 21st, 2012)*
>
> Now if you're not careful, you might miss Krauss' subtle redefinition. In describing the sudden appearance of matter ("particles"), Krauss assumes the prior existence of space ("empty space") and time ("if you wait long enough"). If you've got some empty space and wait long enough, matter appears. For Krauss, the "nothing" from which the universe comes includes two common features of "everything" (space and time), and something more (virtual particles). This leaves us with the real question: "Where did the space, time and virtual particles come from (given all our evidence points to their origination at the beginning of our universe)?" Krauss avoids this inquiry by moving space and time from the category of "something" to the category of "nothing".
>
> If you've got a teenager in your house, you might recognize Krauss' approach to language. I bet you've seen your teenager open the refrigerator door, gaze at all the nutritious fruits and vegetables on the shelves, then lament that there is "nothing to eat."

I used to say that when I was a teenager, but I grew out of it. I didn't go on the Comedy Channel and try to convince everyone that what I was saying about the refrigerator was scientifically accurate.

Anyway, here is a debate between William Lane Craig and Lawrence Krauss, if you want to see how Krauss defends his "refrigerator has nothing to eat" view of cosmology. I know everybody and even many Christians all think that we have something to hide when it comes to science, but if you would just watch these debates, you would see that there is nothing to fear from science at all. We own it.

Meanwhile, I want to show you that this is not at all rare among atheists.

Look, here is Peter Atkins explaining how he makes the Big Bang reconcile with his atheism – and notice that it's a completely different view than Krauss:

So, just who is this Peter Atkins, and why is he a good spokesman for atheism?

From his Wikipedia bio.

Peter William Atkins (born August 10, 1940) is an English chemist and a fellow and professor of chemistry at Lincoln College of the University of Oxford. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, 8th ed. (with Julio de Paula of Haverford College), *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*, 4th ed. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.

[…]Atkins is a well-known atheist and supporter of many of Richard Dawkins' ideas. He has written and spoken on issues of humanism, atheism, and what he sees as the incompatibility between science and religion. According to Atkins, whereas religion scorns the power of human comprehension, science respects it.

[…]He was the first Senior Member for the Oxford Secular Society and an Honorary Associate of the National Secular Society. He is also a member of the Advisory Board of The Reason Project, a US-based charitable foundation devoted to spreading scientific knowledge and secular values in society. The organisation is led by fellow atheist and author Sam Harris.

Now watch that 6-minute video above. Peter Atkins thinks that nothing exists. He thinks he doesn't exist. He thinks that you don't exist. This is how atheism adapts to a world where the Big Bang creation event is fact.

I think Peter Atkins should join Lawrence Krauss on the Comedy Channel and present that view. I would laugh. Wouldn't you?

Where is the outrage in the black community for black-on-black crimes?

July 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Williams

A recent editorial by George Mason University professor of economics Walter Williams.

Excerpt:

> Each year, roughly 7,000 blacks are murdered. Ninety-four percent of the time, the murderer is another black person.
>
> According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1976 and 2011, there were 279,384 black murder victims. Using the 94-percent figure means that 262,621 were murdered by other blacks.
>
> Though blacks are 13 percent of the nation's population, they account for more than 50 percent of homicide victims. Nationally, the black homicide victimization rate is six times that of whites, and in some cities, it's 22 times that of whites.
>
> Coupled with being most of the nation's homicide victims, blacks are most of the victims of violent personal crimes, such as assault and robbery.
>
> The magnitude of this tragic mayhem can be viewed in another light. According to a Tuskegee Institute study, between 1882 and 1968, 3,446 blacks were lynched at the hands of whites. Black fatalities during the Korean War (3,075), Vietnam War (7,243) and all wars since 1980 (8,197) come to 18,515, a number that pales in comparison with black loss of life at home.
>
> It's a tragic commentary to be able to say that young black males have a greater chance of reaching maturity on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan than on the streets of Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Oakland, Newark and other cities.

This is not even to mention abortion, which disproportionately affects blacks. Yet it is overwhelmingly supported by blacks who vote more than 90% Democrat. Maybe we

should be more focused on black-on-black crime and black genocide, since these are bigger problems.

Alexander Vilenkin: “All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning”

July 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve decided to explain why physicists believe that there was a creation event in this post. That is to say, I’ve decided to let famous cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin do it.

From Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Did the cosmos have a beginning? The Big Bang theory seems to suggest it did, but in recent decades, cosmologists have concocted elaborate theories – for example, an eternally inflating universe or a cyclic universe – which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos. Now it appears that the universe really had a beginning after all, even if it wasn’t necessarily the Big Bang.
>
> At a meeting of scientists – titled “State of the Universe” – convened last week at Cambridge University to honor Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday, cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University in Boston presented evidence that the universe is not eternal after all, leaving scientists at a loss to explain how the cosmos got started without a supernatural creator. The meeting was reported in *New Scientist* magazine (Why physicists can’t avoid a creation event, 11 January 2012).
>
> […]In his presentation, Professor Vilenkin discussed three theories which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos.

The three theories are chaotic inflationary model, the oscillating model and quantum gravity model. Regular readers will know that those have all been addressed in William Lane Craig’s peer-reviewed paper that evaluates alternatives to the standard Big Bang cosmology.

But let’s see what Vilenkin said.

More:

> One popular theory is eternal inflation. Most readers will be familiar with the theory of *inflation*, which says that the universe increased in volume by a factor of at least 10^78 in its very early stages (from 10^−36 seconds after the Big Bang to sometime between 10^−33 and 10^−32 seconds), before settling into the slower rate of expansion that we see today. The theory of *eternal inflation* goes further, and holds that the universe is constantly giving birth to smaller “bubble” universes within an ever-expanding multiverse. Each bubble universe undergoes its own initial period of inflation. In some versions of the theory, the bubbles go both backwards and forwards in time, allowing the possibility of an infinite past. Trouble is, the value of one particular cosmic

parameter rules out that possibility:

> But in 2003, a team including Vilenkin and Guth considered what eternal inflation would mean for the Hubble constant, which describes mathematically the expansion of the universe. They found that the equations didn't work (Physical Review Letters, DOI: 10.1103/physrevlett.90.151301). "You can't construct a space-time with this property," says Vilenkin. It turns out that the constant has a lower limit that prevents inflation in both time directions. "It can't possibly be eternal in the past," says Vilenkin. "There must be some kind of boundary."

A second option explored by Vilenkin was that of a cyclic universe, where the universe goes through an infinite series of big bangs and crunches, with no specific beginning. It was even claimed that a cyclic universe could explain the low observed value of the cosmological constant. But as Vilenkin found, there's a problem if you look at the *disorder* in the universe:

> Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists – nothing like the one we see around us.
>
> One way around that is to propose that the universe just gets bigger with every cycle. Then the amount of disorder per volume doesn't increase, so needn't reach the maximum. But Vilenkin found that this scenario falls prey to the same mathematical argument as eternal inflation: if your universe keeps getting bigger, it must have started somewhere.

However, Vilenkin's options were not exhausted yet. There was another possibility: that the universe had sprung from an eternal cosmic egg:

> Vilenkin's final strike is an attack on a third, lesser-known proposal that the cosmos existed eternally in a static state called the cosmic egg. This finally "cracked" to create the big bang, leading to the expanding universe we see today. Late last year Vilenkin and graduate student Audrey Mithani showed that the egg could not have existed forever after all, as quantum instabilities would force it to collapse after a finite amount of time (arxiv.org/abs/1110.4096). If it cracked instead, leading to the big bang, then this must have happened before it collapsed – and therefore also after a finite amount of time.
>
> "This is also not a good candidate for a beginningless universe," Vilenkin concludes.

> So at the end of the day, what is Vilenkin's verdict?
>
> > "All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

This is consistent with the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin Theorem, which I blogged about before, and which William Lane Craig leveraged to his advantage in his debate with Peter Millican.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past. *No one* denies the expansion of space in our universe, and so we are left with a cosmic beginning. Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

Conclusion

If the universe came into being out of nothing, which seems to be the case from science, then the universe has a cause. Things do not pop into being, uncaused, out of nothing. The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

Now, let's have a discussion about this science in our churches, and see if we can't train Christians to engage with non-Christians about the evidence so that everyone accepts what science tells us about the origin of the universe.

The link between single mother welfare, fatherlessness, poverty and crime

July 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Government pays people welfare not to get married before having kids

What is the root cause of criminal behavior? This article by sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, who points out the link between fatherlessness and crime.

The article appears in National Review.

Wilcox writes:

> Another shooting, another son of divorce. From Adam Lanza, who killed 26 children and adults a year ago at Sandy Hook School in Newtown, Conn., to Karl Pierson, who shot a teenage girl and killed himself this past Friday at Arapahoe High in Centennial, Colo., one common and largely unremarked thread tying together most of the school shooters that have struck the nation in the last year is that they came from homes marked by divorce or an absent father. From shootings at MIT (i.e., theTsarnaev brothers) to the University of Central Florida to the Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy in Decatur, Ga., nearly every shooting over the last year in Wikipedia's "list of U.S. school attacks" involved a young man whose parents divorced or never married in the first place.
>
> […]The social scientific evidence about the connection between violence and broken homes could not be clearer. My own research suggests that boys living in single mother homes are almost twice as likely to end up delinquent compared to boys who enjoy good relationships with their father. Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson has written that "Family structure is one of the strongest, if not the strongest, predictor of variations in urban violence across cities in the United

> States." His views are echoed by the eminent criminologists Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi, who have written that "such family measures as the percentage of the population divorced, the percentage of households headed by women, and the percentage of unattached individuals in the community are among the most powerful predictors of crime rates."
>
> Why is fatherlessness such a big deal for our boys (almost all of these incidents involve boys)? Putting the argument positively, sociologist David Popenoe notes that "fathers are important to their sons as role models. They are important for maintaining authority and discipline. And they are important in helping their sons to develop both self-control and feelings of empathy toward others, character traits that are found to be lacking in violent youth." Boys, then, who did not grow up with an engaged, attentive, and firm father are more vulnerable to getting swept up in the Sturm und Drang of adolescence and young adulthood, and in the worst possible way.

So where do fatherless children come from? It turns out that government programs incentivize women to make them.

Dr. Michael Tanner of the libertarian Cato Institute explains how welfare causes fatherlessness in his testimony to Congress:

> Welfare contributes to crime in several ways. First, children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. According to one study, children raised in single-parent families are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior.(3) Moreover, O'Neill found that, holding other variables constant, black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as black children from a family where the father is present. Nearly 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 percent of prison inmates.(4) Research indicates a direct correlation between crime rates and the number of single-parent families in a neighborhood.(5)
>
> As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her seminal article for The Atlantic Monthly:
>
> The relationship [between single-parent families and crime] is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family break up as the most important source of rising rates of crime.(6)
>
> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these

> studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on family structure concluded that "providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women."(9)

The secular left in this country believes that fathers need to be separated away from their children, and that's why they support welfare programs that redirect money from husbands in intact families to single mothers. They believe that fathers are harmful because they set boundaries on children, and judge them and punish them when they act immorally. To the secular left, boundaries, judgments and punishments on children are bad, and must be stopped. So how can the secular left discourage men from marrying and teaching their own children morality? Well, they can tax married men, and they can give the money to single mothers.

Not only is crime caused by fatherlessness, but poverty is. as well.

Here is Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to explain:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:

> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

People on the left claim that poverty causes crime, but they don’t look for the root cause of poverty. The root cause of poverty is the decline of marriage, which produces fatherless children.

How the presence and quality of fathers affects belief in God

July 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A father in the home helps children to reconcile love and moral boundaries

Here's an article by Paul Copan which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own*rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of François-Marie Arouet.

> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence, but there is also statistical evidence.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was

> asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an enormously difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick

is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others. If you want your child to be religious and moral, you have to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he makes, he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading.

A child's relationship with God begins before he/she is even born. It begins with his/her mother's ability to control herself and choose the right man for the job of being a father. Note that superficial qualities like "deep voice", "broad shoulders", "expensive shoes", "likes dogs" and "makes me laugh" have no bearing on a man's ability to commit and lead on moral/spiritual issues. Christians don't really do a good job of showing the practical consequences of bad choices to women in the church. The ones I talk to impress on me how "unpredictable" men are, so that they are justified in choosing one that they like based on tingles, and hoping it will work out. We should be telling women that poor choices with men are wrong, and it leads to fatherlessness and abortion.

Archaeologists make first-time discovery of Philistine cemetary

July 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

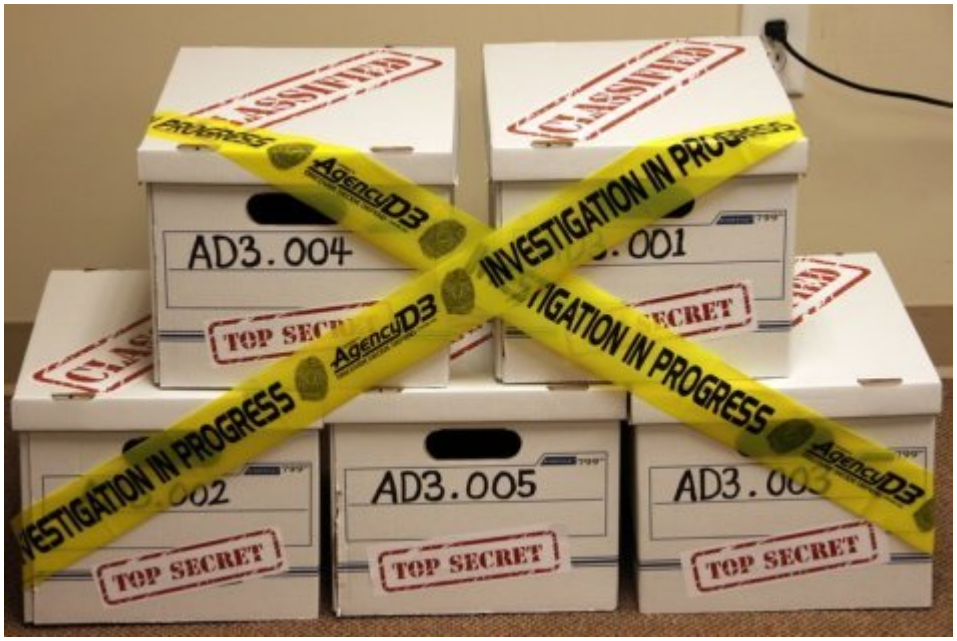

Investigation in progress
Reported by radically leftist CNN, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Archaeologists have unearthed the first Philistine cemetery ever discovered, shedding light on an ancient civilization that was home to one of the Bible's most famous villains.
>
> Historians have long hoped to learn more about the Philistines, and the burial ground offers insight into this ancient and historic population.
>
> The Philistines are best known for Goliath, the giant who challenged a young David to battle near the Valley of Elah; the pair's story is recounted in the biblical books of Samuel.
>
> The 3,000-year-old site was found at Ashkelon, in southern Israel; its discovery marks the culmination of more than 30 years of exploration at the site.
>
> […]Archaeologists unearthed skeletons, individually buried with their own jugs, storage jars, and bowls. The small jugs are assumed to have been filled with perfumed oil.Some skeletons were even found wearing bracelets and earrings, while others had weapons.
>
> The cemetery also had evidence of cremations, pit internments, and multi-chambered tombs.
>
> "Ninety-nine percent of the chapters and articles written about Philistine burial customs should be revised or ignored now that we have the first and only Philistine cemetery found just outside the city walls of Tel Ashkelon," said

> Lawrence Stager, a professor of archaeology at Harvard University and a co-director of the expedition.
>
> Bone samples taken from the site will undergo three different types of testing – DNA, radiocarbon and biological distance studies – to help determine the origin of the Philistines. Biblical passages suggest the community came by sea from ancient Crete.

Here is a previous discovery from August last year reported by Live Science:

> A massive gate unearthed in Israel may have marked the entrance to a biblical city that, at its heyday, was the biggest metropolis in the region.
>
> The town, called Gath, was occupied until the ninth century B.C. In biblical accounts, the Philistines — the mortal enemies of the Israelites — ruled the city. The Old Testament also describes Gath as the home of Goliath, the giant warrior whom the Israelite King David felled with a slingshot.
>
> The new findings reveal just how impressive the ancient Philistine city once was, said lead archaeologist of the current excavation, Aren Maeir, of Bar-Ilan University in Israel.
>
> "We knew that Philistine Gath in the 10th to ninth century [B.C.] was a large city, perhaps the largest in the land at that time," Maeir told Live Science in an email. "These monumental fortifications stress how large and mighty this city was."
>
> […]Both the impressive settlement size and mentions in biblical accounts suggest to scholars that the site is the historic city of Gath, which was ruled by the Philistines, who lived next to the Jewish kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Most scholars think that Gath was besieged and laid to waste by Hazael, King of Aram Damascus, in 830 B.C., Maeir said.
>
> […]The team also found ironworks and a Philistine temple near the monumental gate, with some pottery and other finds typically associated with Philistine culture. Though the pottery represents a distinctive Philistine style, it also shows elements of Israelite technique, suggesting the cultures did influence each other in ways unrelated to war.

The story of David and Goliath is found in 1 Samuel 17. Why don't you give it a read? It's a great story.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

July 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
This is one of my favorite lectures.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips.

Here is a clip:

The full video can be watched on Vimeo:

I pulled the MP3 audio from the lecture in case anyone wants just the audio.

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life

– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

It's a good lecture explaining basic arguments for a cosmic Creator and Designer. If you add the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion (Stephen C. Meyer's arguments), then you will be solid on science apologetics. That's everything a rank-and-file Christian needs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Sean McDowell explains how to make Christian apologetics into a career

July 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two Air Force JTACs discuss mission parameters prior to calling in CAS

Sean McDowell has managed to integrate apologetics pretty tightly with his career, and in this recent blog post, he offers some options to others who might want to follow suit.

He writes:

> We live in a golden age of apologetics. There are more books, curricula, blogs, conferences, academic programs, and people interested in apologetics than ever before. As my friend (and boss) Craig Hazen says, "Apologetics is a growth industry."
>
> Part of the vision of our Biola M.A. Christian Apologetics program is to train apologists to be a resource for the local church. In fact, our dream is that churches would consider the need for a "Pastor or Apologetics" as important as a men's ministry leader or a youth pastor. Until this dream becomes a reality, here's a few ways to make a career in apologetics (If you think I have missed any, please let me know):

He has several options listed in the post:

- Professor of Apologetics
- Ratio Christi
- Author
- Blogger
- Speaker

- Christian School Teacher

At least one personal friend of mine does each of these six options! They are all doable, but you really have to be the best at what you do if you want to pursue them, simply because of the lower demand. People don't value truth these days as much as they value fun and entertainment.

Let's look at number 6 in particular, because this one seems to me to offer the most linear, low-risk, option:

> **6.Christian School Teacher**. Before accepting a teaching position at Biola University, I taught theology and apologetics full-time at a private Christian school in southern California. Since teaching high school involves grading and disciplining students, it is very different than writing or speaking. But it is a valuable way to help Christian students think deeply about their faith, and also to critically engage non-Christian students (I had many atheist, Buddhist, and Muslim students in my classes). If you want to teach at a Christian school, you will need both apologetics/theology knowledge (an undergraduate degree or M.A. is probably sufficient) as well as training as a classroom teacher.

Of course, there is a rival view to the view of doing apologetics full time, and that view is that you should do your regular job full time, and try to have an apologetics ministry on the side. J. Warner Wallace calls such people "tent-making apologists" because, like the apostle Paul, they fund their ministry by working a normal job (Paul made tents to drive his ministry).

Air Force TACPs confirm target locations with their map

Wallace lists 10 reasons why tent-making apologists are effective, and this is one I have personal experience with:

> **Tent-Making Christian Case Makers Reach a Skeptical Audience**
> As an atheist, I was very skeptical of Christians when I thought they were trying to sell me something. In fact, this was a major stumbling block for me. As a high school student, I used to watch local televangelists with scorn if they repeatedly asked their viewers to send them money. Don't underestimate this disdain on the part of skeptics. As a tent-maker, I've had many conversations with skeptics who have given me a hearing simply because they respected my position as a volunteer Case Maker. One told me, "At least I know you're not in this for the money." Tent-making Case Makers are uniquely positioned to reach a skeptical world.

This blog has no ads, because I pay wordpress to have them removed. I do post Amazon links in the What I am Reading section, but that's only to recommend to people what I am actually reading, not to make money.

And these two are near and dear to me:

> **Tent-Making Christian Case Makers Thrive in Any Economy**
> I started thinking again about the power of tent-making Case Makers after reading Lydia McGrew's fantastic post, "An Army of Tent Makers." Lydia is a brilliant Case Maker who continues to have a powerful impact even though she's not a vocational apologist. In her post, Lydia discusses the current financial climate and the limited opportunities for people seeking full-time employment as apologists. While it's often difficult to find full-time employment in the field of Christian apologetics or start a donor-funded apologetics ministry in a challenging economy, tent-making Case Makers aren't limited by bad economic climates. In addition, as Lydia points out, "In the end, if we can have this army of tentmakers, there will be (Lord willing) money to allow some people to work in full-time ministry. But it's going to be quite a small proportion of those who are interested or would ideally like to do so."
>
> **Tent Making Christian Case Makers Survive in Any Political Climate**
> Times are changing and our politicians and judges are less and less friendly to non-profit organizations. A federal judge recently struck down a law giving clergy tax-free housing allowances, and atheist groups continue to challenge the tax exempt status of religious non-profits. If the non-profit status of apologetics ministries is someday successfully abolished, vocational Christian Case Makers will have to rethink their strategy. Tent-making Case Makers will already be standing in the gap. Tent-makers are flexible enough to survive, even in difficult political environments.

My regular readers know that I follow current events and what I see worries me. Earning and saving is my way of weakening the fear of the future, so that I can make a small difference today without being paralyzed by worry about tomorrow. It really is important for Christians to earn and save so that they can do ministry today without crashing and burning tomorrow when things get difficult. Although some silly people think that the

height of Christian ability is to disregard the future and do wild, adventurous things today, those people are wrong. A Christian ought to be wise about balancing ministry and finances, so that they aren't an embarrassment to the Kingdom, or a financial burden to others. Any of the young Christians who I mentor regarding college and careers and finances will tell you that I am an absolute bully when it comes to making young people study useful subjects, get early work experience, and curtail spending on fun and thrills in favor of saving and investing.

Wallace wrote another post where he listed the occupations of a bunch of tent-making apologists, including me. I think the important thing is that you have to earn money and you have to do apologetics. Finding the right balance is your decision, but whatever you decide, make sure you are effective and make sure that you don't starve now, or in the future when you are older. We all have to retire some day, you probably don't want to be working full time in your 70s at a job you don't love, just to put food on the table.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about spending, saving and charity

July 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

A practical lecture on money – spending, saving, charitable giving – from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

I like the way that Wayne Grudem navigates the Bible finding the passages that tell you who God is, so that you can make better decisions by analyzing alternatives and choosing the one that gives your Boss a maximum return on investment. He's very practical.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Spending:

- Christianity does not teach asceticism (= don't enjoy anything in this world), Paul condemns it in 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- When you buy nice things, even if it is a little more expensive, it's an opportunity to be thankful for nice things that God has provided
- Even being rich is OK, but don't let it make you haughty and arrogant, and don't set your hopes on your money (see 1 Tim 6:17)
- It is important for you to earn money, and you are supposed to use it to support yourself and be independent
- It is possible to overspend and live recklessly (Luke 15:13) and it's also possible to overspend and live too luxuriously
- *Increasing your income through career progression is wise*, because it allows you to give away more and save more

- God gives us freedom to decide how much we spend, how much we give away, and how much we save
- every choice a Christian makes with money will give him or her more or less reward in his or her afterlife
- Do not spend more than you have – you should make every effort to get out of debt as quickly as possible

Saving:

- Saving money is wise so you can help yourself and others, and have money in your old age when you will not be working
- If you do not save your own money, you end up being dependent on others (e.g. – family or taxpayers)
- Not saving money for the future is a way of "putting God to the test" (Matt 4:7)
- You are to "be dependent on no one", to the extent that you can (1 Thes 4:12)
- We don't know the future, that's why we should prepare for an emergency, and buy insurance to guard (James 4:13-17)
- It's right for us to learn how to save to be able to buy bigger assets, like a car or a college education
- Saving and investing in stocks and bonds lets people in business start and grow companies, creating jobs and new products
- *Don't over-save, trusting too much in money more than you trust in God* (Ps 62.10; Matt 6:19,24; Luke 12:15-21)

Giving:

- it is required for the people of God to give something out of what they earn, but no percentage is specified (Deut 26:12-13)
- you do not give money to become right with God, you can't earn your salvation
- *a Christian gives to show God that you trust him to take care of you, and to experience trusting him through your giving*
- the quality of your resurrection life with God is affected by giving you do for the Kingdom (Phil 4, Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:18-19)
- when you get involved in the lives of others and give to them, you have the joy of experiencing caring for others (Acts 20:35)
- it's possible to give too little, but it's also possible to give too much – be careful about pride creeping in as well

The first part of this lecture made me think of my treat for the week, which is to get a double chicken burrito bowl after my weight lifting. It is very easy to say grace when you are hovering over a double chicken burrito bowl. It is good to have nice things especially when it makes you thankful for what you have.

I was so happy listening to this talk because he was condemning bad stewardship, which I see in a lot of young people these days. I was happy until he got to the part about

trusting in your savings for your security, and then I thought – that's what I do wrong! I save a lot but it's not just for emergencies and to share with others, like he was saying – I want a sense of security. This was more of a temptation in my 20s than it is now in my 30s, though.

Charity should hurt

I can remember being in my first full-time job as a newly hired junior programmer when the 2001 recession struck. I would cry while signing checks to support William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith ministry, because I was so scared. I had no family or friends where I lived to help me if anything went wrong, and that's been the story of my working life. If anything goes wrong, there is no backup. But it's that experience of crying when I gave that allows me to say today "that's when I became the man I am, that's what a man does when he is a follower of Jesus". If you are not doing the actions of charity, then you will not having the experience of trusting God and letting him lead you. There is more to the Christian life than just saying the right things – you have to do the right things.

Don't follow your heart

If you're scared about giving when you are young, then do what I did in my 20s: work 70-hour weeks, get promoted often, and save everything you earn. I volunteered every Saturday for 9 months in order to get my first white-collar part-time job when I was still in high-school. The faster you increase your savings, the easier it's going to be to take a *genuine interest* in caring for the people around you. Read Phil 1 (fellowship), Phil 2 (concern for others), and Phil 4 (charity). Turn off your emotions and desires when it comes to choosing what to study and what work to do, and put Philippians into practice. Your freedom to give is very much tied to the quality of your decisions of what to study, where to work, how much you spend on entertainment, and so on. That's why you need to turn off your feelings and desires and do what works, even it it's not fun, and even if it involves responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

Daleiden: organ trafficking scheme “an illicit, for-profit scheme all the way through”

July 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Planned Parenthood senior executive: organ harvesting so she can get a Lamborghini

I spent a lot of time last year blogging about each of the sting videos released by the Center for Medical Progress. Following the release of the videos, there was a Congressional investigation. David Daleiden, the man responsible for leading the effort to expose Planned Parenthood, gives us an update on what has been discovered so far.

The Blaze has the story:

> A year after his first video went viral, the filmmaker behind the Center for Medical Progress’ undercover videos said that he didn’t quite anticipate how much of an impact the videos would have.
>
> “A year later, a year after the initial release of the videos, all of the best evidence available shows that not only is Planned Parenthood guilty of harvesting and selling baby body parts for profit, that they’re even more guilty than any of us ever really imagined starting this out,” David Daleiden, the founder of the Center for Medical Progress, told TheBlaze in an interview.
>
> […]“The work that’s been done by the Select Panel in Congress is just incredible,” Daleiden said, noting that the panel uncovered contracts between Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, Planned Parenthood Shasta Pacific and Planned Parenthood Santa Barbara, Ventura, & San Luis Obispo and StemExpress detailing their financial arrangements.
>
> “We tried so hard to get those contracts,” Daleiden said, calling them the “final proof” of a financial benefit to Planned Parenthood.
>
> “A year later, Planned Parenthood has yet to acknowledge whether or not their senior-level leadership implicated in the undercover videos, whether or not any of them have been fired or disciplined, or if they’re still working at Planned Parenthood,” he said. “We have none of those details from Planned Parenthood,

> no accountability about the leadership of their organization."
>
> "Planned Parenthood has yet to disclose exactly how much money their affiliates received from companies like StemExpress and Advanced Bioscience Resources and Novagenix," he continued, "and they have yet to produce any documentation whatsoever showing that they had any shipping costs or transportation costs or any reimbursable costs whatsoever under the law for the transfer of fetal tissue, which is what they've been insistantly claiming. They've provided no proof whatsoever, they've only provided short press releases."
>
> **"Meanwhile, we have hundreds and hundreds of pages of documents – from the select panel and other sources – showing that this was an illicit, for-profit scheme all the way through," he added.**

If you somehow missed the original videos last year, CMP has released a 5-minute re-cap showing some of the highlights:

The Democrats and their allies in the mainstream media have been trying desperately to cover up these videos and to prosecute Daleiden and the Center for Medical Progress. Remember, if you vote Democrat, you're voting for Planned Parenthood to continue selling the body parts of innocent unborn children for money.

Barack Obama supports Planned Parenthood:

Barack Obama speaking to Planned Parenthood

Hillary Clinton supports Planned Parenthood:

Hillary Clinton speaking to Planned Parenthood
Be careful who you vote for.

Luke Barnes discusses the fine-tuning of the fine structure constant

July 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

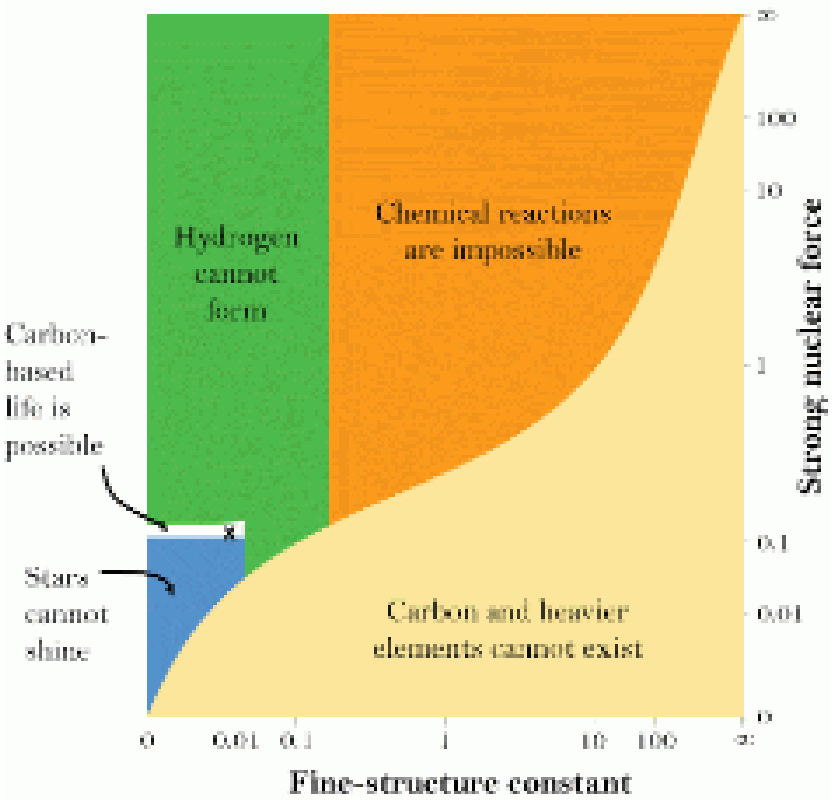

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant

Here is an article from The New Atlantis written by cosmologist Luke Barnes about one specific example of cosmic fine-tuning. (H/T Uncommon Descent via J. Warner Wallace tweet)

Excerpt:

> Today, our deepest understanding of the laws of nature is summarized in a set of equations. Using these equations, we can make very precise calculations of the most elementary physical phenomena, calculations that are confirmed by experimental evidence. But to make these predictions, we have to plug in some numbers that cannot themselves be calculated but are derived from measurements of some of the most basic features of the physical universe. These numbers specify such crucial quantities as the masses of fundamental particles and the strengths of their mutual interactions. After extensive experiments under all manner of conditions, physicists have found that these numbers appear not to change in different times and places, so they are called the fundamental constants of nature.
>
> These constants represent the edge of our knowledge. Richard Feynman called one of them — the fine-structure constant, which characterizes the amount of electromagnetic force between charged elementary particles like electrons —

> “one of the greatest damn mysteries of physics: a magic number that comes to us with no understanding by man.”
>
> […]A universe that has just small tweaks in the fundamental constants might not have any of the chemical bonds that give us molecules, so say farewell to DNA, and also to rocks, water, and planets. Other tweaks could make the formation of stars or even atoms impossible. And with some values for the physical constants, the universe would have flickered out of existence in a fraction of a second. That the constants are all arranged in what is, mathematically speaking, the very improbable combination that makes our grand, complex, life-bearing universe possible is what physicists mean when they talk about the “fine-tuning” of the universe for life.

Atheists, both rank-and-file and expert, almost universally misunderstand the fine-tuning argument. They imagine that if the constants and quantities specified at the origin of the universe were different, then humans would just have green skin, or maybe forehead ridges, or pointy ears. Atheists tend to get their view of science from science fiction in novels or television or movies, and they base their worldview off of fantasies, since this is less thinking and feels better than letting the scientific evidence influence their worldview.

So what does the scientific evidence actually show?

Barnes explains:

> The strong nuclear force, for example, is the glue that holds protons and neutrons together in the nuclei of atoms. If, in a hypothetical universe, it is too weak, then nuclei are not stable and the periodic table disappears again. If it is too strong, then the intense heat of the early universe could convert all hydrogen into helium — meaning that there could be no water, and that 99.97 percent of the 24 million carbon compounds we have discovered would be impossible, too. And, as the chart to the right shows, the forces, like the masses, must be in the right balance. If the electromagnetic force, which is responsible for the attraction and repulsion of charged particles, is too strong or too weak compared to the strong nuclear force, anything from stars to chemical compounds would be impossible.
>
> Stars are particularly finicky when it comes to fundamental constants. If the masses of the fundamental particles are not extremely small, then stars burn out very quickly. Stars in our universe also have the remarkable ability to produce both carbon and oxygen, two of the most important elements to biology. But, a change of just a few percent in the up and down quarks’ masses, or in the forces that hold atoms together, is enough to upset this ability — stars would make either carbon or oxygen, but not both.

It’s very important that theists are well-equipped to explain how individual cases of fine-tuning work. We need to know what you lose if you alter these constants and quantities

even slightly. You can read about some more examples in this previous post.

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalistic alternatives to the Big Bang

July 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students

Here's the lecture, which was given in 2004 at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

This lecture might be a little advanced for beginners, but if you stretch your mind first, you shouldn't tear anything. (Note: standard disclaimers apply if you do tear something!)

The description of the video states:

> This is quite simply one of the best lectures William Lane Craig (a philosopher of science) has given. Craig explores the origins of the universe. He argues for a beginning of the universe, while refuting scientific models like the Steady State Theory, the Oscillating Theory, Quantum Vacuum Fluctuation Model, Chaotic Inflationary Theory, Quantum Gravity Theory, String Theory, M-Theory and Cyclic Ekpyrotic Theory.

And here is the description of the lecture from Reasonable Faith:

> A Templeton Foundation lecture at the University of Colorado, Boulder, laying out the case from contemporary cosmology for the beginning of the universe and its theological implications. Includes a lengthy Q & A period which features previous critics and debate opponents of Dr. Craig who were in attendance, including Michael Tooley, Victor Stenger, and Arnold Guminski.

Craig has previously debated famous atheists Stenger and Tooley previously. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A time of this lecture. Imagine – having laid out your entire case to two people who have debated you before and who know your arguments

well. What did they ask Craig, and how did he respond?

The scientific evidence

The Big Bang cosmology that Dr. Craig presents is the standard model for how the universe came into being. It is a theory based on six lines of experimental evidence.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe
3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

It's probably a good idea to be familiar with these if you are presenting this argument, because experimental science is a reliable way of knowing about reality.

Published research paper

This lecture by Dr. Craig is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Here's the peer-reviewed article that the lecture is based on.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

If you want something to post on your Twitter or Facebook that is much shorter than this

lecture, then you should check out this quick 4-minute explanation of the kalam argument.

Robin Collins lectures on fine-tuning for discoverability from particle physics

July 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
Here's the lecture:

This lecture is 29 minutes long, the Q&A is 15 minutes. I highly recommend this lecture to *all audiences* of *all levels of ability*, for the simple reasons that apart from the content, this lecture is a how-to clinic in the tone, body language, slides and so on for you to use when trying to be persuasive when making your case. Science is king in this lecture. The scientific method is defined and applied in a winsome way. Making science understandable *should be* the bread and butter approach to Christian apologetics, and this lecture rivals the Mike Strauss lecture at Stanford University and the Mike Strauss lecture at the University of Texas – Dallas as the ideal lectures for showing that. It's not just the scientific material that makes this lecture by Collins work, it's the narrative and the style that make the lecture work.

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A

> Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

His thesis in one slide:

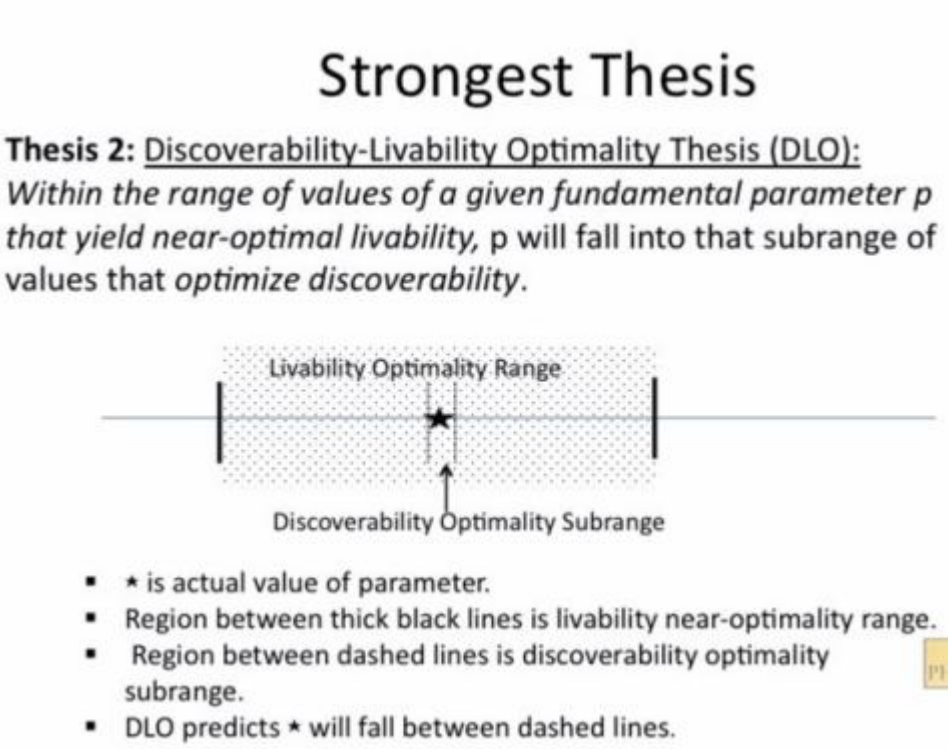

Fine-tuning for discoverability – the DLO thesis
Summary:

- Thesis: the universe is more intelligible than we would expect it by chance
- The regular fine-tuning argument says that complex embodied observers are very rare
- But the number of highly-discoverable universes that have complex embodied observers is rarer still
- Why do we exist in a highly-discoverable universe?
- Can we quantify and test discoverability?
- Yes: by varying fundamental parameters and seeing how it affects discoverability
- Conclusion of his calculations: The Discoverability-Liveability Optimality range is an even smaller range within the Liveablity Optimality range of the standard fine-tuning argument
- Fine-tuning #1: the fine structure constant, governs the strength of the electro-magnetic force
- If larger, wood-burning fire becomes impossible because fires won't stay lit, and therefore forging metals becomes unlikely
- If smaller, wood-burning fires won't go out, e.g. – from lightning strikes, so that

wood would be less accessible
- Other constraints: smaller value decreases effectiveness of light microscopes, drastically lowers efficiency of transformers and motors
- Fine-tuning #2: the cosmic microwave background radiation (CMBR), radiation left over from the Big Bang
- humans need to discover the CMBR in order to confirm the Big Bang creation out of nothing, and it depends on baryon/pothon ratio
- his calculations show that the actual value of CMBR is exactly at the peak for detectability by humans
- if baryon/photon ratio larger, CMBR is less discoverable
- if baryon/photon ratio smaller, CMBR is less discoverable
- Fine-tuning #3: parameters related to subatomic particles are fine-tuned for their discovery and usefulness, e.g. – the bottom quark, the charm quark, the tau lepton and the Higgs Boson
- the lifetime of the particles affects their usefulness to scientists who want to investigate the Standard Model of physics
- decay rates of these subatomic particles are related to several of the finely-tuned parameters
- for example, the mass of the bottom quark is finely-tuned for its discoverability by scientists
- the tau lepton and the charm quark are similarly fine-tuned for disoverability
- the mass of the Higgs boson is finely-tuned for discoverability and for making further discoveries
- Conclusion: the DLO thesis is strongly confirmed – this is an even greater degree of fine-tuning that the already astonishing probabilities of the fine-tuning for complex, embodied intelligent beings
- The formalized version of the philosophical argument based on this evidence is impervious with some of the traditional objections to the standard fine-tuning argument
- #1 multiverse/selection effect: it is not subject to multiverse / observer selection objections
- #2 normalizeability: it is not subject to the McGrew-Vestrup objection because the range of possible values is *finite* not *infinite*
- #3 falsifiability: it makes falsifiable predictions, and in fact Collins' earlier calculations of the CMBR discoverability contained an error that falsified the thesis – until he found the error and corrected for it
- #4 usefulness: it gives clues about the Creator's purpose for us, namely that the universe was created for us to be able to do science and find evidence of the Creator's existence – there is no expectation for us to exercise blind faith, trust in God is meant to be a plausible deduction from the progress of experimental science

Sample slide:

Example: Ideal Lifetime of Bottom Quark

Particle Physicist Matt Strassler: "Bottom quarks . . . have lifetimes in a **"sweet spot"** . . . .*The distance that bottom quarks typically can travel [before they decay]. . . turns out to be* ***an ideal*** *distance for detection by the LHC detectors ATLAS and CMS, and the Tevatron detectors CDF and DZero, and many other experiments too."*

Bottom quark lifetime is finely-tuned for discoverability
And another:

Higgs Mass Ideal

- Particle Physicist Abdelhak Djouadi: "The Higgs particle was born under **a very lucky star** . . . the mass value $M_H \approx$ 125 GeV allows to produce the Higgs particle at the LHC in many redundant channels and to detect it in a large variety of decay modes."
- Particle Physicist Narei Lorenzo Martinez: "In this [low mass] region, most of the decay channels are accessible. An hypothetical Higgs boson at 125 GeV is then **an ideal scenario** for studying its couplings to other particles."

Higgs boson mass is finely-tuned for discoverability
Earlier, I blogged about a Robin Collins lecture on the fine-tuning that allows complex, embodied life to exist. Another must-see lecture. If you are looking for something to study in university, and you have funding, then physics, mathematics and philosophy are the best places to be for a Christian scholar.

Report: Women more likely to live in poverty than men

July 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young women vote overwhelmingly for Democrats – is it working for them?

Brad Wilcox tweeted this article from the leftist The Daily Progress. Let's see what it says, then I'll comment.

The article identifies three reasons why women are poorer than men: single motherhood, divorce and the "pay gap".

Look:

> During their working years, women tend to earn less than men, and when they retire, they're more likely to live in poverty.
>
> These are women who raised children and cared for sick and elderly family members, often taking what savings and income they had and spending it on things besides their own retirement security.
>
> The National Institute on Retirement Security, a nonprofit research center, reports that women are 80 percent more likely than men to be impoverished at age 65 and older. Women age 75 to 79 are three times more likely.
>
> **While experts cite a pay gap as a major cause for retirement insecurity, other factors play a role, from single parenthood and divorce to the fact that women typically live longer than men.**

Dr. Wilcox makes the point that this poverty is due to a retreat from marriage. That's true. But look at the three factors the left-wing article itself cites: single motherhood, divorce and pay gap. Are these policies instances of women being victimized, or are their problems self-inflicted?

1) Single motherhood is caused by the welfare policies that young women favor when they vote overwhelmingly for bigger government. If we take money from working

taxpayers, or borrow it from the next generation, and we give it to women to pay them to have fatherless children, then more women will do this. And of course this is a path to poverty. There just isn't enough money to steal from taxpayers or borrow from future taxpayers to pay for women to have children with no man in the home who can provide for those children. People do more of what you pay them to do. The more money we give to single mothers, the more fatherless children we get, and it creates a host of problems that we can't continue to pay for as a society, e.g. – crime. The mistake was paying women to make poor decisions in the first place, but welfare spending a policy that most young, unmarried women support. They're not victims, they're doing this to themselves.

This new Prager University video from Larry Elder explains why women embrace single motherhood:

We're paying them to make bad decisions, and it creates more poverty.

2) No-fault divorce was caused by the radical feminism that many young, unmarried women support. This policy was brought in to make it easy for women to divorce without having to have a good reason (70% of divorces are initiated by women, mostly over "unhappiness"). Feminists don't like the idea of being "constrained" to marry a man because he is a good provider, protector and moral/spiritual leader. A strong man is intimidating – he will want to make decisions and lead, and we can't let him do that. A better idea is to marry a man who doesn't provide, protect or lead – that way, we don't have to respect him or let him lead. Naturally, when this entertaining, irresponsible man is unable to provide, then women divorce him and find themselves poor and unable to remarry – having lost their youth and beauty to "fun" men. No-fault divorce is not a policy that men supported. It is a policy that feminists supported, because they want to be able to nuke relationships that don't make them feel happy. The most volatile, short-lived relationships are lesbian relationships, because women naturally expect relationships to fulfill them instead of expecting relationships to be tough and challenging. There just isn't a path to prosperity for women into old age if they value feeling happy over self-sacrificial love and moral obligations. We need to teach women to prefer marriage-capable of men instead of fun, entertaining, no-leadership men. We need to teach women to make commitments that override their changing feelings. The problem of divorce is self-inflicted.

3) Lastly, the pay gap. I have written before about how the pay gap is largely related to women's own choices about what to study, what job to take, and how many hours to work. It is simply not possible for a woman to earn as much as a man when she does a degree in English, women's studies or other nonsense. Men don't study what we want to study. We study things we hate – like petroleum engineering and software engineering. We do this so that we can provide for a wife and children, so that we can get what we we want most: respect and the (earned) authority to lead a home. Most men are commitment machines. We hate fun, we want to do hard things, and to be respected for being reliable and steady. The problem of the "pay gap" is self-inflicted.

So, in conclusion, yes – many women are poorer than men, especially as they age. But

their poverty is *self-inflicted.* They are poor because they embraced ideas that would make them poorer. Three ideas destroyed their prosperity: single mother welfare, no-fault divorce, and following your heart in education and career. None of these things will provide women with security or prosperity – especially now that the debt has doubled to $20 trillion, and *there is no more to borrow to continue the government-as-sugar-daddy plan of feminists*. No amount of reassurance from pious pastors and permissive parents can save women from the consequences of their own irrational embrace of radical feminism. It turns out that there is no escape from economics, and the universe does not magically adjust to make the feelings and intuitions of entitled Disney princesses “work out”.

Feminist explains how she chose to drink alcohol before recreational sex

July 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students puking in toilet

Guess where I'm linking today? To a radical feminist web site named Jezebel, to an article written by a radical feminist who writes for the radically leftist Slate.

No, I'm not crazy. Just read it:

> Much of the conversation around alcohol and sex has focused on assault—the line at which intoxication becomes incapacitation, for instance—**but what we fail to mention is how haunted people can be by the sex they actually, technically consented to.**
>
> […]I wonder what my sex life would even look like if alcohol hadn't been there. Alcohol gave me comfort in my own body, and it allowed me to turn my erotic curiosity and hunger for experience into an action plan. I was tired of being the stuttering girl sucking in her stomach after the lights went out. I wanted to be the woman who roamed wild and free.
>
> Alcohol also helped me cut the girlish strings on my heart, an action my college years demanded. Three months into my freshman year, I split a six pack with a dashing sophomore, and we wound up partially clothed on his bed, my bare legs wrapped around his waist, my hands around his neck. I pulled back slightly and asked him the question, the naive question of a girl who does not yet understand her fate: "What does this mean?"

> He looked past me, into his studio apartment, and then back into my eyes. “It means that I’m a 19-year-old boy, and we’re having fun.”

What is interesting is that she didn’t see this man’s using her for fun after getting her drunk as any disqualification for a serious relationship. On the contrary, she believes that a serious relationship built on self-sacrificial love and commitment that lasts through difficulties can be found in a man who uses her for fun sex:

> I’m not saying I didn’t enjoy that night with the dashing sophomore. I’m saying the fun part for me might have been turning our physical intimacy into a sustained attachment.

Amazing. She wasn’t looking for men with good educations, good jobs, lots of savings, who were sober and chaste – they would have made her unhappy with their bossy leading, and strict plans about courting and marriage. Nope, she wanted the drunken slut who didn’t ask her any questions or have any plan for her to develop into a wife and mother. That’s who she wanted. He was hawt! And he was free, easy and fun.

She is 35 now, and still single. I’m sure if you ask her, she would like to be married “some day”, but who could look at 20 years of drunken sex and say that this is good preparation for the challenges of marriage? Marriage is about self-sacrificial love, and endurance. To prepare for it, you learn self-denial and self-control. You learn how to accept expectations, obligations and responsibilities.

Anyway, back to the article by the drunken, promiscuous feminist. The point that I wanted to make is that she *chose the alcohol* herself, and that she did it for a very specific reason:

> I wanted to have fun, too. *And alcohol evened the score***.** I cared less about everything when I was drinking: What you thought of me, what I looked like in this dress, whether that taco was warm or cold when I stuffed it in my mouth. I don’t want to make it sound like I drank *in order to* have sex. I drank for a million reasons.
>
> […]Booze downshifted my intense body consciousness, and it revved up my bravado. Sex was scary—but alcohol made me feel safe.

She drank in order to have sex. Got it? *She chose to get drunk in order to have sex.* This is the part that permissive parents and pious pastors need to understand about their darling daughters. Many young women think that recreational sex with hot guys is a pathway to marriage. They drink in order to make progress towards the marriage they want – the marriage to the man who is fun. Not the man who is serious. They don’t want the serious man who makes plans and expects them to behave responsibly and honor obligations. They want the fun, hot man – the bad boy – and they expect to change him into a faithful, sober, responsible provider through the magical power of vagina. And if that doesn’t work, by threatening him with divorce.

Why are millenials acting like children into adulthood?

This reminds me of the Institute for American Values study. Despite their name, it is not a conservative organization

Look at this citation from p. 15:

> A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up.
>
> **A Yale University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up."**
>
> **A New York University student observed, "[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking."**
>
> **A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."**
>
> **[…]A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."**

I think at this point you should assume that if your daughter is not passionate about chastity, natural marriage and pro-life, then she is probably somewhere on this *drinking – recreational sex – cohabitation – abortion – no-fault divorce* path. The more fun-loving and emotional a woman is, the more likely she is to fall into it, and some of them just work it together with Christianity. Once woman I know was living with a non-Christian man and praying fervently for God to make her career take off. God is there for hope and comfort, not to impose any sort of moral boundaries. And parents and pastors are oblivious – they just want to let women do whatever they want, and then blame men for not making it "work out". Parents and pastors are not doing the job of explaining to women what their

lives will really be like from age 40 to 90, and urging women to make a plan that provides lasting love and and security even as they experience declining youth, declining beauty, and declining fertility.

I hope that many of the men out there who refuse to hold women accountable for their own desires start to understand that not everything a woman wants is good, and not every plan a woman makes will work. Sometimes, you need to calmly and constructively challenge them about their priorities, plans and actions. It’s for their own good.

Republican platform stays pro-marriage, pledges to defund Planned Parenthood

July 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There's always 2020 to run a conservative Republican candidate for President Although it is a mistake to run a lifelong Democrat clown as the Republican nominee for President, at least the party platform of the Republican Party as a whole is conservative on social issues.

The Daily Signal reports:

> A dramatic effort to change the GOP's stance on LGBT issues ended with a whimper Monday as the Republican National Convention kicked off officially.
>
> **The document, adopted Monday on the floor of Quicken Loans Arena, codifies the traditional definition of marriage and denounces the administration's school bathroom directive.**
>
> **"It's the most conservative platform we've ever adopted," Rep. Virginia Foxx, R-N.C., platform committee co-chair, told The Daily Signal. "It's absolutely pro-marriage. It's a wonderful platform to unite all Republicans and all Americans."**
>
> Last week, it wasn't clear if the platform would be agreed to at all.
>
> Delegates and operatives associated with American Unity Fund, an LGBT lobbying organization bankrolled by billionaire Paul Singer, mounted an operation to completely scrap the party's platform supporting traditional marriage in favor of a shorter document that didn't include any language about marriage.
>
> The plan hinged on a parliamentary measure known as a minority report. It would trigger a messy debate on the floor of the convention if just 28 of the 112 delegates signed onto the measure.
>
> Last Wednesday the minority report had 37 signatures, CNN reported.

> But four of those delegates told The Daily Signal that they were lied to about what they were signing. They thought they were signing a short statement of principle authored by Utah delegate Boyd Matheson.
>
> "When we found out about it, we alerted the people who signed it that the one page 'statement of principle' didn't contain support for traditional marriage and family values," Indiana delegate Jim Bopp told The Daily Signal.
>
> By the time the convention convened Monday, more than half of the 37 delegates who had signed the minority report removed their names, delegates Bopp, Matheson, and Ben Marchi told The Daily Signal. The loss of signatures killed the initiative.
>
> […]Marchi, who described the minority report tactic as "the filthiest thing I've ever seen in politics," said the episode should put conservatives on alert.

Not only is the party platform still pro-marriage, (and therefore pro-child), but the party platform is the most pro-life ever.

March for Life reports:

> Today the Republican National Convention voted to pass the most detailed pro-life Platform ever – in direct sharp contrast to the draft Democratic Platform which is the most pro-abortion Platform ever. On the ground in Cleveland to assist the pro-life delegates was March for Life Action Vice President Tom McClusky.
>
> […]"The delegates deserve a lot of credit for creating this document which, in great detail, explains what the pro-life movement is for and just how radical the pro-abortion position is," said March for Life Action Vice President Tom McClusky. **"For the first time ever the Republican Platform calls out abortion giant Planned Parenthood by name and says tax dollars should not go to subsidize the death industry."** In addition support for bans on dilation and extraction abortions as well as bans on sex selection and abortions based on disability are, for the first time, in the Platform.
>
> **Language defending the conscience rights of individuals and institutions was included as well, fitting after the successful vote on the Conscience Protection Act in the U.S. House of Representatives. In addition, the Republican Platform calls for protection against attacks on the Hyde Amendment. Since the 1970's the Hyde amendment has been the firewall preventing certain tax dollars being used to pay for abortions.**

I know that a lot of people who claim to be pro-marriage and pro-life vote for the Democrat party because they are dependent on the government for handouts. But the truth is that if a person is consistently pro-marriage and pro-life, then they ought to be a Republican. I just assume that when someone tells me that they are a Democrat, that they are anti-marriage and pro-abortion. If you're pro-marriage and pro-life, then you

vote Republican. Period.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

July 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here is Dr. William Lane Craig giving a long-form argument for the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus, and taking questions from the audience.

The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the

Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early dating
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthew, which Mike Licona and I doubt is intended to be historical, but is more likely to be apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about

the Jewish scholar Geza Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

You can see this evidence used in an actual debate, against a historian who disagrees with Dr. Craig. That post contains a point by point summary of the debate that I wrote while listening to it.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

Heather Mac Donald's new book: The War on Cops

July 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

12 officers shot, 5 fatally, by snipers in Dallas during protest over police shootings

So, Ben Shapiro said in yesterday's podcast episode that this new book by Heather MacDonald was the book of the year so far.

You can listen to his podcast to hear him interview the author.

Here's a good review / summary that I found on the Washington Post:

> Violent crime has been rising sharply in many American cities after two decades of decline. Homicides jumped nearly 17 percent in 2015 in the largest 50 cities, the biggest one-year increase since 1993. The reason is what Heather Mac Donald first identified nationally as the "Ferguson effect": Since the 2014 police shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, officers have been backing off of proactive policing, and criminals are becoming emboldened.
>
> This book expands on Mac Donald's groundbreaking and controversial reporting on the Ferguson effect and the criminal-justice system. It deconstructs the central narrative of the Black Lives Matter movement: that racist cops are the greatest threat to young black males. On the contrary, it is criminals and gangbangers who are responsible for the high black homicide death rate.
>
> The War on Cops exposes the truth about officer use of force and explodes the conceit of "mass incarceration." A rigorous analysis of data shows that crime, not race, drives police actions and prison rates. The growth of proactive policing in the 1990s, along with lengthened sentences for violent crime, saved thousands of minority lives. In fact, Mac Donald argues, no government agency is more dedicated to the proposition that "black lives matter" than today's data-driven, accountable police department.
>
> Mac Donald gives voice to the many residents of high-crime neighborhoods who want proactive policing. She warns that race-based attacks on the criminal-justice system, from the White House on down, are eroding the authority of law

> and putting lives at risk. This book is a call for a more honest and informed debate about policing, crime, and race.

She lays out the stakes of this debate in this interview with Frontpage Magazine:

MT: *What were your thoughts upon hearing of last week's Dallas shooting in progress, when police were dying and being wounded even as they tried to protect the demonstrators who had gathered there to protest their supposed racial bias?*

HM: I was overcome by acute fear for this country. The elite establishment has been playing with fire in stoking the Black Lives Matter hatred of the police, and that fire may now be raging out of control.

MT: *With the rise of Black Lives Matter and a news media and government administration that are fomenting anti-cop sentiment, is it too alarmist to suggest that we are headed toward a breakdown of civil society if nothing is done?*

HM: It is not only not alarmist to warn of a breakdown of civil society, it is imperative to issue such a warning. Officers working in inner-city areas face animus and resistance to their lawful authority on a daily basis. Law and order, and respect for the law, are disintegrating. A Chicago police officer told me last month that he has never experienced such hatred in his twenty years on the job. The Dallas assassinations, like the assassinations of two New York City police officers in December 2014, are just a more extreme, horrific version of the animus that officers encounter regularly in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement.

I found this 47-minute lecture that she did at the conservative Hilldsale College, in Michigan:

I do think it's important to be aware of what the Democrats who push anti-police hate speech and policies are going to cause. It will start with a refusal by the police to enforce the law, especially in poor black neighborhoods. The first victims of law enforcement pulling out will be the very people who need the police the most. Expect to see a surge in gang activity as people look to gangs for security instead of the police.

Genome mapper Francis Collins changes his mind on "junk DNA"

July 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

First, let's see what Darwinian evolutionists predict about junk DNA, before we look at what the experiments show.

Here's biologist John Timmer to explain the orthodox Darwinian view of DNA from 2007:

> Personally, I fall into the "it's all junk" end of the spectrum. If almost all of these sequences are not conserved by evolution, and we haven't found a function for any of them yet, it's hard to see how the "none of it's junk" view can be maintained. There's also an absence of support for the intervening view, again because of a lack of evidence for actual utility. The genomes of closely related species have revealed very few genes added from non-coding DNA, and all of the structural RNA we've found has very specific sequence requirements. The all-junk view, in contrast, is consistent with current data.

Got that? According to Darwinists, DNA is almost entirely junk – this is what is consistent with the view that creatures have evolved through a process of random mutation and selection. The estimates that I've seen from evolutionary biologists range from 95% to 99% junk. Now let's compare the religion with science, and separate mythology from reality.

Regarding this junk DNA, commenter Thomas A alerted me to this article from Evolution News about famous theistic evolutionist Francis Collins.

It says:

> Count on Marvin Olasky at *World* Magazine not to miss something like this. In*The*

> *Language of God*, theistic evolutionary icon Francis Collins used so-called Junk DNA as homerun evidence against intelligent design. He has since backed down on that, honorably, admitting "hubris" in the process. Olasky:
>
> Collins claimed on page 136 that huge chunks of our genome are "littered" with ancient repetitive elements (AREs), so that "roughly 45 percent of the human genome [is] made up of such genetic flotsam and jetsam." In his talk he claimed the existence of "junk DNA" was proof that man and mice had a common ancestor, because God would not have created man with useless genes.
>
> Last year, though, speaking at the J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference in San Francisco, Collins threw in the towel: "In terms of junk DNA, we don't use that term anymore because I think it was pretty much a case of hubris to imagine that we could dispense with any part of the genome, as if we knew enough to say it wasn't functional. … Most of the genome that we used to think was there for spacer turns out to be doing stuff."
>
> Good for Collins — and maybe he'll go on to deal with other times scientists feel sorry for God as they look at His purportedly poor design. For example, evolutionists use the retina of the eye as evidence against creation, because nerve endings are at the front rather than at the back, which at first glance seems better placement. Yet, as Lee Spetner explains in *The Evolution Revolution*(Judaica Press, 2014), physicists now see front placement as the best one for "ingeniously designed light collectors."
>
> The list of needed retractions should include what you probably learned in high school about apparently purposeless human vestigial organs. Robert Wiedersheim's 1895 list of 86 has shrunk, as almost all of them have proved to have functions. For example, the most famous vestigial organ — the vermiform appendix — is a crucial storage place for benign bacteria that repopulate the gut when diarrhea strikes. The appendix can be a life-saver.

Who knew? Well, intelligent design proponents knew.

Here's intelligent design theorist William Dembski's view of "junk" DNA, from 1998:

> Even if we have a reliable criterion for detecting design, and even if that criterion tells us that biological systems are designed, it seems that determining a biological system to be designed is akin to shrugging our shoulders and saying God did it. The fear is that admitting design as an explanation will stifle scientific inquiry, that scientists will stop investigating difficult problems because they have a sufficient explanation already.
>
> But design is not a science stopper. Indeed, design can foster inquiry where traditional evolutionary approaches obstruct it. Consider the term "junk DNA." Implicit in this term is the view that because the genome of an organism has been cobbled together through a long, undirected evolutionary process, the genome is a patchwork of which only limited portions are essential to the

> organism. **Thus on an evolutionary view we expect a lot of useless DNA. If, on the other hand, organisms are designed, we expect DNA, as much as possible, to exhibit function. And indeed, the most recent findings suggest that designating DNA as "junk" merely cloaks our current lack of knowledge about function… Design encourages scientists to look for function where evolution discourages it.**

Now let's look at the experimental evidence and see whose prediction was proven right by the progress of science.

Science Daily reports on a recent study that confirms the previous study that falsified Darwinian predictions about junk DNA.

Excerpt:

> Researchers from the Gene and Stem Cell Therapy Program at Sydney's Centenary Institute have confirmed that, far from being "junk," the 97 per cent of human DNA that does not encode instructions for making proteins can play a significant role in controlling cell development.
>
> […]Using the latest gene sequencing techniques and sophisticated computer analysis, a research group led by Professor John Rasko AO and including Centenary's Head of Bioinformatics, Dr William Ritchie, has shown how particular white blood cells use non-coding DNA to regulate the activity of a group of genes that determines their shape and function. The work is published today in the scientific journal*Cell*.
>
> "This discovery, involving what was previously referred to as "junk," opens up a new level of gene expression control that could also play a role in the development of many other tissue types," Rasko says. "Our observations were quite surprising and they open entirely new avenues for potential treatments in diverse diseases including cancers and leukemias."

Now, this is yet another falsification of Darwinism, to go with the other papers that I keep posting about new research that falsifies Darwinism. How many papers do we need to falsify Darwinism? I think if you are in an argument over Darwinism, and you produce these articles, then you win, so long as the other person cannot produce anything. It's also a good idea to couple these pieces of evidence with a positive case for intelligent causes operating during the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion. You can't just argue that Darwinism is false, you have to also show that life shows the same signs of design as software code or blog posts. Information.

Ted Cruz refuses to endorse Trump, tells voters to "vote your conscience"

July 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One single, solitary man refuses to salute Hitler at a Nazi party rally

I have to say something about Ted Cruz's speech at the Republican national convention in Cleveland, OH.

This article from The Federalist was the best summary:

> Ted Cruz knows exactly what he's doing. On Wednesday night at the Republican National Convention, Cruz walked onto the stage in Cleveland to thunderous applause, smiled, waved, and then openly defied the Republican Party.
>
> Not only did Cruz fail to endorse Donald Trump, in a master stroke of rhetorical understatement he also implored Republicans to "vote your conscience" in November. It was all he needed to say.
>
> Cruz uttered the name of the GOP nominee only once, right at the beginning. "I congratulate Donald Trump on winning the nomination last night," Cruz told the crowd.
>
> That was it. The very next thing he said was a rhetorical shot across Trump's bow: "I want to see the principles of our party prevail in November."
>
> For the rest of his remarks, Cruz's theme was freedom—not Trump or party unity or even Hillary Clinton. He took up his theme by talking about something he's been talking about for years: the frustrations of average Americans with what Cruz calls the "Washington cartel." Recall that early in the primaries, Cruz made common cause with Trump as an outsider candidate, lambasting not just the

> Obama administration but also a Republican establishment he said was woefully out of step with ordinary Americans.
>
> "Voters are overwhelmingly rejecting big government," he said. "That's a profound victory. People are fed up with politicians who don't listen to them, fed up with a corrupt system that benefits the elites, instead of working men and women."
>
> He lambasted a "political establishment that cynically breaks its promises and ignores the will or the people," a shot aimed not just at the Obama administration, but at his GOP establishment rivals in Congress.
>
> But it was clear, to those who have ears to hear, that Cruz was not making a case for Trump. "We're fighting not for a particular candidate or campaign," he said. Americans deserves leaders who "stand for principles" and "shared values."
>
> The closest Cruz came to an endorsement of anyone was a plea for the beleaguered down-ballot Republicans who in many places across the country face tough odds in November with Trump at the top of the GOP ticket.
>
> **"To those listening, please, don't stay home in November," he said. "Stand, and speak, and vote your conscience, vote for candidates up and down the ticket who you trust to defend our freedom and to be faithful to the Constitution."**

That's what I've been telling people as well. Don't vote for Trump, but do vote for solid conservatives at every level of government in your home state.

Here is the full speech: (Transcript at Caffeinated Thoughts)

Ted explained his actions like this:

Not everyone who runs for office is a "politician"
Donald Trump repeatedly insulted the much better conservatives who were running against him in the primary. Most of those conservatives, like Rubio, have apologized, grovelled, and kissed his ring after they lost. Not Ted Cruz. Ted Cruz is as far above Trump in intelligence and morality as Hyperion to a satyr, to quote Shakespeare. There is

no way that Cruz could kowtow to an immoral imbecile like Trump.

Jonah Goldberg says this at National Review:

> Well here comes Ted Cruz providing exactly the sort of drama they yearned for and many of these same voices are aghast at Ted Cruz's effrontery. The word has gone out across the land: This is an outrage! Not since Caligula appointed his horse to the Roman senate has a political figure showed such contempt for decorum and the solemnity of politics!
>
> […]I understand that Chris Christie will spew whatever fake outrage his masters instruct, like a trained seal barking for another herring. But I don't see why so many supposedly seasoned political observers are volunteering for service.
>
> […]This is part of the corruption of Trump. He called Ted Cruz a liar every day and in every way for months (it used to be considered a breach in decorum to straight up call an opponent a liar, never mind use it as a nickname). The insults against his wife, the cavalier birtherism, the disgusting JFK assassination theories about his Dad: These things are known. And yet the big conversation of the day is *Ted Cruz's* un-sportsmanlike behavior? For real?
>
> […]Ted Cruz has never been my favorite politician. And I am not so naïve that I don't recognize the gamble Cruz is making.
>
> **But if the choice is between forgiving Ted Cruz's obvious political calculation to become the standard bearer of an authentic conservatism or Donald Trump's lizard-brain narcissism where no principle or cause outranks his own glandular desire to be worshipped, like a conqueror atop the carcass of conservatism, I choose Ted.**
>
> **If the choice is between, say, congratulating the Boy Scoutish obedience of Mike Pence as he sells off bits and pieces of his soul like jewels from a family heirloom just to survive another day, or Ted Cruz who took the tougher road and refused to join the mewling mobs of toadies, apologists, human weather vanes, difference-splitters and vacillators, I choose Ted.**
>
> **If the choice is between suspending the rules of decorum, decency, and civility for Donald Trump as he casually bad mouths his own country to the New York Times just as he secures the presidential nomination of the Republican Party or accepting that we are in dark and uncharted waters and conscience must light the way, I choose Ted.**

I wasn't worried about what Cruz would say at the convention. More than anyone else speaking, I trusted him not to stain his honor by endorsing someone he didn't support, for political gain. There was just no way that someone with the education, achievements, moral character and conservative principles of Ted Cruz would lower himself into the gutter to support a disgusting piece of godless left-wing filth like Donald Trump. Ted Cruz will be back in 2020. Maybe then American voters will care enough to actually look into

the backgrounds and achievements of the candidates.

I can only hope that God will give this nation one more chance to turn off of the road to serfdom. But even if he does not, we can't say that we were not warned.

Related posts

- Donald Trump plans to default on our debt and/or embrace hyper-inflation
- Trump reveals that he was lying to his gullible supporters all along
- Will Trump cultists apologize for their laziness and ignorance, as Trump reverts to leftism?
- This suprises no one: Trump won Indiana with votes from fake Christians
- Ted Cruz suspends campaign: what next for conservatives? #NeverTrump
- Is Donald Trump a Christian? Is Donald Trump a moral person?
- How well is Obamacare working, and will Ted Cruz or Donald Trump fix health care?
- Which candidate is the best at defending religious liberty: Trump or Cruz?
- Against misogyny: why every conservative should #DumpTrump #NeverTrump
- Donald Trump's plan to introduce tariffs is just a tax on consumer goods
- Suppose God had coffee with Donald Trump… how would that go?
- Is Donald Trump right to order U.S. troops to commit war crimes?
- How well did Donald Trump do in the hotel and casino business?
- Trump donated to group that promotes homosexuality to 5-year-olds
- Do supporters of Donald Trump really support what Trump believes?
- Is Donald Trump a successful businessman? Let's look at his record
- Report: how Donald Trump used illegal immigrants to build Trump Tower
- Is Trump right to praise Putin's leadership abilities?
- Is Trump right to say that Bush lied about the Iraq war, and there were no WMDs?
- Donald Trump promises gay publication "forward motion" on gay rights issues
- Who has done more on the pro-life and pro-marriage issues – Trump or Cruz?
- Trump, eminent domain, a widow's house, and a limousine parking lot
- Trump wants to increase taxpayer subsidies of ethanol, Cruz wants to end them
- Trump supported the bank bailout and auto bailout, Cruz opposes all bailouts
- Should evangelical Christians prefer Donald Trump on moral grounds?
- What are the "New York Values" that Trump's evangelical Christian supporters admire?
- Donald Trump would expand Obamacare into single-payer health care system

What is the difference between capitalism and socialism?

July 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Over 100,000 Venezuelans cross into Colombia in order to buy food
(This photo H/T Prager University)

One country that has done a good job of implementing socialism is Venezuela.

Here is an article from March 2013 from Slate, a web site that strongly favors socialism. The headline is "Hugo Chavez's economic miracle: The Venezuelan leader was often marginalized as a radical. But his brand of socialism achieved real economic gains". The author is "a senior writer for the International Business Times".

He writes:

> Chavez became the bugaboo of American politics because his full-throated advocacy of socialism and redistributionism at once represented a fundamental critique of neoliberal economics, and also delivered some indisputably positive results. Indeed, as shown by some of the most significant indicators, Chavez racked up an economic record that a legacy-obsessed American president could only dream of achieving.

What did Chavez do, precisely, that caused the Venezuelan economic to boom? Well, he nationalized private industry and redistributed wealth from job creators and entrepreneurs to the poor.

> As The Week correctly put it, while "Chavez's policies of redistribution and nationalization of oil assets endeared him to Venezuela's working class" and produced many laudable results, the country's "oil-centric economy has taken

> away resources from other areas that are badly in need of development."

OK, so that's pretty much what the Democrat party wants to do in the United States as well. Nationalize the energy sector, nationalize health care, etc. Let the government take over the private sector industries in order to eliminate "inequalities". Raise taxes, and redistribute the money to the low income people via social programs, also known as welfare.

So, how does it work? Is socialism really an "economic miracle"?

Here is the latest from Venezuela, as reported by CNN Money. (H/T William)

Excerpt:

> Venezuelans cried at the sight of fully-stocked supermarket shelves in Colombia.
>
> Pregnant women, children and even elderly Venezuelans crossed into Colombia on Sunday after the border was temporarily reopened, allowing them to buy basic foods and toiletries — rare commodities in their home country.
>
> Tearful Venezuelans had gone weeks without basic food items like milk, flour and toilet paper. It's a sad but common part of daily life today in crisis-ridden Venezuela, a country that has the world's largest proven reserves of oil. Colombian officials estimate that about 100,000 Venezuelans crossed the border.
>
> Venezuela is expected to dive deeper into the abyss this year, according to new projections published Wednesday by the International Monetary Fund.
>
> The IMF forecasts Venezuela's economy will shrink 10% this year, worse than its previous estimate of 8%. It also estimates that inflation in Venezuela will catapult to 700% this year, up from the earlier guess of about 480%.
>
> "Venezuela's economic condition continues to deteriorate," says Alejandro Werner, chief Latin America economist at the IMF. The estimates for growth and inflation are the worst worldwide.
>
> The numbers are just the tip of the iceberg. Venezuela is deep into a humanitarian crisis — people are dying in ill-equipped hospitals and many live without basic food items. Venezuela can't pay to import goods because its government is desperately strapped for cash after years of mismanagement of its funds, heavy spending on poorly-run government programs, and lack of investment on its oil fields.
>
> […]**It's all even more tragic given that despite Venezuela's oil abundance, its state-run oil company, PDVSA, is broke. Venezuela's oil production fell to a 13-year low in June, according to OPEC, of which it's a member.**

That's what you get when you let the government take over the free enterprise system, or even when you just stifle the free market with burdensome regulations and high taxes. That's what socialists in Venezuela did. That's what the Democrat party would do. They're two sides of the same coin.

Dennis Prager

Dennis Prager put out a good video recently explaining the problems with socialism:

Why would anyone prefer a system that encourages some people to feel entitled to what other people create and earn? We want a system that is focused on serving your neighbor – not stealing from them.

Arthur Brooks

If you would like a very brief introduction to capitalism, also known as the free enterprise system or the free market system, then you can watch the videos below, featuring Arthur Brooks, president of the American Enterprise Institute.

Here is the first one, which explains the myths that most Americans are taught about capitalism in school and in the culture:

An important advantage of capitalism is that it lifts people out of poverty. The poorest people in America live much better than the wealthy in Venezuela.

And the second video explains what capitalism offers to individuals for their fulfillment, which socialism does not:

Earned success makes people happier, which is at least as important as the wealth benefit.

We can compare the results of each system by looking at where it's been tried. Capitalism lifts people out of poverty – all the people in the society who are willing to work are lifted out of poverty. Even the people who can't work in a capitalist society enjoy the benefits of charity from their neighbors – when people do well, they give more money away. Socialism drives those who work and those who don't work into poverty, and eliminates charity. No one has anything to share when everyone is poor.

Related posts

- Do young Americans know how well socialism is working in Venezuela?
- How well are Democrat Party economic policies working out in Venezuela?
- Obama silent as Venezuelan government violently represses democratic opposition
- How well are Democrat economic policies working in Venezuela and Argentina?
- How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?
- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia's economy to grow? What causes Venezuela's economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Explosion at government-run Amuay refinery, nationalized by Venezuela in 1976
- Iran launches Spanish-language TV channel in Venezuela
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela

- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- What socialists did to the economies of Cuba and Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank

North Carolina State University loses court battle to silence Christian students

July 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Alliance Defending Freedom: for religious liberty and protection of conscience

Friday – that means you get good news, courtesy of the Alliance Defending Freedom.

Excerpt:

> As part of a settlement with a Christian student group, officials with North Carolina State University have revised the school's solicitation policy so that it no longer unconstitutionally censors the free speech of students. In light of the policy change, Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys representing the student group, Grace Christian Life, withdrew their lawsuit against the university on Tuesday.
>
> Last month, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina issued a preliminary injunction that halted the university's former policy, which required a permit for nearly any kind of non-commercial student speech or communication anywhere on campus.
>
> "Students of any religious, political, or ideological persuasion should be able to freely and peacefully speak with their fellow students about their views without interference from university officials who may prefer one view over another. NC State did the right thing in revising its policy to reflect this instead of continuing to defend its previous policy, which was not constitutionally defensible," said ADF Senior Counsel Tyson Langhofer.
>
> ADF-allied attorney Edmund LaCour of Bancroft PLLC served as co-counsel in the lawsuit, *Grace Christian Life v. Woodson*, and argued before the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina in favor of the preliminary

> injunction that the court granted. The settlement essentially incorporates the terms of the injunction and requires the university to adopt a policy that protects the First Amendment freedom of all students to engage in speech throughout the campus without prior permission from the university.
>
> The university only selectively enforced its permit policy and did so against Grace Christian Life, a registered student organization, when officials told members of the group that they needed a permit to speak with other students in the student union.

You can learn more about the ADF by reading about them on their web site.

Well, that's your good news for Friday. ADF is one of the best Christian organizations for solving the real problems that Christians actually face. I really am grateful for their work defending religious liberty. Somebody has to hold the line against the efforts by those on the secular left to deny basic rights to Christians, such as freedom of speech, freedom of association, and conscience protection. It seems like it is open season on Christians, these days. Hardly a day goes buy where some organization or other (often taxpayer-funded!) is trying to intimidate Christians from exercising their Constitutional rights. Well, if nobody shows up to fight a battle, then the other side wins. If we don't have groups like the ADF showing up to fight for us, we will lose these legal battles. Make sure that you honor those who are fighting for you and for your freedom to be who you are.

When talking with a non-Christian, make truth – not behavior – the main issue

July 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Pastor Matt posted about something that I think all Christian apologists believe, deep down. (H/T The Poached Egg)

He writes:

> Typically, the church has defined loving one's neighbor as in line with Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and Christ's teaching in passages such as Matthew 25:31-46, in which we are commanded to love the imprisoned, the homeless, the hungry, etc. as if they were Jesus himself. Of course all believers should do so whether by volunteering at a soup kitchen or donating money to ministries like World Help.
>
> But there is more to loving one's neighbor these days than caring for the poor, as important as that is. Those of us who live in a first world western country now dwell in a post-Christian society. Our neighbors are inundated with naturalism masquerading as good science and sound philosophy. Non-Christians believe the faith is intellectually vacuous.
>
> **It shocks many people when those trained in apologetics point out that atheists cannot answer questions like, "How did the universe come into existence?" "Why is our planet so finely tuned for life despite all the odds against it?" "How did life begin?" "Why do humans have consciousness?" "How is there truth or right and wrong without God?" "Why did the disciples die horrible deaths as impoverished traveling**

> **peasants rather than deny the resurrection of Jesus?", etc.**
>
> If we are to help bring our neighbors to saving faith, we must first destroy their false ideas of what Christianity is and is not. That means we must preach the Gospel (2 Cor. 5:21), knock down specious views of the faith and present the truth of what we believe.
>
> Apologetics is not just an intellectual exercise for nerds like me or a debate to be won on college campuses but an increasing tool in loving our neighbors. For if they do not understand the faith, they will likely not come to faith and that is what the God we love wants and how we must show love to our neighbors. So, let's study not just to win arguments but to love others.

That reminds me of 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Our job is to beat up on false ideas and speculations.

Pastor Matt's point is critical, I think. Just stop and think for a minute about your non-believing co-workers. Do they know that the universe began to exist? Do they know that the initial conditions and the cosmological constants have to be finely tuned to support things like galaxies, stars, planets and elements heavier than hydrogen? Do they know how much information is in a protein, and how many proteins would be needed to make the first living cell? Do they know what it takes to make a planet that can support life? What facts from the gospels and the Pauline letters pass the tests for historicity? What is the best explanation of those minimal facts?

These are the facts that we share when we discuss spiritual things with people. They are not Christian facts, they are public, testable facts. And yet, almost no one in the culture who is not already a believer is curious to find out these things on their own. But without the evidence, how are they supposed to take the first step towards a relationship with God through Jesus Christ? It's not possible. This is a propositional faith, and we know it's true by evidence. To share the evidence with someone so they can decide is as loving as sharing the evidence about retirement planning, or the evidence about nutrition, or the evidence about fitness and exercise, or the evidence about career planning. When you love someone, you tell them the facts, and then they decide. Evangelism is *the same thing*.

Here's something from a recent post by J. Warner Wallace, where he talks about doing apologetics with people who have not yet decided whether God exists or not.

> **The Undecided**
>
> In many ways, this group holds the most promise. People who are undecided usually fall into two categories. Some have never really given the issue much thought. They're neither for nor against; they've simply been living *unaware*. You may be the first person to introduce them to the issues you are trying to share. If so, remember the importance of a first impression. What you say or do will have an impact on the work of those who follow you. The second group of "undecideds" are people who have given the issue some thought, but are just

> beginning to make their decision. For this group of people, your defense of Christianity may very well be the deciding factor. The responsibility you and I have with the undecided is daunting, but it's a privilege to play a small part in their decision.

OK, so I want to make a point about this. So often, I see Christian parents and leaders trying to focus on changing people's behaviors, and not by giving them evidence. Instead of trying to convince them about what's true, they tell them Bible verses, or maybe tell them they are going to Hell. But given what Matt and J. Warner said, I don't want us to be focused on changing outward behavior. I want us to be focused on showing people what is true and showing our work – how we arrived at these true beliefs. You are doing Christianity wrong if you focus on getting behaviors from people by shaming them, overpowering them or scaring them.

So in my case, I'm not trying to get non-Christians to act like Christians when they have no reasons to be one. I'm trying to get them to settle on true beliefs – so that each of them and God can shake hands and be reconciled, responding to his drawing them of their own free will. Then, they can decide how they are going to act. And how they act might be even better than what we had in mind for them when all we wanted was for them to quit swearing and eat their vegetables. The Christian life is bigger than just making people do what we want them to do.

San Antonio man uses legally-owned firearm to defend his home from burglar

July 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A message from Females with Firearms (firearm pictured: Steyr AUG M3 A1)

Another day, another defensive handgun use to stop a criminal from committing a crime.

Daily Wire reports:

> A would-be San Antonio intruder died at the scene of the home he was trying to break into Thursday morning after being shot by the homeowner.
>
> Police said the criminal was a man in his 40's attempting to burglarize the home at around 9:30 a.m. The homeowner, a man in his late 70's, and his wife heard a commotion and went to investigate.
>
> Police spokesman Doug Greene told KSAT12 that "the homeowner and his wife warned the man to leave, but when he broke the front door handle, the homeowner fired a shot through the door, striking the man in the chest."
>
> "He was really trying to make a strong effort to get into the house," Greene said. "They felt the need to defend themselves and their property."
>
> Paramedics arrived shortly after the shooting and performed live-saving measures but were unable to revive the suspect.
>
> Police told reporters that the homeowner is not expected to face any charges in the incident. Detectives also said they recovered a vehicle near the scene that may have belonged to the suspect, but they are still working to accurately

> identify the man.
>
> The homeowner's neighbor, Carl Rick Jr. told the reporter that he wasn't surprised the homeowner made it out without a scratch.
>
> "They picked the wrong man because Bill was ex-Special Forces Lt. Colonel. He was at one time dropped behind enemy lines in North Vietnam."

It's very important that everyone remember what the second amendment is used for in the United States. The second amendment allows law-abiding people to purchase firearms in order to defend themselves from criminals.

Although there is opposition to gun ownership in certain circles, the academic literature is quite clear and decisive. Legal ownership of firearms reduces rates of violent crime. Whenever laws that allow law-abiding citizens to carry firearms for self-defense, violent crime rates decrease. Whenever laws are passed that restrict law-abiding citizens from owning and carrying firearms for self-defense, violent crime rates increase.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and

> handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That’s the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm’s Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

How to apologize effectively: responsibility, restitution, repentance

July 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I guess everyone already knows about Gary Chapman and his 5 Love Languages. But have you heard of his 5 Love Languages of apologies?

I want to focus on two of them that I think are important, because I don't want people to think that just saying "I'm sorry" is good enough.

Here they are (straight out of his book):

Apology Language #3: Making Restitution

In the public arena, our emphasis upon restitution is based upon our sense of justice. The one who commits the crime should pay for the wrongdoing. In contrast, in the private sphere of family and other close relationships, our desire for restitution is almost always based upon our need for love. After being hurt deeply, we need the reassurance that the person who hurt us still loves us.

"How could they love me and do that?" is the question that lingers in our minds. The words "I'm sorry; I was wrong" may not be enough.

For some people, restitution is their primary apology language. For them the statement, "It is not right for me to have treated you that way," must be followed with "What can I do to show you that I still care about you?" Without this effort at restitution, this person will question the sincerity of the apology. They will continue to feel unloved even though you may have said, "I am sorry; I was wrong." They wait for the reassurance that you genuinely love them.

The question, then, is how do we make restitution in the most effective way? Since the

heart of restitution is reassuring the spouse or family member that you genuinely love him or her, it is essential to express restitution in the love language of the other person.

[…]If restitution is the primary apology language of an individual, then this becomes the most important part of the apology. “I’m sorry; I was wrong” will never be taken as sincere if these words are not accompanied by a sincere effort at restitution. They wait for the assurance that you still genuinely love them. Without your effort to make amends, the apology will not have the desired results of forgiveness.

Apology Language #4: Genuinely Repenting

The word repentance means “to turn around” or “to change one’s mind.” In the context of an apology, it means that an individual realizes that his or her present behavior is destructive. The person regrets the pain he or she is causing the other person, and he chooses to change his behavior.

Without genuine repentance, the other languages of apology may fall on deaf ears. What people who’ve been hurt want to know is, “Do you intend to change, or will this happen again next week?”

How then do we speak the language of repentance?

> - **It begins with an expression of intent to change.** When we share our intention to change with the person we have offended, we are communicating to them what is going on inside of us. They get a glimpse of our heart—and this often is the language that convinces them we mean what we say.
> - **The second step down the road of repentance is developing a plan for implementing change.**Often apologies fail to be successful in restoring the relationship because there is no plan for making positive change.
> - **The third step down the road of repentance is implementing the plan.** Following through with the plan gives evidence to the offended party that your apology was sincere.

Most people do not expect perfection after an apology, but they do expect to see effort.

Thus, expressing your desire to change and coming up with a plan is an extremely important part of an apology to this person. Inviting the offended person to help you come up with a plan for change is perhaps the best way to effectively show repentance.

Here are some practical tips that I recommend to someone who has done something morally wrong and who wants to apologize.

To fix the problem you need more than talk

To me, the only thing that needs an apology is breaking a moral rule – you can’t beat someone up for just making a mistake. Whenever someone breaks a moral rule with me, like disrespecting me or being selfish, then I pick out a book for them to read and ask them to read it and then write something about how what they learned in the book

applies to what they did to me. I don’t pick very long books! But I do this for a very important reason.

The very important reason is that I don’t trust people who just agree with me. I don’t trust people’s words. If someone is really sorry about something, then I want them to read something that describes the moral rule that they broke, and to be willing to listen to the feelings of the person they harmed by breaking that rule. That goes a long way in my mind.

Is Hillary Clinton's VP pick of Tim Kaine conservative or liberal?

July 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

First, lets see where he stands on social issues, then we'll go to fiscal issues.

Life News reports:

> Abortion activist Hillary Clinton today tapped pro-abortion Virginia Senator Tim Kaine has her vice-presidential running mate.
>
> The Virginia politician is on record as trying to have it both ways — saying he is both a "traditional Catholic" and a strong supporter of abortion. Kaine has a pro-abortion record and the potential Clinton running mate is not following anyone. As LifeNews previously reported, Kaine said he is a "strong supporter of Roe v. Wade" despite supposedly being a "traditional Catholic."
>
> […]Leading pro-life groups know Kaine is pro-abortion.
>
> "Like Hillary Clinton, Sen. Tim Kaine supports the current policy of abortion on demand," said Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life. "Like Hillary Clinton, Sen. Kaine is so extreme on abortion he opposes even the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, legislation to protect unborn children from abortion after 20 weeks, when they are capable of feeling excruciating pain during dismemberment or other late abortion methods."
>
> As a U.S. senator, Kaine has voted against the pro-life position every chance he got. Sen. Kaine voted to allow government funding of abortion providers, and he voted against legislation to require an abortionist to notify at least one parent before performing an abortion on a minor girl from another state.
>
> Kaine took his most extreme pro-abortion action yet with his recent co-

> sponsorship of the so-called “Women’s Health Protection Act” (S.217), known to pro-lifers as the “Abortion Without Limits Until Birth Act.” This bill would nullify nearly all existing state and federal limitations on regulation of abortion, and prohibit states from enacting meaningful pro-life laws in the future. This revamped version of the long-stalled “Freedom of Choice Act” is a priority of the pro-abortion forces in Washington, D.C.
>
> “Sen. Kaine is good at hiding behind his Catholic background – but no one should be fooled,” Tobias said. “His record, and his openly declared legislative goals, are as pro-abortion as they come.”
>
> […][Kain says] “So for example, Monday, the Supreme Court’s likely to decide a really important case about abortion rights. Which is many states including Virginia have tried to basically take out the constitutional right that gives women the ability to choose by putting these onerous regulations on clinics, health clinics where abortions are provided. We fought those off in Virginia when I was governor because you have to let people make their own moral judgments.”Kaine is a longtime abortion advocate who has sought to appear moderate on abortion. But he was pro-abortion enough for Democrats for Life to yank its endorsement of him. His spokesman and website are now identifying him as a pro-choice Democrat.
>
> Kaine says on his own web site that he doesn’t want to put any limits on the Roe v. Wade decision that allowed virtually unlimited abortions throughout pregnancy for any reason and has resulted in 55 million abortions.
>
> “I strongly support the right of women to make their own health and reproductive decisions and, for that reason, will oppose efforts to weaken or subvert the basic holding of Roe v. Wade,” Kaine says, adding that he doesn’t support “criminalizing women’s reproductive decisions.”
>
> “Tim Kaine will do nothing more than rubberstamp President Obama’s expanding abortion agenda,” said Marjorie Dannenfelser, President of the Susan B. Anthony List in 2012 when Kaine was running for the Senate.
>
> Kaine avoided directly giving his stance on abortion, in order to appear more conservative. However, his refusal to defend life in his political career tells the voters that Kaine supports abortion.

Whenever you are trying to evaluate whether a candidate is conservative or liberal, it’s best to use rating systems from groups like Heritage Action or the American Conservative Union.

Here is his rating from Heritage Action, which is part of the Heritage Foundation:

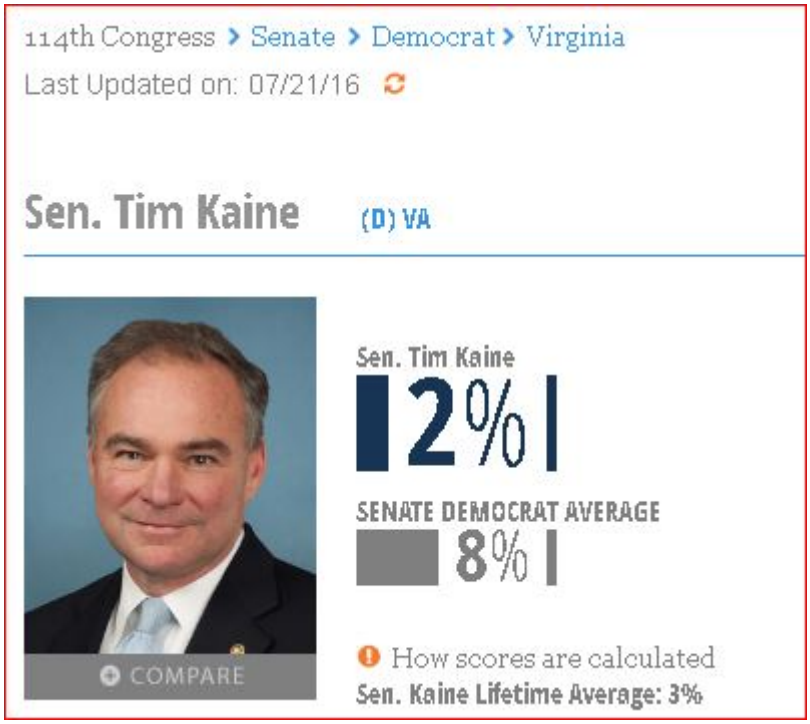

Tim Kaine's radical leftist voting record

He's to the left of the average Democrat in the very liberal U.S. Senate. It you check the Heritage Action page, it actually shows all of his votes and explains why he got the 2% rating.

The American Conservative Union has an article discussing the voting record of Clinton, Sanders, Warren, Obama and Kaine.

They write:

> "Another interesting fact in our analysis is the stark reminder that Sec. Hillary Clinton is no moderate. While many in the media portray her as more centrist than self-described Socialist Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) or fringe activist Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Clinton's lifetime rating of 8.13% is within two percentage points from those extremists. And shockingly, all three of these presidential hopefuls are even more liberal than President Barack Obama's Lifetime Rating of 10% from when he served in the U.S. Senate. If America wants a third Obama term, three candidates will not disappoint.
>
> **"Finally, Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) is the only Member of Congress with a 0% ACU Lifetime Rating. Kaine is not the moderate Democrat that he likes to pretend he is. We can only conclude that the former Democratic National Committee Chairman plans to serve one-term representing the Commonwealth of Virginia before he returns to lead the fringe portion of the liberal activist base."**

Finally, here is Citizens Against Government Waste:

> The Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW) today released its congressional rating of the presumptive Democratic Vice Presidential nominee, Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.).

> Sen. Kaine has served in the U.S. Senate since 2013. He holds a lifetime CCAGW rating of 7 percent, making him one of the Senate's most "hostile" members toward taxpayers. In 2014, Sen. Kaine earned a dismal zero percent rating. CCAGW's Congressional Ratings, which have been issued annually since 1990, identify which members of Congress voted to protect taxpayers and which voted against their interests on spending and taxes.
>
> **CCAGW President Tom Schatz said, "Sen. Kaine has spent his time in the Senate supporting the big-spending agenda of President Obama, so he makes for an ideal running mate for the fiscally reckless Hillary Clinton. Sen. Kaine's miserable 7 percent CCAGW lifetime rating is worse than Mrs. Clinton's 8 percent lifetime score, which included two years – her first and last – at zero percent. By comparison, President Obama's lifetime CCAGW rating was 16 percent and Vice President Joe Biden's lifetime rating was 21 percent. In other words, a President Clinton and a Vice President Kaine could be twice as damaging to the fiscal interests of the United States than the current administration, and would be highly likely to make the government bigger and more intrusive than any administration in history.** That is certainly something to keep in mind as the presidential campaign goes into full swing after the Democratic convention next week."

As Governor of Virginia, he was also far to the left, especially on social issues. Although the Democrats might like to present him as a moderate, he is no such thing. And you discover that if you are willing to do the work of looking at voting records. No one can hide from their voting record.

National Press Secretary of Human Rights Campaign to speak at Democrat convention

July 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

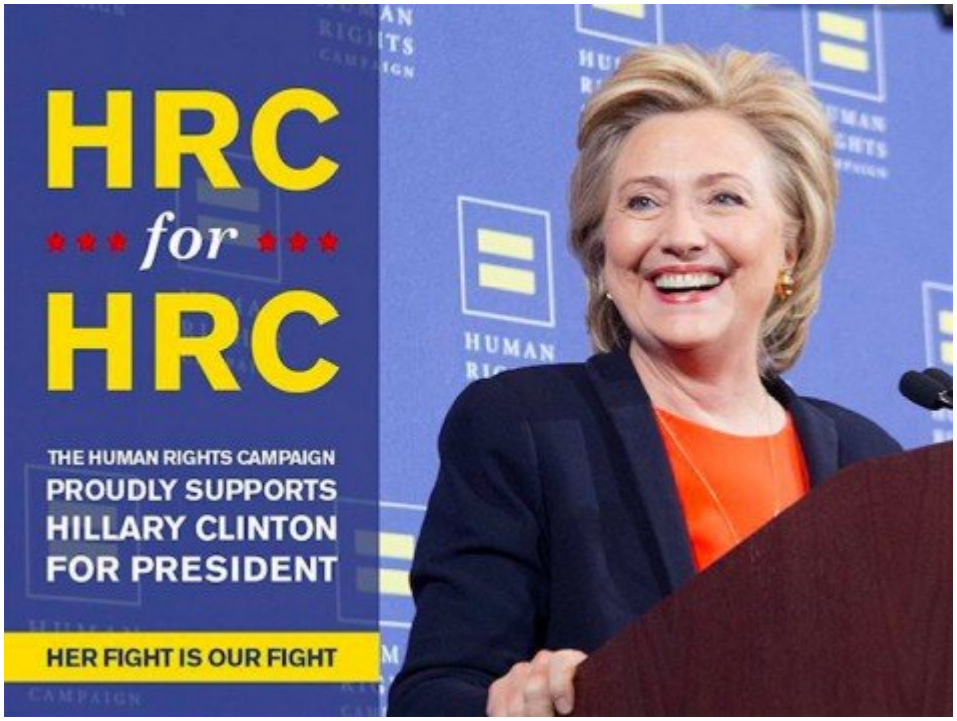

Hillary Clinton and her ally, the Human Rights Campaign

If I had to pick the organization that used the most intolerant coercion against Christians, I'd pick the Human Rights Campaign.

Well, guess who Hillary invited to speak at her convention?

The Hill reports:

> The national press secretary for the Human Rights Campaign Foundation will speak at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia this week, marking the first time an openly transgender person will address a major party's convention.
>
> "Hillary Clinton won't be the only woman to make history this Thursday. When Sarah McBride takes the stage, she will become the first transgender person to speak at a national Democratic or Republican convention," Human Rights Campaign President Chad Griffin said in a statement on Sunday.
>
> "Sarah's inclusion in Thursday's program is a significant milestone for our community, and it sends a strong message that transgender people and their voices matter."
>
> Sarah McBride was invited to speak at the convention by the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus.
>
> […]"I'm so proud to stand with the LGBT Caucus and speak out in support of Hillary Clinton, because we know she stands with us."

> Griffin, who will also speak at the convention, said the event will show a clear contrast between the Democratic and Republican tickets.
>
> "I'm also honored to address a national convention where LGBTQ advocates will play such an integral and historic role," he said.
>
> "Next week's Democratic National Convention will underscore the stark contrast between Hillary Clinton and Tim Kaine's vision for a more equal America, and [Republican presidential nominee]Donald Trump and Mike Pence's agenda of hate and division."
>
> The Human Rights Campaign endorsed Clinton, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, in January.

You might remember that the Human Rights Campaign has been featured on this blog a number of times, because they are the leading group seeking to silence, coerce and otherwise suppress Judeo-Christian values in the public square.

Let's review the history the Human Rights Campaign to discover their agenda from actual actions:

- the wealthy co-founder of the Human Rights Campaign Terry Bean was arrested for sex with an underage teen
- called the Family Research Council a "hate group", after the FRC was attacked by a gun-wielding gay rights activist, who was later convicted of domestic terrorism
- leaked the names of pro-marriage donors to the Huffington Post, names that were supplied to them by a gay rights activist working for the IRS
- published a report on Christian schools and universities who dissent from the gay agenda, in order to intimidate and coerce them into rejecting traditional Christian teachings on sexuality
- calling the employers of Christians in order to get them fired from their jobs

And so on.

Many large corporations are on board with the Human Rights Campaign agenda of anti-Christian bigotry.

Here are their Platinum corporate partners:

Human Rights Campaign Platinum Partners

How far would the Human Rights Campaign go to achieve their goal of stamping out any disagreement with their morality? We're going to find out, because lots of Democrats who falsely claim to be Christians keep voting for the Democrat Party.

Related posts

- Is the Human Rights Campaign blaming Christians for Orlando terrorist attack?
- Obama administration forces transgender bathroom access in all public schools
- Obama DOJ moving fast against NC HB2 but slowly on Clinton investigation
- What are all the big liberal corporations trying to protect in North Carolina?
- Disney, Marvel, NFL and Apple threaten to boycott Georgia over religious freedom bill
- Obama administration to assist gay rights group in targeting Christian schools
- 130 left-wing fascist groups petition Obama to end religious liberty in America
- Democrats' "Equality Act" will threaten religious liberty in all 50 states
- Human Rights Campaign calls the Family Research Council "hate group"
- Human Rights Campaign co-founder Terry Bean arrested for sex crime with 15-year-old
- IRS pays $50,000 for leaking names of pro-marriage donors to gay activist group

Leaked DNC e-mails show that Democrat primary was rigged to favor Clinton

July 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

The radically leftist Washington Post posted an article that explained the big story on Monday.

Excerpt:

> Thousands of leaked emails have sealed the fate of Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz's uneven five-plus-year tenure as DNC chair.
>
> Wasserman Schultz's resignation announcement Sunday afternoon comes as a bad situation just keeps getting worse — and appears as though it might continue to do so. That's because WikiLeaks has so far released nearly 20,000 emails, new details are still being discovered, and there is still the prospect of additional, damaging emails coming to light.
>
> Many of the most damaging emails suggest the committee was actively trying to undermine Bernie Sanders's presidential campaign. Basically all of these examples came late in the primary — after Hillary Clinton was clearly headed for victory — but they belie the national party committee's stated neutrality in the race even at that late stage.

One of the biggest revelations from these e-mails was how the DNC, which is supposed to be fair to all the candidates running, basically threw the primary for Hillary Clinton – it

was rigged that she would win the primary, and the DNC was actively opposing Sanders at every step.

The NY Post explains:

> Democratic Party bigwigs enlisted prominent media outlets to slant coverage to boost Hillary Clinton and sandbag Bernie Sanders, according to some of the 19,000 e-mails hacked from the Democratic National Committee's servers and posted to WikiLeaks.
>
> The messages reveal behind-the-scenes meetings and off-the-record exchanges between DNC operatives and staffers at newspapers, networks and news Web sites, including The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, CNN, MSNBC, Politico and RealClearPolitics.
>
> In one case, an investigative reporter at Politico gave DNC officials a sneak peek at an article about Clinton's state-party fund-raising — before his editor even saw the piece.
>
> "Per agreement . . . any thoughts appreciated," wrote Politico's Ken Vogel to the DNC's national press secretary, Mark Paustenbach, on April 30.
>
> "Vogel gave me his story ahead of time/before it goes to his editors as long as I didn't share it," Paustenbach told his boss, communications director Luis Miranda.
>
> The communication officials cherry-picked reporters.
>
> "We [have] been working him for weeks in general on writing up something positive," Miranda wrote of The Washington Post's Greg Sargent on May 20. "We think he'd play ball."

But, there were other big surprises, like this one reported by the Daily Caller about the Democrat party's plans to reward big donors with cushy federal appointments funded by taxpayer dollars.

Excerpt:

> Democratic National Committee documents recently released by WikiLeaks include spreadsheets and emails that appear to show party officials planning which donors and prominent fundraisers to provide with appointments to federal boards and commissions.
>
> The documents, which were circulated among top DNC officials in April, could raise legal questions for the party, says Ken Boehm, the chairman of the National Legal and Policy Center, a government watchdog group.
>
> "The disclosed DNC emails sure look like the potential Clinton Administration has intertwined the appointments to federal government boards and commissions with the political and fund raising operations of the Democratic Party," Boehm told The Daily Caller.

> “That is unethical, if not illegal.”
>
> […]President Obama has been criticized for appointing dozens of top fundraisers — called “bundlers” in the political fundraising realm — to ambassadorships and other cushy federal positions.

Well, yes. That’s no surprise to anyone who has followed his many scandals, especially the green energy subsidies given to his top bundlers.

I guess it’s no surprise that 5 seconds that the DNC chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz, after receiving news that she wsa being released, immediately signed up with the Clinton campaign. She might as well have been working for them all along, for all the good the DNC did Bernie Sanders.

Cambridge University professor Simon Gathercole lectures on geography in the Bible

July 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

BeThinking posted a new lecture featuring Dr. Simon Gathercole.

Here's the speaker bio:

> Dr Simon Gathercole is Senior Lecturer in New Testament Studies and Fellow of Fitzwilliam College, at the University of Cambridge. He is particularly fascinated by the connections between the New Testament and its contemporary literature.

Summary:

> Simon Gathercole shows how the geographical information in the New Testament Gospels demonstrates their historical reliability and their basis in eyewitness sources. The illustrated lecture lasts about 60 minutes and is followed by about 20 minutes of Q&A.

BeThinking has a PDF containing all the slides used in the lecture.

The lecture is here:

Topics:

- Detailed geography is difficult to fake, especially when it is far into the past
- Bible authors would have to rely on eyewitness testimony if they wanted to get geographic details right
- You can even cross-reference the geographic details mentioned in the New Testament with extra-Biblical sources of that time
- Cities mentioned in the Bible are mentioned in other sources
- Locations that are mentioned in Josephus, a Jewish historian
- Locations that are mentioned in the Rabbis
- 22 of 27 places mentioned in the gospels are attested
- If you compare the gospels with Josephus they are as good

Example slide – he shows where these cities in orange are mentioned outside the Bible:

Aenon	Chorazin	Magadan
Arimathaea	Dalmanutha	Magdala
Bethany	Emmaus	Nain
Bethlehem	Ephraim	Nazareth
Bethphage	Gadara	Salim
Bethsaida	Gergesa	Sidon
Caesarea-P	Gennesaret	Sychar
Cana	Jericho	Tiberias
Capernaum	Jerusalem	Tyre

At the end of the lecture 22 out of 27 cities are attested in other sources
This lecture caught my eye because it was all about connecting the Bible to evidence outside the Bible. I like evidence. You should give it a listen.

86-year-old Catholic priest murdered by Islamic State terrorist in northern France

July 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats think that the real threat to America is not radical Islamic terrorism

The Stream reports on a horrific story from France:

> A priest was killed in a hostage situation at a Catholic church in Normandy, France on Tuesday. The terrorist attack, which seriously wounded at least one other person, was done in the name of ISIS, according to French President Francois Hollande.
>
> The two men cut 84-year-old Rev. Jacques Hamel's throat after shouting "Daesh," another name for ISIS. *The Telegraph* reported that five people were taken hostage during morning Mass in the town of Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray. Two churchgoers and two nuns were taken hostage and one is seriously wounded.
>
> Police shot the two men as they left the building, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. The Islamic State said the attack was made by two of its "soldiers." *Daily Express* reported that one of the attackers was a convicted terrorist known to French authorities. The man was required to wear an electronic bracelet.
>
> Hollande called the attack a "cowardly assassination," *CNN* reported. "Daesh has declared war on us," Hollande said. "We have to win that war."

What is interesting about this is that it is following a continuous stream of attacks by Islamic terrorists and refugees in various countries. The Democrat National Convention is going on right now, maybe they are talking about the threat of radical Islam?

The Daily Wire can answer that:

> While Democrats spent the night jabbering about abortion and $15 minimum

> wage and climate change, jihadists stormed a church in Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray in Normandy, France, and proceeded to behead an 86-year-old priest while shouting "Jesus Lives!"
>
> Just joking. They were yelling "Allahu Akhbar." But you guessed that already.
>
> This is the fifth jihadist attack in Europe in 11 days.
>
> So, how many times did Democrats mention ISIS last night and yesterday?
>
> Zero.
>
> That's right – 61 speakers, zero mentions of ISIS. But the Democrats did find time to put an illegal immigrant on stage, as well as an irritating comedic actress who uses her spare time auctioning sanitary napkins. They found time to take down "offensive" Mississippi state flags and wave Palestinian ones on the floor of the convention. They found time for another actress who claimed that the "border crossed" her family, and a video from J.J. Abrams about that Queen of Mystery and Light, Hillary Clinton.
>
> The Democrats know their priorities. And defeating ISIS isn't one of them.
>
> […]**Republicans worry about terrorism and crime, Democrats worry about whether men who think they're women can go pee-pee next to the ladies.**

If you're watching the coverage of the Democrat convention, the media is busy fawning over the speeches. But the speeches don't address any of the real problems that we are facing. It's just the liberal elites preening themselves about how generous they are with other people's money. The real problems like crime and terrorism are completely ignored. It takes a certain amount of intellectual capacity to be able to apprehend reality as it is in order to do a job. Democrats confuse their own felt needs with reality, and so prefer an illusion in which they can congratulate themselves for being better than others without having to actually solve any real problems by their own effort. Calling evil "good" feels good to a Democrat, it wins applause for Democrats. Democrats think: "who cares if a few innocent people have to suffer or die?" That's how Democrats think.

Peter J. Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospel narratives

July 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

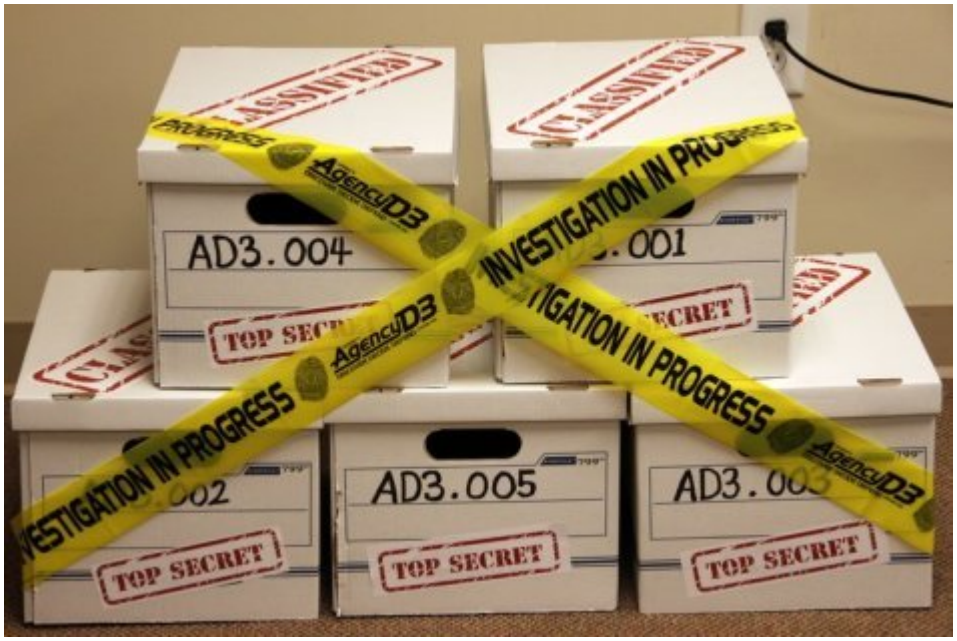

Investigation in progress

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him

that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?
- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

What’s behind the spike in terrorist attacks in Europe?

July 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

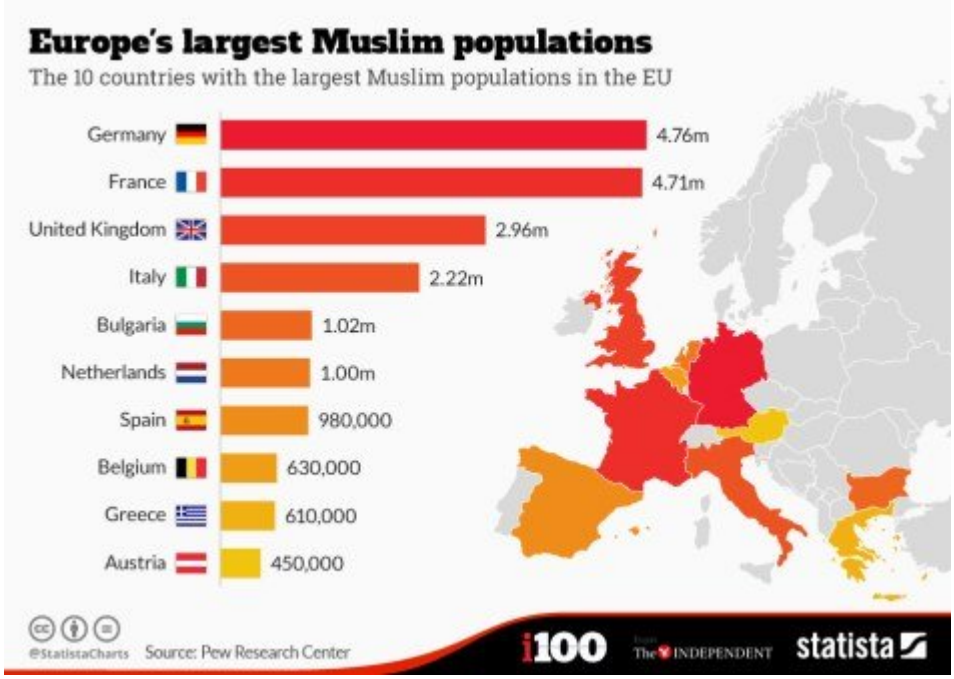

Muslim populations in Europe

Dina tweeted this article from the UK Spectator about the recent spike in terrorist attacks in Europe.

It says:

> It is now a fortnight since Mohammed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel shouted ‘Allahu Akbar’ and ploughed a truck along the Nice seafront, killing 84 people. The following Monday Mohammed Riyad, who said he was from Afghanistan but almost certainly came from Pakistan, screamed ‘Allahu Akbar’ while hacking with an axe at his fellow passengers on a Bavarian train. The next day another Mohammed, this time Mohamed Boufarkouch, shouted ‘Allahu Akbar’ and stabbed a Frenchwoman and her three daughters (aged eight, 12 and 14) near Montpelier. Mixing things up a little, that Friday’s shooter in Munich was a child of Iranians called Ali David Sonboly. Skip forward a couple of days and a ‘-Syrian asylum seeker’ with a machete was hacking a pregnant woman to death in Stuttgart. The next day another ‘Syrian asylum seeker’, Mohammad Daleel, carried out a suicide bombing outside a bar in Ansbach, Bavaria. And a little over 24 hours later two men shouting the name of Isis entered a church in Rouen during Mass, took the nuns and congregation hostage and slaughtered the priest with a knife.

What is interesting is how the mainstream media reports on these attacks. Their top priority doesn’t seem to be to tell the public the truth. They seem to prefer blaming the public for provoking the innocent terrorists into performing these attacks.

Look:

> Although the public know what is going on, the media seems loath to find any connection between these events. Indeed, the same papers that blame an exaggerated spike in ‘hate crime’ on everyone who voted for Brexit seem unwilling to put the blame for these real and violent attacks on the individuals carrying them out. ‘Syrian man denied asylum killed in German blast’ was the Reuters headline on the Ansbach story, neatly turning the suicide bomber into the victim and the German asylum system into the perpetrator. As Reuters went on: ‘A 27-year-old Syrian man who had been denied asylum in Germany a year ago died on Sunday when a bomb he was carrying exploded outside a music festival.’ How terrible for him to lose his bomb in such a way.
>
> The more complex story of the Munich shooter allowed everyone to double-down on their favourite explanations for violence. Inadequate welfare provisions, unsuitable town-planning and bullying were all wheeled out to explain why Ali David Sonboly started shooting in a McDonalds. Others were a little too keen to claim him as an Isis warrior, when it seems he wasn’t. The BBC got around the problem by excising the ‘Ali’ and all reports of his religion. Instead, speculation about the shooting happening on the fifth anniversary of Anders Breivik’s terrorist assault in Norway meant that every-one could ignore the Muslim eyewitness who heard Sonboly shout ‘Allahu Akbar’ and headline on Breivik instead. Meaning that in Europe in 2016 a child of Iranian parents can be portrayed as a white supremacist, while no amount of Mohameds shouting ‘Allahu Akbar’ can be said to have any connection to Islam.

Somehow, the mainstream media has decided that radicalized Muslims who commit terrorist attacks must be protected from public disapproval. Their job isn’t to tell the truth, it’s to try to make people believe things that the mainstream media wants them to believe.

The real question for us is this. If the leaders of the government take this attitude, and continue to mass import unskilled immigrants from Muslim countries, then can we at last *blame them for getting innocent taxpayers killed?* It seems to me that the politicians who cover for the Islamic terrorists are putting us all at risk.

William Lane Craig: churches should focus on apologetics to attract more men

July 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church sucks, that's why men are bored there

I saw that Triablogue quoted an interesting passage from William Lane Craig's newsletter.

Here it is:

> One overwhelming impression of these engagements is the way in which the intellectual defense of Christian faith attracts men. Both at Texas A&M and again at Miami every single student who got up to ask a question was a guy! I wondered if the girls are just shy. But then I remembered a lengthy clip Jan and I watched of cast members of Downton Abbey doing a Q&A with an audience in New York. Almost every person who came to the microphone at that event was a woman! It wasn't until late into the evening that a man finally asked a question, which was remarked by all the cast members. Why the difference between that session and the ones I experienced?—simply because the Downton Abbey program is highly relational, which is more appealing to women, whereas my talks were principally intellectually oriented, which is more appealing to men.
>
> Churches have difficulty attracting men, and the church is becoming increasingly feminized. I believe that apologetics is a key to attracting large numbers of men (as well as women) to church and to Christ. By presenting rational arguments and historical evidences for the truth of the Gospel, by appealing to the mind as well as the heart, we can bring a great influx of men into the Kingdom. I'm so pleased that the church in Canada seems to be awakening to this challenge! I'm convinced that we have the opportunity to revolutionize Western Christianity by reclaiming our intellectual heritage.

I could tell you many, many stories of what it was like for me being shut down by churches who were overly sensitive to the desires of women. In college, I and the other male students had *every attempt* to bring in scholars to lecture or debate *shut down* by female leadership. Every single week it was prayer walks, testimonies, hymn sings… over and over. Eventually, the more manly Christians just quit going. Later on, I witnessed apologetics being shut down in the church from the top down and from the bottom up, as well.

I remember one week an excited male friend invited me to his church because his male pastor was giving sermons using Hugh Ross and Gerald Shroeder books. He was trying to tie in the existence of God to cosmology. Well, I showed up the next Sunday to hear, and was disappointed. I could tell that the pastor wanted to go back to that subject, but he never really did. Later on, we found out that a female parishioner had complained that too much science and evidence had ruined her experience of feeling good and being comforted.

I could go on and on and on telling stories like this. To this day, I cannot stand being in a church unless that church has organized things like apologetic training classes, public lectures, public debates or public conferences. But that's the minority of churches. The fact is that churches are attended far more by women than by men, and pastors are catering to women more than men. Not only will apologetics not be mentioned, but elements of feminism will creep into doctrine (egalitarianism) and all political issues will be avoided. Church has become a place to have good feelings, and it is far divorced from anything like evidence or politics which might be viewed as judgmental and divisive. And yet those are the things that men like to talk about most: right and wrong, public policy, evidential apologetics.

Good news: UK Supreme Court rules against Scotland's fascist Named Person scheme

July 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

6

Child guardian scheme hit by new blow as carer is guilty of vile sex crime

ELGIN HIGH SCHOOL

By Mark Howarth and Charlotte Wace

'Gross intrusion' with no chance to opt out

By Mark Howarth

One of the first "named persons" fired for sex crime with child

Dina tweeted this article from the UK Daily Mail about that the so-called Named Person policy, which appoints a worker from the secular socialist government to each child born in Scotland, who will then follow that child through their childhood and interfere with the parent-child relationship.

Read it:

> Judges have blocked Nicola Sturgeon's controversial law to appoint a named person for every child in Scotland, blasting the scheme as 'totalitarian'.
>
> The flagship policy, introduced by the SNP administration at Holyrood, set out to appoint a single point of contact, such as a teacher or health visitor, to look out for the welfare of children under 18.
>
> **Scottish courts had dismissed attempts by Christian campaigners to block the legislation but today five Supreme Court justices heard an appeal and ruled the measures were 'incompatible' with European human rights laws because of the requirement to share private family data.**
>
> **The court ruled that the current drafting of the legislation risked breaching important regulations protecting privacy and confidentiality and could result in disproportionate interference with the right to a family and private life.**
>
> It is a humiliating blow for the SNP Government in Edinburgh but defiant Scottish ministers insist they will not scrap the scheme despite today's ruling by the

> Supreme Court in London – the UK's highest court.
>
> Deputy First Minister John Swinney vowed to implement the measure nationally once changes have been made to comply with the High Court's ruling.
>
> […]Scottish government ministers had planned to roll out the named person scheme across Scotland in just over a month's time.
>
> Under the scheme the named person will be required to exercise statutory functions, including providing advice, information or support where appropriate to promote, support or safeguard the wellbeing of the child or young person.

There is no opt-out for parents from the Named Person policy. And one of the first named person has already been found guilty of a vile sex crime. What would you expect when you give liberal government workers access to children who are not their own?

The Named Person scheme is an obvious way for the secular left to push their values: abortion, gay marriage, socialism, pacifism, etc. onto children with impunity. This is not surprising since people on the secular left often view parental authority as harmful to children. One can easily imagine scenarios where Christian parents try to teach their children beliefs and moral behaviors that are incompatible with the far-left Scottish government.

I am always taken aback by the great confidence that teachers and social workers have in their desire to impose their radically leftist, anti-family views on families. These bureaucracies tend to be dominated by feminists who have great confidence in their wisdom to impose their views on men. They think that they know how to raise children better than the taxpaying families who pay their salaries.

The only way out of this mess is to cut, cut, cut the size of government, and force the government workers out into the competitive private sector, where the needs of the customers actually matter. I will also say this – if you wonder why men withdraw from wanting to get married and start families, it is because while men relish the idea of starting their own little home where they are the leaders, they have absolutely no interest in entering those arrangements if they are going to be meddled with and bullied by feminist government workers. Men marry to lead, not to be thrown in jail by fascistic feminist bureaucrats.

New study: fathers play an important role in child development

July 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

Science Daily reports:

> Fathers play a surprisingly large role in their children's development, from language and cognitive growth in toddlerhood to social skills in fifth grade, according to new findings from Michigan State University scholars.
>
> The research provides some of the most conclusive evidence to date of fathers' importance to children's outcomes and reinforces the idea that early childhood programs such as Head Start should focus on the whole family, including mother and father alike. The findings are published online in two academic journals, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* and *Infant and Child Development*.
>
> […]The study found that fathers' parenting-related stress had a harmful effect on their children's cognitive and language development when the children were 2 to 3 years old, even when the mothers' influences were taken into account. This impact varied by gender; fathers' influence, for example, had a larger effect on boys' language than girls' language.
>
> Another key finding: Fathers' and mothers' mental health had a similarly significant effect on behavior problems among toddlers. Further, fathers' mental health had a long-term impact, leading to differences in children's social skills (such as self-control and cooperation) when the children reached fifth grade. In fact, fathers' depression symptoms when children were toddlers were more influential on children's later social skills than were mothers' symptoms.
>
> In sum, the findings contribute to the small but growing collection of research affirming the effects of fathers' characteristics and father-child relationship

> qualities on children's social development, rather than just the fathers' residence in the home or presence in the child's life, according to the paper published in *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*.

What's the purpose of this? Well, if you're watching the Democrat convention, you know that Democrats are great believers in taxing working families, and then giving money to women who have children outside of marriage. In fact, government policy even penalizes married couples, the so-called "marriage penalty". But this study clearly shows that we need to stop paying women to have fatherless children. What good does it do to talk about helping children, when you pay women to inflict fatherlessness on children? It makes no sense, and it's not compassionate to the children.

We ought to be promoting marriage with our tax policy, not trying to make the government a substitute for a husband.

What does it mean for a woman to respect a man?

July 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: “Godspeed” by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

Matt Walsh writes a popular blog where he sometimes talks about male-female relationships. I got the impression that he was writing too much about how to blame men, and not enough about the policies and practices that provide incentives for men to underperform, e.g. – mostly female teachers, unfair divorce laws, stimulus spending geared towards women, etc. So imagine my surprise when I came across this article about men and their need for respect.

Matt is concerned that men are hearing too many negative messages in the culture, and not getting enough respect for what they do right.

He writes:

> These cultural messages aren’t harmful because they hurt my manly feelings; they’re harmful because of what they do to young girls. Society tells our daughters that men are boorish dolts who need to be herded like goats and lectured like school boys. Then they grow up and enter into marriage wholly unprepared and unwilling to accept the Biblical notion that “wives should submit to their husbands” because “the husband is the head of the wife.” [Ephesians 5]
>
> It is a fatal problem, because the one thing that is consistently withheld from men and husbands — respect — is the one thing we need the most.
>
> Yes, *need*. We need respect, and that need is so deeply ingrained that a marriage cannot possibly survive if the man is deprived of it.

> Often, people will say that a husband should only be respected if he "earns" it. *This attitude is precisely the problem*. A wife ought to respect her husband because he is her husband, just as he ought to love and honor her because she is his wife. Your husband might "deserve" it when you mock him, berate him, belittle him, and nag him, but you don't marry someone in order to give them what they deserve. In marriage, you give them what you've promised them, even when they aren't holding up their end of the bargain.

OK really, one last quote from Matt:

> Respect is our language. If it isn't said with respect, we can't hear it. This is why nagging is ineffective and self defeating. This is why statements made in sarcastic tones, or with rolling eyes, will never be received well. We have a filter in our brains, and a statement made in disrespect will be filtered out like the poison it is.
>
> Men are notoriously reluctant to share feelings or display vulnerability. Many times, we keep those inner thoughts locked away — our feelings guarded and hidden — because we know we are not respected. A man will never be vulnerable to someone who doesn't respect him. Never.
>
> A man isn't satisfied or content if he isn't respected. If he can't find respect where he is, he will seek it somewhere else. This can have disastrous implications for a relationship, but it applies in other areas of life as well. A man is much more likely to stay in a low paying job, a physically demanding job, a dangerous job, or a tedious job, than a job where he isn't respected.
>
> I'm only emphasizing this because I think it might actually be news to some people. Society does not permit men to be vocal about their need for respect, so the need is often ignored.

What I've found in speaking to women about this is that all the married and divorced women know about this need that men have. And by and large, they agree with it, too. But that is much rarer among single women, which is why men need to be ready to explain their needs and feelings. And women need to allow them to do that and then provide what men need in order to keep them performing.

Let's take a quick look at the Bible, because that's always a good thing to do when you want the truth about these things.

Ephesians 5:22-33:

22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up

for her,

26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;

29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church,

30 because we are members of His body.

31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.

Some women get scared by that, but they shouldn't be, because women get to pick their husbands, so just pick someone whose leadership you actually respect. Believe it or not, it is actually very comforting to co-operate with someone who knows what he is doing, and has demonstrated that through his past decisions.

And now for my opinion about this topic.

To start, remember that men are supposed to be good at the following roles:

- protecting
- providing
- moral leader
- spiritual leader

If a woman sees a man – any man – working away at these tasks so that he can solve her problems with something more than *confident promises about the future*, that's the time to practice respecting him. All men need to be recognized and encouraged in these areas, by all woman who care that men are masculine.

When I think of protecting, there is obviously the physical protection, but there is also the protection from lies and bad decisions. For protection, what I end up doing most is analyzing decisions for women and then giving my recommendation. I have 12 young people I mentor, men and women, who are in undergraduate or graduate school. My job is to make sure that they are not studying garbage subjects, and not wasting their summers. I am proud to say that the 7 women I advise are all in STEM areas, and that took some convincing. Why is this protection? Because women need to not starve, and they need to not feel pressured to settle for a guy because they can't be financially independent by themselves. I am not a feminist, but I do think that women make better wives when they study hard subjects and do hard jobs. It shapes their character so that

they are easier to reason with, less fun-focused, and more able to perform hard work without complaint. I also advise women not to waste money of pursuing fun and thrills when they are young, and instead advise them to save and invest it early. One of the young ladies I mentor just finished her BS in computer science, and just finished her first year of an MS in computer science, worked as a TA and in the summers as a software tester, just finished an internship with a great software company for the summer, and she has an account with Fidelity, just like me.

When I think of providing, I think of the man's ability to work for money. It starts in high school, in the summers or evenings and goes on right to retirement. I did a summer internship with a huge telecom firm when I was in my sophomore year of high school, so it is possible. A man should not rely on others for money, he needs to be independent. A man should not find paid work "boring" and "meaningless". In fact, part of what it means to be a man is to do things that you don't feel like doing, so that you can provide for others. A man does not spend his money on alcohol or travel or other entertainments. He will have plenty to spend it on when he gets older – his family or maybe charity. A man buys things for others that will help them achieve goals – solving problems for others with his earned income. For example, if a woman has surgery on both of her hands, and cannot lug the vacuum up and down the stairs to clean up her cat's fur, then the man buys her a corded hand vacuum, which is much lighter for her to use every day, (he knows she has OCD and wants everything clean). Money makes a woman's life easier, freeing her up to do more important things. It's important for a man to get started early earning money, because earnings can be invested to produce a return. A man's confidence about the future has no cash value. A woman's feelings about a man's potential future earnings has no cash value. Cash has cash value. There is no such thing as assumed future income, there is only a resume, which predicts future earned income based on *the reality* of past earned income.

A good moral leader is not just good at being moral and spiritual himself, but of convincing others to be moral and spiritual. He is able to present his views on moral issues in a convincing way, especially to non-Christians. He studies philosophy (in his spare time! not as a job because it does not pay!) and is aware of research that helps him to make his point about topics like abortion and marriage. He has an interest in current events and politics, and is able to talk about legislation, policies and court cases related to his worldview. He is able to solve problems that could impact a person's ability to be moral or spiritual in the future. For example, consider that some people really do lose their faith when experiencing evil and suffering. A good spiritual leader advises a woman to not make plans that are likely to fail, so that she will never blame God for her own poor decisions. A good moral leader convinces a woman to be serious about marriage early, so that she is not tempted to become a single mother by choice later. Those last two cases are cases I actually had to face, and I won the first one (she dumped a complete loser of a man and married a really great one), and lost the second (she became a single mother by choice and had a fatherless son). But the point is that there is more to being a moral leader than reciting moral rules. And there is more to being a spiritual leader than

reciting Bible verses. A good leader proves he can lead by pushing the people he leads into real world achievements.

These are the things that a good woman looks for in a man, and when she finds them, she accords a man respect in those areas.

New study: Politifact fact-checker is biased against Republicans

July 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Why do people think that CNN are biased leftist clowns?
How accurate is the fact-checking site Politifact, a project of the Tampa Bay Times newspaper?

The Weekly Standard reports on a recent study from George Mason University.

Excerpt:

> The Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA) at George Mason University is out with a new study on media fact checkers, and unsurprisingly, their results suggest that PolitiFact has it out for Republicans. Dylan Byers at *Politico* summarized CMPA's findings:
>
> > The fact-checking organization PolitiFact has found Republicans to be less trustworthy than Democrats, according to a new study.
> >
> > Fifty-two percent of Republican claims reviewed by the Tampa Bay Times fact-checking operation were rated "mostly false," "false" or "pants on fire," versus just 24 percent of Democratic statements, according to George Mason University's Center for Media and Public Affairs. By the same token, 54 percent of Democratic statements were rated as "mostly true" or "true," compared to just 18 percent of Republican statements.
> >
> > The CMPA looked at 100 statements — 46 by Democrats, 54 by Republicans — that were fact-checked by PolitiFact between January 20 and May 22.
>
> […]This is also not the first academic study that concluded PolitiFact might be putting their thumb on the scale when it comes to selecting and evaluating political statements. Last year, during the height of campaign season, the CMPA tallied up PolitiFact ratings. That study also showed PolitiFact tends to be much harder on Republicans:
>
> > The study examined 98 election-related statements by the presidential candidates, their surrogates, and campaign ads fact-checked by PolitiFact.com from June 1 to September 11. Major findings:
> >
> > PolitiFact checked the assertions of Democrats slightly more often than those of Republicans (54% vs. 46% of all statements).
> >
> > However, PolitiFact rated Democratic statements as "mostly true" or "entirely true" about twice as often as Republican statements — 42% true ratings for Democrats vs. 20% for Republicans.

> > Conversely, statements by Republicans were rated as entirely false about twice as often as Democratic statements – 29% false ratings for GOP statements vs. 15% false ratings for Democrats. (This includes categories labeled “false” and “pants on fire.”)
>
> Further, the University of Minnesota School of Public Affairs looked at over than 500 PolitiFact stories from January 2010 through January 2011. Their conclusion:
>
> > Current and former Republican officeholders have been assigned substantially harsher grades by the news organization than their Democratic counterparts. In total, 74 of the 98 statements by political figures judged ‘false’ or ‘pants on fire’ over the last 13 months were given to Republicans, or 76 percent, compared to just 22 statements for Democrats (22 percent).

In other words, they are cherry-picking statements that are false for Republicans and true for Democrats. But maybe that’s just because Republicans lie more than Democrats right before an election? Maybe, just before an election, Republicans suddenly start to lie uncontrollably while Democrats suddenly start to tell the truth all the time?

Let’s take a look at one famous case and see.

This is from Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine.

2008 PolitiFact before the election: ‘We rate his statement True’

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site’s “Truth-O-Meter” to evaluate this claim: “Under Barack Obama’s health care proposal, ‘if you’ve got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.’” The article assures us in its headline that “Obama’s plan expands [the] existing system,” and continues that “Obama is accurately describing his health care plan here…It remains to be seen whether Obama’s plan will actually be able to achieve the cost savings it promises for the health care system. But people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama’s plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his statement True.”
>
> The 2008 Obama plan, among other things, sought to transform the individual insurance market; it proposed to bar insurers from charging different premiums to the healthy and the sick, and to require them to offer plans to all comers, regardless of prior health status. According to PolitiFact, however, there was no need to worry that these provisions would be disruptive to existing health plans.
>
> As per PolitiFact’s usual M.O., Holan didn’t seek out any skeptical health-policy experts to suss out the veracity of Senator Obama’s signature claim. Instead, its sources included Jonathan Cohn, a passionate Obamacare supporter at *The New Republic*, and various interviews and statements of Mr. Obama. Holan simply took the “keep your plan” promise at face value, dismissing as dishonest anyone

> who dared suggest that Obama's claim would be impossible to keep. "His opponents have attacked his plan as 'government-run' health care," she wrote, the scare-quotes around "government-run" being visible to all.
>
> PolitiFact's pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 campaign.

Here's the screen capture from 2008:

Politifact caught with its pants on fire

2013 PolitiFact after the election: 'We rate his statement Pants On Fire'

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama's infamous promise—that "if you like your health care plan, you can keep it"—its 2013 "Lie of the Year."
>
> […]So that brings us back to the fall of 2013. As Obamacare's battle station became operational, and tens of millions of health plans became illegal, PolitiFact was caught with its flaming pants down. Louis Jacobson rapped Valerie Jarrett for tweeting that "nothing in Obamacare forces people out of their health plans"—a claim Jacobson rated as "False," even though PolitiFact had rated it as "True" and "Half True" before.
>
> On November 4, Jacobson rated as "Pants on Fire" the President's new claim that "what we said was, you can keep [your plan] if it hasn't changed since the law passed." Both pieces were edited by Angie Drobnic Holan, who had initially granted PolitiFact's seal of approval to Senator Obama's 2008 promise. Holan delivered the *coup de grâce*, declaring as PolitiFact's "Lie of the Year" the "keep your plan" promise.
>
> "The promise was impossible to keep," says Holan in her December piece. Now she tells us! But none of the key facts that made that promise "impossible" in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President's plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key

> elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan
Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."
Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."
Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact says: we were just kidding! Kidding!
So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, but it's election time so they don't say that.

The Tampa Bay Times. Politifact. It's a catchy name, isn't? It's telling us the Facts about Politics.

I think this case demonstrates how people on the political left allow their emotions to overturn objective reality. You can keep your doctor. You can keep your health plan. Benghazi was caused by a Youtube video. The e-mails and e-mail backups of all the IRS employees were lost. The Department of Justice did not target Associated Press journalists. The assault weapons were not gun-walked to Mexican drug cartels. *They will believe anything that makes them feel superior and noble, even when faced with evidence that clearly falsifies their beliefs.*

Hillary Clinton gets Four Pinocchios rating for Fox News interview

August 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference at this point does national security make? How dare you question the Queen?

There was an interview on Fox News Sunday featuring centrist Chris Wallace and Democrat presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

Full video:

It was hard work to find any news articles that mentioned the exchanges about Benghazi, her private, unsecure e-mail server and alleged peddling of Secretary of State influence for foreign donations, through the Clinton foundation,

Regarding Benghazi, the Washington Free Beacon noted that Clinton called one of the gold star moms a liar, for contradicting Clinton's story that the terrorist attack was caused by a YouTube video:

> With Benghazi playing a major theme in the attacks against Clinton, Wallace played a video clip from the Republican National Convention (RNC) of Pat Smith blaming Clinton for her son's death.
>
> "I blame Hillary Clinton. I blame Hillary Clinton personally for the death of my son. That's personally," Smith said.
>
> Wallace asked Clinton about Smith's comments that Clinton lied to her and the other families on the day when the Benghazi victims' bodies returned to the United States.
>
> "I don't hold any ill feeling for someone who in that moment may not fully recall everything that was or wasn't said," Clinton said.

Wallace played the video of Clinton blaming the attack on YouTube video. She's not just

calling the gold star mom a liar, she's calling the video of her blaming the video a liar, too.

Breitbart News reported on the questions Wallace asked about the Clinton Foundation:

> Wallace, in an exclusive sit-down interview, asked Clinton about allegations first made in *Clinton Cash*, the book and now film/graphic novel, that Clinton used the multi-billion-dollar charity for international "pay-to-play" deals while she served as Secretary of State. Author and Breitbart News Senior Editor-at-Large Peter Schweizer says that Clinton Foundation donors were on the receiving end of corrupt deals approved by Hillary's State Department — including the sale of U.S. uranium to Russia and a rare, lucrative mining permit in Haiti.
>
> Clinton retorted that she is "really proud of the Clinton Foundation," yet not a single speaker at the DNC last week — not even Bill or Chelsea Clinton — mentioned the Foundation or its spinoffs such as the Clinton Global Initiative.
>
> […]This week, news broke that the IRS is investigating the Clinton Foundation. Earlier this month, FBI Director James Comey would not confirm or deny whether the bureau is investigating the Foundation during congressional testimony. Just days later, *The Globe and Mail* reported that "The Canadian affiliate of the Clinton Foundation is spending an astounding 78 percent of the money it raises on administrative costs."

And finally, she got a Four Pinnochios rating from the far-left Washington Post for her comments about her private, unsecure e-mail server – which she used to prevent her employer from reading her e-mails when she was Secretary of State:

> The Facts
>
> "Director Comey said my answers were truthful, and what I've said is consistent with what I have told the American people, that there were decisions discussed and made to classify retroactively certain of the emails."
> —Hillary Clinton, interview on "Fox News Sunday," July 31, 2016
>
> Clinton made these remarks after "Fox News Sunday" host Chris Wallace played a video of her saying: "I did not email any classified material to anyone on my email. There is no classified materials. I am confident that I never sent nor received any information that was classified at the time. I had not sent classified material nor received anything marked classified."
>
> As Wallace put it, "After a long investigation, FBI Director James Comey said none of those things that you told the American public were true."
>
> After Clinton denied that, Wallace played another video of an exchange between Comey and Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.), chair of the House Select Committee on Benghazi:
>
> GOWDY: Secretary Clinton said there was nothing marked classified on her emails either sent or received. Was that true?

> COMEY: That’s not true.
> GOWDY: Secretary Clinton said, “I did not email any classified material to anyone on my email. There is no classified material.” Was that true?
> COMEY: There was classified material emailed.
> So what’s going on here?
>
> The Facts
>
> Clinton is cherry-picking statements by Comey to preserve her narrative about the unusual setup of a private email server. This allows her to skate past the more disturbing findings of the FBI investigation
>
> […]The Pinocchio Test
>
> As we have seen repeatedly in Clinton’s explanations of the email controversy,she relies on excessively technical and legalistic answers to explain her actions. While Comey did say there was no evidence she lied to the FBI, that is not the same as saying she told the truth to the American public — which was the point of Wallace’s question. Comey has repeatedly not taken a stand on her public statements.
>
> And although Comey did say many emails were retroactively classified, he also said that there were some emails that were already classified that should not have been sent on an unclassified, private server. That’s the uncomfortable truth that Clinton has trouble admitting.

Her final rating:

> **Four Pinocchios**

It’s a firing offense – unless you’re Hillary Clinton. And when you are dealing with classified information, it’s a treason offense – unless you’re Hillary Clinton.

Four points in the gay agenda that should concern Christians and conservatives

August 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

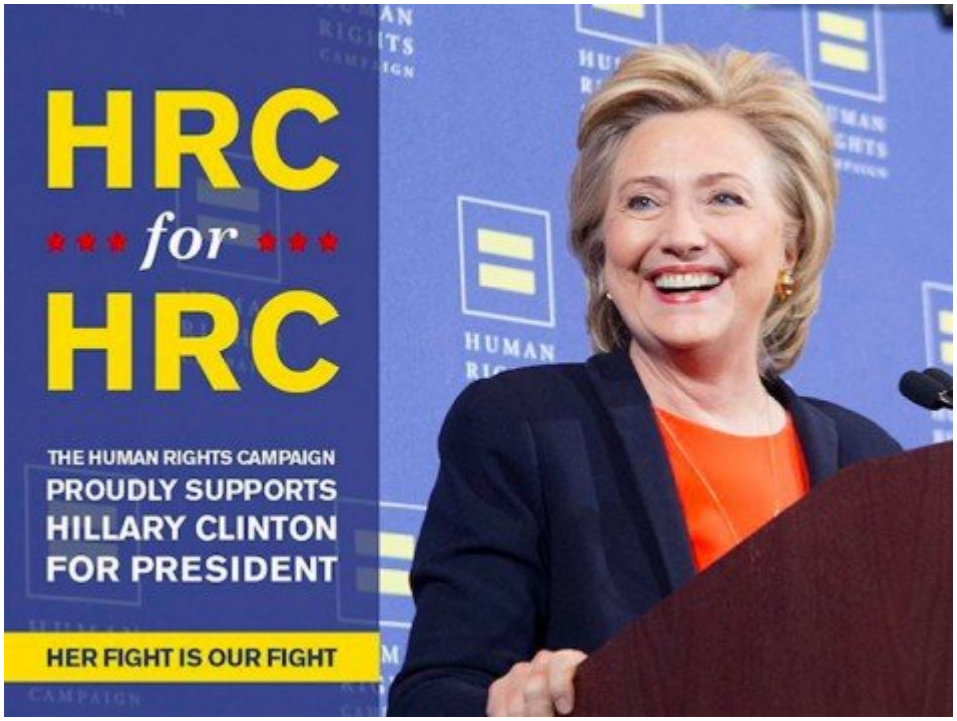

Hillary Clinton and her ally, the Human Rights Campaign

This article by Kelsey Harkness appeared in the Daily Signal, and it's a must-read.

Excerpt:

> More than 25 prominent leaders of the national LGBT movement, including elected officials and other influential voices, gathered for the four-day event called the Equality Forum.
>
> The Daily Signal attended several panel discussions featuring speakers such as Janson Wu, executive director of the advocacy group GLAD; James Esseks, director of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and AIDS project at the American Civil Liberties Union; and Evan Wolfson, former president of Freedom to Marry, a campaign largely credited with winning the legalization of same-sex marriage.
>
> Looking forward, speakers said, priorities include defeating "anti-LGBT" bills, supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth through new school policies and curriculum and partnering with outside organizations on minority-driven issues such as gun control and criminal justice reform. They called for Congress to amend the Civil Rights Act to add protections in places of public accommodation, among other changes.
>
> LGBT advocacy groups also are involved in an array of lawsuits they believe could have a major impact, including a Pennsylvania case where a transgender

> women alleges discrimination by her former employer.

Kelsey has a four point list summarizes the main priorities of the gay rights movement:

> 1. Passing the Equality Act
> 2. Defeating State and Local Laws
> 3. Going to Court
> 4. Partnering With Black Lives Matter and Others

I've written before about the Equality Act and about how it will threaten religious liberty in all 50 states, so let's look at the state and local laws in her point #2.

It says:

> The biggest threat LGBT leaders said they're facing is what they call "anti-LGBT" legislation proposed by conservatives in state and local governments.
>
> After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on same-sex marriage, many people of faith concluded they needed laws to protect their conscience rights so that they can run businesses, adoption agencies, and charity organizations in accord with their deeply held religious beliefs.
>
> Specifically, these state laws—which advocates call Religious Freedom Restoration Acts (RFRAs) after the 1993 federal law—aim to protect from discrimination or punishment those who believe that marriage is the union of one man and one woman, that sexual relations should be reserved for marriage, and that gender identity is based on biological sex.
>
> Wolfson, who spent decades advocating same-sex marriage, didn't pay much mind to those concerns.
>
> "Religion is not the reason people are bigots," he said. "It's the excuse."
>
> With more than 200 such measures popping up last year, Equality Forum panelists said they were dealt a major challenge from opponents who they believe are trying to use religion as a reason to discriminate.
>
> "We knew there was going to be a backlash, but the backlash was bigger than I thought it was going to be," the ACLU's Esseks said, speaking of the Supreme Court's same-sex marriage decision. "That's an enormous onslaught of organized legislative activity coming at us."
>
> To defeat their opponents, LGBT groups plan to go state by state to strike down religious freedom measures and, instead, implement their own laws on sexual orientation and gender identity. They said they intend to do this until new federal law or court decisions negate that necessity.
>
> "The national conversation around this is night and day different from where it was last fall," Esseks said, expressing confidence the tide is shifting in their favor. "We finally got over being awkward and shy about talking about restrooms."

Hillary Clinton has previously said that religious liberty and conscience is no defense to being forced to fund abortions. There’s no reason to think that she has any objection to using the law and the courts to compel Christians and conservatives to celebrate and participate in the agenda of the gay activists.

And now slavery: Venezuela's socialist policies lead to forced labor camps

August 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two socialists shake hands: Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez

How well are Democrat Party policies working out in Venezuela?

Here's the latest from CNBC: (H/T William)

> The government of Venezuela has issued a decree that "effectively amounts to forced labor" in an attempt to fix a spiraling food crisis, according to a new report from Amnesty International.
>
> A Venezuelan ministry last week announced Resolution No. 9855, which calls for the establishment of a "transitory labor regime" in order to relaunch the agricultural and food sector. The decree says that the government must do what is "necessary to achieve strategic levels of self-sufficiency," and states that workers can be forcefully moved from their jobs to work in farm fields or elsewhere in the agricultural sector for periods of 60 days.
>
> […]The law is vague in laying out exactly which workers can be forced to work in the farm sector, though it indicates that both public- and private-sector workers may be included. While working in food production, workers will be suspended from their regular jobs. They'll be allowed to return to their original jobs upon the completion of service.
>
> […]Under President Nicolas Maduro, the country has been gripped by skyrocketing inflation and food shortages that have led to rising unrest this year.
>
> Venezuela's oil-dependent economy capsized with the fall in crude prices in 2014, leaving whole swaths of the country's 31 million people without enough food or other necessities. Inflation is expected to hit almost 720 percent this year, and gross domestic product is seen falling by 8 percent, according to the

> International Monetary Fund.
>
> Maduro's predecessor, Hugo Chavez, left the nation in a vulnerable economic position by nationalizing energy assets while oil prices were high and spending proceeds on widespread social programs. Oil's global drop in 2014 left the government far short of its revenue needs and with only an anemic private sector to generate taxes or jobs.

How did Venezuela get to this point where their economy is in such a shambles that they can neither produce nor even purchase enough food to feed their people?

Answer: socialism.

Here is an article from March 2013 from the radically leftist Slate. The headline is "Hugo Chavez's economic miracle: The Venezuelan leader was often marginalized as a radical. But his brand of socialism achieved real economic gains". The author is "a senior writer for the International Business Times".

He writes:

> Chavez became the bugaboo of American politics because his full-throated advocacy of socialism and redistributionism at once represented a fundamental critique of neoliberal economics, and also delivered some indisputably positive results. Indeed, as shown by some of the most significant indicators, Chavez racked up an economic record that a legacy-obsessed American president could only dream of achieving.

What did Chavez do, precisely, that caused the Venezuelan economic to boom? Well, he nationalized private industry and redistributed wealth from job creators and entrepreneurs to the poor.

> As The Week correctly put it, while "Chavez's policies of redistribution and nationalization of oil assets endeared him to Venezuela's working class" and produced many laudable results, the country's "oil-centric economy has taken away resources from other areas that are badly in need of development."

And now we know what happened after socialist policies were such as nationalizing private companies were adopted. But would you learn anything about what socialist policies actually do, in our government-run public schools, or universities, or in the mainstream media, or from the celebrities in pop culture?

In the United States, we ought to have an electorate that has more understanding of economics than a hamster does. Otherwise we run the risk of electing people who will take us down the same road to serfdom that Venezuela has walked under socialist policies.

Maybe instead of giving ignorant, spoiled millenials free tuition, so they can study English and philosophy, we should be giving them a 2 year missions trip to Venezuelan forced labor camps. They would learn a lot more about America and economics from that, than

they would learn from Ivy League professors.

Related posts

- Do young Americans know how well socialism is working in Venezuela?
- How well are Democrat Party economic policies working out in Venezuela?
- How well does socialism work in countries and cities that adopt it?
- How well are Democrat economic policies working in Venezuela and Argentina?
- Marco Rubio’s speech exposing the horrors of socialism in Cuba and Venezuela
- Obama silent as Venezuelan government violently represses democratic opposition
- How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?
- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia’s economy to grow? What causes Venezuela’s economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama’s buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Doug Axe on the burden of proof on the Darwinian evolutionist

August 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

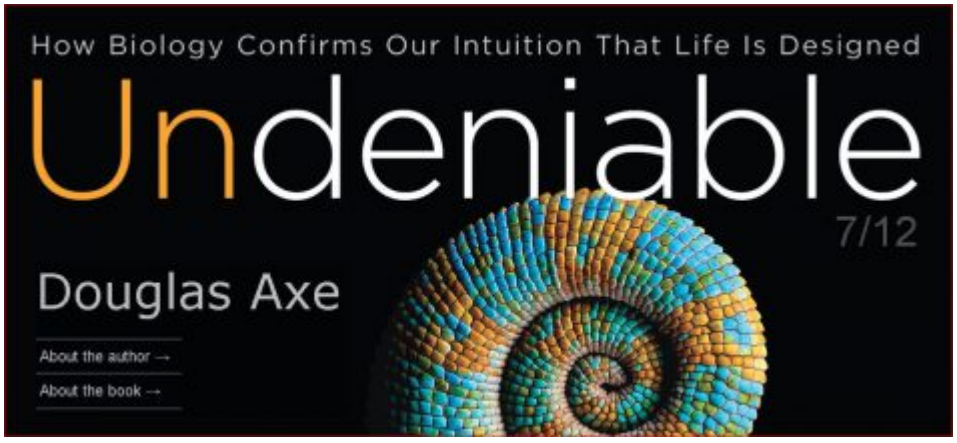

Undeniable: How Biology Confirms Our Intuition That Life Is Designed
An article on what it takes to prove Darwinian evolution, authored by Doug Axe, and posted at The Stream.

It says:

> According to Darwin, evolution invents remarkable things like wings and eyes and brains bit by tiny bit — one little change at a time. That part of his idea might sound reasonable to us because we build things bit by bit as well. Essays are composed one letter at a time. Software code is written one instruction at a time. Buildings go up one brick at a time.
>
> But Darwin's theory runs into trouble when we consider our own inventive activities more closely. Whether essays or software or buildings, we never start a project without having thought about the objective. We always have a *plan* in mind, and while this plan may be revised as we work, we're always working *toward* something. These plans of ours enable us to evaluate our work all along the way. Are we making good progress? If the answer is *yes* — judged with respect to the plan — then we're motivated to double or efforts in anticipation of seeing the fruit of our labors. In this way we *invest* in our creations — pouring into them with the hope of future benefit.
>
> Darwin's blind evolutionary process has no way to do this. It has no ability to plan or to hope. Natural selection can't labor in anticipation of future benefit. Instead, it goes with whatever works best *now*. The patience and foresight and insight we know to be absolutely essential for invention are completely absent from evolution. If things can't be improved *immediately*, then they won't be improved at all. We can dream up fanciful stories where amazing things happen though little Darwinian improvements, but the sober reality is that they are nothing more than that: fanciful stories.
>
> Charles Darwin, to his credit, recognized the problem long before we had

> discovered DNA and long before mathematicians had crunched the numbers. It's the key problem he set out to solve. His solution: These biological novelties arose one tiny random variation at a time, with natural selection tending to seize and pass on the useful variations so that they accumulate over thousands and millions of generations until something as blingy as the eye could emerge.
>
> But Darwin's solution comes at a price. The Darwinian pathway must proceed by a series of tiny, functional variations. Each new step needs to be functional. The Darwinian process can't look ahead and say, "Hey, this variation doesn't help Species G a bit right now. But when I get it put together with a few hundred or thousand other random variations, then it will give the little fellow a real boost, so I'm going to keep this presently useless variation on hand till then." The Darwinian mechanism can't look ahead like an intelligent agent can. It can only judge the present step in the process.
>
> **This is where Nye runs into trouble. If I were to challenge him to come up with actual evidence for his evolutionary interpretation — a series of mutations that improves bird wing structure one tiny, beneficial step at a time — I'm pretty sure he'd come up empty handed, and not just for owl winglets, but for *all* the stunning inventions that characterize life. Indeed, the most strikingly consistent characteristic of the whole Darwinian evolutionary story is the complete lack of evidence that it could actually work.**
>
> **It's worse than that, though. As I explain in my book, there's plenty of counter-evidence — evidence that the clumsy cost-cutting effects of natural selection prevent even very modest acts of invention. As passionate as Nye is about science, then, why would he choose to ignore all this evidence?**

Now I have never seen a gradual genetic pathway from one body plan (phyla) to another body plan (phyla) in any peer-reviewed paper. What I need to see to believe in the ability of Darwinian mechanisms to drive change from one body plan to another is that sequence of changes at the genetic level. And I don't just need to see the steps, I need to see the probabilities of getting the correct sequence of changes at the genetic level within the time available *by chance.* That's what Darwinists assert in their theory – that's what they need to prove. Talking about how one creature looks like another creature is irrelevant. My winter car looks like my Dads car, because we drive the same model, but different model years – and both cars are designed by engineers.

When people ask our side for evidence for our claims, we are able to produce the evidence to substantiate our claims, e.g. – cosmic fine-tuning factors or protein sequencing probabilities. I would like to see the other side do the same, and not just tell me a story.

Axe needs to challenge Nye to a debate about this, and then we can find out whether there is any evidence for Darwinian evolution at all.

New leaked documents reveal IRS discriminated against conservative groups

August 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Catherine Engelbrecht of True the Vote testifies about being persecuted by the fascist IRS

The Washington Free Beacon reports:

> Staff at IRS headquarters in Washington, D.C., buried conservative groups' tax exemption applications beginning in 2010 and lasting through President Obama's reelection campaign in 2012, according todocuments released this week by Judicial Watch, a government watchdog group.
>
> The group released 105 pages of FBI documents, which included interviews with Cincinnati IRS employees who disclosed that applications by Tea Party groups were automatically denied approval and assigned to a special group until they heard from the IRS headquarters in Washington, D.C.
>
> "The FBI's 302 interviews with Cincinnati IRS employees reveal that the agency adopted a series of policies assuring that Tea Party and other conservative group tax exempt applications would not be approved before the November 2012 presidential election," according to a statement from Judicial Watch.
>
> […]Additionally, the IRS began a "BOLO" or "Be On the Lookout" list in 2010, adding Tea Party groups to that list in July or August 2010.
>
> The IRS had a bucketing system, which determined whether applications were quickly approved or would be delayed. If an application was put into the "merit close" bucket, it meant the application met all criteria and was approved quickly.

> According to the documents, IRS officials directed that no one on the BOLO list, which included Tea Party applications, could be put in the merit close bucket. This means that Tea Party applications would never be quickly approved.
>
> "The BOLO was used as a tool for the screeners/classifiers and all revenue agents were expected to know what was on the list," the documents read. "If an item was on the BOLO list, then that case could not be merit closed by the screeners/classifiers."
>
> […]"IRS officials described for the FBI unlawful and purposeful bureaucratic delays orchestrated by top IRS officials in Washington, D.C.," said Judicial Watch president Tom Fitton. "One IRS official details how concerns about the Obama IRS targeting of conservatives were ignored. We hope a future Justice Department follows up on this information in a renewed criminal investigation."
>
> More documents obtained by Judicial Watch revealed that Justice Department attorney Barbara Bosserman, who investigated the IRS' targeting of conservative groups, is an Obama campaign and Democratic Party donor.
>
> Bosserman donated $6,750 to Obama campaigns and the Democratic National Committee from 2004 to 2012.
>
> "Is it any surprise that this compromised investigation found no reason to prosecute anyone in the Obama IRS scandal?" said Fitton.
>
> The IRS did not respond to requests for comment by press time.

Naturally, the corrupt Obama administration – the most corrupt and deceptive administration in United States history – declined to prosecute anyone in the IRS. Because this is government working as designed – where is the defect? It would only be a defect if the IRS discriminated against gay rights groups or abortion groups or black supremacist groups or groups that promote voter fraud or eco-terrorism groups.

Here is True the Vote's CEO's testimony at the House of Representative's investigation of the IRS:

At the end of the investigation, the corrupt DOJ declined to press charges. Because Obama doesn't charge Obama.

I just want to say that during the GOP primary, we had two choices. Ted Cruz would have abolished the IRS and reduced the process of filing taxes to filing out a one-page form. Tax rates would have gone down, and government spending would have been curtailed by abolishing several other departments of the federal government.

Here he is talking about the plan with Megyn Kelly on Fox News.

Donald Trump, the Democrat clown, was all in favor of keeping the IRS, and probably was not even aware of the IRS discrimination scandal. We had a choice. We chose the adulterous clown who inherited money from his sugar Daddy.

People who thought that the IRS was a problem to be solved voted for Ted Cruz, and people who thought that the IRS was doing a good job and didn't need any reform, voted

for Donald Trump the adulterous, pro-abortion Democrat.

Related posts

- Ted Cruz's plan to lower taxes and simplify the process for filing tax returns
- Democrat DOJ declines to prosecute Democrat IRS officials who persecuted conservatives
- Democrats launch investigation of pro-life group that filmed Planned Parenthood videos
- New report: IRS used hundreds of lawyers to hide IRS persecution of conservatives
- IRS auditing conservative news provider Breitbart.com
- IRS reveals that it has lost e-mails of 5 more employees
- Lois Lerner's Blackberry deliberately destroyed after start of congressional probe
- New e-mails: IRS official Lois Lerner called conservatives "a**holes" and "terrorists"
- IRS Lois Lerner pushed to have Republican senator Chuck Grassley audited
- IRS e-mail backups destroyed shortly after targeting of conservatives was discovered
- IRS required BY LAW to store hard copies of all e-mails they claim to have lost
- After a year of stalling, IRS blames loss of e-mails on "hard drive crash"
- Democrats refusing to comply with Freedom of Information Act requests
- House Republicans vote to hold Lois Lerner in contempt of Congress
- E-mails suggest Democrat congressman prompted IRS to target conservative group
- FBI declines to prosecute IRS for targeting Tea Party groups ahead of 2012 election
- IRS exchanged confidential taxpayer information with White House
- IRS fascist Lois Lerner pleads the fifth to avoid transparency and accountability

Mike Licona lectures on historical methods and the New Testament

August 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a quick overview of Michael Licona's latest book on the resurrection, entitled "The Resurrection of Jesus".

60 minutes of lecture, 20 minutes of Q&A.

Summary:

- Dr. Licona's background and education
- The definition of history and philosophy of history
- Postmodern approaches to history
- Historical bedrock: facts that are historically demonstrable
- Historical criterion 1: Explanatory scope
- Historical criterion 2: Explanatory power
- Historical criterion 3: Plausibility
- Historical criterion 4: Ad Hoc / Speculation / non-evidenced assumptions
- Inference to the best explanation
- Investigating miracle claims: is it possible? How?
- Objection of James D.G. Dunn
- Objection of Bart Ehrman
- New Testament sources: Gospels and Paul's letters
- The Gnostic gospels: are they good sources?
- The minimal facts
- The hallucination hypothesis
- The best explanation

While watching this lecture, it struck what good preparation it was for understanding debates. This lecture is more about historical methods, but if you're interested in Mike's minimal facts case for the resurrection, here's a video on that:

This is the case he uses in his debates with Richard Carrier, Dale Allison, Bart Ehrman, etc.

Mike Licona's ministry is here: Risen Jesus.

If you are looking for a good book to read on the resurrection of Jesus, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

Obama administration sent $400 million cash ransom to Iran for hostage release

August 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people and our allies?
Why do civilized countries have a policy of not paying ransom to terrorists for hostages? Because if you pay them once, then it emboldens them to kidnap again and again. Anyone who knows anything about national security and foreign policy knows this: we do not negotiate with terrorists.

But what happens if you elect a drugged-up community organizer who never released his college grades to be the first "affirmative action President"?

The Wall Street Journal explains:

> The Obama administration secretly organized an airlift of $400 million worth of cash to Iran that coincided with the January release of four Americans detained in Tehran, according to U.S. and European officials and congressional staff briefed on the operation afterward.
>
> Wooden pallets stacked with euros, Swiss francs and other currencies were flown into Iran on an unmarked cargo plane, according to these officials. The U.S. procured the money from the central banks of the Netherlands and Switzerland, they said.
>
> […]"With the nuclear deal done, prisoners released, the time was right to resolve this dispute as well," President Barack Obama said at the White House on Jan. 17—without disclosing the $400 million cash payment.
>
> […]Iranian press reports have quoted senior Iranian defense officials describing the cash as a ransom payment. The Iranian foreign ministry didn't respond to a

> request for comment.
>
> […]**Since the cash shipment, the intelligence arm of the Revolutionary Guard has arrested two more Iranian-Americans. Tehran has also detained dual-nationals from France, Canada and the U.K. in recent months.**
>
> […]**The Obama administration has refused to disclose how it paid any of the $1.7 billion, despite congressional queries, outside of saying that it wasn't paid in dollars. Lawmakers have expressed concern that the cash would be used by Iran to fund regional allies, including the Assad regime in Syria and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, which the U.S. designates as a terrorist organization.**
>
> […]**Iran has acknowledged providing both financial and military aid to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and deploying Iranian soldiers there.**

Of course. Because appeasement of tyrants emboldens tyrants to be more aggressive. Anyone with the basic moral sense of a functioning adult knows this.

Republicans called the entire $1.7 billion Iran deal a ransom for hostages:

> Sen. Tom Cotton, a Republican from Arkansas and a fierce foe of the Iran nuclear deal, accused President Barack Obama of paying "a $1.7 billion ransom to the ayatollahs for U.S. hostages."
>
> "This break with longstanding U.S. policy put a price on the head of Americans, and has led Iran to continue its illegal seizures" of Americans, he said.
>
> […]Members of Congress are seeking to pass legislation preventing the Obama administration from making any further cash payments to Iran. One of the bills requires for the White House to make public the details of its $1.7 billion transfer to Iran.
>
> "President Obama's…payment to Iran in January, which we now know will fund Iran's military expansion, is an appalling example of executive branch governance," said Sen.James Lankford (R., Okla.), who co-wrote the bill. "Subsidizing Iran's military is perhaps the worst use of taxpayer dollars ever by an American president."

Republicans are trying to get answers, but the Democrats are hiding everything – just like they did with the gun-running to Mexican drug cartels, the unsecure Hillary e-mail server, the Benghazi cover-up, the IRS persecution of conservatives, and so on.

The Washington Free Beacon explains:

> "It has been seven months since President Obama announced that he was giving the Islamic Republic of Iran almost $2 billion," Rep. Mike Pompeo (R., Kan.), a member of the House Intelligence Committee, told the *Free Beacon* on Wednesday. "And we are just now finding out damning details about how $400 million, which is less than half of the total, was sent to Iran using foreign aircraft

> and foreign currencies."
>
> Pompeo led several unsuccessful inquiries into the cash payout. He said the administration has been stonewalling efforts to obtain a full readout of the exchange in both classified and unclassified settings since January.
>
> […]"That is far too long of a timeline, especially as it is in the face of the Obama administration totally stonewalling congressional inquiries into this matter since January," Pompeo said.

None of this is surprising, given Obama's other anti-American actions. We've already seen Obama release dozens of known Islamic terrorists who were captured on the battlefield – many of whom returned to battlefield to kill more Americans and innocent civilians.

Obama spokesman admits that the money is being given to a nation that supports terrorists:

> White House spokesman Josh Earnest said during Wednesday's press briefing it is possible the $400 million that the Obama administration airlifted to Iran could have been spent on funding terrorism.
>
> "The president was quite forward-leaning in advance of the nuclear deal even being completed in acknowledging that we know that Iran supports terrorism," Earnest said. "We know that Iran supports Hezbollah and the Assad regime, and it is certainly possible that some of the money that Iran has is being used for those purposes, too."

What does Obama care? It's not his money, it's your money. Pass the selfie stick and the golf clubs.

A simple case for the pro-life position by Scott Klusendorf

August 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this message
Are you able to make a basic case for the pro-life view?

Here's a short 38-lecture by Scott Klusendorf, president of the Life Training Institute.

This is a long treatment that talks about the challenge of moral relativism and the case for the pro-life view. He does show a clip of abortion in the video to the audience.

There's also a 35-minute audio recording of Scott on the LTI web site. (H/T Apologetics 315) You can put that on your podcast player and listen to it. Listen to it a lot and soon you'll sound like Scott.

Scott also has an article posted on the LTI web site for those who don't have time for the video or the audio.

In the article makes three points:

1. **Clarify the issue**
2. **Defend your pro-life position with science and philosophy**
3. **Challenge your listeners to be intellectually honest**

Here's the second point:

> Scientifically, we know that from the earliest stages of development, the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings. Leading embryology books confirm

this.[2] For example, Keith L. Moore & T.V.N. Persaud write, “A zygote is the beginning of a new human being. Human development begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm … unites with a female gamete or oocyte … to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual.”[3] Prior to his abortion advocacy, former Planned Parenthood President Dr. Alan Guttmacher was perplexed that anyone, much less a medical doctor, would question this. “This all seems so simple and evident that it is difficult to picture a time when it wasn’t part of the common knowledge,” he wrote in his book *Life in the Making*.[4]

Philosophically, we can say that embryos are less developed than newborns (or, for that matter, toddlers) but this difference is not morally significant in the way abortion advocates need it to be. Consider the claim that the immediate capacity for self-awareness bestows value on human beings. Notice that this is not an argument, but an arbitrary assertion. Why is some development needed? And why is this particular degree of development (i.e., higher brain function) decisive rather than another? These are questions that abortion advocates do not adequately address.

As Stephen Schwarz points out, there is no morally significant difference between the embryo that you once were and the adult that you are today. Differences of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not relevant such that we can say that you had no rights as an embryo but you do have rights today. Think of the acronym **SLED** as a helpful reminder of these non-essential differences:[5]

Size: True, embryos are smaller than newborns and adults, but why is that relevant? Do we really want to say that large people are more human than small ones? Men are generally larger than women, but that doesn’t mean that they deserve more rights. Size doesn’t equal value.

Level of development: True, embryos and fetuses are less developed than the adults they’ll one day become. But again, why is this relevant? Four year-old girls are less developed than 14 year-old ones. Should older children have more rights than their younger siblings? Some people say that self-awareness makes one human. But if that is true, newborns do not qualify as valuable human beings. Six-week old infants lack the immediate capacity for performing human mental functions, as do the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, and those with Alzheimer’s Disease.

Environment: Where you are has no bearing on who you are. Does your value change when you cross the street or roll over in bed? If not, how can a journey of eight inches down the birth-canal suddenly change the essential nature of the unborn from non-human to human? If the unborn are not already human, merely changing their location can’t make them valuable.

Degree of Dependency: If viability makes us human, then all those who depend

> on insulin or kidney medication are not valuable and we may kill them. Conjoined twins who share blood type and bodily systems also have no right to life.
>
> In short, it's far more reasonable to argue that although humans differ immensely with respect to talents, accomplishments, and degrees of development, they are nonetheless equal because they share a common human nature.

That's the core of the basic pro-life case right there. There's also a good interview of Mr. Klusendorf that I blogged about.

Advanced Objections

You can learn more by reading basic pro-life apologetics… from Francis Beckwith. You might recognize Frank Beckwith as the author of "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice". He wrote that book for Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal.

Here are four essays that answer common arguments in favor of legalized abortion.

- Part I. The Appeal to Pity
- Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem
- Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?
- Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Here's an excerpt from Part II:

Excerpt:

> A woman who becomes pregnant due to an act of either rape or incest is the victim of a horribly violent and morally reprehensible crime. Although pregnancy as a result of either rape or incest is extremely rare, **[1]** there is no getting around the fact that pregnancy does occur in some instances.
>
> […]Despite its forceful appeal to our sympathies, there are several problems with this argument. First, it is not relevant to the case for abortion on demand, the position defended by the popular pro-choice movement. This position states that a woman has a **right** to have an abortion for **any** reason she prefers during the entire nine months of pregnancy, whether it be for gender-selection, convenience, or rape. **[3]** To argue for abortion on demand from the hard cases of rape and incest is like trying to argue for the elimination of traffic laws from the fact that one might have to violate some of them in rare circumstances, such as when one's spouse or child needs to be rushed to the hospital. Proving an exception does not establish a general rule.
>
> […]Fourth, this argument begs the question by assuming that the unborn is not fully human. For if the unborn is fully human, then we must weigh the relieving of the woman's mental suffering against the right-to-life of an innocent human being. **And homicide of another is never justified to relieve one of emotional distress**. Although such a judgment is indeed anguishing, we must

> not forget that the same innocent unborn entity that the career-oriented woman will abort in order to avoid interference with a job promotion is biologically and morally indistinguishable from the unborn entity that results from an act of rape or incest. And since abortion for career advancement cannot be justified if the unborn entity is fully human, abortion cannot be justified in the cases of rape and incest. In both cases abortion results in the death of an innocent human life. As Dr. Bernard Nathanson has written, "The unwanted pregnancy flows biologically from the sexual act, but not morally from it." **[5]**Hence, this argument, like the ones we have already covered in this series, is successful only if the unborn are not fully human.

Scott Klusendorf wrote the The Case for Life, which is the best book for beginners on the pro-life view. For those looking for advanced resources, Francis Beckwith, a professor at Baylor University, published the book Defending Life, with Cambridge University Press, 2007.

I found a very polished hour-long talk by Scott on Viemo. That talk was delivered to students and faculty at Furman University.

Finally, if you want to see Scott Klusendorf in a debate with a former ACLU executive, you can see it right here.

My friend Papa Georgio sent me a post that features THREE talks by Scott Klusendorf. (H/T Religio-Political Talk)

Hillary Clinton never completed mandatory information security training

August 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What difference does national security make?

The Daily Caller explains how Hillary Clinton conducted business as Secretary of State – the top diplomat of the most powerful country in the world.

Excerpt:

> Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton completed no security briefings or courses on the proper handling of classified materials and how to conduct secure communications while at the Department of State, according to new Obama administration legal filingsbefore the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.
>
> The surprise admission was released late Friday and could reignite the controversy over Clinton's "careless" handling of classified materials as asserted by FBI Director James Comey, which has already been a central part of the presidential race.
>
> The revelation also could renew calls for the Department of State to strip her of her security clearance. The co-founder of at least one retired military officers organization has called for a suspension of her clearance.
>
> State Department officials previously reported they could not locate records certifying that Clinton or her top aides took the annually required security courses and briefings.
>
> But on July 29, Obama administration officials went further, saying their failure to locate any documents meant that the "courses were not completed" by the secretary or her aides.
>
> […]"If the search of these databases did not locate any such training records, then the courses were not completed," concluded Eric Stein, the co-director of

> the State Department's Office of Information Programs and Services in the July 29 filing before U.S. District Judge Richard J. Leon.

Specifics about her aides:

> State Department records released to TheDCNF show that Cheryl Mills and Jacob Sullivan, two top Clinton aides, took cybersecurity awareness courses once, but not for all four years.
>
> The records show Clinton and aide Huma Abedin never took any cybersecurity awareness training.

Utter contempt for the law, policies, procedures, best practices. Hillary Clinton is above information security and national security.

Have you ever dealt with someone who made decisions based on her emotions? Someone who dismissed all moral rules and objective constraints, believe somehow that these rules were not necessary t succeed? Someone who had utter confidence in her emotions and intuitions such that she dismissed objective constraints? Someone who refused to be held accountable after causing disasters? Someone who attacked others and blamed others instead of taking responsibility? Someone who did dirty, disgusting things in private, thinking that as long as people liked her, then it would be OK? Someone who had no sense of morality, apart from public opinion?

That's what you are getting in Hillary Clinton. It is everything seen in her past actions. Utter contempt for prescriptive morality. Utter disrespect for the seriousness national security and foreign policy. I think she should stick to yoga routines and Chelsea's wedding rather than trying to work in areas where she is clearly not qualified to work. The president of the United States is not a job that should be opened to affirmative action candidates whose sole qualifications are gender and marrying someone important. We need someone qualified.

Do husbands and wives have specific responsibilities in a marriage?

August 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage advice from someone who knows

I found another awesome post by Lindsay.

The post starts explaining how a woman supports a man in his role as spiritual leader of the home. I always talk about the responsibilities of a husband/father in the home being protecting, providing and leading on moral and spiritual issues. Most young, unmarried women I know are thoroughly indocrinated in radical feminism, and reject these roles.

Lindsay is fine with men leading in all 3 of those roles, but this is the part of her post that I really liked:

> Once children arrive, it becomes pretty much impossible for her to work outside the home and still fulfill her duties at home. The funny thing about children is that they need constant care. One cannot care for children and work outside the home too. The choice once children come along is whether to outsource the care of the children to someone else or to do it yourself. I firmly believe that God entrusts children to a husband and wife because he wants them to be the primary influences in their children's lives. That doesn't happen if the children spend a majority of their waking hours in the care of someone else.
>
> Children don't just need food and shelter provided to them, they need love, teaching, discipline, a sense of security, and examples of how they are to live. All of those things are best done when the child spends time primarily with his or her parents. Daycare workers, school teachers, and even grandparents simply cannot provide them in the same way parents can. No one loves a child like his own

> parents do. No one has such a vested interest in ensuring that he grows up with the proper spiritual and moral training. Even if others care about the child, the responsibility for the training of a child belongs to his parents. Daycare workers and teachers and grandparents won't answer to God for the soul of that child. His parents will.
>
> So, given the needs of children, I am convinced that women are called to be with their children, training and caring for them as their primary caregiver. Does that mean a mother can't have any job outside the home? In theory, no. In practice, yes. A woman's priority must be her own family. If she can have her children with her or leave them for only a short time each day, she may still be able to provide the necessary training and care they need from their mother and earn some income. But in doing that, she needs to be sure she is not neglecting her husband's needs either. Theoretically, a woman can have it all – keeping a job and caring for her family too. The problem is that it is a very rare woman who has the energy to keep up with the constant needs of her children for care, training, discipline, and love and those of her husband for companionship, sex, and a partner in life as well as the logistics of running a household and still have something left for even a part-time job.
>
> What usually happens when a woman has an outside job is that her family simply suffers the lack. Either her children spend a lot of time with other caregivers or teachers or her husband does without the companionship and marital intimacy he needs or some of the household chores descend on the husband, taking away some of his time and energy to train his children spiritually and impact the world for Christ. Often it's a combination of these. A woman simply cannot meet all the needs of her family when she is spread that thin and, as a result, something important gets left undone.

I wish I could find women who had definite ideas about what they wanted to do with their children, but thinking back over previous relationships, what I usually hear is that they want to go on mission trips, do pro-life protests, have careers, etc. No one looks at these little kids with any sort of plan to grow them into anything. I just think it's depressing that kids are not part of most women's plans. If there is any plan at all it's that there should be no plan, and the kids can just do anything they want.

How depressing for the man to think about when he has to pay all the bills to raise kids who are aiming at nothing, and will surely hit it. What kind of man is excited about having children when his wife is not on board with making them into anything special? The worst of all is when the women who are thoroughly indoctrinated in radical feminism actually reject men who are good at the three roles, and make excuses for more "fun" men who are lousy at all three roles! The world is going backwards.

Study: violent video games do not cause players to become more violent

August 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Boys and girls playing Pandemic board game

Brad Wilcox re-tweeted a tweet that mentioned this study which I think is interesting. It's important to me that Christians not get sucked into every fad crisis.

Story from U.S. News and World Report: (links removed)

> In truth, there's no evidence to connect violent video games to violence in society. Several studies, such as by psychologist Patrick Markey and economist Scott Cunningham, have linked the release of popular violent video games with immediate *declines* in societal violence. Correlation between the consumption of these games and societal reductions in youth violence were well established, but these newer studies suggest there may be some causal element to this.
>
> Studies of youth also call into question whether a link between violent video games and aggression exists. In a 2015 meta-analysis of studies examining video game effects on youth, little evidence emerged for causal links between violent video games and behavioral problems in youth. Likewise, studies have not supported that a population of youth exists who are "vulnerable" to game effects. One recent study from the University of Missouri found that neither young adults diagnosed on the autism spectrum nor neurotypical young adults became more aggressive when exposed to violent video games. Nor, in a study I conducted with Cheryl Olson, were these games associated with bullying or delinquency among youth with pre-existing mental health symptoms. This is not to say that all studies agree: Over the years, some have found evidence for some

> kinds of effects (usually on minor aggressive acts, like filling in the missing letters of ki__ as “kill” rather than “kiss”); others have not. But gradually, the evidence has weakened, and it has become clear that media effects research has become part of psychological science’s larger replication crisis, where many effects once thought true are now proving difficult to replicate with better, preregistered studies.
>
> This is also reflected in the scientific community where surveys of scholars and cliniciansfind little evidence for a consensus that effects exist. Indeed only a minority of scholars and clinicians agree that violent video games cause aggression or violence in society. And as is common for generational disagreements over new media, the split even among experts finds older experts more inclined to view video games in a negative light.

> Because of all of this, some criminologists have taken to referring to links between violent video games and mass shootings specifically as a “myth.”

Although I do believe that violent video games don’t cause people to me more violent, I do think that it increases tolerance for other people committing violence, which is why I don’t play them. I am a gamer, but I never play violent first-person shooters. My favorite games are military simulators like Harpoon and Command, as well as cartoon-y retro dungeon crawlers (Etrian Odyssey series) and cooperative games like Keep Talking and No One Explodes or the board game Pandemic.

I just think that it is important that we not malign boys any more than is accurate for their different male natures. Boys are more aggressive than girls. It’s not a mental disorder, it’s being a boy. If it wasn’t for this aggressive male nature, we would have no soldiers and policemen to fight evil with force.

Why don’t men talk to women about commitment and marriage any more?

August 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

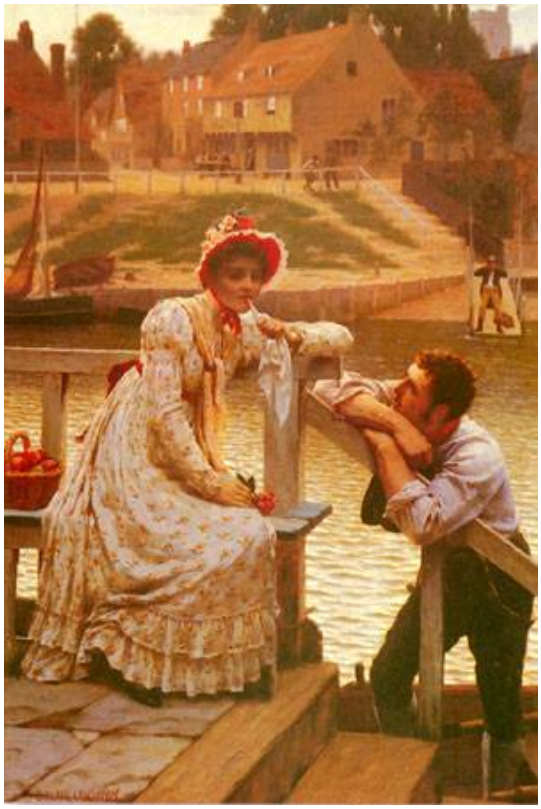

Painting: “Courtship”, by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

I saw this essay from a young woman named Jordana Narin who is explaining how she feels about not being able to talk seriously to a man she had sex with. She is a radical feminist and has a useless, easy degree in creative writing.

The essay was published in the radically leftist New York Times.

First kiss:

> I met [a guy] at summer camp in the Poconos at 14, playing pickup basketball by day and talking in the mess hall late into the night. Back home we lived only 30 minutes apart, but I didn’t see him again until 11th grade, when we ran into each other at a Halloween party in a Lower Manhattan warehouse.
>
> […]Under the muted flashes of a strobe light, we shared our first kiss.

She spent her first kiss on a guy she barely knew at a party, with no relationship context.

And this is how they talked:

> We stayed in touch for the rest of high school, mostly by text message.

> […]Every time his name popped up on my phone, my heart raced.
>
> Still, we were never more than semiaffiliated, two people who spoke and loved to speak and kissed and loved to kiss and connected and were scared of

> connecting.

Where is this relationship going? This boy has no job and no savings and no proven record of steady work – and therefore he *cannot marry anyone.*

More:

> Two years after our first kiss, we were exchanging "I've missed you" messages again. It was a brisk Friday evening in our first semesters of college when I stepped off a train and into his comfortable arms.
>
> He had texted weeks earlier on Halloween (technically our anniversary) to ask if I would visit. We had not talked since summer, and I was trying to forget him. We had graduated from high school into the same inexpressive void we first entered in costume, where an "I've missed you" was as emotive as one got.

Long gaps in between text messages – they have nothing to talk about, and there is no goal. Nevertheless, they are away from their parents, and so she had sex with him, losing her virginity to a man she was not married to.

And then:

> Naïvely, I had expected to gain clarity, to finally admit my feelings and ask if he felt the same. But I couldn't confess, couldn't probe. Periodically I opened my mouth to ask: "What are we doing? Who am I to you?" He stopped me with a smile, a wink or a handhold, gestures that persuaded me to shut my mouth or risk jeopardizing what we already had.
>
> On the Saturday-night train back to Manhattan, I cried. Back in my dorm room, buried under the covers so my roommates wouldn't hear, I fell asleep with a wet pillow and puffy eyes.
>
> The next morning I awoke to a string of texts from him: "You get back OK?" "Let's do it again soon :)"

Yes. She had sex with him because of text messages, Facebook comments and because he "missed her". Not because he had presented his resume and balance sheet to her father, dated her for many months, bought her an engagement ring, courted her for more months, bought her a wedding ring, then walked down the aisle with her.

Why is this happening?

There's an interview that goes with it on the radically leftist NPR web site, but I saved a copy of the MP3 file here in case it disappears.

Moderate Christian Rod Dreher comments on the interview:

> I wouldn't have understood the full scope of what this young woman is saying in her essay without the interview, which is short. In the segment, Narin says that men and women in her generation don't have actual romantic relationships anymore. It's all casual, non-committal sex. "Nobody knows whether their own

> feelings are real," she says.
>
> [..]She tells the interviewer that there's lots of making out and sex, but nobody wants to be emotionally vulnerable to anybody else.
>
> […]**"Everyone in college uses Tinder," she said, referring to the wildly popular dating and hook-up app. "You can literally swipe right and find someone just to hang out for the night. There's no commitments required, and I think that makes committing to someone even harder, because it's so normal, and so expected even, to not want to commit."**
>
> "**In a different time, my grandparents, my great grandparents, they might have thought they were missing out on casual sex**," she says. "But since my generation has been saddled down with that, we kind of look to the past and say well, wasn't that nice. I think both are optimal. **I'm a huge feminist, and I think women should be able to do whatever they want to do. If a woman wants to have tons of casual sex, she totally should.** But I think that there should be the option. And they shouldn't be gendered, women and men. But there should be the option of being in a relationship."

Right. Young women like her who have swallowed radical feminism hook, line and sinker don't want to "miss out" on casual sex right now, but they want to get married "some day" – after they have a lot of fun traveling and doing exciting, fun things.

But what do they think marriage is?

This:

Look at the lyrics:

> You got that 9 to 5
> But, baby, so do I
> So don't be thinking I'll be home and baking apple pies
> I never learned to cook
>
> After every fight
> Just apologize
> And maybe then I'll let you try and rock my body right
> Even if I was wrong
> You know I'm never wrong
>
> And know we'll never see your family more than mine
>
> Even when I'm acting crazy
> Tell me everything's alright

This is what women today understand marriage to be. They expect to be pursuing their own careers, not supporting their husbands and raising children. Most feminists view the roles of wife and mother as demeaning. They aren't interested in supporting or respecting a man who provides for them – they just want him to say yes to whatever they feel like doing – fun and thrills.

The woman singing expects to win every disagreement because, like the song says, she is never wrong. The lyrics also say that sex is conditional on whether the woman feels happy. When it comes to visiting family and holidays, she lets us know that her family is more important than his. And she is allowed to act crazy, which could involve a whole host of selfish, wasteful, narcissistic behaviors, and he is just supposed to celebrate and maybe pay for it. For the rest of his life.

How do men respond to these radical feminists?

Most men are not interested in committing to, or discussing commitment with, radical feminists. Men will have sex with a radical feminist, (not me, but other men), but they will never commit to them. Why not? If a man's role is just to please the "huge feminist", then there is no reason to commit to her. Radical feminists believe that relationships are about their plans and their needs. They are not interested in responsibilities, expectations or obligations to men or to children. But men, even secular men, understand that they must not marry a woman who thinks that relationships should impose no obligations on her. Men play dumb with women to keep the sex coming, but there is no way they would commit to such women.

Now there is one exception to this rule, and that's young, naive men. If a woman is a "huge feminist" then she might be able to get attention from a doormat man without having to give him sex. Typically, these men have no work experience, no savings, are much younger, and are so desperate for attention that they do what Meghan Trainor says in the song: apologize, grovel, condone craziness and selfishness, etc. Although a woman may think she wants a man like that in the short-term, in the long-term, those men prove unattractive and unsatisfactory.

In order to be masculine, a man needs to be a good moral leader and a good spiritual leader. And that means that he needs to call a woman higher, away from her self-centeredness, so she can serve God and serve other people. He cannot just agree with whatever crazy, emotional thing that she thinks up that is fun, thrilling and bound to fail. A good leader has *experience* as a provider, protector and leader that he brings to bear on decision-making, and proven ability achieving and leading others to greatness. I think women with low self-esteem will be interested in men who are doormats, but that is not the solution to the commitment problem. A doormat man does not have what it takes to provide and lead a family.

Foreseeing America's future: Spain's Social Security system goes bankrupt

August 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Youth unemployment rate in Europe (EU member states) as of May 2016 (seasonally adjusted)

The statistic shows the seasonally adjusted youth unemployment rate in Europe (EU member states) as of May 2016. In May 2016, the seasonally adjusted youth unemployment rate in Spain was at 43.9 percent. The source defines youth unemployment as unemployment of those younger than 25 years.

Show more

Socialism in action: Youth unemployment rate in European countries

I lamented the election of an outright socialist (Zapatero) as leader of Spain when it happened (in 2004, and again in 2008), and indeed he did nothing to fix the problems with unfunded entitlement liabilities in Spain.

Investors Business Daily explains what happened:

> Spain is dangling on the edge of a very dangerous fiscal precipice. Not only is its government budget still deep in the red, but its social security fund is about to completely run out of money. Once that happens, the real fun begins.
>
> **As recent reports note, Spain's social security fund will run out of money sometime in 2018. The reason? "Bonus payments" to pensioners, similar to expansions in Social Security benefits for current retirees and women that Hillary Clinton seeks to put in place in the U.S. Unless the Spanish government finds the money to patch the coming social security blowout, deep cuts in benefits or steep rises in taxes will have to be made.**
>
> And this is a problem that won't just go away with improvement in the business cycle. "The financial problems are not a temporary problem," noted Spain's El Confidencial newspaper, as translated by financial advisor and blogger Michael Shedlock. "Revenue from social security contributions is not sufficient to meet payment obligations."

> How bad is it? Well, so far this year there's a 12.24% deficit in social security contributions vs. the forecast. **That gap will likely worsen in coming years, as more workers opt for retirement and fewer people enter the workforce. Payments to some people already deep in retirement may have to be cut — adding to the already disruptive fiscal chaos that has roiled Spain, despite its rebound from the financial crisis.**

We have a similar problem in the United States, thanks to the Democrats. A long time ago, the Democrats created a Ponzi scheme called Social Security in order to buy votes of retirees today with money to be paid by younger American workers tomorrow. There is no Social Security fund, just buying the votes of one group of voters with the votes of a much less politically-aware group of voters (young people).

The same IBD article assessed the American system, as well:

> By 2034, the U.S. Social Security program, too, will be bankrupt. We have one edge on Spain: We can print our own money. But as we've found over the past eight years of quantitative easing, that doesn't exactly solve the problem. And anyway, while inflation is virtually zero today, there's no guarantee it will be the same in 18 years.
>
> […]Today, the total unfunded liability of the U.S. Social Security program is in excess of $25 *trillion*. There are already 60 million Social Security recipients, with some 10,000 baby boomers retiring each and every day. Three out of five current retirees depend on Social Security for their income. Knowing this reckoning is coming and doing nothing is malfeasance of the worst sort.

In Spain, there is so little free market capitalism that young people cannot even find jobs. The unemployment rate for youth in Spain is second only to Greece – the same Greece that elected the socialists for decades. So young people cannot find work in either Greece or Spain. If the young people cannot pay into these systems at the same rate that people did in the past, that just makes them go bankrupt faster.

Millennials, take note. When you vote Democrat, you are voting to pay some of what you earn into a system that will not be there for you when you retire. I have paid into it, and it will be bankrupt long before I retire. And the Democrats are importing more takers (unskilled illegal immigrants, Syrian refugees, elderly family members, etc.) who will be taking more out of the system than they pay into the system. You are making yourselves into slaves because of your gullibility, listening to the lies that your teachers and professors tell you about who to vote for. Think for yourself.

The wonderful thing about having other countries is that you can look at them and see what happens when they implement different laws and policies. Socialism – of the sort championed by the Democrat party in America – has already been tried. It's been tried in Greece, it's been tried in North Korea, it's been tried in Cuba, and in Spain. It's not working anywhere. It's not working here, either.

What is wrong with electing an atheist to be President?

August 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

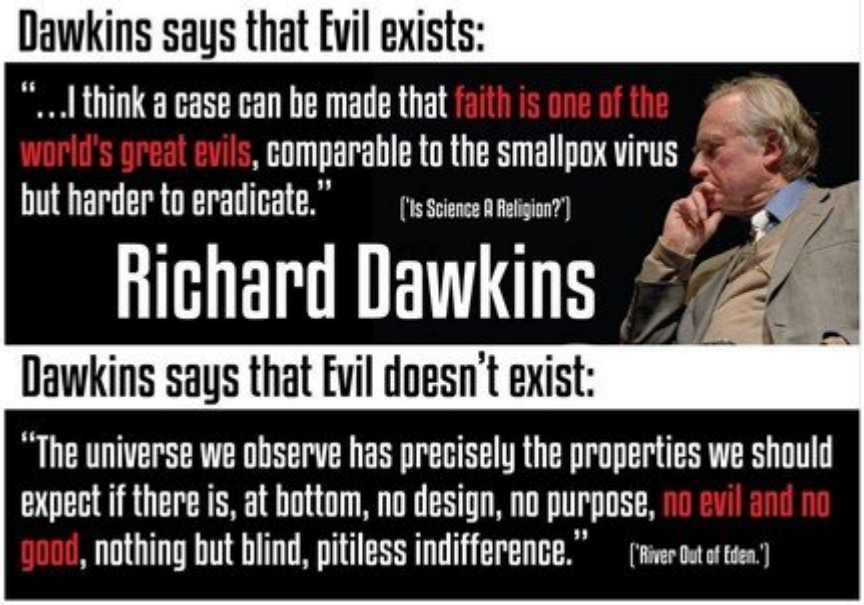

Richard Dawkins says faith is evil and hard to eradicate, but some atheists have tried
One way to decide whether to be concerned or not, is to look at famous atheist leaders of the past, and to see whether they did a good job of protecting basic human rights.

One of the most famous atheists who ran a country was Mao Zedong, who ran China from 1958 to 1962. His reign was called
"The Great Leap Forward".

The far-left Washington Post recently had a news article about Mao:

> Who was the biggest mass murderer in the history of the world? Most people probably assume that the answer is Adolf Hitler, architect of the Holocaust. Others might guess Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, who may indeed have managed to kill even more innocent people than Hitler did, many of them as part of a terror famine that likely took more lives than the Holocaust. But both Hitler and Stalin were outdone by Mao Zedong. From 1958 to 1962, his Great Leap Forward policy led to the deaths of up to 45 million people – easily making it the biggest episode of mass murder ever recorded.
>
> Historian Frank Dikötter, author of the important book *Mao's Great Famine* recently published an article in *History Today*, summarizing what happened:

> […]It is not merely the extent of the catastrophe that dwarfs earlier estimates, but also the manner in which many people died: between two and three million victims were tortured to death or summarily killed, often for the slightest infraction. When a boy stole a handful of grain in a Hunan village, local boss

> Xiong Dechang forced his father to bury him alive. The father died of grief a few days later. The case of Wang Ziyou was reported to the central leadership: one of his ears was chopped off, his legs were tied with iron wire, a ten kilogram stone was dropped on his back and then he was branded with a sizzling tool – punishment for digging up a potato.

> The basic facts of the Great Leap Forward have long been known to scholars. Dikötter's work is noteworthy for demonstrating that the number of victims may have been even greater than previously thought, and that the mass murder was more clearly intentional on Mao's part, and included large numbers of victims who were executed or tortured, as opposed to "merely" starved to death. Even the previously standard estimates of 30 million or more, would still make this the greatest mass murder in history.

Some may say that the root of this mass murder is communism, but you can't do these mass murders if you expect to encounter a God on the other side of death whose design for each of his human creatures was for them to love God, and love their neighbor as themselves.

In any case, opposition to religion is a cornerstone of communism, as this article by professor of political science Paul Kengor explains:

> As Mikhail Gorbachev aptly stated, the Soviet communist state carried out a comprehensive "war on religion." [1] He lamented that the Bolsheviks, his predecessors, even after the civil war ended in the early 1920s, during a time of "peace," had "continued to tear down churches, arrest clergymen, and destroy them. This was no longer understandable or justifiable. Atheism took rather savage forms in our country at that time." [2]
>
> The Soviet Union, reflective of the communist world as a whole, was openly hostile to religion and officially atheist; it was not irreligious or unreligious, with no stance on religion, but took the position that there was no God. Moreover, that atheism translated into a form of vicious anti-religion that included a systematic, often brutal campaign to eliminate belief. This began from the outset of the Soviet communist state and still continues in various forms in communist countries to this day, from China to North Korea to Cuba.
>
> The roots of this hatred and intolerance of religion lie in the essence of communist ideology. Marx dubbed religion the "opiate of the masses," and opined that, "Communism begins where atheism begins." [3]Speaking on behalf of the Bolsheviks in his famous October 2, 1920 speech, Lenin stated matter-of-factly: "We do not believe in God." Lenin insisted that "all worship of a divinity is a necrophilia." [4] He wrote in a November 1913 letter that "any religious idea, any idea of any God at all, any flirtation even with a God is the most inexpressible foulness … the most dangerous foulness, the most shameful 'infection.'" James Thrower of the University of Virginia (a Russia scholar and also a translator) says

> that in this letter the type of "infection" Lenin was referring to was venereal disease. [5]
>
> "There can be nothing more abominable than religion," wrote Lenin in a letter to Maxim Gorky in January 1913. [6] On December 25, 1919, Christmas Day, Comrade Lenin issued the following order, in his own writing: "To put up with 'Nikola' [the religious holiday] would be stupid—the entire Cheka must be on the alert to see to it that those who do not show up for work because of 'Nikola' are shot." [7] Under Lenin, this was not an isolated occurrence.
>
> Along with Trotsky, Lenin became involved in the creation of groups with names like the Society of the Godless, also known as the League of the Militant Godless, which was responsible for the dissemination of anti-religious propaganda in the USSR. [8] This institutionalized bigotry continued to thrive under Lenin's disciples, most notably Stalin, and even under more benign leaders like Nikita Khrushchev.
>
> This atheism was endemic to the communist experiment. Even those communists unable to secure political power—and thus lacking the ability to persecute believers—still did their best to persecute the teachings of organized religion and ridicule the idea of the existence of God. Even in America, it was no surprise to stroll by a city newsstand and catch bold front-page headlines like this in the Daily Worker, the communist organ published by CPUSA: "THERE IS NO GOD." [9] Communists were proud of their atheism, and militant about it.
>
> […]"Religion is poison," as Mao Tse-Tung was said to have stated.

The ideas expressed in these quotations of atheist leaders are pretty much every atheist will sign off on, as long as you don't tell them who said it. These are normal atheist views of religion, and the hatred is especially strong against Christianity.

[image]
Richard Dawkins on atheism, morality, free will and human rights
Let's take a look at what atheist leader Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

Let’s see more from a peer-reviewed journal article authored by Crispin Paine of the University College, London:

> Atheist propaganda and the struggle against religion began immediately after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917. While social change would, under Marxist theory, bring religion to disappear, Leninists argued that the Party should actively help to eradicate religion as a vital step in creating ‘New Soviet Man’. The energy with which the Party struggled against religion, though, varied considerably from time to time and from place to place, as did its hostility to particular faith groups. The 1920s saw the closure of innumerable churches and synagogues (and to a lesser extent mosques) and the active persecution of clergy and harassment of believers.

An article from the pro-communism Marxist.com web site says this about Stalin:

> During the ultra-left period of forcible collectivisation and the Five Year Plan in Four an attempt was made to liquidate the Church and its influence by government decree. Starting in 1929 churches were forcibly closed and priests arrested and exiled all over the Soviet Union. The celebrated Shrine of the Iberian Virgin in Moscow – esteemed by believers to be the “holiest” in all Russia was demolished – Stalin and his Government were not afraid of strengthening religious fanaticism by wounding the feelings of believers as Lenin and Trotsky had been! Religion, they believed, could be liquidated, like the kulak, by a stroke of the pen. The Society of Militant Atheists, under Stalin’s orders, issued on May 15th 1932, the “Five Year Plan of Atheism” – by May 1st 1937, such as the “Plan”, “not a single house of prayer shall remain in the territory of the USSR, and the very concept of God must be banished from the Soviet Union as a survival of the Middle Ages and an instrument for the oppression of the working masses.”!

If atheism is true, there is no objective morality out there to make anything you do objectively wrong, and no one to judge you when you die. Humans are just accidental machines produced by random, undirected evolution in a random, undesigned universe. You won’t be able to ground human rights and objective moral obligations in a universe like that.

European countries generously fund terrorism suspects with welfare

August 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

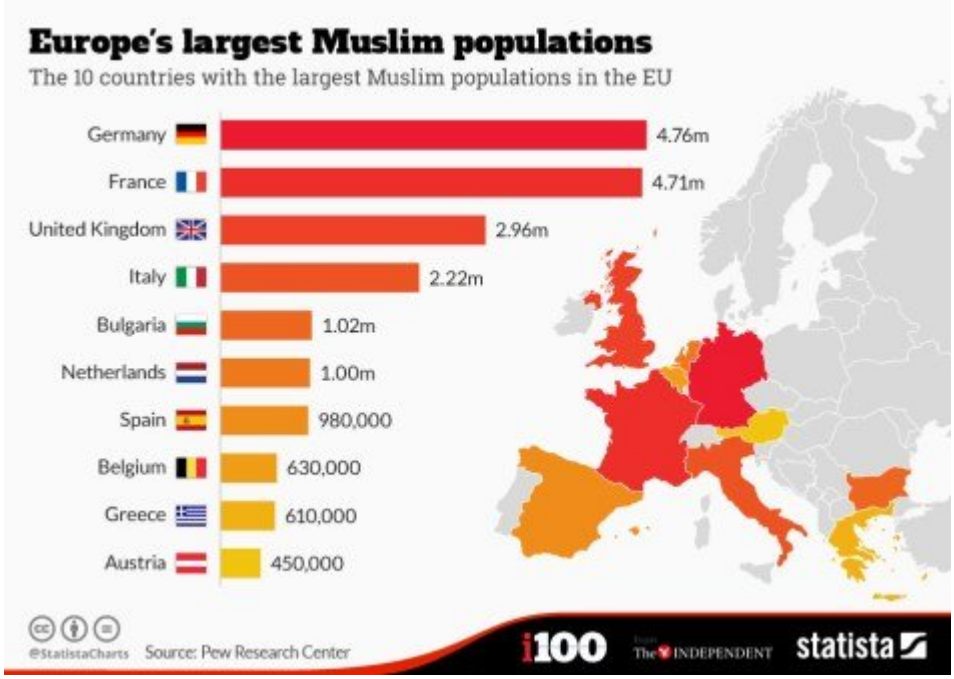

Muslim populations in Europe

This is from the Washington Free Beacon.

Excerpt:

> Several terrorist suspects were collecting Belgian welfare benefits while plotting attacks in Paris and Brussels, according to investigators.
>
> Belgian authorities concluded that at least five of the suspected conspirators in the Brussels and Paris terrorist attacks were partly financed by the nation's social-welfare system, receiving in total about $56,000, the *Wall Street Journal* reported Friday.
>
> Surviving Paris attack suspect Salah Abdeslam collected about $21,000 in unemployment benefits until three weeks before the November assaults. Abdeslam, who was a manager and part owner of a Belgian bar at the time, should have been ineligible for public assistance, officials said.
>
> Numerous suspected terrorists involved in a thwarted Belgian attack had also received welfare benefits, according to a judge who sentenced more than a dozen people who were part of an Islamic State cell to prison last month.
>
> Tom Keatinge, director of the Center for Financial Crime and Security Studies at the Royal United Services Institute in London, said the European benefit system was "vulnerable to abuse for terrorist financing purposes."
>
> Keatinge suggested that European governments offer benefits as vouchers or take a closer look at how people are spending their benefits.

> “If you’re paying benefit to people in certain parts of Brussels, maybe you need to be a little more observant about who you’re paying to, and what they might be doing with it,” he told the *Wall Street Journal*.
>
> The Paris and Brussels terrorist suspects who collected welfare were citizens of the European Union. Current Belgian law prohibits benefits from being suspended until an individual is convicted of terrorism or the suspect leaves the country.
>
> ISIS issued a 2015 manual called “How to Survive in the West: A Mujahid Guide” that included a section advising jihadists,“If you can claim extra benefits from a government, then do so.”
>
> While Belgium, France, Netherlands, and Denmark have collectively severed hundreds of people from welfare who traveled to Syria to fight with ISIS, European countries have struggled to find a longstanding solution because of generous social-welfare systems.

This is interesting:

> Fred Cauderlier, the Belgian prime minister’s spokesman, defended the nation’s welfare system.
>
> “This is a democracy,” he told the *Wall Street Journal.* “We have no tools to check how people spend their benefits.”

No, that’s not democracy, that a socialist welfare state – the kind favored by our own Democrat party. And the Democrat party actively resists attaching any kind of accountability or work requirement to welfare payments. After all, this is how they buy the votes of their favored groups, and they need those votes. They need those votes bad enough to import them, too. And so what if a few of you taxpayers have to die in terrorist attacks so that our Democrat betters can get the votes they need to seize power? The important thing is that they are seen as generous and they get to tell you how to live your life.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

August 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude

others
- It’s meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can’t say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Related posts

- Ryan Anderson explains how gay marriage is already infringing on religious liberty
- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson debates gay marriage with S.E. Cupp on the Blaze
- Ryan T. Anderson explains marriage to Piers Morgan and Suze Orman
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Frank Turek: is "equality" the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults "co-parenting" children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?

- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

Was atheism or Christianity responsible for the Scientific Revolution?

August 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

First, here's an article from the blog of the peer-reviewed journal Nature, probably the best peer-reviewed journal on science in the world.

The article is written by Dr. James Hannam. He has a PhD in the History and Philosophy of Science from the University of Cambridge and is the author of The Genesis of Science: How the Christian Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution (published in the UK as God's Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of Modern Science).

Excerpt:

> Few topics are as open to misunderstanding as the relationship between faith and reason. The ongoing clash of creationism with evolution obscures the fact that Christianity has actually had a far more positive role to play in the history of science than commonly believed. Indeed, many of the alleged examples of religion holding back scientific progress turn out to be bogus. For instance, the Church has never taught that the Earth is flat and, in the Middle Ages, no one thought so anyway. Popes haven't tried to ban zero, human dissection or lightening rods, let alone excommunicate Halley's Comet. No one, I am pleased to say, was ever burnt at the stake for scientific ideas. Yet, all these stories are still regularly trotted out as examples of clerical intransigence in the face of scientific progress.
>
> Admittedly, Galileo was put on trial for claiming it is a fact that the Earth goes around the sun, rather than just a hypothesis as the Catholic Church demanded. Still, historians have found that even his trial was as much a case of papal

> egotism as scientific conservatism. It hardly deserves to overshadow all the support that the Church has given to scientific investigation over the centuries.
>
> That support took several forms. One was simply financial. Until the French Revolution, the Catholic Church was the leading sponsor of scientific research. Starting in the Middle Ages, it paid for priests, monks and friars to study at the universities. The church even insisted that science and mathematics should be a compulsory part of the syllabus. And after some debate, it accepted that Greek and Arabic natural philosophy were essential tools for defending the faith. By the seventeenth century, the Jesuit order had become the leading scientific organisation in Europe, publishing thousands of papers and spreading new discoveries around the world. The cathedrals themselves were designed to double up as astronomical observatories to allow ever more accurate determination of the calendar. And of course, modern genetics was founded by a future abbot growing peas in the monastic garden.
>
> But religious support for science took deeper forms as well. It was only during the nineteenth century that science began to have any practical applications. Technology had ploughed its own furrow up until the 1830s when the German chemical industry started to employ their first PhDs. Before then, the only reason to study science was curiosity or religious piety. **Christians believed that God created the universe and ordained the laws of nature. To study the natural world was to admire the work of God. This could be a religious duty and inspire science when there were few other reasons to bother with it. It was faith that led Copernicus to reject the ugly Ptolemaic universe; that drove Johannes Kepler to discover the constitution of the solar system; and that convinced James Clerk Maxwell he could reduce electromagnetism to a set of equations so elegant they take the breathe away.**
>
> Given that the Church has not been an enemy to science, it is less surprising to find that the era which was most dominated by Christian faith, the Middle Ages, was a time of innovation and progress. Inventions like the mechanical clock, glasses, printing and accountancy all burst onto the scene in the late medieval period. In the field of physics, scholars have now found medieval theories about accelerated motion, the rotation of the earth and inertia embedded in the works of Copernicus and Galileo. Even the so-called “dark ages” from 500AD to 1000AD were actually a time of advance after the trough that followed the fall of Rome. Agricultural productivity soared with the use of heavy ploughs, horse collars, crop rotation and watermills, leading to a rapid increase in population.

I don’t know about you, but the first thing I do when I am trying to find a game to play is ask “is it well designed?” If it’s not well-designed, then I will not take the time to learn the rules and practice playing. That was the situation before science started. The non-scientists thought that the universe was chaotic, that there were no rules, and so there

was no point in trying to learn the rules. It was the idea that the universe was made by an intelligent Creator and Designer that made the first scientists start to do science. If there are rules to the game, then it’s worth it to learn them. But that’s a belief that’s more at home in a theistic worldview, not in a pagan or atheistic one.

Do government-run public schools succeed at educating children?

August 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNS News compares per-pupil costs to the taxpayer to student proficiency levels in a variety of Democrat-dominated cities.

Excerpt:

> In Philadelphia, where the Democratic Party held its national convention, the public schools spent a total of $18,241 per student in the 2011-2012 school year, according to the U.S. Department of Education.
>
> In Detroit… the public schools spent a total of $18,361 per student that year.
>
> In Washington, D.C., where the federal government makes its home, it was $23,980.
>
> What did these schools produce while spending more than $18,000 per student? Not well-educated children.
>
> In the Philadelphia public schools in 2015, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress scores published by the Department of Education, 80 percent of eighth graders were not grade-level proficient in math. Eighty-four percent were not grade-level proficient in reading.
>
> In the Detroit public schools, 96 percent of eighth graders were not grade-level proficient in math. Ninety-three percent were not grade-level proficient in reading.
>
> In the District of Columbia public schools, 83 percent of the eighth graders were not grade-level proficient in math. Eighty-one percent were not grade-level proficient in reading.
>
> **If you pay federal taxes — no matter where you live and no matter where you send your children to school — you help subsidize the public schools in Philadelphia, Detroit and Washington, D.C.**
>
> **In fact, if you pay federal taxes you help subsidize the public schools all across America.**

What I have noticed about American education is that whenever anything is said about the poor performance of the government-run public schools, the teacher unions and school administrators all cry that the problem is not enough money.

But as you can see, we have been spending more and more money on these schools, but not getting any return on the investment:

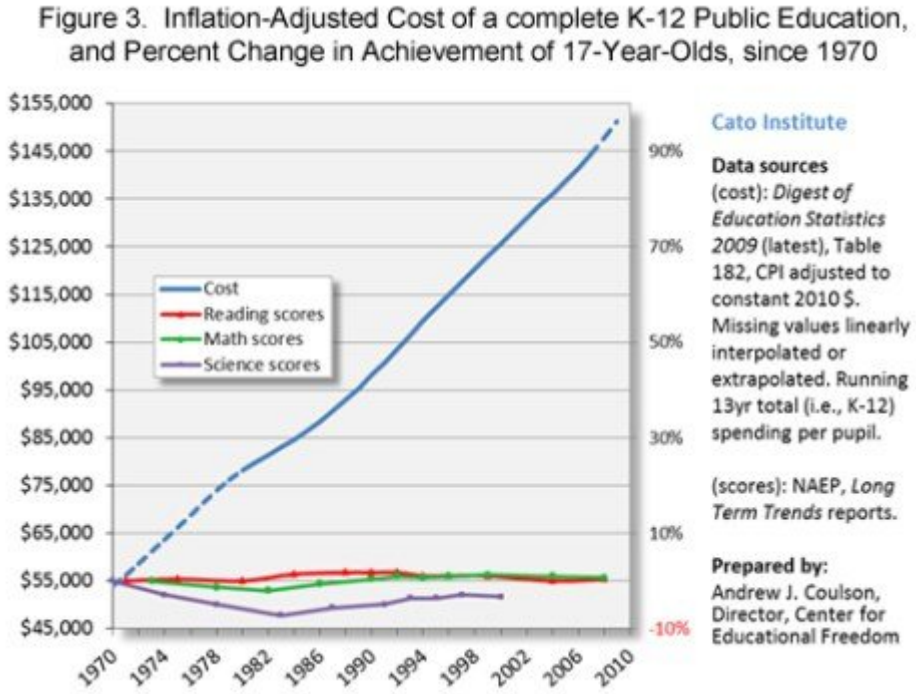

Education spending has tripled since 1970

Where is all that money going? A lot of it is donated to Democrats:

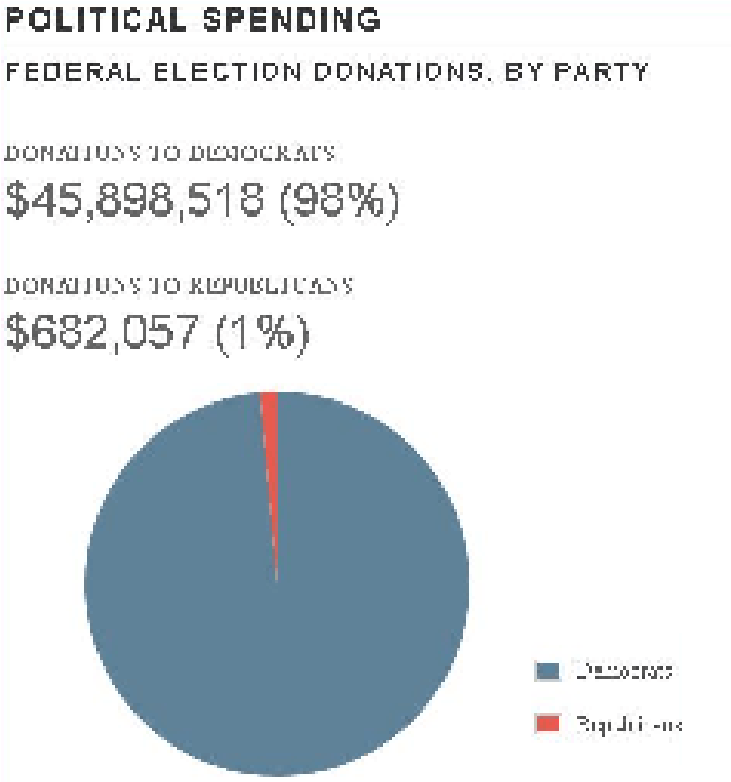

Political contributions by the American Federation of Teachers union (Source)

The Democrats repay the teacher unions by protecting them from competition from private schools and homeschoolers. Democrats shut down every attempt by Republicans to reform public school education to make it more responsive to parents.

In the free market, there is no protection for businesses that fail to perform. They have to shape up or shut down. Maybe instead of shoveling taxpayer money into a bottomless pit, we should give money for each child's education directly to the parents, and let

theparents choose schools that actually focus on the job of educating the children in valuable skills?

The CNS News article continues:

> The cost and the poor performance of public schools in the United States should inspire Congress to do two things: Shut down the federal Department of Education and enact legislation creating complete school choice for families that reside in the District of Columbia.
>
> Voters in states and local communities elsewhere in the country can then decide for themselves whether or not to replace the relatively small percentage of local school revenue that now comes from the federal government.
>
> But the right decision would be for states and local communities to stop giving their education money exclusively to government-run schools.
>
> **Instead, they should give that money to parents — and let parents decide where to send their children to school.**
>
> **Communities should grant every child in their jurisdiction a voucher worth the same amount of money currently spent per pupil in the local government schools. Then they should let families decide whether they want to send their children to one of those government schools or to a private school.**

Attaching the money to the child makes the parents the consumer, and empowers them to buy the right school – the school that does the job that they want the school to do. Instead of focusing on global warming, gay rights, transgender bathrooms and putting condoms on cucumbers, the schools should be focused on math, engineering, technology and science. STEM is where the money is – not in liberal crybaby indoctrination.

Stephen C. Meyer: does the Big Bang cosmology disprove the existence of God?

August 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Here's the 66-minute video featuring Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, who holds the Ph.D in philosophy of science from Cambridge University, and other degrees in the hard sciences.

The lecture starts really, really slowly. You can just fast-forward to the 12 minute mark, or you might die of boredom.

Topics:

- Up until the the last 100 years or so, everyone agreed that the universe was eternal
- This is at odds with the traditional Christian view that God created the universe
- Materialism, the view that matter is all there is, requires eternally existing matter
- Discovery #1: Hubble discovers that the universe is expanding (redshift observation)
- The expanding universe was resisted by proponents of the eternal universe, like Einstein
- Some naturalists even proposed speculative static models like the steady-state model
- However, not of the speculative models fit with observations and experimental results
- Discovery #2: Penzias and Wilson discover the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Measurements of this background radiation confirmed a prediction of the Big Bang theory
- The steady-state theory was falsified of by the discovery of this background

radiation
- The oscillating model was proposed to prevent the need for an absolute beginning
- But the oscillating model is not eternal, it loses energy on each "bounce"
- A paper by Alan Guth and Marc Sher from 1982 proved that our universe will not bounce
- In addition, experiments reveal that the universe will expand forever, and not contract
- The beginning of the universe is more at home in a theistic worldview than an atheistic one
- The beginning of the universe fits in well with the Bible, e.g. – Genesis 1, Titus 1, etc.

In case you are wondering about what the evidence is for the Big Bang, here are 3 of the evidences that are most commonly offered:

> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

By the way, Dr. Meyer also does a great job of explaining the problem of proteins, DNA and the origin of life in this lecture. And you can hear him defend his views in this debate podcast with Keith Fox and in this debate podcast with Peter Atkins. He does a great job in these debates.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason

- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Obama’s Department of Justice shuts down FBI investigation of Clinton Foundation

August 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

The Federalist reported on the latest revelation from the Clinton e-mail investigation:

> Newly released emails reveal President Obama’s Justice Department rejected the FBI’s request to investigate the Clinton Foundation’s relationship with the State Department.
>
> The FBI asked the DOJ to open an investigation into a potential pay-for-play relationship between the State Department and the Clinton Foundation, which spends a very small fraction of its funds on actual charity work, but the DOJ wasn’t interested — saying it had tried and failed to probe the organization in 2015, CNN reports.
>
> Earlier this week, Judicial Watch, a non-profit integrity group,released a batch of emails revealing that top State Department aides did favors for Clinton Foundation bigwigs during Hillary Clinton’s tenure as secretary of State.
>
> […]The DOJ’s refusal to probe the Clinton Foundation’s use of the State Department seems to be more than just a lack of evidence at hand, as U.S. Attorney Loretta Lynch has a special relationship with the Clintons.
>
> Hillary Clinton is reportedly planning to keep Lynch as attorney general, if Clinton wins the election. In late June, Bill Clinton secretly met with Lynch aboard a private plane on the tarmac of a Phoenix airport just before she announced the

> DOJ wouldn't press charges against Clinton for using a private, unsecured email server while serving as secretary of State. The curious timing of these developments led many to believe there is an underlying conflict of interest at play.

The Daily Wire explains what there is to investigate:

> The State Department and Clinton Foundation clearly colluded. The Clintons used Teneo, an advisory business, as a go-between; the firm hired Huma Abedin even as Abedin worked at the State Department. Teneo's Chief Executive Declan Kelly worked as a special envoy for Hillary at the State Department. Former Clinton Foundation head Doug Band "formed the Teneo consulting firm" in June 2011, with "Bill Clinton as the paid honorary chairman."
>
> And, of course, the Clinton Foundation had corrupt dealings with countries and figures all over the world, trading favors from Hillary Clinton's State Department for cash donations and speaking fees for Bill.

The New York Post concludes:

> Hillary Clinton put the State Department up for sale, with top aides pulling strings and doing favors for fat-cat donors to the Clinton Foundation — including a shady billionaire, according to smoking-gun emails released Tuesday.
>
> The stunning revelations include how wealthy contributors seeking influence or prestigious government gigs could fork over piles of cash to get access to Clinton's inner circle, including top aides Huma Abedin and Cheryl Mills.

It's pretty clear what needs to be investigated, but I noticed that the mainstream media is studiously ignoring the Clinton scandals in order to cover Donald Trump's stupidity. They're not lying, they're just choosing not to cover anything that makes Clinton look bad, and everything that makes Trump look bad.

Newsbusters explains:

> The liberal "Big Three" networks seemed to try everything in their power to not mention Hillary Clinton's latest e-mail controversy Wednesday. Throughout all of their news programs, both morning and evening, they gave the e-mails a total of 6 minutes 59 seconds. In stark contrast, they dragged out Trump's "Second Amendment people" comment with a whopping 25 minutes 54 seconds of coverage. "One day after Donald Trump used the second amendment to shoot himself in the foot, Hillary Clinton used her first amendment right to speak out against him," touted anchor Scott Pelley on CBS Evening News.
>
> ABC's World News Tonight had the largest disparity in coverage of the two stories Wednesday evening. The network dedicated a mere 38 seconds to the e-mail controversy, as they mixed it in with other coverage of Clinton. "Today, the Clinton campaign saying, "Hillary Clinton never took actions as Secretary of State because of donations to the Clinton Foundation," reported Cecilia Vega, "But

> Trump says the e-mails exposed pay for play connections." ABC gave Trump's comment 3 minutes 24 seconds that evening.

38 seconds.

That's why nobody trusts the mainstream media to report accurately on politics. They have their candidate, and they are backing her all the way to the White House.

Concealed carry permit holders commit fewer crimes than police officers

August 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A message from Females with Firearms

A new report was reported on at the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Concealed-carry permit holders are nearly the most law-abiding demographic of Americans, a new report by the Crime Prevention Research Center says—comparing the permit holders foremost with police.
>
> "Indeed, it is impossible to think of any other group in the U.S. that is anywhere near as law-abiding," says the report, titled "Concealed Carry Permit Holders Across the United States 2016."
>
> From 2007 through 2015, permits issued by state and local governments increased by 215 percent, to more than 14 million Americans, according to the data.
>
> The study compared permit holders to police, who committed 703 crimes from 2005 to 2007, and 113 of those were firearm violations.
>
> […]The study refers to Texas and Florida, which it says mirror most other states, to compare permit holders with police and the overall population. It used data from 1987 through 2015.
>
> **"We find that permit holders are convicted of misdemeanors and**

> **felonies at less than a sixth the rate for police officers," the report says. "Among police, firearms violations occur at a rate of 16.5 per 100,000 officers. Among permit holders in Florida and Texas, the rate is only 2.4 per 100,000.10. That is just one-seventh of the rate for police officers."**

Did you know that? It is very difficult to get a concealed carry permit, and the people who get them don't want to lose them, because they'd be losing their ability to defend themselves. That's why they are so informed about how to use their firearms safely in a law-abiding manner.

Although there is opposition to gun ownership in certain circles, the academic literature is quite clear and decisive. Legal ownership of firearms reduces rates of violent crime. Whenever laws that allow law-abiding citizens to carry firearms for self-defense, violent crime rates decrease. Whenever laws are passed that restrict law-abiding citizens from owning and carrying firearms for self-defense, violent crime rates increase.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

Young women: one of the best things you can do is marry and raise children

August 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should women postpone marriage and raising children for other things?
Super-mom Lindsay sent me this article about by a former feminist who was once opposed to children, then had 4 of them in 5 years.

Introduction:

> Up until my mid-20's I was firm in my belief that I never wanted to have kids. A combination of events made me reconsider the issue, and by the time we got married I was open to the idea of having some pre-set, small number of kids and had begun thinking about the precise timetables on which I would have them.
>
> […]It would have been inconceivable to me to imagine that constantly having my plans derailed by pregnancies and not even having any idea when I'd be done changing diapers would be an improvement over my fully controlled, well-ordered life, but it has been.
>
> […]Lately I've been imagining what I would say to 2003 Jen if I could go back in time and give her a crystal ball to show her what her future would be like. I've been trying to imagine how I would talk her down from the balcony ledge after the crystal ball got to the "four kids in five years — and doing NFP!" part, how I could possibly convince her that this life is not only not a recipe for misery, but the true fulfillment of everything she thought she wanted.
>
> I would love to tell you that I'd simply be able to explain that each child is such a joy and a blessing, but that would not have resonated with Old Jen; I might have agreed, but ultimately I would have said that those joys and blessing are just too

> much hard work. “I just don’t see how that kind of life could be anything but miserable for someone like me,” I would have said.

So how do you convince a woman that “hard work”, i.e. – self-denial, self-control, self-discipline, self-sacrifice – while caring for children could actually lead to a fulfilling life? And most importantly, that it should not be postponed in pursuit of something that appears more fun, more thrilling or more important (according to a feminist measure of fun, thrills and importance).

She makes 5 points in her post.

Here’s one:

> 3. “It’s not what you do, it’s whom you serve.”
>
> A product of secular society, I’d fallen into the common notion that the way to find true happiness is to focus on yourself more and other people less. It makes perfect sense, after all: doing pleasurable things for me is fun, sacrifice and hard work are not fun; ergo, the secret to happiness must be to live for myself as much as possible. Right?
>
> How shocked I was to discover that I was wrong — dead wrong. Part of fully understanding the concept of vocation was understanding that a vocation is not to be thought of as “what you do” as much as it is “whom you serve.” It was nothing short of revolutionary to hear the concept that God has called every one of us to serve others, that living for yourself is not a valid option; that the key to deep fulfillment, to finding your very purpose in life, is as simple as finding out the specific way in which you’re called to serve. Do that, and you will find peace.
>
> It sounded not only too simple to be true, but too difficult. As a spoiled only child the idea of living to serve sounded terrible. But once I actually took a leap of faith and tried it, I had no doubt that this was truth.

Next,I want to talk about one of the young Christians I mentor, and then about the woman I supported for President in the 2012 election.

I spent Friday night playing with one of the young women I mentor. This is the one who did the BS in computer science, and is now doing the MS in computer science. After playing a few rounds of “Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes”, she mentioned the salary from her internship this summer. She asked me “what am I going to do with so much money? I think I had better stop thinking so much about myself and find some people out there to help”. And I was so pleased. Because this woman, more than any of the other young people I mentor, is my replacement.

J. Warner Wallace likes to talk about training your replacement, and I have several replacements, but none better than her. I remember when she was younger, she was a bit more selfish than now. She still organized events, like bringing Frank Turek, Tim McGrew, etc. to speak on her campus. But she never showed much interest in one-on-one care for others. It was my hope that just like me, she would react to computer science

salary with a sense of obligation to others, and so she has. And that's how I think women ought to be. They should be educated, they should be successful – but they should be open to the needs of others.

Michele Bachmann

The woman I admire the most in the world is former GOP Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, who was my first choice for President in 2012. I had been following her for many years before that, when she was just a state senator. I liked her because of her interest in apologetics, as well as her focus on her family.

Marcus and Michele Bachmann and family

The radically leftist New York Times did a profile of her.

It says:

> Nearly two decades ago, a stay-at-home mother and onetime federal tax lawyer named Michele Bachmann felt a spiritual calling to open her clapboard home here to troubled teenage girls.
>
> "We had our five biological children that God gave to us, and then he called us to take foster children into our home," Mrs. Bachmann told a Christian audience in 2006. "We thought we were going to take unwed mothers in," she continued, adding, "We took 23 foster children into our home, and raised them, and launched them off into the world."
>
> **Today Mrs. Bachmann is Representative Bachmann, a Minnesota Republican, first elected to the House in 2006, and now a candidate for her party's nomination for president. In Washington, she has grabbed the spotlight as a staunch fiscal conservative and brash Tea Party leader. But a look at her life here shows that it was her role as a mother, both to her biological children and to her adolescent foster**

> **daughters, that spurred her to seek public office.**
>
> […]Mrs. Bachmann's political awakening began with her deep disenchantment with the public school system.
>
> […]By the late 1990s, with her own children enrolled in private Christian schools, Mrs. Bachman was upset by the education her foster children were getting in public school. Teachers gave them "little special attention," and many were "placed in lower-level classes, as if they were not expected to succeed," she told a House subcommittee in 2007.
>
> One brought home "an 11th-grade math assignment that involved coloring a poster," she testified. Another "spent an entire week watching movies." A third "remarked to me once that she was in 'stupid people math.' "
>
> So Mrs. Bachmann immersed herself in the minutiae of Minnesota's graduation requirements. She worked with a conservative researcher and began giving talks in church basements.
>
> […]The Rev. Marcus Birkholz, the pastor at Salem Lutheran Church, which Mrs. Bachmann attended for years, calls her "a lady with energy and a heart" whose uncompromising "support for the unborn" extends beyond fighting abortion. "She sees the whole picture," Pastor Birkholz said. "It's not just bringing a child into the world; that child has to be nurtured and educated."
>
> […]Mrs. Bachmann, whose biological children now range in age from 17 to 29, worked until her fourth child was born. (Her youngest, Sophia, is headed to college this fall, while the eldest, Lucas, is a medical resident at the University of Connecticut, pursuing a specialty in psychiatry.) Friends remember her planning neighborhood picnics and organizing bicycle parades.
>
> "I had all these balls in the air that I was juggling," she said in an interview with Minnesota Monthly last year. In choosing to leave work, she said, "I finally realized my dream, which was to be mom of a big, happy family."

What does it mean? It means that women ought not be horrified by husband needs or children needs. They should not be opposed to responsibilities, expectations and obligations in relationships. Sometimes, the path to greatness means taking a few years off from work to homeschool your kids. After all, isn't it better for God to have FIVE Christian kids who will surpass you in influence? Michele didn't get involved in politics by thinking of herself. She got involved in politics by thinking of her children, and her 23 foster children.

Here's my advice to young women: 1) Study something hard that pays. 2) Work a few years and get debt free. 3) Marry a good provider in your mid-to-late 20s. 4) Have as many children as your husband can support. 5) Be actively involved in the education of your kids (with apologetics, too). 6) Open your home to kids who don't have a mom or a dad. 7) Teach your kids the importance of caring for others. 8) Run for President (as a Republican).

Chris Sinkinson debates John Hick on religious pluralism and salvation

August 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

Looks like Justin Brierley on the Unbelievable radio show found a pastor with a Ph.D in philosophy, and he can really whip some ass. And that's a good thing, because he is taking on one of the two leading proponents of religious pluralism, in my opinion, (the other being Paul Knitter).

The players:

> John Hick is a noted philosopher and theologian who is a proponent of a pluralist view of religion – that there is one light (God) but many lampshades (religious expressions).
>
> Chris Sinkinson is a pastor and Bible tutor who has critiqued Hick's work. He says that pluralism empties Christianity of any content and in its own way disrespects other religions more than his own exclusivist stance.

The MP3 file is here. (Note: This link works)

Justin does a great job as moderator of this debate. He said what I was thinking of saying a number of times during the debate.

Anyway, here is my snarky summary. I creatively paraphrase some of the things that Hick says to make it more clear. And funny.

—-

Hick:
– had an experience looking at the buildings of other religions
– other religions have buildings, so all religions are equal
– I spent some time in the East, and met nice Eastern people
– since Eastern people are nice that means all religions are equal

Justin:
– isn’t Jesus’ claim to be the exclusive path to salvation offensive?

Sinkinson:
– all religions that are exclusive and have to deal with religious pluralism
– even John Hick writes polemically in favor of his own view
– even John Hick thinks that religions that are exclusive are false

Justin:
– what about the blind man and the elephant?
– the story seems to say that other people have a partial grasp?
– but the story-teller himself has the privileged view
– so isn’t the religious pluralist just as arrogant as exclusivists?

Hick:
– well, it’s not arrogant to claim to have the right answer
– Jesus never made the claim to be God incarnate
– Jesus never made the claim to be the exclusive path to God
– historians don’t think that John’s gospel is reliable because it is late
– the proclamation of exclusivity was added by evangelists much later

Sinkinson:
– the historians who doubt the high Christology are radical skeptics
– the mainstream of historical scholarship accepts a high Christology
– the EARLIEST history about Jesus has the highest Christology

Hick:
– the moderate scholars do think Jesus was divine but that he didn’t think he was divine
– the phrase “Son of God” was used to describe any remarkable person
– only later did the early church turn the generic term into “God the Son”

Sinkinson:
– there is reflection on Jesus’ identity and developments, but not invention
– Jesus and his followers were in trouble precisely for linking him to deity
– why else would Jesus get into trouble and get crucified?

Hick:
– the Romans crucified him because people were saying he was the Messiah
– but the Messiah was not identified as being divine, but political
– and that’s why the Romans crucified him

Justin:
– do you (Sinkinson) think that people in other religions can be saved?

Sinkinson:
– the traditional view is exclusivism
– the other world religions are logically contradictory with Christianity
– you have to respect their differences – they are not the same as Christianity
– exclusivists allow that people can be saved by responding to natural theology
– and there are also other cases where non-Christians are saved, like old testament saints

and babies who die in infancy

Hick:
– but people’s religions are based on where they are born
– so it’s not fair for God to expect people to be saved in one religion only

Sinkinson:
– the plurality of religions grouped by location doesn’t make christianity false
– that would be the genetic fallacy – rejecting an idea because of its origin
– the real question to consider is whether it is true
– and even the objection assumes that God is a God of love, who should be fair
– but how do you know that God is loving? that is an exclusive view
– how can the “blob” ultimate of religious pluralism be “loving” and “fair”

Hick:
– the ultimate reality is loving or not loving depending on each person’s religion

Sinkinson:
– but some religions and theistic and some are atheistic
– how can those God exist and not exist?

Hick:
– God is beyond everyone’s understanding, except mine
– God is beyond all definitions, except mine
– God is beyond all human understanding, except mine
– i’m not contradicting myself, it’s a mystery! a mystery!
– as long as you don’t look to closely, they’re all the same!
– allow me to tell you about God, which no one can do but me

Justin:
– doesn’t your religious pluralism mean that Christianity is false?

Hick:
– well, Christianity can’t be true, because it disagrees with other religions
– Christianity can’t falsify other religions, that would be mean to them
– other religions are just as “profound” as Christianity – and that’s what matters – not whether a religion makes true claims
– some religions are older than Christianity, that means they can’t be disagreed with
– we can’t let Christianity be true, because then some people will feel bad
– if people feel bad, then they don’t like me and then I feel bad
– if there’s one thing I know about the unknowable ultimate reality, it’s that it wants me to be liked by lots of people

Sinkinson:
– your view seems to be agnosticism – that nothing can be known about the “ultimate real”
– if we can’t express in words what God is like, then why are you saying what God is like?

Hick:

– the indescribable ultimate is described (falsely, but interestingly) by various tradition

Sinkinson:
– does the “ultimate real” exist?

Hick:
– no

Justin:
– are all the exclusive religions wrong, and only you are right?

Hick:
– all propositions about God in all the religions are false
– the experience of being deluded and having feelings about your delusions is “valid” in all religions
– all religions are equally good ways to believe false things and to have feelings about your false beliefs
– only my propositions about God are true
– everyone who disagrees with me is wrong

Sinkinson:
– so all the propositions of all the religions are wrong
– but all the experiences and feelings are “right”

Hick:
– yes
– all propositions about God are humanly constructed, and so false
– except mine – mine are true!

Sinkinson:
– so everything distinctive about Christianity are literally false?

Hick:
– yes, Christian doctrines are all false
– because if they were true, other religions would be false, and they would feel bad
– and we can’t have that, because everyone has to like me
– only things that don’t offend people in other religions can be true

Sinkinson:
– so do we have to then treat all religions as non-propositional?

Hick:
– well just don’t ask people about the content of their beliefs
– just treat their religion as non-cognitive rituals, feelings and experiences
– don’t inquire too deeply into it, because all religions are all nonsense
– i’m very respectful and tolerant of different religions!

Sinkinson:
– but Muslims, for example, think their religion is making truth claims

Hick:
– but there can be tolerance as long as you treat religions as non-propositional nonsense

Sinkinson:
– um, I have a higher respect for religions than you do
– I actually consider that the claims of other religions could be true
– I think that other religions make truth claims and not nonsense claims

Hick:
– well they are all useful because they are all false
– I don't emphasize beliefs, I emphasize living, experiences and feelings
– as long as everyone accepts my view and rejects their religion, we'll all be tolerant

Justin:
– erm, isn't that an exclusive claim?
– you're trying to say that your view of what religion is is right, and everyone else is wrong

Hick:
– I'm not arrogant, I just think that all the religions of the worlds are false
– only my statements about religion are true – everyone else is wrong
– I'm tolerant, and Christians are arrogant

Justin:
– but you think Sinkinson's view is wrong
– why should we accept your view and deny his view?

Hick:
– His view of salvation is false, and mine is true

Sinkinson:
– you use words with set meanings, but you mean completely different things
– when I say salvation, I mean deliverance from sins through Jesus

Hick:
– I get to decide what salvation means for everyone, you intolerant bigot

Sinkinson:
– but that word has a specific meaning that has held true in all of Christian history
– but what you mean by salvation is people having subjective delusions that are not true

Hick:
– I don't like using the word salvation

Sinkinson:
– but you just used it!
– and you think that it is present in different world religions, but it isn't

Hick:
– God is unknowable and indescribable
– God isn't a wrathful God though
– and the Christian description of God is false
– Evangelical Christians are mean
– I had experiences with people of other faiths

– and these experiences taught me that religions that think that the universe is eternal are true
– as long as you reduce religion to behaviors and not truth, then religions are all good at producing behaviors
– if you just treat all religions as clothing fashion and food customs, they are all valid
– the main point of religion is for people to agree on cultural conventions and stick to them
– never mind the propositional statements of religions… who cares about truth? not me!
– but Christianity is definitely false

Sinkinson:
– the Judeo-Christian God is different – he reveals himself to humans
– he is distinct from the other religions
– he is personal, and is loving but also angry at sin

Hick:
– But God isn't a person, and he isn't a non-person
– I can't say what he is – I'll offend someone if I say anything at all!
– except Christians – I can offend them because they are arrogant bigots
– I'm also very spiritual – I meditate on my breathing

Sinkinson:
– you can't assess a religion by the experiences that people have
– people who have weird experiences do all kinds of evil things
– so the real question has to be about truth – is the New Testament reliable?, etc.

America’s abandonment of traditional values has hurt the black community

August 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Walter Williams

My two favorite economists are Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams, who are coincidentally both black. Both have been around long enough to see how the Great Society welfare programs and the Sexual Revolution have affected blacks.

Here is Walter Williams commenting on the black community in The Daily Signal.

He writes:

> How might one explain the greater civility of Philadelphia and other big-city, predominantly black neighborhoods and schools during earlier periods compared with today? Would anyone argue that during the ’40s and ’50s, there was less racial discrimination and poverty? Was academic performance higher because there were greater opportunities? Was civility in school greater in earlier periods because black students had more black role models in the form of black principals, teachers, and guidance counselors? That’s nonsense, at least in northern schools. In my case, I had no more than three black teachers throughout primary and secondary school.
>
> Starting in the 1960s, the values that made for civility came under attack. Corporal punishment was banned. This was the time when the education establishment and liberals launched their agenda that undermined lessons children learned from their parents and the church.
>
> Sex education classes undermined family/church strictures against premarital sex. Lessons of abstinence were ridiculed, considered passé, and replaced with lessons about condoms, birth control pills, and abortion. Further undermining of parental authority came with legal and extralegal measures to assist teenage abortions, often with neither parental knowledge nor parental consent.

> Customs, traditions, moral values, and rules of etiquette are behavioral norms, transmitted mostly by example, word of mouth, and religious teachings. As such, they represent a body of wisdom distilled through the ages by experience and trial and error.
>
> The nation's liberals—along with the education establishment, pseudo-intellectuals, and the courts—have waged war on traditions, customs and moral values. Many people have been counseled to believe that there are no moral absolutes. Instead, what's moral or immoral is a matter of personal convenience, personal opinion, what feels good, or what is or is not criminal.
>
> We no longer condemn or shame self-destructive and rude behavior, such as out-of-wedlock pregnancies, dependency, cheating, and lying. We have replaced what worked with what sounds good.
>
> The abandonment of traditional values has negatively affected the nation as a whole, but blacks have borne the greater burden. This is seen by the decline in the percentage of black two-parent families. Today, a little over 30 percent of black children live in an intact family, where as early as the late 1800s, over 70 percent did. Black illegitimacy in 1938 was 11 percent, and that for whites was 3 percent. Today, it's respectively 73 percent and 30 percent.
>
> It is the height of dishonesty, as far as blacks are concerned, to blame our problems on slavery, how white people behave, and racial discrimination. If those lies are not exposed, we will continue to look for external solutions when true solutions are internal. Those of us who are old enough to know better need to expose these lies.

I know why Democrat leaders lie to the black community about the relative importance of "racism" compared to bad decisions about whether to finish high school, whether to have sex before marriage, whether to break the law, and whether to work rather than collect welfare. The truth is that a person cannot be poor in the United States if they make good decisions. Normally, when people (of any color) make bad decisions, they learn not to do it on their own, or they find themselves advisors to help them learn. But the Democrats are there to tell those who make mistakes that their mistakes are caused by other people. This harms the people making the mistakes instead of helping them.

Pastor Matt discusses his past experiences as an atheist

August 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

Don't worry, he was an atheist then, and now he's pastor Matt, thanks to God's grace.

In this post Pastor Matt talks about why he was once an atheist. (Note: I have just been informed that the link to the post is now broken, but fear not, the blog is being put back up somewhere new)

Excerpt:

> I am sometimes asked, by both skeptics and believers alike, why I was once an atheist and what convinced me to become a Christian. I will answer the latter in another post but let me deal with the former now.
>
> I am a "PK" or "preacher's kid." My father served as the founding pastor of the largest church in southern Ohio. It is a non-denominational, evangelical congregation that grew very quickly.
>
> As a PK, I was privy to a lot of "inside information" and it was not encouraging. I learned men and women who sang hymns with passion and shouted "Amen!" with gusto during the sermon were cheating on their spouse or on their taxes.
>
> By the time I was a teenager I understood why those who called themselves Christians lived secret lives–they wanted to believe but really didn't. I understood because I became one of them.
>
> I was an active member of an '80's evangelical youth group. So, I rocked out to Stryper, had comedian Pat Hurley tapes and volunteered for the children's ministry, which consisted of videotaping episodes of Superbook and The Flying

> House for the kids. However, I actually seriously doubted if God even existed.
>
> I was struggling with the normal sins of a teenager and begged for help in prayer. I also petitioned God on a regular basis to feel His presence but that didn't happen either.
>
> I eventually came to the conclusion that Christianity simply didn't work. I declared myself an atheist at age fifteen and remained an unbeliever for the next ten years.
>
> I ran away from home at age fifteen as well eventually making my way to Hollywood. During those days I partied like it was 1999 (until 1997) and like Aldous Huxley is quoted as saying decades before, I came to not even want God to be real because even the possibility interfered with my desire to create my own morality.

Christianity is not something where you just profess it and suddenly you are automatically perfect. You get the gift of eternal life immediately by faith in Christ, but becoming more like Christ takes time. It's easier to act consistently with the teachings of Christ if you have *spent the time* studying, practicing and growing as a Christian. You shouldn't expect perfect behavior on day one – that is crazy. You should expect that as your beliefs become more solid, then your outward actions will change naturally. And often what you hear at home and in the church is not the best for finding truth through investigation and debate.

It would be terrible to have to put out "good" actions when you never settled the questions of what is true and how are we going to apply what is true in our own decisions. Sometimes, I think that young Christians face too much pressure to appear to be perfect when no one has been willing to help them work through the grounding for the behaviors they are expected to display. And I think a lot of the behaviors they are expected to display are either not important or not Biblical. Behaving like a Christian should be natural – it should proceed from free inquiry, not dogmatism.

Now I'm skipping a lot, but here is his advice for people who were in his situation:

> I'll get to my conversion later but keep in mind: (1) just because a person attends a church, even if they are a PK, that he or she truly comprehends the Gospel because I didn't a full understanding; (2) pastors need to constantly remind their parishioners that sin is easy and living for Christ is difficult because believers are part of a cosmic struggle; (3) the spiritual disciplines are invaluable especially so for young people; and (4) there are many solid arguments for the existence of God and few for materialism and all Christians deserve to know them.

I've spent some time mentoring young Christians who had fallen away for some period of time, and I always make a point of asking them why. Their answer is usually something like this: "I knew that what I was doing was wrong, but I didn't care because no one else cared." The first thing to do with a person who is rebelling is to get in there and start to ask them questions and get involved in helping them to succeed in their lives. People do

bad things because they feel that no one cares. So you better start caring for these young people, whether they are smart, dumb, pretty, ugly, poor, rich, popular, unpopular – it doesn’t matter. They all have souls, and they were all made to know God. Get in there and be real with them before they make a mess of their lives.

Democrat opposition to charter schools hurts the black community

August 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Thomas Sowell

Yesterday, I featured an article from one of my two favorite economists, and today I have an article from my other favorite economist, Dr. Thomas Sowell.

Dr. Sowell writes:

> What about black success? Does that matter? Apparently not so much.
>
> We have heard a lot about black students failing to meet academic standards. So you might think that it would be front-page news when some whole ghetto schools not only meet, but exceed, the academic standards of schools in more upscale communities.
>
> There are in fact whole chains of charter schools where black and Hispanic youngsters score well above the national average on tests. There are the KIPP (Knowledge IS Power Program) schools and the Success Academy schools, for example.
>
> Get instant access to exclusive stock lists and powerful tools on Investors.com. Try us free for 4 weeks.
> Only 39% of all students in New York state schools who were tested recently scored at the “proficient” level in math, but 100% of the students at the Crown Heights Success Academy school scored at that level in math. Blacks and Hispanics are 90% of the students in the Crown Heights Success Academy.
>
> The Success Academy schools in general ranked in the top 2% in English and in

> the top 1% in math. Hispanic students in these schools reached the "proficient" level in math nearly twice as often as Hispanic students in the regular public schools. Black students in these Success Academy schools reached the "proficient" level more than twice as often as black students in the regular public schools.
>
> What makes this all the more amazing is that these charter schools are typically located in the same ghettos or barrios where other blacks or Hispanics are failing miserably on the same tests. More than that, successful charter schools are often physically housed in the very same buildings as the unsuccessful public schools.
>
> In other words, minority kids from the same neighborhood, going to school in classes across the hall from each other, or on different floors, are scoring far above average and far below average on the same tests.

Fine, fine, and obviously no one stands in the way of giving black parents access to these higher-performing schools for their children, right?

Um…

> [T]he teachers' unions are opposed to charter schools — and they give big bucks to politicians, who in turn put obstacles and restrictions on the expansion of charter schools. These include politicians like New York's "progressive" mayor Bill de Blasio, who poses as a friend of blacks by denigrating the police, standing alongside Al Sharpton.
>
> The net result is that 90% of New York City's students are taught in the regular public schools that have nothing like the success of charter schools run by KIPP and Success Academy.
>
> That makes sense only politically, because it gains the money and the votes of the teachers' unions, for whom schools exist to provide jobs for their members, rather than to provide education for children.
>
> If you want to understand this crazy and unconscionable situation, just follow the money and follow the votes.
>
> Black success is a threat to political empires and to a whole social vision behind those empires. That social vision has politicians like Bill de Blasio and Hillary Clinton cast in the role of rescuers and protectors of blacks from enemies threatening on all sides. If politicians can promote paranoia, that means bigger voter turnout, which is what really matters to them.

Republicans are, of course, in favor of giving vouchers to the parents of poor, minority students so they can choose better schools. Because this is a no-brainer for anyone with any sense of morality.

You might think that Democrats are in favor of helping blacks, but that's not true. Democrats don't want blacks to have access to better schools, because Democrats take the side of teacher unions over the poor children who need an education in order to

succeed. Democrats also favor giving welfare to single women to encourage them to raise fatherless children. Democrats want to punish women who do marry by making them pay higher taxes, also known as “the marriage penalty”. And Democrats normalize premarital sex, which puts a lot of pressure on women to have

One more: Democrats favor taking guns away from law-abiding people, so that criminals can rob, rape and murder them. I was just taking to one of my three black Christian female friends (all conservatives, all STEM students – nurse, computer science and computer science), and her mom was *carjacked*. Do Democrats want her mom to own a firearm? Hell, no. They want the criminals to work unimpeded. And demonizing the police doesn’t protect law-abiding blacks from criminals, either.

I think Republicans want to help blacks by giving them the opportunity to rise: good schools, good jobs, promote marriage, oppose criminals and encourage saving money. Democrats don’t really want to let blacks help themselves – they want to keep blacks down so that they can feel good about handing them other people’s money. Getting someone else’s money for nothing is no way to live. You feel a lot better when you earn it yourself through work – but that requires that you get a good education.

Apologetics in the gospel of John

August 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

John is my favorite gospel, because the thing reads like a well constructed essay. The author makes a number of claims about who Jesus was, and supplies evidence for each claim. There is nothing extraneous to John's thesis, the whole thing that he wrote is designed to make a case.

My friend Eric Chabot wrote a post on his blog on the use of apologetics in the gospel of John. (H/T J. Warner Wallace tweet)

Here is his thesis:

> In this post, I will highlight some of the different ways John utilizes apologetics in his testimony of who Jesus is.

He talks about how God has his messengers use evidence:

> 3.Signs and Miracles
>
> While actions by other prophets such as Ezekiel and Jeremiah etc. show some significant parallels to Jesus, Jesus is closer to the actions of the Jewish sign prophetssuch as Moses. "Signs" have a specific apologetic function in that they are used to provide evidence for people to believe the message of God through a prophet of God. Hence, the signs Moses does proves he is truly sent from God. Moses had struggled with his prophetic call when he said " But they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say 'The Lord did not appear to you.' (Exod. 4:1). God assures Moses that the "signs" will confirm his call:
>
> God says, "I will be with you. And this will be אות *"the sign"* to you that it is I who

> have sent you" (Exod. 3:12).
>
> "If they will not believe you," God said, "or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground." (Exod 4: 8-9).
>
> We see the signs are used to help people believe.
>
> Moses "performed *the "signs" before* the people, and they believed; … they bowed down and worshiped" (Exod. 4:30–31)

So what did Jesus do?

> "Works" are directly related to the miracles of Jesus (Jn. 5:20; 36;10:25; 32-28; 14:10-12; 15:24) and is synonymous with "signs." Interestingly enough, when Jesus speaks of miracles and he calls them "works" he doesn't refer to Exod. 4:1-9, but to Num. 16:28, "Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord." For example:
>
> Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. *The works* that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me" (John 10:25).
>
> If I am not doing *the works* of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe *the works,* that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." (John 10:37-38).
>
> But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, *the very works* that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me (John 5: 36)
>
> **"Sign"(*sēmeion*) is used seventy-seven times (forty-eight times in the Gospels). As far as the "signs' Jesus does, 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 42:18; 61:1). In John's Gospel, Jesus performs three "signs," at the beginning of his ministry; the water turned into wine at Cana at Galilee (2:1-12), the healing of the son of the royal official at Capernaum (4:46-64), and catching of the fish in the sea of Galilee (21:1-14). The link between the first two signs in Jn 2:12 while the link between the last two are seen in Jn 7:1, 3-4, 6, 9. Jesus follows the pattern of Moses in that he reveals himself as the new Moses because Moses also had to perform three "signs" so that he could be recognized by his brothers as truly being sent by God (Exod 4: 1-9). In the exchange between Nicodemus said to Jesus, Nicodemus said, We know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous *signs* you are doing if God were not with him" (John 3:2)**
>
> Also, regarding miracles, in some cases the miracle is a witness against those who reject this evidence. John grieved: "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" (John

> 12:37). One result, though not the purpose, of miracles is condemnation of the unbeliever (cf. John 12:31, 37).

The gospel of John is *so good.* Or is it that Jesus is just so good to not be like some idiot who just says things that no one can test? That would be stupid and annoying – it's much better for Jesus to do these signs so that people could believe him about his identity and purpose. Do you like Jesus? I like Jesus.

I read John a long time ago, when I was about 10 or 11 years old.I can't remember what I thought of it, but it probably had a very good effect on me as far as making me think that Christianity was something that I ought to look into. The gospel of John is that good. Philippians is still my favorite book of the Bible (because it's practical, duh), but John is the best introduction. It's the first thing a non-Christian should read to at least understand what Christianity is all about. Everybody should at least know that!

Which political party governs the cities that have so much poverty and crime?

August 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

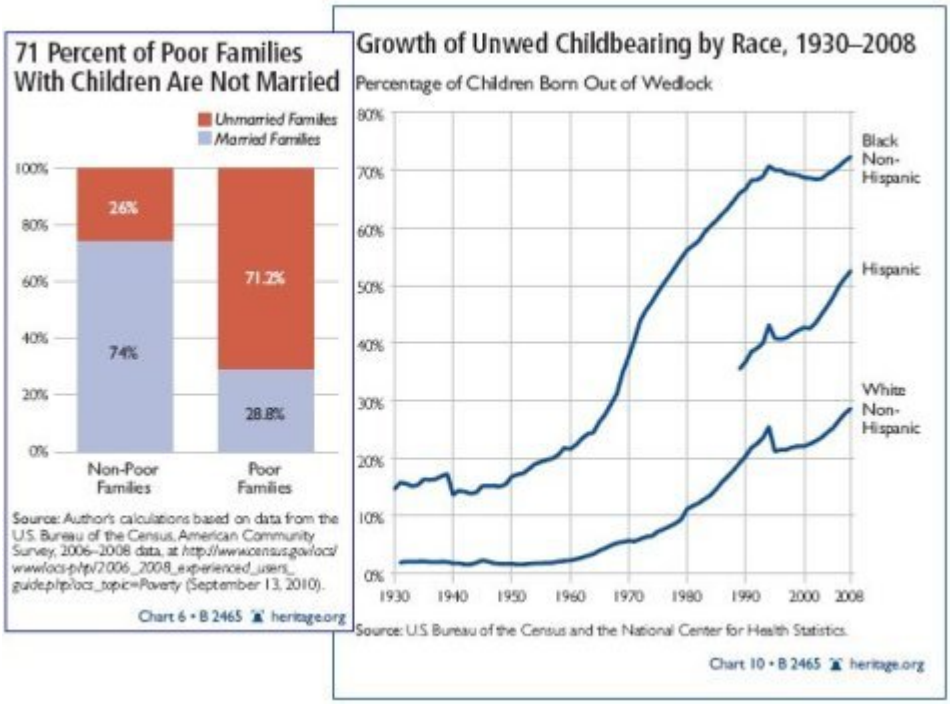

Welfare and out-of-wedlock births

First, let's find out what is happening in Milwaukee. David French explains in this article on National Review.

He writes:

> Police pulled [Sylville] Smith over on Saturday afternoon, he fled from the scene, and police gave chase. Smith was carrying a stolen handgun. An officer with six years' experience caught Smith, reportedly ordered him to drop the gun, and opened fire when Smith failed to comply, shooting him the in the chest and arm. Smith died.

The officer who shot the man who pointed a gun at him was black. It was a black police officer!

Next, riots ensued – and one of the rioters even explained why he was rioting:

> According to police, the shooting was caught on camera. (The footage has not yet been released.) But rather than wait for the evidence or for any semblance of an investigation, hundreds of Milwaukee residents rioted, burning police cars, looting stores, and attacking police. Indeed, to listen to some of the protesters and political leaders, the shooting was merely the excuse for the riot, not the justification. Here's one protester telling reporters that riots are happening because "rich people, they got all this money, and they not . . . trying to give us none."

Here's the video:

It's the "rich people"'s responsibility to give the rioters some of their stuff. Because in America, you can't do anything on your own, the only way to get "stuff" is to riot and take other people's stuff.

More from French:

> And city alderman Khalif Rainey said that the riots were "byproducts" of "the injustice, the unemployment, the under-education" that he says makes Milwaukee the "worst place to live for African-Americans in the entire country." He ended with an ominous warning: "Rectify this immediately because, if you don't, this vision of downtown, all of that, you one day away. You one day away."

But whose fault is all this poverty? Maybe it is hard for black people to get ahead in some of these cities. Who is in charge of these cities?

Rising Murder Rates in Big Cities

A sampling of cities where the number of murders so far this year is outpacing the same period last year.

	2014	2015	PERCENT CHANGE
Milwaukee	59	104	76 %
St. Louis	85	136	60
Baltimore	138	215	56
Washington	73	105	44
New Orleans	98	120	22
Chicago	244	294	20
Kansas City, Mo.	45	54	20
Dallas	71	83	17
New York	190	208	9
Philadelphia	165	171	4

Year-to-date time periods range from Aug. 11 to Aug. 31.

Source: City police departments

Crime rates in major cities, all Democrat-run

The big cities like Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Baltimore, etc. that are so awful for law-abiding blacks to live in have been run by Democrats *for decades.*

Investors Business Daily explains:

> America is awash with troubled, dysfunctional cities that have been electing Democratic mayors for decades.
>
> - Detroit last elected a Republican mayor in 1957. It is now the model of urban failure — it's recognized more for its poverty, crime, rot and bankruptcy than the great cars that it turned out into the early 1970s. It is the poorest big city in the nation, with almost 40% of the population living below the poverty line. The website Law Street actually ranks Detroit ahead of Flint as the country's most dangerous city. Either way, it's clear that both cities have institutionalized crime problems.

> Detroit is also a pit of political corruption. Just in recent years, one mayor, Kwame Kilpatrick, was convicted of corruption and sent to federal prison for 28 years, while building inspectors have been indicted on federal felony bribery charges and a former city council member was investigated in a bribery and kickback scandal.
>
> - Chicago's last GOP mayor was elected in 1927. The nation's third-largest city is home to some of the worst inner-city violence imaginable. More than 2,300 people were shot there last year, and nearly 400 lost their lives to homicides.
>
> Its finances are just as grim. "Chicago is so broke," IBD contributor Stephen Moore explained months ago, "that its bonds are junk status, and Mayor Rahm Emanuel had to go hat in hand last week to the state capital, Springfield, for bailout money to pay the bills." Things have been rotten enough, Moore said, to send "a record number of people … fleeing Cook County, home to Chicago." Only a little more than half of the city's pension liabilities are funded.
>
> - St. Louis has been electing Democratic mayors since 1949. The Gateway to the West has become the gateway for crime. Law Street says that it's the fourth most dangerous city in the country, Forbes says it's the second. It had the sixth-highest poverty rate among big cities in 2014.
> - The last GOP mayor of Philadelphia left office in 1952. A few years ago, Moore identified it as a favorite to follow Detroit into bankruptcy.
> - Both Baltimore and Oakland had Republican mayors as late as the 1960s. In the era of Democratic rule, both are now more well known for their crime and poverty problems than for their charm and character.
> - Newark, N.J., hasn't had a GOP mayor in more than a century. It was ranked as the fifth-worst city to live in in 2015. Detroit, of course, was first.
>
> When Democrats are in control, cities tend to go soft on crime, reward cronies with public funds, establish hostile business environments, heavily tax the most productive citizens and set up fat pensions for their union friends. Simply put, theirs is a Blue State blueprint for disaster.

If you want to blame someone for the failure of the black community to get ahead, blame Democrats. They are the ones who are running things in the cities where we see all this rioting. Their policies are the cause of the poverty. You don't get job creation when you punish the job creators with high taxes and onerous regulations. You don't get fathers in the homes when you reward single motherhood by choice with welfare checks.

What kinds of things should boys do to be more manly?

August 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Painting: "St. George and the Dragon", by Paolo Uccello (~1456)

Super-wife Lindsay sent me this article by David French in National Review. I am skeptical of older men who try to get younger men of today to "man up" without realizing all of the challenges that men face. Many of them are fatherless because their mothers divorced their fathers. Many of them are in failing public schools where 90% of their teachers are women. Many of them are depressed by the $20 trillion debt that was run up to pay for the feminist welfare state. And on, and on, and on.

However, I decided to blog on this because the article was very balanced.

First, here's David:

> I look back to my own childhood. In 1985, I was 16 years old, and I was a nerd's nerd. I toted graph paper and 20-sided dice to school to play Dungeons & Dragons at lunch. (I like to think I was the finest dungeon master Scott County, Ky., had ever seen.) When I wasn't playing D&D, my nose was buried in *Lord of the Rings*, or the Shannara books by Terry Brooks, or the *Dragonriders of Pern* by Anne McCaffrey. I played sports, sure, but let's just say that my varsity tennis exploits didn't make the cheerleaders' hearts flutter.
>
> **But none of my nerdiness relieved me of the responsibility of learning how to be a man — a protector, builder, and fixer. So that meant spending my Saturdays hauling out the ramps to change the oil and oil filters on all our cars. That meant helping my dad build a new back**

> **porch or constantly wrestling with immense piles of firewood. (We heated our house with a wood stove.) I made extra money working in neighborhood yards. Being a guy meant doing manual labor. That was just part of growing up — no matter your social class.**
>
> In the age of instant oil change (why entrust your car's health to your 16-year-old?), ubiquitous lawn services, and on-demand handymen, privileged kids simply don't have the same, naturally occurring opportunities to learn to work with their hands and to develop physical strength. In the age of zero-tolerance school-disciplinary policies — where any kind of physical confrontation is treated like a human-rights violation — they have less opportunity to develop toughness. Today's young males don't have common touchstones for what it's like to grow up to be a *man*.

I just had to quote this, because wow, David French (Harvard Law graduate, Major in the Army Reserves, Bronze Star recipient, and heroic defender of religious liberty) played good old D&D. So did I, although I preferred Warhammer Fantasy Role-Play. I have over 200 hand-painted miniatures in my parents' basement.

Anyway, I digress.

French continues:

> Raising a boy to be a young man used to be a *natural* act. Common experiences and rites-of-passage meant that my D&D friends could pop the hood of a car and get to work right alongside the future mechanics of my high-school class. We weren't *as* good or *as* knowledgeable, but we held our own. **And there were no social-justice warriors shrieking that there was no such thing as distinctively male or masculine pursuits.**
>
> Now, for parents of the privileged, raising a boy to be a young man has to be an *intentional* act. You have to ignore the voices who are telling you to indulge your child's inclinations — no matter what they are — and train them to be not just morally courageous but also physically strong. **They can have their Xbox or their PC (my son brags about his kill/death ratio on *Battlefield*, and we belong to the same *World of Warcraft* guild), but they can also hit the weight room. They can also not just learn to shoot but also how to assemble and disassemble their weapon.** Even if you're rich, you can make your kid do the hard work that keeps any household together.
>
> Though this sounds simplistic, never ever underestimate the positive effect that raw physical strength can have on a young man's development. I've seen the impact that weight training has had on my son, and I wish I'd been as diligent when I was his age. I've experienced the impact — even as an older adult — of the physical transformation of Army training.
>
> **Our culture strips its young men of their created purpose and then wonders why they struggle. It wonders why men — who are built to be**

> **distinctive from women — flail in modern schools and workplaces designed from the ground-up for the feminine experience.** Men were *meant* to be strong. Yet we excuse and enable their weakness. It's but one marker of cultural decay, to be sure, but it's a telling marker indeed. There is no virtue in physical decline.

Yes. I have been thinking about this a lot lately. My parents never had any plan for me growing up, except that I get As in school and work during the summers. However, since I got free of them after graduate school, I have been lifting weights, eating lots of protein from whole foods and taking the appropriate supplements on and off. I think it is important for a man to be able to lift his future wife across the threshold of her new home, and so I had this idea that I should lift weights. I have lifted up one woman (who I was in love with) and that was very fun. So, yes to muscles. Cardio, meh.

And lately I have been picking out my first firearm and getting ready to do my concealed carry permit. (I'm trying to decide between the S&W Performance Center M&P Shield and the Walther PPS M2). And I have always wanted to learn more about auto repair, so I can save money on that. Although, I think that my generation of men didn't learn as much about cars as we did about computer programming and building computers from parts. I'd like to make things out of wood – maybe toys and perches for parrots. And I want to learn gardening, so I can feed myself from what I grow.

There are so many interesting things to learn and do, and I do think that men should be expected and encouraged to develop useful skills so that they can help others. Part of being a man is learning useful things so that you can help others. I think if you explain to young men *why* they should be learning useful skills and working and saving (to help others, to learn self-sacrifice, to practice being generous with gifts) then they would be more interested in these things. A man will do anything in order to get respect, especially from women. Maybe the problem is there – that women want men to be weak man-shaped girlfriends who just agree with them, and never challenge them to grow. I see that a lot in young women today. They aren't comfortable giving men respect, or letting men help them and lead them.

Is Obamacare a spectacular failure because of incompetence, or by design?

August 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

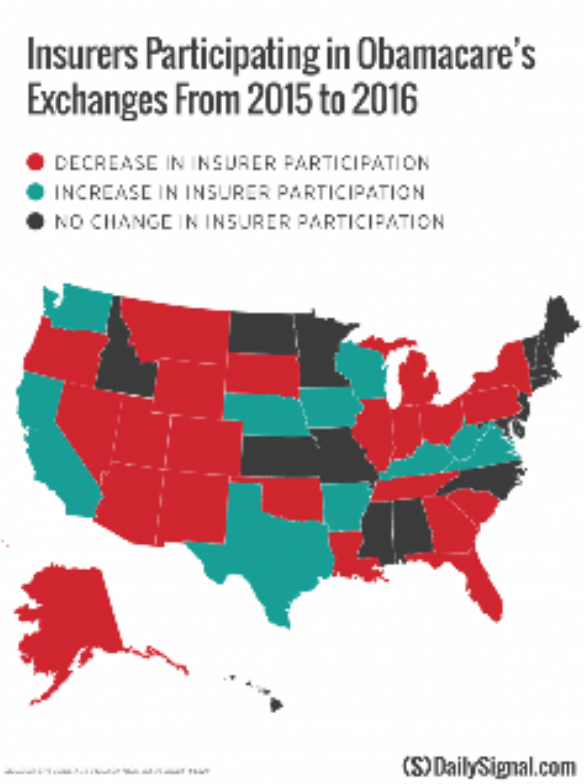

Private insurer participation in Obamacare exchanges, 2015-2016

First, let's establish that Obamacare really is a failed policy.

One of my favorite health policy experts Sally C. Pipes reports for CNBC (H/T Bree) on how private insurers are reversing their decision to sell customers Obamacare policies.

Excerpt:

> Aetna the nation's fourth-largest health insurer, just decided to stop offering plans on Obamacare's exchanges in all but four states in 2017. The firm says that it was losing roughly $300 million per year on these policies. And it projected that its losses would only increase, since the share of covered individuals "in need of high-cost care" was growing, according to CEO Mark Bertolini.
>
> Aetna isn't the only insurer giving up on Obamacare. UnitedHealth, America's biggest insurer, will sell plans in just three states next year, down from 34 this year. Humana will offer coverage in just 156 counties in 2017, 88 percent fewer than this year.
>
> In other words, the insurance "death spiral" has arrived. Obamacare's critics have long predicted that exchange plans' high premiums and deductibles would keep all but the sickest Americans from enrolling. These people would need so much medical care that insurers would lose money no matter how much they

> raised premiums. Eventually, insurers would have no choice but to pull out.
>
> […]Insurers that haven't pulled out of Obamacare are requesting premium hikes averaging 24 percent next year. And some states have it far worse. Many Georgians could see a hike of 65 percent. The 600,000 Texans enrolled in Blue Cross Blue Shield may face a 59 percent premium increase.

I must have blogged about 50 posts on Obamacare, and why it would fail, before the 2012 election. I even had podcasts and articles by Sally C. Pipes! She predicted all of this long ago. The 2012 election was our last chance to stop it, and we failed.

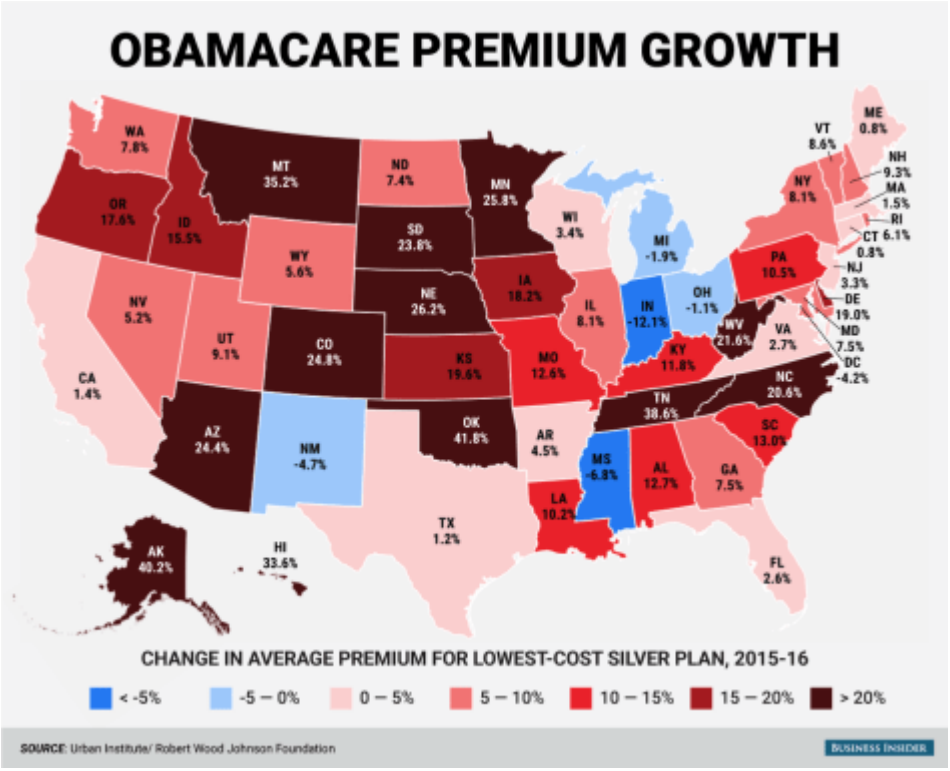

Obamacare premium growth, 2015-2016

I always like to think about the future so I can prepare for it. Investors Business Daily thinks that if Hillary is elected, she will use this crisis to push for single payer health care. Single payer basically means that you pay into the government based on what you earn, and the sickest / least responsible people get a deal because they get "free" care. It's a terrible deal for healthy, fit single men who never use health care. We have to pay about $10,000 a year in taxes, and never use it.

Investors Business Daily explains:

> So what's Hillary Clinton's answer to the failing private exchanges? Get more people on government insurance through what she calls the "public option." This would be a government-run health care plan offered in ObamaCare exchanges across the country.
>
> "The public option, Clinton says, "will strengthen competition and reduce costs."
>
> But wait a minute. The "public option" was pushed by liberal Democrats in 2009 when ObamaCare was being built, and it was rejected by centrists in the party because it looked too much like a steppingstone to single payer.

> As a matter of fact, that was the idea behind the “public option” in the first place.
>
> As Mark Schmitt explained in the liberal American Prospect, “The public option was part of a carefully thought out and deliberately funded effort (to convince the single-payer crowd) they could live with the public option as a kind of stealth single-payer.” The idea was that the public option would be able to undercut private plans, driving them all out of the exchanges.
>
> But all those centrists Democrats who opposed the public option are gone from the Senate, and if Hillary Clinton gets elected with a more liberal Senate majority, the public option will likely be top of her agenda.
>
> With the vast Medicaid expansion, and the public option (as well as Clinton’s proposal to expand Medicare), it’s not far-fetched to say that soon the only people covered by private insurance will be the diminishing number who get it through work. (ObamaCare was also designed to shrink employer-based health.)

I guess my solution to this is to hang on to my employer-subsidized plan for as long as I can, and then if single-payer becomes the law, then I’ll just ease back my working. Maybe work part-time in a less demanding job. I don’t want to get up and go to work to pay for strangers, especially if their “health care” is just abortions, in vitro fertilization, drug addiction therapy, breast enlargements and sex changes – which is what happens in countries where the government does run health care. They just use it as a way to buy votes.

If you're going to be a Christian, you need to be as smart as you can be

August 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

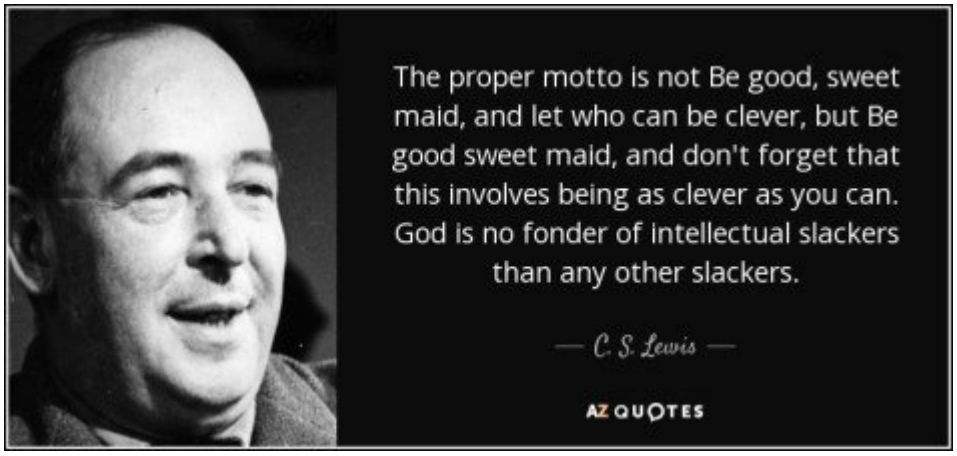

C.S. Lewis has some words to live by for you

I guess I will start this post by linking to something a friend of mine named Joel Furches wrote about an atheist engineer. (link is dead)

He writes:

> As an Aerospace Engineer for the U.S. Navy, Jason Pratt is not inaccurate when he describes himself as a rocket scientist for the government. He has flown F-14 Tomcats and the F/A-18F Super Hornet. He was a test pilot of the FA-18B and D Hornet, the FA-18F Super Hornet, and the T-45 Goshawk. His pedigree with all things aeronautical is well established. As was his atheism.
>
> Pratt grew up in a single parent home. He and his sister were raised by their mother, who felt it was her duty to introduce them to church in their teenage years. The church Pratt attended was a religious shell: a ritualistic facade with little reference to actual scriptural teachings. He went through the ceremonial steps as a matter of form, and the moment he was confirmed by the church, *he* confirmed himself an atheist, and left the church in his dust. His family took this with barely a nod, and as soon as she was confirmed, his sister followed his example.
>
> After High School, Pratt entered college to study engineering. Academically, he proved himself quite brilliant, and flaunted that brilliance at every opportunity. He describes himself as very much a "self-righteous atheist" in college.
>
> He found his atheism very freeing, morally, living by the code of "do whatever you want as long as nobody gets hurt."
>
> Says Pratt:
>
> "I started to meet other students, and some of them were claiming to be Christians. I even had some of them as roommates. Having had some church background, I knew the type. They were hypocrites, deluded by the silly book

> that they claimed they believed in. And so I frequently took pleasure in ridiculing them. I would mock them. I would look for any reason to bring out things that they would claim they believe and I would just make fun of them, and mock their God and the Bible that supposedly guided them.
>
> "I generally enjoyed playing the intellectual superior, and I enjoyed challenging what they believed."
>
> Not much surprise to Pratt, most of the Christians he met had no ability to defend their faith against his ridicule.
>
> […]One day, however, Pratt met a fellow engineering student named John Thatcher. Thatcher had a perfect GPA, which was somewhat intimidating to someone like Pratt, who took such pride in his own intellect. Thatcher was a very likable guy. He was also a Christian. This made things difficult for Pratt.
>
> At the same time, Pratt discovered that his Academic Adviser – a leading authority in the field of Thermodynamics – was a Christian. This discovery was made when Pratt went to his adviser's office one day in order to request some help from the brilliant man. As Pratt approached his office, he was shocked to find a scientific article, arguing Thermodynamics from a Christian perspective, hanging from his office door. Pratt was so infuriated, he stormed away and never spoke to his adviser again.
>
> Confused and upset that these two very intelligent men would believe in superstitious nonsense, Pratt made it his goal to truly examine the claims of Christianity for the first time.

This reminded me of a quote from atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel.

He says this:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."
>
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

I think in general, it's a good thing when Christians strive to be different from the culture around them. Obviously, that means having different moral values and different goals than what's popular and acceptable for non-Christians. It means not openly engaging in activities that are forbidden to Christians, like not getting drunk, not having premarital/extra-marital sex, etc. And I think it also means being as smart as you can possibly be about about areas that touch on your Christian worldview. Why? Because like the story above says, being informed and having the answers is attractive to people who are searching.

It doesn't help God for you to be wild and stupid

In my life, I have sometimes tried to lead other Christians to study harder things and to get better jobs. Most of the time, this works. I can get young Christians to not study English or Drama or Art History, and instead get them to study Engineering or Computer Science or Nursing. And if they already are studying hard things, then I encourage them, I buy them books, I play games with them and ask them how things are going. Once they have the degrees, I encourage them to get jobs, to work in the summers, to open investment accounts, and pay off their loans.

The point is this – what you study and what you do for work and how good you are at your job plays a *massive* role in whether you will get into conversations with non-Christians at all. It is not good service to God to bungle your education and career because you were more interested in feeling good, having fun and seeking thrills. You will lose opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others that way.

Managing your money – paying off debts and investing early and often – is part of that signal of maturity that you send to others. And don't underestimate the importance of marriage and children – something I don't have. If I had a successful marriage, and lots of well-behaved children, that would help a lot as well. Especially if people could come over to a warm and happy home. It sends a message. However, if you're going to stay single, then keep your self-control and be content with it. That sends a message, too.

Life is short. Don't do what feels good. Do what works.

Is Christianity intended to provide you with health, wealth and happiness?

August 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

I don't have any friends who believe that Christianity is supposed to give them health, wealth and happiness. I mentor one girl from Africa, and she is always telling me that it is only Western Christians who think that suffering and evil is unexpected for Christians. Anyway, Lindsay shared this post about the so-called "prosperity gospel", and so I am linking to it and excerpting something for me to comment on.

Here's the post on the Gospel Coalition.

It says:

> I am a pastor in a small village about 500 kilometers west of Nairobi—in Kenya's sugar belt region. For the better part of my adult life, I was a Pentecostal/charismatic/Word of Faith preacher. But the day came when my faith made no sense at all.
>
> I first heard the gospel as a young man, though the message contained false advertising about a Jesus who would meet all my needs and fulfill all my dreams. Remaining unsaved would lead to a life of misery, sickness, and poverty, I was told. It appeared logical, then, to embrace Christ and step into a world of limitless blessing.
>
> I wanted all God had for me, and I zealously rose to become a herald of the message I had received—which I later learned is Word of Faith teaching some call the "prosperity gospel." I knew of no other gospel. I believed God was good, and this meant nothing uncomfortable came from him.

> I learned to deal with Satan for causing anything negative in my life. Spiritual warfare was ingrained in me. As part of the "God class," as Word of Faith teachers say, I had absolute authority to create my own world through positive thinking and faith-based confessions.
>
> I believed God's will included health and wealth, which I could call into existence by faith. Anything less should be repudiated. If all else failed, I could engage the heavenly language of angels—praying in tongues—to bypass Satan and the hosts of darkness.

Do you believe any of that?

Well, the pastor goes on to explain all the terrible things that happened to him – and these are the most difficult experiences that can happen to anyone. How did he respond to God allowing all these bad things happening to him?

Well, pretty badly at first:

> Without answers, we were dismayed with God, whose ways no longer made sense to us. Though faith became a mirage, we kept up appearances, trying to pretend we didn't despair. Yet inwardly we felt doubtful, hopeless, even cursed.
>
> How could we reconcile these bad things with a good God? Our Word of Faith teaching instructed us to dismiss Job's suffering as a consequence of his negative confession: "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away" (Job 1:21). But how could we make sense of Paul himself falling sick (Gal. 4:13) and yet rejoicing in his afflictions (2 Cor. 12:10)? How could we continue to reconcile this portrait with modern "super-apostles" who market health and wealth in their books, DVDs, and mega-meetings?
>
> In my faith crisis and anger at God, I vowed to quit the ministry. I felt like a fraud for preaching a "gospel" that did not work. God had become an enigma, and faith a labyrinth. Yet the passage of time and the routine activities of Churchianity soothed our restless minds—for a while.

But then this happened:

> My friend asked me to translate in Swahili as Billy delivered a message in English. The topic, "justification by faith alone through the imputed righteousness of Christ," sounded ridiculous to me. Onstage for one awkward hour, I forced myself to deliver words I believed were unbiblical and heretical. But the sovereign Lord worked in my heart, calling forth reason through an inner witness to the truths proclaimed. The Holy Spirit planted sufficient doubt about the system I'd defended.
>
> Over the next three weeks I felt tortured by God for my errors, which became apparent with every Bible text I once thought supported my beliefs. The same verses now looked different, affirming Billy's message.
>
> […]**Though I didn't understand the fine points of theology, my**

> **conversion was decisive. Enthralled by Christ, who bids his own to "take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23), I now felt that "the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18).**

I guess I should say the obvious – I have no idea how you would get the idea that you can coerce God into giving you health, wealth and prosperity. This is such an immature view of God. Anyone who has ever been involved in any kind of serious enterprise knows that the best people are the ones who stick to the mission through thick and thin, and just keep on fighting through the hunger, suffering, sickness and other setbacks. And that's everywhere in the Bible. For goodness sake: Jesus was obedient to God to the point of suffering torture and giving his life as a sacrifice to save others from their rebellion against God. How do you get health, wealth and happiness from that?

But more than that, this makes me think of when I was young and first exposed to the Christian message. Far from being something that pushed me away from Christianity, the Bible's message of suffering with honor, and doing the moral thing regardless of happy outcomes, really resonated with me. It is very real world. In this world, it is rare that doing the right thing works out for you. In fact, there should be some area of your life where you are missing something that you really want and need. Consider that a joy, because when you are poor and hungry sad and meek, that's when you are most like the people in the Bible who had to experience these things while remaining faithful and obedient. For me, not being married and not being a father is my empty hole that will never be filled. I get asked about it a lot by my co-workers, and they know I am not happy about it, but they also know I am still faithful even if my needs are not met.

These are my two favorite passages in the Bible:

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**
>
> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.
>
> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

Matthew 5:13:

> 10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
>
> 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

> **13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**
>
> 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
>
> 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

The Bible doesn’t shy away from suffering and evil. That’s part of the normal Christian life. And how you respond to lack and suffering and evil is a powerful signal to the watching world about what Christianity is all about. It’s not about feelings. It’s not about community. It’s not about impressing people with how much you know, or how accomplished you are, or how much stuff you have. It’s about putting truth above all, and learning obedience to God in Christ, no matter what happens to you.

From a practical point of view, I do recommend making good decisions so that you don’t experience unnecessary suffering, though. Be wise, but resolute. If you are careful to make yourself defensible to unexpected setbacks, not only will you be able to endure them, but you will be strong to help others endure them, too. The goal is to not let go of God because unmet desires and dashed expectations.

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

August 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

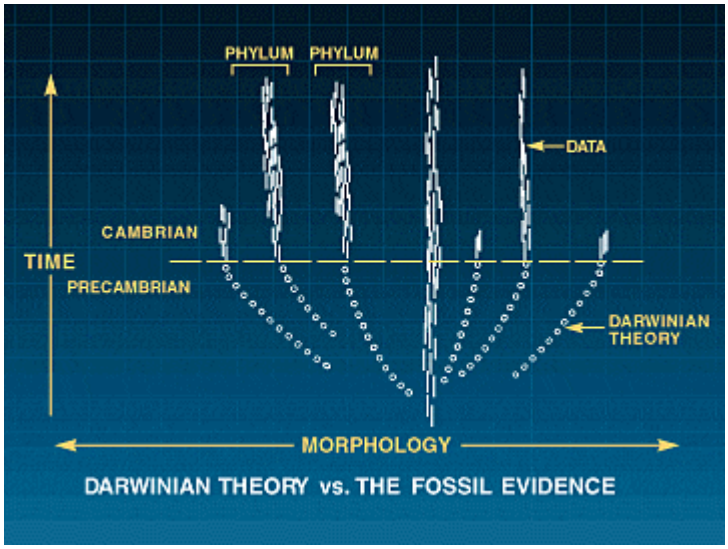

Cambrian Explosion

Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien "The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang" in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a

> unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and
> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

You can get a DVD of the lecture and other great lectures from Access Research Network. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will

prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

Why are boys struggling to succeed in school and to find jobs?

August 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Although you might think that there are no reasons for boys underperforming in school and work, a little research shows that this is not the case.

The first reason boys are struggling is because of no-fault divorce. No-fault divorce allows either person in the marriage to end the marriage for any reason or for no reason at all. It was passed because radical feminists and trial lawyers pushed for it. Each special interest group stands to benefit from it in different ways. Feminists oppose the complementary nature of marriage, and trial lawyers just want to drain as much money as they can out of disintegrating families.

70% of divorces are initiated by women, and this is because women tend to emphasize their own subjective feelings of happiness over the objective commitment they make at the wedding. Women today are influenced by feminism to care more about their happiness than they do about loving and serving others, especially husbands and children. This is especially true of the ones who lack trustworthy male influences. The most unstable relationships are *lesbian* relationships, because there you have two happiness-seekers and no promise-keepers.

In addition, feminism causes women to lose the ability to evaluate men according to traditional male roles, making them vulnerable to predators who do not have the ability to commit to them self-sacrificially. Do you ever wonder why you see single mothers living with atheist men who deliver pizzas and playing video games at age 30? Why is that? Because feminism taught her that men are not better when they are chaste providers and protective mentors. According to feminism, men have no special role as protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. Many just pick the best-looking, most entertaining, least demanding, easiest to control man they can find. Someone who doesn't lead her to behave morally, control her emotions, and put the needs of others above her own desires.

So what happens to boys when marriages can be dissolved so easily?

This article from the Centre for Economic Policy Research explains:

> To assess the long-run effect of divorce, we analyse children's human capital and demographic outcomes. First, we examine college attendance. In Austria, college attendance implies that this person graduated from a higher secondary school. Second, we check the labour market status (employed; unemployed; out-of-labour force) up to the age of 25 years. Third, we examine children's own family formation behaviour (i.e. fertility and marriage). Finally, we investigate the probability of early mortality (below 25 years of age). Our results show that parental divorce – due to a high level of sexual integration in fathers' workplaces — has a negative effect on children's long-term outcomes. Our main findings for

> human capital outcomes are summarised in Figure 1…

Here's Figure 1:

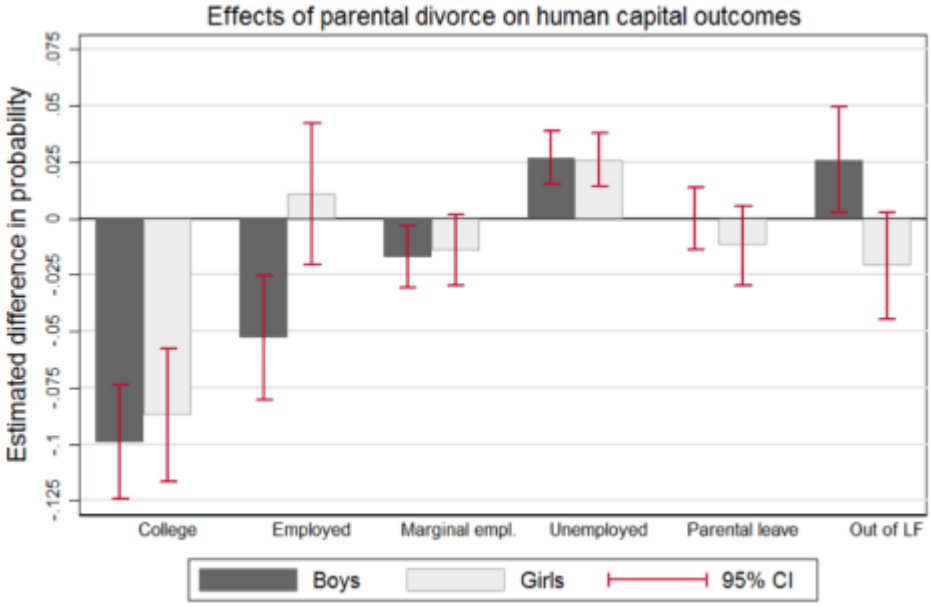

Figure 1 (click for larger image)
And Figure 3: The effect of parental divorce on employment over time.

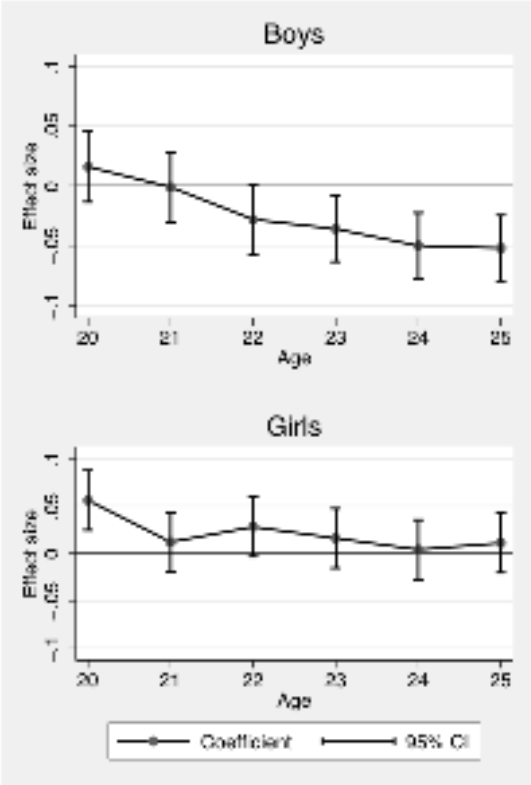

Figure 3
If you want boys to transition into marriage-minded men, you need to fight against no-fault divorce.

The War Against Boys

The other problem affected boys is also rooted in feminism. Feminism is deeply suspicious of male teachers and male administrators in the schools. As a result, schools tend to be dominated by female teachers and female administrators. Many of these

women are feminists, and they seek to change the nature of education from something that is fair to boys and girls, to something that punishes boys and gives the advantage to girls. In addition, feminists in the education industry tend to oppose allowing boys to attend all-male schools, where boys perform at much higher levels.

This article in the left-leaning The Atlantic explains how the school system punishes boys and favors girls – from kindergarten to the workplace, where women receive affirmative action preferences.

Excerpt:

> American boys across the ability spectrum are struggling in the nation's schools, with teachers and administrators failing to engage their specific interests and needs. This neglect has ominous implications not only for the boy's social and intellectual development but for the national economy, as policy analysts are just beginning to calculate.
>
> […]Women in the United States now earn 62 percent of associate's degrees, 57 percent of bachelor's degrees, 60 percent of master's degrees, and 52 percent of doctorates.
>
> Boys in *all* ethnic groups and social classes are far less likely than their sisters to feel connected to school, to earn good grades, or to have high academic aspirations. A recent working paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research documents a remarkable trend among high-achieving students: In the 1980s, nearly the same number of top male and female high school students said they planned to pursue a postgraduate degree (13 percent of boys and 15 percent of girls). By the 2000s, 27 percent of girls expressed that ambition, compared with 16 percent of boys. During the same period, the gap between girls and boys earning mostly A's nearly doubled—from three to five percentage points.
>
> This gap in education engagement has dire economic consequences for boys. A 2011 Brookings Institution report quantifies the economic decline of the median male: For men ages 25 to 64 with no high school diploma, median annual earnings have declined 66 percent since 1969; for men with only a high school diploma, wages declined by 47 percent. Millions of male workers, say the Brookings authors, have been "unhitched from the engine of growth." The College Board delivered this disturbing message in a 2011 report about Hispanic and African-American boys and young adults: "Nearly half of young men of color age 15 to 24 who graduate from high school will end up unemployed, incarcerated or dead." Working-class white boys are faring only slightly better. When economist Andrew Sum and his colleagues at the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University examined gender disparities in the Boston Public Schools, they found that for the class of 2007, among blacks and Hispanics, there were 186 females for every 100 males attending a four-year college or university. For white students: 153 females to every 100 males.

Note that radical feminists and socialists *oppose* solving this problem:

> In the U.S., a powerful network of women's groups works ceaselessly to protect and promote what it sees as female interest. But there is no counterpart working for boys—they are on their own.
>
> […]The reluctance to face up to the boy gap is evident at every level of government. In Washington, President Obama established a White House Council on Women and Girls shortly after taking office in 2009, declaring: "When our daughters don't have the same education and career opportunities as our sons, that affects…our economy and our future as a nation." On the other hand, the proposal for a Council for Boys and Men from a bi-partisan group of academics and political leaders has now been languishing in Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's office for two years.
>
> Similarly, in Maine, the *Portland Press Herald* ran an alarming story about the educational deficits of boys—reporting that high school girls outnumber boys by almost a 2-1 ratio in top-10 senior rankings, that men earn about 38 percent of the bachelor's degrees awarded by Maine's public universities, and that boys both rich and poor had fallen seriously behind their sisters. But the director of Women's Studies at the University of Southern Maine, Susan Feiner, expressed frustration over the sudden concern for boys. "It is kind of ironic that a couple of years into a disparity between male and female attendance in college it becomes 'Oh my God, we really need to look at this. The world is going to end.'"

The rest of the Atlantic article explains how to solve this problem. And the proven solutions clearly show that the problem is not with boys, it's with an education system that discriminates against boys, making it harder for them to learn the skills they need to find work.

So, the tendency of young men to stay home and play video games comes from discrimination against men in the education system, and no-fault divorce laws that allow spouses (mostly women) to divorce easily. It is women who need to do a better job of "womaning up" to attack no-fault divorce and discrimination against boys in school. But pro-male voices among women are few and far between. Women tend to go along with what makes them look good to others in the culture, and what gives them the most autonomy to pursue happiness (unless they are balanced out by strong men who lead them), and that means the most women tend to just ignore the root causes of male decline. When I see single women overwhelmingly supporting the anti-male Democrat party, it just tells me that they are not serious about marriage. Whether they intend to or not, they are killing marriage with their political support for misandry.

It would be nice if we got some leadership from pastors in the churches on this issue. It would be if nice the pastors could challenge women to think about how their voting and advocacy of certain policies affect boys. Basically, if pastors could get women to think "and then what happens" to boys who experience no-fault divorce and anti-male schools. But most pastors are like women, and they put more emphasis on being liked based on

what is valued in the secular culture. It’s easier for them to remain ignorant and bash men than to pick up a book on education or divorce and read it. If we have a crisis of masculinity, it began in the church, from the “men” behind the pulpit. They need to man up and challenge the feminism that is killing marriage.

Tim McGrew lectures on undesigned coincidences in the Bible

August 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Tim McGrew

I have an interesting lecture for you to listen to today, by Dr. Tim McGrew. He is a professor of philosophy at Western Michigan University.

The MP3 file is here.

I do not have a summary of the lecture, but I do have an article that explains what undesigned coincidences are.

Lydia McGrew explains the concept of undesigned coincidences on her blog:

> Undesigned coincidences in the Gospels … is an argument that was well-known in the nineteenth century but has, for no really clear reason, simply been forgotten as time has gone on. It is a cumulative case argument that the Gospels reflect, to an important extent, independent knowledge of actual events. Please note that this argument is quite independent of one's preferred answer to the synoptic question. That is to say, even if, e.g., Mark was the first Gospel and others had access to Mark and show signs of literary dependence on Mark, the argument from undesigned coincidences provides evidence for independent knowledge of real events among the Gospel writers. There are many more of such coincidences beyond those given in the talk.

Basically, this argument finds cases where the same story is in two sources, but where some important detail is left out of one account so that something about the story seems out of place. But the other source has the missing detail that unlocks the mystery. This supports the view that the sources are independent witnesses of the same events. Multiple attestation is an indicator that the material is historical.

My favorite example of undesigned coincidences is the Philip example from John 6. Lydia explains that example here:

> As I was listening to Tim's examples, I was struck by all the reasons there might be for a real eyewitness not to fill out the *explanation for* a detail. Think for example how tedious it is to listen to someone who goes back to explain every little detail he mentions in a story.
>
> […]Similarly, as John is telling the story about the feeding of the five thousand, it would be quite natural for him to say that Jesus asked Philip where they could buy bread if he were really an eyewitness–that is, because he remembered that Jesus *did* ask Philip. (Tim talks about why it was Philip in the interview.) But John himself might have had to stop and think for a moment if someone had asked him, "Why did Jesus ask Philip rather than any of the other disciples?" Presumably when John told the story, he wasn't particularly thinking about some special reason for Jesus to select Philip for the question. But if someone were forging the story as fiction, he would have a reason for choosing to use a given disciple as a character at that point in his fictional narrative, and therefore he would be unlikely to choose that character without making the reason clearer to his readers.
>
> All sorts of such things can happen when one is telling a true story, especially a story one has witnessed. One gets caught up in what one actually remembers and drops in incidental references to small facts, which facts are to some extent selected randomly by the memory as one brings the scene back to memory. This is typical of real memoirs but not of elaborate forgeries.

If you think this is interesting and useful, then give the lecture a listen.

Global warming alarmists demand government discourage child births

August 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

This is from the Washington Times.

It says:

> Climate-change activists are mobilizing to cut the birthrate, arguing that richer nations should discourage people having children in order to protect them from the ravages of global warming and reduce emissions.
>
> Travis Rieder, assistant director of the Berman Institute of Bioethics at Johns Hopkins University, told NPR that bringing down global fertility by half a child per woman "could be the thing that saves us."
>
> "Here's a provocative thought: Maybe we should protect our kids by not having them," said Mr. Rieder, who has one child.
>
> He proposed procreation disincentives such as government tax breaks for poor people and tax penalties for rich people, a kind of "carbon tax on kids."
>
> Poor nations would be cut slack "because they're still developing, and because their per capita emissions are a sliver of the developed world's. Plus, it just doesn't look good for rich, Western nations to tell people in poor ones not to have kids," NPR said.
>
> His paper, "Population Engineering and the Fight Against Climate Change," written with two Georgetown University professors, is scheduled to be published in October.
>
> Their work coincides with that of Conceivable Future, a New Hampshire-basednonprofit founded on the premise that "the climate crisis is a reproductive

> crisis."

This sounds to me a lot like China's one-child policy, which resulted in the government getting involved in all kinds of human rights abuses – coerced abortions, etc. But this isn't surprising.

Remember when Obama was elected, and he chose a science czar named John Holdren? That science czar had advocated for a "world police" that would restrict the number of children that people can have, in order to stop global warming:

> President Obama's "science czar," John Holdren, once floated the idea of forced abortions, "compulsory sterilization," and the creation of a "Planetary Regime" that would oversee human population levels and control all natural resources as a means of protecting the planet — controversial ideas his critics say should have been brought up in his Senate confirmation hearings.
>
> […][M]any of Holdren's radical ideas on population control were not brought up at his confirmation hearings; it appears that the senators who scrutinized him had no knowledge of the contents of a textbook he co-authored in 1977, "Ecoscience: Population, Resources, Environment," a copy of which was obtained by FOXNews.com.
>
> The 1,000-page course book, which was co-written with environmental activists Paul and Anne Ehrlich, discusses and in one passage seems to advocate totalitarian measures to curb population growth, which it says could cause an environmental catastrophe.
>
> The three authors summarize their guiding principle in a single sentence: "To provide a high quality of life for all, there must be fewer people."
>
> […]Holdren and the Ehrlichs offer ideas for "coercive," "involuntary fertility control," including "a program of sterilizing women after their second or third child," which doctors would be expected to do right after a woman gives birth.

What specifically did the authors recommend to solve the overpopulation "problem"?

> Those plans include forcing single women to abort their babies or put them up for adoption; implanting sterilizing capsules in people when they reach puberty; and spiking water reserves and staple foods with a chemical that would make people sterile.
>
> To help achieve those goals, they formulate a "world government scheme" they call the Planetary Regime, which would administer the world's resources and human growth, and they discuss the development of an "armed international organization, a global analogue of a police force" to which nations would surrender part of their sovereignty.

Holdren also predicted that global warming would kill 1 billion people by 2020. That's the level of scientific illiteracy and ignorance we are dealing with when dealing with the Democrat party. They will literally say and do anything to manipulate the voters into

supporting a socialist agenda.

J. Warner Wallace: different answers to the question "why are you a Christian?"

August 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

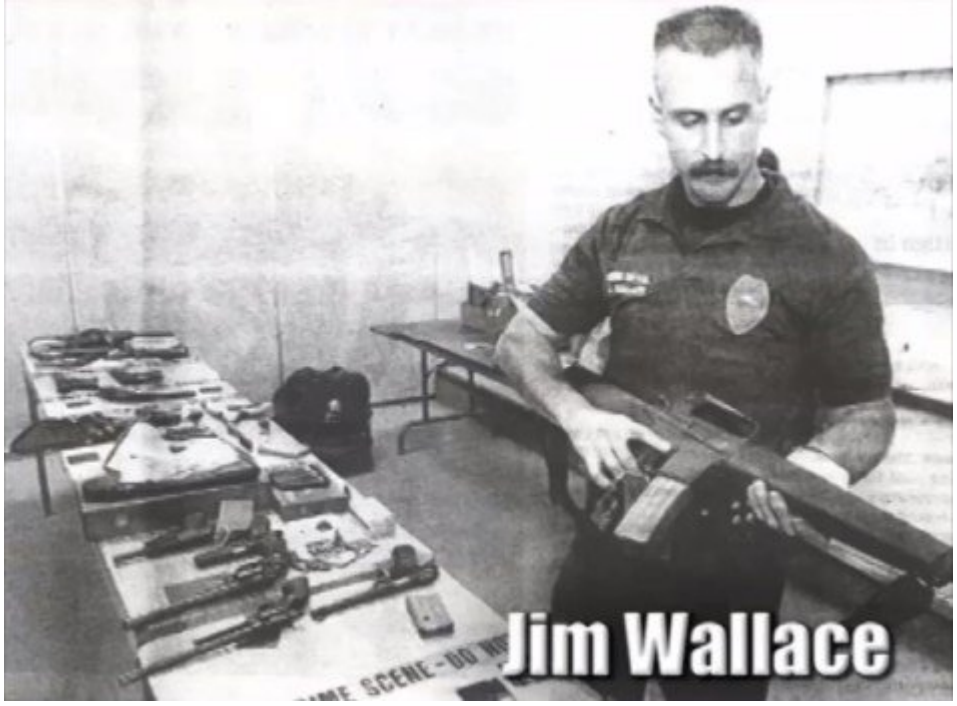

This assault rifle is OK, but apologetics is better

I sometimes think about the horrible experiences I had encountering "normal" Christians in American churches after having become a Christian on my own through reading the New Testament, reading apologetics, and watching William Lane Craig debates. I heard a lot of different reasons from the church Christians, and what struck was 1) their reason had nothing to do with objective truth, and 2) their reason hasn't resulted in them training themselves to explain to a non-Christian why they ought to be a Christian.

Well, J. Warner Wallace recently tweeted an episode of his podcast (the new 30-minute format) and I thought to myself that this might be useful to people who were confused by what they found in the church.

Here is the video:

And he has a blog post about it, where he explains all the responses to the question "why are you a Christian?" which he got from the church – none of which were like his answer for why he became a Christian.

Here are some answers that were not like his answer:

> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because I Was Raised in the Church**
> I didn't come from a Christian family. I wasn't raised in the church or by people who attended church regularly. While students often tell me this is the reason they're Christians, this wasn't the case for me.
>
> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because My Friends Were Christians**
> I also didn't know any Christians. I was never invited to church by anyone as a

> child, and although I knew Christians in my college years, none of these folks ever invited me to church either. My friends were all happy atheists. I didn't become a Christian to be part of a club.
>
> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because I Wanted to Know God**
> I can honestly say I had no interest in God growing up, while in college, or while a young married man. I felt no "hole" in my life, had no yearning for the transcendent, no sense something was missing. I was happy and content. I didn't become a Christian to fulfill some need.
>
> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because I Wanted to Go to Heaven**
> I was also comfortable with my own mortality. Sure it would be nice if we could all live forever, but that's just not the way it is. Live life to the fullest, enjoy your friends and family while you have them, and stop whining. I didn't become a Christian because I was afraid of dying.
>
> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because I Needed to Change My Life**
> My life prior to becoming a Christian was *great*. I had a meaningful and fulfilling career, a beautiful family, an incredible wife, and lots of friends. I wasn't struggling and looking for a solution. I didn't become a Christian to stop beating my wife or to sober up.

I'm sure that all my readers know that Wallace is a homicide detective, and an evidentialist. He handles evidence and builds cases with evidence, and that's how he approaches his worldview as well. So he didn't answer any of those.

Wallace's answer was different:

> […][A]lthough these reasons might motivate students to *start* their journey, I hope these aren't the only reasons they're *still here*. I'm not sure any of these motivations will suffice when push comes to shove, times get tough or students face the challenges of university life. In the end,*truth* matters more than anything else. I'm not looking for a useful delusion, a convenient social network, or an empty promise. I just want to know what's true. I think the students I met in Montreal resonated with this approach to Christianity. They are already members of the Church, have friends in the group, understand the importance of a relationship with God and the promise of Heaven. Now they want to know if any of this stuff is *true*. It's our job, as Christian Case Makers, to provide them with the answer.

I'm actually much harder on church Christians than he is, because I found that the more fideistic the Churchian, the less you could count on them to act like authentic Christians. I have never met an evidential apologist who was soft on moral questions or tough theology, for example. To me, if you have an evidentialist approach to Christianity, then you have no problem with things like a *bodily* resurrection of Jesus, with *exclusive* salvation through faith alone in Christ alone, with a *literal* eternal separation from God called Hell, and so on. A truth-centered approach makes you indifferent to what people

think of you. The important thing is that something is true, not who is or is not offended by it.

What I found is that the anti-intellectual approach to Christianity is correlated with a liberal approach to Christianity. That annoys me because I don't see liberal Christians as reliable allies. The safest and funnest place for me to be is in the company of self-sacrificial, committed Christians. That's where I can let my guard down among my true friends. My closest friends all have some sort of plan and some skin in the game. They are evidence-driven and truth-focused. We are not interested in Christianity as fun, good feelings and community. We are interested in Christianity as truth, and that truth creates obligations on us to study, debate and serve *self-sacrificially*. You can trust an evidence-driven, truth-centered Christian to stand up for what they believe in.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

FBI found 14,900 more emails that Hillary Clinton didn’t turn over to them

August 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

This is from the radically leftist Washington Post, of all places:

> The FBI’s year-long investigation of Hillary Clinton’s private email server uncovered 14,900 emails and documents from her time as secretary of state that had not been disclosed by her attorneys, and a federal judge on Monday pressed the State Department to begin releasing emails sooner than mid-October as it planned.
>
> Justice Department lawyers said last week that the State Department would review and turn over Clinton’s work-related emails to a conservative legal group. The records are among “tens of thousands” of documents found by the FBI in its probe and turned over to the State Department, Justice Department attorney Lisa Ann Olson said Monday in court.
>
> […]Lawyers for the State Department and Judicial Watch, the legal group, are negotiating a plan for the release of the emails in a civil public records lawsuit before U.S. District Judge James E. Boasberg of Washington.
>
> […]Judicial Watch filed the lawsuit in **May 2015** after disclosures that Clinton had exclusively used a personal email server while secretary of state. Judicial Watch had sought all emails sent or received by Clinton at the State Department in a request made under the federal Freedom of Information Act, which covers the

> release of public records.

Hillary is the first Secretary of State to have a private e-mail server hidden from her employers, which she kept in her home. Hillary withheld more of her emails from investigators as “personal and private”, and released less than half of them to the State Department. She deleted more e-mails than she turned over to the State Department.

I work for a major company. About 1 out of every 1000 e-mails I send is personal, and it is usually a reminder that I sent to myself (and CC my Dad) to bring coffee creamer to work because I ran out. I assume that my employers have access to my work e-mail, which is why I don’t put anything sensitive and personal in it. In any big company, all your work e-mails are subject to investigation if anything goes wrong… which is why Hillary didn’t want her employer having access to hers.

Hillary has been trying to blame her decision to hide her e-mails from her employer on Colin Powell, of all people.

CNN says Powell denies everything she is saying:

> Colin Powell is pushing back on reports suggesting that he might have given Hillary Clinton the idea to use a private email account as Secretary of State, telling media outlets that “her people are trying to pin it on me.”
>
> […]”The truth is, she was using (the private email server) for a year before I sent her a memo telling her what I did,” Powell said.
>
> CNN has reached out to the Clinton campaign, as well as representatives for Powell, and has not yet received a response.
>
> Powell, who endorsed Barack Obama for president in 2008 and 2012, has not yet made a formal endorsement in the 2016 presidential election.

Now, I know what Democrat voters will say to this because I’ve talked to some Democrat voters that I know. They’re not going to care. They don’t have any moral sense to see anything wrong with what Clinton did. What is important to them is that their pro-abortion, anti-religious liberty agenda move forward. Little things like transparency and accountability in government don’t matter. Who cares about morality, the Democrat voters say – just give us our fun and give us our stuff.

I was listening to the Ben Shapiro show Monday night, and he gave his best guess about why Hillary had a private e-mail server. His guess, which surprises no one, is that Hillary sold her authority at the State Department for money. She got contributions to the Clinton Foundation, and enormous speaking fees from banks, foreign corporations, etc. She’s raised half a billion dollars for her campaign. I guess that’s what the Presidency costs these days. And why we can’t get any honest candidates.

Survey of over 200 peer-reviewed studies finds no biological basis for “sexual orientation”

August 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
This is a big deal.

I was e-mailed and messaged by billions of people to write about this, even though I had already tweeted it Monday morning, from Ryan Anderson, and then again Monday afternoon, from Kelsey Harkness.

Anyway, there was a new report published in the journal The New Atlantis, surveying all the peer-reviewed research that has been done on sexual orientation and gender identity. (H/T Roland, George, William, and many, many others)

This article from the Daily Signal explains what the report is about:

> A major new report, published today in the journal The New Atlantis, challenges the leading narratives that the media has pushed regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.
>
> Co-authored by two of the nation’s leading scholars on mental health and sexuality, the 143-page report discusses over 200 peer-reviewed studies in the biological, psychological, and social sciences, painstakingly documenting what scientific research shows *and does not show* about sexuality and gender.
>
> **The major takeaway, as the editor of the journal explains, is that “some of the most frequently heard claims about sexuality and gender are not supported by scientific evidence.”**
>
> The report, “Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological, and Social Sciences,” is co-authored by Dr. Lawrence Mayer and Dr. Paul McHugh. Mayer is a scholar-in-residence in the Department of Psychiatry at Johns

> Hopkins University and a professor of statistics and biostatistics at Arizona State University.
>
> McHugh, whom the editor of The New Atlantis describes as "arguably the most important American psychiatrist of the last half-century," is a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and was for 25 years the psychiatrist-in-chief at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. It was during his tenure as psychiatrist-in-chief at Johns Hopkins that he put an end to sex reassignment surgery there, after a study launched at Hopkins revealed that it didn't have the benefits for which doctors and patients had long hoped.

These are serious people. Johns Hopkins is the top medical school in the USA, and probably in the whole world.

The Daily Signal article also lists the four main findings:

> The belief that sexual orientation is an innate, biologically fixed human property—that people are 'born that way'—is *not supported by scientific evidence*.

> Likewise, the belief that gender identity is an innate, fixed human property independent of biological sex—so that a person might be a 'man trapped in a woman's body' or 'a woman trapped in a man's body'—is *not supported by scientific evidence*.

> Only a minority of children who express gender-atypical thoughts or behavior will continue to do so into adolescence or adulthood. There is *no evidence* that all such children should be encouraged to become transgender, much less subjected to hormone treatments or surgery.

> Non-heterosexual and transgender people have higher rates of mental health problems (anxiety, depression, suicide), as well as behavioral and social problems (substance abuse, intimate partner violence), than the general population. Discrimination alone *does not account for the entire disparity*.

The reason why we need to be guided by science in these matters, and not by ideology or feelings, is because of the harm we can do to children if we are not accurate:

> Policymakers should be concerned with how misguided school policies might encourage students to identify as girls when they are boys, and vice versa, and might result in prolonged difficulties. As the report notes, "There is no evidence that all children who express gender-atypical thoughts or behavior should be encouraged to become transgender."

You should read the rest of the Daily Signal's post, and if you want to go on and read the report, you can find that here on the New Atlantis journal's web site.

I feel pretty comfortable talking about the same-sex marriage issue, having read several

books and papers on that. I also have some background in gender identity disorder, and different things that happen to a child in the womb, and during their childhoods, that can affect that. But this transgender question is an area where I need to read more – this was not on the radar when I was exploring all this in the late 90s and early 2000s. I want to be able to discuss this as competently as I can discuss other social issues.

Indian surrogate mothers open up about the pain of giving up their babies

August 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Katy tweeted this story from the radically leftist BBC, and it made me feel sad when I read it.

> India is known as the "surrogacy hub" of the world where infertile couples, many from across the globe, head to rent a womb. In recent years, the southern city of Chennai has emerged as a major centre with more than a dozen hospitals carrying out the procedure and more than 150 surrogates.
>
> Most surrogate mothers are women from poor families who take up the assignment for money. It's generally believed that the transaction is purely commercial, but three surrogate mothers tell the BBC about the emotional bonds they developed with the babies they carried in their wombs for nine months and the pain they felt once the umbilical cord was snapped.

Here is one woman's story from the article:

> I live in a slum in Chennai's Vyasarpadi area and I come from a very poor family. My husband is an auto-rickshaw driver who earns about 8,000 rupees ($120;£92) a month. I work in a factory that makes leather bags. I earn 6,000 rupees ($90; £69).
>
> Seven years ago, my family was struggling, we had borrowed 100,000 rupees from people, mostly to pay the fee of our school-going children, and the debts had to be repaid.
>
> One day, I met a man who worked as an agent for a surrogacy clinic. He told me

> that I could earn 200,000 rupees being a surrogate mother.
>
> I knew two other women in my neighbourhood who had been surrogate mothers so I agreed.
>
> I thought, I have four children, and now I can help someone who cannot have any. I was thinking how horrible it would be if my daughter couldn't bear children. I believe everyone should have children and I wanted to help.
>
> I never met the real parents and have no idea who they are. I was still under sedation when they removed the baby. I never set eyes on it.
>
> I have no idea whether it's white or black, whether it's Indian or foreigner, I don't even know whether it's a boy or a girl!
>
> When I gained consciousness, my first words to my husband were, 'Did you see the baby? Is it a boy or a girl?'
>
> He said he hadn't seen it. I asked my doctor, but she didn't answer my question.
>
> 'You are a surrogate mother, you shouldn't ask these questions,' she said.
>
> But I want to know about the baby. I want to know where he or she is and what it is studying.
>
> For three months after giving birth, I spent sleepless nights, I would get headaches thinking about the baby and I had to take medicines to calm down.
>
> Every year, on 4 November, the day the baby was born, our family celebrates its birthday. I do all the rituals that I do for my other children.
>
> I fast in the morning, I cook payasam [rice pudding] and share it with my family and neighbours, and I visit the temple to pray for the baby's well-being and long life.
>
> I've always wondered if the baby is like any of my other children. I really do miss the baby and would give anything to see it once.
>
> I know it's not my baby after all, but I know that if I'd seen the baby, I wouldn't have given it away.
>
> I hope the baby is happy and fine wherever it is.
>
> We talk a lot about it, we call it Paapa or Kuzanthai (Tamil words for baby or child) and at times, my family thinks maybe it would have been happier with us.
>
> But then, we are a poor family and in difficult times, we think that perhaps the baby's better off in a wealthier family.

As soon as I read this, I thought of the scene form the movie "The Island" where the woman in the cloning factory gives birth to the baby and she is holding it and then the cruel doctors and scientists take it away from her and killed her. I just can't imagine how anyone could take a baby away from the birth mother. There are some things that selfish adults do that are just wrong because of the harm it causes to children. Children are small – they ought to come first.

I wish women would think of having babies when they are younger. It does take some foresight to focus on marriage and children when you are young, but when you think about how expensive adoption is, how expensive and risky IVF is, and how painful surrogate motherhood is for the mother, it really is the best way to go.

Previously, I had blogged about the case of the two gay men who had purchased a baby boy from a surrogate mother in Russia. The mainstream media celebrated the “two gay dads”. But the two gay men raped and abused the boy, and gave him to others to rape and abuse. I can only imagine being a surrogate mother and wondering what the child’s life is like when things like that are happening. I wouldn’t do it. I just couldn’t live with myself not being able to protect and watch over something that I had a hand in making.

What is the “feminization of the church”?

August 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church sucks, that’s why men are bored there

A friend who shall remain anonymous sent me this article from The Art of Manliness about the feminization of the Christian church. The article is long and detailed. I want to mention one point briefly, and do another more fully.

Brief one first:

> While Christians of the past two centuries have complained of a lack of virility in their pastors, there’s also been a statistically certified lack of other kinds of male mentors in the church as well. For example, a survey done in 1920 found that 73% of Sunday School teachers were women, and still today women are around 56% more likely than men to participate in Sunday school and to hold a leadership position in a church (not including the role of pastor).
>
> Does a lack of masculine role models at church negatively effect the recruitment and retention of masculine members? Edwin Starbuck, a prominent psychologist in the early 1900s thought so, positing that “the boy is a hero-worshipper, and his hero can not be found in a Sunday school which is manned by women.” Murrow agrees, citing the research of Dr. Michael Lindsay, who found that:
>
> “the number one reason high-achieving men don’t go to church is they don’t respect the pastor. Those men who did go to church often chose a megachurch because they saw the pastor as their leadership peer. ‘Respecting the senior pastor is vital to predicting whether a man is actively involved,’ Lindsay says.
>
> “Men respect pastors who are properly masculine,” Murrow opines. “They are drawn to men who, like Jesus, embody both lion and lamb. They find macho men and sissies equally repulsive.”

I wrote an article last week where I criticized the education system for being unfair to boys. It turns out that the church and Sunday schools are also unfair to boys. (Not in all cases. My friend Mary teaches Sunday school, loves apologetics, and goes out of her way to affirm the different male nature in her boys).

Here's the longer passage:

> Research has shown that women are more likely to imagine God as characterized by love, forgiveness, and comfort, while men picture him in terms of power, planning, and control. With more women than men belonging to Christian churches, it's not surprising that the religion's theology, and the messages heard from the pulpit, have come to emphasize the former qualities over the latter.
>
> **Podles argues that men think in terms of dichotomies and conflicts — in or out, black or white. They tend to be more orthodoxic and privilege rules over relationships. Women (and more feminine men) tend do the opposite, and wish to overcome differences and assuage conflict, for the sake of greater acceptance and peaceable relationships.**
>
> Consequently, modern sermons tend to deemphasize the contrast between heaven and hell, sin and life, grace and justice, sheep and goats. There are less martial analogies, fewer calls for Christians to take up their cross and become soldiers for Christ. There is less emphasis on the need to suffer, struggle, and sacrifice for the gospel and for others, and more emphasis on how the gospel can be a tool towards greater self-realization and personal fulfillment. The gospel is presented not as heroic challenge, but therapy – the way to "your best life now." The focus is on rewards over obstacles. All gain, no pain.
>
> […]Murrow observes that the modern tenor of the gospel turns the faith's original message on its head: Whereas Jesus "promise[s] suffering, trial, and pain…today's Christianity is marketed…[as] the antidote to suffering, trial, and pain."
>
> Indicative of these changes, Murrow says, is the way "the kingdom of God" has fallen into disuse in describing the church, in favor of the "family of God." In the former, the ethos is more mission directed; in the latter it's more's relational. Each member of the "family of God" has a relationship with each other, and with Jesus Christ. And not just any kind of relationship with the savior — a "personal relationship" — a term whose popularity Murrow thinks contributes to the gospel's lack of appeal to men:
>
> […][D]espite its extrabiblical roots, personal relationship with Jesus Christ has become the number one term evangelicals use to describe the Christian walk. Why? Because it frames the gospel in terms of a woman's deepest desire—a personal relationship with a man who loves her unconditionally. It's imagery that delights women—and baffles men.
>
> […]When Christ called disciples, he did not say, 'Come, have a personal relationship with me.' No, he simply said, 'Follow me.' Hear the difference? Follow

> me suggests a mission. A goal. But a personal relationship with Jesus suggests we're headed to Starbucks for some couple time."
>
> […]"The National Congregations Study found that self-described liberal churches were 14 percent more likely to have a gender gap than conservative ones." Even when they don't know it, Murrow says, men "long for a harsh affection—the love of a coach who yells at his players to get every ounce of effort; the love of a drill sergeant who pushes his recruits to the limits of human endurance; the love of a teacher who demands the impossible from his students. As Western society feminizes, it's getting harder for men to find this kind of love. "

My own view of God is that he is "The General": the master planner who achieves the salvation of *all who can be persuaded* without violating their free will. My soteriology is middle knowledge, and my view of God is that he is a great strategist, and a tactical genius. He is expert at orchestrating complex situations where those who seek him meet the right people, find the right evidence, and have the right experiences. (Read Acts 17:24-28) I respect God as a leader, and look to him frequently to intervene in situations where his honor or his purposes are at stake. I do not expect God to care more about my needs and feelings as he does about achieving his goals. With respect to God's purposes in the world, *my happiness is expendable*. (And I think stating that view offends the feelings of feminized people, but it's Biblical)

Are women pastors and leaders really liberal? Here's an example of a female pastor arguing premarital sex and gay rights in the radically leftist Washington Post. This is very common with women in the church, who tend to value compassion over moral standards – acceptance over boundaries. Women generally accept abortion slightly more than men, and gay marriage a lot more than men. A significant number just aren't interested in what the Bible says about morality. Women tend to think about how moral standards make people feel, and they don't want people to feel judged. They don't usually understand that moral standards and boundaries are there to protect the weak, and to avoid imposing costs on the community to clean up the messes caused by selfishness and recklessness (i.e. – following your heart).

Venezuela solves hunger by banning bread lines, and solves crime by banning self-defense

August 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two socialists shake hands: Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez

First, let's review who has been running Venezuela, and what they've been doing in the last few decades.

Here is an article from March 2013 from the radically leftist Slate. The headline is "Hugo Chavez's economic miracle: The Venezuelan leader was often marginalized as a radical. But his brand of socialism achieved real economic gains". The author is "a senior writer for the International Business Times".

He writes:

> Chavez became the bugaboo of American politics because his full-throated advocacy of socialism and redistributionism at once represented a fundamental critique of neoliberal economics, and also delivered some indisputably positive results. Indeed, as shown by some of the most significant indicators, Chavez racked up an economic record that a legacy-obsessed American president could only dream of achieving.

What did Chavez do, precisely, that caused the Venezuelan economic to boom? Well, he nationalized private industry and redistributed wealth from job creators and entrepreneurs to the poor.

> As The Week correctly put it, while "Chavez's policies of redistribution and nationalization of oil assets endeared him to Venezuela's working class" and produced many laudable results, the country's "oil-centric economy has taken away resources from other areas that are badly in need of development."

It's a miracle! Yay for socialism! Well, that's what leftists thought – this time, for sure, the

laws of economics would be suspended and unicorns would fly.

Reason.com reports on what happened next:

> The tragedy of Venezuela continues unabated, but that doesn't mean the government of President Nicolás Maduro has stopped trying to fix problems like the devastating scarcity of food which has led to malnutrition, riots, food truck hijackings, vigilante lynchings of petty thieves, and the starvation of zoo animals.
>
> No, Maduro hasn't admitted the failure of Chavismo — the brand of Bolivarian socialism imposed on the oil-rich country by his late predecessor Hugo Chavez — instead, Venezuela's embattled leader has launched a war on "anxiety."
>
> The National Superintendency of Fair Prices has reportedly instituted a policy of fining bakeries that allow lines to stretch out their front doors, according to PanAmPost. The head of this particular bureaucracy, William Contreras, claims the lines aren't a true indicator of a severe shortage of bread, but rather, a political "strategy of generating anxiety."
>
> […][T]his is indicative of the magical thinking of Venezuela's socialist government: the breakdown of the economy couldn't possibly because of failed economic policy, and scarcity must be the result of a greater conspiracy.

Fine, so they solved the problem of not enough bread by banning line-ups for bread. Great. But what about Venezuela's astronomically high murder rate? What will they ban to solve that?

Easy, peasy: by seizing the guns of law-abiding people, just like Hillary Clinton wants to do.

Daily Wire reports:

> Venezuela is descending further into the misery of socialism, as their government confiscated 2,000 pistols, shotguns and other firearms on Wednesday.
>
> Reuters reports that the firearms were "crushed and chopped up" at a square in Caracas and ammunition was registered through laser technology as part of Interior Minister Nestor Reverol's recent initiatives to further disarm the Venezuelan citizenry.
>
> "We are going to bring disarmament and peace," Reverol declared.
>
> Venezuela currently has the second highest murder rate in the world, and Caracas is the most violent city in the world. In 2012, dictator Hugo Chavez completely banned private gun ownership, and yet crime rose.

Naturally, taking away the guns of law abiding people increases the rate of violent crime. In the UK, where the ban on handguns resulted in the doubling of violent crime in the four years after the ban. This is known by anyone who has spent more than two minutes studying the history of these laws in other times or places.

In my last post, I reported about how Venezuela had resorted to forced labor (slavery) to

grow more food.

Here's what CNBC reported:

> The government of Venezuela has issued a decree that "effectively amounts to forced labor" in an attempt to fix a spiraling food crisis, according to a new report from Amnesty International.
>
> A Venezuelan ministry last week announced Resolution No. 9855, which calls for the establishment of a "transitory labor regime" in order to relaunch the agricultural and food sector. The decree says that the government must do what is "necessary to achieve strategic levels of self-sufficiency," and states that workers can be forcefully moved from their jobs to work in farm fields or elsewhere in the agricultural sector for periods of 60 days.

It's so bad that Venezuelans are breaking into zoos to kill and eat the animals. Now that's real progressive animal rights for you. But they can solve this by banning the eating of meat.

Slavery, food lines, lousy health care, crime sprees, confiscating guns from law abiding citizens. All to be expected when Democrat party policies go into effect. If Democrats wins the House, Senate and Presidency, we'll see the same here – we're not any better than any other country. Nothing magic about the United States, if we get away from our Constitution.

Related posts

- And now slavery: Venezuela's socialist policies lead to forced labor camps
- Do young Americans know how well socialism is working in Venezuela?
- How well are Democrat Party economic policies working out in Venezuela?
- How well does socialism work in countries and cities that adopt it?
- How well are Democrat economic policies working in Venezuela and Argentina?
- Marco Rubio's speech exposing the horrors of socialism in Cuba and Venezuela
- Obama silent as Venezuelan government violently represses democratic opposition
- How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?
- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia's economy to grow? What causes Venezuela's economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama's buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela

- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Should we be trying to change the world from the bottom up or the top down?

August 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two Air Force JTACs discuss mission parameters prior to calling in CAS

Dr. Paul Gould is a professor of philosophy (PhD from Purdue) at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Here is his bio, which says, in part:

> I have a Masters in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics from Talbot School of Theology and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Purdue University.
>
> I am an Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Christian Apologetics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

What his bio page doesn't say is that he left a career in business to go onto this apologetics/philosophy track. I find that very interesting, because like most professionals with an interest in apologetics, I had the same dream – to go and do a PhD and get into a college and be a positive influence on Christian kids. But the main thing is that he has had some experience in the real world.

Anyway, Dr. Gould has written two posts on how to change the world, and I want you to look at an excerpt from the first one.

First post:

> Christians like to talk—and aspire—to changing the world. This language stems very naturally from our God-given desire to *make a difference*, to *live a life that matters*. In a very real sense, making a difference *is* to change the world. But, usually, when Christians talk about "changing the world" they mean something

> like “winning the world for Christ” or “helping the gospel to gain a hearing in culture” or “contributing toward shalom.”Recently, there have been a number of very helpful books written by folks who challenge the common view of *how* to go about the task of world-changing, and call into question the relationship between Christ and culture. One of the most important books to enter this discussion is James Davison Hunter’s *To Change the World*. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in the topic of world-change. In this post I will share his critique of the “common view” of world change. I think his critique is dead on.
>
> Hunter argued that by and large, Christians have gone about the task of world changing in completely the wrong way and the result is that Christianity in our country at least and in the western world in general, represents a weak culture.
>
> He focuses on world-view ministries (primarily from the US such as Chuck Colson’s Wilberforce Forum and Focus on the Families’ Truth Project) and those like them that offer the following view of how to change the world:
>
> Common view of world change: as we change the individual beliefs and values of persons, and change enough persons, then we will ultimately change society. This is a **bottom up approach**.
>
> On the common view, the implicit view of culture is that “the essence of culture is found in the hearts and minds of individuals” and that culture change will come as enough individual lives are transformed.
>
> Hunter argues that this approach fails to take into account cultural elites and the institutions that yield power within culture.
>
> Instead, cultural change has always been **top-down:** it is always elites—those who have cultural capital to exert influence and power—who have changed the culture. This is why the university, and the media, and the arts are so important in shaping the culture.
>
> All of this leads to a fascinating conclusion: ***some*** *ideas have consequences*—namely ideas propagated by those within society who possess cultural capital and a supporting network of other individuals and institutions also within the center of cultural influence and production.

Second post is here. The second post has a link to his review of Hunter’s book (PDF), which is published by Oxford University Press.

I agree completely with the top-down thesis of James Davison Hunter, and I think that it is a *tragedy* that the Christian parents and Christian churches don’t do a good job of challenging and guiding young Christians to study the things that will allow them to have an influence. Most Christians I talk to have a negative view of steering young Christians towards advanced degrees, or towards making a lot of money, or towards positions of cultural influence, etc. Instead of focusing on being effective, they tell me “I will do what I want to do, because God has a mysterious will for me to be happy”. I don’t buy it. I am happy to consider alternative plans that serve God better, but I don’t think

that the “I’ll do what feels good” view is interested in producing a return for God in terms of money and/or influence. Crazy plans do not work out just because we want them to. There are costs to every plan, and not every plan is as likely to lead to influencing the culture as any other plan. This is reality.

I also think it is important to steer children into positions where they can be prosperous and/or influential. Again, many Christians disagree with guiding children that way. In my experience, it is assumed that children need to be happy, and that they are the best people to decide what they should be doing in life. Well, I’m not a heavy-handed bully, but I am not letting my children do whatever they like, because they don’t have enough wisdom and experience to know what to do. For example, I am not letting my children study ballet in university. It doesn’t pay the bills, and it isn’t likely that they will have an influence compared to other choices. Money is important because money can be used to fund Christian scholars, apologetics ministries and apologetics events. Marriage is a great way to have an influence, but marriage costs money, and that means that marriage-minded people should have a plan to *pay the bills* before they consider marriage. We do not have the right to *do whatever we feel like*, because we have a boss who *expects a return on his investment*. If a person is capable of doing hard things that produce a better return (money or influence or children, etc.) then he should do that.

We have a problem in this country as it is with young people borrowing tens of thousands of dollars to study things that either don’t pay off, or that don’t allow them to have an influence. It’s not unloving to tell children the truth about the choices they make. Especially when the cost of having a child is over six figures *per child*. You can have a huge Christian influence with that kind of money if you spent it on other things, like apologetics scholars, their ministries and their events. So, if you are going to have children and spend it on them, you’d better have some sort of plan, and look for a spouse who is on board with that idea of providing God with a good return on his investment. Everything we do – including the choices to marry and have children – should be focused on serving God. If people shy away from the idea of steering children to have an influence, I don’t think it’s a good idea to get married at all. Save the money and use it for the kingdom somewhere else. Marriage is about making the best decisions you can in order to serve God, and you can’t marry someone who puts their own happiness over the need to produce that return for the boss.

Having said that, if you are already married, stick with it. I am advocating for making smarter decisions *before* you commit. And before you go off to college, ask yourself: is what you are thinking of studying worth it? Trade school is an excellent option that will give you an income that can support a family AND give to apologetics ministries, with less exposure to debt. If you must go to university, then it’s generally wiser to stick with STEM degrees, so that you can get a job and actually pay off those loans. Marriages and children are NOT free. Retirement is not free. Health care is not free. Christian apologetics ministries do not run on wishes and hopes. Christian scholars do not get their degrees for free – they need support. I think another good plan is to have one person do philosophy or history and then be supported by other people with jobs in STEM fields.

That’s what I do – I help out Christian scholars on my team to finish their graduate degrees in fields related to apologetics. Those non-STEM degrees are the best way to have an influence, but it’s easier to get them as a multi-disciplinary team effort. Everyone has to pull their weight!

And one last point. The most amazing thing in the world is when I meet people who are very very skeptical about mentoring young people and steering children towards prosperous and influential areas, even though they themselves may be facing the results of their own poor decisions. You would think that someone who has burned $60,000 on a degree in Women’s Studies and can’t find a job would be on your side about helping other young people to make better decisions, but they are often not on your side. Why is that? Somewhere along the way, this culture stopped liking the Mr. Knightleys who were praised for loving people by telling them the truth about their bad decisions. Now we think that the Emmas can do whatever they want, and no one should be giving them any guidance. How sad.

Trump cuckolds low information alt-right voters by reverting to 2013 pro-amnesty view

August 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump and his friends, the Clintons

The so-called "alt-right" is a group of secular leftist white nationalists who supported Trump in the GOP primary because they thought he would be tough on immigration. They called traditional conservatives "cuckservatives" because they thought that voting for GOP primary candidates who had a *record* of being tough on immigration was less important than insults and vulgarity. Well, just as policy-oriented conservatives predicted during the primary, Trump has reversed himself on his tough rhetoric and resumed the standard Democrat position on immigration: amnesty.

There are a whole bunch of posts about Trump's reversal on immigration policy over at the Conservatives 4 Ted Cruz hub.

I want to focus on the "I told you so" comments especially.

The Hill reports:

> Allies of Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) say the former Republican presidential candidate saw Donald Trump's "softening" on immigration coming.
>
> "Everything Trump promises comes with an expiration date," Amanda Carpenter, Cruz's former Senate communications director, told Politico on Wednesday.
>
> "We knew it during the primary, and now it is apparent he has duped his most loyal supporters on the issue they care about most, immigration," she said. "Don't say we didn't warn them."Chris Wilson, a top adviser during Cruz's Oval Office bid, told the news outlet that Trump's shift justifies Cruz's decision not to endorse Trump, the Republican presidential nominee.
>
> "It vindicates the speech, it vindicates what Ted Cruz warned would happen during the course of the campaign," he said, referencing Cruz's remarks at last

> month's Republican National Convention.
>
> "I do think, yes, the immigration point is another data point that he was right. It's another data point that leads people to understand Ted Cruz knew what he was talking about, he was making the right decision."
>
> Rick Tyler, Cruz's former campaign communications director, said that Trump's evolving stance seems like amnesty for illegal immigrants.
>
> "From what I have seen, he is now the pro-amnesty candidate," he told Politico.
>
> "If Trump is insistent on reversing himself on amnesty, then he will have fooled his entire base. He would have fooled enough people who voted for him to make him the Republican nominee. It's deceitful; it was a betrayal."

Cruz reminded voters during the primary: "Donald Trump will betray you on every issue. If you care about immigration, Donald is laughing at you":

This is what Trump was saying in 2013:

In his own words: Donald Trump embraces amnesty in August 2013

The alt-right beta-male cuckservative Trump supporters were willfully ignorant, and Trump cuckolded them. Cruz supporters predicted this. The alt-right cuckolds chose a candidate based on confident words, not on proven battling for conservative causes. They didn't know about Walker's war against the unions over collective bargaining, or Jindal's war against the Department of Education over vouchers or Cruz's war against the Rubio and Obama amnesties. They listened to Trump's words and foolishly misinterpreted his mocking insults and vulgarity as authenticity. Trump was, is and ever will be a Democrat with policies substantially similar to Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid the Democrats he donated to many, many times. If the alt-right had cared about policy and proven record, they would never have chosen Trump.

Here is everything you need to know about Trump supporters in one video:

That's every Trump supporter right there – including populist demagogues like Laura Ingraham, Sean Hannity, Rush Limbaugh, etc. Anyone who gave Trump any time at all to pretend to be a Republican, during the primary is that fool in the clip. That clip summarizes the whole primary. We had an educated, proven conservative who was defeated by low intelligence, low information voters.

I remember having conversations with my doctor, dentist, and other senior software

engineers in my office about Trump's obvious lack of intelligence. When we saw Trump answer questions in the debate, we instantly saw that Trump was not proficient in American history, structure of government, public policy, international affairs, economics, and so on. My dentist is a Democrat and the first thing he said to me was "how can you vote for a candidate who opposes free trade?" No conservative (or Christian) could vote for that, and to make it clear, none have. Trump gets his support from people like the one in the video – people who just don't know what they are talking about.

This is what the beta-male cucks in the alt-right voted for:

Trump's only skill in life was ability to inherit wealth. That's it. The rest of his life has been committing adultery, hosting beauty pageants and declaring bankruptcy several times. Trump is not qualified for any kind of professional work. The presidency is a professional job and requires experience, judgment and proven ability. If we want to have a free country with the rule of law, then we need the alt-right people to stop getting their marching orders from the National Enquirer.

New study: a good credit score is a key performance indicator for marriage success

August 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

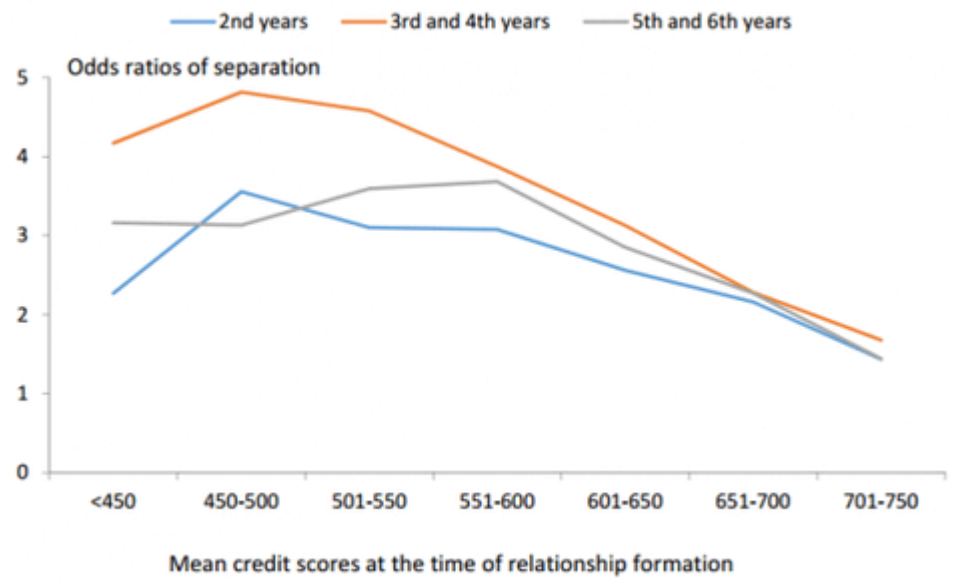

Financial responsibility is a key performance indicator for marriage success
Story from the leftist Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> When people are looking for a significant other, they often try to find someone whose values, education, earnings, hobbies and even height match their own. But new research suggests there's one promising measure for finding a committed partner that most daters overlook — credit scores.
>
> A credit score is a number that is supposed to reflect the risk of lending money to someone, based mostly on their past history of borrowing, repaying and defaulting on debt. Banks have long used credit scores to evaluate customers, but these days potential employers, landlords, insurance companies, cellphone companies and many other businesses do, too.
>
> A new working paper from the Federal Reserve Board that looks at what role credit scores play in committed relationships suggests that daters might want to start using the metric as well. The researchers found that credit scores — or whatever personal qualities credit scores might represent — actually play a pretty big role in whether people form and stay in committed relationships. People with higher credit scores are more likely to form committed relationships and marriages and then stay in them. In addition, how well matched the couple's credit scores are initially is a good predictor of whether they stay together in the long term.
>
> The paper analyzed a large proprietary data set of 12 million randomly selected U.S. consumers from the credit reporting agency Equifax over a period of about

> 15 years. Researchers used an algorithm to find a swathe of committed couples, including some who live together and are not legally married.
>
> They found that people with higher (i.e. better) credit scores are more likely to form a committed relationship, as the chart below shows. This was true even after controlling for other differences between partners, like education level, race or income.
>
> The researchers also found that having higher credit scores when they started the relationship meant that couples were less likely to separate over the next few years… In fact, for every extra 100 points in the couple's average credit score when beginning the relationship, their odds of splitting in the second year fell by around 30 percent.

So what do I want to say about this story? I want to tell you that marriage is not something that you just jump into when you feel like it, without any preparation. Relationships work well when both people have trained their character to be ready to do the most important thing in a relationship: *to commit*. And your credit score is a good measure of your ability to do that.

A high credit score is an excellent measure of a person's ability to be responsible with money, and to take their obligation to pay their money back seriously. Marriage is all about whether two people are comfortable with being responsible, and whether two people can put aside their desire for fun and thrills and meet their obligations, even when they don't feel like it. If a person is uncomfortable with marriage obligations, because it is too "transactional" and they want to be feelings-led, that's a clear sign they are not ready for a commitment through thick and thin. The credit score is a measure of one's ability to be responsible to others regardless of feelings and desires, and that's what you need to commit.

When I meet someone I am interested in for marriage, if they have problems with their education, career or finances, the first thing I do is to try to push them to study for a degree with a good employment rate, and good starting salaries. I push them to get good jobs with reputable companies, and to work in the summer if they are students. I push them to pay off their debts and start investing. I do this because I am trying to make them marriage-ready. That is, I am trying to get them to be comfortable with responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

One girl I used to mentor just got married. She started out living with her parents, doing a degree in English, and working minimum wage service jobs. Then something happened. She moved out of her parents house, got a real job, cut expenses, and married an employed non-student who works and saves money. They are both paying down debt like crazy, and she has a plan to invest soon. Most of what she did was self-directed, all I did was cheer, make suggestions and send the occasional gift. But she never viewed this advising and rewarding as "manipulative". She was happy to get the opinion of someone with qualifications in those areas. She didn't rebel against people who were leading her upward, she embraced it. Now she's committed to a man for life and they are executing a

sound plan to have an influence as Christians. It has not been easy for her. She is punching well above her weight now, though.

If you want to get married, you need to develop the ability to commit. That means that you need to get comfortable with self-sacrifice and self-denial. You need to change your character through studying hard things, working boring jobs, saving instead of spending, and investing early. These are the life experiences that change your character so that you are able to commit to another person for life.

Concealed carry permit holder uses legal firearm to defend police officer

August 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dylan Deboard received the Citizens Award of Valor on July 25, 2016 for assisting police officer

This story is from The Blaze.

Excerpt:

> An Ohio man with a concealed carry permit was presented Monday with a Citizens Award of Valor for coming to the aid of police officer under attack last year.
>
> Cpl. Michael Wheeler of Ohio's Mount Vernon Police Department told Inside Edition that he owes his life to Dylan DeBoard, the man who saved him.
>
> "Every time I see him, I let him know how much I appreciate what he did," he said.
>
> According to Wheeler, he was attacked last year by a homeless man who later admitted to being high on crystal meth. While he was attempting to subdue his attacker, the man knocked Wheeler to his back and straddled him. He ripped away his microphone and reached for his gun.
>
> Wheeler said that in his 14-year career he's "never been in that situation before."
>
> "I've always been able to take control of a situation," he said.
>
> According to Wheeler, all of a sudden, the man stopped struggling with him. He looked up to see a man with a gun.
>
> "I didn't know if he was pointing at me or [the attacker]," Wheeler said.
>
> Then the man with the gun — DeBoard — announced that he was a concealed

> carry holder. Wheeler was then able to use his attacker's hesitation to flip him over and handcuff him.
>
> **The officer said he is thankful for the opportunity to honor DeBoard for his actions. "I wish a lot more of society would do what he did," he added. "There were people standing around, but they were just watching. I kept wondering why people didn't do anything."**

I think the reason why the other bystanders were not doing anything is because they were not armed, they were not trained to use a firearm, and they did not have moral clarity. We have lost moral clarity because we surround ourselves with nonsense on television where celebrity is more important than heroic character.

First, let's talk about the training factor. To get a concealed carry permit in Ohio, you have to complete a course on handgun safety, pass a written test and you also have to pass a marksmanship test. This is because the evaluators do not want you to bring disrepute on legal firearm ownership because you aren't qualified to use the tool you are carrying responsibly. The safety and accuracy test is quite difficult, depending on the state – you might be asked to hit 4″ targets at 5, 10 and 15 yards, for example, with 20 out of 25 rounds fired. That's not easy!

Previously, I blogged about a report that showed that concealed-carry permit holders commit crimes at a lower rate than police officers. This is because the people who get these permits are careful not to do anything to lose them. They want to be safe, but they are also there to watch out for others. It is very important that we recognize that there are some people in our society who make poor choices (e.g. – drug use), and that we need the ability to defend ourselves and others from them.

Pastor Mark Driscoll explains reality of sin, the centrality of Jesus Christ

August 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Mark Driscoll has a series he does called “Best Sermon Ever”, where he invites other pastors to give their sermons. But today’s sermon really is the Best Sermon Ever, but it’s given by Mark Driscoll (sent to me by super-Wife McKenzie). I asked McKenzie to send me the best sermon she had ever heard, and now it’s the best sermon that I have ever heard.

As always, when dealing with Mark Driscoll, we note that he does not hold women accountable to the Bible on moral issues, but instead deflects responsibility for the bad decisions of women to men, often to non-Christian men who don’t even have objective morality . Nevertheless, I agree with him 99.9% of the time, and I think you will agree when you listen to the sermon that this man has a gift for preaching. I could not find a single thing wrong with this sermon, I give it a score of 12 billion out of 10.

This is the link to his web site that has the sermon, the audio and the full transcript. The title of the sermon is “The Father of a Murdered Son”.

This is a Youtube video that someone uploaded: (audio only)

Here is the beginning of the sermon:

> Luke 20:9–18, “The Father of a Murdered Son.”
>
> “And he,” that is Jesus, “began to tell the people this parable,” which is a small story that tells a big truth. “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he

> sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.'
>
> "But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.' And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him."
>
> Jesus here is on his way to Jerusalem. He is days from his crucifixion. He is going to be murdered in a brutal and bloody way. And as he's approaching the cross and the crowds have gathered around him, he wants us to see human history and our lives individually from the perspective of God.
>
> And this is very important because we live in a day where this is not encouraged. This is actually discouraged. We live in a day in which we want to see our lives and history from our perspective according to our own sinful desires and our own selfish pursuits, which can then even lead us to the point of questioning, is there a God? Or if there is a God, questioning the goodness of God. Is there a God? Does he care? Is he involved? Does he love us? And then we put ourselves in the position of judging God.
>
> And then some of us can even go to the Scriptures and say, "I don't think God should ever get angry. He should never judge anyone. That whole issue of hell seems highly unnecessarily and over-reactionary. Perhaps, that was primitive teaching from a former day, thankfully we've evolved beyond that." And it's because we are the guilty looking at the judge and wanting to replace our position with his that we might judge him.
>
> **WHO DOES EACH CHARACTER IN THE PARABLE REPRESENT?**
>
> Jesus here wants for us to have an opportunity, in as much as we're able, with a three-pound, fallen brain and sinful proclivity and self-interest to put a hat on and to look at things, not from our perspective, but from God's perspective, to see our lives as God sees them, to see human history as God sees it. Now we're not God, so we have a limited capacity to do this. But in telling this parable, Jesus is trying to open our understanding to what it is like for God to deal with you and me and us. And he does so in the form of a parable.
>
> For us to extract significant meaning from the parable, it requires that we go through, look at each of the characters and ask, to whom does that refer?

I can't really excerpt this sermon. You simply must listen to all of it.

If you are anything like me, this sermon is going to hold you accountable about whether you are doing everything you can to tell non-Christians about Jesus, and why his actions are the most important events ever to occur in history. I listened to it and I immediately sat down and wrote an 1100 word essay to *very* special woman about my life, and how I would like to be more faithful as a Christian in service to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In particular, I thought of my co-workers who are Muslim, Hindu and Jewish, and how important it is for me to let them know that they can ask me about the story of Jesus and that I will tell them the gospel. It made me think about how much I would like my non-Christian co-workers to hear the gospel, and understand who Jesus claimed to be, and the significance of his actions.

It took me an hour to write this essay to the special lady, and I credit the sermon with stimulating me to write out my innermost thoughts about how Christ saved me, and what I would like to be doing in response.

Five liberal Democrat policies that hurt minorities

August 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

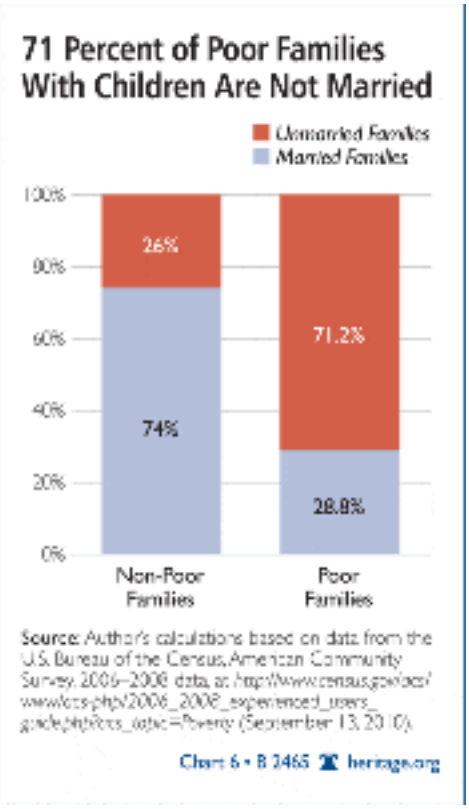

Marriage and Poverty

The five policies are:

- higher minimum wage rates
- opposition to school voucher programs
- releasing criminals from jail
- affirmative action
- single mother welfare

This article is by Jason L. Riley, and it appeared in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> At the urging of labor unions, President Obama has pushed for higher minimum wages that price a disproportionate percentage of blacks out of the labor force. At the urging of teachers unions, he has fought voucher programs that give ghetto children access to better schools.
>
> Both policies have a lengthy track record of keeping millions of blacks ill-educated and unemployed. Since the 1970s, when the federal government began tracking the racial achievement gap, black test scores in math, reading and science have on average trailed far behind those of their white classmates. And minimum-wage mandates have been so effective for so long at keeping blacks out of work that 1930, the last year in which there was no federal minimum-wage

> law, was also the last year that the black unemployment rate was lower than the white rate. For the past half-century, black joblessness on average has been double that of whites.
>
> Last week the Justice Department said it would release some 6,000 inmates from federal prison starting later this month. The goal, according to the White House, is to ease overcrowding and roll back tough sentencing rules implemented in the 1980s and ’90s.
>
> But why are the administration’s sympathies with the lawbreakers instead of their usual victims—the mostly law-abiding residents in low-income communities where many of these inmates eventually are headed? In dozens of large U.S. cities, violent crime, including murder, has climbed over the past year, and it is hard to see how these changes are in the interest of public safety.
>
> The administration assures skeptics that only “nonviolent” drug offenders will be released, but who pays the price if we guess wrong, as officials have so often done in the past?
>
> When Los Angeles asked the Rand Corp. in the 1990s to identify inmates suitable for early release, the researchers concluded that “almost no one housed in the Los Angeles jails could be considered non-serious or simply troublesome to their local communities” and that “jail capacity should be expanded so as to allow lengthier incarceration of the more dangerous.”
>
> A 2002 federal report tracked the recidivism rate of some 91,000 supposedly nonviolent offenders in 15 states over a three-year period. More than 21% wound up rearrested for violent crimes, including more than 700 murders and more than 600 rapes. The report also noted the difficulty of identifying low-risk inmates. Auto thieves were rearrested for committing more than a third of the homicides and a disproportionate share of other violent offenses.

Keep in mind that when criminals are release, they don’t go move into wealthy progressive neighborhoods. It’s not the wealthy leftists elites who have to deal with the released inmates. It’s the poor, low-income minority neighborhoods that have to deal with them.

By the way, I covered the minimum wage argument here, and I covered the school choice argument here.

That covers the first 3 policies. This article from The College Fix covers the fourth policy, affirmative action.

It says:

> A UCLA law professor critiques affirmative action as detrimental to the very people it strives to aid: minority students.
>
> Professor Richard Sander, though liberal-leaning, has deemed affirmative action practices as harmful, a notion that contradicts a liberal view in college admissions, said Stuart Taylor, a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings

> Institution.
>
> […]Sander began teaching law at UCLA in 1989. After a few years he garnered an interest in academic support and asked permission to analyze which strategies most effectively assist struggling students.
>
> After reviewing statistics on performance, especially those of students with lower academic merit, he noticed correlations between race and academic success.
>
> "I was struck by both the degree to which it correlated with having weak academic entering credentials and its correlation with race," Sander said in a recent interview with *The College Fix.* "And as I looked into our admissions process I realized that we were giving really a large admissions preference."
>
> Sander noticed that students admitted into the law school with lower academic credentials than their peers had significantly lower percentages of passing the Multistate Bar Examination, Sander said. This especially pertained to minority students who were given special consideration in the admittance process due to their race rather than their academic preparedness.
>
> He then began thinking about whether or not these students would have better chances of succeeding if they went to a less elite university, he said.
>
> He called this discrepancy a mismatch; when minority students with lower credentials than their peers are accepted into more challenging universities and then suffer academically as a result.

And the fifth policy is welfare. Welfare encourages women to not marry the men that they have sex with, since they will lose their single mother benefits if they do. Children who are raised fatherless are more likely to struggle in a number of areas, and they are especially likely to be poor. What we should be doing (if we really want to help the poor) is paying people to get married and stay married. But Democrats are opposed to that. The connection between welfare, fatherlessness, poverty and crime is explained in a previous post.

Clemson University forbids man from praying on campus, calls it “solicitation”

August 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ratio Christi event at Ohio State University featuring Frank Turek

Young America’s Foundation reports on the latest attack on Constitutional rights by the secular leftists on campus.

This time from Clemson University, in South Carolina:

> On Thursday afternoon, an administrator at Clemson University forced a man praying on campus to leave because he was not in a designated free speech zone and was not permitted to “solicit” outside of one.
>
> Shawn Jones, assistant director for client services at Clemson, approached the man praying near the Fort Hill section of campus around 3:15 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 25, asking him to leave because he was not in a “designated free speech area” and “solicitation” was not permitted outside of one.
>
> Young Americans for Freedom member Kyra Palange confronted Jones on camera, questioning why he forced the individual to stop praying.
>
> **Jones can be seen explaining that the entire campus is not, in fact, a free speech zone and the man would need to follow bureaucratic procedure in order to pray in that particular area.**

Video:

Here is what happened to the student

> In an exclusive statement to Young America’s Foundation, Palange provided her

> account of the events that unfolded:
>
> I was walking across the grassy area near Fort Hill after class at about 3:15 when I saw someone sitting in a folding chair. Next to him was another folding chair with an 8×10 sign that said PRAYER. I approached him and we sat down to pray for a few minutes. When we finished, a man from the university approached us and said he could not be praying there because it was not a “designated free speech area” and presented the person who was praying with a form for the procedures for applying for “solicitation” on campus. He told him he had to leave.
>
> Attention Clemson: The entire United States of America is a free speech zone. If an American wants to exercise their religion, they should be able to do it regardless of whether or not they are in a “designated free speech area.” And silently offering prayer to anyone who wants to take part is not “solicitation.”

I have a friend who did computer science at Clemson, and worked for one of the top software engineering firms. I sent this to her today, and advised her not to give money to Clemson. Seriously, unless you graduated from Grove City College, or the like, you should never give money to your alma mater. I always reply to solicitations from mine asking them about their assault on pro-life campus clubs and Christian clubs. They understand money. And you shouldn’t be giving them any.

I think forcing a person to not pray is pretty much an automatic ticket to Hell, by the way. Maybe not theologically, but yes. Really bad. Don’t take any job where they make you do things that land you in Hell.

Two reasons to avoid premarital sex: trust issues and contact with exes

August 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
This is from Family Studies blog. (H/T Brad Wilcox)

Excerpt:.

> My own research with working-class young adults leads me to believe that they have basically made peace with sexual permissiveness—at least outside of marriage—even as they retain some ambivalence about it. They tend to move in quickly with new romantic partners, even as they worry that people rush too quickly into relationships. From survey data, we know that people without a college education have more lifetime sexual partners than those with a college education, and that most of them see no problem with premarital sex.
>
> But there is one problem: easy access to sex with multiple partners can make for complicated relationships. As sexual partners accumulate, so does the potential for distrust. As one man whose ex-girlfriend had cheated on him explained, “It’s gonna take a lot more time for me to ever trust somebody again like that. I let her in quick, and now it’s never gonna happen again.” One divorced man said simply, “Everyone has to watch their ass all the time.” There is the feeling that no one is safe—even in marriage. As another young man claimed, “Nowadays, even though you got a ring on your finger, people tend to look past that.”
>
> So people describe keeping vigilant watch over their partners’ cell phones, policing for messages from exes. They live an all but married lifestyle, yet they say that they are hesitant to make the commitment of marriage. Why? Part of the reason is that they don’t trust their partner, or themselves, to remain in the marriage. In one survey, 42.5 percent of low-income, unmarried respondents

> cited “worry that the marriage would end in divorce” as a reason they might not be pursuing marriage, and 23.5 percent cited “questions about whether your partner is trustworthy.” As one young man that I interviewed said after learning that his fiancée was cheating on him, “I don’t trust nobody.”
>
> **That distrust is at least partly the legacy of the libertarian sexual ethic, which assumes that sexual activity outside of marriage is typically okay so long as people are mutually consenting to the acts. And that distrust is why I have a hard time believing—as Noah Smith does—that sexual permissiveness will somehow evolve into more stable marriages for the working class. (Indeed, having more sexual partners prior to marriage is linked to greater odds of divorce, as Nicholas Wolfinger and W. Bradford Wilcox recently documented.) There is no invisible hand that will transform James and Jessica’s distrust and cynicism, which stems in part from their multiple past sexual relationships, into trust and an enduring marriage. What the working class needs—what we all need—to achieve our shared aspirations for lifelong love and a stable family is social permission to date without immediately having sex.**
>
> That’s important because today young people often assume that withholding sex is a sign of distrust. As James said, if you begin a relationship and don’t have sex, “they automatically assume that you’re cheating.” But sliding into sex often translates into sliding into a relationship—and children—without first building trust and discerning for character and compatibility. And that slide often contributes to the erosion of trust in the opposite sex and in lifelong love. We must confront that reality if we’re serious about empowering working young adults to achieve trusting relationships.

“Withholding sex” makes it sound bad. You don’t have sex or even do sexual things before marriage because you are trying to prove to your partner that you have self-control enough that when you are married, he/she need not be concerned that you are OK with sex outside of a lifelong commitment. You restrain yourself in order to prove to the other person that you have what it takes in order to be trusted, and the other person does the same to you. It’s not that you are trying to reduce the amount of “fun” you are having, it’s that you are auditioning for a role, and this is what the other person needs to see from you during the courtship – chastity. Chastity demonstrates to them that the commitment you are offering is not based on things that fade, like beauty or youth.

William Lane Craig explains the faith enterprise in an 8-minute video

August 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

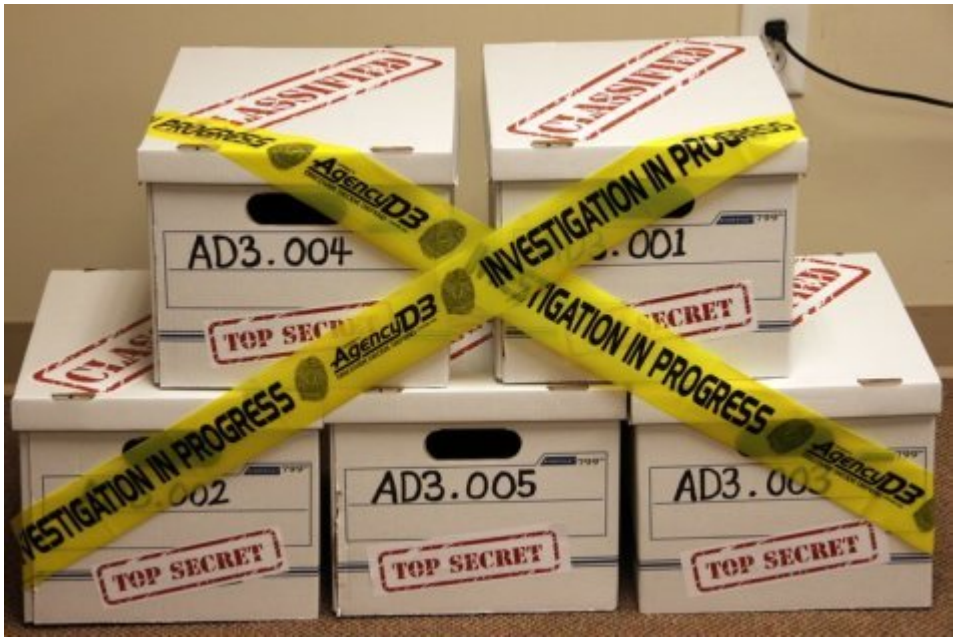

Investigation in progress

I found the video below on the blog of my friend Eric Chabot, who just recently hosted Michael Licona at the Ohio State University. I am hopeful we will get the recording of that soon, and I heard it was a very good lecture and a good turnout.

Here is the video, featuring Dr. William Lane Craig:

When I was doing my undergraduate degree, I had an atheist friend who was super smart, and he once surprised me by announcing that he had read the gospel of John. Flabbergasted, I asked him why. He said "I just wanted to see what all the fuss was about". Indeed. And this video from Dr. Craig explains to you what all the fuss is about. This is basically everything that everyone – Christian or non-Christian – should know about what Christianity is about. This is what I wish all my co-workers knew about me.

I really wish that non-Christians could understand how different Christianity is is from other religions, because it is true. Half my family is Muslim, the other half is Hindu and some Catholic. There is literally *nothing cognitive going on* in the spiritual journeys of my Muslim and Hindu friends and family members. But Christianity is so different from that – it is truth-centered. Anyway, in the rest of this post, I'll describe three striking things about the Christian worldview.

Christianity is testable

First, the Christian worldview is testable scientifically and historically. There are claims made about the external world in Christianity. For example, creation is a major doctrine in the Bible, and in Romans 1, Psalm 19 and other places, God explains to us through his human scribes that the nature of the world (created, designed) is there to prove to us that there is a Creator and Designer. If the universe were eternal, and complex embodied

life common for any permutation of the constants and quantities that are built into the fabric of the universe, that would be evidence for atheism. And the same with history. As 1 Corinthians 15 says, if the historical person of Jesus did not die and was not seen alive after by *large numbers of* friends, skeptics, and enemies, then there is no point in being a Christian. Christianity started out as a movement in the very time and place where the events that make it significant happened. There was no long delay between the central events, and the earliest proclamation of those events. So, you can test scientifically and historically. If the universe did not begin to exist, and if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Christianity would be disproved. These are things that anyone can investigate, but some people do not because they are afraid about what they will find, and how much they will have to adjust to God's existence and character.

Christianity is hard

Second, Christianity is not something that you get into because you need a crutch or because it enhances your life. It is not done in order to fit in with your family or with your culture or with your nation's dominant religion. Christianity is designed to not be fun, to not be easy, to not make you popular. In fact, one of the ways that you know that you are a real Christian and that God is leading you, is *because* God allows you to suffer, and *because* some people around you don't like you, and *because* your career and finances and so on are a little harder because now there is God to worry about in the decision-making, and not just you. It's like being married. A good marriage takes work because it is a commitment to another person. The more you learn about God through your study of science, history, theology and apologetics, the more you love him. And the more you love him, the more you *choose* to adjust your priorities and actions in a way that will invest in the relationship, instead of just what is best for you.

Christianity is effective

Third, Christianity is not about just being passive, having feelings and doing private things like prayer, singing and attending church. Christianity, when done right, involves projecting your beliefs outward. Evangelism, the practice of telling non-Christians the truth about Christianity, is not optional for Christians. Although many other religions dislike Christians for evangelizing, and some even use coercion and force to stop us, it is our responsibility. Many Christians seek to augment their evangelism by learning how to answer objections to Christianity, and how to make a case for the truth of core Christian beliefs. This involves studying philosophy, as well as scientific and historical evidence. And then there are other things to do – like organizing talks with good scholars on university campuses, and funding them through your job. Giving to charities that protect religious liberty, promote the pro-life message, and natural marriage. Those last two are important, because Christians care about children, since they are made by God, in order to know God, and selfish adults must be convinced control themselves. Christians often get involved in politics, seeking to limit the power of the secular government to infringe on human rights, to promote economic growth and to support the military when they engage in just wars. Christians often serve in the police force or the military, because we

seek to restrain and destroy evil and protect the good.

You should use this video as a way to think again about what your life is about. Have you investigated the evidence for Christianity? Have you made an effort to find answers to your objections to Christianity? Have you thought about how to live out your Christianity and make a difference for Christ and his Kingdom? What's your plan?

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Gay rights fascists bully man who donated against transgender agenda

August 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

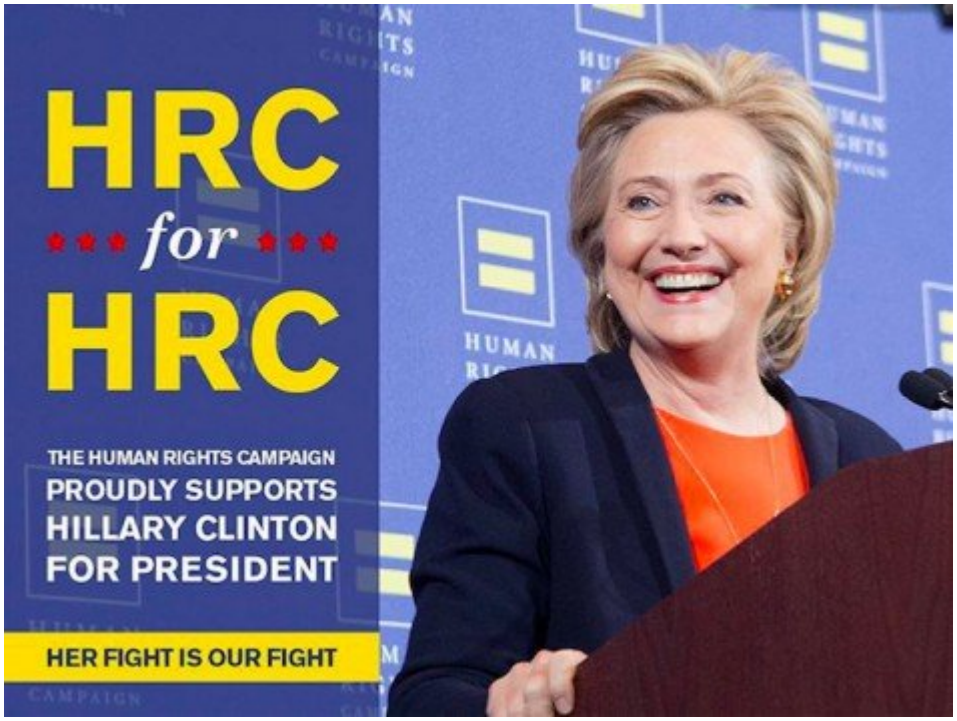

Hillary Clinton and her ally, the Human Rights Campaign

Katy tweeted this interesting story from the Family Policy Institute, about events that just happened recently in Seattle.

Excerpt:

> A popular chef got cooked last week. By the tolerance mob.
>
> Chef John Howie owns a number of Seattle area restaurants and is also the chef for the Seattle Seahawks. By all account he's a really decent guy; generous and active in the community. But isn't that kind of what you'd expect from the guy preparing Russell Wilson's food?
>
> In addition to being a decent guy, Chef Howie made a modest contribution earlier this year to the Just Want Privacy campaign in Washington State.
>
> Just Want Privacy sought to repeal a dangerous new law that gives men the legal right to be present in a women's bathroom, locker room, spa, or changing facility simply by declaring themselves to be female.
>
> The chef was apparently part of the more than 70% of Washingtonians who believe it is problematic to take away the right to privacy women and children have long enjoyed in private spaces.
>
> Probably because he is visible and active in the community, last week the *Seattle Times* and others from the LGBT mob decided to make an example out of him.

Prompted by gay activists, the Seattle Times printed a story about his donation, then:

> […][W]ithin twenty-four hours, Chef Howie had created a video recanting his previous statement.
>
> The video was quickly distributed by a number of local LGBT activists groups including the *Seattle Times.*
>
> You really need to watch the video.
>
> We've all seen statements written by terrorists that were read by hostages. The similarities are inescapable. You kind of expect there to be a rainbow flag and a guy in a mask holding a knife standing behind him.
>
> An obviously shaken Howie opened with an apology. "I'm sorry to the people that I have harmed or negatively affected with my words or my actions."
>
> Stating an opinion about privacy in bathrooms is now apparently harmful all by itself.
>
> The chef promised to never support another effort to protect women's privacy again and concluded by assuring the audience that, "I am reaching out to several leaders in the LGBT community so they can help me to understand their challenges so that I can help them in the future."
>
> Translation, "Yes, I'll give you money when you ask for it."
>
> Everyone understands what happened. They shook him down.

What do we learn from this? Well, we learn that gay activists don't tolerate views other than their own. It's not just that they want to push their views through government, it's that they don't want people who disagree with them to earn a living.

A similar thing happened with the former CEO of Mozilla, Brendan Eich. He made a donation to a pro-marriage group, and then he was forced out of work by the "tolerant" secular leftists.

Do you have an opinion on whether men should be allowed to go into women's showers and women's change rooms? If you do, and you either speak it under your own name, or make a donation under your own name, then you should expect the gay activists to go after you and stop you from working. They've done it before with florists, bakers, photographers, bed and breakfast owners, and now even a chef.

I disagree with the people on the other side. But I don't go after their livelihoods, because they have families, too. That's the difference between us and them, I guess.

What are some reasons why God might allow his creatures to suffer?

August 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

There's an interesting article posted at Belief Map.

He sets up the possible reasons with a very good explanation of the structure of the argument. His explanation allows him to balance the existence of suffering with "greater goods".

Most Christians can name some of the ones that he talks about: free will, character formation, etc.

But what about this quote from a section entitled "Worldly people turning to seek God is good":

> **Seeking fellowship with God is a great good (especially in the context of eternity)**. This is relevant because, with less suffering, fewer would seek God. Indeed,
>
> • "Religiosity declines as worldly prosperity of individuals rises."[2005 WIN-Gallup International poll][1]
>
> • Studies confirm that Christianity grows most rapidly during hardships.[2]
>
> • It is intuitively clear that suffering *would* lead us to turn to God.[3]
>
> • **Eleonore Stump** (Philosophy professor at Saint Louis): "Natural evil—the pain of disease, the intermittent and unpredictable destruction of natural disasters, the decay of old age, the imminence of death—takes away a person's satisfaction with himself. It tends to humble him, show him his frailty, make him reflect on the transience of temporal goods, and turn his affections towards other-worldly

> things, away from the things of this world." ["The Problem of Evil" *Faith and Philosophy*, 2 (1985): 409.]

A bit later, it says this:

> This is not to say God causes suffering, or even that that God permits suffering to bring this about. It only says the world is better to at least some degree for God's not preventing it for a time, and God's knowing that could factor into overriding his reasons to prevent suffering.
>
> For example:
>
> • Peter van Inwagen: "If God did what is proposed, we should all be satisfied with our existence–or at least a lot closer to being satisfied than most of us are now. And if we are satisfied with our existence, why should we even consider turning to God and asking for His help? An essential and important component of God's plan of Atonement—this constitutes an addition to our theodicy—is to make us dissatisfied with our state of separation from Him; and not by miraculously altering our values or by subjecting us to illusion or by causing us suffering that has no natural connection with our separation, but simply by allowing us to 'live with' the natural consequences of this separation, and by making it as difficult as possible for us to delude ourselves about the kind of world we live in: a hideous world, much of whose hideousness is quite plainly traceable to the inability of human beings to govern themselves to or order their own lives. Let us expand our theodicy: An essential part of God's plan of Atonement for separated humanity is for human beings to perceive that a natural consequence of human beings' attempting to order their own lives is a hideous world—a world that is hideous not only by His standards, but by the very standards they themselves accept." ["The Magnitude, Duration, and Distribution of Evil: A Theodicy" Philosophical Topics Vol XVI, No. 2 (1988): 174.]
>
> […]
>
> • Paul Moser (Philosophy professor at Loyola University Chicago): "We can make some sense, in Paul's wake, of why a perfectly loving God would allow certain kinds of pain and suffering. This God, as perfectly loving, would be after something more valuable than human sensory pleasure and the satisfaction of worldly human wants. God would hope that people be liberated from deadly idols in virtue of trusting God as the authoritative Lord who provides genuine human security and contentment, come what may in this world. This divine hope could thus make good use of allowing pain and suffering among us rather than protecting us from all pain and suffering. This would be part of God's redemptive judgment of human idols, by bringing them to noticeable futility, for the sake of reconciliation of humans to God in volitional fellowship with God. It would be judgment intended, at least characteristically, to correct humans from their reliance on futile idols and to restore them to their creator and sustainer in

> volitional fellowship." [The Elusive God (Cambridge, 2008), 42.]

And even mentioned in Scripture itself:

> • Psalm 119:71 — It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.
>
> • Philippians 4:12-14 — I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

If you want to check out some of the other reasons, then click through and read the article here. I think it's worth it to read something if I learn something new, and I found some new competing goods to God's permission of suffering in the article. I like the references to academic work and the Bible, too.

Football player sees autistic boy sitting alone at lunch, sits with him

September 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Florida State University football player sees an opportunity to make things right and takes it

Here's a story from WGN Chicago that I want to comment about.

Excerpt:

> While visiting Montford Middle School with teammates on Tuesday, Florida State University wide receiver Travis Rudolph spotted a boy sitting by himself at lunch, and asked if he could sit next to him according to the Orlando Sentinel.
>
> Later in the day, Bo Paske's mom posted a photo to Facebook that is capturing hearts.
>
> "I'm not sure what exactly made this incredibly kind man share a lunch table with my son, but I'm happy to say that it will not soon be forgotten," she wrote.
>
> "He started off and was so open," Rudolph told the newspaper. "He told me his name was Bo, and how much he loves Florida State, and he went from there."
>
> Rudolph is the Seminoles' leading returning receiver, and in addition to earning the praise of his coaches, gained a mother's love, who says they're now FSU fans for life.
>
> "This is one day I didn't have to worry if my sweet boy ate lunch alone, because he sat across from someone who is a hero in many eyes," the mom stated in her post.

Here's some of what the mother of the boy said in her post:

> Now that I have a child starting middle school, I have feelings of anxiety for him, and they can be overwhelming if I let them. Sometimes I'm grateful for his autism. That may sound like a terrible thing to say, but in some ways I think, I

> hope, it shields him. He doesn't seem to notice when people stare at him when he flaps his hands. He doesn't seem to notice that he doesn't get invited to birthday parties anymore. And he doesn't seem to mind if he eats lunch alone. It's one of my daily questions for him. Was there a time today you felt sad? Who did you eat lunch with today? Sometimes the answer is a classmate, but most days it's nobody. Those are the days I feel sad for him, but he doesn't seem to mind. He is a super sweet child, who always has a smile and hug for everyone he meets. A friend of mine sent this beautiful picture to me today and when I saw it with the caption "Travis Rudolph is eating lunch with your son" I replied "who is that?" He said "FSU football player", then I had tears streaming down my face. Travis Rudolph, a wide receiver at Florida State, and several other FSU players visited my sons school today. I'm not sure what exactly made this incredibly kind man share a lunch table with my son, but I'm happy to say that it will not soon be forgotten. This is one day I didn't have to worry if my sweet boy ate lunch alone, because he sat across from someone who is a hero in many eyes. Travis Rudolph thank you so much, you made this momma exceedingly happy, and have made us fans for life!

I am friends with a number of high achieving, dedicated Christians. A lot of them are very focused on school and work, and it doesn't help that I bully them to get good grades and make money. But I worry sometimes about whether, when they read their Bibles, they are really getting the message of taking care of their neighbors. I want them to have the same heart as the football player did in the story, to sit down and spend time with those who are needy or awkward or unpopular.

I remember growing up very poor, and being a different color than all the well-off white students in the school. I would often go to school with messy hair and torn or faded clothes, because we just didn't have the money to buy me expensive polo shirts like some of the other kids wore. My parents were immigrants. I didn't get invited to many birthday parties, either. I know what it feels like to sit alone at a table because of things that I can't control being uncomfortable for others.

The Bible actually has something to say about it.

Luke 10:25-37:

> 25 And a [a]lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
>
> 26 And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? [b]How does it read to you?"
>
> 27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."
>
> 28 And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."
>
> 29 But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
>
> 30 Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and

> fell among robbers, and they stripped him and [c]beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.
>
> 31 And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.
>
> 32 Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.
>
> 33 But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,
>
> 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.
>
> 35 On the next day he took out two [d]denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.'
>
> 36 Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?"
>
> 37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do [e]the same."

I will say that today it can be difficult to reach out to the other, especially since so many on the secular left make it a condition of talking to them that you agree with them, that you hide your faith and convictions, that you celebrate everything that they are doing even if it is sinful and destructive. They are so intolerant that they even try to get you fired if you disagree with them on moral issues. Still, there are some non-leftist people who are not popular and who will let you be who you are safely. The man who was beat up was a victim of forces outside of his control, he was being immoral and demanding that everyone celebrate his immorality. He was safe to help.

As long as I am free to be who I am as a Christian, what is it the harm of sitting with unpopular people? After all, as long as I'm an open Christian, I'm probably not going to be accepted by the popular crowd anyway. Sin is popular, today. Drinking and hooking up and sexual immorality are popular. I think we ought to be looking for opportunities to be open and welcoming to those who do not force us to hide our faith and deny our moral convictions. For those people who are "safe", we shouldn't resent their demands. Another person's needs shouldn't be a deterrent to reaching out to them. Their hostility to our faith and moral convictions might be, if we judge them to be dangerous.

And I think this openness to opportunity is even more important, if they are asking for advice on spiritual things. Every person was made to know God, and when a person comes to you and asks about God, that makes them the most important person in the world. You have to drop everything and handle that opportunity.

What is Jesus’ view of the definition of marriage?

September 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

I noticed that there is some silly video put out by the atheists at BuzzFeed where a bunch of people claiming to be Christians deny that Jesus has any authority in their worldview.

Here’s what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?”
>
> 4 He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”
>
> 7 They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” 8
>
> He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is

> better not to marry."
>
> 11 But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don't overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are supposed to be willing to endure suffering rather than side with non-Christians against God's authority. So really not sure what the BuzzFeed non-Christians are doing in that video.

Matt Walsh had a fine article about the Buzzfeed video.

He said:

> As Christians, our goal is not to avoid being like the big bad "other Christians," but to strive to be like Christ Himself. This is one of the advantages to having an Incarnate God. He went around acting and speaking and teaching and generally functioning in our realm, thereby giving us a model to follow. This is the model of a loving and merciful man, and *also* a man of perfect virtue who fought against the forces of evil, condemned sin, defended his Father in Heaven with sometimes violent force, spoke truth, and eventually laid down His life for those He loved (which would be all of us).
>
> […]This is what it means to believe in Christ. Not just to believe that He existed, but to believe that Christ is Truth itself, and that everything He said and did was totally and absolutely and irreversibly true forever and always. Many Christians today — not only the ones in the video, but millions alongside them — seem to think we can rightly claim to have "faith" in Jesus or a "relationship" with Him while still categorically denying much of His Word. This is a ridiculous proposition. We can't declare, in one breath, that Christ is Lord, and in the next suggest that maybe God got it wrong on this or that point. Well, we *can* make that declaration, but we expose our belief as fraudulent and self-serving. We worship a God we either invented in our heads, which is a false idol, or a God who is fallible, which is a false idol.

If you really accept Jesus as God, then you can't think he is wrong when he explains what marriage is. Period. End of issue.

Real Christians don't make excuses for sin. Real Christians present the gospel. The gospel is that all men have rebelled against God and fallen short of perfect submission to and obedience of him. For this, they deserve to be separated from God eternally. Jesus paid the price for this rebellion on the cross, and anyone who accepts him as Savior *and Lord* will be with God eternally after they die. There is no salvation apart from Jesus. That's what Christians say. And they say it regardless of how weird they look, and how many

non-Christians don’t like them for saying it.

Why are college tuition and college textbooks so expensive?

September 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

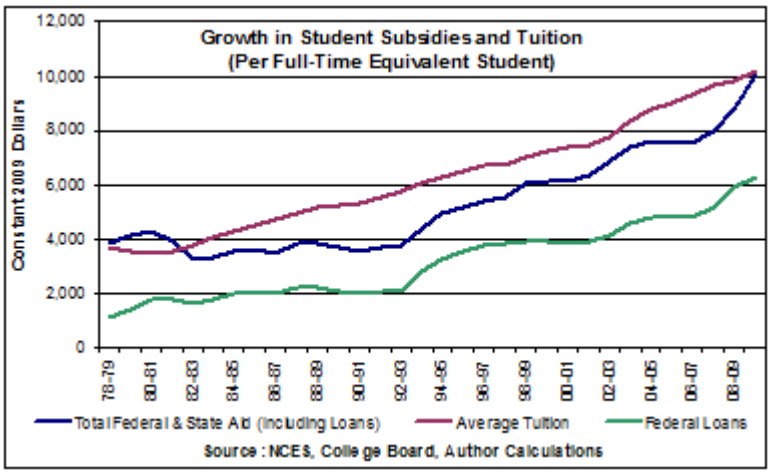

As subsidies increase, so do tuition costs

This article from Investors Business Daily is very helpful.

It says:

> Grey Gordon and Aaron Hedlund, economists at Indiana University and the University of Missouri, developed a method to test various explanations for the share rise in tuition costs. Is it state funding cuts? Or the increased wage premium for a college degree? Or is it related to general cost increases in the services industries?
>
> Not exactly. In a working paper published by the National Bureau of Economic Research the economists report that these factors contributed insignificantly to the rapid rise in tuition between 1987 and 2010.
>
> What did account for almost all of it was, ironically enough, the massive explosion in federal aid over the past several decades. Federal aid — in the form of subsidized loans, grants and tax credits — shot up 134% in the past 15 years, according to the College Board. It's climbed 22% just under President Obama.
>
> Combined with state aid, the government is pouring more than $239 billion a year into programs designed to make college less expensive.
>
> What the authors found is that all this aid money has simply let college administrators spend more and jack up tuition to pay for it, without hurting enrollment. The result is there to see for anyone who visits a college campus these days — gourmet kitchens, luxurious dorms, shiny new administrative buildings, beautiful landscapes, state of the art workout facilities, etc.
>
> […]Not only does the increased federal aid lead to higher tuition, the authors found, but it perversely leads to "more debt, and in the absence of higher labor market returns, more loan default inevitably occurs."

This hypothesis – that it is government subsidies that drive up tuition rates – is supported in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

This is by Paul F. Campos, law professor at the radically leftist UC Boulder, explains that government handouts is causing the rise in college tuition:

> […][T]he astonishing rise in college tuition correlates closely with a huge increase in public subsidies for higher education. If over the past three decades car prices had gone up as fast as tuition, the average new car would cost more than $80,000.
>
> […]As the baby boomers reached college age, state appropriations to higher education skyrocketed, increasing more than fourfold in today's dollars, from $11.1 billion in 1960 to $48.2 billion in 1975. By 1980, state funding for higher education had increased a mind-boggling 390 percent in real terms over the previous 20 years. This tsunami of public money did not reduce tuition: quite the contrary.

But where is the money going? Is it mostly going to research? To the classroom? To hire more and better professors?

No:

> Interestingly, increased spending has not been going into the pockets of the typical professor. Salaries of full-time faculty members are, on average, barely higher than they were in 1970. Moreover, while 45 years ago 78 percent of college and university professors were full time, today half of postsecondary faculty members are lower-paid part-time employees, meaning that the average salaries of the people who do the teaching in American higher education are actually quite a bit lower than they were in 1970.
>
> **By contrast, a major factor driving increasing costs is the constant expansion of university administration. According to the Department of Education data, administrative positions at colleges and universities grew by 60 percent between 1993 and 2009, which Bloomberg reported was 10 times the rate of growth of tenured faculty positions.**
>
> **Even more strikingly, an analysis by a professor at California Polytechnic University, Pomona, found that, while the total number of full-time faculty members in the C.S.U. system grew from 11,614 to 12,019 between 1975 and 2008, the total number of administrators grew from 3,800 to 12,183 — a 221 percent increase.**

Do you wonder why college is so liberal? It's because instead of hiring professors to teach you how to do useful work for money, they are hiring useless administrators who just enforce politically correct secular leftism onto the students.

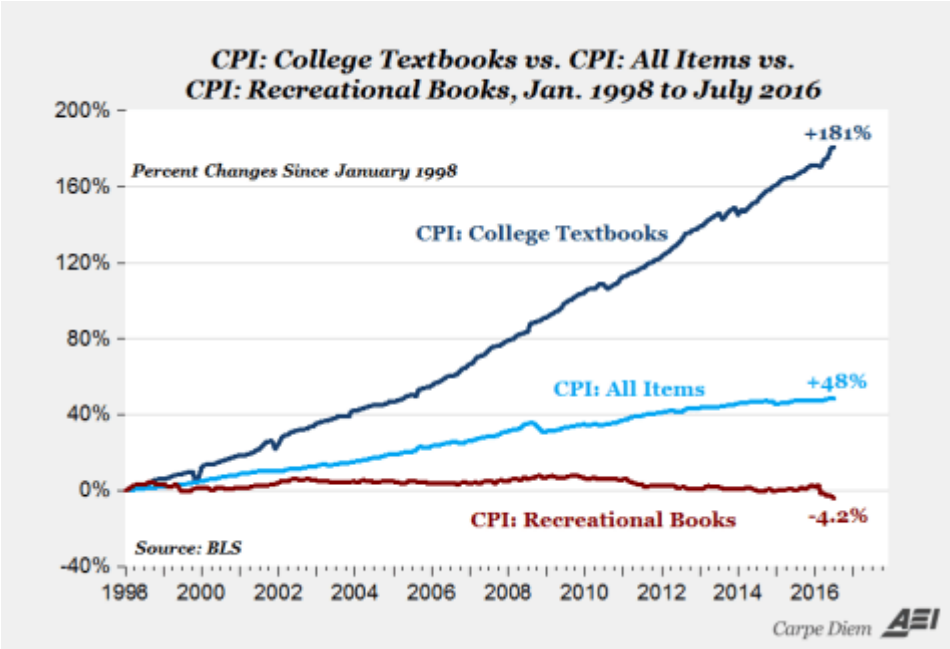

The cost of college text books is skyrocketing

College textbook prices are also going way up because of government subsidies.

> One way the textbook market is insulated from competition and market forces is that the professor, not the student, makes the decision on the textbook for a course, and it's probably the case that many professors are unaware of the retail cost of the books they assign for their students. And once the professor decides on a textbook, there are no substitutes for the new edition of the book assigned. If a professor assigns Mankiw's *Principles of Economics* textbook, students can't substitute McConnell's*Principles of Economics* textbook.
>
> Another reason for skyrocketing textbook prices could be that they are being fueled by easy and cheap credit in the form of student loan debt, which now exceeds $1.36 trillion and has doubled in less than eight years, and tripled in the last decade! Students borrow money not just for college tuition and fees, but also to finance the purchase of textbooks that now routinely cost more than $300, and sometimes approach $400.

What should young people considering college do? If you're going to college or trade school, go to a low-cost school. Do a STEM degree (e.g. petroleum engineering) or learn to do a trade that pays well (e.g. – electrician). Try to get tuition assistance even if it means going to a less prestigious school. And work at every opportunity you get in the most serious job you can find. Don't spend your money – save it. Especially don't spend your money on fun, vacations and alcohol. As soon as you grow up, you're going to wish you could have it all back.

Are pious pastors preparing young Christians to defend their moral values?

September 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

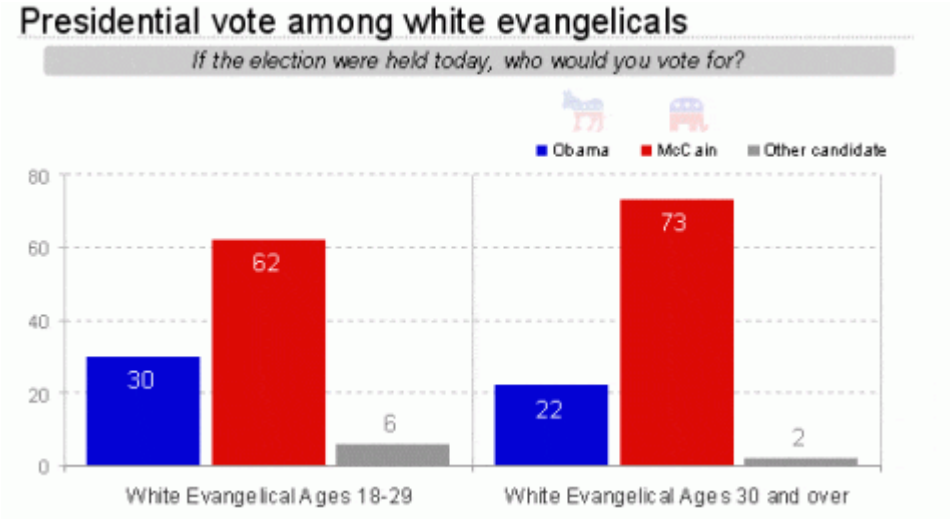

Voting for Obama means abortion, gay marriage and end of religious liberty

You might expect Christians to advocate for values like chastity, life-long natural marriage, protection for unborn and born children, right to work, low taxes, limited government, free speech, religious liberty, and so on. But today, many young evangelicals are embracing higher taxes, more spending, socialism, retreat from just wars against evil forces, abortion, gay marriage, global warming alarmism, etc.

Why is this happening?

Christianity should make me feel happy and be liked by others?

Here is the first problem. When you advocate for moral causes like protecting the unborn, or school choice, or freeing the slaves, a bunch of people are not going to like you. Christians in the time of Jesus knew that being bold about their Christian convictions would make a lot of people think bad things about them – they expected it. But young evangelicals have gotten the idea that being a Christian should not involve any sort of unhappiness and unpopularity. They've been told that God has a wonderful plan for their lives, and that plan involves happiness, fulfillment, travel and adventure. They wouldn't have learned this from the Bible, because the Bible emphasizes suffering and unpopularity as part of the normal Christian life. Christianity has always been opposed to abortion and homosexuality, but these things are not fun and popular today. Since these young Christians believe in a God of love – a cosmic butler who leads them to happiness through their feelings – of course they are going to find defending traditional Christian values too difficult.

Christianity should be about my private experience of belief?

What young evangelicals learn in many churches is that religion is something that is centered on the Bible and the church building – it is not something that flows into real life. This is actually the goal of the most pious, orthodox pastors, with the exception of

people like Pastor Wayne Grudem or Pastor Matt Rawlings who can integrate the Bible with real-world how-to knowledge. Pastors want to protect God from being "judged" by evidence, because they regard evidence as dirty, and unworthy of being allowed to confirm or deny blind faith / tradition. Pastors instead teach young people that you can't find out anything about God from things like the Big Bang, the DNA, the fossil record, or even from the peer-reviewed research on abortion, divorce, or gay marriage. And they don't respond to arguments and evidence from non-Christian skeptics, either. Their goal is to insulate belief from evidence. If the Bible says "do this" then they don't even want to study the way the world works in order to know the best way to do what the Bible asks.

For example, when it comes to politics and social activism, young evangelicals learn in church about helping the poor. But pastors never tell them anything about economics, which shows that the free enterprise system is the best at helping the poor. (Just compare the USA to North Korea or Venezuela or Argentina). Instead, young evangelicals blissfully accept the left's narrative that free markets and charity don't work, and that government must step in to redistribute wealth. Most pastors never pick up an economic textbook to see *which economic system really helps the poor.* And that ignorance is passed on to gullible and sentimental young people, who jump on any slick politician who promises to help the poor through redistribution rather than economic growth and innovation. What you learn about in church is that religion is private and has no connection to reality whatsoever., so there is no point in learning anything – science, economics, philosophy. Pious pastors put Christianity outside the realm of truth.

The (young) people perish for lack of knowledge

What follows from having a view that Christianity only lives in the Bible and church, and not out there in the real world of telescopes and microscopes? Well, most young evangelicals will interpret what their pastor is telling them as "our flavor of ice cream" or "our cultural custom". They don't link Christianity to the real world, they don't think that it's true for everyone. They think that "people in church" just accept what the Bible says on faith, and that's all. So what happens when topics like abortion, marrige, economics, war, etc. come up in their daily conversations? Well, all the pastors have equipped them with is "the Bible says", and that's not enough to be persuasive with non-Christians. They have no way of speaking about their beliefs and values with anyone who doesn't already believe in the Bible. And that's why they go left… it's much easier to just go along with their secular left peers, professors and cultural heroes. And that's exactly what they do. Without facts and evidence – which they never taught or even mentioned in church – how can they be expected to stand up for Biblical Christianity? They can't.

If young Christians never learn how to present a case for traditional values and beliefs apart from the Bible for concepts like pro-life or natural marriage or religious liberty, then they will cave to the secular left culture. And this is exactly what the pious pastors have facilitated by "rescuing" the God and the Bible and the historical Jesus from evidence and knowledge. *Young people lack courage to take Biblical positions, because they first lack knowledge*. They don't know how to make the case using evidence that their opponents will accept – mainstream evidence from publicly accessible sources. And

that’s how the pastors want it – piety, not evidence.

Christianity is a knowledge tradition

No young evangelical is going to lift a finger to take bold moral stands if they think their worldview is just one option among many – like the flavors of ice cream in the frozen section of the grocery store. They have to know that what they are saying is true – then they will be bold. Boldness is easy when you are aware of facts and evidence for your view. Not just what the pastors and choirs accept, but facts and evidence that are widely accepted.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Should Christians be committed to small government conservatism?

September 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

I found a paper (PDF) on the University of Washington web site that makes the case for why Christians ought to care about more than just social issues.

Here's the abstract:

> What accounts for cross-national variation in religiosity as measured by church attendance and non-religious rates? Examining answers from both secularization theory and the religious economy perspective, we assert that cross-national variation in religious participation is a function of government welfare spending and provide a theory that links macro-sociological outcomes with individual rationality. Churches historically have provided social welfare. As governments gradually assume many of these welfare functions, individuals with elastic preferences for spiritual goods will reduce their level of participation since the desired welfare goods can be obtained from secular sources. Cross-national data on welfare spending and religious participation show a strong negative relationship between these two variables after controlling for other aspects of modernization.

Here's the conclusion:

> It is quite apparent that there is a strong statistical relationship between state social welfare spending and religious participation and religiosity. Countries with higher levels of per capita welfare have a proclivity for less religious participation and tend to have higher percentages of non-religious individuals. People living in countries with high social welfare spending per capita even have less of a

> tendency to take comfort in religion, perhaps knowing that the state is there to help them in times of crisis.34 As laid out in the theory above, there is likely a substitution effect for some individuals between state-provided services and religious services. Religion will still be there to serve the spiritual needs of people seeking answers to the philosophic mysteries of life, but those who value those spiritual goods less than the tangible welfare benefits churches provide will be less likely to participate in religious services once secular substitutes become available. Given that religious practice and values are often passed down from generation to generation, the weakening of practice in one generation will likely translate into weaker practice in subsequent generations. Does this mean that secularization theory is correct in its prediction that religion will gradually fade away? Doubtful. Realizing that there is still a yearning among many people to understand the mysteries of life, religion is not likely to dissipate at any time soon. Government simply cannot offer credible substitutes for these less tangible, supernatural goods. The explosion in spirituality once religion was made legal in former Soviet bloc countries lends credence to this assertion (Greeley 1994). As religious markets become more deregulated in various parts of the world, it is likely that new religious movements will take advantage of increased liberty and discover ways to expand.
>
> Perhaps one of the most important lessons from the findings above is that the religiosity of a society is not simply determined by sociological factors. Government policy can play an important role in shaping the religiosity of a nation. Policies aimed at regulating the activities of religious organizations — from tax laws to zoning regulations — have important effects on the firms that supply religious goods and services. Many of these policies are designed consciously to promote or inhibit religious practice. Alternatively, welfare policy has been shown here to unintentionally affect the demand for religious services, likely over the course of generations. And, finally, since an extensive welfare state is considered by many to be a hallmark of modernized societies, the microfoundational analysis presented above provides a way of incorporating a component part of the secularization thesis (which relies heavily on notions of modernization) into the religious economy perspective.

Have you ever heard a sermon that addresses the size of government and individual liberty and prosperity? I haven't. You'd have to be reading Wayne Grudem or Jay Richards to find that. The typical church you attend either praises big government or says nothing about it. After all, we can keep making withdrawals on the liberties we have *right now* without ever worrying about having to make any deposits, right? Everything will be fine, and it's easier not to have to think about what's down the road to serfdom, so long as the scenery is nice for us right now. Religion is primarily about comfort, not truth. Right?

The funny thing is that when I talk to most Christians about this, especially non-Americans, they simply don't have the knowledge of economics to understand how big government affects liberty, prosperity and security. There is no one reading F.A. Hayek

and Thomas Sowell in Europe, and there are not that many people reading them here at home either.

Why doesn’t God make his existence more obvious to people?

September 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

Have you ever heard someone say that if God existed, he would give us more evidence? This is called the “hiddenness of God” argument. It’s also known as the argument from “rational non-belief”.

Basically the argument is something like this:

1. God is all powerful
2. God is all loving
3. God wants all people to know about him
4. Some people don’t know about him
5. Therefore, there is no God.

In this argument, the atheist is saying that he’s looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that’s logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden when our eternal destination depends on our knowledge of his existence.

What reason could God have for remaining hidden?

Dr. Michael Murray, a brilliant professor of philosophy at Franklin & Marshall College, has found a reason for God to remain hidden.

His paper on divine hiddenness is here:

"Coercion and the Hiddenness of God", American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us. Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him. God places a higher value on people having the free will to respond to him, and if he shows too much of himself he takes away their free choice to respond to him, because once he is too overt about his existence, people will just feel obligated to belief in him in order to avoid being punished.

But believing in God just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants for us. If it is too obvious to us that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and behave morally out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out of interest *in him*, just like we might try to get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God's veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don't seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to reach out to us and draw us to him. But I do think that we are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist's argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. In order to derive a contradiction, God MUST NOT have any possible reason to remain hidden. If he has a reason for remaining hidden that is consistent with his goodness, then the argument will not go through.

When Murray offers a possible reason for God to remain hidden in order to allow people to freely respond to him, then the argument is defeated. God wants people to respond to him freely so that there is a genuine love relationship – not coercion by overt threat of damnation. To rescue the argument, the atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free choice of his creatures to reject him.

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007).

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- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

FBI report: Clinton team smashed her old devices and wiped server hard drives

September 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

I'm not really as interested in politics any more since we don't have a conservative running as the Republican candidate, but I do still listen to podcasts and read some news stories.

Here is a news story from the Boston Globe that I felt that I had to blog about.

It says:

> The Democratic presidential nominee told the FBI she never sought or asked permission to use a private server or email address during her tenure as the nation's top diplomat from 2009 to 2013. A prior review by the State Department's internal watchdog concluded the practice violated several polices for the safekeeping and preservation of federal records.
>
> Clinton has repeatedly said her use of private email was allowed. But over a 3 ½ hour interview in July, she told investigators she ''did not explicitly request permission to use a private server or email address,'' the FBI wrote. They said no one at the State Department raised concerns during her tenure, and that Clinton said everyone with whom she exchanged emails knew she was using a private email address.
>
> […]Large portions of the FBI documents were censored. The FBI cited exemptions protecting national security and investigative techniques. Previous government

> reviews of the 55,000 pages of emails Clinton returned to the State Department found that about 110 contained classified information.
>
> **Clinton and her legal team deleted thousands more emails she claimed were personal and private. The FBI report details steps taken by Clinton's staff that appear intended to hamper the recovery of deleted data, including smashing her old Blackberry smartphones with a hammer and using special software to wipe the hard drive of a server she had used.**

Funny video of CNN leftists reacting to reality:

The Weekly Standard has been comparing Clinton's public statements with what she told the FBI, and there headline is "*Hillary Signed She Received Briefing on Classified Info, But Told FBI She Hadn't*".

Look:

> Either Hillary Clinton lied to the FBI or she lied on a State Department form as she began her tenure as Secretary of State. This conclusion appears inescapable after Friday's FBI document release related to the Clinton email investigation.
>
> **As revealed by those FBI documents, Clinton told agents that she could not recall "any briefing or training by State related to the retention of federal records of handling of classified information".**
>
> **But the second paragraph of the Classified Information Nondisclosure Agreement—which she signed on January 22, 2009—states that "I hereby acknowledge that I have received a security indoctrination concerning the nature and protection of classified information."**
>
> […]The form also notes that classified information is not always so marked, but is still regulated by the agreement.

Wow, that sounds to me like the transparency that Obama promised us in his campaign speeches. He was going to lead the most transparent administration ever, remember? And what is his method of holding his staff accountable for these lies? Well, it's to not prosecute them.

Robert Gagnon debates gay activist Jayne Ozanne on Bible vs homosexuality

September 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I am tempted to say that this is the best podcast I have ever heard on the Unbelievable show. Do anything you have to do in order to listen to this podcast.

Details:

> Prof Robert Gagnon has become a well-known voice advocating the traditional biblical view on sexuality. In a highly charged show he debates the scriptural issues on sexuality with Jayne Ozanne, the director of Accepting Evangelicals who came out as gay earlier this year.

The MP3 file is here.

If you can only listen for 15 minutes, then start at 49 minutes in and listen from there.

The following summary is rated MUP for made-up paraphrase. Reader discretion is advised.

Summary:

Intro:

- Speaker introductions
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree that the Bible doesn't support it
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree Jesus taught male-female marriage
- Ozanne: I went to the hospital because I was sick from trying to suppress my gay desires
- Ozanne: Doctors told me that I would die if I didn't act on my gay desires
- Ozanne: I decided to reinterpret the Bible to fit with my gay desires

- Ozanne: According to my new interpretation, Jesus actually supports my gay desires

Segment 1: Genesis

- Ozanne: In Genesis the Bible says that Adam needs a woman to complete him
- Ozanne: I reinterpret this to mean that Adam needed a “complementarian human being”
- Ozanne: Genesis doesn’t say whether Eve was complemented by Adam in that chapter
- Ozanne: It’s not critical that men are complemented by women, a man could complement a man
- Ozanne: Genesis 2 doesn’t talk about children, it’s all about adult needs from a relationship
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 has never been interpreted that way in all of history
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language specifically implies a human being who is opposite/different
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language translates to complement or counterpart
- Gagnon: Genesis as a whole teaches that the sexuality is for male and female natures
- Gagnon: The extraction of something from the man that is given to the woman is complementarian
- Ozanne: I think that people can be complementary outside of male-female Genesis language
- Ozanne: I don’t want to discuss specific words and texts and Greek meanings
- Gagnon: the text has always been read and interpreted to support male/female complementarity
- Gagnon: the male-female nature argument is made because the two natures are complementary
- Ozanne: the text was interpreted by patriarchal males who treated women like property, it’s biased
- Ozanne: what is important to me is how Christ interprets Genesis (?? how does she know that?)
- Ozanne: I am passionate about my interpretation of Scripture which supports my gay desires
- Gagnon: just because a person is passionate about their interpretation it doesn’t make it right
- Gagnon: I am not arguing for the male-female view based on passion, but on scholarship, evidence and history
- Ozanne: both sides are equally passionate about their interpretations (?? so both are equally warranted?)
- Ozanne: the real question is why God “allowed” two different interpretations of Scripture

Segment 2: Is homosexuality a sin?

- Gagnon: Jesus affirmed traditional sexual morality, which forbids homosexuality
- Gagnon: Jesus teaches that marriage is male-female, and limited to two people
- Gagnon: No one in history has interpreted the Bible to say that homosexuality was not immoral
- Ozanne: Jesus came to bring life, and that means he supports homosexuality
- Ozanne: I was dying, and embracing my gay desires allowed me to live, so Jesus approves of me
- Ozanne: God says "I am who I am" and that means he approves of me doing whatever I want
- Ozanne: There is an imperative to be who I am, and that means embracing my gay desires
- Gagnon: Jesus argued that the twoness of the sexual bond is based on the twoness of the sexes
- Gagnon: Jesus did not come to gratify people's innate desires, he called people to repent of sin
- Gagnon: Jesus did reach out to sinners but he never condoned the sins they committed
- Gagnon: Jesus' outreach to tax collectors collecting too much and sexual sinners is the same: STOP SINNING
- Ozanne: I don't think that Romans 1 is talking about homosexuality
- Ozanne: I think it's talking about sexual addiction, not loving, committed gay relationships
- Ozanne: Paul was condemning pederasty in Romans 1, not loving, long-term, consensual sexual relationships between gay adults
- Gagnon: nothing in the passage limits the condemnation to pederasty
- Gagnon: the passage was never interpreted to be limited to pederasty in history
- Gagnon: rabbis and church fathers knew about committed two-adult same-sex relationships, and said they were wrong
- Gagnon: the argument for marriage is based on the broad two-nature argument, with no exceptions
- Gagnon: the condemnation is not limited to exploitative / coercive / lustful / uncommitted relationships
- Gagnon: even pro-gay scholars agree the passage cannot be interpreted Ozanne's way (he names two)

Segment 3: The showdown (49:00)

- Ozanne: I don't care how many pages people have written on this
- Ozanne: God says that "the wisdom of the wise I will frustrate" so you can't use scholars, even pro-gay scholars, to argue against my passionate interpretation
- Ozanne: I am not interested in the text or history or scholarship or even pro-gay

scholars who agree with you
- Ozanne: what decides the issue for me is my mystical feelings about God's love which makes my sexual desires moral
- Ozanne: you are certain that this is wrong, but your view does not "give life" to people
- Ozanne: your scholarship and historical analysis is "a message of death" that causes teenagers to commit suicide (= you are evil and a meany, Robert)
- Ozanne: "I pray for you and your soul" (= opposing me will land you in Hell) and "I hope that listeners will listen with their hearts" (?? instead of their minds?)
- Ozanne: you can prove anything you want with research, even two mutually exclusive conclusions, so you shouldn't rely on scholarship and research since it could be used to prove my view as well
- Ozanne: instead of relying on research, you should rely on your heart and your feelings about God's love to decide what the Bible teaches about sexual morality
- Gagnon: you are distorting the gospel in order to make your case
- Gagnon: attacking my "certainty" is an ad hominem attack to cover your dismissmal of the scholarship and history
- Gagnon: you distort the gospel to make it seem like Christ just wants us to get what we want, when we want it, with who we want it with
- Gagnon: Christ calls us to take up our cross, to lose our lives and to deny ourselves
- Gagnon: you have a notion of what "fullness of life" is, but it's not reflective of the gospel
- Gagnon: Paul's life was much more troubling than yours, mine or anyone else around here
- Gagnon: Paul was beaten, whipped, stoned, poorly sheltered, poorly clothed, poorly fed, shipwrecked, and anxious for his churches
- Gagnon: on your view, he should have been miserable and angry with God all the time
- Gagnon: but instead Paul was constantly thankful and rejoicing to be able to suffer with Jesus and look forward to the resurrection
- Gagnon: I have suffered too, but the suffering we go through never provides us with a license to violate the commandments of God
- Ozanne: "the ultimate thing is what people feel God has called them to"
- Ozanne: My goal right now is to tell young people that homosexuality is fine so they don't commit suicide
- Ozanne: the view that homosexuality is wrong is "evil and misguided"
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm in the gay community are intrinsic to homosexual unions, not caused by external disapproval of homosexuality

Segment 4: Concluding statements

- Gagnon: gay male relationships on average have more sex partners and more STDs
- Gagnon: female relationships on average have shorter-length relationships and

more mental issues
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm are because there is no complementarity / balance in the relationships
- Gagnon: everyone has some disappointment or suffering in their lives that hurts them, and that they are tempted to break the rules to fix, but we should not break the rules in order to be happy
- Ozanne: both sides are passionate, so no one can be right, and evidence proves nothing
- Ozanne: only feelings about “what God is doing” can allow us to decide what counts as sin or not
- Ozanne: the main thing that is at stake here is to make people like us, not to decide what the Bible says about sin
- Ozanne: my message to people is to do whatever you want, and ignore mean people who don’t affirm you
- Ozanne: we should be more opposed to mean people who make non-Christians feel unloved than about doing what the Bible says

E-mails: Clinton Foundation donors lobbied Huma Abedin for diplomatic passports

September 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

From the Daily Caller, another setback for candidate Hillary.

Excerpt:

> New emails released by Judicial Watch in connection with its probe of the Bill, Hillary, and Chelsea Clinton Foundation indicate Clinton Foundation donors lobbied senior Hillary Clinton aide Huma Abedin for diplomatic passports.
>
> Abedin responded positively to the donor inquiries, according to the email.
>
> The donors in question include Doug Band and Justin Cooper. The email indicates that Band reached out to Abedin in 2009, when she served as deputy chief of staff at the U.S. Department of State, and asked for her help in obtaining diplomatic passports for him, Cooper, and a third individual identified only by their initials.
>
> “We had them years ago but they lapsed and we didn’t bother getting them,” Band wrote.
>
> “Ok will figure it out,” Abedin replied.
>
> […]Band previously lobbied Department of State officials on behalf of Gilbert Chagoury, another Clinton Foundation donor who was eventually denied entry to the U.S. due to possible connections to Hamas, the Palestinian terror group.

> Diplomatic passports are a prized asset, as significant benefits accrue to their holders. They are almost exclusively issued to government employees representing the United States in an official capacity. The Department of State requires applicants to present their official orders when procuring such documents.
>
> **Individuals with diplomatic passports enjoy easy passage at international borders, access to special lines at airports, no tax liability on certain sources of income, and relaxed visa restrictions.**
>
> The Clinton campaign has not yet responded to inquiries regarding this story.

Wow. So Clinton Foundation donors were contacting Clinton aides and getting access to diplomatic passports. The State Department exists to reward Clinton Foundation donors, apparently.

Awakening the “moral sense” of the public in the abortion debate

September 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young pro-life women protest Planned Parenthood

Scott Klusendorf linked to this article from the Public Discourse. The article talks about the need to augment logical arguments in other ways in order to awaken the moral sense of the public so that they will support the pro-life cause and vote to repeal pro-abortion laws.

Excerpt:

> In a manner similar to the case of slavery as outlined by Douglass, there are two simple points that, once admitted, join to condemn clearly the practice of abortion: (1) the embryo is a human being from the moment of conception, and (2) all human beings have a natural right to life.
>
> The second point, as in the case of the natural right to liberty, doesn’t require serious argument on the level of ordinary judgment, even though many pro-choice philosophers have tried to argue that only persons have a right to life, and the unborn, in their view, aren’t persons. To make such arguments, however, requires choosing an arbitrary cut-off point for personhood, as pro-life philosophers such as George, Tollefsen, and Lee have shown.
>
> The first point is more often chosen as promising ground for challenges, but it too is plainly obvious to the unbiased mind.
>
> Once conception occurs, the embryo is something other than the woman who

carries it. The fact that the embryo requires the mother's body to live is no argument against this—dependence does not exclude otherness, otherwise none of us would be distinguishable from everyone and everything else in the world upon which we depend in innumerable ways. The embryo is obviously something other than a part of the mother, but what is it?

This is where it gets easy, despite the messy, abstract philosophical arguments. The more appropriate version of the question is the following: What else could it be besides a human being? Is there a single example in natural history of sexual intercourse between two individuals of the same species resulting in something other than another individual of that species? Is it plausible to guess that sexual intercourse between two human beings might result in a fish, at least initially? Or maybe a frog? Such speculation is entirely fanciful and runs directly contrary to our experience of the world since the beginning of recorded history.

It should be obvious to anyone that the two points hold, and that the embryo is a human being possessing a natural right to life from the moment of its conception. The problem is that the younger and less developed the embryo is, the less it excites what some have called our "moral sense," our sympathy with it as another human being like us. And as Hume correctly notes, human beings tend to be moved more by their passions and feelings, including the so-called "moral sense," than by their intellectual understanding of the world when determining their actions. Even if our reason and common sense tell us clearly—as they undoubtedly do—that the embryo is a human being with the right to life, our moral sense or sympathy lets us off the hook.

So where does this leave pro-life advocates? How can we bridge the Humean—and human—gap between intellectual understanding and actual practice in our nation? The answer lies in the parallel between the issue of abortion and those of slavery and subsequent civil rights. The pro-life movement needs to model more closely in its organization and practices the antebellum abolition movement and the civil rights movement in order to achieve similar success in ending the evil of abortion. It needs to take up the mantle of these causes in a manner beyond rhetorical parallel or intellectual analogy and be prepared to undergo similar hardships before achieving its goals.

Both of these historical movements ultimately succeeded not by winning arguments, but by awakening the moral sense or conscience of a majority of the nation. Legislation relating to the provision of an ultrasound prior to an abortion, currently in place in some form in more than twenty states, is very well suited to this purpose. The dissemination of graphic images relating to abortion procedures, though controversial in pro-life circles, is also highly appropriate to this purpose.

The civil rights movement was driven forward significantly by television and photographic coverage of the inhuman treatment of protestors, as well as the

> publication of vivid written reports of racially motivated cruelties. Moral senses or sympathies are sparked most effectively by distasteful, unsettling, and shocking information; and when intellectual argument has had its day in trying to awaken consciences and has shown itself insufficient, recourse must be had to the level of moral sense and feeling.

There can be no doubt that pro-lifers are the abolitionists of this generation, urging the powerful not to take advantage of the powerless.

This reminds me about the story of Emmett Till. Have you heard of that? Here it is explained in a letter from Gregg Cunningham of CBR, a pro-life group.

Excerpt:

> Many pro-lifers have heard about Emmett Till, the fourteen-year-old black boy from Chicago who, while visiting relatives in Mississippi, was tortured to death, allegedly for whistling at a white woman (or bidding her farewell with a flippant "bye baby" – accounts vary). But this tragic civil rights story offers more lessons for effective pro-life activism than is generally understood.
>
> BlackPressUSA.com, August 27, 2001, reported in a story entitled "1955 – Emmett Till Killed in Mississippi" that Emmett's mother "had insisted that the casket be opened when it arrived in Chicago, although it had been sealed when it left Mississippi." There was a reason that authorities in Mississippi did not want the world to see the body of Emmett Till.
>
> The Washington Post, August 28, 2005, published a story on the legacy of Emmett Till entitled "Dead End," with a subhead which read "On the Trail of a Civil Rights Icon, Starting Where He Did":
>
> …Ahmed A. Rayner Sr., … prepared Emmett's body for services after it was pulled from the Tallahatchie River – with a cotton-gin fan tied around his neck with barbed wire. Tortured and bruised, with most of his teeth missing, his remains were returned in a sealed box on a train to Chicago.
>
> Ahmed Rayner is dead and the family-owned funeral home is run by his granddaughter [Pamela Rayner].
>
> […]'I remember him saying that he had to do something because the way that he [Emmett] was brought up here, he looked so bad that it would probably scare most of the people,' says Rayner. There was the eye that her grandfather had to put back into Till's head and the fixing of his swollen tongue that hung out of his mouth – the stitching and patchwork to make the boy presentable in a glass-covered casket.
>
> There was also a reason that Emmett's mother demanded the unsealing of the crate in which the condition of her son's body had been hidden:
>
> 'After the body arrived I knew I had to look and see and make sure it was Emmett. That was when I decided that I wanted the whole world to see what I had seen. There was no way I could describe what was in that box. No way. And I

> just wanted the world to see.' (BlackPressUSA.com, February 21, 2001, 'A Disturbing Picture')
>
> Sounds a lot like abortion: no way it can be described; vital that we show the world how horrifying it looks.

I think the right approach is to give the arguments and the evidence first, and then to show the ultrasound images or the graphical images second (warning people to look away if they are squeamish, first). This is the way that moral people have always argued against injustices. If it worked to change minds then, then it will probably work to change minds now, too. For my own part, I've chose not to engage in sexual behavior at all until I am in a position where I can welcome a child into the world. I want to give my future children a safe environment with a committed mother and father. And if I have to give up short-term recreation in order to avoid putting myself in a situation where abortion might be a temptation, then that's what I'm going to do. It's called acting responsibly.

UK judge sentences radical Islamist imam who lived on welfare to 20 years in prison

September 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats think that the real threat to America is not radical Islamic terrorism

This story is from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> A senior judge has challenged Islamist extremists who live on benefits while claiming to "despise" Western democracy, as he sentenced hate preacher Anjem Choudary to five-and-half years in prison.
>
> **Choudary has lived on benefits in the UK for the past 20 years, during which time it is understood he has claimed up to £500,000 from the state.**
>
> While living off the state – dubbing his benefits 'Jihadiseekers' Allowance' – Choudary became one of the country's most notorious radical preachers – professing hatred against the West.
>
> But he managed to avoid a criminal conviction until he was charged last year with drumming up support for a terrorist organisation by pledging allegiance to Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (Isil).
>
> On Tuesday he was sentenced alongside fellow radical Islamist Mohammed Mizanur Rahman after both being convicted of inviting support for the terrorist group.
>
> […]The judge said Choudary had invited support for Isil while it was "engaged in appalling acts of terrorism".
>
> He said: "At no point did either of you say anything to condemn the violent

> means by which [Isil] claimed to have established a caliphate."

The UK had Labour Party rule for well over a decade, and they opened up their immigration policy to import many, many unskilled immigrants from countries with a significant presence of radical Islam. The idea of the secular leftists was that they would be able to buy the votes of unskilled workers with welfare money paid by the people who actually had jobs. And it worked. Well, there are some problems: they have gangs of Muslims raping and sex-trafficking children, but the strategy of importing anti-conservative voters worked.

I think that a lot of Western countries with welfare states and open-borders immigration policies often have problems like the UK does. And in especially leftist countries that have weakened marriage by redefining it, you get even more welfare fraud.

In Canada, polygamous Muslims can already collect multiple welfare checks for their multiple wives.

Excerpt:

> Hundreds of [Greater Toronto Area] Muslim men in polygamous marriages — some with a harem of wives — are receiving welfare and social benefits for each of their spouses, thanks to the city and province, Muslim leaders say.
>
> Mumtaz Ali, president of the Canadian Society of Muslims, said wives in polygamous marriages are recognized as spouses under the Ontario Family Law Act, providing they were legally married under Muslim laws abroad.
>
> "Polygamy is a regular part of life for many Muslims," Ali said yesterday. "Ontario recognizes religious marriages for Muslims and others."
>
> He estimates "several hundred" GTA husbands in polygamous marriages are receiving benefits. Under Islamic law, a Muslim man is permitted to have up to four spouses.
>
> However, city and provincial officials said legally a welfare applicant can claim only one spouse. Other adults living in the same household can apply for welfare independently.
>
> The average recipient with a child can receive about $1,500 monthly, city officials said.

Note that expanding the welfare state and increasing unskilled immigration from countries with anti-Western populations is a central plank in leftist political parties such as our own Democrat Party. The Democrat Party itself is very much in favor of expanding welfare (Obama repealed the 1996 welfare reform policy) and are also in favor of weakening border security.

More details emerged today in the Wall Street Journal about the payments that Obama sent to Iran: (H/T Ari)

> The Obama administration followed up a planeload of $400 million in cash sent to Iran in January with two more such shipments in the next 19 days, totaling

> another $1.3 billion, according to congressional officials briefed by the U.S. State, Treasury and Justice departments.
>
> The cash payments—made in Swiss francs, euros and other currencies—settled a decades-old dispute over a failed arms deal dating back to 1979. U.S. officials have acknowledged the payment of the first $400 million coincided with Iran's release of American prisoners and was used as leverage to ensure they were flown out of Tehran's Mehrabad on the morning of Jan. 17.
>
> […]The Obama administration briefed lawmakers on Tuesday, telling them that two further portions of the $1.3 billion were transferred though Europe on Jan. 22 and Feb. 5. The payment "flowed in the same manner" as the original $400 million that an Iranian cargo plane picked up in Geneva, Switzerland, according to a congressional aide who took part in the briefing.
>
> The $400 million was converted into non-U.S. currencies by the Swiss and Dutch central banks, according to U.S. and European officials.
>
> The Treasury Department confirmed late Tuesday that the subsequent payments were also made in cash.

Do you ever wonder where your taxpayer money is going? Obama is using it to prop up dangerous Islamic regimes who sponsor terrorism and kill our troops on the battlefield in Iraq. That's what every Democrat voter voted for, as well. They are responsible, whether they intended these consequences or not.

What should a woman do if she is attracted to a man who isn't ready for marriage?

September 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

I have a friend who is now 33 and who has invested all of her relationship time with men who, although they were fun, were never equipped to pull the trigger on marriage. I've been investigating her method of choosing men, and it turns out that she basically chooses men based on which one gives her the "tingles". When pressed, she can't really explain the pathway forward to marriage from the tingles. And indeed a closer look at the men shows that they are not prepared for marriage responsibilities.

When I look at her, I think "if only women could train themselves to have tingles for men who were actually good at marriage, and interested in getting married". Is there a way for these women to transfer the tingles from immature boys to marriage-capable men?

Here is a post by super-mom Lindsay, who married young, has three children, and has wisdom beyond her years.

She writes on her blog:

> The world has it all backwards when it comes to building romantic relationships. The world says, find someone who is fun to be with and that you're attracted to, then build a relationship (often built primarily on sex first) and if you don't break it off and can still stand each other after awhile, maybe start thinking about marriage. Then, once marriage happens, the rest of the world's advice has to do with how to deal with the various issues that inevitably crop up when you've built a relationship on fun and physical attraction and later find out your goals and values are different. The world will also tell you to leave the relationship, even a marriage, as soon as you find attraction waning or problems that aren't easily solved.

> Too often, the church tries to do things the way the world does, except without the sex before marriage. Too many Christian young people were never given guidance on what to look for in a spouse and make the decision based on feeling in love after spending time having fun together. But even where guidance is given, it's often still focused on finding someone you're attracted to who happens to have the right qualities rather than learning first to be attracted to the right kind of person. In other words, even Christians usually believe that attraction is fixed and involuntary and try to center relationships around it anyway.
>
> I suggest a better way. My advice is that we learn to be attracted to good character and the types of traits that make a good spouse. Attraction isn't something that just happens to us. Attraction can be controlled to a large extent. We all have preferences for physical characteristics in the opposite sex, but attraction is more than just noticing someone is good looking, even if that does play a part. These other factors that influence attraction are primarily driven by our mindset and can be modified by our patterns of thought.
>
> In order to control our attraction properly, we should actively think about good character qualities and notice them in others around us and think positive thoughts about those who have them in order to develop a mental pattern of appreciating good character. The opposite should be true of bad character qualities – we should practice seeing them as unattractive. In addition to this, it's important to actively work to downplay the role of physical traits in our attraction so that character becomes the main factor, not more superficial characteristics like height, hair color, or facial features.
>
> For example, a single woman should learn to appreciate men with a good work ethic, leadership qualities, self-control, and an interest in studying the things of God. She should control her thoughts so as to make character the main thing she evaluates about others and so that she values good character. Thus, she should find her interest in an available man growing when she observes good character while she should find her interest in him waning if she finds bad character such an inability to keep a job, passiveness, sexual immorality, or an anger problem (to name just a few issues).
>
> If we teach our young people to value the kinds of traits that make a good spouse and to actively work to be attracted by their presence and repelled by their absence, they will make better choices when it comes to marriage.

Well, I tried to present this to the 33-year-old, and she assured me that men who are perpetual students are "responsible", and that men with empty resumes are "hard workers", and that men with zero earned savings are "good providers". She said that my concerns about men having good educations, non-empty resumes, and substantial earned savings, etc. are "only valid within a limited scope". She went on to suggest that a boy in his mid-30s could still be serious about marriage, even if he lives with his parents, has no college degree, has an empty resume, and has zero savings. I am not sure how

this would work because marriage requires a certain level of income, and a certain buffer from savings. A standard marriage with 2 children costs hundreds of thousands of dollars – not counting tuition. More if you keep the kids out of public school. Whenever I ask the women in their 30s for the numbers, they haven't done the analysis. One of them is actually majoring in business (!) but still isn't able to calculate the cost of marriage enough to know not to marry an unemployed, penniless student. The tingles override all fiscal concerns.

The tragedy is that the youth, beauty and chastity that men find attractive is wasted on men who were chosen because they were free, easy and fun. The tingles *must be obeyed*, and the solution to criticisms of the tingles is to *push the critics away,* no matter how accomplished they may be in real life at things that matter: education, career and finances. Only the advisers who agree with the tingles are trustworthy, no matter how much those advisers may have screwed up their own lives. It doesn't matter how many times the tingles fail to deliver, either, because the alternative to following the tingles (i.e. – growing up) is unthinkable.

It's sad because men are learning that the easiest way to get a woman to like them is to spiritualize their feelings and intuitions as "God speaking to her". The 33-year-old woman praised the "spiritual leadership" of a 28-year-old boy who told her that *her feelings were God speaking to her*. She tried to marry this man, even though he was an unemployed penniless student, before breaking up with him. In other words, you can easily get some crazy young women into a relationship if you tell her that following her heart will work, because God is going to make it all work out. That's what they want to hear, that's what they trust. That's what gives them the tingles.

For some reason, this works on many, many women – it gives them the tingles. But do you know what doesn't work? Actually being competent at husband roles because you have taken your education, career and investing seriously. That's really bad, because what you know about practical matters scares many women, making them feel like their feelings and intuitions will not rule over the man's proven ability. They don't "trust" men who can demonstrate responsibility and competence, because they know that those men will want to lead, overriding their feelings and intuitions. Demonstrated ability actually causes mistrust.

Marriage-ready men are scary because they have plans for marriage, which may involve obligations for the woman, as she steps into the roles of wife and mother. Obligations such as staying home to homeschool, taking care of the husband's sexual needs, not wasting money on fun, thrills or travel, having children (which many women do not want because children have needs). Obligations mean that the woman has to care for others, not just be self-centered. Marriage-ready men make the tingles go away, because marriage means obligations, and many women have been taught by feminism to resent the obligations inherent in marriage roles.

In short, some young women want to fly the plane, even if they are going to crash it. The repeated experience of grabbing the controls and crashing over and over does nothing to

restrain the desire to let feelings and intuitions rule, either. All a “man” has to do gain her favor is to tell her that this time for sure, she will be able to fly the plane just by following her heart. He just needs to abdicate his duty to protect her by telling her the truth, and she will have the tingles for him. And that’s why many women, under the influence of feminism, have the tingles for the wrong men. Confident promises about an optimistic, easy, fun future mean more to them than the realistic judgment that comes from demonstrated ability as a man.

Obama proposes rule to prevent states from defunding Planned Parenthood

September 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama speaking to Planned Parenthood

This story is from Life News, and I think it nicely shows just how pro-abortion Obama, and his Democrat Party supporters, are.

Excerpt:

> Pro-abortion President Barack Obama has proposed a new rule that would essentially prohibit states from defunding the Planned Parenthood abortion business and a leading pro-life member of Congress is not happy about it.
>
> The proposed rule from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) could prevent states from blocking Title X funding (federal dollars for family planning services) to abortion companies like Planned Parenthood.
>
> "This latest stunt from President Obama's Department of Health and Human Services should surprise absolutely no one," Rep. Diane Black told LifeNews.com
>
> "We've known all along that the Obama Administration will go to untold lengths to protect its friends in the big abortion industry. After all, this Administration has previously used backdoor maneuvers to line Planned Parenthood's pockets with Obamacare navigator grants and praised the abortion provider's 'high ethical standard' even after it was caught trafficking in baby body parts," Black said.
>
> She continued: "Now, they have taken the unprecedented step of thwarting

> states' rights with a shady proposed rule change that prevents states from funding the providers who will best serve their citizens. In the coming days, I intend to lead a letter expressing the deep concerns of Members of Congress on this proposal, but we won't stop there. We must use the full force of Congress and the grassroots strength of the national pro-life movement to defeat this absurd rule and prevent the Obama Administration from acting unilaterally to carry out political favors and prop up a scandal-ridden abortion provider."

Many states that are run by Republican governors have defunded Planned Parenthood, e.g. Wisconsin, Texas, etc. And the reason why is not hard to see – less money means fewer abortions. Abortion providers are in the abortion business for the money. And if there is no money, then they get out of the business. Their whole business model relies on leftist governments transferring money from pro-life taxpayers to pro-abortion abortion providers.

Take a look at this story from Live Action News about billing fraud in Wisconsin:

> An audit by Wisconsin's Department of Health and Human Services has found that as many as two-thirds of all Medicaid payments to the state's Planned Parenthood locations were fraudulent.
>
> According to the audit of eight family planning facilities (five of which were operated by Planned Parenthood), roughly half of the funds they received came from fraudulent or otherwise-inappropriate billing practices. Auditors discovered that Planned Parenthood was the worst offender among facilities investigated, with the highest percentage of over-billing.
>
> These practices included prescriptions not signed by valid prescribers, billing for quantities of medications that matched neither the prescribed nor dispensed quantities, failing to prove medication was even dispensed, reimbursement for unnecessary duplicative drugs, and more.

Obama looks at a story like that and says "keep the fraud going!" and his supporters agree. Every Democrat voter is pro-abortion, and every Democrat voter thinks that pro-life taxpayers should be paying their money to abortion providers.

What happened to the Christian baker who declined to celebrate redefining marriage?

September 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I thought that this recent article from The Federalist was worth reading so that everyone can understand how the tolerance crowd really deals with respectful disagreement.

Excerpt:

> The employees tasked with handling the front of the shop are busy tending to consumers, so owner Jack Phillips, the kind of guy who's more comfortable dealing with sugar paste than strangers, jumps in to help out.
>
> We'd like you to design a cake for our wedding, the man explains, motioning to his partner at the other side of the shop.
>
> Sorry, Phillips responds, I can't create specialty cakes for gay weddings. If you'd like, I can sell you anything else you want — cupcakes, pastries, whatever.
>
> Anger flushes over the would-be customer, who stands up, curses, and flips off Phillips while he heads for the door — a reaction that is well within the normal bounds of serious disagreements in American life.

Oh, but the two men could not handle disagreement like you or I could:

> A half hour after Mullins and Craig storm out of Masterpiece Cakeshop, the store's phone rings. An irate caller asked Jack if he's the jerk who turned away the gay couple. Well, no, I just don't design cakes for same-sex weddings; I didn't turn away anyone, he explains.
>
> This distinction fails to pacify the agitated man, and after offering an array of colorful suggestions, he hangs up. In the hour between the incident and closing time that Thursday night, Phillips estimates he received another six comparably

> incensed calls berating him for cake-denying bigotry. When he finally got home, his inbox is fuller than it's ever been. And it's not because locals have a sudden hankering for Funshine Cookie Pops.
>
> […]Jack begins his demanding work at 6 a.m. the next morning, so he can prepare for a Bible study class he hosts on Fridays. The phone is already ringing. It rings all day. All day Saturday (probably all day Sunday) and all day Monday, as well. Angry voices, swearing at him; demanding cakes; threatening him. Jack stops answering.
>
> Then the protestors show up.
>
> One of the disadvantages of showing off your righteous passion in a suburban parking lot in Lakewood, Colorado is that very few people can see or hear you. So the activists picketing Masterpiece that weekend were forced to pick up their rainbow flags and move to a busy intersection on nearby Wadsworth Ave — right across the street from another bakery. Actually, within the five square miles radius of Masterpiece there are a dozen places that could have accommodated the jilted couple.
>
> Then again, this has nothing to do with a cake.

No, they didn't want a cake, they wanted to stamp out anyone who disagreed with their lifestyle – stop them from earning a living so that they would starve. Or maybe put them in prison. And to the people on the secular left, this rage *made sense*. It was *normal*. It was *justified*. They didn't protest the murder of gay people in Muslim countries, they protested being told no by a Christian man whose first priority was to keep his conscience clean according to his moral convictions.

More:

> On Monday, the TV stations showed up. By Tuesday, Jack was on local news.
>
> […]The first letter from the Colorado Civil Rights Commission arrived soon enough. Americans, evidently, no longer share a "common" sense about societal norms. So Mullins and Craig had lawyered up immediately — contacting the ACLU, once champions of free expression and now champions of hurt feelings.
>
> […]The commission was not above retroactive punishment, however. At the time, being found guilty of violating civil rights laws didn't only mean the end of Phillips' life's work. The punishment for refusing to make a special cake for a gay wedding was $500 and one year in prison per charge (jail time was only later amended out of the law when general public learned about the statue).
>
> The shop was not only ordered to alter its policy and start participating in gay weddings or else face debilitating fines, it was told to provide comprehensive staff training, ensure compliance, then file quarterly obedience reports with the government for two full years. In these reports, Phillips was to describe exactly which remedial measures the shop had taken to conform, and document the reasons any other patrons were denied service.

> Colorado's Thought Police would teach Phillips how to stop himself acting on any ideas that were heretical.
>
> The commission could only pass quasi-criminal judgments. In the end, these charges had to be authorized by the attorney general, who was charged with executing complaints and filing formal proceedings. In this case, that person was John Suthers, a Republican. He did.

The case is now headed to the Supreme Court. The article notes that complaints filed with the Colorado Civil Rights Commission by Christians who were denied cakes by non-Christian bakers were dismissed – because the laws are only enforced against Christians. It's very much like 1930s Nazi Germany, in that regard, with the secular leftists in place of the Nazis, of course.

Well, I would never respond like that to people who disagreed with my sexual orientation. My sexual orientation is chastity – no sex before marriage for any reason. I would not even kiss a girl on the lips before marriage. How would I handle someone who refused to sell me a cake? I would thank them, and find another cake. That's what grown-ups who have self-control do when confronted with people who disagree with them. It's called "celebrating diversity". It's called "tolerance".

I don't need pride parades or government coercing those who disagree with me. Chastity is self-evidently virtuous, because it puts self-sacrificial commitment above recreational sex. But some people are not so sure that what they are doing is morally right, and that's why they want to involve the government to force people to celebrate them. They think that maybe if everyone agrees with them, then the majority of sinful humans can somehow overturn the moral law. Or at least make rebellion more comfortable for now. In my case, the honor of what I am doing with my sexuality is internal and self-attesting, even if the culture is against it.

Violent crime soars as Democrat politicians cater to Black Lives Matter agenda

September 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rising Murder Rates in Big Cities

A sampling of cities where the number of murders so far this year is outpacing the same period last year.

	2014	2015	PERCENT CHANGE
Milwaukee	59	104	76 %
St. Louis	85	136	60
Baltimore	138	215	56
Washington	73	105	44
New Orleans	98	120	22
Chicago	244	294	20
Kansas City, Mo.	45	54	20
Dallas	71	83	17
New York	190	208	9
Philadelphia	165	171	4

Year-to-date time periods range from Aug. 11 to Aug. 31.

Source: City police departments

Crime rates in major cities, all Democrat-run

Quick: which city has the strongest anti-gun laws and regulations? Washington, D.C.? Baltimore, MD? Milwaukee, WI? Or maybe it's Chicago, IL, which is run by Barack Obama's good friend Rahm Emanuel.

National Review reports on what's going on in Chicago:

> Thirteen people were shot to death in Chicago over Labor Day weekend, bringing the city's gun-homicide total to 512 since the beginning of the year. Already, the city has exceeded last year's gun-homicide total (491), and it is on pace to see its deadliest year since 1998 (704 dead). Meanwhile, August was the city's deadliest month since June 1996; 90 people were gunned down — and another 382 shot non-fatally, a rate of one shooting every 95 minutes. With the violence that generally has been confined to the gang-ridden South and West Sides of the city reaching the central business district, it is not an exaggeration to say that Chicago is experiencing a crisis of law and order. And it is a crisis that is almost entirely self-inflicted.
>
> Chicago is perhaps the most obvious example to date of the "Ferguson Effect," the previously mocked hypothesis that, in the wake of the hostility toward law enforcement that sprang up following events in Ferguson, Mo., in 2014, police in minority neighborhoods have backed off interacting with residents when not absolutely necessary. Last year saw homicide rates spike in cities with aggressive anti-police movements — St. Louis, Baltimore, Milwaukee, Chicago, etc. — and even Ferguson Effect–skeptics such as Richard Rosenfeld of the University of Missouri–St. Louis were forced to change their minds. Rosenfeld has

> declared that the Ferguson Effect is “the only explanation that gets the timing right.” In October 2015, even Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel said that police in his city were going “fetal.”
>
> […]**In March 2015, the American Civil Liberties Union charged that the Chicago Police Department’s investigatory-stop policy was racist, since the percentage of blacks being stopped was significantly higher than the percentage of Chicagoans who are black (never mind that the relevant standard is the rate at which blacks commit crime). By autumn, the city had struck an agreement to allow the ACLU to review *all* investigatory stops beginning January 1. In the first quarter of 2016, stops decreased by almost 90 percent. The result is not just a markedly diminished police presence, but a loss of much of the intelligence-gathering that is regularly used to solve crimes.**
>
> **The consequence of these “reforms” has been to make life more dangerous for exactly the people the ACLU, Black Lives Matter, and similar groups want to protect. It’s not police targeting young black men; it’s other young black men, generally killing on behalf of gangs, who become more aggressive when law enforcement retreats.**
>
> […]Chicago’s notoriously high crime rates are the result of decades of municipal mismanagement and social breakdown, which will likely take decades to turn around. But there is no excuse for Rahm Emanuel & Co.’s exacerbating these problems by basing policy on knee-jerk outrage and unsubstantiated accusations of systematic racism. Chicago’s leaders seem to be more interested in accommodating left-wing interest groups than in saving lives.

Now, the major cause of crime is welfare, which is paid to single mothers of every race to encourage them to raise fatherless children. Fatherless boys are more likely to commit criminal acts. Almost every boy you meet in prison comes from a background where the father was absent, but the welfare checks were present. It’s the welfare that causes young women to think that getting pregnant before marriage is a viable life plan. After all, if the government is paying you to have fatherless children, it’s almost like having a job – it’s legitimate.

This is not a race issue, it’s a morality issue. If we were serious about stopping crime, we should take all the money that is being wasted on welfare, and spend it on promoting marriage to young women. We need to teach them to not have sex before they are married. But of course, this is against the radical feminist agenda of the Democrat Party, which despises chastity and the “unequal gender roles” in marriage. We can’t trust the Democrats to stop crime, they are the ones who are causing it by destroying marriage in the communities where marriage is most needed.

Christians have always believed in a romantic, committed, exclusive view of sex

September 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The natural family is the only place where sexual activity makes sense

Consider this post from Michael Krueger about the history of Christianity with respect to sex, love and marriage.

Excerpt:

> [I]n the second century, as Christianity emerged with a distinctive religious identity, the surrounding pagan culture began to take notice. And it didn't like what it saw. Christians were seen as strange and superstitious–a peculiar religious movement that undermined the norms of a decent society. Christians were, well, *different*.
>
> So, what was so different about Christians compared to the surrounding Greco-Roman culture?
>
> […]While it was not unusual for Roman citizens to have multiple sexual partners, homosexual encounters, and engagement with temple prostitutes, Christians stood out precisely because of their refusal to engage in these practices.
>
> For instance, Tertullian goes to great lengths to defend the legitimacy of Christianity by pointing out how Christians are generous and share their resources with all those in need. But, then he says, "One in mind and soul, we do not hesitate to share our earthly goods with one another. All things are common among us *but our wives*" (*Apol*. 39). Why does he say this? Because, in the Greco-Roman world, it was not unusual for people to share their spouses with each other.

> In the second-century *Epistle to Diognetus*, the author goes out of his way to declare how normal Christians are in regard to what they wear, what they eat, and how they participate in society. However, he then says, "[Christians] share their meals, *but not their sexual partners*" (*Diogn*. 5.7). Again, this is the trait that makes Christians different.
>
> We see this play out again in the second-century *Apology of Aristides*. Aristides defends the legitimacy of the Christian faith to the emperor Hadrian by pointing out how Christians "do not commit adultery nor fornication" and "their men keep themselves from every unlawful union" (15).
>
> A final example comes from the second-century apology of Minucius Felix. In his defense to Octavius, he contrasts the sexual ethic of the pagan world with that of Christians:
>
> Among the Persians, a promiscuous association between sons and mothers is allowed. Marriages with sisters are legitimate among the Egyptians and in Athens. Your records and your tragedies, which you both read and hear with pleasure, glory in incests: thus also you worship incestuous gods, who have intercourse with mothers, with daughters, with sisters. With reason, therefore, is incest frequently detected among you, and is continually permitted. Miserable men, you may even, without knowing it, rush into what is unlawful: since you scatter your lusts promiscuously, since you everywhere beget children, since you frequently expose even those who are born at home to the mercy of others, it is inevitable that you must come back to your own children, and stray to your own offspring. Thus you continue the story of incest, even although you have no consciousness of your crime. But we maintain our modesty not in appearance, but in our heart we gladly abide by the bond of a single marriage; in the desire of procreating, we know either one wife, or none at all (31).

The genius of Christ-centered relationships is that both parties have to prove that they can be faithful and committed during the courtship. Both people have to work before the marriage to demonstrate their ability at marital roles (husband or wife, father or mother). It's not just that this is the way that we have always done it, it's that there are real reasons why chastity and fidelity are important for marriage success. You can't just have fun, pick anyone you like, and have marriage "work out". You have to be comfortable with chastity and fidelity, and the person you choose has to be comfortable with chastity and fidelity. Each person has to demonstrate that they are capable of self-sacrificial love for others, since that's the main thing that marriage is about – at least the ones that last. Virtue is at the center of the Christian concept of marriage.

New study: marriages where husband does not work full-time more likely to end in divorce

September 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Air Force TACPs confirm target locations with their map

This was reported in Family Studies.

Excerpt:

> In a recent study published this July in *American Sociological Review*, Harvard sociology professor Alexandra Killewald, Ph.D., analyzed data on 6,309 heterosexual married couples from the 1968 to 2013 waves of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID). She looked specifically at the potential effects on marital stability of "spouses' division of labor, overall financial resources, and wives' economic prospects following divorce," comparing couples married before 1975 to those married in 1975 or later (through 2011).
>
> […]**Killewald found that for couples married in 1975 or later, marriages in which the husband was not employed full-time were one-third more likely to divorce. Specifically, a husband who was not employed full-time experienced a "3.3 percent predicted probability of divorce the following year, compared to 2.5 percent if he is employed full-time."**
>
> […]Killewald is certainly not the first to find an association between men's employment and marital stability. A study conducted by three economists and published in 2015 found that "In couples where the wife earns more than the husband, the wife spends more time on household chores; moreover, those couples are less satisfied with their marriage and are more likely to divorce."

> And an earlier study by Liana C. Sayer, Paula England, Paul Allison and Nicole Kangas found that when a husband is "nonemployed" (defined as not working at all), *both the husband and the wife* are more likely to end a marriage. In an email interview with IFS, one of the study's co-authors, New York University sociology professor Paula England, explained her findings.
>
> "The innovation of our study was to look separately at what predicts a divorce wanted more by the woman versus a divorce wanted more by the man," England wrote. "We found that a nonemployed man predicts either the woman leaving the man or the man leaving the woman."
>
> She continued, "Killewald's data just show her if they got divorced, not who left. We found that women's employment doesn't make men leave more, and it only makes women leave more when they are unhappy in the marriage."

People sometimes ask me why I have all these rules and best practices when it comes to relationships and marriage plans. You know: men must have STEM degrees, no sex before marriage, men have to approach women by speaking to fathers first, etc. Well, why have all these rules? Why not just do what feels good? Why not just do what my peers will approve of?

The answer is this:

I didn't get my idea of how courting and marriage works from a culture that dismisses all of the ancient wisdom about love and marriage in favor of the trends of a culture dominated by ideologies that emphasize pleasure over wisdom. The right way to learn about romance, love, marriage and parenting is to go the classics, and then to the scientific studies. We have to learn how the world really works, and abide by the best practices that we find in the classics and in the peer-reviewed publications. And we have to be willing to say no to feelings and friends and even family, when the classics and the peer-reviewed literature say something different.

I'm really not sure where people get this idea that peer-reviewed literature "works within a narrow scope", but you can just do anything you want. No, your radical feminist emotion-fueled craziness works in a narrow scope: in your dreams. In the real world, we do things by the book, and that's how we get results. Children deserve to have parents who are wise and self-controlled, willing to do things the right way. You can't break all the rules and then expect things to somehow magically work out because you feel that they will somehow. The rules are there for a reason.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

September 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining what was in the podcast. (I wish more people who put out podcasts would do that).

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."

> 6. “Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though it *looks* like it could be other ways.”
> 7. “Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life.”
> 8. “Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life.”
> 9. “This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what’s the big deal?”
> 10. “The universe doesn’t look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes.”
> 11. “Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life.”
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

U.S. Civil Rights Commission chairman says religious liberty is just “intolerance”

September 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

The Washington Times reports on a story that shows what Democrats really think about the moral standards described in Judeo-Christian religious texts.

Excerpt:

> The chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights said that “religious freedom” and “religious liberty” have become merely “code words” for intolerance, “Christian supremacy” and committing every form of identity-politics sin, and thus they must yield before anti-discrimination laws.
>
> The remarks, released Thursday in a report on “Peaceful Coexistence: Reconciling Nondiscrimination Principles with Civil Liberties,” is the latest example of an increasingly hostile reception in liberal circles to one of the six specified rights at the core of the First Amendment — the “free exercise” of religion.
>
> “The phrases ‘religious liberty’ and ‘religious freedom’ will stand for nothing except hypocrisy so long as they remain code words for discrimination, intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, Christian supremacy or any form of intolerance,” said Martin R. Castro, a Chicago Democrat named USCCR chairman by President Obama in 2011.
>
> **[…]It’s the area of sexual orientation and gender identity where the**

> **greatest conflicts lie, and the report offered little support to those who see their work or artistic expressions — creative photography, cake decorating or flower arranging, for example — as also expressions of their religious belief about marriage being the union of one man and one woman.**

Is all moral disapproval able to be dismissed as "intolerance"? The truth is that Jews and Christians have been taught from the Bible to put the needs of children above the selfishness of adults. That is why we have rules around sexuality that confine sexuality to within a life-long, faithful, loving commitment of marriage. God decided that a man and a woman cannot have the pleasure of sex without first committing to each other *for life*. That commitment is proof that obligations are more important to the man and the woman than their selfish need to have pleasure in this life.

It's not that Jews and Christians single out homosexuals for "discrimination". We have the exact same disapproval for no-fault divorce, premarital sex, abortion, infanticide and adultery. And we ought not be forced by government officials to celebrate (or subsidize) behaviors that go against our commitment to subjugate sexual urges to the needs of children. Anyone who understands children knows that they need a stable environment to grow up in, and access to their biological mother and father. That is the ideal situation, and that is the arrangement that we celebrate with the word "marriage", even though we are permissive to let people live how they want.

The word marriage is very important. I would not call cohabitation "marriage", nor would I call multi-partner relationships "marriage", nor would I call serial promiscuity "marriage". I would not even attend a marriage ceremony by professed Christians unless I knew that they had been chaste during their courtship. I would not attend the wedding of a person who had previously initiated a divorce, either. I don't want to celebrate or acknowledge any relationship where recreational sex was given more weight than the needs of children for stability, and access to their mother and father. That is the real issue with religious liberty and conscience. I have a right not to endorse or participate in activities that put adult selfishness above the needs of children. And it's my decision what I do or do not celebrate – it's not the decision of a secular leftist bureaucrat.

Double standard

Meanwhile, pastors who oppose homosexuality in their sermons actually do face discrimination and intolerance.

Consider this article from The Stream: (H/T George)

> A pastor filed suit against the Georgia Department of Public Health Wednesday, accusing the agency of religious discrimination after officials allegedly fired the man because of his sermons, which called homosexuality a sin.
>
> Dr. Eric Walsh worked as the director of Pasadena's public health department and served on President Barack Obama's Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDs. The Georgia Department of Public Health then offered him the job of

> running a district of the state health department in 2014 .
>
> When news broke that Walsh had been offered the job, LGBT groups expressed their outrage, largely because he had called homosexuality a sin at the church where he is an associate pastor. The LGBT community called on the department to not hire Walsh because of his “anti-gay propaganda and religious rhetoric.” Walsh also spoke against evolution, Islam and Catholicism.
>
> The health department rescinded their offer, and Walsh filed an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission complaint in 2014 alleging religious discrimination.
>
> […]**First Liberty, a religious liberty group representing Walsh, points to a copy of an email the group obtained where a government official discusses assigning employees to listen to Walsh’s sermons on YouTube.**
>
> “OK…I have an assignment for several of us,” the email reads. “We have to listen to his sermons on You Tube tonight. If we take a couple of hours each, then we should cover our bases. I will enlist Dwana to help us. Kate is going to listen to them as well.”
>
> First Liberty says this email, plus the unwarranted withdrawal of the offer, is serious evidence of discrimination.
>
> **“I couldn’t believe they fired me because of things I talked about in my sermons,” Walsh said in a statement. “It was devastating. I have been unable to get a job in public health since then.”**

How is that not intolerance? Do you think his lawsuit has any chance of success if the government is run by people like this Civil Rights Commission chairman?

Voting matters

Back to the Civil Rights Commission chairman: How does someone with that view get appointed to such a high position? The answer is that many, many people who read the Bible and go to church thought that it would be a good idea to vote for a President who would appoint this man to his high position.

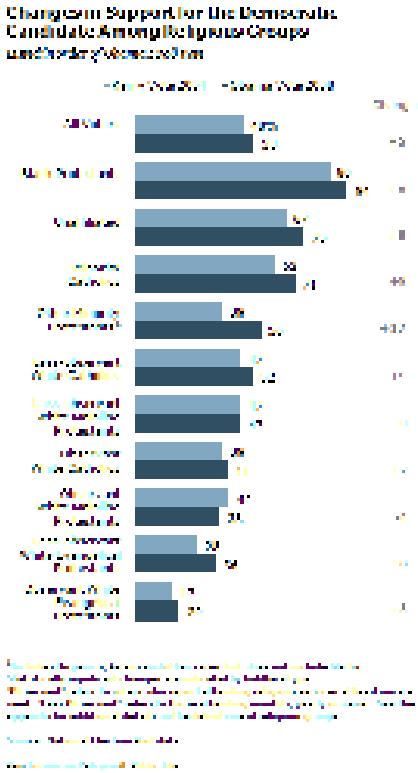

Which Religions Voted for Obama in 2008?

Lots of people who claim to be religious voted for Obama, and now we know what he thinks of Bible-believing Christians.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

September 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.

20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University

> physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

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Minneapolis teacher and his husband investigated for sex with teenaged boy

September 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

The Daily Caller reports:

> Until this past month, Aric Babbit was a popular elementary school teacher in South St. Paul who was active in the community. But it all came crashing down two weeks ago, when a teenage boy and his parents went to the police and reported an ongoing sexual relationship between the boy and both Babbit and his husband, Matthew Deyo.
>
> According to the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, the boy turned over photos of himself naked with Babbit, and said Babbit, his former elementary teacher, had begun "mentoring" him after he came out as gay. Red flags quickly emerged, with Babbit and Deyo providing the boy underwear and yoga shorts as gifts, but the boy's parents were assuaged by being told it was a "gay thing." Eventually, the boy was convinced to go to a jazz concert and stay with the couple in a hotel room, where the boy allegedly had sex with them because he was "unsure about how to say no."
>
> A police investigation quickly discovered additional victims, who said the couple had provided them with pornography, encouraged them to post naked pictures online, and provided them with "chiropractic" massages. According to court documents seen by the Star-Tribune, Babbit and Deyo took kids on a trip to the Twin Cities gay pride festival, where Babbit became angry that a boy wouldn't have sex with him after he'd spent thousands of dollars on him.
>
> They also found other disturbing pieces of evidence. Notably, a search of their house found a hidden camera behind a clock in the bathroom, along with a

> computer folder with the decidedly unappealing title “Kiddies.” According to the St. Paul Pioneer Press, multiple boys told the police about “strange situations in the bathroom” where Babbit would encourage them to masturbate there, apparently in the hopes of obtaining video.

The age of the victim at the time of these events was 16, according to the far left Minneapolis Star Tribune article linked in the DC article.

This reminds me of some other cases that I read about in the news. Here is one from the far left Los Angeles Times.

Excerpt:

> A former USC professor once on the FBI’s 10 Most Wanted fugitives list pleaded guilty Friday to flying to the Philippines and sexually assaulting underage boys he groomed online.
>
> Walter Lee Williams, 65, admitted engaging in illegal sexual contact with minors in foreign places, entering the plea during a brief appearance before U.S. District Judge Phillip S. Gutierrez.
>
> As part of a plea, federal prosecutors agreed to recommend that the onetime eminent professor of gender and sexuality studies serve no more than five years in a federal prison. He also would be subject to 10 years supervision upon release and must pay $25,000 in restitution to his seven victims. Williams will be sentenced Dec. 15.
>
> He was apprehended within a day of making the FBI’s Most Wanted List in June 2013 after he was indicted on sex crimes involving two 14-year-old boys in the Philippines. He was captured in the Mexican coastal town of Playa del Carmen after a resident recognized his photo from a newspaper.
>
> Los Angeles Police Department Deputy Chief Michel Moore said Williams’ conduct came to light three years ago when a person concerned about the safety of children contacted authorities.
>
> Williams taught anthropology, gender studies and history at USC for about two decades until he quit in 2011. Under the guise of academic research on sexuality in the Southeast Asia/Pacific region, he repeatedly traveled to the area.
>
> Federal prosecutors alleged that the author and Fulbright Award winner used those trips to sexually assault underage boys. Investigators believe he has at least 10 victims across Southeast Asia, aged 9 to 17.
>
> Williams engaged in webcam sex sessions with two boys, aged 13 and 14, in the Philippines in 2010. The next year, he traveled to the country and sexually assaulted both boys and a 15-year-old boy, according to the plea agreement. He was 62 at the time.
>
> While there, he also had sexual contact with three other 16-year-old boys, records show.

> When he returned to Los Angeles International Airport on Feb. 11, 2011, he was "intercepted," and child pornography was found on him. The professor fled Los Angeles a week after being interviewed by the FBI.
>
> An attorney for USC last year provided the FBI with materials the professor donated to the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives that contained "lascivious visual depictions of minors," according to the plea agreement. FBI agents also obtained similar images from Williams' former home.

Here's another from the radically leftist San Francisco Chronicle.

Excerpt:

> Veteran gay rights advocate and former San Francisco Human Rights Commission staffer Larry Brinkin pleaded guilty Tuesday to possessing child pornography.
>
> Brinkin, 67, changed his plea in a deal with the district attorney's office that will result in a sentencing recommendation of six months in county jail, six months of home detention, five years of probation and lifetime registration as a sex offender.
>
> Brinkin, who worked as a senior contract compliance officer with the rights commission until his 2010 retirement, was arrested in June 2012. Authorities said e-mail attachments were found on his America Online subscriber's account that contained images of toddlers engaged in sex acts with men.
>
> Prosecutors originally charged him with six felony counts of possessing and distributing child pornography, but dropped all but one felony count of possession as part of the plea bargain.
>
> Brinkin must undergo sex offender therapy and is banned from working with kids, contacting a juvenile without parental consent, and living with someone responsible for a child without disclosing his offender status.
>
> During his 22-year tenure at the rights commission, Brinkin helped craft the city's Equal Benefits Ordinance, which became a national model for workplace equality for gays and lesbians. When he retired, the Board of Supervisors declared the week of Feb. 1, 2010, as Larry Brinkin Week.
>
> Brinkin, who appeared in court with his husband, has been out on $240,000 bail since September 2012. He is scheduled to return for sentencing on March 5, and to surrender into custody at a later date.

The NY Daily News reports on another similar case, and links to CBS News and the Hartford Courant.

Excerpt:

> The case of a same-sex Connecticut couple accused of repeatedly raping and abusing two of their nine adopted boys is headed for trial.

> Married couple George Harasz and Douglas Wirth of Glastonbury were supposed to be sentenced Friday in Hartford Superior Court under a plea deal, but instead withdrew from their agreement with prosecutors. The men had already pleaded no contest in January to one felony count each of risk of injury to a minor — a reduction from even more serious charges related to sexual assault.
>
> […]Harasz and Wirth adopted nine children — three sets of male siblings — beginning in 2000, and ran a home-based dog breeding business called The Puppy Guy.
>
> The couple was arrested in November 2011 following a police and state investigation of sex-abuse allegations. The children were removed from the home.
>
> Police said two boys, ages 5 and 15, accused Harasz of sexually assaulting them. Harasz was initially facing first-degree sexual assault and other charges, while Wirth had been charged with third-degree sexual assault of the 15-year-old boy.
>
> Their arrest warrants claimed the couple not only sexually and physically abused the children, but also forced them to sleep in closets.
>
> […]One of the victims who spoke during the court hearing said sexual assault began when he was 6.
>
> "They took turns raping me over and over," he said.

This story was reported in the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> During his ordeal Mr Cannon was repeatedly plied with Ecstasy and cannabis before being molested by David Cannon and John Scarfe.
>
> His complaints to care workers were ignored and at one stage he was wrongly diagnosed as having mental disorders.
>
> Both men were eventually arrested and charged after Mr Cannon was readmitted to into council care following a domestic incident, at which point he managed to persuade a Forster carer he was being abused.
>
> Cannon, 54, and 31-year old Scarfe were each jailed for 30 months in 2006, for inciting sexual activity with a child.
>
> […]Cannon was allowed to adopt Andy in December 1997, when the youngster was aged eight. This came despite the fact he had earlier been convicted and put on probation for 12 months for assaulting the boy's mother, Elaine Moss, possessing cannabis and handling a stolen computer.
>
> Miss Moss had also claimed Cannon had been abusing her son.
>
> A social worker failed to bring the allegations to the attention of the family court and instead called Cannon a "very caring parent who considered his children's need".

And here's another similar story from UK Sky News, this time from Scotland where the head of a gay youth organization was running a child sex ring.

Excerpt:

> Eight men in a Scottish paedophile ring have been found guilty of a series of "horrific" sex offences against children and babies.
>
> […]Two of the men – convicted sex offender Neil Strachan and gay rights campaigner James Rennie – were convicted of sex attacks on children.
>
> Strachan, 41, and Rennie, 38, both from Edinburgh, were also found guilty of conspiring to abuse youngsters, as were three other members of the gang.
>
> […]The jury found Rennie, the former chief of LGBT Youth Scotland, an organisation dedicated to helping young gay people, guilty of molesting a young boy over more than four years.
>
> The child was just three months old when the abuse began.

And of course we had the story of the two gay activists who adopted a boy from Russia and were later convicted of pedophilia. The co-founder of the Human Rights Campaign was also arrested for underage sex with a teenaged boy.

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

September 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.

20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

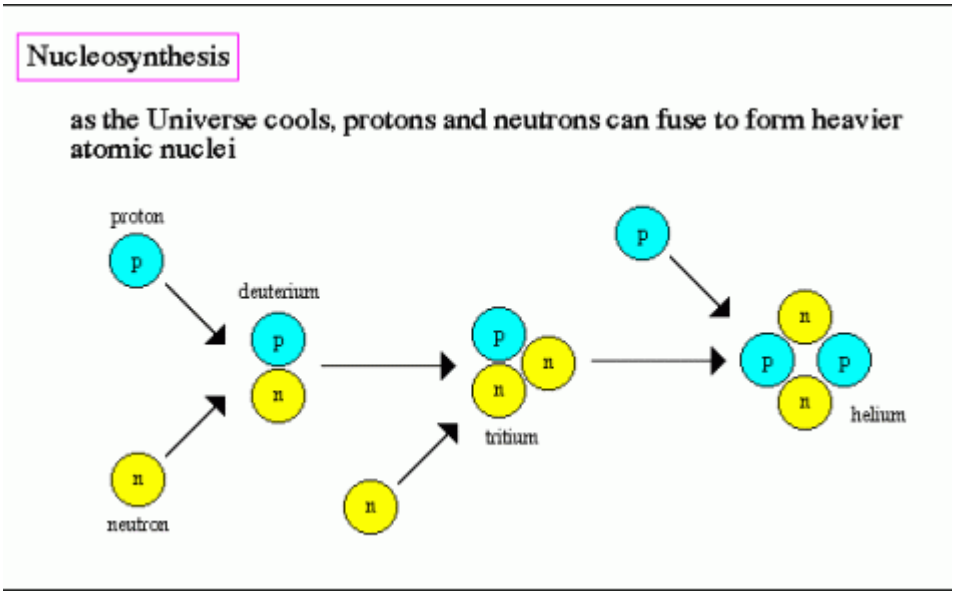

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major

> triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 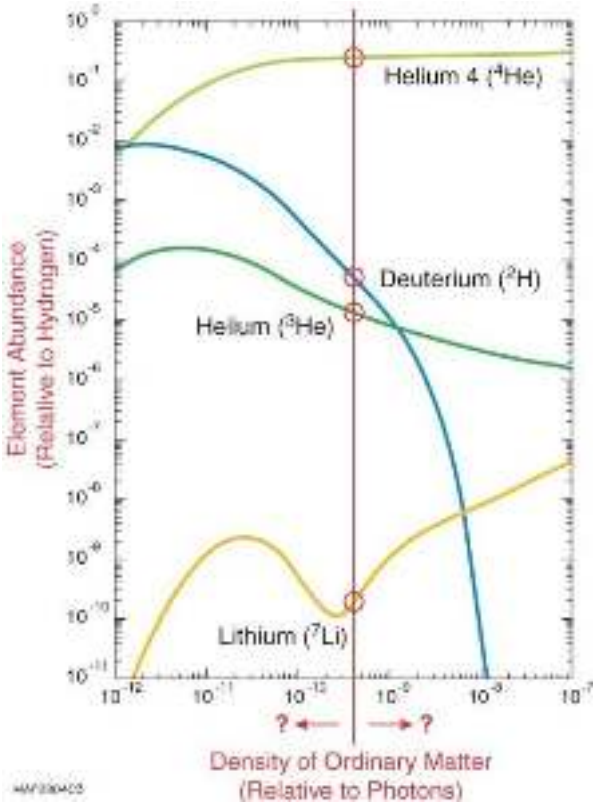
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-

> based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

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For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

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What does it mean to be poor in America?

September 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Major Welfare Programs, 2012

Medicaid	$296 bil
Unemployment Insurance	$126
Disability	$124
Food Stamps	$75
Supplemental Security Income	$60
Earned Income Tax Credit	$56
Pell Grants	$41
Section 8 housing/rental assistance	$28
Drug Benefits	$23
Education for Disadvantaged	$14
School Lunches	$10
S-CHIP	$9
Head Start	$8
TANF Cash Aid	$7

Sources: Congressional Research Service, Congressional Budget Office

Major welfare programs as of 2012

You might think that there are a lot of poor people in America, given the way that Democrats are always talking about the need to take money away from job creating businesses and working families to hand out in welfare to the 47% who pay no income tax. The U.S. Census says that lots of people are poor in America. But is it really true?

Here's an article from the Daily Signal to explain.

It says:

> On Tuesday, the Census Bureau released its annual poverty report declaring that 43.1 million Americans lived in poverty in 2015.
>
> We should be concerned about any American living in real material hardship, but much of what the Census reports about poverty is misleading.
>
> Here are 15 facts about poverty in America that may surprise you. (All statistics are taken from U.S. government surveys.)
>
> - Poor households routinely report spending $2.40 for every $1 of income the Census says they have.
> - The average poor American lives in a house or apartment that is in good repair and has more living space than the average nonpoor person in France, Germany, or England.
> - Eighty-five percent of poor households have air conditioning.
> - Nearly three-fourths of poor households have a car or truck, and 31 percent have two or more cars or trucks.
> - Nearly two-thirds of poor households have cable or satellite TV.
> - Half have a personal computer; 43 percent have internet access.

- Two-thirds have at least one DVD player
- More than half of poor families with children have a video game system, such as an Xbox or PlayStation.
- One-third have a wide-screen plasma or LCD TV.

(The above data on electronic appliances owned by poor households come from a 2009 government survey so the ownership rates among the poor today are most likely higher.)

Activist groups spread alarming stories about widespread hunger in the nation, but in reality, most of the poor do not experience hunger or food shortages. The U.S. Department of Agriculture collects data on these topics in its household food security survey. For 2009, the survey showed:

- Only 4 percent of poor parents reported that their children were hungry even once during the prior year because they could not afford food.
- Some 18 percent of poor adults reported they were hungry even once in the prior year due to lack of money for food.

The following are facts about the housing conditions of the poor.

- Poverty and homelessness are sometimes confused. Over the course of a year, only 4 percent of poor persons become homeless (usually a temporary condition).
- Only 9.5 percent of the poor live in mobile homes or trailers; the rest live in apartments or houses.
- Forty percent of the poor own their own homes, typically, a three-bedroom house with one-and-a-half baths that is in good repair.
- The left claims that one in 25 families with children live in "extreme poverty" on less than $2 per person per day. Government surveys of self-reported spending by families show the actual number is one in 4,469, not one in 25. The typical family allegedly in "extreme poverty" reports spending $25 for every $1 of income the left claims they have.

Why does the Census identify so many individuals as "poor" who do not appear to be poor in any normal sense of the term? The answer lies in the misleading way the Census measures "poverty." The Census defines a family as poor if its income falls below a specified income threshold. (For example, the poverty threshold for a family of four in 2015 was $24,036.) But in counting "income," the Census excludes nearly all welfare benefits.

In 2014, government spent over $1 trillion on means-tested welfare for poor and low income people. (This figure does not include Social Security or Medicare.) Welfare spending on cash, food, and housing was

> **$342 billion.**

I’ve talked before about how welfare programs incentivize young women to have fatherless children, and how fatherless children put a burden on society through crime and other unhealthy behaviors. What is really going on here is that there is not very much real poverty in the United States, but talking about poverty is just a way that Democrats trick the public into supporting more confiscation of wealth from job creators so that the Democrats can buy votes from people.

The right solution to poverty, of course, is to encourage young people to marry, to eliminate teacher unions, to enact vouchers for school choice, and to give financial incentives to people who want to start a business or hire people for their existing business. Democrats are opposed to all of these measures, because they rely on keeping people unmarried, unemployed and dependent on welfare in order to get votes. Government spending to alleviate poverty is just vote buying, especially when the welfare is not temporary and attached to a requirement to look for work.

MIT physicist Alan Lightman on fine-tuning and the multiverse

September 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Here's the article from Harper's magazine.

The MIT physicist says that the fine-tuning is real, and is best explained by positing the existence of an infinite number of universes that are not fine-tuned – the so-called multiverse.

Excerpt:

> While challenging the Platonic dream of theoretical physicists, the multiverse idea does explain one aspect of our universe that has unsettled some scientists for years: according to various calculations, if the values of some of the fundamental parameters of our universe were a little larger or a little smaller, life could not have arisen. For example, if the nuclear force were a few percentage points stronger than it actually is, then all the hydrogen atoms in the infant universe would have fused with other hydrogen atoms to make helium, and there would be no hydrogen left. No hydrogen means no water. Although we are far from certain about what conditions are necessary for life, most biologists believe that water is necessary. On the other hand, if the nuclear force were substantially weaker than what it actually is, then the complex atoms needed for biology could not hold together. As another example, if the relationship between the strengths of the gravitational force and the electromagnetic force were not close to what it is, then the cosmos would not harbor any stars that explode and spew out life-supporting chemical elements into space or any other stars that form planets. Both kinds of stars are required for the emergence of life. The strengths of the

> basic forces and certain other fundamental parameters in our universe appear to be “fine-tuned” to allow the existence of life. The recognition of this fine-tuning led British physicist Brandon Carter to articulate what he called the anthropic principle, which states that the universe must have the parameters it does because we are here to observe it. Actually, the word *anthropic*, from the Greek for “man,” is a misnomer: if these fundamental parameters were much different from what they are, it is not only human beings who would not exist. No life of any kind would exist.
>
> If such conclusions are correct, the great question, of course, is *why* these fundamental parameters happen to lie within the range needed for life. Does the universe care about life? Intelligent design is one answer. Indeed, a fair number of theologians, philosophers, and even some scientists have used fine-tuning and the anthropic principle as evidence of the existence of God. For example, at the 2011 Christian Scholars’ Conference at Pepperdine University, Francis Collins, a leading geneticist and director of the National Institutes of Health, said, “To get our universe, with all of its potential for complexities or any kind of potential for any kind of life-form, everything has to be precisely defined on this knife edge of improbability…. [Y]ou have to see the hands of a creator who set the parameters to be just so because the creator was interested in something a little more complicated than random particles.”
>
> Intelligent design, however, is an answer to fine-tuning that does not appeal to most scientists. The multiverse offers another explanation. If there are countless different universes with different properties—for example, some with nuclear forces much stronger than in our universe and some with nuclear forces much weaker—then some of those universes will allow the emergence of life and some will not. Some of those universes will be dead, lifeless hulks of matter and energy, and others will permit the emergence of cells, plants and animals, minds. From the huge range of possible universes predicted by the theories, the fraction of universes with life is undoubtedly small. But that doesn’t matter. We live in one of the universes that permits life because otherwise we wouldn’t be here to ask the question.

I thought I was going to have to go outside this article to refute the multiverse, but Lightman is honest enough to refute it himself:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.

> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

The multiverse is not pure nonsense, it is theoretically possible. The problem is that the multiverse generator itself would require fine-tuning, so the multiverse doesn't get rid of the problem. And, as Lightman indicates, we have no independent experimental evidence for the existence of the multiverse in any case. Atheists just have to take it on faith, and hope that their speculations will be proved right. Meanwhile, the fine-tuning is just as easily explained by postulating God, and we have independent evidence for God's existence, like the the origin of biological information, the sudden appearance of animal body plans, the argument from consciousness, and so on. Even if the naturalists could explain the fine-tuning, they would still have a lot of explaining to do. Theism (intelligent causation) is the simplest explanation for all of the things we learn from the progress of science.

We need to be frank about atheists and their objections to the progress of science. Within the last 100 years, we have discovered that the physical universe came into being out of nothing 15 billion years ago, and we have discovered that this one universe is fine-tuned for intelligent life. I don't think it's like that the last 100 years of scientific progress on the origins question are going to be overturned so that science once again affirms what atheists believe about the universe. Things are going the wrong way for atheists – at least with respect to science.

See it in action

To see these arguments examined in a debate with a famous atheist, simply watch the debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens, and judge which debater is willing to form his beliefs on scientific progress, and which debater is forming his beliefs *against* the science we have today, and hoping that the good science we have today based on experiments will be overturned by speculative theories at some point in the future. When you watch that debate, it becomes very clear that Christian theists are interested in conforming their beliefs to science, and atheists are very interested in speculating against what science has shown in order to maintain their current pre-scientific view. That's not what rational people ought to do when confronted with evidence.

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Employee of company that wiped unsecure private e-mail server pleads the 5th

September 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton looks bored during Congressional investigation of her misdeeds
He declines to answer questions, for fear of incriminating himself with his own testimony.

Townhall explains:

> Platte River Networks employee Paul Combetta, the person who wiped Hillary Clinton's private server and email archive with BleachBit, plead the Fifth Tuesday and refused to testify in front of the House Oversight Committee.
>
> "On advise of counsel I respectfully decline to answer and assert my Fifth Amendment privilege," Combetta said.
>
> Platte River Networks is the company employed by Clinton to host her private email servers and email accounts during her time at the State Department.
>
> According to the timing presented FBI report on the criminal investigation into the servers, Combetta wiped the server with BleachBit four weeks after the investigation started and two weeks after Congress requested all emails be preserved. Combetta has also been accused of wiping the server while under subpoena.
>
> Combetta's colleague, Bill Thornton, was also called to testify and plead the fifth.

You might remember that another Obama official, Lois Lerner, also pleaded the 5th, during an investigation of the Obama administration's effort to punish conservative

organizations using the IRS.

Details:

> Lois Lerner, former director of IRS exempt organizations, invoked her Fifth Amendment rights again Wednesday before a House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing on the IRS targeting American citizens for their political beliefs.
>
> “On the advice of my counsel, I respectfully exercise my Fifth Amendment right and decline to answer that question,” Lerner said in response to a slew of questions by Chairman Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) regarding the IRS targeting of tea party and conservative groups.

You’ll recall that in Obama’s re-election year, the IRS persecuted conservative groups in order to help Obama win re-election. That’s what government workers do with the salaries that taxpayers pay them. The only solution, of course, is to shut down their departments and only allow the federal government to perform the duties laid out for them in the Constitution. But it looks like Americans prefer to get goodies from their neighbors more than they care about honesty and transparency in government.

What is Planned Parenthood?

September 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

This article from Live Action News lists 5 main points that describe Planned Parenthood.

They are:

1. Abortion is Planned Parenthood's number one priority.
2. Planned Parenthood doesn't have mechanisms in place to help pregnant women who want to stay pregnant and need prenatal care.
3. Planned Parenthood has never done a mammogram, and the self-breast exams can be done by women at home for free.
4. Planned Parenthood routinely gets caught breaking the law.
5. They charge more for the services they do provide than you would pay for the same service at a real health clinic. And they over-bill the government for it, too.

Here is a short video on the first point, for those who cannot read the whole article:

Even those who are pro-abortion should be concerned about the last two points.

Let's see the details on the fourth one – breaking the law:

> One Live Action investigation on Planned Parenthood's complicity in sex trafficking revealed that "seven Planned Parenthood clinics in four different states were willing to aid and abet the sex-trafficking of minor girls by supplying confidential birth control, STD testing, and secret abortions to underage girls and their traffickers."
>
> Live Action also exposed that the abortion chain was willing to cover up sexual abuse. Live Action reported: "Investigations found eight Planned Parenthood clinics in five different states were willing to cover-up sexual abuse, disregarding mandatory suspected statutory rape reporting laws. Clinics also provided

> instructions on how to circumvent parental consent laws.
>
> Of course, The Center for Medical Progress blew away any doubts that the abortion chain had altruistic motives when last summer it exposed the abortion giant's motives to obtain aborted baby parts for use in research. While the abortion giant denied making any profit from its human fetal tissue dealings, it's become clear there is profit involved. In fact, a congressional committee has been investigating the abortion chain's wrongdoing since last summer and has found several indicators of questionable legal issues regarding human fetal tissue practices related to the nation's abortion facilities. One name that appears throughout the committee's investigation is Planned Parenthood, as indicated in this report.

And the fifth point – over-billing the government:

> The abortion chain routinely over-billed Medicaid for its costs, and even admitted it last year. A former Planned Parenthood employee, Sue Thayer, filed a lawsuit against her former employer. Alliance Defending Freedom, who represented her, reported:
>
> Sue found out that Planned Parenthood does whatever it can to cut costs and raise revenue—particularly on the abortion and birth control side of the business. After contracting with drug companies to purchase birth control pills at a bulk discount of about $2.98 per one 28-day cycle, Planned Parenthood would bill Medicaid for $35 and be reimbursed about $26. And, without reporting it to Medicaid, they would also collect a "donation" from the woman to help offset the cost of the "free contraception." But double-dipping in the profit of birth control still wasn't enough.
>
> It's apparent that profit is the motivation behind everything Planned Parenthood does. It behooves the abortion chain to offer "cancer screenings" and other legitimate services because they can bill Medicaid for the costs–and over-bill Medicaid, by its own admission.

Why do the Democrats who run the government give money to an organization that does these things? Answer: because Planned Parenthood gives political donations to the Democrats, and they need that money to win elections.

Do you want to be on their team?

William Lane Craig explains the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement

September 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Probably one of the most common questions that you hear from people who don't fully understand Christianity is this question: "why did Jesus have to die?". The answer that most Christians seem to hold to is that 1) humans are rebelling against God, 2) Humans deserve punishment for their rebellion, 3) Humans cannot escape the punishment for their rebellion on their own, 4) Jesus was punished in the place of the rebellious humans, 5) Those who accept this sacrifice are forgiven for their rebelling.

Are humans rebellious?

Some people think that humans are not really rebellious at all, but it's actually easy to see. You can see it just by looking at how people spend their time. Some of us have no time for God at all, and instead try to fill our lives with material possessions and experiences in order to have happy feelings. Some of us embrace just the parts of God that make us feel happy, like church and singing and feelings of comfort, while avoiding the hard parts of that vertical relationship; reading, thinking and disagreeing with people who don't believe the truth about God. And so on.

This condition of being in rebellion is universal, and all of us are guilty of breaking the law at some point. All of us deserve to be separated from God's goodness and love. Even if we wanted to stop rebelling, we would not be able to make up for the times where we do rebel by being good at other times, any more than we could get out of a speeding ticket by appealing to the times when we drove at the speed limit, (something that I never do, in any case).

This is not to say that all sinners are punished equally – the degree of punishment is proportional to the sins a person commits. However, the standard is perfection. And

worse than that, the most important moral obligation is a *vertical* moral obligation. You can't satisfy the demands of the moral law just by making your neighbor happy, while treating God like a pariah. The first commandment is to love God, the second is to love your neighbor. Even loving your neighbor requires you to tell your neighbor the truth – not just to make them feel good. The *vertical* relationship is more important than the *horizontal* one, and we've all screwed up the vertical relationship. We all don't want God to be there, telling us what's best for us, interfering with our fun. We don't want to relate to a loving God if it means having to care what he thinks about anything that we are doing.

Who is going to pay for our rebellion?

The Christian answer to the problem of our rebellion is that Jesus takes the punishment we deserve in our place.

However, I've noticed that on some atheist blogs, they don't like the idea that someone else can take our punishment for us to exonerate us for crimes that we've committed. So I'll quote from this post by the great William Lane Craig, to respond to that objection.

Excerpt:

> The central problem of the Penal Theory is, as you point out, understanding how punishing a person other than the perpetrator of the wrong can meet the demands of justice. Indeed, we might even say that it would be wrong to punish some innocent person for the crimes I commit!
>
> It seems to me, however, that in other aspects of human life we do recognize this practice. I remember once sharing the Gospel with a businessman. When I explained that Christ had died to pay the penalty for our sins, he responded, "Oh, yes, that's imputation." I was stunned, as I never expected this theological concept to be familiar to this non-Christian businessman. When I asked him how he came to be familiar with this idea, he replied, "Oh, we use imputation all the time in the insurance business." He explained to me that certain sorts of insurance policy are written so that, for example, if someone else drives my car and gets in an accident, the responsibility is imputed to me rather than to the driver. Even though the driver behaved recklessly, I am the one held liable; it is just as if I had done it.
>
> Now this is parallel to substitutionary atonement. Normally I would be liable for the misdeeds I have done. But through my faith in Christ, I am, as it were, covered by his divine insurance policy, whereby he assumes the liability for my actions. My sin is imputed to him, and he pays its penalty. The demands of justice are fulfilled, just as they are in mundane affairs in which someone pays the penalty for something imputed to him. This is as literal a transaction as those that transpire regularly in the insurance industry.

So, it turns out that the doctrine of substitionary atonement is not as mysterious or as objectionable as everyone seems to think it is.

Where to get help if you have a selfish, absent or abusive mother or father

September 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Today, I want to say something this article about lambs in Scotland, written by Sheila Walsh in the The Stream.

She writes:

> I am very fond of sheep. I grew up on the west coast of Scotland with sheep all around me, field after field of white wool and incessant crying when things seemed a little off.
>
> […]Of all the lessons I have learned from these defenseless, gentle animals, the most profound is the most painful. Every now and then, a ewe will give birth to a lamb and immediately reject it. Sometimes the lamb is rejected because they are one of twins and the mother doesn't have enough milk or she is old and frankly quite tired of the whole business. They call those lambs, *bummer lambs*.
>
> Unless the shepherd intervenes, that lamb will die. So the shepherd will take that little lost one into his home and hand feed it from a bottle and keep it warm by the fire. He will wrap it up warm and hold it close enough to hear a heartbeat. When the lamb is strong the shepherd will place it back in the field with the rest of the flock.
>
> "Off you go now, you can do this, I'm right here."
>
> The most beautiful sight to see is when the shepherd approaches his flock in the morning and calls them out, "*Sheep, sheep, sheep*!"

> The first to run to him are the bummer lambs because they know his voice. It's not that they are more loved — it's just that they believe it.
>
> I am so grateful that Christ calls himself the Good Shepherd.
>
> "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice." (John 10:3-4 NLT)

My older brother and I grew up with a mother who was very much focused on her career and earning and saving money for her retirement. We were both stuck in daycare very early after being born, so that she could go back to work right away. My older brother has shown the ill effects of our parents (especially our mother) not having any plan for us, especially morally and spiritually. He dropped out of college after failing his first year, never had a career. Although he has normal intelligence and mental health, he never could stick in any real job.

Although there were early warning signs when his grades started to drop in Grade 5, my parents never took responsibility to make a plan to solve it. Oh, they would yell and scream at him at report card time, but just for a day or two, and after that, nothing constructive. My brother decided that he could just ride out the flak my parents gave him on report card night, and keep going with his plan of having fun and being popular. My parents just forgot about it until the next report card day, because they did not want to be distracted from their careers, hobbies and retirement planning.

I had the exact same upbringing as my older brother. He actually did pretty well until Grade 5 just like me, but then our paths diverged. From Grade 5 on, his grades deterioriated. He got tired of having to study and he was more interested in the opinions of his peers and conforming to pop culture. In my case, from Grade 5 on, my grades were always high-90s. I remember taking the same classes as he did, in the same high school, with the same teachers. He got a 44 in data processing, I got a 96 with the same teacher and won the award for the entire grade. Every class I went to, the teachers would speak fondly of my older brother – he was a nice guy, very popular with his peers, good at sports, but not a very good student. How was it that I was winning awards when he had scored so poorly. Was I really his brother? How could we be so different?

The difference is that in Grade 5, he got a Gideon's New Testament and he read it and he didn't put it into practice, and in Grade 5, I got a Gideon's New Testament and I read it twice and I did put it into practice. That was the difference. I had the awareness of the moral law (i.e.- wisdom) that allowed me to judge my parents and judge my peers and judge my teachers and stand alone. When you cannot rely on anyone to lead you, judging others is critical. That is what allows you to maintain appropriate boundaries and minimize the influence of friends and family who do not have any plan to grow you. Awareness of the moral law is what allows you to stop trying to please people who do not want what is best for you. On the other hand, God is always willing to give you wisdom, and you can find out all about him because he has left plenty of evidence concerning his existence and character for you to find. It is in knowing God as he really is that you can

find your sense of value, purpose and meaning.

For me, Christianity was a simple matter of being willing to go along with what was true, and not insisting having fun or conforming to peer expectations. The essential characteristic of my faith, in contrast to my older brother's lack of faith, was this – I did not mind being different, so long as I never lost a debate about what was true. My obedience to Christ has never been conditional on things going my way, on being liked, or anything like that. The only thing that mattered was being factually correct. It never bothered me what other people were doing, or what other people expected me to do, so long as as I was acting on what I knew to be true. And God helped me to find out what was true my motivating me to study, and leading me to him with good evidence, and good mentors.

How has this affected me? Well, this is the second thing I wanted to say about the bummer lamb analogy. Since I was a victim of this hands-off, me-first style of parenting, it's caused me to be extra sensitive about being a good spiritual leader to others in the same predicament.The people I mentor can see it in the way that I treat them the exact opposite of the way that my older brother and I were treated. I care what people read. I care what courses they choose. I care what they eat. I care how they feel. I care about their finances. I care about their plans to serve God. I care about their romantic relationships. I care whether they get recognition for doing good. I care whether their life is going in the right direction. One person I mentored who once considered taking her own life wrote to me when she graduated from a STEM program, and she said this: "I wish you could have been here at my graduation. My parents only paid for this degree. You were the one who got me through it". We have never met in person, but she is going to continue to make a huge difference for Christ and His Kingdom going forward.

I think when you have been a bummer lamb, you are extra careful to make decisions that will enable you to be a good shepherd to other lambs. Being a good shepherd does not mean being pious, spiritual, mystical, etc. Being a good shepherd does not mean making the lambs feel good about making bad decisions. Being a good shepherd means understanding what God has done to lead you, and then reflecting that love back to others *in practical, self-sacrificial actions that solve actual real-world problems for other people who want to know and serve God*. If you are about to jump off a cliff, the last thing you need is someone with no wisdom or experience telling you that God is OK with you doing whatever feels good to you. What you need is someone practical and competent to give you good advice, however much that advice may make you feel bad, or block your pursuit of fun.

One of my friends proof-read the draft of this post told me that it made her think of 2 Cor 1:3-5:

> [3] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
>
> [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

> [5] For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.“

Nothing else I do in life matters to me as much as taking care of the people I mentor, especially the ones who are lost and lacking guidance and care. I have good health, good education, good career, and great finances. But by far the most important thing I do is following the example of the Shepherd by caring for other lambs.

Can blacks and Hispanics blame their troubles on racism by whites?

September 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The success of children is due to their parents' choices, not from outside racism

If the underperformance of blacks and Hispanics in America were caused by racism by whites, then it follows that Asian-Americans would be underperforming as well. But Asian-Americans are outperforming whites. Let's look at three reasons why, and see if blacks and Hispanics can learn how to succeed by looking at the Asian example.

Here is the summary of this post:

1. Asian Americans marry before they have children
2. Asian Americans save more of what they earn
3. Asian Americans monitor their children's educational progress

Now let's take a look at each of these in order.

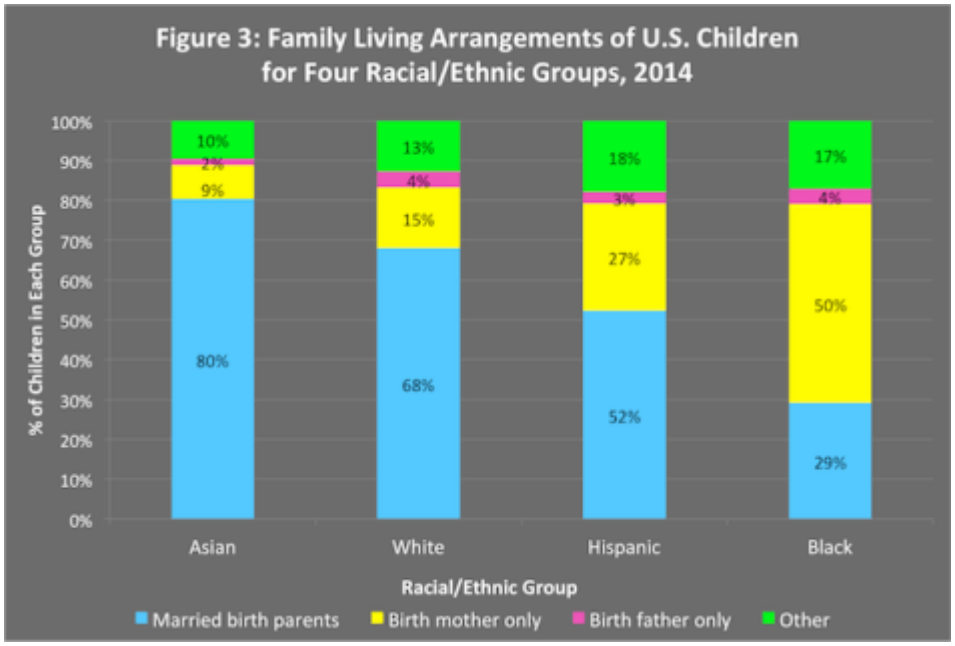

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

1. Asian Americans marry before they have children

This article is from Family Studies.

It says:

> Eight in ten Asian-American kids live with married birth parents, compared with about seven in ten European-American kids, five in ten Hispanic-American kids, and only about three in ten African-American kids. Half of black children live with their mothers only, compared to three in ten Hispanic children, less than two in ten white children and less than one in ten Asian children.

Naturally, children who have two parents to look after them do better, because one parent alone cannot work and do household chores and monitor the children as easily as two parents can. The decision about whether to have sex before marriage is entirely under the control of the grown-ups. It cannot be blamed on racism, poverty and other non-moral pre-occupations of the secular left. Marriage is a moral issue, and Asian-Americans do the moral thing, and marry before they have children.

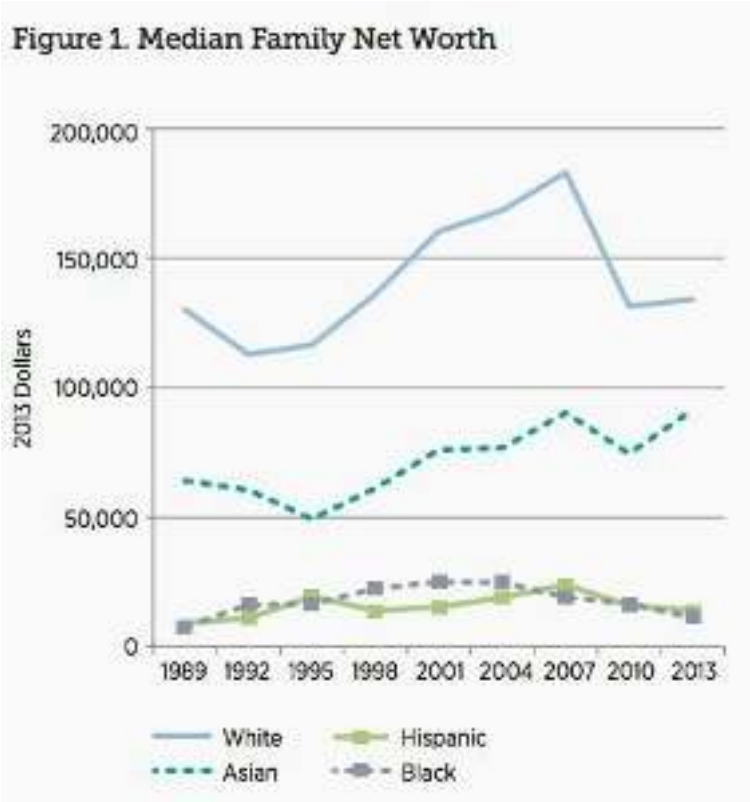

Asian household wealth set to surpass whites

2. Asian Americans save more of what they earn

This article from CNN Money explains:

> Asians have had higher median incomes than their white counterparts, according to a new study by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. The typical Asian family has brought home more money for most of the past two decades.
>
> […][Asians] will surpass whites in net worth in the next decade or two, Fed researchers said.
>
> […]In 1989, the median Asian family had about half the net worth of its white peer. By 2013, they had more than two-thirds.
>
> The gap between whites and blacks and Hispanics, meanwhile, remained little changed over that time period.
>
> Asians have similar financial habits to whites, in terms of investing and borrowing. Both groups are more likely than blacks and Hispanics to invest in stocks and privately-owned businesses and to have more liquid assets, which serves as a buffer against financial shocks. And, on average, the former have about half as much debt as the later.
>
> As a result, Asians and whites have more financial stability than blacks and Hispanics, which also allows the former to build more wealth.

Everyone has to earn and save money, but in some cultures, it becomes normal to not save part of what you earn. That needs to stop. But it has nothing to do with discrimination due to skin color. In Asian culture, there is no glorification of consumer spending on sparkles, bling and other ostentatious wealth. Asians don't want to *appear to*

be wealthy, they want to *actually be* wealthy – by saving money.

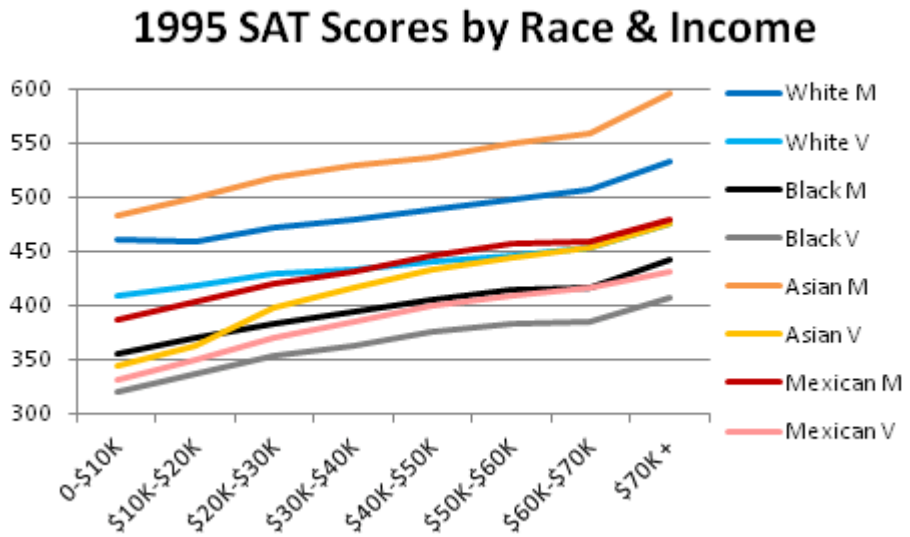

Composite SAT scores by race and income levels: Asians outperform at every income level

3. Asian Americans monitor their children's educational progress

This article from Investors Business Daily explains how Asian parents don't just make demands on their kids to learn, they actively monitor their progress and talk to their kids' teachers:

> Asian-American parents tend to oversee their children's homework, hold them accountable for grades and demand hard work as the ticket to a better life. And it pays off: Their children are soaring academically.
>
> […]As a group, Americans need to take a page from the Asian parents' playbook. American teens rank a dismal 28th in math and science knowledge, compared with teens in other countries, even poor countries.
>
> Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan are at the top. We've slumped. For the first time in 25 years, U.S. scores on the main test for elementary and middle school education (NAEP) fell. And SAT scores for college-bound students dropped significantly.
>
> […]Many [Asian students]from poor or immigrant families, but they outscore all other students by large margins on both tests, and their lead keeps widening.
>
> In New York City, where Asian-Americans make up 13% of overall students, they win more than 50% of the coveted places each year at the city's eight selective public high schools, such as Bronx Science and Stuyvesant.
>
> What's at work here? It's not a difference in IQ. It's parenting. That's confirmed by sociologists from City University of New York and the University of Michigan. Their study showed that parental oversight enabled Asian-American students to far outperform the others.
>
> No wonder many successful charter schools require parents to sign a contract that they will supervise their children's homework and inculcate a work ethic.

You can see an updated image with the latest scores here.

It’s not enough to just outsource the education of your children to a bunch of non-STEM education-degree-holding teachers. Teachers can be good, and some work very hard. But the Democrat teacher unions prevent the firing of teachers who underperform. This is especially true in non-right-to-work states (Democrat states). So, you cannot depend on teachers to educate your children, and Asian parents don’t. That’s why their kids learn. Performance of children in school is not affected by discrimination against skin color, it’s affected by the level of involvement of parents.

Conclusion

We have learned that the success of Asian-Americans in America is all earned. And this proves that there is no such thing as “racism” that holds back non-whites. If blacks and Hispanics imitated the behaviors of Asians (not whites, but Asians), then they would achieve just as well as Asians do. It’s not a race problem, it’s a behavior problem. It’s not a “racism” problem, it’s a behavior problem. It’s an *us* problem, it’s not a *them* problem.

Correcting four myths about the history of the Crusades

September 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Crusader

Here is an interesting article from First Principles Journal.

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

If you asked me what are the two best books on the Crusades, I would answer God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades by Baylor professor Rodney Stark and The Concise History of the Crusades by Professor Thomas F. Madden. If you get this question a lot from atheists, then I recommend you pick these up. Anything by Rodney Stark is useful for Christians, in fact.

How Obama lies about terrorism in order to justify closing Guantanamo prison

September 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?

How do you close a prison that contains senior terrorists who were captured on the battlefield while trying to kill American soldiers?

You have to lie to the American people, that's how.

Stephen Hayes of the Weekly Standard explains:

> Almost seven years later, much to Obama's frustration, the facility remained open. Closing it had proved much more challenging than Obama had theorized as a candidate trying to win an election and a new president acting on his idealism. It turned out that the jihadists who remained in Guantánamo were there for a reason. Many of them were truly, as the cliché had it, "the worst of the worst." Al Qaeda leaders, top Taliban officials, the men who planned the 9/11 attacks, veteran jihadists caught plotting follow-on attacks on U.S. interests, and even those al Qaeda operatives believed to be charged with carrying out the next wave of assaults on the U.S. homeland.
>
> The news in the president's interview wasn't that he intended to make good on his promise to close Guantánamo, however belatedly. It was instead the president's attempt to mislead the American people to accomplish his controversial objective.
>
> "I am absolutely persuaded, as are my top intelligence and military advisers, that Guantánamo is used as a recruitment tool for organizations like ISIS," Obama said, endeavoring to create a national security rationale for closing the detention

> facility. “And if we want to fight them, then we can’t give them these kinds of excuses.”
>
> **This isn’t true. There is virtually no evidence that jihadists use Guantánamo as a significant recruiting tool, and national security experts from across the political spectrum who have tested the claim have judged it false.**
>
> He wasn’t finished. “Keep in mind that between myself and the Bush administration hundreds of people have been released and the recidivism rate—we anticipate, we assume that there are going to be—out of four, five, six hundred people that get released—a handful of them are going to be embittered and still engaging in anti-U.S. activities and trying to link up potentially with their old organizations,” Obama said.
>
> **That wasn’t true. When Obama made this claim, 653 detainees had been released. Of that group, 196 had been confirmed (117) or suspected (79) of returning to jihadist activity upon their release. Those numbers came from the office of the director of national intelligence and represent the U.S. government’s official count of Guantánamo recidivism. Nearly one-in-three former detainees returned to the fight, not a “handful,” as the president suggested.**
>
> There was more. “The bottom line is that the strategic gains we make by closing Guantánamo will outweigh, you know, those low-level individuals who, you know, have been released so far.”
>
> **Again, false. The U.S. government—under George W. Bush and Barack Obama—has released dozens of veteran jihadists whose terror résumés include senior positions in al Qaeda and like-minded groups. And of course Obama had himself transferred five senior Taliban officials to Qatar in order to secure the release of Bowe Bergdahl.**
>
> So, at a time of escalated threat levels from international terrorists, the president of the United States is releasing dangerous jihadists against the advice of the military and intelligence professionals who have studied the threat for years, and he’s lying to the American people to downplay the threat.

Who is Obama protecting when he releases ISIS commanders for a deserter like Bowe Bergdahl? Not us, and not our allies. He’s protecting Islamic terrorists. Does he not know what they are doing to their victims in the Middle East, or does he know and just not care?

Consider this article from the far left UK Independent:

> A Yazidi girl who was repeatedly raped by Isis fighters set herself on fire to make herself unattractive to the men.
>
> The teenager, who asked to be identified only as Yasmin, had escaped Isis captivity and was in a refugee camp in Iraq when she thought she heard Isis

> soldiers' voices outside her tent.
>
> She said she doused herself in petrol and set her body alight in a deliberate attempt to disfigure herself. The flames burned her hair and face, also badly damaging her nose, lips and ears.
>
> The 18-year-old is one of 1,100 refugee women and girls who have been brought from refugee camps in the Middle East to south western Germany for specialist psychological treatment.

Do Democrat voters care about the victims of terrorism? Gay marriage, subsidies for abortionists, welfare and free condoms – that's what Democrats care about. There just wasn't any concern about Islamic terrorism during the 2008 and 2012 elections. ISIS didn't exist when American troops occupied Iraq – the vacuum created by us leaving created ISIS. This epidemic of rape of Yazidi women is what Democrat voters wanted. They voted for this, they wanted it.

Gay activists threaten violence to shut down pro-marriage event

September 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

This story appeared in The Australian on the weekend.

Excerpt:

> A ferocious campaign against Christian groups planning to meet on same-sex marriage has forced them to cancel the event at a major hotel next week, amid claims of physical threats from marriage-equality advocates.

> The Accor Hotels group confirmed late yesterday that the function had been abandoned after a social media storm triggered phone calls that "rattled" employees and left the company concerned about the safety of staff and guests.
>
> In the first test of the "civil" debate promised for a plebiscite on gay marriage, advocates for the "yes" case were being blamed last night for the kind of "hate speech" that Bill Shorten and others have claimed would come from the "no" case.
>
> A spokeswoman for the Mercure Sydney Airport Hotel said the campaign by marriage-equality advocates had forced the company to close the hotel's Facebook page, sparked phone calls that disturbed hotel staff and escalated the problem to the company's headquarters. "We've conducted an objective review regarding the safety and security of our hotel guests and staff," she said. "Following this review the event will no longer take place next week."
>
> […]**A joint statement from the conveners said the hotel staff received "threats of violence" after the details of the private event were published on the internet.** "We have chosen to reconsider our arrangements

> for the event next week due to our concern for the safety of the hotel staff, and our commitment to a reasonable and respectful debate," ACL managing director Lyle Shelton said.

When gay marriage was being passed in the USA, we were told that this would not affect pro-marriage people in any way. Well, I think we do know now that expressing disagreement with gay marriage will affect you. You may have property vandalized. You may receive threats of violence. You may lose your job. You may lose your life savings. You may lose your business. You may lose your right to free speech. You may lose your right to freedom of association. And as the domestic terrorism attack on the Family Research Council by an armed gay activist showed, you may even lose your life.

What is concerning to me is that I don't hear anyone in the media or in the government recognizing where the real intolerance is coming from. Do gay activists have any obligation to respect the legal rights of those who disagree with them?

Minneapolis mayor worries that terrorist attack in her city might fuel “Islamophobia”

September 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats think that the real threat to America is not radical Islamic terrorism

Why do terrorist attacks happen in America? Well, the Democrat party believes in importing vast numbers of unskilled immigrants who don’t speak English from countries who hate us. Why? Because people who can’t earn a living will vote for the Democrats, since the Democrats give them other people’s money in exchange for their votes. And, according to these Democrat Robin Hoods, if the unskilled immigrants engage in a little sex-trafficking, gang raping or terrorist acting, what’s the harm?

The Daily Wire reports on the mayor’s statement following the terrorist attack in her city:

> In a Facebook post designed to convey solidarity with the area’s heavily Somali Muslim immigrant population, Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges apologizes for Islam, trumping a line heard at every Hillary Clinton event from multi-million dollar celebrity fundraisers in New York City to subdued rallies in rural Iowa.
>
> “Love is bigger than hate,” she begins her letter, addressing a local audience traumatized by a recent terror attack at a shopping mall in nearby St, Cloud that left several victims injured after a Muslim man armed with a knife stabbed unsuspecting shoppers while shouting “Allahu Akbar” and asking his targets if they were Muslim.
>
> She continues:
>
> At this difficult moment, I also urge every Minneapolitan and every Minnesotan to support and stand firmly with our Muslim, East African, and Somali friends and neighbors. A horrible, violent attack like this should never be exploited to attack a whole community and a whole religion. Yet we have seen Islamophobia rear its

> ugly head in terrible moments like this far too many times — *and* at a moment when one person in particular is playing to fear and hatred of immigrants on a national scale, I fully understand the worry of the Somali community here that it will happen again.
>
> Forget the terrorists or the poisonous Islamic ideology infecting susceptible Somali men, prompting dozens to leave Minnesota and join terror groups like al-Shabab in their home country of Somalia. Forget the Islamic clerics preaching anti-Western rhetoric, including gender apartheid, Sharia-supremacism, and jihadism. Forget the fact that everyday Americans are being systematically targeted for adopting un-Islamic lifestyles. The real concern is Islamophobia, according to Mayor Hodges.

Minnesota prides itself on welcoming in unskilled immigrants from Somalia, a country dominated by radical Islam. And now they can take pride in the victims of this terrorist attack, too. They caused it.

The far left Minneapolis Star Tribune was also concerned about the Islamic terrorist attack, but not in the way you might thing. They weren't concerned about the victims, or protecting the public.

The Daily Wire explains:

> Only hours after the multiple stabbings of shoppers at a St. Cloud, Minnesota mall on Saturday, the leading newspaper in Minnesota by far, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, published an article that seemed to excuse the Muslim attacker who attempted multiple murders by insinuating he was responding to local anti-Muslim sentiment.
>
> Pat Pheifer of the *Star Tribune* wrote an article titled, titled "Anti-Muslim Tension Isn't New in St. Cloud." Pheifer wrote, "A cloud of anti-Muslim sentiment and tension has hung over St. Cloud for the past seven years, with incidents ranging from bullying Somali and other East African immigrants at St. Cloud Technical High School, to women being screamed at in grocery stores, pig intestines wrapped around the door handles of a halal grocery store, and offensive billboards and license plates."
>
> Pheifer continued, "The most physically injurious incident came Saturday evening when a man stabbed nine people at the city's Crossroads Center before the attacker was killed inside the mall by an off-duty police officer. No one but the attacker was killed." Finally, Pheifer admits, "Authorities said the man reportedly asked at least one victim whether they were Muslim before assaulting them and referred to Allah during the attacks."
>
> The article never mentioned that the attacker, who shouted references to Allah before the attack, was Muslim.
>
> As PJ Media notes, "Despite the fact that the attacker's name was already circulating in the media, Dahir Adan's name never appears."

The lady (Pat Pheifer) who wrote the article was apparently more concerned about defending a failed policy of importing unskilled immigrants from countries dominated by radical Islam, rather than the victims of Islamic terrorism.

When I say that mainstream newspapers like the Minneapolis Star Tribune are far left, this is what I am talking about. They conceal information that would make their favorite politicians look bad. Everyone knows that Democrats are soft on crime, and soft on national security. When terrorist attacks happen, Democrats blame America, and then they release the terrorists to try again.

By the way, another detail of this story that you probably did not hear about from the leftist mainstream media. The man who shot the suspect, preventing further loss of life, is a concealed carry instructor:

> USPSA Shooter, 3-Gunner, and NRA-certified firearms instructor Jason Falconer has been identified as the man who shot and killed a 22-year-old Somali immigrant who went on a stabbing rampage inside a St. Cloud, (MN) Mall on Saturday.
>
> The apparent terrorist—who apparently asked victims if they were Muslims before stabbing them—was engaged by Falconer inside the mall.
>
> Falconer is the president and owner of Tactical Advantage LLC, a shooting range and tactical training facility with a strong focus on arming concealed carriers.

Naturally, he was carrying that day and since he is an expert marksman, the threat was neutralized.

Frequent denial of sex breaks the marriage covenant as much as adultery

September 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Let's start this post by quoting a passage from the Bible.

1 Corinthians 7:1-5:

1 Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband.

3 The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*.

5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

So with that in mind, I want to turn to a well-known Jewish talk show host named Dennis Prager, who is much loved and listened to by Christians. Dennis Prager features a lot of discussions about male-female relationships on his show, particularly during the male-female hour. In this two part series on male sexuality, he explains why women should not deprive their husbands of sex without a good reason.

Part 1 is here.

Excerpt:

> It is an axiom of contemporary marital life that if a wife is not in the mood, she

> need not have sex with her husband. Here are some arguments why a woman who loves her husband might want to rethink this axiom.
>
> First, women need to recognize how a man understands a wife's refusal to have sex with him: A husband knows that his wife loves him first and foremost by her willingness to give her body to him. This is rarely the case for women. Few women know their husband loves them because he gives her his body (the idea sounds almost funny). This is, therefore, usually a revelation to a woman. Many women think men's natures are similar to theirs, and this is so different from a woman's nature, that few women know this about men unless told about it.
>
> This is a major reason many husbands clam up. A man whose wife frequently denies him sex will first be hurt, then sad, then angry, then quiet. And most men will never tell their wives why they have become quiet and distant. They are afraid to tell their wives. They are often made to feel ashamed of their male sexual nature, and they are humiliated (indeed emasculated) by feeling that they are reduced to having to beg for sex.
>
> When first told this about men, women generally react in one or more of five ways…

He then explains the 5 ways that women respond to this.

Here's one:

> 1. You have to be kidding. That certainly isn't my way of knowing if he loves me. There have to be deeper ways than sex for me to show my husband that I love him.

I think that this is a common mistake that liberal women make because they think that men are just hairy women. But men are not women, we are different and sex means something different to men than it does to women. In the past, *most* women understood how men are different than women, but younger women have been taught that there are no differences between the sexes. To think any different is "sexism".

Here's another from the list:

> 4. You have it backwards. If he truly loved me, he wouldn't expect sex when I'm not in the mood.

Again, this is the common mistake that many younger women today make in thinking that love is a one-way street – flowing from men and children to the woman. If men and children DON'T do what the woman wants, or if they make demands on her, then they don't "love" her and she is justified in ignoring them.

Liberal women have been taught to believe that they are always victims or some group of oppressors, such as men and children or corporations. It makes them rebel against having to do anything for anyone else, because they don't want to be "oppressed". That makes them unable to accept that relationships are give-and-take, Once a commitment to love another person permanently has been made, then each person has

responsibilities to provide for the needs of the other.

I actually had a conversation with a Christian woman once who said that women should not be obligated to do things that they didn't feel like doing. I asked her if men were obligated to go to work when they didn't feel like going. She said yes, and acted as though I were crazy for asking. I just laughed, because she didn't even see the inconsistency. The truth is that men often don't feel like working, but they get up and go to work anyway, whether they like it or not (in most cases). Similarly, a women should feel obligated to have sex with her husband, even if she is not in a perfect mood for it (in most cases). Sometimes, a man stays home from work, and it's OK. And sometimes a woman says no to sex, and it's OK. But it's not OK to stop doing it for months and months with no good reason.

Part 2 is here.

Excerpt:

> Here are eight reasons for a woman not to allow not being in the mood for sex to determine whether she denies her husband sex.

He then explains the eight reasons.

Here's one of them:

> 7. Many contemporary women have an almost exclusively romantic notion of sex: It should always be mutually desired and equally satisfying or one should not engage in it. Therefore, if a couple engages in sexual relations when he wants it and she does not, the act is "dehumanizing" and "mechanical." Now, ideally, every time a husband and wife have sex, they would equally desire it and equally enjoy it. But, given the different sexual natures of men and women, this cannot always be the case. If it is romance a woman seeks — and she has every reason to seek it — it would help her to realize how much more romantic her husband and her marriage are likely to be if he is not regularly denied sex, even of the non-romantic variety.

Women have to engage their husbands if they expect their husbands to engage in the marriage as a husband and father. Men can't do their protector, provider and spiritual leader roles forever unless their needs are met at some point. Performance of these male duties is not free. Wives have to love their husbands in the way that men expect to be loved. That's what they vowed to do in the wedding, isn't it?

At the end of the article, Prager makes a general point about women that I think needs to be emphasized over and over and over:

> That solution is for a wife who loves her husband — if she doesn't love him, mood is not the problem — to be guided by her mind, not her mood, in deciding whether to deny her husband sex.

This problem of sex-withholding is so widespread, that it really makes me (although I am

a virgin) wonder what women think that marriage is about anyway. When a woman vows to love her husband, what do they think that word really means? Why do women think that men marry? What do men want that marriage provides for them? Which of those needs are the women's responsibility to provide for? I think these are questions that men should ask women. I think women should be prepared to answer them. Men should expect that women be reading books on men and marriage, and that she has relationships with men where she is giving support, respect, affirmation, affection and approval. You can learn a lot about a woman by how she treats her father, for example.

Unfortunately, many men today haven't thought through what they need from wives in a marriage. They spend their young years chasing women who are fun and sexually permissive. Every husband I asked about what they need has told me that respect, affirmation, affection and regular sex are more important than appearance and fun. Pre-marital sex, having fun, getting drunk, and going out, etc. are not the right foundation for marriage – which requires mutual self-sacrifice in order to work.

Another point: I have a friend who is very concerned that men are breaking sexual rules, but he seems oblivious to 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. I asked him privately what he thought about sex-withholding, and whether this might cause husbands to turn to pornography and even affairs, and I mentioned 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. He said: "no, it's not something I take much interest in". I was tempted to ask him if the Bible was something that he does not take much interest in.

I think he misreads 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 so that it could only be used to condemn *men*. If that were his view, then it actually worries me if well-meaning men are actually undermining marriage, by teaching women that they have no responsibilities to keep the marriage going, and helping them to feel like victims when their marriages fall apart. Sometimes even people who claim to be pro-marriage can undermine marriage practically-speaking, because of their unBiblical belief that women are "naturally good" and should not have any responsibilities in a marriage.

I thought this attitude was so interesting in view of what I read in the Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands. In that book, Dr. Laura urges women to be sensitive to their husbands' different male natures in order to avoid them looking at pornography and having affairs. Withholding sex from a man is the equivalent of a man withholding *conversation* to a woman. Sex is how a man feels loved! What's remarkable is how female callers on her show are shocked that men react badly to being deprived of sex.

I do think that some men will look at porn and cheat regardless of what their wife does sexually, but then it again falls to the woman to choose a man who has demonstrated that he has self-control – i.e., a virgin who has remained chaste with her throughout the courtship and protected her from doing sexual things outside of the covenant context. Chastity is hard, but it is how a man loves his wife self-sacrificially, before he even meets her. It should be a trait much sought after *and respected* by women. Basically, women need to be led by their minds, not by their feelings, when choosing a husband.

A man has to get up and go to work every day for his family, regardless of whether he

feels like it or not. In fact, the many decisions he has made before getting married are also made not because they make him happy, but because he needs to be responsible to his future wife and children. The decision to study science? Loving obligation. The decision to go to grad school in science? Loving obligation. The decision to work in a demanding, risky career? Loving obligation. The decision to save money and eat instant oatmeal for dinner? Loving obligation. Men don't do these things because we enjoy them. We do it because we love our wives and children self-sacrificially, *before we ever even meet them*. I think that women need to do the same.

Minnesota let in thousands of refugees and unskilled immigrants from Muslim countries

September 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats think that the real threat to America is not radical Islamic terrorism

An interesting article from the far left Minneapolis Star Tribune gives some details about the recent terrorist attack at a Minnesota mall:

> Isaiah Mordal had just finished a long day at the Pretzelmaker shop in the Crossroads Center mall. He was supposed to get off work at 5 o'clock but stayed until 8 to fill in for a sick co-worker.
>
> When his shift finally ended, Mordal walked outside with his girlfriend, Johanna Bohnenkamp, who is nearly nine months pregnant. As he did, a man in a security guard's uniform walked past, approached a woman nearby and stabbed her. Then he stabbed her companion.
>
> And then he turned to face Mordal.
>
> "I was in complete shock," Mordal said Monday of the knife attacks at the St. Cloud mall on Saturday night that left 10 people injured. "He had me trapped in a corner. He stood about 10 feet away with his knife in the air."
>
> Mordal begged for his life.
>
> "I said, 'Don't do this! My girlfriend is pregnant!' At that point it seemed like it was going extremely fast, but at the same time, it seemed like it took forever," he said.

Mordal's girfriend was 9 months pregnant, but the attacker stabbed him in the shoulder, and sliced her neck, anyway.

This story from the Weekly Standard explains the concern that rational people have with

unskilled immigrants and refugees from countries with a significant presence of radical Islam, namely that they are easily radicalized.

Excerpt:

> This past Saturday's stabbing rampage by a Somali immigrant in St. Cloud, Minnesota, hits close to home; St. Cloud is about a 45-minute drive from the Twin Cities. Like the Twin Cities, St. Cloud is host to a large and ever-growing population of Somali immigrants and refugees.
>
> The perpetrator of the rampage was one Dahir Adan.
>
> […]Saturday's attack not only hit close to home, it also rang a bell. Adan fits a certain profile. Having attended the trial of three "Minnesota men" (first- and second-generation Somalis) in Minneapolis this past May charged with seeking to join ISIS, I found Adan's story eerily familiar. Adan was born in a Kenyan refugee camp and entered the United States at age two.

Adan was a refugee from Somalia – a country dominated by radical Islam. And now the Obama administration is trying to take in hundreds of thousands of refugees from countries that are dominated by radical Islam.

One of the other defendants is named Omar:

> Omar was born in a Kenyan refugee camp. He was roughly three years old when his family moved to the United States. His family emigrated to Kenya as a result of the Somali civil war. His father was shot three times in the conflict and lost his left leg as a result of the injuries. His father is disabled, but his disability gave him preferential immigration treatment by the United States.
>
> Omar's father has disappeared from the United States. He has left Omar's mother with a rather large family. Omar has nine sisters and four brothers. **They live in housing subsidized by a Section 8 voucher, although that must be the least of it.**

The Weekly Standard mentions this Washington Times article about how much money refugees and unskilled immigrants use up in welfare:

> In the fiscal year that ended in September, Minnesota welcomed 1,118 Somali refugees arriving directly from Africa, most of them without family ties to the state, according to State Department statistics. Overall, more than 30,000 Somalis live in the midwestern state comprising the nation's largest concentration of Somali immigrants, according to U.S. Census data.
>
> […]**Minnesota's state demographer's office reports that only 41 percent of Somali men are working and 54 percent of Somali women are employed, meaning many may rely on the state's handouts to survive, and are more susceptible to extremists pull.**
>
> **"It seems safe to assume that if they're not working, then they're likely receiving public welfare benefits," said Peter Nelson, director of public**

> **policy at the Center of the American Experiment. "More problematic, the Somali men not working are clearly not integrating as well as they could with society, which could feed into them being radicalized and recruited to fight with" the Islamic State.**

The Weekly Standard article noted that the Democrat governor of Minnesota likes to spend taxpayer money on refugees who overwhelmingly vote Democrat. It works well for him because he gets to brag about his generosity, he gets to spend money that isn't his, and he gets to buy votes of people who are content with long-term dependency on government. Well, what about when some of his bribed voters commit acts of terrrorism? His response is to warn taxpayers to keep their mouths shut and keep paying up, lest he label them guilty of "Islamophobia":

> In October last year—coincidentally, in St. Cloud—Governor Mark Dayton weirdly instructed "white, B-plus, Minnesota-born citizens" to suppress their qualms about immigrant resettlement in Minnesota. If they can't, they should "find another state," he added. Late last year Andrew Luger, the United States Attorney for Minnesota, took to the pages of the Star Tribune to inveigh against "the current wave of Islamophobia."

If you resent having your taxpayer money used to buy the votes of refugees and unskilled immigrants, then Democrats will call you names. How dare you interfere with their "generosity" with your money?

I think it is important to connect the mass importation of refugees and unskilled immigrants with consequences. Look at Europe, for example. They have an epidemic of gang-rapes and sex-trafficking caused by refugees and unskilled immigrants. Unskilled Middle East immigrants in the UK and also unskilled South American immigrants in America have both been implicated in sex-trafficking of young women. This is a problem for conservatives like me, but what do progressives think about it?

The Democrat Party's official stance towards sex-trafficking by refugees and illegal immigrants is to accuse anyone who is concerned about it as "racists". But 100% of the people who disagree with gang-rapes and sex-trafficking by refugees and unskilled immigrants are in favor of more skilled immigration of English speakers from other countries. My parents were immigrants, and I am non-white myself! Skilled immigrants add value to the country, because they pay more in taxes than they take in. No one cares about the skin color or national origin of people who come here to work hard, follow the laws, and avoid taking welfare dependency. It's the collecting welfare, crime and terrorism that we are concerned about.

Conservatives fight Democrat plan to import refugees from countries dominated by radical Islam

September 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats think that the real threat to America is not radical Islamic terrorism

The Daily Signal reports:

> Thirty-seven Republican House members wrote a letter to House leadership this week asking them to use a must-pass spending bill as a vehicle for language that would block federal funding to refugees from Syria, the Middle East, and North Africa until national security officials can guarantee that terrorists cannot infiltrate the screening process.
>
> […]Ahead of his speech Tuesday to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Obama submitted his annual refugee report to Congress, outlining his plan to significantly increase the U.S. commitment to resettle refugees for the fiscal year starting Oct. 1.The Obama administration plans to raise the number of refugees admitted to the U.S. to 110,000 in fiscal 2017 from 85,000 this fiscal year, representing a 30 percent increase.
>
> […]Last month, the administration exceeded its goal of admitting 10,000 Syrian refugees during fiscal 2016, which ends Sept. 30.

More about the Republican legislators pushing back against the open-borders Democrats:

> **With Congress in control of the funding for refugee resettlement, Republicans say their concerns over vetting procedures for admitting refugees to the U.S. outweigh other concerns, and that they need more assurances the program cannot be infiltrated by Islamic extremists.**
>
> **In calling for stronger vetting, these critics have pointed to testimony last year to Congress from FBI Director James Comey, in which he said**

> **there are challenges to how the U.S. screens refugees, specifically with the limitations in gathering intelligence in war-torn Syria.**
>
> Republicans also note recent terrorist attacks in Europe where some of the terrorists involved had posed as refugees.
>
> "We have a new dimension on the national security front that we never faced before," said Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., in an interview with The Daily Signal.
>
> "Where in the past refugees have come to the U.S. as a place of rescue and safety, now we have credible evidence that suggests that ISIS and other terror groups are trying to take advantage of our generosity and compassion. So that does necessitate a change in not only our priorities, but also the funding we allocate to this particular issue."

Democrats are (of course) opposed to tougher screening of refugees:

> **Last year, the House, with the support of 47 Democrats—enough to have a veto-proof majority—passed a bill requiring tougher screening of refugees from Syria and Iraq. Senate Democrats blocked the bill from advancing, however, with only two voting to support it.**

Very important to understand that this rhetoric from Democrats dismissing all concern about crime as "racism" and terrorism as "Islamophobia" really does get innocent Americans killed. This is the Democrat platform: they favor criminals and terrorists above taxpayers. This is not an exaggeration *at all*, for those who pay attention to their votes.

As usual, conservative senator Ted Cruz finds himself leading the fight to protect American taxpayers.

The Washington Free Beacon reports:

> Sen. Ted Cruz (R., Texas) is calling for an end to the Obama administration's Middle East refugee program following a series of weekend attacks that appear to be acts of terrorism, according to a statement provided to the *Washington Free Beacon*.
>
> Cruz, a vocal critic of administration efforts to bring tens-of-thousands of refugees from Middle Eastern countries into the United States, is calling on Congress "to prevent Americans who have traveled abroad for training from returning here, and to stop the flow of refugees from hotbeds of terrorism in the Middle East," according to comments provided to the *Free Beacon*.
>
> "Congress should act to prevent Americans who have traveled abroad for training from returning here, and to stop the flow of refugees from hotbeds of terrorism in the Middle East that President Obama is determined to bring to our country," Cruz said. "We can't overcome our enemies by pretending they don't exist, and undermining our first line of defenders. Only together, clear-eyed and determined, can we defeat this foe."
>
> Cruz's comments come on the heels of multiple weekend attacks that have

> wounded dozens of U.S. citizens. Elements of the Islamic State terror group have already claimed credit for some of the attacks.

It’s worth remembering why we have a refugee crisis in the first place. We have a refugee crisis because the majority of Americans voted to elect a President who withdrew from the Middle East in defeat. As a result, Islamic State (ISIS) formed in the power gap that our retreat created. Democrats created this crisis because Democrats wanted free condoms for all more than they wanted peace in the Middle East. They are just not good at national security or foreign policy.

New discovery: ancient Old Testament fragment is identical to copy 2,000 years later

September 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

A new discovery of an ancient text fragment was reported in the Associated Press, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The charred lump of a 2,000-year-old scroll sat in an Israeli archaeologist's storeroom for decades, too brittle to open. Now, new imaging technology has revealed what was written inside: the earliest evidence of a biblical text in its standardized form.
>
> The passages from the Book of Leviticus, scholars say, offer the first physical evidence of what has long been believed: that the version of the Hebrew Bible used today goes back 2,000 years.
>
> The discovery, announced in a Science Advances journal article by researchers in Kentucky and Jerusalem on Wednesday, was made using "virtual unwrapping," a 3D digital analysis of an X-ray scan. Researchers say it is the first time they have been able to read the text of an ancient scroll without having to physically open it.
>
> "You can't imagine the joy in the lab," said Pnina Shor of the Israel Antiquities Authority, who participated in the study.
>
> […]**Scholars have believed the Hebrew Bible in its standard form first came about some 2,000 years ago, but never had physical proof, until**

> **now, according to the study. Previously the oldest known fragments of the modern biblical text dated back to the 8th century.**
>
> **The text discovered in the charred Ein Gedi scroll is "100 percent identical" to the version of the Book of Leviticus that has been in use for centuries, said Dead Sea Scroll scholar Emmanuel Tov from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who participated in the study.**
>
> **"This is quite amazing for us," he said. "In 2,000 years, this text has not changed."**

The article mentioned the Dead Scrolls, which were earlier copies of some of the Old Testament books that we have today. In this case, there was a long gap between these early Dead Sea Scrolls documents, and the earliest copy that we had prior to the Dead Sea Scrolls. How much had changed in the period in between?

This article from Probe Ministries explains:

> The Dead Sea Scrolls play a crucial role in assessing the accurate preservation of the Old Testament. With its hundreds of manuscripts from every book except Esther, detailed comparisons can be made with more recent texts.
>
> The Old Testament that we use today is translated from what is called the Masoretic Text. The Masoretes were Jewish scholars who between A.D. 500 and 950 gave the Old Testament the form that we use today. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947, the oldest Hebrew text of the Old Testament was the Masoretic Aleppo Codex which dates to A.D. 935.{5}
>
> With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now had manuscripts that predated the Masoretic Text by about one thousand years. Scholars were anxious to see how the Dead Sea documents would match up with the Masoretic Text. If a significant amount of differences were found, we could conclude that our Old Testament Text had not been well preserved. Critics, along with religious groups such as Muslims and Mormons, often make the claim that the present day Old Testament has been corrupted and is not well preserved. According to these religious groups, this would explain the contradictions between the Old Testament and their religious teachings.
>
> After years of careful study, it has been concluded that the Dead Sea Scrolls give substantial confirmation that our Old Testament has been accurately preserved. The scrolls were found to be almost identical with the Masoretic text. Hebrew Scholar Millar Burrows writes, "It is a matter of wonder that through something like one thousand years the text underwent so little alteration. As I said in my first article on the scroll, 'Herein lies its chief importance, supporting the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition.'"{6}
>
> A significant comparison study was conducted with the Isaiah Scroll written around 100 B.C. that was found among the Dead Sea documents and the book of Isaiah found in the Masoretic text. After much research, scholars found that the

> two texts were practically identical. Most variants were minor spelling differences, and none affected the meaning of the text.
>
> One of the most respected Old Testament scholars, the late Gleason Archer, examined the two Isaiah scrolls found in Cave 1 and wrote, “Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”{7}
>
> **Despite the thousand year gap, scholars found the Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls to be nearly identical. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide valuable evidence that the Old Testament had been accurately and carefully preserved.**

Now, if you listen to skeptics, agnostics and atheists, you would think that nothing in the Bible is reliable, because the stories were supposedly changed over time, and sometimes intentionally. That’s the message that popularizers like Bart Ehrman sell to a public audience that is hungry to dismiss the Bible. He likes to talk about the supposed distortions that have crept in, because all we have are “copies of copies of copies of copies”. But if you take a look at the hard evidence, rather than Bart’s rhetoric, then you get a very different picture of what really happened.

I think this is an exciting opportunity for people who dismissed the Bible as hopelessly unreliable to think a second time about whether there might be a message in there that tells us who God is, how he has interacted with people in the past, and what he expects from us today. For those who are open to the demands of a two-way relationship with the Creator, the Bible is the place to start.

After recent terrorist attacks, Obama orders intelligence agencies to study global warming

September 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats think that the real threat to America is global warming

The leftist USA Today reports on Obama's tough response to terrorist attacks in New York, New Jersey and Minnesota.

Excerpt:

> A high-level presidential directive signed Wednesday puts climate change at the center of decision-making on national security, requiring agencies to consider current and future climate trends in all "relevant national security doctrine, policies, and plans."
>
> President Obama has long argued that climate change is a national security issue, and the White House trumpeted the memorandum as an "historic step to address the national security implications of climate change."
>
> But the policy changes are mostly evolutionary, following no fewer than three executive orders directing federal agencies to take climate change into consideration when adopting policies.
>
> The eight-page presidential memorandum carries the same force of law within the federal government as an executive order, and its policies will carry over into the next administration unless explicitly rescinded by the next president. In fact, the first agency implementation reports required under Obama's order aren't due until February — the month after Obama leaves office. It also sets up a panel, headed by the president's national security adviser and chief science adviser, to catalog data on climate change and its effects — and giving intelligence agencies more of a role in analyzing climate data.

We have real problems with real Islamic terrorists, and the President is concerned with global warming. I guess Obama's top campaign donors didn't get enough taxpayer money from "stimulus" grants to their (now bankrupt) green energy companies (e.g. – Solyndra) the first time around. I can tell you this: when I go to a shopping mall or walk around downtown, it's not the global warming monster that I am afraid of: it's the radical Islamic terrorists. Why doesn't our government understand this?

Other countries DO understand this, though.

When the UK sees terrorist attacks, they do their job – protect the public from terrorist attacks.

The UK Telegraph reports:

> Britain's top spy has warned that terrorist groups like so-called Islamic State pose a "persistent threat" that is set to last a "professional lifetime".
>
> It comes as intelligence agencies are set to recruit more spies, with MI6 said to be getting another 1,000 staff over the next five years.
>
> In a rare public appearance, Alex Younger, the head of MI6, insisted Britain had made significant improvements in the way it tackles terrorism but admitted there was little sign of the "enduring" danger disappearing soon.
>
> […]Asked if the terror threat from groups like IS and al Qaida had reached its apex, Mr Younger said: "I would like to be optimistic about this but we have got quite long experience of this phenomena now and I see it very much as the flip side to some very deep-seated global trends, not least of all globalisation, the reduction of barriers between us.
>
> "It's a function also of the information revolution and the capacity for ideas to travel. It is fuelled by a deepening sectarian divide in the Middle East and there are some deep social economic and demographic drivers to the phenomenon that we know as terrorism.
>
> "Allied with the emergence of state failure this means that, regrettably, this is an enduring issue which will certainly be with us, I believe, for our professional lifetime."
>
> **Last year's Strategic Defence and Security Review said £2.5bn was being invested in security and intelligence agencies with an additional 1,900 staff to ensure they have "the resources and information they need to prevent and disrupt plots against this country at every stage".**

I wouldn't have a problem paying taxes to a government that actually believed that it was important to not let terrorists kill me. But clearly my taxes are being wasted by this administration. They have been so clouded by fanciful faith-based ideology that they are incapable of doing their jobs.

Obama’s Affordable Care Act: health care costs rise by the most in 32 years

September 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trust Obama with your health care plan

Should you entrust a “community organizer” to reform health care? What if he had no record of having successfully reformed health care in his resume – at any level of government? What if he refused to show you his academic transcripts? What if he had not a single private sector job related to health care in his resume? What if he had written an autobiography where he confessed to drug use that has very possibly damaged his brain so that all he can do is play golf and read a teleprompter?

Should you hire someone like that to reform health care? What if he only gives you one reason to hire him: *his skin color*? Should you hire someone to reform health care *based solely on his skin color*?

CNN Money explains what Obamacare has done to health care costs:

> Health care costs rose sharply in August.
> Prices for medicine, doctor appointments and health insurance rose the most last month since 1984. The price increases come amid a broader debate about climbing health care costs and high premiums for Obamacare coverage.
>
> A recent report by Kaiser/HRET Employer Health Benefits forecasts that the average family health care plan will cost $18,142, up 3.4% from 2015. That’s faster than wage growth in America.
>
> Medical care costs altogether rose 1% just in August from July, according to the Consumer Price Index, a report on price inflation from the U.S. Labor Department.
>
> Premiums on the Obamacare exchanges are expected to rise by double-digits this year.

> Some health insurers, such as Aetna, have recently announced they would pull out of the Obamacare exchanges, saying Obamacare patients have turned out to be sicker and costlier than expected.
>
> Overall, workers are paying up more for deductibles. Over half of U.S. workers with single coverage health insurance plans pay a deductible of $1,000 or more, up from 31% of workers in 2011.
>
> And the health care price increases come as inflation overall continues to be low. Consumer prices altogether rose 1.1% in August compared to a year ago.

Consider this article from Investors Business Daily to illustrate the importance of not picking a President based on confident words and personal charisma.

It says:

> Employer-based health insurance premiums climbed 4.2% this year for family plans, according to an annual Kaiser Family Foundation report. That's up from 3% the year before.
>
> Since 2008, average family premiums have climbed a total of $4,865.
>
> The White House cheered the news, saying it was a sign of continued slow growth in premium costs.
>
> […]"We will start," Obama said back in 2008, "by reducing premiums by as much as $2,500 per family."
>
> That $2,500 figure was Obama's mantra on health care. You can watch the video if you don't believe it.
>
> And Obama wasn't talking about government subsidized insurance or expanding Medicaid or anything like that. He specifically focused on employer provided health care.
>
> For "people who already have insurance, and the employers who are providing it," he said at one campaign event, "we will work to lower your premiums by up to $2,500 per family."

Let's watch the video. I want everyone to see how confident a clown can sound when he lies about being able to solve problems that he knows nothing about.

He had no record of achievement in this area. None, Zero, Zip. And the same goes for his claims about keeping your doctor, keeping your health care plan, and so on. It was all lies – just things that people wanted to believe, that Obama did not have the ability to make happen. He had never, ever done anything with health care ever before. You would literally have had a better result if you had handed the job of health care reform to a turnip.

Honestly, someone's skin color, sex, national origin or sexual orientation is not a reason to hire them to do an important job. Obama isn't qualified to flip burgers in a McDonald's. Why would anyone entrust someone with no transcripts and no resume to undertake such

a momentous task? This is hurting *real people* – real people are having to pay the costs of electing an affirmative action President. We really need to not do things like that.

Next time, if we are going to hire someone to reform health care, let's hire someone like black economist Thomas Sowell. At least he has experience in economics enough to know *what happens next* to all parties involved in a policy implementation. Obama, on the other hand, has doubled the national debt from $10 trillion to $20 trillion – an enormous burden on the next generation of American workers. What did we get for all this spending? Absolute and complete failure across the board.

Did the Jesus' followers expect Messiah to rise from the dead alone, before the final resurrection?

September 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

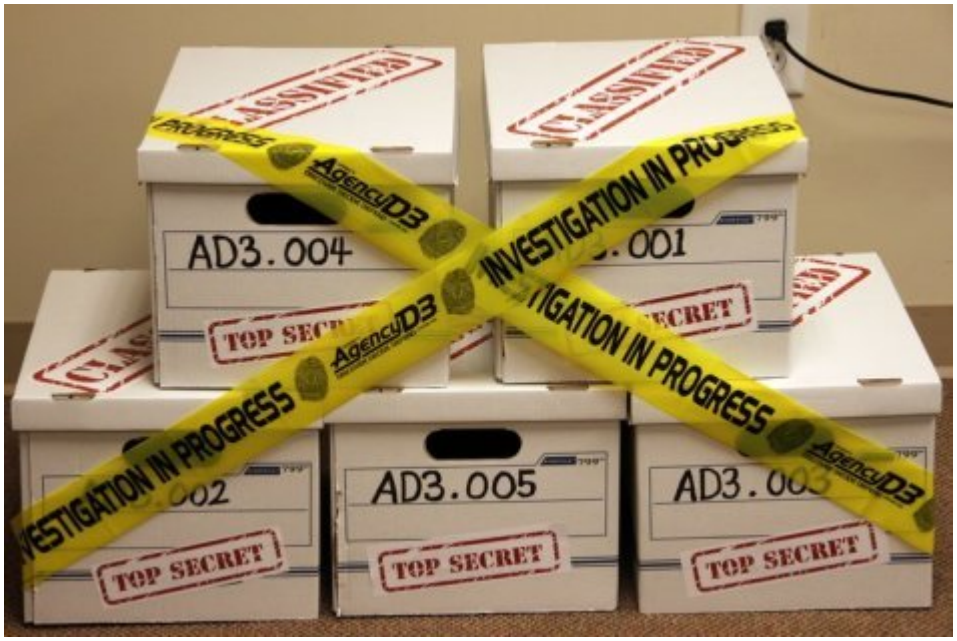

Investigation in progress

Why did the early church apply the word resurrection to Jesus? If they wanted to say that Jesus was alive and had triumphed over his enemies and was exalted by God, then why not say that? Why not say that he had been bodily assumed into Heaven and was now with the Father? The early proclamation that Jesus rose from the dead is a puzzle for naturalists, because it seems unexpected given what most Jews believed about the concept of resurrection. Jews didn't have any concept of an individual resurrection before the day of judgment. Resurrection was something that happened to all the righteous at the end of the world. Not to one person.

Here's a post from Tough Questions Answered to explain.

He quotes Tim Keller's "The Reason for God" so:

> The report of Jesus's resurrection would have also have been unthinkable to the Jews. Unlike the Greeks, the Jews saw the material and physical world as good. Death was not seen as liberation from the material world but as a tragedy. By Jesus's day many Jews had come to hope that some day in the future there would be a bodily resurrection of all the righteous, when God renewed the entire world and removed all suffering and death. The resurrection, however, was merely one part of the complete renewal of the whole world, according to Jewish teaching. The idea of an individual being resurrected, in the middle of history, while the rest of the world continued on burdened by sickness, decay, and death, was inconceivable.

> […]If someone had said to any first-century Jew, "So-and-so has been resurrected

> from the dead!" the response would be, "Are you crazy? How could that be? Has disease and death ended? Is true justice established in the world? Has the wolf lain down with the lamb? Ridiculous!" The very idea of an individual resurrection would have been as impossible to imagine to a Jew as to a Greek.

And there's more in a second post (this is Keller quoting N.T. Wright):

> Over the years, skeptics about the resurrection have proposed that the followers of Jesus may have had hallucinations, that they may have imagined him appearing to them and speaking to them. This assumes that their master's resurrection was imaginable for his Jewish followers, that it was an option in their worldview. It was not.
>
> Others have put forth the conspiracy theory, that the disciples stole the body and claimed he was alive to others. This assumes that the disciples would expect other Jews to be open to the belief that an individual could be raised from the dead. But none of this is possible. The people of that time would have considered a bodily resurrection to be as impossible as the people of our own time, though for different reasons.

Another reason to question whether the concept of resurrection could be applied to Jesus is because there is no expectation that the Messiah was even supposed to die, much less be resurrected.

Dr. William Lane Craig explains:

> *The original disciples believed that Jesus was risen from the dead despite almost every predisposition to the contrary.* Three aspects of the disciples' disposition following Jesus's crucifixion put a question mark behind the faith and hope they had placed in Jesus:
>
> 1. Jesus was dead, and Jews had no anticipation of a dying, much less rising, Messiah.
> 2. According to Jewish law, Jesus's execution as a criminal showed him out to be a heretic, a man literally under the curse of God.
> 3. Jewish beliefs about the afterlife precluded anyone's rising from the dead before the general, eschatological resurrection of the dead.
>
> **It is important to appreciate, with respect to the first aspect of their situation, that in Jewish expectation Messiah would conquer Israel's enemies and restore the throne of David, not be shamefully executed by them.** Jesus's ignominious execution at the hands of Rome was as decisive a disproof as anything could be to a first century Jew that Jesus was not Israel's awaited Messiah, but another failed pretender. Failed Messianic movements were nothing new in Judaism, and they left their followers with basically two alternatives: either go home or else find a new Messiah. These were no doubt hard choices, but nevertheless they were the choices one had. After surveying

> such failed Messianic movements before and after Jesus, N. T. Wright remarks,
>
> So far as we know, all the followers of these first century Messianic movements were fanatically committed to the cause. They, if anybody, might be expected to suffer from this blessed twentieth century disease called 'cognitive dissonance' when their expectations failed to materialize. But in no case, right across the century before Jesus and the century after him, do we hear of any Jewish group saying that their executed leader had been raised from the dead and he really was the Messiah after all.

And here's more support for the no individual resurrection point:

> Finally, Jewish hope in the resurrection of the dead was invariably a corporate and eschatological hope. The resurrection of all the righteous dead would take place after God had brought the world as we know it to an end. Surveying the Jewish literature, Joachim Jeremias concluded,
>
> Ancient Judaism did not know of an anticipated resurrection as an event of history. Nowhere does one find in the literature anything comparable to the resurrection of Jesus. Certainly resurrections of the dead were known, but these always concerned resuscitations, the return to the earthly life. In no place in the later Judaic literature does it concern a resurrection to d o x aas an event of history.41
>
> Even if the disciples' faith in Jesus had somehow managed to survive the crucifixion, they would at most have looked forward to their reunion with him at the final resurrection and would perhaps have preserved his tomb as a shrine, where Jesus's bones might rest until the eschatological resurrection. That was the Jewish hope.
>
> But we know that that did not happen. Despite their having most every predisposition to the contrary, it is an indisputable fact that the earliest disciples suddenly and sincerely came to believe that God had raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead.

So I hope that enough has been said there for you to realize that talking about resurrection with respect to Jesus is a *very weird thing for the early church to do* – that is, unless it actually happened.

Philip E. Johnson lectures on science, evolution and religion

September 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

I found this fun lecture by the grandfather of the big-tent intelligent design movement, Berkeley law professor Philip E. Johnson.

I'll bet you guys have all heard of him, but you've never heard him speak, right? Well, I was a young man, I used to listen to Phil's lectures and his debates with Eugenie Scott quite a bit. This is one of my favorite lectures. Very easy to understand, and boilerplate for anything else in the origins debate. This is a great lecture – funny, engaging and useful. You will definitely listen to this lecture several times if you listen to it once.

The MP3 is here. (91 minutes, 62 megabytes)

The Inherit the Wind stereotype

- Many people get their understanding of origins by watching movies like "Inherit the Wind" (or reading science fiction)
- The actual events of the Scopes trial are nothing like what the movie portrays
- The law forbidding the teaching of evolution was symbolic, not meant to be enforced
- The actual Scopes trial was a publicity stunt to attract attention to Dayton, TN to bring business to the town
- The ACLU advertised for a teacher who would be willing to be sued
- They found a substitute physical education teacher who would be willing to "break" the law
- The movie is nothing like the actual events that transpired
- the movie is a morality play

- The religious people are evil and stupid and ignorant and bigoted
- The scientists and lawyers are all intelligent, romantic, and honest seekers of the truth
- The religious people think that the Bible trumps science and science is not as reliable as the Bible
- The movie argues that the reason why there is ANY dissent to evolution is because of Biblical fundamentalism
- The movie presents the idea that there are no scientific problems with evolution
- The movie says that ONLY Biblical fundamentalists who believe in 6 day, 24-hour creation doubt evolution
- The movie says that Biblical fundamentalism are close-minded, and not open to scientific truth
- The movie says that people who read the Bible as making factual claims are misinterpreting the Bible
- The movie says that smart people read the Bible for comfort and feelings and arbitrary values, not for truth

Guided evolution and methodological naturalism

- What scientists mean by evolution is that fully naturalistic, unguided, materialistic mechanisms caused the diversity of life
- Scientists do not allow that God had any real objective effect on how life was created
- Scientists think that nature did all the creating, and any mention of God is unnecessary opinion – God didn't DO ANYTHING
- Scientists operate with one overriding rule – you can only explain the physical world with physical and material causes
- Scientists DO NOT allow that God could have done anything detectable by the sciences
- Scientists WILL NOT consider the idea that natural, material processes might be INSUFFICIENT for explaining everything in nature
- You cannot even ask the question about whether natural laws, matter and chance can explain something in nature
- Intelligent causes can NEVER be the explanation for anything in nature, and you can't even test experimentally to check that
- Scientists ASSUME that everything can be explained with natural laws, matter and chance – no questioning of natural causes is allowed
- Where no natural explanation of a natural phenomenon is available, scientists SPECULATE about undiscovered natural explanations
- The assumption of naturalistic sufficiency is called "methodological naturalism"
- To question the assumptions that natural is all there is, and that nature has to do its own creating, makes you an "enemy of science"
- But Johnson says that *naturalists* are the enemies of science, because they are like

the Biblical fundamentalists
- Naturalists have a presumption that prevents them from being willing to follow the evidence where it is leading
- Experiments are not even needed, because the presumption of naturalism overrides any experimental finding that falsifies the sufficiency of natural causes to explain some natural phenomenon

What can natural selection and mutation actually do?

- what evolution has actually been observed to do is explain changing populations of moths and finches
- finches with smaller or larger beaks are observed to have differential survival rates when there are droughts or floods
- no new body plan or new organ type has been observed to emerge from these environmental pressures
- the only kind of evolution that has been observed is evolution *within types* – no new genetic instructions are created
- in textbooks, only confirming examples are presented – but what is required is a broad pattern of gradual development of species
- if you look at the fossil record, what you see in most cases is variation within types based on changing environments
- the real question is: can natural law and chance *be observed* to be doing any creating of body plans and organ types?

What kind of effect requires an intelligent cause?

- the thing to be explained in the history of life is the functional information sequences
- you need to have a sequence of symbols or characters that is sufficiently long
- your long sequence of characters has to be sequenced in the right order to have biological function
- the only thing that can create long sequences of functional information is an intelligent cause
- intelligent design people accept micro-evolution – changes within types – because that's been observed
- the real thing to be explained is the first living cell's functional information, and the creation of new functional information

Johnson's case for intelligent design is rooted in science – specifically in the specific arrangements of components in proteins that allows organisms to perform biological functions.

Critical response

The next 15 minutes of the lecture contain a critical response from a philosophy professor who thinks that there have been no developments in design arguments since Aquinas

and Paley. He basically confirms the stereotypes that Johnson outlined in the first part of the lecture. I recommend listening to this to see what opposition to intelligent design really looks like. It's not concerned with answering scientific questions – they want to talk about God, the Bible and Noah's ark. It's our job to get people like this critic to focus on the science.

Here's my snarky rendition of what he said:

1) Don't take the Bible literally, even if the genre is literal.

- all opposition to evolution is based on an ignorant, fundamentalist, literal reading of the Bible
- the Bible really doesn't communicate anything about the way the world really is
- the Bible is just meant to suggest certain opinions and experiences which you may find fetching, or not, depending on your feelings and community
- if Christians would just interpret the Bible as myths and opinions on par with other personal preferences, then evolution is no threat to religious belief

2) As long as you treat the design argument as divorced from evidence, it's not very effective

- the latest and best version of the design argument is the old Paley argument which involves no experimental data, so I'll critique that
- this 200-year old argument which doesn't rely on science has serious problems, and unnamed Christians agree with me!
- Christians should NOT try to prove God's existence using evidence from the natural world (as Romans 1 says), and in fact it's "Pelagianism" to even try
- Christians should divorce their faith from logic and evidence even though the Bible presents faith as being rooted in reason and evidence
- Christians should not tie their faith to the science of today, because science is always changing and the theism-friendly evidence of today might be overturned tomorrow
- It's a good idea for me to critique the arguments of 1000-year old people who did not know anything about the cosmic fine-tuning argument – that's fair!
- I find it very useful to tell people that the argument from design is false without mentioning any design arguments from DNA or cosmic fine-tuning
- We need to assume that the natural world is explainable using only natural causes before we look at any evidence
- We should assume that natural causes create all life, and then rule out all experimental evidence for intelligent causes that we have today
- As long as you accept that God is a personal opinion that has nothing to do with reality, then you can do science
- The non-Christian process theologian Teilhard de Chardin accepts evolution, and therefore so should you
- Remember when theists said God caused thunder because he was bowling in the

clouds and then we found out he didn't? Yeah well – maybe tomorrow we'll find out that functional sequences of amino acids and proteins have natural causes! What would you do then?

3) What the Bible really says is that you should be a political liberal

Q&A time

The lecture concludes with 13 minutes of questions.

Why are Christians allowed to eat shellfish but not allowed to have sex before marriage?

September 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
Here's a wonderful article from Peter Saunders.

The challenge:

> An argument frequently advanced by those attempting to defend homosexual practice is that Christians 'cherry pick' the commands in the Bible – that is, they chose to emphasise some commands while ignoring others.
>
> The Old Testament may forbid homosexual acts (Leviticus 18:2; 20:13) but it also forbids eating seafood without fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9, 10).
>
> So how can Christians then justify upholding laws on sexual morality whilst at the same time ignoring the food laws from the very same books of the Bible? Why may they eat shellfish but not be allowed to have sex outside marriage? Isn't this inconsistent and hypocritical?

The solution is that God enters into "covenants" with his people, and the terms of those covenants change.

Especially dietary laws:

> The answer to this question lies in an understanding of biblical covenants.
>
> A covenant is a binding solemn agreement made between two parties. It generally leaves each with obligations. But it holds only between the parties involved.
>
> There are a number of biblical covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic (Old),

> Davidic and New.
>
> Under the Noahic covenant, which God made with all living human beings (Genesis 9:8-17), people were able to eat anything:
>
> *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Genesis 9:3).*
>
> But under the Sinaitic (Old) Covenant, which God made with the nation of Israel, people were able to eat certain foods, but not others.

Jesus clearly created a new covenant with his followers, where the dietary laws are lifted:

> Jesus said that he had come to fulfil the 'Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). He would establish this new covenant with new laws, with himself as high priest based on his own sacrificial death on the cross.
>
> This new covenant would completely deal with sin (Hebrews 10:1-18) and protect all those who put their faith in him from God's wrath and judgement…
>
> *[…]'In the same way, after the supper (Jesus) took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you"' (Luke 22:20). '…we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Hebrews 10:10)*
>
> People would come under the protection of this new covenant, not by virtue of belonging to the nation of Israel, but through faith in Christ. In fact the function of the Old Testament Law (Sinaitic covenant) was to point to Christ as its fulfilment.
>
> […]So what then did Christ say about foods? He pronounced all foods clean for his followers to eat:
>
> *' "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (Mark 7:18-23)*
>
> Jesus was making that point that under the new covenant God required purity of the heart. Internal thoughts and attitudes were as important as external actions.

Food is OK for Christians, but sexual immorality – which includes premarital sex and adultery – are NOT OK for Christians.

I think sometimes when you are talking to people whose motivation is just to get rid of any objective moral law entirely, they tend to ask questions without really wanting a good answer. This is especially true when it comes to the morality of sex. They ask the question not to get an answer, but to justify getting rid of the moral rules governing sexuality. The answers are there for people who are willing to respect God in their decision-making to find. The answers are not found only by people who have a

reason to not want to find them.

In case you're wondering, I am one of those Christian men who takes chastity seriously. Marriage is about having a close connection with your spouse. Sure, I could break the rules and have a lot of fun now. A lot of Christians have a hard time turning down fun. But when I look at Jesus, I don't see a man who is pursuing fun and thrills. I see a man who sees a need and then sacrifices his own interests to rescue others from peril.

Black education leaders fight NAACP for access to charter schools

September 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

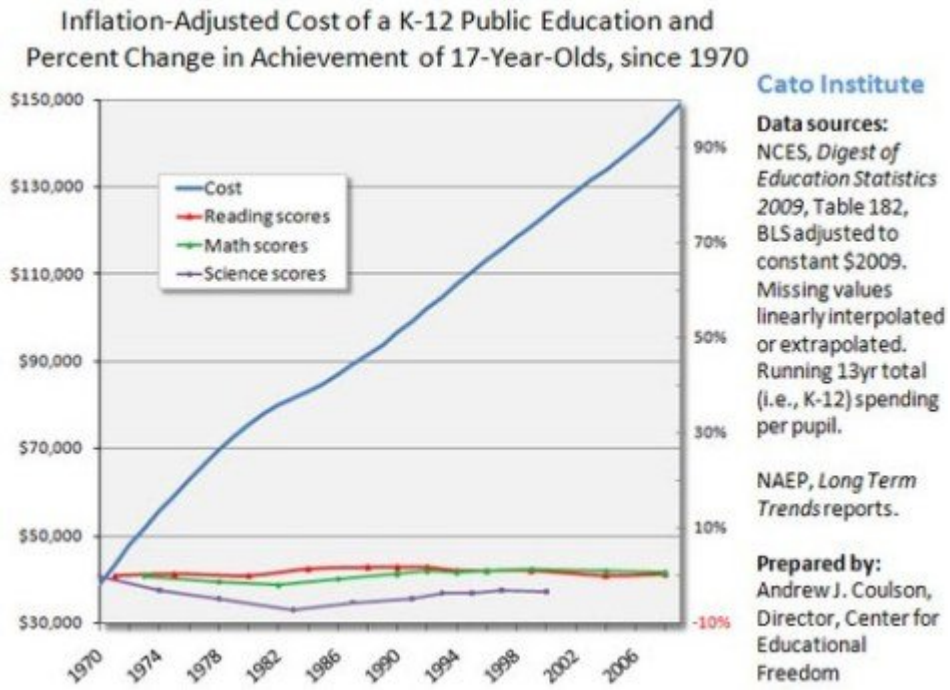

Cato Institute graphs education spending against test scores

This story is from the Daily Signal, by Kelsey Harkness.

Excerpt:

> A group of 160 black education and community leaders from across the country are pushing back against an attempt by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to halt all future charter school growth.
>
> The coalition, organized by the Black Alliance for Educational Options and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, sent a letter to NAACP board members on behalf of "700,000 black families choosing to send their children to charter public schools, and the tens of thousands more who are still on waiting lists."
>
> The letter came in response to a resolution drafted by the NAACP that calls for a "moratorium on the proliferation of privately managed charter schools," arguing that charter schools have "weak oversight" and put schools in low-income communities "at great risk."

Charter schools typically perform much better than public schools, because they have more autonomy from the unions.

Kelsey explains:

> Charter schools are publicly funded schools that are required to follow state standards such as Common Core. They do not charge tuition but instead of being

> run by the government, charter schools are operated by private nonprofit or for-profit organizations.
>
> Typically, local and state school boards are in charge of granting private or nonprofit organizations the ability to launch a new charter school. If charter schools do not meet strict achievement standards, the organization's charter is revoked and given to a new organization to operate.
>
> In exchange for that responsibility, charter schools generally have more autonomy over their daily operations, including hiring, firing, budgeting, and instruction decisions.
>
> […]The coalition also cited a study by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University:
>
>> **According to the most thorough and respected study of charter school results, conducted by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University, black students learn more when they attend charter schools. Black students in charter schools gained the equivalent of 14 extra days of learning in reading and 14 extra days of learning in math per year compared with their black peers in traditional district schools. For low-income black students attending charter schools, the learning gains were even more dramatic—the equivalent of 29 extra learning days in reading and 36 extra learning days in math.**

Why would anyone be against giving poor black children a good education? One thing is for sure: it's always the Republicans and conservatives who are pushing for more school choice, and more accountability from schools to parents. It's always the Democrats who want to shut down competition and force kids into failing public schools. Who are the real racists trying to keep blacks down? It's not conservatives.

Every immigrant without a high school degree will cost taxpayers $640,000

September 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Major Welfare Programs, 2012

Medicaid	$296 bil
Unemployment Insurance	$126
Disability	$124
Food Stamps	$75
Supplemental Security Income	$60
Earned Income Tax Credit	$56
Pell Grants	$41
Section 8 housing/rental assistance	$28
Drug Benefits	$23
Education for Disadvantaged	$14
School Lunches	$10
S-CHIP	$9
Head Start	$8
TANF Cash Aid	$7

Sources: Congressional Research Service, Congressional Budget Office

Major welfare programs as of 2012

I am very much in favor of expanding and streamlining immigration processes for skilled immigrants, especially for areas where there is more demand than supply. But I am not in favor of letting in refugees or other unskilled immigrants, especially if they will be eligible to collect benefits paid for by other working taxpayers.

The Daily Signal explains what the cost is:

> On Thursday, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine will release its report on "The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration." According to the report, first generation immigrants as a group increase the nation's fiscal deficit. In other words, the government benefits they receive exceed the taxes paid.
>
> The National Academies' report provides 75-year fiscal projections for new immigrants and their descendants. The fiscal impact varies greatly according to the education level of the immigrant. Low-skill immigrants are shown to impose substantial fiscal costs that extend far into the future. The future government benefits they will receive greatly exceed the taxes they will pay.
>
> On average, a nonelderly adult immigrant without a high school diploma entering the U.S. will create a net fiscal cost (benefits received will exceed taxes paid) in both the current generation and second generation. The average net present value of the fiscal cost of such an immigrant is estimated at $231,000, a cost that must be paid by U.S. taxpayers.
>
> The concept of "net present value" is complex: it places a much lower value on future expenditures than on current expenditures.

> One way to grasp net present value is that it represents the total amount of money that government would have to raise today and put in a bank account earning interest at 3 percent above the inflation rate in order to cover future costs.
>
> Thus, as each adult immigrant without a high school diploma enters the country, the government would need to immediately put aside and invest $231,000 to cover the future net fiscal cost (total benefits minus total taxes) of that immigrant.
>
> Converting a net present value figure into future outlays requires information on the exact distribution of costs over time. That data is not provided by the National Academies.
>
> However, a rough estimate of the future net outlays to be paid by taxpayers (in constant 2012 dollars) for immigrants without a high school diploma appears to be around $640,000 per immigrant over 75 years. The average fiscal loss is around $7,551 per year (in constant 2012 dollars).
>
> Slightly more than 4 million adult immigrants without a high school diploma have entered the U.S. since 2000 and continue to reside here. According to the estimates in the National Academies report, the net present value of the future fiscal costs of those immigrants is $920 billion.

If you want to take in refugees or unskilled immigrants or sponsor elderly family members, then they should not be allowed to collect benefits paid by other taxpayers. The family that is here already must provide for them, and be held accountable should anything go wrong. Unfortunately, that’s not how the system works now, and it’s not what the Democrats want. They want to import more people who will depend on big government, and then give them the right to vote.

Now, you might think that young American students who expect to find jobs will also expect to keep most of what they earn. It’s very surprising then that they keep voting for a party (the Democrats) that seeks to enslave them with the obligation to pay for other people. I know that the next generation will be paying more in taxes than I ever did during my lifetime.

Are young people getting anything out of their support for the Democrat Party?

September 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I talk to young people, I am often told that my ideas about what to study, when to work and when to invest are “too strict”. They tell me: “your ideas only work within a narrow scope” and “don’t worry about me, everything will work out”.

Well, I happen to know that there are many crises right around the corner that will make things tougher for the next generation than they ever were for me. Trillion dollar student loan bubble, national debt doubled to $20 trillion, entitle programs going bankrupt, cost of health care and tuition skyrocketing, job growth at 1% quarter after quarter, breakdown of law and order, etc.

So how well are the young people equipped to deal with a challenging environment like this? Are they picking good majors and getting good jobs and controlling their spending and moving out of their parents’ houses?

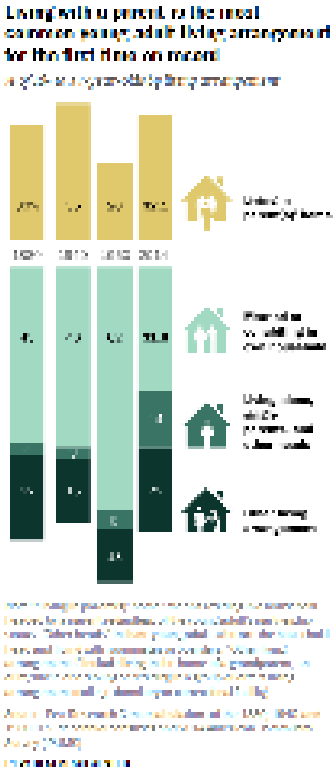

Young adults failing to launch out of parents’ homes
Here’s a new survey from the leftist Pew Research:

> Broad demographic shifts in marital status, educational attainment and employment have transformed the way young adults in the U.S. are living, and a new Pew Research Center analysis of census data highlights the implications of these changes for the most basic element of their lives – where they call home.
> In 2014, for the first time in more than 130 years, adults ages 18 to 34 were slightly more likely to be living in their parents’ home than they were to be living

> with a spouse or partner in their own household.
>
> This turn of events is fueled primarily by the dramatic drop in the share of young Americans who are choosing to settle down romantically before age 35. Dating back to 1880, the most common living arrangement among young adults has been living with a romantic partner, whether a spouse or a significant other. This type of arrangement peaked around 1960, when 62% of the nation's 18- to 34-year-olds were living with a spouse or partner in their own household, and only one-in-five were living with their parents.
>
> […]The Great Recession (and modest recovery) has also been associated with an increase in young adults living at home. Initially in the wake of the recession, college enrollments expanded, boosting the ranks of young adults living at home. And given the weak job opportunities facing young adults, living at home was part of the private safety net helping young adults to weather the economic storm.

The job opportunities in the private sector are bad because of the Obama administration's high taxes and burdensome regulations, which strangle private sector job creation. Dodd-Frank and Obamacare are two examples of bills that kill job creation. There was a good video put out by Prager University that showed how these taxes and regulations hurt entrepreneurs:

Where are the jobs for the young people supposed to come from, when the young people keep voting against the private sector businesses that create jobs? I don't know that their parents and professors are explaining to them how the economy works. Taxes and regulations make job creation harder, and then you have nowhere to work, and just live at home.

The "weak job opportunities" that Pew Research mentioned are especially weak for young people who graduate from non-STEM programs. STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) graduates are able to find jobs that pay enough. Liberal arts graduates end up serving coffee. And then they vote for more environmentalist regulations and a higher minimum wage, and find themselves out of a job entirely. The jobs just go elsewhere where there are lower taxes and fewer regulations.

It's really important for young people to get into the workforce early and start building their resume and references with work experience. Two years of work experience is better than graduate school in most cases, too. Saving works much better when you start investing early, so watch your spending.

Michael Licona on ancient biography and harmonizing Bible contradictions

September 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Brian Auten posted the latest lecture by Dr. Michael Licona at Apologetics 315. Brian's site has the MP3 file (48 minutes, 44.5 Mb). I can make a smaller version for anyone who wants it.

Here is the video and my point-form summary.

The topic:

- Contradictions do not affect the minimum facts case for the resurrection, although they are troubling
- Most people respond to alleged contradictions by trying to harmonize them
- Most verses that appear contradictory can be harmonized successfully
- Some verses cannot be harmonized successfully without really damaging the texts
- Christians should not gloss over these few real contradictions nor pretend that they don't exist
- How should we respond to the verses that cannot easily be harmonized?

Genre considerations:

- The genre of the gospels is "ancient biography"
- Ancient biography is not the same genre as modern biography

Insignificant differences

1. Contradictions vs. Differences:

- In ancient biography, if a source mentions one person's name, it does not mean that other people were not present
- Example: one woman versus two women at the tomb, an account may only mention one woman when there are two
- That is a difference, not a contradiction

2. Time compression:

- in ancient biography, writers are allowed to leave out events in order to compress time
- Some gospels omit details (guy version) and other gospels give more details (girl version)
- For example, the cursing of the fig tree in Mark and Matthew

3. Narrative flow:

- the ancient biographer's style was to link together events into a narrative, even if they are slightly out of order
- This means that the ordering matters less to ancient biographers than forming a coherent narrative
- For example, the prediction by Jesus that Peter would deny him

Significant differences:

1. Biography allows for portrait painting

- When people paint portraits, they sometimes use illustrations or imagery to convey the person's character
- For example, Shakespeare adds things to his history of Julius Caesar to make it more dramatic
- For example, the genealogies in Matthew, the portrait of Jesus in the garden in John

2. Even if there are apparent contradictions in an account it doesn't mean that the basic facts are undermined

- For example, even if we don't know for sure if one thief or two thieves cursed Jesus, no one doubts that he was crucified
- The basic details of the story are not affected by apparent contradictions

Then there is a period of Questions and Answers.

Should we have expected Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie to divorce?

September 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

This article from Family Studies indicates four reasons why we should have expected Brad and Angelina to divorce.

Excerpt:

> The Brangelina break-up is like the big earthquake that seismologists missed. Angelina Jolie serving Brad Pitt with divorce papers just two years into their marriage has sent shock waves through the entertainment and parenting press, inspiring panicked headlines like, "If Brad Pitt And Angelina Jolie Can't Make It, Who Can?"But should we be so surprised?
>
> The unfortunate truth is that if fans of the A-list couple had consulted family and marriage experts, this real-life plot twist might have looked fairly likely, if not predictable. In other words, it was more a matter of *when* than if.
>
> […]F**or starters, Britain's Marriage Foundation recently conducted a study of 488 A-list celebrities. They found "that celebrities divorce at roughly twice the rate of the rest of us. . . . In the early years of their marriages, divorce among celebs is a lot more than twice as commonplace. During the first three years—as with Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie—some 7 percent of celebs had divorced compared to 2 percent for [the rest of] us."**
>
> **Jolie and Pitt also match at least three of the individual risk factors for divorce that University of Denver research professor Scott Stanley, Ph.D., lists on his blog, Sliding vs Deciding. These include: being a child**

> **of divorce (as in Jolie's case), both stars having had "a prior marriage that ended" (this will be Brad's second divorce, and Jolie's third), and "[p]rior to marrying, having sex with or cohabiting with someone other than your mate," which looks applicable to the couple as well. They also match two other divorce risk factors for couples, including "having a child together before marriage," and cohabiting "before either being married or at least engaged."**

Now, I've talked to women about these studies, and I've got two different responses from two different groups.

One group of those women says that the research is entirely correct, and that their future decisions need to be guided by the best practices shown in the research. They like that there is some data there that will help them to act in line what the Bible says. One lady I mentored who had an abortion actually started to mistrust her emotions when it came to choosing men and making decisions about whether to commit. We talked through my objectives, then she evaluated men using the best practices from the research. She wanted to make better decisions, and she thought that the problem was her – specifically, her feelings ruining her decision-making. She's married to a super guy now, and doing great. Her view on emotions now, and I'm quoting, is "emotions are data, but you shouldn't let them influence your decision-making more than reason and evidence". Also, her husband is totally spoiled.

Another group of women expressed support for the Bible teachings and but their response to the best practices contained in the research studies is that they are "too strict" and that they only work "within a narrow scope". And their past usually shows evidence of this habit they have of dismissing moral rules and best practices. Note: converting to Christianity doesn't automatically change reckless, self-centered behavior. The talk could improve, but the actions could still be irresponsible and narcissistic. The truth is that some women just love to let their emotions control them, and it's going to cause problems in a marriage if they don't have self-control. I see a lot of women like this delaying marriage into their early and mid-30s, with no idea about how this affects their value to men. (They seem not to care about what men want from them, or from the marriage, and don't see investing early in marriage to be a good way to make a difference, because it's not fun). Marriages are most stable when the marriage takes place in the late 20s – not the mid 30s.

One last point. I have a male friend who also dismisses all the studies, and defends irresponsible Christian women who break all the rules and delay marriage for fun and thrills and travel. "She's a Christian" he says. "She's much better than most women I know" he says. "What does it matter if she marries at 40? Maybe she doesn't want to have kids?" I show him the study about marriages succeeding when the woman is in her mid to late 20s, and he says "Who cares?" I showed him the study about credit score being connected to marital stability, and he dismissed that one, too. "How many of those women in the study are Christians?" he said. And finally "you can't apply studies to

individuals”. I don’t think that he should dismiss the studies like this – I think it will hurt him. For every divorce that happens, and for every case of sex-withholding, there was a man who first said “the studies don’t apply to me”.

The rules really do matter. You can’t dismiss the research studies and escape the consequences of doing so. And don’t assume that a person has learned her lesson just because she has become a Christian – it’s very possible for her to be *saying* responsible things while *doing* the same wild, irresponsible decision-making that she was doing as a non-Christian. One woman I know who had plans to literally marry an unemployed, penniless graduate student in his late 20s, told me that “men do have a provider role, and women should prefer men who work and have savings”. She literally introduced him to her parents – that’s how serious she was. Not one dime in his bank account, not one job on his resume. Her words say complementarian, but her actions say radical feminist rebellion against traditional male roles.

So, don’t believe the words, *believe the actions*. Show the candidate the studies, and look for actions that are in line with the best practices in the studies.

Tactics: the worst mistake a Christian can make when doing apologetics

September 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian

worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important

for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it. I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within

his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent’s weakness.

New study: children of divorced parents are less likely to be religious

September 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

This is from the leftist Washington Post, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Two widely recognized trends in American society might have something to do with each other.
>
> Divorce rates climbed to the highest levels ever in the 1980s, when about half of all marriages ended in divorce.
>
> And in the present day, Americans are rapidly becoming less religious. Since 1972, the share of Americans who say they do not adhere to any particular religion has increased from 5 percent of the population to 25 percent.
>
> Could those two trends be related? A new study from the Public Religion Research Institute says yes. The children of divorced parents have grown up to be adults of no religion.
>
> **People whose parents divorced when they were children are significantly more likely to grow up not to be religious as adults, the study found. Thirty-five percent of the children of divorced parents told pollsters they are now nonreligious, compared with 23 percent of people whose parents were married when they were children.**
>
> **[…]Cox said his team found that even children of divorced parents who are religious are less religious than their peers. Thirty-one percent of them go to services every week, compared with 43 percent of religious people whose parents were married when they were growing up.**

This part about Protestant pastors wimping out of thorny issues is very interesting:

> Andrew Root, a professor at Luther Seminary who has written a book about the spiritual consequences of divorce for children, was not surprised to hear about the study's findings.
>
> "Everything in a divorce gets divided. Literally everything. Parents' friends get divided. Relatives get divided. Everyone takes sides," Root said. "Even religion takes sides. The church gets divided. Dad leaves Mom's faith, or vice versa. Negotiating those worlds becomes difficult."
>
> **Root said churches are not doing enough to speak directly to the concerns of children in those situations, so the kids lose faith in the ability of the church to help them. He said that when the divorce rate climbed in the 1980s, many members of the clergy, especially mainline Protestant pastors, stopped speaking out against divorce so as not to alienate struggling congregants. But by going silent on the subject, they didn't offer any comfort to the kids.**
>
> As adults, Root said, those same people do not believe the church will respond to their adult problems. "They're now thinking, 'I'm dealing with depression.' Or, 'I'm dealing with my own marital troubles.' The church must not have anything to say to me, because when I was 8 and dealing with divorce, my Sunday-school teacher didn't even say, 'Man, Amanda, that must be really complicated for you'," Root said.

I get e-mails all the time from people who are suffering from the effects of the Sexual Revolution, which was put in place by selfish adults so they could do whatever they wanted. Children suffered a lot from this. Obviously, the painful of experience of their parents divorcing hurt their view of God. But divorce also hurts a child's ability to know what a man loving a woman in a stable commitment looks like, and what a woman loving a man in a stable commitment looks like. I mean – what does love between sexes look like when the "in love" feeling has worn off, and all that remains is the commitment to build something together? I think that a lot is riding on the stability of the relationship between the child's mother and father.

Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?

September 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

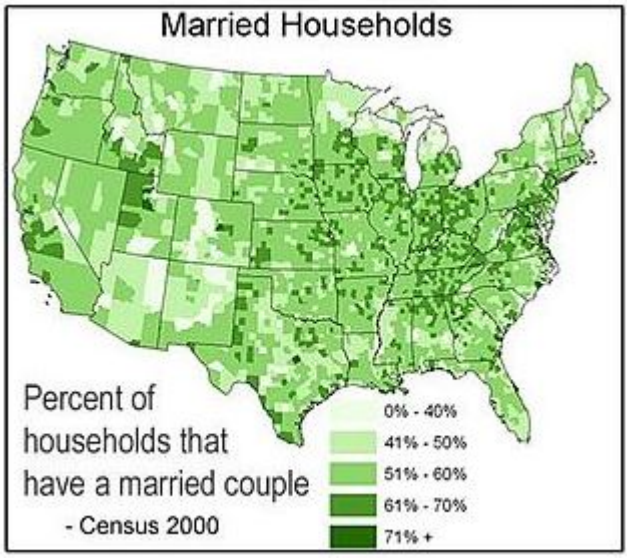

Map of marriage rate by state

Here is an article from USA Today that comments on the notion that atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians.

Excerpt:

> It's been proclaimed from pulpits and blogs for years — Christians divorce as much as everyone else in America.
>
> But some scholars and family activists are questioning the oft-cited statistics, saying Christians who attend church regularly are more likely to remain wed.
>
> "It's a useful myth," said Bradley Wright, a University of Connecticut sociologist who recently wrote "Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites … and Other Lies You've Been Told."
>
> "Because if a pastor wants to preach about how Christians should take their marriages more seriously, he or she can trot out this statistic to get them to listen to him or her."
>
> The various findings on religion and divorce hinge on what kind of Christians are being discussed.
>
> Wright combed through the General Social Survey, a vast demographic study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and found that Christians, like adherents of other religions, have a divorce rate of about 42%. The rate among religiously unaffiliated Americans is 50%.
>
> When Wright examined the statistics on evangelicals, he found worship attendance has a big influence on the numbers. Six in 10 evangelicals who never attend had been divorced or separated, compared to just 38% of weekly

> attendees.
>
> […]Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there's been some confusion.
>
> "You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees," he said.
>
> **Wilcox's analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.
>
> "There's something about being a nominal 'Christian' that is linked to a lot of negative outcomes when it comes to family life," Wilcox said.

Here's a quote from an Oklahoma State University study that confirms the Wright and Wilcox conclusions:

> History of Divorce and Religious Involvement
>
> Those who say they are more religious are less likely, not more, to have already experienced divorce. Likewise, those who report more frequent attendance at religious services were significantly less likely to have been divorced. This pattern of findings held using various analytic techniques that test which variables differentiate persons who have been divorced from persons who have not been divorced, while controlling for other variables that might affect the interpretation of the data, such as age, age of first marriage, income, and gender. When both the global rating of religiousness and the item assessing fiequency of attendance at religious services are entered into the same analysis, the attendance item remains significantly associated with divorce history but the global religiousness item does not. This suggests that a key aspect of how religious faith affects marital relationships may be through involvement with a community of faith.

So, please do bookmark this information for the next time you hear an atheist make this argument. Obviously, you can't expect people who are not serious about their religion to be bound by the moral duties imposed by that religion. People who attend church regularly are probably more serious about their religion, and also probably more informed about what their holy book says. If their holy book is the Bible, then there are few options for divorce.

An article from Focus on the Family by Amy Tracy explains when divorce is allowed according to the Bible.

> God is very clear, however, that He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). He also says,

> “So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate” (Matthew 19:6). According to the New Testament, there are two justifications for divorce: infidelity (Matthew 5:32) and desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15).

So divorce is not something a Bible believing Christian can do for frivolous reasons, unless he wants to be in rebellion against God.

The future of marriage in the church

In my own case, I learned about chastity and sobriety and courting *outside* the church, and in my case that means that I am still a virgin, that I don’t drink more than a beer a year, and that when I like a girl, I court her. I do think that people in the church are generally more moral than people outside the church, but that’s more because of convention rather than conviction. I don’t think it’s going to last, in other words. Church is not the place where reasons and evidence are given that help people to resist peer pressure when they enter hostile environments, like the university. And often, parents are too busy working to understand the issues and communicate them to their children.

I’ve never been in a church where they explained the hormones that are released during sex that cause you to bond to the person you’re having sex with. You would have to look in books or listen to lectures in order to understand the problem with having sex with someone you are not committed to – how it causes you to hold back your emotions for fear of a break-up. The church doesn’t have much to say about the social effects of single motherhood by choice or the effects of gay parenting on children. Nor do they have any positive vision to offer men about how they can serve God by marrying carefully.

Christians who participate in a church community will adopt some of these values, especially if they stay clear of popular culture, the university, etc. Especially if they don’t work in a very secular environment, like a high-tech company or in Hollywood. But unless Christian communities get serious about grounding their values in evidence, I wouldn’t expect this situation to go on, and you can already see young people falling away from church in record numbers when they get to university as a result of this refusal to engage. We’re doing well *now*, but we should move to secure our gains.

New study: Contraceptives double risk of depression in teenage girls

September 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

The Sydney Morning Herald reports:

> A Danish study of a million women has found a link between the use of hormonal contraception such as the the pill and increased risk of depression.
>
> Compared with non-users, women and teenage girls aged 15 to 34 who used hormonal contraception had a 1.23 times higher risk of being diagnosed with depression, especially adolescents, according to a paper published in the journal JAMA Psychiatry.
>
> Researchers at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark analysed health registry data of one million Danish women from 2000 and followed them up after an average of six years.
>
> Of the 55 per cent of those who used hormonal contraception, there were just over 23,000 first diagnoses of depression at the time of follow up.
>
> More than 133,000 had received their first prescription of antidepressants.
>
> The highest risk of depression was among the adolescent girls, who had a 1.8-times higher risk of first use of an antidepressant.
>
> The risk varied slightly among the different types of hormonal contraception, but the risk was three times higher among those who used non-oral products, such as progestogen implants.
>
> Few studies have quantified the effect of low-dose hormonal contraception on the risk for depression, but study author Ojvind Lidegaard says their research warrants the need for further studies into the potential adverse effects of the pill.

> “Use of hormonal contraceptives was associated with subsequent antidepressant use and first diagnosis of depression at a psychiatric hospital among women living in Denmark.
>
> “Adolescents seemed to be more vulnerable to this risk than women 20 to 34 years old,” Lidegaard said.

Of course, one wonders where these studies were BEFORE the pill was championed by the radical feminists. We didn’t have studies before we adopted abortion, no-fault divorce, single mother welfare and gay marriage, either. Do you think that those might have unintended consequences? Shouldn’t we care about the consequences before we adopt policies that go against traditional moral values?

Anyway, let’s review some studies on birth control pills, since no one ever tells young people these things before it’s too late.

This is from the ultra-leftist Time magazine, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Dr. David Gaist, a neurologist at Odense University Hospital and the University of Southern Denmark, and his colleagues found that women taking hormonal contraceptives — those containing estrogen, progestin or a combination of both — showed higher rates of a rare brain tumor known as glioma. Their results, published Thursday in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*, raise questions about the connection between oral contraceptives and brain cancer, but shouldn’t yet be interpreted as a reason to stop taking birth control, says Gaist.
>
> Using data from Denmark’s national registries of health records, cancer cases and prescriptions, Gaist zeroed in on the women aged 15 years to 49 years diagnosed with glioma, and then analyzed whether they were prescribed contraceptives and for how long. **Overall, women who had used hormonal contraceptives at any point in their lives showed a 50% higher risk of developing the brain tumors compared to those who had not used them. And women who used the birth control for more than five years nearly doubled their risk of the cancer.**

Let’s take a look at some previous studies on the effects of contraceptives.

From the Times of India.

Excerpt:

> Women who take oral contraceptives regularly are at a higher risk of developing breast cancer compared to others, shows a study by AIIMS doctors. Breast cancer risk was found to be 9.5 times more in women with a history of consuming such pills. Early menstruation cycle, late marriage and lower duration of breastfeeding were the other major factors responsible for the disease among Indians, according to the study published in the latest issue of the Indian Journal

> of Cancer.

> The study was conducted on 640 women, of which 320 were breast cancer patients. “We found long-term use of oral contraceptive pills (OCP) higher among those suffering from breast cancer-11.9%-compared to healthy individuals-1.2%,” said Dr Umesh Kapil, a professor at the public health nutrition unit, AIIMS. He said breast cancer is caused by repeated exposure of breast cells to circulating ovarian hormones, and long-term use of OCPs, which contain estrogen and progesterone, may be increasing this risk by causing hormonal imbalance.

> The study mostly had women who used OCPs for birth control. Emergency contraceptives, popularly called morning-after pills, were not included.

This is not the first study, nor even the second study, to confirm this link.

Birth control pills

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9) and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed childbearing was a risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

When people talk about a war on women, maybe they should be thinking about this practice of promoting behaviors to women that make them sick. And eventually, we all have to pay for the increased costs of health care when we encourage people to do things that make them sick. We should not be promoting birth control to young women in order to enable them to have recreational sex. It’s not worth the harm it causes them. When

you add in the psychological damage and the risk of abortion if the contraception fails, it really is not the right thing to tell a young woman.

Should we only blame boys for the highly-sexualized culture?

September 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

If you wanted to read just one article that summarizes a lot of my views on radical feminism and the Sexual Revolution, based on my experiences with young women in high school, college and the workplace, this article from The Federalist would be a good choice.

I am going to excerpt a piece of this for my post, but you really need to click through and read the whole thing.

Excerpt:

> Let's build on that foundation and ask why porn is driving expectations for young women.
>
> As with the prevalence of porn among boys, the answer to this question has two parts. The victimization half of the answer is that we've deliberately avoided giving girls any other kinds of expectations. Think about it for a moment: Why should it be so hard to tell a guy "no," as girls reported in the survey? Why should she think it's mean?
>
> Feminists would have you believe that all girls are shrinking violets who never learned how to lean in, but the far better answer is that these girls don't really know of any good *reason* to say no. "I don't want to" is a reason, but it's the kind of reason one must weigh against others' desires in any kind of voluntary relationship.

Chastity, which is the view that relationships work better when sex is confined to exclusive, permanent marital commitments, is out of favor in our society, thanks to

feminism. In place of chastity, feminism encourages young people to have recreational sex outside of marriage.

What happened next?

> **If sex is just meaningless fun without any moral or spiritual dimension, and if youth is just a time for sexual adventures without any thought to actually forging a lasting relationship—as we are all taught these days—then surely it would indeed be mean to arbitrarily withhold that meaningless fun from someone she is fond of.**
>
> In a sexually amoral context, having sex with him so he'll watch a movie with her is a decision with no more gravitas than watching "American Ninja Warrior" with him so he'll watch "The Bachelorette" with her. **Without bringing chastity back into the conversation, there's no meaningful objection. The only expectation is that the boy and girl work out their different wants together, and they have already done so.**
>
> In the past, sexual expectations were founded in marriage and family—that sex is part of a permanent and exclusive partnership rooted in a mutual commitment to one another's well-being and the promise of future children to whom that commitment is extended. Those are the expectations girls were taught, and they generally navigated relationships according to them. They provided a foundation to undergird their refusals.
>
> **Unfortunately, feminists found such expectations restrictive and demeaning, and over a generation successfully uprooted them only to replace them with… nothing of substance. It's only natural that media depictions of sex—porn included—would fill that void and create new expectations.**
>
> […]We cannot meaningfully condemn this situation unless we venture back into the world of sexual morality. After all, if our only concerns are for the desires of those involved, nothing proves the girls' desire for emotional connection without providing sexual gratification is any better than the boys' desire for sexual gratification without providing emotional connection.If this is the extent of our concern, then our response should not be the horror we feel in the pit of our collective stomach, but rather pride that these two different groups were able to negotiate terms by which both sides can get something they want. It would be like the end of a children's program where everyone learned to compromise and work together.
>
> If girls in general want a deal with terms more favorable to them, there's always collective bargaining with the boys. Nevertheless, it's difficult to see how the results would substantially differ from traditional sexual morality. After all, most girls would need to withhold sexual access until granted a commitment more meaningful than "I promise not to sleep with anyone else until I want to be done sleeping with you." Accordingly, the "scabs" (to borrow union terminology) who

> give away access for less would have to be treated with less respect than those who maintain the bargaining position.
>
> **Meanwhile, the other side's interests would need to be taken into account or they would have no incentive to come to the table. The popular boys are already getting what they want, and the rest are already going their own way. Providing sex couldn't be held off for decades while education and career take a front seat.**
>
> **Plus the long-term commitments boys offer as they become men could not be so one-sided that the woman could unilaterally dissolve these at any time and simultaneously claim a man's home, children, and future income. In other words, any mutually beneficial bargain would have to restore chastity, slut-shaming, and early marriage while ending no-fault divorce. What collective bargaining will never achieve is the feminist pipe dream that boys be dutifully subject to feminine whim. They have no incentive for that.**

And this part further down is really good too:

> **Is it really safe to assume these girls have hooked up with a completely random and evenly distributed sample of boys their age?**
>
> **It would be more accurate to say that the boys *who are popular with the girls* are generally like this. After all, it seems rates of teen girls' sexual activity are actually somewhat higher than those of their male peers—a gap particularly pronounced among whites.** The disparity is probably even greater since other studies have shown that men are prone to exaggerating their sexual activity while women are prone to minimizing it.
>
> **All of this suggests that a larger pool of girls is competing for the attentions of a smaller pool of boys.** Many anecdotal accounts reinforce this, suggesting a version of the 80/20 rule is at work in hookup culture (i.e., that 80 percent of the girls are sleeping with 20 percent of the guys). That particular proportion is almost certainly an exaggeration, but the disparity is there.
>
> **Most likely, the sexually inactive majority of boys aren't receiving sex acts in exchange for their attention, just as the sexually inactive girls aren't providing any. Plenty of boys are left out in the cold who would happily adopt a measure of chastity and provide emotional intimacy if it meant access to romantic relationships. The girls are simply choosing not to enter relationships with those boys.** So why are the girls going for the boys who make the demands they reportedly despise?

I just don't see how you can do better than that. This is a very conservative view, because it respects traditional morality, but it is not one that is championed by most "conservatives", who want to just blame men for refusing to put out after feminism has re-made the culture.

In the old days, many men expected women to give them something physically if they spent money on dinner and movie. In the present day, fake man-blaming “conservatives” expect men to put out marriage for women who have done nothing at all to prepare themselves for it. In a world where chastity has been replaced by radical feminist hook-ups, and marriage has been replaced by no-fault divorce, there is no incentive for men to engage. Trying to get them to engage by attacking their manhood is just plain stupid, but unfortunately, most “man up” pastors and “conservatives” ARE just plain stupid.

Miriam Grossman explains what young people are taught about sex in the schools

October 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I wanted to post a lecture given by someone with experience counseling students about sexual health at a major university campus.

Here is the speaker's bio:

> Miriam Grossman, MD, has been a psychiatrist at UCLA Student Psychological Services for more than ten years and has worked with students for twenty years. She received her BA from Bryn Mawr College, her medical degree from New York University, and her psychiatric training through Cornell University Medical College. She is board certified in child, adolescent and adult psychiatry.

I found this lecture given by her to NZ Family First here:

Rather than try to summarize that lecture, I found a full transcript of a similar lecture that she delivered at the Heritage Foundation about what public schools teach young people about sex, and why. This is especially good for those who want to read rather than listen.

Here's the abstract:

> *The principles of sexual health education are not based on the hard sciences. Sex education is animated by a specific vision of how society must change, and because of this, sex ed curricula omit critical biological truths and endorse high-risk behaviors. The priority for SIECUS, Planned Parenthood, and Advocates for Youth is not the health and well-being of young people. These federally funded organizations are fighting "repression" and "intolerance," not herpes or syphilis. But when sexual freedom reigns, sexual health suffers. Our children are being*

> *taught that you can play with fire, and we are obligated to inform them of the risks they face and to teach them biological truths, even when they are politically incorrect.*

And here's a scary excerpt:

> You're all familiar with the epidemics of STIs, sexually transmitted infections, in this country, but there's another one. It's a man-made one. It's an epidemic of ignorance, misinformation, and duplicity.
>
> If you go to the medical library and browse through the journals, you will learn some amazing things, such as a girl's cervix is more easily infected by sexually transmitted infections than a woman's because it has yet to mature. Boys and men don't have a corresponding area of vulnerability in their reproductive system. The neurobiology of teen girls is unique, and it makes a girl's developing brain more vulnerable to stress, especially the stress of failed relationships.
>
> You'd learn that the adolescent brain functions differently from an adult's. The area responsible for reasoning, suppression of impulses, and weighing the pros and cons of one's decisions is not fully developed. Furthermore, under conditions that are intense, novel, and stimulating, teens' decisions are more likely to be shortsighted and driven by emotion. You would discover that oral sex is associated with cancer of the tonsils and throat. The human papilloma virus infects those areas just like it does the cervix.
>
> You'd find loads of articles—in fact, entire books— about oxytocin, a hormone that tells the brain, "You're with someone special now; time to turn caution off and trust on; time to create an emotional bond." In both sexes, oxytocin is released during cuddling and kissing and sexual touching, but estrogen ramps up the effects of oxytocin, and testosterone dampens them.
>
> […]You'd learn also that the healthy vagina, due to its architecture and biology, is an unfriendly environment for HIV, while the rectum has cells that facilitate the entry of HIV directly into the lymphatic system. This and many, many more things have been known for years, but when you turn to sex ed curricula and, most disturbing, the Web sites that are suggested to young people and their parents, nothing: none of this information.
>
> **So there is a man-made epidemic of ignorance: ignorance of biological truths that should be central in any sex ed curriculum or parent education program. Awareness of these truths can save lives.**
>
> **I put the responsibility for the epidemic of ignorance directly on those organizations that are at the helm of teaching sex education because, contrary to their claims and promises, their programs are not comprehensive; they are not science-based or medically accurate or up-to-date.**
>
> **I'll go even further: They are not about preventing disease. Sex ed is a**

> **social movement. Its goal is to change society. The primary goal of groups like SIECUS, Planned Parenthood, and Advocates for Youth is to promote sexual freedom and to rid society of its Judeo–Christian taboos and restrictions.**

The rest of the lecture transcript contains specific examples of how sex educators put children at risk.

I read Dr. Grossman's first book, and I bought her second book, and I really, really recommend these books to people who think that sex is harmless and that sex educators have no agenda that they are trying to push on children. I really can't recommend these books more highly to parents who trust public schools to tell children the truth about important issues like sexuality. They have an agenda, and so you should be armed with the facts.

Society of Christian Philosophers shames invited speaker for expressing Biblical views

October 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Anti-marriage gay activists vandalize church

Something interesting happened at a recent meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, which is a group of left-leaning philosophers who are (apparently) neither Christian, nor Philosophers.

How so?

Rightly Considered blog explains what happened:

> [A]t the latest Midwest meeting of the SCP, Richard Swinburne presented a paper in which he argued for the view that homosexual acts are immoral and that homosexuality is a disability that should be cured. The response from some quarters was predictably hysterical and unremarkable. What is remarkable is that the President of the SCP, Michael Rea, shamefully acquiesced to the leftist hysteria by issuing an ingratiating public apology, accusing Swinburne of causing pain and undermining the SCP's mission of 'diversity' and 'inclusion:
>
> **I want to express my regret regarding the hurt caused by the recent Midwest meeting of the Society for Christian Philosophers. The views expressed in Professor Swinburne's keynote are not those of the SCP itself. Though our membership is broadly united by way of religious faith, the views of our members are otherwise diverse. As President of the SCP, I am committed to promoting the intellectual life of our philosophical community. Consequently (among other reasons), I am committed to the values of diversity and inclusion. As an organization, we have fallen short of those ideals before, and surely we will again. Nonetheless, I will strive for them going forward. If you have thoughts**

> **or feedback you would like to share with me, I would welcome hearing from you via email or private message.**

Ed Feser had an interesting point-by-point response to that the SCP did the Swinburne.

I thought this part was the most interesting:

> [W]hat is this business about the "hurt" Swinburne's views allegedly caused? Philosophers discuss and defend all sorts of ideas that some people are bound to find offensive. So what? If, to take just one example, a philosopher defends the moral legitimacy of abortion, he may well offend those who regard abortion as a species of murder; whereas if he argues instead that abortion is a species of murder, he may well offend those who have had abortions. Still, philosophers discuss and debate abortion all the time, and no one regards this as noteworthy or in need of some disclaimer. So why are things different in the case of Swinburne's chosen topic?
>
> […]If the arguments for the side you disagree with in the abortion debate are *not good* arguments, then *that* is what you should be trying to show. Going on about hurt feelings doesn't add anything at all to the *philosophical* critique. On the other hand, if the arguments for the side you disagree with *are good* arguments, then you should stop disagreeing with them and stop being offended by them. In either case, hurt feelings are neither here nor there. And every philosopher knows this where other topics are concerned. Why are things any different in Swinburne's case?

Apparently, if you attach the word "Christian" to the name "Society of Christian Philosophers", it seems to mean as much as attaching the word "Affordable" to the "Affordable Care Act". Unlike the Evangelical Philosophical Society, the SCP has no requirement for a statement of faith, and boy, does it show.

More Feser:

> Fifth, Rea speaks about the SCP having "fallen short" of the ideals of diversity and inclusion and of his resolve to "strive for them going forward." Well, what does *that* entail exactly? Evidently he thinks that letting Swinburne say what he did amounts to having "fallen short." So is Rea saying that, "going forward," he will work to make sure that views like Swinburne's are *no longer expressed* at SCP meetings, or at least in SCP keynote addresses? How would *preventing views from being expressed* amount to the *furthering* of "diversity and inclusion"? And how would that square with the free and open debate that philosophy is supposed to be all about?

Philosophy USED to be about free and open debate, now it's just a bunch of crybabies silencing those who don't celebrate their views.

Feser:

> Civil and reasonable discussion about questions of sexual morality is increasingly

> difficult today, and it is precisely those who are most prone loudly to express their "hurt" feelings who make it so. Even the most polite, reasoned, and carefully qualified objections to homosexual acts, transgenderism, etc. are routinely dismissed *a priori*as "bigotry," fit only to be ridiculed and shouted down rather than rationally engaged. In extreme cases those who express such views face cyberbullying, loss of employment, and the like. As Justice Scalia pointed out in his dissenting opinion in *United States v. Windsor*, such views are now widely treated as "beyond the pale of reasoned disagreement" and their proponents shunned as if they were "enemies of the human race."
>
> To pretend (as some Christian philosophers I know do) that this sort of thing is essentially just a regrettable but understandable overreaction on the part of wounded souls who have had some bad experiences with obnoxious religious people is naiveté. It is often rather a *calculated political tactic* aimed at making public dissent from liberal conventional wisdom on sexuality practically difficult or impossible.

Feser actually quotes several gay activists to prove that their goal is to shame opposition to their agenda at a non-rational level.

And that non-rational level seems to be the level that most left-wing philosophers are at. Rod Dreher quotes the response of one of the Yale philosophers to Swinburne's views. It's just name-calling and vulgarity. But maybe that's all that philosophy is now. Sad to see that this is the case even with the Society of "Christian" Philosophers.

Philosophy, which used to be as rigorous as my own discipline of computer science because of its roots in symbolic logic, now appears to be as rigorous as any other far-left politically correct indoctrination on the modern university campus.

I'm a software engineer, I work for a living in the competitive private sector, where results matter. If I acted like philosophers do when confronted with opposing views, I'd be fired on the spot. But in the modern secular university, apparently sub-rational thuggery is a viable career alternative. I didn't think that my opinion of philosophers and philosophy could go any lower, but it just did. No one should be paying money for a philosophy degree, and not one dime of taxpayer money should be funding these adult children.

Two Blue Cross plans out of Obamacare, Obama wants taxpayer bailout for insurers

October 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Investors Business Daily reports on the latest big health insurer to drop out of Obamacare.:

> Two Blue Cross plans made the stunning announcement in the past week that they were dropping out of ObamaCare markets. If even the Blues — the backbone of the individual insurance market for decades — can't make it, ObamaCare is truly on the road to ruin.
>
> […]Despite getting approval on an eye-popping rate hike of nearly 60% for 2017, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee announced that it was quitting three of the largest ObamaCare markets in the state, which will leave 100,000 enrollees to scramble for an alternative coverage next year.
>
> The state's Blue Cross had lost half a billion dollars in ObamaCare's first three years, and the company's spokesman said "there are too many uncertainties to continue participating on a statewide level as we have before."
>
> That decision came shortly after Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska's announcement that it was pulling out of ObamaCare entirely in that state — stranding some 20,000 ObamaCare enrollees — after losing $140 million. "We can't take another hit," said CEO Steve Martin last Friday. The decision came after the company had won approval for a 42% premium increase.
>
> These dropouts are on top of the June announcement that Minnesota's Blue Cross was abandoning the states individual market entirely in the wake of $500 million in losses, which means more than 100,000 people in the state will be looking for a new insurer for next year.
>
> That same month, Arizona's Blue Cross announced that it was dropping out of two counties — Maricopa and Pinal. It later decided to get back into Pinal County after Aetna fled the state, which would have left Pinal with zero insurers in the ObamaCare exchange.
>
> In North Carolina, Blue Cross was contemplating an exit until other insurers dropped out, leaving it the sole carrier in much of the state.
>
> […]Even before the latest pullbacks, 974 counties in the U.S. — which represent 31% of all counties — were down to one ObamaCare insurer after Aetna, UnitedHealth, Humana and others pulled out of various states, and after most of the ObamaCare-created insurance co-ops failed, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. Another 31% of counties will be stuck with just two insurers.

Fewer choices means less competition means higher prices for consumers.

Bloomberg News explains:

> Minnesota will let the health insurers in its Obamacare market raise rates by at least 50 percent next year, after the individual market there came to the brink of collapse, the state's commerce commissioner said Friday.
>
> The increases range from 50 percent to 67 percent, Commissioner Mike Rothman's office said in a statement. Rothman, who regulates the state's insurers, is an appointee under Governor Mark Dayton, a Democrat. The rate hike follows increases for this year of 14 percent to 49 percent.
>
> […]On average, rates in the state will rise by about 60 percent, said Shane Delaney, a spokesman for MNSure, the state's marketplace for Obamacare plans.

Wow, this is a lot different than what Obama promised in his campaign speeches, isn't it?

A lot of young people believed Obama's promises in 2008 and again in 2012:

And you can keep your doctor! And you can keep your health plan! Because Obama! Everything will be fine, don't ask for evidence that he has ever achieved anything in his life. He's handsome! He has a nice voice! He's confident!

Should we pick a candidate based on our emotional response to his confident words? Yes, OK. But what about this problem of health insurance companies taking huge losses and pulling out of Obamacare? I don't think that the program works as well, if all the health insurance providers stop selling health insurance.

Well, don't worry! Because Obama has a plan to give all his insurance company friends a big bailout from his private stash of taxpayer dollars.

The Weekly Standard explains:

> Obamacare's "risk corridor" program was designed to redistribute money in the Obamacare exchanges from health insurers who made money to those who lost money. Profitable insurers would pay in; unprofitable insurers would get paid out.

> With so many insurers losing money under Obamacare, however, the program was positioned to become a bailout, as there was no guarantee in Obamacare's text that the money paid out wouldn't exceed the money paid in.
>
> […][I]n late 2014, congressional Republican leadership took action. Congress put an end to Obamacare's insurer bailout, as it added language to the CRomnibus spending package stipulating that the risk corridors must be budget-neutral: No more could be paid out to insurers than was paid in by insurers. Taxpayers would no longer be on the hook for bailing out insurance companies. In December of 2014, Obama signed that legislation into law.
>
> **Congress had acted just in time. Whereas the Obama administration and the CBO both claimed the risk-corridor program would pay for itself, insurers paid $362 million into the program in 2014 and—if not for Congress's having stopped the bailout—would have been paid out a cool $2.87 billion. For every $1 that was paid in, about $8 would have been paid out. Instead, insurers received only $362 million, and Congress saved taxpayers $2.5 billion.**
>
> Obama now seems determined to change that. He is reportedly planning another end-run around Congress—and the Constitution—by bailout out insurers with taxpayer money that Congress hasn't appropriated. The *Post* reports, "Justice Department officials have privately told several health plans suing over the unpaid money that they are eager to negotiate a broad settlement, which could end up offering payments to about 175 health plans." […]In other words, the administration is "eager" to settle with insurers and provide them the bailout that Congress, with Obama's signature, expressly denied.

Oh, that's fine then. Obama is going to give the big insurance companies the bailout they deserve. He is such a generous man!

Obama already doubled the national debt from $10 trillion to $20 trillion in 8 years. We have another $1 trillion in student loan debt, thanks to his nationalization of the student loan administration. And another housing bubble of unknown value on the horizon. When will voters understand that they need to vote for competent people?

Police charge gay rights activist for faking hate crime against himself

October 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's fun! And if you don't celebrate it, we'll sue you for defamation!
This story is from CBS News Los Angeles.

Excerpt:

> The LA County District Attorney's office has filed a felony vandalism charge against an online personality they said filed a fake police report and told authorities he had been beaten and attacked by three men in West Hollywood last June.
>
> Calum McSwiggan, who is known for his online posts and videos, has been charged with vandalism for suggesting the men also damaged a Lexus which they said he damaged.
>
> The DA said original charges were dismissed Thursday to make way for a newly filed felony case.
>
> On Monday, the 26-year-old McSwiggan, pleaded not guilty to one felony count of vandalism over $400 damage and one misdemeanor count of [filing a] false report to a peace officer.
>
> […]According to the felony complaint, McSwiggan damaged the car mirror and bumper of a vehicle on June 27. The defendant then is alleged to have falsely reported to police that he had been beaten by the vehicle's driver and two other men, the DA said.
>
> McSwiggan had several broken teeth in the "attack" and said three men gay

> bashed him outside the popular bar, The Abbey. Officials said his wounds — he also needed stitches in his head — were self-inflicted. **They said he used a pay phone inside the sheriff's station to cause the damage to his face.**
>
> **The defendant — a YouTube star and gay rights activist — faces a possible maximum sentence of three years and six months in county jail if convicted of the charges.**

I'm sure that the lawyers at the Human Rights Campaign will be able to get him out of these charges, lest their noble cause be drawn into disrepute.

Let's recall a few more recently committed fake hate crimes.

This one is from the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The case of the chocolate cake slur, it seems, was simply a hoax.
>
> An openly gay Texas pastor who had accused Whole Foods of defacing his cake with an anti-gay slur dropped his lawsuit against the grocery chain on Monday, issuing an apology that said he was wrong to "perpetuate this story."
>
> "The company did nothing wrong," the pastor, Jordan Brown, said in a statement. "I was wrong to pursue this matter and use the media to perpetuate this story."
>
> […]Mr. Brown's apology represented a remarkable about-face from his remarks last month, delivered at a news conference alongside his lawyer, during which he choked back tears as he told the story.
>
> […]But a day after Mr. Brown's legal salvo, Whole Foods denounced the pastor as a fraud, vowing to press a countersuit that sought $100,000. At the same time, the grocery chain released surveillance footage of Mr. Brown's purchase that it said proved that the cake had not been tampered with.

I doubt that stories like these will be the basis of a plot on Glee or Will and Grace or the other TV shows that seek to change public opinion on gay rights issues. Or maybe Law and Order will do a show on it, but make it a real hate crime where some patriotic Christian homeschooling family actually does commit the hate crime.

I blogged before about several other fake hate crimes in this post, this post and this post. It happens a lot. It might be a good idea to assume that hate crimes committed against the secular left are false unless they are proven true. There is a lot of mental illness in the secular left crowd. A lot of attention-seeking. A lot of wallowing in victimhood and bullying others for sympathy.

Obama shut down Judicial Watch whistleblower organization

October 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?
This story is from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> Political operatives within the Obama administration wrongly punished conservative legal group Judicial Watch, stripping it of "media" status and trying to force it to pay higher fees for its open records requests, the General Services Administration inspector general said in a letter released Thursday.
>
> **The GSA botched several high-profile open records requests, delaying them for months while political appointees got involved, Inspector General Carol F. Ochoa said. The findings were released while the administration was facing charges of slow-walking open records requests for Hillary Clinton's emails, as well as other requests.**
>
> **In the case of Judicial Watch, the order to strip it of media status came from political operatives with long ties to Democratic causes — and even from the White House.**
>
> **The inspector general said the decision came at the behest of Gregory Mecher, a former Democratic campaign fundraiser who at the time was liaison to the White House.** He is married to Jen Psaki, a longtime spokeswoman with the Obama administration and its election campaigns.
>
> […] Judicial Watch ended up suing over the request, the agency finally agreed to waive all fees and even ended up paying Judicial Watch $750 as part of the

> settlement.
>
> Tom Fitton, president of Judicial Watch, questioned the agency's decision to fight a losing case that ended up costing it money.

Let's recall what Obama confidently promised his naive supporters during election campaigns:

Just remember the confidence sound of the words – the confidence is what caused so many people to vote for him. Just his handsome face and confident words.

But the reality after he won the election was quite different, of course.

And this is not an isolated case – it's a pattern of deliberate concealment of government abuse of power:

> Last year, the administration spent $31.3 million to fight FOIA cases — more than twice the $15.4 million the administration spent in 2008, the final year under President George W. Bush.

So the intention was never to be more transparent. The words were put out as bait to catch voters who didn't want to dig into the man's record before choosing him. And it worked! And it worked again in 2012, *even after the truth was known*. This is the problem with choosing men based on confident words, rather than based on demonstrated ability. The word "transparency" sounds so good, but there was no passion for transparency anywhere demonstrated in his actions prior to campaigning. Some people just don't have the self-control to override their feelings and intuitions. We can't be like that – we have to insist on seeing demonstrated ability before voting.

Unfortunately, the voters who believed the confident words will not see this story about Judicial Watch on CNN or MSNBC or the Comedy Channel, and so they will probably never learn from their mistakes. Or maybe they just don't care to vote based on evidence, when they can vote based on feelings, intuitions and first impressions. Vote based on self-delusion, in short. Or maybe they just vote out of a greedy desire to be transferred more of their neighbor's earned money. It certainly isn't because of a desire for more transparency in government.

Why is it so hard for a working man to provide for a family these days?

October 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

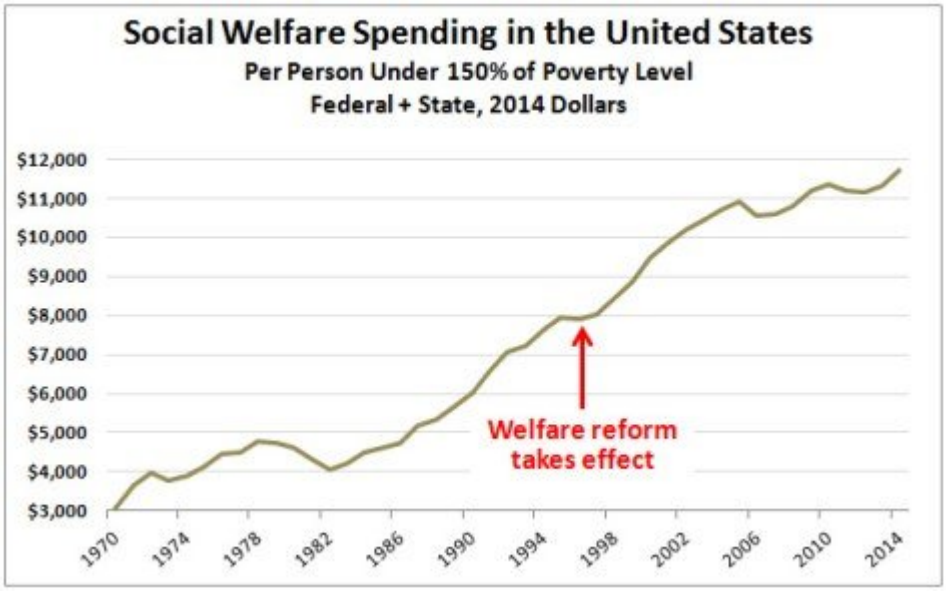

Welfare spending

Here's my argument which answers the question:

1. Feminism was behind no-fault divorce.
2. Making it easier to divorce means that more divorces will occur.
3. Marital instability causes women to vote for bigger government.
4. Unmarried women vote mostly for Democrats.

*Please note that I am talking about unmarried (never married, divorced) women throughout this post.

Here's the evidence for each point.

1. Feminism was behind no-fault divorce, according to this feminist, pro-no-fault-divorce writer.

Excerpt:

> Households of 2010 don't look quite like they did in 1969, when no-fault divorce actually was a controversial topic and these counter-arguments held some weight. The working dad/stay-at-home mom model of the middle class has been replaced by two-parent earner households and a growing number of working mom/stay-at-home dad arrangements. In working poor and impoverished families, the one-parent provider model was never the norm. **No-fault divorce seemed scary when it had never before existed, but the truth is that its introduction was long overdue. Feminist groups at the time supported no-fault divorce, as it provided women an escape hatch from desperately unhappy marriages in a society where they were already**

> **disadvantaged on almost every level, regardless of their marital status.** Imagine an abusive marriage in 1968, when the court-savvy abuser could actually force the victim to stay in the relationship forever. Imagine that now, and you know why domestic violence attorneys are in full support of introducing no-fault divorce to New York. And the judges aren't the only problem.

Note that the author of this piece thinks that it is not women's fault that they choose men who they then want to divorce. It's not the woman's fault that she is unhappy with the man she courted with and then chose and then made vows to – women need a no-fault escape hatch, and children do fine without fathers.

2. Easier divorces means more divorces.

Abstract:

> This paper analyzes a panel of 18 European countries spanning from 1950 to 2003 to examine the extent to which the legal reforms leading to "easier divorce" that took place during the second half of the 20th century have contributed to the increase in divorce rates across Europe. We use a quasi-experimental set-up and exploit the different timing of the reforms in divorce laws across countries. We account for unobserved country-specific factors by introducing country fixed effects, and we include country-specific trends to control for timevarying factors at the country level that may be correlated with divorce rates and divorce laws, such as changing social norms or slow moving demographic trends. We find that the different reforms that "made divorce easier" were followed by significant increases in divorce rates. **The effect of no-fault legislation was strong and permanent, while unilateral reforms only had a temporary effect on divorce rates. Overall, we estimate that the legal reforms account for about 20 percent of the increase in divorce rates in Europe between 1960 and 2002.**

It seems obvious, but more evidence never hurts. About 70% of divorces are initiated by women, either because they chose to marry the wrong man, or because they are unhappy with the right man.

3. Marital instability causes women to vote for bigger government for security.

Excerpt:

> Giving women the right to vote significantly changed American politics from the very beginning. Despite claims to the contrary, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue, and these effects continued growing as more women took advantage of the franchise. Similar changes occurred at the federal level as female suffrage led to more liberal voting records for the state's U.S. House and Senate delegations. In the Senate, suffrage changed voting behavior by an amount equal to almost 20 percent of the difference between Republican and Democratic senators. Suffrage also coincided

> with changes in the probability that prohibition would be enacted and changes in divorce laws.
>
> […]More work remains to be done on why women vote so differently, but our initial work provides scant evidence that it is due to self-interest arising from their employment by government. **The only evidence that we found indicated that the gender gap in part arises from women's fear that they are being left to raise children on their own (Lott and Kenny 1997).** If this result is true, the continued breakdown of the family and higher divorce rates imply growing political conflicts between the sexes. 19

Bigger government must be paid for by higher taxes, of course, which makes it harder for one working man's income to provide for a family. In fact, feminists *wanted* men to be displaced as sole-providers. They would prefer that women are "equal" to men, and that means making women get out and work like men. Feminists had every reason to want bigger government and higher taxes to make traditional single-earner families unfeasible financially. They did it for *equality*.

4. Women are in fact observed to vote for bigger government.

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, the nation made history. It made history in electing the first African American president; it made history in building a bigger margin for the first female Speaker of the House; it made history in delivering the biggest Democratic margin since 1964; it made history in sending a record number of people to the polls and the highest percentage turnout since the 1960 election. Analysts will spend the next few months sifting through the data, trying to figure out what happened and why. Historians will likely spend the next several years and decades studying this election, as well. But one thing is immediately clear. **Unmarried women played a pivotal role in making this history and in changing this nation. They delivered a stunning 70 to 29 percent margin to Barack Obama and delivered similarly strong margins in races for Congress and the U.S. Senate. Although unmarried women have voted Democratic consistently since marital status has been was tracked, this election represents the highest margin recorded and a 16-point net gain at the Presidential level from 2004.**

In fact, there was a recent (2011) study showing that unmarried women do in fact vote for higher taxes and more government as a substitute for a husband's provider role.

Abstract:

> The last three decades have witnessed the rise of a political gender gap in the United States wherein more women than men favor the Democratic party. We trace this development to the decline in marriage, which we posit has made men richer and women poorer. Data for the United States support this argument. **First, there is a strong positive correlation between state divorce**

> **prevalence and the political gender gap – higher divorce prevalence reduces support for the Democrats among men but not women. Second, longitudinal data show that following marriage (divorce), women are less (more) likely to support the Democratic party.**

What follows from voting Democrat?

Since the Democrats took the House and Senate in 2006, and then the Presidency in 2008, the national debt has more than doubled from about 8 trillion to 20 trillion. A lot of that money was spent in welfare for single mothers, which only makes the women and their fatherless children *more dependent* on government. Children raised in unmarried home are far less likely to marry themselves, and to be independent of government. Which means that they will vote for bigger government when they start to vote, since they can't make it through life on their own strength.

If more people vote for Democrats then we will get higher taxes to pay for all the government spending. Higher taxes means that a married man can no longer retain enough of his earnings to support a family. And that means his wife has to work, and that means that his children will learn what the government schools decide they should learn – so that all the children will be equal and think the same (pro-government) thoughts. This should not be controversial, because it is what it is. But if we want to talk about the decline of marriage honestly, then we need to be talking to single women about how they choose men, when they have sex with men, and how they vote at election time. You really can't have it all.

Nebraska teen arrested for throwing her newborn baby out the window

October 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

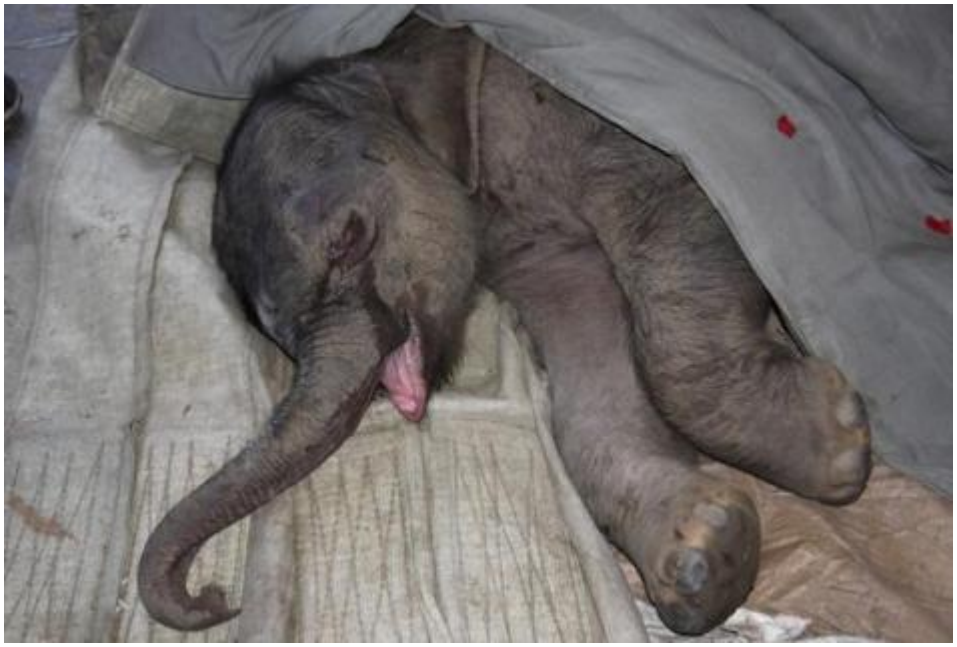

This baby elephant is crying because he was rejected by his mother

The UK Daily Mail reports on a 16-year-old girl who allegedly threw her newborn baby out a second story window.

Excerpt:

> A 16-year-old girl accused of throwing her newborn out of the window has been pictured in her mugshot.
>
> Antonia Lopez, of Omaha, Nebraska, is being charged as an adult in the death of her daughter.
>
> […]**Authorities believe Lopez went into labor on Friday, gave birth in her bedroom and threw her baby girl from the second floor of her apartment building.**
>
> Lopez then told her mother what had happened, according to authorities. Lopez's mother found the baby in the grass, called 911 and gave the newborn CPR until paramedics arrived, police said.
>
> […]The baby had died by the time she was transported her to the hospital, paramedics said. She was then pronounced officially dead.

This is really sad. Have you ever thought about what it must be like for a little baby to be rejected by its own mother? And for the mother to not care about him, because she just wants to do what makes her happy, even though she made him? It's horrible. Every baby should have a mother who welcomes him and takes care of his needs. Who else is there to take care of him, if not his own mother?

Amanda Prestigiacomo has a comment on this story at the Daily Wire, then I'll say something that occurred to me.

Amanda writes:

> The baby girl weighed only two pounds and was believed to be 27-28 weeks old at the time of her murder, according to the director of the neonatal intensive care unit at the Nebraska Medical Center, Dr. Ann Anderson-Berry. Murdering a baby inside a woman's womb at this stage, called a third-trimester abortion, is legal in 12 states and the District of Columbia.
>
> […]Lopez was charged with murder: one count of felony child abuse resulting in death.
>
> But all she really had to do was ask to have her baby murdered while she was still in her womb. This gruesome act is somehow interpreted as a "woman's right to choose" on account of location of the baby at the time of the murder. Twelve different states—Iowa, Texas, Virginia, Alaska, Colorado, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, West Virginia—and the District of Columbia, would have happily murdered the baby, injecting the baby with poison and ripping them apart limb-by-limb, with zero legal repercussions.
>
> Third-trimester babies are completely viable to live outside of the womb and can feel pain.

As soon as I read this story, it made me think about the baby elephant who cried for 5 hours, because its mother tried to stomp it to death. Every time I think about that baby elephant, and it makes me cry. I don't see how this story is any different, except it's worse because it's a person who was made in the image of God, and the people who tried the save the baby were not in time to save him.

A baby elephant's birthday is supposed to be happy

OK, I have another point about this. When I looked at the selfies of this teen in the UK Daily Mail article, the first thing that occurred to me was that this teen was interested in having fun, feeling good, getting attention, etc. The fact that her father is never mentioned anywhere made me think that no one was around to teach her to be responsible and to put the needs of others above her own pursuit of happiness. She didn't

see the baby as more important than her own happiness, even though it she chose the man who impregnated her, and she chose to have sex with that man. The baby wasn't to blame for anything, he just wants to have a mother like all the other babies do. She has a moral obligation to take care of what she chose to make. He needs her to take care of him. *It's his birthday*, for God's sake!

When you look at the Bible, you see Jesus divesting himself of power, and coming as a man to serve others – to look out for their needs. Paul says that this example should be imitated by followers of Jesus in Phillipians 2:

Look at Philippians 2:1-11:

> 1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,
>
> 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.
>
> 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;
>
> **4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.**
>
> 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
>
> 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
>
> 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.
>
> 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
>
> 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
>
> 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
>
> 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

OK, so what's more important? Avoiding obligations to others, or taking care of the needs of others? Yes, there is time for having fun and doing fun things. But Christians need to be alert to those around them. Whenever someone close is in need, they have to consider it a calling from God, and act to help the person in need. In the case of the pregnant teen, it was her baby. The baby was conceived as a result of the teen's decision. It's just like buying a pet in the pet store – you own it, and it has a natural claim on you to provide for and protect it. You made the decision to make it (or with pets, you made the decision to own it). We all understand that taking care of babies is not fun and thrills. It's work. But for Christians at least, we ought to be trained to see the needs of others as acceptable to

us. We can’t always be running away from expectations, responsibilities and obligations.

In fact, I would recommend to young people that they get used to having to care for others, and not getting their way all the time. With practice, you can actually get to the point where you don’t resent having to care for the needs of others. Now, I don’t think you should commit yourself to more than you can handle, and that might mean that you take fewer risks, so you have more time and resources to help others who may need you. Don’t stress your resources, in short. But the point is that we need to be alert to the fact that there is something in Christianity that praises self-denial, and self-sacrifice. This is more important in Christianity than having fun, having peer approval, doing “interesting” things so that other people will be impressed. Manage your life wisely so you can take on someone else’s problems if you need to. Don’t take risks that will create situations that you can’t handle. But if a situation occurs, take it as a task from God to live out your faith. We ought to be different. There ought to be a difference between us and them.

Muslim man proud of son for murdering his daughter after she married a Christian

October 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

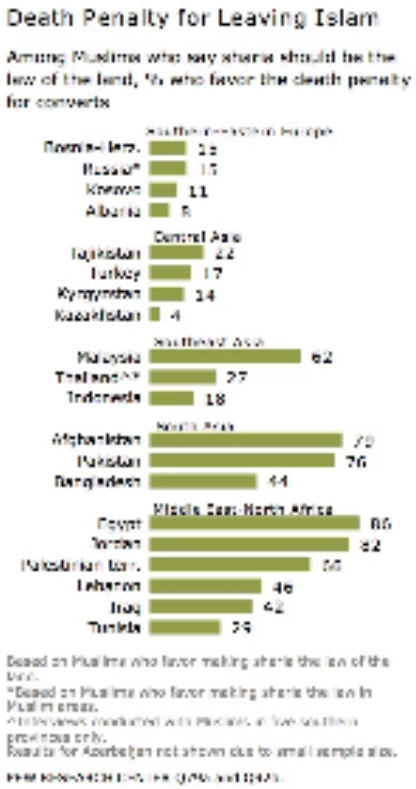

Leftist Pew Research: Should converts away from Islam be killed?
A friend sent me this article and it just made me so unhappy.

The article appeared in the Calgary Sun:

> For two months, over the thunder of machines at the steel mill, the men taunted Mubeen Rajhu about his sister. Even now, they laugh at how easy it was to make him lose his temper.
>
> Some people had seen Tasleem in their Lahore slum with a Christian man. She was 18, a good Muslim girl, out in public with a man. Even though the man had converted to Islam out of love for her, this couldn't be allowed.
>
> "Some guys got to know that his sister was having a relationship," says Ali Raza, a co-worker at the mill. "They would say: 'Can't you do anything? What is the matter with you? You are not a man."'
>
> Raza can barely contain a smile as he talks about the hours spent needling Rajhu.
>
> "He used to tell us, 'If you don't stop, I will kill myself. Stop!"' Raza says.
>
> He raises his voice to compete with the sounds of the coal-powered mill, and workers blackened by its dust gather to listen. They too smile. A few laugh at the memory of Rajhu's outbursts.

> “The guys here told him, ’It would be better to kill your sister. It is better than letting her have this relationship,”’ Raza says.
>
> Rajhu told them he had bought a pistol, and one day in August he stopped coming to work.
>
> Rajhu discovered that his sister had defied the family and married the Christian. For six days he paced. His rage grew. How could she?
>
> He watched her laughing on the phone, ignoring their mother’s pleas to leave the man.
>
> On the seventh day, he retrieved the pistol from where he had hidden it and walked up to his sister and with one bullet to the head, he killed her.

Killed her? He *murdered a defenseless woman*. This is the exact opposite of what a brother should do for a sister. Instead, he should use force to protect her from evil – not bring the evil himself.

But what was interesting was how everyone accepted it:

> In the vast majority of cases, the “honour” killer is a man and the victim is a woman.
>
> She is a sister who falls in love with a man not of her family’s choosing. She is a daughter who refuses to agree to an arranged marriage, sometimes to a man old enough to be her father. She is a wife who can no longer stay in an abusive marriage and divorces her husband.
>
> He is a brother, like Rajhu, who cannot bear the taunts of other men brought up as he was, believing that women are subservient and must be kept in the shadows, their worth often measured by the number of sons they can produce. He is a neighbour, like Raza at the plant, who doesn’t think his friend did anything wrong in taking his sister’s life. He is a father, like Tasleem’s, who is angry about her killing not because she is dead, but because her death will reveal her “shame” to other members of the family and beyond.

The father says some terrible things about the daughter, and is completely oblivious to looking at things from her perspective.

In some places, it really is very difficult to be a Christian:

> The man Tasleem married, Jehangir, fled the night she was killed. The gate to his home, barely a block from Tasleem’s, is padlocked. But the fallout from his love for Tasleem has engulfed the members of the small Christian community living in the area.
>
> Earlier this month, just weeks after the killing, gunmen fired shots into their homes. No one was hurt, but no one has slept well since. In this majority Muslim country, Christians make up barely 5% of the population and in recent years have come under increasing attack by militants, who insist all non-Muslims are unbelievers. Yet Pakistan’s minorities, including Christians, are protected in the

> country's constitution.
>
> "We have been scared since the killing took place," says a neighbour, Shahzia Masih, sitting in a small room decorated with pictures of Jesus and Mary. "There are just a few houses of Christians here, but we have nowhere else to go."

I suppose that since I am tough on women choosing good men, someone might ask me what I would do if my sister married an atheist. Answer: I have a longstanding policy of always putting my relationships with Christians above family members who aren't interested in Christianity. I naturally prefer to do things with people who don't shush me when I want to be myself and speak about the beliefs that matter to me. I'm fine with people who let me be myself, family or non-family. I certainly don't expect everyone to agree with me. All I ask is that if they want a relationship with me, that they not stifle me. I have atheists cousins that I play online games with, but they don't shush me about my beliefs and moral views at all. My atheist aunt and uncle know that they can get me to do things if they let me talk about the things I care about. But they don't have to agree with me, of course. Because they don't believe what I believe. I like to say what I think, but I don't want anyone to be scared into agreeing with me. I'm different from Islam and the secular left in that respect. You believe what you want, but let me believe what I want if you want me to be your friend. Surprising how many Muslims and progressives won't take that deal.

I am pretty confident in Christianity as a worldview in the sense that I believe that if people put reason and evidence first, then they will arrive at Christianity. It doesn't make any sense to try to coerce people into it… Jesus is the Son of God, and he had all the power in the world to coerce. He wasn't willing to do it, not even to save his own life when he took on the form of a man in order to meet with his creatures and rescue them. That means something to me. You just have to read Philippians 2 to see that this unwillingness to use power, but to instead serve others, is at the core of Christian teaching.

Was withdrawing American troops from Iraq a good thing for world peace?

October 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

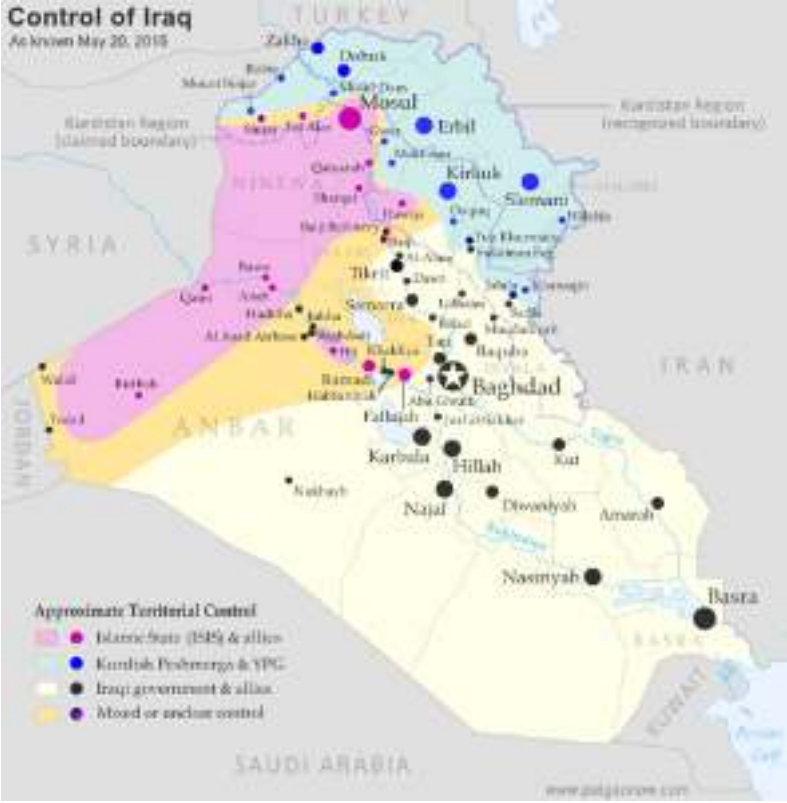

Control of Iraq (click for larger image)

I really enjoyed this article from David French in National Review.

It says:

> In Tuesday night's debate, Democratic vice-presidential nominee Tim Kaine defended the indefensible — a strategic retreat from Iraq that threw away the fruits of American military victory, helped enable a terrifying genocide, and empowered America's enemies. Even worse, he did so while spouting a pack of deceptions and half-truths that exhibited a child's understanding of American strategic interests.
>
> Where to begin? First, it was stunning that Kaine brought up as an *accomplishment* America's dramatically reduced overseas deployments — as if the only measure of strategic success is the number of Americans in harm's way. He said it was a "very, very good thing" that instead of 175,000 deployed, we now have only 15,000.
>
> Well, yes, *if* America's enemies were defeated or contained. Instead, American retreat created power vacuums that our enemies filled. Jihadists control more territory, have more men under arms, and are more effectively attacking America and American allies than when Hillary Clinton became secretary of state. Those are facts that make American withdrawal look less like an accomplishment and

> more like an inexcusable retreat.
>
> Moreover, we didn't have to maintain 175,000 troops in the field to hold on to our hard-fought gains. Kaine made the choice binary — maximum or minimum. Yet our defeat of al-Qaeda in Iraq (the precursor to ISIS) was so comprehensive that the presence of only a small number of American combat troops could have prevented the kind of blitzkrieg we saw in 2014, when ISIS overran large parts of Iraq and Syria. There was never a question of keeping massive numbers of troops in the field. The question was whether we'd keep *any* troops in Iraq, and the Obama administration said no.
>
> And that brings me to Kaine's central deception. He still clings to the old, discredited line that America had no choice but to pull troops out of Iraq because the Bush-era "status of forces" agreement mandated their removal. Yet comprehensive reporting in the *New York Times* and *The New Yorker* magazine tells a very different story — of an administration that was unwilling to commit the roughly 10,000 to 16,000 (not 175,000) troops needed to maintain stability and of an Iraqi government that was unwilling to risk political capital at home for the sake of a merely nominal American presence. In other words, *both sides* blundered, badly.
>
> **As any number of strategic thinkers have noted, the results weren't just predictable, they were predicted — by President George W. Bush himself. Speaking in 2007, Bush said that if troops were withdrawn before commanders said Iraq was ready, then:**
>
> - **It would mean surrendering the future of Iraq to al-Qaeda.**
> - **It would mean that we'd be risking mass killings on a horrific scale.**
> - **It would mean we allow the terrorists to establish a safe haven in Iraq to replace the one they lost in Afghanistan.**
> - **It would mean we'd be increasing the probability that American troops would have to return at some later date to confront an enemy that is even more dangerous.**
>
> **All of these things happened. All of them. ISIS has committed genocide. It blitzed through Iraq, threatening Baghdad and even Kurdistan, and it has created a nation-sized jihadist terror state, one that is shrinking only because — yes — American troops have returned.**

David French was deployed to Iraq, and saw Americans killed there. Then Obama pulled out our forces, giving the enemies of America a great victory. A bit later, the Islamic State (ISIL) formed, and began to take control, committing atrocities unthinkable to most of the naive people who voted for Obama. Retreat from Iraq created a mess, and we should learn from that failure. You can't just pull Western troops out and expect everything to magically fix itself.

New study: loss of non-coding DNA causes abnormal heart function

October 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

First, let's see what Darwinian evolutionists predict about junk DNA, before we look at what the experiments show.

Here's biologist John Timmer to explain the orthodox Darwinian view of DNA from 2007:

> Personally, I fall into the "it's all junk" end of the spectrum. If almost all of these sequences are not conserved by evolution, and we haven't found a function for any of them yet, it's hard to see how the "none of it's junk" view can be maintained. There's also an absence of support for the intervening view, again because of a lack of evidence for actual utility. The genomes of closely related species have revealed very few genes added from non-coding DNA, and all of the structural RNA we've found has very specific sequence requirements. The all-junk view, in contrast, is consistent with current data.

Got that? According to Darwinists, DNA is almost entirely junk – this is what is consistent with the view that creatures have evolved through a process of random mutation and selection. The estimates that I've seen from evolutionary biologists range from 95% to 99% junk. Now let's compare the religion with science, and separate mythology from reality.

Here is an article from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory discussing a new peer-reviewed science paper published in the Nature Communications journal. (H/T William)

Excerpt:

> Researchers have shown that when parts of a genome known as enhancers are

> missing, the heart works abnormally, a finding that bolsters the importance of DNA segments once considered “junk” because they do not code for specific proteins.
>
> The team, led by scientists at the Department of Energy’s Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab), examined the role of two heart enhancers in the mouse genome, showing that the loss of either one resulted in symptoms that resemble human cardiomyopathy, a disease in which the heart muscle often becomes enlarged or rigid. In humans, the disease often leads to heart failure.
>
> The findings appear in a study published today in the journal *Nature Communications*.

And there is actually a helpful summary of how evidence has emerged over the past few years that falsified the Darwinian prediction of “it’s all junk”:

> When scientists sequenced the human genome, they discovered that less than 5 percent of our DNA were genes that actually coded for protein sequences. The biological functions of the noncoding portions of the genome were unclear.
>
> Over the past fifteen years, however, there has been a growing appreciation for the importance of these noncoding regions, thanks in large part to the efforts of individual labs and, more recently, large international efforts such as the Encyclopedia of DNA Elements (ENCODE) project.
>
> What became clear from this work is that there are many elements of the genome, including enhancers, that are involved in regulating gene expression, even though they do not encode for proteins directly.
>
> This realization meant that there were vast sections of the genome that needed to be explored and understood. Dickel noted that there are about 20,000 genes in the mouse genome, and in many cases, scientists have a fairly good understanding of what will happen if any one of them is disabled. In contrast, there are 80,000 candidate heart enhancers in the human genome, and it is still unclear how important they are for human development.
>
> “In genetic studies, the way you establish whether a gene is important is you delete it from the genome and see what happens,” said Dickel. “In many cases, there are genes that, if disabled, make it difficult for the organism to survive. For enhancers, it’s less known what the consequences are if they are damaged or missing. To use a car analogy, if we took the battery out of a car, it wouldn’t start. That’s a critical component. A missing or damaged enhancer could be essential like a battery, or more similar to a missing passenger seat in the car. It’s not as nice, but it’s still possible to drive the car.”

Note this new study is just one small example of function in the non-coding region of DNA.

Consider this quotation from John Mattick:

> [The vast majority of the mammalian genome is differentially transcribed in precise cell-specific patterns to produce large numbers of intergenic, interlacing, antisense and intronic non-protein-coding RNAs, which show dynamic regulation in embryonal development, tissue differentiation and disease, with even regions superficially described as ‘gene deserts’ expressing specific transcripts in particular cells… Moreover, where tested, these noncoding RNAs usually show evidence of biological function in different developmental and disease contexts, with, by our estimate, hundreds of validated cases already published and many more en route, which is a big enough subset to draw broader conclusions about the likely functionality of the rest.

(Source)

Dr. John Mattick is the executive director of the Garvan Institute, and lab head at the RNA Biology and Plasticity lab.

When I talk to rank and file atheists, they like to tell me that their atheism is backed by the findings of science. I say, which findings? The origin of the universe? The cosmic fine-tuning? The origin of life? The Cambrian explosion? Molecular machines? Irreducible complexity? Galactic habitability? Stellar habitability? What science backs up your atheism?

So far, the most scientific answer I’ve gotten was the junk DNA. The most common answer is Star Trek and Star Wars.

New study: girls have higher GPAs and earn more graduate degrees than boys

October 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Academic Records of High School Students who Took the 2016 SAT Test, by Gender		
	Male	Female
High School Rank		
Top 10% of Class	44%	56%
Second 10% of Class	46%	54%
GPA		
A+ (97-100)	40%	60%
A (93-96)	39%	61%
A- (90-92)	43%	57%
B (80-89)	49%	51%
C (70-79)	59%	41%
D, E, F (below 70)	63%	37%
Overall GPA	3.30	3.45

Do female-dominated schools discriminate against boys?
This is from the Washington Examiner.

It says:

> Young women are taking more honors classes, getting better grades and have a higher overall GPA than their male peers, according to a report compiling SAT Test data.
>
> The report, released by the College Board, looked at the test scores of college-bound seniors in 2016, and reviewed high school data demographics. Girls, it turns out, are doing much better in high school than boys. In a chart compiled by American Enterprise Scholar Mark Perry, it's clear that girls are outperforming boys on nearly every level in high school.
>
> […]Don't expect to hear calls for helping boys perform better in school. Activists have focused so heavily on girls for years now that boys have gotten the message that they no longer matter. It's what Christina Hoff Sommers wrote about in her book "The War Against Boys" nearly two decades ago.
>
> What Perry noted in the chart above isn't new for this year, it's been a trend since before Hoff Sommers' book. Yet the focus is still on girls.
>
> […]More girls than boys are attending college and getting master's and doctoral

> degrees.

The article notes that boys perform better on math SATs, which makes you wonder why they have lower GPAs. Most teachers and administrators in traditional schools are women. When those women administrators and teachers attend college, they learn that women have been held back by men and discriminated against. Then they get jobs in the education system teaching boys and girls. Could it be that when a teacher grades a boy, she grades a boy lower than a standardized test would? As a way of "making up" for the supposed discrimination against women?

Has anyone ever studied this to see if there is discrimination against boys in the schools?

The study is here (PDF), and Susan Walsh writes about the study on her blog.

Excerpt:

> A new study of nearly 6,000 elementary school children has found that boys are discriminated against beginning in kindergarten. Christopher Cornwell, an economics professor at the University of Georgia, says that "gender disparities in teacher grades start early and uniformly favor girls."
>
> Despite having higher scores on standardized tests, boys get lower grades than girls. Why? Because teachers are basing grades at least partly on classroom behavior, and the standards are very much geared to female norms.
>
> […]Here's what the disparity looks like for kindergarten boys:

Std. Deviation	Test Scores	Grades
Reading	-.017	-.27
Math	+.02	-.15
Science	+.035	-.14

> (Note: Values are approx., gauged visually from study graphic.)
>
> Another interesting finding was that boys who adhere to female norms on non-cognitive skills were not penalized. Effectively, the more female behavior was rewarded with a grade "bonus" for males.
>
> The implications of this are obvious. Masculinity, even normal maleness, is being punished in schools from a very young age. Only the most female-acting boys are rewarded with a fair assessment.

What the study shows is that administrators and teachers don't grade like standardized tests – they have other criteria that discriminate in favor of girls and against boys. And now we are seeing the effects of this attack on boys in college admissions and graduation rates – not to mention affirmative action for women employees in the workplace.

You can find out more about the war against boys in Christina Hoff Sommers' book "The War Against Boys". If you send your boy(s) to government-run schools, this is a must-read. Sommers is a Democrat, and a traditional equity feminism but unlike most school

administrators and teachers, she does not believe that it is OK to discriminate against boys to keep them down.

New study: Democrat professors outnumber Republicans 12 to 1 in top fields

October 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ratio Christi event at Ohio State University featuring Frank Turek

This is from the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

> Registered Democratic professors outnumber Republican ones nearly 12 to 1 in economics, journalism, psychology and law programs at leading U.S. universities, according to new research.
>
> Many departments at top schools have no registered Republicans, and in many cases, Republicans are outnumbered by registered members of third parties.
>
> The analysis, published in the online journal Econ Journal Watch, presents new evidence that elite universities lean to the Left. It also suggests that Democratic partisanship may be increasing at those schools, as the Democrat-to-Republican ratio appears to have risen significantly in recent years and younger faculty are even more Democratic than their older peers.
>
> Authors Mitchell Langbert, Anthony Quain and Daniel Klein compared departmental faculty lists with voter registration rolls to conclude that there are 11.5 registered Democrats for every one Republican among faculty at the top 40 highest-ranked schools they studied.
>
> Of the five departments they analyzed, history was by far the most Democratic. There are more than 33 Democratic professors for every Republican at the top 40 schools. Economics was the least Democratic, with a 4.5 to 1 ratio.

Previously, I blogged about a study of donations by California faculty that showed that faculty donate overwhelmingly to Democrat politicians. Another study found that those liberal professors would discriminate against conservatives, if given the opportunity.

What explains all of this?

Consider this essay by secular libertarian professor Robert Nozick who explains why university professors are liberal.

Excerpt:

> What factor produced feelings of superior value on the part of intellectuals? I want to focus on one institution in particular: schools. As book knowledge became increasingly important, schooling–the education together in classes of young people in reading and book knowledge–spread. Schools became the major institution outside of the family to shape the attitudes of young people, and almost all those who later became intellectuals went through schools. There they were successful. They were judged against others and deemed superior. They were praised and rewarded, the teacher's favorites. How could they fail to see themselves as superior? Daily, they experienced differences in facility with ideas, in quick-wittedness. The schools told them, and showed them, they were better.
>
> The schools, too, exhibited and thereby taught the principle of reward in accordance with (intellectual) merit. To the intellectually meritorious went the praise, the teacher's smiles, and the highest grades. In the currency the schools had to offer, the smartest constituted the upper class. Though not part of the official curricula, in the schools the intellectuals learned the lessons of their own greater value in comparison with the others, and of how this greater value entitled them to greater rewards.
>
> The wider market society, however, taught a different lesson. There the greatest rewards did not go to the verbally brightest. There the intellectual skills were not *most* highly valued. Schooled in the lesson that they were most valuable, the most deserving of reward, the most entitled to reward, how could the intellectuals, by and large, fail to resent the capitalist society which deprived them of the just deserts to which their superiority "entitled" them? Is it surprising that what the schooled intellectuals felt for capitalist society was a deep and sullen animus that, although clothed with various publicly appropriate reasons, continued even when those particular reasons were shown to be inadequate?

It's very important to understand what is motivating university professors, especially ones who are in departments divorced from reality, like English and victim studies of various sorts. They are literally teaching classes in topic that have no accountability to reality. It's just indoctrination in what the professor believes. These professors think they are smart, but they don't earn anything like the programmers at Google or Amazon. It creates a deep sense of inferiority that makes them hostile to the capitalist system. Their only hope is a powerful government that redirects money from those who serve

customers (private sector companies) to “wordsmiths” like themselves.

Greg Koukl debates Michael Shermer on God, atheism, meaning and morality

October 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

The full transcript of a debate between Michael Shermer, editor of Skeptic magazine, and Greg Koukl, president of Stand to Reason. This debate occurred on Hugh Hewitt's radio show, and was moderated by Hugh Hewitt.

HH = Hugh Hewitt
GK = Greg Koukl
MS = Michael Shermer

Here is a 32-page PDF with the full debate transcript.

And here's an excerpt:

GK: Right. Actually, the big question here, Hugh, is whether it's possible to be good without God. Now I'm not talking about whether it's possible to be good without a belief in God. I certainly think that's possible, but be good without God. And the answer to that question hinges entirely on precisely what you mean by good. And so I was going to give an illustration. So a man drags a young girl into the alley, he sexually abuses her, strangles here, and tosses her into the dustbin. Is that act wrong? Now I think everybody listening is going to admit it is wrong. But here is the real question. What do we mean when we say that that act of rape and abuse and murder is wrong? Are we describing the action itself, the object? Are we saying that the object, the rape, the murder, has a quality of being wrong, and therefore, wherever that rape goes, the wrongness follows it, just like your height, 6' 2", or whatever it is, is an objective quality of you. Wherever you go, your height follows you in the same way. Does the wrongness follow the rape? Well, if it's a quality of the rape, if it's an objective quality of the rape, then it does. And it doesn't matter what people think about it, or what cultures decides, or what your evolutionary conditioning is. The rape is still wrong. The other alternative is that you're not talking about the rape. You're talking about yourself. You're talking about your genetic

conditioning. You're talking about your culture's decision about that kind of thing. And if that's the case, then the truth of the wrongness of the rape is simply in the individual or the subject. And this is why philosophers distinguish between ethical objectivism and ethical subjectivism. Now there's lots of different subjectivisms in ethics. But simply put, if you're an ethical subjectivist, you're a relativist. And actual ethics don't exist. Ethics are an illusion. If you conclude that ethics are an illusion, there's lots of different ways to explain it. Michael's written a really great book, I think, called The Science Of Good And Evil. I've read most of it, and it's well written, and it's very compelling. But it's a description about how the illusion of ethics has taken place. If you want to go that route, you're welcome to go that route. But what you can't do is you can't then talk about morality as if it's objective when your explanations are subjective. So this is a problem that I think all atheists, including Michael, have to solve. Are ethics objective or relative? And if they're relative, then how can we make moral judgments that are meaningful on other people?

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Wow, let's just get right into it. Well, I don't think it's quite so black and white. That is to say I think there are provisional moral truths that exist whether there's a God or not. In other words, it's wrong, morally, absolutely morally wrong to rape and murder. And that would be true whether there was a God or not. In other words, if…is God saying that it's wrong because it's really wrong, and He's instructing us in his Holy Scripture that it's wrong? Or is it only wrong because He said so? And if it turned out there wasn't a God, would that make it okay? And my answer is no, it really is wrong, whether God says it's wrong or not. That is to say I think it really exists, a real, moral standard like that. Why? Well, because first, you could ask the person who is being affected, we should always ask the moral recipient of the act, how do you feel about being raped or murdered or stolen from or lied to. And the moral actor will tell you, it doesn't matter whether, if I could use a current example, I haven't any idea if Tiger Woods and his wife are religious or not. But you can just ask his wife whether it was morally right or wrong, and she'll tell you. It doesn't matter whether there's a God or not. It's wrong. And so that's the first principle. Just ask. Ask the moral recipient of whether it's right or wrong. But I think Greg's after something deeper, that is to say is there something even deeper still behind the moral actor's feelings about how they're treated. And the answer is yes, I think so. We're a social species. We don't live in isolation. We live as members of a group. And as such, there's no possible way our group could survive, be cohesive, be a unit of any kind of solidarity against other groups, or against a harsh environment. If there were too much violations of social norms, that is if there were constant lying and cheating and raping and murdering, there's no way a social group could hang together. And as such, as we all know, we're very tribal. We're tribal against other groups, but within our groups, we're very pro-social, altruistic, cooperative. We have a good and evil in our nature. So to this extent, I find myself interesting often in agreement with my conservative friends on most of the things they consider morally, moral truths. That is, we share the same moral values, even though I come at it from a different perspective.

HH: Greg?

GK: Yeah, I'm actually not after something deeper here, Michael. At least to start out the discussion, I'm trying to be as simple and clear and precise as possible, because it's very easy to weave together a bunch of things that sound persuasive, but turn out to be different things. Like for example, Darwinian evolution, which is a materialistic process, and here I mean the blind watchmaker thesis, the neo-Darwinian synthesis, natural selection working on mutations, and a kind of a cultural evolution that Michael has just referred to as we work together as a group to survive as a group. Those are two entirely different things. One is materialistic, Darwinian, the other one is intelligent design, quite frankly, where the group gets together and makes some determinations to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What I'm trying to do is to be able to answer the question that came up initially, is God necessary for morality, which Michael denies. It's to say well, what is it that morality, that we're trying to describe? It is either objective, and therefore an immaterial obligation that applies to certain behaviors, or it is subjective. The things that Michael described were variously subjective, evolutionary elements, subjective cultural elements, but then he affirmed that we all have good and evil in our nature, or an awareness of that. I agree with that entirely. We all are aware of those things. That's why even if we don't believe in God, we can still know morality and follow it. The question is what accounts for real, genuine objective morality?

HH: One minute to the break, Michael Shermer.

MS: I'm not arguing for cultural evolution. I'm actually arguing as part of our, what you described as materialistic, natural selection, Darwinian evolution, that it's not enough to just pretend or fake being a good group member. You actually have to believe it, feel it, and live it. So what I'm arguing is that natural selected certain moral sentiments, as Adam Smith called them, moral feelings, an actual empathy, Adam Smith talked about, we actually empathize with somebody else, we can put ourselves into their shoes and feel their pain, I'm arguing that's very real. It's every bit as real a part of our evolutionary heritage as our eyes and our hands.

– – – –

HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, you were saying that evolutionary biology has produced a real morality.

MS: Yeah, I think really, Adam Smith had it right in his very first book, The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, long before Darwin, that we actually have in our biological nature, our human nature, the capacity to feel other people's pain. He called it empathy, we think of it often either as empathy or sympathy. That is, we really do connect to other people. A lot of good research on this now, brain scans, you can show somebody a little video of somebody they know, or have feelings for, getting pricked with a pin, and the same areas of their brain light up, the pain receptors, as in the person getting the pin prick. In other words, we have an evolved tendency to really be deeply, emotionally connected to our fellow group members. And that's why I say groups like World Vision, where you want to adopt a child, it doesn't help to show a picture of 10,000 starving African kids. What does

affect us is one child, a picture of one child with a little biography. That's how you get people to adopt a child to donate. The reason for that is because essentially they're tricking the brain, our brains into making that stranger an honorary family member, an honorary within group member, which is why I argue that free trade is one of the best ways of defusing normal tribal tensions between people. It makes them honorary friends, honorary members. Well, what's going on there is we're tricking the brain into sort of this evolutionary rule of thumb – be nice to people that are like you and that are related to you, and that you know, and that are fellow group members, and don't do what our natural tendency is, is to be tribal and xenophobic against those other guys. And free trade is one of the best things you can do for that. So I'm arguing that's actually tapping something deep within us.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, basically, I agree with Mike completely here. We do have this tendency, and it seems to be universal among humankind. The question is, what is that tendency, actually? And what is the best way to explain it? And I see like a handful of significant problems with using evolution to explain morality. The first one is that evolution is a materialistic process. And here, I'm going back to an original point, and I don't want people to lose it. There is no way that you can take molecules, and reorganize them in any fashion, over any length of time, and have pop out of the mixture an objective moral principle that's immaterial, and that applies to human beings. All you're going to get is a reorganization of the molecules. And what they can produce, and this is what Mike has done in his book, and he mentioned just s few moments ago, they can produce sentiments. They can produce feelings. They can produce behavior. But this leads us to the second problem of using evolution to explain morality, is that morality is more than sentiments, feelings and behavior. Morality entails things like motive and intention. I mean, you could have a guy walk into a garage, walk out with a hose, and is that wrong? Well, it depends. Is it his hose or somebody else's hose? Did he intend to take the other person's hose? Is he borrowing the hose? So we can see here are elements that are part of the moral thing that needs to be explained, that are immaterial, and therefore the Darwinian explanation can't even in principle go there. It can't do that job. But here's the worst problem. Regardless of what our sentiments happen to be regarding moral actions, we can feel good or feel bad or whatever, the problem is that morality is prescriptive, not merely descriptive. That is it tells us not just what we did, but what we ought to have done in the past, and what we ought to do in the future. That is not something that any Darwinian mechanism can describe, because nothing about my biology can inveigh upon me to act a certain way for moral reasons in the future. It doesn't tell me why I should be good tomorrow. This is a huge difference between these two views, the descriptive and the prescriptive. Prescriptive is part of morality, and can't even, in principle, be explained by an evolutionary materialistic system.

HH: Michael Shermer, I'll give you a start on that. We have about 45 seconds to the break, so you may want to…we'll come back after the break and pick up. But what's your start to that?

MS: Well, the start would be that again, let's not think of evolution just as nature red and tooth and claw, and it's nasty, brutish and short, but that in fact, we have this whole other social evolution. And I'm not talking about cultural evolution where we consciously make decisions, but subconsciously, because it's in part of our nature to actually, seriously, deeply feel for other people and their actions, and the consequences of our actions, so that we actually have a sense of right and wrong that we're born with, but then culture taps into and tweaks, one way or the other.

– – – –

HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, Greg had made the argument that the Darwinian model simply cannot explain immaterial concepts like morality, that there's just no way you can rearrange the molecules to get there. You're saying well, yes you can.

MS: Yeah, I think so, because if we think of morality as another suite of emotions that are involved with other people's behaviors, the consequences of our actions, how we feel about them, how people feel about us when we do these things, that's as every bit as important a biological part of our nature as anything else we talk about. So let's take a real simple emotion. When you're hungry, nobody does any calculations about the caloric input/output ratios of eating an apple versus an ice cream, although now it's posted on the walls for us to see. But we just feel hungry, and we feel hungry for certain kinds of foods. The feeling of hunger is a proxy for something else. Evolution's done the calculating for us. You need food, so we're going to, your hypothalamus is going to secrete these certain chemicals that causes your stomach to rumble and so on. When you're attracted to somebody else, a member of the opposite sex, nobody does the calculation by, let's say, a man finds a woman attractive who has a .67 hip to waist ratio, and an hourglass figure, although that is pretty much universal. Nobody walks about with calipers taking measurements of who they're going to want to date or ask out. You just look around, and you just go wow, I really find this woman attractive. It's a feeling you have, okay? So those are kind of simple emotions, but sliding up the scale, the moral emotions are really no different. When I lie to somebody, I've violated a social norm, and they respond in a very angry, hostile way. So those emotions that we both share, guilt, shame, anger, disgust, involved a social relationship that whether it was a norm violation, those are the kinds of emotions that are just like hunger and sexual attraction that are built into us by nature, by evolution. Or, if you wish, this is how God created the moral sentiments, just like He created everything else in the universe, through a process of nature. I think that's equally reasonable to argue. So I don't see that it has to be an atheistic viewpoint versus a theistic viewpoint to get to our moral sentiments. Why couldn't God have used evolution to create the moral sentiments as I've described them?

GK: Yeah, well, you don't actually believe that, I know, Mike, so this is kind of like adding God to the soup, you know, if it makes people feel better. But the basic argument is that evolution all by itself can do the trick. And I think if your listeners are listening carefully, what they're going to hear is Mike has just described, and if I'm being unfair to your assessment here, let me know, Mike, that moral feelings are simply that. They are

sophisticated emotions that do some work for us for survival, and even on a group level. Now there's a name for this. It's called emotivism. A.J. Ayer, the famous atheist, offered this description of morality. It's a relativistic scheme of morality. Morality doesn't actually exist, Ayer argued. There is no objective right or wrong. Rape isn't wrong itself. What happens is, we have feelings about it, and we express it in moral language, but rape isn't really wrong. So your listeners are going to have to ask themselves the questions. When they just survey their own moral senses, and we all have access to this, do we want to believe that scientists have figured out that really what we're doing is feeling sophisticated, complicated emotions, and that the emotions are in us, and we are not seeing anything about the action? Or does it seem like rape is wrong? Look, when I say rape is wrong, I'm talking about the rape. When I say liver is awful, I'm talking about me. I'm talking about my own tastes and preferences. It's interesting, as Michael has given his explanation, though, that he's doing, and I don't know if you are aware of this, Michael, but you're doing the very thing that I kind of warned against. You give a description of the foundations of morality that turn out to be relativistic, but then there's a smuggling of a more objectivistic morality in the back door, like when Michael says you don't have to do what your nature tells you to do, in other words, what you've been programmed by evolution to do. You can kind of rise above that. Well, now we're talking about a morality that isn't dictated by evolution, but a morality that we can employ through our acts of will, to rise above this kind of brutish evolutionary morality. And that sounds suspiciously like the very thing that I'm talking about here.

MS: But I don't mean, there's nothing to rise above by itself. Yes, we have to say rise above our tribal instincts to be xenophobic when we meet somebody who's a stranger, who's different from us. We all struggle against that, particularly in a black and white America, where there's always been this underlying tension. Indeed, so culture helps us do that – education, travel, diversity of exposure to different people. That makes you a little more tolerant. Okay, but I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about is tapping into the good part of our nature, the fact that in addition to that xenophobic tribalism we have, we also have this other side that almost never gets discussed in evolutionary…even in evolutionary circles, you'll still hear evolutionary biologists talking about, in a way that Huxley did, and Herbert Spencer did in Darwin's own time, that we have to somehow struggle mightily against our genes to overcome that nasty tendency we have to want to rape, kill, pillage and destroy. Well no, actually, we have this whole other side that's just as genetically programmed into our nature. And the point of culture – education, politics, economics and so on, is to tap into the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said.

GK: Okay, here's the question I have for you, Michael, then. You've identified that really, we have good and we have bad. That's part of, under your terms, that's part of our genetic nature, and we can choose to tap into what you call the good side. Why ever should we do such a thing if there is not a higher standard that directs our action to the better side, your words, than the bad side, your words, if really, ultimately, they are both the result of a genetic evolution, and from outside terms, neither is better than the other.

Why should we do that, Michael?

MS: Yeah, well I don't see how entering God into the equation changes that problem at all.

GK: Well, that's the next step. What I'm trying to show is that the should comes from the outside, and if we can demonstrate that, then we can ask…

Read the rest by click here to get the PDF.

Mike Licona and Bart Ehrman debate the resurrection of Jesus

October 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!
From the Unbelievable radio show.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is well known as a US New Testament Scholar who lost his Christian faith and now questions many core precepts of Christianity, including the Resurrection of Jesus. When Mike Licona had doubts he devoted himself to investigating the evidence and became convinced that Jesus resurrection is the only rational explanation for the facts.
>
> They debate key historical facts about the resurrection – are the letters of Paul that report the resurrection and the Gospel accounts trustworthy or theologised and changed with time? What about apparent contradictions between the Gospels? Does the consensus of scholars count as evidence, or is there a Christian bias? Can a miracle count as an explanation for historical data?

The MP3 file is here.

Snarky summary of the radio debate: (items with * are my made-up paraphrases/clarifications)

This has got to be one of my silliest summaries, but Ehrman makes me so annoyed.

Ehrman:
– my new book is about forgeries in the ancient world
– some books were falsely attributed to prominent Christian figures
– there are mistakes in the Bible
– there are mistakes in the resurrection narratives

– the defeat of inerrancy led to his conversion to liberal Christianity
– the problem of evil and suffering caused him to become a non-Christian

Licona:
– there are minimal facts that are agreed to by a broad spectrum of scholars
– the minimal facts are accepted because they pass standard historical criteria
– Fact 1: Jesus died by crucifixion
– Fact 2: Individuals and groups had visions of Jesus after his death
– Fact 3: Paul, a skeptic and an enemy, had an appearance of Jesus that converted him
– these facts are agreed to atheist scholars, liberal scholars, etc.
– virtually 100% of scholars agree with these three facts
– there is no naturalistic explanation of these three facts
– therefore, the best explanation of these three facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Ehrman:
– all historians would accept these three facts, except for maybe the group appearances
– the death of Jesus is irrelevant to the resurrection
– the second and third point can be collapsed together
– so really there is only one fact

Moderator:
– the crucifixion is relevant because Muslims don't admit that fact
– the crucifixion important because it establishes a resurrection, not a resuscitation

Ehrman:
– well, if the point is that he died, then yes, this does require a resurrection

Licona:
– the crucifixion refutes Muslims who deny that Jesus died
– the crucifixion refutes the apparent death theory (swoon theory)
– the death is required for a bodily resurrection
– it's important to know what facts most scholars, regardless of worldview, agree on
– it's important to emphasize that Licona is working from historical bedrock facts
– the resurrection is the best explanation for the historical bedrock facts

Ehrman:
– you are trying to list 3 things, but really it is just one thing – the appearances
– and not ALL scholars agree that the group visions occurred

Licona:
– name one prominent scholar who denies the group appearances

Ehrman:
– the radically leftist atheist nutcase John Dominic Crossan denies the group appearances
* Crossan is so far on the left that I look like a nutcase for even citing him
* Crossan believes in the Secret Gospel of Mark, which is a hoax – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan believes that the synoptics are LATER than gnostic forged gospels – but I still cite Crossan

* Crossan presupposes atheism, so he cannot admit to miracle stories as a pre-supposition – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan pre-supposes religious pluralism, so he cannot allow any exclusive claims Christians make – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan is a good historian, it's just that he is so far to the left that no one – NO ONE – agrees with his all of crazy theories
* I think it is a good idea to cite historians who pre-suppose atheism and political correctness before they sit down to do history

Licona:
– let me explain why most scholars accept the individual and group post-mortem appearances
– the best source for the appearances is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 15:3-8
– Paul himself had an appearance of Jesus after Jesus' death
– Paul received this material from a source very soon after the appearances – within 1-3 years
– we know that Paul met with Jesus disciples multiple times prior to writing
– Paul probably received it from Peter and James, who were themselves eyewitnesses

Moderator:
– this early dating presumably rules out legend

Licona:
– well legends CAN start quickly
– it does show that Paul was an eyewitness
– it does show that Paul was in contact with reliable eyewitnesses

Ehrman:
– 1 Corinthians is written around 55 AD, twenty-five years after Jesus died
– it is not implausible that Paul got the creed from the disciples, who were eyewitnesses
– but you don't need a long time for legends to emerge, so that is a possibility

Licona:
– only about 3% of people could read and write back them
– instead, people had enormous capacity for memorization
– the Pharisees were particularly good at memorization
– Jews were very serious about passing along traditions accurately
– Paul, a prominent Pharisee, would have been capable of passing on early creeds accurately
– Paul, in 1 Cor 7, shows that he is willing to separate his opinions from authentic tradition
– Paul had an opportunity in 1 Cor 7 to put words into Jesus' mouth, but he wouldn't do it

Ehrman:
– cultural anthropologists show that things do get changed in some oral cultures
– in these oral cultures, it is assumed that the story teller will change the story
– only in written cultures are they careful to avoid changing the story
– in the New Testament, you can compare the same story in two different gospels, there

are differences

Licona:
– Ehrman is right that the gospel writers pick and choose things from the oral tradition that they want to include in their gospels
– different oral tradition transmission schemes have more or less embellishment
– african tribes embellish more, rabbinic teaching embellishes less
* Jesus' followers would have viewed him as a rabbi, and been careful about adding to his teachings
– Paul, an eyewitness, probably received the creed in 1 Cor 15 from other eyewitnesses
– Paul speaks about going twice to Jerusalem in Galatians
– he is meeting with Peter and James to check his facts

Ehrman:
– when you look at Mark and John, there are lots of differences in the narrative

Licona:
– I agree that the gospels have differences, but the oral tradition is likely fixed

Ehrman:
– but Mark and John have different sayings
– why doesn't Mark have the same explicit high Christology that John has?

Licona:
– first, John is trying to weave the oral tradition into a compelling story
– and second, when you look in Mark, the high Christology is there in the Son of Man sayings
– the apocalyptic Son of Man is in Mark, and everywhere in the New Testament

Ehrman:
– the "apocalyptic Son of Man" isn't in John

Licona:
– what about in John 9 with the man who was born blind

Ehrman:
– where is the apocalyptic part?

Licona:
– the healed man worships Jesus because he is the Son of Man
– that links to the apocalypic passages in the Old Testament

Moderator:
– what about the differences between the gospels?

Ehrman:
* well, now is the time for me to set up an inerrantist straw man and then knock it down!
* who was at the empty tomb: one angel or two angels? we don't know, so the whole Bible is false!
* I used to be an inerrantist, so one minor difference is enough for me to dump the whole Bible

* I'll kill you, you stupid straw man! I hate you, Moody Bible Institute! You lied to me!

Licona:
– many of these problems can be solved by realizing that the gospel writers compress time
– the stories don't have to list ALL the characters in every scene
– you don't have to force the Bible to meet some sort of wooden chronology
– the main thing is that the events happened, not that the descriptions match word for word across sources

Ehrman:
– you can't infer a miracle from history, David Hume says so
* extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, David Hume says so
* no I don't know what begging the question is, I'm not a philosopher
* no I don't remember when Bill Craig kicked my ass on this Hume objection in our debate
– the New Testament gospels contradict each other at every point, they are not reliable at all!
* they cannot even agree what Jesus' name is! There are 1 trillion variants of Jesus' name!
* "one angel vs two angels" proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point
* my expansive list of FOUR theologically insignificant variants proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point

Licona:
– um, the gospels agree on the central narrative and disagree on the peripherals
– and they agree on the minimal facts I presented, even if they disagree about the number of angels

Ehrman:
* they have to agree on everything and be inerrant! The Moody Straw Man Bible Institute says so!
* I really really really need to have the number of angels be the same, or Jesus didn't die on the cross

Licona:
– but you don't deny any of the three minimal facts I presented (crucifixion, appearances, Paul)

Ehrman:
– well, I don't know if the group appearances occurred – maybe they did
– i think Jesus died on the cross, and I think that people said they saw him alive afterward

Licona:
– if you deny the minimal facts, then you are outside the majority of scholars

Ehrman:
– the majority of scholars who agree to the minimal facts you presented are Christians
* Gerd Ludemann is an atheist Christian
* James Crossley is an atheist Christian

* Hector Avalos is an atheist Christian
* the majority of the atheist scholars are all Christians!
– VIRTUALLY EVERYBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IS A CHRISTIAN!!! (Yes, he said that)

Licona:
– you really think so?

Ehrman
– you name one non-Christian in the SBL

Licona:
– (incredulous) um, John Dominic Crossan is an atheist

Ehrman:
– but he CLAIMS TO BE A CHRISTIAN so that means HE IS A CHRISTIAN
* all you have to do to be a Christian is claim to be one
* you can even deny the existence of God and the divinity of Christ and still be one, you bigot!

Licona:
– would Jesus or the apostles recognize a Christian as being someone who doubts God's existence

Ehrman:
– my view is that Jesus and the apostles would not recognize evangelical Christians as Christians
* a non-theist can be a Christian just by claiming to be one, but evangelical Christians are not Christians even if they claim to be Christians
– Christians can't record accurate history about the resurrection because they are biased

Licona:
– on your view, if a person is a Christian then he can't write about the evidence for the resurrection
– so then similarly, you would not allow Jews to write about the historicity of the Holocaust
– because you think that if people have an interest in what they are recording then they can't be objective
– but you have to consider the evidence we have, taking the biases of the sources into account

Ehrman:
– but the only people who believe in the resurrection are Christians!

Licona:
– well, people can consider the evidence for the resurrection as non-Christians
– and then if they accept it they can become Christians

Moderator:
– what about your bias? you don't believe in God – doesn't that pre-supposition affect

how you do history?

Ehrman:
– well, I presuppose naturalism, so I can't admit to anything in history that implicates supernatural causes
* no I have never heard of the arguments for the Big Bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, limits on mutations creating information, habitability and so on – I never heard about that stuff from my atheist university professors and even if I had I would have been expelled for talking about it because that would make people feel bad about their sinning

Licona:
– so it's not bias you are concerned about, it's that you don't want history to contradict your untested religion of naturalism?
– why not just do the history without pre-suppositions to gather the minimal facts and then see what the best explanation is?

Ehrman:
* well God is out of bounds as an explanation because I could not have got my PhD if I mentioned God
* I really needed my smart atheist professors to like me and give me good grades so God is RIGHT OUT
* ideas like a real God and moral laws and Hell makes my atheist professors uncomfortable and that means low grades for me
* I'm not really interested in butting heads with professors – it's easier to just agree with them and move on to selling books to the gullible
* My books are much more sensational than Dan Brown books, so please buy lots of them!

Licona:
– what if the historical evidence is good enough to show that Jesus rose from the dead?

Ehrman:
– well I would not call someone rising from the dead a miracle – I would call it weird
* I also think that the Big Bang is "weird" but that doesn't prove that God created the universe out of nothing
* if it's a miracle then I'm going to have to not sin, and maybe even go to Hell, and we can't have that

Licona:
– well, you accept the three minimal facts
– what if we try all the naturalistic explanations for those three facts and there are problems with all of them?
– what if the resurrection is the best explanation for the three minimal facts?

Ehrman:
– but I want to arbitrarily rule God put because I want to pre-suppose naturalism
– there is not historical reason I have to rule put supernatural explanations a priori

Licona:
– I think you are struggling with the theological implications of a historical conclusion

Ehrman:
– well when you do theology, you have to avoid grounding your theology on science or history
– theology has to be completely made up or it’s not good theology

Licona:
– I think you are letting your dislike of the implications of the resurrection determine your historical conclusions
– you have to use historical methods to gather the minimal facts that every scholar accepts, regardless of worldview
– then you weigh ALL the hypotheses, natural and supernatural, that could account for these minimal facts
– then you choose the hypothesis that best explains the minimal facts

Is belief in the Jesus of the Bible needed in order to be rightly related to God?

October 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Here's a good introductory lecture on the topic by Chad Gross, who blogs at Truthbomb Apologetics.

You can see the footnotes for his article on his blog.

For those who don't want to watch the video, here's a good thought from J. Warner Wallace at Please Convince Me.

Excerpt:

> A "just" God does justice, which means to punish or reward appropriately. In the Western tradition, we punish people for the actions they commit, but the extent of punishment is dependent also on the person's mental state, and a person's mental state is reflective of his or her beliefs. Premeditated murder is worse than manslaughter, and is punished more severely, and a hate crime is a sentencing enhancement that adds more punishment to the underlying crime. In both examples, a person's beliefs are at play: the premeditated murderer has reflected on his choices and wants the victim dead; a hate crime reflects a belief that the rights of a member of the protected group are especially unworthy of respect. So, considering a person's beliefs may well be relevant, especially if those beliefs have motivated the criminal behavior.
>
> But the challenger's mistake is even more fundamental. He is wrong to assert that people are condemned for not accepting the gospel. Christians believe that people are condemned for their sinful behavior – the "wages of sin is death" – not

> for what they fail to do. The quoted challenge is like saying that the sick man died of "not going to the doctor." No, the person died of a specific condition – perhaps cancer or a heart attack – which a doctor might have been able to cure. So too with eternal punishment. No one is condemned for refusing to believe in Jesus. While Jesus can – and does – provide salvation for those who seek it, there is nothing unjust about not providing salvation to those who refuse to seek it. After all, we don't normally feel obliged to help someone who has not asked for, and does not want, our assistance. So too the Creator has the right to withhold a gift – i.e. eternity spent in His presence – from those who would trample on the gift, and on the gift-giver.
>
> The quoted assertion also demonstrates an unspoken belief that we can impress God with our "kind" or "generous" behavior. This fails to grasp what God is – a perfect being. We cannot impress Him. What we do right we should do. We don't drag people into court and reward them for not committing crimes. This is expected of them. They can't commit a murder and then claim that punishment is unfair, because they had been kind and generous in the past. When a person gets his mind around the idea of what perfection entails, trying to impress a perfect Creator with our "basic goodness" no longer seems like such a good option.

If you want to hear a debate featuring exclusivists versus pluralists, I've got a podcast and a summary of a good debate on this issue between Chris Sinkinson and John Hick. You can't find a more prominent pluralist than John Hick, except for maybe Paul Knitter, who is featured in a debate with Harold Netland in the new "Debating Christian Theism" book that is just out with Oxford University Press.

Clinton VP Tim Kaine co-sponsored bill to overturn every pro-life law, nationwide

October 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

I have nothing positive to say about Donald Trump, although I very much like his VP pick Mike Pence. But I don't like Hillary Clinton, or her VP pick Tim Kaine.

Life News reports on Kaine's pro-abortion record:

> Hillary Clinton's pro-abortion running mate Tim Kaine will be a participant in tonight's vice presidential debate. One question moderators should consider asking him that's why he is co-sponsoring a radical bill that would overturn every single pro-life law Nationwide.
>
> Planned Parenthood and other abortion advocates are promoting the so-called Women's Health Protection Act. It's radical pro-abortion legislation that they are hoping to be able to get through Congress despite pro-life Republicans controlling both chambers currently.
>
> LifeNews spoke with Douglas Johnson, the legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee about the legislation. He says it's one of the most extreme pro-abortion pieces of legislation ever introduced in Congress. It's so extreme that the typical pro-abortion members of the house and the Senate have co-sponsored the bill but so has Tim Kaine who claims to be a Catholic with a moderate position on abortion.
>
> "This is the most extreme pro-abortion bill ever introduced in Congress. It would invalidate nearly all state laws that apply to abortion, including waiting periods and laws to protect the conscience rights of pro-life health care providers, and would require funding of abortion in most government health programs," Johnson explained. "It would also render meaningless nearly all limits on late abortions. It

> would more accurately be titled the “Abortion Without Limits Until Birth Act.”
>
> “Yet, 35 senators and 143 House members, all Democrats, have co-sponsored this radical bill — including vice-presidential nominee Tim Kaine,” Johnson added.
>
> Kaine has said he thinks women should be able to abort their babies and has added that he is going to “get comfortable with” Hillary Clinton’s push for free abortions paid for by American taxpayers.

We have enough trouble getting Christians to be pro-life without having high-profile pro-abortion people claiming to be Christian.

My position on this election is that people can vote for Trump-Pence if they want, as long as they admit Trump’s problems and don’t lie for him. But I am recommending that no one vote for Clinton-Kaine. These two do have a record of political action, and it is very much against the causes that I believe in, as a Christian and a conservative.

What allows a person to love self-sacrificially when it is difficult and painful?

October 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

All my regular readers know that I hold former Congresswoman and presidential candidate Michele Bachmann in high regard, especially because of her devotion to classical liberalism, her knowledge of economics, quitting her job to homeschool her children, and her defense of helpless unborn children. Michele also had 23 foster children stay in her home at different times, for different periods of time. Michele never went into details about the difficulties of foster mothering, but this article from The Federalist does go into details. It turns out that being a foster parent is a lot harder than I thought.

Excerpt:

> I hear people talk sometimes about what a blessing being a foster parent is. I know many devoted advocates who encourage their friends and their relatives to sign up to become foster parents because it's so needed and it's such a wonderful ministry.
>
> I don't want to damage their work, but I need to be honest. I can't tell people, "You should foster!" and I will never (again) try to persuade someone to foster who doesn't feel led to do so.
>
> […]As I look back over the past three years and I am overwhelmed with such horrifying memories, I can't help but think this really isn't for everyone. This really isn't even for me.
>
> I think about the time my son was punched in the face by his foster brother. I remember the screaming and the blood and the ER trip that cost me over $1,000.

> I remember my husband being attacked by another child. I remember that child kicking him and biting him repeatedly while I ushered my children out of the room. I remember a computer being thrown in the bathtub and destroyed, my van scratched up with the key, and so many of our things broken and ruined by children who were, for a lack of better word, untamed. I remember finding a little boy drinking water out of the toilet like a puppy and pulling down his pants in the middle of the store to pee on the floor. (He was five.)
>
> There were the moments of insane desperation when I called our caseworker begging for help and was simply told, “If you want him removed, then I will need a few weeks.” I wasn’t asking for removal, I was asking for help.
>
> […]I think about how my son was told terribly inaccurate things about sex and relationships by a foster child whose father had numerous affairs with family members. My son hadn’t even heard the word “sex” before. I was forced to explain things to him that he was really too young to know. I also recall this same child trying to touch my other son inappropriately.
>
> I have cleaned feces off the wall and off my children’s pillows when a foster child liked to act out her emotions with her poop.
>
> […]There is the absurd amount of money I have spent on resources for our foster children that the state was supposed to pay for, but didn’t: daycare, therapy, and counseling. I know those things are supposed to be covered. I know. Don’t tell me about how those things are covered. But somehow I have still paid an absurd amount of money for them.
>
> Then there is the time two little boys that had my heart were removed from our home to go back with their biological family, and three months later a story was all over the news about the same boys being found naked in the middle of the road late one night throwing rocks at cars. We weren’t allowed to take them back because we already had new placements and were at capacity. I think about other children we spent so much time and energy pouring our hearts into, who went back home and within weeks returned to their old ways.
>
> Now there is this precious little girl, that after two years of loving I must send back to a home that allowed terrible things to happen to her sister.

So, why does the author of this article do it?

She explains why:

> So, why do I do it? I do it because God asked me to. I do it because in his word he told me there would be a cost to following him. I do it because God is greater than the broken foster care system and God commands the seas in ways I can’t possibly imagine. I do it because I trust in God with all my heart, and although my understanding in this moment is that this path is not worth it for anyone, God tells me not to lean on my understanding, but to trust him. I do it because someone has to, and he has asked me to, and I surrendered my heart to Jesus

> and his will, not my will.
>
> […][I]f God calls you to it, then do it. Not because of who you are, but because of who he is. You might see the blessings. You might not. But it's not about you. It's not about me. It's about him.

I think that in our society, we have sort of divorced self-sacrificial love from the worldview question. We don't really look to marry or make friends with people who have a defined Christian worldview. We just sort of think, well, this person is or is not fun for me. Rather than thinking, this person has the character to deny themselves and their own interests and do what is right for others. A lot of times, secularists whose lives are devoid of caring self-sacrificially for others (e.g. – support for abortion) don't realize how attacking Christianity creates a worse society. You aren't going to find lots of people doing things like caring for difficult children in places like India, with their caste system and law of karma.

If you are the kind of person who thinks that self-sacrificial love is a good thing, then don't expect it to be emotionally fulfilling. You won't be happy with caring for others a lot of the time. Other people can be demanding and ungrateful. But if you want to do it, then take care to have a strong worldview that grounds this sort of self-sacrificial behavior. The foundation comes first. It is really hard for atheists to love other people self-sacrificially, without the example of Christ to make it objectively meaningful. If the universe is an accident, and you only get 80 years or so, and there is no one and nothing waiting for you when you die, and the universe itself dies by running out of usable energy (heat death of the universe), then it is not rational to care for others this way. But if Jesus himself sets the example of caring for others self-sacrificially, and you face him after you die (as judge or as friend), then suddenly doing the right thing becomes reasonable, even if it is not fulfilling and pleasurable right now.

I don't know if non-Christians really can appreciate how Christians are motivated by the idea of following Jesus and choosing to experience the loss of personal happiness for the sake of others, just because it is a way of honoring Christ and sharing in his sufferings.

Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist

October 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

Dina sent me news of a cracking good episode of Unbelievable, which features Lawrence Krauss, who debated William Lane Craig. Krauss’ book was also reviewed in the New York Times.

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

> Lawrence Krauss is a Cosmologist at Arizona State University who describes himself as an “anti-theist”. His latest book “A Universe From Nothing” has received both acclaim and criticism for its attempt to answer the question “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Debating the issue with Krauss is Rodney Holder, Course director at the Faraday Institute, Cambridge. An astrophysicist and priest by background. In a lively exchange they debate whether Krauss’ “nothing” is “nothing”, fine tuning and multiverses, scientific knowledge, miracles and the usefulness of theology and philosophy.

This debate is quite entertaining, and do not be intimidated if your don’t understand science. You can understand pretty easily who is arguing based on facts and who is speculating about unobservable, untestable entities. At one point, Krauss actually denies that there is any fine-tuning in the universe, so please see this link to refute that claim as well as this podcast which explains some examples of fine-tuning. Krauss gets a bit angry at the beginning, but calms down.

Quotation marks are for direct quotes, italics is for made-up snark. See below the summary for more posts that are related to this one.

Summary of the discussion: (picked up at 9:30 when they start talking about the book)

Brierley:

- explain your theory of how the universe can come into being from nothing

Krauss:

- the nothing that preceded the universe is “no space, no time, no universe”
- theists say that God is responsible for creating the universe out of this nothing
- but the laws of nature can create the universe uncaused out of nothing

Holder:

- Krauss sometimes writes that the nothing is really a quantum vacuum, but that is not nothing
- He even acknowledges in his book that a quantum vacuum is not nothing
- He thinks that the nothing has properties, even though it has no being
- It has the property of being unstable
- It has the property of being acted on by quantum fields
- It has the property of being acted on by gravity

Krauss:

- But nothing can have the potential to do things inside it
- For example suppose you have an electron, *which is not nothing*
- If it jumps from one level to another, it emits light
- There was no potential for the light in the electron, but it was there as part of atomic structure

Holder:

- But in cases like that, there is something physical that has the potential

Krauss:

- Well, how did God makes the universe then if it had no potential?

Holder:

- God existed, and the potential for creating the universe in himself

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times

Krauss:

- It was written by a philosopher, so I dismissed it

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the Scientific American

Krauss:

- These book reviewers have not even read my book!

Krauss:

- Science will be able to figure out how to make something from nothing in the future
- We are even now speculating about interesting questions, like is there a multiverse?

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times
- The author of the review claims that you equivocate on the term "nothing"
- In order to get things to pop into being, you have to make "nothing" mean "something"
- Reviewer: none of Krauss' theories explain how something can come from actual nothingness

Krauss:

- In physics, something and nothing are not that different
- The reviewer doesn't understand the physics
- He doesn't understand quantum field theory
- You could call a quantum vacuum "nothing", *(this is the vacuum fluctuation model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*
- Maybe there is an eternally existing multiverse that we can't observe or test scientifically
- Maybe it has laws that we don't know about which allow our universe to pop into being
- Maybe this popping into being is uncaused
- (alarmed) Who made God? Who made God?

Holder:

- God is eternal and necessary

Krauss:

- (interrupting, angry) What does it mean for something to be necessary?

Holder:

- Basically, you have to decide whether there is more evidence that the necessary being God or a multiverse

Brierley:

- So Dr. Krauss are you willing to say that the universe is a brute fact, in some sense, and requires no explanation

Krauss:

- (angry) Religious people are stupid because they just assume brute facts, *not like me and my unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry) Religious people are against the progress of science, they don't want to figure out how things work

Brierley:

- But isn't it possible that naturalists can be opposed to the progress of science?
- What about the way the Fred Hoyle opposed the Big Bang because he wanted an eternal universe

Krauss:

- (angry) But naturalists like me let the facts determine our beliefs, *like the facts about the eternal unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry, shouting) Philosophers are stupid, they know nothing!

=== Break ===

Brierley:

- Do you see any evidence of purpose in the universe?

Krauss:

- Well maybe I would believe if the stars lined up to spell out a message from God

Brierley:

- Actually no, that wouldn't be evidence for God on your multiverse view
- if there an infinite number of universes existing for an infinite amount of time, then anything can happen no matter how unlikely it is
- therefore, no evidence could convince you that God exists, since the unobservable, untestable, eternal multiverse can make anything it wants

Krauss:

- That's a true statement, *and very convenient for atheists who don't want to be accountable to God, don't you think?*

Brierley:

- Back to the multiverse, how does it solve the fine-tuning?

Krauss:

- "We have no idea if the universe is fine-tuned for life", *even though the atheist Martin Rees who endorsed Krauss' book wrote his own book about the fine-tuning of the universe called "Just Six Numbers"*
- Inflationary theory does suggest a way to create multiple universes, *(this is the chaotic inflationary model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*

Brierley:

- But this theory is still very much a hypothesis, isn't it? We can't observe *or test* this hypothesis can we?

Krauss:

- "No, and that is really important to state"
- "I'm an empiricist, so if you can't falsify it and if you can't test it then it's not science"
- In my book, I speculate about a way that we could test the multiverse theory

Holder:

- Yes, in principle, the multiverse would be scientific if you could test it through other theories like inflationary theory
- There are a lot of speculations about multiverse theory, but no evidence from predictions that were validated in the lab

Krauss:

- "I agree completely with everything you just said"

Brierley:

- Roger Penrose agrees with Holder that the multiverse theory is too speculative
- (To Holder) Isn't the multiverse theory better than positing a completely different kind of being, which is God?

Holder:

- The multiverse theory is extremely speculative

- Even if the multiverse were true, you would still need to explain the multiverse

Krauss:

- People don't oppose my book because it's full of self-contradictory speculations
- People oppose my book because they are stupid and ignorant

Holder:

- There are things that exist that science cannot measure, like objective morality
- It's possible to give explanations for moral behavior by appealing to evolution
- But that does not ground self-sacrificial morality, such as what occurs in the Christian life

Brierley:

- Dawkins says there is no purpose or morality in in the universe, do you agree?

Krauss:

- "There is certainly no evidence of any of that"

Brierley:

- In the book, you talk about how we live in a special time in the universe's history to be able to do science, *(i.e. – The Privileged Planet hypothesis)*
- You also write about how all the discoveries were are making will not be communicated to anyone in other places in the universe
- So what is the meaning of doing science on your view? And why are you sad at the knowledge that will not be available to people in the future?
- Are you longing for some kind of purpose?

Krauss:

- No, I just get enjoyment from studying the universe with science to gain understanding

Holder:

- What do you make of Einstein's statement about the unexpected comprehensibility of the universe
- Theists would say that this is because God wanted us to study and understand and gain knowledge

Krauss:

- "It is remarkable that the universe is comprehensible"

Brierley:

- Why is the universe comprehensible?

Krauss:

- Well, maybe the universe just has to be that way

Brierley:

- What do you make of the heat death of the universe, when all life in the universe will die out?

Krauss:

- That's the way the universe is

=== BREAK ===
Krauss:

- I wouldn't want to live in a universe where there was a God
- God is a cosmic Saddam Hussein
- "Religious people turn their minds off" and believe in God for consolation

Holder:

- First, Jesus is the revelation of God and he is no Saddam Hussein
- Second, the Christian life is anything but easy, we are facing some persecution already in the UK
- Third, there is also the problem of being accountable to God when we die
- It's very much like science – Christianity is the way it is, not the way we want it to be

Krauss:

- "If you don't believe in him, you don't get any of the benefits, so you have to believe"
- "And then if you've done something wrong, you're going to be judged for it"
- "So I don't want to be judged by God, I want to be… that's the bottom line"

Holder:

- Well, Jesus has died to pay the price for those things we've done wrong
- Although we will have to face the charges for what we've done, believers will ultimately be forgiven

Finally, Peter Sean Bradley note that Krauss is now walking back his rhetoric in response to criticisms from people like atheist John Horgan.

Related posts

- Ed Feser takes on Lawrence Krauss and Victor Stenger
- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?
- Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist
- William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?
- Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument
- Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger’s critique of cosmic fine-tuning
- A review of Lawrence Krauss’ book “A Universe From Nothing”

Department of Homeland Security running out of money to detain illegal immigrants

October 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaking to "La Raza"

The Wall Street Journal reports:

> The Department of Homeland Security is a month away from running out of money to detain illegal immigrants—a fresh sign of federal budget dysfunction emerging less than two weeks after Congress funded the government through early December.
>
> Homeland Security officials plan to ask the White House for a quick transfer of funds to enable them to continue to detain undocumented immigrants, according to officials familiar with the discussions. **If they don't get more money by early November, officials will be forced to stop holding newly captured illegal immigrants, including high-priority arrests at the border, the officials said.**
>
> The shortfall has caught the Obama administration by surprise, coming so soon after Congress passed a continuing resolution to keep the government operating through Dec. 9, though congressional Republicans have long warned that the White House wasn't budgeting enough money to detain illegal immigrants. The short-term measure passed in September aims only to maintain funding at previous levels, which has turned out to be far short of the money needed to handle a new influx of undocumented people entering the U.S.
>
> "Across the southwest border, we've seen a recent uptick in the number of apprehensions," said a senior official with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the agency within DHS that detains immigrants awaiting possible deportation. "We are growing our [detention] capacity but there is going to be a cost associated with that."

> **DHS officials now see an immediate $136 million shortfall to pay for detention beds and nondetention monitoring of illegal immigration, according to officials briefed on the problem. And that is just the short-term budget hit. In 2017, immigration officials expect they will need significantly more money to detain people awaiting deportation.**

So what difference does it make?

Here is a story from earlier this week about an illegal immigrant in Texas.

Fox News reports:

> Fort Worth police say a man accused of kidnapping a 6-year-old girl from her home also raped her before she was found.
>
> Police are trying to determine how the girl ended up in the woods at the end of a park with a 35-year-old man. Police are investigating if the girl was kidnapped from her home where she slept on the couch or if she walked away from the house and was taken Saturday morning.
>
> Police have been going through the woods near a creek at Titus Park where the girl was found Saturday afternoon, about a mile from the girl's home.
>
> Police arrested Edis Moyà Alas. He's been charged with aggravated sexual assault of a child and aggravated kidnapping. **He also has an immigration hold. Police say Alas is in the U.S. illegally from El Salvador.**

Do Democrats care about protecting the public? We've seen them raise the national debt from $8.5 trillion to $20 trillion since 2007, when Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid took over spending, and then Obama was elected to rubber stamp more spending. We've been spending a lot of money, e.g. – sending money to Iran to sponsor their nuclear weapons and terrorism programs. But at home, there isn't enough money to protect people from criminals who should not even be here.

What would Obama say to that little 6-year-old girl? Probably he would tell her to kiss his ass. Obama doesn't care. And his progressive pro-amnesty allies in the church, e.g. – Russell Moore, also don't care. The important thing for Obama and Moore is to pose and preen in front of cameras, I guess.

New discovery: 25 new Dead Sea scrolls

October 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

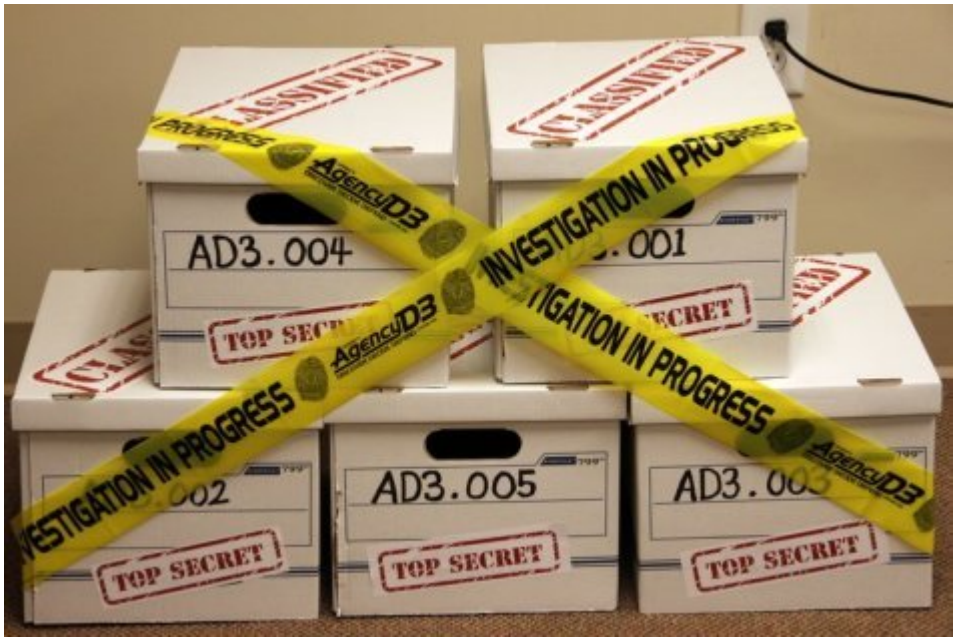

Investigation in progress

What's in them? That's what my friend Dina would ask, because she loves packages, and can't resist opening them.

Live Science reports on the discovery:

> More than 25 previously unpublished "Dead Sea Scroll" fragments, dating back 2,000 years and holding text from the Hebrew Bible, have been brought to light, their contents detailed in two new books.
>
> The various scroll fragments record parts of the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Samuel, Ruth, Kings, Micah, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Joshua, Judges, Proverbs, Numbers, Psalms, Ezekiel and Jonah. The Qumran caves — where the Dead Sea Scrolls were first discovered — had yet to yield any fragments from the Book of Nehemiah; if this newly revealed fragment is authenticated it would be the first.
>
> Scholars have expressed concerns that some of the fragments are forgeries.
>
> **These 25 newly published fragments are just the tip of the iceberg. A scholar told Live Science that around 70 newly discovered fragments have appeared on the antiquities market since 2002.**

The Dead Scrolls were early copies of some of the Old Testament books that we have today. In this case, there was a long gap between these early Dead Sea Scrolls documents, and the earliest copy that we had prior to the Dead Sea Scrolls. How much had changed in the period in between?

This article from Probe Ministries explains:

> The Dead Sea Scrolls play a crucial role in assessing the accurate preservation of the Old Testament. With its hundreds of manuscripts from every book except Esther, detailed comparisons can be made with more recent texts.
>
> The Old Testament that we use today is translated from what is called the Masoretic Text. The Masoretes were Jewish scholars who between A.D. 500 and 950 gave the Old Testament the form that we use today. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947, the oldest Hebrew text of the Old Testament was the Masoretic Aleppo Codex which dates to A.D. 935.{5}
>
> With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now had manuscripts that predated the Masoretic Text by about one thousand years. Scholars were anxious to see how the Dead Sea documents would match up with the Masoretic Text. If a significant amount of differences were found, we could conclude that our Old Testament Text had not been well preserved. Critics, along with religious groups such as Muslims and Mormons, often make the claim that the present day Old Testament has been corrupted and is not well preserved. According to these religious groups, this would explain the contradictions between the Old Testament and their religious teachings.
>
> **After years of careful study, it has been concluded that the Dead Sea Scrolls give substantial confirmation that our Old Testament has been accurately preserved. The scrolls were found to be almost identical with the Masoretic text.**

For example, the Isaiah scroll:

> A significant comparison study was conducted with the Isaiah Scroll written around 100 B.C. that was found among the Dead Sea documents and the book of Isaiah found in the Masoretic text. **After much research, scholars found that the two texts were practically identical. Most variants were minor spelling differences, and none affected the meaning of the text.**
>
> One of the most respected Old Testament scholars, the late Gleason Archer, examined the two Isaiah scrolls found in Cave 1 and wrote, “Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”{7}
>
> **Despite the thousand year gap, scholars found the Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls to be nearly identical. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide valuable evidence that the Old Testament had been accurately and carefully preserved.**

And new discoveries continue to confirm the reliability of ancient Judeo-Christian texts. Here is a recent discovery reported by Associated Press, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The charred lump of a 2,000-year-old scroll sat in an Israeli archaeologist's storeroom for decades, too brittle to open. Now, new imaging technology has revealed what was written inside: the earliest evidence of a biblical text in its standardized form.
>
> The passages from the Book of Leviticus, scholars say, offer the first physical evidence of what has long been believed: that the version of the Hebrew Bible used today goes back 2,000 years.
>
> […]**Scholars have believed the Hebrew Bible in its standard form first came about some 2,000 years ago, but never had physical proof, until now, according to the study. Previously the oldest known fragments of the modern biblical text dated back to the 8th century.**
>
> **The text discovered in the charred Ein Gedi scroll is "100 percent identical" to the version of the Book of Leviticus that has been in use for centuries, said Dead Sea Scroll scholar Emmanuel Tov from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who participated in the study.**
>
> **"This is quite amazing for us," he said. "In 2,000 years, this text has not changed."**

Now, if you listen to skeptics, agnostics and atheists, you would think that nothing in the Bible is reliable, because the stories were supposedly changed over time, and sometimes intentionally. That's the message that popularizers like Bart Ehrman sell to a public audience that is hungry to dismiss the Bible. He likes to talk about the supposed distortions that have crept in, because all we have are "copies of copies of copies of copies". But if you take a look at the hard evidence, rather than Bart's rhetoric, then you get a very different picture of what really happened.

Google censors conservative video lectures from Prager University on YouTube

October 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Google and YouTube censoring mainstream conservative viewpoints

Jay Richards tweeted this story on Twitter, which appeared in the Washington Examiner.

It says:

> In the latest example of bias against conservatives, YouTube is censoring videos from conservative group PragerU by placing them on "restricted mode."
>
> The category, which is applied to videos that may contain "potentially objectionable content," was applied to 21 PragerU videos, the groupannounced on its Facebook page on Tuesday.
>
> The group has created a petition to get YouTube to stop the censorship, and has already received more than 20,000 signatures. The 21 videos account for 10 percent of PragerU's video collection, and include videos asking: "Are the Police Racist?" "Are 1 in 5 Women Raped at College?" and "Is America Racist?"
>
> PragerU, or Prager University, is the brainchild of radio host Dennis Prager, and offers short, five-minute videos about a range of topics presented from a Judeo-Christian and conservative perspective. The videos use slick graphics and statistics to summarize complex issues such as racism and foreign policy.
>
> Jared Sichel, communications director for PragerU, said in a statement that the organization has been communicating with YouTube, which is owned by Google, for "several months" trying to get their videos uncensored. Sichel explained what placing the videos in "restricted mode" does.
>
> "Restricted mode is something that many parents and schools use so that children don't watch explicit adult and sexual content — not so they can't find animated, educational videos on topics ranging from history and economics to happiness and philosophy," he wrote.
>
> Because YouTube and Google has refused to relent, Sichel said, the organization

> started the petition. Another spokesperson for the organization told the *Washington Examiner* that news reports generated Tuesday about the petition have so far not resulted in the videos becoming uncensored.
>
> For comparison, PragerU posted to its Facebook page that videos addressing similar topics from the liberal Vox are not placed in restricted mode. For instance, the PragerU video "Is America Racist?" is in restricted mode, while Vox's "The racist history of US immigration history" is not.

In case you haven't heard about Prager University, these are just 5-6 minute courses taught by scholars who teach atmajor universities or who do research at major think tanks.

Here is a quick video introduction to the series:

The courses are meant to convey truth on complicated subjects in an easy to understand way. I have featured some of them on this blog, and I watch them and share them all the time on social media.

Here are the 21 videos that were deemed unacceptable to the far left activists running Google and YouTube:

- Are The Police Racist?
- Why Don't Feminists Fight for Muslim Women?
- Why Did America Fight the Korean War?
- Who's More Pro-Choice: Europe or America?
- What ISIS Wants
- Why Are There Still Palestinian Refugees?
- Are 1 in 5 Women Raped at College?
- Islamic Terror: What Muslim Americans Can Do
- Did Bush Lie About Iraq?
- Who NOT to Vote For
- Men and the Power of the Visual
- Is America Racist?
- Israel: The World's Most Moral Army
- Radical Islam: The Most Dangerous Ideology
- The Most Important Question About Abortion
- Why Do People Become Islamic Extremists?
- Don't Judge Blacks Differently
- What is the University Diversity Scam?
- He Wants You
- Israel's Legal Founding
- Pakistan: Can Sharia and Freedom Coexist?

And it's not just Google censoring conservative views. Just last month Twitter censored professor Glen Reynolds for criticizing criminals who block highways. And earlier this year we heard about how Facebook editors deliberately push conservative stories down in

their “trending topics” section.

These companies (Google, Facebook, Twitter) couldn’t be successful in far left countries like North Korea and Cuba, but they love to bash the country that gave them success anyway. Ingratitude is everywhere on the left. Ingratitude and narrow-minded intolerance of free speech that disagrees with their own prejudices.

New study: nearly half of millenials reject monogamy

October 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Study reported on by The Stream:

> A new report found nearly half of American millennials don't want monogamous relationships.
>
> YouGov revealed the research on monogamy and cheating, showing couples under 30 are significantly less monogamous than older generations.
>
> Only 51 percent of people under 30 reported desiring a "completely monogamous" relationship, compared to 58 percent from the 30-44 age bracket, 63 percent from the 45-64 age bracket, and 70 percent from the 65 plus age bracket polled.
>
> […]Reports also show that men and women are cheating at almost equal rates.

It's not just adultery that millenials don't care about any more, it's premarital sex. An article from the Washington Post found that both men and women no longer desire their romantic partners to be chaste:

> Dating has changed hugely over the past generations, and so have cultural ideas about what men and women value most in a mate.
>
> This idea is perfectly illustrated by a chart that economist Max Roser, who created the blog Our World in Data, recently put out on Twitter. The chart is made with data from a study published in the Journal of Family Issues in 2013, in which three researchers compared how heterosexual men and women ranked the importance of 18 traits in wives and husbands, first in 1939, and then again in 2008.

> […]**For both men and women, the importance of chastity nose-dived, from #10 in 1939 to #18 in 2008.** Emotional stability and maturity, a pleasing disposition, good health, and refinement and neatness also declined for both sexes.
>
> **For women, a similar religious background and a desire for home and children became less important in their mates**, while men placed less value on ambition and industriousness in their wives.

It goes without saying that adultery is more like to reduce marriage stability. And studies also show that marriage stability is severely impacted by the number of premarital sex partners. That's why chastity matters: it's a predictor of marital stability. If a person can control themselves before marriage when they don't get any sex, it's easier to control themselves when that need is being supplied safely and generously. Also, chastity just reinforces the idea that sex is something that is done within a lifelong commitment, not something that is done outside of a commitment for fun and thrills. I don't that the millenial approach of premarital unchastity and post-marital non-monogamy is going to help them keep their marriages together.

But young people today aren't interested in looking at studies to figure out how to do marriage right so that it will last. They make their decisions with their feelings. They value what the culture tells them to value, rather than picking a mate who has the skills and abilities to make the marriage last.

How well is picking mates based on emotions rather than demonstrated ability working out? The marriage rates are plummeting:

Gallup poll:

> Contrary to what we would expect, given normal demographic patterns of adolescents' movement into early adulthood and family formation, the data show that significantly more millennials are currently single/never married than was true for those in older generations, and considerably more are in domestic partnerships. Specifically, more than half of all millennials (59%) have never married, and 9% are in domestic partnerships. Gallup has noted a trend toward fewer young adults being married in recent years.
>
> In the 2014 Gallup Daily tracking data, just 27% of millennials were married. According to historical U.S. Census Bureau data, 36% of Generation Xers, 48% of baby boomers and 65% of traditionalists were married when they were the age that millennials are now. For millennials currently aged 18 to 30, just 20% are married, compared with nearly 60% of 18- to 30-year-olds in 1962, according to the U.S. Census. When Gen Xers were the same age, 32% were married; for baby boomers, it was more than 40%.
>
> **Millennials are clearly delaying marriage longer than any generation before them, in spite of evidence suggesting that many millennials intend to marry at some point. For example, a 2013 Gallup poll found**

> **that 86% of single/never married Americans aged 18 to 34 (roughly equivalent to the millennial generation) wanted to get married someday.**

Table:

Marital Status, by Generation

	Millennials %	Gen Xers %	Baby boomers %	Traditionalists %	TOTAL %
Single/Never married	59	16	10	4	25
Married	27	62	65	55	52
Separated	2	4	3	1	2
Divorced	3	11	14	9	9
Widowed	*	1	6	29	6
Domestic partnership/ Living with partner	9	6	3	1	5

Marriage rates across different generations of Americans

Who can keep a relationship going when the top criterion is ability to entertain rather than ability to commit self-sacrificially? I hear lots of Christian women say they want to get married "some day", but there they are in their mid 30s, unemployed, penniless, with empty resumes, backpacking through Europe. The words "some day" sound good to their parents and pastors, but the actions are all about hedonism and thrill-seeking – just what the culture told them to do, in order to have a meaningful life.

Is there a cost to the younger generation turning their backs on traditional marriage, including the norms of chastity, fidelity and permanence?

I saw an article on the Public Discourse that talked about the fiscal costs of abandoning traditional marriage.

It says:

> In 1965, liberal Harvard political scientist Daniel Patrick Moynihan was astonished to find that about 25 percent of African-American children were born out of wedlock. Moynihan was deeply worried about this finding because he knew exactly what being born out of wedlock means for a child. Decades of social science confirm what common sense has always taught us: that children born out of wedlock are disadvantaged in every way. They are more likely to be physically and mentally ill, more likely to be poor and unhappy, more likely to have trouble in school and with education generally, more likely to be abused sexually, more likely themselves to abuse others sexually, more likely to abuse alcohol or other drugs, and more likely to engage in criminal activity and to have a disdain for authority.
>
> This, in turn, invariably increases the size and scope of the power of the state. The state must expand to replace fathers who have abandoned their families by

> providing for single mothers. It must increase its public-health efforts to provide for children whose single parents cannot pay for private healthcare and to treat victims of violence committed by those who have been raised in an environment that has failed to equip them for a robust and peaceful social life. It must create and maintain adoption agencies to care for children whose parents are unfit or absent. It must commit more funds to police departments to address crime that results from families breaking apart (or failing to form in the first place), and hence failing to instill virtue in children. It must commit funds to the creation of prisons where criminals are to be kept. The list goes on and on.
>
> The economic costs of abandoning social conservatism, then, run quite high—in addition to all of the unquantifiable social costs of broken families, deaths, broken relationships, and ruined lives. It is no surprise that leftists, committed to consolidating power in the state, have sought to undermine the family: they realize—better than many fiscal conservatives do—that a flourishing marriage culture is required for free markets and limited governments to exist.

So, there really is a cost to the embrace of moral relativism. When morality goes, expensive things happen, and government grows to pick up the costs. The bigger the government grows, the taxes are required to pay for it, leaving you with less of your own money – less of your own freedom to live how you want to live.

Comparing male and female support for abortion, divorce and gay marriage

October 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Disclaimer: This post doesn't apply to married women. When I refer to women below, I mean young, unmarried women. But I'm just going to say "women" for brevity's sake.

Are women really more moral than men? Let's take a look at the attitudes of men and women on five of the most prominent moral issues of our time: gay marriage, divorce, abortion, war, and crime.

Gay marriage, divorce and abortion

Here is Pew Research on gay marriage as of 2016:

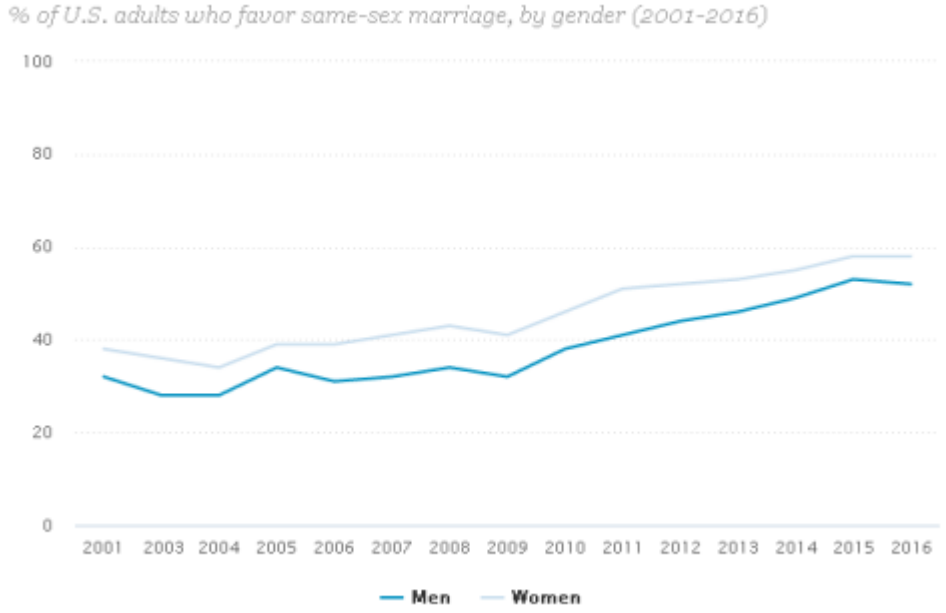

Women are more immoral on gay marriage than men
Women favor gay marriage by a margin of 58% compared to only 52% for men.

Here is the Austin Institute on divorce in 2014:

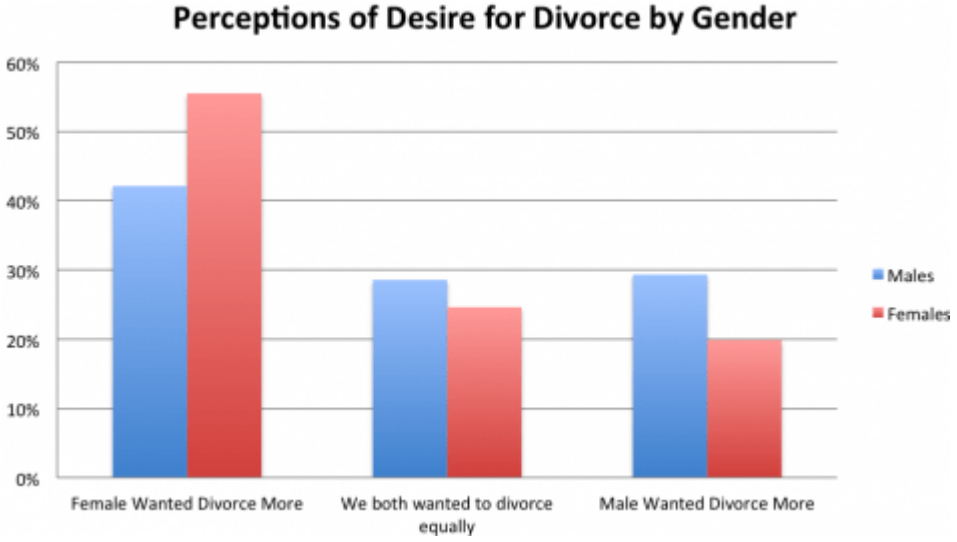

Women are more immoral on divorce than men

Women initiate about 70% of divorces, even though they freely chose the man they married, and vowed to stick by him through all circumstances.

Here is Gallup on abortion as of 2015:

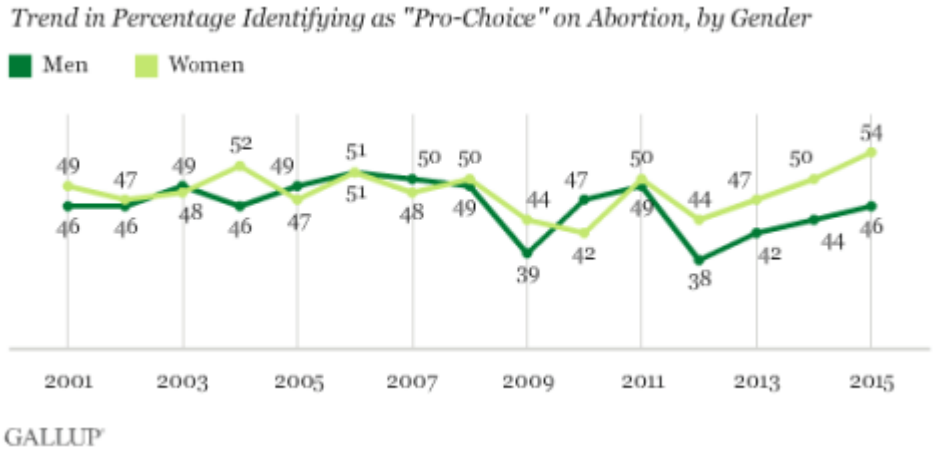

Women are more immoral on abortion than men

About 75% of young, unmarried women vote for the Democrat party – the party of unrestricted, taxpayer-funded abortion.

Abortion ignores the needs of unborn children. Same-sex marriage ignores the need of children for a mother and a father. Divorce devastates children, causing all sorts of negative effects. Men are more willing to judge all three of these bad behaviors than women. Men are more concerned about protecting the weak than they are about feeling compassionate and being perceived as “tolerant”.

What about war and self-defense against criminals?

Women are also more liberal than men on war and self-defense. You can just look at what happened in the Middle East to the Yazidi girls who are being raped and sex-trafficked to understand the consequences of this anti-war viewpoint. To be anti-war when the war is just is to be pro-evil. Just ask the Christians being tortured and murdered in Syria whether they are happy that American troops were withdrawn from Iraq. Just ask the victims of crimes like rape whether they wish they had been armed when they were attacked. Men are tougher on terrorists and criminals than women are.

Blaming men for what women choose to do

This data shows that men should be challenging women to improve their views on these important issues. But Christian pastors and scholars often discourage men from challenging women on moral issues, preferring to *blame men* when women take the wrong side of moral issues.

For example, here’s Mark Driscoll explaining how men are to blame for single motherhood:

> Part of it is the unintended consequences of divorce. Forty percent of kids go to bed at night without a father. Not to be disparaging toward single moms, but if you’re a single mom and you’re working 60 hours a week, and you’ve got a boy, and he’s home all by himself with no parents and no dad, he’s just going to be

> hanging out with his buddies, feeding himself pizza rolls.
>
> The number one consumer of online pornography is 12- to 17-year-old boys. What that means is he's home eating junk food, drinking Monster energy drinks, downloading porn, masturbating and screwing around with his friends. That really doesn't prepare you for responsible adulthood. That's a really sad picture, especially if you're a single gal hoping to get married someday. You're like: "Seriously, that's the candidate pool? You've got to be kidding me." That's why 41 percent of births right now are to unmarried women. A lot of women have decided: "I'm never going to find a guy who is actually dependable and responsible to have a life with. So I'll just get a career and have a baby and just intentionally be a single mother because there are no guys worth spending life with."

This practice among Christian leaders of blaming men for the actions of women is one of the major reasons why women have the views that they do on abortion, divorce, gay marriage, just war and self-defense. Men have been cowed into silence by man-blamers like Mark Driscoll and James Dobson. This message actually weakens the moral leadership of men, and creates a worse world.

This lack of moral leadership by men is particularly problematic with "pro-life" men who try to blame men for abortion. Abortions occur (in non-rape cases) because a woman makes two choices: 1) choosing a man who only wants recreational sex, and 2) choosing to have recreational sex with a man who has shown no interest in commitment or parenting. Speaking as an unmarried virgin somewhat advanced in years, there are plenty of good men out there who don't believe in sex before marriage, and who have prepared very well for the traditional male roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. If women insist on choosing the wrong men, and choosing to do the wrong things with those men, it makes sense to hold them accountable. The bad men were bad before the women chose them, and so they should have been recognized and avoided by the women before any need for abortion occurred. A woman cannot expect a bad man to suddenly turn into a good man after he is given recreational sex. Recreational sex does not make a man who is not interested in marriage and children somehow become interested in marriage and children. And women need to be told this by pro-life men who are not cowards.

Men really need to shed this perception that there is something wrong with them, and challenge women on areas where they have immoral views. Men: don't let yourselves be manipulated into silence in order to get affection, approval or sex. If you must have affection, approval and sex, then choose a woman who puts moral standards above feeling happy and being perceived as compassionate.

Obamacare update: between 1.4 and 2.5 million people will lose health care plans in 2017

October 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?
Bloomberg reports on the latest triumph of Obama the health care expert.

Excerpt:

> A growing number of people in Obamacare are finding out their health insurance plans will disappear from the program next year, forcing them to find new coverage even as options shrink and prices rise.
>
> At least 1.4 million people in 32 states will lose the Obamacare plan they have now, according to state officials contacted by Bloomberg. That's largely caused by Aetna Inc., UnitedHealth Group Inc. and some state or regional insurers quitting the law's markets for individual coverage.
>
> Sign-ups for Obamacare coverage begin next month. Fallout from the quitting insurers has emerged as the latest threat to the law, which is also a major focal point in the U.S. presidential election.
>
> While it's not clear what all the consequences of the departing insurers will be, interviews with regulators and insurance customers suggest that plans will be fewer and more expensive, and may not include the same doctors and hospitals.
>
> […]Bloomberg contacted officials in all 50 states and Washington, D.C., and the 1.4 million-person estimate includes 32 states and only plans sold on the individual "exchange" markets. **In Texas, Arizona, Georgia and Missouri, insurers have pulled out, but regulators couldn't or wouldn't say how many people are affected.** Three states didn't provide sufficient data. Eleven

> states, plus D.C., said they weren't affected.
>
> […]The law requires all Americans to have insurance or pay a fine.

Everything is awesome, because a community with no achievements in life can re-write health care laws with pixie dust, and faith, and trust:

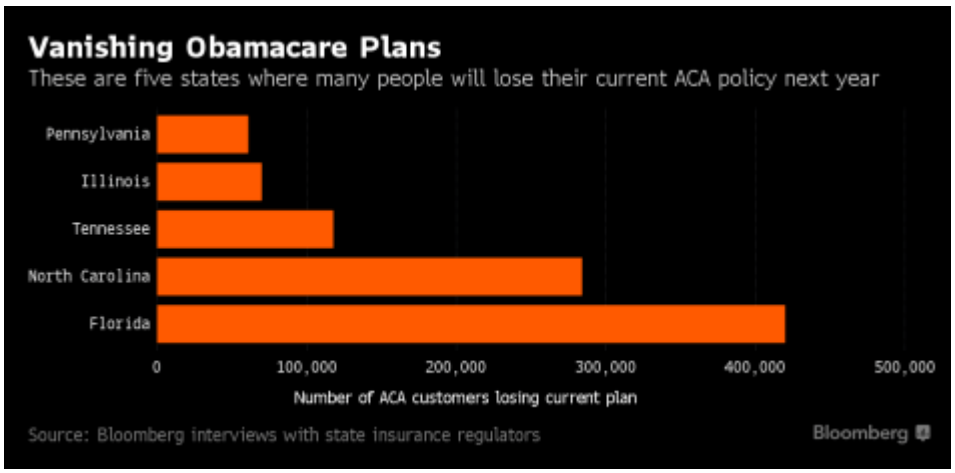

Maybe we should have let someone with experience in health care do the health care reform?

Other estimates of people losing their health care plans are much higher:

> Nationwide estimates of the number of people losing their current plans are higher. For example, Charles Gaba, who tracks the law at ACASignups.net, estimates that 2 million to 2.5 million people in the U.S. will lose their current plans, compared with 2 million a year ago. Gaba's estimate is based on insurance company membership data.
>
> […]For the people losing plans, there are fewer and fewer choices. One estimate by the Kaiser Family Foundation predicts that for at least 19 percent of the people in Obamacare's individual market next year there will be only one insurer to choose from.

And when competition is killed by government regulations, consumers are left with fewer choices, driving up prices:

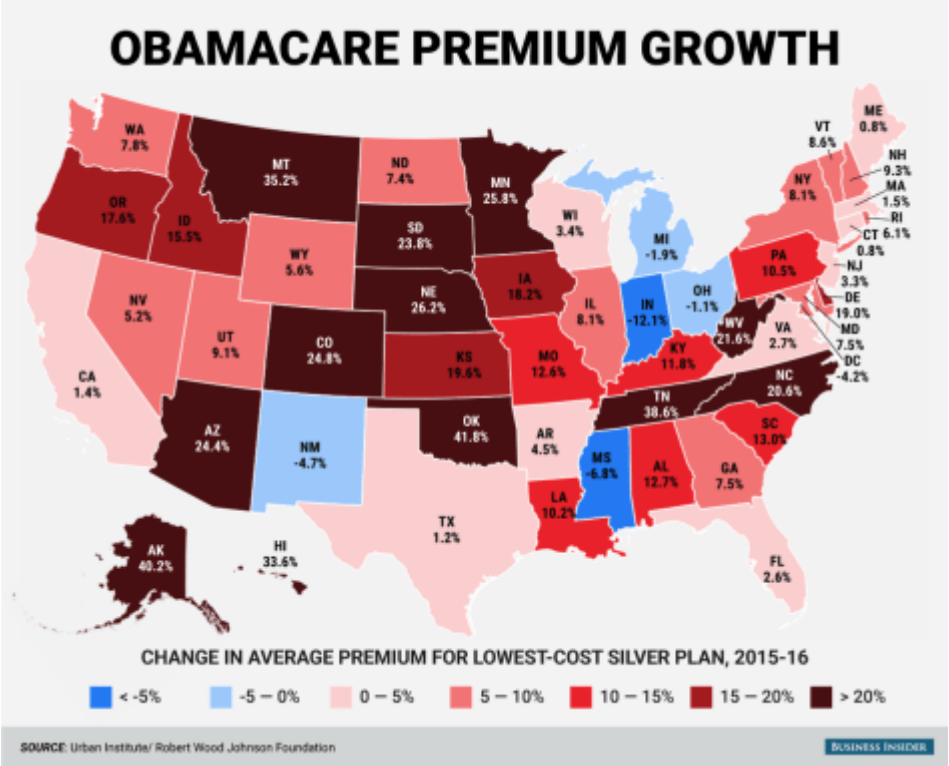

Obamacare premium growth, 2015-2016

If you are hiring someone for a job, it doesn't really make sense to pick someone who has confident words, but no achievements. That's why employers ask you for a resume and references. Obama didn't have any work experience, and he didn't have any references.

A lot of young people believed Obama's promises in 2008 and again in 2012:

You can keep your doctor! You can keep your health plan! All lies, spoken by an uneducated ignoramus who simply had no idea how business and economics works.

Should we pick a candidate based on our emotional response to his confidence?

Obama was hired because a bunch of voters felt good when he confidently spoke about things he didn't even understand. He read words off of a teleprompter, and that caused some people who are dominated by emotions to vote for him. And here we are in a mess.

Next time, do your homework, America, and don’t let your emotions affect important decisions.

Bible study: Esther as an example of bravery and God’s providence

October 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

I’ve been listening to this FREE two-volume series on the book of Esther featuring pastor Alistair Begg. A whole bunch of interesting things stuck out to me, so I’ll write about one of them today.

First, Esther is a Jewish woman whose father or mother died when she was young. She was adopted by Mordecai, another Jew. She was very beautiful, so she was picked to be part of the Persian King’s harem. In fact, she is so beautiful that the King chooses her to be the Queen.

Now there is an enemy of the Jews in the King’s court named Haman, and he manages to get the King to create an edict that says that all the Jews will be killed. Mordecai calls Esther to tell her that she has to stop the King from ordering this edict.

But Esther is out of favor with the King, and hasn’t been asked to come in to visit him for some time. To go in and see the King without being summoned is a capital offense. Unless the King gives permission, she would be killed for intruding on the King. But in the end, she agrees to speak up and say something.

It all gets resolved in Esther chapter 4.

Esther 4:1-17:

> 1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly.

> 2 He went as far as the king’s gate, for no one was to enter the king’s gate clothed in sackcloth.
>
> 3 In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.
>
> 4 Then Esther’s maidens and her eunuchs came and told her, and the queen writhed in great anguish. And she sent garments to clothe Mordecai that he might remove his sackcloth from him, but he did not accept them.
>
> 5 Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king’s eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her, and ordered himto go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.
>
> 6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king’s gate.
>
> 7 Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king’s treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.
>
> 8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people.
>
> 9 Hathach came back and related Mordecai’s words to Esther.
>
> 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him to reply to Mordecai:
>
> 11 “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.”
>
> 12 They related Esther’s words to Mordecai.
>
> 13 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”
>
> 15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai,
>
> 16 “Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.”
>
> 17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

What Mordecai is saying here is that God is sovereign over the events that are taking place, and that even if Esther makes a free decision to not intercede to save her people,

then God will do something else. Somehow, telling her that makes her agree to take the risk and go in to see the King. Even though it is illegal to go in to see the King, she is going to risk her life and do it. And the message there is that God made her beautiful, and placed her in the palace, for exactly this purpose. Her beauty has a purpose.

Before then, she may not have been the most morally pure Jew, nor the most faithful Jew, nor some great authority on theology or apologetics. She was probably keeping her faith pretty hidden. But in that one moment, she rises above being an orphan, above being a harem girl, and above being just a pretty face. God can use anyone – even a silly girl who spends all day in front of a mirror playing with cosmetics – to achieve his ends. She is not Daniel. But today she is getting the call, anyway. It's on her.

What is the lesson here? The lesson is that even a woman with terrible marksmanship is dignified when she accepts a duel. One minute, she is Jew in name only, hiding her faith, living in a palace, sleeping with a pagan King. The next minute, she is the hero. Win, lose or draw, she is the hero. God can use *anybody.* It doesn't mean that you shouldn't be moral, study theology, and study apologetics, and keep your character clean so you have self-control. It means that any believer is just one step away from glory, no matter what they did in the past. That's how God rolls.

Further study

If you are interested in the story of Esther, then you should listen to the entire series by Alistair Begg.

- Volume 1 is here (download all in a zip file)
- Volume 2 is here (download all in a zip file)

The point I am making in this post is in this lecture.

Esther is about two themes: 1) how should a believer in God live in a society where believers are a minority? and 2) even when things look really out of control, God is in control, and is never more than one step away from saving his people.

I have a lot of Christian apologist friends who struggle to go to church, and struggle to read the Bible. The links above will take you to some great preaching on one of the most interesting books of the Bible. Go there, grab the MP3s, and listen to them with no distractions.

Mark D. Linville: does Darwinian evolution make morality rational?

October 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Have you ever heard an atheist tell you that naturalistic evolution is an answer to the moral argument? I have. And I found a good reply to this challenge in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". The chapter that responds to the challenge is authored by Dr. Mark D. Linville. It is only 13 pages long. I have a link to the PDF at the bottom of this post.

First, a bit about the author:

> Blog: The Tavern at the End of the World
> Current positions:
>
> - PhD Research Fellow
> - Tutoring Fellow in Philosophy
>
> Education:
>
> - PhD in Philosophy with a minor in South Asian Studies and a specialization in Philosophy of Religion, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy of Religion, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
> - MA in Theology, Cincinnati Christian Seminary
> - BA in Biblical Studies, Florida Christian College

Here is his thesis of the essay:

> Darwin's account of the origins of human morality is at once elegant, ingenious, and, I shall argue, woefully inadequate. In particular, that account, on its standard interpretation, does not explain morality, but, rather, explains it away . We learn from Darwin not how there could be objective moral facts, but how we could have come to believe—perhaps erroneously—that there are.
>
> Further, the naturalist, who does not believe that there is such a personal being as God, is in principle committed to Darwinism, including a Darwinian account of the basic contours of human moral psychology. I'll use the term evolutionary naturalism to refer to this combination of naturalism and Darwinism. And so the naturalist is saddled with a view that explains morality away. Whatever reason we have for believing in moral facts is also a reason for thinking naturalism is false. I conclude the essay with a brief account of a theistic conception of morality, and argue that the theist is in a better position to affirm the objectivity of morality.

And here's a sample to get your attention:

> But even if we are assured that a "normal" person will be prompted by the social instincts and that those instincts are typically flanked and reinforced by a set of moral emotions, we still do not have a truly normative account of moral obligation. There is nothing in Darwin's own account to indicate that the ensuing sense of guilt—a guilty feeling—is indicative of actual moral guilt resulting from the violation of an objective moral law. The revenge taken by one's own conscience amounts to a sort of second-order propensity to feel a certain way given one's past relation to conflicting first-order propensities (e.g., the father's impulse to save his child versus his impulse to save himself). Unless we import normative considerations from some other source, it seems that, whether it is a first or second-order inclination,one's being prompted by it is more readily understood as a descriptive feature of one's own psychology than material for a normative assessment of one's behavior or character. And, assuming that there is anything to this observation, an ascent into even higher levels of propensities ("I feel guilty for not having felt guilty for not being remorseful over not obeying my social instincts…") introduces nothing of normative import. Suppose you encounter a man who neither feels the pull of social, paternal or familial instincts nor is in the least bit concerned over his apparent lack of conscience. What, from a strictly Darwinian perspective, can one say to him that is of any serious moral import? "You are not moved to action by the impulses that move most of us." Right. So?
>
> The problem afflicts contemporary construals of an evolutionary account of human morality. Consider Michael Shermer's explanation for the evolution of a moral sense—the "science of good and evil." He explains,
>
> By a moral sense, I mean a moral feeling or emotion generated by actions. For example, positive emotions such as righteousness and pride are experienced as

> the psychological feeling of doing "good." These moral emotions likely evolved out of behaviors that were reinforced as being good either for the individual or for the group.2
>
> Shermer goes on to compare such moral emotions to other emotions and sensations that are universally experienced, such as hunger and the sexual urge. He then addresses the question of moral motivation.
>
> In this evolutionary theory of morality, asking "Why should we be moral?" is like asking "Why should we be hungry?" or "Why should we be horny?" For that matter, we could ask, "Why should we be jealous?" or "Why should we fall in love?" The answer is that it is as much a part of human nature to be moral as it is to be hungry, horny, jealous, and in love.3
>
> Thus, according to Shermer, given an evolutionary account, such a question is simply a non-starter. Moral motivation is a given as it is wired in as one of our basic drives. Of course, one might point out that Shermer's "moral emotions" often do need encouragement in a way that, say, "horniness," does not. More importantly, Shermer apparently fails to notice that if asking "Why should I be moral?" is like asking, "Why should I be horny?" then asserting, "You ought to be moral" is like asserting, "You ought to be horny." As goes the interrogative, so goes the imperative. But if the latter seems out of place, then, on Shermer's view, so is the former.
>
> One might thus observe that if morality is anything at all, it is irreducibly normative in nature. But the Darwinian account winds up reducing morality to descriptive features of human psychology. Like the libido, either the moral sense is present and active or it is not. If it is, then we might expect one to behave accordingly. If not, why, then, as a famous blues man once put it, "the boogie woogie just ain't in me." And so the resulting "morality" is that in name only.
>
> **In light of such considerations, it is tempting to conclude with C. S. Lewis that, if the naturalist remembered his philosophy out of school, he would recognize that any claim to the effect that "I ought" is on a par with "I itch," in that it is nothing more than a descriptive piece of autobiography with no essential reference to any actual obligations.**

When it comes to morality, we are not interested in mere descriptions of behavior. We want to know about prescriptions of behavior, and whether why we should care about following those prescriptions. We are interested in what grounds our sense of moral obligation in reality. What underwrites our sense of moral obligation? If it is just rooted in feelings, then why should we obey our moral sense when obeying it goes against out self-interest? Feelings are subjective things, and doing the right thing in a real objective state of affairs requires more than just feelings. There has to be a real objective state of affairs that makes it rational for us to do the right thing, even when the right thing is against our own self-interest. That's what morality is – objective moral obligations *overriding* subjective feelings. I wouldn't trust someone to be moral if it were just based

on their feelings.

The PDF is right here for downloading, with the permission of the author.

Jay Richards: eight common myths about wealth, poverty and the free market

October 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Have you read Jay Richards' book "Money, Greed and God?" Because if you haven't, he's written a series of articles that summarize the main points of the book.

The index post is here.

Here are the posts in the series:

- Part 1: The Eight Most Common Myths about Wealth, Poverty, and Free Enterprise
- Part 2: Can't We Build A Just Society?
- Part 3: The Piety Myth
- Part 4: The Myth of the Zero Sum Game
- Part 5: Is Wealth Created or Transferred?
- Part 6: Is Free Enterprise Based on Greed?
- Part 7: Hasn't Christianity Always Opposed Free Enterprise?
- Part 8: Does Free Enterprise Lead to An Ugly Consumerist Culture?
- Part 9: Will We Use Up All Our Resources?
- Part 10: Are Markets An Example of Providence?

Parts 4 and 5 are my favorites. It's so hard to choose one to excerpt, but I must. I will choose… Part 4.

Here's the problem:

> **Myth #3: The Zero Sum Game Myth – believing that trade requires a winner and a loser.**
>
> One reason people believe this myth is because they misunderstand how

> economic value is determined. Economic thinkers with views as diverse as Adam Smith and Karl Marx believed economic value was determined by the labor theory of value. This theory stipulates that the cost to produce an object determines its economic value.
>
> According to this theory, if you build a house that costs you $500,000 to build, that house is worth $500,000. But what if no one can or wants to buy the house? Then what is it worth?
>
> Medieval church scholars put forth a very different theory, one derived from human nature: economic value is in the eye of the beholder. The economic value of an object is determined by how much someone is willing to give up to get that object. This is the subjective theory of value.

And here's an example of how to avoid the problem:

> How you determine economic value affects whether you view free enterprise as a zero-sum game, or a win-win game in which both participants benefit.
>
> Let's return to the example of the $500,000 house. As the developer of the house, you hire workers to build the house. You then sell it for more than $500,000. According to the labor theory of value, you have taken more than the good is actually worth. You've exploited the buyer and your workers by taking this surplus value. You win, they lose.
>
> Yet this situation looks different according to the subjective theory of value. Here, everybody wins. You market and sell the house for more than it cost to produce, but not more than customers will freely pay. The buyer is not forced to pay a cost he doesn't agree to. You are rewarded for your entrepreneurial effort. Your workers benefit, because you paid them the wages they agreed to when you hired them.
>
> This illustration brings up a couple important points about free enterprise that are often overlooked:
>
> **1. Free exchange is a win-win game**.
>
> In win-win games, some players may end up better off than others, but everyone ends up better off than they were at the beginning. As the developer, you might make more than your workers. Yet the workers determined they would be better off by freely exchanging their labor for wages, than if they didn't have the job at all.
>
> A free market doesn't guarantee that everyone wins in every competition. Rather, it allows many more win-win encounters than any other alternative.
>
> **2. The game is win-win because of rules set-up beforehand.**
>
> A free market is *not* a free-for-all in which everybody can do what they want. Any exchange must be free on both sides. Rule of law, contracts, and property rights are needed to ensure exchanges are conducted rightly. As the developer of the

> house, you'd be held accountable if you broke your contract and failed to pay workers what you promised.
>
> An exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game.

On this view, what you really need to fear as a consumer is government intervention that restricts your choices in the marketplace, or makes some choices more expensive than they need to be (tariffs).

If you care about poverty, it's often tempting to think that it can only be solved one way – by transferring wealth from the rich to the poor. But that is a very mistaken view, as any economist will tell you. The right way to create prosperity is by creating laws and policies that unleash individual creativity. Letting individuals create innovative products and services, letting them keep what they earn, making sure that the law doesn't punish entrepreneurs – that incentivizes wealth creation. Fixing poverty does not mean transferring wealth, it means giving people more freedom to create wealth on their own. Free trade between nations is an important way that we encourage people to create better products and services that what they have available in their own countries.

Economists agree on the benefits of free trade

Who could possibly disagree with free trade? Well, many people on the left do. But economists across the spectrum of ideology (university and private sector and public sector) agree on the benefits of free trade.

Harvard economist Greg Mankiw explains what most professional economists agree on.

Excerpt:

> Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:
>
> 1. **A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)**
> 2. **Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)**
> 3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
> 4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
> 5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
> 6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
> 7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
> 8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
> 9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become

> unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
> 10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
> 11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
> 12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
> 13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
> 14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

Socialist economic policies don't work because they are making policies that are based on economic myths. We know that these myths are myths because of economics is a mathematical science, and because we have tried good and bad policies in different times and places. We have calculations and we have experience to know what works and what doesn't work. If you want to help the poor, you have to respect what economists know about how wealth is created. The solution is not to "spread the wealth around", it's to encourage people to create more wealth by inventing things that people freely choose to buy.

Millennials who elected Obama will face high taxes, poverty and unemployment

October 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

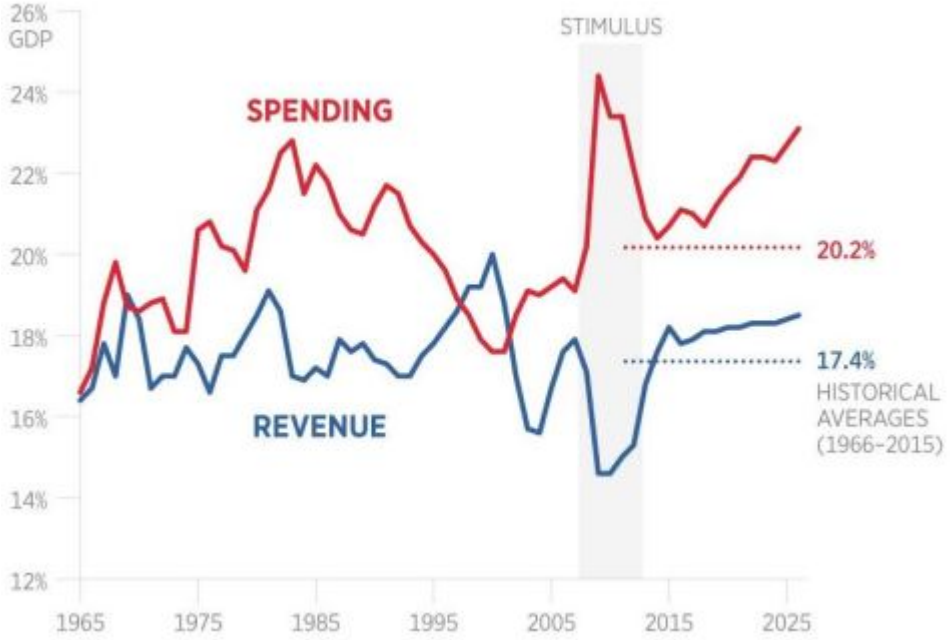

We can’t raise taxes high enough to fix this much overspending

My regular readers have probably noticed that I have stopped blogging about day-to-day politics, ever since the Republican primary candidates with conservative records (Cruz, Jindal, Walker) were eliminated from the GOP primary. I have heard though that the mainstream media is going all in to elect Hillary Clinton. My concern is that many people rely on television news and will never think about two really important issues. First, Obama has been the worst President in the history of the country and has destroyed the economy for decades to come. Second, his disregard for national security and weak foreign policy has emboldened the enemies of Western democracies, e.g. Russia, Iran, etc. We will see the consequences of this (wars and terrorism) for years to come. Those are the real challenges we face as a nation.

This Hoover Institute article by Victor Davis Hanson explains the big picture that the mainstream media doesn’t care about.

Excerpt:

> Consider the $20-trillion national debt. Most Americans accept that current annual $500 billion budget deficits are not sustainable—but they also see them as less extreme than the recently more normal $1 trillion in annual red ink. Americans also accept that the Obama administration doubled the national debt on the expectation of permanent near-zero interest rates, which cannot continue. When interest rates return to more normal historical levels of 4-5% per annum, the costs of servicing the debt—along with unsustainable Social Security and Medicare entitlement costs—will begin to undermine the entire budget.

> Count up current local, state and federal income taxes, payroll taxes, property and sales taxes, and new health care taxes, and it will be hard to find the necessary additional revenue from a strapped and overtaxed middle class, much less from the forty-seven percent of Americans who currently pay no federal income taxes. The Obama administration has tried to reduce the budget by issuing defense cuts and tax hikes—but it has refused to touch entitlement spending, where the real gains could be made. The result is more debt, even as, paradoxically, our military was weakened, taxes rose, revenue increased, and economic growth remained anemic at well below 2% per annum.

The national debt is one ticking time bomb, but there are others. Illegal immigration and Muslim refugees create additional financial problems for the next generation of entrepreneurs and workers:

> Illegal immigration poses a similar dilemma. No nation can remain stable when 10-20 million foreign nationals have crashed through what has become an open border and reside unlawfully in the United States—any more than a homeowner can have neighbors traipsing through and camping in his unfenced yard.
>
> Likewise, there are few multiracial societies of the past that have avoided descending into destructive ethnic chauvinism and tribalism once assimilation and integration were replaced by salad-bowl identity politics. Common words and phrases such as “illegal alien” or “deportation” are now considered taboo, while “sanctuary city” is a euphemism for a neo-Confederate nullification of federal immigration laws by renegade states and municipalities.
>
> Illegal immigration, like the deficits, must cease, but stopping it would be too politically incorrect and painful even to ponder. The mess in Europe—millions of indigent and illegal immigrants who have fled their own failed states to become dependent on the largess of their generous adopted countries, but without any desire to embrace their hosts’ culture—is apparently America’s future.

Progressive Christians and left-leaning Republicans join Democrats in imposing costs on the next generation of taxpayers with open borders immigration policies. The bill for importing people who take more in welfare than they pay in taxes has to be paid by someone. Not only will taxes on individuals go up, but taxes on businesses will cause them to create fewer jobs, or move their production to countries that have lower taxes on business.

The rest of the article talks about more ticking time bombs created by young leftist voters. Obama’s anti-police rhetoric has created a crime crisis that will require more police, more incarceration and higher insurance premiums. Obama’s anti-school-choice policies have made it harder for the next generation to get the education they will need to offer value to employers. Without skills, you won’t have a job, and you will be poor – poorer than your parents’ generation.

Although most young leftists are ignorant about foreign policy, that did not stop them

from voting to cause crises that will harm our economy, and may also draw us into war. Territorial disputes involving strong countries like Russia and China could easily lead to war. Sponsors of terrorism like North Korea and Iran have gained strength during Obama's reign of stupidity. Wars that impact trading partners or allies will cost taxpayers money. And millennials are the ones who are going to get the bill for a failed foreign policy.

The article doesn't mention other crises like the trillion dollar student loan bubble, or the next mortgage lending crisis, or the unfunded pension programs crisis, or Medicare going bankrupt, and then Social Security shortly after, etc. No one in the mainstream media mentions these things, and the millennials aren't aware of these problems. It's not in their culture to put financial concerns above having a good time. But closing your eyes doesn't make a threat disappear. Millennials can't study English in college, rack up student loans, spend all their money on alcohol, work minimum wage jobs, then travel to Europe in their 20s, and expect everything to work out when they get serious about career and savings at age 30. These crises – which millennials voted for – are going to make their lives harder than their parents' lives ever were.

New study: unborn child's heartbeat is detectable at 16 days

October 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this study

A new study conducted by University of Oxford was published in the journal eLife. (H/T Dad)

Here is the report from the Oxford University website:

> When does our heart first start to beat? Until now, researchers thought that the first time our heart muscle contracted to beat was at eight days after conception in mice, which equates to around day 21 of a human pregnancy.

> Now, a team funded by the British Heart Foundation (BHF) at the University of Oxford has demonstrated earlier beating of the heart in mouse embryos which, if extrapolated to the human heart, suggests beating as early as 16 days after conception.
>
> In the study, published in the journal *eLife*, researchers looked at the developing mouse heart and found that the muscle started to contract as soon as it formed the cardiac crescent – an early stage in heart development. In mice, this crescent forms 7.5 days after conception, which is equivalent to day 16 in the human embryo. Previously, it was thought that the heart started to contract a stage later, when the heart appears as a linear tube.

Here's how they did it:

> By adding fluorescent markers to calcium molecules within the mouse embryo, the team was able to see at exactly which point in time the calcium tells our heart muscle cells to contract and then become coordinated enough to produce a heartbeat.
>
> The team also found that this initiation of beating was essential for the heart to develop properly at an early stage and that a protein called NCX1 plays a key role in the generation of the calcium signals needed to produce the beating action of the heart.
>
> The heart is the first organ to form during pregnancy and is critical in providing oxygen and nutrients to the developing embryo. The process of heart development is highly conserved between mammalian species, meaning that these findings may add considerably to our understanding of how the human heart develops.

Abortion is another one of those issues where conservatives are determined to abide by what the progress of science reveals, while liberals are determined to block out what science reveals.

Here is a nice video that shows how unborn children develop in the womb:

From the moment of conception, a new set of human DNA is formed, different from the mother, different from the father. And already the little unborn child is in relationship with his or her mother. He or she is depending on her to honor her obligation to him or her, because it was she who chose to have sex, and who chose the man to have sex with, and who chose when in the relationship to have sex with him.

Those of us who are Christians have always believed that abortion was morally wrong, going write back to the beginning of the Christian faith.

This is from Birds of the Air.

Summary:

> Recently I came across a reading of the Didache. "The *what*?" you may ask. The Didache is a book written somewhere in the first or second century. For a long time it was up for consideration as Scripture. It was believed to be the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Eventually it was agreed that the book was an excellent book, but not inspired Scripture. So I was pleased to be able to download this admirable book containing good teachings from the early Church fathers.
>
> The book seemed to be largely a lot of quotes from Scripture. You'll learn the basic rules of Christianity — "First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself." You'll learn that "grave sins" are forbidden, like adultery, murder, fornication, and so on. (They specifically include pederasty in the list.) There are instructions regarding teachers, prophets, Christian assembly, and so on. Lots of the normal, good stuff. But, since this was written sometime

> prior to 200 AD, I was somewhat surprised at this instruction: “You shall not murder a child by abortion” (Didache, Ch 2).

Christians really would benefit from looking at the moral values of the early church. These days, we tend to decide what is right and wrong based on our feelings, including the feelings we have when other people like us or don’t like us. But deciding things based on your feelings was not real popular with the earliest Christians. They decided what to do based on what was morally right, and they always protected the weak rather than favoring the selfishness and hedonism of the strong.

One the reasons I could never be an atheist is that I would have to shut my eyes to science, and not let science provide me with the facts that undergird my reasoning about moral issues. Most of the atheists I know don’t care about science. They just want to do what makes them feel good, and they don’t care who else gets hurt.

Pakistan delays ruling on death penalty for Christian woman accused of blasphemy

October 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats think that the real threat to America is not radical Islamic terrorism

This story appeared in several Christian sources, but I went looking to find the details in a far left source: Al-Jazeera.

Excerpt:

> Pakistan's Supreme Court has delayed an appeal into the country's most notorious blasphemy case against a Christian mother on death row since 2010, after one of the judges stepped down.
>
> […]Bibi was convicted and sentenced to hang in 2010 after an argument with a Muslim woman over a bowl of water. Her supporters maintain her innocence and insist it was a personal dispute.
>
> But successive appeals have been rejected, and if the Supreme Court bench upholds Bibi's conviction, her only recourse will be a direct appeal to the president for clemency.
>
> […]Rights groups complain that the controversial legislation is often abused to carry out personal vendettas, mainly against minority Christians.

Now would be a good time to pray for Asia Bibi.

I saw another interesting story in the news that I think shows why we need to be more hawkish in our foreign policy with nations like Pakistan and Iran.

ABC News reports:

> The destroyer USS Mason fired defensive countermeasures in response to what may have been incoming missiles, a defense official said . The ship had been

> attacked two times before in the past week, which triggered retaliatory strikes against radars used by Houthi rebels in those attacks. The Pentagon is investigating the incident.
>
> "A U.S. Strike Group transiting international waters in the Red Sea detected possible inbound missile threats and deployed appropriate defensive measures," said a U.S. defense official. "Post event assessment is ongoing. All U.S. warships and vessels in the area are safe."
>
> The destroyer USS Nitze and the USS Ponce, an afloat forward staging area ship, were close to the Mason at the time.
>
> U.S. officials had said earlier Sunday that the Mason had come under attack from two inbound missiles that originated in Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen.
>
> […]**The Houthis are an Iranian-backed rebel group that in January 2015 overthrew the Yemeni government.** Since March 2015, they have been fighting a Saudi-led coalition that intervened militarily in Yemen to restore that government to power.

You'll recall that Obama decided to give Iran a $1.7 billion ransom, $400 million of it in cash, in order to help them with their sponsorship of terrorism and their nuclear weapon development. Perhaps the missiles fired at our ships were bought with money from U.S. taxpayers, funneled to the Houthis via Iran? Thanks, Obama.

Obama is also bringing in over a hundred thousand Muslim refugees (but almost no Christian refugees) tot the United States, and giving them green cards. There was just a news story about that, reported in the Houston Chronicle.

Excerpt:

> A Houston man who pledged his allegiance to ISIS and plotted to detonate homemade bombs in local shopping malls pleaded guilty Monday to a terrorism-related charge.
>
> Omar Faraj Saeed Al Hardan, a 24-year-old father, stockpiled circuitry components, wireless remotes and other bomb-making implements in his west Houston apartment, according to court documents.
>
> "I want to blow myself up. I want to travel with the Mujahidin," he once said, according to prosecutors. "I want to travel to be with those who are against America. I am against America."
>
> […]Al Hardan originally entered the country as an Iraqi refugee in 2009. **He gained legal permanent residence in 2011 and settled in the Houston area.**

Wow, he got a green card in 2 years. People who can speak English who come here with advanced degrees to work, pay taxes and follow the law, have to wait over a decade for a green card. But this refugee got right in at the head of the line. Obama priorities.

Well, what is the Democrat attitude to these domestic terrorists? Is it that the

government needs to crack down to protect the public? Of course not. The bigoted taxpayers are not their main concern.

The Daily Caller reported on leaked Clinton e-mails reveal the standard Democrat attitude to domestic terrorism committed by radicalized Muslims:

> **After Syed Farook was identified as one of the San Bernardino terrorists, Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman expressed dismay that Farook had an ethnic-sounding name rather than a stereotypical white one, newly released emails show.**
>
> "Better if a guy named Sayeed Farouk [sic] was reporting that a guy named Christopher Hayes was the shooter," Podesta wrote in a Dec. 2, 2015 email to Karen Finney, a Clinton campaign spokeswoman.
>
> He was referring to white MSNBC host Christopher Hayes, who had reported on Twitter that Farook was identified as one of the San Bernardino shooters.
>
> **"Damn," was Finney's response to the tweet, which she forwarded to Podesta.**

That's Hillary Clinton's view of radical Islam.

So, is there a plan to address Christians in Pakistan getting the death penalty for being Christian, missile attacks against Navy ships by Iran-backed groups, and domestic terrorism here at home? Yes, Obama's attorney general, Loretta Lynch has a plan for dealing with radical Islam. This is the great plan that moral relativists on the secular left are offering to address radical Islam. Are you ready?

Here it is from the Daily Wire:

> Speaking to the audience at the Muslim Advocates' 10th anniversary dinner Thursday, Lynch said her "greatest fear" is the "incredibly disturbing rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric" in America and vowed to prosecute any guilty of what she deemed violence-inspiring speech.
>
> "The fear that you have just mentioned is in fact **my greatest fear** as a prosecutor, as someone who is sworn to the protection of all of the American people, which is that the rhetoric will be accompanied by acts of violence," she said.
>
> […]After touting the numbers of "investigations into acts of anti-Muslim hatred" and "bigoted actions" against Muslims launched by her DOJ, Lynch suggested the Constitution does not protect "actions predicated on violent talk" and pledged to prosecute those responsible for such actions.

Democrat priorities, American voters.

Sean Carroll debates William Lane Craig on cosmology and God’s existence

October 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here’s the video of the debate:

Carroll was as good of a speaker as Craig in terms of style. Very easy to listen to, very quick on his feet, very civil. There was no clear winner on style.

It was difficult to assess the truth value of scientific points being made, especially for the layperson. I explained a few of them in my posts earlier this week, but I think laypeople might struggle with them if they are hearing about these things for the first time.

A couple of Craig’s slides: (click for larger images)

Slide 1 of 2:

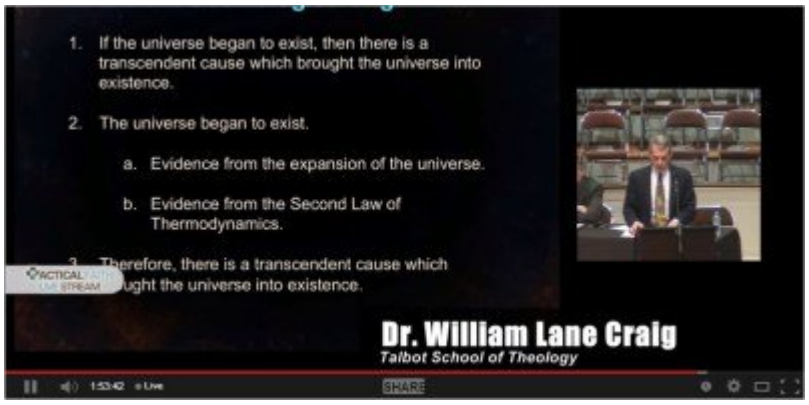

Dr. Craig slide #1 of 2

Slide 2 of 2:

Dr. Craig slide #2 of 2

Quick summary: (this is not complete, because I couldn't get everything they were saying noted)

Dr. Craig defended two arguments: 1) the kalam cosmological argument and the fine-tuning argument.

Dr. Craig supported the origin of the universe with 1) the expansion of the universe and 2) the second law of thermodynamics.

Dr. Craig said that the BGV theorem supports a beginning for the universe.

Dr. Craig said that the consensus of scientists did not accept Carroll's naturalistic cosmology, quoting Stephen Hawking in support.

Dr. Craig said that multiverse models fall victim to the Boltzmann brain problem, where we should observe Boltzmann brains coming into existence and then phasing out again far more probably than embodied minds. But we observe embodied minds, and no Boltzmann brains.

Dr. Carroll said that science cannot study metaphysical questions.

Dr. Carroll said that science is about making models that may or may not be consistent with the experimental data.

Dr. Carroll said that the BGV theorem does not support a beginning for the universe.

Dr. Carroll proposed 17 alternative cosmologies, but did not provide a shred of scientific evidence for any of them, the way that Craig did for the standard model.

Dr. Carroll refuted Dr. Craig's citation of Stephen Hawking, and Craig yielded the point.

Dr. Carroll speculated that science might progress to the point where the fine-tuning can be explained without an intelligent cause, and he gave an example of where that happened (inflation).

Dr. Craig argued that all 17 of the models suggested by Carroll either conflicted with evidence, had serious problems or did require a beginning.

Dr. Craig argued that Carroll's own model required a beginning.

Dr. Craig argued that Carroll's own model fell victim to the Boltzmann brain problem.

Dr. Craig argued that Carroll's own model violated the second law of thermodynamics.

Dr. Craig re-stated his point that the baby universe spawning in Carroll's model was

speculative and incomplete, and cited Christopher Weaver's work.

Dr. Carroll denied that things that pop into being out of nothing require a transcendent cause.

Dr. Carroll reiterated that science can only make naturalistic models, and that he did not have to answer questions about ultimate causes.

Dr. Carroll showed a photo of Alan Guth expressing his opinion that the universe is "probably" eternal. No evidence was given for this assertion.

Dr. Carroll said that the fine-tuning was not done in an optimal way, because one fine-tuned value was lower than it needed to be, and it should be exactly what it needed to be if God did it.

Dr. Carroll said that a finely-tuned universe is more probably in naturalism than in theism, because God can do anything he wants and doesn't need a fine-tuned universe.

Dr. Carroll said he would stop defending his model now, and would instead defend Aguirre-Gratton.

Dr. Craig gave three reasons why the universe popping into being out of nothing requires a transcendent cause.

First, he said that nothing cannot cause anything to happen, because nothing is nothing.

Second, he said that if things pop into being out of nothing, then why don't we see it happening all the time with other things.

Third, he said that we have no reason to dismiss the causal principle, especially when it is the basis of scientific inquiry and has been so fruitful in the progress of science.

Dr. Craig reiterated that baby universes in Carroll's model would be dominated by Boltzmann brains, and we don't observe that.

Dr. Craig said that even on the quantum gravity models that Carroll mentioned, there would still be a beginning.

Dr. Carroll said that Craig mustn't say "popped into being" but instead that "there was a first moment of time".

Dr. Carroll said that his model does indeed violate the second law of thermodynamics "YES!".

At this point Carroll stopped talking about the topic of the debate and started expressing personal opinions about religion. It's funny how often atheists do this in debates.

Dr. Carroll said that most theists don't believe in God because of cosmology, but because of community and feelings.

Dr. Carroll said that science had learned a lot in the last 2000 years, so theism was false.

Dr. Carroll said that most philosophers don't think that God exists, so theism was false.

Dr. Carroll said microscopes and telescopes were absent 2000 years ago, so theism was false.

Dr. Carroll said that religion should be about community and feelings, not about what is

true.

Conclusion:

My conclusion was that Carroll lost because he is just satisfied to throw theories out and not to argue that they are true by citing evidence. Carroll never seemed to be interested in finding out what is true, but instead he just wanted to tell a story that didn't include God, and assert that by Occam's Razor, his story was a better explanation. I am not impressed with theoretical speculations, although the layperson might be. I kept waiting for him to respond to Craig's points about how his model was falsified by experimental evidence and observations, e.g. – the Boltzmann brains or the baby universe generation, and he never cited the evidence I wanted him to cite. Craig did have some evidence for his views, but he could have been stronger in making his case. He could have shown the e-mail from Vilenkin that stated that he had understood the BGV theorem, and was using it correctly, for example.

For me the winning side comes down to evidence. The standard model is the standard model because of scientific evidence. Until that evidence is overturned, then speculative models are of no interest to anyone who is evidence-driven. Speculations are not science. A philosophical presupposition of metaphysical naturalism is not science.

If you want to see a good lecture on scientific evidence related to cosmology, then there is the particle physicist Michael Strauss lecture on cosmology and fine-tuning at Stanford University and his more recent lecture at the University of Texas. Note that Strauss is an experimental physicist, not a theoretical physicist like Carroll.

Here's another review of the debate by Randy Everist of Possible Worlds blog. He explains the back-and-forth over Boltzmann brains and the BGV theorem in more detail.

Democrat operative resigns after being exposed by Project Veritas hidden cam sting

October 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's talk about the videos. There are two so far that have been released, with more to come.

The first video is about Democrats manufacturing violence at Trump rallies. (Warning: vulgar language)

Description:

> **Published on Oct 17, 2016**

> In this explosive new video from Project Veritas Action, a Democratic dirty tricks operative unwittingly provides a dark money trail to the DNC and Clinton campaign. The video documents violence at Trump rallies that is traced to the Clinton campaign and the DNC through a process called birddogging.

Video:

The second video is about Democrats engaging in voter fraud. (Warning: vulgar language)

Description:

> **Published on Oct 18, 2016**

> In the second video of James O'Keefe's new explosive series on the DNC and Hillary Clinton campaign, Democratic party operatives tell us how to successfully commit voter fraud on a massive scale. Scott Foval, who has since been fired, admits that the Democrats have been rigging elections for fifty years.

Video:

When O'Keefe mentioned that he was going to post these videos, Twitter suspended O'Keefe's Twitter account. He was able to get it reactivated after a massive landslide of complaints by his supporters.

Google, a far-left organization that censors conservatives, decided to keep this video off of their YouTube Trending section.

O'Keefe tweeted:

Google censors O'Keefe video from U.S. YouTube Trending section
(Click for larger image)

I personally verified this on Tuesday afternoon, confirming that videos with far fewer hits (around 100,000 views) were listed in the trending section, but not O'Keefe's first sting video, which had over 2.6 million views in only 24 hours . The page view count is much higher now: 3.4 million for the first video, and 564K for the second video, as of Tuesday night.

What about leftist CNN?

Well, I have blogged about CNN's record of supporting the Democrats with biased coverage dozens of times on this blog. But there is one person at CNN who is not a complete hack, and that's Anderson Cooper. He covered the videos on Tuesday night:

Anderson Cooper covers James O'Keefe video on CNN

And the story was actually posted on CNN at the time that I was writing this post:

> A Democratic operative whose organization was helping Hillary Clinton's campaign announced Tuesday that he would be "stepping back" from the campaign after an edited video suggested that he and other staffers hired people to attend Donald Trump's campaign rallies and incite violence.
>
> Robert Creamer — husband of Illinois Rep. Jan Schakowsky — announced his resignation in a statement after conservative activist James O'Keefe released a video under his organization Project Veritas Action, which showed Creamer and other operatives purportedly discussing methods for inciting violence at rallies for the Republican nominee.
>
> […]Creamer was helping the Democratic National Committee with Clinton's campaign while working for Democracy Partners, a progressive consulting group. He is also the head of a group called Mobilize, which contracted with the DNC.
>
> […]He confirmed that he was referring to the Clinton campaign, with which he was "fully integrated."
>
> […]"I mean, honestly, it's not hard to get some of these a——- to pop off," [Scott] Foval purportedly says at one point in the video. "It's a matter of showing up, to want to get into their rally, in a Planned Parenthood T-shirt. Or 'Trump is a Nazi,' you know. You can message to draw them out, and draw them out to punch you."

In the past, Cooper has responded to calls by conservatives to cover stories that are only being covered by individual bloggers, conservative talk shows, and maybe Fox News Channel.

Psychiatrist Paul McHugh explains the troubles with transgender activism

October 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle
In the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> The transgendered suffer a disorder of "assumption" like those in other disorders familiar to psychiatrists. With the transgendered, the disordered assumption is that the individual differs from what seems given in nature—namely one's maleness or femaleness. Other kinds of disordered assumptions are held by those who suffer from anorexia and bulimia nervosa, where the assumption that departs from physical reality is the belief by the dangerously thin that they are overweight.
>
> With body dysmorphic disorder, an often socially crippling condition, the individual is consumed by the assumption "I'm ugly." These disorders occur in subjects who have come to believe that some of their psycho-social conflicts or problems will be resolved if they can change the way that they appear to others. Such ideas work like ruling passions in their subjects' minds and tend to be accompanied by a solipsistic argument.
>
> For the transgendered, this argument holds that one's feeling of "gender" is a conscious, subjective sense that, being in one's mind, cannot be questioned by others. The individual often seeks not just society's tolerance of this "personal truth" but affirmation of it. Here rests the support for "transgender equality," the demands for government payment for medical and surgical treatments, and for

> access to all sex-based public roles and privileges.
>
> With this argument, advocates for the transgendered have persuaded several states—including California, New Jersey and Massachusetts—to pass laws barring psychiatrists, even with parental permission, from striving to restore natural gender feelings to a transgender minor. That government can intrude into parents' rights to seek help in guiding their children indicates how powerful these advocates have become.
>
> How to respond? Psychiatrists obviously must challenge the solipsistic concept that what is in the mind cannot be questioned. Disorders of consciousness, after all, represent psychiatry's domain; declaring them off-limits would eliminate the field. Many will recall how, in the 1990s, an accusation of parental sex abuse of children was deemed unquestionable by the solipsists of the "recovered memory" craze.
>
> You won't hear it from those championing transgender equality, but controlled and follow-up studies reveal fundamental problems with this movement. When children who reported transgender feelings were tracked without medical or surgical treatment at both Vanderbilt University and London's Portman Clinic, 70%-80% of them spontaneously lost those feelings. Some 25% did have persisting feelings; what differentiates those individuals remains to be discerned.
>
> We at Johns Hopkins University—which in the 1960s was the first American medical center to venture into "sex-reassignment surgery"—launched a study in the 1970s comparing the outcomes of transgendered people who had the surgery with the outcomes of those who did not. Most of the surgically treated patients described themselves as "satisfied" by the results, but their subsequent psycho-social adjustments were no better than those who didn't have the surgery. And so at Hopkins we stopped doing sex-reassignment surgery, since producing a "satisfied" but still troubled patient seemed an inadequate reason for surgically amputating normal organs.
>
> It now appears that our long-ago decision was a wise one. A 2011 study at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden produced the most illuminating results yet regarding the transgendered, evidence that should give advocates pause. The long-term study—up to 30 years—followed 324 people who had sex-reassignment surgery. The study revealed that beginning about 10 years after having the surgery, the transgendered began to experience increasing mental difficulties. Most shockingly, their suicide mortality rose almost 20-fold above the comparable nontransgender population. This disturbing result has as yet no explanation but probably reflects the growing sense of isolation reported by the aging transgendered after surgery. The high suicide rate certainly challenges the surgery prescription.

We seem to have this popular idea in our culture now that the loving thing to do in every case is to just affirm whatever anyone feels like doing. Want to have sex-reassignment

surgery? No problem. Want to be surgically altered to look like a cat? No problem. Want to have an amputation because you don't like your arm? No problem. Want to have taxpayer-provided heroine injected by nurses? No problem. Want to adopt a lifestyle that involves having risky sex with hundreds of unprotected partners? We'll wave a rainbow flag for you. Want to get drunk and have sex before you (and they) have even graduated high school? Here are free condoms and free abortions to fix anything that might go wrong.

The really, really bad thing that we must never, ever do, apparently, is to tell someone "it's wrong".

I am really struggling to understand why telling people NOT to do things that are bad for them is a bad thing. I set boundaries on myself to keep myself out of trouble. Why can't I let other people know what they are? Why do I have to pay taxes so that other people can afford to do risky and/or immoral things that I would never do?

DePaul University bans pro-life poster that read “Unborn Lives Matter”

October 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

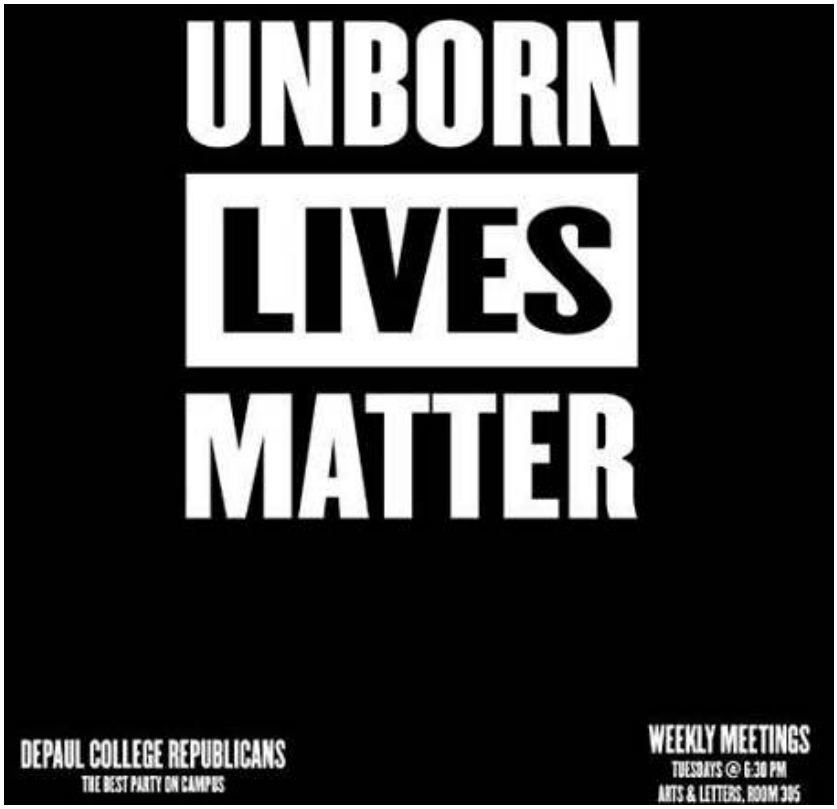

Unborn Lives Matter poster

This article is from Life News.

Excerpt:

> A Catholic college recently banned students from hanging a pro-life poster with the words “Unborn Lives Matter” on campus, claiming that the language could “provoke” other students.
>
> The DePaul University College Republicans created the simple black and white poster to advertise their club meetings and recently submitted it to administrators for approval,according to the Daily Wire.
>
> The poster design was passed all the way up to university President Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider who rejected it for being too similar to “Black Lives Matter” and linked the pro-life message to “bigotry that occurs under the cover of free speech.”
>
> “Once again, DePaul University has shown its true colors,” club Vice President John Minster told The DailyWire. “Rather than standing up for the pro-life and free speech ethics this ‘Catholic’ university claims to uphold, administration has bent the knee to radical leftists, banning more speech despite the pro-life message.”
>
> […]Minster noted that the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, or FIRE,

> has described DePaul University as one of the worst schools for free speech in the U.S.
>
> DePaul also has come under fire for going against Catholic values by promoting abortion. Last fall, a Cardinal Newman Society report found that DePaul and a number of other Catholic universities promoted or had connections to the abortion chain Planned Parenthood.

This isn't the first time that DePaul University has gone after a pro-life student.

Excerpt:

> > The head of a conservative student organization at DePaul University has been sanctioned by the university and could be expelled after he released the names of vandals who destroyed a pro-life flag display.
> >
> > Kristopher Del Campo, the chairman of the Young Americans for Freedom chapter, was found guilty by the university on two counts – "Disorderly, Violent, Intimidating or Dangerous Behavior to Self or Others" and "Judicial Process Compliance."
> >
> > DePaul University did not return calls seeking comment.
> >
> > Last January Del Campo and other pro-life students received permission from the university to erect a pro-life display featuring 500 flags. **Vandals later destroyed the display – stuffing a number of the flags into trash cans.**
> >
> > The university's public safety department launched an investigation and eventually identified 13 students who confessed to the crime. Those names were then released by the university to Del Campo.
> >
> > On Feb. 5 the national Young Americans for Freedom organization posted the names of the vandals on their website. The posting generated negative comments directed at the vandals – and the university held Del Campo responsible.
> >
> > Three days later, Del Campo was informed that he had violated DePaul's Code of Student Responsibility. He was formally charged ten days later.

And of course, we have the case at Marquette University, where a professor was suspended for defending a student's right to disagree with same-sex marriage. He could still lose his job over what he did.

Catholic universities? I think not.

The smoking gun: State Department pressured FBI to unclassify Clinton e-mails

October 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

The far left Washington Post reports:

> FBI official Brian McCauley had been trying for weeks to get his contact at the State Department to approve his request to put two bureau employees back in Baghdad.
>
> Around May 2015, Patrick Kennedy finally called back.
>
> "He said: 'Brian. Pat Kennedy. I need a favor,' " McCauley recalled in an interview Tuesday. "I said: 'Good, I need a favor. I need our people back in Baghdad.' "
>
> Then Kennedy, a longtime State Department official, explained what he wanted: "There's an email. I don't believe it has to be classified."
>
> The email was from Hillary Clinton's private server, and Kennedy wanted the FBI to change its determination that it contained classified information.
>
> […]The purported "quid pro quo" between McCauley and Kennedy was first reported over the weekend by Fox News and the Weekly Standard and confirmed Monday when the FBI released dozens of interview summaries from its criminal investigation into Clinton's use of a private email server while she was secretary of state.

> **The interview summaries showed that Kennedy lobbied multiple bureau officials to change their minds about classifying one email on Clinton's server. At the time, the State Department was reviewing Clinton's emails for release under the Freedom of Information Act and had sent several to the FBI for review.**

Fox News and the Weekly Standard first reported on the story because they are not in the tank for Hillary Clinton.

Fox News notes that the FBI dragged their feet on releasing the e-mails showing the quid pro quo proposal:

> "Left to their own devices the FBI would never have provided these [records] to Congress and waited until the last minute. This is the third batch because [the FBI] didn't think they were relevant," Chaffetz said.

And the Weekly Standard had all the details:

> The FBI official spoke with Kennedy and Kennedy raised the possibility of keeping at least one Clinton email from public disclosure by obtaining a "B9" exemption under the Freedom of Information Act, a rarely used exemption that refers to **"geological and geophysical information and data."** One email in particular concerned Kennedy and, according to the FBI summary, providing a B9 exemption "would allow him to archive the document in the basement of the department of state never to be seen again." The FBI official told Kennedy that he would look into the email if Kennedy would authorize a pending request for additional FBI personnel in Iraq.
>
> A summary of an interview with the section chief of the FBI records management division provides further evidence of Kennedy's attempts to have the classification of some sensitive emails changed. The FBI records official, whose job includes making determinations on classification, told investigators that he was approached by his colleague in international operations after the initial discussion with Kennedy. The FBI records official says that his colleague "pressured" him to declassify an email "in exchange for a quid pro quo," according to the interview summary. "In exchange for making the email unclassified State would reciprocate by allowing the FBI to place more agents in countries where they are presently forbidden." The request was denied.

The Weekly Standard outlines a few more cases where Kennedy pressured the FBI to mark e-mails as not classified.

More:

> Kennedy has been a central figure in the Benghazi and email controversies. He was involved in the controversial decisions not to bolster security at the Benghazi diplomatic outpost despite repeated requests for addition security. And although Kennedy is responsible for ensuring State Department compliance with federal

> records requirements, he communicated regularly with Clinton using her private email. In a sworn deposition in connection with Freedom of Information Act litigation brought by Judicial Watch, Kennedy testified that he exchanged dozens of emails with Clinton and never thought to ask how the private emails would be archived in a manner consistent with federal law. “It’s not something that I ever focused on,” Kennedy testified.

He never thought to ask. It was not something that he ever focused on.

Of course, this is the same FBI that declined to prosecute Clinton for actions that would have been prosecuted if anyone else had committed them – and others have indeed been prosecuted.

Self-described “hack” from Politico e-mails Clinton campaign to approve his story on Hillary

October 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

Nobody in the know regards Politico as a genuine news outfit. There have just been too many examples of flagrant media bias from them to benefit Democrats.

Here is the latest example, reported by Power Line blog:

> One can debate whether the WikiLeaks documents pertaining to Hillary Clinton and her campaign have produced a “smoking gun.” My view is that they haven’t, not yet anyway. But the leaked documents corroborate important portions of the conservative critique of Clinton and of the mainstream media.
>
> The latest example is an April 30, 2015 email in which Politico’s chief political correspondent Glenn Thrush asked John Podesta to approve his writing pre-publication. Alex Pfeiffer of the Daily Caller has the details.
>
> Thrush’s story, about (get this) Hillary Clinton’s supposed fundraising woes, seems designed to generate sympathy, if not funds, for the Clinton campaign. But just to make sure his article was fine by Team Clinton, Thrush emailed it to Podesta in advance of publication. He asked Podesta to “tell me if I fu*ked up anything.”
>
> Thrush stated: “Because I have become a hack I will send u the whole section that pertains to u.” He added: “Please don’t share or tell anyone I did this.”

> Podesta responded that there were “no problems” with Thrush’s story.

By the way, there is a “smoking gun” in the e-mails, as I blogged in my previous post from yesterday afternoon.

If the mainstream news media were doing their jobs, we would be hearing all about what the WikiLeaks e-mails tell us about Hillary Clinton. But instead, we get this:

Let’s review peer-reviewed studies on whether there is any media bias, and which way the media bias goes.

Here’s a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS’ “Evening News,” The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News’ “Special Report With Brit Hume” and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the “NewsHour With Jim Lehrer.” CNN’s “NewsNight With Aaron Brown” and ABC’s “Good Morning America” were a close second and third.
>
> “Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill,” Groseclose said. “If these newscasters weren’t centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators.”
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was “Special Report With Brit Hume” on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC’s “World News Tonight” and NBC’s “Nightly News” to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> “If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox’s ‘Special Report’ as ABC’s ‘World News’ and NBC’s ‘Nightly News,’ then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news,” said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia.”

Here’s a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32%

> vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

Those are the facts.

I presented the two academic studies to a Democrat I know who was complaining about Fox News, and he said that Harvard University, UCLA are biased against progressives. He is an avid reader of Politico, along with the UK Guardian, the New York Times, and MSNBC. I'm sure that they would all agree with him, that those published, peer-reviewed studies are from conservative hacks.

If you accept Jesus and become a Christian, will God make you happy?

October 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Navy SEAL Matthew "Axe" Axelson

This is a wonderful, wonderful post from Amy Hall, who writes for the Stand to Reason blog.

She writes:

> I had a brief interaction with an atheist on Twitter a couple of weeks ago that unexpectedly turned to the issue of suffering when she said:
>
> You clearly never had a time you were hurt. I don't mean sick. I don't mean heart broken. I mean literally a near death experience or rape or abusive relationship…. You can keep floating on a [expletive] cloud thinking Jesus will do everything for you but it's a lie. What makes you so special?
>
> That surprised me at first because it didn't seem to have anything to do with the tweet she was responding to, and I was confused as to why she would assume I'd never been through anything traumatic. But then in subsequent tweets, when she revealed she had been raped, it became clear that her trauma had played a central role in her becoming an outspoken, obviously angry "antitheist." She's a self-described antitheist now because she thinks Christianity teaches Jesus "will do everything for you" to give you a perfect life, and now she knows that's a lie. The rape proved her understanding of Christianity false.
>
> So it made sense for her to reason that since I believe Christianity is true, I must still be under the delusion that Jesus is making my life special, which means I obviously never encountered any evil or suffering to shake that delusion.

All right, readers. I don't want any of you to be thinking that if you become a Christian that these things should be expected to happen:

- you will feel happy all the time

- you will be able to sense God's secret plan for your life through your feelings
- God's secret plan for your life will automatically work, even though it's crazy
- God will give you a perfect spouse and lots of money without you having to do any work
- you get permission to do things that that make you happy, even if they are expressly forbidden by the Bible
- you don't have to do anything that makes you feel bad (e.g. – go to work), because God wants you to be happy

No! Where do people get this idea that if they convert to Christianity, then God will become their cosmic butler?

Amy has the answer: (emphasis mine)

> Hear me, everyone: **This is a failure of the church.**
>
> A friend of mine who was deeply suffering once said to me that many Christians are in for "an epic letdown" when they realize their preconceived notions about what God is expected to do for us are false. Pastors who preach a life-improvement Jesus are leading people down this precarious path to disillusionment.
>
> If suffering disproves your Christianity, you've missed Christianity. The Bible is filled with the suffering of those whom God loves. The central event of the Bible is one of suffering. Love involves suffering. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." That means suffering.

It's the church. It's all the singing about happy things and having of happy feelings and happy preaching designed to make us feel good. I would say the comforting devotional reading doesn't help to make us any tougher or more practical, either. People seem to use Bible study and devotion as a way to artificially create good feelings of happiness, peace and comfort, instead of just *doing hard things to serve God*. I don't think it's a "spiritual" Christian thing to read A. W. Tozer, etc. just so that you can feel comforted and spiritual. That stuff just gives you a false sense of safety about your precarious situation. God's job is not to prevent you from suffering. In fact, even if you make really smart, practical decisions, you can expect to get creamed *anyway*.

Please take 15 minutes and read the book of 1 Peter in the New Testament.

Here's a summary from GotQuestions.org:

> **Purpose of Writing:** 1 Peter is a letter from Peter to the believers who had been dispersed throughout the ancient world and were under intense persecution. If anyone understood persecution, it was Peter. He was beaten, threatened, punished and jailed for preaching the Word of God. He knew what it took to endure without bitterness, without losing hope and in great faith living an obedient, victorious life. This knowledge of living hope in Jesus was the message

> and Christ's example was the one to follow.
>
> **Brief Summary:** Though this time of persecution was desperate, Peter reveals that it was actually a time to rejoice. He says to count it a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ, as their Savior suffered for them. This letter makes reference to Peter's personal experiences with Jesus and his sermons from the book of Acts. Peter confirms Satan as the great enemy of every Christian but the assurance of Christ's future return gives the incentive of hope.
>
> **Practical Application:** The assurance of eternal life is given to all Christians. One way to identify with Christ is to share in His suffering. To us that would be to endure insults and slurs from those who call us "goodie two shoes" or "holier than thou." This is so minor compared to what Christ suffered for us on the Cross. Stand up for what you know and believe is right and rejoice when the world and Satan aim to hurt you.

Recently, I blogged about how suffering is compatible with an all-powerful God, so you might want to read that too if you missed it.

Reported cases of sexually-transmitted diseases reaches record high

October 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

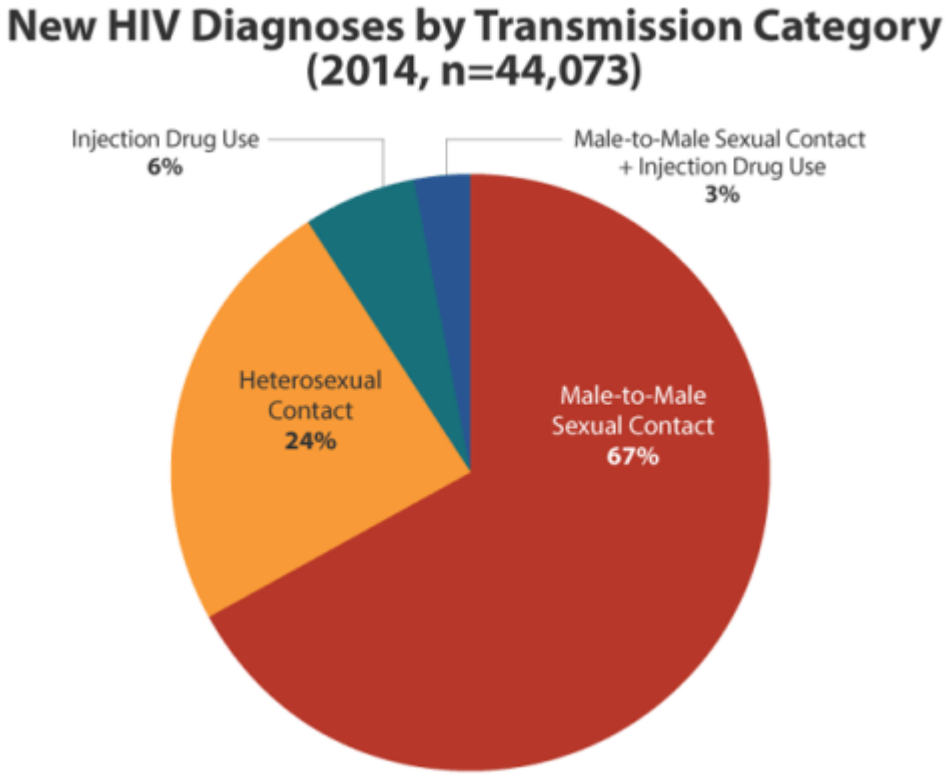

HIV infection rates from Center for Disease Control
This is from the far-left CNN, of all places.

Excerpt:

> There were more reported cases of sexually transmitted diseases last year than ever before in the United States, according to the latest STD surveillance report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
>
> The annual report, which was released on Wednesday, showed that the rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis — the three most commonly reported STDs in the nation — increased between 2014 and 2015, reaching an all-time high.
>
> Reported cases of primary and secondary syphilis rose by 19%, gonorrhea cases rose by 12.8%, and chlamydia cases rose by 5.9%, from 2014. All three STDs are curable with antibiotics, but most infections go undiagnosed and untreated, according to the CDC.

What is interesting is how overspending by bureaucrats on social welfare, amnesty, refugees, etc. has left less money to combat sexually-transmitted diseases:

> In a foreword to the new report, Bolan wrote that some 21 health department STD clinics across the country have closed due to many state and local programs experiencing budget cuts. Therefore, fewer people have access to the testing and

> treatment resources provided by such clinics.
>
> Meanwhile, as more STD cases emerge, treating infections costs the country nearly $16 billion annually.

With the national debt doubled from 10 to 20 trillion under Obama, Obama's free-spirited supporters can look forward to not having access to the "health care" they now need.

Not surprisingly, the reckless young people who voted for Obama are the most reckless with sex. And so they are the most affected by STDs:

> Young people, 15 to 24 years old, accounted for nearly two-thirds of last year's chlamydia diagnoses — and half of the gonorrhea diagnoses.

Not only are there more STD infections, but the diseases have adapted to beat our antibiotics.

The Center for Disease Control reports:

> Gonorrhea has progressively developed resistance to the antibiotic drugs prescribed to treat it. Following the spread of gonococcal fluoroquinolone resistance, the cephalosporin antibiotics have been the foundation of recommended treatment for gonorrhea. The emergence of cephalosporin-resistant gonorrhea would significantly complicate the ability of providers to treat gonorrhea successfully, since we have few antibiotic options left that are simple, well-studied, well-tolerated and highly effective. It is critical to continuously monitor antibiotic resistance in Neisseria gonorrhoeae and encourage research and development of new treatment regimens.

Gonorrhea is the second most prominent STD, right behind chlamydia.

One reason for the upsurge in STDs might be society's growing celebration of male homosexuality.

The Center for Disease Control explains:

> P&S syphilis among men who have sex with men (MSM) has been increasing since at least 2000. In 2014, rates of P&S syphilis increased among MSM, who account for 83 percent of reported cases among men when the sex of the partner is known. Also concerning is that more than half of MSM (51 percent) diagnosed with syphilis in 2014 were also HIV-positive. Infection with syphilis can cause sores on the genitals, which make it easier to transmit and acquire HIV.
>
> Syphilis is currently the only STD for which information on the sex of the sex partner is reported. However, a growing body of evidence indicates that MSM are experiencing similar increases in gonorrhea and chlamydia infections–underscoring the need to further understand what is contributing to the rise.
>
> Gay and bisexual men face a combination of social, epidemiologic, and individual risk factors that can fuel high levels of STDs. Higher prevalence of infection within sexual networks increases the likelihood of acquiring an STD with each

> sexual encounter.

And on a different CDC page:

> Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men made up an estimated 2% of the population but 55% of people living with HIV in the United States in 2013. If current diagnosis rates continue, 1 in 6 gay and bisexual men will be diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime, including 1 in 2 black/African American gay and bisexual men, 1 in 4 Hispanic/Latino gay and bisexual men, and 1 in 11 white gay and bisexual men.

The CDC's solution to this disparity is to ask for more taxpayer money, of course. No disapproval here, just take the money from the moral people and pay for the choices of the reckless people.

Right now, many people are freely choosing to engage in these behaviors, and to celebrate the lifestyles of those who engage in these behaviors, because they think that the government has unlimited taxpayer money to pay for all the costs of these decisions. Little do they know about the national debt, and what happens to "government-provided" health care when the interest rates on that debt increases. As a society, we have decided that it is better to be forgiving and compassionate when people make reckless, risky decisions. "Oh, we can just make the prudent people pay for the mess – they have money", the progressives say. And that works fine, until the money runs out, and people realize that the mean, judgmental, controlling bullies who were defending chastity, fidelity, marriage, moral standards and personal responsibility were right all along.

Clinton camp caught obstructing Congressional investigation

October 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

The Washington Free Beacon.

Excerpt:

> The congressional leader of a key House committee governing the use of technology announced on Thursday that Congress is taking unprecedented action to hold in contempt a computer company that supplied former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton with her private email server, which was since found to contain classified information in violation of federal protocol.
>
> Rep. Lamar Smith (R., Texas), chair of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, informed reporters that he is moving forward with procedures to hold in contempt Platte River Networks, a security firm that helped maintain Clinton's private servers.
>
> Smith announced that he is in possession of emails that show Clinton's lawyer instructed companies involved with the server to thwart an official investigation by Congress.
>
> **Platte River has "obstructed" investigations by Congress and failed to produce critical documents about the server's security vulnerabilities, according to Smith, who accused the firm of stonewalling Congress for**

> **months.**
>
> […]"After many weeks, months, we realized we were being stonewalled, we were not being given information," Smith told reporters on Capitol Hill. Platte River "continues to obstruct" the congressional probe into the "possible misuse" of Clinton's server, he said.
>
> "We do not take issuing a subpoena lightly, nor do we take holding someone in contempt lightly," Smith said. "Platte River continues to refuse to comply at the direction of Secretary Clinton. Regrettably, former Secretary Clinton has interfered with the committee's investigation."

Now might be a good time to review some of Hillary Clinton's big lies.

The Washington Times has a good list:

> Many of us remember the classic line from the "Seinfeld" show, that "it's not a lie if you believe it." Applying that theme to the evolution of Hillary Rodham, then Hillary Rodham Clinton, and now just plain Hillary Clinton, here are the notable accomplishments of her "public service" career:
>
> • Flunked the D.C. Bar Exam.
>
> • Was removed from her House Judiciary Committee staffer job because of incompetence and lying.
>
> • The Whitewater scandal.
>
> • Married a serial liar and cheater, who occasionally had sexual encounters with nonconsenting partners.
>
> **• Lied about "sniper fire" in an attempt to simulate exposure to danger in a war zone.**
>
> • The subject of a "vast right-wing conspiracy" that led to the impeachment and disbarment of her husband
>
> • Took crockery, furniture, artwork and other items from the White House — had to return and/or pay for them.
>
> • Said "what difference, at this point, does it make" about four brave people killed in Libya as a direct result of her failure to protect them on the anniversary of 9/11.
>
> • Totally ignored the structure and rules for the handling of sensitive national security information.
>
> • Amassed a personal fortune with "speaking fees" and payments from private sector political donors and foreign governments into transparent "foundations" in obvious exchange for future political favor.

The one in bold is my favorite.

Investors Business Daily has more details:

> Investigative reporter Sharyl Attkisson reminds us the secretary of state who blamed Benghazi on a video once made up a story about courage under fire in Bosnia.
>
> […]Former CBS reporter Sharyl Attkisson reminded the world of Hillary's tale of heroism in an interview with CBS Philadelphia affiliate WPHT morning host Chris Stigall last November, a tale told by the former first lady in her 2008 run against one Barack Obama.
>
> "I had come home from an overseas trip vacation, and my husband says, 'When you went to Bosnia 12 years ago with the first lady, were you shot at?,' and I'm like, 'No, I think I would know if I were shot at,'" Attkisson told Stigall of the 1996 trip to Bosnia with Hillary, first daughter Chelsea and celebrities Sinbad and Sheryl Crow.
>
> Candidate Clinton claimed in a 2008 speech in Washington and several subsequent interviews that she and Chelsea were forced to run for cover under hostile fire shortly after landing in Tuzla, Bosnia.
>
> "I remember landing under sniper fire," Clinton said. "There was supposed to be some kind of greeting ceremony at the airport, but instead we just ran with our heads down to get into the vehicles to get to our base."
>
> Her harrowing tale never happened, and Mrs. Clinton's faulty memory also forgot that there was a reporter on the trip who was taking notes and had a video of the event.
>
> "The video showed," Attkisson said, "and I thought this was a pretty good way to explain it — I put her in a box saying, 'We got off the plane and had to duck and run for cover and there was sniper fire' and then I show the video of what was really happening, and she's getting off the plane and she's waving, shaking hands with a little school girl."

Here's the video:

It shows that her essential character is like Walter Mitty – always imagining herself to be more heroic than she is. Thing is, Walter Mitty just day dreamed. Hillary tries to actually lie about it in public. Most of us outgrow this tendency to exaggerate in order to appear more important in our teens. Hillary never did.

Report: Clinton ally funded campaign of wife of FBI lead of e-mail probe

October 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

Here is a story that is sure to set back the Hillary Clinton campaign. (H/T Dad)

The Wall Street Journal reports:

> The political organization of Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, an influential Democrat with longstanding ties to Bill and Hillary Clinton, gave nearly $500,000 to the election campaign of the wife of an official at the Federal Bureau of Investigation who later helped oversee the investigation into Mrs. Clinton's email use.
>
> Campaign finance records show Mr. McAuliffe's political-action committee donated $467,500 to the 2015 state Senate campaign of Dr. Jill McCabe, who is married to Andrew McCabe, now the deputy director of the FBI.
>
> The Virginia Democratic Party, over which Mr. McAuliffe exerts considerable control, donated an additional $207,788 worth of support to Dr. McCabe's campaign in the form of mailers, according to the records. That adds up to slightly more than $675,000 to her candidacy from entities either directly under Mr. McAuliffe's control or strongly influenced by him. The figure represents more than a third of all the campaign funds Dr. McCabe raised in the effort.
>
> Mr. McAuliffe and other state party leaders recruited Dr. McCabe to run, according to party officials. She lost the election to incumbent Republican Dick

> Black.
>
> […]Among political candidates that year, Dr. McCabe was the third-largest recipient of funds from Common Good VA, the governor's PAC, according to campaign finance records.
>
> […]Mr. McAuliffe has been a central figure in the Clintons' political careers for decades. In the 1990s, he was Bill Clinton's chief fundraiser and he remains one of the couple's closest allies and public boosters. Mrs. Clinton appeared with him in northern Virginia in 2015 as he sought to increase the number of Democrats in the state legislature.
>
> **Dr. McCabe announced her candidacy in March 2015, the same month it was revealed that Mrs. Clinton had used a private server as secretary of state to send and receive government emails, a disclosure that prompted the FBI investigation.**

Do you ever wonder why the FBI declined to prosecute Clinton, even though less connected people were prosecuted and convicted for the same crimes? Maybe because this McCabe guy was very high up in the agency:

> At the time the investigation was launched in July 2015, Mr. McCabe was running the FBI's Washington, D.C., field office, which provided personnel and resources to the Clinton email probe.
>
> That investigation examined whether Mrs. Clinton's use of private email may have compromised national security by transmitting classified information in an insecure system. A review of Mrs. Clinton's emails concluded that 110 messages contained classified information. Mrs. Clinton has said she made a mistake but that she never sent or received messages that were marked classified.
>
> **At the end of July 2015, Mr. McCabe was promoted to FBI headquarters and assumed the No. 3 position at the agency. In February 2016, he became FBI Director James Comey's second-in-command.**
>
> **As deputy director, Mr. McCabe was part of the executive leadership team overseeing the Clinton email investigation…**

Naturally, the article contains lots of denials and disclaimers from the Clinton camp. Readers will have to make up their minds for themselves.

New study: doing housework adds 3 years to women's lives

October 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

The UK Daily Mail reports on a study sure to confound feminists.

Excerpt:

> It's probably not the most popular piece of health advice ever dished out – but researchers say that doing the housework can add years to your life.
>
> They found that women who clean, hoover and do the laundry are likely to live almost three years longer.

Hoovering is what British people call vacuuming.

More:

> The team from University Medical Centre Rotterdam found that a 55-year-old woman who does little around the house is likely to live to see her 83rd birthday – but that those who keep on top of the housework should live on to the age of 86.
>
> The benefit for men is much less marked. Their efforts with the loo brush will only buy them an extra year.
>
> But men who do the gardening live 2.7 years longer, while working outside the home has little effect on women.
>
> Dr Klodian Dhana, who led the research team, said the differences 'may partly be explained by the fact that men engaged in more gardening and women in domestic work'.
>
> The study of more than 7,000 men and women asked questions on lifestyle then

> followed them for decades.

Prior to this, we also saw studies about how marriages where women do more housework than men have higher frequency of sex.

Here's the press release from Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> Married men and women who divide household chores in traditional ways report having more sex than couples who share so-called men's and women's work, according to a new study co-authored by sociologists at the University of Washington.
>
> […]The new study, published in the February issue of the journal *American Sociological Review*, shows that sex isn't a bargaining chip. Instead, sex is linked to what types of chores each spouse completes.
>
> Couples who follow traditional gender roles around the house — wives doing the cooking, cleaning and shopping; men doing yard work, paying bills and auto maintenance — reported greater sexual frequency.

Prior to that study, there was this Norwegian study.

Excerpt:

> Couples who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a Norwegian study sure to get tongues wagging has shown.
>
> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled Equality in the Home, said.

The far left Wall Street Journal reports that marriages where the woman earns more are more unhappy:

> "A new study reveals that women's gains on the economic front may be contributing to a decline in the formation and stability of marriages," writes University of Chicago economist Richard Thaler in a New York Times column.
>
> The study, by three of Thaler's Chicago colleagues, "found that traditional views of gender identity, particularly the view that the right and proper role of the husband is to make more money than the wife, are affecting choices of whom to marry, how much to work, and even whether to stay married."
>
> […]Why are men averse to higher-income women? Perhaps because they understand that *women* are averse to *lower*-income men. Mating preferences, after all, are driven not only by attraction but by attainability. In theory all men should be attracted to supermodels; in practice few would have the confidence to

> ask one out.

Men, pay attention to these studies and choose wisely. Find out what you are designed to do in a marriage, and what women are designed to do. Train to do your jobs well, and pick a woman who not only does her jobs well, but wants you to do yours. And respects you for doing your jobs. Respect is more important to a man than the air he breathes.

A review of Hillary Clinton’s foreign policy record of achievements

October 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

This article is from the Washington Examiner.

Excerpt:

Iraq:

> […][W]hen the [Iraq] war was at a tipping point in 2007 and General David Petraeus advocated for a surge of U.S. forces to regain lost momentum, she voted against it.
>
> As secretary of state she failed to negotiate a residual force that would have prevented Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki from creating sectarian strife. The ensuing strife led to the creation of an irregular war between Sunni and Shia with the Islamic State growing from that turmoil.

Libya:

> Clinton considers the 2011 overthrow of Moammar Gadhafi in Libya to be one of her finest hours as secretary of state. President Obama considers it one of his worst failures. As secretary of state, she pushed for U.S. and NATO involvement against Gaddafi. When he was overthrown, there was no plan for follow-up governance. The result was instability, a huge refugee flow into southern Europe and the Islamic State gaining a foothold in Libya.

> Worse was the eventual loss of U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens in the Benghazi terrorist attack. It was the first killing of a U.S. ambassador in the line of duty since 1979. The response from our secretary of state? She claimed his killing was the result of an anti-Islamic video.

Russia:

> As secretary of state she proudly pushed the "reset" button on U.S.-Russia relations with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in 2009. She couldn't even get the translation on the button correct: The Russian word emblazoned on the button actually meant "overload."
>
> How prescient. The ensuing result was Cold War 2.0. After her reset, Russia took Crimea, invaded Ukraine, strongly supported Syrian President Bashar Assad, conducted airstrikes against civilians in Aleppo, Syria and significantly increased their military and political presence in the Middle East.

Syria:

> In Syria, while secretary of state, Clinton watched as United Nations resolution after U.N. resolution failed. She accomplished nothing except to repeat the refrain "Assad must go." She said in 2012 that opposition to Assad was the first step towards a better future for the people of Syria.
>
> Tell that to the 500,000 Syrian dead or the 3 million refugees. When Obama drew a red line in 2012 against chemical weapons-use against civilians, Clinton stood by and did nothing as the Syrian regime used sarin nerve gas against civilians.

Egypt:

> In 2009, Clinton called Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and his wife "friends of the family." Some friends. In January of 2011 they were gone, overthrown by an Arab Spring uprising Clinton openly supported. Even greater turmoil followed under the Muslim Brotherhood until a popular uprising resulted in their overthrow.
>
> The new, popularly-elected President Abdel el-Sisi is considered by Clinton to be governing through what is "basically an army dictatorship." Egypt has always been critical to the stability of the Middle East pertaining to Israel. We need them with us for continued efforts to maintain peace in the region. Clinton's position denigrates a key ally in the Middle East.

The article does not mention the disastrous Iran deal, which gave Iran $1.7 billion to help them fund terrorist attacks and develop nuclear weapons for use against Israel. But Hillary Clinton supported that deal, too – according to the far left New York Times.

This article by Victor Davis Hanson in National Review recalls her lack of concern for national security:

> Had anyone else in government set up a private e-mail server, sent and received

> classified information on it, deleted over 30,000 e-mails, ordered subordinates to circumvent court and congressional orders to produce documents, and serially and publicly lied to the American people about the scandal, that person would surely be in jail. The Clinton Foundation is like no other president-sponsored nonprofit enterprise in recent memory — offering a clearing house for Clinton-family jet travel and sinecures for Clintonite operatives between Clinton elections. Hillary Clinton allotted chunks of her time as secretary of state to the largest Clinton Foundation donors. Almost every assistant whom she has suborned has taken the Fifth Amendment, in Lois Lerner fashion.

Being “present” when decisions were made doesn’t give someone a resume that is worth offering them a job. What matters is that they were present and made the right decisions. Hillary Clinton has no accomplishments. Unless you are one of America’s enemies, there is no reason to expect her to be a good President. We know this from her record of failure. She just doesn’t have the ability and the skill needed to exercise good judgment on foreign policy and national security.

Can relationships succeed independently of the efforts of the people involved?

October 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

A few years ago, I blogged about the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage, which I think is the dominant view of marriage among young people today – even among Christians. This view of marriage basically says that there is a person in the world out there who will match up so perfectly with each one of us that we will have to expend no effort and perform no actions and take responsibility for nothing in order for the relationship to work. it will just work on its own!

I've decided to link to this recent article by Matt Walsh which is on that same topic.

He writes:

> The disease is the fanciful, unrealistic, fictionalized perceptions that both males and females harbor about marriage.
>
> For example, think of the glamorization of the "mysterious" and "damaged" guy from the "wrong side of the tracks." Hollywood makes him seem alluring and sexy, but forgets to mention that most of the time, in the real world, that dude probably has herpes, a coke habit, and a criminal record.
>
> Still, that bit of propaganda is nothing compared to the underlying misconception that so many of us carry around consciously or subconsciously, because we've seen it on TV and in the movies, and read it in books a million times since childhood: namely, that there is just *one* person out there for us. Our soul mate. Our Mr. or Mrs. Right. The person we are "meant to be with."

Matt thinks this view of relationships is not realistic:

> I didn't marry my wife because she's The One, *she's The One because I married*

> *her*. Until we were married, she was one, I was one, and we were both one of many. I didn't marry The One, I married *this* one, and the two of us *became* one. I didn't marry her because I was "meant to be with her," I married her because that was my choice, and it was her choice, and the Sacrament of marriage is that choice. I married her because I love her — I chose to love her — and I chose to live the rest of my life in service to her. We were not following a script, we chose to write our own, and it's a story that contains more love and happiness than any romantic fable ever conjured up by Hollywood.
>
> Indeed, marriage is a decision, not the inevitable result of unseen forces outside of our control. When we got married, the pastor asked us if we had "come here freely." If I had said, "well, not really, you see destiny drew us together," that would have brought the evening to an abrupt and unpleasant end. Marriage has to be a free choice or it is not a marriage. That's a beautiful thing, really.
>
> God gave us Free Will. It is His greatest gift to us because without it, nothing is possible. Love is not possible without Will. If we cannot choose to love, then we cannot love. God did not program us like robots to be compatible with only one other machine. He created us as individuals, endowed with the incredible, unprecedented power to choose. And with that choice, we are to go out and find a partner, and make that partner our soul mate.
>
> That's what we do. We *make* our spouses into our soul mates by marrying them. We don't simply recognize that they are soul mates and then just sort of symbolically consecrate that recognition through what would then be an effectively meaningless marriage sacrament. Instead, we find another unique, dynamic, wholly individualized human being, and we make the monumental, supernatural decision to bind ourselves to them for eternity.
>
> **It's a bold and risky move, no matter how you look at it. It's important to recognize this, not so that you can run away like a petrified little puppy and never tie the knot with anyone, but so that you can go into marriage knowing, at least to some extent, what you're really doing. This person wasn't made for you. It wasn't "designed" to be. There will be some parts of your relationship that are incongruous and conflicting. It won't all click together like a set of Legos, as you might expect if you think this coupling was fated in the stars.**
>
> **It's funny that people get divorced and often cite "irreconcilable differences." Well what did they think was going to happen? Did they think *every* difference would be reconcilable? Did they think every bit of contention between them could be perfectly and permanently solved?**

Finally, regarding his own marriage:

> There were literally millions of things that either of us could have done. An innumerable multitude of possible outcomes, but this was *our* outcome because

> we *chose* it. Not because we were destined or predetermined, not because it was "meant to happen," but because we chose it. That, to me, is much more romantic than getting pulled along by fate until the two of us inevitably collide and all that was written in our horoscopes passively comes to unavoidable fruition.
>
> **We are the protagonists of our love story, not the spectators.**

I see this problem everywhere, even with Christian women who have been raised as Disney princesses. I was just told by one last week that she will marry when she meets "the right man" – the man who will require her to do nothing. This magical relationship will require no communication, no working through disagreements, no problem solving, no compromise, no effort, no self-sacrifice of any kind. it will just "work", without any growing up by anyone. Two unemployed people with degrees in English can have a fine marriage, I suppose, traveling the world and skydiving every Tuesday.

I think that when problems arise between two people who are largely compatible, the right thing to do is to engage and solve the problems. Yes, work isn't required in pop culture notions of romance, but those things don't reflect the real world anyway. In the real world, actions to solve a problem count for more than words that avoid the problem. Engineering principles and self-sacrificial attitude are infinitely more useful in a relationship than all the pop culture descriptions of ideal men and ideal women and ideal relationships combined.

By the way, the best book on this problem is Dr. Laura's "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands", which clearly sets out how a woman's choices influence her husband's ability to perform well. The myth of the mind-reading "right man" is also debunked.

Belfast bakery sued by gay activist loses appeal and must pay £88,000

October 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I heard about this story from my friend Jonny in Northern Ireland, who sent me updates about new developments. I didn't realize that the penalty for disagreeing with same-sex marriage was going to be over a hundred thousand dollars! Especially when, as the article mentions, same-sex marriage is not even legal in Northern Ireland.

NBC News reports.

Excerpt:

> A Northern Irish bakery that refused to bake a cake iced with a pro-gay slogan lost its bid to overturn its prosecution for discrimination on Monday as a local court rejected an appeal based on its owners' Christian beliefs.
>
> Ashers Baking Co in Belfast had been found guilty of discrimination in May last year for refusing to make a cake bearing the words "Support Gay Marriage" and a picture of characters Bert and Ernie from the television show Sesame Street.
>
> The firm initially accepted the order from Gareth Lee, a gay rights activist, but later contacted him to cancel it and refund his money. Judge Declan Morgan on Monday ruled the bakery had directly discriminated against Lee.
>
> **Northern Ireland is the only part of the United Kingdom where same-sex marriage is not allowed, and the largest political party, the socially conservative Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), has blocked attempts to legalize it.**
>
> **By contrast the Republic of Ireland in May last year approved gay marriage after a referendum backed the measure, signaling a major change in what was once a strongly Catholic and socially conservative**

> **society.**
>
> […]Daniel McArthur, general manager at Ashers, told journalists he was disappointed with the judgment, saying it undermined "democratic freedom, religious freedom and freedom of speech".
>
> **Northern Ireland's Equality Commission, which backed Lee's case, said it is seeking costs of 88,000 pounds ($108,000) from the bakery, which said it is taking legal advice on what to do next.**

The Belfast Telegraph notes that the bakery was not discriminating against a gay person – they did not know what the sexual orientation of the customer was. They simply objected to endorsing a message on a cake that they did not agree with.

Excerpt:

> The McArthur family insisted they did not know the sexual orientation of Mr Lee, an LGBT activist, when declining his order.
>
> The family insist their problem was with the cake, not the customer. **But Mr Lee claimed it made him feel a lesser person.**
>
> However, on Monday morning the Court of Appeal upheld the original decision that Ashers Bakery had "directly discriminated".
>
> In delivering the appeal judgement, Northern Ireland's Lord Chief Justice Sir Declan Morgan rejected the argument that the bakery would be endorsing the slogan by baking the cake.
>
> He said: "The fact that a baker provides a cake for a particular team or portrays witches on a Halloween cake does not indicate any support for either."
>
> Lord Chief Justice said bakers couldn't provide a service only to customers who agreed with their religious beliefs.
>
> […]After the ruling, speaking publicly for the first time, LGBT activist Gareth Lee said he was "grateful" for the outcome of the appeal.

Mr. Lee had feelings, and the Ashers got a hundred thousand dollar bill (payable to Northern Ireland's Equality Commission) for hurting those feelings.

Keep in mind always that the Asher family is not just paying Northern Ireland's Equality Commission. The family is also paying the salary of this judge with the income from their business. They are paying this secular judge from the secular leftist government to punish them for being faithful to their Biblical convictions. That's why Christians should never vote to enlarge a secular government using money from private individuals and private businesses beyond what the Constitution limits the government to do.

I often hear Christians complain to me about why I am so focused on getting young people to study STEM degrees in school, to get jobs in STEM fields, and to save money and donate effectively.

Premier Christian Radio explains why money matters:

> Throughout the legal battle Ashers has been supported by The Christian Institute, which has organised public rallies and garnered financial backing for the case.
>
> Simon Calvert from the organisation pledged the family would not have to worry.
>
> On Premier's News Hour he said: "We [will] back the family all the way and so the family don't have to worry about the cost.
>
> "The Christian Institute legal defence fund has got that covered but, you know, that's going to be a lot of money."
>
> The organisation had spent £200,000 itself in legal costs, he said.
>
> "It is a lot of money, but Christians are concerned about the state of religious liberty in the UK and they have been willing to donate to our legal defence fund to help us to fight this case and cases like it," he added.

The money to prosecute Christians came from Christians through taxes, and whatever is left over after taxes is used for the defense of Christians from the secular government. That's why money matters. And that's why Christians should not be voting to expand government, which raises tax rates, and shuts off the flow of dollars to organizations that defend Christians in court. It also shows why aliases are practical – the more you can fight the secularists without getting hit and incurring costs yourself, the more money there is for the people who are pinned down by the state and need assistance. You don't want to be someone who has no money to donate, but asks for others to support you. Have the alias, then earn the money. Then you can donate to others, and not depend on them because you won't be in legal trouble yourself. This is so simple, but many Christians don't understand how to think about these financial issues.

Canadian professor warns Americans about conflict between gay rights and free speech

October 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

This editorial by a Canadian university professor from the far left University of Toronto appeared in the non-partisan The Hill.

He writes:

> Two weeks ago I posted three YouTube videos about legislative threats to Canadian freedom of speech. I singled out Canada's Federal Bill C-16, which adds legal protection for "gender identity" and "gender expression" to the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal code.
>
> I noted that the policy statements surrounding similar legislation — most particularly those on the Ontario Human Rights Commission website — were dangerously vague and ill-formulated. I also indicated my refusal to apply what are now known as "preferred" pronouns to people who do not fit easily into traditional gender categories (although I am willing to call someone "he" or "she" in accordance with their manner of self-presentation).
>
> These videos attracted a disproportionate amount of attention — online, in the Canadian national media, and beyond. A demonstration at the University of Toronto protested my statements. Another was held in support of free speech. The latter was met by counter-demonstrators who drowned out the speakers with white noise and assaulted a young female journalist — an act now viewed by half a million people on YouTube overall.

Here is the video:

He continues:

> If you are wondering, reasonably, why any of this might be relevant to Americans, you might note that legislation very similar to Bill C-16 has already been passed in New York City.
>
> Authorities there now fine citizens up to $250,000 for the novel crime of "mis-gendering" — referring to people by any words other than their pronouns of choice (including newly constructed words such as zie/hir, ey/em/eir and co).

The issue is government forcing us to use words that do not reflect reality:

> Bill C-16, and its legislative sisters, are particularly insidious constructions.
>
> […]**There is… a crucial difference between laws that stop people from saying arguably dangerous words and laws that mandate the use of politically-approved words and phrases. We have never had laws of the latter sort before, not in our countries. This is no time to start.**
>
> So, a note from a Canadian friend. The citizens of your great country, and ours — and of our allies across the Western world — are at risk.
>
> **Careless, ideologically-addled legislators are forcing us to use words we did not freely choose. We have to draw a line in the sand. That's why people are watching. It's a vitally important issue. We cannot afford to get it wrong.**

This is actually the mainstream Democrat view. We should expect this view to become federal law whenever Democrats are elected (often with the votes of Catholics and liberal Protestants). This is what Democrats mean when they say "tolerance" and "equality". They mean an end to free speech. You don't have to be a conservative to be alarmed by this, especially when we have so many other more pressing problems, e.g. – the national debt, national security, the dangerous foreign policy situations worldwide, etc.

For those looking to science on the transgender issue, I recommend this peer-reviewed paper published in The New Atlantis journal. It's balanced, and I disagree with some of the conclusions, but you have to at least know what science says about this issue right now.

Illegal immigrant deported 5 times, returns to cause $61 million in forest fire damage

October 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Forest fires really harm the environment

This story comes from the Washington Times.

Excerpt:

> Angel Gilberto Garcia-Avalos had been deported five times in just the past four years, yet each time he has managed to sneak from Mexicoback into the U.S., where he ended up in more mischief: driving without a license, attempted burglary and felony weapons charges.
>
> In August, he graduated to full-fledged mayhem, sparking a fire in the Sequoia National Forest that has already cost the government $61 million and left some of the country's most beautiful landscape scarred for years to come.
>
> Garcia, who pleaded guilty last month and faces 13 months in prison, had only recently been released from the Kern County Jail. **He likely would have been deported again, but local authorities were unable to report him to immigration authorities because of California's new sanctuary city law, which prohibited the sheriff from communicating with federal agents.**
>
> Federal agents now say they will kick Garcia out of the country once he serves his latest sentence, but the damage has already been done.
>
> […]Of the 29,000 acres that were touched by fire, more than half sustained moderate or high-intensity burns. Communities were evacuated in two counties, and a handful of cabins and outbuildings were scorched.
>
> It took six weeks to fully contain the fire. Officials warned at the beginning of October that hot spots could persist until the first snows blanket the area and snuff out the last vestiges.
>
> […][I]t took more than $60 million to contain and extinguish the blaze. Mr. Chatel

> submitted an emergency restoration plan at a cost of $500,000. That doesn't include long-term restoration of campsites, cattle-grazing areas and long-term revegetation.
>
> […]Garcia has admitted to his role in the fire but shows little remorse.

Now, I have a friend who is an evangelical Christian ex-Democrat, now moderate Republican, and he is a strong backer of amnesty for illegal immigrants, and bringing in more Muslim refugees. And the first question he asks me when I send him illegal immigrant crime / refugee Islamic terrorism news stories is this: "how do we know that illegal immigrants / refugees are more likely to commit crimes or terrorism than natural born Americans and skilled legal immigrants?"

Good question, here's the answer from the article:

> Fires sparked by illegal immigrants are more common — and more controversial — along the border.
>
> […]GAO [Government Accountability Office] investigators reviewed 77 human-caused fires along the Arizona border and concluded that 30 of them were caused by illegal border crossers.
>
> Worse yet, the presence of the illegal immigrants made fighting the fires even tougher. One investigator told The Washington Times that armed agents had to accompany firefighters.
>
> In California, Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood said the problems go beyond fire. He said marijuana grows are becoming more frequent on federal lands. When they are raided, the grows are usually found to be manned by illegal immigrants — some of them forced into the labor. State and local law enforcement have become engaged in shootouts at the grows.
>
> "They're destroying the landscape of our national forest," the sheriff told The Washington Times.

Democrats are responsible for passing the laws that make it easy for illegal immigrants to continue to re-enter the United States:

> Garcia has a long criminal record that includes auto theft, burglary and firearms charges. Nabbed last year after failing to appear in court to face felony charges, he was sentenced to more than a year in jail and was released for good behavior after serving 194 days.
>
> **In the past, Kern County would have reported him to federal immigration agents and his criminal record and repeated deportations would have made him a priority case. But California's Trust Act, signed into law last year by Gov. Jerry Brown, a Democrat, put an end to that cooperation.**
>
> **"We didn't hold him because he did not meet the Trust Act," Sheriff Youngblood said.**

I think this story is interesting, because the people who are in favor of illegal immigration also tend to be environmentalists. So it's kind of a funny situation where their support for open borders is actually having a negative impact on the environment. The far left Washington Post says that forest fires make global warming even worse. And the California Democrats who claim to love nature are the ones who voted for this "Trust Act". They caused the forest fire because of their "compassion".

Now, I'm no global warming alarmist, but I am very supportive of conservation and nature preserves. I like trees and animals, and I think we should be careful so that we don't harm them. I'm all for skilled immigration, but also for protecting and conserving nature. But the people on the left have a dilemma – illegal immigration, or protecting nature?

Why is the universe so big, and why is so much of it hostile to life?

October 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Chris Kyle, Navy SEAL, can hit a very small target from a mile away – very improbable

Review: In case you need a refresher on the cosmological and fine-tuning arguments, as presented by a professor of particle physics at Stanford University, then click this link and watch the lecture.

If you already know about the standard arguments for theism from cosmology, then take a look at this post on Uncommon Descent.

Summary:

> In my previous post, I highlighted three common atheistic objections to to the cosmological fine-tuning argument. In that post, I made no attempt to answer these objections. My aim was simply to show that the objections were weak and inconclusive.
>
> Let's go back to the original three objections:
>
> 1. If the universe was designed to support life, then why does it have to be so BIG, and why is it nearly everywhere hostile to life? Why are there so many stars, and why are so few orbited by life-bearing planets? (Let's call this the *size problem*.)
>
> 2. If the universe was designed to support life, then why does it have to be so OLD, and why was it devoid of life throughout most of its history? For instance, why did life on Earth only appear after 70% of the cosmos's 13.7-billion-year history had already elapsed? And Why did human beings (genus Homo) only appear after 99.98% of the cosmos's 13.7-billion-year history had already elapsed? (Let's call this the *age problem*.)

> 3. If the universe was designed to support life, then why does Nature have to be so CRUEL? Why did so many animals have to die – and why did so many species of animals have to go extinct (99% is the commonly quoted figure), in order to generate the world as we see it today? What a waste! And what about predation, parasitism, and animals that engage in practices such as serial murder and infant cannibalism? (Let's call this the *death and suffering problem*.)
>
> In today's post, I'm going to try to provide some positive answers to the first two questions: the size problem and the age problem.

Here's an excerpt for the size argument:

> (a) The main reason why the universe is as big as it currently is that in the first place, the universe had to contain sufficient matter to form galaxies and stars, without which life would not have appeared; and in the second place, the density of matter in the cosmos is incredibly fine-tuned, due to the fine-tuning of gravity. To appreciate this point, let's go back to the earliest time in the history of the cosmos that we can meaningfully talk about: the Planck time, when the universe was 10^-43 seconds old. If the density of matter at the Planck time had differed from the critical density by as little as one part in 10^60, the universe would have either exploded so rapidly that galaxies wouldn't have formed, or collapsed so quickly that life would never have appeared. In practical terms: if our universe, which contains 10^80 protons and neutrons, had *even one more grain of sand* in it – or one grain *less* – we wouldn't be here.

If you mess with the size of the universe, you screw up the mass density fine-tuning. We need that to have a universe that expands at the right speed in order for the matter to clump together to form galaxies, stars and planets. Too fast, and you get no clumping. Too slow, and the whole thing re-collapses into a hot fireball. You need stars and planets to have a place to form life – a place with liquid water at the surface, and more.

And an excerpt for the age argument:

> (a) One reason why we need an old universe is that billions of years were required for Population I stars (such as our sun) to evolve. These stars are more likely to harbor planets such as our Earth, because they contain lots of "metals" (astronomer-speak for elements heavier than helium), produced by the supernovae of the previous generation of Population II stars. According to currently accepted models of Big Bang nucleosynthesis, this whole process was absolutely vital, because the Big Bang doesn't make enough "metals", including those necessary for life: carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus and so on.

Basically, you need heavy elements to make stars that burn slow and steady, as well as to make PEOPLE! And heavy elements have to be built up slowly through several iterations of the stellar lifecycle, including the right kinds of stellar death: supernovae.

Read the rest! These arguments come up all the time in debates with village atheists like

Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins. It's a smokescreen they put up, but you've got to be able to answer it using the scientific evidence we have today. They always want to dismiss God with their personal preferences about what God should or should not do. But the real issue is the design of the cosmological constants that allow life to *anywhere*. That's the part that's designed. And that's not a matter of personal preference, it's a matter of *mathematics* and *experimental science.*

One last parting shot. If God made the universe have life everywhere, the first thing atheists would say is "See? Life evolves fine by itself without any God!" The only way to recognize a marksman is when he hits a narrow target (not hostile to life) from a wide range of possibilities that have no value (hostile to life). We don't credit Chris Kyle for hitting the wall above an Islamic terrorist from a mile away, we credit Chris Kyle for hitting an Islamic terrorist a mile away. The design is not how much of the universe is hospitable to life versus how much is hostile to life. The design is in the cosmological constants – where we are in the narrow band that is hospitable to life and not in the huge regions that are hostile to life.

You can read the best explanation of the design argument in this lecture featuring Robin Collins. That link goes to my post which has a summary of the lecture. He has a new lecture that I also blogged about where he extends the fine-tuning argument down to the level of particle physics. I have a summary of that one as well.

Federal judge asks why Obama isn't admitting Christian refugees from Syria

October 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats think that the real threat to America is not radical Islamic terrorism

This is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> In an otherwise unremarkable opinion over the federal Freedom of Information Act, a federal appellate court judge has issued a sharp rejoinder to the Obama administration over an issue that has been discussed in the news—the almost complete lack of Syrian Christian refugees being brought over to the U.S.
>
> […]However, in a spirited concurrence written by Judge Daniel Manion, the judge expressed his "concern about the apparent lack of Syrian Christians as a part of immigrants from that country."
>
> According to Manion, it is "well-documented" that the refugees are not representative of that "war-torn area of the world." Ten percent of the Syrian population is Christian and "yet less than one-half of 1 percent of Syrian refugees admitted to the United States this year are Christian."
>
> President Barack Obama set a goal of resettling 10,000 Syrian refugees in the U.S., and by August that goal had already been exceeded. But of the "nearly 11,000 refugees admitted by mid-September, only 56 were Christian."
>
> Yet Christian Syrians have been one of the primary targets of the Islamic jihadists infesting Syria and butchering, murdering, and killing civilians. The Islamic State has made it clear that it is going after Christians because it intends to "conquer Rome, break your crosses, and enslave your women."
>
> Thus, one would expect that Christian Syrians would represent a significant

> portion of the Syrians being accepted into the U.S. as refugees. But that hasn't been the case, and, according to Manion, the Obama administration has no "good explanation for this perplexing discrepancy." Thus, we "remain in the dark as a humanitarian catastrophe continues."
>
> This is also relevant to the complaints of various states about the Obama administration settling Syrian refugees in them without providing any information about the people arriving. As Manion points out, "the good people of this country routinely welcome immigrants from all over the world. But in a democracy, good data is critical to public debate about national immigration policy."
>
> The courts and the Obama administration "demand high evidentiary burdens for states seeking to keep their citizens safe, and then prevent the states from obtaining that evidence" on these refugees. That creates a catch-22 for state governments.
>
> So while the administration brings Syrian refugees into the country by the thousands, it is concealing basic information about those refugees behind a wall of government secrecy. This, despite the fact that the Syrian refugee crisis has been the catalyst for the infiltration of terrorists into Western Europe.
>
> Yet the administration refuses to tell the American public or the states how it is making its decisions on who it is accepting for resettlement in the U.S., or even what steps it is taking to ensure we don't have the same infiltration here.
>
> Or why, in a religious civil war where Christians are one of the main targets of the Islamic terrorists engaging in indiscriminate slaughter, it is bringing in almost none of those victims of one of the worst human rights atrocities of the new century.

It's no surprise to me that the Obama administration prefers Muslim refugees to Christian refugees, even though the Christian refugees are the ones who are more in danger, in predominently Muslim countries. But siding with Christians is not something that you would expect a secular leftist like Obama to do.

Robin Collins lectures on the fine-tuning argument at Pepperdine University

October 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
Details:

> Dr. Robin Collins is a Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Messiah College. Collins is the foremost defender of what is known as the teleological argument for the existence of God. He has a background in both physics and philosophy and will be discussing how the specific physical constants and conditions in the universe are finely-tuned for intelligent life and how this "fine-tuning" gives us reason to believe in a Creator.

Here is the video:

Topics:

- the constants and quantities set at the origin of the universe is fine-tuned for conscious, embodied intelligences like us
- three kinds of fine-tuning: 1) laws of nature, 2) constants, 3) quantities
- examples of 1): gravity, electromagnetism, strong force, quantization, Pauli exclusion principle
- examples of 2): **gravitational constant**, **cosmological constant**,
- examples of 3): initial distribution of mass-energy
- in addition to fine-tuning for life, there is also fine-tuning for discoverability
- Naturalistic response to the evidence: the multiverse hypothesis
- problems with the multiverse hypothesis
- additional topics

I put the ones I am ready to speak on in bold. I recommend you learn those as well in order to illustrate the fine-tuning with evidence when you present it. It’s important to understand that if the constants and quantities change, it’s not that you still have life, but just with pointy ears and/or green skin. It’s that you don’t have stars or planets or heavy elements or chemical reactions. Too much science fiction makes people misunderstand the argument.

The meaning of marriage: a lecture at Google by Tim Keller

October 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

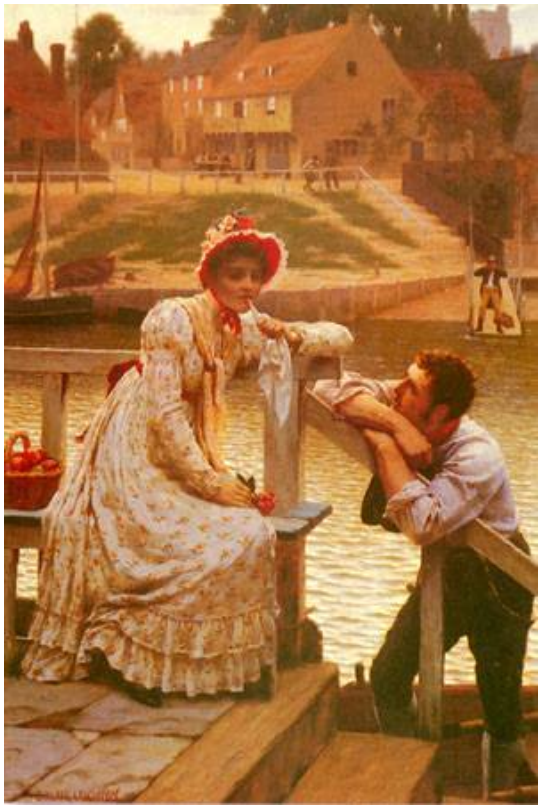

Painting: “Courtship”, by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

Disclaimer: I have reservations about Tim Keller. I consider him to be too liberal for my tastes, especially on scientific (intelligent design) and political/economic issues. However, I think he did a good job explaining marriage in the lecture below.

Here’s the the video:

Details:

> Timothy Keller visits Google’s New York, NY office to discuss his book “The Meaning of Marriage.” This event took place on November 14, 2011, as part of the Authors@Google series.
>
> Timothy J. Keller is an American author, speaker, preacher, and the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. He is the author of several books, including “The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism.”
>
> “The Meaning of Marriage” touches on topics that all readers can relate to, starting with the role of marriage in our culture, its history and the pessimism that is often associated with it. The Kellers also discuss the feelings of and acts of love, romantic relationships, gender roles, singleness, and the role of sex in a marriage.

I saw a lot of things in his lecture that echo my own views. One point where we agree is

on not just looking for traits and virtues in the other person, but in seeing how they handle conflict and solve problems with you. You have to give the other person things to do and see if they make progress and work cooperatively with you. The most important thing to look for is someone who sees potential in you and is committed to helping you realize it. You want someone who won't give up on you, no matter how hard things get. There are fun and happy times in a marriage, but those come naturally – the real question is how well two people stick together to get things done when it's hard. I definitely recommend Keller's book on marriage, it's such a good vision of what marriage could be.

Here's an article entitled "You Never Marry the Right Person", that discusses one of the points in the lecture.

Excerpt:

> In generations past, there was far less talk about "compatibility" and finding the ideal soul-mate. Today we are looking for someone who accepts us as we are *and* fulfills our desires, and this creates an unrealistic set of expectations that frustrates both the searchers and the searched for.
>
> […]The Bible explains why the quest for compatibility seems to be so impossible. As a pastor I have spoken to thousands of couples, some working on marriage-seeking, some working on marriage-sustaining and some working on marriage-saving. I've heard them say over and over, "Love shouldn't be this hard, it should come naturally." In response I always say something like: "Why believe that? Would someone who wants to play professional baseball say, 'It shouldn't be so hard to hit a fastball'? Would someone who wants to write the greatest American novel of her generation say, 'It shouldn't be hard to create believable characters and compelling narrative'?" The understandable retort is: "But this is not baseball or literature. This is love. Love should just come naturally if two people are compatible, if they are truly soul-mates. "
>
> The Christian answer to this is that no two people are compatible. Duke University Ethics professor Stanley Hauerwas has famously made this point:
>
> Destructive to marriage is the self-fulfillment ethic that assumes marriage and the family are primarily institutions of personal fulfillment, necessary for us to become "whole" and happy. The assumption is that there is someone just right for us to marry and that if we look closely enough we will find the right person. This moral assumption overlooks a crucial aspect to marriage. It fails to appreciate the fact that we always marry the wrong person.We never know whom we marry; we just think we do. Or even if we first marry the right person, just give it a while and he or she will change. For marriage, being [the enormous thing it is] means we are not the same person after we have entered it. The primary challenge of marriage is learning how to love and care for the stranger to whom you find yourself married.
>
> Hauerwas gives us the first reason that no two people are compatible for

> marriage, namely, that marriage profoundly changes us. But there is another reason. Any two people who enter into marriage are spiritually broken by sin, which among other things means to be self-centered—living life*incurvatus in se*. As author Denis de Rougemont said, “Why should neurotic, selfish, immature people suddenly become angels when they fall in love … ?” That is why a good marriage is more painfully hard to achieve than athletic or artistic prowess. Raw, natural talent does not enable you to play baseball as a pro or write great literature without enduring discipline and enormous work. Why would it be easy to live lovingly and well with another human being in light of what is profoundly wrong within our human nature? Indeed, many people who have mastered athletics and art have failed miserably at marriage. So the biblical doctrine of sin explains why marriage—more than anything else that is good and important in this fallen world—is so painful and hard.

When you are courting, don’t worry about appearances and feelings and passion so much, because that is all subject to change over time, and those things won’t help you with the real challenges you’ll face in a marriage. Worry about whether they are the kind of person who can make commitments and love other people self-sacrificially – even if they are unlovable. In the long run, their ability to read and understand issues, to care for others and serve them, to keep promises, to be respectful and supportive, to argue respectfully and reasonably, and to solve problems constructively, will all be far more important than appearances and feelings and passion.

During the courtship, give the other person things to do that challenge them and see how they handle being given responsibilities – giving a person hard things to do is a much better way to test a person than recreational nights out with recreational drinking, recreational dancing and recreational sex. Marriage means commitment and hard work, not recreation. And that’s what you should test for – the ability to work hard at the relationship and to keep promises and commitments and to communicate reasonably and to work through difficulties fairly. The most dangerous thing you want to avoid is self-centeredness. You don’t want someone who is primarily interested in minimizing your feelings, and then getting her friends to agree with her that this is legitimate for whatever reasons. You want a person who has had a hard enough life that responsibilities and obligations are natural to her, and who doesn’t try to wiggle out of self-sacrificial acts of love when she doesn’t feel like doing it. Each person needs to invest in the other, so that both can have fuel to do their job in the relationship.

Should Christians expect to know God’s will by means of feelings and intuitions?

October 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

There are two views on the topic of decision making and the will of God. The view you learn in the church is called “the traditional view”. I call this view the feelings/intuition view. This view that elevates feelings / intuitions to the level of divine communications from God. The more practical view is called “the wisdom view”. I call this view the battlefield commander view. I am a proponent of the wisdom / commander view.

Let’s learn about the two different views:

> [The traditional view is] that God has a plan for our lives and that we receive guidance through methods such as “open and closed doors”, “feeling led” and “the still, small, voice”.
>
> [The wisdom view] holds that God does not have an “individual will” for our lives, but rather that all of God’s will can be summed up within two categories, God’s sovereign will and God’s moral will. Basically God’s sovereign will is all the things that god decrees will happen. It is hidden (mostly) from us, and does not play an active part in our decision, although some of it is revealed in the bible. God’s moral will is the part that we must concern ourselves with in making decisions. It is fully revealed in the bible and our decisions must be made within it. We may use wisdom in applying god’s moral will to our lives, or we may be in an area not covered by god’s moral will. We must finally submit in advance to God’s sovereign will, being prepared for him to sovereignty intervene and redirect us through whatever means he wills (see James).

Here’s a bit more from someone else:

> Regarding the view that God has a personal will for us individually that we have to discern and find, J.I. Packer says, “The first thing to say is that the idea of guidance is actually a novelty among orthodox evangelicals. It does not go back farther than the last century. Second, it has led people to so much foolish action on the one hand, and so much foolish inaction on the other, as well as puzzlement and heartbreak when the ‘hotline’ to God seems to go silent, that it has to be discredited. Third, it must be said that Scripture gives us no more warrant constantly to expect personal ‘hotline,’ ‘voice-from-the-control-tower’ guidance than to expect new authoritative revelations to come our way for the guidance of the whole church.” (Hot Tub Religion, page 118).
>
> As to the point of the question, how do I make decisions, I attempt to make decisions in light of three factors: God’s moral will, wisdom, and my personal desires. If something is opposed to God’s moral will, then I should obviously flee from it. If it’s not opposed, then I consider the wisdom of the choices. For example, would it be wise for me to marry a woman who loves Jesus, though we have nothing else in common? Probably not. If the options pass the criteria of wisdom, then I’m free to choose how I wish. If I’m offered two jobs, and both are honoring to God, and both would be wise to take, then I’m free to choose the job I would like more. I don’t need to put out a fleece or await some other confirmation from God. If it’s moral and wise, then the only question as to whether or not it will honor Him is my attitude.
>
> Some examples of this model used in the Bible (in theological circles referred to as the Wisdom Model) are in Paul’s planning of a mission to Rome in Romans 1:9-15, 15:22-24, the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29), and Paul’s instructions for legal disputes (1 Cor 6:3-6).

The best book on this topic is Garry Friesen’s “Decision Making and the Will of God”. In it, you’ll find a full assessment about what the Bible teaches on this topic.

When I am trying to decide what will be effective, I look at Christian scholars, at their papers, books, and public debates. That’s effectiveness because it is addressed to a non-Christian audience in public with the force of reason and evidence. It is persuasion and it is addressed to rational minds. I want to change the minds of people who have a large influence on society on the whole. I don’t think that offering Christianity as life-enhancement or self-help is really “having an influence”. I think that offering Christianity as truth, with support, is “having an influence”.

So let me be clear about what I believe:

- I don’t think that God normally talks to people directly
- I don’t believe that life is an Easter egg hunt, filled with clues accessible only to emotion and intuition
- I don’t believe that God expects people to discover a specific will for their lives using non-rational means

- I think that people make up their own life plan that is consistent with the Bible
- The goal of the life plan is to be effective, and there are no other considerations
- I think that there are many good things a person can do, but that some are more effective than others
- I think that with respect to the goal of serving God effectively, *my happiness is expendable*
- I don't think that the purpose of doing something for the Lord is to feel good about ourselves
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they like them
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they are good at them
- I think people should do hard things that they don't like – as long as it's more effective
- I don't think that any course of action is as effective as any other – some plans accomplish more
- I don't think that life is totally unpredictable and irrational and subjective
- I think that we can know what is or is not effective by studying and learning about the world
- I think life is like a battlefield that must be surveyed, understood and acted upon deliberately

I think that every person is the commanding officer of his or her own life, and each person must study everything they can, make a plan that is consistent with the Bible's moral prescriptions, execute the plan and achieve whatever they can achieve for the Lord. And the goal is not comfort or happy feelings, but real achievements. Not for the purpose of being saved, of course, because salvation is a free gift of God because of what Jesus did on the cross. Life is more like a battle than a vacation resort or a buffet or a shopping center. God's will for us is not have happy feelings, but that we freely choose to sacrifice ourselves out of obedience and service to him. In my case, that means studying hard things, making money, saving money, and giving money away to good scholars, sponsoring good events and being persuasive to non-Christians. None of this necessarily makes me happy, but it does work to bring glory to God. I cried when I had to learn calculus, because it was so hard. But who cares? The main thing is that I have money now to sponsor Christian speakers or to give books to Christians to read, and God is happy with that.

I think that it is very important to realize that God is not impressed by our not being smart and not being effective. If we have the ability to be smart, then we should be smart, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability to make money, then we should make money, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability have a great influence, then we should have a great influence, whether it makes us happy or not. There will be plenty of time for happiness after we're dead. But this life is a time of serving, and we should try to serve effectively, whether it makes us happy or not. With

respect to God's purposes in the world, my happiness is expendable.

Whenever someone questions my goals and plans by saying that I am asserting my will over God's will, the first question I want to ask that person is this: "how do you know what God's will is?" and "what is your basis for thinking that my plan to serve will not be effective?". I want to know if I have misunderstood something about the way the world is, or miscalculated in some way. I want someone to look at my calculations and show where they are going to produce a less optimal result for the Lord. That's the only concern I have – effectiveness for the Lord. Usually what I have found is that the other person wants to make the purpose of life *their own happiness*, and it makes them happier to choose what to do moment by moment, without having to study anything or make plans. It's not that they have better goals (for God) or better plans (for God). It's that they want their goals to be above God, and they don't want to make plans other than to do whatever makes them happy.

This article by Greg Koukl may be helpful.

And I also found this summary of the Friesen book useful:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4
- Part 5
- Part 6
- Part 7
- Part 8
- Part 9

In nine parts.

Hillary Clinton, the Clinton Foundation, and Russia's acquisition of American uranium

October 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

That headline is sensational, but consider this article by Andy McCarthy in National Review.

It says:

> Hillary and her husband, former president Bill Clinton, operated the Clinton Foundation. Ostensibly a charity, the foundation was a de facto fraud scheme to monetize Hillary's power as secretary of state (among other aspects of the Clintons' political influence). The scheme involved (a) the exchange of political favors, access, and influence for millions of dollars in donations; (b) the circumvention of campaign-finance laws that prohibit political donations by foreign sources; (c) a vehicle for Mrs. Clinton to shield her State Department e-mail communications from public and congressional scrutiny while she and her husband exploited the fundraising potential of her position; and (d) a means for Clinton insiders to receive private-sector compensation and explore lucrative employment opportunities while drawing taxpayer-funded government salaries.
>
> While the foundation did perform some charitable work, this camouflaged the fact that contributions were substantially diverted to pay lavish salaries and underwrite luxury travel for Clinton insiders. Contributions skyrocketed to $126 million in 2009, the year Mrs. Clinton arrived at Foggy Bottom. Breathtaking sums

> were “donated” by high-rollers and foreign governments that had crucial business before the State Department. Along with those staggering donations came a spike in speaking opportunities and fees for Bill Clinton. Of course, disproportionate payments and gifts to a spouse are common ways of bribing public officials — which is why, for example, high-ranking government officeholders must reveal their spouses’ income and other asset information on their financial-disclosure forms.
>
> **While there are other egregious transactions, the most notorious corruption episode of Secretary Clinton’s tenure involves the State Department’s approval of a deal that surrendered fully one-fifth of the United States’ uranium-mining capacity to Vladimir Putin’s anti-American thugocracy in Russia.**

Here are the details about the donations:

> In a nutshell, in 2005, under the guise of addressing the incidence of HIV/AIDS in Kazakhstan (where the disease is nearly nonexistent), Bill Clinton helped his Canadian billionaire pal Frank Giustra to convince the ruling despot, Nursultan Nazarbayev (an infamous torturer and human-rights violator), to grant coveted uranium-mining rights to Giustra’s company, Ur-Asia Energy (notwithstanding that it had no background in the highly competitive uranium business). **Uranium is a key component of nuclear power, from which the United States derives 20 percent of its total electrical power.**
>
> In the months that followed, Giustra gave an astonishing $31.3 million to the Clinton Foundation and pledged $100 million more. With the Kazakh rights secured, Ur-Asia was able to expand its holdings and attract new investors, like Ian Telfer, who also donated $2.35 million to the Clinton Foundation. Ur-Asia merged with Uranium One, a South African company, in a $3.5 billion deal — with Telfer becoming Uranium One’s chairman. **The new company proceeded to buy up major uranium assets in the United States.**
>
> […][L]ater, it was announced that Russia’s Rosatom had purchased 17 percent of Uranium One.

Later on:

> **[…][T]he Russian company sought to acquire a controlling interest in Uranium One. That would mean a takeover not only of the Kazakh mines but of the U.S. uranium assets as well. Such a foreign grab requires approval by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, a powerful government tribunal that the secretary of state sits on and heavily influences. Though she had historically postured as a hawk against foreign acquisitions of American assets with critical national-security implications, Secretary Clinton approved the Russian takeover of Uranium One. During and right after the big-bucks Russian**

> **acquisition, Telfer contributed $1.35 million to the Clinton Foundation. Other people with ties to Uranium One appear to have ponied up as much as $5.6 million in donations.**

Does this sound unbelievable? Well consider this article from the far left New York Times, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The headline in the website Pravda trumpeted President Vladimir V. Putin's latest coup, its nationalistic fervor recalling an era when its precursor served as the official mouthpiece of the Kremlin: "Russian Nuclear Energy Conquers the World."
>
> The article, in January 2013, detailed how the Russian atomic energy agency, Rosatom, had taken over a Canadian company with uranium-mining stakes stretching from Central Asia to the American West. The deal made Rosatom one of the world's largest uranium producers and brought Mr. Putin closer to his goal of controlling much of the global uranium supply chain.
>
> But the untold story behind that story is one that involves not just the Russian president, but also a former American president and a woman who would like to be the next one.
>
> At the heart of the tale are several men, leaders of the Canadian mining industry, who have been major donors to the charitable endeavors of former President Bill Clinton and his family. Members of that group built, financed and eventually sold off to the Russians a company that would become known as Uranium One.
>
> **Beyond mines in Kazakhstan that are among the most lucrative in the world, the sale gave the Russians control of one-fifth of all uranium production capacity in the United States. Since uranium is considered a strategic asset, with implications for national security, the deal had to be approved by a committee composed of representatives from a number of United States government agencies. Among the agencies that eventually signed off was the State Department, then headed by Mr. Clinton's wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton.**
>
> **As the Russians gradually assumed control of Uranium One in three separate transactions from 2009 to 2013, Canadian records show, a flow of cash made its way to the Clinton Foundation. Uranium One's chairman used his family foundation to make four donations totaling $2.35 million. Those contributions were not publicly disclosed by the Clintons, despite an agreement Mrs. Clinton had struck with the Obama White House to publicly identify all donors. Other people with ties to the company made donations as well.**
>
> **And shortly after the Russians announced their intention to acquire a majority stake in Uranium One, Mr. Clinton received $500,000 for a Moscow speech from a Russian investment bank with links to the**

> **Kremlin that was promoting Uranium One stock.**

That’s what Hillary Clinton did as Secretary of State. I wonder if Democrat voters are paying attention. I wonder if national security is important to them.

Reformation Day celebrates the supremacy of Scripture and reason in theology

October 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Martin Luther defies the Roman Catholic hierarchy with his 95 Theses

The Ligonier Ministries web site has a summary of the event that kicked off the Reformation.

Excerpt:

> On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther tacked up 95 theses on the church door at Wittenberg. With this act, he hoped to provoke a discussion among the scholars about the abuses of the indulgences by the Roman Catholic Church. He was not trying to create a public furor by any means, but within a fortnight, these theses had spread through the country like wildfire. The last thing Luther had in mind was to start some kind of major controversy, but nevertheless major controversy did begin.
>
> From the discussions at Wittenberg, the disputations began to accelerate and escalate. Copies of the theses reached Rome and critical meetings were scheduled with the young monk. In these debates, Luther was maneuvered into proclaiming publicly that he had questions about the infallibility of church councils and also that he thought that it was possible that the pope could err. In 1520 a papal encyclical was issued which condemned Martin Luther as a heretic. Luther burned the document in a public bonfire and his defiance before the church was now a matter of record.
>
> In response, Martin Luther picked up his pen to challenge the entire penitential system of the Roman Catholic Church, which undermined in principle the free remission of sins that is ours in the gospel. By doing so, he was unswervingly advocating his commitment to *sola fide*, the doctrine of justification by faith alone.
>
> In 1521, Luther was summoned to the Imperial Diet, an authoritative meeting

> that involved the princes of the church, called by the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire to be held in the city of Worms in Germany. Luther was an outlaw. For him to appear at the Diet was to risk his very life; therefore, he was given safe conduct by the Emperor to attend. With a few friends, Luther traveled from Wittenberg to Worms. The eyewitnesses of that episode tell us that when Luther's little covered wagon appeared around the corner of the bend, there were lookouts posted in the church tower at Worms. All the people were agog waiting for the arrival of this notorious person. When Luther's caravan was sighted, people were throwing their hats in the air, blowing trumpets, and creating all the fanfare of the arrival of the hero. It was the 16th century answer to a ticker-tape parade.
>
> Things, however, became very solemn in a hurry because the next day he appeared before the Diet. His books were stacked on a table in the room, and he was asked and ordered to recant of his writings. This surprised Luther because he thought he was going to have an opportunity to defend his writings; but the only question really of any importance that was asked of him was this: "Are these your writings?" And when he said yes, they said, "Are you ready to recant of them?"
>
> Hollywood has their version of Luther standing there boldly with his fist in the air saying, "Here I stand!" and so on. But instead he dropped his chin on his chest and muttered something that nobody could understand, so they asked him to speak up. "What did you say?" He said, "May I have 24 hours to think about it." And so Luther was granted a reprieve of 24 hours to return to his room to contemplate the seriousness of this occasion.
>
> The prayer that Luther wrote in that ensuing 24-hour period was one of the most moving prayers I have ever read in my life. In that prayer, Luther cried out for God in his sense of total loneliness fearing that God had abandoned him, and proclaimed, "O Lord, I am Thine, and the cause is Thine, give me the courage to stand."
>
> And on the morrow, Luther was called once again back to the court and was told to reply to the question. He said to the Diet, "Unless I am convinced by sacred Scripture or by evident reason, I cannot recant, for my conscience is held captive by the Word of God, and to act against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me." And with that there was an instant uproar.

The Protestant Reformation emphasizes the responsibility of each person to become familiar with what the Bible teaches for themselves and to make sense of it using the laws of logic for themselves. There is an enormous focus on the individual's responsibility to puzzle theology out for himself, using the tools available to him: reason, science, Scripture, and history. When doing theology, Protestants do not accept the authority of someone who has a fancy title, fancy hat, fancy robe or fancy staff. Everyone is

responsible to read the Bible, read systematic theology, consult history, and determine what the truth is based on evidence, not authority.

The Reformation put forward the famous five Solas: “Sola Scriptura” (Scripture Alone); “Sola Gratia” (Grace Alone); “Sola Fide” (Faith Alone); “Solus Christus” (Christ Alone); and “Soli Deo Gloria” (To God Alone Be Glory). The vertical relationship with God is seen as more important than making people feel good here and now. True beliefs about God are deemed to be more important than being a good social worker. And that’s why Jesus said that the most important commandment is to love God, then secondly, to love your neighbor. It’s important to get that in the right order, because true beliefs about God’s existence, God’s character, and God’s actions in history are the most important things.

The Reformation was the beginning of evangelical Protestantism, which is really the view that the Christian religion ought to be rooted in actual historical events that are documented in the Bible.

Who halted the FBI investigation of Hillary's private unsecure e-mail server?

November 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?

That's the question I've been asking myself: who killed the FBI investigation of Hillary's e-mail server and the Clinton Foundation?

Former attorney general Michael Mukasey has an answer to the question in the Wall Street Journal.

First a quick review of the facts:

> Nonetheless, in July [FBI director Comey] announced that "no reasonable prosecutor" would seek to charge [Hillary Clinton] with a crime, although Mrs. Clinton had classified information on a private nonsecure server—at least a misdemeanor under one statute; and although she was "extremely careless" in her handling of classified information such that it was exposed to hacking by hostile foreign nations—a felony under another statute; and apparently had caused the destruction of emails—a felony under two other statutes. He then told Congress repeatedly that the investigation into her handling of emails was closed.
>
> Those decisions were not his to make, nor were the reasons he offered for making them at all tenable: that prosecutions for anything but mishandling large amounts of classified information, accompanied by false statements to investigators, were unprecedented; and that criminal prosecutions for gross negligence were constitutionally suspect.
>
> Members of the military have been imprisoned and dishonorably discharged for

> mishandling far less information, and prosecutions for criminal negligence are commonplace and entirely permissible. Yet the attorney general [Loretta Lynch], whose decisions they were, and who had available to her enough legal voltage to vaporize Mr. Comey's flimsy reasons for inaction, told Congress she would simply defer to the director.
>
> That July announcement of Mr. Comey, and that testimony by Attorney General Loretta Lynch, also had a history.
>
> When the FBI learned that two of the secretary's staff members had classified information on their computers, rather than being handed grand-jury subpoenas demanding the surrender of those computers, the staff members received immunity in return for giving them up. In addition, they successfully insisted that the computers not be searched for any data following the date when Congress subpoenaed information relating to its own investigation, and that the computers be physically destroyed after relevant data within the stipulated period was extracted.
>
> The technician who destroyed 30,000 of Mrs. Clinton's emails after Congress directed that they be preserved lied to investigators even after receiving immunity. He then testified that Clinton aides requested before service of the subpoena that he destroy them, and that he destroyed them afterward on his own initiative.
>
> Why would an FBI director, who at one time was an able and aggressive prosecutor, agree to such terms or accept such a fantastic story?

Yes, why did Comey stop the FBI investigation of Hillary Clinton given all of these facts?

Mukasey explains who called off the investigation and why:

> **The search for clues brings us to an email to then-Secretary Clinton from President Obama, writing under a pseudonym, that the FBI showed to Ms. Abedin. That email, along with 21 others that passed between the president and Secretary Clinton, has been withheld by the administration from release on confidentiality grounds not specified but that could only be executive privilege.**
>
> **After disclosure of those emails, the president said during an interview that he thought Mrs. Clinton should not be criminally charged because there was no evidence that she had intended to harm the nation's security—a showing required under none of the relevant statutes. As indefensible as his legal reasoning may have been, his practical reasoning is apparent: If Mrs. Clinton was at criminal risk for communicating on her nonsecure system, so was he.**
>
> That presented the FBI director with a dilemma that was difficult, but not complex. It offered two choices. He could have tried to proceed along the course

> marked by the relevant laws. The FBI is powerless to present evidence to a grand jury, or to issue grand-jury subpoenas. That authority lies with the Justice Department, headed by an attorney general who serves, as her certificate of appointment recites, "during the pleasure of the President of the United States for the time being."
>
> […]**Instead, Mr. Comey acceded to the apparent wish of President Obama that no charges be brought.**

Obama would have wanted the FBI investigation stopped because if the Department of Justice decided that Clinton "was at criminal risk" for communicating on Clinton's nonsecure system, then so was he. Fortunately for Obama, he appointed Loretta Lynch as attorney general, and we know she won't prosecute Democrats, because she refused to go after the IRS for persecuting conservative organizations ahead of the 2012 election, so that Obama would win.

So, did Obama know that he was communicating to Secretary Clinton on an unsecure private e-mail server?

From:cheryl.mills@gmail.com

To: john.podesta@gmail.com

Date: 2015-03-07 21:41

Subject: Fwd: POTUS on HRC emails

---

we need to clean this up - he has emails from her - they do not say state.gov

"We need to clean this up" = We need to cover this up
His own staff sent e-mails confirming that he knew.

The far-left New York Times reports:

> In a March 2015 interview, President Obama said that he had learned about Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server as secretary of state "the same time everybody else learned it, through news reports."
>
> But that assertion concerned aides of Mrs. Clinton, who knew that the president himself had received emails from the private address, according to a hacked email made public on Tuesday by WikiLeaks.
>
> "We need to clean this up — he has emails from her — they do not say state.gov," Cheryl D. Mills, a top aide, wrote to John D. Podesta, another senior adviser, on March 7, 2015.
>
> Two days later, Mr. Obama's spokesman, Josh Earnest, tried to clarify the president's remarks, saying that he had, in fact, exchanged emails with Mrs.

> Clinton through her private account.

And far left CNN confirms:

> A top Hillary Clinton adviser said President Barack Obama's answer on Clinton's private email use as secretary of state needed "clean up," according to hacked emails from her campaign chairman released Tuesday.
>
> In a March 2015 email chain, Cheryl Mills, a top legal adviser and longtime member of Clinton's inner circle, told campaign Chairman John Podesta of an interview in which Obama said he learned about Clinton's private email setup from news reports.
>
> "We need to clean this up — he has emails from her — they do not say state.gov," Mills wrote to Podesta.

So, who ordered the FBI to stop investigating Hillary's private e-mail server? Who ordered the Department of Justice not to proceed with the criminal investigation? Obama was the one with the authority to call it off, and Obama had a reason for calling it off: he was at risk of criminal charges himself.

Theist David Wood debates atheist Michael Shermer: Does God Exist?

November 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two bears fight it out, and may the best bear win!
Details:

> On October 10th, 2016, David Wood (Christian) debated Michael Shermer (Atheist) on the topic "Does God Exist?" The debate was sponsored by Ratio Christi. In the course of the debate, Wood and Shermer discussed the Scientific Revolution, design arguments, cosmological arguments, moral arguments, the problem of evil, skepticism, and methodology.

The video:

The debate starts at 6:30, following introductory remarks. I was ordered to summarize this debate by my good friend Eric, who said this: "I'm a little less than halfway through the David Wood vs Michael Shermer debate, but it's amazing. If you summarize it you will sound super snarky but you will actually be doing honest reporting."

I'm only going to summarize the opening speeches which went until 47:40.I linked to the rebuttals and cross-examination below. I did love the debate, and thought that both sides had great speakers who kept to their times, and were on topic and effective. As always with my snarky paraphrase of the atheist, you should listen to the recording to see what was actually said. I try to present their argument with the spin removed.

Wood's opening speech:

The scientific revolution was started by Christian theists:

- Science requires three assumptions: 1) that the universe can be understood, 2) that human beings can understand it, 3) that it is good for human beings to understand the universe.
- Christians produced an explosion of scientific discoveries during the 16th and 17th century
- In their writings, these Christian theists explained that their scientific investigation was grounded in their Christian worldview, and was seen as a form of worship and learning from God
- It is easy to do science now that the scientific method is widely accepted, but the challenge was to come up with the method and make the first discoveries – Christians did that
- Atheism does not ground the assumption that the universe is understandable – it's an accident
- Atheism does not ground the assumption that humans could understand the universe – we are just random accidents that don't have free will and our consciousness is an illusion
- Atheism does not ground the desire to understand the universe, the earliest scientific discoveries had no practical benefit
- Theism grounds all 3 of the requirements of the scientific enterprise: the universe is made by a rational mind, human beings are made in the image of God – inheriting free will and rationality, knowledge of God (the highest God) can be obtained from the natural world (the Bible says so in Psalm 19:1 and Romans 1)

The testing of the scientific hypotheses confirmed theism:

- scientific progress confirmed the origin of the universe out of nothing
- scientific progress confirmed the fine-tuning of the universe for the existence of complex embodied intelligent life

Atheism doesn't ground the scientific method:

- the three elements of the scientific hypothesis, which was birthed by theism, have been confirmed by repeated use of the scientific method
- the three elements of the scientific hypothesis, which are not grounded in atheism, have been confirmed by repeated use of the scientific method

Shermer's opening speech: (snarky paraphrase with spin removed)

An atheist about one more God than you:

- There are lots of different religions, just like there there are many answers to math questions, and so that means that none of them can be true.
- Just like you, I deny lots of wrong answers to math questions, but I just go one

answer further and deny the right answer

Response to David Wood:

- Well, in most of these European countries, you had to be a Christian or they would burn you at the stake, because it was against the law to be an atheist
- So, since there were only Christians on the face of the planet in every country since the beginning of time (since that was the law everywhere, at all times, and in all places) then OF COURSE Christians invented science since they were the only ones who ever existed
- The fact that the earliest scientists credit their Christian worldview for starting them on the path of making scientific discoveries "is irrelevant" (direct quote). "You might as well point to the fact that they are all dog owners. It's irrelevant." (direct quote)

Atheism is just a lack of belief in God:

- Atheism, which has the definition a belief in the non-existence of God, actually means a lack of belief in God
- I like my made-up definition, because then I don't have to give any reasons or science to show that atheism is true
- I just describe my psychological state, not objective reality, and that allows me to not have to defend my worldview

The burden of proof:

- David has to produce evidence for his view of reality
- I don't have to produce evidence for my view of reality

The scientists that David quoted never discovered anything:

- Those early scientists never discovered anything
- They believed that thunder was God bowling
- Newton and Copernicus and Galileo and the other famous scientists just said "I can't figure it out" and "God did it" (direct quote)

The progress of science shows a natural explanation for everything:

- The progress of science in the last 50 years has overturned the origin of the universe from nothing, and upheld the eternal universe favored by naturalists
- The progress of science in the last 50 years has reduced the number of constants and quantities that have to be fine-tuned
- The progress of science in the last 50 years has reduced the complexity of the origin of life from libraries biological information, molecular machines and miniature factories to simple jello that was formed in a warm pond

Who made God?

- You can't explain the origin of space and time and matter by appealing to a cause that is spaceless, eternal and non-material
- Why can't the universe be the thing that doesn't need to be created (i.e. – it is eternal, and did not begin to exist 14.5 billion years ago, as every scientist says)

Why is there evil?

- On atheism, the universe is an accident, and there is no objective standard of morality
- Therefore, no atheist can call anything good or evil objectively
- God allows human evil and natural evil
- I have looked into the repercussions of evil throughout time and space for every act of apparently gratuitous evil and I can confirm God does not have a morally sufficient reason for allowing human evil and natural evil, and I keep the reasons in my garage at home, but you can't see them because they are invisible, and they are undetectable by any other means

Christians used to believe in witches

- Look at me quoting the Bible in the one place it mentions witches!
- I believe the parts that make Christianity look bad, but not the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 which is accepted as eyewitness testimony by the most skeptical atheist historians

You can repent at the last minute and get eternal life, that's not fair

- Not sure how an atheist misunderstanding Christian doctrines that can be explained by people who have read C.S. Lewis books is an argument against the existence of God

Christianity celebrates human sacrifice

- Christians believe in human sacrifice because Jesus had to die for the sins of everyone
- I'm pro-abortion and think that killing 56 million children is a great thing though

The doctrine of atonement makes no sense

- How could God the Father accept the death of God the Son as a sacrifice for sin?

The rebuttals

I did not summarize the rebuttals, but I did watch them and link to them at the start of each speech.

- Wood's first rebuttal (10 min)
- Shermer's first rebuttal (10 min)

- Wood’s second rebuttal (8 min)
- Shermer’s second rebuttal (8 min)
- Alternating time-limited cross-examination (10 min)
- Wood’s conclusion (5 min)
- Shermer’s conclusion (5 min)
- Questions and answers (33 min)

My thoughts

First, I was very pleased with David Wood’s performance in this debate. I would have liked more focus on the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine-tuning, and fewer quotations from scientists in the opening speech. The rebuttals were good. And his performance in the Q&A was worth listening to.

Shermer’s first rebuttal gave me the impression that he was not interested in grasping truth through science, but just pushing away the science of today with speculations about the science fiction of tomorrow – might, maybe, let’s say, etc. He’s not a skeptic, he’s a speculator. Theists go wherever the evidence leads, we decide based on the evidence we have today. His attempt to underwrite objective morality by appealing to feelings wasn’t convincing. In the Q&A, he takes the standard atheist view that the nothing that preceded the universe is really something.

UPDATE: Triablogue reacts to the debate here.

Half of Obamacare enrollees are skipping doctor visits to save money

November 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

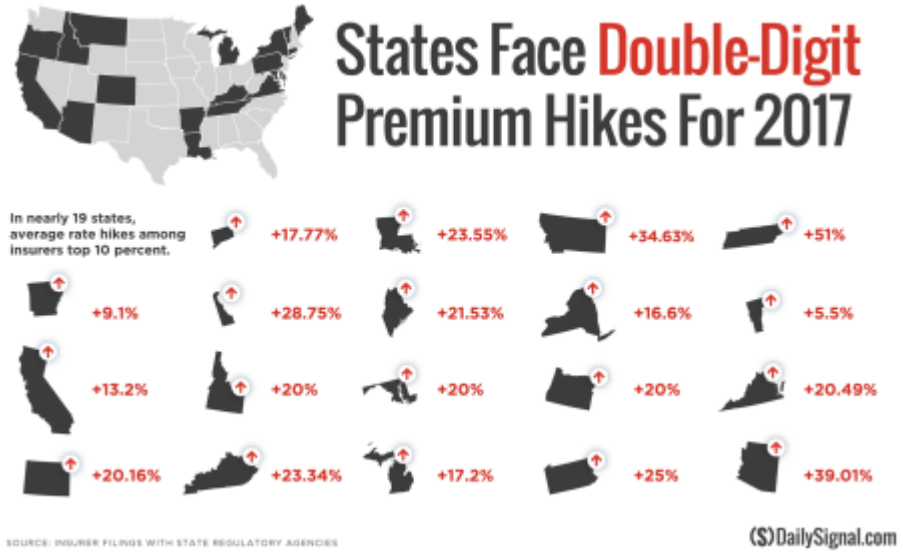

Can you cover more people for more conditions and have costs go down?
(click for larger image)

Obamacare enrollees are covered, but they're not really covered, because they can't afford doctor visits.

The Washington Free Beacon explains.

Excerpt:

> Half of Obamacare enrollees are skipping doctor visits to save money, according to a report from GfK, a market research group.
>
> Only 33 percent of the general insured population is doing the same, according to the report.
>
> "Even before the news broke that the cost of mid-range health insurance from the Affordable Care Act exchanges will rise about 25%, millions of Obamacare customers were already skipping doctor visits to save money," the study said. "With mid-level exchange premiums set to rise about 25%, more cutbacks in care seem likely."
>
> Obamacare enrollees were asked what steps they had taken in the past year to lower their health care costs.
>
> **Thirty-six percent of Obamacare enrollees cut back on doctor visits even when they were sick, 22 percent skipped preventive care, 12 percent reduced lab testing, and 12 percent delayed surgery.**
>
> "Exchange users with lower incomes (below $25,000 a year) are turning to urgent care facilities and 'minute clinics' in huge numbers; 27% have done so in

> the past year, compared to just 12% of the overall [Affordable Care Act] customer population," the study says.
>
> "Visiting one of these outlets is often appealing to people who may have not formed lasting relationships with providers, especially as costs can be substantially lower," the study said.
>
> […]"As we approach another enrollment period for the ACA, it's important to understand why the exchanges are failing," said Brian Blase, a senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center. "The law made insurance way too unattractive for relatively young and healthy people who are largely choosing to pay the individual mandate tax penalty instead of purchasing coverage."
>
> "Only those who receive giant subsidies are signing up for coverage in significant numbers, and many are gaming the new rules to enroll only when they need expensive medical services," he said. "This year's huge premium increases combined with much less choice of plans for Americans across the country demonstrate the law is wrecking the individual market for insurance and needs large scale revision."

Yes, this is the so-called Obamacare death spiral, which has older sicker people signing up for health care, but young healthy people not signing up because there is no value for them. When only sick people sign up, the costs go up, because the payouts are higher. It's like having an auto insurance plan that is only used by those with bad driving records. Naturally, the costs will be higher, and the only way to balance it out is to force people who drive safely and don't make any claims to join anyway, and pay for something they won't use.

Obama's solution to this problem of young people not signing up is to punish them with fines.

CBS News explains:

> Premiums will go up sharply next year under President Barack Obama's health care law, and many consumers will be down to just one insurer, the administration confirmed Monday.
>
> **To make matters worse, the penalty for individuals and families who did not have health insurance in 2016 will also nearly double as compared to fees for 2015 tax returns when revisions to the Affordable Care Act go into effect.**
>
> **According to the IRS, shared responsibility payments will jump to $695 per adult and $347.50 per child, with the family maximum not to exceed $2,085 or 2.5 percent income above the filing threshold. That's up from $325 per adult and $162.50 per child, with a maximum of $975 per family for the 2015 tax year.**

What were the young people thinking when they voted for a deal like this? Well, they

weren’t thinking at all – that’s the problem. Their brains don’t work, so they just do whatever is popular. They don’t have enough real life experience to separate the celebrity worship from the economics. And they don’t respect the judgment of those who are older and wiser.

Can a person be a committed Christian while ignoring apologetics?

November 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ratio Christi event at Ohio State University featuring Frank Turek

I would like to describe a situation that arises frequently that concerns me. The situation I describe below brings out a flaw I see in the way that rank-and-file Christians respond to criticisms of Christianity in the public square.

Here is the situation

Eve is busy programming away at her desk, rushing to check in her unit tests so she can spend her lunch hour reading the latest Stephenie Meyer novel, or check on the schedule for her local sports team, "the Vicariouses" (she has tickets for Thursday). Suddenly Eve hears Alice talking to Bob on the other side of her cubicle. She stops typing to listen to the following unencrypted conversation.

Alice: I was watching a documentary on the Discovery Channel last night that said that the universe has always existed, so there is no God!

Bob: I was watching a documentary on PBS last night showing simulations of how the first life started on Earth! God didn't do it!

Alice: I saw "Inherit the Spin" on the weekend! The only reason people oppose evolution is because of the Bible! Not because of science!

Bob: I'm going to see "The Va Dinci Code" this weekend! It says that the Gospels are unreliable and that Jesus didn't even die on the cross!

Alice: I just bought the latest Dichard Rawkins book "Christians Should Be Fed to Lions and the Bible Should Be Burned"!

Bob: I will read that as soon as I finish Histopher Chritchens' book "Why God is the Evilest, Stupidest Person in the World"!

Eve double-majored in business and computer science at the Indian Institute of Technology, and has an MBA from the London School of Economics. She has spent a ton of time, effort and money studying very difficult subjects for her job, and she even publishes research papers. She works full-time and runs her own business part-time, and teaches night classes for a well-known university. She earns about 200K per year. She lives in a huge house, drives an expensive car, and goes on vacation abroad to all the best vacation spots.

Eve thinks she is a Christian. She has attended church since childhood, her husband is a church elder and she sings in the church choir. She reads the Bible and prays every night, because it helps her to get sleepy before bed. She gives lots of money to the poor. She teaches Sunday school to very small children. She has even read all of the Narnia novels *five times*! She even has a calendar filled with nature scenes and itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny Bible verses posted on her office wall at work! Judging from all of these facts, you might expect Eve to get in on that conversation with Alice and Bob, and set them straight.

But she won't. Why not?

Why won't Eve stand?

I am wondering if anyone can explain to me why it is that most church Christians are not able or not willing to make a public defense when God's reputation is called into question. It seems to me that there are two bad effects that follow from Eve's unwillingness to stand up and invite Alice and Bob to lunch so that she can address their questions and concerns.

1. God's reputation is being trashed by Alice and Bob on the basis of lies they've swallowed from pop culture. These lies about God's existence and character could be easily corrected with a minimal amount of study, which Eve is capable of – she is a genius and has amazing entrepreneurial skills. If someone said similar lies about her husband or children, she *would* speak up, but she won't speak up for God.
2. Alice and Bob are bound for Hell unless someone cares enough to correct their mistaken beliefs, which, along with their sinfulness, is what is keeping them from a relationship with God that would go on in Heaven. If Eve's husband or children were mistakenly about to drink poison thinking it was Aspirin, then Eve *would* speak up. But to save her co-workers from Hell, she won't speak up.

Eve is capable of studying to defend the faith, because of her great success in other areas where so much time and effort were required to master difficult material. So why has she not applied herself to answering public challenges to her Christian faith from her professors, teachers, actors, the media, politicians, scientists, historians, etc.? She's heard these questions about God's existence and character all through high school and into university and then now in her career. Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says to

prepare a defense? Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says to acknowledge God before men? Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says that all authentic believers in Jesus will suffer a little for their faith?

It seems to me that if she did spend some time studying, and then made her defense to her co-workers, then two good things would follow:

1. Eve would be demonstrating her love for God and her friendship with God by protecting his reputation when it is called into question by unbelievers in public settings. That's what friends do – if Eve wanted to be God's friend, she would care that no one believed lies about him and told lies about him in public settings.
2. Eve would be demonstrating her love for her neighbor if she was able to correct some of these false beliefs, such as that the universe is eternal, or that a historical case cannot be made for the resurrection, or that evil is not compatible with theism. It's important for Alice and Bob to know that Christianity is not stupid.

So why is it that Eve is able to go to church for 20 years, sing in the choir, read the Bible, read the Narnia stories, pray on her knees, and yet still be unwilling to do the best thing for God and the best thing for her neighbor? If a Christian is smart enough to know how to get a degree and how to hold down a job, then that intelligence should also be used to defend God's reputation when it is called into question. I don't see how it is possible to claim that you love God, but then not apply your mind to defending him when you apply your mind to other things like education and work.

Who has more power over you: rich business owners or government officials?

November 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Police arrest pro-life student

Economist Walter Williams answers the question in the Daily Signal.

He writes:

> Let's look at the power of the rich. With all the money that Gates, Bezos, and other super-rich people have, what can they force you or me to do?
>
> Can they condemn our houses to create space so that another individual can build an auto dealership or a casino parking lot? Can they force us to pay money into the government-run—and doomed—Obamacare program? Can they force us to bus our children to schools out of our neighborhood in the name of diversity? Can they force us to buy our sugar from a high-cost domestic producer rather than from a low-cost Caribbean producer?
>
> The answer to all of these questions is a big fat no.
>
> You say, "Williams, I don't understand." Let me be more explicit.
>
> Bill Gates cannot order you to enroll your child in another school in order to promote racial diversity. He has no power to condemn your house to make way for a casino parking lot.
>
> Unless our elected public officials grant them the power to rip us off, rich people have little power to force us to do anything. A lowly municipal clerk earning $50,000 a year has far more life-and-death power over us. It is that type of person to whom we must turn for permission to build a house, ply a trade, open a restaurant, and do myriad other activities.
>
> It's government people, not rich people, who have the power to coerce us and rip us off. They have the power to make our lives miserable if we disobey. This coercive power goes a long way toward explaining legalized political corruption.

We have much more to fear from big government than we do from big corporations, and this is granting that big corporations are bad. There's no question that big corporations are generally very liberal, and opposed to social conservatives, and even fiscal conservatives. But what can they really do to you? Not much.

There is a lot of anger among young people in particular against "big corporations" these days, and many of these young people vote for bigger government because of it. But big corporations can only ever try to sell you things, and if you don't like it, turn off the TV and block their ads on Twitter. But you can't as easily stop the IRS from attacking your conservative group, or get rid of a SWAT team conducting a pre-dawn raid to punish you for being a conservative.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

November 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (30 MB)

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion

- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Wall Street Journal: Obama's Department of Justice instructed FBI investigators to "stand down"

November 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

Remember when the Obama adminsitration issued a stand down order to American armed forces when the embassy in Benghazi was being attacked? Four people got killed, then Hillary Clinton and Susan Rice lied about the attack being caused by a YouTube video. It seems like the Obama people haven't learned a thing, because they are doing it again.

I'm going to link to the Daily Wire, because WSJ is behind a pay wall.

Excerpt:

> The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) published a report on Wednesday night describing more internal conflicts at the FBI and Department of Justice (DoJ) regarding investigations into the Clinton Foundation. According to unnamed "people familiar with the matter," the WSJ claims that agents' wishes to aggressively pursue an investigation into government corruptions related to the ostensibly charitable philanthropic enterprise were stymied by DoJ prosecutors.
>
> […]The US attorney for Brooklyn, Robert Capers – an appointee of President Barack Obama – is described as being at "the center of the tension" between the FBI and DOJ. Some at the FBI are said to view him as misleadingly placating both sides of the interagency dispute.
>
> FBI agents and DOJ corruption prosecutors are said to have disagreed over the

> strength of the evidence regarding allegations that contributors to the Clinton Foundation received favorable political treatment from the State Department during Hillary Clinton's tenure as its head.
>
> […]The WSJ's sources claim that some blame is being directed at the FBI's second-in-command, deputy director Andrew McCabe. McCabe's wife is a Democrat senatorial candidate in Virginia who received nearly $500,000 from Virginia Governor and Clinton loyalist Terry McAuliffe.
>
> **With the aforementioned tensions beginning in February and continuing today, the DoJ instructed investigators to "stand down" in their investigation of possible corruption related to the Clinton Foundation, according to the WSJ's sources.**
>
> […]**DoJ officials are said to "have become annoyed" with FBI investigators who continued their investigations despite their efforts being rebuffed. Capers is said to have told officials in Washington that the involved FBI agents "won't let it go."**
>
> **A senior DoJ official is said to have called McCabe on August 12 over the matter, concerned that FBI agents were disregarding or disobeying instructions to cease their investigation of possible corruption related to the Clinton Foundation.**

Bret Baier of Special Report talked about the ongoing investigation on Wednesday night, and again on Thursday.

Wednesday night:

Thursday:

Real Clear Politics has an article posted about the first video:

> Fox News Channel's Bret Baier reports the latest news about the Clinton Foundation investigation from two sources inside the FBI. He reveals five important new pieces of information in these two short clips:
>
> 1. The Clinton Foundation investigation is far more expansive than anybody has reported so far and has been going on for more than a year.
>
> 2. The laptops of Clinton aides Cherryl Mills and Heather Samuelson have not been destroyed, and agents are currently combing through them. The investigation has interviewed several people twice, and plans to interview some for a third time.
>
> 3. Agents have found emails believed to have originated on Hillary Clinton's secret server on Anthony Weiner's laptop. They say the emails are not duplicates and could potentially be classified in nature.
>
> 4. Sources within the FBI have told Baier that an indictment is "likely" in the case of pay-for-play at the Clinton Foundation, "barring some obstruction in some way" from the Justice Department.

> 5. FBI sources say with 99% accuracy that Hillary Clinton's server has been hacked by at least five foreign intelligence agencies, and that information have been taken from it.

Pay attention to point #5 there – that point shows the importance of not electing a lightweight narcissist who will get us all killed with her carelessness and irresponsibility.

I think the only way that Hillary Clinton will avoid going to prison is by getting elected and replacing all the top leadership at the FBI and DOJ with her cronies, so that the investigations of her unsecure e-mail server and the Clinton Foundation pay-to-play deals get stopped.

Hillary Clinton promotes taxpayer funding of abortion and opposes religious liberty

November 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

Where does Hillary Clinton stand on religious liberty? Here she is in a video explaining her view that religious liberty has to be changed by the force of government when it conflicts with abortion rights.

LIfe News explains:

> In a speech last year, Hillary Clinton lamented that too many women are supposedly denied abortions. The Democratic presidential candidate came under fire for that pro-abortion comment, but she also drew widespread condemnation for another remark in the speech.
>
> The comment had Clinton essentially saying that Christians must be forced to change their religious views to accommodate abortions.
>
> "Far too many women are still denied critical access to reproductive health care and safe childbirth. All the laws we've passed don't count for much if they're not enforced," Clinton said, using the euphemism for abortion.
>
> "Rights have to exist in practice — not just on paper," Clinton argued. "Laws have to be backed up with resources and political will. And deep-seated cultural codes, religious beliefs and structural biases have to be changed."

It doesn't matter if you want to be a faithful Christian and disagree with the killing of unborn children. Hillary's going to force you to agree with her pro-abortion agenda, and make you pay for the abortions with your taxes.

And that was actually the pattern of her behavior when she was Secretary of State. She wasn't concerned with national security, or foreign policy. She was concerned with

promoting abortion abroad, using taxpayer dollars, including the taxpayer dollars of pro-life taxpayers.

CNS News explains:

> […]Clinton's State Department… sends tens of millions of dollars to African countries each year for family planning and reproductive health services, including abortion.
>
> The largest recipient is the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), which received $50 million from the State Department in 2010, the most recent year for which figures are available.
>
> UNFPA has a history of supporting abortion services in Africa, most notably in 2005 through its Maputo Plan of Action.
>
> The plan, adopted by the health ministers of the African Union, calls for the implementation of another UNFPA-drafted document known as the Continental Framework on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, which calls on African countries to "[p]rovide safe abortion services to the fullest extent of national laws, and where appropriate provide legal framework for safe abortion services."
>
> In both the Continental Framework and the Maputo Plan, discussion of abortion is couched in terms of reducing "unsafe" abortions, providing "safe" abortions, and promoting access to family planning in Africa.
>
> Through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the State Department also sends millions of dollars to Africa to help with population control and family planning programs.
>
> Clinton on Monday cited six countries – Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, and Uganda – which had partnered with the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's The Way Forward Project to increase care for children in their countries.
>
> Combined, those six countries received a $90.5 million for "family planning" in 2010.

Meanwhile, in America, Hillary's good friends at Planned Parenthood receive about $500 million from federal taxpayers each year. And Planned Parenthood returns the favor by donating millions to Democrats.

The Daily Signal explains:

> In the past three election cycles, Planned Parenthood's advocacy and political arms, employees, and their families have spent over $38 million to elect or defeat candidates for federal office who decide how much taxpayers subsidize the nation's largest abortion provider.
>
> […]Planned Parenthood receives approximately $500 million from federal taxpayers each year for Medicaid and Title X Family Planning, both programs intended for low-income Americans.

> “Planned Parenthood stands alone as a major recipient of taxpayer funding that is also a major participant in elections,” Mattox said.

If Hillary Clinton is elected, we should expect to see more taxpayer dollars being used to promote abortion abroad and here at home. This is something that Hillary Clinton is passionate about – eliminating children in the womb, and silencing Christians who disagree with aborting unborn children.

What’s the best book a woman can read to prepare herself for marriage?

November 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A good marriage is more than fun and feelings – it takes planning and work

I found a great lecture by Sue Bohlin, who works at Probe Ministries. The lecture is about the book “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands” by Dr. Laura Schlessinger. I recommend this book more highly than any other book to Christian women. It really does a lot to give young women a different perspective on men and marriage. Don’t be thrown off by the funny title, it’s really good.

The MP3 file is here. (48 minutes)

Here is a blog post that Sue wrote that captures most of the material in the lecture.

Here’s the introduction:

> Talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written a book that is improving thousands of marriages: *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands.* We need this book because millions of wives either don’t know how to love their husbands wisely and well, or they’re too self-centered to see it as important. Dr. Laura credits this dismal condition to forty years of feminist philosophy, “with its condemnation of just about everything male as evil, stupid, and oppressive, and the denigration of female and male roles in families.” While the women’s movement certainly had a hand to play in the disintegration of relationships and the family, I believe the core cause is our sinful self-centeredness, just as the Bible says.
>
> Which is why we need help, and God instructs older women to train younger women to love their husband and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be

> busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* is a great resource for learning these important values and skills.

And here's the first part I thought was most important:

> A listener to Dr. Laura's radio show named Edgar wrote, "There are a few things that men want so bad they would do anything for it. I think a good number of men want respect more than love. They like to feel they have some power. I nearly cry when you tell a woman caller to respect her husband. There is so much selfishness in the world—in marriages. Prosperity has allowed women to be so independent, and thus so selfish. I always feel as though I come last—my feelings come last, my needs come last."
>
> *"A good number of men want respect more than love."* God knew this when He made us. His commands to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:33 reflects each one's deepest needs: "Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." Dr. Emerson Eggerichs of LoveandRespect.com points out that this verse commands a husband to love his wife. Why? She needs love like she needs air to breathe. This same verse commands a wife to respect her husband. Why? He needs respect like he needs air to breathe.
>
> - Respect means treating someone in a way that builds him up and doesn't tear him down, never denigrating or attacking.
> - Respect means always treating the other person with the dignity they deserve as a person made in the image of God.
> - Respect means grasping that a man's needs and wants are every bit as valid and important as a woman's needs and wants.
> - Respect means not venting to others, *especially* the children. One woman wrote to Dr. Laura, "No emotional outlet is worth damaging my husband's reputation."
>
> There are three A's that men long for from their wives: attention, affection, and affirmation. Respect involves paying attention to what they do simply because they're the ones doing it.

Yes, respect is very important to men, but the thing is, a woman can't respect every man equally. She should choose a man who does things that are respectable. Then respecting him will be easy. Sometimes, women overestimate how easy men are to change after marriage. It's better to just pick one who does all the important things instead of thinking that you can pick a good-looking one and make him do the important stuff like be faithful to you, hold a steady job, save money, argue without getting angry, etc. later. Men don't change much, so pick one who does things that you respect and then give him respect.

And this part also seemed important to me:

> A man named Roy wrote to Dr. Laura with some good advice for wives: “If you can’t accentuate the positive, at least acknowledge it. The world is full of messages to men that there are standards we don’t meet. There is always another man who is more handsome, more virile, or more athletic than we are. None of that matters if the most important person in our life looks up to us, accepts us as we are, and loves us even though we aren’t perfect. . . . All I know is that the husband who has a wife who supports him and praises him for the positive things he does is the envy of all the other men who have to live with criticism, sarcasm, and constant reminders of their failures.”
>
> Men desperately want and need the support of their wives. This is reflected in what God reveals in His Word when He says, “It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” And through the apostle Paul, God instructs wives to relate to their husbands in a way that meets this need when He says, “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.”
>
> Submission is basically giving support with a willing, cooperative heart.
>
> A wife’s submission includes knowing her gifts and strengths, and using them to serve her husband and family.
>
> Service has a bad name, but both husbands and wives are called to serve God first and then each other; husbands are called to sacrificially love and serve their wives with Jesus as their pattern.
>
> So what does support look like?
>
> - Believing in him. Telling him, “You have what it takes.” Being his #1 fan.
> - Cultivating a cooperative heart.
> - Being generous and openhearted—willing to use your gifts and strengths to help him succeed.
> - Understanding the importance of making him look good: never saying anything negative in public.
> - Creating a home that’s a safe haven from the world.
> - Having a warm heart with a positive, cheerful demeanor. Women set the temperature of the home; we are thermostats, not thermometers, of the family. (On the other hand, Proverbs says “A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day; restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.”)
> - Being interested in him and his life.
> - Showing thoughtfulness. What does he like? Do it.
> - And though by no means exhaustive, it also means being a person of faithfulness and integrity. That means keeping your promises and being dependable. As Proverbs 31 puts it, “Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.”

Support and encouragement is SO important to a man. A man can continue to function

fine if the whole world opposes him, but not if the woman he loves doesn't support him. When a man falls in love, a woman has to realize the enormous power she has over him, and be careful not to hurt him. Men are vulnerable to the woman they choose. Although they look pretty tough on the outside, they can easily be hurt by insults or discouragement.

Parting thoughts

So, this lecture and the book are good, but young women should also seek out the advice of older Christian women who have been married successfully for some time. Read Titus 2:3-4 – the Bible encourages older women to mentor younger women! This is really important because we are in a time where young women are often pulled by the culture in many wrong directions, and they need help from people who know what they are doing.

One last point – I actually bought the audio version of the Dr. Laura book and noticed that it was just over two hours long. It turns out that the audio version is *abridged* – it is not as complete as the actual book. I noticed that Sue was quoting from the book passages that I had not heard in the audio recording. So, if you want the full content, get the book, not the audio recording.

Men on strike: the social changes that caused men to opt out of marriage

November 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

SurveyMonkey election poll cross tabs for unmarried women only Nov 2016

I tweeted and shared Dr. Helen Smith's book "Men on Strike" this week multiple times, and I finished reading it myself. The reason was that it was on sale for $3.29 for the Kindle edition. The book explains a few of the developments that have led to men underperforming in school and in the workplace, and opting out of marriage and fatherhood.

Dr. Helen comes to this problem as a secular libertarian, not as a Christian conservative.

A review of Dr. Helen's book appeared in Salvo magazine. The review is written by Terrell Clemmons, who has the best Christian worldview of any woman I know – I frequently rely on her advice.

Terrell writes:

> While the feminist movement may originally have been about equal respect for both sexes, what it has morphed into, she argues, is female privilege. From rape laws that empower women but not the men they may falsely accuse, to divorce laws tilted in favor of the wife, to the feminization of the U.S. education system, men have become the sex under the gun, while women enjoy the status of a protected class.
>
> But unlike their mothers or grandmothers, men today are not taking to the streets burning their undergarments and shrieking demands (thank God). They're

> doing just the opposite, which is far worse. They're going on strike. The strike zones are manifold:
>
> **Higher Education.**In addition to the enrollment imbalance, which is approaching a 60/40 ratio of women to men, college has become, in the words of one professor, "a hostile working environment [in which] males increasingly feel emasculated." Smith quotes a student named John, who had this to say about his college experience: "I had already been cautious around women, having grown up with Tawana Brawley in my backyard and daily stories of sexual harassment; I played it safe and passive every time. But it doesn't matter. The only way not to lose is to not play. So I'm out."
>
> **Work,**including community involvement. With higher female graduation rates and salaries, men today are falling behind their fathers economically and professionally. Consequently, their efforts to prove themselves worthy mates through hard work and higher earnings don't win female attention the way they used to. Discouraged, too many retreat to a man cave, and inertia sets in from there.
>
> **Marriage.**Marriage rates are down, and honest men opting out will tell you why. Smith cites a Rutgers University study of single heterosexual men which turned up the top reasons they hadn't married. They can get sex and the companionship of cohabitation without marriage more easily than in times past, and they don't want to open themselves up to the risk of divorce and financial loss. It really isn't that complicated a decision. In fact, it's often not an actual decision at all. It just happens.

The simplest explanation for the difficulties that boys face in an education system that is dominated by women (teachers and administrators) is discrimination. And in the workplace, the government requires employers to report on male and female head counts, and promote women who are not qualified. I have seen receptionists with tattoos and no college degrees promoted to six-figure manager jobs in companies where I worked.

There is one more which to me was the most surprising one in the book – paternity fraud, and the laws that support paternity fraud:

> Take the following cases of nonconsensual insemination: Nathaniel from California, age 15, had sex with 34-year-old Ricci, which, due to his age, was legally considered nonconsensual. Emile from Louisiana was visiting his parents in the hospital when a nurse offered him oral sex, *if* he wore a condom, which she conveniently offered to dispose of for him afterward. S. F. from Alabama passed out drunk at the home of a female friend and awoke undressed the following morning. In all three cases, including the one involving the minor, a woman got sperm and, nine months later, a child, and the man got ordered by a court of law to pay support for eighteen years.

> Less devious, but similarly amiss, are those cases in which a man, having been betrayed by his wife or girlfriend, was nevertheless held financially responsible for a child genetically proven to be another man's offspring. While not as sensational as sperm-jacking, it is another form of paternity extortion.

In each of those cases, the man was found liable to pay child support – including the case of the 15-year-old boy, who was forced to pay child support to his statutory rapist when he turned 18. This is how the court system works, and more and more men are understanding the risks.

I often encounter "pro-marriage" people while gathering stories for the blog. These pro-marriage people come in two varieties.

On the one end of the spectrum are people like Terrell Clemmons and Jennifer Roback Morse, who understand marriage, but who also understand the social changes that have made marriage unattractive for men. Both Clemmons and Morse have a background in STEM fields, so they are able to understand incentives and tradeoffs. They understand that society has to rollback the changes to education, divorce laws, etc. if they expect men to be interested in marriage again. They understand that men are not just accessories of women, but instead have their own desires, feelings and reasons for marrying.

On the other end of the spectrum are feminist men, who are not able to understand the changing incentives that face men in a world that has evolved under the influence of radical feminism. It is just simpler (less thinking) for these men to accept the radical feminism as a given, and then urge men to "man up". I think a much better idea would be for the "man up" crowd to realize how marriage has changed, and how the schools and the workplace have changed, then make all of these things more attractive to men. It doesn't do any good to try to "dare" men into jumping off a cliff.

Democrat Governor Terry McAuliffe gives 60,000 felons voting privileges

November 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Turnout	43.0% (voting eligible)[1]		
Nominee	Terry McAuliffe	Ken Cuccinelli	Robert Sarvis
Party	Democratic	Republican	Libertarian
Popular vote	1,069,789	1,013,354	146,084
Percentage	47.75%	45.23%	6.52%

Democrat governor elected in 2013 gives convicted felons voting rights in 2016

Mysterious William, who finds all the best stories, shared this news story from the Daily Caller.

It says:

> Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe has granted voting rights to as many as 60,000 convicted felons just in time for them to register to vote, nearly five times more than previously reported and enough to win the state for his long-time friend, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton.
>
> **McAuliffe sought to allow all of Virginia's estimated 200,000 felons to vote, but state courts said each individual felon's circumstances must be weighed. To get around that, McAuliffe used a mechanical autopen to rapidly sign thousands of letters, as if he had personally reviewed them, even as his office was saying the total was 13,000.**
>
> Now, The Daily Caller News Foundation Investigative Group has learned that McAuliffe — who managed Clinton's unsuccessful 2008 presidential campaign — churned out five times as many letters before the registration deadline than publicly claimed.
>
> Virginia's recent political history has seen multiple races that were decided by tiny margins. The 2014 U.S. Senate race, for example, was decided by only17,000 votes, while the attorney general's race came down to a mere 165 votes.
>
> McAuliffe is a close friend of Hillary and former President Bill Clinton, even personally guaranteeing a loan for the purchase of their Chappaqua, New York,

> mansion in 1999. He also served as chairman of the Democratic National Committee where he was a prodigious fund raiser.
>
> The Virginia chief executive claimed to have "no idea" how felons would vote and said he had never thought about it, even though their Democratic leanings are well-known.

He has "no idea"? Well, let me enlighten him: felons vote for Democrats by a margin of 6 to 1.

More from the original article:

> Clinton's staff emailed him after the 200,000-voters move to call it a "great announcement" and set up a call about it.
>
> […]**Virginia officials expressed surprise that McAuliffe had signed so many more letters than previously reported. Registrars and state legislators told TheDCNF they had no idea, and even officers of the state Board of Elections were kept in the dark.**

It's important to understand why there is a Democrat governor in Virginia. The reason why is because in the 2013 election, the Republican National Committee undermined the conservative Tea Party candidate. As a result, the Democrats won a narrow victory by only 55,000 votes (about 2.5%).

The American Thinker explains:

> What happened to Cuccinelli wasn't some back-room conspiracy shrouded in smoke and euphemisms; it was a conscious, overt effort to do serious damage to a Tea Party standard-bearer.
>
> Virginia Republicans tend to value hierarchy and tradition. Cuccinelli the upstart was punished for his impertinence. Instead of waiting his turn, as the aristocratic gatekeepers of the Virginia GOP demand, Cuccinelli asked his party elders to value merit and good policy proposals over seniority and rank. The powers that be within the Virginia Republican establishment responded by smearing the archetypal conservative as an extremist and trying to squash him.
>
> Remember that the establishment came out hard four years ago for the now-tainted RINOish governor Bob McDonnell, but this year largely left the cash-strapped Cuccinelli to his own devices against the fabulously wealthy Terry McAuliffe, the Democrats' Daddy Warbucks.
>
> According to the Virginia Public Access Project, key GOP fundraising organs lavished funds in the 2009 election cycle on the ethically slippery McDonnell. The Republican Party of Virginia and the Republican National Committee gave McDonnell $2,704,348 and $2,253,500, respectively.
>
> In the 2013 election cycle, the two big political committees were stingy, according to available data. As of Oct. 23, the Republican Party of Virginia had given Cuccinelli $843,085, and the RNC had coughed up a paltry $85,098 for the

> gubernatorial candidate. (The Republican Governors' Association was not stingy. RGA gave $1,994,312 to McDonnell, who leaves office in disgrace in January, and a healthy $8,066,772 to Cuccinelli.)

This is why you should only give money to individual conservative candidates – never give money to the RNC or the NRSC and especially not to the Chamber of Commerce, which is not a conservative group.

Should we really have expected FBI Director James Comey to enforce the law?

November 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton look bored about the deaths of 4 Americans who asked for her help

The Wall Street Journal explains why the FBI and DOJ exist primarily to help the Democrat Party, and not to enforce the laws of the nation. (H/T Jay Richards)

Excerpt:

> The Justice Department never went to a grand jury in the case, which was needed to gather all appropriate evidence and vet the legal charges. Judge Mukasey's judgment was vindicated on Sunday when Mr. Comey sent a letter to Congress saying that the FBI had reviewed the new emails and "we have not changed our conclusion that we expressed in July with respect to Secretary Clinton."
>
> To rehearse Mr. Comey's actions: In July he publicly exonerates Mrs. Clinton in an extraordinary press event, two weeks before she is to be nominated for President, though that is not his responsibility. He thus liberates Attorney General Loretta Lynch from her decision-making obligations as the nation's chief prosecuting official. Later we learn Justice cut needless and generous immunity deals with Mrs. Clinton's advisers.
>
> Then 11 days before Election Day Mr. Comey sends a letter to Congress saying the FBI has found new email evidence. He comes under ferocious Democratic assault for meddling in the final days of the campaign. His boss, President

> Obama, joins the criticism and says Mrs. Clinton has already been exonerated. Then two days before the election Mr. Comey sends another letter exonerating Mrs. Clinton again. And Washington's political class wonders why Americans don't trust government?
>
> It's hard to avoid the conclusion that the main point of Mr. Comey's many political interventions has always been to protect Mr. Comey's job and political standing. Certainly Mrs. Clinton will have cause to be grateful to Mr. Comey if she wins on Tuesday. The price to the country is the damage he has done to the reputation of the FBI as an apolitical law-enforcement agency.

And this isn't the first time that Comey has used law enforcement as weapon against conservatives:

> In better news for the cause of justice related to Mr. Comey, the D.C. Court of Appeals last week reinstated Lewis "Scooter" Libby's law license. Readers will recall that as Deputy Attorney General in the Bush Administration, Mr. Comey named his buddy Patrick Fitzgerald as a special prosecutor in connection with the leak of Valerie Plame's CIA identity. Mr. Comey then stood by as Mr. Fitzgerald pursued Mr. Libby, who was Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff, even after he knew that someone else had leaked Ms. Plame's name.
>
> Mr. Fitzgerald won the conviction based on testimony that a key witness, journalist Judith Miller, has since recanted. The office of the D.C. disciplinary counsel recommended that Mr. Libby's law license be reinstated in part due to Ms. Miller's recantation. The hyperpolitical Mr. Comey has left a trail of legal messes wherever he has worked, but at least Mr. Libby can earn a living at his chosen profession again.

Judith Miller is a former journalist for the far left New York Times (a former newspaper).

So often when I blog on these news stories, I don't really comment about how I feel about them. I guess I should say something about how this refusal to enforce the law for the sake of career makes me feel.

What happened to the rule of law in this country? What happened is that the university classrooms in non-STEM areas became political in the last few decades. Professors in the liberal arts who went through school achieving good grades in areas of knowledge that had no value in the private sector became bitter against their culture. They were so good at agreeing with their teachers, and they got good grades for it – how could it be that they were not as wealthy as people who invented smartphones? Their reports cards assured them that they were smarter than everyone. They blamed the marketplace for their failure to succeed. And in their classrooms, they started to teach against Judeo-Christian values, the Constitution, the free enterprise system and the history of the United States. Basically, they blamed their failure to succeed as well as technical entrepreneurs on everyone but themselves, and they wanted to use government as a tool to equalize life outcomes with the people who invented things that consumers actually

want to buy. It was these professors who taught the people who went into the public sector. They taught them the values of their tribe: secularism and leftism. Nothing was taught to them about the foundations that allowed Western Civilization to be great.

So, when you see people like Lois Lerner, James Comey and Loretta Lynch working for the IRS, the FBI and the DOJ, (respectively), then you must understand that they have never been taught to see their role as impartial law enforcement. They are unfamiliar with the phrase “rule of law”, and the importance of the rule of law for Western Civilization. Basically, you can go right through the Constitution, and they disagree with every sentence of it, because that’s what their secular leftists professors taught them to hate. You can’t expect secular leftists to act morally when they are given power – there is no foundation for moral behavior in a secular worldview. As my friend Ari likes to say “there is no law, there is only vendetta”. That’s what you get when you allow tax dollars to subsidize secular leftist wordsmiths in the public schools and public universities.

How much of an advantage will Hillary Clinton get from voter fraud in 2016?

November 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary will get a boost in the election from dead people voting
Rachel Alexander writes about it at The Stream.

Voter fraud:

> Dead voters may account for a large amount of voter fraud. In September, for example, a Young Democrat in Virginia attempted to register 19 dead people to vote through the organization HarrisonburgVotes. He was only caught when a clerk recognized the name of a deceased World War II veteran he had submitted. The group, which is headed by the chairman of the congressional district's Democratic Committee, has fired the young man and taken down its website and social media accounts. "This is proof that voter fraud not only exists but is ongoing and is a threat to the integrity of our elections," said William J. Howell (R-Stafford), speaker of the state's House of Delegates.
>
> Last month, three dead voters were found on the newly registered or re-registered voting list in Hamilton County, Ohio. They had been added after they had passed away.
> Although much of the election fraud is taking place in swing states, fraud continues in states known for the worst election fraud. Chicago, infamous for its dead voters, continues to have the most egregious problems. CBS 2 discovered that "119 dead people have voted a total of 229 times in Chicago in the last decade." Relatives report they can't even get their deceased loved ones removed from voter rolls. One man told the station last month that he has asked multiple times to have his dead mother removed from voter registration. Even though she died in 1998, records show she voted in 2010.
>
> In Indiana, officials are investigating hundreds of voter registrations that appear fraudulent. An organization called Indiana Voter Registration Project submitted

> the registrations, which contain “a combination of fake names, addresses and dates of birth with real information.” Hendricks County Clerk Debbie Hoskins caught the discrepancies and notified law enforcement. The faulty voter registrations have showed up in eight other Indiana counties. The spokeswoman for the organization is Christy Setzer, who has worked as a Democrat strategist for the presidential campaigns of Al Gore, Howard Dean and Chris Dodd.
>
> Another technique, known as double voting or ballot stuffing, lets people vote twice.“You’d be surprised how often people double vote,” Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach told CBS 4 in Colorado. “Two of the cases are serial double voters. I think people discover they can get away with it and keep doing it.” Kobach says some of the voters cast ballots in both Colorado and Kansas, and believes 10,000 people are registered to vote in both states.

Polling officials fraud:

> This category includes officials throwing out ballots for illegitimate reasons and allowing ineligible voters to vote. In 2013, undercover New York City police officers showed up at 63 different precincts pretending to be prohibited voters, but in 61 precincts, or 97 percent of the time, they were allowed to vote (they voted for a dummy name to avoid influencing the election). The officers assumed the identities of dead people, voters who had moved, or felons.
>
> Similarly, in the 2012 election, O’Keefe showed up to a New Hampshire polling place with some assistants, asking for ballots for 10 deceased voters. Their names had not yet been purged from the voting rolls, and poll workers handed them the ballots without asking for ID, a violation of state law.

Elected officials fraud:

> In Missouri, Mayor Ted Hoskins of Berkeley, Mo., a Democrat, and his supporters are accused of requiring early ballot voters to submit their ballots in unsealed envelopes, which is contrary to law. Some residents say they were encouraged to fill out ballots and turn them over to Hoskins or one of his supporters. This could allow tampering of the ballots, so prosecutors and the FBI are currently investigating.
>
> Eric Fey, Democratic director of the Election Board, said, “There were different colored inks and some where the ovals were filled in a very distinct fashion and some that were filled in a very different distinct fashion; things that you just don’t see on other ballots.” Fey said the results benefited Hoskins and his allies.
>
> In 2012, Hoskins received the highest share of early ballots of any candidate, 36 percent. The next highest share among mayoral candidates was a mere 14 percent, and countywide, the share of early ballots averaged 8.6 percent. Hoskins defeated his opponent by 517 votes to 418.

Voting machines fraud:

> Hackers told CBS how simple it is to hack electronic voting machines. For $15, a voter can buy a card that is capable of manipulating the machine — without ever leaving the voting booth. “I can insert it, and then it resets the card, and now I’m able to vote again,” said Brian Varner, a principle researcher at the computer security company Symantec.
>
> Symantec Security Response director Kevin Haley said the machines can be hacked after all the votes have been cast. CBS reports that only 60 percent of states routinely conduct audits after elections by comparing paper trails. The swing states of Virginia and Pennsylvania don’t even collect paper records, so there is no way to conduct audits.

National Review has another list of voter fraud incidents: (links removed)

> Take these cases discovered during just the last month and a half:
>
> - San Pedro, Calif.: Eighty-three absentee ballots were sent to different registered voters who all supposedly lived in the same small, two-bedroom apartment.
> - Pennsylvania: FieldWorks LLC, a Democratic organization, was raided by Pennsylvania State Police for fraudulently filling out registration forms for thousands of voters.
> - Chicago: An investigation by CBS Channel 2 found people who had been registered to vote after their death — a total of 119 dead people who had voted 229 times.
> - Virginia: In an examination of just eight out of the Commonwealth’s 133 counties and independent cities, 1,046 illegal aliens were discovered to have illegally registered to vote.
> - New York: In an undercover video, even Democrats were recently caught complaining about the amount of voter fraud created by New York City mayor Bill de Blasio’s decision to give out ID cards without checking recipients’ identities.

Naturally, under eight years of Barack Obama, nothing has happened to stop this. And that’s not surprising since Obama’s meager “work experience” involved work for an organization called ACORN, which was investigated and sanctioned for aiding and abetting voter fraud.

New study: galactic habitable zone depends on fine-tuning of cosmological constant

November 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

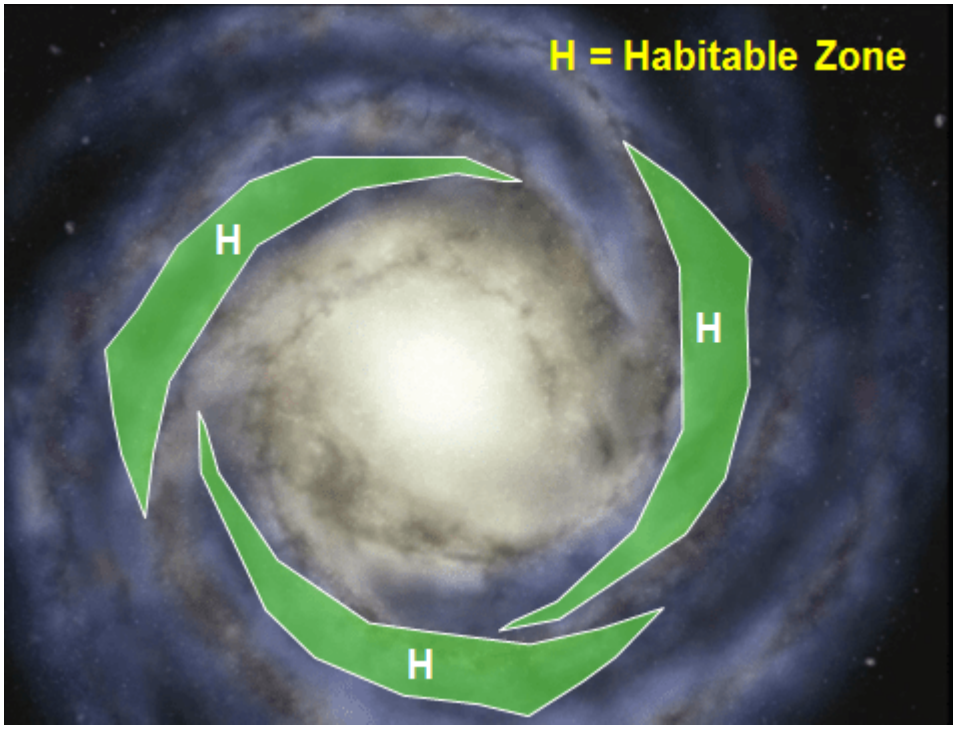

The galactic habitable zone (GHZ) is shown in green superimposed on a spiral galaxy

This is going to be old news to readers of this blog who are familiar with the Michael Strauss, Walter Bradley and Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on habitability and fine-tuning. But, it's nice to see these ideas show up in one of the most prestigious peer-reviewed science journals in the world (if not *the* most prestigious).

Here's the article from Science. (H/T Gunter)

It says:

> Scientists have known for several years now that stars, galaxies, and almost everything in the universe is moving away from us (and from everything else) at a faster and faster pace. Now, it turns out that the unknown forces behind the rate of this accelerating expansion—a mathematical value called the cosmological constant—may play a previously unexplored role in creating the right conditions for life.
>
> That's the conclusion of a group of physicists who studied the effects of massive cosmic explosions, called gamma ray bursts, on planets. They found that when it comes to growing life, it's better to be far away from your neighbors—and the cosmological constant helps thin out the neighborhood.
>
> "In dense environments, you have many explosions, and you're too close to them," says cosmologist and theoretical physicist Raul Jimenez of the University of Barcelona in Spain and an author on the new study. "It's best to be in the

> outskirts, or in regions that have not been highly populated by small galaxies—and that's exactly where the Milky Way is."
>
> Jimenez and his team had previously shown that gamma ray bursts could cause mass extinctions or make planets inhospitable to life by zapping them with radiation and destroying their ozone layer. The bursts channel the radiation into tight beams so powerful that one of them sweeping through a star system could wipe out planets in another galaxy. For their latest work, published this month in *Physical Review Letters*, they wanted to apply those findings on a broader scale and determine what type of universe would be most likely to support life.
>
> The research is the latest investigation to touch on the so-called anthropic principle: the idea that in some sense the universe is tuned for the emergence of intelligent life. If the forces of nature were much stronger or weaker than physicists observe, proponents note, crucial building blocks of life—such fundamental particles, atoms, or the long-chain molecules needed for the chemistry of life—might not have formed, resulting in a sterile or even completely chaotic universe.

Basically, the best place for a galaxy that permits complex, embodied life to exist is one where you can pick up enough heavy elements from dying stars nearby, but not be in an area that is so crowded by stars that you will be murdered by intense gamma radiation when they die.

The cosmological constant has to be set just right that we spread out enough to make space between spiral arms for life-permitting solar systems, but no so spread out that we cannot pick up the heavy elements we need for a metal-rich star, a moon, and the bodies of the intelligent agents themselves.

More:

> **As it turns out, our universe seems to get it just about right. The existing cosmological constant means the rate of expansion is large enough that it minimizes planets' exposure to gamma ray bursts, but small enough to form lots of hydrogen-burning stars around which life can exist. (A faster expansion rate would make it hard for gas clouds to collapse into stars.)**
>
> Jimenez says the expansion of the universe played a bigger role in creating habitable worlds than he expected. "It was surprising to me that you do need the cosmological constant to clear out the region and make it more suburbanlike," he says.

Remember, this is only one of many characteristics that must obtain in order for a have a location in the universe that can support complex, embodied life of any conceivable kind.

Let's review the big picture

Time for me to list out some of the things that are required for a galaxy, solar system and

planet to support complex embodied life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind given these laws of physics.

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

It's not easy to make a planet that supports life. For those who are interested in reaching out to God, he has left us an abundance of evidence for his existence – and his attention to detail.

And remember, these requirements for a habitable planet are downstream from the cosmic fine-tuning of constants and quantities that occurs at the Big Bang. No point in talking about the need for plate tectonics if *you only have hydrogen in your universe.* The habitability requirements are a *further* problem that comes after the fine-tuning problem.

Resources

The best book to read on this topic is "The Privileged Planet", by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards. The latter is one of my absolute favorite Christian scholars, a real renaissance man. If the book is too much, there is a DVD by the same name that covers everything you need to know at a high level. Just FYI, Gonzalez made the cover of Scientific American in 2001, for his research on habitable zones. This is real evidence you can discuss with anyone, anywhere.

You can also watch the DVD for FREE on YouTube. Not sure how long that will be there. If you like it, buy the DVD, so you can show your friends.

Related posts

- New study: survey of 700 quintillion terrestrial exoplanets suggests Earth is special
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- The connection between our moon, plate tectonics and habitability
- Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on the corelation between habitability and discoverability
- New paper finds that mass of asteroid belts affect habitability of planets

- New study on tidal heating strengthens stellar habitability argument
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- Earth-like planet hyped by science-fiction-crazed atheists likely uninhabitable
- Four ways the Earth is fine-tuned for life, and one more
- Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas
- Fine-tuning the habitable zone: tidal-locking and solar flares
- Is silicon-based life a possible alternative for carbon-based life?
- Jupiter deflects comets and asteroids that might otherwise hit Earth
- How common is it for a star to support complex, embodied life?
- Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University
- Scientists troubled by lack of simple explanation for our life-permitting moon

The Democrats who cried wolf: how incompetent Obama and corrupt Clinton lost the election

November 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Why do people think that the mainstream media is biased against Republicans?
In the Tuesday elections, the Republican party won the Presidency, and held onto the Senate and the House of Representatives. Republicans also hold a majority of governorships and state legislatures.

How did this happen? Did the Democrats not paint all of their opposition as racist? Yes, they did. Did the Democrats not paint all of their opposition as sexist? Yes, they did. Did the Democrats not paint all of their opposition as Islamophobic? Yes, they did. Did the Democrats not paint all of their opposition as homophobic? Yes, they did.They said all those things. That's how they talk about Republicans.

But this time, the American people did not accept the normal caricature of Republicans. This time, the voters decided to vote Republican in every possible race, in overwhelming numbers.

Why?

Rich Lowry of National Review explains:

> Yet again, Democrats breathlessly declare the Republican candidate a Nazi — and wonder why no one is listening.
>
> The Republican nominee for president is a racist, sexist threat to American democracy — and this time, we really mean it.
>
> In a nutshell, this is the Democratic argument against Donald Trump. In a wild, topsy-turvy political year, it is the one exceedingly familiar piece of the political landscape — because it is a version of the argument the Left makes against every Republican nominee.
>
> That this line of attack is so shopworn, just when Democrats think we need it most, has led to self-reflection and regret from one of the harshest commentators on the left. **The HBO host Bill Maher said the other day that "liberals made a big mistake" when they attacked George W. Bush "like he was the end of the world," and did the same thing to Mitt Romney and John McCain.**
>
> Maher himself was a prime offender, with no hesitation about resorting to Nazi analogies (he compared Romney's aides to Adolf Hitler's dead-end loyalists, and Laura Bush to Hitler's dog).
>
> Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama have been touring the country saying that Trump isn't like past Republican nominees, even though they were attacked in exactly the same terms.

George W. Bush was a man of deep faith who did all he could to reach out to minorities and soften conservatism's edge. Yet right out of the gate in 2000, the NAACP ran an ad accusing him of being all but complicit in a hideous racist murder in Texas. His botched handling of Hurricane Katrina wasn't portrayed as a mistake in trying circumstances, but of his disregard for black people. He was called a fascist, a war criminal, and a would-be theocrat.

Obama now says Romney was only "wrong on certain policy issues." This is rank revisionism. His campaign's entire approach in 2012 was to disqualify Romney as a person, basically for being too coldbloodedly rational and prim and proper (i.e., the opposite of Trump).

Romney was not, as an Obama ad put it, "one of us." He basically killed people with his heartless layoffs. He posed a real and present danger to Latinos with his policy of "self-deportation." He was waging a "war on women." One prominent piece of evidence for Romney's unhinged sexism was his entirely anodyne, if awkward, comment that he asked for "binders full of women" when making appointments as governor of Massachusetts.

Harry Reid infamously alleged, with no evidence whatsoever, that Romney didn't pay taxes for a decade. When the Republican candidate released his returns, it turned out he had overpaid. And so it went.

It has always been the case that Republican leaders are retrospectively deemed statesmen by the Left when they are dead or retired. It has happened to Ronald Reagan, who went from a warmongering right-wing radical to a statesmanlike moderate; to George H. W. Bush, who was an out-of-touch elitist and now is the epitome of class; and to George W. Bush, John McCain, and Mitt Romney, who now are getting their revivals.

This isn't about the softening passage of time so much as opportunistically using past Republican politicians as a bludgeon against contemporary Republican politicians.

Genuinely alarmed by Trump, Bill Maher apparently realizes how tinny it sounds to lodge against him all the accusations routinely made against any other Republican. **It was just a couple of years ago that Paul Ryan – an earnest policy wonk who operates in the inclusive style of the late Jack Kemp – was attacked as a racist for commenting on men not working in troubled inner-city neighborhoods.**

If this isn't crying wolf, what is? Confronted with Trump, Democrats don't have any radioactive denunciations in reserve. They have all been deployed against a couple of generations of Republicans whose politics and characters were starkly different than Trump's. And will surely be deployed once again – the charges

> never change, just the target.

The problem is that the blame for the election cannot be placed on Republican voters being motivated by racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, etc. This election result was caused by two things: 1) the Democrats inflicted 8 years of failed social policy, fiscal policy and foreign policy on the American people, and 2) the Democrats ran the most entitled, secretive, corrupt candidate who has ever run in any American election.

The problem is that the average Democrat voter has not been following the news closely enough to understand how damaging the failed policies of Barack Obama have been, and how bad their candidate really was.

The average Democrat voter:

- does not know about Benghazi being blamed on a Youtube video.
- does not know about the disasters in Libya and Egypt following our military interventions.
- does not know about our failure to support pro-democracy forces in Syria, arm the Kurds, give anti-tank weapons to Ukraine, and give missile defense to European countries.
- does not know about the details of the Iran nuclear deal.
- does not know about the running of assault weapons to Mexican drug cartels.
- does not know about the handing out of taxpayer money to green energy companies run by Obama bundlers.
- does not know that Obama doubled the national debt from 10 to 20 trillion.
- does not know that Christian business owners are forced to celebrate gay marriage and cover abortifacients in the health insurance plans they offer to employees.
- does not know about illegal immigrants killing Americans after the federal government fails to deport them.
- has not watched the Center for Medical Progress videos showing Planned Parenthood officials optimizing abortion procedures in order to maximize profit from organ trafficking.
- has not watched the Project Veritas videos showing Democrats talking about organizing violence at Republican events, and organizing voter fraud.
- does not know about terrorist attacks committed by Islamic refugees who were fast-tracked to green cards while skilled legal immigrants had to wait in line for decades.
- does not know that Obama blocked construction of the Keystone pipeline, and that labor force participation is at a 30-year low because of Obama’s anti-business policies.
- does not know that thousands of veterans have died waiting for healthcare, while VA bureaucrats falsified records and collected big performance bonuses.
- does not remember how Democrat politicians wanted to give space to BLM rioters to break the law.
- does not understand how Hillary circumvented information security policies to hide her emails from her employer, and how the Clinton Foundation accepted donations

from foreign donors in exchange for access and favors.
- believes that Obamacare is working as designed, and that everyone kept their doctor, kept their health plan, and is now paying less premium, with a lower deductible.

The average Democrat voter is not well-informed, and does not realize that the average Republican voter is aware of all of these things and more – and that this is why the average Republican voter voted for a clown like Donald Trump, rather than vote for a corrupt politician like Hillary Clinton. They voted against Hillary because she intended to double down on policies that we all know have failed catastrophically.

In my experience, the Democrats I know never ask me to explain my views, nor do they read any new source or scholarly work that contradicts the caricature they have of Republican voters. Republicans are familiar with the views on the other side, but Democrats believe caricatures. At some point Democrats have to put truth above their need to feel superior to others, and get informed. Laughing at people who differ with you on serious issues for substantive reasons does not lead to irenic discussion.

The real losers of this election are the celebrities, entertainers and the mainstream media. They have lost their authority to scare Americans with caricatures of Republican political views. I am not happy at all with a Trump presidency, he has just done too many things to burn bridges with me: false accusations against Cruz, slandering George W. Bush, petty insults against Carly Fiorina, Marco Rubio and Paul Ryan, etc. But I am glad that Hillary Clinton lost the election and I am glad that the Democrats wasted so much money trying to get her elected. I am happy that the mainstream media lost. I hope that the people like Stephen Moore, John Bolton, Trey Gowdy, etc. who are on board with Trump (I'm not, I'm a #NeverTrump Cruz supporter) are able to punish the Democrats and shrink the size of government. That would be a really good thing for America.

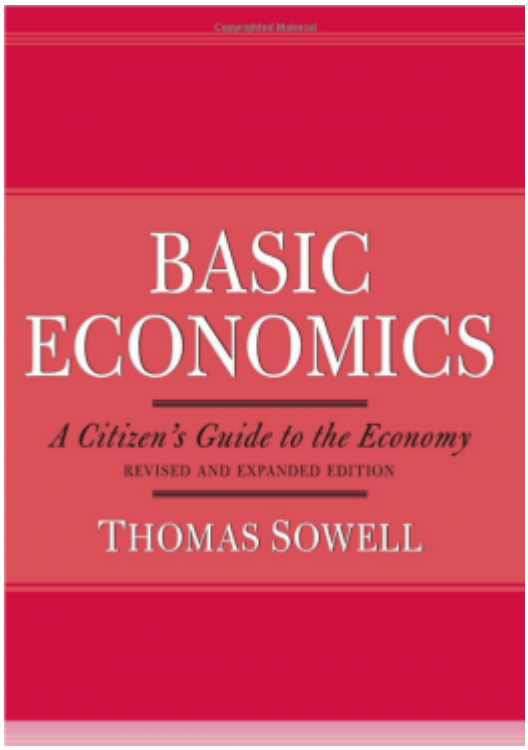

Basic Economics: A Citizen’s Guide to the Economy
My advice to Democrats is this: pick up a book by Thomas Sowell and read it. Try “Basic Economics”, which will teach you how different economic policies have actually worked out in different times and in different places. Then maybe you will have a more accurate picture of reality which will help you to understand what motivates the people who disagree with you on public policy.

William Lane Craig lectures on failure in the Christian life

November 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
I found this audio on Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 web site.

Here is the MP3 file.

And here is my summary.

Intro:

- the topic of failure is not one that is often discussed by Christians
- failure #1: failure in the Christian life which is the result of sin
- failure #2: when a Christian is defeated while trying to serve God
- the consequences for failure #1 can be worse for the Christian
- the consequences for failure #2 can be worse for the world as whole
- how is it possible for a person to fail when they are obeying God? (#2)
- how can it be that God can call someone to a task then let them fail?
- failure is not persecution – persecution is normal for Christians
- failure is not trials – testing is normal for Christians to grow

Bill's failure:

- Bill had submitted all the coursework for his second doctoral degree
- but he had to pass a comprehensive oral examination
- he failed to pass the comprehensive exam
- Bill and Jan and his supporters had all prayed for him to pass
- how could God allow this to happen?

Solution to the problem:

- God’s will for us may be that we fail at the things we try in life
- there are things that God may teach us through failure
- Bill learned that human relationships are more important than careers
- we need to realize that “success” in life is not worldly success
- true success is getting to know God well during your life
- and failure may be the best way to get to know God well
- it may even be possible to fail to know God while achieving a lot
- the real measure of a man is loving God and loving your fellow man

Practical:

- give thanks to God regardless of your circumstances
- try to learn from your failure
- never give up

The ending of Bill’s story:

- Bill spent an entire year preparing for a re-take of his exam
- Bill was awarded his second doctorate “magna cum laude” (with great distinction)
- Bill learned that American students are not well prepared for exams
- the year of studying remedied his inadequate American education
- in retrospect, he is thankful for the failure – he learned more

If you like this, you should pick up Craig’s book “Hard Questions, Real Answers“, which has a chapter on this problem.

Does more relationship experience lead to better relationship success?

November 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

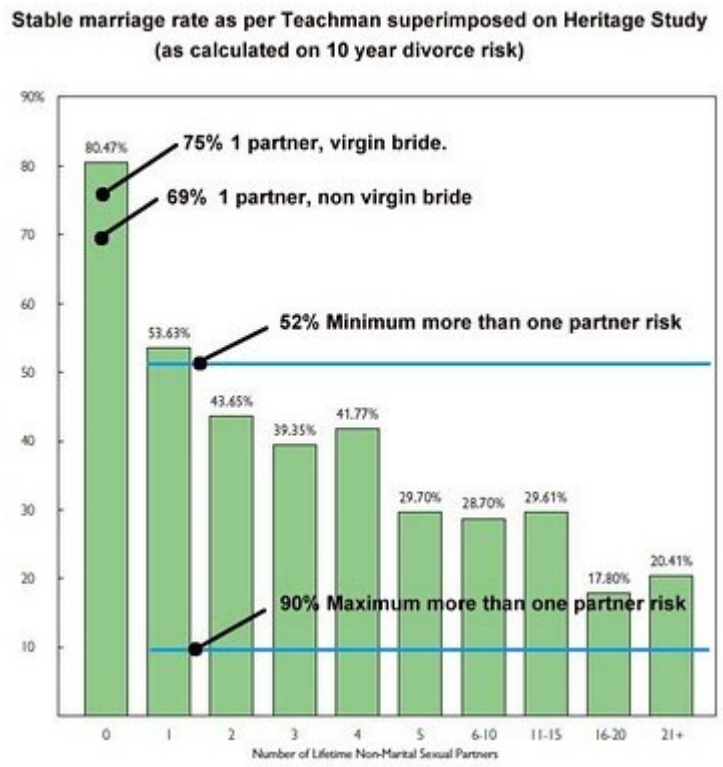

Published in the Journal of Marriage and Family
Consider this article from the Institute for Family Studies.

It says:

> In most areas of life, having more experience is good. Want to be great in your chosen field? Sustained experience is essential. Want to be great at a sport? There's no substitute for practice. And anyone who runs a business can tell you that their best employees are those who have been in the job long enough to have learned how to handle the normal well and the unexpected with wisdom.
>
> While more experience is often beneficial in life, the story looks different when it comes to some types of experience before marriage. For example, in our *Before "I Do"* report, we surveyed a national longitudinal sample of young adults about their love lives prior to marriage to examine factors associated with future marital quality. **We found that having more sexual and cohabiting partners before marriage is associated with lower relationship quality once married. In particular, having only ever lived with or had sex with one's spouse was associated with higher marital quality. Our findings are consistent with other studies showing that cohabiting with more partners before marriage is associated with greater likelihood of divorce[1] and that a higher number of sexual partners before marriage is**

> **associated with lower marital quality and greater likelihood of divorce.**[2]
> As we noted, what happens in Vegas may not always stay in Vegas. But why?
>
> There are many reasons why having more romantic partners before marriage may put one at higher risk of difficulties in marriage. One of the most important explanations comes under the heading of what some call selection effects. For many people, an elevated risk of difficulties in marriage was present before they had their first relationship experience. Background characteristics such as parental divorce, low education, and economic disadvantage are associated both with having more sexual and cohabiting partners and also with lower marital quality and/or divorce.[3]So it may not be that having more sexual or cohabiting partners causes further risk because a lot of risk was already in motion. Selection is a big part of how relationships unfold, but is it the whole story? We believe that, in addition to selection, behavior matters and has plausible connections to marital outcomes. We are going to explain four reasons why having more relationship experience before tying the knot might make it harder to succeed in marriage.

Here are the 4 reasons:

1. **More Awareness of Alternatives**
2. **Changed Expectations: The Perfect Sexual Lover (in Your Mind)**
3. **More Experience Breaking It Off**
4. **Babies**

I have to quote the one that I've personally encountered in my mentoring – number three: more experience breaking it off. I've seen this commitmentphobia in two women who had "wild" periods in their past who had broken up with cohabitating boyfriends.

It says:

> Cohabitation has characteristics that seem paradoxical. Living with a partner makes it harder to break up than dating, all other things being equal, and often now comes at a time in relationship development where people have not really chosen each other for the future.[8] And yet, cohabiting couples frequently break up, and they are more likely than any other time in history not to end up marrying.[9]
>
> These days, cohabitation has become more a part of the dating scene than a lead-up to marriage. Let's call the phenomenon cohabi*dating*. In this context, some people are getting a lot of experience at leaving serious relationships (or surviving being left). Just as with our prior point, that does not sound bad in one way—at least insofar as people are breaking off relationships that had no future. But it's also true that people tend to get good at things they have a lot of experience doing. People can get good at moving out and moving on.
>
> How does that impact marriage? Some people probably so deeply learn that they

> can survive leaving a relationship when they are unhappy with it that they leave reasonably good marriages that would have given them and their children the best outcomes in life. They bail too quickly.
>
> Obviously, many others leave very poor or even dangerous marriages only after a lot of agonizing and effort. We're not suggesting divorce is ever easy or that it is not sometimes the best course. But in a day and age when people get so much experience moving out and moving on, we think many may learn to do so too rapidly, and to their detriment.

If you want to get good at relationships, experience may not be the answer. Reading good studies like this, and making decisions that line up with the research is much wiser. As always, never follow your heart. Always follow rational arguments and evidence, and keep connected to a good panel of advisors who have had long-term relationships success. That's the best way to avoid disaster.

People ask me how to learn how to do relationships well if your parents are divorced and the culture is a cesspool. The answer is to go back in time to before radical feminism, to the time when men and women had distinct roles, and had to attract each other without using sex. Men had to prove their feelings to women with actions, and when women chose men for the roles of husband and father. Parents were consulted to give advice about courtship and marriage. Where can you find this today? Well, books by Christian authors like Jane Austen are very helpful. If you like DVDs, go out and get yourself the BBC production of "North and South", which is based on the book by Christian author Elizabeth Gaskell. My favorite romance is Edmund Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac", just make sure you get the Brian Hooker translation if you are reading it in English. Although the best version is the original French. Shakespeare is also good – I got my rule of saving the first kiss for the proposal / engagement from Henry V.

You have to dig if you are going to get away from a culture that trains people to fail to prepare for marriage. You have to fight to develop and maintain your ability to love another person well, in a Christ-like way. The culture says to treat the opposite sex like a commodity, but you should instead think of them as something designed to be presented to God. Never treat them in a way that causes damage to that vertical relationship, that's the most important thing about them – how they see God.

Donald Trump names Ken Blackwell as head of his domestic transition team

November 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

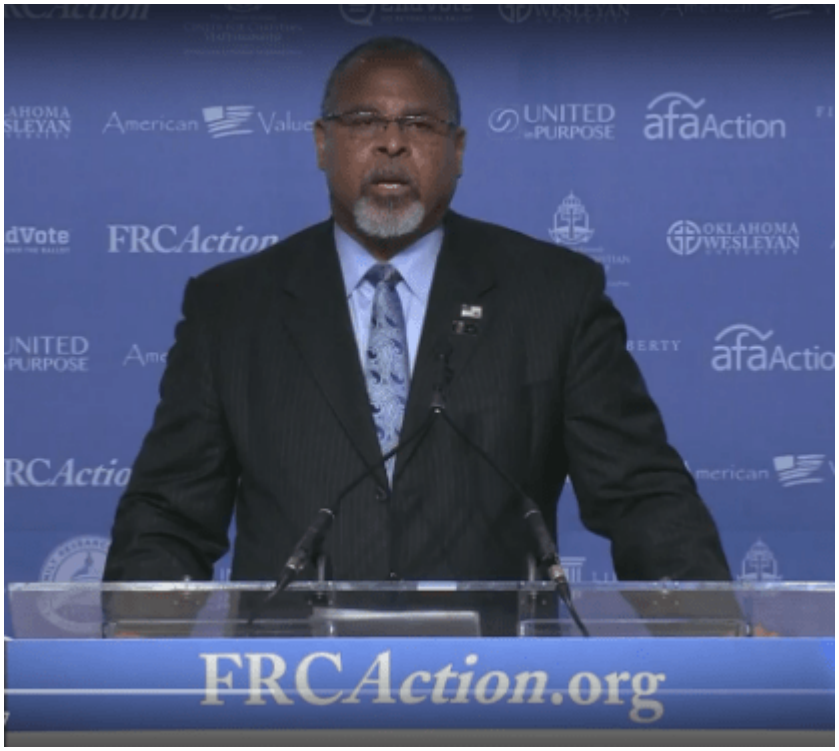

Ken Blackwell: Senior Fellow for Human Rights and Constitutional Governance at the Family Research Council

OK, so some of my readers may not know who Ken Blackwell is, but long story short, this would be like naming Ted Cruz as Solicitor General or naming Thomas Sowell as head of the Congressional Budget Office. Ken Blackwell has a reputation as a social conservative who is also a fiscal conservative. Don't worry, I have things about him for you to read, but first the announcement, which was tweeted by the Family Research Council (!) where Blackwell is a Senior Fellow.

Associated Press:

> The Ohio Republican selected by president-elect Donald Trump to lead his domestic transition is an outspoken conservative with a history as a party maverick.
>
> Ken Blackwell prevailed in an intra-party feud in 2006 to become Ohio's first black nominee for governor. He also took on fellow Republicans in the state Legislature while serving in statewide office.
>
> As state elections chief, Blackwell played a pivotal role in administering the hotly-contested 2004 presidential election while serving as Republican George W. Bush's honorary campaign co-chair. Democrats alleged in political attacks and lawsuits that Blackwell supported vote-suppressing policies favoring Bush, who won Ohio and the election. Blackwell prevailed in court.

> Blackwell is on the boards of the National Rifle Association and Club for Growth. He's also a senior fellow at the Family Research Council.

Oh my goodness, you can't appoint someone from the Family Research Council. This is the organization that gay rights activists really hate – remember the attack by gay activist Floyd Lee Corkins? That was the FRC he tried to shoot up! Wow, this is my second favorite think tank.

Here is his fact sheet from the FRC:

> **Ken Blackwell**
>
> Ken Blackwell is the Senior Fellow for Human Rights and Constitutional Governance at the Family Research Council. He is a national bestselling author of three books: Rebuilding America: A Prescription For Creating Strong Families, Building The Wealth Of Working People, And Ending Welfare; The Blueprint: Obama's Plan to Subvert the Constitution and Build an Imperial Presidency; and Resurgent: How Constitutional Conservatism Can Save America.
>
> He serves on the Board of Directors of various high-profile organizations including the Timothy Plan, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the United States Air Force Academy Foundation, the Club for Growth, Grove City College, the National Rifle Association, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, the National World War II Museum, and the Law Enforcement Legal Defense Fund. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Board of Advisors, of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA).
>
> Mr. Blackwell has had a vast political career. He was mayor of Cincinnati, Treasurer and Secretary of State for Ohio, undersecretary at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. He was a delegate to the White House Summit on Retirement Savings in 1998 and 2002. During the 1990s, he served on the congressionally appointed National Commission on Economic Growth and Tax Reform and the board of the International Republican Institute. He was Co-Chairman of the U.S. Census Monitoring Board from 1999-2001.
>
> He has received many awards and honors for his work in the public sector. These accolades include the U.S. Department of State's Superior Honor Award for his work in the field of human rights which he received from both the administrations of Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. In 2004, the American Conservative Union honored Mr. Blackwell with the John M. Ashbrook Award for his steadfast conservative leadership.
>
> Ken's commentaries have been published in major newspapers and websites: The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, The New York Times,The Washington Post, The Washington Times, and Investor's Business Daily. In addition, he has been interviewed by many media outlets including CBS'sFace the Nation, NBC's Meet the Press, ABC's This Week, and Fox News Sunday.

> His continuing education has included executive programs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard. Mr. Blackwell has also received honorary doctoral degrees from ten institutions of higher education. He holds Bachelor of Science and Master of Education degrees from Xavier University in Ohio, where he later served as a vice president and member of its faculty. In 1992, he received Xavier's Distinguished Alumnus Award and was inducted into Xavier's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2015.

I do have something that I can give you right away. A while back the Heritage Foundation made this public policy booklet that featured essays by social conservatives writing on fiscal issues, and fiscal conservatives writing on social issues. The idea was fusionism – that social conservatives and fiscal conservatives need each other. I am a fusionist. Well, Ken Blackwell is a prominent social conservative, and he wrote a chapter on "The Rule of Law" – exactly the thing that was lacking in the corrupt Obama administration.

Here is the PDF of the booklet's table of contents AND the chapter by Ken Blackwell!!!! How did I get this so fast? I used my Wintery powers, of course.

Also, I have a copy of the full PDF. I would really recommend to everyone that they read this so that they can get a thumbnail picture of what social and fiscal conservatives believe. Each of the essays is only 3-5 pages long, so it's not a lot to read. These are the things that I wish that every evangelical Christian understood about public policy. Really, everyone should understand what conservatives really believe, whether you agree with these positions, or not.

If you have wonderful things about Ken Blackwell to share, leave them in the comments. This is just incredible – I would have believed that Ted Cruz would have named Ken Blackwell to such a post, but never, ever Donald Trump in a million years. I expect Trump to nominate a bunch of moderates like Giuliani, but Blackwell is more like me – very conservative, and passionate about conservative ideas and policies. I think there will be a lot of picks that I disagree with, but this is one I really agree with.

Marine Captain earned Medal of Honor fighting communists in North Korea

November 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's go from the top down to set the context for the profile of William E. Barber.

Map of the Korean War

In the summer of 1950, North Korean communists launch a completely unprovoked attack across the 38th parallel against their peaceful, democratic neighbors, the South Koreans. The Americans immediately sent an invasion force by sea to drive them out. The North Koreans easily manage to take over the capital Seoul, and the allies are left with only one port in the southeast – Pusan. In September of 1950, American forces land an invasion force at Inchon, cutting off the North Korean invasion force surrounding Pusan. The North Koreans retreat, and there is hope that American forces will be home by Christmas. But then, unbeknownst to the Americans, the Chines communists invade North Korea from the north and surround the American forces near the Chosin reservoir, threatening to annihilate an entire Marine division.

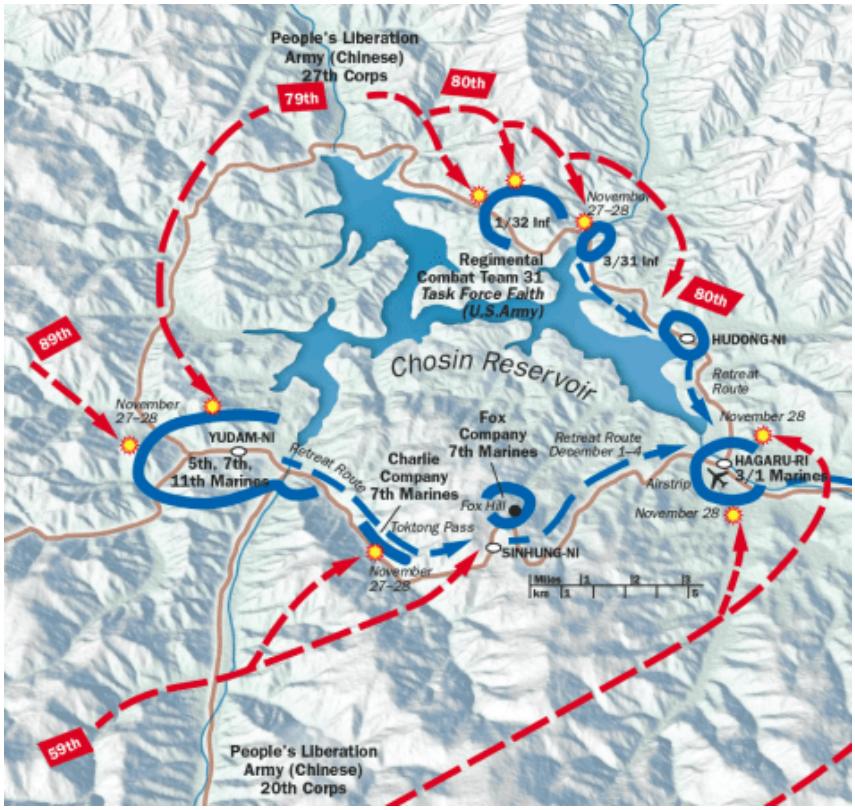

The Marines at Yudam-Ni are surrounded and must retreat to Hagaru-Ri

As you can see from the map, there are a whole bunch of American troops fighting to the north/east and south/west of the Chosin Reservoir. The marines near Yudam-Ni need to retreat along a road called the MSR (main supply road) back to Hagaru-Ri. But in order to conduct that retreat, they have to hold onto the vital Toktong pass, which is overwatched by Fox company from their position on Fox Hill. Can Charlie company and Fox company hold off the entire Chinese 59th division (10,000 men) with only two companies (about 250 men each)?

U.S. Marines “The Chosin Few”, December 1950

Well, the book I read (which Dina gave me for Christmas), was about Fox company and their defense of the Toktong pass. This is what the leftist New York Times had to say about the man in charge of Fox company (“F company”) in a 2002 article:

> Col. William E. Barber, who won the Medal of Honor for his leadership of a vastly outnumbered company under siege on a snowy hilltop in one of the worst defeats in Marine history, the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in 1950, died on April 19 at his home in Irvine, Calif. He was 82.
>
> The cause was bone-marrow cancer, said Jerry Courtier, a friend who hopes to write Colonel Barber’s biography.
>
> The reservoir is south of the Yalu River, which separates North Korea from China. After the Americans had pushed the North Koreans almost to the Yalu, 150,000 Chinese troops unexpectedly crossed the river into North Korea. Colonel Barber’s unit, Company F of the Second Battalion of the Seventh Marines, First Marine Division, was on a hill that commanded the Toktong Pass, a vital gap between Yudam Ni and Hagaru Ri, two towns separated by 78 miles.
>
> The stakes were huge. If F Company yielded its position, 8,000 marines at Yudam Ni would be cut off from the 3,000 at Haguru Ri by tens of thousands of Chinese troops.
>
> Through five days and six nights in subzero weather and often swirling snow, Colonel Barber, then a captain, inspired his men, outnumbered more than five to one, to cling to their tenuous positions. He was shot in a bone near his groin on the second day but continued to make the rounds of the hill. He likened the wound to a bee sting.
>
> When the unit was ordered to withdraw and fight its way to safety, Captain Barber refused. Three times, the enemy broke through the line, only to be repulsed.
>
> ”I knew that we could probably hold, and I knew that if we didn’t hold we could exact a very heavy toll,” he said in an interview in 1976 with The Los Angeles Times.
>
> His citation for the nation’s top medal said that he commanded his men from a stretcher. But Hector A. Cafferata Jr., who as a rifleman won the Medal of Honor in the same battle, insisted that Captain Barber refused the stretcher.
>
> ”He walked the line, he kept us together,” said Mr. Cafferata, who was beside Captain Barber when he was shot.
>
> In the mayhem, the Chinese blew whistles, beat cymbals and tooted bugles as they repeatedly attacked. Coffee froze before men could drink it, and some of the wounded died because plasma froze with no way to thaw it.
>
> When the battle was over, more than 1,000 enemy soldiers were dead. Of Captain Barber’s original 240 men, 82 were able to walk away.

> Gen. Raymond G. Davis, who was a lieutenant colonel in the Marines, received a Medal of Honor for leading the unit that rescued F Company.
>
> William Earl Barber was born on Nov. 30, 1919, in Dehart, Ky. He attended what is now Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky., for two years and enlisted in the Marines, at the age of 21, in 1940.
>
> He was so good at shooting a rifle that he was made a weapons instructor. After volunteering for parachute training, he demonstrated such proficiency that he became a parachute instructor.
>
> In World War II, he was promoted to sergeant in 1942 and commissioned a second lieutenant in 1943. He was a rifle platoon commander at Camp Pendleton, Calif., when his unit was shipped to the Pacific.
>
> Colonel Barber was in the first wave to hit Iwo Jima, where he was wounded twice. He received the Silver Star for bravery in addition to two Purple Hearts. At a ceremony on the 50th anniversary of the battle in 1995, he said:
>
> ”I am older now, as you are, but I can still see the colors of that February morning. The sky. The island. And sometimes I think I can hear the noise of battle.”
>
> He was treated in Japan for his wounds and returned to the United States, where he worked as a recruiter, among other positions. He was promoted to captain in 1949 and was in the force that occupied Japan.
>
> When he joined F Company in Korea, he saw a raggedy unshaven bunch and immediately ordered the the troops to shave, shine their shoes and look like marines. He suggested that his new charges resembled Pancho Villa’s bandits.
>
> ”He was one tough guy,” Mr. Cafferata said. ”He was by the book.”

He was by the book. He enlisted in the Marines because he was grateful to his country for allowing him to escape poverty and go into college, and he wanted to give something back.

You can read a review of the book I read about Fox company, and read about some of the details of what it was like for those men. You’ll never look at your own troubles the same way again. You can also read about Barber’s Medal of Honor citation here.

The Medal of Honor, Navy and Marines variant

So, now that I am done with that book, I have moved on to another Korean War book that Dina gave me, this one about George company. The Korean War might have been our most just war – defending a peaceful democratic ally from a totalitarian communist regime. You just have to compare North Korea and South Korea today to understand the stakes. North Korea is basically a godless concentration camp that tortures and murders its people if they so much as think the wrong thoughts about the atheist state. South Korea is free and prosperous, where the people have human rights, like the right to free speech and freedom of religion.

It's important for me to read about the hardships that real heroes face, so that I don't complain too much about my own tiny struggles. When you read about the struggles of great American soldiers, so many good things happen to you. Your own problems get smaller, your humility and gratitude get bigger. And you are reminded about why America is a great country, and what American character is really like. These things are not taught by leftists in the public schools. They are not talked about by leftists in the mainstream media. They are not presented by leftists in the Hollywood film industry. If you want to know the real America, you have to find it yourself.

Thinking practically about the gospel with an illustration from a war movie

November 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The city of Mogadishu, in Somalia, Africa

I decided to re-post one of my favorite posts for Veteran's Day / Remembrance Day.

First, let's get an overview that helps us understand the context and goals of the mission we are going to discuss.

The scene is set in Somalia, Africa, in 1992. There a civil war between two warlords: Ali Mahdi and Mohammed Farah Aidid. The war has destroyed agricultural operations, and the people are starving. The United Nations are trying to help, but Aidid hijacks the food from UN aircraft so that he can use the food to gain control of the people. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis are dying of starvation. The UN requests American military forces to secure the air-dropped supplies so they can be distributed to the starving people.

In December 1992, President George H.W. Bush answers the call, sending 25,000 troops to Somalia to protect the food from the Somali warlords. However, in 1993, Bill Clinton is elected. He orders that the number of U.S. troops be reduced to 12,000. Following an attack by Aidid on Pakistani peace-keepers, the U.N. issues a resolution to capture those responsible. The U.S. armed forces have the arms and training to battle evil, so they get the call to capture Aidid and his lieutenants.

In late August 1993, Task Force Ranger is deployed to Mogadishu to capture Aidid and his lieutenants at the Olympic Hotel. The U.S. force consists of 440 troops from the Army Rangers and Army Delta Force special forces, commanded by General William Garrison. Garrison requested light armored units (Bradley Infantry Fighting vehicles) that would offer more protection than the unarmored HMMWV Humvees. Garrison was denied the light armor by the Clinton administration. Garrison requested heavier air support (AC-130 Spectre gunships) that would offer better fire support than the UH-60 Blackhawk miniguns. Garrison was denied the air support by the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration did not want the American forces to appear too heavily armed for the peace-keeping role.

The actual mission turned out to be much harder than it needed to be, because of the resources denied by the Clinton administration. Although the Aidid lieutenants were captured, Aidid himself escaped. Eighty-four American soldiers were wounded. Eighteen American soldiers were killed, and their bodies were dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. This was shown over and over by the media, and it undermined American resolve to help the Somali people. As a result, Clinton had the excuse he needed to retreat the American military.

(Source: Nova Online)

Two heroes lost their lives

Today, I want to talk about two of the men who lost their lives in Operation Gothic Serpent. They are Master Sergeant Gary I. Gordon and Sergeant First Class Randall D. Shughart – a Delta Force sniper team.

Here is a clip from the movie Blackhawk Down, which shows what happened to them:

The pilot of the downed Blackhawk was protected by the two men who volunteered to go in after him. They requested that they be inserted at the crash site, even though they knew that reinforcements were likely not going to be there in time to save them. They made the request to go and help the pilot *three times* before being allowed to go in. Their first two requests were denied by their commanding officer, because the odds against their survival were so overwhelming. The rescued pilot was later released by his captors, and the two heroes were awarded the Medal of Honor for their brave actions.

A Congressional Medal of Honor

Here is a description of the requirements to be awarded a Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through **conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of**

> **duty**:
>
> - While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States;
> - While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
> - While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

You can read the official details of their actions.

The point of this post

It is important for Christians to be familiar with real-world examples of people giving their lives in order to save the lives of others. When we see real-world examples of self-sacrifice, it helps us to understand what Jesus really achieved for us, and what he must have felt making that hard choice to volunteer to go in and rescue us. In general, my philosophy when it comes to the Bible is to make every effort to connect what the Bible says to the real world. We must not push Christianity into some far-off world of piety and feelings. We must make connections to real evidence and real life, so that what the Bible says becomes practical, and so that we have a deep friendship with and sympathy for God revealed in Jesus Christ. In real life, being willing to give your life to save someone else is hard. Understanding how that really happens will help us to value what Jesus has done for us.

Bible verses

I saw this verse on the ground outside the Airborne & Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, NC, where I went for my summer vacation in 2015. (Thanks to my friend Curby who hosted me)

Isaiah 6:8:

> [8] Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
>
> And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Here is the picture I took (yes, that is my running shoe):

"Here am I, send me" Isaiah 6:8

When confronted with an opportunity to imitate Christ in his self-sacrifice, we should think less about ourselves and our own desires, and take the opportunity to serve others effectively. We do not do what makes us happy, and we do not pursue fun and thrills. We do what heals, we do what helps others. We do not push away our responsibility to imitate Christ by caring for those in danger. Christianity is not just about "not doing bad things". It's the good things you do because of your relationship with Jesus that show your real allegiance, and give you the experience of being a Christian in deed.

And here is another good verse:

John 15:13:

> [13] Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

If you get a chance to watch the movie Blackhawk Down, then do so. I highly recommend it. You can also read the book that the movie is based on.

I love the Medal of Honor books by Edward F. Murphy. He writes about all the people who have been awarded the Medal of honor in different wars: World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

If you check my reading list, you'll find that I usually read two military books for every one book on another subject.

Trying to make Christianity entertaining makes people think that it's fake

November 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church sucks, that's why men are bored there

My friend Bruce shared this article from the leftist The Atlantic on Facebook. It's written by Larry Taunton of Fixed Point Foundation. Larry surveyed some people who had left the church, and I thought it was worth it to look at this case of Phil.

Larry writes:

> "Church became all about ceremony, handholding, and kumbaya," Phil said with a look of disgust. "I missed my old youth pastor. He actually knew the Bible."
>
> […]Phil was in my office as part of a project that began last year. Over the course of my career, I have met many students like Phil. It has been my privilege to address college students all over the world, usually as one defending the Christian worldview. These events typically attract large numbers of atheists. I like that. I find talking to people who disagree with me much more stimulating than those gatherings that feel a bit too much like a political party convention, and the exchanges with these students are mostly thoughtful and respectful.
>
> […]A smart, likable young man, he sat down nervously as my staff put a plate of food before him. Like others after him, he suspected a trap. Was he being punk'd? Talking to us required courage of all of these students, Phil most of all since he was the first to do so. Once he realized, however, that we truly meant him no harm, he started talking — and for three hours we listened.
>
> Now the president of his campus's SSA [Secular Student Alliance], Phil was once the president of his Methodist church's youth group. He loved his church ("they weren't just going through the motions"), his pastor ("a rock star trapped in a

> pastor's body"), and, most of all, his youth leader, Jim ("a passionate man"). Jim's Bible studies were particularly meaningful to him. He admired the fact that Jim didn't dodge the tough chapters or the tough questions: "He didn't always have satisfying answers or answers at all, but he didn't run away from the questions either. The way he taught the Bible made me feel smart."
>
> Listening to his story I had to remind myself that Phil was an atheist, not a seminary student recalling those who had inspired him to enter the pastorate. As the narrative developed, however, it became clear where things came apart for Phil. During his junior year of high school, the church, in an effort to attract more young people, wanted Jim to teach less and play more. Difference of opinion over this new strategy led to Jim's dismissal. He was replaced by Savannah, an attractive twenty-something who, according to Phil, "didn't know a thing about the Bible." The church got what it wanted: the youth group grew. But it lost Phil.
>
> An hour deeper into our conversation I asked, "When did you begin to think of yourself as an atheist?"He thought for a moment. "I would say by the end of my junior year."
>
> I checked my notes. "Wasn't that about the time that your church fired Jim?"
>
> He seemed surprised by the connection. "Yeah, I guess it was."

A couple of years ago, I was talking to a woman who grew up in a Christian home that was very focused on externals. There was a lot of bullying to get her to comply with expected Christian behavior, although the expected Christian behavior was often arbitrary, and had nothing to do with Christianity and more with just appearing "nice". There was no discussion of the evidence, no talking through objections. No focus on truth at all. She was always very curious about me, and how come I didn't drink, and how come I was able to stay a virgin through college, grad school, to the present day when many people who were raised in the church fell away from it in college. My answer was simple. I never grew up in a Christian home so I was never bullied into acting like a Christian beyond what I was convinced of myself. There was no rebellion, I just took my time and proved everything out before I had to act any particular way.

I didn't ever have to go to church. I didn't go to church until was comfortable going, and I would say that I still am not comfortable in church – ever. If I felt bored in church, I read an apologetics book, and I did this openly. If I didn't like the words of a song, then I didn't sing. I liked to read apologetics books from the beginning, and when I talked to church Christians, I just classified the ones who didn't read apologetics as non-Christians – as fakes. So I never felt like there was anything wrong with me because I didn't sing, pray, read the Bible or do more church stuff. To me, if you didn't like apologetics, you were a fake and you were faking behaviors that you had no way of verifying. Apologetics is the baseline activity of church, and only fakers try to skip over it. Knowing the truth about God comes before acting as if God is real and God has a specific character and will for us. From the existence of God, we move on to the accuracy of the Bible, and on to theology, and then and only then do we start the outward behaviors of a Christian. If you skip to the

behaviors, that is unnatural – like acting a part of a doctor when you have never been to medical school. It's morally wrong to try to pretend to be something you are not.

Bruce commented this above the post:

> When authentic conviction is lacking in your words and actions–or your "zeal" lacks the requisite knowledge to back it up–your teenager knows it.

Right. Young people in the church can tell when old people are more interested in feelings and posing. All they have to do is ask you how much you have done to study whether the things you believe are true. If you have read more devotional literature than you have read apologetics, then you're a fraud. And that, more than anything, is what causes young people to step away from a two-way relationship with God.

My friend Stephen Bedard tweeted this, recently:

> "Frankly, I find it hard to understand how people today can risk parenthood without having studied apologetics." – William Lane Craig

I think you have to blame parents and the pastors when young people reject Christianity. They are the ones who focus on outward behaviors, feelings and rituals instead of frank discussions about truth where reason and evidence are center stage.

If I had to rely on deciding what Christianity was from looking at people in the church, or from looking to my parents or peers, I would never be where I am today. I can barely tolerate church, especially the singing. I generally don't like pastors. Pastors who think that simply speaking the words of the Bible out loud will magically cause a person listening to become a Christian. Pastors who assume the Bible is true without ever arguing for the truth of it. Pastors who never connect their preaching to historical context, historical evidence, philosophical arguments or scientific evidence. Pastors who try to make me feel things. Pastors who never mention current events or public policy. Christianity ought to be more like engineering or lab work if you want to appeal to young people – testable, repeatable, practical. Think back to math class, and how teachers would insist that students show their work, instead of just writing the answer down. Instead of just saying "the Bible says", pastors and parents really need to show young people their work – how did they arrive at their worldview? It's not respectable to be ignorant about these things – there should be no respect in the church for people who put piety above truth.

Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas

November 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

The lecture: (from 2013)

Note: there is a period of 19 minutes of Q&A at the end of the lecture.

About the speaker:

His full biography is here.

Summary:

- It used to be true that most of the great scientists were believers in God
- But now science has advanced and we have better instruments – is it still true?
- Today, many people believe that science has shows that the universe and Earth are not special
- We used to believe that the Earth was the center of the universe, and Darwin showed we are not designed
- The problem with this view is that it is based on old science, not modern science
- Three topics: origin of the universe, fine-tuning of the universe, the Rare Earth hypothesis

Experimental evidence for the origin of the universe:

- #1: Hubble discovered that the universe expands because of redshifting of light from distant galaxies
- #2: Measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation show the universe had a beginnning

- #3: Measurements of the light element (hydrogen and helium) abundances confirm an origin of the universe
- The best explanation for an absolute origin of space, time, matter and energy is a supernatural cause

Experimental evidence for the design of the universe:

- #1: The amount of matter: a bit less = no stars and galaxies, a bit more = universe recollapses
- #2: The strong force: a bit more = only hydrogen, a bit more = little or no hydrogen
- #3: Carbon resonance level: a bit higher = no carbon, a bit lower = no carbon

Experimental evidence for galactic, stellar and planetary habitability:

- #1: Galaxy: produces high number of heavy elements and low radiation
- #2: Star: long stable lifetime, burns bright, bachelor star, third generation star (10 billion years must elapsed),
- #3: Planet: mass of planet, stable orbit, liquid water, tectonic activity, tilt, moon

Naturalistic explanations:

- Humans evolve to the point where they reach back in time and create finely-tuned universe
- Eternally existing multiverse

Hawking and Mlodinow response to Rare Earth:

- There are lots of planets so one must support life
- Odds of a planet that supports life are low even with 10^22 planets

Hawking and Mlodinow proposal of M-theory multiverse:

- There is no experimental evidence for M-theory being true
- M-theory is not testable now and is not likely to be testable in the future
- But science is about making testable predictions, not about blind speculation

Hawking and Mlodinow no-boundary proposal:

- This theory requires the laws of physics to exist prior to the universe
- But where do you get laws of physics before there is any physical world?
- There is no experimental evidence for no-boundary proposal
- All the evidence we have now (redshift, CMBR, H-He abundances) is for Big Bang

What science has revealed provide abundant evidence for a transcendent Creator and Designer.

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Worst president ever leaves Trump a looming economic crisis

November 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?
Consider this article from the Wall Street Journal, which discusses the latest CBO (Congressional Budget Office) report.

Massive budget deficits:

> One lesson is that the days of easy deficit reduction are over. The annual deficit in 2016 rose for the first time in three years—by $148 billion to $587 billion. That's 3.2% of GDP, up sharply from 2.5% last year. Mr. Obama has been able to ride falling defense spending from reduced military deployments overseas, but Pentagon outlays were flat in 2016. Military spending will probably have to increase in future years, no matter who wins Tuesday, to meet the growing challenges from Russia, China and Iran.

Looming entitlement crisis:

> Mr. Obama will also leave town having failed over eight years to do anything to slow the booming burden of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Outlays for those three programs grew by $75 billion last year, or about 4.2%. They now account for 10% of the entire U.S. economy, the highest level ever, and rising.

More spending on welfare programs:

> The President's main contribution has been to put Medicaid on hyperspeed by expanding its coverage through ObamaCare. CBO's budget gnomes report that Medicaid spending has climbed by nearly 40% in a mere three years—to $368

> billion in 2016. That doesn't include what the states are obliged to chip in.

Higher taxes and more regulations (e.g. – Dodd-Frank) killed economic growth:

> Another lesson is that faster economic growth is essential to a healthier fisc. One reason for the deficit rebound in 2016 is that federal revenues increased by a mere $18 billion or less than 1%. Individual income-tax receipts were flat, while corporate income taxes fell by $44 billion or 13% as business profits sagged. This is what happens when the economy sputters at about a 1% growth rate for most of a year.

Massive spending:

> Growth that slow couldn't keep up with spending that increased 4.5% or $166 billion in 2016. Federal outlays were 20.9% of the economy for the year, up from 20.4% in 2014. A Republican Congress has kept that figure down from the heights of the Obama-Nancy Pelosi stimulus, but it is now set to take off again as more Baby Boomers start collecting Social Security and Medicare. (Millennials, get ready to pay even higher taxes throughout your working life.)

Looming crisis caused by rising interest rates:

> This era may be ending as a new President takes office. The Fed may raise rates in December, and bond yields have been rising. Outlays for net interest on the debt increased by $23 billion or 9% in 2016, largely due to faster inflation. But inflation is still tame. If it begins to rise, the debt-financing burden will explode with more than $14 trillion of Treasury debt outstanding, much of it short-term. In January CBO said that if interest rates are 100 basis points above their projections each year for the next decade, the Treasury will have to pay an average of more than $160 billion per year.

And it's not just fiscal matters. Investors Business Daily adds to the list of problems that Obama will pass on to Trump.

Low wages, high unemployment:

> Obama, like every Democrat running for office, claimed to be the champion of the middle class, and that instead of "trickle down" economics, he'd growth the economy from the "middle out." Instead, middle class wages stagnated throughout Obama's term in office, with real median household income today exactly where it was when Obama took office.
>
> And despite Obama's constant bragging about the "longest" stretch of private sector job growth, the 15.5 million private sector jobs added since February 2010 hasn't even kept pace with population growth — which climbed 17.5 million over that time. As a result, more than 14 million people have dropped out of the labor force since Obama took office. In fact, without the huge decline in labor force participation under Obama, the unemployment rate would be more like 10%,

> rather than the official 4.9%.

Higher health care costs and more health care regulations on businesses:

> ObamaCare was supposed to be Obama's grand legacy, showing how government could be a force for good. Instead, it's become an epic failure that will have to dealt with by the next president. The reforms Obama said would repair a "broken" health system have themselves broken it. Premiums in the newly government-run individual market are up an average 22% nationwide, and at rates of 50%, 60%, even 113% in some states — increases unheard of before ObamaCare. Insurance markets that were once vibrantly competitive are now dominated by one or two carriers. ObamaCare has made Medicaid, an already terrible health program, worse by dumping millions more into it. ObamaCare's taxes, mandates, and regulations are suffocating businesses.

Foreign policy disasters:

> A list of Obama's foreign policy failures would fill a volume, but here are just a few: Obama in 2011 prematurely removed troops from Iraq, creating a power vacuum later filled by ISIS; he let Iran's covert nuclear weapons program continue, starting a nuclear arms race in the Mideast; after Obama called ISIS a "jayvee team," it grew in clout and territory as a result of Obama's neglect; Obama's intervention in Libya during that country's civil war led to the country becoming a terrorist haven, with no real government; he and Hillary Clinton pushed the "reset button" with Russia's Vladimir Putin, and Russia launched hostile actions against its neighbors in Crimea and Ukraine, and threats to the Baltic states; Obama has signaled ambivalence over protecting traditional allies in Asia, leading to China arming up and bullying it neighbors. With massive defense cuts Obama put in place, it's safe to say the U.S. hasn't been this weak since the nadir of the Carter years.

This is not even to mention the $1.3 trillion dollar student loan bubble:

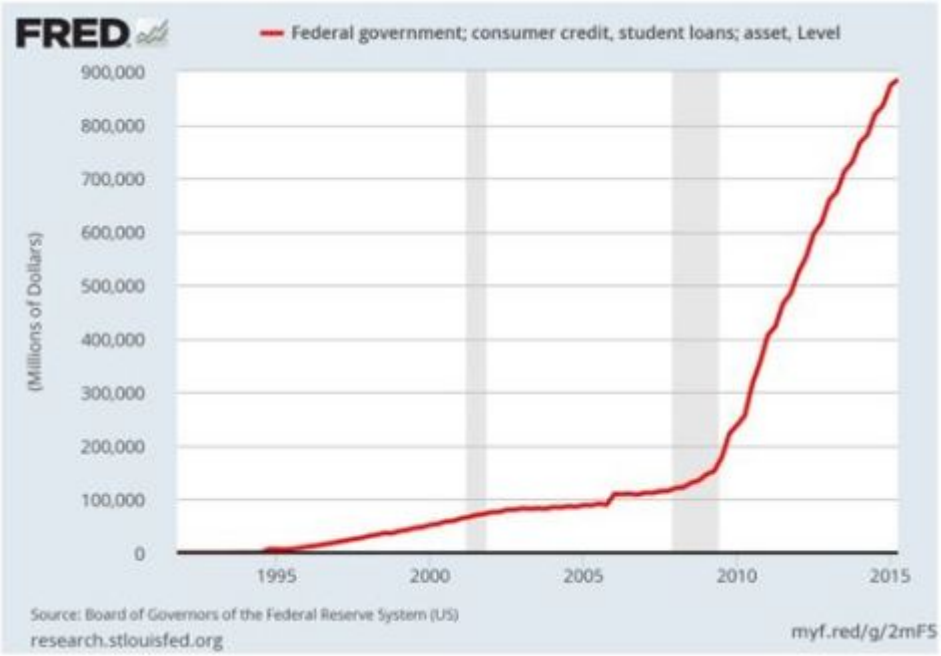

Federal student loans skyrocketed under Obama

And yet another Democrat-caused mortgage lending crisis:

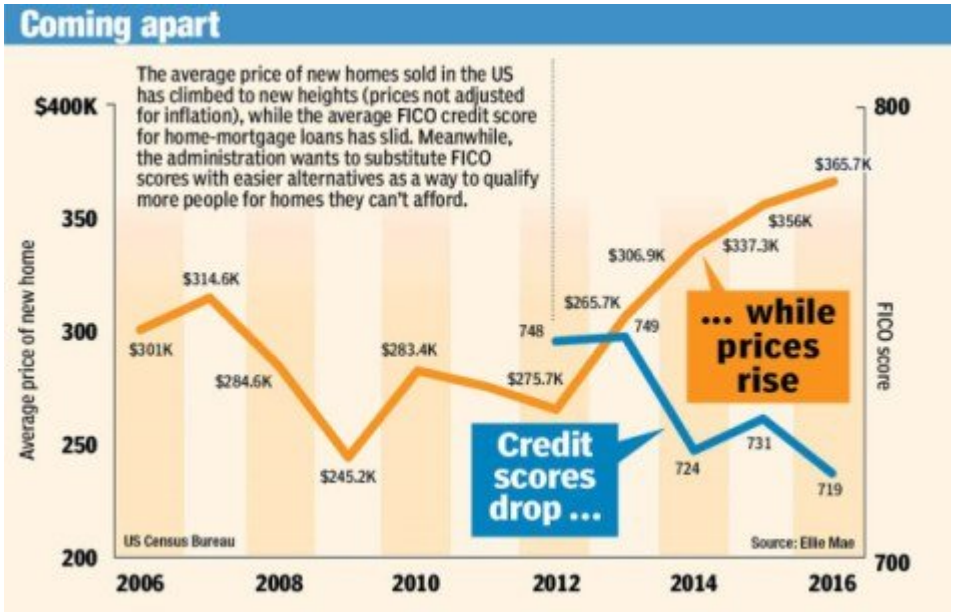

Another Democrat-caused mortgage lending crisis is on the horizon

Democrats are always in favor of making it easy for people to borrow money, and leaving taxpayers on the hook to cover it. Are there enough people working to cover these debts? Has Obama been focused on helping to lower taxes and reduce regulations for job creators, so they can create new jobs? How will the millennials respond to being forced to pay for all the debt incurred by the man they voted for?

Robin Collins and atheist Peter Millican discuss the fine-tuning of the universe for life

November 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

You might remember Peter Millican from the debate he had with William Lane Craig. I ranked that debate as one of the 3 best I have ever seen, along with the first Craig vs Dacey debate and the second Craig vs Sinnott-Armstrong debate.

Details:

> Science has revealed that the fundamental constants and forces of the cosmos appear to be exquisitely fine-tuned to allow a universe in which life can develop. Is God the best explanation of the incredibly improbable odds of the universe we live in being a life-permitting one?
>
> Robin Collins is a Christian philosopher and a leading advocate of the argument for God from cosmic design. Peter Millican is an atheist philosopher at Oxford University. They debate the issues.
>
> From 'Unbelievable?' on 'Premier Christian Radio', Saturday 19th March 2016.

The debate:

MP3 file is available on the Unbelievable web site.

As usual when the atheist is an expert, there is no snark or paraphrasing in the summary.

Summary

Brierley: What is the fine-tuning argument?

Collins: the fine-tuning is structure of the universe is extremely precisely set to allow the existing of conscious, embodied agents who are capable of moral behavior. There are 3

kinds of fine-tuning: 1) the laws of nature (mathematical formulas), 2) the constants of physics (numbers that are plugged into the equations), 3) the initial conditions of the universe. The fine-tuning exists not just because there are lots of possibilities, but there is something special about the actual state of affairs that we see. Every set of laws, parameters and initial conditions is equally improbable, but the vast majority of permutations do not permit life. The possible explanations: theism or the multiverse.

Brierley: How improbable are the numbers?

Collins: Once case is the cosmological constant (dark energy density), with is 1 part in (10 raised to 120th power). If larger, the universe expands too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form after the Big Bang. If smaller, the universe collapses in on itself before life could form. Another case is the initial distribution of mass energy to give us the low entropy we have that is necessary for life. The fine-tuning there is 1 part in (10 raised to the 10th power raised to the 123rd power).

Brierley: What do you think of the argument?

Millican: The argument is worth taking very seriously. I am a fan of the argument. The other arguments for God's existence such as the ontological and cosmological arguments are very weak. But the fine-tuning argument has the right structure to deliver the conclusion that theists want. And it is different from the traditional design argument tended to focus on biological nature, which is not a strong argument. But the fine-tuning argument is strong because it precedes any sort of biological evolution. Although the design is present at the beginning of the universe, it is not visible until much later. The argument points to at least deism, and possibly theism. The argument is not based on ignorance, it is rooted in "the latest results from the frontiers of science" (his phrase).

Brierley: Is this the best argument from natural theology?

Collins: The cosmological argument makes theism viable intuitively, but there are some things that are puzzling, like the concept of the necessary being. But the fine-tuning argument is decisive.

Brierley: What's are some objections to the fine-tuning argument?

Millican: The argument is based on recent physics, so we should be cautious because we **maybe** we will discover a natural explanation.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: The cosmological constant has been around since 1980. But the direction that physics is moving in is that there are more constants and quantities being discovered that need to be fine-tuned, not less. Even if you had a grand unified theory, that would have to be have the fine-tuning pushed into it.

(BREAK)

Millican: Since we have no experience of other laws and values from other universes, **we don't know** whether these values can be other than they are. Psychologically, humans are prone to seeing purpose and patterns where there is none, so **maybe** that's happening here.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: It is possible to determine probabilities on a single universe case, for example using multiple ways of calculating Avogadro's number all converging on the same number makes it more probable.

Millican: Yes, I willing to accept that these constants can take on other values, ("principle of indifference"). But **maybe** this principle be applied if the improbability were pushed up into the theory?

Collins: Even if you had a grand theory, selecting the grand theory from others would retain the improbability.

Brierley: What about the multiverse?

Millican: **What if** there are many, many different universes, and we happen to be in the one that is finely-tuned, then we should not be surprised to observe fine-tuning. **Maybe** a multiverse theory will be discovered in the future that would allow us to have these many universes with randomized constants and quantities. "I do think that it is a little bit of a promissary note". I don't think physics is pointing to this right now.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: I agree it's a promissary note. This is the strongest objection to the fine-tuning argument. But there are objections to the multiverse: 1) the fine-tuning is kicked back up to the multiverse generator has to be set just right to produce universes with different constants, 2) the multiverse is more likely to produce a small universe with Boltzmann brains that pop into existence and then out again, rather than a universe that contains conscious, embodied intelligent agents. I am working on a third response now that would show that the same constants that allow complex, embodied life ALSO allow the universe to be discoverable. This would negate the observer-selection effect required by the multiverse objection.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Millican: I don't see why the multiverse generator has to be fine-tuned, since **we don't know** what the multiverse generator is. I'm not impressed by the Boltzmann brains, but won't discuss. We should be cautious about inferring design because **maybe** this is a case where we are seeing purpose and design where there is none.

Brierley: Can you negate the discoverability of the universe by saying that it might be psychological?

Collins: These things are not psychological. The selected value for the cosmic microwave background radiation is fine-tuned for life and for discoverability. It's not merely a discoverability selection effect, it's optimal for discoverability. If baryon-photon value were much smaller, we would have known that it was not optimal. So that judgment cannot be explained by

Millican: That's a very interesting new twist.

Brierley: Give us your best objection.

Millican: I have two. 1) Even if you admit to the fine-tuning, this doesn't show a being who

is omnipotent and omnisicient. What the fine-tuning shows is that the designer is doing the best it can given the constraints from nature. **If I were God,** I would not have made the universe so big, and I wouldn't have made it last 14 billion years, just to make one small area that supports life. An all-powerful God would have made the universe much smaller, and much younger. 2) The fine-tuning allows life to exist in other solar systems in other galaxies. What does this alien life elsewhere mean for traditional Christian theology? The existence of other alien civilizations argues against the truth of any one religion.

Brierley: Respond to those.

Collins: First objection: with a finite Creator, you run into the problem of having to push the design of that creature up one level, so you don't really solve the fine-tuning problem. An unlimited being (non-material, not composed of parts) does not require fine-tuning. The fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than atheism. Second objection: I actually do think that it is likely that are other universes, and life in other galaxies and stars, and the doctrine of the Incarnation is easily adaptable to that, because God can take on multiple natures to appear to different alien civilizations.

Other resources (from WK)

If you liked this discussion, be sure and check out a full length lecture by Robin Collins on the fine-tuning, and a shorter lecture on his very latest work. And also this the Common Sense Atheism podcast, featuring cosmologist Luke Barnes, who answers about a dozen objections to the fine-tuning argument.

Why should law-abiding Americans be allowed to own handguns?

November 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A message from Females with Firearms

Here's a news story from the Washington Free Beacon that shows what happens when law-abiding Americans are allowed to own handguns.

Excerpt:

> A Florida police officer is alive and the suspect who was beating him is dead thanks to the intervention of an armed citizen on Monday.
>
> The incident began when Deputy First Class Dean Bardes, a 12-year-veteran of the Lee County Sheriff's Office, attempted to pull over a car. When the driver refused to stop, a high-speed chase ensued. When the suspect did finally stop, witnesses say he attacked Bardes.
>
> "There was a lot of other lives that he was putting at risk, including mine and my daughter's," one witness, Nicole Ambrosini, told ABC affiliate WZVN. "I saw a car approaching me from behind at a very fast rate."
>
> "I saw the deputy and the suspect out of their cars with the doors both wide open and they were some type of altercation," she continued.
>
> The suspect appeared to gain the upper hand during the altercation.
>
> "He just kept beating him and beating him," a second witness, Shanta Holditch, told the news station. She said the suspect was "throwing him to the ground and

> punching him in all different directions."
>
> That is when witnesses say an armed man got out of his car and yelled at the suspect to stop hitting the officer. Holditch said the suspect "refused to get off the officer and the officer kept yelling, 'shoot him, shoot him, shoot him.'"
>
> Then witnesses heard three shots and saw the suspect collapse on top of the officer.
>
> "I heard like three shots," another witness, identified as Mr. Smith, told WZVN. "He fell down on top of the police officer. After a moment, the police officer rolled him back over, got on his mic, then rolled over back on the ground besides the guy."
>
> WINK News reports that the suspect may have been armed, but it is unclear if he or Bardes fired any shots during the altercation. He died after being shot by the citizen who intervened to help Bardes. **That citizen holds a Concealed Weapons License, according to WINK.**
>
> Bardes was taken to Lee Memorial Hospital for treatment and has since been released.

According to this web site, Florida has some of the best gun laws for self-defense of any of the 50 states. If a policeman was attacked in a state like Illinois or New York or New Jersey, that policeman would be dead.

What would the secular leftists who oppose gun ownership say to the police officer in this situation? "Too bad" or maybe "have a nice death". What about all the left-wing lawyers and progressive judges who have mistrust and contempt for law-abiding citizens? They'd say "let the policeman die" or "the criminal is the real victim". It's very fashionable in progressive circles to favor criminals over police officers. And they have no respect for a man's traditional role to be a protector of his family and others in the community. Progressives don't think about the real consequences of taking guns away from law abiding people. They want to feel good, and preen for others, but they don't really aim to DO good.

Let's go beyond feelings, though, and look at the peer-reviewed literature, so that we can have accurate beliefs about reality.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

Why are people like Glennon Doyle Melton and Jen Hatmaker so famous?

November 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I keep seeing all these people in the culture like Rob Bell, Rachel Held Evans, Brian McLaren, Joel Osteen getting all this support from Christians – support that the people I admire like Jay Richards, William Lane Craig, Scott Klusendorf and Ryan T. Anderson don't seem to get.

Glennon Doyle Melton in a church

First, here is Glennon being celebrated in the far-left Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Christian author Glennon Doyle Melton — known as the "ultimate confessional writer" for her honest portrayals of her struggling marriage, addiction and eating disorder — has opened up with another big revelation.
>
> She is dating again, her new partner is a woman and that woman is celebrity soccer champ Abby Wambach.
>
> […]Melton's news comes three months after she announced her divorce from Craig Melton, her husband of 14 years…
>
> […]Glennon Doyle Melton has reiterated for years her position affirming that same-sex marriage is not sinful and celebrating love in various forms. A few Christian writers who champion LGBT rights in the church congratulated Melton on Twitter on Sunday night. (Another Christian mom and blogger, Jen Hatmaker, came under fire last month for announcing her support of same-sex marriage for the first time.)
>
> Melton's coming out follows fellow inspirational author and friend Elizabeth Gilbert, of "Eat, Pray, Love" fame. Gilbert announced in September she was in a romantic relationship with her female best friend, just two months after divorcing over the summer.
>
> Both Melton and Gilbert, who had not openly been in lesbian relationships before,

> first shared their news on Facebook, discussed the importance of living their truth and referred to their new partners as "my person."
>
> The similarities reflect what fans immediately notice: Both women value transparency and share an open-life-memoir writing style. Both have undergone spiritual journeys, separations and sexual awakenings.
>
> […]Melton and Gilbert have appeared on her career-making book list and popular programs. During a personable Oprah Winfrey Network interview in September, Oprah called Melton a "breath of fresh air."
>
> […]Gilbert and Melton met for the first time last fall, but Melton has long admired and been inspired by Gilbert. "For the past decade she has been a minister to me," she said.

I sent this story to a young lady I admire very much, and I was greatly comforted by her reply: "She is very deceived as to the truth. " Thank God for women who care more what the Bible says than being popular. Just because a woman is physically fit and charismatic, that doesn't make her a role model for Bible-believing Christians. Her book is endorsed as "epic" by Elizabeth Gilbert, which is a good sign that doesn't mean that she is reliable where it counts – defending the moral values taught in the Bible.

Brandon and Jen Hatmaker (actual photo, not Photoshopped)

Here's an article by former lesbian Rosaria Butterfield posted at The Gospel Coalition about Jen Hatmaker and her husband Brandon.

It says:

> If this were 1999—the year that I was converted and walked away from the woman and lesbian community I loved—instead of 2016, Jen Hatmaker's words about the holiness of LGBT relationships would have flooded into my world like a balm of Gilead. How amazing it would have been to have someone as radiant, knowledgeable, humble, kind, and funny as Jen saying out loud what my heart was shouting: *Yes, I can have Jesus and my girlfriend. Yes, I can flourish both in my tenured academic discipline (queer theory and English literature and culture) and in my church.*

> […]To be clear, I was not converted out of homosexuality. I was converted out of unbelief. I didn't swap out a lifestyle. I died to a life I loved. Conversion to Christ made me face the question squarely: did my lesbianism *reflect* who I am (which is what I believed in 1999), or did my lesbianism *distort*who I am through the fall of Adam? I learned through conversion that when something feels right and good and real and necessary—but stands against God's Word—this reveals the particular way Adam's sin marks my life. Our sin natures deceive us. Sin's deception isn't just "out there"; it's also deep in the caverns of our hearts.
>
> **How I feel does not tell me who I am. Only God can tell me who I am, because he made me and takes care of me. He tells me that we are all born as male and female image bearers with souls that will last forever and gendered bodies that will either suffer eternally in hell or be glorified in the New Jerusalem. Genesis 1:27 tells me that there are ethical consequences and boundaries to being born male and female.**
>
> […]I only know who I really am when the Bible becomes my lens for self-reflection, and when the blood of Christ so powerfully pumps my heart whole that I can deny myself, take up the cross, and follow him.

The essential mistake that all the popular people make is that they distort the Bible in order to feel good about themselves and to be liked by other people. But sometimes, when you put being liked by other people first, you neglect the more important goal of being liked by God. Feeling good and being liked is not the same as being faithful and obedient to God. And God does not like when people misrepresent his character to non-Christians who are "looking for loopholes" in his Word. The whole point of Christianity is self-denial and self-sacrificial obedience, as modeled in Jesus, who gave up his wishes and desires by being willing to die to save others.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10: (Paul writing)

> [9] Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,
>
> [10] nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Matthew 19:1-11: (Jesus' view of marriage)

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,

> 5 and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”
>
> 7 They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?”
>
> 8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”
>
> 11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

If you want to read reflections on these teachings that honor the plain meaning of the words, then by all means, pick up Ryan T. Anderson’s “Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom” and Michael L. Brown’s “Can You Be Gay and Christian?: Responding With Love and Truth to Questions About Homosexuality“. It’s more important to align your beliefs with reason and evidence than with feelings and peer-approval.

Even ordinary Christians like me who are single have to say no to our desires to have sex before we are married. Although it is fashionable in the LGBT community to say “God wouldn’t make me have desires that I couldn’t fulfill” and “it’s not fair because straight people can fulfill their desires” this is baloney. I’m straight, and I have been thwarted in fulfilling my desire for sex for decades. It’s a normal Christian life to go without something you need and to be hungry. It’s not exceptional. This is obvious to anyone who reads the Bible and accepts the plain meaning of the words. Jesus didn’t tell people things that they wanted to hear, he told them hard truths that sometimes got him into a lot of trouble with sinful people. I’m really not sure why people who claim to be Christians are attracted to the exact opposite – false teachers who say things that make them feel good and negate the need for forgiveness from God, *followed by repentance from sin*.

What your political views say about your suitability for marriage and parenting

November 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

SurveyMonkey election poll cross tabs for unmarried women Nov 2016

Would you like your marriage to be long-lasting and fulfilling? Marriage isn't just about two people who have a lot in common getting together to have fun. Marriage is a commitment, and it requires specific character traits like the willingness to take responsibility to care for others self-sacrificially. Some of these marriage-friendly character traits can be difficult to detect, but you can evaluate a person's character by asking them about what policies they oppose and support.

1. Are you opposed to no-fault divorce laws?

No-fault divorce laws allow one spouse to leave the marriage at any time, for any reason, or for no reason at all. If you support no-fault divorce, then your view of marriage is that it's something to be entered into lightly, because it can be exited easily. You'll be walking down the aisle thinking "oh well, if it doesn't work out, I can always get a divorce". If you oppose no-fault divorce laws, then your view of marriage is that there is no escape hatch. You'll probably be a lot more careful about getting married. Since you are convinced that marriage is built to last forever, you'll have a courtship of at least 12 months, and involve both sets of parents in the process. If you put commitment above happiness, you're ready for marriage.

2. Are you opposed to abortion laws?

Abortion laws basically make it easy for two people to have recreational sex, and then get rid of any complications that result quickly and easily. This way, both the people that

created the effect can escape the responsibility for what they did, and keep right on pursuing their goals and dreams. If you support abortion laws, you're really saying that you can engage in recreational sex with people who are unwilling to accept responsibility for any children that result. If you are pro-life, then you're saying that people should be careful about having sex, and be ready to take responsibility for a child, should one appear. Being responsible is good preparation for marriage.

3. Are you supportive of daycare for young kids?

Daycare services are essential for couples who need both the father and the mother to be working. The advantage of both parents working is that you can afford lots of shiny new stuff – like vacations, boats, shoes and handbags. Studies show that children don't die during daycare, although if you put a child in daycare, there will be effects on the child's behavior, such as higher anxiety and aggression. If you oppose daycare, you're putting the needs of your children above your need for shiny stuff. Putting the needs of children first is a sign that you are ready for the self-sacrifice that marriage requires.

4. Are you in favor of smaller government?

If you're in favor of smaller government, then you would rather keep taxes low so that more money stays in the family. If you support bigger government, then you think that government knows how to spend your money better than you and your spouse do. Additionally, government usually likes to spend more money than they take in. For example, in the last 8 years, we've added $10 trillion dollars to the debt, which is now $20 trillion. If you oppose higher taxes and bigger government, then you want government to pass on less debt to your children. Putting your kids' financial well-being over your own is pro-marriage.

5. Are you in favor of school choice?

If you're opposed to school choice, then you think that government should decide which schools your children will attend. School choice laws allow parents to give money to the schools they think are best for the children. If a school has excellent teachers and teaches students skills that they can use in their professional lives, then parents can choose that school. Schools have to compete to provide higher quality to parents, for lower cost. If you support giving parents more choice, then you put the needs of children – especially poor, minority children – above the needs of education administrators and teacher unions. Putting kids fist is pro-marriage.

6. Are you in favor of premarital sex?

Premarital sex is really fun (so I'm told). You can have sex with people who are just really attractive, even if these people have lousy character. Your friends will be impressed, and you'll feel more attractive – like you were climbing a ladder of attractiveness with each new partner. If you combine sex with being drunk, then you can't remember anything after. And you can't feel guilty if the booze made you do it, right? On the other hand, if you present yourself to your spouse as a virgin, you are telling them that you have self-control, that you take sex as communication rather than recreation, and that they can trust you to be faithful by keeping sex inside the marriage. Trust is important for a good

marriage.

7. Are you in favor of welfare for single mothers?

Sometimes, women find themselves pregnant before they are married. If you think that giving taxpayer money to women who have babies before they have husbands is a good idea, then you are rewarding behavior that creates fatherless children. Raising a child without a father causes serious behavioral problems. Boys tend to become more violent, and are more likely to commit crimes. Girls tend to engage in sex at earlier ages. If you oppose encouraging fatherlessness with welfare, you want women to get married before they have kids. Taking the needs of children seriously is pro-marriage.

8. Are you in favor of same-sex marriage?

When a man and a man get married and acquire children, those children will not be raised with their birth mother. Similarly with lesbians, the children will not grow up with their birth father. Studies show that children suffer from not being raised by their biological parents. For example, children of same-sex parents have lower graduation rates than children raised by heterosexual couples. If you think that children have a right to a stable relationship with their biological mother and father, then you place a higher value on the needs of children as opposed to the needs of adults. That's a good sign you're ready for marriage.

9. Are you in favor of radical feminism?

This one comes to us from Lindsay, who blogs at Lindsay's Logic. She says that opposing radical feminism "shows that you do not think the purpose of marriage is to make women happy, but to work as a team to serve God and raise good children." Indeed. Marriage doesn't work if the woman approaches it as an accessory. Marriage is about a man and a woman sacrificing their own interests and compromising in order to work together as a team. Husbands and children have needs that women should care about. Feminism teaches women that husbands and children are less important than their careers, hobbies and interests. Feminism is anti-marriage.

10. Are you responsible with earning, saving and giving away money?

This one comes to us from Bob P. He says that marriages work better when both spouses are "committed to financial planning, budgeting and a renunciation of debt to support a lifestyle. Disagreement about financial issues is one of the greatest causes of marital stress." If you're able to choose a college major or a trade that you don't like, but that pays well, that's a positive. If you're able to string together jobs so that your resume is gap-less, that's a positive. If you're able to save money even though it means you're having less fun, that's a positive. If you're able to give away money to others to support them, that means you're able to sacrifice your interests for the benefit of others. That's pro-marriage.

Well, how did you do? Leave your ideas for more policies and points of view that are marriage-friendly in the comments.

Before the rise of secularism, Americans believed in conscience

November 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

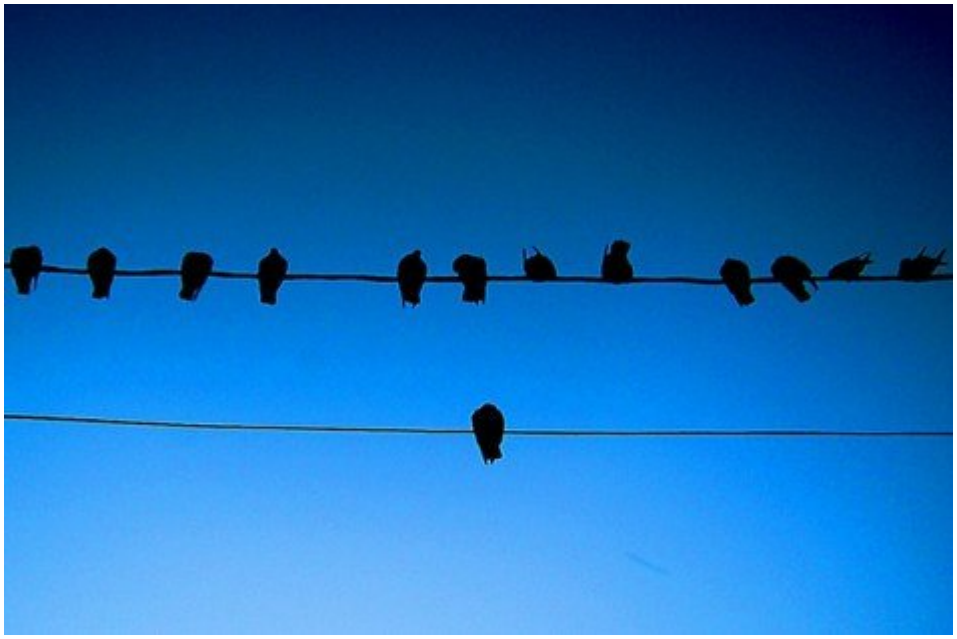

The importance of respecting the conscience of others

In the last 50 years, America exchanged religious liberty for hedonism. We used to believe that conscience was a good thing, and we respected individual differences rooted in religious convictions. But today, secular leftist politicians, lawyers and judges attack Christians using the courts. Pro-lifers, pro-marriage business owners, and people expressing Christian convictions in public have all felt what it is like to have conscience attacked by the secular leftist state.

Let's take a look at what things were like in a different time when moral convictions had not been destroyed by secular leftism.

Consider this article in The Federalist about a new movie called "Hacksaw Ridge".

Excerpt:

> Over last weekend, I saw the new Mel Gibson flick "Hacksaw Ridge." Gruesome and at times overshadowed by lead actor Andrew Garfield's awkwardness, "Hacksaw Ridge" was an ode to the age-old American custom of protecting dissent by protecting the conscience.
>
> In an age when attacks upon conscience and religious liberty grow more and more fiery, the true tale of World War II hero Desmond Doss' conscientious objection to killing is a reminder of the difficult stakes involved in ensuring that individual liberty is the presumption that government takes toward individuals, even during war.
>
> "Hacksaw Ridge" is the story of Doss, a Seventh Day Adventist whose religion prohibited taking the life of a fellow human being. Doss, obviously a patriot, felt

> obligated to serve in World War II as a medic. Where war is the business of taking life, Doss saw his role as helping save lives. That he does, as his heroism is on full display in his military record and receiving the Medal of Honor from President Truman.

The article has 6 sections.

The first one makes the point about how things have changed:

> 1. The Conscience Is Sacred
>
> Doss arrived at his pacifism through religious conviction. It was an ethical precept he arrived at by religious devotion and piety, which means his pacifism was not something arbitrarily considered. Throughout the movie, the tattered Bible he carried with him everywhere he went symbolized the solemnity of his beliefs. Standing before a court martial, he was willing to go to jail for his convictions.
>
> This is important today because so much hostility is based in rejecting religious motivation around contentious issues such as sexuality. Liberals are inclined to believe that any and all opposition to the ever-expanding lexicon of the sexual revolution is based in animus. That's hogwash. Today's dissenters from the sexual revolution have no use for animus. Rather, they believe the purposes of sexuality and human embodiment are different than what secular progressivism teaches.
>
> Doss' sincerity is a reminder that the convictions people arrive at by religious motivation are not designed to be capricious, but are ordered toward certain ends that people will naturally disagree about.

Part 3 was also good, because it explains efforts by Republicans to pass laws like the Religious Freedom Restoration Act – laws that are opposed by atheists in the Democrat party:

> 3. It's Good to Accommodate People's Consciences
>
> When almost court-martialed for insubordination, Doss insists that his desire all along was to be a medic. This request was eventually approved. In the movie, we see the U.S. government preserve a man's conscience by assigning him a duty that did not violate it. The U.S. government was right to accommodate Doss where accommodations can be made. In this move, it recommitted itself to an important principle at the heart of our constitutional system: The presumption of liberty.
>
> This means it is government's burden to prove infringing upon a person's liberty is absolutely necessary. In Doss' case, it was deemed unessential for him to carry a weapon, so he served in a different capacity. This is at the heart of legislation like the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which puts the burden on the government to prove its case and make every last accommodation where

> possible.

The problem with people on the secular left today is that they have no empathy. For them, other people have no right to disagree because it makes them feel bad – but they don't see how jail time and fines amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars makes the victim of their legal attacks feel bad:

> 5. Protecting Conscience Means Developing Empathy for Others' Convictions
>
> As the movie's plot develops, Doss' fellow soldiers come to understand that his motives aren't sinister. They realize that, when freed to live faithfully, Doss is there to help save their lives. Throughout this, and when they learn of his sincerity, his enemies-turned-friends gained a greater understanding of Doss' convictions. They came to understand the force of his resolve, which dampens their mockery.
>
> In one visceral scene in particular, Doss and the most intense warrior in his battalion are in a foxhole together. There, in seeing Doss' devotion to sacrifice and conscience, his enemy-turned-friend makes lighthearted gestures recognizing that Doss' motives are pure. In the crucible of conflict, progress occurs.
>
> As in the case of Doss, protecting conscience doesn't mean you will agree with the conscience you're protecting. In fact, disagreement underscores the very need for protection. If conscience and religious liberty are simply ideas our society supports when popular, such protections are easily undone.

One of my favorite passages in the Bible talks about conscience.

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**
>
> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.
>
> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

You can clearly see in today's gay rights movement the problem with the government choosing to favor sinful behavior over religious liberty. People who are involved in sinful lifestyles don't have the ability to do the right thing when it comes to respecting others. Engaging in a sinful lifestyle corrupts the ability to be respectful of the human rights of others. The desire to feel good and be approved of is seen as more important than respecting the right of others to disagree.

Who knows how far the secular left would go to punish dissenters from gay marriage? Although the media doesn't cover it, there have been countless episodes of violence and

vandalism, workplace persecution and job terminations, not to mention an armed attack by a domestic terrorist at the Family Research Council building. Because people in a sinful lifestyle don’t respect conscience rights of those who disagree. Conversely, when a person stands alone for a moral virtue (e.g. – chastity), there is no desire to compel others.

New study: decline in mainline church attendance linked to progressive theology

November 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church attendance for progressive denominations in free fall

I'm shocked and delighted to see this new study reported in the Weekly Standard, of all places. I guess everyone has an intuition that conservative churches that focus on the Bible have been growing in attendance. And progressive churches that focus on feelings and peer approval are in decline. But now we have some numbers that link the changes in attendance to *specific theological beliefs*.

Excerpt:

> A literal reading of scripture and faith in an interventionist God strengthen church attendance. According to a new academic study of what drives a mainline Protestant church to die out or succeed, preaching these two theological precepts makes all the difference.
>
> The forthcoming article, entitled "Theology Matters," confirms a truth universally acknowledged, or reasonably intuited anyway. The Christ-optional, Gospel-as-metaphor, liberal-progressive mainline Protestantism borne of our secular age keeps so loose a lock on wandering souls that they wander away—choosing boozy brunch, perhaps, over pew-sitting.
>
> The authors, Drs. David Haskell, Kevin Flatt and Stephanie Burgoyne, used five years' data gathered from 2,255 attendees of Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United Church of Canada parishes across the province of Ontario. (The United Church of Canada boasts an ongoing, unsurprising self-parody in an atheist minister no one seems to have ginned up the nerve to defrock.)
>
> Approximately half of the authors' subjects belong to growing parishes within these three mainline denominations, the other half to shrinking ones. Their most striking survey result finds churchgoers at shrinking parishes more doctrinally

> committed than their ministers.

That's true about the atheist woman who is leading one of the denominations into decline:

> An ordained minister with the United Church of Canada is resisting efforts to oust her from the pulpit because she is an atheist.
>
> "I don't believe in … the god called God," Gretta Vosper told the Globe and Mail. "Using the word gets in the way of sharing what I want to share."
>
> She said that she believes the Bible is "mythology," and denies that Jesus is the Son of God.

The United Church of Canada has majored in progressive politics . Progressive politics is more important to them than apologetics and theology. From what I've read, their ministers are more likely to affirm the writings of progressive atheists like John Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg as "infallible" than the Christian Scriptures. We have similar problems in the USA with ELCA, PCUSA, ECUSA, and other far left denominations.

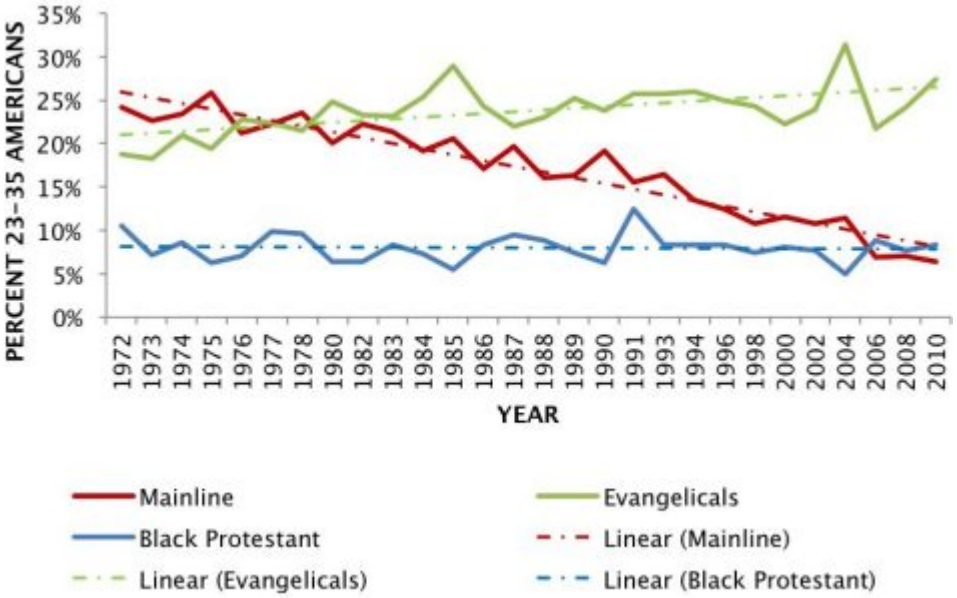

Church attendance by denomination, ages 23-35

Mainline Roman Catholicism, which focuses less on the Bible and more on political goals like Obamacare, climate change alarmism and amnesty is also in decline. They are declining faster than any other denomination.

Here's a quote from the study that breaks down the theology by change in church attendance:

> When asked to agree or disagree with the statement "Jesus rose from the dead with a real, flesh-and-blood body leaving behind an empty tomb" 93% of growing church pastors agreed, 83% of growing church attendees agreed, 67% of declining church attendees agreed, and just 56% of declining church pastors agreed.
>
> When asked if "God performs miracles in answer to prayer" 100% of the growing

> church pastors agreed, 90% of the growing church attendees agreed, 80% of the declining church attendees agreed, and just 44% of the declining church pastors agreed.

I think the problem is that when a minister quotes the Bible and espouses traditional theology, people can sense that this teaching is from God, because it is at odds with their selfish desires. They understand the authenticity of it, because it calls them higher. Progressives like Greta Vosper tell people that their current sinfulness is just fine, since the goal of spirituality is to look inside yourself for guidance so that you feel good. But does sinfulness really deliver results over the long term? We were designed by God for righteousness, not selfishness. I am pretty sure that Jesus knows a little more about human nature than Greta Vosper does.

Consider the words of Daniel 2:

> [1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.
>
> [2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,
>
> [3] he said to them, “I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means.”
>
> [4] Then the astrologers answered the king, “May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”
>
> [5] The king replied to the astrologers, “This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.
>
> [6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me.”
>
> [7] Once more they replied, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”
>
> [8] Then the king answered, “I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:
>
> [9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me.”
>
> [10] The astrologers answered the king, “There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.
>
> [11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.”
>
> [12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all

the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king."

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him."

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

[27] Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

> [28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:
>
> [29] “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.
>
> [30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

People can see right through progressive “spirituality”. They see that this is man-made humanism designed to make people feel better. They know that this is just one person’s opinion, and not from God. The blind leading the blind, as the Bible says. Greta Vosper isn’t deriving her worldview from a truth-centered investigation of science, history or logic. It’s feelings all the way down, and that’s not useful to people who are looking for objective truth and purpose.

Least qualified president ever leaves Trump foreign policy disasters

November 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?

Of all the things that the least qualified president did in the last eight years, the most difficult for the incoming Trump administration to fix are the national security and foreign policy blunders.

It's not just that he gave away all our classified secrets via Hillary's unsecure e-mail server is a problem. And then there were the leaks of our national security secrets from people like Edward Snowden and gay private Bradley Manning. And of course the hacking of our computers by the Chinese. What else would you expect from a political party that focuses on free condoms and gay marriage?

But the worse mistakes are the foreign policy blunders – the creation of wars in other countries and the the supporting of our enemies (giving assault weapons to drug cartels, giving nuclear weapons to Iran, etc.) that are the most difficult to make right.

Consider this article from the Daily Signal.

It lists 5 crises created by the Obama administration in the last 8 years:

1. ISIS in Iraq and Syria
2. Afghanistan War
3. Ukraine-Russia War
4. Saudi Arabia-Yemen War
5. Campaigns Against Terrorists in Africa

There was no "Islamic State" in Iraq or Syria when president Bush left office. Iraq and Syria, along with Egypt and Libya, were stable. Libya had just voluntarily given up their

WMD programs without a shot being fired, because of concern that Bush would invade them, too. But then Obama became president and withdrew our troops from Iraq. What happened next? Genocide, rape and sex-trafficking on a scale unimaginable to naive American progressives.

Excerpt:

> **1. ISIS in Iraq and Syria**
>
> In response to rapid territorial gains made by the Islamic State during the first half of 2014, the U.S. and allied countries began a military campaign against the terrorist group, relying primarily on airstrikes and support of local ground forces.
>
> As of Nov. 2, the U.S. coalition has conducted nearly 16,000 airstrikes in Syria and Iraq, the countries where ISIS maintains its largest presence.
>
> The Defense Department reports that as of Aug. 31, the total cost of operations related to defeating ISIS is $9.3 billion and the average daily cost is $12.3 million.
>
> Trump inherits the military campaign against ISIS during a crucial phase, as the U.S. undertakes missions to take back key territory controlled by the militants.
>
> […]In Syria, the Obama administration is supporting 30,000 Syrian-Kurdish and Syrian-Arab fighters, who announced last weekend they were launching a campaign to liberate the ISIS capital in Raqqa. There are roughly 300 U.S. special operations forces on the ground in the country.

> The moves to take back ISIS' remaining strongholds showcase the extent to which Obama has prioritized the counterterrorism mission in Syria over efforts to help resolve the country's civil war, which has resulted in as many as a half a million deaths.
>
> On Monday, in a press conference, Obama acknowledged his Syria policy "has not worked."

Another blunder by the Obama administration occurred with his decision to take a naive, pacifist stance with Russia. Obama and Clinton were following the liberal playbook, which states that the best way to stop a bully from being aggressive is to bow down to him and grovel. This is literally how progressives think about foreign policy – they think that weaknesses causes tyrants to back off, and that strength causes tyrants to arm up and attack their neighbors.

How well this the progressive view work with Russia?

> **3. Ukraine-Russia War**
>
> Europe's only active war has resulted in the deaths of nearly 10,000 soldiers and civilians on both sides.
>
> The conflict started in 2013, when Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych, under pressure from Russia, suspended talks on a trade deal with the European Union. Thousands of protesters hit the streets in the following days, supporting closer

> ties with the West.
>
> The protests turned violent, and Yanukovych fled the capital, Kiev. Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, and pro-Russian rebels began to seize territory in eastern Ukraine. Separatists in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk eventually declared independence.
>
> Two cease-fire accords are not being observed. The Obama administration's policy has been to support a German and French-led effort to negotiate a settlement to the war, and maintain pressure on Russia by working with the European Union to uphold sanctions imposed on Moscow for its annexation of Crimea. The Obama administration has also delivered Ukraine tens of millions of dollars in nonlethal aid, but has not provided weapons.

Obama isn't providing Ukraine with weapons, because his progressive playbook says that Russia will be more likely to attack if they stand to take *more* losses to anti-tank weapons. That's how people on the secular left think. They make decisions based on what makes them feel superior and what makes them look idealistic to others – not based on what works.

But there's more. Hillary Clinton and Marco Rubio championed an idealistic intervention in Libya. They thought that if we got rid of Libya's dictator, then there would be a spontaneous uprising of peaceful Muslim democracy-lovers. So they ordered air strikes with no ground invasion, and guess what they got?

Islamic State taking root in the anarchy they created:

> **5. Campaigns Against Terrorists in Africa**
>
> Obama has described his efforts to destroy al-Qaeda's core leadership as one of the successes of his national security policy. But the terrorist threat has spread to new regions in recent years, prompting a U.S. military response, and Trump will have to decide how to proceed.
>
> Unrelated campaigns in Libya and Somalia are prime examples of the diffuse threat.
>
> In Libya, the U.S. has conducted more than 360 airstrikes in support of pro-government forces trying to expel ISIS from the coastal Libyan city, Sirte. A small number of U.S. special operations forces are also providing on-the-ground support.
>
> Since the 2011 American intervention in Libya that led to the death of the country's deposed dictator leader, Muammar Gaddafi, the country has been plagued by instability.
>
> Today, the U.S. is supporting a project to build a unity government in Libya. But the unity government has not yet won the approval of Libya's various rival factions.
>
> "Libya is a quintessential civil war," Middle East expert Pollack said. "ISIS makes

> their home in civil wars."
>
> Separately, in another African nation, Somalia, the U.S. has been engaged for more than a decade in an air campaign against al-Shabab, an affiliate of al-Qaeda. The group is responsible for one of the deadliest attacks in Africa, when in 2013 it struck a mall in Nairobi, Kenya.
>
> The terrorist group spawned in 2005, taking advantage of chaos in a country that has been split apart by civil war for 25 years.
>
> This year, The Washington Post reports, the U.S. has conducted more than a dozen airstrikes and drone strikes against al-Shabab.
>
> According to The New York Times, as part of a multifront war against militant Islam in Africa, American forces are also involved in helping to combat al-Qaeda in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso and Boko Haram in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad.

Although progressives like to style themselves as being "anti-war", they actually cause a lot of wars and deaths with their misguided idealistic military interventions. Obama inherited a peaceful situation in Russia and in the Middle East, but he screwed everything up. To stop wars you must understand military issues. Just because a person says they don't like war, it doesn't mean that they know what actions to take to avoid war. President Trump is inheriting disasters from his incompetent predecessor.

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

November 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here's a debate with a well-qualified atheist and Dr. Craig.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any

errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It's not

just that the settings are unlikely, it's that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a "herd morality" that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved "herd morality". However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are

true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It’s possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It’s also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is “Does God Exist?”. If Dr. Millican answers “no” then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God’s existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don’t see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the

need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to

nothing.

We don’t have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can’t be an abstract object because they don’t cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we’ve never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have “algorithmic properties” as well as physical properties, it doesn’t mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that’s not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God’s goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God’s goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can’t translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can’t be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can’t be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don’t permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Did the most unqualified president ever really have a “scandal-free” administration?

November 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama claims that his administration has been free of major scandals

When Barack Obama was running for office, he promised to deliver a high degree of integrity and transparency. His teleprompter told him that he was going to be free of corruption and lawlessness, and he dutifully read those words out to his adoring fans. But after 8 years of Obama rule, does reality match his self-congratulating rhetoric?

Consider this article from the Daily Wire.

It lists 11 scandals that occurred during Obama reign of error:

1. **Operation Fast and Furious**
2. **Benghazi**
3. **The IRS targeted conservative organizations**
4. **The DOJ seized Associated Press phone records as well as phone and email records from Fox News reporter James Rosen**
5. **The NSA conducted mass surveillance against American citizens without a warrant**
6. **The Obama administration paid ransom to Iran for hostages, and lied to the American people about it**
7. **Hillary’s email scandal**
8. **The Environmental Protection Agency poisoned a Colorado river**
9. **The EPA also broke federal law in promoting a regulation**

10. **The GSA scandal**
11. **The Secret Service scandal**

Surprisingly, Obamacare is not mentioned, even though Obama knowingly lied to the American people over and over about the true intentions and effects of the law – intentions and effects that are now understood by Americans who are being driven into bankruptcy by the law. The massive stimulus grants to Obama bundlers for "green energy" corporations that later went bankrupt are not mentioned. Giving green cards to refugees from Islamic countries without doing the proper background checks who then went on to kill Americans in terrorist attacks, (e.g. – Orlando, San Bernadino), is not mentioned. And of course the Democrat fascination with illegal immigration caused them to catch and release illegal immigrants who went on to commit crimes, including the murder of Kate Steinle. A lot more could be added to the list.

I think numbers 3 and 4 from the Daily Wire list above really show the character of the Obama administration: (links removed)

> **3. The IRS targeted conservative organizations.** In 2013, Lois Lerner, who directed the Internal Revenue Service's Exempt Organizations Unit, admitted that Tea Party organizations were targeted under the agency, but blamed it on lower-level employees. Such organizations were heavily scrutinized with invasive questions. Since then, Lerner and IRS commissioner John Koskinen have denied any wrongdoing and have stonewalled congressional efforts to investigate the matter, citing computer crashes for being unable to turn over related emails.
>
> Meanwhile, a federal court concluded in August that conservative groups might still be facing targeted scrutiny from the IRS. It has also been reported that the Department of Justice (DOJ) knew about the IRS's targeting of conservative groups as early as 2011.
>
> **4. The DOJ seized Associated Press phone records as well as phone and email records from Fox News reporter James Rosen.** In the AP's case, the DOJ was investigating a story involving "a CIA operation in Yemen that foiled an al-Qaeda plot in the spring of 2012 to set off a bomb on an airplane headed to the United States," according to the *Washington Post*. The DOJ seized two months of phone records from the AP without informing the news outlet.
>
> "There can be no possible justification for such an overbroad collection of the telephone communications of The Associated Press and its reporters," Gary Pruitt, president of the AP wrote to Holder at the time. "These records potentially reveal communications with confidential sources across all of the newsgathering activities undertaken by the AP during a two-month period, provide a road map to AP's newsgathering operations, and disclose information about AP's activities and operations that the government has no conceivable right to know."
>
> In the Rosen case, the DOJ was investigating a story Rosen did involving North Korea and tracked "his movements and conversations," according to Fox News,

> including phone numbers belonging to Rosen's parents. The DOJ had listed Rosen as a "co-conspirator" under the Espionage Act in regards to the story—allegedly pressing a source for classified information. Rosen was never charged with a crime.
>
> Fox News executive Michael Clemente called the DOJ's actions against Rosen "downright chilling." "We will unequivocally defend [Rosen's] right to operate as a member of what up until now has always been a free press," Clemente said in a statement, per the *Washington Post*.

Basically, Obama has been running the United States like a little Banana Republic, similar to his atheist Marxist buddies Chavez (Venezuela) and Castro (Cuba). He has no respect from laws, and just used government as a weapon to attack his enemies. He truly was the first person to be president who knew nothing about the rule of law or the Constitution. But when I raise these concerns to Democrat voters, they have no idea what I am talking about.

One of the reasons why Obama's supporters are able to believe that he had a scandal-free administration is because they do very little critical thinking themselves, but merely rely on the words of the leftist mainstream media to tell them what reality is. Democrat voters literally have no idea about the fiscal situation and the foreign policy situation that Obama is leaving Trump, because they watch TV, and TV doesn't tell them anything that is critical of Obama. I know that it is fun for leftists to tune in Jon Stewart and Bill Maher and think that they are informed about the world, but they really are not informed. They live in a bubble – a safe space where they only hear voices that agree with them, and voices that tell them how smart and special they are compared to those imbeciles who disagree with them. Feelings, not facts. That's the Democrat way.

The true story of Thanksgiving: Squanto's miraculous path to Plymouth

November 24, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

"The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth" by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe (1914)
God's providence in action, as reported by Eric Metaxas in the Wall Street Journal.

Full text:

> The story of how the Pilgrims arrived at our shores on the Mayflower—and how a friendly Patuxet native named Squanto showed them how to plant corn, using fish as fertilizer—is well-known. But Squanto's full story is not, as National Geographic's new Thanksgiving miniseries, "Saints & Strangers," shows. That might be because some details of Squanto's life are in dispute. The important ones are not, however. His story is astonishing, even raising profound questions about God's role in American history.
>
> Every Thanksgiving we remember that, to escape religious persecution, the Pilgrims sailed to the New World, landing at Plymouth Rock in 1620. But numerous trading ships had visited the area earlier. Around 1608 an English ship dropped anchor off the coast of what is today Plymouth, Mass., ostensibly to trade metal goods for the natives' beads and pelts. The friendly Patuxets received the crew but soon discovered their dark intentions. A number of the braves were brutally captured, taken to Spain and sold into slavery.
>
> One of them, a young man named Tisquantum, or Squanto, was bought by a group of Catholic friars, who evidently treated him well and freed him, even allowing him to dream of somehow returning to the New World, an almost unimaginable thought at the time. Around 1612, Squanto made his way to London, where he stayed with a man namedJohn Slany and learned his ways and language. In 1618, a ship was found, and in return for serving as an interpreter,

Squanto would be given one-way passage back to the New World.

After spending a winter in Newfoundland, the ship made its way down the coast of Maine and Cape Cod, where Squanto at last reached his own shore. After 10 years, Squanto returned to the village where he had been born. But when he arrived, to his unfathomable disappointment, there was no one to greet him. What had happened?

It seems that since he had been away, nearly every member of the Patuxets had perished from disease, perhaps smallpox, brought by European ships. Had Squanto not been kidnapped, he would almost surely have died. But perhaps he didn't feel lucky to have been spared. Surely, he must have wondered how his extraordinary efforts could amount to this. At first he wandered to another Wampanoag tribe, but they weren't his people. He was a man without a family or tribe, and eventually lived alone in the woods.

But his story didn't end there. In the bleak November of 1620, the Mayflower passengers, unable to navigate south to the warmer land of Virginia, decided to settle at Plymouth, the very spot where Squanto had grown up. They had come in search of religious freedom, hoping to found a colony based on Christian principles.

Their journey was very difficult, and their celebrated landing on the frigid shores of Plymouth proved even more so. Forced to sleep in miserably wet and cold conditions, many of them fell gravely ill. Half of them died during that terrible winter. One can imagine how they must have wept and wondered how the God they trusted and followed could lead them to this agonizing pass. They seriously considered returning to Europe.

But one day during that spring of 1621, a Wampanoag walked out of the woods to greet them. Somehow he spoke perfect English. In fact, he had lived in London more recently than they had. And if that weren't strange enough, he had grown up on the exact land where they had settled.

Because of this, he knew everything about how to survive there; not only how to plant corn and squash, but how to find fish and lobsters and eels and much else. The lone Patuxet survivor had nowhere to go, so the Pilgrims adopted him as one of their own and he lived with them on the land of his childhood.

No one disputes that Squanto's advent among the Pilgrims changed everything, making it possible for them to stay and thrive. Squanto even helped broker a peace with the local tribes, one that lasted 50 years, a staggering accomplishment considering the troubles settlers would face later.

So the question is: Can all of this have been sheer happenstance, as most versions of the story would have us believe? The Pilgrims hardly thought so. To them, Squanto was a living answer to their tearful prayers, an outrageous miracle of God. Plymouth Colony Governor William Bradford declared in his journal that Squanto "became a special instrument sent of God" who didn't leave them "till

> he died.”
>
> Indeed, when Squanto died from a mysterious disease in 1622, Bradford wrote that he wanted “the Governor to pray for him, that he might go to the Englishmen’s God in heaven.” And Squanto bequeathed his possessions to the Pilgrims “as remembrances of his love.”
>
> These are historical facts. May we be forgiven for interpreting them as the answered prayers of a suffering people, and a warm touch at the cold dawn of our history of an Almighty Hand?

America is truly a blessed nation. Why this story is not taught in all the schools of the nation is beyond me.

LeadPages shuts down #anywhereButTarget web site to promote “diversity”

November 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One sexual assault lawsuit should finish off Target for good

This story is from the The Stream.

Excerpt:

> A conservative corporate watchdog group’s effort to galvanize conservatives against Target’s restroom and changing-room policies was shut down on Thanksgiving Day by the server company hosting its website, because the campaign allegedly violated the company’s effort to “create an inclusive workplace” respectful of “diversity.”
>
> In an e-mail, Leadpages Director of Operations Doug Storbeck ordered 2nd Vote to take down its #AnywhereButTARGET website. According to Storbeck, “at Leadpages, we strive to create an inclusive workplace that upholds the dignity of all people. We value, respect, and celebrate everyone’s individualities and honor their unique strengths from all different walks of life.”
>
> 2nd Vote’s campaign encouraged conservatives to shop #AnywhereButTARGET because of the company’s policy that allows males who identify as females to use the restroom and changing room of their choice. Conservatives have boycotted the retail giant, though Target executives said in August that a stock drop and an investment in single-sex restrooms was unrelated to the backlash.
>
> Storbeck continued:
>
> We believe that embracing diversity of thought and perspective encourages collaboration that leads to product innovation, diverse products and a successful business. Staying true to our core values is something we take very seriously and we feel this is reinforced in our Terms of Service. Specifically, and according to

> our Acceptable Use and Conduct policy (to which you have agreed), we prohibit any content which: "(g) is hateful or discriminatory based on race, color, sex, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origin, marital status, disability, sexual orientation or age or is otherwise objectionable, as reasonably determined by Ave. 81;"
>
> For the reasons stated above, I am respectfully requesting that you to take down your #AnywhereButTarget landing page upon receipt of this notice, but no later than 8:00am CST on Thursday November 24, 2016.
>
> Storbeck's LinkedIn page says that he lives in the Minneapolis area, which is also where Target's headquarters are located. *The Stream* was unable to determine whether this played a role in Leadpages' decision.

The actual-email is linked in the Stream article, so you can see for yourself how someone can invoke diversity and inclusion to shut down a viewpoint that they disagree with. You need a college education in the liberal arts to call acts of censorship "diversity and inclusion".

Fox 10 News reports on some of the diversity and inclusion that the Target CEO and Doug Storbeck celebrate:

> An O'Fallon, Missouri man was arrested on April 23, 2015 after allegedly secretly filming women in a Target dressing room.
>
> Matthew Foerstel, 26, faces felony charges for invasion of privacy in the second degree and unlawful possession of a firearm.
>
> Foerstel has a plea hearing on Monday, May 2, 2016.
>
> The Brentwood Police Department arrested Foerstel on April 23 after he allegedly held a camera phone under a dressing room door while a female shopper tried on swim suits at the Target store in Brentwood.
>
> An officer went to Ranken Technical College to place Foerstel under arrest and reportedly found him in possession of a loaded handgun.
>
> In 2013, Foerstel was convicted of invasion of privacy in St. Charles County for "knowingly and intentionally" filming an 11-year-old girl while she was partially nude inside a department store dressing room.

In case you are wondering, the CEO of Target, Brian Cornell, still thinks that men dressed as women should be allowed to use women's bathrooms.

NewsMax explains:

> Target CEO Brian Cornell defended the company's transgender bathroom policy decision to shareholders while also denying that the $10 billion in losses suffered since had anything to do with the controversial decision, Breitbart reported.
>
> The new policy, instituted seven weeks ago, allows transgender men and women to use the bathrooms and changing rooms of the gender they identify with at all

> Target stores.
>
> That decision has been the impetus behind a boycott of Target by about 1 million Americans.
> “We’re a company that believes strongly in diversity and inclusion,” LifeSiteNews quoted Cornell at Wednesday’s shareholder meeting in Costa Mesa, Calif. “We’re a company that is very guest-centered.”

All these people on the corporate left like to throw around words like “diversity”, “tolerance” and “inclusion”. But they don’t know what those words even mean.

Are endogenous virus genes evidence for common descent?

November 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

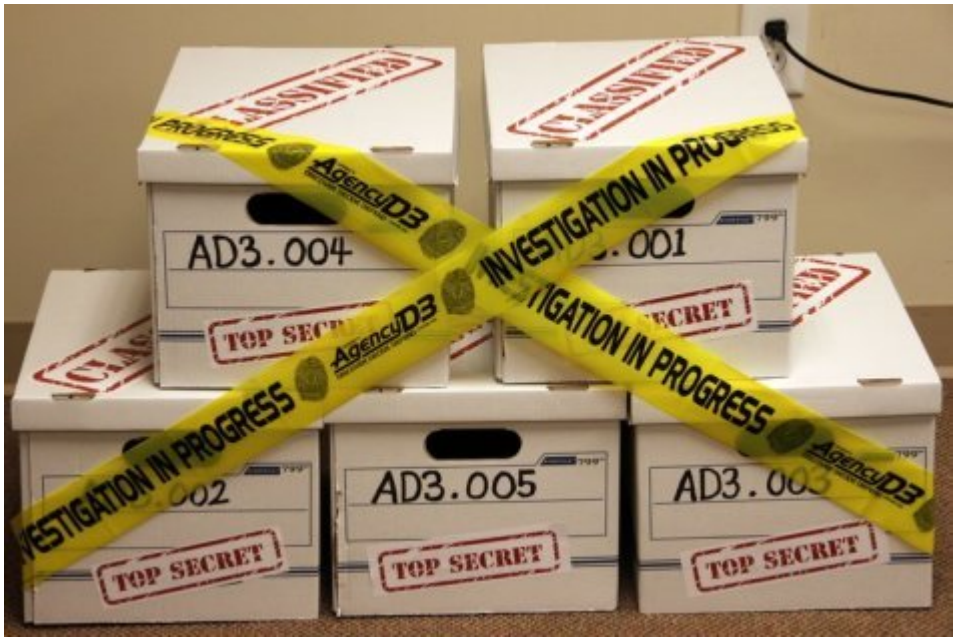

Investigation in progress

This is a guest post by JoeCoder.

It's often argued that when two or more organisms share viral genes in the same place, it is evidence those organisms evolved from a common ancestor. Wikipedia's Evidence for Common Descent page frames it as follows:

> Endogenous retroviruses (or ERVs) are remnant sequences in the genome left from ancient viral infections in an organism. The retroviruses (or virogenes) are always passed on to the next generation of that organism that received the infection. This leaves the virogene left in the genome. Because this event is rare and random, finding identical chromosomal positions of a virogene in two different species suggests common ancestry.

This argument presupposes that the viruses inserted themselves into genomes randomly and stick around as junk DNA baggage, rather than genomes originally being designed with viral-like genes that perform useful functions. However this argument has unraveled as we've discovered useful functions for many viral-like genes, including functions that specifically require a viral-like sequence. Some examples among many:

1. ERV sequences protect against viral infection through interference–a matching-but-opposite strand of RNA is created to bind to and disable RNA from a virus.
2. Likewise, ERV's seem to function "during embryo implantation to help prevent immune recognition by the mother's immune system"
3. In worms, an ERV has been observed to create actual viruses that transfer DNA from somatic cells (skin/brain/heart/etc.) to germline (sperm/egg) cells whenever the

worm is exposed to too much heat, allowing them to rewrite their own DNA for future generations.

4. Viral envelopes from ERV transcripts attach to cell membranes in the placenta and causes them to fuse as a normal part of development: "The HERV-W [a human ERV] envelope glycoprotein named syncytin 1 is expressed in all trophoblastic [part of the placenta] cells and directly involved in human trophoblast fusion and differentiation [cells taking on specialized roles]"

These aren't isolated cases of function. Phys.org interviewed one researcher: "When we investigated public data from embryonic cells, we found that many RNAs originated from regions in the human genome that are ERVs. We did not only observe isolated events, but systematic activation of these ERVs. Every cell type showed transcription of specific classes, something that is very unlikely to occur by chance".

Those cases all involve RNA viruses and that's old news. But two weeks ago, a single-celled eukaryote called *Cafeteria roenbergensis* was found to harbor maviruses within its own DNA that remain dormant until it is attacked by a large virus known as CroV. When this happens the maviruses activate to form an attack fleet, as NewScientist reports:

> A voracious marine predator plagued by a giant virus has a defence system we've never seen before – it fights back by making its very own virus… Rather than waiting for maviruses to arrive by chance when CroVs attack, it actually carries the genes that code for mavirus inside its own genome. These genes are usually dormant, but they get turned on when Cafeteria is invaded by CroV. "It acts as an inducible antiviral defence system," write Fischer and his colleague Thomas Hackl in a new preprint paper.

This process kills the *Cafeteria roenbergensis* cell, but is useful in defending other members of its own species. In this experiment maviruses were deliberately inserted into the *Cafeteria roenbergensis* genome (see the original paper), but more interestingly, sequences similar to the *Cafeteria roenbergensis* viral genes have been found in a wide range of animals:

> A wide range of animals, from sea anemones to crocodiles, harbour genetic elements called Maverick transposons that closely resemble the mavirus genes. It's possible that some of these organisms can also unleash viruses that attack giant viruses.

In spite of this, New Scientist still argues "our genomes are littered with the mutant remains of viruses and genetic parasites." But these discoveries reveal this as a rapidly-shrinking argument of the gaps.

Save this for the next time someone insists that viral genes are useless junk DNA and therefore evidence of common descent.

Communist Cuba's violent suppression of dissenters under Fidel Castro

November 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Communism in action: Cuban government arrests dissenter after a beating

My mother was watching CNN on Saturday, and she called to tell me that Sanjay Gupta was talking about the great healthcare in Cuba. Now, I know that CNN hires a lot of Marxists like Gupta and Zakaria, but many people may not realize how far left they are, and how that bias affects what they say on air. Let's see what Cuba is really like using some evidence for a change.

The Daily Signal has the numbers on Cuba's treatment of dissidents from a respected source:

> As for the dissidents, the Obama administration has abandoned them. Many have told me they feel betrayed by our president, and by extension, by the United States. Guillermo Fariñas, especially, has a reason to feel betrayed, as Obama promised him personally at a meeting in 2013 that he would take no step toward re-establishing relations with Cuba without prior consultations with the opposition. This did not happen.
>
> And dissidents have suffered the consequences. Political arrests have intensified since December of 2014. Throughout 2015, there were more than 8,616 documented political arrests in Cuba.
>
> And in 2016? There already had been over 8,505 political arrests during the first eight months, and they are expected to top 10,000. This represents the highest rate of political arrests in decades and nearly quadruples the tally of political arrests throughout all of 2010 (2,074), early in Obama's presidency.
>
> These figures come from the Cuban Committee for Human Rights and National

> Reconciliation, which is recognized by Amnesty International, Freedom House, and other major human rights groups.

Shutting down communication with the outside world to cover up the arrests, the torture, the human rights abuses, the poverty, and the horribly ineffective health care:

> And because Cuba's communist leaders cannot allow Cubans to be in free contact with the outside world, internet connectivity has dropped. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has something called the Measuring the Information Society Report, which is the world's most reliable source of data and analysis on global access to information and communication.
>
> Last year, the International Telecommunication Union dropped Cuba's ranking to 129 from 119. This means that Cuba actually has lower internet connectivity than some of the world's most infamous suppressors of the internet, including Zimbabwe (which is 127), Syria (which is 117), Iran (91), China (82), and Venezuela (72).

What about Cuba's health care system and economy? Didn't Castro's communist reforms make that better?

Investors Business Daily explains:

> Before the revolution, Cuba had the 13th-lowest infant mortality rate in the world. It was lower than France, Belgium and West Germany. Today, it ranks about 40th. That still looks respectable, until you consider how it was accomplished: Cuba has one of the highest abortion rates in the world. At the first sign of any trouble when a woman is carrying a baby, it is aborted — regardless of the parents' wishes.
>
> That's why their infant mortality rate isn't even worse.
>
> But surely health care for all is a major accomplishment, right?
>
> No. As has been noted in many other places, Cuba has three separate health care systems. One for paying customers from places like the U.S., who go to Cuba for discount treatments of cosmetic surgery and the like.
>
> There's another for Cuba's ruling Communist elite, also a good system. This is the health care system visiting journalists are taken to see, and that they later glowingly report on.
>
> But there's still another system for the rest — the average Cubans. It is abysmal, and even that might understate how bad it is.
>
> "Cubans are not even allowed to visit those (elite) facilities," according to the Web site The Real Cuba. "Cubans who require medical attention must go to other hospitals, that lack the most minimum requirements needed to take care of their patients."
>
> It goes on: "In addition, most of these facilities are filthy and patients have to bring their own towels, bed sheets, pillows, or they would have to lay down on

> dirty bare mattresses stained with blood and other body fluids."
>
> As for doctors, well, they make an average of about $25 to $35 a month. Many have to work second jobs to make ends meet, using substandard equipment. Drug shortages are rife. As a result, one of Cuba's ongoing problems is that doctors leave as soon as they can for other countries, where they can make a decent living.
>
> The country has over 30,000 doctors working overseas officially. Why? Out of kindness? No. The Castro regime earns an estimated $2.5 billion a year in hard currency from doctors working elsewhere, which means Cuba's poor must go without decent care or access to doctors.
>
> As for "universal literacy," please. Primary and secondary schools are little more than Marxist indoctrination centers, where students are taught only what the state wants them to know. That's how they keep people quiet.
>
> Then there's Cuba's higher education, in which "universities are training centers for bureaucrats, totally disconnected from the needs of today's world. To enter the best careers and the best universities, people must be related to the bureaucratic elites, and also demonstrate a deep ideological conviction," notes Colombian journalist Vanesa Vallejo, of the PanAm Post, a Latin American news site.
>
> Nor is it "free." In fact, those who graduate from college must work for a number of years for the government at a substandard wage of $9 a month. They are in effect slave labor. As with most "free" things the socialists offer, the price is very high and nonnegotiable.
>
> In sum, Castro took a healthy country and made it sick. Those who glorify him deserve the scorn they get for propagating such a longstanding lie.

Regarding health care in Cuba, here are a couple of videos that were smuggled out of the actual health care system used by ordinary Cubas:

And:

So, that's the truth about Cuba – very different from what the regime itself and its wealthy supporters in Hollywood and the far left mainstream media want you to believe.

I'd really like to read what Mary Anastasia O'Grady has to say about the death of Castro in the Wall Street Journal, and I hope she writes about this story soon. UPDATE: Here it is, finally.

New study: vocational training graduates more likely to be employed

November 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students puking in toilet

The Stream reports on a new study of interest to young people who want to maximize the revenue from their future job, while minimizing the cost of their higher education.

Excerpt:

> Conventional wisdom says that students need a four-year degree to make it in today's economy. But do the numbers back that up?
>
> According to a new study released by the Department of Education, students who pursue an occupational credential (an education that is career-centered) are more likely to be employed than those who get an academic credential.
>
> […]The study uses data from the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS), which tracked students who had enrolled in college for the first time.
>
> Researchers surveyed students starting in 2003 and tracked their progress through 2009. By the end of that six-year period, the study found that a greater proportion of students who earned an occupational credential were employed.
>
> Additionally, 74 percent of those employed students with an occupational credential were in jobs related to their field of study, compared to just 53 percent of employed students who earned an academic credential.
>
> These data illustrate the need for change in the way policymakers think about

> higher education. With college tuition at an all-time high and with over 3.6 million students defaulting on their student loans, students need alternative options for upward mobility now more than ever.

The author Mary Clare Reim notes:

> This suggests that recent efforts to encourage more individuals to pursue college (President Barack Obama said that all Americans should have at least some postsecondary education) may be misguided. The data also suggest that the administration's antagonism toward more career-focused educational tracks — often provided by for-profit trade schools and community colleges — is misplaced.

On this career guide web site, I found the top 10 trades and technical careers ranked by median annual salary.

1. Elevator Installers and Repairers $70,910
2. Electrical and Electronics Repairers $65,230
3. Boilermakers $54,640
4. Construction and Building Inspectors $52,360
5. Electricians $48,250
6. Pile-Driver Operators $47,860
7. Brickmasons and Blockmasons $46,930
8. Plumbers $46,660
9. Structural Iron and Steel Workers $44,540
10. Sheet Metal Workers $41,710

Of course those are the median salaries, if you are clever and hard working, you can make much more.

Consider this story from the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> Justin Friend 's parents have doctoral degrees and have worked as university lecturers and researchers. So Mr. Friend might have been expected to head for a university after graduating from high school in Bryan, Texas, five years ago.
>
> Instead, he attended Texas State Technical College in Waco, and received a two-year degree in welding. In 2013, his first full year as a welder, his income was about $130,000, more than triple the average annual wages for welders in the U.S. In 2014, Mr. Friend's income rose to about $140,000.
>
> […]Mr. Friend, who is single, typically works 72 hours a week, usually including at least one day of the weekend, often on an overnight shift. His base pay is more than $25 an hour, up from about $22 when he started in 2012. He gets overtime after 40 hours a week. Pay is doubled on Sundays and tripled on holidays. He receives health insurance, a 401k retirement plan and paid vacation.

> With little free time, expenses are low. He rents a one-bedroom apartment for $1,080 a month in a building with a pool and gym. To stay in shape for mountain-climbing trips, he sometimes runs up and down steps wearing a weighted backpack.
>
> […]The long hours mean "it's hard to have a life," Mr. Friend said. Eventually, he said he may pursue an advanced degree in metallurgy and research welding materials and techniques. For now, he's building up his savings.

He's debt-free, and probably didn't even need student loans for this program. You couldn't say that about most college students these days – and the ones in non-STEM fields will never be able to pay their loans back. What causes people to go into programs that don't produce a return on investment? I think I know why. I think that many Americans have the idea that life should be about personal fulfillment, and not about doing things that don't feel right to them. Hard work doesn't "feel" right to many young Americans. They want work to make them famous, and to make them happy. Well, work isn't supposed to be like that. Work is about making money, and very often the most difficult degrees and jobs are the least fame-making, and the least happiness-inducing.

Indoctrinate U

So why do people go to university and college to study non-STEM, non-trade, disciplines that produce lower employment and lower salaries?

I think that the Democrat Party has an interest in running up the national debt to $20 trillion in order to make college indoctrination cheaper, but as the debt grows, it gets harder and harder to provide public sector adult day care jobs to all the students who have no marketable skills. Government makes it easy for lazy students to spend 4 years drinking and having promiscuous sex at taxpayer expense. The combination of an immoral lifestyle with indoctrination and high student loans is usually enough to make a Democrat for life – or at least until the little brainwashed drones start to pay taxes (if ever).

Here is a quote from progressive president Woodrow Wilson about the purpose of higher education:

> The purpose of a university should be to make a son as unlike his father as possible. By the time a man has grown old enough to have a son in college he has specialized. The university should generalize the treatment of its undergraduates, should struggle to put them in touch with every force of life.

That's the real purpose of non-STEM degrees – to make a Democrat voter, and not to make a worker who can earn money and be independent of government programs. If all you have learned to do in college is roll your eyes like a jaded reptile and complain about "sexism" and "racism", then you're only qualified to sit in a safe space, not to provide a customer with anything of value. Welfare programs and government jobs (but I repeat myself) work while there is money to borrow, but when the debt hits a certain level, reality rises back to the surface.

Matt Dillahunty debates David Robertson on atheism, morality and evil

November 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

OK. So I think it's safe to say that of all the Christian apologists out there, David Robertson is my least favorite debater. Why? Many reasons, but mostly because he does not bring in evidence, especially scientific evidence. And he seems to make these clever quips like G. K. Chesterton. I like evidence. I would rather that he talk about scientific and historical evidence.

Dina asked me to listen to this debate a while back, between David Robertson and agnostic Matt Dillahunty (he's not an atheist, he's just an agnostic). I went in absolutely convinced that Robertson was going to have his ass handed to him by Matt Dillahunty. And I could not have been more wrong.

Here's the debate posted on YouTube (audio only):

This snarky summary is just a paraphrase from certain parts of the debate, *it is not designed for accuracy*, but for fun – to make you listen to the debate. Listen to the debate to get the exact words in context.

Summary:

- Matt Dillahunty: he's an agnostic who calls himself an atheist
- David Robertson: he's from Scotland, could we not get someone better?
- Robertson opening statement is incredibly weak, as you might expect, he only had two arguments embedded in a long list of nonsense: 1) origin and design of the universe 2) reality of evil requires objective morality

1) Creation/Design:

Robertson: The fact is that matter exists. There are 3 views that could account for this fact: 1) created, 2) eternal, 3) self-generated out of nothing. Option 3) is self-contradictory, 1) requires a Creator, and 2) is falsified by the Big Bang cosmology. So what's your view?

Dillahunty: You're trying to get me to say what my view is, but I can just say "I don't know" and get out of having to take any position on how matter got here. I can say "I don't know" to all the scientific evidence for the Big Bang cosmology, too!

2) Evil requires objective morality, requires a moral lawgiver:

Robertson: evil exists, e.g. – the Holocaust. If atheism is true, objective morality is impossible. Richard Dawkins agrees. Therefore, theism is the best explanation for the existence of evil.

Dillahunty: In my opinion, morality means doing what helps people have well-being. And I think that the Holocaust is obviously bad, because it hurts the well-being of the victims.

Robertson: The problem is that on your view, different people decide what well-being is to them. If you were raised in the Social Darwinism of the Nazi regime, you would believe that the Holocaust was the best for the well-being of the society as a whole.

Dillahunty: Isn't it obvious that killing people is bad for their well-being?

Robertson: Is it bad for the well-being of unborn children to kill them?

Dillahunty: Yes

Robertson: So you're against abortion, then?

Dillahunty: No

Robertson: So you think that killing the child in the womb is against the well-being of the child, but you're for that?

Dillahunty: I don't know! I don't know!

Then Dillahunty tried to claim Hitler was a Christian:

Dillahunty: here is a quote by Hitler saying that secular schools are bad, and religious schools are good – see, he's a Christian!

Robertson: when was that said and to whom?

Dillahunty: I don't know, I don't know!

Robertson: It was said in 1933, during an election campaign, to Catholic authorities – he was a politician, looking for votes from Catholics so he could become Chancellor.

Good and evil on atheism:

Dillahunty: good actions results in states with more well-being, and evil actions result in states with less well-being.

Brierley: but when the Nazis slaughtered all those people, they believed they were increasing well-being

Dillahunty: But you could demonstrate to them that their action is not going to increase well-being. Survival of the fittest is descriptive of what happens, but it's not prescriptive.

Robertson: Whose well-being will human beings think about most, if not their own? Do you really think that you can stop people like Charles Manson from being evil by sitting down and trying to prove to them that they are not helping their victim's well-being?

(A BIT LATER)

Robertson (to Dillahunty): Is it a fact that Dachau (a concentration camp) was morally wrong?

Dillahunty: (literally, not a paraphrase) I DON'T KNOW

My thoughts:

When I listened to this debate, the overwhelming conviction that emerges is that Matt Dillahunty is not someone who forms his worldview based on evidence. His rejection of the Big Bang cosmology with "I don't know" is just atrocious. His comments about slavery in the Bible and Hitler being a Christian show that his investigations of these issues is far below the level of a responsible adult. His dallying with the Jesus-never-existed view just shows him to be fundamentally anti-intellectual, as even atheist historian Bart Ehrman denies that view. His definition of faith has nothing to do with the Bible, or Christian authorities, or Christian scholars – he invented a definition of faith that allows him to mock Christians as morons. That's just irresponsible – letting the desire to mock others cause you to distort the definition of a word. When asked to state his positions or respond to specific evidence, his response is very often "I don't know". It seems to me that atheism, to him, means not pursuing truth with the aim of grasping it. He wants to keep reality at a safe distance – that's why he says "I don't know" so often.

On morality, it's even worse. It's not surprising to me that he is pro-abortion and has no opinion about concentration camps being objectively evil. Most atheists are pro-abortion, by the way. When it comes to morality, Dillahunty only has his own personal opinions, and they refer to nothing outside his own mind. (His opinion of morality as related to well-being is utilitarianism – a very problematic view – but moreover, it is *his subjective view* – he isn't offering it as any sort of objective moral system that would be prescriptive instead of descriptive. Without an after-life, there is no reason for anyone to care about the moral point of view when it goes against their self-interest, anyway. Atheists use moral language, but their statements are not referring to any objective, prescriptive moral reality. Atheism is materialistic and therefore deterministic – it does not even ground the free will that is needed to make moral choices. Their view is Darwinian survival of the fittest, that's what emerges from their origins story – and it does not rationally ground morality. The strong kill the weak, if they can. I've written before about how difficult it is for atheists to *rationally* condemn things like slavery, and nothing in Dillahunty's presentation led me to believe that he had solved that problem.

Anybody can be an intellectually-satisfied atheist with an empty head – it's *knowledge* that causes people to conform their beliefs to *reality*. If one strives to keep one's head as empty as possible, then of course one can believe anything one wants. I'm glad, speaking as a Christian theist, that I get to follow the evidence wherever it leads. It seems to me that we should do that, rather than decide how we want to live first, and

then invent a worldview to justify our desires.

Positive arguments for theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds

What percentage of Muslims approve of radical Islam and terrorism?

November 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

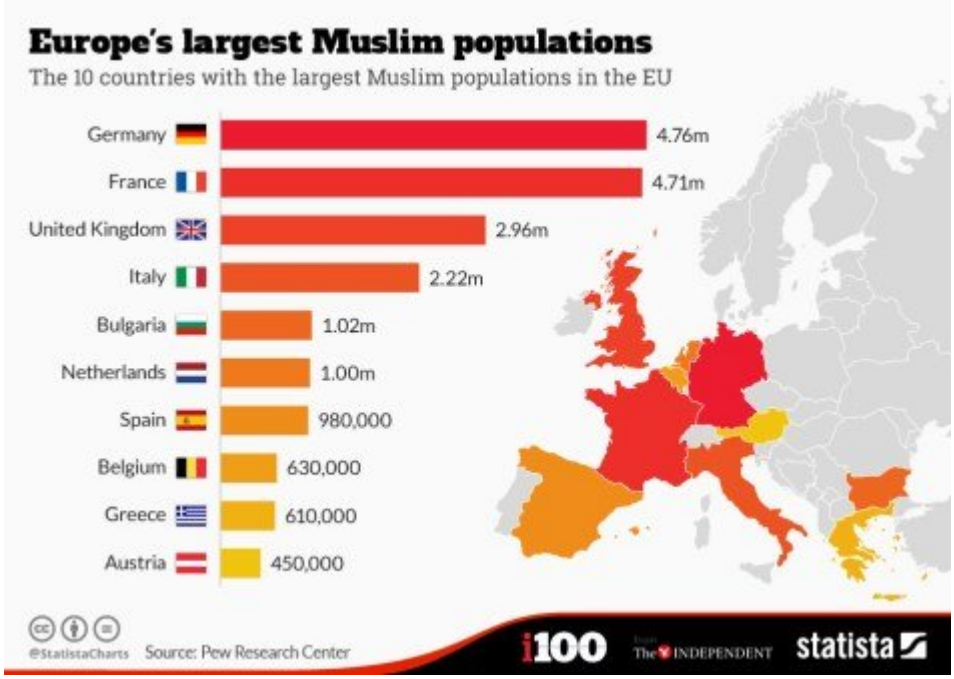

Muslim populations in Europe

Normally, when people ask me about this question, I go straight to the 2013 Pew Research survey which I blogged about before. But now I have something even better.

Here's a post from Ben Shapiro at Breitbart News which looks at several polls from several different countries.

Shapiro writes: (links to polls removed)

> So, here is the evidence that the enemy we face is not a "tiny minority" of Muslims, let alone a rootless philosophy unconnected to Islam entirely. It's not just the thousands of westerners now attempting to join ISIS. It's millions of Muslims who support their general goals, even if they don't support the group itself.
>
> **France.** A new, widely-covered poll shows that a full 16% of French people have positive attitudes toward ISIS. That includes 27% of French between the ages of 18-24. Anne-Elizabeth Moutet of *Newsweek* wrote, "This is the ideology of young French Muslims from immigrant backgrounds…these are the same people who torch synagogues."
>
> **Britain.** In 2006, a poll for the *Sunday Telegraph* found that 40% of British Muslims wanted shariah law in the United Kingdom, and that 20% backed the 7/7 bombers.Another poll from that year showed that 45% of British Muslims said that 9/11 was an American/Israeli conspiracy; that poll showed that one-quarter of British Muslims believed that the 7/7 bombings were justified.

Palestinian Areas. A poll in 2011 showed that 32% of Palestinians supported the brutal murder of five Israeli family members, including a three-month-old baby. In 2009, a poll showed that 78% of Palestinians had positive or mixed feelings about Osama Bin Laden. A 2013 poll showed 40% of Palestinians supporting suicide bombings and attacks against civilians. 89% favored sharia law. Currently, 89% of Palestinians support terror attacks on Israel.

Pakistan. After the killing of Osama Bin Laden, the Gilani Foundation did a poll of Pakistanis and found that 51% of them grieved for the terrorist mastermind, with 44% of them stating that he was a martyr. In 2009, 26% of Pakistanis approved of attacks on US troops in Iraq. That number was 29% for troops in Afghanistan. Overall, 76% of Pakistanis wanted strict shariah law in every Islamic country.

Morocco. A 2009 poll showed that 68% of Moroccans approved of terrorist attacks on US troops in Iraq; 61% backed attacks on American troops in Afghanistan as of 2006. 76% said they wanted strict sharia law in every Islamic country.

Jordan. 72% of Jordanians backed terror attacks against US troops in Iraq as of 2009. In 2010, the terrorist group Hezbollah had a 55% approval rating; Hamas had a 60% approval rating.

Indonesia: In 2009, a poll demonstrated that 26% of Indonesians approved of attacks on US troops in Iraq; 22% backed attacks on American troops in Afghanistan. 65% said they agreed with Al Qaeda on pushing US troops out of the Middle East. 49% said they supported strict sharia law in every Islamic country. 70% of Indonesians blamed 9/11 on the United States, Israel, someone else, or didn't know. Just 30% said Al Qaeda was responsible.

Egypt. As of 2009, 87% of Egyptians said they agreed with the goals of Al Qaeda in forcing the US to withdraw forces from the Middle East. 65% said they wanted strict sharia law in every Islamic country. As of that same date, 69% of Egyptians said they had either positive or mixed feelings about Osama Bin Laden. In 2010, 95% of Egyptians said it was good that Islam is playing a major role in politics.

United States. A 2013 poll from Pew showed that 13% of American Muslims said that violence against civilians is often, sometimes or rarely justified to defend Islam. A 2011 poll from Pew showed that 21 percent of Muslims are concerned about extremism among Muslim Americans. 19 percent of American Muslims as of 2011 said they were either favorable toward Al Qaeda or didn't know.

In short, tens of millions of Muslims all over the world sympathize with the goals or tactics of terrorist groups – or both. That support is stronger outside the West, but it is present even in the West. Islamist extremism is not a passing or fading phenomenon – it is shockingly consistent over time. And the West's attempts to brush off the ideology of fanaticism has been an overwhelming failure.

A more recent poll says that 13% of Syrian refugees support Islamic State:

> A first-of-its-kind survey of the hordes of Syrian refugees entering Europe found 13% support the Islamic State. The poll should raise alarms about the risks posed by the resettlement of 10,000 refugees in the U.S.
>
> The poll of 900 Syrian refugees by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies also found that another 10% of the displaced Syrians have a lukewarm, but not entirely negative, view of the terror group. That means 23% — or almost 1 in 4 — could be susceptible to ISIS recruitment.
>
> It also means as many 2,500 of the 10,000 Syrian refugees that the Obama administration is resettling inside American cities are potential terrorist threats.

Now contrast those facts with the views of Barack Obama and his allies in the mainstream media.

That video is from The Weekly Standard, here's the text:

> President Obama told CNN's Fareed Zakaria that 99.9 percent of Muslims reject radical Islam. He made the comments in response to a question about the White House avoiding using the phrase "Islamic terrorists."
>
> "You know, I think that the way to understand this is there is an element growing out of Muslim communities in certain parts of the world that have perverted the religion, have embraced a nihilistic, violent, almost medieval interpretation of Islam, and they're doing damage in a lot of countries around the world," said Obama.
>
> "But it is absolutely true that I reject a notion that somehow that creates a religious war because the overwhelming majority of Muslims reject that interpretation of Islam. They don't even recognize it as being Islam, and I think that for us to be successful in fighting this scourge, it's very important for us to align ourselves with the 99.9 percent of Muslims who are looking for the same thing we're looking for–order, peace, prosperity."

So Obama denies all of these surveys, and instead invents a view of the world that is consistent with his feelings. A true man of the secular left.

This gap between belief and reality explains why he is now bringing 200,000 Syrian Muslim refugees into America, keeping Syrian Christian refugees out of America, and generally underestimating Islamic State (ISIS / ISIL) because he cannot believe that radical Islam is anything for us to be concerned about.

Is the government capable of vetting Syrian refugees to find threats?

Not so much:

> The administration argues that it's conducting interviews with Syrians at camps in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. But without security forces on the ground in Syria who can verify details, there is no way to back-check a refugee's story to see if

> he is telling the truth and is, in fact, not a security threat.
>
> Even when we had people on the ground in Iraq to screen refugees, terrorists got through the safety net.
>
> In 2011, for instance, two Kentucky immigrants who had been resettled as Iraqi refugees were busted for trying to buy stinger missiles for al-Qaida.
>
> It turned out that their fingerprints matched those linked to roadside bombs in Iraq. It was a major red flag that should have barred their entry, but U.S. screeners failed to take note. And the terrorists slipped into the U.S.
>
> The administration's vetting process for the massive influx of Syrian refugees is completely unreliable, admits the FBI official in charge of such security background checks.
>
> "It's not even close to being under control," warned assistant FBI director Michael Steinbach.

We should not be believing the man who promised us that we could keep our doctor, keep our health plans, and that our health insurance premiums would go down $2,500. He is either lying, or he likes to speak on matters where he is not competent to know the truth of the matter.

UPDATE: ECM sends me this video from Ben Shapiro:

Awesome!

Harvard University astrophysicist discusses fine-tuning in the Washington Post

December 1, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

I'm pretty sure my readers already know about the fine-tuning argument, but it's not every day you see it discussed (however briefly) in a far-left mainstream newspaper like the Washington Post. (H/T Carmen)

The author is Howard A. Smith:

> Howard A. Smith is a senior astrophysicist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a member of the Harvard Department of Astronomy. His research emphasizes the origins of stars, stellar systems and galaxies, and he is an author on more than 250 scientific articles. Previously he was Chair of Astronomy at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum; he also served for three years as a visiting scientist at NASA Headquarters.

Here is some of what he wrote in the far-left Washington Post:

> There was a time, back when astronomy put Earth at the center of the universe, that we thought we were special. But after Copernicus kicked Earth off its pedestal, we decided we were cosmically inconsequential, partly because the universe is vast and about the same everywhere. Astronomer Carl Sagan put it this way: "We find that we live on an insignificant planet of a humdrum star." Stephen Hawking was even blunter: "The human race is just a chemical scum on a moderate-sized planet."
>
> An objective look, however, at just two of the most dramatic discoveries of

> astronomy — big bang cosmology and planets around other stars (exoplanets) — suggests the opposite. We seem to be cosmically special, perhaps even unique — at least as far as we are likely to know for eons.
>
> The first result — the anthropic principle — has been accepted by physicists for 43 years. The universe, far from being a collection of random accidents, appears to be stupendously perfect and fine-tuned for life. The strengths of the four forces that operate in the universe — gravity, electromagnetism, and the strong and weak nuclear interactions (the latter two dominate only at the level of atoms) — for example, have values critically suited for life, and were they even a few percent different, we would not be here. The most extreme example is the big bang creation: Even an infinitesimal change to its explosive expansion value would preclude life. The frequent response from physicists offers a speculative solution: an infinite number of universes — we are just living in the one with the right value. But modern philosophers such as Thomas Nagel and pioneering quantum physicists such as John Wheeler have argued instead that intelligent beings must somehow be the directed goal of such a curiously fine-tuned cosmos.
>
> It seems likely that exoplanets could host extraterrestrial intelligence. But intelligence is not so easy to produce. Paleontologist Peter Ward and astronomer Donald Brownlee summarize the many constraints in their book "Rare Earth: Why Complex Life is Uncommon in the Universe " and show why it takes vastly more than liquid water and a pleasant environment to give birth even to simple (much less complex) life. At a minimum, it takes an environment stable for billions of years of evolution, plus all the right ingredients. Biologists from Jacques Monod to Stephen Jay Gould have emphasized the extraordinary circumstances that led to intelligence on Earth, while geneticists have found that DNA probably resulted from many accidents. So although the same processes operate everywhere, some sequences could be unlikely, even astronomically unlikely. The evolution of intelligence could certainly be such a sequence.
>
> There is, moreover, a well-known constraint: the finite speed of light, which ensures that even over thousands of years we will only be able to communicate with the comparatively few stars (tens of millions) in our cosmic neighborhood. If the combined astronomical, biological and evolutionary chances for life to form and evolve to intelligence are only 1 in 10 million, then we probably have no one to talk to.

What is really strange is when I try to talk to atheists about this evidence, and they tell me about Star Trek and Star Wars and how the universe isn't specially designed and there are aliens everywhere. Atheists like the science fiction, they don't like the science facts.

If you would like to hear a good lecture on the fine-tuning argument, this one with Robin Collins is very good. You can hear him debate the fine-tuning argument with Peter

Millican here. And in this lecture Collins talks about his new research. Another discussion between Luke Barnes and an atheist is useful to understand how objections to the argument can be answered.

Information Enigma: 21-minute video explains intelligent design

December 2, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

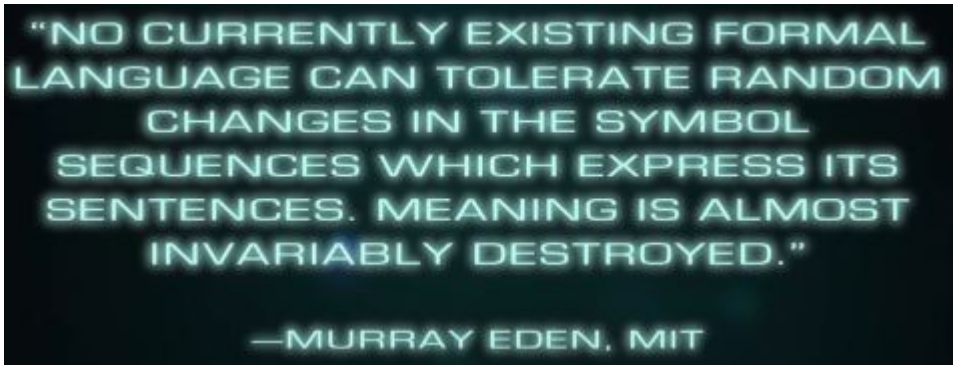

Can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
The video is here:

I have read and listened and watched a lot of material on intelligent design, but I have never seen so much value packed into such a short lecture. I really hope you'll watch this and that it's helpful to you.

Summary:

- the big question when discussing the origin of life: where did the information in living systems come from?
- Until 530 million years ago, the oceans were largely devoid of life
- In a 10 million year period, many new forms of animal life emerged
- New biological forms of life require new information
- the discovery of DNA shows that living systems work because cells have information that allows them to build the components of molecular machines: cell types, proteins, etc.
- can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
- normally, random mutations tend to degrade the functionality of information, e.g. – randomly changing symbols in an applications code does not usually introduce useful new functions, it usually renders what is there non-functional
- the majority of possible sequences will NOT have functions, so random mutations will more likely give you non-functional code, rather than functional code
- example: a bicycle lock with 4 numbers has many possible sequences for the 4 numbers, and only one of them has unlock functionality, the rest have no functionality
- if you have lots of time, then you might be able to guess the combination, but if the lock as has 10 billion numbers, and only one combination that unlocks, you can spend your whole life trying to unlock it and won't succeed
- how likely is it to arrive at a functional protein or gene by chance? Is it more like the 4-dial lock (can be done with lots of time) or the 10 billion dial lock (amount of time

required exceeds the time available)?
- the probability is LOW because there is only one sequence of numbers that has unlock function
- consider a short protein of 150 amino acids has 10 to the 195th power possible sequences
- if many of these sequences of amino acides had biological function, then it might be easier to get to one by random mutation and selection than it is with a lock that only unlocks for ONE sequence
- how many of the possible sequences have biological function?
- Thanks to research done by Douglas Axe, we now know that the number of functional amino acid sequences for even a short protein is incredibly small…
- Axe found that the odds of getting a functional sequence of amino acids that will fold and have biological function is 1 in 10 to the 77th power
- Is that number too improbable to reach by chance? well, there are 10 to 65th atoms in the entire Milky Way galaxy… so yes, this is a very improbable outcome
- can random genetic mutations search through all the sequences in order to find the one in 10 to the 77th power one that has biological function? It depends on how much guessers we have and how many guesses we get in the time available
- even with the entire 3.5 billion year history of life on Earth, only about 10 to the 40th organisms have ever lived, which far smaller fraction of the 10 to the 77th total sequences
- even with a very fast mutation rate, you would not be able to reach a functional protein even with all that time, and even with all those organisms

I was once having a discussion with a woman about the research that Axe did at the Cambridge University lab. He published four articles in the Journal of Molecular Biology. I held out one of the papers to her and showed her the numbers. She said over and over "I hate the Discovery Institute! I hate the Discovery Institute!" Well, yeah, but you can't make the Journal of Molecular Biology go away with hating the Discovery Institute. JMB is peer-reviewed, and this was experimental evidence – not a theory, not a hypothesis.

We have been blessed by the Creator and Designer of the universe in this time and place with *overwhelming evidence* – an abundance of riches. For those who have an open mind, this is what you've been waiting for to make your decision. For the naturalists who struggle so mightily to block out the progress of experimental science, they'll need to shout louder and shut their eyes tighter and push harder to block their ears. Maybe if they keep screaming "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" over and over to themselves, they will be able to ignore the real science a little longer.

Stephen C. Meyer debates intelligent design with two scientists on NPR

December 3, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Evolution News reported on a 27-minute debate featuring Dr. Stephen C. Meyer – probably the best proponent of intelligent design there is.

Description:

> We often say that Darwinists are reluctant to debate advocates of intelligent design, but here are two who deserve a tip of the hat. Keith Pannell is a chemist at the University of Texas at El Paso who hosts a program, *Science Studio*, on the NPR station there. He invited Stephen Meyer on to talk about the science of ID, pegged to the *Dover* anniversary.
>
> Clearly Pannell is an ID critic so he gets kudos for being willing to have a civil and informative conversation. Perhaps feeling insecure about facing the author of *Darwin's Doubt* by himself, Dr. Pannell invited a biologist colleague, Ricardo Bernal, to serve as "co-host."
>
> So it was two against one, but no worries. Meyer is, as always, superb, and the discussion sounds like it was an education for the two Texas scientists. Listen and enjoy.

I took a back-up of the MP3 file here.

Summary:

- How did Dr. Meyer get interested in science?
- What is intelligent design? (origin of life, fine-tuning)

- What is creationism? (young Earth, different epistemology)
- Who does Dr. Meyer think the intelligent designer is?
- Finding the best explanation from multiple competing hypotheses
- Critic: aren't you arguing for a designer from ignorance, then?
- The importance of naturalists acknowledging what they do and do not know about the origin of life
- We do have experience with intelligent causation, whenever we sequence symbols to have meaning and purpose, e.g. – writing
- Critic: information in DNA is not digital information, is it?
- Information in the cell follows a 4-character alphabet
- the sequences are composed of many parts / symbols
- the sequences themselves are specified to have function
- Critic: the complexity just emerges from change over time
- the origin of the first life is immune to explanation of change over time, because there is no replication – this is the first replicator
- Critic: but isn't it just ignorance about the origin of life?
- what we do is look at a number of competing hypothesis and what they are capable of, and see whether each cause is capable of generating the effects we observe in nature
- Critic: where is the experimental verification of your theory?
- well, in the appendices of Signature of the Cell, we predicted that the non-coding regions of DNA (junk DNA) would be found to have function, and that was later proven out
- the Darwinists said that non-coding regions of the DNA was junk, but that's not what has been proven experimentally
- Critic: where was this prediction written up, who wrote it?
- intelligent design theorists predicted it: Dembski, Kenyon, Mims, Sternberg
- Critic: but we used the scientific method to disprove the Darwinian predictions, you don't like the scientific method
- intelligent design proponents love science, and the scientific method, and they do work in labs to confirm their hypotheses, (WK:for example, the probability of generating a protein by chance)
- Critic: what about the Dover court case that you lost?
- the Discovery Institute objected to actions taken by the Dover school board
- Critic: what about the molecular machines, how are they related to intelligent design?
- even in the simplest living organisms, there are tiny machines that are tightly integrated, and cannot be built up in a stepwise fashion
- Critic: I've worked with the ATP-synthase and other molecular machines, but "you can kind of begin to tease how some of these molecular machines have come about" – pieces have multiple functions, and they are co-opted into larger systems
- the problem with the co-option argument breaks down when you look at the specific details of different machines

- for example – the type III secretory system cannot be an precursor to the bacterial flagellum, it is younger, not older than the bacterial flagellum
- Critic: what would it take for your view to be falsified?
- demonstrable undirected processes that are capable of creating functional information in DNA, or processes that can build up an irreducibly complex molecular machine within the time available with a decent probability

If you like this debate, check out Stephen C. Meyer's two books: "Signature in the Cell" and "Darwin's Doubt". They are now out as audio books, too.

New study: the majority (69%) of divorces are initiated by women

December 4, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this "I'll do what I want" attitude compatible with life-long married love?
This new report from Live Science gives us some numbers about who initiates divorces most frequently.

It says:

> Women are more likely than men to initiate divorce in the United States, but they are no more likely than men to initiate breakups in a dating relationship, a new study finds.
>
> "The breakups of nonmarital heterosexual relationships in the U.S. are quite gender-neutral and fairly egalitarian," study author Michael Rosenfeld, an associate professor of sociology at Stanford University, said in a statement. "This was a surprise because the only prior research that had been done on who wanted the breakup was research on marital divorces."
>
> Previous research had found that women are more likely to initiate divorce, at least in the United States, Europe and Australia. In the new study, Rosenfeld compared divorces to nonmarital breakups, in an effort to understand the driving forces behind each type of breakup.
>
> To investigate, he looked at data from the 2009 to 2015 waves of How Couples Meet and Stay Together, a nationally representative survey spearheaded by Rosenfeld and his colleagues. The new study includes 2,262 adults, ages 19 to 64, who reported having opposite-sex partners in 2009. By 2015, 371 of the participants had broken up or gotten divorced.

> Women initiated 69 percent of the 92 divorces, Rosenfeld found. But there was no statistically significant difference between women and men when it came to nonmarital breakups, regardless of whether they were living together, he said.

The Ruth Institute reports on a few studies:

> Female unions seem to have the highest divorce rates, followed by male unions, followed by opposite sex unions.
>
> "For Sweden, the divorce risk for partnerships of men is 50% higher than the risk for heterosexual marriages, and that **the divorce risk for female partnerships is nearly double that for men."**
>
> "For Norway, **divorce risks are 77% higher in lesbian partnerships than in those of gay men."** (The Norwegian data did not include a comparison with opposite sex couples.)
>
> In California, the data is collected a little differently. The study looks at couples who describe themselves as partners, whether same sex or opposite sex. The study asks the question, how likely is it that these couples live in the same household five years later. **Male couples were only 30% as likely, while female couples were less that 25% as likely, as heterosexual married couples, to be residing in the same household for five years.**

It really seems as if there is something about women in particular that causes them to be unable to keep to commitments *in their actions*, despite what they might say *with their words*.

So I am seeing a couple of problems in young, unmarried women that might explain this.

Feminism is bad

First, there is the feminism. Feminism was the driving force behind no-fault divorce. Today, young unmarried women are being taught to view marriage as stifling to their freedom. So if they do get married, they are often resolved that marriage should not affect their freedom in any way. That is just not the way marriage works, though – both spouses need to be equally ready to have their freedom infringed upon by things that HAVE TO GET DONE. Lots of things that have to get done will not be fun, thrilling or amusing – and that's why it's good to be prepared to do them before you marry.

My friend Dina says that she only knows one happily married couple from among her friends. The most frequent case she sees is wife is working in order to pay for big house, two cars, etc. and wife is denying husband sex, which makes him disengage from the marriage. A working wife tends to not be as responsive to the needs of husband and kids as a non-working wife, probably in part due to work stress. There is an epidemic of sex-withholding by women, and it causes men to disengage from marriage because they feel unloved. Although women tend to rebel against the idea that the man's bad behavior is their fault, and that there is a "contractual" nature to marriage, that is how marriage works. You cannot stay married, women, by just doing whatever you feel like, and NOT

doing whatever you DON’T feel like. Men will disengage when their needs are not supplied, and that’s no fault of theirs. It’s your fault. Denying relationship obligations causes men to underperform.

Feminism is often linked closely to “independence”. There is a lot of confusion over what the word independence means among young, unmarried women. A man uses that word to mean “lack of financial dependence on parents, the state, etc. because of good decisions in education, career and finances”. But a woman means “not having to care about the needs of a man and the leadership of a man, or the needs of children while still getting what I want from men and children”. That attitude is not compatible with life-long married love.

Emotions are bad

Second, emotions. In my experience, young, unmarried women are less likely to have reasoned out their own life plan in a practical step-by-step manner. Instead, they tend to do whatever makes them feel good moment-by-moment without any realistic plan. One Christian woman was recently telling me how attracted she was to an atheist moral relativist who had been promiscuous from the age of 15. She explained that her emotions were kindled by his GQ looks, 6-pack abs, mysterious European accent, seductive manner and witty conversations. Although she is apparently a Christian, she doesn’t take Christianity seriously in her decisions about relationships and marriage.

Peer-approval and culture play a large part in determining what women think is attractive in a man, as well as their life goals, and women are driven by these cultural standards more than men who focus on honoring their commitments *regardless* of their emotions. In my experience, women struggle to make their day-to-day actions match their socially-acceptable goal of getting married “some day”. Marriage is for “some day” for today’s busy women, but fun and thrills is for today. “Live in the moment”, they often tell me. If you try to talk to them about roles and responsibilities in a marriage, they will withdraw and rebel. But marriage is about each spouse doing his or her job, and feeling content about what the couple is building together. You can’t make life-long married love from emotional craziness and pursuing fun and thrills with seductive promiscuous moral relativist atheists.

How to pick a woman who won’t divorce you

Young men, I advise you to choose wives who have had to do things that they did not feel like doing. That can involve things like getting a STEM degree, getting a job in STEM, moving out of her parents’ house, getting a “boring” job that helps her pay off her debts, keeping commitments when she doesn’t feel like it, and caring for other people and even animals.

Basically, the more the woman has ground down any narcissism and hedonism she may have, by having to do nasty calculus and horrid lab work, the better. The more accustomed she is to constraints, responsibilities, expectations and obligations, the less likely it is that she’ll divorce you for unhappiness. And all of this goes for men, as well. STEM degree, STEM job, save money, serve others, give to charity.

Marriage is not the time for people to be carried away by their emotions. It’s an enterprise, and it works when both people are rational, practical, hard-working and self-controlled.

Debunked: study claiming shorter lifespans for gays caused by discrimination

December 5, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

In the New York Post, Naomi Schaefer Riley writes about a study used by gay activists to bully those who disagree with their agenda.

She writes:

> The headlines were unsparing and unambiguous. "Anti-gay Stigma Shortens Lives," wrote US News & World Report.
>
> "Anti-Gay Communities Linked to Shorter Lives," said Reuters. "LGB Individuals Living in Anti-Gay Communities Die Early," according to Science Daily.
>
> Two years ago, these stories were hard to ignore when Columbia professor Mark Hatzenbuehler found that gays and lesbians who faced prejudice in their communities had a life expectancy 12 years shorter than those who lived in more accepting areas. Just so we're clear, that's bigger than the lifespan gap between regular smokers and nonsmokers.
>
> We always knew prejudice was bad, but an Ivy League researcher had found that there were significant effects on the physical health of those experiencing it.
>
> But where, one might wonder, were the headlines when another researcher tried to replicate Hatzenbuehler's effects and came up empty?
>
> Last month, Mark Regnerus, a professor at UT Austin, published an article in the journal Social Science and Medicine that concluded that "ten different approaches to multiple imputation of missing data yielded none in which the effect of structural stigma on the mortality of sexual minorities was statistically significant."

> **In other words, Regnerus tried seven — er, 10 — ways from Sunday to try to get the same results as Hatzenbuehler using the exact same data, but failed. Which means, he concluded, that "the original study's . . . variable (and hence its key result) is so sensitive to subjective measurement decisions as to be rendered unreliable."**

This isn't the first time that a study authored by a gay activist has run into evidential problems.

That story was reported in the far-left Politico.

They say:

> One of the authors of a recent study that claimed that short conversations with gay people could change minds on same-sex marriage has retracted it.
>
> Columbia University political science professor Donald Green's retraction this week of a popular article published in the December issue of the academic journal Science follows revelations that his co-author allegedly faked data for the study, "When contact changes minds: An experiment on transmission of support of gay marriage."
>
> […]**The study received widespread coverage from The New York Times, Vox, The Huffington Post, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal and others when it was released in December.**

The equally leftist Washington Post is even more forceful – calling the data a complete fake.

Excerpt:

> […]…**[W]hat really happened was that the data were faked by first author LaCour.** Co-author Green (my colleague at Columbia) had taken his collaborator's data on faith; once he found out, he firmly retracted the article.
>
> Ironically, **LaCour benefited (in the short term) by his strategy of completely faking it.** If he'd done the usual strategy of taking real data and stretching out the interpretation, I and others would've been all over him for overinterpreting his results, garden of forking paths, etc. But, by doing the Big Lie, he bypassed all those statistical concerns.

But the real issue is whether the negative health (and mental health) outcomes of homosexuality can be attributed to the lifestyle itself. The gay activists want you to believe that disagreement with their choices causes the negative effects. But the science shows the opposite: even in countries where there is no "stigma" against homosexuality, the unhealthy physical and mental outcomes persist.

Life Site News reports.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> While many assume that family rejection is the leading cause of depression

> among LBGTI individuals, a new study has found that in fact the problem appears to stem predominantly from the higher incidence of relationship problems among homosexuals.
>
> Dr. Delaney Skerrett led a team of researchers from the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP) in studying suicides in Queensland. He found that a leading cause of suicide among “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex” (LGBTI) people is stress from their romantic partners.
>
> “We tend to assume that the psychological distress LGBTI people are often going through is due to family rejection. But it seems that’s not so much the case. The conflict seems to be largely related to relationship problems, with partners,” Dr. Skerrett said.
>
> […][T]he study, which was published on April 2 in *Asia Pacific Psychiatry*, found that “LGBT individuals experienced relationship problems more often” than heterosexuals, “with relationship conflict also being more frequent than in non-LGBT cases.”
>
> That confirms previous studies finding that homosexuals also face higher rates of intimate partner violence than heterosexuals. A 2007 study in the *Journal of Urban Health*, which is published by the New York Academy of Medicine, found that 32 percent of homosexuals have been abused by at least one partner during their lifetime.
>
> The researchers with AISRAP also found that a higher percentage of homosexuals took their lives [out] of despondency, rather than other psychological illnesses. While one-eighth of all Queensland suicide victims had been diagnosed with a psychosis that impaired their judgment, Skerrett reports “there were no such diagnoses among LGBT individuals.” The conclusion adds to the consensus that depression disproportionately besets active homosexuals.

Maybe the problem is with the person who is making the bad decisions, and not with the people who disagree with the bad decisions?

Daughter of senior EU official raped and murdered by Afghan refugee

December 6, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Maria Ladenburger, daughter of prominent EU official, killed by Afghan refugee

The UK Daily Mail has the story about a tragic rape and murder that resulted directly from Angela Merkel's open-borders immigration policy in Germany.

Excerpt:

> A teenage Afghan asylum seeker has been arrested in Germany for the rape and murder of the 19-year-old daughter of a senior EU official.
>
> Medical student Maria Ladenburger, who volunteered at a refugee home in her spare time, was found dead in the university city of Freiburg, near the border with Switzerland in mid October.
>
> Her father is Dr. Clemens Ladenburger, a lawyer who works as the right hand man to the legal director of the European Commission.
>
> It is unclear whether she ever met her murderer before he took her life.
>
> The suspect has confessed to the murder, according to police. He was arrested on Friday and will go before the courts next year.
>
> Maria was drowned after being raped, her body found in the River Dreisam on October 16.
>
> […]David Müller, head of the police's Special Commission, said at a press conference: 'Through interviews and a web-based survey, we were able to reconstruct Maria's final hours.
>
> **'The 19-year-old student had been at a party. By 2.37am, she left the**

> **party. Maria then cycled home, as usual.**
>
> 'The young woman had been the victim of a sexual offence and a violent crime.'
>
> […]Police are now trying to establish if he may also be responsible for the death of another girl in the area.
>
> Carolin G., 27, was raped and murdered at the beginning of November while jogging in Endinge, just 18 miles away from Freiburg.

My parents would have killed me if I had been out at 2:37 AM in the morning, much less leaving a party. I've never even BEEN to a party filled with 19-year-olds. When I was 19, I was learning computer science and working two jobs.

Anyway, some people tell me that illegal immigrants and refugees from Muslim countries don't commit crimes at a rate higher than other people. Is that true?

Breitbart News has the numbers from the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

Excerpt:

> While illegal immigrants account for about 3.5 percent of the U.S population, they represented 36.7 percent of federal sentences in FY 2014 following criminal convictions, according to U.S. Sentencing Commission data obtained by Breitbart News.
>
> According to FY 2014 USSC data, of 74,911 sentencing cases, citizens accounted for 43,479 (or 58.0 percent), illegal immigrants accounted for 27,505 (or 36.7 percent), legal immigrants made up 3,017 (or 4.0 percent), and the remainder (about 1 percent) were cases in which the offender was either extradited or had an unknown status.
>
> Broken down by some of the primary offenses, illegal immigrants represented 16.8 percent of drug trafficking cases, 20.0 percent of kidnapping/hostage taking, 74.1 percent of drug possession, 12.3 percent of money laundering, and 12.0 percent of murder convictions.

Now a lot of those convictions will be related to immigration… what happens when we take those out?

The sentencing rate is still higher than normal:

> **Eliminating all immigration violations, illegal immigrants would account for 13.6 percent of all the offenders sentenced in FY14 following federal criminal convictions — still greater than the 3.5 percent of the population illegal immigrants are said to make up.**

I don't like it when supporters of open borders and taking in refugees make pious statements in public so they can feel good about themselves. I think that they being generous with other people's money, taking risks with other people's lives. So often, politicians love to be generous with illegal immigrants and Muslim refugees. But they don't pay the taxes for the education, health care, and increased law enforcement.

Private sector employers and their workers pay those taxes.

I am very much in favor of expanding and streamlining immigration processes for skilled immigrants, especially for areas where there is more demand than supply. But I am not in favor of letting in refugees or other unskilled immigrants, especially if they will be eligible to collect benefits paid for by other working taxpayers.

The Daily Signal explains what the cost is:

> On average, a nonelderly adult immigrant without a high school diploma entering the U.S. will create a net fiscal cost (benefits received will exceed taxes paid) in both the current generation and second generation. The average net present value of the fiscal cost of such an immigrant is estimated at $231,000, a cost that must be paid by U.S. taxpayers.
>
> […]Converting a net present value figure into future outlays requires information on the exact distribution of costs over time. That data is not provided by the National Academies.
>
> However, a rough estimate of the future net outlays to be paid by taxpayers (in constant 2012 dollars) for immigrants without a high school diploma appears to be around $640,000 per immigrant over 75 years. The average fiscal loss is around $7,551 per year (in constant 2012 dollars).
>
> Slightly more than 4 million adult immigrants without a high school diploma have entered the U.S. since 2000 and continue to reside here. According to the estimates in the National Academies report, the net present value of the future fiscal costs of those immigrants is $920 billion.

I think we need to draw a distinction between giving voluntarily to charity, and having money forcibly taken by a secular government to give to people whose votes they want to buy. Charity is Biblical. Taxing one group in order to buy the votes of others is socialism.

You can’t be “generous” by forcing a secular government to tax others to pay for your “generosity”. You can’t be “generous” by allowing innocent people to be raped and murdered for your “generosity”.

New study: women who have fewer premarital sex partners have lower risk of divorce

December 7, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

Consider this article from Family Studies that talks about how the number of pre-marital sex partners that a woman has increases her risk of divorce.

It says:

> American sexual behavior is much different than it used to be. Today, most Americans think premarital sex is okay, and will have three or more sexual partners before marrying. What, if anything, does premarital sex have to do with marital stability?
>
> This research brief shows that the relationship between divorce and the number of sexual partners women have prior to marriage is complex. I explore this relationship using data from the three most recent waves of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) collected in 2002, 2006-2010, and 2011-2013. For women marrying since the start of the new millennium:
>
> - Women with 10 or more partners were *the most likely* to divorce, but this only became true in recent years;
> - Women with 3-9 partners were *less likely* to divorce than women with 2 partners; and,
> - Women with 0-1 partners were the *least likely* to divorce.
>
> Earlier research found that having multiple sex partners prior to marriage could lead to less happy marriages, and often increased the odds of divorce.
>
> […]Even more noteworthy has been the decline in the proportion of women who get married having had only one sex partner (in most cases, their future

> husbands). Forty-three percent of women had just one premarital sex partner in the 1970s.
>
> […]By the 2010s, only 5 percent of new brides were virgins. At the other end of the distribution, the number of future wives who had ten or more sex partners increased from 2 percent in the 1970s to 14 percent in the 2000s, and then to 18 percent in the 2010s. Overall, American women are far more likely to have had multiple premarital sex partners in recent years (unfortunately, the NSFG doesn't have full data on men's premarital sexual behavior, and in any event they recall their own marital histories less reliably than do women).

Here's the change:

Table 1: The Distribution of Women's Premarital Sex Partners, by Marriage Cohort					
	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
0 partner	21%	17%	14%	12%	5%
1 partner	43%	36%	26%	21%	22%
2 partners	16%	15%	13%	13%	12%
3 partners	8%	11%	11%	11%	11%
4-5 partners	6%	12%	16%	17%	18%
6-9 partners	4%	5%	11%	13%	14%
10+ partners	2%	4%	10%	14%	18%
total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	268	1,921	4,312	3,598	273

Women have freely chosen to dismiss the Bible and the moral law

And the problem with this, of course, is that more premarital sex partners means a higher risk of divorce:

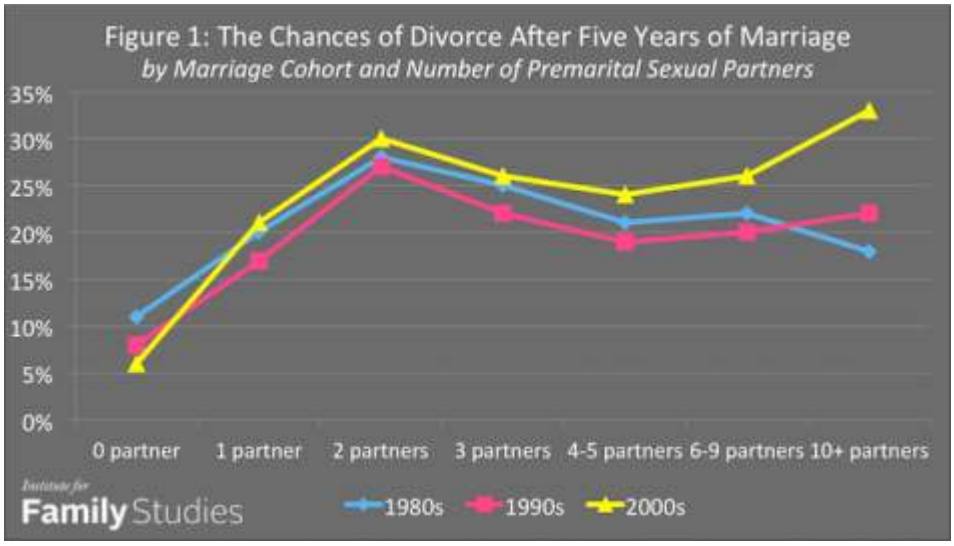

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

Why is the 2-partner number so high?

> In most cases, a woman's two premarital sex partners include her future husband and one other man. That second sex partner is first-hand proof of a sexual alternative to one's husband. These sexual experiences convince women that sex outside of wedlock is indeed a possibility. The man involved was likely to have become a partner in the course of a serious relationship—women inclined to hook up will have had more than two premarital partners—thereby emphasizing the

> seriousness of the alternative.

The Christian Post had an article about some recent numbers from the Centers for Disease Control about virgins.

Excerpt:

> A new Centers for Disease Control study examines teenage health behaviors in connection to their self-reported sexual activity and shows those who remain abstinent are much healthier on many fronts than their sexually active peers.
>
> The report, titled "Sexual Identity, Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12, United States and Selected Sites," showcased the results from a 2015 survey that monitored several categories of health-related behaviors like tobacco usage, drug and alcohol use, sexual habits, unhealthy dietary behaviors, and behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence.
>
> The report concludes "that students who had no sexual contact have a much lower prevalance of most health-risk behaviors compared with students" who had sexual contact.

The article quotes Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, who I have featured on this blog many times:

> In a Monday interview with The Christian Post, Jennifer Roback Morse, founder and president of the Ruth Institute, said, "this study is remarkable because it asks questions and reports the answers, rather than avoiding questions or assuming answers."
>
> As Glenn Stanton noted last week in The Federalist, the results from those questions and answers are remarkable.
>
> With regard to smoking, teenage virgins are 3,300 percent less likely to smoke daily than their peers who are sexually involved with someone of the opposite sex, Stanton computed from the report's data. Teen virgins are 9,500 percent less likely to smoke daily than their peers who are sexually involved with someone of the same sex or in a bisexual relationship, he added. Chaste young people are also extremely less likely to use indoor tanning beds, binge drink, smoke marijuana, ride in cars as passengers with a drunk driver, and get into physical fights than their sexually active peers. Abstinent youth are also more likely to get a solid eight hours of sleep every night and eat breakfast daily.
>
> […]The CDC report also included findings from 25 state surveys, and 19 large, urban school district surveys conducted among students in grades 9–12 which took place between December of 2014 and September of 2015.

Now, many pro traditional marriage people will tell young men "feminism and the sexual revolution change nothing about a woman's suitability for marriage, so go out there and get married to these women anyway". In my experience, no one is telling women NOT to

follow their hearts, and explaining to them the harm that they do by allowing their feelings to determine who they will engage in relationships.

I would like to see women make better decisions with men before they marry, rather than be influenced by their peers and culture to give themselves to men who are not marriage-minded. Maybe a little skepticism should be shown to “follow your heart”? Women need to understand what they are losing when they choose to have premarital sex.

In my group of friends, the men are aware of the Biblical prohibition on premarital sex. My friends know about the research on marriage, and what it takes to make a marriage work. We don’t follow our hearts, because we do what we know will work to achieve the results we want. We don’t listen to the culture, and we don’t listen to radical feminists. Men generally take an engineering approach to marriage – we want to know what the best practices and tradeoffs are, and then we plan and act to succeed.

Are all sins equally bad? Or are there degrees of severity for different sins?

December 8, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

This week, a conservative Christian lady named Mandy asked me about this view that "all sins are equal". We both agreed that it was wrong, because the Bible says so.

But I went ahead and looked up some evidence for her from different sites.

Here's what Ligonier said:

> It's clear that we have different degrees of sin when we consider the warnings of Scripture. There are at least twenty-two references in the New Testament to degrees of rewards that are given to the saints in heaven. There are different levels, different rewards, and different roles in heaven. The Bible warns us against adding to the severity of our judgment. Jesus said to Pontius Pilate, "He who delivered me over to you has the greater sin" (John 19:11). Jesus measures and evaluates guilt, and with the greater guilt and greater responsibility comes the greater judgment. It's a motif that permeates the New Testament.
>
> The idea of gradation of sin and reward is based upon God's justice. If I commit twice as many sins as another person, justice demands that the punishment fits the crime. If I've been twice as virtuous as another person, justice demands that I get more of a reward. God tells us that entrance into heaven will be only on the basis of the merit of Christ, but once we get to heaven, rewards will be dispensed according to works. Those who have been abundant in good works will receive an abundant reward. Those who have been derelict and negligent in good works will have a small reward in heaven. By the same token, those who have been

> grievous enemies of God will have severe torments in hell. Those who have been less hostile will have a lesser punishment at the hands of God. He is perfectly just, and when He judges, He will take into account all of the extenuating circumstances. Jesus said, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak" (Matt. 12:36).

I thought it was ironic that, earlier this very week, my friend Dina sent me a sermon where that exact passage (John 19) was brought up by the pastor.

I think the correct position is that *any sin* is enough to separate you from God, but some sins are more severe than others in God's objective standard of right and wrong.

OK, that was fine and good, but then I noticed a few days later that Michael Krueger had also blogged about this "all sin are equal" view, too. I think it was a tweet from Sean McDowell that mentioned it.

Krueger says this:

> First, to say all sins are the same is to confuse the *effect* of sin with the *heinousness* of sin. While all sins are equal in their effect (they separate us from God), they are not all equally heinous.
>
> Second, the Bible differentiates between sins. Some sins are more severe in terms of impact (1 Cor 6:18), in terms of culpability (Rom 1:21-32), and in terms of the judgment warranted (2 Pet 2:17; Mark 9:42; James 3:1).

Even more Bible references, so we're not on the wrong track.

So then why do some people insist that all sins are equal? It turns out that it is coming from the secular ideal of *non-judgmentalism*.

Krueger explains:

> We should begin by observing that this phrase does not come from Scripture. People do not use it because it appears in the Bible. Why then do they use it?
>
> One reason, as noted above, is that some Christians use this phrase to uphold the seriousness of sin. It is viewed as a way to remind people not to be dismissive about their sin or regard it is a triviality.
>
> Others use this phrase as way to "flatten out" all sins so that they are not distinguishable from each other. Or, to put it another way, this phrase is used to portray all human beings as precisely the same. If all sins are equal, and all people sin, then no one is more holy than anyone else.
>
> In a world fascinated with "equality," this usage of the phrase is particularly attractive to folks. It allows everyone to be lumped together into a single undifferentiated mass.
>
> Such a move is also useful as a way to prevent particular behaviors from being condemned. If all sins are equal, and everyone is a sinner, then you are not allowed to highlight any particular sin (or sinner).

> Needless to say, this usage of the phrase has featured largely in the recent cultural debates over issues like homosexuality. Yes, homosexuality is a sin, some Christians reluctantly concede. But, they argue, all sins are equal in God's sight and therefore it is no different than anything else. Therefore, Christians ought to stop talking about homosexuality unless they are also willing to talk about impatience, anger, gluttony, and so on.

Krueger also posted this fascinating follow up post, where he looks at how the phrase is being used by people on Twitter.

Look at these tweets:

- All sins are equal. People tend to forget that. There is no bigger or smaller sin. Being gay and lying, very equal.
- all sins are equal in God's eyes. whatever you're doing, is no better than what someone else is doing.
- If you have sex before marriage please don't come on social media preaching about the wrongs of homosexuality. All sins are equal
- Need people to realize that all sins are equal… don't try to look down on me or question my faith just cuz you sin differently than I do.
- Don't understand why you're so quick to judge me, when all sins are equal. So much for family..
- if you think being gay is a sin, let me ask you something, have you not done anything wrong in your life? all sins are equal. we're sinners
- Nope no difference at all. All sins are equal no matter what you're running for. The bible says do not judge lest ye be judged
- A huge problem I have with religion is the notion that all sins are equal. Like pre-martial sex and murder are the same amount t of bad.
- people do bad things because they believe that all sins are equal and ~god~ loves y'all equally so he's going to forgive you naman ha ha ha
- It a sin to condemn another sinner and their actions. All sins are equal. So what makes you better than the person you're condemning?
- I think so b/c having sex before marriage doesn't make you less of a women then if you waited until marriage.. all sins are equal soo
- friendly reminder, all sins are equal in gods eyes so you're not better than I

> am in any way. please worry about your own sins before mine.

- People don't like when I suggest abortion as an option. This is a free country and all sins are equal so mind your business!!!

- What I do is no worse than wat you do… all sins are equal no matter what it is… a sin is a sin

- to god all sins are equal so you have no right to compare your sins to someone else's bc in the end it doesn't matter

The first thing that I noticed is that premarital sex and homosexuality are the most popular sins. I would think that divorce and abortion would be up there in the rankings, as well. The second thing I noticed is that the majority of these tweets were from women.

Something strange has happened in our society such that more and more people want to be led by their feelings, rather than be bounded by rules or standards. When people get caught breaking moral rules, rather than be accountable, they attack the person judging them. They would rather escape the judgment of their peers than admit fault and try to fix the mistake, and do better next time. It's so bad now, that the people who *have* morals and who *make* moral judgments are seen as the real bad people. The immoral people are on the offense, and even trying to ban people from being able to disagree with them. We're seeing that with people who are being attacked for defending natural marriage against divorce and redefinition of marriage. In France, they want to make speech critical of abortion a criminal offense. And in Canada, they want to make speech critical of the gay agenda a criminal offense. (It's already a human rights tribunal offense)

What is even more interesting is when the people who push the "don't judge me" line try to justify it from the Bible! And even claim to be Christians! I think the moral of the story is that not everyone who claims to be a Christian really has a Christian worldview. I wish someone had told me that early on!

New study: being raised by married parents has huge positive effect on economic well-being

December 9, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Here's some of the findings from the Institute for Family Studies.

Excerpt:

> Wilcox and Lerhman found that growing up in a two-parent family correlated with many positive outcomes for kids, well into adulthood. For example:
>
> - Growing up with both parents reduced the probability for dropping out of high school by 15 percent for men and 9 percent for women.
> - Growing up in an intact family reduced women's chances of becoming single mothers by 12 percent and men's chances of being nonresidential fathers by 5 percent.
> - Both men and women who grew up in intact families enjoyed substantial marriage premiums. Young men who grew up in intact families earned, on average, more than $6,500 more in personal income and more than $16,000 more in family income than their peers who grew up in single-parent families. Young women from intact families earn more than $4,700 in personal income and more than $12,000 more than their peers from single-parent families.
> - Growing up with both parents also increased young adults chances of marrying themselves. Men who grew up in intact homes were 10 percent more likely to get married than their peers who grew up in single-parent families. Women who grew up in intact homes were 12 percent more likely

> to marry.
>
> Individuals who grow up in intact homes are more likely to marry and once they do, they are the recipients of a host of benefits associated with being married.
>
> - Married men age 28–30 earn nearly $16,000 more, on average, than their single peers. Their family income is nearly $22,000 higher than their single peers. And the marriage premium for men extends to less-educated and minority men who are often at a disadvantage in the work force. Married young men with only high-school educations, for example, earned more than $17,000 more than their single peers.

I don't like to blog about these things without solutions. I have some of my own (school choice, abstinence education funding, repeal no-fault divorce, defund Planned Parenthood, double the child tax credit for married couples, provide a carry forward tax credit to each married parent for ALL income earned by children before age 21, etc.).

But the new study has some solutions too:

> Wilcox and Lehrman do make recommendations for strengthening lower and middle-class families. They recommend eliminating marriage penalties from the tax code, while increasing the child credit and the earned income credit maximum. They also recommend improving vocational training and launching a national campaign that encourages young adults to follow the "success sequence": education, job, marriage, children.

I think a lot of kids of my generation should be reading studies like this and wondering "what did the party of premarital sex, no-fault divorce, abortion and gay rights do for me?". If your political party embraces policies that encourage people to see sex as recreational instead of a way of producing creatures who then become the responsibilities of parents, you are in the wrong political party. The Democrat party is the part of selfishness, and that's why they attack marriage. Marriage is about restraining adults so that children benefit, and every selfish Democrat policy that damages marriage damages children.

As Dennis Prager says:

> Even today, after decades of feminism, most Americans agree that it is better for women and men — and society — when women and men marry. Yet when women marry, it is bad for the Democratic Party; and when women do not marry, even after — or shall we say, especially after — having children, it is quite wonderful for the Democratic Party.
>
> Married women vote Republican. Unmarried women lopsidedly vote Democrat. It is both silly and dishonest to deny that it is in the Democrats' interest that women not marry.

They have no reason to strengthen marriage, and their policies (sex education, no-fault

divorce, single mother welfare, gay marriage, etc.) don’t strengthen marriage. It sounds like such a nice thing to want to not shame people for premarital sex and divorce. After all, we want people to feel good no matter what they choose, right? But there is a price to pay for this “tolerance” of adult selfishness – it’s paid by their children. That’s what happens when we put feelings about moral boundaries.

A lesson about men for marriage-minded women from the movie “High Noon”

December 10, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marine prays with his wife on their wedding day

One of my favorite movies for explaining the differences between men and women is “High Noon” (1952).

Here’s the summary from IMDB:

> Former marshal Will Kane (Gary Cooper) is preparing to leave the small town of Hadleyville, New Mexico, with his new bride, Amy (Grace Kelly), when he learns that local criminal Frank Miller has been set free and is coming to seek revenge on the marshal who turned him in. When he starts recruiting deputies to fight Miller, Kane is discouraged to find that the people of Hadleyville turn cowardly when the time comes for a showdown, and he must face Miller and his cronies alone.

The main theme of the film concerns Amy’s decision to break her wedding vows the very day that she makes them. She tells her new husband that he must bow to her will, and give up his male role as protector. When he explains his reasons for standing his ground to her practically (Miller will hunt them down) and morally (he has a duty protect the town), she dismisses both. She tells him that if he doesn’t run away from Miller and his gang with her, that she will get on the train and leave town by herself.

The intro of film shows the member’s of Miller’s gang assembling, and the words of the song explain the central conflict between husband and wife:

Here's the part of the lyrics we care about:

The noonday train will bring Frank Miller.
If I'm a man I must be brave
And I must face that deadly killer
Or lie a coward, a craven coward,
Or lie a coward in my grave.

O to be torn 'twixt love and duty!
S'posin' I lose my fair-haired beauty!
Look at that big hand move along
Nearin' high noon.

He made a vow while in State's Prison,
Vow'd it would be my life or his'n
I'm not afraid of death, but O,
What will I do if you leave me?

Do not forsake me O my darlin'
You made that promise when we wed.
Do not forsake me O my darlin'
Although you're grievin', I can't be leavin'
Until I shoot Frank Miller dead.

What's interesting is that his new wife Amy apparently does not understand the meaning of wedding vows or the natural roles of good men as protectors of the weak, and fighters against evil. Although she vowed to stick by him and help him, the minute anything threatening appears that makes her feel unhappy, she abandons her vows and abandons her man. Let's break down her mistakes now, using actual conversations from the movie.

First, she doesn't understand or respect the man she married *as a man*:

> **Kane**: *[while riding out of town]* It's no good. I've got to go back, Amy.
>
> **Amy**: Why?
>
> **Kane**: This is crazy. I haven't even got any guns.
>
> **Amy**: Then let's go on. Hurry.
>
> **Kane**: No, that's what I've been thinkin'. They're making me run. I've never run from anybody before.
>
> **Amy**: I don't understand any of this.
>
> **Kane**: *[after looking at his vest watch]* Well, I haven't got time to tell ya.
>
> **Amy**: Then don't go back, Will.
>
> **Kane**: I've got to. That's the whole thing. *[He turns the buggy around and rides back into town]*

Her feelings and her desires for the world to be a happy place for her are so strong that they cloud her judgment.

Second, she doesn't understand the threat posed by evil men:

More:

> **Kane:** I sent a man up five years ago for murder. He was supposed to hang. But up North, they commuted it to life and now he's free. I don't know how. Anyway, it looks like he's coming back.
>
> **Amy:** I still don't understand.
>
> **Kane:** He was always wild and kind of crazy. He'll probably make trouble.
>
> **Amy:** But that's no concern of yours, not anymore.
>
> **Kane:** I'm the one who sent him up.
>
> **Amy:** Well, that was part of your job. That's finished now. They've got a new marshal.
>
> **Kane:** He won't be here until tomorrow. Seems to me I've got to stay. Anyway, I'm the same man with or without this. [He pins his badge on his vest]
>
> **Amy:** Oh, that isn't so.
>
> **Kane:** I expect he'll come lookin' for me. Three of his old bunch are waiting at the depot.
>
> **Amy:** That's exactly why we ought to go.
>
> **Kane:** They'll just come after us, four of 'em, and we'd be all alone on the prairie.
>
> **Amy:** We've got an hour.
>
> **Kane:** What's an hour?…What's a hundred miles? We'd never be able to keep that store, Amy. They'd come after us and we'd have to run again, as long as we live.
>
> **Amy:** No we wouldn't, not if they didn't know where to find us. Oh Will! Will, I'm begging you, please let's go.
>
> **Kane:** I can't.
>
> **Amy:** Don't try to be a hero. You don't have to be a hero, not for me.
>
> **Kane:** I'm not trying to be a hero. If you think I like this, you're crazy.

Instead of recognizing how her feelings are deceiving her about the threat and trusting her husband, she tries to force him to accept her mistaken view of reality by threatening to abandon him.

One of Kane's ex-girlfriends has a talk with Amy, which helps her to understand who Kane is, and what is expected of her:

> **Amy**: That man downstairs, the clerk, he said things about you and Will. I've been trying to understand why he wouldn't go with me, and now all I can think of is that it's got to be because of you…Let him go, he still has a chance. Let him go.
>
> **Helen**: He isn't staying for me. I haven't spoken to him for a year – until today. I

> am leaving on the same train you are…What kind of woman are you? How can you leave him like this? Does the sound of guns frighten you that much?
>
> **Amy**: I've heard guns. My father and my brother were killed by guns. They were on the right side but that didn't help them any when the shooting started. My brother was nineteen. I watched him die. That's when I became a Quaker. I don't care who's right or who's wrong. There's got to be some better way for people to live. Will knows how I feel about it.
>
> **Helen**: I hate this town. I always hated it – to be a Mexican woman in a town like this.
>
> **Amy**: I understand.
>
> **Helen**: You do? That's good. I don't understand you. No matter what you say. If Kane was my man, I'd never leave him like this. I'd get a gun. I'd fight.
>
> **Amy**: Why don't you?
>
> **Helen**: He is not my man. He's yours.

Helen understands the need for a wife to stand by her man. But Amy's response to evil is to shut her eyes and focus on feeling good and being happy. Notice that her "better way" is unspecified – it's just a feeling she has that pacificism and no-violence will somehow "work" to stop evil. But in reality, pacifism is not a "better way" of dealing with evil – it does not work. Her pacifist response not only does not make evil go away, it actually encourages more evil. Weakness emboldens evildoers, and laying down your arms provokes them to do more evil. Will Kane knows this, but she won't listen to him.

You can watch the final gunfight here, as well as Amy's final decision:

So, this is why I really recommend this movie as a discussion-starter when you like a girl and are thinking of marrying her. It clarifies the essential problem with many young women today not being ready for marriage. To be fair, most women come around to respect their husbands and his different roles after they get married. However, the risk of divorce is so dangerous that it makes sense to bring it up for discussion before the marriage happens. Marriage is supposed to be an engine to serve God, and the success of that enterprise cannot be left to chance. You can't just rely on the fact that she says the words of the vow, you have to check to see if she has a habit of keeping her promises when it goes against her own self-interest.

Ask yourself: Who are you, as a man? And does your woman accept that you have obligations to stand up to evil and do good ? Will she support you in your battle against evil, or will the marriage just be about her feelings and desires? I would especially beware of women who think that God is speaking to them through their feelings and desires. Look at her friends: are they practical and successful? Or are they irresponsible, unaccountable and reckless? Look at her father: does he have a plan for her, and does he lead her to be practical, frugal and hard-working? If you are not going to get an ally and a supporter in a wife, then you will not be able to serve God well, as a married man. Think about it.

Should we expect to know what God’s reason is for allowing evil and suffering?

December 11, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Here is an article by Steven Cowan about the problems of evil and suffering.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude.

Now let’s find out what a noseeum is, and how it relates to the existence of evil and suffering:

> However, perhaps God’s existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God’s existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By “pointless evil,” Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe’s argument may be simply stated as follows:
>
> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that

> there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the "noseeum inference." Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a "noseeum" is something that you cannot see—it is a "no-see-um." And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I "no-see-um" a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

In that example, the planet is the noseeum. Just because you look really hard, you can't be confident that the planet is not there. And similarly with the problem of evil and suffering, looking really hard and finding no reason does not mean that there is no reason. It just means that you are not in a good position to see the reason. You don't know enough to to be sure that there is no reason, because of your limitations as a human being.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous. (You can get the PDF here)

According to the paper, human beings just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a noseeum. To know for sure that there is no reason, we would need to have more knowledge than we do.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

The *best* place to learn more about no-see-ums is in this excellent lecture by Biola University professor Doug Geivett.

Teacher fired for stating pro-life views that “triggered” pro-abortion student

December 12, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

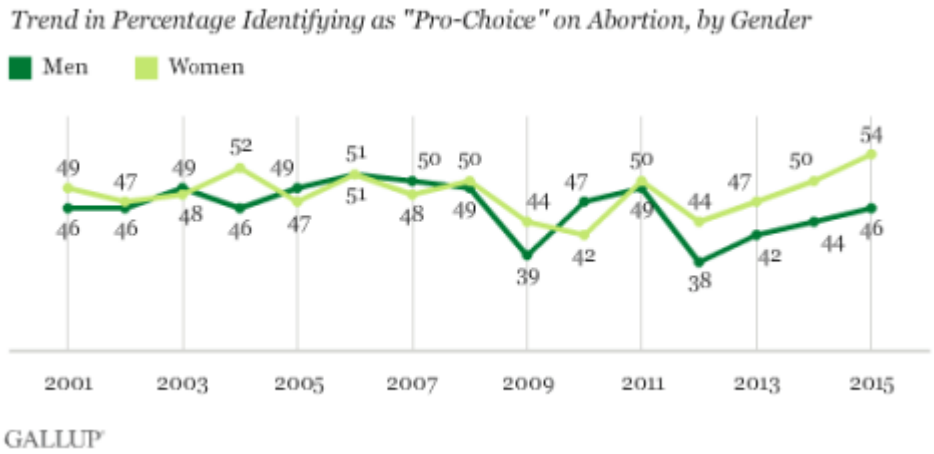

Women are more liberal on abortion than men

Wow, this is like my worst nightmare of what a liberal co-worker could do to me, if I ever expressed my views directly.

Canada’s national newspaper, the National Post, reports:

> A teacher at a posh private school in British Columbia was fired last month after making an innocuous comment about abortion to his Grade 12 law class.
>
> […]The 44-year-old teacher, who has asked that he not be identified to protect what’s left of his career, was teaching “the criminal law unit, a lesson on vice, ethics, morality and the law” to his small class in the Vancouver-area school in late November.“I was working my way through examples of how some people’s sense of personal ethics was more liberal than the letter of the law,” he said in an email.
>
> For example, he told them, many people might roll through a stop sign on a deserted country road, deeming it morally acceptable, even if unlawful.
>
> In other words, he said, in a pluralistic democracy, there’s often “a difference between people’s private morality and the law.
>
> “I find abortion to be wrong,” he said, as another illustration of this gap, “but the law is often different from our personal opinions.”
>
> That was it, the teacher said. “It was just a quick exemplar, nothing more. And we moved on.”
>
> **A little later, the class had a five-minute break, and when it resumed, several students didn’t return, among them a popular young woman who had gone to an administrator to complain that what the teacher said had “triggered” her such that she felt “unsafe” and that, in any case, he had no right to an opinion on the subject of abortion because**

he was a man.

[…]What happened to the teacher over the ensuing few days sounds like something out of the Cultural Revolution in Mao's China, where people were subjected to what were known as ideological struggle sessions, forced to "confess" to various imagined sins before large crowds, and roundly denounced.

Immediately after the student complained to the administrator, the teenager came, with a teacher at her side as support, to confront him in a public area of the school.

She pressed for an apology, but the teacher resisted, because, he said, it would set a dangerous precedent for a teacher to be reamed out in the presence of a colleague.

"When I didn't show contrition," he said, "I was summoned upstairs and grilled by two administrators who told me my job was on the line."

Now panicking — he has a family to support and had just recently returned to teaching after several years in business with a relative — he apologized profusely and promised to apologize the next day to the offended student.

Instead, the school had an administrator take over the class for a day, whereupon, he was told, they would all discuss what went wrong in his absence. He would be invited back to "hear the grievances and offer an apology. It was clear I must do this successfully or I would be terminated."

He repeatedly asked what he'd done wrong or if there was an allegation of misconduct.

"The answer I got back was that I was recognized as an outstanding teacher, but student 'safety' was the school's primary concern."

With the discussion now scheduled for the following day, the teacher, near to melting down with apprehension and disbelief, went to a walk-in clinic and asked for tranquillizers.

The discussion was postponed another day, and after "white-knuckling" it through his other classes, it came time for the law class.

It was exactly the horror show he'd imagined: His boss sat among a crowd of students, ran through a list of what had gone wrong and "what I needed to do to change." While most students appeared to be on his side, the offended girl was still furious.

He apologized specifically to her, but then made what was apparently a fatal error: He said he liked her, that she was a bright and engaging student, and said he'd told her father just that at a recent parent-teacher night.

She stormed out of the class in tears, and he was again castigated by his

> superiors, this time for having been "too personal" in his apologia.
>
> On Nov. 30, he showed up at the school, was retrieved by an administrator and taken to the "head" of school, the private school equivalent of a principal.
>
> He was told he "could no longer continue in the classroom," and was offered a short-term medical disability top-up for employment insurance.
>
> He was then escorted down the hall and off the premises.

In a more recent news article in the National Post, the school is named:

> Fraser Academy, the expensive Vancouver private school where last month a teacher was fired after making allegedly "triggering" remarks to a Grade 12 law class, has put its staff under a gag order.

I guess I have to react to this personally. I have seen things like this happen before, not just in the education system, nor even in the public sector, but in the private sector. It has caused me to have a very firm and convinced prejudice against people on the secular left, namely, that they are so intolerant and bigoted that they literally cannot be approached openly. It's a short step from getting someone fired for disagreeing with you (i.e. – destroying their career and starving their family) to further acts of depravity, like false accusations, fake hate crimes, death threats, vandalism, violence and even domestic terrorism. And the secular left is doing *a lot* of that lately. You have to be a special kind of narcissistic sociopath to get someone fired just for disagreeing with you – and that's what the liberal education system is turning out *in droves.*

Where do these kinds of students come from? Well, it turns out that the education system is chock full of teachers and administrators who are intent on undermining judgments against immorality.

Consider the architect of Ontario's sex education curriculum:

> Ben Levin, the man who "appeared to have it all," was today sentenced to three years in prison for three child pornography offences.
>
> […]The once-tenured professor at Ontario's Institute for Studies in Education had a "hidden, dark side" in a "depraved on-line world" as a "deviant mentor" who made "insidious attempts to normalize the sexual exploitation of children," McArthur noted in her 23-page reasons for sentence.
>
> […]A member of Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne's transition team, Levin was deputy minister of education in 2009 when he and then-minister of education Wynne developed the "equity and inclusive education strategy," part of which was the 2010 radical sex-ed curriculum shelved by then-Premier Dalton McGuinty after parental backlash. The 2015 sex-ed curriculum is virtually the same as the 2010 version.
>
> […]Levin himself claimed in a 2010 interview: "I was the deputy minister of education. In that role, I was the chief civil servant. I was responsible for the operation of the Ministry of Education and everything that they do; I was brought

> in to implement the new education policy."
>
> […]Levin pled guilty on March 3, 2015, to three of an original seven child pornography related charges.

Many people go into the education system to normalize immoral behavior, and naturally they teach students to feel offended at any sort of judging of their immorality.
The promotion of non-judgmentalism flows from people who do immoral things and who don't want to feel bad about it. Many people who become teachers and administrators do so with the goal of causing students to become offended by those who make moral judgments. 50 years ago, you could expect teachers and administrators to side with the teacher who expressed the pro-life views. But today, many teachers and administrators would side with the offended student. I suspect that they share her hatred of disagreement and disapproval because they are hiding something in their own private lives, and they just hate anyone who makes moral judgments.

I really hope that this story of the pro-life student and the fired teacher will help you to learn to predict the rage you will be subject to should you ever disagree with secular leftists in the slightest way. For your own safety, you need to assume that teachers and administrators are immoral psychopaths, even if not all of them are. And this is especially true of public schools. Never state your views where secular leftists can overhear. And understand that this is going to keep going – the next generation is going to be even less sane and less moral, not to mention less employable. It is going to keep going until government money that subsidizes (and normalizes) reckless immoral liberal lifestyles runs out.

William Lane Craig and atheist Daniel Dennett discuss cosmology and fine-tuning

December 13, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Bf 109 locked in a dogfight

Here is audio of a very interesting exchange between William Lane Craig and leading atheist Daniel Dennett.

This audio records a part of the Greer-Heard debate in 2007, between prominent atheist Daniel Dennett and lame theistic evolutionist Alister McGrath. Craig was one of the respondents, and this was the best part of the event. It is a little bit advanced, but I have found that if you listen to things like this over and over with your friends and family, and then try to explain it to non-Christians, you'll get it.

By the way, this is mostly original material from Craig, dated 2007, and he delivers the speech perfectly, so it's entertaining to listen to.

Craig presents three arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe:

- the contingency argument
- the kalam cosmological argument
- the teleological argument

He also discusses Dennett's published responses to these arguments, and that's what I want to focus on, since most of you are already familiar with Craig's philosophical arguments for the existence of God.

Dennett's response to Craig's paper

Here is my snarky paraphrase of Dennett's reponse: (this is very snarky, because Dennett was just awful)

- Craig's three arguments are bulletproof, the premises are plausible, and grounded by the best cutting edge science we know today.
- I cannot find anything wrong with his arguments right now, but maybe later when I go home it will come to me what's wrong with them.
- But atheism is true even if all the evidence is against it today. I know it's true by my blind faith.
- The world is so mysterious, and all the science of today will be overturned tomorrow so that atheism will be rational again. I have blind faith that this new evidence will be discovered any minute.
- Just because the cause of the beginning of time is eternal and the cause of the beginning of space is non-physical, the cause doesn't have to be God.
- "Maybe the cause of the universe is the idea of an apple, or the square root of 7". (HE LITERALLY SAID THAT!)
- The principle of triangulation might have brought the entire physical universe into being out of nothing.
- I don't understand anything about non-physical causation, even though I cannot even speak meaningful sentences unless I have a non-physical mind that is causing my body to emit the meaningful sentences in a non-determined manner.
- Alexander Vilenkin is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- Alan Guth is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- This science stuff is so complicated to me – so Craig can't be right about it even though he's published about it and debated it all with the best atheists on the planet.
- If God is outside of time, then this is just deism, not theism. (This part is correct, but Craig believes that God enters into time at the moment of creation – so that it is not a deistic God)
- If deism is true, then I can still be an atheist, because a Creator and Designer of the universe is compatible with atheism.
- I'm pretty sure that Craig doesn't have any good arguments that can argue for Christianity – certainly not an historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus based on minimal facts, that he's defended against the most prominent historians on the planet in public debates and in prestigous books and research journals.

This is a very careful treatment of the arguments that Dr. Craig goes over briefly during his debates. Recommended.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information

- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Republican governor of Ohio signs bill banning abortions when babies feel pain

December 14, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and my sneaky plan worked perfectly! Excellent! Wow, I'm so shocked and surprised by this – John Kasich is barely a Republican.

Life News reports:

> Today, Governor John Kasich signed the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (Sub. S.B. 127), landmark legislation which would ban late-term abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy. And, citing concerns it would be overturned in court, Kasich vetoed a ban on all abortions after the heart of an unborn baby begins to beat.
>
> "I agree with Ohio Right to Life and other leading, pro-life advocates that SB 127 (a 20-week ban) is the best, most legally sound and sustainable approach to protecting the sanctity of human life," Kasich said in a statement.
>
> Because the heartbeat-based abortion ban will not likely survive a legal challenge in court, pro-life legislators approved the 20-week abortion ban with the hope of saving as many babies as possible under Roe v. Wade.

Why is this "20-week" legislation important? It's important because when the national news media cover this law, they are going to put the focus where it belongs – *on the unborn baby*:

> "On behalf of Ohio Right to Life and our statewide members, we sincerely thank

> Governor Kasich for his unwavering support for the unborn and our pro-life mission. By signing S.B. 127, the 20-week ban, Governor Kasich will save hundreds of unborn lives each year and he positioned the state of Ohio to directly challenge *Roe v. Wade*," it told LifeNews. "The 20-week ban was nationally designed to be the vehicle to end abortion in America. It challenges the current national abortion standard and properly moves the legal needle from viability to the baby's ability to feel pain."

The incremental approach is realistic, and effective. In no way is the pro-life movement required to settle for this victory, either. They will take down the pro-abortion status quo one piece at a time if they have to.

So what about that premise – unborn babies feeling pain at 20 weeks. Is it really true?

Yes – this is another case where the science is all on the side of the Team Pro-Life:

> One leading expert in the field of fetal pain, Dr. Kanwaljeet S. Anand at the University of Tennessee, stated in his expert report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice, "It is my opinion that the human fetus possesses the ability to experience pain from 20 weeks of gestation, if not earlier, and the pain perceived by a fetus is possibly more intense than that perceived by term newborns or older children."
>
> "The neural pathways are present for pain to be experienced quite early by unborn babies," explains Steven Calvin, M.D., perinatologist, chair of the Program in Human Rights Medicine, University of Minnesota, where he teaches obstetrics.

Indeed, that's why the line is set at 20 weeks, and now we can ask the Democrats why they want to hurt babies. That's what this is really about. I have lived a long time on this planet, and I have never, ever hurt a baby. It's not hard, you just avoid getting drunk, and chose relationships based on reason instead of feelings. Then you will never be in a position where you are tempted to hurt a baby to preserve your own happiness.

Here's what a baby is like at 20 weeks:

> You are 20 weeks pregnant. (fetal age 18 weeks)
>
> - Baby now weighs about 11 ounces and is roughly 7 inches long.
> - Baby is 17 cm long crown to rump, and weighs about 310 grams.
> - The baby can hear and recognize the mother's voice.
> - The mother will probably start feeling the first fetal movements.
> - The toenails and fingernails are growing.
> - The growth of hair on the rest of the body has started.
> - The skin is getting thicker.
> - The heart can now be heard with a stethoscope.
>
> Your baby may react to loud sounds. Baby can actually hear noises outside of the womb. Familiar voices, music, and sounds that baby becomes accustomed to

> during their development stages often are calming after birth. This is an important time for sensory development since nerve cells serving each of the senses; taste, smell, hearing, sight, and touch are now developing into their specialized area of the brain.
>
> Your baby now weighs about 11 ounces and at roughly 7 inches long they are filling up more and more of the womb. Though still small and fragile, the baby is growing rapidly and could possibly survive if born at this stage.

I understand why Democrats would vote to allow abortions on unborn children at this age. The abortionists make money off of these procedures, and they make more money off of the sale of organs, sometimes cut from babies who are still alive. Some of that money makes it's way back to the Democrats in the form of political contributions. It's similar to the way that slavers made money off of slaves… except they didn't torture the slaves and cut the organs out of them to sell. I guess someone standing in a slave plantation might have said to a slaver "you can't do that, they can feel pain". And Republicans are standing outside abortion clinics and saying "you can't do that, they can feel pain". But in both cases, the slavers and the abortionists are *making money* from their barbarism. So it doesn't make a difference to them whether they unborn can feel pain. The important thing to them is that they are *making money*. And the money being made by abortionists makes its way into the coffers of Democrat politicians running for re-election. This is working as designed, according to Democrats.

Just for completeness, I must mention that even the radically leftist New York Times admits that unborn children are viable at 22 weeks. Democrats are not in favor of limits on abortion at *any number of weeks*. And the later the better, as far as they're concerned – more developed babies have parts that can be sold for big money.

Atheist gets her PhD in astronomy and astrophysics and finds evidence for God

December 15, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Christian apologist Terrell Clemmons tweeted this testimony by Sarah Salviander, a research scientist in astronomy and astrophysics at the prestigious University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Salviander writes:

> I was born in the U.S., but grew up in Canada. My parents were socialists and political activists who thought British Columbia would be a better place for us to live, since it had the only socialist government in North America at the time. My parents were also atheists, though they eschewed that label in favor of "agnostic." They were kind, loving, and moral, but religion played no part in my life. Instead, my childhood revolved around education, particularly science. I remember how important it was to my parents that my brother and I did well in school.

I just want to point out that I hope that all you Christian parents are taking seriously the obligation to make your kids do well in school, because even if they start out as atheists when they are young, they can still find their way back to God through study, as Sarah did.

She had a bad start, that's for sure:

> I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, a time when science fiction was enjoying a renaissance, thanks largely to the popularity of *Star Wars*. I remember how fascinated I was by the original *Star Wars* trilogy. It had almost nothing to do with

> science—it's more properly characterized as space opera—but it got me thinking about space in a big way. I also loved the original *Star Trek*, which was more science fiction. The stoic and logical character of Mr. Spock was particularly appealing to me. Popular science was also experiencing a renaissance at that time, which had a lot to do with Carl Sagan's television show, *Cosmos*, which I adored. The combination of these influences led to such an intense wonder about outer space and the universe, that by the time I was nine years old I knew I would be a space scientist someday.
>
> Canada was already post-Christian by the 1970s, so I grew up with no religion. In retrospect, it's amazing that for the first 25 years of my life, I met only three people who identified as Christian. My view of Christianity was negative from an early age, and by the time I was in my twenties, I was actively hostile toward Christianity. Looking back, I realized a lot of this was the unconscious absorption of the general hostility toward Christianity that is common in places like Canada and Europe; my hostility certainly wasn't based on actually knowing anything about Christianity. I had come to believe that Christianity made people weak and foolish; I thought it was philosophically trivial. I was ignorant not only of the Bible, but also of the deep philosophy of Christianity and the scientific discoveries that shed new light on the origins of the universe and life on Earth.

She documents a phase of following Ayn Rand and embracing "Objectivism", but eventually she rejects it for failing to answer the big questions of life.

More:

> I began to focus all of my energy on my studies, and became very dedicated to my physics and math courses. I joined campus clubs, started to make friends, and, for the first time in my life, I was meeting Christians. They weren't like Objectivists—they were joyous and content. And, they were smart, too. I **was astonished to find that my physics professors, whom I admired, were Christian. Their personal example began to have an influence on me, and I found myself growing less hostile to Christianity.**

This is why I think it is so important for Christian parents to raise their children to get advanced degrees… either to become professors themselves, or to finance others (e.g. – our own children) to do advanced degrees. It is so important for university students to see Christian professors on campus. And failing that, it's important that we bring Christian speakers in to debate non-Christian speakers on the important issues. This will not happen unless we recognize how important it is, and then make a plan to achieve it.

More:

> **I had joined a group in the Center for Astrophysics and Space Sciences (CASS) that was researching evidence for the big bang. The cosmic background radiation—the leftover radiation from the big bang—provides the strongest evidence for the theory, but cosmologists**

> **need other, independent lines of evidence to confirm it. My group was studying deuterium abundances in the early universe. Deuterium is an isotope of hydrogen, and its abundance in the early universe is sensitive to the amount of ordinary mass contained in the entire universe. Believe it or not, this one measurement tells us whether the big bang model is correct.**
>
> **If anyone is interested in how this works, I'll describe it, but for now I'll spare you the gruesome details. Suffice it to say that an amazing convergence of physical properties is necessary in order to study deuterium abundances in the early universe, and yet this convergence is exactly what we get. I remember being astounded by this, blown away, completely and utterly awed. It seemed incredible to me that there was a way to find the answer to this question we had about the universe. In fact, it seems that every question we have about the universe is answerable. There's no reason it has to be this way, and it made me think of Einstein's observation that the most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it's comprehensible. I started to sense an underlying order to the universe. Without knowing it, I was awakening to what Psalm 19 tells us so clearly, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."**
>
> That summer, I'd picked up a copy of T*he Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas and was reading it in my off hours. Previous to this, I'd only known it as an exciting story of revenge, since that's what the countless movie and TV adaptations always focused on. But it's more than just a revenge story, it's a philosophically deep examination of forgiveness and God's role in giving justice. I was surprised by this, and was starting to realize that the concept of God and religion was not as philosophically trivial as I had thought.
>
> All of this culminated one day, as I was walking across that beautiful La Jolla campus. I stopped in my tracks when it hit me—I believed in God! I was so happy; it was like a weight had been lifted from my heart. I realized that most of the pain I'd experienced in my life was of my own making, but that God had used it to make me wiser and more compassionate. It was a great relief to discover that there was a reason for suffering, and that it was because God was loving and just. God could not be perfectly just unless I—just like everyone else—was made to suffer for the bad things I'd done.

The Count of Monte Cristo is one of my favorite, favorite books as well, and had the same impact on me as it did on her.

OK, that's enough for this post. Go read the rest, and please share it. This woman is an expert Christian apologist and her life will have an influence. Are you going to be like her? Will you mentor others to be like her? Will you marry someone like her? Will you raise children who are like her (which is my plan)? We really need everyone to pull their

weight now, because everywhere you look, the truth of Christianity is under attack.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
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- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Facebook enlists left-wing Politifact and Snopes to censor news critical of Democrats

December 16, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Why do people think that CNN are biased leftist clowns?
First, the story from The Daily Signal. Then, we'll see examples of how Facebook's censorship allies are biased against conservatives.

Daily Signal:

> Facebook announced Thursday an aggressive plan to combat so-called "fake news," giving users more power to report hoaxes and empowering fact-checking outlets as arbiters.
>
> […]Facebook is working with outside fact-checking organizations accredited by Poynter's International Fact Checking Network to help it determine what content is fake. They include ABC News, FactCheck.org, PolitiFact, and Snopes—all of which have been accused of liberal bias in the past.
>
> "We'll use the reports from our community, along with other signals, to send stories to these organizations," Mosseri wrote. "If the fact checking organizations identify a story as fake, it will get flagged as disputed and there will be a link to the corresponding article explaining why. Stories that have been disputed will also appear lower in News Feed."
>
> By putting these stories lower in the News Feed—the page you see when you log in—Facebook is reducing the likelihood that its users will see the content, and therefore, less likely to share it. But even in cases when they do see it, a "warning" will appear noting that the story has been disputed. These "flagged" stories can't be promoted with an ad.

Yes, the same ABC News that employs for Clinton hatchet man George Stephanopolous. That's who will be doing the "fact checking". An example of a "fake news" site, by the way, is The Daily Wire, which is run by Harvard Law graduate Ben Shapiro.

Let's look at another far-left Facebook partner: Politifact. Politifact is just a group of journalists from the Tampa Bay Times newspaper.

Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine, writes about Politifact's assessment of Obama's promise to Americans about keeping their health plans after Obamacare.

2008 PolitiFact before the election: 'We rate his statement True'

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site's "Truth-O-Meter" to evaluate this claim: "Under Barack Obama's health

> care proposal, 'if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.'" The article assures us in its headline that "Obama's plan expands [the] existing system," and continues that "Obama is accurately describing his health care plan here…It remains to be seen whether Obama's plan will actually be able to achieve the cost savings it promises for the health care system. But people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama's plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his statement True."
>
> […]As per PolitiFact's usual M.O., Holan didn't seek out any skeptical health-policy experts to suss out the veracity of Senator Obama's signature claim. Instead, its sources included Jonathan Cohn, a passionate Obamacare supporter at *The New Republic*, and various interviews and statements of Mr. Obama. Holan simply took the "keep your plan" promise at face value, dismissing as dishonest anyone who dared suggest that Obama's claim would be impossible to keep. "His opponents have attacked his plan as 'government-run' health care," she wrote, the scare-quotes around "government-run" being visible to all.
>
> PolitiFact's pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 campaign.

Here's the screen capture from 2008:

Politifact caught with its pants on fire

Before the election, it's true! And Obama got re-elected, because people believed that. But what happened after the election?

2013 PolitiFact after the election: 'We rate his statement Pants On Fire'

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama's infamous promise—that "if you like your health care plan, you can keep it"—its 2013 "Lie of the Year."
>
> […]On November 4, Jacobson rated as "Pants on Fire" the President's new claim that "what we said was, you can keep [your plan] if it hasn't changed since the

> law passed." Both pieces were edited by Angie Drobnic Holan, who had initially granted PolitiFact's seal of approval to Senator Obama's 2008 promise. Holan delivered the *coup de grâce*, declaring as PolitiFact's "Lie of the Year" the "keep your plan" promise.
>
> "The promise was impossible to keep," says Holan in her December piece. Now she tells us! But none of the key facts that made that promise "impossible" in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President's plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan
Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."
Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."
Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact says: we were just kidding! Kidding!
So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, but it's election time so they don't say that. It's not like the critical assessments of Obamacare from health policy experts were not out there between 2007-2012. It's just that the liberal journalism-major bloggers at Politifact couldn't be bothered to read them.

What about Snopes? Maybe Snopes is more reliable than Politifact?

The Daily Caller explains:

> Snopes' main political fact-checker is a writer named Kim Lacapria. Before writing for Snopes, Lacapria wrote for Inquisitr, a blog that — oddly enough — is known for publishing fake quotes and even downright hoaxes as much as anything else.
>
> […]She described herself as "openly left-leaning" and a liberal. She trashed the Tea Party as "teahadists." She called Bill Clinton "one of our greatest" presidents. She claimed that conservatives only criticized Lena Dunham's comparison of voting to sex because they "fear female agency."
>
> […]Lacapria — in another "fact check" article — argued Hillary Clinton hadn't included Benghazi at all in her infamous "we didn't lose a single person in Libya" gaffe. Lacapria claimed Clinton only meant to refer to the 2011 invasion of Libya

> (but not the 2012 Benghazi attack) but offered little fact-based evidence to support her claim.
>
> After the Orlando terror attack, Lacapria claimed that just because Omar Mateen was a registered Democrat with an active voter registration statusdidn't mean he was actually a Democrat. Her "fact check" argued that he might "have chosen a random political affiliation when he initially registered."

Snopes is just spin for Democrat gaffes – playing defense for the DNC.

Can we verify that Snopes actually lies in order to defend Democrats. Well, yes –right here. Snopes lied about American flags being present throughout the first day of the 2016 Democrat convention.

It's groups like these who are being relied upon to spot "fake news" for Facebook. When you are on Facebook, it's important to understand that it is a web site run by Democrats, for the benefit of Democrats. There is no balance. There is no critical thinking. The simple fact of the matter is that many fake news stories are pushed by the leftist mainstream media, and ignored by the leftist "fact checkers". Here's one recent example of how that works.

Dennis Prager: the feminization of America harms the whole world

December 17, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: “Godspeed” by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

A while back, I wrote a post that I really enjoyed writing about the movie High Noon. In it, I talked about the conflict between Marshal Will Kane and his new wife. He wanted to stay and protect his home town against outlaws who are coming to kill him and raze the town. His new wife cannot understand why he has to stand and fight, she wants him to run away with her. In the end, she helps him to defeat the outlaws, saving his life.

That post was inspired by something I heard Dennis Prager talking about on his radio show. He was talking about a survey of boys and girls done by the toy company Mattel. Well, I wanted to blog about his comments, so I ended up writing the High Noon post. But then Dina found an article about the Mattel survey on National Review. I think this is one of the wisest and most perceptive articles I have ever read, and it will really help you to understand what has happened in the last 50 years to this country.

Prager writes:

> Last week the *New York Times* published an article, “Sweeping Away Gender-Specific Toys and Labels,” that contained three sentences that explain one of the most important phenomena in American life. In discussing the increasing move to do away with gender-specific toys — something the *New York Times* approves of — the article quoted Tania Missad, the “director of global consumer insights” at one of the world’s largest toy manufacturers, Mattel:

> **Mattel's research showed some differences in what girls and boys wanted in their action figures, Ms. Missad said. "For boys it's very much about telling a story of the good guy killing the villain. . . . [Girls] would tell us: 'Why does the good girl have to kill the villain? Can't they be friends in the end?'"**

Prager comments on the part in red:

> This difference may be the most important of all the sex differences. Indeed, it can actually shape the future of America and of the world.
>
> Of course, there are women who want evil destroyed — the late Margaret Thatcher, for example. And there are men who oppose confronting evil — the men who lead the modern Democratic party, for example. (One such man is the president of the United States, who has a feminized view of those who do evil — talk to them, but don't confront them, label them, or fight them.) But these exceptions happen in large numbers under two circumstances: when women get married and when men are feminized.
>
> When women get married, they are often influenced by their husbands with regard to political and moral issues, just as married men are influenced by their wives on a whole host of micro issues. As a result, married women are more likely than single women to prefer to fight villains than to befriend them. Unfortunately, more and more American women are single.
>
> **Meanwhile American boys are increasingly raised by single women and taught almost only by female teachers. In addition, they are often taught to be ashamed of their masculine natures and to reject traditional masculine virtues.**
>
> As a result of the above two trends, the amount spent on national defense will continue to decline (while the amount spent on welfare will continue to increase), and America will confront the world's evils less and less. The consequences will be disastrous for millions of people around the globe.
>
> When America retreats from killing bad guys, bad guys kill more innocent people. We are witnessing this right now as a consequence of America's abandoning Iraq and retreating from the world generally. Islamic State took over more and more territories as America abandoned them. Ironically, therefore, as American foreign policy becomes feminized, more Middle East females are raped.
>
> Whenever I see on a car the liberal bumper sticker "War Is Not the Answer," I look to see who is driving. In years of looking, I have seen one male driver.
>
> Both women and men have flawed natures. They share human nature, which is deeply flawed, and the sexes have their own particular natures, which are also flawed. That is one reason men need women and women need men. Men need women to soften their intrinsic aggressive nature and to help them control their predatory sexuality; and women need men to, among other things, better

> understand that evil people and regimes must be fought, not nurtured.

So, there is something in male nature that thinks that it is acceptable to use violence as a last resort in order to defeat evil. Evil might be things like criminals, terrorists… even wolves and bears, if they attacked innocent people.

So what are the solutions?

Here's what we should do:

- We should stop paying women money to have children before they are married, so that boys have fathers to raise them who have made a commitment before they got handed free sex.
- We should rollback no-fault divorce, which leads to fatherless children. People should be less emotional about who they marry, and not think "there's an escape hatch if I feel unhappy".
- We should try to get more male teachers into classrooms, and maybe allow parents to pull boys out of failing schools and put them into all-male schools if they think those work better.
- We should try to vote for policies that empower law enforcement, national security, and our armed forces to detect, attack and defeat evil. For example, we invest in defense spending, and avoid undermining the morale of police and armed forces with political correctness.

I guess the list could be longer, but that's a start for the issues that Prager raised.

We need to work against the forces that demean male nature and male roles, and work to promote male nature and male roles.

Alistair Begg preaches on practicality and initiative in the story of Ruth

December 18, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

I finished listening to Alistair Begg's series on Esther, and I'm now on to his series on Ruth. Sermon #3 stood out to me, because it touches on the important issues of free will vs determinism as well as the two methods of seeking God's will: mysticism vs wisdom.

The discussion centers around Ruth's decision to go to the barley fields to work, in order to get something to eat.

The MP3 file is here.

Here is the description:

> When we're facing a future devoid of prospects or possibilities, it's easy to become overwhelmed and discouraged. Ruth could relate. She was a penniless widow in a foreign land seeking a way to provide for herself and her widowed mother-in-law. Her future was totally dependent upon someone showing her unmerited grace and favor. Instead of giving up, she gives us an example of humility, initiative and faith as she seeks work and sustenance.

As things in the world spin out of control, it's important to remember that you must always have a plan and be working on that plan. Even when things look very bleak, you have to do something reasonable and practical, and then pray to God for "favor". That God will do something unexpected that will make your reasonable action bear unexpected fruit.

If you want to listen to sermons #1 and sermon #2 in the series on Ruth, you can find the

whole series here. So far, I have listened to 5. The first two were also very good, so if you listen to the first 3, you will definitely benefit. Each one is 35 to 40 minutes.

Before you marry, have enough money saved to keep your kids out of public schools

December 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Women react to Clinton loss

My friend William shared this excellent article from The Federalist, which talks about how public schools, under the influence of Common Core, are exposing children to pornography in order to advance a leftist culture agenda. The article has the stories of several heroic mothers who stood up to the school system and got the pornographic materials removed. Let's look at one of them, and then I'll comment on how public school administrators and teachers should be viewed, then I'll comment on the issue of financing these public schools, then I'll talk about planning for schooling of your children.

Excerpt:

> In 2012, Lebanon, Oregon, mother of two Macey France began studying the nationwide implementation of Common Core. While looking through a document titled "Common Core Appendix B" that contained reading exemplars, Macey found the book, "The Bluest Eye" listed as an example of appropriate assigned literature for eleventh- and twelfth-grade students.*
>
> France, a contributor to the website PolitiChicks, took to her keyboard and typed up a scathing condemnation of the book as not high-school appropriate, including quotes directly from the book, such as:

I am not putting pornographic excerpts from public school books on this blog, duh.

We continue:

> As a result, her article "Common Core-Approved Child Pornography" was viewed and shared hundreds of thousands of times and Macey was nominated for a

> CPAC blogger award for Best Sunlight Post of 2013.
>
> "This is when I first became a 'target' for the progressives who support public education and minimize parental rights," said France, who had a hard time understanding how her well-researched, truthful article could make her the target of the kind of emotional, hateful rhetoric she experienced. It frustrated her to be personally attacked for wanting to protect her kids. It also frustrated her to find many parents who weren't concerned about their teens reading "The Bluest Eye" because they believed school officials knew more about what was best for their children than they did.
>
> "I was called names, accused of being backwards, racist [Toni Morrison is a black woman], ignorant, a flat-earther, and even received private messages on Facebook telling me how hateful I was," France said. "I was first introduced to the phrase 'white privilege.' At one point, I was called Hitler. I was misunderstood and accused of wanting to ban and burn books [even though] I went out of my way to convey that I am *not* an advocate for banning literature. I am a *huge* parental rights advocate. I got the distinct impression I was not supposed to question the manner in which they [educators] related to my kids."

My problem with public school is not that education school graduates are selecting high brow reading material that is above me. I love Shakespeare and Spenser and Dickens and Austen and other classical writers. The problem I have with public schools is that some of the teachers, and most of the administrators, have this agenda to break down traditional morality and sexualize children at earlier and earlier ages. This is part of the secular progressive agenda – they know that sexualizing children makes them less likely to become conservative, less likely to marry, less likely to have children who are raised by a mom and dad, and who are therefore more resistant to the will of the secular leftist government.

Public schools are leftist indoctrination seminaries

A good example of how this works can be found in the province of Ontario, Canada. There, the Liberal Party government is led by a lesbian woman who left her husband and children to move in with her lover. The Liberal Party decided to re-write the education curriculum so that it would be more in line with their supporters in the Sexual Revolution crowd, e.g. -secularists, LGBT activists, abortion providers, etc. And so, they hired a convicted child pornographer to re-write the curriculum. They didn't see the public school's priority as teaching children how to get the skills needed to find jobs that pay. They wanted the public schools to make children non-judgmental about the immoral behaviors of the selfish adults.

It's very important for parents to understand that people don't just find themselves in education programs and then in public schools by accident. Sometimes they are in there because they couldn't find real work in the private sector. Sometimes they are there because they want to indoctrinate your kids with their left-wing ideology. You can't assume that the people in public schools want to partner with you to pass on prudent and

practical Judeo-Christian wisdom to your children. The public school monopoly attracts those who are looking for job security and insulation from the disapproval of their customers. It's true that some teachers are there to educate students so they have useful skills in order to find good jobs. But in my experience, many of teachers aren't, and most of the administrators aren't.

Note: private school teachers and administrators have to compete with other schools, so they are sensitive to meeting the needs of parents. At least you have a choice about where you send your kids, so they have to care what you want for your kids, and how much you are able to pay.

Don't vote for bigger government if you value quality education

So how do these public schools get their funding? Well, it's simple. They appeal to voters by saying that the more they spend on public schools, the more children will learn. This actually works on voters who don't bother to familiarize themselves with the facts:

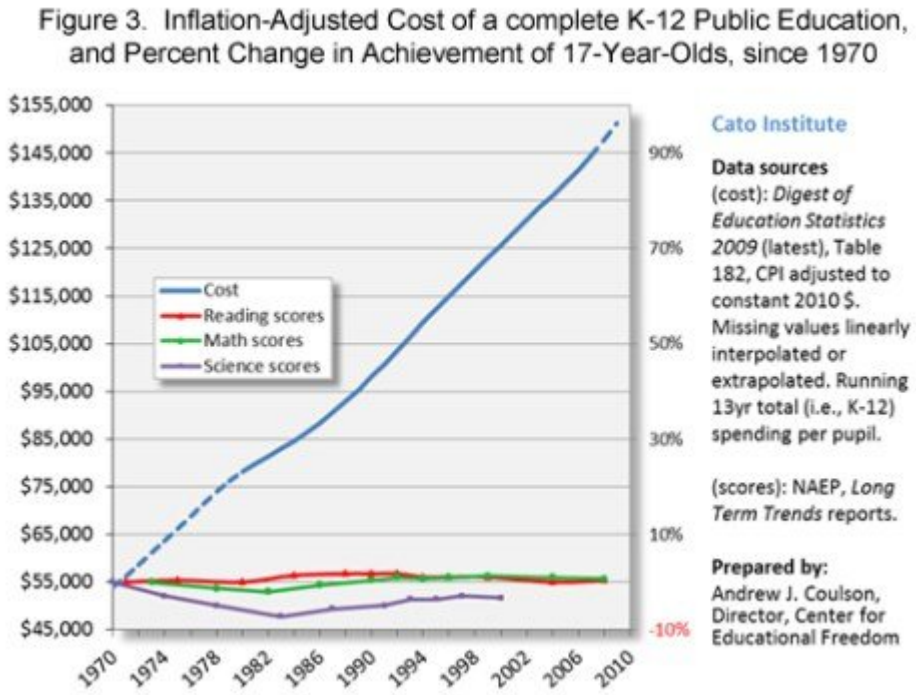

Education spending has tripled since 1970

The truth is that parents who want children to do well should always vote for smaller government, lower taxes, and the pushing down of decision-making in education policy to the state and local level. We shouldn't be swayed by "it's for the children" rhetoric, because throwing more money at the problem only gives us more sexual revolution indoctrination and more gay rights agenda. Most of the new money goes to administrators anyway – not to the teachers in the classrooms. You might think that the public schools are there to help your children to get a job, but that's not what they public school administrators think they are there for.

Getting married? Make a plan to provide for your kids' education

One final point. I am finding myself surrounded by male Christian apologists who want to get married, and who are not interested in being providers. They've spend their entire 20s in school as students, they've taken money from their parents, they've never worked

a day in their lives, they have outstanding student loans, they have no savings, and yet they all talk to women they like about marriage. My view is that Christian men should not be allowed to talk to women – even to ask them the time of day or for directions – until they have a STEM degree, 2 years of private sector work experience, all debts paid off, a car and some savings. And why not? Well, for reasons like this article on the public schools.

The public schools are what they are, and Christian parents cannot rely on them to educate our kids. If a man is talking about marriage without having taken steps to get a STEM degree, STEM private sector work history, and an investment account that is added to every month, then he has no business talking to a woman about marriage. He has to be able to show her that he is serious about providing the children with homeschooling or a private school education. How parents plan to educate their kids is a major issue in marriage – it affects whether the children will be effective and influential, or not. A woman should not trust the promises of any man who has not taken practical steps in the past to prepare for the needs of his children in the future. She cannot accept intentions and promises that make her feel good, she has to see evidence of his ability to put aside his ambitions in order to provide for her and the children – that is his obligation as a man (1 Tim 5:8). A man who wants marriage should prepare *well in advance* for it by having a career that will allow him to earn and save so that his wife and children will not be threatened in their worldview more than they can bear. If he has to give up some student stuff and some ministry stuff in order to prepare for husband / father responsibilities, then he should do that – before the wedding day.

Obama’s weak Syria foreign policy produced the catastrophe of Aleppo

December 19, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neville Chamberlain Obama: peace in our time

We elected a stupid man who doesn’t know how the world works. Although you would never know it from the mainstream media, Obama’s 8-year reign of error has been one foreign policy blunder after another. The retreat from Iraq, which created ISIS. The non-response to Russian aggression in Georgia and Ukraine. The disastrous interventions in Libya and Egypt. The deal to give Iran piles of cash to develop nuclear weapons. And his failure to react quickly to the Syrian crisis. Across the world it has been one failure after another, for 8 years in a row.

Here is the latest news from the far-left Washington Post:

> THE BATTLE for Aleppo is ending in catastrophe, both for the tens of thousands of people who have been besieged there and for the future of Syria. On Wednesday, Syrian government and Iranian-led Shiite militia forces renewed attacks on the last rebel-held streets of the city, shredding a promiseto allow a peaceful evacuation. According to the United Nations, the pro-government forces have been executing civilians in the street or in their homes — including, on Monday, at least 11 women and 13 children. Thousands of men have been rounded up and gang-pressed into the Syrian army, or dispatched to an unknown but likely terrible fate. The United Nations’ term for this nightmare was apt: “A complete meltdown of humanity.”

> The meltdown has several dimensions. One is the utter disrespect for the laws of war by the regime of Bashar al-Assad and its Russian and Iranian allies. These forces systematically destroyed hospitals, including pediatric facilities; decimated civilian housing with bunker-buster bombs and chlorine gas; and refused to allow food or humanitarian aid of any kind into the besieged districts of the city. Aleppo represents "the death of respect for international law and the rules of war," David Miliband, the former British foreign secretary who now heads the International Rescue Committee, was quoted as saying . It sets a horrific precedent for conflicts in the 21st century.
>
> The fall of Aleppo also means the elimination of any prospect in the foreseeable future for the end of Syria's war or the waves of refugees and international terrorism it is generating.

Who is to blame for this?

The far-left Washington Post says it's Obama's fault:

> **Above all, Aleppo represents a meltdown of the West's moral and political will — and in particular, a collapse of U.S. leadership. By refusing to intervene against the Assad regime's atrocities, or even to enforce the "red line" he declared on the use of chemical weapons, President Obama created a vacuum that was filled by Vladimir Putin and Iran's Revolutionary Guard. As recently as October, Mr. Obama set aside options drawn up by his advisers to save Aleppo. Instead, he supported the delusional diplomacy of Secretary of State John F. Kerry, whose endless appeals to Moscow for cease-fires yielded — as Mr. Putin no doubt intended — nothing more than a humiliating display of American weakness.**

And it's not just the Washington Post.

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?
The far-left extremist UK Guardian, one of the most radically secular and progressive newspapers on the planet, featured an article by a far-left writer entitled "**Barack Obama's presidency will be defined by his failure to face down Assad**".

Excerpt:

> In an interview with Jeffrey Goldberg of the Atlantic magazine earlier this year, President Obama said he was "very proud" of the moment in 2013 when, against the "overwhelming weight of conventional wisdom", he decided not to honour his own "red line", allowing Assad to escape accountability for a chemical attack that had killed more than 1,400 civilians.
>
> Obama may be alone in this judgment. A year earlier, seemingly on a whim, he had set a red line on the use of chemical weapons at a time when none were being used. The red line was, in effect, a green light to conventional killing. But the regime called Obama's bluff – and, predictably, he backed down. No longer fearing punishment, the regime escalated its tactics.
>
> Nearly four times as many people were killed in the two years after the chemical attack as had died in the two years before. Obama's abandonment discredited Syria's nationalist opposition and empowered the Islamists. It helped Isis emerge from the shadows to establish itself as a major force. Together, these developments triggered a mass exodus that would displace over half the country's population.

Everyone knows that the Obama administration bent over and bowed to the Russians and the Iranians from day one, with the "Russian reset" and the Iran nuclear weapons deal. Obama treated enemies like friends, and now we are seeing the consequences of his moral relativism and anti-American pacificism.

This part of the Guardian article is my favorite, because it really shows the fundamental problem – namely, that there is a complete disconnect between Obama's high opinion of his own ability and the actual consequences of his policies in objective reality:

> But in his valedictory press conference, last Friday, Obama defended his policy on Syria – albeit with logic whose fractures even his eloquence could not conceal. Inverting cause and consequence, he cited Russian and Iranian presence in Syria as his reason for not confronting Assad (neither was there in August 2013); he cited the disunion among rebels as the reason for not supporting them (they fragmented because they were denied meaningful support); and he cited the fear of deeper American involvement as his justification for restraint (even though a year later it would lead to a far bigger deployment across two states).

He really is in his own little world, where everything he does works fabulously well, because of his superhuman intellect. The man belongs in an insane asylum – never has someone so unqualified and incompetent had a higher opinion of himself, despite manifest failure that even the far left UK Guardian can see plainly. The American people

elected an unstable clown who makes decisions based on delusions instead of evidence. And instead of correcting himself when his failures are known, he persists in his delusions, casting the blame on everyone but himself. As if a narcissistic clown with no education and no resume ought to expect to be successful, and if he is not, then other people must be to blame.

Should Christians expect to know God's will by means of feelings and intuitions?

December 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Air Force TACPs confirm target locations with their map

There are two views on the topic of decision making and the will of God. The view you learn in the church is called "the traditional view". I call this view the feelings/intuition view. This view that elevates feelings / intuitions to the level of divine communications from God. The more practical view is called "the wisdom view". I call this view the battlefield commander view. I am a proponent of the wisdom / commander view.

Let's learn about the two different views:

> [The traditional view is] that God has a plan for our lives and that we receive guidance through methods such as "open and closed doors", "feeling led" and "the still, small, voice".
>
> [The wisdom view] holds that God does not have an "individual will" for our lives, but rather that all of God's will can be summed up within two categories, God's sovereign will and God's moral will. Basically God's sovereign will is all the things that god decrees will happen. It is hidden (mostly) from us, and does not play an active part in our decision, although some of it is revealed in the bible. God's moral will is the part that we must concern ourselves with in making decisions. It is fully revealed in the bible and our decisions must be made within it. We may use wisdom in applying god's moral will to our lives, or we may be in an area not covered by god's moral will. We must finally submit in advance to God's sovereign will, being prepared for him to sovereignty intervene and redirect us

> through whatever means he wills (see James).

Here's a bit more from someone else:

> Regarding the view that God has a personal will for us individually that we have to discern and find, J.I. Packer says, "The first thing to say is that the idea of guidance is actually a novelty among orthodox evangelicals. It does not go back farther than the last century. Second, it has led people to so much foolish action on the one hand, and so much foolish inaction on the other, as well as puzzlement and heartbreak when the 'hotline' to God seems to go silent, that it has to be discredited. Third, it must be said that Scripture gives us no more warrant constantly to expect personal 'hotline,' 'voice-from-the-control-tower' guidance than to expect new authoritative revelations to come our way for the guidance of the whole church." (Hot Tub Religion, page 118).
>
> As to the point of the question, how do I make decisions, I attempt to make decisions in light of three factors: God's moral will, wisdom, and my personal desires. If something is opposed to God's moral will, then I should obviously flee from it. If it's not opposed, then I consider the wisdom of the choices. For example, would it be wise for me to marry a woman who loves Jesus, though we have nothing else in common? Probably not. If the options pass the criteria of wisdom, then I'm free to choose how I wish. If I'm offered two jobs, and both are honoring to God, and both would be wise to take, then I'm free to choose the job I would like more. I don't need to put out a fleece or await some other confirmation from God. If it's moral and wise, then the only question as to whether or not it will honor Him is my attitude.
>
> Some examples of this model used in the Bible (in theological circles referred to as the Wisdom Model) are in Paul's planning of a mission to Rome in Romans 1:9-15, 15:22-24, the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29), and Paul's instructions for legal disputes (1 Cor 6:3-6).

The best book on this topic is Garry Friesen's "Decision Making and the Will of God". In it, you'll find a full assessment about what the Bible teaches on this topic.

When I am trying to decide what will be effective, I look at Christian scholars, at their papers, books, and public debates. That's effectiveness because it is addressed to a non-Christian audience in public with the force of reason and evidence. It is persuasion and it is addressed to rational minds. I want to change the minds of people who have a large influence on society on the whole. I don't think that offering Christianity as life-enhancement or self-help is really "having an influence". I think that offering Christianity as truth, with support, is "having an influence".

So let me be clear about what I believe:

- I don't think that God normally talks to people directly
- I don't believe that life is an Easter egg hunt, filled with clues accessible only to

emotion and intuition
- I don’t believe that God expects people to discover a specific will for their lives using non-rational means
- I think that people make up their own life plan that is consistent with the Bible
- The goal of the life plan is to be effective, and there are no other considerations
- I think that there are many good things a person can do, but that some are more effective than others
- I think that with respect to the goal of serving God effectively, *my happiness is expendable*
- I don’t think that the purpose of doing something for the Lord is to feel good about ourselves
- I don’t think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they like them
- I don’t think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they are good at them
- I think people should do hard things that they don’t like – as long as it’s more effective
- I don’t think that any course of action is as effective as any other – some plans accomplish more
- I don’t think that life is totally unpredictable and irrational and subjective
- I think that we can know what is or is not effective by studying and learning about the world
- I think life is like a battlefield that must be surveyed, understood and acted upon deliberately

I think that every person is the commanding officer of his or her own life, and each person must study everything they can, make a plan that is consistent with the Bible’s moral prescriptions, execute the plan and achieve whatever they can achieve for the Lord. And the goal is not comfort or happy feelings, but real achievements. Not for the purpose of being saved, of course, because salvation is a free gift of God because of what Jesus did on the cross. Life is more like a battle than a vacation resort or a buffet or a shopping center. God’s will for us is not have happy feelings, but that we freely choose to sacrifice ourselves out of obedience and service to him. In my case, that means studying hard things, making money, saving money, and giving money away to good scholars, sponsoring good events and being persuasive to non-Christians. None of this necessarily makes me happy, but it does work to bring glory to God. I cried when I had to learn calculus, because it was so hard. But who cares? The main thing is that I have money now to sponsor Christian speakers or to give books to Christians to read, and God is happy with that.

I think that it is very important to realize that God is not impressed by our not being smart and not being effective. If we have the ability to be smart, then we should be smart, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability to make money, then we should make money, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability have a

great influence, then we should have a great influence, whether it makes us happy or not. There will be plenty of time for happiness after we're dead. But this life is a time of serving, and we should try to serve effectively, whether it makes us happy or not. With respect to God's purposes in the world, my happiness is expendable.

Whenever someone questions my goals and plans by saying that I am asserting my will over God's will, the first question I want to ask that person is this: "how do you know what God's will is?" and "what is your basis for thinking that my plan to serve will not be effective?". I want to know if I have misunderstood something about the way the world is, or miscalculated in some way. I want someone to look at my calculations and show where they are going to produce a less optimal result for the Lord. That's the only concern I have – effectiveness for the Lord. Usually what I have found is that the other person wants to make the purpose of life *their own happiness*, and it makes them happier to choose what to do moment by moment, without having to study anything or make plans. It's not that they have better goals (for God) or better plans (for God). It's that they want their goals to be above God, and they don't want to make plans other than to do whatever makes them happy.

I also found this summary of the Friesen book useful:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4
- Part 5
- Part 6
- Part 7
- Part 8
- Part 9

Remember Jeremiah 17:9:

> 9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else
> And is desperately sick;
> Who can understand it?.

Wisdom is best.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about spending, saving and charity

December 20, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

A practical lecture on money – spending, saving, charitable giving – from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

I like the way that Wayne Grudem navigates the Bible finding the passages that tell you who God is, so that you can make better decisions by analyzing alternatives and choosing the one that gives your Boss a maximum return on investment. He's very practical.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Spending:

- Christianity does not teach asceticism (= don't enjoy anything in this world), Paul condemns it in 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- When you buy nice things, even if it is a little more expensive, it's an opportunity to be thankful for nice things that God has provided
- Even being rich is OK, but don't let it make you haughty and arrogant, and don't set your hopes on your money (see 1 Tim 6:17)
- It is important for you to earn money, and you are supposed to use it to support yourself and be independent
- It is possible to overspend and live recklessly (Luke 15:13) and it's also possible to overspend and live too luxuriously
- *Increasing your income through career progression is wise*, because it allows you to give away more and save more

- God gives us freedom to decide how much we spend, how much we give away, and how much we save
- every choice a Christian makes with money will give him or her more or less reward in his or her afterlife
- Do not spend more than you have – you should make every effort to get out of debt as quickly as possible

Saving:

- Saving money is wise so you can help yourself and others, and have money in your old age when you will not be working
- If you do not save your own money, you end up being dependent on others (e.g. – family or taxpayers)
- Not saving money for the future is a way of "putting God to the test" (Matt 4:7)
- You are to "be dependent on no one", to the extent that you can (1 Thes 4:12)
- We don't know the future, that's why we should prepare for an emergency, and buy insurance to guard (James 4:13-17)
- It's right for us to learn how to save to be able to buy bigger assets, like a car or a college education
- Saving and investing in stocks and bonds lets people in business start and grow companies, creating jobs and new products
- *Don't over-save, trusting too much in money more than you trust in God* (Ps 62.10; Matt 6:19,24; Luke 12:15-21)

Giving:

- it is required for the people of God to give something out of what they earn, but no percentage is specified (Deut 26:12-13)
- you do not give money to become right with God, you can't earn your salvation
- *a Christian gives to show God that you trust him to take care of you, and to experience trusting him through your giving*
- the quality of your resurrection life with God is affected by giving you do for the Kingdom (Phil 4, Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:18-19)
- when you get involved in the lives of others and give to them, you have the joy of experiencing caring for others (Acts 20:35)
- it's possible to give too little, but it's also possible to give too much – be careful about pride creeping in as well

The first part of this lecture made me think of my treat for the week, which is to get a double chicken burrito bowl after my weight lifting. It is very easy to say grace when you are hovering over a double chicken burrito bowl. It is good to have nice things especially when it makes you thankful for what you have.

I was so happy listening to this talk because he was condemning bad stewardship, which I see in a lot of young people these days. I was happy until he got to the part about

trusting in your savings for your security, and then I thought – that's what I do wrong! I save a lot but it's not just for emergencies and to share with others, like he was saying – I want a sense of security. This was more of a temptation in my 20s than it is now in my 30s, though.

Charity should hurt

I can remember being in my first full-time job as a newly hired junior programmer when the 2001 recession struck. I would cry while signing checks to support William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith ministry, because I was so scared. I had no family or friends where I lived to help me if anything went wrong, and that's been the story of my working life. If anything goes wrong, there is no backup. But it's that experience of crying when I gave that allows me to say today "that's when I became the man I am, that's what a man does when he is a follower of Jesus". If you are not doing the actions of charity, then you will not having the experience of trusting God and letting him lead you. There is more to the Christian life than just saying the right things – you have to do the right things.

Don't follow your heart

If you're scared about giving when you are young, then do what I did in my 20s: work 70-hour weeks, get promoted often, and save everything you earn. I volunteered every Saturday for 9 months in order to get my first white-collar part-time job when I was still in high-school. The faster you increase your savings, the easier it's going to be to take a *genuine interest* in caring for the people around you. Read Phil 1 (fellowship), Phil 2 (concern for others), and Phil 4 (charity). Turn off your emotions and desires when it comes to choosing what to study and what work to do, and put Philippians into practice. Your freedom to give is very much tied to the quality of your decisions of what to study, where to work, how much you spend on entertainment, and so on. That's why you need to turn off your feelings and desires and do what works, even it it's not fun, and even if it involves responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

Wayne Grudem explains male leadership in marriage

December 21, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

I'm not willing to take advice on this from most pastors, but Wayne Grudem is someone I respect because he does such a good job of applying the Bible to political issues. So he's practical.

Anyway, here is something he wrote that was shared by a newlywed couple I am friends with.

Excerpt:

> Someone might say, "Well, okay, fine. There's a leadership role for Adam, and I guess that means husbands should have a leadership role in their marriage of some sort. But how does it work? How does it work in practice?"
>
> In our own marriage, Margaret and I talk frequently and at length about many decisions. I can tell you that I wouldn't be here tonight unless Margaret and I had talked about this and asked the Lord about it, and she had given blessing to it, and said, "Yes, I think that's right." Sometimes we make large decisions such as buying a house or a car, and sometimes they are small decisions like where we should go for a walk together. I often defer to Margaret's wishes, and she often defers to mine because we love each other.
>
> In almost every case, each of us has some wisdom and insight that the other does not have. Usually, we reach agreement on the decisions that we make. Very seldom will I do something that she doesn't think is wise–I didn't say never. She prays; she trusts God; she loves God. She is sensitive to God's leading and direction, but in every decision, whether it large or small and whether we have reached agreement or not, the responsibility to make the decision still rests with me.

Now, I am not talking about every decision they make individually. Margaret controls a much larger portion of our budget than I do because all the things having to do with the household and food and clothing and house expenses and everything . . . she writes the checks and pays the bills. I take care of buying books and some things about the car. I have appointments during the day with students. She doesn't get involved in that. She has her own appointments. She has her own calendar. I don't get involved in trying to micromanage all of that. We have distinct areas of responsibility. I am not talking about those things. I don't get involved in those things unless she asks my counsel.

But in every decision that we make that affects us together or affects our family, the responsibility to make the decision rests with me. If there is genuine male headship, I believe there is a quiet acknowledgement that the focus of the decision making process is the husband, not the wife. Even though there will often be much discussion and there should be mutual respect and consideration of each other, ultimately the responsibility to make the decision rests with the husband. And so, in our marriage the responsibility to make the decision rests with me.

This is not because I am a wiser or more gifted leader. It is because I am the husband. God has given me that responsibility. It is very good. It brings peace and joy to our marriage, and both Margaret and I are thankful for it. Now, I need to add very quickly, men, this does not mean that a husband has the right to be a selfish leader.

Just about three years ago, maybe four years ago now, we started the decision making process. Margaret had been in an auto accident in Chicago. As part of the aftermath of that accident, she was experiencing some chronic pain that was aggravated by cold and humidity, and Chicago is cold in the winter and humid in the summer. Chicago was not a good place for that. Some friends said to us, "We have a second house in Mesa, Arizona, if you would ever like to go there and just use it as a vacation place, we would like you to do that."

So we did. We visited Arizona. Mesa is a suburb of Phoenix. Margaret felt better. It was hot, and it was dry. And so I said, "Wow, Margaret I would love to move here, but I am only trained to do one thing; I can teach at a seminary and that is it. There aren't any seminaries here." The next day Margaret was looking in the yellow pages–literally. She said, "Wayne, there's something here called Phoenix Seminary." One thing led to another and God was at work in that seminary, and it was starting to grow.

Then we went through a decision making process. When we were in the middle of that decision making process, on the very day that we were focusing on that, I came in my normal custom of reading through a section of scripture each day, I came to a Ephesians 5:28, "Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies."

> I thought if I would move to take a job in another city for the sake of my body, if I were experiencing the pain that Margaret had, and husbands should love their wives as their own bodies–then shouldn't I move? Shouldn't I be willing to move for Margaret's sake? That was really why we moved to Phoenix.

Anyway, Dina and I were talking the other night about what would happen if – hypothetically – we suddenly found ourselves stuck with a child and responsible for it's education. I said to Dina that I would have a meeting with her, and ask her to research all of the alternative forms of schooling, and look over the research on education and then come back with her recommendation about what would get us the most effectiveness for the least cost and risk. Dina said that she thought that was an excellent plan, but being the kind of person she is, she would not wait to be asked to do this, but would instead pro-actively go and do the work and then present it to me to make the decision. A wife is a chief of staff, she does the research. She has to know all the politics. She has to do the face to face conversations. She has to make all the calculations. She has to be good at putting aside her feelings and being logical and analytical, in order to get results.

I think a lot of people worry that male headship means that husbands will micromanage like a tyrant, but that's just wrong. That's not at all what a man learns about how to lead others, in his workplace. A man looks for a wife with skills and experience to solve these sorts of problems for him while he is out working, and without needing a lot of guidance or monitoring from him. Micromanaging makes them both less efficient and more stressed. The more education and work history she has before she marries, the better she will be at solving problems on her own initiative. I always encourage young women to study hard things and to do hard jobs, but to stop working when young children appear (the first five years of the child's life are critical). Learning hard things and doing hard jobs makes them more prepared for the roles of wife and mother.

Similarly, a wife does not want to choose a poor leader for a husband. She wants to choose someone who makes good decisions, and follows a plan through to a result. She should be looking at his decision making, especially in education, work and finances, and deciding whether he can do the male roles in a marriage. She should be looking at his leadership style and communication ability. These things are well-defined, and she should be able to assess his ability by looking at his life to see if anyone follows his lead at work or outside of work on anything that matters. Does he reach the goals that he plans to reach? Is he realistic about risks and costs? She has to do an assessment of his leadership ability, because if she marries him, he will be leading her. Naturally, she will have to know something about leadership first, and know something about men, and what men expect to achieve with their marriages. What is his plan?

The easiest way for a man to avoid marrying a woman who resists his leadership is to not marry her. And the easiest way for a woman to avoid marrying a man who does not delegate tasks to her that she is better at is to not marry him. We are responsible for these decisions. As long as you don't follow your feelings and intuitions, you'll be fine. Don't marry someone unless you have observed them demonstrating their ability to

do the marriage roles cheerfully and well.

Carmel High School censors and destroys poster from pro-life student club

December 22, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

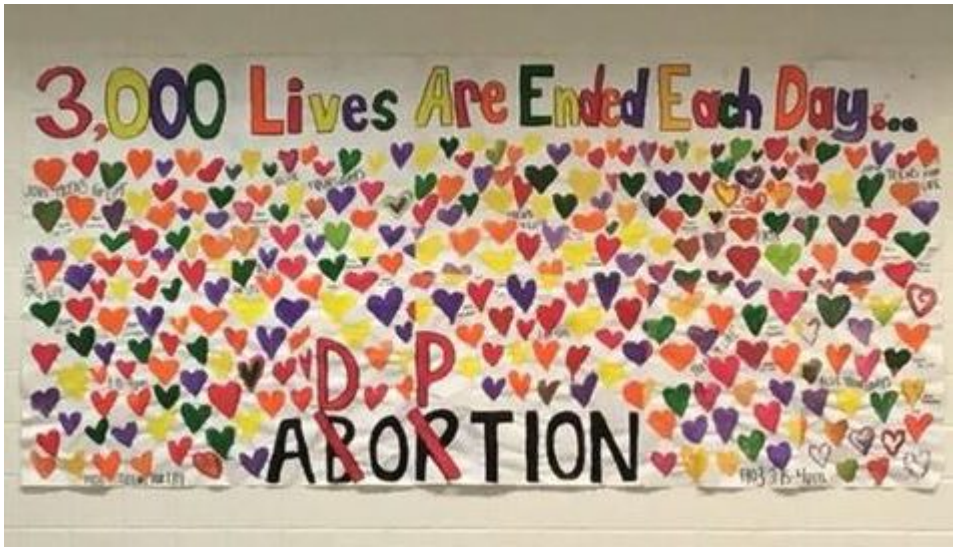

Carmel Teens for Life poster destroyed by left-wing Carmel High School fascists
Another post in our continuing series analyzing why you should never send your children to public schools.

The story comes from Fox local news in Indianapolis:

Excerpt:

> Administrators at Carmel High School are facing the threat of a lawsuit after removing a pro-life poster from the building.
>
> Liberty Counsel, a nonprofit organization "dedicated to advancing religious freedom," says administrators removed the poster display created by Carmel Teens for Life after another student complained that it was "offensive."
>
> The club reportedly spent over 25 hours painting the display which included 300 hearts, each representing 10 lives, to symbolize the written statement "3,000 Lives Are Ended Each Day."

When they were caught red-handed, the fascist administrators tried to threaten the students to stop them from seeking legal advice about their first amendment rights:

> **In addition, administrators reportedly asked members of the club sign an agreement, which prohibits the club from using the word "abortion" in future displays or other forms of communication. The agreement reads *"I will not have communications with outside agencies as a representative of the Teens for Life Club without prior approval from the Sponsors…"* and *"Prior approval for all communications regarding the Teens for Life Club will be requested from the Teens for Life Club Sponsors…"***

> **The organization says members were threatened that if they did not sign the agreement immediately, the club sponsors would be forced to resign.**

Liberty Counsel has more on the strong-arm bully tactics of the radical feminists:

> The School District summoned the club's leaders, demanding that they sign an agreement that they would not seek outside legal counsel or parental input, that they would have to receive prior approval for "all communications," and that they not use the word "abortion" in any communications, including Facebook. There was also a threat to withdraw teacher sponsorship if the teens did not sign the "Agreement."
>
> […]It is highly improper for school officials to demand students forgo their rights and promise to not seek legal counsel or parental input.

That was their response to destroying the poster – cover it up, threaten the teens, don't tell your parents, don't tell the lawyers, don't tell the media. These are the kinds of people who run public schools – little left-wing dictators who hate the values of the parents who pay their salaries. They are more interested in lobbying for pay increases than providing children with an education that allows all points of view to be heard. Zero critical thinking from these secular left education school graduates. They can't get jobs in the real world, but they are good at bullying children in a government-run monopoly.

Leftist Indiana news station RTV6 reported on the story:

Carmel Clay Schools

Carmel Clay Schools denies the rights of students to express their opinions, except if they agree with the secular leftist fascist school administrators. They are trying to cover up the way that they censored the free speech rights of the students. Their response was to threaten the students, to make the problem go away without having to admit fault. The school district allows posters from young Democrats and LGBT activists, just not from pro-lifers.

It's important to understand that school adminstrators and their government allies are generally not moral people.

Consider the architect of Ontario's sex education curriculum:

> Ben Levin, the man who "appeared to have it all," was today sentenced to three years in prison for three child pornography offences.
>
> […]The once-tenured professor at Ontario's Institute for Studies in Education had a "hidden, dark side" in a "depraved on-line world" as a "deviant mentor" who made "insidious attempts to normalize the sexual exploitation of children," McArthur noted in her 23-page reasons for sentence.
>
> […]A member of Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne's transition team, Levin was

> deputy minister of education in 2009 when he and then-minister of education Wynne developed the "equity and inclusive education strategy," part of which was the 2010 radical sex-ed curriculum shelved by then-Premier Dalton McGuinty after parental backlash. The 2015 sex-ed curriculum is virtually the same as the 2010 version.
>
> […]Levin himself claimed in a 2010 interview: "I was the deputy minister of education. In that role, I was the chief civil servant. I was responsible for the operation of the Ministry of Education and everything that they do; I was brought in to implement the new education policy."
>
> […]Levin pled guilty on March 3, 2015, to three of an original seven child pornography related charges.

Many people go into the education system to normalize immoral behavior, and naturally they teach students to feel offended at any sort of judging of their immorality. When one student is offended by a pro-life viewpoint, the teachers and administrators naturally side with the pro-abortion student. They don't side with the moral person, they side with the immoral person. Often, they are acting to protect their own immorality because they are sensitive about being judged by those who are moral.

How are we going to solve this problem of administrator discrimination against moral people? We can't fire the administrators, it's almost impossible to get education officials removed from a government-supported monopoly. But there is a way to solve it.

School choice

The first thing to understand is that parents really need to be promoting school choice as a public policy. When parents pay money to the government, it is handed out to schools willy-nilly, and not tied to school performance. There is no accountability to parents, and that favors the misconduct of the administrators. The simple fact of the matter is that increased spending on education does not result in improved student performance. The money is often eaten up by hiring far left school administrators whose job is to *indoctrinate the students with secular leftist propaganda*, not to teach them marketable skills. Parents want their kids to get jobs that will pay well.

The right way to achieve this goal of student-centered education is to stop the mandatory collection of taxes for education by the government, abolish the federal Department of Education, and put the money earned by parents back in the hands of the parents, so that they can purchase the education from the school that is focused on teaching children to invent products and services for customers. Indoctrination in global warming, Marxism and LGBT activism is not what parents want for their kids. It doesn't make the child independent and self-sufficient.

How to respond to an atheist who complains about slavery in the Bible

December 23, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I often hear atheists going on and on about how the Bible has this evil and that evil. Their favorite one seems to be slavery. Here are three things I say to atheists when they push this objection.

The Bible and slavery

First, you should explain to them what the Bible actually says about slavery. And then tell them about the person responsible for stopping slavery in the UK: a devout evangelical named William Wilberforce.

Here's an article that works.

Excerpt:

> We should compare Hebrew debt-servanthood (many translations render this "slavery") more fairly to apprentice-like positions to pay off debts — much like the indentured servitude during America's founding when people worked for approximately 7 years to pay off the debt for their passage to the New World. Then they became free.
>
> In most cases, servanthood was more like a live-in*employee*, temporarily embedded within the employer's household. Even today, teams trade sports players to another team that has an owner, and these players belong to a franchise. This language hardly suggests slavery, but rather a formal contractual agreement to be fulfilled — like in the Old Testament.3
>
> Second, inform them that moral values are not rationally grounded on atheism. In

> an accidental universe, there is no way we ought to be. There is no design for humans that we have to comply with. There are no objective human rights, like the right to liberty (that would block slavery) or the right to life (that would block abortion). Although you may find that most atheists act nicely, the ones who really understand what atheism means and live it out consistently are not so nice.

Atheism and moral judgments

Second, inform them that moral values are not rationally grounded on atheism. In an accidental universe, there is no way we ought to be. There is no design for humans that we have to comply with. There are no objective human rights, like the right to liberty (that would block slavery) or the right to life (that would block abortion). Although you may find that most atheists act nicely, the ones who really understand what atheism means and live it out consistently are not so nice.

Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

When people like Dawkins talk about morality, you have to understand that they are pretending. To them, morality is just about personal preferences and cultural conventions. They just think that questions of right and wrong are *arbitrary*. Things that are wrong in one time and place are right in another. Every view is as right as any other, depending on the time and place. That's atheist morality.

What's worse than slavery? Abortion!

Third, you should ask the atheist what he has done to oppose abortion. Abortion is worse than slavery, so if they are sincere in thinking that slavery is wrong, then they ought to think that abortion is wrong even more. So ask them what they've done to oppose the practice of abortion. That will tell you how sincere they are about slavery.

Here's Richard Dawkins explaining what he's done to stop abortion:

That’s right. The head atheist supports killing born children.

Kenosis and the doctrine of the Incarnation in Philippians 2:5-11

December 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us

It's Christmas, so it's time to see what the Bible says about who Jesus was and what it tells us about the character of God.

Here are the relevant verses in Phil 2:5-11 [NASB]:

> [5] Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
>
> [6] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
>
> [7] but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.
>
> [8] Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
>
> [9] For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
>
> [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
>
> [11] and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Here's respected New Testament scholar Ben Witherington to help us make sense of it:

> Incarnation refers to the choices and acts of a pre-existent divine being, namely

> the Son of God, that the Son took in order to become a human being. He took on flesh, and became fully, truly human without ceasing to be fully, truly divine. Divinity is not something Jesus acquired later in life, or even after his death and resurrection. According to the theology of Incarnation he had always been the divine Son of God, even before he became Jesus, a human being. Strictly speaking the name Jesus only applies to a human being. It is the name the Son of God acquired once he became a human being in the womb of Mary, a name which he maintains to this day as he continues to be a human being.
>
> […]When I try and explain the incarnation to my students I deliberately choose to use the phrase divine condescension. What do I mean by this? Put another way, if there is going to be a corporate merger between a divine being and a human nature, then the divine side of the equation must necessarily limit itself, take on certain limitations, in order to be truly and fully human. The next question is…. what does it mean to be fully human? It means to have limitations of time and space and knowledge and power, and of course being mortal. Jesus exhibited all these traits. He was even tempted like us in every respect, but he avoided sin. What we should deduce from this is sinning is not a necessary part of being truly human. Yes, it is a trait of all fallen humans, but no, it is not how God made us in the first place. It is not necessary to sin in order to be truly or fully human.
>
> […]While the hymn is clear that the Son was 'in very nature God' at the same time he chose before he became human not to take advantage of his divine prerogatives. What were those? I call them the omnis– omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence.
>
> […]And here I think is what Paul is driving at when he says 'have this mind in yourselves that was also in Christ Jesus'. It says that he 'humbled himself'. Now contrary to what the world may think humility has nothing to do with feelings of low self-esteem. It has nothing to do with feelings of low self-worth. If Jesus is the model of true humility, it can't have anything to do with those things, because Jesus surely was the one person who walked this earth who did not have such feelings, did not have an identity crisis, and so on. Humility is the posture of a strong person who steps down to serve others, as Jesus did.

This IVP commentary on Bible Gateway talks more about what this "divine condescension" means to us, using that passage from Philippians:

> Christ's selflessness for the sake of others expressed itself in his emptying himself by taking the "form" of a slave. Historically, far too much has been made of the verb "emptied himself," as though in becoming incarnate he literally "emptied himself" of something. However, just as*harpagmos* requires no object for Christ to "seize" but rather points to what is the opposite of God's character, so Christ did not empty himself of anything; he simply "emptied himself," poured himself out, as it were. In keeping with Paul's ordinary usage, this is metaphor, pure and simple. What modifies it is expressed in the phrase that follows; he

> "poured himself out by taking on the 'form' of a slave."
>
> Elsewhere this verb regularly means to become powerless or to be emptied of significance (hence the NIV's *made himself nothing;* cf. KJV, "made himself of no reputation"). Here it stands in direct antithesis to the "empty glory" of verse 3 and functions in the same way as the metaphorical "he became poor" in 2 Corinthians 8:9. Thus, as in the "not" side of this clause (v. 6b), we are still dealing with the character of God as revealed in the mindset and resulting activity of the Son of God. The concern is with divine selflessness: God is not an acquisitive being, grasping and seizing, but self-giving for the sake of others.

I think it's important to be clear that Jesus didn't give up anything of his divine attributes by becoming a man. Rather, he added a human nature to his divine nature. The humility is because he came to serve others.

You can see a nice quick video of this doctrine being defended by famous philosophical theologian William Lane Craig:

I think that it is important for us to emphasize the doctrine of the Incarnation at Christmas, in order to correct the grasping and seizing that is so widespread. The really interesting thing about Christmas is the Incarnation, and what it tells us about God and us. It tells us that we have value, because Jesus loved us. But it also says that following Jesus means being humble and being a servant to others. It means pouring yourself out to others in order to serve them. And these obligations are not metaphorical – they are rooted in the historical facts. This is the way the world is as a matter of fact, although certainly we have freedom to rebel against it.

For those looking for defenses to the doctrine of the Incarnation, you can find a chapter on it by Paul Copan in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". That's for intermediate readers. For advanced readers you can look for a chapter in "The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology", edited by Charles Taliaferro and Chad Meister, and published by Cambridge University Press. I just bought that latter book for one of the graduate students I sponsor. I know that Thomas V. Morris also has a couple of books out there on the Incarnation – one for intermediate readers and one for advanced readers. The latter book is published by Cornell University Press.

Battle of the Bulge: The Christmas Day offensive that stopped Hitler in the Ardennes

December 25, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

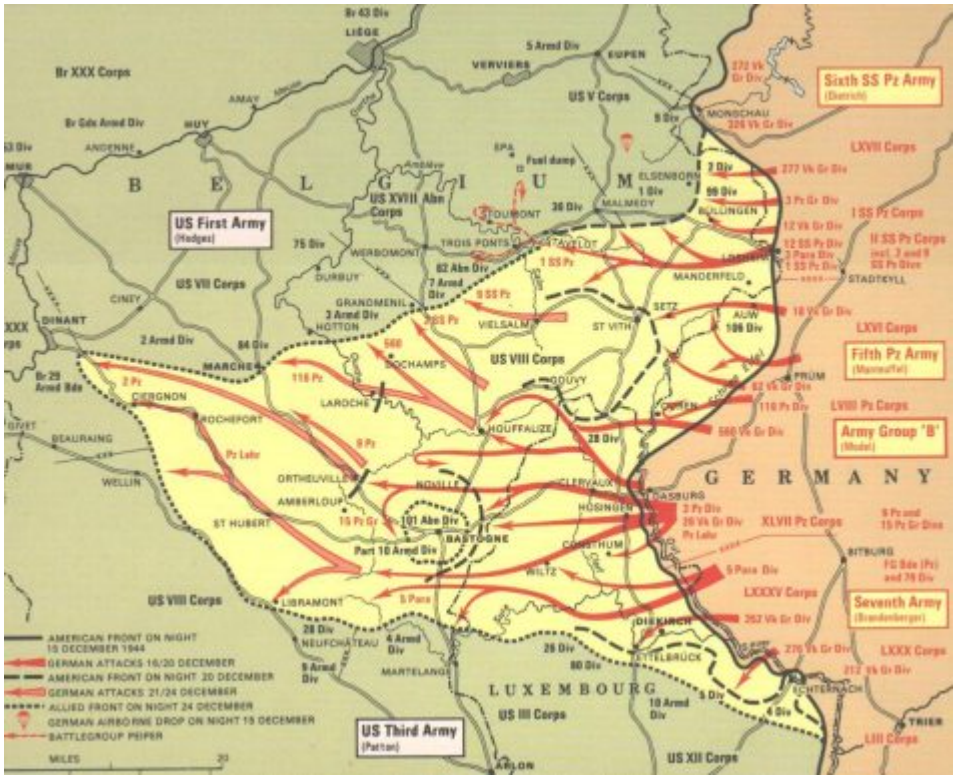

The Battle of the Bulge, situation on December 24th, 1944 (click for larger image)

Well, it's Christmas Day, and my boring family is just discussing popular shows on Netflix, iTunes and other nonsense which no one cares about. What is much more interesting to me is military history. I have been reading several books on the Korean War in the winter of 1950 and the Battle of the Bulge in the winter of 1944, during World War 2. Since I wrote a post about the Korean War last time, I have a post for you about the story of an American general I really admired, which I found in John Toland's "Battle: The Story of the Bulge".

Since I can't quote that book, I found another book with the story on the U.S. Army web site by Hugh M. Cole entitled "The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge". The Day is December 24th, 1944. Following a surprise Axis attack in the Ardennes, British General Montgomery has ordered Allied forces north of Bastogne to retreat and form "proper" defensive lines. Major General J. Lawton Collins, located just north of the tip of the German force's furthest advance west, sees an opportunity to attack the 2nd SS Armored Division, because their superior Panther and Tiger tanks have outrun their supply lines and are out of gas. Will he get permission to attack? If not, will he disobey orders and attack anyway?

Here's the story:

> Although the VII Corps had become involved in a defensive battle, General Collins still expected to launch the corps counterattack which would signal the beginning of aggressive operations against the north flank of the Bulge. In midafternoon on

24 December General Harmon telephoned the VII Corps command post and asked permission to throw another combat command of his 2d Armored Division against elements of the 2d Panzer which had been identified in the neighborhood of Ciney and Celles. (See Map VIII.) The corps commander was away from the command post visiting his divisions; so the call was taken by the corps artillery commander, Brig. Gen. Williston B. Palmer. Palmer knew that the First Army had attached strings to any wholesale commitment of Harmon's division and that Hodges' consent and probably Montgomery's would be needed before more of the 2d Armored was unleashed. He therefore told Harmon to wait-it was too late in the day to launch an attack in any case-until the corps commander reached the 2d Armored command post. Harmon was persistent and called again asking for "immediate authority." Palmer, sorely tempted to give Harmon the permission he needed, reluctantly steeled himself and told Harmon to await Collins' appearance at the 2d Armored command post.

A few minutes later Palmer had a call from the First Army chief of staff, General Kean, who said that Collins was authorized to use all his corps and could change his defensive line. In guarded words Kean asked Palmer if he saw "a town A and a town H" on the map and then mentioned a "pivoting move." Palmer, imbued with Collins' attack philosophy and eager to give the green light to the 2d Armored, looked hastily at the map spread before him, picked out two villages southwest of Ciney and forward of the 2d Armored positions: Achêne and (Le) Houisse. This looked like the go signal for the VII Corps and an attack to advance its western wing. Because the wire line to the 2d Armored command post had gone out, Palmer sent his aide with a message for Collins giving his own optimistic interpretation of the conversation with Kean.

The aide had just departed when Kean called again. On further reflection, he said (perhaps Kean had caught a tone of exultation in Palmer's voice), he doubted whether Palmer had understood him correctly. Then came the cold water douche: "Now get this. I'm only going to say it once. Roll with the punch." Palmer's glance flicked over the map, this time to the north; there, thirty miles to the rear of the villages he had selected earlier were the towns of Andenne and Huy. Palmer remembers that this was the only moment in the war when he was "ill with disapproval."

Out went a second messenger with an explanation of Palmer's mistake and an urgent request for Collins to come home. Collins, who had received the first message at Harmon's command post, was just giving the finishing touches to an attack plan for the entire 2d Armored when the second messenger appeared. Telling Harmon to "hold everything" but making clear that the 2d Armored was to go ahead with plans for the attack on Christmas morning, Collins hurried back to his own headquarters. He arrived there about 1830 but nothing more could be done until a liaison officer, promised by Kean, came in from the First Army.

Two hours later the First Army staff officer (Col. R. F. Akers) appeared and

> confirmed the bad news. Montgomery and Hodges had agreed to shorten the First Army line in order to halt the German advance. The VII corps, therefore, was to go on the defensive and its commander was “authorized” on his own judgment to drop back to the line Andenne-Hotton-Manhay. In any case the VII Corps was to retain a firm contact with the XVIII Airborne Corps, which that evening was withdrawing to the Manhay position.

Collins was stuck – no permission to attack from higher up. If you check the map above, you can see that the withdrawal to the Andenne-Huy line would give up *a lot of ground*. More importantly, it would give the Germans time to refuel. But Collins was still seeing German tanks out of gas in front of him right now – what a perfect opportunity to attack! What should he do? What would you do in his place?

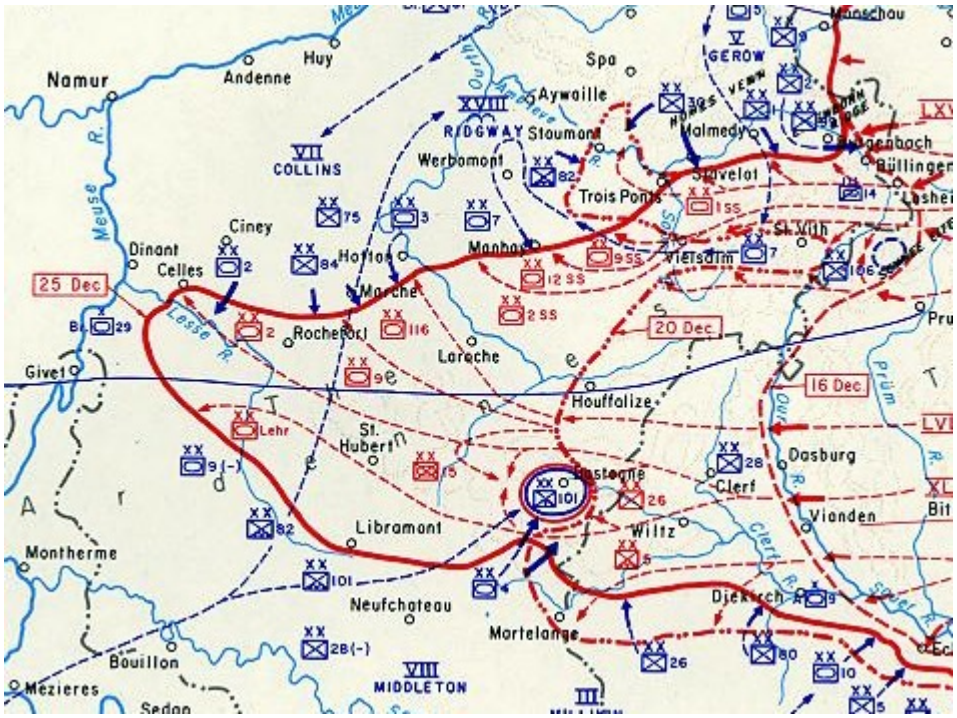

Collins’ plan to cut off the 2nd SS Division east of Celles

Here’s what Collins did:

> **Although General Collins courteously asked the senior members of his corps staff to give their opinions on the action now to be taken by the corps, neither he nor any of his officers considered giving over the attack planned for the 2d Armored.** During the day Harmon’s tanks had inflicted very severe damage on the German columns; the 84th Division had experienced some reverses but seemed to be holding its own. On balance the picture as seen from the VII Corps’ point of view was far less gloomy than that apparently prevailing in higher headquarters. Collins recognized that a retrograde move would strengthen the defenses of Huy and Liège. He also knew that such a move would expose Namur and the major Meuse crossings south of that city, for example, those at Dinant. **The final decision, made by the corps commander himself, probably could have been predicted: on 25 December the 2d Armored Division would advance as planned; the corps**

> **then would continue with limited objective attacks to break up any dangerous concentration of enemy forces on its front.7**

So, what was the outcome of Collins' decision to disobey Montgomery and the other higher ups?

> The attack mapped out by Collins and Harmon late the previous afternoon was launched by CCB at 0800 on Christmas Day, the idea a double-pronged sweep to capture Celles and annihilate the German armor believed to be thereabouts.9 For this maneuver General White divided his command into two task forces. Task Force A (Lt. Col. Harry Hillyard) had its line of departure on the Achêne road and orders to take the Bois de Geauvelant, a large wood some thousand meters across, which lay midway between Achêne and Celles. It was to assemble for the final assault on high ground northwest of Celles. Task Force B (Maj. Clifton B. Batchelder), starting its move near Leignon, was to make the main envelopment and cut off Celles on the southeast. The 82d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion went in on the open right flank of the attack to screen toward the west and as far forward as the Lesse River, south of Celles. CCB would be supported by artillery emplaced west of Ciney and by both American and British fighter-bombers.
>
> Task Force A, medium tanks to the front, went through the Bois de Geauvelant with almost no opposition. As it debouched it came under fire from a little farm near Foy-Notre Dame and lost three half-tracks. The 370th Fighter Group of the IX Tactical Air Command, flying in support of CCB, then flushed out four Panther tanks and put them out of action, at least temporarily. The column again drew fire near Boisselles, but two platoons of the 67th Armored Regiment moved in and destroyed three Panthers doing the shooting. By the middle of the afternoon Task Force A reached the high ground overlooking Celles, blocking the roads to the west and southwest. Task Force B had a brief battle at Conjoux, then rushed on-knocking out isolated tanks and guns- until it arrived on the ridge 1,300 yards southeast of Celles.
>
> The British 29th Armoured Brigade was conducting its own private battle west of Foy-Notre Dame while pushing reconnaissance toward the Lesse River. The British knocked out three Panthers and some infantry near Sorinne, then shot up more German vehicles and took prisoners around Foy-Notre Dame. In the skirmish near Boisselles a few tanks of the British 3d Royal Tank Regiment and some British gunners gave a hand to Task Force A.10
>
> Meanwhile the 82d Reconnaissance Battalion had run into the remnants of the 2d Panzer reconnaissance battalion at Foy-Notre Dame (part of this group had escaped eastward to rejoin the main force huddled in the woods northeast of Celles). These Germans intended to make a fight of it, though at first sight Foy-Notre Dame seemed a peaceful farming village-nothing more. When a platoon from the 82d moved in, the enemy began a fusillade of antitank and machine gun fire from hidden positions. Worse, four Panthers on high ground just south of

the village took a hand. The American cavalry suffered some casualties, but Sergeant Rogers used his assault gun to charge a German antitank gun in the middle of the village and the mop-up began. The four Panthers were brought under fire by British gunners, then finally destroyed by air attack. (Probably these were the tanks which had struck Task Force A near the Bois de Geauvelant.) This skirmish marked the end of the German reconnaissance battalion: the commander and 147 others were captured, and much of its remaining equipment was taken.

When General White's two task forces finally sent tanks into Celles they met little resistance. At first it seemed empty except for the townspeople who had gathered in the church; later some 200 dispirited prisoners were rounded up in and near the town. With the capture of Celles the string was drawn on the bag in the forest between that town and Conjoux. Harmon ordered CCB to turn back the next morning and give the coup de grâce to the trapped enemy.

Although Christmas Day had brought much sporadic action and occasional flare-ups like the fight at Foy-Notre Dame the main German pocket simply had been bypassed. It is known that Cochenhausen's tanks had very little gasoline, probably not enough to permit any appreciable skirmishing or tactical movement, but the German sluggishness in the pocket may be credited to the gunners supporting CCB, the army pilots in their flying OP's," and the close coordination between the artillery and the fighter-bombers of the 370th Fighter Group and Royal Air Force 83 Group. At noon, for example, a spotter plane picked up a column of seven enemy tanks north of Celles-all were destroyed by artillery fire. Twelve P38's and an unknown number of British Typhoons, taking time out only to replenish fuel tanks and ammunition racks, worked over the woods where lay Cochenhausen's command and strafed roads and trails whenever vehicles showed signs of making a break for it.

What of the German efforts to reach Cochenhausen's force? Two small forays were attempted during the day by the Panzer Lehr, whose commander had dispatched tanks along the Custinne road toward Celles, but these efforts were foiled by the ubiquitous Allied planes. That night the kampfgruppe with which the 2d Panzer had been blocking in the Hargimont sector was relieved by the 9th Panzer, and Lauchert finally was free to attempt Cochenhausen's relief. The force which he led from the Rochefort road through the Bois de Famenne and Ciergnon was not likely to give much confidence of success: a company or two of tanks, a battalion of armored infantry, a light artillery battalion, two companies of engineers, and part of a flak battalion.

The Germans had neared the twin villages of Petite and Grande Trisogne, little more than a mile from Celles, when they saw the ridge ahead "crawling with tanks." (These may have been British tanks because the 29th Armoured Brigade was blocking behind the CCB lines.) 11 The 2d Panzer never got to launch an attack, for the American guns opened "a hellish fire" (their targets spotted-as

> Lauchert later recalled-by five artillery planes). Then to top this came the P-38's and Typhoons. On nearby roads more Allied tanks hove in sight but made no concerted attack. Lauchert's group was saved by an order radioed from the XLVII Panzer Corps: he was to return to Rochefort at once; the troops in the pocket would have to destroy their vehicles, leave their wounded, and get out on foot. A Panzer Lehr attempt to reach the pocket via Custinne on 26 December was equally futile, and for the same reasons. Bayerlein's kampfgruppe-at no time in the battles on the Marche front did the Panzer Lehr commander have his entire division in hand-also was ordered back to Rochefort during the night of 26 December.
>
> The story of the 2d Panzer pocket is quickly told. CCB spent two days clearing the thick woods and dense under- brush between Celles and Conjoux. The procedure was simple and effective: first, heavy shelling on a given area, then a slow, methodical advance by the infantry line backed with the tanks. In an extension of the Bois de Geauvelant, where tanks could operate with some freedom, an armored sweep was made which killed about 150 of the enemy. In the main forest near Celles a final squeeze produced 200 prisoners, 12 guns, and 80 vehicles of various types to add to the larger bag. Nonetheless many of the German troops did succeed in escaping on foot. Major von Cochenhausen and nearly 600 of his men ultimately reached Rochefort, but all the equipment of the reconnaissance battalion, the 304th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, the 2d Battalion of the 3d Panzer Regiment, three artillery battalions, and two-thirds of the division flak battalion had to be left behind.12

And that was the turning point of the Battle of the Bulge. It was the end of Hitler's powerful last major attack against the Allies. That happened on Christmas Day 1944, and since today is Christmas Day, may their "names. Familiar… as household words … be in [your] flowing cups freshly remember'd." This story shall the good man teach his son.

Are all religions basically the same?

December 26, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

So, everyone knows that there a huge number of different religions in the world. This is called *religious pluralism.* Some people infer from the large number of different religions that there must be no religion that is correct. After all, they say, there are people in many different religions who are sincere, so that must mean that they are not wrong. (Sincerity = not mistaken) Or, some say that because different religions disagree, then that must mean that no religion is correct. (Disagreement = no right answer) Or, some say that because different religions make different groups of people feel happy, then no religion is wrong. (Makes you happy = not mistaken) Or, one I see among Hindus a lot: "my family and my nation are Hindu, so it cannot be wrong or else my family and nation would be wrong". (family pride and national pride = can't be mistaken). There are probably other variants, but the common factor is this – religion is not like math or science or engineering or technology, where we do have right answers and wrong answers. Religion is something else – it's more like clothing conventions, or culinary preferences, or taste in art or music. It's more about a person's likes and dislikes, not about claims being made about reality.

How should truth-seekers respond to religious pluralism?

The law of non-contradiction

To start with, we all need to be familiar with the law of non-contradiction. This is the stuff that software engineers all learned in undergraduate computer science courses. Computer science is a lot like analytical philosophy because both study symbolic logic. Analytical philosophy is as rigorous as mathematics.

The law says that for any proposition P, P cannot be true and not true at the same time,

and in the same context. For example, let P be the statement “it is raining outside my window right now”. It is impossible that the reality of the world be that it is raining outside my window right now, and not raining outside my window right now.

The external world is shared by all of us, and it is objective (it is not affected by what we think about it). When we make propositional claims, it is the external, mind-independent world that makes claims true or false. And by “world” I mean all of reality, past, present and future.

Similarities between religions

On a superficial level, religions are similar because they all try to answer the same kinds of questions:

- what is the nature of the ultimate reality in the universe?
- what is the fundamental problem faced by human beings?
- what should human beings do to solve this problem?

These questions are shared by all religions, but on a more fundamental level, religions are all completely different because they give *mutually exclusive* answers to these questions. Therefore, according to the law of non-contradiction, they cannot all be true at the same time and in the same context.

Differences between religions

In this post, blogger Neil explains how the Christian Bible claims that Jesus died on a cross, but the Koran claims he did not die on a cross. How do we understand these two contradictory claims? Are they propositional truth claims about the external world, or something else? There are two answers.

Postmodernism: Treating religious claims as subjective nonsense

We could say that all religious claims are just nonsense, and are not intended to apply to the external world, but are just personal preference claims about each believer – they are neither true nor false. The problem is that the postmodernist is then being condescending to the religious adherent by redefining their own words.

Rationality: Treating religions claims as genuine claims about reality

We could instead avoid insulting believers by being condescending about their claims. We could say that all religious claims are exactly what the believers claim they are: real claims about the external world. We could then resolve the conflicts using the same tools we use in our everyday lives: the laws of logic and empirical evidence.

How do postmodernists reinterpret religious claims as non-propositional?

Here are a few ways that postmodernists reinterpret the conflicting claims of different religions:

1. relativism: you reinterpret truth claims of the different religions so that they are claims of personal preference, which express the deluded myths that each individual religious person finds “fetching”

2. pragmatism: you reinterpret truth claims of the different religions so that they are claims of personal selfishness, so that each religious believer chooses the delusion that is personally satisfying to them
3. syncretism: you re-interpret truth claims of the different religions so that claims that are absolutely central, such as "was Jesus God?" are reinterpreted as being peripheral issues, and then the religions can all agree on the core of religious belief, such as advocacy of socialism, global warming and abortion

Why would postmodernists want to treat religious claims as nonsense?

In addition to the desperate desire to keep God from having authority over our moral decision-making (i.e. – sin, rebellion, etc.), there are 3 reasons why people try to treat religious claims as non-propositional nonsense.

1. Ignorance: people do not know the conflicting truth claims that different religions make
2. Laziness: people do not want to have to spend time evaluating the competing truth claims
3. Cowardice: people do not want to investigate and debate truth claims: it makes them unpopular

Postmodernists have decided that the purpose of life is to be hedonistic, and not to worry about the world really is. They think that trying to find out the truth about our origins, our purpose, and our ultimate fate is hard work, and talking about it makes them unpopular. So they don't want to do it.

But that is not what they say when you ask them. Instead, they say that disagreements about religion has caused a lot of wars, and so it's better if we just reduce the question of truth in religion to personal preference. That way, everyone can choose the delusion that makes them happy, (although religions are all *actually* false).

But postmodernists are arrogant to redefine the claims of all religions as nonsense. And it is self-refuting because they are substituting their own view of religion as objectively true, which is just what they deny everyone else. And if disagreeing about religion causes wars, then why are they disagreeing with us about religion?

So then how do we deal with the plurality of religions?

The answer is to treat religion the *exact same way* as any other area of knowledge. We can tolerate people's right to disagree, disagree while still being polite, and resolving disputes using logic, and evidence supplied from disciplines such as analytical philosophy, scientific investigation, and historical analysis.

People who want to involve emotion and intuition in the process of testing the conflicting religious claims can just butt out of the conversation. The search for truth should proceed *irrespective* of what you think about the truth claims of religion. Yes, the doctrine of Hell offends people, but *that doesn't make it false*.

Acknowledgement: I owe some of the thoughts in this post to the work of Douglas

Groothuis, who is an expert on thinking about postmodernism and religious pluralism. You can hear his thoughts in a lecture posted at Apologetics 315.

Skeptical astrophysicist assesses the fine-tuning argument in Cosmos magazine

December 27, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

This article appeared in Cosmos Magazine. (H/T Uncommon Descent)

It is written by the naturalist co-author of the new Cambridge University Press book "A Fortunate Universe: Life in a Finely-Tuned Cosmos".

Excerpt:

> As a cosmologist, I can use [the] immutable laws of physics to evolve synthetic universes on supercomputers, watching matter flow in the clutches of gravity, pooling into galaxies, and forming stars. Simulations such as these allow me to test ideas about the universe – particularly to try to understand the mystery of dark energy (more on this later).
>
> […]So now, I invite you to join me in imagining a universe, a universe slightly different to our own. Let's just play with one number and see what happens: the mass of the down-quark. Currently, it is set to be slightly heavier than the up-quark.
>
> […]If we start to ratchet up the mass of the down-quark, eventually something drastic takes place. Instead of the proton being the lightest member of the family, a particle made of three up-quarks usurps its position. It's known as the Δ^{++}. It has only been seen in the rubble of particle colliders and exists only fleetingly before decaying. But in a heavy down-quark universe, it is Δ^{++}that is stable while the proton decays! In this alternative cosmos, the Big Bang generates a sea of Δ^{++} particles rather than a sea of protons. This might not

> seem like too much of an issue, except that this usurper carries an electric charge twice that of the proton since each up-quark carries a positive charge of two-thirds.
>
> As a result, the Δ^{++} holds on to two electrons **and so the simplest element behaves not like reactive hydrogen, but inert helium.**
>
> This situation is devastating for the possibility of complex life, as in a heavy down-quark universe, the simplest atoms will not join and form molecules. Such a universe is destined to be inert and sterile over its entire history. And how much would we need to increase the down-quark mass to realise such a catastrophe? More than 70 times heavier and there would be no life. While this may not seem too finely tuned, physics suggests that the down-quark could have been many trillions of times heavier. So we are actually left with the question: why does the down-quark appear so light?
>
> Things get worse when we fiddle with forces. Make the strength of gravity stronger or weaker by a factor of 100 or so, and you get universes where stars refuse to shine, or they burn so fast they exhaust their nuclear fuel in a moment. Messing with the strong or weak forces delivers elements that fall apart in the blink of an eye, or are too robust to transmute through radioactive decay into other elements,
>
> **Examining the huge number of potential universes, each with their own unique laws of physics, leads to a startling conclusion: most of the universes that result from fiddling with the fundamental constants would lack physical properties needed to support complex life.**

Here’s another one a bit later:

> And there is another structural issue to consider – our universe is flying apart. Two things affect the rate of expansion: the amount of matter which acts as a brake, and dark energy which acts as an accelerator. Dark energy is winning so our universe is expanding at an accelerating rate.
>
> What this means is that in the early days of the universe, the rate of expansion was slower, slow enough to allow matter to condense into stars, planets and people. But if the universe had been born with only a touch less matter, it would have rapidly expanded, thinning out to less than one hydrogen atom per universe.
>
> On the other hand, if the universe had been born with only a touch more matter, that would have caused it to re-collapse before the first stars could form. **In short, the early universe was on a knife-edge, poised between these possible outcomes. What emerged was the Goldilocks expansion rate: not too fast, not too slow.**

Later on in the article, the skeptical naturalist astrophysicist evaluates the most popular

rebuttal to the scientific evidence: the multiverse.

He concludes:

To some, the picture of the multiverse is comforting, naturally explaining the puzzle of our own fine-tuning. But at present, we have no idea whether this immense sea of universes exists, and they may always be beyond the reach of experiment and observation; if this is the case, is the multiverse more philosophical musing than robust science?

Now, in my experience talking to atheists, especially to the computer science atheists in my office, they simply don't care that the multiverse cannot be tested or observed. They would rather believe in something that cannot be tested or observed than to go along with the scientific evidence that can be tested and observed. When I try to ask them why they are not interested in conforming their worldview to scientific evidence, they hold up their Star Trek mugs, and their Star Wars DVDs, and say "science will figure it out". But Star Trek and Star Wars are science fiction, not science – more like fantasy, really.

I have been able to dig down into the worldviews of the naturalists I know who seem to prefer science fiction to science. And at the very core of their worldview I find two things: 1) a desire to dispense with external reality (including science) as a constraint on their seeking of pleasure in this life, and 2) a desire to feel smug about not believing in myths and legends. Unfortunately, I have never met an atheist who did not prefer speculation and fantasy to experimental science, when confronted with scientific evidence that falsifies naturalism. I think that's a lesson for us all – just because a person is capable at programming a computer (which is good), it doesn't make a science-fiction / fantasy worldview true.

Thomas Sowell, America's most influential public intellectual, announces retirement

December 28, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Thomas Sowell changed the minds of a generation of young people, including me

I had written enough posts to carry me through the Christmas and New Year's vacation. But then something happened that caused me to come off vacation and postpone today's scheduled post in order to write about the retirement of a man who influenced my worldview as much as anyone has. And I am not exaggerating when I say that this man contributed the most of anyone to the economic views of libertarians and conservatives. (Although his views on social and foreign policy issues were largely conservative, as well). I never disagreed with his views, or maybe it's just that he always convinced me to change to agree with him. He's that kind of man – if you liked having a friend who knew how to *think through* just about anything, then this was the guy for you.

But now he has announced his retirement. Here is his farewell column. (H/T Mary)

> Excerpt:
>
> After enjoying a quarter of a century of writing this column for Creators Syndicate, I have decided to stop. Age 86 is well past the usual retirement age, so the question is not why I am quitting, but why I kept at it so long.
>
> […]Looking back over the years, as old-timers are apt to do, I see huge changes, both for the better and for the worse.
>
> In material things, there has been almost unbelievable progress. Most Americans did not have refrigerators back in 1930, when I was born. Television was little more than an experiment, and such things as air-conditioning or air travel were

> only for the very rich.
>
> My own family did not have electricity or hot running water, in my early childhood, which was not unusual for blacks in the South in those days.
>
> It is hard to convey to today's generation the fear that the paralyzing disease of polio inspired, until vaccines put an abrupt end to its long reign of terror in the 1950s.
>
> […]Most people living in officially defined poverty in the 21st century have things like cable television, microwave ovens and air-conditioning. Most Americans did not have such things, as late as the 1980s. People whom the intelligentsia continue to call the "have-nots" today have things that the "haves" did not have, just a generation ago.
>
> […]With all the advances of blacks over the years, nothing so brought home to me the social degeneration in black ghettoes like a visit to a Harlem high school some years ago.
>
> When I looked out the window at the park across the street, I mentioned that, as a child, I used to walk my dog in that park. Looks of horror came over the students' faces, at the thought of a kid going into the hell hole which that park had become in their time.
>
> When I have mentioned sleeping out on a fire escape in Harlem during hot summer nights, before most people could afford air-conditioning, young people have looked at me like I was a man from Mars. But blacks and whites alike had been sleeping out on fire escapes in New York since the 19th century. They did not have to contend with gunshots flying around during the night.
>
> We cannot return to the past, even if we wanted to, but let us hope that we can learn something from the past to make for a better present and future.

It's a tragedy that Thomas Sowell is not more recognized in our culture. Thomas Sowell makes public appearances, but mostly to conservatives. Although I am not a Rush Limbaugh listener, I once heard Thomas Sowell sitting in for Rush, and he had another conservative black economist Walter Williams on with him. Rank-and-file conservatives bought Sowell's books by the bushel and we went through them one after another. The first girl I ever dated went though 6 Thomas Sowell books in 2 months, then enrolled in university to study economics. That's the kind of effect that Thomas Sowell had on people – you couldn't read just one of his books. You read as many as you get from the public library, then you read all could afford to buy. Then you asked for them on birthdays and Christmases from your dumbfounded liberal relatives. It was fresh air – you read Thomas Sowell to get the lies and dishonesty of the progressive culture out of your mind.

But most people on the left have never heard of Thomas Sowell. Despite Sowell's splendid scholarly credentials and academic publications, the leftist gatekeepers don't want their liberal followers to know that the real intellect behind economic conservative is a *black* economist. Instead of fighting against Sowell's ideas, their response has been to

ignore him.

Let's take a quick look at some of the institutions who are recognizing the great man's retirement.

The American Enterprise Institute called it "the end of an era":

> In my opinion, there is no economist alive today who has done more to eloquently, articulately, and persuasively advance the principles of economic freedom, limited government, individual liberty, and a free society than Thomas Sowell. In terms of both his quantity of work (at least 40 books and several thousand newspaper columns) and the consistently excellent and crystal-clear quality of his writing, I don't think any living free-market economist even comes close to matching Sowell's prolific record of writing about economics. And I don't think there is any writer today, economist or non-economist, who can match Thomas Sowell's "idea density" and his ability to consistently pack so much profound economic wisdom into a single sentence and a single paragraph.
>
> Even at 86 years old, Thomas Sowell has remained intellectually active with his syndicated newspaper columns and the publication last year of his 40th book — *Wealth, Poverty and Politics: An International Perspective* — which was, amazingly, his *13th book in the last decade*! To honor Thomas Sowell's well-deserved retirement from writing his invaluable weekly column for the last quarter century, I present below some of my favorite quotations from Dr. Thomas Sowell (most were featured on a CD post in June on Sowell's birthday) and a bonus video of the great economist:

I had to choose just a few of these, so here goes:

> 6. **Politicians as Santa Claus**. The big question that seldom— if ever— gets asked in the mainstream media is whether these are a net increase in jobs. Since the only resources that the government has are the resources it takes from the private sector, using those resources to create jobs means reducing the resources available to create jobs in the private sector.
>
> So long as most people do not look beyond superficial appearances, politicians can get away with playing Santa Claus on all sorts of issues, while leaving havoc in their wake— such as growing unemployment, despite all the jobs being "created."

If you show or read the quote below to anyone who is a serious conservative, they will immediately tell you that the author is Thomas Sowell, or someone summarizing Sowell's work:

> 10. **The Anointed Ones**. In their haste to be wiser and nobler than others, the anointed have misconceived two basic issues. They seem to assume: 1) that they have more knowledge than the average member of the benighted, and 2) that this is the relevant comparison. The real comparison, however, is not between

> the knowledge possessed by the average member of the educated elite versus the average member of the general public, but rather the total direct knowledge brought to bear through social processes (the competition of the marketplace, social sorting, etc.), involving millions of people, versus the secondhand knowledge of generalities possessed by a smaller elite group.
>
> The vision of the anointed is one in which ills as poverty, irresponsible sex, and crime derive primarily from 'society,' rather than from individual choices and behavior. To believe in personal responsibility would be to destroy the whole special role of the anointed, whose vision casts them in the role of rescuers of people treated unfairly by 'society.'

Celebrating entrepreneurs:

> 12. **Helping the Poor.** It was Thomas Edison who brought us electricity, not the Sierra Club. It was the Wright brothers who got us off the ground, not the Federal Aviation Administration. It was Henry Ford who ended the isolation of millions of Americans by making the automobile affordable, not Ralph Nader.
>
> Those who have helped the poor the most have not been those who have gone around loudly expressing "compassion" for the poor, but those who found ways to make industry more productive and distribution more efficient, so that the poor of today can afford things that the affluent of yesterday could only dream about.

Distinctions like this is what gave so many ordinary people the desire to read more and more of Thomas Sowell to clean popular culture socialist pablum out of their minds:

> 13. **Income Mobility**. Only by focusing on the income brackets, instead of the actual people moving between those brackets, have the intelligentsia been able to verbally create a "problem" for which a "solution" is necessary. They have created a powerful vision of "classes" with "disparities" and "inequities" in income, caused by "barriers" created by "society." But the routine rise of millions of people out of the lowest quintile over time makes a mockery of the "barriers" assumed by many, if not most, of the intelligentsia.

Everything becomes clear – as spiderwebs – with a little Thomas Sowell. And for evidence, he used the best studies from all over the world, from across all different times and places, so that you always had the evidence at your fingertips. His books are filled with footnotes for further study.

The Weekly Standard

The Weekly Standard has an article entitled "Thomas Sowell, America's Greatest Public Intellectual, Says 'Farewell'" by Fred Barnes.

Excerpt:

> Thomas Sowell is giving up his column. I can think of lots of columnists whose

> writing we wouldn't miss. Sowell isn't one of them. Every column he wrote in a quarter-century career as a columnist was eminently worth reading. I say this having read nearly every one of them.
>
> What made his columns so good? He wrote with sparkling clarity. He relied on facts. He didn't showcase his scholarship, but his range of subjects was impressive. He understood his readers and didn't write down to them. He was prolific. He wrote two columns a week and, when he had more to say, sometimes three or four. Best of all, he analyzed things from conservative—and somewhat libertarian—perspective better than anyone else and in fewer words.

If you wanted more words, you could always look to his books, and that's what my friends and I did.

National Review

National Review has an article entitled "Thank You, Professor Sowell" by Michelle Malkin. They also re-posted an article from 2011, entitled "A Lion in High Summer".

One quote from Michelle Malkin:

> I first read Thomas Sowell in college — no thanks to my college.
>
> At the majority of America's institutions of "higher learning," reading Thomas Sowell was a subversive act in the early 1990s when I was a student. It remains so today. Why? Because the prolific libertarian economist's vast body of work is a clarion rejection of all that the liberal intelligentsia hold dear.
>
> […]The former leftist playwright David Mamet, in his 2008 manifesto "Why I Am No Longer a Brain-Dead Liberal," cited his exposure to Sowell, whom he dubbed "our greatest contemporary philosopher," as a critical factor in his conversion. Whether tackling the "bait and switch media," the "organized noisemakers," or the lawless enablers of "social disintegration," Thomas Sowell's dozens of academic books and thousands of newspaper columns have sparked generations of his readers across the political spectrum to think independently and challenge imposed visions.
>
> Asked once how he would like to be remembered, Sowell responded: "Oh, heavens, I'm not sure I want to be particularly remembered. I would like the ideas that I've put out there to be remembered." Mission accomplished. Though it has been decades since he taught in a formal classroom, his students are legion.

This is where today's conservatives came from – we read the Thomas Sowell. Many conservatives (e.g. – Michelle and myself) came from non-white families and cultures, just like Sowell. We were convinced to give up on the socialism popular in our families and cultures by his writing. He convinced himself, then he convinced us. In contrast, there isn't much convincing on the secular left – most people just accept secular leftism in order to be liked – it's not cognitive, it's just virtue signaling. Conservatives are convinced

by Thomas Sowell's writing, whereas liberals blindly follow Hollywood celebrities. It's just tribalism.

Ben Shapiro

Jewish conservative Ben Shapiro wrote an article in The Daily Wire entitled "Farewell to Thomas Sowell, Dean of Conservative Columnists".

One excerpt:

> In what we can only hope is the final heartbreak of 2016, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution Thomas Sowell announced his retirement from his syndicated column. Sowell isn't just one of the great thinkers of our time. He's a genuine voice of decency and truth in a time when screaming and hysterics gain headlines. His voice will be missed every week.
>
> […]For years, I've named Sowell as the man I'd most love to see as president. That doesn't end just because his column has.

At the end, he lists his favorite Thomas Sowell books.

That's to show you how real conservatives like Ben Shapiro who are having a real influence (his podcast is the #1 conservative podcast, it has exploded in popularity) were influenced by Thomas Sowell. Shapiro always says that people new to conservatism should always start with a study of basic economics, e.g. – books by Thomas Sowell. No one in my own family started out conservative. I read Thomas Sowell, then they read Thomas Sowell. That's how we became conservatives.

Wintery Knight

I'm busy cleaning stuff out of my parents basement this holiday season. This trip, I am taking some of my books back with me. I made the choices about what to take before I saw Sowell's retirement. Without any sentiment at all, I chose:

- Basic Economics, 4th edition
- Applied Economics, 2nd edition
- Economics Facts and Fallacies, 2nd edition
- Intellectuals and Society, 2nd edition
- The Housing Boom and Bust, 2nd edition
- Inside American Education
- A Personal Odyssey
- A Conflict of Visions
- The Vision of the Anointed (best book for beginners)
- Barbarians Inside the Gates
- Black Rednecks and White Liberals

I am leaving my second edition of Basic Economics for my Dad. I understand that a new 5th edition is now out, and I might get that. I have many, many more on audio books – I buy all the audio books editions that I can get, and listen to them over and over. This is where my worldview on economic issues (not to mention marriage, gun rights, education,

war, etc.) came from.

Worst president ever leaves Trump a looming economic crisis

December 29, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?
Consider this article from the Wall Street Journal, which discusses the latest CBO (Congressional Budget Office) report.

Massive budget deficits:

> One lesson is that the days of easy deficit reduction are over. The annual deficit in 2016 rose for the first time in three years—by $148 billion to $587 billion. That's 3.2% of GDP, up sharply from 2.5% last year. Mr. Obama has been able to ride falling defense spending from reduced military deployments overseas, but Pentagon outlays were flat in 2016. Military spending will probably have to increase in future years, no matter who wins Tuesday, to meet the growing challenges from Russia, China and Iran.

Looming entitlement crisis:

> Mr. Obama will also leave town having failed over eight years to do anything to slow the booming burden of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Outlays for those three programs grew by $75 billion last year, or about 4.2%. They now account for 10% of the entire U.S. economy, the highest level ever, and rising.

More spending on welfare programs:

> The President's main contribution has been to put Medicaid on hyperspeed by expanding its coverage through ObamaCare. CBO's budget gnomes report that Medicaid spending has climbed by nearly 40% in a mere three years—to $368

> billion in 2016. That doesn't include what the states are obliged to chip in.

Higher taxes and more regulations (e.g. – Dodd-Frank) killed economic growth:

> Another lesson is that faster economic growth is essential to a healthier fisc. One reason for the deficit rebound in 2016 is that federal revenues increased by a mere $18 billion or less than 1%. Individual income-tax receipts were flat, while corporate income taxes fell by $44 billion or 13% as business profits sagged. This is what happens when the economy sputters at about a 1% growth rate for most of a year.

Massive spending:

> Growth that slow couldn't keep up with spending that increased 4.5% or $166 billion in 2016. Federal outlays were 20.9% of the economy for the year, up from 20.4% in 2014. A Republican Congress has kept that figure down from the heights of the Obama-Nancy Pelosi stimulus, but it is now set to take off again as more Baby Boomers start collecting Social Security and Medicare. (Millennials, get ready to pay even higher taxes throughout your working life.)

Looming crisis caused by rising interest rates:

> This era may be ending as a new President takes office. The Fed may raise rates in December, and bond yields have been rising. Outlays for net interest on the debt increased by $23 billion or 9% in 2016, largely due to faster inflation. But inflation is still tame. If it begins to rise, the debt-financing burden will explode with more than $14 trillion of Treasury debt outstanding, much of it short-term. In January CBO said that if interest rates are 100 basis points above their projections each year for the next decade, the Treasury will have to pay an average of more than $160 billion per year.

And it's not just fiscal matters. Investors Business Daily adds to the list of problems that Obama will pass on to Trump.

Low wages, high unemployment:

> Obama, like every Democrat running for office, claimed to be the champion of the middle class, and that instead of "trickle down" economics, he'd growth the economy from the "middle out." Instead, middle class wages stagnated throughout Obama's term in office, with real median household income today exactly where it was when Obama took office.
>
> And despite Obama's constant bragging about the "longest" stretch of private sector job growth, the 15.5 million private sector jobs added since February 2010 hasn't even kept pace with population growth — which climbed 17.5 million over that time. As a result, more than 14 million people have dropped out of the labor force since Obama took office. In fact, without the huge decline in labor force participation under Obama, the unemployment rate would be more like 10%,

> rather than the official 4.9%.

Higher health care costs and more health care regulations on businesses:

> ObamaCare was supposed to be Obama's grand legacy, showing how government could be a force for good. Instead, it's become an epic failure that will have to dealt with by the next president. The reforms Obama said would repair a "broken" health system have themselves broken it. Premiums in the newly government-run individual market are up an average 22% nationwide, and at rates of 50%, 60%, even 113% in some states — increases unheard of before ObamaCare. Insurance markets that were once vibrantly competitive are now dominated by one or two carriers. ObamaCare has made Medicaid, an already terrible health program, worse by dumping millions more into it. ObamaCare's taxes, mandates, and regulations are suffocating businesses.

Foreign policy disasters:

> A list of Obama's foreign policy failures would fill a volume, but here are just a few: Obama in 2011 prematurely removed troops from Iraq, creating a power vacuum later filled by ISIS; he let Iran's covert nuclear weapons program continue, starting a nuclear arms race in the Mideast; after Obama called ISIS a "jayvee team," it grew in clout and territory as a result of Obama's neglect; Obama's intervention in Libya during that country's civil war led to the country becoming a terrorist haven, with no real government; he and Hillary Clinton pushed the "reset button" with Russia's Vladimir Putin, and Russia launched hostile actions against its neighbors in Crimea and Ukraine, and threats to the Baltic states; Obama has signaled ambivalence over protecting traditional allies in Asia, leading to China arming up and bullying it neighbors. With massive defense cuts Obama put in place, it's safe to say the U.S. hasn't been this weak since the nadir of the Carter years.

This is not even to mention the $1.3 trillion dollar student loan bubble:

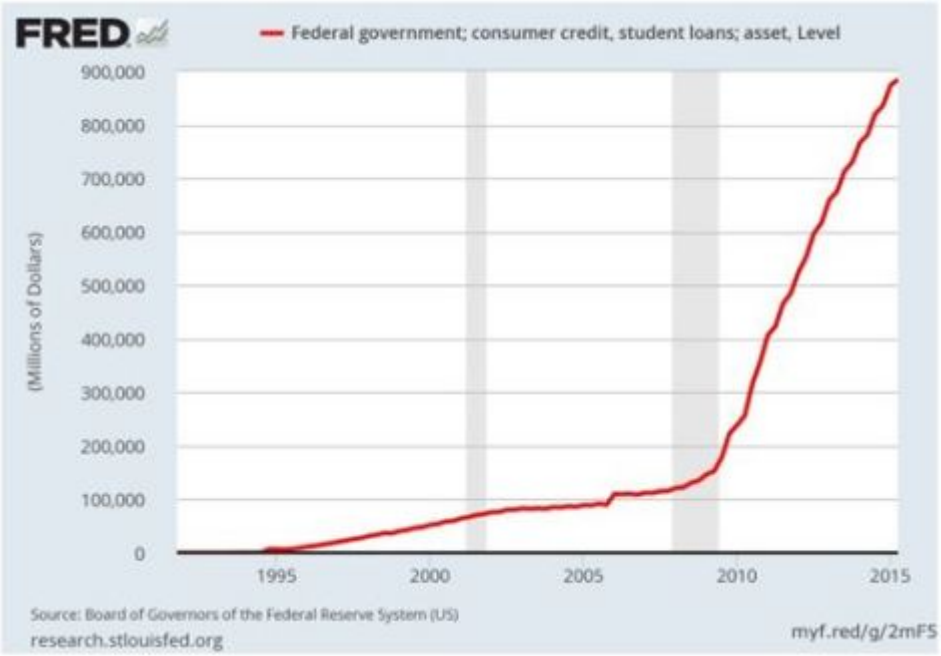

Federal student loans skyrocketed under Obama

And yet another Democrat-caused mortgage lending crisis:

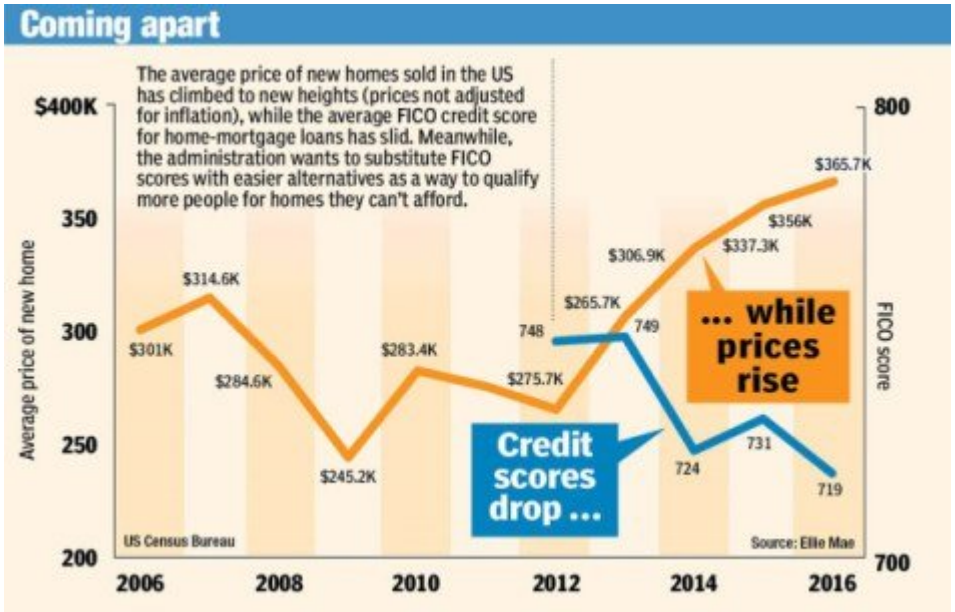

Another Democrat-caused mortgage lending crisis is on the horizon

Democrats are always in favor of making it easy for people to borrow money, and leaving taxpayers on the hook to cover it. Are there enough people working to cover these debts? Has Obama been focused on helping to lower taxes and reduce regulations for job creators, so they can create new jobs? How will the millennials respond to being forced to pay for all the debt incurred by the man they voted for?

Trump will inherit many foreign policy disasters

December 30, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?

The most difficult mistakes for Trump to fix will be the foreign policy blunders committed by the last administration – the creation of wars in other countries and the the supporting of our enemies (giving assault weapons to drug cartels, giving nuclear weapons to Iran, etc.) that are the most difficult to make right.

Consider this article from the Daily Signal.

It lists 5 crises created by the Obama administration in the last 8 years:

1. ISIS in Iraq and Syria
2. Afghanistan War
3. Ukraine-Russia War
4. Saudi Arabia-Yemen War
5. Campaigns Against Terrorists in Africa

There was no "Islamic State" in Iraq or Syria when president Bush left office. Iraq and Syria, along with Egypt and Libya, were stable. Libya had just voluntarily given up their WMD programs without a shot being fired, because of concern that Bush would invade them, too. But then Obama became president and withdrew our troops from Iraq. What happened next? Genocide, rape and sex-trafficking on a scale unimaginable to naive American progressives.

Excerpt:

> **1. ISIS in Iraq and Syria**
>
> In response to rapid territorial gains made by the Islamic State during the first half of 2014, the U.S. and allied countries began a military campaign against the

> terrorist group, relying primarily on airstrikes and support of local ground forces.
>
> As of Nov. 2, the U.S. coalition has conducted nearly 16,000 airstrikes in Syria and Iraq, the countries where ISIS maintains its largest presence.
>
> The Defense Department reports that as of Aug. 31, the total cost of operations related to defeating ISIS is $9.3 billion and the average daily cost is $12.3 million.
>
> Trump inherits the military campaign against ISIS during a crucial phase, as the U.S. undertakes missions to take back key territory controlled by the militants.
>
> […]In Syria, the Obama administration is supporting 30,000 Syrian-Kurdish and Syrian-Arab fighters, who announced last weekend they were launching a campaign to liberate the ISIS capital in Raqqa. There are roughly 300 U.S. special operations forces on the ground in the country.

> The moves to take back ISIS' remaining strongholds showcase the extent to which Obama has prioritized the counterterrorism mission in Syria over efforts to help resolve the country's civil war, which has resulted in as many as a half a million deaths.
>
> On Monday, in a press conference, Obama acknowledged his Syria policy "has not worked."

Another blunder by the Obama administration occurred with his decision to take a naive, pacifist stance with Russia. Obama and Clinton were following the liberal playbook, which states that the best way to stop a bully from being aggressive is to bow down to him and grovel. This is literally how progressives think about foreign policy – they think that weaknesses causes tyrants to back off, and that strength causes tyrants to arm up and attack their neighbors.

How well this the progressive view work with Russia?

> **3. Ukraine-Russia War**
>
> Europe's only active war has resulted in the deaths of nearly 10,000 soldiers and civilians on both sides.
>
> The conflict started in 2013, when Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych, under pressure from Russia, suspended talks on a trade deal with the European Union. Thousands of protesters hit the streets in the following days, supporting closer ties with the West.
>
> The protests turned violent, and Yanukovych fled the capital, Kiev. Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, and pro-Russian rebels began to seize territory in eastern Ukraine. Separatists in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk eventually declared independence.
>
> Two cease-fire accords are not being observed. The Obama administration's policy has been to support a German and French-led effort to negotiate a settlement to the war, and maintain pressure on Russia by working with the European Union to uphold sanctions imposed on Moscow for its annexation of

> Crimea. The Obama administration has also delivered Ukraine tens of millions of dollars in nonlethal aid, but has not provided weapons.

Obama isn't providing Ukraine with weapons, because his progressive playbook says that Russia will be more likely to attack if they stand to take *more* losses to anti-tank weapons. That's how people on the secular left think. They make decisions based on what makes them feel superior and what makes them look idealistic to others – not based on what works.

But there's more. Hillary Clinton and Marco Rubio championed an idealistic intervention in Libya. They thought that if we got rid of Libya's dictator, then there would be a spontaneous uprising of peaceful Muslim democracy-lovers. So they ordered air strikes with no ground invasion, and guess what they got?

Islamic State taking root in the anarchy they created:

> **5. Campaigns Against Terrorists in Africa**
>
> Obama has described his efforts to destroy al-Qaeda's core leadership as one of the successes of his national security policy. But the terrorist threat has spread to new regions in recent years, prompting a U.S. military response, and Trump will have to decide how to proceed.
>
> Unrelated campaigns in Libya and Somalia are prime examples of the diffuse threat.
>
> In Libya, the U.S. has conducted more than 360 airstrikes in support of pro-government forces trying to expel ISIS from the coastal Libyan city, Sirte. A small number of U.S. special operations forces are also providing on-the-ground support.
>
> Since the 2011 American intervention in Libya that led to the death of the country's deposed dictator leader, Muammar Gaddafi, the country has been plagued by instability.
>
> Today, the U.S. is supporting a project to build a unity government in Libya. But the unity government has not yet won the approval of Libya's various rival factions.
>
> "Libya is a quintessential civil war," Middle East expert Pollack said. "ISIS makes their home in civil wars."
>
> Separately, in another African nation, Somalia, the U.S. has been engaged for more than a decade in an air campaign against al-Shabab, an affiliate of al-Qaeda. The group is responsible for one of the deadliest attacks in Africa, when in 2013 it struck a mall in Nairobi, Kenya.
>
> The terrorist group spawned in 2005, taking advantage of chaos in a country that has been split apart by civil war for 25 years.
>
> This year, The Washington Post reports, the U.S. has conducted more than a dozen airstrikes and drone strikes against al-Shabab.

> According to The New York Times, as part of a multifront war against militant Islam in Africa, American forces are also involved in helping to combat al-Qaeda in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso and Boko Haram in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad.

Although progressives like to style themselves as being “anti-war”, they actually cause a lot of wars and deaths with their misguided idealistic military interventions. Obama inherited a peaceful situation in Russia and in the Middle East, but he screwed everything up. To stop wars you must understand military issues. Just because a person says they don’t like war, it doesn’t mean that they know what actions to take to avoid war.

Is it true that Obama led a “scandal-free” administration?

December 31, 2016 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama claims that his administration has been free of major scandals

When Barack Obama was running for office, he promised to deliver a high degree of integrity and transparency. His teleprompter told him that he was going to be free of corruption and lawlessness, and he dutifully read those words out to his adoring fans. But after 8 years of Obama rule, does reality match his self-congratulating rhetoric?

Consider this article from the Daily Wire.

It lists 11 scandals that occurred during Obama reign of error:

1. **Operation Fast and Furious**
2. **Benghazi**
3. **The IRS targeted conservative organizations**
4. **The DOJ seized Associated Press phone records as well as phone and email records from Fox News reporter James Rosen**
5. **The NSA conducted mass surveillance against American citizens without a warrant**
6. **The Obama administration paid ransom to Iran for hostages, and lied to the American people about it**
7. **Hillary’s email scandal**
8. **The Environmental Protection Agency poisoned a Colorado river**
9. **The EPA also broke federal law in promoting a regulation**

10. **The GSA scandal**
11. **The Secret Service scandal**

Surprisingly, Obamacare is not mentioned, even though Obama knowingly lied to the American people over and over about the true intentions and effects of the law – intentions and effects that are now understood by Americans who are being driven into bankruptcy by the law. The massive stimulus grants to Obama bundlers for "green energy" corporations that later went bankrupt are not mentioned. Giving green cards to refugees from Islamic countries without doing the proper background checks who then went on to kill Americans in terrorist attacks, (e.g. – Orlando, San Bernadino), is not mentioned. And of course the Democrat fascination with illegal immigration caused them to catch and release illegal immigrants who went on to commit crimes, including the murder of Kate Steinle. A lot more could be added to the list.

I think numbers 3 and 4 from the Daily Wire list above really show the character of the Obama administration: (links removed)

> **3. The IRS targeted conservative organizations.** In 2013, Lois Lerner, who directed the Internal Revenue Service's Exempt Organizations Unit, admitted that Tea Party organizations were targeted under the agency, but blamed it on lower-level employees. Such organizations were heavily scrutinized with invasive questions. Since then, Lerner and IRS commissioner John Koskinen have denied any wrongdoing and have stonewalled congressional efforts to investigate the matter, citing computer crashes for being unable to turn over related emails.
>
> Meanwhile, a federal court concluded in August that conservative groups might still be facing targeted scrutiny from the IRS. It has also been reported that the Department of Justice (DOJ) knew about the IRS's targeting of conservative groups as early as 2011.
>
> **4. The DOJ seized Associated Press phone records as well as phone and email records from Fox News reporter James Rosen.** In the AP's case, the DOJ was investigating a story involving "a CIA operation in Yemen that foiled an al-Qaeda plot in the spring of 2012 to set off a bomb on an airplane headed to the United States," according to the *Washington Post*. The DOJ seized two months of phone records from the AP without informing the news outlet.
>
> "There can be no possible justification for such an overbroad collection of the telephone communications of The Associated Press and its reporters," Gary Pruitt, president of the AP wrote to Holder at the time. "These records potentially reveal communications with confidential sources across all of the newsgathering activities undertaken by the AP during a two-month period, provide a road map to AP's newsgathering operations, and disclose information about AP's activities and operations that the government has no conceivable right to know."
>
> In the Rosen case, the DOJ was investigating a story Rosen did involving North Korea and tracked "his movements and conversations," according to Fox News,

> including phone numbers belonging to Rosen's parents. The DOJ had listed Rosen as a "co-conspirator" under the Espionage Act in regards to the story—allegedly pressing a source for classified information. Rosen was never charged with a crime.
>
> Fox News executive Michael Clemente called the DOJ's actions against Rosen "downright chilling." "We will unequivocally defend [Rosen's] right to operate as a member of what up until now has always been a free press," Clemente said in a statement, per the *Washington Post*.

The news media has a very short memory. They don't focus on the scandals for more than a night or two, if at all. But conservatives have a long memory for scandals, especially the ones where government was used as a weapon against us.

How early are the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity?

January 1, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here's a great post from Tough Questions Answered.

The post describes evidence for the Incarnation and the Trinity in the writings of Ignatius, who was the third Bishop of Antioch from 70 AD to 107 AD.

Here's the raw quote from Ignatius' "Epistle to the Ephesians":

> But our Physician is the only true God, the Father and Begetter of the only-begotten Son. We have also as a Physician the Lord our God, Jesus the Christ, the only-begotten Son and Word, before time began, but who afterwards became also man, of Mary the virgin. For "the Word was made flesh." Being incorporeal, He was in a body; being impassible, He was in a passible body; being immortal, He was in a mortal body; being life, He became subject to corruption, that He might free our souls from death and corruption, and heal them, and might restore them to health, when they were diseased with ungodliness and wicked lusts.

And TQA discusses the passage:

> There are several aspects of this passage which demonstrate that Saint Ignatius held beliefs consistent with the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Dual Nature of Christ. First, he refers to two separate Persons, God the Father and Jesus Christ, yet he calls both of them God.
>
> […]Second, Ignatius refers to Jesus Christ as begotten "before time began". This

> is almost word for word identical to the Nicene Creed, which says, “I believe in. . . one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. . .” Some today claim that the Early Church believed Christ’s being ”begotten” of the Father was in relation to His birth from Mary (specifically, this is an LDS claim). However, Ignatius’ comment here demonstrates that the Early Church’s understanding of Christ’s nature as “only-begotten” was a relationship with the Father that was “before time began” and has nothing to do with His earthly incarnation. It is interesting to note that the Greek word translated as “only-begotten” both here and in the New Testament is ”monogenes”. Monogenes literally means “one of a kind,” and to the Church Fathers it connoted Christ being of the same nature as the Father. . . something that was entirely unique to Him.
>
> In addition to calling Christ God and claiming Him to be the “only-begotten” of the Father “before time began”, Ignatius tells us that “afterwards” Christ “became man”. Ignatius then goes on to point out some aspects that Christ’s becoming man added to His nature. He says that although Christ was incorporeal, He was in a body; although He was impassible, He was in a passible body; although He was immortal, He was in a mortal body; although He was life, He became subject to corruption. These differing aspects of Christ’s nature, aspects that are polar opposites to one another, speak to Christ having two natures, one as God and one as man, and demonstrate that Saint Ignatius understood Christ in this manner. As God, Christ was incorporeal, impassible, immortal, and life itself. However, as man He was corporeal, passible, mortal, and subject to corruption.

Now I think you can pull the Incarnation and the Trinity right out the Bible, but it’s still nice to see such a prominent church father writing about it decades after the events.

Mike Licona debates Bart Ehrman on the reliability of the gospels

January 2, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!
From the Unbelievable radio show.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is well known as a US New Testament Scholar who lost his Christian faith and now questions many core precepts of Christianity, including the Resurrection of Jesus. When Mike Licona had doubts he devoted himself to investigating the evidence and became convinced that Jesus resurrection is the only rational explanation for the facts.
>
> They debate key historical facts about the resurrection – are the letters of Paul that report the resurrection and the Gospel accounts trustworthy or theologised and changed with time? What about apparent contradictions between the Gospels? Does the consensus of scholars count as evidence, or is there a Christian bias? Can a miracle count as an explanation for historical data?

The MP3 file is here. (Note: this link works)

Snarky summary of the radio debate: (items with * are my made-up paraphrases/clarifications)

Ehrman:
– Bart's new book is about forgeries in the ancient world
– some books were falsely attributed to prominent Christian figures
– there are mistakes in the Bible
– there are mistakes in the resurrection narratives
– the defeat of inerrancy led to his conversion to liberal Christianity

– the problem of evil and suffering caused him to become a non-Christian

Licona:
– there are minimal facts that are agreed to by a broad spectrum of scholars
– the minimal facts are accepted because they pass standard historical criteria
– Fact 1: Jesus died by crucifixion
– Fact 2: Individuals and groups had visions of Jesus after his death
– Fact 3: Paul, a skeptic and an enemy, had an appearance of Jesus that converted him
– these facts are agreed to atheist scholars, liberal scholars, etc.
– virtually 100% of scholars agree with these three facts
– there is no naturalistic explanation of these three facts
– therefore, the best explanation of these three facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Ehrman:
– all historians would accept these three facts, except for maybe the group appearances
– the death of Jesus is irrelevant to the resurrection
– the second and third point can be collapsed together
– so really there is only one fact

Moderator:
– the crucifixion is relevant because Muslims don't admit that fact
– the crucifixion important because it establishes a resurrection, not a resuscitation

Ehrman:
– well, if the point is that he died, then yes, this does require a resurrection

Licona:
– the crucifixion refutes Muslims who deny that Jesus died
– the crucifixion refutes the apparent death theory (swoon theory)
– the death is required for a bodily resurrection
– it's important to know what facts most scholars, regardless of worldview, agree on
– it's important to emphasize that Licona is working from historical bedrock facts
– the resurrection is the best explanation for the historical bedrock facts

Ehrman:
– you are trying to list 3 things, but really it is just one thing – the appearances
– and not ALL scholars agree that the group visions occurred

Licona:
– name one prominent scholar who denies the group appearances

Ehrman:
– the radically leftist atheist nutcase John Dominic Crossan denies the group appearances
* Crossan is so far on the left that I look like a nutcase for even citing him
* Crossan believes in the Secret Gospel of Mark, which is a hoax – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan believes that the synoptics are LATER than gnostic forged gospels – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan presupposes atheism, so he cannot admit to miracle stories as a pre-

supposition – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan pre-supposes religious pluralism, so he cannot allow any exclusive claims Christians make – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan is a good historian, it's just that he is so far to the left that no one – NO ONE – agrees with his all of crazy theories
* I think it is a good idea to cite historians who pre-suppose atheism and political correctness before they sit down to do history

Licona:
– let me explain why most scholars accept the individual and group post-mortem appearances
– the best source for the appearances is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 15:3-8
– Paul himself had an appearance of Jesus after Jesus' death
– Paul received this material from a source very soon after the appearances – within 1-3 years
– we know that Paul met with Jesus disciples multiple times prior to writing
– Paul probably received it from Peter and James, who were themselves eyewitnesses

Moderator:
– this early dating presumably rules out legend

Licona:
– well legends CAN start quickly
– it does show that Paul was an eyewitness
– it does show that Paul was in contact with reliable eyewitnesses

Ehrman:
– 1 Corinthians is written around 55 AD, twenty-five years after Jesus died
– it is not implausible that Paul got the creed from the disciples, who were eyewitnesses
– but you don't need a long time for legends to emerge, so that is a possibility

Licona:
– only about 3% of people could read and write back them
– instead, people had enormous capacity for memorization
– the Pharisees were particularly good at memorization
– Jews were very serious about passing along traditions accurately
– Paul, a prominent Pharisee, would have been capable of passing on early creeds accurately
– Paul, in 1 Cor 7, shows that he is willing to separate his opinions from authentic tradition
– Paul had an opportunity in 1 Cor 7 to put words into Jesus' mouth, but he wouldn't do it

Ehrman:
– cultural anthropologists show that things do get changed in some oral cultures
– in these oral cultures, it is assumed that the story teller will change the story
– only in written cultures are they careful to avoid changing the story
– in the New Testament, you can compare the same story in two different gospels, there are differences

Licona:
– Ehrman is right that the gospel writers pick and choose things from the oral tradition that they want to include in their gospels
– different oral tradition transmission schemes have more or less embellishment
– african tribes embellish more, rabbinic teaching embellishes less
* Jesus' followers would have viewed him as a rabbi, and been careful about adding to his teachings
– Paul, an eyewitness, probably received the creed in 1 Cor 15 from other eyewitnesses
– Paul speaks about going twice to Jerusalem in Galatians
– he is meeting with Peter and James to check his facts

Ehrman:
– when you look at Mark and John, there are lots of differences in the narrative

Licona:
– I agree that the gospels have differences, but the oral tradition is likely fixed

Ehrman:
– but Mark and John have different sayings
– why doesn't Mark have the same explicit high Christology that John has?

Licona:
– first, John is trying to weave the oral tradition into a compelling story
– and second, when you look in Mark, the high Christology is there in the Son of Man sayings
– the apocalyptic Son of Man is in Mark, and everywhere in the New Testament

Ehrman:
– the "apocalyptic Son of Man" isn't in John

Licona:
– what about in John 9 with the man who was born blind

Ehrman:
– where is the apocalyptic part?

Licona:
– the healed man worships Jesus because he is the Son of Man
– that links to the apocalypic passages in the Old Testament

Moderator:
– what about the differences between the gospels?

Ehrman:
* well, now is the time for me to set up an inerrantist straw man and then knock it down!
* who was at the empty tomb: one angel or two angels? we don't know, so the whole Bible is false!
* I used to be an inerrantist, so one minor difference is enough for me to dump the whole Bible
* I'll kill you, you stupid straw man! I hate you, Moody Bible Institute! You lied to me!

Licona:
– many of these problems can be solved by realizing that the gospel writers compress time
– the stories don't have to list ALL the characters in every scene
– you don't have to force the Bible to meet some sort of wooden chronology
– the main thing is that the events happened, not that the descriptions match word for word across sources

Ehrman:
– you can't infer a miracle from history, David Hume says so
* extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, David Hume says so
* no I don't know what begging the question is, I'm not a philosopher
* no I don't remember when Bill Craig kicked my ass on this Hume objection in our debate
– the New Testament gospels contradict each other at every point, they are not reliable at all!
* they cannot even agree what Jesus' name is! There are 1 trillion variants of Jesus' name!
* "one angel vs two angels" proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point
* my expansive list of FOUR theologically insignificant variants proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point

Licona:
– um, the gospels agree on the central narrative and disagree on the peripherals
– and they agree on the minimal facts I presented, even if they disagree about the number of angels

Ehrman:
* they have to agree on everything and be inerrant! The Moody Straw Man Bible Institute says so!
* I really really really need to have the number of angels be the same, or Jesus didn't die on the cross

Licona:
– but you don't deny any of the three minimal facts I presented (crucifixion, appearances, Paul)

Ehrman:
– well, I don't know if the group appearances occurred – maybe they did
– i think Jesus died on the cross, and I think that people said they saw him alive afterward

Licona:
– if you deny the minimal facts, then you are outside the majority of scholars

Ehrman:
– the majority of scholars who agree to the minimal facts you presented are Christians
* Gerd Ludemann is an atheist Christian
* James Crossley is an atheist Christian
* Hector Avalos is an atheist Christian

* the majority of the atheist scholars are all Christians!
– VIRTUALLY EVERYBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IS A CHRISTIAN!!! (Yes, he said that)

Licona:
– you really think so?

Ehrman
– you name one non-Christian in the SBL

Licona:
– (incredulous) um, John Dominic Crossan is an atheist

Ehrman:
– but he CLAIMS TO BE A CHRISTIAN so that means HE IS A CHRISTIAN
* all you have to do to be a Christian is claim to be one
* you can even deny the existence of God and the divinity of Christ and still be one, you bigot!

Licona:
– would Jesus or the apostles recognize a Christian as being someone who doubts God's existence

Ehrman:
– my view is that Jesus and the apostles would not recognize evangelical Christians as Christians
* a non-theist can be a Christian just by claiming to be one, but evangelical Christians are not Christians even if they claim to be Christians
– Christians can't record accurate history about the resurrection because they are biased

Licona:
– on your view, if a person is a Christian then he can't write about the evidence for the resurrection
– so then similarly, you would not allow Jews to write about the historicity of the Holocaust
– because you think that if people have an interest in what they are recording then they can't be objective
– but you have to consider the evidence we have, taking the biases of the sources into account

Ehrman:
– but the only people who believe in the resurrection are Christians!

Licona:
– well, people can consider the evidence for the resurrection as non-Christians
– and then if they accept it they can become Christians

Moderator:
– what about your bias? you don't believe in God – doesn't that pre-supposition affect how you do history?

Ehrman:
– well, I presuppose naturalism, so I can't admit to anything in history that implicates supernatural causes
* no I have never heard of the arguments for the Big Bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, limits on mutations creating information, habitability and so on – I never heard about that stuff from my atheist university professors and even if I had I would have been expelled for talking about it because that would make people feel bad about their sinning

Licona:
– so it's not bias you are concerned about, it's that you don't want history to contradict your untested religion of naturalism?
– why not just do the history without pre-suppositions to gather the minimal facts and then see what the best explanation is?

Ehrman:
* well God is out of bounds as an explanation because I could not have got my PhD if I mentioned God
* I really needed my smart atheist professors to like me and give me good grades so God is RIGHT OUT
* ideas like a real God and moral laws and Hell makes my atheist professors uncomfortable and that means low grades for me
* I'm not really interested in butting heads with professors – it's easier to just agree with them and move on to selling books to the gullible
* My books are much more sensational than Dan Brown books, so please buy lots of them!

Licona:
– what if the historical evidence is good enough to show that Jesus rose from the dead?

Ehrman:
– well I would not call someone rising from the dead a miracle – I would call it weird
* I also think that the Big Bang is "weird" but that doesn't prove that God created the universe out of nothing
* if it's a miracle then I'm going to have to not sin, and maybe even go to Hell, and we can't have that

Licona:
– well, you accept the three minimal facts
– what if we try all the naturalistic explanations for those three facts and there are problems with all of them?
– what if the resurrection is the best explanation for the three minimal facts?

Ehrman:
– but I want to arbitrarily rule God put because I want to pre-suppose naturalism
– there is not historical reason I have to rule put supernatural explanations a priori

Licona:

– I think you are struggling with the theological implications of a historical conclusion

Ehrman:
– well when you do theology, you have to avoid grounding your theology on science or history
– theology has to be completely made up or it’s not good theology

Licona:
– I think you are letting your dislike of the implications of the resurrection determine your historical conclusions
– you have to use historical methods to gather the minimal facts that every scholar accepts, regardless of worldview
– then you weigh ALL the hypotheses, natural and supernatural, that could account for these minimal facts
– then you choose the hypothesis that best explains the minimal facts

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

January 3, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two bears fight it out, and may the best bear win!

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates).

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it!

The MP3 file is here.

The video is here:

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer

- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering

- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

In New England, liberal professors outnumber conservative professors 28 to 1

January 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Cheryle Abatte, Marquette University
I don't think that colleges are as interested in "diversity and inclusion" as they claim to be.

This story is from Boston Magazine.

Excerpt:

> Last spring, Samuel Abrams, a professor of politics at Sarah Lawrence College, in New York, decided to run the numbers. From the start, he certainly expected liberal professors to outnumber conservatives, but his data—25 years' worth of statistics from the Higher Education Research Institute—told a far more startling tale: In the South and throughout the Great Plains, the ratio of liberal to conservative professors hovered around 3 to 1. On the liberal left coast, the ratio was 6 to 1. And then there was New England—which looked like William F. Buckley's worst nightmare—standing at 28 to 1. "It astonished me," says Abrams, whose research revealed that conservative professors weren't just rare; they were being pushed to the edge of extinction.
>
> […] In 1989, according to Abrams's data, the ratio of liberal to conservative professors in New England was 5 to 1. The divide widened slowly through the 1990s and then tore open shortly after the turn of the century. Then, between 2004 and 2014, conservative professors essentially fell off the face of the Northeast.

Is this happening because conservative professors are not qualified? The article has an example:

> Consider the case of James Miller, an economist at Smith College who arrived on campus in 1996. In hopes of attaining tenure, he taught several classes each semester, cranked out academic articles in reputable journals, and authored a book on game theory. Along the way, he also wrote a few op-eds, including one for *National Review* in which he asserted that the dominance of liberals in academia skews scholarship to the point that aspiring professors are forced to pursue research pleasing to the liberal gatekeepers, who grant or deny tenure with the ruthlessness of Caesar at the Roman Forum. "Practically the only way for a women's-studies professor to get a lifetime college appointment," he wrote, "is for her to contribute to the literature on why America is racist, sexist, and homophobic."
>
> **When Miller came up for tenure the following year, he was denied by**

> **two votes. In letters explaining why board members voted for or against Miller, one of the professors wrote that she voted against him because Miller had publicly criticized the economics of tenure policies in his book. Another professor wrote that she found the views expressed in Miller's *National Review* op-ed to be disturbing. "They didn't say I was wrong," Miller says, still sounding defensive more than a decade later. "They said I shouldn't have said that."**

There was another recent study on this problem of progressives discriminating against conservatives in academia.

The Washington Examiner reports:

> Registered Democratic professors outnumber Republican ones nearly 12 to 1 in economics, journalism, psychology and law programs at leading U.S. universities, according to new research.
>
> Many departments at top schools have no registered Republicans, and in many cases, Republicans are outnumbered by registered members of third parties.
>
> The analysis, published in the online journal Econ Journal Watch, presents new evidence that elite universities lean to the Left. It also suggests that Democratic partisanship may be increasing at those schools, as the Democrat-to-Republican ratio appears to have risen significantly in recent years and younger faculty are even more Democratic than their older peers.
>
> Authors Mitchell Langbert, Anthony Quain and Daniel Klein compared departmental faculty lists with voter registration rolls to conclude that there are 11.5 registered Democrats for every one Republican among faculty at the top 40 highest-ranked schools they studied.
>
> Of the five departments they analyzed, history was by far the most Democratic. There are more than 33 Democratic professors for every Republican at the top 40 schools. Economics was the least Democratic, with a 4.5 to 1 ratio.

Previously, I blogged about a study of donations by California faculty that showed that faculty donate overwhelmingly to Democrat politicians. Another study found that those liberal professors would discriminate against conservatives, if given the opportunity.

What explains all of this?

Consider this essay by secular libertarian professor Robert Nozick who explains why university professors are liberal.

Excerpt:

> What factor produced feelings of superior value on the part of intellectuals? I want to focus on one institution in particular: schools. As book knowledge became increasingly important, schooling–the education together in classes of young people in reading and book knowledge–spread. Schools became the major institution outside of the family to shape the attitudes of young people, and

> almost all those who later became intellectuals went through schools. There they were successful. They were judged against others and deemed superior. They were praised and rewarded, the teacher's favorites. How could they fail to see themselves as superior? Daily, they experienced differences in facility with ideas, in quick-wittedness. The schools told them, and showed them, they were better.
>
> The schools, too, exhibited and thereby taught the principle of reward in accordance with (intellectual) merit. To the intellectually meritorious went the praise, the teacher's smiles, and the highest grades. In the currency the schools had to offer, the smartest constituted the upper class. Though not part of the official curricula, in the schools the intellectuals learned the lessons of their own greater value in comparison with the others, and of how this greater value entitled them to greater rewards.
>
> The wider market society, however, taught a different lesson. There the greatest rewards did not go to the verbally brightest. There the intellectual skills were not *most* highly valued. Schooled in the lesson that they were most valuable, the most deserving of reward, the most entitled to reward, how could the intellectuals, by and large, fail to resent the capitalist society which deprived them of the just deserts to which their superiority "entitled" them? Is it surprising that what the schooled intellectuals felt for capitalist society was a deep and sullen animus that, although clothed with various publicly appropriate reasons, continued even when those particular reasons were shown to be inadequate?

It's very important to understand what is motivating university professors, especially ones who are in departments divorced from reality, like English and victim studies of various sorts. They are literally teaching classes in topic that have no accountability to reality. It's just indoctrination in what the professor believes. These professors think they are smart, but they don't earn anything like productive people in the private sector, e.g. – software engineers. It creates a deep sense of inferiority that makes them hostile to the capitalist system. Their only hope is a powerful government that redirects money from those who serve customers (private sector companies) to "wordsmiths" like themselves.

Gary Habermas and James Crossley discuss the minimal facts case for the resurrection

January 5, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two ninjas face off at sundown

James Crossley is my favorite atheist ancient historian, such a straight shooter. He's on the skeptical left, but he has a no-baloney way of talking that I really like. I was so excited to summarize this, and there's not a speck of snark in this summary. Crossley dates the gospel of Mark 37-43 A.D., far earlier than most scholars. Justin Brierley does a great job as moderator. Gary Habermas is OK, but he is not familiar with any useful arguments for God's existence, (kalam, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, etc.), and that is a problem in this debate.

Here are the details of the debate:

> Christian philosopher and historian Gary Habermas has been at the forefront of the 'minimal facts' approach as evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.
>
> He debates the commonly agreed facts with agnostic New Testament scholar James Crossley and they discuss whether the miracle of the resurrection can be a historically valid explanation of the evidence.

Note: this is the first of two shows they are doing together!!

The MP3 file is here. (If this disappears, tell me, I have a copy)

There is also a video on YouTube:

This non-snarky summary starts at 10:52.

Summary:

- Habermas: the minimal facts are the facts that even the majority of *skeptical* scholars will accept

Habermas list of minimal facts: (near universal acceptance)

1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion
2. After his death, his disciples had experiences that they believed were appearances of the risen Jesus
3. The disciples were transformed by their experiences and proclaimed his resurrection and were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection
4. The proclamation of his resurrection was early
5. James was converted by a post-mortem experience
6. Paul was converted by a post-mortem experience

Habermas list of widely-accepted facts:

1. Burial for Jesus in a private tomb
2. The private tomb found empty
3. The disciples despaired after Jesus was crucified
4. The proclamation of the resurrection started in Jerusalem
5. Changing the worship day from Saturday to Sunday

Crossley's views on the minimal and widely-accepted facts:

- Crossley: I am in broad agreement with what Gary said
- Crossley: "the resurrection appearances are some of the hardest, best evidence we have" because it's in early 1 Cor 15:3-8 creed
- Crossley: people were convinced that they had seen the risen Christ

The burial in a private tomb:

- Crossley: I have my doubts about the private tomb burial and the empty tomb
- Crossley: Mark's gospel has the burial in a private tomb by Joseph of Arimethea, and Mark is the earliest gospel
- Crossley: I don't have a doubt, it's just that there are other possible alternatives, and then the tradition was invented later – but that's just a possibility
- Crossley: there is not enough evidence to make a decision either way on the burial

The empty tomb:

- Habermas: there are multiple lines of evidence for the empty tomb
- Habermas: the reason it's not one of my minimal facts is because a quarter to a third of skeptical scholars reject it

The transformation of the followers of Jesus:

- Crossley: "yes, clearly, I don't think you can argue with that, it's fairly obvious"

The conversions of James and Paul:

- Crossley: “yes, because it’s based on 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, that report, that was handed on to him”

Where Habermas and Crossley agree:

- Habermas: you agree with the 6 facts in the minimal facts list, and you have problems with 2 of 5 facts from the widely accepted list
- Crossley: Yes

The empty tomb:

- Crossley: Two problems: first, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 doesn’t mention it, but it “probably assumes the idea that Jesus left behind an empty tomb when resurrected, I am convinced by some of the conservative arguments on that one, but it’s not hard evidence for there actually being an empty tomb”
- Crossley: Second, “the other early source we have ends with no resurrection appearances”, it makes him a bit skeptical of the empty tomb
- Habermas: the empty tomb is not a minimal fact, I want 90% agreement by skeptical scholars for it to be a minimal fact
- Habermas: I have never included the empty tomb in my list of minimal facts
- Brierley: William Lane Craig puts it in his list of minimal facts
- Habermas: It is very well attested, so if that’s what you mean, then it’s a minimal fact, but it doesn’t have the 90% agreement like the other minimal facts
- Habermas: I have 21 arguments for the empty tomb, and none of them require early dating of sources or traditional authorship of the gospels, e.g. – the women discovered the empty tomb, the pre-Markan source, the implications of 1 Cor 15 has some force, the sermons summary in Acts 13 which Bart Ehrman dates to 31 or 32 A.D. has putting a body down and a body coming up without being corrupted

Why is 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 more respected as a source than the gospels?

- Habermas: There is a unanimous New Testament conclusion, across the board, from conservative to liberal, that in 1 Cor 15:3-8 Paul is presenting creedal data, Richard Bauckham says that this goes back to the early 30s A.D., Paul got this from the eyewitnesses he mentions in Galatians 1 and 2
- Crossley: [reads 1 Corinthians:3-8 out loud], now that’s a tradition that’s handed on, this is Paul, we know this is Paul, writing mid-50s, this is kind of gold, this is the evidence I wish we had across the board

Why doesn’t James accept the resurrection:

- Crossley: Historians should not conclude that the supernatural is real, concluding the supernatural is outside of history
- Crossley: I am more interested in what people believed at that time
- Brierley: as a historian, are you required to give an explanation of the commonly-

accepted facts
- Crossley: yes, historians must give their explanation for the facts
- Crossley: we know people have visions, and how the cultural context determines the content of visions, e.g. – the background of martyrdom
- Brierley: so you would go for the hallucination hypothesis?
- Crossley: yes, but I prefer not to use that word

Should historians rule out the supernatural?

- Habermas: let's not ask what caused the event, let's just see if the disciples thought they saw him before he died, that he died on the cross, and then believed they saw him after he died, like you might see someone in the supermarket
- Habermas: I'm not asking whether a miracle occurred, I just want to know whether Jesus was seen after he died on the cross
- Crossley: that sounds like the angle I'm coming at this from
- Crossley: the problem is that there is a supernatural element to some of the appearances, so it's not a supermarket appearances
- Brierley: it's not angels and hallelujah in the sky
- Habermas: nothing like that, no light in the early accounts, fairly mundane

Does James agree that people believed they saw Jesus after his death?

- Crossley: yes, I think that's fairly clear that we do
- Crossley: but historians cannot prove claims that what happened to Jesus was supernatural
- Brierley: your view is so far from what I see on Internet atheists sites, where they say it's all legendary accumulation, fairy tales
- Crossley: I'm perfect comfortable with the idea – and I think it happened – that people created stories, invented stories
- Crossley: there are too many cases where people are sincerely professing that they thought they saw Jesus after his death

Would you expect the disciples to have visions of a resurrected Jesus if nothing happened to him?

- Habermas: the dividing line is: did something happen to Jesus, or did something happen to his disciples?
- Habermas: the view that people were seeing a kind of ghostly Jesus (non-bodily) – a Jedi Jesus – after his death is a resurrection view, but I hold to a bodily resurrection view
- Brierley: N.T. Wright says a resurrected Jesus was contrary to expectations – should we expect the disciples to have a vision of Jesus as resurrected?
- Crossley: Wright generalizes too much thinking that there was a single view of the resurrection (the general resurrection at the end of the age), there are a variety of

views, some are contradictory
- Crossley: Herod Antipas thought that Jesus might be John the Baptist returned from the dead, and he knew Jesus was flesh and blood, there is the story of the dead rising in the earthquake in Matthew, there are stories of the resurrection in Maccabees, and this would influence what people expected
- Habermas: the earliest Christian view was *bodily* resurrection
- Crossley: yes, I think that's right
- Crossley: In Mark 6, they thought Jesus was a ghost, so there is room for disagreement

Why should a historian not rule out a supernatural explanation?

- Habermas: to get to supernatural, you have to go to philosophy – it's a worldview problem
- Habermas: he predicted his own death and resurrection
- Habermas: one factor is the uniqueness of Jesus
- Habermas: the early church had belief in the bodily resurrection, and a high Christology out of the gate
- Habermas: you might look at evidence for corroborated near-death experiences that raise the possibility of an afterlife
- Crossley: I'm content to leave it at the level of what people believe and not draw any larger conclusions
- Crossley: regarding the predicting his own death, the gospels are written after, so it's not clear that these predictions predate Jesus' death
- Crossley: it's not surprising that Jesus would have predicted his own death, and that he might have foreseen God vindicating him

If you admit to the possibility of miracles, is the data sufficient to conclude that the best explanation of the facts is resurrection?

- Crossley: If we assume that God exists, and that God intervenes in history, and that this was obvious to everyone, then "of course"
- Brierley: Are you committed to a naturalistic view of history?
- Crossley: Not quite, broadly, yes, I am saying this all I can do
- Brierley: should James be open to a supernatural explanation?
- Habermas: if you adopt methodological naturalism,it colors how look at the data is seen, just like supernaturalism does

Paul Ryan pledges to cut off funding for nation's largest provider of abortions

January 6, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama speaking to Planned Parenthood

Planned Parenthood got $550 million from taxpayers last year, many of whom are pro-life! What do the Republicans intend to do about it?

The Washington Free Beacon reports:

> House Speaker Paul Ryan (R., Wis.) indicated Thursday that congressional Republicans might push to defund Planned Parenthood using the budget reconciliation process.
>
> Ryan was asked at his weekly press briefing whether the effort to repeal and replace Obamacare would include a provision to redirect hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars from Planned Parenthood to women's health care centers that do not provide abortion.
>
> "Planned Parenthood legislation would be in our reconciliation bill," Ryan said.

The Democrats introduced the practice of "reconciliation" to get their legislation passed in the Senate by simple majority. And now that they've lost the majority in the Senate, reconciliation can be used to get conservative things done:

> The reconciliation process allows a simple majority of senators, rather than 60 senators, to pass certain forms of budgetary legislation without the threat of a filibuster. Republicans, who control the Senate 52-48, plan to use reconciliation

> to repeal major aspects of Obamacare, just as Democrats used reconciliation to amend the law in 2010.
>
> Congressional Republicans passed a bill in 2015 that would have defunded Planned Parenthood in the summer of 2015 after undercover videos were released about the group's organ harvesting operations. Senate Democrats blocked the bill in August, preventing it from coming to a vote. Reconciliation would help Ryan and Republicans avoid stalling tactics after President-elect Donald Trump takes office on Jan. 20.
>
> **Planned Parenthood received more than $550 million from taxpayers in the 2015 fiscal year, a 5 percent increase from 2014. The government payments accounted for 40 percent of its revenue, according to its 2015 annual report. The group received a huge boost in funding when President Obama took office in 2009 and repealed the Mexico City Policy, which bans the use of taxpayer dollars for abortion in foreign aid.**
>
> **The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which was overseen by then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, gave Planned Parenthood $100 million between 2010 and 2012. The group continued to rake in taxpayer cash throughout 2015 and 2016, winning nearly $28 million in awards from federal agencies.**

That's a lot of taxpayer money that the Democrats sent to their buddies at Planned Parenthood. But then, Planned Parenthood made a lot of donations to Democrat politicians running for office.

Earlier this week, my friend Kevin sent me new about the findings of the House of Representatives investigation of Planned Parenthood's business practices.

Here is a summary of their findings from the Daily Signal:

> Planned Parenthood affiliates profited by transferring parts of aborted babies to outside organizations in violation of the law, a special House panel has concluded after a yearlong investigation.
>
> In a 418-page report released Wednesday, the House Select Investigative Panel on Infant Lives also found that other organizations involved in the transfer of fetal tissue broke federal or state law.
>
> In one case, a national Planned Parenthood executive interviewed by staff investigators for the House panel said "it doesn't bother me" that one vendor, StemExpress, paid Planned Parenthood $55 for an aborted baby's intact brain and then sold it to a customer for more than $3,000.
>
> "It's none of my concern. It doesn't bother me," the Planned Parenthood executive said, according to the panel's report.
>
> Republican members of the House panel recommend that authorities pursue charges against Planned Parenthood affiliates, which receive taxpayer money,

> and other entities for violating the law and related regulations.
>
> “It is my hope that our recommendations will result in some necessary changes within both the abortion and fetal tissue procurement industries,” the panel’s chairman, Rep. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., said in a press release. “Our hope is that these changes will both protect women and their unborn children, as well as the integrity of scientific research.”

It will be interesting to see how far the Republicans are willing to go on this issue. Vice President Mike Pence recently said that the new administration will be in the business of keeping promises. Well, let’s see them do it.

Luke Barnes discusses the fine-tuning of the fine structure constant

January 8, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

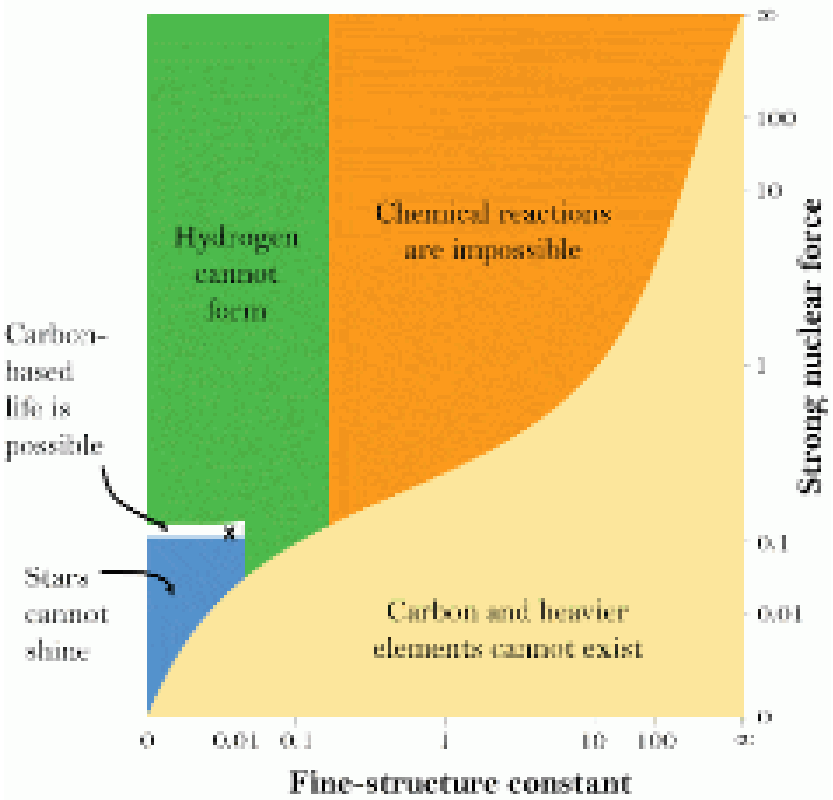

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant

Here is an article from The New Atlantis written by cosmologist Luke Barnes about one specific example of cosmic fine-tuning. (H/T Uncommon Descent via J. Warner Wallace tweet)

Excerpt:

> Today, our deepest understanding of the laws of nature is summarized in a set of equations. Using these equations, we can make very precise calculations of the most elementary physical phenomena, calculations that are confirmed by experimental evidence. But to make these predictions, we have to plug in some numbers that cannot themselves be calculated but are derived from measurements of some of the most basic features of the physical universe. These numbers specify such crucial quantities as the masses of fundamental particles and the strengths of their mutual interactions. After extensive experiments under all manner of conditions, physicists have found that these numbers appear not to change in different times and places, so they are called the fundamental constants of nature.
>
> These constants represent the edge of our knowledge. Richard Feynman called one of them — the fine-structure constant, which characterizes the amount of electromagnetic force between charged elementary particles like electrons —

> “one of the greatest damn mysteries of physics: a magic number that comes to us with no understanding by man.”
>
> […]A universe that has just small tweaks in the fundamental constants might not have any of the chemical bonds that give us molecules, so say farewell to DNA, and also to rocks, water, and planets. Other tweaks could make the formation of stars or even atoms impossible. And with some values for the physical constants, the universe would have flickered out of existence in a fraction of a second. That the constants are all arranged in what is, mathematically speaking, the very improbable combination that makes our grand, complex, life-bearing universe possible is what physicists mean when they talk about the “fine-tuning” of the universe for life.

Atheists, both rank-and-file and expert, almost universally misunderstand the fine-tuning argument. They imagine that if the constants and quantities specified at the origin of the universe were different, then humans would just have green skin, or maybe forehead ridges, or pointy ears. Atheists tend to get their view of science from science fiction in novels or television or movies, and they base their worldview off of fantasies, since this is less thinking and feels better than letting the scientific evidence influence their worldview.

So what does the scientific evidence actually show?

Barnes explains:

> The strong nuclear force, for example, is the glue that holds protons and neutrons together in the nuclei of atoms. If, in a hypothetical universe, it is too weak, then nuclei are not stable and the periodic table disappears again. If it is too strong, then the intense heat of the early universe could convert all hydrogen into helium — meaning that there could be no water, and that 99.97 percent of the 24 million carbon compounds we have discovered would be impossible, too. And, as the chart to the right shows, the forces, like the masses, must be in the right balance. If the electromagnetic force, which is responsible for the attraction and repulsion of charged particles, is too strong or too weak compared to the strong nuclear force, anything from stars to chemical compounds would be impossible.
>
> Stars are particularly finicky when it comes to fundamental constants. If the masses of the fundamental particles are not extremely small, then stars burn out very quickly. Stars in our universe also have the remarkable ability to produce both carbon and oxygen, two of the most important elements to biology. But, a change of just a few percent in the up and down quarks’ masses, or in the forces that hold atoms together, is enough to upset this ability — stars would make either carbon or oxygen, but not both.

It’s very important that theists are well-equipped to explain how individual cases of fine-tuning work. We need to know what you lose if you alter these constants and quantities

even slightly. You can read about some more examples in this previous post.

Meet the young conservative running against a Democrat senator in Ohio

January 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ohio Senate candidate Josh Mandel

Although Republicans have the House, Senate and White House now, there are still a lot of very liberal senators who need to be defeated in 2018. In Ohio, there is a very liberal and very old senator named Sherrod Brown who faces a challenge from a much young conservative candidate.

The Washington Free Beacon reports:

> Josh Mandel, Ohio's 39-year-old Republican state treasurer, is making his second attempt to unseat Democrat Sherrod Brown in the U.S. Senate by running as a conservative and defender of the Constitution.
>
> Mandel, a former Marine who served as a state representative before winning election to two terms as state treasurer, spoke with the *Washington Free Beacon* about his 2018 campaign to "transfer the power from the politicians to the people."
>
> **Among Mandel's goals as a senator would be instituting term limits to "clean out" veteran politicians who have stayed too long in Washington, torching political correctness in the fight against Islamic extremism, and rolling back federal government regulations that have squeezed entrepreneurs and small businesses. He is also passionate about enforcing immigration laws and protecting Ohio's oil, gas, and coal industries.**
>
> "I think that everyday taxpayers are fed up with the feeling that Washington is rigged on behalf of special interests and lobbyists and I think there is a hunger for a new generation of leaders to come shake this place up," Mandel said in Washington, D.C., just blocks from the U.S. Capitol building.
>
> The 2018 Senate race will pit the young conservative against Brown, a liberal

> politician 30 years Mandel's senior who has been in Washington for more than two decades. The way Mandel sees it, Ohio voters will have a clear choice between a veteran politician who has stayed in Washington to "do well" and a leader from the next generation who is unafraid of standing up for conservative principles.
>
> "I think the voters of Ohio are going to have a choice of do they want someone who ran on term limits and then changed [his] mind so he could spend his entire adult life in Washington like Sherrod Brown, or someone like me who is going to come here to Washington, do as much good as possible, and then go home and live under the budget and laws that I created," Mandel said.
>
> […]The young Republican likely faces a fierce battle against Brown, who he unsuccessfully challenged in 2012. Brown defeated Mandel by six points to win reelection to the U.S. Senate.
>
> Brown has served in the Senate since 2007 and represented Ohio's 13th district in Congress for 13 years before that. The Democrat has had a long career in politics, serving as Ohio's secretary of state and a member of the state's general assembly before coming to Washington.

Accomplishments:

> When asked about his accomplishments as state treasurer, Mandel pointed to his work releasing the Ohio checkbook online, which gives taxpayers a look at how the state spends its money, and improving Ohio's rating on government transparency. Mandel also helped dig the state out of an $8 billion budget hole; Ohio's finances have moved from 43rd to 7th in national rankings since 2011.

Under Obama (and Sherrod Brown), the US national debt went from $10 trillion to $20 trillion in 8 years.

Here is Mandel's 2018 Senate race ad:

Sherrod Brown has a conservative rating of 7% from Heritage Action. Ohio is a purple state. I think Ohio can do better than 7% in 2018.

Fake news: Gizmodo smears Trump, then issues “correction” #fakeNews

January 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you want real fake news, look to secular leftists

Oh my goodness, Trump is going to explode the planet with nuclear weapons! That’s what Ashley Feinberg, a clown journalist for the far-left blog “Gizmodo” wants you to believe. (H/T Christina Hoff Sommers)

Here’s her story. (Warning: vulgar language)

Excerpt:

> According to an official within the Department of Energy, the Trump transition team has declined to ask the head of the National Nuclear Security Administration and his deputy to temporarily stay in their roles after Trump takes office on January 20th.
>
> The NNSA is the $12 billion-a-year agency that “maintains and enhances the safety, security, and effectiveness of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile.” It’s unclear when the two officials will be replaced. Their offices will remain vacant until they are.
>
> […]Trump, however, appears determined to be free of anyone who was appointed by Obama, regardless of whether or not he has anyone in line for the job.

Oh, it’s terrible, that awful Trump! Firing critical personnel before he even takes office.

OK, so what this post is saying is that Trump's team WAS EXPLICITLY ASKED TO RETAIN these nuclear arsenal administrators, and Trump's team EXPLICITLY SAID NO. That would indeed be irresponsible, if it were true.

But wait, here's a correction:

> **Correction, 1/9/17, 11:03 p.m., :** Another NNSA official, speaking on background to Gizmodo and Defense News, has disputed this report as "inaccurate" while confirming that "there have been no discussions between the president-elect's transition team and any of NNSA's political appointees on extending their public service past Jan. 20." In other words, the Trump transition team has not asked the top two NNSA officials to stay on until they can be replaced.
>
> After speaking to our source for clarification, we have updated the story and headline to reflect that, while Klotz and Creedon have submitted their resignations, intend to depart on January 20, and have not been asked by the Trump transition to stay past that date, **the Trump team has not explicitly instructed them to leave or "clean out their desks," as we reported.** According to our source, both officials "have expressed [to the Trump team] that they would likely be willing to stay to facilitate a smooth transition, if asked," as is the tradition for key officials, and have received no response.

OH!!!!!! So the Trump team never actually asked them to leave or clean out their desks? Wow, that makes the whole story false. And the author of the post is a "Senior Reporter" for Gizmodo. She has a BA in Communication and English, which is about the least challenging major there is, except for maybe Education. The bottom of the barrel. I would imagine that this is what people who want to major in being drunk and hooking up study.

You can read more about Ashley's "journalism" in this post on Gawker, who also employs her.

Why do Democrat voters rely on fake news for their view of the world? I guess they think that clowning is more important than accuracy.

If you ever wanted to understand how secular leftists journalists operate – I mean from the lowliest blogs right through Slate to the New York Times and Washington Post, there you have the perfect example. Ashley will probably be working for the NYT or the WaPo in the near future. She has every qualification. This is why I keep telling young people to study STEM, because at least that won't give you brain damage.

Oxford University Press book: is religion responsible for wars and violence in history?

January 11, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

J.W. Wartick posted a review of a book called "The Myth of Religious Violence", and written by Dr. William T. Cavanaugh.

Let's take a look at some of the review.

Here, J.W. quotes from the book:

> The story goes that, after the Protestant Reformation divided Christendom along religious lines, Catholics and Protestants began killing each other for holding to different doctrines. The wars of religion… demonstrated to the West the inherent danger of public religion. The solution to the problem lay in the rise of the modern state, in which religious loyalties were marginalized and the state secured a monopoly on the means of violence…
>
> This story is more than just a prominent example of the myth of religious violence. It has a foundational importance for the secular West, because it explains the origin of its way of life and its system of governance. It is a creation myth for modernity (123).

Then writes this:

> Following the lines of thinking of Voltaire, John Locke, and others, Cavanaugh argues that the myth of religious violence is perpetuated in order to marginalize that which is considered religious and give rise to the nation-state. According to this myth, "All theological religions are to be tolerated, provided they do not interfere with the obligations of citizens to the state…" (129). The myth is that religion is divisive and that they "fight over doctrines or 'religious creeds'" so that "the state steps in to make peace" (130).
>
> Cavanaugh shows that this myth is indeed false. The "wars of religion" had any number of motivating factors. The use of this story is not so much to tell a truth

> as it is a means by which to legitimize the nation-state. He argues towards these conclusions by showing that many "wars of religion" were in fact wars of economy, wars of power structures, and the like. He notes four primary factors for this myth to work: that combatants were motivated by religious difference, that the primary cause of war was religion, that religious causes are analytically separable from political, economic, and social causes at the time of the wars, and that the rise of the modern state was not a cause of the wars (141-142). He then analyzes each of these in turn based upon the historical record and shows that these all fail to account for the actual history of the "wars of religion." In fact, the opposite is true in each case (142-177).
>
> "We must conclude that the myth of the wars of religion is finally incredible, which is to say, false" (177).

> […]Perhaps the most challenging and paradigm-shifting portion of the book is that which focuses upon the uses of the myth of religious violence. Cavanaugh argues that the myth is so perpetuated because of its usefulness.

Cavanaugh has his BA from the University of Notre Dame, his MA from Cambridge University, and his PhD from Duke University.

Regarding religion and wars, consider this post from Well Spent Journey:

> **The Claim:** *"Religion has been the primary cause of war and oppression throughout the history of mankind."*
>
> **The Truth:** In their comprehensive Encyclopedia of Wars, Phillips and Axelrod document the recorded history of warfare. Of the 1,763 wars presented, a mere 7% involved a religious cause. When Islam is subtracted from the equation, that number drops to 3.2%.
>
> In terms of casualties, religious wars account for only 2% of all people killed by warfare. This pales in comparison to the number of people who have been killed by secular dictators in the 20th century alone.

So let's take a look at those secular dictators.

According to the The Black Book of Communism, published by Harvard University Press, over 100 million innocent people were killed in atheistic, communist regimes in the last century. In the past, consistent atheists like Stalin who had power enough to ignore objective morality caused millions of innocent deaths. And you can even see atheism killing lots and lots of people in countries like North Korea today – where the official state religion is atheism. Why is that? It's because the worldview of atheism teaches that the universe, and human beings, are here by accident. We are all just molecules in motion, and there is no inherent dignity or purpose to any of our lives that would obligate others to treat us a certain way.

On the Christian view, every single person has dignity because they are made in the image of God, and made to know him. Christians can never treat another person (of any

religion or no religion) in any way that would discourage them from knowing God and experiencing his love for us. We could never hurt anyone in a way that causes them to turn against God. We are careful with people, because we want to act towards them in a way that helps them to accomplish this purpose.

Of course there are lots of atheists in the Judeo-Christian West who live more peacefully, because they are living in a background of objective morality and human rights provided by Western religions. But in countries like North Korea, with a state religion that cannot ground free will or objective morality or human rights or judgment after death, there are fewer restraints.

Even here, we have already seen over 50 million unborn children killed since abortion became legal. And I can guarantee you that it's not authentic, Bible-believing Christians who are having these abortions. People who think they are going to face God when they die do not treat their fellow humans like machines made out of meat. As a group, atheists tend to be among the most radical in favor of abortion rights. The Secular Census of 2012 found that 97% of atheists vote for abortion. And of course today in the news we got the second video of Planned Parenthood top brass explaining how they sell the body parts of unborn babies to the highest bidder. I wrote about the first video here.

The idea of the strong killing the weak for their own advantage is the law of the jungle, and it's not surprising to me that those who think that humans *are just animals* would act this way with vulnerable children. If you only have 80 years to be happy in an accidental universe, then anything goes. No one is there to hold you accountable when you die. If the weak get in your way, kill them all. Just don't get caught. That's what atheist morality teaches.

Here's famous atheist Richard Dawkins explaining why infanticide is OK:

And here's what he thinks of objective moral values and duties:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.
>
> –Richard Dawkins, (River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

You can read more about the morality of atheists likeRichard Dawkins here.

In a previous post, I looked at an article by an atheist who explained what it meant to live consistently with atheism. I really recommend reading that in order to understand what is rational within that worldview.

Canadian judge bans pro-life ads, because free speech makes people feel bad

January 12, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This pro-life ad was banned because it hurts people's feelings

This is from Heat Street. It reminds me what a joke of a country Canada has become since their 50 year slide into secular left fascism.

Excerpt:

> A Canadian city was "proportionate and reasonable" in censoring a pro-life ads from the sides of its buses because the banners were "likely to cause psychological harm to women who have had an abortion," according to a ruling.
>
> Justice C.S. Anderson has ruled that the city of Grande Prairie in the province of Alberta "reasonably" balanced the freedom of speech rights of the pro-life advertiser with the city's own policies of providing a "safe and welcoming" space for bus passengers and pedestrians with its advertising.
>
> According to the judge, the ruling won't prohibit every pro-life ad in the city, but he stressed that it was reasonable to ban banners specifically produced by the Calgary-based Canadian Centre for Bioethical Reform (CCBR) because they might upset women and children.
>
> The pro-life group's ad showed unborn babies at seven weeks' and 16 weeks' gestation followed by an empty frame filled in red to represent an aborted baby. Underneath the images were the captions: "growing," "growing" and "gone." The ad also read: "Abortion kills children" and showed the group's website.
>
> Judge Anderson said that CCBR website includes messages such as "Now is the time to put an end to the slaughter. Now is the time to look evil in the face and say, enough. Now is the time to join together, and lend our voices to those who had theirs brutally taken from them."
>
> "These are strong statements that vilify women who have chosen, for their own reasons, to have an abortion; they are not merely informative and educational," Anderson added.

Now, it's true that I am a bit of a "hold women accountable" person. In the past I've blogged about how women are more supportive of abortion rights and gay marriage than men. So, naturally, I wanted to know if the pro-abortion, anti-free-speech judge was a

man or woman. Answer: she’s a woman:

> **The Honourable Charlene S. Anderson**, a lawyer with Ross Smith Asset Management Inc. in Calgary, is appointed a judge of the Court of Queen’s Bench of Alberta (Calgary) to replace Madam Justice B.L. Veldhuis who was appointed to the Court of Appeal on February 8, 2013.

Honorable!??? That’s not the word I would use for an anti-free-speech fascist, but I know that Canada is a third-world banana republic, where the right to free speech is not guaranteed in their founding documents. It’s a tax-and-spend nanny state, where the government micromanages the words of the citizens.

Courage under fire: Ronald Speirs and Easy Company at the Battle of Foy

January 13, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I try to occasionally post something that shows a particularly brave action from some time and place in military history. For example, I previously wrote about Medal of Honor winner Michael Murphy in 2011. Last year, his story was told more widely in the movie "Lone Survivor", which I recommend to everyone. Today I want to highlight another hero: Ronald Speirs.

It is January 1945 and the famous "Screaming Eagles", the 101st Airborne division, are about to turn the tide of the Battle of the Bulge in Bastogne.

Let's read about the Battle of Foy courtesy of a scenario description from the wargame "Flames of War". (Note: LMG = light machine gun, in this case, a .30 caliber machine gun)

Excerpt:

> E or 'Easy' Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, like the rest of the division, was ordered on to the attack on 9 January 1945 as part of a general offensive to drive back the Germans from Bastogne. In the following days the 506th Regiment, along with the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, cleared the forests around the town of Foy and pushed the Germans out. Their next objective was to take Foy to allow the 11th Armored Division to attack from Foy across the fields northeast towards Noville.
>
> […]At 0900 hours on 13 January Easy Company attacked along the western edge of Foy, along the road. The new year had brought heavy snow and the it blanketed the ground and had reduced temperatures to well below zero. 2nd Battalion commander, Captain Dick Winters, had two section of LMGs deployed on the edge of the woods facing Foy to give Easy Company covering fire while they crossed the 250 yards of open field between the forest and Foy's buildings. There were just a few scattered trees and haystacks to give cover. As Easy Company advance the covering fire did its job, limiting the fire on the paratroopers to sporadic rifle shots. The approach on Foy made good pace under the cover of the LMG fire, but about 75 yards out from the edge of the village the skirmish line halted and the paratroopers hunkered down in the snow. Captain Winters stared in disbelief, wondering what was going on.
>
> Lieutenant Dike, who was commanding Easy Company, had been overwhelmed with indecision. It became obvious to Winters that Dike didn't know what he was doing, or had had a failure of confidence. His immediate impulse was to take command himself, but he noticed Lieutenant Ronald Speirs, a capable platoon commander from D Company, standing nearby. Winters ordered Speirs to take command of Easy Company and get the attack moving again. What Speirs did

> next amazed many of the paratroopers who witnessed it.
>
> **On receiving his orders from Winters, Speirs immediately ran at full speed down to where Dike and his HQ had taken cover behind a haystack and told Dike his orders, 'I'm here to take over'. After quickly being told of the situation by the NCOs he ran off towards Foy. The men of Easy Company immediately followed. On reaching the outskirt buildings of Foy, Speirs immediately sought to link up with I Company of 3rd Battalion who, despite only having 25 men, were supporting the attack from the other flank of Foy. He set off running again, through the German lines, to find I Company's commander. After consulting with its commander, Captain Gene Brown, he turned around and dashed back through Foy and the surprised Germans. Through all this the enemy fired on him with machine-guns, rifles and guns, but not a single shot hit its mark.**

Now with all that said, watch the two clips below, and pay close attention the faces of the men under Lieutenant Dike, and then later under Lieutenant Speirs. Pay close attention to how Speirs' courage inspires the men under him to also be courageous. Especially First Sergeant Lipton, who later risks his own life to draw fire from a German sniper so that Shifty Powers can prevent any other troops from being killed by the sniper.

The two clips are from "Band of Brothers", the episode entitled "The Breaking Point". There is some coarse language, but no sexual language in it. Really, if you are squeamish, do not watch it. However, if you can handle it, then buy the whole DVD set. It will inspire you, and help you to do things that you didn't think were possible. If you really want to understand the men of E Company, you can read a book by Stephen E. Ambrose called *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York, 1992).

Low resolution clip, includes briefing at the beginning

This video is lower resolution, but show Winters reflecting on how Lipton had asked him not to let Dike lead the attack the night before, and also Winters carefully explaining to Dike that the American attack has to *keep moving* or they will get pinned down by machine guns and zeroed-in by mortars and destroyed.

I like that one because it shows the briefing, but the next clip is in 720HD.

High resolution clip, does not include briefing

This is a higher resolution version that is only 8.5 minutes long, but doesn't have the briefing.

If you listen closely when Speirs explains what everyone is going to do, you can here one of the NCOs say "thank God" as he pats the other on the back.

Leadership

To be a good military leader, you have to know many things. A knowledge of strategy and tactics, a knowledge of military history, the ability to see the battlefield, knowledge of

your opponent, knowledge of weapons, and so on. But surely the greatest of these is courage. As Von Clausewitz says in his famous book “On War”, “War is the province of danger, and therefore courage above all things is the first quality of a warrior.” Nothing inspires troops like a commander who is willing to take on the same risks that he asks his troops to take.

Take a look at this article from the Ivey School of Business journal, which talks about the characteristics of Canadian generals in Afghanistan.

Excerpt:

A leader must be in front of subordinates. This takes courage. Leadership from the front encapsulates the adage, *never ask a subordinate to do something that you, the leader, wouldn’t do*. In Afghanistan, the leader must not only be in front, but he or she must *be seen* to be in front. Subordinates seek this reassurance from their leaders at all levels. Though they may be tentative, leaders must demonstrate character and moral strength. Their credibility is inextricably dependent on their ability to do so.. During his frequent visits to Afghanistan, former Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Rick Hillier, made a point of visiting troops that were situated in some of the most IED-laden areas of the Canadian sector. Through his demonstrated courage, he inspired leaders of all levels. “If the CDS goes there, so can I” was the resulting mindset. The current CDS, General Walt Natynczyk, has successfully continued this practice.

[…]All leaders need courage. It is the lynchpin of effective leadership. No one respects a wimp who will buy in to any idea no matter how inane it might be. Courage is having the strength of character to persist and hold on to ideas in the face of opposition. Here, I’m not restricting my treatment of courage as it relates to fear. It’s also about strength of character and devotion to causes and ideas.

As Christians, we have a leader who led by example. We all need to learn to not be so concerned with looking out for ourselves and our happiness first, but to instead be willing to take risks and sacrifice ourselves to do the right thing. We Christians should all be courageous, because we are led by a courageous leader.

That doesn’t necessarily mean going halfway across the world, it can mean reaching out to someone right there next to you who needs your help and support. Maybe that person has been running on an empty tank for a long time, but still trying to do the right thing. You never know when the opportunity to do something amazing will arise, but you won’t take it if you keep thinking of how you might get hurt. You have to reconcile yourself that you are not here to avoid every possible kind of suffering. It doesn’t mean that you take unnecessary risks, but it does mean *not letting fear stop you from doing the right thing*.

Now get out there and take that attack on in.

Stephen C. Meyer and Doug Axe discuss 5 major problems with macro-evolution

January 14, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

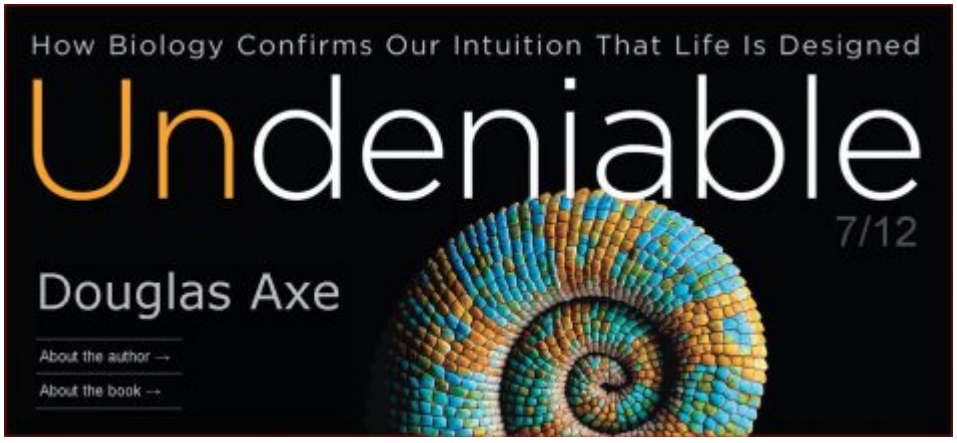

Undeniable: How Biology Confirms Our Intuition That Life Is Designed

The host of the Cross Examined radio show Dr. Frank Turek talks with Stephen C. Meyer and Doug Axe about a recent conference of Royal Society scientists discussing the problems with the theory of macro-evolution.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- about the Royal Society conference
- the main topic was whether naturalistic mechanisms can produce new body plans and new organ types
- no one disputes micro-evolution: beaks changing size, antibiotic resistance
- many of the naturalistic scientists admitted the problems with current naturalistic theories, but they don't want to embrace the need for a designer
- none of the proposals that were debated solved the real problems with macro-evolution
- Problem #1: the sudden origin of body plans in the fossil record
- Problem #2: the origin of information (e.g. – in protein molecule)
- Problem #3: need for favorable early mutations (for body plans)
- Problem #4: the problem of epigenetics
- Problem #5: the universality of the design intuition

Some of these problems have actually gotten *worse* for naturalistic evolution as our scientific knowledge has grown.

If you want the two *best* books on intelligent design, get Dr. Meyer's "Signature in the Cell" and "Darwin's Doubt". I should note that Dr. Meyer is not a young Earth creationist, and has defended the Big Bang cosmology as a solid evidence for a Creator of the universe. Being in favor of an old universe and an old Earth is compatible with being opposed to evolution – *because of scientific reasons.*

Is the Big Bang cosmology a theistic or atheistic theory of cosmic origins?

January 15, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Dr. Michael Strauss is a practicing particle physics employed as a professor at University of Oklahoma. He does research in particle physics at CERN, a large hadron collider. It's safe to assume that he knows something about experimental physics.

Here's what he writes about Christians and the Big Bang at his new blog:

> When my children were young, I would often drive to the home of the person babysitting my kids, usually a young teenage girl, pick her up, then drive her back to my house. In the car I would ask questions about her interests or her school. In addition, I would sometimes ask a question that intrigued me since I am a scientist and a Christian, "Do you think the Big Bang is a theistic theory or an atheistic theory?" Now that question is not on most people's list of babysitter interview questions, but I was interested to know their answer even though it would not affect their monetary tip. Every time I asked this question I always got the same answer, that the Big Bang is an atheistic theory. This is just one example of the fact that many kids growing up in an evangelical church environment have the perception that the Big Bang is an idea which removes God as the creator. It seems that many Christians may disdain the Big Bang.
>
> Subsequent conversations with people of all ages have shown me that many individuals (1) don't really understand what the Big Bang is, (2) don't know the scientific evidence for the Big Bang, and (3) don't comprehend the theistic significance of the Big Bang. So let's explore these ideas a little bit.

Here is his overview of the scientific evidence for the Big Bang:

> There are three primary observations that are best explained by the Big Bang. First, the universe is expanding so that it must have had a beginning of expansion in the past. Second, because the universe was once very hot, we can still see the remnants of that heat in the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) radiation. The latest measurements of the CMB spectrum made by the Planck satellite (shown above) agrees almost perfectly with theoretical calculations using the standard Big Bang cosmological model (see the plot at the end of this post). Third, the theory predicts the amount of primordial light elements that should have been created in the first few minutes of the Big Bang, like hydrogen and helium. Again the observations and the theoretical calculations align almost exactly. A few other observations are supported by Big Bang predictions, like the distribution of galaxies and primordial gas. The agreement between what we measure and what is expected from a Big Bang is so remarkable that just about all scientists accept the Big Bang as the origin of our universe, despite its implication that the universe had a beginning.
>
> Does this scientific evidence support theism, or atheism?
>
> Because we don't have any observations that tell us exactly what happened "in the beginning" of our universe, we can only speculate. But let me point out the obvious. All of the observations we do have, and all the theoretical calculations, and even some projective calculations like the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem (which I should probably blog about at some time) give credence to the conclusion that all of the space, time, matter, and energy of this universe had a beginning. **The Big Bang is a misnomer for it is not some kind of explosion since there was nothing that existed to explode. It is the origin of the universe. So if this universe had a beginning, then the cause of the universe can not be a part of the universe. The cause must be transcendent, like the Christian idea of God.** Is the fact that all the evidence points to our universe having a transcendent cause proof for God? No, but it is extremely powerful evidence. If one hundred years ago you had predicted that scientists would obtain unambiguous evidence about the history of the universe for 13.8 billion years, all of its lifetime except the first fraction of a second, and that all of the evidence would point to an actual beginning consistent with a transcendent cause, I don't think anyone would have taken you seriously. But that is exactly what has happened. **Theists could not have outlined a better scenario to support theism. The scientific facts are completely consistent with the statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."**

Now I've had conversations with atheists about this scientific evidence during my lifetime. And the conversations always go like this: I lay out the experimental evidence and theoretical evidence for a cosmic beginning, and they start to talk about science fiction:

Star Wars and Star Trek. But there are also famous atheists who have tried to account for the Big Bang cosmology in their atheistic worldview.

Here's Oxford University professor of physical chemistry (and atheist) Peter Atkins explaining how he grounds the Big Bang cosmology:

Easy! Nothing actually exists, according to Peter Atkins.

What about a theoretical physicist, like Lawrence Krauss? Well, he just redefines the nothing that causally preceded the origin of the universe so that it is actually something. Pure speculation, and it goes against the experimental scientific evidence we have. Exactly what you'd expect from a man who wrote a book about the physics of "Star Trek".

You don't get to start with the laws of physics in the Big Bang cosmology. You don't get to start with an electron. You don't get to start with a quantum vacuum, nor even quantum foam. You start with nothing: no matter, no energy, no space, and no time. From that state, the universe begins to exist. Atheists *hate* the Big Bang cosmology. And they also hate the fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the Big Bang that allows the universe to support complex, embodied intelligent life. (Another miraculous evidence for God that is opposed by the anti-science fundamentalists).

I see resistance against the use of scientific evidence to support the existence of God from many pious pastors like Al Mohler, Russell Moore, etc. Some pastors think that you can just read the Bible out loud to someone and it will convert them to Christianity, as if the words of the Bible, in and of themselves, were some sort of incantation. It's sort of like the "burning of the bosom" that Mormons are supposed to have when reading the Mormon Bible, which Mormons use in place of evidence, since they don't have any. Many fideist pastors adopt this Mormon approach to trusting in God. Never mind that Jesus offered his resurrection as evidence of his claims to divinity to skeptics. Apparently, These pious pastors know better than Jesus how to evangelize non-Christians, and they've decided that the magic words fideist approach is better than use of scientific and historical evidence. It's really annoying that the pious pastors have so much more influence in churches than the witness of experimental science, which is just God speaking to us through nature. I'd trust scientific evidence over an uneducated fundamentalist pastor any day of the week.

Is health care a right or a commodity?

January 16, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Here is a splendid post about the economics of health care from Ben Shapiro, writing for National Review.

He responds to a view held by those on the radical left: people need health care, therefore health care is a right.

Excerpt:

> The idea here seems to be that unless you declare medical care a right rather than a commodity, you are soulless — that as Marx might put it, necessity, rather than autonomy, creates rights.
>
> This is foolhardy, both morally and practically.
>
> Morally, you have no right to demand medical care of me. I may recognize your necessity and offer charity; my friends and I may choose to band together and fund your medical care. But your necessity does not change the basic math: Medical care is a service and a good provided by a third party. No matter how much I need bread, I do not have a right to steal your wallet or hold up the local bakery to obtain it. Theft may end up being my least immoral choice under the circumstances, but that does not make it a moral choice, or suggest that I have not violated your rights in pursuing my own needs.
>
> But the left believes that declaring necessities rights somehow overcomes the individual rights of others. If you are sick, you now have the right to demand that my wife, who is a doctor, care for you. Is there any limit to this right? Do you have the right to demand that the medical system provide life-saving care forever, to the tune of millions of dollars of other people's taxpayer dollars or services? How, exactly, can there be such a right without the government's

> rationing care, using compulsion to force individuals to provide it, and confiscating mass sums of wealth to pay for it?
>
> The answer: There can't be. Rights that derive from individual need inevitably violate individual autonomy.

But there are ways to make a commodity less expensive, and of higher quality. It happens all the times in free markets, where innovators are rewarded with profits – just think of the people who sell smartphones.

More:

> To make a commodity cheaper and better, two elements are necessary: profit incentive and freedom of labor. The government destroys both of these elements in the health-care industry. It decides medical reimbursement rates for millions of Americans, particularly poor Americans; this, in turn, creates an incentive for doctors not to take government-sponsored health insurance. It regulates how doctors deal with patients, the sorts of training doctors must undergo, and the sorts of insurance they must maintain; all of this convinces fewer Americans to become doctors. Undersupply of doctors generally and of doctors who will accept insurance specifically, along with overdemand stimulated by government-driven health-insurance coverage, leads to mass shortages. The result is an overreliance on emergency care, costs for which are distributed among government, hospitals, and insurance payers.
>
> So, what's the solution for poor people? Not to declare medical care a "right," and certainly not to dismiss reliance on the market as perverse cruelty. Markets are the solution in medical care, just as they are in virtually every other area.
>
> Treating medical care as a commodity means temporary shortages, and it means that some people will not get everything we would wish them to have. But that's also true of government-sponsored medical care, as the most honest advocates will admit. And whereas government-sponsored medical care requires a top-down approach that violates individual liberties, generates overdemand, and quashes supply, markets prize individual liberties, reduce demand (you generally demand less of what you must pay for), and heighten supply through profit incentive.

It's always a good idea to look at how health care is working in countries that do have single payer health care systems. Canada has a single-payer system. How is that working out?

The Fraser Institute issued a recent report on health care in Canada:

> Waiting for treatment has become a defining characteristic of Canadian health care. In order to document the lengthy queues for visits to specialists and for diagnostic and surgical procedures in the country, the Fraser Institute has—for over two decades—surveyed specialist physicians across 12 specialties and 10 provinces.

> This edition of Waiting Your Turn indicates that, overall, waiting times for medically necessary treatment have in-creased since last year. Specialist physicians surveyed report a median waiting time of 20.0 weeks between referral from a general practitioner and receipt of treatment—longer than the wait of 18.3 weeks reported in 2015. This year's wait time—the longest ever recorded in this survey's history—is 115% longer than in 1993, when it was just 9.3 weeks.
>
> […]It is estimated that, across the 10 provinces, the total number of procedures for which people are waiting in 2016 is 973,505. This means that, assuming that each person waits for only one procedure, 2.7% of Canadians are waiting for treatment in 2016.
>
> […]Patients also experience significant waiting times for various diagnostic technologies across the provinces. This year, Canadians could expect to wait 3.7 weeks for a computed tomography (CT) scan, 11.1 weeks for a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan, and 4.0 weeks for an ultrasound.
>
> Research has repeatedly indicated that wait times for medically necessary treatment are not benign inconveniences. Wait times can, and do, have serious consequences such as increased pain, suffering, and mental anguish. In certain instances, they can also result in poorer medical outcomes—transforming potentially reversible illnesses or injuries into chronic, irreversible conditions, or even permanent disabilities. In many instances, patients may also have to forgo their wages while they wait for treatment, resulting in an economic cost to the individuals themselves and the economy in general.

The typical cost of the single-payer health care system to a Canadian family is nearly $12,000.

Socialist Canada has been doing a lot of taxing and spending to try to fix this problem, but the problem is getting worse. And no wonder: when the government controls health care, it becomes a tool for buying votes. Abortions and sex changes are "health care" in Canada. Breast enlargements and IVF are "health care" in the UK. Of course, good luck getting treatment when you are in your old age and will not be voting much in the future : both Canada and the UK have euthanasia programs to get rid of elderly people who are no longer as useful to politicians as young people who still have lots of voting ahead of them.

How good are the atheistic arguments of Christopher Hitchens?

January 17, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

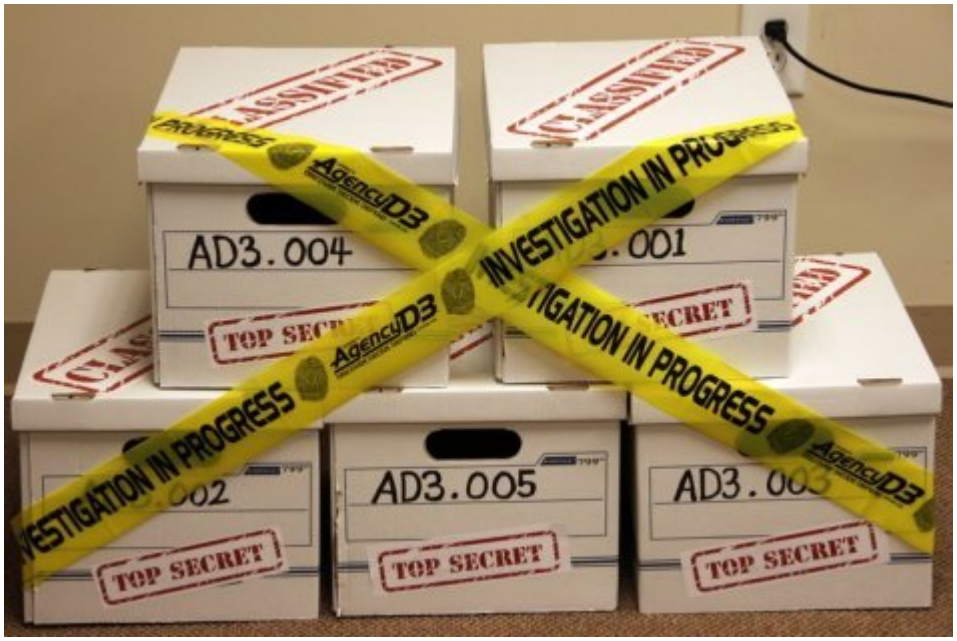

Investigation in progress

I thought that I would go over an opening statement from a previous debate featuring Christopher Hitchens to find out what atheists are like in debates. I used his opening speech from his debate with Frank Turek. The audio from that debate is here, at Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 site.

Now the important thing to remember about a generic debate on whether GOD EXISTS is that there should be no mention of any particular God, such as the Christian God, and no mention of the history of any particular religion. All arguments that assume specific theological or moral doctrines or specific religious history are *irrelevant* to a debate on generic theism.

The question being debated is: does a God who created and designed the universe, who has all the traditional properties of God, such as omniscience, omnipotence, omni-benevolence, etc. exist? That is the question being debated in a "Does God Exist?" debate.

Frank Turek's case for theism:

Frank Turek made 4 *relevant* arguments for theism, each of which *alone* would support his conclusion, that God exists:

- the origin of time, space, matter and energy out of nothing
- the fine-tuning of the physical constants to support the minimum requirements for life of any kind
- the origin of the biological information in the first self-replicating organism
- objective, prescriptive moral rules need to be grounded by the designer of the

universe

And he also listed 4 features of the universe that are more consistent with theism than atheism (= materialism).

- non-material minds that allow rationality that would be impossible on materialism/determinism
- the mathematical structure of the universe and its intelligibility to the scientific method
- free will, which is required for moral responsibility and moral choices, requires a non-material mind/soul
- our first person experience of consciousness is best explained by a non-material mind/soul

Hitchens' case against theism

To counter, Hitchens has to argue against God using arguments in one of two forms:

1. The concept of God is logically self-contradictory
2. An *objective* feature of the world is inconsistent with the attributes of God

The claim that God does not exist is a claim to know something about God, namely, that he does not exist. This claim requires the speaker to bear a burden of proof. In a debate on "Does God Exist?", Hitchens must *deny* that God exists. Let me be clear: Hitchens must defeat the arguments for the claim that God exists, and then defend the claim that God does not exist, and support that claim using arguments and evidence.

Hitchens makes 2 basic claims:

- There are no good reasons to believe that theism is true
- There are good reasons to believe atheism is true

So far so good. But what are his good reasons for atheism?

1. I personally don't like Christianity, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: I personally don't like Catholicism getting rid of limbo
   – Premise: I personally don't like Hell
   – Premise: I personally don't like some episodes in church history
   – Conclusion: God doesn't exist
2. The plurality of religions means that no religious claims can be correct, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: There are lots of religions
   – Premise: The religions all disagree in their truth claims about the external world
   – Conclusion: No religion's claims can be correct, therefore God doesn't exist
3. I believe in one less God than you, therefore God doesn't exist
   – Premise: You disbelieve in every God I do, except one

– Conclusion: God doesn’t exist

4. Religious people are stupid and evil, therefore God doesn’t exist
   – Premise: Religious people are ignorant
   – Premise: Religious people are fearful
   – Premise: Religious people are servile
   – Premise: Religious people are masochistic
   – Conclusion: God doesn’t exist
5. Evolution explains how life progressed from single cell to today’s bio-diversity, therefore God doesn’t exist
   – Premise: Modern theists like Turek believe in Paley’s argument, and argued it in this debate
   – Premise: Paley’s argument was refuted by evolution
   – Conclusion: God doesn’t exist
6. God wouldn’t have made the universe this way, therefore God doesn’t exist
   – Premise: If God exists, then he would have made the universe my way
   – Premise: The heat death of the universe wasn’t done my way
   – Premise: The extinction of species wasn’t done my way
   – Premise: The size of the universe wasn’t done my way
   – Premise: The amount of open space wasn’t done my way
   – Premise: The large number of stars wasn’t done my way
   – Premise: The age of the universe wasn’t done my way
   – Conclusion: God doesn’t exist
7. Religion makes people do things that I don’t like, therefore God doesn’t exist
   – Premise: Some religions do suicide bombing
   – Premise: Some religions do child abuse
   – Premise: Some religions do genital mutilation
   – Conclusion: God doesn’t exist
8. If you speak a sentence, I can repeat the same words as you said, therefore God doesn’t exist
   – Premise: Anything that you say is good, I can say is good too
   – Premise: Anything that you say is bad, I can say is bad too
   – Conclusion: God doesn’t exist
9. Atheists are morally superior to religious people, therefore God doesn’t exist
   – Premise: I act in a way that is consistent with my personal, arbitrary moral preferences
   – Premise: You don’t act in a way that is consistent with my personal, arbitrary moral preferences
   – Conclusion: God doesn’t exist
10. If I believe in God, I would have to submit to an authority
    – Premise: If I believe in God, then I can’t do whatever I want
    – Premise: But I want to do whatever I want
    – Conclusion: God doesn’t exist
11. I don’t like certain Christian doctrines, therefore arguments for God from science fail

and therefore God doesn't exist
– Premise: I don't like the atonement
– Premise: I don't like the virgin birth
– Premise: I don't like the incarnation
– Premise: I don't like original sin
– Premise: I don't like the resurrection
– Conclusion: Arguments that are built on recent discoveries from the progress of science like the big bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, etc. are incorrect, and therefore God doesn't exist

Andwering Hitchens' case

- The form of *all* of these arguments is *logically invalid*. The conclusions do not follow from the premises using the laws of logic, such as modus ponens and modus tollens.
- Hitchens cannot complain about morality because he has no foundation for objective moral facts. What he is really expressing is that he personally does not like such-and-such a state of affairs, based on his own arbitrary personal preferences, and the arbitrary social customs that evolved in the place and time that he finds himself in. On atheism, "morality" is just describing what people do – either individually or as groups living in different times and places. There is no objective right and wrong, and no objective way we ought to be. All statements are *subjective.* They describe what the speaker personally likes and dislikes. Just like taste in foods or taste in dress – which varies by individually, and is influenced by time and place ARBITRARILY.

Specific comments about each argument:

- Argument 1 tries to disprove God by arguing from Hitchens' personal preferences about specific Christian doctrines. Christian doctrines are irrelevant to a debate about generic theism. And there is no reason why God should be bound by the personal, subjective preferences of one man. In fact, the concept of God entails that his unchanging nature is the standard of good and evil. So, this argument doesn't disprove God, it's just a statement of personal, subjective preference.
- Argument 2: Just because there are different truth claims made by different groups, doesn't mean no one is correct. Mormons believe that matter existed eternally, and Jews believe it was created out of nothing. The big bang theory shows that the Mormons are wrong and the Jews are right.
- Argument 3: First of all, the debate is a about a generic Creator and Designer, not any particular religious conception of God. So the argument is irrelevant. Moreover, Christians reject Zeus, for example, because Zeus is supposed to exist in time and space, and therefore could not be the cause of the beginning of time and space.
- Argument 4: This is just the ad hominem fallacy. Hitchens is attacking the character of the theist, but that doesn't show theism is false.
- Argument 5: This argument can be granted for the sake of argument, even though

it’s debatable. The point is that it is irrelevant, since it doesn’t refute any of Turek’s actual scientific arguments like the big bang, the fine-tuning of the physical constants, the origin of information in the simplest living cell.
- Argument 6: Again, there is no reason to think that God should be bound by Hitchens’ personal opinion of how God should operate.
- Argument 7: This is the ad hominem fallacy again. The good behavior of religious believers is not a premise in any of Turek’s FOUR arguments for theism. Therefore, Hitchens’ point is irrelevant to the debate.
- Argument 8: The fact that the atheist can parrot moral claims is not the issue. Being able to speak English words is not what grounds objective, prescriptive morality. The issue is the ontology of moral rules, the requirement of free will in order to have moral responsibility and moral choices, ultimate significance of moral actions, and the rationality of self-sacrificial moral actions.
- Argument 9: This is just the ad hominem fallacy again.
- Argument 10: This is not argument so much as it reveals that the real reason Hitchens is an atheist is emotional. One might even say infantile.
- Argument 11: Again, these specific Christian doctrines are irrelevant to a debate about generic theism. And Hitchen’s subjective, personal preferences about Christian doctrine certainly do not undermine the objective scientific support for the premises in Turek’s 3 scientific arguments.

So Frank Turek talked about facts in the external world, and Christopher Hitchens mistakenly thought that his opinions and preferences about what he would do if he were God were interesting to us. They might be interesting to his psychiatrist, but they are not interesting to us.

Obama commutes sentence of government employee who leaked classified information

January 18, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama speaks to the Human Rights Campaign

The non-partisan The Hill reports.

Excerpt:

> President Obama on Tuesday commuted the prison sentence of former Army [private] [Bradley] Manning, according to the White House.
>
> Manning was convicted in 2013 of leaking classified information about U.S. national security activities that were later disclosed by WikiLeaks.
>
> […]Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas) said he doesn't agree with Obama's decision to release Manning early.
>
> "I think on the larger issue of criminal justice reform, the president is really undermining our political capital by granting clemency at an unprecedented rate," Cornyn said. "People say, well why should we change the sentencing rules in criminal justice reform if the president can just do it with a flick of his pen?"
>
> While it's the president's right to commute sentences, Cornyn said, it's not a wise move.
>
> […]**Obama has relied on his 2014 clemency initiative to advance his goal of shortening sentences for non-violent offenders he views as unjust.**
>
> T**he president has mostly doled out commutations and pardons to**

> **people convicted of drug crimes who received lengthy mandatory minimum sentences under requirements that have since been scaled back by Congress.**
>
> **Obama has granted commutations to 1,385 federal inmates as president, more than the total number given by the past 12 presidents combined. He has also pardoned 212 people.**
>
> **The White House is expected to announce another round of clemency grants on Thursday, officials said.**

Bradley Manning is a gay man, and he received sex-reassignment surgery at taxpayer expense thanks to the Obama administration.

Gay rights groups and anti-American legal groups petitioned the far-left President to pardon the convicted traitor, and that's what Obama did, since he is funded by far-left groups and must dance to their tune.

What do we learn from this?

Well, this story continues a pattern of behavior by Democrats in which they side with criminals, terrorists, and enemies against the interests of America, of America's allies and the safety of American citizens. It is a pattern.

Ben Shapiro explains in this article for Daily Wire:

> Manning wasn't Obama's only controversial commutation: he also commuted the sentence of General James E. Cartwright, former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who lied to reporters about leaking information about the Stuxnet virus directed by Israel against the Iranian nuclear program; Obama commuted Oscar Lopez Rivera, an FALN terrorist who was convicted to a 55-year sentence for seditious conspiracy, forced robbery, and firearms charges.
>
> […]**Obama *Hates* The National Security Community.** Manning revealed documents to WikiLeaks that damaged American national security severely. According to the Associated Press, as *The Weekly Standard* notes, "The government presented [an] uncontested written statement that former al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden asked for and received from an associate the Afghanistan battlefield reports that WikiLeaks published. The material was found on digital media seized in the May 2011 raid on bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, [lead prosecutor Maj. Ashden] Fein said. Bin Laden was killed in the raid." Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) rightly stated, "I don't understand why the president would feel special compassion for someone who endangered the lives of our troops, diplomats, intelligence officers, and allies." And Obama's other commutations reveal a deep disdain for our allies and our defense community: FALN is a terrorist organization, and the leak of the Stuxnet virus information only helped Iran.

This is what Obama and his Democrat allies learned in their non-STEM college courses at

leftist universities: America is evil, and America's enemies are good. That's why Democrats bend over backwards to release terrorists from Guantanamo Bay prison, to give assault weapons to Mexican drug cartels (which are then used to murder law enforcement and border security personnel), to abandon our security personnel in Benghazi, to give billions of dollars to assist Iran to develop nuclear weapons, to embolden aggressive invasions by Russia into Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014), to cut our military spending (e.g. – stop production of F-22 Raptor, mothball our aircraft carriers), and cripple our armed forces with political correctness. And so on.

William Lane Craig discusses faith and reason with university students

January 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students

This is an interview of Dr. William Lane Craig before college students at the University of Central Florida. (95 minutes)

You can get an MP3 of the lecture here. (33 MB)

Questions from the interviewer: (40 minutes)

- What started you on his journey of studying faith and reason?
- How would you define the word "faith"?
- Are faith and reason compatible? How are they related?
- How can reasonable faith help us to avoid the two extremes of superstition and nihilism?
- Who makes the best arguments against the Christian faith?
- Why are angry atheists like Dawkins and Hitchens more well known than better-informed academic atheists?
- Does the Bible require Christians to give the unbeliever reasons for their faith?
- How does faith spur Christians to think carefully about the big questions in life?
- Should the American church prod churchgoers to develop their minds so they can engage the secular culture?
- When talking about Christianity intellectually, is there a risk of neglecting the experience of being a Christian?
- Which Christian apologist has shaped your thinking the most?
- Which Christian philosopher has shaped your thinking the most?

- Does the confidence that comes from apologetics undermine humility and reverence?
- If you had to sketch out a 5 minute case for Christianity, what would you present?
- Can non-Christians use their reason to arrive at truth?
- Are there cases where atheists must affirm irrational things in order to remain atheists?
- Can the universe have existed eternal, so that there is no need to explain who created it?
- Even if you persuade someone that Christianity is true, does that mean they will live it out?

There is also a long period of questions, many of them hostile, from the audience of students (55 minutes).

- Haven't you said nasty things about some atheists? Aren't you a meany?
- What do you make of the presuppositional approach to apologetics?
- Can a person stop being a Christian because of the chances that happen to them as they age?
- Why did God wait so long after humans appeared to reveal himself to people through Jesus?
- Can a person be saved by faith without have any intellectual assent to truth?
- How do you find time for regular things like marriage when you have to study and speak so much?
- How would you respond to Zeitgeist and parallels to Christianity in Greek/Roman mythology?
- Do Christians have to assume that the Bible is inerrant and inspired in order to evangelize?
- If the universe has a beginning, then why doesn't God have a beginning?
- Can you name some philosophical resources on abstract objects, Platonism and nominalism?
- How can you know that Christianity more right than other religions?
- Should we respond to the problem of evil by saying that our moral notions are different from God's?
- Define the A and B theories of time. Explain how they relate to the kalam cosmological argument.
- How can Christians claim that their view is true in the face of so many world religions?
- What is the role of emotions in Christian belief and thought?
- Can evolution be reconciled with Christian beliefs and the Bible?
- When witnessing person-to-person, should you balance apologetics with personal testimony?
- Is there a good analogy for the trinity that can help people to understand it? [Note: HE HAS ONE!]

- How can Christians reconcile God's omniscience, God's sovereignty and human free will?

This is a nice introductory lecture that is sure to get Christians to become interested in apologetics. As you watch or listen to it, imagine what the world would be like if *every* Christian could answer the questions of skeptical college students and professors like Dr. Craig. What would non-Christians think about Christianity if *every* Christian had studied these issues like Dr. Craig? Why aren't we making an effort to study these things *so that* we can answer these questions?

It is really fun to see him fielding the questions from the skeptical university students. My favorite question was from the physics student who sounds really foreign, (at 1:19:00), then you realize that he is a Christian. I do think that Dr. Craig went a little far in accommodating evolution, but I put that down to the venue, and not wanting to get into a peripheral issue. I'm also surprised that no one asked him why God allows humans to suffer and commit acts of evil.

If you are looking for a good basic book on apologetics, then I would choose "Is God Just a Human Invention?" by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow.

Who is William Lane Craig?

About William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

William Lane Craig is, without a doubt, the top living defender of Christianity. He has debated all of the most famous atheists, including Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, etc.

as well as academic atheists like Quentin Smith, Peter Millican, etc. if you search this blog, you'll find many debates posted here, sometimes even with snarky summaries.

William Lane Craig debates atheist Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?

January 20, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here is the video from the third debate from Dr. William Lane Craig's speaking tour in Australia.

Format:

- William Lane Craig (15 min)
- Lawrence Krauss (15 min, but was actually 21:40)
- Moderated discussion
- Question and answer

Dr. Graham Oppy, the moderator, is a well-known atheist philosopher. He let Dr. Krauss speak for 21 minutes and 40 seconds, which is why my summary of Krauss is so long.

The video:

Summary

After careful consideration, I decided not to be snarky at all in this summary. What you read below is what happened. There may be some small mistakes, but I will fix those if people tell me about them. I also included some quotes and timestamps for the more striking things that Dr. Krauss said.

The debate itself starts at 4:50 with Dr. Craig's opening speech. He does use slides to show the structure of his arguments.

Dr. Craig's opening speech. (4:50)

1. The kalam cosmological argument:
    - God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe
    - The Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem supports the absolute beginning of the universe
    - Even if our universe is part of a multiverse, the multiverse itself would have to have an absolute beginning
    - Speculative cosmologies try to challenge the Big Bang theory, but none of them – even if true – can establish that the past is eternal
    - Only two types of things could explain the origin of spece, time, matter and energy – either abstract objects or minds
    - Abstract objects do not cause effects, but minds do cause effects (we do it ourselves)
    - A mind is the best explanation for the origin of the universe
2. The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
    - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
    - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
    - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
    - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see
3. The cosmic fine-tuning for the existence of intelligent life
    - There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) cosmological constants and 2) quantities
    - These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life
    - There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design
    - Law is rejected because they are put in at the beginning or matter – they don't emerge from matter
    - Chance must be rejected, because they odds are just too long unless you appeal to a world-ensemble
    - We do not observe what the world ensemble hypothesis predicts that we should observe
    - Design is the best explanation for finely-tuned constants and quantities
4. The existence of objective moral values and duties
    - Our experience of morality (values and duties) is that it is objectively real and incumbent on us
    - When someone goes into a classroom and shoots at innocent children, that is objectively wrong
    - On naturalism, moral values and moral duties do not exist – they are conventional and variable by time and place
    - The best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties is that God exists

5. The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus
    - There are three widely-accepted facts that are best explained by the resurrection hypothesis
    - 1) the empty tomb, 2) the post-mortem appearances, 3) the early church's belief in the resurrection
    - Naturalistic attempts to explain these 3 boilerplate facts fail
    - The best explanation of the 3 minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead
6. The immediate experience of God
    - Belief in God is a "properly basic" belief – rational even without arguments because of experience of God

Dr. Krauss' opening speech. (21:12)

Slides: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

1. Religious pluralism I
    - There have been lots of different gods created by people through history
    - We've gotten rid of all of them by understanding how the universe works by doing science
    - Religion is just stories, and the stories are inconsistent with how the universe works
2. Progress of naturalistic science I
    - Newtonian physics refutes the idea that angels push planets around
    - Darwinian evolution refutes design arguments, including the one that Dr. Craig presented (24:10)
    - Biochemistry hasn't explained how life originated, but we will have the solution soon
    - Physics shows us that matter can be created and destroyed without need a God
    - Physics shows us that universes can be created and destroyed "no problem"
3. Religious pluralism II
    - Since we have been able to disprove all the gods we've invented, why hang on to the last one
    - It's unlikely that the God that Dr. Craig presented exists, because we disproved all the others he didn't present
4. Hiddenness of God
    - There is a complete lack of evidence for the other 999 gods, so how likely is it that the God Dr. Craig presented exists
5. Religious pluralism III
    - There are inconsistencies between various religions, so therefore there can be no religion that is right
6. Progress of naturalistic science II
    - Peasants had a very low level of knowledge about the world and they believed

in God
    - But our level of knowledge has increased over time, so we shouldn't believe in God now
    - Peasants thought that the Earth orbited the Sun, but this is now known to be false
    - The Scriptures said that the Earth orbited the Sun, but now we know that's false from science
7. Christianity plagiarizes from other religions I
    - There is nothing new or special about Jesus
    - He's just as unpleasant as all the other gods
    - Everything particular to Jesus occurs in other religions
8. Catholics are inconsistent about what they believe
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in transubstantiation
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in the virgin birth
9. The resurrection is copied from many other religions
    - Dionysus, Osiris, etc.
10. There is no evidence for the resurrection
    - The stories about Jesus were written "decades or hundreds of years after the fact"
    - The stories are inconsistent with each other
    - Dr. Craig tells me that historical Jesus scholars all accept that the resurrection happened
    - That's like saying that all alien abductions experts agree that alien abductions happened
    - It's unreasonable to think that the resurrection happened because no one saw it happen
    - I accept that people reported on appearances, but hallucination theory can explain that
11. The timeline for the creation and incarnation are all wrong
    - The creation, planet formation, hominids, incarnation, etc. all take place in the wrong times
    - If God knew what he was doing, he would done everything at better times to be more efficient
12. David Hume's argument against miracles is sound
    - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – nothing wrong with this argument
    - Miracles are really just coincidences
    - Catholic apparitions at Lourdes disprove the historical argument that Dr. Craig made for the resurrection
13. God is petty and jealous
    - God shouldn't demand that we trust him, esteem him and consider his character when we make decisions
    - The atoning death of Jesus for the sins of the world also makes no sense

14. Belief is based on geography
    - What you believe is clearly correlated with where you are born
    - There is even an Islamic clone of Dr. Craig who “uses the exact same arguments” that he does to prove Islam
    - Belief in God is decreasing in the Internet-accessible world
15. Science can develop morals without God
    - Reason is able to guide our actions to be moral
    - Morality evolves over time, so there is no objective morality
    - Catholicism teaches things that are immoral
    - Some things are prohibited by biological revulsion, such as incest
    - But if a brother and sister have sex using condoms “is that morally wrong? I can’t say it is frankly” (37:24)
16. Dr. Craig is irrational
    - “I came here convinced based on my past interactions and his writing that Dr. Craig was a dishonest Charlatan”
    - “Any argument that validates God is reasonable to him”
    - “And any argument against it is not only unreasonable but wrong and worth distorting”
    - “Because it must be wrong – he’s decided the answer in advance”
17. Dr. Craig is immoral
    - Dr. Craig thinks it is OK for God to command that Canaanite children are killed
    - “So in fact if they were Canaanite children in that schoolroom that he talked about then it would be OK”
    - It’s not reasonable to justify genocide in that way, but Dr. Craig is willing to go to those lengths
18. The cause of the origin of the space time universe need not be God
    - Dr. Craig says that if there is an explanation for the origin or space, time, matter and energy it must be God
    - But it could just as easily be turtles or Zeus
19. Dr. Craig misrepresents the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem
    - Alexander Vilenkin wrote me an e-mail that says that the theorem doesn’t work in all cases
    - “Dr. Craig is so convinced that these arguments must be true that he won’t listen to the fact that they’re not”
20. Darwinian evolution explains the fine-tuning
    - “Life was fine tuned – we got rid of it with Darwin”
    - Mutation and natural selection explain the cosmic fine-tuning argument that Dr. Craig presented
21. Suboptimal design disproves the fine-tuning argument
    - “We get back aches” therefore “This argument that [the universe] is fine-tuned for life is nonsense”
22. William Lane Craig can be proven to exhibit homosexual behavior using logical arguments

    - Look, you can construct arguments that are clearly wrong
    - Premise 1: “All mammals exhibit homosexual behavior”
    - Premise 2: “William Lane Craig is a mammal”
    - Seems to be saying that logical arguments can prove false things “it’s nonsense”
23. Dr. Craig distorted a podcast that some group made on pain receptors
    - Dr. Craig’s faith is so strong that it causes him to distort what this group said

Discussion: (44:35)

I will not be summarizing everything that was said, just a few main points.

The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can’t even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don’t work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don’t have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) “All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON’T KNOW!!!!!!!” (raising his voice)
- Craig: I’m not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has

been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"
- Craig: "I wonder what you deleted from the original letter"
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "I just told you!"
- Craig: "Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) 'You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.'
- Craig: "That's Vilenkin."
- Krauss: "In this paper, that's absolutely right"
- Krauss: But it's ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it's unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: "Isn't it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?"
- Krauss: "No"
- Craig: "Well, can you give us one then"
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) "In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong"
- Krauss: "You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it's hard"
- Craig: "Right"

I noticed that a huge number of atheist web sites are taking the Vilenkin quote that Krauss used out of context, like this one and this one. There are probably a lot more of them like that, which I think is interesting. That's why we have these debates, I guess. To set the record straight about who accuses people of being dishonest, and who is actually dishonest.

Fine-tuning:

- Krauss tried to argue that he had explained the fine-tuning with the Higgs particle, but Dr. Craig said that only applied to the cosmological constant, not all the other examples of fine-tuning. Krauss said that it wasn't impressive that this universe permitted life and that "It would have been much more surprising if we evolved in a universe in which we couldn't live". Krauss argued the fine-tuning was only for "Life

like us". But Dr. Craig explained that the fine-tuning is what allows us to have the basics of any kind of life, like slow-burning stars, chemical diversity, etc. – things that are required for basic minimal life functions in any living system. Craig said that he was working with the current physical laws of this universe (F = ma, etc.) and that he was looking at what changed if we changed those even slightly. Krauss tried to say that if he changed things like the mass of particles then the strength of forces would change. (But the forces aren't laws!) Krauss argued that the cosmological constant would be even better for life if it was zero, and Craig said that the life permitting range did include zero, but that the range of life-permitting values was narrow.

Jesus' existence:

- Craig reponded to the mystery religions charge, the charge that the evidence for the minimal facts is too late/too weak, the charge that grief visions explained the evidence better, and Hume's argument against miracles. Craig brought up the early creed from 1 Cor 15:3-7 and explained to Krauss that it was 5 years after the events, and that Jewish standards of oral transmission were strong enough to ensure that the creed was reliable, and most of the eyewitnesses would still have been alive.

Audience Q and A: (1:21:09)

The first topic is the grounding of morality. Krauss agrees that there is no objective morality and no objective moral oughts. He also said that that standards of behavior are arbitrary, and that they change over time and they are adopted for promoting social order. Dr. Craig pressed the point that science itself would collapse without ethical values. It assumes them, but cannot ground them.

The next topic was free will. Krauss is a determinist. Craig asked him how he could reconcile moral responsibility with determinism.

The next topic was the effectiveness of mathematics. Krauss didn't have an explanation for it and didn't think it needed one. Then they got into whether the Genesis has been verified by science and whether it is meant to be taken literally.

The next topic was whether philosophy makes any progress. Craig gave the example of verificationism being rejected as too narrow, and self-refuting. Krauss: "I'm going to come to the defense of philosophy for the first time". Craig: "That's amazing!" Krauss said that science provides new knowledge. Craig said there were some things that could be known apart from science.

Paul Helm debates William Lane Craig on Calvinism and Molinism on Unbelievable

January 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

I listened to this excellent discussion between Dr. William Lane Craig and Oxford University Calvinist philosopher Dr. Paul Helm. I think this is a useful discussion in general because atheists often bring up problems with Calvinism as objections to Christianity in general, such as:

- If God exists, then he controls everything and I don't have free will
- If God knows the future, then I don't have free will
- If God controls everything, then I am not responsible for my sinning
- If God HAS to choose me to be saved, then I am not responsible for my damnation if God doesn't choose me

Details:

> If God ordains the future, can humans have free will? Are people predestined for salvation? And what does the Bible say on the matter? William Lane Craig is a Christian philosopher and leading proponent of Molinism, a view of divine sovereignty that seeks to reconcile God's fore-ordination with human free will. Paul Helm is a leading Calvin Scholar. He defends the view that God predestines the future, limiting human freedom.
>
> MP3 of this show: http://cdnapi.kaltura.com/p/618072/sp/61807200/playManifest/entryId/1_jn0bdo52/flavorId/0_002f1k0d/protocol/http/format/url/a.mp3?clientTag=feed:1_jlj47tkv
>
> For William Lane Craig: http://www.reasonablefaith.org
>
> For Paul Helm: http://paulhelmsdeep.blogspot.co.uk/

I was surprised because my Calvinist friend Dina thought that Dr. Helm won this debate, but I thought that Dr. Craig won. So without further ado, here is the snark-free summary of the discussion. I also sent the summary to Dina to make sure that it was reasonably fair and accurate. She said it was biased, but she was predestined to say that. Anyway, there's a commentary on the debate over at Michael's Theology blog.

Summary:

JB: Has Lewis had any impact on your apologetics?

Craig: Not as a scholar, but more as a model of a scholar who leaves a legacy through his published work

JB: How did you become interested in Calvinism?

Helm: Starting from childhood, and lately writing more on Calvinism from a philosophical point of view

JB: How do you view God's sovereignty?

Helm: Strong view of divine sovereignty, God is sovereign over all events, but that doesn't mean that they are determined by him

JB: What is Calvin's legacy?

Helm: He amplified an existing concept of predestination, and wrote on many other topics

JB: What is Molinism?

Craig: Molina affirms divine sovereignty as Paul Helm does, but he also affirms libertarian free will

Craig: Every event that occurs happens by God's will or by God's permission

JB: What about open theism?

Craig: Paul and I both oppose open theism

JB: How does Molinism reconcile human free will and divine sovereignty

Craig: God has knowledge of what would happen under any set of circumstances

Craig: God has knowledge of everything that COULD happen, and he has knowledge of everything that WILL happen

Craig: God knows what each person freely choose to do in any set of circumstances and he can place people in times and places where he is able to achieve his ends without violating creaturely freedom and creaturely responsibility

JB: How does this apply to the issue of salvation?

Craig: The circumstances in which God puts a person includes God leading people to him and he foreknows who will respond to his leading

Craig: God has ordered the world in such a way that he foreknows the exact people who will free respond to his leading if he puts them in certain circumstances

JB: Does God want to save the maximum of people?

Craig: My own view is that God does order the world in such a way that the maximum

number of people will respond to God’s drawing them to himself

JB: Is the Molinist view gaining ground?

Craig: Yes, Calvinists and open theists are both moving towards it, and Molinism is the dominant view among philosophical theologians

JB: Why has Molinism not convinced you?

Helm: It’s an unnecessary theory, God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge covers what middle knowledge covers

Helm: Calvinism has a stronger view of sin, such that God has to act unilaterally and irrestibly to save them

JB: Are creatures free on your view?

Helm: My view of free will is weaker than Craig’s view of free will

Craig: For the Calvinist, grace is irresistible, but for the Molinist, grace is effective when it is met with a response from the creature

Craig: The Bible affirms the strong view of free will, when it says that in certain circumstances people can freely choose to do other than they do

Helm: But if a person is in circumstances X and they are free, then why don’t they choose something that isn’t what God can foresee

Craig: In identical circumstances, a person has the freedom to choose, and God doesn’t determine what they choose, he just foreknows what they choose

Helm: How can God foreknow what people will freely do if people have this strong view of freedom that allows them to do anything? God would not know what people can freely do if they really are free

Craig: God has knowledge of what his creatures would freely do in any set of circumstances, he has knowledge of subjunctive statements

Craig: The Scripture is filled with statements that show that God has this knowledge of what people would do in other circumstances (e.g. – 2 Cor 2:8)

Helm: I am not denying that the Bible is full of subjunctive statements, but if humans have real libertarian free will, then God cannot know what they will do

Craig: I think God does preordain everything, Molinism has a strong sense of divine sovereignty BUT the foreordaining is done with the knowledge of what humans would do in any circumstances, so that what God ordains achieves his ends, but without violating creaturely free will

Craig: I take at face value the passages of the Bible where it says that God wants all persons to be saved

Craig: When the Bible says that God wants ALL persons to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), the Bible means that God wants ALL persons to be saved

Craig: So either universalism is true OR there is something that stops all from being saved outside of God

Craig: the something that prevents all from being saved is creaturely free will

Helm: Most people don't have the opportunity to hear the gospel, so God doesn't want all to be saved

Helm: People can still be responsible for what God "fore-ordains"

JB: Can a person really be responsible for wickedness if they didn't freely choose it?

Helm: Even though God is the only one who can act unilaterally to make save people, the people who act wickedly are still responsible

Craig: Molinism provides an answer to the problem of why not all people have heard the gospel, because by using middle knowledge he is able to know who would respond to the gospel if they heard it and he places those people in the times and places where they will hear it

Craig: That solution means that NO ONE is lost because they have not heard the gospel

Craig: There is Biblical support for (Acts 17:27) God choosing the times and places where people will live SO THAT they will be led by him and be able to respond to his leading

JB: Is God the author of sin, on Calvinism?

Craig: If Calvinists define providence to mean causal determinism, then he is the cause of every effect including human actions, and he is the one who causes people to sin

Craig: This view (determinism) impugns the character of God

Helm: I don't think that sovereignty requires determinism

Helm: God has mysterious resources – which I cannot specify – that reconcile his sovereignty with human responsibility for wickedness

JB: But if God is the cause of people doing wrong things, then how can they be responsible for it?

Helm: Well, humans do cause their own actions

Craig: Helm is right to say that God has resources to reconcile God's sovereignty with free will and human responsibility, and that resource is not an unknown mystery, it's middle knowledge

Craig: I can affirm everything in the Westminster Confession except for the one clause where they expressly repudiate middle knowledge as the mechanism for reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

Helm: Well, Calvinists have a strong view of sin so that humans cannot respond to God's leading

Craig: Yes, and that's why humans need prevenient grace in order to respond to him

Craig: God has to take the initiative and draw people to himself or they cannot be saved, but that grace is resistible, and that's what the Bible teaches (Acts 7:51), so humans are still responsible if they resist God

Helm: My view of grace is that it is monergistic and irrestible, it is a unilateral action on the part of God, like pulling someone out of an icy pond which they can't get out of

JB: If humans freely choose to respond to God's drawing and leading, does that diminish grace?

Helm: Many are called but few are chosen

Craig: Molinism does not require synergism – which is the idea that humans are partly responsible for their salvation

Craig: In Eph 2:8, Scripture is clear that faith opposite to works, and responding to God's drawing is not meritorious

JB: So receiving a gift is not meritorious?

Craig: It's the passive acceptance of what someone else has done for you

Helm: But doesn't this mean that you can lose your salvation, because you can accept and resist the gift of salvation?

Craig: That's a separate question that Christians can differ on, but if the Holy Spirit indwells a person and seals them, then that would argue for the view that salvation cannot be revoked

JB: Doesn't Romans 8 teach Calvinism pretty clearly?

Helm: This is called the "golden chain", and it does support Calvinism

Craig: Actually, this text is no problem for Molinists because the first link in the chain is foreknowledge, which, if it incorporates middle knowledge, is no problem for Molinists

Craig: What God is electing in Romans 8 is a specific group of people that he knows in advance of creating the universe will freely respond to his drawing them to him

Craig: In Acts 4:27-28, it is talking about God's foreknowledge, which involves and incorporates knowledge of what any individual would freely choose if placed in those circumstances

JB: If God actualizes a set plan with set circumstances for everyone, isn't that very similar to Calvinism?

Craig: Yes! It's a strong statement of divine sovereignty

Helm: Foreknowledge doesn't mean that God knows what people would do, it's just refering to God "knowing his own mind" about what he wants to do

JB: How do you respond to the fairness of God unilaterally and specifically choosing some people for salvation and choosing other people for damnation (because he refuses to act unilaterally for them)?

Helm: God ordinarily bypasses other people in the Bible, like when he chooses the Jews as his chosen people

Craig: The problem with that is that the Bible clearly teaches that God has a genuine will that all will be saved and he makes a genuine offer of salvation to all people

Craig: Also, just being a Jew and a member of the chosen people doesn't mean you were saved, because some Jews rebelled against God

Craig: And there were also people outside of the Jewish people who were righteous and in

a relationship with God, like Job

Helm: “the fabric of our faith” depends on God’s choice and his not-choice, it is fundamental to the Bible and to God’s character, and choosing them “effectively” (irrestibly and unilaterally)

Helm: The idea of God considering “possible worlds”, some of which are feasible and not feasible, with conflicts between the wills of free creatures in different circumstances, and then actualizing one world that achieve these ends is very messy

Craig: Some worlds may not feasible for God to create, for example a world in which everyone is saved – it is logically possible, but may not be feasible

Craig: God will not exercise any divine coercion to force people to go to Heaven against their own will

Helm: If God chooses a world because it is feasible, then he doesn’t love me directly, he is choosing a world, not individuals

Craig: Well, when God actualizes a world, he specifically knows which individuals will be saved within that world, but without disrespecting free will

Craig: The world isn’t primary, the individuals are primary

Helm: I think that middle knowledge can he included in God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge

Craig: The knowledge of what people would do in different circumstances is based on the freedom of the individuals

JB: Make your conclusions!

Craig: Molinism is a Biblical model for reconciling divine sovereignty with human freedom

Helm: It is intellectually mystifying to introduce this strong view of human freedom and it is not Biblical

Two examples of authentic love, one from a woman, one from a man

January 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Time for examples of real, self-sacrificial love

Actually, there are 3 stories – Dina added one in the comments which I have copied onto the bottom of the main post.

Let's start with the most self-sacrificial example first. This one made my toes curl in admiration.

From Life News:

> When St. Louis mother Cara Combs was diagnosed with stage IV melanoma while she was pregnant with her fourth child, she was given the choice of having treatment or saving her own life. She chose to save her baby. She decided to put off treatment in favor of giving birth at the 28th week to give her baby girl a chance to live.
>
> Sadly, Combs died Tuesday morning — three days after giving birth.
>
> In deciding to reject treatment, Combs posted the following on Facebook:
>
> I feel it's time to post this because I know a lot of information is going around. Last week I was diagnosed with stage IV melanoma. I am also 25 weeks pregnant. I can't begin treatment while pregnant so I have some tough decisions to make. Against the advice of my oncologist, I am choosing to delay my treatment for three weeks in order to get the baby to 28 weeks. There is no good

> decision here. We will both be fighting for our lives and I feel incredibly guiltily about that. I saw a dermatologist last year and she didn't find anything concerning. Even my oncologist can't find the source. At 38 you don't expect to find out that you are dying. It definitely puts things into perspective. All I can say is enjoy every minute with your kids and don't stress about little things. The baby will probably be born the first week of December and I will start treatment 48 hours later. I know we are in for some big upcoming battles. Thank you for all of the support we have received so far. It is very much appreciated!
>
> Tragically, Roy Combs had to post the message on the family's GoFundMe page this week about losing his wife:
>
> I wanted to let everyone know that we lost Cara Walters Combs this morning. I don't have to tell you how great of a person she was. She will be missed by all. I always knew she was destined for greater things. We all have a perfect angel looking over us. She was the strongest person I ever met and the best wife and mother. She sacrificed everything so her legacy could live on. Thank you all for your support and prayers. She was my everything and always will be.
>
> In similar cases, doctors often suggest an abortion, but, as studies show, there is typically no need for women to destroy the life of their unborn child to save their own. Her story story confirms what research has shown: women who are pregnant and battling breast cancer don't need to have an abortion.

She made the ultimate sacrifice for her unborn child – she wanted to be sure that she would not hurt her child with chemotherapy. Now, can we at least agree that this was a more noble choice than abortion? Not obligatory, for sure. *But heroic.* That's the kind of woman I would want to get up and go to work for every day. Someone who thinks about the needs of others first.

Anyway, on to part two!

This one is from MercatorNet.

And they write:

> A few weeks ago Shannon mentioned the high numbers of divorces around the world. (She even included a colourful map – I'm such a cartophile…) She wisely noted that dedication is probably the key for a happy marriage, if you are prepared to be in for the long haul from the start then you're more likely to work through the hard times rather than cut and run.
>
> Along such lines, watch the above video entitled "What is love?". It shows the love of a man (Bill) for his wife of 50 years (Glad) who has advanced alzeihmer's disease. God forbid that anything should happen to her, but I hope that I will be able to serve my wife with the love, cheerfulness and dedication that Bill demonstrates in this video. If love is willing the good of another then Bill is a great exemplar of love. It is a great antitode to today's "me-first-and-foremost" mentality and culture. It is also the (hard) answer to today's high divorce rates.

> Perhaps with a few more Bills in the world that map in Shannon's post will become less red…just something to think about this Advent.

Indeed.

If you are looking for someone to marry, look for someone who is good at dealing with the needs of other people. Someone who doesn't mind responsibilities, expectations and obligations. Good news for those people, though. You can break that self-centeredness by doing things you don't feel like doing. You have to train yourself to not cut and run when things get difficult. Doing whatever you feel like doing is bad training for marriage. Doing things for others that you don't feel like doing is good training for marriage. Fortunately, there are lots of positive messages about self-denial and self-sacrifice in the Bible. Those can really help you if you are unable to resist the pull of fun and thrills.

Here is a comment that my good friend Dina had about the first story:

> As you know, I am a midwife. I once looked after a woman with cancer that was diagnosed during the pregnancy. She refused treatment to help baby Grace come safely into the world. They had tried for 12 years to have a baby. The pregnancy made her cancer worse as it was an oestrogen based tumour, and she died when Grace was 10 days old and in the special care baby unit.
>
> I remember wheeling her through on her bed to the baby unit so she could have a cuddle with Grace. She said to me "I would save Grace's life over mine every time" the morning she died.
>
> I get a Christmas card and a picture of her every year. Grace is 11 now, and I will never forget her mother's determination, and the strength she found to live long enough to see her born safely.

I read a lot of military history, searching for examples of bravery and courage to humble me. It's easy for me to think that men are the only ones who are self-sacrificial because that's who I read about most. But clearly, women love self-sacrificially as well, and sometimes paying the ultimate price.

Finally, here is some good advice from the Bible for everyone to think about:

Phil 2:3-8:

> [3] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.
>
> [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.
>
> [5] Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,
>
> [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
>
> [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

> [8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Remember, everyone is made in God’s image, and you can love them. It’s easier if they’re lovable, of course – not everyone is safe to love.

Who suffers the most from the trend of extended adolescence?

January 22, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

My friend Tracy sent me this interesting post. As I read it, I thought I was going to disagree with him about who is to blame for the mess he describes, but as we'll see in a bit, I don't.

Here's his intro, which pretty much everyone agrees on:

> **The Five Traditional Milestones of Adulthood**
>
> Something magically happens between adolescence and young adulthood. There are five traditional milestones of that mark entrance into adulthood that sociologists, psychologists, and the general population have used as a proxy to determine when someone has reached that tipping point of maturity. It is at this time adolescence is shed and emotional maturity comes to full fruition.
>
> These are:
>
> - Leaving Home
> - Becoming Financially Independent
> - Completing School
> - Marrying
> - Starting a Family

He has some examples to illustrate who is and isn't mature:

> ***Examples of Adults:***

> - A 25-year old teacher with a college degree, who works full time, is married, has a child, owns her own home, and pays for her own living expenses
> - A 65-year old janitor with a high school diploma, who works full time, is married or widowed, has children, owns his own home, and pays for his own living expenses
>
> ***Examples of Extended Adolescence:***
>
> - A 30-year old who has part of their rent and bills covered by parents, endlessly enrolls in colleges or universities seeking additional degrees or credentials, single, without children.
> - A 45-year old high-school dropout living on social welfare programs who spends his days getting drunk in bars

OK, then he talks about who suffers the most from "extended adolescence":

> What is particularly interesting is the interaction between biology and the paradigm shift that has occurred with so much of the younger generation suffering from extended adolescence. **Women have a specific, limited window of time in which they can genetically reproduce and to which they are attractive to potential mates**. This so-called "biological clock", written into the code at the very deepest core of our DNA, puts a limit on childbearing for females.
>
> - **Fertility:** Female fertility peaks at 20 to 30 years old. After 30 years old, fertility drops by 20%. After 35, it drops 50%. After 40, it drops 95%. As for in vitro fertilization, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine states that women in their early 40's have, on average, only a 3% to 5% chance of having a baby through this method.
> - **Down Syndrome:** At 25, a woman has about 1 chance in 1,250 of having a baby with Down Syndrome; at age 30, a 1-in-1,000 chance; at age 35, a 1-in-400 chance; at age 40, a 1-in-100 chance; and at 45, a 1-in-30- chance.
> - **Miscarriage:** Only 9 percent of recognized pregnancies for women aged 20 to 24 end in miscarriage; 15 percent of women aged 25-30 miscarry; 40 percent of women over 40 do and more than 50 percent miscarry at 42 years of age.
>
> These limitations do not apply to men (an 80 year old man can still reproduce). Men have virtually no opportunity cost to waiting to find a mate. If they want to spend their twenties working their way up their field, putting money in the bank, playing video games, and hanging out with friends, they can always wake up one morning and decide they are ready to settle down, get married, and have kids. **As such, the biological cost of extended adolescence is significantly and substantially higher for women than it is for men. Females suffer from**

> **a Mother Nature-induced "use it or lose it" policy.**

So, should men be expected to ride to the rescue of women who are the end of the their fertility period? Should men make things "work out" for women who refused to marry when they were in their 20s, when they were fertile and attractive?

Nope:

> This fear was encapsulated by Kay Hymowitz in a book called Manning Up: How the Rise of Women Has Turned Men Into Boys.
>
> […]As one reviewer somewhat critically noted of the book, "Hymowitz wants the child-men [those suffering from extended adolescence] to man up so that women don't have to become spinsters or "choice mothers" at the expense of their careers. Might women alter their own behavior? "[T]he economic and cultural changes are too embedded, and, for women especially, too beneficial to reverse." So the answer is no. Although it is women who are becoming disenchanted with the way things are, and although it is women who have created this situation, it is [in her opinion] men who ought to change. And they are to change precisely when women are ready."
>
> The reviewer is correct because *men **are** acting rationally within the confines the new paradigm.* In today's world, men are presented no social, financial, emotional, or reproductive advantage by adjusting their own life to the ticking of a potential mate's biological clock. It is for the woman, to borrow a phrase, "too damn bad". It may not be fair, but in a finite world, there is an opportunity cost to every decision we make. That has always been one of the central themes of this blog. Incentive systems drive nearly everything in civilization from the type of people we attract into certain industries to the kind of behavior we reward. The incentive system for men has changed and society now reflects this reality.

I actually blame the pastors and parents for allowing women to delay marriage, and then blaming men for not marrying women who pass their fertility date. Pastors and parents don't challenge young women's feelings with the truth about what she ought to be doing in order to grow up early and attract a man during the time when she is younger and fertile. They want to let women decide what to do at every point in their lives, based on their feelings "in the moment". The refusal to make judgments leads to women having delusions like "I can have children when I'm 35" and "I can change a bad man into a good man after I marry him" and "a degree in English is as worthwhile as a degree in computer science".

Feminism has a lot to do with it. Women used to be taught by pastors and parents that they should choose chaste men with good jobs, work histories and savings. But feminism says that men don't have any special provider role, and now the main things that women look for in a man is that he is attractive, fun, and lets her do whatever she feels like doing – no matter how crazy and irrational it is.

One woman recently told me that a female friend of ours, who is dating a penniless 28-

year-old student, who has never worked a day in his life need not worry about him. She said “if they marry, he’ll drop out of school and start to work and provide for her”. She is 33, and she thinks that marrying a full-time student is a good idea, because he enthusiastically supports her crazy plans to pursue fun, thrills and travel into her mid-30s. She tells him that God is telling her (through her feelings) to pursue fun and thrills through travel – a position she held when she still an atheist in college, mind you. And she intends to keep up the traveling for as long as she can, even if she isn’t out of debt until she turns 40. And he, in response, is both unwilling to, and incapable of, questioning her plan from a practical point of view. She likes that he lets her fly the plane, even it it means she’ll crash it and kill them both. There is something mentally wrong with a man who stays in school until he is 30, and thinks that he is fine to be in a relationship with a woman. Only men who show aptitude for the provider role should be taken seriously by women.

Pastors and parents don’t dare hurt the self-esteem of sensitive little girls by telling them to study hard things, get full-time jobs, move out of the house and focus on marrying a man who can provide during their 20s. And what happens when the “fun-thrills-travel until you’re 35” plan explodes and no one wants to marry her? Well, then, all pastors and parents who applauded when she delayed marriage blame men for not wanting to marry her. But men don’t marry 35-year-old women. At age 35, the value proposition of marriage to men has been greatly diminished by age and infertility. (Or worse: by promiscuity, cohabitation, divorce, and children from other men) There is a window of opportunity for a woman to invest in a man with her youth, beauty, support and encouragement. Once that window is closed, a man who has a good education, a good resume and good amount of savings has no obligation to marry. All the battles have already been fought as well as they are going to be, and without a woman there to help him. He doesn’t have any emotional connection to a woman that would cause him to either get married or stay married, because of the help he received when it really mattered. Believe me when I tell you that single women today are very intentional about passing up good men so that they can be “free” to travel and have fun. They know exactly what they are doing, but hope to somehow escape the responsibility for their choices later.

Trump signs executive order giving Americans relief from Obamacare fees and taxes

January 23, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

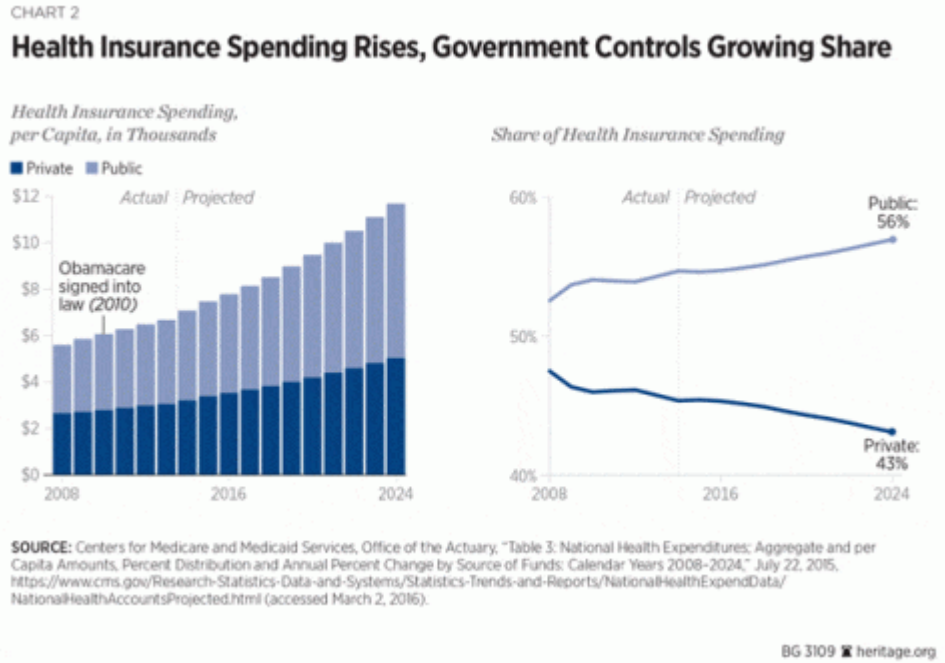

Health insurance costs rose dramatically under Obama (click for larger image)

The Washington Free Beacon reports.

Excerpt:

> On his first day in office, President Trump signed an executive order that would relieve the economic burden that Obamacare has caused, fulfilling a promise he made on the campaign trail.
>
> […]Trump promised Americans that on day one of taking office, he would ask Congress to immediately deliver a full repeal of the Affordable Care Act.
>
> "Since March of 2010, the American people have had to suffer under the incredible economic burden of the Affordable Care Act—Obamacare," Trump said. "As it appears Obamacare is certain to collapse of its own weight, the damage done by the Democrats and President Obama, and abetted by the Supreme Court, will be difficult to repair unless the next president and a Republican congress lead the effort to bring much-needed free market reforms to the healthcare industry."
>
> "It is not enough to simply repeal this terrible legislation," Trump said. "We will work with Congress to make sure we have a series of reforms ready for implementation that follow free market principles and that will restore economic freedom and certainty to everyone in this country."

Since Trump's economic policy draws on the experts at the conservative Heritage Foundation, we can expect that the alternative to Obamacare will be one based on a

system that is proven to be successful. Switzerland has a health care system that has universal coverage, yet is fully privatized. It costs little, and delivers a lot of health care. Their system works, unlike socialist health care systems in the UK and Canada – which Obama was trying to emulate.

House Republicans say:

> "Our goal is a truly patient-centered system, which means more options to choose from, lower costs, and greater control over your coverage," said Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R., Wis.). "And as we work to get there, we will make sure there is a stable transition period so that people don't have the rug pulled out from under them."
>
> The nominee to lead the Department of Health and Human Services Rep. Tom Price (R., Ga.) echoed that sentiment, saying at his confirmation hearing that it is imperative that individuals have health coverage and have greater choices and opportunities to get the coverage they need.
>
> "I think there's been a lot of talk about individuals losing health care coverage—that is not our goal, nor is it our desire, nor is it our plan," Price said.

The Daily Signal has more details on the relief provided to poor Americans in his executive order. It directs Trump's subordinates to:

> […]exercise all authority and discretion available to them to waive, defer, grant exemptions from, or delay the implementation of any provision or requirement of the Act that would impose a fiscal burden on any State or a cost, fee, tax, penalty, or regulatory burden on individuals, families, healthcare providers, health insurers, patients, recipients of healthcare services, purchasers of health insurance, or makers of medical devices, products, or medications.

The Daily Signal also comments:

> As to the substance, the new president's clear directive is for his appointees to focus on minimizing the damaging effects of the law. That constitutes a sharp change in direction from the one taken by the Obama administration.
>
> The implementation approach taken by the Obama administration was essentially to try to increase subsidized enrollment heedless of any resulting costs or disruptions to either the public or private sectors. This executive order signals that the Trump administration's first order of business for Obamacare will instead be to minimize those costs and disruptions.

Some numbers from CNBC:

> For many Obamacare customers this year, they'll be paying more for less.
>
> **A new report on Obamacare plans details how plan premiums, deductibles and other out-of-pocket insurance costs have grown sharply even as the size of networks of health providers covered by those plans**

> **are shrinking in 2017.**
>
> The report from the Avalere consultancy also details how the number of insurers selling Obamacare plans have also shrunk, decreasing competition in the individual health plan market.

> Last year, just 4 percent of all regions of the United States had only one participating insurer on Obamacare exchange, according to Avalere's analysis. This year, 36 percent of all regions in the U.S. will have only one participating health insurer on an Obamacare exchanges.
>
> Avalere's report also found that in 2017, just 31 percent of all exchange-sold plans are "preferred provider organizations" or "point of service" plans, down from 52 percent of all plans in 2014, the first year of Obamacare coverage
>
> PPOs generally have a wider networks of doctors and hospitals covered by the plan, and cover more out-of-network services than do other types of plans, including health maintenance organizations.

I have a friend who is a Democrat. For every month of the last 6 years, I have been presenting him with the numbers on Obamacare showing the negative impact on small businesses and poor Americans. He makes 6 figures as a software engineer, and knows literally nothing about economics. I have even told him stories about some of my friends who are poorer who struggled with the financial burdens caused by the law. His response was stunning: "what does this matter to you, you have health care through your employer". That's how Democrats think. As long as they are OK, who cares about the poor. The important thing for them is that government run everything and make all the decisions, because ordinary people cannot be trusted with freedom.

You can read more about the disaster of Obamacare here in a report by the Heritage Foundation.

Trump signs executive order banning taxpayer funding of foreign abortions

January 24, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump enacts good executive order = GOOD TRUMP
Well, this is two "Good Trump" episodes in a row.

The Stream reports:

> President Donald Trump on "Day One" of his presidency signed an executive order restoring the so-called "Mexico City Policy," which requires all foreign non-governmental organizations that receive federal funding to refrain from performing or promoting abortion services.
>
> Ronald Reagan first established the broader policy 33 years ago, which built on a 50-year-old law banning USAID from providing funds to any nongovernmental organization providing a number of services — including abortion.
>
> Called the "global gag rule" by critics, the policy has been lifted or reinstated by presidents since Reagan, depending on whether the president was a Republican or a Democrat. Bill Clinton lifted the policy in 1993, George W. Bush reinstated in 2001 and Barack Obama pulled it during his first term as president.
>
> Under the policy, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) will lose federal funding. Alison Marshall, the director of advocacy for IPPF, estimates that the abortion organization will lose approximately $100 million over a period of two to three years.
>
> Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), the only woman remaining on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said she has a legislative plan in place now that President Trump moved forward with restoring the policy. Shaheen is also worried that President Trump will gut gender equality programs, among other "liberal social policies." Calling the move to reinstate the Mexico City policy "short-sighted," Shaheen said that "Abolishing those programs is antithetical here in our

> democracy."
>
> Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said that it was "time to take a hard look at women's aid programs," reported*Foreign Policy*. "The State Department is trying to basically get countries who receive foreign assistance to sign up for a liberal agenda," said Graham. He added that under the Obama administration, "It's been out of control."
>
> **In addition to his action on the Mexico City Policy, President Trump signed executive orders withdrawing the U.S. from the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and freezing federal workforce hiring. President Trump exempted the military from the hiring freeze.**

It's important to note that Obama was the one who enacted taxpayer-funding of abortions abroad with United States taxpayer money.

Here's what Obama did on January 24th, 2009, eight years ago today:

> One of Obama's first acts as president was to repeal the Mexico City Policy, which prohibited tax dollars from going to international organizations that do abortions. A few months later he signed an executive order that allowed tax dollars to fund unsuccessful embryonic stem cell research.
>
> Less than a month after taking office, President Obama began the process to roll back conscience protections that his predecessor had put in place so that healthcare professionals would not be forced to perform abortions if they were opposed to doing them.
>
> He also nominated Kathleen Sebelius, then governor of Kansas, for the position of the secretary of Health and Human Services. Ms. Sebelius was one of the most pro-abortion governors in the nation, vetoing a bill that would have restricted late-term abortions, and was close friends with late-term abortionist George Tiller.
>
> […]And all that was just in the first couple months of Obama's presidency.

Are you pro-life? Obama was making you pay for abortions abroad, not to mention federal funding of Planned Parenthood. That's what people who vote Democrat get when they vote Democrat. There is no such thing as a pro-life Democrat. Everyone who votes Democrat is pro-abortion, no exceptions. Every Democrat votes for late-term abortion, partial-birth abortion, infanticide, sex-selection abortions and race-selection abortions. Every Democrat is in favor of abortions even after the baby can feel pain.

Good Trump, Bad Trump

Regarding reporting on Trump: I am going to be fair about posting good things that Trump does and bad things that Trump does. If Trump does anything to impose tariffs, I will blog on that. If Trump does anything to weaken NATO or embolden Russia, I will blog on that. If Trump does anything to waste money on "infrastructure", I will blog on that. So far, it's good Trump all the way.

Note: No conservatives really liked Obama's Trans Pacific Partnership deal, so Trump's getting rid of that does not count as "bad Trump". But I will be watching for any kind of tariff or other protectionist nonsense, since consumers are the ones who are hardest hit by those naive, populist economic policies. Free trade is bedrock conservatism, and any opposition to free trade is wrong. It's wrong if Obama does it (by delaying the free trade deal with Columbia) and it's wrong if Trump does it.

Trump signs executive order to unblock construction of two major pipelines

January 25, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump signs good executive action = GOOD TRUMP

I can't believe that I am blogging on "Good Trump" three days in a row. Rest assured, when there is "Bad Trump", I will cover that as well.

The Daily Signal reports:

> President Donald Trump signed a pair of executive orders to move forward with two major pipelines blocked by the Obama administration, but with the caveat the U.S. would "renegotiate" the terms of building the projects.
>
> "It's subject to a renegotiation of terms by us," Trump said before signing an executive order on the Keystone XL oil pipeline. "We're going to renegotiate some of the terms, and, if they'd like, we'll see if we can get that pipeline built."
>
> The Dakota Access oil pipeline's construction was also "subject to terms and conditions to be negotiated by us," Trump said before signing his second executive order on pipelines Tuesday.
>
> One of those conditions is pipelines must be built with U.S.-produced steel, Trump said. Union leaders met with Trump Tuesday morning.
>
> Trump also signed executive orders to expedite environmental reviews of infrastructure projects to get them built more quickly.
>
> The Obama administration blocked Keystone XL and Dakota Access, drawing cheers from environmental activists opposed to using fossil fuels. Former President Barack Obama argued Keystone XL's approval would tarnish America's image as a champion against global warming.
>
> The former administration blocked the Dakota Access oil pipeline in November

> 2016, after environmentalists and American Indians protested for months to block the pipeline. Activists argued the pipeline would impact Standing Rock Sioux sacred tribal sites—though they produced little evidence of this.
>
> Environmentalists were furious with Trump's pipeline executive orders, but supporters argue it will be better for jobs and the environment to build more pipelines.

Trump shouldn't care about the global warming fascists, as I can guarantee you that none of them voted for him, and none of them ever will.

However, I am worried about what I am hearing about Trump on free trade. Every conservative believes in free trade, because conservatives understand basic economics, and basic economics teaches that free trade is always better for both parties of the trade.

If Trump puts tariffs (taxes on trades) on foreign goods coming into the United States, (e.g. – smartphones, computers, electronics and cars), then American consumers will pay MORE for those items.

Look what the American Enterprise Institute says:

> America's low-income households benefit the most from free trade and having access to cheap imports because they spend a greater share of their budgets on traded goods like clothing, footwear, household items, school supplies, appliances, toys, and furniture (think Walmart shoppers)…
>
> […]America's low-income households have the most to lose from greater restrictions on free trade with import quotas, protective trade tariffs, border taxes, and other trade barriers. If Trump starts a trade war with tariffs and border taxes, it will be a "war on the poorest Americans…

That's why I am skeptical about Trump's protectionist tendencies. Some of the people who got him elected are uneducated when it comes to basic economics, and they are pressuring him to do stupid things that will hurt *all the consumers* in a misguided effort to save the jobs of *a few workers.* Workers who would be better off getting re-trained and re-hired in a more challenging job. I'd much rather use government money for re-training someone who loses their job than slam all the poorest consumers with a tax on their consumer goods from foreign countries. No unemployment, but tuition for a trade school or university, and cut employer payroll taxes on them for 5 years after they graduate. It would be like increasing their value, then putting them on sale. That's way better than tariffs.

Trump signs executive order to build border wall and sanction sanctuary cities

January 26, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump signs good executive action = GOOD TRUMP

I'm astonished to find myself blogging for a fourth time in a row on "Good Trump" when there hasn't been any "Bad Trump" in between. There has been talk about things that would be Bad Trump, but all the actions so far have been Good Trump.

Story from Townhall.com:

> As expected, President Donald J. Trump has just signed two executive orders that call for the construction of a border wall and outlines a new agenda regarding immigration enforcement. It's done. Bloomberg's Jennifer Jacobs reported one of the orders puts an end to catch-and-release, U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel by 5,000 people, and seeks to put an end to asylum fraud.
>
> The second order seeks to end sanctuary cities, identify criminal illegal aliens, triple the amount of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, and empower them to enforce federal immigration laws. It will also create victims advocacy office for Americans who loved ones had been victimized by people who should have never been here in the first place.

Regarding the second order, the Washington Examiner reports that the sanctions against sanctuary cities will involve cutting off the flow of federal tax dollars:

> President Trump will direct his secretary of homeland security to examine ways the administration can suspend grants to so-called "sanctuary cities," or areas where law enforcement agents do not enforce immigration laws, White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Wednesday.
>
> "What the executive order does is, it directs the secretary to … look at funding streams that are going to these cities … and figure out how we can defund those

> streams," Spicer said of an executive action Trump was expected to sign later in the day.

Why is Trump doing this?

It might be worth remembering the case of Kate Steinle, so that we understand what caused American voters to elect Trump.

> Five-time deportee, seven-time convicted felon Juan Francisco Lopez-Sanchez said in a new interview Sunday with a local ABC News affiliate that he came to San Francisco because he knew the sanctuary city would not hand him over to immigration officials.
>
> […]Lopez-Sanchez has confessed to shooting Kathryn Steinle last Wednesday at Pier 14.
>
> Had San Francisco authorities not refused a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainer request, Lopez-Sanchez may not have been in the United States and Steinle might still be alive.

The Obama administration held to a pattern of releasing illegal immigrants who had been convicted of serious crimes:

> […][A]fter Kathryn Steinle was killed July 1, allegedly by an illegal immigrant with seven felony convictions, Obama said . . . nothing.
>
> […]Why has Obama been so reticent to speak out? Perhaps it is because any soul-searching in this case would require him to confront the fact that his administration has been releasing tens of thousands of dangerous illegal immigrants with criminal convictions into our communities — including many who have gone on to commit murder.
>
> It got little notice, but on May 28, Sarah Saldana, director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, admitted in a letter to Sens. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) that between fiscal years 2010 and 2014, the Obama administration had released "121 unique criminal aliens who had an active [deportation] case at the time of release and were subsequently charged with homicide-related offenses."
>
> Think about that: 121 times over the past four years, the administration has released an illegal immigrant with prior criminal convictions who went on to be charged with murder. That is one every 12 days.

Like Obama, Hillary Clinton favored amnesty for illegal immigrants, less border security and no wall. She didn't care about the victims of crimes committed by illegal immigrants, because she had bodyguards with guns to protect her. And so, that's how we got President Trump and the Trump wall. It wasn't that voters didn't like the idea of a female President, it was that voters didn't like the idea of a President who would bend over backwards for people who should not be here, and who treated the safety and security of

taxpayers with contempt.

Does Planned Parenthood provide prenatal care and mammograms to women?

January 27, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

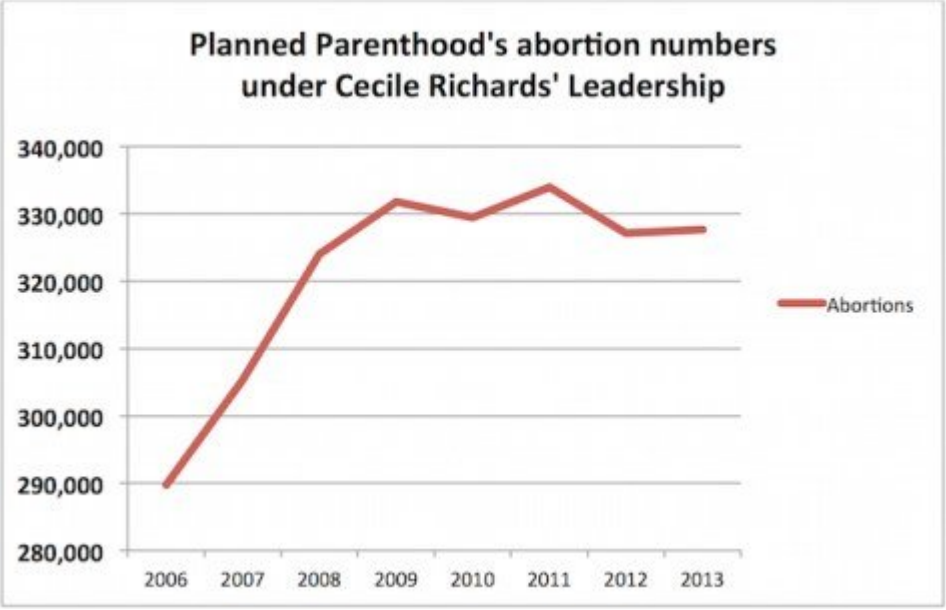

How many abortions does Planned Parenthood perform?
(Source)

A new video put out by Live Action takes a look at the claim that Democrats make that Planned Parenthood provides prenatal care to pregnant women.

But that's not all – what about the claim made by Democrats that Planned Parenthood provides mammograms to women?

Life Site News explains the myth and the reality.

Excerpt:

> The day before hundreds of pro-life activists prepared to flood Planned Parenthood's offices with requests to schedule a mammogram, the organization issued a statement admitting that they do not offer the cancer screening procedure at any of their facilities.
>
> The calls were placed today as part of "Call Planned Parenthood to Schedule Your Imaginary Mammogram Day" – an event organized by pro-life activists in response to President Obama's statement during the presidential debate Tuesday that the abortion organization offers mammograms.
>
> "There are millions of women all across the country, who rely on Planned Parenthood for, not just contraceptive care, they rely on it for mammograms, for cervical cancer screenings," the president had said, repeating a claim he had made earlier this summer in an interview with *Glamour* magazine.
>
> But Obama isn't the only one.
>
> The notion that Planned Parenthood offers mammograms is one of the most

> enduring myths about the abortion giant. The claim is regularly trotted out by pro-abortion politicians eager to defend taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood, but wary of invoking its controversial status as the country's leading provider of abortions.

Not only does Planned Parenthood not provide mammograms, but the abortions they perform have been linked to the epidemic of breast cancer that is afflicting women today.

What about the claim that only 3% of what Planned Parenthood does is doing abortions?

False:

> Practically every defender of the organization, fighting to preserve its federal funding, reverts to the 3 percent figure. How could you possibly, they ask, defund a group that devotes itself overwhelmingly to uncontroversial procedures and services for women?
>
> […]The 3 percent factoid is crafted to obscure the reality of Planned Parenthood's business. The group performs about 330,000 abortions a year, or roughly 30 percent of all the abortions in the country. By its own accounting in its 2013–2014 annual report, it provides about as many abortions as Pap tests (380,000). The group does more breast exams and provides more breast-care services (490,000), but not by that much.
>
> The 3 percent figure is derived by counting abortion as just another service like much less consequential services. So abortion is considered a service no different than a pregnancy test (1.1 million), even though a box with two pregnancy tests can be procured from the local drugstore for less than $10.
>
> By Planned Parenthood's math, a woman who gets an abortion but also a pregnancy test, an STD test, and some contraceptives has received four services, and only 25 percent of them are abortion. This is a little like performing an abortion and giving a woman an aspirin, and saying only half of what you do is abortion.
>
> Such cracked reasoning could be used to obscure the purpose of any organization. The sponsors of the New York City Marathon could count each small cup of water they hand out (some 2 million cups, compared with 45,000 runners) and say they are mainly in the hydration business. Or Major League Baseball teams could say that they sell about 20 million hot dogs and play 2,430 games in a season, so baseball is only .012 percent of what they do.
>
> Supporters of Planned Parenthood want to use its health services as leverage to preserve its abortions, as if you can't get one without the other. Of course, this is nonsense. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides free or low-cost breast- and cervical-cancer screenings — without aborting babies. State health departments provide free cancer screenings — without aborting babies. Community health centers provide a range of medical services — without aborting babies.

I think it’s a good idea to be able to respond to Planned Parenthood’s rhetoric. These are the people who kill babies, and we have to be able to respond to their false claims. When a majority of people learn the truth about the baby killing business, it will stop.

Thomas Sowell: does affirmative action help minorities to get ahead?

January 28, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Thomas Sowell – the best economist in the world

My favorite economist, Thomas Sowell has an article in Investors Business Daily that explains what affirmative action really does to minorities.

Excerpt:

> Affirmative action is supposed to benefit black and other minority students admitted with lower academic qualifications than some white students who are rejected.
>
> […]Despite much media spin, the issue is not whether blacks in general should be admitted to higher-ranked or lower-ranked institutions.
>
> The issue is whether a given black student, with given academic qualifications, should be admitted to a college or university where he would not be admitted if he were white.
>
> Much research over the years has confirmed… that admitting black students to institutions for which their academic preparation is not sufficient can be making them worse off instead of better off.
>
> I became painfully aware of this problem more than 40 years ago when I was teaching at Cornell University and discovered that half the black students there were on some form of academic probation.
>
> These students were not stupid or uneducable. On the contrary, the average black student at Cornell at that time scored at the 75th percentile on scholastic

> tests. Their academic qualifications were better than those of three-quarters of all American students who took those tests.
>
> Why were they in trouble at Cornell, then? Because the average Cornell student in the liberal arts college at that time scored at the 99th percentile. The classes taught there — including mine — moved at a speed geared to the verbal and mathematical level of the top one percent of American students.
>
> The average white student would have been wiped out at Cornell. But the average white student was unlikely to be admitted to Cornell in the first place. Nor was a white student who scored at the 75th percentile.
>
> That was a "favor" reserved for black students. This "favor" turned black students who would have been successful at most American colleges and universities into failures at Cornell.
>
> None of this was peculiar to Cornell. Black students who scored at the 90th percentile in math had serious problems trying to keep up at MIT, where other students scored somewhere within the top 99th percentile.
>
> Nearly one-fourth of these black students with stellar qualifications in math failed to graduate from MIT, and those who did graduate were concentrated in the bottom tenth of the class.
>
> There were other fine engineering schools around the country where those same students could have learned more, when taught at a normal pace, than at a breakneck speed geared to students with extremely rare abilities in math.
>
> […]Mismatching students with educational institutions is a formula for needless failures.
>
> The book "Mismatch" by Sander and Taylor is a first-rate study of the hard facts. It shows, for example, that the academic performances of black and Hispanic students rose substantially after affirmative action admissions policies were banned in the University of California system.
>
> Instead of failing at Berkeley or UCLA, these minority students were now graduating from other UC campuses. They were graduating at a higher rate, with higher grades, and now more often in challenging fields like math, science and technology.
>
> […]Does the actual fate of minority students not matter to the left as much as their symbolic presence on a campus?

Now, you might ask yourself on what basis Sowell makes all these assertions, so here are a few of his academic publications about affirmative action, which are state-of-the-art:

- Preferential Policies: An International Perspective, William Morrow & Co., 1990
- Affirmative Action Around the World: An Empirical Study, Yale University Press, 2005

Now, I was recently talking to a friend who has empirically false views on a number of

topics. He is opposed to capital punishment, opposed to gun ownership, supports affirmative action, and so on. When I ask him why he believes these things, he doesn’t point to any evidence. I offered to give him studies showing that capital punishment has a deterrent effect on crime, that concealed carry laws reduce violent crime rates, that affirmative action laws harm minorities, etc.

If we really want to help minorities, we have to do what makes sense according the evidence. We have to aim to do good, not just feel good.

A must-read series of posts on cosmic fine-tuning by Allen Hainline

January 29, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

There are four posts in the series, so far. I think Allen might be done, so I'm going to link to all four and snip something I like from each one.

The first post is on whether the fine-tuning is real, and whether a multiverse explains the fine-tuning so that there is no need for a cosmic Designer.

I just have to choose this quote from the atheist Stephen Hawking on the fine-tuning:

> The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life. For example, if the electric charge of the electron had been only slightly different, stars would have been unable to burn hydrogen and helium, or else they would not have exploded. It seems clear that there are relatively few ranges of values for the numbers [i.e. the constants of nature] that would allow for development of any form of intelligent life.

And from Luke Barnes, who I've mentioned before on this blog:

> In my years of researching this topic, I'm amazed at how few scientists who have studied the fine-tuning details disagree with this core claim that the subset of life-permitting physics is a tiny fraction among possibilities. Since Luke Barnes is a top researcher on this topic, consider his input on the level of acceptance of the fine-tuning claim: *"I've published a review of the scientific literature, 200+ papers, and I can only think of a handful that oppose this conclusion, and piles and piles that support it.*[3]"

And on the multiverse as a way to escape the fine-tuning:

> The key issue though is that for the multiverse to be an adequate explanation for the fine-tuning it requires the conjunction of several hypotheses for which we lack *any* empirical evidence:
>
> 1. A universe-generating mechanism that generates a plethora of universes
> 2. That this mechanism doesn't itself require fine-tuning
> 3. The many-worlds interpretation of quantum physics
> 4. The ability to *widely* vary constants in those universes. If you think that it's a foregone conclusion that String Theory/M-Theory[8] will come to the rescue in this area, you should watch this video clip by Oxford physicist Roger Penrose where he exclaims that "it's not even a theory … it's a collection of hopes".
>
> Occam's razor therefore does seem to favor design over the multiverse. When one accounts for the extensive problems in affirming premise 2 and how these multiverse theories make predictions incompatible with our universe, the hypothesis that God designed the physics of the universe to bring about life is more plausible.

Here's the second post, where he explains the fine-tuning argument philosophically, and gives an example of one of the constants that has to be fine-tuned in order to support complex, embodied intelligence of any kind.

The cosmological constant:

> The inference to design will be more easily recognized if we shed some light as to the specialness of the required values. Consider the size of the bull's eye and wall based on just 1 parameter – the cosmological constant. There is a natural range for possible values for this constant because there are known contributions that are 10^{120}times larger than the overall net value. (There is a near perfect but inexact cancellation of contributions accurate to 120 decimal places). Let's use the most conservative numbers in the physics literature that indicate a fine-tuning to 1 part in 10^{53}. If the cosmological constant, which governs the expansion rate of the universe, had been larger than its current value by this tiny fraction, then the universe would have expanded so fast that no stars or planets would have formed and therefore no life. If the value were smaller by this amount then the universe would have rapidly collapsed before the universe cooled sufficiently to allow for stable information storage which is required by any self-replicating system such as life.

In the third post, he responds to objections to the fine-tuning argument. One objection you hear from atheists who don't understand the science is that any selection of constants and quantities is as likely as any other, so our life-permitting set is just random. Now, first off, there are only 10 to the 80 atoms in the visible universe, so if the

cosmological constant is fine-tuned to 1 in 10 to the 120, it's not rational to say "it just happened randomly".

But here is Allen's response:

> However, the assumption that any set of constants is just as likely as any other is the very thing that we want to know. Starting off with that as an *assumption* begs the question against design. As Luke Barnes articulates in this excellent podcast dealing with responses to the fine-tuning claim, suppose we're playing poker and every time I deal I get a royal flush. If this continues to happen, you become increasingly convinced that I'm likely to be cheating. If I responded to an accusation of cheating by just saying "well any set of 5 cards is just as likely as any other so you can't accuse me of cheating" you would be rational to reject this explanation. The question is not "how likely is any set of 5 cards?" but rather "how likely is it I'm cheating if I just dealt myself 10 straight royal flushes?" This question accounts for the possibility that I'm cheating which would almost certainly be true in this scenario. So the right fine-question is "given the fine-tuning evidence, how likely is it that the constants were set at random?" The values for physical constants conform to a very particular pattern – that which supports life. The fact that we have so many finely-tuned constants makes it unlikely that they were all set at random (at least in the single universe scenario and I've already shown some of the problems/challenges in multiverse explanations.)

Every 5-card hand that you draw is equally unlikely, but the royal flush is the highest hand in the game and *always wins.* Every hand you draw is unlikely, but whatever you draw is overwhelmingly likely to not be a royal flush.

Finally, the fourth post deals with the objection that the constants and quantities could not have been other than they are.

He quotes physicist John Barrow giving 5 reasons why the constants can vary, and then this:

> Even if the constants and laws of physics couldn't vary, there is even more reason to think that there were many physically possible sets of initial conditions. Paul Davies states this emphatically:
>
> "Even if the laws of physics were unique, it doesn't follow that the physical universe itself is unique…the laws of physics must be augmented by cosmic initial conditions…there is nothing in present ideas about 'laws of initial conditions' remotely to suggest that their consistency with the laws of physics would imply uniqueness. Far from it…it seems, then, that the physical universe does not have to be the way it is: it could have been otherwise.[4]"
>
> John A. Wheeler agrees: "Never has physics come up with a way to tell with what initial conditions the universe was started off. On nothing is physics clearer than what is not physics."

The constants and quantities are not determined by physics. They were *selected* by whoever created nature in the first place.

So that's the series. I noticed that he kept linking to this Common Sense Atheism podcast featuring famous cosmologist Luke Barnes. I grabbed it to listen this weekend, and you might want to get it, too. It's over an hour. It seems like it is one stop shopping to understand common objections to the fine-tuning argument, and how strong each one is.

Stop telling women that God will give them a husband later if they delay marriage now

January 30, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

Dalrock blogged a splendid post about people who claim that there is a shortage of "good men". He says that if there really were a shortage of good men, then people who want women to actually get married would be telling women not to delay marriage, but to instead get serious about marrying early, when their ability to attract a man is at its peak.

Dalrock writes:

> We can see the same pattern in Dr. John Piper's recent post Why Are Women More Eager Missionaries?* Piper explains that missionary work has become a pink ghetto:
>
> …the actual situation among most evangelical faith missions is that between 80–85% of all single missionaries are women. It is a rare thing, like two out of every ten, for a single man to make missions his life's vocation, which results in the overall statistics being that one-third of those in evangelical world missions are married men, one-third are married women, and 80 percent of the last third are single women. Which means that something just less than two-thirds of the total missionary force are women.
>
> **Piper's main concern with the post however is not that there aren't enough single men doing missionary work, but that women who choose this field aren't marrying as they would like. Piper complains that the problem for husband hunting missionary women is really an exacerbated version of the same problem all Christian women have, and that is an overall lack of marriageable Christian men…**

I'll save you the quotation of Piper, but his reason why missionary women struggle to find

husbands is – SHOCK! – that Christian men refuse to man up. I.e – Piper believes that there are not enough marriage-ready, marriage-minded men.

More:

> **But if Piper actually believed… that there was a severe shortage of husband material men, he would focus his attention on helping the women reading navigate this incredibly difficult situation. Overseas mission work may feel empowering for young women, but (according to Piper) single women going into the mission field are greatly handicapping their prospects in an already bleak field. His advice to young women would be to choose which was truly more important to them, being a missionary or finding a husband.**

If Piper really believed that there were a shortage of marriage-minded, marriage-capable Christian men, then Piper would be counseling women who *genuinely* want to marry to make marriage a priority when they are younger, prettier and more fertile. Some women say that they want to get married "some day", but the truth is that they want fun and thrills until they get tired of it, and they just expect a suitable man to show up right when they need one – even if the things a man wants in a woman are all gone.

So who is to blame if missionary women can't find husbands?

> Piper even tells a story which would be a perfect way to teach this lesson. He describes a single woman named Gladys Aylward who went to a place where she found no marriageable men, and then blamed single men for not following her and proposing marriage:
>
> "Miss Aylward talked to the Lord about her singleness. She was a no-nonsense woman in very direct and straightforward ways and she asked God to call a man from England, send him straight out to China, straight to where she was, and have him propose to me." I can't forget the next line. Elisabeth Elliot said, "With a look of even deeper intensity, she shook her little bony finger in my face and said, 'Elisabeth, I believe God answers prayer. And he called him.'" And here there was a brief pause of intense whisper. She said, "'He called him, and he never came.'"
>
> Now, that experience, I would guess, is not unique to Gladys Aylward.
>
> **If Piper really believed that Christian husbands were scarce, he would be sharing this anecdote to warn young women of the foolishness of moving away from the pool of men they hope to choose a husband from and then expecting God to send the man of their choosing across the world to propose. If we were in a culture of scarcity of good men, this would be the *obvious* lesson from this story. But we live in an age with unshakable confidence that good men are not only available all around us, but will always be abundant. If Piper believed that the husband Miss Aylward was praying for was surrounded by real life English**

> **women eager to win him as a husband, this story wouldn't be complaining about why he didn't drop everything, fly to China, and propose to a woman he had never met. If Piper believed that the man was sought after as a husband in England, he would be pointing out the foolishness of Miss Aylward flying off to China and then wondering why a man she had never met didn't show up to propose once she decided she wanted to marry.**

Now to be fair, in Miss Aylward's case, she almost certainly did a lot more good as a missionary than she would have achieved with a marriage. She was not pursuing fun and thrills, she really was making a difference. Still, it was neither rational nor prudent to think that the odds of meeting a Christian man were very good in China. She either needed to accept that being a missionary in a secular country meant not marrying, or she needed to focus on marriage first when she was attractive to men as a life partner. (Many women are propositioned for sex as they age, but few of them are asked to marry) As homeschooling mom "That Mom" points out on her blog, having an influence through marriage and parenting is not compatible with the irresponsible thrill-seeking hedonism championed by impractical pastors like Francis Chan.

But some missionaries really are delaying marriage for frivolous reasons. The 33-year-old missionary woman I know keeps telling all her advisers that she wants to get married "some day". Her last two boyfriends were both penniless students in their late 20s, who had never worked a full-time job in their entire lives. She feels that there is no need to prepare herself for the roles of wife and mother, either. Her negative $20,000 net worth? No problem. The 5-year gap in her resume? No problem. Her chorus of advisers tell her that God will give her a husband right on cue. A husband who won't insist that a wife have chastity, sobriety, self-control, financial responsibility, beauty or fertility.

What men want in a wife and mother apparently has no importance whatsoever to women today. And women have no appreciation of how investing in a husband early causes him to be loyal to her when she is older. Women think that a husband will show up when she is ready, and be loyal to her even though she was absent during the hardships of the first decade of his career. Fun and thrills in your 20s are more important than helping a man through the difficult battles of his early career. Just show up when you are 35 -unchaste, wrinkly and infertile – and reap the rewards of his unassisted earning and saving.

Why do men like John Piper mislead women about the feasibility of their emotion-driven plans? Answer: because they fear women's reactions to disagreement. Men are easier to criticize than women, because men are trained to take it, and not to show their emotions. Practically speaking, whenever a woman anoints her emotions as *God speaking to her*, her plan almost never works out. But it takes courage to tell a woman to make plans with her mind, instead of with her feelings.

I expect women today to disrespect male advisers, even those with proven ability, because we live in an age of radical feminism where even Christian women who deny

feminism act as if they were radical feminists. But it’s not just men who are disrespected. Many women don’t even respect *older women* with proven ability (See Titus 2:3-5). They just block experts out and find advisers with no proven ability, but who agree with them.

By the way, for an explanation of why men prefer not to be missionaries, read this post on Deeper Strength blog.

Trump signs executive order to eliminate job-killing regulations on small businesses

January 31, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump signs good executive action = GOOD TRUMP

It's Tuesday, so I guess it's time for another executive order. Is it "Good Trump" or "Bad Trump" this time?

Yesterday, the Daily Signal reported this:

> President Donald Trump signed an executive order Monday aimed at slashing regulations on American small businesses.
>
> The order will expand regulatory review with the goal of dramatically peeling back federal regulations. The order is the Trump administration's first step in repealing two regulations for every new regulation put forth, CNBC reports.
>
> The measure also sets a $0 budget for new regulations in 2017, and a cap on the cost of any new regulations going forward. Once in effect, it will require federal agencies to propose any new regulatory rules to the White House for official review.
>
> […]By signing the order, Trump is following through on his campaign promise to put a moratorium on any new regulations when he takes office. Trump also promised to end "all unnecessary regulations" imposed on the energy industry and to "dismantle" the 2,300-page Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

It's good Trump!

Last week, there was another executive order designed to halt pending regulations.

The Washington Free Beacon reports that so far, Trump has halted $181 Billion (with a B) in regulatory costs:

> In one of his first acts as president, Donald Trump effectively halted nearly $200

> billion worth of regulations, according to a new analysis.
>
> President Trump has taken aggressive action to curb regulations in his first week, promising to cut 75 percent or “maybe more,” and signing an executive order Monday to cut two regulations from the books when every new rule is introduced.
>
> The first move came in the form of a memo to all federal agencies from Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, freezing all recently finalized and pending regulations. The American Action Forum, a center-right policy institute, found the action resulted in stopping rules that would cost the economy $181 billion.

Getting rid of regulations is important, because it frees up small businesses to put more resources on expanding and job creation. Most jobs are created by small businesses, and they are definitely complaining more lately about being overregulated.

Small businesses and regulations
The American Enterprise Institute explains:

> Startups have been on the decline for 30 years, and I have written frequently on some of the possible reasons. One big open question: To what extent is government regulation playing a role in that decline? A blog post by Scott Shane, professor of Entrepreneurial Studies at Case Western Reserve University, offers a few data points that suggest rules and red tape could be hindering business formation. He notes, for instance, small business owners are complaining more about regulation than they have in the past — twice as much as in the 1980s, for instance. And this:
>
> Over the past three-and-a-half decades, federal regulation has been rising, while new business creation has been falling, as the chart above indicates. Researchers at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the Hudson Institute, the Hoover Institution and the Heritage Foundation believe the pattern is more than a coincidence. The per capita rate of new employer business creation and number of rules pages in the Federal Register — a common measure of the scope of federal regulation — correlate -0.67 over the 1977 to 2012 period. Similarly, the

> per capita rate of business creation and the number of pages in the Code of Federal Regulation — another frequently used estimate of government rulemaking — correlate -0.78 over the same period. (A correlation of 1.00 means that two numbers move in perfect concert.)
>
> Correlation may not prove correlation, but it can provide a helpful lead on where to look for the problem.

Trump’s focus seems to be to get job creation started again by lifting the tax and regulatory burdens on those who create jobs. That’s a very different focus than his predecessor.

Trump picks a scholarly originalist to replace Scalia on the Supreme Court

February 1, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump picks a strict constructionist (originalist) for Supreme Court vacancy

There were three main candidates: Pryor had the most conservative record and a few red flags, Hardiman was the "stealth" candidate, and Gorsuch was the scholarly originalist.

Tump picked the scholarly originalist.

The Federalist explains:

> Tonight, President Trump rewarded social conservatives and delivered on his campaign promise by nominating Neil Gorsuch, a Circuit Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit, to the United States Supreme Court.
>
> […]Gorsuch, 49, was appointed to the 10th Circuit in 2006 by George W. Bush. His nomination generated little controversy, and he was confirmed with a voice vote by the U.S. Senate. **A graduate of Columbia, Harvard Law, and Oxford, he is praised for his eloquent legal prose, intellectual gifts, and is heralded by conservatives for his textualist and orginalist interpretations of the Constitution. It is no surprise that his appointment fills the vacuum left by Justice Antonin Scalia's death.**
>
> Gorsuch has garnered significant praise from Robert P. George, the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University and arguably the nation's most influential social conservative intellectual. On Facebook, George issued the following praise for Gorsuch: "He would be a superb Supreme Court justice. He is intellectually extremely gifted and is deeply committed to the (actual) Constitution and the rule of law. He will not manufacture 'rights' or read things into the Constitution that aren't there or read things out of the Constitution that are." In social conservative circles, a Robert George endorsement is sufficient alone to merit support for Gorsuch.

This I really like – he's a Protestant like me:

> A member of the Anglican communion (who would become the only Protestant on the Supreme Court), Gorsuch studied under eminent legal philosopher, natural lawyer, and ethicist John Finnis at Oxford. Anyone familiar with Finnis' work will understand the resounding alignment his work has with social conservative pillars, particularly around issues of human dignity and sexual ethics.

The only Protestant on the bench, in a majority Protestant country. It's about time!

I'm not sure how to align SCOTUSBlog, but I think of them as center-left. Here's what they think of the nominee:

> With perhaps one notable area of disagreement, Judge Gorsuch's prominent decisions bear the comparison out. For one thing, the great compliment that Gorsuch's legal writing is in a class with Scalia's is deserved: Gorsuch's opinions are exceptionally clear and routinely entertaining; he is an unusual pleasure to read, and it is always plain exactly what he thinks and why. Like Scalia, Gorsuch also seems to have a set of judicial/ideological commitments apart from his personal policy preferences that drive his decision-making. He is an ardent textualist (like Scalia); he believes criminal laws should be clear and interpreted in favor of defendants even if that hurts government prosecutions (like Scalia); he is skeptical of efforts to purge religious expression from public spaces (like Scalia); he is highly dubious of legislative history (like Scalia); and he is less than enamored of the dormant commerce clause (like Scalia).

He's like Scalia, and that's what we want, (although Clarence Thomas is my favorite Supreme Court Justice).

Here's Gorsuch's view of legislating from the bench, in an article he wrote for National Review in 2005:

> This overweening addiction to the courtroom as the place to debate social policy is bad for the country and bad for the judiciary. In the legislative arena, especially when the country is closely divided, compromises tend to be the rule the day. But when judges rule this or that policy unconstitutional, there's little room for compromise: One side must win, the other must lose. In constitutional litigation, too, experiments and pilot programs–real-world laboratories in which ideas can be assessed on the results they produce–are not possible. Ideas are tested only in the abstract world of legal briefs and lawyers arguments. As a society, we lose the benefit of the give-and-take of the political process and the flexibility of social experimentation that only the elected branches can provide.

He doesn't like judicial activism, he wants legislators to legislate. It's about time we got a judge who believes in interpreting the Constitution instead of legislating from the bench. All we had for the last eight years was affirmative action picks who legislated from the bench, instead abiding by the plain meaning of the laws.

National Review also reports that religious liberty is an area of strength for him:

> In two high-profile religious-liberty cases, Gorsuch voted to hold that the Obama administration had violated the Religious Freedom Restoration Act by refusing to exempt religious employers from a requirement to cover contraceptives in their insurance plans. In neither case, though, will it be easy for opponents to portray his decisions as evidence of social-conservative zealotry.
>
> He concurred in a decision freeing the Hobby Lobby chain from the contraceptive mandate. Its evangelical owners considered some of the contraceptives they were forced to cover to be abortifacients, and objected to them for that reason. A narrow 5-4 majority of the Supreme Court affirmed that decision. Gorsuch joined a dissent arguing that the Little Sisters of the Poor, a group of Catholic nuns, had shown that the Obama administration's fines for noncompliance with the mandate amounted to a substantial burden on the exercise of their faith — one of the preconditions for getting protection under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The Supreme Court unanimously vacated the decision from which Gorsuch had dissented.
>
> Gorsuch's solicitude for religious liberty has not been confined to cases involving abortion, contraception, or conservative Christians. In the less well-known *Yellowbear v. Lampert*, Gorsuch ruled that the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act meant that a Native American prisoner had to have access to his prison's sweat lodge.

Religious liberty is my core value – the thing I care the most about. It's important to me that the nominee have a record on the issue I care about the most.

I think that next time we get a SCOTUS nominee, if we get 60 or more Republican senators in the Senate after the 2018 mid-terms, we'll get the very conservative Pryor. Which would basically make Trump's presidency great for conservatives. It's very important to get these picks right. This was the right pick for 52 Republican senators in the Senate, and Pryor is the right pick when we have 60 Republican senators in the Senate. So get ready for 2018.

UPDATE: Ben Shapiro says that Pryor has some red flags, and that Gorsuch was the best pick. He calls it a home run, and even wore the red MAGA hat on his podcast, for being wrong. So Trump chose the best person.

Can a person believe in God and fully naturalistic molecules-to-man evolution?

February 2, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

The term for a person who believes in fully naturalistic evolution but who also believes in God is "theistic evolutionist".

Terrell Clemmons takes a look at one organization of theistic evolutionists "Biologos", and makes a distinction between their public statements and the real implications of their public statements.

Here is the PR / spin definition of theistic evolution:

> Evolutionary creation is "the view that all life on earth came about by the God-ordained process of evolution with common descent. Evolution is a means by which God providentially achieves his purposes in creation." This view, also called *theistic evolution*, has been around since the late nineteenth century, and BioLogos promotes it today in a variety of religious and educational settings.

And here is the no-spin definition of theistic evolution:

> As Dr. Stephen Meyer explains it, the central issue dividing Bio-Logos writers from intelligent design theorists is BioLogos's commitment to methodological naturalism (MN), which is not a scientific theory or empirical finding, but an arbitrary rule excluding non-material causation from the outset. "Unfortunately," Meyer writes,
>
> methodological naturalism is a demanding doctrine. The rule does not say "try finding a materialistic cause but keep intelligent design in the mix of live possibilities, in light of what the evidence might show." Rather, MN tells you that

> you simply must posit a material or physical cause, whatever the evidence.
>
> **What this means, according to BioLogos's own epistemology, is that God is objectively undiscoverable and unknowable—a tenet that sits squarely at odds with Christian orthodoxy, which has for centuries held that God is clearly discernible in the natural world (e.g., Romans 1:20).** Obviously, this is theologically problematic, but Meyer also points out that theistic evolution faces problems from a scientific standpoint as well, as the technical literature among evolutionary biologists is moving *away* from the Darwinian mechanism.

Whenever I talk to theistic evolutionists, I try to stop them from talking about the Bible or their faith, because that's not what is interesting to me. I don't really care about their history as a religious person, or where they go to church, or who their pastor is. When I talk about origins and evolution, I only care about the science. What the ordinary process of scientific inquiry tells us about nature? Does nature have the capacity to create all of the varieties of life without any intelligent agency playing a role? Or, are there parts of nature that are similar to computer programs, blog posts, and term papers, where the best explanation of the effect is an intelligent agent choosing how to arrange the parts to achieve functionality?

I don't accept molecules-to-man unguided evolution. This is not because I start with faith and let faith override the findings of science. It's because I think that if you look at specific areas of natural history, there is clear evidence of intelligent agency, such as in the origin of life, or the Cambrian explosion. These effects in nature are well-studied and well-understood, and they look much more like the code that a computer scientist (like me) writes than the simplistic "order" created by wind erosion or crystalline patterns or anything the blind forces of nature could produce. Blind forces are observed to make small changes – short or long finch beaks, fruit flies with 4 wings and no balancers, bacterial resistances.

What's also interesting is how often theistic evolutionists drop the theism but keep the evolution.

Consider this article about Stephen Matheson from Evolution News:

> Biologist Stephen Matheson is a longtime critic of the theory of intelligent design. His extensive attacks on Stephen Meyer's *Signature in the Cell*, for one, ranged from the substantive to the trivial and personal. The tone was frequently…abrasive, and we responded at the time. With Arthur Hunt, Dr. Matheson has debated Dr. Meyer in a forum at Biola University. Formerly a professor at an Evangelical Christian school, Calvin College, Matheson is still listed as a Blog Author at the theistic evolutionary website *BioLogos*, where it notes that he enjoys "explor[ing] issues of science and Christian faith."
>
> Well, his theistic evolutionary explorations have now terminated. As he reports on his personal blog page, where he took a hiatus of more than five years along

> with a break from his teaching, he is “happily” no longer a Christian.

OK. Now that’s just one case, but what about Howard Van Till, also of Calvin College? Salvo magazine takes a look at what he wrote in a recent book:

> In what follows I shall use the term “naturalism,” when unqualified, to represent neither more nor less than *the rejection of supernaturalism.* Stated positively, naturalism is committed to the belief that all events that occur within this Universe are consistent with and adequately explained by the system of natural causes. This commitment necessarily entails the additional belief that the system of natural causes is fully adequate to account for all events that transpire. Focusing on the issue of the Universe’s formational economy, we can say that naturalism—as here defined -entails the RFEP.

He now gives presentations for atheist groups entitled “From Calvinism to Freethought”. Freethought is a euphemism for atheism.

Now, for the big three Western monotheistic religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. To deny supernaturalism IS to deny the robust theism present in the world’s big three monotheistic religions. Van Till denies theism as commonly understood now. And again, this isn’t because of the science. His heavy handed naturalistic assumption squashed out any kind of serious inquiry into areas like the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine tuning, the origin or life, the Cambrian explosion, biological convergence, so-called junk DNA, deleterious mutations, and so on. Places where you can see that naturalistic forces cannot do the creating that Van Till has faith that they can.

And for the record, I am an *enthusiastic* supporter of the standard Big Bang cosmology, and a 4.5 billion year Earth. My problem with evolution is not Bible-based, it’s science-based. If the science shows the need for intelligent causes, and I think it does, then I think that the naturalists need to adjust their assumptions and pre-suppositions to match the evidence. We have blog posts and computer science code, that’s evidence for a programmer. We have DNA and proteins and sudden origin of body plans, that’s evidence for a programmer, too.

UC Berkeley riots against free speech could end subsidies for left-wing colleges

February 3, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For a long time now, conservative speakers have been being blocked by left-wing students and protestors. At UC Berkeley, a leftist seminary, things have spilled over into fascism and violence.

You can review some photos of the violence, vandalism and rioting in this post from the Daily Signal.

Here's one:

Rioters smash windows at a T-Mobile store during a protest against campus speaker (Photo credit: Photo: Noah Berger/EPA/Newscom)

Here's an example of the violence, reported by the Washington Free Beacon:

> A female Donald Trump supporter was pepper-sprayed on Wednesday night by an anti-Trump protester while she was giving an on-camera interview at the University of California, Berkeley.
>
> "I'm looking to make a statement by just being here, and I think the protesters are doing the same," Kiara Robles told KGO-TV. "Props to the ones who are doing it non-violently, but I think that's a very rare thing indeed."
>
> Within seconds of that comment, someone wearing black gloves came over and pepper-sprayed Robles in the face and then quickly ran away. It is not completely clear why Robles was targeted, but she was wearing a red "Make Bitcoin Great Again" hat that resembled Trump's "Make America Great Again" campaign hat as protests broke out to oppose a Trump supporter scheduled to speak on campus.

Here's the video:

Watch that. And think carefully about what Democrats are really like. How different is the typical Democrat that you know from the one who attacked a defenseless woman who was merely *speaking words that the attacker did not like*? This is the result of leftist seminaries and the leftist mainstream media and leftist Hollywood teaching impressionable young people to hate others instead of understanding them.

The normally sedate National Review comments:

> The use of violence in the pursuit of political aims is the very definition of terrorism. And while it probably would be too much to treat these half-baked campus radicals with the seriousness applied to al-Qaeda or the Islamic State, the crimes committed in this and related episodes are serious and demand to be treated seriously. Political violence has social implications far beyond those of ordinary crime — we are not talking here about local thugs knocking over a 7-Eleven in Oakland.

Domestic terrorism. That's what the left perpetrated, and is now covering up, in California. The article notes that only one person was arrested, and that's not surprising, since the Democrats in power are doing *nothing whatsoever* to fix the problems. This is what Democrats believe, from bottom right to the top. So why would they punish people they agree with?

The Daily Signal notes that no one has been arrested:

> […][T]he new violent nature of these protests prompts a discussion over whether or not the school should be a recipient of federal funds.
>
> Videos have surfaced of a crowd of protestors beating a man unconscious and lighting a massive fire, which led to the cancellation of Yiannopoulos' speaking engagement by the university.
>
> **Yet as of last night, campus police remained minimally involved in containing the riots, with the police chief saying she was not aware of any arrests made.**

Fortunately, there may be a way to reverse the indoctrination in hate that young people are receiving – namely, cutting off the flow of taxpayer money to the leftist seminaries.

More:

> The riots were violent enough to elicit a response from President Donald Trump, who tweeted out, "If U.C. Berkeley does not allow free speech and practices violence on innocent people with a different point of view – NO FEDERAL FUNDS?"
>
> Indeed, American taxpayers should be well aware of where their money is going.
>
> UC Berkeley is a public institution that receives federal dollars, yet it appears to allow violence, censorship, and holds contempt for the Constitution and the rule

> of law.

The response to Trump’s tweet from Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, a radical leftist, was to pretend to be shocked that anyone would punish the leftist leaders for manufacturing domestic terrorists with taxpayer money. They are so entitled, that they cannot imagine that they are committing fraud by taking taxpayer money, and turning out little brainwashed fascists.

Now the secular left will be very unhappy with the flow of funds they use for indoctrinating children being cut off. But if we want to stop future crimes and future acts of domestic terrorism, then we should serious about forcing the leftist seminaries to expose their little psychopaths-in-training to critical thinking and a diversity of viewpoints. Before it’s too late.

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalistic alternatives to the Big Bang

February 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students

Here's the lecture, which was given in 2004 at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

This lecture might be a little advanced for beginners, but if you stretch your mind first, you shouldn't tear anything. (Note: standard disclaimers apply if you do tear something!)

The description of the video states:

> This is quite simply one of the best lectures William Lane Craig (a philosopher of science) has given. Craig explores the origins of the universe. He argues for a beginning of the universe, while refuting scientific models like the Steady State Theory, the Oscillating Theory, Quantum Vacuum Fluctuation Model, Chaotic Inflationary Theory, Quantum Gravity Theory, String Theory, M-Theory and Cyclic Ekpyrotic Theory.

And here is the description of the lecture from Reasonable Faith:

> A Templeton Foundation lecture at the University of Colorado, Boulder, laying out the case from contemporary cosmology for the beginning of the universe and its theological implications. Includes a lengthy Q & A period which features previous critics and debate opponents of Dr. Craig who were in attendance, including Michael Tooley, Victor Stenger, and Arnold Guminski.

Craig has previously debated famous atheists Stenger and Tooley previously. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A time of this lecture. Imagine – having laid out your entire case to two people who have debated you before and who know your arguments

well. What did they ask Craig, and how did he respond?

The scientific evidence

The Big Bang cosmology that Dr. Craig presents is the standard model for how the universe came into being. It is a theory based on six lines of experimental evidence.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe
3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

It's probably a good idea to be familiar with these if you are presenting this argument, because experimental science is a reliable way of knowing about reality.

Published research paper

This lecture by Dr. Craig is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Here's the peer-reviewed article that the lecture is based on.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

If you want something to post on your Twitter or Facebook that is much shorter than this

lecture, then you should check out this quick 4-minute explanation of the kalam argument.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

February 5, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here is Dr. William Lane Craig giving a long-form argument for the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus, and taking questions from the audience.

The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the

Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early dating
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthewand whether it is intended to be historical or apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza

Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is “The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus” and the best comprehensive book is “The Resurrection of Jesus“.

Report: NOAA rushed a paper to publication that exaggerated global warming

February 6, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

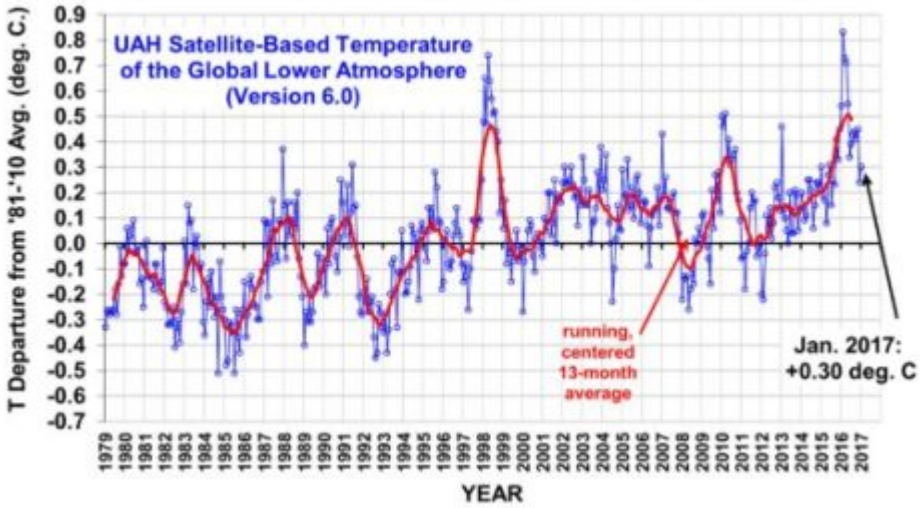

Satellite-based measurements of global temperature (Source)

This is a bombshell.

The UK Daily Mail reports:

> The Mail on Sunday today reveals astonishing evidence that the organisation that is the world's leading source of climate data rushed to publish a landmark paper that exaggerated global warming and was timed to influence the historic Paris Agreement on climate change.
>
> A high-level whistleblower has told this newspaper that America's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) breached its own rules on scientific integrity when it published the sensational but flawed report, aimed at making the maximum possible impact on world leaders including Barack Obama and David Cameron at the UN climate conference in Paris in 2015.
>
> The report claimed that the 'pause' or 'slowdown' in global warming in the period since 1998 – revealed by UN scientists in 2013 – never existed, and that world temperatures had been rising faster than scientists expected. Launched by NOAA with a public relations fanfare, it was splashed across the world's media, and cited repeatedly by politicians and policy makers.
>
> But the whistleblower, Dr John Bates, a top NOAA scientist with an impeccable reputation, has shown The Mail on Sunday irrefutable evidence that the paper was based on misleading, 'unverified' data.
>
> It was never subjected to NOAA's rigorous internal evaluation process – which Dr Bates devised.

> His vehement objections to the publication of the faulty data were overridden by his NOAA superiors in what he describes as a ‘blatant attempt to intensify the impact’ of what became known as the Pausebuster paper.

You can take a look at the graph above, which shows the pause since 1998. And now we are starting another downturn. How could a scientific paper be published that tried to hide the pause? How could the NOAA do this? Answer: big government is desperate to show the need for higher taxes and more regulation of energy producers.

Let’s hope that the Republicans aren’t influenced by this, or we will all be paying more for electricity and gas.

Muslim immigrants yell “Allahu Akbar!” as they are sentenced for underage sex-trafficking

February 7, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

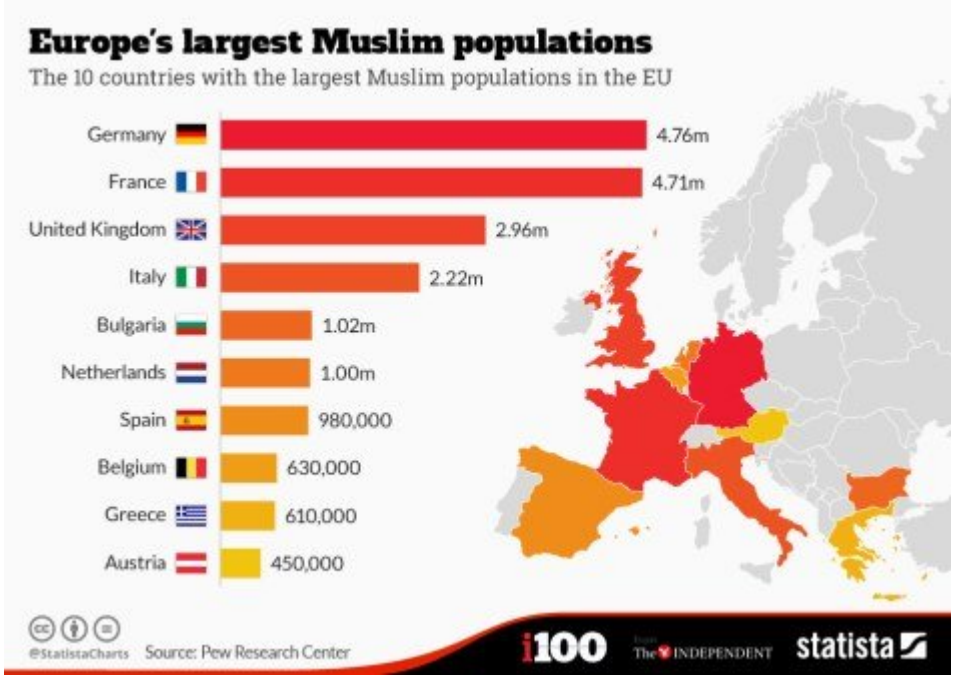

Muslim populations in Europe

I have to be careful with this post, because I know a lot of open borders “Christians” who will be offended by hearing about the effects of their open borders advocacy.

Here are the facts from Powerline Blog:

Full text:

> You are probably familiar with the Rotherham scandal. Rotherham is a city in England where over a period of years, more than 1,400 girls, many of them pre-teens, were raped and trafficked by a loose consortium of men. The men were all Muslim immigrants or sons of immigrants, the girls were all, or nearly all, white. When the scandal finally came to light in 2014, city officials said that they had been reluctant to do anything about the problem for fear of being accused of racism.
>
> Several criminal trials have resulted from the scandal. The third such trial has just been completed. Six defendants were convicted and sentenced to 10 to 20 years for rape and other crimes. The Sun identified them:
>
> Brothers Basharat Dad, 32, and Nasar Dad, 36, of both of Rotherham, and Tayab Dad, 34, of Sheffield, were jailed on Tuesday for sex offences along with Matloob Hussain, 41, of Rotherham, Mohammed Sadiq, 40, of Rotherham, and Amjad Ali, of Worksop, Nottinghamshire.
>
> This is the most curious aspect of the news report:
>
> There were emotional and chaotic scenes at Sheffield Crown Court after two of

> the defendants shouted “Allahu Akbar” as they were led from the dock.
>
> What do you suppose they meant by that?
>
> As their supporters began shouting down into the court, one of the victims shouted back “justice is served” as police moved into the public gallery.
>
> They have supporters? Why?

I blogged about this trial many times on this blog. It’s good to know that justice has been done. By the way, the mass immigration policies that were in effect in the UK for a very long time were brought in by the leftist Labour Party. So if you know someone who votes Labour, or worse, Liberal Democrat, now you know what they voted for. Everyone who voted for Labour or Liberal Democrats is complicit in this crime. They put into motion the causes that led to this effect.

I did ask some of my open borders Christian friends about this story, and they basically said that they didn’t care about a few victims of crime, so long as the Muslim immigrants were benefiting from liberal spending of taxpayers money. Especially in academic circles, where professors are insulated from reality, there is widespread ignorance about how open borders affects taxpayers who have to pay the bills for unskilled immigrants.

Russell Moore

Sometimes, even pious pastors start to seek praise by spending the money of working taxpayers. One of those pious pastors is Russell Moore, who advocates for open borders.

Christian apologetics blog Triablogue explains, quoting the well-respected National Review:

> Evidently, Russell Moore, President of the SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, is a tool of George Soros:

> Russell Moore? He’s one of the leaders of the Evangelical Immigration Table, a Soros front group pushing for Obama’s immigration agenda.

I found a pretty good article from an actual scholar that counters the open borders push by Soros-funded immigration groups. You might want to bookmark it when you run into people who want to push for open borders. And remember. Always ask who is paying for it. George Soros is an atheist. He doesn’t believe the Bible. But he can pay people to quote the Bible selectively to advance his leftist agenda. Christian leftists are very anxious to appear generous – so long as they are spending other people’s money, and risking other people’s lives. As long as their daughters are not sex-trafficked by pedophile gangs, they are all in favor of open borders.

William Lane Craig explains the purpose of prayer

February 8, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

This is from a recent Q&A from his web site Reasonable Faith.

Here's the question:

> My question is this: what is the point of prayer? Here prayer is defined as an attempt to communicate with God.
>
> God either can read our thoughts or he cannot. If he can read our thoughts, there is surely no need to try to transmit or broadcast them to him as he already knows what they are. If he cannot read our thoughts, then any thought-based effort to contact him is futile. It doesn't matter what type of prayer it is (eg petition, thanksgiving, repentance), there is no point in making any effort to send it up to him.
>
> Of course, Christianity generally holds that God is omniscient and therefore able to read our thoughts, so the first of these scenarios would be the applicable one. The characteristic of omniscience makes the concept of prayer all the more redundant as it means God already knows any information that might be communicated to him, and exactly what the best thing is to do about it, so prayer could not in any way influence his decisions.
>
> I am well aware that the Bible commands us to pray in numerous instances, but in the light of this argument this strikes me as an incredibly arbitrary thing for a good God to command, and thus makes the reliability of the Bible all the more questionable to me.
>
> Currently it seems to me that the idea of prayer is most sensibly explained as an addictive placebo that gives people a greater sense of control over their

> circumstances than they actually have.

Dr. Craig's response is long, but here is the key part:

> Yes, God can read our thoughts. So how is that problematic for the spiritual discipline of prayer? You say, "*there is surely no need to try to transmit or broadcast them to him as he already knows what they are.*" Hold on, Joe! Seriously, do you think prayer is a matter of providing God *information*? You defined prayer as communication with God. You don't communicate with another person through a third-person relationship. You enter into what has been called an "I-thou" relationship. You speak *to* another person, not just about that person. Your girlfriend or wife would be decidedly unimpressed if you rationalized never telling her "I love you" on the grounds that she already knows that! Anybody that obtuse is on his way to a break-up! Two people who are in love with each other want to speak to each other, to build an intimate relationship with each other.
>
> So, sure, God reads my mind, and that enables me to pray to Him at any moment, even when audible prayers would be inappropriate. I can shoot up a thought-prayer, "Thank you, Lord!" or "God, give me wisdom!" at a moment's notice. This is what people in a relationship do. Can you imagine anyone so obtuse as to say, "I don't have to thank John for what he did for me because he already knows I'm grateful"? Or "I don't have to apologize to Susan because she already knows I'm sorry"?
>
> Moreover, did it not occur to you that such personal communication may be good for you? I-thou relationships open you up as a person, to make you a more loving, transparent, and vulnerable person. Prayer to God is the same way. God knows what is good for us and so wants us to talk to Him.

But in addition to that – yes, God can answer prayers:

> You have a second, different objection to prayer: "*omniscience makes the concept of prayer all the more redundant as it means God already knows any information that might be communicated to him, and exactly what the best thing is to do about it, so prayer could not in any way influence his decisions*." This is an objection to the efficacy of prayer. What the objection overlooks is that God can take prayers (or the lack thereof) into account in His providential planning of the world. Knowing that Joe would freely pray in a certain set of circumstances, God may actualize a world in which Joe's prayers are answered; but had God known that Joe would not pray, God may have actualized something else instead. Prayers, then, are not an effort to change God's mind. Rather God takes account of prayers in choosing which world to actualize. Prayers thus make a *counterfactual* difference: if I were not to pray, then something else would have been the case instead. Knowledge of this sort is called "middle knowledge," and there's a lot on this website about this fascinating topic.

I have to tell you that in a poll of some of my male apologist friends, we all struggle with

prayer. I can’t say why they struggle with prayer, but in my case it’s just that I have trouble understanding how big God is and how much more he can do – especially when there are so many problems and I can’t work on them all myself. My personality is very practical. If something needs to be done, I do it. If something needs to be said, I say it. The best thing to do when any dragon appears is to attack it. The best thing to do when a princess is in distress is to rescue her. I do not call for help when there is anything for me to do. Prayer is like a last resort!

Having said that, I do understand that God wants to partner with me and that means that my perception of him changes as I work my way through the standard prayer practices… acknowledging who God is, thanking him for what I have, asking him for what I need, asking him to defend himself and act to make people aware of him and his character, etc. I do struggle with it, though. It’s not as easy for me to do as go to church or read the Bible. Apologetics, of course, is no problem for me! I wish someone would encourage me to pray.

I think the middle knowledge point he raised is key, though – God, prior to creating the world *can* factor in all of your prayers that you freely pray, because he foreknows everything you will do in the circumstances (time and place) that he places you in. So, have confidence. Even if he doesn’t answer you the way you expect, your prayers were heard.

Aside from all that, I do think that God is pleased when I pray about my concerns to him. It shows him how I am changing, and have his priorities in my mind, and not my own. If you are interested in pleasing God, then talking to him about your concerns and priorities is a good thing to do, especially as your concerns and priorities become more like his.

Does God’s omniscience conflict with human free will?

February 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Here’s the setup for the question, from Come Reason Ministries.

Excerpt:

> Hello,
>
> Christian doctrine holds that God is all knowing (1 John 3:20), and humans have free will (Deuteronomy 30:19 is my favorite example). however, at my favorite apologetics debate board, I have seen skeptics raise an objection to these points several times. the basic logic behind their arguments is this:
>
> 1. A being with free will, given two options A and B, can freely choose between A and B.
> 2. God is omniscient (all-knowing).
> 3. God knows I will choose A.
> 4. God cannot be wrong, since an omniscient being cannot have false knowledge.
> 5. From 3 and 4, I will choose A and cannot choose B.
> 6. From 1 and 5, omniscience and free will cannot co-exist.
>
> I have read many counter-arguments from apologetics sites, but they were either too technical (I couldn’t understand them), or not satisfying. so, I was wondering what would your input be on this issue?
>
> Thank you,
>
> Justin

Ever heard that one? I actually had that one posed to me by a guy I used to work with who had a Ph.D in computer science from Northwestern. So this is an objection you may actually here.

Here's Lenny Eposito's answer:

> Hi Justin,
>
> Thanks for writing. This is a great question as it shows how even those who appeal to logic can have biases that blind them. Let's examine this argument and see if it follows logically.
>
> Premises 1 and 2 in your outline above are the main premises to the argument and are not disputed. The Christian worldview argues that every human being is a free moral agent and is capable of making choices simply by exercising their will, not under compulsion or because of instinct. Also, it is a long held doctrine of Christianity that God is all-knowing. The Bible says that God knows "the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10)." For omniscience to be truly knowledgeable it must be correct knowledge, so premise number 4 is also granted.
>
> However, point number 5 is where the logic falters. Those who argue in this manner make the mistake of thinking that because God possesses knowledge about a specific matter, then he has influenced it. That does not follow at all. Just because God can foresee which choice you will make, it does not mean you couldn't still freely choose the other option.
>
> Let me give you an example. I have a five year old son. If I were to leave a chocolate chip cookie on the table about a hour before dinner time and my son was to walk by and see it, I know that he would pick up the cookie and eat it. I did not force him to make that decision. In fact, I don't even have to be in the room at all. I think I know my son well enough, though, to tell you that if I come back into the kitchen the cookie will be gone. His act was made completely free of my influence, but I knew what his actions would be.
>
> In examining the argument, the assumption is made in premise 3 that because God knows I will choose A somehow denies me the choice of B. That is the premise that Christianity rejects. Omniscience and free will are not incompatible and it is a non-sequitor to claim otherwise.
>
> Thank you Justin for this interesting question. I pray that you will continue to defend the gospel of our Lord and may He continue to bless you as you seek to grow in Him.

That's a great answer and should work in ordinary conversations.

More technical

J.W. Wartick maps out the arguments more fully with symbolic logic here on his Always Have A Reason blog. But I'll just excerpt the gist of it.

Excerpt:

> It is necessarily true that if God knows x will happen, then x will happen. But then if one takes these terms, God knowing x will happen only means that x will happen, not that x will happen *necessarily.* Certainly, God's foreknowledge of an event means that that event will happen, but it does *not* mean that the event could not have happened otherwise. If an event happens necessarily, that means the event could not have happened otherwise, but God's foreknowledge of an event doesn't somehow transfer necessity to the event, it only means that the event will happen. It could have been otherwise, in which case, God's knowledge would have been different.
>
> […]Perhaps I could take an example. Let's say that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow (and I do hope I will, I don't like missing classes!). God knows in advance that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow. His knowledge of this event means that it will happen, but it doesn't mean that I couldn't choose to stay in and sleep for a while, or play my new copy of Final Fantasy XIII, or do something more useless with my time. If I chose to, say, play Final Fantasy XIII (a strong temptation!), then God simply would have known that I would play FFXIII. His knowledge does not *determine* the outcome, His knowledge is simply *of the outcome*.

If we choose A, God would foreknow A. If we choose B, God would foreknow B. His foreknowledge of our choices is contingent on our making free choices.

New study: literacy more widespread around ancient Israel than previously thought

February 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

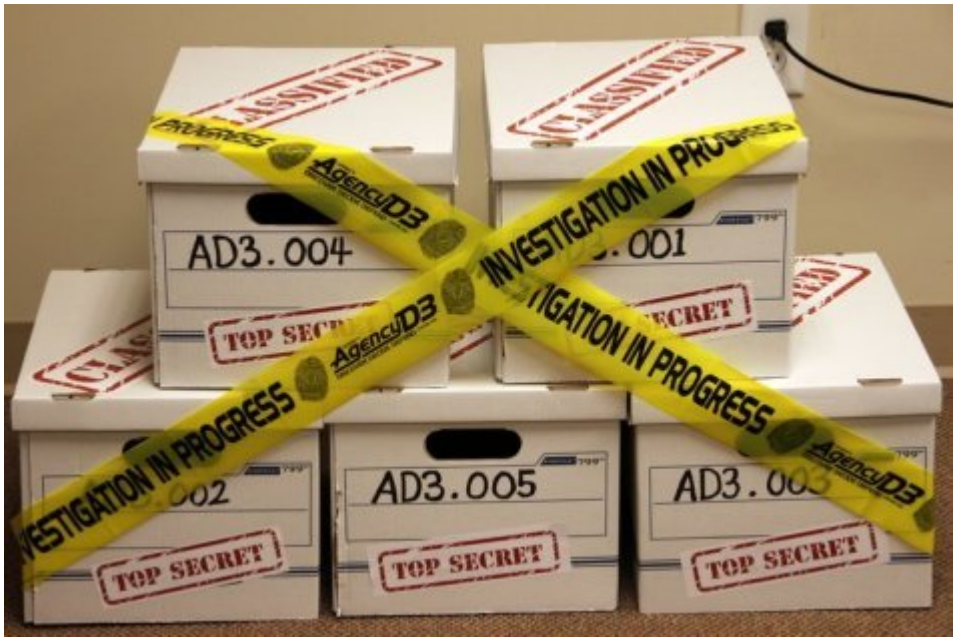

Investigation in progress

Some skeptics like to attack the traditional authorship of the gospels by arguing that the gospels couldn't have been written by anyone close to Jesus, because they were all illiterate. The impression I get from the skeptics is that they think that illiteracy was widespread in and around ancient Israel.

But then, in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places, there is news about a new peer-reviewed study:

> Eliashib, the quartermaster of the remote desert fortress, received his instructions in writing — notes inscribed in ink on pottery asking for provisions to be sent to forces in the ancient kingdom of Judah.
>
> The requests for wine, flour and oil read like mundane, if ancient, shopping lists. But a new analysis of the handwriting suggests that literacy may have been far more widespread than previously known in the Holy Land around 600 B.C., toward the end of the First Temple period. The findings, according to the researchers from Tel Aviv University, could have some bearing on a century-old debate about when the main body of biblical texts was composed.
>
> […]The new study, published on Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, combined archaeology, Jewish history and applied mathematics, and involved computerized image processing and the development of an algorithm to distinguish between the various authors issuing the commands.
>
> Based on a statistical analysis of the results, and taking into account the content

> of the texts that were chosen for the sample, the researchers concluded that at least six different hands had written the 18 missives at around the same time. **Even soldiers in the lower ranks of the Judahite army, it appears, could read and write.**
>
> […]The study was based on a trove of about 100 letters inscribed in ink on pieces of pottery, known as ostracons, that were unearthed near the Dead Sea in an excavation of the Arad fort decades ago and dated from about 600 B.C. That was shortly before Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah, and the exile of its elite to Babylon — and before many scholars believe the major part of the biblical texts, including the five books of Moses, also known as the Pentateuch, were written down in any cohesive form.
>
> The Arad citadel was small, far-flung and on an active front, close to the border with the rival kingdom of Edom. The fort itself was only about half an acre in size, and probably would have accommodated about 30 soldiers. The wealth of texts found there, recording troop movements, provisions and other daily activities, were created within a short time, making them a valuable sample for looking at how many different hands wrote them.
>
> […]**One of the longstanding arguments for why the main body of biblical literature was not written down in anything like its present form until after the destruction and exile of 586 B.C. is that before then there was not enough literacy or enough scribes to support such a huge undertaking.**
>
> **But if the literacy rates in the Arad fortress were repeated across the kingdom of Judah, which had about 100,000 people, there would have been hundreds of literate people, the Tel Aviv research team suggests.**
>
> **That could have provided the infrastructure for the composition of biblical works that constitute the basis of Judahite history and theology including early versions of the books of Deuteronomy to II Kings, according to the researchers.**

I just heard a debate on the weekend in which atheist historian Bart Ehrman made the argument that around the time of Jesus, almost no one was literate. Therefore, it's unlikely that anyone who was an eyewitness to Jesus' would have been able to write anything down about it.

I think this evidence does have some bearing on that question, because it shows that literacy of at least Hebrew was more widespread in the area than previously thought. That means that the people around Jesus are more likely to be able to keep their own notes, and then pass those notes off to a writer of Greek. Instead of having stories being circulated for the 30-35 years between the death of Jesus and the writing of Mark (note: I think Mark was written much earlier than that), you would have written notes by the eyewitnesses that could then be translated into Greek.

But there's more interesting stuff about Bart Ehrman's charge of widespread illiteracy.

Consider this post that I found on Catholic apologist Jimmy Akin's blog, where he makes the case that Bart Ehrman is even wrong about his estimate of illiteracy. And when I say wrong, I mean it looks like Ehrman deliberately misrepresents a primary source that he quotes in order to make his point. Maybe that will be fixed in a future edition of his book, but it wasn't fixed in the debate on Saturday – he used the same botched quote then.

Is Matthew Vines twisting Scripture in order to justify sexual misbehavior?

February 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Here's a post from Christian writer Terrell Clemmons about efforts by gay activists to redefine Christianity so that it is consistent with homosexual behavior. This particular post is focused on Matthew Vines.

She writes:

> In March 2012, two years after having set out to confront homophobia in the church, Matthew presented the results of his "thousands of hours of research" in an hour-long talk titled "The Gay Debate." The upshot of it was this: "The Bible does not condemn loving gay relationships. It never addresses the issues of same-sex orientation or loving same-sex relationships, and the few verses that some cite to support homophobia have nothing to do with LGBT people." The video went viral (more than three quarter million views to date) and Matthew has been disseminating the content of it ever since.
>
> In 2013, he launched "The Reformation Project," "a Bible-based, non-profit organization … to train, connect, and empower gay Christians and their allies to reform church teaching on homosexuality from the ground up." At the inaugural conference, paid for by a $104,000 crowd-funding campaign, fifty LGBT advocates, all professing Christians, gathered for four days in suburban Kansas City for teaching and training, At twenty-three years of age, Matthew Vines was already becoming a formidable cause célèbre.

Terrell summarizes the case he makes, and here is the part I am interested in:

Reason #1: *Non-affirming views inflict pain on LGBT people*. This argument is

undoubtedly the most persuasive *emotionally*, but Matthew has produced a Scriptural case for it. Jesus, in his well-known Sermon on the Mount, warned his listeners against false prophets, likening them to wolves in sheep's clothing. Then switching metaphors he asked, "Do people pick grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?" The obvious answer is no, and Jesus's point was, you can recognize a good or bad tree – and a true or false prophet – by its good or bad fruit. From this, Matthew concludes that, since non-affirming beliefs on the part of *some* Christians cause the bad fruit of emotional pain for*other* Christians, the non-affirming stance must not be good.

Terrell's response to this is spot on, and I recommend you read her post to get the full response.

She writes:

> Matthew Vines in particular, and LGBTs in general, appear to be drivingly fixated on changing other people's moral outlook. But *why*? Why are they distressed over the shrinking subset of Christianity that holds to the traditional ethic of sex? Note that Matthew found an affirming church in his hometown, as can most any LGBT-identifying Christian. Affirming churches abound. Gaychurch.org lists forty-four affirming denominations – *denominations*, not just individual churches – in North America and will help you find a congregation in your area. Why, then, given all these choices for church accommodation, are Matthew and the Reformers specifically targeting churches whose teachings differ from their own?
>
> One gets the sense that LGBTs *really*, *really need* other people to affirm their sexual behavior. Certainly it's human to *want* the approval of others, but this goes beyond an emotionally healthy desire for relational comity. Recall Matthew's plea that non-affirming views on the part of *some* Christians cause emotional pain for *others*. He, and all like-minded LGBTs, are holding *other people* responsible for their emotional pain. This is the very essence of *codependency*.
>
> The term came out of Alcoholics Anonymous. It originally referred to spouses of alcoholics who enabled the alcoholism to continue unchallenged, but it has since been broadened to encompass several forms of dysfunctional relationships involving pathological behaviors, low self-esteem, and poor emotional boundaries. Codependents "believe their happiness depends upon another person," says Darlene Lancer, an attorney, family therapist, and author of *Codependency for Dummies*. "In a codependent relationship, *both* individuals are codependent," says clinical psychologist Seth Meyers. "They try to control their partner and they aren't comfortable on their own."
>
> Which leads to an even more troubling aspect of this Vinesian "Reformation." Not only are LGBT Reformers *not* content to find an affirming church for themselves and peacefully coexist with everyone else, *everyone else must change* in order to be correct in their Christian expression.
>
> This is the classic progression of codependency, and efforts to change everyone

> else become increasingly coercive. We *must* affirm same-sex orientation, Matthew says. If we don't, we are "tarnishing the image of God [in gay Christians]. Instead of making gay Christians more like God … embracing a non-affirming position makes them less like God." "[W]hen we reject the desires of gay Christians to express their sexuality within a lifelong covenant, we separate them from our covenantal God."
>
> Do you hear what he's saying? LGBTs' relationships with God are dependent on Christians approving their sexual proclivities. But he's *still* not finished. "In the final analysis, then, it is not gay Christians who are sinning against God by entering into monogamous, loving relationships. It is *we* who are sinning against them by rejecting their intimate relationships." In other words, non-affirming beliefs stand between LGBTs and God. Thus sayeth Matthew Vines.

The rest of her article deals with Vines' attempt to twist Scripture to validate sexual behavior that is not permissible in Christianity.

Vines seems to want a lot of people to agree that the Bible somehow doesn't forbid this sexual behavior so that the people who are doing it won't feel bad about doing it. If he can just silence those who disagree and get a majority of people to agree, then the people who are doing these things will feel better.

Matthew Vines is annoyed that Bible-believing Christians expect homosexuals to work through their same-sex attractions, abstain from premarital sex, and then either remain chaste like me, or marry one person of the opposite sex and then confine his/her sexual behavior to his/her marriage. But how is that different than what is asked of me? I am single, and have opposite sex-attractions, but I am also expected to abstain from sex outside of marriage. I have two choices: either remain chaste or marry one woman for life, and confine my sexual behavior to that marriage. I'm not married, so I've chosen to remain chaste. **If I have to exercise a little self-control to show God that what he wants from me is important to me, then I am willing to do that.** I'm really at a loss to understand why so many people take sexual gratification as a given, rather than as an opportunity for self-denial and self-control. I am especially puzzled by sinful people demanding that other celebrate their sin – and using the power of the government now to compel others to celebrate their sin. Christianity is a religion where the founder prioritized self-sacrificial obedience above pleasure and fulfillment. You really have to wonder about people who miss that core element of Christianity.

My service to God is not conditional on me getting my needs met. And my needs and desires are no less strong than the needs of people who engage in sex outside the boundaries of Christian teaching. We just make different decisions about what/who comes first. For me, Jesus is first, because I have sympathy with Jesus for loving me enough to die in my place, for my sins. I am obligated to Jesus, and that means that my responsibility to meet expectations in our relationship comes above my desire to be happy and fulfilled. For Matthew, the sexual desires come first, and Scripture has to be reinterpreted in light of a desire to be happy. I just don't see anything in the New

Testament that leads me to believe that we should expect God to fulfill our desires. The message of Jesus is about self-denial, self-control and putting God the Father first – even when it results in suffering. I take that seriously. That willingness to be second and let Jesus lead me is what makes me an authentic Christian.

There is a good debate featuring Robert Gagnon and a gay activist in this post, so you can hear both sides.

Watch Ted Cruz debate Bernie Sanders on health care policy and repealing Obamacare

February 11, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate happened on CNN earlier in the week. Thankfully, I was out traveling, so I actually had a TV to watch this in my hotel room.

Here is the full video:

It's 90 minutes long. No commercials. This was basically a debate of similar substance to the William Lane Craig debates, where actual economic evidence was *continuously produced* in order to show who was telling the truth, and who was just trying to be popular by saying what people who are uneducated at economics want to hear. In short: there was a clear winner and loser in this debate, and it was clear all the way through, and was reinforced over and over every time evidence was produced. The person producing the evidence would turn his back on the camera, and return to his podium to get the evidence. That person won the debate by being grounded in reality.

Also, the questions were excellent, especially from the small business owners who were impacted by Obamacare. The moderators were biased towards Sanders, but not excessively.

For those who cannot watch, there is an article at the Daily Signal.

Full text:

> In a prime-time debate on CNN this week, Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Ted Cruz, R-Texas, discussed "The Future of Obamacare" in America. Cruz, a leading critic of the law, used the moment to outline the law's failures.
>
> Here are four things Cruz said about Obamacare:
>
> 1) "Now, nobody thinks we're done once Obamacare is repealed. Once Obamacare is repealed, we need commonsense reform that increases competition, that empowers patients, that gives you more choices, that puts you in charge of your health care, rather than empowering government bureaucrats to get in the way. And these have been commonsense ideas."
>
> 2) "Indeed, I don't know if the cameras can see this, but in 70 percent of the counties in America, on Obamacare exchanges, you have a choice of one or two health insurance plans, that's it … It's interesting. You look at this map, this also very much looks like the electoral map that elected Donald Trump. It's really quite striking that the communities that have been hammered by this disaster of a law said enough already."
>
> During one of the more powerful moments in the debate, Cruz held up aHeritage Foundation chart showing viewers how many counties in the U.S. have access to only one or two insurers under Obamacare. Additionally, only 11 percent of

> counties have access to four or more insurance providers.
>
> 3) “Whenever you put government in charge of health care, what it means is they ration. They decide you get care and you don’t. I don’t think the government has any business telling you you’re not entitled to receive health care.”
>
> The U.S. should not envy other health care systems, especially Canada and the United Kingdom, Cruz said. He referred to a governor from Canada who came to the U.S. specifically to have heart surgery.
>
> 4) “That’s why I think the answer is not more of Obamacare, more government control, more of what got us in this mess. Rather, the answer is empower you. Give you choices. Lower prices. Lower premiums. Lower deductibles. Empower you and put you back in charge of your health care.”
>
> Obamacare is burdening Americans. The average deductible for a family on a bronze plan is $12,393, according to a HealthPocket analysis. According to aneHealth report, the average nationwide premium increase for individuals is 99 percent and 140 percent for families from 2013-2017.

I really recommend you watch this debate, because it these things were done on a weekly or monthly basis, then people would be able to think critically about what they are presented with from the mainstream media, Hollywood elites and liberal academics.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

February 12, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight
Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.

4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates
- You didn't need to come out on this cold night
- Craig's arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn't listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don't require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that "every effect requires a cause"
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can't see

- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn’t have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It’s too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It’s self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That’s why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg’s own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity (“I”) is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg’s responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it’s not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It’s that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the

majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said. Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the

fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

New study: in 2017, minimum wage increases will cost 383,000 low income jobs

February 13, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Is raising the minimum wage a good idea? Where would the money come from for the higher wages? Would job creators be able to afford to pay people more for the same level of productivity?

Investors Business Daily discusses a new study about the minimum wage increases that will take effect in 2017:

> One of the most vexing economic issues today is the minimum wage. For many, the failure to raise the minimum wage to $15 or higher is a sign of our nation's stinginess and an essential part of the fight for income equality. However, the truth, sad to say, is quite different, as a new study shows.

> The study by the American Action Forum, a nonpartisan think tank led by former Congressional Budget Office Director Douglas Holtz-Eakin, looked at minimum-wage hikes scheduled to take effect in the coming years in 14 states and the nation's capital and found they will "cost millions of jobs across the country and each lost job only leads to total wage earnings rising by a few thousand dollars."
>
> **The reason is simple: When you raise the minimum wage of low-skilled, low-productivity labor — a group that disproportionately includes young minority males — you inevitably destroy jobs. No business will hire someone and pay him more than he's worth.**
>
> So all those states might think they're helping the downtrodden and the poor, and striking a blow for equality by mandating higher wages, but they're doing just the opposite: Pricing many young people out of entry-level jobs.

> **The study estimates that minimum-wage hikes in just 2017 will kill off 383,000 low-end jobs. When phased in over a series of years, the losses become truly big: 2.6 million jobs.** But wait, won't the minimum-wage hike at least boost incomes?
>
> Yes, but not much. For each job lost, earnings for the employees affected by the increase would go up just $6,900.
>
> **"While proposals to raise the minimum wage are well intended, it is important to consider the negative labor market consequences," the report said. "A 10% increase in the real minimum wage is associated with a 0.3 to 0.5 percentage-point decline in the net job rate."**

What will happen when all of these young workers come out of high school and cannot find entry level jobs? Answer: they will have to get money through crime or black market or by collecting welfare. That's how you earn money if you can't get employment through legal means.

If we left the minimum wage low, they would be able to find entry level jobs and move up the ladder, perhaps by taking classes at night, like my parents did. My Dad was able to earn his Bachelor's degree by working in a flower shop and as a security guard for minimal pay. Then he was able to find full-time work that allowed him to have another child, i.e. – me. My parents married first, got jobs, then had children later. But they relied on the availability of entry level jobs in order to work that plan through.

It's very important to understand that not everyone who INTENDS to help the poor really ACHIEVES helping the poor. I really hope that Americans start to understand from disasters like Obamacare that you cannot let economic illiterates drive policy decisions. No matter how good the happy-talk sounds when read off of a teleprompter, there is no getting around the laws of economics.

Pastor Mark Driscoll explains reality of sin, the centrality of Jesus Christ

February 14, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Mark Driscoll has a series he does called “Best Sermon Ever”, where he invites other pastors to give their sermons. But today’s sermon really is the Best Sermon Ever, but it’s given by Mark Driscoll (sent to me by super-Wife McKenzie). I asked McKenzie to send me the best sermon she had ever heard, and now it’s the best sermon that I have ever heard.

As always, when dealing with Mark Driscoll, we note that he does not hold women accountable to the Bible on moral issues, but instead deflects responsibility for the bad decisions of women to men, often to non-Christian men who don’t even have objective morality . Nevertheless, I agree with him 99.9% of the time, and I think you will agree when you listen to the sermon that this man has a gift for preaching. I could not find a single thing wrong with this sermon, I give it a score of 12 billion out of 10.

This is the link to his web site that has the sermon, the audio and the full transcript. The title of the sermon is “The Father of a Murdered Son”.

This is a Youtube video that someone uploaded: (audio only)

Here is the beginning of the sermon:

> Luke 20:9–18, “The Father of a Murdered Son.”
>
> “And he,” that is Jesus, “began to tell the people this parable,” which is a small story that tells a big truth. “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he

> sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.'
>
> "But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.' And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him."
>
> Jesus here is on his way to Jerusalem. He is days from his crucifixion. He is going to be murdered in a brutal and bloody way. And as he's approaching the cross and the crowds have gathered around him, he wants us to see human history and our lives individually from the perspective of God.
>
> And this is very important because we live in a day where this is not encouraged. This is actually discouraged. We live in a day in which we want to see our lives and history from our perspective according to our own sinful desires and our own selfish pursuits, which can then even lead us to the point of questioning, is there a God? Or if there is a God, questioning the goodness of God. Is there a God? Does he care? Is he involved? Does he love us? And then we put ourselves in the position of judging God.
>
> And then some of us can even go to the Scriptures and say, "I don't think God should ever get angry. He should never judge anyone. That whole issue of hell seems highly unnecessarily and over-reactionary. Perhaps, that was primitive teaching from a former day, thankfully we've evolved beyond that." And it's because we are the guilty looking at the judge and wanting to replace our position with his that we might judge him.
>
> **WHO DOES EACH CHARACTER IN THE PARABLE REPRESENT?**
>
> Jesus here wants for us to have an opportunity, in as much as we're able, with a three-pound, fallen brain and sinful proclivity and self-interest to put a hat on and to look at things, not from our perspective, but from God's perspective, to see our lives as God sees them, to see human history as God sees it. Now we're not God, so we have a limited capacity to do this. But in telling this parable, Jesus is trying to open our understanding to what it is like for God to deal with you and me and us. And he does so in the form of a parable.
>
> For us to extract significant meaning from the parable, it requires that we go through, look at each of the characters and ask, to whom does that refer?

I can't really excerpt this sermon. You simply must listen to all of it.

If you are anything like me, this sermon is going to hold you accountable about whether you are doing everything you can to tell non-Christians about Jesus, and why his actions are the most important events ever to occur in history. I listened to it and I immediately sat down and wrote an 1100 word essay to *very* special woman about my life, and how I would like to be more faithful as a Christian in service to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In particular, I thought of my co-workers who are Muslim, Hindu and Jewish, and how important it is for me to let them know that they can ask me about the story of Jesus and that I will tell them the gospel. It made me think about how much I would like my non-Christian co-workers to hear the gospel, and understand who Jesus claimed to be, and the significance of his actions.

It took me an hour to write this essay to the special lady, and I credit the sermon with stimulating me to write out my innermost thoughts about how Christ saved me, and what I would like to be doing in response.

Are gay rights and children's rights compatible?

February 15, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Here are a couple of articles from The Federalist which made me think that gay rights are not compatible with children's rights.

Here is the first article that talks about growing babies on demand in labs, and also surrogacy:

> In the years leading up to the Supreme Court decision nationalizing gay marriage, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, and in the short span since, the debate is already leagues beyond whether gays should adopt babies who are already born and need homes. Now we are grappling with the reality of buying and selling babies. Don't pretend that's not what it is—there's a financial exchange for growing a baby. What else would you call it?
>
> **Buying a child via surrogacy is cruel and selfish. Most often it deprives her of knowing at least one biological parent in addition to the mother who nourished and supported her for nine months and brought her into the world. Buying a baby from a lab, even if she's made up completely of the commissioning couple's DNA, is even more cruel and selfish. It could deprive her of any mother at all.**
>
> If two men are "conceiving" a child, that baby must be grown in a surrogate or, when the technology permits, an artificial womb, which would certainly be more convenient and with fewer legal pitfalls but less humane.
>
> Motherhood begins with gestation, not birth, but in the case of a lab gestation, there would be no mother. Babies recognize their mother's voice from hearing it in the womb, and as experts on surrogacy have explained, human pregnancy

> creates a deep, lifelong bond between mother and baby.
>
> Family therapist Nancy Verrier said in an interview for the documentary "Breeders: A Subclass of Woman?," "The baby is hurt by the separation, by the loss, of that mother that it knows." What trauma, then, would a child with no mother experience?
>
> Lab-grown babies would be a great leap in commodifying children. This is a progression in lockstep with both the sexual revolution, which bestows legitimacy to a wide array of sexual orientations and arrangements, and with modern feminism. Both the New Sexuality and feminism declare to gay couples and single women: "If a baby sounds nice to you, who should tell you you cannot have what you want?" Genetic engineering is the latest tool in that effort to meet demand for babies, and the stakes are high.

Do children need their biological mother and father to raise them? Do children benefit from having two parents who have (minimally) a biological stake in their development?

> Recent, comprehensive research conducted by Dr. Paul Sullins at the Catholic University of America has found that "children with samesex parents are assessed at higher levels of distress, compared to children with opposite-sex parents, for every measure of child emotional difficulty, developmental difficulty or treatment service." Additionally, children of same-sex couples, "are at almost four (3.6) times the risk of emotional problems when compared to children residing with married biological parents." Sullins also found that, "Risk of child emotional problems is 1.9-2.2 times greater, significant at .01 or better, with same-sex parents than with opposite-sex cohabiting parents or step-parent family."
>
> According to this study, which was far more comprehensive than the small ones popularized by the media that claim the opposite, it is more beneficial for children to be raised by two opposite-sex parents, and when they are raised by married opposite-sex biological parents, the rates of distress to children are nearly twice as low.

Here's the second article, which lists more problems for children who are created through lab conception or by surrogacy:

> 1. **Commodification of Children**. Children are not products, they are humans with inherent rights and thus worthy of protection. Selecting desirable embryos based on health, appearance, gender, race, or other characteristics treats humans as products, not people. This kind of behavior is appropriate when purchasing a car, but not when having a child.
>
> 2. **Right to life**. The embryos deemed unacceptable were likely destroyed. And often commissioning parents will, for the sake of maximizing their

> investment, implant multiple embryos and then "selectively reduce" (that is, abort around 20 weeks) the unwanted children, even if they are perfectly healthy.

3. **Right to their mother**. Children have a right to both biological parents. They are not items to be cut and pasted into the romantic configuration of adults. Like every other child, these girls are made by, and will likely long for, a relationship with both biological parents. Kids don't just need "love and safety." They actually crave male and female parental love and receive unique and complimentary benefits from both mother and father.

4. **Right to their genetic information**. Children crave, and have a right to, their biological identity. Not only because they want to understand who they are, but it's also critical for their long term medical health- and the health of their own children. It's a violation of a child's right to arbitrarily deny them access to half of their biology.

5. **Right to their heritage**. Biological connection mattered enough for these commissioning fathers to ensure that each dad got one biological child. Probably because they wanted grandchildren and great-grandchildren related to them as well. But it works the other way too. Children have a right to know, and desire to be known by, both sides of their extended family and racial/ethnic culture whenever possible.

6. **Right to be born free—not bought and sold**. As mentioned in the article, purchasing eggs and employing a surrogate costs $100,000-$200,000. Many children born via sperm and egg donation are troubled that money exchanged hands over their conception, no matter how little. I heard one adult child painfully remark "My father (sperm donor) was paid $75 to stay out of my life forever."

7. **Subjecting children to increased medical risks**. Pregnancies resulting from reproductive technologies are more likely to involve complications. Children born through surrogacy, for example, are more likely to be premature, suffer from low birth weight, and have trouble adjusting likely due to "the absence of a gestational connection to the mother."

To understand why these practices are wrong, we have to stop looking at the selfish adults, and listening to their self-centered sob stories. We have to think about the children. About the children's need to *not* be lost in a universe without the two people who chose to bring them into being. Growing up is a scary thing. It doesn't get better for children when they can't even have relationships with the two people who made them. We all need those relationships. It goes against common sense to dismiss the effect of

parents being biologically related to their children. Biological parents have more of a perceived stake in the development of their biological children. We need to give children what they need.

Conservative legislators introduce new consumer-focused replacement for Obamacare

February 16, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

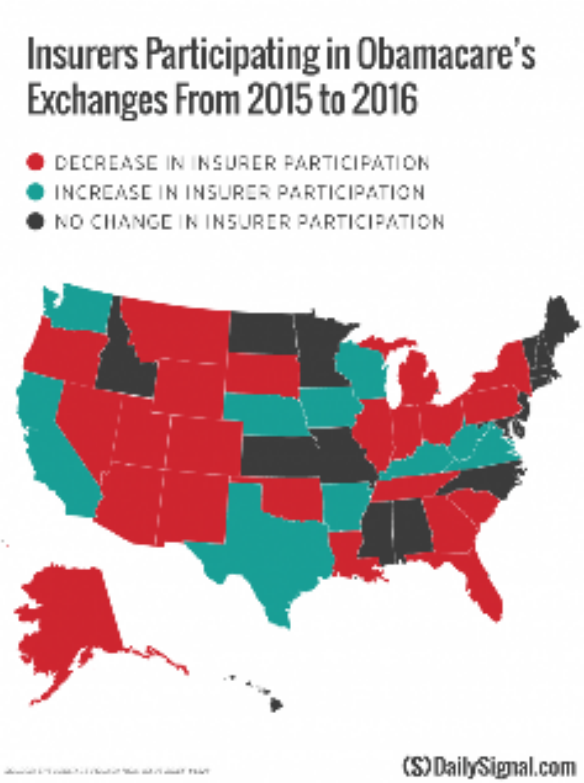

Obamacare insurers are dropping out, which raises premiums higher, 2015-2016

I have your Thursday good news ready to go – from the Daily Signal.

This is how you reform health care:

> Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., and Rep. Mark Sanford, R-S.C., introduced a bill to replace Obamacare on Wednesday, increasing the pressure on GOP leaders who continue to discuss moving the law's replacement at the same time as its repeal.
>
> **The legislation already has the full support of the House Freedom Caucus, a group of roughly 40 of the lower chamber's conservative members.** Conservatives in both the House and Senate have said they want to see repeal efforts move faster, and the lawmakers are hoping that the legislation is a turning point in the repeal-and-replace debate.
>
> "We're excited about the fact that it will finally be able to address many of the concerns that we're hearing, whether it's at town halls or personal calls from our constituents about pre-existing conditions, about how to empower the consumer in terms of their health care choice, and ultimately drive down the price of health care," House Freedom Caucus Chairman Mark Meadows, R-N.C., said Wednesday.
>
> Called the Obamacare Replacement Act, the legislation shares the hallmarks of other GOP replacement plans, and Paul said it was a "consensus bill" that pulled

> aspects of other proposals together.
>
> […]**Paul and Sanford's bill focuses heavily on the expansion of health savings accounts (HSAs), which are medical savings accounts. Their legislation allows consumers to contribute an unlimited amount annually to HSAs. Currently, consumers can contribute a maximum of $3,400 per year.**
>
> **The Obamacare Replacement Act also creates a $5,000 tax credit for those who contribute to a HSA, and prohibits consumers from using the money in their accounts to pay for elective abortions.**
>
> **Under Paul and Sanford's bill, consumers who don't receive insurance through their employers can deduct the cost of premiums from their taxable incomes, which serves to equalize the tax treatment for individuals and employers.**
>
> **Additionally, the legislation allows individuals and small businesses to band together through membership in an Association Health Plan to buy health insurance. Paul and Sanford said these pooling mechanisms will decrease costs for consumers.**
>
> **The bill also allows insurance companies to sell policies across state lines and eliminates Obamacare's essential health benefits mandate, which is a list of services insurance plans are required to cover without cost-sharing.**

If you want to drive down the cost of health care, you let people get covered for only what they need – no abortions, sex changes, IVF, acupuncture, drug rehabilitation, breast enlargements, fertility treatments, etc. Allowing people to buy plans across state lines will mean that consumers in blue states like California and Massachusetts won't be forced to buy in-state plans that cover all kinds of progressive garbage that they don't even want.

Look how Obamacare is falling apart:

> At the Future of Healthcare event put on by the *Wall Street Journal*, Aetna CEO Mark Bertolini said that Obamacare was only "getting worse" because there weren't enough young, healthy enrollees to pay for the sick people covered by the Obamacare exchanges. Bertolini said it was due to "how poorly structured the funding mechanism and premium model is," as premiums keep increasing with the death spiral, causing less people to sign up, and thus resulting in even higher premiums.
>
> "I think you will see a lot more withdrawals this year of plans," Bertolini said.
>
> On Wednesday, Humana–which came to a mutual agreement with Aetna not to merge–announcedthat it was withdrawing from Obamacare altogether. In 2016, UnitedHealth also announced that they would be pulling out of the Obamacare exchanges, and Aetna itself said they would only stay in four Obamacare exchanges.

> Bertolini stated at the event that the company has not decided if it will remain in these Obamacare exchanges.
>
> “There isn’t any risk sharing going on in Nebraska,” Bertolini said, pointing to the fact that Aetna was the only insurer left in that exchange. “It will cost us a lot of money.”

Now is the time to replace it!

The problem with Obamacare is that it didn’t do anything to leverage the strengths of the free enterprise system. Instead of turning health care purchasing into competitive online e-commerce (i.e. – Amazon), they turned it into the DMV and the post office. What else would you expect from clowns who were born rich, and never held private sector jobs in their entire lives? You don’t expect the people who run the single-payer VA health system that is killing people on waiting lists to do a good job of reforming health care, do you? Let the free market solve it. Choice and competition means lower prices.

Homeowner uses legally owned handgun to catch burglar for the police

February 17, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

This is from the Washington Free Beacon, and it's a good reminder of why America has the Second Amendment.

Full text:

> A burglar is in custody after coming face to face with a Florida homeowner and her revolver on Friday.
>
> Cape Coral Police arrested 20-year-old Jacob Cintra after he allegedly broke into Jim Gibbons's car and tried to break into his home. Gibbons told reporters he and his wife were sleeping when they heard a commotion. Jim went to open his blinds and see what was happening when he spotted Cintra just in front of him trying to break into the home.
>
> "I yelled to my wife, 'Go get the gun!'" he told NBC2.
>
> As Gibbons's wife returned with her revolver, Cintra spotted her and thought better of trying to break in.
>
> "He just had a dumb look on his face," Gibbons told WINK. "Why would you be surprised? There's two cars in the driveway and dogs are barking in the house," he said.
>
> Cintra then ran off. Gibbons said his wife was prepared to defend them if he had come through the door.
>
> "She said if he had been fiddling with the door, trying to open it, she would have shot him," he told NBC2.
>
> Neighbors applauded the Gibbons. "That's cool that we still have the Second Amendment for that," David Jean-Jacques told the news station.

> The burglar wasn't on the run for long. Once the police arrived the Gibbons's dog alerted them to where Cintra was hiding.
>
> "Did you tell them you're the hero?" Gibbons asked his dog in front of the NBC2 cameras. "Yeah, you're the hero."
>
> Cintra is currently being held without bond in Lee County Jail on two burglary charges.
>
> "He's lucky," he said. "He's pretty dumb and he's lucky."

People who oppose guns typically oppose them because of feelings. Guns are loud and makes me feel scared, they say. But if you actually look at the scientific data, you'll see that guns do reduce crime rates.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at

> great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

If you still think that guns are somehow bad for reducing crime, why not check out a formal academic debate featuring 3 people on each side of the debate?

If you want to know why the Democrat parts of the United States have such high rates of violence, then you need to look at the enormously high out-of-wedlock birth rates in the Democrat parts of the United States. Having babies before marrying causes fatherless children, and fatherless children are more likely to commit crimes. When Democrats stop paying single mothers money to have fatherless kids, then the crime rates in the Democrat parts of the United States will go down. It's a personal responsibility issue.

New study: cohabitating parents twice as likely to split up as married parents

February 18, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

SurveyMonkey election poll cross tabs for unmarried women Nov 2016

This was reported by the Daily Signal.

It says:

> Children born to unmarried, cohabiting parents—both in the United States and across Europe—are nearly twice as likely to see their parents split up, compared to children born to married parents.
>
> A new study from the Institute for Family Studies and Social Trends Institute examines family stability among cohabiting and married-parent families from numerous countries across the world. The findings provide evidence against some common myths about cohabitation and children's family stability.
>
> One of these myths claims that cohabitation is less stable than marriage simply because low-income individuals are more likely to choose to cohabit. However, researchers find that in the majority of countries studied, cohabitation is less stable even among the highly educated.
>
> The authors note, "In the overwhelming majority of countries, the most educated cohabiting parents still have a far higher rate of break-up than the lowest educated married couples."
>
> For example, in the United States, 49 percent of children born to highly-educated cohabiting mothers experienced at least one union disruption by age 12,

> compared to just 26 percent of children born to lower-educated married mothers. In the United Kingdom, the percentages are 53 percent and 39 percent, respectively.
>
> A second common argument is that cohabitation becomes more stable (begins to look more like marriage) as it becomes more common in a society.
>
> However, the findings did not support this notion. As the share of children born to cohabiting couples increased in a country, family instability also increased.
>
> Laurie DeRose, one of the authors of the study, explains:
>
> We find no evidence in this report to support the idea that as births to cohabiting parents become more common, as they have in the United States, marriage and cohabitation resemble each other in terms of stability for children. On average, marriage is associated with more family stability for children across the globe—even in countries where it is in retreat.
>
> […]A 2011 report from the Institute for American Values calls "the rise of cohabiting households with children … the largest unrecognized threat to the quality and stability of children's family lives."
>
> Research shows that children in cohabiting households are more likely to be physically, sexually, and emotionally abused, and to be aggressive or display delinquent behaviors (such as substance abuse or committing property crime). They are also more likely to experience poverty and have poorer health.

It should be noted that Democrats favor policies that punish people who want to marriage, e.g. – no-fault divorce, marriage tax penalty, single mother welfare, etc.

Dennis Prager explains why the Democrats oppose marriage:

> It takes a particularly noble Democrat to promote marriage and family. The strengthening of these institutions is not in the Democratic Party's self-interest. The more people marry, and especially the more they have children after they marry, the more likely they are to hold conservative values and vote Republican.
>
> That is why it is inaccurate to speak of a "gender gap" in Americans' voting. The gap is between married and unmarried women. Single women, especially single women with children, tend to vote Democratic, while married women, especially married women with children, tend to vote Republican.
>
> Why is this?
>
> There are two primary reasons.
>
> One is that women's nature yearns for male protection. This is a heretical idea among the well educated whose education is largely devoted to denying the facts of life. But it is a fact of life that can easily be proven: Extremely wealthy women almost always seek to marry men who are even wealthier than they are.
>
> […]**Given women's primal desire to be protected, if a woman has no man to provide it, she will seek security elsewhere — and elsewhere today**

> **can only mean the government. In effect, the state becomes her husband. This phenomenon has frequently been commented on with regard to the breakdown of many black families. The welfare state simply rendered many black men unnecessary and therefore undesirable as spouses: Why marry when you can get more benefits from the state while remaining single (and get even more money if you have children while remaining single)?**
>
> **Once a woman does marry, however, her need for the state not only diminishes, she now begins to view the state as inimical to her interests. For the married woman, especially if she has children, two primal urges work against her having a pro-big government attitude. Her urge to be protected, which is now fulfilled by her husband, and her primal urge to protect her nest are now endangered by the government, which as it grows, takes away more and more of her family's money.**
>
> **Once a woman marries and has children, therefore, her deepest desires — to be protected and to protect her family — work as strongly on behalf of conservative values and voting Republican as they did on behalf of liberalism and the Democratic Party when she was single.**
>
> The other reason married women are less likely to be liberal and vote Democratic relates to maturity and wisdom.
>
> Just about everyone — a man as much as a woman — is rendered more mature and wiser after marrying. This is not an insult to singles. It was as true of me as of anyone else. If you're single, ask any married person — happily or unhappily married — whether or not marriage has matured them.
>
> The single biggest change induced by marriage is that you can no longer think only about yourself. "I" becomes "we." Narcissism becomes far less possible in marriage than in the single state. And just as marriage decreases narcissism, it increases wisdom. Having to relate to another human being (especially of the opposite sex) to whom you have made a lifelong commitment (even if it ends in divorce) vastly increases your wisdom. And if you have children, your wisdom increases exponentially. Again, ask any parent if they are wiser since becoming a parent.

If you take a look at the map above, you'll see that unmarried women vote overwhelmingly Democrat, because they want to be able to follow their hearts without having to be responsible about finding a husband and raising children. They vote for big government to make their self-centeredness "work out". Why have a husband when you can get his money by taxing him? Single women think it's better to tax a man and not have to respect him. That's why they vote Democrat. And as taxes go higher and higher, what you'll find is that many single men who might like to marry can no longer afford to marry – because they are paying for the upkeep of millions of single women already.

Cambridge University professor Simon Gathercole lectures on geography in the Bible

February 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

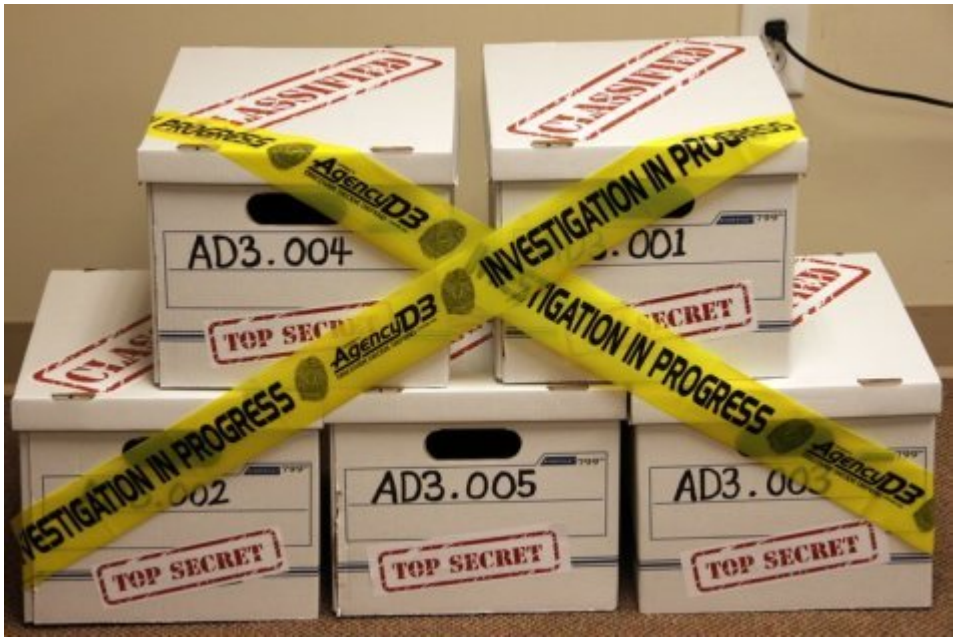

Investigation in progress

BeThinking posted a new lecture featuring Dr. Simon Gathercole.

Here's the speaker bio:

> Dr Simon Gathercole is Senior Lecturer in New Testament Studies and Fellow of Fitzwilliam College, at the University of Cambridge. He is particularly fascinated by the connections between the New Testament and its contemporary literature.

Summary:

> Simon Gathercole shows how the geographical information in the New Testament Gospels demonstrates their historical reliability and their basis in eyewitness sources. The illustrated lecture lasts about 60 minutes and is followed by about 20 minutes of Q&A.

BeThinking has a PDF containing all the slides used in the lecture.

The lecture is here:

Topics:

- Detailed geography is difficult to fake, especially when it is far into the past
- Bible authors would have to rely on eyewitness testimony if they wanted to get geographic details right
- You can even cross-reference the geographic details mentioned in the New Testament with extra-Biblical sources of that time
- Cities mentioned in the Bible are mentioned in other sources

- Locations that are mentioned in Josephus, a Jewish historian
- Locations that are mentioned in the Rabbis
- 22 of 27 places mentioned in the gospels are attested
- If you compare the gospels with Josephus they are as good

Example slide – he shows where these cities in orange are mentioned outside the Bible:

Aenon	Chorazin	Magadan
Arimathaea	Dalmanutha	Magdala
Bethany	Emmaus	Nain
Bethlehem	Ephraim	Nazareth
Bethphage	Gadara	Salim
Bethsaida	Gergesa	Sidon
Caesarea-P	Gennesaret	Sychar
Cana	Jericho	Tiberias
Capernaum	Jerusalem	Tyre

At the end of the lecture 22 out of 27 cities are attested in other sources
This lecture caught my eye because it was all about connecting the Bible to evidence outside the Bible. I like evidence. You should give it a listen.

Biomimetics: scientists making discoveries using God's designs in nature

February 20, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Well, scientists are still gaining insights from God's book of nature.

Evolution News reports on the latest:

Pure science seeks understanding of "the nature of nature" and its operations. Applied science takes the insights from pure research and makes it work for human interests. What if you had a single word that incorporates both? Here's a contender for such a word: *Biomimetics*. The application side is clear, because engineers and inventors try to imitate nature's designs. But the pure-research side becomes active in the process, because you have to understand something before you can imitate it. This is a win-win bonanza for 21st-century science, and intelligent design, if not by that name, is at the center of it.

They list the following areas where scientists borrowed from God's designs in nature to make scientific progress:

- drug discovery (Nature Communications)
- artificial muscles (American Institute of Physics)
- robotics (Engineering at Illinois News)
- drones (Live Science and New Scientist)
- crop pollination (New Scientist)
- ceramics (Proceedings of the Natural Academy of Science)
- more ceramics (Nature Communications)
- clothing (American Chemical Society)
- more clothing (Phys.org)

- more robotics (Public Library of Science)

Naturally, I chose the bird example for this blog post, because I love birds more than any creature – especially parrots.

This time it's peacocks and peahens:

> Peacock dye. The American Chemical Society is involved in the gold rush, too, excited to announce that "Peacock colors inspire [a] greener way to dye clothes." The iridescent colors of birds and butterflies come not from pigments, but from geometric structures at the nanoscopic level that intensify certain wavelengths of light. Everyone from fashion designers to parents to the EPA will be happy to learn about better dyes inspired by peacock feathers. "Testing showed the method could produce the full spectrum of colors, which remained bright even after washing," an ACS team said. "In addition, the team said that the technique did not produce contaminants that could pollute nearby water."

Amazing that some people just go about their lives ignorant and oblivious to the design that's all around them. Then again, if they thought about who made these designs, it might interfere with their pursuit of pleasure. Maybe they just shut out the evidence so they can keeping being the boss of their own lives, and never take responsibility for their moral choices?

Romans 1:18-21:

> 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,
>
> 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.
>
> 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
>
> 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

See the related posts below for more posts on biomimetics.

Related posts

- Biomimetics again: scientists reverse engineer the design of snake scales
- Define biomimetics and give two examples from peer-reviewed science journals?
- New study: how the hummingbird performs stunning feats of aerobatics
- Shorebird's beak inspires researchers to design new water collection strategy
- Target acquisition and interception in dragonflies

Bible study: Was the resurrection body of Jesus spiritual or physical?

February 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

So, everyone from left to right accepts the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 being dated to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, even atheists like Crossley, Ludemann and Crossan. The thing is, some people are not sure that the appearances of Jesus to individuals, groups, and skeptics really were physical appearances. They say "well, Paul's appearance was non-physical, so the other ones must have been, too".

Let's take a look.

Here's a paragraph from my friend Eric Chabot, from his blog Think Apologetics. He explains why Paul's use of the word "resurrection" to describe what the other witnesses saw means *bodily* resurrection.

He writes:

> If Paul did have a vision then the term "vision" is vague and must be defined. As Licona points out, visions are either objective (i.e., something that is seen without the use of our natural senses) or subjective (i.e., a product of our minds). The real problem is with the vision hypothesis is that it doesn't explain Paul's use of resurrection to explain what had happened to Jesus. The two words are used for resurrection in the New Testament "anastasis" (rising up) and "egersis" (waking up), both imply a physical body**.** Furthermore, the use of the word "opethe" (the Greek word for appeared) shows the Gospel writers did believe that Jesus appeared physically. "There you will see (opethe) him" (Matt. 28:7); "The Lord has risen and has appeared (opethe) to Simon" (Luke 24:24).

> When they used “opethe” here, it means that He appeared physically to them.

> So when Paul gives his list of appearances in 1 Cor. 15, the issues becomes whether the appearance to him is the same as it was to the disciples. There is no doubt the post resurrection body of Jesus (after the ascension) had to be somewhat different than the body the disciples saw. Also, whenever the New Testament mentions the word body, in the context of referring to an individual human being, the Greek word “soma” always refers to a literal, physical body.Greek specialist Robert Gundry says “the consistent and exclusive use of soma for the physical body in anthropological contexts resists dematerialization of the resurrection, whether by idealism or by existentialism.” [9] Furthermore, in N.T. Wright’s The Resurrection of the Son of God shows that the Greek word for resurrection which is “anastasis” was used by ancient Jews, pagans, and Christians as bodily in nature.

Now, I think my view on this, and I’m not sure if Eric would correct me, is that Paul got an objective but non-physical vision of Jesus. There was something there that everyone else could see and hear, in my view. But in my view Paul’s “veridical” vision was post-ascension, and so non-physical. Paul uses the word resurrection to describe what the other eyewitnesses saw (and he met them at least twice, according to Gal 1 and Gal 2), and that means physical resurrected body.

Eric Chabot writes this in another place:

> **Acts 9- Paul’s Damascus Road Experience**
>
> Here we see whatever happened, this was after the ascension. Hence, to say Paul saw the exact same Jesus before he ascended is hard to infer from the text. There simply isn’t enough information here. The Bible says, “they heard” the same voice Paul did ” (Acts 9: 7). But they “did not see anyone ” (Acts 9: 7). Notice Paul was physically blinded by the brightness of the light. One way or the other, the experience involved something that was external to Paul. It wasn’t something that was the same thing as a vision that Paul talks about in 2 Cor. 12:1. Furthermore, the phrase “he let himself be seen’” (ōphthē , aorist passive,), is the word Paul uses in 1 Cor. 15:7 to describe of his own resurrection appearance as the other ones in the creed. As Paul Barnett says:
>
> “It is sometimes claimed that the word appeared (ōphthē) means a mystical seeing, as of a vision, and that since this was what Paul “saw” it was what the other apostles “saw.” In other words, after death, Jesus was taken directly to heaven whence he “appeared” to various people, mystically, as it were. This however, is not all the meaning of Paul’s words. First, the word ōphthē, “appeared” is not limited to visionary seeing it is also used for physical seeing. Moreover, the verb raise used in the phrase ‘raised on the third day” is used elsewhere in combination with the words “from the dead” which literally means “from among the corpses.” Thus raised preceding appeared gives the latter a

> physical not a mystical meaning. Christ, as “raised from the dead” ….appeared.” Furthermore, when Paul asks “ Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?”(1 Cor. 9: 1), he is using the ordinary word horan, “to see” for physical sight. If “seeing” the Lord “raised from the dead” qualified others to be apostles, then Paul is, indeed, an apostle. It was no mere subjective vision that arrested Paul en route to Damascus. (8) .
>
> In the end, word studies can’t entirely resolve this issue. We need to remember the etymological fallacy as well. We would have to look at all the texts that speak of resurrection (including the entire 1 Cor. 15 chapter in their entire context as well as the anthropology of the New Testament. We also need to study the resurrection in light of the Second Temple Jewish period. See our reading list here for some resources that may help.

But conservative ancient historian Gary Habermas seems to think that Paul got the physical body as well.

He says:

> Now, I said before in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul could have chosen to only use the word *pneuma*. He doesn’t. He does say “spiritual,” but he’s got an adjective there. He also says, *soma*, “body.” What did Paul mean?

> Philippians Chapter 3. It’s a short chapter. There are 21 verses, but Paul says three things in one chapter that indicate he’s talking about a physical resurrection. In the opening verses he says, “I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews” and “as touching the law,” he says, “I was a Pharisee.” Now, it’s very well known that the Pharisee believed in a bodily resurrection. In fact, according to Acts 23, as Paul was being taken captive by the Romans to prevent his being killed, he shouted out to the group of people and said, “Why are you taking me? Because I believe in the resurrection of the dead?” He meant a literal resurrection.
>
> When the Pharisees heard that, they said there’s nothing wrong with this guy. But the Sadducees [who didn’t believe in the Resurrection] didn’t like it. So as a Pharisee, he’s agreeing with the Pharisees.
>
> So, the first evidence is from Philippians 3. As a Pharisee, Paul believes in a physical resurrection.
>
> Secondly, in verse 11 he says, “That I may attain the resurrection of the

> dead." Now, the normal Greek word for resurrection is *anastasis,* but in this passage, Philippians 3:11, he puts a prefix on there, ***ek*** *anastasis.* ***Ek****anastasis*, according to all Greek scholars that I know of, is translated in this passage: "The out resurrection from among the dead." Paul said, "I want to attain the out resurrection."
>
> Now, to a Jew, "out resurrection" means "what goes down is what comes up." You come out from death. And then just a few verses later, Philippians 3:20,21, he said, "From Heaven, we look for Jesus who will change our vile *soma* (body) to be like unto His glorious *soma* (or body)," when he should have said *pneuma*, according to this other view.
>
> So he's a Pharisee who believes in a physical resurrection. ***Ek*** *anastasis*—"resurrection from out among the dead ones."
>
> Thirdly, Paul says, "He Jesus will change ***my body*** to be like ***His body***."

> So right there in Philippians 3 alone, I think the picture of Jesus being some wispy spirit that appeared to him on the road to Damascus doesn't fit Paul's own data.

Yes, that's why Philippians is my favorite book. You can get so much useful theology out of it. Something about the resurrection in Phil 3, something about Jesus' divinity in Phil 2, and loads of practical advice on stewardship, charity, fellowship, endurance and practical love for others throughout. Some of it takes a little digging, but that's what commentaries are for, am I right? But I digress.

If you want to read something a little more challenging, I found a paper from the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) from their journal, where it talks more about soma and anastasis. If you want a bit of a challenge, download the PDF and read it. It's by Kirk R. MacGregor and the title is "1 Corinthians 15:3B–6A, 7 And The Bodily Resurrection Of Jesus".

House Democrat aides got $100K from Iraqi donor while managing sensitive data

February 22, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?

Would you like to know how hacks really happen? Hacks happen most often because of the human element. We appoint an entitled narcissist to be Secretary of State, and she decides to disregard information security rules. Then a gay Army private leaks all our national security secrets to our enemies. (Then Obama gives him a free sex change and pardons him)

And now: we elect Democrats to Congress, and they hire employees who leak our secrets to our enemies in the Middle East.

The Daily Signal explains:

> **Rogue congressional staffers took $100,000 from an Iraqi politician while they had administrator-level access to the House of Representatives' computer network, according to court documents examined by The Daily Caller News Foundation's Investigative Group.**
>
> **The money was a loan from Dr. Ali al-Attar, an Iraqi political figure, and was funneled through a company with "impossible"-to-decipher financial transactions that the congressional information technology staffers controlled.**
>
> Imran Awan, ringleader of the group that includes his brothers Abid and Jamal, has provided IT services since 2005 for Florida Democrat Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the former Democratic National Committee chairwoman. The brothers are from Pakistan.

> **The trio also worked for dozens of other House Democrats, including members of the intelligence, foreign affairs, and homeland security committees. Those positions likely gave them access to congressional emails and other sensitive documents.**
>
> The brothers, whose access to House IT networks has been terminated, are under criminal investigation by the U.S. Capitol Police.
>
> Wasserman Schultz resigned from her DNC post following a disastrous email hack during the 2016 campaign. Her House spokesman did not respond to The Daily Caller News Foundation's question Monday about Imran's employment status. As of Feb. 6, she had declined to fire Imran.
>
> Investigators found that congressional information was being copied to an off-site server and they suspect the brothers of improperly accessing information and stealing congressional property. Chiefs of staff for the employing Democrats were notified Feb. 2.
>
> Soon after Imran began working for members of Congress, Imran's and Abid's wives—Hina Alvi and Natalia Sova—also began receiving congressional paychecks, The Daily Caller News Foundation found. Imran's employers included two members of the Intelligence Committee, Indiana Democrat Rep. Andre Carson and California Democrat Rep. Jackie Speier.

Another brother was running a car dealership while working for multiple Democrat Congressmen:

> Abid had "100 percent control" of the dealership, a one-time business partner said in court documents, in addition to his $165,000-a-year job working full-time for multiple representatives, including Ohio Democrat Tim Ryan and California Democrat Jim Costa.
>
> […]Four out of the six Democrats he worked for also employed Imran. His employers included a member of the Intelligence Committee, Patrick Murphy of Florida; a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Theodore Deutch of Florida; and Brad Ashford of Nebraska, who is on the Armed Services Committee.
>
> Abbas' congressional email was cut off in early February, around the time the Capitol Police revealed that they had uncovered a scheme involving a network of IT aides.

So what do we learn from this? We learn that Democrats are not able to take information security seriously. If every breach of national security we know of involves carelessness by Democrats, then maybe it's not an accident. Maybe all of their promoting of our enemies and deliberate weakening of our borders and our armed forces is being done on purpose. You can't put a bunch of unqualified college kids in charge of the most powerful country in the world.

New study: discipline in schools is more effective than increased government spending

February 23, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

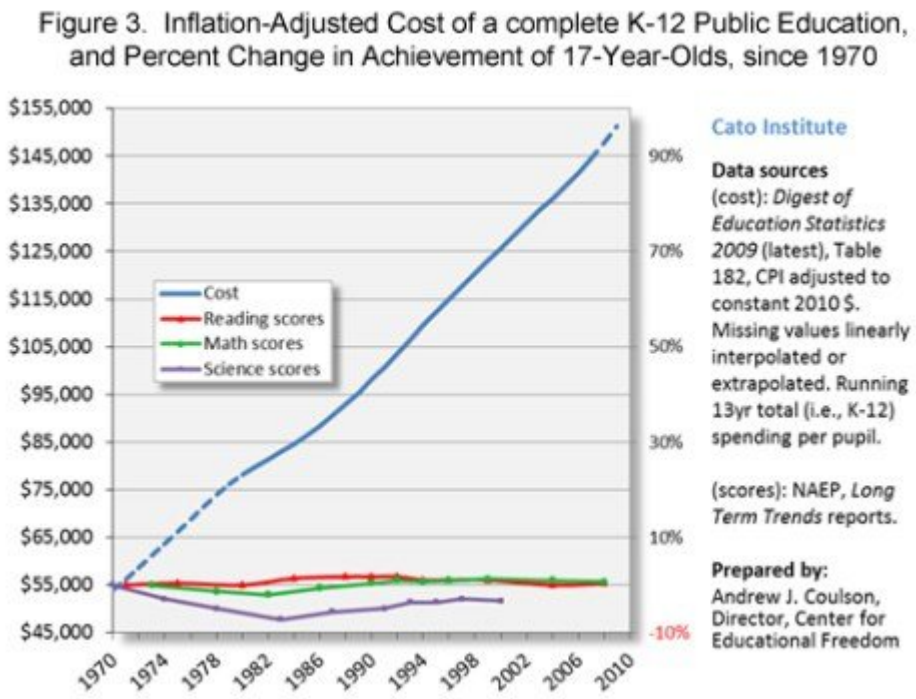

Education spending has tripled since 1970 – but where are the results?
New study reported by Phys.org. (H/T Mark)

Excerpt:

> Discipline in schools has a greater impact and is more important to educational performance when compared to monetary investment, a new study from Macquarie University has found.

> The study found that school performance was overwhelmingly determined by how schools are run, while in comparison the amount of money spent on schools as a percentage of GDP had a minor influence on educational performance.
>
> "Monetary investment in education is not sufficient to boost educational performance. Discussion on education policy often centres on funding, but this study now establishes that a much more effective 'tool' to improve education performance and ultimately the competitiveness of a nation, is to focus on school discipline," said co-author Associate Professor Chris Baumann of the study, published in the International Journal of Educational Management.
>
> In analysing educational performance, the research assessed data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), World Bank data on Government Expenditure, and World Economic Forum (WEF) data on competitiveness.

Thanks to Obama and his allies in the House and Senate, we now have a $20 trillion

national debt, and $1.3 trillion of outstanding student loan debt from students. He left the Republicans with a mess, because his first, last and only solution to feeling unpopular was to borrow and spend more money – even if that never solved any problems.

Another important factor in the educational performance of children is whether they have married opposite-sex parents in the home.

The Orlando Sentinel reports:

> In fact, our new study, "Strong Families, Successful Schools," by the Institute for Family Studies, provides evidence that families play an important role in the performance and character of schools in counties across Florida. We found that the share of married-parent families in a county is one of the strongest predictors of high-school graduation rates for Florida counties; indeed, it's a more powerful predictor than family income, race or ethnicity.
>
> Across the state's counties, graduation rates are 4 percentage-points higher for every 10 percentage-point rise in married-couple families.
>
> We also found that counties that have strong and stable families tend to enjoy safer schools. In our research, the strongest predictor of school-suspension rates in counties across the state was the share of married parents in a county. County trends in family structure proved to be more important than county trends in parental education, family income, race and ethnicity. The suspension rate was lower by 3.5 points for every 10 percentage points that the proportion of married-couple families in a county was higher.
>
> Our research is particularly timely because it compliments new research from MIT economist David Autor and his colleagues. Their study of more than 1 million Florida children indicates that poor boys, more than poor girls, are being hit particularly hard by single parenthood. After comparing brothers and sisters from father-absent homes, Autor and his colleagues concluded that the "boy-girl gap in suspensions is far smaller in families where children are born to married parents" and that the gender gap in high-school graduation is smaller for children whose parents are married.
>
> Autor told The New York Times: "Boys particularly seem to benefit more from being in a married household or committed household — with the time, attention and income that brings."

Previously, I blogged about a Canadian study which concluded that children of same-sex parents have negative educational outcomes compared to children of opposite sex married parents.

Are Democrats in favor of opposite-sex marriage?

Democrats want to pay women welfare for having children out of wedlock, which not only lowers the academic performance of the children, but it introduces lack of discipline and disruption into the schools. Although Democrats claim they want to improve educational outcomes, (by borrowing and giving more money to their allies in the unionized public

school system), their policies actually harm children. That is the result, whatever their pious intentions. And we all know that it was Democrats who pushed same-sex marriage on children, depriving children of either their mother or their father.

Democrats are also opposed to school choice. School choice allows parents to get their children out of failing public schools. School choice is especially beneficial to poor, minority students. Public schools are so bad, that even Democrat politicians refuse to send their own children to them.

So, for all their pious preening about wanting the best for children, Democrats really achieve two things: 1) worse educational outcomes for children, 2) more taxpayer money given to Democrat administrators and teachers in the failing public school system. When it comes to educating children, Democrats are against it.

Why don’t men today talk to women about commitment and marriage?

February 24, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

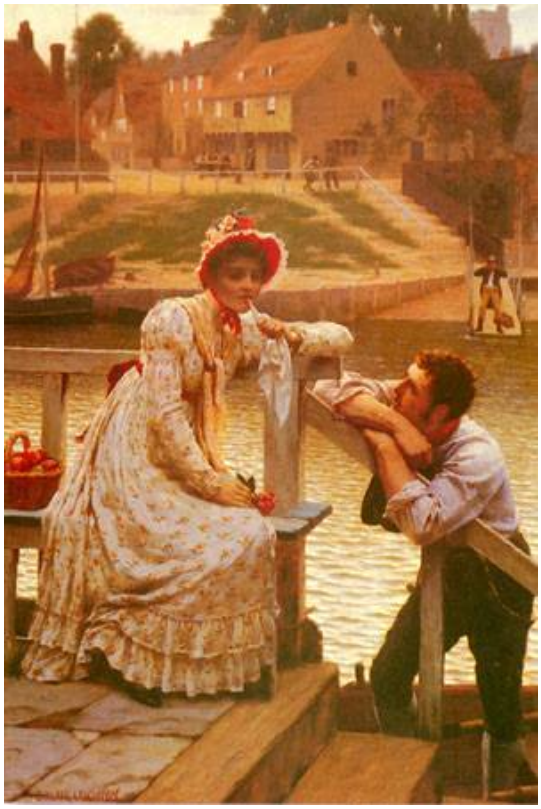

Painting: “Courtship”, by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

I saw this essay from a young woman named Jordana Narin who is explaining how she feels about not being able to talk seriously to a man she had sex with. She is a radical feminist and has a non-STEM degree in creative writing.

The essay was published in the radically leftist New York Times.

First kiss:

> I met [a guy] at summer camp in the Poconos at 14, playing pickup basketball by day and talking in the mess hall late into the night. Back home we lived only 30 minutes apart, but I didn’t see him again until 11th grade, when we ran into each other at a Halloween party in a Lower Manhattan warehouse.
>
> […]Under the muted flashes of a strobe light, we shared our first kiss.

No communication:

> We stayed in touch for the rest of high school, mostly by text message.

> […]Every time his name popped up on my phone, my heart raced.
>
> Still, we were never more than semiaffiliated, two people who spoke and loved to speak and kissed and loved to kiss and connected and were scared of connecting.

Where is this relationship going? This boy has no job and no savings and no proven record of steady work – and therefore he *cannot marry anyone.* Why is she even talking to a man who cannot afford to marry her – who has no proven record as a provider?

More:

> Two years after our first kiss, we were exchanging "I've missed you" messages again. It was a brisk Friday evening in our first semesters of college when I stepped off a train and into his comfortable arms.
>
> He had texted weeks earlier on Halloween (technically our anniversary) to ask if I would visit. We had not talked since summer, and I was trying to forget him. We had graduated from high school into the same inexpressive void we first entered in costume, where an "I've missed you" was as emotive as one got.

Long gaps in between text messages – they have nothing to talk about, and there is no goal. Nevertheless, they are away from their parents, and so she had sex with him, losing her virginity to a man she was not married to.

And then:

> Naïvely, I had expected to gain clarity, to finally admit my feelings and ask if he felt the same. But I couldn't confess, couldn't probe. Periodically I opened my mouth to ask: "What are we doing? Who am I to you?" He stopped me with a smile, a wink or a handhold, gestures that persuaded me to shut my mouth or risk jeopardizing what we already had.
>
> On the Saturday-night train back to Manhattan, I cried. Back in my dorm room, buried under the covers so my roommates wouldn't hear, I fell asleep with a wet pillow and puffy eyes.
>
> The next morning I awoke to a string of texts from him: "You get back OK?" "Let's do it again soon :)"

So my question for you is this: should a woman who has recreational sex with a man she barely knows expect to have real relationships, including a marriage relationship?

There's an interview that goes with it on the radically leftist NPR web site, but I saved a copy of the MP3 file here in case it disappears.

Rod Dreher comments on the interview:

> I wouldn't have understood the full scope of what this young woman is saying in her essay without the interview, which is short. In the segment, Narin says that men and women in her generation don't have actual romantic relationships anymore. It's all casual, non-committal sex. "
>
> [..]She tells the interviewer that there's lots of making out and sex, but nobody wants to be emotionally vulnerable to anybody else.
>
> […]**"Everyone in college uses Tinder," she said, referring to the wildly popular dating and hook-up app. "You can literally swipe right and find**

> **someone just to hang out for the night. There's no commitments required, and I think that makes committing to someone even harder, because it's so normal, and so expected even, to not want to commit."**
>
> "**In a different time, my grandparents, my great grandparents, they might have thought they were missing out on casual sex**," she says. "But since my generation has been saddled down with that, we kind of look to the past and say well, wasn't that nice. I think both are optimal. **I'm a huge feminist, and I think women should be able to do whatever they want to do. If a woman wants to have tons of casual sex, she totally should.** But I think that there should be the option. And they shouldn't be gendered, women and men. But there should be the option of being in a relationship."

Right. Young women like her who have swallowed radical feminism hook, line and sinker don't want to "miss out" on casual sex right now, but they want to get married "some day" – after they have a lot of fun traveling and doing exciting, fun things. Today, they want to choose to have sex with hot guys, but tomorrow they want the "option" of a man committing to them, even though they have a repeated pattern of putting recreational sex above commitment in their own lives. Basically, they don't want to pick a man *now* who can actually do marriage. Right now, they want to pick a man who has no interest in marriage. Later, they want a man to pursue them for marriage.

Consider this story from the Ottawa Sun about a woman who didn't want to say no to sex right now, but wanted to get married "some day":

> A New York woman is facing charges after police say she lied about being raped by two football players at a party to get sympathy from a prospective love interest.
>
> Nikki Yovino, 18, has been charged with falsely reporting an incident and tampering with or fabricating physical evidence.
>
> Last October Yovino reported that she had been sexually assaulted in a bathroom by two Sacred Heart University football players at an off-campus party.
>
> The men, however, said it had been consensual.
>
> Capt. Brian Fitzgerald tells WABC-TV another student informed authorities of explicit text messages between the three. He says one man also recorded some of the incident on his cellphone.
>
> "She admitted that she made up the allegation of sexual assault against (the football players) because it was the first thing that came to mind and she didn't want to lose (another male student) as a friend and potential boyfriend. She stated that she believed when (the other male student) heard the allegation it would make him angry and sympathetic to her," said an affidavit, according to the New York Post.

Two. Football. Players. ***At the same time.***

Nowhere in society is there any man who tells women like this that they should not pursue pleasure right now if they want marriage some day. No father. No pastor. No one has the courage to tell young women that following their emotions leads them to abortion, single motherhood, divorce, infertility and missing marriage completely.

Do women prepare themselves for the self-sacrifice and self-control required in marriage?

Here's what many women think of marriage:

Look at the lyrics:

> You got that 9 to 5
> But, baby, so do I
> So don't be thinking I'll be home and baking apple pies
> I never learned to cook
>
> After every fight
> Just apologize
> And maybe then I'll let you try and rock my body right
> Even if I was wrong
> You know I'm never wrong
>
> And know we'll never see your family more than mine
>
> Even when I'm acting crazy
> Tell me everything's alright

Women today expect to be pursuing their own interests before, during and after marriage. They don't want the constraints of relationships with a husband or children. I think this will work to get attention from certain men for a while, but when she loses her youth and beauty, it will dry up pretty quickly. Who is there telling women that they need to pick a marriage-minded man and focus on marriage earlier, rather than later?

Will anyone talk about marriage to these women?

Most men are not interested in committing to, or discussing commitment with, women who put pleasure above self-control. Most non-Christian men will have sex with a hedonistic women, but they are too smart to ever commit to them. Why would a man commit to a narcissist? If a man's role is just to please the "huge feminist", then there is no reason to commit to her and be the slave of her selfish impulses for the rest of his life. Radical feminists believe that relationships are about their plans and their needs. They are not interested in responsibilities, expectations or obligations to men or to children. Most men, even secular men, understand that they must not marry a woman who rejects moral obligations for fun. Especially with the looming threat of no-fault divorce.

Study: relationship problems, not family rejection, causes gay suicides

February 25, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Life Site News reports.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> While many assume that family rejection is the leading cause of depression among LBGTI individuals, a new study has found that in fact the problem appears to stem predominantly from the higher incidence of relationship problems among homosexuals.
>
> Dr. Delaney Skerrett led a team of researchers from the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP) in studying suicides in Queensland. He found that a leading cause of suicide among "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex" (LGBTI) people is stress from their romantic partners.
>
> "We tend to assume that the psychological distress LGBTI people are often going through is due to family rejection. But it seems that's not so much the case. The conflict seems to be largely related to relationship problems, with partners," Dr. Skerrett said.
>
> In fact, he said, "The numbers are telling us there's a general acceptance at the family level," something he said is "great" and "really heartening!"
>
> Instead, the study, which was published on April 2 in *Asia Pacific Psychiatry*, found that "LGBT individuals experienced relationship problems more often" than heterosexuals, "with relationship conflict also being more frequent than in non-LGBT cases."

> That confirms previous studies finding that homosexuals also face higher rates of intimate partner violence than heterosexuals. A 2007 study in the *Journal of Urban Health*, which is published by the New York Academy of Medicine, found that 32 percent of homosexuals have been abused by at least one partner during their lifetime.
>
> The researchers with AISRAP also found that a higher percentage of homosexuals took their lives [out] of despondency, rather than other psychological illnesses. While one-eighth of all Queensland suicide victims had been diagnosed with a psychosis that impaired their judgment, Skerrett reports "there were no such diagnoses among LGBT individuals." The conclusion adds to the consensus that depression disproportionately besets active homosexuals.

Previously, I blogged about a gay activist who thought that disagreement with gay rights caused gays to commit suicide. I wonder what he would do with a study like this? I also blogged previously about the "epidemic" of domestic violence among gays, and the article I linked to for that was from the left-leaning Atlantic Monthly.

But there's more to say – let's look at an individual case now, which will put some meat on the bones of the studies.

Here's an article from the liberal New York Times.

Here's the set up:

> BOB BERGERON was so relentlessly cheery that people sometimes found it off-putting. If you ran into him at the David Barton Gym on West 23rd Street, where he worked out nearly ever morning at 7, and you complained about the rain, he would smile and say you'd be better off focusing on a problem you could fix.
>
> That's how Mr. Bergeron was as a therapist as well, always upbeat, somewhat less focused on getting to the root of his clients' feelings than altering behavior patterns that were detrimental to them: therapy from the outside-in.
>
> Over the last decade, he built a thriving private practice, treating well-to-do gay men for everything from anxiety to coping with H.I.V. Mr. Bergeron had also begun work as a motivational speaker, giving talks at gay and lesbian centers in Los Angeles and Chicago. In February, Magnus Books, a publisher specializing in gay literature, was scheduled to print a self-help guide he had written, "The Right Side of Forty: The Complete Guide to Happiness for Gay Men at Midlife and Beyond."
>
> It was a topic he knew something about. Having come out as gay in the mid-1980s, Mr. Bergeron, 49, had witnessed the worst years of the AIDS epidemic and emerged on the other side. He had also seen how few public examples there were of gay men growing older gracefully.
>
> He resolved to rewrite the script, and provide a toolbox for better living.
>
> "I've got a concise picture of what being over 40 is about and it's a great perspective filled with happiness, feeling sexy, possessing comfort relating to

> other men and taking good care of ourselves," Mr. Bergeron said on his Web site. "This picture will get you results that flourish long-term."
>
> But right around New Year's Eve, something went horribly wrong. On Jan. 5, Mr. Bergeron was found dead in his apartment, the result of a suicide that has left his family, his friends and his clients shocked and heartbroken as they attempt to figure out how he could have been so helpful to others and so unable to find help himself.

Look:

> To his friends, Mr. Bergeron maintained a positive tone. He went on vacation, dated some, visited museums.
>
> Still, he privately expressed misgivings about what the future held. Olivier Van Doorne, a patient of Mr. Bergeron and the creative director of SelectNY, a fashion advertising firm, recalled Mr. Bergeron telling him that every gay man peaks at one point in his life.
>
> "He said a number of times: 'I peaked when I was 30 or 35. I was super-successful, everyone looked at me, and I felt extremely cool in my sexuality.' "
>
> Mr. Siegel, the therapist who supervised Mr. Bergeron in the early days of his career, said: "Bob was a very beautiful younger man, and we talked a lot about how that shapes and creates a life. The thesis of his book is based very much on his own personal experience with that. And the book also emphasized what to do when you're not attractive or you no longer have the appeal you once had. The idea was to transcend that and expand your sexual possibilities."

And:

> On an island in the kitchen, Mr. Bergeron had meticulously laid out his papers. There was a pile of folders with detailed instructions on top about whom to call regarding his finances and his mortgage. Across from that he placed the title page of his book, on which he also wrote his suicide note. In it he told Mr. Sackheim and Mr. Rappaport that he loved them and his family, but that he was "done."
>
> As his father remembered it, Mr. Bergeron also wrote, "It's a lie based on bad information."
>
> An arrow pointed up to the name of the book.
>
> The inference was clear. As Mr. Bergeron saw it at the end of his life, the only right side of 40 was the side that came before it.

I think that the problem is that in the gay lifestyle, you have a typically male emphasis on physical appearance, sex and pleasure. There is none of the moderating influence of women, which tends to push men into commitments, responsibility and stability. Stuff that provides fulfillment and meaning and purpose after you lose your youth and

appearance.

If you really love a person, then you don’t tell them that the dangerous thing they want to do is not dangerous. That’s not love. It’s easier for you to approve of them and be liked by everyone, but it’s not love.

William Lane Craig on the unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

February 26, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

You might remember that Dr. Craig used a new argument in his debate with Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia.

My notes on the debate record it thus:

> The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
>
> - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
> - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
> - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
> - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see

And now Dr. Craig has expanded on it in the Q&A section of his Reasonable Faith web site.

The question:

> Dear Dr Craig
>
> Firstly can I thank you for all your work. My faith in Christ has been enormously strengthened through studying your work in apologetics in particular and I have grown in confidence in my Christian witness.

> My question relates to numbers and mathematics as a whole. On the Defenders podcast you state that as God is the only self-existent, necessary being, numbers and mathematical objects, whilst being useful, don't actually exist as these too would exist necessarily and independently of God. If this is the case, how can it be that mathematics is so easily applied to the natural world? Surely if mathematics only existed in our minds, we would expect to see no correlation between it and how the physical world actually is?
>
> Michael
>
> United Kingdom

Excerpt from the answer:

> As philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng points out, for the non-theistic realist, the fact that physical reality behaves in line with the dictates of acausal mathematical entities existing beyond space and time is "a happy coincidence" (*Mathematics and Reality* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 239). Think about it: If, *per impossibile*, all the abstract objects in the mathematical realm were to disappear overnight, there would be no effect on the physical world. This is simply to reiterate that abstract objects are causally inert. The idea that realism somehow accounts for the applicability of mathematics "is actually very counterintuitive," muses Mark Balaguer, a philosopher of mathematics. "The idea here is that in order to believe that the physical world has the nature that empirical science assigns to it, I have to believe that there are causally inert mathematical objects, existing outside of spacetime," an idea which is inherently implausible (*Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 136).
>
> By contrast, the theistic realist can argue that God has fashioned the world on the structure of the mathematical objects. This is essentially what Plato believed. The world has mathematical structure as a result.

This argument was also made by mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley in a lecture he gave on scientific evidence for an intelligent designer. You can read an essay that covers some of the material in that lecture at Leadership University.

Excerpt:

> The physical universe is surprising in the simple mathematical form it assumes. All the basic laws of physics and fundamental relationships can be described on one side of one sheet of paper because they are so few in number and so simple in form (see table 1.1).
>
> […]It has been widely recognized for some time that nature assumes a form that is elegantly described by a relatively small number of simple, mathematical relationships, as previously noted in table 1.1. None of the various proposals presented later in this chapter to explain the complexity of the universe address

> this issue. Albert Einstein in a letter to a friend expressed his amazement that the universe takes such a form (Einstein 1956), saying:
>
> You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world to the degree that we may speak of such comprehensibility as a miracle or an eternal mystery. Well, a priori one should expect a chaotic world which cannot be in any way grasped through thought. . . . The kind of order created, for example, by Newton's theory of gravity is of quite a different kind. Even if the axioms of the theory are posited by a human being, the success of such an enterprise presupposes an order in the objective world of a high degree which one has no a priori right to expect. That is the "miracle" which grows increasingly persuasive with the increasing development of knowledge.
>
> Alexander Polykov (1986), one of the top physicists in Russia, commenting on the mathematical character of the universe, said: "We know that nature is described by the best of all possible mathematics because God created it." Paul Davies, an astrophysicist from England, says, "The equations of physics have in them incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe" (Davies 1984). Successful development of a unified field theory in the future would only add to this remarkable situation, further reducing the number of equations required to describe nature, indicating even further unity and integration in the natural phenomena than have been observed to date.

The whole paper that started this off is called "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics", and it is a must read for advanced Christian defenders. You can read the whole thing here.

Can you expect the mainstream media to report honestly on science education?

February 27, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

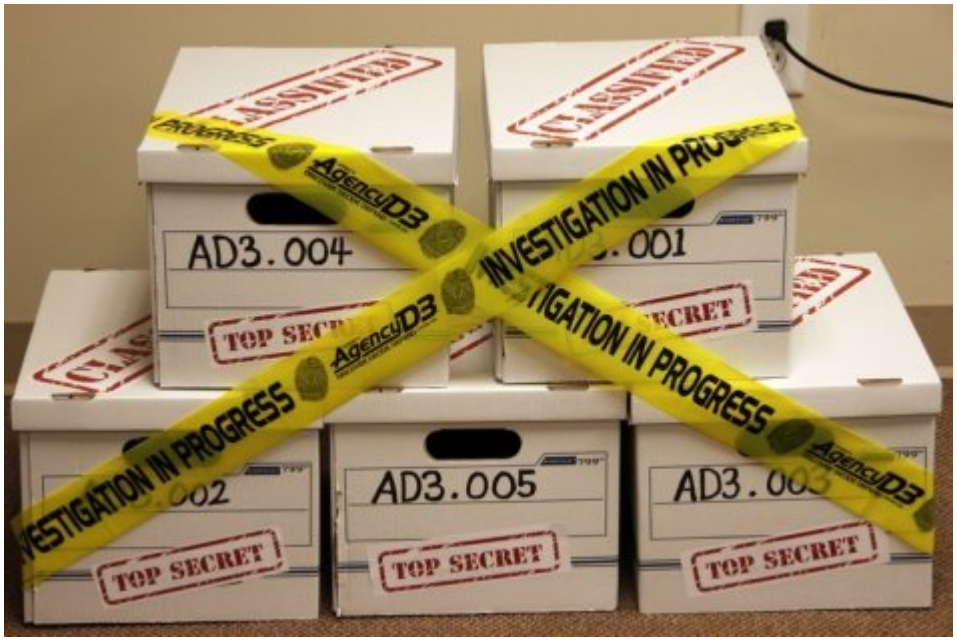

Investigation in progress

Whenever policy makers try to get public schools to teach both sides of issues like evolution or global warming, the mainstream media is there to distort the issues.

With respect to evolution, there are criticisms of elements of the theory from within naturalistic science.

For example, here is an interview with famous biologist Lynn Margulis, published in the radically pro-evolution, pro-naturalism Discover magazine.

Excerpt:

> Margulis came to view symbiosis as the central force behind the evolution of new species, an idea that has been dismissed by modern biologists. The dominant theory of evolution (often called neo-Darwinism) holds that new species arise through the gradual accumulation of random mutations, which are either favored or weeded out by natural selection. To Margulis, random mutation and natural selection are just cogs in the gears of evolution; the big leaps forward result from mergers between different kinds of organisms, what she calls symbiogenesis. Viewing life as one giant network of social connections has set Margulis against the mainstream in other high-profile ways as well. She disputes the current medical understanding of AIDS and considers every kind of life to be "conscious" in a sense.

Here is something from the interview:

> **And you don't believe that natural selection is the answer?**

> This is the issue I have with neo-Darwinists: They teach that what is generating novelty is the accumulation of random mutations in DNA, in a direction set by natural selection. If you want bigger eggs, you keep selecting the hens that are laying the biggest eggs, and you get bigger and bigger eggs. But you also get hens with defective feathers and wobbly legs. Natural selection eliminates and maybe maintains, **but it doesn't create.**

Now, that's a criticism of the standard theory from a prominent scientist who is a naturalist. She has a naturalistic alternative that she thinks can do the creating. Can we teach her criticism of the standard theory in the public schools? This is what people mean by "teach the controversy". We don't mean teach intelligent design, we mean teach the weaknesses of the theory of evolution from *within the naturalistic scientific community.* But this is apparently too much for journalism graduates to understand.

This article from The Stream explains:

> In states like Louisiana, Tennessee, and the current flash point of South Dakota, we have supported responsible academic freedom laws. These laws allow science teachers to present the strengths and weaknesses of neo-Darwinian theory as an explanation of biological novelties. They don't introduce or protect teaching about intelligent design, and certainly not about any religious doctrine (like creationism). They explicitly extend protection to science instruction alone, and then only when it enriches students' understanding of subjects that are already part of the curriculum (which ID is not). Yet journalists routinely assert that these laws would shoehorn intelligent design and "creationism" in public school science classes.
>
> In the same context, when we advocate introducing students to "critical thinking" on evolution, with teaching material drawn only from mainstream science, the media claim that "critical thinking" is "code" for intelligent design, or for "intelligent design creationism." We know that it's not, and that the "code word" conspiracy theory is utterly false.

The author of that piece tries to explain the difference between criticism of evolution from within mainstream science, and intelligent design, but the journalists just can't understand what he is saying. There is an example of it here on Evolution News.

Maggie Gallagher does not like the message of the movie “La La Land”

February 28, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

I own a couple of books written by Maggie Gallagher, (“The Abolition of Marriage” and “The Case for Marriage”).

Here is an excerpt from her review of La-La Land, posted at The Stream: (excerpt contains spoilers)

> The story begins as a classic story of two beautiful young people who meet in L.A. — a “*city of magic, city of stars,”* as the haunting lyric puts it, but clearly no longer City of Angels. Together they pursue their dreams both of love and success. Sebastian wants to become a jazz club singer. Mia wants to be a famous actress. The dramatic climax of the film comes after Sebastian at some personal sacrifice has given Mia the shot at her dreams, dreams she had given up on. And she chooses those dreams over him.
>
> […]In *La La Land, [the director]* chose to sharpen the clash between love and ambition. He does so in three ways:
>
> 1. By making the choice to leave love behind the woman’s choice, rather than the man’s, brilliantly (in the commercial sense) situating the film among the emerging and popular female empowerment dramas in which women learn they do *not need a man* to be happy and fulfilled.
> 2. By making the man a genuine hero — how else do you describe a guy who, after a woman has broken up with him and run home to Ohio to hide in the

> safety of her parents' house, drives all night to deliver to her the message that she has a callback audition to a major movie? (She didn't leave a forwarding address so he can't just call her and let her know.)
> 3. By portraying the obstacle to love as so feeble that it's hard to imagine why it should destroy true love: Mia has to go to Paris for 6 months to make her movie. It's her big break. Of course she has to go. But what is a love that cannot survive a few months in Paris? Is there no Skype? Are there no intercontinental flights?
>
> One young online commentator described this twist on the iconic musical narrative, this "bittersweet ending," as being more realistic, more *grounded*. I find it difficult to get into that young man's head. How one can believe that however hard it is to find true love these days, becoming a famous Hollywood actress is a more "realistic" dream? Mia is not the loser for making this choice. She becomes famous and finds a new love, who seem a nice man, and they have a baby. She has it all, and has chosen correctly, because dreams are not transferable, but people can be replaced.

The message of the movie is clear: a good man is easier to find than a good career – especially a career that is fun, thrills and popularity. Follow your heart, and all these things will be added unto you.

She concludes with this:

> […]*La La Land* is a strange postmodern exercise in nostalgia, which tried to give us all the romantic feelings of the classic Hollywood musicals before ripping them away from us and substituting the idea that it is work alone on which we can rely.
>
> If you Google *La La Land*, this synopsis pops up: "With modern day Los Angeles as the backdrop, this musical about everyday life explores what is more important: a once-in-a-lifetime love or the spotlight."

I know a lot of Christian women who delay marriage because they want the spotlight.

Don't give your money to Hollywood leftists

I don't go to movie theaters except once every 1-3 years, because I don't want to give Hollywood my money. If I like a movie, I buy it later on DVD for less than $10. The last movie I saw in the theater was "13 Hours". I rarely see anything in the themes of popular movies (or popular music) that is true, good or beautiful. This movie does nothing to make me question my stewardship of my dollars. What I end up spending my money on these days is World War 2 and Korean War history audio books. Nothing in those books hurts my character. Reading military history helps me to be thankful and humble.

Consider Romans 12:1-2:

> 1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.

> [2] And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

And Phil 4:8:

> [8] Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

I don’t want to explain to God later why I gave the money he entrusted to me to radical leftists. What is frustrating to me about movies, (and entertainment in general, including far-left ESPN), is that all too often, my friends seem to think that my choice of entertainment is not something that God cares about.

Report: Women more likely to live in poverty than men

March 1, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young women vote overwhelmingly for Democrats – is it working for them?

Brad Wilcox tweeted this article from the leftist The Daily Progress. Let's see what it says, then I'll comment.

The article identifies three reasons why women are poorer than men: single motherhood, divorce and the "pay gap".

Look:

> During their working years, women tend to earn less than men, and when they retire, they're more likely to live in poverty.
>
> These are women who raised children and cared for sick and elderly family members, often taking what savings and income they had and spending it on things besides their own retirement security.
>
> The National Institute on Retirement Security, a nonprofit research center, reports that women are 80 percent more likely than men to be impoverished at age 65 and older. Women age 75 to 79 are three times more likely.
>
> **While experts cite a pay gap as a major cause for retirement insecurity, other factors play a role, from single parenthood and divorce to the fact that women typically live longer than men.**

Dr. Wilcox makes the point that this poverty is due to a retreat from marriage. That's true. But look at the three factors the left-wing article itself cites: single motherhood, divorce and pay gap. Are these policies instances of women being victimized, or are their problems self-inflicted?

1) Single motherhood is caused by the welfare policies that young women favor when they vote overwhelmingly for bigger government. If we take money from working

taxpayers, or borrow it from the next generation, and we give it to women to pay them to have fatherless children, then more women will do this. And of course this is a path to poverty. There just isn't enough money to steal from taxpayers or borrow from future taxpayers to pay for women to have children with no man in the home who can provide for those children. People do more of what you pay them to do. The more money we give to single mothers, the more fatherless children we get, and it creates a host of problems that we can't continue to pay for as a society, e.g. – crime. The mistake was paying women to make poor decisions in the first place, but welfare spending a policy that most young, unmarried women support. They're not victims, they're doing this to themselves.

This new Prager University video from Larry Elder explains why women embrace single motherhood:

We're paying them to make bad decisions, and it creates more poverty.

2) No-fault divorce was caused by the radical feminism that many young, unmarried women support. This policy was brought in to make it easy for women to divorce without having to have a good reason (70% of divorces are initiated by women, mostly over "unhappiness"). Feminists don't like the idea of being "constrained" to marry a man because he is a good provider, protector and moral/spiritual leader. A strong man is intimidating – he will want to make decisions and lead, and we can't let him do that. A better idea is to marry a man who doesn't provide, protect or lead – that way, we don't have to respect him or let him lead. Naturally, when this entertaining, irresponsible man is unable to provide, then women divorce him and find themselves poor and unable to remarry – having lost their youth and beauty to "fun" men. No-fault divorce is not a policy that men supported. It is a policy that feminists supported, because they want to be able to nuke relationships that don't make them feel happy. The most volatile, short-lived relationships are lesbian relationships, because women naturally expect relationships to fulfill them instead of expecting relationships to be tough and challenging. There just isn't a path to prosperity for women into old age if they value feeling happy over self-sacrificial love and moral obligations. We need to teach women to prefer marriage-capable of men instead of fun, entertaining, no-leadership men. We need to teach women to make commitments that override their changing feelings. The problem of divorce is self-inflicted.

3) Lastly, the pay gap. I have written before about how the pay gap is largely related to women's own choices about what to study, what job to take, and how many hours to work. It is simply not possible for a woman to earn as much as a man when she does a degree in English, women's studies or other nonsense. Men don't study what we want to study. We study things we hate – like petroleum engineering and software engineering. We do this so that we can provide for a wife and children, so that we can get what we we want most: respect and the (earned) authority to lead a home. Most men are commitment machines. We hate fun, we want to do hard things, and to be respected for being reliable and steady. The problem of the "pay gap" is self-inflicted.

So, in conclusion, yes – many women are poorer than men, especially as they age. But

their poverty is *self-inflicted.* They are poor because they embraced ideas that would make them poorer. Three ideas destroyed their prosperity: single mother welfare, no-fault divorce, and following your heart in education and career. None of these things will provide women with security or prosperity – especially now that the debt has doubled to $20 trillion, and *there is no more to borrow to continue the government-as-sugar-daddy plan of feminists*. No amount of reassurance from pious pastors and permissive parents can save women from the consequences of their own irrational embrace of radical feminism. It turns out that there is no escape from economics, and the universe does not magically adjust to make the feelings and intuitions of entitled Disney princesses “work out”.

Study: brain of child neglected by mother is smaller and underdeveloped

March 2, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail. In the past, I've written about how much children need their fathers, but this time I'm focusing on how much children need their mothers, especially in the first 5 years of development.

Here is two brain scans to compare:

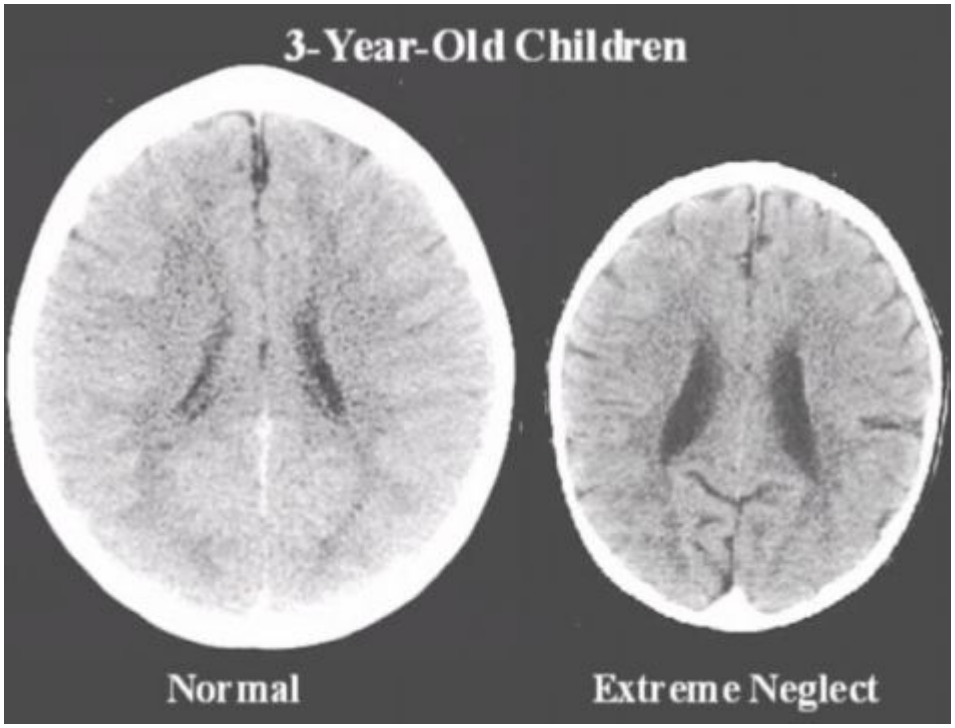

Brain scans of 3-year old children: normal vs neglected

Excerpt:

> Both of these images are brain scans of a two three-year-old children, but the brain on the left is considerably larger, has fewer spots and less dark areas, compared to the one on the right.
>
> According to neurologists this sizeable difference has one primary cause – the way each child was treated by their mothers.
>
> The child with the larger and more fully developed brain was looked after by its mother – she was constantly responsive to her baby, reported The Sunday Telegraph.
>
> But the child with the shrunken brain was the victim of severe neglect and abuse.
>
> According to research reported by the newspaper, the brain on the right worryingly lacks some of the most fundamental areas present in the image on the left.
>
> The consequences of these deficits are pronounced – the child on the left with the larger brain will be more intelligent and more likely to develop the social

> ability to empathise with others.
>
> But in contrast, the child with the shrunken brain will be more likely to become addicted to drugs and involved in violent crimes, much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on state benefits.
>
> The child is also more likely to develop mental and other serious health problems.
>
> Professor Allan Schore, of UCLA, told The Sunday Telegraph that if a baby is not treated properly in the first two years of life, it can have a fundamental impact on development.
>
> He pointed out that the genes for several aspects of brain function, including intelligence, cannot function.
>
> […]The study correlates with research released earlier this year that found that children who are given love and affection from their mothers early in life are smarter with a better ability to learn.
>
> The study by child psychiatrists and neuroscientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, found school-aged children whose mothers nurtured them early in life have brains with a larger hippocampus, a key structure important to learning, memory and response to stress.
>
> The research was the first to show that changes in this critical region of children's brain anatomy are linked to a mother's nurturing, Neurosciencenews.com reports.
>
> The research is published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Early Edition.
>
> Lead author Joan L. Luby, MD, professor of child psychiatry, said the study reinforces how important nurturing parents are to a child's development.

My friend Katy tweeted this article from far-left NPR:

> Parents do a lot more than make sure a child has food and shelter, researchers say. They play a critical role in brain development.
>
> More than a decade of research on children raised in institutions shows that "neglect is awful for the brain," says Charles Nelson, a professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital. Without someone who is a reliable source of attention, affection and stimulation, he says, "the wiring of the brain goes awry." The result can be long-term mental and emotional problems.

The article goes on to talk about children who grow up without mothers in Romanian orphanages:

> As the children grew older, the researchers were able to use MRI to study the anatomy of their brains. And once again, the results were troubling. "We found a

> dramatic reduction in what's referred to as gray matter and in white matter," Nelson says. "In other words, their brains were actually physically smaller."
>
> The scientists realized the cause wasn't anything as simple as malnutrition. It was a different kind of deprivation — the lack of a parent, or someone who acted like a parent.
>
> A baby "comes into the world expecting someone to take care of them and invest in them," Nelson says. "And then they form this bond or this relationship with this caregiver." But for many Romanian orphans, there wasn't even a person to take them out of the crib.
>
> "Now what happens is that you're staring at a white ceiling, or no one is talking to you, or no one is soothing you when you get upset," Nelson says. So areas of the brain involved in vision and language and emotion don't get wired correctly.

I expect the woman I marry (if I marry) to have a college degree, and preferably a graduate degree, and a couple of years of employment. But I think to be fair to the research on child development, *she has to stay home and invest in those children through the first five years at least*. After that she can stay home or work as much as she thinks is beneficial to the family goals of impacting the university, the church and the public square – as well as continuing to raise those children. I would take over more of the parenting as the children's needs changed. When it comes to children, we work backward from their needs, and those needs create responsibilities and obligations on the grown-ups. That doesn't mean the children are spoiled – it means that they get what they need.

Christian parents have to go even further

Here is a relevant post from Lindsay, a Christian mother who has a graduate degree in biology and was teaching biology before leaving her career to care for her children.

She writes:

> Now, can a woman handle the logistics of the home, ensure her family is cared for, and still work outside the home? Perhaps, in some cases – especially if they do not yet have children. But no woman is Superwoman. We all have limitations. It's just not possible for any woman to adequately care for children and home while holding down a full time job. The care of children and the home is primarily a woman's responsibility in a way it isn't for her husband. If there are no children, it may be possible for her to care for the home and her husband and still keep a job outside the home, but she must keep the home and her husband as her priority.
>
> Once children arrive, it becomes pretty much impossible for her to work outside the home and still fulfill her duties at home. The funny thing about children is that they need constant care. One cannot care for children and work outside the home too. The choice once children come along is whether to outsource the care of the children to someone else or to do it yourself. I firmly believe that God

> entrusts children to a husband and wife because he wants them to be the primary influences in their children's lives. That doesn't happen if the children spend a majority of their waking hours in the care of someone else.
>
> Children don't just need food and shelter provided to them, they need love, teaching, discipline, a sense of security, and examples of how they are to live. All of those things are best done when the child spends time primarily with his or her parents. Daycare workers, school teachers, and even grandparents simply cannot provide them in the same way parents can. No one loves a child like his own parents do. No one has such a vested interest in ensuring that he grows up with the proper spiritual and moral training. Even if others care about the child, the responsibility for the training of a child belongs to his parents. Daycare workers and teachers and grandparents won't answer to God for the soul of that child. His parents will.

For Christian parents, the stakes are even higher. Not only do they have to care about basic needs of child, but the higher spiritual needs as well. Men really need to be careful to pick a mother for their child who has demonstrated ability in caring for the needs of others, letting the needs of others override her own selfish desires.

Is Christianity intended to provide you with health, wealth and happiness?

March 3, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Is Christianity supposed to provide you with health and wealth?

Consider post on the Gospel Coalition.

It says:

> I am a pastor in a small village about 500 kilometers west of Nairobi—in Kenya's sugar belt region. For the better part of my adult life, I was a Pentecostal/charismatic/Word of Faith preacher. But the day came when my faith made no sense at all.
>
> I first heard the gospel as a young man, though the message contained false advertising about a Jesus who would meet all my needs and fulfill all my dreams. Remaining unsaved would lead to a life of misery, sickness, and poverty, I was told. It appeared logical, then, to embrace Christ and step into a world of limitless blessing.
>
> I wanted all God had for me, and I zealously rose to become a herald of the message I had received—which I later learned is Word of Faith teaching some call the "prosperity gospel." I knew of no other gospel. I believed God was good, and this meant nothing uncomfortable came from him.
>
> I learned to deal with Satan for causing anything negative in my life. Spiritual warfare was ingrained in me. As part of the "God class," as Word of Faith teachers say, I had absolute authority to create my own world

> through positive thinking and faith-based confessions.
>
> I believed God's will included health and wealth, which I could call into existence by faith. Anything less should be repudiated. If all else failed, I could engage the heavenly language of angels—praying in tongues—to bypass Satan and the hosts of darkness.

Do you believe any of that?

Well, the pastor goes on to explain all the terrible things that happened to him – and these are the most difficult experiences that can happen to anyone. How did he respond to God allowing all these bad things happening to him?

Well, pretty badly at first:

> Without answers, we were dismayed with God, whose ways no longer made sense to us. Though faith became a mirage, we kept up appearances, trying to pretend we didn't despair. Yet inwardly we felt doubtful, hopeless, even cursed.
>
> How could we reconcile these bad things with a good God? Our Word of Faith teaching instructed us to dismiss Job's suffering as a consequence of his negative confession: "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away" (Job 1:21). But how could we make sense of Paul himself falling sick (Gal. 4:13) and yet rejoicing in his afflictions (2 Cor. 12:10)? How could we continue to reconcile this portrait with modern "super-apostles" who market health and wealth in their books, DVDs, and mega-meetings?
>
> In my faith crisis and anger at God, I vowed to quit the ministry. I felt like a fraud for preaching a "gospel" that did not work. God had become an enigma, and faith a labyrinth. Yet the passage of time and the routine activities of Churchianity soothed our restless minds—for a while.

But then this happened:

> My friend asked me to translate in Swahili as Billy delivered a message in English. The topic, "justification by faith alone through the imputed righteousness of Christ," sounded ridiculous to me. Onstage for one awkward hour, I forced myself to deliver words I believed were unbiblical and heretical. But the sovereign Lord worked in my heart, calling forth reason through an inner witness to the truths proclaimed. The Holy Spirit planted sufficient doubt about the system I'd defended.
>
> Over the next three weeks I felt tortured by God for my errors, which became apparent with every Bible text I once thought supported my beliefs. The same verses now looked different, affirming Billy's message.
>
> […]**Though I didn't understand the fine points of theology, my conversion was decisive. Enthralled by Christ, who bids his own to "take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23), I now felt that "the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory**

> **that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18).**

I guess I should say the obvious – I have no idea how you would get the idea that you can coerce God into giving you health, wealth and prosperity. This is such an immature view of God. Anyone who has ever been involved in any kind of serious enterprise knows that the best people are the ones who stick to the mission through thick and thin, and just keep on fighting through the hunger, suffering, sickness and other setbacks. And that's everywhere in the Bible. For goodness sake: Jesus was obedient to God to the point of suffering torture and giving his life as a sacrifice to save others from their rebellion against God. How do you get health, wealth and happiness from that?

But more than that, this makes me think of when I was young and first exposed to the Christian message. Far from being something that pushed me away from Christianity, the Bible's message of suffering with honor, and doing the moral thing regardless of happy outcomes, really resonated with me. It is very real world. In this world, it is rare that doing the right thing works out for you. In fact, there should be some area of your life where you are missing something that you really want and need. Consider that a joy, because when you are poor and hungry sad and meek, that's when you are most like the people in the Bible who had to experience these things while remaining faithful and obedient. For me, not being married and not being a father is my empty hole that will never be filled. I get asked about it a lot by my co-workers, and they know I am not happy about it, but they also know I am still faithful even if my needs are not met.

These are my two favorite passages in the Bible:

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**
>
> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.
>
> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

Matthew 5:13:

> 10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
>
> 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
>
> **13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything,**

> **except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**
>
> 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
>
> 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

The Bible doesn’t shy away from suffering and evil. That’s part of the normal Christian life. And how you respond to lack and suffering and evil is a powerful signal to the watching world about what Christianity is all about.

From a practical point of view, I do recommend making good decisions to prepare for potential troubles and tragedies. If you are careful to make yourself defensible to unexpected setbacks, not only will you be able to endure them, but you will be strong to help others endure them, too. The goal is to not let go of God because unmet desires and dashed expectations. A wise person understands that everyone has a breaking point, but with a little wisdom and preparation, you can build your defenses so that the stress that might break someone less prepared does not break you.

New study: first life pushed back earlier, leaving less time for naturalist magic

March 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Whenever you discuss origins with naturalists, it's very important to get them to explain how the first living organism emerged without any help from an intelligent agent. The origin of life is an information problem. A certain minimal amount of biological information for minimum life function has to be thrown together by chance. No evolutionary mechanisms have the potential to work until replication is already in place.

Evolution News reports on a new study that makes the window for naturalistic forces to create the first self-replicating organism even smaller.

Excerpt:

> A paper in *Nature* reports the discovery of fossil microbes possibly older, even much older, than any found previously. The lead author is biogeochemist Matthew Dodd, a PhD student at University College London. If the paper is right, these Canadian fossils could be 3.77 billion years old, or even as old as — hold onto your hat, in case you're wearing one — 4.28 billion years.
>
> From the Abstract:
>
> Although it is not known when or where life on Earth began, some of the earliest habitable environments may have been submarine-hydrothermal vents. Here we describe putative fossilized microorganisms that are at least 3,770 million and possibly 4,280 million years old in ferruginous sedimentary rocks, interpreted as seafloor-hydrothermal vent-related precipitates, from the Nuvvuagittuq belt in Quebec, Canada. These structures occur as micrometre-scale haematite tubes and filaments with morphologies and mineral assemblages similar to those of

> filamentous microorganisms from modern hydrothermal vent precipitates and analogous microfossils in younger rocks. The Nuvvuagittuq rocks contain isotopically light carbon in carbonate and carbonaceous material, which occurs as graphitic inclusions in diagenetic carbonate rosettes, apatite blades intergrown among carbonate rosettes and magnetite–haematite granules, and is associated with carbonate in direct contact with the putative microfossils.
>
> This new paper is interesting to compare with a paper from last year, Nutman et al., "Rapid emergence of life shown by discovery of 3,700-million-year-old microbial structures," also in *Nature*, which found microbial structures that are a bit younger.
>
> But the "microbial structures" from Nutman et al. 2016 are different from these new "microfossils" presented by Dodd et al. 2017. In Nutman et al., they only found stromatolite-type structures rather than actual microfossils. Some stromatolite experts were a bit skeptical that what they found were really stromatolites.
>
> But the new paper by Dodd and his colleagues, "Evidence for early life in Earth's oldest hydrothermal vent precipitates," seems to offer potential bacteria-like microfossils. They are tiny black carbonaceous spheres and "hematite tubes" which the authors think are biogenically created. We've seen more convincing ancient microfossils, but these aren't bad.
>
> According to Dodd et al., these new finds would be the oldest known microfossils, if that is in fact what they are. Very interesting. If so, that just keeps pushing unquestionable evidence of life's existence on Earth further and further back, which leaves less and less time for the origin of life to have occurred by unguided chemical evolution after Earth became habitable.
>
> **If they are in fact 4.28 billion years old, then that would mean there was life very, very early in Earth's history — as Cyril Ponnamperuma said, it's like "instant life."**

Instant life is "rational" for naturalistic fideists, but for evidence-driven people who understand the long odds on generating even a simple protein by chance, it's irrationality.

Let's recall exactly how hard it is to make even a simple protein without intelligent agency to select the elements of the sequence.

The odds of creating even a single functional protein

I've talked about Doug Axe before when I described how to calculate the odds of getting functional proteins by chance.

Let's calculate the odds of building a protein composed of a functional chain of 100 amino acids, by chance. (Think of a meaningful English sentence built with 100 scrabble letters, held together with glue)

Sub-problems:

- BONDING: You need 99 peptide bonds between the 100 amino acids. The odds of getting a peptide bond is 50%. The probability of building a chain of one hundred amino acids in which all linkages involve peptide bonds is roughly (1/2)^99 or 1 chance in 10^30.
- CHIRALITY: You need 100 left-handed amino acids. The odds of getting a left-handed amino acid is 50%. The probability of attaining at random only L–amino acids in a hypothetical peptide chain one hundred amino acids long is (1/2)^100 or again roughly 1 chance in 10^30.
- SEQUENCE: You need to choose the correct amino acid for each of the 100 links. The odds of getting the right one are 1 in 20. Even if you allow for some variation, the odds of getting a functional sequence is (1/20)^100 or 1 in 10^65.

The final probability of getting a functional protein composed of 100 amino acids is 1 in 10^125. Even if you fill the universe with pre-biotic soup, and react amino acids at Planck time (very fast!) for 14 billion years, you are probably not going to get even 1 such protein. And you need at least 100 of them for minimal life functions, plus DNA and RNA.

Research performed by Doug Axe at Cambridge University, and published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Molecular Biology, has shown that the number of functional amino acid sequences is tiny:

> Doug Axe's research likewise studies genes that it turns out show great evidence of design. Axe studied the sensitivities of protein function to mutations. In these "mutational sensitivity" tests, Dr. Axe mutated certain amino acids in various proteins, or studied the differences between similar proteins, to see how mutations or changes affected their ability to function properly. He found that protein function was highly sensitive to mutation, and that proteins are not very tolerant to changes in their amino acid sequences. In other words, when you mutate, tweak, or change these proteins slightly, they stopped working. In one of his papers, he thus concludes that "functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences," and that functional protein folds "may be as low as 1 in 10^77."

The problem of forming DNA by sequencing nucleotides faces similar difficulties. And remember, mutation and selection cannot explain the origin of the *first* sequence, because mutation and selection require replication, which does not exist until that first living cell is *already in place*.

What does “Christian fellowship” mean?

March 5, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Philippians is my favorite book of the Bible. When I study Philippians 1, I use D. A. Carson’s “Basics for Believers” commentary.

Here is the part I want to talk about today:

Philippians 1:1-11:

> 1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:
>
> 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> 3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> 4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> 5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> 6 *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> **7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.**
>
> 8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere

> and blameless until the day of Christ;
>
> 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Now just read that and reflect on how passionate, and even *unstable and emotional* Paul sounds about this love he has for this church. Ask yourself this: what is the basis for these feelings? Read it again, and write your answer down. I'll tell you mine in a minute.

Now here is D. A. Carson.

He writes:

> As often in his letters, Paul begins with a warm expression of thanks to God for something in the lives of his readers. Here the grounds of his thanksgiving to God are three in number, though all three are tied to the same theme.
>
> The first is their faithful memory of him. The NIV reads, "I thank my God every time I remember you" (1: 3). But others suggest "I thank my God every time you remember me," or something similar. The original is ambiguous. For reasons I shall not go into, I think Paul is referring to their remembrance of him. Later on he will thank the Philippians for remembering him so warmly that they sent funds to support him in his ministry. **But here the vision is broader: he perceives that their interest in him is a reflection of their continued commitment to the gospel, and that is why he thanks God for them.**
>
> The point becomes explicit in the second cause of his thanksgiving: "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now . . ." (1: 4– 5). Their "partnership in the gospel" injects joy into Paul's prayers of thanksgiving: "I always pray with joy," he writes. The word rendered "partnership" is more commonly translated "fellowship" in the New Testament. What precisely does the word mean? In common use "fellowship" has become somewhat debased. If you invite a pagan neighbor to your home for a cup of tea, it is friendship; if you invite a Christian neighbor, it is fellowship. If you attend a meeting at church and leave as soon as it is over, you have participated in a service; if you stay for coffee afterward, you have enjoyed some fellowship. In modern use, then, fellowship has come to mean something like warm friendship with believers.
>
> **In the first century, however, the word commonly had commercial overtones. If John and Harry buy a boat and start a fishing business, they have entered into a fellowship, a partnership. Intriguingly, even in the New Testament the word is often tied to financial matters. Thus, when the Macedonian Christians send money to help the poor Christians in Jerusalem, they are entering into fellowship with them (Rom. 15: 26).**
>
> **The heart of true fellowship is self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision. Both John and Harry put their savings into the fishing boat. Now they share the vision that will put the fledgling company on its feet.**

> **Christian fellowship, then, is self-sacrificing conformity to the gospel. There may be overtones of warmth and intimacy, but the heart of the matter is this shared vision of what is of transcendent importance, a vision that calls forth our commitment.** So when Paul gives thanks, with joy, because of the Philippians' "partnership in the gospel" or "fellowship in the gospel," he is thanking God that these brothers and sisters in Christ— from the moment of their conversion (" from the first day until now," Paul writes)— rolled up their sleeves and got involved in the advance of the gospel. They continued their witness in Philippi, they persevered in their prayers for Paul, they sent money to support him in his ministry— all testifying to their shared vision of the importance and priority of the gospel. That is more than enough reason for thanking God.

> [..]Implicitly, such an apostolic stance asks us what gives us our greatest joy. Is it personal success? Some victory for our children? Acquisition of material things? "I have no greater joy," John writes, "than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." Paul reflects exactly the same attitude. Paul adds, "It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart . . ." (Phil. 1: 7). Probably this was written against the background of Stoic influence that was cautious about whole-life commitments, especially if they involved the "passions." Be cool; do not be vulnerable; do not get hurt. But that was not Paul's way. "It is right for me to feel this way about all of you," Paul insists, regardless of what the contemporary culture says. "I have you in my heart": my whole life and thought are bound up with you.

More:

> So strongly does he want the Philippians to recognize his devotion to them that Paul puts himself under an oath: "God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus" (1: 8). The significance of the oath is not that without it he might lie. Rather, he puts himself under an oath so that the Philippians might feel the passion of his truthfulness, in exactly the same way that God puts himself under an oath in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There the point is not that otherwise God might lie, but that God wants to be believed (Heb. 7: 20– 25). So Paul: God is my witness "how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus."
>
> Here is no mere professionalism. Nor is this an act, a bit of showmanship to "turn them on" to the apostle. Rather, it is something that repeatedly bubbles through Paul's arguments. It recurs, for example, in chapter 4: "Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!" (4: 1).
>
> **Both from Paul's example and from that of the Philippians, then, we must learn this first point: the fellowship of the gospel, the partnership of the gospel, must be put at the center of our relationships with other**

> **believers. That is the burden of these opening verses. Paul does not commend them for the fine times they had shared watching games in the arena. He doesn't mention their literature discussion groups or the excellent meals they had, although undoubtedly they had enjoyed some fine times together. What lies at the center of all his ties with them, doubtless including meals and discussion, is this passion for the gospel, this partnership in the gospel.**
>
> What ties us together? What do we talk about when we meet, even after a church service? Mere civilities? The weather? Sports? Our careers and our children? Our aches and pains? None of these topics should be excluded from the conversation of Christians, of course. In sharing all of life, these things will inevitably come up. But what must tie us together as Christians is this passion for the gospel, this fellowship in the gospel. On the face of it, nothing else is strong enough to hold together the extraordinary diversity of people who constitute many churches: men and women, young and old, blue collar and white, healthy and ill, fit and flabby, different races, different incomes, different levels of education, different personalities. What holds us together? It is the gospel, the good news that in Jesus, God himself has reconciled us to himself. This brings about a precious God-centeredness that we share with other believers.

Does what Carson writes make you think of the Lord of the Rings book 1? ("The Fellowship of the Ring") It sounds like Christians are supposed to band together in common purpose in order to complete a quest. They are not supposed to just be hanging out to pass the time. There is planning. There is cooperation. There is danger. There is achievement. There is adventure. I think that he loves the church in Philippi because they have entered into this fellowship of the gospel with him.

More:

> Already in verse 4 Paul has insisted that whenever he prays for the Philippians, he does so with joy and thanksgiving. Now he gives us the content of his prayers for them: "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ— to the glory and praise of God" (1: 9– 11).
>
> […]Second, what Paul has in mind is not mere sentimentalism or the rush of pleasure spawned, for example, by a large conference. "I pray," Paul writes, "that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight." The kind of love that Paul has in mind is the love that becomes more knowledgeable. Of course, Paul is not thinking of just any kind of knowledge. He is not hoping they will learn more and more about nuclear physics or sea turtles. He has in mind the knowledge of God; he wants them to enjoy insight into God's words and ways, and thus to know how to live in light of them.

So here is my main point: I think that we need to stop looking at other people on the surface level – age, skin color, wealth, clothes, etc. – and start to dig deeper underneath to find out where each person stands with respect to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our criteria should not be present ability. We should choose those with desire, intensity, and willingness to learn *hard things*. If a person can demonstrate their desire to do grow in knowledge and depth of insight, you should be spending your time, money and effort with that person *first*. Don't pick the people who you like for surface reasons, pick the people who you can engage in fellowship with.

Tim McGrew lectures on alleged historical errors in the gospels

March 6, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Today's post features a lecture given by Dr. Timothy J. McGrew. He is a Professor of Philosophy at Western Michigan University, but he also specializes in historical apologetics.

Here are a couple of Dr. McGrew's videos – with slides! – on alleged errors in the gospels.

Alleged errors in Mark and Matthew:

In this lecture, entitled Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels, Dr. Timothy McGrew critiques seven of the strongest objections to the historical reliability of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. This is about 55 minutes of content followed by fifteen minutes of Q&A.

More on this talk here. (including MP3)

Alleged errors in Luke and John:

In this lecture, entitled Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels, Dr. Timothy McGrew critiques the strongest objections to the historical reliability of the Gospels of Luke & John. This is about 55 minutes of content followed by thirty minutes of Q&A.

More on this talk here. (including MP3)

Bio of Tim McGrew:

> Dr. Timothy McGrew is Professor of Philosophy at Western Michigan University. He specializes in theory of knowledge, logic, probability theory, and the history and philosophy of science, and he has published in numerous journals including Mind, The Monist, Analysis, British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, and

> Philosophia Christi. His most recent publications include the article on “Evidence” in The Routledge Companion to Epistemology (forthcoming), a co-authored anthology in The Philosophy of Science (Blackwell, 2009), and a paper (with Lydia McGrew) on the the argument from miracles in The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology (Blackwell, 2009).

Always remember not to get bogged down in these low-level issues, though, until you have agreement from the skeptic about the higher order issues, e.g. – does God exist? etc. Scientific arguments first, historical and philosophical arguments second, Bible “errors” last of all. Proiving inerrancy is never the first step in a discussion about Christian theism – always start with God’s existence and the mainstream science. The Bible difficulties should come at the very end of the discussion, once easier matters have been settled.

Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage

March 7, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What effects does redefining marriage have on society?

A must-read long paper from the Heritage Foundation. It's a great concise presentation of the reasons why the United States should not redefine marriage. (H/T A tweet from Ryan T. Anderson)

Abstract:

> *Marriage is based on the truth that men and women are complementary, the biological fact that reproduction depends on a man and a woman, and the reality that children need a mother and a father. Redefining marriage does not simply expand the existing understanding of marriage; it rejects these truths. Marriage is society's least restrictive means of ensuring the well-being of children. By encouraging the norms of marriage—monogamy, sexual exclusivity, and permanence—the state strengthens civil society and reduces its own role. The future of this country depends on the future of marriage. The future of marriage depends on citizens understanding what it is and why it matters and demanding that government policies support, not undermine, true marriage.*

Excerpt:

> Supporters of redefinition use the following analogy: Laws defining marriage as a union of a man and a woman are unjust—fail to treat people equally—exactly like laws that prevented interracial marriage. Yet such appeals beg the question of what is essential to marriage. They assume exactly what is in dispute: that

> gender is as irrelevant as race in state recognition of marriage. However, race has nothing to with marriage, and racist laws kept the races apart. Marriage has everything to do with men and women, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers and children, and that is why principle-based policy has defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman.
>
> Marriage must be color-blind, but it cannot be gender-blind. The color of two people's skin has nothing to do with what kind of marital bond they have. However, the sexual difference between a man and a woman is central to what marriage is. Men and women regardless of their race can unite in marriage, and children regardless of their race need moms and dads. To acknowledge such facts requires an understanding of what, at an essential level, makes a marriage.

And a bit later:

> If the law taught a falsehood about marriage, it would make it harder for people to live out the norms of marriage because marital norms make no sense, as matters of principle, if marriage is just intense emotional feeling. No reason of principle requires an emotional union to be permanent or limited to two persons, much less sexually exclusive. Nor should it be inherently oriented to family life and shaped by its demands. This does not mean that a couple could not decide to live out these norms where temperament or taste so motivated them, just that there is no reason of principle to demand that they do so. Legally enshrining this alternate view of marriage would undermine the norms whose link to the common good is the basis for state recognition of marriage in the first place.
>
> Insofar as society weakens the rational foundation for marriage norms, fewer people would live them out, and fewer people would reap the benefits of the marriage institution. This would affect not only spouses, but also the well-being of their children. The concern is not so much that a handful of gay or lesbian couples would be raising children, but that it would be very difficult for the law to send a message that *fathers matter* when it has redefined marriage to make *fathers optional*.

And one last one:

> In fact, much of this is already occurring. Heritage Foundation Visiting Fellow Thomas Messner has documented multiple instances in which redefining marriage has already become a nightmare for religious liberty.[48] If marriage is redefined to include same-sex relationships, then those who continue to believe the truth about marriage—that it is by nature a union of a man and a woman—would face three different types of threats to their liberty: the administrative state, nondiscrimination law, and private actors in a culture that is now hostile to traditional views.[49]
>
> After Massachusetts redefined marriage to include same-sex relationships, Catholic Charities of Boston was forced to discontinue its adoption services rather

> than place children with same-sex couples against its principles.[50] Massachusetts public schools began teaching grade-school students about same-sex marriage, defending their decision because they are "committed to teaching about the world they live in, and in Massachusetts same-sex marriage is legal." A Massachusetts appellate court ruled that parents have no right to exempt their children from these classes.[51]
>
> The New Mexico Human Rights Commission prosecuted a photographer for declining to photograph a same-sex "commitment ceremony." Doctors in California were successfully sued for declining to perform an artificial insemination on a woman in a same-sex relationship. Owners of a bed and breakfast in Illinois who declined to rent their facility for a same-sex civil union ceremony and reception were sued for violating the state nondiscrimination law. A Georgia counselor was fired after she referred someone in a same-sex relationship to another counselor.[52] In fact, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty reports that "over 350 separate state anti-discrimination provisions would likely be triggered by recognition of same-sex marriage."[53]

This article is long and comprehensive. It will take some time to read. It's includes logical arguments as well as empirical evidence from research – with footnotes. I really recommend taking a look at the article. Even if it takes a long time to read, it will definitely expand your mind to think about why we had a definition of marriage in the first place, and what we would lose by changing that definition. When you debate people who want to redefine marriage, it's very important to appeal to logical arguments and evidence from studies. Get the conversation away from emotions and instead introduce facts and arguments.

My favorite book on the marriage issue is Ryan Anderson's "Truth Overruled". If you don't have it, I really recommend it.

The kalam cosmological argument defended in a peer-reviewed science journal

March 8, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the peer-reviewed article. It appears in a scientific journal focused on astrophysics.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

Here's an excerpt in which the author, Dr. William Lane Craig, explains the Big Bang cosmology:

> The monumental significance of the Friedman-Lemaitre model lay in its historization of the universe. As one commentator has remarked, up to this time the idea of the expansion of the universe "was absolutely beyond comprehension. Throughout all of human history the universe was regarded as fixed and immutable and the idea that it might actually be changing was inconceivable."{8} But if the Friedman-Lemaitre model were correct, the universe could no longer be adequately treated as a static entity existing, in effect, timelessly. Rather the universe has a history, and time will not be matter of indifference for our investigation of the cosmos. In 1929 Edwin Hubble's measurements of the red-shift in the optical spectra of light from distant galaxies,{9} which was taken to indicate a universal recessional motion of the light sources in the line of sight, provided a dramatic verification of the Friedman-Lemaitre model. Incredibly, what Hubble had discovered was the isotropic expansion of the universe predicted by Friedman and Lemaitre. It marked a veritable turning point in the history of science. "Of all the great predictions that

> science has ever made over the centuries," exclaims John Wheeler, "was there ever one greater than this, to predict, and predict correctly, and predict against all expectation a phenomenon so fantastic as the expansion of the universe?"{10}
>
> As a GTR-based theory, the Friedman-Lemaitre model does not describe the expansion of the material content of the universe into a pre-existing, empty, Newtonian space, but rather the expansion of space itself. This has the astonishing implication that as one reverses the expansion and extrapolates back in time, space-time curvature becomes progressively greater until one finally arrives at a singular state at which space-time curvature becomes infinite. This state therefore constitutes an edge or boundary to space-time itself. P. C. W. Davies comments,
>
> > An initial cosmological singularity . . . forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity. . . . On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.{11}
>
> The popular expression "Big Bang," originally a derisive term coined by Fred Hoyle to characterize the beginning of the universe predicted by the Friedman-Lemaitre model, is thus potentially misleading, since the expansion cannot be visualized from the outside (there being no "outside," just as there is no "before" with respect to the Big Bang).{12}
>
> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"{13}
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Every theist should be able to understand and defend this argument. It is a scientific refutation of materialism, and it is supported by six lines of scientific evidence – all of which emerged as science has progressed.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe

3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

Those are the scientific discoveries that have led us to the beginning of the universe, which support's Dr. Craig's argument.

This is the kind of evidence I expect all Christian theists to be using when discussing the question of whether God exists. Scientific evidence. When talking to non-Christians, we first need to show that we understand science, because science is a reliable and respected way of getting knowledge about the universe. Non-Christians do not accept the Bible, but they do accept science, so we begin evangelism with science. Science (experimental, testable, repeatable science) should set limits on what anyone can believe – including non-Christians, who might otherwise not be inclined to listen to Bible verses and theology. Important: it's not a good idea to discuss the resurrection of Jesus with a person who does not accept the scientific evidence for a Creator of the universe.

The Big Bang is not compatible with atheism

According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by the atheistic worldview.

Feminist explains how she chose to drink alcohol before recreational sex

March 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students puking in toilet

Guess where I'm linking today? To a radical feminist web site named Jezebel, to an article written by a radical feminist who writes for the radically leftist Slate.

No, I'm not crazy. Just read it:

> Much of the conversation around alcohol and sex has focused on assault—the line at which intoxication becomes incapacitation, for instance—**but what we fail to mention is how haunted people can be by the sex they actually, technically consented to.**
>
> […]I wonder what my sex life would even look like if alcohol hadn't been there. Alcohol gave me comfort in my own body, and it allowed me to turn my erotic curiosity and hunger for experience into an action plan. I was tired of being the stuttering girl sucking in her stomach after the lights went out. I wanted to be the woman who roamed wild and free.
>
> Alcohol also helped me cut the girlish strings on my heart, an action my college years demanded. Three months into my freshman year, I split a six pack with a dashing sophomore, and we wound up partially clothed on his bed, my bare legs wrapped around his waist, my hands around his neck. I pulled back slightly and asked him the question, the naive question of a girl who does not yet understand her fate: "What does this mean?"

> He looked past me, into his studio apartment, and then back into my eyes. “It means that I’m a 19-year-old boy, and we’re having fun.”

What is interesting is that she didn’t see this man’s using her for fun after getting her drunk as any disqualification for a serious relationship. On the contrary, she believes that a serious relationship built on self-sacrificial love and commitment that lasts through difficulties can be found in a man who uses her for fun sex:

> I’m not saying I didn’t enjoy that night with the dashing sophomore. I’m saying the fun part for me might have been turning our physical intimacy into a sustained attachment.

Amazing. She wasn’t looking for men with good educations, good jobs, lots of savings, who were sober and chaste – they would have made her unhappy with their bossy leading, and strict plans about courting and marriage. Nope, she wanted the drunken slut who didn’t ask her any questions or have any plan for her to develop into a wife and mother. That’s who she wanted. He was hawt! And he was free, easy and fun.

She is 35 now, and still single. I’m sure if you ask her, she would like to be married “some day”, but who could look at 20 years of drunken sex and say that this is good preparation for the challenges of marriage? Marriage is about self-sacrificial love, and endurance. To prepare for it, you learn self-denial and self-control. You learn how to accept expectations, obligations and responsibilities.

Anyway, back to the article by the drunken, promiscuous feminist. The point that I wanted to make is that she *chose the alcohol* herself, and that she did it for a very specific reason:

> I wanted to have fun, too. *And alcohol evened the score***.** I cared less about everything when I was drinking: What you thought of me, what I looked like in this dress, whether that taco was warm or cold when I stuffed it in my mouth. I don’t want to make it sound like I drank *in order to* have sex. I drank for a million reasons.
>
> […]Booze downshifted my intense body consciousness, and it revved up my bravado. Sex was scary—but alcohol made me feel safe.

She drank in order to have sex. Got it? *She chose to get drunk in order to have sex.* This is the part that permissive parents and pious pastors need to understand about their darling daughters. Many young women think that recreational sex with hot guys is a pathway to marriage. They drink in order to make progress towards the marriage they want – the marriage to the man who is fun. Not the man who is serious. They don’t want the serious man who makes plans and expects them to behave responsibly and honor obligations. They want the fun, hot man – the bad boy – and they expect to change him into a faithful, sober, responsible provider through the magical power of vagina. And if that doesn’t work, by threatening him with divorce.

Why are millenials acting like children into adulthood?

This reminds me of the Institute for American Values study. Despite their name, it is not a conservative organization

Look at this citation from p. 15:

> A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up.
>
> **A Yale University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up."**
>
> **A New York University student observed, "[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking."**
>
> **A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."**
>
> **[…]A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."**

I think at this point you should assume that if your daughter is not passionate about chastity, natural marriage and pro-life, then she is probably somewhere on this *drinking – recreational sex – cohabitation – abortion – no-fault divorce* path. The more fun-loving and emotional a woman is, the more likely she is to fall into it, and some of them just work it together with Christianity. Once woman I know was living with a non-Christian man and praying fervently for God to make her career take off. God is there for hope and comfort, not to impose any sort of moral boundaries. And parents and pastors are oblivious – they just want to let women do whatever they want, and then blame men for not making it "work out". Parents and pastors are not doing the job of explaining to women what their

lives will really be like from age 40 to 90, and urging women to make a plan that provides lasting love and and security even as they experience declining youth, declining beauty, and declining fertility.

I hope that many of the men out there who refuse to hold women accountable for their own desires start to understand that not everything a woman wants is good, and not every plan a woman makes will work. Sometimes, you need to calmly and constructively challenge them about their priorities, plans and actions. It’s for their own good.

Has feminism been good for women?

March 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

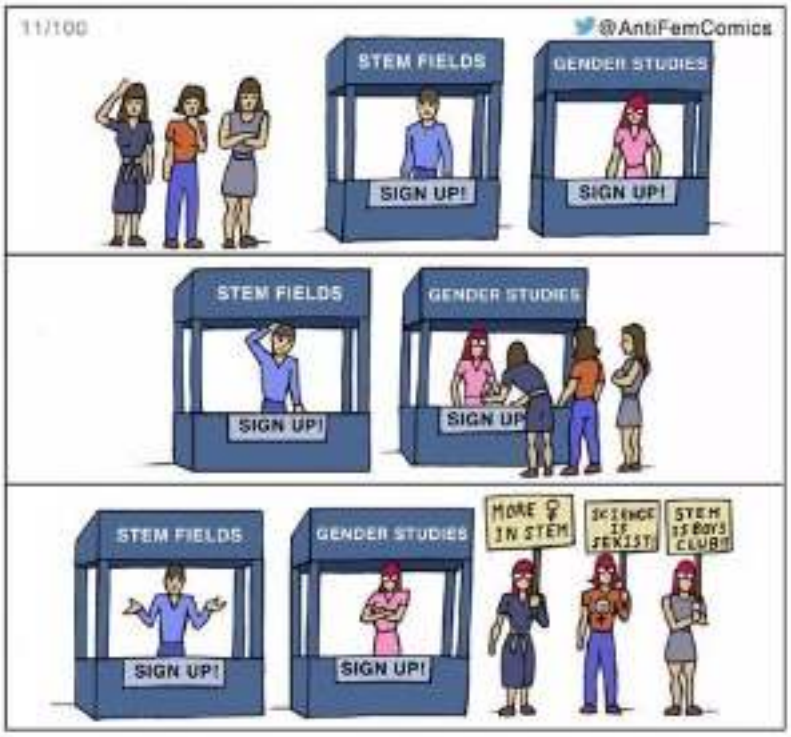

The gender disparity in STEM fields explained

Radical feminists complain a lot about sexism, but damage is self-inflicted

One problem with feminism is that it produces the very outcomes that feminists then turn around and complain about. For example, consider the women's studies major that is favored by feminists. Does it produce a good financial return on investment?

Here is an article from the Daily Signal to answer that.

Excerpt:

> While only 23 percent of American women identify as feminists, 47 percent of millennial women do.
>
> But unfortunately, the policies supported by modern feminists have been particularly bad for young women.
>
> […]Today, millennial women struggle with significant student loan debt and often have a hard time finding a job that will get them out of mom and dad's basement. About 42 percent of women have more than $30,000 in student loan debt, compared than just 27 percent of men.
>
> This could be a function of more women pursuing higher levels of learning. But significant student loan defaults among this group indicate that women may not be getting the return on investment they had hoped for.
>
> Women are vastly overrepresented in majors that are known to have low returns on investment, such as gender studies or social work. Yet the feminist movement

> encourages more young women to pursue these degrees.
>
> Their solution is to advocate further government assistance through policies such as free public college, loan forgiveness, and income-based repayment policies that drag out the life of a loan while doing nothing to put pressure on colleges to keep prices in check.

Hmm. Perhaps instead of taxing working men to pay for the poor academic decisions of women, we can shame and blame women who prefer useless degrees in women's studies to useful degrees in computer science?

Look at the numbers reported by USA Today:

> According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of women's and gender studies degrees in the United States has increased by more than 300% since 1990, and in 2015, there were more than 2,000 degrees conferred.
>
> These days, women's studies programs include gender and sexuality studies, and many of the programs explore and question the relationship of race, class, sexuality, ethnicity and more to encourage students to investigate in the broader field of gender.

THREE HUNDRED PERCENT. It would never occur to me – as a child of poor non-white immigrants – that I could spend tens of thousands of dollars, and even go into debt, for a degree that would not pay for itself. Whether I liked computer science or not, that's what I had to study – or something like that.

What about the idea that women are paid less than men for the same work, because of discrimination?

Liberal feminist Hanna Rosin takes a look at this question in the far-left Slate, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The official Bureau of Labor Department statistics show that the median earnings of full-time female workers is 77 percent of the median earnings of full-time male workers. But that is very different than "77 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men." The latter gives the impression that a man and a woman standing next to each other doing the same job for the same number of hours get paid different salaries. That's not at all the case. "Full time" officially means 35 hours, but men work more hours than women. That's the first problem: We could be comparing men working 40 hours to women working 35.

> How to get a more accurate measure? First, instead of comparing annual wages, start by comparing average weekly wages. This is considered a slightly more accurate measure because it eliminates variables like time off during the year or annual bonuses (and yes, men get higher bonuses, but let's shelve that for a moment in our quest for a pure wage gap number). By this measure, women

> earn 81 percent of what men earn, although it varies widely by race. African-American women, for example, earn 94 percent of what African-American men earn in a typical week. Then, when you restrict the comparison to men and women working 40 hours a week, the gap narrows to 87 percent.

> But we're still not close to measuring women "doing the same work as men." For that, we'd have to adjust for many other factors that go into determining salary. Economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn did that in a recent paper, "The Gender Pay Gap.".”They first accounted for education and experience. That didn't shift the gap very much, because women generally have at least as much and usually more education than men, and since the 1980s they have been gaining the experience. The fact that men are more likely to be in unions and have their salaries protected accounts for about 4 percent of the gap. The big differences are in occupation and industry. Women congregate in different professions than men do, and the largely male professions tend to be higher-paying. If you account for those differences, and then compare a woman and a man doing the same job, the pay gap narrows to 91 percent. So, you could accurately say in that Obama ad that, "women get paid 91 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men."

I believe that the remainder of the gap can be accounted for by looking at other *voluntary* factors that differentiate men and women.

The Heritage Foundation says that a recent study puts the number at 95 cents per dollar.

Excerpt:

> Women are more likely than men to work in industries with more flexible schedules. Women are also more likely to spend time outside the labor force to care for children. These choices have benefits, but they also reduce pay—for both men and women. When economists control for such factors, they find the gender gap largely disappears.
>
> A 2009 study commissioned by the Department of Labor found that after controlling for occupation, experience, and other choices, women earn 95 percent as much as men do. In 2005, June O'Neil, the former director of the Congressional Budget Office, found that "There is no gender gap in wages among men and women with similar family roles." Different choices—not discrimination—account for different employment and wage outcomes.

If women choose to study women's studies, why should they be surprised that they are paid less than men who study computer science? I wish the people who teach women's studies understood what it means to create something for a customer that they are willing to pay for. Then maybe they could tell women how to get paid more. People who learn hard things, create value for customers, and work longer hours make more money. Teaching young women useless prejudices against men does not help them to make

more money.

What are Boltzmann brains, and what challenge do they pose to the multiverse hypothesis?

March 11, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

I thought I would turn to the atheist theoretical physicist Sean Carroll, who has previously debated William Lane Craig, to explain to us what a Boltzmann brain is, and what threat it posts to the multiverse hypothesis.

Here is Sean Caroll, quoted by About.com:

> Ludwig Boltzmann was one of the founders of the field of thermodynamics in the nineteenth century.
>
> One of the key concepts was the second law of thermodynamics, which says that the entropy of a closed system always increases. Since the universe is a closed system, we would expect the entropy to increase over time. This means that, given enough time, the most likely state of the universe is one where everything is the in thermodynamic equilibrium … but we clearly don't exist in a universe of this type since, after all, there is order all around us in various forms, not the least of which is the fact that we exist.
>
> With this in mind, we can apply the anthropic principle to inform our reasoning by taking into account that we do, in fact, exist.
>
> Here the logic gets a little confusing, so I'm going to borrow the words from a couple of more detailed looks at the situation. As described by cosmologist Sean Carroll in *From Eternity to Here*:
>
> > *Boltzmann invoked the anthropic principle (although he didn't call it that) to explain why we wouldn't find ourselves in one of the very common*

> *equilibrium phases: In equilibrium, life cannot exist. Clearly, what we want to do is find the most common conditions within such a universe that are hospitable to life. Or, if we want to be more careful, perhaps we should look for conditions that are not only hospitable to life, but hospitable to the particular kind of intelligent and self-aware life that we like to think we are….*
>
> *We can take this logic to its ultimate conclusion. If what we want is a single planet, we certainly don't need a hundred billion galaxies with a hundred billion stars each. And if what we want is a single person, we certainly don't need an entire planet. But if in fact what we want is a single intelligence, able to think about the world, we don't even need an entire person–we just need his or her brain.*
>
> *So the* reductio ad absurdum *of this scenario is that the overwhelming majority of intelligences in this multiverse will be lonely, disembodied brains, who fluctuate gradually out of the surrounding chaos and then gradually dissolve back into it. Such sad creatures have been dubbed "Boltzmann brains" by Andreas Albrecht and Lorenzo Sorbo….*

In a 2004 paper, Albrecht and Sorbo discussed "Boltzmann brains" in their essay:

> *A century ago Boltzmann considered a "cosmology" where the observed universe should be regarded as a rare fluctuation out of some equilibrium state. The prediction of this point of view, quite generically, is that we live in a universe which maximizes the total entropy of the system consistent with existing observations. Other universes simply occur as much more rare fluctuations. This means as much as possible of the system should be found in equilibrium as often as possible.*
>
> *From this point of view, it is very surprising that we find the universe around us in such a low entropy state. In fact, the logical conclusion of this line of reasoning is utterly solipsistic. The most likely fluctuation consistent with everything you know is simply your brain (complete with "memories" of the Hubble Deep fields, WMAP data, etc) fluctuating briefly out of chaos and then immediately equilibrating back into chaos again. This is sometimes called the "Boltzmann's Brain" paradox.*

[…]Now that you understand Boltzmann brains as a concept, though, you have to proceed a bit to understanding the "Boltzmann brain paradox" that is caused by applying this thinking to this absurd degree. Again, as formulated by Carroll:

> *Why do we find ourselves in a universe evolving gradually from a state of incredibly low entropy, rather than being isolated creatures that recently fluctuated from the surrounding chaos?*

Unfortunately, there is no clear explanation to resolve this … thus why it's still

> classified as a paradox.

Naturalists like to propose the multiverse as a way of explaining away the fine-tuning that we see, and explaining why complex, embodied intelligent beings like ourselves exist. But even if the multiverse hypothesis were true, we still would not expect to observe stars, planets, and conscious embodied intelligent beings. It is far more likely on a multiverse scenario that any observers we had would be "Boltzmann" brains in an empty universe. The multiverse hypothesis doesn't explain the universe we have, which contains "*a hundred billion galaxies with a hundred billion stars each*" – not to mention our bodies which are composed of heavy elements, all of which require fine-tuning piled on fine-tuning piled on fine-tuning.

William Lane Craig answered a question about Boltzmann brains a while back, so let's look at his answer since we saw what his debate opponent said above.

He writes:

> Incredible as it may sound, today the principal–almost the only–alternative to a Cosmic Designer to explain the incomprehensibly precise fine tuning of nature's constants and fundamental quantities is the postulate of a World Ensemble of (a preferably infinite number of) randomly ordered universes. By thus multiplying one's probabilistic resources, one ensures that by chance alone somewhere in this infinite ensemble finely tuned universes like ours will appear.
>
> Now comes the key move: since observers can exist only in worlds fine-tuned for their existence, OF COURSE we observe our world to be fine-tuned! The worlds which aren't finely tuned have no observers in them and so *cannot* be observed! Hence, our observing the universe to be fine-tuned for our existence is no surprise: if it weren't, we wouldn't be here to be surprised. So this explanation of fine tuning relies on (i) the hypothesis of a World Ensemble and (ii) an observer self-selection effect.
>
> Now apart from objections to (i) of a direct sort, this alternative faces a very formidable objection to (ii), namely, if we were just a random member of a World Ensemble, then we ought to be observing a very different universe. Roger Penrose has calculated that the odds of our solar system's forming instantaneously through the random collision of particles is incomprehensibly more probable that the universe's being fine-tuned, as it is. So if we were a random member of a World Ensemble, we should be observing a patch of order no larger than our solar system in a sea of chaos. Worlds like that are simply incomprehensibly more plentiful in the World Ensemble than worlds like ours and so ought to be observed by us if we were but a random member of such an ensemble.
>
> Here's where the Boltzmann Brains come into the picture. In order to be observable the patch of order needn't be even as large as the solar system. The most probable observable world would be one in which a single brain fluctuates

> into existence out of the quantum vacuum and observes its otherwise empty world. The idea isn't that the brain is the whole universe, but just a patch of order in the midst of disorder. Don't worry that the brain couldn't persist long: it just has to exist long enough to have an observation, and the improbability of the quantum fluctuations necessary for it to exist that long will be trivial in comparison to the improbability of fine tuning.
>
> In other words, the observer self-selection effect is explanatorily vacuous. It does not suffice to show that only finely tuned worlds are observable. As Robin Collins has noted, what needs to be explained is not just intelligent life, but embodied, interactive, intelligent agents like ourselves. Appeal to an observer self-selection effect accomplishes nothing because there is no reason whatever to think that most observable worlds are worlds in which that kind of observer exists. Indeed, the opposite appears to be true: most observable worlds will be Boltzmann Brain worlds.

Allen Hainline explained some of the OTHER problems with the multiverse in a post on Cross Examined's blog. I recommend taking a look at those as well, because I feel funny even *talking* about Boltzmann brains. I would rather just say that there is no experimental evidence for the multiverse hypothesis, as I blogged before, and leave it at that. But if the person you are talking to fights you on it, you can disprove the multiverse with the Boltzmann brains.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

March 12, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining what was in the podcast. (I wish more people who put out podcasts would do that).

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."

> 6. “Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though it *looks* like it could be other ways.”
> 7. “Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life.”
> 8. “Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life.”
> 9. “This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what’s the big deal?”
> 10. “The universe doesn’t look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes.”
> 11. “Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life.”
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

What caused “a rising tide of personality disorders among millenials”?

March 13, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rioters smash windows at a T-Mobile store during a protest against campus speaker

That quote about millenials in the title of this post comes from the American Counseling Association.

PJ Media reports: (H/T Curby)

> If you were to come across someone who cried in the streets, who saw the world in terms of black and white and made death threats against strangers, who cowered in a special room and made public displays of naked self-harm and blood letting, you might conclude that they were suffering from a personality disorder.
>
> All these symptoms can be found in the *High Conflict* Personality Disorder category known as *Axis II* in DSMV, including Anti-Social PD, Histrionic PD, Paranoid PD, Narcissistic PD, and Borderline PD.
>
> […]**In 2014, a survey of 100,000 college students at 53 U.S. campuses by the American College Health Association found that 84% of U.S. students feel unable to cope, while more than half experience overwhelming anxiety.**

The problems begin with how the children are raised. As the size and scope of government grew, taxes had to be raised to pay for the “social safety net”. When taxes go up, women can no longer afford to stay home with their young children during the first five years, which are critical to child development. Instead, the moms go out to work to pay for the new social welfare programs. And their children end up in day cares.

Look:

> The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development has found:

> Children in full-time day care were close to three times more likely to show behavior problems than those cared for by their mothers at home.
>
> […]The more time in child care of any kind or quality, the more aggressive the child.
>
> The result is young people who, a decade and a half after daycare, scream at the parent/State for not protecting them sufficiently. It is no coincidence that "safe spaces" resemble daycare centers.

Day cares cause children to have increased anxiety and aggression. It used to be that this would be mitigated as the child grew up and encountered real life. Their narcissism would die because they would have to accept that they were not the center of the universe. They learned that hard work was not fun, and that they had to do things that they didn't feel like doing in order to survive. But today, things are different – something else is happening to children in public schools and university classrooms.

More:

> Faced with histrionic students, university staff end up behaving like "Helicopter Parents": those largely absent, full-time working parents who overcompensated by flying in to fuss over their child. Attempting to assuage parental guilt, one of the tools they used was "positive parenting" — a philosophy created by social Progressives.
>
> Parents were taught to not scold or punish, and instead to use "positive reinforcement" in an attempt to raise their children with "high self-esteem." This ideology also became fashionable within an increasingly progressive school system that awarded children prizes for "non-competitive sports" and for merely taking part in school activities.
>
> **As they passed from day care to through high school, these children with artificially enforced high self-esteem were also told that they were morally superior to generations that came before. They were inducted into politically correct language and were even taught to lecture their own parents on racism, equality, and ecology. From the ages of six to eighteen, they took part in yearly multiculturalist "save the planet" projects. They were told they had a heroic destiny as "agents of change."**
>
> A false picture of the world and a vastly inflated sense of self-importance did not compensate for the foundational trauma of parental neglect. Instead, as Dr. Jean Twenge has explained, Positive Parenting created young people with a "narcissistic wound" for whom the real world would be perceived as a threat to self-worth.

And this explains why college students today resort to violence when presented with ideas that they disagree with – even if the people are vastly more intelligent and experienced than they are themselves. They don't care about free speech, because they already know everything. They claim to care about diversity, but they shout down or assault anyone who disagrees with them.

And that's not the only contradiction:

> SJW protests are awash with contradictions. SJWs claim to fight for freedom, but are opposed to freedom of speech, support banning videos and books, and support the violent disruption of public talks, as was seen with the riots at UC Berkeley, Middlebury College, and elsewhere.
>
> SJWs believe in a world with "no boundaries" where "everyone is equal" — free immigration, open access to healthcare and education, etc. — but at the same time are obsessed with creating segregated spaces.
>
> While they protest against the "fascist patriarchal state" they are, at the same time, fundamentally Statist, demanding that the government police language for them and punish their enemies. While SJWs claim to fight for human rights, they parade the symbol of the largest genocides in history — the Communist flag. They are pro-feminist, and at the same time defend Sharia law.

It's a mess. People like to joke about the zombie apocalypse, but it's a joke because there is no such thing as a zombie. Except that when I see what the secular left has produced on college campuses, it really does make me think of zombies. Do you think that people with no marketable skills could resist the urge to steal and kill when they find themselves in debt and unable to earn a living with their degree in Marxist-Feminist Studies? Where would a psychotic millennial draw the line? They don't understand how successful mature people became successful – they only understand that their own failure is not their fault. It's all the fault of white males, the patriarchy, straights, capitalists, etc. Where does a deluded secular leftist draw the line on violence? Can you expect moral behavior from someone who doesn't believe in God, and doesn't believe in personal responsibility?

I think we are going to see a lot more violence from these young leftist psychopaths – especially from the ones being raised without a married mother and father. I think we're going to see something to rival the most horrifying of zombie apocalypse movies. There isn't any foundation of empathy or morality inside them – it was never put into them by their own families or the godless schools.

Robin Collins lectures on fine-tuning for discoverability from particle physics

March 14, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
Here's the lecture:

This lecture is 29 minutes long, the Q&A is 15 minutes. I highly recommend this lecture to *all audiences* of *all levels of ability*, for the simple reasons that apart from the content, this lecture is a how-to clinic in the tone, body language, slides and so on for you to use when trying to be persuasive when making your case. Science is king in this lecture. The scientific method is defined and applied in a winsome way. Making science understandable *should be* the bread and butter approach to Christian apologetics, and this lecture rivals the Mike Strauss lecture at Stanford University and the Mike Strauss lecture at the University of Texas – Dallas as the ideal lectures for showing that. It's not just the scientific material that makes this lecture by Collins work, it's the narrative and the style that make the lecture work.

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A

> Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

His thesis in one slide:

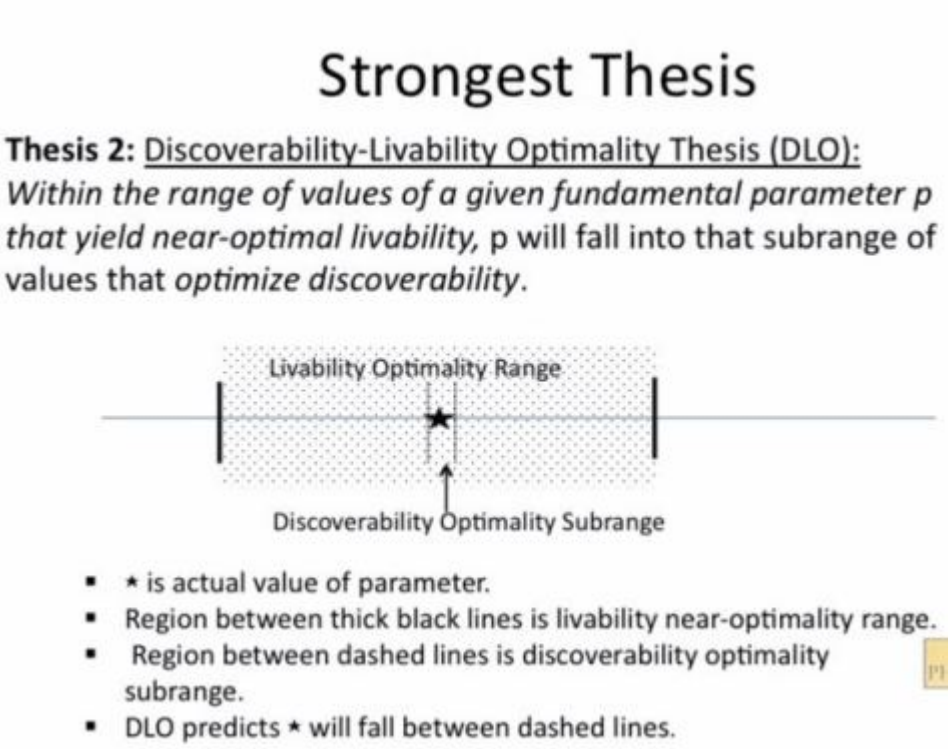

Fine-tuning for discoverability – the DLO thesis
Summary:

- Thesis: the universe is more intelligible than we would expect it by chance
- The regular fine-tuning argument says that complex embodied observers are very rare
- But the number of highly-discoverable universes that have complex embodied observers is rarer still
- Why do we exist in a highly-discoverable universe?
- Can we quantify and test discoverability?
- Yes: by varying fundamental parameters and seeing how it affects discoverability
- Conclusion of his calculations: The Discoverability-Liveability Optimality range is an even smaller range within the Liveablity Optimality range of the standard fine-tuning argument
- Fine-tuning #1: the fine structure constant, governs the strength of the electro-magnetic force
- If larger, wood-burning fire becomes impossible because fires won't stay lit, and therefore forging metals becomes unlikely
- If smaller, wood-burning fires won't go out, e.g. – from lightning strikes, so that

wood would be less accessible
- Other constraints: smaller value decreases effectiveness of light microscopes, drastically lowers efficiency of transformers and motors
- Fine-tuning #2: the cosmic microwave background radiation (CMBR), radiation left over from the Big Bang
- humans need to discover the CMBR in order to confirm the Big Bang creation out of nothing, and it depends on baryon/pothon ratio
- his calculations show that the actual value of CMBR is exactly at the peak for detectability by humans
- if baryon/photon ratio larger, CMBR is less discoverable
- if baryon/photon ratio smaller, CMBR is less discoverable
- Fine-tuning #3: parameters related to subatomic particles are fine-tuned for their discovery and usefulness, e.g. – the bottom quark, the charm quark, the tau lepton and the Higgs Boson
- the lifetime of the particles affects their usefulness to scientists who want to investigate the Standard Model of physics
- decay rates of these subatomic particles are related to several of the finely-tuned parameters
- for example, the mass of the bottom quark is finely-tuned for its discoverability by scientists
- the tau lepton and the charm quark are similarly fine-tuned for disoverability
- the mass of the Higgs boson is finely-tuned for discoverability and for making further discoveries
- Conclusion: the DLO thesis is strongly confirmed – this is an even greater degree of fine-tuning that the already astonishing probabilities of the fine-tuning for complex, embodied intelligent beings
- The formalized version of the philosophical argument based on this evidence is impervious with some of the traditional objections to the standard fine-tuning argument
- #1 multiverse/selection effect: it is not subject to multiverse / observer selection objections
- #2 normalizeability: it is not subject to the McGrew-Vestrup objection because the range of possible values is *finite* not *infinite*
- #3 falsifiability: it makes falsifiable predictions, and in fact Collins' earlier calculations of the CMBR discoverability contained an error that falsified the thesis – until he found the error and corrected for it
- #4 usefulness: it gives clues about the Creator's purpose for us, namely that the universe was created for us to be able to do science and find evidence of the Creator's existence – there is no expectation for us to exercise blind faith, trust in God is meant to be a plausible deduction from the progress of experimental science

Sample slide:

Example: Ideal Lifetime of Bottom Quark

Particle Physicist Matt Strassler: "Bottom quarks . . . have lifetimes in a **"sweet spot"** . . . .*The distance that bottom quarks typically can travel [before they decay]. . . turns out to be* ***an ideal*** *distance for detection by the LHC detectors ATLAS and CMS, and the Tevatron detectors CDF and DZero, and many other experiments too."*

Bottom quark lifetime is finely-tuned for discoverability
And another:

Higgs Mass Ideal

- Particle Physicist Abdelhak Djouadi: "The Higgs particle was born under **a very lucky star** . . . the mass value $M_H \approx$ 125 GeV allows to produce the Higgs particle at the LHC in many redundant channels and to detect it in a large variety of decay modes."
- Particle Physicist Narei Lorenzo Martinez: "In this [low mass] region, most of the decay channels are accessible. An hypothetical Higgs boson at 125 GeV is then **an ideal scenario** for studying its couplings to other particles."

Higgs boson mass is finely-tuned for discoverability
Earlier, I blogged about a Robin Collins lecture on the fine-tuning that allows complex, embodied life to exist. Another must-see lecture. If you are looking for something to study in university, and you have funding, then physics, mathematics and philosophy are the best places to be for a Christian scholar.

Sociology professor orders students to only use feminist sources for assignment

March 15, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

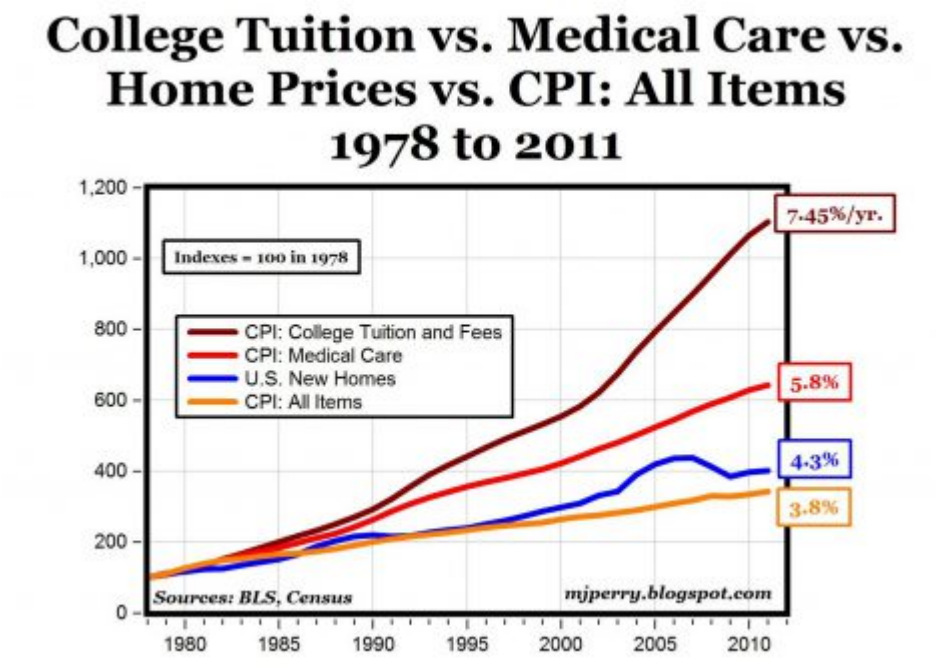

College tuition is rising: are you getting more for your money?
The Toronto Sun reports on a sociology professor who gave her students an assignment – an assignment with some very peculiar constraints.

Excerpt:

> A Ryerson University student who wanted to write a paper on the "myth" of the male-female wage gap was told by her prof that not only was she wrong, she should only rely on feminist journals for her assignment instead of business sources which "blame women," her sister says.
>
> Josephine Mathias, 21, a fourth-year political science student at University of Toronto, took to YouTube Wednesday to criticize the assignment given her twin Jane for a sociology class.
>
> […]After Jane sent an email describing her intention to write about the wag gap, her instructor replied that her premise was wrong, Josephine said.

Here's what the professor said:

> **"Perhaps you want to write your paper on the glass ceiling. You need to look at feminist sources on this issue…Do NOT use business sources. They blame women. The reality is patriarchy," says the instructor's email, posted online.**
>
> **In a copy of the assignment provided to the Toronto Sun by Josephine,**

> **the instructor also notes that Ontario and Canada government websites and Statistics Canada will not be considered scholarly sources.**
>
> **"Government websites state government policy that is devoid of analysis, and usually reproduces mainstream stereotypes, assumptions and misconceptions," the assignment says.**

So, that's what you get when you enroll in non-STEM courses in a non-STEM program. What is interesting is that the professor makes about $167,000 a year. That's more than I make, and I actually do useful work! It's also higher than the average professor's salary.

Here's a video Josephine made about the assignment, and the so-called wage gap:

This is not the only political correctness going on in Toronto. A professor at the University of Toronto is also in trouble for refusing to use gender-neutral pronouns.

The Toronto Sun reports:

> Dr. Jordan Peterson was bemused at my surprise. "I know, when you first discover it, you say 'What the hell; what's going on here?'" he acknowledged. "Unfortunately, it's pretty par for the course. This is standard practice."
>
> He should know. The U of T psychology prof ignited a firestorm of criticism last fall from trans activists, faculty and students when he ran afoul of the PC police by posting a video on his YouTube channel saying that he wouldn't use gender-neutral pronouns such as "they," "ze" and "zir." Protesters called for his dismissal and someone poured glue into the lock of his office door.
>
> Where's the intellectual discourse, the room for contrary views?
>
> "This is the thing people don't understand about postmodernism: postmodernists don't debate. They don't believe in debate, it's not part of the creed," Peterson argued.
>
> "All these ethnic studies, gender studies, most of the humanities, a good chunk of the social sciences, it's all gone down the postmodern rabbit hole. There's no debate. It's a political war. You don't talk to the other side."
>
> Dialogue with those you don't agree with would be giving them a platform — and respect — they don't deserve. Instead, you just shut it down. "This is how it is. This is a university," he sighed. "It sure would be nice if was unbelieveable, but unfortunately, it's how it is."

This is why I keep telling young people that they need to avoid non-STEM programs at secular universities. You're borrowing a ton of money to become less intelligent. The professors tell you what to believe and you believe it and repeat it like a trained parrot, and then they give you a diploma and you're $40,000 in debt with no job prospects. Don't be stupid – understand that there are a lot of people at the university who have no business being there. They have no useful knowledge to give you. Pretty much every non-STEM professor or instructor at a secular university is an imbecile.

This is what college does to students:

You’re not learning anything from an imbecile, except how to ape an imbecile yourself.

This problem is only going to stop when we cut off the funding for universities and cut off the per-pupil funding from government as well. Funding for universities should come from loans made by companies to the individual students, who then promise to work for those companies for a certain number of years at graduation. The money should not be handed to students to go party, with no strings attached.

Alexander Vilenkin: “All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning”

March 16, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve decided to explain why physicists believe that there was a creation event in this post. That is to say, I’ve decided to let famous cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin do it.

From Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Did the cosmos have a beginning? The Big Bang theory seems to suggest it did, but in recent decades, cosmologists have concocted elaborate theories – for example, an eternally inflating universe or a cyclic universe – which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos. Now it appears that the universe really had a beginning after all, even if it wasn’t necessarily the Big Bang.
>
> At a meeting of scientists – titled “State of the Universe” – convened last week at Cambridge University to honor Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday, cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University in Boston presented evidence that the universe is not eternal after all, leaving scientists at a loss to explain how the cosmos got started without a supernatural creator. The meeting was reported in *New Scientist* magazine (Why physicists can’t avoid a creation event, 11 January 2012).
>
> […]In his presentation, Professor Vilenkin discussed three theories which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos.

The three theories are chaotic inflationary model, the oscillating model and quantum gravity model. Regular readers will know that those have all been addressed in William Lane Craig’s peer-reviewed paper that evaluates alternatives to the standard Big Bang cosmology.

But let’s see what Vilenkin said.

More:

> One popular theory is eternal inflation. Most readers will be familiar with the theory of *inflation*, which says that the universe increased in volume by a factor of at least 10^78 in its very early stages (from 10^−36 seconds after the Big Bang to sometime between 10^−33 and 10^−32 seconds), before settling into the slower rate of expansion that we see today. The theory of *eternal inflation* goes further, and holds that the universe is constantly giving birth to smaller “bubble” universes within an ever-expanding multiverse. Each bubble universe undergoes its own initial period of inflation. In some versions of the theory, the bubbles go both backwards and forwards in time, allowing the possibility of an infinite past. Trouble is, the value of one particular cosmic

parameter rules out that possibility:

> But in 2003, a team including Vilenkin and Guth considered what eternal inflation would mean for the Hubble constant, which describes mathematically the expansion of the universe. They found that the equations didn't work (Physical Review Letters, DOI: 10.1103/physrevlett.90.151301). "You can't construct a space-time with this property," says Vilenkin. It turns out that the constant has a lower limit that prevents inflation in both time directions. "It can't possibly be eternal in the past," says Vilenkin. "There must be some kind of boundary."

A second option explored by Vilenkin was that of a cyclic universe, where the universe goes through an infinite series of big bangs and crunches, with no specific beginning. It was even claimed that a cyclic universe could explain the low observed value of the cosmological constant. But as Vilenkin found, there's a problem if you look at the *disorder* in the universe:

> Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists – nothing like the one we see around us.
>
> One way around that is to propose that the universe just gets bigger with every cycle. Then the amount of disorder per volume doesn't increase, so needn't reach the maximum. But Vilenkin found that this scenario falls prey to the same mathematical argument as eternal inflation: if your universe keeps getting bigger, it must have started somewhere.

However, Vilenkin's options were not exhausted yet. There was another possibility: that the universe had sprung from an eternal cosmic egg:

> Vilenkin's final strike is an attack on a third, lesser-known proposal that the cosmos existed eternally in a static state called the cosmic egg. This finally "cracked" to create the big bang, leading to the expanding universe we see today. Late last year Vilenkin and graduate student Audrey Mithani showed that the egg could not have existed forever after all, as quantum instabilities would force it to collapse after a finite amount of time (arxiv.org/abs/1110.4096). If it cracked instead, leading to the big bang, then this must have happened before it collapsed – and therefore also after a finite amount of time.
>
> "This is also not a good candidate for a beginningless universe," Vilenkin concludes.

> So at the end of the day, what is Vilenkin's verdict?
>
> > "All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

This is consistent with the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin Theorem, which I blogged about before, and which William Lane Craig leveraged to his advantage in his debate with Peter Millican.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past. *No one* denies the expansion of space in our universe, and so we are left with a cosmic beginning. Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

Conclusion

If the universe came into being out of nothing, which seems to be the case from science, then the universe has a cause. Things do not pop into being, uncaused, out of nothing. The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

Now, let's have a discussion about this science in our churches, and see if we can't train Christians to engage with non-Christians about the evidence so that everyone accepts what science tells us about the origin of the universe.

New study: nearly half of millenials reject monogamy

March 17, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Study reported on by The Stream:

> A new report found nearly half of American millennials don't want monogamous relationships.
>
> YouGov revealed the research on monogamy and cheating, showing couples under 30 are significantly less monogamous than older generations.
>
> Only 51 percent of people under 30 reported desiring a "completely monogamous" relationship, compared to 58 percent from the 30-44 age bracket, 63 percent from the 45-64 age bracket, and 70 percent from the 65 plus age bracket polled.
>
> […]Reports also show that men and women are cheating at almost equal rates.

It's not just adultery that millenials don't care about any more, it's premarital sex. An article from the Washington Post found that both men and women no longer desire their romantic partners to be chaste:

> Dating has changed hugely over the past generations, and so have cultural ideas about what men and women value most in a mate.
>
> This idea is perfectly illustrated by a chart that economist Max Roser, who created the blog Our World in Data, recently put out on Twitter. The chart is made with data from a study published in the Journal of Family Issues in 2013, in which three researchers compared how heterosexual men and women ranked the importance of 18 traits in wives and husbands, first in 1939, and then again in 2008.

> […]**For both men and women, the importance of chastity nose-dived, from #10 in 1939 to #18 in 2008.** Emotional stability and maturity, a pleasing disposition, good health, and refinement and neatness also declined for both sexes.
>
> **For women, a similar religious background and a desire for home and children became less important in their mates**, while men placed less value on ambition and industriousness in their wives.

It goes without saying that adultery is more like to reduce marriage stability. And studies also show that marriage stability is severely impacted by the number of premarital sex partners. That's why chastity matters: it's a predictor of marital stability. If a person can control themselves before marriage when they don't get any sex, it's easier to control themselves when that need is being supplied safely and generously. Also, chastity just reinforces the idea that sex is something that is done within a lifelong commitment, not something that is done outside of a commitment for fun and thrills. I don't that the millenial approach of premarital unchastity and post-marital non-monogamy is going to help them keep their marriages together.

But young people today aren't interested in looking at studies to figure out how to do marriage right so that it will last. They make their decisions with their feelings. They value what the culture tells them to value, rather than picking a mate who has the skills and abilities to make the marriage last.

How well is picking mates based on emotions rather than demonstrated ability working out? The marriage rates are plummeting:

Gallup poll:

> Contrary to what we would expect, given normal demographic patterns of adolescents' movement into early adulthood and family formation, the data show that significantly more millennials are currently single/never married than was true for those in older generations, and considerably more are in domestic partnerships. Specifically, more than half of all millennials (59%) have never married, and 9% are in domestic partnerships. Gallup has noted a trend toward fewer young adults being married in recent years.
>
> In the 2014 Gallup Daily tracking data, just 27% of millennials were married. According to historical U.S. Census Bureau data, 36% of Generation Xers, 48% of baby boomers and 65% of traditionalists were married when they were the age that millennials are now. For millennials currently aged 18 to 30, just 20% are married, compared with nearly 60% of 18- to 30-year-olds in 1962, according to the U.S. Census. When Gen Xers were the same age, 32% were married; for baby boomers, it was more than 40%.
>
> **Millennials are clearly delaying marriage longer than any generation before them, in spite of evidence suggesting that many millennials intend to marry at some point. For example, a 2013 Gallup poll found**

> **that 86% of single/never married Americans aged 18 to 34 (roughly equivalent to the millennial generation) wanted to get married someday.**

Table:

Marital Status, by Generation

	Millennials %	Gen Xers %	Baby boomers %	Traditionalists %	TOTAL %
Single/Never married	59	16	10	4	25
Married	27	62	65	55	52
Separated	2	4	3	1	2
Divorced	3	11	14	9	9
Widowed	*	1	6	29	6
Domestic partnership/ Living with partner	9	6	3	1	5

Marriage rates across different generations of Americans

Who can keep a relationship going when the top criterion is ability to entertain rather than ability to commit self-sacrificially? I hear lots of Christian women say they want to get married "some day", but there they are in their mid 30s, unemployed, penniless, with empty resumes, backpacking through Europe. The words "some day" sound good to their parents and pastors, but the actions are all about hedonism and thrill-seeking – just what the culture told them to do, in order to have a meaningful life.

Is there a cost to the younger generation turning their backs on traditional marriage, including the norms of chastity, fidelity and permanence?

I saw an article on the Public Discourse that talked about the fiscal costs of abandoning traditional marriage.

It says:

> In 1965, liberal Harvard political scientist Daniel Patrick Moynihan was astonished to find that about 25 percent of African-American children were born out of wedlock. Moynihan was deeply worried about this finding because he knew exactly what being born out of wedlock means for a child. Decades of social science confirm what common sense has always taught us: that children born out of wedlock are disadvantaged in every way. They are more likely to be physically and mentally ill, more likely to be poor and unhappy, more likely to have trouble in school and with education generally, more likely to be abused sexually, more likely themselves to abuse others sexually, more likely to abuse alcohol or other drugs, and more likely to engage in criminal activity and to have a disdain for authority.
>
> This, in turn, invariably increases the size and scope of the power of the state. The state must expand to replace fathers who have abandoned their families by

> providing for single mothers. It must increase its public-health efforts to provide for children whose single parents cannot pay for private healthcare and to treat victims of violence committed by those who have been raised in an environment that has failed to equip them for a robust and peaceful social life. It must create and maintain adoption agencies to care for children whose parents are unfit or absent. It must commit more funds to police departments to address crime that results from families breaking apart (or failing to form in the first place), and hence failing to instill virtue in children. It must commit funds to the creation of prisons where criminals are to be kept. The list goes on and on.
>
> The economic costs of abandoning social conservatism, then, run quite high—in addition to all of the unquantifiable social costs of broken families, deaths, broken relationships, and ruined lives. It is no surprise that leftists, committed to consolidating power in the state, have sought to undermine the family: they realize—better than many fiscal conservatives do—that a flourishing marriage culture is required for free markets and limited governments to exist.

So, there really is a cost to the embrace of moral relativism. When morality goes, expensive things happen, and government grows to pick up the costs. The bigger the government grows, the taxes are required to pay for it, leaving you with less of your own money – less of your own freedom to live how you want to live.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

March 18, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude

others
- It’s meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can’t say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Related posts

- Ryan Anderson explains how gay marriage is already infringing on religious liberty
- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson debates gay marriage with S.E. Cupp on the Blaze
- Ryan T. Anderson explains marriage to Piers Morgan and Suze Orman
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Frank Turek: is "equality" the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults "co-parenting" children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?

- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

Will computers and robots ever become self-aware?

March 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

There is a very famous thought experiment from UC Berkeley philosopher John Searle that all Christian apologists should know about. And now everyone who reads the Wall Street Journal knows about it, because of this article.

In that article, Searle is writing about the IBM computer that was programmed to play Jeopardy. Can a robot who wins on Jeopardy be "human"? Searle says no. And his famous Chinese room example (discussed in the article) explains why.

Excerpt:

> Imagine that a person—me, for example—knows no Chinese and is locked in a room with boxes full of Chinese symbols and an instruction book written in English for manipulating the symbols. Unknown to me, the boxes are called "the database" and the instruction book is called "the program." I am called "the computer."
>
> People outside the room pass in bunches of Chinese symbols that, unknown to me, are questions. I look up in the instruction book what I am supposed to do and I give back answers in Chinese symbols.
>
> Suppose I get so good at shuffling the symbols and passing out the answers that my answers are indistinguishable from a native Chinese speaker's. I give every indication of understanding the language despite the fact that I actually don't understand a word of Chinese.
>
> And if I do not, neither does any digital computer, because no computer, qua computer, has anything I do not have. It has stocks of symbols, rules for manipulating symbols, a system that allows it to rapidly transition from zeros to

> ones, and the ability to process inputs and outputs. That is it. There is nothing else.

Here is a link to the full article by John Searle on the Chinese room illustration.

By the way, Searle is a naturalist – not a theist, not a Christian. Now, let's hear from a Christian scholar who can make more sense of this for us.

Here's a related article on "strong AI" by Christian philosopher Jay Richards.

Excerpt:

> Popular discussions of AI often suggest that if you keep increasing weak AI, at some point, you'll get strong AI. That is, if you get enough computation, you'll eventually get consciousness.
>
> The reasoning goes something like this: There will be a moment at which a computer will be indistinguishable from a human intelligent agent in a blind test. At that point, we will have intelligent, conscious machines.
>
> This does not follow. A computer may pass the Turing test, but that doesn't mean that it will actually be a self-conscious, free agent.
>
> The point seems obvious, but we can easily be beguiled by the way we speak of computers: We talk about computers learning, making mistakes, becoming more intelligent, and so forth. We need to remember that we are speaking metaphorically.
>
> We can also be led astray by unexamined metaphysical assumptions. If we're just computers made of meat, and we happened to become conscious at some point, what's to stop computers from doing the same? That makes sense if you accept the premise—as many AI researchers do. If you don't accept the premise, though, you don't have to accept the conclusion.
>
> In fact, there's no good reason to assume that consciousness and agency emerge by accident at some threshold of speed and computational power in computers. We know by introspection that we are conscious, free beings—though we really don't know how this works. So we naturally attribute consciousness to other humans. We also know generally what's going on inside a computer, since we build them, and it has nothing to do with consciousness. It's quite likely that consciousness is qualitatively different from the type of computation that we have developed in computers (as the "Chinese Room" argument, by philosopher John Searle, seems to show). Remember that, and you'll suffer less anxiety as computers become more powerful.
>
> Even if computer technology provides accelerating returns for the foreseeable future, it doesn't follow that we'll be replacing ourselves anytime soon. AI enthusiasts often make highly simplistic assumptions about human nature and biology. Rather than marveling at the ways in which computation illuminates our understanding of the microscopic biological world, many treat biological systems as nothing but clunky, soon-to-be-obsolete conglomerations of hardware and

> software. Fanciful speculations about uploading ourselves onto the Internet and transcending our biology rest on these simplistic assumptions. This is a common philosophical blind spot in the AI community, but it’s not a danger of AI research itself, which primarily involves programming and computers.
>
> AI researchers often mix topics from different disciplines—biology, physics, computer science, robotics—and this causes critics to do the same. For instance, many critics worry that AI research leads inevitably to tampering with human nature. But different types of research raise different concerns. There are serious ethical questions when we’re dealing with human cloning and research that destroys human embryos. But AI research in itself does not raise these concerns. It normally involves computers, machines, and programming. While all technology raises ethical issues, we should be less worried about AI research—which has many benign applications—than research that treats human life as a means rather than an end.

When I am playing a game on the computer, I know exactly why what I am doing is fun – I am conscious of it. But the computer has no idea what I am doing. It is just matter in motion, acting on it’s programming and the inputs I supply to it. And that’s all computers will ever do. Trust me, this is my field. I have the BS and MS in computer science, and I have studied this area. AI has applications for machine learning and search problems, but consciousness is not on the radar. You can’t get there from here.

Reported cases of sexually-transmitted diseases reaches record high

March 20, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

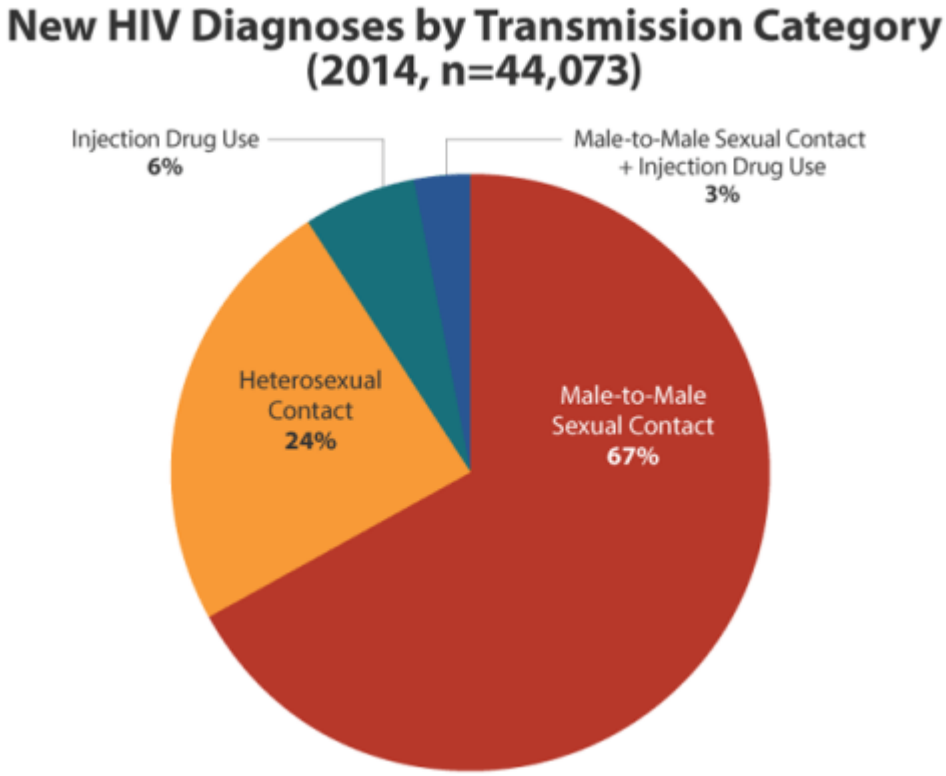

HIV infection rates from Center for Disease Control
This is from the far-left CNN, of all places.

Excerpt:

> There were more reported cases of sexually transmitted diseases last year than ever before in the United States, according to the latest STD surveillance report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
>
> The annual report, which was released on Wednesday, showed that the rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis — the three most commonly reported STDs in the nation — increased between 2014 and 2015, reaching an all-time high.
>
> Reported cases of primary and secondary syphilis rose by 19%, gonorrhea cases rose by 12.8%, and chlamydia cases rose by 5.9%, from 2014. All three STDs are curable with antibiotics, but most infections go undiagnosed and untreated, according to the CDC.

What is interesting is how overspending by bureaucrats on social welfare, amnesty, refugees, etc. has left less money to combat sexually-transmitted diseases:

> In a foreword to the new report, Bolan wrote that some 21 health department STD clinics across the country have closed due to many state and local programs experiencing budget cuts. Therefore, fewer people have access to the testing and

> treatment resources provided by such clinics.
>
> Meanwhile, as more STD cases emerge, treating infections costs the country nearly $16 billion annually.

With the national debt doubled from 10 to 20 trillion under Obama, Obama's free-spirited supporters can look forward to not having access to the "health care" they now need.

Not surprisingly, the reckless young people who voted for Obama are the most reckless with sex. And so they are the most affected by STDs:

> Young people, 15 to 24 years old, accounted for nearly two-thirds of last year's chlamydia diagnoses — and half of the gonorrhea diagnoses.

Not only are there more STD infections, but the diseases have adapted to beat our antibiotics.

The Center for Disease Control reports:

> Gonorrhea has progressively developed resistance to the antibiotic drugs prescribed to treat it. Following the spread of gonococcal fluoroquinolone resistance, the cephalosporin antibiotics have been the foundation of recommended treatment for gonorrhea. The emergence of cephalosporin-resistant gonorrhea would significantly complicate the ability of providers to treat gonorrhea successfully, since we have few antibiotic options left that are simple, well-studied, well-tolerated and highly effective. It is critical to continuously monitor antibiotic resistance in Neisseria gonorrhoeae and encourage research and development of new treatment regimens.

Gonorrhea is the second most prominent STD, right behind chlamydia.

One reason for the upsurge in STDs might be society's growing celebration of male homosexuality.

The Center for Disease Control explains:

> P&S syphilis among men who have sex with men (MSM) has been increasing since at least 2000. In 2014, rates of P&S syphilis increased among MSM, who account for 83 percent of reported cases among men when the sex of the partner is known. Also concerning is that more than half of MSM (51 percent) diagnosed with syphilis in 2014 were also HIV-positive. Infection with syphilis can cause sores on the genitals, which make it easier to transmit and acquire HIV.
>
> Syphilis is currently the only STD for which information on the sex of the sex partner is reported. However, a growing body of evidence indicates that MSM are experiencing similar increases in gonorrhea and chlamydia infections–underscoring the need to further understand what is contributing to the rise.
>
> Gay and bisexual men face a combination of social, epidemiologic, and individual risk factors that can fuel high levels of STDs. Higher prevalence of infection within sexual networks increases the likelihood of acquiring an STD with each

> sexual encounter.

And on a different CDC page:

> Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men made up an estimated 2% of the population but 55% of people living with HIV in the United States in 2013. If current diagnosis rates continue, 1 in 6 gay and bisexual men will be diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime, including 1 in 2 black/African American gay and bisexual men, 1 in 4 Hispanic/Latino gay and bisexual men, and 1 in 11 white gay and bisexual men.

The CDC's solution to this disparity is to ask for more taxpayer money, of course. No disapproval here, just take the money from the moral people and pay for the choices of the reckless people.

Right now, many people are freely choosing to engage in these behaviors, and to celebrate the lifestyles of those who engage in these behaviors, because they think that the government has unlimited taxpayer money to pay for all the costs of these decisions. Little do they know about the national debt, and what happens to "government-provided" health care when the interest rates on that debt increases. As a society, we have decided that it is better to be forgiving and compassionate when people make reckless, risky decisions. "Oh, we can just make the prudent people pay for the mess – they have money", the progressives say. And that works fine, until the money runs out, and people realize that the mean, judgmental, controlling bullies who were defending chastity, fidelity, marriage, moral standards and personal responsibility were right all along.

Comparing male and female support for abortion, divorce and gay marriage

March 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Disclaimer: This post doesn't apply to married women. When I refer to women below, I mean young, unmarried women. But I'm just going to say "women" for brevity's sake.

Are women really more moral than men? Let's take a look at the attitudes of men and women on five of the most prominent moral issues of our time: gay marriage, divorce, abortion, war, and crime.

Gay marriage, divorce and abortion

Here is Pew Research on gay marriage as of 2016:

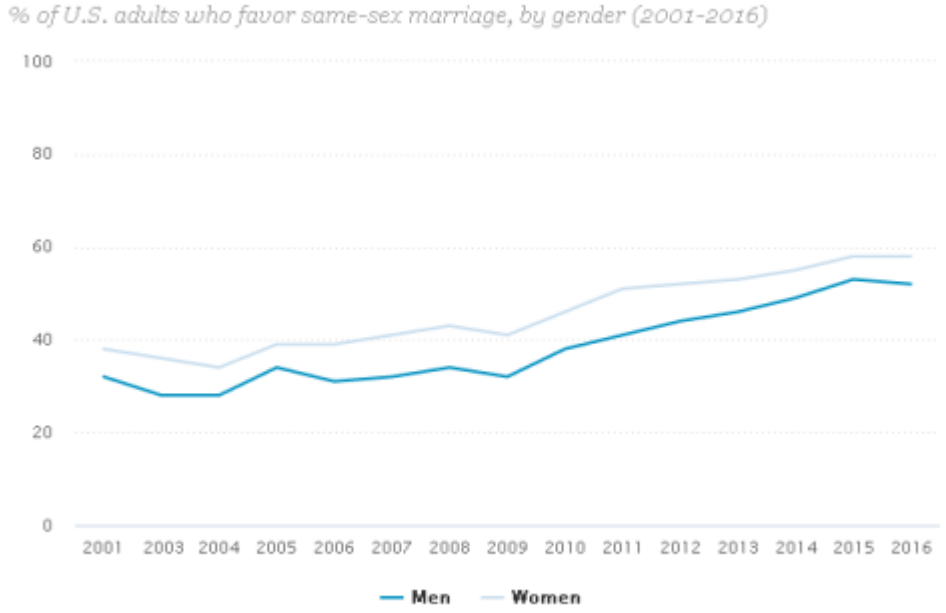

Women are more immoral on gay marriage than men
Women favor gay marriage by a margin of 58% compared to only 52% for men.

Here is the Austin Institute on divorce in 2014:

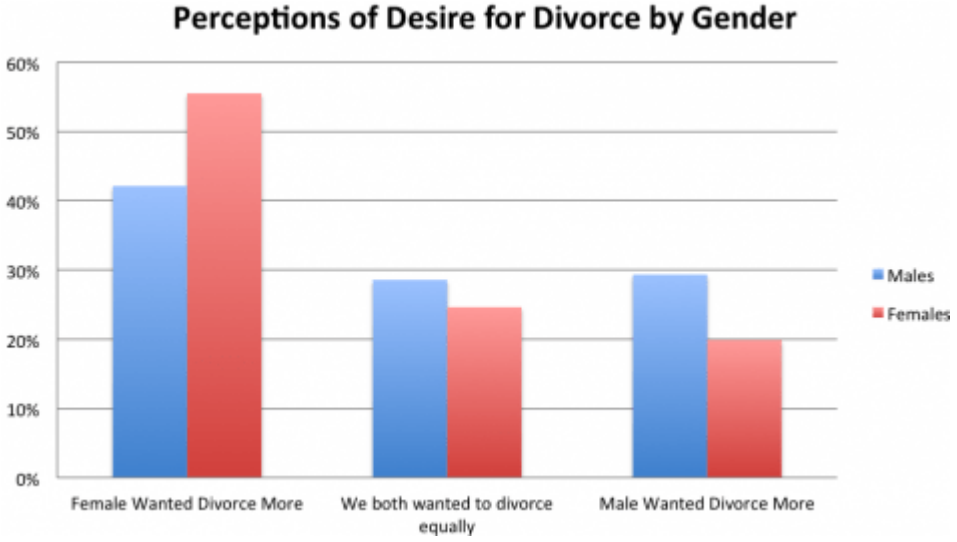

Women are more immoral on divorce than men

Women initiate about 70% of divorces, even though they freely chose the man they married, and vowed to stick by him through all circumstances.

Here is Gallup on abortion as of 2015:

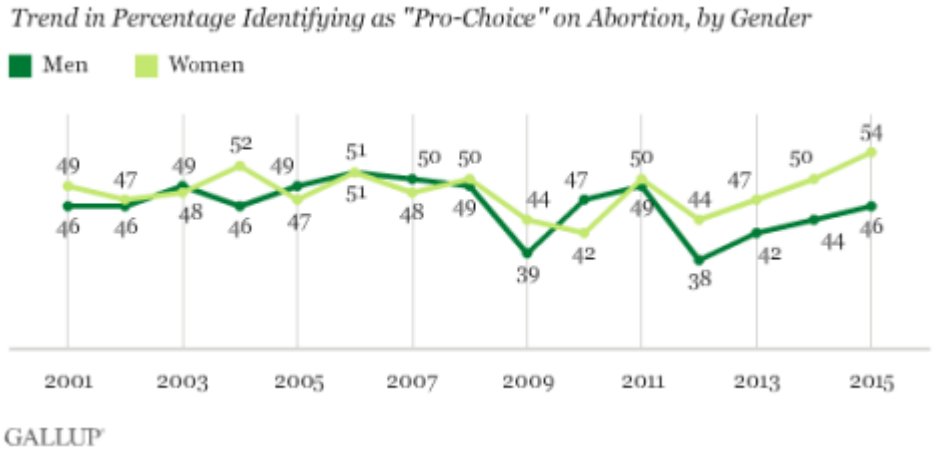

Women are more immoral on abortion than men
About 75% of young, unmarried women vote for the Democrat party – the party of unrestricted, taxpayer-funded abortion.

Abortion ignores the needs of unborn children. Same-sex marriage ignores the need of children for a mother and a father. Divorce devastates children, causing all sorts of negative effects. Men are more willing to judge all three of these bad behaviors than women. Men are more concerned about protecting the weak than they are about feeling compassionate and being perceived as “tolerant”.

What about war and self-defense against criminals?

Women are also more liberal than men on war and self-defense. You can just look at what happened in the Middle East to the Yazidi girls who are being raped and sex-trafficked to understand the consequences of this anti-war viewpoint. To be anti-war when the war is just is to be pro-evil. Just ask the Christians being tortured and murdered in Syria whether they are happy that American troops were withdrawn from Iraq. Just ask the victims of crimes like rape whether they wish they had been armed when they were attacked. Men are tougher on terrorists and criminals than women are.

Blaming men for what women choose to do

This data shows that men should be challenging women to improve their views on these important issues. But Christian pastors and scholars often discourage men from challenging women on moral issues, preferring to *blame men* when women take the wrong side of moral issues.

For example, here’s Mark Driscoll explaining how men are to blame for single motherhood:

> Part of it is the unintended consequences of divorce. Forty percent of kids go to bed at night without a father. Not to be disparaging toward single moms, but if you’re a single mom and you’re working 60 hours a week, and you’ve got a boy, and he’s home all by himself with no parents and no dad, he’s just going to be

> hanging out with his buddies, feeding himself pizza rolls.
>
> The number one consumer of online pornography is 12- to 17-year-old boys. What that means is he's home eating junk food, drinking Monster energy drinks, downloading porn, masturbating and screwing around with his friends. That really doesn't prepare you for responsible adulthood. That's a really sad picture, especially if you're a single gal hoping to get married someday. You're like: "Seriously, that's the candidate pool? You've got to be kidding me." That's why 41 percent of births right now are to unmarried women. A lot of women have decided: "I'm never going to find a guy who is actually dependable and responsible to have a life with. So I'll just get a career and have a baby and just intentionally be a single mother because there are no guys worth spending life with."

This practice among Christian leaders of blaming men for the actions of women is one of the major reasons why women have the views that they do on abortion, divorce, gay marriage, just war and self-defense. Men have been cowed into silence by man-blamers like Mark Driscoll and James Dobson. This message actually weakens the moral leadership of men, and creates a worse world.

This lack of moral leadership by men is particularly problematic with "pro-life" men who try to blame men for abortion. Abortions occur (in non-rape cases) because a woman makes two choices: 1) choosing a man who only wants recreational sex, and 2) choosing to have recreational sex with a man who has shown no interest in commitment or parenting. Speaking as an unmarried virgin somewhat advanced in years, there are plenty of good men out there who don't believe in sex before marriage, and who have prepared very well for the traditional male roles of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. If women insist on choosing the wrong men, and choosing to do the wrong things with those men, it makes sense to hold them accountable. The bad men were bad before the women chose them, and so they should have been recognized and avoided by the women before any need for abortion occurred. A woman cannot expect a bad man to suddenly turn into a good man after he is given recreational sex. Recreational sex does not make a man who is not interested in marriage and children somehow become interested in marriage and children. And women need to be told this by pro-life men who are not cowards.

Men really need to shed this perception that there is something wrong with them, and challenge women on areas where they have immoral views. Men: don't let yourselves be manipulated into silence in order to get affection, approval or sex. If you must have affection, approval and sex, then choose a woman who puts moral standards above feeling happy and being perceived as compassionate.

1 Corinthians 15: the earliest source for the basic facts about the life of Jesus

March 22, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us

First, the creed – which is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8:

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Almost all historians accept this creed as dating back to within 5 years of the death of Jesus. But why?

Here's a great article from Eric Chabot, director of Ratio Christi Apologetics Alliance, The Ohio State University to explain why.

Excerpt:

> The late Orthodox Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide was so impressed by the creed of 1 Cor. 15, that he concluded that this "formula of faith may be considered as a statement of eyewitnesses." (5)
>
> Paul's usage of the rabbinic terminology "passed on" and "received" is seen in the creed of 1 Cor. 15:3-8:

> “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.”
>
> There is an interesting parallel to Paul’s statement in 1 Cor. 15:3-8 in the works of Josephus. Josephus says the following about the Pharisees.
>
> “I want to explain here that the Pharisees passed on to the people certain ordinances from a succession of fathers, which are not written down in the law of Moses. For this reason the party of the Sadducees dismisses these ordinances, averaging that one need only recognize the written ordinances, whereas those from the tradition of the fathers need not be observed.” (6)
>
> As Richard Bauckham notes, “the important point for our purposes is that Josephus uses the language of “passing on” tradition for the transmission from one teacher to another and also for the transmission from the Pharisees to the people.”(7)
>
> Bauckham notes in his book Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony that the Greek word for “eyewitness” (autoptai), does not have forensic meaning, and in that sense the English word “eyewitnesses” with its suggestion of a metaphor from the law courts, is a little misleading. The autoptai are simply firsthand observers of those events. Bauckham has followed the work of Samuel Byrskog in arguing that while the Gospels though in some ways are a very distinctive form of historiography, they share broadly in the attitude to eyewitness testimony that was common among historians in the Greco-Roman period. These historians valued above all reports of firsthand experience of the events they recounted.
>
> Best of all was for the historian to have been himself a participant in the events (direct autopsy). Failing that (and no historian was present at all the events he need to recount, not least because some would be simultaneous), they sought informants who could speak from firsthand knowledge and whom they could interview (indirect autopsy).” In other words, Byrskog defines “autopsy,” as a visual means of gathering data about a certain object and can include means that are either direct (being an eyewitness) or indirect (access to eyewitnesses).
>
> Byrskog also claims that such autopsy is arguably used by Paul (1 Cor.9:1; 15:5–8; Gal. 1:16), Luke (Acts 1:21–22; 10:39–41) and John (19:35; 21:24; 1 John 1:1–4).
>
> While the word “received” (a rabbinical term) can also be used in the New Testament of receiving a message or body of instruction or doctrine (1 Cor.11:23; 15:1, 3; Gal. 1:9, 12 [2x], Col 2:6; 1 Thess 2:13; 4:1; 2 Thess 3:6), it also means

> means “to receive from another.” This entails that Paul received this information from someone else at an even earlier date. 1 Corinthians is dated 50-55 A.D. Since Jesus was crucified in 30-33 A.D. the letter is only 20-25 years after the death of Jesus. But the actual creed here in 1 Cor. 15 was received by Paul much earlier than 55 A.D.
>
> […]Even the co-founder Jesus Seminar member John Dominic Crossan, writes:
>
> “Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that “I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received.” The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he “went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days” (11).
>
> This comment by Crossan makes sense because within the creed Paul calls Peter by his Aramic name, Cephas. Hence, if this tradition originated in the Aramaic language, the two locations that people spoke Aramaic were Galilee and Judea. (12) The Greek term “historeo” is translated as “to visit” or “to interview.” (13) Hence, Paul’s purpose of the trip was probably designed to affirm the resurrection story with Peter who had been an actual eyewitness to the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:5).

I know what you’re thinking. You’re thinking “Hey WK, isn’t John Dominic Crossan that wacky liberal atheist who is on the far-left fringe of historical Jesus scholarship? So wacky, that he actually thought that Secret Gospel of Mark was *real*, instead of just being a hoax?” Yes, that’s the nutty John Dominic Crossan I mean. The very one.

Here’s a bit more about this early creed from Gary Habermas.

Quote:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: “However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul’s.”[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul’s own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for

delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: "It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition."[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]

The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]

Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]

Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.

(3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles.

> As Martin Hengel notes, “Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests” by Paul.[15]
>
> These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul’s Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul’s word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.
>
> (4) Not only do we have Paul’s account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus’ resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus’ appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

That’s how solid this early creed is – even atheists like Crossan and Ludemann accept it as historically reliable. It’s historical bedrock, as Michael Licona likes to say. This is the stuff that *everyone* accepts – across the ideological spectrum!

What do college students achieve by participating in the hook-up culture?

March 23, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

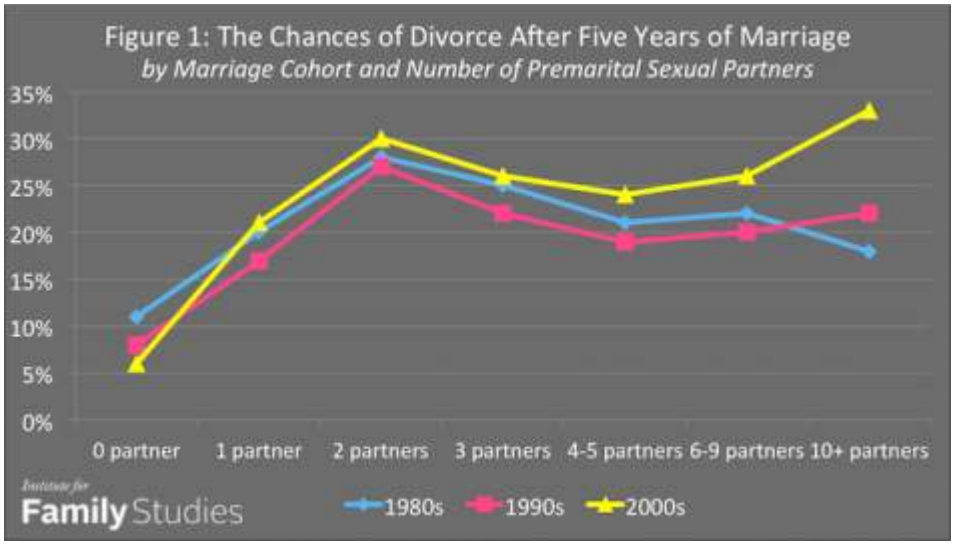

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

Stuart Schneiderman linked to a balanced article from the New York Times Magazine which offers scary insights into the hook-up culture at one of our elite universities.

First, feminism is definitely a driver of the hook-up culture, and women are voluntarily choosing it:

> At 11 on a weeknight earlier this year, her work finished, a slim, pretty junior at the University of Pennsylvania did what she often does when she has a little free time. She texted her regular hookup — the guy she is sleeping with but not dating. What was he up to? He texted back: Come over. So she did. They watched a little TV, had sex and went to sleep.
>
> Their relationship, she noted, is not about the meeting of two souls.
>
> “We don’t really like each other in person, sober,” she said, adding that “we literally can’t sit down and have coffee.”
>
> Ask her why she hasn’t had a relationship at Penn, and she won’t complain about the death of courtship or men who won’t commit. Instead, she’ll talk about “cost-benefit” analyses and the “low risk and low investment costs” of hooking up.
>
> “I positioned myself in college in such a way that I can’t have a meaningful romantic relationship, because I’m always busy and the people that I am interested in are always busy, too,” she said.
>
> “And I know everyone says, ‘Make time, make time,’ ” said the woman, who spoke on the condition of anonymity but agreed to be identified by her middle initial, which is A. “But there are so many other things going on in my life that I find so important that I just, like, can’t make time, and I don’t want to make time.”

> It is by now pretty well understood that traditional dating in college has mostly gone the way of the landline, replaced by “hooking up” — an ambiguous term that can signify anything from making out to oral sex to intercourse — without the emotional entanglement of a relationship.
>
> Until recently, those who studied the rise of hookup culture had generally assumed that it was driven by men, and that women were reluctant participants, more interested in romance than in casual sexual encounters. But there is an increasing realization that young women are propelling it, too.
>
> Hanna Rosin, in her recent book, “The End of Men,” argues that hooking up is a functional strategy for today’s hard-charging and ambitious young women, allowing them to have enjoyable sex lives while focusing most of their energy on academic and professional goals.

And a bit more about “A”:

> For A., college is an endless series of competitions: to get into student clubs, some of which demand multiple rounds of interviews; to be selected for special research projects and the choicest internships; and, in the end, to land the most elite job offers.
>
> As A. explained her schedule, “If I’m sober, I’m working.”
>
> In such an overburdened college life, she said, it was rare for her and her friends to find a relationship worth investing time in, **and many people avoided commitment because they assumed that someone better would always come along.**
>
> “We are very aware of cost-benefit issues and trading up and trading down, so no one wants to be too tied to someone that, you know, may not be the person they want to be with in a couple of months,” she said.
>
> Instead, she enjoyed casual sex on her terms — often late at night, after a few drinks, and never at her place, she noted, because then she would have to wash the sheets.
>
> […]“‘I’ve always heard this phrase, ‘Oh, marriage is great, or relationships are great — you get to go on this journey of change together,’ ” she said. “That sounds terrible.
>
> “I don’t want to go through those changes with you. I want you to have changed and become enough of your own person so that when you meet me, we can have a stable life and be very happy.”
>
> In the meantime, from A.’s perspective, she was in charge of her own sexuality.
>
> **“I definitely wouldn’t say I’ve regretted any of my one-night stands,” she said.**
>
> **“I’m a true feminist,” she added. “I’m a strong woman. I know what I want.”**

> At the same time, she didn't want the number of people she had slept with printed, and she said it was important to her to keep her sexual life separate from her image as a leader at Penn.
>
> **"Ten years from now, no one will remember — I will not remember — who I have slept with," A. said. "But I will remember, like, my transcript, because it's still there. I will remember what I did. I will remember my accomplishments and places my name is hung on campus."**

These high-powered feminist students are having sex with strangers because they are "hot", not because they have made the man prove his intention and ability to commit by waiting until marriage.

I think the key point about this is that these women think that they are actually on a path to marriage by focusing on themselves and their careers. Their alcohol abuse is a path to marriage. Their promiscuity with bad boy men who have no interest in marriage is a path to marriage. Their career and selfishness is a path to marriage. This despite the fact that research clearly shows that the number of sexual partners that a woman has before marrying directly impacts her ability to perform in a relationship. Premarital sex with bad boys raises her estimation of her own value in relationships. When she is older and has to settle for what she can get, she will be dissatisfied and ungrateful. This is where divorce comes from.

Nothing that these women are doing is preparation for actual commitment and support. They can't even converse with men, much less do the duties of a wife. Their ability to choose a man who can perform actual husband/father duties is not being formed by study or courtship. There is no wisdom. There is no self-sacrifice. There is no chastity. There is no support. There is no communication. These women are pro-abortion – that's their view of the rights and dignity of children. They are pro-gay marriage – that's their view of providing for children's relationship needs. These are literally the worst women in the world to marry. Their ignorance of what they must do to be good wives and mothers, and their messed up criteria for choosing men who can be husband and fathers makes them the worst women in the world to marry.

Read this carefully:

> Some women went to college wanting a relationship, but when that seemed unlikely, they embraced hooking up as the best alternative. M., an athletic freshman with long legs and a button nose, arrived at college a virgin and planned to wait to have sex until she had her first boyfriend, something she expected to happen in college. But over the course of the fall, as she saw very few students forming relationships, she began to lose hope about finding a boyfriend and to see her virginity as a hindrance.
>
> "I could be here for four years and not date anyone," she said she realized. "Sometimes you are out, and there's a guy you really are attracted to, and you

> kind of want to go back home with him, but you kind of have that underlying, 'I can't, because I can't just lose my V-card to some random guy.' "
>
> At a party in the spring semester, she was taking a break from dancing when she ran into a guy she had had a class with in the fall. They started talking, then danced until the party was over. M. went back to his room, where they talked some more and then started making out.
>
> By this time, she said, "I wasn't very drunk — I was close to sober," which made her believe she could make a considered decision.
>
> **"I'm like, 'O.K., I could do this now,' " she recalled thinking. " 'He's superhot, I like him, he's nice. But I'm not going to expect anything out of it, either.' "**
>
> The alternative, she said, was that "I could take the chance that one night I get really drunk and sleep with someone that I don't want to sleep with, which probably is what would have ended up happening."
>
> So she had sex with him. In the morning, he walked her home.
>
> **"Honestly, all of my friends, they're super envious, because I came back with the biggest smile on my face," M. said. As she had expected, she and the guy remained friendly but nothing more. Yet she was still happy with her decision.**
>
> **"All of my friends are jealous, because I had such a great first experience," she added.** Over spring break, she slept with someone else.
>
> In general, she said, she thought that guys at Penn controlled the hookup culture. But women played a role as well.
>
> "It's kind of like a spiral," she said. "The girls adapt a little bit, because they stop expecting that they're going to get a boyfriend — because if that's all you're trying to do, you're going to be miserable. But at the same time, they want to, like, have contact with guys." So they hook up and "try not to get attached."
>
> **Now, she said, she and her best friend had changed their romantic goals, from finding boyfriends to finding "hookup buddies," which she described as "a guy that we don't actually really like his personality, but we think is really attractive and hot and good in bed."**

I think I would really like everyone reading this to just read that last part over a few times, and let that sink in. You have a minority of good looking athletic men having sex with most of the women on campus, while the majority of men who opt-out of the hook-up culture and want to court and marry are left wondering where all the women went. And many of those will reinvent themselves as "bad boys" in order to at least get some contact with women, so that there are even fewer chaste, marriage-enabled men.

I really recommend reading some of Dr. Schneiderman's comments on this article. He is really not happy about it, and he puts the blame squarely on feminists. As do I. Radical feminism is the ideology that gave us abortion, fatherlessness and divorce. We should call

it what it is: selfish and destructive.

How chastity orders your relationships and liberates you for love

March 24, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Time for examples of real, self-sacrificial love

I really recommend chastity to men especially. As long as they are chaste, they free themselves to love others unselfishly. That's not for every woman, but it's very useful to do with the right women.

In Salvo magazine, Terrell Clemmons has a good summary of what chastity allows you to do in this post, where she looks at the ideas of Dawn Eden.

She writes:

> Contrary to the pervasive bad press it's gotten from libertines, chastity isn't about "not having sex." In fact, it's about a lot more than just sex. Dawn defines it beautifully: "Chastity is the virtue that enables us to love fully and completely in every relationship, in the manner that is appropriate to the relationship." Of course, this raises the question of what determines *appropriateness*, but from both a scriptural and natural law standpoint, this is an easy question to answer. Sexual expression is appropriate to the marriage relationship and inappropriate to all others. Whether or not it's easy to *follow* is certainly another matter, and Dawn gives excellent counsel on that and other related matters, but the point here is that the categories are discrete and clearly discernible.
>
> More important, chaste living is grounded in something larger and more permanent than the individual. Whereas in modern singlehood, love is based on

> feelings, which are apt to change with the wind or even last night's dinner, chaste love is defined by and grounded in God himself. Love of God—love *for* God and love *from* God—becomes the love that orders all other loves. "For each of those whom divine providence places in your life," Dawn writes, "friends, family, the stranger on the street—you ask yourself, how can I love God through loving this person?"
>
> Whereas the modern single is driven by an inner void that is desperately trying to get filled, the chaste singular looks to *God himself* to fill the void. Rather than trying to *get* love through the right match, the chaste singular *receives* love from God, the ultimate source, and then turns outward with *love to give* from an inner fullness.
>
> Chaste love is respectful. It behaves with appropriate decorum, which requires forethought. *What is the nature of this relationship? Why am I in it? Where is it headed? What are my intentions?*
>
> […]To be sure, chastity will require something of you. First, it requires acknowledging the black hole within that will never be filled by sex and then inviting God himself to fill it. After that, it requires discipline, responsibility, and an ongoing trust in God himself as guarantor of the outcome. It's the outward lifestyle that proceeds from a sound inward theology of sex and love.
>
> "I learned, through discovering chastity," Dawn writes, "that the greatest tragedy is not that of being unloved. The greatest tragedy is not loving." Chaste living is holistic and comprehensive, engaging mind, body, and spirit. It's about learning to order love as love was meant to be ordered.

Chaste love is basically intelligent, self-sacrificial love. It loves as a way of doing work for your Boss. Instead of trying to make this other person meet your needs, you try to think of how you can make them be a productive person for your Boss. You don't see them as a commodity, you see them as a fellow soldier. And since you don't know how far any person can go in serving God, every person you meet has value.

Personally, I think it is a lot more rewarding to chastely love women who have had bad experiences. Not all are safe, but you can tell whether to invest in them by whether they do the things that will build them up. Study something hard. Get good grades. Get a job. Strengthen your faith by reading apologetics. Stop wasting money on alcohol and drugs and cigarettes. Save money instead of spending it. Choose men who are husband material, not boy-toy material.

It's incredibly fulfilling to see a woman actually listen to you and take your advice, and then to see her experience the rewards of good decision-making. Men sometimes think that sexual submission is a good way to feed the need for respect. But it's a temporary fix. The permanent fix is to have a place of honor in someone's life because you helped turn their life around. That's real respect, and it's not the kind that the woman takes back later after she sobers up.

Peer-reviewed paper: Michael Behe's "First Rule of Adaptive Evolution"

March 25, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Let's take a look at Mike Behe's first rule of adaptive evolution, which states that most examples of adaptation in evolutionary experiments involve a loss of function, or a modification of an existing function. Not new functionality.

The paper was published in the Quarterly Review of Biology. I found it on PubMed.

Abstract:

> Adaptive evolution can cause a species to gain, lose, or modify a function; therefore, it is of basic interest to determine whether any of these modes dominates the evolutionary process under particular circumstances. Because mutation occurs at the molecular level, it is necessary to examine the molecular changes produced by the underlying mutation in order to assess whether a given adaptation is best considered as a gain, loss, or modification of function. Although that was once impossible, the advance of molecular biology in the past half century has made it feasible. In this paper, I review molecular changes underlying some adaptations, with a particular emphasis on evolutionary experiments with microbes conducted over the past four decades. **I show that by far the most common adaptive changes seen in those examples are due to the loss or modification of a pre-existing molecular function**, and I discuss the possible reasons for the prominence of such mutations.

By far the most common adaptive changes in the examples we have are due to loss of function or modification of pre-existing function?

Evolution News has a post up about the paper.

Excerpt:

> After reviewing the effects of mutations upon Functional Coding ElemenTs (FCTs), Michael Behe's recent review article in Quarterly Review of Biology, "Experimental Evolution, Loss-of-Function Mutations and 'The First Rule of Adaptive Evolution'," offers some conclusions. In particular, as the title suggests, Behe introduces a rule of thumb he calls the "The First Rule of Adaptive Evolution": "Break or blunt any functional coded element whose loss would yield a net fitness gain." In essence, what Behe means is that mutations that cause loss-of-FCT are going to be far more likely and thus far more common than those which gain a functional coding element. In fact, he writes: "the rate of appearance of an adaptive mutation that would arise from the diminishment or elimination of the activity of a protein is expected to be 100-1000 times the rate of appearance of an adaptive mutation that requires specific changes to a gene." Since organisms will tend to evolve along the most likely pathway, they will tend to break or lose an FCT before gaining a new one. He explains:

> It is called the "first" rule because the rate of mutations that diminish the function of a feature is expected to be much higher than the rate of appearance of a new feature, so adaptive loss-of-FCT or modification-of-function mutations that decrease activity are expected to appear first, by far, in a population under selective pressure.(Michael J. Behe, "Experimental Evolution, Loss-of-Function Mutations and 'The First Rule of Adaptive Evolution'," Quarterly Review of Biology, Vol. 85(4) (December, 2010).)

> Behe argues that this point is empirically supported by the research reviews in the paper. He writes:

> As seen in Tables 2 through 4, the large majority of experimental adaptive mutations are loss-of-FCT or modification-of-function mutations. In fact, leaving out those experiments with viruses in which specific genetic elements were intentionally deleted and then restored by subsequent evolution, only two gain-of-FCT events have been reported

> After asking "Why is this the case?" Behe states, "One important factor is undoubtedly that the rate of appearance of loss-of-FCT mutations is much greater than the rate of construction of new functional coded elements." He draws sound and defensible conclusions from the observed data:

> Leaving aside gain-of-FCT for the moment, the work reviewed here shows that organisms do indeed adapt quickly in the laboratory–by loss-of-FCT and modification-of-function mutations. If such adaptive mutations also arrive first in the wild, as they of course would be expected to, then those will also be the kinds of mutations that are first available to selection in nature. … In general, if a

> sequence of genomic DNA is initially only one nucleotide removed from coding for an adaptive functional element, then a single simple point mutation could yield a gain-of-FCT. As seen in Table 5, several laboratory studies have achieved thousand to million-fold saturations of their test organisms with point mutations, and most of the studies reviewed here have at least single-fold saturation. Thus, one would expect to have observed simple gain-of-FCT adaptive mutations that had sufficient selective value to outcompete more numerous loss-of- FCT or modification-of-function mutations in most experimental evolutionary studies, if they had indeed been available.

> But this stark lack of examples of gain-of-functional coding elements can have important implications:

> A tentative conclusion suggested by these results is that the complex genetic systems that are cells will often be able to adapt to selective pressure by effectively removing or diminishing one or more of their many functional coded elements.

> Behe doesn't claim that gain-of-function mutations will never occur, but the clear implication is that neo-Darwinists cannot forever rely on examples of loss or modification-of-FCT mutations to explain molecular evolution. At some point, there must be gain of function.

Now, there was a response to this paper from Jerry Coyne on his blog, and then a rebuttal from Mike Behe in a separate article on Evolution News.

Free Speech bus vandalized by LGBT activists

March 26, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Is the tolerance and diversity crowd really as tolerant and diverse as they claim?

Consider this story from the Washington Free Beacon about the Free Speech bus created by the National Organization for Marriage.

Excerpt:

> A bus with social conservative slogans denouncing transgenderism was vandalized Thursday in New York City by trans activists.
>
> […][T]he bus never left New York. The National Organization for Marriage announced Thursday that the bus had been defaced by angry activists wielding hammers.

Oh, such hate speech! Much offended. Only hammers could fix this problem of other people having different opinions than the secular left extremists.

They even attacked the driver:

> National Organization for Marriage president Brian Brown told *USA Today* that the driver of the bus tried to stop the vandals, but was tackled by one of the activists.

Newsbusters also reported on the mainstream media's coverage of the attack:

> If you're not convinced the media is on board with the LGBT agenda, think again.
>
> On the evening of March 23, NYC vandals damaged a bus displaying a conservative message about gender, and even tackled the vehicle's driver. Although liberal media outlets condemned the bus's message prior to the incident, few reported on the vandalism and its ironic assault on free speech. And

> if they did, biased headlines labelled the vehicle “transphobic” or “anti-transgender.”
>
> However, the #FreeSpeechBus doesn’t promote hate; it promotes science. A joint effort between the National Organization for Marriage, the International Organization for the Family and conservative activist group Citizen Go, the bus and its activists are holding rallies and press conferences in key East Coast cities. Their message — and the words emblazoned on the bright orange vehicle — are simple: “It’s biology: Boys are boys … and always will be. Girls are girls … and always will be. You can’t change sex. Respect all.”
>
> Nevertheless, *USA Today* writer Melanie Eversley headlined her piece: “Bus with anti-transgender message is vandalized in NYC.” Fusion reporter Rafi Schwartz took the same track, writing: “A transphobic ‘free speech’ bus hit the streets of New York — and was immediately vandalized.”
>
> Huffington Post Trends Reporter Elyse Wanshel reported on the bus before it was defaced, condemning its “transphobic message of hate.” So far, Huff Post has not published any stories about the vandalism.

Now might be a good time to remind everyone about the attack on the Family Research Council building.

The attacker in that case, a gay rights activist, was later convicted of domestic terrorism.

Border security union blames rape of teen by illegals on Obama policies

March 27, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?
The Washington Examiner reports:

> Open door immigration policies put in place by the Obama administration were cited a cause for the alleged rape of a 14-year-old student inside Maryland high school by two illegals, according to the head of the Border Patrol union.
>
> Brandon Judd, president of the National Border Patrol Council, cited the former administration's "catch and release" program for letting the two illegals charged in the rape into the United States.
>
> In Senate testimony, he said, "Had we done our job that 14-year-old girl would never have been raped. Period. That's all there is to it."
>
> Two illegal immigrants have been charged in the rape that occurred a week ago in the Rockville, Md., high school. A lawyer for the oldest, 18-year-old Henry Sanchez-Milian, of Guatemala, claimed that the sex was consensual, but police claim they have a "strong case" for rape. Jose Montano, 17 of El Salvador, was also charged. Because he is a minor, no other details of his case have been released.
>
> Homeland Security officials said that Sanchez-Milian crossed the Texas border, was caught, and released. They have released little other information, including if the two were allowed in under the Obama unaccompanied minor program or why Sanchez-Milian was released.

Now, no one has been convicted yet in this case, so it's premature to draw any

conclusions. If this case does pan out, though, it will b e interesting for me to ask my evangelical friends what they think of the results of the open borders policies that they favor. Two of my open borders evangelical friends are university professors, and both of them are paid because of government grants and other redistributions of taxpayer money. It's natural for them to think that taking money from taxpayers is fine and good. But they often haven't thought far enough ahead about things like this rape. What would well meaning evangelical pastors and professors say about the victims of crime by illegal immigrants? After all, if those illegal immigrants had been deported after serving their convictions, then there would be fewer victims of crime here. I don't think that pious pastors and erudite professors have much understanding about what taxpayer money is supposed to be for – it's for the government to protect the taxpayers by enforcing the law. One can certainly be in favor of skilled immigration, while still being opposed to illegal immigration – especially the ones who commit crimes and then are released to commit more crimes.

That rape case is still up in the air, but there is another case where the facts are more settled.

Consider this story from the Washington Free Beacon.

Excerpt:

> The Obama administration began the process last year of granting legal status to an adult illegal immigrant from Mexico with a criminal background who federal agents tried deporting twice and is now accused of killing his 15-year-old girlfriend.
>
> Armando Garcia-Ramirez, 36, has been charged with murdering his teenage girlfriend from Texas, who local reporters identified as Jennifer Delgado, the*Washington Times* reported Tuesday.
>
> The ex-couple had a one-year-old child and Delgado was nine months pregnant with another when she was killed. Garcia-Ramirez was reportedly Delgado's stepfather at one time and may have been when he impregnated her.
>
> Federal authorities apparently missed this relationship last year when Garcia-Ramirez was arrested for smuggling five other illegal immigrants into the United States. Prosecutors did not pursue the case, according to the *Times*, and Garcia-Ramirez went free after making bond. He was approved for a worker permit months later, which made him eligible for taxpayer benefits.

I'm very much in favor of legal immigration, especially skilled legal immigration. my great concern is that people come into the country who cannot make their own way, and want to survive by depending on the government – by taking from taxpaying businesses and workers. What's amazing to me is the people who are actively trying to prevent the deportation of convicted criminals who should not even be in the country. Unfortunately, everyone who voted for Obama voted for criminals to remain in the United States.

The case of Kate Steinle was another example of compassionate liberals killing another

innocent victim. It happens more than you think.

Hindu nationalists, led by Narendra Modi, crack down on religious liberty

March 28, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Map of India

This was reported by the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> In a sad development, the government of India is clamping down on religious liberty, and impoverished children stand to lose the most.
>
> Compassion International, a Christian organization that partners with local churches around the world to improve the lives of children in poverty, began shutting down its operations in India due to financial restrictions imposed on them by the Indian government. This will leave an estimated 145,000 children worse off.
>
> The shutdown comes after months of attempts to convince the Indian government to reverse its decision, and the clampdown on Compassion International comes amid other government actions against nearly 11,000 faith-based and secular organizations operating in India.
>
> Compassion International is a faith-based aid organization that provides humanitarian assistance for underprivileged children around the world, and has operated in India since 1968. The group is the largest single foreign provider of assistance in India, contributing around $45 million in humanitarian aid annually.
>
> Stephen Oakley, general counsel for Compassion International, testified that the

> organization hosts programs that run five to six days a week, and provides meals, medical treatment, and tutoring, as well as financial assistance for school tuition.
>
> While these programs are run out of the local Christian churches, Compassion International denies that any forced conversions take place and does not use adherence to Christianity as a condition for providing assistance. The aid is purely based on need.
>
> […]Nooruddin estimates that about half of the foreign aid organizations in India have been pushed out since 2012 due to an inability to renew their licenses—something the government has made more difficult in an attempt to reduce the influence of outside organizations in India.

The concept of charity is foreign to Hinduism in particular (but not Islam), simply because if a person is poor, this is seen as a result of bad karma that they have collected because of misdeeds in past lives. It's nothing for anyone to fix, in short, and it's seen as best to concentrate on one's one's grades and one's own wealth-building. Although most Hindus don't want to be bothered taking care of the poor themselves, they also don't want Christians getting the credit for doing it. So, the easiest way to stop Christians getting credit with the poor for helping the poor is to stop Christians from helping the poor – leveling the playing field between the two religions.

Evangelism and Hindu tolerance

I come from a partially Hindu background, and I have to work with a lot of Indian people in my current job as a software engineer. And I have indeed noticed an aversion to Christianity from them. it's actually very strange. When I ask them about religion, they can talk passionately about religious diversity and how tolerant their Hinduism is. But if you dig a little more under the surface, not only do they disagree with everything I believe, but they also don't think I should allowed to express my views in public to anyone who doesn't already agree with me.

So why is that? Well, although many East Indian people that I speak to know a great deal about computer science and making money, they actually know almost nothing about religions other than their own. For them, religion isn't an area for investigation about what's true or false. For them, religion is like their nationality or race or family or community. It's beyond logic and evidence, it's just design for social cohesion. So, if, for example, you tell a Hindu that their oscillating eternal cosmology is factually false, they get angry because that's not religion is for them. They don't care whether what they believe is true or false, so long as it helps them get along with their families and communities. And since Christianity would cause a break up in their families and communities (should anyone convert), they want to stop all logical and evidential discussions of it. For a Hindu, not eating meat is more important than how the universe began, because not eating meat is social, and how the universe began is factual. Bring up facts to people who are looking for social cohesion and unity gets you the kind of response that you see from Modi and the Hindu nationalists.

Analysis: how much did each Obamacare mandate drive up health insurance premiums?

March 29, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ACA Mandate	National Average Values
Health Insurer Tax	2.0%
Health Exchange Fee (only on exchange plans, currently at 3.5%)	1.4-2.3% now, 2.8-3.7% by 2023 across all plans, exchange or not
Guarantee Issue	15.0-30.0%
Reinsurance	1.0-2.0%
Morbidity (Sick-ness)	4.0%
Community Rating (1-3 Ratio, unisex)	
Young (<35)	19.0-35.0%
Old (>55)	-4.0% to -9.0%
Male	11.0%
Female	-9.0%
Essential Health Benefits	8.0%
Actuarial value	8.5%
Total, weighted for age & gender distribution	44.5-68%

($)DailySignal.com

How each Obamacare mandate affected the health insurance premiums

Since 2010, we were inundated with reports and studies from various groups that argued that the new mandates in Obamacare would drive up the cost of health insurance. And that was actually observed to happen. Year after year, health insurance costs rose – usually by double digits. We knew why this was happening, too: Obamacare required health insurers to cover more conditions, many of them not even related to health insurance.

Here is an an analysis of which mandates caused health insurance costs to rise the most from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

Obamacare caused premiums to rise for various reasons, chief among them being the vast new regulations the law imposed on insurance markets. A new analysis from Milliman backs this up. The study provided estimates of the average impact that various Obamacare regulations had on premiums.

[…]Changes in morbidity (or the sickness of the population) due to newly uninsured by itself caused 4 percent increases in premiums nationally, but in Ohio it raised premiums by 35-40 percent.

Age is also a factor in premium prices, and Obamacare disrupted the natural order by dictating the age banding, which disproportionately harmed young people. (Age banding

here refers to how much the most expensive plans can be in comparison to the cheapest.)

Before Obamacare, the national rate of age banding was 1-to-5. In other words, the most expensive plan was five times more costly than the cheapest plan, with expense increasing with age.

Obamacare mandated that the rate be set at 1-to-3, so that the most expensive plan could be no more than three times as expensive. While elderly people's premiums might have seen fewer increases—which is both due to banding and the fact that Obamacare is close to a death spiral—young people have suffered.

Overall, young people can expect to have rate increases between 58.9 percent and 91.8 percent using national averages. However, not every state had a 1-to-5 age band.

In places like Ohio, the effects are far worse—it had a 1-to-6 age band. Even accounting for the differences in its population from the national average, young people in Ohio can still expect to pay an average of 7.7 percent more on top of other increases.

In addition to this "youth tax," mandates like the "essential health benefits" and actuarial requirements further punish all Americans with benefits that they don't need, at prices they can't afford. While in places like Maryland these mandates might only contribute 8 to 10 percent to premium increases, nationally they raise premiums by an average of 16.5 percent, up to 32 percent.

Overall, accounting for gender, age, and the relative proportions of all those groups, Americans are paying 44.5 to 68 percent more in premiums owing just to Title I regulations. That number is even higher when factoring all the other adverse effects of Obamacare.

Notice that "guaranteed issue", which is so popular with those who feel that they can somehow be generous by spending other people's money, is one of the biggest drivers of health insurance costs. When pollsters ask people whether they want to keep these provisions, they mostly say yes. But when the pollsters ask whether they want to keep these provisions if it means that their own health insurance costs will go up, they mostly say no. It's amazing how American voters, especially Democrats, love the idea of spending other people's money. As long as they don't have to pay for it, then it's a great idea to spend someone else's money in order to buy the feeling (and the peer approval) of being generous and compassionate.

And after 8 years of Obama offering that feeling to his supporters, we now have a national debt of $20 trillion, instead of $10 trillion. Mind you, in decades of asking my co-workers, I've never yet met one Democrat who could tell me what the national debt was. I guess that would interrupt their feelings of generosity and compassion.

Should we only blame boys for the highly-sexualized culture?

March 30, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

If you wanted to read just one article that summarizes a lot of my views on radical feminism and the Sexual Revolution, based on my experiences with young women in high school, college and the workplace, this article from The Federalist would be a good choice.

I am going to excerpt a piece of this for my post, but you really need to click through and read the whole thing.

Excerpt:

> Let's build on that foundation and ask why porn is driving expectations for young women.
>
> As with the prevalence of porn among boys, the answer to this question has two parts. The victimization half of the answer is that we've deliberately avoided giving girls any other kinds of expectations. Think about it for a moment: Why should it be so hard to tell a guy "no," as girls reported in the survey? Why should she think it's mean?
>
> Feminists would have you believe that all girls are shrinking violets who never learned how to lean in, but the far better answer is that these girls don't really know of any good *reason* to say no. "I don't want to" is a reason, but it's the kind of reason one must weigh against others' desires in any kind of voluntary relationship.

Chastity, which is the view that relationships work better when sex is confined to exclusive, permanent marital commitments, is out of favor in our society, thanks to

feminism. In place of chastity, feminism encourages young people to have recreational sex outside of marriage.

What happened next?

> **If sex is just meaningless fun without any moral or spiritual dimension, and if youth is just a time for sexual adventures without any thought to actually forging a lasting relationship—as we are all taught these days—then surely it would indeed be mean to arbitrarily withhold that meaningless fun from someone she is fond of.**
>
> In a sexually amoral context, having sex with him so he'll watch a movie with her is a decision with no more gravitas than watching "American Ninja Warrior" with him so he'll watch "The Bachelorette" with her. **Without bringing chastity back into the conversation, there's no meaningful objection. The only expectation is that the boy and girl work out their different wants together, and they have already done so.**
>
> In the past, sexual expectations were founded in marriage and family—that sex is part of a permanent and exclusive partnership rooted in a mutual commitment to one another's well-being and the promise of future children to whom that commitment is extended. Those are the expectations girls were taught, and they generally navigated relationships according to them. They provided a foundation to undergird their refusals.
>
> **Unfortunately, feminists found such expectations restrictive and demeaning, and over a generation successfully uprooted them only to replace them with… nothing of substance. It's only natural that media depictions of sex—porn included—would fill that void and create new expectations.**
>
> […]We cannot meaningfully condemn this situation unless we venture back into the world of sexual morality. After all, if our only concerns are for the desires of those involved, nothing proves the girls' desire for emotional connection without providing sexual gratification is any better than the boys' desire for sexual gratification without providing emotional connection.If this is the extent of our concern, then our response should not be the horror we feel in the pit of our collective stomach, but rather pride that these two different groups were able to negotiate terms by which both sides can get something they want. It would be like the end of a children's program where everyone learned to compromise and work together.
>
> If girls in general want a deal with terms more favorable to them, there's always collective bargaining with the boys. Nevertheless, it's difficult to see how the results would substantially differ from traditional sexual morality. After all, most girls would need to withhold sexual access until granted a commitment more meaningful than "I promise not to sleep with anyone else until I want to be done sleeping with you." Accordingly, the "scabs" (to borrow union terminology) who

> give away access for less would have to be treated with less respect than those who maintain the bargaining position.
>
> **Meanwhile, the other side's interests would need to be taken into account or they would have no incentive to come to the table. The popular boys are already getting what they want, and the rest are already going their own way. Providing sex couldn't be held off for decades while education and career take a front seat.**
>
> **Plus the long-term commitments boys offer as they become men could not be so one-sided that the woman could unilaterally dissolve these at any time and simultaneously claim a man's home, children, and future income. In other words, any mutually beneficial bargain would have to restore chastity, slut-shaming, and early marriage while ending no-fault divorce. What collective bargaining will never achieve is the feminist pipe dream that boys be dutifully subject to feminine whim. They have no incentive for that.**

And this part further down is really good too:

> **Is it really safe to assume these girls have hooked up with a completely random and evenly distributed sample of boys their age?**
>
> **It would be more accurate to say that the boys *who are popular with the girls* are generally like this. After all, it seems rates of teen girls' sexual activity are actually somewhat higher than those of their male peers—a gap particularly pronounced among whites.** The disparity is probably even greater since other studies have shown that men are prone to exaggerating their sexual activity while women are prone to minimizing it.
>
> **All of this suggests that a larger pool of girls is competing for the attentions of a smaller pool of boys.** Many anecdotal accounts reinforce this, suggesting a version of the 80/20 rule is at work in hookup culture (i.e., that 80 percent of the girls are sleeping with 20 percent of the guys). That particular proportion is almost certainly an exaggeration, but the disparity is there.
>
> **Most likely, the sexually inactive majority of boys aren't receiving sex acts in exchange for their attention, just as the sexually inactive girls aren't providing any. Plenty of boys are left out in the cold who would happily adopt a measure of chastity and provide emotional intimacy if it meant access to romantic relationships. The girls are simply choosing not to enter relationships with those boys.** So why are the girls going for the boys who make the demands they reportedly despise?

I just don't see how you can do better than that. This is a very conservative view, because it respects traditional morality, but it is not one that is championed by most "conservatives", who want to just blame men for refusing to put out after feminism has re-made the culture.

In the old days, many men expected women to give them something physically if they spent money on dinner and movie. In the present day, fake man-blaming “conservatives” expect men to put out marriage for women who have done nothing at all to prepare themselves for it. In a world where chastity has been replaced by radical feminist hook-ups, and marriage has been replaced by no-fault divorce, there is no incentive for men to engage. Trying to get them to engage by attacking their manhood is just plain stupid, but unfortunately, most “man up” pastors and “conservatives” ARE just plain stupid.

Muslim Rollins College professor attacks Christian student for questioning her stupidity

March 31, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

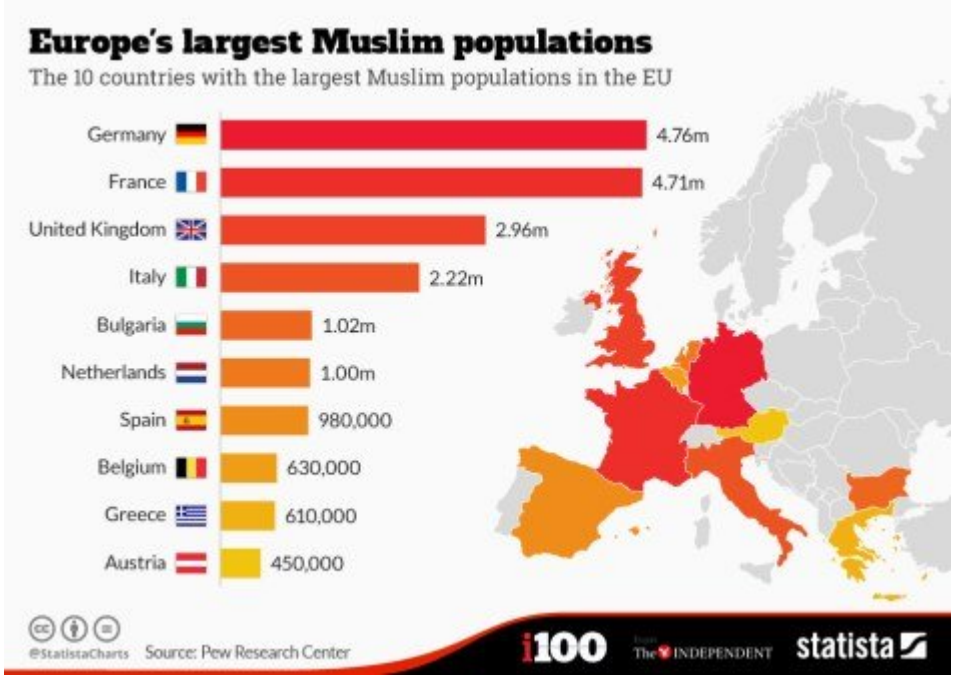

Muslim populations in Europe

To start this post, let's review the minimal facts about the historical Jesus by citing prominent non-Christian historical Jesus scholar E.P. Sanders of Duke University.

Below is a list of facts about the historical Jesus that are accepted by ancient historians – Christian, non-Christian, atheist.

These are compiled by non-Christian scholar E.P. Sanders:

From his book "Jesus and Judaism" (1985):

- Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.
- Jesus called disciples and spoke of there being twelve.
- Jesus confined his activity to Israel.
- Jesus was a Galilean who preached and healed.
- Jesus engaged in a controversy about the temple.
- **Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem by the Roman authorities.**
- After his death, his followers continued as an identifiable movement.
- At least some Jews persecuted at least parts of the new movement.

From his book "The Historical Figure of Jesus" (1993):

- Jesus was born c.4 BCE, near the time of the death of Herod the Great;
- He spent his childhood and early adult years in Nazareth, a Galilean village;
- He was baptized by John the Baptist;
- He called disciples;

- He taught in the towns, villages, and countryside of Galilee (apparently not the cities);
- He preached “the kingdom of God”;
- Around the year 30 he went to Jerusalem for Passover;
- He created a disturbance in the temple area;
- He had a final meal with the disciples;
- He was arrested and interrogated by Jewish authorities, specifically the high priest;
- **He was executed on the orders of the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate;**
- His disciples at first fled;
- They saw him (in what sense is uncertain) after his death;
- As a consequence they believed he would return to found the kingdom;
- They formed a community to await his return and sought to win others to faith in him as God’s Messiah.

Now, the two facts in bold are denied by Muslim believers, for the simple reason that their holy book in Surah 4:157 denies the crucifixion of Jesus. As the list of nearly universally accepted facts above suggests, there is basically no PhD-credentialed ancient historian who holds the Muslim view. In particular, Jewish, secular and atheist historians would all grant that Jesus died of crucifixion.

Now, let’s see the story from the College Fix.

Excerpt:

> A student says he was suspended from Rollins College for challenging his Muslim professor’s anti-Christian assertions, including her claim that Jesus’ crucifixion never took place.
>
> Twenty-year-old Marshall Polston, a sophomore at the private, Florida-based four-year college, said that the professor of his Middle Eastern Humanities class also told students that Jesus’ disciples did not believe he was God.
>
> […]The professor, Areej Zufari, as well as a campus spokesperson, could not be reached by *The College Fix* late Sunday. However, the *Central Florida Post* reports that it tried numerous times to obtain comment from Rollins College and Professor Zufari to no avail.
>
> Polston claims the situation began after he challenged Zufari’s assertions about Jesus and his disciples. Polston said this challenge led Zufari to file a complaint with a campus dean, claiming he made her feel “unsafe.”
>
> Next, Polston received a 52 percent on a major essay.
>
> “I was upset, understandably. I’ve never gotten anything less than straight A’s, so I was really interested in figuring out how to possibly improve or at least understand the grade,” Polston told the *Post*.
>
> […]Zufari, for her part, posted on Facebook to the ACLU of Florida, complaining about an unnamed student that is “making my life hell this semester. This one is spewing hatred at me, de-railing class, and just sent me a hateful email

> threatening me…I want to know if there is a way to hold the individual responsible for his harassment and hate speech. Any ideas? Thank you!"
>
> According to the March 24 suspension letter, Polston's "actions have constituted a threat of disruption within the operations of the College and jeopardize the safety and well-being of members of the College community and yourself."
>
> Those alleged actions are not spelled out within the document. Nonetheless, Polston was given strict directions not to set foot on campus or have any contact with Zufari in the letter.

So let's find out about this alleged harassment.

> A campus safety report obtained by *The College Fix*states:
>
> "Student _____ stated to me that she looked out the back glass door of the classroom and saw Mr. Polston staring into the room. He briefly stopped then proceeded on his way. Campus safety was immediately notified and responded at 19:36 hours. A search was conducted but Mr. Polston was not found. Ms. Zufari's students were upset and did not feel comfortable being in the class. Ms. Zufari dismissed her class early at 20:07 hours."
>
> **Polston has completely refuted these claims, however, offering video footage of his whereabouts — at a restaurant over a half-hour away from the school.**

It would not be the first time that free speech was deemed offensive, or that a fake hate crime was alleged.

Richard Carrier debates Mark Goodacre: Did Jesus exist?

April 1, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

It's April Fools today, and I have an April Fool for you – his name is Richard Carrier.

Debate topic:

> Richard Carrier is the world's foremost proponent of the "mythicist" view of Jesus – that he never actually existed as a historical person. He explains his theory that St. Paul only ever spoke of Jesus in the spiritual realm and that the Gospels are "extended parables". Mark Goodacre is NT professor at Duke University. He contends that Carrier's mythicist view is extremely far fetched and the evidence for the historical Jesus is beyond reasonable doubt.

Here are the participants:

> **Mark Goodacre** is an Associate Professor in New Testament at the Department of Religion, Duke University, North Carolina, USA. He earned his MA, M.Phil and DPhil at the University of Oxford and was Senior Lecturer at the University of Birmingham until 2005. His research interests include the Synoptic Gospels, the Historical Jesus and the Gospel of Thomas.
>
> **Richard Carrier** holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University in ancient history, specializing in the intellectual history of Greece and Rome, particularly ancient philosophy, religion, and science, with emphasis on the origins of Christianity and the use and progress of science under the Roman empire.

The debate can be listened to here:

This debate took place on Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable?" show based in the UK.

Carrier uses the letters of Paul as his sources, because they are the earliest. He doesn't think that there is enough there to ground Jesus as a real person in history. Goodacre responds by looking at the letters of Paul to see what facts about a real, historical Jesus are there, and also which other eyewitnesses Paul talked to. In particular, Carrier has to respond to the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15 as well as his meeting with Peter and James, two other eyewitnesses, twice in Galatians. 1 Corinthians and Galatians are two early Pauline letters that are unanimously regarded as authentic. Carrier's strategy is to try to introduce parallels between myths and the historical Jesus.

Goodacre also raises the crucifixion a historical fact about Jesus, which is a virtually undeniable fact about Jesus that is not even denied by people like the radical atheist John Dominic Crossan. Goodacre says that the crucifixion story would be embarrassing to the early Christians. They would not have invented a story of their Messiah-candidate being crucified – it was considered to shameful of a way to die. Carrier responded that other groups make up history that is embarrassing to them all the time. Goodacre says this practice was not common among the groups of Jews that we know about. Carrier says that there are other unknown groups of Jews that we have no evidence for who did do that. Then he calls arguing based on the practices of the Jews that we do not know about an "argument from ignorance".

Carrier talks about how Philippians has that embarrassing passage about Jesus abandoning his divine capabilities to humble himself by becoming an actual human being, and says that this is evidence that he was not an actual human being. (Unforced error!) Philippians is another one of the Pauline epistles that is not in doubt. Carrier then says that John invents historical reports in order to emphasize certain things about Jesus, and therefore that means that other non-John sources are therefore all falsified by John's exaggerating on some details. He then cites the radical atheist John Dominic Crossan to say that historical narratives are actually extended parables.

William Lane Craig explains the resurrection of Jesus in Ireland

April 2, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

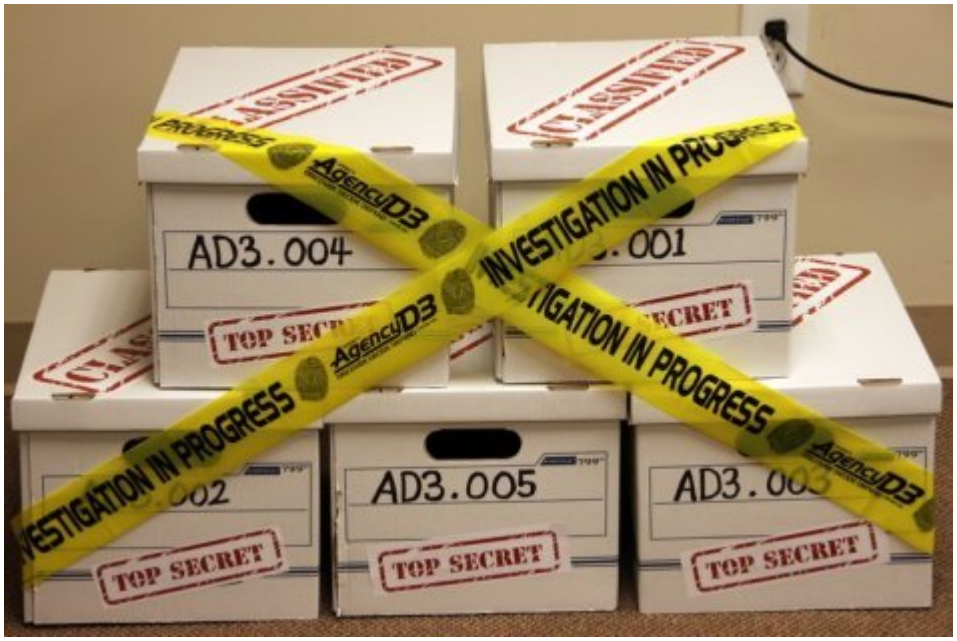

Investigation in progress

I have a couple of friends in Northern Ireland, and one sent me an alert about this article in The Irish News, authored by the top living defender of Christianity, William Lane Craig.

Most churches don't do a good job of explaining the vital importance of the resurrection when discussing why anyone should consider Christianity as a worldview. Here is how William Lane Craig sets the stage for his defense of the resurrection:

> Most people are happy to agree that God exists; but in our pluralistic society it has become politically incorrect to claim that God has revealed Himself decisively in Jesus.
>
> What justification can Christians offer for thinking that the Christian God is real?
>
> The answer of the New Testament is the resurrection of Jesus. It is God's vindication of Jesus' radical personal claims to divine authority.
>
> So how do we know that Jesus is risen from the dead? It is crucial that Christians are able to present objective evidence in support of our beliefs. Otherwise our claims hold no more water than the assertions of anyone else claiming to have a private experience of God.
>
> Fortunately, Christianity, as a religion rooted in history, makes claims that can in important measure be investigated historically.
>
> Suppose, then, that we approach the New Testament writings, not as inspired Scripture, but merely as a collection of Greek documents coming down to us out of the first century, without any assumption as to their reliability other than the way we normally regard other sources of ancient history.

> We may be surprised to learn that the majority of New Testament critics investigating the gospels in this way accept the central facts undergirding the resurrection of Jesus.

If you want to see William Lane Craig in head-to-head action in Ireland, Truthbomb Apologetics recently linked to one of the debates he did there. (H/T Apologetics 315)

I wish more pastors and churches could explain the importance and significance of the resurrection for Christian believers and seekers like that. This is the place in history where God has chosen to make the Christian religion mandatory on everyone.

Paul explains in Acts 17:24-31:

> 24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.
>
> 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.
>
> 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.
>
> 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.
>
> 28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'[a] As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'[b]
>
> 29 "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill.
>
> **30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.**
>
> **31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."**

The resurrection is very important.

In another place, Dr. Craig summarizes his reasons for thinking that God raised Jesus from the dead.

He writes:

> 4. *The resurrection of Jesus.* It seems to me that there are four established facts which constitute inductive evidence for the resurrection of Jesus:
>
> Fact #1: *After his crucifixion, Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea in the tomb.* This fact is highly significant because it means that the location of Jesus's tomb was known to Jew and Christian alike. In that case it becomes inexplicable how belief in his resurrection could arise and flourish in the face of a tomb containing his corpse. According to the late John A. T. Robinson of Cambridge

> University, the honorable burial of Jesus is one of "the earliest and best-attested facts about Jesus."15
>
> Fact #2: *On the Sunday morning following the crucifixion, the tomb of Jesus was found empty by a group of his women followers*. According to Jakob Kremer, an Austrian specialist on the resurrection, "By far most exegetes hold firmly to the reliability of the biblical statements concerning the empty tomb."16 As D. H. van Daalen points out, "It is extremely difficult to object to the empty tomb on historical grounds; those who deny it do so on the basis of theological or philosophical assumptions."17
>
> Fact #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead*. This is a fact that is almost universally acknowledged among New Testament scholars today. Even Gert Lüdemann, perhaps the most prominent current critic of the resurrection, admits, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus's death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."18
>
> Finally, fact #4: *The original disciples believed that Jesus was risen from the dead despite their having every reason not to*. Despite having every predisposition to the contrary, it is an undeniable fact of history that the original disciples believed in, proclaimed, and were willing to go to their deaths for the fact of Jesus's resurrection. C. F. D. Moule of Cambridge University concludes that we have here a belief which nothing in terms of prior historical influences can account for—apart from the resurrection itself.19
>
> Any responsible historian, then, who seeks to give an account of the matter, must deal with these four independently established facts: the honorable burial of Jesus, the discovery of his empty tomb, his appearances alive after his death, and the very origin of the disciples' belief in his resurrection and, hence, of Christianity itself. I want to emphasize that these four facts represent, not the conclusions of conservative scholars, nor have I quoted conservative scholars, but represent rather the majority view of New Testament scholarship today. The question is: how do you best explain these facts?

A more detailed version is here.

I like to listen to debates with non-Christians, and the most frequent response I hear from atheists is to sort of sidestep discussing this evidence and start to talk about Bible difficulties: why God allowed some group of ancient people to be slaughtered, or whether there were one angel or two angels at the empty tomb. This is a stupid approach. What we should expect from non-Christians is that they either deny the WIDELY-ACCEPTED evidence, or that they propose a different and better NATURALISTIC explanation of the widely-accepted evidence.

If you listen carefully to how atheists respond to historical evidence, you'll find that they generally do neither, and that's because their unbelief is volitional (from their will) rather

than cognitive (from their mind). They want to dispense with a God who will hold them accountable, so they just refuse to discuss evidence that could compel them to face a relationship with him that would constrain their pursuit of pleasure. Try it yourself and see what your favorite atheist does.

Should a husband take special measures to assure his wife of his fidelity to her?

April 3, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Painting: "St. George and the Dragon", by Paolo Uccello (~1456)

Well. A story broke last Thursday that occupied my mind so much that I could barely concentrate at work. I sent it to all my best advisers to get their response to it.

Here is the story reported in The Stream:

> It sounds like Vice President Mike Pence really loves his wife and really values his marriage.
>
> Yesterday *The Washington Post* ran a sweet profile of second lady Karen Pence noting her meek, steady influence on her husband. Interviews with friends and colleagues revealed that Mrs. Pence is a prayer warrior. She's also passionate about art therapy and works to help military families.
>
> **But Karen Pence's quiet power was not what set off a million talking heads on Twitter. No, it was the matter-of-fact statement that Mike and Karen Pence abide by a version of the Billy Graham Rule. In a 2002 interview, then-congressman Pence said he doesn't drink without his wife present, nor does he dine alone with other women.**
>
> **This common-sense rule stands out in a town like DC, where many, many marriages have fallen apart because of affairs.**

Indeed.

Regular readers of my blog know that I almost always take the side of men against

young, unmarried women who have been influenced by feminism. But that doesn't mean that I think that men who find a good woman and then commit to her in marriage should do as they please. Not only do I approve of what Pence is doing for his wife, but I consider his actions *essential and required* for any husband. At the very least, every Christian husband has to come to some sort of understanding with his wife about how he intends to protect her from infidelity. And he needs to be realistic about the role that alcohol plays, as well as peer-pressure and opportunity. In a place like Washington, D.C. it becomes even more of a necessity to have these discussions. Every husband who claims to be a follower of Jesus has a responsibility to be a provider, a protector and a leader on moral and spiritual issues. Part of that protector role is protecting his wife from infidelity. He needs to have a plan to make sure that neither husband nor wife is exposed to temptation beyond what either can resist.

But look at how people on the secular left responded to this story- they claimed that Pence was "sexist" and that he could never allow any woman to occupy a position of authority with this rule – even though he had a female lieutenant governor while keeping to this rule.

Newsbusters reports:

> Some on the left went crazy, criticizing the VP's respectful stance as old-fashioned, demeaning to women, or even sharia-esque.
>
> "Pence's rule doesn't honor his wife," MTV News Senior National Correspondent Jamil Smith tweeted. "It uses antiquated ideas about gender and public scorn to place new responsibility upon her shoulders."
>
> Slate contributor Heather Schwedel accused the politician of holding "a pretty radically retrograde mindset" that views women "primarily as sexual temptations." Schwedel also quoted formerly evangelical journalist Elizabeth Spiers, who ridiculously wondered if "Pence could argue that he shouldn't have to hire women on a religious freedom basis."
>
> Linking to Schwedel's piece, TeenVogue writer Lily Herman revealed her complete misunderstanding of the VP's practice. "Mike Pence basically doesn't interact with women," she tweeted.
>
> Others made illogical attempts to prove Pence's hypocrisy.
>
> […]"Sincere question. How is this different from extreme repressive interpretations of Islam ("Sharia Law!") mocked by people like Mike Pence," queried NYT contributor Xeni Jardin.
>
> St. Louis Post columnist Aisha Sultan agreed, commenting: "He's waaay more Muslim than Obama ever was."

Mollie Z. reported on even more secular leftist screeching at The Federalist, and she commented:

> Infidelity destroys intimacy, happiness, and marriages themselves. But it

> happens because of the strong temptation that exists every day for most healthy people. When marriages end, the associated costs are financial, emotional, and physical. Divorce tends to be hard on men, women, and children. It harms economic and health outcomes for children, and decreases women's standard of living over the course of their lifetimes. Guarding against it is smart.
>
> […]Physical proximity is important for that last part. Emily Belz wrote in 2010 about Mark Souder's marital failure that forced him out of Congress. He was an Indiana representative who shocked everyone by stepping down after the revelation he'd had an affair with a part-time staffer who was also married. In her article, she notes that Dan Quayle had told Souder to move his family to Washington when he was first elected. Souder didn't do that. Also mentioned in this article is one Mike Pence, also a congressman from Indiana at the time. Pence did move his family, and it paid off. In the article his wife discusses how he needs the kids and the kids need him.
>
> **If divorce rates weren't sky-high and if infidelity weren't a problem faced by millions of couples, mocking Pence for the means by which he keeps his marriage intact might make more sense. Heck, if the human condition weren't such that we all find it difficult to do the right thing, the mockery also might make sense.**
>
> **As it is, Pence's smart tactics for avoiding the kind of marital failure that could destroy him, his wife, their family, and the lives of those around them is to be commended and celebrated.**

I think I know what it is that is animating people to mock Pence's thoughtful plan. It's not mockery that is just coming from the secular left, either. The fundamental thing that Pence is doing is this: he is making a plan to achieve the result he wants, and then following through on the plan. The plan does not allow him to play fast and loose with boundaries. He has to exercise self-control well before he is faced with an impossible situation. He has to give up on some freedom and exercise self-control in order to draw a line well before he comes to the line that he cannot cross. In short, Pence has made a plan on his own that is not Biblical, but that will help him to achieve the goal that the Bible sets for him: do not commit adultery.

I think that there are people on the secular left AND on the religious right alike who don't want to give up any freedom, nor make any plan. They just want to pursue pleasure and be driven by their feelings. They don't want to say no to anything or have any self-control. This is a problem I see in secular leftists and low-grade feelings-based Christians, too. Naturally, secular leftists lack moral wisdom enough to exercise self-control, that's a given. But what happens to people on the religious right is that they want to punt to the Bible, and piety and feelings to such an extent that they are destroyed by their own foolishness. Because the Bible only specifies goals, lazy Christians often lean too much on God, refusing to think that there is any wisdom elsewhere that could make the achievement of Biblical goals easier. That's why you see a lot of young Christians getting

into trouble. If you have a goal to achieve for your Boss, you have to make a plan to achieve it. You can't just follow your feelings and then blame everyone else when you fail. You can't do what you feel like doing, refusing to exercise self-denial and self-control throughout a plan, then complain that you didn't achieve the goal. No one does well on an exam if they don't come to class, do the homework, and study for the exam.

What about results?

What about the approach of secular leftist women who attack Pence? What kind of men do they choose, and do these men produce results like Pence and Pence's rule do?

This splendid article from The Stream explores the decisions of the radical feminists, noting that Democrat women pick men like Anthony Weiner and Bill Clinton.

It concludes:

> What feminists really claim to want from men is a milder version of Jenner: Someone who suppresses, beats down, and denies what it means to be a man. Who internalizes the guilt that feminism sprays men with like a firehose. And yet who (like Jenner) is somehow still attracted to women. A tame man, a damaged man, a man who is no threat at all.
>
> At least that's what feminists think they want. In fact, they're probably secretly more attracted to Clinton. They'd be better off with Pence. What they'll end up with is Weiner.
>
> Who said that there's no justice in the world?

What we are seeing today is a generation of people inside and outside the church who laugh at moral rules like chastity. Instead of choosing chaste partners and being intelligent about settle moral boundaries, they think that they can achieve the same outcome (lifelong married love) with their own made-up "morality". When you look around at the great crises of our time: abortion, divorce, single motherhood, you can clearly see that each begins with a decision to take what makes me feel good and disregard moral rules. Naturally, the people who break the rules never imagine that they will not get the same lifelong, married love that the rule-followers get. But of course, it doesn't work like that. What the rule-breakers really get is Bill Clinton and Anthony Weiner. They fail the exam because they refused to prepare for it.

The media reported that TRAPPIST-1 planets were “Earth-like”, but were they?

April 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

My assumption whenever I read these headlines from the naturalist mainstream media is that they are just scientific illiterates pushing a science fiction agenda. Naturalists believe that no intelligent designer was required in order to create a planet, a solar system and a galaxy fine-tuned for complex embodied life. The mainstream media tries to help naturalists by trumpeting that make planets that support life look common, so that no designer is needed.

Recently, there was a story about some planets that the mainstream media called “Earth-like”. But were they really Earth-like?

Evolution News reports: (links removed)

> Do you recall the hubbub only one month ago about TRAPPIST-1, a dim red dwarf star some 40 light years from Earth? This star has seven planet, three of which, roughly Earth-sized, were announced as being potentially habitable. This led to excited speculation about alien evolution:
>
> - “Scientists find three new planets where **life could have evolved**” (*Sky News*)
> - “Nasa discovers new solar system where **life may have evolved** on three planets” (*The Telegraph*)
> - “Nasa’s ‘holy grail’: Entire new solar system that **could support alien life** discovered” (*The Independent*)

> - “Seven **Alien ‘Earths’** Found Orbiting Nearby Star” (*National Geographic*)
>
> Well, not so fast. Much of the breathlessness about the system stemmed from a tho
>
> roughly imaginative artist’s rendering courtesy of NASA. The planets are designated by letters, b through h. The middle three planets are depicted as rather inviting, with what appear to be pleasing Earth-like oceans.
>
> Today, the TRAPPIST-1 bubble looks to have popped, with 3D computer climate modeling showing major problems with the system. According to Eric T. Wolf of the University of Colorado’s Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics, the inner three planets would be barren, the outer three frozen. And the middle, planet e? In NASA’s rendering, it looks the most Earth-like. However, in a system like this centering on a dim red dwarf, planet e would need to have been stocked, to start, with seven times the volume of Earth’s oceans.
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Let’s review what’s needed for a planet to support life, so that when these stories come out, we can recognize how many “Earth-like” qualities required for life are *not mentioned*.

Previously, I blogged about a few of the minimum requirements that a planet must satisfy in order to support complex life.

Here they are:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it’s too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it’s too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the planet has to be far enough from the star to avoid tidal locking and solar flares
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet’s rotation

- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits
- planet mass must be enough to retain an atmosphere, but not so massive to cause a greenhouse effect

Now what happens if we disregard all of those characteristics, and just classify an Earth-like planet as one which is the same size and receives the same amount of radiation from its star? Well, then you end up labeling a whole bunch of planets as “Earth-like” that really don’t permit life.

Professor calls her student's employer to get him fired for disagreeing with her

April 5, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rioters smash windows at a T-Mobile store during a protest against campus speaker

I know we just blogged about a stupid professor who charged a student who disagreed with her in class with "harassment", but this is a completely different case.

Here is the story from Campus Reform.

Excerpt:

> A Texas State University history professor called the employers of at least two conservatives, one a current student, in retribution over a political disagreement on Facebook.
>
> Elizabeth Bishop, who is allegedly rumored to become the next dean of the College of Liberal Arts, made phone calls to employers and a university department in an attempt to punish the two conservatives for daring to disagree with her in a Facebook discussion.
>
> The Facebook status in question was initially posted by Colton Duncan, the student body vice president, but was apparently later removed by Facebook for "violating community standards."
>
> Duncan decried Texas State's apparent double standard in allowing radical communist Angela Davis to speak on campus, calling her an "American terrorist," but not allowing the College Republicans to hold a Women's Empowerment Summit.
>
> **The status soon developed into a debate over the relative merits of capitalism and communism, where Alexander Morrissette, an employee of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, and Bishop began commenting at**

> **each other.**

I would not recommend debating anything with a non-STEM professor who teaches at a secular college / university. It doesn't matter where you debate or what you debate, these people have no experience at hearing points of view different from their own. They don't debate with evidence, they just call you names and then try to silence you.

Here's how this professor came after the student who disagreed with her:

> Their debate continued in relatively the same vein, but things escalated when the Texas Public Policy Foundation received a call from Bishop the next day asking if Morrissette was one of its employees.
>
> **Bishop contended in the call that Morrissette had made a disparaging Facebook post about her, but refused to provide details on what the post said.** The employee who answered the call said she would talk to Morrissette about his Facebook habits, and Bishop hung up the phone shortly thereafter.
>
> Seemingly unsatisfied with the Foundation's response, as Morrissette said they "laughed the ordeal off," Bishop set her sights on an anonymous Texas State student who had "liked" several of Morrissette's comments.
>
> **Bishop allegedly called the university department where the student works and requested they investigate her and her "associates" for "hate speech," and further demanded that the student be removed from her leadership positions on campus.**
>
> When Morrissette heard of this development, he said it was "worse…that she levied her threats at students who are still directly subjected to her authority on campus."

Imagine that you had an employer who did take action against you, and you were the sole provider for your wife and children! Where would you be without a job in this economy? There are also a lot of cases where the left moves on from trying to coerce you to vandalism, assault and even domestic terrorism.

It's very important to understand that secular leftist professors – at least non-STEM professors at secular campuses – are not capable of critical thinking or tolerating different points of view. You just have to look at them as unreasoning barbarians, and avoid saying or doing anything that can provoke their anti-intellectual rage against you.

If you're going to go to college or university, be sure and do and do a STEM degree. Not only do rigorous STEM degrees keep out the idiots, but you can also get a job on the other end of it. It doesn't matter if you like STEM or not, it's a matter of not throwing away your money to ignorant fascists like this professor.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

April 6, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change

> his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

The Case for Christ movie opens today in theaters

April 7, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Finally, a movie about Lee Strobel's investigation of Christianity.

NewsMax has an article about the new movie.

Excerpt:

> A former reporter and atheist who set out to disprove the existence of God – and came to "quite a different conclusion" – said Monday it is "disconcerting" to see his tumultuous story portrayed in a new film.
>
> The movie based on the book "The Case For Christ," which opens Friday, has had encouraging feedback at test previews, author Lee Strobel told Newsmax TV host Miranda Khan on Monday's "Newsmax Prime."
>
> "A lot of faith-based films tend to be, if we're honest, a little cringeworthy, a little cheesy," he said. "And there's none of that in this movie. This is a movie that is so well done from a production standpoint, the acting, the script, that we really are convinced that Christians will go to it, they'll be encouraged . . . to come and see this story about a marriage, a love story, about a father-son story, and be drawn into the evidence."
>
> The movie stars include Mike Vogel, Erika Christensen, and Faye Dunaway.
>
> Strobel said after his wife converted to Christianity, he was anxious what it would mean for his marriage and "decided to . . . use my journalism and legal training and investigate the resurrection of Jesus, because I figured if I could disprove that, then the whole thing collapses."
>
> He said he came to "quite a different conclusion."
>
> "The evidence of history, I think, points powerfully and persuasively toward the conclusion that the resurrection is an actual historical event," he said. "So, I became convinced that it's true. I ended up becoming a Christian, and our lives changed from there."
>
> "It's a little disconcerting because it's my story, and it's not a pretty story at some points," he added. "A lot of our private arguments that we had about faith, they're very personal, they're now on the big screen.
>
> "But we felt like there's a lot of people who are curious about faith and wonder whether there's any real evidence that God exists and that Jesus is who he claimed to be, and we thought, you know, if it can help people come to some resolution of that or begin their own investigation, then it's worth kind of putting ourselves out there that way."

I know what you're thinking. Is this going to suck like so many other happy-clappy Christian movies, e.g. – God's Not Dead 1?

Apparently, it's actually a good movie:

> Last night when my wife and I came to an early preview of The Case for Christ movie we had high, but hesitant, hopes. Far too often we have seen a trailer for an upcoming Christian movie that looked pretty good, only to be disappointed when we saw the actual movie. I've often used the qualification for half-way decent Christian films, "*That was pretty good for a faith based film.*"
>
> No such qualification was necessary for The Case for Christ. It was well written and superbly acted. It triggered both cheers and tears. It was a good movie.
>
> This film was as much of a love story and a mystery as it was an apologetic for the Christian faith. It was equally relational and relentless. It kept you locked in right up until the climactic and emotional finale.
>
> I can't think of a movie better suited for you and your spouse to invite an unreached couple out to enjoy than this one. Afterward you can unpack the powerful message of the movie together. I call it a "*popcorn and coffee double date.*" Invite a couple out for a movie night, buy them tickets and popcorn and enjoy the movie together. Then take them out for coffee afterwards and ask,*"What did you think about the message of the movie?*" From there just let the conversation flow.

I almost NEVER go see movies in the theater, but I'm going to see this one for sure. I've read every single one of Lee Strobel's books. It's hard to say that they changed my life, because I was already a well-grounded Christian at that point. But it certainly gave me thrills to think that a very broad audience was going to get an evidence-based look at Christianity from those books. I expect the movie to reach an even larger audience than the books.

Here's a passage from the Bible that I think is suitable, although the historical context of the passage is admittedly not especially applicable to Lee.

Jeremiah 29:10-14:

> [10] "For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.
>
> [11] For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.
>
> [12] Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.
>
> [13] You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.
>
> [14] I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

You can find out more about the movie here.

Who wrote the gospels? When were they written? Are they based on eyewitnesses?

April 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at the data

Mike Licona is one of my favorite Christian historians, and so I'm happy to feature a lecture where he answers questions about the four gospels. He explains why the four biographies in the New Testament should be accepted as historically accurate: (55 minutes)

Summary:

- What a Baltimore Ravens helmet teaches us about the importance of truth
- What happens to Christians when they go off to university?
- The 2007 study on attitudes of American professors to evangelical Christians
- Authors: Who wrote the gospels?
- Bias: Did the bias of the authors cause them to distort history?
- Contradictions: What about the different descriptions of events in the gospels?
- Dating: When were the gospels written?
- Eyewitnesses: Do the gospel accounts go back to eyewitness testimony?

This is basic training for Christians. They ought to show this lecture whenever new people show up, because pastors should not quote the Bible until everyone listening has this information straight.

Mike Licona's big book on the resurrection is called "The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach". This book is not for beginners, but it is comprehensive. Dr. Licona also has a new book on the differences between the gospels out with Oxford University Press.

Apologetics in the gospel of John

April 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

John is my favorite gospel, because the thing reads like a well constructed essay. The author makes a number of claims about who Jesus was, and supplies evidence for each claim. There is nothing extraneous to John's thesis, the whole thing that he wrote is designed to make a case.

My friend Eric Chabot wrote a post on his blog on the use of apologetics in the gospel of John. (H/T J. Warner Wallace tweet)

Here is his thesis:

> In this post, I will highlight some of the different ways John utilizes apologetics in his testimony of who Jesus is.

He talks about how God has his messengers use evidence:

> 3.Signs and Miracles
>
> While actions by other prophets such as Ezekiel and Jeremiah etc. show some significant parallels to Jesus, Jesus is closer to the actions of the Jewish sign prophetssuch as Moses. "Signs" have a specific apologetic function in that they are used to provide evidence for people to believe the message of God through a prophet of God. Hence, the signs Moses does proves he is truly sent from God. Moses had struggled with his prophetic call when he said " But they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say 'The Lord did not appear to you.' (Exod. 4:1). God assures Moses that the "signs" will confirm his call:
>
> God says, "I will be with you. And this will be אות *"the sign"* to you that it is I who

> have sent you" (Exod. 3:12).
>
> "If they will not believe you," God said, "or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground." (Exod 4: 8-9).
>
> We see the signs are used to help people believe.
>
> Moses "performed *the "signs" before* the people, and they believed; … they bowed down and worshiped" (Exod. 4:30–31)

So what did Jesus do?

> "Works" are directly related to the miracles of Jesus (Jn. 5:20; 36;10:25; 32-28; 14:10-12; 15:24) and is synonymous with "signs." Interestingly enough, when Jesus speaks of miracles and he calls them "works" he doesn't refer to Exod. 4:1-9, but to Num. 16:28, "Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord." For example:
>
> Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. *The works* that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me" (John 10:25).
>
> If I am not doing *the works* of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe *the works,* that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." (John 10:37-38).
>
> But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, *the very works* that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me (John 5: 36)
>
> **"Sign"(*sēmeion*) is used seventy-seven times (forty-eight times in the Gospels). As far as the "signs' Jesus does, 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 42:18; 61:1). In John's Gospel, Jesus performs three "signs," at the beginning of his ministry; the water turned into wine at Cana at Galilee (2:1-12), the healing of the son of the royal official at Capernaum (4:46-64), and catching of the fish in the sea of Galilee (21:1-14). The link between the first two signs in Jn 2:12 while the link between the last two are seen in Jn 7:1, 3-4, 6, 9. Jesus follows the pattern of Moses in that he reveals himself as the new Moses because Moses also had to perform three "signs" so that he could be recognized by his brothers as truly being sent by God (Exod 4: 1-9). In the exchange between Nicodemus said to Jesus, Nicodemus said, We know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous *signs* you are doing if God were not with him" (John 3:2)**
>
> Also, regarding miracles, in some cases the miracle is a witness against those who reject this evidence. John grieved: "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" (John

> 12:37). One result, though not the purpose, of miracles is condemnation of the unbeliever (cf. John 12:31, 37).

The gospel of John is *so good.* Or is it that Jesus is just so good to not be like some idiot who just says things that no one can test? That would be stupid and annoying – it's much better for Jesus to do these signs so that people could believe him about his identity and purpose. Do you like Jesus? I like Jesus.

I read John a long time ago, when I was about 10 or 11 years old.I can't remember what I thought of it, but it probably had a very good effect on me as far as making me think that Christianity was something that I ought to look into. The gospel of John is that good. Philippians is still my favorite book of the Bible (because it's practical, duh), but John is the best introduction. It's the first thing a non-Christian should read to at least understand what Christianity is all about. Everybody should at least know that!

Trump signs bill to allow states to drug-test applicants for unemployment benefits

April 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted Cruz and and his supportive wife Heidi

I liked this story, because not only did it talk about Ted Cruz, but it also shows a major difference between Republicans and Democrats.

The story is from the far left Dallas Morning News.

Excerpt:

> President Donald Trump on Friday signed legislation backed by two Texas Republicans that will allow states to expand the pool of applicants for unemployment benefits who can be drug tested.
>
> The bill, sponsored by Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and Rep. Kevin Brady of The Woodlands, nullifies a Labor Department rule that went into effect in September limiting drug tests to applicants who had a job that does regular drug screenings.
>
> "Under the previous administration, the Department of Labor undermined the ability of states to conduct drug testing in their programs as permitted by Congress," Cruz said in a written statement. "This rule was yet another example of executive overreach by the Obama administration, and I commend President Trump for signing this resolution into law."
>
> **The measure traveled down a partisan path in Congress, passing through the Senate earlier this month with a party-line vote. Four Democrats in the House voted in favor of the bill in February, but no Texans.**
>
> "After 5 years of battling with the Obama Department of Labor, states like Texas will now be allowed to drug test folks on unemployment to ensure they are job ready from day one," Brady said in a written statement. "This is a win for families, workers, job creators, and local economies."

> […]"We are not helping anyone by leaving them in a position where they are dependent on and addicted to drugs," Cruz said.

I find this law so reasonable that I cannot believe that anyone who has a job and pays taxes could oppose it. Now, it's true that a lot of Democrats either don't work or get money from government salaries, government spending, or welfare. But even so, I would expect them to see that it is wrong to waste the taxpayer dollars of honest workers and their entrepreneurial employers on people who are addicted to drugs.

I hope that this bill will clear the way for conservative governors to get people off of welfare and into the workplace.

My favorite governor is Scott Walker, and he is discussed in this recent article from the center-left The Hill.

Excerpt:

> Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker (R) on Monday said he would ask the state's Republican-led legislature to undertake one of the most aggressive welfare reform packages since a wave of new measures passed in the mid-1990s.
>
> **Walker's plan, "Wisconsin Works for Everyone," would impose new work requirements on both able-bodied adults with school-age children who receive state food assistance and those who receive housing assistance. Both work plans, which would be tested on a pilot basis, would require recipients to be employed for at least 80 hours per month, or to be enrolled in job training programs. Those who do not meet work requirements would see part of their benefits cut.**
>
> "We believe our public assistance programs should ask able-bodied adults to take steps toward self-sufficiency through work, while also providing comprehensive tools to help them get and keep a job," Walker said Monday.
>
> The Wisconsin Republican has made welfare reform a key element of his second term in office.
>
> "In 2017, we are going to push the federal government to allow Wisconsin to go even further, to be a leader once again on welfare reform," Walker said last week during his State of the State address.
>
> **The plan proposed Monday would expand job training programs and employer resource networks for those who receive government aid. It would create an earned income tax credit specifically aimed at getting younger Wisconsinites into the workforce, and it would require existing business license requirements to be reviewed by a state panel in hopes of reducing red tape.**

I also expect that Walker's plans will get no Democrat support.

It really says something about how differently Republicans and Democrats view the

money they take from taxpayers. Republicans want to be responsible in how they spend taxpayer money, whereas Democrats want to waste it so they can feel generous and preen in front of crowds about how generous they are. But you can’t be generous with someone else’s money.

The best way to help a person who is dependent on government is not to keep them on drugs, and keep them on welfare. They need to guided out of drug use, and into a job. Forging your own success makes you happier than being dependent anyway.

Mainstream conservative news site reviews The Case for Christ movie

April 11, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This review is from Ed Morrissey of Hot Air, a major conservative news and commentary web site.

Excerpt:

> **[T]he pursuit of evidence forms the core of the film's narrative. In 1980, Lee Strobel (Mike Vogel) finds his marriage and professional life turned upside-down when his wife Leslie (Erika Christiansen) converts from their shared atheism to Christianity. Convinced that his wife has been brainwashed by a cult — being just a couple of years removed from the Jonestown massacre — Strobel decides to apply his journalistic expertise to debunk the central core of the Christian faith: the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Can Strobel find an evidence-based argument to refute Christianity, or will he be forced to face his own biases and assumptions?**
>
> Given that this is explicitly a conversion story (and that Strobel's book sold 14 million copies over the last two decades), that outcome isn't exactly a mystery, but the film isn't intended to be a mystery anyway. At its core, *The Case for Christ* is a love story on multiple levels rather than an exposition about evidentiary support for the Resurrection. The love Lee and Leslie have for each other becomes redemptive, but so too the terribly strained relationship that Lee has with his father, and that Lee also has with *The* Father.

I think the love story is fine, because it is an winsome invitation for people watching who are not yet Christians to take a look at the evidence. People today are really struggling in their relationships because they have kicked God out of their partner-selection and how they relate to their partners. Most people today conduct their relationships as functional atheists, including Christians. Atheism is the denial of objective purpose in the universe, and a denial that there is any design for human behavior, and human relationships like love and marriage. Everyone is floundering about in a sea of relativism, trying to use each other like commodities in order to scrape out some happiness without having to love anyone else self-sacrificially. The idea that loving others self-sacrificially could actually be what we were designed to do (as revealed in the example of Jesus) is intriguing. But since it goes against our natural self-centeredness, something other than desire and emotion is going to have to drive the search for a better way forward. That something is God himself, revealing his existence and his character to us through evidence in nature, and through the historical evidence around the life, death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus. Evidence has the power to drive us against our own selfishness and hedonism, making us

capable of loving others, and helping us to choose those who will love us like Jesus, because they love God first and foremost.

Morrissey concludes:

> The production values match those of higher-level independent films. The casting of Vogel and Christiansen is especially successful, as they present a very realistic depiction of a young married couple in serious trouble. Faye Dunaway and Frankie Faison have smaller but notable roles, and the ever-estimable Robert Forster portrays Lee's estranged father. *Eight is Enough's* Grant Goodeve has a cameo, but veteran character actor Mike Pniewski's turn as the Chicago Tribune's religion editor might be the most memorable outside of the featured cast. The direction and cinematography are straightforward and not at all overdone, with no "shaky cam" usage to generate a false sense of style. The film does an excellent job of recalling the 1980-81 period without making the mistake of falling back into kitsch, opting instead for a look as realistic and nuanced as the film itself.
>
> It all adds up to a compelling and very *human* story about love, redemption, faith, reason, and finding peace with all of them. With the emergence of *Risen* and *The Case for Christ*, the faith-based segment of the film market has come into its own. On the Hot Air scale, I'd give it a five:
>
> - 5 – Full price ticket
> - 4 – Matinee only
> - 3 – Wait for Blu-Ray/DVD/PPV rental or purchase
> - 2 – Watch it when it hits Netflix/cable
> - 1 – Avoid at all costs

If Christianity is anything, Christianity needs to be a worldview – a picture of reality. It's not a set of stories designed to make us feel good about our attempts to eek out pleasure by doing whatever we want. It's not a community, nor even worship songs that make us have feelings. There has to be something objective that is incumbent on us whether we like it or not. The call of Christianity is to turn around and go in a different direction, re-prioritizing goals in our lives according to someone else's leadership and example. That's not going to be possible unless we really believe that this behavior is in line with the way the world really is. For those born and raised in a society infused with secularism, we are already confronted with widespread beliefs that challenge the existence of God and miracles like the resurrection. We have to do something to break out of those background beliefs that we just absorbed uncritically. We have to pursue truth and conform our worldview to the evidence so that the behaviors of a Christian become natural and normal, against our natural self-centered desires and feelings.

My hope is that a large number and people will watch this movie and understand the factual foundations of Christianity for the first time. Maybe they will finally see themselves as guilty or refusing to take a look at the evidence. The problem with unbelief

is that it really is a willful closing of one's eyes against reality, so that one can continue to be in control. To search for the evidence is to be open to changing our deepest desires to match reality. Something that no non-Christian in the history of the world has ever done.

Consider John 18:37:

> [37] "You are a king, then!" said Pilate.
>
> Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

Exactly right. Jesus came to demonstrate the reality of God's existence and his power as Creator by giving us a historical resurrection that we could investigate using the ordinary methods of doing history.

And we know that miracles like the resurrection are possible from the scientific evidence for a cosmic beginning, and for cosmic fine-tuning, as Romans 1 explains.

Romans 1:18-20:

> [18] The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,
>
> [19] since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.
>
> [20] For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made,so that people are without excuse.

This is the way the world really is, and we have to adjust to reality, because of the evidence.

Let's hope that God uses this movie to get a lot of people to re-think whether they have been pursuing truth the way they should be. It's very tempting to forget evidence and just pursue pleasure, but we were not intended to do that by the God who made us and everything else.

Obama was an active ally and supporter of Russia for his entire administration

April 12, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton ended Republican-led opposition to Russian aggression

I guess everyone remembers how Hillary Clinton presented the Russian Foreign Minister with a "reset" button that they pushed together, signaling to the world that Democrat politicians wanted nothing to do with the view that there was anything morally wrong with Putin's thugocracy.

But all of a sudden, the same Democrats who bent over for Russia for eight years are complaining about Russia today.

This article from National Review is a helpful reminder of exactly what the Democrats did with Russia during the last eight years.

Excerpt:

> He reset with Russia shortly after its clash with Georgia in 2008. He concluded the New START agreement with Moscow that reduced our nuclear forces but not theirs. When candidate Mitt Romney warned about Russia in the 2012 campaign, Obama rejected him as a Cold War relic. The president then went on to forge an agreement with Russia's ally Iran to allow it to preserve its nuclear program. During the red-line fiasco, he eagerly grasped a lifeline from Russia at the price of accepting its intervention in Syria. He never budged on giving Ukraine "lethal" weapons to defend itself from Russian attack. Finally, Obama cut U.S. defense spending and cracked down on fossil fuels, a policy that Russia welcomed since its economy is dependent on high oil prices.
>
> Put all of this together, and it's impossible to conclude anything other than that Obama was a Russian stooge, and not out of any nefarious deals, but out of his own naivete and weakness. Obama didn't expect any rewards when he asked then-Russian President Dmitry Medvedev during a hot-mic moment at an international meeting to relay to Vladimir Putin his ability to be more "flexible" after the 2012 election; he was, to put it in terms of the current Russian election

> controversy, “colluding” with the Russians in the belief it was a good strategy. His kompromat was his own foolishness.
>
> The cost of Obama’s orientation toward Russia became clearer during the past two weeks. When he pulled up short from enforcing his red line, an agreement with the Russians to remove Bashar Assad’s chemical weapons became the fig leaf to cover his retreat. This deal was obviously deficient, but Obama officials used clever language to give the impression that it had removed all chemical weapons from Syria. Never mind that Assad still used chlorine gas to attack his population — exploiting a grievous loophole — and that evidence piled up that Assad was cheating more broadly.
>
> The Russians eagerly covered for Assad because he’s their client. What was the Obama administration’s excuse? It effectively made itself a liar for the Russians at the same time Moscow bolstered the Assad regime we said had to go, smashed the moderate opposition we were trying to create and sent a destabilizing refugee flow into Europe. This was a moral and strategic disaster.

Now, I’m pretty sure that if you ask a typical Democrat, they won’t remember any of the things that Obama did to embolden Russian aggression in the last eight years.

Remember this?

And how about this?

Obama was our President for the last eight years, and he supported our enemies (Russia, Iran, Cuba) and opposed our allies (Georgia, Ukraine, Israel). And now the Democrats complain about the evil Russians – the same evil Russians that they supported when they voted for Obama. *They voted for the pro-Russia candidate and now they are complaining about the empowered Russia their President created.* Obama sold our American foreign policy out for the Russians and the Iranians – that’s what Democrats voted for. TWICE.

Most people on the left can’t remember what Obama did in the last 8 years with Russia and Iran. Democrat political views just consist of demanding taxpayer-funded condoms, so that they can get drunk, get pregnant with a hot guy, then kill the baby or go on welfare. There really isn’t anything more to being a Democrat than that. Democrats today look at Syria and don’t realize that their President has been backing the two biggest Syrian supporters for the last eight years: Russia and Iran. They complain about the very situation that they created when they elected an America-hating progressive.

Foreign. Policy. Matters.

Jay Richards answers the objection “Who Designed the Designer?”

April 13, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

So I have presented the evidence for a cosmic beginning and for cosmic fine-tuning many times to atheists, going slowly over the history of cosmology and astrobiology, pointing out the discoveries that led all the science-accepting grown-ups to accept the Big Bang cosmology and the cosmic fine-tuning.

A couple of examples of evidence for the cosmic beginning: cosmic microwave background radiation and nuclesosynthesis.

And some examples of cosmic fine-tuning would be the gravitational force and the strong force.

The response from atheists who listen to this evidence is usually something along the lines of “Am I going to Hell?” and “Who made God?” or “Who Designed the Designer?”

Well, I’ve answered the Am I Going To Hell response to scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer in another place. The response to the who made God question is simple: 1) scientists acknowledge the Big Bang as the beginning of all space, matter and time itself. 2) the cause of the beginning of time must exist outside of time, and the cause is therefore eternal, and CANNOT therefore come into being itself.

For an answer to the last question about the Designer, let’s turn to Jay Richards, probably my favorite Christian thinker, (tied with Stephen C. Meyer).

Watch this for two minutes:

I just want to make sure that everyone gets the two points there.

First point is obvious. When it comes to objects that have the appearance of design, we

have to look at the features of the object itself. If the object exhibits hallmarks of design, e.g. – specified complexity, irreducible complexity, etc., then we have to compare the design and non-design explanations for the object and choose which is the most reasonable. We do not need to know anything about who the designer(s) are, and you can see this in other areas like SETI, where nothing at all may be known about the originator of a coded message from space, yet still naturalists can accept that a coded message was sent (e.g. – first 100 prime numbers in beats and pauses).

The second point is that atheists have to account for the fine-tuning within their worldview as well, and give an explanation that is more probable than a Designer.

Questions like "Who made God?" and "Who Designed the Designer?" are asked in order to *avoid having to provide an explanation for the scientific evidence we have today.* It's not that atheists have the answer to the evidence, it's that they want to ask silly questions in order to avoid having to comply (rationally speaking) with the scientific evidence they see with their own eyes. Today, we have the scientific evidence for a beginning of the universe, and for fine-tuning of the universe to support complex, embodied intelligent agents. So that's why you need to focus them on the important question: *what is the explanation for the scientific evidence within an atheistic framework – how do they fit the scientific evidence we have today into their worldview?*

You have to watch out for their response of forced ignorance in the face of scientific evidence and demand that they deal with the scientific evidence that we have today. The more progress we have made in science in the last 50 years, the stronger the evidence for a cosmic beginning and for cosmic fine-tuning have become. This isn't going away. Denial of today's evidence and hoping for reversals of what we know today is not a rational response to the scientific evidence of today.

Let me give you a case in point. There was a recent debate where a prominent atheist said he was not even sure that the universe began to exist, despite the fact that this is guaranteed under the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem. The BGV theorem says that any universe that is on balance expanding must have a cosmic beginning. (And our universe will be expanding outward, eternally) Atheists like to clump together on atheist podcasts, atheist blogs and atheist chat rooms where they can all agree amongst themselves that the universe didn't have a beginning and wasn't designed – so that they can keep living as if no one designed them for a purpose that might interfere with their desires. But this is just willful ignorance in the face of solid scientific evidence, and we need to demand that they account for the scientific evidence we have today within their worldview. We can't allow them to continue in their Flat-Earth worldview because they just plug their ears and shut their eyes to the progress of science. Self-inflicted ignorance is not a rational response to the progress of science.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

April 14, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.

20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University

> physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

April 15, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

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20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

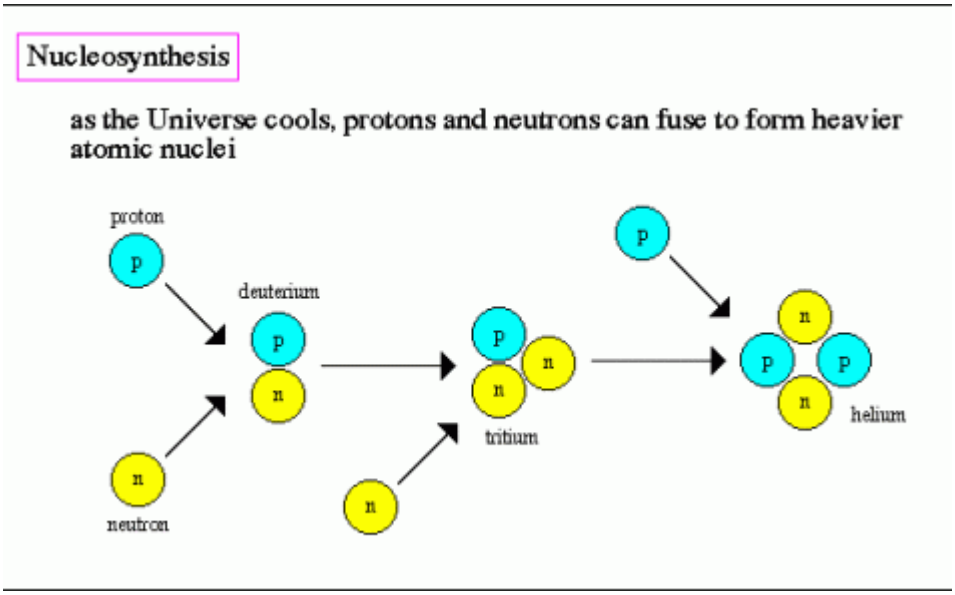

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major

> triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 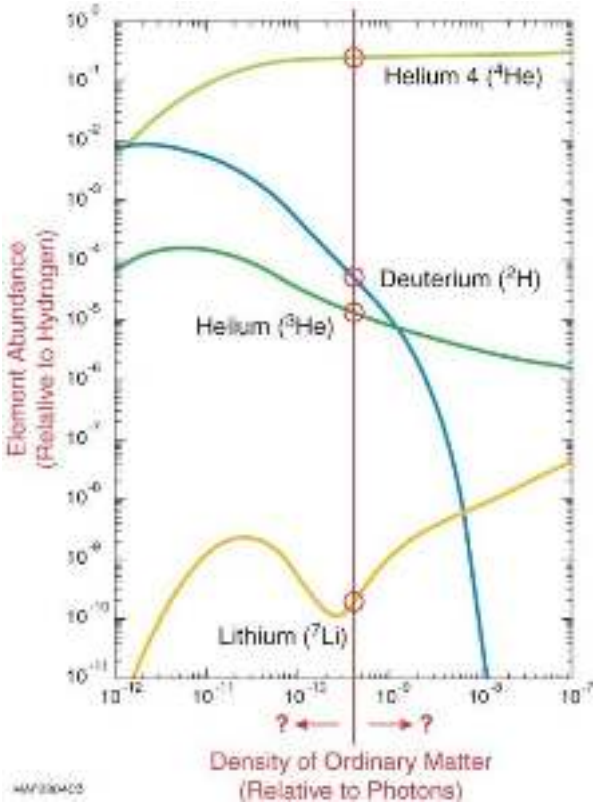
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-

> based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

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N.T. Wright lectures on the seven mutations caused by resurrection of Jesus

April 16, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's a video of his case for the resurrection:

You can read a written version of the lecture here.

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable* apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an

invented exaltation was already available to do the job.

3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.
5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

UT Arlington student commits suicide after being disciplined for rejecting gay man

April 18, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

This is from David Fench in National Review.

> On June 2, 2016, Klocke committed suicide — mere days after learning that he'd been disciplined for allegedly "harassing" a gay student. Last week, his family filed a lawsuit, laying out claims that — if proven true — should send chills down the spines of parents of male children.
>
> […]He claimed that the gay student called him "beautiful." Klocke then typed into his web browser, "Stop, I'm straight." The gay student replied, "I'm gay" and then allegedly kept glancing at Klocke, who eventually got up and moved seats.
>
> […]**After the class, the gay student allegedly approached a senior administrator he knew, the university's vice president of student affairs and dean of students. Rather than launching the school's Title IX process for resolving complaints of sexual harassment or gender discrimination, the dean assisted the student in preparing a claim that circumvented normal procedures entirely.**
>
> **The dean then allegedly assigned the case to the school's associate director of academic integrity, who promptly issued an order prohibiting Klocke not only from contacting his accuser, he also prohibited him from attending the class where the incident occurred, and — crucially — from contacting any member of the class, directly or through any other person. Later, he reportedly barred Klocke's father, an attorney, from**

> **attending a meeting regarding the case, and then "decided" the dispute without following university-prescribed procedures, without giving Klocke the opportunity to contact or call witnesses, and indeed without hearing from any witness who could corroborate either student's claims. The school, for its part, denies that it departed from mandatory processes and asserts that it "followed its policies and procedures."**
>
> **The associate director of academic integrity found Klocke responsible for "harassment," placed him on probation for the remainder of his academic career at the university, and prohibited him from returning to the class where the incident occurred, though he could work on "group projects outside the classroom."**

It is important to note that there are two competing accounts of what happened, and those are laid out fully in David French's article.

The College Fix has more on the lack of evidence from the gay student, and the actions of the university:

> Here's a list of UTA violations of Klocke's rights under its own rules, according to the suit:
>
> Not letting him go back to his class or contact anyone in class to find potential witnesses
>
> Never telling him he was under Title IX investigation
>
> Never telling him a student affairs official, who was advising the accuser, was running the investigation
>
> Charging him with "physical abuse" (a claim never made by the accuser) and a "non-specific" harassment violation, without giving him the required hearing and opportunity to present witnesses
>
> Withholding a list of witnesses and describing the accuser's report as a neutral "statement of evidence"
>
> Refusing to tell Klocke that his father, an attorney, could accompany him in a meeting with Moore if they "waived confidentiality"
>
> Even when both Snow and Moore privately agreed they couldn't keep Klocke out of his class based on the evidence, Moore told Snow he had "worked it out" to keep Klocke out, the suit claims.
>
> The next day he received a letter stating he had been found responsible for harassment, putting him on disciplinary probation through graduation.
>
> Schow concludes:
>
> Klocke had no prior history of mental health problems, and by all accounts was happy and looking forward to the future after graduation.

Personally, I believe the account of the student who committed suicide, that seems more in line with what universities are doing to straight white male students these days. Progressives are constantly faking hate crimes against themselves in order to punish those who refuse to approve or participate in what they are doing. They can’t live and let live, they have to crush and overpower all dissent. It really makes me wonder why you hear so little about the corrupting effects of sin in churches today. People who sin can become dangerous to people around them, because they seek to stifle out any dissent or disapproval to what they are doing, by any means necessary. Sin can cause intolerance, in short.

What scared me the most during 8 years of the Obama administration

April 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?

Progressives (especially liberal white women with non-STEM degrees) often ask me how I can be a conservative since I don't fit their preconceived notion of a white male Republican. I could talk about how conservative policies are better for my life plans, but usually I just start with a story of something that the Obama administration did that scared me *personally* – namely, using the IRS to attack conservative groups right before the 2012 elections, so that Obama would win re-election.

Nothing was ever done to the IRS leaders who persecuted this conservative groups under the Obama administration, of course.

However, there might be a happy ending to this story under a Republican administration, as the Daily Signal reports:

> Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady and tax policy subcommittee Chairman Peter Roskam sent a letter to Attorney General Jeff Sessions Wednesday, noting the Obama administration refused to review the information the committee gathered in its extensive investigation into the matter.
>
> According to the congressmen, there is clear evidence Lerner willfully partook in criminal activity during her tenure as the Exempt Organizations division director, yet former President Barak Obama insisted there was "not a smidgeon of corruption" at the agency.
>
> **"On April 9, 2014, the House Committee on Ways and Means voted to send a letter to the Department of Justice referring former IRS Exempt**

> **Organizations Division Director Lois G. Lerner for criminal prosecution," Brady and Roskam wrote. "As indicated in the attached letter, the Committee's nearly three-year investigation uncovered evidence of willful misconduct on the part of Ms. Lerner. Despite this fact, and for what many believe were purely partisan reasons, the prior administration refused to review Ms. Lerner's misconduct."**
>
> **The lawmakers cited evidence showing Lerner provided misleading information to Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration's questions and the use of her personal email, which put taxpayers' confidential information at risk of exposure, as reasons for reopening the investigation.**
>
> The DOJ announced in October 2015 it would not pursue criminal charges against Lerner at the close of its two-year probe. The investigation faced challenges due to Lerner's crashed hard drive, the absence of email archives, and the destruction of over 400 electronic backup tapes, and it was unable to prove the IRS official "intentionally discriminated against an applicant based upon viewpoint" and cited line-employees' "ignorance, inertia" and "negligence" for delays in tea party applications for r 501(c)(3) status.
>
> "It is clear that when the DOJ announced in October 2015 that it would not bring charges against Lois Lerner, the agency was following President Obama's signal on how he wanted the investigation to be handled," they continued. "Taxpayers deserve to know that the DOJ's previous evaluation was not tainted by politics."

For now, thought conservative lawmakers are at least trying to get some mony taken out of the IRS budget.

Jim Jordan, my favorite Congressman, explains in USA Today:

> Part of my time in Washington has involved investigating the IRS targeting of conservative groups. For a sustained period, the IRS systematically targeted Americans based on their political beliefs.
>
> **Congressional efforts to investigate the matter were thwarted. IRS Commissioner John Koskinen was brought in to clean up the mess, but under his watch, 422 back-up tapes containing potentially 24,000 emails relevant to the scandal were destroyed. Such actions leave the American people with little trust in the IRS.**
>
> Not only did the IRS violate the First Amendment with its targeting, the agency may have violated the Fourth with the use of "Stingray" surveillance technology. Last year, the House Oversight Committee held a hearing about the technology, which tricks cellphones into pinging off a Stingray device to reveal the phone's location. Such technology might have a place at the FBI, but why does a tax collecting agency need a device that can track citizens' whereabouts?
>
> These issues, along with other egregious examples of wasteful spending (one IRS

> employee spent $43,726 at a Ritz Carlton near Washington, D.C.) warrant the Congress to use its power of the purse to demand accountability.
>
> Likewise, it's up to leaders at the IRS to prioritize their budget on the agency's core mission: collecting tax revenue and serving its customers, the American taxpayers. Instead of using taxpayer dollars to violate constitutional rights, the agency should refocus on its priorities. Applying budget cuts in a way that hurts its core mission is just another in a long line of poor decisions by IRS leadership.
>
> Given the history of waste, disregard for civil liberties and lack of internal controls at the IRS, it is no surprise that the Trump administration would like to cut the budget. Doing so sends a signal that this Congress and administration will not reward unlawful behavior.

It seems pretty to me at least that the previous administration repeatedly used government power to target and attack those who disagreed with their communist – pacificist policies. I'd like to see Jeff Sessions punish the progressives from the last administration so that they learn the hard way to obey the law, even if they have no sense of morality. If we had electe Ted Cruz, then he would have just abolished the IRS outright, and that would be a wonderful thing.

Duquesne university student government wants to ban Chick-Fil-A from campus

April 20, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

This story from Campus Reform is worth considering, especially for people who think that it is safe to support traditional marriage in public.

Excerpt:

> Student senators at Duquesne University are lobbying for the cancellation of plans to bring Chick-fil-A to campus in the fall, saying they "fear" for the safety of their peers.
>
> The popular fast-food chain came under fire in 2012 after its president, Dan Cathy, admitted his company was "guilty as charged" for donating to organizations opposed to same-sex marriage, prompting years of protests by LGBT activists, especially on college campuses.
>
> Now, however, Duquesne University Student Senator Niko Martini has reignited concerns over the company's past by proposing a resolution at the Student Government Association's (SGA) March 26 meeting to nix the restaurant from a list of proposed overhauls to the school's dining options.
>
> "Chick-fil-A has a questionable history on civil rights and human rights," Martini remarked in a statement to *The Duquesne Duke*. "I think it's imperative [that] the university chooses to do business with organizations that coincide with the [university's] mission and expectations they give students regarding diversity and inclusion."

He hates the chicken, because the chicken is pro-natural-marriage, and he can't deal with that. He has to silence anyone who disagrees with him on the definition of marriage.

This reminds me of the time that the gay activist Floyd Lee Corkins entered the Family Research Council building in Washington D.C. with several Chick-Fil-A sandwiches – *and a handgun.*

The radically leftist Washington Post wrote about what happened:

> The man convicted of shooting an unarmed security guard at the Family Research Council last summer was sentenced Thursday to 25 years in prison.
>
> Floyd Lee Corkins II had plotted to kill "as many people as possible" at conservative organizations that he viewed as anti-gay before he was stopped by the guard, Leonardo Johnson.
>
> U.S. District Chief Judge Richard W. Roberts called Corkins's crime "horrific" and praised Johnson, who was shot in the forearm while subduing Corkins and taking his gun.
>
> "The carnage you wanted did not happen only because an ordinary man showing extraordinary courage stopped you," Roberts told Corkins before announcing his prison term. "Killing human beings is not political activism. It is criminal behavior."
>
> […]In February, Corkins pleaded guilty to three felony charges: a federal charge of transporting a firearm and ammunition across state lines, and D.C. charges of assault with intent to kill and committing an act of terrorism while armed.
>
> **Corkins, who volunteered at a gay community center in the District, told investigators that he was angry with organizations he considered anti-gay, such as the Family Research Council and the fast-food chain Chick-fil-A. The head of the restaurant chain had spoken out at the time against same-sex marriage.**
>
> In a multimedia presentation in the courtroom, federal prosecutors described Corkins's planning of the shooting as "deliberate and clear-headed."
>
> **The day before, Corkins had purchased 15 Chick-fil-A sandwiches that he carried in his backpack along with the 9mm SIG Sauer pistol. He planned to "smear" the sandwiches in the faces of his victims to make a political statement, according to court documents.**

Is Corkins any different from these other anti-marriage campus radicals? He opened fire, I guess, and was convicted of domestic terrorism. The campus radicals haven't shot anyone who disagrees with them so far. But the same hate is there in both.

Can atheists help themselves to objective morality on atheism?

April 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Here's Dr. William Lane Craig explaining why atheists can't help themselves to objective morality, given a worldview of atheism:

He presents 3 reasons why in the video, all of which are also discussed in his Defenders class:

> The mention of Plato brings to mind another possible atheistic response to the first premise of the moral argument that *if God does not exist, then objective moral values and duties do not exist*. Plato thought that the Good just exists as a sort of self-subsistent idea, as an entity in and of itself. Indeed, it is the most real thing in reality. The Good simply exists. If you find this difficult to grasp, join the company! Nevertheless, that is what Plato believed. Later Christian thinkers, like Augustine, equated Plato's Good with the nature of God. God's nature is the Good, and so it was anchored in a concrete object, namely, God. But for Plato, at least, the Good just sort of existed on its own as a kind of self-existent idea.
>
> Some atheists might say that moral values, like Justice, Mercy, Love, and Forbearance, just exist all on their own as sort of abstract moral objects. They have no other foundation; they just exist. We can call this view Atheistic Moral Platonism. According to this view, moral values are not grounded in God. They just exist all on their own.
>
> Unintelligibility of Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> What might we say by way of response to Atheistic Moral Platonism? Let me make three responses. First, it seems to me that this view is just unintelligible. I

> simply don't understand what it means. What does it mean, for example, to say that the moral value Justice just exists? I understand what it means to say that a *person* is just or that some *action* is just, but what does it even mean to say that in the absence of any persons or any objects at all, that Justice just exists? It is hard to understand even what this means. Moral values seem to be properties of persons, and so it is hard to understand how Justice can just exist as a sort of abstraction.
>
> Lack of Moral Obligation on Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> Secondly, a major weakness of this view is that it provides no basis for objective moral duties. Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that moral values like Justice, Love, Forbearance, and Tolerance just exist on their own. Why would that lay any sort of moral obligation upon me? Why would the existence of this realm of ideas make it my duty to be, say, merciful or loving? Who or what lays such an obligation upon me? Why would I have the moral duty to be merciful or loving? Notice that on this view moral vices like Greed, Hatred, and Selfishness presumably also exist as abstractions. In the absence of any moral law giver, what obligates me to align my life with one set of these abstract ideas rather than with some other set of abstract ideas? There just doesn't seem to be any basis at all for moral duty in this view. In the absence of a moral law giver, Atheistic Moral Platonism lacks any basis for moral obligation.
>
> Improbability of Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> Finally, thirdly, it is fantastically improbable that the blind evolutionary process should spit forth exactly those kinds of creatures that align with the existence of this realm of abstract values.1 Remember that they have no relationship with each other at all. The natural realm and this abstract moral realm are completely separate. And yet, lo and behold, the natural realm has by chance alone evolved exactly those kind of creatures whose lives align with these moral duties and values. This seems to be an incredible coincidence when you think about it. It is almost as if the moral realm knew that we were coming! I think it is a far more plausible view to say that both the natural realm and the moral realm are under the sovereignty of a divine being, who is both the creator of natural laws that govern the physical universe and whose commands constitute the moral laws that govern our ethical duties. This is a more coherent view of reality. Theism is a more coherent view because these two realms of reality don't fall apart in this disjointed way. They are both under the sovereignty of a single natural and moral law giver.
>
> For those three reasons, Atheistic Moral Platonism is a less plausible view than theistic based ethics such as I have been defending.

And now, I must be mean to the atheists, because I think this me too nonsense is just ridiculous, desperate intellectual dishonesty.

I remember having a conversation with one of my IT project managers who was an

atheist, and she asked me what I thought would happen to dogs when they died. I said "well they don't have an afterlife so they just rot away when we bury them and get eaten by worms". She was aghast and said "no they don't, they go to Heaven". That was just her wishful thinking, there. And that's what morality on atheism is: wishful thinking. It's just an appearance package that gets bolted on absolute meaninglessness and hedonism. And even if the atheist tries to make traditional decisions in their own lives, they typically push for full-on dismantling of Judeo-Christian values, especially in the sexual realm. And that spills over into abortion, divorce, same-sex marriage and government restraints on free speech, conscience and religious liberty.

Dear atheists: you cannot duct tape morality onto nihilism and have it be rational. We know you're doing it to feel good about yourselves and to appear normal instead of wearing your nihilism openly. But your faked morality is not even close to the morality of theists, and especially not of Christian theists. Christians go against their self-interest because we imitate the self-sacrificial love of Christ, who gave himself as a ransom to save others. That makes no sense on an atheistic worldview, since this life is all you have, and there is no afterlife where your actions are in the context of a relationship with that self-sacrificial Son of God. In any case, free will doesn't exist on atheism, so that means no moral choices regardless. These are the common sense implications of atheist first principles, and in fact that's what you hear expressed from the finest atheist scholars: no free will, no right and wrong, no life after death.

If you want to see what atheists really think about morality, then take a look at this post featuring Matt Dillahunty, where he is asked to condemn the Holocaust as objectively wrong, and he refuses to do it. That's intellectually consistent atheist morality right there. If the universe is an accident, and human beings evolved by accident, then there is way things ought to be, and no way we ought to act. And no one is there is no ongoing two-way relationship for our conduct to be part of, anyway. On atheism, human beings will die out individually and collectively in the heat death of the universe. Once the heat death of the universe arrives, there will be no one left to care how we lived after we're dead – there is no one waiting for us who cares how we act towards him and towards others. Atheists can arbitrarily put any limits they want on their actions, based on what makes them feel good, and what makes people like them, perhaps taking account the arbitrary customs and conventions of the time and place they find themselves in. But it's delusional and irrational make-believe for atheists to claim that morality is rational on their worldview.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones

- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

The Thoroughly Rational Conversion of Michael Minot

April 22, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

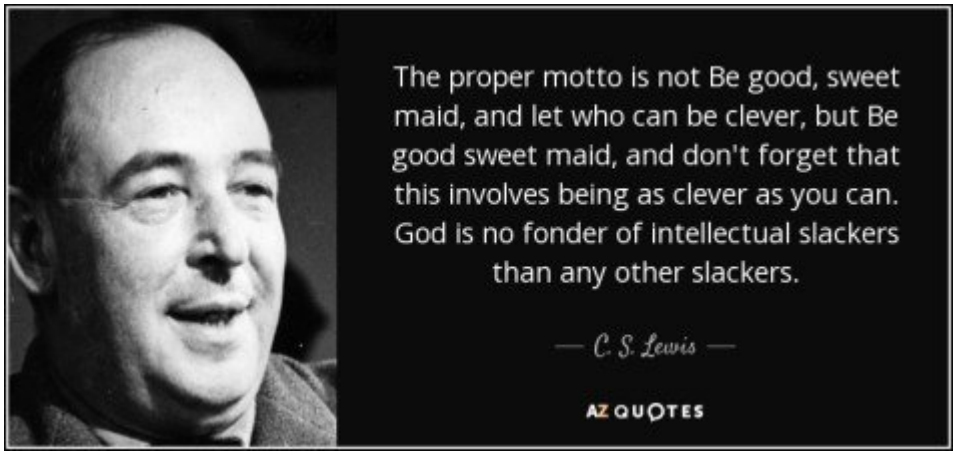

C.S. Lewis has some words to live by for you

One of the things I've noticed hanging around in church on and off the last 20 years or so is that it often seems to be the case the church leaders seem to value some people as leaders more than others. Specifically, it seems to me that church leaders prefer to put athletes and cheerleaders into leadership positions, and they tend to be skeptical of people who have intellectual conversion stories, and intellectual interests. I think I actually got the phrase "jocks and cheerleaders" from Dr. John Mark Reynolds when describing who churches tend to prefer, so I'm not just making this up.

But not everyone sees things that way. Of all the people I've met or read, I probably agree with Terrell Clemmons the most. And if I disagree with her, then I usually find out that she is right later on. Pretty much everything she writes about is not only relevant, but practical, which is amazing for a person who writes about topics related to Christian belief and practice. One of the things she likes to write about is the background stories of people who were intelligent and successful as non-Christians, who then went on to become Christians through a careful study of the evidence, *and then went on to make a difference through outward-focused enterprises.*

Let's start with this article from Salvo Magazine about a successful atheist lawyer named Michael Minot.

Terrell writes:

> Never in his 28 years did Mike Minot imagine he would entertain this unthinkable thought, yet lately of an evening he might easily be found pacing around his house like an awestruck research scientist muttering things like, "It just can't be! . . . *Can it?"*
>
> The seismic shift had started quite unexpectedly just a few months prior. He was three years out of law school, and life was great. After years of living on beans and weenies as a student, he had arrived on the scene of success. He had a growing law practice, money in his pocket, and a teeming social life. The world

> was his oyster.
>
> Then he had received an odd phone call. Normally confident and well-spoken, Jim, whom he'd met while studying for the Florida bar exam, spoke awkwardly, struggling uncharacteristically to get his message out. Finally he got to his point. "Sharon and I have been watching what's been going on in your life. And we decided we would give you a call and invite you to do something. We believe the Scriptures are very important. They're very important to our lives, and they're helpful to us. We know what you think about spiritual matters, but we want to challenge you to take some time at this point in your life and reexamine these things."
>
> To say Mike was taken aback would be an understatement. He was a perfectly contented atheist, and he had no interest in interrupting his prosperous life to look at anyone's answers to questions he wasn't even asking. But he did value the relationship he had with Jim, Sharon, and their two adorable kids. If he were to summarily dismiss this suggestion, what would that do to their friendship? It seemed he should at least put forth a cursory effort, if for no other reason than for the health of the relationship.

First thing to note is that the people who ask Michael to give Christianity a look are successful and intelligent themselves. Not only is Jim studying for the Florida bar exam (so that he has credibility to another lawyer), but Jim's wife has also given him more credibility by marrying him. Married couples are typically more "grown-up" than singles, and I'm saying that as a chaste single myself who has been successful in education, career and finances. Marriage requires a whole set of behaviors from people that singles don't have to perform. The point is, though, that Michael is being approached by people from the same professional and social background. He is not being approached by a missionary or a street preacher, but by someone who has been effective in their education, career and marriage.

This really does matter – Christians are often perceived (rightly) as over-emotional, irrational, impractical, and driven more by community than by truth-seeking. It's very important for Christians who want to produce a return that they not be living with their parents in their 20s, have gap-filled minimum-wage resumes, have $20,000 in student in outstanding student loans from an easy, unused non-STEM degree, and no achievements except zip-lining, skydiving, surfing, and fear-of-missing-out travel.

The journey starts with science:

> With no predetermined plan, he delved into both the Scriptures and science. The Scriptures felt intimidating, though, and he was more comfortable with science. Not two weeks in, he found something that totally blew his mind. Ironically, it was something that had been there all along: the solar system—and the mind-boggling precision by which it operates. He marveled at the elegant complexity of it. It appeared way too precise, statistically speaking, to be an accident.

> Suddenly, this was no longer a casual exercise. He *had* to find the natural explanation for the solar system. If he continued on his merry life without it, he would forever live plagued by lingering thoughts that he could be living a lie. Never did he want to go in for a lie, and intellectual honesty demanded that he keep searching.
>
> So he put on his miner's lighted helmet, so to speak, and went to work. But instead of locating the natural explanation for the solar system, he found himself turning up all manner of equally troublesome phenomena—the fine-tuning of the earth for supporting life, with its balance of nitrogen to oxygen ratios and plate tectonics; the information content of DNA; and the complexities of animal and human life, to name a few. The perplexities mounted, and the whole project snowballed. He would go looking for the explanation for one natural marvel, only to encounter two more crying out for explanation.

If I could communicate one thing to the church, it would be this: whether you agree with the old universe and old Earth timelines or not, everyone who attends church for a decade should be able to state the kalam cosmological argument, the fine-tuning argument, the intelligent design argument, the fossil record argument, and the habitability argument, to the degree where they are naming scientists, discoveries and specific books where the evidence for these arguments are laid out.

Unfortunately, thanks to the "leadership" of many prominent fideist pastors, many Christians have adopted an attitude of outright suspicion to science, preferring instead to pre-suppose the truth of the Bible by blind faith ("the burning of the bosom", as the Mormons say), and refusing to study anything outside the Bible that might establish the necessary prerequisites to taking the Bible seriously. Successful non-Christian professionals looking to evaluate Christianity, this blind-faith approach is rightly seen as anti-intellectualism.

More:

> Other complications did follow, though. He had trustingly believed teachers and authorities who had taught that everything could be explained naturalistically. What else, now, needed to be reexamined? This went beyond science and philosophy to sociology, psychology—*everything* had to be rethought according to this completely new paradigm. He would later liken it to being planted on a whole new planet.
>
> And his entire social life collapsed in a matter of weeks. But he joined a church, and it became his new social center as well as his spiritual lifeline. He volunteered to serve as a jail chaplain in the evenings, a post he filled to great satisfaction for fifteen years. He met his wife Nichole at church, and they went on to adopt five children. Life settled into a richly rewarding concert of family, jail ministry, and law. Nothing he'd ever envisioned back in his atheist days could match the prosperity of these blessings.

> At first glance, it may seem ironic that an atheist committed to seeing everything through the "lens of science" would come back around to see God through the lens of science. But the truth is, it wasn't science *per se* that had hidden his Creator from view. Rather, it was the lens of philosophical naturalism *imposed onto science*—both in education and throughout the broader culture—that had fostered and fueled Mike's unchallenged atheism.

Naturalism is a philosophy – a philosophical assumption. It's not science. The origin and design of the universe are science. DNA is science. Habitability constraints are science. The sudden origin of major body plans in the fossil record is science. There are no scientific arguments for atheism. There's just speculation driven by naturalistic philosophy.

In the end, Minot turns his life around 180 degrees, and puts his intellect and professional abilities to work for the gospel. You can read about all the ways he is making an impact in Terrell's article in Salvo Magazine. Always remember stories like these when you are making decisions about your own education and career. God is still working, still reaching out to people through science and history, appealing to their minds for a fair hearing, and then asking for their best efforts for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A liberal feminist comedian, her beliefs about God and how she formed them

April 23, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Consider this article written by a liberal ex-Catholic woman whose 7-year-old daughter is an atheist.

First the biography of the author:

> **Carolyn Castiglia** is a New York-based comedian/writer wowing audiences with her stand-up and freestyle rap. You may recognize her hip-hop alter ego Miss CKC from Comedy Central, VH1 and MTV2. Carolyn's web vids have been nominated for an ECNY Award and featured in two issues of *EW* magazine. She's appeared in *TONY*, *The NY Post*, *The Idiot's Guide to Jokes* and *Life & Style*. You can find Carolyn's writing elsewhere online at MarieClaire.com and The Huffington Post.

Look at what she wrote:

> I was raised Catholic, and like most people my age who were raised Catholic, I no longer attend church on Sundays. We're "recovering Catholics." That's what so many of us call ourselves. We're still disgusted with the Church for the way it covered up the sex abuse perpetrated against my generation and roll our eyes at the Church's stance on things like abortion, gay marriage and women's rights.
>
> […]I learned a lot about being a Good Person from the things I heard in church… I wanted to be a Good Person, not just because only Good People go to Heaven. I just liked the idea. The meek shall inherit the Earth. It sounded right. Somehow all this sh*t I'm swallowing now, it's gonna pay off later.

> I'm pretty much agnostic now (sometimes believing more strongly, other times thinking the concept of God is kind of a joke), but I value the way the idea of God has gotten me through the rough patches. And that has been the payoff. Somehow this notion that there is a giant man in the sky with long hair and a big robe who will hug you from heaven if you need it and carry you on the beach when you've had one too many wine coolers to walk without falling down and getting sand all up in your bikini has been very comforting to me. The image of Jesus but as God but totally as a bro (a homeboy, if you will), there's something righteous about it, if you know what I mean.
>
> But the way I imagine God has changed over the years — He's gone from being a person, a man, to being more of a Thing, a notion. Goodness. The Oneness of the Universe. With something female in there. The energy that keeps the whole thing afloat. God as I know it now when I know it is kind of a cocktail made from a shot of Buddhism, a shot of feminist activism and a splash of ginger ale (because that, my friends, is something you can always count on).

Now the Christians who are reading this will be cringing because we know that these beliefs are not taken out of the Bible. She seems to be speaking more about her opinions rather than what is true. She doesn't seem to be focused on finding truth, but more on being a "good person" and having God as a crutch to pull out if she falls down while pursuing her own plan.

She's wrong that "good people" go to Heaven. Only people who accept Jesus as their leader (Lord) and accept his death as a sacrifice for their rebellion against God (Savior) are resurrected to eternal life. If she is a relativist, then I guess what she means by being a "good person" is that she thinks of herself as good and that the people around her think of her as good. However, the main purpose of Christianity is not to be a good person, or to have people like you or to be happy and comforted. The main goal of Christian living is to puzzle about the truth about God's existence and character, and then to re-prioritize your life based on who Jesus is and what Jesus has done for us. So the focus in Christianity is on truth, and that's what her church should have taught her from a young age. And we are the ones who must read the Bible, we must not rely on someone else to do it for us.

But there is more to her story – her child has been affected by her problematic views of Christianity and God.

She writes:

> My daughter, on the other hand, at the ripe old age of 7, is convinced that there is no God. Not even a god. Yup, my kid's an atheist. And she pretty much has been since she was 5.
>
> It's not for lack of exposure to God or god or even gods and spirituality, because she has attended Church and church and a UU "church" and it has made no impact. We've prayed together. I talk about God sometimes, in a good way.

> When I asked her recently why she doesn't believe in God she told me, succinctly, "Because I know too much about science!"

Is it a good idea to take scientific advice from a 7-year-old child? I think that we should instead prefer to learn from scholars who research and debate issues in science and religion, and then teach the child based on what we have learned. This is why it was so important to emphasize *how people arrive at true beliefs* in the church. If she had done the work herself to arrive at true beliefs, then she would know what to say to her child's presumptuousness.

More:

> The other night over dinner my daughter looked up at me and said, "Who created the Earth?" And I said, "Well, some people believe that God created the Earth, and some people believe that nature is a creation unto itself." My daughter replied, "I think nature is a creation unto itself." I said, "You know, you're pretty staunch about the fact that there is no God." And she told me, "Well, I don't think he exists. If he does, he's a ghost, and that's weird. I just don't believe it. You know, there are Universes beyond our Universe. Once you get outside the Milky Way galaxy, there's a lot more stuff out there."
>
> Wow. When I was 7 I didn't know there was a world outside my town.

So the universe created itself? How could it create itself? It would have to have existed in order to do anything, including create. So it would have to have existed… *before it began to exist*. That's a contradiction, and so it cannot be true. Funny how kids decide whether God exists or not without knowing what they are talking about. It's the parents' job to be able to guide the discussion, not just sit there.

She continues:

> Oh sure, my mother thinks raising a child without religion is dangerous. "I understand you don't think she needs God now, Carolyn. But you gotta give her religion so it's there for her when she needs it later." When the shit hits the fan, when everything falls apart. When you realize there is no one but God you can trust.

See, here is where she needs someone to point out that it's not God's job to help you through crises or make you happy. No one who reads the Bible thinks that God is our cosmic butler. We know from reading the Bible that he has purposes that are different from our purpose to be happy.

How feminism undermines a woman's ability to attract a husband

April 24, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

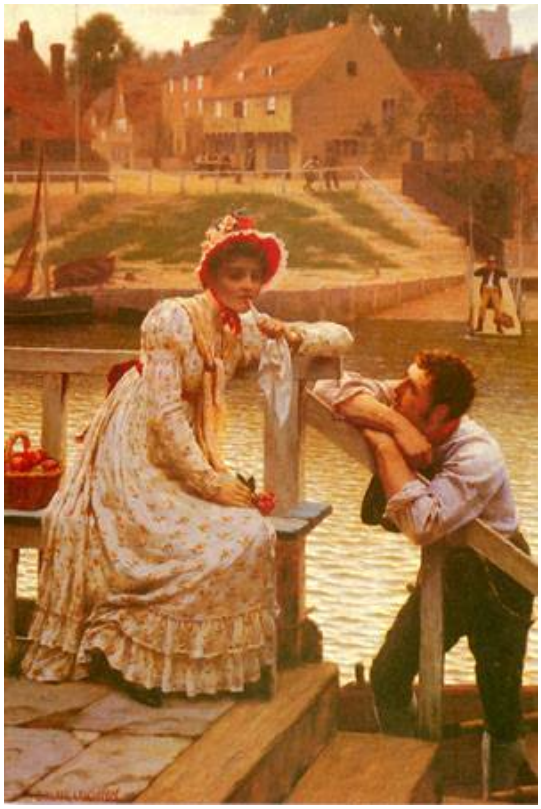

Painting: "Courtship", by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

A while back, Duane Caldwell mentioned this article from Life Site News in the comments of this blog post.

It says:

> Fewer young men in the US want to get married than ever, while the desire for marriage is rising among young women, according to the Pew Research Center.
>
> Pew recently found that the number of women 18-34 saying that having a successful marriage is one of the most important things rose from 28 percent to 37 percent since 1997. The number of young adult men saying the same thing dropped from 35 percent to 29 percent in the same time.
>
> Pew's findings have caught the attention of one US writer who maintains that feminism, deeply entrenched in every segment of the culture, has created an environment in which young men find it more beneficial to simply opt out of couple-dom entirely.
>
> Suzanne Venker's article, "The War on Men," which appeared on the website of Fox News in late November, has become a lodestone for feminist writers who have attacked her position that the institution of marriage is threatened, not enhanced, by the supposed gains of the feminist movement over the last 50

> years.
>
> “Where have all the good (meaning marriageable) men gone?” is a question much talked about lately in the secular media, Venker says, but her answer, backed up by statistics, is not to the liking of mainstream commentators influenced by feminism.
>
> She points out that for the first time in US history, the number of women in the workforce has surpassed the number of men, while more women than men are acquiring university degrees.
>
> “The problem? This new phenomenon has changed the dance between men and women,” Venker wrote. **With feminism pushing them out of their traditional role of breadwinner, protector and provider – and divorce laws increasingly creating a dangerously precarious financial prospect for the men cut loose from marriage – men are simply no longer finding any benefit in it.**
>
> As a writer and researcher into the trends of marriage and relationships, Venker said, she has “accidentally stumbled upon a subculture” of men who say “in no uncertain terms, that they’re never getting married.”
>
> **“When I ask them why, the answer is always the same: women aren’t women anymore.” Feminism, which teaches women to think of men as the enemy, has made women “angry” and “defensive, though often unknowingly.”**

Actually, feminism teaches men to regard *certain men* as the enemy: men who are chaste before marriage, and who want marriage and who want children and who expect women to stop working when young children arrive are the enemy. But bad boys who don’t want marriage, and just want to have fun and thrills without imposing any pro-child structure on the relationship are still very much in demand.

As I read it, the problem is that women have a natural desire to get acceptance sexually from “bad boys” men who exhibit traits that are entirely opposed to the traditional tasks of a husband in marriage.

Instead of preferring men with abilities as protector and provider and moral / spiritual leader, women have been pushed by feminism to deny the value of these traditional male roles. In the past, women were taught to resist the temptation to pick the bad boy, because there was widespread suspicion of single women’s ability to make rational choices about men. Their fathers and brothers and churches pushed them towards men who had marital ability: chastity, self-control, communication skills, personal responsibility, enterprise, etc. Today, no one is telling women to pick men who have demonstrated ability in husband behaviors. So, they just pick the ones that look the part: height, muscles, facial hair, tattoos, piercings, etc. Those men give them the tingles, and they are more interested in showing off than in picking a man who can do the marriage job.

The feminist solution to the natural desires of women to prefer the bad boy is not to direct them towards good men who have marriage ability. It's to continue to direct them to bad boys, but to remove the need for a provider man by directing them into life-long careers and/or dependency on government welfare programs. I am all for women getting STEM degrees and working prior to the arrival of young children, but feminism is really telling women that staying at home as a wife and mother is wrong. And so, rather than looking for a man who can allow them to stay home with young children, they focus on working or collecting welfare for fatherless kids.

The article says this:

> [T]he link between marriage and childrearing has become disconnected in the minds of the so-called Millennial generation, those between 18 and 29. While 52 percent of Millennials say being a good parent is "one of the most important things" in life, just 30 per cent say the same about having a successful marriage, an attitudinal survey found.
>
> The gap, of 22 percentage points, between the value Millennials place on parenthood over marriage, was just 7 points in 1997. **The research found that Millennials, many of whom are the children of divorce and single-parenthood themselves, are also less likely than their elders to say that a child needs both a father and mother at home, that single parenthood and unmarried couple parenthood are bad for society.**

Young women keep choosing bad boys who are fun and non-judgmental and live in the moment, then they are disappointed when these free and easy bad boys reject the responsibilities of husbands: fidelity, providing, etc. From their small sample of bad boys, the young women conclude that all men are incapable of marriage. But the reason they get the relationship results they get is because they choose poorly in the first place. Unfortunately, this just drives them further into their careers or further into dependency on big government.

What I've been finding lately is that the traditional skills that women used to have that made them suitable as wives are disappearing. The traditional skills are soft skills like listening, caring, nurturing, encouraging, supporting, being responsible and frugal, etc. Women traditionally were able to focus on relationships and sacrifice fun and thrills in order to invest in others and build them up. Today, I see a lot of forced busy-ness and impatience with the needs of others. Instead of focusing on relationships, there is a focus on selfishness. An impatience with the demands of relationships, and a desire to delay marriage and child-bearing as long as possible.

Former Obama official admits Democrats manipulated climate data to push policy

April 25, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

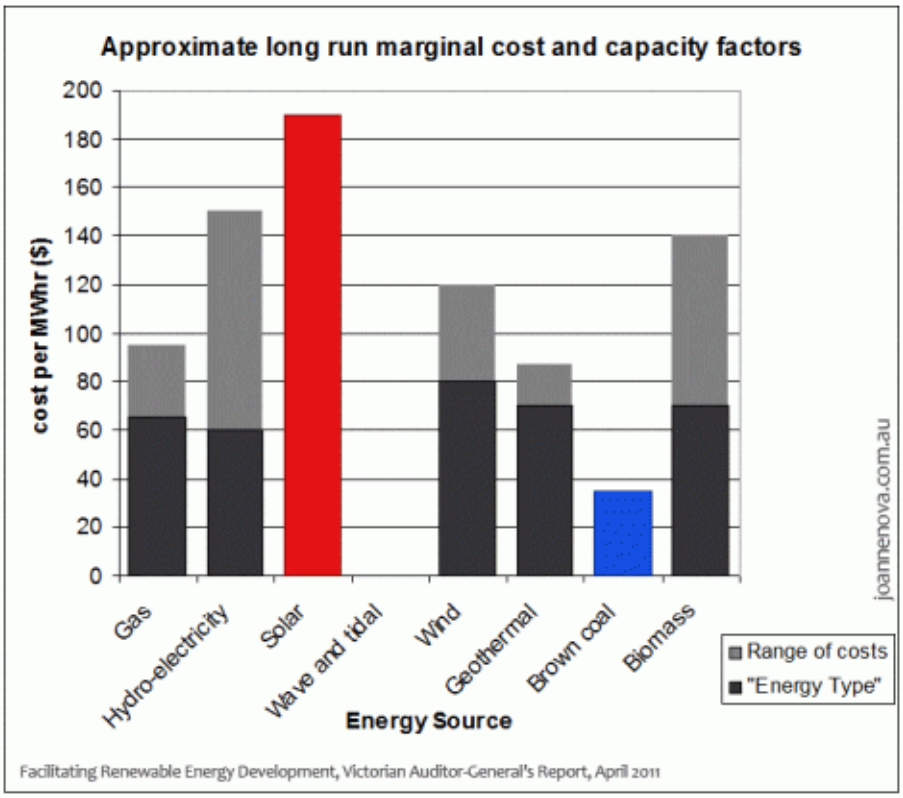

Cost of renewable wind and solar energy

This story is from the Daily Signal, and it also appeared at the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> A former member of the Obama administration claims Washington, D.C., often uses “misleading” news releases about climate data to influence public opinion.
>
> Former Energy Department Undersecretary Steven Koonin told The Wall Street Journal Monday that bureaucrats within former President Barack Obama’s administration spun scientific data to manipulate public opinion.
>
> “What you saw coming out of the press releases about climate data, climate analysis, was, I’d say, misleading, sometimes just wrong,” Koonin said, referring to elements within the Obama administration he said were responsible for manipulating climate data.
>
> He pointed to a National Climate Assessment in 2014 showing hurricane activity has increased from 1980 as an illustration of how federal agencies fudged climate data. Koonin said the assessment was technically incorrect.
>
> “What they forgot to tell you, and you don’t know until you read all the way into the fine print, is that it actually decreased in the decades before that,” he said. The U.N. published reports in 2014 essentially mirroring Koonin’s argument.

> The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported there "is limited evidence of changes in extremes associated with other climate variables since the mid-20th century" and current data shows "no significant observed trends in global tropical cyclone frequency over the past century."
>
> Press officers work with scientists within agencies like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and NASA and are responsible for crafting misleading press releases on climate, he added.
>
> Koonin is not the only one claiming wrongdoing. House lawmakers with the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, for instance, recently jump-started an investigation into NOAA after a whistleblower said agency scientists rushed a landmark global warming study to influence policymakers.
>
> Texas Republican Rep. Lamar Smith, the committee's chairman, will "move forward as soon as possible" in asking NOAA to hand over documents included in a 2015 subpoena on potential climate data tampering.
>
> […]Neither agency responded to The Daily Caller News Foundation's request for comment.

Why would the Obama administration lie about science?

Well, first of all, after being elected, Obama funneled piles of taxpayer money to so-called "green" businesses owned by his campaign fundraisers.

Here is an example reported by the Washington Free Beacon:

> New disclosures show that one of President Obama's bundlers is the wife of an executive at an energy company that received a more-than-$1.2 billion Department of Energy (DOE) loan guarantee for a solar power plant.
>
> Arvia Few is a bundler for the Obama re-election campaign who has promised to raise between $50,000 and $100,000. She began bundling for Obama in the first quarter of 2012. Her husband, Jason Few, is an executive at a company that has benefited handsomely from the Obama administration's clean energy spending, records show.
>
> The U.S. Department of Energy granted NRG Solar a $1.237-billion loan in September 2011 to help build NRG's California Valley Solar Ranch, which is described as "a 250 MW alternating current PV solar generating facility" by the U.S. Department of Energy.
>
> Few became senior vice president of Houston-based Reliant Energy in 2008. He was named President of Reliant in May 2009 when NRG Energy acquired Reliant for $287.5 million. He currently serves as executive vice president and chief customer officer of NRG Energy.
>
> "This investment and its outcome represent a pattern in which the Obama Department of Energy took promises of technological development with an undue amount of credence," says energy expert Kenneth P. Green, a resident

> scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

Scientists looking for grant money to research global warming have a lot to gain from exaggerated results. It’s a vicious circle: the scientists scream about a crisis, and the government funnels them more money to them to research “solutions”. Everybody wins – except taxpayers who have to foot the bill.

Ted Cruz introduces bill to fund border wall with confiscated drug cartel assets

April 26, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Senator Ted Cruz and Senator Jeff Sessions

Unfortunately, Donald Trump is backing away from his national security wall proposal.

Far-left ABC News gleefully reports:

> President Donald Trump stepped back Monday from demanding a down payment for his border wall in must-past spending legislation, potentially removing a major obstacle to a bipartisan deal just days ahead of a government shutdown deadline.
>
> Trump told a gathering of around 20 conservative media reporters Monday evening that he would be willing to return to the wall funding issue in September, according to two people who were in the room. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the get-together, which was not originally intended to be on the record.
>
> The border wall money is fiercely opposed by Democrats, whose votes are needed to pass the government-wide spending legislation that comes due Friday at midnight. The wall is also unpopular with many Republicans, and GOP negotiators on Capitol Hill were uneasy about the clash over the wall potentially sparking a government shutdown.
>
> **Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York, who has a key role providing Democratic votes to pass the legislation, welcomed Trump's reported shift on the wall.**
>
> **"It's good for the country that President Trump is taking the wall off the table in these negotiations," Schumer said late Monday. "Now the bipartisan and bicameral negotiators can continue working on the**

> **outstanding issues."**
>
> **House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California said, "The president's comments this evening are welcome news given the bipartisan opposition to the wall, and the obstacle it has been to the continuing bipartisan negotiations in the appropriations committees."**

Trump promised to make Mexico pay for the border wall, but that was never going to happen. And at least Democrat leaders Schumer and Pelosi are pleased with his backing down on the border wall.

Team Trump is now trying to say that he would build the wall later this year, or maybe next year.

The Washington Examiner reports:

> With the threat of a shutdown looming, press reports said Monday evening that Trump was admitting that funding for the border wall could be passed later this year. **Tuesday morning, White House counselor Kellyanne Conway confirmed on Fox News that the deadline might be able to slip even further, into next year.**

Into next year.

However, there is some good news from Senator Ted Cruz, who has an idea for where to get the money from for the national security wall *right now.*

He posted this about his new legislation:

> U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) today introduced the Ensuring Lawful Collection of Hidden Assets to Provide Order (EL CHAPO) Act. The bill would reserve any amounts forfeited to the U.S. Government as a result of the criminal prosecution of "El Chapo" (formally named Joaquin Archivaldo Guzman Lorea) and other drug lords for border security assets and the completion of the wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. The U.S. Government is currently seeking the criminal forfeiture of more than $14 billion in drug proceeds and illicit profits from El Chapo, the former leader of the Sinaloa drug cartel who was recently extradited to the U.S. to face criminal prosecution for numerous alleged drug-related crimes, including conspiracy to commit murder and money laundering.
>
> **"Fourteen billion dollars will go a long way toward building a wall that will keep Americans safe and hinder the illegal flow of drugs, weapons, and individuals across our southern border," said Sen. Cruz. "Ensuring the safety and security of Texans is one of my top priorities. We must also be mindful of the impact on the federal budget. By leveraging any criminally forfeited assets of El Chapo and his ilk, we can offset the wall's cost and make meaningful progress toward achieving President Trump's stated border security objectives."**

I'm disappointed with Trump. He hasn't gotten a lot done so far, even with a Republican

House and Senate. He told everyone that this national security wall was his first priority, but now he’s delaying construction. It’s not going to be easier to get the funding for this after Republicans have already funded the government. I am all for a shutdown of non-essential government services until we get the wall. But then again, I really meant it when I said I was for border security. And I like to win.

Trump budget funds Obamacare, refugees, Iran deal, Planned Parenthood

April 27, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

National Enquirer: "Trump Must Be President"

This is from the Conservative Review:

> When Republicans initially gained control of the House in 2011, they promised to defund Obamacare, end funding for Planned Parenthood, and cut spending in the first budget bill in March. Even though they only controlled one branch of government, the understanding was that, buttressed by an electoral landslide, Republicans would stand their ground on at least half of their demands. Well, they caved immediately and then promised us they'd fight "the next time" in the fall budget. It became an inside joke among conservatives on Capitol Hill – "don't worry, we'll do it the next time" – even though the same rationale for the maniacal capitulation the first time would always persist in the subsequent iterations.
>
> Now, with control of all three branches and a president who sold himself in the primaries as the antithesis of weak-kneed Republicans who don't know the first thing about tough negotiations, we are in the exact same position. Last night, President Trump signaled that, after not even fighting on refugee resettlement and Planned Parenthood, he would cave on the final budget issue – the funding of the border fence. But fear not, he'll resume his demand … the next time!

The true-believing Trumpers are telling me that Trump will do all the best things in time, so that I will get tired of all the winning. But the odds are less likely that we get the votes without the leverage of shutting down the government:

> If Republicans can't deliver on any of these basic promises when their political capital is the strongest and they stand the farthest from the next election, what

> dynamic will change in the next year to provide conservatives with a single legislative victory?
>
> If the budget will never be used as leverage to fight back against the courts, for example, on refugees and visas from the Middle East, what is stopping the courts from erasing even the few remaining benefits of this presidency in its executive orders? If Congress fails to act, the courts will likely “strike down” the executive order against sanctuary cities.

Next time? That’s not what he said when he was running for President. He sounded like such a tough guy, and many people who preferred confidence over resume were fooled. But confidence doesn’t do anything, it’s just appearance. The reality is now upon us. Now we know for certain.

When Trump did some good things at the beginning of his Presidency, I was glad, and blogged about them. Now he is doing horrible things, and showing his true nature as a Democrat. I think it’s fair to mock the people who believed his confident, insulting words – instead of insisting on seeing evidence from past battles that would show his real priorities.

New study: fracking doesn't contaminate groundwater

April 28, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

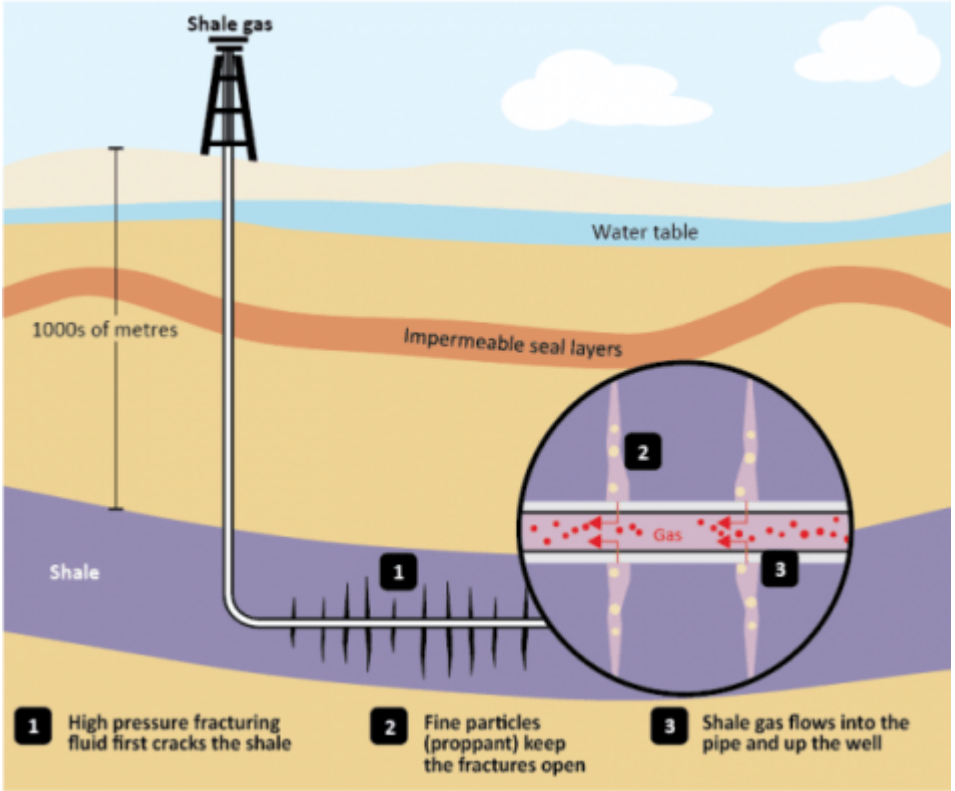

Hydraulic fracturing, also known as "fracking"

I doubt this will be interesting to the Bill Nye / Neil deGrasse Tyson socialist crowd, but it will be interesting to conservatives, who do care about the latest peer-reviewed research.

This was reported by the radically leftist National Public Radio:

> Fracking the Marcellus Shale did not pollute groundwater in northwestern West Virginia, but wastewater spills did contaminate surface water, according to a new study from Duke University.
>
> […]The study was unique in that it monitored drinking water wells and surface water over three years, a longer time period than previous research on the impact of fracking on drinking water. The study also used multiple methods of determining the source of the pollution, and was able to draw on baseline water quality data.
>
> **"Based on consistent evidence from comprehensive testing, we found no indication of groundwater contamination over the three-year course of our study," said Avner Vengosh, professor of geochemistry and water quality at Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment. "**
>
> **[…]The peer-reviewed study was published recently in Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta, a European journal.**
>
> […]Vengosh said the baseline data, gathered from drinking water wells before

> shale gas drilling occurred nearby, boosts their confidence in the results. A total of 112 water wells were sampled over three years, with 20 sampled before drilling or fracking occurred.

Now, I know that Democrats will not like this study, but the study was rigorous and thorough:

> David Yoxtheimer, a hydrogeologist with Penn State's Marcellus Center for Outreach and Research, who was not involved in the study, said the report is comprehensive in that it used a number of different tools to determine the source of contamination.
>
> "This is a good example of an objective study," said Yoxtheimer. "They kept their scientific glasses on and looked at it objectively. It's the type of science we need more of out there. Collect data without motive and come back and report."

Prior to this study, we had a peer-reviewed PNAS study:

> **Now comes a study, conducted by scientists at the University of Texas and published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences — and co-financed by one of the highest-profile environmentalists in the country — that shows much smaller amounts of methane emissions associated with fracking, far less than environmentalists and the Environmental Protection Agency have contended.**
>
> […]The study, billed as the first to measure the actual emissions of methane from natural gas wells, finds these emissions were, in some cases, only about 2% of the most recent national estimate by the EPA in 2011. An upcoming EPA rule, effective January 2015, requires all methane to be captured when liquids are removed after drilling.
>
> […]"For those wells with methane capture or control, 99% of the potential emissions were captured or controlled," the study notes.
>
> […]Thanks in large part to fracking, energy-related carbon dioxide emissions in 2012 were the lowest in the U.S. since 1994, at 5.3 billion metric tons. With the exception of 2010, emissions have declined every year since 2007.

Bill Nye and Neil DeGrasse Tyson didn't like that study, because it was experimental science.

They also hated this report from the far-left EPA, also reported in the radically leftist National Public Radio.

Excerpt:

> **The Environmental Protection Agency says it finds no evidence that hydraulic fracturing — better known as fracking — has led to widespread pollution of drinking water. The oil industry and its backers welcome the long-awaited study while environmental groups criticize it.**

> **“We found the hydraulic fracturing activities in the United States are carried out in a way that has not led to widespread systemic impacts on drinking water resources,” says Tom Burke, Science Advisor and Deputy Assistant Administrator of EPA’s Office of Research and Development. “In fact, the number of documented impacts to drinking water resources is relatively low when compared to the number of fractured wells,” he adds.**
>
> The EPA’s draft assessment was conducted at the request of Congress. “It is the most complete compilation of scientific data to date,” says Burke, “including over 950 sources of information, published papers, numerous technical reports, information from stakeholders and peer-reviewed EPA scientific reports.”

I remember telling Democrats in my previous job about these peer-reviewed studies and DOE reports and EPA reports, and they denied all of this data. I guess they had their feelings roused by carefully produced Hollywood movies, and their worldviews have been set in stone. They believe what they believe, and the strength of their beliefs are not going to be affected by peer-reviewed science.

What is Jesus' view of the definition of marriage?

April 29, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

I noticed that there is some silly video put out by the atheists at BuzzFeed where a bunch of people claiming to be Christians deny that Jesus has any authority in their worldview.

Here's what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
>
> 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"
>
> 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

> 10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”
>
> 11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don’t overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are supposed to be willing to endure suffering rather than side with non-Christians against God’s authority. So really not sure what the BuzzFeed non-Christians are doing in that video.

Matt Walsh had a fine article about the Buzzfeed video.

He said:

> As Christians, our goal is not to avoid being like the big bad “other Christians,” but to strive to be like Christ Himself. This is one of the advantages to having an Incarnate God. He went around acting and speaking and teaching and generally functioning in our realm, thereby giving us a model to follow. This is the model of a loving and merciful man, and *also* a man of perfect virtue who fought against the forces of evil, condemned sin, defended his Father in Heaven with sometimes violent force, spoke truth, and eventually laid down His life for those He loved (which would be all of us).
>
> […]This is what it means to believe in Christ. Not just to believe that He existed, but to believe that Christ is Truth itself, and that everything He said and did was totally and absolutely and irreversibly true forever and always. Many Christians today — not only the ones in the video, but millions alongside them — seem to think we can rightly claim to have “faith” in Jesus or a “relationship” with Him while still categorically denying much of His Word. This is a ridiculous proposition. We can’t declare, in one breath, that Christ is Lord, and in the next suggest that maybe God got it wrong on this or that point. Well, we *can* make that declaration, but we expose our belief as fraudulent and self-serving. We worship a God we either invented in our heads, which is a false idol, or a God who is fallible, which is a false idol.

If you really accept Jesus as God, then you can’t think he is wrong when he explains what marriage is. Period. End of issue.

Real Christians don’t make excuses for sin. Real Christians present the gospel. The gospel is that all men have rebelled against God and fallen short of perfect submission to and obedience of him. For this, they deserve to be separated from God eternally. Jesus paid the price for this rebellion on the cross, and anyone who accepts him as Savior *and Lord* will be with God eternally after they die. There is no salvation apart from Jesus. That’s

what Christians say. And they say it regardless of how weird they look, and how many non-Christians don’t like them for saying it.

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

April 30, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

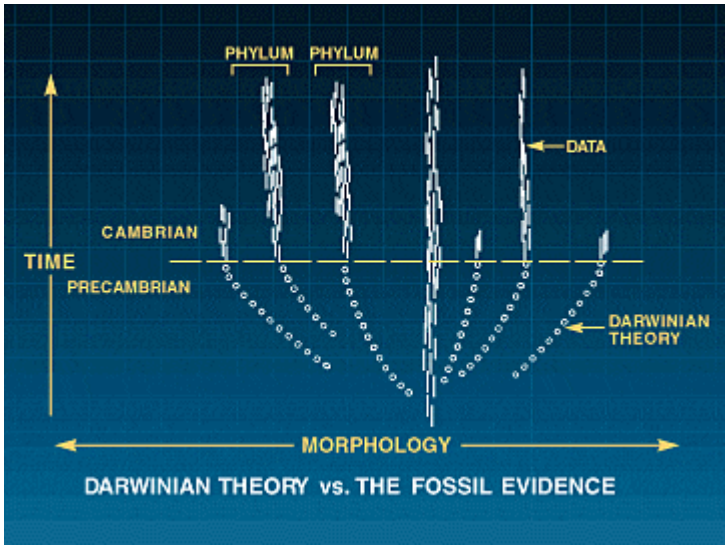

Cambrian Explosion

Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien "The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang" in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a

> unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and
> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

You can get a DVD of the lecture and other great lectures from Access Research Network. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

If you'd like to see Dr. Meyer defend his views in a debate with someone who reviewed

his book about the Cambrian explosion, you can find that in this previous post.

Further study

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

Ohio woman shoots intruder after he attacks her in her parents' home

May 1, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

If people only ever read the mainstream media on crime and self-defense issues, they would never learn why people choose to get gun licenses and buy guns. The would only ever learn reasons to ban guns and to disarm law-abiding citizens.

This story was reported in the Washington Free Beacon:

> An Ohio woman and her elderly parents are safe while the man who attacked her on Friday is in prison facing several pending charges.
>
> Kim Sinnott of Hamilton, Ohio, was at her parents' home in the early morning hours of Friday celebrating her father's 75th birthday when the home's alarm went off. She and her twin sister Tamie Lesher went to investigate the disturbance.
>
> "About 1:30 a.m. the alarm went off in the house," Sinnott told *Pantagraph*. "We noticed the light on in the garage. We saw somebody walking in the garage."
>
> That's when the pair came across a man police later identified as 21-year-old Mykale B. Davis. Sinnott pointed her father's .32 caliber pistol at the man.
>
> "I told him that I had a gun," she said. "I was standing there looking at him with the gun pointing at him. I told him a hundred times not to come out because I had a gun and that I would shoot and that we were waiting for the cops, that we had the cops on the line right now."
>
> That's when the intruder lunged at Sinnott and attempted to wrestle the gun away from her.
>
> "Anything could have happened by just the way he lunged at me, and I had the gun in his face and told him not to come out because I would shoot," she told the

> paper. “He probably thought I wouldn’t shoot.”
>
> But Sinnott did shoot the intruder.
>
> “When he grabbed me and pulled me down I was fearing for my life,” she said. “I shot him just for him to let me go. I don’t know if it was in the leg or in the foot. I was scared to death.”
>
> The shot caused the man to flee out of the garage and down the street where police later apprehended him.
>
> […]Sinnott said the incident has shaken her and her entire family. “God doesn’t give you anything you can’t handle, but I’m about done,” she said.

People who oppose guns typically oppose them because of feelings. Guns are loud and makes me feel scared, they say. But if you actually look at the scientific data, you’ll see that guns do reduce crime rates.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author’s most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: “Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world.” The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain’s Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England"s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

If you still think that guns are somehow bad for reducing crime, why not check out a formal academic debate featuring 3 people on each side of the debate?

If you want to know why the Democrat parts of the United States have such high rates of violence, then you need to look at the enormously high out-of-wedlock birth rates in the Democrat parts of the United States. Having babies before marrying causes fatherless children, and fatherless children are more likely to commit crimes. When Democrats stop paying single mothers money to have fatherless kids, then the crime rates in the Democrat parts of the United States will go down. It's a personal responsibility issue.

Nancy Fitzgerald: making a difference for God with students entering college

May 2, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

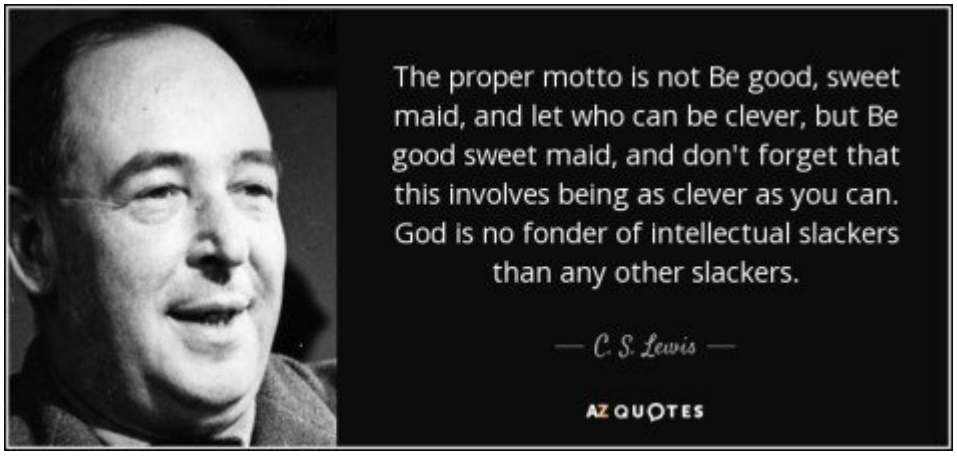

C.S. Lewis has some words to live by for you

About a week ago, I wrote a blog post about a column in Salvo magazine written by Terrell Clemmons, which she entitled "Captive No More: The Thoroughly Rational Conversion of Michael Minot".

What was exciting about that post was how Minot – a lawyer – was able to put his intellect to work as a Christian after his investigation of the evidence was complete.

I found another article by Terrell in Salvo magazine about another person who did an investigation of Christianity. After becoming a Christian, she also put her intellectual ability to work for her new Boss, and she produced an amazing return.

Terrell tells the story of Nancy, who lost her faith as a child when her two-year-old brother died. Despite letting go of God, she was a very capable student, had a good marriage and led a comfortable life:

> Life went on, but for Nancy, the carefree innocence of youth had died, and the emptiness of Stephen's crib did not compare to the barrenness in her soul. Days turned into years, and she went on to earn three degrees from Indiana University, no thanks to God, whom she managed fairly well to avoid thinking about.
>
> Until the later years of college, that is. *Is there really a God or not?* she wondered. *And what is my purpose in life?* She began asking people from all kinds of backgrounds what they believed. *Do you go to church? Why? Do you believe in God? Why?* This was not a casual survey. It was a serious attempt to get at the truth about reality. It was the "Christians" she found most interesting. And most disappointing. They would acknowledge that they *did* believe in God, but when pressed to explain *why*, not a single one could give a reason that made sense to her. Not. A single. One.
>
> "I was raised that way" or "I find comfort in it" simply would not cut it for her,

> and so she concluded that the whole Christian thing was either a grand hoax or a contrived crutch for weak people. Well, she was not one to be taken in, and she was certainly no weakling. Therefore, life might as well be about her own success and comfort. She decided she would be a nice atheist/humanist. In the unlikely event that there actually was a real God, he probably graded on a curve, anyway. She'd never killed anyone, and she had volunteered to serve at a church brunch once. Surely she would still get "in."
>
> She married Ed, a med student training to become a heart surgeon, and by age 32, had all the accoutrements of success and comfort: a nice home in the suburbs, four beautiful children, and a housekeeper and nanny to cover daily chores, leaving her free to play golf and enjoy life to her heart's content.

She wasn't able to get any answers to her questions from her friends. They seemed to be Christians for the emotional good it did them, or maybe for the community. They had never bothered to do any investigations of the normal questions that non-Christians ask. So, her atheism persisted.

Until one fine day:

> When her youngest child reached six months old, she jumped onto an amateur golf tour and took a skinny little Bible with her to the first tournament in Florida. She started reading in the Book of Genesis and right away saw a God who was angry, who didn't really like people, and who killed a lot of them, primarily by drowning.
>
> "I'm done," she said when a couple of friends dropped in and asked her what she was reading. "I can't believe in this God. Drowning. *Drowning. Really?*"
>
> As it turned out, the friends were Christians, and better-prepared than the average Christian to give her some direction. Oh no, Genesis is not the place to start, they said. She should read the Book of John.

Oh thank goodness. Yes, John is always the first book to read when you are investigating the Bible. It gives you the theistic framework and a report of a miracle that you can investigate using the ordinary tools of history.

What happened next?

> *God*, she prayed, *if this is really true, if Jesus Christ really did what this book says he did*, *then I will believe and trust that he is God and my own personal Savior.* She informed him that under no circumstances would she go to Africa as a missionary, and made a few other stipulations. And she still didn't actually believe it all yet anyway, but a fire had been lit. Golf could wait. She left the tournament and returned home to her family, anxious to begin researching this God and the Bible.
>
> She started by simply writing out questions she needed answers to—questions about God and about this Christian faith, and she discovered that there was a

> wealth of evidence to support the reliability of the Bible texts. But what really moved her was the Scriptures' running total of fulfilled prophecies—general prophecies, yes, but the quantity of specific prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ was astounding! There was something supernatural about this, no question.

The whole family ended up becoming Christians, including her four children. That's already pretty good, but she wasn't done re-prioritizing her life to account for this new information. Because she could see challenges ahead for her children when they got to college.

More:

> About ten years later, as her oldest son was preparing to go to college, she asked him, "So what are you going to do if you get a roommate in college like me?"
>
> "What do you mean, Mom?"
>
> "I used to be an atheist," she said.
>
> To which he responded, "What is that?"
>
> Nancy was floored. Her own son had no clue about her history, and he was clearly unprepared for the university environment.
>
> She set about organizing all her research material into handouts, rounded up a few of her son's friends, and held a class with six students. They loved it! She didn't preach to them, but rather interacted with them, and presented solid material using movie clips and other provocative visuals. From that start, her classes grew year by year, until some 150 kids were showing up weekly, with more being turned away for lack of room.
>
> Nancy's classes may well have stayed confined to her community had it not been for the intervention of Charles Colson, who got wind of this popular class and hopped a plane for a visit. "Nancy, you've got to publish this," he said. "We've got to replicate what you're doing here across America." Nancy had reservations about ministries, and she definitely did not want to *be* a "ministry." But she agreed with his point that "people have to get smarter about their faith."
>
> Fortunately, he prevailed, and the result became Anchorsaway Worldview Curriculum. "Because kids need anchor points in place when they go away," says Nancy.

For the rest, you should click through and read Terrell's article. You're not going to believe how much of an impact Nancy was able to have on the people who have the most potential influence – college students and young professionals.

If you like the original article, Terrell Clemmons has many more great ones in Salvo magazine. And she has a web site. I promise you nearly everything she writes is very practical. If you like wisdom, you will enjoy her thinking. I think Christian men in particular will find practical wisdom from her writings. Like Nancy, Terrell is having a big influence as well.

But I can’t end this blog post without something else that Terrell wrote about Nancy that I really liked.

This:

> She gets frustrated with churches, many of which are not only *not* helping young people cultivate a grounded faith, but are resistant to her efforts do so on their behalf. Now a grandmother of ten, she could retire. “But Lord, where else would I rather be?” she asks with a charming smile. “I’d take a half-lap around this property, and then come back here ready to work again.”

Ah, wonderful! I also dislike churches! They are mostly awful, and the fideist pastors will fight you tooth and nail to keep apologetics out, so that their emotion-driven flocks don’t have to worry their pretty little heads about evidence. Who cares about evidence? If we didn’t have people like Nancy fighting those battles, where would we be?

It’s really important that you see people like Nancy who have several degrees and a successful life as valuable. It’s people like her who have the biggest influence. Make sure that when college-student-aged Nancy comes to you with questions, that you have the answers to give her. Because we really need everyone to do their part for the Kingdom. This woman had an influence. And more importantly, she had an influence on her own children, protecting them from the peer pressure they would face from non-Christians at college.

Men on strike: the social changes that caused men to opt out of marriage

May 3, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

SurveyMonkey election poll cross tabs for unmarried women only Nov 2016

I read and enjoyed Dr. Helen Smith's book "Men on Strike" last year. The book explains a few of the developments that have led to men underperforming in school and in the workplace, and opting out of marriage and fatherhood.

Dr. Helen comes to this problem as a secular libertarian, not as a Christian conservative.

A review of Dr. Helen's book appeared in Salvo magazine. The review is written by Terrell Clemmons, who has the best Christian worldview of any woman I know – I frequently rely on her advice.

Terrell writes:

> While the feminist movement may originally have been about equal respect for both sexes, what it has morphed into, she argues, is female privilege. From rape laws that empower women but not the men they may falsely accuse, to divorce laws tilted in favor of the wife, to the feminization of the U.S. education system, men have become the sex under the gun, while women enjoy the status of a protected class.
>
> But unlike their mothers or grandmothers, men today are not taking to the streets burning their undergarments and shrieking demands (thank God). They're doing just the opposite, which is far worse. They're going on strike. The strike zones are manifold:

> **Higher Education.**In addition to the enrollment imbalance, which is approaching a 60/40 ratio of women to men, college has become, in the words of one professor, “a hostile working environment [in which] males increasingly feel emasculated.” Smith quotes a student named John, who had this to say about his college experience: “I had already been cautious around women, having grown up with Tawana Brawley in my backyard and daily stories of sexual harassment; I played it safe and passive every time. But it doesn’t matter. The only way not to lose is to not play. So I’m out.”
>
> **Work,**including community involvement. With higher female graduation rates and salaries, men today are falling behind their fathers economically and professionally. Consequently, their efforts to prove themselves worthy mates through hard work and higher earnings don’t win female attention the way they used to. Discouraged, too many retreat to a man cave, and inertia sets in from there.
>
> **Marriage.**Marriage rates are down, and honest men opting out will tell you why. Smith cites a Rutgers University study of single heterosexual men which turned up the top reasons they hadn’t married. They can get sex and the companionship of cohabitation without marriage more easily than in times past, and they don’t want to open themselves up to the risk of divorce and financial loss. It really isn’t that complicated a decision. In fact, it’s often not an actual decision at all. It just happens.

The simplest explanation for the difficulties that boys face in an education system that is dominated by women (teachers and administrators) is discrimination. And in the workplace, the government requires employers to report on male and female head counts, and promote women who are not qualified. I have seen receptionists with tattoos and no college degrees promoted to six-figure manager jobs in companies where I worked.

There is one more which to me was the most surprising one in the book – paternity fraud, and the laws that support paternity fraud:

> Take the following cases of nonconsensual insemination: Nathaniel from California, age 15, had sex with 34-year-old Ricci, which, due to his age, was legally considered nonconsensual. Emile from Louisiana was visiting his parents in the hospital when a nurse offered him oral sex, *if* he wore a condom, which she conveniently offered to dispose of for him afterward. S. F. from Alabama passed out drunk at the home of a female friend and awoke undressed the following morning. In all three cases, including the one involving the minor, a woman got sperm and, nine months later, a child, and the man got ordered by a court of law to pay support for eighteen years.
>
> Less devious, but similarly amiss, are those cases in which a man, having been betrayed by his wife or girlfriend, was nevertheless held financially responsible for a child genetically proven to be another man’s offspring. While not as

> sensational as sperm-jacking, it is another form of paternity extortion.

In each of those cases, the man was found liable to pay child support – including the case of the 15-year-old boy, who was forced to pay child support to his statutory rapist when he turned 18. This is how the court system works, and more and more men are understanding the risks.

I often encounter “pro-marriage” people while gathering stories for the blog. These pro-marriage people come in two varieties.

On the one end of the spectrum are people like Terrell Clemmons and Jennifer Roback Morse, who understand marriage, but who also understand the social changes that have made marriage unattractive for men. Both Clemmons and Morse have a background in STEM fields, so they are able to understand incentives and tradeoffs. They understand that society has to rollback the changes to education, divorce laws, etc. if they expect men to be interested in marriage again. They understand that men are not just accessories of women, but instead have their own desires, feelings and reasons for marrying.

On the other end of the spectrum are feminist men, who are not able to understand the changing incentives that face men in a world that has evolved under the influence of radical feminism. It is just simpler (less thinking) for these men to accept the radical feminism as a given, and then urge men to “man up”. I think a much better idea would be for the “man up” crowd to realize how marriage has changed, and how the schools and the workplace have changed, then make all of these things more attractive to men. It doesn’t do any good to try to “dare” men into jumping off a cliff. Men aren’t stupid, and they do what is in their own best interests. If the man-up crowd wants younger men to marry, then they need to change the incentives offered to men. And that means changing women first.

John C. Sanford’s genetic entropy hypothesis

May 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

JoeCoder sent me a recent peer-reviewed paper by John C. Sanford, so I’ve been trying to find something written by him at a layman’s level so I could understand what he is talking about.

Dr. Sanford’s CV is posted at the Cornell University web page.

I found this 20-minute video of an interview with him, in which he explains his thesis:

The most important part of that video is Sanford’s assertion that natural selection cannot remove deleterious mutations from a population faster than they arrive.

And I also found a review of a book that he wrote that explains his ideas at the layman level.

It says:

> Dr. John Sanford is a plant geneticist and inventor who conducted research at Cornell University for more than 25 years. He is best known for significant contributions to the field of transgenic crops, including the invention of the biolistic process (“gene gun”).
>
> […]Sanford argues that, based upon modern scientific evidence and the calculations of population geneticists (who are almost exclusively evolutionists), mutations are occurring at an alarmingly high rate in our genome and that the vast majority of all mutations are either harmful or “nearly-neutral” (meaning a loss for the organism or having no discernible fitness gain). Importantly, Sanford also establishes the extreme rarity of any type of beneficial mutations in comparison with harmful or “nearly-neutral” mutations. Indeed, “beneficial” mutations are so exceedingly rare as to not contribute in any meaningful

> way. [NOTE: “Beneficial” mutations do not necessarily result from a gain in information, but instead, these changes predominantly involve a net loss of function to the organism, which is also not helpful to [Darwinism]; see Behe, 2010, pp. 419-445.] Sanford concludes that the frequency and generally harmful or neutral nature of mutations prevents them from being useful to any scheme of random evolution.
>
> […]In the next section of the book, Sanford examines natural selection and asks whether “nature” can “select” in favor of the exceedingly rare “beneficial” mutations and against the deleterious mutations. The concept of natural selection is generally that the organisms that are best adapted to their environment will survive and reproduce, while the less fit will not. Sanford points out that this may be the case with some organisms, but more commonly, selection involves chance and luck. But could this process select against harmful mutations and allow less harmful or even beneficial mutations to thrive? According to Sanford, there are significant challenges to this notion.

Stanford is a co-author of an academic book on these issues that has Dembski and Behe as co-authors.

Now, I do have to post something more complicated about this, which you can skip – it’s an abstract of a paper he co-authored from that book:

> Most deleterious mutations have very slight effects on total fitness, and it has become clear that below a certain fitness effect threshold, such low-impact mutations fail to respond to natural selection. The existence of such a selection threshold suggests that many low-impact deleterious mutations should accumulate continuously, resulting in relentless erosion of genetic information. In this paper, we use numerical simulation to examine this problem of selection threshold.
>
> The objective of this research was to investigate the effect of various biological factors individually and jointly on mutation accumulation in a model human population. For this purpose, we used a recently-developed, biologically-realistic numerical simulation program, Mendel’s Accountant. This program introduces new mutations into the population every generation and tracks each mutation through the processes of recombination, gamete formation, mating, and transmission to the new offspring. This method tracks which individuals survive to reproduce after selection, and records the transmission of each surviving mutation every generation. This allows a detailed mechanistic accounting of each mutation that enters and leaves the population over the course of many generations. We term this type of analysis genetic accounting.
>
> Across all reasonable parameters settings, we observed that high impact mutations were selected away with very high efficiency, while very low impact mutations accumulated just as if there was no selection operating. There was always a large transitional zone, wherein mutations with intermediate fitness

> effects accumulated continuously, but at a lower rate than would occur in the absence of selection. To characterize the accumulation of mutations of different fitness effect we developed a new statistic, selection threshold (STd), which is an empirically determined value for a given population. A population's selection threshold is defined as that fitness effect wherein deleterious mutations are accumulating at exactly half the rate expected in the absence of selection. This threshold is mid-way between entirely selectable, and entirely unselectable, mutation effects.
>
> Our investigations reveal that under a very wide range of parameter values, selection thresholds for deleterious mutations are surprisingly high. Our analyses of the selection threshold problem indicate that given even modest levels of noise affecting either the genotype-phenotype relationship or the genotypic fitness-survival-reproduction relationship, accumulation of low-impact mutations continually degrades fitness, and this degradation is far more serious than has been previously acknowledged. Simulations based on recently published values for mutation rate and effect-distribution in humans show a steady decline in fitness that is not even halted by extremely intense selection pressure (12 offspring per female, 10 selectively removed). Indeed, we find that under most realistic circumstances, the large majority of harmful mutations are essentially unaffected by natural selection and continue to accumulate unhindered. This finding has major theoretical implications and raises the question, "What mechanism can preserve the many low-impact nucleotide positions that constitute most of the information within a genome?"

Now I have been told by JoeCoder that there are many critical responses to his hypothesis, most of which have to do with whether natural selection can overcome the difficulty he is laying out. But since this is not my area of expertise, there is not much I can say to adjudicate here. Take it for what it is.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds

- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Religious liberty defenders evaluate Trump's new executive order

May 5, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump holds up Bible he "received from his mother" to evangelicals

The Alliance Defending Freedom is a prominent defender of religious liberty. They fight out religious liberty cases at the highest level – the Supreme Court of the United States.

Here's what they thought of Trump's executive action on religious liberty:

> "During his campaign, President Trump stated that the first priority of his administration would be to preserve and protect religious liberty. In speeches, he said the Little Sisters of the Poor and other people of faith will always have their religious liberty protected on his watch and will not have to face bullying from the government because of their religious beliefs. Religious voters took him at his word, giving the president a mandate to affirm and protect Americans' first freedom.
>
> "The current outline of the Religious Liberty Executive Order released by White House officials recalls those campaign promises but leaves them unfulfilled.
>
> "First, no specific relief is offered to families like the Vander Boons in Michigan, who were threatened with the effective closure of their family-run business for simply expressing a religious point of view on marriage that differed from that of the federal government.
>
> "Second, the outline directs the IRS 'to exercise maximum enforcement discretion to alleviate the burden of the Johnson Amendment.' But Americans

> cannot rely on the discretion of IRS agents, some of whom have abused that discretion for years to silence pastors and intrude into America's pulpits. Nor does the outline do anything to prevent a future, hostile administration from wielding its power to penalize any church who dares exercise its constitutionally protected freedoms in a manner that displeases those in authority. A legislative problem like the Johnson Amendment demands a legislative solution like the Free Speech Fairness Act.
>
> "Third, the outline indicates it will 'provide regulatory relief for religious objectors to Obamacare's burdensome preventive services mandate, a position supported by the Supreme Court decision in Hobby Lobby.' The president certainly should fulfill his promise to protect the Little Sisters of the Poor, a host of Christian colleges, and others from having to choose between violating their consciences and paying crippling fines to the IRS.

Here is an article by religious liberty hero David French of the ACLJ in National Review. He makes a key point that must be understood by pastors who want to know if the coast is clear to speak about policy from a Christian perspective.

Excerpt:

> Next — and this is important to understand — an executive order cannot repeal a statute, and legal restrictions on political activity by churches are statutory. They're part of the so-called Johnson Amendment, a rarely enforced provision of the tax code that prohibits 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations from, as the IRS explains, "directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office."
>
> The Johnson Amendment is constitutionally problematic (to put it mildly). Lyndon Johnson rammed it through Congress for the noble purpose of stopping nonprofits from supporting his primary opponent and preserving his own political hide, and it's been on the books ever since. Though it's rarely enforced, it hangs like the Sword of Damocles over the heads not just of churches but of every 501(c)(3) in the United States. First Amendment lawyers are desperate to find a good test case to challenge it, but the IRS's general lack of enforcement means that the right case is elusive. So the amendment remains.
>
> The answer to the Johnson Amendment, however, is to either repeal the statute or overturn it in court. This order does neither. In fact, a lawyer will commit malpractice if he tells a pastor or director of a nonprofit that this order allows a church or nonprofit to use its resources to support or oppose a candidate. **Even if the Trump administration chooses not to enforce the law, a later administration can tear up Trump's order and begin vigorous enforcement based on actions undertaken during the Trump administration.**

> **Imagine, for example, that churches rely on this order to mobilize support for Trump in his 2020 reelection campaign. Imagine he loses to Kamala Harris. Then, suddenly, churches across the land would be instantly vulnerable to IRS enforcement action. Thinking they were protected, churches would find themselves in the worst of predicaments, with their rights and possibly even existences dependent on the capricious mercies of the federal courts.**

Although many evangelicals bet on Trump to do something to protect religious liberty, the President has not done anything with this executive action to solve the problems. I cannot help but think that we would have been better off with someone who was more aware of the challenges, and who had a track record of battling for religious liberty in his record.

Although Trump whiffed again on religious liberty, there are several pieces of legislation that Congress could take up to solve the problem.

Here are four of them:

- Free Speech Fairness Act
- Russell Amendment
- Conscience Protection Act
- First Amendment Defense Act

Perhaps we can count on Trump to sign them – if the Republicans get them passed.

What got me started on apologetics? William Lane Craig debate transcripts

May 6, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students

Yes, William Lane Craig debate transcripts. In fact, I still read them from time to time to keep up my skills.

Here's one of my favorites, the Craig-Nielsen debate on grounding morality without God

Summary:

> THE CRAIG-NIELSEN DEBATE: GOD, MORALITY, AND EVIL
> William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen
> with annotations by William Lane Craig
> February 1991, University of Western Ontario

Best part:

Finally, he raises the issue of immortality and says, "Death doesn't undermine moral values. In fact, things that we value become all the more precious." Well, in one sense he's right. It's the *absence of God* that undermines the objectivity of moral values, not *death*. But let's suppose that there are objective moral values. What would be undermined by the lack of immortality? I think two things.

First, I think there would be no reason to adopt the moral point of view. Since you're going to die, everyone ends up the same. It doesn't make any difference whether you live as a Hitler or a Mother Teresa. There is no relationship between your moral living and your ultimate fate. And so in that sense, death undermines the reason for adopting the moral point of view rather that just being an egoist and living for self.

Second, there's no basis for self-sacrifice on this point of view. Why should an atheist, who knows everything is going to end in death, do things that are morally right that go against self-interest? For example, a few years ago there was a terrible mid-winter air disaster in Washington, DC, as a plane crashed into a bridge spanning the Potomac River, spilling its passengers into the icy waters. And as the helicopters came to rescue these people, attention focused on one man who again and again passed by the rope ladder rather than be pulled to safety himself. Seven times he did this, and when they came again, he was gone. The whole nation turned its eyes to this man in respect and admiration for the noble act of self-sacrifice that he did. And yet on the atheistic view, that man wasn't noble. He did the *stupidest* thing possible. He should have gone for the rope ladder first, pushed others away, if necessary, in order to survive! But to give up all the brief existence he will ever have for others he didn't even know? Why? It seems to me, then, that it's not simply the absence of God that undermines objective moral values, but ethical living is also undermined by the atheistic point of view because you then have no reason to adopt the moral point of view and you have no basis for acts of self-sacrifice.

By contrast, on the Christian view, where you have both God and immortality, you have the necessary presuppositions for the affirmation of objective moral values and for consistent living of the ethical life.

And another of my favorites, the Craig-Taylor debate on the ontological grounding of morality.

Summary:

> Is The Basis Of Morality Natural Or Supernatural?
> Richard Taylor and William Lane Craig
> October 1993, Union College, Schenectady, New York

Sample Craig:

(2) I argued that moral accountability also exists under the supernaturalist view, and Professor Taylor didn't deny the point.

(II) What about my critique, then, of naturalism? I said that naturalism doesn't provide a sound foundation for morality, and here I made two points:

(1) On the naturalist view, objective right and wrong do not exist. Again, Professor Taylor doesn't deny this point; he just says, "Well, to say that they're conventional doesn't mean they're contemptible." Well, granted; but it *does* mean they're arbitrary, they're non–objective. There's no more difference between moral right and wrong than driving on the right–hand side of the road versus the left–hand side of the road. It's simply a societal convention. And the modern evolutionist thinks these conventions are just based in socio–biological evolution. According to Michael Ruse, a professor of the philosophy of science,

> The position of the modern evolutionist…is that humans have an awareness of morality…because such an awareness is of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation, no less than are hands and feet and teeth…. Considered as

> a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, [ethics] is illusory. I appreciate that when somebody says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves.... Nevertheless...such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction and...any deeper meaning is illusory....{26}

This is essentially the same view as Professor Taylor's. Moral values are simply rooted in socio–biological evolution, that have passed down as certain taboos and certain commands, but they have no objective validity in terms of their moral rightness or wrongness. Professor Taylor says, "But I have a high regard for people who are truly moral and decent." I don't deny that. Of course he does! But the point is that in his ethics, in his philosophy, he has no *basis* for that affirmation. What I bring is not a new set of values—I think we pretty much hold those in common—but I'm offering a secure *foundation* for those values that we all want to hold dear.

You see, on Professor Taylor's view, there really isn't any objective morality. I think every one of us here tonight would agree that it's wrong to kill babies and that the holocaust was morally wrong. But in his book Professor Taylor says, "The infanticide practiced by the Greeks of antiquity did not violate their customs. If we say it was nevertheless wrong, we are only saying that it is forbidden by *our* ethical and legal rules. And the abominations practiced by the Nazis...are forbidden by our rules, and not, obviously, by theirs."{27} I submit that that is simply a patently false view of moral values and that naturalism, therefore, can't provide any objective basis for right and wrong.

And another of my favorites, the Craig-Tooley debate on the problem of evil.

Summary:

> A Classic Debate on the Existence of God
> Dr. William Lane Craig & Dr. Michael Tooley
> November 1994, University of Colorado at Boulder

Sample Craig:

> (2) Christian doctrines increase the probability of the coexistence of God and the evils in the world. Let me just mention a couple of these.
>
> (i) On the Christian view, the purpose of life is not happiness as such in this life. Rather it is the knowledge of God—which will ultimately produce true and everlasting happiness. What that means is that many evils occur in this life which might be utterly pointless with respect to producing human happiness. But they might not be pointless with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Dr. Tooley assumes when he talks about changes that would make this world a better place, that the purpose of life is basically to be happy in this life. And I certainly admit that you could make changes that might appear to make this life a better place, make it happier. But that's not God's purpose. So if you understand that the purpose of life is not happiness as such, I think that you can see that the existence of evil doesn't necessarily cast any improbability upon

> God’s existence.
>
> (ii) It’s also the Christian view that God’s purpose spills over into eternal life. In the afterlife God will bestow a glory and happiness upon us that is incomparable to what we’ve suffered here on earth. And the longer we spend in eternity with Him, the more the sufferings in this life shrink by comparison to an infinitesimal instant. Dr. Tooley admits in his article that it is possible that immortality could justify such evils. But, he says, it’s “very unlikely” that there is life after death. Well, I have two comments. First, I’d like him to prove that it’s unlikely that there is life after death.{26} Second, I suggest that the resurrection of Jesus gives us grounds for hoping in life after death, and I’ve attempted to justify that historically. So given these Christian doctrines, I think you can see that the existence of God and evil is not so improbable after all.
>
> […]
>
> (4) Finally, I think that there is actually an argument for God from evil. It would go like this:
>
> (i) If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist. If there is no God, moral values are either socio-biological by-products or just expressions of personal preference.
>
> (ii) Evil exists. That’s the premise of the atheist. There is real evil in the world.
>
> (iii) Therefore, objective values do exist. Some things are really wrong.
>
> (iv) Therefore, God exists.
>
> Thus the presence of evil in the world actually demonstrates God’s existence because in the absence of God, there wouldn’t be any distinction objectively between good and evil, between right and wrong. So although evil in one sense calls into question God’s existence, in a much deeper sense, I think, it actually requires God’s existence.
>
> So in the light of these four responses, I think that the argument from evil, as difficult and emotionally pressing as it might be, in the end doesn’t constitute a good argument against the existence of God. So I think the four arguments given against the existence of God by Dr. Tooley are inconclusive. You’ve still got my six arguments for God’s existence, and therefore I still think that on balance the evidence favors theism as the more rational worldview.

There are more debate transcripts on Craig’s Reasonable Faith web site.

Scott Klusendorf defends the pro-life view on the Unbelievable radio show

May 7, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of this debate
Here are the details:

> The abortion debate reared its head again this summer after controversial tweets by Richard Dawkins made the news.
>
> Justin hosts a discussion between Mara Clarke of the Abortion Support Network and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Instititute. Mara believes women need to be decide whether to terminate a pregnancy, but Scott says that all depends on whether we are dealing with a human life in the womb.
>
> MP3 of this show:
>
> http://cdnapi.kaltura.com/p/618072/sp/61807200/playManifest/entryId/1_ggc953xi/flavorId/1_vto2eisb/protocol/http/format/url/a.mp3?clientTag=feed:1_jlj47tkv

My snarky paraphrase of the debate (not exact):

- Speaker introductions
- Klusendorf: no justification for abortion is necessary if the unborn are not human
- Klusendorf: we need to address the issue "what is the unborn?" Are the unborn human?
- Klusendorf: SLED: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency

- Klusendorf: None of these things affect the value of a human being
- Klusendorf: Even if we don't KNOW whether the unborn is human
- Mara: I'm not going to debate when life begins
- Mara: Women know when life begins by feelings
- Mara: The moral decision is "whether I can take care of this child?"
- Brierley: When is an unborn being human?
- Mara: I refuse to debate that – the real question is whether women want their babies or not
- Mara: Forced pregnancy is not OK
- Brierley: Could your justification for abortion (not wanting to care for a child) work through all 9 months?
- Mara: Late term abortions are rare, so I don't have to answer that question
- Mara: Abortion should be OK through all 9 months of pregnancy because women cannot be restricted
- Mara: Some women are poor, they need to be able to kill expensive babies at any time
- Klusendorf: although she says she won't debate the unborn, she does take a position
- Klusendorf: she assumes the unborn is not human, because she says that insufficient funds is justification for abortion
- Klusendorf: no one argues that you can kill a two year old because they cost money, because she thinks they are human
- Klusendorf: she is begging the question by assuming the unborn are not human, but that is the issue we must resolve
- Klusendorf: I am pro-choice on many other things, e.g. women choosing their own husbands, religion, etc.
- Klusendorf: Some choices are wrong – Mara might be right, but she needs to make the case for the unborn not being human
- Brierley: What is your reason for thinking that an unborn child is different from a 2-year old?
- Mara: An unborn child is not the same as a 2-year old, in my personal opinion
- Mara: I am not a debater, so I don't have to provide reasoning for my assertion, I just feel it
- Mara: Not everybody agrees with Scott, they don't have to have a rational argument, they just need to feel differently
- Mara: From my experience, when a woman doesn't want to be pregnant, then she should be able to not be pregnant
- Mara: Women shouldn't be punished with a baby that she doesn't want, even if she chooses to have recreational sex
- Brierley: What do you think of women who think the unborn is human and do it anyway?
- Klusendorf: It's interesting that they never kill their toddlers for those reasons
- Klusendorf: I layed out scientific and philosophical reasons for the humanity of the

unborn
- Klusendorf: Her response was “but some people disagree with you”
- Klusendorf: People disagreed about whether slavery was wrong, or whether women should be able to vote
- Klusendorf: that doesn’t mean there is no right answer – the right answer depends on the arguments
- Klusendorf: if absence of agreement makes a view false, then it makes HER pro-choice view false as well
- Klusendorf: she did make an argument for the unborn child having no rights because of the location
- Klusendorf: she needs to explain to us why location matters – what about location confers value
- Mara: I’m not going to let Scott frame my debate for me!!!
- Mara: women get pregnant and they don’t want their babies! should we put them in jail!!!!
- Klusendorf: I didn’t just give my opinion, I had science and philosophy, the issue is “what is the unborn?”
- Mara: philosophical and scientific debates are unimportant, I am an expert in real women’s lives
- Klusendorf: Which women? Women in the womb or only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Only those outside the womb
- Klusendorf: Only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Women living outside the womb have a right to kill women inside the womb – women have bodily autonomy
- Klusendorf: then does a pregnant woman with nausea have a right to take a drug for it that will harm her unborn child?
- Mara: Unborn children are only valuable if they are wanted, unborn children only deserve protection if they are wanted
- Mara: There are restrictions on abortion – you can’t get an abortion through all nine months in the US
- Mara: There is a 24-week limit in the UK as well
- Klusendorf: There are no restrictions on abortion that conflict with “a woman’s health” because Supreme Court said
- Mara: where are these late term abortion clinics?
- Klusendorf: (he names two)
- Mara: that’s not enough!!! we need more! where is there one in Pennsylvania?
- Klusendorf: well, there used to be Gosnell’s clinic in Pennsylvania, and you could even get an infanticide there….
- Brierley: What about Dawkins’ view that it is moral to abort Down’s Syndrome babies?
- Klusendorf: he is ignoring the scientific case and philosophical case for the pro-life
- Klusendorf: the pro-life view is a true basis for human equality

What I wanted Scott to ask was whether sex-selection abortions were OK with her. Since her reasoning is “if it’s unwanted, it has no rights”, then that would mean sex-selection abortions are just fine. That’s what a UK abortion expert recently argued. And I also posted recently about how sex-selection abortions are not prosecuted in the UK. If you’re looking for a war on women, there it is.

The Wintery Knight’s favorite Bible verses

May 8, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Dina asked me to post my favorite Bible verses, so here are 8 of my favorites.

Psalm 27:14:

> [11] Teach me Your way, O Lord,
> And lead me in a level path
> Because of my foes.
>
> [12] Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries,
> For false witnesses have risen against me,
> And such as breathe out violence.
>
> [13] *I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord
> In the land of the living.
>
> **[14] Wait for the Lord;**
> **Be strong and let your heart take courage;**
> **Yes, wait for the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**
>
> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

Matthew 5:13:

> 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
>
> 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
>
> **13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**
>
> 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
>
> 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

2 Timothy 2:4:

> 1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
>
> [2] The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
>
> [3] Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[4] No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.**
>
> [5] Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

Daniel 3:18:

> [13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.
>
> [14] Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?
>
> [15] Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?”
>
> [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we

> do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.
>
> [17] If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire;and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
>
> **[18] But *even* if *He does* not,let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."**

Esther 4:14:

> [10] Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai:
>
> [11] "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days."
>
> [12] They related Esther's words to Mordecai.
>
> [13] Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> **[14] For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"**

Philippians 1:9:

> [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> [4] always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> [5] in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> [6] *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> [7] For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
>
> [8] For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> [10] so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
>
> [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Numbers 13:30:

> [25] When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,
>
> [26] they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.
>
> [27] Thus they told him, and said, “We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.
>
> [28] Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.
>
> [29] Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.”
>
> **[30] Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.”**

Post your favorite verse in the comments – not too many! Be selective.

Why are people like Glennon Doyle Melton and Jen Hatmaker so famous?

May 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I keep seeing all these people in the culture like Rob Bell, Rachel Held Evans, Brian McLaren, Joel Osteen getting all this support from Christians – support that the people I admire like Jay Richards, William Lane Craig, Scott Klusendorf and Ryan T. Anderson don't seem to get.

Glennon Doyle Melton in a church

First, here is Glennon being celebrated in the far-left Washington Post.

Excerpt:

> Christian author Glennon Doyle Melton — known as the "ultimate confessional writer" for her honest portrayals of her struggling marriage, addiction and eating disorder — has opened up with another big revelation.
>
> She is dating again, her new partner is a woman and that woman is celebrity soccer champ Abby Wambach.
>
> […]Melton's news comes three months after she announced her divorce from Craig Melton, her husband of 14 years…
>
> […]Glennon Doyle Melton has reiterated for years her position affirming that same-sex marriage is not sinful and celebrating love in various forms. A few Christian writers who champion LGBT rights in the church congratulated Melton on Twitter on Sunday night. (Another Christian mom and blogger, Jen Hatmaker, came under fire last month for announcing her support of same-sex marriage for the first time.)
>
> Melton's coming out follows fellow inspirational author and friend Elizabeth Gilbert, of "Eat, Pray, Love" fame. Gilbert announced in September she was in a romantic relationship with her female best friend, just two months after divorcing over the summer.
>
> Both Melton and Gilbert, who had not openly been in lesbian relationships before,

> first shared their news on Facebook, discussed the importance of living their truth and referred to their new partners as "my person."
>
> The similarities reflect what fans immediately notice: Both women value transparency and share an open-life-memoir writing style. Both have undergone spiritual journeys, separations and sexual awakenings.
>
> […]Melton and Gilbert have appeared on her career-making book list and popular programs. During a personable Oprah Winfrey Network interview in September, Oprah called Melton a "breath of fresh air."
>
> […]Gilbert and Melton met for the first time last fall, but Melton has long admired and been inspired by Gilbert. "For the past decade she has been a minister to me," she said.

I sent this story to a young lady I admire very much, and I was greatly comforted by her reply: "She is very deceived as to the truth. " Thank God for women who care more what the Bible says than being popular. Just because a woman is physically fit and charismatic, that doesn't make her a role model for Bible-believing Christians. Her book is endorsed as "epic" by Elizabeth Gilbert, which is a good sign that doesn't mean that she is reliable where it counts – defending the moral values taught in the Bible.

Brandon and Jen Hatmaker (actual photo, not Photoshopped)

Here's an article by former lesbian Rosaria Butterfield posted at The Gospel Coalition about Jen Hatmaker and her husband Brandon.

It says:

> If this were 1999—the year that I was converted and walked away from the woman and lesbian community I loved—instead of 2016, Jen Hatmaker's words about the holiness of LGBT relationships would have flooded into my world like a balm of Gilead. How amazing it would have been to have someone as radiant, knowledgeable, humble, kind, and funny as Jen saying out loud what my heart was shouting: *Yes, I can have Jesus and my girlfriend. Yes, I can flourish both in my tenured academic discipline (queer theory and English literature and culture) and in my church.*

> […]To be clear, I was not converted out of homosexuality. I was converted out of unbelief. I didn't swap out a lifestyle. I died to a life I loved. Conversion to Christ made me face the question squarely: did my lesbianism *reflect* who I am (which is what I believed in 1999), or did my lesbianism *distort*who I am through the fall of Adam? I learned through conversion that when something feels right and good and real and necessary—but stands against God's Word—this reveals the particular way Adam's sin marks my life. Our sin natures deceive us. Sin's deception isn't just "out there"; it's also deep in the caverns of our hearts.
>
> **How I feel does not tell me who I am. Only God can tell me who I am, because he made me and takes care of me. He tells me that we are all born as male and female image bearers with souls that will last forever and gendered bodies that will either suffer eternally in hell or be glorified in the New Jerusalem. Genesis 1:27 tells me that there are ethical consequences and boundaries to being born male and female.**
>
> […]I only know who I really am when the Bible becomes my lens for self-reflection, and when the blood of Christ so powerfully pumps my heart whole that I can deny myself, take up the cross, and follow him.

The essential mistake that all the popular people make is that they distort the Bible in order to feel good about themselves and to be liked by other people. But sometimes, when you put being liked by other people first, you neglect the more important goal of being liked by God. Feeling good and being liked is not the same as being faithful and obedient to God. And God does not like when people misrepresent his character to non-Christians who are "looking for loopholes" in his Word. The whole point of Christianity is self-denial and self-sacrificial obedience, as modeled in Jesus, who gave up his wishes and desires by being willing to die to save others.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10: (Paul writing)

> [9] Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,
>
> [10] nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Matthew 19:1-11: (Jesus' view of marriage)

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,

> 5 and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”
>
> 7 They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?”
>
> 8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”
>
> 11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

If you want to read reflections on these teachings that honor the plain meaning of the words, then by all means, pick up Ryan T. Anderson’s “Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom” and Michael L. Brown’s “Can You Be Gay and Christian?: Responding With Love and Truth to Questions About Homosexuality“. It’s more important to align your beliefs with reason and evidence than with feelings and peer-approval.

Even ordinary Christians like me who are single have to say no to our desires to have sex before we are married. Although it is fashionable in the LGBT community to say “God wouldn’t make me have desires that I couldn’t fulfill” and “it’s not fair because straight people can fulfill their desires” this is baloney. I’m straight, and I have been thwarted in fulfilling my desire for sex for decades. It’s a normal Christian life to go without something you need and to be hungry. It’s not exceptional. This is obvious to anyone who reads the Bible and accepts the plain meaning of the words. Jesus didn’t tell people things that they wanted to hear, he told them hard truths that sometimes got him into a lot of trouble with sinful people. I’m really not sure why people who claim to be Christians are attracted to the exact opposite – false teachers who say things that make them feel good and negate the need for forgiveness from God, *followed by repentance from sin*.

Debating forgiveness: must a person admit wrongdoing before being forgiven?

May 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

I was traveling outside the country when this debate came out, so I couldn't blog about it right away. I've now listened to it three times. I liked it so much that I even ordered Chris' book for Dina. She has listened to the debate, and is currently split between the two debaters. I am in firm agreement with the pastor Chris.

Here's a link to the debate page on Moody Bible Institute's "Up For Debate" program with Julie Roys. (H/T Kris)

Details:

> **Should Christians Forgive No Matter What?**
>
> Should Christians forgive someone even if he's not sorry? Or does true forgiveness require repentance and a desire to reconcile? This Saturday, on Up For Debate, Julie Roys will explore this issue with Chris Brauns, a pastor who believes forgiveness requires repentance, and Remy Diederich who believes it does not.

Although I disagree with Remy, I only disagree with him about whether the guilty person must admit guilt and feel remorse and make restitution (depending on the severity of the offense). I agree with him on other things like no revenge, attitude of love, expressing willingness to forgive and be reconciled, etc. I also disagree with Remy on "forgiving God", which I think is just crazy, because when God is engineering a person's salvation, he never fails. I think that God is the Great General, and his strategies never fail to achieve the outcomes he desires (while still respecting free will). Whatever suffering or inadequacy or longing that you experience as a Christian is not some sort of mistake,

horrible as it may be for you at the time. God is not your cosmic butler, although a lot of people these days seem to think that he is, and then they get disappointed.

Anyway, please listen to that debate and comment on it about who you think is right. I think my view (and Chris' view) is in the minority in the church, because the church is so utterly *dominated* by feelings and radical feminism. I think my view (and Chris' view) is the masculine view – the view that upholds moral standards, sets moral boundaries and defends the rightness of making moral judgments.

Below, I have pasted in some of my other thoughts on forgiveness from a previous post.

I think this is the key passage – Luke 17:3-4:

> 3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.
>
> 4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

That's Jesus speaking, there.

Also, I was having a debate with someone who disagrees with all this, and while debating with her, I thought of another example.

Luke 18:9-14:

> 9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:
>
> 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.
>
> 11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.
>
> 12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'
>
> 13 But the tax collector,standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'
>
> 14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So again, no forgiveness without repentance.

Forgiveness is what happens when someone who is sinned against treats the sinner as if he had never sinned. It is not on the balance sheet. It is not brought to mind. It is not held against them in the future. The forgiver trusts the sinner again as if the previous sin had never happened.

In divine (vertical) forgiveness, there is no forgiveness without repentance. There are

Bible verses above to show that.

My argument is twofold. First, there is a clear teaching of Jesus explaining the sequence of sin and forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness, between humans (Luke 17:3). The verses cited by the forgive without repentance crowd don't show the mechanics of how to forgive, they are making the point that if you want God to forgive you, you should forgive others. The parable in Luke 18:9-14 affirms this again – repentance always precedes forgiveness.

Second, we have an obligation to imitate God, and that means imitating the way he forgives those who sin against him. When I raise that with the unconditional forgiveness crowd, they want to insist that there is a difference, that the word "forgive" means different things. I'm not convinced.

Finally, I do think that forgiving someone is obligatory if they sincerely repent, and even if they screw up again and again. So long as the repentance is sincere, (like if there is restitution and a genuine effort to show an understanding how the sin affected the wronged party in writing), then forgiveness should be automatic. Depending on how bad the sin is, there maybe be more to do than just say "I'm sorry". If the repentance is genuine, then I think the person who is sinned against must forgive, if they expect to be forgiven by God for the things they repent of.

Alan E. Kurschner adds one final point about the unconditional forgiveness view. He argues that there is serious textual doubt about the originality of Luke 23:34a, a text used by the pro-unconditional-forgiveness crowd. He has a journal article coming out on it, but a synopsis of his argument is here.

He also wrote this in a comment on this blog:

> Second, on Matt 6:15, this is what I have to say. Notice the then-clause: "neither will your Father forgive your sins." This would require universalism on the Father's part according to the unconditional interpretation given the first half: "But if you do not forgive others their sins." Since everyone has wronged the Father is the Father required to forgive everyone even if they are not seeking forgiveness?

So I think the case for the forgiveness being conditional on repentance is pretty strong, especially when serious harm has been caused.

Bible study: Paul’s continuing effort to disciple the Thessalonians

May 11, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

U.S. Marines “The Chosin Few”, Dec. 1950 (Chosin Reservoir, North Korea)

I was asked by my friend Kevin to do more Bible study, and two of the books he asked me to do are 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians. He had reason for asking this, and I found out after I sent him my reflections. So, I thought I’d better write these up so that you all get something out of this, too.

Background

You can read more about the author, background and dating of 1st Thessalonians.

You can read more about the author, background and dating of 2nd Thessalonians.

You should read both books, and it’s easy because they are short.

The relevant parts

See if you can guess the point I want to make from what I cite from each book before you read my conclusion.

1 Thessalonians 2:3-12:

> 3 For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit;
>
> 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.
>
> 5 For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for

> greed—God is witness—
>
> 6 nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.
>
> 7 But we proved to be gentle among you,as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.
>
> 8 Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.
>
> 9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.
>
> 10 You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;
>
> 11 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,
>
> 12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

1 Thessalonians 2:17-20:

> 17 But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face.
>
> 18 For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us.
>
> 19 For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?
>
> 20 For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-3,6-13:

> 1 Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone,
>
> 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,
>
> 3 so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.
>
> 6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you,
>
> 7 for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith;
>
> 8 for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord.

> 9 For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account,
>
> 10 as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?
>
> 11 Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you;
>
> 12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you;
>
> 13 so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4:

> 3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater;
>
> 4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13:

> 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.
>
> 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you,
>
> 8 nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you;
>
> 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.
>
> 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.
>
> 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.
>
> 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.
>
> 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

OK that’s all I want to quote, now for what I thought about all that.

My thoughts

Well, Kevin wanted me to read this because he thinks that I hover around young Christians a lot and fuss about whether they are going to church, whether they are reading apologetics, whether they are doing their homework, and passing their exams. You would not believe some of the things happening in the lives of my Christians friends! Every day, I hear new things:

- my dog died
- my professor is a liberal bully
- I'm starting university
- I quit my old job and got a new job
- I am starting an internship
- I finished graduate school
- I'm starting graduate school in September
- I started putting money into a savings account
- my grandmother died
- I missed a final exam
- I cried in class
- my boyfriend wants sex or he'll break up with me
- I moved into a new house
- my work hours are being reduced
- I hate my job
- I can explain why I want to change careers on Thursday night
- I can study the Bible with you on Friday night
- I've got baby ducks in my garden
- the other people on my team aren't working on our course project

And more. I think Kevin wanted me to know that he was glad that I was meddling in the lives of all of these people, and that it was similar to what Paul does. Paul does not preach to people so that he will think that he is important or clever. He likes to debate and persuade, but he also likes to get involved in people's lives over the long term. Paul isn't just swooping by to solicit donations or preen about how great he is and then leave. He actually has an interest in the lives of other Christians. He actually tries to set an example for them of how to live. He wants the people to follow his lead, not follow his words. He always says "do what I do" not "do what I say". He doesn't just do a big public event and then forget about the people that he spoke to.

So, my point in this is for you to read the two letters to the Thessalonians closely, and don't be like these parents, pastors, apologists and celebrities who just speak and leave. Don't look to the people you have influence over as a source of money or approval. Challenge those people to change, built them up, share with them, give them gifts. Instead of telling them how to live, tell them to follow your example. And watch out for their daily struggles and troubles. Make sure you know who else is influencing them, and have your say to persuade them that your Christian viewpoint is right. Don't just talk. Don't appear so perfect like you are high above the others. Instead, make your whole life

an example of what you want to convince them of. Show them your plans and goals and sacrifices, let them see your reasoning. And be willing to let them tell you the really dirty details of what they are doing. Don’t be so far above them that you refuse to get down to their level and do what they like to do, so you can spend time with them and really listen.

Trump administration ends 6-week law enforcement sweep with 1,378 arrests

May 12, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Under new management, the police are back to law enforcement

This was reported by Fox News.

Excerpt:

> The Trump administration has concluded a six-week nationwide sweep of suspected gang members with 1,378 arrests — the largest such gang sweep conducted by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) to date.
>
> The operation, which ran from March 26 through May 6, targeted gang members and associates involved in transnational criminal activity, including drug trafficking, weapons smuggling, human smuggling, sex trafficking, murder and racketeering.
>
> […]**According to ICE, of the 1,378 total arrested, 933 were U.S. citizens, and 1,095 were confirmed as gang members or affiliates. Also, 104 of those arrested were affiliated with the dreaded MS-13 gang, eight of whom illegally crossed the border as unaccompanied minors.**
>
> […]**During the operation, HSI partnered with other law enforcement agencies to seize more than 200 firearms, narcotics like cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, fentanyl and marijuana and $491,763 in U.S. currency.**

> Enforcement actions occurred across the nation, but the greatest activity took place in the Houston, New York City, Atlanta and Newark, N.J., areas.

Fox News also reports that illegal immigration is way down under Trump, even before construction of the new wall.

Excerpt:

> After years of surging immigration from Central America, law enforcement in Texas' Rio Grande Valley are finally seeing some relief, thanks in part to President Trump's strong rhetoric.
>
> […]"Since January, we have seen a significant decrease in traffic to the point we're averaging about 150 alien apprehensions a day," down from as many as 1,000 a day, according to Deputy Chief Raul Ortiz of the Rio Grande Border Patrol Sector. "A big part of the decrease, I think, has to do with a lot of the discussion about the buildup of infrastructure on the southwest border, more agents along the border and some of the message making its way down to those host countries."
>
> […]**Previously, Central American immigrants turned themselves in, claimed asylum and were released.**
>
> **In most cases, the Obama Administration accommodated the claim by placing the applicant on a court docket with a two- to three-year waiting list. In the meantime, most illegal immigrants were free to work while living with relatives. Some set down roots by getting married or having American-born children.**
>
> **President Trump promised to end that 'catch and release' policy, saying "anyone who illegally crosses the border will be detained until they are removed out of our country."**
>
> **Apparently that message got through thousands of miles away.**

Traditionally, the Republican party has been the party of law and order, whereas Democrats are the party of leniency and permissiveness. Republicans like self-defense, Democrats don't. Republicans support victim's rights, but Democrats want to shorten sentences and release criminals. Republicans think that punishing criminals deters future crime, and Democrats think that criminals are just not responsible for their criminal acts.

Here is a story from February 2013, when Obama was still President.

Fox News reports.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Homeland Security has started releasing hundreds of illegal immigrants held in local jails in anticipation of automatic budget cuts, in a move one Arizona sheriff called politically motivated — and dangerous.

> **Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu said Tuesday that Immigration and Customs Enforcement released more than 500 detainees in his county alone over the weekend. A spokesman for Babeu told FoxNews.com that ICE officials have said they plan to release a total of nearly 10,000 illegal immigrants.**
>
> The numbers, though, are in dispute. ICE officials said that it's unclear how many ultimately might be released and that only 303 have been released from four Arizona facilities so far, though all those are in Pinal County. According to ICE, 2,280 detainees are still in custody in those facilities.
>
> Babeu described the move as a "mass budget pardon" and suggested the administration was going to unnecessary lengths to demonstrate the impact of the so-called sequester.
>
> "President Obama would never release 500 criminal illegals to the streets of his hometown, yet he has no problem with releasing them in Arizona. The safety of the public is threatened and the rule of law discarded as a political tactic in this sequester battle," he said.
>
> An ICE spokeswoman confirmed the plans without specifying how many illegal immigrants might be released.
>
> […]In Arizona, Babeu slammed the move, painting his community as a victim of gridlock in Washington.
>
> "Clearly, serious criminals are being released to the streets of our local communities by this mass budget pardon. These are illegals that even President Obama wants to deport. This is insane that public safety is sacrificed when it should be the budget priority that's safeguarded," he said.

Did any of those criminals who were released go on to commit crimes? Sure. But what do Democrats care about protecting taxpayers from criminals? They always blame the victims of crime, and stand against law-abiding taxpayers.

Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument

May 13, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Here's a must-listen interview from Apologetics 315.

Details:

> Today's interview is with Robin Collins, professor of philosophy at Messiah College. His training is in physics and in philosophy and he is a leading advocate for using the fine-tuning of the universe as a design argument for theism. He talks about his background and training, the fine-tuning argument, the different types of fine-tuning with examples and illustrations (laws, constants and initial conditions), two different ways of presenting the fine-tuning argument, answering common objections to the argument, the uniqueness of life, variations of the multiverse hypothesis, the failure of multiverse theory to explain away fine-tuning, objections to Victor Stenger, upcoming books, simplifying the fine-tuning argument for practical use, common mistakes when presenting the argument, the most common objection (*who designed God?*), and more.

Get the MP3 file from Apologetics 315.

Dr. Collins is extremely cautious and circumspect in his assessment of the fine-tuning argument. He takes the objections to the argument, like the multiverse, seriously and that comes across in the interview. He is familiar with criticisms of the argument and he has engaged with skeptics like Victor Stenger in his published work. I highly recommend it. It is a little more suited to intermediate-level Christians, but not so advanced that it's impossible for non-math beginners to follow the broad thrust of what's being said.

About Robin Collins:

> Robin Collins (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1993), is professor of philosophy at Messiah College, Grantham, PA specializing in the area of science and religion. He has written over twenty-five articles and book chapters on a wide range of topics, such as the fine-tuning of the cosmos as evidence for the existence of God, evolution and original sin, the Doctrine of Atonement, Asian religions and Christianity, and Bohm's theory of quantum mechanics. Some of his most recent articles/book chapters are "Philosophy of Science and Religion" in The Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion, "Divine Action and Evolution" in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology (2009) "The Multiverse Hypothesis: A Theistic Perspective," in Universe or Multiverse? (Cambridge University Press), and "God and the Laws of Nature," in Theism or Naturalism: New Philosophical Perspectives (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to finish a book that presents the case for design based on physics and cosmology, tentatively entitled The Well-Tempered Universe: God, Cosmic Fine-tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

You can read Robin Collins' testimony here.

The fine-tuning argument

Here's a short article where Collins gives TWO examples of the fine-tuning. He is very modest in his argument, merely asserting that the fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than it is with atheism.

Excerpt:

> Science is commonly thought to have undercut belief in God. As Nobel Prize winning physicist Steven Weinberg famously remarked, "the more we find out about the universe, the more meaningless it all seems." Yet, the discoveries of modern physics and cosmology in the last 50 years have shown that the structure of the universe is set in an extraordinarily precise way for the existence of life; if its structure were slightly different, even by an extraordinarily small degree, life would not be possible. In many people's minds, the most straightforward explanation of this remarkable fine-tuning is some sort of divine purpose behind our universe.

> This fine-tuning falls into three categories: the fine-tuning of the laws of nature, the fine-tuning of the constants of physics, and the fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe. "Fine-tuning of the laws of nature" refers to the fact that if the universe did not have precisely the right combination of laws, complex intelligent life would be impossible. If there were no universal attractive force (law of gravity), for example, matter would be dispersed throughout the universe and the energy sources (such as stars) needed for life would not exist. Without the strong nuclear force that binds protons and neutrons together in the nucleus, there would not be any atoms with an atomic number greater than hydrogen,

> and hence no complex molecules needed for life. And without the Pauli-exclusion principle, all electrons would fall to the lowest orbital of an atom, undercutting the kind of complex chemistry that life requires.

> Some fundamental physical numbers governing the structure of the universe—called the constants of physics—also must fall into an exceedingly narrow range for life to exist. For example, many have estimated that the cosmological constant—a fundamental number that governs the expansion rate of empty space—must be precisely set to one part in 10^{120} in order for life to occur; if it were too large, the universe would have expanded too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form, and if it were too small, the universe would have collapsed back on itself. As Stephen Hawking wrote in his book A Brief History of Time, "The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [i.e. the constants of physics] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life." Finally, the initial distribution of mass energy at the time of the big bang must have an enormously special configuration for life to occur, which Cambridge University mathematical physicist Roger Penrose has calculated to be on the order of one part in $10^{10^{123}}$. This is an unimaginably small number.

I know what you're thinking: How do we know that non-Christian scientists acknowledge the fine-tuning of gravity in the way that Collins describes?

Well, the New Scientist actually talks about the fine-tuning of the force of gravity. And they're not Christians.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe's birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What's more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15}at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Here’s a very long paper by Collins on the fine-tuning argument, where he answers several objections to the argument, including the multiverse/many-universe hypothesis.

If you want a longer response to the multiverse argument, but you don’t want to shell out big bucks for Collins’ chapter in the “Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology“, then you can just get James Sinclair’s essay in “Contending With Christianity’s Critics“.

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalism at the University of St. Andrews

May 14, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Note: even if you have heard Dr. Craig's arguments before, I recommend jumping to the 48 minutes of Q&A time, which starts 72 minutes in.

About Dr. William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich, Germany in 1984.

Dr. Craig was in Scotland to lecture at a physics conference, but a local church organized this public lecture at the University of St. Andrews.

Here is the full lecture with Q&A: (2 hours)

Summary:

- Naturalism defined: the physical world (matter, space and time) is all that exists
- Dr. Craig will present 7 reasons why naturalism is false
- 1) the contingency argument
- 2) the kalam cosmological argument
- 3) the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life
- 4) the moral argument
- 5) the ontological argument
- 6) the resurrection of Jesus
- 7) religious experience

Dr. Craig does mention an 8th argument early in the Q&A – the argument from the non-physicality of mental states (substance dualism), which is an argument that I find convincing, because a materialist conception of mind is not compatible with rationality, consciousness and moral agency.

Questions and Answers

He gets a couple of questions on the moral argument early on – one of them tries to put forward an evolutionary explanation for "moral" behaviors. There's another question the definition of naturalism. There is a bonehead question about the non-existence of Jesus based on a Youtube movie he saw – which Craig responds to with agnostic historian Bart Ehrman's book on that topic. There's a question about God as the ground for morality – does morality come from his will or nature.

Then there is a question about the multiverse, which came up at the physics conference Dr. Craig attended the day before. There is a good question about the Big Bang theory and the initial singularity at time t=0. Another good question about transfinite arithmetic, cardinality and set theory. One questioner asks about the resurrection argument. The questioner asks if we can use the origin of the disciples belief as an argument when other religions have people who are willing to die for their claims. One of the questioners asks about whether the laws of nature break down at 10^-43 after the beginning of the universe. There is a question about the religious experience argument, and Craig has the opportunity to give his testimony.

I thought that the questions from the Scottish students and faculty were a lot more thoughtful and respectful than at American colleges and universities. Highly recommended.

Study: sex-reassignment surgery does not improve mental health of transgender people

May 15, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

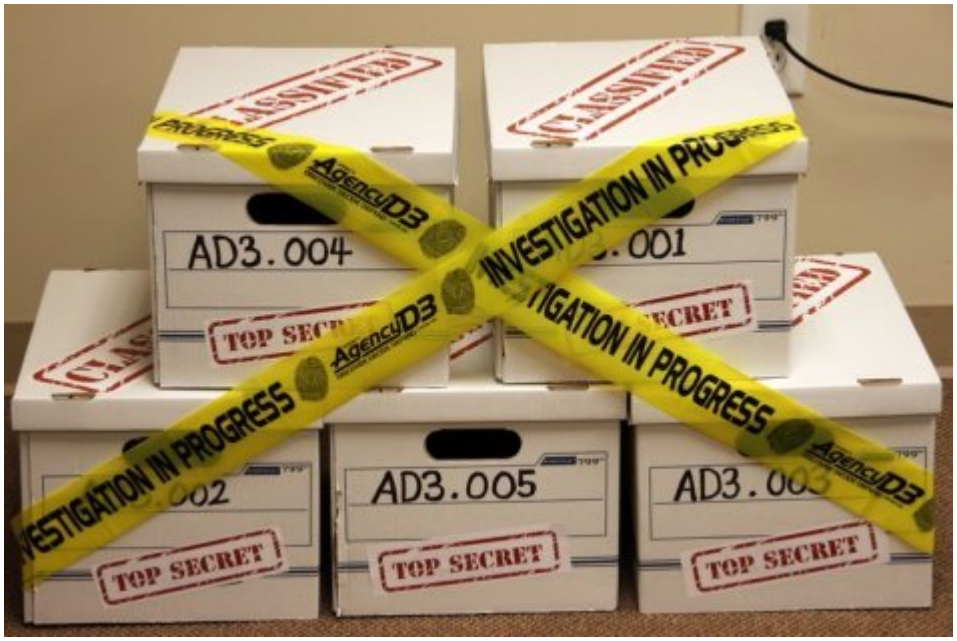

Investigation in progress

I found this peer-reviewed PLOS study while reading an article from CNS News.

The study takes a look at sex-reassigned people in pro-LGBT Sweden, between 1973 and 2003. Specifically, they aim to measure "mortality, morbidity, and criminal rate after surgical sex reassignment of transsexual persons" over a 30 year period.

The setting is important because Sweden has a much higher tolerance for gay rights than other Western countries, e.g. – America. There's virtually no dissent from the gay rights agenda in Sweden – certainly no organized dissent.

Here are the results and the conclusion:

> ### Results
>
> The overall mortality for sex-reassigned persons was higher during follow-up (aHR 2.8; 95% CI 1.8–4.3) than for controls of the same birth sex, particularly death from suicide (aHR 19.1; 95% CI 5.8–62.9). Sex-reassigned persons also had an increased risk for suicide attempts (aHR 4.9; 95% CI 2.9–8.5) and psychiatric inpatient care (aHR 2.8; 95% CI 2.0–3.9). Comparisons with controls matched on reassigned sex yielded similar results. Female-to-males, but not male-to-females, had a higher risk for criminal convictions than their respective birth sex controls.
>
> ### Conclusions
>
> Persons with transsexualism, after sex reassignment, have considerably higher risks for mortality, suicidal behaviour, and psychiatric morbidity than the general

> population. Our findings suggest that sex reassignment, although alleviating gender dysphoria, may not suffice as treatment for transsexualism, and should inspire improved psychiatric and somatic care after sex reassignment for this patient group.

So, there were higher risks of death, higher risk of suicidal behavior, and higher mental illness.

The CNS News article interviewed a Johns Hopkins University scientist who is familiar with the history of sex-reassignment surgery.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Paul R. McHugh, the Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University and former psychiatrist–in-chief for Johns Hopkins Hospital, who has studied transgendered people for 40 years, said it is a scientific fact that "transgendered men do not become women, nor do transgendered women become men."
>
> […]Dr. McHugh, who was psychiatrist-in-chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital for 26 years, the medical institute that had initially pioneered sex-change surgery – and later ceased the practice – stressed that the cultural meme, or idea that "one's sex is fluid and a matter of choice" is extremely damaging, especially to young people.
>
> […][T]here is plenty of evidence showing that "transgendering" is a "psychological rather than a biological matter," said Dr. McHugh.
>
> "In fact, gender dysphoria—the official psychiatric term for feeling oneself to be of the opposite sex—belongs in the family of similarly disordered assumptions about the body, such as anorexia nervosa and body dysmorphic disorder," said McHugh.
>
> "Its treatment should not be directed at the body as with surgery and hormones any more than one treats obesity-fearing anorexic patients with liposuction," he said.
>
> In fact, at Johns Hopkins, where they pioneered sex-change-surgery, "we demonstrated that the practice brought no important benefits," said Dr. McHugh. "As a result, we stopped offering that form of treatment in the 1970s."

Regarding the study, McHugh says this:

> The most thorough follow-up of sex-reassigned people—extending over 30 years and conducted in Sweden, where the culture is strongly supportive of the transgendered—documents their lifelong mental unrest."
>
> "Ten to 15 years after surgical reassignment, the suicide rate of those who had undergone sex-reassignment surgery rose to 20 times that of comparable peers," said McHugh.

Normally, when it comes to questions like these, I think it’s best to be guided by the evidence. What good would it do to tell someone to do something that makes them like you today (“you’re so tolerant and compassionate”) if they commit suicide tomorrow? Although people today think that being truthful and setting boundaries is “intolerant”, it can actually save someone’s life. When you stop someone from *going further* in a direction that will expose them to harm, you’re actually doing the right thing – even if they hate you right now for disagreeing with them. (That hatred of dissent is a sign that they are wrong, by the way)

William Lane Craig and atheist Daniel Dennett discuss cosmology and fine-tuning

May 16, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Bf 109 locked in a dogfight

A friend of mine mentioned that she met a girl who was raised Christian, who is now an atheist, and who thought that atheist Daniel Dennett was the bee's knees when it came to philosophy of religion. So I thought I would re-post something related to Dennett for my friend.

Here is audio of a very interesting exchange between William Lane Craig and leading atheist Daniel Dennett.

This audio records a part of the Greer-Heard debate in 2007, between prominent atheist Daniel Dennett and lame theistic evolutionist Alister McGrath. Craig was one of the respondents, and this was the best part of the event. It is a little bit advanced, but I have found that if you listen to things like this over and over with your friends and family, and then try to explain it to non-Christians, you'll get it.

By the way, this is mostly original material from Craig, dated 2007, and he delivers the speech perfectly, so it's entertaining to listen to.

Craig presents three arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe:

- the contingency argument
- the kalam cosmological argument
- the teleological argument

He also discusses Dennett's published responses to these arguments, and that's what I want to focus on, since most of you are already familiar with Craig's philosophical

arguments for the existence of God.

Dennett's response to Craig's paper

Here is my snarky paraphrase of Dennett's reponse: (this is very snarky, because Dennett was just awful)

- Craig's three arguments are bulletproof, the premises are plausible, and grounded by the best cutting edge science we know today.
- I cannot find anything wrong with his arguments right now, but maybe later when I go home it will come to me what's wrong with them.
- But atheism is true even if all the evidence is against it today. I know it's true by my blind faith.
- The world is so mysterious, and all the science of today will be overturned tomorrow so that atheism will be rational again. I have blind faith that this new evidence will be discovered any minute.
- Just because the cause of the beginning of time is eternal and the cause of the beginning of space is non-physical, the cause doesn't have to be God.
- "Maybe the cause of the universe is the idea of an apple, or the square root of 7". (HE LITERALLY SAID THAT!)
- The principle of triangulation might have brought the entire physical universe into being out of nothing.
- I don't understand anything about non-physical causation, even though I cannot even speak meaningful sentences unless I have a non-physical mind that is causing my body to emit the meaningful sentences in a non-determined manner.
- Alexander Vilenkin is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- Alan Guth is much smarter than Craig and if he were here he would beat him up good with phantom arguments.
- This science stuff is so complicated to me – so Craig can't be right about it even though he's published about it and debated it all with the best atheists on the planet.
- If God is outside of time, then this is just deism, not theism. (This part is correct, but Craig believes that God enters into time at the moment of creation – so that it is not a deistic God)
- If deism is true, then I can still be an atheist, because a Creator and Designer of the universe is compatible with atheism.
- I'm pretty sure that Craig doesn't have any good arguments that can argue for Christianity – certainly not an historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus based on minimal facts, that he's defended against the most prominent historians on the planet in public debates and in prestigous books and research journals.

This is a very careful treatment of the arguments that Dr. Craig goes over briefly during his debates. Recommended.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Reversing the American trend of borrowing and spending too much

May 17, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

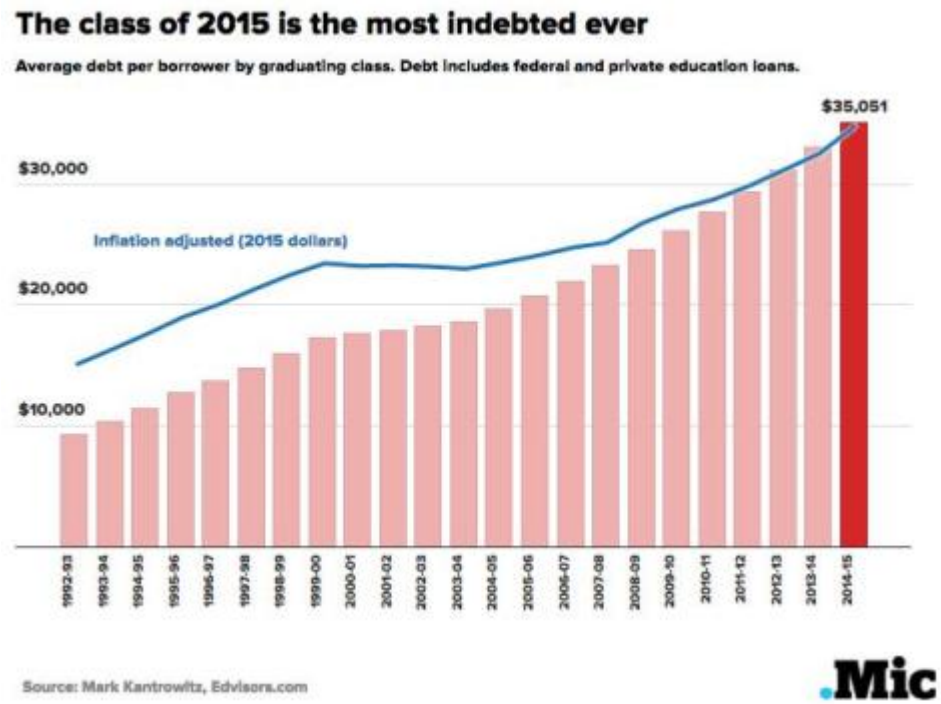

Average debt is now up to $35,000, often for a useless non-STEM degree

First, the problem, using this article from New Zealand. It is authored by a self-made millionaire to young people.

Excerpt:

> A young property tycoon has hit out at Generation Y claiming they need to stop travelling and spending money on overpriced food if they want to save for their first home.
>
> Tim Gurner, 35, is worth nearly half a billion dollars since buying his first investment property at the age of 19.
>
> The Melbourne millionaire believes it's time his generation change their spending and lifestyle habits.
>
> "When I was trying to buy my first home, I wasn't buying smashed avocado for $19 and four coffees at $4 each," he told Channel Nine's 60 Minutes program.
>
> "We're at a point now where the expectations of younger people are very, very high. They want to eat out every day, they want travel to Europe every year.
>
> "This generation is watching the Kardashians and thinking that's normal – thinking owning a Bentley is normal."

And how did the millennials respond? With immature, ignorant rebellion:

> Gurner's comments have been met with a backlash on social media will many

> criticising how he started out in the property – with a loan from his grandfather.
>
> One social media comment read: "Maybe the new home buyers would stand more of a chance if they were given 34K by their grandad… that's a fair few smashed avos.'
>
> Another added: 'Nice if you can get it,' while one commented: 'Much like Trump's dad gave him a "small loan of $1Mil.'

Of course, the average college graduate *HAS actually borrowed that much money* (see graphic above), but they just preferred to blow it all on alcohol, birth control and a degree in English literature.

Speaking of a degree in English literature…

This woman complained to her boss because she wasn't making enough money. She graduated with a non-STEM degree (English literature), and lives in one of the most expensive cities in America. (The cities that are all run by leftist Democrats who love to spend money on public works and welfare). She didn't even have roommates to split the rent!

I see this in so many young people – complete disregard for the future in order to have fun, thrills and frivolous travel right now. And all their same-age friends support their decision-making. Young people don't listen to grown-ups who have experience and real achievements. They listen to their friends. I know one woman who literally flew off to be a missionary in Europe for two years, on the advice of two Christian students, neither of which had ever worked a full-time job or saved money. They were proudly living off their parent's incomes into their late-20s, and she looked to them for advice on education, career and finances.

Low-income earners can still save money

You don't have to have a great job to make choices that lead to growing your wealth.

Here is an article from Business Insider about how to build wealth on a minimum wage salary.

Excerpt:

> Here are the key expenses that someone on minimum wage can consider cutting, to make an immediate impact:
>
> - Moving to a more affordable city can cut living expenses considerably. It's hard to accumulate wealth in Manhattan or San Francisco, but is much more likely in Buffalo or Memphis.
> - Eliminate commuting. Cars are expensive, and it is possible to get a place close enough to work to bike.
> - Cut some wires, particularly cable. After all, it's 2017 – just go with internet and Netflix.
> - Don't eat out, unless it's absolutely necessary.
> - Skip most purchases of new clothes. Instead, make thrift stores your new

> best friend, and don't be afraid to mend holes in clothing.
> - Cut expensive activities, and rediscover that the best things in life are free. Playing many sports can be free (or cheap), and public libraries are free (or cheap).
>
> Once that's done – it's all about investing in yourself.

The Obama administration set interest rates low for the last eight years, encouraging people to borrow more and more money – money that they could not pay back. Thankfully, the private sector has ways of encouraging people to save money.

This article is from the far-left The Atlantic.

Excerpt:

> Late last summer, Dawn Paquin started keeping her money on a prepaid debit card from Walmart instead of in a traditional checking account. The wages from her factory job—she works from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., inspecting blades on industrial bread-slicing machines—now go directly onto the Visa-branded card, which she can use like a regular debit card, though unlike most debit cards, it is not linked to a checking or savings account.
>
> […]The card is more convenient, Paquin said, and she doesn't have to worry about monthly statements; she tracks her money, and pays all her bills, with the card's associated phone app.
>
> […]In a 2015 Federal Reserve Board survey, 46 percent of respondents reported that they would have trouble coming up with $400 in an emergency; living paycheck to paycheck is now a commonplace middle-class experience. So while Paquin noticed that her Walmart MoneyCard app asked her from time to time whether she wanted to "stash" some money, she didn't bother to figure out what that actually meant, let alone respond.
>
> Then, late last year, she got an email saying that a "prize savings" feature had been added to her card. If she kept some of her balance in a virtual "vault," meaning that it would not show up in her available funds, she would be eligible to win a cash prize in a monthly drawing—up to $1,000. Every dollar in the MoneyCard Vault would equal an entry in that month's drawing. This caught her interest. A prize would go a long way toward her being able to buy a car. It also made her focus on what all those "stash" requests were about. "*Oh, cool, this can work as a savings account, too*," she remembers realizing. So when she got paid, she started setting aside "10 bucks, 20 bucks, whatever I could."'
>
> […]The program was launched to a limited number of MoneyCard holders in August, offering 500 prizes a month—one for $1,000, the rest $25 each. In December, the company reported that the number of Vault users had grown more than 130 percent, to more than 100,000, and that the average savings had grown from $413 to $572, a 38 percent increase.

Paquin actually did end up winning the $1000 prize for stashing some of her earnings. And she saved most of it, of course. Because she learned from the incentives.

Economist Walter Williams explains how to not be poor

May 18, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Walter Williams

Here is his article on wealth and poverty on Creators.

First, there is no real poverty in the United States:

> There is no material poverty in the U.S. Here are a few facts about people whom the Census Bureau labels as poor. Dr. Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield, in their study "Understanding Poverty in the United States: Surprising Facts About America's Poor", report that 80 percent of poor households have air conditioning; nearly three-quarters have a car or truck, and 31 percent have two or more. Two-thirds have cable or satellite TV. Half have one or more computers. Forty-two percent own their homes. Poor Americans have more living space than the typical non-poor person in Sweden, France or the U.K. What we have in our nation are dependency and poverty of the spirit, with people making unwise choices and leading pathological lives aided and abetted by the welfare state.

Second, the "poverty" is not caused by racism, but by poor choices:

> The Census Bureau pegs the poverty rate among blacks at 35 percent and among whites at 13 percent. The illegitimacy rate among blacks is 72 percent, and among whites it's 30 percent. A statistic that one doesn't hear much about is that the poverty rate among black married families has been in the single digits for more than two decades, currently at 8 percent. For married white families, it's 5 percent. Now the politically incorrect questions: Whose fault is it to have children without the benefit of marriage and risk a life of dependency? Do people have free will, or are they governed by instincts?
>
> There may be some pinhead sociologists who blame the weak black family structure on racial discrimination. But why was the black illegitimacy rate only 14

> percent in 1940, and why, as Dr. Thomas Sowell reports, do we find that census data "going back a hundred years, when blacks were just one generation out of slavery … showed that a slightly higher percentage of black adults had married than white adults. This fact remained true in every census from 1890 to 1940"? Is anyone willing to advance the argument that the reason the illegitimacy rate among blacks was lower and marriage rates higher in earlier periods was there was less racial discrimination and greater opportunity?

Third, avoiding poverty is the result of good choices:

> No one can blame a person if he starts out in life poor, because how one starts out is not his fault.
>
> If he stays poor, he is to blame because it is his fault. Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior. It turns out that a married couple, each earning the minimum wage, would earn an annual combined income of $30,000. The Census Bureau poverty line for a family of two is $15,500, and for a family of four, it's $23,000. By the way, no adult who starts out earning the minimum wage does so for very long.

Fourth, what stops people from making good choices is big government:

> Since President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty, the nation has spent about $18 trillion at the federal, state and local levels of government on programs justified by the "need" to deal with some aspect of poverty. In a column of mine in 1995, I pointed out that at that time, the nation had spent $5.4 trillion on the War on Poverty, and with that princely sum, "you could purchase every U.S. factory, all manufacturing equipment, and every office building. With what's left over, one could buy every airline, trucking company and our commercial maritime fleet. If you're still in the shopping mood, you could also buy every television, radio and power company, plus every retail and wholesale store in the entire nation". Today's total of $18 trillion spent on poverty means you could purchase everything produced in our country each year and then some.

Walter Williams is one of my two favorite economists, the other being Thomas Sowell. By sheer coincidence, they both happen to have grown up poor, and they both happen to be black. They understand what causes poverty very well. I recommend their books to you if you want to understand economics.

California State University gives $300,000 to left-wing campus groups, but zero to pro-life group

May 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young pro-life women protest Planned Parenthood

Consider this story from Alliance Defending Freedom, which talks about California State University–San Marcos.

Excerpt:

> Although the university says that it prohibits any of those groups from spending activity fee grants on expenses to bring speakers to campus, the Gender Equity Center and the LGBQTA Pride Center enjoy preferential status, and as such, are exempt from that rule and the standard $500 cap. In the 2016-2017 academic year, those two "centers" received a combined $296,498 for speech and expressive activities —more than 21 percent of all mandatory student activity fees the programming board received for that year—compared to only $38,629 for the more than 100 other groups combined (less than 3 percent).

The Students for Life group applied for $500 to bring in a pro-life speaker, and the university wouldn't even give them that tiny sum.

However, I linked to Alliance Defending Freedom for a reason… somebody is about to get sued:

> Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys filed a federal lawsuit Wednesday against California State University–San Marcos officials on behalf of a pro-life student organization and its campus president, Nathan Apodaca, who are prevented from bringing pro-life speakers to campus under the university's discriminatory

> funding policies.
>
> […]"While touting a community that values 'individual and cultural diversity, and respect[s] multiple perspectives,' Cal State–San Marcos is not practicing what it preaches," said ADF Senior Counsel Casey Mattox, director of the ADF Center for Academic Freedom. "Today's college students will be tomorrow's legislators, judges, commissioners, and voters. But at Cal-State San Marcos they are learning that government can force citizens to pay for advocacy of the views it decides shall be orthodox and effectively exclude competing views. There can be no marketplace of ideas where the government simply funds its favored views."

Alliance Defending Freedom is also suing another California university professor who instructed his little thug students to smash a pro-life display.

Excerpt:

> In April, the Fresno State Students for Life received permission to chalk positive, life-affirming messages on the sidewalks leading to the university's library. As its members finished chalking these messages on the morning of May 2, Gregory Thatcher, a public health professor, confronted them and falsely alleged they could not chalk messages near the library, and could only express themselves in the so-called "free speech area." (The university eliminated this speech zone in June 2015.)
>
> After club president Bernadette Tasy explained she had university permission to chalk messages in that spot, Thatcher announced that he would return to erase the messages shortly. He then recruited at least seven students from his 8:00 a.m. class to erase and deface the pro-life chalk messages. When Ms. Tasy reminded him that the club was acting with full permission, Thatcher walked over to one of the pro-life messages and began erasing it himself, claiming that he was exercising his free speech rights.
>
> […]The lawsuit, *Fresno State Students for Life v. Thatcher*, explains that Professor Thatcher's decision to erase Students for Life's expression, to recruit students to help in his censorship, and to harass and intimidate the group violates their fundamental right to freedom of speech. Additionally, the complaint asks the court to block Thatcher "and any other persons acting on his behalf or at his direction from interfering, disrupting, or altering any future lawful expressive activities that [Fresno State Students for Life and its members] conduct."

Lawsuits are fun! As long as it isn't me being sued.

Not everything that ADF does is a lawsuit, though, they also win lots and lots of prestigious trials.

Here's one report from this week:

> In many people's minds, it would have been easy for Blaine Adamson to "just print the shirts" when he was contacted about making shirts promoting the

> Lexington Pride Festival. He could have saved himself the lengthy legal battle, the lost customers, and the derogatory messages and phone calls. But Blaine's conscience would have suffered.
>
> "I want God to find joy in what we do and how we work, how we treat our employees, and the messages we print," says Blaine. "So if someone walks in and says, 'Hey, I want you to help promote something,' I can't promote something that I know goes against what pleases Him."
>
> Thankfully, a Kentucky appellate court has recognized Blaine's constitutional freedom not to print messages that he disagrees with. Today the court affirmed the Fayette Circuit Court's ruling that Blaine, managing owner of Hands On Originals (HOO) in Lexington, Kentucky, is free to decide for himself the ideas and messages he wants to express.
>
> The Gay and Lesbian Services Organization, which requested the shirts and filed the original complaint against Blaine with the Lexington-Fayette Urban Country Human Rights Commission, had tried to make this a case about discrimination. But the truth is that Blaine didn't discriminate against anyone. And that's exactly what the Kentucky Court of Appeals said in its ruling.
>
> Both Blaine and HOO regularly do business with and employ people who identify as LGBT. His decision not to print the shirts was because of the message that the shirts would promote. It had nothing to do with any characteristic of the person requesting them.
>
> "Americans should always have the freedom to believe, the freedom to express those beliefs, and the freedom to *not* express ideas that would violate their conscience," said ADF Senior Counsel Jim Campbell. "Today's decision is a victory for printers and other creative professionals who serve all people but cannot promote all messages."

If this case goes to the Kentucky Supreme Court, ADF has promised to defend the Christian business owners.

If you like Alliance Defending Freedom like I do, be sure and subscribe to their podcast. If you're looking for a good podcast app that's free and ad-free, try this one.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

May 20, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus in a debate by saying that the resurrection is the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. Minimal facts are the parts of the New Testament that meet a set of strict historical criteria. These are the facts that skeptical historians agree with, totally apart from any religious beliefs.

So what are the criteria that skeptical historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria

> are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."
>
> In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> (1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
>
> (2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
>
> (3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
>
> (4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
>
> (5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
>
> (6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.
>
> Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for

the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book.

Try this approach instead:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection

8. Don’t let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And remember that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I’ve read is the one by Robert H. Stein in “Contending with Christianity’s Critics“. It’s a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion “God raised Jesus from the dead”. That whole book is really very, very good.

More accusations of child molestation against Seattle's gay Democrat mayor Ed Murray

May 20, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

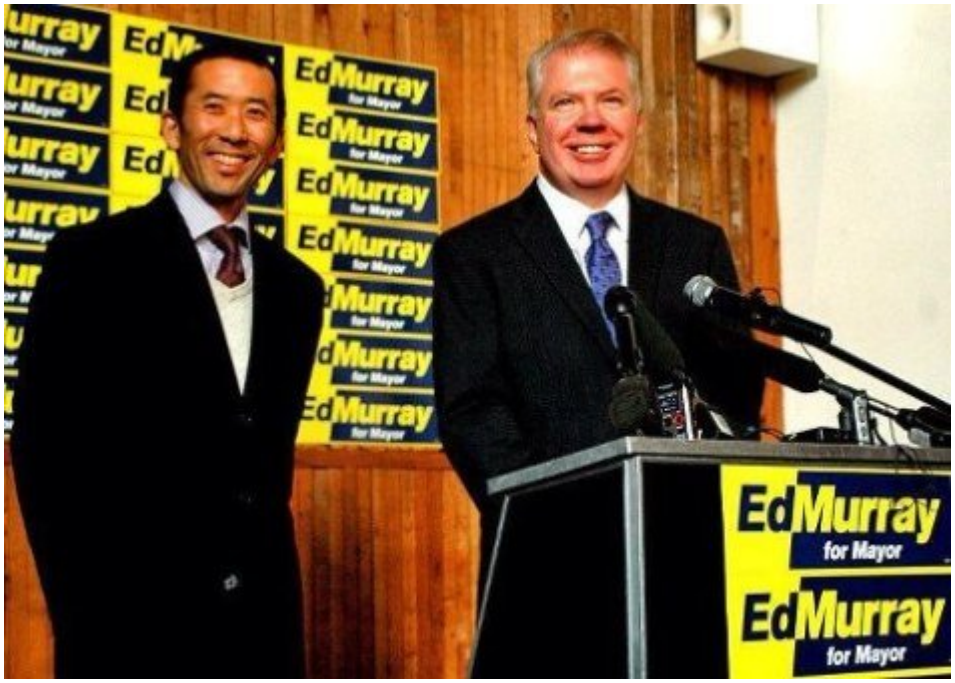

Democrat mayor of Seattle Ed Murray

The radically leftist Washington Post reports on the latest round of accusations against Seattle's gay Democrat mayor:

> Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, a nationally famous champion of gay rights and progressive causes, has been accused by three men of having sex with them as children.
>
> An unnamed man filed a child sex abuse lawsuit against the mayor on Thursday, alleging Murray "repeatedly criminally raped and molested" him when he was a homeless 15-year-old in the 1980s.
>
> The unnamed plaintiff and two other men gave interviews to the Seattle Times — all telling similar stories about a politico in his late 20s and 30s, who befriended street kids, paid them and had his way with them.
>
> "I don't necessarily think that he destroyed my life," Jeff Simpson told the newspaper after describing years of molestation from age 13 on. "But I believe a lot of the problems I have stemmed from this."
>
> Murray, a gay rights pioneer-turned-leading opponent of President Trump's immigration policies, canceled a planned event after news of the lawsuit broke Thursday and held a brief news conference the next day.
>
> […]Toward the end of the decade, according to the lawsuit, he met a homeless, drug-addicted 15-year-old on a bus.
>
> "Young and curious, D.H. encountered Ed Murray upon the bus and developed a

> friendly interaction," reads the lawsuit.
>
> This quickly turned into a regular negotiation, it reads, with the teen "willing to do whatever Mr. Murray asked for as little as $10 to $20."
>
> The plaintiff, now 46, was named only by initials in the lawsuit. But he gave an interview to the Times, recalling: "He'd be doing certain things, and I'd tell him to stop, and he wouldn't stop."
>
> […]The lawsuit — filed because the statute of limitations precludes criminal charges after so many years — goes into explicit detail about the alleged sexual encounters between the two.

This isn't the first round of accusations against the Democrat gay activist:

> It describes the apartment's floor plan. It also describes intimate physical descriptions of Murray that match the account of another accuser who did not sue: Lloyd Anderson.
>
> Anderson told the Times that he met the future mayor as a teen in the early 1980s — when he and Simpson were both living in a group home in Portland.
>
> Murray invited Anderson home and gave him $30 and some marijuana in return for oral sex, he told the newspaper.
>
> Simpson told the Times he lived off-and-on with Murray for years, having sex regularly, and reported the molestation to his group home manager after an argument in 1984 — though nothing came of it.
>
> Authorities pursued a sodomy investigation against Murray that same year, according to the Associated Press, but dropped it.
>
> Anderson and Simpson took their accusations to the media and Washington lawmakers in 2008, the Times reported — when Murray was a state senator known for championing same-sex marriage and other gay rights causes.

Previously, I've blogged about how the co-founder of the Human Rights Campaign – and a prominent donor to the Democrat Party – was also accused of child molestation. We also had the story about the two gay activists who molested a boy they adopted (for money) from Russia. The story about the two gay men who were investigated for sex with a teenage boy. And so on.

While searching for previous stories along these lines, I found this old story about how Democrats voted to subsidize Viagra for child molesters and rapists. Yes, really. That blog post quoted from the Washington Times, a respected national newspaper. This actually happened.

Although you don't often hear much about the kinds of causes that the Democrat party really care about, their real priorities are there, if you pay attention to the news. While Republicans are trying to eject MS-13 gangsters from the United States, Democrats are voting for Viagra for child molesters and rapists.

Are Latter Day Saints (LDS) doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

May 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out

> of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that although Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is

> central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-

> Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

Further study

If you want a nice long PDF to print out and read at lunch (which is what I did with it) you can grab this PDF by Michael Licona, entitled "Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock".

Why is the universe so big, and why is so much of it hostile to life?

May 22, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Review: In case you need a refresher on the cosmological and fine-tuning arguments, as presented by a professor of particle physics at Stanford University, then click this link and watch the lecture.

If you already know about the standard arguments for theism from cosmology, then take a look at this post on Uncommon Descent.

Summary:

> In my previous post, I highlighted three common atheistic objections to to the cosmological fine-tuning argument. In that post, I made no attempt to answer these objections. My aim was simply to show that the objections were weak and inconclusive.
>
> Let's go back to the original three objections:
>
> 1. If the universe was designed to support life, then why does it have to be so BIG, and why is it nearly everywhere hostile to life? Why are there so many stars, and why are so few orbited by life-bearing planets? (Let's call this the *size problem*.)
>
> 2. If the universe was designed to support life, then why does it have to be so OLD, and why was it devoid of life throughout most of its history? For instance, why did life on Earth only appear after 70% of the cosmos's 13.7-billion-year history had already elapsed? And Why did human beings (genus Homo) only appear after 99.98% of the cosmos's 13.7-billion-year history had already

> elapsed? (Let's call this the *age problem*.)
>
> 3. If the universe was designed to support life, then why does Nature have to be so CRUEL? Why did so many animals have to die – and why did so many species of animals have to go extinct (99% is the commonly quoted figure), in order to generate the world as we see it today? What a waste! And what about predation, parasitism, and animals that engage in practices such as serial murder and infant cannibalism? (Let's call this the *death and suffering problem*.)

Here's an excerpt for the size argument:

> (a) The main reason why the universe is as big as it currently is that in the first place, the universe had to contain sufficient matter to form galaxies and stars, without which life would not have appeared; and in the second place, the density of matter in the cosmos is incredibly fine-tuned, due to the fine-tuning of gravity. To appreciate this point, let's go back to the earliest time in the history of the cosmos that we can meaningfully talk about: the Planck time, when the universe was 10^-43 seconds old. If the density of matter at the Planck time had differed from the critical density by as little as one part in 10^60, the universe would have either exploded so rapidly that galaxies wouldn't have formed, or collapsed so quickly that life would never have appeared. In practical terms: if our universe, which contains 10^80 protons and neutrons, had *even one more grain of sand* in it – or one grain *less* – we wouldn't be here.

If you mess with the size of the universe, you screw up the mass density fine-tuning. We need that to have a universe that expands at the right speed in order for the matter to clump together to form galaxies, stars and planets. Too fast, and you get no clumping. Too slow, and the whole thing re-collapses into a hot fireball. You need stars and planets to have a place to form life – a place with liquid water at the surface, and more.

And an excerpt for the age argument:

> (a) One reason why we need an old universe is that billions of years were required for Population I stars (such as our sun) to evolve. These stars are more likely to harbor planets such as our Earth, because they contain lots of "metals" (astronomer-speak for elements heavier than helium), produced by the supernovae of the previous generation of Population II stars. According to currently accepted models of Big Bang nucleosynthesis, this whole process was absolutely vital, because the Big Bang doesn't make enough "metals", including those necessary for life: carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus and so on.

Basically, you need heavy elements to make stars that burn slow and steady, as well as to make PEOPLE! And heavy elements have to be built up slowly through several iterations of the stellar lifecycle, including the right kinds of stellar death: supernovae.

Read the rest! These arguments come up all the time in debates with village atheists like Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins. It's a smokescreen they put up, but you've

got to be able to answer it using the scientific evidence we have today. They always want to dismiss God with their personal preferences about what God should or should not do. But the real issue is the design of the cosmological constants that allow life to *anywhere*. That's the part that's designed. And that's not a matter of personal preference, it's a matter of *mathematics* and *experimental science.*

Republican legislators getting things done for social conservatives in Texas

May 23, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas Governor Greg Abbott

Texas is the most economically successful state in the union, but that's not the only thing special about Texas. Texas governor Greg Abbott is a strong promoter of the free enterprise system. But he is also serious about defending Judeo-Christian values. Right now, he is my pick to be the next Republican nominee for President, even more than my previous favorite, Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin. Abbott's doing a lot for social conservatives, as well as fiscal conservatives.

This Texas Tribune story shows what achievements he will be able to run on in a Republican primary:

> Gov. Greg Abbott has signed into law legislation shielding pastors' sermons from government subpoena power.
>
> Senate Bill 24 stemmed from the 2014 battle over Houston's anti-discrimination ordinance, when the city subpoenaed sermons of five pastors who opposed it. The legislation was a priority of Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who joined Abbott on Sunday for a bill-signing ceremony at the churches of one of those pastors.
>
> […]Authored by state Sen. Joan Huffman, R-Houston, SB 24 says a government cannot "compel the production or disclosure of a written copy or audio or video recording of a sermon delivered by a religious leader during religious worship … or compel the religious leader to testify regarding the sermon." It went into effect

> immediately when it was formally signed by Abbott on Friday in Austin.

You'll remember that this law became necessary when Houston's gay Democrat mayor decided to subpoena the sermons of Christian pastors to try to intimidate them into not talking about moral issues.

There's another story from the Daily Signal about another bill that is headed to Governor Abbott's desk:

> The Texas Senate early Monday passed a bill to allow faith-based adoption and foster care providers to operate based on their religious beliefs.
>
> By a final vote of 21-10, state senators agreed with their counterparts in the Texas House of Representatives that society should continue to make room for adoption and foster care services associated with a religious tradition, whether Christian or Muslim.
>
> Only one Democrat joined the Senate's 20 Republicans in voting for the bill. The remaining 10 voted against it.
>
> In an interview Monday with The Daily Signal, state Rep. James Frank, a Republican who co-wrote the legislation, predicted that Texas Gov. Greg Abbott would sign it.
>
> "I am obviously very excited about it passing the Senate, and I fully expect … that Governor Abbott will sign it and it will be law," Frank said, "and we'll have, I hope, more people serving and free to serve children in the state of Texas."

Not sure why Democrats would vote against a bill like this, but I notice a lot of Democrats are getting busted for underage sex and underage sexting lately. We already knew how Democrats felt about no-fault divorce and adultery: they're all for it! Any sort of selfishness that adults can engage in is more important than providing kids with a mom and a dad. Democrats oppose prioritizing opposite sex couples, because it might offend gay couples or single parents.

Whose policies are responsible for the Islamic State terrorist attack against children?

May 24, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

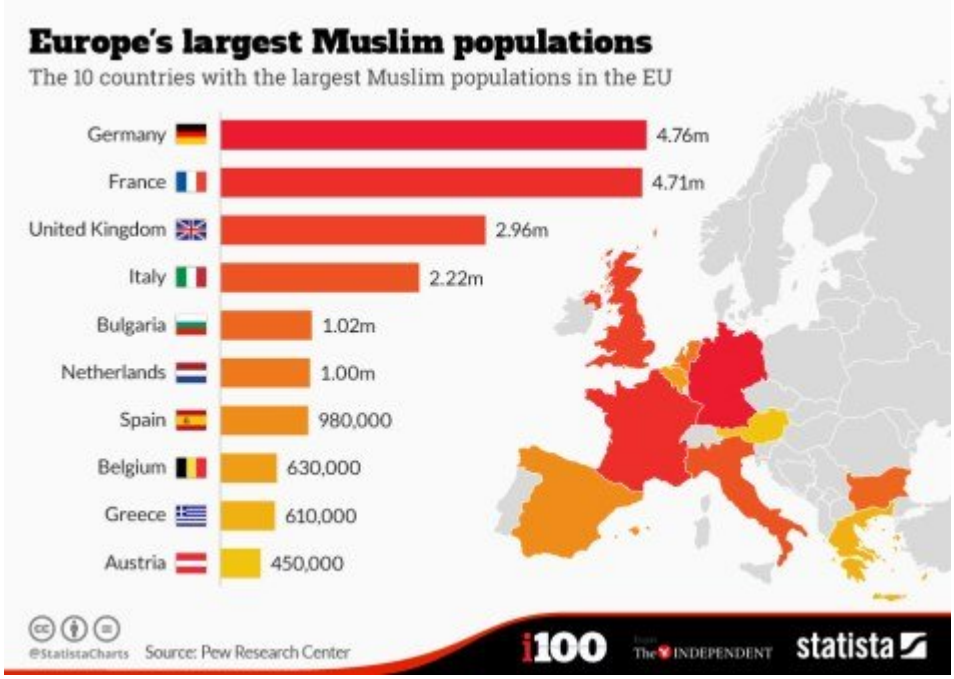

Muslim populations in Europe

First, the news story from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Salman Abedi, 22, who was reportedly known to the security services, is thought to have returned from Libya as recently as this week.

Devout Muslim:

> He had become radicalised recently – it is not entirely clear when – and had worshipped at a local mosque that has, in the past, been accused of fund-raising for jihadists.
>
> Abedi's older brother Ismail had been a tutor at Didsbury mosque's Koran school. The imam last night said that Salman Abedi, who wore Islamic dress, had shown him "the face of hate" when he gave a talk warning on the dangers of so-called Islamic State.

A family friend described him as "very religious".

Parents were Islamic refugees:

> Born in 1994, the second youngest of four children, Abedi's parents were Libyan refugees who fled to the UK to escape Gaddafi.

Well educated:

> Abedi went to school locally and then on to Salford University in 2014 where he studied business management before dropping out.

He lived in a "red-brick terrace" home with his parents. No poverty to speak of.

Wall Street Journal says:

> Islamic State on Tuesday claimed responsibility for the attack, the deadliest in the U.K. since 2005.
>
> […]In a statement published online, Islamic State said the attack was revenge for "aggression toward Muslim countries" and identified the assailant as a "soldier of the caliphate."

The root problem is, of course, the open borders immigration policies enacted by the Labour Party of the UK. It was their attempt to tilt the electorate away from the free enterprise system, towards government dependency. And it worked. Of course, if a few UK citizens have to die for the far left Labour Party to win election after election… so be it, right?

Sober-minded Christian writer David French commented on this story at National Review:

> While it's impossible to predict any given terror attack, there are two laws of terrorism that work together to guarantee that attacks will occur, and they'll occur with increasing frequency. First, when terrorists are granted safe havens to plan, train, equip, and inspire terror attacks, then they will strike, and they'll keep striking not just until the safe havens are destroyed but also until the cells and affiliates they've established outside their havens are rooted out. Second, when you import immigrants at any real scale from jihadist regions, then you *will* import the cultural, religious, and political views that incubate jihad. Jihadist ideas flow not from soil but from people, and when you import people you import their ideas.
>
> Let's look at how these two ideas have worked together in both Europe and America. The map below (from AFP) charts significant terror attacks in Europe (including Turkey). You'll note a significant increase in activity since 2014, since ISIS stampeded across Syria and into Turkey and established a terrorist caliphate in the heart of the Middle East. There existed a safe haven and a population to inspire back in Europe. The result was entirely predictable:

This is the predicable result he mentions:

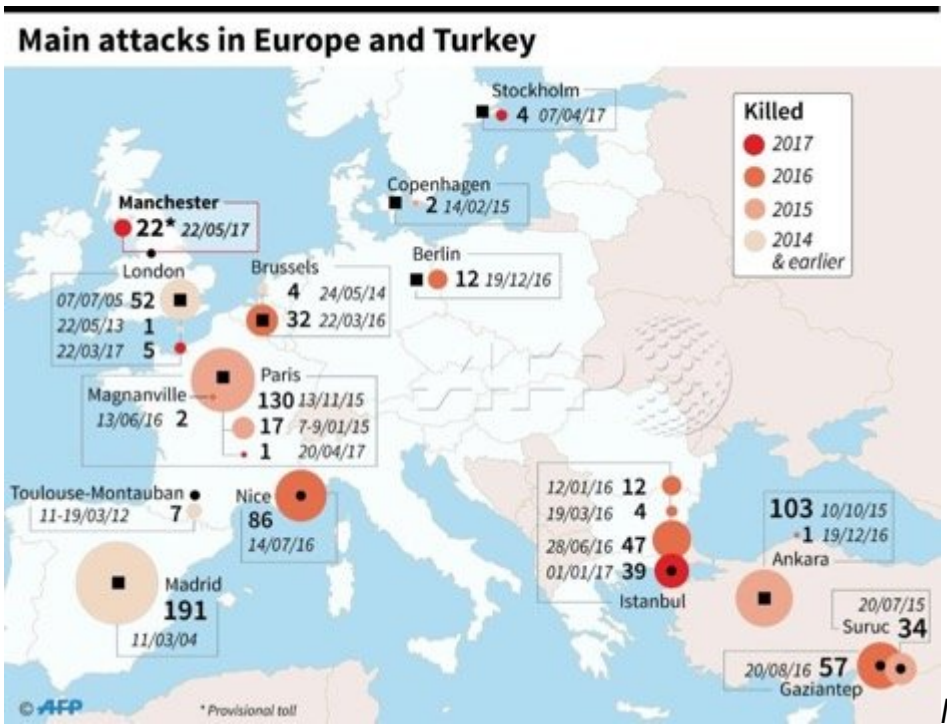

Map of terrorist attacks in Europe

And this is significant:

> What about the United States? A similar phenomenon was in play. This Heritage Foundation timeline of terror attacks and plots documents a total of 95 incidents since 9/11. The numbers are revealing. After the implementation of the (now) much-derided Bush strategy, there were a grand total of 27 terror attacks and plots — almost all of them foiled.
>
> After the end of the Bush administration, the numbers skyrocketed, with 68 plots or attacks recorded since. A number of them, including the Fort Hood shooting, the Boston Marathon bombing, the San Bernardino mass murder, and the Orlando nightclub massacre, have been terrifying successful. Indeed, there have been more domestic terror plots and attacks since the rise of ISIS in the summer of 2014 than there were in the entirety of the Bush administration after 9/11. And make no mistake, jihadist terrorists are disproportionately immigrants and children of immigrants.
>
> What did Bush do that was so successful? He not only pressed military offensives in the heart of the Middle East, he fundamentally changed the American approach to immigration and implemented a number of temporary measures that, for example, dramatically decreased refugee admissions and implemented country-specific protective measures that have since been discontinued.

You'll recall that Islamic State was caused by Barack Obama's decision to retreat from Iraq. The refugee crisis worsened because of his other failed interventions in Libya and Syria. This is what happens when people are carried away by a happy-sounding "anti-war" message. Wiser voters thought about what would happen if we pulled out of Iraq, and voted against Obama. The wiser voters lost.

Speaking of Democrats, I wonder if Barack Obama and his Democrat supporters will call this terrorist attack “workplace violence”, like he did with the Fort Hood terrorist attack by Major Nidal Hassan? I’ve talked to a few Democrats about immigration from countries with a significant population of radicalized Muslims, and they are all in favor of increased immigration from those countries. Democrats are more scared of pro-marriage, pro-life Christians than of Islamic terrorists. After all, it’s not them dying in these attacks. Give them their gay marriage and their free birth control.

But I’m also noticing a lot of Christians trying to appear generous and compassionate lately, by embracing the same open borders policies as the progressives.
They’re claiming generosity and compassion in public by spending *other people’s money* and risking *other people’s lives.* This is especially popular among Christians in academia, seeking to curry favor with their secular colleagues. For many Christian leftists like Russell Moore, embracing open borders immigration policy, is a quick way to avoid charges of lacking compassion. Except nobody ever asks these pious Christians who has compassion for the victims of their policies.

Finally, national security expert Andrew C. McCarthy notes that the current Republican administration’s efforts to vet incoming immigrants from Muslim countries has been opposed by Democrats in the judiciary, and far-left civil rights groups. Republicans are trying to prevent terrorist attacks like this at home, but they are opposed at every turn by naive Democrat voters who are more interested in feeling good and looking good than in protecting the victims of terrorist attacks. You can’t have it both ways when it comes to national security.

What’s a good sign that a person wants to go Heaven, and will like it there?

May 25, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Find a church that doesn’t have the problems that you complain about

The Dina tweeted this column by Matt Walsh yesterday, and I am not sure how much I agree with it, but I found it very interesting.

Matt writes about how most American Christians think that they will go to Heaven either because 1) they have done “good” things or 2) you have faith in Jesus (without letting your faith in Jesus impact your life in any way that goes against your self-interest). He doesn’t think that either of those really mean that you will fit into Heaven.

He writes:

> We do good things, we reassure ourselves. We believe. We’ll be fine. But “believing” and being a generally nice guy don’t matter on their own. What matters is to love Christ. If I don’t love Christ but I still give to charity because it makes me feel good, I’m no closer to Heaven than I would be if I were a bank robber. And if I don’t love Christ but I still believe that He exists and He is Lord, I am no closer to Heaven than I would be if I were an atheist. In fact, I’m probably much further away (“Even the demons believe”).
>
> […]Heaven is not for those who merely believe in God or perform wonderful deeds in His name, but for those who truly wish to do nothing but love and serve Him for all eternity. In other words, Heaven is for those who actually want to go. And we only want to go to Heaven if we want a life that is completely consumed by Christ and nothing else. If we want a life that is only partly Christ, we don’t want Heaven. We may as well admit it now while there’s still time: We don’t want Heaven.
>
> If Christ is not even close to our primary joy in life, how can we go to a place where He is the *only* joy? If we are content to make Christ only a part of our lives here, how can we go to a place where there is no life but Him?
>
> […]**Many of us think we desire Heaven because we imagine it as a place of self-centered pleasure. We believe that the happiness of Heaven is**

> **much like the happiness we find on Earth. So, if we enjoy eating good food, watching movies, playing sports, whatever, we fantasize that Heaven will be like some sort of resort where we can eat all the cheesecake we want and have access to an infinite Netflix library and maybe toss the pigskin around with Johnny Unitas on a football field in the clouds. And if this is the only kind of happiness we desire — a selfish, indulgent kind of happiness — then we clearly do not desire the happiness of Heaven.**
>
> […]**John Henry Newman once suggested that our attitude towards church is a pretty good indication of how much we really desire Heaven, and how much we'd actually enjoy it if we went there. As he pointed out, we cannot expect to find happiness in Heaven if we detest going to church, praying, and reading the Bible. If we find religion to be a crashing bore, and are stimulated only by what is selfish and secular, how do we think we'll fare in a place where the only things we really love are obliterated, and the one thing we always avoid must now be the center of our existence forever?**
>
> If all the things that are purely about God in this life are, to us, dull and uninteresting, and all we do is bide our time until we can get back to the TV, then Heaven would be torture. There would be no leaving God to get back to the TV. It would be only God always. If we find little appeal in spending even a few minutes with God now, how can we expect that we'll find any appeal in spending infinity with Him?
>
> **This is the problem with people who say they don't pray, attend church, or read Scripture, but they go on walks instead, or spend time with their families, or go to the beach, and that's where they "find God." It's true that God can be found in all of those things, but you can also enjoy them without thinking about God at all. There are only a few activities in life that are purely, solely, and inevitably about God and God only, and those are the activities many Christians enjoy least of all. Most of us can't stand to worship the Lord unless it's in the context of some relaxing and entertaining recreational activity, yet we still claim to desire Heaven.**
>
> **No, it's not Heaven we want. It's a vacation.**

I have always railed against the feminized church and pious anti-intellectual man-blaming pastors, but that was only because those were the only churches and pastors I had encountered. After moving a few months ago to a red state, I started attending a new church, based on their past apologetics-oriented activities, and the intellectual ability of the pastor. Since trying this new church, I've found it no problem at all to show up every Sunday for the service and for Sunday school. And I don't feel anything awful about it.

I've been really blessed lately, red state, great new job, and achieving financial

independence at last. I wanted to reconnect with God and so I went out and found a decent church. The whole point of me going there was to hear the hymns, think about the sermons, and read the parts of the Bible that I don't normally read. I wanted a refresher on the character of my Boss, so that I could make better decisions that would respect him. Jesus has been my Boss a long time. It never hurts to go back and find out what the Boss is like.

Dina and all my friends are happy that I am going to church. And I hope all my friends understand now why I wasn't going much before. The problem was that there were no churches where I used to live that had intelligent pastors AND that were hosting apologetics events AND that equipped members of the flock to engage in public debates with atheists. This church does those things.

It doesn't hurt that I get to wear a shirt and tie, or that the worship service has so many great classical hymns that don't blow out my eardrums (I really hate dark churches with loud contemporary music!). Of course I was going to go to church, people – I just had to find a good one first. And that was their problem to solve, not mine.

Study: homeschooled children less likely to leave their faith

May 26, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

Lindsay, a super-mom who homeschools her kids with her super-husband Doug, sent me this article from Christian News.

Quick blurb:

> The recently-released findings from an in-depth study of nearly 10,000 young adults show that Millennials who were homeschooled are less likely to leave the faith than individuals who attended private or public schools.
>
> Late last month, Generations with Vision and the National Home Education Research Institute published the results of their Gen2 Survey. The study explores the correlations between different educational methods and the spiritual decisions of Millennials who were raised in the church.
>
> "The purpose of the study is to examine these adults who were churched growing up and to understand the key influences which either encouraged or deterred them from believing and practicing the faith of their parents," said the survey's director and lead researcher, Dr. Brian Ray.
>
> Using a sample size of 9,369 18-to 38-year-olds who were churched while growing up, the Gen2 Survey collected data on Millennials' educational backgrounds, worldviews, and religious beliefs. The study found that individuals who were homeschooled, attended church regularly, and had good relationships with their parents were most likely to remain involved in the Christian faith.

> "Having a strong relationship with the child's mother and father, attending church as a child, and years homeschooled were all clearly positively associated with Millennials' basic Christian orthodoxy, broader biblical beliefs, Christian

> behaviors (e.g., attending church, keeping sex in marriage, prayer, not using pornography), satisfaction in life, civic and community involvement, and having beliefs similar to one's parents," Ray stated.
>
> 87% of study participants who were homeschooled said they have strong Christian beliefs. Conversely, Millennials who were enrolled in public schools or private Christian schools were more likely to walk away from the faith later in life.
>
> "Number of years in Christian school and number of years in public school were negatively associated with most of the adult beliefs and behaviors just mentioned," Ray explained.
>
> Statistically, homeschooled young adults were six times as likely to be believers and seven times as likely to be stronger in their Christian beliefs as Millennials attending private schools. Homeschooled Millennials were also two times as likely to be stronger in Christian beliefs as those who attended Christian schools or public schools.

I find that when I court Christian women, they pretty much have the idea that kids are are for providing fun for their parents. And if you make a plan to make them achieve anything, then that is bad because it's less fun for the parents. Sometimes they try to dress it up in emotional or religious language when they are explaining it to others, but under cross-examination, it really turns out to be "marriage and parenting are better when we do whatever I feel like moment by moment". If the man does not step up during the courtship with the research and get agreement on issues like homeschooling, then he needs to shut it down and move on. Women who are guided by their feelings instead of studies in decisions about how to parent are not safe to marry. Either they accept the the best practices from research, or they are out of the running.

Of course, that necessarily means finding a wife who has done a decent degree, worked a few years, and saved up enough money to help you to keep her at home with young children. I am seeing a lot of men in my office who have decent salaries, but they still can't keep their wives at home, because their wives ran up $200,000 in student loans (this actually happened to my co-worker Javier). Other times, I see grown women into their mid-30s, still carrying tens of thousands in student loans, and refusing to get a full-time job in their field (this actually happened to a missionary I know who refused to work any job but waitress / bartender). Sometimes, the woman just doesn't want to stay home, because she likes the feel of earning her own money instead of being dependent on her husband. That screws the kids as well, but it's a very popular attitude today. These are the things that a man has to check for before he marries – and remember that there is often a great gulf between words and past actions. Don't be fooled by someone who talks about what they will do in the future, when their past is completely different.

So if a couple determines that they are going to have no strict approach to how to parent the kids, then they should not be surprised their children fall away from the faith. Either you are aware of who is teaching your kids, and what they are teaching them, or you are not. It is no coincidence that the secular left pushes for earlier and earlier starts to

schooling and more and more free college. They know that the more they get the kids away from their parents and in with peers of the same age and secular leftist professors and teaches, the more those kids are likely to adopt their values – not the values of their parents. Not the values of grown-ups who have to survive in the real world with common sense.

Google’s YouTube censors video of national abortion conference speakers

May 27, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

I can’t show you the video any more by embedding a YouTube clip, because YouTube censored the video. YouTube is owned by Google.

The Washington Free Beacon has an article about YouTube’s censorship of the video.

Excerpt:

> **YouTube has deleted a video that showed Planned Parenthood executives admitting abortion is “killing,” leading pro-life activists to accuse the site of censorship.**
>
> […]The link to the three-minute video now redirects to a message from YouTube, saying, “This video has been removed for violating YouTube’s Terms of Service.” It does not elaborate on which terms or condition the video violated, nor does it give a reason why it was taken down. YouTube did not return request for comment.

But the Daily Signal has posted something about the video.

Exerpt:

> Lawyers for Center for Medical Progress founder David Daleiden released a new video Thursday that exposes horrifying statements from leaders of the abortion industry during National Abortion Federation conventions in California in 2014 and 2015.
>
> The National Abortion Federation describes itself as “the professional association of abortion providers.” The group says it “exhibits and presents at numerous

> conferences … about topics related to abortion care."
>
> The video notes that "Planned Parenthood makes up about 50 percent of [the National Abortion Federation's] members and leadership."
>
> **The video opens with a Planned Parenthood medical director speaking on a panel about "heads that get stuck" and the "hemorrhages that we manage."**
>
> **She is later seen telling a panel: "Given that we might actually both agree that there's violence in here, ask me why I come to work every day. Let's just give them all the violence, it's a person, it's killing, let's just give them all that."**
>
> A Planned Parenthood abortionist then complains about how an unborn child "is a tough little object" and "very difficult" to take apart.
>
> A lawyer from the American Civil Liberties Union is heard remarking, "When the skull is broken, that's really sharp" as the crowd laughs about the difficulty of "getting that skull out."
>
> Another Planned Parenthood official, speaking on a panel, recalls that an "eyeball just fell down into my lap, and that is gross." The crowd laughs.
>
> The video shows a procurement manager from StemExpress, which acquires fetal tissue for research, commenting that there are "a lot of [abortion] clinics that we work with that, I mean, it helps them out significantly."
>
> At another point, a Planned Parenthood official says of clinics providing tissue from abortions that "the truth is that some might want to do it … to increase their revenues. And we can't stop them."

The Daily Signal article notes that California is currently prosecuting the Center for Medical Progress for releasing videos of abortionists explaining in plain English what it is exactly that they do for a living, and how they maximize revenue earned by killing unborn children.

CMP is being defended by the Alliance Defending Freedom.

If abortion were such a wonderful thing, you would think that abortion providers would be anxious to brag to the public about the great work they are doing.

Instead, countries that have legalized abortion have to censor news stories and prosecute nurses and doctors who refuse to perform abortions. Naturally, these nurses and doctors are not allowed to tell their stories or they will face criminal charges.

There is a great push in the United States right now by the abortion profiteers to force pro-life nurses and doctors out of the medical profession.

Wesley J. Smith explains in First Things:

> Doctors in the United States cannot be forced to perform abortions or assist suicides. But that may soon change. Bioethicists and other medical elites have launched a frontal assault against doctors seeking to practice their professions

> under the values established by the Hippocratic Oath. The campaign's goal? To force doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and others in the health field who hold pro-life or orthodox religious views to choose between their careers and their convictions.
>
> Ethics opinions, legislation, and court filings seeking to deny "medical conscience" have proliferated as journals, legislative bodies, and the courts have taken up the cause. In the last year, these efforts have moved from the relative hinterlands of professional discussions into the center of establishment medical discourse. Most recently, preeminent bioethicist Ezekiel Emanuel—one of Obamacare's principal architects—coauthored with Ronit Y. Stahl an attack on medical conscience in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, perhaps the world's most prestigious medical journal. When advocacy of this kind is published by the *NEJM*, it is time to sound the air raid sirens.

Naturally, in countries with single payer socialist medicine, that effort is much further along. Canada, for example, has been prosecuting pro-life nurses and doctors for decades. In a signle-payer system run by the secular left, there just is no room for conscience, much as there was no room for Germans who wanted to abstain from killing innocent Jews in Nazi Germany. When you are in a single payer health care system, you have to kill or be prosecuted for listening to your conscience.

Here's an article about it from Evolution News:

> Ontario, Canada, has passed a law formally legalizing lethal injection euthanasia. And it will force all provincial doctors to be complicit by either doing the deed themselves to all legally qualified patients who request to be killed, or by tasking them with procuring a death doctor.
>
> From the website of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (my emphasis):
>
> In Ontario, health regulatory colleges are responsible for regulating their respective professions in the public interest. In doing so, colleges may establish policies and standards **that their members must comply with, including policies and standards regarding medical assistance in dying.**
>
> The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario requires that when physicians **are unwilling to provide certain elements of care for reasons of conscience or religion, an effective referral to another health-care provider must be provided to the patient**. An effective referral means **"a referral made in good faith, to a non-objecting, available, and accessible physician**, other health-care professional, or agency".
>
> Think about this. Three years ago, it would have been a felony for doctors to kill patients, potentially landing them in prison.
>
> Now, refusing to participate in homicide could cost them their medical licenses.

Single payer countries are very supportive of killing the elderly, since this reduces health care costs and allows them to have more health care money to buy votes by providing things that leftists want with taxpayer money, e.g. free sex-reassignment surgery, free contraceptives, free drug injection clinics for people addicted to illegal drugs, free breast enlargements, free IVF for unmarried elderly feminists, etc.

I see the effort to censor the CMP videos as part of the attempt to nationalize health care and criminalize dissent from the leftist agenda of deeming certain lives not as valuable as other lives.

Gary Habermas and James Crossley discuss the minimal facts case for the resurrection

May 28, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two ninjas face off at sundown

James Crossley is my favorite atheist ancient historian, such a straight shooter. He's on the skeptical left, but he has a no-baloney way of talking that I really like. I was so excited to summarize this, and there's not a speck of snark in this summary. Crossley dates the gospel of Mark 37-43 A.D., far earlier than most scholars. Justin Brierley does a great job as moderator. Gary Habermas is OK, but he is not familiar with any useful arguments for God's existence, (kalam, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, etc.), and that is a problem in this debate.

Here are the details of the debate:

> Christian philosopher and historian Gary Habermas has been at the forefront of the 'minimal facts' approach as evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.
>
> He debates the commonly agreed facts with agnostic New Testament scholar James Crossley and they discuss whether the miracle of the resurrection can be a historically valid explanation of the evidence.

Note: this is the first of two shows they are doing together!!

The MP3 file is here. (If this disappears, tell me, I have a copy)

There is also a video on YouTube:

This non-snarky summary starts at 10:52.

Summary:

- Habermas: the minimal facts are the facts that even the majority of *skeptical* scholars will accept

Habermas list of minimal facts: (near universal acceptance)

1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion
2. After his death, his disciples had experiences that they believed were appearances of the risen Jesus
3. The disciples were transformed by their experiences and proclaimed his resurrection and were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection
4. The proclamation of his resurrection was early
5. James was converted by a post-mortem experience
6. Paul was converted by a post-mortem experience

Habermas list of widely-accepted facts:

1. Burial for Jesus in a private tomb
2. The private tomb found empty
3. The disciples despaired after Jesus was crucified
4. The proclamation of the resurrection started in Jerusalem
5. Changing the worship day from Saturday to Sunday

Crossley's views on the minimal and widely-accepted facts:

- Crossley: I am in broad agreement with what Gary said
- Crossley: "the resurrection appearances are some of the hardest, best evidence we have" because it's in early 1 Cor 15:3-8 creed
- Crossley: people were convinced that they had seen the risen Christ

The burial in a private tomb:

- Crossley: I have my doubts about the private tomb burial and the empty tomb
- Crossley: Mark's gospel has the burial in a private tomb by Joseph of Arimethea, and Mark is the earliest gospel
- Crossley: I don't have a doubt, it's just that there are other possible alternatives, and then the tradition was invented later – but that's just a possibility
- Crossley: there is not enough evidence to make a decision either way on the burial

The empty tomb:

- Habermas: there are multiple lines of evidence for the empty tomb
- Habermas: the reason it's not one of my minimal facts is because a quarter to a third of skeptical scholars reject it

The transformation of the followers of Jesus:

- Crossley: "yes, clearly, I don't think you can argue with that, it's fairly obvious"

The conversions of James and Paul:

- Crossley: “yes, because it’s based on 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, that report, that was handed on to him”

Where Habermas and Crossley agree:

- Habermas: you agree with the 6 facts in the minimal facts list, and you have problems with 2 of 5 facts from the widely accepted list
- Crossley: Yes

The empty tomb:

- Crossley: Two problems: first, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 doesn’t mention it, but it “probably assumes the idea that Jesus left behind an empty tomb when resurrected, I am convinced by some of the conservative arguments on that one, but it’s not hard evidence for there actually being an empty tomb”
- Crossley: Second, “the other early source we have ends with no resurrection appearances”, it makes him a bit skeptical of the empty tomb
- Habermas: the empty tomb is not a minimal fact, I want 90% agreement by skeptical scholars for it to be a minimal fact
- Habermas: I have never included the empty tomb in my list of minimal facts
- Brierley: William Lane Craig puts it in his list of minimal facts
- Habermas: It is very well attested, so if that’s what you mean, then it’s a minimal fact, but it doesn’t have the 90% agreement like the other minimal facts
- Habermas: I have 21 arguments for the empty tomb, and none of them require early dating of sources or traditional authorship of the gospels, e.g. – the women discovered the empty tomb, the pre-Markan source, the implications of 1 Cor 15 has some force, the sermons summary in Acts 13 which Bart Ehrman dates to 31 or 32 A.D. has putting a body down and a body coming up without being corrupted

Why is 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 more respected as a source than the gospels?

- Habermas: There is a unanimous New Testament conclusion, across the board, from conservative to liberal, that in 1 Cor 15:3-8 Paul is presenting creedal data, Richard Bauckham says that this goes back to the early 30s A.D., Paul got this from the eyewitnesses he mentions in Galatians 1 and 2
- Crossley: [reads 1 Corinthians:3-8 out loud], now that’s a tradition that’s handed on, this is Paul, we know this is Paul, writing mid-50s, this is kind of gold, this is the evidence I wish we had across the board

Why doesn’t James accept the resurrection:

- Crossley: Historians should not conclude that the supernatural is real, concluding the supernatural is outside of history
- Crossley: I am more interested in what people believed at that time
- Brierley: as a historian, are you required to give an explanation of the commonly-

accepted facts
- Crossley: yes, historians must give their explanation for the facts
- Crossley: we know people have visions, and how the cultural context determines the content of visions, e.g. – the background of martyrdom
- Brierley: so you would go for the hallucination hypothesis?
- Crossley: yes, but I prefer not to use that word

Should historians rule out the supernatural?

- Habermas: let's not ask what caused the event, let's just see if the disciples thought they saw him before he died, that he died on the cross, and then believed they saw him after he died, like you might see someone in the supermarket
- Habermas: I'm not asking whether a miracle occurred, I just want to know whether Jesus was seen after he died on the cross
- Crossley: that sounds like the angle I'm coming at this from
- Crossley: the problem is that there is a supernatural element to some of the appearances, so it's not a supermarket appearances
- Brierley: it's not angels and hallelujah in the sky
- Habermas: nothing like that, no light in the early accounts, fairly mundane

Does James agree that people believed they saw Jesus after his death?

- Crossley: yes, I think that's fairly clear that we do
- Crossley: but historians cannot prove claims that what happened to Jesus was supernatural
- Brierley: your view is so far from what I see on Internet atheists sites, where they say it's all legendary accumulation, fairy tales
- Crossley: I'm perfect comfortable with the idea – and I think it happened – that people created stories, invented stories
- Crossley: there are too many cases where people are sincerely professing that they thought they saw Jesus after his death

Would you expect the disciples to have visions of a resurrected Jesus if nothing happened to him?

- Habermas: the dividing line is: did something happen to Jesus, or did something happen to his disciples?
- Habermas: the view that people were seeing a kind of ghostly Jesus (non-bodily) – a Jedi Jesus – after his death is a resurrection view, but I hold to a bodily resurrection view
- Brierley: N.T. Wright says a resurrected Jesus was contrary to expectations – should we expect the disciples to have a vision of Jesus as resurrected?
- Crossley: Wright generalizes too much thinking that there was a single view of the resurrection (the general resurrection at the end of the age), there are a variety of

views, some are contradictory
- Crossley: Herod Antipas thought that Jesus might be John the Baptist returned from the dead, and he knew Jesus was flesh and blood, there is the story of the dead rising in the earthquake in Matthew, there are stories of the resurrection in Maccabees, and this would influence what people expected
- Habermas: the earliest Christian view was *bodily* resurrection
- Crossley: yes, I think that's right
- Crossley: In Mark 6, they thought Jesus was a ghost, so there is room for disagreement

Why should a historian not rule out a supernatural explanation?

- Habermas: to get to supernatural, you have to go to philosophy – it's a worldview problem
- Habermas: he predicted his own death and resurrection
- Habermas: one factor is the uniqueness of Jesus
- Habermas: the early church had belief in the bodily resurrection, and a high Christology out of the gate
- Habermas: you might look at evidence for corroborated near-death experiences that raise the possibility of an afterlife
- Crossley: I'm content to leave it at the level of what people believe and not draw any larger conclusions
- Crossley: regarding the predicting his own death, the gospels are written after, so it's not clear that these predictions predate Jesus' death
- Crossley: it's not surprising that Jesus would have predicted his own death, and that he might have foreseen God vindicating him

If you admit to the possibility of miracles, is the data sufficient to conclude that the best explanation of the facts is resurrection?

- Crossley: If we assume that God exists, and that God intervenes in history, and that this was obvious to everyone, then "of course"
- Brierley: Are you committed to a naturalistic view of history?
- Crossley: Not quite, broadly, yes, I am saying this all I can do
- Brierley: should James be open to a supernatural explanation?
- Habermas: if you adopt methodological naturalism,it colors how look at the data is seen, just like supernaturalism does

Let’s celebrate our heroes for Memorial Day

May 29, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

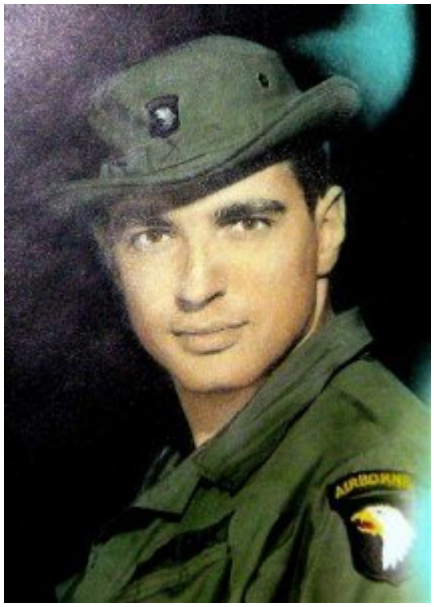

Leslie Sabo

Here’s a story of heroism from Investors Business Daily.

It says:

> Leslie Sabo was killed during the Vietnam War’s 1970 Cambodian Campaign. He was nominated for the Medal of Honor, but the records were lost until a veteran rediscovered them in 1999. In 2012, Sabo’s widow received the nation’s highest military award on his behalf, the 249th for Vietnam.
>
> Sabo’s platoon and another had been ambushed from all sides by a large and well-entrenched force of communist soldiers.
>
> He repeatedly attacked and killed enemy soldiers, was wounded by a grenade as he shielded a comrade, and then was fatally shot as he provided covering fire for a medevac helicopter.
>
> “His indomitable courage and complete disregard for his own safety saved the lives of many of his platoon members,” said the Medal of Honor citation. “Spc. 4 Sabo’s extraordinary heroism and selflessness, above and beyond the call of duty, at the cost of his life, are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, and the United States Army.”
>
> Leslie Jr. was born in 1948 in Kufstein, Austria, where his well-to-do family had moved after the Soviet occupation of Hungary at the end of World War II, leaving almost everything behind.
>
> They moved to America when he was 2. They lived in Youngstown, Ohio, and then Ellwood City, Pa.
>
> Leslie Sr., a lawyer in Hungary, retrained as an engineer, and both parents taught

> their two remaining sons (another was killed by a bomb during the war) patriotism for their adopted country.

Here are some more details from the Army web site:

> 4 Leslie H. Sabo Jr. distinguished himself, May 10, 1970, in Se San, Cambodia, while serving as a rifleman in Company B, 3d Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division.

> Members of B. Co. were ambushed by a large enemy force. While conducting a reconnaissance patrol, 22-year-old Sabo, charged an enemy position, killing several enemy soldiers. Immediately thereafter, he assaulted an enemy flanking force, successfully drawing their fire away from friendly soldiers and ultimately forcing the enemy to retreat.
>
> When a grenade landed nearby a wounded comrade, Sabo picked up the grenade threw it away while shielding his buddy with his own body, thus absorbing the brunt of the blast and saving the man's life.

> Seriously wounded by the blast, Sabo, nonetheless, retained the initiative and single- handedly charged an enemy bunker that had inflicted severe damage on the platoon. He received several serious wounds from withering automatic weapons fire in the process. Despite being mortally injured, he crawled towards the enemy emplacement and, when in position, threw a grenade into the bunker. The resulting explosion silenced the enemy fire, but also ended Spc. 4 Sabo's life.

He gave his life to save his friends.

Check out some of my Medal of Honor posts:

- Navy SEAL Michael Murphy awarded Medal of Honor
- How Sal Giunta earned a Medal of Honor and lived to tell about it
- What can Christians learn from Rob Miller's Medal of Honor story?

God bless our soldiers, airmen and sailors!

Do Christian pastors think that premarital sex is morally wrong?

May 30, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lesbian Glennon Doyle Melton in a church, surrounded by female Christian fans

My friend Wes posted an article from Dalrock's blog about how Spain is trying to get people to make babies after repeated laws punishing men for marrying and having children, such as forcing men to do housework, assuming that men are guilty of domestic violence without any evidence, making no-fault divorce more unfair for men, and now allowing children to sue their parents for maintenance throughout their 20s. Spain is feminist, and no sane, intelligent man marries and has children there.

That article was fine, so I decided to run through his last dozen posts. In many of them, he talked about how pastors, confronted with the decreasing numbers of marriage-minded men, were blind to the root cause of the problem: radical feminism. In fact, the pious pastors continued to blame men for refusing to marry like they did before radical feminism removed all the incentives for them to marry.

Let's just take a look at this one.

Excerpt:

> […][O]ver the past decades we have witnessed an explosion in out of wedlock births. Feminists have been entirely open about their desire to make single motherhood an attractive option for women, and after decades of social and legal "progress" 40% of all children are now born out of wedlock in the US.
>
> For feminist Christians this isn't a problem, as they can simply celebrate their victory while pushing for even more "progress". But for complementarians and other conservative Christians, this poses a huge challenge. How can they *appear* to take biblical morality (and the welfare of innocent children) seriously while avoiding upsetting women in our thoroughly feminized culture? There is only one answer, no matter how absurd it is. The answer is to pretend that feminists aren't really in the final mopping up stages in the culture war, and assert instead that what we are experiencing is a sudden and mysterious change in men. Here

> is how Glenn Stanton, the Director of Family Formation Studies at Focus on the Family (FotF), explains the incredible increase we are seeing in out of wedlock births*:
>
> Women want to marry and have daddies for their babies. But if they can't find good men to commit themselves to, well… Our most pressing social problem today is a man deficit.
>
> The level of denial here is astonishing, and would be laughable if it weren't entirely commonplace. Even more astounding, often times the denial of feminism is expressed *using feminist terminology*, and even includes calls to *join feminists* in their push to re order our society**:
>
> Whatever our views on specific economic policies, we must recognize that much economic hardship of women in our age is the result of men who abandon their commitments. We should eschew obnoxious "welfare queen" rhetoric and work with others of goodwill to seek economic and social measures to provide a safety net for single mothers and abused women in jeopardy. We should join with others, including secular feminists, in seeking legal protections against such manifestations of a **rape culture** as sexual harassment, prostitution, and sex slavery.
>
> The quote above is from Dr. Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In the past, I've blogged about pastor Mark Driscoll, an otherwise excellent pastor, who was asked by a Christian woman in a premarital sexual relationship with a non-Christian man how to get him to commit to her. His answer was not to rebuke the woman for choosing a hawt bad boy because of her feelings of attraction. His answer was to bellow how dare this non-Christian man who signed up for recreational sex with this fake Christian woman not act as if he were actually a Christian man (even though she was not acting like a Christian woman). It's rare (I mean really rare) to hear a sermon where the pastor actually says that prohibitions against premarital sex apply to men and women. Instead, you get people like Moore and Driscoll refusing to confront these sinful women, because that's just too scary! It doesn't matter if women's choice of bad men has caused abortion, divorce, fatherlessness, etc. to skyrocket. Pious pastors can't hold women accountable for putting feelings above the Bible – that would take courage, and the pious pastors don't have that. Women need to be told that they should be focused on marriage when they are choosing men. They shouldn't choose the exciting promiscuous binge-drinking bad boy with the spotty resume and the empty balance cheat. They should choose the man who can actually do the job.

50 Shades of Feminism

The refusal to apply the Bible to women's decisions can be seen in the response from pious pastors to the widespread popularity of 50 Shades of Gray among Christian women.

Excerpt:

> Christian women are just as enthralled with 50SOG as non Christian women are:
>
> What *is* surprising is who is viewing the film and reading the book—and why in the world they even would. Many refer to the book as “mommy porn” because of its wild popularity among adult women. And ticket sales are briskest in the typically-conservative deep south…
>
> …it’s also reaching our young daughters. According to IMDB (Internet Movie Database), the movie drew the highest reviews by far from girls under 18.
>
> And just in case you’re wondering, a Barna survey found that women who identify themselves as Christians are reading the books at the same rate as the general public. It’s captivating women everywhere.

Christian women are reading these books for the same reason as non-Christian women: because they like the sociopath man.

What is the solution to this? To tell Christian women that their feelings of attraction are morally wrong? Oh no, that’s too frightening to the pious pastors. Women are protected when we tell them not to be responsible with alcohol, responsible with their choice of man, responsible with their sexual choices.

You would think that pious pastors would confront women about their attraction for 50 Shades, but they don’t. The solution is always to get the sane, moral men have to bullied to “man up” so that women don’t act badly. The pious pastors simply refuse to see what the problem is: women being taught that their feelings are a hotline to God’s will for their happiness, so that the rules don’t apply to them, and they can choose godless men and try to make things work out by giving them recreational sex. Pious pastors are flat out teaching women in their churches that God’s job is to make them happy, that their feelings are God speaking to them, that the Bible doesn’t apply to their decision making about men and marriage, and that if their crazy, emotional selfishness blows up in their faces, then it’s somehow the innocent male bystander’s fault that it happened.

Robert Gagnon debates gay activist Jayne Ozanne on Bible vs homosexuality

May 31, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I am tempted to say that this is the best podcast I have ever heard on the Unbelievable show. Do anything you have to do in order to listen to this podcast.

Details:

> Prof Robert Gagnon has become a well-known voice advocating the traditional biblical view on sexuality. In a highly charged show he debates the scriptural issues on sexuality with Jayne Ozanne, the director of Accepting Evangelicals who came out as gay earlier this year.

The MP3 file is here.

If you can only listen for 15 minutes, then start at 49 minutes in and listen from there.

The following summary is rated MUP for made-up paraphrase. Reader discretion is advised.

Summary:

Intro:

- Speaker introductions
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree that the Bible doesn't support it
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree Jesus taught male-female marriage
- Ozanne: I went to the hospital because I was sick from trying to suppress my gay desires
- Ozanne: Doctors told me that I would die if I didn't act on my gay desires
- Ozanne: I decided to reinterpret the Bible to fit with my gay desires

- Ozanne: According to my new interpretation, Jesus actually supports my gay desires

Segment 1: Genesis

- Ozanne: In Genesis the Bible says that Adam needs a woman to complete him
- Ozanne: I reinterpret this to mean that Adam needed a “complementarian human being”
- Ozanne: Genesis doesn’t say whether Eve was complemented by Adam in that chapter
- Ozanne: It’s not critical that men are complemented by women, a man could complement a man
- Ozanne: Genesis 2 doesn’t talk about children, it’s all about adult needs from a relationship
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 has never been interpreted that way in all of history
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language specifically implies a human being who is opposite/different
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language translates to complement or counterpart
- Gagnon: Genesis as a whole teaches that the sexuality is for male and female natures
- Gagnon: The extraction of something from the man that is given to the woman is complementarian
- Ozanne: I think that people can be complementary outside of male-female Genesis language
- Ozanne: I don’t want to discuss specific words and texts and Greek meanings
- Gagnon: the text has always been read and interpreted to support male/female complementarity
- Gagnon: the male-female nature argument is made because the two natures are complementary
- Ozanne: the text was interpreted by patriarchal males who treated women like property, it’s biased
- Ozanne: what is important to me is how Christ interprets Genesis (?? how does she know that?)
- Ozanne: I am passionate about my interpretation of Scripture which supports my gay desires
- Gagnon: just because a person is passionate about their interpretation it doesn’t make it right
- Gagnon: I am not arguing for the male-female view based on passion, but on scholarship, evidence and history
- Ozanne: both sides are equally passionate about their interpretations (?? so both are equally warranted?)
- Ozanne: the real question is why God “allowed” two different interpretations of Scripture

Segment 2: Is homosexuality a sin?

- Gagnon: Jesus affirmed traditional sexual morality, which forbids homosexuality
- Gagnon: Jesus teaches that marriage is male-female, and limited to two people
- Gagnon: No one in history has interpreted the Bible to say that homosexuality was not immoral
- Ozanne: Jesus came to bring life, and that means he supports homosexuality
- Ozanne: I was dying, and embracing my gay desires allowed me to live, so Jesus approves of me
- Ozanne: God says "I am who I am" and that means he approves of me doing whatever I want
- Ozanne: There is an imperative to be who I am, and that means embracing my gay desires
- Gagnon: Jesus argued that the twoness of the sexual bond is based on the twoness of the sexes
- Gagnon: Jesus did not come to gratify people's innate desires, he called people to repent of sin
- Gagnon: Jesus did reach out to sinners but he never condoned the sins they committed
- Gagnon: Jesus' outreach to tax collectors collecting too much and sexual sinners is the same: STOP SINNING
- Ozanne: I don't think that Romans 1 is talking about homosexuality
- Ozanne: I think it's talking about sexual addiction, not loving, committed gay relationships
- Ozanne: Paul was condemning pederasty in Romans 1, not loving, long-term, consensual sexual relationships between gay adults
- Gagnon: nothing in the passage limits the condemnation to pederasty
- Gagnon: the passage was never interpreted to be limited to pederasty in history
- Gagnon: rabbis and church fathers knew about committed two-adult same-sex relationships, and said they were wrong
- Gagnon: the argument for marriage is based on the broad two-nature argument, with no exceptions
- Gagnon: the condemnation is not limited to exploitative / coercive / lustful / uncommitted relationships
- Gagnon: even pro-gay scholars agree the passage cannot be interpreted Ozanne's way (he names two)

Segment 3: The showdown (49:00)

- Ozanne: I don't care how many pages people have written on this
- Ozanne: God says that "the wisdom of the wise I will frustrate" so you can't use scholars, even pro-gay scholars, to argue against my passionate interpretation
- Ozanne: I am not interested in the text or history or scholarship or even pro-gay

scholars who agree with you
- Ozanne: what decides the issue for me is my mystical feelings about God's love which makes my sexual desires moral
- Ozanne: you are certain that this is wrong, but your view does not "give life" to people
- Ozanne: your scholarship and historical analysis is "a message of death" that causes teenagers to commit suicide (= you are evil and a meany, Robert)
- Ozanne: "I pray for you and your soul" (= opposing me will land you in Hell) and "I hope that listeners will listen with their hearts" (?? instead of their minds?)
- Ozanne: you can prove anything you want with research, even two mutually exclusive conclusions, so you shouldn't rely on scholarship and research since it could be used to prove my view as well
- Ozanne: instead of relying on research, you should rely on your heart and your feelings about God's love to decide what the Bible teaches about sexual morality
- Gagnon: you are distorting the gospel in order to make your case
- Gagnon: attacking my "certainty" is an ad hominem attack to cover your dismissmal of the scholarship and history
- Gagnon: you distort the gospel to make it seem like Christ just wants us to get what we want, when we want it, with who we want it with
- Gagnon: Christ calls us to take up our cross, to lose our lives and to deny ourselves
- Gagnon: you have a notion of what "fullness of life" is, but it's not reflective of the gospel
- Gagnon: Paul's life was much more troubling than yours, mine or anyone else around here
- Gagnon: Paul was beaten, whipped, stoned, poorly sheltered, poorly clothed, poorly fed, shipwrecked, and anxious for his churches
- Gagnon: on your view, he should have been miserable and angry with God all the time
- Gagnon: but instead Paul was constantly thankful and rejoicing to be able to suffer with Jesus and look forward to the resurrection
- Gagnon: I have suffered too, but the suffering we go through never provides us with a license to violate the commandments of God
- Ozanne: "the ultimate thing is what people feel God has called them to"
- Ozanne: My goal right now is to tell young people that homosexuality is fine so they don't commit suicide
- Ozanne: the view that homosexuality is wrong is "evil and misguided"
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm in the gay community are intrinsic to homosexual unions, not caused by external disapproval of homosexuality

Segment 4: Concluding statements

- Gagnon: gay male relationships on average have more sex partners and more STDs
- Gagnon: female relationships on average have shorter-length relationships and

more mental issues
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm are because there is no complementarity / balance in the relationships
- Gagnon: everyone has some disappointment or suffering in their lives that hurts them, and that they are tempted to break the rules to fix, but we should not break the rules in order to be happy
- Ozanne: both sides are passionate, so no one can be right, and evidence proves nothing
- Ozanne: only feelings about “what God is doing” can allow us to decide what counts as sin or not
- Ozanne: the main thing that is at stake here is to make people like us, not to decide what the Bible says about sin
- Ozanne: my message to people is to do whatever you want, and ignore mean people who don’t affirm you
- Ozanne: we should be more opposed to mean people who make non-Christians feel unloved than about doing what the Bible says

Scott Klusendorf discusses abortion and euthanasia at the Summit Forum

June 1, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scott Klusendorf, President of the Life Training Institute

Here's the video, featuring one of my favorite pro-life speakers Scott Klusendorf. Scott is the founder and President of the Life Training Institute. LTI's mission is to make a rigorous, rational defense for pro-life positions with respect to a variety of ethical issues.

Three topics:

- right to life of the unborn
- reproductive technologies
- end of life questions

40 minutes of guided discussion, 20 minutes of Q&A. This video was apparently recorded in the summer of 2016.

Abortion:

- the 1-minute case for the pro-life position (excellent)
- dealing with those who dismiss the pro-life case as religious
- how and when do people win arguments?
- how does one get better at discussing moral issues?
- who are some of the best books to get informed about life issues?
- what are some of the best books from the other side?
- what is the SLED test? do pro-abortion scholars accept it?
- if abortion were illegal, who should be punished and how much?
- is it inflammatory and dangerous to say that abortion is killing?

Assisted reproductive technologies:

- how should we speak to people considering ARTs?
- what is the underlying issue in ART discussions?
- should pro-lifers be opposed to all use of ARTs?
- what should pro-lifers think about surrogacy?
- which books provide an introduction to ART ethics?

End of life issues:

- what is the central issue in end of life discussions?
- should treatment always be continued or are there situations where treatment can be withdrawn?

Final issues:

- if a student wants to take courses in bioethics, where should they go to take courses or do a degree?
- what is the policy situation for pro-lifers in terms of legislation and SCOTUS decision-making?
- what are some policies that pro-lifers can support as incremental measures that move the issue in the right direction?

I liked this discussion. I tried to listen as someone new to the issue and he did a good job of not assuming any prior knowledge of the debate. My favorite part was his survey of books and arguments on the other side, and what they say. I don't think that most people realize what the implications of the pro-abortion worldview really are for things like infanticide, and so on. The discussion about who should be punished for abortion and how much was new to me – and that actually came up during the last election, during the GOP primary. Personally, I would let the woman get off, and just prosecute the doctor.

It's very very good to listen to crystal clear thinking on these controversial issues from someone who has encountered the other side in their writings, and in public debates with them. Not to mention having to interact with people making decisions in these areas.

East Lansing bans farmer from selling produce because he opposes gay marriage

June 2, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

Can basic human liberties like freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of religion coexist with legalized gay marriage?

Consider this story from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> A farmers market and Facebook posts have opened a new front in courtroom battles over religious freedom.
>
> It started when Steve Tennes, who owns a 120-acre farm in Charlotte, Michigan, expressed his traditional view about marriage on the farm's Facebook page.
>
> This drew a warning from an official more than 20 miles away in East Lansing, Michigan, that if Tennes tried to sell his fruit at the city's farmers market, it could incite protests.
>
> No one showed up to protest that August day last summer, though, and Tennes continued selling organic apples, peaches, cherries, and pumpkins at the seasonal market until October, as he had done the six previous years.
>
> Nevertheless, East Lansing moved earlier this year to ban Tennes' farm, the Country Mill, from participating in the farmers market when it resumes June 4. The city cited its human relations ordinance, an anti-discrimination law that includes sexual orientation.
>
> So Tennes and his wife sued the city for religious discrimination.

> […]Alliance Defending Freedom, a Christian legal aid organization, is representing the Tenneses.

You'll recall that gay rights activists are constantly going after those who disagree with them about gay marriage. Sometimes with insults, sometimes with lawsuits, sometimes with intimidation (this case for an example), sometimes with job terminations (this case for an example), sometimes with expulsions (this case for an example), sometimes with vandalism (this case for an example) and sometimes with domestic terrorism (this case for an example).

I have adjusted to this by just assuming that anyone who votes Democrat is a potential fascist, who cannot be trusted to have a civil conversation. That's what my alias is for – so I can discuss these issues without losing my job, like Mozille CEO Brendan Eich did, when he opposed gay marriage. It's just safer to assume that secular leftists are incapable of rational debate. So many of them clearly are not, and no one on the secular left condemns them for it.

We've seen a lot of Christian business owners being sued in SOGI states, and this is really an attempt to *compel agreement on gay marriage through starvation.* Not just the business owners, but their families, too. Of course, gay activist Floyd Lee Corkins took that a step further when he attacked the Family Research Council building with a gun – intent on mass murder. Given their indifference to basic human rights, I wonder how many gay activists really think that what he did was wrong.

Here's another case of fascism from earlier this week, this time reported by The Federalist.

Excerpt:

> On May 6, 2017, the director of Illinois' child welfare agency (DCFS), George Sheldon, "signed enhanced department procedures" setting "mandatory minimum standards for LGBTQ children under its authority (See Appendix K in this May 11, 2017 document. Quoted passages in this article are from Appendix K unless otherwise specified).
>
> […]Designed with American Civil Liberties Union assistance, the policies are problematic not only for the vulnerable children in state care but also for the kin, foster families, caseworkers, volunteers, and others trying to assist them. Consider the effects on staff and volunteers, who must pass an ideological test—to see if they are sufficiently "LGBTQ-affirming"— to mentor, serve, or care for the state's most vulnerable children.
>
> According to the gender guardians at DCFS, all children have a "right to self-determination of gender and sexual orientation," and individual choices about "sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression" should be viewed as "developmental milestones, not problematic behavior." The role of adults is simply to "facilitate exploration of any LGBTQ matters through an affirming approach…by being open, non-judgmental, and empathic."

> Thus, when children or adolescents "explore/express a sexual orientation other than heterosexual and/or a gender identity that is different from the child/youth's sex assigned at birth," DCFS "staff, providers, and foster parents" must "support and respect" the child's exploration "without any effort to direct or guide them to any specific outcome for their exploration."
>
> In other words, all DCFS staff and volunteers must communicate a uniform message to the children and adolescents in their care: it's perfectly normal to identify as transgender or gender non-conforming, and just as conducive to a child's wellbeing to be transgender as to identify with one's actual sex.

It's always useful to look to other countries where gay rights is further along to find out what will happen next. In previous posts, I talked about how Ontario – a province in Canada – decided to allow a convicted child pornographer design their education curriculum. Parents would not be granted an opt out of the indoctrination for any reason.

Well, Life Site News reports on the next step:

> Ontario's Kathleen Wynne Liberals have passed what critics describe as "totalitarian" Bill 89 by a vote of 63 to 23 on the last day before Queen's Park adjourns for the summer.
>
> […]Bill 89, or the Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act, 2017, repeals and replaces the former Child and Family Services Act that governs child protection services, and adoption and foster care services.
>
> It adds "gender identity" and "gender expression" as factors to be considered "in the best interests of the child."
>
> At the same time, it deletes the religious faith in which the parents are raising the child as a factor to be considered, and mandates child protection services consider only the child's own "creed" or "religion" when assessing the best interests of the child.
>
> "With the passage of Bill 89, we've entered an era of totalitarian power by the state, such as never witnessed before in Canada's history," says Jack Fonseca, senior political strategist for Campaign Life Coalition.
>
> […]Children's Aid agencies now have "a type of police power to bust down your door, and seize your biological children if you are known to oppose LGBT ideology and the fraudulent theory of 'gender identity', if for instance, some claim is made that your child may be same-sex attracted or confused about their 'gender,'" according to Fonseca.
>
> "We already see similar tyranny happening in other jurisdictions, such as Norway, where the main child protection service there, Barnevernet, has been involved in numerous high profile seizures of children from traditionally-principled families," he added.

This is what happens when you let the secular left have a majority government in your

country. Would you get married and have children in a country where your children could be taken from you? I would not.

William Lane Craig lectures on radical skepticism and the historical Jesus

June 3, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Brian Auten at Apologetics 315 posted a lecture by William Lane Craig on the historical Jesus.

In his post, Brian doesn't really say much about where or when the lecture was recorded. But I can tell you! This lecture has a special meaning for me because when I was just learning about apologetics, this was one of the first lectures I ordered. The lecture was delivered in 1996 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary as part of the distinguished Carver-Barnes Lecture Series. The title was "Re-Discovering the Historical Jesus". Hearing this again (I lent mine away and never got it back) was a real treat for me.

The MP3 file is here.

And here is a summary I made so you can follow along as you listen.

Lecture 1: the pre-suppositions of the Jesus Seminar
– the origins of the radically skeptical "Jesus Seminar" group
– what does the Jesus Seminar believe about Jesus?
– what is a pre-supposition?
– how do pre-suppositions affect the study of history?
– the Jesus Seminar's pre-supposition of naturalism (atheism)
– the Jesus Seminar's pre-supposition that the NT gospels are late
– the Jesus Seminar's pre-supposition of political correctness
– does the Jesus Seminar represent the consensus of NT scholars?

Lecture 2A: are the NT gospels historically reliable?
– should the gospels be assumed to be reliable or unreliable

– argument #1: insufficient time from events to written record
– argument #2: gospels contain very little legendary material
– argument #3: Jewish culture was good at oral transmission
– argument #4: eyewitness correction and apostolic supervision
– argument #5: the gospels are reliable where they can be tested
– #1: legendary elements only appear 1-2 generations after events
– but gospels were written within the lifetimes of the eyewitnesses
– sources for the gospels are even earlier, e.g. – 1 Cor 15:3-8
– on the other hand, the apocryphal gospels do contain legends
– #5: gospels are confirmed by history and archaeology were possible
– Luke includes details showing that he traveled with eyewitness Paul

Lecture 2B: the self-understanding of Jesus

– how early and reliable is believe in Jesus' divinity
– it would be hard to get monotheistic Jews to think Jesus was divine
– the only way this belief could have emerged is if Jesus taught it
– parable of the wicked tennants and vineyard – Jesus' self-understanding
– passage about no one knowing the father except the son, etc.
– passage about not knowing the date of his second coming
– the healings and exorcisms are well-attested and skeptics grant them

Lecture 2C: the trial and crucifixion of Jesus

– crucifixion is well-attested inside and outside the New Testament
– even the Jesus Seminar considers this an indisputable fact about Jesus
– Jesus was crucified for blasphemy – i.e. claiming to be divine

Lecture 2D: the minimal facts case for the resurrection

– minimal fact #1: the burial in a known location
– minimal fact #2: the empty tomb
– minimal fact #3: the appearances to individuals and groups
– minimal fact #4: the early belief that Jesus was resurrected
– the majority of scholars, including skeptics, accept the minimal facts
– naturalistic explanations are not able to account for these facts

There is a very noisy weird person in the audience who keeps shouting his approval. This lecture is almost identical to a lecture that Craig gave for Stand to Reason's Masters Series, on the pre-suppositions of the Jesus Seminar. There is no Q&A in this lecture, but there is Q&A in the STR version.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

June 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
This is one of my favorite lectures.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips.

Here is a clip:

The full video can be watched on Vimeo:

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range

in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

It's a good lecture explaining basic arguments for a cosmic Creator and Designer. If you add the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion (Stephen C. Meyer's arguments), then you will be solid on science apologetics. That's everything a rank-and-file Christian needs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

What your political views say about your suitability for marriage and parenting

June 5, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Would you like your marriage to be long-lasting and fulfilling? Marriage isn't just about two people who have a lot in common getting together to have fun. Marriage is a commitment, and it requires specific character traits like the willingness to take responsibility to care for others self-sacrificially. Some of these marriage-friendly character traits can be difficult to detect, but you can evaluate a person's character by asking them about what policies they oppose and support.

1. Are you opposed to no-fault divorce laws?

No-fault divorce laws allow one spouse to leave the marriage at any time, for any reason, or for no reason at all. If you support no-fault divorce, then your view of marriage is that it's something to be entered into lightly, because it can be exited easily. You'll be walking down the aisle thinking "oh well, if it doesn't work out, I can always get a divorce". If you oppose no-fault divorce laws, then your view of marriage is that there is no escape hatch. You'll probably be a lot more careful about getting married. Since you are convinced that marriage is built to last forever, you'll have a courtship of at least 12 months, and involve both sets of parents in the process. If you put commitment above happiness, you're ready for marriage.

2. Are you opposed to abortion laws?

Abortion laws basically make it easy for two people to have recreational sex, and then get rid of any complications that result quickly and easily. This way, both the people that created the effect can escape the responsibility for what they did, and keep right on

pursuing their goals and dreams. If you support abortion laws, you're really saying that you can engage in recreational sex with people who are unwilling to accept responsibility for any children that result. If you are pro-life, then you're saying that people should be careful about having sex, and be ready to take responsibility for a child, should one appear. Being responsible is good preparation for marriage.

3. Are you supportive of daycare for young kids?

Daycare services are essential for couples who need both the father and the mother to be working. The advantage of both parents working is that you can afford lots of shiny new stuff – like vacations, boats, shoes and handbags. Studies show that children don't die during daycare, although if you put a child in daycare, there will be effects on the child's behavior, such as higher anxiety and aggression. If you oppose daycare, you're putting the needs of your children above your need for shiny stuff. Putting the needs of children first is a sign that you are ready for the self-sacrifice that marriage requires.

4. Are you in favor of smaller government?

If you're in favor of smaller government, then you would rather keep taxes low so that more money stays in the family. If you support bigger government, then you think that government knows how to spend your money better than you and your spouse do. Additionally, government usually likes to spend more money than they take in. For example, in the last 8 years, we've added $10 trillion dollars to the debt, which is now $20 trillion. If you oppose higher taxes and bigger government, then you want government to pass on less debt to your children. Putting your kids' financial well-being over your own is pro-marriage.

5. Are you in favor of school choice?

If you're opposed to school choice, then you think that government should decide which schools your children will attend. School choice laws allow parents to give money to the schools they think are best for the children. If a school has excellent teachers and teaches students skills that they can use in their professional lives, then parents can choose that school. When parents have a choice, schools have to compete to provide higher quality to parents, for lower cost. If you support giving parents more choice, then you put the needs of children – especially poor, minority children – above the needs of education administrators and teacher unions. Putting kids first is pro-marriage.

6. Are you in favor of premarital sex?

Premarital sex is really fun (so I'm told). You can have sex with people who are just really attractive, even if these people have lousy character. Your friends will be impressed, and you'll feel more attractive – like you were climbing a ladder of attractiveness with each new partner. If you combine sex with being drunk, then you can't remember anything after. And you can't feel guilty if the booze made you do it, right? On the other hand, if you present yourself to your spouse as a virgin, you are telling them that you have self-control, that you take sex as communication rather than recreation, and that they can trust you to be faithful by keeping sex inside the marriage. Trust is important for a good marriage.

7. Are you in favor of welfare for single mothers?

Sometimes, women find themselves pregnant before they are married. If you think that giving taxpayer money to women who have babies before they have husbands is a good idea, then you are rewarding behavior that creates fatherless children. Raising a child without a father causes serious behavioral problems. Boys tend to become more violent, and are more likely to commit crimes. Girls tend to engage in sex at earlier ages. If you oppose encouraging fatherlessness with welfare, you want women to get married before they have kids. Taking the needs of children seriously is pro-marriage.

8. Are you in favor of same-sex marriage?

When a man and a man get married and acquire children, those children will not be raised with their birth mother. Similarly with lesbians, the children will not grow up with their birth father. Studies show that children suffer from not being raised by their biological parents. For example, children of same-sex parents have lower graduation rates than children raised by heterosexual couples. If you think that children have a right to a stable relationship with their biological mother and father, then you place a higher value on the needs of children as opposed to the needs of adults. That's a good sign you're ready for marriage.

9. Are you in favor of radical feminism?

This one comes to us from Lindsay, who blogs at Lindsay's Logic. She says that opposing radical feminism "shows that you do not think the purpose of marriage is to make women happy, but to work as a team to serve God and raise good children." Indeed. Marriage doesn't work if the woman approaches it as an accessory. Marriage is about a man and a woman sacrificing their own interests and compromising in order to work together as a team. Husbands and children have needs that women should care about. Feminism teaches women that husbands and children are less important than their careers, hobbies and interests. Feminism is anti-marriage.

10. Are you responsible with earning, saving and giving away money?

This one comes to us from Bob P. He says that marriages work better when both spouses are "committed to financial planning, budgeting and a renunciation of debt to support a lifestyle. Disagreement about financial issues is one of the greatest causes of marital stress." If you're able to choose a college major or a trade that you don't like, but that pays well, that's a positive. If you're able to string together jobs so that your resume is gap-less, that's a positive. If you're able to save money even though it means you're having less fun, that's a positive. If you're able to give away money to others to support them, that means you're able to sacrifice your interests for the benefit of others. That's pro-marriage.

Well, how did you do? Leave your ideas for more policies and points of view that are marriage-friendly in the comments.

Remembering Lt. Richard Winters on D-Day: The Battle of Brecourt Manor

June 6, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Richard D. Winters Monument

The caption says, “Wars do not make men great, but they do bring out the greatness in good men.” Now let’s see what Dick Winters did during World War II.

Mission: locate and destroy enemy artillery

Brecourt Manor

I want to link to this article from Investors Business Daily about Lt. Winters action at Brecourt Manor.

> Here’s the summary of what Dick Winters did on the morning of June 6th, 1944:
>
> First Lt. Dick Winters leapt into leadership on D-Day, June 6, 1944. His commander’s aircraft was shot down as the men parachuted at 600 feet. When Winters headed to earth, he was in charge of a small platoon.

> When he landed, he had to command Company E with 148 men, because his commander had been lost along with the plane.
>
> Yet in the chaos, Winters could locate only a dozen other soldiers for their first task: take out a 50-man German artillery battery.
>
> “Winters ordered his assault force to strip down to only essential weapons — guns and grenades — to use against the well-prepared defenses, then deployed his machine guns to cover his advances,” Keith Huxen, senior director of research at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, told IBD. “Waiting for the proper moment, he led a charge across an open field, gaining the first gun placement, and then they moved down the trenches, systematically destroying each gun.
>
> “In the process, Winters discovered a map detailing all German gun positions to kill American soldiers coming up from Utah Beach, which saved many lives.”
>
> Joined by five reinforcements during the fight, Winters lost four dead and six wounded. The Yanks managed to kill 15 Nazis, capture 11 and wound many others.
>
> Winters’ maneuvers are still studied at West Point as a case of successfully attacking a fixed position, despite being outnumbered.
>
> Winters (1918-2011) was born in Ephrata, Pa., and the family moved to Lancaster when he was 8.
>
> He later attributed his character and desire to go to church regularly to his mother.
>
> Winters attended local Franklin & Marshall College and earned an economics degree with top honors in 1941. He enlisted in the Army in August to shorten his service time, rather than wait to be drafted if America was to join the war.

The diagram below shows where everything was positioned. The Rangers attacked through the trenches containing the four guns, while being raked with fire from multiple MG42 heavy machine guns across the open field.

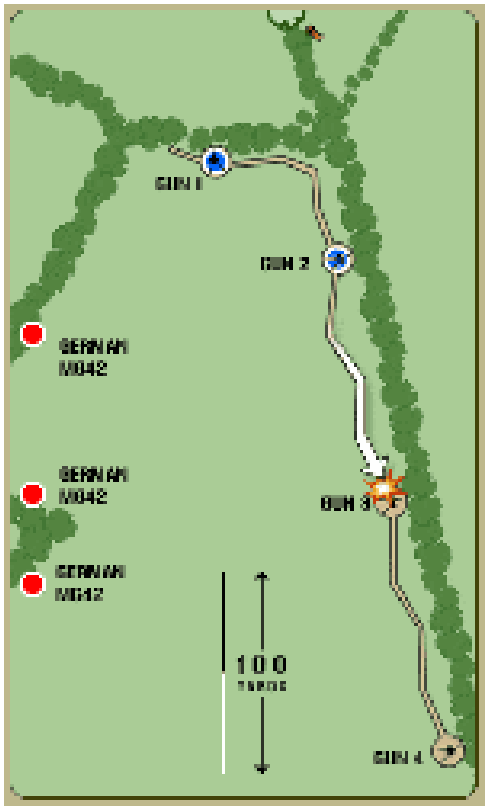

Assaulting the guns at Brecourt Manor

The operation was one of the most famous actions in the Normandy invasion, and you may have seen it portrayed in the Band of Brothers DVD series. But the article notes that when Dick Winters read the script for that series, “he asked that the profanity be cut from the dialogue of his character, since he never swore”. When the producers told him it was too late to change it, he wrote them a letter of resignation from the production, because “I don’t want these boys and girls thinking it is acceptable using profanity”. In the end, the movie makers removed the swearing by the actor portraying Winters.

If you are looking for a reason to buck the culture and stop swearing, there’s a good reason for you right there – Dick Winters never used profanity.

You can watch the scene from Band of Brothers in low resolution here:

If you play Combat Mission, like I do, you can watch a 28 minute AAR from the simulation of the battle.

Operation Market Garden

More from the article I linked above, this time from Operation Market Garden:

> Near Nijmegen on Oct. 5, Winters’ platoon was a position where any movement carried risks. Rather than retreat when fired on by a larger force behind a dike, he led a charge to the top and on the other side discovered a company of 150 Nazi SS troops. Despite having only 40 men, the Americans opened up with everything they had, then shot up a company of enemy reinforcements.
>
> The fray ended with 50 Germans dead, 11 POWs and countless wounded, with few casualties among the Americans.
>
> “This was Easy Company’s crowning achievement of the war and my apogee as a

> company commander," Winters told Kingseed. "This demonstrated its overall superiority, of every soldier, of every phase of infantry tactics: patrol, defense, attack using a base of fire, withdrawal and, above all, superior marksmanship with rifles, machine guns and mortar fire."

Dick Winters is a brave man, someone I admire him very much. And I am grateful for men like him.

I blogged about another hero of the 101st Airborne Division, Ronald Speirs, in a previous post.

Chris Sinkinson debates John Hick on religious pluralism and salvation

June 7, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

Looks like Justin Brierley on the Unbelievable radio show found a pastor with a Ph.D in philosophy, and he can really whip some ass. And that's a good thing, because he is taking on one of the two leading proponents of religious pluralism, in my opinion, (the other being Paul Knitter).

The players:

> John Hick is a noted philosopher and theologian who is a proponent of a pluralist view of religion – that there is one light (God) but many lampshades (religious expressions).
>
> Chris Sinkinson is a pastor and Bible tutor who has critiqued Hick's work. He says that pluralism empties Christianity of any content and in its own way disrespects other religions more than his own exclusivist stance.

The MP3 file is here. (Note: This link works)

Justin does a great job as moderator of this debate. He said what I was thinking of saying a number of times during the debate.

Anyway, here is my snarky summary. I creatively paraphrase some of the things that Hick says to make it more clear. And funny.

—-

Hick:
– had an experience looking at the buildings of other religions
– other religions have buildings, so all religions are equal
– I spent some time in the East, and met nice Eastern people
– since Eastern people are nice that means all religions are equal

Justin:
– isn’t Jesus’ claim to be the exclusive path to salvation offensive?

Sinkinson:
– all religions that are exclusive and have to deal with religious pluralism
– even John Hick writes polemically in favor of his own view
– even John Hick thinks that religions that are exclusive are false

Justin:
– what about the blind man and the elephant?
– the story seems to say that other people have a partial grasp?
– but the story-teller himself has the privileged view
– so isn’t the religious pluralist just as arrogant as exclusivists?

Hick:
– well, it’s not arrogant to claim to have the right answer
– Jesus never made the claim to be God incarnate
– Jesus never made the claim to be the exclusive path to God
– historians don’t think that John’s gospel is reliable because it is late
– the proclamation of exclusivity was added by evangelists much later

Sinkinson:
– the historians who doubt the high Christology are radical skeptics
– the mainstream of historical scholarship accepts a high Christology
– the EARLIEST history about Jesus has the highest Christology

Hick:
– the moderate scholars do think Jesus was divine but that he didn’t think he was divine
– the phrase “Son of God” was used to describe any remarkable person
– only later did the early church turn the generic term into “God the Son”

Sinkinson:
– there is reflection on Jesus’ identity and developments, but not invention
– Jesus and his followers were in trouble precisely for linking him to deity
– why else would Jesus get into trouble and get crucified?

Hick:
– the Romans crucified him because people were saying he was the Messiah
– but the Messiah was not identified as being divine, but political
– and that’s why the Romans crucified him

Justin:
– do you (Sinkinson) think that people in other religions can be saved?

Sinkinson:
– the traditional view is exclusivism
– the other world religions are logically contradictory with Christianity
– you have to respect their differences – they are not the same as Christianity
– exclusivists allow that people can be saved by responding to natural theology
– and there are also other cases where non-Christians are saved, like old testament saints

and babies who die in infancy

Hick:
– but people’s religions are based on where they are born
– so it’s not fair for God to expect people to be saved in one religion only

Sinkinson:
– the plurality of religions grouped by location doesn’t make christianity false
– that would be the genetic fallacy – rejecting an idea because of its origin
– the real question to consider is whether it is true
– and even the objection assumes that God is a God of love, who should be fair
– but how do you know that God is loving? that is an exclusive view
– how can the “blob” ultimate of religious pluralism be “loving” and “fair”

Hick:
– the ultimate reality is loving or not loving depending on each person’s religion

Sinkinson:
– but some religions and theistic and some are atheistic
– how can those God exist and not exist?

Hick:
– God is beyond everyone’s understanding, except mine
– God is beyond all definitions, except mine
– God is beyond all human understanding, except mine
– i’m not contradicting myself, it’s a mystery! a mystery!
– as long as you don’t look to closely, they’re all the same!
– allow me to tell you about God, which no one can do but me

Justin:
– doesn’t your religious pluralism mean that Christianity is false?

Hick:
– well, Christianity can’t be true, because it disagrees with other religions
– Christianity can’t falsify other religions, that would be mean to them
– other religions are just as “profound” as Christianity – and that’s what matters – not whether a religion makes true claims
– some religions are older than Christianity, that means they can’t be disagreed with
– we can’t let Christianity be true, because then some people will feel bad
– if people feel bad, then they don’t like me and then I feel bad
– if there’s one thing I know about the unknowable ultimate reality, it’s that it wants me to be liked by lots of people

Sinkinson:
– your view seems to be agnosticism – that nothing can be known about the “ultimate real”
– if we can’t express in words what God is like, then why are you saying what God is like?

Hick:

– the indescribable ultimate is described (falsely, but interestingly) by various tradition

Sinkinson:
– does the “ultimate real” exist?

Hick:
– no

Justin:
– are all the exclusive religions wrong, and only you are right?

Hick:
– all propositions about God in all the religions are false
– the experience of being deluded and having feelings about your delusions is “valid” in all religions
– all religions are equally good ways to believe false things and to have feelings about your false beliefs
– only my propositions about God are true
– everyone who disagrees with me is wrong

Sinkinson:
– so all the propositions of all the religions are wrong
– but all the experiences and feelings are “right”

Hick:
– yes
– all propositions about God are humanly constructed, and so false
– except mine – mine are true!

Sinkinson:
– so everything distinctive about Christianity are literally false?

Hick:
– yes, Christian doctrines are all false
– because if they were true, other religions would be false, and they would feel bad
– and we can’t have that, because everyone has to like me
– only things that don’t offend people in other religions can be true

Sinkinson:
– so do we have to then treat all religions as non-propositional?

Hick:
– well just don’t ask people about the content of their beliefs
– just treat their religion as non-cognitive rituals, feelings and experiences
– don’t inquire too deeply into it, because all religions are all nonsense
– i’m very respectful and tolerant of different religions!

Sinkinson:
– but Muslims, for example, think their religion is making truth claims

Hick:
– but there can be tolerance as long as you treat religions as non-propositional nonsense

Sinkinson:
– um, I have a higher respect for religions than you do
– I actually consider that the claims of other religions could be true
– I think that other religions make truth claims and not nonsense claims

Hick:
– well they are all useful because they are all false
– I don't emphasize beliefs, I emphasize living, experiences and feelings
– as long as everyone accepts my view and rejects their religion, we'll all be tolerant

Justin:
– erm, isn't that an exclusive claim?
– you're trying to say that your view of what religion is is right, and everyone else is wrong

Hick:
– I'm not arrogant, I just think that all the religions of the worlds are false
– only my statements about religion are true – everyone else is wrong
– I'm tolerant, and Christians are arrogant

Justin:
– but you think Sinkinson's view is wrong
– why should we accept your view and deny his view?

Hick:
– His view of salvation is false, and mine is true

Sinkinson:
– you use words with set meanings, but you mean completely different things
– when I say salvation, I mean deliverance from sins through Jesus

Hick:
– I get to decide what salvation means for everyone, you intolerant bigot

Sinkinson:
– but that word has a specific meaning that has held true in all of Christian history
– but what you mean by salvation is people having subjective delusions that are not true

Hick:
– I don't like using the word salvation

Sinkinson:
– but you just used it!
– and you think that it is present in different world religions, but it isn't

Hick:
– God is unknowable and indescribable
– God isn't a wrathful God though
– and the Christian description of God is false
– Evangelical Christians are mean
– I had experiences with people of other faiths

– and these experiences taught me that religions that think that the universe is eternal are true
– as long as you reduce religion to behaviors and not truth, then religions are all good at producing behaviors
– if you just treat all religions as clothing fashion and food customs, they are all valid
– the main point of religion is for people to agree on cultural conventions and stick to them
– never mind the propositional statements of religions… who cares about truth? not me!
– but Christianity is definitely false

Sinkinson:
– the Judeo-Christian God is different – he reveals himself to humans
– he is distinct from the other religions
– he is personal, and is loving but also angry at sin

Hick:
– But God isn't a person, and he isn't a non-person
– I can't say what he is – I'll offend someone if I say anything at all!
– except Christians – I can offend them because they are arrogant bigots
– I'm also very spiritual – I meditate on my breathing

Sinkinson:
– you can't assess a religion by the experiences that people have
– people who have weird experiences do all kinds of evil things
– so the real question has to be about truth – is the New Testament reliable?, etc.

Why don’t young Americans understand the effects of socialist policies?

June 8, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Supermarket shelves empty thanks to socialist policies

Here is an interesting article by Kathryn Blackhurst, writing for LifeZette.com. The article reports on how the mainstream media has covered the situation in Venezuela, which has been under socialist rule for decades.

Kathryn explains:

> Out of approximately 50,000 total evening news stories on ABC, CBS and NBC combined in the last four years, just 25 have covered the ongoing crisis in socialist Venezuela, according to a Media Research Center study published Tuesday.
>
> After Venezuela’s former socialist president, Hugo Chávez, passed away in March 2013, the country has spiraled into economic disaster and civil chaos. So far in 2017, more than 50 Venezuelans have been killed during protests against current Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his socialist policies. Many Venezuelans are starving due to shortages of food and other essentials. The country’s inflation rate is set to surpass 700 percent and 25 percent of Venezuelans will be unemployed.
>
> “Yet the Big Three evening newscasts have tried to pretend this crisis does not exist, offering virtually no coverage as the situation has deteriorated over the past four years,” MRC Research Analyst Mike Ciandella wrote.
>
> “The networks have also been reluctant to attach the ‘socialist’ label to Venezuela’s government, and have utterly failed to criticize liberal politicians and celebrities who have praised the Chávez and Maduro regimes,” Ciandella added.
>
> Indeed, out of the 50,000 total evening news stories on the three networks, just 25 covered Venezuela, and only seven mentioned “socialism.” In addition, NBC Nightly News only broadcast 13 stories spanning 16 minutes and 54 seconds, ABC’s World News only covered 8 minutes and 34 seconds over seven stories,

> and CBS Evening News only offered 3 minutes and 11 seconds over five stories.
>
> **"The network evening news programs seem allergic to reporting on the ongoing crisis in Venezuela," Ciandella told LifeZette in an email. "Even worse, the few times they *have* managed to cover the widespread poverty, starvation and government oppression in that country, they somehow find ways to do that without mentioning the word 'socialism.'"**

That's why your children can go through public schools and consume mainstream media news without ever understanding what effects follow from left-wing socialist economic policies. There just isn't anyone intelligent and honest enough in the mainstream media to give the historical context that explains what policies were tried in the past, which resulted in the effects in the present.

Over 100,000 Venezuelans pouring into Colombia from the Venezuela in order to buy food

Economist Stephen Moore has more about the situation in Venezuela, in this Investors Business Daily article.

He writes:

> Venezuela is a human rights crisis of epic proportions with mass hunger, mass poverty, despair, ghetto upon ghetto, and a mass exodus of private businesses and anyone with money. There are no rich and no evil corporations to loot anymore. The inflation rate is almost 500% as the currency is now about as valuable as Monopoly money.
>
> The Wall Street Journal reports that Venezuela now employs 100,000 security forces — not to repel foreign threats or invaders, but to keep the government leaders like corrupt president Nicolas Maduro safe from their own citizens. Adjusted for population size, this would be the equivalent of one million

> Americans employed every day to stop riots in the streets. More than 40 protesters have been shot so far this year by the guardsmen.
>
> **The average pay has fallen to less than $50 — not per day, or per week, but per month. How's that for a minimum wage? The people eat dogs if they can find them and the world was shocked by the story earlier this year of the raid on the municipal zoo to eat the animals. How bad off does a population have to be to start carving up elephant meat?**
>
> The burgeoning resistance throws molotov cocktails, rocks and even human feces at the security forces during the nonstop rioting. It's like a scene out of an HBO movie. "I don't fear death because this life is crap," one protester told the WSJ.
>
> […]**What is stunning about this story is that this is a nation that was once one of the wealthiest places in South America. Unlike places such as Subsaharan Africa where extreme poverty is the norm, there is no excuse for Venezuala's steep fall into the abyss because this is a resource-rich nation.**
>
> **Under thug Hugo Chavez the former socialist dictator, Venezuela began its relentless conquest of private wealth and it's process of nationalizing private enterprises. Chavez was lionized by the American left and the Hollywood elite — Sean Penn and Chavez were BFFs — for his "progressive" policies.**

There's literally no difference between the views of Chavez and Maduro and mainstream Democrat economic policy in the United States. They're just further along the road to serfdom than we are, because their population is less economically literate than we are. For now.

I'd be willing to bet that many of these starving protestors in Venezuela voted over and over again for the socialists. That's what happens when people vote with their feelings instead of knowledge of basic economics. But where would ignorant Venezuelans have picked up a knowledge of basic economics? Come to think of it… where would ignorant American millenials, who hold entire conversations in memes, pick up a knowledge of basic economics? They certainly wouldn't get it from public schools teachers or the mainstream media "journalists".

Democrat Bernie Sanders proposes test to ban Christians from political office

June 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Senator Bernie Sanders had an interesting exchange with White House deputy budget director nominee Russell Vought. Religious liberty defender David French writes about it in National Review.

First, French's rough transcription of the dialog:

> Sanders: Let me get to this issue that has bothered me and bothered many other people. And that is in the piece that I referred to that you wrote for the publication called *Resurgent*. You wrote, "Muslims do not simply have a deficient theology. They do not know God because they have rejected Jesus Christ, His Son, and they stand condemned." Do you believe that that statement is Islamophobic?
>
> Vought: Absolutely not, Senator. I'm a Christian, and I believe in a Christian set of principles based on my faith. That post, as I stated in the questionnaire to this committee, was to defend my alma mater, Wheaton College, a Christian school that has a statement of faith that includes the centrality of Jesus Christ for salvation, and . . .
>
> Sanders: I apologize. Forgive me, we just don't have a lot of time. Do you believe people in the Muslim religion stand condemned? Is that your view?
>
> Vought: Again, Senator, I'm a Christian, and I wrote that piece in accordance with the statement of faith at Wheaton College:
>
> Sanders: I understand that. I don't know how many Muslims there are in America. Maybe a couple million. Are you suggesting that all those people stand condemned? What about Jews? Do they stand condemned too?
>
> Vought: Senator, I'm a Christian . . .
>
> Sanders (shouting): I understand you are a Christian, but this country are made of people who are not just — I understand that Christianity is the majority religion, but there are other people of different religions in this country and around the world. In your judgment, do you think that people who are not Christians are going to be condemned?
>
> Vought: Thank you for probing on that question. As a Christian, I believe that all individuals are made in the image of God and are worthy of dignity and respect regardless of their religious beliefs. I believe that as a Christian that's how I should treat all individuals . . .
>
> Sanders: You think your statement that you put into that publication, they do not know God because they rejected Jesus Christ, His Son, and they stand condemned, do you think that's respectful of other religions?

> Vought: Senator, I wrote a post based on being a Christian and attending a Christian school that has a statement of faith that speaks clearly in regard to the centrality of Jesus Christ in salvation.
>
> Sanders: I would simply say, Mr. Chairman, that this nominee is really not someone who this country is supposed to be about.

French comments:

> This is a disgraceful and unconstitutional line of questioning from the man who came close to being the Democratic nominee for president. He's not only imposing a religious test for public office in direct violation of Article VI of the United States Constitution, he's gone so far as to label this decent man — who's seeking to serve his country in a vital role — as "not someone who this country is supposed to be about." Vought expressed entirely orthodox Christian beliefs. There is nothing "extreme" about his statements, and they mirror the statements of faith of countless Christian churches and schools across the land. Are these believers also not fit for public office?

The Christian view is, of course, that some people choose to separate themselves from God's presence in the afterlife because of their refusal to respond to God's revelation of himself in the time they have while they are still alive. People could respond to general revelation and the moral law written on their hearts, or if they are able to, they could investigate deeper, studying scientific evidence or historical evidence. But each person is morally obligated to seek the truth about God as he really is. God reveals himself to those who seek him.

Surprisingly, many people with advanced degrees and great careers and great wealth want nothing to do with *seeking the truth about God's existence and Jesus Christ.* I know. I work next to brilliant software engineers who have utterly stupid and ignorant opinions about God's existence and the historical Jesus. And they go their whole lives chasing health, wealth and fame rather than buckle down with the books and look into these things. They would prefer *not to look into these things* and that's why they remain separated from God eternally, after they die. God isn't grading people on whether they go to a good college, marry, have a great career, make lots of money, have lots of kids, and send their kids to great colleges to become doctors (wonderful though all that is). God is concerned about whether you know who he is, whether you accept what Jesus Christ is has done for you in history, and whether you love God in your priority-setting and decision-making.

Disagreement with non-Christians does not make Christians mean to non-Christians. You can just look at Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan to see how Christians are supposed to treat people that we disagree with about religion. In this life, Christians are called on to love their neighbors – including their neighbors of other faiths or of no faiths – as themselves. In fact, historically speaking, one of the main reasons why Christianity expanded so quickly is that early Christians took the obligation to love their neighbors so

seriously. Unlike Democrats, we didn't outsource caring for the poor and the sick to the government. Instead of being "generous" by spending other people's money, we were generous with *our own* money. This is foreign to most Democrats, who typically give nothing to charity, but make a big show of spending taxpayer money – money that they never earned themselves.

Some people may ask, "what about those who have never heard of Jesus?" For the problem of those people who have never heard of Jesus before they die, we have the middle knowledge solution. Christians love people who disagree with them, and we hope and pray that they will take the time to investigate these matters for themselves so that they come to a true worldview. I pray for non-Christians – this is a normal part of the Christian life. Disagreeing with someone doesn't mean that you treat them badly. For the problem of those who are not able to search out the answers from science and history, God will judge them on their response to God's existence in nature – which everyone has access to. The design of the universe is one of the reasons given by people for an intuitive belief in a Creator and Designer, and we all have the moral law written on our hearts.

What about Sanders? Is he tolerant of other religions? Does he treat people of other religions well? My opinion based on what I know of Sanders is that Sanders is an atheist, and so he is in disagreement with the factual claims of *every religion on the planet.* They're all wrong, according to Sanders. We're already seeing a lot of attacks by secular leftists against Christians using government as a weapon. Sanders would take it up a notch, by actually preventing Christians from serving in political roles. To me, that seems like what Hitler did to the Jews in Nazi Germany – drumming them out of positions of influence solely because their religion differed from his own pagan religion.

Very interesting for me now, to think back to the Christians I knew who supported Bernie Sanders in the Democrat primary last election. Why did they do it? Sanders has virtually no positions in common with what the Bible teaches. Not just on social issues, obviously, but also on fiscal and foreign policy issues. He is the complete anti-Bible politician. I believe that the main reason that some Christians supported Bernie Sanders is because they wanted to feel good about themselves, and be perceived as "generous" by other people around them. They did not want to do this by spending *their own* money and time to help others. They wanted to feel good and look generous by having Bernie Sanders steal *other people's money and time* to "help" others through enormous government spending and borrowing from future taxpayers. They wanted to take money away from individual taxpayers who earned the money by working, and let the secular leftists in government spend it on buying votes from their favored special interest groups. It was all about envy, theft and coveting. Things that no *real* Christian would ever choose when voting for President.

What does it mean for a woman to respect a man?

June 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: “Godspeed” by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

Matt Walsh writes a popular blog where he sometimes talks about male-female relationships. I got the impression that he was writing too much about how to blame men, and not enough about the policies and practices that provide incentives for men to underperform, e.g. – mostly female teachers, unfair divorce laws, stimulus spending geared towards women, etc. So imagine my surprise when I came across this article about men and their need for respect.

Matt is concerned that men are hearing too many negative messages in the culture, and not getting enough respect for what they do right.

He writes:

> These cultural messages aren’t harmful because they hurt my manly feelings; they’re harmful because of what they do to young girls. Society tells our daughters that men are boorish dolts who need to be herded like goats and lectured like school boys. Then they grow up and enter into marriage wholly unprepared and unwilling to accept the Biblical notion that “wives should submit to their husbands” because “the husband is the head of the wife.” [Ephesians 5]
>
> It is a fatal problem, because the one thing that is consistently withheld from men and husbands — respect — is the one thing we need the most.
>
> Yes, *need*. We need respect, and that need is so deeply ingrained that a marriage cannot possibly survive if the man is deprived of it.

> Often, people will say that a husband should only be respected if he "earns" it. *This attitude is precisely the problem*. A wife ought to respect her husband because he is her husband, just as he ought to love and honor her because she is his wife. Your husband might "deserve" it when you mock him, berate him, belittle him, and nag him, but you don't marry someone in order to give them what they deserve. In marriage, you give them what you've promised them, even when they aren't holding up their end of the bargain.

OK really, one last quote from Matt:

> Respect is our language. If it isn't said with respect, we can't hear it. This is why nagging is ineffective and self defeating. This is why statements made in sarcastic tones, or with rolling eyes, will never be received well. We have a filter in our brains, and a statement made in disrespect will be filtered out like the poison it is.
>
> Men are notoriously reluctant to share feelings or display vulnerability. Many times, we keep those inner thoughts locked away — our feelings guarded and hidden — because we know we are not respected. A man will never be vulnerable to someone who doesn't respect him. Never.
>
> A man isn't satisfied or content if he isn't respected. If he can't find respect where he is, he will seek it somewhere else. This can have disastrous implications for a relationship, but it applies in other areas of life as well. A man is much more likely to stay in a low paying job, a physically demanding job, a dangerous job, or a tedious job, than a job where he isn't respected.
>
> I'm only emphasizing this because I think it might actually be news to some people. Society does not permit men to be vocal about their need for respect, so the need is often ignored.

What I've found in speaking to women about this is that all the married and divorced women know about this need that men have. And by and large, they agree with it, too. But that is much rarer among single women, which is why men need to be ready to explain their needs and feelings. And women need to allow them to do that and then provide what men need in order to keep them performing.

Let's take a quick look at the Bible, because that's always a good thing to do when you want the truth about these things.

Ephesians 5:22-33:

22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up

for her,

26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;

29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church,

30 because we are members of His body.

31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.

Some women get scared by that, but they shouldn't be, because women get to pick their husbands, so just pick someone whose leadership you actually respect. Believe it or not, it is actually very comforting to co-operate with someone who knows what he is doing, and has demonstrated that through his past decisions.

And now for my opinion about this topic.

To start, remember that men are supposed to be good at the following roles:

- protecting
- providing
- moral leader
- spiritual leader

If a woman sees a man – any man – working away at these tasks so that he can solve her problems with something more than *confident promises about the future*, that's the time to practice respecting him. All men need to be recognized and encouraged in these areas, by all woman who care that men are masculine.

When I think of protecting, there is obviously the physical protection, but there is also the protection from lies and bad decisions. For protection, what I end up doing most is analyzing decisions for women and then giving my recommendation. I have 12 young people I mentor, men and women, who are in undergraduate or graduate school. My job is to make sure that they are not studying garbage subjects, and working during the summer months. I am proud to say that the 7 women I advise are all in STEM areas, and that took some convincing. Why is this protection? Because women need to not starve, and they need to not feel pressured to settle for a guy because they can't be financially independent by themselves. I am not a feminist, but I do think that women make better wives when they study hard subjects and do hard jobs. It shapes their character so that

they are easier to reason with, less fun-focused, and more able to perform hard work without complaint. I also advise women not to waste money of pursuing fun and thrills when they are young, and instead advise them to save and invest it early. One of the young ladies I mentor just finished her BS in computer science, and just finished her first year of an MS in computer science, worked as a TA and in the summers as a software tester, just finished an internship with a great software company for the summer, and she has an account with Fidelity, just like me.

When I think of providing, I think of the man's ability to work for money. It starts in high school, in the summers or evenings and goes on right to retirement. I did a summer internship with a huge telecom firm when I was in my sophomore year of high school, so it is possible. A man should not rely on others for money, he needs to be independent. A man should not find paid work "boring" and "meaningless". In fact, part of what it means to be a man is to do things that you don't feel like doing, so that you can provide for others. A man does not spend his money on alcohol or travel or other entertainments. He will have plenty to spend it on when he gets older – his family or maybe charity. A man buys things for others that will help them achieve goals – solving problems for others with his earned income. For example, if a woman has surgery on both of her hands, and cannot lug the vacuum up and down the stairs to clean up her cat's fur, then the man buys her a corded hand vacuum, which is much lighter for her to use every day, (he knows she has OCD and wants everything clean). Money makes a woman's life easier, freeing her up to do more important things. It's important for a man to get started early earning money, because earnings can be invested to produce a return. A man's confidence about the future has no cash value. A woman's feelings about a man's potential future earnings has no cash value. Cash has cash value. There is no such thing as assumed future income, there is only a resume, which predicts future earned income based on *the reality* of past earned income.

A good moral leader is not just good at being moral and spiritual himself, but of convincing others to be moral and spiritual. He is able to present his views on moral issues in a convincing way, especially to non-Christians. He studies philosophy (in his spare time! not as a job because it does not pay!) and is aware of research that helps him to make his point about topics like abortion and marriage. He has an interest in current events and politics, and is able to talk about legislation, policies and court cases related to his worldview. He is able to solve problems that could impact a person's ability to be moral or spiritual in the future. For example, consider that some people really do lose their faith when experiencing evil and suffering. A good spiritual leader advises a woman to not make plans that are likely to fail, so that she will never blame God for her own poor decisions. A good moral leader convinces a woman to be serious about marriage early, so that she is not tempted to become a single mother by choice later. Those last two cases are cases I actually had to face, and I won the first one (she dumped a complete loser of a man and married a really great one), and lost the second (she became a single mother by choice and had a fatherless son). But the point is that there is more to being a moral leader than reciting moral rules. And there is more to being a spiritual leader than

reciting Bible verses. A good leader proves he can lead by pushing the people he leads into real world achievements.

These are the things that a good woman looks for in a man, and when she finds them, she accords a man respect in those areas.

Jerry Walls lectures on objections to Reformed theology

June 11, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

WARNING: This lecture is a very sharp and pointed critique of Calvinist theology. Viewer discretion is advised.

In Protestant Christianity, there is a division between people who accept Calvinist doctrines and those who don't. Both groups think that the other group are genuine Christians, but the debate has more to do with the human free will, human responsibility and who God loves.

About Dr. Jerry Walls:

- BA in Religion and Philosophy, Houghton College
- MDiv, Princeton Seminary
- STM, Yale Divinity School
- PhD in Philosophy, Notre Dame

He is a professor at Houston Baptist University.

Dr. Walls is Protestant (like me). He is a substance dualist (like me). And he believes in a real eternal Hell (like me). And he is very, very assertive. Definitely no confidence problems here. And you're not going to have a problem keeping your attention on this lecture!

Note that I do not agree with or endorse Dr. Walls on all of his views.

Here's the lecture: (64 minutes)

Summary:

- What are the main doctrines of Calvinism? (TULIP)
- A look at the Westminster Confession
- The nature of freedom and free will
- Calvinist doctrine of freedom: compatibilism
- The implications of compatibilism
- Who determines what each person will desire on Calvinism?
- Who does God love on Calvinism?
- The law of non-contradiction
- Does God make a genuine offer of salvation to all people on Calvinism?
- Does God love "the elect" differently than the "non-elect" on Calvinism?

He quotes at least a half-dozen Calvinist theologians in this lecture, including John Piper, J.I. Packer and D.A. Carson. And he also mentions 3 videos at the end of the lecture where he goes over specific Bible verses that seem to support Calvinism (part 4, part 5, part 6 are the ones he mentioned).

This lecture is very strong stuff, and I think that he could have been nicer when presenting it, but he hit on every single objection that I have to Calvinism, and he worked through my reasoning too! So I really liked that he validated all of my concerns about Calvinism. I'm not as bothered about the problems with Calvinism as he is, though. I don't think it's a big divisive issue. I almost always read Calvinist theologians when I am reading theology. I just conjoin Calvinism with middle knowledge and resistible grace, and it's fine. You get divine sovereignty AND human responsibility, and without having to swallow determinism and double-predestination (doctrines which cannot be separated from 5-point Calvinism). Calvinists are some of the best theologians, but I think that they are just wrong on the things he discusses in his lecture.

Calvinists who are interested in this issue would do well to read a book on the other side of the fence, like "Salvation and Sovereignty" by Kenneth Heathley. That's a good defense of the middle knowledge perspective.

Is apologetics a waste of time in a postmodern culture?

June 12, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Air Force TACPs confirm target locations with their map

One thing that I noticed while growing up in youth groups and campus clubs is that most of the young unmarried ladies don't have much interest in making a case for Christian truth claims that are reasonable and supported by evidence. Is it that they are just too lazy to do the studying? Well, no – they do very well in school and get decent jobs after they graduate. So they are able to learn and work on things they like, just not defending their faith. Is it that aren't able to communicate? Well, no – they are able to talk and talk about things they are interested in, like clothes, television, movies, food, fitness, etc. So what's the real problem here? I think the problem is that women (more than men) have accepted a *postmodern* worldview. Postmodernism reduces questions of religion and ethics to personal preferences, divorced from reason and evidence. In postmodernism, everyone is equally right about whichever religion or morality they prefer. And you choose what you like – what resonates with you. For postmodern "Christians", it causes them to lose all motivation to study and engage in debate in areas like religion and ethics.

Look at this clip of William Lane Craig:

He's also written a response here.

Personally, I don't even see how you can BE a Christian and accept postmodernism.

When I was an undergraduate, there was a girl I attended IVCF with named Kerry.

Although she was doing a STEM degree and graduated #2 in her class, she just preferred not to study anything related to the real questions that atheists ask. Why not? Because some male youth pastor she had a crush on had convinced her that postmodernism was true, and that it was a waste of time to argue about cosmic fine-tuning. She was more than happy to discover that (thanks to postmodernism) religion was all about feelings and intuitions. No need to waste time reading anything to learn how to give an answer for the hope within you. I would repeat to her verbatim questions I had got from atheists students in high school and university, and she just refused to do anything to come up with an answer. For her, Christianity was about feeling good and being liked, and God would never ask her to do anything (study, debate) that would cause her to be unhappy.

Another woman I worked for told me that she had enough trouble in her day-to-day life to take on any trouble in her religion. She was a leader in a program called the "Calvinettes" – girls interested in Calvinism, I guess. I asked her if she was teaching these Calvinettes anything that would help them when they were confronted by relativism and naturalism in the university. She said no, and that studying science and history was not desired by her Calvinettes, because people who study are nerdy and unpopular. Although she claimed to be in a two-way relationship with God, she never saw any responsibility to defend his honor when it was called into question.

I guess I have trouble understanding postmoderns who It would be like me marrying, and standing there silent when people spoke lies about my wife. Sharing my opinion is not what is needed here, you have to defend your wife and prove her goodness by making a factual case that overrides the other person's opinions.

One thing is for sure: postmodern Christians don't treat God very well. It's almost as if embracing postmdodernism is done precisely because it relieves a person of having to do any studying and having to do any battling. When it comes to defending God's reputation and honor when it's called into question, we have to do *what works*. Not what makes us feel good. Not what makes people like us.

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian at the same time?

June 13, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

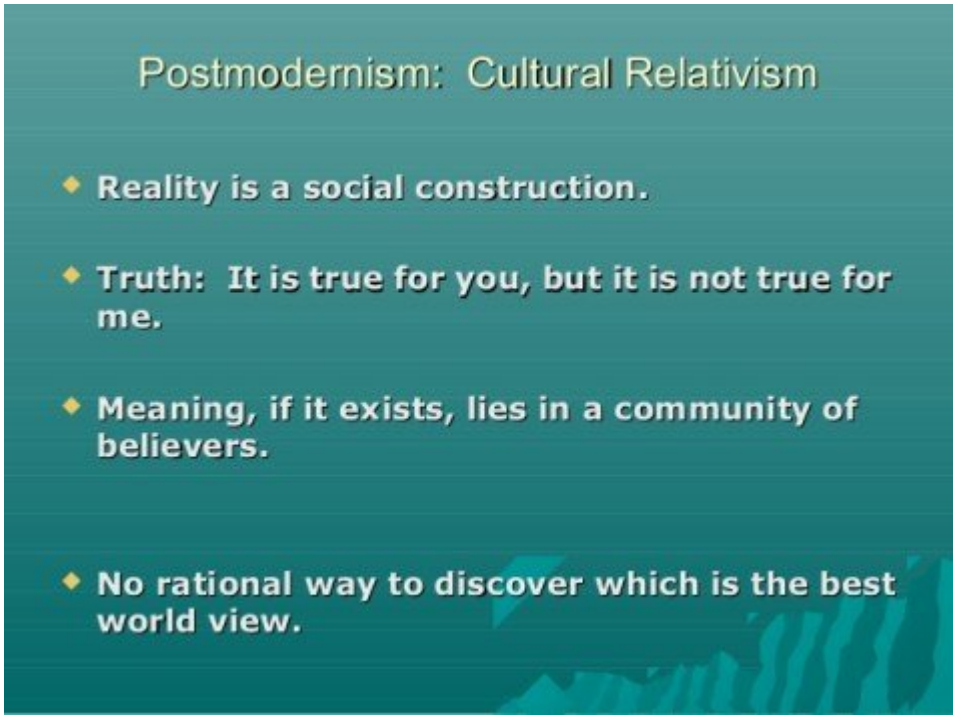

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian? Let's look at their leader
Wow. Postmodern "Christian" Brian McLaren has completely abandoned traditional Christianity. McLaren, you may already know, spear-headed the "emergent church" movement – an attempt to fuse postmodern relativism with liberal Christianity.

Greg Koukl and Kevin DeYoung analyze his latest book "A New Kind of Christianity".

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

Kevin DeYoung – Brian McLaren's New Kind of Christianity
Host: Greg Koukl

Guest: Kevin DeYoung – Brian McLaren's "New Kind of Christianity" (00:00:00)
Commentary: Reality vs. Religion? The Modern Upper Story Leap (00:56:39)
Guest: Dennis Prager – Reality vs. Religion (01:52:25)

We're interested in the first hour of the three-hour show.

Topics of hour one:

- What is Brian's view of Creation?
- What is Brian's view of the Fall?
- What is Brian's view of Scripture?
- What is Brian's view of Truth?
- What is Brian's view of sin and Hell?
- What is Brian's view of the Fall?

- What is Brian's view of atonement?
- How did Brian's leftist political views infect his theology?
- How did postmodernism affect Brian's epistemology?
- How faithful is Brian in interpreting the text?

There's also a nice blog post about Brian McLaren by Melinda from Stand to Reason, too.

Excerpt:

> McLaren doesn't think the Bible is to be taken literally. For instance, the Garden of Eden story isn't about sin and the Fall, rather it's a "compassionate coming of age story." Consequently, the whole idea of sin and Hell is a horrible overreaction and has caused the church to offer a violent message and image all these years. It follows from this interpretation then, that there is no need for the cross and Jesus' death and resurrection. Those are violent ideas resulting from a bad reading of the Bible.

And a couple of longer reviews are linked.

> Tim Challies and Kevin DeYoung have written excellent and more in-depth reviews of McLaren's new book and I highly recommend them.

I highly recommend you listen to this podcast and if you know anyone who is being influenced by the (non) religious left, take a look at the articles, especially the DeYoung article, which is quite good.

A generous "orthodoxy"?

And finally, here is a review of another *much earlier* Brian McLaren book by Biola University professor of philosophy Doug Geivett – one of my absolute favorite people. This is back when McLaren was just starting to leave orthodox Christianity behind.

Excerpt:

> Brian McLaren's book *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Zondervan, 2004) has been called a manifesto of the "emerging church" — a movement that is rethinking Christianity against the backdrop of postmodernism. McLaren is the founding pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church in Spencerville, Md.
>
> […]In using the term "orthodoxy" for his position, McLaren is making a political move to subvert traditional evangelical theology. "Orthodoxy," as he uses it, is whatever happens to be in vogue and culturally dominant. Also, an important theme among postmodernists has to do with the nature of *belief* — they doubt that people have, or need, good reasons to believe as they do, so they emphasize behavior over belief. (This probably explains why McLaren's book relies less on evidence and argumentation and more on rhetoric.) However, in de-emphasizing the importance of belief, McLaren and other postmodernists overlook three things.
>
> First, belief is the engine that drives behavior. The best way to cure wrong action

> is to identify false beliefs. Second, all people — even postmodernists — have definite beliefs about the things that matter most. They can't help it. While McLaren resists the invitation to state clearly what he believes — for example, about the eternal destiny of nonbelievers — surely he has some view of the matter and that view influences his approach to the proclamation of the gospel. (As a pastor, he should have good ideas about this and a host of other issues of theological significance.) Third — though postmodernists sneer at the idea of evidence — evidence matters because it's how we determine what's true and is crucial to ordering our lives according to truth. In this respect, the postmodernist is out of step with the culture because human beings are by nature evidence-gatherers.

Very important to understand where these postmodern "Christians" are coming from, and where they end up when they've worked their mystical anti-realism through to its conclusions.

The psychological motivation of those who embrace postmodernism

June 14, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

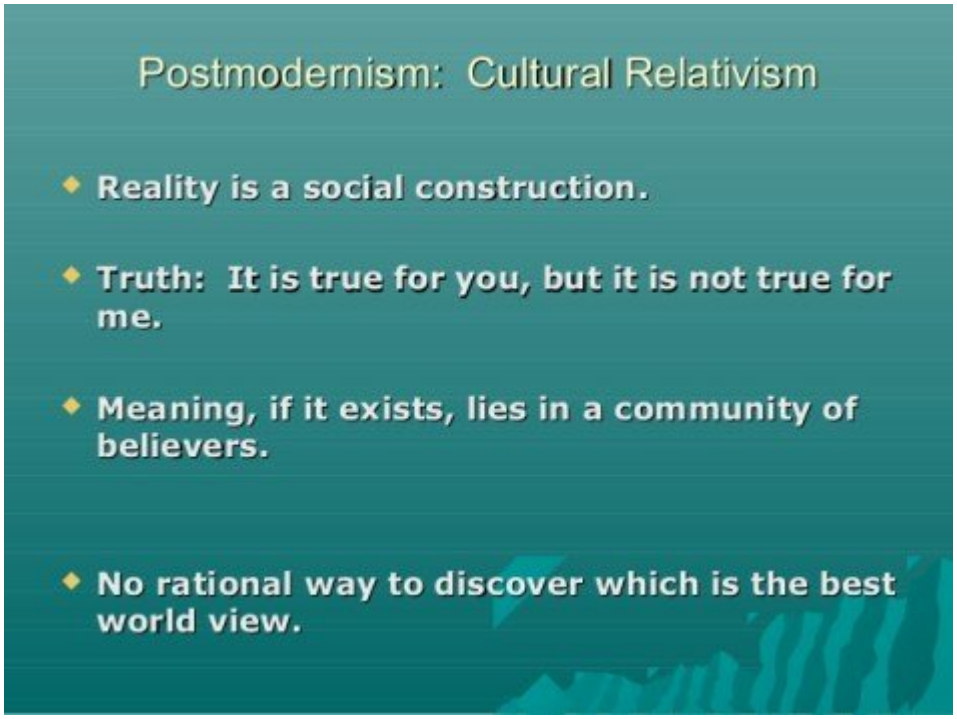

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian? Not for long

Famous analytical philosopher John Searle has written a book "Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World", explaining what's factually wrong with postmodernism. In the introduction, he explains what postmodernism is, and what motivates people to accept postmodernism.

He writes:

> […][W]hen we act or think or talk in the following sorts of ways we take a lot for granted: when we hammer a nail, or order a takeout meal from a restaurant, or conduct a lab experiment, or wonder where to go on vacation, we take the following for granted: there exists a real world that is totally independent of human beings and of what they think or say about it, and statements about objects and states of affairs in that world are true or false depending on whether things in the world really are the way we say they are. So, for example, if in pondering my vacation plans I wonder whether Greece is hotter in the summer than Italy, I simply take it for granted that there exists a real world containing places like Greece and Italy and that they have various temperatures. **Furthermore, if I read in a travel book that the average summer temperature in Greece is hotter than in Italy, I know that what the book says will be true if and only if it really is hotter on average in the summer in Greece than in Italy. This is because I take it for granted that such statements are true only if there is something independent of the**

> **statement in virtue of which, or because of which, it is true.**
>
> […]These two Background presuppositions have long histories and various famous names. The first, that there is a real world existing independently of us, I like to call "external realism." "Realism," because it asserts the existence of the real world, and "external" to distinguish it from other sorts of realism-for example, realism about mathematical objects (mathematical realism) or realism about ethical facts (ethical realism). The second view, that a statement is true if things in the world are the way the statement says they are, and false otherwise, is called "the correspondence theory of truth." This theory comes in a lot of different versions, but the basic idea is that statements are true if they correspond to, or describe, or fit, how things really are in the world, and false if they do not.

The "correspondence theory of truth" is the view of truth assumed in books of the Bible whose genre is such that that they were intended by the authors to be taken *literally*, (with allowances for symbolism, figures of speech, metaphors, hyperbole, etc.).

But what about the postmodernists, who seek to deny the objectivity of external reality?

More Searle:

> Thinkers who wish to deny the correspondence theory of truth or the referential theory of thought and language typically find it embarrassing to have to concede external realism. Often they would rather not talk about it at all, or they have some more or less subtle reason for rejecting it. In fact, very few thinkers come right out and say that there is no such thing as a real world existing absolutely, objectively, and totally independently of us. Some do. Some come right out and say that the so-called real world is a "social construct."

What is behind the denial of objective reality, and statements about external reality that are warranted by evidence?

> It is not easy to get a fix on what drives contemporary antirealism, but if we had to pick out a thread that runs through the wide variety of arguments, it would be what is sometimes called "perspectivism." Perspectivism is the idea that our knowledge of reality is never "unmediated," that it is always mediated by a point of view, by a particular set of predilections, or, worse yet by sinister political motives, such as an allegiance to a political group or ideology. And because we can never have unmediated knowledge of the world, then perhaps there is no real world, or perhaps it is useless to even talk about it, or perhaps it is not even interesting.

Searle is going to refute anti-realism in the rest of the book, but here is his guess at what is motivating the anti-realists:

> > **I have to confess, however, that I think there is a much deeper**

> > **reason for the persistent appeal of all forms of antirealism, and this has become obvious in the twentieth century: it satisfies a basic urge to power. It just seems too disgusting, somehow, that we should have to be at the mercy of the "real world." It seems too awful that our representations should have to be answerable to anything but us. This is why people who hold contemporary versions of antirealism and reject the correspondence theory of truth typically sneer at the opposing view.**
>
> […]I don't think it is the argument that is actually driving the impulse to deny realism. I think that as a matter of contemporary cultural and intellectual history, the attacks on realism are not driven by arguments, because the arguments are more or less obviously feeble, for reasons I will explain in detail in a moment. **Rather, as I suggested earlier, the motivation for denying realism is a kind of will to power, and it manifests itself in a number of ways. In universities, most notably in various humanities disciplines, it is assumed that, if there is no real world, then science is on the same footing as the humanities. They both deal with social constructs, not with independent realities. From this assumption, forms of postmodernism, deconstruction, and so on, are easily developed, having been completely turned loose from the tiresome moorings and constraints of having to confront the real world. If the real world is just an invention-a social construct designed to oppress the marginalized elements of society-then let's get rid of the real world and construct the world we want. That, I think, is the real driving psychological force behind antirealism at the end of the twentieth century.**

Now, I'll go one step further than Searle.

People, from the Fall, have had the desire to step into the place of God. It's true that we creatures exist in a universe created and designed by God. But, there is a way to work around the fact that God made the universe and the laws that the universe runs on, including logic, mathematics and natural laws. And that way is to *deny logic, mathematics and natural laws.* Postmodernists simply deny that there is any way to construct rational arguments and support the premises with evidence from the real world. That way, they imagine, they are free to escape a God-designed world, including a God-designed specification for how they ought to live. The postmoderns deny *the reliable methods of knowing about the God-created reality because logic and evidence can be used to point to God's existence, God's character, and God's actions in history.*

And that's why there is this effort to make reality "optional" and perspectival. Everyone can be their own God, and escape any accountability to the real God – the God who is easily discovered through the use of logic and evidence. I believe that this is also behind the rise of atheists, who feign allegiance to logic and science, but then express "skepticism" about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, objective

morality, the minimal facts concerning the historical Jesus, and other undeniables.

Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist

June 15, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

Dina sent me news of a cracking good episode of Unbelievable, which features Lawrence Krauss, who debated William Lane Craig. Krauss’ book was also reviewed in the New York Times.

The MP3 file is here.

Details:

> Lawrence Krauss is a Cosmologist at Arizona State University who describes himself as an “anti-theist”. His latest book “A Universe From Nothing” has received both acclaim and criticism for its attempt to answer the question “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Debating the issue with Krauss is Rodney Holder, Course director at the Faraday Institute, Cambridge. An astrophysicist and priest by background. In a lively exchange they debate whether Krauss’ “nothing” is “nothing”, fine tuning and multiverses, scientific knowledge, miracles and the usefulness of theology and philosophy.

This debate is quite entertaining, and do not be intimidated if your don’t understand science. You can understand pretty easily who is arguing based on facts and who is speculating about unobservable, untestable entities. At one point, Krauss actually denies that there is any fine-tuning in the universe, so please see this link to refute that claim as well as this podcast which explains some examples of fine-tuning. Krauss gets a bit angry at the beginning, but calms down.

Quotation marks are for direct quotes, italics is for made-up snark. See below the summary for more posts that are related to this one.

Summary of the discussion: (picked up at 9:30 when they start talking about the book)

Brierley:

- explain your theory of how the universe can come into being from nothing

Krauss:

- the nothing that preceded the universe is “no space, no time, no universe”
- theists say that God is responsible for creating the universe out of this nothing
- but the laws of nature can create the universe uncaused out of nothing

Holder:

- Krauss sometimes writes that the nothing is really a quantum vacuum, but that is not nothing
- He even acknowledges in his book that a quantum vacuum is not nothing
- He thinks that the nothing has properties, even though it has no being
- It has the property of being unstable
- It has the property of being acted on by quantum fields
- It has the property of being acted on by gravity

Krauss:

- But nothing can have the potential to do things inside it
- For example suppose you have an electron, *which is not nothing*
- If it jumps from one level to another, it emits light
- There was no potential for the light in the electron, but it was there as part of atomic structure

Holder:

- But in cases like that, there is something physical that has the potential

Krauss:

- Well, how did God makes the universe then if it had no potential?

Holder:

- God existed, and the potential for creating the universe in himself

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times

Krauss:

- It was written by a philosopher, so I dismissed it

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the Scientific American

Krauss:

- These book reviewers have not even read my book!

Krauss:

- Science will be able to figure out how to make something from nothing in the future
- We are even now speculating about interesting questions, like is there a multiverse?

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times
- The author of the review claims that you equivocate on the term "nothing"
- In order to get things to pop into being, you have to make "nothing" mean "something"
- Reviewer: none of Krauss' theories explain how something can come from actual nothingness

Krauss:

- In physics, something and nothing are not that different
- The reviewer doesn't understand the physics
- He doesn't understand quantum field theory
- You could call a quantum vacuum "nothing", *(this is the vacuum fluctuation model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*
- Maybe there is an eternally existing multiverse that we can't observe or test scientifically
- Maybe it has laws that we don't know about which allow our universe to pop into being
- Maybe this popping into being is uncaused
- (alarmed) Who made God? Who made God?

Holder:

- God is eternal and necessary

Krauss:

- (interrupting, angry) What does it mean for something to be necessary?

Holder:

- Basically, you have to decide whether there is more evidence that the necessary being God or a multiverse

Brierley:

- So Dr. Krauss are you willing to say that the universe is a brute fact, in some sense, and requires no explanation

Krauss:

- (angry) Religious people are stupid because they just assume brute facts, *not like me and my unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry) Religious people are against the progress of science, they don't want to figure out how things work

Brierley:

- But isn't it possible that naturalists can be opposed to the progress of science?
- What about the way the Fred Hoyle opposed the Big Bang because he wanted an eternal universe

Krauss:

- (angry) But naturalists like me let the facts determine our beliefs, *like the facts about the eternal unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry, shouting) Philosophers are stupid, they know nothing!

=== Break ===

Brierley:

- Do you see any evidence of purpose in the universe?

Krauss:

- Well maybe I would believe if the stars lined up to spell out a message from God

Brierley:

- Actually no, that wouldn't be evidence for God on your multiverse view
- if there an infinite number of universes existing for an infinite amount of time, then anything can happen no matter how unlikely it is
- therefore, no evidence could convince you that God exists, since the unobservable, untestable, eternal multiverse can make anything it wants

Krauss:

- That's a true statement, *and very convenient for atheists who don't want to be accountable to God, don't you think?*

Brierley:

- Back to the multiverse, how does it solve the fine-tuning?

Krauss:

- "We have no idea if the universe is fine-tuned for life", *even though the atheist Martin Rees who endorsed Krauss' book wrote his own book about the fine-tuning of the universe called "Just Six Numbers"*
- Inflationary theory does suggest a way to create multiple universes, *(this is the chaotic inflationary model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*

Brierley:

- But this theory is still very much a hypothesis, isn't it? We can't observe *or test* this hypothesis can we?

Krauss:

- "No, and that is really important to state"
- "I'm an empiricist, so if you can't falsify it and if you can't test it then it's not science"
- In my book, I speculate about a way that we could test the multiverse theory

Holder:

- Yes, in principle, the multiverse would be scientific if you could test it through other theories like inflationary theory
- There are a lot of speculations about multiverse theory, but no evidence from predictions that were validated in the lab

Krauss:

- "I agree completely with everything you just said"

Brierley:

- Roger Penrose agrees with Holder that the multiverse theory is too speculative
- (To Holder) Isn't the multiverse theory better than positing a completely different kind of being, which is God?

Holder:

- The multiverse theory is extremely speculative

- Even if the multiverse were true, you would still need to explain the multiverse

Krauss:

- People don't oppose my book because it's full of self-contradictory speculations
- People oppose my book because they are stupid and ignorant

Holder:

- There are things that exist that science cannot measure, like objective morality
- It's possible to give explanations for moral behavior by appealing to evolution
- But that does not ground self-sacrificial morality, such as what occurs in the Christian life

Brierley:

- Dawkins says there is no purpose or morality in in the universe, do you agree?

Krauss:

- "There is certainly no evidence of any of that"

Brierley:

- In the book, you talk about how we live in a special time in the universe's history to be able to do science, *(i.e. – The Privileged Planet hypothesis)*
- You also write about how all the discoveries were are making will not be communicated to anyone in other places in the universe
- So what is the meaning of doing science on your view? And why are you sad at the knowledge that will not be available to people in the future?
- Are you longing for some kind of purpose?

Krauss:

- No, I just get enjoyment from studying the universe with science to gain understanding

Holder:

- What do you make of Einstein's statement about the unexpected comprehensibility of the universe
- Theists would say that this is because God wanted us to study and understand and gain knowledge

Krauss:

- "It is remarkable that the universe is comprehensible"

Brierley:

- Why is the universe comprehensible?

Krauss:

- Well, maybe the universe just has to be that way

Brierley:

- What do you make of the heat death of the universe, when all life in the universe will die out?

Krauss:

- That's the way the universe is

=== BREAK ===
Krauss:

- I wouldn't want to live in a universe where there was a God
- God is a cosmic Saddam Hussein
- "Religious people turn their minds off" and believe in God for consolation

Holder:

- First, Jesus is the revelation of God and he is no Saddam Hussein
- Second, the Christian life is anything but easy, we are facing some persecution already in the UK
- Third, there is also the problem of being accountable to God when we die
- It's very much like science – Christianity is the way it is, not the way we want it to be

Krauss:

- "If you don't believe in him, you don't get any of the benefits, so you have to believe"
- "And then if you've done something wrong, you're going to be judged for it"
- "So I don't want to be judged by God, I want to be… that's the bottom line"

Holder:

- Well, Jesus has died to pay the price for those things we've done wrong
- Although we will have to face the charges for what we've done, believers will ultimately be forgiven

Finally, Peter Sean Bradley note that Krauss is now walking back his rhetoric in response to criticisms from people like atheist John Horgan.

Related posts

- Ed Feser takes on Lawrence Krauss and Victor Stenger
- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?
- Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist
- William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?
- Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument
- Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger’s critique of cosmic fine-tuning
- A review of Lawrence Krauss’ book “A Universe From Nothing”

J. Warner Wallace: I am not a Christian because it works for me

June 16, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a must-read post from Cold-Case Christianity author J. Warner Wallace.

Excerpt:

> Life on this side of my decision hasn't always been easy. It's been nearly seventeen years since I first trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. I still struggle to submit my prideful will to what God would call me to do. Christianity is not easy. It doesn't always "work" for me. There are times when I think it would be easier to do it the old way; easier to cut a corner or take a short cut. There are many times when doing the right thing means doing the most difficult thing possible. There are also times when it seems like non-Christians have it easier, or seem to be "winning". It's in times like these that I have to remind myself that I'm not a Christian because it serves my own selfish purposes. I'm not a Christian because it "works" for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn't always been easy.
>
> I'm a Christian because it is true. I'm a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I'm a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative.

I think this is important. There are people who I know who claim to be Christian, but they are clearly believing that God is a mystical force who arranges everything in their lives in order to make them happy. They are not Christians because it's true, but because of things like comfort and community. But people ought to become Christians because they think it's true. Truth doesn't necessarily make you happy, though. Truth can impose

intellectual obligations and moral obligations on you. Seeing God as he really is doesn't help us to "win" at life, as the culture defines winning.

Winning in Christianity doesn't mean making lots of money, or being famous, or winning human competitions, or being approved of by lots of people. Winning for a Christian might involve things like building relationships with people and leading them to know that God exists and who Jesus is. That has no cash value, and it's not going to make you famous. Actually, it will probably cost you money and time, and make you unpopular with a lot of people.

The Bible doesn't promise that people who become Christians will be happier. Actually, it promises that Christians will suffer for doing the right things. Their autonomy will suffer, as they sacrifice their own interests and happiness in order to make God happy, by serving his interests. Christianity isn't something you add on to your before-God life in order to achieve your before-God goals. When you become a Christian, you get a new set of goals, based on God's character and his design for you. And although you might be very successful in the world as part of serving God, there is no guarantee of that. Christianity is not life enhancement.

Can relationships succeed independently of the efforts of the people involved?

June 17, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

A few years ago, I blogged about the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage, which I think is the dominant view of marriage among young people today – even among Christians. This view of marriage basically says that there is a person in the world out there who will match up so perfectly with each one of us that we will have to expend no effort and perform no actions and take responsibility for nothing in order for the relationship to work. it will just work on its own!

I've decided to link to this recent article by Matt Walsh which is on that same topic.

He writes:

> The disease is the fanciful, unrealistic, fictionalized perceptions that both males and females harbor about marriage.
>
> For example, think of the glamorization of the "mysterious" and "damaged" guy from the "wrong side of the tracks." Hollywood makes him seem alluring and sexy, but forgets to mention that most of the time, in the real world, that dude probably has herpes, a coke habit, and a criminal record.
>
> Still, that bit of propaganda is nothing compared to the underlying misconception that so many of us carry around consciously or subconsciously, because we've seen it on TV and in the movies, and read it in books a million times since childhood: namely, that there is just *one* person out there for us. Our soul mate. Our Mr. or Mrs. Right. The person we are "meant to be with."

Matt thinks this view of relationships is not realistic:

> I didn't marry my wife because she's The One, *she's The One because I married*

> *her*. Until we were married, she was one, I was one, and we were both one of many. I didn't marry The One, I married *this* one, and the two of us *became* one. I didn't marry her because I was "meant to be with her," I married her because that was my choice, and it was her choice, and the Sacrament of marriage is that choice. I married her because I love her — I chose to love her — and I chose to live the rest of my life in service to her. We were not following a script, we chose to write our own, and it's a story that contains more love and happiness than any romantic fable ever conjured up by Hollywood.
>
> Indeed, marriage is a decision, not the inevitable result of unseen forces outside of our control. When we got married, the pastor asked us if we had "come here freely." If I had said, "well, not really, you see destiny drew us together," that would have brought the evening to an abrupt and unpleasant end. Marriage has to be a free choice or it is not a marriage. That's a beautiful thing, really.
>
> God gave us Free Will. It is His greatest gift to us because without it, nothing is possible. Love is not possible without Will. If we cannot choose to love, then we cannot love. God did not program us like robots to be compatible with only one other machine. He created us as individuals, endowed with the incredible, unprecedented power to choose. And with that choice, we are to go out and find a partner, and make that partner our soul mate.
>
> That's what we do. We *make* our spouses into our soul mates by marrying them. We don't simply recognize that they are soul mates and then just sort of symbolically consecrate that recognition through what would then be an effectively meaningless marriage sacrament. Instead, we find another unique, dynamic, wholly individualized human being, and we make the monumental, supernatural decision to bind ourselves to them for eternity.
>
> **It's a bold and risky move, no matter how you look at it. It's important to recognize this, not so that you can run away like a petrified little puppy and never tie the knot with anyone, but so that you can go into marriage knowing, at least to some extent, what you're really doing. This person wasn't made for you. It wasn't "designed" to be. There will be some parts of your relationship that are incongruous and conflicting. It won't all click together like a set of Legos, as you might expect if you think this coupling was fated in the stars.**
>
> **It's funny that people get divorced and often cite "irreconcilable differences." Well what did they think was going to happen? Did they think *every* difference would be reconcilable? Did they think every bit of contention between them could be perfectly and permanently solved?**

Finally, regarding his own marriage:

> There were literally millions of things that either of us could have done. An innumerable multitude of possible outcomes, but this was *our* outcome because

> we *chose* it. Not because we were destined or predetermined, not because it was "meant to happen," but because we chose it. That, to me, is much more romantic than getting pulled along by fate until the two of us inevitably collide and all that was written in our horoscopes passively comes to unavoidable fruition.
>
> **We are the protagonists of our love story, not the spectators.**

I see this problem everywhere, even with Christian women who have been raised as Disney princesses. I was just told by one last week that she will marry when she meets "the right man" – the man who will require her to do nothing. This magical relationship will require no communication, no working through disagreements, no problem solving, no compromise, no effort, no self-sacrifice of any kind. it will just "work", without any growing up by anyone. Two unemployed people with degrees in English can have a fine marriage, I suppose, traveling the world and skydiving every Tuesday.

I think that when problems arise between two people who are largely compatible, the right thing to do is to engage and solve the problems. Yes, work isn't required in pop culture notions of romance, but those things don't reflect the real world anyway. In the real world, actions to solve a problem count for more than words that avoid the problem. Engineering principles and self-sacrificial attitude are infinitely more useful in a relationship than all the pop culture descriptions of ideal men and ideal women and ideal relationships combined.

By the way, the best book on this problem is Dr. Laura's "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands", which clearly sets out how a woman's choices influence her husband's ability to perform well. The myth of the mind-reading "right man" is also debunked.

Why is it so hard for a working man to provide for a family these days?

June 18, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

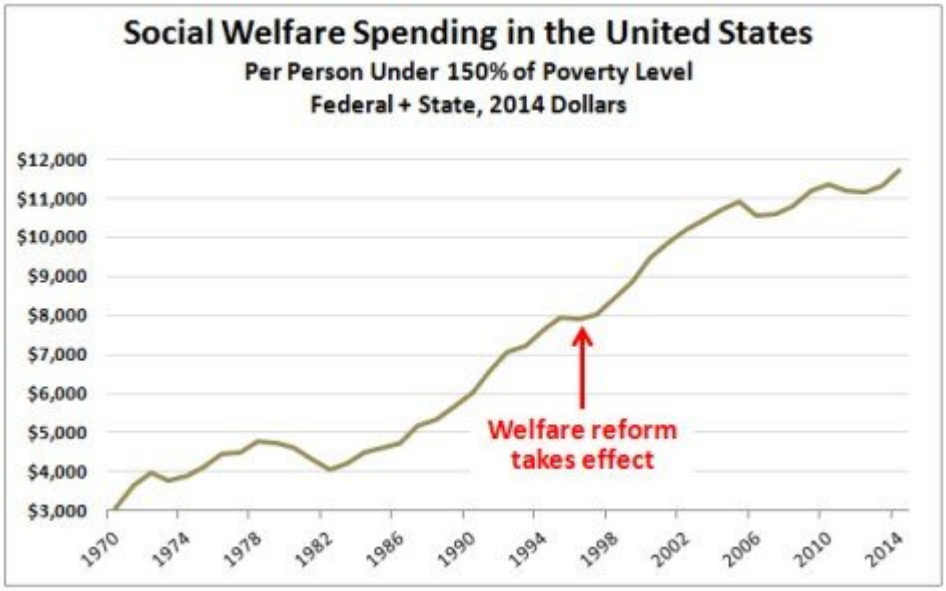

Welfare spending

Here's my argument which answers the question:

1. Feminism was behind no-fault divorce.
2. Making it easier to divorce means that more divorces will occur.
3. Marital instability causes women to vote for bigger government.
4. Unmarried women vote mostly for Democrats.

When government spending increases for social programs and welfare, then taxes must be raised to pay for it. When taxes rise, men keep too little of their salaries to hold onto the provider role.

*Please note that I am talking about unmarried (never married, divorced) women throughout this post.

Here's the evidence for each point.

1. Feminism was behind no-fault divorce, according to this feminist, pro-no-fault-divorce writer.

Excerpt:

> Households of 2010 don't look quite like they did in 1969, when no-fault divorce actually was a controversial topic and these counter-arguments held some weight. The working dad/stay-at-home mom model of the middle class has been replaced by two-parent earner households and a growing number of working mom/stay-at-home dad arrangements. In working poor and impoverished families, the one-parent provider model was never the norm. **No-fault divorce seemed scary when it had never before existed, but the truth is that its**

> **introduction was long overdue. Feminist groups at the time supported no-fault divorce, as it provided women an escape hatch from desperately unhappy marriages in a society where they were already disadvantaged on almost every level, regardless of their marital status.** Imagine an abusive marriage in 1968, when the court-savvy abuser could actually force the victim to stay in the relationship forever. Imagine that now, and you know why domestic violence attorneys are in full support of introducing no-fault divorce to New York. And the judges aren't the only problem.

Note that the author of this piece thinks that it is not women's fault that they choose men who they then want to divorce. It's not the woman's fault that she is unhappy with the man she courted with and then chose and then made vows to – women need a no-fault escape hatch, and children do fine without fathers.

2. Easier divorces means more divorces.

Abstract:

> This paper analyzes a panel of 18 European countries spanning from 1950 to 2003 to examine the extent to which the legal reforms leading to "easier divorce" that took place during the second half of the 20th century have contributed to the increase in divorce rates across Europe. We use a quasi-experimental set-up and exploit the different timing of the reforms in divorce laws across countries. We account for unobserved country-specific factors by introducing country fixed effects, and we include country-specific trends to control for timevarying factors at the country level that may be correlated with divorce rates and divorce laws, such as changing social norms or slow moving demographic trends. We find that the different reforms that "made divorce easier" were followed by significant increases in divorce rates. **The effect of no-fault legislation was strong and permanent, while unilateral reforms only had a temporary effect on divorce rates. Overall, we estimate that the legal reforms account for about 20 percent of the increase in divorce rates in Europe between 1960 and 2002.**

It seems obvious, but more evidence never hurts. About 70% of divorces are initiated by women, either because they chose to marry the wrong man, or because they are unhappy with the right man.

3. Marital instability causes women to vote for bigger government for security.

Excerpt:

> Giving women the right to vote significantly changed American politics from the very beginning. Despite claims to the contrary, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue, and these effects continued growing as more women took advantage of the franchise. Similar changes occurred at the federal level as female suffrage led to more liberal voting records

> for the state's U.S. House and Senate delegations. In the Senate, suffrage changed voting behavior by an amount equal to almost 20 percent of the difference between Republican and Democratic senators. Suffrage also coincided with changes in the probability that prohibition would be enacted and changes in divorce laws.
>
> […]More work remains to be done on why women vote so differently, but our initial work provides scant evidence that it is due to self-interest arising from their employment by government. **The only evidence that we found indicated that the gender gap in part arises from women's fear that they are being left to raise children on their own (Lott and Kenny 1997).** If this result is true, the continued breakdown of the family and higher divorce rates imply growing political conflicts between the sexes. 19

Bigger government must be paid for by higher taxes, of course, which makes it harder for one working man's income to provide for a family. In fact, feminists *wanted* men to be displaced as sole-providers. They would prefer that women are "equal" to men, and that means making women get out and work like men. Feminists had every reason to want bigger government and higher taxes to make traditional single-earner families unfeasible financially. They did it for *equality*.

4. Women are in fact observed to vote for bigger government.

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, the nation made history. It made history in electing the first African American president; it made history in building a bigger margin for the first female Speaker of the House; it made history in delivering the biggest Democratic margin since 1964; it made history in sending a record number of people to the polls and the highest percentage turnout since the 1960 election. Analysts will spend the next few months sifting through the data, trying to figure out what happened and why. Historians will likely spend the next several years and decades studying this election, as well. But one thing is immediately clear. **Unmarried women played a pivotal role in making this history and in changing this nation. They delivered a stunning 70 to 29 percent margin to Barack Obama and delivered similarly strong margins in races for Congress and the U.S. Senate. Although unmarried women have voted Democratic consistently since marital status has been was tracked, this election represents the highest margin recorded and a 16-point net gain at the Presidential level from 2004.**

In fact, there was a recent (2011) study showing that unmarried women do in fact vote for higher taxes and more government as a substitute for a husband's provider role.

Abstract:

> The last three decades have witnessed the rise of a political gender gap in the United States wherein more women than men favor the Democratic party. We

> trace this development to the decline in marriage, which we posit has made men richer and women poorer. Data for the United States support this argument. **First, there is a strong positive correlation between state divorce prevalence and the political gender gap – higher divorce prevalence reduces support for the Democrats among men but not women. Second, longitudinal data show that following marriage (divorce), women are less (more) likely to support the Democratic party.**

What follows from voting Democrat?

Since the Democrats took the House and Senate in 2006, and then the Presidency in 2008, the national debt has more than doubled from about 8 trillion to 20 trillion. A lot of that money was spent in welfare for single mothers, which only makes the women and their fatherless children *more dependent* on government. Children raised in unmarried home are far less likely to marry themselves, and to be independent of government. Which means that they will vote for bigger government when they start to vote, since they can't make it through life on their own strength.

If more people vote for Democrats then we will get higher taxes to pay for all the government spending. Higher taxes means that a married man can no longer retain enough of his earnings to support a family. And that means his wife has to work, and that means that his children will learn what the government schools decide they should learn – so that all the children will be equal and think the same (pro-government) thoughts. This should not be controversial, because it is what it is. But if we want to talk about the decline of marriage honestly, then we need to be talking to single women about how they choose men, when they have sex with men, and how they vote at election time. You really can't have it all.

We need to teach women to not make false accusations of rape

June 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Zerlina Maxwell writes in the Washington Post: "we should automatically believe rape claims"

Here's the news story that is prompting this post, from the Washington Free Beacon.

Excerpt:

> *Rolling Stone* settled the defamation lawsuit filed by a University of Virginia fraternity over a false story about a rape on campus, agreeing to pay $1.65 million on Tuesday.
>
> The lawsuit stemmed from the 2014 story "A Rape on Campus," published in *Rolling Stone* by Sabrina Rubin Erdely. The story detailed the sexual assault of a woman identified only as "Jackie" at the Virginia Alpha Chapter of the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity.
>
> The story was officially retracted in 2015 after a police investigation did not find any evidence to back up the story. News outlets also began to question Jackie's story, and once again did not find any evidence to confirm her account.
>
> The fraternity sought $25 million and settled for $1.65 million. Phi Kappa Psi plans to donate a "significant portion" to groups that provide sexual assault awareness education, prevention training, and victim counseling services, according to the Associated Press.
>
> "*Rolling Stone* and Erdely had an agenda, and they were recklessly oblivious to the harm they would cause innocent victims in their ruthless pursuit of that

> agenda," the fraternity's lawsuit said.
>
> *Rolling Stone* settled another defamation lawsuit against university administrator Nicole Eramo for $3 million.

Naturally, the liberal mainstream media – which anxiously reported on the hoax – is not nearly as interested in reporting on the correction. Because they have their agenda of blaming men for the free choices that women make. But it's not just liberal mainstream media that pushes the rape culture myth. At the time this Rolling Stone story came out, I remember that traditional pro-marriage advocates like Brad Wilcox gleefully tweeted the false rape accusation story, and then had to take it back later. So this was by no means seen through at the beginning, except by men's rights activists who were familiar with the nature of false rape hoax stories. "Pro-marriage" people are anxious to prove that they can fit in with liberals, and if they have to denigrate men to do it, they will.

So why do some women lie about rape? Let's look at a study.

Studies show about 40% of rape accusations are false

False accusations of rape or sexual assault are commonly used by women to get attention and sympathy, or to get an alibi when they've done something wrong, or to get revenge on someone who has rejected them.

Here's a Fox News article from a prominent equity feminist, Wendy McElroy.

Excerpt:

> "Forty-one percent of all reports are false."
>
> This claim comes from a study conducted by Eugene J. Kanin of Purdue University. Kanin examined 109 rape complaints registered in a Midwestern city from 1978 to 1987.
>
> Of these, 45 were ultimately classified by the police as "false." Also based on police records, Kanin determined that 50 percent of the rapes reported at two major universities were "false."
>
> Although Kanin offers solid research, I would need to see more studies with different populations before accepting the figure of 50 percent as prevalent; to me, the figure seems high.
>
> But even a skeptic like me must credit a DNA exclusion rate of 20 percent that remained constant over several years when conducted by FBI labs. This is especially true when 20 percent more were found to be questionable.
>
> False accusations are not rare. They are common.

If you would like to get an idea of how false rape accusations are handled by the police, here is an example. Usually no charges are filed against the women, or if charges are filed, then they get off without jail time. Meanwhile, men falsely accused of rape spend years in jail, until the women finally admits she made the whole thing up. The presumption is that women always tell the truth, and that evidence isn't needed to prove

her charges.

False accusations in divorce trials

False accusations of domestic violence and sexual abuse are also commonly made during divorce settlements in order to get custody of the children, and the attendant benefits.

Consider this article from Touchstone magazine, by Stephen Baskerville.

Excerpt:

> Today it is not clear that we have learned anything from these miscarriages of justice. If anything, the hysteria has been institutionalized in the divorce courts, where false allegations have become routine.
>
> What is ironic about these witch-hunts is the fact that it is easily demonstrable that the child abuse epidemic—which is very real—is almost entirely the creation of feminism and the welfare bureaucracies themselves. It is well established by scholars that an intact family is the safest place for women and children and that very little abuse takes place in married families. Child abuse overwhelmingly occurs in single-parent homes, homes from which the father has been removed. Domestic violence, too, is far more likely during or after the breakup of a marriage than among married couples.
>
> Yet patently false accusations of both child abuse and domestic violence are rampant in divorce courts, almost always for purposes of breaking up families, securing child custody, and eliminating fathers. “With child abuse and spouse abuse you don’t have to prove anything,” the leader of a legal seminar tells divorcing mothers, according to the *Chicago Tribune*. “You just have to accuse.”
>
> Among scholars and legal practitioners it is common knowledge that patently trumped-up accusations are routinely used, and virtually never punished, in divorce and custody proceedings. Elaine Epstein, president of the Massachusetts Women’s Bar Association, writes that “allegations of abuse are now used for tactical advantage” in custody cases. The *Illinois Bar Journal* describes how abuse accusations readily “become part of the gamesmanship of divorce.” The *UMKC Law Review*reports on a survey of judges and attorneys revealing that disregard for due process and allegations of domestic violence are used as a “litigation strategy.” In the *Yale Law Review*, Jeannie Suk calls domestic violence accusations a system of “state-imposed *de facto* divorce” and documents how courts use unsupported accusations to justify evicting Americans from their homes and children.

I often hear men, especially men in the church, complaining that young men won’t get married because they are too busy watching porn and playing video games. But maybe the real reason is that they don’t want to be exposed to domestic violence laws and divorced courts that are waiting to separate them from their earnings.

If the church isn’t speaking out against premarital sex (to women) and against no-fault divorce (to women) and against biased domestic violence laws (to women), then they

have no one to blame for the so-called “marriage strike” but themselves. Unfortunately, it seems that no one who advocates for marriage has the courage to attack the root cause of the marriage decline: women’s own irresponsible choices. When women choose immoral men and then choose to have sex with them before marriage, they have no one to blame but themselves for the damage that results.

Domestic violence rates

Here’s a recent article in the radically leftist UK Guardian that summarizes the evidence that *women commit domestic violence at the same rates as men*.

Excerpt:

> Domestic violence has traditionally been understood as a crime perpetrated by domineering men against defenceless women. Research spanning over 40 years has, however, consistently found that men and women self-report perpetrating domestic violence at similar rates. Professor John Archer from the University of Central Lancashire has conducted a number of meta-analytic reviews of these studies and found that women are as likely to use domestic violence as men, but women are twice as likely as men to be injured or killed during a domestic assault. Men still represent a substantial proportion of people who are assaulted, injured or killed by an intimate partner (50%, 30% and 25% respectively).
>
> If the empirical research is correct in suggesting that between a quarter and half of all domestic violence victims are men, a question follows: why has women’s domestic violence towards men been unreported for so long, and what has changed in the last five years to make it more visible?
>
> One reason may be the feminist movement. Feminism took up the cause of domestic abuse of women in the 1970s, with the world’s first women’s refuge being opened by Erin Pizzey in 1971. Feminism understood domestic violence as the natural extension of men’s patriarchal attitudes towards women, leading men to feel they had the right to control their partners, using violence if necessary. Feminists campaigned successfully to bring the issue into the public arena, thereby securing resources to establish services to help victims. This activism and advocacy led to governmental and public acceptance that “domestic violence” was synonymous with violence against women.
>
> […]The dual stereotypes of the violent man and passive woman have undoubtedly obscured the existence of male victims of domestic violence in the past. Men were also unlikely to view their own victimisation as either domestic violence or a criminal assault, and so were unlikely to seek help.

More domestic violence studies from multiple countries are discussed here. They confirm the study discussed above – the rates are similar for men and women. But all the taxing and spending is for women, not men. It’s a huge difference in how women and men are treated, just like there is a difference in concern and spending with breast cancer vs prostate cancer.

I’ve only met one unmarried woman in my entire life who was aware of all of these injustices against men. And yet so many women want to get married, and think they are qualified for marriage. What kind of friend could a woman be to a man, when she only knows about the trendy problems that concern leftists (global warming, rape culture, transgenders in bathrooms, etc.) but nothing about the problems that face unmarried men – especially if they take on the challenges of marriage and fatherhood? The typical young, unmarried woman today (Christian and non-Christian) is pro-abortion, pro-no-fault-divorce, pro-big-government, a radical feminist and anti-male. Why do they think that marriage is something they deserve? What exactly is it that they offer a man?

Can prayer, Bible reading, church-singing and charismatic preaching stop Katy Perry's apostasy?

June 20, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Parents teaching their kids

I received an e-mail from a woman who was telling me to drop my list of 10 worldview questions and just look for a wife who reads the Bible and has feelings about Jesus.

She wrote:

> My suggestion to you is to consider a top-down approach. Just pray for God to send you your wife and pray that you recognize her immediately. You don't seem like you really want to remain single…and your children are missing out on having you as their dad. Marriage is for children, remember? I know several young ladies who know their Scripture and who love Jesus but who, I don't think, would pass your test because, in my perception, they aren't cerebral enough.

Marriage is for children. Marriage is not for God, apparently.

I get this e-mail a lot, especially from women who have married non-Christians or who are divorced. Now the whole point of the list of 10 questions is to detect women who are not going to help me to produce effective, influential Christian children. If I am going to spend north of $100,000 per child + tuition, then I expect to get some sort of return on that investment for God. That money doesn't earn itself, and it needs to be well-spent serving God.

It's my wife's job to help me to do that. My goal in choosing a wife is to find a helper to make the relationship serve God. Otherwise, it's better for God if I give that money that I worked very hard to earn directly to effective Christian scholars. I don't have money to burn "playing house" with someone who is guided by her feelings. I can just give the money to Reasonable Faith or Discovery Institute instead.

Let's take a look at two parents who aimed at nothing and hit it with their daughter. The two parents run a ministry that is based around passionate preaching, prayer and Bible verses.

Excerpt:

> The Lord spoke to Arise International Conference host Mary Hudson to encourage women to reach their full destiny in Jesus Christ. He wants women to rise up as trailblazers, to think outside the box and be bold in Him, of course putting God first, your husband second and then your family!
>
> Mary's ministry of Arise! International holds annual women's empowerment and leadership conferences in Hawaii, Belgium, Colombia, France, Switzerland, Denmark and the USA. The river of glory is rising and we must flow with it.
>
> 2012 promises to be a break-through year to Arise! in who you are in Christ. Lean on Him for direction, don't look to man. Knowing the signs of the times and hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit will be vital to being at the right place at the right time to reap the harvest of souls coming into the Kingdom.
>
> Pray about being a part of Arise! this coming year. It just may be the meeting that propels you into the next level for your life. Remember, you are equipped with everything you need to fulfill your purpose. God's assignments reveal your abilities and your capabilities, and He will provide both the potential and the provision to meet every assignment.
>
> We call you blessed and highly favored!

I noticed that their "book store" offers nonsense books like this:

Keith Hudson "Looking and Seeing":

> Like this disciplined athlete, you need to learn how to look beyond your present situation and keep your eye on His Presence. God is ready to display His glory in your life as well in these last days, but it is going to take boldness for you to take the mask off and look at people and situations the way God sees them, not how man looks at them. What may stand in front of you may look too big for you to grasp; that what you see now is the way it's always going to be. Or you look at the dream God has given you and think, "there is no way I can ever accomplish this with my resources at my age…" That is the moment you have to flip the switch from looking to seeing.

Mary Hudson "Smart Bombs":

> Smart Bombs is a book which will show you practically and with true life examples how to take God's Word and let it explode strongholds in your life. When you read the Bible, He quickens particular passages or verses to your heart. You know it is God talking to you about your situation. Or when you receive a prophetic word, you sense in your heart this is speaking to you. But what do you do with these words when they bear witness with you? Let them fade away and disappear off of your memory? No, Smart Bombs shows you how to go on the offense with the anointed word of God, how to demolish strongholds and take back everything the enemy has stolen from you.
>
> This easy read is a must for anyone who is looking for clarity on their destiny.

Keith Hudson “The Cry”:

> The Cry will reignite you with new fire. Christians lose their passion when they let go of their zeal for God. We come into prayer meetings and we are so polished and perfected. But the Lord wants to hear the cry of your heart. The church has lost its cry: God is about to restore it. Why did the thirty people gathered for the Azusa Street revival have such a move of the spirit of God in their day? Because they had a cry in their hearts and in their prayers. The Cry will release a desperate longing in you for Gods intervention in your life. It goes way beyond your natural thinking into a spiritual hunger from your innermost being. When everything else has failed, a desperate cry touches the heart of God.

Now do you think that someone who reads books like that will produce the same kind of children as parents who read William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer, Jay Richards, and Michael Licona? Of course not. Because the Hudson books are fluff and the books by real Christian scholars are not fluff.

Now let’s read an article from Christian Post about what sort of child the fluff approach produces. (H/T Mysterious Chris S.)

Excerpt:

> Katy Perry, the 29-year-old singer and songwriter, is revealing that while she prays she no longer identifies with Christianity.
>
> “I don’t believe in a heaven or a hell, or an old man sitting on a throne. I believe in a higher power bigger than me because that keeps me accountable,” she told Marie Claire magazine recently. “Accountability is rare to find, especially with people like myself, because nobody wants to tell you something you don’t want to hear.”
>
> Perry, who took the Billboard charts by storm with her hit song “I Kissed a Girl” in 2008, told Marie Claire that she no longer considers herself a Christian despite being raised by Christian ministers.
>
> “I’m not Buddhist, I’m not Hindu, I’m not Christian, but I still feel like I have a deep connection with God. I pray all the time – for self-control, for humility,” she told Marie Claire. “There’s a lot of gratitude in it. Just saying ‘thank you’ sometimes is better than asking for things.”
>
> Despite her decision to perform music that may seem controversial to the Christian community, the chart-topping singer has never shied away from crediting the Christian church for giving her a start as a performer.
>
> “The atmosphere I grew up in was 100 percent Christian,” Perry said her “Part of Me: 3D” movie which was released last year. “I started singing in the church, I never really had another plan.”

Their daughter is writing songs to promote homosexuality to young people. That’s their legacy. The legacy of spiritual gifts, God opening doors of mysticism and charismatic anti-

intellectualism. That's what they are going to present to God as their spiritual legacy. I noticed that Mary Hudson is now calling her daughter's celebrity divorce after one year of marriage a "gift from God". Her daughter married a heroin-addicted leftist non-Christian – but he was *hawt*. Tall, dark, handsome and a famous comedian, too.

The list of questions I use when courting helps me to avoid marrying a woman like Katy Perry's mother. She could not answer any of my questions. None of them. And what's more, she doesn't want to answer them. She wants to live her whole life without learning how to answer them. She wants to stick with her Bible, her singing, her feelings, her passionate oratory and her crowds of gullible people. I will not marry a woman like that. It produces disaster and failure. It produces anti-Christian children.

In fact, you can't succeed at anything worthwhile in life using the Keith and Mary Hudson approach to parenting. You can't do a thing with that approach. Not writing software, not fixing cars, not making investments, not sending a rocket to the moon, not even evangelizing an apostate daughter. You do not want to be a Christian man who pumps 30 years of hard labor into a family that produces apostate children. If you are going to spend the money, then make sure you get the results.

The seven fatal flaws of moral relativism

June 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Moral relativism is the view that moral values and moral duties do not exist in reality, but only exist as opinions in people's minds. When you ask a moral relativist where the belief that stealing is wrong comes from, he may tell you that it is his opinion, or that it is the opinion of most people in his society. But he cannot tell you that stealing is wrong independent of what people think, because morality (on moral relativism) is just personal preference.

So what's wrong with it?

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Salvo magazine web site.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in

> silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like “It’s wrong to push your own morality on others”. This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don’t let them make any moral statements without asking them first to ground morality on their worldview. And that’s because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can’t answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people’s personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It’s all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be “it depends”. It depends on the person who is speaking because it’s a subjective claim, not an objective claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

So, practically speaking, everyone has to decide whether right and wrong are real – objectively real. If they are objectively real, that means that there is a right way for human beings to behave, and a wrong way for human beings to behave. It means that things that are really objectively wrong like rape are wrong for all times and all places, regardless of what individuals and societies might think of it. In order to rationally ground that kind of morality, you have to have a foundation for it – a cosmic Designer who decides for all times and places what the conduct of his creatures ought to be. And then our moral duties are duties that are owed to this Designer. It is like playing football or playing a boardgame – the person who invents the game decides the rules. But if there is no designer of the game, then there are no rules.

Without a designer of the universe, the question of how we ought to act is decided by people in different times and different places. It’s arbitrary and variable, and therefore it doesn’t do the job of prescribing behavior authoritatively. It’s very important not to get involved in any serious endeavor with another person or persons if they don’t have a sense of right and wrong being absolute and fixed. A belief in objective moral values is a necessary pre-requisite for integrity.

Bible study: the importance of truth in religion

June 22, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here's an interesting passage of the Bible. What do you all think the practical value of this passage is?

[1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

[2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

[3] he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

[4] Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

[6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

[7] Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[8] Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

[9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me

the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me.”

[10] The astrologers answered the king, “There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

[11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.”

[12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king’s guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king’s officer, “Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?” Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.”

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

[27] Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

[29] “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

[30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

This passage is interesting to me because it shows the kind of attitude that God answers. The King in this passage was tired of hearing man-made stories from his servants – stories that were undoubtedly influenced by the servants desire to survive the King’s wrath. The servants would only have told the King things that were vague and happy, so that they could never be proved wrong or found to be judgmental or offensive. But the King was tired of that. He wanted someone with authority to tell him the truth about the way the world was.

In the rest of the chapter, Daniel interprets the dream, and concludes by saying this: “The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”. The King replies: “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

I think it is is going to be difficult for Christians living today to be able to tell people their dreams like that. But what we can do is talk about God’s miracles as revealed by science and history. We can study astrophysics, biochemistry and history and we can explain what God did in creating and fine-tuning the universe for life, in sequencing amino acids into functioning proteins, in creating brand new body plans in the Cambrian explosion, in raising Jesus from the dead as a matter of historical record, and so on. We have to show how great God is to people who do not even think he exists, and without assuming that they believe in the Bible. And we have to do it by focusing on *what is true.*

Early last week, I got a message from a friend who was interested in a girl that he met on an online dating service. She claimed to be a Christian. My friend explained why he was so interested in some of the evidences I outlined above. She was not impressed. She said “I prefer to show people Christianity is true by not judging them, by being compassionate, by introducing them to a fun and affirming community”. There was no emphasis on truth in her approach. In fact, any religious group could do those things and “establish” their religion as true, by appealing to feelings. But this is clearly not what the God of the Bible

intends for people who seek him. He is a God of truth, and truth is established by logical reasoning and supporting evidence.

There are still people out there like the King who are looking for someone who can speak to them with authority. All it takes from us is a little studying, and we can be like Daniel, too. But we have to know what God has done from science and history, and speak with authority about how we can know that God has acted *supernaturally*. Authority to speak comes from having knowledge about what we are talking about, and knowledge comes from studying and debating with people we disagree with. Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer in the God of Israel, but he was still interested in truth. That won't always be the case, but it is the case for some people.

New study: fracking doesn't contaminate groundwater

June 23, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

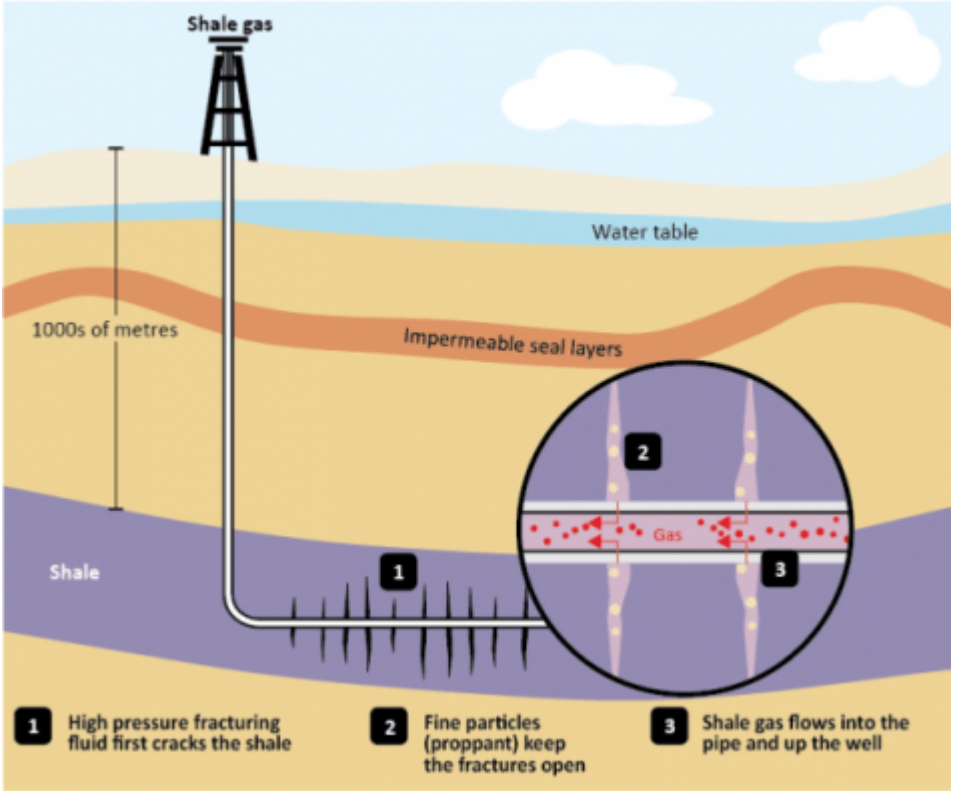

Hydraulic fracturing, also known as "fracking"

A new study was reported in the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Hydraulic fracturing hasn't contaminated groundwater in Texas, isn't an earthquake hazard, and has been a boon for the state's economy, according to a study released Monday.
>
> The new study's conclusions on drinking water are in line with multiple other studies of hydraulic fracturing, popularly known as fracking.
>
> Hydraulic fracturing is the process of drilling into rock and injecting a high-pressure mixture of water, sand, and chemicals to obtain shale gas and oil, which is produced from fractured rock. Some environmentalists argue that it can harm water supplies.
>
> The report initiated by the Academy of Medicine, Engineering and Science of Texas, based in Austin, asserted that "direct migration of contaminants from targeted injection zones is highly unlikely to lead to contamination of potential drinking water aquifers."
>
> […]**"In Texas and pretty much everywhere, hydraulic fracturing has not been proven to have an adverse impact on drinking water," Christine Ehlig-Economides, a professor of petroleum engineering at the**

> **University of Houston who is chairwoman of the task force, told The Daily Signal.**

But that's not all:

> **The study also explored the impact of fracking in five other areas: geology and earthquake activity; land resources; air quality; the economy; and society. It found generally positive results for each.**
>
> However, in a sixth category, transportation, the report found that fracking produced a surge of trucks, damaging pavement at an estimated cost to state taxpayers of $1.5 billion to $2 billion per year.
>
> **Even so, the study concluded that fracking adds $473 billion to the Texas economy and created 3.8 million jobs.**

This isn't the first study this year that found that fracking is safe for the environment.

The radically leftist National Public Radio reported on another study out of Duke University earlier this year:

> Fracking the Marcellus Shale did not pollute groundwater in northwestern West Virginia, but wastewater spills did contaminate surface water, according to a new study from Duke University.
>
> […]The study was unique in that it monitored drinking water wells and surface water over three years, a longer time period than previous research on the impact of fracking on drinking water. The study also used multiple methods of determining the source of the pollution, and was able to draw on baseline water quality data.
>
> **"Based on consistent evidence from comprehensive testing, we found no indication of groundwater contamination over the three-year course of our study," said Avner Vengosh, professor of geochemistry and water quality at Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment. "**
>
> **[…]The peer-reviewed study was published recently in Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta, a European journal.**
>
> […]Vengosh said the baseline data, gathered from drinking water wells before shale gas drilling occurred nearby, boosts their confidence in the results. A total of 112 water wells were sampled over three years, with 20 sampled before drilling or fracking occurred.

Now, I know that Democrats will not like this study, but the study was rigorous and thorough:

> David Yoxtheimer, a hydrogeologist with Penn State's Marcellus Center for Outreach and Research, who was not involved in the study, said the report is comprehensive in that it used a number of different tools to determine the source of contamination.

> "This is a good example of an objective study," said Yoxtheimer. "They kept their scientific glasses on and looked at it objectively. It's the type of science we need more of out there. Collect data without motive and come back and report."

Prior to this study, we had a peer-reviewed PNAS study:

> **Now comes a study, conducted by scientists at the University of Texas and published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences — and co-financed by one of the highest-profile environmentalists in the country — that shows much smaller amounts of methane emissions associated with fracking, far less than environmentalists and the Environmental Protection Agency have contended.**
>
> […]The study, billed as the first to measure the actual emissions of methane from natural gas wells, finds these emissions were, in some cases, only about 2% of the most recent national estimate by the EPA in 2011. An upcoming EPA rule, effective January 2015, requires all methane to be captured when liquids are removed after drilling.
>
> […]"For those wells with methane capture or control, 99% of the potential emissions were captured or controlled," the study notes.
>
> […]Thanks in large part to fracking, energy-related carbon dioxide emissions in 2012 were the lowest in the U.S. since 1994, at 5.3 billion metric tons. With the exception of 2010, emissions have declined every year since 2007.

Prior to that study, there was this report from the far-left EPA, also reported in the radically leftist National Public Radio.

Excerpt:

> **The Environmental Protection Agency says it finds no evidence that hydraulic fracturing — better known as fracking — has led to widespread pollution of drinking water. The oil industry and its backers welcome the long-awaited study while environmental groups criticize it.**
>
> **"We found the hydraulic fracturing activities in the United States are carried out in a way that has not led to widespread systemic impacts on drinking water resources," says Tom Burke, Science Advisor and Deputy Assistant Administrator of EPA's Office of Research and Development. "In fact, the number of documented impacts to drinking water resources is relatively low when compared to the number of fractured wells," he adds.**
>
> The EPA's draft assessment was conducted at the request of Congress. "It is the most complete compilation of scientific data to date," says Burke, "including over 950 sources of information, published papers, numerous technical reports, information from stakeholders and peer-reviewed EPA scientific reports."

Fracking reduces air pollution and lowers energy costs for consumers and businesses that

employ consumers. What’s not to like? People on the political right like fracking, because they are aware of the science in these studies. People on the left hate science, and so they hate fracking. They don’t let science inform their views.

Can recreational sex turn a selfish, irresponsible man into a marriage-minded provider?

June 24, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

An article from the American Thinker answers the question that vexes many men. As you read this excerpt below, ask yourself if it is a man or a woman writing this.

First of all, liberal women seem to be having an awful lot of sex these days. They are losing their virginity early, and working their way through as many "alpha males" as possible, but all the while they insist that a stream of recreational-sex relationships is somehow a path to lifelong married love. Can you turn a man who wants nothing more than recreational sex into the perfect husband, simply by invoking the magical power of vagina?

Liberal women think that you can:

> On the one hand, liberal women believe wholeheartedly in the idiotic social construct they call, "sexual liberation." They pride themselves on losing their virginity, as though that "accomplishment" had ever been above the challenge-scale of an alley cat in heat.
>
> These liberal women I've known, having given away their female V-card over and over and over again, all the while scour their host of intimate "trial runs" searching for that mythical, Hollywood-construct, Mr. Right. This Mr. Right guy, for whom they are searching, is known to them up front as even more sexually-liberated than they, but this little factoid seems not to register in their liberated little heads as they frantically search for the equally mythical family home with the white picket fence, which somehow never gets hit by any of life's roving tornadoes. One can almost hear them say in unison, "And they all lived happily ever after."

I think it's one of the deepest mysteries of the world why women think that a man who has lots and lots of recreational sex is somehow marriage material. When I think of men who are qualified for marriage, I think of men who have studied hard subjects, gotten marketable skills, worked and worked, saved and saved, and shown that they can be faithful in marriage by exhibiting self-control in the courtship. But liberal women think that all of this reasoning is junk, and you must just jump right into sex to see if the relationship will "work out" or to find out what you "like". Recreational sex, they insist, is a superior way of finding a husband. Discussing who will do what in an actual marriage and what the actual marriage is for is apparently ineffective.

More:

> Evidently, the liberal woman is capable of the most severe form of psychological denial known to humankind. Certain that one of the men with whom she has copulated without strings will suddenly morph into a faithfully monogamous creature the minute she can convince one of them to say "I do" in front of a few witnesses, the liberal woman marches blindly down the aisle towards near-certain, adulterous doom. Yet, no amount of honest reason can dissuade liberal women from this self-destructive, moral myopia.
>
> What other term but "morally schizoid" could possibly describe this blatantly contradictory tendency among liberal women?
>
> Having spent their youth casually throwing their own sexual morality to the winds of fairytale "liberation," these liberal women still steadfastly cling to the faithfully monogamous ideal for that sometime-later moment when they actually do desire all the traditional things — the husband, the kids, the white picket fence — those pesky female-nature embedded longings, which coincidentally ensure the continuation of the human race.
>
> But these liberal women somehow — in perfect schizoid manner — convince themselves that once married, they will be the gratuitous beneficiaries of the monogamous respect they still desire, but have never once demanded or deserved. Intuitively, women know that strict monogamy provides the only real security for themselves and their own offspring. Yet, they continue themselves to spurn the demands of monogamy until the very last minute, believing that fidelity springs forth naturally in miraculous profusion among all "married" humans. Such pure poppycock can only be explained as a mental disorder.

I think women need to ask themselves questions honestly and rationally:

- can recreational sex make an unemployed man get a job?
- can recreational sex make a violent man be courteous and respectful?
- can recreational sex make an atheist turn into a Christian?
- can recreational sex make a male slut stay faithful?
- can recreational sex make wastefulness turn into frugality?
- can recreational sex make laziness turn into diligence?

- can recreational sex make irresponsibility turn into commitment?

Marriages last because both partners have prepared themselves for self-sacrifice, rational discussions, problem solving and cooperation.

Previously, I provided the male perspective on liberal women's poor decision-making about men and marriage. Read the article from the American Thinker (*written by a woman*), then read mine.

Robin Collins and atheist Peter Millican discuss the fine-tuning of the universe for life

June 25, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

You might remember Peter Millican from the debate he had with William Lane Craig. I ranked that debate as one of the 3 best I have ever seen, along with the first Craig vs Dacey debate and the second Craig vs Sinnott-Armstrong debate.

Details:

> Science has revealed that the fundamental constants and forces of the cosmos appear to be exquisitely fine-tuned to allow a universe in which life can develop. Is God the best explanation of the incredibly improbable odds of the universe we live in being a life-permitting one?
>
> Robin Collins is a Christian philosopher and a leading advocate of the argument for God from cosmic design. Peter Millican is an atheist philosopher at Oxford University. They debate the issues.
>
> From 'Unbelievable?' on 'Premier Christian Radio', Saturday 19th March 2016.

The debate:

MP3 file is available on the Unbelievable web site.

As usual when the atheist is an expert, there is no snark or paraphrasing in the summary.

Summary

Brierley: What is the fine-tuning argument?

Collins: the fine-tuning is structure of the universe is extremely precisely set to allow the existing of conscious, embodied agents who are capable of moral behavior. There are 3

kinds of fine-tuning: 1) the laws of nature (mathematical formulas), 2) the constants of physics (numbers that are plugged into the equations), 3) the initial conditions of the universe. The fine-tuning exists not just because there are lots of possibilities, but there is something special about the actual state of affairs that we see. Every set of laws, parameters and initial conditions is equally improbable, but the vast majority of permutations do not permit life. The possible explanations: theism or the multiverse.

Brierley: How improbable are the numbers?

Collins: Once case is the cosmological constant (dark energy density), with is 1 part in (10 raised to 120th power). If larger, the universe expands too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form after the Big Bang. If smaller, the universe collapses in on itself before life could form. Another case is the initial distribution of mass energy to give us the low entropy we have that is necessary for life. The fine-tuning there is 1 part in (10 raised to the 10th power raised to the 123rd power).

Brierley: What do you think of the argument?

Millican: The argument is worth taking very seriously. I am a fan of the argument. The other arguments for God's existence such as the ontological and cosmological arguments are very weak. But the fine-tuning argument has the right structure to deliver the conclusion that theists want. And it is different from the traditional design argument tended to focus on biological nature, which is not a strong argument. But the fine-tuning argument is strong because it precedes any sort of biological evolution. Although the design is present at the beginning of the universe, it is not visible until much later. The argument points to at least deism, and possibly theism. The argument is not based on ignorance, it is rooted in "the latest results from the frontiers of science" (his phrase).

Brierley: Is this the best argument from natural theology?

Collins: The cosmological argument makes theism viable intuitively, but there are some things that are puzzling, like the concept of the necessary being. But the fine-tuning argument is decisive.

Brierley: What's are some objections to the fine-tuning argument?

Millican: The argument is based on recent physics, so we should be cautious because we **maybe** we will discover a natural explanation.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: The cosmological constant has been around since 1980. But the direction that physics is moving in is that there are more constants and quantities being discovered that need to be fine-tuned, not less. Even if you had a grand unified theory, that would have to be have the fine-tuning pushed into it.

(BREAK)

Millican: Since we have no experience of other laws and values from other universes, **we don't know** whether these values can be other than they are. Psychologically, humans are prone to seeing purpose and patterns where there is none, so **maybe** that's happening here.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: It is possible to determine probabilities on a single universe case, for example using multiple ways of calculating Avogadro's number all converging on the same number makes it more probable.

Millican: Yes, I willing to accept that these constants can take on other values, ("principle of indifference"). But **maybe** this principle be applied if the improbability were pushed up into the theory?

Collins: Even if you had a grand theory, selecting the grand theory from others would retain the improbability.

Brierley: What about the multiverse?

Millican: **What if** there are many, many different universes, and we happen to be in the one that is finely-tuned, then we should not be surprised to observe fine-tuning. **Maybe** a multiverse theory will be discovered in the future that would allow us to have these many universes with randomized constants and quantities. "I do think that it is a little bit of a promissary note". I don't think physics is pointing to this right now.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: I agree it's a promissary note. This is the strongest objection to the fine-tuning argument. But there are objections to the multiverse: 1) the fine-tuning is kicked back up to the multiverse generator has to be set just right to produce universes with different constants, 2) the multiverse is more likely to produce a small universe with Boltzmann brains that pop into existence and then out again, rather than a universe that contains conscious, embodied intelligent agents. I am working on a third response now that would show that the same constants that allow complex, embodied life ALSO allow the universe to be discoverable. This would negate the observer-selection effect required by the multiverse objection.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Millican: I don't see why the multiverse generator has to be fine-tuned, since **we don't know** what the multiverse generator is. I'm not impressed by the Boltzmann brains, but won't discuss. We should be cautious about inferring design because **maybe** this is a case where we are seeing purpose and design where there is none.

Brierley: Can you negate the discoverability of the universe by saying that it might be psychological?

Collins: These things are not psychological. The selected value for the cosmic microwave background radiation is fine-tuned for life and for discoverability. It's not merely a discoverability selection effect, it's optimal for discoverability. If baryon-photon value were much smaller, we would have known that it was not optimal. So that judgment cannot be explained by

Millican: That's a very interesting new twist.

Brierley: Give us your best objection.

Millican: I have two. 1) Even if you admit to the fine-tuning, this doesn't show a being who

is omnipotent and omnisicient. What the fine-tuning shows is that the designer is doing the best it can given the constraints from nature. **If I were God,** I would not have made the universe so big, and I wouldn't have made it last 14 billion years, just to make one small area that supports life. An all-powerful God would have made the universe much smaller, and much younger. 2) The fine-tuning allows life to exist in other solar systems in other galaxies. What does this alien life elsewhere mean for traditional Christian theology? The existence of other alien civilizations argues against the truth of any one religion.

Brierley: Respond to those.

Collins: First objection: with a finite Creator, you run into the problem of having to push the design of that creature up one level, so you don't really solve the fine-tuning problem. An unlimited being (non-material, not composed of parts) does not require fine-tuning. The fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than atheism. Second objection: I actually do think that it is likely that are other universes, and life in other galaxies and stars, and the doctrine of the Incarnation is easily adaptable to that, because God can take on multiple natures to appear to different alien civilizations.

Other resources (from WK)

If you liked this discussion, be sure and check out a full length lecture by Robin Collins on the fine-tuning, and a shorter lecture on his very latest work. And also this the Common Sense Atheism podcast, featuring cosmologist Luke Barnes, who answers about a dozen objections to the fine-tuning argument.

Canada passes criminal law against undesired gender pronouns

June 26, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada criminalizes speech that makes people feel bad
The Daily Signal reports:

> Canada passed a law Thursday making it illegal to use the wrong gender pronouns. Critics say that Canadians who do not subscribe to progressive gender theory could be accused of hate crimes, jailed, fined, and made to take anti-bias training.
>
> Canada's Senate passed Bill C-16, which puts "gender identity" and "gender expression" into both the country's Human Rights Code, as well as the hate crime category of its Criminal Code by a vote of 67-11, according to LifeSiteNews. The bill now only needs royal assent from the governor general.

Royal assent is a formality, it is automatic.

I have some friends who are big fans of Justin Trudeau, Canada's Liberal Party prime minister. Trudeau is a former substitute drama teacher, who was elected prime minister because of his famous last name. He knows about as much about economics and national security as this keyboard that I am typing on.

For his part, Trudeau is very pleased with this law:

> "Great news," announced Justin Trudeau, Canada's prime minister. "Bill C-16 has passed the Senate – making it illegal to discriminate based on gender identity or expression. #LoveisLove."

So is Canada's attorney general – the chief law enforcement officer of the land. She tweeted:

> "Proud that Bill C-16has passed in the Senate," said Jody Wilson-Raybould, the country's attorney general and minister of justice. "All Canadians should feel

> #FreeToBeMe."

Yes, everyone is free to be themselves… except when they throw you in the slammer for offending people with mental illnesses.

You'll recall that one University of Toronto professor is in big trouble for opposing this law. He is quoted in the article:

> Jordan Peterson, a professor at the University of Toronto, and one of the bill's fiercest critics, spoke to the Senate before the vote, insisting that it infringed upon citizens' freedom of speech and institutes what he views as dubious gender ideology into law.
>
> "Compelled speech has come to Canada," stated Peterson. "We will seriously regret this."
>
> "[Ideologues are] using unsuspecting and sometimes complicit members of the so-called transgender community to push their ideological vanguard forward," said the professor to the Senate in May. "The very idea that calling someone a term that they didn't choose causes them such irreparable harm that legal remedies should be sought [is] an indication of just how deeply the culture of victimization has sunk into our society."
>
> Peterson has previously pledged not to use irregular gender pronouns and students have protested him for his opposition to political correctness.
>
> "This tyrannical bill is nothing but social engineering to the nth degree, all in the name of political correctness," Jeff Gunnarson, vice president of Campaign Life Toronto, a pro-life political group in Canada, told LifeSiteNews.

Should a Christian try to make a life in a country that has not only taxpayer funded abortion, but taxpayer funded sex changes, too? Seems to me that this a joke country, and people of conscience should get out as quickly as they can. It's a clown country, ruled by amoral idiots.

Supreme Court: Christians taxpayers are allowed access to social programs

June 27, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Supreme Court of the United States

Here is the latest Supreme Court decision news, and I'll explain shortly why this is good news for a much more important religious liberty case.

David French posted this analysis in National Review:

> While there are many threats to religious liberty, few are more consequential over the long term than the state's ever-expanding role in private life. If the government is able to vacuum up tax dollars, create programs large and small for public benefit, and then exclude religious individuals or institutions from those programs, it has functionally created two tiers of citizenship. Secular individuals and institutions enjoy full access to the government they fund, while religious individuals and institutions find themselves funding a government that overtly discriminates against them.
>
> That's the issue the Supreme Court addressed today in *Trinity Lutheran Church v. Comer*. By a 7–2 margin, the Court held that when a state creates a neutral program for public benefit — in this case, a program that uses scrap tires to provide rubberized safety flooring for playgrounds — it can't exclude a church from that program, even if that means state benefits flow directly to a house of worship.

Social conservative Maggie Gallagher writes this in The Stream:

> The good news is the Trinity Lutheran victory shows us the current Court is more supportive of religious liberty than many of us feared.
>
> Justice Elana Kagan joined the majority opinion without any reserve. Justice Breyer wrote his own concurring opinion limiting his judgement to playground resurfacing programs and not all government benefits.

> Only Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Ruth Bader Ginbsurg dissented. In Justice Sotomayor's dissent, she warned of almost apocalyptic consequences:
>
> This ruling, "weakens this country's longstanding commitment to a separation of church and state beneficial to both," she wrote, "If this separation means anything, it means that the government cannot, or at the very least need not, tax its citizens and turn that money over to houses of worship. The court today blinds itself to the outcome this history requires and leads us instead to a place where separation of church and state is a constitutional slogan, not a constitutional commitment."
>
> If so, it's a good thing.

You'll remember that Sotomayor was the wise Latina nominated by Barack Obama, who many Christians-in-name-only voted for. And of course separation of church and state is nowhere in the Constitution. What Sotomayor and her ilk on the secular left want is for Christian taxpayers to channel their earnings into the coffers of their secular leftist overlords, who apparently know much better how to spend it than the fools who earned it.

This is good news, but it's also a hopeful sign that the Supreme Court will come out in favor of religious liberty and conscience in another case, a case that pits powerful and wealthy gay rights activists and their government allies against Christian small business owners trying to follow Jesus in everything they do.

The other case is reported on in the Daily Signal:

> By deciding to hear the appeal of a Colorado baker, the Supreme Court could make its first ruling next year on whether government may coerce some Christians, Jews, and Muslims to use their creative gifts to celebrate same-sex marriage.
>
> The high court announced Monday that it would review the case of baker Jack Phillips, who cites his Christian faith in declining to make custom cakes for same-sex weddings.
>
> The Supreme Court's eventual ruling could be the first since its 2015 decision legalizing same-sex marriage to say whether bakers, photographers, florists, and others must be part of such celebrations through their creative expression.
>
> Phillips, whose Masterpiece Cakeshop is in Lakewood, Colorado, stopped making all wedding cakes in 2014 rather than be compelled by the state to design and bake them for same-sex marriages—or be fined for not obeying.
>
> State agency and court decisions said Phillips must make such cakes after a gay couple complained about him in July 2012.
>
> "There's just certain events, certain cakes I don't make," Phillips told The Daily Signal in a phone interview in August 2015. "That was one of them."
>
> He also won't make cakes depicting witchcraft, ghosts, and demons or sexually

> suggestive images, Phillips said in the interview.
>
> The Supreme Court previously delayed nine times on deciding to hear Phillips' appeal in the case, first filed last July. But with the newest justice, Neil Gorsuch, settled into his seat to succeed the late Antonin Scalia, the high court announced Monday morning that it would do so in its next term, which begins in October.

You can find out more about the Masterpiece Cakes case by watching this short video from Alliance Defending Freedom:

Although today's decision makes me more optimistic, David French is less optimistic, because of Justice Kennedy's previous statements on the gay marriage decision.

He writes in National Review:

> Third, if Justice Kennedy views this case primarily through the LGBT lens, then the First Amendment may well lose. Kennedy is obviously proud of his long line of LGBT-friendly precedents, and that pride has even led him to a relatively rare First Amendment misstep, so it will be critical to explain to him (and the other justices, of course) that this isn't a case about "discrimination" but rather about forced speech. Framing matters, and the other side will wrongly frame the case as raising the specter of Jim Crow. The right framing is found in the First Amendment.

I'll be watching this case closely.

William Lane Craig debates Daniel Came: Does God exist?

June 28, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

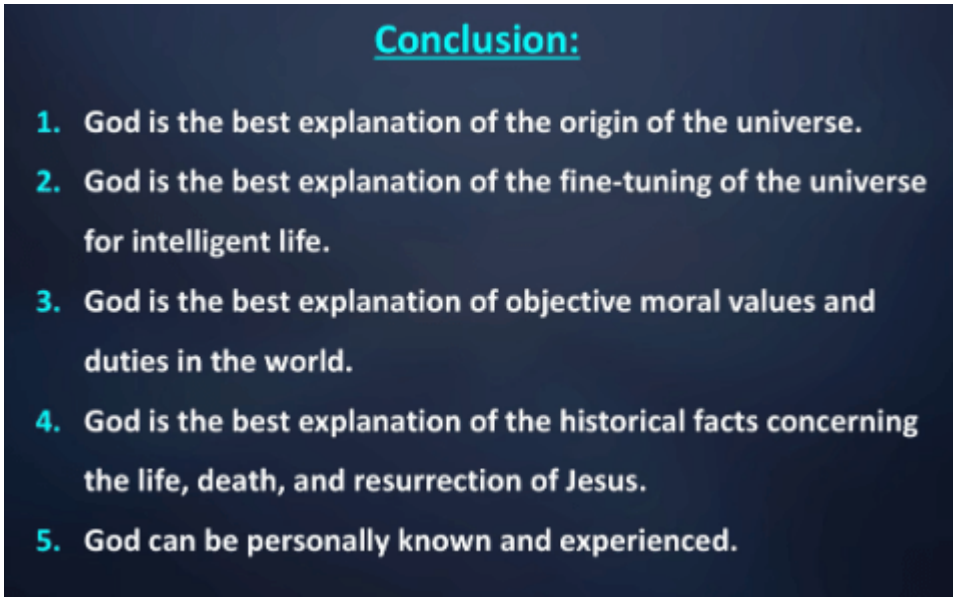

Dr. Craig's opening speech summary slide

The video of the debate was posted by ReasonableFaith.org – Dr. Craig's organization. This debate occurred in March 2017 at the University of Dublin, in Ireland.

The video: (91 minutes)

My non-snarky summary is below.

Dr. Craig's opening speech

Two claims:

1. There are good reasons to think that theism is true.
2. There are not comparably good reasons to think that atheism is true.

Five reasons for God's existence:

1. The beginning of the universe
– actual infinite past is mathematically impossible
– BGV theorem: any universe that is on balance expanding in its history (like ours) cannot be past eternal

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– slight changes to quantities and constants prevent a universe from supporting complex embodied life
– the multiverse response of atheists conflicts with observations, e.g. the Boltzmann Brains problem

3. Objective moral values
– God's existence is required to ground objective moral values and duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus

– there are good reasons to accept the most widely accepted facts about the historical Jesus (empty tomb, appearances, early widespread belief in the resurrection)
– the best explanation of these minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

5. Experience God directly
– in the absence of any defeaters to belief in God, a person can experience God directly

Dr. Daniel Came's opening speech

1. The hiddenness of God
– if God wants a personal relationship with us, and a relationship with God would be the greatest good for us
– God ought to reveal himself to us, but he does not reveal himself to many people, the "non-resistant non-believers"

2. The inductive problem of evil
– many evil events occur that are pointless – there is no morally sufficient reason why God would allow them to occur
– examples: animal suffering, children born with disease, tsunamis
– the theistic response to this is that humans are not in a position to know whether there are morally sufficient reasons, due to our limitations of knowing the consequences
– but this ripple effect defense has 4 possible outcomes, 3 of which don't do the job of justifying

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

1. The hiddenness of God
– God's goal is not to make his existence known, but to draw them into a love relationship
– it's speculative that overt displays of God's existence would draw people to him in a love relationship, they might resent his bullying
– atheist would have to prove that God could draw more people into a love relationship with him by revealing himself more overtly

2. The inductive problem of evil
– as humans, we are not in a position to know for certain that any apparently pointless evil really is pointless
– William Alston article: 6 limitations of human knowing make it impossible to judge that an evil is actually "pointless"
– Dr. Came says that there are 4 possibilities for the ripple effects, and since 3 are bad, it's likely that there are not morally sufficient reasons for a apparently pointless evil
– it is logically fallacious to assert probability conclusions without knowing the probabilities of those 4 options
– there is actually an argument from evil: since the problem of evil requires an objective standard of good and evil by which to measure, and God is the only possible ground of objective morality, then pressing the problem of evil actually requires the atheist to assume God, in order to ground this objective moral standard

Dr. Came's first rebuttal

3. Objective moral values

– there are naturalistic theories of moral realism where objective moral duties and objective moral values exist in a naturalistic universe
– I'm not saying that any of them are correct, but there are many theories about object morality in a naturalistic universe

There are naturalistic theories for all of the 5 arguments that Dr. Craig presented. It is Dr. Craig's responsibility to present those naturalistic theories and prove that they are not as good as his explanations. I'm not going to defend (or even name!) a single naturalistic theory for any of these 5 arguments by Dr. Craig.

Dr. Craig's explanations for the 5 evidences he gave can't be admitted, because we have to know how God did something *in naturalistic terms* before we can know that God did it supernaturally. Explanations are only valid if they are naturalistic.

1. The beginning of the universe
– naturalism explains how the universe expands after it came into being, so that explains how it came into being
– the God explanation, that God created the universe out of nothing, is not admissible, because it is not naturalistic
– how does God, as an unembodied mind interact with the physical world?
– the only agency that we know about is human agents, and we have bodies, so how could God perform actions without having a body?

The theistic hypothesis does not make any predictions, but naturalism makes lots of testable predictions. God could do anything, so he is not constrained and is therefore untestable. We can't infer God as an explanation in principle because we can't predict what is more probable if God exists than if he does not.

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the university was not set up to make embodied intelligence plausible, because the vast majority of the universe is hostile to life
– there are models of the multiverse that escape the Boltzmann Brains problem that Dr. Craig raised

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

Some of Dr. Craig's arguments are deductive (e.g. – the beginning of the universe, objective moral values), so that the conclusion follows from the premises if the premises are true. The resurrection passes the standard tests for historical explanations.

1. The beginning of the universe
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for an ultimate beginning of the universe

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for a design of the universe to support life
– he has to prove that intelligences has to be attached to bodies
– human beings are non-physical minds united to physical bodies
– naturalistic attempts to explain mental operations fail

– the arguments *prove* that unembodied minds exist
– the vast expanse of the universe is required in order to form the galaxies, stars and heavy elements needed for complex life
– why expect that the entire universe should be small, or that life would be everywhere?
– a non-fine-tuned world is more likely in the multiverse, and in a multiverse, we are more likely to have a Boltzmann brain world than a world with complex, embodied life
– Dr. Came has not advanced any naturalistic explanation for the fine-tuning

3. Objective moral values
– non-theistic ethical theories cannot account for the ontological foundations of objective moral values and duties
– atheistic theories of moral realism simply assume objective moral values out of thin air
– it is especially hard to find any basis for objective moral duties in the absence of God

Dr. Came's second rebuttal

5. Religious experience
– Dr. Craig should not bring up religious experience in a debate where arguments and evidence are central
– people who have dreams, hallucinations and psychotic delusions could appeal to religious experience
– religious experience is by no means universal, and it is possible to doubt it

3. Objective moral values
– there are lots of atheists who hold to objective moral values
– Dr. Craig has to explain how God grounds objective moral values and duties
– Dr. Craig has to explain why atheist moral realist theories don't work to ground objective moral values and duties

1. The beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig claims that something can't come from nothing, that's not an argument
– there are numerous models that don't require an absolute beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig cites the BGV theorem, but Guth (one of the authors) says that only the inflation has a beginning, not the whole universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion

1. The beginning of the universe
– on theism, there is an efficient cause, but no material cause, for the origin of the universe
– on atheism, there is neither an efficient cause nor a material cause, for the origin of the universe: that's worse!
– if he thinks that there are models of the universe that don't require a beginning, then let him name a viable eternal model of the universe
– he never refuted the mathematical argues against an infinite past

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– nothing to refute

3. Objective moral values

– God is a better ground for morality than humans, because he is ultimate, and not contingent and arbitrary
– God is a being who is worthy of worship, and therefore command his creatures with moral duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus
– nothing to refute

5. Religious experience
– only justified because there are no defeaters to it

1. The hiddenness of God
– atheist has to show that if God's existence were more obvious, that it would result in more people being drawn to him

2. The inductive problem of evil
– Dr. Came's argument was logically fallacious, and makes errors in probability theory

Dr. Came's conclusion

Sometimes, people can't prove something, but lack of evidence is a justification for doubting it, e.g. – werewolves.

If none of Craig's arguments work, then it follows that it is not rational to believe that God exists, and it is rational to believe that God does not exist.

Atheists shouldn't have a burden of proof for what they know, only theists have a burden of proof for what they know.

My thoughts

One quick point. If life were common everywhere then atheists would infer that God wasn't involved in it. Period. "Life is everywhere, so it's common, why do we need a designer?" they'd say. I agree with Dr. Came about denouncing religious experience in a formal debate. I don't like when Dr. Craig brings this up, but I see why he does it – he's an evangelist, and that's a good thing, too. I just worry about how it looks to atheists, although it's good for sincere seekers. I'm not the one on the stage, though, Dr. Craig is.

I think the point about more overt revealing by God would annoy people and make them turn away. Think of how gay people respond to the suggestion that there is anything wrong with them, with rage, vandalism, threats, coercion, attempts to get you to lose your job and business, and using government as a weapon to fine and imprison you. It's really obvious to me that more God does not mean more *love* of God. For those who don't want God, the hiddenness is respect for their choice to put pleasure above the search for truth. (I mean the gay activists – I have great sympathy for people who struggle with same-sex unwanted attractions because they were impacted by a failed bond with their parent of the same sex as they are).

Whenever I meet people like Dr. Came, I always urge them to keep investigating and pursuing truth, because they will find it if they are sincerely seeking after God. Some atheists do sincerely seek God, but I don't know any who haven't found him. I'm not sure if that's because those atheists who claim to be non-resistant and rational are in fact

resistant and non-rational, or what the real reason is. If you believe the Bible, *all* unbelief is non-rational and resistant (see Romans 1). Regarding the werewolves, we don't have any good arguments for werewolves, we do have good arguments for God. Dr. Came didn't refute the arguments that Craig raised, nor did his own arguments for atheism work. And there are many, many more arguments (origin of life, Cambrian explosion, habitability-discoverability, molecular machines) that Craig did not raise, too.

Tim Keller explains basic Christian doctrines to Nick Kristof in the New York Times

June 29, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

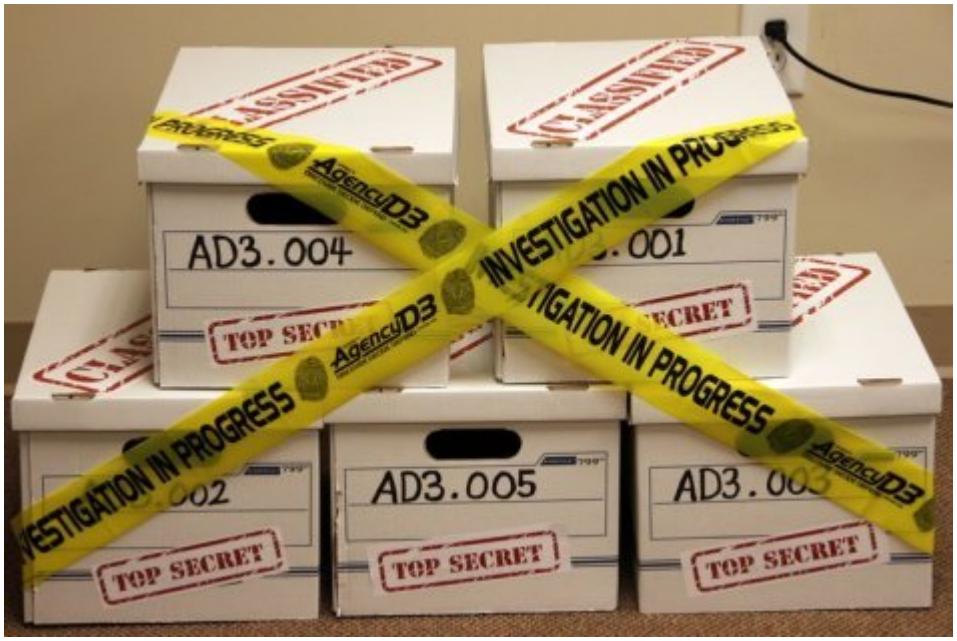

Investigation in progress

When I saw this New York Times article, and I had to blog about it. Although I am more conservative than Tim Keller on many issues (economics, race issues, intelligent design vs Darwinism), he does a pretty good job of explaining and defending basic Christian doctrines to Nicholas Kristof. Kristof one the secular leftist columnists who writes for the New York Times, which is one the most secular and most leftist media sources.

The format of the article is question and answer, and I'll choose a few that I really liked. (The questions were all good, by the way)

Excerpt:

> *But let me push back. As you know better than I, the Scriptures themselves indicate that the Resurrection wasn't so clear cut. Mary Magdalene didn't initially recognize the risen Jesus, nor did some disciples, and the gospels are fuzzy about Jesus' literal presence — especially Mark, the first gospel to be written. So if you take these passages as meaning that Jesus literally rose from the dead, why the fuzziness?*
>
> I wouldn't characterize the New Testament descriptions of the risen Jesus as fuzzy. They are very concrete in their details. Yes, Mary doesn't recognize Jesus at first, but then she does. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24) also don't recognize Jesus at first. Their experience was analogous to meeting someone you last saw as a child 20 years ago. Many historians have argued that this has the ring of eyewitness authenticity. If you were making up a story about the Resurrection, would you have imagined that Jesus was altered enough to not

> be identified immediately but not so much that he couldn't be recognized after a few moments? As for Mark's gospel, yes, it ends very abruptly without getting to the Resurrection, but most scholars believe that the last part of the book or scroll was lost to us.
>
> **Skeptics should consider another surprising aspect of these accounts. Mary Magdalene is named as the first eyewitness of the risen Christ, and other women are mentioned as the earliest eyewitnesses in the other gospels, too. This was a time in which the testimony of women was not admissible evidence in courts because of their low social status. The early pagan critics of Christianity latched on to this and dismissed the Resurrection as the word of "hysterical females." If the gospel writers were inventing these narratives, they would never have put women in them. So they didn't invent them.**
>
> **The Christian Church is pretty much inexplicable if we don't believe in a physical resurrection. N.T. Wright has argued in "The Resurrection of the Son of God" that it is difficult to come up with any historically plausible alternate explanation for the birth of the Christian movement. It is hard to account for thousands of Jews virtually overnight worshiping a human being as divine when everything about their religion and culture conditioned them to believe that was not only impossible, but deeply heretical. The best explanation for the change was that many hundreds of them had actually seen Jesus with their own eyes.**

The part in bold is what distinguishes a person who has studied apologetics from the average Jesus-hollering Bible thumper who cannot speak except in Bible verses. We have too few people who can argue historical analysis (e.g. – the criterion of embarassment) and quote authorities on the historical Jesus (e.g. – N.T. Wright). I really think that we need to start shaming people who argue for Christianity by quoting the Bible, as if non-Christians accept the Bible without any kind of historical analysis.

Here's another:

> *What I admire most about Christianity is the amazing good work it inspires people to do around the world. But I'm troubled by the evangelical notion that people go to heaven only if they have a direct relationship with Jesus. Doesn't that imply that billions of people — Buddhists, Jews, Muslims, Hindus — are consigned to hell because they grew up in non-Christian families around the world? That Gandhi is in hell?*
>
> The Bible makes categorical statements that you can't be saved except through faith in Jesus (John 14:6; Acts 4:11-12). I'm very sympathetic to your concerns, however, because this seems so exclusive and unfair. There are many views of this issue, so my thoughts on this cannot be considered *the* Christian response.

> But here they are:
>
> You imply that really good people (e.g., Gandhi) should also be saved, not just Christians. The problem is that Christians do not believe anyone can be saved by being good. If you don't come to God through faith in what Christ has done, you would be approaching on the basis of your own goodness. This would, ironically, actually be *more* exclusive and unfair, since so often those that we tend to think of as "bad" — the abusers, the haters, the feckless and selfish — have themselves often had abusive and brutal backgrounds.
>
> Christians believe that it is those who admit their weakness and need for a savior who get salvation. If access to God is through the grace of Jesus, then anyone can receive eternal life instantly. This is why "born again" Christianity will always give hope and spread among the "wretched of the earth."
>
> I can imagine someone saying, "Well, why can't God just accept everyone — universal salvation?" Then you create a different problem with fairness. It means God wouldn't really care about injustice and evil.
>
> There is still the question of fairness regarding people who have grown up away from any real exposure to Christianity. The Bible is clear about two things — that salvation must be through grace and faith in Christ, and that God is always fair and just in all his dealings. What it doesn't directly tell us is exactly how both of those things can be true together. I don't think it is insurmountable. Just because I can't see a way doesn't prove there cannot be any such way. If we have a God big enough to deserve being called God, then we have a God big enough to reconcile both justice and love.

As you can see from the article, Christians can and should prepare themselves to answer these basic questions, because there are a lot of people on the secular left who can't find anyone who can answer them. We lose a lot of young people because we focus too much on feeling good and being liked, not enough on giving other people's questions the respect they deserve. Keller quotes historians like Wright and philosophers like Plantinga. He defends the Bible verses he cites using the criteria of embarrassment. He defends the existence of God by appealing the creation (Big Bang cosmology) and design of the universe (cosmic fine-tuning). If questioned, I know from his writings that Keller is able to put scientific meat on his assertions. It is very important that Christians understand that Christianity is a religion that from the beginning was started by a man who appealed to evidence (miracles) to ground his claims.

As you can see from Keller's responses, there is a lot more to defending the faith than simply quoting the Bible as if non-Christians all believed it. Some pastors do that – citing the Bible as if just saying the words will have a magical effect on people's views. I call this the "magic words" approach to apologetics, and it's not Biblical. I think the pastors who do this (Al Mohler, Russell Moore, etc.) have been influenced by Mormon epistemology. The right way to defend the faith is to put more effort into it – *crafting intelligent responses that are persuasive and effective with your intended audience*.

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on basic economics

June 30, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Here is a podcast on basic economics from Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Morse is the founder of the Ruth Institute, a global non-profit organization focused on keeping the family together, protecting the rights of children and helping the millions of people who have been harmed by family breakdown.
>
> She has authored or co-authored four books and spoken around the globe on marriage, family and human sexuality. Her work has been translated into Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Polish. Her newest book is The Sexual Revolution and Its Victims.
>
> She earned her Ph.D. at the University of Rochester and taught economics at Yale and George Mason Universities.

A bit more about her economics credentials: Dr. Morse served as a Research Fellow for Stanford University's Hoover Institution from 1997-2005. She received her Ph.D. in economics from the University of Rochester in 1980 and spent a postdoctoral year at the University of Chicago during 1979-80. She taught economics at Yale University and George Mason University for 15 years.

The MP3 file is here. (49 minutes)

Topics:

- The study of economics is anti-postmodern – there is objective truth independent of what people think
- The study of economics believes in fixed principles of human nature

- Economics studies the allocation of scarce resources that have alternative uses
- Economics studies how people exchange resources
- How both people who engage in a voluntary trade always believe that they will be better off
- How both people who engage in a voluntary trade both benefit from the exchange
- How incentives motivate people to act
- Understanding supply and demand
- Understanding how "free" government services are rationed
- Understanding opportunity costs
- How prices signal producers to produce more or less, and consumers to buy or not buy
- Market-driven prices versus price controls
- The role of substitution
- The necessity of allowing failure in a free market

The requirements of economic growth:

- private property
- contracts
- the profit motive
- competition
- free trade
- entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation
- the rule of law

If you want to learn more about basic economics, I recommend picking up a book or two by Thomas Sowell – the first book I usually give away is "Intellectuals and Society", and then next "Basic Economics". A shorter introduction is "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism" by Robert Murphy. You can find a good list of books on the website of The Institute for Faith, Work and Economics.

I think it's important for Christians to understand basic economics, because so much of the impact we have depends not only on our personal finances, but on our ability to promote economics policies that will *affect our personal finances.* For example, whether you have a job or not depends on economic policy. Whether you can get food and other required resources depends on economic policy. Often, big-government regimes with poor economic policies (e.g. – North Korea) will make it impossible for you to have other liberties, like religious freedom.

Just think about how hard it would be for you to pursue a Christian life plan in a place like Venezuela, where your priorities would not be apologetics, but just finding food and avoiding death and theft at the hands of criminals. Closer to home, we are now seeing Seattle restaurant workers having their hours cut and even losing their jobs – because they decided to raise the minimum wage rate (bad economics).

Excerpt:

> This latest study from the UW team looks at the effects of both the first and second jumps. The second jump, in January 2016, raised the minimum wage to $10.50 to $13. (The minimum wage has since gone up again, to the current $11 to $15. It goes up again in January to $11.50 to $15.)
>
> The team concluded that the second jump had a far greater impact, boosting pay in low-wage jobs by about 3 percent since 2014 but also resulting in a 9 percent reduction in hours worked in such jobs. That resulted in a 6 percent drop in what employers collectively pay — and what workers earn — for those low-wage jobs.
>
> For an average low-wage worker in Seattle, that translates into a loss of about $125 per month per job.
>
> "If you're a low-skilled worker with one of those jobs, $125 a month is a sizable amount of money," said Mark Long, a UW public-policy professor and one of the authors of the report. "It can be the difference between being able to pay your rent and not being able to pay your rent."
>
> The report also estimated that there are about 5,000 fewer low-wage jobs in the city than there would have been without the law.

As I blogged previously, 93% of economists agree that raising the minimum wage hurts job seekers. It actually hurts young and/or minority job seekers the most, because they are the ones looking for entry-level jobs. That is why in countries that have embraced bad economic policies, the unemployment rates for young people are at or above 50%.

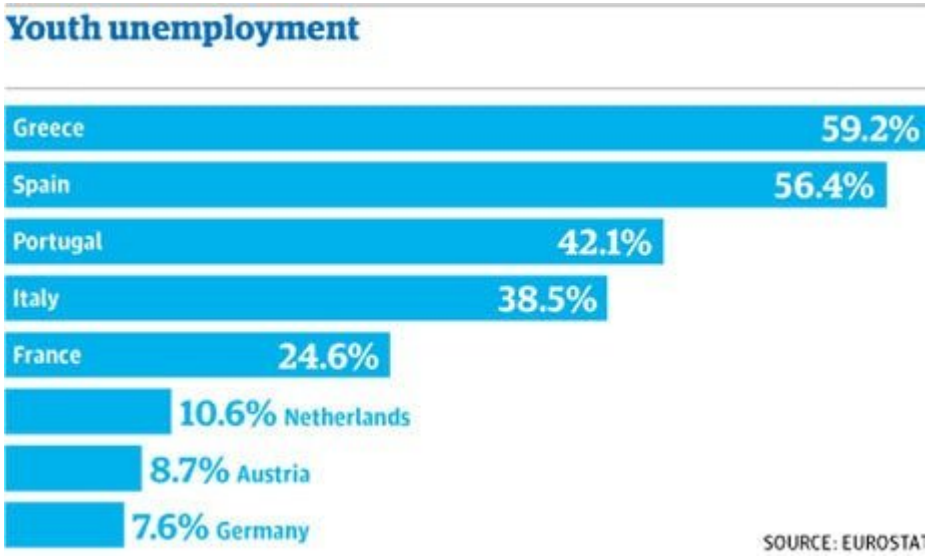

Youth unemployment in socialist countries
Look at what the far-left UK Guardian says:

> In Greece, 59.2% of under-25s are out of work. In Spain, youth unemployment stands at 56.5%; in Italy, it hovers around 40%.
>
> […]In the words of Enrico Giovannini, Italy's employment minister, this is a disaster all the more shocking because it is hitting Europe's best-educated generation: in Spain, nearly 40% of people in their 20s and early 30s have degrees; in Greece it's 30%; in Italy, more than 20%.

Having an education isn’t what gets you a job. What gets you a job are the economic policies that make it viable for an entrepreneur to risk their capital in the hope of being able to keep more of what they earn – instead of paying it to the government so that bureaucrats can spend it on social programs.

Imagine it was you who lost your job or couldn’t find work due to bad economic policy. Think of how that would affect your ability to even drive to church on Sundays, or purchase a Bible, much less being able to organize an apologetics event at the university and pay for a speaker to fly in and stay in a hotel. Economics is important for Christians to understand, because so much of our influence and effectiveness depends on it.

Are all sins equally bad? Or are there degrees of severity for different sins?

July 1, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

This question came up recently so I did some digging on theology web sites to find what Bible verses applied to the question.

Here's what Ligonier said:

> It's clear that we have different degrees of sin when we consider the warnings of Scripture. There are at least twenty-two references in the New Testament to degrees of rewards that are given to the saints in heaven. There are different levels, different rewards, and different roles in heaven. The Bible warns us against adding to the severity of our judgment. Jesus said to Pontius Pilate, "He who delivered me over to you has the greater sin" (John 19:11). Jesus measures and evaluates guilt, and with the greater guilt and greater responsibility comes the greater judgment. It's a motif that permeates the New Testament.
>
> The idea of gradation of sin and reward is based upon God's justice. If I commit twice as many sins as another person, justice demands that the punishment fits the crime. If I've been twice as virtuous as another person, justice demands that I get more of a reward. God tells us that entrance into heaven will be only on the basis of the merit of Christ, but once we get to heaven, rewards will be dispensed according to works. Those who have been abundant in good works will receive an abundant reward. Those who have been derelict and negligent in good works will have a small reward in heaven. By the same token, those who have been grievous enemies of God will have severe torments in hell. Those who have been

> less hostile will have a lesser punishment at the hands of God. He is perfectly just, and when He judges, He will take into account all of the extenuating circumstances. Jesus said, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak" (Matt. 12:36).

A while back, my friend Dina sent me a sermon where that exact passage (John 19) was brought up by the pastor.

I think the correct position is that *any sin* is enough to separate you from God, but some sins are more severe than others in God's objective standard of right and wrong.

OK, that was fine and good, but then I noticed a few days later that Michael Krueger had also blogged about this "all sin are equal" view, too.

Krueger says this:

> First, to say all sins are the same is to confuse the *effect* of sin with the *heinousness* of sin. While all sins are equal in their effect (they separate us from God), they are not all equally heinous.
>
> Second, the Bible differentiates between sins. Some sins are more severe in terms of impact (1 Cor 6:18), in terms of culpability (Rom 1:21-32), and in terms of the judgment warranted (2 Pet 2:17; Mark 9:42; James 3:1).

Even more Bible references, so we're not on the wrong track.

So then why do some people insist that all sins are equal? It turns out that it is coming from the secular ideal of *non-judgmentalism*.

Krueger explains:

> We should begin by observing that this phrase does not come from Scripture. People do not use it because it appears in the Bible. Why then do they use it?
>
> One reason, as noted above, is that some Christians use this phrase to uphold the seriousness of sin. It is viewed as a way to remind people not to be dismissive about their sin or regard it is a triviality.
>
> Others use this phrase as way to "flatten out" all sins so that they are not distinguishable from each other. Or, to put it another way, this phrase is used to portray all human beings as precisely the same. If all sins are equal, and all people sin, then no one is more holy than anyone else.
>
> In a world fascinated with "equality," this usage of the phrase is particularly attractive to folks. It allows everyone to be lumped together into a single undifferentiated mass.
>
> Such a move is also useful as a way to prevent particular behaviors from being condemned. If all sins are equal, and everyone is a sinner, then you are not allowed to highlight any particular sin (or sinner).
>
> Needless to say, this usage of the phrase has featured largely in the recent cultural debates over issues like homosexuality. Yes, homosexuality is a sin,

> some Christians reluctantly concede. But, they argue, all sins are equal in God's sight and therefore it is no different than anything else. Therefore, Christians ought to stop talking about homosexuality unless they are also willing to talk about impatience, anger, gluttony, and so on.

Krueger also posted this fascinating follow up post, where he looks at how the phrase is being used by people on Twitter.

Look at these tweets:

- All sins are equal. People tend to forget that. There is no bigger or smaller sin. Being gay and lying, very equal.
- all sins are equal in God's eyes. whatever you're doing, is no better than what someone else is doing.
- If you have sex before marriage please don't come on social media preaching about the wrongs of homosexuality. All sins are equal
- Need people to realize that all sins are equal… don't try to look down on me or question my faith just cuz you sin differently than I do.
- Don't understand why you're so quick to judge me, when all sins are equal. So much for family..
- if you think being gay is a sin, let me ask you something, have you not done anything wrong in your life? all sins are equal. we're sinners
- Nope no difference at all. All sins are equal no matter what you're running for. The bible says do not judge lest ye be judged
- A huge problem I have with religion is the notion that all sins are equal. Like pre-martial sex and murder are the same amount t of bad.
- people do bad things because they believe that all sins are equal and ~god~ loves y'all equally so he's going to forgive you naman ha ha ha
- It a sin to condemn another sinner and their actions. All sins are equal. So what makes you better than the person you're condemning?
- I think so b/c having sex before marriage doesn't make you less of a women then if you waited until marriage.. all sins are equal soo
- friendly reminder, all sins are equal in gods eyes so you're not better than I am in any way. please worry about your own sins before mine.

> People don’t like when I suggest abortion as an option. This is a free country and all sins are equal so mind your business!!!

> What I do is no worse than wat you do… all sins are equal no matter what it is… a sin is a sin

> to god all sins are equal so you have no right to compare your sins to someone else’s bc in the end it doesn’t matter

The first thing that I noticed is that premarital sex and homosexuality are the most popular sins. I would think that divorce and abortion would be up there in the rankings, as well.

Something strange has happened in our society such that more and more people want to be led by their feelings, rather than be bounded by rules or standards. When people get caught breaking moral rules, rather than be accountable, they attack the person judging them. They would rather escape the judgment of their peers than admit fault and try to fix the mistake, and do better next time.

It’s so bad now, that the people who *have* morals and who *make* moral judgments are seen as the real bad people. The immoral people are on the offense, and even trying to ban people from being able to disagree with them. We’re seeing that with people who are being attacked for defending natural marriage against divorce and redefinition of marriage. In France, they want to make speech critical of abortion a criminal offense. And in Canada, they’ve now made speech critical of the gay agenda a criminal offense. (It’s already a human rights tribunal offense)

What is even more interesting is when the people who push the “don’t judge me” line try to justify it from the Bible. Very strange, but we seem to have forgotten the value of setting moral boundaries. Now moral boundaries are “evil”. Instead, having compassion for people who break the moral boundaries and harm themselves and others is “good”.

Government-run health care system to kill child against the wishes of his parents

July 2, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The National Health Service is government-run socialist health care

I was asked to blog about this story by Trina, and so I will.

Here is the straight news story from Fox News:

> The mother and father of a brain-damaged 11-month-old baby on Friday were sitting bedside with the boy after losing a legal battle that would have kept the boy on life support.
>
> The Wall Street Journal reported that doctors at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London, who are caring for Charlie Gard received permission from a court to discontinue life support.
>
> The boy's parents objected to the decision and wanted to take him to the U.S. for an unproven, experimental therapy.
>
> […]**On Tuesday, the parents lost a bid to take Charlie to the U.S. for trial therapy when the European Court of Human Rights sided with earlier rulings that continued treatment would cause "significant harm" and that life support should end.**

The ECHR decision followed other decisions by British courts, all of which sided against the parents. The courts decided that the government-run NHS health care system should kill the child, rather than allowing the parents to bring the child to the US to try the experimental treatment.

National Review summarizes the reasoning of the judges:

> According to the Honourable Mr. Justice Nicholas Francis of the High Court's

> Family Division, who authored the decision subsequently upheld by the higher courts, death is "in Charlie's best interests." There was no "scientific basis" for believing that Charlie would respond positively to the experimental American treatment; meanwhile, there is "unanimity among the experts from whom I have heard that nucleoside therapy cannot reverse structural brain damage." "If," wrote Justice Francis, "Charlie's damaged brain function cannot be improved, as all agree, then how can he be any better off than he is now?" It was "with a heavy heart," the judge said, that he sided with the doctors. Charlie should be permitted "to die with dignity."
>
> […]So it was that successive courts in the United Kingdom and in Europe simultaneously found that Connie Yates and Chris Gard had devoted themselves unhesitatingly to their son's welfare for ten months, and also that Yates and Gard could not be trusted to act in their son's best interests.

Connie Yates and Chris Gard *pay the salaries* of this leftist judges and leftist NHS doctors. If these judges were elected, and these doctors were in the private sector, then the parents' wishes would matter. But since the money disappeared in taxes, there is *no accountability*. The government actors have already collected the money from the parents, and now they don't care what the parents want any more. They won't even let them bring their child to the United States for treatment that their primitive government-run system can't offer.

But it's worse than that – the NHS won't even let the parents take the child home to die.

Hot Air explains:

> The couple had raised nearly £1.4 million for that effort, which would have ended NHS involvement in the case, but the courts decided that they — and not the parents — were in position to decide that death rather than potential treatment was what was best for the child. Now the parents cannot even take the baby home to allow him to die there rather than in hospital, even though they pledged to cover all the costs.
>
> […]In a single-payer system such as NHS, the courts have clearly ruled that the state has more standing on whether to allow someone to die than the person or his/her nearest relations. And now, the state — through its socialized-medicine providers — refuse to even allow the death to take place under the circumstances desired by the family.

Lest you think that this is an isolated incident, there are a number of other failures of socialized medicine linked in this article by libertarian Daniel Mitchell, writing for CNS News. When Obamacare was being debated, I was easily able to find dozens of NHS horror stories. Just imagine that the losers at the post office or the bureau of motor vehicles were providing you with health care. That's the NHS. They don't care about you, they've already got their money from your taxes. They have no competition from other players in a free market, so they don't care. THEY DON'T CARE.

I should note that the UK’s socialized medicine system does allow young women to get breast enlargements, and women also get free IVF treatment. All paid for by taxpayers, of course. The first duty of politicians is to get re-elected. When you put health care in the hands of politicians, they use health care to redistribute taxpayer money in order to buy votes.

Two peer-reviewed studies shed light on news media bias

July 3, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Why do people think that CNN are biased leftist clowns?
Let's learn about media bias using these peer-reviewed studies.

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.
>
> "Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill," Groseclose said. "If these newscasters weren't centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators."
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was "Special Report With Brit Hume" on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> "If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox's 'Special Report' as ABC's 'World News' and NBC's 'Nightly News,' then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news," said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia."

Here's a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32%

> vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the

> Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

Those are the facts.

So what?

Now consider this column from Brent Bozell, which explains the difference media bias makes to political intelligence.

Excerpt:

> **A 2008 survey by the Pew Research Center asked media consumers three questions: which party was in control of Congress (Democrats), who was the secretary of state (Condi Rice) and who was the prime minister of Britain (Gordon Brown).**
>
> **Let's document how the viewers of "Hannity & Colmes" were better informed than Stewart's "Daily Show" gigglers on basic political facts. Hannity viewers beat Stewart's on the Democratic majority (84 percent to 65 percent correct answers), Condi Rice (a dramatic 73 percent to 48 percent gap) and Gordon Brown (49 percent to 36). Overall, as a percentage getting all three questions right, Hannity won 42-30.**

Just keep that in mind when you are watching the mainstream media news shows. A very good site to bookmark and read is Newsbusters, which documents mainstream media bias daily.

Happy Independence Day 2017!

July 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

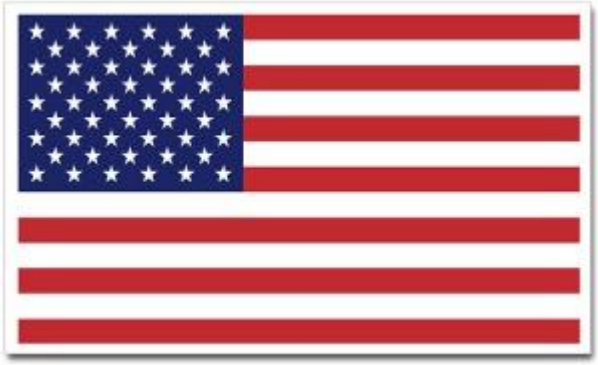

The Stars and Stripes

The Declaration of Independence

Here's the complete text of the Declaration of Independence here.

And now let's take a look at an article at The Federalist which talks about what the Declaration of Independence tells us about the character of America.

It says:

> The Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson famously wrote, was "intended to be an expression of the American mind." Although not intended as such, it was also an expression of the American character. Woven throughout the text are insights into the minds and virtues of those Lincoln called the "once hardy, brave, and patriotic, but now lamented and departed race of ancestors" who fought for the independence we still enjoy.

> This aspect of the Declaration of Independence receives scant attention from scholars and citizens, yet it must be understood. The theory of government elaborated in that text presupposes the existence of citizens who know how to govern themselves and are willing to assert their rights. The American character is the unstated premise of the argument, without which the theory, though still true, doesn't work in practice.

So, what's the American character?

> What sets us Americans apart is that we do not merely declare for liberty. We staunchly stand for it. To be an American is not only to know that you are born free, it is to have the courage to defend your freedom. This admirable aspect of the American character is evident in the fifth grievance the Declaration levels against the king.

> It reads: "He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing, with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people." The king acted as monarchs are wont to do. Our forefathers, although they were subjects, did not

> take his abuses passively. They resisted—with manly firmness.
>
> Today, King George III is long gone. Our representative houses are no longer dissolved at will (although they have unconstitutionally been declared to be in recess). Our rights, however, are still encroached upon, whether by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Environmental Protection Agency. Thankfully, courageous Americans still push back, like the Green family, who challenged Obamacare's abortifacient mandate, or the Sacketts, who fought the EPA's effective seizure of their property.
>
> No charter of liberties or Constitution—not even one handed down by God himself—could ever, on its own, protect the rights of the people. James Madison, the father of our own Constitution, was not so foolish as to place his trust in mere "parchment barriers against the encroaching spirit of power."
>
> In Federalist No. 57, Madison takes up the question of "what is to restrain the House of Representatives from making legal discriminations in favor of themselves and a particular class of the society?" His answer: "the genius of the whole system; the nature of just and constitutional laws; and *above all*, the vigilant and manly spirit which actuates the people of America—a spirit which nourishes freedom, and in return is nourished by it."
>
> The 56 men who signed our Declaration of Independence set the example for their fellow countrymen and for future generations. They did not simply proclaim the universal rights of man. They also pledged "to each other, our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor." And they meant it. Twelve served as combat commanders during the Revolutionary War. Five were captured and imprisoned by the British. Seventeen lost part of their fortunes.

> America is not a country for servile men and women. We not only have a *right* to be free, but a *duty* to be free. For "when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it *is their right, it is their duty*, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security." Free as we are, we have no liberty to choose despotism—even if it is sugarcoated, as it is today, with material comfort and license.
>
> […]Two centuries later, the American character endures, battered and bruised though it may be. It has been corroded by the Progressive faith in government, the sixties ethos of "if it feels good, do it," and the mindlessness and vulgarity of pop culture. But we can still readily discern among many Americans the habits of mind and the virtues of a free people. For this, we should be grateful on this Fourth of July.

To love liberty means to be willing to stand up for liberty, and that can mean something as simple as 1) not voting for bigger government just because they are handing out money to you and 2) not voting for bigger government because they are letting you do

immoral things.

Standing up for liberty means standing up for your own personal responsibility. It means looking primarily to yourself for earning a living. It means choosing to behave morally so that you don’t create a situation where you need the government to bail you out of your own immoral decisions with someone else’s money.

Survey of over 200 peer-reviewed studies finds no biological basis for “sexual orientation”

July 5, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

There was a report published last year in the journal The New Atlantis, surveying all the peer-reviewed research that has been done on sexual orientation and gender identity.

This article from the Daily Signal explains what the report is about:

> A major new report, published today in the journal The New Atlantis, challenges the leading narratives that the media has pushed regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.
>
> Co-authored by two of the nation’s leading scholars on mental health and sexuality, the 143-page report discusses over 200 peer-reviewed studies in the biological, psychological, and social sciences, painstakingly documenting what scientific research shows *and does not show* about sexuality and gender.
>
> **The major takeaway, as the editor of the journal explains, is that “some of the most frequently heard claims about sexuality and gender are not supported by scientific evidence.”**
>
> The report, “Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological, and Social Sciences,” is co-authored by Dr. Lawrence Mayer and Dr. Paul McHugh. Mayer is a scholar-in-residence in the Department of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University and a professor of statistics and biostatistics at Arizona State University.
>
> McHugh, whom the editor of The New Atlantis describes as “arguably the most important American psychiatrist of the last half-century,” is a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and was for 25 years the psychiatrist-in-chief at the Johns Hopkins

> Hospital. It was during his tenure as psychiatrist-in-chief at Johns Hopkins that he put an end to sex reassignment surgery there, after a study launched at Hopkins revealed that it didn't have the benefits for which doctors and patients had long hoped.

These are serious people. Johns Hopkins is the top medical school in the USA, and probably in the whole world.

The Daily Signal article also lists the four main findings:

> The belief that sexual orientation is an innate, biologically fixed human property—that people are 'born that way'—is *not supported by scientific evidence*.

> Likewise, the belief that gender identity is an innate, fixed human property independent of biological sex—so that a person might be a 'man trapped in a woman's body' or 'a woman trapped in a man's body'—is *not supported by scientific evidence*.

> Only a minority of children who express gender-atypical thoughts or behavior will continue to do so into adolescence or adulthood. There is *no evidence* that all such children should be encouraged to become transgender, much less subjected to hormone treatments or surgery.

> Non-heterosexual and transgender people have higher rates of mental health problems (anxiety, depression, suicide), as well as behavioral and social problems (substance abuse, intimate partner violence), than the general population. Discrimination alone *does not account for the entire disparity*.

The reason why we need to be guided by science in these matters, and not by ideology or feelings, is because of the harm we can do to children if we are not accurate:

> Policymakers should be concerned with how misguided school policies might encourage students to identify as girls when they are boys, and vice versa, and might result in prolonged difficulties. As the report notes, "There is no evidence that all children who express gender-atypical thoughts or behavior should be encouraged to become transgender."

You should read the rest of the Daily Signal's post, and if you want to go on and read the report, you can find that here on the New Atlantis journal's web site.

I feel pretty comfortable talking about the same-sex marriage issue, having read several books and papers on that. I also have some background in gender identity disorder, and different things that happen to a child in the womb, and during their childhoods, that can affect that. But this transgender question is an area where I need to read more – this was not on the radar when I was exploring all this in the late 90s and early 2000s. I want to be able to discuss this as competently as I can discuss other social issues.

Is the Big Bang cosmology a theistic or atheistic theory of cosmic origins?

July 6, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Dr. Michael Strauss is a practicing particle physics employed as a professor at University of Oklahoma. He does research in particle physics at CERN, a large hadron collider. It's safe to assume that he knows something about experimental physics.

Here's what he writes about Christians and the Big Bang at his new blog:

> When my children were young, I would often drive to the home of the person babysitting my kids, usually a young teenage girl, pick her up, then drive her back to my house. In the car I would ask questions about her interests or her school. In addition, I would sometimes ask a question that intrigued me since I am a scientist and a Christian, "Do you think the Big Bang is a theistic theory or an atheistic theory?" Now that question is not on most people's list of babysitter interview questions, but I was interested to know their answer even though it would not affect their monetary tip. Every time I asked this question I always got the same answer, that the Big Bang is an atheistic theory. This is just one example of the fact that many kids growing up in an evangelical church environment have the perception that the Big Bang is an idea which removes God as the creator. It seems that many Christians may disdain the Big Bang.
>
> Subsequent conversations with people of all ages have shown me that many individuals (1) don't really understand what the Big Bang is, (2) don't know the scientific evidence for the Big Bang, and (3) don't comprehend the theistic significance of the Big Bang. So let's explore these ideas a little bit.

Here is his overview of the scientific evidence for the Big Bang:

> There are three primary observations that are best explained by the Big Bang. First, the universe is expanding so that it must have had a beginning of expansion in the past. Second, because the universe was once very hot, we can still see the remnants of that heat in the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) radiation. The latest measurements of the CMB spectrum made by the Planck satellite (shown above) agrees almost perfectly with theoretical calculations using the standard Big Bang cosmological model (see the plot at the end of this post). Third, the theory predicts the amount of primordial light elements that should have been created in the first few minutes of the Big Bang, like hydrogen and helium. Again the observations and the theoretical calculations align almost exactly. A few other observations are supported by Big Bang predictions, like the distribution of galaxies and primordial gas. The agreement between what we measure and what is expected from a Big Bang is so remarkable that just about all scientists accept the Big Bang as the origin of our universe, despite its implication that the universe had a beginning.
>
> Does this scientific evidence support theism, or atheism?
>
> Because we don't have any observations that tell us exactly what happened "in the beginning" of our universe, we can only speculate. But let me point out the obvious. All of the observations we do have, and all the theoretical calculations, and even some projective calculations like the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem… give credence to the conclusion that all of the space, time, matter, and energy of this universe had a beginning. **The Big Bang is a misnomer for it is not some kind of explosion since there was nothing that existed to explode. It is the origin of the universe. So if this universe had a beginning, then the cause of the universe can not be a part of the universe. The cause must be transcendent, like the Christian idea of God.** Is the fact that all the evidence points to our universe having a transcendent cause proof for God? No, but it is extremely powerful evidence. If one hundred years ago you had predicted that scientists would obtain unambiguous evidence about the history of the universe for 13.8 billion years, all of its lifetime except the first fraction of a second, and that all of the evidence would point to an actual beginning consistent with a transcendent cause, I don't think anyone would have taken you seriously. But that is exactly what has happened. **Theists could not have outlined a better scenario to support theism. The scientific facts are completely consistent with the statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."**

I know how I account for this scientific discovery in my worldview: a non-physical mind that existed eternally created the physical universe at time t=0. But how do atheists, who can only explain the world by appealing to matter, explain the origin of matter itself?

Here's Oxford University professor of physical chemistry (and atheist) Peter Atkins

explaining how he grounds the Big Bang cosmology:

Easy! Nothing actually exists, according to Peter Atkins.

What about a theoretical physicist, like Lawrence Krauss? Well, he just redefines the nothing that causally preceded the origin of the universe so that it is actually something. Pure speculation, and it goes against the experimental scientific evidence we have. Exactly what you'd expect from a man who wrote a book about "the physics of Star Trek".

Each of us has to come to terms with this scientific evidence. What could have caused the beginning of the universe? It can't be matter, because this was the beginning of all the matter in the universe. It has to be a *mind.*

Although most theists have no problem with this scientific evidence, atheists really hate it. When I tell them about this evidence, they tell me that in a few years or decades, all the evidence for a beginning we have now will have gone away. "How do you know that?" I ask. We have faith" they reply. I don't think anyone should deny the objective reality we all share just because it's what they want to believe.

Welfare program usage drops 85% after work requirement reinstated

July 7, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is from National Review, and it really made me think about where all the money that I've paid in taxes over the years has gone.

Excerpt:

> After Alabama reinstated food-stamp work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents, the rolls dropped by 85 percent.
>
> […]According to the Alabama Department of Human Resources, between January 1 and May 1, 13 counties in the Yellowhammer State saw their food-stamp rolls drop by a combined 85 percent. The reason? At the beginning of the year, those 13 counties joined the rest of the state in ending a years-long exemption from work requirements for ABAWDs — able-bodied adults without dependents — participating in the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
>
> On New Year's Day, there were 5,538 ABAWD enrollees across the 13 formerly exempted counties; by the beginning of May, there were 831. That mirrors a sharp statewide decline, which began on January 1, 2016, when the same exemption ended in Alabama's 54 other counties. At the beginning of last year, the state had 49,940 able-bodied adults without dependents on its SNAP rolls; by May 1 of this year, that number was 7,483 — a drop of 85 percent.

The article notes that work requirements on welfare programs were dismantled *at the federal level* by the Obama administration in 2009.

> As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, signed into law by President Obama that February, Congress "temporarily" suspended the conditions on ABAWD SNAP enrollees nationwide. The suspension was supposed to extend only through 2010, but no government initiative is temporary. Eight years later, ABAWD time-limit waivers are still in effect in at least part of 36 states; ten states remain entirely exempt.

The article also notes that Kansas (in 2013) rejected Obama's federal waiver. The result? Welfare program usage fell 72%.

The article concludes:

> The overall food-stamp population remains large: Forty-four million Americans — about one in seven — at a cost of $71 billion to the federal government last year. Compared to other categories of recipient, that of able-bodied adults without dependents is small. But more than savings is at stake in removing clingers-on from the dole. A free people does not depend on the government for its daily

> bread. Those who can work, should.

People who have jobs don’t need welfare, but these people were literally choosing not to work so that they could collect welfare. They could have worked if they wanted to, but they chose not to.

How do you think that people who are dependent on government vote? Do they vote for smaller government and lower taxes? All that Obama achieved by attacking welfare reform was to buy hundreds of thousands of votes from dependent people. But he didn’t use his own money to do this – he used mine. I could have used my money for my own life priorities, but Democrat politicians know better than me, apparently. My job is just to work to earn the money, but I’m too stupid to know how to spend it. Other smarter people who are better than me know best about how to spend it. And they spend it on buying the votes of lazy people so they can get re-elected.

One million patients per week cannot get a doctor's appointment in socialist UK

July 8, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The National Health Service is government-run socialist health care

What would happen if government took over health care, and created one of the largest bureaucracies in the world?

Absolute failure.

The UK Telegraph explains:

> One million patients a week cannot get appointments with GPs, amid the longest waiting times on record, new figures show.
>
> […]The NHS figures show the number waiting at least a week to see their GP has risen by 56 per cent in five years, with one in five now waiting this long.
>
> The pressures left 11.3 per cent of patients unable to get an appointment at all – a 27 per cent rise since 2012. This amounts to around 47 million occasions on which patients attempted but failed to secure help from their GP, forcing them to give up, try again later or turn to Accident & Emergency departments.
>
> Rising numbers of patients struggled to even get through on the phone, with 27.8 per cent of those polled citing difficulties, compared with 18.5 per cent in 2012.
>
> […]The survey of more than 800,000 patients – which is held annually – found worsening access to family doctors across a range of measures.
>
> GPs said the NHS was "at breaking point" with patients increasingly giving up their search for help, even though their health was deteriorating.

But, I am often told by socialists that American health care is just terrible compared to government-run health care systems in other countries. After all, who gives you better

service? Private companies in a free market, like Amazon.com? Or government-run monopolies, like the Bureau of Motor Vehicles?

Let's take a look at this analysis by a medical doctor who is also a Stanford University professor:

> **Fact No. 1: Americans have better survival rates than Europeans for common cancers.**[1] Breast cancer mortality is 52 percent higher in Germany than in the United States, and 88 percent higher in the United Kingdom. Prostate cancer mortality is 604 percent higher in the U.K. and 457 percent higher in Norway. The mortality rate for colorectal cancer among British men and women is about 40 percent higher.
>
> **Fact No. 6: Americans spend less time waiting for care than patients in Canada and the U.K.** Canadian and British patients wait about twice as long – sometimes more than a year – to see a specialist, to have elective surgery like hip replacements or to get radiation treatment for cancer.[6] All told, 827,429 people are waiting for some type of procedure in Canada.[7] In England, nearly 1.8 million people are waiting for a hospital admission or outpatient treatment.[8]
>
> **Fact No. 9: Americans have much better access to important new technologies like medical imaging than patients in Canada or the U.K.** Maligned as a waste by economists and policymakers naïve to actual medical practice, an overwhelming majority of leading American physicians identified computerized tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) as the most important medical innovations for improving patient care during the previous decade.[11] [See the table.] The United States has 34 CT scanners per million Americans, compared to 12 in Canada and eight in Britain. The United States has nearly 27 MRI machines per million compared to about 6 per million in Canada and Britain.[12]

UK taxpayers pay a lot more in taxes than Americans do. Is it worth it?

Honestly, who would you rather have running your health care? Doctors or unionized government workers who never passed high school arithmetic? The free market is best.

An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview

July 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

If you love to listen to the Cold Case Christianity podcast, as I do, then you know that in a recent episode, J. Warner Wallace mentioned a blog post on an atheistic blog that clearly delineated the implications of an atheistic worldview. He promised he was going to write about it and link to the post, and he has now done so.

Here is the whole the whole thing that the atheist posted:

> "[To] all my Atheist friends.
>
> Let us stop sugar coating it. I know, it's hard to come out and be blunt with the friendly Theists who frequent sites like this. However in your efforts to "play nice" and "be civil" you actually do them a great disservice.
>
> We are Atheists. We believe that the Universe is a great uncaused, random accident. All life in the Universe past and future are the results of random chance acting on itself. While we acknowledge concepts like morality, politeness, civility seem to exist, we know they do not. Our highly evolved brains imagine that these things have a cause or a use, and they have in the past, they've allowed life to continue on this planet for a short blip of time. But make no mistake: all our dreams, loves, opinions, and desires are figments of our primordial imagination. They are fleeting electrical signals that fire across our synapses for a moment in time. They served some purpose in the past. They got us here. That's it. All human achievement and plans for the future are the result of some ancient, evolved brain and accompanying chemical reactions that once served a survival purpose. Ex: I'll marry and nurture children because my genes demand reproduction, I'll create because creativity served a survival advantage to my

> ancient ape ancestors, I'll build cities and laws because this allowed my ape grandfather time and peace to reproduce and protect his genes. My only directive is to obey my genes. Eat, sleep, reproduce, die. That is our bible.
>
> We deride the Theists for having created myths and holy books. We imagine ourselves superior. But we too imagine there are reasons to obey laws, be polite, protect the weak etc. Rubbish. We are nurturing a new religion, one where we imagine that such conventions have any basis in reality. Have they allowed life to exist? Absolutely. But who cares? Outside of my greedy little gene's need to reproduce, there is nothing in my world that stops me from killing you and reproducing with your wife. Only the fear that I might be incarcerated and thus be deprived of the opportunity to do the same with the next guy's wife stops me. Some of my Atheist friends have fooled themselves into acting like the general population. They live in suburban homes, drive Toyota Camrys, attend school plays. But underneath they know the truth. They are a bag of DNA whose only purpose is to make more of themselves. So be nice if you want. Be involved, have polite conversations, be a model citizen. Just be aware that while technically an Atheist, you are an inferior one. You're just a little bit less evolved, that's all. When you are ready to join me, let me know, I'll be reproducing with your wife.
>
> I know it's not PC to speak so bluntly about the ramifications of our beliefs, but in our discussions with Theists we sometimes tip toe around what we really know to be factual. Maybe it's time we Atheists were a little more truthful and let the chips fall where they may. At least that's what my genes are telling me to say."

In his post, Wallace comments on the statement above, but for more, you should listen to the podcast.

This fellow is essentially expanding on what Richard Dawkins has said about atheism:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

And Cornell University atheist William Provine agrees: (this is taken from his debate with Phillip E. Johnson)

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and

> no free will for humans, either.

And what about Florida State University atheist Michael Ruse:

> "The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory." (Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

I see a lot of atheists these days thinking that they can help themselves to a robust notion of consciousness, to real libertarian free will, to objective moral values and duties, to objective human rights, and to objective meaning in life, without giving credit to theism. It's not rational to do this. As Frank Turek said on the latest episode of "Cross Examined", atheists have to sit in God's lap to slap his face. We should be calling them out on it. I think it's particularly important not to let atheists utter a word of moral judgment on any topic, since they cannot ground an objective standard that allows them to make statements of morality. Further, I think that they should have every immorality ever committed presented to them, and then they should be told "your worldview does not allow you to condemn this as wrong". They can't praise anything as right, either. This is not to say that we should go all presuppositional on them, but if the opportunity arises to point out how they are borrowing from theism in order to attack it, we should do that *in addition* to presenting good scientific and historical evidence.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Trump administration has fired hundreds of Veteran's Affairs officials

July 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

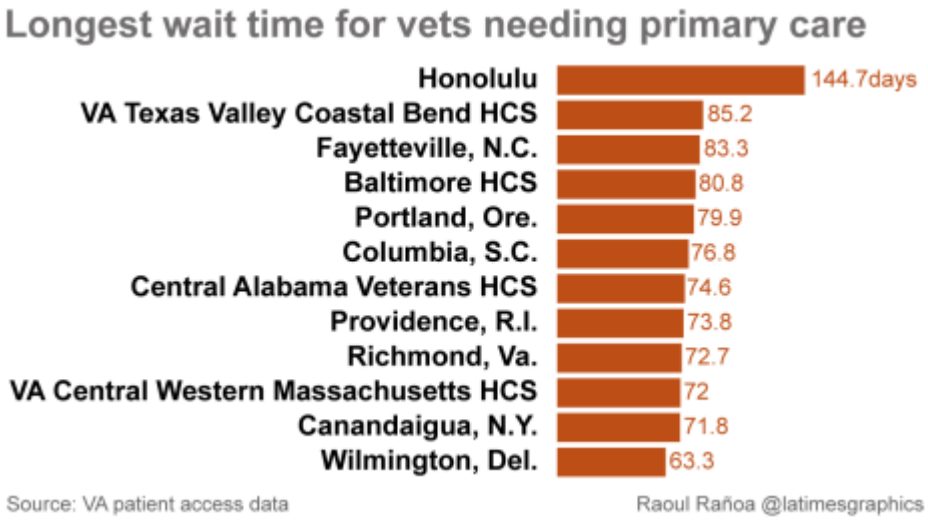

VA health care wait times

I expected Trump to get into trouble on Twitter even after he was elected, and he is certainly doing that. But he's also doing a lot of conservative things, too. And those are more important, because they are policies.

Here's the latest "Good Trump" news reported by the far-left CBS News.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today that more than 500 officials have been fired for misconduct since President Trump took office earlier this year, according to data posted online.
>
> In an effort for more transparency and accountability within the VA, Secretary of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin announced that a public list of employee "accountability actions" will be posted online and updated weekly.
>
> The list outlines a total of 747 disciplinary actions including 526 employees who were fired since January 20. The actions affected a myriad of positions ranging from a tractor operator to VA attorneys.The list does not include employee names due to privacy reasons but does note the employee's position and VA region.
>
> "Veterans and taxpayers have a right to know what we're doing to hold our employees accountable and make our personnel actions transparent," Secretary Shulkin said in a statement.
>
> This announcement comes less than a month after President Trump signed the Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act which strengthened the ability of Secretary Shulkin to discipline VA officials. President Trump said that previous laws "…kept the government from holding those who failed our veterans

> accountable."

Why is this important? Well, the VA health care delivery system is the only true single-payer health care system in the United States. It's run by Big Government bureaucrats who get paid a lot of money, regardless of how they serve their customers. When the administrators want a raise, they just falsify records to hide their failure to perform. It's so bad that veterans are dying while waiting for treatment. And since it's not a for-profit system, there's nothing they can do about it. They can't threaten to withhold payment, and they can't take their business somewhere else. It's a government-run monopoly, and customers are treated like garbage.

Here's an example reported by the Washington Free Beacon:

> More than 100 veterans died while waiting for care at a Veterans Affairs hospital in Los Angeles, Calif., over a nine-month span ending in August 2015, according to a new government report.
>
> The VA Office of Inspector General found in a recent healthcare inspection that 225 veterans at the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System facility died with open or pending consults between Oct. 1, 2015 and Aug. 9, 2015. Nearly half—117—of those patients died while experiencing delays in receiving care.
>
> The inspector general reported that 43 percent of the 371 consults scheduled for patients who ended up dying were not timely because of a failure by VA employees to follow proper procedure. The report was unable to substantiate claims that patients died as a result of the delayed consults.

Fox News has a different example from a different VA hospital:

> More than 200 veterans have died while waiting for medical care at the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital in Phoenix, two years after the facility was at the center of a scandal in which patient records were altered to hide the length of their waiting period.
>
> In a report released Tuesday, the VA Inspector General's office (OIG) found that 215 deceased patients had open specialist consultation appointments at the Phoenix facility on the day they died. The report also found that one veteran never received an appointment for a cardiology exam "that could have prompted further definitive testing and interventions that could have forestalled his death."
>
> […]The report also found that nearly a quarter of all specialist consultations in 2015 were canceled, in part due to employee confusion stemming from outdated scheduling procedures that were not updated until this past August.

The Free Beacon and Fox News are centrist news sources, so let's look at something from the radical kooky fringe of fake news.

Here's the far-left Clown News Network (CNN) reporting on another VA failure from 2014, when Obama was still President:

> At least 40 U.S. veterans died waiting for appointments at the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Health Care system, many of whom were placed on a secret waiting list.
>
> The secret list was part of an elaborate scheme designed by Veterans Affairs managers in Phoenix who were trying to hide that 1,400 to 1,600 sick veterans were forced to wait months to see a doctor, according to a recently retired top VA doctor and several high-level sources.
>
> For six months, CNN has been reporting on extended delays in health care appointments suffered by veterans across the country and who died while waiting for appointments and care.
> But the new revelations about the Phoenix VA are perhaps the most disturbing and striking to come to light thus far.
>
> Internal e-mails obtained by CNN show that top management at the VA hospital in Arizona knew about the practice and even defended it.
>
> Dr. Sam Foote just retired after spending 24 years with the VA system in Phoenix. The veteran doctor told CNN in an exclusive interview that the Phoenix VA works off two lists for patient appointments:
>
> There's an "official" list that's shared with officials in Washington and shows the VA has been providing timely appointments, which Foote calls a sham list. And then there's the real list that's hidden from outsiders, where wait times can last more than a year.

I hope that's not fake news, but with CNN, you never know. Let's just assume it's real for now.

Right now, we have a Republican President, Republican House, and Republican Senate, so something is finally being done to fix a problem that existed *throughout the eight years of the Obama administration*.

Legal handgun owner shoots and kills man trying to drown 3-month-old twins

July 11, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guns are for self-defense against criminals

Here's the story from ABC local news in Oklahoma.

Excerpt:

> An Ada man was shot and killed by a neighbor Friday after he tried drowning twin babies.
>
> "It's awful because I've held the babies and, like, I've played with them and I just gave them clothes yesterday," said neighbor Summer Pierce.
>
> Officials say Leland Foster was allegedly threatening the mother of the children with a knife during the ordeal.
>
> A 12-year-old girl who was in the home ran to a neighbor's house for help.
>
> The neighbor, Cash Freeman, rushed back over to the home to find Foster trying to drown the 3-month-old twins, a boy and a girl, in the bathtub.
>
> He then shot Foster twice in the back with a gun.

The babies survived. But because so many people in America view the use of force by legal handgun owners (especially men) with suspicion, the hero was afraid of what the lawyers would do to him.

More:

> We spoke to Freeman off camera and he told us when he saw what was happening in the bathroom, he did what he had to do to save the babies. **However, he told us he was concerned that he could be in trouble.**

That was his feeling after he saved the babies. He did the right thing, but in America, land of the Second Amendment, he was afraid of the lawyers who might try to punish him for

being a man, and doing what men do: protect children from danger.

What a world.

I'm thankful that this happened in Oklahoma, though, and so there was a happy conclusion.

ABC local news reports:

> Police questioned and released Freeman, but the district attorney was tasked with determining if the shooting was a criminal act.
>
> […]A little more than a month after the shooting, officials say the case is closed.
>
> On Thursday, the Pontotoc County District Attorney announced that the shooting was a 'justifiable use of deadly force under Oklahoma Law.'

The decision to not prosecute this man apparently came out *a month later* than his interrogation by police. Imagine what that month must have been like for him. Is this the way that want men to feel when they do the right thing? And is it wise to attack and punish men who use force for self-defense and for defense of others? If I were in a position to use deadly force to protect someone else, the first thing on my mind would be what the police and the lawyers and the government would do to me. And that is just sad. But that's the world we live in, where so many people who are afraid of guns (while knowing nothing at all about them). I think many people would blame this man for being "violent" without caring about the context for his actions.

Why do progressives oppose guns? I think because they hate conservatives in a way that is not reciprocated. Progressives think that conservatives are *evil*, whereas conservatives think that progressives are merely *wrong*. Progressives don't like guns, because if they had them, they feel that they could not stop themselves from killing. There are many examples of this: the Bernie Sanders supporter who shot at Republican legislators, or the gay activist who opened fire in the Family Research Council building. Progressives project their own lack of self-control onto conservatives, and that's why they want to ban guns and criminalize self-defense. But conservatives use guns for good, not evil.

Was Hitler a Christian? Is Nazism similar to Christianity?

July 12, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

One of the strangest things I have heard from atheists is the assertion that Christianity is somehow connected to the fascism, such as the fascism that existed under Adolf Hitler. Two posts by Jewish author Jonah Goldberg from National Review supply us with the facts to set the record straight.

Let's start with the first post.

Here are some of the points:

1) Hitler wanted Christianity removed from the public square

> Like the engineers of that proverbial railway bridge, the Nazis worked relentlessly to replace the nuts and bolts of traditional Christianity with a new political religion. The shrewdest way to accomplish this was to co-opt Christianity via the Gleichschaltung while at the same time shrinking traditional religion's role in civil society.

2) Hitler banned the giving of donations to churches

> Hitler banned religious charity, crippling the churches' role as a counterweight to the state. Clergy were put on government salary, hence subjected to state authority. "The parsons will be made to dig their own graves," Hitler cackled. "They will betray their God to us. They will betray anything for the sake of their miserable little jobs and incomes."

3) Hitler replaced Christian celebrations with celebrations of the state

> Following the Jacobin example, the Nazis replaced the traditional Christian

> calendar. The new year began on January 30 with the Day of the Seizure of Power. Each November the streets of central Munich were dedicated to a Nazi Passion play depicting Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch. The martyrdom of Horst Wessel and his "old fighters" replaced Jesus and the apostles. Plays and official histories were rewritten to glorify pagan Aryans bravely fighting against Christianizing foreign armies. Anticipating some feminist pseudo history, witches became martyrs to the bloodthirsty oppression of Christianity.

4) Hitler favored the complete elimination of Christianity

> When some Protestant bishops visited the Fuhrer to register complaints, Hitler's rage got the better of him. "Christianity will disappear from Germany just as it has done in Russia . . . The Germanrace has existed without Christianity for thousands of years . . . and will continue after Christianity has disappeared . . . We must get used to the teachings of blood and race."

5) Hitler favored the removal of mandatory prayers in schools

> In 1935 mandatory prayer in school was abolished…

6) Hitler favored the banning of Christmas carols and nativity plays

> …and in 1938 carols and Nativity plays were banned entirely.

7) Hitler abolished religious instruction for children

> By 1941 religious instruction for children fourteen years and up had been abolished altogether….

And now the second post.

8) Hitler opposed the ideas of universal truth and objective moral absolutes

> …Just as the Nazi attack on Christianity was part of a larger war on the idea of universal truth, whole postmodern cosmologies have been created to prove that traditional religious morality is a scam, that there are no fixed truths or "natural" categories, and that all knowledge is socially constructed.

Practically everything this man believed was 100% anti-Christian. But he fits in fine on the secular left.

Conclusion

Adolf Hitler was a man influenced by two big ideas: evolution and socialism. His party was the national SOCIALIST party. He favored a strong role for the state in interfering with the free market. He was in favor of regulating the family so that the state could have a bigger influence on children. And he favored the idea of survival of the fittest. His ideas are 100% incompatible with Christianity and with capitalism as well. Christians value individual rights and freedoms, small government and the autonomy of the family against the state. The commandments about not coveting and not stealing are *incompatible* with

redistribution of wealth from those who produce to those who “need”. The differences are clear and significant. The Bible favors *voluntary charity by individuals and churches*. It does not favor redistribution of wealth by a secular government *to equalize life outcomes regardless of personal responsibility*.

Ignorant atheists and their myths

In a recent debate between Matt Dillahunty and David Robertson, Dillahunty made the claim that Hitler was a Christian, because in a campaign speech, he told a Catholic audience that secular schools were bad, and religious schools were good. Dillahunty thought that this meant that Hitler was a Christian. Robertson asked him when those words were spoken, and whether they formed the basis of any POLICY after Hitler was elected. Dillahunty didn’t know, because he just cited the quotation without knowing anything about the context, or about the historical period. Robertson informed him that the words were spoken in a *campaign speech*, prior to Hitler’s rise to power, and that nothing in Hitler’s policies ever took the words seriously after he came to power. It was the equivalent of Obama claiming to support natural marriage, then legalizing same-sex marriage once elected. He lied in order to be elected. This kind of ignorance is very prominent in the atheist (“secular humanist”) community, which survives on mythology which is never subjected to rational inquiry. Here’s another good example of this ignorance.

Incidentally, Dillahunty later said, in the same debate no less, that he “didn’t know” if the Holocaust was morally wrong. Right – because *on atheism right and wrong are meaningless concepts*, rationally speaking. They are reduced to personal preferences only, where each opinion is as valid as the opposite opinion, since there is no *objective* standard by which to judge different opinions. That’s why atheists can’t make moral judgements about *anything*, they just have preferences, like their preference for certain foods and certain clothes. Very important to realize this when talking to atheists, because they use moral language to describe their personal feelings and opinions.

Whenever I hear atheists speculating about whether Hitler was a Christian, I immediately know that they have not investigated anything very carefully, and are merely being insulting. It’s not worth having a conversation with people who are stupid AND insulting.

Atheist Jerry Coyne explains why morality is impossible for atheists

July 13, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson about to do philosophy

Let's review what you need in your worldview in order to have a rationally grounded system of morality.

You need 5 things:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you

just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Theism rationally grounds all 5 of these. Atheism cannot ground *any of them.*

Let's take a look at #4: free will and see how atheism deals with that.

Atheism and free will?

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality.

Here are some more atheists to explain how atheists view morality.

William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud

> and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

When village atheists talk about how they can be moral without God, it's important to ask them to justify the minimum requirements for rational morality. Atheists may act inconsistently with their worldview, believing in free will, expecting praise and blame for complying with the arbitrary standards of their peer group, etc. But there is nothing more to morality on atheism that imitating the herd – at least when the herd is around to watch them. And when the herd loses its Judeo-Christian foundation – watch out. That's when the real atheism comes out – the atheism that we've seen before in countries that turned their backs on God, and the moral law. When God disappears from a society, anything is permissible.

Was Stalin an atheist? Is atheism or communism responsible for mass murders?

July 14, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Let's take a look at what Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

Let's see more from a peer-reviewed journal article authored by Crispin Paine of the University College, London:

> Atheist propaganda and the struggle against religion began immediately after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917. While social change would, under Marxist theory, bring religion to disappear, Leninists argued that the Party should actively help to eradicate religion as a vital step in creating 'New Soviet Man'. The energy with which the Party struggled against religion, though, varied considerably from time to time and from place to place, as did its hostility to particular faith groups. The 1920s saw the closure of innumerable churches and synagogues (and to a

> lesser extent mosques) and the active persecution of clergy and harassment of believers. From 1930, though, Stalin introduced a less aggressive approach, and wartime support for the government earned for the Russian Orthodox Church, at least, a level of toleration which lasted until Stalin's death. Under Khrushchev antireligious efforts resumed, if spasmodically, and they lasted until the end of the Soviet Union.

An article from the pro-communism Marxist.com web site says this about Stalin:

> During the ultra-left period of forcible collectivisation and the Five Year Plan in Four an attempt was made to liquidate the Church and its influence by government decree. Starting in 1929 churches were forcibly closed and priests arrested and exiled all over the Soviet Union. The celebrated Shrine of the Iberian Virgin in Moscow – esteemed by believers to be the "holiest" in all Russia was demolished – Stalin and his Government were not afraid of strengthening religious fanaticism by wounding the feelings of believers as Lenin and Trotsky had been! Religion, they believed, could be liquidated, like the kulak, by a stroke of the pen. The Society of Militant Atheists, under Stalin's orders, issued on May 15th 1932, the "Five Year Plan of Atheism" – by May 1st 1937, such as the "Plan", "not a single house of prayer shall remain in the territory of the USSR, and the very concept of God must be banished from the Soviet Union as a survival of the Middle Ages and an instrument for the oppression of the working masses."!

Now, if all you read were atheist web sites, you'd think that Stalin loved religion and wasn't opposed to Christianity at all. An atheist I know told me that Stalin was a Christian because that's what he was as a child at one point. Funny sort of way to carry out your Christian faith, isn't it? If you read atheist web sites, you'd expect Stalin to have had the career of a William Lane Craig or a J.P. Moreland. And yet in the fever swamp of atheist web sites, this is what they tell themselves. They believe it because they want to believe it. They have to believe it, in order to keep God at bay.

Now, if you were going to pick a hero of the Christian faith, you'd probably pick a real fundamentalist like William Wilberforce, who freed the slaves – because of his evangelical Christian convictions. Wilberforce took Christianity seriously – he believed every verse of the Bible, he tried to convert people to his faith, and he pushed his faith on others by passing laws. He was the worst nightmare of atheism – a politically active Evangelical Christian.

But who is a great atheist who was politically active? When I think of a great atheist, someone who really did the most to oppose the "lie" of God's existence, I think of Josef Stalin. So what kind of morality can we expect from someone who takes the message of Richard Dawkins and Dan Barker seriously and has the political power to really do something about it?

The Ukraine Famine

Take a look at this UK Daily Mail article about a great achievement of the atheist Josef Stalin, which occurred in 1932-1933.

Excerpt:

> Now, 75 years after one of the great forgotten crimes of modern times, Stalin's man-made famine of 1932/3, the former Soviet republic of Ukraine is asking the world to classify it as a genocide.
>
> The Ukrainians call it the Holodomor – the Hunger.
>
> Millions starved as Soviet troops and secret policemen raided their villages, stole the harvest and all the food in villagers' homes.
>
> They dropped dead in the streets, lay dying and rotting in their houses, and some women became so desperate for food that they ate their own children.
>
> If they managed to fend off starvation, they were deported and shot in their hundreds of thousands.
>
> So terrible was the famine that Igor Yukhnovsky, director of the Institute of National Memory, the Ukrainian institution researching the Holodomor, believes **as many as nine million may have died.**
>
> […]Between four and five million died in Ukraine, a million died in Kazakhstan and another million in the north Caucasus and the Volga.
>
> By 1933, 5.7 million households – somewhere between ten million and 15 million people – had vanished. They had been deported, shot or died of starvation.

This is what follows when you believe that the universe is an accident, that there is no objective good and evil, that human beings are just animals, that no God will hold us accountable, and that human beings are not made in the image of God for the purpose of freely choosing to come into a relationship with him. The Ukrainian famine is an action that came from a man whose worldview was *passionate atheism.*

Atheism today

You might think that today's atheists are much different than Josef Stalin, but understand that according to a recent survey of atheists conducted by atheists, 97% of atheists are pro-abortion. How many people have been killed by abortion? 56 million in the United States alone. Atheists in a society like ours, founded on Judeo-Christian values, are obviously going to live a lot better than Stalin. For one thing, they don't have the power that Stalin had to eradicate theism, although you can see Stalinism in the anti-Christian activities of groups like the Freedom From Religion Foundation. But take away the Judeo-Christian foundations of this society, and what would you see atheists doing?

Remember the words of Richard Dawkins:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by

> rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

Now, having said that, I readily admit that many atheists adopt Judeo-Christian values if their society is saturated with them, but they are acting better than their worldview requires. They are acting *inconsistently* with what atheism really teaches. It's good for us that they do, but for how long?

An exchange on purpose from one of William Lane Craig's early debates

July 15, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

The full transcript of this 1991 debate is here on the Reasonable Faith site. Keep in mind that this is young William Lane Craig against old, experienced Kai Nielsen.

Nevertheless, here is an exchange I wanted to highlight.

William Lane Craig:

The chief purpose of life is not happiness per se*, but the knowledge of God.* One reason the problem of evil seems so puzzling is that we tend to think that the goal of human life is happiness in this world. But on the Christian view this is false. Man's end is not happiness as such, but the knowledge of God–which in the end will bring true and everlasting human fulfillment. Many evils occur in life which seem utterly pointless with respect to producing human happiness, but they may not be unjustified with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Innocent human suffering provides an occasion for deeper dependency and trust in God, either on the part of the sufferer or perhaps those around him. Whether God's purpose is achieved through our suffering all depends on how we freely respond.

Kai Nielsen:

The first thing you should come to recognize is that there can be purposes *in* life that are perfectly intact even if there is no purpose *to* life. If there is no God or *telos* of any sort, there is no purpose to life; you weren't made for a purpose. But even if you weren't made for a purpose, you could find plenty of purposes in life, things worth doing and having and believing and struggling for. Some religious people will say, "That's all right for little individual small purposes, but you can't have any overarching purpose in life without

belief in God. You can little, fairly trivial things, but no really deep and pervading conception of a purpose in life without God." But that's not true. There are many atheists who have had such overarching purposes. They've fought relentlessly "the plague" (to use Camus' metaphor). They've sought to lessen the sum total of human suffering, of human degradation, of blighted hopes; they've positively sought to bring about a world with more happiness in it and more understanding of each other–more human flourishing, more human solidarity, a brotherhood and sisterhood. They've sought, in short, to bring about a classless, raceless, genderless world. Those big purposes – overarching purposes in life – are perfectly available to anyone who is an atheist as well as to someone who is a theist. I don't deny that believers haven't done that, but you don't *need* God to have either small purposes in life or an overarching purpose in life.

William Lane Craig:

First of all, I have never denied that you can have *subjective* purposes in life, but what I *am* arguing is that there is no *objective* basis to assume the moral worth of your purpose in life on an atheistic view. All purposes in life you choose are morally equal–whether you want to live a life as a doctor caring for the poor or choose instead to be a Ferdinand Marcos. There's no objective basis for assessing the moral worth of those purposes.

Kai Nielsen:

He says that I don't meet his objection that moral purposes *in* life all are perfectly arbitrary without God. I don't see the slightest reason for that. Some of them are arbitrary if they are silly and thoughtless purposes. Some purposes, if they are integrated, carefully thought-out, related to everything else we know, reflective (where human beings work through long traditions, including working with Christian traditions, in which you put together everything you know and think carefully about these purposes), are perfectly objective. And they are the only kind you can give much sense to.

You'll note that what counts as a good purpose on Kai's view is not objective. Every purpose that he mentioned (e.g. – genderless world) was meaningful *to him*. He chose them because they made him *feel good.* But do these purposes have any significance, ultimately?

Consider the heat death of the universe:

> The 'heat-death' of the universe is when the universe has reached a state of maximum entropy. This happens when all available energy (such as from a hot source) has moved to places of less energy (such as a colder source). Once this has happened, no more work can be extracted from the universe. Since heat ceases to flow, no more work can be acquired from heat transfer. This same kind of equilibrium state will also happen with all other forms of energy (mechanical, electrical, etc.). **Since no more work can be extracted from the universe at that point, it is effectively dead, especially for the purposes of humankind.**

This is how the universe ends, on atheism. No purpose achieved by any atheist matters,

ultimately – the end destination is the same. Humans are going to die out individually and collectively on atheism, nothing anyone does to affect anyone else is going to change a thing. Nothing atheists do matters.

Atheists like to make much of this life being all they have, and to live it to the fullest, etc. Their purposes are carefully chosen to give them happiness in this life. Every purpose is as valid as any other, so long as pursuing that purpose produces *happiness* for the pursuer. But nothing *ultimately* matters if atheism is true, because the end result of the universe is the same. Nothing they do matters to them, because they're dead. Nothing they do matters to anyone else, because we're all dead. It will be as if we never existed or did anything, one way or the other. The only reason to adopt a purpose, on atheism, is for the happiness it brings you *in this life.* The purpose cannot be chosen in order to have ultimate significance, because on atheism there is no ultimate significance – everything ends in the heat death of the universe *regardless* of what we do.

In Christian theism, however, what you do in this life has ultimate meaning beyond our earthly lives. What you choose affects your afterlife. What you do with others affects their afterlife. Plans made with respect to that objective goal of knowing God do stand the test of time. They matter, even if they don't feel good now. If your actions help to turn someone towards God or away from God, it makes a huge difference. A difference that lasts.

Matt Dillahunty debates David Robertson on atheism, morality and evil

July 16, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

OK. So I think it's safe to say that of all the Christian apologists out there, David Robertson is my least favorite debater. Why? Many reasons, but mostly because he does not bring in evidence, especially scientific evidence. And he seems to make these clever quips like G. K. Chesterton. I like evidence. I would rather that he talk about scientific and historical evidence.

Dina asked me to listen to this debate a while back, between David Robertson and agnostic Matt Dillahunty (he's not an atheist, he's just an agnostic). I went in absolutely convinced that Robertson was going to have his ass handed to him by Matt Dillahunty. And I could not have been more wrong.

Here's the debate posted on YouTube (audio only):

This snarky summary is just a paraphrase from certain parts of the debate, *it is not designed for accuracy*, but for fun – to make you listen to the debate. Listen to the debate to get the exact words in context.

Summary:

- Matt Dillahunty: he's an agnostic who calls himself an atheist
- David Robertson: he's from Scotland, could we not get someone better?
- Robertson opening statement is incredibly weak, as you might expect, he only had two arguments embedded in a long list of nonsense: 1) origin and design of the universe 2) reality of evil requires objective morality

1) Creation/Design:

Robertson: The fact is that matter exists. There are 3 views that could account for this fact: 1) created, 2) eternal, 3) self-generated out of nothing. Option 3) is self-contradictory, 1) requires a Creator, and 2) is falsified by the Big Bang cosmology. So what's your view?

Dillahunty: You're trying to get me to say what my view is, but I can just say "I don't know" and get out of having to take any position on how matter got here. I can say "I don't know" to all the scientific evidence for the Big Bang cosmology, too!

2) Evil requires objective morality, requires a moral lawgiver:

Robertson: evil exists, e.g. – the Holocaust. If atheism is true, objective morality is impossible. Richard Dawkins agrees. Therefore, theism is the best explanation for the existence of evil.

Dillahunty: In my opinion, morality means doing what helps people have well-being. And I think that the Holocaust is obviously bad, because it hurts the well-being of the victims.

Robertson: The problem is that on your view, different people decide what well-being is to them. If you were raised in the Social Darwinism of the Nazi regime, you would believe that the Holocaust was the best for the well-being of the society as a whole.

Dillahunty: Isn't it obvious that killing people is bad for their well-being?

Robertson: Is it bad for the well-being of unborn children to kill them?

Dillahunty: Yes

Robertson: So you're against abortion, then?

Dillahunty: No

Robertson: So you think that killing the child in the womb is against the well-being of the child, but you're for that?

Dillahunty: I don't know! I don't know!

Then Dillahunty tried to claim Hitler was a Christian:

Dillahunty: here is a quote by Hitler saying that secular schools are bad, and religious schools are good – see, he's a Christian!

Robertson: when was that said and to whom?

Dillahunty: I don't know, I don't know!

Robertson: It was said in 1933, during an election campaign, to Catholic authorities – he was a politician, looking for votes from Catholics so he could become Chancellor.

Good and evil on atheism:

Dillahunty: good actions results in states with more well-being, and evil actions result in states with less well-being.

Brierley: but when the Nazis slaughtered all those people, they believed they were increasing well-being

Dillahunty: But you could demonstrate to them that their action is not going to increase well-being. Survival of the fittest is descriptive of what happens, but it's not prescriptive.

Robertson: Whose well-being will human beings think about most, if not their own? Do you really think that you can stop people like Charles Manson from being evil by sitting down and trying to prove to them that they are not helping their victim's well-being?

(A BIT LATER)

Robertson (to Dillahunty): Is it a fact that Dachau (a concentration camp) was morally wrong?

Dillahunty: (literally, not a paraphrase) I DON'T KNOW

My thoughts:

When I listened to this debate, the overwhelming conviction that emerges is that Matt Dillahunty is not someone who forms his worldview based on evidence. His rejection of the Big Bang cosmology with "I don't know" is just atrocious. His comments about slavery in the Bible and Hitler being a Christian show that his investigations of these issues is far below the level of a responsible adult. His dallying with the Jesus-never-existed view just shows him to be fundamentally anti-intellectual, as even atheist historian Bart Ehrman denies that view. His definition of faith has nothing to do with the Bible, or Christian authorities, or Christian scholars – he invented a definition of faith that allows him to mock Christians as morons. That's just irresponsible – letting the desire to mock others cause you to distort the definition of a word. When asked to state his positions or respond to specific evidence, his response is very often "I don't know". It seems to me that atheism, to him, means not pursuing truth with the aim of grasping it. He wants to keep reality at a safe distance – that's why he says "I don't know" so often.

On morality, it's even worse. It's not surprising to me that he is pro-abortion and has no opinion about concentration camps being objectively evil. Most atheists are pro-abortion, by the way. When it comes to morality, Dillahunty only has his own personal opinions, and they refer to nothing outside his own mind. (His opinion of morality as related to well-being is utilitarianism – a very problematic view – but moreover, it is *his subjective view* – he isn't offering it as any sort of objective moral system that would be prescriptive instead of descriptive. Without an after-life, there is no reason for anyone to care about the moral point of view when it goes against their self-interest, anyway. Atheists use moral language, but their statements are not referring to any objective, prescriptive moral reality. Atheism is materialistic and therefore deterministic – it does not even ground the free will that is needed to make moral choices. Their view is Darwinian survival of the fittest, that's what emerges from their origins story – and it does not rationally ground morality. The strong kill the weak, if they can. I've written before about how difficult it is for atheists to *rationally* condemn things like slavery, and nothing in Dillahunty's presentation led me to believe that he had solved that problem.

Anybody can be an intellectually-satisfied atheist with an empty head – it's *knowledge* that causes people to conform their beliefs to *reality*. If one strives to keep one's head as empty as possible, then of course one can believe anything one wants. I'm glad, speaking as a Christian theist, that I get to follow the evidence wherever it leads. It seems to me that we should do that, rather than decide how we want to live first, and

then invent a worldview to justify our desires.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

July 17, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight
Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.

4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates
- You didn't need to come out on this cold night
- Craig's arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn't listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don't require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that "every effect requires a cause"
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can't see

- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn’t have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It’s too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It’s self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That’s why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg’s own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity (“I”) is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg’s responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it’s not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It’s that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the

majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said. Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the

fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Should government get out of the marriage business?

July 18, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Here are three articles by Jennifer Roback Morse posted at The Public Discourse. The articles answer the charge from social liberals and libertarians that government should "get the government out of marriage".

Here's the first article which talks about how government will still be involved in marriage, even if we get rid of the traditional definition of marriage, because of the need for dispute resolution in private marriage contracts. She uses no-fault divorce as an example showing how it was sold as a way to get government out of the divorce business. But by making divorce easier by making it require no reason, it increased the number of disputes and the need for *more government intervention* to resolve these disputes.

Here's the second article which talks about how the government will have to expand to resolve conflicts over decisions about who counts as a parent and who gets parental rights. With traditional marriage, identifying who the parents are is easy. But with private marriage contracts where the parties are not the biological parents, there is a need for the state to step in and assign parental rights. Again, this will require an expansion of government to resolve the disputes.

Here's the third article which talks about how marriage is necessary in order to defend the needs and rights of the child at a time when they cannot enter into contracts and be parties to legal disputes.

The third article was my favorite, so here is an excerpt from it:

> The fact of childhood dependence raises a whole series of questions. How do we get from a position of helpless dependence and complete self-centeredness, to a

> position of independence and respect for others? Are our views of the child somehow related to the foundations of a free society? And, to ask a question that may sound like heresy to libertarian ears: Do the needs of children place legitimate demands and limitations on the behavior of adults?
>
> I came to the conclusion that a free society needs adults who can control themselves, and who have consciences. A free society needs people who can use their freedom, without bothering other people too much. We need to respect the rights of others, keep our promises, and restrain ourselves from taking advantage of others.
>
> We learn to do these things inside the family, by being in a relationship with our parents. We can see this by looking at attachment- disordered children and failure-to-thrive children from orphanages and foster care. These children have their material needs met, for food, clothing, and medical care. But they are not held, or loved, or looked at. They simply do not develop properly, without mothers and fathers taking personal care of them. Some of them never develop consciences. But a child without a conscience becomes a real problem: this is exactly the type of child who does whatever he can get away with. A free society can't handle very many people like that, and still function.
>
> In other words I asked, "Do the needs of society place constraints on how we treat children?" But even this analysis still views the child from society's perspective. It is about time we look at it from the child's point of view, and ask a different kind of question. *What is owed to the child*?
>
> **Children are entitled to a relationship with both of their parents. They are entitled to know who they are and where they came from. Therefore children have a legitimate interest in the stability of their parents' union, since that is ordinarily how kids have relationships with both parents. If Mom and Dad are quarreling, or if they live on opposite sides of the country, the child's connection with one or both of them is seriously impaired.**
>
> **But children cannot defend their rights themselves. Nor is it adequate to intervene after the fact, after harm already has been done. Children's relational and identity rights must be protected proactively.**
>
> **Marriage is society's institutional structure for protecting these legitimate rights and interests of children.**

I recommend taking a look at all three articles and becoming familiar with the arguments in case you have to explain why marriage matters and why we should not change it. I think it is important to read these articles and to be clear that to be a libertarian doctrine does not protect the right of a child to have a relationship with both his or her parents. Nor does libertarianism promote the idea that parents ought to stick together for their children. Libertarianism means that adults get to do what they want, and no one speaks for the kids.

The purpose of marriage is to make adults make careful commitments, and restrain their desires and feelings, so that children will have a stable environment with their biological parents nearby. We do make exceptions, but we should not celebrate exceptions and we should not subsidize exceptions. It’s not fair to children to have to grow up without a mother or father just so that adults can pursue fun and thrills.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

July 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference

between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.

But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.

There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that “There is no God” is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that “There is a God.” Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God’s existence. He confesses that he doesn’t know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term “atheist,” you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with “non-theist.” So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word ‘atheist’ has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix ‘a-’ being read in this same way in ‘atheist’ as it customarily is in . . . words as ‘amoral’ . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. “The Presumption of Atheism,” by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word “atheist” trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our

> **cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.**
>
> **One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.**
>
> So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, "So is there a God or not?"

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these "subjective atheists"?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says "I lack a belief in the gravitational force!". When you engage in serious discussions with people about God's existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don't care about a person's psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over "I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God"? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: "I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!" What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: "Wintery Knight won't listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!". I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that's why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don't *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I'm not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

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- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

July 20, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they

take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.” And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What’s harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I’ll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, “In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home.” And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase “In order that you may know”. Same message, right?

3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don’t know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It’s really great. Acts 2:36. I’ve been a Christian 20 years and I didn’t see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can’t exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” There it is again. “Know for certain.”

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition “Christ rose from the grave,” for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, “I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave.”

3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be

> transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

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- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?

July 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

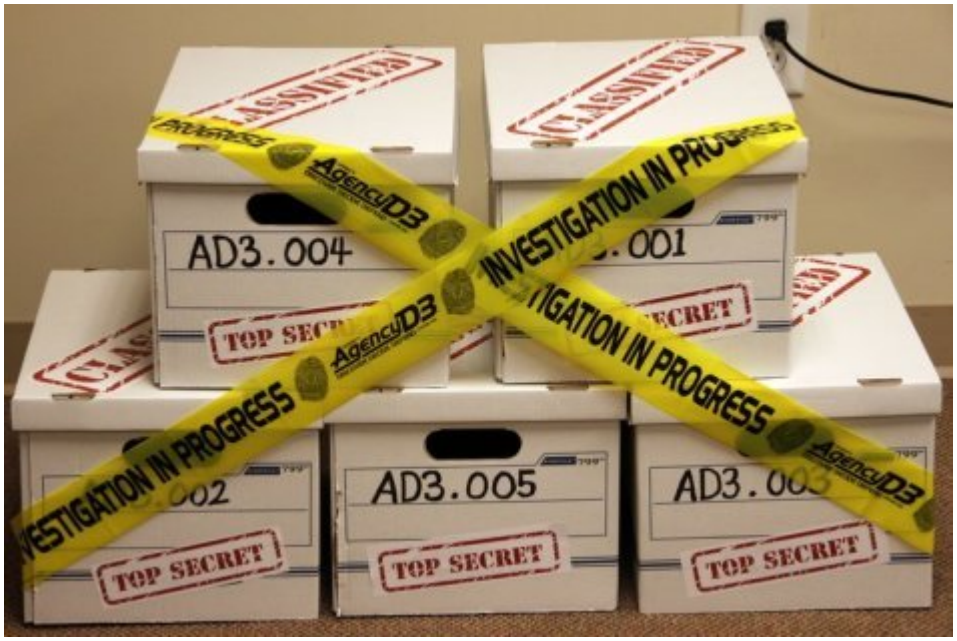

Investigation in progress

I've been having discussions with atheists lately, and finding out that in the atheist community, a lot of false beliefs persist because they (as a group) insulate themselves from rational inquiry. Basically, one of them says something that makes Christians look bad, and the rest of them believe it without ever looking into it, or even listening to a critical point of view. Anything that makes Christians look stupid and/or evil is *believed without question*.

It's not just the big lies like "the universe is eternal", "Jesus never existed", "unborn babies aren't human beings", "the multiverse explains away the cosmic fine-tuning", "the origin of life is a solved problem: aliens seeded the Earth with life", "the Cambrian explosion occurred over tens of millions of years", "moral realism is perfectly rational in an accidental universe where humans evolved randomly", etc.. Sometimes, it's just ordinary stuff like divorce rates between Christians and atheists. Stuff you can check pretty easily, as long as you're not lazy and ignorant.

I thought I would re-post this USA Today article from 2011 about that.

Excerpt:

> It's been proclaimed from pulpits and blogs for years — Christians divorce as much as everyone else in America.
>
> But some scholars and family activists are questioning the oft-cited statistics, saying Christians who attend church regularly are more likely to remain wed.
>
> "It's a useful myth," said Bradley Wright, a University of Connecticut sociologist who recently wrote "Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites … and Other Lies

> You've Been Told."
>
> "Because if a pastor wants to preach about how Christians should take their marriages more seriously, he or she can trot out this statistic to get them to listen to him or her."
>
> The various findings on religion and divorce hinge on what kind of Christians are being discussed.
>
> Wright combed through the General Social Survey, a vast demographic study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and found that Christians, like adherents of other religions, have a divorce rate of about 42%. The rate among religiously unaffiliated Americans is 50%.
>
> When Wright examined the statistics on evangelicals, he found worship attendance has a big influence on the numbers. Six in 10 evangelicals who never attend had been divorced or separated, compared to just 38% of weekly attendees.
>
> […]Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there's been some confusion.
>
> "You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees," he said.
>
> **Wilcox's analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.
>
> "There's something about being a nominal 'Christian' that is linked to a lot of negative outcomes when it comes to family life," Wilcox said.

Here's a quote from an Oklahoma State University study that confirms the Wright and Wilcox conclusions:

> History of Divorce and Religious Involvement
>
> Those who say they are more religious are less likely, not more, to have already experienced divorce. Likewise, those who report more frequent attendance at religious services were significantly less likely to have been divorced. This pattern of findings held using various analytic techniques that test which variables differentiate persons who have been divorced from persons who have not been divorced, while controlling for other variables that might affect the interpretation of the data, such as age, age of first marriage, income, and gender. When both the global rating of religiousness and the item assessing frequency of attendance at religious services are entered into the same analysis,

> the attendance item remains significantly associated with divorce history but the global religiousness item does not. This suggests that a key aspect of how religious faith affects marital relationships may be through involvement with a community of faith.

So, please do bookmark this information for the next time you hear an atheist make this argument. Obviously, you can't expect people who are not serious about their religion to be bound by the moral duties imposed by that religion. People who attend church regularly are probably more serious about their religion, and also probably more informed about what their holy book says. If their holy book is the Bible, then there are few options for divorce.

An article from Focus on the Family by Amy Tracy explains when divorce is allowed according to the Bible.

> God is very clear, however, that He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). He also says, "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matthew 19:6). According to the New Testament, there are two justifications for divorce: infidelity (Matthew 5:32) and desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15).

So divorce is not something a Bible believing Christian can do for frivolous reasons, unless he wants to be in rebellion against God.

The future of marriage in the church

In my own case, I learned about chastity and sobriety and courting *outside* the church, and in my case that means that I am still a virgin, that I don't drink more than a beer a year, and that when I like a girl, I court her. I do think that people in the church are generally more moral than people outside the church, but that's more because of convention rather than conviction. I don't think it's going to last, in other words – it's more like a hangover. Church is not the place where reasons and evidence are given that help people to resist peer pressure when they enter hostile environments, like the university. And often, parents are too busy working at their jobs (to make money they don't even need) to understand the issues and communicate them to their children.

We're probably not going to keep our low divorce rate unless we start to get serious about learning how to discuss moral issues practically, using evidence. Take premarital sex as an example. I've never been in a church where they explained the hormones that are released during sex that cause you to bond to the person you're having sex with. You would have to look in books or listen to lectures in order to understand the problem with having sex with someone you are not committed to – how it causes you to hold back your emotions for fear of a break-up. The church doesn't have much to say about the social effects of single motherhood by choice or the effects of gay parenting on children. Nor do they have any positive vision to offer men about how they can serve God by marrying carefully. Now is probably a good time to start thinking deeply about how to have a good relationship, how to have a good marriage, how to raise children who will make a

difference.

Are atheists able to perform the greatest moral duty?

July 22, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

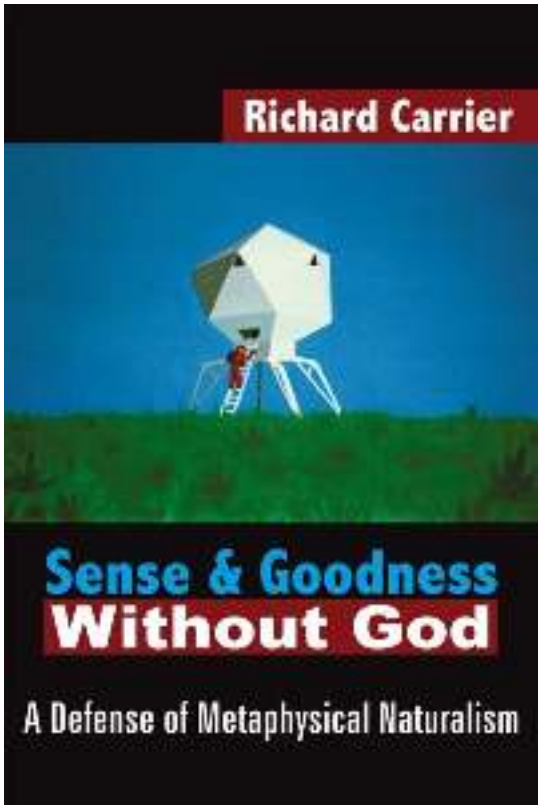

Goodness Without God: is it possible?

J. Warner Wallace looks at what Jesus says the most important commandment is, and then asks whether atheists can be justified morally if Jesus is right.

He writes:

> I was an atheist for the first thirty-five years of my life. While I was a committed (and often aggressive) non-believer, most people who knew me would probably have described me as a "nice guy". My behavior wasn't all that different than many of my Christian friends. I worked with many other atheist police officers. We were often suspicious of the Christians in our midst and the people we arrested who claimed to be Christians. Even as atheists we were familiar with Jesus' directive to "love your neighbor as yourself." My partner, Tim, used to say, "If there is a good God and a good Heaven, I think I will be there when it's all over. I'm a good person. I try to 'do the right thing'. *I'm* not a bad guy; I put bad people in jail. So I'm not worried about it." Tim held a "works based" moral worldview and he was sure his good deeds would earn him a spot in Heaven if he was wrong about the existence of God. But Tim (and I) were unfamiliar with Jesus' teaching in its full context, and now, years later as a Christian, I've come to understand why the first part of the "Greatest Command" is even more important than the second.

> When approached by a skeptic, Jesus affirmed the greatest commandments of God in the following way:
>
> ***Matthew 22:35-40***
> *One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."*
>
> Most unbelievers recognize the value of the second half of this command ("You shall love your neighbor as yourself") but deny the value of the first part ("'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.") There's a reason, however, why Jesus listed these two commands in this specific order. The first command (loving God) is the "great and foremost commandment" because it is *required* to achieve the second command (loving others). You can't *truly* do the right thing unless you understand the relationship between these two commands:

Read the rest at Cold Case Christianity.

I've made the same point here many times, but I have never been an atheist and I don't make the point in the same winsome way that Wallace does.

I think his post is worth sending along to any atheists you may know who think themselves justified. I think it is a mistake for people to derive their own version of morality based on the time and place where they are, and then think that picking and choosing the parts they like will justify them with God. Remember, a recent survey of atheists found that 97% of them favor abortion rights. I think this is consistent with the atheist view that there are no human rights, including a right to life. Moreover, in my experience, I have found that most atheists have no problem with the government stomping all over the consciences of Christian business owners when it comes to things like gay rights. It's important to show them that there is a standard independent of their personal opinions, justifications and rationalizations. And that they don't measure up to it.

Is the presuppositionalist approach to apologetics Biblical?

July 23, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here's J.W. Wartick's take from Always Have a Reason blog.

Excerpt:

> Cornelius Van Til pioneered the field of "presuppositional apologetics" primarily through his works *Christian Apologetics* and *The Defense of the Faith*. His arguments are easily misunderstood as question begging or viciously circular. Herein, I have presented a brief outline and analysis which reveals that while the presuppositional approach may indeed have some logical faults, the overall system has a certain power to it and can be integrated into a total-apologetic system.
>
> […]The key to understand here is that Van Til does not accept that there is a neutral reason "out there" by which Christians and non-Christians can arbitrate the truth of Christianity; his point is that there *is no neutral ground* and that one's presuppositions will determine one's end point. Again, he writes, "this [apologetic method] implies a refusal to grant that any area or aspect of reality, any fact or any law of nature or of history, can be correctly interpreted except it be seen in the light of the main doctrines of Christianity" (*Christian Apologetics*, 124).
>
> However, Van Til takes it even further and argues that one must presuppose the truth of Christianity in order to make sense of reality: " What is the content of this presupposition, then? It is this: "I take what the Bible says about God and his relation to the universe as unquestionably true on its own authority" (*The*

Defense of the Faith, 253); again, “The Bible is thought of as authoritative on everything of which it speaks. Moreover, it speaks of everything” (*Christian Apologetics*, 19). Thus, Van Til’s apologetic does not make Christianity the conclusion of an argument; rather, Christianity is *the starting presupposition*.

The presuppositional approach here cannot be stressed enough. For Van Til, one simply *cannot* grant to the non-Christian any epistemic point. “We cannot avoid coming to a clear-cut decision with respect to the question as to whose knowledge, man’s or God’s, shall be made the standard of the other. …[O]ne must be determinative and the other subordinate” (*The Defense of the Faith* 62-63).

What place is had for evidences in Van Til? At some points, he seems to be very skeptical of the use of Christian evidences. In particular, the fact that he argues there is no neutral evaluation grounds between the Christian and non-Christian seems to imply that there can be no real evaluation of such arguments apart from Christianity. One of Van Til’s most famous illustrations of the use of evidences can be found in *The Defense of the Faith* pages 332 and following. He uses three persons, Mr. Black (non-Christian), Mr. Grey (Christian non-presuppositionalist), and Mr. White (presuppositional/reformed apologist):

> Mr. Grey… says that, of course, the “rational man” has a perfect right to test the credibility of Scripture by logic… by experience… [Mr. Grey then takes Mr. Black a number of places to show him various theistic evidences. Mr. Black responds:] “you first use intellectual argument upon principles that presuppose the justice of my unbelieving position. Then when it it is pointed out to you that such is the case, you turn to witnessing [subjectively].
>
> …At last it dawned upon Mr. White that first to admit that the principles of Mr. Black, the unbeliever, are right and then to seek to win him to the acceptance of the existence of God the Creator… is like first admitting that the United States had historically been a province of the Soviet Union but ought at the same time to be recognized as an independent and all-controlling power… If one reasons for the existence of God and for the truth of Christianity on the assumptions that Mr. Black’s principles of explanation are valid, then one must witness on the same assumption [which makes witnessing wholly subjective.] (p. 332-339)

It can be seen here that even evidences for Van Til must be based within a presupposition. There is no way to look at evidences in the abstract. One can either offer them within the presuppositions of Christianity or outside of Christianity. For Van Til, once one has agreed to offer evidences outside of Christianity, one has granted the presuppositions of the non-believer, and therefore is doomed to fail.

This would include using arguments like the cosmological argument, the fine-tuning argument, arguments from miracles, etc. – including the resurrection. That seems to be Van Til's view. No evidence allowed – you have to presuppose Christianity is true in order to make sense of the world.

Now, I think we need to make a distinction between using questioning the pre-suppositions of our opponents, as with William Lane's Craig's moral argument, Plantinga's epistemological argument for reason and Menuge's ontological argument for reason. There are arguments for theism that question the pre-suppositions of an atheist. Certainly, non-theists cannot ground things like morality, free will, consciousness and rationality on atheism. But that's not what Van Til is saying. He says that an atheist cannot be swayed by evidence unless he first becomes a Christian. I.e. – he is saying that atheist Anthony Flew is lying when he says that evidence caused him to turn to believe in God. On Van Til's view, that's impossible.

My view of presuppositional apologetics is that is as a system, it is circular reasoning. It assumes Christianity in order to prove Christianity. But there is an even worse problem with it. It's not a Biblical way of doing apologetics. It's man's way of doing apologetics, not God's. I think that the best way to understand Van Til's apologetics is by saying that it really just a sermon disguised as apologetics. The problem is that Van Til's sermon has no basis in the Bible. Wherever he is getting his view from, it's not from the Bible. When I look the Bible, I don't see any Biblical support for the view that pre-suppositional apologetics is the *only approved way* of defending the faith. Instead, the standard method seems to be evidentialism.

In Romans 1, Paul writes that people can learn about God's existence from the natural world.

Romans 1:18-23:

[18]The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

[19]since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

[20]For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

[21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[22]Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

[23]and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

And in Acts, Peter appeals to eyewitness testimony for the resurrection, and Jesus' miracles.

Acts 2:22-24, and 36:

[22]“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[23]This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

[24]But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

And finally from the same chapter:

[36]“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Professor Clay Jones of Biola University makes the case that the use of evidence when preaching the gospel was *standard operating procedure* in the early church.
(H/T Apologetics 315)

Intro:

> In 1993 I started working for Simon Greenleaf University (now Trinity Law School) which offered an M.A. in Christian apologetics (Craig Hazen was the director). Much of my job was to promote the school and although I had studied Christian apologetics since my sophomore year in high school, I decided I needed to see whether an apologetic witness had strong Biblical precedence.
>
> It does.
>
> As I poured through the Scripture I found that Jesus and the apostles preached the resurrection of Christ as the sign of the truth of Christianity.
>
> What follows are some of the passages which support the resurrection witness.

Here is my favorite verse from his massive list list of verses in favor of the evidential approach to Christian apologetics:

> Mat. 12:39-40: A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jesus is saying that the resurrection was deliberately given as a sign to unbelievers to convince them. (“The Sign of Jonah” = the resurrection)

So, I see that God uses nature and miracles to persuade, which can be assessed using scientific and historical methods. Can anyone find me a clear statement in the Bible that states that only pre-suppositional arguments should be used? I could be wrong, and I am willing to be proven wrong. I think we should use the Biblical method of apologetics, not the fallen man’s method of apologetics.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

If you accept Jesus and become a Christian, will God make you happy?

July 24, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

This is a wonderful, wonderful post from Amy Hall, who writes for the Stand to Reason blog.

She writes:

> I had a brief interaction with an atheist on Twitter a couple of weeks ago that unexpectedly turned to the issue of suffering when she said:
>
> You clearly never had a time you were hurt. I don't mean sick. I don't mean heart broken. I mean literally a near death experience or rape or abusive relationship…. You can keep floating on a [expletive] cloud thinking Jesus will do everything for you but it's a lie. What makes you so special?
>
> That surprised me at first because it didn't seem to have anything to do with the tweet she was responding to, and I was confused as to why she would assume I'd never been through anything traumatic. But then in subsequent tweets, when she revealed she had been raped, it became clear that her trauma had played a central role in her becoming an outspoken, obviously angry "antitheist." She's a self-described antitheist now because she thinks Christianity teaches Jesus "will do everything for you" to give you a perfect life, and now she knows that's a lie. The rape proved her understanding of Christianity false.
>
> So it made sense for her to reason that since I believe Christianity is true, I must still be under the delusion that Jesus is making my life special, which means I obviously never encountered any evil or suffering to shake that delusion.

All right, readers. I don't want any of you to be thinking that if you become a Christian

that these things should be expected to happen:

- you will feel happy all the time
- you will be able to sense God's secret plan for your life through your feelings
- God's secret plan for your life will automatically work, even though it's crazy
- God will give you a perfect spouse and lots of money without you having to study anything hard, or do any hard work
- you get permission to do things that that make you happy, even if they are expressly forbidden by the Bible
- you don't have to do anything that makes you feel bad (e.g. – talk to non-Christians about Christian truth claims), because God wants you to be happy

No! Where do people get this idea that if they convert to Christianity, then God will become their cosmic butler?

Amy has the answer: (emphasis mine)

> Hear me, everyone: **This is a failure of the church.**
>
> A friend of mine who was deeply suffering once said to me that many Christians are in for "an epic letdown" when they realize their preconceived notions about what God is expected to do for us are false. Pastors who preach a life-improvement Jesus are leading people down this precarious path to disillusionment.
>
> If suffering disproves your Christianity, you've missed Christianity. The Bible is filled with the suffering of those whom God loves. The central event of the Bible is one of suffering. Love involves suffering. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." That means suffering.

It's the church. It's the focus on happy things and having of happy feelings and happy songs and preaching designed to make us feel good. I would say the comforting devotional reading doesn't help to make us any tougher or more practical, either. That happy-clappy stuff just gives you a false sense of safety about your precarious situation. God's job is not to prevent you from suffering. In fact, even if you make really smart, practical decisions, you can expect to get creamed *anyway*.

Please take 15 minutes and read the book of 1 Peter in the New Testament.

Here's a summary from GotQuestions.org:

> **Purpose of Writing:** 1 Peter is a letter from Peter to the believers who had been dispersed throughout the ancient world and were under intense persecution. If anyone understood persecution, it was Peter. He was beaten, threatened, punished and jailed for preaching the Word of God. He knew what it took to endure without bitterness, without losing hope and in great faith living an obedient, victorious life. This knowledge of living hope in Jesus was the message

> and Christ's example was the one to follow.
>
> **Brief Summary:** Though this time of persecution was desperate, Peter reveals that it was actually a time to rejoice. He says to count it a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ, as their Savior suffered for them. This letter makes reference to Peter's personal experiences with Jesus and his sermons from the book of Acts. Peter confirms Satan as the great enemy of every Christian but the assurance of Christ's future return gives the incentive of hope.
>
> **Practical Application:** The assurance of eternal life is given to all Christians. One way to identify with Christ is to share in His suffering. To us that would be to endure insults and slurs from those who call us "goodie two shoes" or "holier than thou." This is so minor compared to what Christ suffered for us on the Cross. Stand up for what you know and believe is right and rejoice when the world and Satan aim to hurt you.

Recently, I blogged about how suffering is compatible with an all-powerful God, so you might want to read that too if you missed it.

Young workers are paying Social Security taxes but will they ever collect benefits?

July 25, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

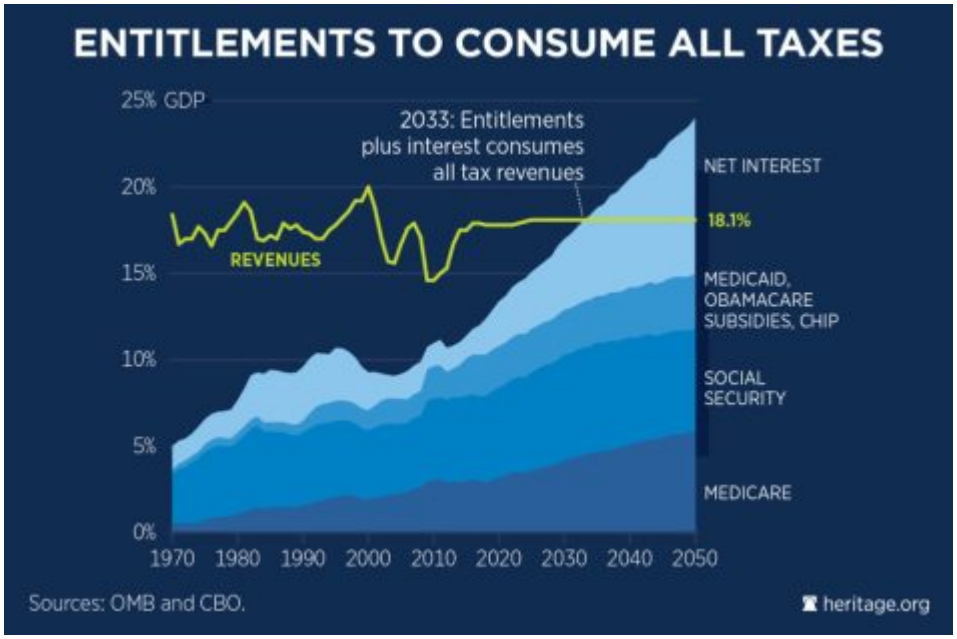

What if we had no money for anything except interest and entitlements?

The way Social Security taxes work is that you pay 12.4% of your salary, and another 2.9% for Medicare. That's 15.3%, before any federal, state and local taxes. So, what are you getting for this 12.4% contribution to the Social Security welfare program? You're supposed to be able to withdraw that money when you retire, but that money isn't being stored in an account with your name on it. It's being spent right now on people who are already retired. Will there be money available for you to withdraw when you retire?

If you're a young person who retires in 2035 or later, the answer is absolutely not.

The Daily Signal has the numbers:

> The American people need to know the state of finances of the Social Security program so they can better understand why reform is not only necessary, but absolutely essential. Here are five takeaways from the most recent financial report:
>
> - **$66 Billion Cash-Flow Deficit in 2016**
>
> Social Security is still considered solvent and able to pay full benefits because it has accumulated a $2.8 trillion trust fund, but since the entirety of its trust fund consists of IOUs, cash-flow deficits must be financed by general revenue taxes or new public borrowing.
>
> Since 2010, the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance program has taken in less money from payroll tax revenues and the taxation of benefits than it pays out in benefits, generating cash-flow deficits.

- **$14.3 Trillion in Unfunded Obligations**

However, this figure assumes that the $2.8 trillion in trust fund reserves are available to be spent. The problem is that these reserves represent liabilities for the U.S. taxpayer. The payroll revenues have been spent and the trust fund was credited with U.S. bonds, which represent claims on the American taxpayer. This is why the actual unfunded obligation is $14.3 trillion.

The trustees report that Social Security's unfunded obligation has reached $11.5 trillion. That is the difference between what the program is expected to receive in income and what is expected to spend over the 75-year horizon the program's actuaries consider for projections.

- **Insolvent by 2035**

Based on current projections, the Social Security Old-Age and Survivors Insurance trust fund will be depleted by 2035, reducing Social Security's expenditures automatically to what the program will receive in revenues, regardless of benefits due at that time.

Social Security is only legally permitted to spend funds in excess of its revenues until its trust fund is depleted.

- **25 Percent Automatic Benefit Cut**

What this means for beneficiaries is that in the absence of congressional action, benefits could be delayed or indiscriminately reduced across the board by 25 percent.

Once the Social Security trust fund is depleted, the program will only be able to pay 75 percent of scheduled benefits, based on payroll and other Social Security tax revenues projected at that time.

- **High Costs to Delaying Reform**

The trustees highlight that if Congress waits until the trust funds become exhausted, the cost of making the program solvent will be as much as 40 percent higher, meaning significantly greater benefit cuts and/or tax increases for workers and beneficiaries.

There are several key reforms Congress could pursue to preserve benefits for the most vulnerable beneficiaries without increasing the tax or debt burden on younger generations. However, the longer Congress waits the act, the larger the changes that will be necessary to address Social Security's combined financing shortfall.

Young people working today who retire in 2035 or later will never see a dime of their Social Security contributions. What's more likely is that the taxes on their income will go

even higher. Take a good look at your paycheck, and you will see money being deducted for this entitlement program. This is money you will never see again. It is being used now, to buy the votes of elderly people who vote against reform when they vote Democrat.

The only person to try to do something about these Social Security problems was George W. Bush – a Republican. But his effort to set up private savings accounts was stopped by Democrats, who depend on the votes of the people who collect from Social Security.

These problems are even worse when you realize that Social Security is only one of the entitlement programs that is going bankrupt. There are others – as well as interest on the $20 trillion debt. ($10 trillion of which was added by Obama in his 8 years as Welfare President). Young people: you are paying taxes for programs that will not be there for you when you need them. Stop voting Democrat, because money matters!

Astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on intelligent design and habitability

July 26, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Since it's eclipse time in America, I've posted a lecture that talks about intelligent design and eclipses. There are 5 video clips that make up the full lecture.

The playlist for all 5 clips is here.

About the speaker

> Guillermo Gonzalez is an Associate Professor of Physics at Grove City College. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington and has received fellowships, grants and awards from such institutions as NASA, the University of Washington, the Templeton Foundation, Sigma Xi (scientific research society) and the National Science Foundation.

Learn more about the speaker here.

The lecture

Here's part 1 of 5:

And the rest are here:

- Part 2 of 5
- Part 3 of 5
- Part 4 of 5
- Part 5 of 5

Total time: 43 minutes.

Topics:

- What is the Copernican Principle?
- Is the Earth's suitability for hosting life rare in the universe?
- Does the Earth have to be the center of the universe to be special?
- How similar to the Earth does a planet have to be to support life?
- What is the definition of life?
- What are the three minimal requirements for life of any kind?
- Requirement 1: A molecule that can store information (carbon)
- Requirement 2: A medium in which chemicals can interact (liquid water)
- Requirement 3: A diverse set of chemical elements
- What is the best environment for life to exist?
- Our place in the solar system: the circumstellar habitable zone
- Our place in the galaxy: the galactic habitable zones
- Our time in the universe's history: the cosmic habitable age
- Other habitability requirements (e.g. – metal-rich star, massive moon, etc.)
- The orchestration needed to create a habitable planet
- How different factors depend on one another through time
- How tweaking one factor can adversely affect other factors
- How many possible places are there in the universe where life could emerge?
- Given these probabilistic resources, should we expect that there is life elsewhere?
- How to calculate probabilities using the "Product Rule"
- Can we infer that there is a Designer just because life is rare? Or do we need more?

The corelation between habitability and measurability.

- Are the habitable places in the universe also the best places to do science?
- Do the factors that make Earth habitable also make it good for doing science?
- Some places and times in the history of the universe are more habitable than others
- Those exact places and times also allow us to make scientific discoveries
- Observing solar eclipses and structure of our star, the Sun
- Observing stars and galaxies
- Observing the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Observing the acceleration of the universe caused by dark matter and energy
- Observing the abundances of light elements like helium of hydrogen
- These observations support the big bang and fine-tuning arguments for God's existence
- It is exactly like placing observatories on the tops of mountains
- There are observers existing in the best places to observe things
- This is EXACTLY how the universe has been *designed for making scientific discoveries*

This lecture was delivered by Guillermo Gonzalez in 2007 at the University of California at

Davis. If you like this lecture, but maybe want something a bit more user friendly, check out “The Privileged Planet” DVD, or watch it online here (first 60 minutes of that video).

How can we get single men and husbands to be interested in church and ministry?

July 27, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church is ineffective and impractical, and that's why men are bored there

Consider this passage from William Lane Craig's April 2013 newsletter, which made me very excited and happy. (H/T Triablogue)

Here it is:

> One overwhelming impression of these engagements is the way in which the intellectual defense of Christian faith attracts men. Both at Texas A&M and again at Miami every single student who got up to ask a question was a guy! I wondered if the girls are just shy. But then I remembered a lengthy clip Jan and I watched of cast members of Downton Abbey doing a Q&A with an audience in New York. Almost every person who came to the microphone at that event was a woman! It wasn't until late into the evening that a man finally asked a question, which was remarked by all the cast members. Why the difference between that session and the ones I experienced?—simply because the Downton Abbey program is highly relational, which is more appealing to women, whereas my talks were principally intellectually oriented, which is more appealing to men.
>
> Churches have difficulty attracting men, and the church is becoming increasingly feminized. I believe that apologetics is a key to attracting large numbers of men (as well as women) to church and to Christ. By presenting rational arguments and historical evidences for the truth of the Gospel, by appealing to the mind as well as the heart, we can bring a great influx of men into the Kingdom. I'm so pleased that the church in Canada seems to be awakening to this challenge! I'm convinced that we have the opportunity to revolutionize Western Christianity by

> reclaiming our intellectual heritage.

Now, I hear a lot of complaints from women in the church and pastors in the church about men not being interested in going to church. I think that the problem is that church is hostile to men's natures. Men thrive on conflict and competition. Men prefer strict rules and moral judgments. Men prefer to shame people who underperform, rather than coddle them. Men are practical and results focused. So how should the church accommodate the different nature that men have? Apologetics is one way to appeal to the male nature.

Let's take a look at it.

Pastors: church as it is now is abrasive to men's male nature

In a recent William Lane Craig podcast, at time 8:47, the WLC tells Kevin Harris about how he and his wife Jan asked about six of the young men who attend his "Defenders" apologetics class which morning service they attended: traditional or contemporary. ALL of the young men said that they attended neither service, because they go to church to learn something and the service has no educational value to them. The only attend the Defenders class. The apologetics class taught them things they could actually use – things they could actually use to think better, and fight better. This is my experience as well, although I am looking for a better church that does have some appeal to men. I might even have to move to find a decent church that has apologetics.

There is absolutely nothing going on in most churches that is valuable to a man. Men, by and large, only pray as a last resort, after we have done everything we can to solve the problem ourselves. We pay the most attention to the parts of the Bible that help us debate with non-Christians, or that give us things to do. We like to find evidence in the real world that connects with what the Bible is saying. We are interested in planning, execution and results. We are not very interested in feelings, singing, devotions, or bending the rules to make people doing bad things feel good. Now that's not necessarily true for all men, but it is true for the majority of men.

And lest some people worry that fighting makes enemies, it doesn't. Fighting with non-Christians has two effects: 1) they respect Christianity more, and 2) they want to be your friends and talk to you about spiritual things. Atheists see your standing up for what you believe in and living consistently with it indicative of *authenticity*. That is not the exception, Christian women and pastors – *that is the rule*. Atheists don't think that standing up for what you believe in makes Christianity look *fake,* they think it makes Christianity look *authentic.* Well, at least the ones who are worth talking to think that.

Wives: don't choose men who had no interest in advocating for Christianity before you married them

A related problem I see is the problem of wives marrying the wrong men then complaining that the men they freely chose to marry are not interested in church. This is actually the woman's fault. Most women don't think about what is best for God when they think about who to marry and have children with, they think about what makes them feel good. They don't have any kind of plan where they match the man's ability to the roles he will play as husband and father – they just pick who makes them feel good. This works

about as well as buying and selling stocks based on which make you feel good, or choosing electronics and computers based on the color, or choosing a job or a church based on what the building looks like. The Bible lays out a few minimal requirements for a man: chastity, self-sacrificial love, providing for family, leading on moral and spiritual issues. Most young, unmarried women don't value those things. If a woman picks a man who doesn't make any demands on them, and who doesn't judge them, then she cannot depend on him to show spiritual and moral leadership later on in the marriage. So don't pick a man like that.

Wives: men respond to attention, recognition and approval from women

The reason that most husbands don't engage in Christianity is because most wives (not my married friends of course) haven't approached Christianity as something that is objectively true. Men don't create illusions for themselves in order to feel better – they are more practical than that. Men only invest in things that they think are true, and where they can see that their practical efforts will make a difference. Men are turned off by the view that Christianity is just something that helps families and communities bond, and makes people feel comfort. We think that's weakness, and we abhor weakness. Once men get the idea that a woman thinks of Christianity as feelings-fulfillment, we stop trying to achieve anything for the Kingdom of God. Men don't want to be roped into Christianity if all it means is helping people get along and feel good. But they very much want to be roped into a demanding relationship with God where their efforts to achieve results count with God *and* gets them recognition and approval from their wives.

So how do wives learn to recognize and approve of what men do as Christians? Well, women need to learn apologetics and they need to practice debating with non-Christians. That will teach them to value conflict and competition, and to see how engagement and authenticity drives relationships with non-Christians forward. If women show an interest in objective truth, moral goodness and theological correctness, then men will become interested in these things, too. They will do it because men are addicted to pleasing women, and they want to help women more than anything in the world, second only to pleasing God. Men will enthusiastically engage in whatever will get them praise and recognition from women, and that means that women have to care about Christianity beyond their personal emotional experience of it and beyond their social cohesion experience of it. Initially, wives must be ready to praise and encourage their husbands, and then once the husbands get it, then they will be self-motivated and move out on their own. It will be self-sustaining.

New study: rising oxygen levels rejected as explanation of Cambrian explosion

July 28, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

So, just to refresh everyone, the Cambrian explosion was an event that occurred about 543 million years ago. In a very short period of time, less than 10 million years, probably 3-5 million, all of the major animal body plans emerged.

Here's what the Cambrian explosion looks like:

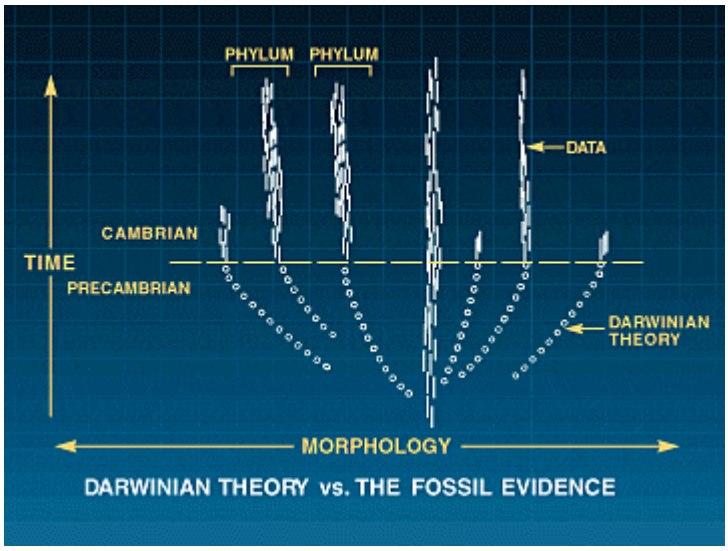

Cambrian Explosion

The Darwinian theory says that there should be precursors to all of the new phyla that appear. But we have never been able to find any precursors. We've been looking in the fossil record for the slow transition from simple life to complex life that Darwin predicted, but we've never been able to find anything that explains the sudden emergence of the body plans in the Cambrian explosion.

There is no known naturalistic explanation for the rapid emergence of these “phyla”. But, naturalists were holding out hope that maybe a sudden rise in the level of oxygen might have “triggered” the required increase in complexity.

This is from Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> Oxygen is crucial for the existence of animals on Earth. But, an increase in oxygen did not apparently lead to the rise of the first animals. New research shows that 1.4 billion years ago there was enough oxygen for animals — and yet over 800 million years went by before the first animals appeared on Earth.

> Animals evolved by about 600 million years ago, which was late in Earth’s history. The late evolution of animals, and the fact that oxygen is central for animal respiration, has led to the widely promoted idea that animal evolution corresponded with a late a rise in atmospheric oxygen concentrations.
>
> “But sufficient oxygen in itself does not seem to be enough for animals to rise. This is indicated by our studies,” say postdoc Emma Hammarlund and Professor Don Canfield, Nordic Center for Earth Evolution, University of Southern Denmark.
>
> […]The new study is published in the journal *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences*.
>
> […]The results differ from other studies and raise several questions, such as: Why then did animals rise so late in Earth’s history?
>
> “The sudden diversification of animals probably was a result of many factors. Maybe the oxygen rise had less to do with the animal revolution than we previously assumed,” says Hammarlund.

Now look here. I don’t see how a rise in oxygen level can create new body plans. Body plans are written in sequences of symbols – in proteins and DNA. I can no more believe that a rise in oxygen levels could create new animal body plans than I could believe that raising the level of oxygen in a computer lab could explain the new code that is being written by the software engineers. Body plans are information, and new body plans require new information. Information comes from software engineers – intelligent agents – not from rising oxygen levels.

In any case, the hypothesis was falsified. It isn’t the first time a naturalistic hypothesis for the Cambrian explosion was shot down (see below) and it won’t be the last.

Related posts

- New study: fossil discovery adds a new phyla to the explosive Cambrian explosion
- Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion
- How brief was the period in which the Cambrian phyla suddenly appeared?
- New study: ancient Cambrian-era fossils have similar brains to animals today
- New study: apoptosis is unchanged from Cambrian fossils to modern humans

- Fazale Rana responds to new paper claiming that rapid evolution explains Cambrian explosion
- New paper in Nature: Ediacaran fossils not ancestors of Cambrian fauna
- Nature publishes discovery of fossil with complex brain dated just after the Cambrian explosion
- Bad news for believers in naturalistic explanations of the Cambrian explosion
- Paul Chien interviewed on the Cambrian era fossils
- What is the best explanation for the Cambrian fossil record?
- The Cambrian explosion: biology's Big Bang
- The Cambrian explosion is getting more explosive

New study: college students who lost access to marijuana improved their grades

July 29, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

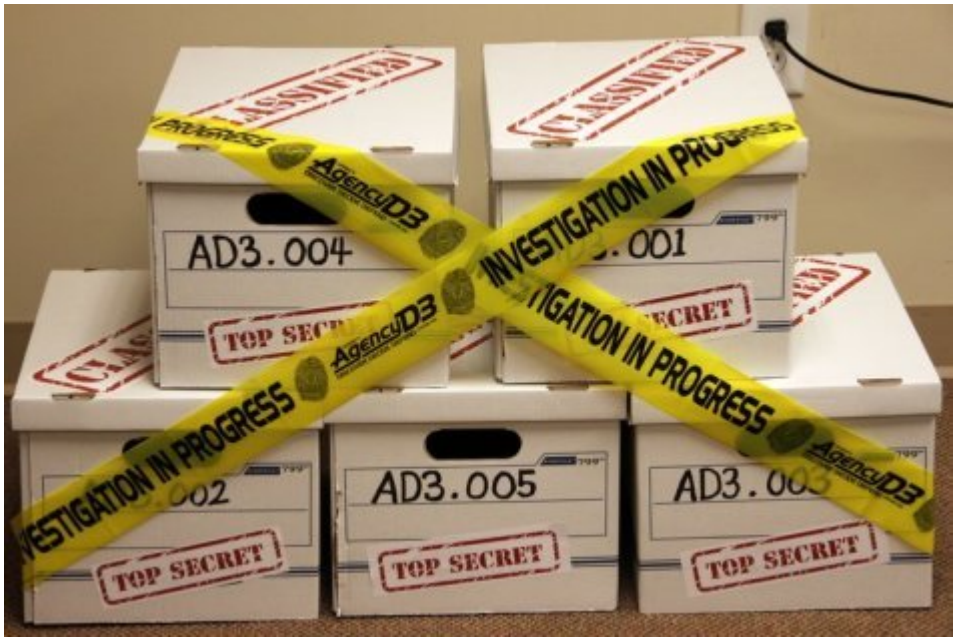

Investigation in progress

This is from the radically leftist fake news site Washington Post, of all places. Thankfully, the study was done by scientists, not by journalists.

Excerpt:

> The most rigorous study yet of the effects of marijuana legalization has identified a disturbing result: College students with access to recreational cannabis on average earn worse grades and fail classes at a higher rate.
>
> Economists Olivier Marie and Ulf Zölitz took advantage of a decision by Maastricht, a city in the Netherlands, to change the rules for "cannabis cafes," which legally sell recreational marijuana. Because Maastricht is very close to the border of multiple European countries (Belgium, France and Germany), drug tourism was posing difficulties for the city. Hoping to address this, the city barred noncitizens of the Netherlands from buying from the cafes.
>
> This policy change created an intriguing natural experiment at Maastricht University, because students there from neighboring countries suddenly were unable to access legal pot, while students from the Netherlands continued.
>
> The research on more than 4,000 students, published in the Review of Economic Studies, found that those who lost access to legal marijuana showed substantial improvement in their grades. Specifically, those banned from cannabis cafes had a more than 5 percent increase in their odds of passing their courses. Low performing students benefited even more, which the researchers noted is particularly important because these students are at high-risk of dropping out.

> The researchers attribute their results to the students who were denied legal access to marijuana being less likely to use it and to suffer cognitive impairments (e.g., in concentration and memory) as a result.
>
> Other studies have tried to estimate the impact of marijuana legalization by studying those U.S. states that legalized medicinal or recreational marijuana. But marijuana policy researcher Rosalie Pacula of RAND Corporation noted that the Maastricht study provide evidence that "is much better than anything done so far in the United States."

The author of that article is a professor of psychiatry at Stanford University. Should be reliable.

The best way to learn about the effects of legalizing drugs like marijuana is to look at where it's been tried. We don't have to look far, just to Colorado.

The Daily Signal reports on a peer-reviewed study about Colorado.

Excerpt:

> A published academic peer-reviewed study and another thorough study set to be released next Monday show:
>
> - An increase in marijuana-related traffic fatalities in Colorado since 2009
> - An increase in marijuana-related traffic fatalities in Colorado compared to non-"medical marijuana" states since 2009
> - Alcohol-related fatalities remained the same
>
> […]Marijuana was in essence legalized in Colorado in 2009, when the state commercialized the sale of so-called "medical marijuana." By commercializing the sale, and thus consumption of marijuana across the state, the state saw a large increase in use by its citizens, and citizens from other states, so-called pot tourists.
>
> In other words, 2009 was a pivotal year for Colorado and its' drivers.
>
> In the three years prior to 2009 (2006-2008), Colorado averaged 35 drivers per year who tested positive for marijuana in fatal accidents.
>
> In the three years after 2009 (2010-2012), Colorado averaged 57.3 drivers per year who tested positive for marijuana use in fatal accidents—a 64 percent increase over the pre-2009 numbers.

And here is another report that explains some of the other effects of legalizing marijuana.

Excerpt:

> According to the new report by the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area entitled "The Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado: The Impact," the impact of legalized marijuana in Colorado has resulted in:
>
> 1. The majority of DUI drug arrests involve marijuana and 25 to 40 percent

> were marijuana alone.
> 2. In 2012, 10.47 percent of Colorado youth ages 12 to 17 were considered current marijuana users compared to 7.55 percent nationally. Colorado ranked fourth in the nation, and was 39 percent higher than the national average.
> 3. Drug-related student suspensions/expulsions increased 32 percent from school years 2008-09 through 2012-13, the vast majority were for marijuana violations.
> 4. In 2012, 26.81 percent of college age students were considered current marijuana users compared to 18.89 percent nationally, which ranks Colorado third in the nation and 42 percent above the national average.
> 5. In 2013, 48.4 percent of Denver adult arrestees tested positive for marijuana, which is a 16 percent increase from 2008.
> 6. From 2011 through 2013 there was a 57 percent increase in marijuana-related emergency room visits.
> 7. Hospitalizations related to marijuana has increased 82 percent since 2008.
>
> The report includes other data about the negative effect of legalizing marijuana in Colorado, including marijuana-related exposure to children, treatment, the flood of marijuana in and out of Colorado, the dangers of pot extraction labs and other disturbing factual trends.

Part of me thinks that posting this is futile. Sensible people will not be surprised by these studies, but the libertarians and Democrats who think that legalized pot is just wonderful are probably so brain-damaged already that they won't care what studies say at all. Marijuana is dangerous and addictive. We shouldn't legalize it, and we shouldn't normalize it.

Related posts

- New study: long-term marijuana use causes decline in memory in middle age
- New 20-year study: long-term use of cannabis raises risk of mental health problems
- Report: Negative impacts from the legalization of marijuana in Colorado
- Welfare cash used to purchase marijuana in Colorado
- New study: even casual use of marijuana / cannabis alters brain
- New study: teen pot use could hurt brain and memory
- New study finds connection between early use of marijuana and mental illness
- New study: marijuana use by teens is linked to permanent brain abnormalities
- New study: smoking marijuana raises risk of having a stroke
- New study: smoking marijuana/cannabis permanently lowers IQ

Are evangelism and human responsibility for sin rational in Calvinism?

July 30, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here is a quote from Dr. Craig that seems to get Calvinists so angry:

> "The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom which confront Him are outside His control. He has to play with the hand He has been dealt."
>
> (Source)

Calvinists have told me that this quotation from Dr. Craig is "heretical" or "borderline heretical". They are claiming that Dr. Craig thinks that God is lacking in power somehow. But why is God's power limited, according to this quote?

Well, it's because God respects FREE WILL. That quote is simply Dr. Craig's way of saying that God does not override the free will of his creatures.

So let's make sense of Craig's statement. Either there is determinism and God causes people to act, or humans have free will and they cause themselves to do things. If you do not cause yourself to act, then you are not responsible for what you do. Just think for a minute. If I push you into someone and you fall into them and then they fall off a cliff, then are you a murderer? No – I would be, because I am the cause. The Bible teaches that God has chosen to limit his power so that that people have genuine responsibility for their actions, and that means they have genuine free will. Humans can only be responsible for their sins if they have the ability to do other than they do, and this is the traditional Christian view.

It's true that human beings are totally depraved as a result of the fall, and do not want

God in their lives, but they are responsible because God wants them to be saved, and it is their free choice that prevents it. Rather than force humans to love him against their will, God lets them resist him, and so they are responsible for their sin.

Dr. Craig cites the famous Calvinist D. A. Carson (who I like) explaining some of the themes of the Bible that affirm robust free will and human responsibility:

> The classical Reformed [scholars]… acknowledge that the reconciliation of Scriptural texts affirming human freedom and contingency with Scriptural texts affirming divine sovereignty is inscrutable. D. A. Carson identifies nine streams of texts affirming human freedom: (1) People face a multitude of divine exhortations and commands, (2) people are said to obey, believe, and choose God, (3) people sin and rebel against God, (4) people's sins are judged by God, (5) people are tested by God, (6) people receive divine rewards, (7) the elect are responsible to respond to God's initiative, (8) prayers are not mere showpieces scripted by God, and (9) God literally pleads with sinners to repent and be saved (*Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension,* pp. 18-22). These passages rule out a deterministic understanding of divine providence, which would preclude human freedom.

On Calvinism, however, all of these 9 features of reality, supported by dozens and dozens of Bible passages, are all false. On Calvinism, God is the sole causal agent. There is no free will. People go to Heaven or Hell as a choice of God. People can only perform good actions if God acts unilaterally to "regenerate" them, making obedience to God possible. Calvinism teaches that God and his agents are constantly exhorting and commanding things that they literally cannot do because they are unregenerate, and the only way to get regenerate is for God to regenerate them, *against their will*. And they can't resist that.

So let's make sense of D.A. Carson's list of 9 items:

1. On Calvinism, when God or his agents exhort or command people to perform good actions, it's meaningless because God has to unilaterally regenerate them first, so that they can perform the good actions.
2. On Calvinism, when God or his agents tell people to obey, believe and choose God, it's meaningless because God has to unilaterally regenerate them first, so they can obey, believe and choose God.
3. On Calvinism, when people sin and rebel against God, it's like people are soda cans that God shakes up some of them, and then pops the tabs on all of them and the ones he shook up fizz.
4. On Calvinism, when God judges people for sinning, it's like God sends the cans who don't fizz to Hell for eternity, even though he unilaterally chose not to shake them, which is the only way they could fizz.
5. On Calvinism, when God tests people, it's meaningless, because there is no way they can pass the tests unless God unilaterally regenerates them first, so they can

pass the test.

6. On Calvinism, when people receive divine rewards, it's meaningless, because all the credit goes to God for regenerating them. They are just fizzing because God shook their can of soda.
7. On Calvinism, when people respond to God's initiative, it's meaningless, because God's regeneration is irresistible and irrevocable. They can do nothing other than fizz when he shakes the can.
8. On Calvinism, when people pray, it's meaningless, because God unilaterally decides whether to regenerate people or not, and all their fizzing comes solely from his decision to shake or not shake the can.
9. On Calvinism, when God pleads with sinners to repent and be saved, it's meaningless, because God has to unilaterally regenerate them before they can repent, and then that repentance cannot be resisted at any time after.

Here's William Lane Craig to explain it further in an answer to a question of the week from Dr. Craig's Reasonable Faith web site.

5 problems:

1. *Universal, divine, causal determinism cannot offer a coherent interpretation of Scripture.*
2. *Universal causal determinism cannot be rationally affirmed*.
3. *Universal, divine, determinism makes God the author of sin and precludes human responsibility.*
4. *Universal, divine, determinism nullifies human agency*.
5. *Universal, divine determinism makes reality into a farce*.

If God's choice, to regenerate or not, causally determines whether we can respond to him, or not, then that is *determinism*. And it makes our lives *meaningless* because we are not responsible for anything we do. Life is a puppet show, and there is only one person pulling the strings. Evangelism makes no sense, because God decides unilaterally and irrevocably who is saved. When I explain this to Calvinists, their response is that God commands us to evangelize, so we must even if it *makes no sense on their view.*

A Calvinist might respond to this defense of free will and human responsibility with passages from Romans 8 and 9, but those are best understood as speaking about corporate election, rather than unilaterally-determined selection. Membership in the elect group is based on people responding to God's drawing of them to him. That interpretation fits with the rest of the Bible, which is uniformly affirmative of human free will and human responsibility. Concerns about diminished divine sovereignty are resolved by middle knowledge, in which God chooses to actualize exactly the world that achieves his sovereign will out of all the possible worlds, and he saves exactly the people he chooses to save – but without violating their free will. Yes, it's cosmic entrapment, but at least the cosmic entrapment does not violate the free will of the creatures, which would render then irresponsible for their own sins.

Disclaimer: I don't think that this is an issue that should divide Christians, and I do think that Calvinists are most definitely Christians. And that they are very devout and intelligent Christians, too. I think they just have a presupposition of theological determinism that colors the way they read the Bible, resulting in an unBiblical anthropology. This often leads them to a Mormon epistemology ("the Bible is true because I feel that it's true") and magic words evangelism ("the correct way to evangelize is not to use evidence but to invite unbelievers to presuppose the truth of the Bible because it causes them to have all the feels").

If you are looking for a good book on this issue, I recommend Kenneth Keathley's "Salvation and Sovereignty", which is a thorough discussion of the problem of divine sovereignty and human freedom.

How good is Alexander Vilenkin’s no-God explanation for the origin of the universe?

July 31, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

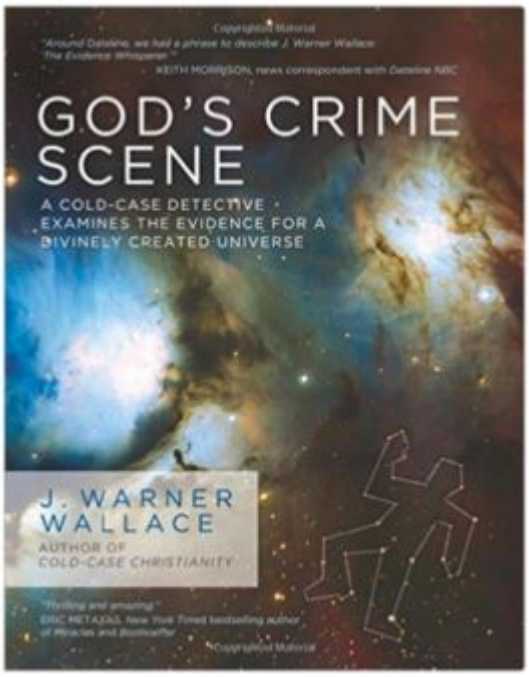

God’s Crime Scene: A Cold-Case Detective Examines the Evidence for a Divinely Created Universe

I’ve been spending some time going over J. Warner Wallace’s splendid book “God’s Crime Scene” with a friend of mine over Skype. Last week we did chapter 1 on the origin of the universe. We were both struck at Wallace’s statement about Alexander Vilenkin, a non-theist who thinks that the universe had a beginning out of nothing.

Wallace writes:

> If you’re a bit confused by all the alternatives offered by those who deny the universe had a beginning, perhaps it’s time to call an expert witness. In this case, there’s no one better than Alexander Vilenkin, theoretical physicist, cosmologist, professor of physics, and director of the Institute of Cosmology at Tufts University. Partnering with mathematician Arvind Borde, cosmologist Alan Guth, and graduate researcher Audrey Mithani, Vilenkin has written several papers demonstrating demonstrating any model of the universe in which expansion is occurring, regardless of the early conditions of the cosmos, must have a beginning.[8] Vilenkin’s work addresses all the models we’ve already described, plus any future proposals in which the expansion of the universe is acknowledged. [9]Vilenkin is a critical expert witness because he simplifies and makes sense of the diverse, sometimes-confusing scientific data.’

This week, my friend asked me why Vilenkin was still not ready to become a theist. Well, Dr. William Lane Craig got asked that same question in his question of the week, and his

answer was interesting.

Vilenkin's view affirms the nothing that precedes the universe:

> Modern physics can describe the emergence of the universe as a physical process that does not require a cause. Nothing can be created from nothing, says Lucretius, if only because the conservation of energy makes it impossible to create nothing [*sic*; something?] from nothing. . . .
>
> There is a loophole in this reasoning. The energy of the gravitational field is negative; it is conceivable that this negative energy could compensate for the positive energy of matter, making the total energy of the cosmos equal to zero. In fact, this is precisely what happens in a closed universe, in which the space closes on itself, like the surface of a sphere. It follows from the laws of general relativity that the total energy of such a universe is necessarily equal to zero. . . .
>
> If all the conserved numbers of a closed universe are equal to zero, then there is nothing to prevent such a universe from being spontaneously created out of nothing. And according to quantum mechanics, any process which is not strictly forbidden by the conservation laws will happen with some probability. . . .
>
> What causes the universe to pop out of nothing? No cause is needed.[1]

Dr. Craig replies at length, here is the part I liked best:

> **Finally, Vilenkin's inference that because the positive and negative energy in the universe sum to zero, therefore no cause of the universe's coming into being is needed is hard to take seriously. This is like saying that if your debts balance your assets, then your net worth is zero, and so there is no cause of your financial situation!** (Vilenkin would, I hope, not agree with Peter Atkins that because the positive and negative energy of the universe sum to zero, therefore nothing exists now, and so "Nothing did indeed come from nothing."[2] For as Descartes taught us, I, at least, undeniably exist, and so something exists.) **Christopher Isham, Britain's premier quantum cosmologist, rightly points out that there still needs to be "ontic seeding" to create the positive and negative energy in the first place, even if on balance its sum is naught.[3]**
>
> Vilenkin's interaction with the *kalam* cosmological argument is, as I say, fascinating because we see here so clearly how philosophical *faux pas*, not scientific mistakes, invalidate the objections of an eminent scientist to the argument. This should be an object lesson to all those who, like Stephen Hawking or Lawrence Krauss, naïvely think that philosophy is a sterile and irrelevant discipline compared to science. Philosophy can help all of us, including scientists, to avoid the logical mistakes and conceptual confusions that are all too prevalent in discussions taking place on the borderland of physics, metaphysics, and theology.

That’s a very simple refutation of a famous scientist’s speculative cosmology that anyone can understand. Christians are on very good ground when it comes to the science of origins.

You would think that more Christians would be aware of this evidence and the difficulties that naturalists have in accounting for the origin of the universe in their worldview. But, for some reason, it’s not a real hot topic in most churches. Nor is the fine-tuning or the origin of life or the Cambrian explosion. It’s really strange! If you haven’t yet picked up Wallace’s book, I highly recommend it. It’s the best book for blue collar workers who like evidence. The book touches on virtually every piece of evidence relevant to the God question, including some I had never seen before.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

How the presence and quality of fathers affects belief in God

August 1, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A father in the home helps children to reconcile love and moral boundaries

Here's an article by Paul Copan which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own*rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of François-Marie Arouet.

> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence, but there is also statistical evidence.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was

> asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an more difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to

see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others. If you want your child to be religious and moral, you have to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he makes, he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading.

My advice to Christian women is this. When you are picking a man, be sure and choose one who is already invested in Christian things and producing results. It's very unlikely that he's going to start from nothing after you marry him. If you value your kids, make a man's interest in developing and acting on a Christian worldview the main thing you are looking for.

The Muratorian fragment, dated 170 A.D., affirms 22 out of 27 New Testament books

August 2, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

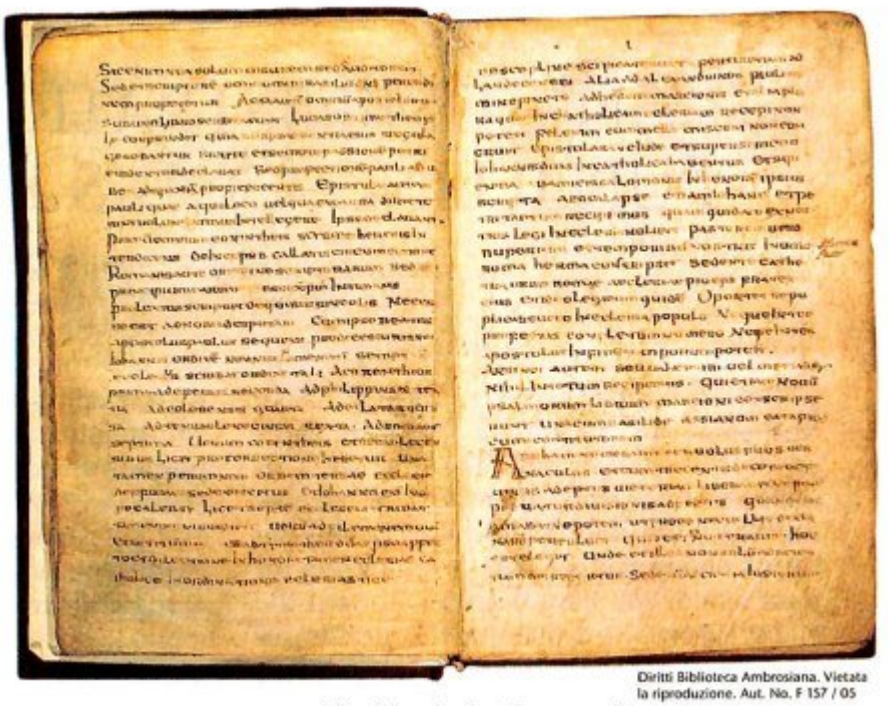

The Muratorian Fragment
Lines 32-85

The Muratorian fragment / The Muratorian canon (click for larger image)

I sometimes hear this odd objection that the books that were to be included in the Bible were not decided until the 4th century. I think it comes from some Hollywood movie, or maybe a TV show. Anyway, this post should help fix that myth.

I'm going to quote from New Testament expert Dr. Michael J. Kruger from his blog.

He writes:

> One of the key data points in any discussion of canon is something called the Muratorian fragment (also known as the Muratorian canon). This fragment, named after its discoverer Ludovico Antonio Muratori, contains our earliest list of the books in the New Testament. While the fragment itself dates from the 7th or 8th century, the list it contains was originally written in Greek and dates back to the end of the second century (c.180).
>
> […]What is noteworthy for our purposes here is that the Muratorian fragment affirms 22 of the 27 books of the New Testament. These include the four Gospels, Acts, all 13 epistles of Paul, Jude, 1 John, 2 John (and possibly 3rd John), and Revelation. This means that at a remarkably early point (end of the second century), the central core of the New Testament canon was already established and in place.

Although there is still dispute about some books, that does not negate the fact that the main books we use (the gospels, Acts, the letters of Paul) are all considered to be canon by 180 A.D., much before any famous church councils ever happened. And those books were decided on because they were in widespread use and respected by everyone.

What about the books that were in dispute? Do they throw any core doctrines into doubt?

> Second, if there was a core collection of New Testament books, then the theological trajectory of early Christianity had already been determined prior to the debates about the peripheral books being resolved. So, regardless of the outcome of discussion over books like 2 Peter or James, Christianity's core doctrines of the person of Christ, the work of Christ, the means of salvation, etc., were already in place and already established. The acceptance or rejection of books like 2 Peter would not change that fact.

By the way, I'd actually heard that the date for this fragment was 170 A.D., so it might even be earlier than Dr. Krueger says.

I did search around a bit for something to break the tie between me and Krueger, because I couldn't remember my source for the date. I found this book "Jesus, Gospel Tradition and Paul in the Context of Jewish and Greco-Roman Antiquity" by David E. Aune, and he writes on p. 22:

> The four Gospels are also referred to in the Canon Muratorianus, a seventh or eighth century manuscript originally translated from Greek into a deponent form of Latin and widely regarded as having been produced ca. 170 CE. Though the beginning of this canonical list is fragmentary (though obviously referring to Mark), the first two clear references to New Testament books are to Luke and John (lines 2, 9): tertio euangelii librum secando Lucan guard evangeliorutn Iohannis ex decipolis." ("The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke … The fourth of the Gospels is that of John, [one) of the disciples").

So, that's why the date in the title of this post is 170 A.D., and not the later 180 A.D. he mentions. And that's why there's no reason to be skeptical that the Bible we have today is any different than the Bible that everybody in the early church had.

MIT physicist Alan Lightman on fine-tuning and the multiverse

August 3, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Here's the article from Harper's magazine.

The MIT physicist says that the fine-tuning is real, and is best explained by positing the existence of an infinite number of universes that are not fine-tuned – the so-called multiverse.

Excerpt:

> While challenging the Platonic dream of theoretical physicists, the multiverse idea does explain one aspect of our universe that has unsettled some scientists for years: according to various calculations, if the values of some of the fundamental parameters of our universe were a little larger or a little smaller, life could not have arisen. For example, if the nuclear force were a few percentage points stronger than it actually is, then all the hydrogen atoms in the infant universe would have fused with other hydrogen atoms to make helium, and there would be no hydrogen left. No hydrogen means no water. Although we are far from certain about what conditions are necessary for life, most biologists believe that water is necessary. On the other hand, if the nuclear force were substantially weaker than what it actually is, then the complex atoms needed for biology could not hold together. As another example, if the relationship between the strengths of the gravitational force and the electromagnetic force were not close to what it is, then the cosmos would not harbor any stars that explode and spew out life-supporting chemical elements into space or any other stars that form planets. Both kinds of stars are required for the emergence of life. The strengths of the

> basic forces and certain other fundamental parameters in our universe appear to be “fine-tuned” to allow the existence of life. The recognition of this fine-tuning led British physicist Brandon Carter to articulate what he called the anthropic principle, which states that the universe must have the parameters it does because we are here to observe it. Actually, the word *anthropic*, from the Greek for “man,” is a misnomer: if these fundamental parameters were much different from what they are, it is not only human beings who would not exist. No life of any kind would exist.
>
> If such conclusions are correct, the great question, of course, is *why* these fundamental parameters happen to lie within the range needed for life. Does the universe care about life? Intelligent design is one answer. Indeed, a fair number of theologians, philosophers, and even some scientists have used fine-tuning and the anthropic principle as evidence of the existence of God. For example, at the 2011 Christian Scholars’ Conference at Pepperdine University, Francis Collins, a leading geneticist and director of the National Institutes of Health, said, “To get our universe, with all of its potential for complexities or any kind of potential for any kind of life-form, everything has to be precisely defined on this knife edge of improbability…. [Y]ou have to see the hands of a creator who set the parameters to be just so because the creator was interested in something a little more complicated than random particles.”
>
> Intelligent design, however, is an answer to fine-tuning that does not appeal to most scientists. The multiverse offers another explanation. If there are countless different universes with different properties—for example, some with nuclear forces much stronger than in our universe and some with nuclear forces much weaker—then some of those universes will allow the emergence of life and some will not. Some of those universes will be dead, lifeless hulks of matter and energy, and others will permit the emergence of cells, plants and animals, minds. From the huge range of possible universes predicted by the theories, the fraction of universes with life is undoubtedly small. But that doesn’t matter. We live in one of the universes that permits life because otherwise we wouldn’t be here to ask the question.

I thought I was going to have to go outside this article to refute the multiverse, but Lightman is honest enough to refute it himself:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.

> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

The multiverse is not pure nonsense, it is theoretically possible. The problem is that the multiverse generator itself would require fine-tuning, so the multiverse doesn't get rid of the problem. And, as Lightman indicates, we have no independent experimental evidence for the existence of the multiverse in any case. Atheists just have to take it on faith, and hope that their speculations will be proved right. Meanwhile, the fine-tuning is just as easily explained by postulating God, and we have independent evidence for God's existence, like the the origin of biological information, the sudden appearance of animal body plans, the argument from consciousness, and so on. Even if the naturalists could explain the fine-tuning, they would still have a lot of explaining to do. Theism (intelligent causation) is the simplest explanation for all of the things we learn from the progress of science.

We need to be frank about atheists and their objections to the progress of science. Within the last 100 years, we have discovered that the physical universe came into being out of nothing 15 billion years ago, and we have discovered that this one universe is fine-tuned for intelligent life. I don't think it's like that the last 100 years of scientific progress on the origins question are going to be overturned so that science once again affirms what atheists believe about the universe. Things are going the wrong way for atheists – at least with respect to science.

See it in action

To see these arguments examined in a debate with a famous atheist, simply watch the debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens, and judge which debater is willing to form his beliefs on scientific progress, and which debater is forming his beliefs *against* the science we have today, and hoping that the good science we have today based on experiments will be overturned by speculative theories at some point in the future. When you watch that debate, it becomes very clear that Christian theists are interested in conforming their beliefs to science, and atheists are very interested in speculating against what science has shown in order to maintain their current pre-scientific view. That's not what rational people ought to do when confronted with evidence.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion

- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- Near-death experiences and mental effort: evidence for the soul
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Are human bodies poorly designed? Is the human retina a bad design?

August 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

I think this "sub-optimal" argument against a Designer is stupid, because designs are always trade-offs between different quality goals, but just to put this one to bed, here is Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> Now a new paper in *Nature Communications*, "Müller cells separate between wavelengths to improve day vision with minimal effect upon night vision," has expanded upon this research, further showing the eye's optimal design. According to the paper, Müller cells not only act as optical fibers to direct incoming light through the optic nerve, but are fine-tuned to specific wavelengths to ensure that light reaches the proper retinal cells. From the Abstract:
>
> Vision starts with the absorption of light by the retinal photoreceptors — cones and rods. However, due to the 'inverted' structure of the retina, the incident light must propagate through reflecting and scattering cellular layers before reaching the photoreceptors. It has been recently suggested that Müller cells function as optical fibres in the retina, transferring light illuminating the retinal surface onto the cone photoreceptors. Here we show that Müller cells are wavelength-dependent wave-guides, concentrating the green-red part of the visible spectrum onto cones and allowing the blue-purple part to leak onto nearby rods. This phenomenon is observed in the isolated retina and explained by a computational model, for the guinea pig and the human parafoveal retina. Therefore, light propagation by Müller cells through the retina can be considered as an integral

> part of the first step in the visual process, increasing photon absorption by cones while minimally affecting rod-mediated vision.
>
> (Amichai M. Labin, Shadi K. Safuri, Erez N. Ribak, and Ido Perlman, "Müller cells separate between wavelengths to improve day vision with minimal effect upon night vision," *Nature Communications*, DOI: 10.1038/ncomms5319 (July 8, 2014).)
>
> The paper presents Müller cells as a direct answer to the view that the vertebrate eye has a suboptimal wiring:
>
> [T]he mammalian retina and the peripheral retina of humans and primates are organized in a seemingly reverse order with respect to the light path. This arrangement places the photoreceptors, responsible for light absorption, as the last cells in the path of light, rather than the first. Therefore, the incident light must propagate through five reflecting and scattering layers of cell bodies and neural processes before reaching the photoreceptors. This 'inverted' retinal structure is expected to cause blurring of the image and reduction in the photon flux reaching the photoreceptors, thus reducing their sensitivity. It has been recently reported that retinal Müller cells act as light guides serving to transfer light across the retina, from the vitreo-retinal border towards the photoreceptors.

I just had someone push this idea that human beings are badly designed as a response to the *cosmic fine-tuning argument* of all things. Her list of objections was all speculations (multiverse, aliense, design of humans could be better).

This argument that humans are poorly designed strikes me as literally insane. But since this argument is still in use, I guess I had better say something.

First, the argument assumes that the designer of human beings has to design *for our comfort and pleasure*. Apparently, God – if he were to exist – would be obligated to design creatures who never got sick, never grew old, and never suffered at all. This makes sense to atheists, for some reason – that the God of the universe has to create creatures that last forever and never suffer. There is this perception out there among atheists and very small narcissistic children (but I repeat myself) that God should be our cosmic butler, waiting at our beck and call to do whatever makes us happiest. From the Christian perspective, this is nonsense. Human beings only think about ultimate questions because, as C.S. Lewis wrote, we suffer pain and have limited lifespans. If were designed to be happy and live forever, we would *never* think about a relationship with God. By nature, humans want to avoid God, because we don't want to be accountable to him for our rebellion against him and the harm we cause by disobeying the moral law.

The second problem with the argument from imperfection is that it has no understanding of how engineers work in practice. Engineers are used to trading off non-functional requirements against each other. If the laptop has a fast processor, then it runs hotter. If the laptop has great battery life, it's heavier because of the larger battery. If the laptop has lots of memory, it costs more to buy. There is no way to get every design goal met because they conflict with each other.

Sometimes, I think that atheists are just little children who have stopped growing in maturity and wisdom. I once heard one particularly stupid atheist in a debate claim that his belief in God had ended when he asked God to help him find his cricket bat, and God had not cosmic butlered to his satisfaction. This happened when the atheist was a child, of course. And this is when most atheists become atheists. It’s not a conclusion that is reached for intellectual reasons. It’s just multiverse, aliens, science fiction, and sexual immorality all the way down. Give me what I want when I want it, and don’t judge me for being self-centered and immoral.

How secularism and socialism killed marriage and family in Canada

August 5, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

This is actually a news article from National Post, the more prestigious and less progressive of Canada's two national newspapers.

Excerpt:

> Couples without kids are outpacing their procreating counterparts, same-sex relationships are blossoming, multiple generations are living under the same roof and more people than ever are living alone, Statistics Canada revealed Wednesday as the 2016 census showcased more seismic changes in the way Canadians are living their lives.
>
> […]Canada is skewing older, with fewer children and less affinity for marriage — forcing legislators to adjust and adapt their policies and programs to fit a rapidly evolving reality.
>
> […]Higher rates of separation and divorce also mean more people living alone or as lone parents, as does an increasing number of women in the workforce, which fosters a greater sense of economic independence.
>
> Childless couples grew in number at a faster rate over the last five years than couples with at least one child, leaving the latter group at 51.1 per cent of the population, the lowest level ever recorded.
>
> The baby boomers who fuelled such population growth in the 20th century are empty nesters in the 21st. The census found younger Canadians who do have kids are living in places like Alberta, long a magnet for job-seeking families, or Nunavut, where fertility rates are high.

They also important large numbers of unskilled immigrants who paid less in taxes than they used in social programs:

> Canada's 35.15 million people are getting older; there are now more seniors than children under the age of 14. Immigration contributed two-thirds of the country's population growth between 2011 and 2016, and that diversity has also added complexity to the Canadian family portrait.

At the time, the Liberal Party thought that importing a lot of non-Christians who would vote for bigger government dependency was a good idea. And it was a good idea to keep them getting elected, but now they are facing the long-term consequences of importing a lot of unskilled have-not socialists.

Canada legalized same-sex marriage, and same-sex marriages don't produce children naturally:

> And a decade after census-takers first collected numbers on same-sex marriage, such couples now make up one per cent of all households, with their overall numbers having increased by 60.7 per cent since 2006. Opposite-sex couples grew by just 9.6 per cent during the same period.
>
> Today, about 12 per cent of all same-sex couples are living with children, be they biological offspring, adopted or members of a stepfamily. In raw numbers, there were 10,020 children aged 14 and under living with 8,770 same-sex couple parents on census day last year.

Canada legalized same-sex "marriage" a decade before America did.

Basically, the problem here is that men don't get married in a big government socialist country, because they are taxed to pay for the big government, but they aren't allowed to lead the family. The money men earn that *would* be used to make decisions about their households is eaten up by secular socialist government programs. Instead of gun ownership, they have a politically correct and ineffective police force. Instead of home-schooling or a network or private schools, there are failing public schools that indoctrinate rather than educate. Instead of a choice of medical providers, there is a single-payer system that makes you take a number and wait your turn. Instead of stay at home mothers, they have expensive, ineffective government-run daycare. Instead of deciding what kind of car to drive, car money is confiscated for public transportation. And so on and so on. This makes men opt out of marriage, and then you don't get children being raised in two-parent homes. The whole society is set up to undermine the male aspiration to be the provider, and to make all the important decisions. There was a deep suspicion of letting men lead in their own homes.

Canadian schools are secular and they teach socialism. They undermine religious liberty and traditional moral values. There is affirmative action for women in the schools and in the workplace that discriminates against boys (in school) and men (in the workplace). The police and divorce courts regularly punish men for faked domestic violence and no-fault divorce. The entire Parliament and legal system is a hotbed of misandry and radical

feminism.

In Canada, it's now a criminal offense to disagree with transgenderism, and in the province of Ontario, if parents disagree with transgenderism, the government will seize your children. Speaking as a Christian man with a high income, and a high net worth, I find it unappealing to think that I would be paying the salaries of secular socialists so that they could then interfere in my life and rule over me. I would be forced to give social engineers my money, and they would be continuously overruling my leadership in the home.

Canada, as a nation, decided a while back to embrace non-judgmentalism and redistribution of wealth to make sinful lifestyles produce the same outcomes as traditional lifestyles. Everybody gets free health care. What this means is that only working people pay for health care, but only the immoral people used it. They thought that this was "compassion", but it just meant that fewer people would work, and more people who go off down immoral rabbit trails in their personal lives. They have free abortions and free drug injection clinics and free sex change surgery. But they don't have free homeschooling, free stay at home moms, or tax breaks for chastity and sobriety. Everything wrong was subsidized, and everything right was taxed. The state became an unofficial arbiter of disputes between husbands and wives, always siding with the unhappy, emotional wife against the husbands who attempted to lead their families to be moral and spiritual.

What we are seeing now is similar to what has been observed in European countries for decades. An aging population that is depending on government to provide health care and pensions for them in their old age. When government grows large, human beings become more and more irresponsible. The population of Canada has been trained to think that their future needs are *government's* problem. They don't have to marry and make children to care for them in their old age – that's *government's* problem. They don't have to save their own money for old age – that's *government's* problem. When the government taxes all your money and takes over everything in the private sector, including the traditional roles of churches and charities, people become passive and irresponsible. Canada proudly embraced abortion and the redefinition of marriage, and now they don't have a new generation of taxpayers to pay for their bloated government.

Next stop, Greece. Well done, Canada. If you want to have secularism, socialism and feminism, then you can't have liberty, marriage and family. They made their choice, and we ought to be learning from their mistakes.

Study: children of same-sex couples do less well than those of married couples

August 6, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

The Public Discourse reports on a recent study out of Canada.

Excerpt:

> A new academic study based on the Canadian census suggests that a married mom and dad matter for children. Children of same-sex coupled households do not fare as well.
>
> There is a new and significant piece of evidence in the social science debate about gay parenting and the unique contributions that mothers and fathers make to their children's flourishing. A study published last week in the journal *Review of the Economics of the Household*—analyzing data from a very large, population-based sample—reveals that the children of gay and lesbian couples are only about 65 percent as likely to have graduated from high school as the children of married, opposite-sex couples. And gender matters, too: girls are more apt to struggle than boys, with daughters of gay parents displaying dramatically low graduation rates.
>
> Unlike US-based studies, this one evaluates a 20 percent sample of the Canadian census, where same-sex couples have had access to all taxation and government benefits since 1997 and to marriage since 2005.
>
> While in the US Census same-sex households have to be guessed at based on the gender and number of self-reported heads-of-household, young adults in the Canadian census were asked, "Are you the child of a male or female same-sex married or common law couple?" While study author and economist Douglas Allen noted that very many children in Canada who live with a gay or lesbian

> parent are actually living with a single mother—a finding consonant with that detected in the 2012 New Family Structures Study—he was able to isolate and analyze hundreds of children living with a gay or lesbian *couple* (either married or in a "common law" relationship akin to cohabitation).
>
> So the study is able to compare—side by side—the young-adult children of same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples, as well as children growing up in single-parent homes and other types of households. Three key findings stood out to Allen:
>
> children of married opposite-sex families have a high graduation rate compared to the others; children of lesbian families have a very low graduation rate compared to the others; and the other four types [common law, gay, single mother, single father] are similar to each other and lie in between the married/lesbian extremes.
>
> Employing regression models and series of control variables, Allen concludes that the substandard performance *cannot* be attributed to lower school attendance or the more modest education of gay or lesbian parents. Indeed, same-sex parents were characterized by higher levels of education, and their children were more likely to be enrolled in school than even those of married, opposite-sex couples. And yet their children are notably more likely to lag in finishing their own schooling.
>
> […]The truly unique aspect of Allen's study, however, may be its ability to distinguish gender-specific effects of same-sex households on children. He writes:
>
> the particular gender mix of a same-sex household has a dramatic difference in the association with child graduation. Consider the case of girls. . . . Regardless of the controls and whether or not girls are currently living in a gay or lesbian household, the odds of graduating from high school are considerably lower than any other household type. Indeed, girls living in gay households are only 15 percent as likely to graduate compared to girls from opposite sex married homes.
>
> Thus although the children of same-sex couples fare worse overall, the disparity is unequally shared, but is instead based on the combination of the gender of child and gender of parents. Boys fare better—that is, they're more likely to have finished high school—in gay households than in lesbian households. For girls, the opposite is true. Thus the study undermines not only claims about "no differences" but also assertions that moms and dads are interchangeable. *They're not*.

With a little digging, I found the abstract of the study:

> Almost all studies of same-sex parenting have concluded there is "no difference" in a range of outcome measures for children who live in a household with same-sex parents compared to children living with married opposite-sex parents.

> Recently, some work based on the US census has suggested otherwise, but those studies have considerable drawbacks. Here, a 20% sample of the 2006 Canada census is used to identify self-reported children living with same-sex parents, and to examine the association of household type with children's high school graduation rates. This large random sample allows for control of parental marital status, distinguishes between gay and lesbian families, and is large enough to evaluate differences in gender between parents and children. Children living with gay and lesbian families in 2006 were about 65 % as likely to graduate compared to children living in opposite sex marriage families. Daughters of same-sex parents do considerably worse than sons.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington. A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more shorter times). That's not good for children either. Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships have much higher rates of domestic violence. That's not good for children either. So we have three reasons to think that normalizing gay relationships as "marriage" would not be good for children.

The reason I am posting this is because I want people to understand why social conservatives like me propose these laws defining and promoting marriage. We do favor natural marriage for the same reason that we oppose no-fault divorce, and for the same reason why we oppose welfare for single mothers (it encourages single motherhood). We don't want to encourage people to deprive children of their mother or their father. We look at the research, and we decide that children need their mother and father. Given the choice between the needs of the child and restraining the freedom of the adults, we prefer the child's need for her mother and father. It's not just arbitrary rules, there is a reason behind the rules.

But children are not commodities. They have certain needs right out of the box. Adults should NOT be thinking about how to duct-tape a child onto any old relationship that doesn't offer the same safety and stability that opposite sex marriage offers. We should be passing laws to strengthen marriage in order to protect children, not to weaken it. Libertarians don't want to do that, because they want adults to be free to do as they please, at the expense of children. Libertarians think that the adults should be able to negotiate private contracts and have no obligations to any children who are present, or who may be present later.

Related posts

- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert

P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child’s perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

Ben Shapiro remembers the leftists who praised socialism in Venezuela

August 7, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two socialists shake hands: Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez

There is a podcast to go with this post in the video below, for those who don't want to watch the podcast on The Daily Wire.

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, Maduro dragged opposition leaders Leopoldo Lopez and Antonio Ledezma off to prison; on Sunday, the dictatorship killed some ten people during election riots.
>
> […]The latest controversy in Venezuela arises thanks to Maduro's brutish attempt to overthrow the legitimate legislature of the country in favor of a constituent assembly that would essentially allow Maduro to redraw the constitution. Maduro is, of course, the successor to thug dictator Hugo Chavez, who seized power in January 1999 through election, and then proceeded to nationalize foreign oil projects, socialize virtually every other industry, institute price and wage controls, ratchet up tariffs, and entirely destroy the economy of one of the most natural-resources-blessed countries on the planet. Chavez took office with promises to end income inequality in the country. Instead, his brutish regime exacerbated poverty to the point of crisis – but at least they minimized income inequality! Just for good measure, Chavez also essentially destroyed the free press and made employment in key industries contingent on loyalty to his regime.
>
> The consequences: no bread, no sugar, no toilet paper, ordinary citizens hunting dogs in the streets and waiting in line outside bakers not for bread, but for the ability to comb through the garbage for crumbs. Hyperinflation has set in:

according to CNBC, “On Friday, $1 equaled 10,389 bolivars. Earlier this week, on Monday, it was worth 8,820 bolivars. At the start of this year, $1 equaled 3,164 bolivars, according to the unofficial exchange rate calculated by dolartoday.com, which millions of Venezuelans use.” Venezuelan hospitals lack gloves, soap, water, paper. Electrical blackouts aren’t infrequent. Caracas has become the most violent city in the Western hemisphere.

According to Hannah Dreier of *Associated Press*:

The government of President Nicolas Maduro blames the U.S. and right-wing business interests for the economic collapse, but most economists say it actually stems from government-imposed price and currency distortions. There often seemed to be a direct line between economic policy and daily hardship. One week, the administration declared that eggs would now be sold for no more than 30 cents a carton. The next week, eggs had disappeared from supermarkets, and still have not come back…. People started digging through the trash at all hours, pulling out vegetable peelings and soggy pizza crusts and eating them on the spot. That seemed like rock bottom. Until my local bakery started organizing lines each morning, not to buy bread but to eat trash.

It’s worth noting that the American Left praised both Chavez and Maduro for decades as halcyons of humanitarian redistributionism. As I noted at *Breitbart* at the time, when Chavez died in 2013, Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY) called him “a leader that understood the needs to the poor. He was committed to empowering the powerless.” Former President Jimmy Carter praised Chavez’s “commitment to improving the lives of his fellow countrymen,” adding that he would “be remembered for his bold assertion of autonomy and independence for Latin American governments and for his formidable communications skills and personal connection with supporters in his country and abroad to whom he gave hope and empowerment.” Eugene Robinson of *The Washington Post* called Chavez “quick” and “popular.” Larry King called him “huggable.” The Associated Press called him a “fighter.” *The Atlantic* stated, “Passionate and charismatic, Chávez slipped comfortably into the role of romantic Latin American revolutionary, championing the poor against an unfeeling local oligarchy and its imperial paymasters….Today millions of Venezuelans will weep tears of genuine anguish at his passing.” ABC News and Univision said he was “revered by Venezuela’s poor, who considered him one of their own.” And *The New York Times* sounded off, of course, calling him a “dreamer with a common touch and enormous ambition” who “maintained an almost visceral connection with the poor.”

During his tenure, Chavez received praise from Oliver Stone and Noam Chomsky, from Danny Glover and Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, who said, “Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez appears to have had success in bringing health and education to the people in the poor neighborhoods of Caracas, to those who previously saw few benefits of the countries oil wealth…. It is not only

> important to have sustainable growth, but to ensure the best distribution of economic growth, for the benefit of all citizens."
>
> The Left owns Venezuela.

When you see people lining up to go through trash looking for food in Venezuela, remember the people who praised the damnable economic system that caused it.

Here is the podcast featuring Ben Shapiro:

Indeed. The first post I ever wrote on this blog about Venezuela's descent into destruction was on February 8, 2009. I've been writing about this for over 8 years, and following Venezuela's every little step down the road to socialism. Make no mistake.Your children are being told that socialism is the greatest economic system ever. And they think socialism is great, even though they've never set foot in any country that has actually tried it, like Venezuela.

What American schools produce:

Socialism is great, and they'll vote for it, but they have no idea what they are voting for. Their unionized public school teachers and their celebrity masters taught them how great it is, but they never mentioned anywhere that it's actually been tried.

Related posts

- Venezuela solves hunger by banning bread lines, and solves crime by banning self-defense
- And now slavery: Venezuela's socialist policies lead to forced labor camps
- Do young Americans know how well socialism is working in Venezuela?
- How well are Democrat Party economic policies working out in Venezuela?
- How well does socialism work in countries and cities that adopt it?
- How well are Democrat economic policies working in Venezuela and Argentina?
- Marco Rubio's speech exposing the horrors of socialism in Cuba and Venezuela
- Obama silent as Venezuelan government violently represses democratic opposition
- How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?
- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia's economy to grow? What causes Venezuela's economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama's buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel

- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Temperature measurements plunge after Australia removes “adjustments”

August 8, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

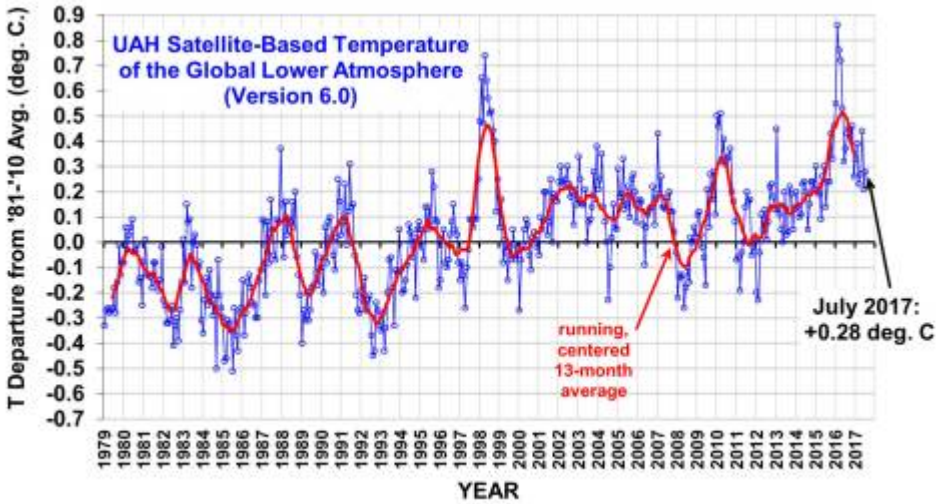

Satellite global temperature measurements 1979 – July 2017
(Image source: Data from University of Alabama, Huntsville)

Of course the temperature measurements went down after the measuring process was adjusted to report the raw data.

The Australian reports.

Excerpt:

> Recorded temperatures at the Bureau of Meteorology’s Thredbo Top automatic weather station have dropped below -10C in the past week, after action was taken to make the facility “fit for purpose”.

> A record of the Thredbo Top station for 3am on Wednesday shows a temperature reading of -10.6C. This compares with the BoM’s monthly highlights for June and July, both showing a low of -9.6C.
>
> The BoM said it had taken immediate action to replace the Thredbo station after concerns were raised that very low temperatures were not making it onto the official record. **Controversy has dogged the bureau’s automatic weather station network since Goulburn man Lance Pigeon saw a -10.4C reading on the BoM’s website on July 2 automatically adjust to -10C, then disappear.**
>
> **Later independent monitoring of the Thredbo Top station by scientist Jennifer Marohasy showed a recording of -10.6C vanish from the record.**
>
> BoM initially claimed the adjustments were part of its quality control procedures. But bureau chief executive Andrew Johnson later told Environment Minister Josh Frydenberg that investigations had found a number of cold-weather stations were

> not “fit for purpose” and would be replaced.

Several other temperature measurement stations are also receiving the fix to stop adjusting the raw data:

> An in-house investigation that includes two independent experts has been called. The bureau said it rejected allegations aired in some media outlets that it had sought to tamper with temperature data.
>
> **It has been reported online that electronic smart cards were allegedly fitted to the BoM’s automatic weather stations, which put a limit on how low temperatures could be recorded in official weather data.** The BoM declined to comment ahead of the internal review.
>
> […]On her website yesterday, Dr Marohasy said it was not the recording devices that were at fault. “To be clear, the problem is not with the equipment; all that needs to be done is for the smart-card readers to be removed,” Dr Marohasy said.

And this was not a situation where the government, which had been lying, corrected itself. Oh no! Challenges to the faked government data came from outside the government, as Bureau of Meteorology minister explained:

> “The first we heard of the problem was in early July after (*The Australian)* approached the Bureau of Meteorology,” the minister said.

You might remember a recent scandal where it was discovered that scientists in the UK had been adjusting the temperatures to “hide the decline” of temperatures in their simulation code.

Here was the data before hiding the decline:

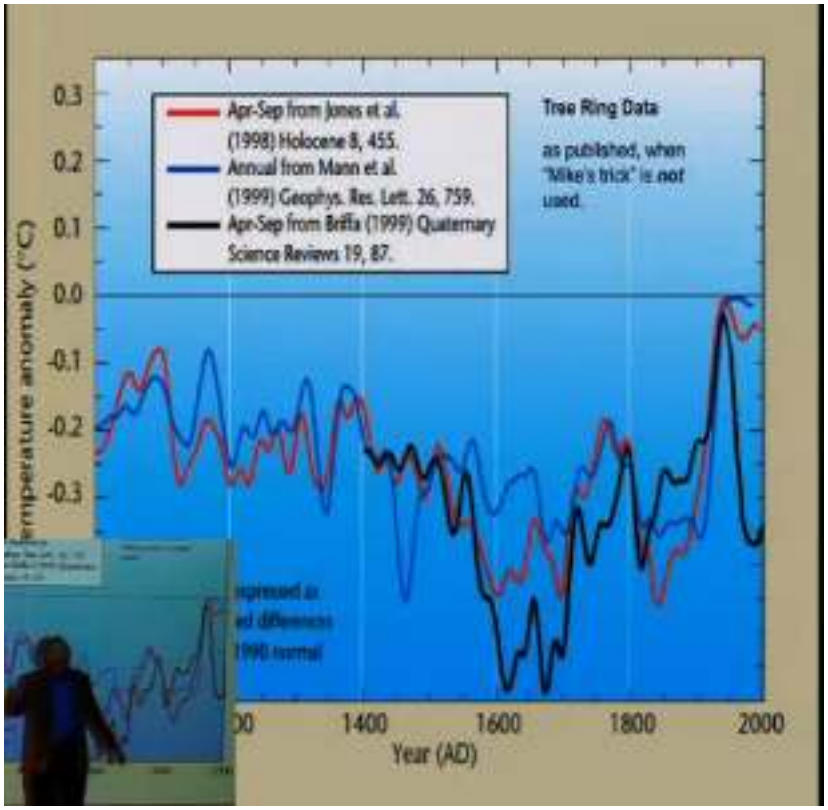

Raw temperature measurements before hiding the decline

And here was the data after:

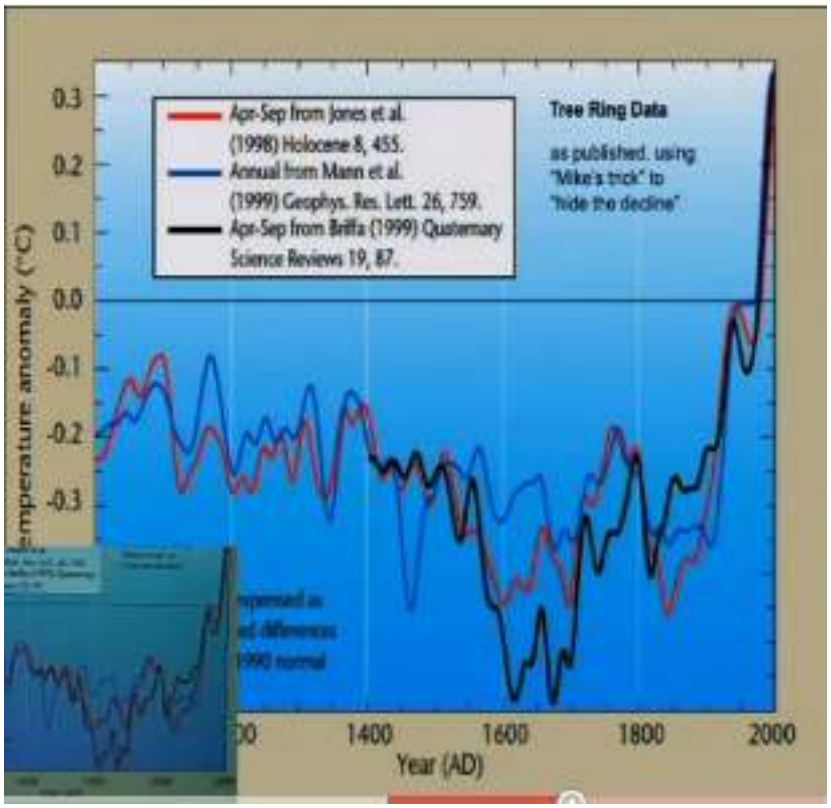

Raw temperature measurements after hiding the decline

That second graph, with “Mike’s Nature trick” to “hide the decline” was sent then to the IPCC to influence climate policy. I have no doubt that socialist governments were very grateful for this “evidence”. Just what they needed to get a mandate from the masses to control businesses and consumer spending were grateful for this hiding of the decline, and rewarded the scientists with many research grants. This is why we call global

warming alarmists “watermelons”: green on the outside, and red on the inside.

If you’ve never heard of that Climategate story from 2009 before, you should definitely read about it. Here is a good single post that explains what happened.

Is living together before marriage the same as getting married?

August 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Dad sent me this article from the Daily Signal. Let's look at it, then I'll give my opinion on this research.

Five points:

1. Cohabiting couples are more prone to break up (and break up for good) than married couples
2. Even after marrying, women who cohabitated prior to marriage are more apt to separate or divorce than those who did not.
3. Men who cohabit tend to make less money than their married counterparts
4. Among young mothers, married women are more financially secure than cohabiting women
5. Cohabiting couples report more depression and more alcohol problems than married couples

The key points for me:

> **1. Cohabiting couples are more prone to break up (and break up for good) than married couples.** In the May 2003 issue of the Journal of Marriage and Family Study, Georgina Binstock and Arland Thornton found that, in the first year of living together, couples who cohabited were eight times more likely to end their relationships than those who were married. In the second and third years, those rates decreased to four and three times more likely, respectively.

> And when it comes to getting back together after a breakup, cohabiting couples were about a third less likely to get back together again.
>
> **2. Even after marrying, women who cohabitated prior to marriage are more apt to separate or divorce than those who did not.** One study demonstrated that for women who lived with their partners before marriage, it was 33 percent more likely for their marriages to result in separation or divorce.
>
> **5. Cohabiting couples report more depression and more alcohol problems than married couples.** Even when controlling for race, age and gender, cohabiting individuals reported higher levels of depression than married ones, 2.8 points according to one study. In another study, cohabiting individuals were three times more likely to report having problems with alcohol consumption than those who were married, as well as 25 percent more problems than single people who did not cohabit. Cohabiting women indicated more alcohol problems than married women—and men who cohabited said they had more alcohol problems than both married *and* single men.

This article from the UK Daily Mail that Dina sent me says that 9 in 10 children being born now will see their parents split by the time the children reach 16.

It says:

> Nearly nine out of ten babies born to co-habiting parents this year will have seen their family break up by the time they reach the age of 16, says a study.
>
> Half of all children born this year will not be living with both natural parents when they reach their mid-teens, and almost all those who suffer family breakdown will be the children of unmarried parents, added the report.
>
> The study, based on figures from the national census and large-scale academic surveys, extrapolates from current trends and calculates that just 9 per cent of babies born to cohabiting couples today will still have their parents living together by the time they are 16.
>
> The report adds that the declining popularity of marriage and the rise of co-habitation will damage the lives of increasing numbers of children.
>
> The figures were produced by researcher Harry Benson, of the Marriage Foundation think tank, who said: 'The report provides solid evidence that married parents are more stable than unmarried parents.
>
> […]The study by the think tank, which is headed by High Court family division judge Sir Paul Coleridge, was based on findings from the census of 2001 and recent results from Understanding Society, a government-backed survey which charts the lives of people in 40,000 homes.
>
> The report said that in 2001, four out of ten teenagers aged 15 were not living with both parents, and among the parents of 15-year-olds who stayed together,

> 97 per cent were married.

The article is from 2013, but I don’t see why things would have gotten any better. We are even more supportive as a society now of adult selfishness and less inclined to take care in our courting so that children are not deprived of fathers and/or mothers through our poor decision making.

So I’ve had experiences mentoring two women who started off as Christian, fell away from Christianity, then returned to the faith. Both of them spend time cohabitating with atheist men. So when I read numbers like the ones above, I want to warn Christian parents. You should not assume that your daughter will always be a Christian when you are raising them. You have to talk to them about these issues and share these numbers with them. Although you can start by telling them what the Bible says, you have to go on from there to explain what a romantic relationship looks like between Christians, and what happens to people who reject the Bible and start having premarital sex.

Man builds $51 million theme park for his special needs daughter

August 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

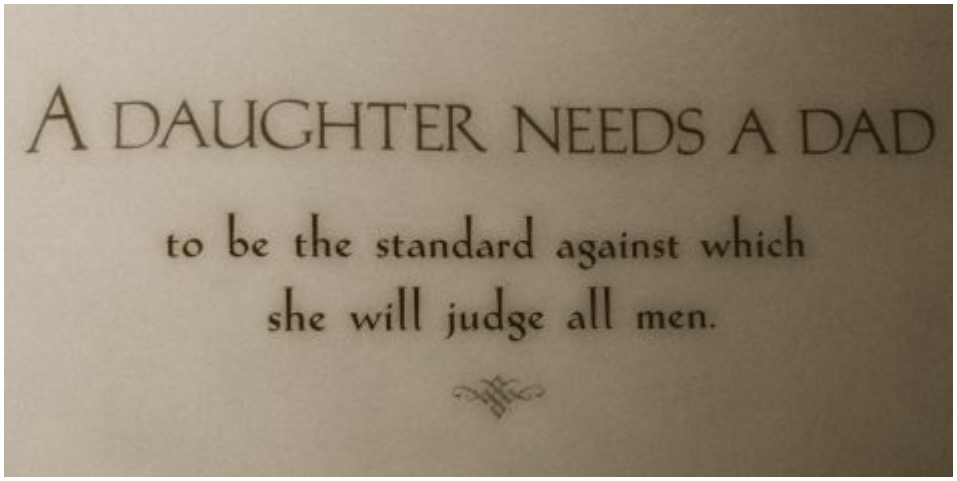

What is the essential characteristic of a successful father?
This inspiring story comes to us from The Federalist.

Excerpt:

> A Texas dad wanted to take his daughter, who has special needs, somewhere she could feel included while having fun. When Gordon Hartman realized a place like that didn't exist, he decided to build an amusement park for her in San Antonio, Texas.
>
> Gordon recounts watching his then-12-year-old daughter, Morgan, who is on the autism spectrum, try to play with a group of children who were swimming in a hotel pool where they were vacationing. But the kids ran away from her, likely because they didn't know how to interact with someone with special needs.
>
> The interaction broke Gordon's heart and later inspired him to sell his homebuilding business to set up a nonprofit, The Gordon Hartman Family Foundation, which provides grants and sponsorships to local charities that serve the special-needs community.
>
> He then worked with a team of doctors, engineers, and special needs experts to create Morgan's Wonderland, a theme park tailored to accommodate visitors with special needs. More than one million people have visited the $34 million park since its opening in 2010. Last month, Gordon opened an adjacent waterpark, Morgan's Inspiration Island, to the tune of $17 million.
>
> "When [Morgan] comes here she's a rock star! Lots of people want to talk to her and take her picture, she's very good with it," Hartman told BBC."Morgan knows the park is named after her, but I don't think she understands the magnitude of what it represents and how it's changed lives."

The nice thing about this story is that it really shows what the design for fathers should

be. This is what young single women should be looking for in a man. This pattern of behavior where the man is not greedy about money, but is instead able to take an interest in the lives of others who need help in order to grow, and then investing in them using money that he has earned by working. We can measure this father on a moral scale and say that he is a good father.

Many people seem to take pride these days in not judging men on moral grounds any more. Everything is feelings about surface-level concerns. Men are praised for offering fun and thrills right now, but not for what they do in a family unit as husband and father. There is no concept of a *design* for men that allows them to be graded out on the criteria that really matter. Eliot Spitzer, Bill Clinton, Anthony Weiner, etc. all seem to be viewed by many as very desirable. I read women on the left who say that they will not even go out with a man who isn't pro-abortion. Being pro-abortion basically means that you think sex is about recreation, not about something a husband and wife do in the context of marriage. And it also means that taking the life of an innocent person is a good way to avoid taking responsibility for your own choices. But this is exactly the opposite of what makes a good husband and a good father! Why would anyone choose that over this father in the story?

I can tell you one thing about this story. That little girl's mother chose well. She didn't let the culture sway her away from picking a man who majored in character. And now her daughter is getting the benefit of her good decision-making. A woman's taking care of her children starts with making good decisions about men. And good decisions about men means deciding on men who are hard workers, good earners, sensitive to others, protectors of the weak, and generous givers. Good men let other people impose on them. Good men invest in the people around them. We need teach young women to remember what it is that men are designed to do.

Reported cases of sexually-transmitted diseases reaches record high

August 11, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

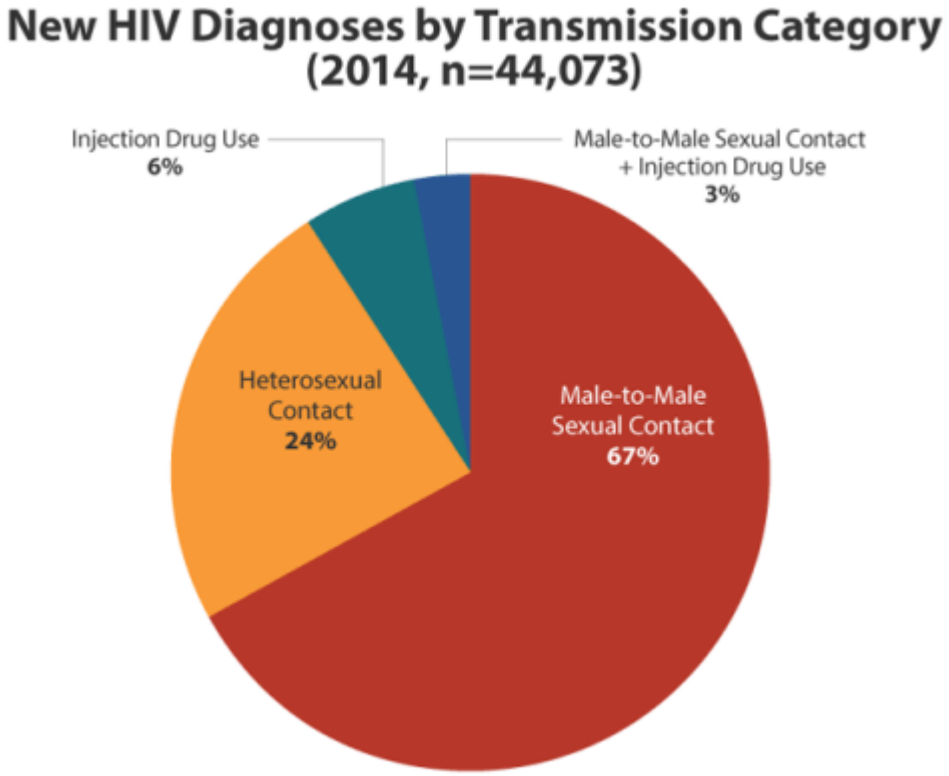

HIV infection rates from Center for Disease Control
This is from the far-left CNN, of all places.

Excerpt:

> There were more reported cases of sexually transmitted diseases last year than ever before in the United States, according to the latest STD surveillance report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
>
> The annual report, which was released on Wednesday, showed that the rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis — the three most commonly reported STDs in the nation — increased between 2014 and 2015, reaching an all-time high.
>
> Reported cases of primary and secondary syphilis rose by 19%, gonorrhea cases rose by 12.8%, and chlamydia cases rose by 5.9%, from 2014. All three STDs are curable with antibiotics, but most infections go undiagnosed and untreated, according to the CDC.

What is interesting is how overspending by bureaucrats on social welfare, amnesty, refugees, etc. has left less money to combat sexually-transmitted diseases:

> In a foreword to the new report, Bolan wrote that some 21 health department STD clinics across the country have closed due to many state and local programs experiencing budget cuts. Therefore, fewer people have access to the testing and

> treatment resources provided by such clinics.
>
> Meanwhile, as more STD cases emerge, treating infections costs the country nearly $16 billion annually.

With the national debt doubled from 10 to 20 trillion under Obama, Obama's free-spirited supporters can look forward to not having access to the "health care" they now need.

Not surprisingly, the reckless young people who voted for Obama are the most reckless with sex. And so they are the most affected by STDs:

> Young people, 15 to 24 years old, accounted for nearly two-thirds of last year's chlamydia diagnoses — and half of the gonorrhea diagnoses.

Not only are there more STD infections, but the diseases have adapted to beat our antibiotics.

The Center for Disease Control reports:

> Gonorrhea has progressively developed resistance to the antibiotic drugs prescribed to treat it. Following the spread of gonococcal fluoroquinolone resistance, the cephalosporin antibiotics have been the foundation of recommended treatment for gonorrhea. The emergence of cephalosporin-resistant gonorrhea would significantly complicate the ability of providers to treat gonorrhea successfully, since we have few antibiotic options left that are simple, well-studied, well-tolerated and highly effective. It is critical to continuously monitor antibiotic resistance in Neisseria gonorrhoeae and encourage research and development of new treatment regimens.

Gonorrhea is the second most prominent STD, right behind chlamydia.

One reason for the upsurge in STDs might be society's growing celebration of male homosexuality.

The Center for Disease Control explains:

> P&S syphilis among men who have sex with men (MSM) has been increasing since at least 2000. In 2014, rates of P&S syphilis increased among MSM, who account for 83 percent of reported cases among men when the sex of the partner is known. Also concerning is that more than half of MSM (51 percent) diagnosed with syphilis in 2014 were also HIV-positive. Infection with syphilis can cause sores on the genitals, which make it easier to transmit and acquire HIV.
>
> Syphilis is currently the only STD for which information on the sex of the sex partner is reported. However, a growing body of evidence indicates that MSM are experiencing similar increases in gonorrhea and chlamydia infections–underscoring the need to further understand what is contributing to the rise.
>
> Gay and bisexual men face a combination of social, epidemiologic, and individual risk factors that can fuel high levels of STDs. Higher prevalence of infection within sexual networks increases the likelihood of acquiring an STD with each

> sexual encounter.

And on a different CDC page:

> Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men made up an estimated 2% of the population but 55% of people living with HIV in the United States in 2013. If current diagnosis rates continue, 1 in 6 gay and bisexual men will be diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime, including 1 in 2 black/African American gay and bisexual men, 1 in 4 Hispanic/Latino gay and bisexual men, and 1 in 11 white gay and bisexual men.

The CDC's solution to this disparity is to ask for more taxpayer money, of course. No disapproval here, just take the money from the moral people and pay for the choices of the reckless people.

Right now, many people are freely choosing to engage in these behaviors, and to celebrate the lifestyles of those who engage in these behaviors, because they think that the government has unlimited taxpayer money to pay for all the costs of these decisions. Little do they know about the national debt, and what happens to "government-provided" health care when the interest rates on that debt increases. As a society, we have decided that it is better to be forgiving and compassionate when people make reckless, risky decisions. "Oh, we can just make the prudent people pay for the mess – they have money", the progressives say. And that works fine, until the money runs out, and people realize that the mean, judgmental, controlling bullies who were defending chastity, fidelity, marriage, moral standards and personal responsibility were right all along.

Is Google right to say that sex differences don't exist?

August 12, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

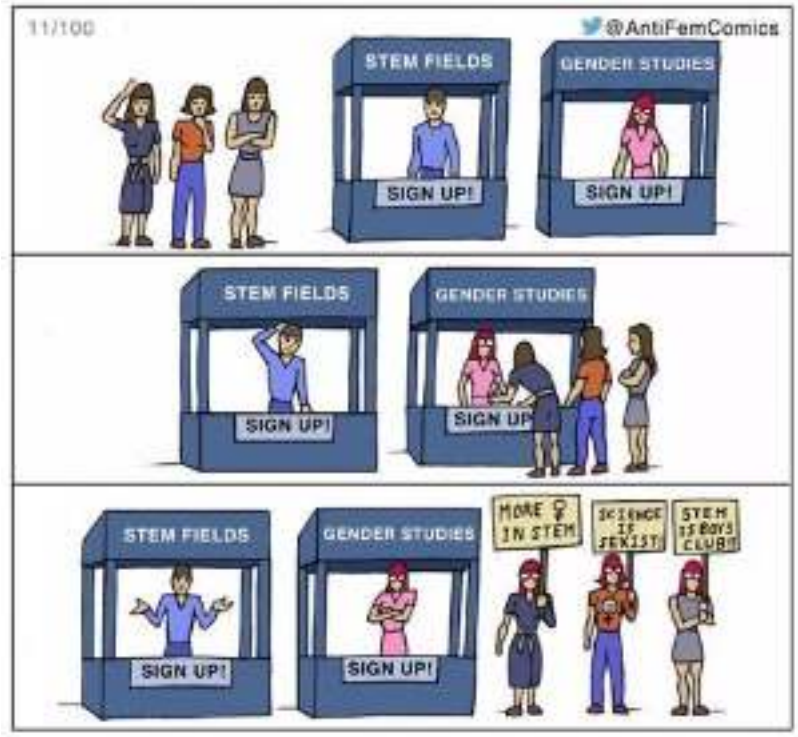

The gender disparity in STEM fields explained

Radical feminists complain a lot about sexism, but damage is self-inflicted

Google recently fired a software engineer who asked them to do a better job of promoting diversity by actually appealing to women's different needs and desires. He suggested more collaborative coding ("pair programming") and more part-time work options. Google responded to his suggestions by ejecting him forcibly from their left-wing politically correct echo chamber. Google executives claim that their company is rooted in science. Well, is there a science of sex differences? Who is right?

This article from The Globe and Mail, which is the more leftist of Canada's two national newspapers, is written by a PhD in the field of sexual neuroscience from York University.

She says:

> Despite how it's been portrayed, the memo was fair and factually accurate. Scientific studies have confirmed sex differences in the brain that lead to differences in our interests and behaviour.
>
> As mentioned in the memo, gendered interests are predicted by exposure to prenatal testosterone – higher levels are associated with a preference for mechanically interesting things and occupations in adulthood. Lower levels are associated with a preference for people-oriented activities and occupations. This is why STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields tend to be dominated by men.

> We see evidence for this in girls with a genetic condition called congenital adrenal hyperplasia, who are exposed to unusually high levels of testosterone in the womb. When they are born, these girls prefer male-typical, wheeled toys, such as trucks, even if their parents offer more positive feedback when they play with female-typical toys, such as dolls. Similarly, men who are interested in female-typical activities were likely exposed to lower levels of testosterone.
>
> As well, new research from the field of genetics shows that testosterone alters the programming of neural stem cells, leading to sex differences in the brain even before it's finished developing in utero. This further suggests that our interests are influenced strongly by biology, as opposed to being learned or socially constructed.

Her article is filled with linked to peer-reviewed papers, although I removed the links when quoting her article.

She even links to peer-reviewed papers to refute the Google science-deniers:

> Many people, including a former Google employee, have attempted to refute the memo's points, alleging that they contradict the latest research.
>
> I'd love to know what "research done […] for decades" he's referring to, because thousands of studies would suggest otherwise. A single study, published in 2015, did claim that male and female brains existed along a "mosaic" and that it isn't possible to differentiate them by sex, but this has been refuted by four – yes, four – academicstudies since.
>
> This includes a study that analyzed the exact same brain data from the original study and found that the sex of a given brain could be correctly identified with 69-per-cent to 77-per-cent accuracy.
>
> […]Contrary to what detractors would have you believe, women are, on average, higher in neuroticism and agreeableness, and lower in stress tolerance.

I think the key point in this debate is one that the author makes herself: women ought to be able to find ways to study and work on things that are interesting to them. Of course some jobs pay more than others because they are more productive, and of course we should make women aware of the consequences of studying nonsense subjects that don't pay. We don't want women running up student loans they'll never pay back, then defaulting on them and passing the costs off to taxpayers. But we shouldn't try to push women into STEM jobs by watering down the requirements of those jobs – that just treats the people who can do the jobs very unfairly.

In my own case, I prefer women who do have STEM degrees and STEM work experience, but that's because I think that STEM education and work experience grinds out some of the characteristics of women that make them bad partners for goal-directed men like myself. I have every reason for wanting more women in STEM, but I want them to do it honestly. I want them to be treated fairly, and not get a whole bunch of advantages in

education and the workplace just because they are women.

Jesus’ death on the cross is sufficient to reconcile rebellious humans to God

August 13, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

I thought I post this passage from Colossians for everyone to think about, because I had some thoughts about it.

Colossians 1:15-23:

> [15] The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.
>
> [16] For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.
>
> [17] He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
>
> [18] And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.
>
> [19] For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,
>
> [20] and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.
>
> [21] Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.
>
> [22] But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—
>
> [23] if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the

> hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

I don't think anyone can read this and think that there is anything that they have to do in order to contribute to their reconciliation with God. This passage is really clear – when it comes to being reconciled with God, Jesus does all the work. You can't do anything to add to the solution, because Jesus is the whole solution. This is what Christians mean by Jesus is our savior. He saves us from the wrath of God by taking our punishment for us.

The reason I am posting this is because I have been having some discussions with Reformed theologians, and they are very suspicious of me having definite plans for my life. It's very strange. The more I talk about things that I'd like to do in order to be a friend of Jesus, and treat him as Lord in my prioritization and decision-making, the more suspicious they get that I am trying to merit salvation.

The even stranger thing is that these Reformed people are clearly making a lot of decisions in their lives that reflect Jesus' commands and Jesus' priorities. I am sure that the Reformed people would be outraged if I asked them if their own plans and decisions were meant to contribute something to their own salvation. But I also think that they are hyper-sensitive to any sort of planning or allegiance to God that involves thoughtful decision-making. And they can sometimes be very passive, which I think is a consequence of their commitment to determinism (i.e. – they think that God is the sole determiner of whether a person is saved or not, and there is no human agency or human responsibility involved in having faith, not even in response to God's initiative to save).

Being a Christian means treating Christ as Lord, i.e. – leader. Naturally, if Jesus is your leader, then you are interested in making decisions that respect his leadership. This is completely separate from the issue of Jesus as Savior. I think the Bible is very clear in urging people to trust Jesus, and I think that this trust comes out in actions. Jesus says that if you love him, then you should obey his commands. Christianity is not just something that I do in my mind, by having the right answers to theology questions. When I am faced with a decision about how to act, I can trust in Jesus by making a decision that respects Jesus as leader. Trust is one of the components of Biblical faith, the others being accurate knowledge and rational assent. Trusting in Jesus is not something that is an add-on to Jesus' work of atoning for my rebellion against God with his death on the cross. Trusting in Jesus is, however, a necessary component of my faith in Jesus.

Harvard University could lose federal funding because of anti-Asian preferences

August 14, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

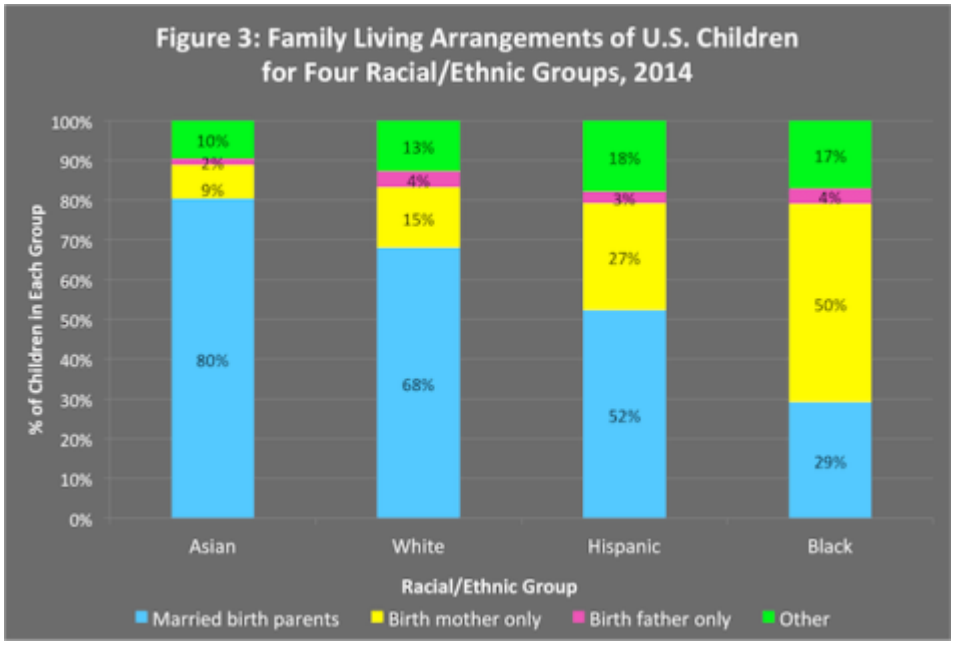

Asians marry before they have children, so most Asian kids have two parents

I would love to see Harvard University and other left-wing institutions lose taxpayer money over this.

The College Fix reports:

> When Harvard University faced a regulatory complaint in 2015 about alleged quotas that held down Asian-American admissions, the Obama administration gave it a pass, citing ongoing litigation on the subject.
>
> Now that the Trump administration is in charge, Harvard is facing a battle over its affirmative action policies on both regulatory and judicial fronts.
>
> Asian-American groups that have long accused Harvard of discrimination are celebrating the regulatory about-face.
>
> "We are happy hearing that and hope for concrete steps taken by the" Justice Department, Chunyan Li, a board member of the Asian American Coalition for Education, told *The College Fix* in a phone call.
>
> […]An internal job posting leaked Tuesday said DOJ's civil rights division is seeking "attorney detailees" who already work in the division to conduct "investigations and possible litigation related to intentional race-based discrimination in college and university admissions."
>
> The division consists of Trump political appointees, as opposed to the career civil servants who lead DOJ's Educational Opportunity Section, *Circa* reported.

This is actually a real problem in left-wing colleges and universities, and there was even a

recent study about it that was published in Science, one of the top peer-reviewed journals.

Excerpt:

> When it comes to academic achievement, Asian-Americans outclass every other ethnic group, with more than half over age 25 holding a bachelor's degree—well above the national average of 28%. To find what gives Asian-Americans a leg up, a team of sociologists scoured two long-term surveys covering more than 5000 U.S. Asian and white students. After crunching test scores, GPAs, teacher evaluations, and social factors such as immigration status, the team reports a simple explanation online today in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*: Asian-American students work harder.
>
> The team found that students from all Asian ethnic groups put greater importance on effort than on natural ability. This outlook, the team argues, causes students to respond to challenges by trying harder and has a greater impact on Asian-Americans' academic achievement than does cognitive ability or socioeconomic status. However, the team says Asian-American students reported lower self-esteem, more conflict with their parents, and less time spent with friends compared with their white peers. The team suspects the high academic expectations or their "outsider" status in American society could be to blame.

Although it's trendy on the left to say that they are color-blind, the truth is that the left is obsessed with race and racism. In this case, racial discrimination against hard-working Asians. I have no problem with letting in as many Asians as deserve to get admitted, because race shouldn't be a factor in admissions. The best students should be admitted – the ones who can actually do the work.

If Harvard does lose it's federal funding for racism, then it would be nice to see all the other colleges that discriminate on race lose their as well. It's amazing to me that we give so much money to educational institutions anyway, which just drives up the cost of a college education.

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life by J. P. Moreland

August 15, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

I found this essay on After All, but it looks like their site is not working well, so I'm just going to steal it and post it here, in case it disappears completely. This is one of my favorite short essays on utilitarianism, and it's a wonder that the thing can't stay up somewhere. Well, it will have a home here now. I'd be surprised to see anyone else be this awesome in a measly 1000 words as Dr. Moreland is below.

—-

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life

What Is Utilitarianism?

Utilitarianism (also called consequentialism) is a moral theory developed and refined in the modern world by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). It can be defined as follows:

> *An action or moral rule is right if and only if it maximizes the amount of nonmoral good produced in the consequences that result from doing that act or following that rule compared with other acts or rules open to the agent.*

By focusing on three features of utilitarianism, we can clarify this definition.

(1) Utilitarian theories of value.

What is a nonmoral good? Utilitarians deny that there are any moral actions or rules that are intrinsically right or wrong. But they do believe in objective values that are nonmoral.

Hedonistic utilitarians say that the only intrinsic good is pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Quantitative hedonists (Bentham) say that the amount of pleasure and pain is the

only thing that matters in deciding between two courses of action, I should do the one that produces the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain (measured by factors like the duration and intensity of the pleasure). Qualitative hedonists (Mill) say that pleasure is the only intrinsic good, but the type of pleasure is what is important, not the amount. They would rank pleasures that come from reading, art, and friendship as more valuable than those that come from, say, a full stomach.

Pluralistic utilitarians say there are a number of things that have intrinsic, nonmoral value: pleasure, friendship, health, knowledge, freedom, peace, security, and so forth. For pluralists, it is not just the pleasure that comes from friendship that has value but also friendship itself.

Currently, the most popular utilitarian view of value is subjective preference utilitarianism. This position says it is presumptuous and impossible to specify things that have intrinsic nonmoral worth. So, they claim, intrinsic value ought to be defined as that which each individual subjectively desires or wants, provided these do not harm others. Unfortunately, this view collapses into moral relativism.

(2) Utilitarians and maximizing utility.

Utilitarians use the term utility to stand for whatever good they are seeking to produce as consequences of a moral action (e.g., “pleasure” for the hedonist, “satisfaction of subjective preference” for others). They see morality in a means-to-ends way. The sole value of a moral action or rule is the utility of its consequences. Moral action should maximize utility. This can be interpreted in different ways, but many utilitarians embrace the following: the correct moral action or rule is the one that produces the greatest amount of utility for the greatest number of people.

(3) Two forms of utilitarianism: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.

According to act utilitarianism, an act is right if and only if no other act available maximizes utility more than the act in question. Here, each new moral situation is evaluated on its own, and moral rules like “don’t steal” or “don’t break promises” are secondary The moral agent must weigh available alternatives and choose the one that produces the best consequences. Rule utilitarianism says that correct moral actions are done in keeping with correct moral rules, However, no moral rule is intrinsically right or wrong. Rather, a correct moral rule is one that would maximize utility if most people followed it as opposed to following an alternative rule. Here, alternative rules (e.g., “don’t lie” vs. “don’t lie unless doing so would enhance friendship”) are compared for their consequences, not specific actions.

What Is Wrong with Utilitarianism?

Several objections show the inadequacy of utilitarianism as a normative moral theory.

First, utilitarianism can be used to justify actions that are clearly immoral. Consider the case of a severely deformed fetus. The child is certain to live a brief, albeit painless life. He or she will make no contribution to society. Society, however, will bear great expense. Doctors and other caregivers will invest time, emotion, and effort in adding mere hours to the baby's life. The parents will know and love the child only long enough to be heartbroken at the inevitable loss. An abortion negates all those "utility" losses. There is no positive utility lost. Many of the same costs are involved in the care of the terminally ill elderly. They too may suffer no pain, but they may offer no benefit to society. In balancing positives and negatives, and excluding from the equation the objective sacredness of all human life, we arrive at morally repugnant decisions. Here deontological and virtue ethics steer us clear of what is easier to what is right.

Second, in a similar way, utilitarianism denies the existence of supererogatory acts. These are acts of moral heroism that are not morally obligatory but are still praiseworthy. Examples would be giving 75 percent of your income to the poor or throwing yourself on a bomb to save a stranger. Consider the bomb example. You have two choices — throwing yourself on the bomb or not doing so. Each choice would have consequences and, according to utilitarianism, you are morally obligated to do one or the other depending on which option maximized utility. Thus, there is no room for acts that go beyond the call of morality.

Third, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of human rights and human dignity. If enslaving a minority of people, say by a lottery, would produce the greatest good for the greatest number, or if conceiving children only to harvest their parts would do the same, then these could he justified in a utilitarian scheme. But enslavement and abortion violate individual rights and treat people as a means to an end, not as creatures with intrinsic dignity as human beings. If acts of abortion, active euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and so forth maximize utility, then they are morally obligatory for the utilitarian. But any moral system that makes abortion and suicide morally obligatory is surely flawed.

Finally, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of motives and character. We should praise good motives and seek good character because such motives and character are intrinsically valuable. But utilitarianism implies that the only reason we should praise good motives instead of bad ones, or seek good character instead of bad character, is because such acts would maximize utility. But this has the cart before the horse. We should praise good motives and blame bad ones because they are good or bad, not because such acts of praising and blaming produce good consequences.

In sum, it should be clear that utilitarianism is an inadequate moral theory. Unfortunately, ours is a pragmatic culture and utilitarianism is on the rise. But for those of us who follow Christ, a combination of virtue and deontological ethics is a more adequate view of common sense morality found in natural law and of the moral vision contained in the Bible.

New study: marijuana triples risk of high blood pressure

August 16, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

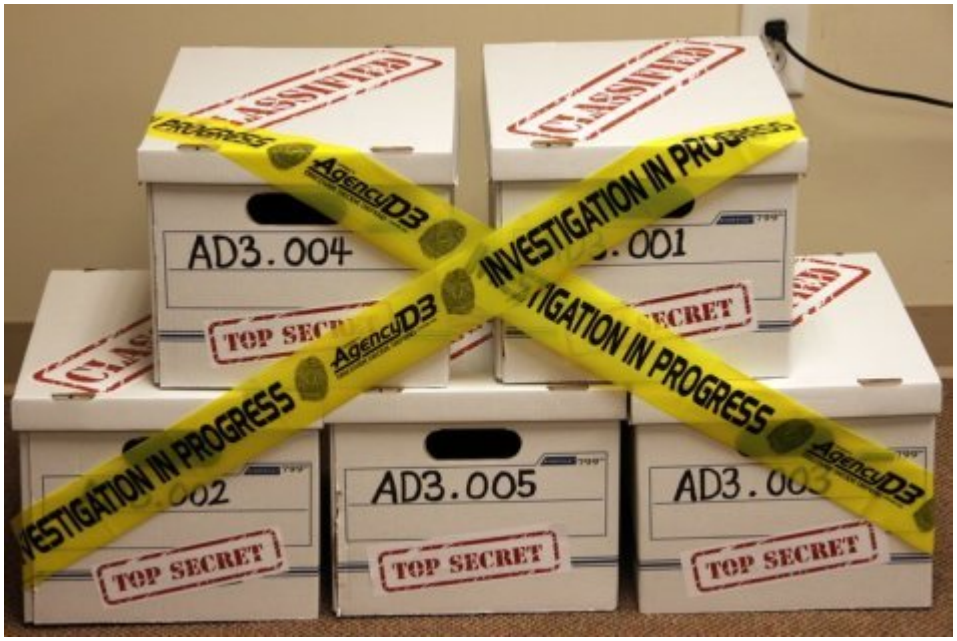

Investigation in progress

I actually have two studies for this post, both reported by far-left news sources, oddly enough.

First one is from the radical leftist Reuters.

Excerpt:

> People who smoke marijuana have a three times greater risk of dying from hypertension, or high blood pressure, than those who have never used the drug, scientists said on Wednesday.
>
> The risk grows with every year of use, they said.
>
> The findings, from a study of some 1,200 people, could have implications in the United States among other countries. Several states have legalized marijuana and others are moving toward it. It is decriminalized in a number of other countries.
>
> […]The study, published in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology, was a retrospective follow-up study of 1,213 people aged 20 or above who had been involved in a large and ongoing National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. In 2005–2006, they were asked if they had ever used marijuana.
>
> For Yankey's study, information on marijuana use was merged with mortality data in 2011 from the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, and adjusted for confounding factors such as tobacco smoking and variables including sex, age and ethnicity.
>
> The average duration of use among users of marijuana, or cannabis, was 11.5

> years.
>
> The results showed marijuana users had a 3.42-times higher risk of death from hypertension than non-users, and a 1.04 greater risk for each year of use.

There is a problem with that study, though:

> Yankey said were limitations in the way marijuana use was assessed — including that researchers could not be sure whether people had used the drug continuously since they first tried it.

Here is a second study reported by the radically-leftist CNN.

Excerpt:

> The number of children who were admitted to emergency rooms for unintentional marijuana intoxication increased by 133% in France over an 11-year period, according to a new study.
>
> Marijuana intoxication can occur when a child accidentally ingests a marijuana product or inhales marijuana smoke. Symptoms can vary based on the child's age and size but often include sleepiness, difficulty breathing, seizures or even coma. Effects usually last six to 24 hours.
>
> Cannabis is illegal in France, but it has the highest rate of marijuana use in Europe, said Dr. Isabelle Claudet, lead author of the study, published Monday in the journal Pediatrics.
>
> "And that means we are facing an increase in emergency admissions of marijuana intoxication and an increase in severe symptoms seen in children," said Claudet, a pediatric emergency physician in Toulouse.
>
> She and other researchers analyzed the number of French children under 6 admitted to pediatric emergency departments because of unintentional cannabis intoxication and the number of cannabis-related calls involving children to French poison control centers.
>
> From 2004 to 2014, 235 children were admitted to ERs with cannabis intoxication, and there was a 133% increase in the admissions rate for it. The number of calls to poison control centers related to cannabis exposure in children increased by 312% in the same period.
>
> [...]Over the 11-year span, the severity of symptoms in children admitted to emergency departments because of marijuana intoxication also increased.
>
> Twenty times more severe cases were reported in 2014 compared with 2004, and and four times more severe cases were reported in 2014 compared with 2013. Of the 32 children reported to have gone into comas, 53% were admitted in 2014, and there were more cannabis-related admissions than any other type of pediatric emergency room admission.

One of the problems with making drugs legal is that it is known to increase the use of the

drugs. And the more available a drug becomes, the more likely it is to fall into the hands of children. Especially at a time like this, where both parents (if there are two parents) usually work. That means no one is at home to supervise.

This week, someone at work had asked me why I was so unwilling to spend money on entertainment. It made me think back to my early years growing up in a poor immigrant household. We simply didn't have money for things like cigarettes or alcohol or entertainment. Our first TV was a black and white TV, for goodness sake. We were always the last to get the new inventions, like microwaves and computers. I wasn't interested in alcohol or drugs because I couldn't afford them. I was too busy trying to make money because my parents had none to give me. Sometimes, I think that American children have TOO MUCH money. If you had to choose between food and drugs, you'd choose food.

Related posts

- New study: college students who lost access to marijuana improved their grades
- New study: long-term marijuana use causes decline in memory in middle age
- New 20-year study: long-term use of cannabis raises risk of mental health problems
- Report: Negative impacts from the legalization of marijuana in Colorado
- Welfare cash used to purchase marijuana in Colorado
- New study: even casual use of marijuana / cannabis alters brain
- New study: teen pot use could hurt brain and memory
- New study finds connection between early use of marijuana and mental illness
- New study: marijuana use by teens is linked to permanent brain abnormalities
- New study: smoking marijuana raises risk of having a stroke
- New study: smoking marijuana/cannabis permanently lowers IQ

Daughter of single mother explains how absent father ruined her life

August 17, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

SurveyMonkey election poll cross tabs for unmarried women Nov 2016

The meaning of that image above will become clear at the end of the post.

I found a YouTube video featuring a conversation about the fundamental problem that I see with young, unmarried women: their decision to have recreational premarital sex with hot guys throughout their teens and 20s.

Here is the conversation: (just listen to the first 7 minutes to start)

Note: this conversation contains vulgar language. Listener discretion is advised.

Molyneux gets her talking about the most important question that women who fail with men never want to answer: why did your mother choose this awful, awful man, to be your father out of all the other men in the world? At the end, she really has learned her lesson and gives a good warning to other young women at the crossroads.

Summary of key admissions:

- Caller: I'm a 41-year-old single white female who was a bad girl in my 20s. I was raised fatherless by a loving Christian mom. Question: what caused me to fail at life and be living with my (divorced) mother?
- I was gifted, very intellectual, top of the class
- My mom is a very caring person
- My mom approached my Dad when he was already in another relationship (i.e. – her mom was the woman her father cheated with on another woman, then her mom

married this cheating man and he dumped the previous woman)
- My mom was very attractive, and could have chosen different men, but she was really attracted to this terrible man
- My mom had a desire to get away from her strict parents, who she resented
- when I was 15 I chose a man, I had recreational sex with him before marriage, and he stalked me and humiliated me
- I felt like an adult at age 15, and I had sex with this man then so that I could put childhood behind me and become an adult
- My mother counter-acted the absence of my Dad by raising me as a Christian – she was a radical, intense Christian and that hyper-religiosity made me not want to talk about sex with her
- My mom divorced my father because he was a jerk
- My mom did not mind that he had other children from past relationships, was underemployed, and was lazy
- I used to sneak out of my room and sit on the back porch and drink alcohol with the neighbor kids
- My mom was a worrier and a control freak, so I rebelled against her warnings and attempts to set boundaries on my wildness
- I and my 15-year-old recreational sex partner used a condom from my devout Christian mother's drawer
- I had sex with 5 different boyfriends from age 15-18 and caught mono
- My mom had temporary boyfriends after the divorce
- In my 20s, "there wasn't much to do except go out and drink". "two to three times a week, me and my girlfriends would get dressed up, go to the clubs, and try to attract hot guys".
- From 21-30, I stopped looking for relationships, I just hooked up with hot guys for one-night stands and FWBs
- I felt better about myself, more confident and in control when I would drink and have one-night stands with these hot guys
- "I don't know why I was so focused on looks" in these guys
- The hooking up stopped at 30, then dating (with sex) resumed
- I realized that the hot guys I wanted were not going to settle down, especially with new younger women available
- From 15 to now, I've slept with 60 different men, sometimes repeatedly, and on and off
- I never admitted the true number of men I slept with to any of these men
- last relationship was 5 years ago (at age 36)
- I have lost interest in sex, and lost interest in men
- I don't have the mental toughness to be in a relationship
- I have "been broken" by too many failed relationships
- nobody told me that my decisions with men were not going to go well

In the final 8 minutes where Stefan explains the larger consequences of women's choices

for civilization is very important, I think. I was surprised that he spoke directly to the "hot" alpha males that women want and told them that they are breaking women, and share the blame for destroying our civilization. The thing is, I don't think those hot alpha males care about civilization, or anything except for themselves. So why do young women choose them?

If I had to pick one essential characteristic of young, unmarried women which ruins their lives, it is their inability to choose responsible men who are proven to be good at doing the things that men do as husbands and fathers. Young, unmarried women today are attracted to men who are LOUSY at the things that men do as husbands and fathers. Responsible men with strict morals and settled religion are not attractive to young, unmarried women. These women can't connect their choices with men to the tasks that men actually perform in a married home. I am talking about non-Christian women AND Christian women. Nothing that women learn in church corrects this flaw. They are taught to believe that God speaks to them through their emotions, that they must follow their emotions, and everything they do that blows up in their faces is the fault of men. It's never their responsibility.

Men's rights activists say that this flaw is the root cause of the end of civilization, and I'm inclined to believe them. Saving women from this flaw is the number one task of fathers, and it is the number one thing that women must look for in a man they make babies with: FIND A MAN WHO CAN BREAK YOUR FUTURE DAUGHTER(S) OUT OF THIS DELUSION BEFORE THEY CHOOSE A BAD MAN. Strong men confront women and set boundaries to help women make better choices. Weak men blame the bad men that women freely choose and this does NOT help women make better choices. Women need to understand that men who speak to them directly, and tell them no, and set boundaries and try to push them to be serious about education and career and finances and marriage are NOT anti-woman. We are trying to protect you and strengthen you, by telling you to make good decisions, and be responsible.

City Journal publishes comprehensive profile of Southern Poverty Law Center

August 18, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, recall from this article posted at The Federalist that the Southern Poverty Law Center was the source of the "hate map" which was used by convicted domestic terrorist Floyd Lee Corkins in his attempt to shoot and kill everyone at the Family Research Council. He was stopped by a security guard, and the video above is the footage of the attempted mass murder.

Excerpt:

> Corkins would later admit that he had located Family Research Council's office on a "hate map" produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center, and he planned to shoot people in the building and smear the Chick-fil-A sandwiches on them.
>
> […]Much of the ensuing media coverage ignored or downplayed Corkins' motives, which the *Washington Post* referred to as "a detail sure to reignite the culture wars." A year later, Southern Poverty Law Center founder Morris Dees was still publicly defending the inclusion of Family Research Council on the organization's "hate map."

Just to be clear, this gay activist was convicted of domestic terrorism, and received 25 years in prison.

Let's find out more about SPLC, courtesy of this article from the centrist City Journal, a very respected source.

Here is the article from City Journal.

Excerpt:

> Ironically, the SPLC not only overlooks most of the real hate groups in operation today, along with overtly race-based organizations, such as the pro-Latino National Council of La Raza and MEChA, but also labels moderates with whom it disagrees "extremists" if they deviate from its rigid political agenda, which embraces open borders, LGBT rights, and other left-wing totems. The SPLC has branded Somali-born reformer Ayaan Hirsi Ali an "anti-Muslin extremist" for her opposition to female genital mutilation and other oppressive Islamic practices, and designated the respected Family Research Council as a "hate group" for its opposition to same-sex marriage. Likewise, the organization deems mainstream immigration-reform advocates such as the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) and Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) as hate groups. British Muslim activist Maajid Nawaz—regarded by most observers as a human rights leader—is suing the SPLC for listing him as an extremist.

Not just the Family Research Council, but the Alliance Defending Freedom and Liberty

Counsel, too. Defending religious liberty at the Supreme Court and winning your case apparently makes you a “hate group”.

More:

> Critics of the SPLC accuse the lavishly funded organization of peddling fear and smearing political opponents—mostly conservatives—as bigots. Its “Hatewatch” list is avowedly ideological, acknowledging that it “monitors and exposes the activities of the American radical right.” Few left-wing organizations—and no Islamist groups—are branded in this way by the SPLC. Nevertheless, the SPLC, founded in 1971, has burrowed itself into the civil rights movement, the organized bar, the cloistered culture of large law firms, the education system, and even law enforcement as a champion for “the exploited, the powerless and the forgotten.” Its executives are richly compensated, some in excess of $400,000 annually. Operating from palatial six-story quarters in Montgomery, Alabama (sometimes called the “Poverty Palace”), it enjoys a $300 million endowment, including more than $23 million in cash.

The non-profit rating group “Charity Watch” gives the SPLC an “F” rating. This is the lowest grade possible.

More:

> The SPLC frequently rails against public figures as “enablers” not technically designated as hate groups or extremists, such as Texas governor Greg Abbott, former congressman and presidential candidate Ron Paul, radio talk show host Glenn Beck, Fox News commentator Judge Andrew Napolitano, and Kentucky senator Rand Paul. Rush Limbaugh, the Breitbart News Network, the Boy Scouts of America, and Focus on the Family (founded by psychologist, broadcaster, and best-selling author James Dobson) have also earned the SPLC’s wrath.

And finally:

> What many of the individuals and groups condemned by the SPLC have in common is a conservative orientation. Favoring traditional marriage becomes the moral equivalent of cross-burning; opposing illegal immigration or amnesty for illegal immigrants equates to advocating genocide; resisting the spread of radical Islam invokes Timothy McVeigh; and anti-tax Tea Party groups are now indistinguishable from armed militias or Holocaust deniers. Thus, dissent is de-legitimatized, and political foes are demonized.
>
> […]SPLC senior fellow Mark Potok, a 20-year veteran of the organization and editor of its “hate list”—a quarterly publication—has admitted that “our aim in life is to destroy these groups, to completely destroy them.”

How far would the SPLC go to “destroy” their enemies? Well, the SPLC-inspired attack on the Family Research Council is not the only time that the SPLC has been linked to violent left-wing extremism.

Consider this story from the radically leftist New York Times.

They write:

> It was a little after 5 p.m., a quiet time in a quiet neighborhood, before many people had returned home from work on Tuesday, when two women called 911 to report multiple gunshots and screams echoing through a condominium complex here near the University of North Carolina.
>
> By the time the police arrived, three people were dead — a newlywed couple and the woman's sister. They were young university students, Muslims of Arab descent, and high achievers who regularly volunteered in the area. A neighbor, a middle-age white man, was missing — then under arrest and charged with three counts of murder.
>
> […]Mr. Hicks, appeared to have a deep dislike of all religion. On his Facebook page, nearly all of his posts expressed support for atheism, criticism of Christian conservatives or both.

Let's take a look at what's on his Facebook page:

> His Facebook Likes included the Huffington Post, Rachel Maddow, the Southern Poverty Law Center, Freedom from Religion Foundation, Bill Nye "The Science Guy," Neil deGrasse Tyson, Gay Marriage groups and similar progressive pages.

Previously, I blogged about a peer-reviewed study published in the journal *Academic Questions*, found that the SPLC "…fails to use objective criteria in determining which organizations should be labeled a "hate group"…". Something to keep in mind when you hear the left-wing media invoking the SPLC as an authority.

Are the Galapagos finch beaks evidence of Darwinian evolution?

August 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
Jonathan Wells has an article about it at Evolution News.

It says:

> When Charles Darwin visited the Galápagos Islands in 1835, he collected specimens of the local wildlife. These included some finches that he threw into bags, many of them mislabeled. Although the Galápagos finches had little impact on Darwin's thinking (he doesn't even mention them in *The Origin of Species*), biologists who studied them a century later called them "Darwin's finches" and invented the myth that Darwin had correlated differences in the finches' beaks with different food sources (he hadn't). According to the myth, Darwin was inspired by the finches to formulate his theory of evolution, thoughaccording to historian of science Frank Sulloway "nothing could be further from the truth."
>
> In the 1970s, biologists studied a population of medium ground finches on one of the islands in great detail. When a severe drought left only large, hard-to-crack seeds, 85 percent of the birds perished. The survivors had beaks that were about 5 percent larger than the average beak size in the original population. The biologists estimated that if similar droughts occurred once every ten years, the population could become a new species in only 200 years. In a 1999 booklet defending evolution, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences called the finches "a particularly compelling example" of the origin of species.
>
> **But after the drought, birds with smaller beaks flourished again, and the average beak size of the population returned to normal. No net evolution had occurred.** No matter; Darwin's finches became an icon of

> evolution that is still featured in most biology textbooks.
>
> In the 1980s, a population of large ground finches, with larger beaks than the medium ground finches, migrated to the island. When a drought in 2004-2005 again reduced the food supply, the medium and large ground finch populations both declined. But since even the largest beaks among the medium ground finches were no match for the beaks of the large ground finches, the latter pretty much monopolized the larger seeds and the former had to make do with smaller seeds. This time, the medium ground finches that survived the drought had beaks that were *smaller* than the average size in the original population. Biologists studying the finches argued that birds with smaller beaks were better able to eat the tiny seeds that were left after the large ground finches ate the big ones, and they concluded that this was again an example of "evolutionary change."
>
> **[…]Wait a minute. Average beak size increased slightly during one drought, only to return to normal after the rains return. Then average beak size decreased slightly during another drought. A region of DNA is correlated with beak size. And somehow that tells us how finches evolved in the first place?**

There is an important distinction to make between micro-evolution and macro-evolution. Changes within a type is micro-evolution. Evolving a new organ type or body plan is macro-evolution. There is plenty of evidence for micro-evolution, but no evidence for macro-evolution.

What needs to be proven by the Darwinists is that the same process that results in different average beak size in a population of finches after a drought can create the finches in the first place. I think that Darwinists are credulous – they believe what they want to believe because they want to believe it, even if the evidence is incredibly weak. Darwinists must demonstrate that *heritable variations can result in the generation of new organ types and body plans.* Changes in average beak size is not interesting. What is needed is to show how the beaks, much less the wings, evolved in the first place.

Icons of Evolution

Jonathan has actually written about a number of misleading things that you may mind in Biology textbooks.

Here are the sections in his book "Icons of Evolution":

- The Miller-Urey Experiment
- Darwin's Tree of Life
- Homology in Vertebrate Limbs
- Haeckel's Embroys
- Archaeopteryx–The Missing Link
- Peppered Moths
- Darwin's Finches

- Four-Winged Fruit Flies
- Fossil Horses and Directed Evolution
- From Ape to Human: The Ultimate Icon

Dr. Wells holds a Ph.D in Molecular and Cell Biology from the University of California at Berkeley.

Making monergism make sense: a middle-knowledge approach to salvation

August 20, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

This article at Free Thinking Ministries was written by my friend Tim Stratton. In it, he tries to rescue Calvinism from the horror of double-predestination.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Many reformed folks *(freely?)* choose to reject Molinism because they contend that this theological view "smells of synergism." What is this stench that reportedly makes John Calvin turn over in his grave? Simply put, synergism is the view that man plays at least a small part in his own salvation process. Monergism, on the other hand, is the view that God is the author of salvation from beginning to end.
>
> Since Molinism affirms that man is free to choose to reject God's saving grace or not, many Calvinists jump to the conclusion and assume that Molinism must be synergistic. This does not necessarily follow.[1] Consider one possible model:
>
> 1- God, by nature, is a volitional unmoved mover who is free to choose between options in accord with His nature. (This is supported via the *Kalam* and the *Argument from Time*).
>
> 2- By God's grace, humans are created in the "image of God." By nature, then, we are free to choose between options in accord with our nature. (This is supported via the *Freethinking Argument*).
>
> 3- Adam & Eve freely chose to disobey God and this sin completely separates humanity from God. This is what it means to have a "totally depraved sin

> nature." (Every aspect of man is separated from God).
>
> 4- In this state of depraved separation from God (sin nature), humans do not even know God exists if merely left to our own devices.
>
> 5- If humans do not even know God exists, then, left to our own devices and **apart from God's grace**, it would be impossible to choose to love and follow God (thus, Pelagianism is impossible on this view).
>
> 6- God, in His love for all people, provides amazing prevenient grace to all people (Romans 1:20), writing the law on the human heart (Romans 2:15), conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-9), and draws all men (John 12:32). This is commonly referred to as "common grace."
>
> 7- Therefore, by God's grace, human nature has changed from a "totally separated from God nature" to a nature that has now experienced enough divine revelation (influences) allowing all mankind to start making some free and volitional choices in accord with our new nature; namely, to choose to resist God's grace and revelation, or not.[2] Mankind is without excuse because we do not have to resist what God has made clear (Romans 1:18-20).[3]
>
> *[Note: According to Calvinist, Matt Slick (albeit inadvertently), Mark 4:10-12 implies that if an unregenerate person gets access to clear and accurate information, then they possess the ability to become Christians!]*
>
> 8- If one does not reject or continually resist the grace and revelation God provides them, then God will continually provide more and more until the person reaches the point of "no return" and will become saved.
>
> Thus, God does *ALL* the work in salvation from beginning to end on this Molinistic model; all the human can do is freely resist God's grace and revelation, but he or she does not have to! The human does nothing to gain salvation apart from God's grace on this Monergistic Model of Molinism.

I think that Stratton's formulation above does indeed keep God as the sole initiator of salvation. And that's good. But it also makes sure that human resistance to God is allowed, and that's good. We want salvation to be 100% by faith alone in Christ alone. But we don't want God to be the cause of people not being saved (because he is the ONLY ONE who can save them, and he chooses not to save them). On Stratton's view, God wants everyone to be saved. If anyone is saved, it's because God did ALL THE WORK to lead them and secure their salvation with the death of Jesus on the cross. But, on Stratton's view, humans do get a choice – the choice to trust God or not. And so, if a person is not saved, then it's their fault – not God's. This works.

Read his whole post, and see what you think about it.

Are solar eclipses common? What has to be in place to observe a solar eclipse?

August 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

If there were a Designer of the universe, what would He have to do to allow creatures living on a planet to observe a solar eclipse?

Consider this article from Discovery Institute.

Excerpt:

> A rare convergence of events allows Earthlings to witness not just solar eclipses, but perfect solar eclipses, where the Moon just barely covers the Sun's bright photosphere. Such eclipses depend on the precise sizes, shapes, and relative distances of the Sun, Moon, and Earth. There's no law of physics or celestial mechanics that requires the right configuration. In fact, of the more than 65 major moons in our Solar System, ours best matches the Sun as viewed from its planet's surface, and this is only possible during a fairly narrow window of Earth's history encompassing the present. The Moon is about 400 times smaller than the Sun. But right now, the Moon is about 400 times closer to the Earth than is the Sun. So, the Moon's apparent size on the sky matches the Sun's. Astronomers have noted this odd coincidence for centuries. And, since the Sun appears larger from the Earth than from any other planet with a moon, an Earth-bound observer can discern finer details in the Sun's chromosphere and corona than from any other planet. This makes our solar eclipses more valuable scientifically.
>
> The recent pictures of solar eclipses sent back from the Opportunity rover on Mars nicely illustrate how much better our solar eclipses are. The two small potato-shaped Martian moons, Deimos and Phobos, appear much too small to

> cover the Sun's disk, and they zip across it in less than a minute.

Not only do you need things to be finely-tuned to see the eclipse, but you also need observers to be there.

More:

> It's intriguing that the best place to view total solar eclipses in our Solar System is the one time and place where there are observers to see them. It turns out that the precise configuration of Earth, Moon and Sun are also vital to sustaining life on Earth. A moon large enough to cover the Sun stabilizes the tilt of the rotation axis of its host planet, yielding a more stable climate, which is necessary for complex life. The Moon also contributes to Earth's ocean tides, which increase the vital mixing of nutrients from the land to the oceans. The two moons around Mars are much too small to stabilize its rotation axis.
>
> In addition, it's only in the so-called Circumstellar Habitable Zone of our Sun–that cozy life friendly ring where water can stay liquid on a planet's surface–that the Sun appears to be about the same size as the Moon from Earth's surface. As a result, we enjoy perfect solar eclipses.

Why would the Designer of the Universe want his observers to exist in exactly the right place to observe the solar eclipse? What is the point of seeing a solar eclipse?

Here is the point:

> Our ability to observe perfect solar eclipses has figured prominently in several important scientific discoveries, discoveries that would have been difficult if not impossible on the much more common planets that don't enjoy such eclipses.
>
> First, these observations helped disclose the nature of stars. Scientists since Isaac Newton (1666) had known that sunlight splits into all the colors of the rainbow when passed through a prism. But only in the 19th century did astronomers observe solar eclipses with spectroscopes, which use prisms. The combination of the man-made spectroscope with the natural experiment provided by eclipses gave astronomers the tools they needed not only to discover how the Sun's spectrum is produced, but the nature of the Sun itself. This knowledge enabled astronomers to interpret the spectra of the distant stars. So, in a sense, perfect eclipses were a key that unlocked the field of astrophysics.
>
> Second, in 1919, perfect solar eclipses allowed two teams of astronomers, one led by Sir Arthur Eddington, to confirm a prediction of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity–that gravity bends light. They succeeded in measuring the changes in the positions of starlight passing near the Sun's edge compared to their positions months later. Such a test was most feasible during a perfect solar eclipse. The tests led to the general acceptance of Einstein's theory, which is the foundation of modern cosmology.

So, you've got fine-tuning for the eclipse, fine-tuning for the observers, and with that in

place, the observers can collect scientific evidence… including evidence that confirms cosmic fine-tuning as well as general relativity. General relativity is important because if gives us the expanding universe – one of the evidences for the Big Bang cosmology. The Big Bang cosmology states that the entire physical universe came into being out of nothing, about 14 billion years ago. Who could have caused that? If we don't have eclipses, we are losing out on evidence of cosmic fine-tuning and cosmic creation.

There's a new Discovery Institute podcast featuring Jay Richards, co-author of the amazing book "The Privileged Planet".

Details:

> On this episode of **ID: The Future**, CSC Senior Fellow Jay Richards explains how perfect solar eclipses are the tip of an iceberg-size design argument found in a book he co-wrote, *The Privileged Planet*. The conditions for a habitable planet (right distance from the right size star, a big but not too big moon that is the right distance away to stabilize Earth's tilt and circulate its oceans) are also conditions that make perfect solar eclipses from the Earth's surface much more likely. And perfect eclipses aren't just eerie and beautiful. They've helped scientists test and discover things, and are part of a larger pattern: The conditions needed for a habitable place in the cosmos correlate with the conditions well suited for scientific discovery. As Richards notes, this correlation is inexplicable if the cosmos is the product of chance. But if it's intelligently designed with creatures like us in mind, it's just what we might expect.

The MP3 file is here.

If you have not seen The Privileged Planet, you can get the same argument as in the book in just over an hour. You can either buy The Privileged Planet DVD, or click here to watch it on YouTube. And it's narrated by John-Rhys Davies.

Open-minded liberal Dave Rubin talks to moderate conservative Larry Edler

August 22, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two lions fight it out and… hey what is this?

My friend Kris found this and she sent it to me. I watched both parts, and found a PragerU video to go with. I liked the first part better than the second part.

Here is the first part:

And the summary:

Date:

January 15th, 2016

Topic:

Which group, progressives or conservatives, have reality-based policies that can be defended with evidence?

Summary:

- Larry Elder's family background, upbringing, education and career
- What is the definition of conservatism?
- What is a libertarian?
- Why does Larry Elder support pushing social issues down to the states?
- Why does Larry Elder support Bush's decision to go to war with Iraq?
- Why doesn't Larry elder refer to himself as an "African-American"?
- Why does the Democrat Party get 95% of the black vote?

- Is there such a thing as “systemic racism”?
- Do white police officers treat black people worse than white people?
- What is the REAL problem facing the black community?
- What is the number one cause of death for young black men?
- Black conservatives are called names by the left: is it racism?
- Does the black community agree with Democrat Party on abortion policy?
- Does the black community agree with Democrat Party on education policy?
- Does the black community agree with Democrat Party on retirement policy?
- Does the black community agree with Democrat Party on marriage policy?
- Why does the left want to reduce border security and import more refugees?
- What are some non-conservative that Larry Elder holds?
- Is Hollywood tolerant of different political views?
- What do black people think about illegal immigration?

There was another conversation a year later, which you can watch here. It’s not quite as electrifying as the first one, but I definitely recommend it to Trump supporters. Trump, and the response to Trump, is discussed.

Here is part 2:

That’s all very well and good, but this is the shocking part – Dave Rubin, *who is in a same-sex marriage*, actually now identifies more as a conservative than as a progressive. Why? Because he thinks that his classical liberal views are closer to conservatism than progressivism.

What this Prager University video to see why:

I had to look up where he was educated: Binghamton University. That’s probably why he is so open-minded.

I’m fine with people who are on the left, as long as they don’t come after me for my views. I’m particularly happy with people like Rubin who can at least *understand* why I hold the views I do, and I don’t mind that they don’t agree with me. I just don’t want them to come after my job or attack me with violence. Dave Rubin is a lot better than the armed “antifa” fascists who are pressing their views with violence and vandalism. The worst part is that the mainstream media supports these little Stalinists. I’m pleased that classical liberals find that alarming. I would classify Rubin as a libertarian now – a big improvement from being a leftist.

Two reasons to avoid premarital sex: trust issues and contact with exes

August 23, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
This is from Family Studies blog. (H/T Brad Wilcox)

Excerpt:.

> My own research with working-class young adults leads me to believe that they have basically made peace with sexual permissiveness—at least outside of marriage—even as they retain some ambivalence about it. They tend to move in quickly with new romantic partners, even as they worry that people rush too quickly into relationships. From survey data, we know that people without a college education have more lifetime sexual partners than those with a college education, and that most of them see no problem with premarital sex.
>
> But there is one problem: easy access to sex with multiple partners can make for complicated relationships. As sexual partners accumulate, so does the potential for distrust. As one man whose ex-girlfriend had cheated on him explained, “It’s gonna take a lot more time for me to ever trust somebody again like that. I let her in quick, and now it’s never gonna happen again.” One divorced man said simply, “Everyone has to watch their ass all the time.” There is the feeling that no one is safe—even in marriage. As another young man claimed, “Nowadays, even though you got a ring on your finger, people tend to look past that.”
>
> So people describe keeping vigilant watch over their partners’ cell phones, policing for messages from exes. They live an all but married lifestyle, yet they say that they are hesitant to make the commitment of marriage. Why? Part of the reason is that they don’t trust their partner, or themselves, to remain in the marriage. In one survey, 42.5 percent of low-income, unmarried respondents

> cited “worry that the marriage would end in divorce” as a reason they might not be pursuing marriage, and 23.5 percent cited “questions about whether your partner is trustworthy.” As one young man that I interviewed said after learning that his fiancée was cheating on him, “I don’t trust nobody.”
>
> **That distrust is at least partly the legacy of the libertarian sexual ethic, which assumes that sexual activity outside of marriage is typically okay so long as people are mutually consenting to the acts. And that distrust is why I have a hard time believing—as Noah Smith does—that sexual permissiveness will somehow evolve into more stable marriages for the working class. (Indeed, having more sexual partners prior to marriage is linked to greater odds of divorce, as Nicholas Wolfinger and W. Bradford Wilcox recently documented.) There is no invisible hand that will transform James and Jessica’s distrust and cynicism, which stems in part from their multiple past sexual relationships, into trust and an enduring marriage. What the working class needs—what we all need—to achieve our shared aspirations for lifelong love and a stable family is social permission to date without immediately having sex.**
>
> That’s important because today young people often assume that withholding sex is a sign of distrust. As James said, if you begin a relationship and don’t have sex, “they automatically assume that you’re cheating.” But sliding into sex often translates into sliding into a relationship—and children—without first building trust and discerning for character and compatibility. And that slide often contributes to the erosion of trust in the opposite sex and in lifelong love. We must confront that reality if we’re serious about empowering working young adults to achieve trusting relationships.

“Withholding sex” makes it sound bad. You don’t have sex or even do sexual things before marriage because you are trying to prove to your partner that you have self-control enough that when you are married, he/she need not be concerned that you are OK with sex outside of a lifelong commitment. You restrain yourself in order to prove to the other person that you have what it takes in order to be trusted, and the other person does the same to you. It’s not that you are trying to reduce the amount of “fun” you are having, it’s that you are auditioning for a role, and this is what the other person needs to see from you during the courtship – chastity. Chastity demonstrates to them that the commitment you are offering is not based on things that fade, like beauty or youth.

Should people in sinful lifestyles bully churches into celebrating them?

August 24, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Anti-marriage gay activists vandalize church

This story was the topic of the most recent episode of the Reasonable Faith podcast. Basically, a conservative, apologetics-friendly church had a homosexual person who wanted to be openly gay and still be accepted as a member. After he was told by the church that he could attend the church, but not be a member, he decided to write the mainstream media to shame the church.

Here is the link to Reasonable Faith's podcast – and they have a transcript.

I want to first focus on the letter written by the gay man:

> Dear Watermark Community Church,
>
> Today I celebrate a very interesting anniversary with you. It was exactly one year ago when you told me that I was no longer worthy to serve, be in a community group, and be a member of your church.
>
> I spent years in your church battling against my homosexuality. I believed with all my heart that God would change me; I prayed for change almost daily. But when I wasn't able to change, you turned your back on me.
>
> You say our "sin" is not unique, but you treat us in a unique manner; this is unacceptable behavior. We are actual people that have actual feelings.
>
> Here we are a year later and you are still doing to others what you did to me. You are tarnishing the name of God to Christians and non-Christians alike; you should be ashamed of yourselves! Do not forget, Jesus was a angry with people just like you who said certain groups of people were not worthy to be followers of Him.
>
> Thank you for removing yourself from my life! I am who God made me to be. I

> cannot change my sexual orientation and nor would I want to. I now have internal peace and happiness unlike ever before.
>
> Jason Thomas

As Reasonable Faith notes, this is *what he said* and this is what the far-left Dallas Morning News reported. It sounds like the church was very mean to him, but is that what really happened?

Here is what the church actually wrote to him:

> Dear Jason,
>
> This is a difficult letter to write, as I am sure that it will be a difficult one to hear and receive. We genuinely care for you, love you, and want nothing more for you than to live an abundant life that is found in Jesus Christ alone.
>
> However, in our attempt to shepherd you, we have recognised a destructive pattern that prohibits us in caring for you and playing the role you desire for us to have in your life (1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28). **Specifically, your desire to actively participate in a same-sex relationship with another man, and your unwillingness to heed biblical counsel from your church to turn from that relationship, has made it exceedingly difficult to shepherd you during this time.**
>
> As we noted during our time together last Tuesday (9/29/15), and through the years, we have gently & repeatedly brought these patterns to your attention and, at times, you have heeded this counsel and repented. But now, this is no longer the case. So, in obedience to Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Corinthians 5:11, we are left with no other option but to remove you from our body and treat you as we would anyone who is living out of fellowship with God…and we lovingly, but firmly, call you back to repentance. This means that you are no longer a member of our body at Watermark. We are praying that repentance comes quickly and that you do not continue choosing a path of destruction and one that leads you away from the authority and care of the church.
>
> We recognise that these patterns are only symptoms of a heart that is either unwilling or unable to fully trust God in every area of your life, including your sexuality. We plead with you to run to the Lord and allow the Spirit of God to begin to transform your heart in a mighty way (Titus 3:3-7).
>
> In order to help you through this time, we would like to make some tangible recommendations that we hope will serve as a catalyst for true repentance and heart-change in your life. They are:
>
> 1. Faithful attendance of Re:Generation targeting the above issue, while following counsel to not be in a dating relationship during that time.
>
> 2. Meet with a Watermark staff member who shares in the same struggle (same sex attraction) who has found freedom, healing, and victory through our Savior

> Jesus Christ (just let Brandon know when you're ready to meet with him).
>
> We affirm your many gifts, your heart of kindness, and we value the way God has uniquely formed you (Psalm 139:13-14). We all pray for your repentance and full restoration so that your gifts and passions can be fully unleashed for the Kingdom of God. We love you, Jason, and stand at the gate for you and eagerly await God's restoration in your life (Luke 15:20).
>
> In Christ,
>
> The Elders of Watermark Community Church

Here is what one of my friends at Watermark who was aware of the situation told me:

> I think it's clear that Watermark was very kind and loving in their discipline and can't be called hypocritical or homophobic, and they were not trying to change the man's sexual orientation but rather simply asking him to abstain from sexual relationships. They give lots of chances before administering discipline and the process is the same each time they go through this with members. Some repent and some turn away.

As we have seen, publicizing those who disagree with homosexuality and gay marriage is a favorite tactic of the fascist left. Sometimes, it just involves smearing (e.g. – the Southern Povery Law Center). Sometimes, it involves lawfare, (e.g. – the attorney general of Washington state). Sometimes, it involves leaking the names of pro-marriage donors (e.g. – the Human Rights Campaign). Sometimes, it involves vandalism, violence and even domestic terrorism (e.g. – Floyd Lee Corkins' attack on the Family Research Council). When it comes to homosexuality and gay marriage, fascism is the normal response to dissent.

I'm in a situation right now where I am trying to become a member of a wonderful PCA church, which I have been attending regularly for months – but never taken communion. The PCA church is a Reformed church and they believe in infant baptism.

I am a 3.9 point Calvinist, and opposed to infant baptism. Both of these challenges came up in the new members meeting (not from me, because I don't want to do *anything* in *their church* to annoy the leaders at all). The lead pastor said that all we have to do for salvation is to trust God, he does everything. Well, as long as that trust is a genuine free will choice, then I agree with him. He also said that you don't have to sign off on every point of Reformed theology, especially predestination. He assured us that many of the elders were former baptists, and they had good reasons for their Presbyterian view. This was a FIVE HOUR free for all discussion with the pastors and elders! Yet, I did not feel it was my place to raise public criticisms even in a home setting. Instead, I went out of my way to try to ask questions about the parts of the church that impressed me: apologetics and public debates with atheists. Going forward, I don't intend to express my thoughts to anyone in the church, and I certainly DO NOT want to be a leader in the church. That's what this blog is for. I didn't start that church, I'm just there to attend and learn.

I just find it astonishing that gay activists and other radicals on the left think that they can try to *bring in the mainstream media and the law to punish the church for holding to orthodox Christian moral values.* But this is why we call sin "sin". We don't call chastity a sin, because chaste people aren't fascists when they hear disagreement. We don't call caring for the elderly a sin, because caring people aren't fascists when they hear disagreement. There is something really wrong with these behaviors that the Bible forbids, and you can see what it is when you look at the totalitarian responses to mere disagreement with the sin.

Look at 1 Corinthians 6:1-10:

> [1] If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people?
>
> [2] Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?
>
> [3] Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!
>
> **[4] Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church?**
>
> **[5] I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers?**
>
> **[6] But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!**
>
> **[7] The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?**
>
> [8] Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters.
>
> [9] Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived:Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men
>
> [10] nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Consider 1 Corinthians 5:9-13:

> [9] I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—
>
> [10] not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.
>
> [11] **But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with**

> **such people.**
>
> [12] What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?
>
> [13] God will judge those outside. **“Expel the wicked person from among you.”**

Everyone sins. Fine. Keep it to yourself. Don’t use the law to force Bible-believing Christians to celebrate your sins. The church’s job is to help you to be more like Christ. You’re in a community where everyone is supposed to be serious about growing as a Christian and part of that involves improving your character morally. Another part means getting along with other Christians instead of being disruptive.

Regarding complaints about not being able to act on your sexual orientation, I have no sympathy. I am attracted to women, and I am a virgin, because I am not married. I am not going to church to rebel against this requirement. My job is to structure my life in such a way that it is easier to obey it, whether that involves studying the issue in the research or drawing the line long before I have to make a decision in the heat of the moment. God must be #1 in a person’s life, setting goals and policies, and our job is to make and execute effective plans that deliver results for the Boss.

By the way, do not miss this other recent article on homosexuality from Reasonable Faith.

What are the historical arguments for the empty tomb narrative?

August 25, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

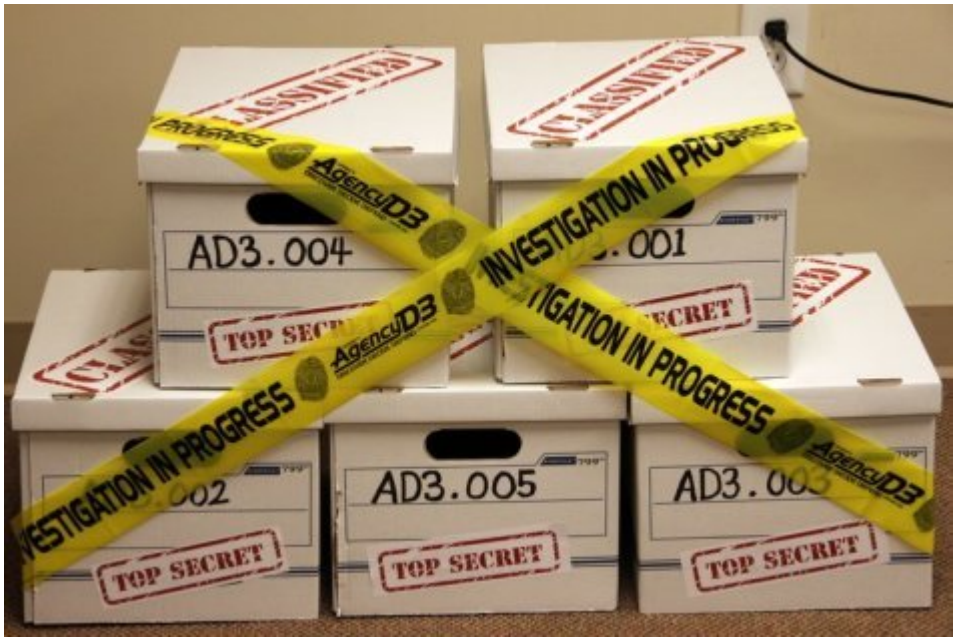

Investigation in progress

I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb

was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

A few quotes from atheist historians not from Dr. Craig's article: (thanks to Eric of Ratio Christi OSU)

> Michael Goulder (Atheist NT Prof. at Birmingham) "…it goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion." ["The Baseless Fabric of a Vision," in Gavin D'Costa, editor, Resurrection Reconsidered (Oxford, 1996), 48.]
>
> Gerd Lüdemann (Atheist Prof of NT at Göttingen): "…the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus…not later than three years… the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE." [The Resurrection of Jesus, trans. by Bowden (Fortress, 1994), 171-72.]
>
> Robert Funk (Non-Christian scholar, founder of the Jesus Seminar): "…The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30

> C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." [Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, The Acts of Jesus, 466.]

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s. For example, the atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark some time in the 40s. (See the debate below)

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say "The President is hosting a dinner at the White House" and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the "high priest" as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus' death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

So we are dealing with very early sources for the empty tomb.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as "Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women" and "Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female."
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was

> worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

Study: marriages where husband does not work full-time more likely to end in divorce

August 26, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Air Force TACPs confirm target locations with their map

This was reported in Family Studies.

Excerpt:

> In a recent study published this July in *American Sociological Review*, Harvard sociology professor Alexandra Killewald, Ph.D., analyzed data on 6,309 heterosexual married couples from the 1968 to 2013 waves of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID). She looked specifically at the potential effects on marital stability of "spouses' division of labor, overall financial resources, and wives' economic prospects following divorce," comparing couples married before 1975 to those married in 1975 or later (through 2011).
>
> […]**Killewald found that for couples married in 1975 or later, marriages in which the husband was not employed full-time were one-third more likely to divorce. Specifically, a husband who was not employed full-time experienced a "3.3 percent predicted probability of divorce the following year, compared to 2.5 percent if he is employed full-time."**
>
> […]Killewald is certainly not the first to find an association between men's employment and marital stability. A study conducted by three economists and published in 2015 found that "In couples where the wife earns more than the husband, the wife spends more time on household chores; moreover, those couples are less satisfied with their marriage and are more likely to divorce."

> And an earlier study by Liana C. Sayer, Paula England, Paul Allison and Nicole Kangas found that when a husband is "nonemployed" (defined as not working at all), *both the husband and the wife* are more likely to end a marriage. In an email interview with IFS, one of the study's co-authors, New York University sociology professor Paula England, explained her findings.
>
> "The innovation of our study was to look separately at what predicts a divorce wanted more by the woman versus a divorce wanted more by the man," England wrote. "We found that a nonemployed man predicts either the woman leaving the man or the man leaving the woman."
>
> She continued, "Killewald's data just show her if they got divorced, not who left. We found that women's employment doesn't make men leave more, and it only makes women leave more when they are unhappy in the marriage."

People sometimes ask me why I have all these rules and best practices when it comes to relationships and marriage plans. You know: men must have STEM degrees, no sex before marriage, men have to approach women by speaking to fathers first, etc. Well, why have all these rules? Why not just do what feels good? Why not just do what my peers will approve of?

The answer is this: don't get your ideas about relationships and marriage from your feelings, your peers or the culture. Think for yourself.

I didn't get my idea of how courting and marriage works from a culture that dismisses all of the ancient wisdom about love and marriage in favor of the trends of a culture dominated by ideologies that emphasize pleasure over wisdom. The right way to learn about romance, love, marriage and parenting is to go the classics, and then to the scientific studies. We have to learn how the world really works, and abide by the best practices that we find in the classics and in the peer-reviewed publications. And we have to be willing to say no to feelings and friends and even family, when the classics and the peer-reviewed literature say something different. Peer-reviewed studies matter: we cannot escape them by feelings or by peer approval or by cultural trends.

The big problem with this Peter Pan, Disney princess view of relationships popular with women (Christian and non-Christian) is children. Children deserve to have parents who are wise and self-controlled, willing to do things the right way. You can't break all the rules and then expect things to somehow magically work out because you feel that they will somehow. The rules are there for a reason. If a man cannot demonstrate that he is serious about the husband role by showing you a resume with 5 years of full-time private sector experience in a STEM or vocational job, and $50,000 net worth, then he's not fit for the role of husband. Women need to rule out every man who has not demonstrated his ability as a provider and saver, then choose from the ones who are left by evaluating for other criteria. Feelings of attraction based on "hot" appearance, non-judgmentalism, liberal politics and lack of leadership, (which often goes along with lack of planning), are not signs that a man is qualified for husband and father roles. Women today have things exactly backwards when choosing men. If your goal is marriage, choose a man who has

demonstrated ability to do marriage tasks – like working full time and not wasting all his earnings on fun and thrills.

Why does atheist historian Gerd Ludemann accept the post-mortem experiences of the risen Jesus?

August 27, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

William Lane Craig explains why even atheist historians like Gerd Ludemann accept that the earliest followers of Jesus had experiences in which Jesus appeared to them as resurrected Lord.

Excerpt:

> Fact #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead*. This is a fact which is almost universally acknowledged among New Testament scholars, for the following reasons:
>
> 1. The list of eyewitnesses to Jesus's resurrection appearances which is quoted by Paul in I Cor. 15. 5-7 guarantees that such appearances occurred.
>
> 2. The appearance traditions in the gospels provide multiple, independent attestation of such appearances.
>
> With respect to the first supporting line of evidence, it is universally accepted on the basis of the early date of Paul's tradition as well as the apostle's personal acquaintance with many of the people listed that the disciples did experience postmortem appearances of Christ. Among the witnesses of the resurrection appearances were Peter, the immediate circle of the disciples known as "the Twelve," a gathering of 500 Christian believers (many of whom Paul evidently knew, since he was aware that some had died by the time of his writing), Jesus's younger brother James, and a wider group of apostles. "Finally," says Paul, "as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me" (I Cor. 15.8).

> The second supporting line of evidence appeals again to the criterion of multiple attestation. The Gospels independently attest to postmortem appearances of Jesus, even to some of the same appearances found in Paul's list. Wolfgang Trilling explains,
>
> From the list in I Cor. 15 the particular reports of the Gospels are now to be interpreted. Here may be of help what we said about Jesus's miracles. It is impossible to 'prove' historically a particular miracle. But the totality of the miracle reports permits no reasonable doubt that Jesus in fact performed 'miracles.' That holds analogously for the appearance reports. It is not possible to secure historically the particular event. But the totality of the appearance reports permits no reasonable doubt that Jesus in fact bore witness to himself in such a way.38
>
> The appearance to Peter is independently attested by Paul and Luke (I Cor. 15.5; Lk. 24.34), the appearance to the Twelve by Paul, Luke, and John (I Cor. 15.5; Lk. 24:36-43; Jn. 20.19-20), the appearance to the women disciples by Matthew and John (Mt. 28.9-10; Jn. 20.11-17), and appearances to the disciples in Galilee by Mark, Matthew, and John (Mk. 16.7; Mt. 28. 16-17; Jn. 21). Taken sequentially, the appearances follow the pattern of Jerusalem-Galilee-Jerusalem, matching the festival pilgrimages of the disciples as they returned to Galilee following the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread and traveled again to Jerusalem two months later for Pentecost.
>
> Lüdemann himself concludes, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus's death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."39 Thus, we are in basic agreement that following Jesus's crucifixion various individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Christ alive from the dead. The real bone of contention will be how these experiences are best to be explained.

Triablogue notes that most historians accept these post-mortem experiences of the risen Jesus:

> In their 2004 book, Gary Habermas and Michael Licona mention five facts accepted by the large majority of scholars:
>
> 1. Jesus died by crucifixion.
> 2. Jesus' disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them.
> 3. The church persecutor Paul was suddenly changed.
> 4. The skeptic James, brother of Jesus, was suddenly changed.
> 5. The tomb was empty.
>
> Habermas and Licona write:
>
> "On the state of Resurrection studies today, I (Habermas) recently completed an overview of more than 1,400 sources on the resurrection of Jesus published since 1975. I studied and catalogued about 650 of these texts in English, German, and

> French. Some of the results of this study are certainly intriguing. For example, perhaps no fact is more widely recognized than that early Christian believers had real experiences that they thought were appearances of the risen Jesus. A critic may claim that what they saw were hallucinations or visions, but he does not deny that they actually experienced something….roughly 75 percent of scholars on the subject accept the empty tomb as a historical fact." (The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2004], pp. 60, 70)
>
> Habermas and Licona explain that even "the majority of nonbelieving scholars" (p. 149) accept such facts, not just Christian scholars. And even many professing Christian scholars are Christian in name, but reject much of what Christians have traditionally believed. Skeptics sometimes suggest that a scholarly consensus on facts related to Jesus' resurrection isn't of much significance, because so many of the scholars are Christians, but *traditional* Christians make up only a small percentage of scholarship.

When talking about the appearances, the challenge is always to make the move from "thought they saw" to "they actually saw". In chapter 6 of their introductory book on the resurrection of Jesus, "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus", Mike Licona and Gary Habermas give some reasons why the post-mortem appearances of Jesus were not hallucinations. First, they argue that hallucinations are had by individuals, not groups. Second, they argue that the hallucination hypothesis leaves the empty tomb unexplained. It also doesn't explain the appearances to skeptical James and antagonistic Paul. Finally, the appearance narratives are too varied to be hallucinations, i.e. – individuals, groups, friends, enemies, different times and different places.

If you want to read a scholarly response to the hallucination hypothesis, it's right in the article by Dr. Craig that I was quoting from above. He assesses the hallucination hypothesis as put forward by atheist scholar Gerd Ludemann against the standard criteria for judging multiple competing historical explanations. It's too much to quote here, but click through and read it when you can. If you want to see a good summary of the arguments for the empty tomb, go right here.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

New study: switching male and female marriage roles makes both sexes unhappy

August 28, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Child grabs for his mom, who is leaving for work

Here's a report on a new study from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> When females were the main breadwinner in the family, they were discovered to report more symptoms of depression.
>
> However, the opposite effect was found in men: Their psychological well-being was highest when they were the primary wage-earners.
>
> Researchers at the University of Illinois examined data on nearly 1,500 men and 1,800 women, aged between 52 and 60. Their well-being was evaluated through surveys.
>
> The researchers first found that men's well-being decreased once they had exited the workforce to become home-makers.
>
> Meanwhile, the inverse was not so for women: Women's psychological well-being was not affected by leaving their jobs to become stay-at-home mothers.
>
> 'We observed a statistically significant and substantial difference in depressive symptoms between men and women in our study,' says lead researcher Karen Kramer.
>
> 'The results supported the overarching hypothesis: well-being was lower for mothers and fathers who violated gendered expectations about the division of paid labor, and higher for parents who conformed to these expectations.'

If you don't like the UK Daily Mail, CNN reported on a similar study back in 2014.

Indeed. The trouble is this: who can afford to provide for a stay-at-home wife on one salary, in a country where 30% of your income is taxed, and many things (e.g. – health care, college tuition, etc.) are way more expensive because of socialist welfare state policies? We have a $20 trillion dollar debt, and taxes are only going to go higher, making it that much harder for a working man to provide for a family – no matter how diligent he is about getting STEM degree(s) and working full time, non-stop. Marriages where the woman stays home with the children are happiest for everyone, but thanks to the voting patterns of radical feminists, husbands have been replaced by government programs, and those cost taxpayer money. You can either have a big government welfare state or you can have a stay-at-home wife. You can't have both.

I got a snarky comment on a post I wrote last week about how marriages where the husband does not work full-time are more likely to fail.

Here is the comment:

> Well done.
> I'll now await your follow-up article on the divorce rate for couples where the wife works full-time outside of the home and how men should choose a woman who has demonstrated an ability to do marriage tasks – like taking care of the household full time, raising and nuturing children, being loving and supportive of a husband when times are tough (especially if, God forbid, he should ever find himself ***unemployed*** and thus no longer a provider, in which case most wives' base and visceral impulse is to abandon him), not wanting "a career," and not insisting that her husband waste all his earnings on fun and thrills for her.

Well, I'm blogging about it again today, but if the commenter were very clever, then he would have found this post from June of 2013 entitled "STUDY SHOWS THAT FEMALE-BREADWINNER MARRIAGES ARE LESS HAPPY AND LESS STABLE".

Excerpt:

> Given these findings, it isn't surprising that when a wife earns more than her husband, the risk of divorce rises, too. To study this, the authors used a survey conducted in two waves, 1987-88 and 1992-93. (There were no more recent data available for this particular test.) Then they investigated the likelihood of a divorce in the five-year interval. For this sample, some 12 percent of all couples were divorced during this period — a sobering fact about the stability of marriages in general. But the divorce rate rose by half, to about 18 percent, for couples in which the wife earned more than the husband.

When I was a high school student, I can remember trying to decide between being an English teacher, being a prosecuting attorney, or being a software engineer. It was my Dad who pointed me towards software engineering. As an avid stock picker, my Dad was seeing tech stocks exploding in value, and he knew that I would be able to find work even if I was laid off during tough times. I am glad that I listened to his advice, although my

career still has not been easy, which is why I saved money for the two times where I was laid off (both times my subsidiary was folded by the parent company!). My reason for going into a field where I could earn more money was because I wanted to get married, have 4 children, and "heal" the experience of being neglected by my mother (who stuck me in day care after 6 weeks and worked full-time until she retired) by watching her parent my kids as a stay-at-home mom. I knew enough to know that marriage works better when the man provides and the woman focuses on the children – at least until they are 6 years old. Since then, I've discovered homeschooling, and I would definitely have done that. It's not that I am opposed to women working, it's that I am opposed to children not being raised by their mother.

As I explained in my lengthy reply to the snarky commenter, it's gotten much harder for men to be the sole provider, and have a stay at home wife and homeschooling mom:

> Regarding tough times, I think that the situation for men right now is horrible with respect to marriage and children. $20 trillion debt and a generation of unskilled snowflake millenials voting for socialism in droves. I also think that co-ed schools where teachers and administrators are 80% females produce lousy outcomes for boys (read Christina Hoff Sommers' "The War on Boys", 2nd edition). Affirmative action in higher education and in the workplace for women doesn't help men become providers, either. Men also pay the same premiums for health care as women, and yet they use far less health care: more tilting the field against men. And so on, don't even get me started on divorce courts and child custody.

This isn't the first time that I've blogged on studies about male and female roles in marriage. If you want to get good results from your marriage, you definitely want to follow the studies below.

Related posts

- Studies show that egalitarian marriage results in less sex
- New study finds that egalitarian marriage doesn't make women happier
- Study shows that female-breadwinner marriages are less happy and less stable
- New study: higher risk of divorce when men do housework
- Study: 70% of divorces caused by domestic issues like money or housework
- New study: couples who divide housework on traditional sex roles have a lot more sex

What do skeptical ancient historians think of the earliest Christian creed?

August 29, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here is a post from my friend Eric Chabot. He writes about the earliest historical source for the minimal facts about the resurrection, which is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Corinthians: 3-7.

1 Cor 15:3-7:

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Just in case you didn't know, Cephas is Peter, one of Jesus' closest followers.

The general consensus among scholars is the that creed goes back to within 1-3 years after the death if Jesus, when almost all the eyewitnesses were still around.

The creed

In Eric's post, he quotes very well-known skeptical historians who affirm each part of the creed.

First, the creed as a whole is respected, even by atheist scholars like John Dominic Crossan:

> Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that "I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received." The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition

> would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he "went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days" (3).

And atheist scholar Robert Funk:

> The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30 C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." — Robert Funk co-founder of the Jesus Seminar.(5)

Let's take a look at one of the parts of the creed that is respected by skeptical historians… namely, the early belief that Jesus was resurrected shortly after his death.

The early belief in the resurrection

Skeptical scholar E.P. Sanders:

> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. "I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: 'I saw him first!' 'No! I did.' Paul's tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus' followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions." "Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the 'resurrection': the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it. (14)

Skeptical scholar Bart Ehrman:

Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus' resurrection, since this is a matter of public record. (17)

> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don't doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don't have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don't think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19). (18)

You know, if all you did was give someone his post, I think that would be enough to show people that a more complete investigation of the historical Jesus was certainly a reasonable thing to do. It's amazing to me that people who grow up at this time when access to the data is so easy do not take the opportunity to look into Christianity.

List of virtually undeniable facts

Finally, below is a list of facts about the historical Jesus that are accepted by ancient historians – Christian, non-Christian, atheist.

These are compiled by non-Christian scholar E.P. Sanders:

From his book "Jesus and Judaism" (1985):

- Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.
- Jesus called disciples and spoke of there being twelve.
- Jesus confined his activity to Israel.
- Jesus was a Galilean who preached and healed.
- Jesus engaged in a controversy about the temple.
- Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem by the Roman authorities.
- After his death, his followers continued as an identifiable movement.
- At least some Jews persecuted at least parts of the new movement.

From his book "The Historical Figure of Jesus" (1993):

- Jesus was born c.4 BCE, near the time of the death of Herod the Great;
- He spent his childhood and early adult years in Nazareth, a Galilean village;
- He was baptized by John the Baptist;
- He called disciples;
- He taught in the towns, villages, and countryside of Galilee (apparently not the cities);
- He preached "the kingdom of God";
- Around the year 30 he went to Jerusalem for Passover;
- He created a disturbance in the temple area;
- He had a final meal with the disciples;
- He was arrested and interrogated by Jewish authorities, specifically the high priest;
- He was executed on the orders of the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate;
- His disciples at first fled;
- They saw him (in what sense is uncertain) after his death;
- As a consequence they believed he would return to found the kingdom;
- They formed a community to await his return and sought to win others to faith in him as God's Messiah.

The way the resurrection of Jesus is presented on TV, you would think that mythical stories about Jesus emerged decades and even centuries after the fact in other parts of the world from where the events happened. But the trouble is that no ancient historian thinks that. Only Hollywood TV producers and movie makers think that. Now, if you are getting your view of the historical accuracy of basic Christian beliefs from television and movies, then don't be surprised if you are wrong. No one is saying that you have to go to Christian pastors and preachers for the facts, but you should go to the historians. They at least know the minimal facts.

The best way for a skeptic to tackle these issues is, I think, to watch a decent debate on the resurrection of Jesus between two respected scholars. My favorite debate on the resurrection is William Lane Craig versus atheist historian James Crossley. I have a video and a summary already ready made just waiting for you to check it out. Don't worry, no one will be looking over your shoulder making you change everything your life should you be convinced. Just watch the debate and decide what you are going to do with it on your own. You don't have to change your whole life overnight. Becoming a Christian is instantaneous and easy to do. Living like a Christian is a process, and it's between you and God how fast you go. So just see what the facts are to start with and then take it from there.

How long are the days of Genesis? Hugh Ross and Jason Lisle debate

August 30, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two bears fight it out, and may the best bear win!

I found this radio debate about the age of the Earth on the Apologetics 315 Twitter feed.

Speakers:

Jason Lisle

Dr. Lisle graduated *summa cum laude* from Ohio Wesleyan University where he double-majored in physics and astronomy, and minored in mathematics. He did graduate work at the University of Colorado where he earned a Master's degree and a Ph.D. in Astrophysics. While there, Dr Lisle used the SOHO spacecraft to investigate motions on the surface of the sun as well as solar magnetism and subsurface weather. His thesis was entitled "Probing the Dynamics of Solar Supergranulation and its Interaction with Magnetism." Among other things, he discovered a previously unknown polar alignment of supergranules (solar convection cells), and discovered evidence of solar giant cells. He has also authored a number of papers in both secular and creation literature.

Hugh Ross

At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver's Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States

for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or “quasars,” some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

So both have impeccable scientific credentials.

The MP3 file is here. (This is the updated version that Brian Auten fixed to remove the commercials!)

I don’t always agree with Frank Pastore, (only 95%), but he knows the topic of the debate back to front, and guides the discussion in an incredibly useful, accurate way. This is a fine debate to listen to! You will learn a lot. And you will have fun learning.

The Bible and the early church fathers

Jason Lisle

- we take Genesis literally
- the starting point of YEC is Scripture
- the plain meaning of Scripture is that the earth was made in 6 24-hour days
- science has to be interpreted in a way that fits a plain reading of Genesis 1
- the evidence for an old universe and old Earth must be rejected a priori

Hugh Ross

- we take Genesis literally
- the Hebrew word for day (yom) can mean 24 hours or a long period of time
- there are multiple creation accounts in the Bible
- interpreting yom as long periods of time harmonizes all the accounts
- the Bible says that the seventh day is not even ended
- we believe in a literal Adam and Eve living thousands of years ago

Jason Lisle

- there’s only 1 account of creation in the Bible: Genesis
- the normal view in church history is 6 24-hour days
- there are some early church fathers who that the days are long
- the other places where creation is discussed are not real accounts

Hugh Ross

- the early church did not spend a lot of time talking about the age of the Earth
- there is not unanimous agreement about the age of the Earth
- there is no definitive statement on the age of the Earth until Isaac Newton
- Newton strongly favored an old earth, hundreds of years before Darwin
- there are other creation accounts, Job 38-39
- Pslam 104 is a creation account

Jason Lisle

- a Psalm is not written in the genre of historical narrative
- Psalm 104 is not a creation account – it talks about ships, etc
- it's talking about the modern era, not a creation account

The evidence from science

Hugh Ross

- both of us believe in an absolute beginning of time, space and matter
- both of us believe that space is expanding now
- stars form as matter coalesces during the expansion of the universe
- star formation requires a universe aged on the order of billions of years

Jason Lisle

- if you pre-suppose my interpretation of Genesis, then the universe is young

Hugh Ross

- the speed of the expansion of the universe proves an old universe
- the light emitted from the oldest stars also proves an old universe

Jason Lisle

- if you pre-suppose my interpretation of Genesis, then the universe is young

Was the universe made with the appearance of age

Jason Lisle

- any evidence for an old universe is wrong
- stars didn't form gradually, they were created by God instantly
- stars have the appearance of age, but they're actually young

Hugh Ross

- God doesn't lie in the Bible or in the book of nature
- Scientists can look back in time by looking further out into the universe
- Because light takes a long time to travel to the Earth, we can see the past
- we can see a time when there were no stars yet
- stars formed slowly over time, not instantaneously
- we have photos of the universe before stars and after stars
- we can see a history of the universe by looking closer and further away

Does nature provide us with knowledge about creation?

They discuss Psalm 19 now, so here's Psalm 19:1-5:

[1] The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

[2] Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

[3] There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

[4] Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

[5] which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

Jason Lisle

- nature isn't a book
- nature doesn't provide knowledge about God
- Psalm 19 doesn't say that nature communicates to us
- **verse 3 says "There is no speech nor language"**

Hugh Ross

- **If you read all of verse 3, it says the exact opposite of what you just said it says**
- Verse 1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands"
- Verse 2: "Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge."
- Verse 3: "There is no speech or language **where their voice is not heard.**"
- Verse 4: "Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."

Jason Lisle

- You can't take the Bible literally all the time

How important is the age of the Earth?

Hugh Ross

- it's a non-essential because it has nothing to do with salvation or inerrancy
- both sides of the debate affirm the same views of salvation and inerrancy
- professional scientists have multiple lines of evidence saying the universe is old
- the only reason it matters is that young earth creationism is a barrier to faith
- if you have to deny science to be a Christian, then it stops people from being saved
- young earth opposition to science has been used by secularists to marginalize Christianity

Jason Lisle

- there was no death in the Garden of Eden, animal or human, before the Fall
- the Bible says that death was a consequence of Adam's sin

- so there was no death before the Fall, according to the Bible
- old earth people believe in death before the Fall

Consider Romans 5:12:

[12]Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Hugh Ross

- Romans 5:12 says that Adam's sin caused death to come **to all men**
- old earth people believe that only animal death existed before the Fall, not human death
- plant and animal death existed before the Fall – Adam and Eve were eating!

Jason Lisle

- I interpret the Bible to say that plants aren't living creatures

What about dinosaurs, the Flood, and Noah's ark?

Jason Lisle

- dinosaurs were created on the 6th day
- dinosaurs lived alongside humans and were vegetarians before the Fall
- dinosaurs were on the Ark – they're not that big – just take baby dinosaurs
- it's a global flood

Hugh Ross

- dinosaurs were created on the 5th day
- they were extinct before before humans ever appeared
- nobody in history ever wrote about dinosaurs until 200 years ago
- it's a local flood

Study: women who have fewer premarital sex partners have lower risk of divorce

August 31, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

Consider this article from Family Studies that talks about how the number of pre-marital sex partners that a woman has increases her risk of divorce.

It says:

> American sexual behavior is much different than it used to be. Today, most Americans think premarital sex is okay, and will have three or more sexual partners before marrying. What, if anything, does premarital sex have to do with marital stability?
>
> This research brief shows that the relationship between divorce and the number of sexual partners women have prior to marriage is complex. I explore this relationship using data from the three most recent waves of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) collected in 2002, 2006-2010, and 2011-2013. For women marrying since the start of the new millennium:
>
> - Women with 10 or more partners were *the most likely* to divorce, but this only became true in recent years;
> - Women with 3-9 partners were *less likely* to divorce than women with 2 partners; and,
> - Women with 0-1 partners were the *least likely* to divorce.
>
> Earlier research found that having multiple sex partners prior to marriage could lead to less happy marriages, and often increased the odds of divorce.
>
> […]Even more noteworthy has been the decline in the proportion of women who get married having had only one sex partner (in most cases, their future

> husbands). Forty-three percent of women had just one premarital sex partner in the 1970s.
>
> […]By the 2010s, only 5 percent of new brides were virgins. At the other end of the distribution, the number of future wives who had ten or more sex partners increased from 2 percent in the 1970s to 14 percent in the 2000s, and then to 18 percent in the 2010s. Overall, American women are far more likely to have had multiple premarital sex partners in recent years (unfortunately, the NSFG doesn't have full data on men's premarital sexual behavior, and in any event they recall their own marital histories less reliably than do women).

Here's the change:

Table 1: The Distribution of Women's Premarital Sex Partners, by Marriage Cohort					
	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
0 partner	21%	17%	14%	12%	5%
1 partner	43%	36%	26%	21%	22%
2 partners	16%	15%	13%	13%	12%
3 partners	8%	11%	11%	11%	11%
4-5 partners	6%	12%	16%	17%	18%
6-9 partners	4%	5%	11%	13%	14%
10+ partners	2%	4%	10%	14%	18%
total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	268	1,921	4,312	3,598	273

Women have freely chosen to dismiss the Bible and the moral law

And the problem with this, of course, is that more premarital sex partners means a higher risk of divorce:

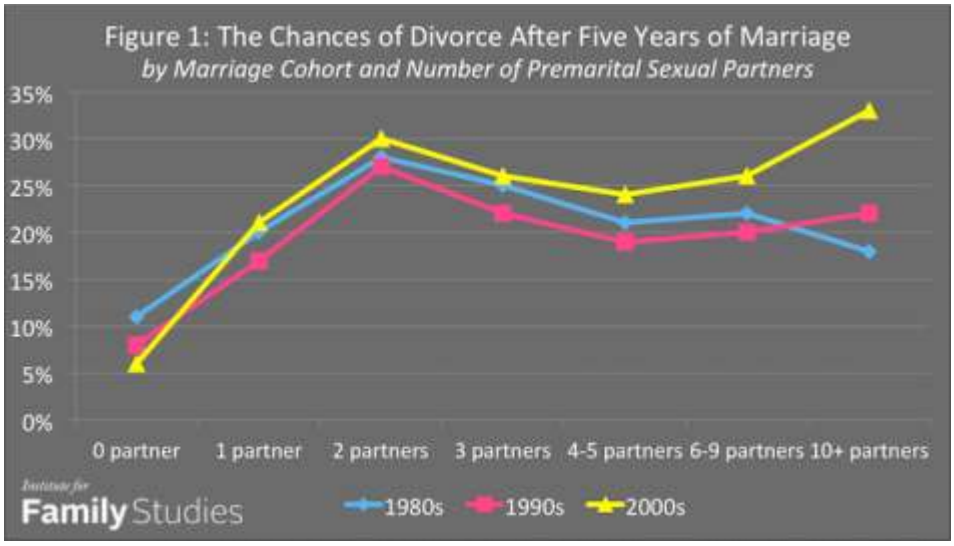

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

Why is the 2-partner number so high?

> In most cases, a woman's two premarital sex partners include her future husband and one other man. That second sex partner is first-hand proof of a sexual alternative to one's husband. These sexual experiences convince women that sex outside of wedlock is indeed a possibility. The man involved was likely to have become a partner in the course of a serious relationship—women inclined to hook up will have had more than two premarital partners—thereby emphasizing the

> seriousness of the alternative.

The Christian Post had an article about some recent numbers from the Centers for Disease Control about virgins.

Excerpt:

> A new Centers for Disease Control study examines teenage health behaviors in connection to their self-reported sexual activity and shows those who remain abstinent are much healthier on many fronts than their sexually active peers.
>
> The report, titled "Sexual Identity, Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12, United States and Selected Sites," showcased the results from a 2015 survey that monitored several categories of health-related behaviors like tobacco usage, drug and alcohol use, sexual habits, unhealthy dietary behaviors, and behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence.
>
> The report concludes "that students who had no sexual contact have a much lower prevalance of most health-risk behaviors compared with students" who had sexual contact.

The article quotes Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, who I have featured on this blog many times:

> In a Monday interview with The Christian Post, Jennifer Roback Morse, founder and president of the Ruth Institute, said, "this study is remarkable because it asks questions and reports the answers, rather than avoiding questions or assuming answers."
>
> As Glenn Stanton noted last week in The Federalist, the results from those questions and answers are remarkable.
>
> With regard to smoking, teenage virgins are 3,300 percent less likely to smoke daily than their peers who are sexually involved with someone of the opposite sex, Stanton computed from the report's data. Teen virgins are 9,500 percent less likely to smoke daily than their peers who are sexually involved with someone of the same sex or in a bisexual relationship, he added. Chaste young people are also extremely less likely to use indoor tanning beds, binge drink, smoke marijuana, ride in cars as passengers with a drunk driver, and get into physical fights than their sexually active peers. Abstinent youth are also more likely to get a solid eight hours of sleep every night and eat breakfast daily.
>
> […]The CDC report also included findings from 25 state surveys, and 19 large, urban school district surveys conducted among students in grades 9–12 which took place between December of 2014 and September of 2015.

Now, many pro traditional marriage people will tell young men "feminism and the sexual revolution change nothing about a woman's suitability for marriage, so go out there and get married to these women anyway". In my experience, no one is telling women NOT to

follow their hearts, and explaining to them the harm that they do by allowing their feelings to determine who they will engage in relationships.

I would like to see women make better decisions with men before they marry, rather than be influenced by their peers and culture to give themselves to men who are not marriage-minded. Maybe a little skepticism should be shown to “follow your heart”? Women need to understand what they are losing when they choose to have premarital sex.

In my group of friends, the men are aware of the Biblical prohibition on premarital sex. My friends know about the research on marriage, and what it takes to make a marriage work. We don’t follow our hearts, because we do what we know will work to achieve the results we want. We don’t listen to the culture, and we don’t listen to radical feminists. Men generally take an engineering approach to marriage – we want to know what the best practices and tradeoffs are, and then we plan and act to succeed.

Study: women who attend church regularly are healthier, and live longer

September 1, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church is good for you

CNS News reports on a new Harvard study that was published in JAMA Internal Medicine.

It says:

> A new study by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and published online in JAMA Internal Medicine found that women who attended religious services more than once a week were more than 30% less likely to die during a 16-year-follow-up than women who never attended.
>
> The study also found that compared with women who never attended religious services, women who attended more than once per week had a decreased risk of both cardiovascular mortality (27%) and cancer mortality (21%).
>
> "Our results suggest that there may be something important about religious service attendance beyond solitary spirituality," said Tyler VanderWeele, professor of epidemiology at Harvard Chan School and senior author of the study. "Part of the benefit seems to be that attending religious services increases social support, discourages smoking, decreases depression, and helps people develop a more optimistic or hopeful outlook on life."
>
> […]Most of the women in the study were Protestant or Catholic. The baseline age of the participants was 60 years or older – and "therefore the study cannot be generalized to men or young adults."

Now, note: this is not an apologetics argument, it's just something interesting to get a discussion started. Obviously, we don't believe things *just* because they make us happier or healthier. I would raise this to get a discussion started about whether a secular life that suppresses questions of meaning and purpose can really be satisfying at all. My goal is truth, though. Not life enhancement. We have to keep the focus on truth.

J. Warner Wallace: is the idea that you should only evangelize your friends Biblical?

September 2, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ratio Christi event at Ohio State University featuring Frank Turek

A recent post from the Please Convince Me blog analyzed whether it is normal for Christians to only evangelize their friends.

Excerpt:

> We typically only share our faith with people we know, so it's shouldn't surprise us that these are the people who come to know something about our faith! But does it have to be this way, and more importantly, is this approach consistent with what the New Testament teaches?
>
> In order to answer this question, we needn't go further than the words of Jesus. During His earthly ministry, Jesus commissioned seventy-two of His followers to travel from town to town, announcing, "The Kingdom of God has come near" (Luke 10:9). Were these disciples told to engage only people they already knew? Hardly. In fact, Jesus warned these budding evangelists that they would be in unknown, often dangerous territory; He told the group they would be "lambs in the midst of wolves" (Luke 10:3). Later, after the Resurrection, Jesus commissioned His apostles with a more sweeping directive: "You shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). It's clear that the expansive geographic parameters described by Jesus would require the apostles to move quickly beyond the limits of their friends and acquaintances.
>
> And that's exactly what the apostles proceeded to do. Paul repeatedly entered

> unfamiliar synagogues to announce the Good News to Jews who were strangers to Paul (i.e. Acts 13:13-42 and Acts 18:4-5), and he frequently evangelized "on the streets" from town to town to Jewish and Gentile groups he did not know (i.e. Acts 13:44-52 and Acts 17:16-21). In fact, there are very few examples of friendship evangelism on the pages of Scripture.
>
> I gently reminded the students that they needed to see strict friendship evangelism for what it truly is: a natural, fallen, human response to the fear of discomfort and worldly judgment. Most of us are more concerned with how we will be perceived (and the discomfort we might feel) than our godly responsibility to share the Gospel. Jesus has a message for us: Get over it. Get comfortable with discomfort. The more we talk about Jesus and reflect His nature and mission, the more likely the world will hate us (John 15:18-16:14). The more we stand up for the truth, the more likely the world will put us in a tough spot (Matthew 10:17-23). And the more we are ostracized by the fallen world around us, the more joy we ought to feel to have been given the opportunity to stand up for something more than our own immediate personal comfort (Luke 6:22-23).

See, I think the problem is that Christians, when they evangelize, are not equipped to do anything more than talk about their personal experiences and preferences when it comes to evangelism. The problem is that asserting that your experience/preference is better than someone else's experience/preference is uncomfortable. Especially if their preference makes them happy and makes them act nicely. That's why evangelizing people is so intimidating for us – because we're never telling people about facts that are true or false out there in the real world. It's not controversial to tell someone that their belief about the world out there is wrong. That's why I prefer to talk about public, testable data – like whether the universe began, or how to make a protein, or where the Cambrian animals came from. That's just like discussing anything else.

The publication of the new Darwin's Doubt book that was on the New York Times non-fiction bestseller list is a good example of something to talk about safely. Although I might intimidated about trying to talk about feelings, sinfulness and religious experiences with people, I don't mind talking about science with people. It's much easier to talk about facts and evidence that about my personal experiences. People understand that and they aren't intimidated by it, because they feel that they can disagree with factual claims and participate in the discussion.

For example, if I am talking to a Hindu, I'll show him the papers that argue against the oscillating universe model which is part of the Hindu religion. I don't even have to mention Hinduism, Christianity or religion. And then he has to come back to me on that factual claim. But it's a lot easier for me to tell him he's wrong about facts than to tell him he's wrong about religious preference claims. Think about it – you disagree with strangers and acquaintances all the time about facts, and you're not scared of that. I tell people they're wrong about computer science stuff every day. Why is it any different to tell them that they're wrong about facts that happen to be related to the claims of different

religions? It’s the same thing! That’s why it’s so important to speak about facts with strangers. It’s normal. It’s not weird. It’s easy to say “You need to get your facts straight, because not knowing the facts is causing you to commit to the wrong religion”. That’s doable. Even with strangers.

Bible study: what does the Christian concept of "grace" mean?

September 3, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A good shepherd rescuing a lost sheep, who had no hope

My friend Wessel sent me this sermon a few days ago because I was looking for a good sermon on grace. Some of my friends pitched in with sermons, but this one from a South African church was BY FAR the best. I've listened to it 3 times already. The speaker sounds exactly like one of best friends from university, Andrew, who is from South Africa.

I'm testing out a new file download service, so I hope this works… here is the MP3 file. (7 megabytes, 30 minutes)

Let me know if you can't download that.

The text of the sermon is Genesis 48:1-20:

> 1 Some time later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him.
>
> 2 When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed.
>
> 3 Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me
>
> 4 and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.'
>
> 5 "Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and

Simeon are mine.

[6] Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers.

[7] As I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

[8] When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, "Who are these?"

[9] "They are the sons God has given me here," Joseph said to his father.

Then Israel said, "Bring them to me so I may bless them."

[10] Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them.

[11] Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too."

[12] Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground.

[13] And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him.

[14] But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger,and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.

[15] Then he blessed Joseph and said,

"May the God before whom my fathers
  Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully,
the God who has been my shepherd
  all my life to this day,

[16] the Angel who has delivered me from all harm
  —may he bless these boys.
May they be called by my name
  and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac,
and may they increase greatly
  on the earth."

[17] When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.

[18] Joseph said to him, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."

[19] But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a

> people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations."
>
> 20 He blessed them that day and said,
>
> "In your[c] name will Israel pronounce this blessing:
> 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'"
>
> So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

So, in this story, God continues his tradition of choosing the lowly people in the world instead of the people who are seen as "better". God does this in many cases, because he has a big heart for people who are born in a bad position. Normally in the world, people always choose what they think is best for them. They choose the prettiest girl. They choose the most tallest man. Those who need a little extra help or care are passed over. God sometimes does the complete opposite of this. Instead of choosing the obvious "best person", he chooses a much lower person, and he lifts them up to do great things.

Consider 1 Corinthians 1:26-31:

> 26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called.Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.
>
> 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.
>
> 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,
>
> 29 so that no one may boast before him.
>
> 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.
>
> 31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

The speaker in the sermon explains the idea of grace by talking about sheep and shepherds. He explains that unlike clever homing pigeons, sheep are prone to wandering off and they aren't able to find their way home. Sometimes, they get lost, and sometimes they even wander into danger. A bad shepherd would just say that he only wanted to have the best sheep – the smartest ones or the richest ones or the best looking ones or the most popular ones. But a good shepherd is sorry for the sheep that needs the most help, and is the most lost, and in the most danger. God is like a good shepherd. God sends his Son to die to atone for the sins of the bad sheep in this world, even when they didn't deserve it. (John 3:16-17) That's grace. But he also arranges the world in a way that bad sheep have an opportunity to reach out and find him. (Acts 17:24-27) That's grace, too.

In my own life, I have often found myself being excluded or discounted by people, usually because of my skin color or because of my early childhood poverty or because I just struggle to understand what I'm expected to say and to do. But a funny thing often

happens. Right when I am feeling the worst about being excluded, God comes along and gives me something special to do, that makes me forget about being excluded. And that's been my experience of grace, ever since I was little and even to this day. The honor of being allowed to participate in God's plan makes me forget what it feels like to be excluded. The very best things I've achieved in my life are the times where God showed me someone who started out life in a terrible situation (usually because of the selfish decisions of their irresponsible parents) and then I participated in God's plan to lead them out of the mess they started out from.

I think one of the biggest reasons why some Christians stick with Christianity through thick and thin is that they have this experience of grace. This experience of grace means that no matter what, that sheep is going to loyal to that shepherd who chose him when he was at his lowest and most vulnerable. The first part of the choosing is obviously Jesus dying on the cross to atone for your rebellion. But after that, God carefully reveals himself to the sheep. And then there is the guidance that helps the sheep to avoid destroying himself with sin. If the sheep makes mistakes, the good shepherd has already laid down his life to pay for them. This is a lot of effort being put into this rescue operation. It's difficult for people who have never experienced grace to realize how real and life-transforming it is. For those who have not experienced it, I really recommend that you pray to God, in the name of Jesus, and ask him to give you grace.

There are still things in my life where God has decided that he is not going to fix it. And, strangely enough, that doesn't make me disloyal to him at all. Why not? Well, you have to read the Bible and understand that Jesus was not spared from suffering or death in his loyal obedience to God. He wasn't given everything he wanted to feel happy all the time. When you understand that this is the character of your shepherd, then it's much easier for you to put up with the things you lack, too.

Miriam Grossman: a brief history of sex education

September 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

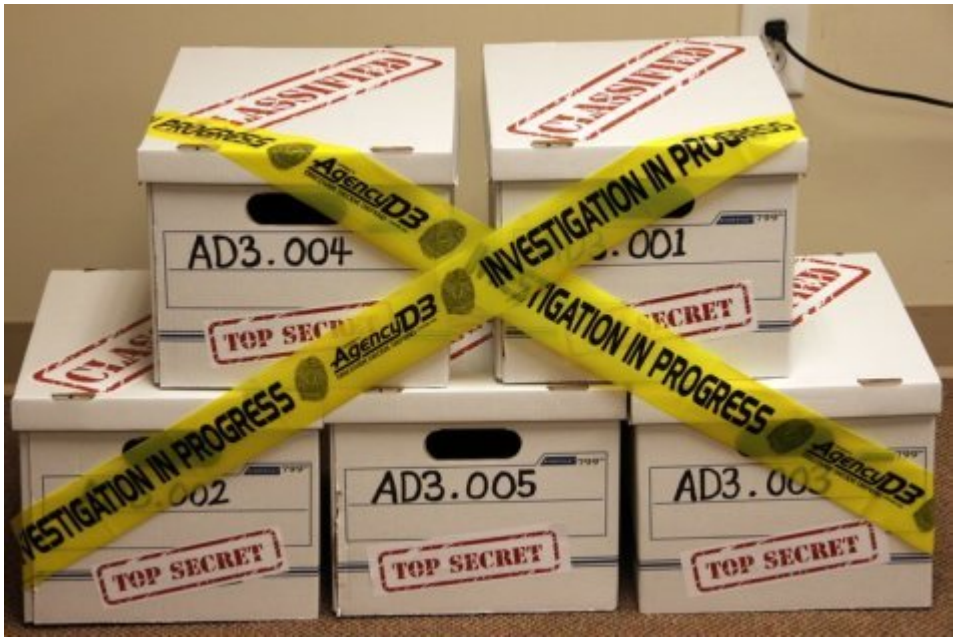

Investigation in progress

Miriam Grossman is a psychiatrist at UCLA who helps the students there. She's written two books on sex and college students, and I've gotten both of them. Here's an article from the Public Discourse authored by her.

First, she explains that sex education today is not about biology, it's about advocacy:

> Now we have *comprehensive sexuality education*. It includes discussion of identity, gender, reproductive rights, and discrimination. Children learn that they're sexual from birth, and that the proper time for sexual activity is when they feel ready. They're taught that they have rights to pleasure, birth control, and abortion.
>
> The terms husband and wife aren't used, the union of man and woman is one of several options, and morality? Well, that's judging, and judging is not allowed.
>
> You won't find much biology in sexuality education, but there's voluminous information on the varieties of sexual expression, the pros and cons of different contraceptives and abortions, and the harms of gender stereotypes.
>
> Gender itself is a complicated matter. A boy might turn into a man, a woman, or something else. A girl might feel she was born in the wrong body, and want her breasts removed. This is all normal, children learn.
>
> There are over two dozen sexually transmitted diseases, and infection with one of these "lovebugs" is considered by some to be a part of growing up. A doctor declares on YouTube, "Expect to have HPV once you become sexually intimate. All of us get it."
>
> And childhood innocence? Forget it! Material created for children makes

> most *adults* uncomfortable. On websites recommended to students, nothing is taboo—sadomasochism, polyamory, and what were once called "deviant" behaviors . . . they're all good.

Here's how "sex education" came to be:

> [I]n 1964 Dr. Mary Calderone founded the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). This is the group behind the sexuality education guidelines published by UNESCO, aggressively promoted to nations all over the world. Calderone created SIECUS with seed money provided by Hugh Hefner.
>
> Like Kinsey, she was on a crusade to change society. Sex education has too much negativity, she insisted, too much focus on unwanted pregnancy and diseases. The real problem, she insisted, following Kinsey, was that society is puritanical and repressed.
>
> There were too many nos in sex ed. The approach of SIECUS, Calderone promised, would be based on yesses. Proper sex ed would teach children that from the day they're born they are sexual beings, and that the expression of their sexuality is positive, natural, and healthy.
>
> She told parents, "Children are sexual and think sexual thoughts and do sexual things . . . parents must accept and honor their child's erotic potential." She also told them, "Professionals who study children have recently affirmed the strong sexuality of the newborn."
>
> What did it mean, exactly, to be open and positive, and to replace the nos of sex education with yesses? What did it mean to "break from traditional views"?
>
> It meant more than premarital and extramarital sex. Much more. Modern sex ed was about breaking boundaries. There were officials within SIECUS who were so radical that they argued publicly for relaxing the taboos against adult/child sexuality, even incest. Wardell Pomeroy, for example, a disciple of Kinsey's who served as president of SIECUS, argued, "It is time to admit that incest need not be a perversion or a symptom of mental illness."
>
> *TIME* magazine described Pomeroy as part of the "pro-incest lobby." He wrote a book, *Boys & Sex*, for grades six and up. There he argued that "our sexual behavior…is like that of other animals….There is essentially nothing that humans do sexually that is abnormal." Calderone provided a blurb for the book jacket: "As I read your manuscript, I kept saying to myself, 'At last it is being said…'"
>
> Another figure to know is Dr. John Money. In 1955, he introduced the radical concept that maleness and femaleness are feelings, separate from anatomy and chromosomes. He was convinced we are born without gender, then conditioned by society to identify either as male or female.
>
> Money was a prominent psychologist; he's well respected to this day. He described pedophilia as "a love affair between an age-discrepant couple." Money

> was also part of the incest lobby: “For a child to have a sexual experience with a relative,” he wrote, “was not necessarily a problem.” Like Kinsey, Money had deep emotional wounds. His identity as a man was troubled, and he molested young boys.
>
> What’s so astonishing is that these men, these very disturbed men, using fraudulent data and theories that have been discredited, succeeded in transforming much of society. Today’s sexuality education is based on their teachings.
>
> Once I understood who the founders were—Kinsey, Calderone, Pomeroy, Money, and others—I understood how we got to today’s “comprehensive sexuality education.” I knew how we had reached today’s madness.
>
> It came from disturbed individuals with dangerous ideas—radical activists who wanted to create a society that would not only accept their pathology, but celebrate it!
>
> These men were pedophiles. It was in their interest to see children as miniature adults who enjoyed sexual contact, and had the right to consent to it, without other adults, or the law, interfering.
>
> Why would they value childhood innocence? They didn’t believe that children were innocent to begin with. They also thought that restricting sex to husband and wife was unnatural and destructive. They weren’t fighting disease, they were fighting ancient taboos; they were fighting biblical morality.
>
> The bottom line: sex ed began as a social movement, and it remains a social movement. Its goal is for students to be open to just about any form of sexual expression. Sex ed is not about preventing disease, it’s about sexual freedom, or better—sexual license. It’s about changing society, one child at a time.

Previously, I blogged about how the Liberal Party author of the province of Ontario’s education curriculum was convicted on child pornography charges. The lesbian governor of the province of Ontario still hasn’t been kicked out. Apparently, Liberal Party voters like this being taught to children in Ontario.

I think that a lot of young people today are growing up in a household that is very different than what I grew up with. I grew up in a household where I had two parents biologically related to me who were married before they had me and are still married. People knew back then that the marital bond was stronger when two people had guarded their chastity prior to marrying one another. That stable marriage that I grew up with was an asset to my development. But thanks to sex education, which normalized recreational sex outside of marriage, children today are far less likely to have the kind of childhood that I had.

If you are growing up without a father, you should thank sex education. If you are growing up without a mother, you should thank sex education. If you were abused by a relative or your mothers boyfriend (or girlfriend), you should thank sex education. If you grew up

fatherless and sought a boyfriend to have sex with before you could even vote, then thank sex education. If the premarital sex that your parents had caused them to divorce, thank sex education. If you are growing up in any household that is not a happily married long-lasting married household, thank sex education.

One last point. The fiscal conservative in me is appalled that this advocacy is all being taught in public schools with taxpayer money. You and I are paying these people to indoctrinate children in views that puts their safety, health and emotional well-being at risk. You and I are paying to have their sexually transmitted diseases treated. You and I are paying for their contraceptives and abortions. You and I are paying for the costs of teenage pregnancies and increases crime from fatherless boys. Thank sex education for all of these social ills.

Does Al Gore really believe in global warming?

September 5, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

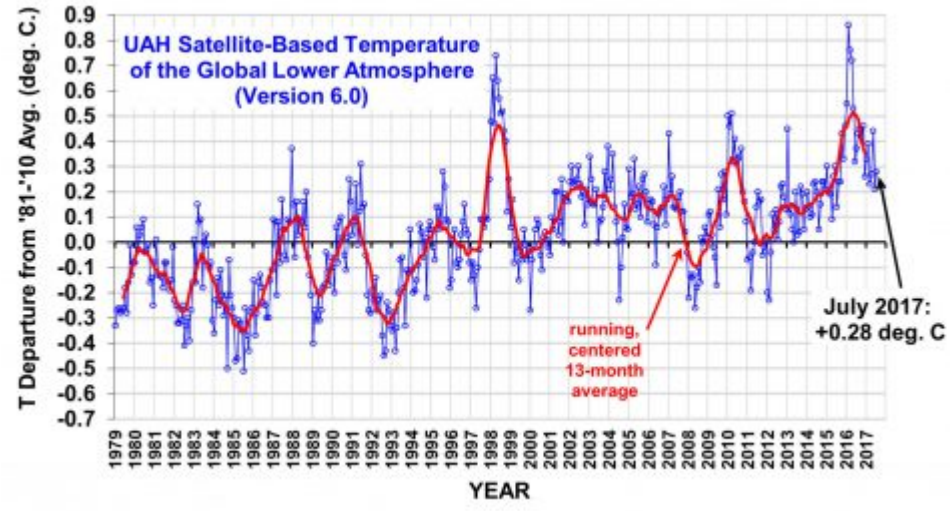

Satellite global temperature measurements 1979 – July 2017

I think that if the rich Democrats who warn us about global warming really believed in global warming, rather than just scamming people out of their wealth, then we should be able to see it in their personal decisions about energy consumption. For example, they should fly commercial instead of on private jets, and they should live in modest homes that use less than average amounts of electricity.

Let's take a look at what Al Gore is like in real life.

The Daily Caller explains:

> On Friday, Al Gore's sequel to "An Inconvenient Truth" – "An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power" – arrives in movie theaters across the country. But there's another inconvenient sequel worth noting and, like most sequels, this one is even worse than the original.
>
> Gore's hypocritical home energy use and "do as I say not as I do" lifestyle has plunged to embarrassing new depths.
>
> In just this past year, Gore burned through enough energy to power the typical American household for more than 21 years, according to a new report by the National Center for Public Policy Research. The former vice president consumed 230,889 kilowatt hours (kWh) at his Nashville residence, which includes his home, pool and driveway entry gate electricity meters. A typical family uses an average of 10,812 kWh of electricity per year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.
>
> It gets worse.
>
> Last September alone, Gore devoured 30,993 kWh of electricity. That's enough to power 34 average American homes for a month. Over the last 12 months, Gore used more electricity just heating his outdoor swimming pool than six typical

> homes use in a year.
>
> The National Center for Public Policy Research obtained the environmentalist's energy-usage information from individuals at the Nashville Electric Service, the utility that provides electricity to Gore's home and much of Middle Tennessee.
>
> […]Spending more than $1,800 a month on an energy bill would sink most Americans, but it's pocket change to Gore. He has manipulated environmental concerns into a big business. When his term as vice president ended in 2001, Gore's net worth was less than $2 million. Today, Gore is worth an estimated $300 million.
>
> […]Astonishingly, Gore also owns at least two other homes – a penthouse in San Francisco and a farmhouse in Carthage, Tennessee – so his carbon footprint is even larger than it appears.

It doesn't look like Al Gore is serious about global warming. If he were serious he would be living in a smaller house, driving smaller cars, and using less electricity.

Maybe Al Gore is an exception, though. Let's take a look at Elon Musk and big corporations that support global warming alarmism.

The center-left The Hill reports:

> Take Elon Musk, for example. Two of his companies, Tesla and SolarCity, have accepted billions in global-warming-predicated government loans and federal tax credits. Put another way, Musk has a multibillion-dollar personal stake in global warming.
>
> Nor is mogul Musk alone. GE, Microsoft, Google, JP Morgan, Bank of America, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley – all benefit from "warmist" tax equity arrangements that allow them to take a 30 percent federal investment tax credit when financing solar projects.
>
> That preferential tax treatment can be worth hundreds of millions of dollars per deal. In 2013, for example, Goldman Sachs offered a $500 million financing arrangement for SolarCity rooftop solar leases.
>
> Goldman Sachs has also been associated with other solar projects beholden to the federal taxpayer for financial backing. They include the Desert Sunlight utility solar project (with over $350 million in stimulus funds and a nearly $1.5 billion loan guarantee from the Department of Energy) and the Alamosa Solar Generating Project (with cash grant from Treasury exceeding $35 million and a more than $90 million loan guarantee from the Department of Energy).
>
> GE's Shepherds Flat wind farm received over $1.2 billion in federal and state subsidies, despite the Obama administration's estimation that it would "likely move without the [Department of Energy] loan guarantee." The Obama administration also determined the climate benefits fell short of the total

> subsidies by a factor of six.
>
> Google, General Electric, Chevron, BP, and Statoil are among a host of companies that own Ivanpah, the solar farm boondoggle that has cost Californians and federal taxpayers hundreds of millions

So, when you see these big billionaires lecturing the rest of us on how we need to rein in our energy consumption, recycle, etc. you need to understand why they may have a reason for keeping the Big Lie going. The most elementary reason of all: welfare. The reason that these big corporate global warmists advocate for global warming is the same reason many rank-and-file Democrats vote for big government: they like to collect welfare.

The lottery is a voluntarily tax on the poorest people

September 6, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You need to study math so that you don't end up doing this your whole life

Here is a good article on basic economics by Arthur C. Brooks, president of the American Enterprise Institute (a free market think tank).

He writes in the Wall Street Journal:

> Powerball—the lottery shared by 44 states, the District of Columbia and two territories—is just one of the sweepstakes run by 47 jurisdictions in the U.S. These games produce nearly $70 billion a year in government revenue and enjoy profits of about 33%—much higher than margins in the private gambling industry.
>
> Who are these lotteries' most loyal customers? Poor people. Lots of folks buy the occasional ticket, but studies have long shown a steady association between poverty and lottery play. Many scholars report that the poorest third of Americans buy more than half of all lotto tickets, which is why states advertise so aggressively in poor neighborhoods.
>
> Harmless entertainment, you may say, but poor people don't see it that way. They tend to view lottery tickets as an investment. Duke University social scientists Charles Clotfelter and Philip Cook reported in a 1990 study that people earning less than $30,000 a year are 25% more likely to say they play the lottery for the money rather than the entertainment.
>
> […]Even if someone feels compelled to throw a financial "Hail Mary," the lottery is a terrible choice. The odds of winning last week's jackpot were about 1 in 292 million. And the average return from $1 spent on lottery tickets is 52 cents, according to a 2002 paper by Melissa Kearney, an economist now at the University of Maryland.

> **But this isn't easy to see for those with low levels of education. My own analysis of survey data from the National Gambling Impact Study Commission suggests that someone who didn't attend college may think the return on lottery tickets is 40% higher than the estimate given by a person of similar demographics who holds a degree.**

If you took a poll of how people who bought lottery tickets voted, I'm certain that you would find that 90% of them are Democrats. This is because Democrats are economically illiterate, judging for their support for minimum wage increases and opposition to free trade. I suppose there would be a fair number of Donald Trump supporters in there, too. People can can do math don't buy lottery tickets. It's much better to pay off debt and then start saving for your retirement. Although public schools used to teach math and basic economics, now they are so busy teaching young people to hate their parents, their God and their country that there is no time for teaching math and basic economics. Even if the public school teachers knew math and basic economics, which they probably don't, judging by how members of teacher unions vote.

Apparently, people on the political left now oppose teaching math, because it's racist or sexist or something.

The Daily Caller explains:

> Is math sexist? One Vanderbilt University professor believes that it is.
>
> Writing in an academic journal last month, the professor complained about the masculinization of math and how it causes the oppression of women.
>
> Describing mathematics as a "white and heteronormatively masculinized space," professor Luis A. Leyva insists that factors including teacher expectations and cultural norms "serve as gendering mechanisms that give rise to sex-based achievement differences," per Campus Reform.
>
> […]In the article titled "Unpacking the Male Superiority Myth and Masculinization of Mathematics at the Intersection," Leyva says that teachers "contribute to the masculinization of the domain that unfairly holds students to men's higher levels of achievement and participation as a measure of success."
>
> In other words, being held to a high standard keeps women down.

Do you ever wonder why Democrats want to halt all education reform? Well, people who can't do math tend to be awful at earning and saving money. And do you know what happens to people who are terrible at earning and saving money? They become dependent on welfare and they vote for bigger government, i.e. – Democrats.

The Pew Research Center, a liberal organization, actually did a study on this uninformed voter problem.

Excerpt:

> So Republicans are more knowledgeable than Democrats, contrary to what many would like to believe.

> According to whom? None other than the Pew Research Center, a left-of-center organization. Moreover, Pew's latest survey only reaffirms previous surveys demonstrating the same result.
>
> In fact, the results weren't even close.
>
> In a scientific survey of 1,168 adults conducted during September and October of last year, respondents were asked not only multiple-choice questions, but also queries using maps, photographs and symbols. Among other subjects, participants identified international leaders, cabinet members, Supreme Court justices, nations on a world map, the current unemployment and poverty rates and war casualty totals.
>
> In a 2010 Pew survey, Republicans outperformed Democrats on 10 of 12 questions, with one tie and Democrats outperforming Republicans on just 1 of the 12. In the latest survey, however, Republicans outperformed Democrats on every single one of 19 questions.
>
> […]Those Pew results are confirmed by some surprising other sources. According to a *New York Times* headline dated April 14, 2010, "Poll Finds Tea Party Backers Wealthier and More Educated." Shattering widespread myths, that survey revealed that Tea Party supporters were more likely to possess a college degree than their counterparts (23% to 15%), and also more likely to have completed post-graduate studies (14% to 10%). Tea Partiers were also more likely to have completed "some college" by a 33% to 28% margin, and substantially less likely to have not completed high school than non-supporters (3% versus 12%), or to possess only a high school degree (26% versus 35%).

I hope no readers of this blog drop math before they go to college or trade school, and you all better be studying something that pays if you do go to college. I don't want to catch any of you buying lottery tickets as your retirement plan. I want to encourage you all to make a long-term plan for your retirement, and make sure that the pieces in the short-term fit with that long-term plan.

Mother puts makeup on her son and parades him in public

September 7, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the boy's mother. The boy's father is not mentioned in any article I found
This story appeared in The Blaze, and I think it's worth blogging.

Excerpt:

> Nemis Quinn Mélançon Golden started getting into drag when he was 7, the Advocate reported.
>
> And just a year later — under his stage name "Lactatia" — he's now the newest sensation in Montreal's drag scene, the outlet said.
>
> […]"Anyone can do what they want in life," Lactatia told LGBT in the City on camera. "It doesn't matter what anyone else thinks. If you want to be a drag queen and your parents don't let you, you need new parents. If you want to be a drag queen and your friends don't let you, you need new friends."
> After taking voguing classes, Lactatia showed up at the Werq the World drag tour when it stopped in Montreal recently. At the show, Bianca del Rio — star of "RuPaul's Drag Race" — invited Lactatia onstage where the elementary school-aged drag queen "charmed the dress off the older queen," the Advocate reported.
>
> Lactatia told LGBT in the City that he's been wearing dresses "and being into girls' stuff since I was like 3." As for the origin of his stage name, Lactatia said his

> sister “made it up, and we all thought it was funny.”
>
> And who does Lactatia’s makeup? His mother, of course.

The video, which I will not link to, has 30 million views and 225,000 shares. Which just goes to show you that a lot of people think that it is no problem at all to sexualize a child, and march him/her around in public.

The UK Daily Mail has more about the mother:

> Nemis’ mother Jessica explains that her little boy was asking for her to put make-up on him from the age of two – and he just grew to love the art of it.
>
> ‘We just want our kids to express themselves however they see fit,’ she says. ‘As long as they are respectful and nice people, then I really don’t care!’

As long as her kids are nice, she doesn’t really care. This is what parenting has come down to in the 21st century, at least in progressive strongholds like Montreal.

I’m sure the mother isn’t doing this to her child for the attention, either. After all, women with nose piercings and tattooed chests shown off by low-cut tops are not seeking attention at all. Just incredible.

Democrat senators attack judicial nominee for her Catholic faith

September 8, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from National Review.

Excerpt:

> This afternoon, during a confirmation hearing for 7th Circuit Court of Appeals nominee Amy Coney Barrett, Democratic senator Dianne Feinstein attacked the nominee for her Roman Catholic faith.
>
> Barrett is a law professor at the University of Notre Dame who has written about the role of religion in public life and delivered academic lectures to Christian legal groups. Drawing on some of these materials, Feinstein launched a thinly veiled attack on Barrett's Catholic faith, asserting that her religious views will prevent her from judging fairly.
>
> "When you read your speeches, the conclusion one draws is that the dogma lives loudly within you," Feinstein said. "And that's of concern when you come to big issues that large numbers of people have fought for for years in this country." Feinstein is clearly hinting here at the Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, a ruling that Feinstein supports so vociferously that she has even called it a "super-precedent."
>
> […]Other Democratic senators took issue with Barrett over her faith as well. Senate minority whip Dick Durbin criticized Barrett's use of the term "orthodox Catholic," insisting that it unfairly maligns Catholics who do not hold certain positions about abortion or the death penalty. (Durbin himself is a Catholic who abandoned his previous pro-life position.) "Do you consider yourself an orthodox Catholic?" he later asked Barrett point blank.
>
> And Hawaii senator Mazie Hirono snarked, "I think your article is very plain in your perspective about the role of religion for judges, and particularly with regard to Catholic judges."

It was reported that Feinstein actually said "*The dogma lives loudly within you, and that's of concern*". Think about that.

To me, the more important thing about this story is how comfortable secular people are about forcing their secular convictions down the throats of others. What they're essentially saying is this: "I can use power to push my worldview onto you, and I can use power to stop you from living according to your convictions". You can be certain that Diane Feinstein has answers to all of the same big questions that theists have answers to: "does God exist?" "did Jesus rise from the dead?" "is there a purpose to suffering and evil?" "is there life after death?", etc. She has different answers to those same questions, but she wouldn't accuse herself of having dogma. She feels very comfortable pushing her

worldview through political power, but doesn't think that theists ought to be able to do the same.

And this provides an interesting lesson for Christians: how did it come to be the case that Christian convictions are automatically perceived by secular leftist elites to be irrational and dangerous? Why is it that Christians shouldn't be allowed to participate in politics, but atheists should, since they answer the same big questions with their respective worldviews? The answer is simple. Atheists perceive Christians as having a worldview that is not based on fact. And they perceive themselves as having a worldview that is based on fact. How did this happen?

Well, simply put, Christian leaders made it happen, by refusing to focus on apologetics and evangelism. For better or worse, Christian churches (from fundamentalist Pentecostal to conservative Presbyterian) have decided that evangelism and apologetics are not important enough to focus on at church. And the result of this is that as non-Christians work their way through school and into the workplace, they never encounter any intelligent Christians who have reasons and evidence for their beliefs. Not just Christian beliefs, but policy beliefs, too. The church has failed to teach their members and adherents the importance of having answers, and this (along with the Sexual Revolution) is one of the main reasons why America has gone secular.

Even if you spend your childhood and teen years in church, you will never hear serious discussion of whether God really exists or whether the Bible is historically reliable. These things will be assumed to be true. You will be shamed if you ask questions, and you will even be shamed if you study apologetics to know how to answer these questions. This is considered pious by most church leaders, no matter what denomination you're in. Atheists are not blind to the fact that most people who profess Christ are ignorant of competing views, and cannot explain why they hold their views using reason and evidence. And this is where the perception that Christians are too dangerous to be allowed to participate in politics comes from.

This past week, I had a conversation with a senior engineer about his beliefs. He had attended Christian schools K through 12, and Christian churches his entire life. It all ended for him the minute he hit college. I perceived that he had questions that had gone unanswered, and asked him if he had ever seen any formal debates on Christianity. His answer? "I did not know that such a thing even existed". I sent him a couple of debates to watch, and we are going to have lunch to discuss his background, because he was open to a rational discussion of the evidence. It doesn't matter what church you are in, you will almost certainly never see a formal debate on Christianity. Because of this lack of emphasis on open debate, we lose a lot of intelligent people the minute they hit the university campus.

Things have gotten so bad, that it is now dangerous to even come out as a Christian in the education system, although there is still space to do it in the workplace, if you are careful who you speak to, and when. Most Christians I know, though, have no interest in jeopardizing their careers by being perceived as stupid at work. And yet there is this

tremendous need for every Christian to reset the perceptions on ultimate questions. We must do this, or we are finished.

Anyway, it's interesting to take a look at two of the nominees that Democrat senators opposed. Are they even qualified? Or are they anti-intellectual dingbats with no experience at all?

The Daily Signal has a helpful article about them. It turns out that they are exquisitely well-educated and have solid resumes, as well. That's something else that Christians should not neglect if we want to be respected by secular elites.

We should all be very serious about our educations, careers and finances. Finances are important because it is an immediate signal to others that you have a wisdom about how to live. If we marry, then our marriage and children also sends a signal about competence. My view is that Christians should be learning much more than just the Bible in church. A little basic economics, basic apologetics, basic New Testament, and basic philosophy of religion would definitely help to correct the perceptions that others have of Christianity. And the study of those areas would make the average rank-and-file Christian much more confident about discussing those things in school and at work.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Black family sues school for refusing to protect their daughter from abuse by peers

September 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

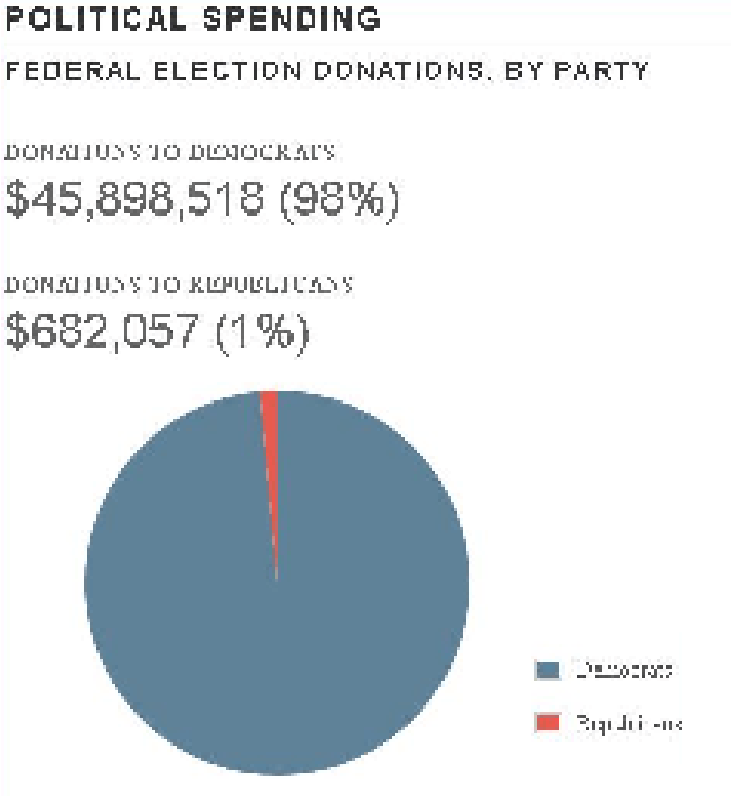

Political contributions by the American Federation of Teachers union

I just thought the following story was astonishing. My heart really goes out to this little girl, who is just trying to work hard and make a life for herself.

This is from The State.

Excerpt:

> Parents of an African-American girl at Columbia's Hand Middle School have filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against Richland School District 1, alleging school officials did little for two years while their academically advanced daughter was physically and verbally abused for "acting white."
>
> "Hand Middle School students called (the girl) racial slurs and physically assaulted her on numerous occasions," says the lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Columbia by Alex Young, a soldier at Fort Jackson, and his wife, Toschia Moffett, a consultant.
>
> "Although approximately 50 percent of the students at Hand Middle School identify as African American, (the girl) was one of the few African Americans in her honors and advanced classes during the 2015-2016 and 2016-17 school years," the lawsuit says.
>
> **"Hand Middle School students called (the girl) racial slurs like 'Oreo,'**

> **‘white girl,’ ‘wannabe white girl’ … and generally maligned her for ‘acting white,’ ” the lawsuit alleges. Both boys and girls were involved in the bullying, the lawsuit says.**
>
> **During those years, she also was “repeatedly pushed, shoved and tripped in hallways and other locations around Hand Middle School … (and) suffered several notable physical assaults,” the lawsuit says.**
>
> Although the parents reported the harassment to school officials, district-level officials and school board members, little was done and the bullying continued, the lawsuit says. The parents tried numerous times to meet with Richland 1 Superintendent Craig Witherspoon, but Witherspoon told people “he was avoiding them,” the lawsuit says.

I took a quick look at the web page and found out that the Superintendent is black! Not white! Yet he still refused to have any compassion on the little girl and punish the people who were intimidating her.

The most interesting thing about this story to me, is that the racism is being committed by other black students. Why would they make life harder for someone who they ought to more empathy for?

There were some more details in a local news story from WISTV:

- On or about February 10, 2017, a group of approximately 12 students surrounded India while she was beaten with a bottle.
- On March 17, 2017, the same male student who shoved India in November 2016 hit her in the face with a backpack. The blow from the backpack “chip[ed] two teeth and caus[ed] her nose to gush blood. The incident was caught on video and the school promised to keep [the male student] away from India.”
- On the same day India returned, the male student who hit her in the face with the backpack followed India to the auditorium and intimidated her during theater rehearsal.
- The lawsuit says that India developed stress, anxiety, and self-esteem issues that affected her education and caused her to miss several days of school. So much so, India began eating her lunch over a toilet in a bathroom stall to avoid other children.

I’m sure that I don’t have to tell you that this school system is a PUBLIC school system. This is a government-run school with unionized teachers and unionized administrators. The parents of the little girl were stuck with this failing school. The money they might have used to pay for a better school, or for homeschooling, was ripped away from the

parents in the form of *mandatory taxation*. They were forced to pay for failure, because the Democrat Party doesn't believe that parents should have the right to choose where their children go to school. And believe me, this kind of failure by the public schools affects a lot of minority children.

We need to have a policy that allows parents to opt out of paying taxes for failing schools, and then get a refund that they can use to buy the education they want for their children. Public schools teachers and administrators are not the "customers" of the education system – they are the service providers. Children are the customers, and they ought to be able to go where the teachers and administrators serve them.

William Lane Craig explains the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement

September 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Probably one of the most common questions that you hear from people who don't fully understand Christianity is this question: "why did Jesus have to die?". The answer that most Christians seem to hold to is that 1) humans are rebelling against God, 2) Humans deserve punishment for their rebellion, 3) Humans cannot escape the punishment for their rebellion on their own, 4) Jesus was punished in the place of the rebellious humans, 5) Those who accept this sacrifice are forgiven for their rebelling.

Are humans rebellious?

Some people think that humans are not really rebellious at all, but it's actually easy to see. You can see it just by looking at how people spend their time. Some of us have no time for God at all, and instead try to fill our lives with material possessions and experiences in order to have happy feelings. Some of us embrace just the parts of God that make us feel happy, like church and singing and feelings of comfort, while avoiding the hard parts of that vertical relationship; reading, thinking and disagreeing with people who don't believe the truth about God. And so on.

This condition of being in rebellion is universal, and all of us are guilty of breaking the law at some point. All of us deserve to be separated from God's goodness and love. Even if we wanted to stop rebelling, we would not be able to make up for the times where we do rebel by being good at other times, any more than we could get out of a speeding ticket by appealing to the times when we drove at the speed limit, (something that I never do, in any case).

This is not to say that all sinners are punished equally – the degree of punishment is proportional to the sins a person commits. However, the standard is perfection. And

worse than that, the most important moral obligation is a *vertical* moral obligation. You can't satisfy the demands of the moral law just by making your neighbor happy, while treating God like a pariah. The first commandment is to love God, the second is to love your neighbor. Even loving your neighbor requires you to tell your neighbor the truth – not just to make them feel good. The *vertical* relationship is more important than the *horizontal* one, and we've all screwed up the vertical relationship. We all don't want God to be there, telling us what's best for us, interfering with our fun. We don't want to relate to a loving God if it means having to care what he thinks about anything that we are doing.

Who is going to pay for our rebellion?

The Christian answer to the problem of our rebellion is that Jesus takes the punishment we deserve in our place.

However, I've noticed that on some atheist blogs, they don't like the idea that someone else can take our punishment for us to exonerate us for crimes that we've committed. So I'll quote from this post by the great William Lane Craig, to respond to that objection.

Excerpt:

> The central problem of the Penal Theory is, as you point out, understanding how punishing a person other than the perpetrator of the wrong can meet the demands of justice. Indeed, we might even say that it would be wrong to punish some innocent person for the crimes I commit!
>
> It seems to me, however, that in other aspects of human life we do recognize this practice. I remember once sharing the Gospel with a businessman. When I explained that Christ had died to pay the penalty for our sins, he responded, "Oh, yes, that's imputation." I was stunned, as I never expected this theological concept to be familiar to this non-Christian businessman. When I asked him how he came to be familiar with this idea, he replied, "Oh, we use imputation all the time in the insurance business." He explained to me that certain sorts of insurance policy are written so that, for example, if someone else drives my car and gets in an accident, the responsibility is imputed to me rather than to the driver. Even though the driver behaved recklessly, I am the one held liable; it is just as if I had done it.
>
> Now this is parallel to substitutionary atonement. Normally I would be liable for the misdeeds I have done. But through my faith in Christ, I am, as it were, covered by his divine insurance policy, whereby he assumes the liability for my actions. My sin is imputed to him, and he pays its penalty. The demands of justice are fulfilled, just as they are in mundane affairs in which someone pays the penalty for something imputed to him. This is as literal a transaction as those that transpire regularly in the insurance industry.

So, it turns out that the doctrine of substitionary atonement is not as mysterious or as objectionable as everyone seems to think it is.

Did global warming / climate change cause hurricanes Harvey and Irma?

September 11, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

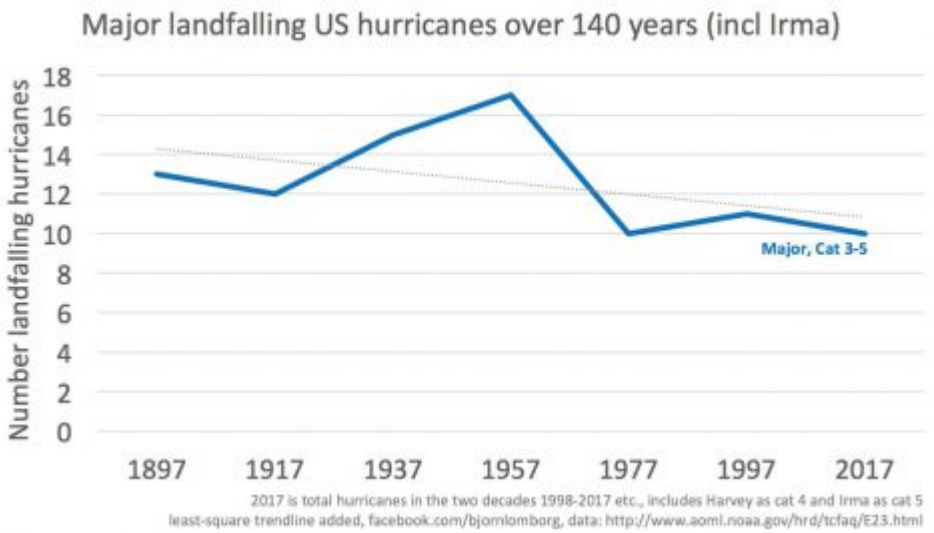

NOAA graph showing frequency of major hurricanes (1897-2017)

The graph above (tweeted by famous climate scientist Bjorn Lomborg) includes Harvey and Irma.

The Daily Signal takes a look at the historical record of major hurricanes that made landfall.

Excerpt:

> Flooding in homes and businesses across Houston was still on the rise when Politico ran a provocative article, titled "Harvey Is What Climate Change Looks Like."
>
> Politico was not alone, as another news outlet called the one-two punch of Harvey and Irma the potential "new normal." Brad Johnson, executive director of the advocacy group Climate Hawks Vote, says Harvey and Irma are reason to finally jail officials who "reject science."
>
> […]Except they're not telling the full story.
>
> Consider this data from a 2012 article in the Journal of Climate, authored by climatologists Roger Pielke Jr. and Jessica Weinkle. Pielke tweeted a graph from the paper that shows no trends in global tropical cyclone landfalls over the past 46 years.

Here is the graph:

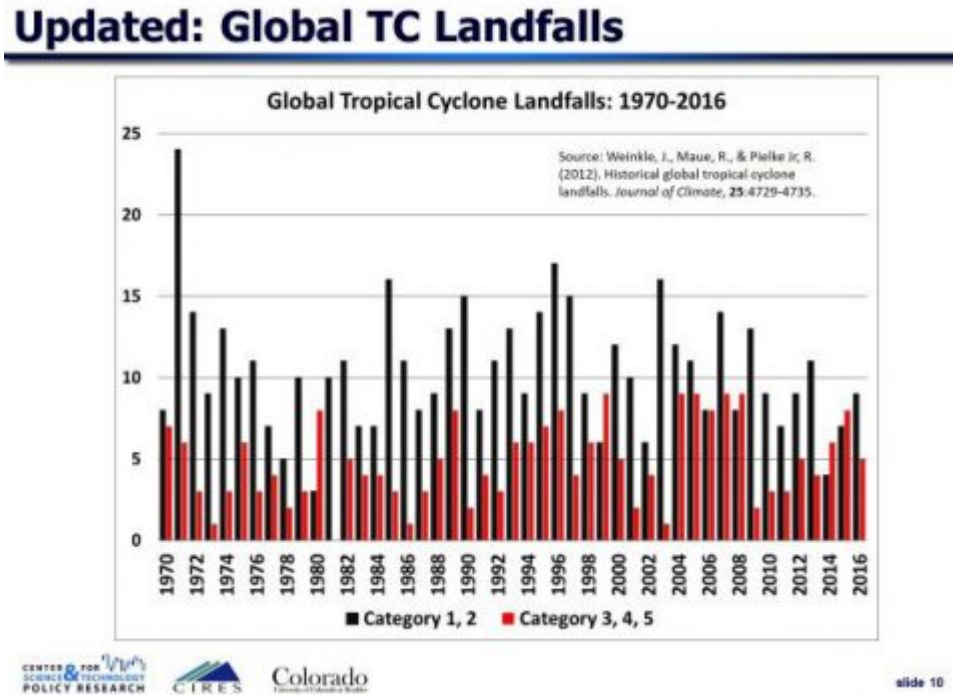

Historical graph of tropical cyclone landfalls (1970-2016)

If global warming were a thing, then you should be able to see much lower numbers on the left, and much higher on the right. But it's basically flat.

More from the far-left United Nations IPCC:

> The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported in its most recent scientific assessment that "[n]o robust trends in annual numbers of tropical storms, hurricanes, and major hurricanes … have been identified over the past 100 years in the North Atlantic basin," and that there are "no significant observed trends in global tropical cyclone frequency."
>
> Further, "confidence in large-scale changes in the intensity of extreme extratropical cyclones [such as 'Superstorm' Sandy] since 1900 is low."

If even the socialist United Nations admits there's no problem, then I'm not sure why the far-left mainstream media is trying to link global warming with hurricanes.

What about floods?

Reason.com reported on a report from the National Academies of Science on the link between global warming and floods:

> The 2017 *Special Report* further finds that trends with respect to floods in the U.S. are a mixed: They have increased in some regions and declined in others. The draft also observes that "attribution studies have not established a robust connection between increased riverine flooding and human-induced climate change."
>
> **A new study in the *Journal of Hydrology* analyzing long term flooding trends in North America and Western Europe finds no discernible increase in floods in those areas during the past 80 years.** A team led U.S. Geological Survey researcher Glenn Hodgkins reported, "There was no

> compelling evidence for consistent changes over time in major-flood occurrence during the 80 years through 2010, using a very large dataset (>1200 gauges) of diverse but minimally altered catchments in North America and Europe." The researchers added, "For North America and Europe, the results provide a firmer foundation for the IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] finding that compelling evidence for increased flooding at a global scale is lacking."

Floods are still happening, but at the same rate as before – it's flat.

But these observations of flat numbers of hurricanes and floods isn't stopping the mainstream media from being hysterical.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig at Biola U: Does God Exist?

September 12, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang
– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws

– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection
– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus

– god wouldn’t have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that’s a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that’s a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that’s a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don’t support life, that’s a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that’s a bad design

3. hitchens’ burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can’t prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig’s scientific arguments don’t go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don’t prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don’t prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn’t be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig’s evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can’t use the progress of science
– it’s too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god’s existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn’t forming his view based on evidence
– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don’t believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you’ve got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God

– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH’s evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH’s argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn’t need to be efficient

CH’s argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH’s argument that Craig’s scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH’s argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn’t need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH’s citation of Craig’s book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true
– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH’s rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH’s rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH’s argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed

– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them
– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that's a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven't even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn't prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they're growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn't improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do

– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn't need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that's why people act morally
– it's degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don't know why, because i can't ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don't hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don't believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don't agree

WC moral argument: it's not epistemology it's the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing

– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history
– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it’s just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that’s not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

Trump doesn’t intend to negotiate for border wall using DACA as leverage

September 13, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump, with some of his brilliant alt-right supporters

The center-left The Hill reports.

Excerpt:

> White House legislative affairs director Marc Short told reporters on Tuesday that President Trump would not demand that border wall funding is tied to a legislative replacement for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.
>
> Speaking at a roundtable event hosted by the Christian Science Monitor, Short said the administration didn’t want to “bind” itself by making a demand that would likely be a nonstarter for many lawmakers.
>
> “We’re interested in getting border security and the president has made the commitment to the American people that a barrier is important to that security,” Short said. “Whether or not that is part of a DACA equation, or … another legislative vehicle, I don’t want to bind us into a construct that would make the conclusion on DACA impossible.”
>
> There had been speculation that Trump would require any compromise on potential DACA legislation include money for a wall along the southern border.

Trump’s not going to use DACA as leverage to get us the border wall.

Trump has been awful at pressuring lawmakers in both parties into supporting conservative legislation. I can’t think of a single piece of legislation that he has even tried

to be persuasive on. It's the President's job to drum up support for legislation that he promised during his campaign. He does this by being intelligent, informed and persuasive. Trump had a lot of confident words about his ability to make great deals during the campaign, but so far, we haven't even seen him *try* to make a great deal. Everything that requires a legislative solution – from the Obamacare repeal, to the border wall, to the Iran deal, to the debt ceiling – has been a complete failure.

And now the White House is even saying that Trump has always favored amnesty.

This is from the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> President Donald Trump's request that Congress protect illegal immigrants is not a change of heart, but something Trump has always supported, according to White House press secretary Sarah Sanders.
>
> Trump presented a hard-line immigration policy on the campaign trail and said during an August 2016 campaign speech that "there will be no amnesty."
>
> "Our message to the world will be this: you cannot obtain legal status, or become a citizen of the United States, by illegally entering our country," he stated during the speech.
>
> **However, last week President Trump announced that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) amnesty program will be rescinded in six months and that Congress has until then to "legalize DACA," which protects roughly 800,000 illegal immigrants from deportation.**
>
> Asked about Trump's support of amnesty, Sanders said, "I think the president has spoken out very clearly that he wants us to make this decision based on a variety of factors. But the number one thing is that he wants responsible **immigration reform** and part of that is including that in the process."
>
> **She went on to say that Trump "always wanted responsible immigration reform."**
>
> Trump did mention immigration reform during that Arizona immigration speech in 2016, but in a much different manner.
>
> "When politicians talk about **immigration reform**, they usually mean the following: amnesty, open borders, and lower wages," Trump said in reference to politicians such as Republican South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

800,000 people is a lot of people. Many of those people will use more in social services than they pay in, and some of them will actually be dangerous, as reported in this CNS News story:

> Jamiel Shaw II (Dec. 22, 1990 — March 2, 2008) was a promising young football player at Los Angeles High School. He was being prospected by Rutgers University and Stanford University.

> On his way home on March 2 after participating in a weekend football training program, Shaw was confronted by two Hispanic men who asked him in which gang was he a member. (Shaw was only several blocks from his home.)
>
> When Shaw did not respond quickly, Pedro Espinoza, an illegal alien gang member and a DREAMer, shot Shaw in the stomach and the face. Shaw died shortly thereafter at a hospital. (Jamiel Shaw Sr. had heard the shots and discovered his dying son on the street.)
>
> Espinoza, who had several previous arrests, including gun charges and an assault on a police officer, was convicted of first degree murder on May 9, 2012.

Wouldn't it be great if all the people who voted for the DREAM Act were now tried as accessories to murder? I would really like to see that. But even that would not be enough to make up for the loss of a child to a repeat-criminal.

Look, I can admit that Trump made a good decision on the Supreme Court nominee. But he was elected because people thought he would repeal Obamacare and build the wall. We were told that people who had actually *performed actions to achieve those ends*, like Ted Cruz, were unreliable. Trump was the best candidate, because he was a tough-talking outsider who could make deals. Well, we're still waiting for him to be persuasive to Congress on legislation. He had a big mouth, but he isn't able to back it up. There was nothing in his background that demonstrated that he would back it up.

He used to tell us that we'd get tired of all the winning. Maybe so. But first, we have to start winning. Let's win one time to get the winning started. Build the wall.

Atheist morality: Seattle's gay Democrat mayor resigns after child sex abuse allegations

September 14, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

The main thing I remember about this man is that he strongly pushed for gay marriage in the state of Washington, and that he was celebrated by atheists when gay marriage became the law in Washington. Everyone was proud of him, proud of gay marriage, and proud of their state, because this is the kind of morality that atheists champion.

The far-left New York Times reports:

> The mayor of Seattle, Ed Murray, said on Tuesday that he would resign after announcing in May that he would not seek a second term. Several men have comeforward to accuse Mr. Murray of sexually abusing them decades ago, when they were underage.
>
> The announcement came just hours after The Seattle Times published a story with an account by a fifth man, Mr. Murray's cousin, who said Mr. Murray had abused him in the 1970s.
>
> [..]Mr. Murray, 62, a Democrat, is the city's first openly gay mayor, and had served in the State Legislature for many years before being elected in 2013.
>
> […]**The liberal Mr. Murray is generally considered a father of Washington's same-sex marriage law, which he pressed in the State Legislature for years.**

The radically-leftist New York Times isn't about to tell you what this Democrat gay-marriage activist actually did – that's not news that's fit to print. For that you have to go

to Life Site News.

Gay activist Terry Bean and Barack Obama

Not the first time

Here's some Democrat concern for the chldren, reported in the far-left CNN, of all places. Headline: "Obama backer, Democratic fundraiser Terry Bean charged in sexual abuse case".

Excerpt:

> A prominent supporter of President Barack Obama and co-founder of the Human Rights Campaign was arrested last week on charges of sodomy and sexual abuse related to what authorities said was an encounter with a juvenile male.
>
> Terrence Bean, 66, a major Democratic donor and a celebrated gay-rights activist, was indicted on two felony charges of sodomy and a misdemeanor count of sexual abuse by a grand jury and arrested in Oregon Wednesday, according to a statement from the Portland Police Bureau.
>
> […]The charges relate to an alleged encounter the two had with a 15-year-old boy in Oregon last year, The Oregonian reported. Bean's attorney has denied the charges and said in a statement that Bean is the "victim of an extortion ring." CNN is not naming the alleged victim because the network does not identify minors or victims of sexual assaults.
>
> […]Bean, a real-estate developer and co-founder of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund and the Human Rights Campaign, is a powerful figure in Democratic politics.
>
> The Oregonian reported that he helped raise more than half a million dollars for Obama's 2012 re-election campaign, and Federal Election Commission records show he's contributed thousands to Democrats, including former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and others.
>
> Photos posted online show him with the Obamas, House Minority Leader Nancy

> Pelosi and aboard Air Force One with the President.
>
> In remarks at a 2009 Human Rights Campaign dinner, President Obama thanked Bean, calling him a "great friend and supporter."

This goes right to the top of the Democrat party. Gay activists are connected to people at the top of the Democrat party. When a person votes Democrat, they're either pedophiles themselves or they are (effectively) voting for increased normalization of pedophilia.

Pedophilia is nothing but the elevation of the desires of selfish adults over the protection of children. And we already know where the Democrats stand on that – we just have to look at how they reconcile irresponsible recreational sex with the right to life of the unborn. This is the party of adult selfishness. They don't care about the needs of children at all. They see children as commodities, instead of people made in the image of God in order to know God.

Objective morality for atheists

I have a friend who is an atheist who tells me that he doesn't need God to ground objective moral values. He is a good person, he says. He supports gay marriage. He was proud when the Seattle mayor got gay marriage passed in his state. He says that objective moral values are easily grounded on atheism.

Let's review what objective morality (moral realism) really means in practice for atheists:

> In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.
>
> (Richard Dawkins, "God's Utility Function," Scientific American, November, 1995, p. 85)

Whatever morality atheists try to claim, the truth is that their worldview cannot ground it rationally. This universe is an accident. There are no objective human rights. There is no objective morality. There is no free will nor moral agency. There is no judge of our actions when we die. Other human beings are just lumps of matter to be used for our own pleasure, as long as we are powerful enough to escape the disapproval of those accursed Bible-believers. Assume that every atheist is either like the Seattle mayor or is proud of what he is doing. That's what atheists vote for, after all. This is the world they want to actualize through their voting. The whole point of atheism is to get rid of moral restraints on the pursuit of pleasure. The great virtue that motivates young atheists to turn away from the Bible is just "I want to get drunk and have premarital sex without consequences". End of story. It's not intellectual.

More atheism objective morality:

- UK Telegraph: Adopted boy's complaints about his gay guardians were ignored by social workers

- Associated Press: Homosexual Penn State University coach who sexually abused boys
- Sky News: Head of a gay youth organization was running a child sex ring
- Sun News: Gay man kidnapped teen, chained him up and raped him multiple times over several days
- Jewish World Review: Jesse Dirkhising dies of suffocation after being tortured and raped

Related posts

- Famous gay activist pleads guilty to child pornography charges
- Some supporters of gay marriage favor normalizing pedophilia and incest
- Academic researchers gather for conference on… pedophilia?
- Minneapolis teacher and his husband investigated for sex with teenaged boy
- Gay activist pleads guilty to sexually assaulting boys
- Gay man gets 40-year sentence for molesting boy he adopted from Russia
- Architect of Kathleen Wynne's Ontario Liberal Party sex ed curriculum sentenced for child porn
- Democrats vote to protect pedophiles in H.R. 1913 hate crime bill
- Gay rights activist accused of sexually assaulting 17-year-old boy
- Gay health expert charged with selling adopted 5-year old boy for sex

Why sexual permissiveness is not compatible with the welfare of children

September 15, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist Terry Bean and Barack Obama

Here is a striking essay from the Public Discourse. It talks about how we, as a society, have generally taken on an anything-goes approach with respect to sex. The one exception (for now) is pedophilia, which is the sexual abuse of children by adults. The essay points out that there is no moral reason for having this one exception, on secularism. The exception exists because of a sort of "ick" factor – not because we have a moral framework that makes anything right or wrong objectively. The essay argues that we are not shy about harming children in a million other ways, and lists some examples. I just want to quote a few and then I'll comment about my own moral views around sexuality.

Quick summary of his argument:

> The moral structure of pedophilia is simply this: the welfare of children is subordinate to the sexual gratification of adults.
>
> […]We should be thankful that the Sanduskys and Laheys are still considered monstrous. But in contemporary America that condemnation rests on sentiment and not on moral reasoning. No one can simultaneously explain *why* their actions were so vile and uphold the first commandment of the sexual revolution: fulfill thy desires.
>
> […]No, it isn't *how* Sandusky and Lahey did what they did, or under what circumstances, that explains the disgust. It's *what* they did—but nobody wants to acknowledge that.
>
> The reason for that reluctance becomes clear, if we keep in mind the moral structure of pedophilia. Sexual gratification trumps. Thank goodness that for now,

> there aren't many men who are sexually attracted to youngsters. In that single case, we raise the banner for the children. But in no other case.

That's his argument.

Now, a quick excerpt:

> If we altered the question, and asked not how many people have done sexually abusive things with children, but how many people have done sexual things that redounded to the suffering of children, then we might confess that the only thing that separates millions of people from Jerry Sandusky is inclination. Everything that was once considered a sexual evil and that is now winked at or cheered, everything without exception, has served to hurt children, and badly.
>
> We might point here to divorce. Unless it is necessary to remove oneself and one's children from physical danger and moral corruption, the old wisdom regarding divorce should hold, if children themselves have anything to say about it. Parents will say, "My children can never be happy unless I am happy," but they should not lay that narcissistic unction to their souls. Children need parents who love them, not parents who are happy; they are too young to be asked to lay down their lives for someone else. It is not the job of the child to suffer for the parent, but the job of the parent to endure, to make the best of a poor situation, to swallow his pride, to bend her knees, for the sake of the child.
>
> We might point to births out of wedlock. The child has a right to enter more than a little nursery decorated with presents from a baby shower. He should enter a human world, a story, a people. He should be born of a mother and a father among uncles and aunts and cousins and grandparents, stretching into the distant past, with all their interrelated histories, with his very *being* reflected in all those mirrors of relation, not to mention his eyes and his hair, the talents in his fingers and the cleverness in his mind. This *belonging* to a big and dependable world can be secured only in the context of the *permanent* love of his mother and father, declared by a vow before the community and before the One in whom there is no shadow of alteration.

And now my comments about this article.

So pretty much all my regular readers know that I take extremely conservative views on social issues, since I am an evangelical Protestant Christian. But I don't just have conservative views – I am also chaste at a personal level. I am not one of these re-virgins – I have never had sex. Not once. And I don't mean I have never had sexual intercourse only, I mean that I have never even kissed a woman on the lips. I am a radical on the issue of chastity. I don't view chastity as depriving oneself of something good, I view it is as a thing that serious Christian men do when we want to enable and develop other capabilities. It's my conviction that chastity enables the capability to see women as God sees them, which is a precursor to growing them up to serve him. That's what women are for, on my view – exactly like men are for knowing and serving God. It's my belief that

once a man has premarital sex, it becomes much harder for him to view women that way.

So, I am really really really against any kind of sexual activity of any kind prior to marriage. I think that if a man wants to show affection to a woman, then sex before marriage is not the way to do that. There are other ways, and men ought to know how to speak the language of love to a woman in many different ways apart from sex, assuming that this is his goal for her. A man needs to create a context for sex before he can have it. Marriage is how a man provides a context for sex. Not just by giving a woman safety, but by specifying a shared vision which the woman agrees to support when she agrees to marriage. Men shouldn't have intimate experiences with women who are not committed to a constructive partnership with specific goals, e.g. – birthing or adopting children in order to give them a stable, loving *sane* environment to grow up in. That is so rare nowadays, especially on college campuses which are inundated with sexual liberalism, thanks to radical feminism. My conviction that sex is not something that should be done before marriage emerges partly from a concern that children should have the best opportunity for that stable environment. And that's what I want to focus on – sexual restraint as a means of providing for children and protecting children.

First, premarital sex creates a situations where abortion happens. Men and women should not engage in activities for recreational reasons that could possibility lead to the death of another human being, period. I am not one of these people who thinks "oh, poor woman who is pregnant, what a beastly man who did that to her – but she can do the right thing and keep the baby". I think that women are equally to blame with men for even having sex before marriage – the mistake was having sex in the first place. So getting pregnant and keeping the baby is good, but preventing fatherlessness and not putting burdens on taxpayers is much, much better. People who engage in premarital sex are not only selfish, immature and irresponsible, but they are actually acting in a *negligent* fashion towards the child that may result from their *choices*. We should not make choices that put innocent children at risk. Premarital sex can be compared with driving while drunk in that regard. You might think it's fun, but it's not a good, moral thing to do because of the harm that may result. Saying "but I didn't mean to" after the fact doesn't change the harm.

Second, I've blogged before about many studies (like this one) that show that premarital sex reduces relationship stability, duration, and quality. Another study I blogged about showed that the number of sexual partners that a man or woman has before marriage directly affects the probability that the relationship will provide a stable environment for raising children. So one of my reasons for being chaste is to maximize the probability of giving my future children that stable environment. Another reason to be chaste is to give my future wife that gift of fidelity. When a man has proven that he has the ability to restrain himself with his wife during the courtship, that is a signal to her that he is good at self-control. The ability to court without premarital sex shows her that he is able to think about her as a person, and that he is able to evaluate her objectively for the purpose of filling the roles of wife and mother. And that this is, in fact, his whole purpose for her. A purpose that will survive the decline of her appearance and youth. Security is another gift

that a chaste man gives his wife, so that she can age confidently.

Thirdly, I have in the past blogged about research on gay unions showing how various factors that are more probable in gay relationships, (e.g. – elevated rates of domestic violence, low relationship stability, drug abuse, high rates of promiscuity, etc.), undermine the stability of the environment in which children grow up. More here. Dr. Ryan Anderson has argued that the norms present in gay relationships will undermine the norms of traditional marriage, (permanence, sexual exclusivity, etc.), if marriage is redefined to eliminate the gender requirement. I think we need to keep the traditional definition of marriage because it's better for children if we do (and there are other reasons to prefer natural marriage, as I've written about before).

I think I've said enough here to show that very often when it comes to sexual activity what is driving my conservative views is concern for others. Concern not just for the future children, but for the future wife. And not just for them, but for society as a whole, who would have to pay the social costs of things like divorce, and the social costs of children of divorce, etc. And not just for society, but also for God, who intends sexuality for a very specific purpose – it is a form of communication for two people who have been bonded to each other for life. Marriage has to count for God and achieve his goals. One of those goals is raising up children well for his sake. And adults need to control themselves in order to provide children with what they need.

Where to get help if you have a selfish, absent or abusive mother or father

September 16, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Today, I want to say something this article about lambs in Scotland, written by Sheila Walsh in the The Stream.

She writes:

> I am very fond of sheep. I grew up on the west coast of Scotland with sheep all around me, field after field of white wool and incessant crying when things seemed a little off.
>
> […]Of all the lessons I have learned from these defenseless, gentle animals, the most profound is the most painful. Every now and then, a ewe will give birth to a lamb and immediately reject it. Sometimes the lamb is rejected because they are one of twins and the mother doesn't have enough milk or she is old and frankly quite tired of the whole business. They call those lambs, *bummer lambs*.
>
> Unless the shepherd intervenes, that lamb will die. So the shepherd will take that little lost one into his home and hand feed it from a bottle and keep it warm by the fire. He will wrap it up warm and hold it close enough to hear a heartbeat. When the lamb is strong the shepherd will place it back in the field with the rest of the flock.
>
> "Off you go now, you can do this, I'm right here."
>
> The most beautiful sight to see is when the shepherd approaches his flock in the morning and calls them out, "*Sheep, sheep, sheep*!"

> The first to run to him are the bummer lambs because they know his voice. It's not that they are more loved — it's just that they believe it.
>
> I am so grateful that Christ calls himself the Good Shepherd.
>
> "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice." (John 10:3-4 NLT)

My older brother and I grew up with a mother who was very much focused on her career and earning and saving money for her retirement. We were both stuck in daycare very early after being born, so that she could go back to work right away. (Me after 6 weeks) My older brother has shown the ill effects of our parents (especially our mother) not having any plan for us, especially morally and spiritually. He dropped out of college after failing his first year, never had a career. Although he has normal intelligence and mental health, he never could stick in any real job.

Although there were early warning signs when his grades started to drop in Grade 5, my parents never took responsibility to make a plan to solve it. Oh, they would yell and scream at him at report card time, but just for a day or two, and after that, nothing constructive. My brother decided that he could just ride out the flak my parents gave him on report card night, and keep going with his plan of having fun and being popular. My parents just forgot about it until the next report card day, because they did not want to be distracted from their careers, hobbies and retirement planning. When dispensing rewards, my brother was always given the same as me, despite our different levels of achievement. And my parents considered this equal dispensation of rewards regardless of performance to be a great virtue, and excellent parenting.

I had the exact same upbringing as my older brother. He actually did pretty well until Grade 5 just like me, but then our paths diverged. From Grade 5 on, his grades deterioriated. He got tired of having to study and he was more interested in the opinions of his peers and conforming to popular culture. In my case, from Grade 5 on, my grades were always high-90s. I remember taking the same classes as he did, in the same high school, with the same teachers. He got a 44 in data processing, I got a 96 with the same teacher and won the award for the entire grade. Every class I went to, the teachers would speak fondly of my older brother – he was a nice guy, very popular with his peers, good at sports. But not a very good student. How was it that I was winning awards when he had scored so poorly. Was I really his brother? How could we be so different?

The difference is that in Grade 5, he got a Gideon's New Testament and he read it and he didn't put it into practice, and in Grade 5, I got a Gideon's New Testament and I read it twice and I did put it into practice. That was the difference. I had the awareness of the moral law (i.e.- wisdom) that allowed me to judge my parents and judge my peers and judge my teachers and stand alone. When you cannot rely on anyone to lead you, be able to judge when others mistreat you is very important. That is what allows you to maintain appropriate boundaries and minimize the influence of friends and family who are teaching you self-destructive behaviors. Awareness of the moral law is what allows you to stop

trying to please people who do not want what is best for you. On the other hand, God is always willing to give you wisdom if you ask Him for it, and you can find out all about him because he has left plenty of evidence concerning his existence and character for you to find. It is in knowing God as he really is that you can find your sense of value, purpose and meaning. The God of the New Testament is the God of people who are lost and need a Savior.

For me, Christianity was a simple matter of being willing to go along with what was true, and not insisting on having fun or conforming to peer expectations. The essential characteristic of my faith, in contrast to my older brother's lack of faith, was this – I did not mind being different, so long as I never lost a debate about what was true. My obedience to Christ has never been conditional on things going my way, on being liked, or anything like that. The only thing that mattered was being factually correct. It never bothered me what other people were doing, or what other people expected me to do, so long as I was acting on what I knew to be true. And God helped me to find out what was true by motivating me to study, and leading me to him with good evidence, and good mentors. Thanks to Jesus' death on the cross, the mistakes I made early did not count against me, and they never will. Jesus' death on the cross gives me the imputed righteousness that I need to stand before God holy and blameless. This is what allows me to keep learning and keep trying no matter how much I fail on any given day.

How has this affected me? Well, this is the second thing I wanted to say about the bummer lamb analogy. Since I was a victim of this hands-off, me-first style of parenting, it's caused me to be extra sensitive about being a good spiritual leader to others in the same predicament. The people I mentor can see it in the way that I treat them . I treat them the opposite of the way that my older brother and I were treated. I care what people read. I care what courses they choose. I care what they eat. I care how they feel. I care about their finances. I care about their plans to serve God. I care about their romantic relationships. I care whether they get recognition for doing good. I care whether their life is going in the right direction. One person I mentored who once considered taking her own life wrote to me when she graduated from a STEM program, and she said this: "I wish you could have been here at my graduation. My parents only paid for this degree. You were the one who got me through it". We have never met in person, but she is going to continue to make a huge difference for Christ and His Kingdom going forward.

I think when you have been a bummer lamb, you are extra careful to make decisions that will enable you to be a good shepherd to other lambs. Being a good shepherd does not mean being pious, spiritual, mystical, etc. Being a good shepherd does not mean making the lambs feel good about making bad decisions. Being a good shepherd means understanding what God has done to lead you, and then reflecting that love back to others *in practical, self-sacrificial actions that solve actual real-world problems for other people who want to know and serve God*. If you are about to jump off a cliff, the last thing you need is someone with no wisdom or experience telling you that God is OK with you doing whatever feels good to you. What you need is someone practical and competent to give you good advice, however much that advice may make you feel bad, or block your

pursuit of fun.

One of my friends proof-read the draft of this post and told me that it made her think of 2 Cor 1:3-5:

> [3] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
>
> [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.
>
> [5] For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ."

Nothing else I do in life matters to me as much as taking care of the people I mentor, especially the ones who are lost and lacking guidance and care. I have good health, good education, good career, and great finances. But by far the most important thing I do is following the example of the Shepherd by caring for other lambs.

The most important thing Christian parents need to focus on with their children

September 17, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

I know what you're thinking – I'm going to say apologetics. But, in dealing with the new membership questions of my PCA Presbyterian church, I have moved to think that it might be something else. Sean McDowell has a recent post about it, and since he is an expert in apologetics, I'm inclined to agree with him.

He writes:

> In his book *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis makes a distinction between "Gift-love" and "Need-love." As for Gift-love, he gives the example of a father who works and plans for the future well being of his family, even though he will die without seeing them benefit. As for Need-love, Lewis gives the example of a lonely and frightened child who comes to its mother's arms for comfort and protection. Such love is neither selfish nor improper, because children are intended to have nurturing mothers, and mothers are intended to care for their kids.
>
> According to Lewis, God's love for mankind is entirely Gift-love: "The Father gives all He is and has to the Son. The Son gives Himself back to the Father, and gives Himself to the world, and for the world to the Father, and thus gives the world (in Himself) back to the Father too." God does not *need* our love or worship. Rather, He freely loves us as an extension of His grace.
>
> But our love for God is different. While we *may* be able to offer God Gift-love, our love is primarily need based. Lewis explains: "But man's love for God, from the very nature of the case, must always be very largely, and must often be entirely, a Need-love." We desperately need God in both this world and the next.
>
> And then Lewis makes an additional (and helpful) distinction—while our objective

> need for God will never change, our *awareness* of that need can. And if our awareness of the need for God fades, then so may our faith. Thus, Lewis says:
>
> *There seems no reason for describing as hypocritical the short-lived piety of those whose religion fades away once they have emerged from "danger, necessity or tribulation." Why should they not have been sincere? They were desperate and howled for help. Who wouldn't?*
>
> In other words, if someone believes in God because of an immediate need for safety or comfort, then as soon as the danger or pain ends, so may the faith. How does this relate to students? Think about it. If a young person believes in God for social or relational needs in the family, church, or school, then when those needs fade, so will his or her faith. If belief in God fulfills some external need, then as soon as that need fades, or another venue provides satisfaction of that need, the student will likely abandon his or her faith (or minimally, have a *marginalized* faith).

The whole post is worth reading, because no less than Sean McDowell himself had a moment like this where he realized his own sinfulness and had to rely on Jesus for his forgiveness.

Judging from his tweets, I know that Sean is obsessed with super-heroes like Spider-Man, and so he would not be comparing himself to his peers in terms of righteousness. That sort of distance between you and Spider-Man can be really grating for boys. Inside, we feel like we are meant to be super-heroes. Many young men go into apologetics because they see it as a super-power. The problem of not measuring up is very strong for us, because we see the demands of Christianity as much greater than mere church attendance. I imagine that as Sean engaged with people using his apologetics super-power, he probably realized how difficult it was to know *everything* and give an answer to *everyone.* That's above and beyond the standard shortcomings or pride, anger, hatred, and so on that are inside of every person.

We are not super-heroes but we need to have super-human righteousness (that is, perfect righteousness) in order to stand before our Creator and Designer. The only solution is to rely on the imputed righteousness of Jesus for our super-hero status. It is a good and healthy thing to take on Jesus as King, and to imitate him. But when we fail, we must also rely on him as Savior. And thank God the Father for that provision of salvation. And indeed, I myself think of Jesus as Savior in the moments where I am conscious of my own sin. But I need to think about him more than that, and I'll explain how next.

What I learned about myself while thinking deeply about the new member questions for the excellent PCA church is that I had pretty much forgotten the excitement of how God saved me by grace when I was little. I was saved in a non-Christian home where, thanks to my hands-off "parents", I was on a very dark path to failure. When I look at my older brother now, I can clearly see where I would have ended up. It is a disastrous place to be. I get excited about God as initiator and architect of salvation (not without my free will to trust). When God architects a divine appointment for me to use my prepared abilities in

his defense or in mentoring little ones, I praise God as author of salvation. But I forget that Christ is the one who allows me to be clean enough to participate in this plan.

My ambition from small was to be a super-hero, and this later turned into great respect for people in the military, especially those who are awarded the Medal of Honor, like Michael Murphy. I want God to give me the Medal of Honor, too. But sin ruins my ambition every day. When I am called out to serve and am found faithful and competent, I need to remember that what makes me fit for service is Christ's sacrifice on the cross. His shed blood is the cape that I put on when it is my turn to come off the bench and be who I was designed to be.

Thank God that the PCA church made me reflect on this. I have never been in a place where the spiritual transformation was so strong. If you are not in church, because you hate church are disappointed in church, may I just suggest that you don't hate church more than I do, and you are not more disappointed with church than I am. You need to give church another look. Go and find the church that is involved with Reasons to Believe, or Reasonable Faith, or apologetics conferences with evidentialists like Wallace and Turek and Craig. Then get in there try your best to tolerate it!

Study explains why university women embrace binge-drinking and hook ups

September 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students throwing up after binge drinking

This study is from the Institute for American Values. Despite their name, they are not conservatives. It was done by Norval Glenn and Elizabeth Marquardt.

If you download the 88 page PDF, the first few pages are an executive summary.

There are a couple of things that really struck me about this IAV study on hooking-up.

First, this one from p. 15:

> A notable feature of hook ups is that they almost always occur when both participants are drinking or drunk.
>
> A Rutgers University student observed, "You always hear people say, oh my gosh, I was so drunk, I hooked up with so and so…" Perhaps not surprisingly, many noted that being drunk helped to loosen one's inhibitions and make it easier to hook up. A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up. A Yale University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up." A New York University student observed, "[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking."
>
> A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then

> if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."
>
> Other women observed that being drunk gives a woman license to act sexually interested in public in ways that would not be tolerated if she were sober. For instance, a University of Michigan student said, "Girls are actually allowed to be a lot more sexual when they are drunk…"
>
> A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."
>
> Some reported that drinking had led them to do things they later regretted. A University of Virginia student said, "My last random hook up was last October and it was bad. I was drunk and I just regretted it very much."

And this one from p. 30 on the effects of hooking-up on their future commitments:

> A few women did see an unambiguous connection between present relationships and future marriage.
>
> […]Many women either saw little or no connection between present and future relationships, or their understanding of this connection was curiously flat. A student at New York University said, "[The present and the future are] connected because I will still have the same values and principles that I have now, but I just won't be single anymore."A number of women said that the present and the future are connected because whatever heartache or confusion they experience now gives them lessons for the future.
>
> A University of Michigan student said, "Early relationships prepare you for marriage because it's like, oh, what type of person do I want to be with? Oh, I've had these bad experiences. Or, I've learned from this relationship that I should do this and I shouldn't do this."
>
> A sophomore at Howard University said that "I am kind of learning from a lot of the mistakes that I have made." At a further extreme, some women saw their future marriage as the reason to experiment widely in the present. A Rutgers University student said,"I think hooking up with different people and seeing what you like and don't like is a good idea. Because eventually you're going to have to… marry someone and I'd just like to know that I experienced everything."
>
> Although it is admirable to take risks and learn from one's mistakes, these women would probably find it difficult to explain how having your heart broken a few or even many times in your early years — or trying to separate sex from feeling, as in hooking up — is good preparation for a trusting and happy marriage later on.

And on p. 42, we learn what women think marriage is and isn't for:

> For instance, in the on-campus interviews one student complained, "[With]

> marriage…you have to debate everything… Why do you need a piece of paper to bond a person to you? …But I know if I don't get married I'll probably feel like… [a] lonely old woman… If anything, I'd get married [because of] that."
>
> This student went on to say that she would be satisfied to live with a man, but added that, if the man was committed to her, he would offer to marry her, and that this was the kind of commitment that she wanted. A student at the University of Washington said,"I don't want to get married right after I graduate from college. I just think that would stunt my growth in every way that there is. I would like to be in a very steady, committed relationship with a guy."

And on p. 44, we learn that they like co-habitation, which increases the risk of divorce by about 50% (but they don't know *that*):

> In the national survey, 58 percent of the respondents agreed that "It is a good idea to live with someone before deciding to marry him." This belief often coexists with a strong desire to marry, because it was embraced by 49 percent of the respondents who strongly agreed that marriage was a very important goal for them.
>
> […]Women we interviewed on campus reflected a similar range of attitudes about cohabitation. Some women thought that cohabitation was a good way to test whether one could spend a lifetime with a potential partner. In such cases, women often cited fears of divorce as the reason for trying cohabitation first. A senior at the University of Washington said, "I kind of don't really see marriages work ever, so I want to make sure that everything's all right before [we get married]. I don't see how people can get married without living together because I know like I have a best friend and I live with her and we want to kill each other, like, every few months."
>
> Other women felt that, in an age of divorce, cohabitation was a preferable alternative to marriage. A student at New York University said, "You see so [many] people getting divorces… I just don't see the necessity [of marriage]." She went on to say, "I think that I don't have to be married to [the] person that I'm with…. You know like… Goldie Hawn [and Kurt Russell]? They're not married."

But let's get back to the drinking and the hook-up sex…

Once a woman abandons femininity for feminism, then sex is all that she can use to get noticed by a man. Men are like hiring managers, and courting is like a job interview for the job of marriage and mothering. If a woman tries to get the job by having sex with the interviewer, he isn't going to hire her for the marriage job, since sex has almost nothing to do with the marriage job. Men have to think about things like fidelity and mothering ability when they are choosing a wife. The problem is that thanks to feminism, women have stopped trying to show their ability to be wives and mothers to men, preferring to instead act like bad boys – no emotions, toughness, hardness, binge-drinking, promiscuity. Men may be happy to have sex with women like that, but they do not

commit to them for life. They're just looked upon as feral animals, to be pumped and dumped by every man who isn't a Christian. And Christian men are disqualified for relationships with young feminists, because we have morals.

Moreover, if a man is constantly being offered sex from feminist women during his 20s and 30s, he basically loses all the time that he could be training for his roles as protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. He will never take on those roles if he is handed sex before marriage for free. That is the root cause of the "man-up" complaint that women make. Why don't men grow up? Because they don't have to. They don't have to do a thing to audition for husband roles, in order to get sex. They just have to be "hot" and feign liberal political views. Many (most?) teenage women are giving the bad boys oral sex on the first date now. Women aren't looking for husbands until much later, when their effort to achieve self-esteem through slutty behavior stalls out, and they realize that the whole feminist project was futile and unsustainable.

In a previous post, I explained how feminist leaders wanted to get women to drink like men, have sex like men, and to abolish courtship and marriage. Under the influence of cultural definitions of what makes a good man and a good relationship, women began to choose men to have sex with without any consideration of morality, religion, marriage, etc. This results in a cycle of binge-drinking, one-night-stands, cheating, co-habitating, breaking-up, stalking, aborting, etc., until the woman's ability to trust and love anyone – including herself – is completely destroyed. And yet these college women somehow believe this is is "fun" and "adventurous", that it makes them feel "sexy", and that the experience of being selfish and seeing the worst kind of men acting in the worst possible ways, point blank, somehow prepares them for marriage and motherhood. They are told this, and they are so unable to break out of their need to "fit in" with their peers and culture that by the time they realized they've been had, it's too late to fix it. And yet, they themselves made those decisions. They are responsible, whether they intended the consequences or not. No one was stopping them from investigating what was likely to happen, if they decided to play the fool sexually.

Stefan Molyneux: “why I was wrong about atheists”

September 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long, lonely journey through the night

This guy has one of the sharpest channels on YouTube, very un-PC. I don’t agree with him on everything, but he is outrageously popular.

Watch: (20 minutes) (H/T William)

This might be a very useful thing to show to pastors who favor socialist policies and big government redistribution. He actually says that the conservative policies that conservatives embrace *attracted him to theism.* I just think that is so hilarious… because all the pastors seem to want to embrace left-wing causes. Especially things like global warming, illegal immigration, redistribution of wealth, single payer health care, etc. Well, the kinds of atheists we like – the ones who believe in liberty, prosperity, security – don’t hold our small government politics against us.

No Christian presents their views through government – that’s why we are all crazy about apologetics. We love apologetics as much as secular leftists love big government. At least apologetics is non-coercive he says. But when atheists enforce their view through big government, backed by prisons and guns, that is coercive. His arguments about demographics, and being willing to marry, have kids for the good of society are terrific to illustrate the value of *self-sacrifice* within the Christian worldview. Far from being a liability, devotion to small government, low taxes and individual liberty is actually an asset when evangelizing. Just as pious pastors are all rushing to join the open borders, global warming, single-payer health care, radical feminism team, we find out that principled atheists are uncomfortable with many of those things. Maybe we should take note of that, instead of just blindly following the crowd.

Have a look at this video, and put THIS apologetic argument into your quiver. There is much, much more to evangelism and apologetics than what you read in books on

apologetics. And this is why I work so hard to connect the Christian worldview to every other area of knowledge. You don’t always have to talk about old, boring William Lane Craig style apologetics with atheists. Sometimes, you can just talk to them about tax policy and free speech. Why not? Atheists are sometimes complicated people.

If white Americans are racist, how come Asians do so well?

September 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

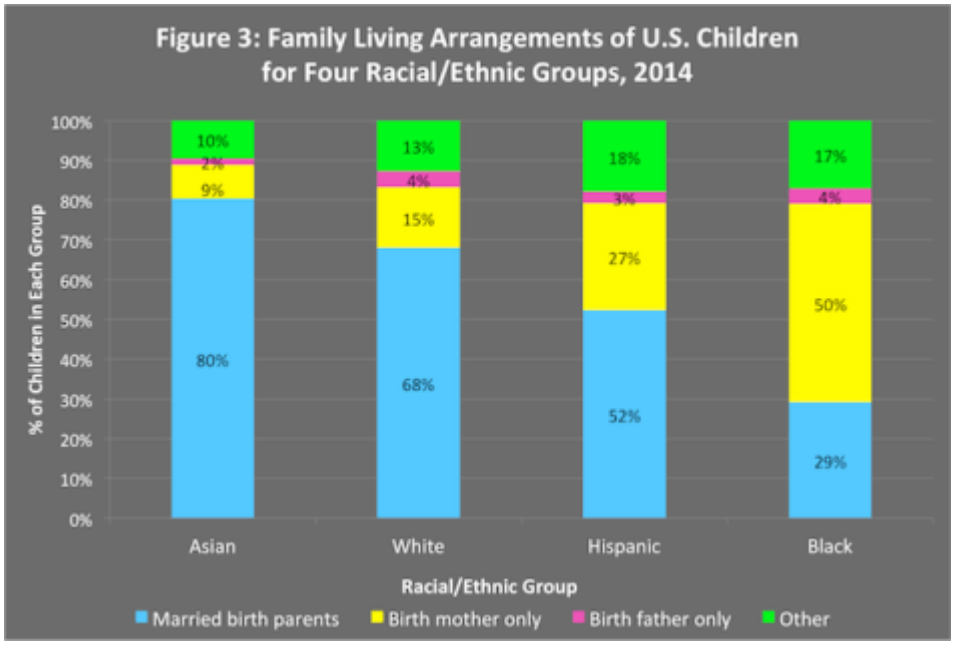

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

This article is written by the far-left radical Nicholas Kristof, writing in the radically-leftist New York Times. (A former newspaper)

Excerpt:

> THIS is an awkward question, but here goes: Why are Asian-Americans so successful in America?
>
> It's no secret that Asian-Americans are disproportionately stars in American schools, and even in American society as a whole. Census data show that Americans of Asian heritage earn more than other groups, including whites. Asian-Americans also have higher educational attainment than any other group.
>
> […]Does the success of Asian-Americans suggest that the age of discrimination is behind us?

> A new scholarly book, "The Asian American Achievement Paradox," by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, notes that Asian-American immigrants in recent decades have started with one advantage: They are highly educated, more so even than the average American. These immigrants are disproportionately doctors, research scientists and other highly educated professionals.
>
> It's not surprising that the children of Asian-American doctors would flourish in the United States. But Lee and Zhou note that kids of working-class Asian-Americans often also thrive, showing remarkable upward mobility.

Part of the problem is that non-Asian Americans take a passive view of life, believing that

high grades come to those who are naturally smart – not to those who work harder:

> There's also evidence that Americans believe that A's go to smart kids, while Asians are more likely to think that they go to hard workers. The truth is probably somewhere in between, but the result is that Asian-American kids are allowed no excuse for getting B's — or even an A-. The joke is that an A- is an "Asian F."

And, as the image I posted above shoes, Asian girls are given boundaries on their sexuality, causing them to choose men who will be good husbands and fathers, and making those men marry before being given sex – factors proven to improve marital stability:

> Strong two-parent families are a factor, too. Divorce rates are much lower for many Asian-American communities than for Americans as a whole, and there's evidence that two-parent households are less likely to sink into poverty and also have better outcomes for boys in particular.

So, let's be real – if white racial discrimination held non-white groups back, then Asians would be in the same situation as blacks and hispanics. But Asians are not being held back, because of their strong marriage culture and focus on hard work. Whites don't hold anyone back. This is just a myth that Democrats use to make blacks (and hispanics) think that they need government to save them from the bogeyman. Asians don't need saving, and neither should any other non-white groups.

We can start by shaming women of all races who choose to have sex with men who are not ready for marriage. There are lots of men out there who are willing to marry, and that should be what women are looking for most if all in a man. That change alone will probably erase most of the achievement gap between different racial groups. Does anyone have the courage to tell young women (of all races) to be more responsible with their sexual decisions? The out-of-wedlock birth rate for blacks is over 70%. This causes massive poverty and crime in the black community. Does anyone have the courage to tell blacks that they are doing this to themselves?

What is the root cause of the problems facing the black community?

September 22, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

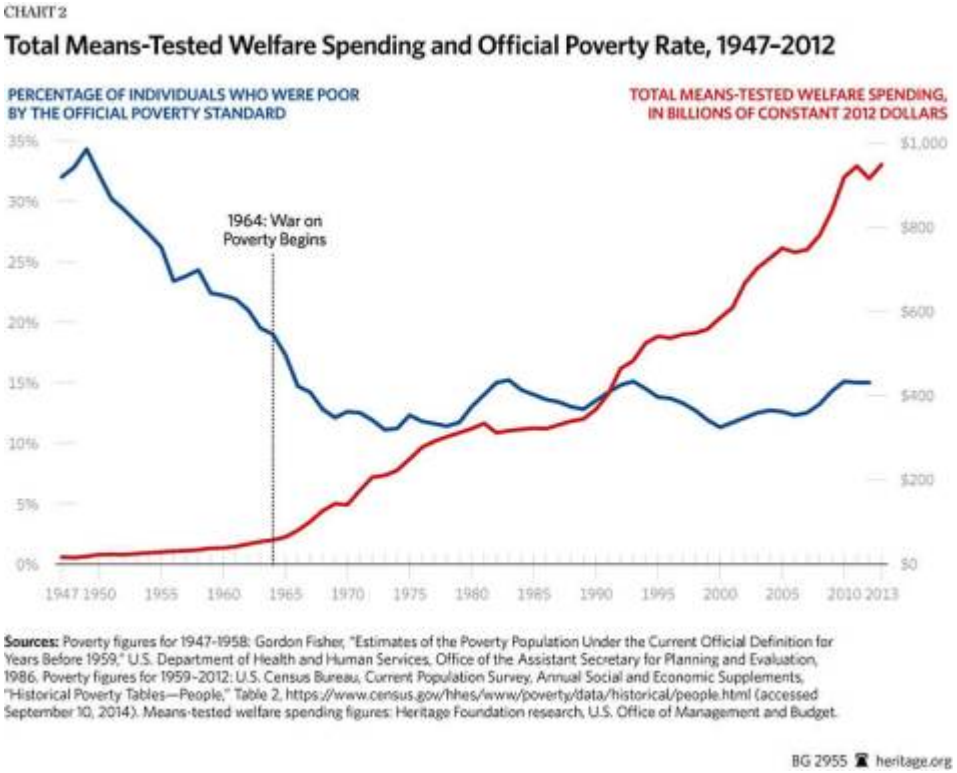

Welfare spending lets women to choose "hot" bad boys, instead of husbands

All my regular readers know that black economist Thomas Sowell is my favorite economist, but that's only because he writes so many USEFUL books on so many topics. I probably agree more with my other favorite economist, who also happens to be black, Walter Williams. Williams is the John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics at George Mason University, which is – in my opinion – the top school for economics in the country.

His biography is right on his web site.

Excerpt:

> Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Dr. Walter E. Williams holds a B.A. in economics from California State University, Los Angeles, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in economics from UCLA. He also holds a Doctor of Humane Letters from Virginia Union University and Grove City College, Doctor of Laws from Washington and Jefferson College and Doctor Honoris Causa en Ciencias Sociales from Universidad Francisco Marroquin, in Guatemala, where he is also Professor Honorario.
>
> Dr. Williams has served on the faculty of George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, as John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics, since 1980; from 1995 to 2001, he served as department chairman. He has also served on the faculties of Los Angeles City College, California State University Los Angeles, and

> Temple University in Philadelphia, and Grove City College, Grove City, Pa.
>
> Dr. Williams is the author of over 150 publications.

Here is a recent column written by Williams on the situation facing the black community in America. The whole thing is worth reading, and should be seen as "the antidote" to the poison being spread about blacks in the predominantly white mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> That the problems of today's black Americans are a result of a legacy of slavery, racial discrimination and poverty has achieved an axiomatic status, thought to be self-evident and beyond question. This is what academics and the civil rights establishment have taught. But as with so much of what's claimed by leftists, there is little evidence to support it.
>
> The No. 1 problem among blacks is the effects stemming from a very weak family structure. Children from fatherless homes are likelier to drop out of high school, die by suicide, have behavioral disorders, join gangs, commit crimes and end up in prison. They are also likelier to live in poverty-stricken households. But is the weak black family a legacy of slavery? In 1960, just 22 percent of black children were raised in single-parent families. Fifty years later, more than 70 percent of black children were raised in single-parent families. Here's my question: Was the increase in single-parent black families after 1960 a legacy of slavery, or might it be a legacy of the welfare state ushered in by the War on Poverty?
>
> According to the 1938 Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, that year 11 percent of black children were born to unwed mothers. Today about 75 percent of black children are born to unwed mothers. Is that supposed to be a delayed response to the legacy of slavery? The bottom line is that the black family was stronger the first 100 years after slavery than during what will be the second 100 years.
>
> At one time, almost all black families were poor, regardless of whether one or both parents were present. Today roughly 30 percent of blacks are poor. However, two-parent black families are rarely poor. Only 8 percent of black married-couple families live in poverty. Among black families in which both the husband and wife work full time, the poverty rate is under 5 percent. Poverty in black families headed by single women is 37 percent. The undeniable truth is that neither slavery nor Jim Crow nor the harshest racism has decimated the black family the way the welfare state has.

There's more, but if you are looking for a quick, simple overview of what REALLY holds blacks down, then this article repays the investment to read it. I think it's important to listen to the perspective of a self-made man.

I think the solution to the problem is a combination of school choice, and changing the incentives facing young blacks by rewarding success, instead of failure. We should be paying for performance. That way, we'll get more performance. People always do what

there is an incentive to do, and that’s across all races, all times, all places.

This longer article by Robert Rector at the Heritage Foundation has more analysis, with more statistics. It’s also worth reading.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

September 23, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight
Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.

4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates
- You didn't need to come out on this cold night
- Craig's arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn't listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don't require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that "every effect requires a cause"
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can't see

- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn’t have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It’s too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It’s self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That’s why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg’s own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity (“I”) is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg’s responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it’s not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It’s that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the

majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said. Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the

fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Atheist Richard Carrier, who divorced his wife to go polyamorous, seeks new sex partner

September 24, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

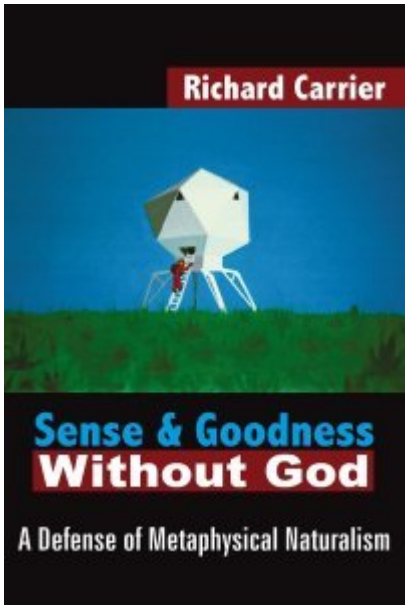

Goodness Without God: is it possible?
Is atheism a rational worldview, or is it just rationalizing sexual misbehavior?

A while back, prominent atheist Dr. Richard Carrier explained how he was divorcing his wife – who supported him financially – in order to go polyamorous full-time.

The Yeti's Roar, a libertarian atheist blog reacted to the news: (link removed)

> In a recent blog post, entitled "Coming Out Poly + A Change of Life Venue", the esteemed Dr. Richard Carrier PhD, discusses his "coming out" as polyamorous, an "orientation" that he just discovered at the young age of 47.
>
> […]Carrier claims that after 17 years of marriage, he cheated on his wife multiple times, for reasons that he won't disclose. In the midst of his infidelity, he suddenly "discovered" (as a middle aged man) that he was polyamorous. Even though his wife attempted to make the marriage work by allowing him to see other women under the guise of an "open marriage", Carrier still decided to kick her to the curb. So in Carrier's view, his affairs were not a mistake, but rather a fun new "lifestyle choice" that he will pursue, regardless of the past commitment to his wife.
>
> What is even more despicable about Carrier's behavior toward his wife is the fact that she supported him financially.
>
> […] The only reason he has been able to live a comfortable lifestyle while blogging and writing obscure books is due to his wife's financial support. The reason that he could afford to invest his time in getting graduate degrees from Columbia in subjects that will never land him a decent paying job is due to the support of his wife. The reason he was able to travel around the country for low

> paying speaking engagements instead of having to get a real job is due to his wife's financial support. And how does he repay his wife for the support she has given him? He cheats on her, waits until he is making enough money where he no longer needs her income, and kicks her to the curb.

So, whenever Richard Carrier was talking about morality without God, now we know what he meant. He even dedicated his book on morality without God to his now ex-wife. How ironic.

But the new polyamoratheism news is that Carrier is actually searching for a new "date".

I am not linking to his blog post, but it says: (H/T The Yeti's Roar)

> I'll start by making sure anyone considering this is up to speed. I am polyamorous. I currently have many girlfriends. All I consider my friends. Some are just occasional lovers. Some I am more involved with. They are also polyamorous, or near enough (not all of them identify that way, but all of them enjoy open relationships). And I will always have relationships with them, as long as they'll have me in their life.
>
> Many different things can be meant by the following terms, but just for the present purpose, if by a primary relationship is meant someone you live with or just about as good as live with, a secondary as someone you date regularly, and a tertiary as someone you date occasionally, all my relationships are tertiary, but only because of geography. I live just below Sacramento, California, where the rents are cheap, which means, where no one wants to live. And I'm unlikely to move anytime soon. So relationships with me, at best, are likely to be tertiary—long distance chatting with occasional being together throughout the year. Even so, I always take such friendships seriously.
>
> […]**I'm 0.5 on the Kinsey scale. Not heavy into kink (but get along well with people who are). I have an unusual fetish or two but don't expect any of my partners to share them. I'm pro sex worker, and though I personally find strip clubs and brothels uninteresting at best (uncomfortable at worst), I like partners who are or who have been sex workers. I also like women who have or pursue a lot of partners or who love to boast of their sexual exploits, especially over wine or whiskey or equivalent. I'm not going to get all butt-hurt or angsty over how high Your Number is. It very much has the opposite effect on me.**
>
> […]I am also planning to have a hotel room, and am comfortable sharing it platonically. Certainly I would enjoy sharing it non-platonically, but I don't expect it. I can't believe (even though I know) there are still guys who assume the other sh*t buys them sex, thus necessitating I say this: if you are going to have sex with me, it has to be because it's fun and you want to, not because it's something you owe me. On the same understanding, if you have a place for me to crash in town (platonically or not), and are happy to have me over to spare me

> the cost of hiring a room, that would be lovely. And yes, if you are poly or open and live with a partner or two, I'm comfortable with that as well.
>
> This also means you don't have to live in the LA area to join me for this. If you can get to LA, and don't mind sharing a room (at my expense), the opportunity remains.

This is Richard Carrier's book on morality without God:

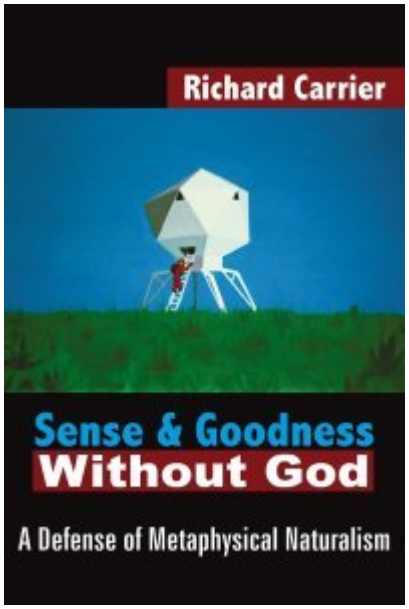

Goodness without God: Now we know what he was talking about
And the book is dedicated to his wife, now ex-wife:

> For Jen…
>
> My buxom brunette
> My wellspring of joy
> My north star of sanity

Indeed.

I trust that everyone now understands what I was saying about the reasons why atheists jettison God and objective morality. Sexual freedom is definitely a big one, and probably the biggest. This is not a worldview, people, it's not something that is derived from logic and evidence. It starts and ends with getting rid of moral accountability to the Creator. Period. End of issue.

Not that all atheists are as immoral as Carrier, and not all atheists are motivated by sexual perversion. But the primary motivation is always to be able to get God out of the morality business. There's no denying that atheists look pretty normal in a society that is still running on the fumes of a declining Judeo -Christian value system. But if you look at how they vote, e.g. – for abortion, for gay marriage, against religious liberty, etc., it's very clear that they want the society to move away from Judeo-Christian values. And it is this desire that more and more human beings not respect the moral oughts that God prescribes that is the real rebellion.

Romans 1:18-21 nails this:

> [18]The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,
>
> [19]since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.
>
> [20]For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.
>
> [21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

What is expected in the Christian worldview is not to pick and choose a few moral behaviors here and there. Individual moral values are not the issue. When Christ calls a man, he call him to die to himself and his own self-interest, and to take up his moral positions and champion them. Have you ever tried to champion the pro-life cause in an increasingly secular society? How about championing the pro-marriage cause? In order to be a Christian, you don't just accept the sacrifice of Jesus as atonement for sin, but you also let him lead. And one of those areas of letting him lead is in defining what is and is not moral. It's very easy for a man to not murder unborn children himself, and to marry someone of the opposite sex, and congratulate himself on how moral he is. Personal morality is not the issue. Inventing your own arbitrary moral code and then following it might make you feel good, but that is not what God requires. The real challenge of Christianity has to do with standing up for the truth claims, including the moral values, in the face of a society that will not approve of you.

What is required of a man on the Christian worldview is total abandonment to God's calling and a 100% re-prioritization of his life. It's not about doing X and Y, but not A and B, and getting a passing grade. It's about putting Jesus Christ in as your commanding officer in every area of your life.

Documented cases of discrimination against religious people skyrocketing

September 25, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

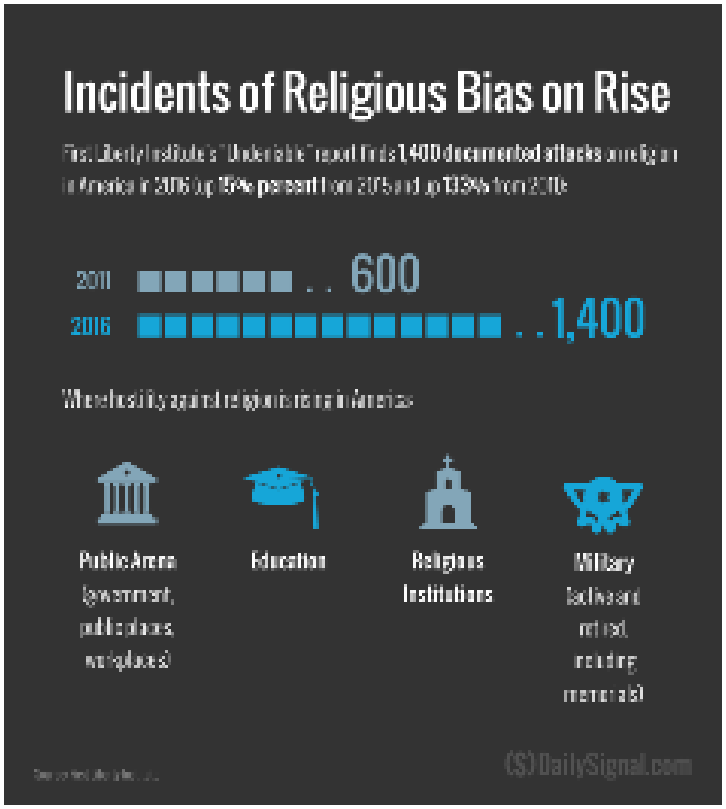

Discrimination against religious people

Consider this story from the Daily Signal, and keep in mind that these are only the documented cases.

Excerpt:

> Freedom of religion isn't as protected as some Americans may think. In fact, reported attacks on religion are increasing in the U.S. and, according to First Liberty Institute, the evidence is undeniable.
>
> The 2017 edition of a First Liberty report called "Undeniable" shows threats to Americans' First Amendment rights spanning the past five years.
>
> The number of documented incidents of religious discrimination grew 15 percent in 2016 compared with 2015. The number of incidents increased by 133 percent, from 600 to more than 1,400, between 2011 and 2016.
>
> "We're in a battle right now for religious freedom in the future of our country," First Liberty President Kelly Shackelford said in a Facebook Live video Sept. 12.
>
> Justin Butterfield, editor-in-chief of the study, said in an interview with The Daily Signal that much of the data comes from court filings from across the country.
>
> The research team also collects reports from news outlets and other organizations, including the Freedom From Religion Foundation, an atheist group.

> Butterfield, who has a law degree from Harvard, said researchers specifically looked for instances where someone was illegally restricted from, or prosecuted for, practicing his or her faith.

Some people like to think that gay rights are a wonderful thing, but you can't expect people who are involved in a sin to treat those who disagree with them with respect. Sin causes people to want to coerce and silence those who disagree.

Here is a story from Alliance Defending Freedom about a case in Washington state – a very, very godless state:

> Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys filed a brief Monday with the Washington Supreme Court asking it to take up the case of Barronelle Stutzman, a floral artist whom the state and the American Civil Liberties Union sued for acting consistently with her faith.
>
> ADF filed notices of appeal in April on behalf of Stutzman, owner of Arlene's Flowers in Richland, after a lower state court ruled that she must pay penalties and attorneys' fees for declining to use her artistic abilities to design custom floral arrangements for a long-time customer's same-sex ceremony. Rather than participate in the ceremony, Stutzman referred the customer, whom she considers a friend and had served for nearly 10 years, to several other florists in the area who would provide high-quality arrangements and wedding support.
>
> […]**"Government is supposed to protect freedom, not intimidate citizens into acting contrary to their faith and conscience," added ADF Senior Legal Counsel Jeremy Tedesco. "The two lawsuits have the potential to financially devastate Barronelle's business and personal assets – including taking this 70-year old grandmother's retirement and personal savings – simply for acting in accordance with her faith. We hope the Washington Supreme Court will review this case not only because of the important legal and constitutional implications, but also because of the devastating impact the lower court's ruling has on Barronelle."**

Barronelle just asked to not be forced to celebrate something that she didn't believe in, and the attorney general of Washington thought that an appropriate response to her refusal to celebrate gay marriage was to take everything she owned, and block her from earning a living in the state of Washington.

It's very important to people who are behaving immorally that they not be judged or shamed by religious people for their immoral choices. How far would social liberals go to stop religious people from judging them? Well, in America, they resort to lawsuits, censorship, coercion, vandalism and even violence. You'll recall the attack by domestic terrorist Floyd Lee Corkins against the Family Research Council building. Corkins was, of course, a social progressive and in favor of legalizing gay marriage, and opposed to religious liberty.

Why did Dan Barker leave Christianity for atheism?

September 26, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Unbelievable's radio show featured a discussion with former Christian Dan Barker, the founder and co-President of the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

I thought that I would make some general comments about why I think that many people leave the Christian faith, and what you should be careful of in order to avoid following in Dan Barker's footsteps, specifically.

Basically, there are four major reasons why people leave Christianity.

1. They want to do something immoral with impunity. This type of person wants to do something immoral that is forbidden by Christianity, like pre-marital sex or getting drunk in clubs with friends. They dump Christianity in order to have freedom to seek happiness in this life.
2. They want to make decisions based on their emotions, rather than wisdom. This type of person thinks that God's job is to save them when they act irresponsibly. When God disappoints them by not make their recklessness "work out", they leave the faith.
3. They want to be loved by people, not by God. This type of person thinks that Christianity is a tool that they can use to become popular. When they first try to articulate the gospel in public, they find that people don't like them as much, and they feel bad about offending people with exclusive truth claims that they cannot back up using logic and evidence. So, they water down Christianity to get along with non-Christians. Finally, they jettison Christianity completely. This happens to a lot of young Christians the moment they hit college / university.
4. They don't want to learn to defend their faith. This type of person is asked questions

by skeptics that they cannot answer. Usually this happens when people go to university after growing up in the shelter of the Church. The questions and peer pressure make them feel stupid. Rather than investigate Christianity to see if it's true, they drop it, so they can be thought of as part of the "smart" crowd.

Now listen to the discussion and see if you can identify some of these factors from Barker's own carefully-prepared words. He is trying very hard to make himself look honest and moderate, because he wants Christians to be sympathetic with his story and his motives for leaving Christianity. But I think that there is enough in his statements to construct a different hypothesis of why he left Christianity.

I've grouped the data by risk factor. Some of this is my interpretation of his real motivations, based on my experience dealing with former-Christians.

Non-rational, emotional approach to Christianity

- he was raised in a devout Christian family where he probably wouldn't have faced skeptical questions
- he converted to Christianity at age 15 as a result of a religious experience, not a serious investigation
- his idea of God was probably idealized and uninformed, e.g. – a loving God who wants us to be happy
- he wandered around from church to church preaching, with no fixed address or source of income
- he earned money by collecting "love offerings" from churches where he performed his music
- he wrote Christian songs and Christian musicals, but nothing substantive on apologetics and theology
- he worked in three churches known for being anti-intellectual and fundamentalist
- there's no evidence that of any deep study of philosophy, science and history during this time

Desire to gain acceptance from non-Christians

- he began to notice that some people were uncomfortable with sin and Hell
- he began to avoid preaching about sin and Hell in order to make these people comfortable
- he watered-down the gospel to focus on helping people to be happy in this life
- his manic approach to Christian ministry was challenged by the "real life" needs of his growing family
- he met liberal pastors while performing his music in their churches
- he found it difficult to disagree with them because they seemed to be "good" people
- he watered down his message further in order to appeal to people across the theological spectrum

Ignorance of Christian apologetics

- he began to think that if there are many different views of religion, then no view can be correct
- he was not intellectually capable of using logic and evidence to test these competing claims to see which was true
- he decided to instead re-interpret Christian truth claims as non-rational opinions, so they could all be "valid"
- he became a theological liberal, abandoning theism for an impersonal "ground of being"
- he embraced religious pluralism, the view that all religions are non-rational and make no testable truth claims
- he began to see God as a "metaphor" whose purpose is to make people have a sense of meaning and purpose
- he jettisoned God completely and focused more on helping people find meaning and morality apart from God
- seems to think that religion is about having a "great life", and felt that you can have a "great life" without religion
- seems to think that religion is about being "good", and felt that you can be "good" without religion
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them what to do instead of letting them do anything they want
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them what is true, instead of letting them believe whatever they want
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them that God will hold them accountable for their beliefs and actions

So what do I think happened?

Barker was generating an income from donations from churches where he entertained them. Gradually, his family grew to the point where conservative churches were not enough to support him. He had to change his message to appeal to liberal churches in order to cast a wider net.

He seems to have thought that Christianity is about having his needs met and being liked by others. I think he wanted to feel good and to make people feel good with his preaching and singing. But Christianity is not a feel-good religion. It's not a tool to make people like you. He seems to have become aware that the exclusive claims of Christianity made other people feel offended, so he cut them out. Christian apologists learn how to provide evidence for claims that non-Christians find offensive or hard to believe, but Dan hadn't studied philosophy, science or history so he couldn't defend it. It's hard to speak unpopular truths when you have nothing to back it up except your music composing. Eventually, Dan just quit making the truth claims entirely.

I also think money was a factor. It seems to me that it would have hurt his career and

reduced his invitations from liberal churches if he had kept up teaching biblical Christianity. In order to appeal to a wider audience, (like many Christian singers do – e.g. – Amy Grant, Jars of Clay, etc.), he would have felt pressured to water down the unpleasant parts of his preaching and singing. Lacking apologetics skill, he instead abandoned his message. He needed to account for his family's needs and "real life", and exclusive truth claims and Hell-talk would have reduced his ability to do that. It seems to me that he should have scaled back his extreme schedule of preaching and singing, and instead gotten a steady job so that he could afford "real life" and a family without being pressured into altering his message. The Christian life requires a certain amount of wisdom that Dan did not have.

Life isn't a fairy tale. God isn't there to reward risky behavior. We need to be more shrewd about financial matters so that we have the ability to *not care* about what people think of us. Look at this blog. I work all day as a senior software engineer with two degrees in computer science, so that I don't have to rely on donations. Additionally, I save most of what I make in case a tragedy strikes. Since I am financially secure, I can say what I think, and disregard anyone who wants me to change my message because they are offended. Becoming a Christian isn't a license to behave irrationally and immaturely with money. For some people, (like William Lane Craig), stepping out in faith works. But if it doesn't work, it's better to retreat and re-trench, rather than to compromise your message for money.

I actually met someone like Dan Barker recently. She grew up in an anti-intellectual hippy Christian home. Her mother came from a good family, and decided on a whim to marry a non-Christian. Like Barker, the family exalted feelings and irrational expectations of miracles from God for "fearless" acts. She got herself into trouble with alcohol and promiscuity in her 20s, by making emotional decisions and mixing with the wrong crowd. Her way of fixing this was to fly off on a one-year missions trip, wrecking her resume and finances. Now, she is in her late 30s, unmarried, and literally blaming *Jesus* for putting too many demands on her that she doesn't have time for, e.g – morning quiet time. This causes her to feel guilty, and make her want to reject Christianity. She had no intellectual conception of basic core doctrines like God's existence or Jesus' resurrection, which might have acted as a bulwark against her emotions. When I explained to her how I had structured my education and career so that I could have an influence without testing God, she seemed bored and said that I was too "fearful".

This is apparently widespread, especially among anti-intellectual denominations. Another ex-Pentecostal atheist woman I heard about from people who knew her when she was young decided to drop out of college to travel around North America doing pro-life work. When she found herself penniless, unmarried and without children in her mid-30s, she decided to have a baby out of wedlock. The government will pay for it, she said. Rather than trying to justify this decision as a Christian, she blamed God for not making her madness "work out". She is now an atheist, because God did not reward her decision to live fearlessly for him with a husband and children. It was all God's fault. There is a whole subculture within Christianity, where the pursuit of fun and thrills can be masked with

pious language, and all talk of prudence and restraint is seen as cowardice and lack of faith.

The Christian life requires a certain level of intelligence, a certain level of practical wisdom, and a certain level of self-control and discipline. Make sure that you don’t walk away from God because of your own bad choices.

Is the presupposition of naturalism in science good for the pursuit of truth?

September 27, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

This topic came up recently in a discussion, and I wanted to be sure that all my readers were aware of how to think about the work that the presupposition of naturalism does in supporting naturalistic views of science. When I was little, way back in the 1990s, Phillip E. Johnson's work on the definitions of science, evolution and creation were very important stuff. He was everywhere, doing lectures on university campuses and debates on the radio with Eugenie Scott. I was able to get a bunch of this audio from Access Research Network on AUDIO CASSETTES, but now that's all obsolete.

Thankfully, I was able to find an old column written by Johnson in the Wall Street Journal, and preserved by Access Research Network.

Excerpt:

> A Chinese paleontologist lectures around the world saying that recent fossil finds in his country are inconsistent with the Darwinian theory of evolution. His reason: The major animal groups appear abruptly in the rocks over a relatively short time, rather than evolving gradually from a common ancestor as Darwin's theory predicts. When this conclusion upsets American scientists, he wryly comments: **"In China we can criticize Darwin but not the government. In America you can criticize the government but not Darwin."**
>
> That point was illustrated last week by the media firestorm that followed the Kansas Board of Education's vote to omit macro-evolution from the list of science topics which all students are expected to master. Frantic scientists and educators warned that Kansas students would no longer be able to succeed in college or graduate school, and that the future of science itself was in danger. The *New*

> *York Times* called for a vigorous counteroffensive, and the lawyers prepared their lawsuits. Obviously, the cognitive elites are worried about something a lot more important to themselves than the career prospects of Kansas high school graduates.
>
> The root of the problem is that "science" has two distinct definitions in our culture. On the one hand, science refers to a method of investigation involving things like careful measurements, repeatable experiments, and especially a skeptical, open-minded attitude that insists that all claims be carefully tested. Science also has become identified with a philosophy known as materialism or scientific naturalism. This philosophy insists that nature is all there is, or at least the only thing about which we can have any knowledge. It follows that nature had to do its own creating, and that the means of creation must not have included any role for God. Students are not supposed to approach this philosophy with open-minded skepticism, but to believe it on faith.
>
> […]All the most prominent Darwinists proclaim naturalistic philosophy when they think it safe to do so. Carl Sagan had nothing but contempt for those who deny that humans and all other species "arose by blind physical and chemical forces over eons from slime." Richard Dawkins exults that Darwin "made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist," and Richard Lewontin has written that scientists must stick to philosophical materialism regardless of the evidence, because "we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door."

So, if you're having a discussion with a person who believes in naturalism – that everything in nature can be explained by material forces alone – then they will give you a stock response to all of your evidence for something outside of nature.

- Origin of the universe? *That's not science*
- Cosmic fine-tuning? *That's not science*
- Origin of life? *That's not science*
- Cambrian explosion? *That's not science*
- Habitability-discoverability? *That's not science*

It's not that the people who did the science around these discoveries invoked God, and that's why it's not science. On the contrary, the mainstream scientists who made these discoveries scrupulously left God out of their microscopes and telescopes. These discoveries – which have only gotten worse for the naturalists as more details emerge – do not have easy naturalistic explanations. If you ask the naturalist for an explanation, they will resort to various sorts of speculations:

- future science will undermine all our current knowledge
- we are in an unobservable multiverse that exists eternally
- aliens seeded the Earth with life, and THEY evolved
- there are lots of fossils we haven't discovered yet

- there are lots of stars and planets we haven't discovered yet

What's the answer to this arguing from ignorance?

I think ridicule is best. You need to start by telling the full story about how these discoveries were made. Name the scientists, state the dates. Tell the whole story of how the science was done. Do this for each discovery. Then, at the end, ask them which of these scientific discoveries they deny. Ask them for naturalistic explanations of the ones they accept. Pretend to be confused, then concerned about their sanity. Finally, you should be as condescending as possible, and just explain that we can't believe in fairies and unicorns. Explain things to them as if they were a child: we have to base our worldview on what science has revealed. We can't hold out for Santa Claus to come down the chimney with new science that undermines all we have discovered. We have to go with the science we have today, and the science we have today says Creator and Designer. That is the best explanation of the what we know right now. And the trend is that these discoveries are becoming even MORE difficult for naturalism to account for. I guarantee you that the average rank-and-file atheist knows more about Star Wars and Star Trek lore than they do about actual scientific discoveries that threaten their beloved religion of naturalism.

Try to make your face look like Tucker Carlson:

The Tucker Carlson face conveys a mix of confusion, disappointment and horror

For God's sake, even Richard Dawkins admitted in his debate with John Lennox that a good case can be made for a deistic God from the science we have now. If Dawkins can admit this, then you need to be extremely harsh to the village atheists.

If the word "naturalism" is all new to you, you should probably read the whole article and this longer article as well. The longer article really explains the different definitions of the words that are used in these debates. Johnson's an excellent writer, and you will learn a lot.

Medical doctor explains what young people are taught about sex in the schools

September 28, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I noticed that the radically-leftist CNN has another article up warning about the record number of STDs.

Excerpt:

> In 2016, Americans were infected with more than 2 million new cases of gonorrhea, syphilis and chlamydia, the highest number of these sexually transmitted diseases ever reported, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday.
>
> […]The agency's annual Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance Report shows that more than 1.6 million of the new cases were from chlamydia, 470,000 were from gonorrhea and nearly 28,000 cases were of primary and secondary syphilis. Secondary syphilis is the most contagious form of the disease, according to the CDC. While all of these can be cured by antibiotics, many people go undiagnosed and untreated.
>
> Only those three STDs are required by law to be reported to the CDC by physicians. When you include HIV, herpes and more of the dozens of diseases which can be transmitted sexually but which are not tracked, the CDC estimates there are more than 20 million new cases of STDs in the United States each year. At least half occur in young people ages 15 to 24.

Many of these diseases, e.g. – syphilis, are making a comeback precisely because of society's newfound "tolerance" of "alternative lifestyles" that involve having sex with a

massive number of (often anonymous) sex partners.

Unfortunately, the proposed "solution" to this problem from those on the secular left is to throw gasoline on the fire.

Consider the lecture below, which was given by someone with experience counseling students about sexual health at a major university campus.

Here is the speaker's bio:

> Miriam Grossman, MD, has been a psychiatrist at UCLA Student Psychological Services for more than ten years and has worked with students for twenty years. She received her BA from Bryn Mawr College, her medical degree from New York University, and her psychiatric training through Cornell University Medical College. She is board certified in child, adolescent and adult psychiatry.

I found this lecture given by her to NZ Family First here:

Rather than try to summarize that lecture, I found a full transcript of a similar lecture that she delivered at the Heritage Foundation about what public schools teach young people about sex, and why. This is especially good for those who want to read rather than listen.

Here's the abstract:

> *The principles of sexual health education are not based on the hard sciences. Sex education is animated by a specific vision of how society must change, and because of this, sex ed curricula omit critical biological truths and endorse high-risk behaviors. The priority for SIECUS, Planned Parenthood, and Advocates for Youth is not the health and well-being of young people. These federally funded organizations are fighting "repression" and "intolerance," not herpes or syphilis. But when sexual freedom reigns, sexual health suffers. Our children are being taught that you can play with fire, and we are obligated to inform them of the risks they face and to teach them biological truths, even when they are politically incorrect.*

And here's a scary excerpt:

> You're all familiar with the epidemics of STIs, sexually transmitted infections, in this country, but there's another one. It's a man-made one. It's an epidemic of ignorance, misinformation, and duplicity.
>
> If you go to the medical library and browse through the journals, you will learn some amazing things, such as a girl's cervix is more easily infected by sexually transmitted infections than a woman's because it has yet to mature. Boys and men don't have a corresponding area of vulnerability in their reproductive system. The neurobiology of teen girls is unique, and it makes a girl's developing brain more vulnerable to stress, especially the stress of failed relationships.
>
> You'd learn that the adolescent brain functions differently from an adult's. The area responsible for reasoning, suppression of impulses, and weighing the pros

> and cons of one's decisions is not fully developed. Furthermore, under conditions that are intense, novel, and stimulating, teens' decisions are more likely to be shortsighted and driven by emotion. You would discover that oral sex is associated with cancer of the tonsils and throat. The human papilloma virus infects those areas just like it does the cervix.
>
> You'd find loads of articles—in fact, entire books— about oxytocin, a hormone that tells the brain, "You're with someone special now; time to turn caution off and trust on; time to create an emotional bond." In both sexes, oxytocin is released during cuddling and kissing and sexual touching, but estrogen ramps up the effects of oxytocin, and testosterone dampens them.
>
> […]You'd learn also that the healthy vagina, due to its architecture and biology, is an unfriendly environment for HIV, while the rectum has cells that facilitate the entry of HIV directly into the lymphatic system. This and many, many more things have been known for years, but when you turn to sex ed curricula and, most disturbing, the Web sites that are suggested to young people and their parents, nothing: none of this information.
>
> **So there is a man-made epidemic of ignorance: ignorance of biological truths that should be central in any sex ed curriculum or parent education program. Awareness of these truths can save lives.**
>
> **I put the responsibility for the epidemic of ignorance directly on those organizations that are at the helm of teaching sex education because, contrary to their claims and promises, their programs are not comprehensive; they are not science-based or medically accurate or up-to-date.**
>
> **I'll go even further: They are not about preventing disease. Sex ed is a social movement. Its goal is to change society. The primary goal of groups like SIECUS, Planned Parenthood, and Advocates for Youth is to promote sexual freedom and to rid society of its Judeo–Christian taboos and restrictions.**

The rest of the lecture transcript contains specific examples of how sex educators put children at risk.

I read Dr. Grossman's first book, and I bought her second book, and I really, really recommend these books to people who think that sex is harmless and that sex educators have no agenda that they are trying to push on children. I really can't recommend these books more highly to parents who trust public schools to tell children the truth about important issues like sexuality. They have an agenda, and so you should be armed with the facts.

New study: single-sex schools more successful than mixed-sex schools

September 29, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Academic Records of High School Students who Took the 2016 SAT Test, by Gender		
	Male	Female
High School Rank		
Top 10% of Class	44%	56%
Second 10% of Class	46%	54%
GPA		
A+ (97-100)	40%	60%
A (93-96)	39%	61%
A- (90-92)	43%	57%
B (80-89)	49%	51%
C (70-79)	59%	41%
D, E, F (below 70)	63%	37%
Overall GPA	3.30	3.45

Do female-dominated schools discriminate against boys?
Here is the very latest study on this important topic from the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR). They found that boys and girls both do better in single-sex schools, when compared to boys and girls in mixed-sex schools.

Excerpt:

> We find robust evidence that pupils in single-sex schools outperform their counterparts in co-ed schools, by 5–10% of a standard deviation for boys and 4–7% for girls, with similar estimates across subjects (which include Korean, English, and maths). This is consistent with the findings reported in Park et al. (2013).

And this study was done in South Korea, where things are a lot more focused on academics than in North America!

In most schools, women comprise on average about 80% of the classroom instructors. This is not even to mention the administrators and the curriculum designers. It is not a friendly environment for boys. In fact, studies have shown that the typical curriculum is biased against boys. Teacher bias may also be a factor, since boys outperform their classroom grades on standardized tests (where there is no bias against them from the teachers).

Regarding the feminist curriculum, consider this report on a study from the UK Telegraph:

> A lack of male role models at home and school is turning boys off reading at a young age as they increasingly reject books as "feminine", it is claimed.
>
> [...]Gavin Barwell, chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Literacy, said reading was not seen as a "masculine thing" by boys – leaving them lagging behind girls from the age of four onwards.
>
> [...]According to Government figures, boys are less likely to read basic words or recite the alphabet by the age of five and the gap widens throughout compulsory education.

> By the age of 16, fewer than 59 per cent of boys gained a good GCSE in English last year compared with 72.5 per cent of girls.

According to a brand new report from the American Enterprise Institute, this discrimination against boys is having a long-term negative effect on their participation in graduate school:

> For the eighth year in a row, women earned a majority of doctoral degrees awarded at US universities in 2016. Of the 78,744 doctoral degrees awarded in 2016 (Table B.25), women earned 40,407 of those degrees and 52.1% of the total, compared to 37,145 degrees awarded to men who earned 47.9% of the total...
>
> [...]Women represent 57.5% of all graduate students in the US, meaning that there are now 135 women enrolled in graduate school for every 100 men.

Here is one of the AEI charts:

Total Graduate School Enrollment, By Field and Gender, 2016

Field	Male	Female	Females per 100 Males
Arts and Humanities	43.3%	**56.0%**	**129.3**
Biological, Agricultural Sciences	46.3%	**54.1%**	**116.8**
Business	55.0%	45.1%	82.0
Education	25.4%	**75.0%**	**295.3**
Engineering	75.8%	24.7%	32.6
Health Sciences	22.6%	**77.7%**	**343.8**
Mathematics and Computer Sciences	69.1%	31.5%	45.6
Physical and Earth Sciences	63.3%	37.0%	58.5
Public Administration	23.6%	**77.1%**	**326.7**
Social and Behavioral Sciences	37.5%	**62.4%**	**166.4**
Other Fields	39.5%	**62.4%**	**158.0**
Total	**42.6%**	**57.5%**	**135.0**

Source: Council of Graduate Schools

Graduate school enrollment, male vs female, 2016

You can read about a couple more studies here that also argue that the male-

underformance problem is a lack of male teachers in the classroom. It’s important to understand this, because it shows why ignorant cries of “man up” are not going to get men to perform better in school and at work. And men only marry if they feel comfortable taking on the roles of husband and father – which costs money. Men have to be able to earn money in order to engage in marriage and family, and the schools we have right now are set up against them doing that. If you want your daughters to have husbands (instead of marrying government social programs), then you’d better pay attention to these studies and vote accordingly. If you can pull your boys put of mixed-sex schools, it’s a good idea to do that. Homeschooling or single-sex private schools work better for boys.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

September 30, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)

- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

New study: Canadian rocks confirm life existed very early in Earth's history

October 1, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Naturalists have a lot of testable beliefs about the origin and diversity of life on Earth. In case of the origin of life, naturalists believe that the origin of life occurred very late in Earth's history, because they need a lot of time for the biological information in proteins and DNA to appear. Unfortunately for them, life appears almost immediately after the Earth cools, 4 billion years ago.

The far-left The Atlantic reports on a new study.

Excerpt:

> The Torngat Mountains in northeastern Canada are full of life. Reindeer graze on lichen, polar bears prowl the coastlines, and great whales swim in the offshore waters. Scientists patrol the land, too, looking for the oldest rocks on the planet, which were formed almost 4 billion years ago, when the Earth was just an infant world.
>
> Back then, the landscape would have been very different. The Earth was a hellish place that had only just acquired a firm crust. Its atmosphere was devoid of oxygen, and it was regularly pelted with asteroids. There were no reindeer, whales, polar bears, or lichen. But according to new research, there *was* life.
>
> In a rock formation called the Saglek Block, Yuji Sano and Tsuyoshi Komiya from the University of Tokyo found crystals of the mineral graphite that contain a distinctive blend of carbon isotopes. That blend suggests that microbes were already around, living, surviving, and using carbon dioxide from the air to build their cells. If the two researchers are right—and claims about such ancient events

> are always controversial—then this Canadian graphite represents one of the earliest traces of life on Earth.

> The Earth was formed around 4.54 billion years ago. If you condense that huge swath of prehistory into a single calendar year, then the 3.95-billion-year-old graphite that the Tokyo team analyzed was created in the third week of February. By contrast, the earliest fossils ever found are 3.7 billion years old; they were created in the second week of March.
>
> […]"The emerging picture from the ancient-rock record is that life was everywhere," says Vickie Bennett from Australian National University, who was not involved in the latest study. "As far back as the rock record extends—that is, as far back as we *can* look for direct evidence of early life, we are finding it. Earth has been a biotic, life-sustaining planet since close to its beginning."

Naturally, this is not the only problem with current naturalistic origin of life scenarios. Casey Luskin posted an article on Evolution News outlining the 5 main problems with naturalistic origin of life scenarios:

1. **No Viable Mechanism to Generate a Primordial Soup**
2. **Forming Polymers Requires Dehydration Synthesis**
3. **RNA World Hypothesis Lacks Confirming Evidence**
4. **Unguided Chemical Processes Cannot Explain the Origin of the Genetic Code.**
5. **No Workable Model for the Origin of Life**

That article is a very good summary of some of the major problems facing naturalistic true believers.

I feel that I should add something to his list, so here's a peer-reviewed paper published in the prestigious peer-reviewed science journal *Nature*, entitled "The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere". That paper concludes that oxygen was present in the early Earth's environment, possibly as far back as 4.4 billion years ago – right after the Earth was formed. Oxygen is lethal to all naturalistic scenarios that seek to form amino acids from simpler components. And amino acids are required to form proteins.

When faced with these problems, true believers in naturalistic religion are content to rest on blind faith and ignorance. They hope to be vindicated by future discoveries. They are certain that it happened, but they don't know how, and they don't have any evidence. This is good enough for naturalists, because they lack curiosity and are not willing to let their worldviews be guided by what experimental science has discovered.

Women who delay marriage for casual sex surprised to be single in their mid-30s

October 2, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

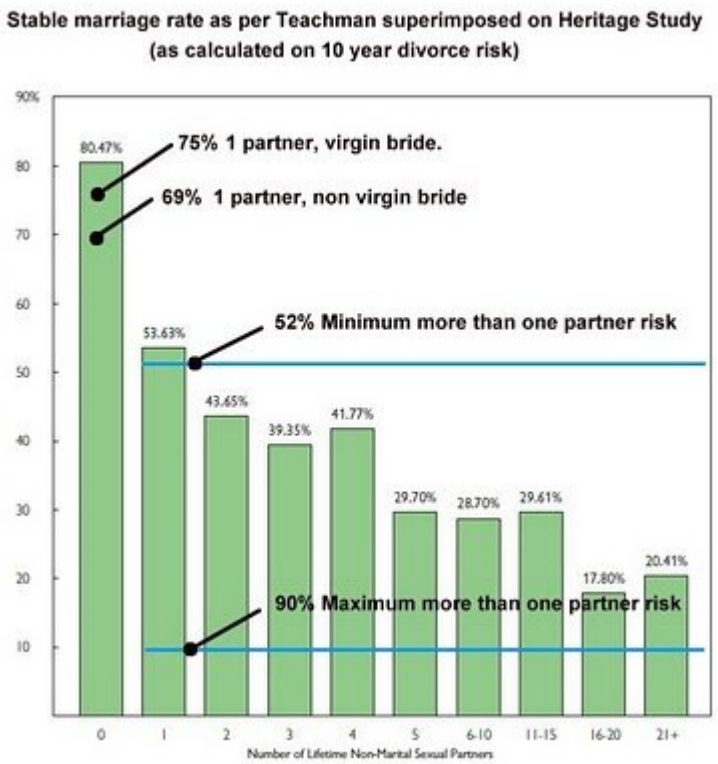

Divorce risk and number of pre-marital sex partners

Dr. Mark Regnerus is a sociologist at the University of Texas at Austin. He has published books on the changing nature of relationships with Oxford University Press. His newest book argues that the Sexual Revolution has caused men to lose interest in marriage because women are now giving them sex for free, without them having to prove their husband credentials first. This causes men to be disinterested in the traditional ways of impressing a woman, namely, getting a job, moving out, being willing to commit, and being able to provide for children who may appear.

The Daily Signal provides a case study taken from Regnerus' latest book "Cheap Sex", which illustrates the problem.

Excerpt:

> Sarah is 32 years old and recently moved to Texas from New York, looking for a new start—in more ways than one.
>
> Brooklyn had grown too expensive for her hipster pocketbook. A relationship she had hoped would blossom and mature there had instead withered. So to Austin she came, hoping she could improve upon her modest $22,000 annual earnings the previous year.
>
> Her most recent sexual partner—Daniel—was not actually a relationship per se. He was not the reason she moved. Rather, he was a 23-year-old American she

> had met in China four years before during a three-week language immersion program.
>
> […]When they first met, and slept together, Sarah was in a relationship with David, the man for which she had moved to, and then away from, New York. She ended up "cheating on him," that is, David, several times.
>
> […]If you're having trouble keeping times, dates, and boyfriends straight, it's understandable. Sarah herself laughs at the drama of it all.
>
> […]Getting serious was never much of an option. He was 23, and she was 32: "We both knew … he was graduating from college and, you know, like we both, at least I knew it was never gonna work out. I think he kind of felt the same way."
>
> […]When asked how rapidly her relationships tend to become sexual, Sarah replied, "the first or second date." That account did not stand out from those of many other interviewees.
>
> The numbers are on her side, too. In the 2014 Relationships in America survey, sex before the relationship begins was the modal—meaning the most common—point at which Americans report having first had sex in their current relationships.
>
> Is her timing of sex intentional? No. "It just happens," she reasoned.
>
> […]This, she claims, is the standard approach to dating among her peers, if not necessarily the most optimal: "I don't think it's unusual, but I think that for a lasting relationship, it's not the best approach."
>
> […]Three years later, now 35, Sarah continues to live in Austin and continues to find commitment elusive. She does not dislike her life, but it is not the one she envisioned a decade earlier.

Daniel is a musician, which doesn't surprise me at all. A musician, student or other unemployed penniless bad boy will not make any demands on the woman, because he almost certainly has no plan for the future. This is what women today want: someone for *right now* who doesn't want her to do anything to prepare for marriage, e.g. – get a real job, stop the thrill-seeking, stop traveling the world. No matter what a woman says about marriage, if her actions now show an interest in fun and thrills, then she doesn't want marriage.

The typical woman's plan for marriage is simply to *imagine* marriage happening later somehow, without her having to do anything that she doesn't feel like doing right now. It would be like "planning" for your retirement by taking trips all over the world *right now,* while *imagining* living off the interest from a million dollars in savings at age 55. And Christian women do this too. I know THREE Christian women in their 30s who chased after younger men who were *still in college*. One of them did it twice in a row!

This is what women today want:

- hot appearance
- confident words about the future
- empty resume
- empty bank account
- several years younger than they are
- no firm convictions about morality
- no firm convictions about theology
- progressive political views, especially on abortion

Men who have no jobs and no money don't lead women, and are much easier for women to manipulate. The problem with these men is – as any married woman knows – is that *those men do not commit*. Why not? Because they *cannot afford to commit*. Marriage, put simply, costs money. Starter houses cost a quarter million. Children cost a quarter million each, not counting college. Retirement costs a quarter million per spouse. And so on. But there is no one in this society telling women that they need to care about choosing men who are serious about the objective duties of the husband role.

Women love to believe that they can choose a hot, irresponsible bad boy who gives them feelings, and then magically mold him into a husband: able to work hard, save money, be self-controlled, faithful and good with children. Feelings determine the choice of man, and feelings tell them that the man can be magically transformed into a husband somehow. Perhaps by giving him premarital sex! That will make him responsible. After all, you can put out a fire with gasoline, right? *This is the most common approach women today take to relationships: get drunk, have sex with hot bad boy, shack up with him, wait for him to propose marriage.*

I frequently tell my female friends about women I know like the one in the article – many raised by two married parents in Christian homes. They have arts degrees, empty resumes, empty bank accounts, and histories of alcoholism, bulimia, promiscuity and/or divorce. My female friends give me the same advice: "YOU NEED TO LOWER YOUR STANDARDS OR YOU'LL NEVER GET MARRIED". If that's the best that they can do, then it's no wonder that men are not interested in marriage.

If you want men to be interested in marriage, fix the root cause. The root cause of the marriage rate declining is not men. The root cause is feminism – and young women's blind acceptance of it.

No terrorism charges for Somali refugee who stabbed policeman, ran down pedestrians

October 3, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Election 2015: Socialists in red, Communists in Orange, Conservatives in blue

Canada is a country that likes to show the world how generous and compassionate they are by letting in thousands and thousands of refugees, many of whom cannot speak English and do not accept the values of Western Civilization, such as human rights and the rule of law.

The radically-leftist former newspaper New York Times reports:

> The Canadian police arrested a refugee from Somalia on suspicion of terrorist acts early Sunday after a police officer in Edmonton was struck with a car and stabbed outside a football game. Four other people were later deliberately hit by a U-Haul truck driven by the same suspect, the authorities said.
>
> […]The police did not identify the suspect beyond saying he was Somali. CBC News, quoting unidentified sources, said his name was Abdulahi Hasan Sharif.
>
> Rod Knecht, chief of the Edmonton Police Service, said that officers had found an Islamic State flag in the car that hit the police officer. “Currently, we believe this is an individual who acted alone,” Chief Knecht said in a statement released on Sunday morning.

An article from the far-left, government-run CBC reported:

> A former co-worker of the Somali refugee CBC News has identified as the man arrested in a weekend attack in Edmonton says Abdulahi Hasan Sharif was an ISIS sympathizer years before Saturday’s violent events, and that he had

> reported him to police.
>
> […]”He had major issues with polytheists. He said they need to die. That sort of thing. I only had a handful of conversations with him about it; those only occurred when there were just two of us in the work room.”

Muslims often refer to Christians as polytheists because of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. But these anti-Christian threats of genocide were no concern for the Edmonton police. Police in Canada are carefully trained in political correctness and promoting diversity. They are warned that they will lose their jobs if they have any bias against Canada’s favored Liberal Party voting blocs. When the co-worker warned the police about the refugee, they had to decide whether to take the threat seriously or side with political correctness and diversity. There is even a criminal law against “Islamophobia” in Canada that punishes people who disagree with radical Islam. The politically correct police would not want to lose their jobs and their fat pensions by running afoul of that. So they ignored the red flags raised by the Canadian taxpayer.

This was not the only time he was investigated, though, as the far-left CBC reports:

> In 2015, after a complaint was made to the Edmonton Police Service that the man was displaying signs of extremism, members of the Integrated National Security Enforcement Team (INSET) launched an investigation, Degrand said.
>
> The suspect was interviewed by members of INSET, but there was “insufficient evidence” to make an arrest and the suspect was deemed “not a threat,” Degrand said.

Again, there is a law against Islamophobia, and all the police are carefully trained not to do anything that could get them into trouble with their politically correct bosses. This is not the first time that Canadian police have turned their backs on victims because of the “diversity” of the criminals. At other times, citizens called the police to protect their property and their safety from First Nations criminals, and the police just turned their backs as the vehicles of the taxpayers were burned. Because of political correctness. Taxpayers are good enough to pay the salaries of the politically correct policemen. But taxpayers are not good enough to have their property and safety protected by policemen.

No charges of terrorism

Now, you might think that all this violence against police and civilians would be prosecuted as an instance of terrorism. But you don’t know Canada.

The radically-leftist, government-owned CBC reports that the government says that they did nothing wrong, and that no government procedures will be changing:

> The man accused of stabbing an Edmonton police constable on the weekend and running down four pedestrians on Jasper Avenue has not been charged with terrorism-related offences.
>
> […]Sharif came to Canada in 2012, and at the time raised no red flags for immigration officials, Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale said Monday.

> Speaking to reporters in Ottawa, Goodale said Sharif arrived through a “regular port of entry” and obtained refugee status at the time.
>
> The minister said events in Edmonton over the weekend in no way indicate that Canada’s screening process needs to be enhanced, or that the system failed.
>
> “The procedures that are in place, that I have had the opportunity to observe and that Minister [Ahmed] Hussen is vigorously administering, are procedures that place a very high premium on public safety and security,” Goodale said.

Ahmed Hussen is the Liberal Party’s Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

I’m all for ethnic diversity, but not when it means letting some people have exemptions if they break the law. The law should apply equally to everyone, and the police should take all reports equally, regardless of political correctness.

Anti-gun statistician takes a look at the effects of UK and Australia gun bans

October 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

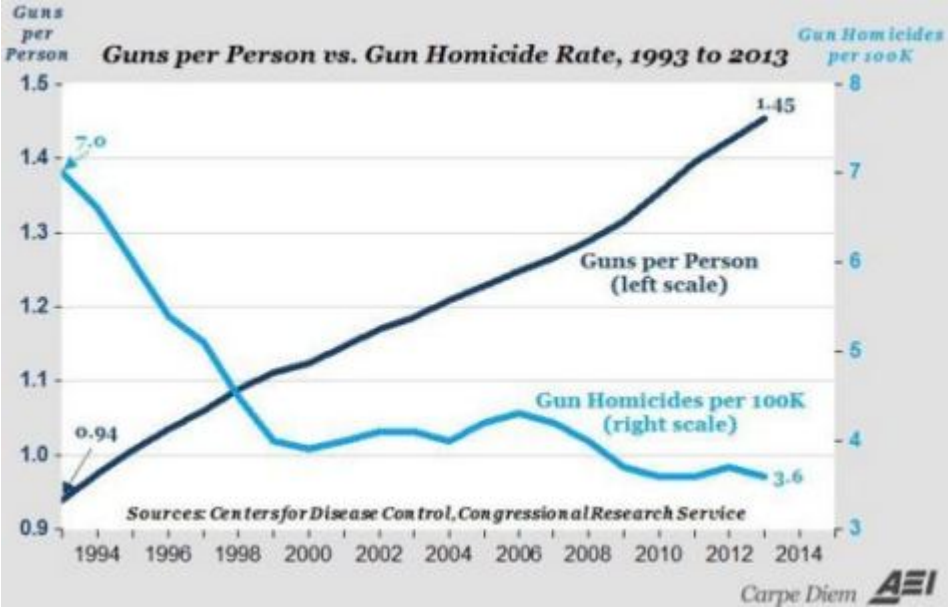

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

I found this op-ed in the radically-leftist Washington Post, of all places. The author took a look at the evidence on gun violence for Five Thirty Eight, and decided that gun control policies would not help the problems that we are actually facing.

Excerpt:

> Leah Libresco is a statistician and former newswriter at FiveThirtyEight, a data journalism site. She is the author of "Arriving at Amen."
>
> Before I started researching gun deaths, gun-control policy used to frustrate me. I wished the National Rifle Association would stop blocking common-sense gun-control reforms such as banning assault weapons, restricting silencers, shrinking magazine sizes and all the other measures that could make guns less deadly.
>
> Then, my colleagues and I at FiveThirtyEight spent three months analyzing all 33,000 lives ended by guns each year in the United States, and I wound up frustrated in a whole new way. We looked at what interventions might have saved those people, and the case for the policies I'd lobbied for crumbled when I examined the evidence. The best ideas left standing were narrowly tailored interventions to protect subtypes of potential victims, not broad attempts to limit the lethality of guns.
>
> I researched the strictly tightened gun laws in Britain and Australia and concluded that they didn't prove much about what America's policy should be. Neither nation experienced drops in mass shootings or other gun related-crime that could be attributed to their buybacks and bans. Mass shootings were too rare in Australia for their absence after the buyback program to be clear

> evidence of progress. And in both Australia and Britain, the gun restrictions had an ambiguous effect on other gun-related crimes or deaths.

I've written before about how banning handguns in the UK doubled the violent crime rate in the next four years. That's not ambiguous in my book! But this is 538 and Washington Post, so we can't expect them to agree with the evidence all the way, or they'd be conservatives. Regarding Australia's gun ban, violent crime rates rose after they confiscated guns as well. It's very important to look at the data on these issues, because on liberal web sites, they basically run headlines claiming the exact opposite of what studies show, and this is eaten up by their anti-intellectual leftist readers.

More:

> When I looked at the other oft-praised policies, I found out that no gun owner walks into the store to buy an "assault weapon." It's an invented classification that includes any semi-automatic that has two or more features, such as a bayonet mount, a rocket-propelled grenade-launcher mount, a folding stock or a pistol grip. But guns are modular, and any hobbyist can easily add these features at home, just as if they were snapping together Legos.
>
> As for silencers — they deserve that name only in movies, where they reduce gunfire to a soft puick puick. In real life, silencers limit hearing damage for shooters but don't make gunfire dangerously quiet. An AR-15 with a silencer is about as loud as a jackhammer. Magazine limits were a little more promising, but a practiced shooter could still change magazines so fast as to make the limit meaningless.
>
> **As my co-workers and I kept looking at the data, it seemed less and less clear that one broad gun-control restriction could make a big difference. Two-thirds of gun deaths in the United States every year are suicides. Almost no proposed restriction would make it meaningfully harder for people with guns on hand to use them.**
>
> […]**However, the next-largest set of gun deaths — 1 in 5 — were young men aged 15 to 34, killed in homicides. These men were most likely to die at the hands of other young men, often related to gang loyalties or other street violence. And the last notable group of similar deaths was the 1,700 women murdered per year, usually as the result of domestic violence. Far more people were killed in these ways than in mass-shooting incidents, but few of the popularly floated policies were tailored to serve them.**

This excerpt is basically correct, and I've explained in the past that inner-city gun violence is caused by fatherlessness, which is caused by the decisions that women make about men and when to have sex with them. Unless we are willing to tell women not to have sex with thuggish bad boys, then we aren't going to get rid of inner-city gun violence. We certainly shouldn't be paying women welfare money to have more fatherless

children, if we want to stop gun violence. We're not serious about gun violence, or we would ban single mother welfare, and give tax incentives for children who are raised in a home where the child's biological is present and committed to the child's mother for life. No one on the left who complains about gun violence is serious about solving the root cause of gun violence. Because they don't want to be guided by facts.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were

> committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

187 House Democrats vote against banning abortions where unborn child feels pain

October 5, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this legislation

There is some good news for pro-lifers.

Life News reports:

> The House of Representatives today approved a pro-life bill that bans abortions from after 20-weeks of pregnancy up to the day of birth.
>
> The vote for the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act broke down on mostly partisan lines with Republicans supporting the ban on late-term abortions and Democrats opposing it. The House approved the bill on a 237-189 vote.
>
> Should the Senate approve the bill, President Donald Trump would sign the pro-life bill into law.

And I have to highlight one of the Republican lawmakers who made his stand for the unborn. This is to correct the view that Republicans don't understand the pro-life issue, and don't really support it. At least in the House, they are pro-life, for real.

Excerpt:

> During the debate on the bill to ban abortions after 20 weeks, Congressman Sean Duffy gave what may be one of the most passionate defenses of the pro-life position ever seen on the floor of Congress. Duffy took on the claim often made by Democrats who support abortion saying they stand for the defenseless and

> voiceless.
>
> "I've listened to the floor debate day after day .. about how they fight for the forgotten, they fight for the defenseless, they fight for the voiceless. And they pound their chest and stomp their feet. You don't have anyone in our society that's more defenseless than these little babies," he said. "And we are not taking — I believe in conception. I know my colleagues can't agree with me on that. Can't we come together and say we are going to stand with little babies that feel pain, that survive outside the womb? Ones that don't have lobbyists and money? Don't we stand with those little babies?"
>
> "If you stand with the defenseless, with the voiceless, you have to stand with little babies. Don't talk to me about cruelty in our bill — when you look at little babies being dismembered, feeling excruciating pain, if we can't stand to defend these children, what do we stand for in this institution?" he added.

Sean Duffy is a Congressman from the great state of Wisconsin. I don't think that any pro-lifer would be more passionate. I was not able to find a video of this speech. If anyone does, please let me know so I can update the post.

Although the medical consensus is that the unborn feel pain after 20 weeks, some experts think it is even earlier:

> Another bombshell dropped during the hearing came from Dr. Maureen Condic, who is Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Adjunct Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Utah School of Medicine. She testified that the unborn child is capable of reacting to pain as early as 8-10 weeks. This is when most abortions in America take place.

A while back, I blogged about a case where a woman killed her 20-week old unborn child. Yes, this really is happening. Something to think about.

Is a 22-week unborn child "viable"?

The Stream has an article up about a child that was delivered at 22 weeks and is doing very well.

Excerpt:

> At 22 weeks and four days along, Danielle Pickering gave birth to her baby boy Micah.
>
> Now 5 years old, Micah has become a face of the late-term abortion debate.
>
> On Tuesday, the U.S. House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, a bill that would ban abortion after 20 weeks, the point when "pain receptors (nociceptors) are present throughout the unborn child's entire body," according to the legislation.

Video:

Deliver the child, and put her up for adoption! It's the right thing to do. Plenty of married

couples out there looking to adopt.

Let’s be practical about this

Even if this bill doesn’t pass in the Senate, it will be useful to see who doesn’t vote for it. Any Republican who doesn’t should be primaried by a pro-life Republican candidate. And primarying fake pro-lifers actually works: remember what happened to Renee Ellmers after she blocked pro-life leglislation? I blogged about it here. Ellmers was replaced in the primary with someone much more conservative, who was also endorsed by the National Right to Life. He had a 100% pro-life rating from 2014 from Project Vote Smart. And he won the general election against the Democrat. His current Heritage Foundation conservative score is 89% conservative. And he voted for the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act that is the subject of this post.

This is what we have to do – force the votes, primary the fake conservatives, win the elections.

Did Australia's ban on guns lower violent crime rates and lower suicide rates?

October 6, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

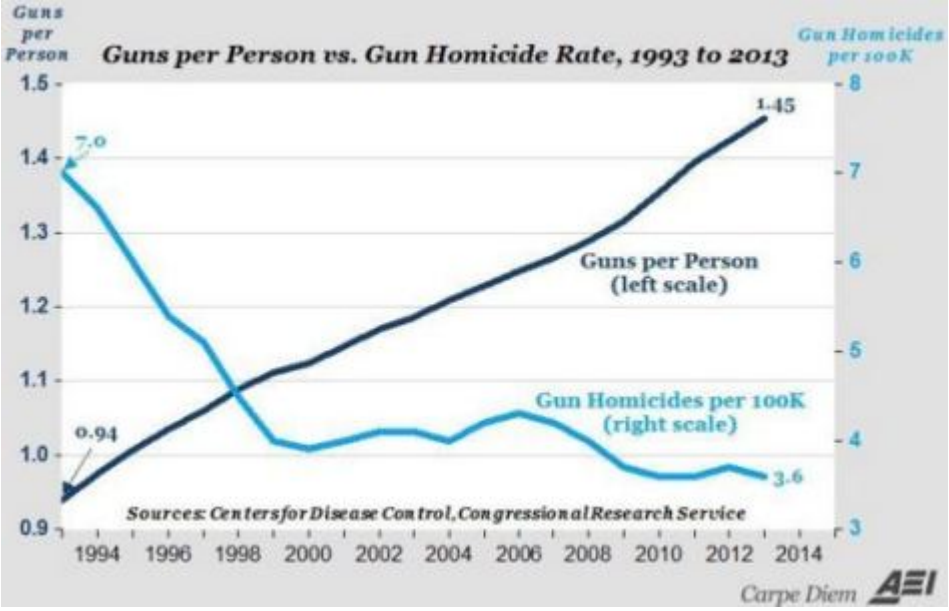

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

Someone asked me about what I thought of Australia's experience banning the use of handguns for self-defense against criminals, and so I thought I would link to an article from The Federalist, then explain what peer-reviewed studies say about the issue.

Let's start with The Federalist.

It says:

> The argument, as Vox's headline puts it, is "Australia confiscated 650,000 guns. Murders and suicides plummeted."
>
> The piece, along with many gun control advocates, cites a Harvard University study whose conclusion begins with this line: "It does not appear that the Australian experience with gun buybacks is fully replicable in the United States." Not a great start for Vox's angle, but I digress.
>
> The study doesn't conclude that "murders and suicides plummeted" in Australia after the 1996 gun ban, as Vox claims in its headline. Instead, it focuses solely on firearm-related murders and suicides.

After the gun ban, violent crime rates were up:

> Yes, as with the gun-happy United States, the murder rate is down in Australia. It's dropped 31 percent from a rate of 1.6 per 100,000 people in 1994 to 1.1 per 100,000 in 2012.But it's the only serious crime that saw a consistent decline post-ban.
>
> In fact, **according to the Australian government's own statistics, a number of serious crimes peaked in the years after the ban.**

> **Manslaughter, sexual assault, kidnapping, armed robbery, and unarmed robbery all saw peaks in the years following the ban, and most remain near or above pre-ban rates. The effects of the 1996 ban on violent crime are, frankly, unimpressive at best.**
>
> **It's even less impressive when again compared to America's decrease in violent crime over the same period.** According to data from the U.S. Justice Department, violent crime fell nearly 72 percent between 1993 and 2011. Again, this happened as guns were being manufactured and purchased at an ever-increasing rate.

So although you have fewer firearm-related deaths when you disarm law-abiding civilians, violent crime increases, because there is now NO deterrence to criminals. Even a criminal with a knife can rob, rape and murder someone who is unarmed.

What about suicide rates?

Look:

> The Australian gun ban's effect on suicide in the country isn't any better. While Vox repeats the Harvard study's claim that firearm-related suicides are down 57 percent in the aftermath of the ban, Lifeline Australia reports that overall suicides are at a ten-year high. The Australian suicide prevention organization claims suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians 15 to 44 years old. So, while Australians kill themselves with firearms less often, it seems they don't actually take their own lives any less often than before the ban.

So, overall suicides are not down, people simply found other ways to kill themselves. So the gun ban had no effect on the overall suicide rate. But it did raise the violent crime rate. Should we be surprised by this? Actually, this is consistent with peer-reviewed research.

Gun crime also skyrocketed after the 1996 gun ban. The Washington Free Beacon reports.

Excerpt:

> Australia has seen a rise in gun crime over the past decade despite imposing an outright ban on many firearms in the late 1990s.
>
> Charges for crimes involving firearms have increased dramatically across the island nation's localities in the past decade according to an analysis of government statistics conducted by *The New Daily*. It found that gun crimes have spiked dramatically in the Australian states of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania. In Victoria, pistol-related offenses doubled over the last decade. In New South Wales, they tripled. The other states saw smaller but still significant increases.
>
> Experts said that the country's 1996 ban on most semi-automatic firearms has actually driven criminals to those guns. "The ban on semi-automatics created

> demand by criminals for other types of guns," professor Philip Alpers of the University of Sydney told *The New Daily*. "The criminal's gun of choice today is the semi-automatic pistol."
>
> […]Regardless of the reasons for the jump in gun crime, the numbers reveal the true size of Australia's illegal gun market. "Taken together, the data suggests that despite our tough anti-gun laws, thousands of weapons are either being stolen or entering the country illegally," *The New Daily* said. "The fourfold rise in handgun-related charges in NSW in the past decade points to the existence of a big illegal market for concealable firearms that seems to have been underestimated in the past."

If you take guns away from law-abiding people (which is what Australia did), then *only* criminals will have guns. And that means that the criminals will become bolder in the face of their disarmed victims.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

I think that peer-reviewed studies should be useful for assessing gun control vs gun rights policy. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, which shows that the 1997 UK gun ban caused violent crime rates to MORE THAN DOUBLE in the four years following the ban. But both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

One of the common mistakes I see anti-gun advocates making is to use the metric of all "gun-related deaths". First of all, this completely ignores the effects of hand gun ownership on violent crime, as we've seen. Take away the guns from law-abiding people and violent crime skyrockets. But using the "gun-related deaths" number is especially wrong, because it includes suicides committed with guns. This is the majority (about two thirds) of gun related deaths, even in a country like America that has a massive inner-city gun violence problem caused by the epidemic of single motherhood by choice. If you take out the gun-related SUICIDES, then the actual number of gun homicides has decreased as gun ownership has grown.

For a couple of useful graphs related to this point, check out this post over at the American Enterprise Institute.

British university cuts funding for research on sex-change regret

October 7, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Transgender issues

Are universities interested in discovering truth? Not if the truth is not politically correct. Consider this story reported by the radically-leftist, government-run BBC.

Excerpt:

> James Caspian wanted to write a thesis on "detransition" as part of his master's degree in counselling and psychotherapy at Bath Spa University.
>
> He said it was rejected by the university's ethics committee because it could be "politically incorrect".
>
> […]Mr Caspian, a counsellor who specialises in therapy for transgender people, told Radio 4: "I was astonished at that decision.
>
> "I think that a university exists to encourage discussion, research – dissent even, challenging perhaps ideas that are out of date or not particularly useful."
>
> He says he wanted to study people who had swapped gender and then changed their minds after coming across evidence of a growing number of people who regretted having the surgery and finding no research had been done into the subject.

His proposal was rejected by the university's "ethics committee". How come?

> **"The fundamental reason given was that it might cause criticism of the research on social media and criticism of the research would be criticism of the university and they also added it was better not to offend people," he said.**
>
> **According to the Times, it was rejected because "engaging in a potentially politically incorrect piece of research carries a risk to the university".**

Life Site News notes that there is no problem with the author's bias – he is progressive on transgender rights:

> Caspian is decidedly pro-"transgender." According to his bio, since 2001 he has been a Trustee of the Beaumont Trust, a British charity "dedicated to education about and support of transgendered, transsexual and cross-dressing individuals."
>
> A perusal of Beaumont Trust's website reveals it to be very friendly to "transgender" ideology. For example, one piece on the site inveighs against "internalized transphobia," the "T" parallel to "internalized homophobia" (an idea used to rationalize homosexuality as a natural and normal "orientation").

This story shows the real priorities of the university, especially on social and moral issues. If the university is not a place to discover truth, then why should we give them any respect in our society? It's one thing to spend money to get an education, and something else entirely to spend money to get an indoctrination.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about spending, saving and charity

October 8, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

A practical lecture on money – spending, saving, charitable giving – from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

I like the way that Wayne Grudem navigates the Bible finding the passages that tell you who God is, so that you can make better decisions by analyzing alternatives and choosing the one that gives your Boss a maximum return on investment. He's very practical.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Spending:

- Christianity does not teach asceticism (= don't enjoy anything in this world), Paul condemns it in 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- When you buy nice things, even if it is a little more expensive, it's an opportunity to be thankful for nice things that God has provided
- Even being rich is OK, but don't let it make you haughty and arrogant, and don't set your hopes on your money (see 1 Tim 6:17)
- It is important for you to earn money, and you are supposed to use it to support yourself and be independent
- It is possible to overspend and live recklessly (Luke 15:13) and it's also possible to overspend and live too luxuriously
- *Increasing your income through career progression is wise*, because it allows you to give away more and save more

- God gives us freedom to decide how much we spend, how much we give away, and how much we save
- every choice a Christian makes with money will give him or her more or less reward in his or her afterlife
- Do not spend more than you have – you should make every effort to get out of debt as quickly as possible

Saving:

- Saving money is wise so you can help yourself and others, and have money in your old age when you will not be working
- If you do not save your own money, you end up being dependent on others (e.g. – family or taxpayers)
- Not saving money for the future is a way of "putting God to the test" (Matt 4:7)
- You are to "be dependent on no one", to the extent that you can (1 Thes 4:12)
- We don't know the future, that's why we should prepare for an emergency, and buy insurance to guard (James 4:13-17)
- It's right for us to learn how to save to be able to buy bigger assets, like a car or a college education
- Saving and investing in stocks and bonds lets people in business start and grow companies, creating jobs and new products
- *Don't over-save, trusting too much in money more than you trust in God* (Ps 62.10; Matt 6:19,24; Luke 12:15-21)

Giving:

- it is required for the people of God to give something out of what they earn, but no percentage is specified (Deut 26:12-13)
- you do not give money to become right with God, you can't earn your salvation
- *a Christian gives to show God that you trust him to take care of you, and to experience trusting him through your giving*
- the quality of your resurrection life with God is affected by giving you do for the Kingdom (Phil 4, Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:18-19)
- when you get involved in the lives of others and give to them, you have the joy of experiencing caring for others (Acts 20:35)
- it's possible to give too little, but it's also possible to give too much – be careful about pride creeping in as well

The first part of this lecture made me think of my treat for the week, which is to get a double chicken burrito bowl after my weight lifting. It is very easy to say grace when you are hovering over a double chicken burrito bowl. It is good to have nice things especially when it makes you thankful for what you have.

I was so happy listening to this talk because he was condemning bad stewardship, which I see in a lot of young people these days. I was happy until he got to the part about

trusting in your savings for your security, and then I thought – that's what I do wrong! I save a lot but it's not just for emergencies and to share with others, like he was saying – I want a sense of security. This was more of a temptation in my 20s than it is now in my 30s, though.

Charity should hurt

I can remember being in my first full-time job as a newly hired junior programmer when the 2001 recession struck. I would cry while signing checks to support William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith ministry, because I was so scared. I had no family or friends where I lived to help me if anything went wrong, and that's been the story of my working life. If anything goes wrong, there is no backup. But it's that experience of crying when I gave that allows me to say today "that's when I became the man I am, that's what a man does when he is a follower of Jesus". If you are not doing the actions of charity, then you will not having the experience of trusting God and letting him lead you. There is more to the Christian life than just saying the right things – you have to do the right things.

Don't follow your heart

If you're scared about giving when you are young, then do what I did in my 20s: work 70-hour weeks, get promoted often, and save everything you earn. I volunteered every Saturday for 9 months in order to get my first white-collar part-time job when I was still in high-school. The faster you increase your savings, the easier it's going to be to take a *genuine interest* in caring for the people around you. Read Phil 1 (fellowship), Phil 2 (concern for others), and Phil 4 (charity). Turn off your emotions and desires when it comes to choosing what to study and what work to do, and put Philippians into practice. Your freedom to give is very much tied to the quality of your decisions of what to study, where to work, how much you spend on entertainment, and so on. That's why you need to turn off your feelings and desires and do what works, even it it's not fun, and even if it involves responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

The Thoroughly Rational Conversion of Michael Minot

October 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

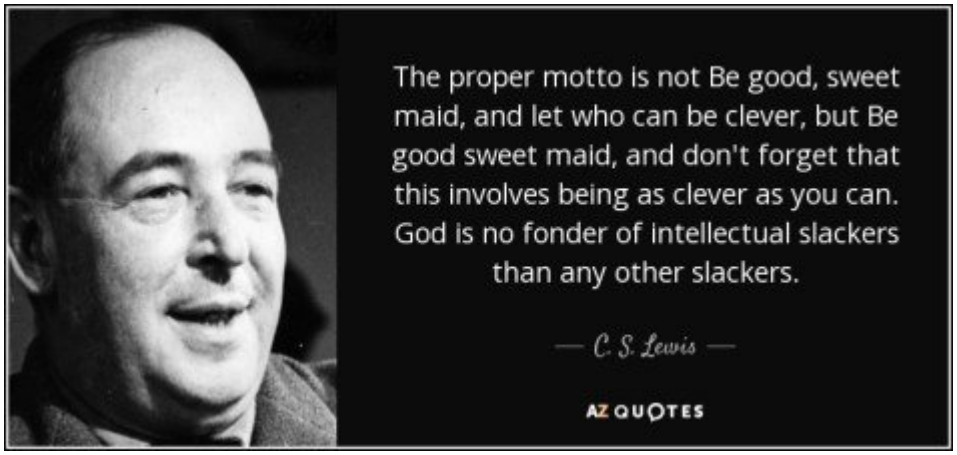

C.S. Lewis has some words to live by for you

One of the things I've noticed hanging around in church on and off the last 20 years or so is that it often seems to be the case the church leaders seem to value some people as leaders more than others. Specifically, it seems to me that church leaders prefer to put athletes and cheerleaders into leadership positions, and they tend to be skeptical of people who have intellectual conversion stories, and intellectual interests. I think I actually got the phrase "jocks and cheerleaders" from Dr. John Mark Reynolds when describing who churches tend to prefer, so I'm not just making this up.

But not everyone sees things that way. Of all the people I've met or read, I probably agree with Terrell Clemmons the most. And if I disagree with her, then I usually find out that she is right later on. Pretty much everything she writes about is not only relevant, but practical, which is amazing for a person who writes about topics related to Christian belief and practice. One of the things she likes to write about is the background stories of people who were intelligent and successful as non-Christians, who then went on to become Christians through a careful study of the evidence, *and then went on to make a difference through outward-focused enterprises.*

Let's start with this article from Salvo Magazine about a successful atheist lawyer named Michael Minot.

Terrell writes:

> Never in his 28 years did Mike Minot imagine he would entertain this unthinkable thought, yet lately of an evening he might easily be found pacing around his house like an awestruck research scientist muttering things like, "It just can't be! . . . *Can it?"*
>
> The seismic shift had started quite unexpectedly just a few months prior. He was three years out of law school, and life was great. After years of living on beans and weenies as a student, he had arrived on the scene of success. He had a growing law practice, money in his pocket, and a teeming social life. The world

> was his oyster.
>
> Then he had received an odd phone call. Normally confident and well-spoken, Jim, whom he'd met while studying for the Florida bar exam, spoke awkwardly, struggling uncharacteristically to get his message out. Finally he got to his point. "Sharon and I have been watching what's been going on in your life. And we decided we would give you a call and invite you to do something. We believe the Scriptures are very important. They're very important to our lives, and they're helpful to us. We know what you think about spiritual matters, but we want to challenge you to take some time at this point in your life and reexamine these things."
>
> To say Mike was taken aback would be an understatement. He was a perfectly contented atheist, and he had no interest in interrupting his prosperous life to look at anyone's answers to questions he wasn't even asking. But he did value the relationship he had with Jim, Sharon, and their two adorable kids. If he were to summarily dismiss this suggestion, what would that do to their friendship? It seemed he should at least put forth a cursory effort, if for no other reason than for the health of the relationship.

First thing to note is that the people who ask Michael to give Christianity a look are successful and intelligent themselves. Not only is Jim studying for the Florida bar exam (so that he has credibility to another lawyer), but Jim's wife has also given him more credibility by marrying him. Married couples are typically more "grown-up" than singles, and I'm saying that as a chaste single myself who has been successful in education, career and finances. Marriage requires a whole set of behaviors from people that singles don't have to perform. The point is, though, that Michael is being approached by people from the same professional and social background. He is not being approached by a missionary or a street preacher, but by someone who has been effective in their education, career and marriage.

This really does matter – Christians are often perceived (rightly) as over-emotional, irrational, impractical, and driven more by community than by truth-seeking. It's very important for Christians who want to produce a return that they not be living with their parents in their 20s, have gap-filled minimum-wage resumes, have $20,000 in student in outstanding student loans from an easy, unused non-STEM degree, and no achievements except zip-lining, skydiving, surfing, and fear-of-missing-out travel.

The journey starts with science:

> With no predetermined plan, he delved into both the Scriptures and science. The Scriptures felt intimidating, though, and he was more comfortable with science. Not two weeks in, he found something that totally blew his mind. Ironically, it was something that had been there all along: the solar system—and the mind-boggling precision by which it operates. He marveled at the elegant complexity of it. It appeared way too precise, statistically speaking, to be an accident.

> Suddenly, this was no longer a casual exercise. He *had* to find the natural explanation for the solar system. If he continued on his merry life without it, he would forever live plagued by lingering thoughts that he could be living a lie. Never did he want to go in for a lie, and intellectual honesty demanded that he keep searching.
>
> So he put on his miner's lighted helmet, so to speak, and went to work. But instead of locating the natural explanation for the solar system, he found himself turning up all manner of equally troublesome phenomena—the fine-tuning of the earth for supporting life, with its balance of nitrogen to oxygen ratios and plate tectonics; the information content of DNA; and the complexities of animal and human life, to name a few. The perplexities mounted, and the whole project snowballed. He would go looking for the explanation for one natural marvel, only to encounter two more crying out for explanation.

If I could communicate one thing to the church, it would be this: whether you agree with the old universe and old Earth timelines or not, everyone who attends church for a decade should be able to state the kalam cosmological argument, the fine-tuning argument, the intelligent design argument, the fossil record argument, and the habitability argument, to the degree where they are naming scientists, discoveries and specific books where the evidence for these arguments are laid out.

Unfortunately, thanks to the "leadership" of many prominent fideist pastors, many Christians have adopted an attitude of outright suspicion to science, preferring instead to pre-suppose the truth of the Bible by blind faith ("the burning of the bosom", as the Mormons say), and refusing to study anything outside the Bible that might establish the necessary prerequisites to taking the Bible seriously. Successful non-Christian professionals looking to evaluate Christianity, this blind-faith approach is rightly seen as anti-intellectualism.

More:

> Other complications did follow, though. He had trustingly believed teachers and authorities who had taught that everything could be explained naturalistically. What else, now, needed to be reexamined? This went beyond science and philosophy to sociology, psychology—*everything* had to be rethought according to this completely new paradigm. He would later liken it to being planted on a whole new planet.
>
> And his entire social life collapsed in a matter of weeks. But he joined a church, and it became his new social center as well as his spiritual lifeline. He volunteered to serve as a jail chaplain in the evenings, a post he filled to great satisfaction for fifteen years. He met his wife Nichole at church, and they went on to adopt five children. Life settled into a richly rewarding concert of family, jail ministry, and law. Nothing he'd ever envisioned back in his atheist days could match the prosperity of these blessings.

> At first glance, it may seem ironic that an atheist committed to seeing everything through the “lens of science” would come back around to see God through the lens of science. But the truth is, it wasn’t science *per se* that had hidden his Creator from view. Rather, it was the lens of philosophical naturalism *imposed onto science*—both in education and throughout the broader culture—that had fostered and fueled Mike’s unchallenged atheism.

Naturalism is a philosophy – a philosophical assumption. It’s not science. The origin and design of the universe are science. DNA is science. Habitability constraints are science. The sudden origin of major body plans in the fossil record is science. There are no scientific arguments for atheism. There’s just speculation driven by naturalistic philosophy.

In the end, Minot turns his life around 180 degrees, and puts his intellect and professional abilities to work for the gospel. You can read about all the ways he is making an impact in Terrell’s article in Salvo Magazine. Always remember stories like these when you are making decisions about your own education and career. God is still working, still reaching out to people through science and history, appealing to their minds for a fair hearing, and then asking for their best efforts for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Twitter censors Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn's Senate campaign ad

October 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conservative lady is running for Senate in Tennessee

Tennessee has two of the least conservative Republican senators, namely, Bob Corker and Lamar Alexander. One of my absolute favorite members of the House of Representatives, Marsha Blackburn, is running for Corker's seat in 2018. I have written about her on this blog many times. Twitter decided to censor a pro-life announcement from her Senate campaign account.

Here's the story from the Washington Free Beacon:

> Twitter has blocked Republican Rep. Marsha Blackburn's (Tenn.) Senate campaign announcement ad, ruling that a pro-life statement was "inflammatory."
>
> At one point in the video, Blackburn, who announced last week that she is running for the Senate in Tennessee, heralded how she "stopped the sale of baby body parts," a reference to her investigation into Planned Parenthood's reported practice of "donating" body parts in return for monetary compensation.
>
> **But a Twitter representative told the Blackburn campaign that Twitter blocked the ad from being promoted, calling it "an inflammatory statement that is likely to evoke a strong negative reaction," the Associated Press reported Monday. Twitter said that Blackburn would have to repost the video without the flagged statement in order to advertise.**

> Instead, Blackburn—who is vying to replace Sen. Bob Corker (R., Tenn.), who will not seek another term—tweeted out a call to action on Facebook and Twitter, asking her followers to share the video themselves.
>
> "Twitter shut down our announcement video ad, claiming it was 'inflammatory' & 'negative.' Silicon Valley should not be allowed to impose their values on us," she wrote on Facebook. "Join me in standing up to the liberal elite."

Here's the video that was censored:

Marsha Blackburn has an 88% conservative rating from the Heritage Foundation. I've not found a better way to assess political candidates than the Heritage Foundation's Scorecards.

I took a quick look at the Twitter CEO's account (@Jack) and found it littered with sophomoric left-wing propaganda, including support for anti-American millionaire Colin Kaepernick. Obviously "Jack" is in favor of left-wing free speech, just not free speech for those he disagrees with. This is standard for the close-minded, intolerant bigots on the left, though. Nothing surprising, people on the left like Jack just don't handle different points of view very well.

More about Blackburn from Life News, for those who don't know her record:

> The Tennessee Republican has established herself as a champion for the rights of unborn babies. The eight-term congresswoman has a 100-percent pro-life voting record.
>
> Most recently, she chaired the U.S. House Select Panel on Infant Lives, which investigated Planned Parenthood's sales of aborted baby body parts. In January, the committee sent numerous criminal and regulatory referrals to federal and state officials regarding Planned Parenthood and other groups involved in the baby body parts trade.

More than anyone, Blackburn has distinguished herself as a pro-lifer who is willing to investigate Big Abortion corporations.

I thought to myself, where is all this censorship of pro-life views coming from? Well, it turns out that this person who works in communications at Twitter is the former press secretary for Kalama Harris. You remember Kamala Harris is the attorney general of California, who collaborated with Planned Parenthood to go after the Center for Medical Progress.

The Washington Times explains:

> Officials from California Attorney General Kamala Harris' office and Planned Parenthood collaborated to draft legislation targeting the pro-life activist whose undercover videos showed officials for the nation's largest abortion provider discussing the sale of fetal body parts, emails show.
>
> The emails depict conversations between the state agency and Planned Parenthood over AB 1671, which would amend the penal code to make secretly

> recording and disseminating communications with health care providers a crime. Gov. Jerry Brown has until the end of the month to sign or veto the bill.
>
> AB 1671 is a response to the Center for Medical Progress' undercover video series spearheaded by David Daleiden.
>
> The documents are another indication of Ms. Harris' close relationship with Planned Parenthood and call into question the impartiality of her ongoing investigation of Mr. Daleiden, legal experts said.
>
> […]Ronald D. Rotunda, a professor of jurisprudence at Chapman University, said the emails show Ms. Harris is a "tool of Planned Parenthood." He said it is not uncommon for the attorney general to play a role in the legislative process, but added that Ms. Harris in this case was "working with Planned Parenthood to protect it from criminal prosecution."

Now, it's well known that companies like Google, Facebook, Twitter, etc. have serious problems at the top with censorship of diverse views. In these companies, they all think the same, and they hire people who think the same, and they fire people who don't think the same. Instead of fixing the problem, they keep right on going with their progressive cultural imperialism. If you're looking for "corporate fascism", you don't need to look any further than Google, Facebook and Twitter. Zero ideological diversity. Dangerous censorship of opposing views.

If the federal government is looking for a good place to crack down on corporate fascism, I think breaking up Google, Facebook and Twitter into smaller companies would be a good start. In fact, moderate Republican Hugh Hewitt recently suggested this to House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy on his MSNBC show. By all means, and we should de-fund fascist universities that don't allow both sides of debates to be heard.

I don't often ask my readers for favors, but if you can please share this post on social media, I would be grateful. Marsha Blackburn is one of the good ones, and I'd like to see her win the race to become senator in Tennessee. I'm sick of seeing conservative legislation derailed by the likes of Corker and Alexander.

Related posts

- House Republicans create Select Committee to investigate Planned Parenthood
- House to vote on Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act on January 22nd
- Marsha Blackburn will lead floor debate on House bill that bans abortions after 20 weeks
- Abortion provider Planned Parenthood receives record amount of taxpayer funding
- House Republicans set to unveil $2.5 TRILLION in spending cuts
- Videos of health care summit speeches by Ryan, Blackburn, Coburn and Alexander
- Marsha Blackburn warns about ballooning entitlement programs
- Marsha Blackburn explains how public-option health care failed in Tennessee
- Marsha Blackburn busts Al Gore on cap and trade corruption
- Michele Bachmann and Marsha Blackburn defend free market capitalism

Project Veritas captures New York Times video editor admitting to anti-Trump bias

October 11, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Real Clear Politics reports:

> In the latest installment of "American Pravda" from James O'Keefe and 'Project Veritas,' Nick Dudich, Audience Strategy Editor for NYT Video, is caught on camera saying the *Times* "always" slants news with an anti-Trump bias.
>
> Dudich speaks candidly to an undercover reporter about how his left-wing political bias influences his editorial judgment, and reveals an unusual connection to former FBI Director James Comey, and a strange association with domestic terror group Antifa.
>
> Dudich goes on to explain what he might do, as a journalist, to target President Trump:
>
> "I'd target his businesses, his dumb f*ck of a son, Donald Jr., and Eric… Target that. Get people to boycott going to his hotels. Boycott… So a lot of the Trump brands, if you can ruin the Trump brand and you put pressure on his business and you start investigating his business and you start shutting it down, or they're hacking or other things. He cares about his business more than he cares about being President. He would resign. Or he'd lash out and do something incredibly illegal, which he would have to."

That's the unbiased New York Times. People read that former newspaper, and they think that they are reading a real newspaper. But the New York Times is just Democrat propaganda. It's not journalism. No one working at the New York Times has been educated well enough to do journalism.

Let's take a look at published academic studies.

Studies confirm left-wing media bias

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." CNN's "NewsNight With Aaron Brown" and ABC's "Good Morning America" were a close second and third.

> “Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill,” Groseclose said. “If these newscasters weren’t centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators.”
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was “Special Report With Brit Hume” on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC’s “World News Tonight” and NBC’s “Nightly News” to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> “If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox’s ‘Special Report’ as ABC’s ‘World News’ and NBC’s ‘Nightly News,’ then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news,” said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia.”

Here’s a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.
>
> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data.”

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.

> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.
>
> The donors include CNN's Guy Raz, now covering the Pentagon for NPR, who gave to Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq; New Yorker war correspondent George Packer; a producer for Bill O'Reilly at Fox; MSNBC TV host Joe Scarborough; political writers at Vanity Fair; the editor of The Wall Street Journal's weekend edition; local TV anchors in Washington, Minneapolis, Memphis and Wichita; the ethics columnist at The New York Times; and even MTV's former presidential campaign correspondent.

Those are the facts. Although leftists may not like to hear the facts, denial does not alter the facts.

New study: model of 700 quintillion terrestrial exoplanets suggests Earth is special

October 12, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

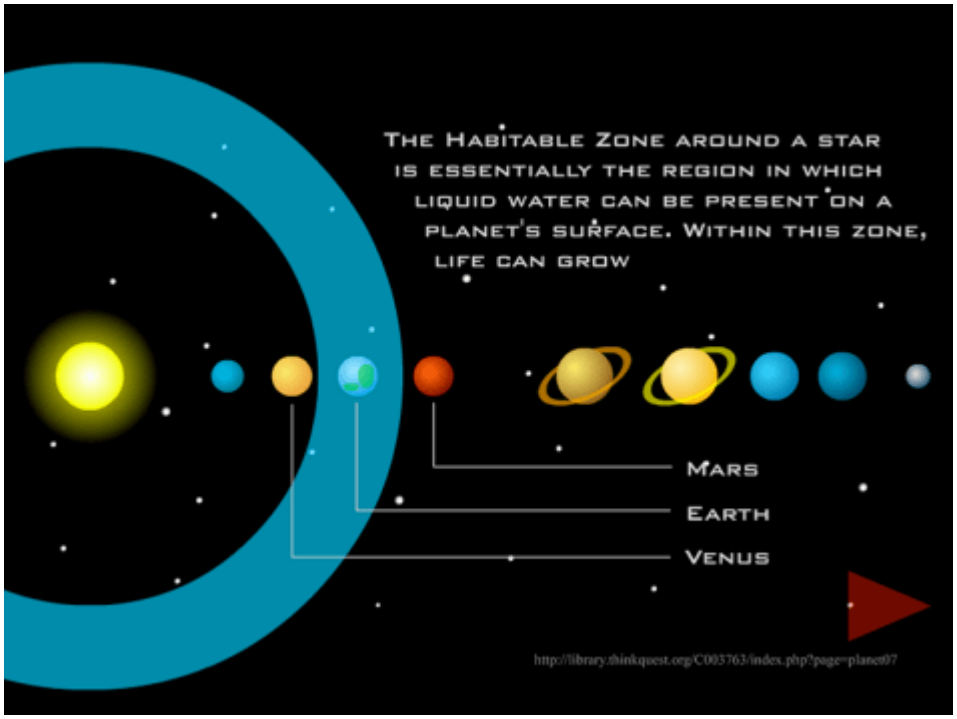

The Circumstellar Habitable Zone, where liquid water could potentially exist
This is from Scientific American. (H/T William)

Excerpt:

> More than 400 years ago Renaissance scientist Nicolaus Copernicus reduced us to near nothingness by showing that our planet is not the center of the solar system. With every subsequent scientific revolution, most other privileged positions in the universe humans might have held dear have been further degraded, revealing the cold truth that our species is the smallest of specks on a speck of a planet, cosmologically speaking. A new calculation of exoplanets suggests that Earth is just one out of a likely 700 million trillion terrestrial planets in the entire observable universe. But the average age of these planets—well above Earth's age—and their typical locations—in galaxies vastly unlike the Milky Way—just might turn the Copernican principle on its head.
>
> Astronomer Erik Zackrisson from Uppsala University and his colleagues created a cosmic compendium of all the terrestrial exoplanets likely to exist throughout the observable universe, based on the rocky worlds astronomers have found so far. In a powerful computer simulation, they first created their own mini universe containing models of the earliest galaxies. Then they unleashed the laws of physics—as close as scientists understand them—that describe how galaxies grow, how stars evolve and how planets come to be. Finally, they fast-forwarded through 13.8 billion years of cosmic history. Their results, published to the

> preprint server arXiv (pdf) and submitted to *The Astrophysical Journal*, provide a tantalizing trove of probable exoplanet statistics that helps astronomers understand our place in the universe.

Discover magazine, which is all in for Darwinism and aliens everywhere, says this about the study:

> Zackrisson found that Earth appears to have been dealt a fairly lucky hand. In a galaxy like the Milky Way, for example, most of the planets Zackrisson's model generated looked very different than Earth — they were larger, older and very unlikely to support life.
>
> […]Zackrisson's work suggests an alternative to the commonly held assumption that planets similar to Earth must exist, based on the sheer number of planets out there.
>
> […]**One of the most fundamental requirements for a planet to sustain life is to orbit in the "habitable zone" of a star — the "Goldilocks" region where the temperature is just right and liquid water can exist. Astronomers have, to this point, discovered around 30 exoplanets in the habitable zones of stars. Simply extrapolating that figure based on the known number of stars suggests that there should be about 50 billion such planets in the Milky Way alone. Probability seems to dictate that Earth-twins are out there somewhere.**
>
> **But according to Zackrisson, most planets in the universe shouldn't look like Earth. His model indicates that Earth's existence presents a mild statistical anomaly in the multiplicity of planets. Most of the worlds predicted by his model exist in galaxies larger than the Milky Way and orbit stars with different compositions — an important factor in determining a planet's characteristics. His research indicates that, from a purely statistical standpoint, Earth perhaps shouldn't exist.**

Time for me to list out some of the things that are required for a galaxy, solar system and planet to support complex embodied life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind given these laws of physics.

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation

- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

It’s not easy to make a planet that supports life. For those who are interested in reaching out to God, he has left us an abundance of evidence for his existence – and his attention to detail.

Related posts

- How tidal effects improve the habitability of a planet
- The connection between our moon, plate tectonics and habitability
- Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on the corelation between habitability and discoverability
- New paper finds that mass of asteroid belts affect habitability of planets
- New study on tidal heating strengthens stellar habitability argument
- Walter Bradley lectures on the creation and design of the universe
- Earth-like planet hyped by science-fiction-crazed atheists likely uninhabitable
- Four ways the Earth is fine-tuned for life, and one more
- Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas
- Fine-tuning the habitable zone: tidal-locking and solar flares
- Is silicon-based life a possible alternative for carbon-based life?
- Jupiter deflects comets and asteroids that might otherwise hit Earth
- How common is it for a star to support complex, embodied life?
- Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University
- Scientists troubled by lack of simple explanation for our life-permitting moon

Study: early sexual activity has negative impact on relationship quality and stability

October 13, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to execute a plan to reach a stable marriage?

I've posted before about how premarital sex affects the stability of marriages by making divorce more likely. But there has been more research published since. Let's take a look.

Here a good study on relationship tempo and relationship quality.

Abstract:

> Rapid sexual involvement may have adverse long-term implications for relationship quality. This study examined the tempo of sexual intimacy and subsequent relationship quality in a sample of married and cohabiting men and women. Data come from the Marital and Relationship Survey, which provides information on nearly 600 low- to moderate-income couples living with minor children. Over one third of respondents became sexually involved within the first month of the relationship. Bivariate results suggested that delaying sexual involvement was associated with higher relationship quality across several dimensions. The multivariate results indicated that the speed of entry into sexual relationships was negatively associated with marital quality, but only among women. **The association between relationship tempo and relationship quality was largely driven by cohabitation. Cohabiting may result in poorer quality relationship because rapid sexual involvement early in the romantic relationship is associated with entrance into shared living.**

The authors are from Cornell University and University of Wisconsin – Madison. Prestigious schools, and very far to the left.

Here's another recent study that shows that if a woman has more partners than just her husband as a premarital sex partner, the risk of divorce increases.

Conclusion:

> Using nationally representative data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, I estimate the association between intimate premarital relationships (premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) and subsequent marital dissolution. I extend previous research by considering relationship histories pertaining to both premarital sex and premarital cohabitation. I find that premarital sex or premarital cohabitation that is limited to a woman's husband is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption. **However, women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship have an increased risk of marital dissolution.**

Here's another study that makes it even more clear.

Findings:

> Data from the 1988 US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) were utilized to assess the impact of premarital sexual activity on subsequent marital stability. Among white NSFG subjects first married in 1965-85, **virgin brides were significantly less to have become separated or divorced (25%) than women who had not been virgins at marriage (35%).**
>
> [...]The lower risk of divorce on the part of white women with no premarital sexual experience persisted even after numerous intervening and background variables were controlled.

And I am going to save the best study for last. This marvelous PDF is from August 2014, and is put out by the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia. It is comprehensive, and links to many papers from decades ago to the state of the art today. It seems like people are really rushing into sex these days, without much thought. They want to have fun, feel accepted, be like their friends, conform to the culture. But sometimes, it's better to be practical than to be governed by the desire for fun and thrills. If you want to do something, look at the research and find out what the consequences are before you do it. That's what a sensible person does.

When it comes to discussing the Bible's rules on sex, evidence is very important. Evidence is what convinces even non-Christian people to take the Bible seriously when it comes to putting sex in its proper place. That's why we need to know what the Bible says, and we need to augment that with real-world evidence so that it is applied to our own decision-making, and so that we can be persuasive when discussing it with others.

Woman freezes her eggs after wasting 8 years in relationship with NBA player

October 14, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

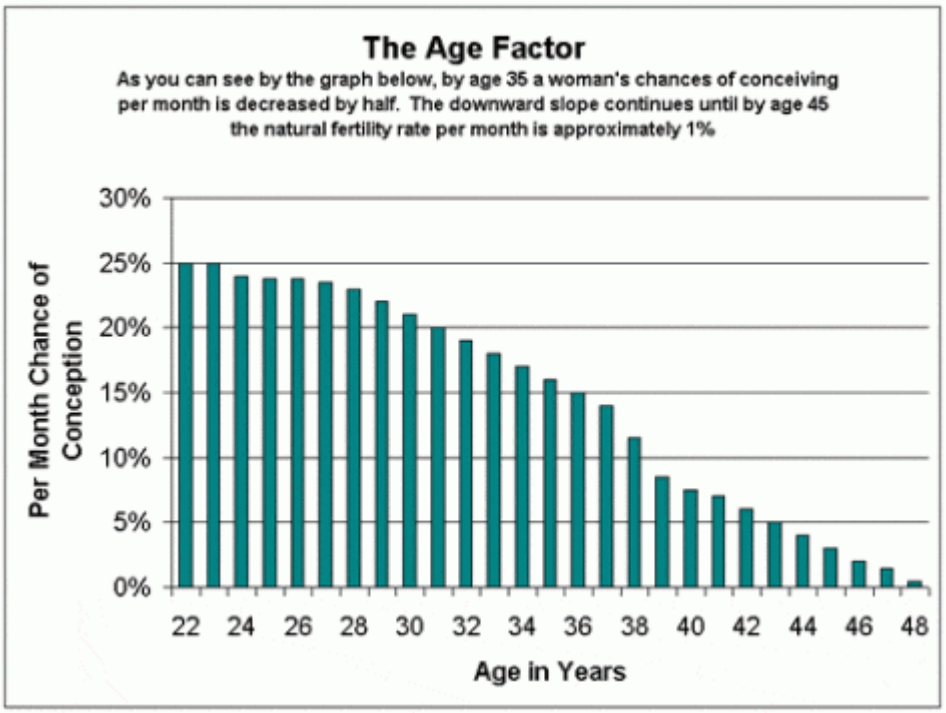

Fertility in women by age

First, I want to recap this story about a woman who had an 8-year relationship with a former NBA basketball player. He proposed marriage around year 7. In year 8, the NBA player announced that he was gay and broke off their engagement.

The UK Daily Mail reported on it in 2013:

> The former fiancee of NBA star Jason Collins, who in April came out as the first openly gay athlete in a major American team sport, has spoken for the first time about the heartache of losing the man she loved.
>
> Carolyn Moos had been with Mr Collins for eight years before he called off their wedding without explanation in July 2009.
>
> 'I had no idea why,' the 35-year-old reveals in the latest issue of Cosmopolitan magazine. 'We had planned to have children, build a family. Nearly four years later, I got my answer. My former fiancé, Jason Collins. . . announced last spring in Sports Illustrated that he is gay.'
>
> […][S]he found out her ex-fiance was gay the same day the magazine hit newsstands.
>
> […]In the revealing essay, Ms Moos re-lives the day that Mr Collins, a pro basketball player with the Washington Wizards, called off their wedding without giving a reason.
>
> 'It was July of 2009, and he had just returned home from a road trip with his twin

> brother, Jarron. **I had been living with Jason in Los Angeles for the previous year, ever since our engagement.**

8 years with no proposal? Living together before marriage? I'm pretty sure that they were having sex before marriage during this 8 years. Is this what a man who is interested in commitment and children does with a woman?

More:

> 'Another time, he told me that I was his soul mate and I was meant for him.'
>
> During the next few years, the couple began to build a life together in Los Angeles, and Mr Collins proposed on a trip to Mexico in 2008.
>
> 'Some seven years after we had begun our relationship, he finally said the words I had waited so long to hear,' Ms Moos recalled.
>
> 'I remember feeling overwhelmed with joy and also thinking: finally. I was almost 30. In the air on the way home, I saw my future unfolding before me. I pictured our family: intelligent, athletic, tall, dynamic.'

She pictured her future family, and she did not picture moral character or spiritual leadership. Her fiance was not chosen for moral character or spiritual leadership. Yes, he was famous. Yes, he was rich (from throwing a ball into a hoop). Yes, he was handsome. But real men do not wait 8 years to commit to a woman, if they really love her. Real men are serious with a wife candidate right up front, and the courtship is intense and has a clear goal of finding out whether there should be a marriage, or not. It's not about having fun, e.g. – taking trips together to Mexico together. It's about finding out whether each person has demonstrated a capability for self-sacrificial love. Working out in a gym does not build character. Throwing a ball into a hoop does not build character. She would have been better off with an ordinary, non-famous man who was serious about marriage and children. Ordinary, non-famous people know what commitment requires, and what marriage is about.

Everybody celebrate

According to Wikipedia (not linked), many people on the political left cheered her fiance on when he announced his surprise for her:

> Following his announcement, Collins has received high praise and support for deciding to publicly reveal that he is gay. Fellow NBA star Kobe Bryant praised his decision, as did others from around the league, including NBA commissioner David Stern. President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, former president Bill Clinton, and Collins' corporate sponsor Nike were also among those offering their praise and support for Collins.*The Guardian* called it significant for LGBT acceptance "as professional sports had long been seen as the final frontier."

Yes, yes. Everyone jump up and down and cheer for this man who wasted 8 years of a woman's life – the best years of her beauty and youth. Letters poured in. There were

media appearances. Then-President Obama even phoned him and congratulated him. Phoned him and congratulated him for being gay, and ending an 8 year relationship with a girl he had pumped and dumped. During one interview he explained that he always knew he was gay. I wish he had told Carolyn that, instead of telling her she was his "soul-mate". Newsflash: MEN LIE FOR SEX, which is why women used to make them wait until marriage.

Freezing her eggs

She spent her fertile 20s and early 30s, from 23-31, with this NBA player. Fertility starts dropping off at age 27. It takes another nosedive at age 35. So she decided to freeze her eggs, which a lot of feminists who delay marriage are doing these days.

Here is a video of Carolyn Moos explaining her decision to freeze her eggs.

https://vimeo.com/165094478

According to the radically-leftist New York Times, egg-freezing has about a 30% success rate for producing a live baby, and it's very expensive. IVF, you'll recall, typically results in many embryos being "discarded", which is why pro-lifers are careful with it.

Obviously, I think that Carolyn bears the responsibility for choosing THIS man out of all the OTHER men she could have chosen. She has to reap what she's sown. We can certainly learn from her mistake – wasting her young and fertile years with an overgrown child who made a living throwing balls into hoops. However, I am writing this post because of the people who praise those who walk away from commitments. There seems to be a lot of praise being given to people who end commitments to "be true to themselves". I think it's important to think about the victims of the Sexual Revolution – which was essentially a revolution putting selfishness above self-sacrificial love, and the needs of children. When people are true to their selfishness, people get used. Marriages crumble to pieces.

These days, we seem to have given up on giving young women advice about what kind of men they should be in relationships with. We just let them decide for themselves based on their feelings and their peer's opinions and the teachings of the popular culture around them. Maybe men need to have a little more courage about disagreeing with young women who are "following their hearts".

Paul Helm debates William Lane Craig on Calvinism and Reformed theology

October 15, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

I listened to this excellent discussion between Dr. William Lane Craig and Oxford University Calvinist philosopher Dr. Paul Helm. I think this is a useful discussion in general because atheists often bring up problems with Calvinism as objections to Christianity in general, such as:

- If God knows the future, then I don't have free will
- If God controls everything, then I am not responsible for my sinning
- If God has to override my free will to be saved, then I am not responsible for being damned if God doesn't choose me

Details:

> If God ordains the future, can humans have free will? Are people predestined for salvation? And what does the Bible say on the matter? William Lane Craig is a Christian philosopher and leading proponent of Molinism, a view of divine sovereignty that seeks to reconcile God's fore-ordination with human free will. Paul Helm is a leading Calvin Scholar. He defends the view that God predestines the future, limiting human freedom.
>
> MP3 of this show: http://cdnapi.kaltura.com/p/618072/sp/61807200/playManifest/entryId/1_jn0bdo52/flavorId/0_002f1k0d/protocol/http/format/url/a.mp3?clientTag=feed:1_jlj47tkv
>
> For William Lane Craig: http://www.reasonablefaith.org
>
> For Paul Helm: http://paulhelmsdeep.blogspot.co.uk/

Or listen on YouTube:

I was surprised because my Calvinist friend Dina thought that Dr. Helm won this debate, but I thought that Dr. Craig won. So without further ado, here is the snark-free summary of the discussion. I also sent the summary to Dina to make sure that it was reasonably fair and accurate. She said it was biased, but she was predestined to say that. Anyway, there's a commentary on the debate over at Michael's Theology blog.

Summary:

JB: Has Lewis had any impact on your apologetics?

Craig: Not as a scholar, but more as a model of a scholar who leaves a legacy through his published work

JB: How did you become interested in Calvinism?

Helm: Starting from childhood, and lately writing more on Calvinism from a philosophical point of view

JB: How do you view God's sovereignty?

Helm: Strong view of divine sovereignty, God is sovereign over all events, but that doesn't mean that they are determined by him

JB: What is Calvin's legacy?

Helm: He amplified an existing concept of predestination, and wrote on many other topics

JB: What is Molinism?

Craig: Molina affirms divine sovereignty as Paul Helm does, but he also affirms libertarian free will

Craig: Every event that occurs happens by God's will or by God's permission

JB: What about open theism?

Craig: Paul and I both oppose open theism

JB: How does Molinism reconcile human free will and divine sovereignty

Craig: God has knowledge of what would happen under any set of circumstances

Craig: God has knowledge of everything that COULD happen, and he has knowledge of everything that WILL happen

Craig: God knows what each person freely choose to do in any set of circumstances and he can place people in times and places where he is able to achieve his ends without violating creaturely freedom and creaturely responsibility

JB: How does this apply to the issue of salvation?

Craig: The circumstances in which God puts a person includes God leading people to him and he foreknows who will respond to his leading

Craig: God has ordered the world in such a way that he foreknows the exact people who will free respond to his leading if he puts them in certain circumstances

JB: Does God want to save the maximum of people?

Craig: My own view is that God does order the world in such a way that the maximum

number of people will respond to God’s drawing them to himself

JB: Is the Molinist view gaining ground?

Craig: Yes, Calvinists and open theists are both moving towards it, and Molinism is the dominant view among philosophical theologians

JB: Why has Molinism not convinced you?

Helm: It’s an unnecessary theory, God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge covers what middle knowledge covers

Helm: Calvinism has a stronger view of sin, such that God has to act unilaterally and irrestibly to save them

JB: Are creatures free on your view?

Helm: My view of free will is weaker than Craig’s view of free will

Craig: For the Calvinist, grace is irresistible, but for the Molinist, grace is effective when it is met with a response from the creature

Craig: The Bible affirms the strong view of free will, when it says that in certain circumstances people can freely choose to do other than they do

Helm: But if a person is in circumstances X and they are free, then why don’t they choose something that isn’t what God can foresee

Craig: In identical circumstances, a person has the freedom to choose, and God doesn’t determine what they choose, he just foreknows what they choose

Helm: How can God foreknow what people will freely do if people have this strong view of freedom that allows them to do anything? God would not know what people can freely do if they really are free

Craig: God has knowledge of what his creatures would freely do in any set of circumstances, he has knowledge of subjunctive statements

Craig: The Scripture is filled with statements that show that God has this knowledge of what people would do in other circumstances (e.g. – 2 Cor 2:8)

Helm: I am not denying that the Bible is full of subjunctive statements, but if humans have real libertarian free will, then God cannot know what they will do

Craig: I think God does preordain everything, Molinism has a strong sense of divine sovereignty BUT the foreordaining is done with the knowledge of what humans would do in any circumstances, so that what God ordains achieves his ends, but without violating creaturely free will

Craig: I take at face value the passages of the Bible where it says that God wants all persons to be saved

Craig: When the Bible says that God wants ALL persons to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), the Bible means that God wants ALL persons to be saved

Craig: So either universalism is true OR there is something that stops all from being saved outside of God

Craig: the something that prevents all from being saved is creaturely free will

Helm: Most people don't have the opportunity to hear the gospel, so God doesn't want all to be saved

Helm: People can still be responsible for what God "fore-ordains"

JB: Can a person really be responsible for wickedness if they didn't freely choose it?

Helm: Even though God is the only one who can act unilaterally to make save people, the people who act wickedly are still responsible

Craig: Molinism provides an answer to the problem of why not all people have heard the gospel, because by using middle knowledge he is able to know who would respond to the gospel if they heard it and he places those people in the times and places where they will hear it

Craig: That solution means that NO ONE is lost because they have not heard the gospel

Craig: There is Biblical support for (Acts 17:27) God choosing the times and places where people will live SO THAT they will be led by him and be able to respond to his leading

JB: Is God the author of sin, on Calvinism?

Craig: If Calvinists define providence to mean causal determinism, then he is the cause of every effect including human actions, and he is the one who causes people to sin

Craig: This view (determinism) impugns the character of God

Helm: I don't think that sovereignty requires determinism

Helm: God has mysterious resources – which I cannot specify – that reconcile his sovereignty with human responsibility for wickedness

JB: But if God is the cause of people doing wrong things, then how can they be responsible for it?

Helm: Well, humans do cause their own actions

Craig: Helm is right to say that God has resources to reconcile God's sovereignty with free will and human responsibility, and that resource is not an unknown mystery, it's middle knowledge

Craig: I can affirm everything in the Westminster Confession except for the one clause where they expressly repudiate middle knowledge as the mechanism for reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

Helm: Well, Calvinists have a strong view of sin so that humans cannot respond to God's leading

Craig: Yes, and that's why humans need prevenient grace in order to respond to him

Craig: God has to take the initiative and draw people to himself or they cannot be saved, but that grace is resistible, and that's what the Bible teaches (Acts 7:51), so humans are still responsible if they resist God

Helm: My view of grace is that it is monergistic and irrestible, it is a unilateral action on the part of God, like pulling someone out of an icy pond which they can't get out of

JB: If humans freely choose to respond to God's drawing and leading, does that diminish grace?

Helm: Many are called but few are chosen

Craig: Molinism does not require synergism – which is the idea that humans are partly responsible for their salvation

Craig: In Eph 2:8, Scripture is clear that faith opposite to works, and responding to God's drawing is not meritorious

JB: So receiving a gift is not meritorious?

Craig: It's the passive acceptance of what someone else has done for you

Helm: But doesn't this mean that you can lose your salvation, because you can accept and resist the gift of salvation?

Craig: That's a separate question that Christians can differ on, but if the Holy Spirit indwells a person and seals them, then that would argue for the view that salvation cannot be revoked

JB: Doesn't Romans 8 teach Calvinism pretty clearly?

Helm: This is called the "golden chain", and it does support Calvinism

Craig: Actually, this text is no problem for Molinists because the first link in the chain is foreknowledge, which, if it incorporates middle knowledge, is no problem for Molinists

Craig: What God is electing in Romans 8 is a specific group of people that he knows in advance of creating the universe will freely respond to his drawing them to him

Craig: In Acts 4:27-28, it is talking about God's foreknowledge, which involves and incorporates knowledge of what any individual would freely choose if placed in those circumstances

JB: If God actualizes a set plan with set circumstances for everyone, isn't that very similar to Calvinism?

Craig: Yes! It's a strong statement of divine sovereignty

Helm: Foreknowledge doesn't mean that God knows what people would do, it's just refering to God "knowing his own mind" about what he wants to do

JB: How do you respond to the fairness of God unilaterally and specifically choosing some people for salvation and choosing other people for damnation (because he refuses to act unilaterally for them)?

Helm: God ordinarily bypasses other people in the Bible, like when he chooses the Jews as his chosen people

Craig: The problem with that is that the Bible clearly teaches that God has a genuine will that all will be saved and he makes a genuine offer of salvation to all people

Craig: Also, just being a Jew and a member of the chosen people doesn't mean you were saved, because some Jews rebelled against God

Craig: And there were also people outside of the Jewish people who were righteous and in

a relationship with God, like Job

Helm: “the fabric of our faith” depends on God’s choice and his not-choice, it is fundamental to the Bible and to God’s character, and choosing them “effectively” (irrestibly and unilaterally)

Helm: The idea of God considering “possible worlds”, some of which are feasible and not feasible, with conflicts between the wills of free creatures in different circumstances, and then actualizing one world that achieve these ends is very messy

Craig: Some worlds may not feasible for God to create, for example a world in which everyone is saved – it is logically possible, but may not be feasible

Craig: God will not exercise any divine coercion to force people to go to Heaven against their own will

Helm: If God chooses a world because it is feasible, then he doesn’t love me directly, he is choosing a world, not individuals

Craig: Well, when God actualizes a world, he specifically knows which individuals will be saved within that world, but without disrespecting free will

Craig: The world isn’t primary, the individuals are primary

Helm: I think that middle knowledge can he included in God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge

Craig: The knowledge of what people would do in different circumstances is based on the freedom of the individuals

JB: Make your conclusions!

Craig: Molinism is a Biblical model for reconciling divine sovereignty with human freedom

Helm: It is intellectually mystifying to introduce this strong view of human freedom and it is not Biblical

Four ways that the progress of experimental science conflicts with atheism

October 16, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

When people ask me whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism, I offer the following four basic pieces of scientific evidence that are more compatible with theism than atheism.

Here are the four pieces of evidence best explained by a Creator/Designer:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the biological information in the first replicator (origin of life)
4. the sudden origin of all of the different body plans in the fossil record (Cambrian explosion)

And I point to specific examples of recent discoveries that confirm those four arguments. Here are just a few of them:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (From an article from Caltech)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning to allow the existence of conscious, embodied life (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)
4. Evidence showing that Ediacaran fauna are not precursors to the Cambrian fossils, (from the journal Nature)

Atheists will typically reply to the recent scientific discoveries that overturned their speculations like this:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause
2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes
4. Maybe we will find a seamless chain of fossils that explain how the Cambrian explosion occurred slowly, over a long period time

Ever heard any of these responses?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the four responses of atheists to the experimental data.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
>
> †Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, USA
>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings

> have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.

> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities."
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. There is no evidence for a multiverse, but there is evidence for fine-tuning. TONS OF IT.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can't make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can't make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth's interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to

> obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into meaningful words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them.

4) The best candidate to explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian era fossils was the Ediacaran fauna, but those are now recognized as not being precursors to the Cambrian fossils.

Science Daily reports on a paper from the peer-reviewed journal Science:

> Evidence of the single-celled ancestors of animals, dating from the interval in Earth's history just before multicellular animals appeared, has been discovered in 570 million-year-old rocks from South China by researchers from the University of Bristol, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Paul Scherrer Institut and the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.
>
> […]This X-ray microscopy revealed that the fossils had features that multicellular embryos do not, and this led the researchers to the conclusion that the fossils were neither animals nor embryos but rather the reproductive spore bodies of single-celled ancestors of animals.
>
> Professor Philip Donoghue said: "We were very surprised by our results — we've been convinced for so long that these fossils represented the embryos of the earliest animals — much of what has been written about the fossils for the last ten years is flat wrong. Our colleagues are not going to like the result."
>
> Professor Stefan Bengtson said: "These fossils force us to rethink our ideas of how animals learned to make large bodies out of cells."

The trend is that there is no evolutionary explanation for the body plans that emerged in the Cambrian era. If you want to make the claim that "evolution did it", then you have to produce the data *today*. Not speculations about the future. The data we have today says no to naturalism. The only way to affirm naturalistic explanations for the evidence we have is *by faith*. But rational people know that we need to minimize our leaps of faith, and

go with the simplest and most reasonable explanation – an intelligence is the best explanation responsible for rapid generation of biological information.

Conclusion

I do think it's important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see way too much G. K. Chesterton, Francis Chan and other untestable, ineffective jibber-jabber. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it's too hard. It's not too hard. Everyone can understand Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". That's more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works. You don't want to be anti-science and pro-speculation like atheists are. I recommend reading Uncommon Descent and Evolution News every day for a start.

Is cohabitation a better way to prepare for marriage than courting?

October 17, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

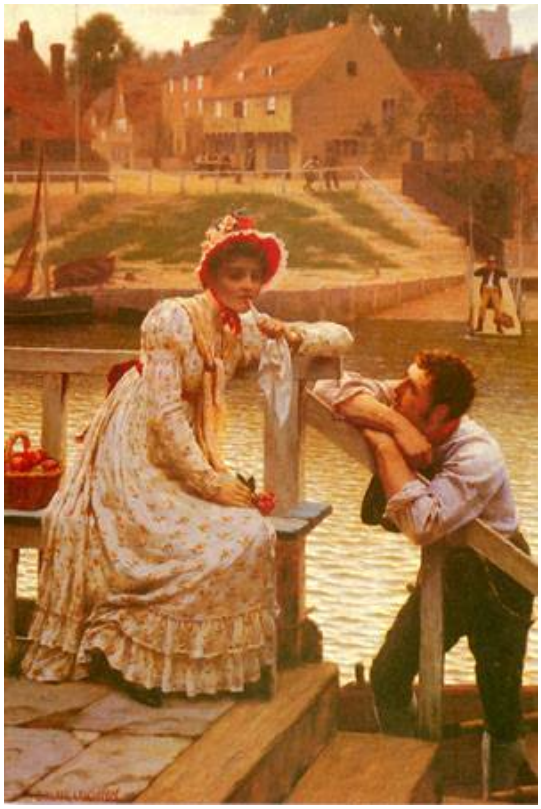

Painting: "Courtship", by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

Consider this assessment of cohabitation from the radically-leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> AT 32, one of my clients (I'll call her Jennifer) had a lavish wine-country wedding. By then, Jennifer and her boyfriend had lived together for more than four years. The event was attended by the couple's friends, families and two dogs.
>
> When Jennifer started therapy with me less than a year later, she was looking for a divorce lawyer. "I spent more time planning my wedding than I spent happily married," she sobbed. Most disheartening to Jennifer was that she'd tried to do everything right. "My parents got married young so, of course, they got divorced. We lived together! How did this happen?"
>
> Cohabitation in the United States has increased by more than 1,500 percent in the past half century. In 1960, about 450,000 unmarried couples lived together. Now the number is more than 7.5 million. The majority of young adults in their 20s will live with a romantic partner at least once, and more than half of all marriages will be preceded by cohabitation. This shift has been attributed to the sexual revolution and the availability of birth control, and in our current economy, sharing the bills makes cohabiting appealing. But when you talk to people in their 20s, you also hear about something else: cohabitation as

> prophylaxis.
>
> In a nationwide survey conducted in 2001 by the National Marriage Project, then at Rutgers and now at the University of Virginia, nearly half of 20-somethings agreed with the statement, "You would only marry someone if he or she agreed to live together with you first, so that you could find out whether you really get along." About two-thirds said they believed that moving in together before marriage was a good way to avoid divorce.

That's a nice idea – wanting protection against divorce. But I think these hopeful attitudes that young people have about cohabitation and the utility / harmlessness of premarital sex, is so much whistling past the graveyard. The fact is that cohabitation does not improve marital stability.

The New York Times author assesses the evidence about cohabitation:

> Couples who cohabit before marriage (and especially before an engagement or an otherwise clear commitment) tend to be less satisfied with their marriages — and more likely to divorce — than couples who do not. These negative outcomes are called the cohabitation effect.
>
> **Researchers originally attributed the cohabitation effect to selection, or the idea that cohabitors were less conventional about marriage and thus more open to divorce. As cohabitation has become a norm, however, studies have shown that the effect is not entirely explained by individual characteristics like religion, education or politics. Research suggests that at least some of the risks may lie in cohabitation itself.**
>
> As Jennifer and I worked to answer her question, "How did this happen?" we talked about how she and her boyfriend went from dating to cohabiting. Her response was consistent with studies reporting that most couples say it "just happened."
>
> "We were sleeping over at each other's places all the time," she said. "We liked to be together, so it was cheaper and more convenient. It was a quick decision but if it didn't work out there was a quick exit."
>
> She was talking about what researchers call "sliding, not deciding." Moving from dating to sleeping over to sleeping over a lot to cohabitation can be a gradual slope, one not marked by rings or ceremonies or sometimes even a conversation. Couples bypass talking about why they want to live together and what it will mean.

Cohabitation is associated with *higher risks of divorce* because it works to undermine the need for quality communication during courting and the need for commitment that is based on discipline, instead of pleasure. People slide into something that looks like marriage because the sex pulls them in. But they've never taken the time to talk about what the relationship is really about, and whether they are intending to commit to the other person for life, and on what terms, and for what reason. Young people find these

conversations difficult and scary for a reason – they are not capable of discussing relationships in terms of self-sacrifice, self-control, and self-denial.

The focus on early sex is caused by a focus on wanting to get to pleasure right away. They want relationships to be like a consumer good, where they get their needs met without having to talk about suitability for roles, and acceptance of responsibilities and obligations. In my experience, young people are terrified of the responsibilities, obligations and expectations of a real commitment. They want relationships to be free,easy and fun – where they just get to do whatever they feel like, moment by moment. And somehow, it's all supposed to work out, without anyone talking seriously about roles and responsibilities and commitment.

But of course that doesn't work as well as keeping your distance and getting to know each other first. It's not just compatibility that is important, though – it's that both people need to prepare for the roles and responsibilities they will have in a marriage, and demonstrate to each other that each is capable of performing those roles.

What's the answer?

Research has shown that pre-marital chastity produces more stable and higher quality marriages. And that's because chastity helps people to focus on *conversations and obligations* instead of the *recreational sex* which clouds the judgment and glosses over the seriousness of marriage. Premarital sex rushes the relationship to the point where it is harder to break it off because of the sunk costs of sex and the pain of the break-up. Courtship is the time to discuss the things that break up marriages, like finances and division of labor. It is the time to demonstrate self-control and fidelity. Courting doesn't allow either person to get control of the relationship through sex, so that they can get their needs met without having to care about the other person. When sex is ruled off the table, the only way to have the relationship go on is by serving the other person and showing them that you have what it takes to do the marriage role you're assigned. That's hard work, but young people need to accept that and get on with preparing for and practicing their marriage responsibilities.

Why not go back to courting?

If you asked me, I would tell you that courting is protection against a painful break-up as well as protection against a bad marriage. And the aim of courting is to interview the other person so that you can see whether they understand the demands of the marriage and whether they can perform their duties to their spouse and children. In particular, men should investigate whether the woman has prepared (or is willing to prepare now) to perform her roles as wife and mother, and women should investigate whether the man has prepared to perform his roles as protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader (or is willing to prepare now). Courting is not designed to be fun, although it can be fun. It is not meant to make people feel happy, it is mean to prepare them for marriage. And this is because you cannot translate fun and happy into marriage, because marriage is about well-defined roles, self-sacrifice and commitment. Marriage is about following through for the other person, whether you get what you want or not. You'd be surprised how often

people give up on courting and show that their real goal for a relationship is not lifelong self-sacrificial love at all, but just using other people for their own happiness while they keep their distance from the responsibilities, obligations and expectations of the marriage covenant.

And that’s why I encourage men to very gently and subtly guide the relationship in a way that will allow both the woman and the man to practice their expected marital duties, see how they feel about their duties and get better at being able to perform them. Men have the most to lose from the divorce courts, if things go south. That’s why it is the man’s the responsibility to detect and reject women who are only interested in fun and thrills.

Ted Cruz will debate Bernie Sanders on CNN tonight at 9 PM Eastern time

October 18, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted and Heidi Cruz have a plan to simplify the tax code

The Resurgent reports:

> Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) will participate in a CNN town hall on October 18th to discuss President Trump's new tax proposals.
>
> CNN's Jake Tapper and Dana Bash will moderate the debate in Washington at 9 p.m. ET.
>
> Cruz and Sanders will debate the best way to approach the issue, with Cruz supporting tax cuts for all, while Sanders supports tax hikes on the wealthy. The Senators will also take questions from the audience.
>
> Currently, President Trump wants to reduce the personal income tax brackets from seven to three, double the standard deduction for married and single filers, and slash the corporate tax rate while finally eliminating the estate tax.
>
> Senator Cruz argues that the current tax plan is far too complex, and supports a more simplified version that will ease the burdens on middle class families and businesses.
>
> "We spend about nine billion hours a year wasting time with the IRS," he said. "The world would be much, much simpler if you and I and everyone else just filled out a postcard."

Dana Bash is a radical-leftist, and Jake Tapper is just a regular leftist. They'll both agree with Sanders and will probably try to help him out, if he falls asleep.

Here is the full video from the first debate on health care policy:

It's 90 minutes long. No commercials. This was basically a debate of similar substance to William Lane Craig debates, where actual economic evidence was *continuously*

produced in order to show who was telling the truth, and who was just trying to be popular by saying what people who are uneducated at economics want to hear. In short: there was a clear winner and loser in this debate, and it was clear all the way through, and was reinforced over and over every time evidence was produced. The person producing the evidence would turn his back on the camera, and return to his podium to get the evidence. That person won the debate by being grounded in reality.

Also, the questions were excellent, especially from the small business owners who were impacted by Obamacare. The moderators were biased towards Sanders, but not excessively.

For those who cannot watch, there is an article at the Daily Signal.

Full text:

> In a prime-time debate on CNN this week, Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Ted Cruz, R-Texas, discussed "The Future of Obamacare" in America. Cruz, a leading critic of the law, used the moment to outline the law's failures.
>
> Here are four things Cruz said about Obamacare:
>
> 1) "Now, nobody thinks we're done once Obamacare is repealed. Once Obamacare is repealed, we need commonsense reform that increases competition, that empowers patients, that gives you more choices, that puts you in charge of your health care, rather than empowering government bureaucrats to get in the way. And these have been commonsense ideas."
>
> 2) "Indeed, I don't know if the cameras can see this, but in 70 percent of the counties in America, on Obamacare exchanges, you have a choice of one or two health insurance plans, that's it … It's interesting. You look at this map, this also very much looks like the electoral map that elected Donald Trump. It's really quite striking that the communities that have been hammered by this disaster of a law said enough already."
>
> During one of the more powerful moments in the debate, Cruz held up aHeritage Foundation chart showing viewers how many counties in the U.S. have access to only one or two insurers under Obamacare. Additionally, only 11 percent of counties have access to four or more insurance providers.
>
> 3) "Whenever you put government in charge of health care, what it means is they ration. They decide you get care and you don't. I don't think the government has any business telling you you're not entitled to receive health care."
>
> The U.S. should not envy other health care systems, especially Canada and the United Kingdom, Cruz said. He referred to a governor from Canada who came to the U.S. specifically to have heart surgery.
>
> 4) "That's why I think the answer is not more of Obamacare, more government control, more of what got us in this mess. Rather, the answer is empower you. Give you choices. Lower prices. Lower premiums. Lower deductibles. Empower you and put you back in charge of your health care."

> Obamacare is burdening Americans. The average deductible for a family on a bronze plan is $12,393, according to a HealthPocket analysis. According to aneHealth report, the average nationwide premium increase for individuals is 99 percent and 140 percent for families from 2013-2017.

I really recommend you watch tonight’s debate, because it these things were done on a weekly or monthly basis, then people would be able to think critically about what they are presented with from the mainstream media, Hollywood elites and progressive academics.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment

October 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Reformed Baptist theologian Wayne Grudem speaks on the Bible and capital punishment.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?
- what did God say to Noah about CP?
- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?
- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?
- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?
- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?
- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the “whole life ethic” and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

The Bible is awesome because it gives us knowledge about God’s character. How are we supposed to act in a way that is pleasing to God if we don’t know what he thinks of the issues of the day? We won’t know how we are supposed to act unless we know who God is first. And that’s why when we read the Bible we should be looking to find out the truth about who God is.

Labor unions donated $765 million between 2012 and 2016, and 99% went to left-wing groups

October 20, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

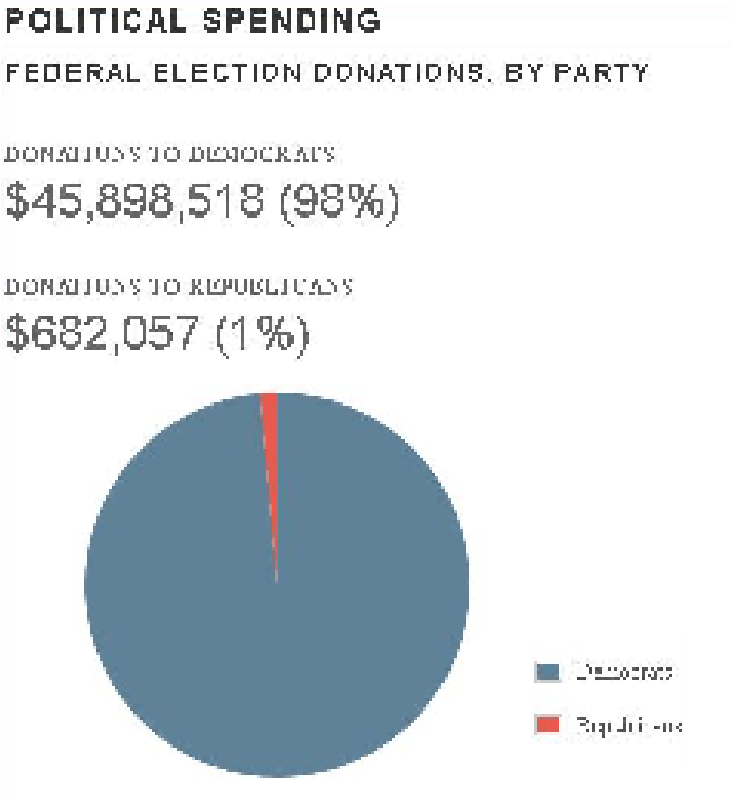

Political contributions by the American Federation of Teachers union
Astonishing article from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Unions across the country donated $765 million to various organizations over the last four years, and 99 percent of that cash went to liberal-leaning causes.
>
> Labor unions gave $764,952,394 to left-wing special interests between 2012 and 2016, according to the Center for Union Facts. Of the nearly $765 million, 99 percent of union political contributions went to left-wing causes. The Center for Union Facts compiled a comprehensive database of information about labor unions in the United States: outlining union spending, salary information, dues revenue data, and more using data from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Examples of who gets the money:

> The department's data show between 2012 and 2016, roughly $240 million went to left-wing political groups. Labor unions gave $77 million to special-interest groups and another $13 million to environmental groups. Over $25 million went to groups like the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Rainbow PUSH Coalition.
>
> **During this same time frame, almost $307 million went to the**

> **Democratic Party and aligned groups, including Media Matters, the Clinton Foundation, Mi Familia Vota, the National Democratic Club, the Advocacy Fund, Progressive Democrats of America, and Planned Parenthood.**
>
> […]**Here's how much a few pro-abortion groups received from labor unions since 2007, according to Luka Ladan, communications director for the Center for Union Facts:**
>
> - **Planned Parenthood: $1.18 million**
> - **Emily's List: $810,000**
> - **NARAL Pro-Choice America: $45,000**

Examples of who gives the money:

> Here are the dollar amounts since 2007 that a few labor unions have given for abortion lobby funding:
>
> - American Federation of Teachers: $1,150,000
> - American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees: $520,100
> - International Association of Firefighters: $10,000
> - Service Employees International Union: $180,000
> - United Association: $40,000
> - United Auto Workers: $100,000
> - United Food and Commercial Workers International Union: $35,000

Teachers, non-import auto workers, government employees. All pro-abortion. I never buy cars made by union employees, I'd just be funding abortionists.

I think there was a time in America's history where unions were actually doing some good, but that time has long gone. We can't allow labor unions to take the country in the direction of Greece and Venezuela, otherwise none of us will have jobs, and we'll be selling our bodies for food, like they do in other communist countries. I would like to see some legislation banning public sector unions outright, and then a national right to work law should finish off the private sector unions, since rank-and-file private sector union workers are typical not radical leftists. We definitely need a national voucher law to get the money out of the public schools and back into the hands of parents.

Whenever well-meaning people vote for more taxpayer more for union-dominated fields like education, keep in mind that a significant portion of this money gets funneled back into anti-American causes. Be careful about wanting to spending more taxpayer money "for the children", because it often turns out to just be more taxpayer money for the Planned Parenthood, or for the Clinton Foundation, etc.

If you could rescue EITHER embryos OR a 5-year-old, what would you do?

October 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this message

I overheard Ben Shapiro talking about some pro-abortion tweet that went viral on Twitter. Basically, the snarky pro-abortion person tried to make the case that unborn children don't deserve legal protections because people have a moral intuition to save a 5-year-old instead of an embryo, if they can only choose one. The best response to this dilemma comes from Robert George, professor at Princeton University and Christopher Tollefsen.

Their article was posted at The Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> We agree that considering the case as described by Sandel, most people in Jones's circumstances would choose to rescue the girl. However, this by no means shows that human embryos are not human beings or that they may be deliberately killed to produce stem cells, or in an abortion.
>
> The first thing to notice is that the case as described is not, in fact, analogous to the suggestion that we should perform embryo-destructive research for the benefits it might provide us, or to the suggestion that it is permissible to abort an unborn human being. In both such cases, we are being invited to kill, or authorize the killing of, human embryos or fetuses in order to provide benefits to others. But in the fire scenario, there is no killing; the deaths of the embryos who are lost when Jones opts to save the girl are not killings—no one is acting to destroy the

> embryos or cause their deaths—but rather are the kind of death we accept as side effects in various cases in which, for example, acting to save one or some persons means that we are unable to save another or others.
>
> Second, there are differences between the embryos and the five-year-old girl that are or can be morally relevant to the decision concerning whom to rescue. For example, the five-year-old will suffer great terror and pain in the fire, but the embryos will not. Moreover, the family of the five-year-old presumably loves her and has developed bonds of attachment and affection with her that will mean much greater grief in the event of her death than in the event of the death of the embryos. While these concerns would not justify killing, they can play a legitimate role in determining how we may allocate scarce resources and, in some cases, whom we may or should rescue. Often, the (or at least a) morally correct decision cannot be made just on the numbers—a point that even utilitarians are willing to acknowledge. And so, for example, it is morally relevant in some cases where choices of whom to rescue must be made that a person we could save is (for example) our own son or daughter, even if saving him or her means that we cannot save, say, three of our neighbors' children who end up perishing in the fire from which we saved our own child.

The analogy, like Judith Jarvis Thomson's violin analogy, completely ignores the fact that in a pregnancy, the baby is created as a result of the decisions of the mother and the father of the baby. This is not some stranger, this is their child. And in the case of abortion, it's not being done to save a 5-year-old. I once heard of a case where a woman killed her unborn child so she wouldn't look fat on the beach, during her vacation. Hardly a morally sufficient reason.

I really liked this:

> The possibility that resources might be used and even, perhaps, lives risked to save the frozen embryos calls to mind the story with which we began our book *Embryo: A Defense of Human Life*. In 2005, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, a police crew in New Orleans *did* save a canister of fourteen hundred human embryos from a hospital. Our book began with Noah, one of those embryos, who sixteen months later emerged, via Caesarean section, into the light of the world and his parents' love. But if those officers had never made it to Noah's hospital, or if they had abandoned those canisters of liquid nitrogen, the toll of Katrina would have been fourteen hundred human beings higher than it already was, and Noah, sadly, would have perished before having the opportunity to meet his loving family.

The harm of abortion is exactly like the harm of murder in general… each act deprives a person of all of their future. And this against the victim's will, and without adequate moral justification.

An embryo has a unique genetic signature different from his mother, different from his

father. He is a different person, and, if given shelter and food, he will grow up just like any of us do. Is it such a terrible thing to give food and shelter to another human being, that was created as a direct result of the choices of grown-ups? We don’t get to resort to murder of others just in order to make our own lives easier, do we?

Bible study: what difference does the resurrection of Jesus make?

October 22, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here's an article from Bible.org, written by famous New Testament manuscript expert Dan Wallace. (H/T Eric Chabot, Ratio Christi OSU)

There is a lot in this article, but I'll just snip out one that I think is interesting.

First, what does the Old Testament say about the doctrine of the resurrection in Judaism?

> The resurrection of the dead was not *plainly* revealed in the OT until very late in salvation history. It was not until the Jews were taken in captivity, in the sixth century BC, that this was clearly articulated. Daniel 12:1-2 is the principal text: it speaks of the resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous:
>
> At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (RSV)
>
> Why was it not *clearly* revealed till then? It was not revealed until there was a *felt* need for it. When the Jews had no present (because of the captivity) they had to look to the future. The revelation of the resurrection came at precisely the time when the people of God needed *hope* for the future.
>
> What is significant about this is how masterful are God's insights into human nature. In the NT era, one religious group in Palestine did not embrace the

> resurrection as a true doctrine: the Sadducees (cf. Mark 12:18)–that is why they were "sad, you see!" The Sadducees were in charge of the temple. They derived their income from the sacrifices. In a sense, they were the precursors to modern TV evangelists. They had it good! They were the rich aristocracy that ran the place.
>
> **Those who have it good in this life don't often long for the next. The Sadducees illustrate this. The resurrection is a truth especially precious to those who are poor and those who are hopeless. It is precious to those who long for heaven enough that earth holds no sway over them.**

This means something to me. I didn't grow up with parents who had any plan for me. I had to figure out what I was supposed to be doing with my life on my own, because they were both too busy doing their own things. This is true even to this day. After I became a Christian, there were many things that I wanted to achieve in this life. But for a variety of reasons, those most of those things never happened. I wanted to do great things for God, like getting married, having a family, getting a PhD and teaching computer science in a secular university. But things that I had intended to do for God just didn't happen the way I had hoped.

I often find myself thinking of Heaven, and having that eternal perspective on this life. One of the things that is the hardest to accept is that being a Christian makes many things I'd like to do a lot harder. It certainly didn't open any doors at school, or now, at work. I'm glad my salvation doesn't depend on achieving anything in particular. And I'm especially glad that my salvation doesn't depend on what anyone thinks of me. I find it almost impossible in this culture to get any respect by doing the things that I think are really important.

I think if a person were really successful at what they tried to do, then it would be really hard for them to give up living and go to be with Jesus. That's not a problem for me, though. If fact, if the resurrection were not true, then I wouldn't be able to say that my life was a very good life, measuring success the way people do.

The resurrection teaches correct apologetics methodology

Did you know that Jesus provided the resurrection as evidence for those who were skeptical of his claims to be God stepping into history?

Here's an article from Got Questions? on the "Sign of Jonah", which appears in the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

It says:

> The phrase "sign of Jonah" was used by Jesus as a typological metaphor for His future crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Jesus answered with this expression when asked by the Pharisees for miraculous proof the He was indeed the Messiah. The Pharisees remained unconvinced of Jesus' claims about Himself, despite His having just cured a demon-possessed man who was both blind and mute. Shortly after the Pharisees accused Jesus of driving out demons by the

> power of Satan, they said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.” He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here” (Matthew 12:38–41).
>
> To fully appreciate the answer that Jesus gave, we must go to the Old Testament book of Jonah. In its first chapter, we read that God commanded the prophet Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and warn its people that He was going to destroy it for its wickedness. Jonah disobediently ran from the Lord and headed for the city of Tarshish by boat. The Lord then sent a severe storm that caused the crew of the ship to fear for their lives. Jonah was soon thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish where he remained for “three days and three nights” (Jonah 1:15–17). After the three-day period, the Lord caused the great fish to vomit Jonah out onto dry land (Jonah 2:10).
>
> It is this three days that Jesus was referring to when He spoke of the sign of Jonah.

I often bring up the Sign of Jonah when I am dealing with Christians who don’t want to learn how to explain their faith to non-Christians persuasively. I’m glad that story is in there!

The resurrection is a very important part of the life of the Christian. I argued in this post that it makes a difference to your feelings about your own life, and it makes a difference to your case-making with non-Christians.

Silence about Clinton-Russia scandals shows mainstream media's bias

October 23, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Vladimir Putin shake hands, such a happy occasion

The leftist media has been desperately trying to find some evidence of Trump-Russia collusion, since Trump stole the election from their beloved Hillary. Nowhere is this more evident than in the media's continuous covering up for Hillary's Russia connections. But it's more than just the media covering up, it's the leftists in government, as well.

Here is the story from the center-left The Hill:

> Federal agents used a confidential U.S. witness working inside the Russian nuclear industry to gather extensive financial records, make secret recordings and intercept emails as early as 2009 that showed Moscow had compromised an American uranium trucking firm with bribes and kickbacks in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, FBI and court documents show.
>
> They also obtained an eyewitness account — backed by documents — indicating Russian nuclear officials had routed millions of dollars to the U.S. designed to benefit former President Bill Clinton's charitable foundation during the time Secretary of State Hillary Clinton served on a government body that provided a favorable decision to Moscow, sources told The Hill.
>
> **Rather than bring immediate charges in 2010, however, the Department of Justice (DOJ) continued investigating the matter for nearly four more years, essentially leaving the American public and Congress in the dark**

> **about Russian nuclear corruption on U.S. soil during a period when the Obama administration made two major decisions benefiting Putin's commercial nuclear ambitions.**

Do you remember who was attorney general back in 2010? That's right, it was Eric Holder under President Barack Obama. And the Obama administration decided that this connection between Hillary Clinton's Clinton Foundation and Russia was not worth doing anything about. Instead, you'll recall, the Obama administration weaponized government against conservative political groups, by targeting them for IRS sanctions. And ran assault weapons to Mexican drug cartels that were used to kill Border Patrol agents.

But that uranium scandal is not the only Clinton-Russia scandal. What about selling rights to AMERICAN uranium to the Russians?

Radically-leftist extremist Newsweek reports:

> When planning a trip to Moscow for a speaking engagement in June 2010, former President Bill Clinton reportedly tried to meet with an official who was part of a Russian state-run company seeking approval to purchase a uranium company with holdings in the United States. Instead, Clinton ended up meeting Vladimir Putin.
>
> A month prior to the trip, Clinton, whose wife, Hillary Clinton, was secretary of state at the time, asked the State Department if it had any "concerns" about a list of 15 people he intended to meet in Russia, The Hill reported Thursday, citing emails and government records.
>
> Among them was Arkady Dvorkovich, an aide to Russia's president at the time, Dmitri Medvedev, and a board director of Rosatom, the state-run atomic energy agency that was vying for a majority stake in Canadian company Uranium One. The company had mines in the United States, and if the deal went through, Russia would gain control of 20 percent of the U.S.'s uranium.
>
> The deal did win approval even though the FBI reportedly discovered that officials in Russia's nuclear industry were bribing an American uranium trucking company, indicating a potential national security threat.

That Uranium One deal did go through, and the Clinton Foundation got $2.35 million in donations from Russia, including $500,000 for a speaking fee for Bill Clinton. He spoke in Moscow, Russia. Uranium (used for making nuclear weapons) for cash. That's the real Russia scandal – the one that the mainstream media has said virtually nothing about.

Newsbusters explains:

> In a shock to no one, the liberal networks funded by taxpayers — PBS and NPR — have so far ignored the emerging new stories on the emerging new investigative stories on Russian involvement with the Clintons and the Obama administration. A Nexis search finds nothing there. PBS and NPR have hammered on Russia over the last two days, but only as it deals with the Trump angle.

But wait! There's more! This isn't even the latest Clinton-Russia scandal. Remember how the mainstream media reported on the findings of a Trump research dossier during the election? Well, did you ever ask yourself who funded that dossier?

Fox News explains:

> On the same day, Oct. 4, that the House Intelligence Committee subpoenaed three employees of the opposition research firm Fusion GPS to testify in the Trump dossier investigation, the committee also subpoenaed TD Bank for Fusion's bank records.
>
> Now, according to a source familiar with the situation, Fusion has asked a U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., judge to prevent the bank from complying with the subpoena.
>
> The move comes just days after two of those three Fusion employees asserted their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination rather than answer questions about the dossier. A third subpoenaed Fusion employee, founder Glenn Simpson, has not yet appeared before the House.
>
> The committee's intention in sending the subpoena to TD Bank is to see if Fusion's bank records shed light on who financed the Trump dossier. That is one of the two most important questions in the dossier investigation — the other being whether any U.S. intelligence or law enforcement agencies used the unverified dossier as a basis for surveillance applications to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court.
>
> Fusion has flatly refused to provide any information on its funding to either House or Senate investigators. The two officials refused to answer all questions from the House this week, and in an appearance before Senate Judiciary Committee investigators in August, Simpson also refused to answer the question.
>
> It is not unprecedented for Congress to subpoena bank records. As a general rule, according to congressional investigators, banks usually comply without much fuss. But of course, this is not a routine case.

Wow, the Trump-Russia dossier creators took the fifth, rather than *incriminate themselves* by telling who funded it. Who could it be? Who stood to benefit most if Trump won the election? The Washington Times has reported that donations to the Clinton Foundation have dried up now that Clinton is no longer in a position of political power.

During the writing of this post, I found another scandal – this one reported in the New York Post, about Hillary Clinton's former campaign chairman John Podesta. He's involved (75,000 shares) with a company that "received $35 million from the Russian government while Clinton served as secretary of state."

If you haven't heard about any of these scandals, maybe that should tell you something the mainstream media's bias against reality. All the news that fits their Democrat politics, they print.

Pastor Mark Driscoll explains reality of sin, the centrality of Jesus Christ

October 24, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Mark Driscoll has a series he does called “Best Sermon Ever”, where he invites other pastors to give their sermons. But today’s sermon really is the Best Sermon Ever, but it’s given by Mark Driscoll (sent to me by super-Wife McKenzie). I asked McKenzie to send me the best sermon she had ever heard, and now it’s the best sermon that I have ever heard.

As always, when dealing with Mark Driscoll, we note that he does not hold women accountable to the Bible on moral issues, but instead deflects responsibility for the bad decisions of women to men, often to non-Christian men who don’t even have objective morality . Nevertheless, I agree with him 99.9% of the time, and I think you will agree when you listen to the sermon that this man has a gift for preaching. I could not find a single thing wrong with this sermon, I give it a score of 12 billion out of 10.

This is the link to his web site that has the sermon, the audio and the full transcript. The title of the sermon is “The Father of a Murdered Son”.

This is a Youtube video that someone uploaded: (audio only)

Here is the beginning of the sermon:

> Luke 20:9–18, “The Father of a Murdered Son.”
>
> “And he,” that is Jesus, “began to tell the people this parable,” which is a small story that tells a big truth. “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he

> sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.'
>
> "But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.' And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him."
>
> Jesus here is on his way to Jerusalem. He is days from his crucifixion. He is going to be murdered in a brutal and bloody way. And as he's approaching the cross and the crowds have gathered around him, he wants us to see human history and our lives individually from the perspective of God.
>
> And this is very important because we live in a day where this is not encouraged. This is actually discouraged. We live in a day in which we want to see our lives and history from our perspective according to our own sinful desires and our own selfish pursuits, which can then even lead us to the point of questioning, is there a God? Or if there is a God, questioning the goodness of God. Is there a God? Does he care? Is he involved? Does he love us? And then we put ourselves in the position of judging God.
>
> And then some of us can even go to the Scriptures and say, "I don't think God should ever get angry. He should never judge anyone. That whole issue of hell seems highly unnecessarily and over-reactionary. Perhaps, that was primitive teaching from a former day, thankfully we've evolved beyond that." And it's because we are the guilty looking at the judge and wanting to replace our position with his that we might judge him.
>
> **WHO DOES EACH CHARACTER IN THE PARABLE REPRESENT?**
>
> Jesus here wants for us to have an opportunity, in as much as we're able, with a three-pound, fallen brain and sinful proclivity and self-interest to put a hat on and to look at things, not from our perspective, but from God's perspective, to see our lives as God sees them, to see human history as God sees it. Now we're not God, so we have a limited capacity to do this. But in telling this parable, Jesus is trying to open our understanding to what it is like for God to deal with you and me and us. And he does so in the form of a parable.
>
> For us to extract significant meaning from the parable, it requires that we go through, look at each of the characters and ask, to whom does that refer?

I can't really excerpt this sermon. You simply must listen to all of it.

If you are anything like me, this sermon is going to hold you accountable about whether you are doing everything you can to tell non-Christians about Jesus, and why his actions are the most important events ever to occur in history. I listened to it and I immediately sat down and wrote an 1100 word essay to *very* special woman about my life, and how I would like to be more faithful as a Christian in service to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In particular, I thought of my co-workers who are Muslim, Hindu and Jewish, and how important it is for me to let them know that they can ask me about the story of Jesus and that I will tell them the gospel. It made me think about how much I would like my non-Christian co-workers to hear the gospel, and understand who Jesus claimed to be, and the significance of his actions.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

October 25, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.

20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University

> physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

October 26, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

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So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

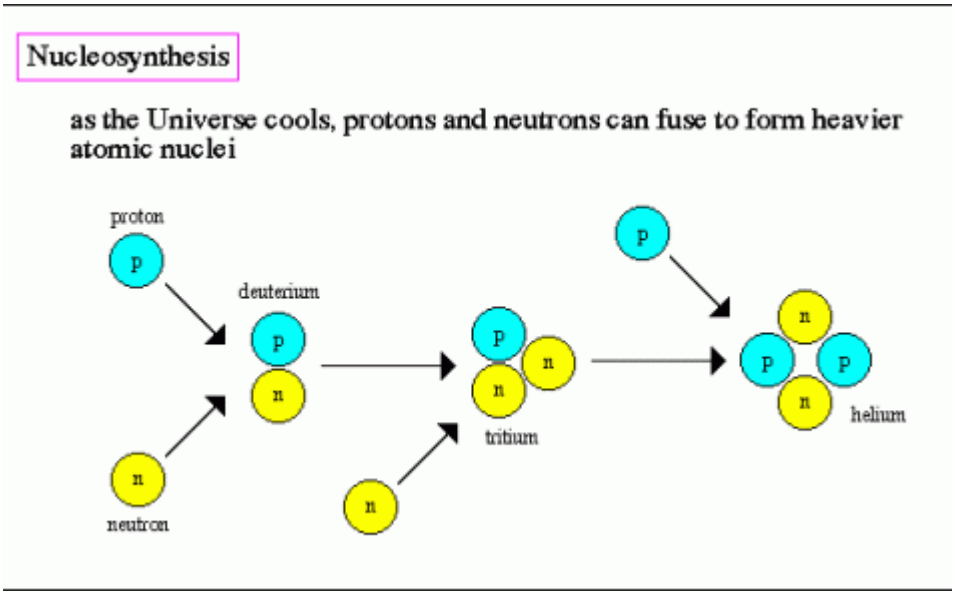

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major

> triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 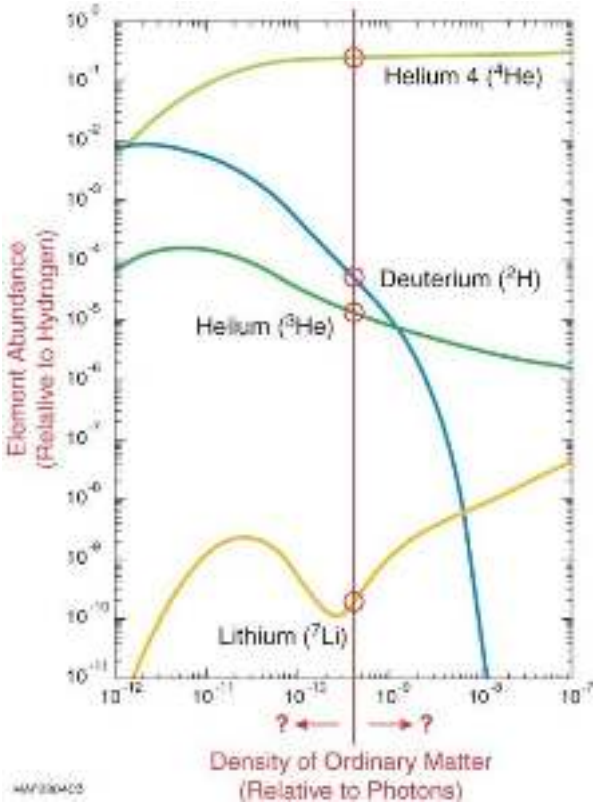
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-

> based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

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Ontario, Canada government bans pro-life sidewalk counselors

October 27, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kathleen Wynne and Justin Trudeau

My friend Mary from Marin tweeted this, and I thought it was worth sharing. Imagine you were a pro-life taxpayer in Ontario, and you donated money to the provincial conservatives. Then you read this story, reported by Life Site News.

Excerpt:

> Ontario's legislators passed a bill criminalizing pro-life speech and expression outside abortion clinics today by a vote of 86-1.
>
> MPP Jack MacLaren, a member of the Trillium Party, cast the sole dissenting vote.
>
> PC Conservative MPPs Sam Oosterhoff, Monte McNaughton and Rick Nicholls were not in the House for the vote.
>
> The far-reaching Bill 163 automatically outlaws all pro-life activity — including sidewalk counselling and showing "disapproval" of abortion — within 50 meters of Ontario's eight abortion centers, a distance that can be increased to 150 meters on request.
>
> Bill 163 also allows hospitals, pharmacies, and healthcare facilities that do abortions, including providing the abortion pill — to apply for "bubble zones" banning all pro-life activity of up to 150 meters.
>
> Individuals convicted of breaching Bill 163 face a fine of up to $5,000 and jail

> sentence of up to six months, which increases to a fine of up to $10,000 and a jail sentence of up to one year for a second and subsequent conviction.
>
> Campaign Life Coalition blasted the Ontario MPPs for passing the bill.
>
> “This law, which was drafted by Planned Parenthood and their allies in the abortion business, using feeling-based anecdotes and hearsays, lacked any real evidence that backed their claims of the war-like atmosphere outside abortion facilities,” said Jim Hughes, national president of Campaign Life Coalition.
>
> “This law is the first step in silencing and criminalizing speech that is not the official opinion of the state. The whole process of fast-tracking this bill, and slandering pro-life people throughout, was a shame.”

With help from the “conservatives”, who ask pro-lifers for donations:

> Liberal Attorney General Yasir Naqvi introduced the bill on October 4. PC Party leader Patrick Brown declared the same day that he was pro-abortion and supported the bill, and PC MPP Lisa MacLeod introduced a motion the next day to expedite the bill.

There was NO EVIDENCE of any wrongdoing:

> But pro-life blogger Patricia Maloney obtained through a freedom of information request a record of Ottawa police attendance at the Morgentaler abortion center from January 2014 to June 2017.
>
> “There were a total of 64 police reports for this period, most of which most were false alarms, cancelled calls, administrative issues, and other minor issues,” Maloney wrote.
>
> “In this three-year, five-month period, there were exactly two level 1 assaults (minor injury or no injury). It is unknown if the assaults were perpetrated against pro-life or against pro-choice people.”
>
> Maloney spoke with Constable Chuck Benoit at the Ottawa Police Service who confirmed the two “level 1” assaults in that period, on October 25, 2016, and May 28, 2017.
>
> “All the other incidents were run of the mill police work,” she wrote.
>
> “I was told that neither of these assaults resulted in injuries, and no one was charged with anything. So why do we need this bubble zone? Why did Jim Watson initiate this law?” Maloney noted.
>
> “Because he doesn’t like pro-life people. He prefers to treat us like second class citizens. If we try and discuss pro-life concerns with him, either by email or in person, his disgust for us is clear.”

In Ontario, pro-lifers are good enough to pay taxpayers for the salaries of fascists, but not good enough to have free speech. There is no free speech in Canada – and now disapproval of atheistic morality gets you fines and jail time. That’s how far intolerance of

dissent has gone in one of the most socialist areas in the world. In the beginning, religious people voted for big government to get the free health care. Now, they are reaping what they sowed.

Canadian Christians loved to boast about how much more compassionate they are than those crazy American Christians, with their guns and their private health care. Well, enjoy your socialism. It turns out that it’s very hard to keep your religious liberty when a big government is controlling the commanding heights of the culture.

New discovery: ancient Old Testament fragment is identical to copy 2,000 years later

October 28, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

A new discovery of an ancient text fragment was reported in the CTV News, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The charred lump of a 2,000-year-old scroll sat in an Israeli archaeologist's storeroom for decades, too brittle to open. Now, new imaging technology has revealed what was written inside: the earliest evidence of a biblical text in its standardized form.
>
> The passages from the Book of Leviticus, scholars say, offer the first physical evidence of what has long been believed: that the version of the Hebrew Bible used today goes back 2,000 years.
>
> The discovery, announced in a Science Advances journal article by researchers in Kentucky and Jerusalem on Wednesday, was made using "virtual unwrapping," a 3D digital analysis of an X-ray scan. Researchers say it is the first time they have been able to read the text of an ancient scroll without having to physically open it.
>
> "You can't imagine the joy in the lab," said Pnina Shor of the Israel Antiquities Authority, who participated in the study.
>
> […]**Scholars have believed the Hebrew Bible in its standard form first came about some 2,000 years ago, but never had physical proof, until now, according to the study. Previously the oldest known fragments of**

> **the modern biblical text dated back to the 8th century.**
>
> **The text discovered in the charred Ein Gedi scroll is "100 percent identical" to the version of the Book of Leviticus that has been in use for centuries, said Dead Sea Scroll scholar Emmanuel Tov from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who participated in the study.**
>
> **"This is quite amazing for us," he said. "In 2,000 years, this text has not changed."**

The article mentioned the Dead Scrolls, which were earlier copies of some of the Old Testament books that we have today. In this case, there was a long gap between these early Dead Sea Scrolls documents, and the earliest copy that we had prior to the Dead Sea Scrolls. How much had changed in the period in between?

This article from Probe Ministries explains:

> The Dead Sea Scrolls play a crucial role in assessing the accurate preservation of the Old Testament. With its hundreds of manuscripts from every book except Esther, detailed comparisons can be made with more recent texts.
>
> The Old Testament that we use today is translated from what is called the Masoretic Text. The Masoretes were Jewish scholars who between A.D. 500 and 950 gave the Old Testament the form that we use today. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947, the oldest Hebrew text of the Old Testament was the Masoretic Aleppo Codex which dates to A.D. 935.{5}
>
> With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now had manuscripts that predated the Masoretic Text by about one thousand years. Scholars were anxious to see how the Dead Sea documents would match up with the Masoretic Text. If a significant amount of differences were found, we could conclude that our Old Testament Text had not been well preserved. Critics, along with religious groups such as Muslims and Mormons, often make the claim that the present day Old Testament has been corrupted and is not well preserved. According to these religious groups, this would explain the contradictions between the Old Testament and their religious teachings.
>
> After years of careful study, it has been concluded that the Dead Sea Scrolls give substantial confirmation that our Old Testament has been accurately preserved. The scrolls were found to be almost identical with the Masoretic text. Hebrew Scholar Millar Burrows writes, "It is a matter of wonder that through something like one thousand years the text underwent so little alteration. As I said in my first article on the scroll, 'Herein lies its chief importance, supporting the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition.'"{6}
>
> A significant comparison study was conducted with the Isaiah Scroll written around 100 B.C. that was found among the Dead Sea documents and the book of Isaiah found in the Masoretic text. After much research, scholars found that the two texts were practically identical. Most variants were minor spelling

> differences, and none affected the meaning of the text.
>
> One of the most respected Old Testament scholars, the late Gleason Archer, examined the two Isaiah scrolls found in Cave 1 and wrote, “Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”{7}
>
> **Despite the thousand year gap, scholars found the Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls to be nearly identical. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide valuable evidence that the Old Testament had been accurately and carefully preserved.**

Now, if you listen to skeptics, agnostics and atheists, you would think that nothing in the Bible is reliable, because the stories were supposedly changed over time, and sometimes intentionally. That’s the message that popularizers like Bart Ehrman sell to a public audience that is hungry to dismiss the Bible. He likes to talk about the supposed distortions that have crept in, because all we have are “copies of copies of copies of copies”. But if you take a look at the hard evidence, rather than Bart’s rhetoric, then you get a very different picture of what really happened.

I think this is an exciting opportunity for people who dismissed the Bible as hopelessly unreliable to think a second time about whether there might be a message in there that tells us who God is, how he has interacted with people in the past, and what he expects from us today. For those who are open to the demands of a two-way relationship with the Creator, the Bible is the place to start.

More and more women are asking why they can't find a good man to marry

October 29, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

In the last few months, I've met 5 different Christian women in their 30s who all asked me the same question: where are all the good men who want to marry me?

Christian men's rights blogger Dalrock had two different posts where he described the answer to this question.

Here is the first post from Dalrock that concisely illustrates the problem:

> As I wrote in A very long season, feminists don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husbands than absolutely necessary. As if to prove this very point, 30 year old Mona Chalabi writes in the NY Times* I Want My 2.3 Bonus Years:
>
> If I could prolong my time as a young adult by, say, 2.3 years, here is a list of things I would like to do:
>
> • Go to more parties. Preferably wild parties that I can think about, years later, at mild parties.
>
> […]• Have more romantic partners.
>
> […]• Get a bit higher up the career ladder a bit earlier on. That would probably boost my earnings, giving me more financial security. I could use that money to go to more parties, get a membership to a fancy gym and maybe even meet a romantic partner on the ab machines.
>
> To drive the message home, the image at the top of the article is a cartoon of a

> resentful Chalabi giving her future husband the side eye for her lost years of sampling penises!

Surely, this must be an isolated case just for New York Times feminists, right? It's not widespread, is it?

Second post from Dalrock:

> Margaret Wente at the Globe and Mail* asks where all the good men have gone. Wente comes to the conclusion that women need a sex cartel:
>
> …it's up to us to make the rules. "Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" my father used to say. It drove me crazy when he said that. Now, it's dawned on me that he was right.
>
> Since the women's cartel collapsed, women's bargaining power has seriously eroded. That's why so many single women hate Tinder, which has further commodified sex for the benefit of men. Women are just another consumer good in the shop window.
>
> The apex fallacy aside, Wente is partially right. Women (as a group) have signaled to men that what they really want are exciting sexy badboys, not boring loyal dudes. **It isn't that women no longer want to marry beta providers, they just don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husband than absolutely necessary.**
>
> As a result, some up and coming boring loyal dudes aren't knocking themselves out in their twenties while they wait for their future wife to tire of having sex with other men.

If you wonder why men are no longer performing in school, and exchanging careers for video games, the answer is simple. Men have realized that young women today, under the influence of feminism, are not interested in traditional husbands during their late teens and 20s. During these years, women are interested in travel, fun, drinking, hook-ups and cohabitation with amoral atheists. This is what I have personally observed. In the minds of young women, the highest value men are good-looking men who have no religion, and make no moral judgments, and are left of center politically – especially on abortion. There are many good men who are romantic about women from their youth, and want to get married. But when they see what young women really want, they just give up on school and work, since doing the traditional male roles has no value to young women. Many good men even give up on morality and Christianity because they want a relationship with a woman so badly.

More from second post:

> What Wente doesn't understand is that timing is everything. From an economic point of view, women are dividing up sexual access that traditionally would have been reserved only for their husband into two blocks. The first block contains their most attractive and fertile years, and it is dedicated to no strings sex with

> exciting badboys. Then, once women reach what Rollo calls the epiphany phase, they want to bargain sexual access in their remaining (older and less fertile) years for maximum beta bucks.
>
> The problem with this strategy is (generally speaking) not that the previously overlooked beta men will refuse to marry the suddenly reformed party girls. The problem is that young men now look at the men 3-5 (and even 5-10) years older than them and don't see an indication that signaling provider status will make them attractive to women. They also see a society that holds married fathers in contempt**. Most of these men are still working hard in their late teens and twenties to prepare to signal provider status in their 30s. But a growing minority of young men are no longer doing so. These men are instead working like women. Once the reformed party girls are ready to find Mr. Beta Bucks, there is a shortage of 30 something men who fit the bill. Even worse, no amount of complaining or shaming will cause the missing beta providers to go back in time and spend the prior decade preparing for this moment.

I'm one of the last men who followed the marriage-preparedness script for traditional men who wanted to marry and have four children and have a stay-at-home homeschooling mom to raise them from birth to graduate school. I find myself now in my early 40s, with a 6-figure income and a nearly 7-figure net worth. I declined to use those assets to play the field with hot bad girls, preferring instead to keep my sexual past completely clean for my eventual wife. However, what I observed in my late teens and 20s and even early 30s was a complete lack of interest in marriage ability, from non-Christian women and Christian women alike. Christian women aren't learning to value early marriage from their married parents or their evangelical churches. None of the traditional husband skills are valued by young women, i.e. – chastity, gapless resume, alcohol abstinence, undergraduate and graduate STEM degrees, experience nurturing and mentoring others, stewardship of earned income.

I recently caused an uproar on my Facebook page by saying that even if the perfect woman showed up right now to marry me, I would not pursue her because the critical time where the woman could have applied maximum youth, beauty and fertility as a wife to make an impact on my education, early career, health, and finances has passed. A younger woman develops value to her husband precisely by applying herself to him and to her family in these critical early years. Men who have experienced this self-sacrificial love and support are loyal to their wives even after their wives lose their youth and beauty. Why? Because the men know that they are much better than they could have been, having enjoyed that early investment of value made by their young wives.

Young women very supportive of premarital sex

As Christian writer Matt Walsh notes in a recent article at the Daily Wire, this "follow your heart" focus on happiness in women is lethal to marital stability, and men know it.

Excerpt:

> There was an article in *Cosmo* this week with a title that summarizes all that's wrong with *Cosmo* and modern society as a whole: "I eloped at 25, divorced at 26, and dated my way across Europe all summer." Of course, by "dated my way across Europe" she means that she slept with half the continent.
>
> The author, Elise, says she "started fighting" with her husband and within a few months they both decided that their differences were irreconcilable. Despite counseling, she says, "neither of us was happy." So, exhausted from 12 whole months of marriage, Elise embarked on a voyage of self-discovery and STD cultivation. She met random dudes in half a dozen countries and had sex with them, learning quite a lot as she went, though she can't really explain what exactly she learned or why sex was a necessary component in learning it. Finally, she came home and started dating some other guy. The end.
>
> Well, not really the end. 20 years from now I'm sure we'll get the follow up article: "I'm alone and miserable and it's everyone's fault but mine." **After all, you may be able to fill the emptiness in your soul with frivolous sex when you're young and physically desirable, but that phase is fleeting. People who don't want to "waste" their beauty and youth on a spouse, so they waste it instead on strangers who don't love them or even care what happens to them tomorrow, will be shocked when a tomorrow comes where even strangers aren't interested anymore. This is where the single-minded, utterly selfish pursuit of "happiness" at all costs inevitably leads: to rejection, despair, and a quiet, unnoticed death on a lonely hospital bed.**
>
> As Elise helpfully demonstrated, "do what makes you happy" is poison in a marriage. Many a vow has been broken because one or both partners decide to

> chase “happiness” instead of commitment, fidelity, and love. “I deserve to be happy,” reports the legion of serial divorcees, as they drift on to the next spouse, and the next, and the next, and the next, looking for the one — *the* one, finally — who might cure the misery they’ve inflicted on themselves. Increasingly unhappy, yet increasingly convinced that they deserve to be.

And this follow your heart to happiness situation is alive and well in the church today. Marriage-minded Christian men who have prepared for husband roles are surprised to find that there is often little or no difference between Elise and the Christian women the church produces. Christian men who desire to invest in a marriage that is stable, productive and influential have nowhere to turn for a wife who is able and willing to help. In my experience, the problem with happiness-focused women who delay marriage is never discussed in churches from the pulpit. The “good men to marry” that today’s 30-something women are looking for were plentiful back when those same women were in their early-to-mid 20s.

Is belief in a Creator / Designer compatible with belief in Darwinian evolution?

October 30, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

What should we make of theistic evolutionists telling us that you can *believe* in God, while still *knowing* that matter, law and chance fully explain the development of all of biological life?

Consider this quotation from Phillip E. Johnson.

Quote:

> The National Academy's way of dealing with the religious implications of evolution is akin to the two-platoon system in American football. When the leading figures of evolutionary science feel free to say what they really believe, writers such as Edward O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Carl Sagan, Steven Pinker, Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Lewontin and others state the "God is dead" thesis aggressively, invoking the authority of science to silence any theistic protest. That is the offensive platoon, and the National Academy never raises any objection to its promoting this worldview.
>
> At other times, however, the scientific elite has to protect the teaching of the "fact of evolution" from objections by religious conservatives who know what the offensive platoon is saying and who argue that the science educators are insinuating a worldview that goes far beyond the data. When the objectors are too numerous or influential to be ignored, the defensive platoon takes the field. That is when we read those spin-doctored reassurances saying that many scientists are religious (in some sense), that science does not claim to have proved that God does not exist (but merely that he does not affect the natural world), and that science and religion are separate realms which should never be mixed (unless it is the materialists who are doing the mixing). Once the defensive platoon has done its job it leaves the field, and the offensive platoon goes right back to telling the public that science has shown that "God" is permanently out

> of business.
>
> (Phillip E. Johnson: “The Wedge of Truth”, IVP 2000, pp. 88-89).

So what naturalistic scientists believe is that God didn’t do anything to create the diversity of life – that nature does all of its own creating without God. In fact, it doesn’t matter if the best naturalistic explanation is improbable or implausible – naturalists *must* bitterly cling to materialistic explanations of natural phenomena. Any doubts about the efficacy of naturalistic mechanisms get met by “theistic evolutionists” – scientists who think that science shows that God didn’t do anything in the history of life.

When it comes to discussing origins, you have to be very careful with theistic evolutionists. The one question they want to avoid is whether science, done in the ordinary naturalistic way, can discover evidence of intelligent agency in the history of the development of life. And that’s why you have to ask them that question *first*. “Is there any scientific evidence that intelligent causes were active during the history of the development of life on this planet?” Their answer to that is the same as atheists, namely: “there is no scientific evidence that intelligent causes are responsible for the effects we see in the history of life on Earth”. Theistic evolutionists and atheists agree on that: as far as pure scientific evidence is concerned, nature can do its own creating without any intelligence writing genetic code or engineering animal body plans.

Now, take a look at this article by Jay Richards. He cites some theistic evolutionists.

Excerpt:

> Biologist Ken Miller:
>
> For his part, [Ken] Miller, a biologist, has no qualms about telling us what *God* would do: “And in Catholicism, he said, God **wouldn’t** micromanage that way. ‘Surely he **can** set things up without having to violate his own laws.'”
>
> I am unaware of any tenet of Catholic theology that requires God not to micromanage. It is, however, a tenet of deism.

Got that? What really happened is that God didn’t do anything. How does he know that? From the science? No. Because he assumes naturalism. Oh, it’s true that he *says* that God is lurking somewhere behind the material processes that created life. But God’s agency is *undetectable* by the methods of science. And he is hoping that you will accept his subjective pious God-talk as proof that a fundamentally atheistic reality is somehow reconcilable with a robust conception of theism.

More from Richards:

> Then we get Stephen Barr offering his private definition of “chance.”

> It **is possible** to **believe** simultaneously in a world that is shaped by chance and one following a divine plan. “God is in charge and there’s a lot of accident,” said Barr, also a Catholic. “It’s all part of a plan. . . . God **may have** known where every molecule was going to move.”

What does Barr really believe? He believes that what science shows is that nature created life without any interference by an intelligent agent. Barr then offers believers his subjective pious God-talk to reassure them that evolution is compatible with religion. He has a *personal belief* – NOT BASED ON SCIENCE – that the material processes that created all of life are "all part of a plan". He cannot demonstrate that from science – it's his *faith commitment*. And more speculations: "God may have known…". He can't demonstrate that God did know anything *from science*. He is just offering a personal opinion about what God "could have" done. The purpose of these subjective opinions is to appease those who ask questions about what natural mechanisms can really create. Can natural causes really account for the development of functional proteins? Never mind that – look at my shiny spiritual-sounding testimony!

That's theistic evolution. What really happened is that no intelligent causes are needed to explain life. What they say is "God could" and "God might" and "I pray" and "I attend this church" and "I received a Christian award" and "I sing praise hymns in church". None of these religious opinions and speculations are relevant to the science – they are just opinions, speculations and biographical trivia. Atheists and theistic evolutionists agree on what science shows about the diversity of life – *intelligent causes didn't do anything*.

Front-loading?

One of the ways that theistic evolutionists try to affirm design is by insisting that the design is "front-loaded". The design for all the information and body plans is somehow embedded in matter.

Here is Stephen C. Meyer to assess that:

It's very important to understand that there is no *scientific evidence* for design (information) being front-loaded. So although the theistic evolutionists are talking about design, it's still in the realm of faith – not detectable to scientific investigation. And as Dr. Meyer explained, it doesn't work to explain design anyway.

I attended a Wheaton College philosophy conference where Dr. Michael Murray read a paper advocating for this front-loaded view of design. I raised my hand to ask him a question, "hey, philosophy guy, did God front-load the information in that paper you're reading, or did you write it yourself?" But the philosophy moderators must have known that I was an engineer, and would talk sense into him, because they never called on me. However, I did e-mail him later and asked him if he had any evidence for this front-loading theory, and couldn't God write sequence information in time the same way he had sequenced information in his essay. He replied and said that front-loading was more emotionally satisfying for him. That's philosophy, I guess. Thank goodness an engineer wrote his e-mail program so that he could at least come clean about his silly view.

The quickest way to disarm a theistic evolutionist is to ask them for a naturalistic explanation of the origin of life. And for a naturalistic explanation of the Cambrian explosion. And so on. Focus on the science – don't let them turn the conversation to their personal beliefs, or to the Bible, or to religion. No one cares about the psychology of the theistic evolutionist. We only care what science can show.

Reformation Day celebrates the supremacy of Scripture and reason in theology

October 31, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Martin Luther defies the Roman Catholic hierarchy with his 95 Theses

The Ligonier Ministries web site has a summary of the event that kicked off the Reformation.

Excerpt:

> On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther tacked up 95 theses on the church door at Wittenberg. With this act, he hoped to provoke a discussion among the scholars about the abuses of the indulgences by the Roman Catholic Church. He was not trying to create a public furor by any means, but within a fortnight, these theses had spread through the country like wildfire. The last thing Luther had in mind was to start some kind of major controversy, but nevertheless major controversy did begin.
>
> From the discussions at Wittenberg, the disputations began to accelerate and escalate. Copies of the theses reached Rome and critical meetings were scheduled with the young monk. In these debates, Luther was maneuvered into proclaiming publicly that he had questions about the infallibility of church councils and also that he thought that it was possible that the pope could err. In 1520 a papal encyclical was issued which condemned Martin Luther as a heretic. Luther burned the document in a public bonfire and his defiance before the church was now a matter of record.
>
> In response, Martin Luther picked up his pen to challenge the entire penitential system of the Roman Catholic Church, which undermined in principle the free remission of sins that is ours in the gospel. By doing so, he was unswervingly advocating his commitment to *sola fide*, the doctrine of justification by faith alone.
>
> In 1521, Luther was summoned to the Imperial Diet, an authoritative meeting

> that involved the princes of the church, called by the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire to be held in the city of Worms in Germany. Luther was an outlaw. For him to appear at the Diet was to risk his very life; therefore, he was given safe conduct by the Emperor to attend. With a few friends, Luther traveled from Wittenberg to Worms. The eyewitnesses of that episode tell us that when Luther's little covered wagon appeared around the corner of the bend, there were lookouts posted in the church tower at Worms. All the people were agog waiting for the arrival of this notorious person. When Luther's caravan was sighted, people were throwing their hats in the air, blowing trumpets, and creating all the fanfare of the arrival of the hero. It was the 16th century answer to a ticker-tape parade.
>
> Things, however, became very solemn in a hurry because the next day he appeared before the Diet. His books were stacked on a table in the room, and he was asked and ordered to recant of his writings. This surprised Luther because he thought he was going to have an opportunity to defend his writings; but the only question really of any importance that was asked of him was this: "Are these your writings?" And when he said yes, they said, "Are you ready to recant of them?"
>
> Hollywood has their version of Luther standing there boldly with his fist in the air saying, "Here I stand!" and so on. But instead he dropped his chin on his chest and muttered something that nobody could understand, so they asked him to speak up. "What did you say?" He said, "May I have 24 hours to think about it." And so Luther was granted a reprieve of 24 hours to return to his room to contemplate the seriousness of this occasion.
>
> The prayer that Luther wrote in that ensuing 24-hour period was one of the most moving prayers I have ever read in my life. In that prayer, Luther cried out for God in his sense of total loneliness fearing that God had abandoned him, and proclaimed, "O Lord, I am Thine, and the cause is Thine, give me the courage to stand."
>
> And on the morrow, Luther was called once again back to the court and was told to reply to the question. He said to the Diet, "Unless I am convinced by sacred Scripture or by evident reason, I cannot recant, for my conscience is held captive by the Word of God, and to act against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me." And with that there was an instant uproar.

The Protestant Reformation emphasizes the responsibility of each person to become familiar with what the Bible teaches for themselves and to make sense of it using the laws of logic for themselves. There is an enormous focus on the individual's responsibility to puzzle theology out for himself, using the tools available to him: reason, science, Scripture, and history. When doing theology, Protestants do not accept the authority of someone who has a fancy title, fancy hat, fancy robe or fancy staff. Everyone is

responsible to read the Bible, read systematic theology, consult history, and determine what the truth is based on evidence, not authority.

The Reformation put forward the famous five Solas: “Sola Scriptura” (Scripture Alone); “Sola Gratia” (Grace Alone); “Sola Fide” (Faith Alone); “Solus Christus” (Christ Alone); and “Soli Deo Gloria” (To God Alone Be Glory). The vertical relationship with God is seen as more important than making people feel good here and now. True beliefs about God are deemed to be more important than being a good social worker. And that’s why Jesus said that the most important commandment is to love God, then secondly, to love your neighbor. It’s important to get that in the right order, because true beliefs about God’s existence, God’s character, and God’s actions in history are the most important things.

The Reformation was the beginning of evangelical Protestantism, which is really the view that the Christian religion ought to be rooted in actual historical events that are documented in the Bible.

William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech

November 1, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Making sense of the meaning of atheism

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video. The essay is for Christians already familiar with basic apologetics.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Here's a quick couple of quotes from the essay for those who cannot watch:

> If there is no God, then any ground for regarding the herd morality evolved by homo sapiens as objectively true seems to have been removed. After all, what is so special about human beings? They are just accidental by-products of nature which have evolved relatively recently on an infinitesimal speck of dust lost somewhere in a hostile and mindless universe and which are doomed to perish individually and collectively in a relatively short time. Some action, say, incest, may not be biologically or socially advantageous and so in the course of human evolution has become taboo; but there is on the atheistic view nothing really wrong about committing incest. If, as Kurtz states, "The moral principles that govern our behavior are rooted in habit and custom, feeling and fashion,"[5] then the non-conformist who chooses to flout the herd morality is doing nothing more serious than acting unfashionably.
>
> The objective worthlessness of human beings on a naturalistic world view is

> underscored by two implications of that world view: materialism and determinism. Naturalists are typically materialists or physicalists, who regard man as a purely animal organism. But if man has no immaterial aspect to his being (call it soul or mind or what have you), then he is not qualitatively different from other animal species. For him to regard human morality as objective is to fall into the trap of specie-ism. On a materialistic anthropology there is no reason to think that human beings are objectively more valuable than rats. Secondly, if there is no mind distinct from the brain, then everything we think and do is determined by the input of our five senses and our genetic make-up. There is no personal agent who freely decides to do something. But without freedom, none of our choices is morally significant. They are like the jerks of a puppet's limbs, controlled by the strings of sensory input and physical constitution. And what moral value does a puppet or its movements have?
>
> […]Moreover, if atheism is true, there is no moral accountability for one's actions. Even if there were objective moral values and duties under naturalism, they are irrelevant because there is no moral accountability. If life ends at the grave, it makes no difference whether one lives as a Stalin or as a saint. As the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky rightly said: "If there is no immortality, then all things are permitted."

If you want a much shorter, slicker version of this argument to share, Reasonable Faith has produced this nice 5-minute video that you can tweet or share on your Facebook page or whatever:

The moral argument is the easiest argument in the world to discuss with non-Christians, as everyone has to have an answer to questions like "what makes humans valuable?" and "why should I do the right thing when it goes against my self-interest?" and "will evildoers who escape justice in this life be punished when they die?" and "do humans have free will to make moral choices?" These are interesting questions, and people can just give their opinion and then think about it as they discuss it.

If you want to show this lecture and Q&A to your apologetics group, you can find the DVD here.

You can also read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor. I found this debate very helpful for answering the question that everyone should be able to answer: "why should I be moral?"

Survey of scientific literature finds that children need their mom for first 3 years

November 2, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Child grabs for his mom, who is leaving for work

Recently, an article published in the Wall Street Journal reported on research survey done why a far-left Democrat psychotherapist based in far-left New York City. Surprisingly, her book caused an uproar among the author's left-wing allies. How come?

Excerpt:

> Motherhood used to be as American as apple pie. Nowadays it can be as antagonistic as American politics. Ask Erica Komisar.
>
> Ms. Komisar, 53, is a Jewish psychoanalyst who lives and practices on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. If that biographical thumbnail leads you to stereotype her as a political liberal, you're right. But she tells me she has become "a bit of a pariah" on the left because of the book she published this year, "Being There: Why Prioritizing Motherhood in the First Three Years Matters."
>
> […]The premise of Ms. Komisar's book—backed by research in psychology, neuroscience and epigenetics—is that "mothers are biologically necessary for babies," and not only for the obvious reasons of pregnancy and birth. "Babies are much more neurologically fragile than we've ever understood," Ms. Komisar says. She cites the view of one neuroscientist, Nim Tottenham of Columbia University, "that babies are born without a central nervous system" and "mothers are the central nervous system to babies," especially for the first nine months after birth.
>
> What does that mean? "Every time a mother comforts a baby in distress, she's actually regulating that baby's emotions from the outside in. After three years, the baby internalizes that ability to regulate their emotions, but not until then."

> For that reason, mothers “need to be there as much as possible, both physically and emotionally, for children in the first 1,000 days.”

What’s interesting about this is how the left responds to the science. You might have heard that the left is very fond of science, but veterans of debates about God’s existence know that people on the left tend to be hostile to science that goes against their view: the Big Bang cosmology, cosmic fine-tuning, biological information, irreducible complexity, molecular machines, habitability, etc. And early childhood education is no exception.

More:

> Christian radio stations “interviewed me and loved me,” she says. She went on “Fox & Friends,” and “the host was like, your book is the best thing since the invention of the refrigerator.” But “I couldn’t get on NPR,” and “I was rejected wholesale—particularly in New York—by the liberal press.” She did appear on ABC’s “Good Morning America,” but seconds before the camera went live, she says, the interviewer told her: “I don’t believe in the premise of your book at all. I don’t like your book.”
>
> […]Ms. Komisar tells of hosting a charity gathering for millennials at her apartment. One young woman “asked me what my book was about. I told her, and she got so angry. She almost had fire coming out of her eyes, she was so angry at my message. She said, ‘You are going to set women back 50 years.’ I said, ‘Gosh, I wouldn’t want to do that.’ ”
>
> […]The needs of children get lost in all this—and Ms. Komisar hears repeatedly that the hostility to her message is born of guilt. When she was shopping for a literary agent, she tells me, “a number of the agents said, ‘No, we couldn’t touch that. That would make women feel guilty.’ ” Another time she was rejected for a speaking gig at a health conference. She quotes the head of the host institution as telling her: “You are going to make women feel badly. How dare you?”
>
> […]**“The thing I dislike the most is day care,” she says. “It’s really not appropriate for children under the age of 3,” because it is “overstimulating” given their neurological undevelopment. She cites the “Strange Situation experiments,” devised in 1969 by developmental psychologist Mary Ainsworth, a pioneer of attachment theory: “A mother and the baby are on the floor playing. The mother gets up and leaves the baby in the room alone. The baby has a separation-anxiety response. A stranger walks in; the baby has a stressed reaction to the stranger.”**
>
> […]Researchers sample the infant’s saliva and test it for cortisol, a hormone associated with stress (and inversely correlated with oxytocin). In a series of such experiments in which Ms. Komisar herself participated, “the levels were so high in the babies that the anticipation was that it would . . . in the end, cause disorders and problems.” In a more recent variant of the experiment, scientists

> use functional magnetic resonance imaging to look directly at the brain of an infant reacting to photos of the mother and of a stranger.

I spoke to a millennial co-worker in my office who is very proud of his strong feminist views. His wife just had a baby, and they stuck the baby in daycare after 3 months so that she could go back to work. I did speak to him about what the research says (daycare and public school studies are a hobby of mine!), but I try to only disagree with him on one thing at a time, and right now, we're disagreeing about cohabitation and marital stability. It's amazing how confident millennials are about taking positions on things like daycare, cohabitation, public schools, etc. without ever having consulted the relevant peer-reviewed science.

Let's look at one of the studies, to see some evidence.

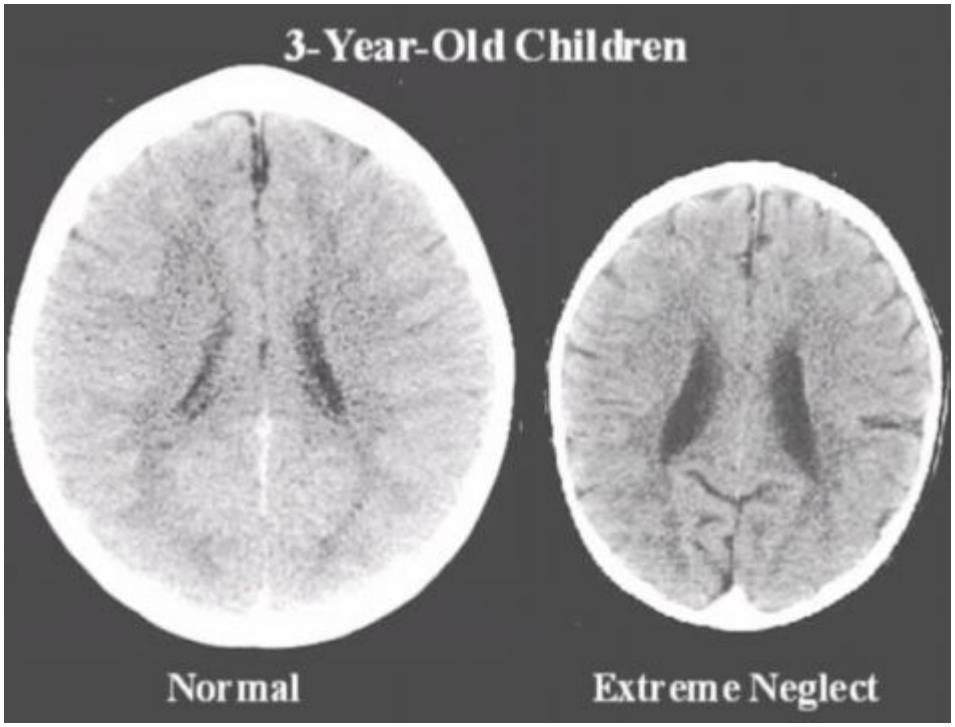

Brain scans of 3-year old children: normal vs neglected

The UK Telegraph reported on a recent study that measured the brain development of 3-year-old children.

Excerpt:

> Take a careful look at the image of two brains on this page. The picture is of the brains of two three-year-old children. It's obvious that the brain on the left is much bigger than the one on the right. The image on the left also has fewer spots, and far fewer dark "fuzzy" areas.
>
> To neurologists who study the brain, and who have worked out how to interpret the images, the difference between these two brains is both remarkable and shocking. The brain on the right lacks some of the most fundamental areas present in the image on the left. Those deficits make it impossible for that child to develop capacities that the child on the left will have: the child on the right will grow into an adult who is less intelligent, less able to empathise with others,

> more likely to become addicted to drugs and involved in violent crime than the child on the left. The child on the right is much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on welfare, and to develop mental and other serious health problems.
>
> […]The primary cause of the extraordinary difference between the brains of these two three-year-old children is the way they were treated by their mothers. The child with the much more fully developed brain was cherished by its mother, who was constantly and fully responsive to her baby.
>
> The child with the shrivelled brain was neglected and abused. That difference in treatment explains why one child's brain develops fully, and the other's does not.
>
> […]Professor Allan Schore, of UCLA, who has surveyed the scientific literature and has made significant contributions to it, stresses that the growth of brain cells is a "consequence of an infant's interaction with the main caregiver [usually the mother]".
>
> The growth of the baby's brain "literally requires positive interaction between mother and infant. The development of cerebral circuits depends on it."
>
> Prof Schore points out that if a baby is not treated properly in the first two years of life, the genes for various aspects of brain function, including intelligence, cannot operate, and may not even come into existence. Nature and nurture cannot be disentangled: the genes a baby has will be profoundly affected by the way it is treated.

I always like to consult the findings of science to find out the right way to achieve a goal. This puts off some prospective mates, who want to avoid planning and preparation so they can ride a roller-coaster of emotions and just do whatever they want to be happy in the moment. But in every other area of life, I've found that doing things the right way always involves studying and planning, then careful execution of a plan. Nobody passes an exam by going clubbing when they should be studying. Going clubbing is more fun "in the moment", but studying always gets better results.

In this case, it's very clear that keeping a mother at home for the first three years of each child would require some earning and saving by me, since men are the principal providers. And I expect that women who are looking for husbands to raise their children with will look for men who have made preparations to give the young children what they need. Not everything a man does is about looks and fun – there are real requirements here. It's very important for young people to prepare for marriage and raising children by working backward from what the science says about children's needs.

The more you read about the science, the less wiggle-room there is for feelings. Doing the right thing (saving money for a stay-at-home mom) is hard because it feels bad. But when you inform yourself with science, it makes it easier to override your bad feelings, because you know you're doing the right thing to achieve a result. If you can't bring yourself to prepare now to do things right later, then you should read more science, and

that might make it easier to do the right thing.

Debating forgiveness: must a person admit wrongdoing before being forgiven?

November 3, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

I've listened to this debate three times because I liked it so much. I even ordered Chris' book for my best friend Dina. She has listened to the debate, and is currently split between the two debaters. I am in firm agreement with the pastor Chris, although Remy has some useful things to say that I agree with.

Here's a link to the debate page on Moody Bible Institute's "Up For Debate" program with Julie Roys.

Details:

> **Should Christians Forgive No Matter What?**
>
> Should Christians forgive someone even if he's not sorry? Or does true forgiveness require repentance and a desire to reconcile? This Saturday, on Up For Debate, Julie Roys will explore this issue with Chris Brauns, a pastor who believes forgiveness requires repentance, and Remy Diederich who believes it does not.

Although I disagree with Remy, I only disagree with him about whether the guilty person must admit guilt and feel remorse and make restitution (depending on the severity of the offense). I agree with him on other things like no revenge, attitude of love, expressing willingness to forgive and be reconciled, etc. I also disagree with Remy on "forgiving God", which I think is just crazy, because when God is engineering a person's salvation, he never fails. I think that God is the Great General, and his strategies never fail to achieve the outcomes he desires (while still respecting free will). Whatever suffering or inadequacy or longing that you experience as a Christian is not some sort of mistake,

horrible as it may be for you at the time. God is not your cosmic butler, although a lot of people these days seem to think that he is, and then they get disappointed.

Anyway, please listen to that debate and comment on it about who you think is right. I think my view (and Chris' view) is in the minority in the church, because the church is so utterly *dominated* by feelings and radical feminism. I think my view (and Chris' view) is the masculine view – the view that upholds moral standards, sets moral boundaries and defends the rightness of making moral judgments.

Below, I have pasted in some of my other thoughts on forgiveness from a previous post.

I think this is the key passage – Luke 17:3-4:

> 3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.
>
> 4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

That's Jesus speaking, there.

Also, I was having a debate with someone who disagrees with all this, and while debating with her, I thought of another example.

Luke 18:9-14:

> 9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:
>
> 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.
>
> 11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.
>
> 12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'
>
> 13 But the tax collector,standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'
>
> 14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So again, no forgiveness without repentance.

Forgiveness is what happens when someone who is sinned against treats the sinner as if he had never sinned. It is not on the balance sheet. It is not brought to mind. It is not held against them in the future. The forgiver trusts the sinner again as if the previous sin had never happened.

In divine (vertical) forgiveness, there is no forgiveness without repentance. There are

Bible verses above to show that.

My argument is twofold. First, there is a clear teaching of Jesus explaining the sequence of sin and forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness, between humans (Luke 17:3). The verses cited by the forgive without repentance crowd don't show the mechanics of how to forgive, they are making the point that if you want God to forgive you, you should forgive others. The parable in Luke 18:9-14 affirms this again – repentance always precedes forgiveness.

Second, we have an obligation to imitate God, and that means imitating the way he forgives those who sin against him. When I raise that with the unconditional forgiveness crowd, they want to insist that there is a difference, that the word "forgive" means different things. I'm not convinced.

Finally, I do think that forgiving someone is obligatory if they sincerely repent, and even if they screw up again and again. So long as the repentance is sincere, (like if there is restitution and a genuine effort to show an understanding how the sin affected the wronged party in writing), then forgiveness should be automatic. Depending on how bad the sin is, there maybe be more to do than just say "I'm sorry". If the repentance is genuine, then I think the person who is sinned against must forgive, if they expect to be forgiven by God for the things they repent of.

Alan E. Kurschner adds one final point about the unconditional forgiveness view. He argues that there is serious textual doubt about the originality of Luke 23:34a, a text used by the pro-unconditional-forgiveness crowd. He has a journal article coming out on it, but a synopsis of his argument is here.

He also wrote this in a comment on this blog:

> Second, on Matt 6:15, this is what I have to say. Notice the then-clause: "neither will your Father forgive your sins." This would require universalism on the Father's part according to the unconditional interpretation given the first half: "But if you do not forgive others their sins." Since everyone has wronged the Father is the Father required to forgive everyone even if they are not seeking forgiveness?

So I think the case for the forgiveness being conditional on repentance is pretty strong, especially when serious harm has been caused.

New study: the majority (69%) of divorces are initiated by women

November 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this "I'll do what I want" attitude compatible with life-long married love?
This new report from Live Science gives us some numbers about who initiates divorces most frequently.

It says:

> Women are more likely than men to initiate divorce in the United States, but they are no more likely than men to initiate breakups in a dating relationship, a new study finds.
>
> "The breakups of nonmarital heterosexual relationships in the U.S. are quite gender-neutral and fairly egalitarian," study author Michael Rosenfeld, an associate professor of sociology at Stanford University, said in a statement. "This was a surprise because the only prior research that had been done on who wanted the breakup was research on marital divorces."
>
> Previous research had found that women are more likely to initiate divorce, at least in the United States, Europe and Australia. In the new study, Rosenfeld compared divorces to nonmarital breakups, in an effort to understand the driving forces behind each type of breakup.
>
> To investigate, he looked at data from the 2009 to 2015 waves of How Couples Meet and Stay Together, a nationally representative survey spearheaded by Rosenfeld and his colleagues. The new study includes 2,262 adults, ages 19 to 64, who reported having opposite-sex partners in 2009. By 2015, 371 of the participants had broken up or gotten divorced.

> Women initiated 69 percent of the 92 divorces, Rosenfeld found. But there was no statistically significant difference between women and men when it came to nonmarital breakups, regardless of whether they were living together, he said.

The Ruth Institute reports on a few studies:

> Female unions seem to have the highest divorce rates, followed by male unions, followed by opposite sex unions.
>
> "For Sweden, the divorce risk for partnerships of men is 50% higher than the risk for heterosexual marriages, and that **the divorce risk for female partnerships is nearly double that for men."**
>
> "For Norway, **divorce risks are 77% higher in lesbian partnerships than in those of gay men."** (The Norwegian data did not include a comparison with opposite sex couples.)
>
> In California, the data is collected a little differently. The study looks at couples who describe themselves as partners, whether same sex or opposite sex. The study asks the question, how likely is it that these couples live in the same household five years later. **Male couples were only 30% as likely, while female couples were less that 25% as likely, as heterosexual married couples, to be residing in the same household for five years.**

It really seems as if there is something about women in particular that causes them to be unable to keep to commitments *in their actions*, despite what they might say *with their words*.

So I am seeing a couple of problems in young, unmarried women that might explain this.

Feminism is bad

First, there is the feminism. Feminism was the driving force behind no-fault divorce. Today, young unmarried women are being taught to view marriage as stifling to their freedom. So if they do get married, they are often resolved that marriage should not affect their freedom in any way. That is just not the way marriage works, though – both spouses need to be equally ready to have their freedom infringed upon by things that HAVE TO GET DONE. Lots of things that have to get done will not be fun, thrilling or amusing – and that's why it's good to be prepared to do them before you marry.

My friend Dina says that she only knows one happily married couple from among her friends. The most frequent case she sees is wife is working in order to pay for big house, two cars, etc. and wife is denying husband sex, which makes him disengage from the marriage. A working wife tends to not be as responsive to the needs of husband and kids as a non-working wife, probably in part due to work stress. There is an epidemic of sex-withholding by women, and it causes men to disengage from marriage because they feel unloved. Although women tend to rebel against the idea that the man's bad behavior is their fault, and that there is a "contractual" nature to marriage, that is how marriage works. You cannot stay married, women, by just doing whatever you feel like, and NOT

doing whatever you DON’T feel like. Men will disengage when their needs are not supplied, and that’s no fault of theirs. It’s your fault. Denying relationship obligations causes men to underperform.

Feminism is often linked closely to “independence”. There is a lot of confusion over what the word independence means among young, unmarried women. A man uses that word to mean “lack of financial dependence on parents, the state, etc. because of good decisions in education, career and finances”. But a woman means “not having to care about the needs of a man and the leadership of a man, or the needs of children while still getting what I want from men and children”. That attitude is not compatible with life-long married love.

Emotions are bad

Second, emotions. In my experience, young, unmarried women are less likely to have reasoned out their own life plan in a practical step-by-step manner. Instead, they tend to do whatever makes them feel good moment-by-moment without any realistic plan. One Christian woman was recently telling me how attracted she was to an atheist moral relativist who had been promiscuous from the age of 15. She explained that her emotions were kindled by his GQ looks, 6-pack abs, mysterious European accent, seductive manner and witty conversations. Although she is apparently a Christian, she doesn’t take Christianity seriously in her decisions about relationships and marriage.

Peer-approval and culture play a large part in determining what women think is attractive in a man, as well as their life goals, and women are driven by these cultural standards more than men who focus on honoring their commitments *regardless* of their emotions. In my experience, women struggle to make their day-to-day actions match their socially-acceptable goal of getting married “some day”. Marriage is for “some day” for today’s busy women, but fun and thrills is for today. “Live in the moment”, they often tell me. If you try to talk to them about roles and responsibilities in a marriage, they will withdraw and rebel. But marriage is about each spouse doing his or her job, and feeling content about what the couple is building together. You can’t make life-long married love from emotional craziness and pursuing fun and thrills with seductive promiscuous moral relativist atheists.

How to pick a woman who won’t divorce you

Young men, I advise you to choose wives who have had to do things that they did not feel like doing. That can involve things like getting a STEM degree, getting a job in STEM, moving out of her parents’ house, getting a “boring” job that helps her pay off her debts, keeping commitments when she doesn’t feel like it, and caring for other people and even animals.

Basically, the more the woman has ground down any narcissism and hedonism she may have, by having to do nasty calculus and horrid lab work, the better. The more accustomed she is to constraints, responsibilities, expectations and obligations, the less likely it is that she’ll divorce you for unhappiness. And all of this goes for men, as well. STEM degree, STEM job, save money, serve others, give to charity.

Marriage is not the time for people to be carried away by their emotions. It’s an enterprise, and it works when both people are rational, practical, hard-working and self-controlled.

William Lane Craig explains how to structure a conversation with an atheist

November 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man teaching a woman how to shoot a firearm accurately

It's from his latest question and answer on the newly redesigned Reasonable Faith website.

Here's the question in brief:

> I must say I feel completely defeated and I could use your help and insight. I had a discussion over God's existence tonight and totally botched it!! I feel I did a dis-service to the reasonableness of the Christian worldview.
>
> I've been studying apologetics for quite some time. I felt I knew the material pretty well. Now I'm not so sure. Dr. Craig, I know you're one of the great Christian debaters. When you were younger, did you ever feel you completely botched a debate and felt like a failure? That is how I feel right now!!

Dr. Craig's response, in part:

> So right at the beginning of the conversation, when he says that he is an atheist, it would be important to understand exactly what he means by that. Is he just agnostic or does he claim to know that God does not exist? If the latter, what justification does he have for so radical a position? You might comment on how difficult it is to prove that God does not exist and so express your interest in hearing his arguments against the existence of God. If he just says that "*there's no real evidence for the existence of God*," that's a perfect opening for you to

say, “Wait a minute! You’re a criminal analyst, right? As a criminologist, you must know that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. I want to hear your evidence against God.”

Or again, when he makes a claim like “*there’s no way to know if there’s absolute truth*,” you ought to be ready for such an assertion. Take out a pen and write his claim on a paper: “There’s no way to know if there’s absolute truth.” Then show it to him and ask, “Is that absolutely true?” If not, then is it just his opinion? If it is absolutely true, then how does he know it? Isn’t his position self-refuting? Be nice about it. Say, “I’m really trying to understand how your position isn’t self-referentially incoherent.”

When he says, “*not knowing is okay and we should be more willing to accept uncertainty*,” you should respond, “Have I ever claimed to know with certainty that God exists? I’m just saying that on balance God’s existence is more probable than not.” Ask him if he wouldn’t agree with that. If not, why not?

If he demands evidence of God’s existence, then you should be ready and waiting. I don’t get the impression, Marshall, that you have memorized any arguments and their respective premises. If you have them memorized, that’s the best antidote for becoming tongue-tied. You need to have memorized: “Why, I can think of at least five arguments for God’s existence!” When he says, “Yeah, like what?”, then you recite your list of arguments that you’ve memorized:

1. God is the best explanation for why anything at all exists rather than nothing.

2. God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe.

3. God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life.

4. God is the best explanation of objective moral values and duties.

5. The very possibility of God’s existence implies that God exists.

For the average unbeliever to hear even a list such as this is overwhelming. If he then wants to talk about one of them, recite from memory the premises of that argument, e.g.,

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.

2. Objective moral values and duties do exist.

3. Therefore God exists.

You may even want to write the premises out on a piece of paper for him to look at.

If anyone ever responds to your arguments by attacking or blaming you personally, like saying you “*must live with a lot of guilt and that’s why [you] probably feel the need for God*,” just smile and say, “Are you not familiar with the logical fallacy of argument *ad hominem*?” (It’s evident by this point that you’re dealing with a really snarky person and therefore can afford to be more confrontational.) “Even if what you said were true—which it isn’t—, it has no relevance to the soundness of my argument. If you want to deny the conclusion

> of my argument, then you must think that one of its premises is false. So I want you to tell me which premise you think is false and why." If you have these sentences memorized, you won't feel tongue-tied when he makes his accusations.

In my opinion, Dr. Craig left out a very important point, which is that you need to structure the conversation so that you major in the majors and purposefully set aside any discussion of minor issues. If your atheist wants to discuss whether she is going to Hell, you respond by explaining that Hell is only a problem if the New Testament is an accurate description of God, which depends on whether God exists at all. So we start with God's existence, and Dr. Craig's 5 arguments. And, as Dr. Craig says, we focus the atheist on the discussion of whether God exists, and what evidence he has against God's existence.

I would also say that you need to be ready to discuss the scientific evidence related to the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, habitability, etc. You need to be able to retrace the histories of the discoveries that lead the majority of scientists to accept this data, and name the scientists. That way, when your atheist denies your evidence, you can ask them why they hate science. This is the most powerful argument for theism, in my opinion – the opposition to mainstream science that atheists must necessarily commit to in order to be atheists.

Also, you need to know the minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus, which doesn't even assume that the Bible is inerrant or inspired or even generally reliable. And finally, you'll need to know how to spot a self-refuting claim and how to respond to philosophical objections to God's existence: the problem of evil, the hiddenness of God, physicalist conceptions of mind, etc. But the main point is that you are always on the topic of whether God exists, where your evidence is strongest, until you get that as a solid admission. Never move off that until you get that admission. The Bible should not be cited until you get a solid admission from your opponent on the existence of God.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Obama administration hid 470,000 Osama Bin Laden compound documents from the public

November 6, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Was Barack Obama focused on protecting the American people?

Stephen Hayes writes for The Weekly Standard primarily on foreign policy issues. His latest article explains what we've learned from the CIA's decision to release 470,000 documents captured in the raid on Osama Bin Laden's compound. Although the Obama adminstration claimed to have released all the documents, they only released 571 documents. Why would Barack Obama hide the other documents from the public? And what caused them to pick the 571 documents that they did release?

Only 571 documents released by Obama:

> On the penultimate day of the Obama administration, less than 24 hours before the president would vacate the White House, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper issued a press release meant to put to rest what had been a pesky issue for his office. "Closing the Book on Bin Laden: Intelligence Community Releases Final Abbottabad Documents," the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) announced. "Today marks the end of a two-and-a-half-year effort to declassify several hundred documents recovered in the raid on Osama bin Laden's Abbottabad, Pakistan, compound in May 2011." Accompanying the press release were 49 documents captured during the raid, bringing the total number of documents made public to 571.

Why not 470,571 – why only 571?

> In the weeks following the bin Laden raid, the documents went through an immediate interagency triage for actionable intelligence. That initial scrub

> yielded valuable information that led to the capture and killing of key al Qaeda associates. But then the documents sat, largely untouched, for months at a time. From that point on, the Obama administration's interest in the Abbottabad documents didn't extend much beyond their public relations implications. **Simply put, a fuller release of the cache would have fatally undermined the message that al Qaeda had been decimated and that the war on terror was being reduced to a few mopping-up exercises.**
>
> […]After Obama's reelection, the administration repeatedly shut down requests from Republican lawmakers, led by Rep. Devin Nunes, for access to the documents. Then the 2014 Intelligence Authorization Act turned those requests into a demand backed by law. That's the only reason the 571 documents were released. And that's where matters stood through the early months of the Trump administration.

The Trump administration has finally released ALL the documents.

What's in the documents?

> As Thomas Joscelyn details elsewhere in these pages, among them can be found documents describing al Qaeda's relationship with the Afghan Taliban; videos and photographs of senior al Qaeda operatives, including those running the terror network and its affiliates today; letters with new information on al Qaeda's web of relationships inside Pakistan; documents explaining the ways in which al Qaeda was adapting to U.S. targeting of its leaders; and the 228-page handwritten journal of the jihad kept by Osama bin Laden himself.

The Thomas Jocelyn piece is here, but I can't cover that, because I want to talk about the Iran – Al Qaeda connection.

It's not just the number of documents that's interesting, it's the fact that the Obama administration lied to the American public by trying to separate Al Qaeda from Iran.

This is important:

> The new materials make clear that ODNI sought to mislead the country not only about the size of the collection but about its contents, too. The January ODNI press statement claimed that the batch of 49 documents it was then making public "mirrors the themes in previous releases," chief among them Osama bin Laden's "hatred, suspicion of Iran." It was true that this was what previous ODNI releases claimed. But it is misleading in the extreme to pretend that the story of Iran and al Qaeda told through the captured bin Laden documents is solely one of hostility.
>
> Bin Laden had described Iran as the "main artery" for al Qaeda in one of the previously released letters recovered in Abbottabad. The details on Iran's support for al Qaeda, some of them buried until now, led to terrorist designations by the Treasury Department and even caused some intelligence analysts to revisit the

> assumption that the Shiite radicals in Iran wouldn't back the Sunni al Qaeda. In a 2011 interview, David S. Cohen, a senior Treasury Department official who went on to become deputy director of the CIA, described the intelligence, which detailed a network of financial support for al Qaeda that operated out of Iran: "There is an agreement between the Iranian government and al Qaeda to allow this network to operate," Cohen said. "There's no dispute in the intelligence community on this." Iran was providing a "core pipeline" of support that included safe haven for al Qaeda members and the facilitation of travel and the flow of money and weapons.
>
> Al Qaeda accepted this help warily, it is true, and the al Qaeda-Iran relationship is based on mutual interest rather than ideological or doctrinal affinity. But to ignore the secret agreement altogether—to set aside the years of collaboration and to elide bin Laden's own description of Iran as the "main artery" for al Qaeda, all in order to downplay the threat such an alliance presents—is a textbook case of cherry-picking.

The Obama administration covered up the Iran – AQ link so that they could make a deal to allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons. And give them $400 million of unmarked cash on pallets to help them along in their sponsorship of terrorism in the Middle East. This was the foreign policy of the last eight years under Barack Obama. And when you see people being raped and murdered by radical Islamic terrorists in the Middle East, you need to understand that this is what Democrat voters voted for. They wanted this to happen, and they voted for Obama to make it happen. It's very important that voters inform themselves carefully about national security and foreign policy matters, because how we vote affects so much of what happens in the world. We can't just be clowning around with ignorant liberal comedians on the Comedy Channel. We have to be more serious than that. This is America.

One of the reasons why the Trump victory in 2016 was so significant is that it did allow us to finally get the whole story on so many scandals that the Obama administration was covering up. We all know about the familiar scandals that were ignored by the far-left mainstream media: IRS persecution of conservative groups to help Obama get re-elected, running assault weapons to Mexican drug cartels to push a gun confiscation narrative, blaming the Benghazi terrorist attack on a YouTube video, etc. There was no lie too big for an administration run by leftist college students with no real-world experience. But just think of how close we came to never finding out the answers about all of these scandals.

Texas shooter was an atheist, mocked believers in God

November 7, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Richard Dawkins on atheism, morality, free will and human rights
I saw some images purportedly taken from his now-deleted Facebook page that showed that he liked a bunch of atheist pages, but I wanted to hold off until we had some actual comments from people who knew him personally.

This is from Daily Wire:

> According to former classmates of Devin Patrick Kelley, the 26-year-old man who killed 26 people and injured over 20 others in a church in Sutherland Springs, Texas on Sunday was an avowed atheist who mocked those who believed in God.
>
> DailyMail.com spoke with former classmates who attended New Braunfels High School with Kelley. They all told a similar story: Kelley — who had a history of violence and was given a "bad conduct" discharge from the Air Force — "preached atheism," acted "creepy" and "weird," and seemed to hold a "very negative" worldview.
>
> "He had a kid or two, fairly normal, but kinda quiet and lately seemed depressed," Kelley's former high school classmate Patrick Boyce told DailyMail.com. "He was the first atheist I met. He went Air Force after high school, got discharged but I don't know why. I was just shocked [to hear the news]."
>
> Another former classmate, Nina Rose Nava, told the outlet that Kelley "was different in school and creeped me out," but she added that she "never" would have thought he would do "such a horrific thing."
>
> […]"[I]n complete shock! I legit just deleted him off my [Facebook] cause I couldn't stand his post," wrote Nava. "He was always talking about how people who believe in God [were] stupid and trying to preach his atheism."
>
> Nava's impression of Kelley's posts were echoed by Christopher Leo Longoria, who said he "removed him off [Facebook] for those same reasons!" Longoria described Kelley as being "super negative all the time."
>
> Michael Goff agreed with Nava's opinion of Kelley, replying, "He was weird but never that damn weird, always posting his atheist sh** like Nina wrote, but damn he always posted pics of him and his baby — crazy."

He was only able to buy weapons because of two mistakes made by the Air Force, his former employer.

The NY Daily News explains:

> The Air Force blundered by not submitting Devin Kelley's criminal history to the FBI database used for gun background checks, as required, officials said Monday night.
>
> Kelley appears to have both lied and taken advantage of a loophole in federal firearms laws to purchase his weapons despite serving time in military prison for domestic violence.
>
> […]Kelley, 26, was pushed out of the military in 2014 after serving a year in the brig at Miramar Air Force Base in California.
>
> He was convicted in military court in 2012 of beating up his first wife and fracturing the skull of their young son, while assigned to Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico. She divorced him that same year.
>
> […]**Based on his plea under 18 U.S. Code section 922, Christensen said it would have been illegal for Kelley to possess or purchase a firearm.**
>
> **"It's also illegal because he was convicted of a domestic violence charge. So, for two reasons, he should not have had a gun."**

So, this is a case where government failed to do its job, and keep weapons out of the hands of a crazy atheist who hated Christians.

If there is a silver lining to Kelley's shocking evil, it's the story about the man who shot the atheist murderer. He is a Christian man, a marksman, a former NRA instructor, and the owner of a legal firearm.

The Washington Times explains:

> A former National Rifle Association instructor has come forward as the "good Samaritan" who shot and wounded the gunman who attacked the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas.
>
> Stephen Willeford, 55, has been hailed as a hero for confronting the shooter and forcing him to flee, but he insisted in an interview Monday that "I'm no hero."
>
> "I think my God, my Lord protected me and gave me the skills to do what needed to be done, and I just wish I could have gotten there faster," said Mr. Willeford told 40/29 News in Fort Smith-Fayetteville.
>
> […]Mr. Willeford, 55, said his daughter alerted him to the gunshots, after which he removed his rifle from its safe, loaded his magazine, and ran across the street to the church. He didn't even pause to put on his shoes.
>
> "He saw me and I saw him," said Mr. Willeford, adding that he stood behind a pickup truck for cover.
>
> Authorities said at a Monday evening press conference that the suspect, 26-year-old Devin Patrick Kelley, was hit twice in the confrontation.

I doubt that will be reported in the mainstream media – defensive use of guns by legal owners of guns is not popular with the progressive mainstream media. I'm sure we'll get

lots of stories demonizing the NRA, though. But I didn't see any Hollywood elites or progressive journalists defending the people in that church.

Objective morality on atheism?

Let's review what objective morality (moral realism) really means in practice for atheists. Does atheism provide a rational foundation for human rights and moral duties?

Let's see what Kelley says:

> In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.
>
> (Richard Dawkins, "God's Utility Function," Scientific American, November, 1995, p. 85)

Oh wait, that's not Kelley, that's Richard Dawkins. Atheists like Richard Dawkins think that morality is make-believe, and if they can get away with being immoral, (think Harvey Weinstein), then they will. Survival of the fittest. The strong abuse and kill the weak. It's "natural selection". That's what was printed on the t-shirt of another atheist mass murderer when he engaged in some love-your-neighbor (atheist style) at Columbine High School a while ago. Not every atheist is a crazy mass murderer, of course. But it's important for atheists to think seriously about whether they willing to take atheism seriously when it comes to morality. In a recent debate, Matt Dillahunty, who claims to be an atheist, wouldn't even condemn the Holocaust as evil. Why not? Because he takes Dawkins seriously about what morality is on atheism. It's make-believe.

It's very important for atheists to think through what sort of objective morality is possible in an accidental universe where there is no free will (to make moral choices), no life after death (where those who escape justice in this life face it in the next), no human rights or human dignity (because we're just randomly evolved meat machines), and no objective moral lawgiver to impose moral duties on us. Obviously, atheists living in the United States of America are going to inherit the Judeo-Christian values that were present when the country was formed. They're going to act better than their worldview in most cases. My worry is how will atheists act when push comes to shove and their self-interest comes up against moral intuitions that – on their own view – are just illusory?

Atheists, come over to the light side. We have cookies. And objective moral values and duties. You ought to want that! Don't be a Dick Dawkins.

Millennial snowflakes want socialism, but most of them cannot even define it

November 8, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Millennials love socialism and communism

I like to make fun of millennials on this blog, because in my interactions with them, I find that they have great confidence and self-esteem in their own opinions, even though they have seldom done any study of the issues they're confident about.

Campus Reform has a good example of millennial ignorance:

> More than four-in-ten U.S. millennials would prefer to live under socialism than capitalism, according to a new survey by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.
>
> When given the choice to pick a preferred system of government, 44 percent of millennials responded that they would rather live in a socialist country while another seven percent opted for a communist state. Capitalism, on the other hand, was preferred by 42 percent of millennial respondents, with the remaining 14 percent split evenly between fascism and communism.
>
> According to the study, pro-socialist sentiment is much higher among millennials when compared to the rest of the country, noting that 59 percent of Americans say they would rather reside in a capitalist country, with only 35 percent of respondents signaling a preference for a socialist state.
>
> Millennials were also about twice as likely as the general population to say they would prefer living in a fascist or communist country, with about seven percent choosing each option.

> "The percentage of Millennials who would prefer socialism to capitalism is a full ten points higher than that of the general population," the foundation observed in its report. "It seems that the majority of America's largest generation would prefer to live in a socialist or communist society than in a free enterprise system that respects the rule of law, private property, and limited government."
>
> The survey also found that millennials, along with most other Americans, "either don't know the definition of communism or misidentify it."
>
> […]Consistent with the other findings, the survey also revealed that millennials are least opposed to communist ideology when compared to other age groups.

Let's just take one example of this millennial ignorance.

The Daily Signal posted an article about a survey from last year on millennial attitudes towards communism.

Look at this:

> The survey also revealed a general lack of historical knowledge, especially among young adults. **According to the report, one-third (32 percent) of millennials believed that more people were killed under George W. Bush than under Joseph Stalin.**

Bush killed more people than Stalin? First of all, Bush's war was to liberate Iraq from radical Islam. You can see what happened when we pulled our forces out under Obama. Raped Yazidi sex-slaves, for one thing. Stalin killed *people who disagreed with him* – like the Ukrainian farmers I blogged about before. The number of war deaths in Iraq numbers in the tens of thousands, and most of those casualties are *enemy casualties*. I like dead terrorists, so that's not a liability for me. The number of deaths under Stalin is somewhere around 40 million, most of those were innocent people.

Here are the brilliant millennials saying what they've been taught to say so that people will be impressed:

They're just idiots. I wouldn't trust them to spit on the pavement.

There is some hope, though, that when millennials start paying taxes they flip their voting to free enterprise policies.

The Charlotte Observer explains:

> There is some evidence that this generation's views on activist government will stick. However, there is more reason to expect that support for their Scandinavian version of socialism may wither as they age, make more money and pay more in taxes.
>
> The expanded social welfare state Sanders thinks the United States should adopt requires everyday people to pay considerably more in taxes. Yet millennials become averse to social welfare spending if they foot the bill. As they reach the threshold of earning $40,000 to $60,000 a year, the majority of millennials come

> to oppose income redistribution.
>
> Millennials wouldn’t be the first generation to flip-flop. In the 1980s, 52 percent of baby boomers supported bigger government, and so did Generation Xers (53 percent) in the 1990s. Yet, both baby boomers and Gen Xers grew more skeptical of government over time and by about the same magnitude. Today, only 25 percent of boomers and 37 percent of Gen Xers continue to favor larger government.

Yeah, growing up has a way of making people into Republicans. That might be an argument for getting kids out of school and into work sooner, so that they grow up faster, and have grown-up beliefs about economics and taxation. I don’t even consider someone to be a grown-up until they’ve worked 5 years in the private sector. I’m really not sure why millennials think that their opinions are correct given that lack of life experience at grown-up tasks. Going to school and working in the public sector or not-for-profit sector are not grown-up tasks.

What is the root cause of multiple-victim public shootings?

November 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

Let's take a closer look at some recent active shooters, and see if we can find out what they have in common. And then we can decide whether the people who complain the most about gun violence are willing to do anything about the root cause of gun violence.

Let's start with this article from The Stream, which looks at 3 mass murderers:

> **Dylann Roof**: The killer of nine people in a Charleston, South Carolina church grew up in painful circumstances. His parents divorced when he was small. His father divorced his first wife after a few years of marriage. And he reportedly was abusive of his second wife, Dylann's step-mother.
>
> According to the Associated Press, "Court documents and nearly two dozen interviews show Roof's early childhood was troubled and confused as well, as he grew up in an unstable, broken home amid allegations of marital abuse and infidelity."
>
> **Stephen Paddock**: The man who slaughtered 58 concert-goers in Las Vegas was the son of a top criminal.
>
> Paddock's father was named Benjamin. He "was on the FBI's Top Ten Most Wanted list in the 1970s for robbing banks and was described as psychopathic in an arrest warrant. According to the warrant, the suspect's father carried a firearm and was considered 'armed and dangerous.'"
>
> Benjamin Paddock was arrested and put in prison. But "six months after his sentencing, he escaped and robbed a bank in San Francisco before being recaptured in Oregon."
>
> […]**Adam Lanza**: The son of divorce, the Sandy Hook Elementary School killer

> struggled with mental health issues for years.
>
> Lanza's parents divorced in 2009 after 28 years of marriage. Adam, then 17, was experiencing severe mental and emotional illnesses.

Three case studies are fine, but is this the general rule among active shooters?

The Federalist takes a look:

> As University of Virginia Professor Brad Wilcox pointed out back in 2013: "From shootings at MIT (i.e., the Tsarnaev brothers) to the University of Central Florida to the Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy in Decatur, Ga., **nearly every shooting over the last year in Wikipedia's 'list of U.S. school attacks' involved a young man whose parents divorced or never married in the first place."** His observation is largely ignored.
>
> In contrast, conversations about black-on-black violence often raise the link between broken households (or fatherless homes) and juvenile delinquency. But when the conversation turns to mass shootings, we seem to forget that link altogether.
>
> […]**On CNN's list of the "27 Deadliest Mass Shootings In U.S. History," seven of those shootings were committed by young (under 30) males since 2005. Of the seven, only one—Virginia Tech shooter Seung-Hui Cho (who had been mentally unstable since childhood)—was raised by his biological father throughout childhood.**

So what are some of the factors that lead to young men who have mental illness, anger issues, etc.?

Daycare

For one thing, young children's brains don't develop if they don't have their mothers at home for the first 2 years at least, and the study I linked to said 3 years. Mothers are essential, during this time, for developing the parts of the brain that allow empathy and self-control. Unfortunately, keeping the mom home during the crucial early years is rare, because feminism requires that she work in order to be like a man.

No-fault divorce

I also recently blogged about how easy it is to initiate divorce just because you are unhappy. Well, when parents divorce for no good reason, (after having chosen a spouse poorly), that has a very bad effect on the children. Although the divorce rate is dropping, that's because fewer people are marrying – they're cohabitating instead. The alternative to marriage, cohabitation, is far more unstable than marriage. Either way, children lose out from the decreased stability of their parent's union. The notion of lifelong commitment regardless of happiness is gone. Now we treat relationships as entertainment instead of enterprise.

So what should we do?

Well, to fix the daycare, we could give tax breaks to promote stay at home mothers. In

the two countries where that was tried (UK and Canada), it was opposed by the political left. The UK wanted to give tax breaks ONLY to working mothers, not to stay at home mothers. And Canada did not want to extend income splitting to cover stay at home moms. Why not? Because when women work, the state gets more money, and the children adopt the values of the state in the government-run public schools. So, there is a solution to daycare's bad influence on children, but the left opposes it.

And, to fix no-fault divorce, we could repeal no-fault divorce laws. Unfortunately no-fault divorce laws are strongly supported by powerful left-wing groups: trial lawyers and radical feminists. But they are also supported by women who don't want to think too hard about who they are "in love" with. I was once told by a divorced mother of four whose husband cheated on her that she would never dream of marrying without no-fault divorce. Another childless divorced woman whose ex-husband cheated on her (she suspects) told me that it is impossible to tell whether a man is faithful or not through courtship and interviews. So long as women see marriage as something to be entered into on feelings, and exited lightly, children will be raised fatherless. It doesn't help that we are subsidizing single motherhood with welfare and divorce courts that typically reward the the partner who initiates divorce (usually the woman). We could repeal no-fault divorce and single mother welfare, but again, the left opposes both of these things.

Leftist policies create the gun violence problem

As I've discussed before, the common denominator in all violent crime is that the violent criminal is male, and grew up without a father. The left pretends to be concerned with this, but they are not willing to address the root causes of the problem. They want more daycare, and they want it taxpayer-funded. They want universal pre-K, and they want it taxpayer-funded. They want to keep no-fault divorce, because it's just too much work for women to make wise choices in how they make sexual choices and who they marry. And they want more and more welfare for single mothers, because women who have babies before they have husbands should be rewarded by taxpayers who made better decisions. People on the left want to subsidize fatherlessness, in short. And whatever you subsidize, you get more of.

Fatherlessness is the root cause of crime and mass murders, and the left doesn't care about solving the real problem. It's ironic that the left looks to government to solve the problem that government has actually created, by destroying marriage and the family unit.

The importance of Christian men setting an example of benevolent authority

November 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

I think that children are more likely to accept theism if they have a father who is able to lead them in a loving, caring way. And I also think that children who grow up with an authoritiarian or absent or defective father are more likely to reject theism. The father needs to be strong. The father needs to be good. Otherwise, it's harder for the kids to believe in God.

Let's start proving this with a lecture from psychologist Paul Vitz:

Here's an article by Paul Copan (related to the lecture) which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own* rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]

Let’s look at some of them.

- *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of Francois-Marie Arouet.
- *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume’s biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
- *Baron d’Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
- *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
- Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx’s father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
- *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
- *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
- *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
- *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
- *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist’s father died before he was born.[12]
- *Madeleine Murray-O’Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.

We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:

- *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
- *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father (“the Commander”) was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens “didn’t hold much converse.” Once having “a respectful distance,” their relationship took on a “definite coolness” with an “occasional thaw.” Hitchens adds: “I am rather barren of paternal recollections.”[14]
- *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]

Moreover, Vitz’s study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in

> common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence of a psychological explanation for atheism, but there is also statistical evidence.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know.

> You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

So, I think we can make a case that anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have a more difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. They may not see the value of a relationship with someone who uses their power for to grow them and guide them. They may view the leadership of a powerful person skeptically, because they have been disappointed by father figures in their own lives.

I think the best way for a Christian man to to lead someone who is less powerful, is to explain why they want the person to grow in a particular dimension. Why are the moral boundaries there? Why is one course of action more practical than another? Why is it worth it to give up pleasure and do hard things? The experience of trusting male leadership as a child, and seeing it work out, helps a person keep their belief in God. In my own case, I trusted my Dad on things like saving and investing, studying computer science instead of English, living at home instead of going away to college, and many other things, and because I have seen that leadership produce dividends, it's much easier for me to accept that I can be a disciple of Jesus and trust him when things don't go my way. I am used to not getting my way right now, but having it work out well later. I have experienced it with my Dad.

Marine Captain earned Medal of Honor fighting communists in North Korea

November 11, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's go from the top down to set the context for the profile of William E. Barber.

Map of the Korean War

In the summer of 1950, North Korean communists launch a completely unprovoked attack across the 38th parallel against their peaceful, democratic neighbors, the South Koreans. The Americans immediately sent an invasion force by sea to drive them out. The North Koreans easily manage to take over the capital Seoul, and the allies are left with only one port in the southeast – Pusan. In September of 1950, American forces land an invasion force at Inchon, cutting off the North Korean invasion force surrounding Pusan. The North Koreans retreat, and there is hope that American forces will be home by Christmas. But then, unbeknownst to the Americans, the Chines communists invade North Korea from the north and surround the American forces near the Chosin reservoir, threatening to annihilate an entire Marine division.

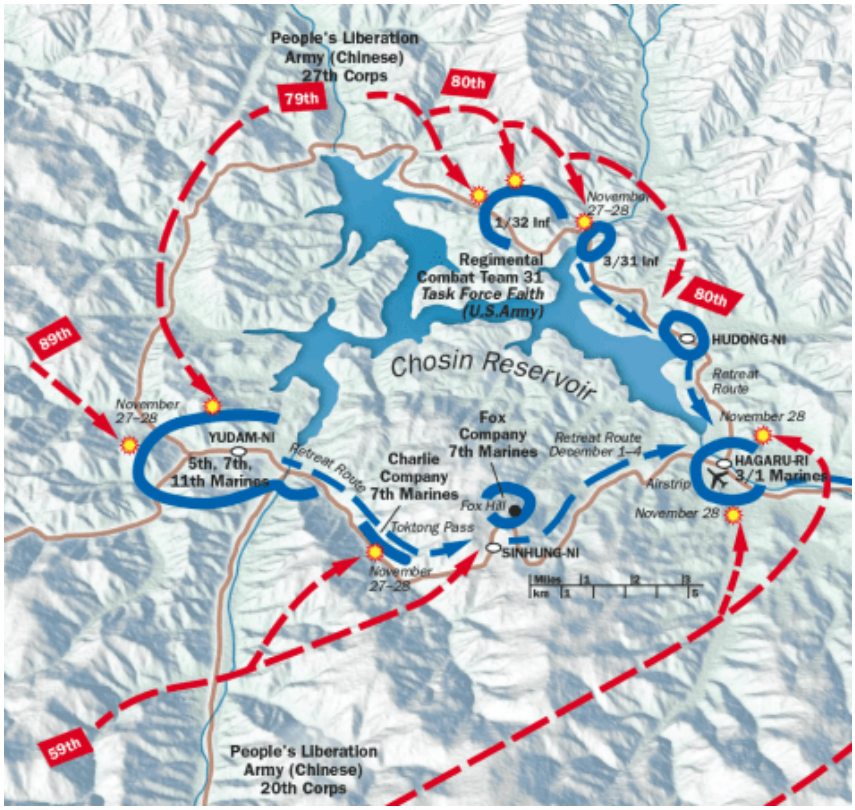

The Marines at Yudam-Ni are surrounded and must retreat to Hagaru-Ri

As you can see from the map, there are a whole bunch of American troops fighting to the north/east and south/west of the Chosin Reservoir. The marines near Yudam-Ni need to retreat along a road called the MSR (main supply road) back to Hagaru-Ri. But in order to conduct that retreat, they have to hold onto the vital Toktong pass, which is overwatched by Fox company from their position on Fox Hill. Can Charlie company and Fox company hold off the entire Chinese 59th division (10,000 men) with only two companies (about 250 men each)?

U.S. Marines “The Chosin Few”, December 1950

Well, the book I read (which Dina gave me for Christmas), was about Fox company and their defense of the Toktong pass. This is what the leftist New York Times had to say about the man in charge of Fox company (“F company”) in a 2002 article:

> Col. William E. Barber, who won the Medal of Honor for his leadership of a vastly outnumbered company under siege on a snowy hilltop in one of the worst defeats in Marine history, the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in 1950, died on April 19 at his home in Irvine, Calif. He was 82.
>
> The cause was bone-marrow cancer, said Jerry Courtier, a friend who hopes to write Colonel Barber’s biography.
>
> The reservoir is south of the Yalu River, which separates North Korea from China. After the Americans had pushed the North Koreans almost to the Yalu, 150,000 Chinese troops unexpectedly crossed the river into North Korea. Colonel Barber’s unit, Company F of the Second Battalion of the Seventh Marines, First Marine Division, was on a hill that commanded the Toktong Pass, a vital gap between Yudam Ni and Hagaru Ri, two towns separated by 78 miles.
>
> The stakes were huge. If F Company yielded its position, 8,000 marines at Yudam Ni would be cut off from the 3,000 at Haguru Ri by tens of thousands of Chinese troops.
>
> Through five days and six nights in subzero weather and often swirling snow, Colonel Barber, then a captain, inspired his men, outnumbered more than five to one, to cling to their tenuous positions. He was shot in a bone near his groin on the second day but continued to make the rounds of the hill. He likened the wound to a bee sting.
>
> When the unit was ordered to withdraw and fight its way to safety, Captain Barber refused. Three times, the enemy broke through the line, only to be repulsed.
>
> ”I knew that we could probably hold, and I knew that if we didn’t hold we could exact a very heavy toll,” he said in an interview in 1976 with The Los Angeles Times.
>
> His citation for the nation’s top medal said that he commanded his men from a stretcher. But Hector A. Cafferata Jr., who as a rifleman won the Medal of Honor in the same battle, insisted that Captain Barber refused the stretcher.
>
> ”He walked the line, he kept us together,” said Mr. Cafferata, who was beside Captain Barber when he was shot.
>
> In the mayhem, the Chinese blew whistles, beat cymbals and tooted bugles as they repeatedly attacked. Coffee froze before men could drink it, and some of the wounded died because plasma froze with no way to thaw it.
>
> When the battle was over, more than 1,000 enemy soldiers were dead. Of Captain Barber’s original 240 men, 82 were able to walk away.

> Gen. Raymond G. Davis, who was a lieutenant colonel in the Marines, received a Medal of Honor for leading the unit that rescued F Company.
>
> William Earl Barber was born on Nov. 30, 1919, in Dehart, Ky. He attended what is now Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky., for two years and enlisted in the Marines, at the age of 21, in 1940.
>
> He was so good at shooting a rifle that he was made a weapons instructor. After volunteering for parachute training, he demonstrated such proficiency that he became a parachute instructor.
>
> In World War II, he was promoted to sergeant in 1942 and commissioned a second lieutenant in 1943. He was a rifle platoon commander at Camp Pendleton, Calif., when his unit was shipped to the Pacific.
>
> Colonel Barber was in the first wave to hit Iwo Jima, where he was wounded twice. He received the Silver Star for bravery in addition to two Purple Hearts. At a ceremony on the 50th anniversary of the battle in 1995, he said:
>
> ”I am older now, as you are, but I can still see the colors of that February morning. The sky. The island. And sometimes I think I can hear the noise of battle.”
>
> He was treated in Japan for his wounds and returned to the United States, where he worked as a recruiter, among other positions. He was promoted to captain in 1949 and was in the force that occupied Japan.
>
> When he joined F Company in Korea, he saw a raggedy unshaven bunch and immediately ordered the the troops to shave, shine their shoes and look like marines. He suggested that his new charges resembled Pancho Villa’s bandits.
>
> ”He was one tough guy,” Mr. Cafferata said. ”He was by the book.”

He was by the book. He enlisted in the Marines because he was grateful to his country for allowing him to escape poverty and go into college, and he wanted to give something back.

You can read a review of the book I read about Fox company, and read about some of the details of what it was like for those men. You’ll never look at your own troubles the same way again. You can also read about Barber’s Medal of Honor citation here.

The Medal of Honor, Navy and Marines variant

So, now that I am done with that book, I have moved on to another Korean War book that Dina gave me, this one about George company. The Korean War might have been our most just war – defending a peaceful democratic ally from a totalitarian communist regime. You just have to compare North Korea and South Korea today to understand the stakes. North Korea is basically a godless concentration camp that tortures and murders its people if they so much as think the wrong thoughts about the atheist state. South Korea is free and prosperous, where the people have human rights, like the right to free speech and freedom of religion.

It's important for me to read about the hardships that real heroes face, so that I don't complain too much about my own tiny struggles. When you read about the struggles of great American soldiers, so many good things happen to you. Your own problems get smaller, your humility and gratitude get bigger. And you are reminded about why America is a great country, and what American character is really like. These things are not taught by leftists in the public schools. They are not talked about by leftists in the mainstream media. They are not presented by leftists in the Hollywood film industry. If you want to know the real America, you have to find it yourself.

Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas

November 12, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

The lecture: (from 2013)

Note: there is a period of 19 minutes of Q&A at the end of the lecture.

About the speaker:

His full biography is here.

Summary:

- It used to be true that most of the great scientists were believers in God
- But now science has advanced and we have better instruments – is it still true?
- Today, many people believe that science has shows that the universe and Earth are not special
- We used to believe that the Earth was the center of the universe, and Darwin showed we are not designed
- The problem with this view is that it is based on old science, not modern science
- Three topics: origin of the universe, fine-tuning of the universe, the Rare Earth hypothesis

Experimental evidence for the origin of the universe:

- #1: Hubble discovered that the universe expands because of redshifting of light from distant galaxies
- #2: Measurements of the cosmic microwave background radiation show the universe had a beginnning

- #3: Measurements of the light element (hydrogen and helium) abundances confirm an origin of the universe
- The best explanation for an absolute origin of space, time, matter and energy is a supernatural cause

Experimental evidence for the design of the universe:

- #1: The amount of matter: a bit less = no stars and galaxies, a bit more = universe recollapses
- #2: The strong force: a bit more = only hydrogen, a bit more = little or no hydrogen
- #3: Carbon resonance level: a bit higher = no carbon, a bit lower = no carbon

Experimental evidence for galactic, stellar and planetary habitability:

- #1: Galaxy: produces high number of heavy elements and low radiation
- #2: Star: long stable lifetime, burns bright, bachelor star, third generation star (10 billion years must elapsed),
- #3: Planet: mass of planet, stable orbit, liquid water, tectonic activity, tilt, moon

Naturalistic explanations:

- Humans evolve to the point where they reach back in time and create finely-tuned universe
- Eternally existing multiverse

Hawking and Mlodinow response to Rare Earth:

- There are lots of planets so one must support life
- Odds of a planet that supports life are low even with 10^22 planets

Hawking and Mlodinow proposal of M-theory multiverse:

- There is no experimental evidence for M-theory being true
- M-theory is not testable now and is not likely to be testable in the future
- But science is about making testable predictions, not about blind speculation

Hawking and Mlodinow no-boundary proposal:

- This theory requires the laws of physics to exist prior to the universe
- But where do you get laws of physics before there is any physical world?
- There is no experimental evidence for no-boundary proposal
- All the evidence we have now (redshift, CMBR, H-He abundances) is for Big Bang

What science has revealed provide abundant evidence for a transcendent Creator and Designer.

Related posts

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Canadian province blocks Christian couple from adopting children

November 13, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kathleen Wynne and Justin Trudeau

This is from the less liberal of Canada's two national newspapers, the National Post.

Excerpt:

> An evangelical Christian couple have filed a court application alleging the province discriminated against them based on their religious beliefs by rejecting their application to adopt a child.
>
> The Edmonton couple — whose are identified only by initials in court documents — allege an initial recommendation they be allowed to adopt was revoked after "interference" by the Ministry of Children's Services, and that they were told their religious beliefs related to gender and sexuality were contrary to the "official position of the Alberta government."
>
> "If we did not change our religious beliefs regarding sexuality, to conform to the beliefs of Child and Family Services, we would not be approved for adoption," said the woman in an affidavit filed Nov. 1 with Court of Queen's Bench in Edmonton.
>
> The couple's identities have been redacted from the documents filed in court, but a copy of a Safe Home Study Report completed in February 2017 describes them as employed, owning their own home and having happy and healthy family and community networks. They indicated they hoped to adopt a child, or up to three

> siblings, between the ages of seven and 17. The Catholic Social Services worker who prepared the report said in an email she was “pleased” to recommend them for adoption.
>
> However, the report recommended a “homosexual child” not be placed with the couple because of an assessment that though they said would unconditionally love a child questioning or exploring their sexuality, they would not support the “lifestyle,” which could mean a child may not feel accepted.
>
> Then, in mid-March, the worker contacted the couple again and said Child and Family services had received the report and had additional questions about their views on sexuality.
>
> The worker and the couple sent emails back and forth. In one, the woman wrote she believes homosexuality is a choice.
>
> **During subsequent meetings with Catholic Social Services and Child and Family Services, the couple said they made it clear they would seek counselling and support if their child was questioning their sexuality, but they could not encourage a lifestyle that “we knew caused a higher proportion of anxiety, depression, and suicide attempts than other lifestyles,” according to the affidavit.**
>
> **On May 3, the couple’s adoption application was officially rejected, according to court documents.**

What’s interesting to remember is that the salaries of the government workers at Child and Family Services is paid for by taxpayers – taxpayers just like this evangelical Christian couple that’s being discriminated against. They’re good enough to pay for government, not good enough to avoid discrimination by government.

Whenever the government discriminates against Christians, it’s important to remember that many Christians actually vote for secular government at election time. The problem with many Christians today is that they think that government redistributing wealth is the same as people giving away money directly to people or organizations they know. The Bible doesn’t endorse giving money to a secular government *in order to alleviate poverty*. The government is there to enforce laws and protect the public from evildoers. Still, in Canada, lots of Christians vote for bigger government. And then things like this happen, and you wonder why they do. When people vote for big government, they may not like what they voted for. Just ask the people in Venezuela how big government is working for them.

North Korean soldier shot by other North Korean soldiers as he defects to South Korea

November 14, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Call this North Korean wall the "Bernie Sanders" socialism wall

I keep meeting young evangelicals who tell me how wonderful life would be if the government ran health care, and if the government regulated energy development and consumption. Well, there are countries where the government runs everything – like Venezuela and North Korea. What's it like to live there?

The radically-leftist New York Times has an interesting story about what it's like to live in a socialist country, where the government owns everything.

Excerpt:

> North Korean troops fired on a fellow soldier who was defecting to South Korea on Monday across the heavily armed border dividing the countries, South Korean officials said, amid heightened tensions over the North's nuclear weapons program.
>
> The soldier was shot but succeeded in reaching the South, its military said in a statement.
>
> The North Korean soldier defected through Panmunjom, a village that straddles the border between the two Koreas. Alerted by gunshots, South Korean guards found the North Korean soldier about 55 yards south of the border line that bisects Panmunjom. He was taken to a hospital with gunshot wounds to an elbow and shoulder, South Korean officials said.
>
> […]The defector drove a vehicle toward the border line inside Panmunjom, and then left the vehicle, running south while he was fired upon by other North Korean soldiers, according to the American-led United Nations Command, which oversees the 1953 armistice that halted the Korean War.
>
> He took cover near a building on the southern side of the Joint Security Area in

> Panmunjom before South Korean and American troops came to his aid and took him to a hospital, the command said in a statement.
>
> The Joint Security Area, which is 35 miles north of Seoul, the capital, was established after North Korea and its Communist ally China signed the armistice with the United Nations Command, which fought on South Korea's behalf.
>
> The area is the only place along the border where troops from North and South Korea face off, separated from each other by only a few feet.
>
> A North Korean soldier last defected at the heavily guarded location in 2007.
>
> **More than 30,000 North Koreans have fled to the South since a widespread famine hit the impoverished North in the late 1990s. Nearly all of them have traveled through China. But a few North Korean soldiers and civilians have defected by crossing the 2.5-mile-wide demilitarized zone, which is guarded by minefields, sentry posts and tall fences topped with barbed wire, some electrified.**
>
> **In 2012, a North Korean soldier scaled three barbed-wire fences to defect to the South. That same year, another North Korean soldier fled across the border after killing his platoon and squadron leaders. In 2015, after walking across the border, a North Korean soldier told South Korean investigators that he was fleeing widespread beatings and other abuse within his military barracks.**
>
> […]In 1984, a gunfight erupted at Panmunjom when a citizen from what was then the Soviet Union dashed across the border to defect to the West. North Korean troops opened fire to stop him, and South Korean border guards fired back. One South Korean soldier and three North Korean border guards were killed.

My editors told me not to turn this post into another negative screed against stupid millennials, but to instead offer some encouraging words of advice on how they can educate themselves.

The first thing to realize is that all of your public school teachers are idiots – especially the ones who teach non-STEM classes. Education school degrees are the easiest degrees to get at college. They have the lowest entrance requirements, and the ed school students learn material that is fit for high school English classes. It's a great degree for low-IQ people who dropped out of math in high school. So you can't trust your public school teachers to teach you anything about civics or economics. If you were indoctrinated by your teachers to hate the free enterprise system, then you were lied to and indoctrinated. You will have to teach yourself, on your own.

For history, a good one-volume book is "A Patriot's History of the United States" by Larry Schweikhart.

For economics, anything by Thomas Sowell is worth reading, but you might be better off starting out with "The Vision of the Anointed", "Basic Economics". "Economic Facts and Fallacies" and "Intellectuals and Society". The nice thing about Thomas Sowell is that he

does studies of economic policies that have been tried in different countries during different time periods, so you learn a lot about history as well.

Finally, the reason that there is a North and South Korea, and not just a North Korea, is because American, British and Australian forces beat back an unprovoked invasion by the North Koreans in 1950. This was probably the most moral war that the United States has ever engaged in, in the history of the United States. We shed our blood and spent our treasure to protect South Korea from becoming one large concentration camp – which is what North Korea is. If you'd like to read a good book about the Korean War, I highly recommend "The Frozen Hours", a historical novel by Jeff Shaara.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

November 15, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two bears fight it out, and may the best bear win!

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates).

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it!

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes

- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning

- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly

lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

Can atheists rationally ground objective moral values and duties?

November 16, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Here's Dr. William Lane Craig explaining why atheists can't help themselves to objective morality, given a worldview of atheism:

He presents 3 reasons why in the video, all of which are also discussed in his Defenders class:

> The mention of Plato brings to mind another possible atheistic response to the first premise of the moral argument that *if God does not exist, then objective moral values and duties do not exist*. Plato thought that the Good just exists as a sort of self-subsistent idea, as an entity in and of itself. Indeed, it is the most real thing in reality. The Good simply exists. If you find this difficult to grasp, join the company! Nevertheless, that is what Plato believed. Later Christian thinkers, like Augustine, equated Plato's Good with the nature of God. God's nature is the Good, and so it was anchored in a concrete object, namely, God. But for Plato, at least, the Good just sort of existed on its own as a kind of self-existent idea.
>
> Some atheists might say that moral values, like Justice, Mercy, Love, and Forbearance, just exist all on their own as sort of abstract moral objects. They have no other foundation; they just exist. We can call this view Atheistic Moral Platonism. According to this view, moral values are not grounded in God. They just exist all on their own.
>
> Unintelligibility of Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> What might we say by way of response to Atheistic Moral Platonism? Let me make three responses. First, it seems to me that this view is just unintelligible. I

> simply don't understand what it means. What does it mean, for example, to say that the moral value Justice just exists? I understand what it means to say that a *person* is just or that some *action* is just, but what does it even mean to say that in the absence of any persons or any objects at all, that Justice just exists? It is hard to understand even what this means. Moral values seem to be properties of persons, and so it is hard to understand how Justice can just exist as a sort of abstraction.
>
> Lack of Moral Obligation on Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> Secondly, a major weakness of this view is that it provides no basis for objective moral duties. Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that moral values like Justice, Love, Forbearance, and Tolerance just exist on their own. Why would that lay any sort of moral obligation upon me? Why would the existence of this realm of ideas make it my duty to be, say, merciful or loving? Who or what lays such an obligation upon me? Why would I have the moral duty to be merciful or loving? Notice that on this view moral vices like Greed, Hatred, and Selfishness presumably also exist as abstractions. In the absence of any moral law giver, what obligates me to align my life with one set of these abstract ideas rather than with some other set of abstract ideas? There just doesn't seem to be any basis at all for moral duty in this view. In the absence of a moral law giver, Atheistic Moral Platonism lacks any basis for moral obligation.
>
> Improbability of Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> Finally, thirdly, it is fantastically improbable that the blind evolutionary process should spit forth exactly those kinds of creatures that align with the existence of this realm of abstract values.1 Remember that they have no relationship with each other at all. The natural realm and this abstract moral realm are completely separate. And yet, lo and behold, the natural realm has by chance alone evolved exactly those kind of creatures whose lives align with these moral duties and values. This seems to be an incredible coincidence when you think about it. It is almost as if the moral realm knew that we were coming! I think it is a far more plausible view to say that both the natural realm and the moral realm are under the sovereignty of a divine being, who is both the creator of natural laws that govern the physical universe and whose commands constitute the moral laws that govern our ethical duties. This is a more coherent view of reality. Theism is a more coherent view because these two realms of reality don't fall apart in this disjointed way. They are both under the sovereignty of a single natural and moral law giver.
>
> For those three reasons, Atheistic Moral Platonism is a less plausible view than theistic based ethics such as I have been defending.

And now, I must be mean to the atheists, because I think this me too nonsense is just ridiculous, desperate intellectual dishonesty.

I remember having a conversation with one of my IT project managers who was an

atheist, and she asked me what I thought would happen to dogs when they died. I said "well on your view of atheism, they don't have an afterlife, so they just rot away when we bury them and they get eaten by worms". She was aghast and said "no they don't, they go to Heaven". That was just her wishful thinking, there. And that's what morality on atheism is: wishful thinking. It's just an appearance package that gets bolted onto absolute meaninglessness and hedonism. And even if the atheist tries to make traditional decisions in their own lives, they typically push for full-on dismantling of Judeo-Christian values, especially in the sexual realm. And that spills over into abortion, divorce, same-sex marriage and government restraints on free speech, conscience and religious liberty.

Dear atheists: you cannot duct tape morality onto nihilism and have it be rational. We know you're doing it to feel good about yourselves and to appear normal instead of wearing your nihilism openly. But your faked morality is not even close to the morality of theists, and especially not of Christian theists. Christians go against their self-interest because we imitate the self-sacrificial love of Christ, who gave himself as a ransom to save others. That makes no sense on an atheistic worldview, since this life is all you have, and there is no afterlife where your actions are in the context of a relationship with that self-sacrificial Son of God. In any case, free will doesn't exist on atheism, so that means no moral choices regardless. These are the common sense implications of atheist first principles, and in fact that's what you hear expressed from the finest atheist scholars: no free will, no right and wrong, no life after death.

If you want to see what atheists really think about morality, then take a look at this post featuring Matt Dillahunty, where he is asked to condemn the Holocaust as objectively wrong, and he refuses to do it. That's intellectually consistent atheist morality right there. If the universe is an accident, and human beings evolved by accident, then there is way things ought to be, and no way we ought to act. And no one is there is no ongoing two-way relationship for our conduct to be part of, anyway. On atheism, human beings will die out individually and collectively in the heat death of the universe. Once the heat death of the universe arrives, there will be no one left to care how we lived after we're dead – there is no one waiting for us who cares how we act towards him and towards others. Atheists can arbitrarily put any limits they want on their actions, based on what makes them feel good, and what makes people like them, perhaps taking account the arbitrary customs and conventions of the time and place they find themselves in. But it's delusional and irrational make-believe for atheists to claim that morality is rational on their worldview.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones

- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

When feminists defended an accused rapist by attacking the character of his victims

November 17, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Huma Abedin (left), Harvey Weinstein (center), Hillary Clinton (right)

I think that the history of the presidency of Bill Clinton is important, because we have to really understand what the "feminism" of feminists really means. Does it mean protecting the equal rights of women? Or does it means something else?

Read some of this article in the leftist The Atlantic.

Excerpt:

> Yet let us not forget the sex crimes of which the younger, stronger Bill Clinton was very credibly accused in the 1990s. Juanita Broaddrick reported that when she was a volunteer on one of his gubernatorial campaigns, she had arranged to meet him in a hotel coffee shop. At the last minute, he had changed the location to her room in the hotel, where she says he very violently raped her. She said that she fought against Clinton throughout a rape that left her bloodied. At a different Arkansas hotel, he caught sight of a minor state employee named Paula Jones, and, Jones said, he sent a couple of state troopers to invite her to his suite, where he exposed his penis to her and told her to kiss it. Kathleen Willey said that she met him in the Oval Office for personal and professional advice and that he groped her, rubbed his erect penis on her, and pushed her hand to his crotch.
>
> It was a pattern of behavior; it included an alleged violent assault; the women involved had far more credible evidence than many of the most notorious accusations that have come to light in the past five weeks. But Clinton was not left to the swift and pitiless justice that today's accused men have experienced. Rather, he was rescued by a surprising force: machine feminism. The movement

> had by then ossified into a partisan operation, and it was willing—eager—to let this friend of the sisterhood enjoy a little *droit de seigneur.*

You won't find a worst example of a man using power to force innocent women to satisfy his sexual desires. Surely, no Christian man could condone this. But do you know who did defend this? Why, the head of the radical feminist movement, that's who:

> The notorious 1998 New York Times op-ed by Gloria Steinem must surely stand as one of the most regretted public actions of her life. It slut-shamed, victim-blamed, and age-shamed; it urged compassion for and gratitude to the man the women accused.

> […]Called "Feminists and the Clinton Question," it was written in March of 1998, when Paula Jones's harassment claim was working its way through court. It was printed seven days after Kathleen Willey's blockbuster 60 Minutes interview with Ed Bradley. If all the various allegations were true, wrote Steinem, Bill Clinton was "a candidate for sex addiction therapy." To her mind, the most "credible" accusations were those of Willey, who she noted was "old enough to be Monica Lewinsky's mother." And then she wrote the fatal sentences that invalidated the new understanding of workplace sexual harassment as a moral and legal wrong: "Even if the allegations are true, the President is not guilty of sexual harassment. He is accused of having made a gross, dumb, and reckless pass at a supporter during a low point in her life. She pushed him away, she said, and it never happened again. In other words, President Clinton took 'no' for an answer."
>
> Steinem said the same was true of Paula Jones. These were not crimes; they were "passes." Steinem revealed herself as a combination John and Bobby Kennedy of the feminist movement: the fair-haired girl and the bare-knuckle fixer. The widespread liberal response to the sex-crime accusations against Bill Clinton found their natural consequence 20 years later in the behavior of Harvey Weinstein: Stay loudly and publicly and extravagantly on the side of signal leftist causes and you can do what you want in the privacy of your offices and hotel rooms.

Although conservative Christian men were horrified by this infidelity and breaking of the command to not commit adultery, this was no problem for radical feminists in the media.

Remember this quote from feminist journalist Nina Burleigh?

She wrote this in The Observer, at the height of the Clinton sexual assault / rape scandals:

> At the corner CVS drugstore, inside a fresh stack of Mirabella magazines, there lies an essay I wrote about sex, power and playing cards with Bill Clinton. I described how surprised I was to find that power is seductive, even for a feminist like me. I said I thought that the President had looked at my legs a little longer than was perfectly normal, and I described how that felt (quite flattering,

> actually).
>
> Nine in the morning, Monday, July 6. Fire Island. I'm supposed to be on vacation. The phone rings. A friend is calling to tell me that Howard Kurtz, Washington Post media critic and best-selling author, has written about me under the headline "A Reporter With Lust in Her Heart."
>
> […]When he called back, I decided my only defense would be to give him a quote that would knock his socks off. I also wanted to test the Post 's new "sizzle"-the paper's post-We Broke the Lewinsky Story advertising hook. **So when Howard asked whether I could still objectively cover the President, having found him so attractive, I replied, "I would be happy to give him a blowjob just to thank him for keeping abortion legal. I think American women should be lining up with their Presidential kneepads on to show their gratitude for keeping the theocracy off our backs."**

That's exactly right. That's what feminism is really about.

Feminism isn't about defending women's equality before the law, or protecting them from rape on campus and sexual harassment in the workplace. Feminism isn't about defending women's equal rights in Muslim countries, like the right to an education, or the right to drive a car, or the right not to be assaulted. Feminism isn't about anything like that.

Feminism is about government-provided abortion on demand. It doesn't matter if Bill Clinton raped and sexually harassed women. Those victims aren't to be believed. Those victims of Bill Clinton had to be denounced as sluts, bimbos and tramps – *by feminists*. The most important goal of feminism is freeing women up to pursue irresponsible sex with hot bad boys, by allowing them to have free contraceptives, and free abortion on demand. That's what feminism is really about.

New study: decline in mainline church attendance linked to progressive theology

November 18, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church attendance for progressive denominations in free fall

This study was reported in the Weekly Standard, of all places.

Excerpt:

> A literal reading of scripture and faith in an interventionist God strengthen church attendance. According to a new academic study of what drives a mainline Protestant church to die out or succeed, preaching these two theological precepts makes all the difference.
>
> The forthcoming article, entitled "Theology Matters," confirms a truth universally acknowledged, or reasonably intuited anyway. The Christ-optional, Gospel-as-metaphor, liberal-progressive mainline Protestantism borne of our secular age keeps so loose a lock on wandering souls that they wander away—choosing boozy brunch, perhaps, over pew-sitting.
>
> The authors, Drs. David Haskell, Kevin Flatt and Stephanie Burgoyne, used five years' data gathered from 2,255 attendees of Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United Church of Canada parishes across the province of Ontario. (The United Church of Canada boasts an ongoing, unsurprising self-parody in an atheist minister no one seems to have ginned up the nerve to defrock.)
>
> Approximately half of the authors' subjects belong to growing parishes within these three mainline denominations, the other half to shrinking ones. Their most striking survey result finds churchgoers at shrinking parishes more doctrinally committed than their ministers.

That's true about the atheist woman who is leading one of the denominations into decline:

> An ordained minister with the United Church of Canada is resisting efforts to oust her from the pulpit because she is an atheist.
>
> "I don't believe in … the god called God," Gretta Vosper told the Globe and Mail. "Using the word gets in the way of sharing what I want to share."
>
> She said that she believes the Bible is "mythology," and denies that Jesus is the Son of God.

The United Church of Canada has majored in progressive politics . Progressive politics is more important to them than apologetics and theology. From what I've read, their ministers are more likely to affirm the writings of progressive atheists like John Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg as "infallible" than the Christian Scriptures. We have similar problems in the USA with ELCA, PCUSA, ECUSA, and other far left denominations.

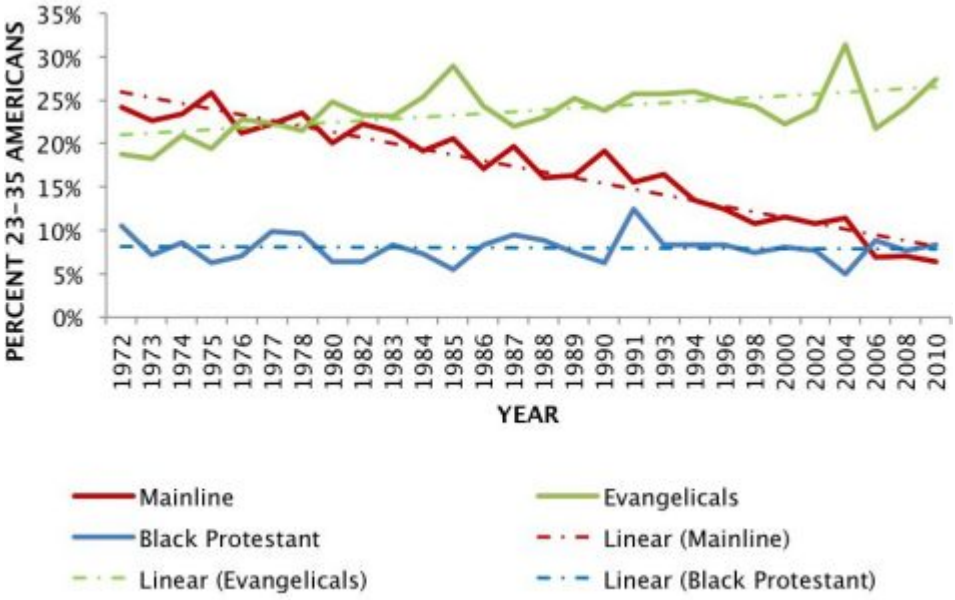

Church attendance by denomination, ages 23-35

Mainline Roman Catholicism, which focuses less on the Bible and more on political goals like Obamacare, climate change alarmism and amnesty is also in decline. They are declining faster than any other denomination.

Here's a quote from the study that breaks down the theology by change in church attendance:

> When asked to agree or disagree with the statement "Jesus rose from the dead with a real, flesh-and-blood body leaving behind an empty tomb" 93% of growing church pastors agreed, 83% of growing church attendees agreed, 67% of declining church attendees agreed, and just 56% of declining church pastors agreed.
>
> When asked if "God performs miracles in answer to prayer" 100% of the growing church pastors agreed, 90% of the growing church attendees agreed, 80% of the declining church attendees agreed, and just 44% of the declining church pastors agreed.

I think the problem is that when a minister quotes the Bible and espouses traditional theology, people can sense that this teaching is from God, because it is at odds with their selfish desires. They understand the authenticity of it, because it calls them higher. Progressives like Greta Vosper tell people that their current sinfulness is just fine, since the goal of spirituality is to look inside yourself for guidance so that you feel good. But does sinfulness really deliver results over the long term? We were designed by God for righteousness, not selfishness. I am pretty sure that Jesus knows a little more about human nature than Greta Vosper does.

Consider the words of Daniel 2:

> [1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.
>
> [2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,
>
> [3] he said to them, “I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means.”
>
> [4] Then the astrologers answered the king, “May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”
>
> [5] The king replied to the astrologers, “This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.
>
> [6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me.”
>
> [7] Once more they replied, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”
>
> [8] Then the king answered, “I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:
>
> [9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me.”
>
> [10] The astrologers answered the king, “There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.
>
> [11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.”
>
> [12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.
>
> [13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king’s guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king’s officer, “Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?” Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.”

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

[27] Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

> [29] “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.
>
> [30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

People can see right through progressive “spirituality”. They see that this is man-made humanism designed to make people feel better. They know that this is just one person’s opinion, and not from God. The blind leading the blind, as the Bible says. Greta Vosper isn’t deriving her worldview from a truth-centered investigation of science, history or logic. It’s feelings all the way down, and that’s not useful to people who are looking for objective truth and purpose.

The psychological motivation of those who embrace postmodernism

November 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

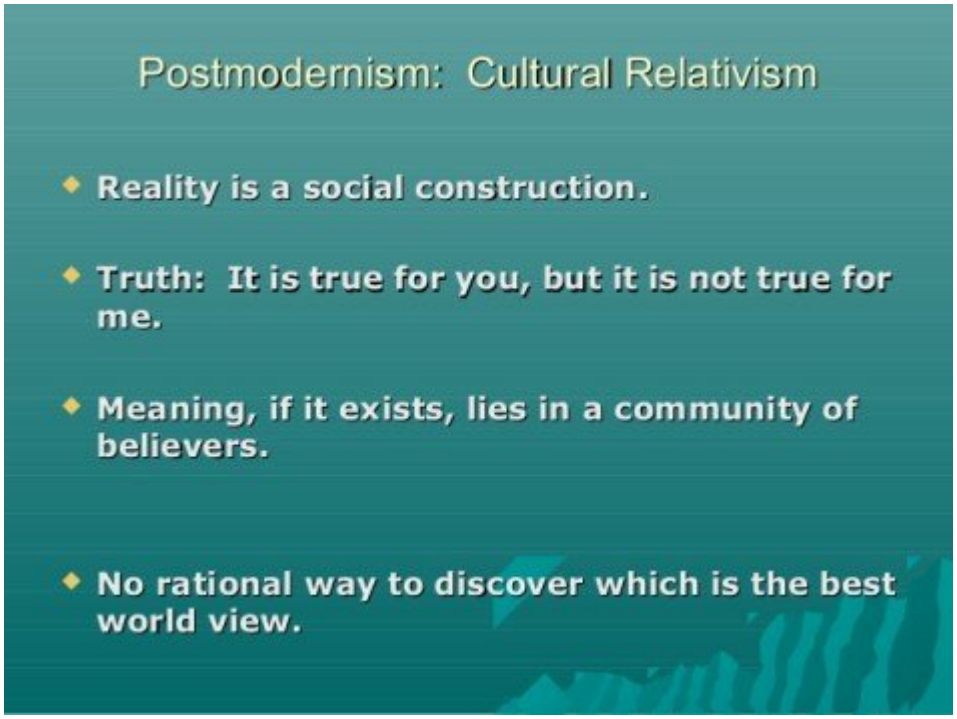

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian? Not for long

Famous analytical philosopher John Searle has written a book "Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World", explaining what's factually wrong with postmodernism. In the introduction, he explains what postmodernism is, and what motivates people to accept postmodernism.

He writes:

> […][W]hen we act or think or talk in the following sorts of ways we take a lot for granted: when we hammer a nail, or order a takeout meal from a restaurant, or conduct a lab experiment, or wonder where to go on vacation, we take the following for granted: there exists a real world that is totally independent of human beings and of what they think or say about it, and statements about objects and states of affairs in that world are true or false depending on whether things in the world really are the way we say they are. So, for example, if in pondering my vacation plans I wonder whether Greece is hotter in the summer than Italy, I simply take it for granted that there exists a real world containing places like Greece and Italy and that they have various temperatures. **Furthermore, if I read in a travel book that the average summer temperature in Greece is hotter than in Italy, I know that what the book says will be true if and only if it really is hotter on average in the summer in Greece than in Italy. This is because I take it for granted that such statements are true only if there is something independent of the**

> **statement in virtue of which, or because of which, it is true.**
>
> […]These two Background presuppositions have long histories and various famous names. The first, that there is a real world existing independently of us, I like to call "external realism." "Realism," because it asserts the existence of the real world, and "external" to distinguish it from other sorts of realism-for example, realism about mathematical objects (mathematical realism) or realism about ethical facts (ethical realism). The second view, that a statement is true if things in the world are the way the statement says they are, and false otherwise, is called "the correspondence theory of truth." This theory comes in a lot of different versions, but the basic idea is that statements are true if they correspond to, or describe, or fit, how things really are in the world, and false if they do not.

The "correspondence theory of truth" is the view of truth assumed in books of the Bible whose genre is such that that they were intended by the authors to be taken *literally*, (with allowances for symbolism, figures of speech, metaphors, hyperbole, etc.).

But what about the postmodernists, who seek to deny the objectivity of external reality?

More Searle:

> Thinkers who wish to deny the correspondence theory of truth or the referential theory of thought and language typically find it embarrassing to have to concede external realism. Often they would rather not talk about it at all, or they have some more or less subtle reason for rejecting it. In fact, very few thinkers come right out and say that there is no such thing as a real world existing absolutely, objectively, and totally independently of us. Some do. Some come right out and say that the so-called real world is a "social construct."

What is behind the denial of objective reality, and statements about external reality that are warranted by evidence?

> It is not easy to get a fix on what drives contemporary antirealism, but if we had to pick out a thread that runs through the wide variety of arguments, it would be what is sometimes called "perspectivism." Perspectivism is the idea that our knowledge of reality is never "unmediated," that it is always mediated by a point of view, by a particular set of predilections, or, worse yet by sinister political motives, such as an allegiance to a political group or ideology. And because we can never have unmediated knowledge of the world, then perhaps there is no real world, or perhaps it is useless to even talk about it, or perhaps it is not even interesting.

Searle is going to refute anti-realism in the rest of the book, but here is his guess at what is motivating the anti-realists:

> > **I have to confess, however, that I think there is a much deeper**

> > **reason for the persistent appeal of all forms of antirealism, and this has become obvious in the twentieth century: it satisfies a basic urge to power. It just seems too disgusting, somehow, that we should have to be at the mercy of the "real world." It seems too awful that our representations should have to be answerable to anything but us. This is why people who hold contemporary versions of antirealism and reject the correspondence theory of truth typically sneer at the opposing view.**
>
> […]I don't think it is the argument that is actually driving the impulse to deny realism. I think that as a matter of contemporary cultural and intellectual history, the attacks on realism are not driven by arguments, because the arguments are more or less obviously feeble, for reasons I will explain in detail in a moment. **Rather, as I suggested earlier, the motivation for denying realism is a kind of will to power, and it manifests itself in a number of ways. In universities, most notably in various humanities disciplines, it is assumed that, if there is no real world, then science is on the same footing as the humanities. They both deal with social constructs, not with independent realities. From this assumption, forms of postmodernism, deconstruction, and so on, are easily developed, having been completely turned loose from the tiresome moorings and constraints of having to confront the real world. If the real world is just an invention-a social construct designed to oppress the marginalized elements of society-then let's get rid of the real world and construct the world we want. That, I think, is the real driving psychological force behind antirealism at the end of the twentieth century.**

Now, I'll go one step further than Searle.

People, from the Fall, have had the desire to step into the place of God. It's true that we creatures exist in a universe created and designed by God. But, there is a way to work around the fact that God made the universe and the laws that the universe runs on, including logic, mathematics and natural laws. And that way is to *deny logic, mathematics and natural laws.* Postmodernists simply deny that there is any way to construct rational arguments and support the premises with evidence from the real world. That way, they imagine, they are free to escape a God-designed world, including a God-designed specification for how they ought to live. The postmoderns deny *the reliable methods of knowing about the God-created reality because logic and evidence can be used to point to God's existence, God's character, and God's actions in history.*

And that's why there is this effort to make reality "optional" and perspectival. Everyone can be their own God, and escape any accountability to the real God – the God who is easily discovered through the use of logic and evidence. I believe that this is also behind the rise of atheists, who feign allegiance to logic and science, but then express "skepticism" about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, objective

morality, the minimal facts concerning the historical Jesus, and other undeniables.

Can secular leftist men find any value in women apart from sex?

November 20, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Huma Abedin (left), Harvery Weinstein (center), Hillary Clinton (right)

So, lately we have had a lot of scandals in the media where secular leftist men have been accused of raping, sexually assaulting, and sexually harassing women. I have been getting increasingly concerned about how radical feminism's sexual revolution agenda has destroyed romantic love and lifelong marriage for some time, and all these accusations coming out made me want to write something about it.

First of all, we can't count on the secular left to stop this epidemic of abusing women. Secular leftists don't care about women who are abused. As I mentioned in my previous post on the feminist defenders of Bill Clinton, feminists always circle the wagons to defend Democrat rapists and sexual criminals when they are discovered. Here's another link for a different Democrat sexual assault apologist. This is what secular leftists do about sexual assault and rape. They make defenses for the rapists, and attack the victims' character.

Matt Walsh has some helpful suggestions on how we can rollback the changes brought on by the secular left with their sexual revolution.

He writes: (H/T Dina)

> I'm tired of talking about this sexual harassment thing. Let the victims come forward, let justice be done, but why are we spending every day talking about it? There's no point.
>
> There could be a point, but there isn't. There isn't, because we aren't going to do anything to prevent these issues in the future. We aren't learning anything. We aren't coming up with solutions. We aren't allowed to come up with solutions.

> The only thing we're allowed to say is: "This is bad! So bad! Men are bad! So much badness! Very, very bad! Bad men! Bad!"

Matt's article comes up with 3 solutions, and I'll leave it to you to check them out. I only care about the third one for my post:

> **3) Emphasize chastity.**
>
> I mentioned this on Twitter and someone, who's apparently a professional writer, asked me what the word means. That's our culture in a nutshell. We literally don't know what the word "chastity" means.
>
> For anyone else who may be confused, chastity is the virtue which moderates our sexual desires. Basically, to be chaste is to practice restraint. A chaste person refrains from more than just sexual assault. He refrains, also, from pornography, vulgarity, sex outside marriage, and sex that is not in accordance with natural law. This all sounds downright archaic nowadays, I realize, but our outrage over sexual improprieties doesn't amount to much if it isn't rooted in a fundamental belief in the dignity of the human person.
>
> Notice I say we should emphasize chastity, not that we are doomed unless everyone practices it perfectly. The problem is not just that people misbehave nowadays — indeed, people have misbehaved in the same ways throughout history — but that our culture has no real message and no real idea about how we ought to be behaving. We can say, "Don't harass and assault," but the message is not getting through because it's insufficient on its own. People must be taught not to see each other as sex objects, but we can only teach them that if we teach them first about the sacredness of the sexual act and the inherent worth of all human beings. If we have ruled that out and abandoned chastity, then we cannot be shocked at the pigs who surround us.

First thing to say is that I don't think that Matt's ideas will be very attractive to a culture that is committed to an atheistic cosmos: random universe, no objective morality, purpose of life is happiness, no free will, no accountability when you die. Matt's solutions require that people think that there is a design for human relationships with an objective right way and wrong way to handle relationships.

This sexual abuse epidemic is exactly what I would have predicted from powerful men who believe that they are machines made out of meat, living in an accidental universe with no objective moral laws, who will never have to answer to their Creator when they die. If God does not exist, then anything is permissible – so long as you can get away with it. If you want to know how secular leftist men treat women, look at how Harvey Weinstein treated women who were less powerful than he was.

On atheism, women are just animals – machines made out of meat. You can use them for your pleasure and then throw them away. There is nothing that women are "meant" to be, because there is no Designer. If you find a pretty girl who is fatherless, then by all means – take advantage of her but don't get caught. This is rational on atheism. Atheism

is the Harvey Weinstein religion. That's what's rational in a random, mindless universe with no free will and no accountability to an omnipotent moral lawgiver.

And if those nasty Christians disapprove of you, well you can just threaten them in court for refusing to celebrate your authentic atheist hedonism. That's happening already – using the law to coerce Christians into approving of immorality. Weinstein himself donated millions to the Democrat party – the party that undermines sexual morality, and makes it easier for perverts to do what they want to do without being judged.

So what about Matt's suggestion of a resurgence of chastity?

Chastity is a Judeo-Christian value that states that men and women who aren't married to one another cannot engage in sexual activity. Chastity isn't just abstaining from sex, though. It's having opposite sex relationships in which you are actively seeking to set goals with a woman and help her to achieve those goals. So, let's see what that looks like for me as a chaste man, then I'll talk about whether this is even possible on any worldview other than orthodox Judaism or evangelical Bible-belieing Christianity.

In Christianity, women are equally made in the image of God as men, and they are made for the same purpose as men – to enter into a relationship with God through Christ. So, right away, I have a set of priorities for every woman on the planet that comes from my worldview. My goal with them is to help them to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and then after that, I want to lead and advise them to grow their skills so that they are able to live lives of influence and effectiveness. You can read all about Christian fellowship in Philippians, by the way. Fellowship in the work of the gospel is the business of Christianity and women are meant to be equal partners with men in that business. (Although they might have different roles at different times). Every woman is a potetional partner in the fellowship of the gospel, and so they all have value,

In my case, I have always tried to help women to study and find work that would prepare them to have an influence. For those who are too old to marry, I encourage them to have an influence through speaking, teaching or organizing events, for example. I have female friends who are too old to marry who I monitor. If they need support to get things done for God, then I give them encouragement and gifts to make their operations run smoother. Just today one of them e-mailed me her answer to an atheist who was trying to justify being moral on atheism. For a chaste Christian man, women don't have to be young and pretty and sexually permissive in order to get basic care. They get care because they play for the same team as Christian men do, and they have the desire to get things done for the team.

There are other young women I mentor who are in other states, and/or are too young for me to marry. I try to get them to change their majors to STEM, to read books on apologetics and economics, to get jobs in the summer, to go to graduate school, to save their money by not wasting it on fun, and to keep an eye out for husband candidates by looking past mere appearances. The goal is to get them to have an influence, and that's not going to be achieved with crazy emotional life choices made without any wisdom or experience. Again – they have value without having to be pretty or give in to my sexual

desires. I don’t even understand what sex means outside of marriage. Sex is what married couples do in order to balance out the challenges of marriage and re-affirm the union. It’s a thing you speak about to your spouse who has committed to you for life. I wouldn’t speak about sex to someone I wasn’t married to, what sense would that even make? It makes no sense.

Is treating women well rational on atheism?

When you keep seeing stories of powerful secular leftists using their power to take what they want from women and then throw them away, remember that on atheism this is rational. If you want to get male-female relationships right, you have to get the worldview right. Young women have a natural desire to dismiss rules and to pursue fun, without seeing the consequences of their actions in the long term. There has to be some reason for a man to tell a woman the truth about what follows from her decisions. Men have to be willing to reason with a woman about what she should be doing today so that she reaches the goals she is aiming for tomorrow. Christian men have the capacity to put their self-interest on hold and say what needs to be said to treat women well. Atheist men don’t have any such restraint. We need to remember that ideas like atheism have consequences. It’s no use complaining about the effects when you put the causes in place yourself.

Fascism in Canada: grad student dragged into kangaroo court for showing debate clip

November 22, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brace yourself for the most blatant infringement on a student's rights by a secular-leftist university administration that you have ever heard with your own ears. This story comes to us from Ontario, Canada, home of the famous fascist Ontario Human Rights Commission, which prosecutes people for having thoughts that are not approved of by government elites.

A news story appeared in the National Post. (H/T Amy)

Excerpt:

> During a seminar with first-year communications students, Wilfrid Laurier University teaching assistant Lindsay Shepherd screened a TVOntario debate to illustrate the sometimes-controversial politics of grammar.
>
> The video, an episode of The Agenda with Steve Paikin, included University of Toronto professor Jordan Peterson presenting his case against the use of non-gendered pronouns. It also included panellists taking the opposite viewpoint.
>
> Nevertheless, after an anonymous student complained, Shepherd found herself reprimanded for violating the school's Gendered and Sexual Violence policy. In a subsequent meeting with university officials, she was accused of creating a "toxic" and "problematic" environment that constituted violence against transgendered students. She was also falsely told that she had broken the law.
>
> Shepherd recorded the meeting. Audio and selected transcripts are below. The voices are of Shepherd, her supervising professor Nathan Rambukkana, another professor, Herbert Pimlott, as well as Adria Joel, manager of Gendered Violence Prevention and Support at the school.

Just so you know, TVOntario would be the equivalent of your local state-level PBS. This is

a government-run, publicly-funded TV station. Fully licensed by the CRTC.

Here's a clip from the transcript, where the Communication Studies professor threatens the student with *criminal prosecution*:

Rambukkana: …[Peterson] lectures about critiquing feminism, critiquing trans rights —

Shepherd: I'm familiar. I follow him. But can you shield people from those ideas? Am I supposed to comfort them and make sure that they are insulated away from this? Like, is that what the point of this is? Because to me, that is so against what a university is about. So against it. I was not taking sides. I was presenting both arguments.

Rambukkana: So the thing about this is, if you're presenting something like this, you have to think about the kind of teaching climate that you're creating. **And this is actually, these arguments are counter to the Canadian Human Rights Code. Even since … C-16, ever since this passed, it is discriminatory to be targeting someone due to their gender identity or gender expression.**

Debate on secular left dogma is not permitted in Canada, because it's their state religion:

Rambukkana: Do you see how this is something that is not intellectually neutral, that is kind of "up for debate," I mean this is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Shepherd: But it is up for debate.

Rambukkana: You're perfectly welcome to your own opinion, but when you're bringing it into the context of the classroom that can become problematic, and that can become something that is, that creates an unsafe learning environment for students.

Shepherd: But when they leave the university they're going to be exposed to these ideas, so I don't see how I'm doing a disservice to the class by exposing them to ideas that are really out there. **And I'm sorry I'm crying, I'm stressed out because this to me is so wrong, so wrong.**

That's right – these left-wing fascists actually made her cry.

The professors tell her that being neutral and showing both sides is also a violation of the Ontario Human Rights Code:

Rambukkana: Do you understand how what happened was contrary to, sorry Adria, what was the policy?

Joel: Gendered and Sexual Violence.

Rambukkana: — Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy. Do you understand how —

Shepherd: Sorry, what did I violate in that policy.

Joel: Um, so, gender-based violence, transphobia, in that policy. **Causing harm**, um, to trans students by, uh, bringing their identity as invalid. Their pronouns as invalid — potentially invalid.

Shepherd: So I caused harm?

Joel: — which is, under the **Ontario Human Rights Code** a protected thing so something that Laurier holds as a value.

If you want to share a quick news clip on social media, here's a quick 12 minute news report from one of Canada's most famous free-speech warriors, the irreppressible Ezra Levant:

You can hear 10 minutes of the recording here:

The full recording is here. (42 minutes)

Imagine that this happened to you, and conducted by an institution that you paid for twice: with your taxes, and with your tuition money. You would literally be paying the thought police to make you cry for not agreeing with the politically correct approved Canadian thoughts about transgenderism. When Americans vote Democrat, we are walking along a path that will turn our entire country into a place like Ontario, Canada. There will be none of the freedoms guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. Canada doesn't have those freedoms, and that's where the American left wants to take us. To be on the political left is to be a fascist. By definition. The Democrat Party simple IS the party of fascism. That's their agenda. It doesn't matter whether individual Democrat voters disagree with fascism, they are voting to take the country towards the fascism that we already see in Canada.

By the way, let this be a reminder to you to never drop math, and always study STEM subjects in university, with the best areas being engineering, especially petroleum engineering and computer science. Stay away from areas that are disconnected from reality. If it can't be tested (English, Education, Communication Studies, Lesbian Dance Theory) then it shouldn't be studied at a secular-leftist gulag. Communication Studies is what people study when they have no marketable skills, and don't aspire to do meaningful private sector work. You need to avoid being part of the fascist big government machine, and that means having marketable skills.

The true story of Thanksgiving: Squanto's miraculous path to Plymouth

November 23, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

"The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth" by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe (1914)
God's providence in action, as reported by Eric Metaxas in the Wall Street Journal.

Full text:

> The story of how the Pilgrims arrived at our shores on the Mayflower—and how a friendly Patuxet native named Squanto showed them how to plant corn, using fish as fertilizer—is well-known. But Squanto's full story is not, as National Geographic's new Thanksgiving miniseries, "Saints & Strangers," shows. That might be because some details of Squanto's life are in dispute. The important ones are not, however. His story is astonishing, even raising profound questions about God's role in American history.
>
> Every Thanksgiving we remember that, to escape religious persecution, the Pilgrims sailed to the New World, landing at Plymouth Rock in 1620. But numerous trading ships had visited the area earlier. Around 1608 an English ship dropped anchor off the coast of what is today Plymouth, Mass., ostensibly to trade metal goods for the natives' beads and pelts. The friendly Patuxets received the crew but soon discovered their dark intentions. A number of the braves were brutally captured, taken to Spain and sold into slavery.
>
> One of them, a young man named Tisquantum, or Squanto, was bought by a group of Catholic friars, who evidently treated him well and freed him, even allowing him to dream of somehow returning to the New World, an almost unimaginable thought at the time. Around 1612, Squanto made his way to London, where he stayed with a man namedJohn Slany and learned his ways and language. In 1618, a ship was found, and in return for serving as an interpreter,

Squanto would be given one-way passage back to the New World.

After spending a winter in Newfoundland, the ship made its way down the coast of Maine and Cape Cod, where Squanto at last reached his own shore. After 10 years, Squanto returned to the village where he had been born. But when he arrived, to his unfathomable disappointment, there was no one to greet him. What had happened?

It seems that since he had been away, nearly every member of the Patuxets had perished from disease, perhaps smallpox, brought by European ships. Had Squanto not been kidnapped, he would almost surely have died. But perhaps he didn't feel lucky to have been spared. Surely, he must have wondered how his extraordinary efforts could amount to this. At first he wandered to another Wampanoag tribe, but they weren't his people. He was a man without a family or tribe, and eventually lived alone in the woods.

But his story didn't end there. In the bleak November of 1620, the Mayflower passengers, unable to navigate south to the warmer land of Virginia, decided to settle at Plymouth, the very spot where Squanto had grown up. They had come in search of religious freedom, hoping to found a colony based on Christian principles.

Their journey was very difficult, and their celebrated landing on the frigid shores of Plymouth proved even more so. Forced to sleep in miserably wet and cold conditions, many of them fell gravely ill. Half of them died during that terrible winter. One can imagine how they must have wept and wondered how the God they trusted and followed could lead them to this agonizing pass. They seriously considered returning to Europe.

But one day during that spring of 1621, a Wampanoag walked out of the woods to greet them. Somehow he spoke perfect English. In fact, he had lived in London more recently than they had. And if that weren't strange enough, he had grown up on the exact land where they had settled.

Because of this, he knew everything about how to survive there; not only how to plant corn and squash, but how to find fish and lobsters and eels and much else. The lone Patuxet survivor had nowhere to go, so the Pilgrims adopted him as one of their own and he lived with them on the land of his childhood.

No one disputes that Squanto's advent among the Pilgrims changed everything, making it possible for them to stay and thrive. Squanto even helped broker a peace with the local tribes, one that lasted 50 years, a staggering accomplishment considering the troubles settlers would face later.

So the question is: Can all of this have been sheer happenstance, as most versions of the story would have us believe? The Pilgrims hardly thought so. To them, Squanto was a living answer to their tearful prayers, an outrageous miracle of God. Plymouth Colony Governor William Bradford declared in his journal that Squanto "became a special instrument sent of God" who didn't leave them "till

> he died."
>
> Indeed, when Squanto died from a mysterious disease in 1622, Bradford wrote that he wanted "the Governor to pray for him, that he might go to the Englishmen's God in heaven." And Squanto bequeathed his possessions to the Pilgrims "as remembrances of his love."
>
> These are historical facts. May we be forgiven for interpreting them as the answered prayers of a suffering people, and a warm touch at the cold dawn of our history of an Almighty Hand?

America is truly a blessed nation. Why this story is not taught in all the schools of the nation is beyond me.

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

November 24, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to video)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

Here's the debate:

Summary

Note: the following debate summary is rated "S" for Snarky. Reader discretion is advised.

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism

- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program
- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent
- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do

maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true
- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not

repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to

the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms

can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah
- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet 9 from Outer Space!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren’t going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

Book review of R.C. Sproul's "If there's a God, why are there atheists?"

November 25, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Brian Auten has a book review posted up at Apologetics 315.

The book is "If There's A God, Why Are There Atheists?", by theologian R.C. Sproul. R.C. Sproul is one of my favorite theologians. The book in question has a very, very special place in my heart, because I think that it is one of the major reasons why I was able to resist pernicious ideas like religious pluralism and postmodernism for so long. Once you put on the glasses of Romans 1 and see for the first time what man is really doing with respect to God, you can never see things the same again. I'll say more about this at the end, but let's see what Brian wrote first.

The review

So often, you hear atheists complaining about religion is nothing but wish-fulfillment or some sort of crutch for people who are frightened by a variety of things. They think that God is invented to solve several problems. 1) how does the world work?, 2) is there meaning to suffering and evil?, 3) why should I be moral?, and 4) what will happen to me and my loved ones when I die?. On the atheistic view, God is just a crutch that people cling to out of weakness and ignorance. But is this really the case?

Sproul starts the book by investigating three atheists who sought to explain religious belief as a result of psychological factors.

Brian writes:

Before tackling the psychology of atheism, Sproul spends a chapter on the psychology of theism, from the perspective of Freud's question "If there is no God, why is there religion?"11 What follows is an overview of various psychological explanations of theistic belief: Feuerbach's "religion is a dream of the human mind."12 Marx's belief that religion

is “due to the devious imagination of particular segment of mankind.”13 And Nietzche’s idea that “religion endures because weak men need it.”14 The author properly reiterates: “We must be careful to note that the above arguments can never be used as proof for the nonexistence of God. They can be useful for atheists who hear theists state that the only possible explanation for religion is the existence of God.”15 That being said, Sproul also reveals what these arguments presume:

> Their arguments already presupposed the nonexistence of God. They were not dealing with the question, Is there a God? They were dealing with the question, Since there is no God, why is there religion?16

Sproul points out the weaknesses of each of these approaches and says “there are just as many arguments showing that unbelief has its roots in the psychological needs of man.”

Wow, could that really be true? What are the real reasons why people reject God? Does the Bible have anything to say about what those reasons are?

Brian cites Sproul’s contention:

> The New Testament maintains that unbelief is generated not so much by intellectual causes as by moral and psychological ones. The problem is not that there is insufficient evidence to convince rational beings that there is a God, but that rational beings have a natural hostility to the being of God.
>
> […]Man’s desire is not that the omnipotent, personal Judeo-Christian God exist, but that He not exist.

In Romans 1:18-23, the apostle Paul explains what is really going on:

[18]The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

[19]since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

[20]For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

[21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[22]Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

[23]and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

On this blog, I regularly present many, many arguments for theism in general, and Christian theism in particular:

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Sproul explains why atheists cannot allow themselves to live according to the evidence that is presented to them:

> The cumulative effect of this knowledge that is clearly seen is to leave men 'without excuse.' Herein lies the basis of the universal guilt of man. No one can claim ignorance of the knowledge of God. No one can cite insufficient evidence for not believing in God. Though people are not persuaded by the evidence, this does not indicate an insufficiency in the evidence, but rather an insufficiency in man.
>
> […]The basic stages of man's reaction to God can be formulated by means of the categories of trauma, repression, and substitution.
>
> […]If God exists, man cannot be a law unto himself. If God exists, man's will-to-power is destined to run head-on into the will of God.

And this is the force that is animating atheists today. They don't want to be accountable to God in a relationship, no matter what the evidence is. They have to deny it, so that they can be free to get the benefits of a universe designed for them, without having to give any recognition or acknowledgement back. If they have to lie to themselves to deny the evidence, they will do it. Anything to insulate themselves from the Creator and Designer who reveals himself in Jesus Christ.

The rest of the book review, and the book, deals with explaining in detail how atheists respond to an all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator/Designer. I encourage you to click through and read the whole book review. You can read the review, and the book, and then investigate for yourself whether atheists really are like that.

My survey of atheists

By the way, did you all see my survey of atheists that I did a while back? It's relevant because one of the questions I asked to my volunteers was "How you begin to follow Christ if it suddenly became clear to you that Christianity was objectively true?". I got some very strange responses that dovetail nicely with Sproul's book.

Here are a few of the responses:

- I would not follow. My own goals are all that I have, and all that I would continue to have in that unlikely situation. I would not yield my autonomy to anyone no matter what their authority to command me.
- I would not follow, because God doesn't want humans to act any particular way, and he doesn't care what we do.
- I would not follow. Head is spinning. Would go to physician to find out if hallucinating.
- I hope I would be courageous enough to dedicate my life to rebellion against God.
- I would not have to change anything unless forced to and all that would change is my actions not my values. I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran.
- He would have to convince me that what he wants for me is what I want for me.

This is all part of my series discussing whether morality is rationally grounded by atheism.

Well Spent Journey did a similar survey of atheists, inspired by mine, and got this result on the relevant question:

> ***12. How would you begin to follow Jesus if it became clear to you that Christianity was true?***
>
> *– Would follow (5)*
> *– Wouldn't follow (6)*
> *– Might follow the teachings of Jesus, but that isn't Christianity (2)*
> *– It would depend on how this truth was revealed (3)*
> *– Christianity can't be true (3)*
> *– No answer given (4)*
>
> **…What would be the hardest adjustment you would have to make to live a faithful, public Christian life?**
>
> *– Adjusting wouldn't be that difficult; would eagerly welcome knowing that Christianity was true (2)*
> *– Praying, since it seems weird, creepy, and strange*
> *– Trying to figure out how the Bible became so corrupted*
> *– Trying to convince myself that the God of the Bible is deserving of worship (2)*
> *– Don't think it would be possible to adjust*
> *– No clear response, or not applicable (16)*

Yes, they really think like that! Just *ask an atheist questions* and you'll see how "objective" they really are. Atheism is entirely psychological. It's adopted in order to feel sufficient and to operate with autonomy, with the goal of self-centered pleasure-seeking above all. Evidence has nothing to do with it.

Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral? Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong?

November 26, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

Note: For a Christian response to the complaint that the Bible doesn't condemn slavery, see this article and this article for slavery in the Old Testament, and this article for slavery in the New Testament. These are all by Christian philosopher Paul Copan. You can watch a lecture with Paul Copan on the slavery challenge here, and buy a book where he answers the challenge in more detail. There is also a good debate on whether the Bible condones slavery here, featuring David Instone-Brewer and Robert Price. My post is not a formal logical essay on this issue, it is more that I am outraged that atheists, who cannot even rationally ground objective morality, insist on criticizing the morality of the Bible. I think that atheists who are serious about finding the truth about these issues should check out those links, if they are interested in getting to the truth of these matters.

In other posts, I've argued that without an objective moral standard of what is right and wrong, any judgments about right and wrong are just individual opinions. So, when an atheist says slavery is wrong, what he really means is that he thinks slavery is wrong *for him*, in the same way that he thinks that,say, that chocolate ice cream is right *for him*. He isn't saying what is wrong *objectively*, because on atheism there are no objective moral rules or duties. He is speaking for himself: "I wouldn't own a slave, just like I wouldn't eat broccoli – because it's yucky!". But he has no rational argument against other people owning slaves in other times and places, because their justification for owning slaves is the same as his justification for not owning slaves : personal preference and cultural conventions.

So do atheists oppose slavery? Do they believe in an objective human right to liberty? Well, there are no objective human rights of any kind on atheism. Human beings are just

accidents in an accidental universe, and collections of atoms do not mysteriously accrue "rights". There is no natural right to liberty on atheism. Now consider abortion, which is favored by most atheists. Like slavery, abortion declares an entire class of human beings as non-persons in order to justify preserving their own happiness and prosperity by means of violence. That's exactly what slavery does, except abortion is worse than slavery, because you actually kill the person you are declaring as a non-person instead of just imprisoning them.

So how many atheists have this pro-abortion view that it is OK to declare unborn children as non-persons so they can kill them?

Well, according to Gallup, the "non-religious" are the group most likely to support abortion. In fact, 68% favor legalized abortion, compared to only 19% who oppose it.

Take a look at the Gallup poll data from 2012:

Americans' Abortion Views, by Education and Religion

With respect to the abortion issue, would you consider yourself to be pro-choice or pro-life?

	"Pro-choice"	"Pro-life"
	%	%
National adults	41	50
No religion	68	19
Catholic	38	54
Protestant/Other Christian	33	57
Postgraduate	58	37
College graduate only	45	53
Some college	41	49
High school graduate or less	33	53

May 3-6, 2012

GALLUP

Most atheists are OK with the strong killing the weak

The Gallup numbers might actually be low, because "No religion" might include people who are spiritual, but not religious. But what about atheists alone?

As a group, atheists tend to be among the most radical supporters of legalized abortion. The Secular Census of 2012 found that 97% of atheists vote for abortion. There are almost no pro-life atheists. Why is it that atheists look at unborn children and think it's OK to kill them? Well, let's see what atheists scholars think about morality, and from that we'll find out why they think abortion is morally permissible.

Atheist scholars think morality is nonsense

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud

> and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Source: http://www.arn.org/docs/orpages/or161/161main.htm

Atheists Michael Ruse says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory.(Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

Atheist Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

Most atheists are like this – although some affirm objective morality, without really having a rational basis for it. In general though, when atheists use moral language to condemn God, the Bible, or Christians, it's very important to understand that it is just theater. They are trying to use words that describe realities that they do not even believe in, usually with the goal of getting you to stop judging them for their own sin. I blogged about two examples of this before – Richard Carrier and Michael Shermer.

Let's take a closer look at Richard Dawkins' statement that there is "no evil and no good".

Richard Dawkins and morality

Here's Richard Dawkins' view of abortion:

Richard Dawkins explains morality on atheism

But wait! He goes even further than mere abortion:

Dawkins believes in Darwinian evolution. Survival of the fittest. The strong kill the weak. Where is protection for the unborn in that narrative?

Richard Dawkins even advocates for adultery.

So, what Dawkins really believes is that morality is nonsense. But in order to get you to stop condemning abortion, adultery, infanticide and a whole host of other atheistic misbehaviors, he will try to condemn you using moral language to stop you from making moral judgments. But the goal here is to intimidate you into not judging. By his own words, he thinks that the whole notion of objective moral values and objective moral duties is just nonsense.

Who does oppose slavery?

How did slavery end?

Dinesh D'Souza explains:

> Slavery was mostly eradicated from Western civilization–then called Christendom–between the fourth and the tenth century. The Greco-Roman institution of slavery gave way to serfdom. Now serfdom has its problems but at least the serf is not a "human tool" and cannot be bought and sold like property. So slavery was ended twice in Western civilization, first in the medieval era and then again in the modern era.
>
> In the American South, Christianity proved to be the solace of the oppressed. As historian Eugene Genovese documents in Roll, Jordan, Roll, when black slaves sought to find dignity during the dark night of slavery, they didn't turn to Marcus Aurelius or David Hume; they turned to the Bible. When they sought hope and inspiration for liberation, they found it not in Voltaire or D'Holbach but in the Book of Exodus.
>
> The anti-slavery movements led by Wilberforce in England and abolitionists in America were dominated by Christians. These believers reasoned that since we are all created equal in the eyes of God, no one has the right to rule another without consent. This is the moral basis not only of anti-slavery but also of democracy.

And, in fact, you can see Christians pushing the culture hard against abortion today, just as we did with slavery. We also oppose frivolous divorce, and redefining marriage in a way that normalizes removing mothers and/or fathers away from their children. Defending the weak is what we do.

If there’s one thing that Trump is doing right, it’s nominating originalist judges

November 27, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, so far Trump’s done many things right and many things wrong. Although I think more of the right things are actions (cleaning up regulations, energy development, etc.) and the wrong things are just horribly damaging tweets. The best actions surely include his habit of nominating judges who will interpret the law as written, instead of pushing a political agenda.

Far-left ABC News reports on the most important judicial pick – Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch.

Excerpt:

> More than 2,000 conservatives in tuxedos and gowns recently filled Union Station’s main hall for a steak dinner and the chance to cheer the man who saved the Supreme Court from liberal control.
>
> Justice Neil Gorsuch didn’t disappoint them, just as he hasn’t in his first seven months on the Supreme Court.
>
> “Tonight I can report that a person can be both a publicly committed originalist and textualist and be confirmed to the Supreme Court,” Gorsuch said to sustained applause from members of the Federalist Society…
>
> […]The 50-year-old justice has been almost exactly what conservatives hoped for and liberals dreaded when he joined the court in April. He has consistently, even aggressively, lined up with the court’s most conservative justices. He has even split with Chief Justice John Roberts, viewed by some as insufficiently conservative because of his two opinions upholding President Barack Obama’s health law.

The article notes that liberal legal groups are very unhappy with Gorsuch’s constant focus

on what the Constitution says. They don't like him asking lawyers questions about the Constitution.

More:

> Leonard Leo, the Federalist Society executive vice president who has advised Trump on judicial picks, also took issue with Gorsuch's critics when he introduced the justice at the dinner. "They mischaracterize candor and a demand for rigorous analysis as polarizing," Leo said.
>
> Gorsuch and Leo embraced on the podium, in front of an adoring crowd of like-minded lawyers, judges and academics. The Federalist Society, which counted Scalia among its earliest backers, has helped Trump identify candidates for federal judgeships and has members in legal jobs across his administration.
>
> Gorsuch made no apologies either for the substance of his questions and writing, or his style. He talked at length about the importance of seeking out the meaning of the Constitution and laws as they were understood when they written.
>
> "Originalism has regained its place at the table of constitutional interpretation, and textualism in the reading of statutes has triumphed. And neither one is going anywhere on my watch," Gorsuch said.
>
> He went on to note that "some pundits have expressed bewilderment" about the questions he asks in court.
>
> "But while I have you here tonight, I thought I might just settle the matter once and for all by taking a poll. … Should I just keep on asking about the text and original meaning of the Constitution?" he asked.
>
> The response was predictably and overwhelmingly in favor.

Before Gorsuch was nominated and confirmed, I liked Justice Clarence Thomas best. He was the most faithful to the original meaning of the Constitution – better than Scalia.

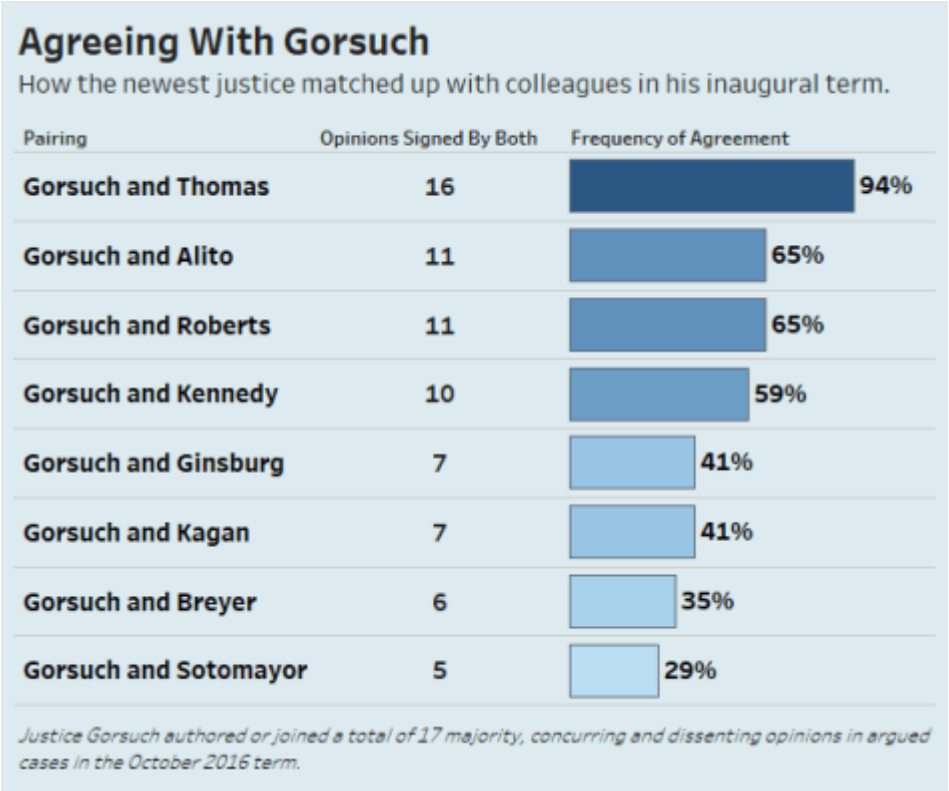

Now that Gorsuch is on the bench, he's been tracking with Thomas. According to this article from Law 360, he votes with Thomas 94% of the time. Much higher than any of the centrist and liberal judges. The liberal writer of the Law 360 article is predictably horrified that Gorsuch is so good on religious liberty in particular:

> As the most controversial rulings came down near the end of the term, however, Justice Gorsuch splintered off from most of his conservative colleagues and exclusively joined Justice Thomas in five separate opinions.
>
> On Monday, for instance, Justice Gorsuch and Justice Thomas supported each other's concurrences in the major religious freedom case, Trinity Lutheran v. Comer. The pair joined Chief Justice Roberts' majority opinion holding that a Missouri playground-funding program closed to religious groups was unconstitutional, but they criticized the court for limiting the scope of its ruling.
>
> In Trinity Lutheran, the court found that a widely available public program that discriminates on the basis of religious status violates the free exercise clause of the First Amendment. The court refused to say, however, whether a program that withholds public funds from groups that would use that money for religious purposes similarly violates the free exercise clause.
>
> In doing so, Justice Roberts made an unworkable distinction, Justice Gorsuch said. "I don't see why it should matter whether we describe that benefit, say, as closed to Lutherans (status) or closed to people who do Lutheran things (use)," he said. "It is free exercise either way."
>
> Justice Gorsuch's desire for an expanded free exercise clause would likely come as a crushing blow to liberal groups and other advocates of church-state separation.

That's the most important issue to me – my religious liberty. My right to live an authentic Christian life without being bullied by secular leftists in the government. I want people on the Supreme Court to defend my right to behave like a Christian in public.

The conservative Daily Signal had an article up describing even more good news about new judicial nominations.

Excerpt:

> On Friday, President Donald Trump announced the addition of five individuals to his outstanding list of potential candidates for a future Supreme Court vacancy.
>
> As was the case with the lists Trump put out during his presidential campaign, these new additions to the list are conservative men and women who are committed to interpreting the Constitution according to its original public meaning.
>
> While there are currently no vacancies on the Supreme Court, rumors abound that Justice Anthony Kennedy may retire in the near future.

Whatever mess Trump makes with his Tweets, you have to love this judicial nominees. We would never have gotten nominees like this with Hillary Clinton. And what's even better is that Trump will be making more judicial nominations in the next 12 months than Obama did in his entire 8 years in office, according to the radically leftist Washington Post. (H/T Curby)

Excerpt:

> Conservatives have a new court-packing plan, and in the spirit of the holiday, it's a turducken of a scheme: a regulatory rollback hidden inside a civil rights reversal stuffed into a Trumpification of the courts. If conservatives get their way, President Trump will add twice as many lifetime members to the federal judiciary in the next 12 months (650) as Barack Obama named in eight years (325). American law will never be the same.

That's good news for liberty, bad news for big government coercion.

Gary Habermas and James Crossley discuss the minimal facts case for the resurrection

November 28, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two ninjas face off at sundown

James Crossley is my favorite atheist ancient historian, such a straight shooter. He's on the skeptical left, but he has a no-baloney way of talking that I really like. I was so excited to summarize this, and there's not a speck of snark in this summary. Crossley dates the gospel of Mark 37-43 A.D., far earlier than most scholars. Justin Brierley does a great job as moderator. Gary Habermas is OK, but he is not familiar with any useful arguments for God's existence, (kalam, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, etc.), and that is a problem in this debate.

Here are the details of the debate:

> Christian philosopher and historian Gary Habermas has been at the forefront of the 'minimal facts' approach as evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.
>
> He debates the commonly agreed facts with agnostic New Testament scholar James Crossley and they discuss whether the miracle of the resurrection can be a historically valid explanation of the evidence.

Note: this is the first of two shows they are doing together.

The MP3 file is here.

There is also a video on YouTube:

This non-snarky summary starts at 10:52.

Summary:

- Habermas: the minimal facts are the facts that even the majority of *skeptical* scholars will accept

Habermas list of minimal facts: (near universal acceptance)

1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion
2. After his death, his disciples had experiences that they believed were appearances of the risen Jesus
3. The disciples were transformed by their experiences and proclaimed his resurrection and were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection
4. The proclamation of his resurrection was early
5. James was converted by a post-mortem experience
6. Paul was converted by a post-mortem experience

Habermas list of widely-accepted facts:

1. Burial for Jesus in a private tomb
2. The private tomb found empty
3. The disciples despaired after Jesus was crucified
4. The proclamation of the resurrection started in Jerusalem
5. Changing the worship day from Saturday to Sunday

Crossley's views on the minimal and widely-accepted facts:

- Crossley: I am in broad agreement with what Gary said
- Crossley: "the resurrection appearances are some of the hardest, best evidence we have" because it's in early 1 Cor 15:3-8 creed
- Crossley: people were convinced that they had seen the risen Christ

The burial in a private tomb:

- Crossley: I have my doubts about the private tomb burial and the empty tomb
- Crossley: Mark's gospel has the burial in a private tomb by Joseph of Arimethea, and Mark is the earliest gospel
- Crossley: I don't have a doubt, it's just that there are other possible alternatives, and then the tradition was invented later – but that's just a possibility
- Crossley: there is not enough evidence to make a decision either way on the burial

The empty tomb:

- Habermas: there are multiple lines of evidence for the empty tomb
- Habermas: the reason it's not one of my minimal facts is because a quarter to a third of skeptical scholars reject it

The transformation of the followers of Jesus:

- Crossley: "yes, clearly, I don't think you can argue with that, it's fairly obvious"

The conversions of James and Paul:

- Crossley: “yes, because it’s based on 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, that report, that was handed on to him”

Where Habermas and Crossley agree:

- Habermas: you agree with the 6 facts in the minimal facts list, and you have problems with 2 of 5 facts from the widely accepted list
- Crossley: Yes

The empty tomb:

- Crossley: Two problems: first, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 doesn’t mention it, but it “probably assumes the idea that Jesus left behind an empty tomb when resurrected, I am convinced by some of the conservative arguments on that one, but it’s not hard evidence for there actually being an empty tomb”
- Crossley: Second, “the other early source we have ends with no resurrection appearances”, it makes him a bit skeptical of the empty tomb
- Habermas: the empty tomb is not a minimal fact, I want 90% agreement by skeptical scholars for it to be a minimal fact
- Habermas: I have never included the empty tomb in my list of minimal facts
- Brierley: William Lane Craig puts it in his list of minimal facts
- Habermas: It is very well attested, so if that’s what you mean, then it’s a minimal fact, but it doesn’t have the 90% agreement like the other minimal facts
- Habermas: I have 21 arguments for the empty tomb, and none of them require early dating of sources or traditional authorship of the gospels, e.g. – the women discovered the empty tomb, the pre-Markan source, the implications of 1 Cor 15 has some force, the sermons summary in Acts 13 which Bart Ehrman dates to 31 or 32 A.D. has putting a body down and a body coming up without being corrupted

Why is 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 more respected as a source than the gospels?

- Habermas: There is a unanimous New Testament conclusion, across the board, from conservative to liberal, that in 1 Cor 15:3-8 Paul is presenting creedal data, Richard Bauckham says that this goes back to the early 30s A.D., Paul got this from the eyewitnesses he mentions in Galatians 1 and 2
- Crossley: [reads 1 Corinthians:3-8 out loud], now that’s a tradition that’s handed on, this is Paul, we know this is Paul, writing mid-50s, this is kind of gold, this is the evidence I wish we had across the board

Why doesn’t James accept the resurrection:

- Crossley: Historians should not conclude that the supernatural is real, concluding the supernatural is outside of history
- Crossley: I am more interested in what people believed at that time
- Brierley: as a historian, are you required to give an explanation of the commonly-

accepted facts
- Crossley: yes, historians must give their explanation for the facts
- Crossley: we know people have visions, and how the cultural context determines the content of visions, e.g. – the background of martyrdom
- Brierley: so you would go for the hallucination hypothesis?
- Crossley: yes, but I prefer not to use that word

Should historians rule out the supernatural?

- Habermas: let's not ask what caused the event, let's just see if the disciples thought they saw him before he died, that he died on the cross, and then believed they saw him after he died, like you might see someone in the supermarket
- Habermas: I'm not asking whether a miracle occurred, I just want to know whether Jesus was seen after he died on the cross
- Crossley: that sounds like the angle I'm coming at this from
- Crossley: the problem is that there is a supernatural element to some of the appearances, so it's not a supermarket appearances
- Brierley: it's not angels and hallelujah in the sky
- Habermas: nothing like that, no light in the early accounts, fairly mundane

Does James agree that people believed they saw Jesus after his death?

- Crossley: yes, I think that's fairly clear that we do
- Crossley: but historians cannot prove claims that what happened to Jesus was supernatural
- Brierley: your view is so far from what I see on Internet atheists sites, where they say it's all legendary accumulation, fairy tales
- Crossley: I'm perfect comfortable with the idea – and I think it happened – that people created stories, invented stories
- Crossley: there are too many cases where people are sincerely professing that they thought they saw Jesus after his death

Would you expect the disciples to have visions of a resurrected Jesus if nothing happened to him?

- Habermas: the dividing line is: did something happen to Jesus, or did something happen to his disciples?
- Habermas: the view that people were seeing a kind of ghostly Jesus (non-bodily) – a Jedi Jesus – after his death is a resurrection view, but I hold to a bodily resurrection view
- Brierley: N.T. Wright says a resurrected Jesus was contrary to expectations – should we expect the disciples to have a vision of Jesus as resurrected?
- Crossley: Wright generalizes too much thinking that there was a single view of the resurrection (the general resurrection at the end of the age), there are a variety of

views, some are contradictory
- Crossley: Herod Antipas thought that Jesus might be John the Baptist returned from the dead, and he knew Jesus was flesh and blood, there is the story of the dead rising in the earthquake in Matthew, there are stories of the resurrection in Maccabees, and this would influence what people expected
- Habermas: the earliest Christian view was *bodily* resurrection
- Crossley: yes, I think that's right
- Crossley: In Mark 6, they thought Jesus was a ghost, so there is room for disagreement

Why should a historian not rule out a supernatural explanation?

- Habermas: to get to supernatural, you have to go to philosophy – it's a worldview problem
- Habermas: he predicted his own death and resurrection
- Habermas: one factor is the uniqueness of Jesus
- Habermas: the early church had belief in the bodily resurrection, and a high Christology out of the gate
- Habermas: you might look at evidence for corroborated near-death experiences that raise the possibility of an afterlife
- Crossley: I'm content to leave it at the level of what people believe and not draw any larger conclusions
- Crossley: regarding the predicting his own death, the gospels are written after, so it's not clear that these predictions predate Jesus' death
- Crossley: it's not surprising that Jesus would have predicted his own death, and that he might have foreseen God vindicating him

If you admit to the possibility of miracles, is the data sufficient to conclude that the best explanation of the facts is resurrection?

- Crossley: If we assume that God exists, and that God intervenes in history, and that this was obvious to everyone, then "of course"
- Brierley: Are you committed to a naturalistic view of history?
- Crossley: Not quite, broadly, yes, I am saying this all I can do
- Brierley: should James be open to a supernatural explanation?
- Habermas: if you adopt methodological naturalism,it colors how look at the data is seen, just like supernaturalism does

The link between single mother welfare, fatherlessness, poverty and crime

November 29, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Government pays people welfare not to get married before having kids

What is the root cause of criminal behavior? This article by sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, who points out the link between fatherlessness and crime.

The article appears in National Review, now available on the AEI web site.

Wilcox writes:

> From Adam Lanza, who killed 26 children and adults a year ago at Sandy Hook School in Newtown, Conn., to Karl Pierson, who shot a teenage girl and killed himself this past Friday at Arapahoe High in Centennial, Colo., one common and largely unremarked thread tying together most of the school shooters that have struck the nation in the last year is that they came from homes marked by divorce or an absent father. From shootings at MIT (i.e., theTsarnaev brothers) to the University of Central Florida to the Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy in Decatur, Ga., nearly every shooting over the last year in Wikipedia's "list of U.S. school attacks" involved a young man whose parents divorced or never married in the first place.
>
> […]The social scientific evidence about the connection between violence and broken homes could not be clearer. My own research suggests that boys living in single mother homes are almost twice as likely to end up delinquent compared to boys who enjoy good relationships with their father. Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson has written that "Family structure is one of the strongest, if not the strongest, predictor of variations in urban violence across cities in the United

> States." His views are echoed by the eminent criminologists Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi, who have written that "such family measures as the percentage of the population divorced, the percentage of households headed by women, and the percentage of unattached individuals in the community are among the most powerful predictors of crime rates."
>
> Why is fatherlessness such a big deal for our boys (almost all of these incidents involve boys)? Putting the argument positively, sociologist David Popenoe notes that "fathers are important to their sons as role models. They are important for maintaining authority and discipline. And they are important in helping their sons to develop both self-control and feelings of empathy toward others, character traits that are found to be lacking in violent youth." Boys, then, who did not grow up with an engaged, attentive, and firm father are more vulnerable to getting swept up in the Sturm und Drang of adolescence and young adulthood, and in the worst possible way.

So where do fatherless children come from? It turns out that government programs incentivize women to make them.

Dr. Michael Tanner of the libertarian Cato Institute explains how welfare causes fatherlessness in his testimony to Congress:

> Welfare contributes to crime in several ways. First, children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. According to one study, children raised in single-parent families are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior.(3) Moreover, O'Neill found that, holding other variables constant, black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as black children from a family where the father is present. Nearly 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 percent of prison inmates.(4) Research indicates a direct correlation between crime rates and the number of single-parent families in a neighborhood.(5)
>
> As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her seminal article for The Atlantic Monthly:
>
> The relationship [between single-parent families and crime] is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family break up as the most important source of rising rates of crime.(6)
>
> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these

> studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on family structure concluded that "providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women."(9)

The secular left in this country believes that fathers need to be separated away from their children, and that's why they support welfare programs that redirect money from husbands in intact families to single mothers. They believe that fathers are harmful because they set boundaries on children, and judge them and punish them when they act immorally. To the secular left, boundaries, judgments and punishments on children are bad, and must be stopped. So how can the secular left discourage men from marrying and teaching their own children morality? Well, they can tax married men, and they can give the money to single mothers.

Not only is crime caused by fatherlessness, but poverty is. as well.

Here is Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to explain:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:

> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

People on the left claim that poverty causes crime, but they don’t look for the root cause of poverty. The root cause of poverty is the decline of marriage, which produces fatherless children.

Ted Cruz in CNN debate: taxing the rich 100% isn't enough to pay for socialism

November 30, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On CNN, you get anti-conservative propaganda 24 hours a day. The only exception are the policy debates they sometimes air, in which intelligent conservatives get to speak. Past debates have featured Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, who is the most intelligent conservative debater in the USA. On Tuesday night, Cruz was joined by Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, another able conservative. They debated two radical leftists – Bernie Sanders and Maria Cantwell.

The Washington Examiner had an excellent summary.

Excerpt:

> Sen. Ted Cruz sniped at Sen. Bernie Sanders' often-used complaint about "millionaires and billionaires" not paying enough in taxes during the CNN town hall debate on Tuesday, and quipped there aren't enough of them to "pay for all the socialism that Bernie and the Democrats want to give away."
>
> The comment came as Cruz, R-Texas, took aim at the line of attack favored by Sanders, I-Vt., and the Democrats against the GOP tax reform about how it's a tax cut for "the rich," but Cruz said that really means it is a tax cut for "taxpayers."
>
> "Democrats have one talking point on taxes: It's a tax cut for the rich," Cruz began. "And they say it over and over and over again in response to everything. The most important thing for you to know when you're at home is when they say rich, they mean taxpayer. Every time they say 'rich' they mean taxpayers."
>
> "Why is it? Because the very rich — there aren't enough of them," Cruz continued. "Bernie ran for president, he rolled out a tax plan. His tax plan was a massive tax increase. If you took every single person in America making over a million dollars, and you taxed them 100 percent of their income, you took every

> penny they earned — you came in in jackboots and confiscate it — it would pay 8 percent of the cost of Bernie's tax plan. You know where they get their money? They get it from you, they get it from the the middle class."
>
> Cruz went on to cite a quote from his and Bernie's prior CNN debate in which Sanders, while describing his preferred tax plan, said "everybody will pay some more."
>
> "You're a single mom, you're working, he says you're going to pay some more,"' Cruz said afterwards. "You're a small business owner, he says you're going to pay some more. And the reason is, there aren't not enough millionaires and billionaires to pay for all the socialism that Bernie and the Democrats want to give away."
>
> […]"You said we're going to tax the middle class but then you said, 'we the Democrats are going to give it back to you. We're going to give you free stuff, free healthcare, free education,'" Cruz said. "But you know what, it's going to be Bernie and Maria deciding what you get. Tim and I have a simpler view. You keep your money, you get to decide if you want to invest in your decision."

Is Ted Cruz correct about this point? Yes.

In 2012, John Stossel wrote this in Forbes:

> If the IRS grabbed 100 percent of income over $1 million, the take would be just $616 billion.

In 2011, the Tax Foundation explained that even if you taxed ALL THE INCOME from all the people who make $200,000 or more, you would only raise $1.53 trillion dollars:

> So taking half of the yearly income from every person making between one and ten million dollars would only decrease the nation's debt by 1%. Even taking every last penny from every individual making more than $10 million per year would only reduce the nation's deficit by 12 percent and the debt by 2 percent. There's simply not enough wealth in the community of the rich to erase this country's problems by waving some magic tax wand.
>
> Finally, to put everything in perspective, think about what would need to be done to erase the federal deficit this year: After everyone making more than $200,000/year has paid taxes, the IRS would need to take every single penny of disposable income they have left. Such an act would raise approximately $1.53 trillion. It may be economically ruinous, but at least this proposal would actually solve the problem.

That's much less than the $10 trillion that Obama added to the debt in his 8 years in office. And much much less than the current national debt which is over $20 trillion. Taxing the rich isn't enough to pay for our current spending – we have to cut spending.

Tax cuts are designed to spur economic growth by putting money into the hands of job-creating entrepreneurs. It's the entrepreneurs who make inventions like smartphones and

online marketplaces and streaming online media which make us *all* more productive. Competition between entrepreneurs drives quality up, and prices down. That's why we give tax cuts to entrepreneurs – people and businesses who create economic growth by innovating. Giving taxpayer money to the Department of Motor Vehicles generates ZERO economic growth. Giving money to innovators and job creators is what gets us the new inventions and services that grow the economy.

As Ted Cruz noted in the debate, we do indeed see increased economic growth *and higher tax revenues* when we have cut taxes in the past, e.g. – under Ronald Reagan. Not the mention the millions of jobs that are created by putting money back in the hands of entrepreneurs.

According to the radically-leftist communist NPR, Bernie Sanders' most recent tax proposals would add $18 trillion to the debt over 10 years. That's $1.8 trillion PER YEAR – much more than the $1.53 trillion you get from taxing the rich. So again, even if we take every penny made by those who earn $200,000 or more per year, we aren't going to be able to pay for socialism. And those people aren't going to just keep working if you take everything they earn anyway. They'd either stop working or just leave the country – just like the rich left France when they impose a top tax rate of 75%. This is how the world really works, OK. People don't work for nothing. They probably wouldn't even work if the government took half of what they earned. I certainly would not.

Back to the debate…

Here is a clip of Ted Cruz explaining how there isn't enough money to pay for the Democrat spending platform even if you take every penny earned by the top earners:

Here is my favorite clip of Tim Scottt:

I like this clip of CNN cutting off Ted Cruz when he is presenting evidence, too:

The full video of the CNN debate is here:

And here is the full transcript.

How chastity orders your relationships and liberates you for love

December 1, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Time for examples of real, self-sacrificial love

I really recommend chastity to men especially. As long as they are chaste, they free themselves to love others unselfishly. That's not for every woman, but it's very useful to do with the right women.

In Salvo magazine, Terrell Clemmons has a good summary of what chastity allows you to do in this post, where she looks at the ideas of Dawn Eden.

She writes:

> Contrary to the pervasive bad press it's gotten from libertines, chastity isn't about "not having sex." In fact, it's about a lot more than just sex. Dawn defines it beautifully: "Chastity is the virtue that enables us to love fully and completely in every relationship, in the manner that is appropriate to the relationship." Of course, this raises the question of what determines *appropriateness*, but from both a scriptural and natural law standpoint, this is an easy question to answer. Sexual expression is appropriate to the marriage relationship and inappropriate to all others. Whether or not it's easy to *follow* is certainly another matter, and Dawn gives excellent counsel on that and other related matters, but the point here is that the categories are discrete and clearly discernible.
>
> More important, chaste living is grounded in something larger and more permanent than the individual. Whereas in modern singlehood, love is based on

> feelings, which are apt to change with the wind or even last night's dinner, chaste love is defined by and grounded in God himself. Love of God—love *for* God and love *from* God—becomes the love that orders all other loves. "For each of those whom divine providence places in your life," Dawn writes, "friends, family, the stranger on the street—you ask yourself, how can I love God through loving this person?"
>
> Whereas the modern single is driven by an inner void that is desperately trying to get filled, the chaste singular looks to *God himself* to fill the void. Rather than trying to *get* love through the right match, the chaste singular *receives* love from God, the ultimate source, and then turns outward with *love to give* from an inner fullness.
>
> Chaste love is respectful. It behaves with appropriate decorum, which requires forethought. *What is the nature of this relationship? Why am I in it? Where is it headed? What are my intentions?*
>
> […]To be sure, chastity will require something of you. First, it requires acknowledging the black hole within that will never be filled by sex and then inviting God himself to fill it. After that, it requires discipline, responsibility, and an ongoing trust in God himself as guarantor of the outcome. It's the outward lifestyle that proceeds from a sound inward theology of sex and love.
>
> "I learned, through discovering chastity," Dawn writes, "that the greatest tragedy is not that of being unloved. The greatest tragedy is not loving." Chaste living is holistic and comprehensive, engaging mind, body, and spirit. It's about learning to order love as love was meant to be ordered.

Chaste love is basically intelligent, self-sacrificial love. It loves as a way of doing work for your Boss. Instead of trying to make this other person meet your needs, you try to think of how you can make them be a productive person for your Boss. You don't see them as a commodity, you see them as a fellow soldier. And since you don't know how far any person can go in serving God, every person you meet has value.

Personally, I think it is a lot more rewarding to chastely love women who have had bad experiences. Not all are safe, but you can tell whether to invest in them by whether they do the things that will build them up. Study something hard. Get good grades. Get a job. Strengthen your faith by reading apologetics. Stop wasting money on alcohol and drugs and cigarettes. Save money instead of spending it. Choose men who are husband material, not boy-toy material.

It's incredibly fulfilling to see a woman actually listen to you and take your advice, and then to see her experience the rewards of good decision-making. Men sometimes think that sexual submission is a good way to feed the need for respect. But it's a temporary fix. The permanent fix is to have a place of honor in someone's life because you helped turn their life around. That's real respect, and it's not the kind that the woman takes back later after she sobers up.

San Francisco jury finds illegal immigrant who shot Kate Steinle dead not guilty

December 2, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(Photo: Kate Steinle)

A San Francisco jury refused to convict the illegal immigrant who shot Kate Steinle dead. Canadian conservative Mark Steyn reacted to the news on Fox News:

Excerpt:

> Mark Steyn joined Tucker Carlson to react to the not guilty verdict in the Kate Steinle murder trial.
>
> Jose Ines Garcia Zarate, an illegal immigrant who had been deported multiple times, shot and killed Steinle while she was walking on a San Francisco pier with her father in July 2015.
>
> Zarate admitted to shooting Steinle, but said it was an accident. He avoided a second-degree murder conviction, although he was found guilty of being a felon in possession of a firearm.
>
> The shooting sparked a national debate over illegal immigration and sanctuary cities.
>
> “It is a miscarriage of justice in the profoundest sense in that Kate Steinle is dead because she went for a walk in a popular destination in her own city and her parents will never see anybody convicted for that crime,” Steyn said.
>
> He said there is no dispute that Zarate fired the shot that killed Steinle or that he should not have been in the U.S. in the first place.
>
> “Why is one political party, the entire bureaucracy and two-thirds of the remaining political party fetishizing and sentimentalizing immigrants who can’t speak the language, with a grade two education, and setting up competing jurisdictions in this country that protect them at the expense of American citizens?” Steyn said.

The Daily Signal recaps the shooter's criminal record:

> A Mexican national, Zarate–then known as Juan Francisco López-Sánchez–is a seven-time convicted felon who had been deported from the U.S. five times before the shooting.
>
> Just months before the shooting, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials lodged an immigration detainer for Zarate with the San Francisco sheriff's office, which declined the request.
>
> **In an interview with local media, Zarate said he had made his way to San Francisco because he knew he would be less likely to be deported because of the city's sanctuary policies.**

Ted Cruz just tweeted that he wanted the Senate to vote on the "Kate's law" bill, which has already passed the Republican-majority House in June 2017. The bill imposes criminal penalties on illegal immigrants who are deported, but then re-enter the United States illegally again. The sentences are tougher for illegal immigrants who already had criminal convictions before re-entering.

The Senate, which is populated with more liberal Republicans, has refused to do anything with the bill. Certainly, the bill would not get the votes of any Democrats in the Senate. 166 Democrats voted against it in the House.

The downside of the soul mate / fairy tale view of relationships

December 3, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(Image: Husband and wife doing some woodworking together)

Astonishing article from the leftist Huffington Post, of all places. (links removed)

Excerpt:

> As millennial women, we were groomed for a white knight fantasy. From childhood favorites such as *Snow White* to adult rom-com staples such as *How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days* or *Sleepless in Seattle*, the media perpetuates a romantic storyline in which compatibility and lasting romance is something effortless, built on chance, sustained by good looks, fun dates and electric sexual chemistry. These story lines shape our expectations for romantic happiness. It is not enough to find someone with whom we are mostly compatible, who would make a good parent, with whom we could learn and grow wrinkly; now, we expect a perfect fit and an easy, instantaneous "connection." In short, we want a soul mate. But it is this desire for a soul mate that is actually the undoing of our happy ending.
>
> A "soul mate" is defined as one who is ideally suited to us, perfectly completes us, one with whom the relationship feels easy and natural. With them, a relationship is just "meant to be"… A survey of young adults conducted by the National Marriage Project found that while 84% of young adults report finding a marriage partner "very important," a full 94% of young adults say they would like to marry a soul mate, and 73% of people ages 18 – 29 believe that there is a soul mate out there for them.

Wow. That doesn't sound like a good approach to me. My approach has always been to pick the girl who was most willing to learn new things. And then to explain to her my vision for marriage and see if I could get her to work independently on that plan before I married her. I don't favor this soul mate approach at all.

Does the "soul mate" approach work?

> We heard that those who get married later and possess a college degree have fewer divorces and more stable marriages. So we spend our twenties trying to find ourselves through travel, accumulating degrees and building a career. Marriage will be the capstone of our achievements, and nothing less than tying the knot with a soul mate will suffice. But the tragic irony is that soul mate thinking makes us increasingly likely to divorce. A study of 1,400 married men and women shows that people who hold soul mate orientations are 150% more likely to end up divorced than those who do not.
>
> **The widespread cultural belief in "soul mate ideology" undermines our chances at happiness because it makes us passive receivers of idyllic romantic expectations. Further, it fosters self-centeredness; one rarely longs to be a soul mate for someone *else*, which would require effort. For this reason, believing in soul mates is one of the most dis-empowering belief systems we can adopt. As millennials, we pride ourselves on actively pursuing the life we want to live, rather than simply accepting whatever hand we are dealt. We are innovative, passionate, proactive and not afraid to take risks. Yet, there is a disconnect when it comes to our desire for lasting love. Though there are prospects around us, we forgo taking the concrete steps needed to build happy compatible relationships because we do not "feel a spark." We are passively waiting on the sidelines for love to "happen," and then wonder why it is so difficult.**

I've always felt that the soul mate approach was like the evil villain in opposition to my noble plan-based approach. My approach is to pick a woman who wants to learn and work hard. Explain your marriage plan to her, and how your marriage plan serves God. My marriage plan accomplishes four goals, for example. 1) Influence the university with apologetics, 2) influence the church with apologetics, 3) provide a model of a good marriage to people in the community, including co-workers, college students and neighbors, and 4) raise effective, influential children who will have an impact for God. Now if you are a Christian woman raised in a church that affirms the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage with this "God has a wonderful plan for your life" stuff, then a specific, non-emotional plan from a man is the last thing you want to hear about.

Their solution is for people to work at compatibility:

> Compatibility is something co-created through intentionality and conscious choice. It involves mutual sacrifice, effort and commitment for the sake of the

> other’s benefit. A recent study found that of the couples who demonstrate above average daily generosity, 50% of them report being “very happy” in marriage; among the low generosity scores, only 14% can say the same. As studies indicate, selflessness is required to create mutual compatibility. It is not instantaneous, nor does it usually begin with true love’s kiss.
>
> We both know from experience that there are some you naturally connect with and others you do not. This is not a call towards forced attraction or companionship. But, our romantic futures should not be placed in the hands of blind chance. It is time we roll up our sleeves and shift our expectations from unattainable perfection to realistic romance, one that accounts for imperfection. We must understand that work in a relationship is a necessary key to success, rather than an indication of imminent failure. We will be letting go of a tired plot line that sets us up for disappointment and embracing an active role in our own unique story.
>
> How refreshing to know that we do not have to be perfect to be lovable, and that our romantic success is not solely dependent on finding the “right” fit, but instead built through cultivating daily moments of generosity, sacrifice and conscious coupling.

So in my case, I am looking for a woman who listens to the plan, develops the skills for the plan and then independently engages in activities to achieve the goals of the plan. In the past, I have had women listen to the plan carefully, including my motivations and experiences that caused me to choose this plan. And they have been willing to read books, listen to lectures, watch debates, to gain the skills needed to make a difference. And they have even engaged independently with activities like public speaking, teaching classes, and so forth. But none of the women who had done that accepted the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage. They all wanted to hear a good plan, learn useful skills and then get to work. Big difference.

Even alpha male bad boys are disappointed by the Sexual Revolution

December 4, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

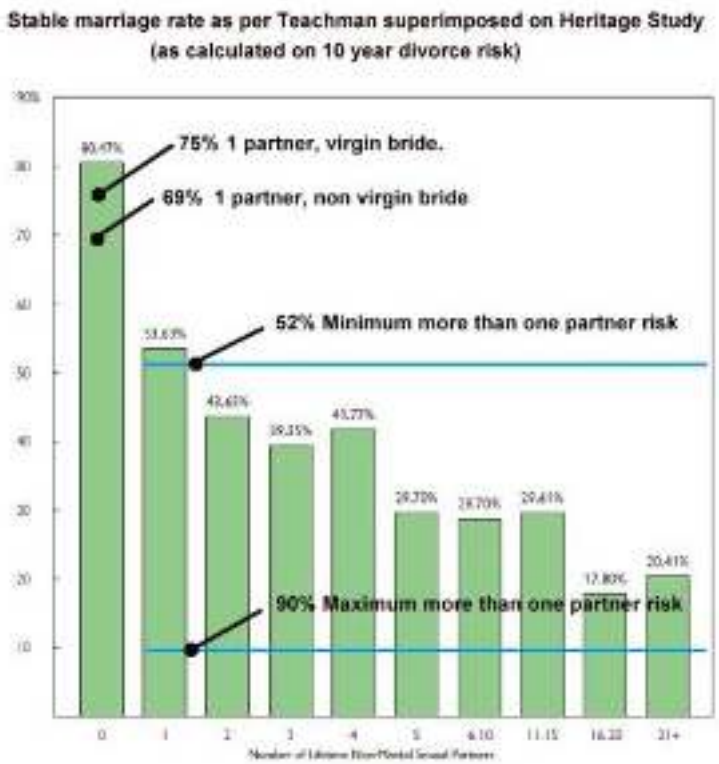

Marriage stability vs sexual partners,(Teachman et al. JAMF, August 2010)

Thanks to radical feminism's dominance in the culture, young unmarried women are no longer desiring marriage, nor selecting men for husband and father roles. In my experience, I would say that about 80% of young unmarried women are competing for 20% of the men. Instead of evaluating these men for husband and father roles, they just evaluate them on externals.

This article from the UK Daily Mail illustrates the problem:

> Women are often said to be the less shallow sex when it comes to what they find attractive.
>
> But a study of an online gallery of 'hot male commuters' has found that the fairer sex are just as superficial as men – as they find muscles and money the sexiest male attributes.
>
> The study based its findings on a website called Tube Crush, where women and gay men secretly take pictures of the capital's attractive men on the London Underground.
>
> […]While the authors acknowledge that gay men also use the site, they say that female responses to the 'hot commuters' suggest females have not moved on in what they find attractive beyond 'money and strength' – despite their

> advancement in society.
>
> Signs that the man is wealthy – such as a flashy watch or an expensive suit – were considered highly attractive by site users, as were powerful arm and chest muscles.
>
> But the classic image of the 'new man' – a man holding a baby – or skinnier or nerdier types of man were far less represented.

This is a good illustration of what the marriage-minded men now see on college campuses. Today, marriage-minded men who focus on sobriety, chastity and providing for a family are ignored until women tire of chasing the minority of "bad boys" who have these shallow, external characteristics. On campus, marriage-minded men are ignored while young, unmarried women hope to boost their self-esteem and have fun by having sex with guys who possess shallow external qualities. Alcohol is used as a lubricant for this operation, reducing inhibitions and providing an alibi to the woman's peer group for the slutty behavior. It seems as if women have completely given up on marriage – at least until their youth start to fade in their early 30s.

Now, as one of the 80% of men who are marriage-minded, I am dissatisfied with women's decisions to delay marriage for fun with bad boys. But it turns out that even the other 20% of men who are "bad boys" are *also* dissatisfied with women's choices.

Consider this article from the UK Sun: (H/T Sarah)

> It sounds like every young man's idea of heaven: endless sex with a constant stream of gorgeous, up-for-it women who don't even expect a pizza date before, or a conversation afterwards – and all via a tap on your smartphone.
>
> Yet incredibly, a new generation of handsome, successful – and sexually prolific – Tinder-weary lads are claiming sex with hundreds of one-night stands is leaving them burned out, bored – and lonely.
>
> Despite bedding a bevvie of beauties, they claim they're desperate for lasting romance – and broody for children with a new wave of sexually-liberated young women who just don't want to commit.
>
> I got to know a group of these seemingly lucky men after I co-wrote the UK's biggest ever academic study into more than 2,000 British men, released this week.
>
> Called the Harry's Masculinity Report, the survey was conducted by University College London and Harry's, a new men's grooming company that's just launched in the UK.
>
> Harry's wanted to shatter the myths around masculinity, and discover what truly made modern men tick in 2017.

Here are some details:

> One of these was Simone Ippolito, 25, from Bournemouth, a self-confessed Tinder

> “player” for two years.
>
> The salesman and part-time model claimed: “When I first got Tinder two years ago, it was heaven. In three months I got 300 matches. They were coming so fast I couldn’t keep up.
>
> “People on Tinder are only there for sex. I’ve been on 200 dates, and I get a result 99 per cent of the time.
>
> “Getting sex is too easy. You get bored of it. Tinder takes all the pleasure out of flirting. It’s not fun anymore. Tinder is literally two glasses of wine then back home for sex. There is no emotion.
>
> “It is boring, empty and lonely. You can’t have a nice conversation after mechanical sex. It’s just sex and go. Now I just want to stop it and settle down”.
>
> Talking to other single men, it rapidly became clear that while dating apps like Tinder means it’s never been easier to get sex, it’s never been harder to fall in love.
>
> This sentiment was echoed by Gary Barnett, 34, social media manager from Brighton, who’s been single for three months.
>
> “For the first time ever in human history, sex is on tap,” he says.
>
> “Nine times out of ten you don’t even have to go out on a date. If a girl likes your photos, they just come round.
>
> “If you’re half attractive you’re bombarded with offers. You can go on Tinder dates every single night of the week.
>
> “The social interaction is totally lacking. You can have sex and never talk again.
>
> “They always ask the same three questions. ‘Hi how are you?’ ‘how’s your week been?’ or ‘I love your beard/tattoos’. That’s literally code for ‘do you want to f***?’
>
> “That was really good for the first year. I filled my boots. After 50 Tinder dates, including 20 in the last two months with no sign of any ‘keepers,’ I’m over it. You get to the point where you can’t be bothered to do it anymore”.

Ah yes, the beard and tattoos. These are apparently very important for attracting women today. But it doesn’t work to attract a serious marriage-minded women to settle down with. Men are designed to want relationships with women. But not every woman is capable of having a relationship with a man. Especially after so many women have been taught by feminism not to prefer commitment-minded men who can perform the traditional male roles: protecting, providing and leading on moral and spiritual issues. Bears, muscles, shiny watches and tattoos might attract women, but it doesn’t make those women marriage-ready. They’re not marriage ready at all.

Who is there today who is teaching women to be ready for marriage? They’re being taught to look for shiny watches, beards, piercings and tattoos. After a while of smashing up their character with bad boys, they aren’t good for marriage any more. Women who

choose men based on shallow externals quickly lose their ability to trust any man – even if the right man comes along. And no amount of bad boy attractiveness can fix up a woman who has chosen over and over in favor of fun and thrills.

The Sexual Revolution have messed up love and commitment for everyone, it seems.

Supreme Court to decide whether it is legal to be a Christian after same-sex marriage

December 5, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had a really tough decision Monday night about what to write about for Tuesday's post. I wanted to say something about the sexting and resume misrepresentation accusations against Ravi Zacharias. I also wanted to say something about the how the Democrats in the DOJ and the FBI protected Hillary Clinton from criminal charges while inventing a fake Russia-Trump connection. I wanted to say something about how the Supreme Court just allowed full enforcement of the Trump security measures against countries that are significantly influenced by radical Islamic terrorism. In the end, I chose the Supreme Court story, because it relates to free speech and freedom of association

There's a good little video summary of the case here:

Ben Shapiro posted a great summary of what you need to know about the case at the Daily Wire:

> On Tuesday, the Supreme Court is slated to hear oral argument in the famed *Masterpiece Cakeshop* case. The case is a seminal one for religious liberty. It pits the ability of local and state governments to enforce "anti-discrimination law" against religious practice rights for businessowners; it essentially decides whether or not religious people can practice their religion in their business. This goes to the heart of freedom of religion in the United States.
>
> The case revolves around a man named Jack Phillips. Jack is a baker. He makes and decorates cakes. He has a simple rule: he'll sell anyone a cake. Gay, straight, transgender, green. Anyone. But he won't make a custom cake for every event. As a religious Christian, this means that he sees it as sinful participation to make a custom cake celebrating a same-sex wedding. So he'll make a cake for a same-sex wedding, but he won't decorate it as such (no groom-groom wedding

> toppers, for example). He also refuses to make cakes that push anti-gay messages, anti-American messages, and adult-themed messages.
>
> That's his Constitutional right. But the Leftists at the Colorado Civil Rights Commission didn't think so. They think that Jack must be forced to violate his own religious beliefs and decorate a cake for a same-sex wedding, or stop making any cakes at all. As a result of their ruling, Jack lost 40% of his business and more than half of his employees — all for abiding by his Biblical beliefs in the most tolerant possible way. He was even told that he had to re-educate employees, including his family members, and report to the government what his artistic decisions were, listing all the cakes he'd failed to bake and why.

Now, I know lots of people who claim to be Christians who support redefining marriage to eliminate the requirement of complementary sexes. I wonder how they would explain their support for SSM given this clear case of fascism by a secular government? Before this country redefined marriage, people on the right warned that there would be consequences for religious liberty.

Sometimes, it's nice to read what is really happening in the world, with the politically correct spin removed.

Try this:

> But this isn't a religious case at all. It's a freedom of association and freedom of speech case. Religious practice shouldn't be bound to the home or church — religious life infuses every aspect of living. But by the same token, an atheist should be free to reject a Christ-themed cake, a Leftist speechwriter should be free to reject a right-wing politician, and The New Republic should be free to refuse to deliver to the Trump White House. Does this mean that people we dislike will be able to act in ways we dislike? Absolutely. But freedom lives in the spaces where we acknowledge that we have no right to another's labor or approval. Tyranny grows when we refuse to acknowledge those spaces.

What's really going on here is that there is a group of people involved in sinful, self-destructive activities. And their response to their own bad feelings about what they're freely choosing to do is to try to generate happy feelings by forcing everyone around them to celebrate their decisions. You would never see a chaste person suing unchaste people to demand their approval. That's because chastity is self-evidently virtuous. No outside celebration or affirmation is wanted or needed. But sinful people become obsessed with shutting out purity. And if they can't shut it out, then they use the law to stamp it out.

That's what this Supreme Court case is really about. We shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that people on the secular left are Americans in any sense of the word. They don't accept the Constitution, they don't accept free speech, they don't accept freedom of association, they don't accept religious liberty. They accept their sexual desires. And the human rights of everyone else in the world has to give way to their sexual desires.

The loss of liberty for Bible-believing Christians isn't a problem for fake Christians who think Christianity is about feeling good and being liked. It's only a problem for people who actually do have a relationship with God in Christ. And that's a very small minority of people who profess Christianity.

For a more thorough take on the legal aspects of the case, you can check out this editorial by Robbie George in the radical leftist New York Times, of all places.

Highlights from day one of the Masterpiece Cakeshop Supreme Court case

December 6, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kristen Waggoner of Alliance Defending Freedom argued Jack Phillips' case before the Supreme Court. (Photo: Jeff Malet/The Heritage Foundation)

I thought it might be worth reading about the first day of arguments in the Masterpiece Cakeshop case. Not only can we find out what is likely to happen, but we'll also learn how the ADF lawyer Kristen Waggoner is making her defense.

The Daily Signal reports:

> The Supreme Court heard oral arguments on Tuesday in a closely watched case dealing with free speech, religious liberty, and same-sex marriage.
>
> Specifically, the justices considered whether the state of Colorado can force Jack Phillips, a Christian baker, to create a custom cake for a same-sex wedding against his deeply held religious beliefs.
>
> Attorneys for Phillips clearly explained that he seeks to exercise his freedom only to speak messages that he agrees with, while still welcoming all customers into his store. The First Amendment's free speech and religious liberty clauses protect his freedoms to do just that.
>
> In a lengthy and charged oral argument, the nine justices wrestled with how Americans who hold different views on marriage in our post-Obergefell society can continue to live with each other in mutual respect.

Here is the key that might predict the outcome, from the Supreme Court's swing vote:

> In one of the most charged exchanges of the day, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy questioned Colorado Solicitor General Frederick Yarger about whether a member

> of the Colorado Civil Rights Commission who compared Phillips to a racist and a Nazi demonstrated anti-religious bias—and that, if he did so, whether the judgment against Masterpiece should stand.

More:

> After disavowing the commissioner's comments, Yarger argued that the ruling should still stand. But Kennedy returned to the issue again, telling Yarger that "tolerance is essential in a free society. And tolerance is most meaningful when it's mutual. It seems to me that the state in its position here has been neither tolerant nor respectful of Mr. Phillips' religious beliefs."
>
> Kennedy also pointed out there were other cake shops that would have accommodated Charlie Craig and David Mullins, the same-sex couple who requested a cake for their wedding.
>
> In a similar line of questioning, Justice Samuel Alito pointed out that the state of Colorado had failed to demonstrate mutual tolerance when it only protected the freedom of cake artists who landed on one side of the gay marriage debate—namely, the state's side.
>
> When three religious customers went to cake artists to request cakes that were critical of same-sex marriage, those cake artists declined—yet Colorado did not apply its anti-discrimination statute to punish the artists. But when Phillips declined to create a cake to celebrate a same-sex marriage, Colorado imposed a three-pronged penalty that drove him out of the wedding cake business, causing him to lose 40 percent of his business.
>
> […]In the exchange with Alito, the Colorado solicitor general said that cake artists could not discriminate on the basis of identity, but could discriminate on the basis of messages. Gorsuch later responded, saying that's exactly what Phillips has argued.

It was also made clear that Phillips was not discriminating against identity, but just refusing to agree with the state's position on same-sex marriage.

> During the oral arguments, the court appeared to recognize what is patently obvious from the facts. Phillips welcomes all people into his store, encourages them to buy off-the-shelf items, and will make custom-designed cakes for them provided they don't ask for items that violate his beliefs.
>
> He has served gays for the 24 years his store has been in operation and welcomes their business to this day. He does not discriminate against anybody because of their identity.
>
> So comparisons to shopkeepers in the Jim Crow South who sought to keep the races "separate but equal" are a smear that divert attention from the real issue: Phillips simply disagrees with the state on the issue of marriage.

More:

> Finally, the oral arguments revealed the scope of how far the state of Colorado is willing to go to impose its views of marriage on citizens. In one line of questioning from Roberts, Colorado admitted that it would force Catholic Legal Services to provide a same-sex couple with legal services related to their wedding even if it violates Catholic teachings on marriage.
>
> And in questioning from Alito, the ACLU answered that the state could force a Christian college whose creed opposes same-sex marriage to perform a same-sex wedding in its chapel.

I was listening to the latest Ben Shapiro podcast, and in the last 10 minutes, he talked about the case. He pointed out that at the time when Phillips refused to participate in a same-sex marriage, same-sex marriage was not even legal in Colorado. Nevertheless, Colorado went after him. Hard. I think they secular left is going to lose this case – it's just too much fascism. Too much intolerance.

You can read more about Kristen Waggoner here. She's also arguing the Arlen's Flowers v. the State of Washington case. A great lady. A real hero.

If you're looking for a great book to read on what comes after same-sex marriage and how to discuss and debate it, read Ryan T. Anderon's "Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Liberty". It's the best book for laymen on the subject. Really helps you to know how to talk about this issue. I had to do it a week ago with one of my atheist co-workers who asked ME out to lunch to talk more about his spiritual journey. If you don't read, you can't defend.

Greg Koukl and Michael Krueger discuss Bart Ehrman's skepticism of the gospels

December 7, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
Here is a recent episode that I'm sure you'll enjoy.

Details:

> Michael Kruger on Bart Ehrman's claim we can't trust the Gospel accounts (April 1, 2016)

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Who is Bart Ehrman? What are his books about?
- Conservatives tend to agree with Ehrman on the facts, not on his interpretation of the facts
- Ehrman has an article claiming that the Holy Week gospel accounts are untrustworthy
- do the variants in the NT texts undermine the reliability of the texts?
- the difference between reasonable scholar-Bart and hyper-skeptical popularizer-Bart
- where does Ehrman's view of gospel reliability fit in the broad spectrum of NT scholars?
- there are 200,000 to 400,000 variants in the copies of the gospels: what is a "variant"?
- can a person be an authentic Christian if the gospels are not actual historical events?
- Ehrman's view: Christians can have feelings about events that never happened = not Biblical

- was Jesus just an itinerant preacher who spoke pithy slogans? what about his Jewish background?
- is there scholarly agreement regarding the minimal facts underlying the resurrection of Jesus?
- is there a disconnect between uneducated eyewitnesses and educated Greek gospel authors?
- is the early church an “oral culture” or a “textual culture”? Is oral transmission reliable?
- was text of the New Testament was inspired by God or dictated by God?
- do we have any reasons to think that the gospel authors were in contact with eyewitnesses?
- should be be hyper-skeptical of the gospels when we have an early creed in 1 Cor 15:3-8?

Stand to Reason does a nice job with their podcast. Not only can you download the MP3, but they have a transcript, and links to resources mentioned in each episode. First class!

The Economist: marriage is still the best place for children

December 8, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

I stopped reading The Economist when they endorsed the socialist failure Barack Obama, who doubled the national debt to $20 trillion in only 8 years. However, even a stopped clock is right twice a day. And here is one of those times.

Excerpt:

> However, there is one big reason to worry about the quality and longevity of people's intimate bonds. It is that relationships often produce children, and children are profoundly affected by how their parents get on.
>
> You could make enough confetti for a summer of weddings with all the academic papers that show how much children gain from being brought up in stable, loving families, and how much they suffer when those families break down. Culture and customs make little difference. In Japan, four-fifths of single-parent households emerge when couples divorce—a much higher share than in the West, where people usually slip into single parenthood without marrying. Japanese children living with only one parent nonetheless perform significantly worse in school tests, just as children from single-parent families do in Europe and America. In poorer countries, family breakdown can kill. According to one recent estimate, the chance that an African child will die before turning five is about 25-30 per 1,000 for those born into stable families, but 35-40 per 1,000 for the children of single, divorced or widowed parents.
>
> Marriage is not always good for children. They do not benefit when a parent marries somebody who is not their mother or father, and seem to suffer if the

> parent they live with cycles through several relationships. What they seem to need most is for their biological parents to stick together. And one strong claim that can be made for marriage is that it appears to glue parents together more tightly than any other arrangement.

This part is key, especially for those millennials who think that cohabitating before marrying makes the marriage more secure:

> Analysis of one large American data set by Kathryn Edin and Laura Tach, two sociologists, shows that 27% of marriages broke down within nine years of a child being born. By contrast, among couples who were merely cohabiting when a child appeared, 53% separated within nine years—and most of the remaining 47% were married by that point. Among couples who were dating but not living together when the child was born, 81% had split up.
>
> Again, this pattern runs across national and cultural borders. Cohabiting couples behave a bit more like married couples in countries where giving birth outside marriage is very common, such as Estonia and Norway. But they seldom attain the same level of stickiness as married couples, even after controlling for the mother's level of education.

Cohabitation doesn't work, because it's basically saying that I'm going to try the other person and see if I like the other person, and that sex is required to know if I like the other person. It doesn't really matter that you know the other person really well, because you can always get out of cohabitation just by leaving. Marriage says that I'm going to commit to the other person for life, through thick and thin. Here, both people tend to do a more thorough job of selecting their partner, perhaps even consulting fathers for advice. Why? Because getting out of a marriage is a lot harder to do, and more expensive.

In the past, I've blogged about some factors that can make your marriage pretty much divorce proof: things like chastity, not spending too much on the wedding, age of the man and woman at marriage, education levels of each spouse, number of people attending the wedding ceremony, isolation from other divorced people, church attendance, and so on. The truth is that you can engineer a marriage that's practically divorce proof. But if you insist on spontaneity and following your heart, then you aren't going to care what studies say works best.

Porn star bullied to commit suicide for refusing to have sex with bisexual men

December 9, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

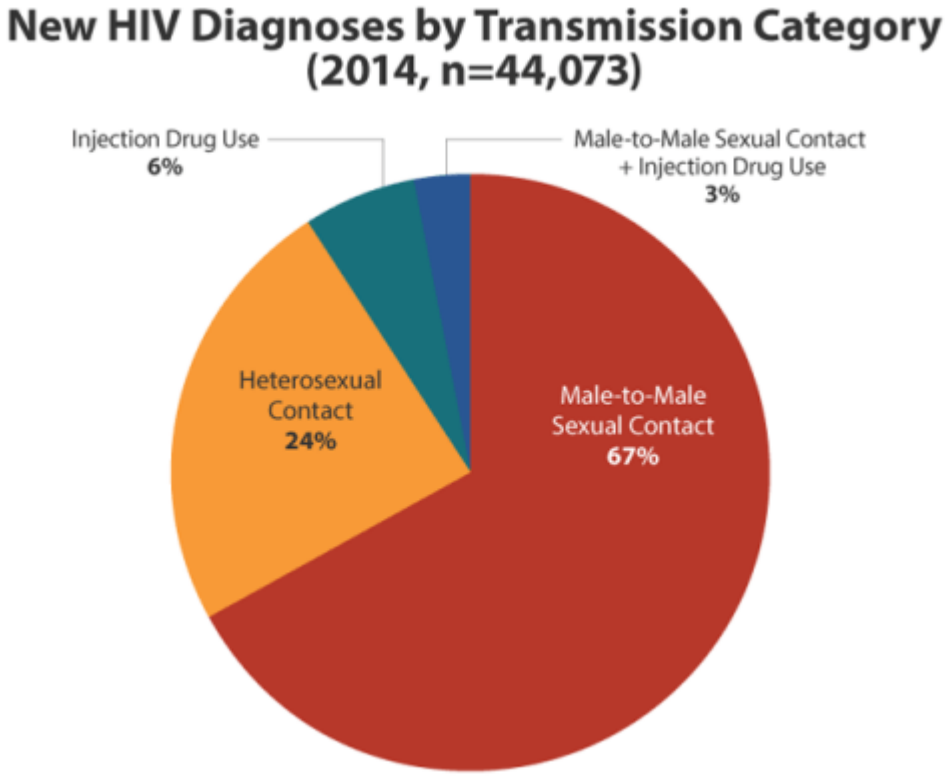

HIV infection rates from Center for Disease Control

Recently there was a news story about a porn star actress who refused to act with men who were known to have sex with men, claiming there was a higher risk of getting STDs.

Fox News reports on what happened next:

> A porn star relentlessly bullied on Twitter after saying she did not want to have sex with someone who had shot gay porn committed suicide by hanging.
>
> August Ames, a 23-year-old rising star in the adult film industry, died Tuesday in California. The Ventura County Medical Examiner confirmed to The Blast that Ames died of asphyxiation due to hanging.
>
> "She was the kindest person I ever knew and she meant the world to me," her husband, Kevin Moore, told industry trade magazine Adult Video News (AVN), which first reported the news.
>
> […]Close friends told The Blast that they suspect her social media presence and recent harassment may have contributed to her death.
>
> In recent days, Ames' Twitter feed has been littered with cyberbullies accusing her of being homophobic after she publicly chose to not work with an unidentified actor who had previously shot gay porn.

So, the gay rights bullies basically killed her with bullying. Very interesting considering

the bullying of Christian businesses also being conducted by gay rights fascists today. But was she right about her claims that men who have sex with men are more likely to catch sexually transmitted diseases?

This is from the far-left CNN, of all places.

Excerpt:

> There were more reported cases of sexually transmitted diseases last year than ever before in the United States, according to the latest STD surveillance report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
>
> The annual report, which was released on Wednesday, showed that the rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis — the three most commonly reported STDs in the nation — increased between 2014 and 2015, reaching an all-time high.
>
> Reported cases of primary and secondary syphilis rose by 19%, gonorrhea cases rose by 12.8%, and chlamydia cases rose by 5.9%, from 2014. All three STDs are curable with antibiotics, but most infections go undiagnosed and untreated, according to the CDC.

What is interesting is how overspending by bureaucrats on social welfare, amnesty, refugees, etc. has left less money to combat sexually-transmitted diseases:

> In a foreword to the new report, Bolan wrote that some 21 health department STD clinics across the country have closed due to many state and local programs experiencing budget cuts. Therefore, fewer people have access to the testing and treatment resources provided by such clinics.
>
> Meanwhile, as more STD cases emerge, treating infections costs the country nearly $16 billion annually.

With the national debt doubled from 10 to 20 trillion under Obama, Obama's free-spirited supporters can look forward to not having access to the "health care" they now need.

Not surprisingly, the reckless young people who voted for Obama are the most reckless with sex. And so they are the most affected by STDs:

> Young people, 15 to 24 years old, accounted for nearly two-thirds of last year's chlamydia diagnoses — and half of the gonorrhea diagnoses.

Not only are there more STD infections, but the diseases have adapted to beat our antibiotics.

The Center for Disease Control reports:

> Gonorrhea has progressively developed resistance to the antibiotic drugs prescribed to treat it. Following the spread of gonococcal fluoroquinolone resistance, the cephalosporin antibiotics have been the foundation of recommended treatment for gonorrhea. The emergence of cephalosporin-resistant gonorrhea would significantly complicate the ability of providers to treat

> gonorrhea successfully, since we have few antibiotic options left that are simple, well-studied, well-tolerated and highly effective. It is critical to continuously monitor antibiotic resistance in Neisseria gonorrhoeae and encourage research and development of new treatment regimens.

Gonorrhea is the second most prominent STD, right behind chlamydia.

One reason for the upsurge in STDs might be society's growing celebration of male homosexuality.

The Center for Disease Control explains:

> P&S syphilis among men who have sex with men (MSM) has been increasing since at least 2000. In 2014, rates of P&S syphilis increased among MSM, who account for 83 percent of reported cases among men when the sex of the partner is known. Also concerning is that more than half of MSM (51 percent) diagnosed with syphilis in 2014 were also HIV-positive. Infection with syphilis can cause sores on the genitals, which make it easier to transmit and acquire HIV.
>
> Syphilis is currently the only STD for which information on the sex of the sex partner is reported. However, a growing body of evidence indicates that MSM are experiencing similar increases in gonorrhea and chlamydia infections–underscoring the need to further understand what is contributing to the rise.
>
> Gay and bisexual men face a combination of social, epidemiologic, and individual risk factors that can fuel high levels of STDs. Higher prevalence of infection within sexual networks increases the likelihood of acquiring an STD with each sexual encounter.

And on a different CDC page:

> Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men made up an estimated 2% of the population but 55% of people living with HIV in the United States in 2013. If current diagnosis rates continue, 1 in 6 gay and bisexual men will be diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime, including 1 in 2 black/African American gay and bisexual men, 1 in 4 Hispanic/Latino gay and bisexual men, and 1 in 11 white gay and bisexual men.

The CDC's solution to this disparity is to ask for more taxpayer money, of course. No disapproval here, just take the money from the moral people and pay for the choices of the reckless people.

Right now, many people are freely choosing to engage in these behaviors, and to celebrate the lifestyles of those who engage in these behaviors, because they think that the government has unlimited taxpayer money to pay for all the costs of these decisions. Little do they know about the national debt, and what happens to "government-provided" health care when the interest rates on that debt increases. As a society, we have decided that it is better to be forgiving and compassionate when people make reckless, risky decisions. "Oh, we can just make the prudent people pay for the mess – they have

money”, the progressives say. And that works fine, until the money runs out, and people realize that the mean, judgmental, controlling bullies who were defending chastity, fidelity, marriage, moral standards and personal responsibility were right all along.

Can relationships succeed independently of the efforts of the people involved?

December 10, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

A few years ago, I blogged about the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage, which I think is the dominant view of marriage among young people today – even among Christians. This view of marriage basically says that there is a person in the world out there who will match up so perfectly with each one of us that we will have to expend no effort and perform no actions and take responsibility for nothing in order for the relationship to work. it will just work on its own!

I've decided to link to this recent article by Matt Walsh which is on that same topic.

He writes:

> The disease is the fanciful, unrealistic, fictionalized perceptions that both males and females harbor about marriage.
>
> For example, think of the glamorization of the "mysterious" and "damaged" guy from the "wrong side of the tracks." Hollywood makes him seem alluring and sexy, but forgets to mention that most of the time, in the real world, that dude probably has herpes, a coke habit, and a criminal record.
>
> Still, that bit of propaganda is nothing compared to the underlying misconception that so many of us carry around consciously or subconsciously, because we've seen it on TV and in the movies, and read it in books a million times since childhood: namely, that there is just *one* person out there for us. Our soul mate. Our Mr. or Mrs. Right. The person we are "meant to be with."

Matt thinks this view of relationships is not realistic:

> I didn't marry my wife because she's The One, *she's The One because I married*

> *her*. Until we were married, she was one, I was one, and we were both one of many. I didn't marry The One, I married *this* one, and the two of us *became* one. I didn't marry her because I was "meant to be with her," I married her because that was my choice, and it was her choice, and the Sacrament of marriage is that choice. I married her because I love her — I chose to love her — and I chose to live the rest of my life in service to her. We were not following a script, we chose to write our own, and it's a story that contains more love and happiness than any romantic fable ever conjured up by Hollywood.
>
> Indeed, marriage is a decision, not the inevitable result of unseen forces outside of our control. When we got married, the pastor asked us if we had "come here freely." If I had said, "well, not really, you see destiny drew us together," that would have brought the evening to an abrupt and unpleasant end. Marriage has to be a free choice or it is not a marriage. That's a beautiful thing, really.
>
> God gave us Free Will. It is His greatest gift to us because without it, nothing is possible. Love is not possible without Will. If we cannot choose to love, then we cannot love. God did not program us like robots to be compatible with only one other machine. He created us as individuals, endowed with the incredible, unprecedented power to choose. And with that choice, we are to go out and find a partner, and make that partner our soul mate.
>
> That's what we do. We *make* our spouses into our soul mates by marrying them. We don't simply recognize that they are soul mates and then just sort of symbolically consecrate that recognition through what would then be an effectively meaningless marriage sacrament. Instead, we find another unique, dynamic, wholly individualized human being, and we make the monumental, supernatural decision to bind ourselves to them for eternity.
>
> **It's a bold and risky move, no matter how you look at it. It's important to recognize this, not so that you can run away like a petrified little puppy and never tie the knot with anyone, but so that you can go into marriage knowing, at least to some extent, what you're really doing. This person wasn't made for you. It wasn't "designed" to be. There will be some parts of your relationship that are incongruous and conflicting. It won't all click together like a set of Legos, as you might expect if you think this coupling was fated in the stars.**
>
> **It's funny that people get divorced and often cite "irreconcilable differences." Well what did they think was going to happen? Did they think *every* difference would be reconcilable? Did they think every bit of contention between them could be perfectly and permanently solved?**

Finally, regarding his own marriage:

> There were literally millions of things that either of us could have done. An innumerable multitude of possible outcomes, but this was *our* outcome because

> we *chose* it. Not because we were destined or predetermined, not because it was "meant to happen," but because we chose it. That, to me, is much more romantic than getting pulled along by fate until the two of us inevitably collide and all that was written in our horoscopes passively comes to unavoidable fruition.
>
> **We are the protagonists of our love story, not the spectators.**

I see this problem everywhere, even with Christian women who have been raised as Disney princesses. I was just told by one last week that she will marry when she meets "the right man" – the man who will require her to do nothing. This magical relationship will require no communication, no working through disagreements, no problem solving, no compromise, no effort, no self-sacrifice of any kind. it will just "work", without any growing up by anyone. Two unemployed people with degrees in English can have a fine marriage, I suppose, traveling the world and skydiving every Tuesday.

I think that when problems arise between two people who are largely compatible, the right thing to do is to engage and solve the problems. Yes, work isn't required in pop culture notions of romance, but those things don't reflect the real world anyway. In the real world, actions to solve a problem count for more than words that avoid the problem. Engineering principles and self-sacrificial attitude are infinitely more useful in a relationship than all the pop culture descriptions of ideal men and ideal women and ideal relationships combined.

By the way, the best book on this problem is Dr. Laura's "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands", which clearly sets out how a woman's choices influence her husband's ability to perform well. The myth of the mind-reading "right man" is also debunked.

Tennessee Senate candidates Phil Bredesen and Marsha Blackburn differ on sexual harassment

December 11, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conservative lady is running for Senate in Tennessee

Let's take a look at the differing records of the two leading candidates for the open Senate seat in Tennessee on the issues of sexual harassment and sexual assault. First, the Democrat candidate Phil Bredesen and then second, the Republican candidate Marsha Blackburn.

Here's the Washington Free Beacon.

Excerpt:

> The Tennessean, a Nashville-based publication owned by Gannett, first began investigating the ethical processes of Bredesen's office after the May 2005 news that a top official appointed by Bredesen was being suspended for workplace harassment. Reporting on the incident proved difficult as state investigators shredded all the notes taken during the investigation, with the top investigator admitting to being "keenly aware" that documentation could later be requested as public records.
>
> The details of the 2005 harassment claims against Mack Cooper, Bredesen's senior adviser for legislation and policy, were never revealed.
>
> Bredesen denied that shredding documents was part of a "cover up." Instead he argued it was part of an effort to protect the identities of victims. He admitted,

> however, that there was no way to prove his point.
>
> "There's nothing to be covered up here," Bredesen told the AP in reference to the Cooper case. "I don't have any way of proving that to you."
>
> Equally damning for Bredesen's office was the case of Quenton White, appointed commissioner of Tennessee's Department of Corrections by Bredesen shortly after he was elected governor in 2002.
>
> White resigned from the post in July 2005, just two months after Cooper's suspension, due to "mounting questions about a sexual harassment allegation against him, his handling of a sexual harassment case against his executive assistant, and circumstances surrounding his relationship with a former subordinate," the Tennessean reported.
>
> White, reporters discovered, had been accused of sexual harassment a year before his resignation. Bredesen confirmed the 2004 sexual assault allegation but said investigators found "no corroboration" of the claim.
>
> Bredesen again had to explain to reporters, however, that he could not give any proof for his statement because the top investigator shredded her notes and had no written report on what was found.
>
> […]The Tennessean's then editor, Everett J. Mitchell II, slammed Bredesen's secrecy on high-profile cases, writing in his paper, "How is the public to be assured that the problem has been appropriately and adequately addressed if the public business is done in secrecy?"
>
> Mitchell argued "the shredding of documents raises the specter there was more to it and that there was something to hide."
>
> The paper even sued the state of Tennessee for access to sealed sexual harassment files, but had its case dismissed by a state judge who ruled Bredesen could withhold documents on grounds of attorney-client privilege. Bredesen had previously told the paper he would "consider" opening withheld case files.

So there's the record of the Tennessee Democrat on sexual harassment and sexual assault. The striking thing about all this is that the Nashville Tennessean is actually left-of-center on political issues.

The record of the Tennessee Republican candidate Marsha Blackburn, is very different from the Democrat candidate.

The Washington Times explains:

> Rep. Marsha Blackburn said Thursday that any member of Congress who used taxpayer dollars to fund sexual harassment-related settlements needs to refund that money.
>
> "They need to pay that money back with interest," Ms. Blackburn, Tennessee Republican, said on Fox News.
>
> She said she did not know who or how many congressmen are on the list of those

> who have used this money for such a purpose, but said the issue needs to be addressed.
>
> "It is inappropriate that there has not been transparency with members of Congress and the American taxpayer. So let's clean this up," Ms. Blackburn said.
>
> Ms. Blackburn is helping push forward a bill sponsored by Rep. Ron DeSantis, Florida Republican, to end these so-called "hush funds" used to fund sexual harassment settlements.
>
> So far, Rep. John Conyers is the only member publicly known to have used this money to settle a sexual harassment claim. He was accused of harassment by a former employee and settled a lawsuit with her using taxpayer money.

John Conyers is, of course, a Democrat.

So, Marsha's position on sexual harassment and sexual assault is that the investigation documents should not be shredded, but that they should be made public. The names of the accused should be made public. The settlements paid to the accusers at taxpayer expense should be made public, and paid back with interest. And payouts to accusers should stop being made using taxpayer dollars. That all sounds good to me.

Just so you know, the payouts for these sexual harassment claims is not a small amount of money. Democrat congressman Alcee Hastings paid out $220,000 to his accuser. Well, he didn't pay it out, the taxpayers paid it out for him with our money.

Tennesseans certainly have a clear choice to make in this Senate race. There are clear differences.

Feminist and self-described “professional misandrist” explains what to look for in a man

December 12, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

I heard about “Everyday Feminism” by listening to the Andrew Klavan podcast. Today, I wanted to link to an article featuring 10 questions that a radical feminist should ask the man on the first date.

Here are a few:

> ## 4. What are your thoughts on sex work?
>
> You may scratch your head at this one, but much like racism and misogynoir, being pro-sex worker is a necessary pillar of dismantling the patriarchy. I don’t mean pro-sex worker in the sense where non-sex workers write op-eds and think pieces about how sex work is amazing and feminist.
>
> I mean the kind where we pass the mic to sex workers because they know their experiences better than anyone who hasn’t ever engaged in sex work. I mean the kind of pro-heauxism where you understand the labor of sex workers of color, especially trans women of color who engage in sex work, because their experience and knowledge is crucial to understanding the oppressive structures of our world.

7. Do you think capitalism is exploitative?

Anti-capitalism, especially in the U.S., is imperative if you have an understanding of systemic racism, the prison industrial complex, the 13th Amendment, and exploitation. Capitalism, for one, teaches us that we are only valuable if we produce capital. That means that if you aren't contributing to the system with your labor, your life means almost nothing.

If your date says they're anti-fascist and part of the resistance but they're cool with exploiting labor from communities of color and they support the school to prison pipeline, then there's a good chance they'll only value you for your ability to nurture them without any reciprocation.

8. Can any human be illegal?

We live on a tiny planet, with land and water within a galaxy surrounded by a universe with an inconceivable number of other galaxies and planets. Yet here we dictate where we are and who is *allowed* to be where we are. It's mind-boggling that borders are even a thing, so to call people "aliens" or "illegal immigrants" is so inhumane and despicable.

White Americans stole this land, colonized this land, created so many borders, pushed out, killed and enslaved people of color and somehow they have the audacity to claim that this land is theirs and that black and brown immigrants are stealing their jobs, land, and homes? Miss me with that b***s***.

9. Do you support Muslim Americans and non-Muslim people from Islamic countries?

I can't think of any other religion which has been vilified and lied about more than Islam in a cultural and systemic way. I am not Muslim, so I will stay in my lane, but I cannot imagine for a second even claiming to be a feminist if I didn't stand in solidarity with my Muslim friends and family — especially now, especially after 9/11.

Don't waste your time and energy on dating someone who thinks that Islam is inherently violent or misogynistic. Instead, read some Huda Sha'arawi or Mona Eltahawy to educate yourself further on Muslim feminism.

So, she's looking for a man who doesn't enough marketable skills to work in the private sector, who doesn't believe in the rule of law, who thinks that his earnings should be taxed to pay for illegal immigrants to get free school, free health care, free entitlements, etc. (instead of paying for his own family and household), and who thinks that radical

Muslims are doing great work by intentionally targeting innocent people for terrorist attacks. Is this man she is looking for someone who can do man-roles in a long-term relationship? It doesn't sound to me like he is capable of doing the jobs a man does in marriage. Marriage-capable men protect, provide and lead on moral and spiritual issues.

I found a little bit of biography about this woman. I was shocked to find that she does not have a STEM degree. (not shocked!)

> I am an intersectional feminist writer and freelance journalist. I was born and raised in Geneva, Switzerland and I moved to Philadelphia in 2010. I received my BA in Journalism from Temple University and interned at the Philadelphia Daily News as a full-time news intern and reporter. I wrote over twenty pieces covering court stories, crime and neighborhood events, including my own column and two front page stories.
>
> Following my internship & graduation I became increasingly committed to writing freelance for feminist and anti-racist publications like BUST, Guerrilla Feminism, Rewire, Blavity and Philadelphia Printworks. I am currently the senior editor for Wear Your Voice Magazine and a freelance writer for publications like Teen Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, Elle, Allure and more.
>
> I specialize in online editorial branding and communications for anti-racist, pro-feminist sites. I helped rebrand and re-focus Wear Your Voice to expand their readership and provide a platform for marginalized voices and those who wish to learn more about intersectional feminism.
>
> I am available for speaking events and panels about anti-racism, feminism, journalism, freelance writing and activism.

Political science is one of the easiest and most useless degrees to get, and jobs for political science graduates pay far less than science and engineering careers. Writing feminist screeds is not a career. Petroleum engineering is a career. Intelligent people study hard things, so that they can get good jobs, and make real money by offering real value to customers.

Her Instagram describes her as a "professional misandrist". Yet she's looking for a man. Imagine that! Marriage requires a woman to embrace her feminine nature, and to affirm and cultivate her man's male nature. None of her views are compatible with what a woman does in a marriage. And none of her views are compatible with keeping a husband engaged in a marriage. She just doesn't have any ability to keep a long-term relationship together.

Secular men might find her useful for a quick hook-up or as a friend with benefits, but she would be an absolute nightmare to marry. And that ability to get hook-up sex will fade as her youth and appearance fade. Then she'll have no value whatsoever, to any man – even the ones who just want to use her for sex. It's sad. Her father should be able to convey some wisdom to her about how to live, but I suspect her father is absent – probably because her mother made poor choices about who to have babies with.

Ten better questions

You can find my list of ten questions for courting here. I don't ask these questions all at once, on the first date. I just raise these issues and see if there is any interest in them. I think you'll find that my list of 10 questions is a lot more relevant to the roles that a woman plays in a marriage than the radical feminist's ten questions are relevant to the roles a man plays in marriage. But then again, I doubt that radical feminists are interested in a marriage that lasts – not enough to make choices to really achieve it.

Finally, my friend Wes posted a response to the radical feminist questions by equity feminist Christina Hoff Sommers:

Elections have consequences: Trump DOJ investigating Planned Parenthood

December 13, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood

I remember the days when the DOJ was managed by Eric Holder, and was as corrupt as corrupt could be. The rank and file is probably still corrupt, but a Republican administration brings different priorities.

Fox News reports:

> The Justice Department has launched a federal investigation into Planned Parenthood's practices and the sale of fetal tissue.
>
> In a letter first obtained by Fox News, Justice Department Assistant Attorney General for Legislative Affairs Stephen Boyd formally requested unredacted documents from the Senate Judiciary Committee, the same panel that led the congressional probe into the women's health organization.
>
> […]A spokesman for the committee told Fox News on Friday that they received the Department's "official request for unredacted copies of its 2016 report and we will work to cooperate fully."
>
> In that final report entitled "Human Fetal Tissue Research: Context and Controversy" published in December 2016, Grassley referred Planned Parenthood and other providers to the FBI for investigation.
>
> Grassley said at the time that the committee has discovered enough evidence that shows how abortion providers had transferred fetal tissue and body parts from aborted fetuses for research by charging amounts higher than they actually cost.
>
> "The report documents the failure of the Department of Justice, across multiple

> administrations, to enforce the law that bans the buying and selling of human fetal tissue," Grassley wrote last December urging the Justice Department and FBI to investigate. "It also documents substantial evidence suggesting that the specific entities involved in the recent controversy, and/or individuals employed by those entities, may have violated that law."

This would never have happened if Hillary Clinton had won the election in 2016.

That's happening at the federal level. At the state level, two companies that were in the baby parts selling business just got hit with massive fines.

The radically leftist Los Angeles Times reports:

> Two bioscience companies that once operated in Costa Mesa have reached a $7.785-million settlement with the Orange County district attorney's office over allegations that they illegally sold fetal tissue to companies around the world, prosecutors said Friday.
>
> According to the settlement signed Monday, DV Biologics LLC and sister company DaVinci Biosciences LLC, both based in Yorba Linda, must cease all operations in California within 60 to 120 days. The agreement also requires the companies to admit liability for violations of state and federal laws prohibiting the sale or purchase of fetal tissue for research purposes, prosecutors said.
>
> […]Prosecutors opened an investigation into the companies in September 2015 after a complaint was submitted by the Irvine-based Center for Medical Progress. The anti-abortion group gained national attention in 2015 after releasing a video showing Planned Parenthood affiliates discussing the sale of aborted fetuses.

There's been a lot of good news lately. In Iraq, ISIS has been forced to give up all the territory they had taken. Government regulations continue to be obliterated by the Trump administration. Republicans are working on a tax bill which will give taxpayers some of their earned income back – as well as stimulating American companies to create more jobs. And more and more originalist judges are being appointed. Things are looking good in the short term.

Jay Richards: why should Christians learn about economics?

December 14, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good basic introduction to the free enterprise system by Dr. Jay Richards:

In this lecture, Dr. Richards covers the following topics:

- the piety myth – thinking that good intentions matter more than good results
- the greed myth – thinking that capitalism is about greed instead of about innovation and serving others
- the zero sum game myth – thinking that voluntary exchanges between buyers and sellers result in win-lose outcomes
- the materialist myth – thinking that there is only a set amount of wealth to be divided by competition

It turns out that the best system for lifting the poor out of poverty – by work or charity – is the economic system that creates wealth through human ingenuity and hard work. That system is the free enterprise system.

Something to read?

If you can't listen to the lecture and don't want to buy the whole book "Money, Greed and God?" Then I have a series of posts on each chapter for you.

The index post is here.

Here are the posts in the series:

- Part 1: The Eight Most Common Myths about Wealth, Poverty, and Free Enterprise
- Part 2: Can't We Build A Just Society?
- Part 3: The Piety Myth
- Part 4: The Myth of the Zero Sum Game
- Part 5: Is Wealth Created or Transferred?
- Part 6: Is Free Enterprise Based on Greed?
- Part 7: Hasn't Christianity Always Opposed Free Enterprise?
- Part 8: Does Free Enterprise Lead to An Ugly Consumerist Culture?
- Part 9: Will We Use Up All Our Resources?
- Part 10: Are Markets An Example of Providence?

Parts 4 and 5 are my favorites. It's so hard to choose one to excerpt, but I must. I will choose… Part 4.

Here's the problem:

> **Myth #3: The Zero Sum Game Myth – believing that trade requires a winner and a loser.**

> One reason people believe this myth is because they misunderstand how economic value is determined. Economic thinkers with views as diverse as Adam Smith and Karl Marx believed economic value was determined by the labor theory of value. This theory stipulates that the cost to produce an object determines its economic value.
>
> According to this theory, if you build a house that costs you $500,000 to build, that house is worth $500,000. But what if no one can or wants to buy the house? Then what is it worth?
>
> Medieval church scholars put forth a very different theory, one derived from human nature: economic value is in the eye of the beholder. The economic value of an object is determined by how much someone is willing to give up to get that object. This is the subjective theory of value.

And here's an example of how to avoid the problem:

> How you determine economic value affects whether you view free enterprise as a zero-sum game, or a win-win game in which both participants benefit.
>
> Let's return to the example of the $500,000 house. As the developer of the house, you hire workers to build the house. You then sell it for more than $500,000. According to the labor theory of value, you have taken more than the good is actually worth. You've exploited the buyer and your workers by taking this surplus value. You win, they lose.
>
> Yet this situation looks different according to the subjective theory of value. Here, everybody wins. You market and sell the house for more than it cost to produce, but not more than customers will freely pay. The buyer is not forced to pay a cost he doesn't agree to. You are rewarded for your entrepreneurial effort. Your workers benefit, because you paid them the wages they agreed to when you hired them.
>
> This illustration brings up a couple important points about free enterprise that are often overlooked:
>
> **1. Free exchange is a win-win game**.
>
> In win-win games, some players may end up better off than others, but everyone ends up better off than they were at the beginning. As the developer, you might make more than your workers. Yet the workers determined they would be better off by freely exchanging their labor for wages, than if they didn't have the job at all.
>
> A free market doesn't guarantee that everyone wins in every competition. Rather, it allows many more win-win encounters than any other alternative.
>
> **2. The game is win-win because of rules set-up beforehand.**
>
> A free market is *not* a free-for-all in which everybody can do what they want. Any exchange must be free on both sides. Rule of law, contracts, and property rights

> are needed to ensure exchanges are conducted rightly. As the developer of the house, you'd be held accountable if you broke your contract and failed to pay workers what you promised.
>
> An exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game.

If you do get the book, be sure and skip the chapter on usury. It's just not as engaging as the others, in my opinion.

Is Bernie Sanders correct to say that Canada has better, lower-cost health care?

December 15, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

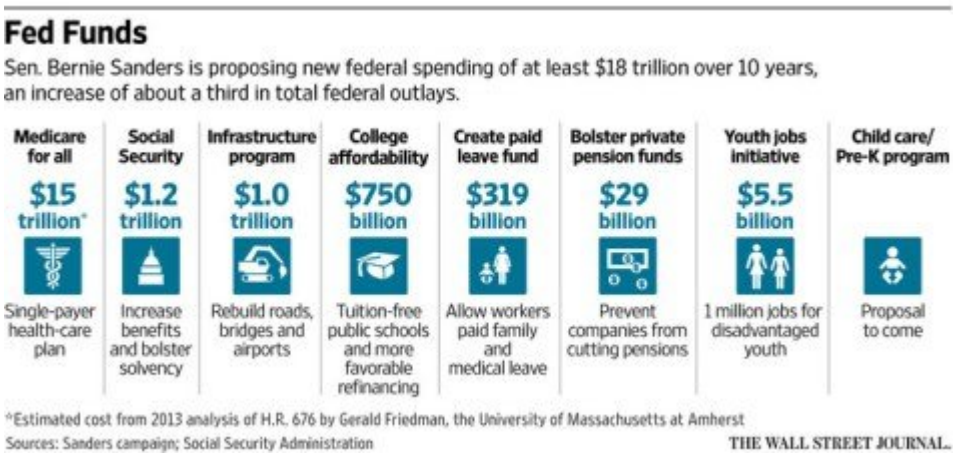

Wall Street Journal calculates cost of Sanders spending plan

He seems to be really passionate about raising taxes on working families, and then giving them "free" health care in return. Let's see how that's working out in Canada, where they do have a single-payer health care system.

The Washington Free Beacon reports:

> Waiting times for medically necessary health care services under Canada's single-payer system have hit a record high, according to a report from the Fraser Institute.
>
> […]The Fraser Institute found that patients under Canada's single-payer system this year waited an average of 10.9 weeks—roughly two-and-a-half months—from the time they had a consultation with a specialist to the time at which they received treatment. Physicians consider 7.2 weeks to be a clinically reasonable wait time.
>
> The report also found that patients' wait for treatment after referral to a specialist by their general practitioner was 21.2 weeks, or longer than four months.
>
> "This year's wait time—the longest ever recorded in this survey's history—is 128 percent longer than in 1993, when it was just 9.3 weeks," the report states.
>
> The report, which looks at 10 provinces in Canada, found that there are 1,040,791 patients waiting for procedures. There are also high wait times to receive scans and ultrasounds. Patients waited an average of 10.8 weeks for an MRI scan and 3.9 weeks for an ultrasound.
>
> "Research has repeatedly indicated that wait times for medically necessary treatment are not benign inconveniences," the report states. "Wait times can, and do, have serious consequences such as increased pain, suffering, and mental

> anguish."
>
> According to the report, patients experience long wait times for surgeries, waiting as long as 41.7 weeks for orthopedic surgery, 32.9 weeks for neurosurgery, and 31.4 weeks for ophthalmology.
>
> "In certain instances, [wait times] can also result in poorer medical outcomes—transforming potentially reversible illnesses or injuries into chronic, irreversible conditions, or even permanent disabilities," the report states. "In many instances, patients may also have to forgo their wages while they wait for treatment, resulting in an economic cost to the individuals themselves and the economy in general."
>
> Fraser points out that previous studies have found the lost economic output in waiting for joint replacement surgery, coronary artery bypass graft surgery, MRI scans, and cataract surgery totaled $14.8 billion in 2007.
>
> The report also notes that 46.3 percent of patients would prefer to have their procedure performed within a week if they had the opportunity to do so.

The article also quotes Sally C. Pipes, a Canadian health care expert who knows how much Canadian taxpayers pay for "free" health care.

> Pipes also refutes Sanders's claim that Canada's system offers relatively the same quality of care at a cheaper cost.
>
> "It isn't cheaper because Canadians pay for health care through their taxes," Pipes explains. "The average Canadian family pays anywhere between $4,000 and $12,000 a year in taxes for a system where they have to wait over five months from seeing a primary care doctor to getting treatment by a specialist."
>
> "There's fewer doctors relative to the population than in all but four other industrialized countries," she said. "It's last in terms of acute care hospital beds and there's doctor shortages, residency spots are down, and waiting times—this is what happens when government controls the health care system, and this is what Bernie Sanders wants for the United States."

Canadians are also paid less than Americans. Why? Because Canadian employers have to pay a percentage of their employee's salary to the government for health care. Obviously, the employers are going to take that out of their employee's salary without telling them.

Finally, it should be obvious that progressive Canadian politicians go South when they're sick for healthcare. They know that when health care is free, you get the quality you're paying for.

One thing you need to understand is that if you put health care in the hands of politicians, they they will use it for vote-buying, like they do with any government-run social program. So, if you are young and want an abortion or a sex change, you're in luck. Because you have a lot of voting ahead of you, and they want to keep you happy with big

government. But, if you're old, and don't have so much voting left to do, you're expendable. That's why countries with big government health care, like the Netherlands and Canada and the UK are always tinkering with euthanasia for the elderly.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

December 16, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude

others
- It’s meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can’t say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Related posts

- Ryan Anderson explains how gay marriage is already infringing on religious liberty
- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson debates gay marriage with S.E. Cupp on the Blaze
- Ryan T. Anderson explains marriage to Piers Morgan and Suze Orman
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Frank Turek: is "equality" the issue in the same-sex marriage debate?
- Childless single adults "co-parenting" children in loveless partnerships
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?

- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

J.P. Moreland asks: does truth matter when choosing a religion?

December 17, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

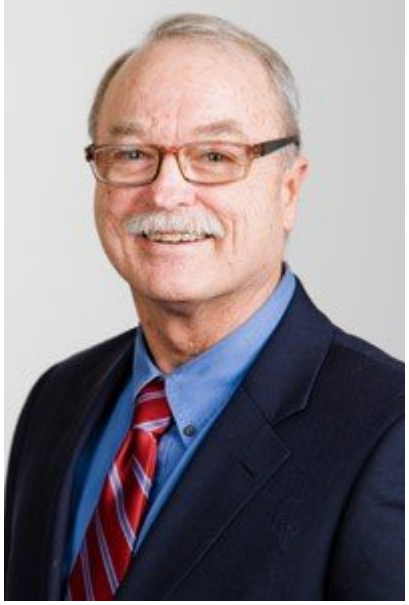

Dr. J.P. Moreland

This lecture contains Moreland's famous "Wonmug" illustration. Ah, memories! If you don't know who Wonmug is, you can find out in this lecture.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Is it intolerant to think that one religion is true?
- Is it more important to be loving and accepting of people regardless of worldview?
- How should Christians approach the question of religious pluralism?
- How does a person choose a religion anyway?
- Who is Wonmug, and would you like to be like Wonmug?
- Is it enough that a belief "works for you", or do you want to believe the truth?
- Can all the religions in the world be true?
- Is it wise to pick and choose what you like from all the different religions?
- Is it possible to investigate which religion is true? How?
- Which religions are testable for being true or false?
- How you can test Christianity historically (very brief)

I'm posting this, because I've noticed that there's an awful lot of cultural Christianity in red states. Basically, if you ask someone if they are a Christian, and they say yes, they don't usually mean that they think it's true and that they've investigated whether it's true. They usually just mean that they like it, or it makes them feel good, or that's how they were raised, etc. My worry about this is that if Christianity isn't adopted because it's true, then no one is going to do any work or self-sacrifice for it.

People are willing to invest in projects self-sacrificially if they think that they are involved in something true. So, you might enroll in a chemistry program in college because you expect to come out with true beliefs about chemistry. You'll do the work and solve the problems because you think that chemistry is real. But if you think that chemistry is just made up nonsense with no use at all, you're probably not going to work at it and sacrifice for it. You'll probably just find something else to do with your life that's easier and more fun. That's why the truth question is really important.

Is what Ted Cruz does in the Senate relevant to you?

December 18, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted and Heidi Cruz have a plan to for tax reform

Sometimes, I talk to rank and file Christians and see what they are interested in. Sometimes, they are interested in parenting, sports, movies and the same sort of stuff that non-Christians are interested in. Sometimes, they are interested in Bible study and theology, and maybe even philosophy of religion. But only rarely are they interested in apologetics and public policy. However, public policy is very important to Christians, because it affects how we work, how much we earn after taxes, and how much freedom we have to spend our money as we see fit. If you have Kingdom of God goals for your life as a Christian that are different from the ordinary minimal life goals of a non-Christian, then public policy is very important to you.

With that said, education has to be one of the most important areas that Christians are concerned about. Not only do we not want our children to be taught lies, but we also want them to be taught marketable skills that will allow them to have an influence as a Christian. If public schools are not doing a good job at both tasks, then we need to get the money we were forced to pay in taxes for them back, so we can make better choices about education.

The Washington Examiner reports on what conservative Texas senator Ted Cruz has done lately that will be interesting to Christians who are thoughtful about how their children are educated.

Excerpt:

> Parents would get new federal tax breaks for sending their children to private or religious schools or teaching them at home if the final Republican tax overhaul bill becomes law.
>
> For that, they can thank Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, who offered the original amendment to extend 529 college savings plans to grade school and high school, including costs for homeschooling.

> Cruz's amendment was the only one, setting aside manager's amendments, to be added on either chamber's floor. It passed as Republicans moved their bill through the Senate in the closing hours of Dec. 1. Cruz got an assist from Vice President Mike Pence, who cast the deciding vote in favor of the amendment after Republicans Lisa Murkowksi of Alaska and Susan Collins of Maine balked at the measure.
>
> The amendment, which would allow $10,000 per child to be distributed from tax-privileged 529 savings plans each year, was included in Friday's joint House-Senate conference bill. It would represent a tax cut of about $500 billion over 10 years, according to Congress' Joint Committee on Taxation.
>
> With the Cruz amendment's inclusion, passage of the bill would represent a major advancement for school choice at the federal level.
>
> The House version of the legislation contained a similar measure. It also included a noteworthy provision that would have permitted parents to open 529 accounts for unborn children. That language, which pro-abortion rights supporters had decried as an attempt to restrict abortion through the tax code, didn't make it into the final bill.

One of the things that disappoints me about Donald Trump is that he does so little to persuade others to adopt conservative positions. Instead of being reasonable and using evidence, he is more likely to take to Twitter to get into a third-grade-level mocking match with people who disagree with him. It is true that he has done some conservative things, like reducing regulations, nominating great judges, and so on. But a great communicator creates consensus by being persuasive. You might not be able to persuade the radical leftists, but you have to be able to persuade at least some of the moderates. Ted Cruz has a much better record of being persuasive on policy issues than Donald Trump. And that's probably because Ted Cruz has experience debating in college, and made it through Harvard University law school as an open conservative. He was considered brilliant by his progressive law professors, even though they didn't agree with him.

We're better off – from a public policy point of view – when we elect people who know how to be persuasive on public policy issues. Clowning around is entertaining, but it doesn't get the wall built, and it doesn't get Obamacare repealed. You have to be a better debater to get those kinds of things done.

Men on strike: the social changes that caused men to opt out of marriage

December 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

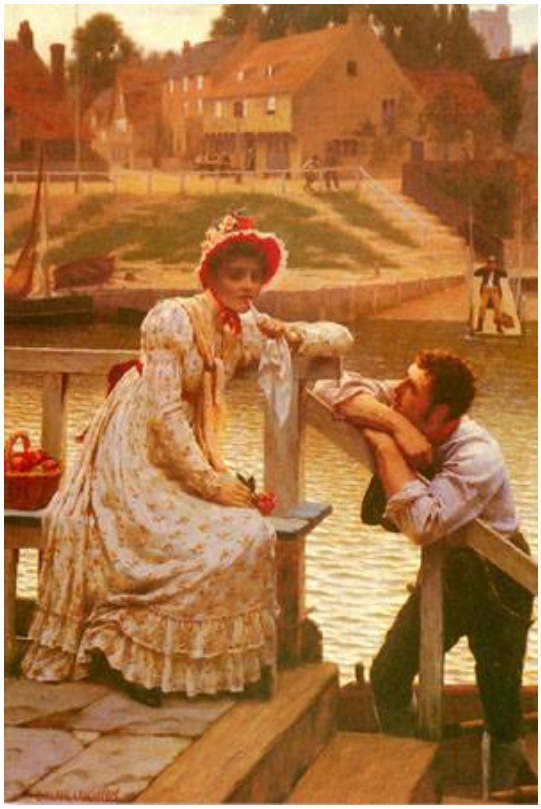

Painting: "Courtship", by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

I read and enjoyed Dr. Helen Smith's book "Men on Strike" last year. The book explains a few of the developments that have led to men underperforming in school and in the workplace, and opting out of marriage and fatherhood.

Dr. Helen comes to this problem as a secular libertarian, not as a Christian conservative.

A review of Dr. Helen's book appeared in Salvo magazine. The review is written by Terrell Clemmons, who has the best Christian worldview of any woman I know – I frequently rely on her advice.

Terrell writes:

> While the feminist movement may originally have been about equal respect for both sexes, what it has morphed into, she argues, is female privilege. From rape laws that empower women but not the men they may falsely accuse, to divorce laws tilted in favor of the wife, to the feminization of the U.S. education system, men have become the sex under the gun, while women enjoy the status of a protected class.
>
> But unlike their mothers or grandmothers, men today are not taking to the streets burning their undergarments and shrieking demands (thank God). They're doing just the opposite, which is far worse. They're going on strike. The strike

> zones are manifold:
>
> **Higher Education.**In addition to the enrollment imbalance, which is approaching a 60/40 ratio of women to men, college has become, in the words of one professor, “a hostile working environment [in which] males increasingly feel emasculated.” Smith quotes a student named John, who had this to say about his college experience: “I had already been cautious around women, having grown up with Tawana Brawley in my backyard and daily stories of sexual harassment; I played it safe and passive every time. But it doesn’t matter. The only way not to lose is to not play. So I’m out.”
>
> **Work,**including community involvement. With higher female graduation rates and salaries, men today are falling behind their fathers economically and professionally. Consequently, their efforts to prove themselves worthy mates through hard work and higher earnings don’t win female attention the way they used to. Discouraged, too many retreat to a man cave, and inertia sets in from there.
>
> **Marriage.**Marriage rates are down, and honest men opting out will tell you why. Smith cites a Rutgers University study of single heterosexual men which turned up the top reasons they hadn’t married. They can get sex and the companionship of cohabitation without marriage more easily than in times past, and they don’t want to open themselves up to the risk of divorce and financial loss. It really isn’t that complicated a decision. In fact, it’s often not an actual decision at all. It just happens.

The simplest explanation for the difficulties that boys face in an education system that is dominated by women (teachers and administrators) is discrimination. And in the workplace, the government requires employers to report on male and female head counts, and promote women who are not qualified. I have seen receptionists with tattoos and no college degrees promoted to six-figure manager jobs in companies where I worked.

There is one more which to me was the most surprising one in the book – paternity fraud, and the laws that support paternity fraud:

> Take the following cases of nonconsensual insemination: Nathaniel from California, age 15, had sex with 34-year-old Ricci, which, due to his age, was legally considered nonconsensual. Emile from Louisiana was visiting his parents in the hospital when a nurse offered him oral sex, *if* he wore a condom, which she conveniently offered to dispose of for him afterward. S. F. from Alabama passed out drunk at the home of a female friend and awoke undressed the following morning. In all three cases, including the one involving the minor, a woman got sperm and, nine months later, a child, and the man got ordered by a court of law to pay support for eighteen years.
>
> Less devious, but similarly amiss, are those cases in which a man, having been

> betrayed by his wife or girlfriend, was nevertheless held financially responsible for a child genetically proven to be another man's offspring. While not as sensational as sperm-jacking, it is another form of paternity extortion.

In each of those cases, the man was found liable to pay child support – including the case of the 15-year-old boy, who was forced to pay child support to his statutory rapist when he turned 18. This is how the court system works, and more and more men are understanding the risks.

I often encounter "pro-marriage" people while gathering stories for the blog. These pro-marriage people come in two varieties.

On the one end of the spectrum are people like Terrell Clemmons and Jennifer Roback Morse, who understand marriage, but who also understand the social changes that have made marriage unattractive for men. Both Clemmons and Morse have a background in STEM fields, so they are able to understand incentives and tradeoffs. They understand that society has to rollback the changes to education, divorce laws, etc. if they expect men to be interested in marriage again. They understand that men are not just accessories of women, but instead have their own desires, feelings and reasons for marrying.

On the other end of the spectrum are feminist men, who are not able to understand the changing incentives that face men in a world that has evolved under the influence of radical feminism. It is just simpler (less thinking) for these men to accept the radical feminism as a given, and then urge men to "man up". I think a much better idea would be for the "man up" crowd to realize how marriage has changed, and how the schools and the workplace have changed, then make all of these things more attractive to men. It doesn't do any good to try to "dare" men into jumping off a cliff. Men aren't stupid, and they do what is in their own best interests. If the man-up crowd wants younger men to marry, then they need to change the incentives offered to men. And that means changing women first.

Jay Richards: How to end poverty in 10 tough steps

December 19, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Stand to Reason's Amy Hall blogged about a lecture by Jay Richards, a Christian expert in economics. Amy linked to this post by Justin Taylor which summarizes the talk (above).

Summary:

1. Establish and maintain the rule of law.
2. Focus the jurisdiction of government on maintaining the rule of law, and limit its jurisdiction over the economy and the institutions of civil society.
3. Implement a formal property system with consistent and accessible means for securing a clear title to property one owns.
4. Encourage economic freedom: Allow people to trade goods and services unencumbered by tariffs, subsidies, price controls, undue regulation, and restrictive immigration policies.
5. Encourage stable families and other important private institutions that mediate between the individual and the state.
6. Encourage belief in the truth that the universe is purposeful and makes sense.
7. Encourage the right cultural mores—orientation to the future and the belief that progress but not utopia is possible in this life; willingness to save and delay gratification; willingness to risk, to respect the rights and property of others, to be diligent, to be thrifty.
8. Instill a proper understanding of the nature of wealth and poverty—that wealth is created, that free trade is win-win, that risk is essential to enterprise, that trade-offs are unavoidable, that the success of others need not come at your expense, and that you can pursue legitimate self-interest and the common good at the same time.
9. Focus on your comparative advantage rather than protecting what used to be your competitive advantage.
10. Work hard.

His book "Money, Greed and God" is a perfect introduction to economics and how it relates to the Christian worldview. I always encourage Christians to move beyond good intentions to good results by studying economics. We are supposed to be helping the poor, but how should we do it? Economics is the science that allows us to understand which policies we should support to do that.

Should Christians expect to know God’s will by means of feelings and intuitions?

December 21, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

There are two views on the topic of decision making and the will of God. The view you learn in the church is called “the traditional view”. I call this view the feelings/intuition view. This view that elevates feelings / intuitions to the level of divine communications from God. The more practical view is called “the wisdom view”. I call this view the battlefield commander view. I am a proponent of the wisdom / commander view.

Let’s learn about the two different views:

> [The traditional view is] that God has a plan for our lives and that we receive guidance through methods such as “open and closed doors”, “feeling led” and “the still, small, voice”.
>
> [The wisdom view] holds that God does not have an “individual will” for our lives, but rather that all of God’s will can be summed up within two categories, God’s sovereign will and God’s moral will. Basically God’s sovereign will is all the things that god decrees will happen. It is hidden (mostly) from us, and does not play an active part in our decision, although some of it is revealed in the bible. God’s moral will is the part that we must concern ourselves with in making decisions. It is fully revealed in the bible and our decisions must be made within it. We may use wisdom in applying god’s moral will to our lives, or we may be in an area not covered by god’s moral will. We must finally submit in advance to God’s sovereign will, being prepared for him to sovereignty intervene and redirect us through whatever means he wills (see James).

Here’s a bit more from someone else:

> Regarding the view that God has a personal will for us individually that we have to discern and find, J.I. Packer says, “The first thing to say is that the idea of guidance is actually a novelty among orthodox evangelicals. It does not go back farther than the last century. Second, it has led people to so much foolish action on the one hand, and so much foolish inaction on the other, as well as puzzlement and heartbreak when the ‘hotline’ to God seems to go silent, that it has to be discredited. Third, it must be said that Scripture gives us no more warrant constantly to expect personal ‘hotline,’ ‘voice-from-the-control-tower’ guidance than to expect new authoritative revelations to come our way for the guidance of the whole church.” (Hot Tub Religion, page 118).
>
> As to the point of the question, how do I make decisions, I attempt to make decisions in light of three factors: God’s moral will, wisdom, and my personal desires. If something is opposed to God’s moral will, then I should obviously flee from it. If it’s not opposed, then I consider the wisdom of the choices. For example, would it be wise for me to marry a woman who loves Jesus, though we have nothing else in common? Probably not. If the options pass the criteria of wisdom, then I’m free to choose how I wish. If I’m offered two jobs, and both are honoring to God, and both would be wise to take, then I’m free to choose the job I would like more. I don’t need to put out a fleece or await some other confirmation from God. If it’s moral and wise, then the only question as to whether or not it will honor Him is my attitude.
>
> Some examples of this model used in the Bible (in theological circles referred to as the Wisdom Model) are in Paul’s planning of a mission to Rome in Romans 1:9-15, 15:22-24, the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29), and Paul’s instructions for legal disputes (1 Cor 6:3-6).

The best book on this topic is Garry Friesen’s “Decision Making and the Will of God”. In it, you’ll find a full assessment about what the Bible teaches on this topic.

When I am trying to decide what will be effective, I look at Christian scholars, at their papers, books, and public debates. That’s effectiveness because it is addressed to a non-Christian audience in public with the force of reason and evidence. It is persuasion and it is addressed to rational minds. I want to change the minds of people who have a large influence on society on the whole. I don’t think that offering Christianity as life-enhancement or self-help is really “having an influence”. I think that offering Christianity as truth, with support, is “having an influence”.

So let me be clear about what I believe:

- I don’t think that God normally talks to people directly
- I don’t believe that life is an Easter egg hunt, filled with clues accessible only to emotion and intuition
- I don’t believe that God expects people to discover a specific will for their lives using non-rational means

- I think that people make up their own life plan that is consistent with the Bible
- The goal of the life plan is to be effective, and there are no other considerations
- I think that there are many good things a person can do, but that some are more effective than others
- I think that with respect to the goal of serving God effectively, *my happiness is expendable*
- I don't think that the purpose of doing something for the Lord is to feel good about ourselves
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they like them
- I don't think that people should choose ineffective things to do just because they are good at them
- I think people should do hard things that they don't like – as long as it's more effective
- I don't think that any course of action is as effective as any other – some plans accomplish more
- I don't think that life is totally unpredictable and irrational and subjective
- I think that we can know what is or is not effective by studying and learning about the world
- I think life is like a battlefield that must be surveyed, understood and acted upon deliberately

I think that every person is the commanding officer of his or her own life, and each person must study everything they can, make a plan that is consistent with the Bible's moral prescriptions, execute the plan and achieve whatever they can achieve for the Lord. And the goal is not comfort or happy feelings, but real achievements. Not for the purpose of being saved, of course, because salvation is a free gift of God because of what Jesus did on the cross. Life is more like a battle than a vacation resort or a buffet or a shopping center. God's will for us is not have happy feelings, but that we freely choose to sacrifice ourselves out of obedience and service to him. In my case, that means studying hard things, making money, saving money, and giving money away to good scholars, sponsoring good events and being persuasive to non-Christians. None of this necessarily makes me happy, but it does work to bring glory to God. I cried when I had to learn calculus, because it was so hard. But who cares? The main thing is that I have money now to sponsor Christian speakers or to give books to Christians to read, and God is happy with that.

I think that it is very important to realize that God is not impressed by our not being smart and not being effective. If we have the ability to be smart, then we should be smart, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability to make money, then we should make money, whether it makes us happy or not. If we have the ability have a great influence, then we should have a great influence, whether it makes us happy or not. There will be plenty of time for happiness after we're dead. But this life is a time of serving, and we should try to serve effectively, whether it makes us happy or not. With

respect to God's purposes in the world, my happiness is expendable.

Whenever someone questions my goals and plans by saying that I am asserting my will over God's will, the first question I want to ask that person is this: "how do you know what God's will is?" and "what is your basis for thinking that my plan to serve will not be effective?". I want to know if I have misunderstood something about the way the world is, or miscalculated in some way. I want someone to look at my calculations and show where they are going to produce a less optimal result for the Lord. That's the only concern I have – effectiveness for the Lord. Usually what I have found is that the other person wants to make the purpose of life *their own happiness*, and it makes them happier to choose what to do moment by moment, without having to study anything or make plans. It's not that they have better goals (for God) or better plans (for God). It's that they want their goals to be above God, and they don't want to make plans other than to do whatever makes them happy.

This article by Greg Koukl may be helpful.

And I also found this summary of the Friesen book useful:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4
- Part 5
- Part 6
- Part 7
- Part 8
- Part 9

In nine parts.

Fifth Third Bank gives employees raises and bonuses ahead of Trump's tax cut bill

December 22, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

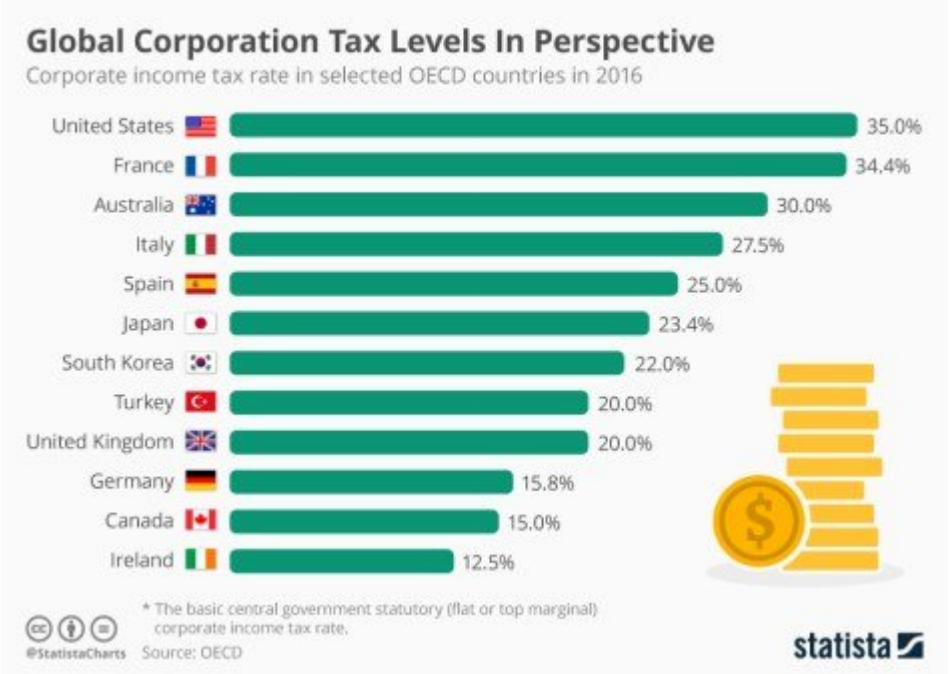

Why does the United States have the highest corporate tax rate in the world?
What happens when you cut the corporate tax? Well, government gets less of what businesses earn, which means less money for sugar subsidies and AMTRAK and settle Congressional sexual-harassment lawsuits. And what do businesses do with that extra money they get to keep? Well, they could create new products, make existing products cheaper, improve existing products, improve their existing products… lots of good things. In a competitive free market, business have to use their capital to develop better and cheaper products that customers will want to freely buy.

CNBC reports on one of my favorite corporations – Fifth Third Bank – reacting to news of an impending cut in the corporate tax rate.

Excerpt:

> Fifth Third Bancorp will pay more than 13,500 employees a bonus and raise the minimum wage of its workforce to $15 an hour after the passage of the Republican tax plan that will cut the bank's corporate tax rate.
>
> […]Cincinnati-based Fifth Third, the fifteenth largest U.S. bank by asset size, said the tax cut allowed it to re-evaluate its employee pay and pass along some of the windfall. Nearly 3,000 workers will see hourly wages rise to $15. The $1,000 one-time bonus is expected to be paid by the end of this year, the bank said, assuming President Donald Trump signs the bill into law by Christmas.
>
> Senior managers and top executives are excluded from the special payments. "It is good for our communities, employees and Fifth Third Bank," said CEO Greg

> Carmichael in a statement.

But, Fifth Third wasn't the only company making decisions that favored their employees.

Fox Business reported on some others – and notice how the bonuses are going to non-management and non-executive workers:

> AT&T
>
> The telecom giant said Wednesday that more than 200,000 of its employees, including union-represented and non-management workers, will be eligible for a $1,000 bonus. The checks will be in the mail in time for the holidays if Trump finalizes the tax bill with his signature before Christmas. AT&T (T) also said it will invest $1 billion more than expected in the U.S. in 2018, once the cuts are final.
>
> "Congress, working closely with the President, took a monumental step to bring taxes paid by U.S. businesses in line with the rest of the industrialized world," AT&T Chairman and CEO Randall Stephenson said in a statement. "This tax reform will drive economic growth and create good-paying jobs."
>
> Boeing
>
> The aerospace and defense company immediately announced $300 million in investments after the bill passed, with $100 million toward corporate giving including employee gift-match programs, $100 million toward workforce development, training and education and $100 million toward enhancing Boeing's workplaces.
>
> "On behalf of all of our stakeholders, we applaud and thank Congress and the administration for their leadership in seizing this opportunity to unleash economic energy in the United States," Boeing (BA) President and CEO Dennis Muilenburg said in a statement. "It's the single-most important thing we can do to drive innovation, support quality jobs and accelerate capital investment in our country."
>
> Comcast
>
> The Philadelphia-based telecom corporation said it would award $1,000 bonuses to more than 100,000 non-executive employees. In addition, Comcast (CMCSA) NBC Universal Chairman and CEO Brian L. Roberts said the company plans to spend more than $50 billion in the next five years on infrastructure investments that are expected to create "thousands of new direct and indirect jobs."
>
> In a press release, Comcast said the initiatives were "based on the passage of tax reform and the FCC's action on broadband."

The way that economics works is that when you give tax cuts to the people who create products and services, they use that money to try to develop better products and services. We all benefit from having innovative products that make us more efficient and productive. Laptops, smartphones, wireless routers, GPS all give us the potential to be more productive. But the only way to develop and sell these products is to hire people

who are focused on pleasing customers.

But when you give government money, they turn to the most dependent segments of the population (e.g. – non-English-speaking refugees from countries dominated by Islamic terrorism), and they offer to buy their votes by giving them free stuff. Free drug-injection clinics. Free contraceptives. Free abortions. Free sex changes. Free welfare for refugees and illegal immigrants. We need to let private sector job creators keep their own money because they pay workers who have to get up and go to work.

Democrats vote against tax cut for parents of homeschooled and disabled children

December 23, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ted and Heidi Cruz have a plan to cut taxes for parents

I blogged recently about an amendment to the tax bill that Ted Cruz had put in to help parents with the costs of educating their children. It was a good amendment, and the Democrats even let some of it remain in the final version of the bill. But they voted against the tax cuts for parents who homeschool their children, or who have children with disabilities.

Here's an article from Town Hall to explain what happened.

Excerpt:

> Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas), one of the Senate's most outspoken advocates for school choice, introduced an addition to the tax bill called the Student Opportunity Amendment. The amendment would expand 529 college savings plans to also include K-12 education, allowing parents and grandparents to use these tax-advantaged plans to save up to $10,000 per child per year for private schools, religious schools, or even homeschooling.
>
> This represented a significant change in policy that would benefit more than 50 million children. The Senate voted in favor of the amendment, 50-50, with the Vice President breaking the tie.
>
> However, Democrats weren't about to let a beneficial piece of legislation pass without a fight. Party leaders ran to the Senate Parliamentarian to complain that the entire amendment ran afoul of the Byrd rule — another one of those arcane Senate rules that no one understands. But while the Parliamentarian disagreed with the Democrats' argument about the majority of the provisions in the amendment, she unfortunately found their argument compelling when applied to homeschooling and struck the language from the bill.

> In response, Senator Cruz rushed to the floor and pushed a Motion to Waive the Parliamentarian's changes, which solely affected the homeschooling provision. This motion would require a 60-vote majority to succeed.
>
> As Senator Cruz explained in a passionate speech on the Senate floor, one of the provisions that was to be eliminated from the amendment was particularly important — it would allow parents with a child with disabilities to use a 529 plan to pay for educational therapy, which can often be prohibitively expensive.
>
> How could the Democrats vote against that?
>
> "We've got right now a motion to waive this mean-spirited, vindictive point of order that discriminates against homeschoolers and carves out kids with disabilities," Cruz charged. He argued that the vote "ought to be 100 to nothing."
>
> Nevertheless, not a single Democrat voted for Senator Cruz's motion. Not one. The Democrats knowingly and proudly discriminated against homeschooled kids and kids with disabilities, in many cases destroying their access to quality education. Even by the Democrats' woefully low standards, it was a shameful display.

I found the video of the 13-minute speech – the part about the schools starts at 6 minutes in:

The whole thing is worth watching, just to understand what a tax cut really is, and to accept that Democrats don't want you to have the money you earn. They want the money you earn – they want to spend it. They want to spend it buying the votes of people who don't agree with your values, and who don't respect how hard you worked in order to earn that money.

Let me tell you what this means to me. When I was young, I realized that getting married and having kids would require me to work an extra twenty years. Instead of retiring at 45, I would have to work until I was 65. I thought and thought about this, and I realized that the only reason to do this extra work would be if I could have several children and raise them to be effective and influential Christians. So, I went to work getting multiple degrees in computer science and then working to earn and save money for this plan.

And this is what I learned while learning about politics along the way. There is one political party, the party of Ted Cruz, that wants me to keep my own money, and to educate my children as I see fit. They want me to marry, and they want me to have children, and they want me to lead my family the way that I see fit. After all, these conservatives say, he is the own earning the money. He should keep what he earns, and he should spend it how he needs to to achieve his goals. He shouldn't be forced to pay into any education system that works against his values and against his worldview. That's what Ted Cruz was trying to help me with with his amendment.

But there is another political party which believes in big government. They want to confiscate what I earn to create a system of government-run schools. And in those government-run schools, the children will not be taught anything useful for getting a job,

getting married, having children, etc. They will be taught how to have premarital sex, how to stop global warming with socialism, how to have an atheistic worldview, how to blame capitalism for the failure of socialist policies, and how to embrace gay rights and radical feminism. If I tell those Democrats that I don't want to send my schools there, they tell me that I have to pay for those schools, and there will be no tax cuts for me to homeschool my kids. Democrats are fascists – they want the government to be everything, and the family to be nothing.

I don't know if the Democrats really realize the message they are sending to the last good men. The men who don't drink, don't take drugs, who are chaste, and who do want to marry and have children. But I am watching what happens in the world of politics, and I am getting the message. They don't want me to pass on my values to my kids, they want their public school allies to pass progressive values on to my kids. And when Ted Cruz tries to do something to stop them, they shut him down. I hope more people realize how the government sees my priorities. They want to take what I earn, but they don't let me have the freedom to lead a family. This is why men are not interested in marriage and children like they used to be. We don't like the idea of being robbed by the government tax collectors and then being replaced by government educators.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

December 24, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
This is one of my favorite lectures.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips.

Here is a clip:

The full video can be watched on Vimeo:

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range

in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

It's a good lecture explaining a couple of basic arguments for a cosmic Creator and Designer. If you add the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion (Stephen C. Meyer's arguments), then you will be solid on the basic scientific arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Kenosis and the doctrine of the Incarnation in Philippians 2:5-11

December 25, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us

It's Christmas, so it's time to see what the Bible says about who Jesus was and what it tells us about the character of God.

Here are the relevant verses in Phil 2:5-11 [NASB]:

> [5] Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
>
> [6] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
>
> [7] but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.
>
> [8] Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
>
> [9] For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
>
> [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
>
> [11] and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Here's respected New Testament scholar Ben Witherington to help us make sense of it:

> Incarnation refers to the choices and acts of a pre-existent divine being, namely

> the Son of God, that the Son took in order to become a human being. He took on flesh, and became fully, truly human without ceasing to be fully, truly divine. Divinity is not something Jesus acquired later in life, or even after his death and resurrection. According to the theology of Incarnation he had always been the divine Son of God, even before he became Jesus, a human being. Strictly speaking the name Jesus only applies to a human being. It is the name the Son of God acquired once he became a human being in the womb of Mary, a name which he maintains to this day as he continues to be a human being.
>
> […]When I try and explain the incarnation to my students I deliberately choose to use the phrase divine condescension. What do I mean by this? Put another way, if there is going to be a corporate merger between a divine being and a human nature, then the divine side of the equation must necessarily limit itself, take on certain limitations, in order to be truly and fully human. The next question is…. what does it mean to be fully human? It means to have limitations of time and space and knowledge and power, and of course being mortal. Jesus exhibited all these traits. He was even tempted like us in every respect, but he avoided sin. What we should deduce from this is sinning is not a necessary part of being truly human. Yes, it is a trait of all fallen humans, but no, it is not how God made us in the first place. It is not necessary to sin in order to be truly or fully human.
>
> […]While the hymn is clear that the Son was 'in very nature God' at the same time he chose before he became human not to take advantage of his divine prerogatives. What were those? I call them the omnis– omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence.
>
> […]And here I think is what Paul is driving at when he says 'have this mind in yourselves that was also in Christ Jesus'. It says that he 'humbled himself'. Now contrary to what the world may think humility has nothing to do with feelings of low self-esteem. It has nothing to do with feelings of low self-worth. If Jesus is the model of true humility, it can't have anything to do with those things, because Jesus surely was the one person who walked this earth who did not have such feelings, did not have an identity crisis, and so on. Humility is the posture of a strong person who steps down to serve others, as Jesus did.

This IVP commentary on Bible Gateway talks more about what this "divine condescension" means to us, using that passage from Philippians:

> Christ's selflessness for the sake of others expressed itself in his emptying himself by taking the "form" of a slave. Historically, far too much has been made of the verb "emptied himself," as though in becoming incarnate he literally "emptied himself" of something. However, just as*harpagmos* requires no object for Christ to "seize" but rather points to what is the opposite of God's character, so Christ did not empty himself of anything; he simply "emptied himself," poured himself out, as it were. In keeping with Paul's ordinary usage, this is metaphor, pure and simple. What modifies it is expressed in the phrase that follows; he

> "poured himself out by taking on the 'form' of a slave."
>
> Elsewhere this verb regularly means to become powerless or to be emptied of significance (hence the NIV's *made himself nothing;* cf. KJV, "made himself of no reputation"). Here it stands in direct antithesis to the "empty glory" of verse 3 and functions in the same way as the metaphorical "he became poor" in 2 Corinthians 8:9. Thus, as in the "not" side of this clause (v. 6b), we are still dealing with the character of God as revealed in the mindset and resulting activity of the Son of God. The concern is with divine selflessness: God is not an acquisitive being, grasping and seizing, but self-giving for the sake of others.

I think it's important to be clear that Jesus didn't give up anything of his divine attributes by becoming a man. Rather, he added a human nature to his divine nature. The humility is because he came to serve others.

You can see a nice quick video of this doctrine being defended by famous philosophical theologian William Lane Craig:

I think that it is important for us to emphasize the doctrine of the Incarnation at Christmas, in order to correct the grasping and seizing that is so widespread. The really interesting thing about Christmas is the Incarnation, and what it tells us about God and us. It tells us that we have value, because Jesus loved us. But it also says that following Jesus means being humble and being a servant to others. It means pouring yourself out to others in order to serve them. And these obligations are not metaphorical – they are rooted in the historical facts. This is the way the world is as a matter of fact, although certainly we have freedom to rebel against it.

For those looking for defenses to the doctrine of the Incarnation, you can find a chapter on it by Paul Copan in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". That's for intermediate readers. For advanced readers you can look for a chapter in "The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology", edited by Charles Taliaferro and Chad Meister, and published by Cambridge University Press.

Was the Trump-Russia Steele dossier the FBI's "insurance policy" against Trump?

December 26, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Why do people think that CNN are biased leftist clowns?
This is an article from the venerable Andy C. McCarthy, writing for National Review. He knows something investigations of this sort, having investigated and successfully prosecuted the men responsible for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. What does he think about the Trump-Russia dossier that dominated the far-left mainstream media news cycle for months after Trump's election?

He writes:

> The FBI's deputy director Andrew McCabe testified Tuesday at a marathon seven-hour closed-door hearing of the House Intelligence Committee. According to the now-infamous text message sent by FBI agent Peter Strzok to his paramour, FBI lawyer Lisa Page, it was in McCabe's office that top FBI counterintelligence officials discussed what they saw as the frightening possibility of a Trump presidency.
>
> That was during the stretch run of the 2016 campaign, no more than a couple of weeks after they started receiving the Steele dossier — the Clinton campaign's opposition-research reports, written by former British spy Christopher Steele, about Trump's purportedly conspiratorial relationship with Vladimir Putin's regime in Russia.
>
> Was it the Steele dossier that so frightened the FBI? I think so.
>
> There is a great deal of information to follow. But let's cut to the chase: The Obama-era FBI and Justice Department had great faith in Steele because he had previously collaborated with the bureau on a big case. Plus, Steele was working on the Trump-Russia project with the wife of a top Obama Justice Department official, who was personally briefed by Steele. The upper ranks of the FBI and DOJ strongly preferred Trump's opponent, Hillary Clinton, to the point of overlooking significant evidence of her felony misconduct, even as they turned up the heat on Trump. In sum, the FBI and DOJ were predisposed to believe the allegations in Steele's dossier. Because of their confidence in Steele, because they were predisposed to believe his scandalous claims about Donald Trump, they made grossly inadequate efforts to verify his claims. Contrary to what I hoped would be the case, I've come to believe Steele's claims were used to obtain FISA surveillance authority for an investigation of Trump.
>
> There were layers of insulation between the Clinton campaign and Steele — the campaign and the Democratic party retained a law firm, which contracted with Fusion GPS, which in turn hired the former spy. At some point, though, perhaps

> early on, the FBI and DOJ learned that the dossier was actually a partisan opposition-research product. By then, they were dug in. No one, after all, would be any the wiser: Hillary would coast to victory, so Democrats would continue running the government; FISA materials are highly classified, so they'd be kept under wraps. Just as it had been with the Obama-era's Fast and Furious and IRS scandals, any malfeasance would remain hidden.

This is what we know about who paid for the Trump-Russia dossier (the Clinton campaign), and who passed the dossier to the news media (the Clinton bloggers).

I think we need to read these resignations the same way as we read the resignations of high-ranking Obama officials who were investigated and discovered to be using their political positions as weapons to attack Republicans, e.g. – Eric Holder, Lois Lerner, etc.

Basically, the lesson from all of this is that Democrats are no different than corrupt left-wing politicians in other communist regimes. They don't understand any sort of standard of morality that would require them to do their jobs with integrity. To be a Democrat is to think that morality is a delusion, and that anything is permissible. This is a consequences of abandoning God as author of objective moral values and duties. And that's why we should not be electing secular leftists to have power over us. It's too dangerous to let godless people have that kind of power. We shouldn't see the abuses of power in other left-wing regimes of the past as something different and distinct from the secular leftists in our own country.

Alexander Vilenkin: “All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning”

December 27, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve decided to explain why physicists believe that there was a creation event in this post. That is to say, I’ve decided to let famous cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin do it.

From Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Did the cosmos have a beginning? The Big Bang theory seems to suggest it did, but in recent decades, cosmologists have concocted elaborate theories – for example, an eternally inflating universe or a cyclic universe – which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos. Now it appears that the universe really had a beginning after all, even if it wasn’t necessarily the Big Bang.
>
> At a meeting of scientists – titled “State of the Universe” – convened last week at Cambridge University to honor Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday, cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University in Boston presented evidence that the universe is not eternal after all, leaving scientists at a loss to explain how the cosmos got started without a supernatural creator. The meeting was reported in *New Scientist* magazine (Why physicists can’t avoid a creation event, 11 January 2012).
>
> […]In his presentation, Professor Vilenkin discussed three theories which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos.

The three theories are chaotic inflationary model, the oscillating model and quantum gravity model. Regular readers will know that those have all been addressed in William Lane Craig’s peer-reviewed paper that evaluates alternatives to the standard Big Bang cosmology.

But let’s see what Vilenkin said.

More:

> One popular theory is eternal inflation. Most readers will be familiar with the theory of *inflation*, which says that the universe increased in volume by a factor of at least 10^78 in its very early stages (from 10^−36 seconds after the Big Bang to sometime between 10^−33 and 10^−32 seconds), before settling into the slower rate of expansion that we see today. The theory of *eternal inflation* goes further, and holds that the universe is constantly giving birth to smaller “bubble” universes within an ever-expanding multiverse. Each bubble universe undergoes its own initial period of inflation. In some versions of the theory, the bubbles go both backwards and forwards in time, allowing the possibility of an infinite past. Trouble is, the value of one particular cosmic

parameter rules out that possibility:

> But in 2003, a team including Vilenkin and Guth considered what eternal inflation would mean for the Hubble constant, which describes mathematically the expansion of the universe. They found that the equations didn't work (Physical Review Letters, DOI: 10.1103/physrevlett.90.151301). "You can't construct a space-time with this property," says Vilenkin. It turns out that the constant has a lower limit that prevents inflation in both time directions. "It can't possibly be eternal in the past," says Vilenkin. "There must be some kind of boundary."

A second option explored by Vilenkin was that of a cyclic universe, where the universe goes through an infinite series of big bangs and crunches, with no specific beginning. It was even claimed that a cyclic universe could explain the low observed value of the cosmological constant. But as Vilenkin found, there's a problem if you look at the *disorder* in the universe:

> Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists – nothing like the one we see around us.
>
> One way around that is to propose that the universe just gets bigger with every cycle. Then the amount of disorder per volume doesn't increase, so needn't reach the maximum. But Vilenkin found that this scenario falls prey to the same mathematical argument as eternal inflation: if your universe keeps getting bigger, it must have started somewhere.

However, Vilenkin's options were not exhausted yet. There was another possibility: that the universe had sprung from an eternal cosmic egg:

> Vilenkin's final strike is an attack on a third, lesser-known proposal that the cosmos existed eternally in a static state called the cosmic egg. This finally "cracked" to create the big bang, leading to the expanding universe we see today. Late last year Vilenkin and graduate student Audrey Mithani showed that the egg could not have existed forever after all, as quantum instabilities would force it to collapse after a finite amount of time (arxiv.org/abs/1110.4096). If it cracked instead, leading to the big bang, then this must have happened before it collapsed – and therefore also after a finite amount of time.
>
> "This is also not a good candidate for a beginningless universe," Vilenkin concludes.

> So at the end of the day, what is Vilenkin's verdict?
>
> > "All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

This is consistent with the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin Theorem, which I blogged about before, and which William Lane Craig leveraged to his advantage in his debate with Peter Millican.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past. *No one* denies the expansion of space in our universe, and so we are left with a cosmic beginning. Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

Conclusion

If the universe came into being out of nothing, which seems to be the case from science, then the universe has a cause. Things do not pop into being, uncaused, out of nothing. The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

Now, let's have a discussion about this science in our churches, and see if we can't train Christians to engage with non-Christians about the evidence so that everyone accepts what science tells us about the origin of the universe.

Diane Black is running for governor of Tennessee

December 28, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

STATE RESULTS: Tennessee

SORTING OPTIONS

STATE	DISTRICT	NAME	PARTY	SCORE
TN	4	REP. SCOTT DESJARLAIS	R	93%
TN	7	REP. MARSHA BLACKBURN	R	88%
TN	6	REP. DIANE BLACK	R	85%

Heritage Action Scorecards show most conservative legislators

Exciting news in Tennessee!

Previously, I blogged about how my favorite Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn had entered the Tennessee Senate race for the seat being vacated by squishy moderate Bob Corker. I have blogged about Marsha Blackburn's activities many times on this blog, going back for many years. Although Marsha Blackburn is a wonderful candidate for the Senate, Tennessee still needs a conservative governor.

Here is the latest news from Fox News, authored by Diane Black – another Congresswoman I admire.

Excerpt:

> I became chairman of the House Budget Committee one year ago and have been proud to serve in that role along with our new president. He has pushed an agenda of action – responsible budgeting, repealing ObamaCare's worst mandates, and aggressive tax-cutting to get our economy going. This has been exactly the kind of work I came to Congress to do and we have done it.
>
> But my heart has always been at home. This why today I'm announcing that I will now step down as chairman of the House Budget Committee, while continuing to serve in Congress, to devote more attention to my next challenge: seeking the governorship of Tennessee.
>
> When I was elected to Congress in 2010, I had three main goals: repeal ObamaCare, reform the tax code and start attacking the growing federal debt

> and deficits. In just one year, the Budget Committee has taken significant steps to achieve all of these goals.

She's the current Chair of the House Budget Committee and probably had a lot to do with the splendid House version of that tax cut bill that I liked so much. But she's not only good on fiscal issues, she's also a member of the House pro-life caucus, and was involved in the Select Investigative Panel on Planned Parenthood – an investigation of the selling of unborn baby body parts. Marsha Blackburn chaired the panel.

The Washington Examiner says that she has a few rivals – but none of them were recognizable to me:

> The gubernatorial race is slated for Nov. 6, 2018, the same day as the midterm elections in Congress. Republican Gov. Bill Haslam, the incumbent, is prohibited by Tennessee law from running for a third term. Black joins a field of other Republicans who have announced their candidacies, including former state Sen. Mae Beavers; Randy Boyd, former commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development under Haslam; Rep. Beth Harwell, speaker of the Tennessee House; businessman Bill Lee; and realtor Kay White.
>
> Black will continue to work on the Ways and Means Committee. Before being elected to Congress, she was a Tennessee state representative and senator.
>
> In a statement from the House Budget Committee's office, Black urged her colleagues to address "unsustainable mandatory programs."
>
> "Without question, it is critical that lawmakers take real action to reverse the trajectory of our nation's growing debt," she said.

I always support the candidates with the best record of achieving conservative results in the teeth of opposition. That's why I liked Scott Walker and Ted Cruz in the GOP primary. It's good to see Marsha Blackburn and Diane Black running for Senate and Governor, respectively. They also both have experience fighting for conservative principles and achieving results in the teeth of opposition. I am very happy to see people with records of achieving results running for higher office. I noticed that Diane Black has a degree in nursing, and a private sector career as a nurse, prior to entering politics. I think gives her a practical, evidence-based background, which so many non-STEM politicians lack.

Trump defeated ISIS: Islamic State has now lost 98% of their territory

December 29, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

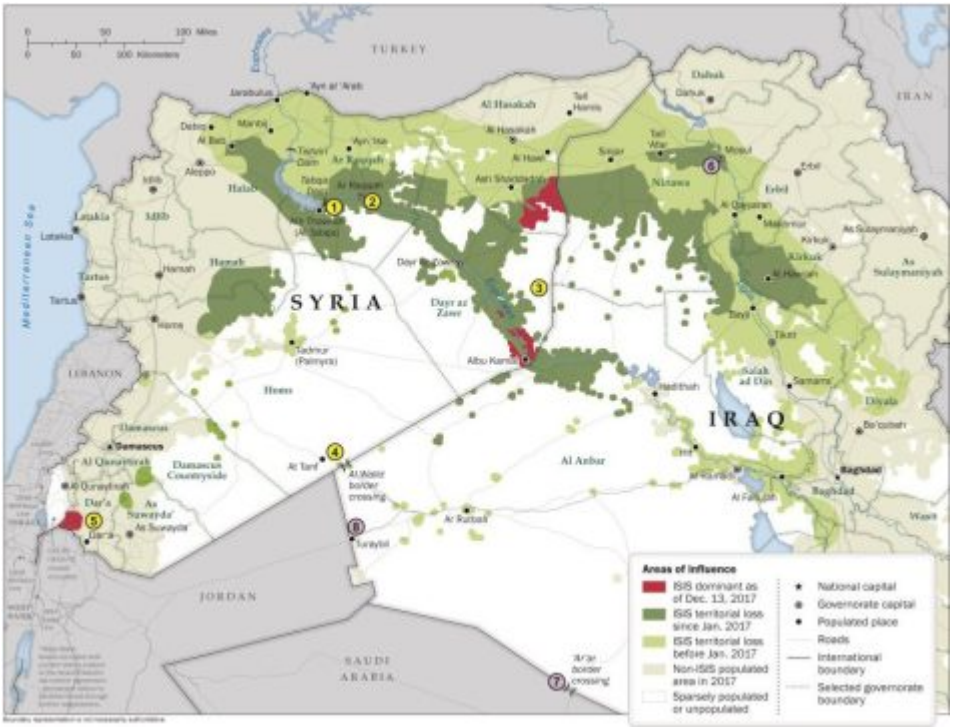

Islamic State retreats: light and dark green = previous ISIS areas, red = current ISIS areas (Source: U.S. State Department via Business Insider)

I spent some time during my winter vacation reading through a whole bunch of military history books… “Lone Survivor”, “13 Hours” and “Red Platoon”.

In Thirteen Hours, I found out how the embassy in Benghazi was attacked, and then defended by security personnel at a nearby CIA outpost. The security personnel requested assistance over and over, and explained carefully that this was a planned terrorist attack, with pre-sighted indirect fire from mortars. All the requests for support were ignored by the Obama administration. Later on, Obama’s friend Susan Rice came out to assure us that the Obama administration had not failed to protect the ambassador, because the planned terrorist attack was just some minor protest violence caused by a YouTube video.

In Red Platoon, I found out about how U.S. forces were attacked in Eastern Afghanistan, near Pakistan, but no reinforcements were available because the entire army and air force was off looking for Private Beau Bergdahl, the deserter who Obama traded five Taliban commanders to get back. Is trading five experienced Taliban commanders for one deserter with the rank of Private a good deal? I don’t think so. Bergdahl was later convicted of desertion, by the way. At the time of the swap, Obama’s friend Susan Rice assured us that Bergdahl served honorably and was worth the five Taliban commanders.

In Lone Survivor, I found out about how how a 4-man team of Navy SEALs were discovered by Afghanistan civilians while conducting surveillance on a Taliban

commander. Because they were afraid of the progressive mainstream media, and limited by the Obama administration's pro-terrorist rules of engagement, they had to release the civilians. In gratitude for their lives, the civilians then immediately reported them to a nearby Taliban base. As a result, 3 of the 4 Navy SEALs were killed in action, and the fourth grievously wounded. He is very careful in the book to explain the costs of the mainstream media's pro-terrorist bias, and the damaging effects of the Obama administration's pro-terrorist rules of engagement (ROE).

Elsewhere, the pro-LGBT Obama administration gave convicted traitor Private Bradley Manning a free taxpayer-funded sex change, and then pardoned him for giving away our most important military secrets to WikiLeaks. Then Team Obama gave Iran a big boost in their development of nuclear weapons, including $400 million in untraceable cash. This is the same Iran that was killing our soldiers via IEDs in Iraq.

This is a snapshot of how the Obama administration handled foreign policy and national security during their eight-year reign of error. This is not even to mention the disasters in Syria, Egypt and Libya. It was the worst foreign policy presidency ever. And remember, Obama inherited a victory in Iraq, after George W. Bush's successful surge. Obama turned that victory into a defeat by retreating prematurely instead of winning the peace. ISIS was created by Obama's withdrawal from the battlefield.

Things have changed now that Donald Trump took over. He immediately gave the military more autonomy to go after our enemies, and now after one year, we have the results.

Fox News reports:

> ISIS has lost 98 percent of the territory it once held — with half of that terror group's so-called "caliphate" having been recaptured since President Trump took office less than a year ago, U.S. military officials said Tuesday.
>
> The massive gains come after years of "onerous" rules, when critics say the Obama administration "micromanaged" the war and shunned a more intensive air strategy that could have ended the conflict much sooner.
>
> "The rules of engagement under the Obama administration were onerous. I mean what are we doing having individual target determination being conducted in the White House, which in some cases adds weeks and weeks," said retired Air Force Lt. Gen. David Deptula, the former head of U.S. Air Force intelligence. "The limitations that were put on actually resulted in greater civilian casualties."
>
> […]The latest American intelligence assessment says fewer than 1,000 ISIS fighters now remain in Iraq and Syria, down from a peak of nearly 45,000 just two years ago. U.S. officials credit nearly 30,000 U.S.-led coalition airstrikes and regional partners on the ground for killing more than 70,000 jihadists. Meanwhile, only a few thousand have returned home.
>
> The remaining ISIS strongholds are concentrated in a small area along the border of Syria and Iraq. ISIS, at one point, controlled an area the size of Ohio.

During the Obama administration, a lot of evil things were happening at the hands of evil men in the Middle East. I would like the American people to vote with their minds instead of with their feelings. Foreign policy and national security should be important, and they are certainly too important to be trusted to the radical left. We can do better than blame-America-first Democrats.

Ontario government seizes foster kids from Christian couple over Santa Claus and Easter bunny

December 30, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Election 2015: Socialists in red, Communists in Orange, Conservatives in blue

In Canada, Christian couples are qualified to pay mandatory taxes to the secular government, but they're not qualified raise children. That's the government's job, apparently.

Check out this story from the Toronto Sun.

Excerpt:

> 'Twas a few days before Christmas when all through a Hamilton courtroom of the hallowed Superior Court of Ontario, the lawyers were arguing about – Santa Claus.
>
> And the Easter bunny as well.
>
> To his credit, Justice Andrew Goodman kept a straight face throughout the hearing as the lawyer for the Hamilton CAS struggled to explain why the agency suddenly yanked two little girls from their happy foster home just because their devout Christian foster parents wouldn't lie and tell them Santa and the Easter Bunny were real.
>
> The children — aged four and three at the time — faced the imminent danger that the "magic" of the holidays might be destroyed if they were left with Derek and Frances Baars, argued lawyer Jim Wood.
>
> "They're entitled to believe that while they're sleeping, Santa Claus is coming to put the presents under the tree," he insisted. "The risk is there. The children

> needed to be removed."
>
> The Baars were upfront when they signed on: They don't celebrate Halloween and, as their glowing SAFE Homestudy Report clearly states, they "do not endorse Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny as they do not wish to lie to children."
>
> They were approved as foster parents in December 2015 and the sisters moved into their home a week before Christmas.
>
> The Baars bought them gifts and celebrated the holiday — but carefully avoided the Santa question. Their birth mother even sent a note thanking them for giving her girls such a nice Christmas.
>
> […]Their CAS worker was hopping mad by their hearsay, told them it was an essential part of Canadian culture and issued an ultimatum: Tell the girls the Easter Bunny was real or their foster home would be closed.
>
> And so it was. They were abruptly fired as foster parents and the mystified little girls were pulled from their home the next day.

It was an emergency! The children needed to be removed from the home right away by the benevolent taxpayer-funded social workers.

More:

> Despite the dire shortage of foster parents in the region, the Baars were no longer acceptable to the Hamilton CAS. They'd even offered to care only for infants or kids for whom Santa and the Easter Bunny weren't important, but were turned down.

The children need to be removed, because the parents are obviously dangerous. It's dangerous to tell children that Santa Claus isn't real, because it's better to lie to them, and then have that mistrust poison the relationship between child and parents.

My personal view on this is exactly what the Christian couple decided. Make Christmas and Easter fun days, but focus on the theological issues involved in each day: the Incarnation and the Resurrection. You don't want to get into a situation where you poison the relationship with your children by lying to them – telling them lies that make them feel good, and then having them find out later from their same-age peers the truth. It undermines you, and elevates their peers as trustworthy truth-tellers.

I just have to point out one more fact about this province of Ontario in Canada, and their views on raising children. Remember that the Deputy Minister of Education in Ontario designed a sex-education curriculum that was mandatory for all the children in Ontario. He was later convicted of child pornography. And Ontario also passed a law allowing the state to seize children from parents who disagree with the province's LGBT agenda. So clearly, this is not the place to get married and have children, if you expect to raise your children according to a sensible Judeo-Christian worldview.

Maybe voting in a big secular government isn't such a great thing. I know that when I give money to private sector businesses in free exchanges of value, they would not come

to my house looking for children to seize. They just take their money, and I get something useful that I wanted that matches MY values. When you grow government, you end up paying them regardless of how they perform, and then when they are big enough, they turn around and starting pushing you around. You'll never have that problem when you keep government focused on its Constitutional responsibilities. Unfortunately, the people of Canada have apparently forgotten all about how to organize a government so that it respects liberty.

Trump’s major accomplishments for the year 2017

December 31, 2017 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump signs good executive action = GOOD TRUMP

At the beginning of 2017, I was a card-carrying member of the Team Never Trump. I was very grumpy that my picks for president, Scott Walker and Ted Cruz, were beat out in the primary by a pretend-conservative. I expected Trump to be a center-left Democrat who would do nothing to fix 8 years of failure from our first affirmative action President. We now know that Trump basically lied his way through the GOP primaries, pretending to be a redneck pro-union isolationist Democrat when he actually intended to govern as a mainstream conservative.

This article from the Washington Examiner lists 81 of his major accomplishments, not counting the repeals of 11 Obama-legacy policies. Let’s look at the ones that are quantifiable improvements over his predecessor.

Excerpt:

> **Jobs and the economy**
>
> - Passage of the tax reform bill providing $5.5 billion in cuts and repealing the Obamacare mandate.
> - Increase of the GDP above 3 percent.
> - Creation of 1.7 million new jobs, cutting unemployment to 4.1 percent.
> - Saw the Dow Jones reach record highs.
> - A rebound in economic confidence to a 17-year high.
> - A new executive order to boost apprenticeships.
> - A move to boost computer sciences in Education Department programs.
>
> **Killing job-stifling regulations**
>
> - Signed an Executive Order demanding that two regulations be killed for every new one creates. He beat that big and cut 16 rules and regulations

> for every one created, saving $8.1 billion.
> - Signed 15 congressional regulatory cuts.
> - Withdrew from the Obama-era Paris Climate Agreement, ending the threat of environmental regulations.
> - Signed an Executive Order cutting the time for infrastructure permit approvals.
> - Eliminated an Obama rule on streams that Trump felt unfairly targeted the coal industry.
>
> **Boosting U.S. energy dominance**
>
> - The Department of Interior, which has led the way in cutting regulations, opened plans to lease 77 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico for oil and gas drilling.
> - Trump traveled the world to promote the sale and use of U.S. energy.
> - Expanded energy infrastructure projects like the Keystone XL Pipeline snubbed by Obama.
> - Ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to kill Obama's Clean Power Plan.
> - EPA is reconsidering Obama rules on methane emissions.

This Washington Examiner list failed to mention opening up a tiny area of the HUGE ANWR district to oil drilling. Not only will this create more jobs, but it also lowers the price of energy for individual families and for job creators. Also, it helps us to not be dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I think this is important as well:

> **Protecting communities**
>
> - Justice announced grants of $98 million to fund 802 new cops.
> - Justice worked with Central American nations to arrest and charge 4,000 MS-13 members.
> - Homeland rounded up nearly 800 MS-13 members, an 83 percent one-year increase.
> - Signed three executive orders aimed at cracking down on international criminal organizations.
> - Attorney General Jeff Sessions created new National Public Safety Partnership, a cooperative initiative with cities to reduce violent crimes.
>
> **Promoting peace through strength**
>
> - Directed the rebuilding of the military and ordered a new national strategy and nuclear posture review.
> - Worked to increase defense spending.

> - Empowered military leaders to “seize the initiative and win,” reducing the need for a White House sign off on every mission.
> - Elevated U.S. Cyber Command into a major warfighting command.
> - Imposed a travel ban on nations that lack border and anti-terrorism security.
> - Saw ISIS lose virtually all of its territory.
> - Pushed for strong action against global outlaw North Korea and its development of nuclear weapons.
> - Announced a new Afghanistan strategy that strengthens support for U.S. forces at war with terrorism.
> - NATO increased support for the war in Afghanistan.
> - Approved a new Iran strategy plan focused on neutralizing the country’s influence in the region.

The article didn’t mention the latest news of Trump’s decision to defend U.S. industry from an EMP attack – which is the threat we are least defended against.

This is a big difference from Obama, who liked to attack law enforcement at every turn, preferring to side with criminals and radical Islamic terrorists at every turn. He did it over and over and over. The criminals and terrorists were always right and entitled to special privileges. After all, Islamic terrorism was just “workplace violence”. The police had always “acted stupidly”. Obama had armed security on him at every moment, so who cares if some illegal immigrant shot you? If you were the victim of crime, then it was your fault. You deserved it. Remember the Crusades before you get on your high horse about judging. All that while his administration was running guns to Mexican drug cartels and giving $400 million in unmarked bills to Iran to aid their nuclear weapons development.

That’s the public safety you got with your taxpayer dollars with the Obama administration.

But one of the areas where Trump really shined had to be in the nomination of judges who were committed to interpreting the law as written, instead of interpreting the law based on their need to feel good and look good to others.

The Washington Examiner posted another article on the 9 most significant achievements, and here’s number one:

> President Trump shattered an all-time record earlier this month when the Senate confirmed his 12th federal appeals court nominee, marking the only time in history a U.S. president has made more than 11 appellate appointments during his first year in office.
>
> With those appellate appointments, a new Supreme Court justice, and his investiture of several other low-court judges, Trump has rapidly and radically changed the federal judiciary this year. The president’s close relationship with conservative groups like the Heritage Foundation and Federalist Society has ensured that nearly all of his judicial nominees fit the mold of Justice Neil

> Gorsuch, a strict originalist who succeeded the iconic conservative Justice Antonin Scalia after being confirmed by the Senate last April.
>
> "There's been a serious effort to identify people who are seriously committed to doctrines and modes of analysis rather than just being seen as conservatives or Republicans," Ilya Shapiro, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute wrote recently.
>
> Many conservatives see the president's judicial appointments as his biggest accomplishment yet, noting that Trump's progress in this area will likely be the most enduring element of his post-presidential legacy. With 59 nominations (including U.S. Attorneys) and 19 confirmations in the Senate so far, even legal conservatives who begrudgingly voted for Trump are likely to be pleased.

As a Never Trump person, this has been the biggest surprise of all. He picked judges better than George W. Bush! Who could have predicted this, based on his record prior to running for President? But he certainly has some conservative accomplishments now, to rival those of the better 2016 candidates like Walker and Cruz.

I'm a Never Trump person. Trump treated my favorite candidates shamefully in the 2016 primaries – especially Ted Cruz. However, I cannot deny that he governed more conservatively than expected. It will be interesting to see if he is able to make any progress on building the southern border wall, and on repealing Obamacare. He hasn't been able to do anything on either of those yet. He needs to do a better job of being persuasive to centrists, instead of being snarky and insulting.

Obama administration ignored pro-democracy protesters, gave Iran dictators $1.7 billion

January 1, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neda Agha-Soltan – pro-democracy protester who was killed by Iradian dictatorship

Since we are seeing Trump reach out to pro-democracy protesters in Iran, it's worth remembering how Obama responded to them in 2009.

First, here's what happened in Iran in 2009, just after Obama was elected president.

The radically leftist BBC reports:

> The doctor who tried to save an Iranian protester as she bled to death on a street in Tehran has told the BBC of her final moments.
>
> Dr Arash Hejazi, who is studying at a university in the south of England, said he ran to Neda Agha-Soltan's aid after seeing she had been shot in the chest.
>
> Despite his attempts to stop the bleeding she died in less than a minute, he said.
>
> Video of Ms Soltan's death was posted on the internet and images of her have become a rallying point for Iranian opposition supporters around the world.
>
> […]Dr Hejazi said he saw Ms Soltan, who he did not know, with an older man who he thought was her father but later on learned was her music teacher.
>
> "Suddenly everything turned crazy. The police threw teargas and the motorcycles started rushing towards the crowd. We ran to an intersection and people were just standing. They didn't know what to do.
>
> "We heard a gunshot. Neda was standing one metre away from me. I turned back

> and I saw blood gushing out of Neda's chest.
>
> "She was in a shocked situation, just looking at her chest. Then she lost her control.
>
> "We ran to her and lay her on the ground. I saw the bullet wound just below the neck with blood gushing out.
>
> "I have never seen such a thing because the bullet, it seemed to have blasted inside her chest, and later on, blood exiting from her mouth and nose.
>
> "I had the impression that it had hit the lung as well. Her blood was draining out of her body and I was just putting pressure on the wound to try to stop the bleeding, which wasn't successful unfortunately, and she died in less than one minute."

Here's the video:

Here's how Obama responded to the pro-democracy protesters in 2009, according to the far-left extremist New York Times:

> President Obama said Tuesday that it would be counterproductive for the United States "to be seen as meddling" in the disputed Iranian presidential election, dismissing criticism from several leading Republicans that he has failed to speak out forcefully enough on behalf of the Iranian opposition.
>
> […]With protesters filling the streets of Tehran to denounce the declared outcome of the election, administration officials said they were wary of doing anything that would allow the declared victor, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, to portray the protests as American-led.
>
> Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, offered some of the sharpest critiques of Mr. Obama's tempered response.
>
> "He should speak out that this is a corrupt, flawed sham of an election," Mr. McCain said in an interview Tuesday on NBC's "Today" show. "The Iranian people have been deprived of their rights."

The UK Telegraph explains that this was not a free and fair election:

> Iran has seen thousands demonstrate following the election, prompting the regime to respond to public anger on Tuesday by offering a partial recount of votes in last week's election.
>
> Supporters of both men have staged demonstrations, each drawing tens of thousands of people, but the event in support of the president was heavily promoted on state television, with all six channels urging Iranians to attend.
>
> The rival protest, by contrast, was officially banned and the regime tried to stop its opponents from communicating by blocking text messages and email accounts.

Later on in his failed presidency, Obama would send $1.7 billion in cash to Iran to help

them develop nuclear weapons, so they could destroy Israel a little faster. He made sure to include $400 million in unmarked bills, so that future administrations would not be able to back out of the "deal".

It came out recently that Obama was so desperate to give the Iranian regime this money, that he actually stopped an investigation into drug-smuggling by Iran's terrorist ally, Hezbollah.

The Stream reports on the story, which was broken by the far-left Politico:

> President Barack Obama torpedoed a DEA-led effort to stop Hezbollah from smuggling cocaine into the country. POLITICO broke the bombshell news Sunday night. The reason for allowing the Iran-backed terror group's criminal enterprise to continue? Obama's desperate desire for better relations and a nuclear deal with Iran.
>
> The DEA teamed with dozens of agencies here and abroad in 2008 after discovering Hezbollah had grown beyond Middle East politics and thuggery into international crime. The special task force was called Project Cassandra. For eight years Project Cassandra worked to unravel Hezbollah's drug and weapons trafficking, money laundering and other criminal activities.
>
> They followed cocaine shipments, some from Latin America to West Africa and on to Europe and the Middle East, and others through Venezuela and Mexico to the United States. They tracked the river of dirty cash as it was laundered by, among other tactics, buying American used cars and shipping them to Africa.
>
> Hezbollah isn't just smuggling cocaine. A November piece in The Hill noted, "Hezbollah's involvement in producing and selling counterfeit medicines such as Captagon — a powerful amphetamine — is well documented." Captagon is dubbed "chemical courage." It was the drug of choice for ISIS. As Canada's CBC reported, Captagon is "widely used by fighters in the Syrian civil war for its ability to make people alert, fearless and ready to kill with abandon."
>
> Project Cassandra traced the crime syndicate to "the innermost circle of Hezbollah and its state sponsors in Iran."

This is the same Iran that imprisons Christian women in dirty prisons, funds Hezbollah terrorists, sends aid to Islamic terrorists in Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen, and backed the corrupt Syria dictatorship. And more. I don't have space to write all of what they do, but they're one of the worst countries on the face of the planet. Not the people – but the Islamist dictators who run the show.

Trump came out and expressed support for the Iranian protesters, for which he received widespread support from lawmakers and former government officials.

Right now, half of the American public is so ignorant of national security and foreign policy that we elected an imbecile to the White House in 2008 and 2012. The idiots elected an idiot, and it was a disastrous eight years for liberty and peace. All I can say right now about Iran is at least the bleeding has stopped now that the grown-ups are back

in charge.

Christian couple loses appeal, must pay $135,000 for not affirming same-sex marriage

January 2, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

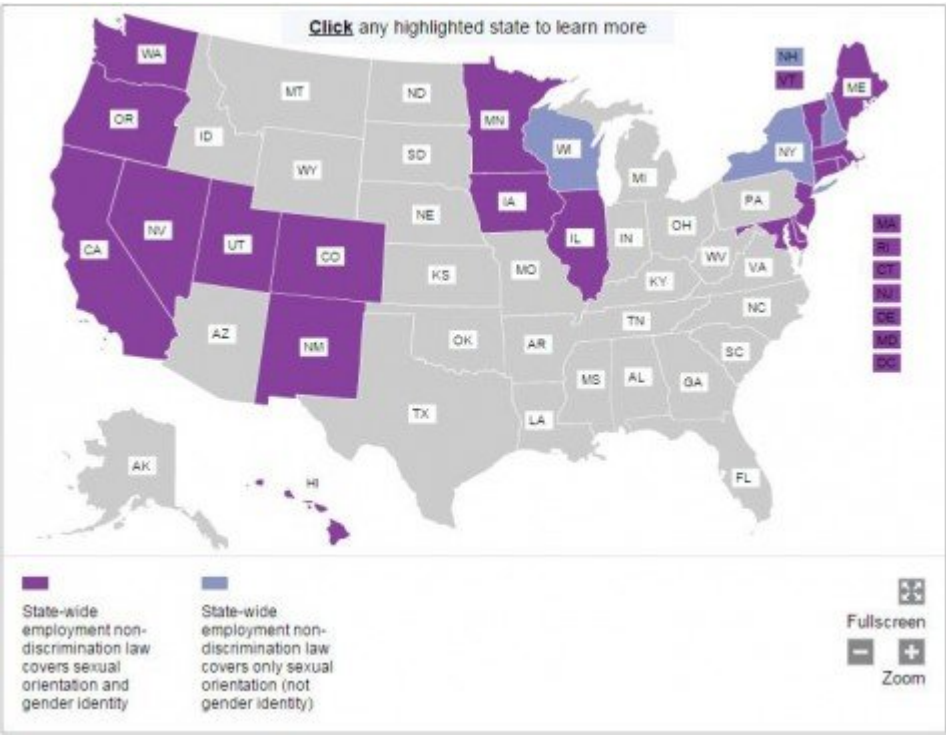

States that force Christians to affirm and celebrate LGBT lifestyles

There's been an update on the persecution of the Christian bakers from Oregon. They appealed their case to the Oregon Court of Appeals.

The Daily Signal has the latest news:

> A husband-and-wife baking team must pay a $135,000 fine for declining to make a cake for the wedding of two women, Oregon's second-highest court has ruled.
>
> A three-judge panel of the Oregon Court of Appeals on Thursday upheld a decision by a state agency that led to the fine and forced Aaron and Melissa Klein to close their bakery.
>
> The court ruled that baking wedding cakes is not "speech, art, or other expression" protected by the First Amendment. The judges said the state did not "impermissibly burden the Kleins' right to the free exercise of religion" because it compelled the Christian bakers only to comply with "a neutral law of general applicability."
>
> Oregon law prohibits businesses from refusing service because of a customer's sexual orientation, as well as because of race, gender, and other personal characteristics.
>
> "We are very disappointed in the court's decision," Michael Berry, deputy general counsel at First Liberty Institute, which represents the Kleins, told The Daily Signal in a phone interview Friday. "I think that punishing people for their

> religious beliefs is … not American, and it's wrong."
>
> "It does not matter how you were born or who you love," one of the lesbians, Laurel Bowman-Cryer, said in a written statement following the ruling.
>
> […]After the Kleins declined in 2013 to make a cake for the wedding of Rachel and Laurel Bowman-Cryer, citing their Christian religious beliefs that marriage is the union of a man and a woman, they also faced protests that eventually led them to shut down their bakery.
>
> […]Berry, the First Liberty attorney, said his legal team is deciding how they will move forward, which could mean appealing to the Oregon Supreme Court.

How would same-sex marriage affect your marriage? That's what proponents of same-sex marriage asked before forcing us all to participate in their gay weddings. The Christian bakers in question did not discriminate against individual gay people, they just didn't want to be participants in a view of marriage that is unacceptable to any Bible-believing Christian. Marriage is important in Christianity. It's a union of complementary male and female natures designed to provide children with male and female parenting.

If you're living in one of the blue or purple states in the map above, then you are vulnerable to persecution by your state. It's very important for Christians to be aware of where they live, and to whom they are paying taxes. I think husbands in particular need to be careful about what they study, where they work, and where they live, given the challenges that Christian families face from the secular state. Secular leftists are in love with their sinful rebellion, and morality makes no sense to them. We have seen many, many examples of people on the secular left using threats, coercion, vandalism and even violence, to get others to agree with them.

It's worth remembering that we're in this situation largely because pious Bible-oriented pastors have been taking a vacation from the moral issues of the day, e.g. – abortion and same-sex marriage. They see their role as feeling good and being liked. Using science and philosophy to train Christians about the case for pro-life and or the case for natural marriage is too much work. I guess they think that it's better to just focus on proper theology for the 50th time in a row, and not say anything divisive about current events.

Huma Abedin sent State Department passwords to her unsecure Yahoo e-mail account

January 3, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Huma Abedin (left), Harvery Weinstein (center), Hillary Clinton (right)

One of the problems with people on the secular left is that they are so fixated on gender and skin color, that they hire, appoint and promote people based on gender and skin color. It doesn't matter which candidate is competent for the job, it only matters that they appear concerned about "diversity". Affirmative action is dangerous and damaging in the private sector. For example, Equifax hired a woman who majored in music, and had no background in computer science, to be their head of electronic security.

Excerpt:

> Equifax "Chief Security Officer" Susan Mauldin has a bachelor's degree and a master of fine arts degree in music composition from the University of Georgia. Her LinkedIn professional profile lists no education related to technology or security.
>
> This is the person who was in charge of keeping your personal and financial data safe — and whose apparent failings have put 143 million of us at risk from identity theft and fraud.

Then they were hacked, and 143 million accounts were compromised. But in the public sector, it's worse. Public sector secrets affect our national security and our foreign policy. When public sector officials are careless, it's not just that money is lost, it's that lives are lost.

With that in mind, take a look at the latest news about Hillary Clinton's most trusted aide.

The Daily Caller reports:

> Huma Abedin forwarded sensitive State Department emails, including passwords to government systems, to her personal Yahoo email account before every single Yahoo account was hacked, a Daily Caller News Foundation analysis of emails released as part of a lawsuit brought by Judicial Watch shows.
>
> Abedin, the top aide to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, used her insecure personal email provider to conduct sensitive work. This guarantees that an account with high-level correspondence in Clinton's State Department was impacted by one or more of a series of breaches — at least one of which was perpetrated by a "state-sponsored actor."
>
> The U.S. later charged Russian intelligence agent Igor Sushchin with hacking 500 million Yahoo email accounts. The initial hack occurred in 2014 and allowed his associates to access accounts into 2015 and 2016 by using forged cookies. Sushchin also worked for the Russian investment bank Renaissance Capital, which paid former President Bill Clinton $500,000 for a June 2010 speech in Moscow.
>
> A separate hack in 2013 compromised three billion accounts across multiple Yahoo properties, and the culprit is still unclear. "All Yahoo user accounts were affected by the August 2013 theft," the company said in a statement.
>
> Abedin, Clinton's deputy chief of staff, regularly forwarded work emails to her personal humamabedin@yahoo.com address. "She would use these accounts if her (State) account was down or if she needed to print an email or document. Abedin further explained that it was difficult to print from the DoS system so she routinely forwarded emails to her non-DoS accounts so she could more easily print," an FBI report says.
>
> Abedin sent passwords for her government laptop to her Yahoo account on Aug. 24, 2009, an email released by the State Department in September 2017 shows.
>
> Long-time Clinton confidante Sid Blumenthal sent Clinton an email in July 2009 with the subject line: "Important. Not for circulation. You only. Sid." The message began "CONFIDENTIAL… Re: Moscow Summit." Abedin forwarded the email to her Yahoo address, potentially making it visible to hackers.

If private sector workers forwarded sensitive work e-mails to their unsecured personal e-mail accounts, they would be fired immediately. But, millions and millions of people voted for Hillary Clinton. They did not care about her Clinton Foundation pay-to-play arrangement when she was Secretary of State. They did not care that she had a private, unsecure e-mail server, in order to break government records laws. She was a woman, and it was her turn. Huma Abedin is a non-white woman, so it was really her turn.

We aren't serious as a nation about hiring the best people. We treat elections like popularity contests. We vote for who we like. We vote in order to feel good about how compassionate we are with other people's money. We vote to end wars by retreating, as if retreating from a fight is a deterrent to evil nations.

When I talk to people who vote for Democrats, they can’t even tell me what the national debt it, but they are proud and enthusiastic Democrats. They don’t feel any shame about not understanding anything about the world. They feel that their opinion is important, and no study or effort is needed to be informed before voting. This isn’t the right way to elect leaders.

What worldview does the maker of Star Wars movies want you to accept?

January 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I heard that there was a new Star Wars movie out, and that many of my Christian friends were going to see it. I passed on it, because there is something about that whole series that is creepy to me.

It looks like my concerns have some justification. I noticed a couple of reviews of the movie from Come Reason Ministries and Bnonn Tennant.

Here are 3 points that Lenny makes at Come Reason: (H/T Brian)

1. Faith and tradition are disposable
2. You don't really need to put in years of work to be competent
3. Men are inconsequential

All three points he makes seem to me to be exactly what the movie communicates, but I want to focus on point #3:

> The most obvious message The Last Jedi sends is the one that Johnson clearly sought to send, that is that men offer nothing uniquely beneficial to society. The main protagonist, Rey, is female. So are all the leadership of the Resistance. Kylo Ren and Snoke are bad guys and are men. The double-dealing code-breaker is a man. The arms dealer is a man.
>
> […]As the film progressed, its agenda became more overt and more satirical. It is the women in this film who time and again save the day while the men just mess everything up. Poe is a hotshot who recklessly expends a number of lives taking

> out a ship that makes no difference in the rest of the film. His later plans are shown to be useless as Laura Dern's Vice Admiral Holdo had a plan in the works all along.
>
> […]The egregiousness of this fiction is distressing. Men have long been the punching bags of media. War is an ugly thing, but it is and has always been men who time and again put their lives on the line to protect us from the evils that threaten our way of life. Men would willingly die to save women and children because they understood the weaker needed protection by the stronger. But now our society says the unique thing that makes men men is itself dangerous. It needs to be checked and men need to behave more like women. When you take away a man's self-understanding as provider and protector, you rob him of his place in the world. Why then would men in this or future generations stand up and put their lives on the line when a real enemy?

I really like what he had to say here. Let's look at one more from Bnonn Tennant, then I'll say something. (H/T Wes)

Excerpt:

> Throughout the second act, we are led to believe that Holdo [female] is an incompetent coward who has effectively frozen under pressure—stuck in a holding pattern rather than chancing anything risky in the hope of saving the fleet. An entire story arc is developed to support this assumption, where Poe [male] takes matters into his own hands with a dangerous hail-mary—building to a great anti-climax where this B-plot finally flops instead of paying off as the audience expects, and Holdo is revealed to have had a better plan all along. Many reviewers have expressed their frustration at how pointless this lengthy arc was—a misdirect and plot twist for the sake of saying "gotcha" rather than creating a payoff in terms of character development or plot advancement. But they are interpreting the movie through the framework of what makes a good story rather than what makes a good leftist porno. From that perspective, this was feminist gold.
>
> In a scene reminiscent of Isaiah 55:8–9, the revelation of Holdo's providence is unveiled—a mystery kept secret for long ages. We discover that she has been leading the fleet to a secret rebel base all along, sacrificing ships like chess pieces along the way in order to establish an unassailable stalemate in the end-game, rather than lose the king. (Sorry, the queen—in this chess game, the king and the queen swap places—obviously.)
>
> It is the perfect feminine plan: one without fighting, in which the security of the collective is ensured. And by contrast, we see that Poe's plan was reckless and foolhardy—pointlessly risking his life, and the life of Rose (who herself serves no particular purpose except to meet the racial-diversity-body-positivity quota), on a gambit that ultimately failed. His masculine impulse to solve the problem through direct action blinded him to the greater feminine wisdom. Worse, it nearly cost

> the entire Resistance their lives, as he sabotaged the female leadership through mutiny—and it did cost Holdo her life, as she had to buy the Resistance time after Poe's plan backfired and alerted the First Order to the fleeing transport ships.
>
> But why didn't Holdo just confide her plan to Poe in the first place? Because she shouldn't have needed to. Ultimately, Poe's greatest sin was not his taking action—it was his taking action out of a failure to recognize and trust in the transcendence of feminine wisdom. His sin was faithlessness. Masculine arrogance prevented him from faithfully submitting to Holdo.

Women know how to do everything through intuition, and men with their "skills" and "experience" and "courage" and "problem-solving" just screw it all up.

I guess I want to say that this is why I don't give money to Hollywood. I have not owned a television since around 2002. The only time I see what's on television is in the gym, or at my parents' house for family gatherings. I wouldn't want to give my money to people like Clinton-donor and sexual harasser Harvey Weinstein or Kathleen Kennedy, the radical feminist president of Lucasfilm. I don't like art that misleads, and pretty much everything that comes out of the entertainment industry these days misleads entertainment-addicts about what is real and true.

We are living in a culture where Christians have – for decades – failed to steward their money properly. Instead of refraining from funding secular leftist enemies in the entertainment industry, we have been giving them money for the rope that they are using to hang us. Politics is downstream from culture, and we made the culture by enriching secular leftists in the entertainment industry. Why? Because we couldn't be bothered to hold every thought captive to Christ. We had to have our fun, and we are sure that God, if he exists, really just wants us to act to satisfy our desires so that we can be happy. We have to have our NFL football, our Comedy Channel news, our 50 Shades of Grey books, our Game of Thrones and our House of Cards. "Take our money", we tell the secular left. If the special effects and CGI are good, then we'll eat the sewage.

New study: doing housework adds 3 years to women's lives

January 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

The UK Daily Mail reports on a study sure to confound feminists.

Excerpt:

> It's probably not the most popular piece of health advice ever dished out – but researchers say that doing the housework can add years to your life.
>
> They found that women who clean, hoover and do the laundry are likely to live almost three years longer.

Hoovering is what British people call vacuuming.

More:

> The team from University Medical Centre Rotterdam found that a 55-year-old woman who does little around the house is likely to live to see her 83rd birthday – but that those who keep on top of the housework should live on to the age of 86.
>
> The benefit for men is much less marked. Their efforts with the loo brush will only buy them an extra year.
>
> But men who do the gardening live 2.7 years longer, while working outside the home has little effect on women.
>
> Dr Klodian Dhana, who led the research team, said the differences 'may partly be explained by the fact that men engaged in more gardening and women in domestic work'.
>
> The study of more than 7,000 men and women asked questions on lifestyle then

> followed them for decades.

Prior to this, we also saw studies about how marriages where women do more housework than men have higher frequency of sex.

Here's the press release from Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> Married men and women who divide household chores in traditional ways report having more sex than couples who share so-called men's and women's work, according to a new study co-authored by sociologists at the University of Washington.
>
> […]The new study, published in the February issue of the journal *American Sociological Review*, shows that sex isn't a bargaining chip. Instead, sex is linked to what types of chores each spouse completes.
>
> Couples who follow traditional gender roles around the house — wives doing the cooking, cleaning and shopping; men doing yard work, paying bills and auto maintenance — reported greater sexual frequency.

Prior to that study, there was this Norwegian study.

Excerpt:

> Couples who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a Norwegian study sure to get tongues wagging has shown.
>
> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled Equality in the Home, said.

The far left Wall Street Journal reports that marriages where the woman earns more are more unhappy:

> "A new study reveals that women's gains on the economic front may be contributing to a decline in the formation and stability of marriages," writes University of Chicago economist Richard Thaler in a New York Times column.
>
> The study, by three of Thaler's Chicago colleagues, "found that traditional views of gender identity, particularly the view that the right and proper role of the husband is to make more money than the wife, are affecting choices of whom to marry, how much to work, and even whether to stay married."
>
> […]Why are men averse to higher-income women? Perhaps because they understand that *women* are averse to *lower*-income men. Mating preferences, after all, are driven not only by attraction but by attainability. In theory all men should be attracted to supermodels; in practice few would have the confidence to

> ask one out.

Men, pay attention to these studies and choose wisely. Find out what you are designed to do in a marriage, and what women are designed to do. Train to do your jobs well, and pick a woman who not only does her jobs well, but wants you to do yours. And respects you for doing your jobs. Respect is more important to a man than the air he breathes.

Radical feminism changes men’s perceptions of women in the workplace

January 6, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

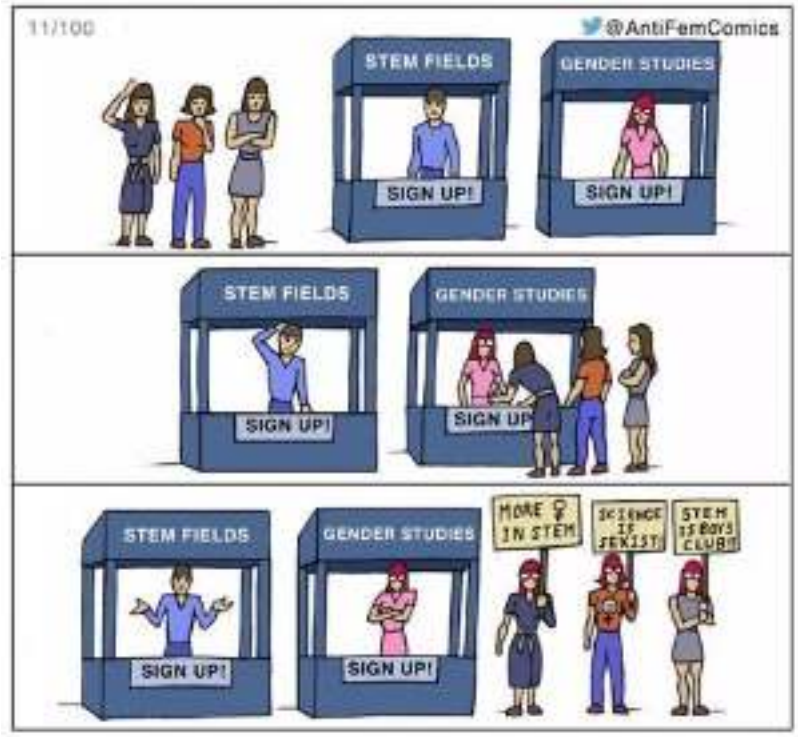

The gender disparity in STEM fields explained

Radical feminists complain a lot about sexism, but damage is self-inflicted

Lately, we’ve seen an outburst of radical feminism as more women have been equating actual rape and sexual assault with sexist comments or clumsy passes. How does this change how women are perceived in the workplace?

Here’s an article from Medium (H/T Tracy) by an anonymous male feminist.

The first point is about how women handle disagreement, compared to men:

> When James Damore was asked for feedback from his supervisor and internally circulated his google memo, it got leaked, he got fired and women stayed at home the next Day because “for emotional reasons”
>
> **A ten page summary** of data and analysis from Damore was enough to “emotional distress” the women at the company.

This lack of resilience and self-control disrupts the workplace, and results in lost productivity. If it turns into a lawsuit, the costs are even higher. This is in addition to women having fewer STEM degrees than men, working fewer hours than men, and taking months leave for pregnancy. Not to mention preferential hiring and promoting of women to meet government-mandated quotes.

Second point, is increased hostility to men.

Look at this tweet from a writer at Teen Vogue:

Emily Lindin, a mainstream writer with a degree in music history, tweets her misandry She has 23,000 followers on Twitter – this woman is mainstream. I looked into her background a bit. No mention of a father at home, and a self-confessed “slutty” lifestyle from her early teens onward. Her entire writing career seems to be to attack everyone who disagrees with her promiscuity.

Feminism, as an ideology, does not allow women to prefer men who exhibit traditional masculine characteristics: providing, protecting, moral and spiritual leadership, chastity, fidelity. That’s “sexist”. So what’s left? Get drunk and have sex with the hot bad boys, since evaluating a man’s character is “sexist”. Then promote false accusations and misandry to get revenge against the hot bad boys you freely chose. This will only get worse as more radical feminists waste their 20s on hot bad boys, and raise more fatherless girls when they become single mothers by choice, in their 30s.

Do men want to work with women who hate men and make false accusations against people they disagree with? I’m a conservative, Christian, pro-life virgin. I disagree with all premarital sex. If this woman worked with me and found out my views, she would almost certainly get me fired. As more and more women come under the influence of angry radical feminists, men will have the perception that women hate them. That’s bad for the minority of non-progressive women, but it’s just safer to avoid any woman once the radical feminist views become the majority.

Another article from Medium (H/T Wes) makes a third point about how conservatives are treated by liberal women in the workplace. The article is written by a female senior software engineer, who promotes STEM to women and the elderly. She is a self-described “moderate conservative”.

Excerpt:

> On September 27, 2017, I decided to attend the Atlanta Google Women Techmakers' event "Idea Jam Session," which was hosted at TechSquare Labs in Atlanta. At that time, I was still an active member of Women Who Code, the Atlanta GDG, and Google Women Techmakers and, perhaps naively, I just assumed that I had every right to attend the event like any other member of the group because I had not been banned.
>
> Upon arriving at the event, Maggie immediately asked me to leave the room. At the door, she informed me that she would be extremely uncomfortable if I remained a member of the community because some of the views that I had expressed on Twitter are *"very harmful to gender equality"*. She then asked Daniel Sabeo, the event coordinator at TechSquare Labs, to escort me from the facility. I was deeply upset at being publicly humiliated, but left willingly without causing any disruption.
>
> Two days later, I got an email from TechSquare Labs. Daniel had discussed the incident with Allen Nance, Paul Judge, and Rodney Sampson, the owners of the facility, and he informed me that they had collectively decided to ban me and my company from using their venue or attending any of their events because they were concerned about the "safety" of their members. I later learned from a fellow developer that Maggie had, in fact, told various people that I'd been stalking her.
>
> […]The following week, Martin Omander, GDG program manager for North America, formally banned me from the Google Developer Group and Google Women Techmakers and, again, declined to provide me with any details of the complaints against me or the rules that I'd allegedly violated.

How many women are likely to attack conservatives in the workplace?

Young, unmarried women voted 78% to 22% for Obama in 2008, according to exit polls.

National Exit Polls: 2008 Performance by Unmarried Women				
	Unmarried Women Support for Obama	Unmarried Women Support for McCain	Married Women Support for Obama	Married Women Support for McCain
Performance Across various Demographics (Exit Polls)				
National (All Women)	70%	29%	47%	50%
College Educated	73%	24%	51%	46%
Non-College Educated	68%	31%	44%	54%
Young Women (18-29)	78%	22%	55%	45%
Women Under 50	74%	25%	49%	48%
Women Over 50	64%	35%	44%	53%
Women with Income >$50K	70%	27%	44%	53%
Women with Income <$50K	71%	28%	57%	41%
Women with Children	74%	25%	51%	47%
Women without Children	68%	31%	44%	53%
Source: Exit Polls				

Exit polls from the 2008 Obama vs McCain election: unmarried women voters only

Obama voted against banning infanticide multiple times as a state senator in Illinois. 78% of young, unmarried women voted for him anyway. Women who graduate from college in non-STEM fields are especially progressive. In my experience, most young, unmarried women form their views by adapting to the dominant views of their community. On campus, their community is usually progressive. In my experience, men are more likely to construct a worldview through reasoning and evaluating evidence.

In my experience, young, unmarried progressive women are progressive because they want taxpayer-funded abortions, taxpayer-funded contraception, no-fault divorce, single mother welfare, student-loan forgiveness, etc. Taxpayer-funded bailouts for problems caused by their own free choices. They feel that if society is paying for something, then it's "normal" and they don't have feel guilty about making poor choices. Their primary concern about politics is being able to do what they feel like without anyone disapproving. Everything bad that happens is "unexpected", and so society should have to pay for it.

Most men rightly disagree with leftist policies, because men believe in personal responsibility. But if men think that they will be falsely charged or otherwise sanctioned for being conservative, then it makes sense for them to not speak to women at all. Again, that's bad for the minority of young, unmarried conservative women, but it's safer to just avoid the risk. Especially as radical feminism becomes the dominant view among young, unmarried women. The point is that men are going to have to hide their political views from MOST young, unmarried women in the office, because progressive ones seem to be very intolerant of the conservative views that most men hold.

I don't even speak to young, unmarried women about religion and politics in the workplace. It doesn't matter if we have the same views or not. Feeling offended and going full totalitarian is just too widespread. The rational choice for men is to disengage. I can have conversations safely about religion and politics with men, even if they disagree with me. I realize that this isn't fair to the minority of young, unmarried conservative women who are safe to talk to, but it's just too dangerous to risk it.

Is there anything in the Bible for a person in habitual sin to turn back to God?

January 7, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Sometimes, I feel that I write such mean and judgy things that it discourages people who are involved in a very rebellious lifestyle to think that there is anything that God can do with them. This is because, as a man, I am very interested in setting out boundaries for people to protect them. If I'm dealing with a genuinely repentant or just plain open-minded person, then I am very much more understanding and supportive.

Here's the story from the Christian Post that caused me to feel guilty about my being so mean all the time:

> Emily Thomes, now a wife and churchgoer who has been speaking out about leaving behind homosexuality, explained in a Facebook video last week for Anchored North, an online evangelism website, that her first romantic relationship with another girl began when she was 15 years old.
>
> "It was my first time ever dating someone," Thomes says in the video, which has been viewed over 1.3 million times as of Tuesday.
>
> She says that she came out to other people, and reasoned that God would be accepting of her relationship.
>
> "God being love meant God was nice and God was chill with what you were cool with," she said of her thinking at the time.
>
> "By 18 and 19 and 20, I was super wild and in serial relationships with women," Thomes reveals.

> She adds that she ended up getting engaged to a woman who had two children when she entered nursing school.
>
> At 22, however, she got invited to a Bible study.

And here are the verses:

> I searched for verses on homosexuality and found 1 Corinthians 6:9–10. I'd read these and other verses like them before. I'd argued against them to those who opposed me, but suddenly I could no longer argue. It was clear. I was in the "will not enter the kingdom of God" lineup. I was lost, wretched, and blatantly opposed to him. But the next verse said, "And such were some of you" (1 Cor. 6:11). Clearly, the Lord could save me. He'd extended his hand to me, the worst of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). I grasped his hand by faith, and I felt overwhelmingly awful and grateful. Although I'd ignored him and lived foolishly, he showed me mercy when I deserved nothing but justice.
>
> My whole life changed that day. Homosexual practice and drug use were my most obvious sins, but there are many others he revealed and—continues to reveal—to me. I still battle same-sex attraction, pride, anger, and a slew of sins, but I trust he'll complete the work he's begun (Phil. 1:6). He's also allowed me to be a wife, and one day, Lord willing, a mother. Two months ago—on the two-year anniversary of my conversion—I married the most Christlike man I've ever known.

A lot of people grow up in situations where they don't get a good, healthy example of a man and a woman loving each other as their parents. It's really hard for people who grow up without one or both parents to know what to do when pursuing their own relationships. A lot of times, they will get into trouble because they don't know what's appropriate, and who to have a relationship with. By the time they reach the point where they are considering a relationship with God at all, they're already in a lifestyle that doesn't allow them to do a fair and reasonable consideration of the evidence. It would simply be too much of a change to turn back on all the non-Christian commitments and relationships that they've already invested in. Fortunately, there is help for people like that in the Bible, as we've seen.

How well is socialized health care working in Britain?

January 8, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The National Health Service is government-run socialist health care

Back in 2009, a radical leftist named Paul Krugman wrote about the health care system in Britain. As a leftist, it's his view that government-run health care is better than free market health care. Basically, he thinks that people get better health care if it's run like the US Postal Service is run, instead of how Amazon.com is run.

Let's see what he says in the far-left extremist New York Times:

> In Britain, the government itself runs the hospitals and employs the doctors. We've all heard scare stories about how that works in practice; these stories are false. Like every system, the National Health Service has problems, but over all it appears to provide quite good care while spending only about 40 percent as much per person as we do. By the way, our own Veterans Health Administration, which is run somewhat like the British health service, also manages to combine quality care with low costs.

And what about the people who say that the NHS doesn't provide quality health care, despite getting a huge portion of the all the taxes that are collected in Britain?

> At this point, all that stands in the way of universal health care in America are the greed of the medical-industrial complex, the lies of the right-wing propaganda machine, and the gullibility of voters who believe those lies.

Every bad story that you've ever heard about socialized health care is a lie, and you're gullible if you believe those lies.

Well, see, now I'm confused. Because if I turn the page of the New York Times from an editorial to a news story, I read this:

> At some emergency wards, patients wait more than 12 hours before they are tended to. Corridors are jammed with beds carrying frail and elderly patients waiting to be admitted to hospital wards. Outpatient appointments were canceled to free up staff members, and by Wednesday morning hospitals had been ordered to postpone nonurgent surgeries until the end of the month.
>
> Cuts to the National Health Service budget in Britain have left hospitals stretched over the winter for years, but this time a flu outbreak, colder weather and high levels of respiratory illnesses have put the N.H.S. under the highest strain in decades.
>
> The situation has become so dire that the head of the health service is warning that the system is overwhelmed.
>
> […]"The N.H.S. waiting list will grow to five million people by 2021," Mr. Stevens said in an impassioned speech to health care leaders in November. "That is one million more people, equivalent to one in 10 of us, the highest number ever."
>
> Over the past week, hospitals have increasingly declared "black alerts," an admission that they are unable to cope with demand, the health service confirmed, without releasing numbers. Most hospitals have been unable to meet emergency-ward targets of seeing patients within four hours because of a shortage of beds and staff.

Britain spends billions and billions of pounds on health care every year, but it's never enough. And British citizens already pay far more in taxes than Americans, who get much better care.

Sometimes, statistics are not as good as a good horror story… On this blog, I've written about dozens of NHS horror stories. But Paul Krugman says they are all lies, including this one from the same New York Times article:

> "There's no real system or order; it's a jungle in here," said Nancy Harper, who had accompanied her 87-year-old grandmother, who was lying down and complaining of excruciating pain in her lower back.
>
> "It's been more than five hours," Ms. Harper said. "We get to the front of the queue and then someone more ill comes in and we get pushed back. It's outrageous."

The UK Telegraph had some more information about the NHS health care system:

> Every hospital in the country has been ordered to cancel all non-urgent surgery until at least February in an unprecedented step by NHS officials.
>
> The instructions on Tuesday night – which will see result in around 50,000 operations being axed – followed claims by senior doctors that patients were being treated in "third world" conditions, as hospital chief executives warned of the worst winter crisis for three decades.
>
> […]Trusts have also been told they can abandon efforts to house male and

> female patients in separate wards, in an effort to protect basic safety, as services become overwhelmed.

50,000 scheduled surgeries canceled. If this were private sector health care, then the patients would have some recourse. But when the government is running health care, good luck trying to sue them for pain and suffering. They've already got your money from taxes, too – you can't get it out to go somewhere else for surgery.

Although this seems horrifying to Americans, this is pretty standard all year round for Canadians, who have a true single payer health care system. According to the Fraser Institute, the average Canadian family pays about $12,000 in taxes for their free health care. And when they need things like MRIs or knee replacements, they have to wait for months. The average wait time there for "medically necessary treatment" is 21.2 weeks. Medically Necessary Treatment. When I ask for an MRI in America, I get in the same week that I call.

When conservatives like me oppose government-run health care, it's because we have looked carefully at government-run health care as it exists in comparable countries, and we have decided that it does not work. Progressives need to take a look at reality in countries like Britain and Canada. How well does it work? How much does it cost? It's no good making policy decisions with feelings instead of facts.

William Lane Craig debates Daniel Came: Does God exist?

January 9, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

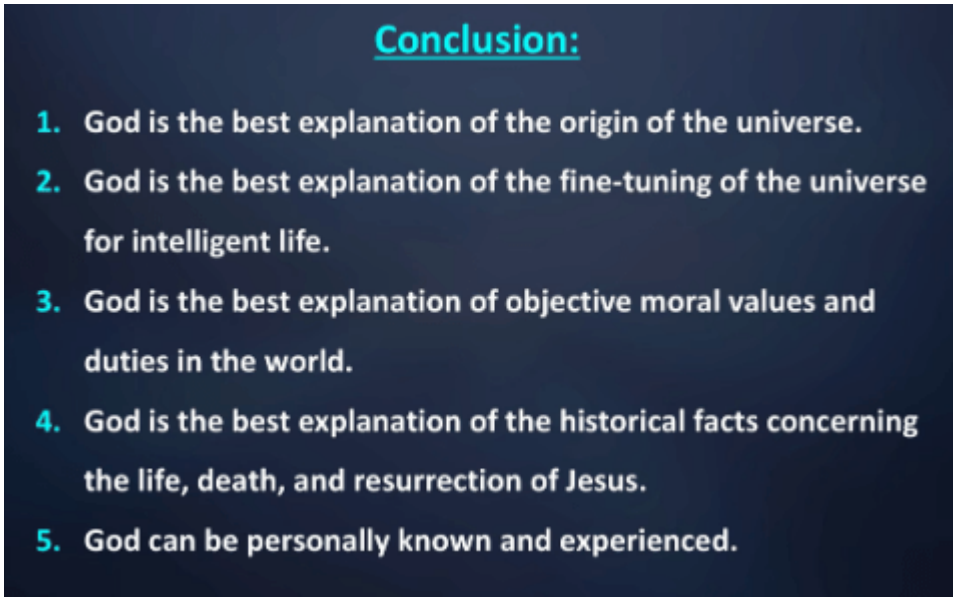

Dr. Craig's opening speech summary slide

The video of the debate was posted by ReasonableFaith.org – Dr. Craig's organization. This debate occurred in March 2017 at the University of Dublin, in Ireland.

The video: (91 minutes)

My non-snarky summary is below.

Dr. Craig's opening speech

Two claims:

1. There are good reasons to think that theism is true.
2. There are not comparably good reasons to think that atheism is true.

Five reasons for God's existence:

1. The beginning of the universe
– actual infinite past is mathematically impossible
– BGV theorem: any universe that is on balance expanding in its history (like ours) cannot be past eternal

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– slight changes to quantities and constants prevent a universe from supporting complex embodied life
– the multiverse response of atheists conflicts with observations, e.g. the Boltzmann Brains problem

3. Objective moral values
– God's existence is required to ground objective moral values and duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus

– there are good reasons to accept the most widely accepted facts about the historical Jesus (empty tomb, appearances, early widespread belief in the resurrection)
– the best explanation of these minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

5. Experience God directly
– in the absence of any defeaters to belief in God, a person can experience God directly

Dr. Daniel Came's opening speech

1. The hiddenness of God
– if God wants a personal relationship with us, and a relationship with God would be the greatest good for us
– God ought to reveal himself to us, but he does not reveal himself to many people, the "non-resistant non-believers"

2. The inductive problem of evil
– many evil events occur that are pointless – there is no morally sufficient reason why God would allow them to occur
– examples: animal suffering, children born with disease, tsunamis
– the theistic response to this is that humans are not in a position to know whether there are morally sufficient reasons, due to our limitations of knowing the consequences
– but this ripple effect defense has 4 possible outcomes, 3 of which don't do the job of justifying

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

1. The hiddenness of God
– God's goal is not to make his existence known, but to draw them into a love relationship
– it's speculative that overt displays of God's existence would draw people to him in a love relationship, they might resent his bullying
– atheist would have to prove that God could draw more people into a love relationship with him by revealing himself more overtly

2. The inductive problem of evil
– as humans, we are not in a position to know for certain that any apparently pointless evil really is pointless
– William Alston article: 6 limitations of human knowing make it impossible to judge that an evil is actually "pointless"
– Dr. Came says that there are 4 possibilities for the ripple effects, and since 3 are bad, it's likely that there are not morally sufficient reasons for a apparently pointless evil
– it is logically fallacious to assert probability conclusions without knowing the probabilities of those 4 options
– there is actually an argument from evil: since the problem of evil requires an objective standard of good and evil by which to measure, and God is the only possible ground of objective morality, then pressing the problem of evil actually requires the atheist to assume God, in order to ground this objective moral standard

Dr. Came's first rebuttal

3. Objective moral values

– there are naturalistic theories of moral realism where objective moral duties and objective moral values exist in a naturalistic universe
– I'm not saying that any of them are correct, but there are many theories about object morality in a naturalistic universe

There are naturalistic theories for all of the 5 arguments that Dr. Craig presented. It is Dr. Craig's responsibility to present those naturalistic theories and prove that they are not as good as his explanations. I'm not going to defend (or even name!) a single naturalistic theory for any of these 5 arguments by Dr. Craig.

Dr. Craig's explanations for the 5 evidences he gave can't be admitted, because we have to know how God did something *in naturalistic terms* before we can know that God did it supernaturally. Explanations are only valid if they are naturalistic.

1. The beginning of the universe
– naturalism explains how the universe expands after it came into being, so that explains how it came into being
– the God explanation, that God created the universe out of nothing, is not admissible, because it is not naturalistic
– how does God, as an unembodied mind interact with the physical world?
– the only agency that we know about is human agents, and we have bodies, so how could God perform actions without having a body?

The theistic hypothesis does not make any predictions, but naturalism makes lots of testable predictions. God could do anything, so he is not constrained and is therefore untestable. We can't infer God as an explanation in principle because we can't predict what is more probable if God exists than if he does not.

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the university was not set up to make embodied intelligence plausible, because the vast majority of the universe is hostile to life
– there are models of the multiverse that escape the Boltzmann Brains problem that Dr. Craig raised

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

Some of Dr. Craig's arguments are deductive (e.g. – the beginning of the universe, objective moral values), so that the conclusion follows from the premises if the premises are true. The resurrection passes the standard tests for historical explanations.

1. The beginning of the universe
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for an ultimate beginning of the universe

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for a design of the universe to support life
– he has to prove that intelligences has to be attached to bodies
– human beings are non-physical minds united to physical bodies
– naturalistic attempts to explain mental operations fail

– the arguments *prove* that unembodied minds exist
– the vast expanse of the universe is required in order to form the galaxies, stars and heavy elements needed for complex life
– why expect that the entire universe should be small, or that life would be everywhere?
– a non-fine-tuned world is more likely in the multiverse, and in a multiverse, we are more likely to have a Boltzmann brain world than a world with complex, embodied life
– Dr. Came has not advanced any naturalistic explanation for the fine-tuning

3. Objective moral values
– non-theistic ethical theories cannot account for the ontological foundations of objective moral values and duties
– atheistic theories of moral realism simply assume objective moral values out of thin air
– it is especially hard to find any basis for objective moral duties in the absence of God

Dr. Came's second rebuttal

5. Religious experience
– Dr. Craig should not bring up religious experience in a debate where arguments and evidence are central
– people who have dreams, hallucinations and psychotic delusions could appeal to religious experience
– religious experience is by no means universal, and it is possible to doubt it

3. Objective moral values
– there are lots of atheists who hold to objective moral values
– Dr. Craig has to explain how God grounds objective moral values and duties
– Dr. Craig has to explain why atheist moral realist theories don't work to ground objective moral values and duties

1. The beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig claims that something can't come from nothing, that's not an argument
– there are numerous models that don't require an absolute beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig cites the BGV theorem, but Guth (one of the authors) says that only the inflation has a beginning, not the whole universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion

1. The beginning of the universe
– on theism, there is an efficient cause, but no material cause, for the origin of the universe
– on atheism, there is neither an efficient cause nor a material cause, for the origin of the universe: that's worse!
– if he thinks that there are models of the universe that don't require a beginning, then let him name a viable eternal model of the universe
– he never refuted the mathematical argues against an infinite past

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– nothing to refute

3. Objective moral values

– God is a better ground for morality than humans, because he is ultimate, and not contingent and arbitrary
– God is a being who is worthy of worship, and therefore command his creatures with moral duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus
– nothing to refute

5. Religious experience
– only justified because there are no defeaters to it

1. The hiddenness of God
– atheist has to show that if God's existence were more obvious, that it would result in more people being drawn to him

2. The inductive problem of evil
– Dr. Came's argument was logically fallacious, and makes errors in probability theory

Dr. Came's conclusion

Sometimes, people can't prove something, but lack of evidence is a justification for doubting it, e.g. – werewolves.

If none of Craig's arguments work, then it follows that it is not rational to believe that God exists, and it is rational to believe that God does not exist.

Atheists shouldn't have a burden of proof for what they know, only theists have a burden of proof for what they know.

My thoughts

One quick point. If life were common everywhere then atheists would infer that God wasn't involved in it. Period. "Life is everywhere, so it's common, why do we need a designer?" they'd say. I agree with Dr. Came about denouncing religious experience in a formal debate. I don't like when Dr. Craig brings this up, but I see why he does it – he's an evangelist, and that's a good thing, too. I just worry about how it looks to atheists, although it's good for sincere seekers. I'm not the one on the stage, though, Dr. Craig is.

I think the point about more overt revealing by God would annoy people and make them turn away. Think of how gay people respond to the suggestion that there is anything wrong with them, with rage, vandalism, threats, coercion, attempts to get you to lose your job and business, and using government as a weapon to fine and imprison you. It's really obvious to me that more God does not mean more *love* of God. For those who don't want God, the hiddenness is respect for their choice to put pleasure above the search for truth. (I mean the gay activists – I have great sympathy for people who struggle with same-sex unwanted attractions because they were impacted by a failed bond with their parent of the same sex as they are).

Whenever I meet people like Dr. Came, I always urge them to keep investigating and pursuing truth, because they will find it if they are sincerely seeking after God. Some atheists do sincerely seek God, but I don't know any who haven't found him. I'm not sure if that's because those atheists who claim to be non-resistant and rational are in fact

resistant and non-rational, or what the real reason is. If you believe the Bible, *all* unbelief is non-rational and resistant (see Romans 1). Regarding the werewolves, we don't have any good arguments for werewolves, we do have good arguments for God. Dr. Came didn't refute the arguments that Craig raised, nor did his own arguments for atheism work. And there are many, many more arguments (origin of life, Cambrian explosion, habitability-discoverability, molecular machines) that Craig did not raise, too.

New study: children of divorced parents are less likely to be religious

January 10, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

This is from the leftist Washington Post, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Two widely recognized trends in American society might have something to do with each other.
>
> Divorce rates climbed to the highest levels ever in the 1980s, when about half of all marriages ended in divorce.
>
> And in the present day, Americans are rapidly becoming less religious. Since 1972, the share of Americans who say they do not adhere to any particular religion has increased from 5 percent of the population to 25 percent.
>
> Could those two trends be related? A new study from the Public Religion Research Institute says yes. The children of divorced parents have grown up to be adults of no religion.
>
> **People whose parents divorced when they were children are significantly more likely to grow up not to be religious as adults, the study found. Thirty-five percent of the children of divorced parents told pollsters they are now nonreligious, compared with 23 percent of people whose parents were married when they were children.**
>
> **[…]Cox said his team found that even children of divorced parents who are religious are less religious than their peers. Thirty-one percent of them go to services every week, compared with 43 percent of religious people whose parents were married when they were growing up.**

This part about Protestant pastors wimping out of thorny issues is very interesting:

> Andrew Root, a professor at Luther Seminary who has written a book about the spiritual consequences of divorce for children, was not surprised to hear about the study's findings.
>
> "Everything in a divorce gets divided. Literally everything. Parents' friends get divided. Relatives get divided. Everyone takes sides," Root said. "Even religion takes sides. The church gets divided. Dad leaves Mom's faith, or vice versa. Negotiating those worlds becomes difficult."
>
> **Root said churches are not doing enough to speak directly to the concerns of children in those situations, so the kids lose faith in the ability of the church to help them. He said that when the divorce rate climbed in the 1980s, many members of the clergy, especially mainline Protestant pastors, stopped speaking out against divorce so as not to alienate struggling congregants. But by going silent on the subject, they didn't offer any comfort to the kids.**
>
> As adults, Root said, those same people do not believe the church will respond to their adult problems. "They're now thinking, 'I'm dealing with depression.' Or, 'I'm dealing with my own marital troubles.' The church must not have anything to say to me, because when I was 8 and dealing with divorce, my Sunday-school teacher didn't even say, 'Man, Amanda, that must be really complicated for you'," Root said.

I get e-mails all the time from people who are suffering from the effects of the Sexual Revolution, which was put in place by selfish adults so they could do whatever they wanted. Children suffered a lot from this. Obviously, the painful of experience of their parents divorcing hurt their view of God. But divorce also hurts a child's ability to know what a man loving a woman in a stable commitment looks like, and what a woman loving a man in a stable commitment looks like. I mean – what does love between sexes look like when the "in love" feeling has worn off, and all that remains is the commitment to build something together? I think that a lot is riding on the stability of the relationship between the child's mother and father.

New study: unborn child's heartbeat is detectable at 16 days

January 11, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this study

A new study conducted by University of Oxford was published in the journal eLife. (H/T Dad)

Here is the report from the Oxford University website:

> When does our heart first start to beat? Until now, researchers thought that the first time our heart muscle contracted to beat was at eight days after conception in mice, which equates to around day 21 of a human pregnancy.

> Now, a team funded by the British Heart Foundation (BHF) at the University of Oxford has demonstrated earlier beating of the heart in mouse embryos which, if extrapolated to the human heart, suggests beating as early as 16 days after conception.
>
> In the study, published in the journal *eLife*, researchers looked at the developing mouse heart and found that the muscle started to contract as soon as it formed the cardiac crescent – an early stage in heart development. In mice, this crescent forms 7.5 days after conception, which is equivalent to day 16 in the human embryo. Previously, it was thought that the heart started to contract a stage later, when the heart appears as a linear tube.

Here's how they did it:

> By adding fluorescent markers to calcium molecules within the mouse embryo, the team was able to see at exactly which point in time the calcium tells our heart muscle cells to contract and then become coordinated enough to produce a heartbeat.
>
> The team also found that this initiation of beating was essential for the heart to develop properly at an early stage and that a protein called NCX1 plays a key role in the generation of the calcium signals needed to produce the beating action of the heart.
>
> The heart is the first organ to form during pregnancy and is critical in providing oxygen and nutrients to the developing embryo. The process of heart development is highly conserved between mammalian species, meaning that these findings may add considerably to our understanding of how the human heart develops.

Abortion is another one of those issues where conservatives are determined to abide by what the progress of science reveals, while liberals are determined to block out what science reveals.

Here is a nice video that shows how unborn children develop in the womb:

From the moment of conception, a new set of human DNA is formed, different from the mother, different from the father. And already the little unborn child is in relationship with his or her mother. He or she is depending on her to honor her obligation to him or her, because it was she who chose to have sex, and who chose the man to have sex with, and who chose when in the relationship to have sex with him.

Those of us who are Christians have always believed that abortion was morally wrong, going write back to the beginning of the Christian faith.

This is from Birds of the Air.

Summary:

> Recently I came across a reading of the Didache. "The *what*?" you may ask. The Didache is a book written somewhere in the first or second century. For a long time it was up for consideration as Scripture. It was believed to be the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Eventually it was agreed that the book was an excellent book, but not inspired Scripture. So I was pleased to be able to download this admirable book containing good teachings from the early Church fathers.
>
> The book seemed to be largely a lot of quotes from Scripture. You'll learn the basic rules of Christianity — "First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself." You'll learn that "grave sins" are forbidden, like adultery, murder, fornication, and so on. (They specifically include pederasty in the list.) There are instructions regarding teachers, prophets, Christian assembly, and so on. Lots of the normal, good stuff. But, since this was written sometime

> prior to 200 AD, I was somewhat surprised at this instruction: “You shall not murder a child by abortion” (Didache, Ch 2).

Christians really would benefit from looking at the moral values of the early church. These days, we tend to decide what is right and wrong based on our feelings, including the feelings we have when other people like us or don’t like us. But deciding things based on your feelings was not real popular with the earliest Christians. They decided what to do based on what was morally right, and they always protected the weak rather than favoring the selfishness and hedonism of the strong.

Study: non-STEM college programs make students less religious

January 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Why do students turn away from Christianity in college? It might have something to do with what they choose to study.

Rice University reports on a new study conducted by sociologist Elaine Howard Ecklund.

Excerpt:

> The public's view that science and religion can't work in collaboration is a misconception that stunts progress, according to a new survey of more than 10,000 Americans, scientists and evangelical Protestants. The study by Rice University also found that scientists and the general public are surprisingly similar in their religious practices.
>
> The study, "Religious Understandings of Science (RUS)," was conducted by sociologist Elaine Howard Ecklund and presented today in Chicago during the annual American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) conference. Ecklund is the Autrey Professor of Sociology and director of Rice's Religion and Public Life Program.
>
> "We found that nearly 50 percent of evangelicals believe that science and religion can work together and support one another," Ecklund said. "That's in contrast to the fact that only 38 percent of Americans feel that science and religion can work in collaboration."
>
> The study also found that 18 percent of scientists attended weekly religious services, compared with 20 percent of the general U.S. population; 15 percent

> consider themselves very religious (versus 19 percent of the general U.S. population); 13.5 percent read religious texts weekly (compared with 17 percent of the U.S. population); and 19 percent pray several times a day (versus 26 percent of the U.S. population).
>
> […]RUS is the largest study of American views on religion and science.

Meanwhile, Reasonable Faith has a podcast about the study, and what they discuss is how students who go into *non-STEM* university programs lose their interest in religion at a much higher rate than people who study STEM.

Here is the MP3 file.

And the relevant portion of the transcript:

> DR. CRAIG: Right. **If you look at their chart they give, where it shows the changes in religiosity by college major, it shows that in biology, engineering, and physical science and math they were mixed. The overall effect was neither negative nor positive. For some it was positive, some negative. But those majors did not seem to have a very significant effect upon the person's religious behavior. The majors that had a very positive impact on religiosity were education, vocational or clerical education, business, and what is classified as "other." All of those majors – whatever those are – have an overall positive impact upon students' religiosity.**
>
> KEVIN HARRIS: And attendance as well – attendance to church services.
>
> DR. CRAIG: Yes.
>
> KEVIN HARRIS: **The big fly in the ointment here is that "both the Humanities and the Social Sciences see dramatic declines in attendance and even more in religious beliefs." It lowers church attendance, synagogue attendance, and even more in religious beliefs.** What do we mean by the humanities and the social sciences?
>
> DR. CRAIG: Humanities would include your non-scientific areas; for example, literature (hence the title of the article), politics.[3] I don't know if they would include economics in this or not. Religious studies. In the social sciences are things like anthropology and sociology would be included there.
>
> KEVIN HARRIS: The study of art?
>
> DR. CRAIG: Yes, I suppose the arts would be in the humanities – that would be music and graphic arts. It is a big, big catch-all category.

And why does Dr. Craig think this is happening?

> DR. CRAIG: […]It could well be that it is because it is in the humanities that the radicals of the 1960s were able to find a place in the university and become ensconced as professors with the relativism that they were championing. In areas like anthropology and sociology you find tremendous relativism where you simply

> study these cultures and societies without making any sort of judgment as to truth with regard to what they believe. This leads to the belief that it is all relative; there isn't anything that is objectively true. John Searle is a very prominent philosopher at the University of California, Berkeley. Searle says that he believes that because of the commitment to the objectivity of truth and logic and the scientific method the hard sciences were barred to these radicals of the 1960s – getting into them and influencing them. But where they found an opening was in things like the Women's Studies Department, Religious Studies, Anthropology, Sociology. These soft sciences. He says the professors in these disciplines are the children of the 1960s that have carried into it their relativistic views of truth. I noticed here the conclusion by the researchers of the University of Michigan (apparently who did this study), "Our results suggest that it is Postmodernism, not Science, that is the bête noir [the black beast or the hated thing] of religiosity." The enemy of religiosity is postmodernism, not science.
>
> KEVIN HARRIS: Postmodernism, as you've pointed out, was mainly a thing confined to literature and the soft sciences.
>
> DR. CRAIG: Right. Women's Studies, Religious Studies is rampant with Postmodernist perspectives. That has a real ring of truth to it, and could be the reason behind these statistics.

And this is why I recommend that people not drop math in high school, and pick a STEM field to study in college (or a trade in trade school). You are wasting your money when you let people in non-STEM areas indoctrinate you in fact-free irrationality. By the way, I love business administration as a major, for those who do not want to do the lab work. It attracts a lot of conservatives and entrepreneurs.

If you're not worried about your faith, then you should at least be worried about your wallet:

Rank	Major	Early Career Salary	Mid-Career Salary
1	Petroleum Engineering	$102,200	$175,300
2	Actuarial Mathematics	$60,800	$119,600
3	Nuclear Engineering	$57,000	$118,900
4	Chemical Engineering	$69,600	$116,700
5	Electronics & Communications Engineering	$64,100	$113,200
6	Electrical & Computer Engineering (ECE)	$66,500	$113,000
7	Computer Science (CS) & Engineering	$66,700	$112,600
8	Computer Engineering (CE)	$67,200	$108,600
9	Aerospace Engineering	$64,700	$107,900
9	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$66,500	$107,900
11	Materials Science & Engineering	$64,000	$105,100
11	Physics	$57,200	$105,100
13	Computer Science (CS)	$61,600	$103,600
14	Statistics	$54,900	$103,100
15	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$62,800	$101,600
16	Computer Science (CS) & Mathematics	$63,200	$101,400
17	Software Engineering	$61,700	$99,800

STEM degrees are good for your finances as well

It’s much easier to have an influence as a Christian if you get your financial house in order. Having a degree that leads to a good paying job is certainly a good way to fund your life plan. Money also helps you to not worry too much about what the secular left can do to you. It’s good for offense and defense, in short.

Canada’s prime minister explains why pro-life groups are not eligible for job grants

January 13, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kathleen Wynne and Justin Trudeau

First, the news story, and after we’ll see the prime minister explain his reasons for this policy in his own words. As you are reading, keep in mind that the federal government sells no products or services of value in a free market. They earn no money. All the money they have was confiscated from people working in the free (private sector) market.

The Calgary Herald reports: (H/T McKenzie)

> In the name of “inclusion” and “tolerance,” Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Liberal government are excluding and being intolerant to faith-based social agencies and churches from even applying for the Canada Summer Jobs program that provides subsidies to hire summer students.
>
> In so doing, Trudeau will hypocritically be harming the very people he claims to care for the most — youth seeking work experience and the poorest of the poor in Canada.
>
> The new application for the Canada Jobs Grant requires that the organization’s core mandate respects “reproductive rights” along with other human rights, and unless that “attestation” is checked, the online application cannot be submitted. That means fewer students will be hired to help the most vulnerable in society.

Now why do you think that Trudeau, a secular left fascist, would do this? Could it be that he wants people to see the secular state as the sole provider of assistance to people in need, by attacking private Christian charities?

> In the name of tolerance, the Trudeau government is being intolerant to a huge swath of society that does most of the heavy lifting when it comes to caring for the poor and vulnerable in Canada.
>
> According to the report Religion, Participation, and Charitable Giving — written at the behest of Canadian Heritage, Statistics Canada, Health Canada and other organizations — author Kurt Bowen found that actively religious people are far more likely to give of their time and money to charitable causes — including secular charitable causes.
>
> According to the 1999 report, "the religiously active are 32 per cent of all Canadians, but they are responsible for 65 per cent of all direct, charitable donations. Conversely, the 42 per cent of Canadians who are religiously inactive generate only 20 per cent of all charitable givings."

Famous economist Thomas Sowell discussed a study by Arthur Brooks on who gives to charity in National Review. The study found that religious people give far more of their time and money to helping others than secular people. So, by attacking the part of the population that actually cares about morality, Trudeau is basically trying to cut off the poor from private-sector charity, so that they have nowhere else to turn for help except the secular government.

Now let's hear Trudeau – a former substitute drama teacher, who was elected because of his looks and famous name – explain why taxing pro-lifers and then discriminating against them is a good idea.

Townhall reports: (H/T Sean McDowell)

> Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau spoke Wednesday about a new requirement in the Canadian summer jobs grant application that groups must indicate support for "the right to access safe and legal abortions" to be included in the program. Trudeau defended the requirement and called groups opposed to abortion "not in line with where we are as a government, and quite frankly where we are as a society."
>
> "If you're pro-life then you are ridiculed and insulted, but if you're pro-choice then you are praised," a student told Trudeau at a town hall at McMaster University and was greeted with applause.
>
> Trudeau replied that defending rights and freedoms "is at the core of who I am and, quite frankly, is at the core of who Canada is. … At the same time, we need to know that there is a difference between freedom of expression and acting on those expressions and beliefs."
>
> He went on to explain his issue with pro-life groups receiving the grant.

> “An organization that has the explicit purpose of restricting women’s rights by removing rights to abortion and the right for women to control their own bodies is not in line with where we are as a government, and quite frankly where we are as a society,” he said.
>
> He also clarified that while people can believe what they want, acting on those beliefs was problematic, in his view.
>
> “Of course, you’re more than allowed to have whatever beliefs you like,” he continued. “But when those beliefs lead to actions determined to restrict a woman’s right to control her own body, that’s where I, and I think we, draw the line as a country. And that’s where we stand on that.”

You can have whatever beliefs you like, as you’re working hard to earn the money that will be spent by your secular leftist fascist overlords. You’re certainly good enough to work for money, you’re just not good enough to get anything from the government for it.

And this is why we need pro-lifers to realize that the government is not their friend when it comes to spending money. We should not be giving them any more money than they need to do their *Constitutionally-determined responsibilities*. When you grow the government to meet every need, e.g. – health care, then you find out that their idea of health care isn’t what you expected. In Canada, abortion is health care. Pro-lifers pay taxes to the government, and the government takes those taxes and performs abortions with them. If you don’t like it, then don’t vote for the government to take over health care. We need people who are moral to understand what it means to trust a secular government to do the things that should be done by individuals, families, churches, and community organizations. And when those entities keep their own money, they can do more than the government can anyway.

Bible study: why would a loving God make a terrible place like Hell?

January 14, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

It's time for us to take a look in the Bible and make some sense of it, again. Today's question is really "what does God expect us to be doing with our lives?" but I wanted the title of this post to be more eye-catching for non-Christians.

Why do people go to Hell?

Let's start with finding out what we are supposed to be doing, and then we'll know why there is a place like Hell for people who don't do that to be separated from God.

Everyone has a moral obligation to choose how to use their time wisely during their life time. People everywhere, in all times and places, have had the choice of whether to spend more time thinking about the "big questions" or more time having fun and being selfish. Thinking about the big questions logically leads a person to making discoveries about God's existence and character. Once the people who think about the "big questions" discover the answers to those big questions, they are morally obligated to use their free will to love God using all their capabilities.

Bible verse break:

Deuteronomy 4:27-30:

> 27 The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the Lord will drive you.
>
> 28 There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell.

> 29 But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul.
>
> 30 When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the Lord your God and obey him.

At a bare minimum, loving God also means obeying the moral law. But I think there is a lot more to loving God than just obeying rules. Each person is also obligated to engage in and support enterprises that help others to know God as he really is. If a person fails to use their free will to love God, then that person is *sinning*. Notice that on my view, being nice to your neighbor is relatively unimportant compared to being nice to God. Jesus' first commandment is to love God, and that vertical dimension is much more important than horizontal dimension of loving your neighbor.

Bible verse break, again – this time Paul is explaining what he does to love God:

Philippians 1:3-19:

> 3 I thank my God every time I remember you.
>
> 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy
>
> 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,
>
> 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> 7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.
>
> 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> 9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,
>
> 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,
>
> 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.
>
> 12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.
>
> 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.
>
> 14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.
>
> 15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill.
>
> 16 The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.

> 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition,not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains.
>
> 18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.
>
> Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,
>
> 19 for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

So we are supposed to be telling people the gospel, which is the good news about who God is, and what he has done for us to bring us into a right relationship with him, despite our lack of curiosity about him, and our focus on ourselves instead of him. The pre-condition to loving God and sharing the gospel is knowing what his character is really like. Most people are born into a certain religion or learn it from their parents or their culture and they either adopt it without thinking or they reject it without thinking. They are not interested in investigating who God is using reason and evidence, including scientific and historical evidence.

On the Christian view, the best thing you can possibly do with your time is to investigate whether God is real, and what he is like. It's wrong to say that investigating doesn't matter or that all religions are the same. In fact, when you actually look into these things like you do any other area of knowledge, with logic and evidence, you do arrive at knowledge of who God is. And that's because God has left clues of who he is in the natural world and in history – he expects us to be looking for him. He is as real as any other person you know, and his character is as defined as any other person you know.

Bible verse break:

Acts 17:26-27:

> 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.
>
> 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

I think that the result of any honest investigation is going to be that the Christian religion is going to be found to be more true in its major claims than any other religion. I.e. – people who conduct an honest investigation are going to find that the Christian claims about the universe coming into being out of nothing, and of Jesus rising from the dead, etc. will be validated by the progress of science and historical inquiry.

But since people have a natural tendency to focus on making themselves happy, not many investigations occur. They know that if Christianity is true, they would have to engage in radical self-denial and self-sacrificial love. They know they would have to sober, be chaste, be different, and not be liked because of their exclusive view. And people don't want to do that, so an honest investigation *never even gets started.*

Instead, what you find non-Christians doing is hoping in speculations to justify their flight from the demands of the God who is there. We want to be free to make ourselves happy, and that means that we have to keep the real God who is there and who is not silent at arms length. That's what non-Christians do – they use their time on Earth to push God away so they can focus on themselves and their own happiness. In fact, even Christians do it, which is why we rely on Jesus as a sacrifice for our sin. We could come near to God and work on the things that he would like us to work on without some way to get past our own rebellion. For those who grasp the sacrifice of Jesus as an atonement for our rebellion, cooperation with God becomes possible.

One of the problems that Christians have today is that we do not really understand what sin is. We think that sin is about hurting other people or making other people feel bad. But actually, the sinfulness of a person has little to do with that, and much more to do with how we respond to God. We have a moral obligation to know God and to include God in all of our decision making. Hell is the place that God has made for people who turn away from him. A person chooses Hell when she refuses to investigate whether God is there and who God is, so that she does not have to adjust her choices to respect God.

Google now censoring conservative news, while giving leftist propaganda a free pass

January 15, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Google's new motto: be evil

Google is a radically leftist company that fires employees (e.g. – James Damore) who step outside of progressive dogma. And now they're promoting leftist causes in their search engine – by censoring conservative news sources.

The Daily Caller explains:

> Google, the most powerful search engine in the world, is now displaying fact checks for conservative publications in its results.
> No prominent liberal site receives the same treatment.
>
> And not only is Google's fact-checking highly partisan —
> perhaps reflecting the sentiments of its leaders — it is also blatantly wrong, asserting sites made "claims" they demonstrably never made.

Here's an example of the fact-checking that Google does:

> The Robert Mueller fact check (pictured above) is a case in point for Google's new feature.
>
> Ostensibly trying to sum up the crux of the post, the third-party "fact-checking" organization says the "claim" in a DC article that special Counsel Robert Mueller is hiring people that "are all Hillary Clinton supporters" is misleading, if not false.
>
> The problem is that TheDC's article makes no such claim. Their cited language doesn't even appear in the article. Worse yet, there was no language trying to make it seem that the investigation into the Trump administration and Russia is entirely comprised of Clinton donors. The story simply contained the news: Mueller hired a Hillary Clinton donor to aid the investigation into President Donald Trump.

The Daily Wire, another "fact-checked" site, has an example of how Google fact checked

them:

> For example, Google shows a result from Snopes.com with regard to a Daily Wire story about Barack Obama praising Jay-Z while remaining publicly silent on the Congressional baseball shooting. Snopes.com suggests that the story was false, because Obama privately called Sen. Jeff Flake (R-AZ) — an exchange reported only by Flake, not Obama. But the entire premise of the story was that Obama had remained publicly quiet on the shooting.
>
> Or, for example, Daily Wire's story on race-based shootings in the United States. We reported — correctly — that police kill more white people than black people. Snopes.com ranked that claim "mixed."

The Federalist is also being "fact-checked". How good is Google's "fact-checking" of The Federalist?

> Consider the case of a woman named Eileen Wellstone. Out of many thousands of pieces published by The Federalist over the past four years, a single one mentions the name Eileen Wellstone. That article, detailing the sordid history of Bill Clinton, mentions her name exactly once: "Another woman, Eileen Wellstone, claimed Clinton raped her while he was at Oxford University in the late 1960s."
>
> For some reason, in this "reviewed claim" against The Federalist, Google sends the reader to a Snopes fact-check that argues that Clinton wasn't expelled from Oxford over this alleged rape — a point I concede sounds completely accurate and is also an assertion that no one has ever made in this publication.

What should we think of this censorship ? Are people who work for Google stupid people? When you have no one to tell you when you're wrong, you make mistakes. Confirmation bias causes even "smart" people to make mistakes.

Google is so intolerant of intellectual diversity that they're now being sued by former employees who refused to goose-step along with their progressive dogma.

The far-left Washington Post reported on that:

> James Damore, the former Google engineer who was fired after distributing a memo questioning the company's diversity policies, filed a class-action lawsuit Monday claiming that the technology giant discriminates against white men and conservatives.
>
> […]The suit by Damore, filed in Santa Clara, Calif., alleges discrimination by Google against men, people of the "Caucasian race," and people with perceived conservative political views. The suit says that Google employees who expressed views deviating from the majority at Google on politics or on employment practices, including "diversity hiring policies, bias sensitivity, and social justice," were "singled out, mistreated, and systematically punished and terminated from Google," in violation of their legal rights.
>
> Damore's fellow plaintiff in the class action is another Google employee, a former

> software engineer named David Gudeman.
>
> […]Damore’s legal complaint filled over 200 pages and included screenshots of emails and other correspondence between Damore and Google employees, and anonymous complaints from current Google employees who hold conservative viewpoints. One screenshot showed an email from a Google engineer who wrote Damore, “You’re a misogynist and a terrible human. I will keep hounding you until one of us is fired.”
>
> Another screenshot shows how a Google employee received a so-called peer bonus — in which a colleague can recommend another colleague for a bonus — for speaking out against the values in Damore’s memo.
>
> The complaint described another Google event, the company’s weekly “all-hands,” in which Google executives “shamed” teams that did not have 50 percent women on staff.
>
> “There’s a Lord of the Flies mentality there,” said Dhillon. “Where a person can be singled out, shamed, and fired.”

Maybe it’s time for the government to step in and break Google up into smaller companies so that they don’t have a monopoly in the search engine space? If they can’t respect people’s freedoms because they are so committed to being evil, maybe government needs to step in and make sure that we have more competition?

Clay Jones: why does God allow suffering?

January 16, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Last week a friend of mine who sent me lots of stories for my blog decided to commit suicide.

I had not been close to him for the past couple of years, because he wasn't responding to e-mails and we lived in different cities. I only met him in person one time. I know that he was deeply hurt by his father's decision to divorce his mother when he was only 9 years old. And his mother later died of cancer when he was 16. Although he had been a pretty serious Catholic early on, these two blows pushed him into a sort deistic agnosticism. During the time I knew him, he told me that he accepted all the scientific arguments for God's existence, but he did not think that there was enough evidence for Christianity in particular. He didn't believe in a God who cared about people, and answered prayers. Given the terrible things that had happened to him, I can understand why he felt that way.

Whenever I talked to him about my life and my childhood, he liked that I had also grown up with bad parents and had suffered some painful experiences. My experiences allowed me to be sensitive about the things that happened to him. He would talk about how his father never admitted any guilt for the divorce, even though divorces cause enormous problems for children – especially for their relationship with God.

I sometimes wonder why we both went down different paths when we were hit with suffering. I don't really know the answer. But I thought of this post from Clay Jones, who writes about the problems of evil and suffering.

Excerpt:

> Since I teach on why God allows evil, I often talk about Job. I have learned that many Christians have missed a major lesson of that book, if not *the* major lesson.

Although many rightly conclude from Job that we should be humble when it comes to why God allows this or that suffering, there is something else amazing found in the book's beginning.

In the first chapter we learn that Job is the wealthiest man in the world, renowned, and that he worships God.

But then we are told of a great contest in Heaven.

One day the angels presented themselves before the Lord and Satan came along with them and the Lord asked Satan:

"Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." (Job 1:8-11)

Here Satan contends that Job only serves God because God has given Job everything Job wants and that If God didn't give Job what he wanted then Job would rebel.

Well, the Lord tells Satan that Satan can destroy all the things Job enjoys. Soon disaster kills his family, marauders steal his possessions, Satan afflicts him with boils, and Job's wife tells him to "curse God and die."

And here's the question I ask my students: "what was the only thing that Job had to do to humiliate Satan in front of God and all God's servants?"

The answer is simple: the only thing Job had to do to humiliate Satan in front of God and all the beings of the heavenly realm was to continue to honor God. As long as Job honored God, he humiliated Satan.

Satan would be humiliated because it would not only prove him wrong but, even more importantly, it would prove that some beings will serve God even if their lives are miserable.

And this would justify God's final judgment of Satan! After all, why did Satan rebel? Isn't it because Satan thought he deserved more? The implication is, "If you gave me everything I had ever wanted, then I wouldn't have rebelled either." Isn't it Satan's underlying argument that no one will serve God if He deprives them of what they value? Satan certainly believed that was the case with Job.

So, like Job, when our life gets very hard, if we get fired, or our finances tank, or we get cancer, but we still honor God then we too humiliate Satan.

And, of course, all of us, unless we die first, will get life threatening news which can be our finest hour! What I mean is that our finest hour isn't getting a promotion or sitting on the beach in Kauai; our finest hour is when we get life shattering news, and our family and friends and acquaintances and the Heavenly

> host are watching, and we continue to honor God anyway!
>
> When we do this, when we honor God in hardship, then we too humiliate Satan.
>
> Eph. 3:10: “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.”

I think when people see Christians in the world, there is this assumption that God will look out for his own people and protect them and give them nice things. But we forget that God has his own reasons for creating us. He is using us to make his existence and character known to others. It tells other people something when they can see that your needs are not met, but you still remain faithful. People sometimes think that I keep my faith because I just haven’t been hit hard enough by suffering. But the truth is that I have suffered, and even now there are things I wanted, like a wife and family, that I never got. It’s important for people looking on to understand that I am not a Christian because it works for me, but because Christianity is a true worldview. I’m not guaranteed happiness in this life. Endurance is a Christian virtue.

What is the fine-tuning argument for God's existence, and does the multiverse counter it?

January 17, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

One of the best arguments for the existence of a Creator and Designer of the universe is the cosmic fine-tuning argument. The argument argues that individual constants and quantities in nature cannot be much smaller or larger than they are, because it would remove the ability of the universe to support life of any kind. Dr. Michael Strauss, an experimental physicist, explains some examples of the fine-tuning in a recent post on his blog.

He writes:

> I liken the finely-tuned universe to a panel that controls the parameters of the universe with about 100 knobs that can be set to certain values. If you turn any knob just a little to the right or to the left the result is either a universe that is inhospitable to life or no universe at all.
>
> Consider the knob that controls the strength of the strong nuclear force that holds quarks inside the neutrons and protons and binds the nucleus of the atom together. If the strength were increased by 2%, the element hydrogen would be either non-existent or very rare. Without hydrogen there would be no water (H_2O) or stars that burn hydrogen as their nuclear fuel like our sun. Without hydrogen there would be no life. If the strength of the strong nuclear force were decreased by about 5%, then hydrogen would be the only element in the universe. That would simplify the periodic table and make Chemistry class very easy, but it would render life impossible.
>
> All known life in this universe is based on the element carbon, which is formed in

> the final stages of a star's life. The carbon you and I are made of is the result of the nuclear processes that occurred as previous stars ended their lives. One nice recent study showed that if the mass of the quarks that make up neutrons and protons were changed by just a few percent, then the process that makes carbon as stars die would be altered in such a way that there would not be sufficient carbon in the universe for life. The masses of the lightest sub-atomic quarks are the precise value that is required for carbon to form and for life to exist.

Regarding the multiverse, let me just quote from MIT physicist Alan Lightman, writing in Harper's magazine about the multiverse:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.
>
> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

The multiverse is not pure nonsense, it is theoretically possible.But even if there were a multiverse, the generator that makes the universes itself would require fine-tuning, so the multiverse doesn't get rid of the problem. And, as Lightman indicates, we have no independent experimental evidence for the existence of the multiverse in any case. Atheists just have to take it on faith, and hope that their speculations will be proved right. Meanwhile, the fine-tuning is just as easily explained by postulating God, and we have independent evidence for God's existence, like the the origin of biological information, the sudden appearance of animal body plans, the argument from consciousness, and so on. Even if the naturalists could explain the fine-tuning, they would still have a lot of explaining to do. Theism (intelligent causation) is the simplest explanation for all of the things we learn from the progress of science.

It's very important to understand that if these values were any different, then it's not like we would bridges on our foreheads, or have green skin, or have pointy ears, etc. That's what science fiction teaches you. And many atheists form their view of science by watching science fiction entertainment. But the truth is that the consequences of changing these values are much more consequential: no stars, no planets, no hydrogen, no heavy elements, the universe re-collapses into a hot fireball. You're not going to have complex, embodied intelligent agents running around making moral decisions and

relating to God in a world like that.

Questions like the existence of God should be decided by feelings and faith and superstitious nonsense. They ought to be decided by evidence. Specifically, scientific evidence. Everyone has to account for this scientific evidence for fine-tuning within their worldview, and they have to account for it in a way that is responsible and rational. Punting to the multiverse, without any evidence for it, is neither rational nor responsible. Holding out hope that the evidence we have now will all go away is neither rational nor responsible.

Daughter of single mother explains how absent father ruined her life

January 18, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

I found a YouTube video featuring a conversation about the fundamental problem that I see with young, unmarried women: their decision to have recreational premarital sex with hot guys throughout their teens and 20s.

Here is the conversation: (just listen to the first 7 minutes to start)

Note: this conversation contains vulgar language. Listener discretion is advised.

Molyneux gets her talking about the most important question that women who fail with men never want to answer: why did your mother choose this awful, awful man, to be your father out of all the other men in the world? At the end, she really has learned her lesson and gives a good warning to other young women at the crossroads.

Summary of key admissions:

- Caller: I'm a 41-year-old single white female who was a bad girl in my 20s. I was raised fatherless by a loving Christian mom. Question: what caused me to fail at life and be living with my (divorced) mother?
- I was gifted, very intellectual, top of the class
- My mom is a very caring person
- My mom approached my Dad when he was already in another relationship (i.e. – her mom was the woman her father cheated with on another woman, then her mom married this cheating man and he dumped the previous woman)

- My mom was very attractive, and could have chosen different men, but she was really attracted to this terrible man
- My mom had a desire to get away from her strict parents, who she resented
- when I was 15 I chose a man, I had recreational sex with him before marriage, and he stalked me and humiliated me
- I felt like an adult at age 15, and I had sex with this man then so that I could put childhood behind me and become an adult
- My mother counter-acted the absence of my Dad by raising me as a Christian – she was a radical, intense Christian and that hyper-religiosity made me not want to talk about sex with her
- My mom divorced my father because he was a jerk
- My mom did not mind that he had other children from past relationships, was underemployed, and was lazy
- I used to sneak out of my room and sit on the back porch and drink alcohol with the neighbor kids
- My mom was a worrier and a control freak, so I rebelled against her warnings and attempts to set boundaries on my wildness
- I and my 15-year-old recreational sex partner used a condom from my devout Christian mother's drawer
- I had sex with 5 different boyfriends from age 15-18 and caught mono
- My mom had temporary boyfriends after the divorce
- In my 20s, "there wasn't much to do except go out and drink". "two to three times a week, me and my girlfriends would get dressed up, go to the clubs, and try to attract hot guys".
- From 21-30, I stopped looking for relationships, I just hooked up with hot guys for one-night stands and FWBs
- I felt better about myself, more confident and in control when I would drink and have one-night stands with these hot guys
- "I don't know why I was so focused on looks" in these guys
- The hooking up stopped at 30, then dating (with sex) resumed
- I realized that the hot guys I wanted were not going to settle down, especially with new younger women available
- From 15 to now, I've slept with 60 different men, sometimes repeatedly, and on and off
- I never admitted the true number of men I slept with to any of these men
- last relationship was 5 years ago (at age 36)
- I have lost interest in sex, and lost interest in men
- I don't have the mental toughness to be in a relationship
- I have "been broken" by too many failed relationships
- nobody told me that my decisions with men were not going to go well

In the final 8 minutes where Stefan explains the larger consequences of women's choices for civilization is very important, I think. I was surprised that he spoke directly to the

“hot” alpha males that women want and told them that they are breaking women, and share the blame for destroying our civilization. The thing is, I don’t think those hot alpha males care about civilization, or anything except for themselves. So why do young women choose them?

If I had to pick one essential characteristic of young, unmarried women which ruins their lives, it is their inability to choose responsible men who are proven to be good at doing the things that men do as husbands and fathers. Young, unmarried women today are attracted to men who are LOUSY at the things that men do as husbands and fathers. Responsible men with strict morals and settled religion are not attractive to young, unmarried women. These women can’t connect their choices with men to the tasks that men actually perform in a married home. I am talking about non-Christian women AND Christian women. Nothing that women learn in church corrects this flaw. They are taught to believe that God speaks to them through their emotions, that they must follow their emotions, and everything they do that blows up in their faces is the fault of men. It’s never their responsibility.

Men’s rights activists say that this flaw is the root cause of the end of civilization, and I’m inclined to believe them. Saving women from this flaw is the number one task of fathers, and it is the number one thing that women must look for in a man they make babies with: FIND A MAN WHO CAN BREAK YOUR FUTURE DAUGHTER(S) OUT OF THIS DELUSION BEFORE THEY CHOOSE A BAD MAN. Strong men confront women and set boundaries to help women make better choices. Weak men blame the bad men that women freely choose and this does NOT help women make better choices. Women need to understand that men who speak to them directly, and tell them no, and set boundaries and try to push them to be serious about education and career and finances and marriage are NOT anti-woman. We are trying to protect you and strengthen you, by telling you to make good decisions, and be responsible.

Democrats oppose release of #FISAMemo detailing surveillance abuses #ReleaseTheMemo

January 19, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The memo "raises serious questions about… the Obama DOJ and Comey FBI"
OK, I'm not following this story too closely, but I think what I'm hearing is that the Clinton campaign funded a company called Fusion GPS, which produced a Trump-Russia dossier. And this dossier was then used to get surveillance warrants on Trump campaign staff, in order to help Hillary Clinton win the election. And apparently, there's a memo that documents exactly how this was done, and the Republicans are trying to release it to the public, while the Democrats are trying to cover it up.

The Daily Caller talks about what's IN the memo:

> National security journalist and Fox News contributor Sara Carter reportedThursday that the memo shows "extensive Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act abuse."
>
> The memo also contains information about the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as well as the infamous Trump-Russia dossier.
>
> Carter also writes that sources told her "they would not be surprised if it leads to the end of Robert Mueller's Special Counsel investigation into President Trump and his associates."
>
> She also reports that an unnamed congressional member told her "(w)e probably will get this stuff released by the end of the month."

The article has some tweets by Congressmen Louie Gohmert, Ron DeSantis, etc.

And more:

> A number of other Republican lawmakers sounded off about the contents of the classified intelligence memo.
>
> Pennsylvania Rep. Scott Perry told Fox News, "You think about, 'is this happening in America or is this the KGB?' That's how alarming it is."

> Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz said, “I believe the consequence of its release will be major changes in people currently working at the FBI and the Department of Justice.”
>
> Gaetz also issued a statement on his congressional website Thursday calling for the document to be released to the public, writing, “The House must immediately make public the memo prepared by the Intelligence Committee regarding the FBI and the Department of Justice. The facts contained in this memo are jaw-dropping and demand full transparency. There is no higher priority than the release of this information to preserve our democracy.”

How bad are the contents of the memo?

Here’s the latest from Fox News:

> A four-page memo circulating in Congress that reveals alleged United States government surveillance abuses is being described by lawmakers as “shocking,” “troubling” and “alarming,” with one congressman likening the details to KGB activity in Russia.
>
> Speaking with Fox News, the lawmakers said they could not yet discuss the contents of the memo they reviewed on Thursday after it was released to members by the House Intelligence Committee. But they say the memo should be immediately made public.
>
> “It is so alarming the American people have to see this,” Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan said.
>
> “It’s troubling. It is shocking,” North Carolina Rep. Mark Meadows said. “Part of me wishes that I didn’t read it because I don’t want to believe that those kinds of things could be happening in this country that I call home and love so much.”
>
> Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz said he believed people could lose their jobs after the memo is released.
>
> “I believe the consequence of its release will be major changes in people currently working at the FBI and the Department of Justice,” he said, referencing DOJ officials Rod Rosenstein and Bruce Ohr.
>
> “You think about, ‘is this happening in America or is this the KGB?’ That’s how alarming it is,” Pennsylvania Rep. Scott Perry said.
>
> The House Intelligence Committee on Thursday approved a motion by New York Rep. Pete King to release the memo on abuses of FISA, or the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, to all House members.
>
> […]The vote Thursday morning on releasing the memo to lawmakers was along party lines, with Democrats voting against making it available for all members.

I probably should get ahead of myself, but I am really hoping that some of the Democrats in the DOJ and FBI end up in the slammer. We have a problem with corruption in the government. It’s a problem that will get immeasurably better if we put some Democrats

in jail for the crimes they've committed. I'm so anxious to see these secular leftists who thought that they were above the law get justice. Government is not intended to be as a weapon against the advocates of limited government. This is not the Soviet Union.

New study: what lifestyle allows women to be happiest and most fulfilled?

January 20, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

In preparation for this blog post, I read an article from a far-left source about the decline of women's happiness.

Excerpt:

> As women gain political, economic and social freedoms, one would expect that they should feel even more contented relative to men. But this isn't so.
>
> The "paradox of declining female happiness" was pointed out by economists Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, who also happen to share a house and kids. They analyzed the happiness trends of US citizens between 1970 and 2005 and found a surprising result.
>
> Stevenson and Wolfers discovered that American women rated their overall life satisfaction higher than men in the 1970s. Thereafter, women's happiness scores decreased while men's scores stayed roughly stable. By the 1990s, women were less happy than men. This relative unhappiness softened after the turn of the century, but men continue to enjoy a higher sense of subjective wellbeing that is at least as high — if not higher — than women's.
>
> Those 35 years saw advances in American women's rights and financial power.

Let's take a look at a recent study that the Daily Wire reported on, to see what really makes women happy:

> Despite the onslaught of propaganda telling young girls otherwise, a recent research paper distilling data from over 30 European countries concluded that

> mothers find homemaking preferable to working full-time.
>
> Doc. PhDr. Dana Hamplová, Ph.D., a senior scientist at the Institute of Sociology, ASCR, and a current representative of the Czech Republic in the International Social Science Program, authored the paper. Addressing Betty Friedan's narrative in the book The Feminine Mystique, which claims that women are happiest and most fulfilled at work, Hamplová "explores the link between employment and subjective well-being among mothers with children under 3 years of age," reads the paper's abstract.
>
> "Analyzing multiple measures of subjective well-being, the paper shows that homemakers are generally happier than full-time workers," the scientist found.
>
> "Contrary to our expectations, homemaking was positively associated with happiness particularly among mothers who left higher quality employment for childcare. Though some variation across countries exists, it is not linked to the provision of formal childcare, duration of parental leave, or tax system," Hamplová explains.
>
> […]"Thus, similarly to several other studies, the ESS [European Social Survey] data do not corroborate Betty Friedan's idea that domesticity and housekeeping leaves women unhappy and unsatisfied," she writes. "As all 12 measures of happiness/satisfaction point to the same direction, the conclusion that mothers with younger children tend to be better off if they are not engaged in paid employment seems to be robust."

We've had lots of advancements in women's power, often coming at the expense of men (i.e. – husband candidates). For example, anti-male schools staffed by feminist administrators and feminist teachers might be great for women, but they don't produce high-earning men for women to marry. And when women vote to expand government, taxes must increase to pay for all the spending. This reduces even further the pool of men who can take on a wife and family shrinks even more because of the increased tax burden.

This article from the leftist The Atlantic explains:

> In the view that has prevailed in American education over the past decade, boys are resented, both as the unfairly privileged sex and as obstacles on the path to gender justice for girls. This perspective is promoted in schools of education, and many a teacher now feels that girls need and deserve special indemnifying consideration.
>
> […]A review of the facts shows boys, not girls, on the weak side of an education gender gap. The typical boy is a year and a half behind the typical girl in reading and writing; he is less committed to school and less likely to go to college. In 1997 college full-time enrollments were 45 percent male and 55 percent female. The Department of Education predicts that the proportion of boys in college classes will continue to shrink.

> Data from the U.S. Department of Education and from several recent university studies show that far from being shy and demoralized, today's girls outshine boys. They get better grades. They have higher educational aspirations. They follow more-rigorous academic programs and participate in advanced-placement classes at higher rates. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, slightly more girls than boys enroll in high-level math and science courses. Girls, allegedly timorous and lacking in confidence, now outnumber boys in student government, in honor societies, on school newspapers, and in debating clubs. Only in sports are boys ahead, and women's groups are targeting the sports gap with a vengeance. Girls read more books. They outperform boys on tests for artistic and musical ability. More girls than boys study abroad. More join the Peace Corps. At the same time, more boys than girls are suspended from school. More are held back and more drop out. Boys are three times as likely to receive a diagnosis of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. More boys than girls are involved in crime, alcohol, and drugs. Girls attempt suicide more often than boys, but it is boys who more often succeed. In 1997, a typical year, 4,483 young people aged five to twenty-four committed suicide: 701 females and 3,782 males.

It's important to note that women are not victims here, they are actually the ones who created the shortage of men who could earn enough money to support a family, and allow them to stay home with their children. Their "advancements in power" came at a cost: they undermined the system that produced men who were capable of handling the financial demands of a family where the wife can raise her own children.

Look at this study of how women have voted to expand government and therefore raise taxes on working men for social programs that replace husbands:

> This paper examines the growth of government during this century as a result of giving women the right to vote. Using cross-sectional time-series data for 1870–1940, we examine state government expenditures and revenue as well as voting by U.S. House and Senate state delegations and the passage of a wide range of different state laws. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue and more liberal voting patterns for federal representatives, and these effects continued growing over time as more women took advantage of the franchise. Contrary to many recent suggestions, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s, and it helps explain why American government started growing when it did.

Bigger government means higher taxes means men earn less money, after taxes. How are you supposed to keep your wife home to watch over the little ones when taxes are higher? You can't.

How much does the average American corporation make in profit?

January 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

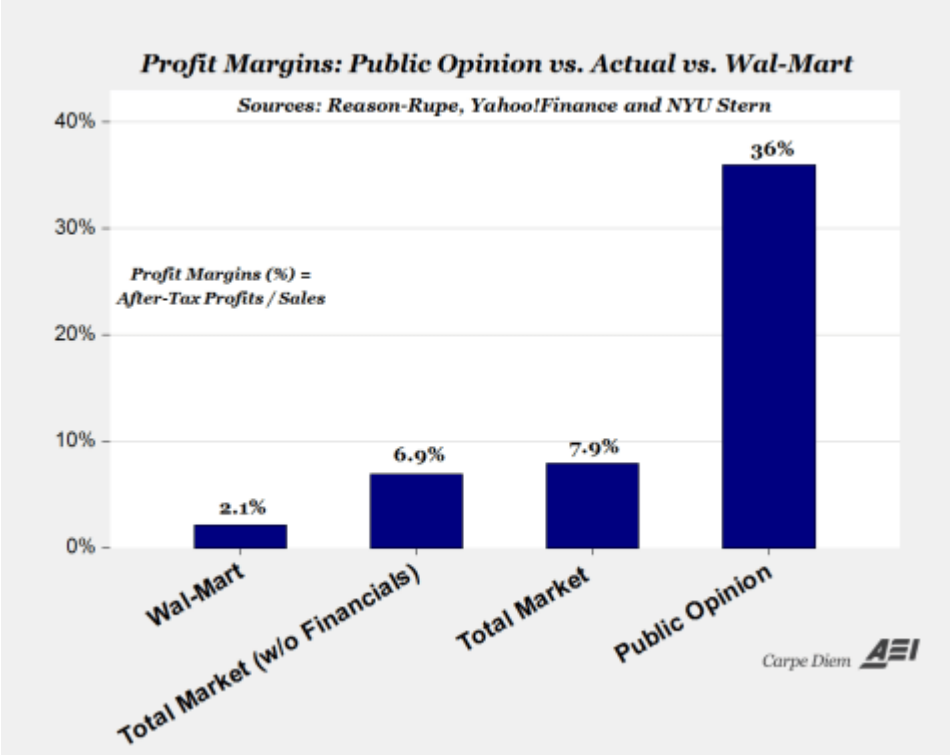

How much profit does the average American corporation make?

A while back, there was a story about how Americans *vastly overestimate* how many people in the USA are homosexual. According to Gallup polls in 2011, Americans estimated that 25% of the people in America were homosexual. In 2015, it was 23%. The actual number is about 3%. So it's very clear that Americans can have wildly inaccurate perceptions about reality. Why are Americans so wrong? I think it's because they see a lot of gay people in high profile areas, particularly in the entertainment industry.

I thought about this failure to perceive reality when I saw a story about how much profit Americans think that corporations make. My guess was that the average corporation makes about 5-10% profit margin. I know this because I used to buy and sell stocks regularly and that's one of the numbers I would look at. Most Americans own stocks, so I thought they most Americans would know the number as well. But it turns out that American perceptions of corporate profits are wildly off the mark.

Check out this article from the prestigious American Enterprise Institute:

> When a random sample of American adults were asked the question "Just a rough guess, what percent profit on each dollar of sales do you think the average company makes after taxes?" for the Reason-Rupe poll in May 2013, the average response was 36%! That response was very close to historical results from the polling organization ORC International polls for a slightly different, but related question: What percent profit on each dollar of sales do you think the average

> manufacturer makes after taxes? Responses to that question in 9 different polls between 1971 and 1987 ranged from 28% to 37% and averaged 31.6%.
>
> How do the public's estimates of corporate profit margins compare to reality? Not surprisingly they are off by a huge margin. According to this NYU Stern database for more than 7,000 US companies (updated in January 2018) in many different industries, the average profit margin is 7.9% for all companies and 6.9% for more than 6,000 companies excluding financials (see chart above).
>
> […]"Big Oil" companies make a lot of profits, right? Well, that industry (Integrated Oil/Gas) had a below-average profit margin of 5.6% in the most recent period analyzed, and separately, the Production and Exploration Oil/Gas industry is losing money, reflected in a -6.6% profit margin. For the general retail sector, the average profit margin is only 2.3% and for the grocery and food retail industry, it's even lower at only 1.6%. And evil Walmart only made a 2.1% profit margin in 2017 (first three quarters) which is less than the industry average for general retail, possibly because grocery sales now make up more than half of Walmart's revenue and profit margins are lower on food than general retail.

Sometimes, the government makes MORE from the sale of goods or services than the company that does ALL the work:

> Interestingly, Walmart's profit margin of 2.1% is actually less than one-third of the 6.5% the average state/local government takes of each dollar of Walmart's retail sales for sales taxes. Think about it – for every $100 in sales for Walmart, the state/local governments get an average of $6.50 in sales taxes (and as much as $10.12 in Louisiana and $9.45 in Tennessee, see data here), while Walmart gets only $2.10 in after-tax profits!

I think that Americans are getting their false anti-corporation views from listening to the mainstream media. The mainstream media is overwhelmingly leftist according to recent studies of their political donations. I think that the anti-corporate views of the average American comes from their uncritical consumption of mainstream media propaganda. They think they are getting objective news reporting, but what they're really getting is socialist propaganda.

Here is a short little video that explains more about profit margins, and what would happen if a socialist like Bernie Sanders were put in charge of a corporation:

If you'd like to help with this problem of anti-business economic illiteracy, please watch the video and share it, or share the AEI article, which contains the video. America will be a better country when Americans have accurate, informed beliefs about important issues.

Senate Democrats government shutdown puts illegal aliens above our military

January 22, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats celebrating shutting down the government for illegal aliens

By now I guess everyone has heard about the Senate Democrats deciding to shut down the government. What's surprising to me about this is why they are choosing to do it, and what it shows about their priorities. Who are they really working for?

Here's Genevieve Wood's article about it at the Daily Signal:

> As you may have heard, a government shutdown is looming here in D.C. Many of you out there watching probably think, "So what? That can be a good thing. Less of Washington, fewer bureaucrats telling us what to do and how to spend our money." Those are all good points.
>
> But that is not why Democrats are threatening to shut down the government.
>
> Let's keep in mind this is the same party that is always telling us if we shut down the government, this will be a travesty for millions of Americans, so many government programs and services will be unmet.
>
> But yet they're still willing to do so. Why is that?
>
> Well, it's because their liberal base is demanding that in this election year they put the needs and desires of those who are here in this country illegally before anybody else.
>
> So if you're an American who wants to live in a safe community and wants a safe

> border, too bad for you. If you're a man or woman serving in our military, sworn to protect us around the world, well, we're just not going to get those funds in that the military may need. And if you're somebody who is not an American citizen but you're standing in line because you, too, want to have a chance at the American dream and you're trying to do it the right way? To all of those folks, Democrats are saying, "Get to the back of the line. "

Democrats don't just want increased illegal immigration, they want chain migration, too. When you allow chain migration, you're not selecting people to come into the country who can speak English, who have college educations, who can perform skills in short supply. Chain migration doesn't require immigrants to speak English or be able to work. It doesn't require anything beyond a family connection.

This article from Real Clear Politics has more:

> On this week's Fox News Sunday panel, Heritage Foundation leader Michael Needham clarifies the dispute which led to the government shutdown, explaining that from the start the president has called for an end to chain migration, "this crazy system where people are allowed to bring distant relatives like cousins into the country."
>
> "This is a shutdown over whether or not we could give amnesty to illegal immigrants who are here, and have chain migration allowing them to bring distant relatives. That's not going to work out well in November [for Democrats] if they say they are the party in favor of amnesty and distant relatives," he added.

Countries like Canada and Australia only allow in immigrants who can speak English and who have skills that are in demand, like information technology or medicine. That's the way immigration should work. We shouldn't be bringing in people who will cause the rest of us to have to carry them through life. We should be focused on skilled immigrants, but the Democrats are focused on *unskilled immigrants* and the family members of those unskilled immigrants.

Can feminism be defended with reason and evidence? Jordan Peterson vs Cathy Newman

January 23, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Can radical feminism be defended rationally and evidentially?

There was a short discussion recently on UK Channel 4 between Canadian university professor named Jordan Peterson, and a radical feminist with an undergraduate degree in English named Cathy Newman. While you watch, imagine that she is teaching some non-STEM course that you've enrolled in. Would you dare to disagree with her?

First, the video, which has over 3.1 million views on Monday night:

And here is an article from the UK Spectator: (paywalled)

> Whatever else anybody might think of him, Professor Peterson is a man of remarkable learning and experience, and does not appear to have arrived at any of his views by the now common means of 'I reckon'. Yet Newman, who approaches the interview with the trademark sourness she employs for everyone she expects to disagree with, treats this is just another chance to burnish her own social justice credentials and expose her guest as a bigot. Big mistake.
>
> Storming straight in with the differences between the sexes, in the opening minutes it is clear that Professor Peterson is willing to back up all his views with references, data and calm analysis.
>
> By 11 minutes in she is saying 'I think I take issue with (that)', before demonstrating that she can't. Soon she is reduced to dropping the bombshell observation that 'all women are different'. By 16.45 there is a palpable win, as Peterson points out that Newman has exactly the disagreeable and aggressive qualities that allow certain types of people to succeed. By 19.30 she is having to throw out things to him that he hasn't even said, such as 'You're saying women aren't intelligent enough to run top companies'. A minute later and she is reduced to countering empirical evidence with anecdote. Peterson presents the data about men in general and Newman responds with the 'I know plenty of men who aren't (like that)' card. Shortly after that (at 22.25) Newman is reduced to

> spluttering and then silence. She tries to pull herself together. But she can think of nothing to say.

To be honest, Cathy Newman is nothing like the women I'm friends with. All of my closest friends are Christian women. All of them are anti-feminist to some degree, with the most successful one professionally (Dina) being the wisest and most anti-feminist of all. When I think of my panel of wise Christian women advisors – each with one or more STEM degrees – I don't recognize Cathy Newman in them. But Cathy Newman does remind me of the radical feminists I encountered when I was doing my BS and MS degrees in computer science at the university.

In my experience, radical feminists debate using six tactics:

1. Deny facts or evidence because men were involved in researching them or discovering them
2. Countering empirical data with anecdotes and personal experiences
3. Taking arguments and evidence as if they are personal attacks
4. Becoming hysterical and crying
5. Claiming that disagreement with feminism will produce violence against women and women committing suicide, etc.
6. Trying to get you expelled, fired or silenced – often by making false accusations or faking hate crimes against themselves

It's important for everyone to understand the views of others in order to know how defensible our own views are. In order to get the best scholarly case for radical feminism, I like to read feminist academics like Christina Hoff Sommers, Camille Paglia, Jennifer Roback Morse, etc. who evaluate and critique radical feminist scholarship. That's how I encounter the ideas of those I disagree with (as well as listening to and watching debates).

Here's a short Factual Feminist video:

I understand the claims that are made by radical feminists, but I am also aware of what the evidence says. I don't try to stop feminists from making claims, I just study how to refute their claims.

But what about the radical feminists? Do they do a good job of understanding those who disagree with them? Let's take a look at an example which I think is representative of feminist tolerance and open-mindedness.

The Toronto Sun reports on a sociology professor who gave her students an assignment – an assignment with some very peculiar constraints.

Excerpt:

> A Ryerson University student who wanted to write a paper on the "myth" of the male-female wage gap was told by her prof that not only was she wrong, she should only rely on feminist journals for her assignment instead of business sources which "blame women," her sister says.

> Josephine Mathias, 21, a fourth-year political science student at University of Toronto, took to YouTube Wednesday to criticize the assignment given her twin Jane for a sociology class.
>
> […]After Jane sent an email describing her intention to write about the wag gap, her instructor replied that her premise was wrong, Josephine said.

Here's what the professor said:

> **"Perhaps you want to write your paper on the glass ceiling. You need to look at feminist sources on this issue…Do NOT use business sources. They blame women. The reality is patriarchy," says the instructor's email, posted online.**
>
> **In a copy of the assignment provided to the Toronto Sun by Josephine, the instructor also notes that Ontario and Canada government websites and Statistics Canada will not be considered scholarly sources.**
>
> **"Government websites state government policy that is devoid of analysis, and usually reproduces mainstream stereotypes, assumptions and misconceptions," the assignment says.**

What is interesting is that the professor makes about $167,000 a year – higher than the average professor's salary. And she's not teaching computer science or petroleum engineering. I find it interesting that another Canadian university reprimanded a grad student for showing a debate clip that offered both sides of the transgenderism debate. Leftist tolerance. Leftist open-mindedness.

Once you've paid your tuition, and the leftist has the grading pen, you lose every argument. Either you get an F, or you get expelled. If you're in the workplace, you get fired. False charges are often made. Hate crimes are faked. Anything to play the victim, rather than address the arguments and evidence. This is how people on the left "debate".

As I wrote previously, the more women embrace radical feminism, the more toxic they become to men. Not just in the classroom or the workplace, but in relationships. Who wants to marry someone whose only response to reason is fury? Men might be OK with temporary arrangements with abusive women. At least while those women have youth and beauty. But men don't marry abusive women. At least, not if they have any wisdom.

(Image source: Independent Man)

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

January 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!
Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change

> his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

What is masculinity, and why do leftists oppose it?

January 25, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Air Force TACPs confirm target locations with their map and GPS

My friend Adina shared a splendid article from the American Thinker with me. People often ask me why I speak about policy and politics so much on a Christian apologetics blog. My usual answer is that things like money and religious liberty are central to how Christians run their lives. But this article made me think of a deeper reason, one that's been the driving force in my life for a long time.

First, let's see some of the article, then I'll talk about why this article is a key to really understanding men like me.

Excerpt:

> An ongoing mantra of the left is that everyone is a victim, with a singular carve-out for white men. A large group of the female population has embraced this chant.
>
> While there may be a number of grievances put forth by this movement, there also comes a theme that is particularly dangerous: the feminist attack on masculinity. This is derived not only from feminists; it comes from the left in general.
>
> There has emerged a war on masculinity. Why? Because masculine men are harder to control under tyrannical socialism. The modern beta male, on the other hand, craves socialism. This is why the left has branded masculinity as toxic: it stands as a roadblock to their endgame.

That's the thesis of the article, and here is a snippet that I want to talk about:

> The feminist hatred for masculinity is only another tool in the toolbox of communism. Masculinity tends to make a man individualistic. Individualistic men are capitalists, not communists. They are men who cherish individual liberty, and they rely on themselves rather than on government. Self-reliance is a four-letter word for leftists, and masculine men are generally self-reliant. Beta males like Pajama Boy rely on government, and such modern men, devoid of any semblance of masculinity, are ideal for leftist indoctrination.
>
> Were the frontiersmen communists or capitalists? How about the cowboys? How about the Navy SEALs or Army Rangers? Sure, the press may find in the military a few Che Guevara t-shirt-wearing idiots and parade them all over the place, but I am willing to bet that the majority of SEAL Team 6 comprises masculine capitalists.
>
> What games do young boys play? They pretend to be cowboys. They pretend to be soldiers. They don't pretend to be soviet textile workers slaving under Stalin's system. They don't pretend to be entitled Millennial brats who congregate at Starbucks and talk about the wonders of socialism, either. Most boys hit the ground embracing masculinity. Some maintain it, but many have it berated out of them by the weak society they walk in or by their leftist parents.
>
> Masculinity leads a man to seek to better himself in many regards, while collectivism thrives on mediocrity. Collectivism in this country is sought by the lazy who don't want to work but feel entitled to free handouts of all kinds.

I can confirm from my reading of SEAL and Ranger autobiographies that they are overwhelmingly conservative in their politics.

OK, so two points about this. First, I grew up in a very liberal environment where masculinity was already under attack starting from elementary school. It started in the public schools with the lazy public school teachers. In college, I saw lazy college students doing non-STEM degrees because they were easy. And then they wanted bailouts for their unpaid student loans.

I really noticed it when I worked for the government during a couple of summers. Most people in unionized jobs just don't have the marketable skills to make it in the private sector, where people are paid based on performance and can easily be fired for failure to perform. Public schools and government are two places where people who can't perform go in order to make money without having to perform. Even their raises are defined by collective bargaining, not individual merit. (My public school system even went on strike, and I would see the teachers holding signs in order to get paid more, instead of doing what normal people do, and producing more). Working in the public sector just not acceptable to people who want to work hard and advance by merit.

The more I experienced this, as a student and as a government employee, the more I realized that I wanted to get as far away as possible from laws and policies that reflect a desire to provide security for lazy people. I wanted these people out of my life. I didn't want them getting my money. I did not want them making the rules that I had to live by. I

wanted to cut government funding and enact right-to-work and school choice laws. Just to stop the forced funding of lazy people through mandatory taxes. I didn't yet realize that there was any masculine-feminine distinction going on, I just knew that these were lazy people, they made poor choices because of their desire for fun and laziness, and they ought to be starving, not getting paid. And as the left started to crack down on free speech, guns, and other freedoms, I started a lifelong journey from blue states to red states. I just wanted nothing to do with these people interfering in my life, and leeching off of me. I wanted to post pictures of a Steyr Aug on Twitter and tag all my female public school teachers and their nanny state allies, who didn't like guns because "they are loud and scary". (Note: I do not yet own a Steyr Aug. Maybe some day.).

My second point is about how this denigration of masculinity works out in relationships.

I wanted to get married pretty much from high school. Since I didn't have a stay at home mom, I decided early on that I wanted that for my children. I can remember thinking about this in my junior year of high school (grade 11). So, I talked to my Dad about it, and he suggested that I not follow my dream of becoming an English teacher, and instead focus on computer science. I was just as good at computer science as English literature in those days – good enough for the class awards every year in both subjects. So, I got the BS and the MS, and then moved to find work that would pay a lot. And I saved a lot of what I earned.

Fast forward to my relationships. What I found is that women who were influenced by leftism had *zero respect* for my ability to lead in areas like education, career and finance. Since they had been taught that masculinity was toxic, they would often prefer younger, penniless, unemployed students who were more easily manipulated. They resented that I would offer them advice about what to study, where to work, and how to save more, which – along with apologetics and raising parrots – is about the only stuff I'm qualified to give advice about! Basically, they had been trained to see male competence as toxic. Male leadership – even when it was clearly demonstrated from past success – was toxic. And the "best" men were the men who let them make decisions based on their feelings, which mostly involved pursuing fun and being irresponsible – and sometimes even immoral. Men exist to give women "feelings", and for no other purpose than that.

Well, that's what I wanted to say about how my experience with anti-masculinity in education, career and relationships has affected me. My masculinity came about naturally, as a result of encountering leftism in different areas of my life. And I think having to deal with it up close just pushed me further in the masculine direction. That is not to say that I am a promiscuous, risk-taking thug. I'm chaste, I'm a software engineer, I don't drink, I have no tattoos or piercings, I've never been arrested, and I've saved most of what I earned. But if I could move to a place where government kept out of my business and out of my wallet, then I'd move. If I could find a woman who respected the strengths of men, then I'd marry her.

I basically want to be in a place where the government and the women around me are respectful of my different priorities and different life goals. Unfortunately, I'm living in a

time of great foolishness, and much of that has been brought about by leftism. Much of my income is confiscated so that other people can spend it and call themselves “generous” with money they did not, and could not, earn themselves. My liberty is constrained, and the people who cost me money or do me harm – illegal immigrants, criminals, terrorists, etc. – are treated better than I am. All in the name of “compassion”. We are in a time and place where people in high places are at war with masculinity. I wish I could opt out of every nanny state policy, but there’s no opt-out.

Why wasn't Hillary Clinton indicted for her private e-mail server?

January 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama

Andy McCarthy writes about it at National Review. McCarthy is a former assistant U.S. attorney, and that he led the 1995 prosecution of the World Trade Center bombers, as well as prosecuting other prominent terrorism cases. So, he's familiar with the law, and familiar with national security. The National Review is one of the most prestigious conservative publications.

Excerpt:

> From the first, these columns have argued that the whitewash of the Hillary Clinton–emails caper was President Barack Obama's call — not the FBI's, and not the Justice Department's. […]The decision was inevitable. Obama, using a pseudonymous email account, had repeatedly communicated with Secretary Clinton over her private, non-secure email account.
>
> These emails must have involved some classified information, given the nature of consultations between presidents and secretaries of state, the broad outlines of Obama's own executive order defining classified intelligence (see EO 13526, section 1.4), and the fact that the Obama administration adamantly refused to disclose the Clinton–Obama emails. If classified information was mishandled, it was necessarily mishandled on both ends of these email exchanges.
>
> If Clinton had been charged, Obama's culpable involvement would have been patent. In any prosecution of Clinton, the Clinton–Obama emails would have been in the spotlight. For the prosecution, they would be more proof of willful (or, if

> you prefer, grossly negligent) mishandling of intelligence. More significantly, for Clinton's defense, they would show that Obama was complicit in Clinton's conduct yet faced no criminal charges.
>
> That is why such an indictment of Hillary Clinton was never going to happen.

He explains how we know that Obama knew about the Clinton private, unsecure, bathroom closet e-mail server:

> As his counselors grappled with how to address his own involvement in Clinton's misconduct, Obama deceptively told CBS News in a March 7 interview that he had found out about Clinton's use of personal email to conduct State Department business "the same time everybody else learned it through news reports." Perhaps he was confident that, because he had used an alias in communicating with Clinton, his emails to and from her — estimated to number around 20 — would remain undiscovered.
>
> His and Clinton's advisers were not so confident. Right after the interview aired, Clinton campaign secretary Josh Scherwin emailed Jennifer Palmieri and other senior campaign staffers, stating: "Jen you probably have more on this but it looks like POTUS just said he found out HRC was using her personal email when he saw it on the news."
>
> Scherwin's alert was forwarded to Mills. Shortly afterwards, an agitated Mills emailed Podesta: "We need to clean this up — he has emails from her — they do not say state.gov." (That is, Obama had emails from Clinton, which he had to know were from a private account since her address did not end in "@state.gov" as State Department emails do.)

They needed to "clean this up".

Just to reiterate, there is only one reason why someone has a private e-mail server, and that is to escape the record-keeping requirements of their employer. If all your e-mails are stored on your private, unsecure, bathroom closet server, then you can just delete them when you want, and your employer will never know about them. And then if you've been pedaling the foreign policy of the United States for donations to your "foundation", then no one will ever find out.

This could not be allowed to be linked back to Obama, and so it was not allowed to be linked back to Obama.

McCarthy explains:

> In April 2016, in another nationally televised interview, Obama made clear that he did not want Clinton to be indicted. His rationale was a legally frivolous straw man: Clinton had not intended to harm national security. This was not an element of the felony offenses she had committed; nor was it in dispute. No matter: Obama's analysis was the stated view of the chief executive. If, as was sure to happen, his subordinates in the executive law-enforcement agencies

> conformed their decisions to his stated view, there would be no prosecution.
>
> Within a few weeks, even though the investigation was ostensibly still underway and over a dozen key witnesses — including Clinton herself — had not yet been interviewed, the FBI began drafting Comey's remarks that would close the investigation. There would be no prosecution.
>
> On June 27, Lynch met with Clinton's husband, former President Bill Clinton, on an out-of-the-way Arizona tarmac, where their security details arranged for both their planes to be parked.
>
> Over the next few days, the FBI took pains to strike any reference to Obama's emails with Mrs. Clinton from the statement in which Comey would effectively end the "matter" with no prosecution.

And remember, we have a second FBI scandal being investigated, now. We're trying to figure out whether the FBI used the Trump-Russia dossier, which was funded by the Clinton campaign, in order to get FISA court warrants to conduct surveillance on Trump and Trump associates. Just a little extra help for their favored presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton. Again, if true – we're still investigating.

I used to think that the worst thing the Obama administration did was the IRS persecution of conservative groups ahead of Obama's re-election campaign in 2012. And now there's this new scandal. Now we're finding out little by little what the Obama administration really did, but we'll probably never know the whole truth.

Making a difference as a Christian doesn't mean doing dramatic, reckless things

January 27, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ratio Christi event at Ohio State University featuring Frank Turek (10/12/2015)

What's the ideal balance between work and missions? In this post, I will argue against going abroad to do full-time missions.

Do apologetics ministry in your spare time, and work full-time

A full-time job and part-time ministry makes the most sense from a cost-benefit point of view. I have friends who are software engineers who studied enough science, history, and philosophy part-time, who are able to do public debates with atheists, which influence many more people than one-on-one interactions. One of my friends has several Masters degrees, and is in a PhD program, but his full-time career is in software and network management. He is 100% self-funded. He has worked in a successful apologetics career with a full-time career in technology, and he is debt-free. This is the best option . Your debts get paid off. Your resume stays gap-free. You bring a nest egg to your future spouse. You can afford to have children. You can afford a stay-at-home mom. You can afford either homeschooling or private schools, should you decide to go that route.

You have to start saving and investing early if you want to be independent in your old age. With full-time work and part-time ministry, you still make a difference for Christ and His Kingdom over time, while avoiding a financial crisis that could cost you your family, your friends, *and even your faith*. This is an especially wise way to proceed, given the economic struggles we are likely to face from housing bubbles, student loan bubbles, rising interest rates, entitlement crises, state pension underfunding, environmental regulations, the ever increasing national debt, demographic crisis, etc. Read the culture

and be cautious about the future.

Use the Internet to make a difference in other countries for free

One cost-effective way to make a difference is by using the Internet to reach other countries. You can work full-time, and then use your spare time to blog. This blog gets an average of 24,000 page views per week. About 45% of that traffic comes from NON-USA countries. If you keep working full-time and just start a blog for free, then you can maintain your gap-free resume and have a much easier time marrying and raising children.

The university next door is a great place to have an influence

I do think full-time ministry is OK in two cases: if you don't go abroad, or if you go abroad with a full-time job or full-ride scholarship. My friend Eric Chabot was able to host Frank Turek at Ohio State University last night (see photo above), for example. He got a great crowd. He is donation-driven, but he runs a lean operation since he lives near the campus where he serves. When it comes to having an impact, the American university is the place to make a difference. We have enough trouble in our own country, especially in the universities, where so many young people lose the faith of their childhood – there's no need to travel and incur heavy expenses. I think it also makes sense financially to go abroad for missions, if you get a scholarship that pays your way or if you have a job offer where you can work full-time and do missions part-time. What does not make sense is sending an unskilled missionary to a foreign country at the cost of tens of thousands of dollars that could be used much more efficiently in smaller, effective Eric-Chabot-style operations.

Your feelings and desires are not God speaking to you

Now some people who want to go into overseas missions will tell me that they feel led to go. This method of decision making is not Biblical, as I explained in one of my previous posts. If you believe the Bible, then feelings are a pretty poor way of determining what God wants from you. In fact, left to themselves, humans typically choose what feels best for them, not what does best for God. If God really calls you to do something, like he called Jonah, then you probably won't feel like doing it. Missionary work is especially suspect when God is supposedly calling you to go to a country that you always dreamed of traveling to while you were a non-Christian. Normally, conversion causes you to have different desires – not the same desires you had as a non-Christian. Unless you hear an audible voice, like an Old Testament prophet would, then it's best not to think that God is speaking through your feelings and desires. A good book to read on this is "Decision Making and the Will of God", by Garry Friesen.

Don't go into missions in order to have fun or go on an adventure

I am suspicious of people who try to turn Christianity into a mechanism for achieving the same goals that non-Christians want to achieve. These days, it seems as if everyone wants to travel to exotic places. If there is evidence of hedonistic, fun-pursuing, thrill-seeking behavior in your past, then consider that you may just want an "adventure". I have a friend who went to Russia for a year just after graduating college, and she

admitted to me that she just went “to have an adventure”. To me, that’s not a good reason to spend thousands of dollars, and put gaps in your resume. It’s not a cost-effective way to make a difference, given the other alternatives. Your goal should be to make yourself defensible so that you can put out a sustained effort that lasts, not burn out and then be ineffective for the rest of your life. Think about what J. Warner Wallace says about living wisely and prudently so you position yourself to make a steady contribution in the second half of your life. Don’t wreck your long-term impact for short-term fun. God will not honor that.

Don’t go into missions to make up for an immoral past

Anyway, if you look in your past and see lots of wild behavior – drinking, drugs, premarital sex, cohabitation, abortions, gambling, divorces, etc., then consider that you may be interested in missions for the wrong reasons. You don’t need to go on a missions trip to dramatically declare to everyone that you are now completely reformed from your wild party days. I actually managed to talk a friend out of a short-term missions trip who felt that it was a good way to do something meaningful to “make up” for her past. By being responsible with her job and saving money, she’s managed to avoid burning out, and to instead put out a steady stream of effective activities. And she was financially stable enough to get married and have children, as well – another excellent way to make a difference.

Do not go into missions if your resume and balance sheet do not demonstrate maturity

We already talked about the need for sound planning in the Bible study we did with Wayne Grudem. The Bible praises hard work, stewardship, prudence and wisdom. And this is especially true for people who are getting older and need to be thinking about marriage, children and retirement. It’s not a good witness for Christians to be financially unstable. When you are able to stand on your own two feet financially, and help others from your earnings, you gain credibility with non-Christians. We don’t want people to think that we are doing this for the money. The best option is to be self-funded, like Paul and his tent-making-funded ministry.

By the way, if you’d like to read a related post by Eric Chabot, this one is a good one.

Frank Turek lectures on the case against same-sex marriage

January 28, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker Frank Turek:

> Dr. Frank Turek is a dynamic speaker and award-winning author or coauthor of four books: Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to make their Case, I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, Correct, Not Politically Correct and Legislating Morality. As the President of CrossExamined.org, Frank presents powerful and entertaining evidence for Christianity at churches, high schools and at secular college campuses that often begin hostile to his message. He has also debated several prominent atheists including Christopher Hitchens and David Silverman, president of American Atheists.
>
> Frank hosts an hour-long TV program each week called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist that is broadcast Wednesday nights on DirecTV Channel 378 (the NRB Network). His radio program called CrossExamined with Frank Turek airs on 122 stations every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. eastern and is available continuously on the free CrossExamined App.
>
> A former aviator in the US Navy, Frank has a master's degree from the George Washington University and a doctorate from Southern Evangelical Seminary. He and his wife, Stephanie, are blessed with three grown sons.

He's one of my favorite speakers, and I admire him for being willing to take a public stand on controversial issues like gay marriage. He's actually had to pay a price for that in his professional life, and I blogged about that before.

Here's the lecture on gay marriage, featuring Christian apologist Frank Turek. It was presented in July 2015, after the Supreme Court decision.

Outline:

Outline of Frank Turek's lecture on same sex marriage
Introduction:

- how to present your case against marriage safely
- Christians are required to go beyond tolerance
- loving another person can mean opposing the person when they want to do something wrong, even if they hate you
- what did Jesus say about marriage? (see Matt 19:4-6)
- what did Jesus say about sexual morality? (Matt 15, Matt 19)

Summary:

- the same-sex marriage debate is about whether to compel people who disagree with the gay lifestyle to validate and normalize it
- P1: the government has an interest in marriage because it perpetuates and stabilizes society – this is the purpose of marriage
- P2-4: government can take 3 kinds of stances towards behaviors: promote, permit or prohibit
- government promotes behaviors when it has an interest in them
- same-sex relationships should be permitted, but not promoted
- Q1: if same-sex marriage had serious negative consequences, would you reconsider their position?
- Q2: are heterosexual relationships the same as homosexual relationships?
- Q3: what would society be like if everyone married according to the natural marriage definition: one woman, one man, for life?
- Q4: what would society be like if everyone married according to the same-sex marriage definition: man/man and woman/woman?
- Should Christians care about law and politics? or should they just preach the gospel?
- They should care because people often get their cues about what is moral and

immoral based on what is legal and illegal
- Many of the social problems we see today can be traced back to problems with marriage and family
- Children do much better when they have a relationship with their mother and their father
- Same-sex marriage necessarily destroys the relationship between a child and its mother or its father
- When a country embraces same-sex marriage, it reinforces the idea that marriage is not about making and raising children
- same-sex marriage shifts the focus away from the needs of the children to the feelings of desires of the selfish adults
- does homosexuality impose any health and mental health risks?
- what has the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage been in Massachusetts to individuals, schools, businesses and charities?
- how same-sex marriage poses a threat to religious liberty
- how should you respond to the view that homosexuality is genetic?

My biggest concern is religious liberty, and we are seeing how same-sex marriage has proven to be incompatible with religious liberty. But I also care about children… I want them to have mothers and fathers who put their needs first. How did we ever get to this point where the ever-changing feelings and desires of adults are somehow linked to marriage? Marriage is about a commitment – it is the subjugation of feelings and desires to responsibilities and obligations. It is a promise. A promise to commit to love your spouse and children regardless of feelings and desires. It requires more self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice. Not less.

Does Planned Parenthood provide prenatal care and mammograms to women?

January 29, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

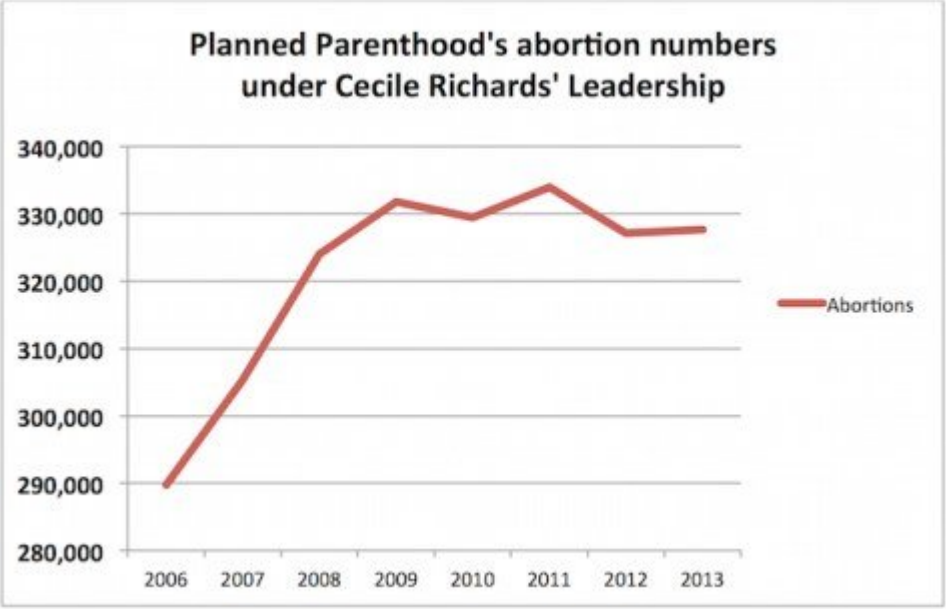

How many abortions does Planned Parenthood perform?
(Source)

A new video put out by Live Action takes a look at the claim that Democrats make that Planned Parenthood provides prenatal care to pregnant women.

But that's not all – what about the claim made by Democrats that Planned Parenthood provides mammograms to women?

Life Site News explains the myth and the reality.

Excerpt:

> The day before hundreds of pro-life activists prepared to flood Planned Parenthood's offices with requests to schedule a mammogram, the organization issued a statement admitting that they do not offer the cancer screening procedure at any of their facilities.
>
> The calls were placed today as part of "Call Planned Parenthood to Schedule Your Imaginary Mammogram Day" – an event organized by pro-life activists in response to President Obama's statement during the presidential debate Tuesday that the abortion organization offers mammograms.
>
> "There are millions of women all across the country, who rely on Planned Parenthood for, not just contraceptive care, they rely on it for mammograms, for cervical cancer screenings," the president had said, repeating a claim he had made earlier this summer in an interview with *Glamour* magazine.
>
> But Obama isn't the only one.
>
> The notion that Planned Parenthood offers mammograms is one of the most

> enduring myths about the abortion giant. The claim is regularly trotted out by pro-abortion politicians eager to defend taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood, but wary of invoking its controversial status as the country's leading provider of abortions.

Not only does Planned Parenthood not provide mammograms, but the abortions they perform have been linked to the epidemic of breast cancer that is afflicting women today.

What about the claim that only 3% of what Planned Parenthood does is doing abortions?

False:

> Practically every defender of the organization, fighting to preserve its federal funding, reverts to the 3 percent figure. How could you possibly, they ask, defund a group that devotes itself overwhelmingly to uncontroversial procedures and services for women?
>
> […]The 3 percent factoid is crafted to obscure the reality of Planned Parenthood's business. The group performs about 330,000 abortions a year, or roughly 30 percent of all the abortions in the country. By its own accounting in its 2013–2014 annual report, it provides about as many abortions as Pap tests (380,000). The group does more breast exams and provides more breast-care services (490,000), but not by that much.
>
> The 3 percent figure is derived by counting abortion as just another service like much less consequential services. So abortion is considered a service no different than a pregnancy test (1.1 million), even though a box with two pregnancy tests can be procured from the local drugstore for less than $10.
>
> By Planned Parenthood's math, a woman who gets an abortion but also a pregnancy test, an STD test, and some contraceptives has received four services, and only 25 percent of them are abortion. This is a little like performing an abortion and giving a woman an aspirin, and saying only half of what you do is abortion.
>
> Such cracked reasoning could be used to obscure the purpose of any organization. The sponsors of the New York City Marathon could count each small cup of water they hand out (some 2 million cups, compared with 45,000 runners) and say they are mainly in the hydration business. Or Major League Baseball teams could say that they sell about 20 million hot dogs and play 2,430 games in a season, so baseball is only .012 percent of what they do.
>
> Supporters of Planned Parenthood want to use its health services as leverage to preserve its abortions, as if you can't get one without the other. Of course, this is nonsense. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides free or low-cost breast- and cervical-cancer screenings — without aborting babies. State health departments provide free cancer screenings — without aborting babies. Community health centers provide a range of medical services — without aborting babies.

I think it’s a good idea to be able to respond to Planned Parenthood’s rhetoric. These are the people who kill babies, and we have to be able to respond to their false claims. When a majority of people learn the truth about the baby killing business, it will stop.

Can unborn babies feel pain at 20 weeks?

January 30, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn Baby – 10 weeks old

On Monday night, The Senate voted 51-46 in opposition to a measure that would have banned abortions on unborn children 20 weeks and older. The legislation was titled the "Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act".

National Review has the story:

> The Senate failed this evening to pass the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which would've banned abortions after 20 weeks, after Democrats filibustered the bill. In a 51–46 vote, the bill failed to make it out of debate and to a final floor vote.
>
> Two Republicans — Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska — continued their support for abortion by crossing the aisle to vote with the Democrats against the bill. Meanwhile, three Democrats — Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Bob Casey Jr. of Pennsylvania, and Joe Donnelly of Indiana — broke ranks and voted with Republicans in favor of the legislation. The vote split along similar party lines in 2015, the last time the Senate considered similar legislation.
>
> […]The bill was based on scientific evidence showing that fetuses have the capacity to feel pain beginning at 20-weeks' gestation.

The Daily Signal posted an article on the evidence for the proposition that unborn children 20 weeks and older feel pain.

Excerpt:

> According to a 2006 study from the International Association for the Study of Pain, “The available scientific evidence makes it possible, even probable, that fetal pain perception occurs well before late gestation.” The study goes on to say that pain perception develops in the “second trimester,” “well before the third trimester.”
>
> A 2012 study by the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists concludes, “the basis for pain perception appear[s] at about 20 to 22 weeks from conception.”
>
> And another 2012 study that was published in the journal Fetal Diagnosis and Therapy found that “ … from the second trimester onwards, the fetus reacts to painful stimuli … [T]hese painful interventions may cause long-term effects.” The authors of this study recommend that unborn children be given painkillers during “potentially painful procedures” such as surgeries—or, I would add, such as abortions.
>
> There are many more studies like these but the consensus is clear: The science at a minimum suggests that unborn children can feel pain at 20 weeks—can feel the abortionists’ knife and suction tube as it rips them apart in the womb. That possibility alone should have us rushing to ban abortion at 20 weeks.

20 weeks is pretty far along in the pregnancy process. It’s way past the time when babies can feel pain, and close to the point where they are actually viable outside the womb.

A little while back, I blogged about a little baby who was delivered at 22 weeks, and survived:

If the Senate had passed the bill, then Trump would have signed it into law, which is very different than his predecessor Obama. Obama, you’ll remember, voted several times in favor of infanticide, as a state senator in Illinois. As president, he threatened to veto any ban on abortions after 20 weeks. When people were voting for Obama as president, that’s what they were voting for.

So, what’s the answer to a defeat like this? Well, we have to get more persuasive. We have to get more convincing. We have to learn how to get comfortable having conversations with safe, open-minded moderates about abortion. People aren’t afraid to talk about abortion if you just stick to the scientific evidence, and reason about what we know for certain.

Fortunately for pro-lifers, making the pro-life case is an easy things to learn how to do. You just need an introductory book. If you haven’t yet gotten a book on how to be convincing, then pick up “The Case for Life”, written by Scott Klusendorf. It’s the best introductory book, and you get the benefit of his experience debating abortion advocates in formal debates. If you can’t get the book, then you can just watch a lecture featuring Scott Klusendorf, and see how he does it.

Trump’s State of the Union speech: “Americans are dreamers, too”

January 31, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump’s State of the Union pitted America against Democrats

I can’t recommend that you go back and watch the speech, because it was so very long. Too long. However, the guys over at the Daily Wire liked the speech a lot, and they gave it high grades. Why? Because Trump put forward conservative principles with examples in a way that linked conservative virtues to America. However, the Democrats sat through almost all of it with stone faces, sitting on their hands.

The best summary I found so far was up at the Daily Caller.

Excerpt:

> President Donald Trump delivered a largely conciliatory speech during his State of the Union address Tuesday.
>
> […]The major policy proposals put forth to Congress were calls for a new infrastructure investment package and the acceptance of a new proposal to reform the U.S. immigration system. “Every Federal dollar should be leveraged by partnering with State and local governments and, where appropriate, tapping into private sector investment — to permanently fix the infrastructure deficit,” the president said of infrastructure.
>
> Trump’s immigration package offers a pathway to citizenship for 1.8 million illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children in exchange for full funding for wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, eliminating chain migration and an end to the diversity visa lottery program.

> The president frequently pointed out guests of the First Lady throughout the speech including U.S. soldiers recognized for valor in combat, firefighters from California, ICE agents, parents who lost their children to MS-13 gang violence, and a North Korea defector.

And here is the detail on one case I liked from the Daily Caller:

> President Donald Trump celebrated Staff Sgt. Justin Peck for his role in saving the life of his fellow soldier who was wounded clearing deadly traps form buildings in the former ISIS stronghold of Raqqa, Syria.
>
> "Near Raqqa last November Justin and his comrade, Chief Petty Officer Kenton Stacy, were on a mission to clear buildings that ISIS had rigged with explosives so that civilians could return to that city hopefully soon and hopefully safely," Trump said. "Clearing the second floor of vital hospital, Kenton Stacy was severely wounded by an explosion. Immediately, Justin bounded into the booby-trapped and unbelievably dangerous and unsafe building and found Kenton, but in very, very bad shape."
>
> Trump went on to describe the incredible medical care administered by Peck, who rose stoically to his feet amid overwhelming applause from the audience.
>
> "He applied pressure to the wound and inserted a tube to reopen an airway, he then performed CPR for twenty straight minutes during the ground transport and maintained artificial respiration through two and a half hours and through emergency surgery," Trump said. "Kenton Stacy would have died if it were not for Justin's selfless love for his fellow warrior. Tonight Kenton is recovering in Texas, Raqqa is liberated and Justin is wearing his new bronze star with a V for valor."
>
> U.S. backed coalition forces cleared ISIS militants from Raqqa in October after four years of occupation. The terrorist group has been eradicated from roughly 98 percent of the territory they held at the height of their power.

Here's the clip for that one:

This is good because Democrats think that our armed forces need to be disarmed and pulled out of wars against our enemies. That is why Obama pulled out of Afghanistan and Iraq, and cut funding for the military. He thought they were doing harm, and wanted them to stop doing harm. Obama's allies in the mainstream media go out of their way to paint the US armed forces in a bad light – remember how many months they talked about Abu Ghraib and waterboarding? But Trump counters the Democrats with an example of people in the Armed Forces doing great things. And since Trump is the one speaking, praise for the military is naturally linked with Trump's Republican party. Republicans believe in the military, and here is an example of why we do. And Democrats sat on their hands and kept silent.

There were lots of examples that helped everyone to understand why Republicans take

the positions they do.

Here’s an example – why are Republicans for border security?

And another – why are Republicans opposed to North Korea?

And another – why do Republicans cut taxes for the middle class?

And another – why do Republicans think America is better than some other countries?

When a Republican president points out examples of things Republicans like, other people start to understand that Republicans are not the horrible devils that Democrats make them out to be. When the Democrats refused to clap for goodness, it helps people to think “maybe I’m not a Democrat after all”.

This went on and on throughout the speech. The Democrats were silent for tax cuts. The Democrats were silent for hard working Americans. The Democrats were silent for small business owners. The Democrats were silent for lower black unemployment. The Democrats were silent when the national anthem was praised. The Democrats were silent when the flag was celebrated. What came across over and over again was that what is good for America is bad for Democrats, and vice versa.

It was a great speech, and it moved the ball forward as far as the place of conservatism in the culture.

Stop telling women that God will give them husbands later if they delay marriage now

February 1, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

Dalrock blogged a splendid post about people who claim that there is a shortage of "good men". He says that if there really were a shortage of good men, then people who want women to actually get married would be telling women not to delay marriage, but to instead get serious about marrying early, when their ability to attract husband candidates is at its peak.

Dalrock writes:

> We can see the same pattern in Dr. John Piper's recent post Why Are Women More Eager Missionaries?* Piper explains that missionary work has become a pink ghetto:
>
> …the actual situation among most evangelical faith missions is that between 80–85% of all single missionaries are women. It is a rare thing, like two out of every ten, for a single man to make missions his life's vocation, which results in the overall statistics being that one-third of those in evangelical world missions are married men, one-third are married women, and 80 percent of the last third are single women. Which means that something just less than two-thirds of the total missionary force are women.
>
> **Piper's main concern with the post however is not that there aren't enough single men doing missionary work, but that women who choose this field aren't marrying as they would like. Piper complains that the problem for husband hunting missionary women is really an exacerbated version of the same problem all Christian women have, and that is an overall lack of marriageable Christian men…**

I'll save you the quotation of Piper, but his reason why missionary women struggle to find husbands is – SHOCK! – that Christian men refuse to man up. I.e – Piper believes that women can't find husbands because men are not ready and willing to marry.

More:

> **But if Piper actually believed… that there was a severe shortage of husband material men, he would focus his attention on helping the women reading navigate this incredibly difficult situation. Overseas mission work may feel empowering for young women, but (according to Piper) single women going into the mission field are greatly handicapping their prospects in an already bleak field. His advice to young women would be to choose which was truly more important to them, being a missionary or finding a husband.**

If Piper really believed that there were a shortage of marriage-minded, marriage-capable Christian men, then Piper would be counseling women who *genuinely* want to marry to make marriage a priority when they are younger, prettier and more fertile. Some women say that they want to get married "some day". But the hidden truth is often that they just want to delay marriage in order to have fun and thrills, until they get tired of it. And then they just expect a suitable man to show up right when they need one. But do men want to marry a 35-year-old woman when they are 40 as much as they want to marry a 23-year-old woman when they are 25?

More Dalrock:

> Piper even tells a story which would be a perfect way to teach this lesson. He describes a single woman named Gladys Aylward who went to a place where she found no marriageable men, and then blamed single men for not following her and proposing marriage:
>
> "Miss Aylward talked to the Lord about her singleness. She was a no-nonsense woman in very direct and straightforward ways and she asked God to call a man from England, send him straight out to China, straight to where she was, and have him propose to me." I can't forget the next line. Elisabeth Elliot said, "With a look of even deeper intensity, she shook her little bony finger in my face and said, 'Elisabeth, I believe God answers prayer. And he called him.'" And here there was a brief pause of intense whisper. She said, "'He called him, and he never came.'"
>
> Now, that experience, I would guess, is not unique to Gladys Aylward.
>
> **If Piper really believed that Christian husbands were scarce, he would be sharing this anecdote to warn young women of the foolishness of moving away from the pool of men they hope to choose a husband from and then expecting God to send the man of their choosing across the world to propose. If we were in a culture of scarcity of good men, this would be the *obvious* lesson from this story. But we live in an age with**

> **unshakable confidence that good men are not only available all around us, but will always be abundant. If Piper believed that the husband Miss Aylward was praying for was surrounded by real life English women eager to win him as a husband, this story wouldn't be complaining about why he didn't drop everything, fly to China, and propose to a woman he had never met. If Piper believed that the man was sought after as a husband in England, he would be pointing out the foolishness of Miss Aylward flying off to China and then wondering why a man she had never met didn't show up to propose once she decided she wanted to marry.**

Miss Aylward either needed to accept that being a missionary in a secular country meant not marrying, or she needed to focus on marriage first when she was attractive to men as a life partner. Many women are propositioned for sex after they hit their mid-30s, but few of them are asked to marry. This is because men need women more when they are just starting out in their careers than when they are established in their careers.

Many women have no appreciation of how investing in a husband early causes him to be loyal to her when she is older. Women think that a husband will show up when she is ready, and be loyal to her even though she was absent during the hardships of the first decade of his career. A woman can do a lot of good for a man when he is starting out in his career and trying to save money for a house. But when those years have passed, the man's ability to work and save have been largely set – without anyone's help. If he went through those years single, then he typically will have earned less and saved less than a married man, because he did it without a wife's support. Men do better in their careers and finances when they have a wife's support. Especially in the early career, which is more stressful because of the lack of work experience. If a woman wants a man to be faithful and loyal, then she needs to choose a man who needs her, and invest in him using her youth and beauty to support him during his critical 20s and early 30s. Men respond to support during the critical years with lifelong fidelity and loyalty.

By the way, for an explanation of why men prefer not to be missionaries, read this post on Deeper Strength blog.

And one last point. I have known 3 women missionaries, and many women who thought about becoming short-term missionaries. In *every case* the women had grown up as Christians, and then gone wild in their 20s with alcohol and promiscuity. And they saw missions work as a fun and thrilling way to "atone" for their wild past. Another reason for Christian men to be skeptical of women missionaries.

Is Matthew Vines twisting Scripture in order to justify sexual misbehavior?

February 2, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Here's a post from Christian writer Terrell Clemmons about efforts by gay activists to redefine Christianity so that it is consistent with homosexual behavior. This particular post is focused on Matthew Vines.

She writes:

> In March 2012, two years after having set out to confront homophobia in the church, Matthew presented the results of his "thousands of hours of research" in an hour-long talk titled "The Gay Debate." The upshot of it was this: "The Bible does not condemn loving gay relationships. It never addresses the issues of same-sex orientation or loving same-sex relationships, and the few verses that some cite to support homophobia have nothing to do with LGBT people." The video went viral (more than three quarter million views to date) and Matthew has been disseminating the content of it ever since.
>
> In 2013, he launched "The Reformation Project," "a Bible-based, non-profit organization … to train, connect, and empower gay Christians and their allies to reform church teaching on homosexuality from the ground up." At the inaugural conference, paid for by a $104,000 crowd-funding campaign, fifty LGBT advocates, all professing Christians, gathered for four days in suburban Kansas City for teaching and training, At twenty-three years of age, Matthew Vines was already becoming a formidable cause célèbre.

Terrell summarizes the case he makes, and here is the part I am interested in:

Reason #1: *Non-affirming views inflict pain on LGBT people*. This argument is

undoubtedly the most persuasive *emotionally*, but Matthew has produced a Scriptural case for it. Jesus, in his well-known Sermon on the Mount, warned his listeners against false prophets, likening them to wolves in sheep's clothing. Then switching metaphors he asked, "Do people pick grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?" The obvious answer is no, and Jesus's point was, you can recognize a good or bad tree – and a true or false prophet – by its good or bad fruit. From this, Matthew concludes that, since non-affirming beliefs on the part of *some* Christians cause the bad fruit of emotional pain for*other* Christians, the non-affirming stance must not be good.

Terrell's response to this is spot on, and I recommend you read her post to get the full response.

She writes:

> Matthew Vines in particular, and LGBTs in general, appear to be drivingly fixated on changing other people's moral outlook. But *why*? Why are they distressed over the shrinking subset of Christianity that holds to the traditional ethic of sex? Note that Matthew found an affirming church in his hometown, as can most any LGBT-identifying Christian. Affirming churches abound. Gaychurch.org lists forty-four affirming denominations – *denominations*, not just individual churches – in North America and will help you find a congregation in your area. Why, then, given all these choices for church accommodation, are Matthew and the Reformers specifically targeting churches whose teachings differ from their own?
>
> One gets the sense that LGBTs *really*, *really need* other people to affirm their sexual behavior. Certainly it's human to *want* the approval of others, but this goes beyond an emotionally healthy desire for relational comity. Recall Matthew's plea that non-affirming views on the part of *some* Christians cause emotional pain for *others*. He, and all like-minded LGBTs, are holding *other people* responsible for their emotional pain. This is the very essence of *codependency*.
>
> The term came out of Alcoholics Anonymous. It originally referred to spouses of alcoholics who enabled the alcoholism to continue unchallenged, but it has since been broadened to encompass several forms of dysfunctional relationships involving pathological behaviors, low self-esteem, and poor emotional boundaries. Codependents "believe their happiness depends upon another person," says Darlene Lancer, an attorney, family therapist, and author of *Codependency for Dummies*. "In a codependent relationship, *both* individuals are codependent," says clinical psychologist Seth Meyers. "They try to control their partner and they aren't comfortable on their own."
>
> Which leads to an even more troubling aspect of this Vinesian "Reformation." Not only are LGBT Reformers *not* content to find an affirming church for themselves and peacefully coexist with everyone else, *everyone else must change* in order to be correct in their Christian expression.
>
> This is the classic progression of codependency, and efforts to change everyone

> else become increasingly coercive. We *must* affirm same-sex orientation, Matthew says. If we don't, we are "tarnishing the image of God [in gay Christians]. Instead of making gay Christians more like God … embracing a non-affirming position makes them less like God." "[W]hen we reject the desires of gay Christians to express their sexuality within a lifelong covenant, we separate them from our covenantal God."
>
> Do you hear what he's saying? LGBTs' relationships with God are dependent on Christians approving their sexual proclivities. But he's *still* not finished. "In the final analysis, then, it is not gay Christians who are sinning against God by entering into monogamous, loving relationships. It is *we* who are sinning against them by rejecting their intimate relationships." In other words, non-affirming beliefs stand between LGBTs and God. Thus sayeth Matthew Vines.

The rest of her article deals with Vines' attempt to twist Scripture to validate sexual behavior that is not permissible in Christianity.

Vines seems to want a lot of people to agree that the Bible somehow doesn't forbid this sexual behavior so that the people who are doing it won't feel bad about doing it. If he can just silence those who disagree and get a majority of people to agree, then the people who are doing these things will feel better.

Matthew Vines is annoyed that Bible-believing Christians expect homosexuals to work through their same-sex attractions, abstain from premarital sex, and then either remain chaste like me, or marry one person of the opposite sex and then confine his/her sexual behavior to his/her marriage. But how is that different than what is asked of me? I am single, and have opposite sex-attractions, but I am also expected to abstain from sex outside of marriage. I have two choices: either remain chaste or marry one woman for life, and confine my sexual behavior to that marriage. I'm not married, so I've chosen to remain chaste. **If I have to exercise a little self-control to show God that what he wants from me is important to me, then I am willing to do that.** I'm really at a loss to understand why so many people take sexual gratification as a given, rather than as an opportunity for self-denial and self-control. I am especially puzzled by sinful people demanding that other celebrate their sin – and using the power of the government now to compel others to celebrate their sin. Christianity is a religion where the founder prioritized self-sacrificial obedience above pleasure and fulfillment. You really have to wonder about people who miss that core element of Christianity.

My service to God is not conditional on me getting my needs met. And my needs and desires are no less strong than the needs of people who engage in sex outside the boundaries of Christian teaching. We just make different decisions about what/who comes first. For me, Jesus is first, because I have sympathy with Jesus for loving me enough to die in my place, for my sins. I am obligated to Jesus, and that means that my responsibility to meet expectations in our relationship comes above my desire to be happy and fulfilled. For Matthew, the sexual desires come first, and Scripture has to be reinterpreted in light of a desire to be happy. I just don't see anything in the New

Testament that leads me to believe that we should expect God to fulfill our desires. The message of Jesus is about self-denial, self-control and putting God the Father first – even when it results in suffering. I take that seriously. That willingness to be second and let Jesus lead me is what makes me an authentic Christian.

There is a good debate featuring Robert Gagnon and a gay activist in this post, so you can hear both sides.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

February 3, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here is Dr. William Lane Craig giving a long-form argument for the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus, and taking questions from the audience.

The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the

Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early dating
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthewand whether it is intended to be historical or apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza

Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is “The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus” and the best comprehensive book is “The Resurrection of Jesus“.

Study: raising children without a father causes harm to the children

February 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I thought it might be a good idea to take a look at a recent research paper on father absence. My purpose in posting this study is to remind people to think about what children need when making relationship decisions. Fathers are more of a necessity for children than a nice-to-have.

The paper about a large-scale study was posted at NCBI NIH.

The abstract says:

> The literature on father absence is frequently criticized for its use of cross-sectional data and methods that fail to take account of possible omitted variable bias and reverse causality. We review studies that have responded to this critique by employing a variety of innovative research designs to identify the causal effect of father absence, including studies using lagged dependent variable models, growth curve models, individual fixed effects models, sibling fixed effects models, natural experiments, and propensity score matching models. Our assessment is that studies using more rigorous designs continue to find negative effects of father absence on offspring well-being, although the magnitude of these effects is smaller than what is found using traditional cross-sectional designs. The evidence is strongest and most consistent for outcomes such as high school graduation, children's social-emotional adjustment, and adult mental health.

I was curious to see what specific problems fatherlessness causes for children, according

to this redo of previous studies.

The conclusion explains:

> The body of knowledge about the causal effects of father absence on child well-being has grown during the early twenty-first century as researchers have increasingly adopted innovative methodological approaches to isolate causal effects. We reviewed 47 such articles and find that, on the whole, articles that take one of the more rigorous approaches to handling the problems of omitted variable bias and reverse causality continue to document negative effects of father absence on child well-being, though these effects are stronger during certain stages of the life course and for certain outcomes.
>
> We find strong evidence that father absence negatively affects children's social-emotional development, particularly by increasing externalizing behavior. These effects may be more pronounced if father absence occurs during early childhood than during middle childhood, and they may be more pronounced for boys than for girls. There is weaker evidence of an effect of father absence on children's cognitive ability.
>
> Effects on social-emotional development persist into adolescence, for which we find strong evidence that father absence increases adolescents' risky behavior, such as smoking or early childbearing. The evidence of an effect on adolescent cognitive ability continues to be weaker, but we do find strong and consistent negative effects of father absence on high school graduation. The latter finding suggests that the effects on educational attainment operate by increasing problem behaviors rather than by impairing cognitive ability.
>
> The research base examining the longer-term effects of father absence on adult outcomes is considerably smaller, but here too we see the strongest evidence for a causal effect on adult mental health, suggesting that the psychological harms of father absence experienced during childhood persist throughout the life course. The evidence that father absence affects adult economic or family outcomes is much weaker. A handful of studies find negative effects on employment in adulthood, but there is little consistent evidence of negative effects on marriage or divorce, on income or earnings, or on college education.
>
> Despite the robust evidence that father absence affects social-emotional outcomes throughout the life course, these studies also clearly show a role for selection in the relationship between family structure and child outcomes. In general, estimates from IFE, SFE, and PSM models are smaller than those from conventional models that do not control for selection bias. Similarly, studies that compare parental death and divorce often find that even if both have significant effects on well-being, the estimates of the effect of divorce are larger than those of parental death, which can also be read as evidence of partial selection.

Right now, we're living in a time where people think that it's ok to do whatever they feel

like doing. People seem to treat relationships as if they are meant to provide the grown-ups with satisfaction, and the needs of the children are often neglected. Any kind of warning or appeal to evidence is dismissed by those who want to bend and break the rules.

Well, when you take a look at the studies, you actually find that there are rules about how to go about relationships in order to achieve results. It seems to me that children's needs ought to be an important consideration when making relationship decisions. Men shouldn't have babies with bad mothers, and women shouldn't have babies with bad fathers. It ought to be an important criterion for choosing a mate and conducting a relationship: are we making decisions protecting children and giving them what they need?

And it turns out that there are studies that tell you how to prepare for making a stable commitment, too. Like this one, which found that the number of premarital sex partners reduces relationship stability and quality. This is just an example, there are many more studies that provide a lot more information about how to do things right.

I think today, people want to make decisions about what to do based on feelings. If it feels good, do it. But this approach doesn't work anywhere in life. It doesn't work when choosing a major, when choosing a job, when choosing how to spend money. It just never works. Nothing useful is ever achieved by putting feelings above reason and evidence.

People shouldn't be surprised when they break the rules and then get negative outcomes. It just takes a little reading first to find out what is likely to work and what isn't. There are real victims to bad decisions. There are mistakes that can't be fixed with happy talk and a positive attitude. We seem to have gotten addicted to the idea that every damaging mistake can be fixed by making everyone around say happy words about the mistake. But the truth is that when you make bad decisions, the damage exists independently of what people say about it.

It's not the mean people making moral judgments that causes fatherless kids to have higher anxiety or be more violent or get pregnant earlier or abuse drugs. It's the fatherlessness. The only hope that children have to avoid the consequences of bad decisions by parents is for the moral people to set boundaries and teach moral wisdom with evidence.

We shouldn’t be surprised by evidence of fascism in the Obama administration

February 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama

There were plenty of signs that Obama was a pretty typical leftist authoritarian. Everything we knew about his ideology before he was elected should have told us that he was in favor of big government, and opposed to private businesses and families. If there was a conflict between liberty and government overreach, then Obama could be counted on to come down on the side of big government.

Here’s a reminder from The Federalist about why we shouldn’t be surprised by what was revealed in the House Intelligence Committee memo.

Excerpt:

> Remember Frank VanderSloot? He was one of eight Mitt Romney donors that an Obama campaign website targeted in April 2012, listing each by name and condemning them for the crime of having donated to Obama’s opponent. The post described VanderSloot as a “wealthy individual” with a “less-then-reputable record.”
>
> It didn’t stop with this public shaming of a private citizen. As the Wall Street Journal’s Kim Strassel later noted, the Obama campaign’s site was a clear signal to harass and intimidate Romney donors, which is exactly what happened:
>
> Twelve days later, a man working for a political opposition-research firm called an Idaho courthouse for Mr. VanderSloot’s divorce records. In June, the IRS informed Mr. VanderSloot and his wife of an audit of two years of their taxes. In July, the Department of Labor informed him of an audit of the guest workers on

> his Idaho cattle ranch. In September, the IRS informed him of a second audit, of one of his businesses. Mr. VanderSloot, who had never been audited before, was subject to three in the four months after Mr. Obama teed him up for such scrutiny.
>
> The last of these audits was only concluded in recent weeks. Not one resulted in a fine or penalty. But Mr. VanderSloot has been waiting more than 20 months for a sizable refund and estimates his legal bills are $80,000. That figure doesn't account for what the president's vilification has done to his business and reputation.
>
> Using the IRS to target political enemies was nothing new for the Obama administration in 2012. In Obama's January 2010 State of the Union address, he infamously disparaged the U.S. Supreme Court—to the justices' faces—for its ruling in Citizens United. He claimed the ruling would "open the floodgates for special interests" to influence elections—by which he meant conservative groups. He returned to this theme again and again in subsequent speeches, warning that Citizens United would enable shadowy organizations, maybe even foreign-controlled corporations, to infiltrate our politics with "dark money."
>
> Obama's message was clear: these conservative advocacy groups should be targeted. The IRS got the message, and from 2010 to 2013 it systematically targeted conservative nonprofits applying for tax-exempt status. If your group had "tea party" or "patriots" in its name, the IRS came after you. Hundreds of individuals and groups, mostly comprised of private citizens with moderate means, were subjected to exhaustive and expensive IRS audits. The feds demanded detailed donor and member information, reading lists, and in some cases the contents of prayers offered at meetings. The applications were held up for years.
>
> Last October, the IRS signed a consent decree in federal court admitting that it targeted conservative groups. But of course nothing ever happened to those responsible. The IRS official at the heart of the targeting scandal, Lois Lerner, retired with a full pension and no disciplinary action was ever taken against any IRS employee. When the scandal broke in 2013, Obama feigned outrage, calling the agency's behavior "outrageous" and assuring the public that the IRS should be "held fully accountable."
>
> But of course the IRS was simply responding to Obama's openly expressed suggestion that these groups were suspicious and improperly engaged in campaigning. Obama didn't have to issue a direct order to get the IRS to do his political dirty work, he just had to make himself clear.

And it wasn't just the IRS persecuting conservative groups. The Obama administration also went after religious people – people of moral character and conscience.

More:

> The same sort of politicization and abuse of power unfolded throughout the executive branch under Obama. Consider the contraceptive mandate. The Affordable Care Act invested the U.S. secretary of Health and Human Services with enormous power over the country's health insurance markets, including the ability to define what sort of contraceptive coverage employers had to provide. Employers with strong religious objections to contraception and related abortifacients, like Hobby Lobby and the Little Sisters of the Poor (an order of Catholic nuns who care for the poor elderly), were effectively told by the Obama administration to shut up and violate their faith.
>
> In both of those cases, Obama's Justice Department went all the way to the Supreme Court to try to force those employers to comply with the dictates of the HHS secretary. That Obama's Justice Department failed in both cases shouldn't diminish the fact that both HHS and DOJ carried on a highly politicized campaign against religious conservatives who refused to go along with federal rules stemming from Obama's signature legislative accomplishment.

On this blog, I wrote many times about the fascist activities of the Holder DOJ and then the Lynch DOJ, after his departure. Basically, the Obama administration thought that it was perfectly reasonable to weaponize the entire federal government – from IRS, to EPA, to HHS, and beyond – against their political opposition. Both the Republican party, and also private citizens, private businesses and private charities.

How to falsify a religion using scientific or historical evidence

February 6, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

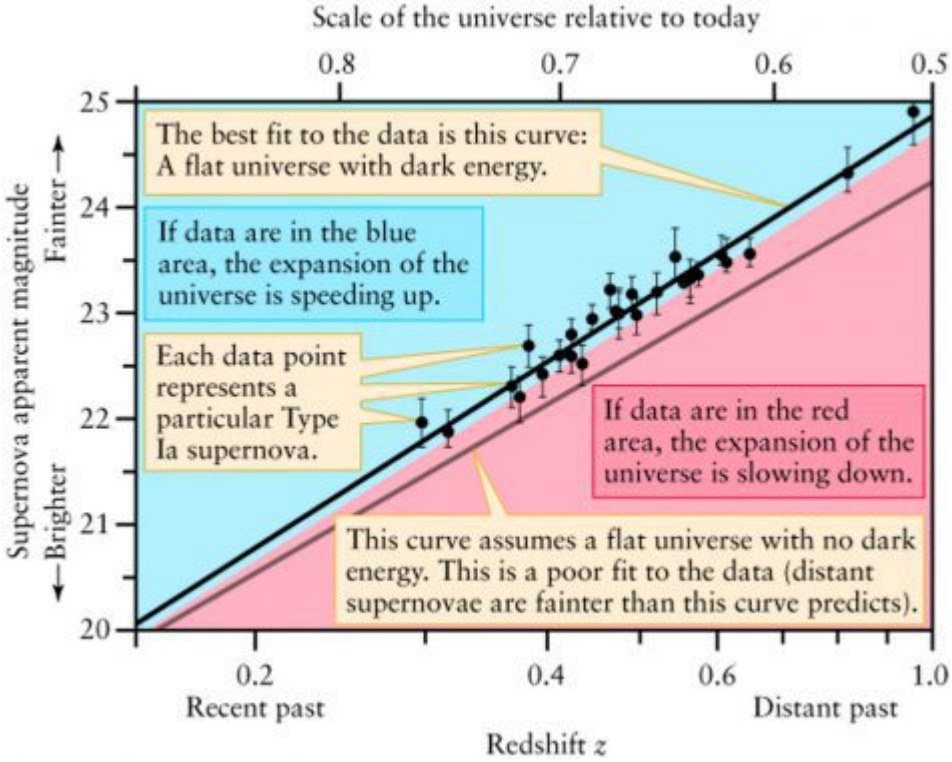

Will the universe expand forever, or will it collapse and bounce?
(Image source)

What I often see among atheists is this tendency to set up expectations of how God would have acted and then complain that he doesn't met those expectations. I don't think that this is a good way to argue against a religion, because it's subjective. God isn't obligated to comport with atheist expectations. A much better way of evaluating religions is to test the claims each makes against evidence.

So in this post, I wanted to show how a reasonable person can evaluate and reject different worldviews using evidence.

Falsifying a religion using science

Consider this argument:

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a

collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

Notice how the oscillating model is falsified by mathematics and experimental evidence. Remarkable, when you remember how the public schools would play Carl Sagan videos which promoted this no-Creator model of the universe.

The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with atheism, Buddhism, Mormonism, etc. because they also require an eternally existing universe.

Atheism in particular is incompatible with the universe "coming into being", because that would be a supernatural cause – a cause that created the natural world. According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.*

Falsifying a religion using history

Consider this argument:

1. To be a Muslim, you must believe that the Koran is without error.
2. The Koran claims that Jesus did not die on a cross. (Qur'an, 4: 157-158)
3. The crucifixion of Jesus is undisputed among non-Muslim historians, including atheist historians.
4. Therefore, it is not rational for me to become a Muslim.

I'm going to support the premise that Jesus was crucified by citing historians from all backgrounds.

Consider some quotes from the (mostly) non-Christian scholars below:

> "Jesus' death as a consequence of crucifixion is indisputable." Gert Lüdemann
>
> "That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be." J.D. Crossan
>
> "The passion of Jesus is part of history." Geza Vermes
>
> Jesus' death by crucifixion is "historically certain". Pinchas Lapide
>
> "The single most solid fact about Jesus' life is his death: he was executed by the Roman prefect Pilate, on or around Passover, in the manner Rome reserved particularly for political insurrectionists, namely, crucifixion." Paula Fredriksen
>
> "The support for the mode of his death, its agents, and perhaps its co-agents, is overwhelming: Jesus faced a trial before his death, was condemned, and was executed by crucifixion." L.T. Johnson

> “One of the most certain facts of history is that Jesus was crucified on orders of the Roman prefect of Judea, Ponitus Pilate.” Bart Ehrman

That’s 7 famous historians: 3 atheists, 3 Jews and 1 moderate Catholic. The atheists, Ludemann, Crossan and Ehrman, have all debated against the resurrection of Jesus with William Lane Craig. Johnson is the moderate Catholic, the rest are Jewish historians. The Koran was written in the 7th century. That is why no professional historian accepts the Koran as more authoritative than the many earlier Christian and non-Christian sources for the crucifixion story. Many of the sources for the crucifixion are dated to the 1st century. It’s not faith. It’s history.

I have seen debates with Muslim scholars, and I have never once heard them cite a non-Muslim historian to the effect that Jesus was not crucified. To my knowledge, there is no (non-Muslim) historian who denies the crucifixion of Jesus in his published work.

Can Christianity be falsified by science or history?

Yes. If you prove that the universe is eternal than would falsify the Bible’s claim that God created the universe out of nothing. That would be a scientific disproof. If you could find the body of Jesus still inside a tomb, that would falsify the Bible’s claim about a resurrection. That would be a historical disproof. The nice thing about Christianity is that we make lots of testable claims. When someone claims to be a Christian, it’s a good thing if they can show how they arrived at that conclusion. Being able to square God’s existence with science, and Jesus’ resurrection with history are two crucial steps to showing the reasonableness of Christianity.

What theory of truth should a Bible-believing Christian accept?

February 7, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

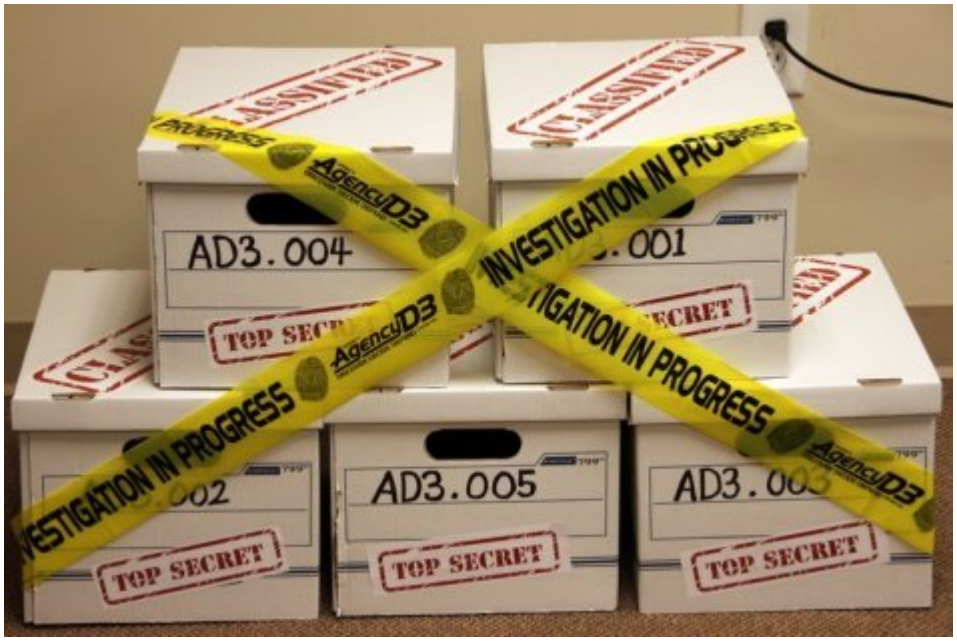

Investigation in progress

I was just thinking to myself this week about why I keep running into people who identify as Christians who are open and unrepentant about habitual sin. Now, I'm not perfect, but you don't see me out there in public saying that the Bible is wrong. I would not claim that some behavior that was condemned by all previous generations of Christians is suddenly ok.

So, I thought and thought and thought about it, and here is what I came up with. Somehow, people have come to a view of Christianity that tells them that Christianity is not something that is true about the universe out there. Instead, Christianity is "true" in the sense that it "works for them".

So they aren't saying that God actually exists or that Jesus actually rose from the dead, because they don't know if those things are objectively true. They're just saying that they like some Christian words and behaviors because those things make them feel good. Christianity is not something they could defend as objectively true to any non-Christian using reason and evidence. They like how the idea of a loving God makes them feel. Or maybe they like invoking the idea of "do not judge" when someone questions their destructive choices or immorality. But they don't actually submit to these ideas as "true" in the same way that they take the instructions on a medicine bottle as true.

Here's a post by Aaron Brake at Stand to Reason, that explains three different views of truth. He calls the view that I talked about the "pragmatic view of truth". He says that the pragmatic view is that things are true if they "work" for the individual. So, in the case of my Christians-who-deny-Jesus-as-Lord, these people pick and choose things that work for them out of Christianity, e.g. – the love of God, the "do not judge" fragment, the women

taken in adultery, etc. But they leave out the moral obligations that Christians have believed for thousands of years, e.g. – no sex before marriage, marriage is between a man and woman for life, divorce is pretty much always unjustified, and adultery is never OK under any circumstances.

Here is the view of truth that he thinks is best:

> Finally, there is the **correspondence theory** of truth: *truth is when an idea, belief, or statement matches (or corresponds with) the way the world actually is (reality).*
>
> This may rightly be labeled the "common sense" view of truth. While not taught explicitly in Scripture, it is assumed throughout both the Old and New Testaments. The correspondence theory of truth states that an idea, belief, or statement is true if it matches, or corresponds with, reality. In this sense, reality is the truth-maker, and the idea, belief, or statement is the truth-bearer. When the truth-bearer (an idea) matches the truth-maker (reality), they are said to stand in an "appropriate correspondence relationship," and truth obtains.
>
> Consider the following statements:
>
> 1. Donald Trump is the current President of the United States.
> 2. The city of Los Angeles is located in California.
> 3. Elective abortion kills an innocent human being.
>
> Are these statements *true*? They are if, in fact, they match reality. Statement number 1 is true if, in reality, Donald Trump is the current President of the United States. Statement 2 is true if, in fact, the city of Los Angeles is located in California. And statement 3 is true if elective abortion really does kill an innocent human being. Easy enough, right? Aristotle put it this way:
>
> To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true; so that he who says anything that it is, or that it is not, will say either what is true or what is false.
>
> **A Case for Correspondence**
>
> Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland notes two main arguments which have been advanced in favor of the correspondence theory of truth: the descriptive and the dialectical.
>
> The descriptive argument simply presents specific cases that help illustrate the concept of truth. For example, in Moreland's bookstore case, an individual named Joe has the thought "Richard Swinburne's book *The Evolution of the Soul* is in the bookstore." When Joe enters the bookstore and sees the book, he actually experiences truth, a correspondence relation between his thought and reality. Again, this is the "common sense" definition of truth since it is the view we all presuppose in our daily actions and speech; i.e., everyone assumes the correspondence theory of truth when reading a medicine label or dialing a phone

> number.

That theory of truth is the normal theory of truth, and it's the one used in the Bible, e.g. – Elijah on Mount Carmel, Jesus calling his resurrection the Sign of Jonah. If the Bible teaches something, then that teaching is true, because it conforms to the way the world really is. Objective reality makes the Bible's statements true or false. It's true whether people like it or not.

Here's what I suspect is true of all the liberal Christians that I've met. None of them will have looked into things like the existence of God or the resurrection to see if they are objectively true. They'll not even be interested in lifting a finger to study in order to find out whether those things are true. If they evangelize, they'll tell stories about their own life experiences and feelings, and try to "sell" Christianity based on felt needs being met. They'll not waste a second on studying the laws of logic, or science or history in order to demonstrate Christian claims as true – especially the ones that don't "ring true" to them.

It makes me think of that post that I wrote about John Searle and his suspicion about why people become postmodern relativists. He thinks it's so that they can deny reality if reality constrains their will to pursue happiness. I've actually seen this when people break all the rules in their selfish pursuit of happiness, and then when it all explodes in their face, they claim that life is unpredictable, and it wasn't their fault. The rejection of the correspondence theory of truth is – I think – rooted in this desire to dismiss anything that could act as a brake on their hedonism. They don't care that you can produce studies after studies showing that fatherlessness is bad for children. If God didn't give them a husband, then they are perfectly justified in having children through a sperm donor, and raising the fatherless child with welfare money. The simplest way out of your Bible verses and fatherlessness studies is for them to say that doing wrong "works for them" and so it's "true for them".

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

February 8, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference

between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.

But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.

There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that “There is no God” is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that “There is a God.” Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God’s existence. He confesses that he doesn’t know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term “atheist,” you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with “non-theist.” So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word ‘atheist’ has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix ‘a-’ being read in this same way in ‘atheist’ as it customarily is in . . . words as ‘amoral’ . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. “The Presumption of Atheism,” by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word “atheist” trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our

> **cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.**
>
> **One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.**
>
> So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, "So is there a God or not?"

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some "atheists" who are not like that. How should we deal with these "subjective atheists"?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says "I lack a belief in the gravitational force!". When you engage in serious discussions with people about God's existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don't care about a person's psychology.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason

- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Peter J. Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospel narratives

February 9, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the evidence

Greg West of The Poached Egg tweeted this lecture featuring Peter D. Williams yesterday, and I'm posting it today with a summary below.

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?
- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate. That link contains a link to the audio of the debate as well as my snarky summary. It's very snarky.

How secularism and socialism killed marriage and family in Canada

February 10, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

This is actually a news article from National Post, the more prestigious and less progressive of Canada's two national newspapers.

Excerpt:

> Couples without kids are outpacing their procreating counterparts, same-sex relationships are blossoming, multiple generations are living under the same roof and more people than ever are living alone, Statistics Canada revealed Wednesday as the 2016 census showcased more seismic changes in the way Canadians are living their lives.
>
> […]Canada is skewing older, with fewer children and less affinity for marriage — forcing legislators to adjust and adapt their policies and programs to fit a rapidly evolving reality.
>
> […]Higher rates of separation and divorce also mean more people living alone or as lone parents, as does an increasing number of women in the workforce, which fosters a greater sense of economic independence.
>
> Childless couples grew in number at a faster rate over the last five years than couples with at least one child, leaving the latter group at 51.1 per cent of the population, the lowest level ever recorded.
>
> The baby boomers who fuelled such population growth in the 20th century are empty nesters in the 21st. The census found younger Canadians who do have kids are living in places like Alberta, long a magnet for job-seeking families, or Nunavut, where fertility rates are high.

They also important large numbers of unskilled immigrants who paid less in taxes than they used in social programs:

> Canada's 35.15 million people are getting older; there are now more seniors than children under the age of 14. Immigration contributed two-thirds of the country's population growth between 2011 and 2016, and that diversity has also added complexity to the Canadian family portrait.

At the time, the Liberal Party thought that importing a lot of non-Christians who would vote for bigger government dependency was a good idea. And it was a good idea to keep them getting elected, but now they are facing the long-term consequences of importing a lot of unskilled have-not socialists.

Canada legalized same-sex marriage, and same-sex marriages don't produce children naturally:

> And a decade after census-takers first collected numbers on same-sex marriage, such couples now make up one per cent of all households, with their overall numbers having increased by 60.7 per cent since 2006. Opposite-sex couples grew by just 9.6 per cent during the same period.
>
> Today, about 12 per cent of all same-sex couples are living with children, be they biological offspring, adopted or members of a stepfamily. In raw numbers, there were 10,020 children aged 14 and under living with 8,770 same-sex couple parents on census day last year.

Canada legalized same-sex "marriage" a decade before America did.

Basically, the problem here is that men don't get married in a big government socialist country, because they are taxed to pay for the big government, but they aren't allowed to lead the family. The money men earn that *would* be used to make decisions about their households is eaten up by secular socialist government programs. Instead of gun ownership, Canada has a politically correct and ineffective police force. Instead of home-schooling or a network or private schools, there are failing public schools that indoctrinate rather than educate. Instead of a choice of medical providers, there is a single-payer system that makes you take a number and wait your turn. Instead of stay at home mothers, they have expensive, ineffective government-run daycare. Instead of deciding what kind of car to drive, car money is confiscated for public transportation. Canada has some of the worst anti-male divorce and custody laws. And so on and so on. Big government makes men opt out of marriage. The whole society is set up to undermine the male aspiration to be the provider, and to let government make all the important decisions.

In Canada, it's now a criminal offense to disagree with transgenderism, and in the province of Ontario, if parents disagree with transgenderism, the government will seize your children. Speaking as a Christian man with a high income, and a high net worth, I find it unappealing to think that I would be paying the salaries of secular socialists so that they could then interfere in my life and rule over me. I would be forced to give social

engineers my money, and they would be continuously overruling my leadership in the home.

Canada, as a nation, decided a while back to embrace non-judgmentalism and redistribution of wealth to make sinful lifestyles produce the same outcomes as traditional lifestyles. Everybody gets free health care. What this means is that only working people pay for health care, but only the immoral people used it. They thought that this was “compassion”, but it just meant that fewer people would work, and more people who go off down immoral rabbit trails in their personal lives. They have free abortions and free drug injection clinics and free sex change surgery. But they don’t have free homeschooling, free stay at home moms, or tax breaks for chastity and sobriety. Everything wrong was subsidized, and everything right was taxed. The state became an unofficial arbiter of disputes between husbands and wives, always siding with the unhappy, emotional wife against the husbands who attempted to lead their families to be moral and spiritual.

What we are seeing now is similar to what has been observed in European countries for decades. An aging population that is depending on government to provide health care and pensions for them in their old age. When government grows large, human beings become more and more irresponsible. The population of Canada has been trained to think that their future needs are *government’s* problem. They don’t have to marry and make children to care for them in their old age – that’s *government’s* problem. They don’t have to save their own money for old age – that’s *government’s* problem. When the government taxes all your money and takes over everything in the private sector, including the traditional roles of churches and charities, people become passive and irresponsible. Canada proudly embraced abortion and the redefinition of marriage, and now they don’t have a new generation of taxpayers to pay for their bloated government.

Next stop, Greece. Well done, Canada. If you want to have secularism, socialism and feminism, then you can’t have liberty, marriage and family. They made their choice, and we ought to be learning from their mistakes.

Does God’s omniscience conflict with human free will?

February 11, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Here’s the setup for the question, from Come Reason Ministries.

Excerpt:

> Hello,
>
> Christian doctrine holds that God is all knowing (1 John 3:20), and humans have free will (Deuteronomy 30:19 is my favorite example). however, at my favorite apologetics debate board, I have seen skeptics raise an objection to these points several times. the basic logic behind their arguments is this:
>
> 1. A being with free will, given two options A and B, can freely choose between A and B.
> 2. God is omniscient (all-knowing).
> 3. God knows I will choose A.
> 4. God cannot be wrong, since an omniscient being cannot have false knowledge.
> 5. From 3 and 4, I will choose A and cannot choose B.
> 6. From 1 and 5, omniscience and free will cannot co-exist.
>
> I have read many counter-arguments from apologetics sites, but they were either too technical (I couldn’t understand them), or not satisfying. so, I was wondering what would your input be on this issue?
>
> Thank you,
>
> Justin

Ever heard that one? I actually had that one posed to me by a guy I used to work with who had a Ph.D in computer science from Northwestern. So this is an objection you may actually hear.

Here's Lenny Eposito's answer:

> Hi Justin,
>
> Thanks for writing. This is a great question as it shows how even those who appeal to logic can have biases that blind them. Let's examine this argument and see if it follows logically.
>
> Premises 1 and 2 in your outline above are the main premises to the argument and are not disputed. The Christian worldview argues that every human being is a free moral agent and is capable of making choices simply by exercising their will, not under compulsion or because of instinct. Also, it is a long held doctrine of Christianity that God is all-knowing. The Bible says that God knows "the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10)." For omniscience to be truly knowledgeable it must be correct knowledge, so premise number 4 is also granted.
>
> However, point number 5 is where the logic falters. Those who argue in this manner make the mistake of thinking that because God possesses knowledge about a specific matter, then he has influenced it. That does not follow at all. Just because God can foresee which choice you will make, it does not mean you couldn't still freely choose the other option.
>
> Let me give you an example. I have a five year old son. If I were to leave a chocolate chip cookie on the table about a hour before dinner time and my son was to walk by and see it, I know that he would pick up the cookie and eat it. I did not force him to make that decision. In fact, I don't even have to be in the room at all. I think I know my son well enough, though, to tell you that if I come back into the kitchen the cookie will be gone. His act was made completely free of my influence, but I knew what his actions would be.
>
> In examining the argument, the assumption is made in premise 3 that because God knows I will choose A somehow denies me the choice of B. That is the premise that Christianity rejects. Omniscience and free will are not incompatible and it is a non-sequitor to claim otherwise.
>
> Thank you Justin for this interesting question. I pray that you will continue to defend the gospel of our Lord and may He continue to bless you as you seek to grow in Him.

That's a great answer and should work in ordinary conversations.

More technical

J.W. Wartick maps out the arguments more fully with symbolic logic here on his Always Have A Reason blog. But I'll just excerpt the gist of it.

Excerpt:

> It is necessarily true that if God knows x will happen, then x will happen. But then if one takes these terms, God knowing x will happen only means that x will happen, not that x will happen *necessarily.* Certainly, God's foreknowledge of an event means that that event will happen, but it does *not* mean that the event could not have happened otherwise. If an event happens necessarily, that means the event could not have happened otherwise, but God's foreknowledge of an event doesn't somehow transfer necessity to the event, it only means that the event will happen. It could have been otherwise, in which case, God's knowledge would have been different.
>
> […]Perhaps I could take an example. Let's say that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow (and I do hope I will, I don't like missing classes!). God knows in advance that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow. His knowledge of this event means that it will happen, but it doesn't mean that I couldn't choose to stay in and sleep for a while, or play my new copy of Final Fantasy XIII, or do something more useless with my time. If I chose to, say, play Final Fantasy XIII (a strong temptation!), then God simply would have known that I would play FFXIII. His knowledge does not *determine* the outcome, His knowledge is simply *of the outcome*.

If we choose A, God would foreknow A. If we choose B, God would foreknow B. His foreknowledge of our choices is contingent on our making free choices.

How did Obama's plan to let government run student loans work out?

February 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

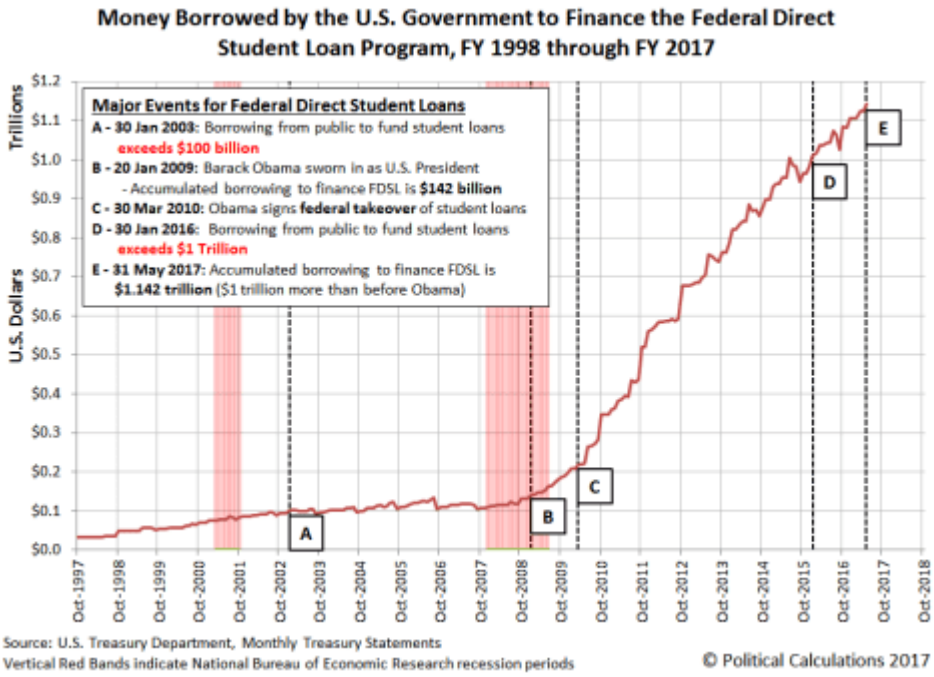

Obama nationalized student loan administration in 2010

I'm a free-market capitalist, so I believe that economic decision-making is best done by the people it concerns, not the people in government. If it is a decision that affects the family, let the family decide. If it's a decision that affects the business, let the business owner decide. Obama has a different view – he thinks that government should make all of the decisions, even though government earns none of the money.

Here is an article in Investor's Business Daily about his policy of letting the government take over student loan decision-making.

Excerpt:

> A report from the Department of Education notes that the net cost of the federal government's direct loan program is quickly heading into the red. This program, mind you, was supposed to be a moneymaker for the government, as students paid back federal loans with interest.
>
> But as it turns out, borrowers have been flocking toward various loan forgiveness programs, by which the government will lose money, erasing gains from other loans. The report shows that the direct loan program went from a $25 billion surplus in 2012 to less than $5 billion by 2015.
>
> A separate report says that this program ran a $36 billion deficit last year, up from $8.4 billion in 2016.
>
> This is not how this federal loan program was supposed to work when President Obama launched it eight years ago.

> In 2010, President Obama effectively nationalized student lending by cutting banks — which had been offering government-backed loans to students — out of the equation and having the government make the loans itself.
>
> "By cutting out the middleman, we'll save the American taxpayers $68 billion in the coming years," Obama said when he signed this change into law. "That's real money."
>
> As a result, federal student loan debt shot up from $154.9 billion in 2009 to $1.1 trillion by the end of 2017.

As everyone knows, under Obama's big government leadership, the national debt skyrocketed from $10 trillion to $20 trillion in only 8 years. Obama ran up as much debt in his 8 years as ALL the other presidents, combined. Why? It's simple. Because government isn't as careful with *other people's money* as people are careful *with their own money*. People make better decisions than government because they care about the money more – they earned it. The right people to solve an economic problem are the people in the families, and the people at the local bank branches nearby. When government takes over economic decision-making, they use other people's money to buy the votes of people who make poor decisions.

We shouldn't be allowing students to take 4-year vacations at taxpayer expense, so that they can learn English or Women's Studies and then stick taxpayers with the bill. Some of those taxpayers had to study hard things like engineering and pay their own way. Some of those taxpayers had to get jobs in the trades as electricians and plumbers to pay for the bad decisions of these spoiled brats. Student loan administration should not be something for big government to control. When government decides who gets loans, students feel no pressure to study subjects and get credentials that will allow them to pay back what they borrowed. I want the banks to make the lending decisions and loan out their own money, so that they can deny people who are studying nonsense that won't get a return.

That's why we should never have elected a big-government liberal to be president. They make a lot of promises about how great they are with money, but it never works out. Big government is never the answer to problems that are outside of what the Constitution describes as the boundaries of government.

(Image Source)

Mainstream media celebrates mass starvation and political prisons in North Korea

February 13, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNN raves about North Korea's brutal regime: Pretty! Glamorous! Stylish!

I'm sure everyone has heard about the mainstream media's embrace of North Korea's charming smiles at the Olympics. I like to listen to the Ben Shapiro podcast, the Andrew Klavan podcast, and the Daily Signal podcast and they ALL talked about it. But I wanted to tell people the truth, and remind people that this isn't the first time that mainstream media types have covered up atrocities in order to make their heroes look good.

The Daily Signal posted celebratory tweets from seven different mainstream media sources: CNN, ThinkProgress, The New York Times, Politico, Reuters, and a bureau chief of the Washington Post.

The New York Times tweeted: "Without a word, only flashing smiles, Kim Jong-un's sister outflanked Vice President Mike Pence in diplomacy" and Reuters tweeted: "North Korea judged winner of diplomatic gold at Olympics".

Before we go any further, let's learn a bit about starvation in North Korea from a radically leftist source: Newsweek.

Excerpt:

> Roughly 18 million people in North Korea are not getting enough food, a United Nations report released this week found. That means 70 percent of the isolated nation's population relies on food assistance to get by, including 1.3 million

> children under the age of five.
>
> “Amidst political tensions, an estimated 18 million people across DPRK [North Korea] continue to suffer from food insecurity and undernutrition, as well as a lack of access to basic services,” the U.N. report said. “Furthermore, 10.5 million people, or 41 percent of the total population, are undernourished.”
>
> North Koreans also need basic healthcare and sanitation, the U.N. report determined. Without safe water or better sanitation and hygiene, diarrhea and pneumonia have become the leading cause of death for children under five, the report said.

The radically-leftist NBC News reports on the concentration camps:

> Atrocities committed by North Korea against its own people are “strikingly similar” to those perpetrated by the Nazis during World War II, the head of a United Nations panel said Monday after publishing an unprecedented report.
>
> The year-long investigation called for urgent action by the international community to stop allleged crimes against humanity committed by Kim Jong Un and his regime.
>
> […]But the report also shed new light on the country’s darkest side – its labor camps.
>
> As many as 120,000 North Koreans are thought to be imprisoned across the country, many of them in four large camps. This number may have shrunk in recent years, according to the report, but only because many of the inmates have been murdered or starved to death.
>
> People and their families are held for arbitrary crimes such as “gossiping” about the state.
>
> […]The U.N. report contains more of this harrowing testimony, which it says is tantamount to “extermination, murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape, forced abortions and other sexual violence.” It compared conditions to camps run by the Nazis during World War II and gulags set up in Soviet Russia.

This is what the mainstream media declined to mention while they were praising a woman smiling and Mike Pence frowning as some great evidence of moral equivalence between North Korea and the United States of America.

One big concentration camp: a satellite photo of North Korea at night

This is not the first time that the mainstream media has covered up for forced starvation, imprisonment and mass murders.

Here's another case written about in The Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> AT LONG LAST a Pulitzer Prize committee is looking into the possibility that the Pulitzer awarded to Walter Duranty, the New York Times Moscow correspondent whose dispatches covered up Stalin's infamies, might be revoked.In order to assist in their researches, I am downloading here some of the lies contained in those dispatches, lies which the New York Times has never repudiated with the same splash as it accorded Jayson Blair's comparatively trivial lies:
>
> "There is no famine or actual starvation nor is there likely to be."
> –New York Times, Nov. 15, 1931, page 1
>
> "Any report of a famine in Russia is today an exaggeration or malignant propaganda."
> –New York Times, August 23, 1933
>
> "Enemies and foreign critics can say what they please. Weaklings and despondents at home may groan under the burden, but the youth and strength of the Russian people is essentially at one with the Kremlin's program, believes it worthwhile and supports it, however hard be the sledding."
> –New York Times, December 9, 1932, page 6
>
> "You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs."
> –New York Times, May 14, 1933, page 18

> “There is no actual starvation or deaths from starvation but there is widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition.”
> –New York Times, March 31, 1933, page 13
>
> I would like to add another Duranty quote, not in his dispatches, which is reported in a memoir by Zara Witkin, a Los Angeles architect, who lived in the Soviet Union during the 1930s. (“An American Engineer in Stalin’s Russia: The Memoirs of Zara Witkin, 1932-1934,” University of California Press). The memoirist describes an evening during which the Moscow correspondents were discussing how to get out the story about the Stalin-made Russian famine. To get around the censorship, the UP’s Eugene Lyons was telephoning the dire news of the famine to his New York office but the was ordered to stop because it was antagonizing the Kremlin. Ralph Barnes, the New York Herald Tribune reporter, turned to Duranty and asked him what he was going to write. Duranty replied:
>
> Nothing. What are a few million dead Russians in a situation like this? Quite unimportant. This is just an incident in the sweeping historical changes here. I think the entire matter is exaggerated.
>
> And this was at a time when peasants in Ukraine were dying of starvation at the rate of 25,000 a day.

And that is how mainstream media journalists think about the people who are harmed by their leftist policies – whether it be the unborn, children raised without one or more biological parents, families who cannot get make ends meet, innocent people murdered by terrorists and other criminals, etc. Kill them all, as long as big government is in control, making everyone “equal”. Journalists want to call evil “good”, and good “evil”, until the people are so confused that they lose the ability to judge the crimes of Marxist regimes.

You can get the facts about the forced starvation of Ukrainian civilians – in this article from the center-left The Atlantic, written by historian Anne Applebaum.

Here’s one quote:

> In the years 1932 and 1933, a catastrophic famine swept across the Soviet Union. It began in the chaos of collectivization, when millions of peasants were forced off their land and made to join state farms. It was then exacerbated, in the autumn of 1932, when the Soviet Politburo, the elite leadership of the Soviet Communist Party, took a series of decisions that deepened the famine in the Ukrainian countryside. Despite the shortages, the state demanded not just grain, but all available food. At the height of the crisis, organized teams of policemen and local Party activists, motivated by hunger, fear, and a decade of hateful propaganda, entered peasant households and took everything edible: potatoes, beets, squash, beans, peas, and farm animals. At the same time, a cordon was drawn around the Ukrainian republic to prevent escape. The result was a catastrophe: At least 5 million people perished of hunger all across the Soviet Union. Among them were nearly 4 million Ukrainians who died not because of

> neglect or crop failure, but because they had been deliberately deprived of food.
>
> Neither the Ukrainian famine nor the broader Soviet famine were ever officially recognized by the USSR. Inside the country the famine was never mentioned. All discussion was actively repressed; statistics were altered to hide it. The terror was so overwhelming that the silence was complete. Outside the country, however, the cover-up required different, subtler tactics. These are beautifully illustrated by the parallel stories of Walter Duranty and Gareth Jones.

Collectivization: that's what the mainstream media loves. Everyone the same and equal, and no differences. Cogs in a machine, with no dissent from our watchful government above. When you look at North Korea, or Cuba or Venezuela, you're looking at the Marxist atheist ideal. Free people are so unpredictable, they say, that we need a big government if we want to avoid catastrophes like global warming and overpopulation. This is how leftists think – or should I say, this is how leftists *feel.* They don't think.

Leftism starts with a feeling of superiority over one's neighbor, and the desire to be delivered from these inferior people by an infallible government. Those stupid neighbors with their religion and their values – they are wasting food and electricity on their large families. They should be thrown into a concentration camp, so that they don't teach their children their mistaken values, e.g. – chastity, sobriety and natural marriage. Who can stop them from having views different from mine? The government can, if we enlightened people vote to make it big enough to control them.

It's very important for people to understand what it is that they are consuming when they turn on television shows on CNN, or pick up a New York Times newspaper.

Information Enigma: 21-minute video explains intelligent design

February 14, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

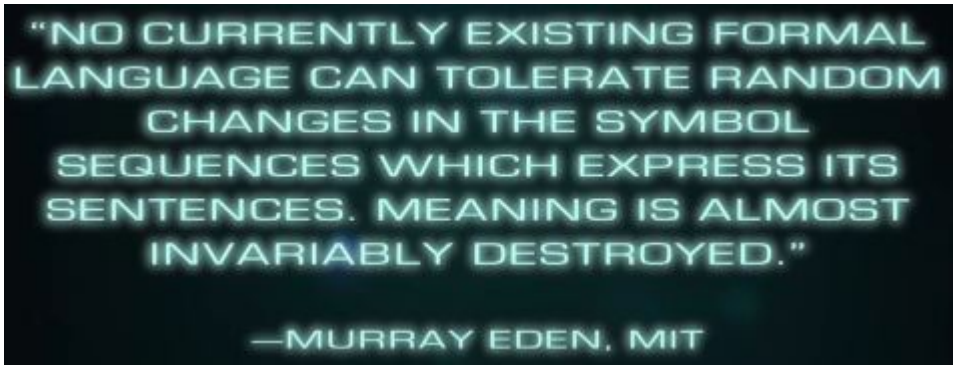

Can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
The video is here:

I have read and listened and watched a lot of material on intelligent design, but I have never seen so much value packed into such a short lecture. I really hope you'll watch this and that it's helpful to you.

Summary:

- the big question when discussing the origin of life: where did the information in living systems come from?
- Until 530 million years ago, the oceans were largely devoid of life
- In a 10 million year period, many new forms of animal life emerged
- New biological forms of life require new information
- the discovery of DNA shows that living systems work because cells have information that allows them to build the components of molecular machines: cell types, proteins, etc.
- can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
- normally, random mutations tend to degrade the functionality of information, e.g. – randomly changing symbols in an applications code does not usually introduce useful new functions, it usually renders what is there non-functional
- the majority of possible sequences will NOT have functions, so random mutations will more likely give you non-functional code, rather than functional code
- example: a bicycle lock with 4 numbers has many possible sequences for the 4 numbers, and only one of them has unlock functionality, the rest have no functionality
- if you have lots of time, then you might be able to guess the combination, but if the lock as has 10 billion numbers, and only one combination that unlocks, you can spend your whole life trying to unlock it and won't succeed
- how likely is it to arrive at a functional protein or gene by chance? Is it more like the 4-dial lock (can be done with lots of time) or the 10 billion dial lock (amount of time

required exceeds the time available)?
- the probability is LOW because there is only one sequence of numbers that has unlock function
- consider a short protein of 150 amino acids has 10 to the 195th power possible sequences
- if many of these sequences of amino acides had biological function, then it might be easier to get to one by random mutation and selection than it is with a lock that only unlocks for ONE sequence
- how many of the possible sequences have biological function?
- Thanks to research done by Douglas Axe, we now know that the number of functional amino acid sequences for even a short protein is incredibly small…
- Axe found that the odds of getting a functional sequence of amino acids that will fold and have biological function is 1 in 10 to the 77th power
- Is that number too improbable to reach by chance? well, there are 10 to 65th atoms in the entire Milky Way galaxy… so yes, this is a very improbable outcome
- can random genetic mutations search through all the sequences in order to find the one in 10 to the 77th power one that has biological function? It depends on how much guessers we have and how many guesses we get in the time available
- even with the entire 3.5 billion year history of life on Earth, only about 10 to the 40th organisms have ever lived, which far smaller fraction of the 10 to the 77th total sequences
- even with a very fast mutation rate, you would not be able to reach a functional protein even with all that time, and even with all those organisms

I was once having a discussion with a woman about the research that Axe did at the Cambridge University lab. He published four articles in the Journal of Molecular Biology. I held out one of the papers to her and showed her the numbers. She said over and over "I hate the Discovery Institute! I hate the Discovery Institute!" Well, yeah, but you can't make the Journal of Molecular Biology go away with hating the Discovery Institute. JMB is peer-reviewed, and this was experimental evidence – not a theory, not a hypothesis.

We have been blessed by the Creator and Designer of the universe in this time and place with *overwhelming evidence* – an abundance of riches. For those who have an open mind, this is what you've been waiting for to make your decision. For the naturalists who struggle so mightily to block out the progress of experimental science, they'll need to shout louder and shut their eyes tighter and push harder to block their ears. Maybe if they keep screaming "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" over and over to themselves, they will be able to ignore the real science a little longer.

What is the root cause of multiple-victim public shootings?

February 15, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

The New York Times is reporting that the shooter was fatherless:

> Mr. Cruz had no criminal history before the shootings, according to state law enforcement records. But his childhood was certainly troubled.
>
> He spent much of it in a subdivision called Pine Tree Estates, on a lush, narrow street dotted with tropical plants and the occasional driveway basketball hoop. Mr. Cruz and his brother, Zachary, had been adopted, and were raised largely by their mother, Lynda Cruz, especially after their father, Roger P. Cruz, died suddenly in 2004 at the age of 67. Ms. Cruz died in November, and people who knew Nikolas said he had taken the loss hard.

This doesn't surprise me, because we've known for decades that fatherlessness is associated in higher rates of criminal behavior in boys.

Let's take a closer look at some recent active shooters, and see if we can find out what they have in common. And then we can decide whether the people who complain the most about gun violence are willing to do anything about the root cause of gun violence.

Let's start with this article from The Stream, which looks at 3 mass murderers:

> **Dylann Roof**: The killer of nine people in a Charleston, South Carolina church grew up in painful circumstances. His parents divorced when he was small. His father divorced his first wife after a few years of marriage. And he reportedly was abusive of his second wife, Dylann's step-mother.
>
> According to the Associated Press, "Court documents and nearly two dozen interviews show Roof's early childhood was troubled and confused as well, as he

> grew up in an unstable, broken home amid allegations of marital abuse and infidelity."
>
> **Stephen Paddock**: The man who slaughtered 58 concert-goers in Las Vegas was the son of a top criminal.
>
> Paddock's father was named Benjamin. He "was on the FBI's Top Ten Most Wanted list in the 1970s for robbing banks and was described as psychopathic in an arrest warrant. According to the warrant, the suspect's father carried a firearm and was considered 'armed and dangerous.'"
>
> Benjamin Paddock was arrested and put in prison. But "six months after his sentencing, he escaped and robbed a bank in San Francisco before being recaptured in Oregon."
>
> […]**Adam Lanza**: The son of divorce, the Sandy Hook Elementary School killer struggled with mental health issues for years.
>
> Lanza's parents divorced in 2009 after 28 years of marriage. Adam, then 17, was experiencing severe mental and emotional illnesses.

Three case studies are fine, but is this the general rule among active shooters?

The Federalist takes a look:

> As University of Virginia Professor Brad Wilcox pointed out back in 2013: "From shootings at MIT (i.e., the Tsarnaev brothers) to the University of Central Florida to the Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy in Decatur, Ga., **nearly every shooting over the last year in Wikipedia's 'list of U.S. school attacks' involved a young man whose parents divorced or never married in the first place."** His observation is largely ignored.
>
> In contrast, conversations about black-on-black violence often raise the link between broken households (or fatherless homes) and juvenile delinquency. But when the conversation turns to mass shootings, we seem to forget that link altogether.
>
> […]**On CNN's list of the "27 Deadliest Mass Shootings In U.S. History," seven of those shootings were committed by young (under 30) males since 2005. Of the seven, only one—Virginia Tech shooter Seung-Hui Cho (who had been mentally unstable since childhood)—was raised by his biological father throughout childhood.**

So what are some of the factors that lead to young men who have mental illness, anger issues, etc.?

Daycare

For one thing, young children's brains don't develop if they don't have their mothers at home for the first 2 years at least, and the study I linked to said 3 years. Mothers are essential, during this time, for developing the parts of the brain that allow empathy and self-control. Unfortunately, keeping the mom home during the crucial early years is rare,

because feminism requires that she work in order to be like a man.

No-fault divorce

I also recently blogged about how easy it is to initiate divorce just because you are unhappy. Well, when parents divorce for no good reason, (after having chosen a spouse poorly), that has a very bad effect on the children. Although the divorce rate is dropping, that's because fewer people are marrying – they're cohabitating instead. The alternative to marriage, cohabitation, is far more unstable than marriage. Either way, children lose out from the decreased stability of their parent's union. The notion of lifelong commitment regardless of happiness is gone. Now we treat relationships as entertainment instead of enterprise.

So what should we do?

Well, to fix the daycare, we could give tax breaks to promote stay at home mothers. In the two countries where that was tried (UK and Canada), it was opposed by the political left. The UK wanted to give tax breaks ONLY to working mothers, not to stay at home mothers. And Canada did not want to extend income splitting to cover stay at home moms. Why not? Because when women work, the state gets more money, and the children adopt the values of the state in the government-run public schools. So, there is a solution to daycare's bad influence on children, but the left opposes it.

And, to fix no-fault divorce, we could repeal no-fault divorce laws. Unfortunately no-fault divorce laws are strongly supported by powerful left-wing groups: trial lawyers and radical feminists. But they are also supported by women who don't want to think too hard about who they are "in love" with. I was once told by a divorced mother of four whose husband cheated on her that she would never dream of marrying without no-fault divorce. Another childless divorced woman whose ex-husband cheated on her (she suspects) told me that it is impossible to tell whether a man is faithful or not through courtship and interviews. So long as women see marriage as something to be entered into on feelings, and exited lightly, children will be raised fatherless. It doesn't help that we are subsidizing single motherhood with welfare and divorce courts that typically reward the the partner who initiates divorce (usually the woman). We could repeal no-fault divorce and single mother welfare, but again, the left opposes both of these things.

Leftist policies create the gun violence problem

As I've discussed before, the common denominator in all violent crime is that the violent criminal is male, and grew up without a father. The left pretends to be concerned with this, but they are not willing to address the root causes of the problem. They want more daycare, and they want it taxpayer-funded. They want universal pre-K, and they want it taxpayer-funded. They want to keep no-fault divorce, because it's just too much work for women to make wise choices in how they make sexual choices and who they marry. And they want more and more welfare for single mothers, because women who have babies before they have husbands should be rewarded by taxpayers who made better decisions. People on the left want to subsidize fatherlessness, in short. And whatever you subsidize, you get more of.

Fatherlessness is the root cause of crime and mass murders, and the left doesn’t care about solving the real problem. It’s ironic that the left looks to government to solve the problem that government has actually created, by destroying marriage and the family unit.

Why are men withdrawing from traditional male roles as providers and mentors?

February 16, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

My friend Adina shared an article about the decline of masculinity in men. Masculinity has traditionally involved men acting according to a specific gender role. One of the components of men's traditional roles is chivalry. Chivalry means that the man is very informed about character and morality, and he acts on these convictions.

Here's an article about the decline in male chivalry from The College Fix. (H/T Adina)

Excerpt:

> Today, boys and men are taught to shun chivalry and their natural inclination to protect and cherish women.
>
> While oppression of women in America was the status quo for centuries, now traditional masculine qualities are under fire. Today, men are the ones in trouble.
>
> What changed? I believe we can begin to trace the emerging "end of men" with the introduction of the welfare system, which incentivized women to forego marriage. As a result, 40 percent of children now grow up without fathers in the home as opposed to 10 percent in the 1960s.
>
> With the disappearance of dads, little boys lost their male role models. Because of this, boys do not shed their childish ways. Without fathers, they are more likely to be sexually promiscuous, serve jail time, and use drugs, studies show. All these negative activities affect men's emotional behaviors, which in turn ends up hurting women.

And specifically regarding the mentoring natural of traditional masculinity:

> Today, men cannot voice constructive criticism without being accused of sexism

> or “mansplaining.” With the denial of rights — the right to be a father, the right to be chivalrous, the right to cherish women, the right to be a masculine man, the right to speak freely and defend oneself — comes the removal of responsibility. It makes sense that we see the trend of irresponsibility among men accelerate. Without responsibility, men have no purpose for which to strive.

The welfare state really upsets me. It seems to me that those programs are there to make a good husband unnecessary, since the state takes the place of the man as provider. Before, men who earned a lot were sought after by women. But now, women can easily delay marriage to high-earning men, and instead spend their 20s going after men who aren’t interested in or capable of marriage. The welfare state is there to make avoiding responsible men “work out”. But the responsible men are actually paying for these programs, but without getting any of the respect they deserve. There isn’t anything in society that is telling women that men who do traditional roles like providing and mentoring are better than a hot bad boy and a welfare check. We have a 42% out-of-wedlock birth rate right now, and a $20 trillion national debt. We’re not doing a good job of teaching women which men they should be choosing. We’re not doing a good job of teaching women how to be in a relationship with a man without giving him premarital sex. Men are keeping silent while women make important life choices without any practical guidance. And the reason why is because men have become frightened about treating women like moral agents, subject to the same concerns about morality and responsibility that men are. It is essential that men be encouraged to bring up practical concerns, moral concerns, and step-by-step planning out of life goals with women. It helps women to focus less on feelings and how they are perceived, so they can make decisions that are likely to produce the outcomes that they want.

Here’s an interesting article in the Federalist that makes a point I’ve often made about eradication gender roles. If you get rid of the idea men ought to perform certain roles in society, and then don’t give them any respect for fulfilling those roles, then don’t be surprised when they reject the expectations of society.

Excerpt:

> Well, our brave new world of gender *equality*—in which we scoff at gender differences and men and women are encouraged to act the same—often proves harmful to women and girls. While the modern feminist movement won women tremendous freedoms educationally, professionally, personally, and sexually, it often leaves women feeling anything but empowered.
>
> The reality is these freedoms have too often come at the expense of all values and traditions. We’ve in effect thrown the helpful social mores out with the old-fashioned bathwater. But it’s the modern feminist movement, which ushered away any hint of traditional chivalry and gendered expectations, that’s in part to blame. Certainly few want to return to an age when gender roles were excessively rigid, but feminists have gone to extremes and encouraged a culture that undermines healthy gender relationships. Men who hold doors are now

> viewed as part of the patriarchal society. And girls are expected to just “be one of the guys.”
>
> But gender roles helped men and women and in times past allowed the sexes to better navigate the sometimes-rough waters of romance, courtship, marriage, and sex. Feminists view the chivalry and social mores of previous generations as anachronistic. But the reality is these traditional customs of giving up a seat for a woman on a train, or accompanying a woman in public, weren’t all rooted in sexism. They were social structures to help make men more respectful of women and to curb this kind of inappropriate behavior.

> It might not have been perfect, but it had a purpose. Today’s dismissal of gender differences instead creates confusion, disappointment, and often more opportunity for harassment.

It seems to me that this article explains why men are so disappointing these days with respect to rising up to the roles of protector, provider, moral leader and spiritual leader.

If you tell women that there is nothing that men aspire to that is different than what women aspire to, then they lose the ability to evaluate men as protectors, providers, moral leaders and spiritual leaders. If men have no special roles, then the only way to distinguish a good one from a bad one is by appearance, peer-approval and tingles (feelings). Once men understand that this is how they are being evaluated, that’s where they put their effort.

I can tell you that in my experience, women who are influenced by feminism do not welcome men who focus on and excel at these male responsibilities. My new duties, as I understand them from the culture, are to be fun-loving, thrill-providing, and non-judgmental. No definite moral or spiritual opinions are allowed. That’s the job of the public schools – to teach us right and wrong and our secular religion. And protecting and providing? That’s the job of the police and the army, and the government social programs. Men don’t like it when they don’t have respect for fulfilling roles that are their responsibility. We do better when we are respected for being able to do something that others cannot do, and when we are not micro-managed by others while doing it.

Regarding chivalry, I think it’s only safe to do now with women who explicitly reject feminism. Being chivalrous to a feminist doesn’t earn her respect, so don’t bother. They’ll just get you in trouble, which can ruin your ability to be be chivalrous to the minority of women who respect you for doing that.

Mike Licona explains the As, Bs, Cs, Ds and Es of New Testament reliability

February 18, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Licona is one of my favorite Christian apologists, and here is an excellent lecture to show you why.

In the lecture, he explains why the four biographies in the New Testament should be accepted as historically accurate: (55 minutes)

Summary:

- What a Baltimore Ravens helmet teaches us about the importance of truth
- What happens to Christians when they go off to university?
- The 2007 study on attitudes of American professors to evangelical Christians
- Authors: Who wrote the gospels?
- Bias: Did the bias of the authors cause them to distort history?
- Contradictions: What about the different descriptions of events in the gospels?
- Dating: When were the gospels written?
- Eyewitnesses: Do the gospel accounts go back to eyewitness testimony?

This is basic training for Christians. It would be nice if every Christian was equipped in church to be able to make a case like this.

Making sense of evil and suffering within a Christian worldview

February 19, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One thing I've noticed in talking to atheists who grew up in Christian homes is that they often leave their Christian worldview behind because of a disappointment with God. For some reason, they get this idea that God is our cosmic butler. We can do whatever we want in order to be happy, and if we want any help in this, then we just ring for him. When we encounter disappointment, our tendency is to just leave God behind.

Paul Copan explains the high points of the problems of evil and suffering in 17 minutes. (H/T Apologetics 315)

The MP3 file is here.

The video is here:

Topics:

- the question itself reveals that we are moral beings
- the problem of evil is the great interrupter of human well-being
- every philosophy of life has to address this question
- is God required to give us a life that is easy and comfortable?
- evil is a departure from good, i.e. – the way things ought to be
- a way things ought to be implies a plan for what ought to be
- human evil implies a plan for the way we ought to be
- free creatures have the ability to deviate from the plan
- where does this plan for the universe and us come from?
- how can there be a way we ought to be come from?
- evil is the flip side of good so where does good come from?
- God's own moral nature is the standard of good and evil
- where does evil from natural disasters come from?
- how dangerous natural phenomena preserve Earth's habitability
- there is a benefit from tectonic activity
- similarly, God lets humans freely choose knowing harm may result
- people are free to try to find meaning in something other than God
- God is able to use negative things to bring about positive results
- e.g. – when good people suffer, they can comfort and care for others
- can people be good enough on their own without God?

I do think it's worth thinking about whether the New Testament portrays God as our cosmic butler, just waiting on us hand and foot so that we can be happy. Personally, I think you'd have to be crazy to get that impression of God from the Bible. Especially from the life of Jesus, who suffers in order to do the will of his Father. Wouldn't it be funny if atheists were disbelieving in a God of their own making? Suffering in the pursuit of

goodness has always been the center of the Christian life. I'm not sure where people get this idea that God's job is to make us happy, according to our own desires. Seems kind of shallow. Certainly not Biblical. Do people even read the Bible any more to find out what God is really like? Maybe that's the problem.

If you want to read two *good* books for beginners on Christian Apologetics that cover a range of intermediate issues, then pick up "Passion Conviction" and the companion "Contending With Christianity's Critics". Awesome, awesome resources. The Kindle editions can often be had for $3 each on Amazon.

Is Sam Harris successful at rationally grounding objective moral values and duties?

February 20, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

I just wanted to put out a few snips from this layperson-level article on the Reasonable Faith web site. The article is about atheist scholar Sam Harris, and his attempt to provide a basis for morality on atheism.

Here's the Harris project:

> The question then is, what is the best foundation for the existence of objective moral values and duties? What grounds them? What makes certain actions good or evil, right or wrong? Traditionally, God has been the highest Good (*summum bonum*) and His commandments constitutive of our moral duties. But if God does not exist, what foundation remains for objective moral values and duties?

Dr. Craig is able to show why Harris' attempt to ground the objective moral value of humans in "human flourishing" fails, by using the law of identity to show that Harris' rule doesn't account for the possibility that those who do evil could *possibly* flourish and be happy. If Harris is right that objective morality is *identical* to human flourishing, then it cannot even be *possible* that this be the case. This can be a bit confusing to non-philosophers, though, so I'll focus on Dr. Craig's argument against Harris' attempt to ground objective moral duties.

Dr. Craig writes:

> That takes us to a second question: Does atheism provide a sound foundation for objective moral duties? Duty has to do with moral obligation and prohibition, what I ought or ought not to do. Here reviewers of *The Moral Landscape* have been merciless in pounding Harris' attempt to provide a naturalistic account of

> moral obligation. Two problems stand out.
>
> **First:** Natural science tells us only what *is*, not what *ought* to be, the case. As philosopher Jerry Fodor has written, "Science is about facts, not norms; it might tell us how we are, but it wouldn't tell us what is wrong with how we are." In particular it cannot tell us that we have a moral obligation to take actions that are conducive to human flourishing.
>
> So if there is no God, what foundation remains for objective moral duties? On the naturalistic view, human beings are just animals, and animals have no moral obligations to one another. When a lion kills a zebra, it kills the zebra, but it does not *murder* the zebra. When a great white shark forcibly copulates with a female, it forcibly copulates with her but it does not *rape* her — for there is no moral dimension to these actions. They are neither prohibited nor obligatory.
>
> So if God does not exist, why think we have any moral obligations to do anything? Who or what imposes these moral duties on us? Where do they come from? It is hard to see why they would be anything more than a subjective impression ingrained into us by societal and parental conditioning.

So we might *feel* morally obligated to do something, maybe what our herd expects of us in this time and place we live in. But on atheism those feelings are arbitrary. After all, societies have evolved where feelings of obligation are felt by people to perform suicide bombings against civilians. On atheism, those feelings are as valid and grounded as any other "duties" because they emerge from the same process in other times and places. Obligations change between time and place – they are not objectively real. But that means that our moral duties are not objective, they are arbitrary – if atheism is true. The same "socio-biological evolution" is generating opposite moral duties in different times and places. This is not "objective".

And the second objection is even more lethal:

> **Second:** "ought" implies "can." A person is not morally responsible for an action he is unable to avoid. For example, if somebody shoves you into another person, you are not to blame for bumping into this person. You had no choice. But Harris believes that *all* of our actions are causally determined and that there is no free will. Harris rejects not only libertarian accounts of freedom but also compatibilistic accounts of freedom. But if there is no free will, no one is morally responsible for anything. In the end, Harris admits this, though it's tucked away in his endnotes. Moral responsibility, he says, "is a social construct," not an objective reality: "in neuroscientific terms no person is more or less responsible than any other" for the actions they perform. His thoroughgoing determinism spells the end of any hope or possibility of objective moral duties on his worldview because we have no control over what we do.
>
> Harris recognizes that "determinism really does threaten free will and responsibility as we intuitively understand them." But not to worry! "*The illusion*

> *of free will is itself an illusion*." The point, I take it, is that we do not really have the illusion of free will. Not only is such a claim patently false phenomenologically, as any of us can attest, but it is also irrelevant. The fact remains that whether we experience the illusion of free will or not, on Harris' view we are thoroughly determined in all that we think and do and can therefore have no moral responsibilities.

On Harris' view, human beings are computers made out of meat. But if you cannot freely make moral choices, then you cannot choose to perform moral duties or not. What is amazing to me is why he wants to deny free will in the first place. He is surely very well aware of his own experience of free will, and his own consciousness, for that matter. Before we even start to look at scientific evidences against atheism like the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, etc. we already have evidence within ourselves that naturalism is false.

Just in passing, my friend Micah sent me this article about Sam Harris' academic credentials. Although Harris has a PhD in neuroscience, the underlying reality is a bit more complicated. When I watched him debate William Lane Craig, he seemed to be ignorant of simple problems with his utilitarian moral views, and his inability to ground libertarian free will. The problems with utilitarianism have been known for hundreds of years. You can watch the debate yourself and see if you think he was prepared or not.

Divorce is horribly painful for boys

February 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About a month ago, one of my friends ECM committed suicide. He used to send me a lot of stories for this blog. Whenever we talked about his background, he would always point to his parents' divorce as something that really hurt him badly, and caused him to abandon the faith of his childhood for drinking and promiscuity in college. I found an editorial on Fox News that talks about some of the things that he told me he had experienced.

Suzanne Venker writes:

> Broken homes, or homes without a physically and emotionally present mother and father, are the cause of most of society's ills. "Unstable homes produce unstable children," writes Peter Hasson at The Federalist.
>
> He adds, "On CNN's list of the "27 Deadliest Mass Shootings In U.S. History," seven of those shootings were committed by young males since 2005. Of the seven, only one—Virginia Tech shooter Seung-Hui Cho—was raised by his biological father throughout childhood."
>
> Life for Nikolas Cruz was no different. His adoptive father died when Cruz was very young, and his adoptive mother had a difficult time raising him.
>
> America's boys are in serious trouble. As Warren Farrell's new book, The Boy Crisis, explains, boys are experiencing a crisis of education, a crisis of mental health (as in the case of Nikolas Cruz), a crisis of purpose. And at the root of it all is fatherlessness.
>
> Indeed, there is a direct correlation between boys who grow up with absent fathers and boys who drop out of school, who drink, who do drugs, who become delinquent and who wind up in prison.
>
> And who kill their classmates.

The reason why so many people on the left want to ban guns as the solution to violent crime they don't like is because they don't want to address the root cause of the problem: fatherlessness. And why don't they want to address it? In a second editorial, Suzanne Venker explains why not.

Excerpt:

> To point out that boys need their fathers is to shine a spotlight on divorce and single mothers; and that is, admittedly, uncomfortable. But there's no way to address fatherlessness comfortably.
>
> The fact is, divorce and family breakdown—which, to answer my emailer's question, is the root of fatherlessness—is catastrophic for children. There's more than one reason why, but an obvious one is that in the majority of cases, divorce

> separates children from their fathers.
>
> This is destructive to both boys and girls, but each sex suffers differently. Girls who grow up deprived of their father are more likely to become depressed, more likely to self-harm, and more likely to be promiscuous. But they still have their mothers, with whom they clearly identify. Boys do not have a comparable identification and thus suffer more from father absence. They also tend to act out in a manner that's harmful to others, which girls typically do not.
>
> […]More often than not, children lose contact with their fathers—for two reasons. One, mothers remain the default custodial parent in the average American divorce and thus retain most of the control. Second, it is usually women who consider themselves the aggrieved party, as evidenced by the fact that wives initiate 70 percent of divorces.
>
> The unfortunate result is that some divorced mothers use any opportunity to undermine their children's relationship with their father or, if not that, dismiss the significance of a father's role.
>
> […]And the saddest part is most absent fathers aren't absent by choice. The "deadbeat dad" exists, but not in spades. In many instances, women are divorcing perfectly good husbands in their search for what they believe will be a better match—which is a natural outgrowth of no-fault divorce. Certainly, women who are married to abusive or dangerous men must file for divorce. But such husbands and fathers cannot account for the 70 percent female-led divorce rate.

Seventy percent of divorces are initiated by women, and most of those are for flimsy reasons like unhappiness. As if marriage is about feeling good, and it's the other person's job to make you feel good. And if they don't make you feel good, then you can nuke the relationship. It can be very difficult for men to make women feel anything. Most men do the normal male roles in marriage: protect, provide, lead on moral and spiritual issues. But it's becoming very common for women today to not be "happy" with the normal male roles.

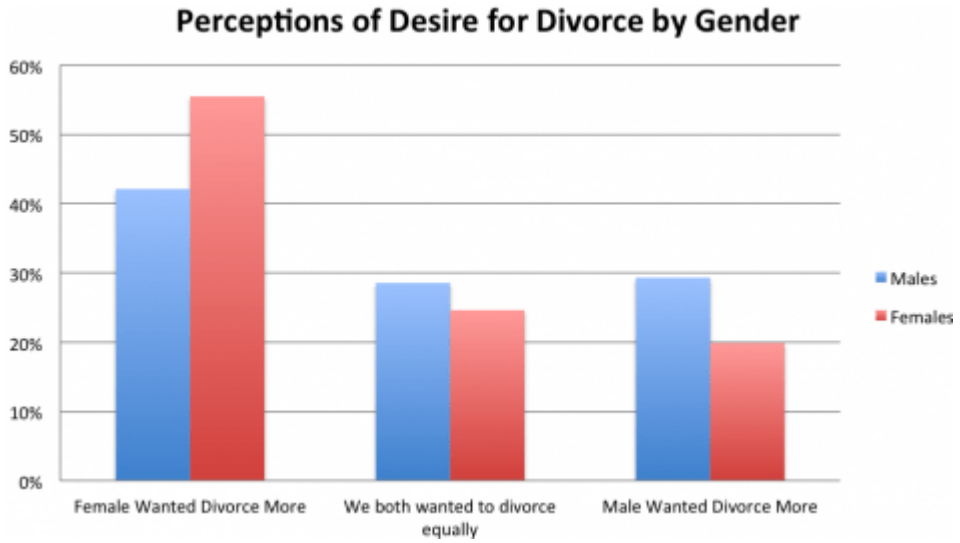

Differing attitudes on divorce

Personally, I think it's because of the pattern of hedonism that they build up with alcohol and promiscuity in college. The more men that women have sex with before marrying, the higher their likelihood of dissolving their marriage.

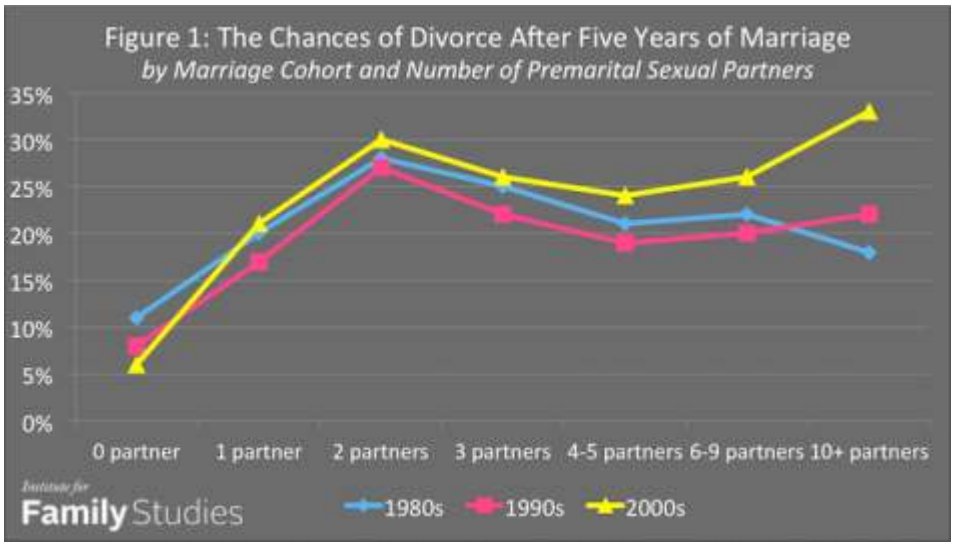

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

Previously, I blogged about a Swiss study that showed that children tend to rebel against the religion of their parents if the father is not actively promoting it to them. Studies of prominent atheists find that their fathers are defective in some way – absent, immoral, unfaithful, weak, etc. It's not use crying about crime later if we as a society have decided to stay silent when women choose men poorly, and choose the timing of sex in relationships poorly. If women chase bad boys and make babies with bad boys, then we should be asking them why. This is a community, and poor decisions about who to make babies with costs us all in the long run.

Ohio parents denied custody of their daughter for not supporting transgenderism

February 22, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

A long, long time ago, I wrote a very long post detailing a secular case against same-sex marriage. One of the reasons was that promoting gay rights would infringe on other basic rights, like the right to free speech and freedom of association. Same-sex marriage denies that that the two genders are different. Those who disagree with this are now being punished for their disagreement, e.g. – Christian business owners. It isn't difficult to predict that transgender activism will cause the same sorts of problems.

Here's an example reported at the Daily Wire:

> On Friday, Ohio parents were denied custody of their daughter for not being supportive enough of her alleged transgenderism.
>
> The 17-year-old biologically female child identifies as a boy and claims she has suicidal thoughts over her parents' lack of support for her transgenderism (they won't, for example, call her by her new chosen male name). The parents were fighting for custody of their daughter back from the state in an effort to stop potential transgender hormone treatment.
>
> An attorney representing the parents, whose names have not been disclosed because of privacy concerns, argued that the girl was not "even close to being able to make such a life-altering decision at this time." Representatives of the girl argued that a "medical team" claimed that the treatment was a matter of life and death.
>
> Hamilton County Judge Sylvia Sieve Hendon granted custody to the girl's maternal grandparents, who are open to transgender hormone therapy. The teenager has been living with them since 2016.

> According to CNN, Hendon also granted the grandparents the option to petition to change the teen's name to her new male name in probate court. The girl is now covered by their insurance.
>
> "The grandparents, rather than parents, will be the ones to help make medical decisions for the child going forward. But before any hormone treatment is allowed, the court ordered, the teen should be evaluated by a psychologist who is not affiliated with the current facility where he is receiving treatment, on 'the issue of consistency in the child's gender presentation, and feelings of non-conformity,'" notes CNN.

I thought this part was very interesting:

> The parents' Christian faith was used against them in the case by Donald Clancy of the Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office.
>
> "Father testified that any kind of transition at all would go against his core beliefs and allowing the child to transition would be akin to him taking his heart out of his chest and placing it on the table," argued Clancy.
>
> Brinkman denied the allegations and argued that the parents believed hormone therapy was "unnecessary" and "would do more harm than good."

In cases like this, I always like to remind Christians to remember how they vote. Many Christians think that a big secular government should be empowered to hand out welfare, stop global warming, provide free sex changes, free abortions and free contraceptives, etc. But they don't understand that a big secular government does not care about religious liberty, parental autonomy, or conscience rights. They care about redistributing taxpayer money to buy the votes of people who depend on government.

Legislators and judges are paid by taxpayers, through the collection of mandatory taxes. This means that the victims of Judge Sylvia Sieve Hendon are paying her salary. They are paying her to overrule their decision-making. Think about that. And think about that again when you decide whether to vote for smaller or bigger government.

How the presence and quality of fathers affects belief in God

February 23, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A father in the home helps children to reconcile love and moral boundaries

Here's an article by Paul Copan which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own*rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of François-Marie Arouet.

> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence, but there is also statistical evidence.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was

> asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an more difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to

see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others. If you want your child to be religious and moral, you have to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he makes, he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading.

My advice to Christian women is this. When you are picking a man, be sure and choose one who is already invested in Christian things and producing results. It's very unlikely that he's going to start from nothing after you marry him. If you value your kids, make a man's interest in developing and acting on a Christian worldview the main thing you are looking for.

What are the historical arguments for the empty tomb narrative?

February 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

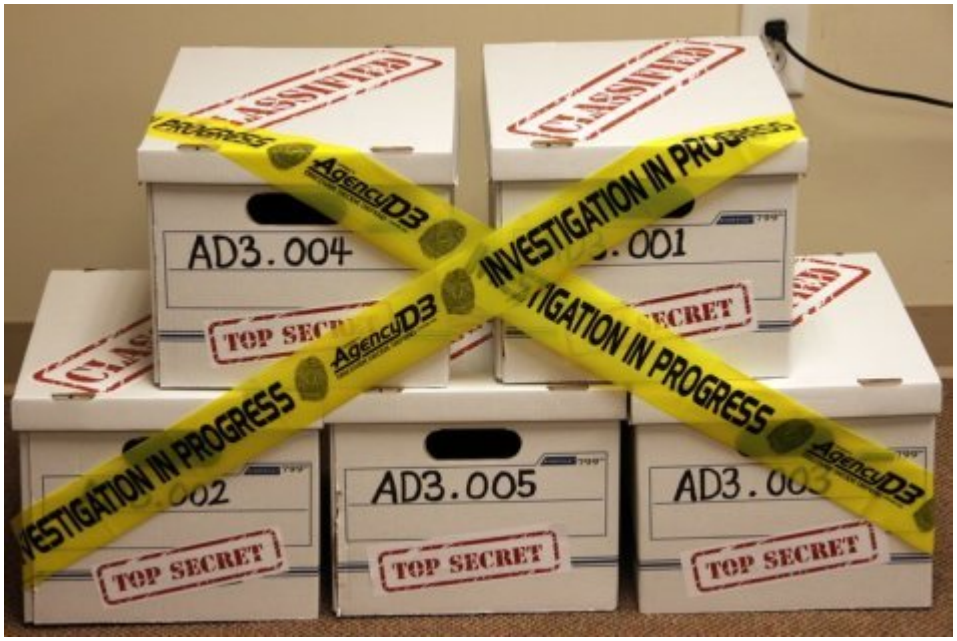

Investigation in progress

I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb

was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

A few quotes from atheist historians not from Dr. Craig's article: (thanks to Eric of Ratio Christi OSU)

> Michael Goulder (Atheist NT Prof. at Birmingham) "…it goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion." ["The Baseless Fabric of a Vision," in Gavin D'Costa, editor, Resurrection Reconsidered (Oxford, 1996), 48.]
>
> Gerd Lüdemann (Atheist Prof of NT at Göttingen): "…the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus…not later than three years… the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE." [The Resurrection of Jesus, trans. by Bowden (Fortress, 1994), 171-72.]
>
> Robert Funk (Non-Christian scholar, founder of the Jesus Seminar): "…The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30

> C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." [Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, The Acts of Jesus, 466.]

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s. For example, the atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark some time in the 40s. (See the debate below)

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say "The President is hosting a dinner at the White House" and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the "high priest" as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus' death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

So we are dealing with very early sources for the empty tomb.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as "Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women" and "Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female."
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was

> worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

What historical evidence is there to support the post-mortem appearances of Jesus?

February 25, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi Ohio State University has a *great* post up about the post-mortem appearances of Jesus.

The post contains:

- a list of the post-mortem resurrection appearances
- quotations by skeptical historians about those appearances
- alternative naturalistic explanations of the appearances
- responses to those naturalistic explanations

Although there is a lot of research that went into the post, it's not very long to read. The majority of scholars accept the appearances, because they appear in *so many different sources* and because some of those sources are very early, especially Paul's statement of the early Christian creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, which is from about 1-3 years after Jesus was executed by the Romans. Eric's post lists out some of the skeptical scholars who the appearances, and you can see how they allude to the historical criteria that they are using. (If you want to sort of double-check the details, I blogged about how historians investigate ancient sources before)

Let's take a look at some of the names you might recognize:

> **E.P. Sanders:**
>
> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my

> judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. “I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: ‘I saw him first!’ ‘No! I did.’ Paul’s tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus’ followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions.” “Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the ‘resurrection’: the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it.”[1]
>
> **Bart Ehrman:**
>
> It is a historical fact that some of Jesus’ followers came to believe that he had been raised from the dead soon after his execution. We know some of these believers by name; one of them, the apostle Paul, claims quite plainly to have seen Jesus alive after his death. Thus, for the historian, Christianity begins after the death of Jesus, not with the resurrection itself, but with the belief in the resurrection.[2]
>
> **Ehrman also says:**
>
> We can say with complete certainty that some of his disciples at some later time insisted that . . . he soon appeared to them, convincing them that he had been raised from the dead.[3]
>
> **Ehrman also goes onto say:**
>
> Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus’ resurrection, since this is a matter of public record.[4]
>
> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don’t doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don’t have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don’t think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19).[5]
>
> **Marcus Borg**
>
> The historical ground of Easter is very simple: the followers of Jesus, both then and now, continued to experience Jesus as a living reality after his death. In the early Christian community, these experiences included visions or apparitions of Jesus. [8]

The references to Paul are because of the early creed he records in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, and his conversations with the other eyewitnesses in Galatians. Eric has another post where he goes over that early creed, and it is something that every Christian should know

about. It’s really kind of surprising that you never hear a sermon on that early creed in church, where they generally sort of assume that you believe everything in the Bible on faith. But skeptical historians don’t believe in the post-mortem appearances by faith – they believe it (in part) because of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

If you want to see a Christian scholar make the case for the resurrection appearances in a debate, then here is a post I wrote with the video, audio and summary of the William Lane Craig vs James Crossley debate on the resurrection.

Four Broward county deputies stood outside waiting while Parkland killer shot children

February 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Broward county sheriff Scott Israel and Hillary Clinton

Should we depend on the police to protect us from armed criminals? Broward county sheriff Scott Israel is a well-known Democrat who supports Hillary Clinton. After the Florida shooting, he went on CNN and blamed the law-abiding gun owners for the Florida school shooting. But it was the police officers in his own department who stood around outside the crime scene doing nothing as children were shot by a killer they had visited 45 times.

The Daily Wire reports:

> On Thursday night, the American public learned two bombshell pieces of information regarding the Parkland, Florida mass shooting. First, we learned that the Broward County Sheriff's Office was told in November that the Parkland shooter "could be a school shooter in the making" but deputies didn't bother to write up a report; that report "came just weeks after a relative called urging BSO to seize his weapons." Then, in even more shocking news, we learned that an armed school resource officer at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School sat outside and waited for four minutes during the six minute attack that ended in the deaths of 17 human beings.
>
> So, here's what we know.
>
> We know the FBI was warned specifically about the Parkland shooter not once,

> but twice — and did nothing.
>
> We know the Broward County Sheriff's deputies were called to the home of the Parkland shooter at least 39 times since 2010.
>
> We know that the Broward County Sheriff's Office was warned multiple times about the Parkland shooter.
>
> We know that an armed officer was present during the shooting and did nothing — and that JROTC students showed far more courage.

Just to be clear, it's actually FORTY-FIVE times that the Broward county police had to visit the killer's home.

Far-left Buzzfeed reports:

> Broward County sheriff's officials said in a statement late Saturday that they responded only to 23 calls involving suspected Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz or his family over the years, but records obtained by BuzzFeed News show at least 45 responses since 2008.
>
> The number of calls made over the years involving Cruz or his family, according to the call records, are nearly twice the number publicly disclosed by the department.

And it's not just one armed school resource officer who sat around outside doing nothing, it's FOUR armed policemen who sat around outside doing nothing.

The Daily Wire reports:

> On Friday, CNN issued a shock report finding that earlier reports regarding Broward County Sheriff's Deputy Scot Peterson — the armed school safety officer who apparently cowered outside the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School while a mass shooter slaughtered 17 people inside — were accurate, but that Peterson wasn't the only officer waiting outside. According to CNN:
>
> When Coral Springs police officers arrived at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, on February 14 in the midst of the school shooting crisis, many officers were surprised to find not only that Broward County Sheriff's Deputy Scot Peterson, the armed school resource officer, had not entered the building, but that three other Broward County Sheriff's deputies were also outside the school and had not entered, Coral Springs sources tell CNN. The deputies had their pistols drawn and were behind their vehicles, the sources said, and not one of them had gone into the school.
> So there were four armed officers outside the school. And none of them did anything, according to CNN. They instead waited for Coral Springs police to lead the charge inside.
>
> What's more, Coral Springs City Manager Mike Goodrum apparently chewed out Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel over that malfeasance on February 15 — more than a week ago. Which means that Israel knew full well that his own office

> had botched everything dramatically when he stood on stage with CNN's Jake Tapper and a crowd of angry parents and community members and blamed the National Rifle Association and Dana Loesch for his own horrible failure.

Now, you might think that the sheriff in this case would resign immediately. It would probably be a good idea for him to lose his pension, and face civil and perhaps even criminal charges for criminal negligence. So, what did he do? He went on CNN and howled about how the NRA is to blame for the shooting, and that the answer to the shooting is reduced ownership of firearms by law abiding people. The NRA and the law-abiding gun owners did not visit the suspect's house 45 times, though.

You see, Sheriff Israel expects law-abiding people to not defend themselves from the fatherless killers produced by the socialist welfare state. He expects us to rely on him and his Broward county police officers. The same police officers who stood around outside doing nothing while children were shot.

It really makes me think about why CNN had this man at a townhall where he could point fingers at the NRA and law-abiding gun owners, when the truth is that his deputies stood around doing nothing while a killer they had visited 45 times murdered innocent children. Seems to me the NRA and the law-abiding people certainly had less to do with this shooting than the Democrat sheriff and his incompetent cowardly deputies.

Which side of the abortion rights debate is backed by scientific evidence?

February 27, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn Baby – 10 weeks old

Once upon a time I didn't know much about the case for abortion rights or the case for the right to life of unborn children. My reason for not reading much about it is that I thought that it was kind of a subjective issue. But, I started a project to read 1-2 books on every conceivable topic, including one on abortion. Lo and behold, it turned out that one side did have the backing of science.

This article from The Public Discourse explains: (links removed)

> The following are typical examples—only three of the many, many we could cite. These are from standard texts by embryologists, developmental biologists, and microbiologists:
>
> "Human life begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm unites with a female gamete or oocyte (ovum) to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marked the beginning of each of us as a unique individual." "A zygote is the beginning of a new human being (i.e., an embryo)." Keith L. Moore, The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology, 7th edition.
>
> "Fertilization is the process by which male and female haploid gametes (sperm and egg) unite to produce a genetically distinct individual." Signorelli et al., Kinases, phosphatases and proteases during sperm capacitation, Cell Tissue

> Research.
>
> “Although life is a continuous process, fertilization (which, incidentally, is not a ‘moment’) is a critical landmark because, under ordinary circumstances, a new, genetically distinct human organism is formed when the chromosomes of the male and female pronuclei blend in the oocyte” (emphasis added; Ronan O’Rahilly and Fabiola Mueller, Human Embryology and Teratology, 3rd edition.

The genetically distinct part is key – this unborn child is has a different DNA signature (a human signature) than either the mother or the father. Nothing will be added or taken away from this new signature as the unborn child grows. It never changes.

More:

> These authorities all agree because the underlying science is clear. At fertilization—or, more precisely, when the sperm (a male sex cell) fuses with the oocyte (a female sex cell, more commonly referred to as an egg)—each of them ceases to be, and a new entity, one that is both genetically and functionally distinct from either parent, is generated. This new entity, initially a single totipotent cell, then divides into two cells, then (asynchronously) three, then four, eight, and so on, enclosed all the while by a membrane inherited from the oocyte (the zona pellucida), which then dissolves during implantation, allowing for continued growth in the direction of maturity as a member of the species. Even prior to implantation, however, these cells and membrane function as parts of a whole that regularly and predictably develops into the more mature stages of a complex human body.
>
> How do we know that the result of sperm-oocyte fusion is a new entity, rather than a continuation of the oocyte? We know that a new entity exists because, once the sperm penetrates the oocyte, a completely new trajectory of biological development commences. The biological activity of an oocyte is directed toward successful fertilization; the biological activity of sperm is directed toward penetration of an oocyte. The biological activity of the new entity that results when sperm and oocyte fuse, however, is directed toward nothing less than the development of a mature human organism, distinct from either parent. Further, this new entity’s activities are directed not by instructions from the mother’s body, as some people wrongly suppose, but by its own unique set of instructions, especially the blueprint for development contained in its unique genetic material. The mother’s body recognizes the zygote and then the embryo as an entity distinct from itself. In fact, the embryo must send out chemical signals to prevent the mother’s immune system from attacking it. The embryo also emits chemical signals that induce changes in the lining of the mother’s uterus to enable successful implantation.
>
> If this embryo is provided a suitable environment, nutrition, and protection from deliberate attack, serious injury, or disease, it will develop to the mature stage of a human organism. Thus, from the zygote stage onward this distinct, new

> organism has all of the internal resources—in its genetic and epigenetic structure—needed to develop itself (or, rather, himself or herself, since in the human sex is determined from the very beginning) to the mature stage of a human organism. At no point after fertilization—implantation, gastrulation, birth, puberty, etc.—does a fundamental change in biological trajectory occur. These subsequent stages of development are simply the unfolding of the zygote's inherent dynamism toward human organismal maturity. This shows that the zygote already is a human organism—a member of the species Homo sapiens—albeit at an early stage of his or her development.

So, since I like to win arguments with science, I just took the side of the debate that was backed by science. I really hate to lose debates, you know. I really like to cite scientific evidence when I'm debating.

The crime of abortion, it seems to me, is that you are depriving a human being of his or her future, because of your convenience right now. Human beings don't have the right to take away the futures of other human beings because they want to be unburdened by the results of their own actions. We shouldn't resort to violence in order to escape responsibility for our own actions. In almost every case, (except to save the life of the mother), killing the unborn child isn't justified. It's actually very scary to me that anyone would think that hurting other people was a reasonable response to one's own diminished happiness. How did we ever get to a place in society when people don't think that taking responsibility to care for the unborn child is morally better than killing the unborn child? It's a baby for goodness sake. We ought to be serious about setting up our lives and controlling ourselves so that we never hurt an unborn child.

Wayne Grudem explains male leadership in marriage

February 28, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

I'm not willing to take advice on this from most pastors, but Wayne Grudem is someone I respect because he does such a good job of applying the Bible to political issues. So he's practical.

Anyway, here is something he wrote that was shared by a newlywed couple I am friends with.

Excerpt:

> Someone might say, "Well, okay, fine. There's a leadership role for Adam, and I guess that means husbands should have a leadership role in their marriage of some sort. But how does it work? How does it work in practice?"
>
> In our own marriage, Margaret and I talk frequently and at length about many decisions. I can tell you that I wouldn't be here tonight unless Margaret and I had talked about this and asked the Lord about it, and she had given blessing to it, and said, "Yes, I think that's right." Sometimes we make large decisions such as buying a house or a car, and sometimes they are small decisions like where we should go for a walk together. I often defer to Margaret's wishes, and she often defers to mine because we love each other.
>
> In almost every case, each of us has some wisdom and insight that the other does not have. Usually, we reach agreement on the decisions that we make. Very seldom will I do something that she doesn't think is wise–I didn't say never. She prays; she trusts God; she loves God. She is sensitive to God's leading and direction, but in every decision, whether it large or small and whether we have reached agreement or not, the responsibility to make the decision still rests with me.

Now, I am not talking about every decision they make individually. Margaret controls a much larger portion of our budget than I do because all the things having to do with the household and food and clothing and house expenses and everything . . . she writes the checks and pays the bills. I take care of buying books and some things about the car. I have appointments during the day with students. She doesn't get involved in that. She has her own appointments. She has her own calendar. I don't get involved in trying to micromanage all of that. We have distinct areas of responsibility. I am not talking about those things. I don't get involved in those things unless she asks my counsel.

But in every decision that we make that affects us together or affects our family, the responsibility to make the decision rests with me. If there is genuine male headship, I believe there is a quiet acknowledgement that the focus of the decision making process is the husband, not the wife. Even though there will often be much discussion and there should be mutual respect and consideration of each other, ultimately the responsibility to make the decision rests with the husband. And so, in our marriage the responsibility to make the decision rests with me.

This is not because I am a wiser or more gifted leader. It is because I am the husband. God has given me that responsibility. It is very good. It brings peace and joy to our marriage, and both Margaret and I are thankful for it. Now, I need to add very quickly, men, this does not mean that a husband has the right to be a selfish leader.

Just about three years ago, maybe four years ago now, we started the decision making process. Margaret had been in an auto accident in Chicago. As part of the aftermath of that accident, she was experiencing some chronic pain that was aggravated by cold and humidity, and Chicago is cold in the winter and humid in the summer. Chicago was not a good place for that. Some friends said to us, "We have a second house in Mesa, Arizona, if you would ever like to go there and just use it as a vacation place, we would like you to do that."

So we did. We visited Arizona. Mesa is a suburb of Phoenix. Margaret felt better. It was hot, and it was dry. And so I said, "Wow, Margaret I would love to move here, but I am only trained to do one thing; I can teach at a seminary and that is it. There aren't any seminaries here." The next day Margaret was looking in the yellow pages–literally. She said, "Wayne, there's something here called Phoenix Seminary." One thing led to another and God was at work in that seminary, and it was starting to grow.

Then we went through a decision making process. When we were in the middle of that decision making process, on the very day that we were focusing on that, I came in my normal custom of reading through a section of scripture each day, I came to a Ephesians 5:28, "Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies."

> I thought if I would move to take a job in another city for the sake of my body, if I were experiencing the pain that Margaret had, and husbands should love their wives as their own bodies–then shouldn't I move? Shouldn't I be willing to move for Margaret's sake? That was really why we moved to Phoenix.

Anyway, Dina and I were talking the other night about what would happen if – hypothetically – we suddenly found ourselves stuck with a child and responsible for it's education. I said to Dina that I would have a meeting with her, and ask her to research all of the alternative forms of schooling, and look over the research on education and then come back with her recommendation about what would get us the most effectiveness for the least cost and risk. Dina said that she thought that was an excellent plan, but being the kind of person she is, she said that she would not wait to be asked to do this, but would instead pro-actively go and do the work and then present it to me to make the decision. A wife is a chief of staff, she does the research. She has to know all the politics. She has to do the face to face conversations. She has to make all the calculations. She has to be good at putting aside her feelings and being logical and analytical, in order to get results.

I think a lot of people worry that male headship means that husbands will micromanage like a tyrant, but that's just wrong. That's not at all what a man learns about how to lead others, in his workplace. A man looks for a wife with skills and experience to solve these sorts of problems for him while he is out working, and without needing a lot of guidance or monitoring from him. Micromanaging makes them both less efficient and more stressed. The more education and work history she has before she marries, the better she will be at solving problems on her own initiative. I always encourage young women to study hard things and to do hard jobs, but to stop working when young children appear (the first five years of the child's life are critical). Learning hard things and doing hard jobs makes them more prepared for the roles of wife and mother.

Similarly, a wife does not want to choose a poor leader for a husband. She wants to choose someone who makes good decisions, and follows a plan through to a result. She should be looking at his decision making, especially in education, work and finances, and deciding whether he can do the male roles in a marriage. She should be looking at his leadership style and communication ability. These things are well-defined, and she should be able to assess his ability by looking at his life to see if anyone follows his lead at work or outside of work on anything that matters. Does he reach the goals that he plans to reach? Is he realistic about risks and costs? She has to do an assessment of his leadership ability, because if she marries him, he will be leading her. Naturally, she will have to know something about leadership first, and know something about men, and what men expect to achieve with their marriages. What is his plan?

The easiest way for a man to avoid marrying a woman who resists his leadership is to not marry her. And the easiest way for a woman to avoid marrying a man who does not delegate tasks to her that she is better at is to not marry him. We are responsible for these decisions. As long as you don't follow your feelings and intuitions, you'll be fine.

Don’t marry someone unless you have observed them demonstrating their ability to do the marriage roles cheerfully and well.

YouTube is using the radically leftist SPLC to decide which videos are “hateful”

March 1, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Google and YouTube are censoring mainstream conservative viewpoints

The Southern Poverty Law Center is in the news again. The Daily Caller is reporting that YouTube, which is owned by the fascist corporation Google, is using the SPLC to decide which videos are “hateful”. So, I thought it might be a good idea to remind everyone about the SPLC’s past connection to left-wing domestic terrorism.

Excerpt:

> The Southern Poverty Law Center is assisting YouTube in policing content on their platform, The Daily Caller has learned.
>
> The left-wing nonprofit — which has more recently come under fire for labeling legitimate conservative organizations as “hate groups” — is one of the more than 100 nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and government agencies in YouTube’s “Trusted Flaggers” program, a source with knowledge of the arrangement told TheDC.

First, recall from this article posted at The Federalist that the Southern Poverty Law Center was the source of the “hate map” which was used by convicted domestic terrorist Floyd Lee Corkins in his attempt to shoot and kill everyone at the Family Research Council.

Excerpt:

> Corkins would later admit that he had located Family Research Council’s office on a “hate map” produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center, and he planned to shoot people in the building and smear the Chick-fil-A sandwiches on them.
>
> […]Much of the ensuing media coverage ignored or downplayed Corkins’ motives, which the *Washington Post* referred to as “a detail sure to reignite the culture wars.” A year later, Southern Poverty Law Center founder Morris Dees

> was still publicly defending the inclusion of Family Research Council on the organization's "hate map."

Just to be clear, this gay activist was convicted of domestic terrorism, and received 25 years in prison. He was stopped by a security guard, and this video is the footage of the attempted mass murder.

Let's find out more about SPLC, courtesy of this article from the centrist City Journal, a very respected source.

Here is the article from City Journal.

Excerpt:

> Ironically, the SPLC not only overlooks most of the real hate groups in operation today, along with overtly race-based organizations, such as the pro-Latino National Council of La Raza and MEChA, but also labels moderates with whom it disagrees "extremists" if they deviate from its rigid political agenda, which embraces open borders, LGBT rights, and other left-wing totems. The SPLC has branded Somali-born reformer Ayaan Hirsi Ali an "anti-Muslin extremist" for her opposition to female genital mutilation and other oppressive Islamic practices, and designated the respected Family Research Council as a "hate group" for its opposition to same-sex marriage. Likewise, the organization deems mainstream immigration-reform advocates such as the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) and Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) as hate groups. British Muslim activist Maajid Nawaz—regarded by most observers as a human rights leader—is suing the SPLC for listing him as an extremist.

Not just the Family Research Council, but the Alliance Defending Freedom and Liberty Counsel, too. Defending religious liberty at the Supreme Court and winning your case apparently makes you a "hate group".

More:

> Critics of the SPLC accuse the lavishly funded organization of peddling fear and smearing political opponents—mostly conservatives—as bigots. Its "Hatewatch" list is avowedly ideological, acknowledging that it "monitors and exposes the activities of the American radical right." Few left-wing organizations—and no Islamist groups—are branded in this way by the SPLC. Nevertheless, the SPLC, founded in 1971, has burrowed itself into the civil rights movement, the organized bar, the cloistered culture of large law firms, the education system, and even law enforcement as a champion for "the exploited, the powerless and the forgotten." Its executives are richly compensated, some in excess of $400,000 annually. Operating from palatial six-story quarters in Montgomery, Alabama (sometimes called the "Poverty Palace"), it enjoys a $300 million endowment, including more than $23 million in cash.

The non-profit rating group "Charity Watch" gives the SPLC an "F" rating. This is the

lowest grade possible.

More:

> The SPLC frequently rails against public figures as “enablers” not technically designated as hate groups or extremists, such as Texas governor Greg Abbott, former congressman and presidential candidate Ron Paul, radio talk show host Glenn Beck, Fox News commentator Judge Andrew Napolitano, and Kentucky senator Rand Paul. Rush Limbaugh, the Breitbart News Network, the Boy Scouts of America, and Focus on the Family (founded by psychologist, broadcaster, and best-selling author James Dobson) have also earned the SPLC’s wrath.

And finally:

> What many of the individuals and groups condemned by the SPLC have in common is a conservative orientation. Favoring traditional marriage becomes the moral equivalent of cross-burning; opposing illegal immigration or amnesty for illegal immigrants equates to advocating genocide; resisting the spread of radical Islam invokes Timothy McVeigh; and anti-tax Tea Party groups are now indistinguishable from armed militias or Holocaust deniers. Thus, dissent is de-legitimatized, and political foes are demonized.
>
> […]SPLC senior fellow Mark Potok, a 20-year veteran of the organization and editor of its “hate list”—a quarterly publication—has admitted that “our aim in life is to destroy these groups, to completely destroy them.”

How far would the SPLC go to “destroy” their enemies? Well, the SPLC-inspired attack on the Family Research Council is not the only time that the SPLC has been linked to violent left-wing extremism.

Consider this story from the radically leftist New York Times.

They write:

> > It was a little after 5 p.m., a quiet time in a quiet neighborhood, before many people had returned home from work on Tuesday, when two women called 911 to report multiple gunshots and screams echoing through a condominium complex here near the University of North Carolina.
> >
> > By the time the police arrived, three people were dead — a newlywed couple and the woman’s sister. They were young university students, Muslims of Arab descent, and high achievers who regularly volunteered in the area. A neighbor, a middle-age white man, was missing — then under arrest and charged with three counts of murder.
> >
> > […]Mr. Hicks, appeared to have a deep dislike of all religion. On his Facebook page, nearly all of his posts expressed support for atheism, criticism of Christian conservatives or both.

Let's take a look at what's on his Facebook page:

> > His Facebook Likes included the Huffington Post, Rachel Maddow, the Southern Poverty Law Center, Freedom from Religion Foundation, Bill Nye "The Science Guy," Neil deGrasse Tyson, Gay Marriage groups and similar progressive pages.

Previously, I blogged about a peer-reviewed study published in the journal *Academic Questions*, found that the SPLC "…fails to use objective criteria in determining which organizations should be labeled a "hate group"…". Something to keep in mind now that you know that YouTube is letting them censor content.

William Lane Craig debates atheist Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?

March 2, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here is the video from the third debate from Dr. William Lane Craig's speaking tour in Australia.

Format:

- William Lane Craig (15 min)
- Lawrence Krauss (15 min, but was actually 21:40)
- Moderated discussion
- Question and answer

Dr. Graham Oppy, the moderator, is a well-known atheist philosopher. He let Dr. Krauss speak for 21 minutes and 40 seconds, which is why my summary of Krauss is so long.

The video:

Summary

After careful consideration, I decided not to be snarky at all in this summary. What you read below is what happened. There may be some small mistakes, but I will fix those if people tell me about them. I also included some quotes and timestamps for the more striking things that Dr. Krauss said.

The debate itself starts at 4:50 with Dr. Craig's opening speech. He does use slides to show the structure of his arguments.

Dr. Craig's opening speech. (4:50)

1. The kalam cosmological argument:
    - God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe
    - The Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem supports the absolute beginning of the universe
    - Even if our universe is part of a multiverse, the multiverse itself would have to have an absolute beginning
    - Speculative cosmologies try to challenge the Big Bang theory, but none of them – even if true – can establish that the past is eternal
    - Only two types of things could explain the origin of spece, time, matter and energy – either abstract objects or minds
    - Abstract objects do not cause effects, but minds do cause effects (we do it ourselves)
    - A mind is the best explanation for the origin of the universe
2. The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
    - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
    - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
    - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
    - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see
3. The cosmic fine-tuning for the existence of intelligent life
    - There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) cosmological constants and 2) quantities
    - These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life
    - There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design
    - Law is rejected because they are put in at the beginning or matter – they don't emerge from matter
    - Chance must be rejected, because they odds are just too long unless you appeal to a world-ensemble
    - We do not observe what the world ensemble hypothesis predicts that we should observe
    - Design is the best explanation for finely-tuned constants and quantities
4. The existence of objective moral values and duties
    - Our experience of morality (values and duties) is that it is objectively real and incumbent on us
    - When someone goes into a classroom and shoots at innocent children, that is objectively wrong
    - On naturalism, moral values and moral duties do not exist – they are conventional and variable by time and place
    - The best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties is that God exists

5. The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus
    - There are three widely-accepted facts that are best explained by the resurrection hypothesis
    - 1) the empty tomb, 2) the post-mortem appearances, 3) the early church's belief in the resurrection
    - Naturalistic attempts to explain these 3 boilerplate facts fail
    - The best explanation of the 3 minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead
6. The immediate experience of God
    - Belief in God is a "properly basic" belief – rational even without arguments because of experience of God

Dr. Krauss' opening speech. (21:12)

Slides: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

1. Religious pluralism I
    - There have been lots of different gods created by people through history
    - We've gotten rid of all of them by understanding how the universe works by doing science
    - Religion is just stories, and the stories are inconsistent with how the universe works
2. Progress of naturalistic science I
    - Newtonian physics refutes the idea that angels push planets around
    - Darwinian evolution refutes design arguments, including the one that Dr. Craig presented (24:10)
    - Biochemistry hasn't explained how life originated, but we will have the solution soon
    - Physics shows us that matter can be created and destroyed without need a God
    - Physics shows us that universes can be created and destroyed "no problem"
3. Religious pluralism II
    - Since we have been able to disprove all the gods we've invented, why hang on to the last one
    - It's unlikely that the God that Dr. Craig presented exists, because we disproved all the others he didn't present
4. Hiddenness of God
    - There is a complete lack of evidence for the other 999 gods, so how likely is it that the God Dr. Craig presented exists
5. Religious pluralism III
    - There are inconsistencies between various religions, so therefore there can be no religion that is right
6. Progress of naturalistic science II
    - Peasants had a very low level of knowledge about the world and they believed

in God
    - But our level of knowledge has increased over time, so we shouldn't believe in God now
    - Peasants thought that the Earth orbited the Sun, but this is now known to be false
    - The Scriptures said that the Earth orbited the Sun, but now we know that's false from science
7. Christianity plagiarizes from other religions I
    - There is nothing new or special about Jesus
    - He's just as unpleasant as all the other gods
    - Everything particular to Jesus occurs in other religions
8. Catholics are inconsistent about what they believe
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in transubstantiation
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in the virgin birth
9. The resurrection is copied from many other religions
    - Dionysus, Osiris, etc.
10. There is no evidence for the resurrection
    - The stories about Jesus were written "decades or hundreds of years after the fact"
    - The stories are inconsistent with each other
    - Dr. Craig tells me that historical Jesus scholars all accept that the resurrection happened
    - That's like saying that all alien abductions experts agree that alien abductions happened
    - It's unreasonable to think that the resurrection happened because no one saw it happen
    - I accept that people reported on appearances, but hallucination theory can explain that
11. The timeline for the creation and incarnation are all wrong
    - The creation, planet formation, hominids, incarnation, etc. all take place in the wrong times
    - If God knew what he was doing, he would done everything at better times to be more efficient
12. David Hume's argument against miracles is sound
    - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – nothing wrong with this argument
    - Miracles are really just coincidences
    - Catholic apparitions at Lourdes disprove the historical argument that Dr. Craig made for the resurrection
13. God is petty and jealous
    - God shouldn't demand that we trust him, esteem him and consider his character when we make decisions
    - The atoning death of Jesus for the sins of the world also makes no sense

14. Belief is based on geography
    - What you believe is clearly correlated with where you are born
    - There is even an Islamic clone of Dr. Craig who “uses the exact same arguments” that he does to prove Islam
    - Belief in God is decreasing in the Internet-accessible world
15. Science can develop morals without God
    - Reason is able to guide our actions to be moral
    - Morality evolves over time, so there is no objective morality
    - Catholicism teaches things that are immoral
    - Some things are prohibited by biological revulsion, such as incest
    - But if a brother and sister have sex using condoms “is that morally wrong? I can’t say it is frankly” (37:24)
16. Dr. Craig is irrational
    - “I came here convinced based on my past interactions and his writing that Dr. Craig was a dishonest Charlatan”
    - “Any argument that validates God is reasonable to him”
    - “And any argument against it is not only unreasonable but wrong and worth distorting”
    - “Because it must be wrong – he’s decided the answer in advance”
17. Dr. Craig is immoral
    - Dr. Craig thinks it is OK for God to command that Canaanite children are killed
    - “So in fact if they were Canaanite children in that schoolroom that he talked about then it would be OK”
    - It’s not reasonable to justify genocide in that way, but Dr. Craig is willing to go to those lengths
18. The cause of the origin of the space time universe need not be God
    - Dr. Craig says that if there is an explanation for the origin or space, time, matter and energy it must be God
    - But it could just as easily be turtles or Zeus
19. Dr. Craig misrepresents the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem
    - Alexander Vilenkin wrote me an e-mail that says that the theorem doesn’t work in all cases
    - “Dr. Craig is so convinced that these arguments must be true that he won’t listen to the fact that they’re not”
20. Darwinian evolution explains the fine-tuning
    - “Life was fine tuned – we got rid of it with Darwin”
    - Mutation and natural selection explain the cosmic fine-tuning argument that Dr. Craig presented
21. Suboptimal design disproves the fine-tuning argument
    - “We get back aches” therefore “This argument that [the universe] is fine-tuned for life is nonsense”
22. William Lane Craig can be proven to exhibit homosexual behavior using logical arguments

    - Look, you can construct arguments that are clearly wrong
    - Premise 1: “All mammals exhibit homosexual behavior”
    - Premise 2: “William Lane Craig is a mammal”
    - Seems to be saying that logical arguments can prove false things “it’s nonsense”
23. Dr. Craig distorted a podcast that some group made on pain receptors
    - Dr. Craig’s faith is so strong that it causes him to distort what this group said

Discussion: (44:35)

I will not be summarizing everything that was said, just a few main points.

The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can’t even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don’t work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don’t have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) “All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON’T KNOW!!!!!!!” (raising his voice)
- Craig: I’m not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has

been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"
- Craig: "I wonder what you deleted from the original letter"
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "I just told you!"
- Craig: "Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) 'You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.'
- Craig: "That's Vilenkin."
- Krauss: "In this paper, that's absolutely right"
- Krauss: But it's ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it's unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: "Isn't it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?"
- Krauss: "No"
- Craig: "Well, can you give us one then"
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) "In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong"
- Krauss: "You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it's hard"
- Craig: "Right"

I noticed that a huge number of atheist web sites are taking the Vilenkin quote that Krauss used out of context, like this one and this one. There are probably a lot more of them like that, which I think is interesting. That's why we have these debates, I guess. To set the record straight about who accuses people of being dishonest, and who is actually dishonest.

Fine-tuning:

- Krauss tried to argue that he had explained the fine-tuning with the Higgs particle, but Dr. Craig said that only applied to the cosmological constant, not all the other examples of fine-tuning. Krauss said that it wasn't impressive that this universe permitted life and that "It would have been much more surprising if we evolved in a universe in which we couldn't live". Krauss argued the fine-tuning was only for "Life

like us". But Dr. Craig explained that the fine-tuning is what allows us to have the basics of any kind of life, like slow-burning stars, chemical diversity, etc. – things that are required for basic minimal life functions in any living system. Craig said that he was working with the current physical laws of this universe (F = ma, etc.) and that he was looking at what changed if we changed those even slightly. Krauss tried to say that if he changed things like the mass of particles then the strength of forces would change. (But the forces aren't laws!) Krauss argued that the cosmological constant would be even better for life if it was zero, and Craig said that the life permitting range did include zero, but that the range of life-permitting values was narrow.

Jesus' existence:

- Craig reponded to the mystery religions charge, the charge that the evidence for the minimal facts is too late/too weak, the charge that grief visions explained the evidence better, and Hume's argument against miracles. Craig brought up the early creed from 1 Cor 15:3-7 and explained to Krauss that it was 5 years after the events, and that Jewish standards of oral transmission were strong enough to ensure that the creed was reliable, and most of the eyewitnesses would still have been alive.

Audience Q and A: (1:21:09)

The first topic is the grounding of morality. Krauss agrees that there is no objective morality and no objective moral oughts. He also said that that standards of behavior are arbitrary, and that they change over time and they are adopted for promoting social order. Dr. Craig pressed the point that science itself would collapse without ethical values. It assumes them, but cannot ground them.

The next topic was free will. Krauss is a determinist. Craig asked him how he could reconcile moral responsibility with determinism.

The next topic was the effectiveness of mathematics. Krauss didn't have an explanation for it and didn't think it needed one. Then they got into whether the Genesis has been verified by science and whether it is meant to be taken literally.

The next topic was whether philosophy makes any progress. Craig gave the example of verificationism being rejected as too narrow, and self-refuting. Krauss: "I'm going to come to the defense of philosophy for the first time". Craig: "That's amazing!" Krauss said that science provides new knowledge. Craig said there were some things that could be known apart from science.

Facebook enlists left-wing Politifact and Snopes to censor criticism of Democrats

March 3, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This week, I was appalled to see that the Babylon Bee, a Christian satire web site, was attacked by Facebook for writing a satire critical of the radically leftist CNN.

Look:

Facebook is so good at checking facts and censoring conservatives

This is what Facebook sent to Adam Ford for his satire of CNN. Since Facebook cited Snopes, I thought it might be a good idea to talk about two Facebook "fact checkers", and an example of their "fact-checking".

First, a story from The Daily Signal. Then, we'll see examples of how Facebook's censorship allies are biased against conservatives.

Let's look at the first far-left Facebook partner: Politifact. Politifact is just a group of journalists from the Tampa Bay Times newspaper.

Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine, writes about Politifact's assessment of Obama's promise to Americans about keeping their health plans after Obamacare.

2008 PolitiFact before the election: 'We rate his statement True'

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site's "Truth-O-Meter" to evaluate this claim: "Under Barack Obama's health care proposal, 'if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.'"

> The article assures us in its headline that “Obama’s plan expands [the] existing system,” and continues that “Obama is accurately describing his health care plan here…It remains to be seen whether Obama’s plan will actually be able to achieve the cost savings it promises for the health care system. But people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama’s plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his statement True.”
>
> […]As per PolitiFact’s usual M.O., Holan didn’t seek out any skeptical health-policy experts to suss out the veracity of Senator Obama’s signature claim. Instead, its sources included Jonathan Cohn, a passionate Obamacare supporter at *The New Republic*, and various interviews and statements of Mr. Obama. Holan simply took the “keep your plan” promise at face value, dismissing as dishonest anyone who dared suggest that Obama’s claim would be impossible to keep. “His opponents have attacked his plan as ‘government-run’ health care,” she wrote, the scare-quotes around “government-run” being visible to all.
>
> PolitiFact’s pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 campaign.

Here’s the screen capture from 2008:

Politifact caught with its pants on fire

Before the election, it’s true! And Obama got re-elected, because people believed that. But what happened after the election?

2013 PolitiFact after the election: ‘We rate his statement Pants On Fire’

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama’s infamous promise—that “if you like your health care plan, you can keep it”—its 2013 “Lie of the Year.”
>
> […]On November 4, Jacobson rated as “Pants on Fire” the President’s new claim that “what we said was, you can keep [your plan] if it hasn’t changed since the law passed.” Both pieces were edited by Angie Drobnic Holan, who had initially

> granted PolitiFact's seal of approval to Senator Obama's 2008 promise. Holan delivered the *coup de grâce*, declaring as PolitiFact's "Lie of the Year" the "keep your plan" promise.
>
> "The promise was impossible to keep," says Holan in her December piece. Now she tells us! But none of the key facts that made that promise "impossible" in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President's plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan
Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."
Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.
Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."
Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact says: we were just kidding! Kidding!
So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, but it's election time so they don't say that. It's not like the critical assessments of Obamacare from health policy experts were not out there between 2007-2012. It's just that the liberal journalism-major bloggers at Politifact couldn't be bothered to read them. And this is who Facebook is using as a fact checker, because Facebook has one way of seeing issues – the radical leftist way. If you disagree, then they censor your content. Because Facebook employees are close-minded, anti-intellectual socialists who hate free speech.

What about Snopes? Maybe Snopes is a more reliable "fact checker" than Politifact?

The Daily Caller explains:

> Snopes' main political fact-checker is a writer named Kim Lacapria. Before writing for Snopes, Lacapria wrote for Inquisitr, a blog that — oddly enough — is known for publishing fake quotes and even downright hoaxes as much as anything else.
>
> […]She described herself as "openly left-leaning" and a liberal. She trashed the Tea Party as "teahadists." She called Bill Clinton "one of our greatest" presidents. She claimed that conservatives only criticized Lena Dunham's comparison of voting to sex because they "fear female agency."
>
> […]Lacapria — in another "fact check" article — argued Hillary Clinton hadn't

> included Benghazi at all in her infamous “we didn’t lose a single person in Libya” gaffe. Lacapria claimed Clinton only meant to refer to the 2011 invasion of Libya (but not the 2012 Benghazi attack) but offered little fact-based evidence to support her claim.
>
> After the Orlando terror attack, Lacapria claimed that just because Omar Mateen was a registered Democrat with an active voter registration statusdidn’t mean he was actually a Democrat. Her “fact check” argued that he might “have chosen a random political affiliation when he initially registered.”

Snopes is just spin for Democrat gaffes – playing defense for the DNC. And Facebook using them to check facts, because Facebook is basically joined at the hip to the Democrat party.

Can we verify that Snopes actually lies in order to defend Democrats. Well, yes –right here. Snopes lied about American flags being present throughout the first day of the 2016 Democrat convention.

It’s groups like these who are being relied upon to spot “fake news” for Facebook. When you are on Facebook, it’s important to understand that it is a web site run by Democrats, for the benefit of Democrats. There is no balance. There is no critical thinking. The simple fact of the matter is that many fake news stories are pushed by the leftist mainstream media, and ignored by the leftist “fact checkers”. Here’s one recent example of how that works.

Making monergism make sense: a middle-knowledge approach to salvation

March 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

This article at Free Thinking Ministries was written by my friend Tim Stratton. In it, he tries to rescue Calvinism from the horror of double-predestination.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Many reformed folks *(freely?)* choose to reject Molinism because they contend that this theological view "smells of synergism." What is this stench that reportedly makes John Calvin turn over in his grave? Simply put, synergism is the view that man plays at least a small part in his own salvation process. Monergism, on the other hand, is the view that God is the author of salvation from beginning to end.
>
> Since Molinism affirms that man is free to choose to reject God's saving grace or not, many Calvinists jump to the conclusion and assume that Molinism must be synergistic. This does not necessarily follow.[1] Consider one possible model:
>
> 1- God, by nature, is a volitional unmoved mover who is free to choose between options in accord with His nature. (This is supported via the *Kalam* and the *Argument from Time*).
>
> 2- By God's grace, humans are created in the "image of God." By nature, then, we are free to choose between options in accord with our nature. (This is supported via the *Freethinking Argument*).
>
> 3- Adam & Eve freely chose to disobey God and this sin completely separates humanity from God. This is what it means to have a "totally depraved sin

> nature." (Every aspect of man is separated from God).
>
> 4- In this state of depraved separation from God (sin nature), humans do not even know God exists if merely left to our own devices.
>
> 5- If humans do not even know God exists, then, left to our own devices and **apart from God's grace**, it would be impossible to choose to love and follow God (thus, Pelagianism is impossible on this view).
>
> 6- God, in His love for all people, provides amazing prevenient grace to all people (Romans 1:20), writing the law on the human heart (Romans 2:15), conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-9), and draws all men (John 12:32). This is commonly referred to as "common grace."
>
> 7- Therefore, by God's grace, human nature has changed from a "totally separated from God nature" to a nature that has now experienced enough divine revelation (influences) allowing all mankind to start making some free and volitional choices in accord with our new nature; namely, to choose to resist God's grace and revelation, or not.[2] Mankind is without excuse because we do not have to resist what God has made clear (Romans 1:18-20).[3]
>
> *[Note: According to Calvinist, Matt Slick (albeit inadvertently), Mark 4:10-12 implies that if an unregenerate person gets access to clear and accurate information, then they possess the ability to become Christians!]*
>
> 8- If one does not reject or continually resist the grace and revelation God provides them, then God will continually provide more and more until the person reaches the point of "no return" and will become saved.
>
> Thus, God does *ALL* the work in salvation from beginning to end on this Molinistic model; all the human can do is freely resist God's grace and revelation, but he or she does not have to! The human does nothing to gain salvation apart from God's grace on this Monergistic Model of Molinism.

I think that Stratton's formulation above does indeed keep God as the sole initiator of salvation. And that's good. But it also makes sure that human resistance to God is allowed, and that's good. We want salvation to be 100% by faith alone in Christ alone. But we don't want God to be the cause of people not being saved (because he is the ONLY ONE who can save them, and he chooses not to save them). On Stratton's view, God wants everyone to be saved. If anyone is saved, it's because God did ALL THE WORK to lead them and secure their salvation with the death of Jesus on the cross. But, on Stratton's view, humans do get a choice – the choice to trust God or not. And so, if a person is not saved, then it's their fault – not God's. This works.

Read his whole post, and see what you think about it.

Jay Richards: eight common myths about wealth, poverty and the free market

March 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Have you read Jay Richards' book "Money, Greed and God?" Because if you haven't, he's written a series of articles that summarize the main points of the book.

The index post is here.

Here are the posts in the series:

- Part 1: The Eight Most Common Myths about Wealth, Poverty, and Free Enterprise
- Part 2: Can't We Build A Just Society?
- Part 3: The Piety Myth
- Part 4: The Myth of the Zero Sum Game
- Part 5: Is Wealth Created or Transferred?
- Part 6: Is Free Enterprise Based on Greed?
- Part 7: Hasn't Christianity Always Opposed Free Enterprise?
- Part 8: Does Free Enterprise Lead to An Ugly Consumerist Culture?
- Part 9: Will We Use Up All Our Resources?
- Part 10: Are Markets An Example of Providence?

Parts 4 and 5 are my favorites. It's so hard to choose one to excerpt, but I must. I will choose… Part 4.

Here's the problem:

> **Myth #3: The Zero Sum Game Myth – believing that trade requires a winner and a loser.**
>
> One reason people believe this myth is because they misunderstand how

> economic value is determined. Economic thinkers with views as diverse as Adam Smith and Karl Marx believed economic value was determined by the labor theory of value. This theory stipulates that the cost to produce an object determines its economic value.
>
> According to this theory, if you build a house that costs you $500,000 to build, that house is worth $500,000. But what if no one can or wants to buy the house? Then what is it worth?
>
> Medieval church scholars put forth a very different theory, one derived from human nature: economic value is in the eye of the beholder. The economic value of an object is determined by how much someone is willing to give up to get that object. This is the subjective theory of value.

And here's an example of how to avoid the problem:

> How you determine economic value affects whether you view free enterprise as a zero-sum game, or a win-win game in which both participants benefit.
>
> Let's return to the example of the $500,000 house. As the developer of the house, you hire workers to build the house. You then sell it for more than $500,000. According to the labor theory of value, you have taken more than the good is actually worth. You've exploited the buyer and your workers by taking this surplus value. You win, they lose.
>
> Yet this situation looks different according to the subjective theory of value. Here, everybody wins. You market and sell the house for more than it cost to produce, but not more than customers will freely pay. The buyer is not forced to pay a cost he doesn't agree to. You are rewarded for your entrepreneurial effort. Your workers benefit, because you paid them the wages they agreed to when you hired them.
>
> This illustration brings up a couple important points about free enterprise that are often overlooked:
>
> **1. Free exchange is a win-win game**.
>
> In win-win games, some players may end up better off than others, but everyone ends up better off than they were at the beginning. As the developer, you might make more than your workers. Yet the workers determined they would be better off by freely exchanging their labor for wages, than if they didn't have the job at all.
>
> A free market doesn't guarantee that everyone wins in every competition. Rather, it allows many more win-win encounters than any other alternative.
>
> **2. The game is win-win because of rules set-up beforehand.**
>
> A free market is *not* a free-for-all in which everybody can do what they want. Any exchange must be free on both sides. Rule of law, contracts, and property rights are needed to ensure exchanges are conducted rightly. As the developer of the

> house, you'd be held accountable if you broke your contract and failed to pay workers what you promised.
>
> An exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game.

On this view, what you really need to fear as a consumer is government intervention that restricts your choices in the marketplace, or makes some choices more expensive than they need to be (tariffs).

If you care about poverty, it's often tempting to think that it can only be solved one way – by transferring wealth from the rich to the poor. But that is a very mistaken view, as any economist will tell you. The right way to create prosperity is by creating laws and policies that unleash individual creativity. Letting individuals create innovative products and services, letting them keep what they earn, making sure that the law doesn't punish entrepreneurs – that incentivizes wealth creation. Fixing poverty does not mean transferring wealth, it means giving people more freedom to create wealth on their own. Free trade between nations is an important way that we encourage people to create better products and services that what they have available in their own countries.

Economists agree on the benefits of free trade

Who could possibly disagree with free trade? Well, many people on the left do. But economists across the spectrum of ideology (university and private sector and public sector) agree on the benefits of free trade.

Harvard economist Greg Mankiw explains what most professional economists agree on.

Excerpt:

> Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:
>
> 1. **A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)**
> 2. **Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)**
> 3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
> 4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
> 5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
> 6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
> 7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
> 8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
> 9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become

> unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
> 10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
> 11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
> 12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
> 13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
> 14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

Socialist economic policies don't work because they are making policies that are based on economic myths. We know that these myths are myths because of economics is a mathematical science, and because we have tried good and bad policies in different times and places. We have calculations and we have experience to know what works and what doesn't work. If you want to help the poor, you have to respect what economists know about how wealth is created. The solution is not to "spread the wealth around", it's to encourage people to create more wealth by inventing things that people freely choose to buy.

If you accept Jesus and become a Christian, will God make you happy?

March 6, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

This is a wonderful, wonderful post from Amy Hall, who writes for the Stand to Reason blog.

She writes:

> I had a brief interaction with an atheist on Twitter a couple of weeks ago that unexpectedly turned to the issue of suffering when she said:
>
> You clearly never had a time you were hurt. I don't mean sick. I don't mean heart broken. I mean literally a near death experience or rape or abusive relationship…. You can keep floating on a [expletive] cloud thinking Jesus will do everything for you but it's a lie. What makes you so special?
>
> That surprised me at first because it didn't seem to have anything to do with the tweet she was responding to, and I was confused as to why she would assume I'd never been through anything traumatic. But then in subsequent tweets, when she revealed she had been raped, it became clear that her trauma had played a central role in her becoming an outspoken, obviously angry "antitheist." She's a self-described antitheist now because she thinks Christianity teaches Jesus "will do everything for you" to give you a perfect life, and now she knows that's a lie. The rape proved her understanding of Christianity false.
>
> So it made sense for her to reason that since I believe Christianity is true, I must still be under the delusion that Jesus is making my life special, which means I obviously never encountered any evil or suffering to shake that delusion.

All right, readers. I don't want any of you to be thinking that if you become a Christian

that these things should be expected to happen:

- you will feel happy all the time
- you will be able to sense God's secret plan for your life through your feelings
- God's secret plan for your life will automatically work, even though it's crazy
- God will give you a perfect spouse and lots of money without you having to study anything hard, or do any hard work
- you get permission to do things that that make you happy, even if they are expressly forbidden by the Bible
- you don't have to do anything that makes you feel bad (e.g. – talk to non-Christians about Christian truth claims), because God wants you to be happy

No! Where do people get this idea that if they convert to Christianity, then God will become their cosmic butler?

Amy has the answer: (emphasis mine)

> Hear me, everyone: **This is a failure of the church.**
>
> A friend of mine who was deeply suffering once said to me that many Christians are in for "an epic letdown" when they realize their preconceived notions about what God is expected to do for us are false. Pastors who preach a life-improvement Jesus are leading people down this precarious path to disillusionment.
>
> If suffering disproves your Christianity, you've missed Christianity. The Bible is filled with the suffering of those whom God loves. The central event of the Bible is one of suffering. Love involves suffering. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." That means suffering.

It's the church. It's the focus on happy things and having of happy feelings and happy songs and preaching designed to make us feel good. I would say the comforting devotional reading doesn't help to make us any tougher or more practical, either. That happy-clappy stuff just gives you a false sense of safety about your precarious situation. God's job is not to prevent you from suffering. In fact, even if you make really smart, practical decisions, you can expect to get creamed *anyway*.

Please take 15 minutes and read the book of 1 Peter in the New Testament.

Here's a summary from GotQuestions.org:

> **Purpose of Writing:** 1 Peter is a letter from Peter to the believers who had been dispersed throughout the ancient world and were under intense persecution. If anyone understood persecution, it was Peter. He was beaten, threatened, punished and jailed for preaching the Word of God. He knew what it took to endure without bitterness, without losing hope and in great faith living an obedient, victorious life. This knowledge of living hope in Jesus was the message

> and Christ's example was the one to follow.
>
> **Brief Summary:** Though this time of persecution was desperate, Peter reveals that it was actually a time to rejoice. He says to count it a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ, as their Savior suffered for them. This letter makes reference to Peter's personal experiences with Jesus and his sermons from the book of Acts. Peter confirms Satan as the great enemy of every Christian but the assurance of Christ's future return gives the incentive of hope.
>
> **Practical Application:** The assurance of eternal life is given to all Christians. One way to identify with Christ is to share in His suffering. To us that would be to endure insults and slurs from those who call us "goodie two shoes" or "holier than thou." This is so minor compared to what Christ suffered for us on the Cross. Stand up for what you know and believe is right and rejoice when the world and Satan aim to hurt you.

Recently, I blogged about how suffering is compatible with an all-powerful God, so you might want to read that too if you missed it.

New study: regular churchgoers and married people most satisfied with their love life

March 7, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

One of the curious things about me is that I love to read studies in order to understand what to do in order to reach a goal. So, I read a lot of studies on marriage, finances, and moral issues. My goal is to find the "best practices" that predict good outcomes. One of the things that we should all be concerned about is having a good love life. Well, believe it or not, there are studies about how to achieve this. One of them just came out in Science Daily.

Consider this article from Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> Regular churchgoers, married people or those who enjoy harmonious social ties are most satisfied with their love life. This also goes for people who are currently in love or who experience the commitment and sexual desire of their partners, says Félix Neto and Maria da Conceição Pinto of the Universidade do Porto in Portugal. Their findings, published in an article in Springer's journal *Applied Research in Quality of Life,* look at the influences on love life satisfaction throughout one's adult life.

> The researchers associate love with the desire to enter into, maintain, or expand a close, connected, and ongoing relationship with another person. In turn, love life satisfaction is a purely subjective, overall measurement of someone's actual enjoyment of love. To investigate the factors that influence this across various age groups, 1,284 adult Portuguese women and men ranging between 18 and 90 years old were asked to evaluate and weigh specific facets of their own love lives

> by using the Satisfaction With Love Life Scale.
>
> […]**While education does not impact a person's love life satisfaction, religious involvement does. The finding that believers and regular churchgoers are positive about their love lives is in line with previous studies that associate religious involvement with better mental health and greater satisfaction with life and sexual relationships in general.**

Previously, I blogged about a study reported in USA Today, which showed that people who attend church have lower divorce rates than those who don't attend church.

Excerpt:

> It's been proclaimed from pulpits and blogs for years — Christians divorce as much as everyone else in America.
>
> But some scholars and family activists are questioning the oft-cited statistics, saying Christians who attend church regularly are more likely to remain wed.
>
> […]The various findings on religion and divorce hinge on what kind of Christians are being discussed.
>
> **Wright combed through the General Social Survey, a vast demographic study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and found that Christians, like adherents of other religions, have a divorce rate of about 42%. The rate among religiously unaffiliated Americans is 50%.**
>
> **When Wright examined the statistics on evangelicals, he found worship attendance has a big influence on the numbers. Six in 10 evangelicals who never attend had been divorced or separated, compared to just 38% of weekly attendees.**
>
> […]Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there's been some confusion.
>
> "You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees," he said.
>
> **Wilcox's analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.
>
> "There's something about being a nominal 'Christian' that is linked to a lot of negative outcomes when it comes to family life," Wilcox said.

Whenever I talk to atheists about marital satisfaction and marital stability, they always tell me these myths about how atheists divorce less and are happier in their marriages

than religious people. But when I ask them for studies, they don't have any, or they start to talk about the Discovery Channel or Star Trek or something. It's like they believe things without any evidence at all. Meanwhile, one also has to note that atheists have much lower rates of marriage than church-attending believers.

Now clearly, there are going to be atheists with great marriages that never break up. But individual cases do not overturn peer-reviewed research studies. The fact is that marriage is an institution that is soaked through with moral values and moral obligations. If you think that morality is just arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place, as is logically consistent with atheism, then the odds are that you won't be able to stay married for long – if you even get married at all.

Atheist Lawrence Krauss offers the best argument against Christianity

March 8, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Richard Dawkins on atheism, morality, free will and human rights
Although there are some pretty smart atheists out there, none is smarter than the venerable Lawrence Krauss. Well, Krauss has been thinking about atheism quite a bit since his debate with William Lane Craig, and he's come up with an argument that simply can't be defeated.

Buzzfeed reports on Krauss' new argument against Christian theism:

> **When Melody Hensley** first met Lawrence Krauss, she was a 29-year-old makeup artist at a department store, and he was one of her intellectual idols. She ran an atheist website in her spare time and had just started volunteering for the Center for Inquiry (CFI), a nonprofit group committed to promoting science and reason above faith. She was hoping to build a career in the burgeoning "skeptics" movement, and Krauss was one of its brightest luminaries.
>
> At a CFI event in November 2006, Krauss asked Hensley for her card, and later, as she was leaving, asked her if she was "of age." She brushed off the odd question, excited to meet a star skeptic. When he later emailed to invite her to dinner, she accepted.
>
> "I didn't care if he flirted with me, I just wanted to be around somebody important, and I also wanted to get a job in this field," Hensley told BuzzFeed News. "I thought I could handle myself."
>
> They made a plan to eat in the restaurant at the Washington, DC, hotel where Krauss was staying, Hensley recalled. But first he asked her to come up to his room while he wrapped up some work. He seemed in no rush to leave, she said, ordering a cheese plate and later champagne, despite her suggestion that they go down to dinner.
>
> Then, Hensley said, Krauss made a comment about her eye makeup, and got very close to her face. Suddenly, he lifted her by the arms and pushed her onto the bed beneath him, forcibly kissing her and trying to pull down the crotch of her tights. Hensley said she struggled to push him off. When he pulled out a condom, Hensley said, she got out from under him, said "I have to go," and rushed out of the room.
>
> Krauss told BuzzFeed News that what happened with Hensley in the hotel room was consensual. In that room, "we mutually decided, in a polite discussion in fact, that taking it any further would not be appropriate," he told BuzzFeed News by email.

> But Hensley said that is untrue. “It was definitely predatory,” she said. “I didn’t want that to happen. It wasn’t consensual.”

The argument is supported by many interlocking evidences from different fields of study:

> BuzzFeed News has learned that the incident with Hensley is one of many wide-ranging allegations of Krauss’s inappropriate behavior over the last decade — including groping women, ogling and making sexist jokes to undergrads, and telling an employee at Arizona State University, where he is a tenured professor, that he was going to buy her birth control so she didn’t inconvenience him with maternity leave. In response to complaints, two institutions — Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, and the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, Ontario — have quietly restricted him from their campuses. Our reporting is based on official university documents, emails, and interviews with more than 50 people.

So, here is how the argument goes formally:

Premise 1. If Christianity is true, then sex outside of a natural marriage is wrong.

Premise 2. Sex outside of a natural marriage is not wrong.

Conclusion: Therefore, Christian theism is not true. (MT)

This argument seems to hold a lot of sway with many atheists, like Richard Dawkins, Richard Carrier, Michael Shermer, and so on. Pretty much everyone who makes a career out of disproving Christianity is familiar with this powerful argument.

Although this is an excellent argument (I call it the argument from immorality), it should be noted that it is not a new argument at all. It’s actually discussed in the Bible of all places, in Romans chapter 1.

Romans 1:18-25:

> [18] The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,
>
> [19] since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.
>
> [20] For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.
>
> [21] For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.
>
> [22] Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools
>
> [23] and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.
>
> [24] Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

> [25] They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised.Amen.

In my experience, atheists reject the evidence for Christianity because they don't want the moral changes that come with Christianity. Even the atheists I know who claim to be "moral" nevertheless promote immorality through their political actions, voting for a world where moral evils like abortion and pedophilia cannot be judged. They also vote to suppress the disagreement of Christians, and celebrate when the state silences Christian expressions of disapproval for immorality. Actions tell what is going on much more than words.

UPDATE:

New York Times: Arizona State Suspends Lawrence Krauss During Inquiry Over Sexual Misconduct Accusations

Gizmodo: Science Organizations Cancel Lawrence Krauss Events After Sexual Harassment Allegations

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Debating forgiveness: must a person admit wrongdoing before being forgiven?

March 9, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

I've listened to this debate three times because I liked it so much. I even ordered Chris' book for my best friend Dina. She has listened to the debate, and is currently split between the two debaters. I am in firm agreement with the pastor Chris, although Remy has some useful things to say that I agree with.

Here's a link to the debate page on Moody Bible Institute's "Up For Debate" program with Julie Roys.

Details:

> **Should Christians Forgive No Matter What?**
>
> Should Christians forgive someone even if he's not sorry? Or does true forgiveness require repentance and a desire to reconcile? This Saturday, on Up For Debate, Julie Roys will explore this issue with Chris Brauns, a pastor who believes forgiveness requires repentance, and Remy Diederich who believes it does not.

Although I disagree with Remy, I only disagree with him about whether the guilty person must admit guilt and feel remorse and make restitution (depending on the severity of the offense). I agree with him on other things like no revenge, attitude of love, expressing willingness to forgive and be reconciled, etc. I also disagree with Remy on "forgiving God", which I think is just crazy, because when God is engineering a person's salvation, he never fails. I think that God is the Great General, and his strategies never fail to achieve the outcomes he desires (while still respecting free will). Whatever suffering or inadequacy or longing that you experience as a Christian is not some sort of mistake,

horrible as it may be for you at the time. God is not your cosmic butler, although a lot of people these days seem to think that he is, and then they get disappointed.

Anyway, please listen to that debate and comment on it about who you think is right. I think my view (and Chris' view) is in the minority in the church, because the church is so utterly *dominated* by feelings and radical feminism. I think my view (and Chris' view) is the masculine view – the view that upholds moral standards, sets moral boundaries and defends the rightness of making moral judgments.

Below, I have pasted in some of my other thoughts on forgiveness from a previous post.

I think this is the key passage – Luke 17:3-4:

> 3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.
>
> 4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

That's Jesus speaking, there.

Also, I was having a debate with someone who disagrees with all this, and while debating with her, I thought of another example.

Luke 18:9-14:

> 9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:
>
> 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.
>
> 11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.
>
> 12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'
>
> 13 But the tax collector,standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'
>
> 14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So again, no forgiveness without repentance.

Forgiveness is what happens when someone who is sinned against treats the sinner as if he had never sinned. It is not on the balance sheet. It is not brought to mind. It is not held against them in the future. The forgiver trusts the sinner again as if the previous sin had never happened.

In divine (vertical) forgiveness, there is no forgiveness without repentance. There are

Bible verses above to show that.

My argument is twofold. First, there is a clear teaching of Jesus explaining the sequence of sin and forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness, between humans (Luke 17:3). The verses cited by the forgive without repentance crowd don't show the mechanics of how to forgive, they are making the point that if you want God to forgive you, you should forgive others. The parable in Luke 18:9-14 affirms this again – repentance always precedes forgiveness.

Second, we have an obligation to imitate God, and that means imitating the way he forgives those who sin against him. When I raise that with the unconditional forgiveness crowd, they want to insist that there is a difference, that the word "forgive" means different things. I'm not convinced.

Finally, I do think that forgiving someone is obligatory if they sincerely repent, and even if they screw up again and again. So long as the repentance is sincere, (like if there is restitution and a genuine effort to show an understanding how the sin affected the wronged party in writing), then forgiveness should be automatic. Depending on how bad the sin is, there maybe be more to do than just say "I'm sorry". If the repentance is genuine, then I think the person who is sinned against must forgive, if they expect to be forgiven by God for the things they repent of.

Alan E. Kurschner adds one final point about the unconditional forgiveness view. He argues that there is serious textual doubt about the originality of Luke 23:34a, a text used by the pro-unconditional-forgiveness crowd. He has a journal article coming out on it, but a synopsis of his argument is here.

He also wrote this in a comment on this blog:

> Second, on Matt 6:15, this is what I have to say. Notice the then-clause: "neither will your Father forgive your sins." This would require universalism on the Father's part according to the unconditional interpretation given the first half: "But if you do not forgive others their sins." Since everyone has wronged the Father is the Father required to forgive everyone even if they are not seeking forgiveness?

So I think the case for the forgiveness being conditional on repentance is pretty strong, especially when serious harm has been caused.

City Journal publishes comprehensive profile of Southern Poverty Law Center

March 10, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, recall from this article posted at The Federalist that the Southern Poverty Law Center was the source of the "hate map" which was used by convicted domestic terrorist Floyd Lee Corkins in his attempt to shoot and kill everyone at the Family Research Council. He was stopped by a security guard, and the video above is the footage of the attempted mass murder.

Excerpt:

> Corkins would later admit that he had located Family Research Council's office on a "hate map" produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center, and he planned to shoot people in the building and smear the Chick-fil-A sandwiches on them.
>
> […]Much of the ensuing media coverage ignored or downplayed Corkins' motives, which the *Washington Post* referred to as "a detail sure to reignite the culture wars." A year later, Southern Poverty Law Center founder Morris Dees was still publicly defending the inclusion of Family Research Council on the organization's "hate map."

Just to be clear, this gay activist was convicted of domestic terrorism, and received 25 years in prison.

Let's find out more about SPLC, courtesy of this article from the centrist City Journal, a very respected source.

Here is the article from City Journal.

Excerpt:

> Ironically, the SPLC not only overlooks most of the real hate groups in operation today, along with overtly race-based organizations, such as the pro-Latino National Council of La Raza and MEChA, but also labels moderates with whom it disagrees "extremists" if they deviate from its rigid political agenda, which embraces open borders, LGBT rights, and other left-wing totems. The SPLC has branded Somali-born reformer Ayaan Hirsi Ali an "anti-Muslin extremist" for her opposition to female genital mutilation and other oppressive Islamic practices, and designated the respected Family Research Council as a "hate group" for its opposition to same-sex marriage. Likewise, the organization deems mainstream immigration-reform advocates such as the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) and Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) as hate groups. British Muslim activist Maajid Nawaz—regarded by most observers as a human rights leader—is suing the SPLC for listing him as an extremist.

Not just the Family Research Council, but the Alliance Defending Freedom and Liberty

Counsel, too. Defending religious liberty at the Supreme Court and winning your case apparently makes you a “hate group”.

More:

> Critics of the SPLC accuse the lavishly funded organization of peddling fear and smearing political opponents—mostly conservatives—as bigots. Its “Hatewatch” list is avowedly ideological, acknowledging that it “monitors and exposes the activities of the American radical right.” Few left-wing organizations—and no Islamist groups—are branded in this way by the SPLC. Nevertheless, the SPLC, founded in 1971, has burrowed itself into the civil rights movement, the organized bar, the cloistered culture of large law firms, the education system, and even law enforcement as a champion for “the exploited, the powerless and the forgotten.” Its executives are richly compensated, some in excess of $400,000 annually. Operating from palatial six-story quarters in Montgomery, Alabama (sometimes called the “Poverty Palace”), it enjoys a $300 million endowment, including more than $23 million in cash.

The non-profit rating group “Charity Watch” gives the SPLC an “F” rating. This is the lowest grade possible.

More:

> The SPLC frequently rails against public figures as “enablers” not technically designated as hate groups or extremists, such as Texas governor Greg Abbott, former congressman and presidential candidate Ron Paul, radio talk show host Glenn Beck, Fox News commentator Judge Andrew Napolitano, and Kentucky senator Rand Paul. Rush Limbaugh, the Breitbart News Network, the Boy Scouts of America, and Focus on the Family (founded by psychologist, broadcaster, and best-selling author James Dobson) have also earned the SPLC’s wrath.

And finally:

> What many of the individuals and groups condemned by the SPLC have in common is a conservative orientation. Favoring traditional marriage becomes the moral equivalent of cross-burning; opposing illegal immigration or amnesty for illegal immigrants equates to advocating genocide; resisting the spread of radical Islam invokes Timothy McVeigh; and anti-tax Tea Party groups are now indistinguishable from armed militias or Holocaust deniers. Thus, dissent is de-legitimatized, and political foes are demonized.
>
> […]SPLC senior fellow Mark Potok, a 20-year veteran of the organization and editor of its “hate list”—a quarterly publication—has admitted that “our aim in life is to destroy these groups, to completely destroy them.”

How far would the SPLC go to “destroy” their enemies? Well, the SPLC-inspired attack on the Family Research Council is not the only time that the SPLC has been linked to violent left-wing extremism.

Consider this story from the radically leftist New York Times.

They write:

> It was a little after 5 p.m., a quiet time in a quiet neighborhood, before many people had returned home from work on Tuesday, when two women called 911 to report multiple gunshots and screams echoing through a condominium complex here near the University of North Carolina.
>
> By the time the police arrived, three people were dead — a newlywed couple and the woman's sister. They were young university students, Muslims of Arab descent, and high achievers who regularly volunteered in the area. A neighbor, a middle-age white man, was missing — then under arrest and charged with three counts of murder.
>
> […]Mr. Hicks, appeared to have a deep dislike of all religion. On his Facebook page, nearly all of his posts expressed support for atheism, criticism of Christian conservatives or both.

Let's take a look at what's on his Facebook page:

> His Facebook Likes included the Huffington Post, Rachel Maddow, the Southern Poverty Law Center, Freedom from Religion Foundation, Bill Nye "The Science Guy," Neil deGrasse Tyson, Gay Marriage groups and similar progressive pages.

Previously, I blogged about a peer-reviewed study published in the journal *Academic Questions*, found that the SPLC "…fails to use objective criteria in determining which organizations should be labeled a "hate group"…". Something to keep in mind when you hear the left-wing media invoking the SPLC as an authority.

Why sexual permissiveness is not compatible with the welfare of children

March 11, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist Terry Bean and Barack Obama

Here is a striking essay from the Public Discourse. It talks about how we, as a society, have generally taken on an anything-goes approach with respect to sex. The one exception (for now) is pedophilia, which is the sexual abuse of children by adults. The essay points out that there is no moral reason for having this one exception, on secularism. The exception exists because of a sort of "ick" factor – not because we have a moral framework that makes anything right or wrong objectively. The essay argues that we are not shy about harming children in a million other ways, and lists some examples. I just want to quote a few and then I'll comment about my own moral views around sexuality.

Quick summary of his argument:

> The moral structure of pedophilia is simply this: the welfare of children is subordinate to the sexual gratification of adults.
>
> […]We should be thankful that the Sanduskys and Laheys are still considered monstrous. But in contemporary America that condemnation rests on sentiment and not on moral reasoning. No one can simultaneously explain *why* their actions were so vile and uphold the first commandment of the sexual revolution: fulfill thy desires.
>
> […]No, it isn't *how* Sandusky and Lahey did what they did, or under what circumstances, that explains the disgust. It's *what* they did—but nobody wants to acknowledge that.
>
> The reason for that reluctance becomes clear, if we keep in mind the moral structure of pedophilia. Sexual gratification trumps. Thank goodness that for now,

> there aren't many men who are sexually attracted to youngsters. In that single case, we raise the banner for the children. But in no other case.

That's his argument.

Now, a quick excerpt:

> If we altered the question, and asked not how many people have done sexually abusive things with children, but how many people have done sexual things that redounded to the suffering of children, then we might confess that the only thing that separates millions of people from Jerry Sandusky is inclination. Everything that was once considered a sexual evil and that is now winked at or cheered, everything without exception, has served to hurt children, and badly.
>
> We might point here to divorce. Unless it is necessary to remove oneself and one's children from physical danger and moral corruption, the old wisdom regarding divorce should hold, if children themselves have anything to say about it. Parents will say, "My children can never be happy unless I am happy," but they should not lay that narcissistic unction to their souls. Children need parents who love them, not parents who are happy; they are too young to be asked to lay down their lives for someone else. It is not the job of the child to suffer for the parent, but the job of the parent to endure, to make the best of a poor situation, to swallow his pride, to bend her knees, for the sake of the child.
>
> We might point to births out of wedlock. The child has a right to enter more than a little nursery decorated with presents from a baby shower. He should enter a human world, a story, a people. He should be born of a mother and a father among uncles and aunts and cousins and grandparents, stretching into the distant past, with all their interrelated histories, with his very *being* reflected in all those mirrors of relation, not to mention his eyes and his hair, the talents in his fingers and the cleverness in his mind. This *belonging* to a big and dependable world can be secured only in the context of the *permanent* love of his mother and father, declared by a vow before the community and before the One in whom there is no shadow of alteration.

And now my comments about this article.

So pretty much all my regular readers know that I take extremely conservative views on social issues, since I am an evangelical Protestant Christian. But I don't just have conservative views – I am also chaste at a personal level. I am not one of these re-virgins – I have never had sex. Not once. And I don't mean I have never had sexual intercourse only, I mean that I have never even kissed a woman on the lips. I am a radical on the issue of chastity. I don't view chastity as depriving oneself of something good, I view it is as a thing that serious Christian men do when we want to enable and develop other capabilities. It's my conviction that chastity enables the capability to see women as God sees them, which is a precursor to growing them up to serve him. That's what women are for, on my view – exactly like men are for knowing and serving God. It's my belief that

once a man has premarital sex, it becomes much harder for him to view women that way.

So, I am really really really against any kind of sexual activity of any kind prior to marriage. I think that if a man wants to show affection to a woman, then sex before marriage is not the way to do that. There are other ways, and men ought to know how to speak the language of love to a woman in many different ways apart from sex, assuming that this is his goal for her. A man needs to create a context for sex before he can have it. Marriage is how a man provides a context for sex. Not just by giving a woman safety, but by specifying a shared vision which the woman agrees to support when she agrees to marriage. Men shouldn't have intimate experiences with women who are not committed to a constructive partnership with specific goals, e.g. – birthing or adopting children in order to give them a stable, loving *sane* environment to grow up in. That is so rare nowadays, especially on college campuses which are inundated with sexual liberalism, thanks to radical feminism. My conviction that sex is not something that should be done before marriage emerges partly from a concern that children should have the best opportunity for that stable environment. And that's what I want to focus on – sexual restraint as a means of providing for children and protecting children.

First, premarital sex creates a situations where abortion happens. Men and women should not engage in activities for recreational reasons that could possibility lead to the death of another human being, period. I am not one of these people who thinks "oh, poor woman who is pregnant, what a beastly man who did that to her – but she can do the right thing and keep the baby". I think that women are equally to blame with men for even having sex before marriage – the mistake was having sex in the first place. So getting pregnant and keeping the baby is good, but preventing fatherlessness and not putting burdens on taxpayers is much, much better. People who engage in premarital sex are not only selfish, immature and irresponsible, but they are actually acting in a *negligent* fashion towards the child that may result from their *choices*. We should not make choices that put innocent children at risk. Premarital sex can be compared with driving while drunk in that regard. You might think it's fun, but it's not a good, moral thing to do because of the harm that may result. Saying "but I didn't mean to" after the fact doesn't change the harm.

Second, I've blogged before about many studies (like this one) that show that premarital sex reduces relationship stability, duration, and quality. Another study I blogged about showed that the number of sexual partners that a man or woman has before marriage directly affects the probability that the relationship will provide a stable environment for raising children. So one of my reasons for being chaste is to maximize the probability of giving my future children that stable environment. Another reason to be chaste is to give my future wife that gift of fidelity. When a man has proven that he has the ability to restrain himself with his wife during the courtship, that is a signal to her that he is good at self-control. The ability to court without premarital sex shows her that he is able to think about her as a person, and that he is able to evaluate her objectively for the purpose of filling the roles of wife and mother. And that this is, in fact, his whole purpose for her. A purpose that will survive the decline of her appearance and youth. Security is another gift

that a chaste man gives his wife, so that she can age confidently.

Thirdly, I have in the past blogged about research on gay unions showing how various factors that are more probable in gay relationships, (e.g. – elevated rates of domestic violence, low relationship stability, drug abuse, high rates of promiscuity, etc.), undermine the stability of the environment in which children grow up. More here. Dr. Ryan Anderson has argued that the norms present in gay relationships will undermine the norms of traditional marriage, (permanence, sexual exclusivity, etc.), if marriage is redefined to eliminate the gender requirement. I think we need to keep the traditional definition of marriage because it's better for children if we do (and there are other reasons to prefer natural marriage, as I've written about before).

I think I've said enough here to show that very often when it comes to sexual activity what is driving my conservative views is concern for others. Concern not just for the future children, but for the future wife. And not just for them, but for society as a whole, who would have to pay the social costs of things like divorce, and the social costs of children of divorce, etc. And not just for society, but also for God, who intends sexuality for a very specific purpose – it is a form of communication for two people who have been bonded to each other for life. Marriage has to count for God and achieve his goals. One of those goals is raising up children well for his sake. And adults need to control themselves in order to provide children with what they need.

New study: single-sex schools more successful than mixed-sex schools

March 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Academic Records of High School Students who Took the 2016 SAT Test, by Gender		
	Male	Female
High School Rank		
Top 10% of Class	44%	56%
Second 10% of Class	46%	54%
GPA		
A+ (97-100)	40%	60%
A (93-96)	39%	61%
A- (90-92)	43%	57%
B (80-89)	49%	51%
C (70-79)	59%	41%
D, E, F (below 70)	63%	37%
Overall GPA	3.30	3.45

Do female-dominated schools discriminate against boys?
Here is the very latest study on this important topic from the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR). They found that boys and girls both do better in single-sex schools, when compared to boys and girls in mixed-sex schools.

Excerpt:

> We find robust evidence that pupils in single-sex schools outperform their counterparts in co-ed schools, by 5–10% of a standard deviation for boys and 4–7% for girls, with similar estimates across subjects (which include Korean, English, and maths). This is consistent with the findings reported in Park et al. (2013).

And this study was done in South Korea, where things are a lot more focused on academics than in North America!

In most schools, women comprise on average about 80% of the classroom instructors. This is not even to mention the administrators and the curriculum designers. It is not a friendly environment for boys. In fact, studies have shown that the typical curriculum is biased against boys. Teacher bias may also be a factor, since boys outperform their classroom grades on standardized tests (where there is no bias against them from the teachers).

Regarding the feminist curriculum, consider this report on a study from the UK Telegraph:

> A lack of male role models at home and school is turning boys off reading at a young age as they increasingly reject books as "feminine", it is claimed.
>
> [...]Gavin Barwell, chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Literacy, said reading was not seen as a "masculine thing" by boys – leaving them lagging behind girls from the age of four onwards.
>
> [...]According to Government figures, boys are less likely to read basic words or recite the alphabet by the age of five and the gap widens throughout compulsory education.

> By the age of 16, fewer than 59 per cent of boys gained a good GCSE in English last year compared with 72.5 per cent of girls.

According to a brand new report from the American Enterprise Institute, this discrimination against boys is having a long-term negative effect on their participation in graduate school:

> For the eighth year in a row, women earned a majority of doctoral degrees awarded at US universities in 2016. Of the 78,744 doctoral degrees awarded in 2016 (Table B.25), women earned 40,407 of those degrees and 52.1% of the total, compared to 37,145 degrees awarded to men who earned 47.9% of the total...
>
> [...]Women represent 57.5% of all graduate students in the US, meaning that there are now 135 women enrolled in graduate school for every 100 men.

Here is one of the AEI charts:

Total Graduate School Enrollment, By Field and Gender, 2016

Field	Male	Female	Females per 100 Males
Arts and Humanities	43.3%	**56.0%**	**129.3**
Biological, Agricultural Sciences	46.3%	**54.1%**	**116.8**
Business	55.0%	45.1%	82.0
Education	25.4%	**75.0%**	**295.3**
Engineering	75.8%	24.7%	32.6
Health Sciences	22.6%	**77.7%**	**343.8**
Mathematics and Computer Sciences	69.1%	31.5%	45.6
Physical and Earth Sciences	63.3%	37.0%	58.5
Public Administration	23.6%	**77.1%**	**326.7**
Social and Behavioral Sciences	37.5%	**62.4%**	**166.4**
Other Fields	39.5%	**62.4%**	**158.0**
Total	**42.6%**	**57.5%**	**135.0**

Source: Council of Graduate Schools

Graduate school enrollment, male vs female, 2016

You can read about a couple more studies here that also argue that the male-

underformance problem is a lack of male teachers in the classroom. It’s important to understand this, because it shows why ignorant cries of “man up” are not going to get men to perform better in school and at work. And men only marry if they feel comfortable taking on the roles of husband and father – which costs money. Men have to be able to earn money in order to engage in marriage and family, and the schools we have right now are set up against them doing that. If you want your daughters to have husbands (instead of marrying government social programs), then you’d better pay attention to these studies and vote accordingly. If you can pull your boys put of mixed-sex schools, it’s a good idea to do that. Homeschooling or single-sex private schools work better for boys.

Telford sex-trafficking ring involving up to thousand children was run by “Asian” men

March 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

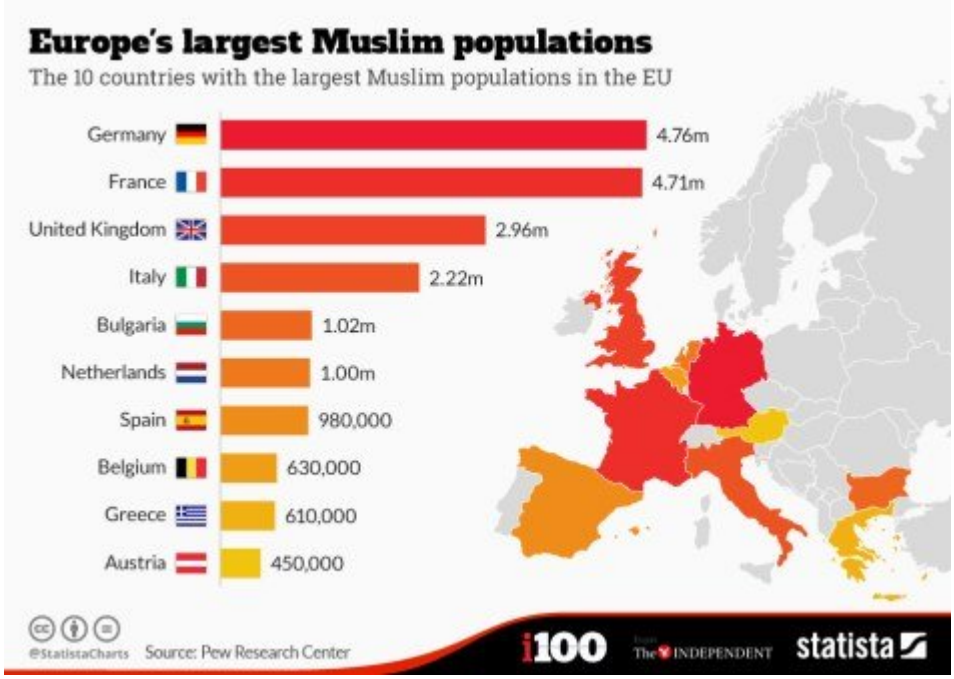

Muslim populations in Europe

Every time I see one of these sex-trafficking of children stories in the UK media, it reminds me of the Labor Party’s decade-long strategy of importing unskilled immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries.

Here is the latest from the UK Telegraph.

Excerpt:

> Up to 1,000 children could have been abused in Britain’s biggest ever child abuse scandal, an investigation has revealed.
>
> Hundreds of children, some as young as 11, are estimated to have been drugged, beaten and raped over a 40-year period in the town of Telford.
>
> […]The investigation claims that allegations dating back to the 1980s were mishandled by authorities in Telford, who repeatedly failed to punish a network of abusers.
>
> Victims claimed that similar abuse, which has been linked to three murders and two other deaths, has continued in the area.
>
> The newspaper’s probe alleges that social workers were aware of the abuse in the 1990s, but that it took police a decade to launch Operation Chalice, an inquiry into child prostitution in the Telford area in which seven men were jailed.
>
> It is also claimed that abused and trafficked children were considered “prostitutes” by council staff, that authorities did not keep details of abusers from Asian communities for fear of being accused of “racism” and that police

> failed to investigate one recent case five times until an MP intervened.

Complaints of abuse were ignored:

> "Night after night, I was forced to have sex with multiple men in disgusting takeaways and filthy houses. I must have been getting the morning after pill from a local clinic at least twice a week but no one asked any questions.
>
> "I was told that if I said a word to anyone they'd come for my little sisters and tell my mum I was a prostitute."
>
> Another victim, aged 14 at the time, alleges that she had the baby of her 18-year-old abuser. Now 47, she said that she told the council and school of her abuse at the time but does not believe action was taken.
>
> […]Two other investigations were launched alongside Operation Chalice after two victims named dozens more abusers, yet victims have claimed that they were put off helping inquiries.
>
> One said that she left the investigation because she was not "emotionally supported" by the police. The other claimed officers deterred her from pursuing her request for evidence after they learnt she had contacted the paper.

Why didn't anybody ask any questions? Because in the feminized, pluralistic UK, people don't want to hurt the feelings of evildoers. Every crime is just an accident, and we wouldn't want to confront evil with force. That would be so… masculine.

This Telford case isn't the first UK sex-trafficking ring.

Oxfordshire

I blogged before about an article by the ultra-leftist BBC, so they are very politically correct.

They write:

> As many as 373 children may have been targeted for sex by gangs of men in Oxfordshire in the last 16 years, a serious case review found.
>
> The investigation came after a sadistic sex gang of seven men were jailed in 2013 for abusing six girls in Oxford, between 2004 and 2012.
>
> Thames Valley Police and Oxfordshire County Council made "many errors" in that case and could have acted sooner.
>
> A victim of the gang said the issue had been "swept under the carpet".
>
> Of the 373 cases, the council said about 50 victims were boys.
>
> […]The report also called for research into why a significant proportion of people convicted in these kind of cases are of "Pakistani and/or Muslim heritage".
>
> In the Oxford case, known as Operation Bullfinch, two of the men were of east African origin and five of Pakistani origin.

Rotterham

How about the Rotterham sex-trafficking gang?

Here are the facts from Powerline Blog:

Full text:

> You are probably familiar with the Rotherham scandal. Rotherham is a city in England where over a period of years, more than 1,400 girls, many of them pre-teens, were raped and trafficked by a loose consortium of men. The men were all Muslim immigrants or sons of immigrants, the girls were all, or nearly all, white. When the scandal finally came to light in 2014, city officials said that they had been reluctant to do anything about the problem for fear of being accused of racism.
>
> Several criminal trials have resulted from the scandal. The third such trial has just been completed. Six defendants were convicted and sentenced to 10 to 20 years for rape and other crimes. The Sun identified them:
>
> Brothers Basharat Dad, 32, and Nasar Dad, 36, of both of Rotherham, and Tayab Dad, 34, of Sheffield, were jailed on Tuesday for sex offences along with Matloob Hussain, 41, of Rotherham, Mohammed Sadiq, 40, of Rotherham, and Amjad Ali, of Worksop, Nottinghamshire.
>
> This is the most curious aspect of the news report:
>
> There were emotional and chaotic scenes at Sheffield Crown Court after two of the defendants shouted “Allahu Akbar” as they were led from the dock.

But wait, there are more examples.

Rochdale

Another case reported in the UK Telegraph:

> Taxi driver Shabir Ahmed, 59, was already serving a 19 year sentence from May for conspiracy, two rapes, aiding and abetting rape, sexual assault and sex trafficking. His domineering temper earned him the nickname “Daddy” by the white teenage victims.

> The ringleader, who called the judge a ‘racist b——‘, was one of nine men jailed at Liverpool Crown Court for a total of 77 years for passing round the youngsters and plying them with drugs and drink.

> […]His victim, who cannot be named, revealed Ahmed once made her kneel on the floor in a pose called the ‘chicken’, with her arms threaded through her legs and touching her ears, before striking her on the back with a cricket bat.
>
> The girl, now an adult, claims she was repeatedly raped over many years. He left her never wanting to have sex again or get married.
>
> The girl said when she was first raped she was so young she needed to stand on a chair to reach a sink.

> […]Ahmed told the court he was a standard-bearer for “targeted and weakened British Muslims”, and claimed the police were anti-Muslim
>
> He said of the Rochdale grooming trial: “We were all innocent. My only crime was to be Muslim. Not of the majority race.”
>
> In May, Ahmed and his eight co-defendants were jailed for their role in a child-sex ring.

In other cases, the police ignored the complaints of the victims.

This happens often because the UK deliberately chose a “compassionate” open-borders immigration policy. We should not imitate their example. Merit-based immigration is best.

Michael Strauss: are Earth-like planets common in the universe?

March 13, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Physicist Michael Strauss is one of my favorite speakers and scholars – he has a real love of experimental science which I find lacking in many Christian philosophers who seem to treat science (as opposed to *naturalism*) as the enemy.

Here is his latest blog post:

> When scientists say that an Earth-like planet may have been discovered, they actually mean one of three things. Either (1) the planet is in such an orbit around its central star that allows the temperature on the planet to possibly harbor liquid water, or (2) the planet is about the same size as the earth, or (3) the planet is solid and rocky rather than gaseous. Of course any one of these criteria, or even all three, does not actually give us a true Earth-like planet. We know that our moon is in the correct location to contain liquid water, but it is not "Earth-like." We know Venus is about the size of the earth, but it is not "Earth-like." We know that Mercury is rocky and not gaseous, but it is not "Earth-like." So none of these criteria really give an Earth-like planet. Headlines and sound-bites are not meant to be precise but to draw attention, and it is much more exciting to proclaim an "Earth-like" planet has been found rather than a "Venus-like" planet (if even that could be claimed).
>
> […]An enlightening book on this subject is *Rare Earth: Why Complex Life Is Uncommon in the Universe* by Peter D. Ward and Donald Brownlee, published in 2000. One of my favorite chapters in the book is titled "The Surprising Importance of Plate Tectonics" which documents why plate tectonics is required

> in order for complex life to survive. Having lived 23 years of my life in California, I am well acquainted with the consequences of plate tectonics, but had no idea that such activity was crucial for my survival. Ward and Brownlee document how plate tectonics not only forms and maintains continents, but promotes biological diversity, regulates global temperature, and helps maintain a planetary magnetic field. They write, "It may be that plate tectonics is the central requirement for life on a planet and that it is necessary for keeping a world supplied with water," (p. 220).
>
> The astrophysicist Hugh Ross has done a rough estimate of the probability of finding a single planet that could support even simple unicellular life for a sustained period of time. Including correlations and longevity factors, and assuming there are 10 billion trillion planets in the visible universe, he concludes that the probability of finding a single planet that could support unicellular life for a prolonged period of time is 1 in 10^{556}, (see Part B of this document). If this informed estimate is even close to being correct, then there are no other planets in the visible universe that can support life.

Previously, I blogged about a few of the minimum requirements that a planet must satisfy in order to support complex life.

Here they are:

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the planet has to be far enough from the star to avoid tidal locking and solar flares
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits
- planet mass must be enough to retain an atmosphere, but not so massive to cause a greenhouse effect

That's a lot of characteristics that need to be present. When you calculate the probabilities of each one and then multiply them (product rule) to get the odds of getting a planet with ALL of them present, you get a number far smaller than the maximum number of possible life sites in the universe. We are alone.

Women who delay marriage for casual sex surprised to be single in their mid-30s

March 14, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

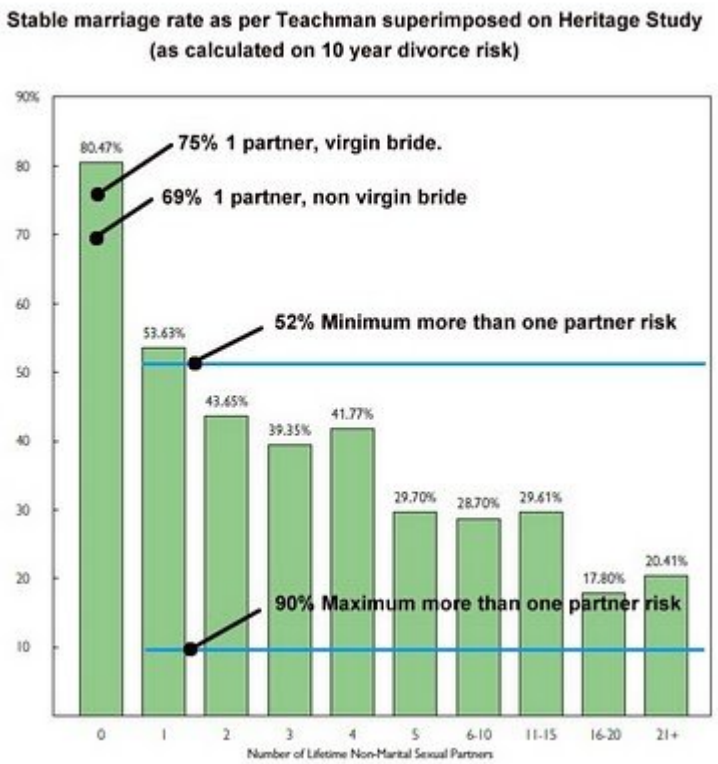

Divorce risk and number of pre-marital sex partners

Dr. Mark Regnerus is a sociologist at the University of Texas at Austin. He has published books on the changing nature of relationships with Oxford University Press. His newest book argues that the Sexual Revolution has caused men to lose interest in marriage because women are now giving them sex for free, without them having to prove their husband credentials first. This causes men to be disinterested in the traditional ways of impressing a woman, namely, getting a job, moving out, being willing to commit, and being able to provide for children who may appear.

The Daily Signal provides a case study taken from Regnerus' latest book "Cheap Sex", which illustrates the problem.

Excerpt:

> Sarah is 32 years old and recently moved to Texas from New York, looking for a new start—in more ways than one.
>
> Brooklyn had grown too expensive for her hipster pocketbook. A relationship she had hoped would blossom and mature there had instead withered. So to Austin she came, hoping she could improve upon her modest $22,000 annual earnings the previous year.
>
> Her most recent sexual partner—Daniel—was not actually a relationship per se. He was not the reason she moved. Rather, he was a 23-year-old American she

> had met in China four years before during a three-week language immersion program.
>
> […]When they first met, and slept together, Sarah was in a relationship with David, the man for which she had moved to, and then away from, New York. She ended up "cheating on him," that is, David, several times.
>
> […]If you're having trouble keeping times, dates, and boyfriends straight, it's understandable. Sarah herself laughs at the drama of it all.
>
> […]Getting serious was never much of an option. He was 23, and she was 32: "We both knew … he was graduating from college and, you know, like we both, at least I knew it was never gonna work out. I think he kind of felt the same way."
>
> […]When asked how rapidly her relationships tend to become sexual, Sarah replied, "the first or second date." That account did not stand out from those of many other interviewees.
>
> The numbers are on her side, too. In the 2014 Relationships in America survey, sex before the relationship begins was the modal—meaning the most common—point at which Americans report having first had sex in their current relationships.
>
> Is her timing of sex intentional? No. "It just happens," she reasoned.
>
> […]This, she claims, is the standard approach to dating among her peers, if not necessarily the most optimal: "I don't think it's unusual, but I think that for a lasting relationship, it's not the best approach."
>
> […]Three years later, now 35, Sarah continues to live in Austin and continues to find commitment elusive. She does not dislike her life, but it is not the one she envisioned a decade earlier.

Daniel is a musician, which doesn't surprise me at all. A musician, student or other unemployed penniless bad boy will not make any demands on the woman, because he almost certainly has no plan for the future. This is what many women today want: someone for *right now* who doesn't want her to do anything to prepare for marriage, e.g. – get a real job, stop the thrill-seeking, stop traveling the world. No matter what a woman says about marriage, if her actions now show an interest in fun and thrills, then she doesn't want marriage.

The typical woman's plan for marriage is simply to *imagine* marriage happening later somehow, without her having to do anything that she doesn't feel like doing right now. It would be like "planning" for your retirement by taking trips all over the world *right now,* while *imagining* living off the interest from a million dollars in savings at age 55. This problem is what happens when the culture tells women that they should not aspire to marriage, and should not measure men to see if they will make good husbands and fathers. If a woman cannot expect a man to be a man (protector, provider, moral and spiritual leader), then she will choose men on other criteria.

This is what women today want:

- hot appearance
- confident words about the future
- empty resume
- empty bank account
- several years younger than they are
- no firm convictions about morality
- no firm convictions about theology
- progressive political views, especially on abortion

Men who have no jobs and no money don't lead women, and are much easier for women to manipulate. The problem with these men is – as any married woman knows – is that *those men do not commit*. Why not? Because they *cannot afford to commit*. Marriage, put simply, costs money. Starter houses cost a quarter million. Children cost a quarter million each, not counting college. Retirement costs a quarter million per spouse. And so on. But there is no one in this society telling women that they need to care about choosing men who are serious about the objective duties of the husband role.

Women love to believe that they can choose a hot, irresponsible bad boy who gives them feelings, and then magically mold him into a husband: able to work hard, save money, be self-controlled, faithful and good with children. Feelings determine the choice of man, and feelings tell them that the man can be magically transformed into a husband somehow. Perhaps by giving him premarital sex! That will make him responsible. After all, you can put out a fire with gasoline, right? *This is the most common approach women today take to relationships: get drunk, have sex with hot bad boy, shack up with him, wait for him to propose marriage.*

I frequently tell my female friends about women I know like the one in the article – many raised by two married parents in Christian homes. They have arts degrees, empty resumes, empty bank accounts, and histories of alcoholism, bulimia, promiscuity and/or divorce. My female friends give me the same advice: "YOU NEED TO LOWER YOUR STANDARDS OR YOU'LL NEVER GET MARRIED". If that's the best that they can do, then it's no wonder that men are not interested in marriage.

If you want men to be interested in marriage, fix the root cause. The root cause of the marriage rate declining is not men. The root cause is feminism.

Five liberal Democrat policies that hurt minorities

March 15, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

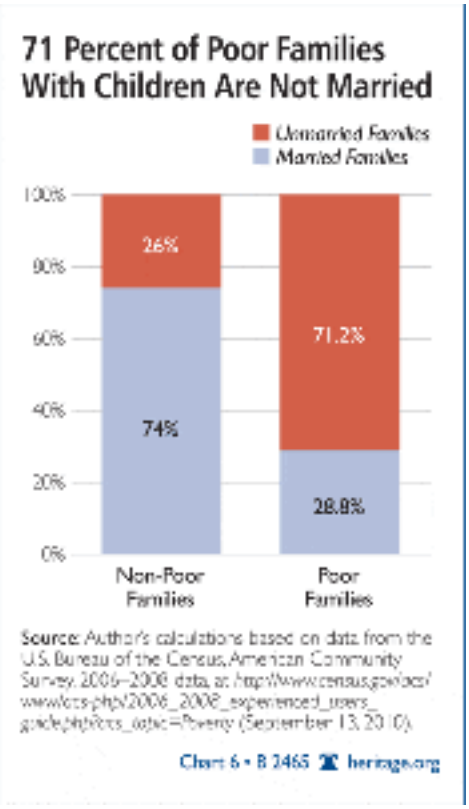

Marriage and Poverty

The five policies are:

- higher minimum wage rates
- opposition to school voucher programs
- releasing criminals from jail
- affirmative action
- single mother welfare

This article is by Jason L. Riley, and it appeared in the Wall Street Journal.

Excerpt:

> At the urging of labor unions, President Obama has pushed for higher minimum wages that price a disproportionate percentage of blacks out of the labor force. At the urging of teachers unions, he has fought voucher programs that give ghetto children access to better schools.
>
> Both policies have a lengthy track record of keeping millions of blacks ill-educated and unemployed. Since the 1970s, when the federal government began tracking the racial achievement gap, black test scores in math, reading and science have on average trailed far behind those of their white classmates. And minimum-wage mandates have been so effective for so long at keeping blacks out of work that 1930, the last year in which there was no federal minimum-wage

> law, was also the last year that the black unemployment rate was lower than the white rate. For the past half-century, black joblessness on average has been double that of whites.
>
> Last week the Justice Department said it would release some 6,000 inmates from federal prison starting later this month. The goal, according to the White House, is to ease overcrowding and roll back tough sentencing rules implemented in the 1980s and ’90s.
>
> But why are the administration’s sympathies with the lawbreakers instead of their usual victims—the mostly law-abiding residents in low-income communities where many of these inmates eventually are headed? In dozens of large U.S. cities, violent crime, including murder, has climbed over the past year, and it is hard to see how these changes are in the interest of public safety.
>
> The administration assures skeptics that only “nonviolent” drug offenders will be released, but who pays the price if we guess wrong, as officials have so often done in the past?
>
> When Los Angeles asked the Rand Corp. in the 1990s to identify inmates suitable for early release, the researchers concluded that “almost no one housed in the Los Angeles jails could be considered non-serious or simply troublesome to their local communities” and that “jail capacity should be expanded so as to allow lengthier incarceration of the more dangerous.”
>
> A 2002 federal report tracked the recidivism rate of some 91,000 supposedly nonviolent offenders in 15 states over a three-year period. More than 21% wound up rearrested for violent crimes, including more than 700 murders and more than 600 rapes. The report also noted the difficulty of identifying low-risk inmates. Auto thieves were rearrested for committing more than a third of the homicides and a disproportionate share of other violent offenses.

Keep in mind that when criminals are release, they don’t go move into wealthy progressive neighborhoods. It’s not the wealthy leftists elites who have to deal with the released inmates. It’s the poor, low-income minority neighborhoods that have to deal with them.

By the way, I covered the minimum wage argument here, and I covered the school choice argument here.

That covers the first 3 policies. This article from The College Fix covers the fourth policy, affirmative action.

It says:

> A UCLA law professor critiques affirmative action as detrimental to the very people it strives to aid: minority students.
>
> Professor Richard Sander, though liberal-leaning, has deemed affirmative action practices as harmful, a notion that contradicts a liberal view in college admissions, said Stuart Taylor, a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings

> Institution.
>
> […]Sander began teaching law at UCLA in 1989. After a few years he garnered an interest in academic support and asked permission to analyze which strategies most effectively assist struggling students.
>
> After reviewing statistics on performance, especially those of students with lower academic merit, he noticed correlations between race and academic success.
>
> "I was struck by both the degree to which it correlated with having weak academic entering credentials and its correlation with race," Sander said in a recent interview with *The College Fix.* "And as I looked into our admissions process I realized that we were giving really a large admissions preference."
>
> Sander noticed that students admitted into the law school with lower academic credentials than their peers had significantly lower percentages of passing the Multistate Bar Examination, Sander said. This especially pertained to minority students who were given special consideration in the admittance process due to their race rather than their academic preparedness.
>
> He then began thinking about whether or not these students would have better chances of succeeding if they went to a less elite university, he said.
>
> He called this discrepancy a mismatch; when minority students with lower credentials than their peers are accepted into more challenging universities and then suffer academically as a result.

And the fifth policy is welfare. Welfare encourages women to not marry the men that they have sex with, since they will lose their single mother benefits if they do. Children who are raised fatherless are more likely to struggle in a number of areas, and they are especially likely to be poor. What we should be doing (if we really want to help the poor) is paying people to get married and stay married. But Democrats are opposed to that. The connection between welfare, fatherlessness, poverty and crime is explained in a previous post.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about spending, saving and charity

March 16, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

A practical lecture on money – spending, saving, charitable giving – from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

I like the way that Wayne Grudem navigates the Bible finding the passages that tell you who God is, so that you can make better decisions by analyzing alternatives and choosing the one that gives your Boss a maximum return on investment. He's very practical.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Spending:

- Christianity does not teach asceticism (= don't enjoy anything in this world), Paul condemns it in 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- When you buy nice things, even if it is a little more expensive, it's an opportunity to be thankful for nice things that God has provided
- Even being rich is OK, but don't let it make you haughty and arrogant, and don't set your hopes on your money (see 1 Tim 6:17)
- It is important for you to earn money, and you are supposed to use it to support yourself and be independent
- It is possible to overspend and live recklessly (Luke 15:13) and it's also possible to overspend and live too luxuriously
- *Increasing your income through career progression is wise*, because it allows you to give away more and save more

- God gives us freedom to decide how much we spend, how much we give away, and how much we save
- every choice a Christian makes with money will give him or her more or less reward in his or her afterlife
- Do not spend more than you have – you should make every effort to get out of debt as quickly as possible

Saving:

- Saving money is wise so you can help yourself and others, and have money in your old age when you will not be working
- If you do not save your own money, you end up being dependent on others (e.g. – family or taxpayers)
- Not saving money for the future is a way of "putting God to the test" (Matt 4:7)
- You are to "be dependent on no one", to the extent that you can (1 Thes 4:12)
- We don't know the future, that's why we should prepare for an emergency, and buy insurance to guard (James 4:13-17)
- It's right for us to learn how to save to be able to buy bigger assets, like a car or a college education
- Saving and investing in stocks and bonds lets people in business start and grow companies, creating jobs and new products
- *Don't over-save, trusting too much in money more than you trust in God* (Ps 62.10; Matt 6:19,24; Luke 12:15-21)

Giving:

- it is required for the people of God to give something out of what they earn, but no percentage is specified (Deut 26:12-13)
- you do not give money to become right with God, you can't earn your salvation
- *a Christian gives to show God that you trust him to take care of you, and to experience trusting him through your giving*
- the quality of your resurrection life with God is affected by giving you do for the Kingdom (Phil 4, Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:18-19)
- when you get involved in the lives of others and give to them, you have the joy of experiencing caring for others (Acts 20:35)
- it's possible to give too little, but it's also possible to give too much – be careful about pride creeping in as well

The first part of this lecture made me think of my treat for the week, which is to get a double chicken burrito bowl after my weight lifting. It is very easy to say grace when you are hovering over a double chicken burrito bowl. It is good to have nice things especially when it makes you thankful for what you have.

I was so happy listening to this talk because he was condemning bad stewardship, which I see in a lot of young people these days. I was happy until he got to the part about

trusting in your savings for your security, and then I thought – that's what I do wrong! I save a lot but it's not just for emergencies and to share with others, like he was saying – I want a sense of security. This was more of a temptation in my 20s than it is now in my 30s, though.

Charity should hurt

I can remember being in my first full-time job as a newly hired junior programmer when the 2001 recession struck. I would cry while signing checks to support William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith ministry, because I was so scared. I had no family or friends where I lived to help me if anything went wrong, and that's been the story of my working life. If anything goes wrong, there is no backup. But it's that experience of crying when I gave that allows me to say today "that's when I became the man I am, that's what a man does when he is a follower of Jesus". If you are not doing the actions of charity, then you will not having the experience of trusting God and letting him lead you. There is more to the Christian life than just saying the right things – you have to do the right things.

Don't follow your heart

If you're scared about giving when you are young, then do what I did in my 20s: work 70-hour weeks, get promoted often, and save everything you earn. I volunteered every Saturday for 9 months in order to get my first white-collar part-time job when I was still in high-school. The faster you increase your savings, the easier it's going to be to take a *genuine interest* in caring for the people around you. Read Phil 1 (fellowship), Phil 2 (concern for others), and Phil 4 (charity). Turn off your emotions and desires when it comes to choosing what to study and what work to do, and put Philippians into practice. Your freedom to give is very much tied to the quality of your decisions of what to study, where to work, how much you spend on entertainment, and so on. That's why you need to turn off your feelings and desires and do what works, even it it's not fun, and even if it involves responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

The kalam cosmological argument defended in a peer-reviewed science journal

March 17, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the peer-reviewed article. It appears in a scientific journal focused on astrophysics.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

Here's an excerpt in which the author, Dr. William Lane Craig, explains the Big Bang cosmology:

> The monumental significance of the Friedman-Lemaitre model lay in its historization of the universe. As one commentator has remarked, up to this time the idea of the expansion of the universe "was absolutely beyond comprehension. Throughout all of human history the universe was regarded as fixed and immutable and the idea that it might actually be changing was inconceivable."{8} But if the Friedman-Lemaitre model were correct, the universe could no longer be adequately treated as a static entity existing, in effect, timelessly. Rather the universe has a history, and time will not be matter of indifference for our investigation of the cosmos. In 1929 Edwin Hubble's measurements of the red-shift in the optical spectra of light from distant galaxies,{9} which was taken to indicate a universal recessional motion of the light sources in the line of sight, provided a dramatic verification of the Friedman-Lemaitre model. Incredibly, what Hubble had discovered was the isotropic expansion of the universe predicted by Friedman and Lemaitre. It marked a veritable turning point in the history of science. "Of all the great predictions that

> science has ever made over the centuries," exclaims John Wheeler, "was there ever one greater than this, to predict, and predict correctly, and predict against all expectation a phenomenon so fantastic as the expansion of the universe?"{10}
>
> As a GTR-based theory, the Friedman-Lemaitre model does not describe the expansion of the material content of the universe into a pre-existing, empty, Newtonian space, but rather the expansion of space itself. This has the astonishing implication that as one reverses the expansion and extrapolates back in time, space-time curvature becomes progressively greater until one finally arrives at a singular state at which space-time curvature becomes infinite. This state therefore constitutes an edge or boundary to space-time itself. P. C. W. Davies comments,
>
> > An initial cosmological singularity . . . forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity. . . . On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.{11}
>
> The popular expression "Big Bang," originally a derisive term coined by Fred Hoyle to characterize the beginning of the universe predicted by the Friedman-Lemaitre model, is thus potentially misleading, since the expansion cannot be visualized from the outside (there being no "outside," just as there is no "before" with respect to the Big Bang).{12}
>
> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"{13}
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Every theist should be able to understand and defend this argument. It is a scientific refutation of materialism, and it is supported by six lines of scientific evidence – all of which emerged as science has progressed.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe

3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

Those are the scientific discoveries that have led us to the beginning of the universe, which support's Dr. Craig's argument.

This is the kind of evidence I expect all Christian theists to be using when discussing the question of whether God exists. Scientific evidence. When talking to non-Christians, we first need to show that we understand science, because science is a reliable and respected way of getting knowledge about the universe. Non-Christians do not accept the Bible, but they do accept science, so we begin evangelism with science. Science (experimental, testable, repeatable science) should set limits on what anyone can believe – including non-Christians, who might otherwise not be inclined to listen to Bible verses and theology. Important: it's not a good idea to discuss the resurrection of Jesus with a person who does not accept the scientific evidence for a Creator of the universe.

The Big Bang is not compatible with atheism

According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by the atheistic worldview.

Study: lack of secure attachment during early childhood harms children

March 18, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

This is from the leftist Brookings Institute, a respected think tank

They write about a new study:

> Attachment theory is founded on the idea that an infant's early relationship with their caregiver is crucial for social and emotional development. It is an old theory, born during the 1950s. But it can bring fresh light on issues of opportunity and equality today, as a three-decade longitudinal study of low-income children from Alan Sroufe, Byron Egeland, Elizabeth Carlson, and W. A. Collins, all University of Minnesota psychologists, demonstrates.
>
> […]Small infants are heavily dependent on caregivers, who must respond to their needs. But counter-intuitively, the infants who have a reliable caregiver are also most likely to become self-efficacious later.
>
> Infants (aged 9 to 18 months) with responsive parents learn how their own behavior can impact their environment. This "call and response" process builds the infant's sense of self-efficacy— one reason parents *should* pick up the sippy cup, especially for the hundredth time! But this virtuous learning cycle breaks down if the caregiver fails to respond adequately.

Here are the definitions:

- **Secure attachment**: When the caregiver (mom, in this study) is present, the infant explores the room and interacts with the experimenter, occasionally returning to the caregiver for support. When the caregiver leaves, the child becomes sad and

hesitates to interact with the experimenter, but upon their return, is visibly excited.
- **Anxious/resistant attachment:** Regardless of the caregiver's presence, the infant shows fear of the experimenter and novel situations—these infants cry more and explore the room less. They become upset when the caregiver leaves, and while they approach upon return often resist physical contact, as a form of "punishment".
- **Anxious/avoidant attachment:** No preference is shown between a caregiver and a stranger— infants play normally in the presence of the experimenter and show no sign of distress or interest when their caregiver leaves and returns. The experimenter and the caregiver can comfort the infant equally well.

And here the results:

> The Minnesota study found that attachment makes a difference later in life. Without knowing students' attachment history, preschool teachers judged those who had secure attachments to have higher self-esteem, to be more self-reliant, to be better at managing impulses, and to recover more easily from upsetting events. When teachers were asked which students, among those with serious struggles in class, nonetheless had "a core of inner self-worth, an indication that… maybe they could get better," they picked students that had secure attachments as infants.
>
> In contrast, children with anxious/resistant attachments:
>
> - tended to hover near teachers
> - became easily frustrated
> - were more likely to be seen as "dependent" by blinded observers
> - were less competent and patient with puzzles and other cognitive challenges
>
> Children with anxious/avoidant attachments:
>
> - tended to be apathetic towards other children
> - failed to ask for adult help when stressed
> - were "often self-isolating"
>
> Both groups had higher rates of anxiety and depression as teenagers.

So again, we are seeing that when it comes to parenting, you have to think about what you are doing. That doesn't mean that you have to be slaves to your kids, or spoil them or hover over them. It means that what you are doing with your kids matters. It means that you need to make a plan to have enough time and money to be able to care for them when they need it. I think that the right time to talk about such things is during the courtship. Who is going to be watching the children? How will we afford the things that they need? How will we deal with unexpected situations?

“The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands” is required reading for women who want to marry

March 19, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

I’ve been re-reading my favorite book on marriage, and so I thought I would re-post something about it.

Sue Bohlin of Probe Ministries read “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands“, and her assessment is here.

Excerpt:

> Talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written a book that is improving thousands of marriages: *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands.*{1} We need this book because millions of wives either don’t know how to love their husbands wisely and well, or they’re too self-centered to see it as important. Dr. Laura credits this dismal condition to forty years of feminist philosophy, “with its condemnation of just about everything male as evil, stupid, and oppressive, and the denigration of female and male roles in families.”{2} While the women’s movement certainly had a hand to play in the disintegration of relationships and the family, I believe the core cause is our sinful self-centeredness, just as the Bible says.{3}
>
> Which is why we need help, and God instructs older women to train younger women to love their husband and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.{4} *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* is a great resource for learning these important values and skills.

She talks about men’s needs for direct communication, respect, appreciation, support,

and sex.

And ends with this:

> I can't recommend *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* highly enough. In fact, I gave a copy to my new daughter-in-law! Let me close with one more piece of wisdom from Dr. Laura: "[M]en are simple creatures who come from a woman, are nurtured and brought up by a woman, and yearn for the continued love, admiration and approval of a woman. . . Women need to better appreciate the magnitude of their power and influence over men, and not misuse or abuse it."{25}

Sue is the husband of famous Christian scholar Ray Bohlin, PhD, and they've been married for a very long time.

And here's another summary of the book that I found.

Full text:

> Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written another book that deserves a place on the best seller list with six of her other books, such as Ten Stupid Things Women Do to Mess Up Their Lives and Ten Stupid Things Men Do to Mess Up Their Lives. The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands, from this unmarried man's perspective, is an excellent manual for women on how to get want they want from men and marriage and, generally, how to be happy. Dr. Laura makes a number of important, practical points, based on her experience in private practice, from advising her radio callers, and from literally hundreds of letters and emails she received from men and women while she was writing the book. Here are the points that struck this writer, together with commentary:

> 1. **Men Need Women, and This Need Gives Women Huge Influence**. Dr. Laura states the point as follows: "[M]en are simple creatures who come from a woman, are nurtured and brought up by a woman, and yearn for the continued love, admiration, and approval from a woman." Women have great power and influence over men, and wives in particular have tremendous power over their husbands. How they use this power essentially controls the relationship, because women are the masters of most relationships and marriages. That's why Dr. Laura says that she probably won't write The Proper Care and Feeding of Wives: wives already have most of the power and their marriages depend, for the most part, on them.

> 2. **Women Err in Favoring Children Over Husband**. A friend once told this writer that once a woman has children, her husband is relegated to the moral equivalence of a piece of furniture. How sad if this is true in many marriages. Here's how Dr. Laura puts it: "Once wives became mothers, they had no time to be wives. The men would even compliment their wives on being great mothers, but expressed considerable pain over not being shown love, affection, or sexual

interest. The typical reply from a wife challenged with this was ‘I only have time to take care of one person, and our child is that person. I’m just too tired for you.’ This puts fathers in the ugly and uncomfortable position of feeling competitive with and resentful of their children, whom they love so much.”

3. **Men and Women Are Different**. That men and women are deeply different ought not to be notable, but for the fact that it is so often challenged today. Dr. Laura says that society tries to make both men and women “unisex.” But men are happiest being men, and women are happiest being women, with few exceptions. The differences start to manifest themselves very early. In one study Dr. Laura mentions, a barrier was placed between 1 year-old babies and their mothers. What did the little boys do? They attempted to get around the barrier or knock it down. The little girls? They cried until their mothers’ picked them up. Men tend to respond to things physically, women verbally. In fact, the two sexes are just right for each other.

4. **Not Every Thought and Feeling Needs to be Said**. Women tend to be so verbal, so expressive, that they can tire out men easily unless they exercise some restraint. Dr. Laura reports that wives generally overwhelm their husbands with communication. “Husbands imagine (so foolishly) that their wives are telling them something they actually need to know because they’re supposed to do something about it. Otherwise, men can’t imagine why the ‘communication’ is happening at all. It confuses them, frustrates them, and their response is to turn off. That’s when they unfairly become labeled insensitive.” Husbands and fiances are not girlfriends or psychologists, and women who want attention should adjust their communication style accordingly when speaking with them.

5. **Men Are Not Mind-Readers**. Most men are not very intuitive compared to most women. Many women “get caught up in the absurdly romanticized notion that ‘if he loved me, he’d just know what I’m thinking, what I’d like, what he should say.'” If a woman wants her man to do something, she should just ask him plainly, without nagging, and show appreciation when he does it. To act otherwise, as many women do, shows arrogance and lack of respect for the husband’s difference, and it leads to unhappiness in the marriage and in the family.

6. **Man Is an Embodied Soul**. No, Dr. Laura didn’t put it that way; “embodied soul” is a Catholic concept. But that concept is what underlies her discussion of how important it is to a man that his wife try to keep up her appearance. What does it mean that we are embodied souls? It means that our bodies are integral parts of who we are. We are not just souls. Our bodies are not like clothing that we can take on or off. There was no time during which we had only souls and not bodies, and in eternity as well we will have bodies. It is through our bodies, in fact, that we communicate to our loved ones and to the rest of the world. One

thinks of the beautiful line from the old Anglican marriage rite: bride and groom pledge to each other “with my body I thee worship.” It is ironic, but in many cases men–sex-crazed pigs in the minds of many women–actually have a truer understanding of the beauty of the body and the meaning of the marital embrace than their wives do. “Objectification” may come as much or more from the woman’s side as from the husband’s if the woman sees her own body as being separate from rather than an integral part of herself. Dr. Laura writes: “In reading all the letters from men, I was struck by their depth of senstivity about the issue of women’s appearance. It wasn’t an impersonal, animal reaction (as it is with women the men don’t personally know), it was a deeply personal one. The wife’s comfort with and appreciation of her own body and femininity, and her willingness to share that with her husband, actually fed his sense of well-being, his feeling of being loved as a husband and valued as a ‘man.'”

7. **Infidelity by Omission**. Brides and grooms make a number of vows, not only of sexual fidelity. Marital vows include and imply words like love, honor, protect, and care for. “[W]hen one breaches those vows by neglect, is that also not a form of infidelity? Perhaps we should start looking at the act of intentionally depriving a spouse of legitimate needs as infidelity, too, because it stems from being unfaithful to the intent of the vows.”

8. **In the Bedroom**. To her credit, Dr. Laura gives due place to the importance for marriage of the marital act: “The bedroom is the foundation of marriage and family.” St. Josemaria Escriva, founder of Opus Dei, that supposedly conservative institution within the Church, put it this way: “The marriage bed is an altar.” Enough said?

9. **Women Should Appreciate Men’s Masculinity**. Dr. Laura relates a trip she made recently to a swimming pool. A mom and a dad were wading with their infant child. Mom held the child against her chest, cooed to him, and swooped him up and down. She passed the baby to dad. He turned the baby’s face outward and swooshed him forward and up into the air. “Mom equals protection and nurturance. Dad equals autonomy and adventure. It is the perfect balance that helps produce a functional, secure human being.” Too many women, though, act like Alice Kramdens, constantly belitting their husbands, shooting down their aspirations, treating them like children. Dr. Laura writes: “When a wife treats her man like he’s one of her children, when she puts him down or thwarts his need for autonomy, adventure, risk, competition, challenge, and conquest, she ends up with a sullen, unooperative, unloving, hostile lump.”

10. **Thou Shalt Not Covet**. Dr. Laura contributes a novel (to this writer) and insightful contemporary application of the commandment, “thou shal not covet.” Specifically, she understands it as a rebuke to people who want it all, especially feminists. “Perhaps the feminist notions about women having power if they do it

> all has obstructed too many women's ability to realize that in real life we all make choices, and that the true joy and meaning of life is not in how many things we have or do, but in the sacrifice and commitment we make to others within the context of the choices we've made. The Tenth Commandment, about coveting, reminds us that none of us can have everything there is nor everything we want. Without enjoying and appreciating our gifts and blessings, we create a hell on earth for ourselves and for those who love us."

PCF Husbands is the best basic book on marriage. Easy to read, tons of wisdom. It's a great book for women to read to find out what men really want from a wife, and to find out what a wife should do to kep her marriage intact and satisfying. Marriage can be a beautiful thing if both people go into the relationship with the view that each person has to put in 100% effort to make it work. Understanding a man's needs helps a woman to put in her 100%. It would be hard to take care of a parrot or some other strange creature if you didn't know anything about what their needs and habits were. This book explains a lot of what women need to know about men.

America’s new generation of little secular psychopaths

March 20, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Zombies! They can’t think about policy rationally

I’ve been reading a lot about life in the former Soviet Union, where millions of innocent people were murdered for “equality”. I’m trying to understand how it was possible for an entire population to voluntarily give up their freedom in exchange for concentration camps and mass graves. The conclusion I’ve come to is that the majority of the Russian people must have lost the ability to make judgments about right and wrong. Could such a thing happen here?

According to Everett Piper, writing in the Washington Times, it already has: (H/T Ari)

> For some 70 years, “The Lottery” has rightly been included in many literary anthologies for its shocking portrayal of the power of groupthink and the human inclination to accept evil.
>
> For more than 30 years beginning in 1970, English professor Kay Haugaard used the story to spur corresponding discussions in her literature class at Pasadena City College. Ms. Haugaard says she could always count on some common reactions:
>
> “Everyone thought it was scary because, as someone inevitably said, ‘The characters seem just like regular people — you know, like us!’”
>
> “The story always impressed the class with the insight that I felt the author had intended: the danger of just ‘going along’ with something habitually, without examining its rationale and value. In spite of the changes that I had witnessed over the years in anthologies and in students’ writing, Jackson’s message about blind conformity always spoke to my students’ sense of right and wrong.”
>
> Then in the 1990s, something started to change dramatically in how her students responded to the sobering tale. Rather than being horrified by it, some claimed

> they were bored by it, while others thought the ending was “neat.”
>
> When Ms. Haugaard pressed them for more of their thoughts, she was appalled to discover that not one student in the class was willing to say the practice of human sacrifice was morally wrong! She describes one interaction with a student, whom she calls Beth:
>
> “‘Are you asking me if I believe in human sacrifice?’ Beth responded thoughtfully, as though seriously considering all aspects of the question. ‘Well, yes,’ I managed to say. ‘Do you think that the author approved or disapproved of this ritual?’
>
> “I was stunned: This was the [young] woman who wrote so passionately of saving the whales, of concern for the rain forests, of her rescue and tender care of a stray dog. ‘I really don’t know,’ said Beth; ‘If it was a religion of long standing, [who are we to judge]?’”
>
> “For a moment, I couldn’t even respond,” reports Ms. Haugaard. “This woman actually couldn’t seem to bring herself to say plainly that she was against human sacrifice. My classes of a few years before would have burst into nervous giggles at the suggestion. This class was calmly considering it.”
>
> At one point, a student explained she had been taught not to judge, and if this practice worked for them, who was she to argue differently.
>
> Appalled by the student’s moral indifference, Ms. Haugaard concludes, “Today, for the first time in my thirty years of teaching, I looked my students in the eye and not one of them in my class could tell me that this society, this cultural behavior was a bad thing.”
>
> Not one of these students would say human sacrifice is wrong? The whole point of “The Lottery” is to show the dangers of blindly following bad ideas. But Ms. Haugaard’s students had been taught that labels like good and evil, sacred and sinful, no longer applied as absolutes — and they responded accordingly. They had been taught that to assign moral values to actions was, in itself, wrong.

She’s for stopping global warming, but not for stopping human sacrifice. How come? Because she was taught to be against global warming by her leftist public school teachers. She was “taught” her secular leftist views because the teachers presented those secular leftist views as morally pure, and opposition to those secular leftist views as morally evil. Naturally, the stupid student wanted to accept the “good” views of her far-left public school teachers. On actual moral issues like child sacrifice, she has no ability to judge right from wrong. She accepted what she was taught. She can’t think for herself. The mere mention of opposing views sends her rushing for a safe space.

The concepts of right and wrong only have meaning if there really is a way that human beings ought to behave. In a theistic worldview, right and wrong are independent of our feelings, because they are rooted in the character of the Creator and Designer of the universe. The Designer gets to decide how we should act, not us. But if there is no

Designer, (atheism), then humans decide for themselves. They decide what's right and wrong *for them* based on their feelings. What's right is what works *for them*. Theists discuss morality as they discuss mathematics – choose what is correct. Atheists discuss morality as they discuss taste in food – choose what you like. As secularists have taken over in the schools, students have lost the ability to even have conversations about morality. And so, we've raised a generation of young people who cannot make moral judgments.

How can we expect people who can't make moral judgments to respond to evils, like the evils of communism? Before you can get to concentration camps and mass graves, you have to educate the young people into imbecility. And the secular public schools have done a pretty good job of that. We've got a generation of young people who are in lockstep with their far-left atheist teachers on every issue. They can't think for themselves, and they can't listen to views different from the views their teachers taught them. They don't have the brains to resist those who would enslave us all.

Armed support officer ends attempted school shooting in Maryland

March 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

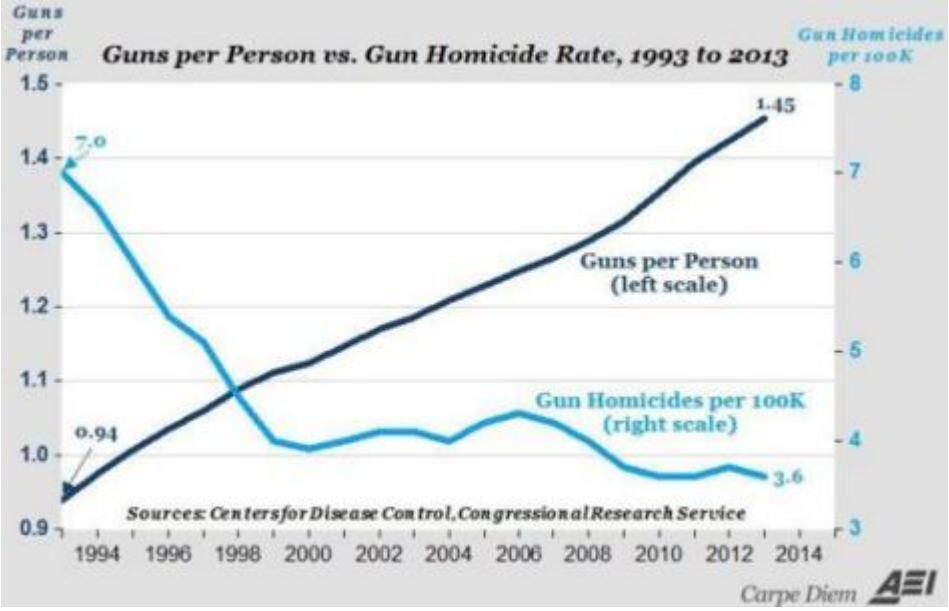

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

The mainstream media is using naive students like sock puppets to push an anti-self-defense agenda. I saw a clip where one of the children was explaining that armed teachers or security guards would not prevent school shootings. Instead, the solution being suggested by those on the left is to ban all semi-automatic weapons – which would mean confiscating nearly every firearm used for self-defense against criminals by law-abiding citizens.

So, does having an armed security guard on staff work?

Here's a story from the Daily Caller:

> The Great Mills High School student who injured two others Tuesday morning was stopped by the school's armed resource officer.
>
> According to St. Mary's County Sheriff Tim Cameron, the school resource officer (SRO) fired a round at the shooter, who fired a round in return. The shooter is now dead, Cameron confirmed Tuesday morning, and an investigation will determine whether the SRO's bullet struck the shooter.
>
> The incident is now over, though the shooter managed to injure two students. One of them is in critical condition in the hospital, Cameron said. The SRO was not injured during the incident.

In fact, almost all mass shootings happen in "gun-free zones", where there are no armed security guards.

Economist John Lott explains:

> Since 1950, more than 98 percent of public mass shootings in America have

> taken place where citizens are banned from carrying guns. In Europe, every mass public shooting in history has occurred in a gun-free zone. And Europe is no stranger to mass public shootings. In the past eight years, it has experienced a per-capita casualty rate 50 percent higher than that of the U.S.
>
> With permit holders preventing dozens of mass public shootings in recent years, it is unsurprising that killers try to avoid resistance.
>
> Last year, a young Islamic State sympathizer planned a shooting at one of the largest churches in Detroit. A FBI wiretap recorded his reasons for picking the church: “It’s easy, and a lot of people go there. Plus people are not allowed to carry guns in church. Plus it would make the news.”
>
> These killers might be crazy, but they aren’t stupid. Picking defenseless targets means being able to kill more people. A long list of killers explicitly have stated this reasoning, including the 2015 Charleston, S.C., church shooting, the 2012 theater shooting in Aurora, Colo., and the 2015 attack in San Bernardino, Calif.
>
> […]In March 2013, 86 percent of police officers surveyed by PoliceOne, the 450,000-member private organization of police, said that casualties would have been prevented if legally-armed citizens had been able to carry guns in places such as Newtown and Aurora.
>
> […]Last summer, professor Gary Mauser and I released a survey of all economists and criminologists who had published peer-reviewed empirical research on firearms.
>
> […]By 66 percent to 32 percent, economists and criminologists answer that gun-free zones are “more likely to attract criminals than they are to deter them.”

Allowing some teachers to voluntarily train and arm themselves would be a deterrent to school shootings. But this is not the solution that the leftist gun-grabbers are looking for. They don’t really want to solve the problem of school shootings. They just want to confiscate all legally-owned guns and abolish self-defense completely.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

March 22, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus in a debate by saying that the resurrection is the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. Minimal facts are the parts of the New Testament that meet a set of strict historical criteria. These are the facts that skeptical historians agree with, totally apart from any religious beliefs.

So what are the criteria that skeptical historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria

> are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."
>
> In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> (1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
>
> (2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
>
> (3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
>
> (4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
>
> (5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
>
> (6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.
>
> Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for

the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book.

Try this approach instead:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection

8. Don’t let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And remember that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I’ve read is the one by Robert H. Stein in “Contending with Christianity’s Critics“. It’s a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion “God raised Jesus from the dead”. That whole book is really very, very good.

Conservatives vote against wasteful $1.3 trillion spending bill

March 23, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The new Republican spending bill has nothing for conservatives

Even though many conservative Republican congressmen voted against the massive spending bill, it still passed the House. All the Democrats voted for it. It's a Democrat spending bill – there's nothing in it that Trump promised. No money for the wall. No de-funding of sanctuary cities. No de-funding of Planned Parenthood. No de-funding of Obamacare.

CNBC reports:

> The U.S. Congress was racing on Thursday to approve a massive spending bill and send it to President Donald Trump for enactment before a midnight Friday government shutdown deadline, in a move that would significantly boost defense and non-military funding through Sept. 30.
>
> The House of Representatives planned to debate and vote on the measure on Thursday. If it clears the chamber, despite opposition from some conservatives protesting the measure's crushing deficit spending, it is likely to have an easier time passing the Senate.
>
> When coupled with recently enacted tax cuts, the bill is projected to result in budget deficits hitting more than $800 billion for this year. That could create political difficulties for Republicans running for re-election in November if the conservative wing of the party lashes out at this legislation.
>
> […]It also would deliver a further setback to Trump, whose proposals for severe cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency, State Department and other federal agencies would be scaled back.
>
> The bill, which also excludes some of Trump's immigration-related funding requests, was unveiled late on Wednesday. Senate No. 2 Republican John Cornyn said his chamber could take it up on Thursday night if no senator acts to slow it.
>
> On Wednesday, the White House signaled that Trump would sign the legislation if

> Congress sends it to him.
>
> House Republicans' conservative Freedom Caucus on Thursday said its roughly three dozen members would not back the bill because it massively increases spending while not defunding Obamacare, Planned Parenthood and so-called sanctuary cities.
>
> "You're going to see lots of conservatives vote against it," U.S. Representative Jim Jordan, a caucus member, told Fox News in an interview.
>
> Trump at one point wanted $25 billion included in the bill to fully fund construction of his proposed U.S.-Mexico border wall, but negotiations with Democrats to make that happen fell apart early this week, according to congressional aides.
>
> Instead, Trump would get nearly $1.6 billion more for border security this year.

Trump is busy lying about border wall funding in the bill, promising that "more will be forthcoming". But this bill is a loss for conservatives. Ted Cruz has vowed to vote against the bill in the Senate, which tells you something about whether the bill is conservative or not. It's garbage. We're going back to trillion-dollar deficits to fund worthless government bureaucracies again.

William Lane Craig discusses faith and reason with university students

March 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students

This is an interview of Dr. William Lane Craig before college students at the University of Central Florida. (95 minutes)

Questions from the interviewer: (40 minutes)

- What started you on his journey of studying faith and reason?
- How would you define the word “faith”?
- Are faith and reason compatible? How are they related?
- How can reasonable faith help us to avoid the two extremes of superstition and nihilism?
- Who makes the best arguments against the Christian faith?
- Why are angry atheists like Dawkins and Hitchens more well known than better-informed academic atheists?
- Does the Bible require Christians to give the unbeliever reasons for their faith?
- How does faith spur Christians to think carefully about the big questions in life?
- Should the American church prod churchgoers to develop their minds so they can engage the secular culture?
- When talking about Christianity intellectually, is there a risk of neglecting the experience of being a Christian?
- Which Christian apologist has shaped your thinking the most?
- Which Christian philosopher has shaped your thinking the most?
- Does the confidence that comes from apologetics undermine humility and reverence?

- If you had to sketch out a 5 minute case for Christianity, what would you present?
- Can non-Christians use their reason to arrive at truth?
- Are there cases where atheists must affirm irrational things in order to remain atheists?
- Can the universe have existed eternal, so that there is no need to explain who created it?
- Even if you persuade someone that Christianity is true, does that mean they will live it out?

There is also a long period of questions, many of them hostile, from the audience of students (55 minutes).

- Haven't you said nasty things about some atheists? Aren't you a meany?
- What do you make of the presuppositional approach to apologetics?
- Can a person stop being a Christian because of the chances that happen to them as they age?
- Why did God wait so long after humans appeared to reveal himself to people through Jesus?
- Can a person be saved by faith without have any intellectual assent to truth?
- How do you find time for regular things like marriage when you have to study and speak so much?
- How would you respond to Zeitgeist and parallels to Christianity in Greek/Roman mythology?
- Do Christians have to assume that the Bible is inerrant and inspired in order to evangelize?
- If the universe has a beginning, then why doesn't God have a beginning?
- Can you name some philosophical resources on abstract objects, Platonism and nominalism?
- How can you know that Christianity more right than other religions?
- Should we respond to the problem of evil by saying that our moral notions are different from God's?
- Define the A and B theories of time. Explain how they relate to the kalam cosmological argument.
- How can Christians claim that their view is true in the face of so many world religions?
- What is the role of emotions in Christian belief and thought?
- Can evolution be reconciled with Christian beliefs and the Bible?
- When witnessing person-to-person, should you balance apologetics with personal testimony?
- Is there a good analogy for the trinity that can help people to understand it? [Note: HE HAS ONE!]
- How can Christians reconcile God's omniscience, God's sovereignty and human free will?

This is a nice introductory lecture that is sure to get Christians to become interested in apologetics. As you watch or listen to it, imagine what the world would be like if *every* Christian could answer the questions of skeptical college students and professors like Dr. Craig. What would non-Christians think about Christianity if *every* Christian had studied these issues like Dr. Craig? Why aren't we making an effort to study these things *so that* we can answer these questions?

It is really fun to see him fielding the questions from the skeptical university students. My favorite question was from the physics student who sounds really foreign, (at 1:19:00), then you realize that he is a Christian. I do think that Dr. Craig went a little far in accommodating evolution, but I put that down to the venue, and not wanting to get into a peripheral issue. I'm also surprised that no one asked him why God allows humans to suffer and commit acts of evil.

If you are looking for a good basic book on apologetics, then I would choose "Is God Just a Human Invention?" by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow.

Who is William Lane Craig?

About William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.
>
> Dr. Craig pursued his undergraduate studies at Wheaton College (B.A. 1971) and graduate studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.A. 1974; M.A. 1975), the University of Birmingham (England) (Ph.D. 1977), and the University of Munich (Germany) (D.Theol. 1984). From 1980-86 he taught Philosophy of Religion at Trinity… In 1987 they moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Dr. Craig pursued research at the University of Louvain until assuming his position at Talbot in 1994.
>
> He has authored or edited over thirty books, including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*; *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*; *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*; and *God, Time and Eternity*, as well as over a hundred articles in professional journals of philosophy and theology, including *The Journal of Philosophy*, *New Testament Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, and *British Journal for Philosophy of Science*.

Craig's CV is here.

Craig's list of publications is here.

William Lane Craig is, without a doubt, the top living defender of Christianity. He has debated all of the most famous atheists, including Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, etc. as well as academic atheists like Quentin Smith, Peter Millican, etc. if you search this blog, you'll find many debates posted here, sometimes even with snarky summaries.

Single payer health care: man denied medical treatment is offered euthanasia

March 25, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

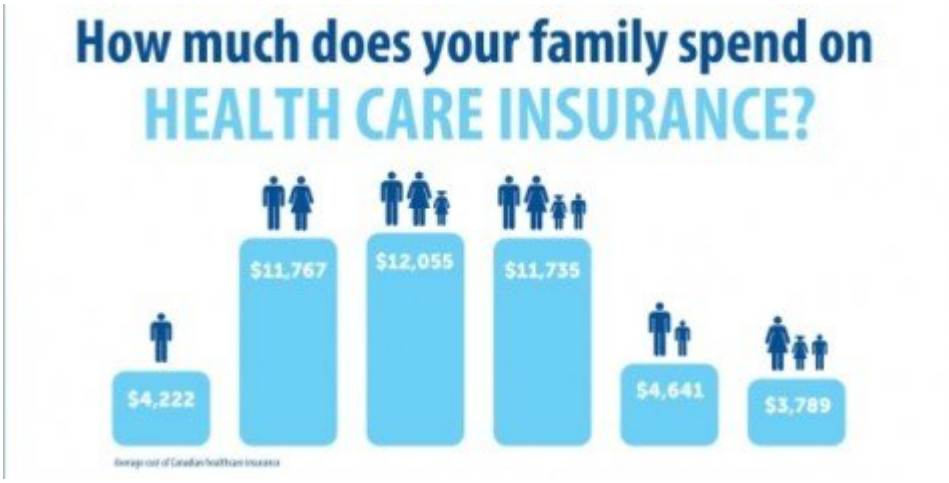

Fraser Institute, 2015: the cost of single payer health care

What sort of health care can you expect in a system where you pay mandatory taxes to government bureaucrats whose primary purpose is to buy votes in order to win re-election? Can these bureaucrats be trusted to give you the health care that you've paid for?

Well, in Canada, health care is paid for by mandatory collection of taxes from those who work. You don't pay for what you use, you just pay based on what you earn. The more you work, the more you pay in taxes. But paying more in taxes doesn't mean that you will get treatment. In Canada, you'll get behind people who don't pay a dime into the system. You'll wait for months. And you'll be waiting in line behind people who want IVF, abortions, sex changes, and free heroine injections. Because in Canada, health care is just vote buying. The healthiest hardest working people pay and don't use. The laziest and most irresponsible people don't pay and use too much.

But there is one thing that the Canadian government will do for you – they'll offer to murder you in order to keep you from draining health care dollars away from the people whose votes need to be bought.

Evolution News explains:

> […][A] Canadian man with serious disabilities has been refused coverage for independent-living services — but offered payment by Canadian Medicare for the costs of obtaining a lethal jab. From the *CTV News* story:
>
> [Roger] Foley's request to the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT), where he was directed to apply, was denied last year. Foley asked for a review of that decision, but his lawsuit alleges that the review process has been delayed multiple times as the CILT defaulted on deadlines.
>
> So he hired lawyer Ken Berger.

> “We don’t really understand why it’s not being solved and why we’ve had to file this lawsuit for Roger,” Berger, who specializes in health law, told CTV News. “We really didn’t want to reach this stage, but we were left with no alternative.”
>
> According to Foley’s statement of claim, the only two options offered to him have been a “forced discharge” from the hospital “to work with contracted agencies that have failed him” or medically assisted death. Refusing to leave the hospital and unwilling to die by a doctor’s hand, Foley claims he has been threatened with a $1,800 per day hospital bill, which is roughly the non-OHIP daily rate for a hospital stay.
>
> Can you imagine the screaming if a private health-insurance company were alleged to have forced these alternatives on a man with disabilities wanting assistance for independent living? The screaming would be heard in China.
>
> But this is socialized single-payer socialism. So, expect a much more muted response.
>
> Coercion to “choose” assisted suicide or euthanasia will come in many guises. This is one of them. Those with eyes to see, let them see.

Let me tell you something very important. You cannot demand quality from a service or product provider if you have already paid them. The time to ask for a lower price or higher quality is when you have your money in your pocket. That is why we are so happy to buy things from Amazon.com, but not so happy with the Postal Service or the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Where there is competition, there is higher quality at a lower price. The free market works better than a government monopoly.

Facts vs feelings in the debate on gun control vs self-defense

March 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a splendid at the Daily Signal article that ought to be read by everyone who has an opinion about the conflict between gun confiscation vs self-defense.

Here are the 8 points made in the article, then I'll comment on my favorite one:

> 1. Violent crime is down and has been on the decline for decades.
> 2. The principal public safety concerns with respect to guns are suicides and illegally owned handguns, not mass shootings.
> 3. A small number of factors significantly increase the likelihood that a person will be a victim of a gun-related homicide.
> 4. Gun-related murders are carried out by a predictable pool of people.
> 5. Higher rates of gun ownership are not associated with higher rates of violent crime.
> 6. There is no clear relationship between strict gun control legislation and homicide or violent crime rates.
> 7. Legally owned firearms are used for lawful purposes much more often than they are used to commit crimes or suicide.
> 8. Concealed carry permit holders are not the problem, but they may be part of the solution.

Whenever we discuss gun violence, it's very important to exclude suicides using a gun from the overall rate of gun deaths. Once you do that, you will find that the rate of violent crime has been declining as more and more law-abiding Americans have gone through the process to purchase a firearm for self-defense.

Let's talk about the gun homicide rate and how the steady increase in firearm ownership has affected that.

Here is a graph:

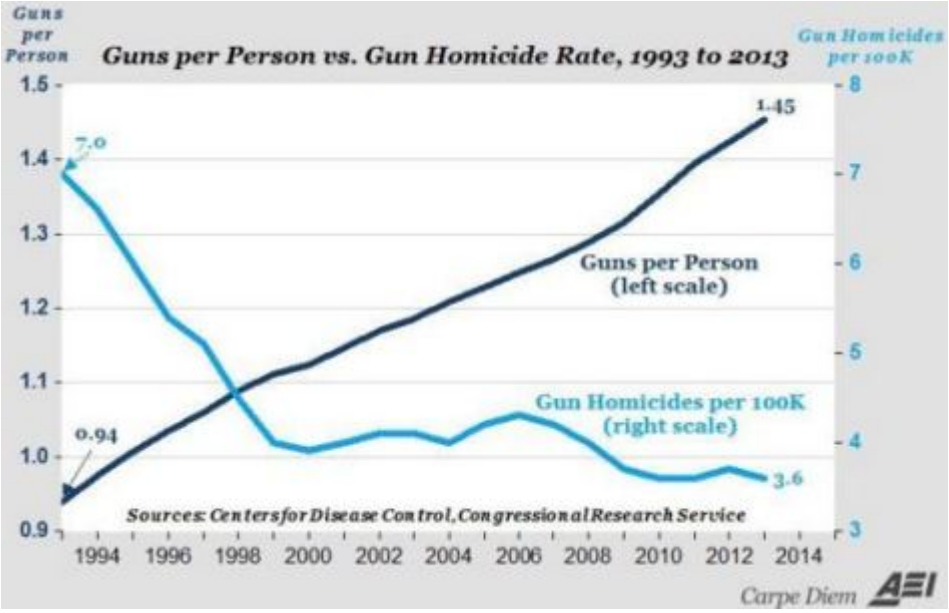

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

The question I want to address is this: why would someone want to own a gun in the first place?

Here are the points from the list of eight points that are relevant to that question:

> **Higher rates of gun ownership are not associated with higher rates of violent crime.**
>
> - Switzerland and Israel have much higher gun ownership rates than the United States but experience far fewer homicides and have much lower violent crime rates than many European nations with strict gun control laws.
> - Higher rates of concealed carry permit holders are even more strongly associated with reduction in violent crime than are “right-to-carry” states. The probable reason for this is that “right-to-carry” studies often include “open carry” states, which have not been shown to correlate with more people actually carrying or even owning firearms. Rates of concealed carry permit holders are better indicators of the number of people who actually possess and carry firearms within a given population.
>
> **There is no clear relationship between strict gun control legislation and homicide or violent crime rates.**
>
> - Homicide and firearm homicide rates in Great Britain spiked in the years immediately following the imposition of severe gun control measures, despite the fact that most developed countries continued to experience a downward trend in these rates. This is also pointed out by noted criminologist John Lott in his book “The War on Guns.”
> - Similarly, Ireland’s homicide rates spiked in the years immediately following the country’s 1972 gun confiscation legislation.
> - Australia’s National Firearms Act appears to have had little effect on suicide and homicide rates, which were falling before the law was enacted and

continued to decline at a statistically unremarkable rate compared to worldwide trends.
- According to research compiled by John Lott and highlighted in his book "The War on Guns," Australia's armed and unarmed robbery rates both increased markedly in the five years immediately following the National Firearms Act, despite the general downward trend experienced by other developed countries.
- Great Britain has some of the strictest gun control laws in the developed world, but the violent crime rate for homicide, rape, burglary, and aggravated assault is much higher than that in the U.S. Further, approximately 60 percent of burglaries in Great Britain occur while residents are home, compared to just 13 percent in the U.S., and British burglars admit to targeting occupied residences because they are more likely to find wallets and purses.
- It is difficult to compare homicide and firearm-related murder rates across international borders because countries use different methods to determine which deaths "count" for purposes of violent crime. For example, since 1967, Great Britain has excluded from its homicide counts any case that does not result in a conviction, that was the result of dangerous driving, or in which the person was determined to have acted in self-defense. All of these factors are counted as "homicides" in the United States.

Legally owned firearms are used for lawful purposes much more often than they are used to commit crimes or suicide.

- In 2013, President Barack Obama ordered the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to assess existing research on gun violence. The report, compiled by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council, found (among other things) that firearms are used defensively hundreds of thousands of times every year.
- According to the CDC, "self-defense can be an important crime deterrent." Recent CDC reports acknowledge that studies directly assessing the effect of actual defensive uses of guns have found "consistently lower injury rates among gun-using crime victims compared with victims who used other self-protective strategies."
- Semi-automatic rifles (such as the AR-15) are commonly used as self-defense weapons in the homes of law-abiding citizens because they are easier to control than handguns, are more versatile than handguns, and offer the advantage of up to 30 rounds of protection. Even Vox has published stories defending the use of the AR-15.
- AR-15s have been used to save lives on many occasions [list omitted by WK]

Concealed carry permit holders are not the problem, but they may be

> **part of the solution.**
>
> - Noted criminologist John Lott found that, as a group, concealed carry permit holders are some of the most law-abiding people in the United States. The rate at which they commit crimes generally and firearm crimes specifically is between one-sixth and one-tenth of that recorded for police officers, who are themselves committing crimes at a fraction of the rate of the general population.
> - Between 2007 and 2015, murder rates dropped 16 percent and violent crime rates dropped 18 percent, even though the percentage of adults with concealed carry permits rose by 190 percent.
> - Regression estimates show a significant association between increased permit ownership and a drop in murder and violent crime rates. Each percentage point increase in rates of permit-holding is associated with a roughly 2.5 percent drop in the murder rate.
> - Concealed carry permit holders are often “the good guy with a gun,” even though they rarely receive the attention of the national media. Concealed carry permit holders were credited with saving multiple lives [list omitted by WK]

So, I think that those points provide a very necessary balance for the “ban guns” crowd. Gun ownership is a vital part of a free citizen’s right to self-defense. People who want to discuss gun confiscation vs self-defense need to be aware of the way guns are really used by law-abiding people to protect themselves and their families.

Can we trust the politically correct, radically leftist FBI to protect the public?

March 27, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The politically correct FBI fails and fails and fails again

Wow, I can remember back 10 years ago when my opinion of the FBI was that they were the morally good law enforcement agency. Now it seems that the only thing they are good at is demonizing Christians and conservatives, committing adultery with each other, covering up for corrupt Democrats, and collecting fat taxpayer-funded pensions.

We know that the FBI failed miserably to follow up on public death threats made by the Florida school shooter under his own real name. Apparently, this might have been due to the fact that the shooter was non-white, and law enforcement became very politically correct under the past Democrat administration. They certainly don't want to make Muslim terrorists a priority.

Michelle Malkin explains:

> According to a probable cause affidavit filed by the Palm Beach County police, 17-year-old Corey Johnson bought a knife last Sunday and brought it with him to a sleepover at longtime friend Kyle Bancroft's house. At 4 a.m., he decided to kill Kyle's mother, Elaine; his brother, Dane; and Dane's friend, Jovanni Sierra Brand.
>
> Corey repeatedly stabbed Jovanni in his bed and slit his throat. Then he attempted to murder Elaine as she approached the boys' bedrooms in response to Jio's last gasps. Dane rescued his mom and sustained 32 stab wounds. Both were hospitalized and survived. Jio was buried last Friday—less than a week after celebrating his 13th birthday at a pizza party attended by Corey.

> The accused killer told police he “stabbed the victims because of his Muslim faith,” watched videos of “Muslim jihadists” on his cellphone, and “was reading the Quran from his phone just prior to the attack to give him courage to carry out his intentions.”
>
> […]Corey’s brutal attack was no bolt out of the blue, no unexpected incidence of sudden jihad syndrome. Local school officials and police in Palm Beach County, along with federal and international law enforcement authorities, had encountered more red flags in their years of dealing with Corey than at a Communist May Day parade in Havana.
>
> In middle school, Corey had reportedly stalked a student and sexually harassed her. She told school police. Nothing happened. He dabbled in white supremacy, anti-Semitism, and gay-bashing, and then immersed himself in radical Islam—rising at 5 a.m. daily to pray and revere the Syrian flag.
>
> Corey’s online jihad agitation, physical abuse, and addiction to ISIS beheading videos prompted his sister in 2016 to confide in a school therapist, who contacted the local sheriff’s office.
>
> Corey’s mom, the sister told school officials, was in denial. The sister so feared for her life she slept with a knife under her bed.
>
> Law enforcement officers at the Jupiter Police Department and Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office convened at Corey’s high school last January to investigate the self-radicalized teen’s contact with ISIS as he sought to join the terror group.
>
> The FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force became involved after European intelligence counterparts told them Corey had used Instagram to issue security threats to a Catholic high school in England. The threats “were so severe in nature,” local officials discovered, “that up to 100 students were removed from the school fearing some kind of attack.”
>
> One of the messages threatened: “By Allah, we will kill every single Infidel student at this school.” Corey told FBI agents he “was supportive of known terrorist Anwar al Awlaki”—the spiritual patron of lone-wolf jihadists.
>
> The FBI’s plan of action? Inaction. The agency watched and waited and wanly admonished Corey to knock it off because authorities “believed a redirection approach would be the most beneficial regarding his conduct.”
>
> “Redirection” is akin to the alternative social justice strategies school officials and police used in Parkland, Florida, before 17 innocent students and teachers died at the hands of a teen shooter who was a walking neon sign for a mental health catastrophe.
>
> No referrals, no charges, no records, no problems.
>
> Except for the fact that Corey ignored the FBI and continued his Islamic instigation online. After nearly a year of foot-dragging, the FBI gathered enough

> evidence to bring federal charges against Corey for his social media terror threats.
>
> According to records released by the Jupiter Police Department, local officials were told the charges would be brought in the summer of 2017. But on the early morning of the jihad stabbings at Palm Beach Gardens last week, the FBI and U.S. Attorney's Office had yet to take action on a known radicalized threat who had menaced his family, his schoolmates, and innocents abroad.
>
> It's a familiar narrative for the FBI—from the Boston Marathon bombers to the Orlando nightclub shooter to the Fort Lauderdale airport jihadist to the San Bernardino terrorists. Family members, teachers, neighbors, and co-workers saw something and said something.

It's just workplace violence, as Barack Obama would say. The system worked, as Janet Napolitano would say. The real priority of law enforcement should be to crack down on anti-Muslim hate, as Loretta Lynch would say. These are the imbeciles who were running federal law enforcement during the last administration.

This is the politically correct, ineffective FBI that the radically leftist media is defending these days. The leftist news media doesn't want you to own a gun or defend yourself. They want you to trust the government to protect you and your family.

Middle Eastern men who ran Oxford child sex-trafficking ring found guilty

March 28, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

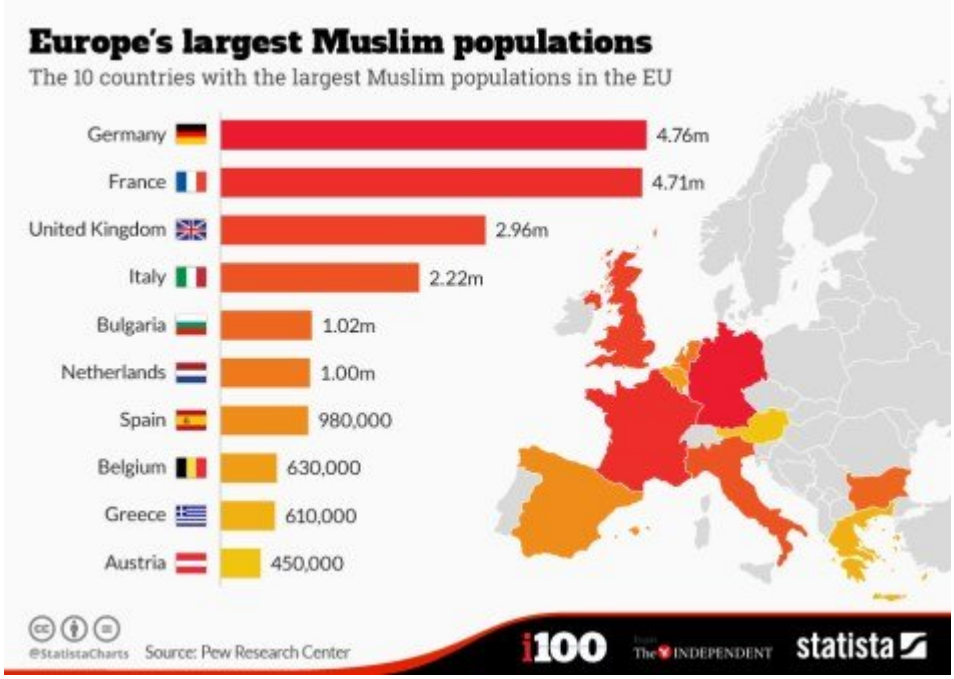

Muslim populations in Europe

Note: this story is NOT about the Telford sex-trafficking ring that I reported on recently. This is about the Oxford sex-trafficking ring that I reported on in 2015.

Although this article from the far-left BBC refuses to find the common denominator in the seven men who were convicted of sex-trafficking children, but you might be able to discern it for yourself.

Excerpt:

> Seven men have been found guilty of grooming and sexually abusing teenage girls "on a massive scale" in Oxford.
>
> The gang was convicted of more than 20 offences including rape and indecent assault between 1998 and 2005.
>
> Prosecutor Oliver Saxby QC said they carried out the "routine, cynical and predatory sexual exploitation" of vulnerable girls who were groomed with alcohol and drugs.
>
> The five victims were aged between 13 and 15 when the offences started.
>
> Opening the case at Oxford Crown Court, Mr Saxby said the gang preyed on girls who had a background of problems at home.
>
> He said they offered their victims "company, attention, acceptance into the group" as well as "food, parties, alcohol, and sometimes drugs".
>
> Mr Saxby said this was all part of "the grooming process" the gang used in order

> to carry out “sexual exploitation on a massive scale”.
>
> He said the girls would be made to have sex at parties, in cars or parks, with other men around, and sometimes after being subjected to threats and violence.
>
> One girl was taken to a B&B in Iffley Road and told to have sex with older men, who one of the defendants described as “uncles”, he said.
>
> Mr Saxby added: “She says she has lost count of the number of ‘uncles’ she had sex with… After sex she would sit in the shower and scrub herself.”

And here are the names and ages of the men:

- Assad Hussain, 37, of Iffley Road, Oxford, guilty of five counts of rape and two counts of indecent assault, not guilty of one count of indecent assault.
- Kameer Iqbal, 39, of Dashwood Road, Oxford, guilty of three counts of rape.
- Khalid Hussain, 38, of Ashhurst Way, Oxford, guilty of rape and indecent assault, not guilty of one count of rape.
- Kamran Khan, 36, of Northfield Road, Bolton, guilty of indecent assault and false imprisonment, not guilty of rape.
- Moinul Islam, 41, of Wykeham Crescent, Oxford, guilty of rape, two counts of indecent assault and supplying cannabis, not guilty of false imprisonment.
- Raheem Ahmed, 40 of Starwort Path, Oxford, guilty of two counts of indecent assault and false imprisonment, not guilty of rape.
- Alladitta Yousaf, 48, of Bodley Road, Oxford, guilty of indecent assault.

In my previous article about the Telford gang, I reported on how the secular, leftist, politically correct UK police refused to take the complaints of the girls and their mothers seriously, for fear of offending the Middle Eastern men who were being accused. The police did nothing to protect the children, because the Labour Party had carefully instructed them in politically correct leftist dogma. If they had done anything to prosecute the predators, they would have lost their jobs for insensitivity and intolerance.

This is not the first time that we have had sex-trafficking gangs run by men of Middle-Eastern origin.

Rotterham

How about the Rotterham sex-trafficking gang?

Here are the facts from Powerline Blog:

Full text:

> You are probably familiar with the Rotherham scandal. Rotherham is a city in England where over a period of years, more than 1,400 girls, many of them pre-teens, were raped and trafficked by a loose consortium of men. The men were all Muslim immigrants or sons of immigrants, the girls were all, or nearly all, white. When the scandal finally came to light in 2014, city officials said that they had been reluctant to do anything about the problem for fear of being accused of racism.
>
> Several criminal trials have resulted from the scandal. The third such trial has just been completed. Six defendants were convicted and sentenced to 10 to 20 years for rape and other crimes. The Sun identified them:
>
> Brothers Basharat Dad, 32, and Nasar Dad, 36, of both of Rotherham, and Tayab Dad, 34, of Sheffield, were jailed on Tuesday for sex offences along with Matloob Hussain, 41, of Rotherham, Mohammed Sadiq, 40, of Rotherham, and Amjad Ali, of Worksop, Nottinghamshire.
>
> This is the most curious aspect of the news report:
>
> There were emotional and chaotic scenes at Sheffield Crown Court after two of the defendants shouted "Allahu Akbar" as they were led from the dock.

But wait, there are more examples.

Rochdale

Another case reported in the UK Telegraph:

> Taxi driver Shabir Ahmed, 59, was already serving a 19 year sentence from May for conspiracy, two rapes, aiding and abetting rape, sexual assault and sex trafficking. His domineering temper earned him the nickname "Daddy" by the white teenage victims.

> The ringleader, who called the judge a 'racist b——', was one of nine men jailed at Liverpool Crown Court for a total of 77 years for passing round the youngsters and plying them with drugs and drink.

> […]His victim, who cannot be named, revealed Ahmed once made her kneel on the floor in a pose called the 'chicken', with her arms threaded through her legs and touching her ears, before striking her on the back with a cricket bat.
>
> The girl, now an adult, claims she was repeatedly raped over many years. He left her never wanting to have sex again or get married.
>
> The girl said when she was first raped she was so young she needed to stand on a chair to reach a sink.
>
> […]Ahmed told the court he was a standard-bearer for "targeted and weakened British Muslims", and claimed the police were anti-Muslim
>
> He said of the Rochdale grooming trial: "We were all innocent. My only crime was

> to be Muslim. Not of the majority race."
>
> In May, Ahmed and his eight co-defendants were jailed for their role in a child-sex ring.

In other cases, the police ignored the complaints of the victims.

This happens often because the UK deliberately chose a "compassionate" open-borders immigration policy. We should not imitate their example. Merit-based immigration is best.

I find it very interesting that so many Christian leaders like Russell Moore take progressive positions on refugees and illegal immigrants. Are they not aware of what is going on in countries that embraced open borders? Or do they just not care about the fatherless little girls who suffer from their "generosity"?

Matt Dillahunty debates David Robertson on atheism, morality and evil

March 29, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

OK. So I think it's safe to say that of all the Christian apologists out there, David Robertson is my least favorite debater. Why? Many reasons, but mostly because he does not bring in evidence, especially scientific evidence. And he seems to make these clever quips like G. K. Chesterton. I like evidence. I would rather that he talk about scientific and historical evidence.

Dina asked me to listen to this debate a while back, between David Robertson and agnostic Matt Dillahunty (he's not an atheist, he's just an agnostic). I went in absolutely convinced that Robertson was going to have his ass handed to him by Matt Dillahunty. And I could not have been more wrong.

Here's the debate posted on YouTube (audio only):

This snarky summary is just a paraphrase from certain parts of the debate, *it is not designed for accuracy*, but for fun – to make you listen to the debate. Listen to the debate to get the exact words in context.

Summary:

- Matt Dillahunty: he's an agnostic who calls himself an atheist
- David Robertson: he's from Scotland, could we not get someone better?
- Robertson opening statement is incredibly weak, as you might expect, he only had two arguments embedded in a long list of nonsense: 1) origin and design of the universe 2) reality of evil requires objective morality

1) Creation/Design:

Robertson: The fact is that matter exists. There are 3 views that could account for this fact: 1) created, 2) eternal, 3) self-generated out of nothing. Option 3) is self-contradictory, 1) requires a Creator, and 2) is falsified by the Big Bang cosmology. So what's your view?

Dillahunty: You're trying to get me to say what my view is, but I can just say "I don't know" and get out of having to take any position on how matter got here. I can say "I don't know" to all the scientific evidence for the Big Bang cosmology, too!

2) Evil requires objective morality, requires a moral lawgiver:

Robertson: evil exists, e.g. – the Holocaust. If atheism is true, objective morality is impossible. Richard Dawkins agrees. Therefore, theism is the best explanation for the existence of evil.

Dillahunty: In my opinion, morality means doing what helps people have well-being. And I think that the Holocaust is obviously bad, because it hurts the well-being of the victims.

Robertson: The problem is that on your view, different people decide what well-being is to them. If you were raised in the Social Darwinism of the Nazi regime, you would believe that the Holocaust was the best for the well-being of the society as a whole.

Dillahunty: Isn't it obvious that killing people is bad for their well-being?

Robertson: Is it bad for the well-being of unborn children to kill them?

Dillahunty: Yes

Robertson: So you're against abortion, then?

Dillahunty: No

Robertson: So you think that killing the child in the womb is against the well-being of the child, but you're for that?

Dillahunty: I don't know! I don't know!

Then Dillahunty tried to claim Hitler was a Christian:

Dillahunty: here is a quote by Hitler saying that secular schools are bad, and religious schools are good – see, he's a Christian!

Robertson: when was that said and to whom?

Dillahunty: I don't know, I don't know!

Robertson: It was said in 1933, during an election campaign, to Catholic authorities – he was a politician, looking for votes from Catholics so he could become Chancellor.

Good and evil on atheism:

Dillahunty: good actions results in states with more well-being, and evil actions result in states with less well-being.

Brierley: but when the Nazis slaughtered all those people, they believed they were increasing well-being

Dillahunty: But you could demonstrate to them that their action is not going to increase well-being. Survival of the fittest is descriptive of what happens, but it's not prescriptive.

Robertson: Whose well-being will human beings think about most, if not their own? Do you really think that you can stop people like Charles Manson from being evil by sitting down and trying to prove to them that they are not helping their victim's well-being?

(A BIT LATER)

Robertson (to Dillahunty): Is it a fact that Dachau (a concentration camp) was morally wrong?

Dillahunty: (literally, not a paraphrase) I DON'T KNOW

My thoughts:

When I listened to this debate, the overwhelming conviction that emerges is that Matt Dillahunty is not someone who forms his worldview based on evidence. His rejection of the Big Bang cosmology with "I don't know" is just atrocious. His comments about slavery in the Bible and Hitler being a Christian show that his investigations of these issues is far below the level of a responsible adult. His dallying with the Jesus-never-existed view just shows him to be fundamentally anti-intellectual, as even atheist historian Bart Ehrman denies that view. His definition of faith has nothing to do with the Bible, or Christian authorities, or Christian scholars – he invented a definition of faith that allows him to mock Christians as morons. That's just irresponsible – letting the desire to mock others cause you to distort the definition of a word. When asked to state his positions or respond to specific evidence, his response is very often "I don't know". It seems to me that atheism, to him, means not pursuing truth with the aim of grasping it. He wants to keep reality at a safe distance – that's why he says "I don't know" so often.

On morality, it's even worse. It's not surprising to me that he is pro-abortion and has no opinion about concentration camps being objectively evil. Most atheists are pro-abortion, by the way. When it comes to morality, Dillahunty only has his own personal opinions, and they refer to nothing outside his own mind. (His opinion of morality as related to well-being is utilitarianism – a very problematic view – but moreover, it is *his subjective view* – he isn't offering it as any sort of objective moral system that would be prescriptive instead of descriptive. Without an after-life, there is no reason for anyone to care about the moral point of view when it goes against their self-interest, anyway. Atheists use moral language, but their statements are not referring to any objective, prescriptive moral reality. Atheism is materialistic and therefore deterministic – it does not even ground the free will that is needed to make moral choices. Their view is Darwinian survival of the fittest, that's what emerges from their origins story – and it does not rationally ground morality. The strong kill the weak, if they can. I've written before about how difficult it is for atheists to *rationally* condemn things like slavery, and nothing in Dillahunty's presentation led me to believe that he had solved that problem.

Anybody can be an intellectually-satisfied atheist with an empty head – it's *knowledge* that causes people to conform their beliefs to *reality*. If one strives to keep one's head as empty as possible, then of course one can believe anything one wants. I'm glad, speaking as a Christian theist, that I get to follow the evidence wherever it leads. It seems to me that we should do that, rather than decide how we want to live first, and

then invent a worldview to justify our desires.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

William Lane Craig explains the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement

March 30, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Probably one of the most common questions that you hear from people who don't fully understand Christianity is this question: "why did Jesus have to die?". The answer that most Christians seem to hold to is that 1) humans are rebelling against God, 2) Humans deserve punishment for their rebellion, 3) Humans cannot escape the punishment for their rebellion on their own, 4) Jesus was punished in the place of the rebellious humans, 5) Those who accept this sacrifice are forgiven for their rebelling.

Are humans rebellious?

Some people think that humans are not really rebellious at all, but it's actually easy to see. You can see it just by looking at how people spend their time. Some of us have no time for God at all, and instead try to fill our lives with material possessions and experiences in order to have happy feelings. Some of us embrace just the parts of God that make us feel happy, like church and singing and feelings of comfort, while avoiding the hard parts of that vertical relationship; reading, thinking and disagreeing with people who don't believe the truth about God. And so on.

This condition of being in rebellion is universal, and all of us are guilty of breaking the law at some point. All of us deserve to be separated from God's goodness and love. Even if we wanted to stop rebelling, we would not be able to make up for the times where we do rebel by being good at other times, any more than we could get out of a speeding ticket by appealing to the times when we drove at the speed limit, (something that I never do, in any case).

This is not to say that all sinners are punished equally – the degree of punishment is proportional to the sins a person commits. However, the standard is perfection. And

worse than that, the most important moral obligation is a *vertical* moral obligation. You can't satisfy the demands of the moral law just by making your neighbor happy, while treating God like a pariah. The first commandment is to love God, the second is to love your neighbor. Even loving your neighbor requires you to tell your neighbor the truth – not just to make them feel good. The *vertical* relationship is more important than the *horizontal* one, and we've all screwed up the vertical relationship. We all don't want God to be there, telling us what's best for us, interfering with our fun. We don't want to relate to a loving God if it means having to care what he thinks about anything that we are doing.

Who is going to pay for our rebellion?

The Christian answer to the problem of our rebellion is that Jesus takes the punishment we deserve in our place.

However, I've noticed that on some atheist blogs, they don't like the idea that someone else can take our punishment for us to exonerate us for crimes that we've committed. So I'll quote from this post by the great William Lane Craig, to respond to that objection.

Excerpt:

> The central problem of the Penal Theory is, as you point out, understanding how punishing a person other than the perpetrator of the wrong can meet the demands of justice. Indeed, we might even say that it would be wrong to punish some innocent person for the crimes I commit!
>
> It seems to me, however, that in other aspects of human life we do recognize this practice. I remember once sharing the Gospel with a businessman. When I explained that Christ had died to pay the penalty for our sins, he responded, "Oh, yes, that's imputation." I was stunned, as I never expected this theological concept to be familiar to this non-Christian businessman. When I asked him how he came to be familiar with this idea, he replied, "Oh, we use imputation all the time in the insurance business." He explained to me that certain sorts of insurance policy are written so that, for example, if someone else drives my car and gets in an accident, the responsibility is imputed to me rather than to the driver. Even though the driver behaved recklessly, I am the one held liable; it is just as if I had done it.
>
> Now this is parallel to substitutionary atonement. Normally I would be liable for the misdeeds I have done. But through my faith in Christ, I am, as it were, covered by his divine insurance policy, whereby he assumes the liability for my actions. My sin is imputed to him, and he pays its penalty. The demands of justice are fulfilled, just as they are in mundane affairs in which someone pays the penalty for something imputed to him. This is as literal a transaction as those that transpire regularly in the insurance industry.

So, it turns out that the doctrine of substitionary atonement is not as mysterious or as objectionable as everyone seems to think it is.

Education Secretary Betsy Devos scores a victory against public sector union

April 2, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Secretary of Education Betsy Devos

Although you would never know it from the mainstream news media, Secretary of Education Betsy Devos is doing her best to advance a taxpayer-friendly agenda in education policy.

Here's the latest from the American Enterprise Institute, a free-market think tank:

> In a noteworthy development, DeVos's team this month radically revamped the collective-bargaining agreement (CBA) that governs the 3,900 employees at the U.S. Department of Education. The new CBA, between the Department and Council 252 of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), includes big changes from the 2013 agreement negotiated under the Obama administration.
>
> The new agreement doesn't address compensation or benefits, of course, since those are governed by federal law, but it does include a raft of sensible, taxpayer-friendly changes.
>
> The new CBA eliminates the set-aside of "official time" for union business. Under the old agreement, designated union representatives were free to work on union business during normal, government hours — all on the taxpayers' dime. The old CBA stipulated that "no fewer than 75" (!) union stewards across the country could work up to 40 hours a year on "official time," while another three union officers would devote 100 percent of their time to union business. Henceforth, union business will be done on union time, rather than on the taxpayers'.
>
> Under the old agreement, department employees were given only a solitary 48-hour window each year in which they could opt out of union membership; miss that, and they were automatically enrolled. Henceforth, employees who wish to

> be in the union each year will be free to do so, and they will have an extended period in which to enroll — but they will have to actively choose to join.
>
> The revamped accord also removes the requirements for “pre-decisional consultation.” Under the previous CBA, the department was required to consult the union before every agency-wide decision that could be construed as affecting the work of employees (such as transferring employees from one office to another, or even shifting employees from one project to another within the same office). Now, the department needs only notify the union of such decisions.
>
> Under the new CBA, the union will be charged “fair-market rent” for the use of government office space and federally furnished equipment to conduct union business. Under the Obama-era accord, taxpayers were required to provide space and equipment to the union free of charge.
>
> More generally, the new agreement removes a number of provisions that added burdensome procedural directives above and beyond statutory requirements when it came to things such as telework and grievance procedures.

If there is one thing I expected from Betsy Devos, it’s taxpayer-friendly education policy.

Unfortunately, the Republican party didn’t help her very much in that massive $1.3 Billion spending bill that they passed, with Democrat support. Betsy wants to cut federal spending on education, and return control of education policy to the states and municipalities. But the GOP just gave the Department of Education a bigger budget. We really need to switch out some of these big government Republicans for authentic conservatives.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

April 3, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)

- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

What do pastors teach Christian women about relationships and marriage?

April 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

I enjoy reading Dalrock's blog. Recently, he posted a couple of posts (first and second) about theologian Doug Wilson. A friend gave me Wilson's book "Reforming Marriage", and I did not find it to be a helpful guide to marriage. So, I was interested to see what Dalrock found in Wilson's other writings.

Here's one quote that Dalrock found:

> As the apostle Paul is urging young women to marry, he lets a very interesting comment fall in passing. "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (1 Tim. 5:14). The word translated here as "guide the house" is oikodespotein. **The wife is to be the ruler or despot of the home.**

And:

> A wife therefore has true authority over her home which no one, including her husband, can take away from her.
>
> […]In a certain sense, a husband… is an honored and permanent guest… **he should learn to see himself as a guest.**

Now, that seems to contradict the traditional view that men are supposed to be leaders in the home. I don't think that Christian women are well-served by pastors who dispute the traditional view.

Apparently, lots of women are being told that the traditional meaning of the Bible doesn't

apply to them. I heard Ben Shapiro talk about a church-attending Christian woman who was raging at the *Jewish* men she had relationships with, because they had not married her. (in his latest podcast, H/T David)

Shapiro mentions this article from the radically-leftist Washington Post:

> At my very first job in New York, a colleague jokingly informed me: "You came in a WASP, but you're leaving a Jew."
>
> That statement was in reference to the demographics of the office's staff. Almost everyone who worked there was Jewish, and I, a recent college graduate who had spent my adolescence in a largely Christian community in the South, was not.
>
> […]Over almost seven years and two serious relationships with Jewish men who at first said religion didn't matter — and then backtracked and decided it did — I've optimistically begun interfaith relationships with an open mind twice, only to become the last woman these men dated before settling down with a nice Jewish girl.
>
> […]There were times at church that I saw couples worshiping together and felt pangs of jealousy. But I told myself every relationship had its problems and these were relatively minor.

She attended church, but she thought that a difference in religion was "relatively minor". Nevermind what the Bible says about it. I think that this woman was taught by her pastor that her feelings had more authority than the teachings of the Bible. And that she could retain the label of "Christian" and attend church, despite holding to a worldview that was essentially feminist at its core.

This isn't the first time that I've met "Christian" women raised in the church who thought that the Bible should not have any authority over their choices in relationships. Most woman I met in my teens and 20s believed that. Their only guides were their feelings and intuitions, and that even led some of them to *shack up with atheists*. And many of the men they chose were just children studying in non-STEM programs, living at home, and racking up debts. They had empty resumes, and empty bank accounts. Nothing I said to these women from wisdom or from the Bible put a dent in their priorities. And in more than one case, pastors backed them up against me.

What prompted me to write this post today was the conjunction of the Dalrock posts with what a friend of mine told me about the Christian woman he is currently dating. So let's talk about that second part.

My friend is an absolute stud of a Christian man. He has a STEM career, tons of money, his own house, and he has spent a lot of time studying apologetics and engaging in debates. He also attends church and Bible study weekly, and runs an apologetics discussion group. On paper, this guy has everything.

So I was asking him how things were going with the lady. He was telling her about his adventures debating some moral issue. Rather than asking him for details about the exchange, or saying her own view, she completely shut down and refused to discuss it at

all! And she wouldn't even recognize that what he was doing was praiseworthy, in order to encourage him. You would think that a guy would be able to impress a self-described Christian woman with his adventures as a Christian man. But it turns out that a lot of Christian women don't look for *anything seriously Christian in a man or in a marriage*.

The experience my friend described basically summarizes what I saw in my teens and 20s, until I met my friend Mary through my blog. Mary is a serious Christian woman who is chaste and active in apologetics. She can run circles around me in debates, and has a computer science degree. She works in computer science, too. Since Mary, I have even met other single and married Christian women with conservative politics, STEM degrees and solid careers and/or marriages, who read apologetics and engage in discussions with non-Christians. They do exist. But I don't think that any of these great Christian women learned to value these things in church.

I think most pastors fear hurting women's feelings by expecting them to take the Bible seriously when it comes to relationships and marriage. They minimize the obligations on women to be chaste, to date Christian men, to be focused on marriage while dating, to let husbands lead in the home, etc. It really bothers me that traditional conservative "complementarian" pastors are either unable or unwilling to tell women that the Bible has something to say about how to prepare for marriage, and who they choose to marry. Pastors are free to push their new revisionist feminist version of marriage. But I didn't get BS and MS degrees in computer science with the plan of putting in 45 years of full-time work in the private sector for a "marriage" that's been degraded by radical feminism. I offer a lot, and therefore I won't accept anything less than a Christian wife and a Christian marriage.

People wonder why men are not marrying as often as they used to. I think it has something to do with the fact that pastors are teaching women that husbands ought not be the leaders of their own homes. A Christian man will want his wife to be chief of staff in the home. She should be intelligent, accomplished and effective. Of course he will consult with her before making decisions on how to proceed. But men don't marry unless we are going to be entrusted with that leadership role. Male leadership in marriage is non-negotiable. And that's why women need to be wise about choosing the right man for that job – by relying on her mind, instead of on her feelings. Not everything a woman feels like doing is wise.

If you're a young woman wanting to impress a Christian man with your qualifications for marriage, then check out my marriage questions, and see how you do.

Sean McDowell reviews new book on Darwinian evolution and intelligent design

April 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

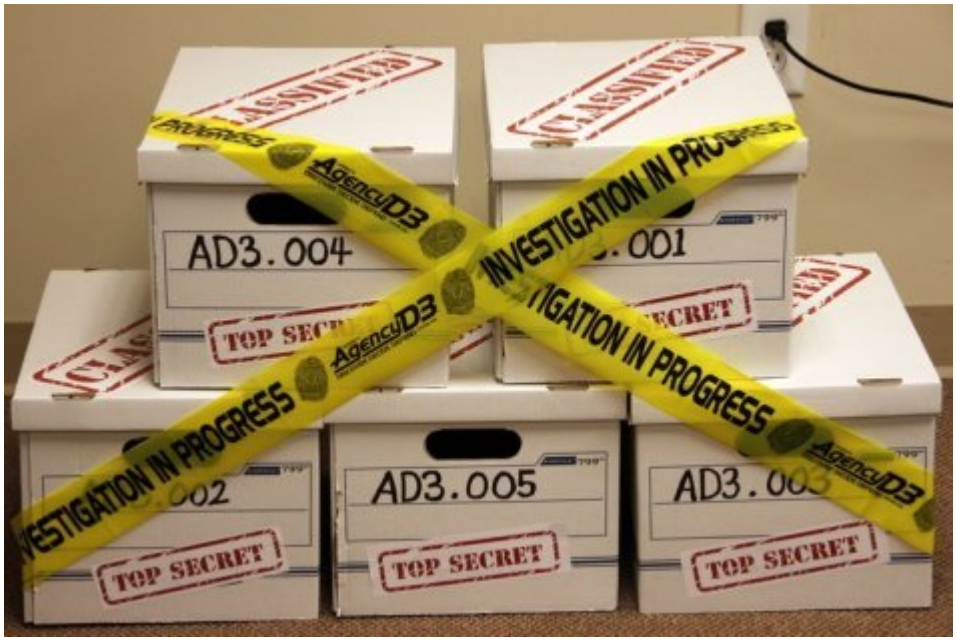

Investigation in progress

I really love the two books on intelligent design written by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, but they are just so big that you can't really give them to a co-worker or a family member or a friend to read. I've been looking for a decent book that explains the issues in a compelling way, and now it looks like I've found one.

First, a review of the new book from Amazon:

> **Possibly the best ID book to read first**
>
> For those with a specific interest, there are many other excellent ID books that take a deep dive into a particular topic. Heretic stands out as being excellent as an introductory doorway into considering Intelligent Design.
>
> One doesn't need to be involved in the sciences to benefit greatly from this clearly written book. The great majority of the material can be readily understood by a general audience and the authors provide guidance if you want it on how to skim or skip ahead when the next part has more technical details.
>
> That said, this is now my preferred and recommended first book for any scientist who has just assumed Darwin's grand claim must be true and who hasn't yet given any serious consideration to the possibility that design is real, not merely an appearance of design.
>
> The book allows one to follow along as the main author begins from that same point of assuming Darwinism, but then must grapple and struggle with the hard realities of the evidence. Along the way, this book provides one of the clearest and most illuminating examinations of the influence of assumptions (and of

> career considerations) upon what people are willing to consider.
>
> Ultimately the book invites the reader to make the same commitment made early on by the main author to follow the evidence wherever it leads.
>
> I don't know of a book that does a better job of calling scientists away from blind faith in an assumed paradigm and toward a return to sound science based on following the observed evidence — including those most troublesome facts that don't agree with old assumptions.

OK, so this review gave me some hope, but it's what Dr. Sean McDowell had to say that really caught my attention.

He writes:

> *Heretic: One Scientist's Journey from Darwin to Design* is the most recent book published by the Discovery Institute, the foremost Intelligent Design (ID) organization. If you are looking for a good, introductory text to help understand the current debate, this is an excellent place to start.
>
> Unlike other recent book on intelligent design (such as *Darwin's Doubt* by Stephen Meyer or *Undeniable* by Doug Axe) this book does not offer a fresh argument for intelligent design. But this is hardly a criticism, because the book does not aim to. Rather, it tells the story of Matti Leisola—an accomplished scientist, professor, and researcher from Finland—and how he became disillusioned with the Darwinian paradigm and came to embrace design.
>
> The storied nature of this book is one of its greatest strengths. Rather than weeding into difficult scientific details (that can distract the non-specialist reader), *Heretic* takes readers on Leisola's personal journey of wrestling with important issues like the fossil record and the origin of life (It is also co-written with Jonathan Witt). Leisola does discuss relevant scientific issues, but with full awareness of his primarily lay audience.
>
> I am thrilled to see the Discovery Institute publishing books that take a narrative approach to origin questions. In our book *Understanding Intelligent Design*, William Dembski and I include a plethora of stories and examples. But *Heretic* is told entirely as a story, and my suspicion is that it may incite new readers to consider the arguments for intelligent design.
>
> *Heretic* would be an excellent book to give to someone who is new to discussions over Darwin and design. Along with being interesting, the narrative approach is also much "softer" to read. Rather than directly trying to persuade readers, Leisola simply shares his personal conclusions regarding origins. And yet it is impossible for the thoughtful reader to miss the force of many of his arguments, even if he or she ultimately disagrees with Leisola's conclusions.

Just in passing, I didn't like "Undeniable" at all, although I'm a great admirer of Doug Axe and his story of getting his PhD from Caltech, and then post-doctoral research on protein

formation at Cambridge University. He was able to get his research published multiple times in the peer-reviewed Journal of Molecular Biology. But I just don't find him to be a good writer, especially for ordinary people.

OK, so after reading the Amazon review and then having it confirmed with Dr. McDowell's review, I am officially excited. I decided to buy a copy of the book, but not for me. I have lots of friends who are voracious readers who can read it and then tell me what they thought of it. So, I bought a copy of it for my very best friend Dina – she has a couple of STEM degrees and a STEM career, so she'll be able to make short work of it, and then she'll tell me whether it is worth giving away to my friends and co-workers.

If anyone else has read the book and wants to send me a review, please do. My e-mail is in the About Me section. There have been so many good books coming out lately that I haven't even gotten through them all: "A Fortunate Universe" (Cambridge University Press), "The Case for Miracles" (by Lee Strobel), "Why Does God Allow Evil?" (by Clay Jones), "Five Proofs of the Existence of God" (by Ed Feser), "Discrimination and Disparities" (by Thomas Sowell), etc. I hope everyone knows about these books and gets one or two or all to read.

What is the criterion of embarrassment, and what are some examples of it?

April 6, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

The criterion of embarrassment is just one of the historical criteria used to select the parts of a piece of ancient literature that are likely to be historical. Other things in the source may have happened, but we can't know them as history. If significant parts of a text are historical, it is possible to accept it as historical until there are specific reasons to say that some part of it is NOT historical.

Here is William Lane Craig's list of criteria for a saying or event to be historical:

1. Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
2. Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
3. Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
4. Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
5. Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
6. Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.

The criteria is the same for liberal historians and conservative historians, although some historians weight one criteria more than others when trying to evaluate the historicity of

different New Testament parts.

What's amazing is that even liberal historians will give you facts that are embarrassing to the authors as "historical".

Anyway, here are 8 examples of parts of the New Testament that exhibit the criterion of embarrassment, thanks to theologian C. Michael Patton.

1. Jesus' Baptism
2. Jesus' Family Did Not Believe
3. John the Baptist's Doubt
4. The Disciples Doubted After the Resurrection
5. Jesus Does not Know the Time of His Coming
6. Women are the First to Witness the Resurrection
7. Jesus Cursed a Fig Tree
8. Death and Resurrection of Christ

I think 6 and 8 are the ones I want you to take away with you when you finish this post.

Here they are:

> Women are the First to Witness the Resurrection
>
> This is one that is often brought up. Craig Keener puts it well enough: "The witness of women at the tomb is very likely historical, precisely because it was so offensive to the larger culture — not the sort of testimony one would invent. Not all testimony was regarded as being of equal merit; the trustworthiness of witnesses was considered essential. Yet most of Jesus' Jewish contemporaries held much less esteem for the testimony of women than for that of men; this suspicion reflects a broader Mediterranean limited trust of women's speech and testimony also enshrined in Roman law." (Keener, The Historical Jesus, 331)

And:

> Death and Resurrection of Christ
>
> This easily escapes our notice since the basic story of Christ is so well known. However, both the death and resurrection of Christ are, from the standpoint of the culture of the day, embarrassing and damaging. Concerning the death of Christ on a cross, Paul sees this problem: "But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Cor. 1:23). The word used for "stumbling block" is skandalon. Louw-Nida defines this as "that which causes offense and thus arouses opposition." Why? Because the Jews would never have thought their Messiah would have been hung on a tree. "Cursed is one who hangs on a tree" (Gal. 3:13; Deut 21:23). The Greeks thought of the resurrection as foolishness as they were dualist, essentially believing that the material world was evil and the spiritual world good. They would have scoffed at the idea that

> Christ returned to physical form. This is why later Greeks attempted to adapt the Christ story, doing away with the physical resurrection. Marcion is the most famous promoter of this view (see Docitism).

Now, when you are talking about the New Testament to your non-believing friends, you definitely want to draw attention to passages that are embarrassing to the authors. It will help you to be more convincing when you explain the New Testament like a historian.

By the way, you can read an entire post I did on *all the criteria* that historians use to evaluate ancient historical documents.

Peter J. Williams debates Bart Ehrman on his book "Misquoting Jesus"

April 7, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The audio for this Unbelievable radio show debate is available from Apologetics 315.

Bart Ehrman actually posted the audio on YouTube, as well:

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is the US author of the bestselling book "Misquoting Jesus" (In the UK "Whose word is it?"). He calls into question the authority of the New Testament as scribal changes over time have changed the documents.
>
> So can we trust the scripture? Bible scholar Peter Williams believes in the reliability of the New Testament and that Bart's prognosis is far too pessimistic.

This post is a re-post from 2011. I have been listening to this lecture by Peter J. Williams on "Misquoting Jesus" this week, and it reminded me to re-post this debate.

Summary of the Williams-Ehrman debate:

Note: this summary is *snarky*. If you want an accurate view of the debate, then listen to it. My summary is meant to be humorous.

Ehrman:

- I had a mystical experience in childhood and became an evangelical Christian
- I went to Moody Bible Institute, and they told me that the Bible was inerrant
- For a while, I was committed to the view that there are no mistakes in the Bible
- At Princeton, I was taught *and graded* by professors who did not accept inerrancy
- By a strange coincidence, I began to see that the Bible did have errors after all!
- We don't have the original documents written by the original authors, we only have thousands of copies
- if the words of the Bible are not completely inerrant, then none of it is historical
- if all of the words in all the copies of the Bible are not identical, then none of it is historical

Williams:

- I would say the New and Old testaments are the Word of God
- We don't need to have the original Greek writings in order to believe in the authority of the Bible
- I believe in inerrancy, but doesn't mean there are no problems
- the doctrine of inerrancy has always referred to the original Greek copies, not the translations

Moderator:

- what are the main points of Misquoting Jesus?

Ehrman:

- we don't have the originals of any of the books of the New Testament
- we have copies that are much later, sometimes even centuries later!!1!
- the copies we have all differ from one another – they were changed by scribes!!1!
- we have 5000 manuscripts in the original Greek language
- there are hundreds of thousands of differences!!1!
- most of the differences don't matter
- some differences are significant for meaning or doctrine
- errors are propagated because the next scribe inherits the mistake of their source copy
- a large gap between the time of writing and the first extant copy means more errors have crept in

Williams:

- the reason we have so many variants is because the number of manuscripts is large

Angry Jesus or compassionate Jesus in Mark

Ehrman:

- most manuscripts say that Jesus was compassionate when healing a leper, but one says he was angry
- it makes a huge huge huge really really big difference if Jesus is compassionate or angry
- the whole Bible needs to be thrown out because of this one word between different in one manuscript

Williams:

- this variant is important for understanding the passage, but it has no great meaning
- the change is probably just an accident – the two words are very similar visually in Greek
- it's just an accident – it emerged in one manuscript, and it impacted a few more
- the tiny number of manuscripts that have the error are geographically isolated
- I'm pretty sure that WK prefers the angry Jesus anyway – so who cares?

Ehrman:

- no! someone changed it deliberately! it's a conspiracy! you should buy my book! it's a *big deal*!!!!!1!!1!one!!eleventy-one!

The woman caught in adultery in John

Ehrman:

- it is isn't in any of the earliest manuscripts
- this is an apocryphical story that some scribe deliberately inserted into the text
- most people don't even know about this! it's a cover-up! you need to buy my scandalous book!

Williams:

- that's right, it's a late addition by some overzealous scribe
- and it's clearly marked as such in every modern Bible translation
- the only people who don't know about this are people who don't read footnotes in their Bible
- and in any case, this isn't a loss of the original words of the New Testament – it's an addition

Grace of God or apart from God in Hebrews

Ehrman:

- well this is just a one word difference, but it makes a huge huge really really big difference!
- the words are very similar, so it's could be an accident I guess
- but it wasn't! this was a deliberate change! it's a conspiracy! it's a cover-up! scandal!
- buy my book! It's almost as good as Dan Brown!

Moderator:

- hmmmn…. I kind of like "apart from God" – why is this such a big scandal again?

Ehrman:

- you don't care? how can you not care? it has to be inerrant! or the whole thing is false!
- Moody Bible Institute says!

Williams:

- yeah Bart is always saying that every change is deliberate but it's just an accident
- the words are very similar, just a few letters are different, this is clearly an accident
- I have no problem with apart from God, or by the Grace of God
- please move on and stop screaming and running around and knocking things over

Moderator:

- but what if pastors try to use this passage in a sermon?

Williams:

- well, one word doesn't make a big different, the meaning that appears is fine for preaching
- it's only a problem for people who treat the Bible as a magic book with magical incantations
- they get mad because if one word is out of place then the whole thing doesn't work for their spell
- then they try to cast happiness spells but the spells don't work and they experience suffering
- the suffering surprises them since they think that fundamentalism should guarantee them happiness
- then they become apostates and get on TV where they look wide-eyed and talk crazy

Ehrman:

- hey! are you talking about me? a lot of people buy my books! i am a big success!
- it is very important that people don't feel bad about their sinning you know!

Is Misquoting Jesus an attack?

Williams:

- it's rhetorically imbalanced and misleading
- it tries to highlight change and instability and ignore the majority of the text that is stable
- he makes a big deal out of 5 or so verses that are different from the mainstream text
- he says that scribes deliberately changed the scriptures, but he doesn't prove that
- it's just as likely that the differences are just scribal errors made by accident

Ehrman:

- well, maybe the variants aren't a big deal, but what about one angel vs. two angels?
- that's a significant issue! significant enough for me to become an apostate – a *rich* apostate
- if one word is different because of an accident, then the whole Bible cannot be trusted
- it has to be completely inerrant, so a one word difference means the whole thing is unreliable
- we don't even know if Jesus was even named Jesus, because of one angel vs two angels!!!1!
- buy my book! you don't have to read it, just put it on your shelf, then you'll feel better about not having a relationships with God – because who's to say what God

really wants from you? Not the Bible!

William Lane Craig debates Peter Atkins: Does God Exist?

April 8, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of a debate with Peter Atkins, from the Reasonable Faith speaking tour in the UK:

This is a must-see debate. It was extremely fun to watch.

Details:

> On Wednesday 26th October 2011 William Lane Craig debated Peter Atkins on the topic: *Does God Exist?* This debate took place at the University of Manchester as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig. The debate was chaired by Christopher Whitehead, Head of Chemistry School at the University. Post-debate discussion was moderated by Peter S Williams, Philosopher in Residence at the Damaris Trust, UK.

Dr. William Lane Craig:

> **William Lane Craig** (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich in 1984.

Dr. Peter Atkins:

> **Peter William Atkins** (born 10 August 1940) is a British chemist and former Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Lincoln College. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public, including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.
>
> Atkins studied chemistry at the University of Leicester, obtaining a bachelor's

> degree in chemistry, and – in 1964 – a PhD for research into electron spin resonance spectroscopy, and other aspects of theoretical chemistry. Atkins then took a postdoctoral position at the UCLA as aHarkness Fellow of the Commonwealth fund. He returned to Oxford in 1965 as fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, and lecturer in physical chemistry (later, professor of physical chemistry).

You can get the audio of the debate here, along with links to their previous debate from 1998. This debate is accessible and understandable to novice-level Christians.

I am happy when debates like this come out. I have friends who are Christians who doubt the importance of apologetics in evangelism, because they don't think that apologists can prove anything or win arguments. I have friends who are skeptical of using arguments that assume a 14-billion year old universe, because they think that the Big Bang is compatible with atheism (!). I have friends who think that philosophical arguments have no persuasive force. I have friends who think that nothing can be proven from history, beyond a reasonable doubt. I have co-workers who ask me whether anyone wins these debates. I think that this debate answers all of those questions.

This debate clearly shows why Christians should not shy away from studying science, philosophy and history. We will not discover anything that harms Christian theism by thinking logically and by looking at the evidence. To the contrary, it is the atheist who makes war on the progress of science, and who is forced to resist the clear experimental evidence, and to resort to baseless speculations and blind faith. If you want to see a good debate with an intelligent atheist, I recommend watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican instead. But if you want to see a really, really overwhelming defeat for atheism, watch this debate. It is very clear at the end of this debate why Richard Dawkins refused to debate William Lane Craig at Oxford.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING SPEECHES

I only had time to summarize the first two speeches. Keep in mind that Dr. Craig always shines in his rebuttals, and this debate is no different. So you'll want to watch those rebuttals. Dr. Atkins *literally* says in this debate in his first rebuttal "There was nothing here originally. There is nothing here now. But it is an interesting form of nothing which seems to be something." And the audience laughs nervously. This debate is like that. You will see a clear winner and clear loser in this debate. This fight is decided by knockout.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

1. the origin of the universe
2. the moral argument
3. the resurrection of Jesus

Peter Atkins opening speech:

1. Dr. Craig is stupid, lazy and evil:
– Dr. Craig's arguments are old: from the 11th century! Old arguments can't be true
– Dr. Craig is just asserting that "God did it" because he is lazy

– Dr. Craig feels pressured to agree with the theistic majority
– Dr. Craig needs a psychological crutch to comfort him
– Dr. Craig is fearful of death
– Dr. Craig is just wishing for an eternal life of bliss
– Dr. Craig is driven by his heart, and not by his head

2. Origin of the universe:
– Maybe the universe is eternal and has no beginning – we don't know
– Maybe mommy universes can give birth to daughter universes
– It is naive to think that a cause is needed to cause the creation of the universe from nothing
– Science is just about to show how it is possible that something appears out of nothing without cause
– Some scientists have already begun to speculate about about how something can come into being out of nothing
– Maybe nothing is not really nothing, but it is actually something
– It would be admitting defeat to say that God created the universe out of nothing

3. Fine-Tuning:
– It could be the case that the fundamental constants are not variable
– It could be the case that the fine-tuning of the cosmic constants is a happy accident
– It could be the case that there are billions of billions of unobservable universes that are not fine tuned
– It could be the case that the cosmic constants in these billions and billions of unobservable universes are all random so that some are fine-tuned
– Anyone who infers that an intelligence is the best explanation of a finely-tuned set of life-permitting cosmic constants is lazy

4. Purpose:
– Philosophers and theologians are stupid
– I don't think that there is purpose in the universe
– I think that the universe is more grand if there is no purpose, so there is no purpose

5. Miracles:
– I don't think that miracles happen
– The resurrection is a fabrication
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't exist
– It could be the case that Jesus wasn't really crucified
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't really die after being crucified
– It could be the case that the disciples stole his body
– It could be the case that the women went to the wrong hole in the ground
– the gospels are political propaganda written long after the events they are reporting on

6. Theodicy:
– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing humans to perform actions that result in suffering

– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing nature to cause suffering

7. Morality:

– customs and conventions emerges arbitrarily in different times and places based on an awareness of the consequences of actions, as well as various anecdotes and experiences

– these customs and conventions are decided based on the goal for survival, in much the same way as politeness and manners emerge for decorum and to avoid offense

– it is childish to presume that there is an umpire God who decides moral values and duties

8. Religious believers are stupid, lazy and evil:

– the notion of God has arisen because people are stupid and want to be comforted

– there are no arguments or evidences for belief in God

– people who believe in God do not think, but instead take refuge in incomprehensible nonsense

Jordan Peterson tweets an article about the minimal facts approach to the resurrection

April 9, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jordan Peterson is aware of the best case for the resurrection – are you? Wow.

Jordan Peterson is now known to be aware of the strongest case for the resurrection, because he's tweeted about it. Let's see what he tweeted and what's in the article.

It's this article, written by Dr. Gary Habermas, which was published at The Stream:

> Not too long ago I listed six of these events in a dialogue with an agnostic New Testament scholar. I used the historical facts that 1) Jesus died by crucifixion, 2) his early followers had experiences a short time later that they thought were appearances of Jesus, 3) and as a result, they were transformed to the point of being willing to die for this message. Further, two former unbelievers 4) James the brother of Jesus and 5) Saul of Tarsus (later the apostle Paul) both similarly thought that they had seen the risen Jesus, as well; and 6) This Gospel message of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ began to be taught very soon after these events.
>
> Some might be surprised to hear that the agnostic scholar with whom I was dialoguing not only agreed with the historical nature of these six events, without exceptions, but he even added that each one was very well-recognized.

How come?

> Perhaps the chief reason for the widespread agreement comes from recent critical recognition that the New Testament contains dozens of brief snippets of information from the earliest church teaching — preserved from the first 20 years before the first canonical books were written. Scholars call these "creedal texts" or traditions. The best known of them is 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 which scholars agree originated no later than the early to mid-30s AD, or within just five years of the life of Christ. There is also 1 Corinthians 8:6 and 11:23-25, Romans 1:3-4, 10:9, and Philippians 2:6-11. That's not all of them. Among the many others are Luke 24:34 and the Acts sermon summaries. These texts actually predate by many years the works in which they appear.
>
> Another avenue comes from the regular use of different tools and rules used by historians and others to recognize the occurrence of past historical facts. These are often called the *criteria of authenticity*. Here are six of these that help explain how scholars come to this kind of agreement:
>
> 1. Some events are established by the *reliable testimonies* from people who were close to or who even participated in the events.
> 2. Sometimes the witnesses reported these things *very soon afterwards*, rather than waiting years to do so.
> 3. On other occasions, these events are attested by *two or even more independent sources*.
> 4. Sometimes, *enemies* who actually oppose the occurrences and would have preferred that they had not happened, might agree that they nonetheless did so.
> 5. Or the accounts may be told in a way that is so *embarrassing* to those telling it, or to their loved ones or their cause, that the best explanation for them saying it is simply that it's the truth.
> 6. Another test preferred by some scholars is the result of an event fitting well with or exhibiting similarities to other occurrences that are known to have occurred (*coherence*).
>
> There are other historical tools and rules as well, but these are among the best-known ones. Often, two or even several of these additional reasons are present and endorse the same event from different angles. Once in a while, the list of confirmatory reasons can get quite lengthy. In such cases, it becomes more and more difficult to deny the factual nature of the reports. So actually, agreement among dissimilar scholars can be fairly common.

If you've ever seen debates with atheist scholars like James Crossley, Bart Ehrman, Gerd Ludemann, etc., you know that they agree with some or all of these "minimal facts".

Now, this post is about Jordan Peterson. How come he is tweeting this argument? Well, I think part of the reason is that Peterson is a brilliant scholar, and he's going to find out about pretty much everything that he sets out to investigate. I have been told that the

New Testament is an area of interest for him. I can't help but believe that his recent dialog with the venerable Christian scholar William Lane Craig might have put him on the right track.

Here is that dialog, in case you missed it:

I would like all my readers to pray for Jordan Peterson. Ask God to do what God does best – putting people into a time and place where they can find out something about him that leads to a relationship with himself.

If you want a place to start, read Acts 17:24-26 and then ask God to engineer Jordan Peterson's life in such a way that he finds the answers to his questions from the people he meets and situations he finds himself in. God is a master architect and a brilliant general. Looking back on my life, I can clearly see how carefully he led me to know things about him, and then to know him. We just have to ask God to do what he does for Jordan Peterson. Asking is free. It might be a good idea to pray for wisdom for Dr. Peterson, as well.

Survey: young, unmarried women explain why they avoid having children

April 10, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article comes from the leftist Huffington Post.

They write:

> The Huffington Post and YouGov asked 124 women why they choose to be childfree. Their motivations ranged from preferring their current lifestyles (64 percent) to prioritizing their careers (9 percent) — a.k.a. fairly universal things that have motivated men not to have children for centuries. To give insight into the complex, layered decisions women make, HuffPost asked childfree readers to discuss the reasons they have chosen not to have kids and gathered 270 responses here.

They grouped the responses into 5 categories:

1. I want to prioritize my career
2. I don't like children
3. I had a bad relationship with my parents
4. I don't want the financial responsibility
5. I like my life as it is

And here are some interesting quotations:

Category 1:

> I am a first-generation college graduate in my family. My mother was a single mom my entire childhood, and I was there to see that struggle. Being a parent, for a woman, means for life. Being a parent, for men, seems to be something very different. I understand raising children is a big life change and I don't want to sell myself short on my potential to become something more and maybe even create change. **I am childfree because I want to travel, move, pursue my career wholly** and be able to push myself to be an inspiration to other women. If a child comes into my life, it won't be until I am happy and successful in my work life, and not until I am secure with my finances and a marriage. I don't want to one day wake up as an old woman wishing I had waited to have children so I could live my own life first, make mistakes, learn new things and find myself. Today kids are not for me.

Category 2:

> I'm nearly 47; my boyfriend (domestic partner) of 17 years is nearly 50. I've never been pregnant and have taken every precaution to remain childfree. I tolerate other people's children when I have to. I'm happiest when there are NO

> children around. I definitely don't want them in my home. I like my life as it is. My boyfriend and I are both scientists. We also raise snakes and spiders! **We like to travel. We travel to ride roller coasters (members of ACE — American Coaster Enthusiasts) and to attend rock concerts.** I am also a performer in a senior winter guard. My plate overfloweth! I see no reason to procreate. I would be unhappy. Why be unhappy?

Category 3:

> I have a great relationship with my husband. **We have the time and money to travel, and that gives us precious memories.** I had a bad relationship with my dad, and maybe I'm scared to treat my children like that. I'm very happy with my decision. I have a great relationship with myself too.

Category 4:

> My spouse and I have talked in depth about having children. However, **we both decided that our desire to travel the world is a financial burden in itself. If we have kids, we will never have the means to travel**, and at the end of our life, we would rather be 100 percent committed to fulfilling our own realistic dreams rather than only able to provide a subpar life for a child. Comes down to the fact we are selfish, but at least we recognize this and made the choice early enough to avoid damaging a kid

Category 5:

> The thought of having to do kiddie crap every weekend makes me want to shoot myself. I like having the extra money to save for retirement and not worry about braces, summer camp or college tuition. **I can travel on a moment's notice.** I can give my all to my job and not have to worry about daycare, sick days, or having to leave my co workers to pick up my slack. I'm the "cool aunt" to all my nieces and nephews. I have more time to do the things that make me happy and productive. My relationship with my guy is not strained due to the constant neediness of children. I don't want to put my body through pregnancy and childbirth. I can give my dog all the attention he needs and deserves.

If I had to choose one comment to represent the entire survey, it would be this one:

> The moment you have children, you're life ceases to be about yourself. Kids always take priority and I feel like I can do more for this world than just generate offspring.

I think this is the real reason why young, unmarried women choose not to prepare or plan for marriage and children . Marriage and children "some day" is like planning for your retirement by winning the lottery. It's a way for the woman to signal to her family and friends that she will *eventually* want the responsibility of a husband and kids, but not right now.

We need to move beyond a survey to quantify this, and this U.S. Census data does that:

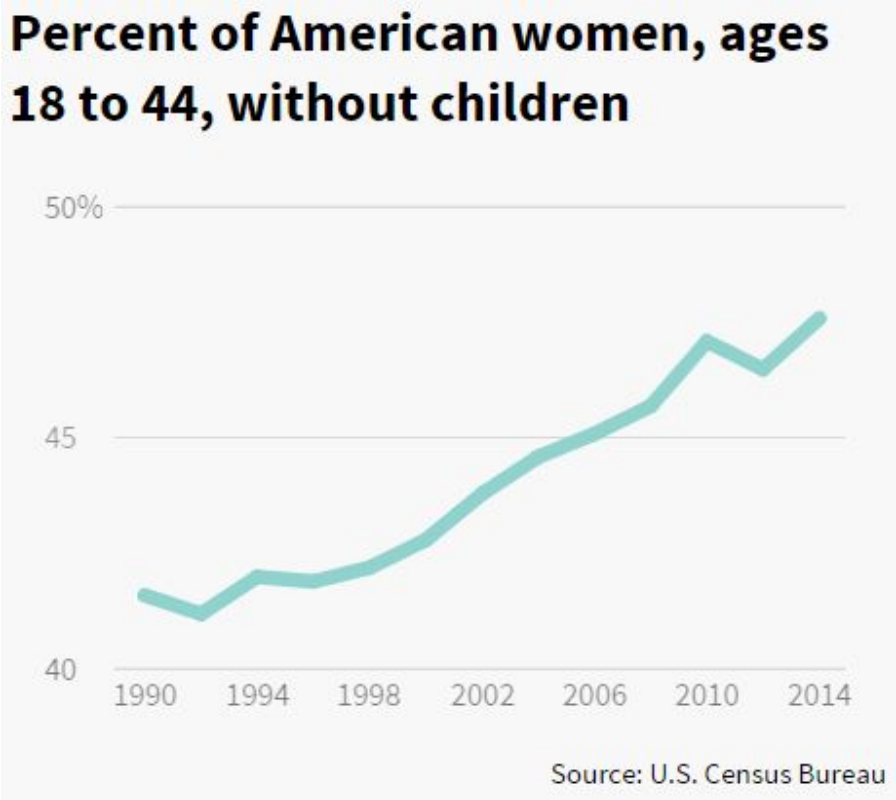

Childless by choice, not because of men failing to "man up"

These quotations are very troubling to me. I've been serious about obtaining STEM degrees, saving money by *not traveling*, and making a plan to have a marriage and family that will serve God. I haven't used my freedom to buy alcohol or to play the field sexually. I don't see women being serious about choosing men who are serious about marriage – especially men who are financially prepared to pay for things like houses and children. A lot of women are even interested in men who are younger than they are, despite the fact that these men have not proven themselves in their careers and finances.

How can young, unmarried women be sincere about wanting marriage and children "some day" if they waste their 20s and 30s on men who aren't prepared for the financial responsibility? And that's not even to mention the fidelity responsibility – men who have self-control before marriage are more able to be faithful after marriage. It seems as if a faithful man who can provide for a family is that *last thing* that women want. Even if a man does find one who wants to get married, the financial situation between a marriage-minded man and a woman who has spent all her time traveling is going to be a huge mismatch.

Young, unmarried women seem to oppose marriage because they know it will impose responsibilities, expectations and obligations on them. And their parents, relatives, friends and co-workers are doing nothing to detect and counter this attitude. As Lindsay argued on this blog before, the marriage / children plan is an excellent way for Christians to make a difference. But it does take work – work that some young, unmarried women are deliberately avoiding.

Christian case maker warns Christians to trust the evidence, not their feelings

April 11, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Alisa Childers posted a review of a recent dialog between Dr. Sean McDowell and former-Christian Bart Campolo, son of far-left progressive fake Christian Tony Campolo. The dialog occurred on the Unbelievable radio show.

Here's an exerpt from Alisa's review:

> Recently, the two came together to have a discussion on Premier Christian Radio entitled, "Why Bart Lost His Faith, Why Sean Kept His." It was a fascinating discussion, and the thing that most struck me was the reason they each gave for having become a Christian in the first place. Campolo described how he converted to Christianity after finding a youth group he connected with and attending one of their retreats:
>
> There's hundreds of kids there. It's Saturday night, there's candlelight and firelight and everybody's singing "Our God is an Awesome God," and "We Love You Lord." And in the midst of that kind of environment I had what I guess you would call a transcendent moment…I felt something. It felt like there was something happening in that room that was bigger than the group. I felt like I was connecting to something. And in that moment ….that was God.
>
> I heard something. It was real to me. People that don't believe in transcendent experiences—I always think like, "You haven't been to the right concert… You haven't used the right drugs. You haven't fallen in love with the right partner."
>
> These experiences are real, and I think whatever narrative you're in when you have one, it confirms that narrative. If I would have had that same transcendent

> moment with my friends in a mosque in Afghanistan, it would have confirmed Islam to me. But I was in the Christian world, so from that point on, Jesus was real to me.
>
> In Campolo's own words, he became a Christian because of a transcendent experience….a feeling that resonated deeply in his heart.

He had a feeling, and he took that feeling as a reason for believing propositional claims about the external world. God's existence? He had a feeling. Christ's resurrection? He had a feeling. The reliability of the Bible? He had a feeling. Instead of focusing on truth, he spent his early life pursuing social justice. He didn't look at evidence, he just tried to have experiences. He tried to chase feelings by having little Christian ministry adventures. Missions trips. Volunteer work. Community. Charismatic speaking to crowds about things he knew literally nothing about.

Further on in the dialog, he explains that his standard for allegiance is not truth, it's literally "what works". And he clarifies "what causes [people] to thrive, what causes [people] to flourish". His emphasis (in his ministry) was always on feeling good by being nice to people, because they liked him. This perspective is rampant in the evangelical church, especially among progressive young people. The idea of testing the Christian worldview against science and history to see if it is true is absolutely out. Instead, it's all about feeling good and making people like you by being nice to them.

Experiences made him an atheist. He worked with poor people, and he decided that God didn't exist because he wasn't making these people happy. He had gay roommates in college, so he decided that the Bible's rules around sexual morality had to be wrong. Never any investigation of economics to understand poverty, no investigation of homosexuality in the peer-reviewed literature, etc. It was feelings all the way. A bit later, Campolo extols the virtue of blind faith, and blasts apologetics as ineffective at changing minds. And then later, he has a bicycle crash, and he becomes convinced from that accident that "this life is all we have". So he disproved substance dualism, which is consistent with the Bible and supported by multiple lines of philosophical argumentation and experimental evidence… *by having feelings about a bicycle crash*.

Now, on this blog, we despise feelings and experiences. We discuss scientific evidence for a Creator and a Designer all the time. The origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitality requirements, etc. For Campolo, Christianity was never about truth, and so he never conducted an investigation about whether it was true. The only God he would accept was a god who "worked for him" – who made him feel good, and who made people (including non-Christians) like him. It was all about him, never about adjusting himself to an objective reality that might have involved obedience to God, having some bad feelings, and being disliked by non-Christians.

The more emphasis that a person places on feelings, intuitions, travel, adventure, and social justice, the farther away they tend to be from analytical philosophy, historical investigation, scientific evidence, etc. You cannot establish the truth of a worldview by

going on a missions trip to Haiti, or by holding orphans in Bolivia. The truth of Christianity is known through study of reality, using logic, science and historical analysis. Making feelings the foundation for a worldview is just a disaster waiting to happen.

Alisa has some words of caution to young Christians and their parents about experience as the root of a Christian worldview:

1. You can be talked out of an experience.
2. Your heart and feelings lie.
3. You can fall back on evidence in times of doubt or suffering.

Here is number 2:

> The prophet Jeremiah described the human heart as "deceitful above all things and desperately sick." Proverbs 3:5-7 tells us not to "lean on our own understanding." Jesus described the human heart as being filled with thoughts like murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, and slander. Proverbs 28:26 tells us that whoever trusts his own mind is a fool.
>
> **In other words, do not, under any circumstances, follow your heart.**
>
> This, of course, stands in stark contrast to the themes we are constantly encountering in entertainment and on social media. However, when it comes to spiritual beliefs, trusting our hearts and following our feelings can lead to all sorts of aberrant theology, sinful choices, and a distortion of true Christian faith.

See that?

"In other words, do not, under any circumstances, follow your heart."

We need more Christians saying this in the church. Especially Christian women – it's better when women put evidence at the center of the Christian life, and push feelings out to the edges.

By the way, she mentions a quotation from J. Warner Wallace about not being a Christian because "it works for me". I wrote a whole post about this.

If you want to read another deconversion story that shows how a focus on feelings and experiences leads to atheism, check out the story of Dan Barker. I know so many people who were raised in the church by pastors who were anxious to "protect" Christian truth claims from being proved or disproved by evidence. They thought that their approach was more pious – how dare we let science and history stand in judgment over the Bible? When I look at Dan Barker and Bart Campolo, I can see where that fideism ended up. Piety is a cheap way of gaining respect without having done any work. We need to demand better from pastors. They ought to be able to show their work. They ought to be able to demonstrate what reasoning and evidence led them to their convictions. Not their feelings and experiences, but actual reasoning and evidence.

The sooner we get to the point where Christianity is true because of reason and evidence, regardless of individual feelings, the better off we will be at being authentic followers of

Jesus.

Finally, if you liked the Unbelievable show dialog between McDowell and Campolo, there is a 3-hour discussion on the same topic, which was held at the Faith Beyond Belief conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada last week. The video has been posted on YouTube.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

More and more women are asking why they can't find a good man to marry

April 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

In the last few months, I've met 5 different Christian women in their 30s who all asked me the same question: where are all the good men who want to marry me?

Christian men's rights blogger Dalrock had two different posts where he described the answer to this question.

Here is the first post from Dalrock that concisely illustrates the problem:

> As I wrote in A very long season, feminists don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husbands than absolutely necessary. As if to prove this very point, 30 year old Mona Chalabi writes in the NY Times* I Want My 2.3 Bonus Years:
>
> If I could prolong my time as a young adult by, say, 2.3 years, here is a list of things I would like to do:
>
> • Go to more parties. Preferably wild parties that I can think about, years later, at mild parties.
>
> […]• Have more romantic partners.
>
> […]• Get a bit higher up the career ladder a bit earlier on. That would probably boost my earnings, giving me more financial security. I could use that money to go to more parties, get a membership to a fancy gym and maybe even meet a romantic partner on the ab machines.
>
> To drive the message home, the image at the top of the article is a cartoon of a

> resentful Chalabi giving her future husband the side eye for her lost years of sampling penises!

Surely, this must be an isolated case just for New York Times feminists, right? It's not widespread, is it?

Second post from Dalrock:

> Margaret Wente at the Globe and Mail* asks where all the good men have gone. Wente comes to the conclusion that women need a sex cartel:
>
> …it's up to us to make the rules. "Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" my father used to say. It drove me crazy when he said that. Now, it's dawned on me that he was right.
>
> Since the women's cartel collapsed, women's bargaining power has seriously eroded. That's why so many single women hate Tinder, which has further commodified sex for the benefit of men. Women are just another consumer good in the shop window.
>
> The apex fallacy aside, Wente is partially right. Women (as a group) have signaled to men that what they really want are exciting sexy badboys, not boring loyal dudes. **It isn't that women no longer want to marry beta providers, they just don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husband than absolutely necessary.**
>
> As a result, some up and coming boring loyal dudes aren't knocking themselves out in their twenties while they wait for their future wife to tire of having sex with other men.

If you wonder why men are no longer performing in school, and exchanging careers for video games, the answer is simple. Men have realized that young women today, under the influence of feminism, are not interested in traditional husbands during their late teens and 20s. During these years, women are interested in travel, fun, drinking, hook-ups and cohabitation with amoral atheists. This is what I have personally observed. In the minds of young women, the highest value men are good-looking men who have no religion, and make no moral judgments, and are left of center politically – especially on abortion. There are many good men who are romantic about women from their youth, and want to get married. But when they see what young women really want, they just give up on school and work, since doing the traditional male roles has no value to young women. Many good men even give up on morality and Christianity because they want a relationship with a woman so badly.

More from second post:

> What Wente doesn't understand is that timing is everything. From an economic point of view, women are dividing up sexual access that traditionally would have been reserved only for their husband into two blocks. The first block contains their most attractive and fertile years, and it is dedicated to no strings sex with

> exciting badboys. Then, once women reach what Rollo calls the epiphany phase, they want to bargain sexual access in their remaining (older and less fertile) years for maximum beta bucks.
>
> The problem with this strategy is (generally speaking) not that the previously overlooked beta men will refuse to marry the suddenly reformed party girls. The problem is that young men now look at the men 3-5 (and even 5-10) years older than them and don't see an indication that signaling provider status will make them attractive to women. They also see a society that holds married fathers in contempt**. Most of these men are still working hard in their late teens and twenties to prepare to signal provider status in their 30s. But a growing minority of young men are no longer doing so. These men are instead working like women. Once the reformed party girls are ready to find Mr. Beta Bucks, there is a shortage of 30 something men who fit the bill. Even worse, no amount of complaining or shaming will cause the missing beta providers to go back in time and spend the prior decade preparing for this moment.

I'm one of the last men who followed the marriage-preparedness script for traditional men who wanted to marry and have four children and have a stay-at-home homeschooling mom to raise them from birth to graduate school. I find myself now in my early 40s, with a 6-figure income and a nearly 7-figure net worth. I declined to use those assets to play the field with hot bad girls, preferring instead to keep my sexual past completely clean for my eventual wife. However, what I observed in my late teens and 20s and even early 30s was a complete lack of interest in marriage ability, from non-Christian women and Christian women alike. Christian women aren't learning to value early marriage from their married parents or their evangelical churches. None of the traditional husband skills are valued by young women, i.e. – chastity, gapless resume, alcohol abstinence, undergraduate and graduate STEM degrees, experience nurturing and mentoring others, stewardship of earned income.

I recently caused an uproar on my Facebook page by saying that even if the perfect woman showed up right now to marry me, I would not pursue her because the critical time where the woman could have applied maximum youth, beauty and fertility as a wife to make an impact on my education, early career, health, and finances has passed. A younger woman develops value to her husband precisely by applying herself to him and to her family in these critical early years. Men who have experienced this self-sacrificial love and support are loyal to their wives even after their wives lose their youth and beauty. Why? Because the men know that they are much better than they could have been, having enjoyed that early investment of value made by their young wives.

Young women very supportive of premarital sex

As Christian writer Matt Walsh notes in a recent article at the Daily Wire, this "follow your heart" focus on happiness in women is lethal to marital stability, and men know it.

Excerpt:

> There was an article in *Cosmo* this week with a title that summarizes all that's wrong with *Cosmo* and modern society as a whole: "I eloped at 25, divorced at 26, and dated my way across Europe all summer." Of course, by "dated my way across Europe" she means that she slept with half the continent.
>
> The author, Elise, says she "started fighting" with her husband and within a few months they both decided that their differences were irreconcilable. Despite counseling, she says, "neither of us was happy." So, exhausted from 12 whole months of marriage, Elise embarked on a voyage of self-discovery and STD cultivation. She met random dudes in half a dozen countries and had sex with them, learning quite a lot as she went, though she can't really explain what exactly she learned or why sex was a necessary component in learning it. Finally, she came home and started dating some other guy. The end.
>
> Well, not really the end. 20 years from now I'm sure we'll get the follow up article: "I'm alone and miserable and it's everyone's fault but mine." **After all, you may be able to fill the emptiness in your soul with frivolous sex when you're young and physically desirable, but that phase is fleeting. People who don't want to "waste" their beauty and youth on a spouse, so they waste it instead on strangers who don't love them or even care what happens to them tomorrow, will be shocked when a tomorrow comes where even strangers aren't interested anymore. This is where the single-minded, utterly selfish pursuit of "happiness" at all costs inevitably leads: to rejection, despair, and a quiet, unnoticed death on a lonely hospital bed.**
>
> As Elise helpfully demonstrated, "do what makes you happy" is poison in a marriage. Many a vow has been broken because one or both partners decide to

> chase “happiness” instead of commitment, fidelity, and love. “I deserve to be happy,” reports the legion of serial divorcees, as they drift on to the next spouse, and the next, and the next, and the next, looking for the one — *the* one, finally — who might cure the misery they’ve inflicted on themselves. Increasingly unhappy, yet increasingly convinced that they deserve to be.

And this follow your heart to happiness situation is alive and well in the church today. Marriage-minded Christian men who have prepared for husband roles are surprised to find that there is often little or no difference between Elise and the Christian women the church produces. Christian men who desire to invest in a marriage that is stable, productive and influential have nowhere to turn for a wife who is able and willing to help. In my experience, the problem with happiness-focused women who delay marriage is never discussed in churches from the pulpit. The “good men to marry” that today’s 30-something women are looking for were plentiful back when those same women were in their early-to-mid 20s.

J. Warner Wallace: I am not a Christian because it works for me

April 13, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a must-read post from Cold-Case Christianity author J. Warner Wallace.

Excerpt:

> Life on this side of my decision hasn't always been easy. It's been nearly seventeen years since I first trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. I still struggle to submit my prideful will to what God would call me to do. Christianity is not easy. It doesn't always "work" for me. There are times when I think it would be easier to do it the old way; easier to cut a corner or take a short cut. There are many times when doing the right thing means doing the most difficult thing possible. There are also times when it seems like non-Christians have it easier, or seem to be "winning". It's in times like these that I have to remind myself that I'm not a Christian because it serves my own selfish purposes. I'm not a Christian because it "works" for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn't always been easy.
>
> I'm a Christian because it is true. I'm a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I'm a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative.

I think this is important. There are people who I know who claim to be Christian, but they are clearly believing that God is a mystical force who arranges everything in their lives in order to make them happy. They are not Christians because it's true, but because of things like comfort and community. But people ought to become Christians because they think it's true. Truth doesn't necessarily make you happy, though. Truth can impose

intellectual obligations and moral obligations on you. Seeing God as he really is doesn't help us to "win" at life, as the culture defines winning.

Winning in Christianity doesn't mean making lots of money, or being famous, or winning human competitions, or being approved of by lots of people. Winning for a Christian might involve things like building relationships with people and leading them to know that God exists and who Jesus is. That has no cash value, and it's not going to make you famous. Actually, it will probably cost you money and time, and make you unpopular with a lot of people.

The Bible doesn't promise that people who become Christians will be happier. Actually, it promises that Christians will suffer for doing the right things. Their autonomy will suffer, as they sacrifice their own interests and happiness in order to make God happy, by serving his interests. Christianity isn't something you add on to your before-God life in order to achieve your before-God goals. When you become a Christian, you get a new set of goals, based on God's character and his design for you. And although you might be very successful in the world as part of serving God, there is no guarantee of that. Christianity is not life enhancement.

Has increased education spending in schools improved student performance in test scores?

April 14, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I want a raise, I work harder, but lazy teachers quit working to hold signs

One of my friends has been having a debate with one of his former teachers about whether spending more money on government-run education improves tests scores. He tried posting some evidence, but she just dismissed that by claiming:

1. If we hadn't spent more money, then the student test scores would have gone down instead of staying the same.
2. Most of the money that government spends on education goes to vouchers and private schools, not public schools
3. Economists at prestigious think tanks like that Cato Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and the American Enterprise Institute cannot be trusted to accurately cite the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics because of the Koch Brothers
4. You can't compare the test scores of American students with the test scores of Asian students who outperform them, (for less government spending), because math is different in Asia compared to America

Let's look at some data and see if her arguments are correct.

Does more spending mean higher student performance?

National Review reported on data collected in the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which spans all 50 states.

Look:

> Comparing educational achievement with per-pupil spending among states also calls into question the value of increasing expenditures. While high-spending

> Massachusetts had the nation's highest proficiency scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, low-spending Idaho did very well, too. South Dakota ranks 42nd in per-pupil expenditures but eighth in math performance and ninth in reading. The District of Columbia, meanwhile, with the nation's highest per-pupil expenditures ($15,511 in 2007), scores dead last in achievement.

The student test scores are dead last, but National Review notes that "according to the National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, D.C. was spending an average of $27,460 per pupil in 2014, the most recent year for which data are available." They are spending the most per-pupil, but their test scores are dead last.

CBS News reported on another recent study confirming this:

> Decades of increased taxpayer spending per student in U.S. public schools has not improved student or school outcomes from that education, and a new study finds that throwing money at the system is simply not tied to academic improvements.
>
> The study from the CATO Institute shows that American student performance has remained poor, and has actually declined in mathematics and verbal skills, despite per-student spending tripling nationwide over the same 40-year period.
>
> "The takeaway from this study is that what we've done over the past 40 years hasn't worked," Andrew Coulson, director of the Center For Educational Freedom at the CATO Institute, told Watchdog.org. "The average performance change nationwide has declined 3 percent in mathematical and verbal skills. Moreover, there's been no relationship, effectively, between spending and academic outcomes."
>
> The study, "State Education Trends: Academic Performance and Spending over the Past 40 Years," analyzed how billions of increased taxpayer dollars, combined with the number of school employees nearly doubling since 1970, to produce stagnant or declining academic results.
>
> "The performance of 17-year-olds has been essentially stagnant across all subjects despite a near tripling of the inflation-adjusted cost of putting a child through the K-12 system," writes Coulson.

Where did the numbers come from? The Koch Brothers? No:

> Data from the U.S. Department of Education incorporating public school costs, number of employees, student enrollment and SAT scores was analyzed to explore the disparity between increased spending and decreasing or stagnant academic results.

Well, at least government-run monopoly schools outperform private private schools, right? No:

> […][P]rivate schools, where students excel over public school peers, …manage to

> operate at budgets about 34 percent lower than taxpayer-funded schools, US Finance Post reports.
>
> Public schools spend, on average, $11,000 per student, per year.
>
> Coulson noted an Arizona study he conducted which showed that the average per-pupil spending at private schools was only about 66 percent of the cost of public schools.

A more recent state-specific study from 2016 found that this is still the case.

This problem gets even worse when you look at test scores from other countries, where even less is spent on education.

As the Washington Post reported at the end of 2016:

> When it comes to math, U.S. high school students are falling further behind their international counterparts, according to results released Tuesday of an ongoing study that compares academic achievement in 73 countries. And the news is not much better in reading and science literacy, where U.S. high schoolers have not gained any ground and continue to trail students in a slew of developed countries around the globe.
>
> In the latest Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) measuring math literacy in 2015, U.S. students ranked 40th in the world. The U.S. average math score of 470 represents the second decline in the past two assessments — down from 482 in 2012 and 488 in 2009. The U.S. score in 2015 was 23 points lower than the average of all of the nations taking part in the survey.

More money is being spent, but the scores are DECREASING.

Now, why is it that increased government spending in the public school monopoly doesn't improve student performance? Well, one reason is that very little of the money makes it to the classroom.

Where does all the money go?

Let's look at four places where the money spent on the government-run public school monopoly ends up.

Administration

First, a lot of it gets paid to administrations who implement politically correct programs designed to turn the impressionable young people into little secular socialists.

Here's a helpful chart from the American Enterprise Institute:

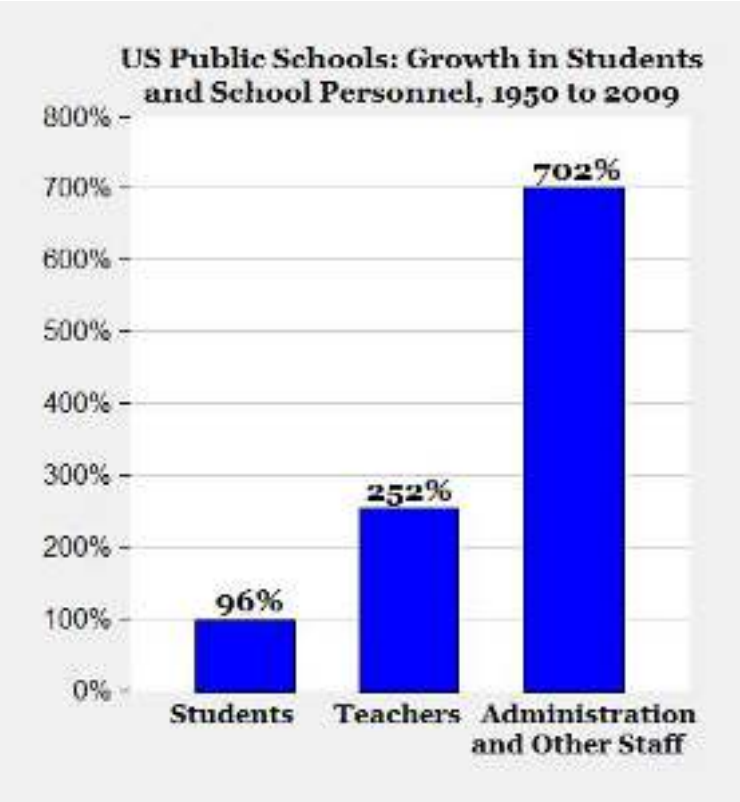

Where does taxpayer money spent on the public school monopoly go?
I guess if a school wants to make things like Planned Parenthood sex education and LGBT indoctrination into priorities, then they would need more administrators.

Pensions

Second, education employees get enormous pensions, which are paid by taxpayers and negotiated by their unions. You would never see pensions this large in the private sector.

This is from the leftist Brookings Institute, from 2014:

> This figure shows we now spend nearly $1,100 per student on retirement benefits. The average public school student teacher ratio is 16 to 1. So we are spending about $17,000 per year per teacher in pension contributions.
>
> […]The National Council on Teacher Quality writes,
>
> In 2014 teacher pension systems had a total of a half trillion dollars in unfunded liabilities—a debt load that climbed more than $100 billion in just the last two years. Across the states, an average of 70 cents of every dollar contributed to state teacher pension systems goes toward paying off the ever-increasing pension debt, not to future teacher benefits (p. iii).
>
> While we are spending a huge amount to fund teacher pensions, most of that spending doesn't go to attracting the best teachers. It's paying off past debts.

We can't hire good teachers, because all the education spending of today is paying for the gold-plated pensions of yesterday.

That was 2014. The numbers are even worse today. Teachers contribute very, very little to their pensions, but the benefits are enormous compared to what the private sector taxpayers get in Social Security. (Which is going to be bankrupt by 2034, as reported by

the far-left PBS)

Teacher training

Third, a lot of it is spent on teacher training, because apparently teaching multiplication, Shakespeare or geography changes every year, so the teachers need tens of thousands of dollars in annual training.

The Washington Post reports on a recent study:

> A new study of 10,000 teachers found that professional development — the teacher workshops and training that cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year — is largely a waste.
>
> The study released Tuesday by TNTP, a nonprofit organization, found no evidence that any particular approach or amount of professional development consistently helps teachers improve in the classroom.
>
> […]The school districts that participated in the study spent an average of $18,000 per teacher annually on professional development. Based on that figure, TNTP estimates that the 50 largest school districts spend an estimated $8 billion on teacher development annually. That is far larger than previous estimates.
>
> And teachers spend a good deal of time in training, the study found. The 10,000 teachers surveyed were in training an average of 19 school days a year, or almost 10 percent of a typical school year, according to TNTP.

Maybe if more of the money spent on education were spent directly on hiring teachers, then we would see an improvement. Unfortunately, a lot of the money meant for teachers goes to the teacher unions. How do they spend that money?

Political Contributions

Finally, this is from OpenSecrets.org, concerning political contributions made in the most recent election cycle:

Rank	Organization	Total Contributions	To Dems & Liberals	To Repubs & Conserve	Pct to Dems & Liberals
1	Fahr LLC	$90,585,570	$90,585,570	$0	100.0%
2	Renaissance Technologies	$59,139,938	$33,414,308	$25,250,600	56.9%
3	Las Vegas Sands	$44,362,186	$51,436	$44,333,430	0.1%
4	Paloma Partners	$41,961,900	$41,958,600	$3,300	100.0%
5	Service Employees International Union	$39,389,570	$39,387,460	$2,100	100.0%
6	Adelson Drug Clinic	$38,847,300	$40,000	$38,830,000	0.1%
7	Newsweb Corp	$38,802,040	$38,796,640	$0	100.0%
8	NextGen Climate Action	$35,459,288	$35,459,288	$0	100.0%
9	American Federation of Teachers	$33,599,606	$33,580,580	$10,700	100.0%
10	Priorities USA/Priorities USA Action	$33,470,302	$33,470,302	$0	100.0%
11	National Education Assn	$29,774,140	$29,426,584	$347,306	98.8%
12	Laborers Union	$29,086,698	$28,386,961	$474,925	96.4%
13	Soros Fund Management	$28,708,898	$27,561,598	$679,700	97.6%

Top Political Contributors in 2016 election cycle

The two largest teacher unions came in at #9 and #11. Most of their donations go to Democrat Party. Democrats believe (against the evidence) that spending more money in the government-run public school monopoly will improve student performance on tests.

So, what's the solution?

The solution is that we abolish the federal Department of Education, which has done nothing to improve the quality of education for students. We need to push the education of children back down to the state and local levels. We need to empower parents to choose the schools that work best for their children by giving parents vouchers. We need to increase tax-free education savings accounts to help parents with school expenses. We should also give free college tuition to homeschooled students who are admitted to STEM programs at any college or university. We can take the money from the pensions of the union administrators, after we abolish ever single public sector teacher union in the country, and seize all their assets and pensions. If that's not enough money, then we can seize all the pensions of Department of Education employees – a just punishment for their failure to produce results while still taking taxpayer money.

Finally, we should allow people who already have private sector experience doing things like STEM to become teachers. Let's face it: the departments that grant Education degrees have the lowest entrance requirements, and produce the least competent adults. People with years of private sector work experience teach better than people with Education degrees. Let's open up teaching to people who have experience in the private sector doing software engineering, statistics, nursing, etc. and then we'll have qualified teachers.

Why does atheist historian Gerd Ludemann accept the post-mortem experiences of the risen Jesus?

April 15, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

William Lane Craig explains why even atheist historians like Gerd Ludemann accept that the earliest followers of Jesus had experiences in which Jesus appeared to them as resurrected Lord.

Excerpt:

> Fact #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead*. This is a fact which is almost universally acknowledged among New Testament scholars, for the following reasons:
>
> 1. The list of eyewitnesses to Jesus's resurrection appearances which is quoted by Paul in I Cor. 15. 5-7 guarantees that such appearances occurred.
>
> 2. The appearance traditions in the gospels provide multiple, independent attestation of such appearances.
>
> With respect to the first supporting line of evidence, it is universally accepted on the basis of the early date of Paul's tradition as well as the apostle's personal acquaintance with many of the people listed that the disciples did experience postmortem appearances of Christ. Among the witnesses of the resurrection appearances were Peter, the immediate circle of the disciples known as "the Twelve," a gathering of 500 Christian believers (many of whom Paul evidently knew, since he was aware that some had died by the time of his writing), Jesus's younger brother James, and a wider group of apostles. "Finally," says Paul, "as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me" (I Cor. 15.8).

> The second supporting line of evidence appeals again to the criterion of multiple attestation. The Gospels independently attest to postmortem appearances of Jesus, even to some of the same appearances found in Paul's list. Wolfgang Trilling explains,
>
> From the list in I Cor. 15 the particular reports of the Gospels are now to be interpreted. Here may be of help what we said about Jesus's miracles. It is impossible to 'prove' historically a particular miracle. But the totality of the miracle reports permits no reasonable doubt that Jesus in fact performed 'miracles.' That holds analogously for the appearance reports. It is not possible to secure historically the particular event. But the totality of the appearance reports permits no reasonable doubt that Jesus in fact bore witness to himself in such a way.38
>
> The appearance to Peter is independently attested by Paul and Luke (I Cor. 15.5; Lk. 24.34), the appearance to the Twelve by Paul, Luke, and John (I Cor. 15.5; Lk. 24:36-43; Jn. 20.19-20), the appearance to the women disciples by Matthew and John (Mt. 28.9-10; Jn. 20.11-17), and appearances to the disciples in Galilee by Mark, Matthew, and John (Mk. 16.7; Mt. 28. 16-17; Jn. 21). Taken sequentially, the appearances follow the pattern of Jerusalem-Galilee-Jerusalem, matching the festival pilgrimages of the disciples as they returned to Galilee following the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread and traveled again to Jerusalem two months later for Pentecost.
>
> Lüdemann himself concludes, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus's death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."39 Thus, we are in basic agreement that following Jesus's crucifixion various individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Christ alive from the dead. The real bone of contention will be how these experiences are best to be explained.

Triablogue notes that most historians accept these post-mortem experiences of the risen Jesus:

> In their 2004 book, Gary Habermas and Michael Licona mention five facts accepted by the large majority of scholars:
>
> 1. Jesus died by crucifixion.
> 2. Jesus' disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them.
> 3. The church persecutor Paul was suddenly changed.
> 4. The skeptic James, brother of Jesus, was suddenly changed.
> 5. The tomb was empty.
>
> Habermas and Licona write:
>
> "On the state of Resurrection studies today, I (Habermas) recently completed an overview of more than 1,400 sources on the resurrection of Jesus published since 1975. I studied and catalogued about 650 of these texts in English, German, and

> French. Some of the results of this study are certainly intriguing. For example, perhaps no fact is more widely recognized than that early Christian believers had real experiences that they thought were appearances of the risen Jesus. A critic may claim that what they saw were hallucinations or visions, but he does not deny that they actually experienced something….roughly 75 percent of scholars on the subject accept the empty tomb as a historical fact." (The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2004], pp. 60, 70)
>
> Habermas and Licona explain that even "the majority of nonbelieving scholars" (p. 149) accept such facts, not just Christian scholars. And even many professing Christian scholars are Christian in name, but reject much of what Christians have traditionally believed. Skeptics sometimes suggest that a scholarly consensus on facts related to Jesus' resurrection isn't of much significance, because so many of the scholars are Christians, but *traditional* Christians make up only a small percentage of scholarship.

When talking about the appearances, the challenge is always to make the move from "through they saw" to "they actually saw". In chapter 6 of their introductory book on the resurrection of Jesus, "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus", Mike Licona and Gary Habermas give some reasons why the post-mortem appearances of Jesus were not hallucinations. First, they argue that hallucinations are had by individuals, not groups. Second, they argue that the hallucination hypothesis leaves the empty tomb unexplained. It also doesn't explain the appearances to skeptical James and antagonistic Paul. Finally, the appearance narratives are too varied to be hallucinations, i.e. – individuals, groups, friends, enemies, different times and different places.

If you want to read a scholarly response to the hallucination hypothesis, it's right in the article by Dr. Craig that I was quoting from above. He assesses the hallucination hypothesis as put forward by atheist scholar Gerd Ludemann against the standard criteria for judging multiple competing historical explanations. It's too much to quote here, but click through and read it when you can. If you want to see a good summary of the arguments for the empty tomb, go right here.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

Can a person believe in both God and Darwinian evolution?

April 16, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

The term for a person who believes in fully naturalistic evolution but who also believes in God is "theistic evolutionist".

Terrell Clemmons takes a look at one organization of theistic evolutionists "Biologos", and makes a distinction between their public statements and the real implications of their public statements.

Here is the PR / spin definition of theistic evolution:

> Evolutionary creation is "the view that all life on earth came about by the God-ordained process of evolution with common descent. Evolution is a means by which God providentially achieves his purposes in creation." This view, also called *theistic evolution*, has been around since the late nineteenth century, and BioLogos promotes it today in a variety of religious and educational settings.

And here is the no-spin definition of theistic evolution:

> As Dr. Stephen Meyer explains it, the central issue dividing Bio-Logos writers from intelligent design theorists is BioLogos's commitment to methodological naturalism (MN), which is not a scientific theory or empirical finding, but an arbitrary rule excluding non-material causation from the outset. "Unfortunately," Meyer writes,
>
> methodological naturalism is a demanding doctrine. The rule does not say "try finding a materialistic cause but keep intelligent design in the mix of live possibilities, in light of what the evidence might show." Rather, MN tells you that

> you simply must posit a material or physical cause, whatever the evidence.
>
> **What this means, according to BioLogos's own epistemology, is that God is objectively undiscoverable and unknowable—a tenet that sits squarely at odds with Christian orthodoxy, which has for centuries held that God is clearly discernible in the natural world (e.g., Romans 1:20).** Obviously, this is theologically problematic, but Meyer also points out that theistic evolution faces problems from a scientific standpoint as well, as the technical literature among evolutionary biologists is moving *away* from the Darwinian mechanism.

Whenever I talk to theistic evolutionists, I try to stop them from talking about the Bible or their faith, because that's not what is interesting to me. I don't really care about their history as a religious person, or where they go to church, or who their pastor is. When I talk about origins and evolution, I only care about the science. What the ordinary process of scientific inquiry tells us about nature? Does nature have the capacity to create all of the varieties of life without any intelligent agency playing a role? Or, are there parts of nature that are similar to computer programs, blog posts, and term papers, where the best explanation of the effect is an intelligent agent choosing how to arrange the parts to achieve functionality?

I don't accept molecules-to-man unguided evolution. This is not because I start with faith and let faith override the findings of science. It's because I think that if you look at specific areas of natural history, there is clear evidence of intelligent agency, such as in the origin of life, or the Cambrian explosion. These effects in nature are well-studied and well-understood, and they look much more like the code that a computer scientist (like me) writes than the simplistic "order" created by wind erosion or crystalline patterns or anything the blind forces of nature could produce. Blind forces are observed to make small changes – short or long finch beaks, fruit flies with 4 wings and no balancers, bacterial resistances.

What's also interesting is how often theistic evolutionists drop the theism but keep the evolution.

Consider this article about Stephen Matheson from Evolution News:

> Biologist Stephen Matheson is a longtime critic of the theory of intelligent design. His extensive attacks on Stephen Meyer's *Signature in the Cell*, for one, ranged from the substantive to the trivial and personal. The tone was frequently…abrasive, and we responded at the time. With Arthur Hunt, Dr. Matheson has debated Dr. Meyer in a forum at Biola University. Formerly a professor at an Evangelical Christian school, Calvin College, Matheson is still listed as a Blog Author at the theistic evolutionary website *BioLogos*, where it notes that he enjoys "explor[ing] issues of science and Christian faith."
>
> Well, his theistic evolutionary explorations have now terminated. As he reports on his personal blog page, where he took a hiatus of more than five years along

> with a break from his teaching, he is “happily” no longer a Christian.

OK. Now that’s just one case, but what about Howard Van Till, also of Calvin College?

Salvo magazine takes a look at what he wrote in a recent book:

> In what follows I shall use the term “naturalism,” when unqualified, to represent neither more nor less than *the rejection of supernaturalism.* Stated positively, naturalism is committed to the belief that all events that occur within this Universe are consistent with and adequately explained by the system of natural causes. This commitment necessarily entails the additional belief that the system of natural causes is fully adequate to account for all events that transpire. Focusing on the issue of the Universe’s formational economy, we can say that naturalism—as here defined -entails the RFEP.

He now gives presentations for atheist groups entitled “From Calvinism to Freethought”. Freethought is a euphemism for atheism.

Now, for the big three Western monotheistic religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. To deny supernaturalism IS to deny the robust theism present in the world’s big three monotheistic religions. Van Till denies theism as commonly understood now. And again, this isn’t because of the science. His heavy handed naturalistic assumption squashed out any kind of serious inquiry into areas like the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine tuning, the origin or life, the Cambrian explosion, biological convergence, so-called junk DNA, deleterious mutations, and so on. Places where you can see that naturalistic forces cannot do the creating that Van Till has faith that they can.

And for the record, I am an *enthusiastic* supporter of the standard Big Bang cosmology, and a 4.5 billion year Earth. My problem with evolution is not Bible-based, it’s science-based. If the science shows the need for intelligent causes, and I think it does, then I think that the naturalists need to adjust their assumptions and pre-suppositions to match the evidence. We have blog posts and computer science code, that’s evidence for a programmer. We have DNA and proteins and sudden origin of body plans, that’s evidence for a programmer, too.

Democrat senator imposes religious test to bar Christians from public office

April 17, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Anti-marriage gay activists vandalize church

CIA Director Mike Pompeo has been nominated to be Secretary of State. He would be a great pick, and you can already see from his previous job that he's well qualified. But what if we decided not to care about his professional qualifications, and instead tried to oppose him based on his religious convictions?

That's what Democrat Senator Cory Booker did, here's the video: (and as you're watching, consider what relevance this has to the job of Secretary of State)

Ben Shapiro, an orthodox Jew, reported on the exchange at the Daily Wire:

> On Thursday, Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) offered a bizarre critique of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo: Pompeo wasn't sufficiently enthusiastic about homosexual sex.
>
> Yes, this is a real thing.
>
> Booker asked Pompeo, "Do you believe gay sex is a perversion?"
>
> Pompeo is a religious Christian, so presumably he does. He answered, quite properly, "When I was a politician, I had a very clear view on whether it was appropriate for two same-sex persons to marry. I stand by that." He also informed Booker, "My respect for every individual regardless of sexual orientation is the same."

This isn't the first time that prominent Democrat senators have attacked Christian nominees for their Christian religious beliefs.

Remember when Bernie Sanders did it?

Partial transcript:

> Sanders: Let me get to this issue that has bothered me and bothered many other people. And that is in the piece that I referred to that you wrote for the publication called *Resurgent*. You wrote, "Muslims do not simply have a deficient theology. They do not know God because they have rejected Jesus Christ, His Son, and they stand condemned." Do you believe that that statement is Islamophobic?
>
> Vought: Absolutely not, Senator. I'm a Christian, and I believe in a Christian set of principles based on my faith. That post, as I stated in the questionnaire to this committee, was to defend my alma mater, Wheaton College, a Christian school that has a statement of faith that includes the centrality of Jesus Christ for salvation, and . . .
>
> […]Sanders (shouting): I understand you are a Christian, but this country are made of people who are not just — I understand that Christianity is the majority religion, but there are other people of different religions in this country and around the world. In your judgment, do you think that people who are not Christians are going to be condemned?

So basically, there is Bernie Sanders using the power of government force a Christian to deny the exclusivity of Christian theology. Something that no authentic Christian could do in good conscience. But he's not the only one.

Here's Democrat senators Dick Durbin and Diane Feinstein doing the same thing.

This is from National Review.

Excerpt:

> This afternoon, during a confirmation hearing for 7th Circuit Court of Appeals nominee Amy Coney Barrett, Democratic senator Dianne Feinstein attacked the nominee for her Roman Catholic faith.
>
> Barrett is a law professor at the University of Notre Dame who has written about the role of religion in public life and delivered academic lectures to Christian legal groups. Drawing on some of these materials, Feinstein launched a thinly veiled attack on Barrett's Catholic faith, asserting that her religious views will prevent her from judging fairly.
>
> "When you read your speeches, the conclusion one draws is that the dogma lives loudly within you," Feinstein said. "And that's of concern when you come to big issues that large numbers of people have fought for for years in this country." Feinstein is clearly hinting here at the Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, a ruling that Feinstein supports so vociferously that she has even called it a "super-precedent."
>
> […]Other Democratic senators took issue with Barrett over her faith as well. Senate minority whip Dick Durbin criticized Barrett's use of the term "orthodox

> Catholic," insisting that it unfairly maligns Catholics who do not hold certain positions about abortion or the death penalty. (Durbin himself is a Catholic who abandoned his previous pro-life position.) "Do you consider yourself an orthodox Catholic?" he later asked Barrett point blank.

To me, the more important thing about these stories is how comfortable secular people are about forcing their secular convictions down the throats of others. What they're essentially saying is this: "I can use power to push my worldview onto you, and I can use power to stop you from living according to your convictions". You can be certain that Diane Feinstein has answers to all of the same big questions that theists have answers to: "does God exist?" "did Jesus rise from the dead?" "is there a purpose to suffering and evil?" "is there life after death?", etc. She has different answers to those same questions, but she wouldn't accuse herself of having dogma. She feels very comfortable pushing her worldview through political power, but doesn't think that theists ought to be able to do the same. questions with their respective worldviews? The answer is simple.

Why are Christians perceived as irrational? Atheists perceive Christians as having a worldview that is not based on fact. And they perceive themselves as having a worldview that is based on fact. How did this happen?

Well, simply put, Christian leaders made it happen, by refusing to focus on apologetics and evangelism. For better or worse, Christian churches (from fundamentalist Pentecostal to conservative Presbyterian) have decided that evangelism and apologetics are not important enough to focus on at church. And the result of this is that as non-Christians work their way through school and into the workplace, they never encounter any intelligent Christians who have reasons and evidence for their beliefs. Not just Christian beliefs, but policy beliefs, too. The church has failed to teach their members and adherents the importance of having answers, and this (along with the Sexual Revolution) is one of the main reasons why America has gone secular.

Even if you spend your childhood and teen years in church, you will never hear serious discussion of whether God really exists or whether the Bible is historically reliable. These things will be assumed to be true. You will be shamed if you ask questions, and you will even be shamed if you study apologetics to know how to answer these questions. This is considered pious by most church leaders, no matter what denomination you're in. Atheists are not blind to the fact that most people who profess Christ are ignorant of competing views, and cannot explain why they hold their views using reason and evidence. And that's why they are comfortable bullying us.

Tactics: the worst mistake a Christian can make when doing apologetics

April 18, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian

worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important

for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it. I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within

his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent’s weakness.

Radical feminists oppose shutdown of underage sex-trafficking site

April 19, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Women's March

Wow! Read that tweet by the organizer's of the Women's March (which doesn't even represent all women). A web site that facilitates "sex work" was shut down by the FBI, and the Women's March is upset. What can it mean?

Well, here's an article from The Federalist to explain. (H/T Sean M.)

Excerpt:

> Last Friday, the FBI seized Backpage.com, a website well known for facilitating the sale of trafficked minors, mostly girls, for sex all over the United States. On Monday, seven top Backpage officials were arrested after being indicted on 93 counts, including money laundering and facilitating prostitution, 17 cases of which involve trafficking victims as young as 14. *The Washington Post* says Backpage earned an estimated $500 million in prostitution-related revenue since its launch in 2004.
>
> The National Center on Missing and Exploited Children reports that 73 percent of all child sex trafficking cases it has handled involved Backpage.com. According to the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, Backpage reached 97 countries and was the world's largest single facilitator of sex trafficking. NCOSE also reports that from January 2013 to March 2015, 99 percent of Backpage's global revenue was attributable to prostitution advertising. During that time, it

> made nearly $51 million from prostitution ads in California alone.

The rest of the The Federalist article makes clear that nothing in that web site's operations made sex-trafficking "safer" for women. In fact, the whole "sex work" business is dangerous for women:

> While it's impossible to say all women in prostitution are trafficked into it, numerous young women and girls tell us they were sold into sex against their will into the industry that traffickers, sex buyers, and their supporters try to legitimize with terms like "sex work." We do know, thanks to the research of Melissa Farley at Prostitution Research and Education, that 70 percent of those in the sex industry link their entry to prior sexual abuse.
>
> Most say they entered as minors, which in the United States qualifies as trafficking. Many enter feeling they have no other options, reducing the sense of free choice in the matter. Once they're in, 89 percent of "sex workers" say they want to get out of the industry but feel they have limited options. You don't call an industry safe when women are coerced into it and have difficulty getting out.
>
> According to Farley's comprehensive studies, as many as 99 percent of those in the sex industry have said they experienced violence within it. Thanks to ladies like Marian Hatcher, who leads the human trafficking division at the Cook County Sheriff's Office, we know that 37 children and adults between 2007 and 2016 were killed as a result of online sex ads like those at Backpage.com. You don't call an industry safe when women face threats to their lives and agency within it.

Sometimes, it's a good idea to look back and see how we got to this point. Just a few decades ago, women generally did not have sex before marriage. Instead, they avoided sex with hot bad boys, found a man who could do husband roles early on, and got married. We had a lot of 40, 50 and 60 year marriages. Lots of children and grandchildren. Photo albums full of pictures. Family, relationships and community. In those days, women were more comfortable with the obligations of relationships, and they were happy to give up some freedom in order to have a strong family and home.

Today, things are different. Feminism won. Women don't look for men who would make good husbands and fathers. Women don't marry early because they see marriage as boring and sexist. Unfortunately, having a lot of fun with bad boys in your 20s isn't a plan for the next 60 years of your life.

Instead of backtracking on their mistakes, the radical feminists are now telling us we have to go forward. How far forward? We have to normalize prostitution and sex-trafficking, too. Once upon a time we had rules around sex, and men played by those rules. Now, the old rules that protected women are gone, and the radical feminists are the ones driving it. Their ideology means more to them than women's happiness and safety.

And it's not just harmful sex work that the radical feminists support. Radical feminists also championed sex-selection abortions, which allows mothers to terminate their

children for being the wrong sex. Radical feminists also support race-selection abortions, which allow mothers to terminate their children for being the wrong race. And no-fault divorce law were championed by radical feminists and their trial lawyer allies, resulting in an epidemic of fatherless children. Fatherlessness is really bad for little girls, and little boys, too.

Well, maybe I'm wrong, but I don't see how radical feminism has made the lives of women, born and unborn, better. Just because a few women made poor choices with men, and got angry at all men, that isn't a reason to let them burn down the institution of marriage. Maybe we should just encourage young women to make better choices about when to marry and who to marry than the bitter feminists did? That's what we used to do, and it seemed to me that women were a lot safer and happier with that.

There is evidence of collusion to get a presidential candidate elected

April 20, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Left to right: Comey, Lynch, Clinton, McCabe

Nobody knows American politics better than Michael Barone. In this article for Real Clear Politics, he explains what we now know about collusion during the 2016 presidential election. This piece was tweeted by Brit Hume AND Hugh Hewitt (of MSNBC) so you know it's fair and balanced.

First, here's the status of the Russia collusion investigation:

> The Russia collusion charge had some initial credibility because of businessman Donald Trump's dealings in Russia and candidate Trump's off-putting praise of Vladimir Putin.
>
> It was fueled by breathless media coverage of such trivial events as Jeff Sessions' conversation with the Russian ambassador at a Washington reception — and, of course, by the appointment of former FBI Director Robert Mueller as special counsel. But Mueller's prosecutions of Trump campaign operatives were for misdeeds long before the campaign, and his indictment of 13 Russians specified that no American was a "knowing participant" in their work.
>
> Now there's talk that Mueller is winding up his investigation. It seems unlikely that whatever he reports will fulfill the daydreams so many liberals have of making Trump go the way of Richard Nixon.

So much for that story. Just think of how much the mainstream media talked about a story that turned out to be a big nothingburger.

But here's another collusion story that's emerging:

> Meanwhile, the evidence builds of collusion by Obama administration law enforcement and intelligence personnel in trying to elect Hillary Clinton and defeat and delegitimize Trump in and after the 2016 election.
>
> The investigation of Clinton's illegal email system was conducted with kid gloves.

> FBI Director James Comey accepted Attorney General Loretta Lynch's order to call it a "matter" rather than an "investigation." Clinton aides were allowed to keep her emails and destroy 30,000 of them, plus cellphones. They were not subject to grand jury subpoenas, and a potential co-defendant was allowed to claim attorney-client privilege.
>
> On June 27, 2016, Lynch clandestinely met with Bill Clinton on his plane at the Phoenix airport — a meeting that became known only thanks to an alert local TV reporter. Lynch supposedly left the decision on prosecution to Comey, who on July 5 announced publicly that Clinton had been "extremely careless" but lacked intent to violate the law, even though the statute punishes such violations whether they are intentional or not.
>
> Contrast that with the collusion of Obama officials with the Clinton campaign-financed Christophe Steele/Fusion GPS dossier alleging Trump ties with Russians. Comey and the Justice Department used it, without divulging who paid for it, to get a FISA warrant to surveil former Trump campaign operative Carter Page's future and past communications — the "wiretap" Trump was derided for mentioning.
>
> Similarly, when Comey informed Trump in January 2017 of the contents of the then-unpublished Steele dossier, he didn't reveal that the Clinton campaign had paid for it. Asked on his iatrogenic book tour why not, he blandly said he didn't know. And maybe he doesn't actually realize he was employing J. Edgar Hoover-like tactics to keep his job. Maybe.
>
> In any case, after he was fired, he immediately sent four of his internal memos, at least one of them classified, to a law professor friend to leak them to the press, with the intent of getting a special counsel appointed — who turned out to be his longtime friend and ally Robert Mueller. Collusion, anyone?

I wonder if the mainstream media will be as excited about reporting on this one? The mainstream media seems intent on presenting Comey as some kind of superstar public servant. But the truth is very different.

Trump needs to appoint people to these law enforcement agencies who will investigate actual crimes that were committed by the previous administration and their allies in the media. I'd like to see people who use government as a weapon put behind bars. We have to know for certain that using the government as a weapon to influence elections has consequences.

Dave Rubin interviews my favorite economist: Thomas Sowell

April 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Thomas Sowell – the best economics teacher you will ever learn from

Two half-hour interviews with my FAVORITE economist, Thomas Sowell. If you haven't read any books by Thomas Sowell, then you don't know how wonderful economics can be. Thomas Sowell stands for the proposition that before you adopt an economic policy, you have to consider what incentives it will create for *everyone* involved. And he backs up his ideas with studies that span the whole range of times and places. It turns out that many bad ideas have already been disproved in different times and places, and Thomas Sowell knows them all. Thomas Sowell is a man of facts and evidence.

Description of part one:

> Dr. Thomas Sowell (Economist) joins Dave to discuss his Marxist past, free speech on campuses, distinguishing between classical liberalism and libertarianism, and his new book "Discrimination & Disparities.

Part one:

"This idiot has stumbled on something that will ruin us all". LOL!

Description of part two:

> Dr. Thomas Sowell (Economist and Author) joins Dave to discuss the role of government, the problem with minimum wage laws, his experience as a black conservative, debunking systemic racism, the importance of common decency, and his new book "Discrimination & Disparities."

Part two:

In the comments, Dave explains that YouTube has demonetized the video. I suppose that this is because the video contains conservative ideas, and YouTube is owned by the far-left Google.

Anyway, I recommend getting your hands on some Thomas Sowell books.

This one seems to be a collection of introductory essays:

The Thomas Sowell Reader

I haven't read it, but it has the highest reviews of any of his books. What I would recommend is picking up one of the OLDER versions of his "Basic Economics":

Basic Economics

You can get a used one for a couple of bucks. I read the second edition a while back, and I remember that just reading the first 3 chapters knocked my socks off. Some crazy person even uploaded the audio of the edition I read to YouTube. Just listen to the first 3-4 chapters, and you'll see what I mean. No one who wants to understand how the world *really works* can ignore Thomas Sowell.

One that I still haven't read that's short and sweet is:

The Vision of the Anointed

But a later book that is similar is actually my favorite Thomas Sowell book:

Intellectuals and Society

I also liked this one a lot:

Economic Facts and Fallacies

I once dated a homeschooled girl who came from a large, rural family. This family produced brilliant children, but the parents didn't really believe in college. I told the girl that to marry me, she would have to get a college degree. She and her parents didn't really like that, and we broke up. However, I did tell her that she should read Thomas Sowell, because she had some left of center views on public policy, e.g. – health care. I found out later that she went on to read SIX Thomas Sowell books in two months. After that, she went on to get a BA in economics via distance learning, with a 4.0 GPA! I think part of that transformation is due to the Thomas Sowell books. Thomas Sowell changes lives.

I have to include this clip of Thomas Sowell from a long time ago:

He understood the things we are fighting about today *decades ago*. This man should have been our first black president.

By the way, Dave Rubin does a lot of good interviews. This one that he did with Larry Elder was worth watching.

Democrat bill to ban public expression of Biblical morality passes California assembly

April 22, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

I hate California, and would never live there. I would never pay money to Sacramento Democrats to waste it on their secular, socialist priorities.

California is banning the free speech rights of Christians. That's not my headline, that's sensible David French in National Review:

> […][T]he California State Assembly is set to vote on a bill that would actually — among other things — *ban the sale of books* expressing orthodox Christian beliefs about sexual morality.
>
> Yes, ban the sale of books.
>
> Assembly Bill 2943 would make it an "unlawful business practice" to engage in "a transaction intended to result or that results in the sale or lease of goods or services to any consumer" that advertise, offer to engage in, or do engage in "sexual orientation change efforts with an individual."
>
> The bill then defines "sexual orientations change efforts" as "any practices that seek to change an individual's sexual orientation. This includes *efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions*, or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same sex." (Emphasis added.)
>
> This is extraordinarily radical. Christian orthodoxy is simple — regardless of a person's desires (their "orientation"), the standard of right conduct is crystal clear. Sex is reserved for marriage between a man and a woman. When it comes

> to “gender expression,” there is no difference between “sex” and “gender,” and the Christian response to gender dysphoria is compassion and treatment, not indulgence and surgical mutilation.
>
> Put another way, there is a fundamental difference between temptation and sin. California law would intrude directly on this teaching by prohibiting even the argument that regardless of sexual desire, a person’s sexual behavior should conform to Biblical standards.

This bill has actually *passed* in the California assembly.

I just want to point out that David French has a JD from Harvard University. He’s not an idiot – this is what Christians of all walks of life are expected to believe. I’m not quite as successful as David is, but I haven’t even kissed a girl on the lips. I certainly would never have sex with a woman outside of marriage – what would that even communicate to her? So yes, we really do take these rules seriously, and not because we’re stupid or poor or ignorant.

When I say that people should not be having sex outside of marriage – gay or straight – I walk the walk. And I ought to be able to freely speak my view. I ought to be able to lend someone a book expressing my view, too. I ought to be able to buy a book that takes the Biblical view of sexuality seriously. This bill outlaws all of that – and violators would be persecuted using money taken from them in taxes.

You can read more about the bill here, on the California Family Council web site.

Can people change their “sexual orientation”?

A friend of mine decided to post some peer-reviewed evidence that people can and do change their “sexual orientation”.

Here is what he wrote:

> Here’s the data I’ve seen:
>
> “Among the 14% of Dutch adult males who reported ever having physical attraction to other males, about half noted that these feelings disappeared later in life”
> https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10508-006-9088-5
>
> “Only 38% of exclusive same-sex attracted females stayed in this group with the rest moving into ‘occasional’ same-sex attraction (38%) or exclusive opposite-sex attraction (25%). One half of female and one third of male 21-year olds with occasional same-sex attraction only had opposite-sex attraction as 26-year olds.”
> https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10508-006-9088-5
>
> “Although most (97%) heterosexuals maintained their heterosexual identity, nonheterosexuals frequently changed their identity label over the life course: 39% of gay males, 65% of lesbians, 66% of male bisexuals, and 77% of female bisexuals.”
> https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10508-006-9088-5

> “The instability of same-sex romantic attraction and behavior (plus sexual identity in previous investigations) presents a dilemma for sex researchers who portray nonheterosexuality as a stable trait of individuals”
> https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10508-006-9088-5
>
> “in a 5-year study… of young adults (Dickson et al., 2003)… only 65% of the men with same-sex attraction and 40% of the women with same-sex attraction did so [maintained a consistent rating of attraction over 5 years]”
> http://midus.wisc.edu/findings/pdfs/1153.pdf
>
> “in a longitudinal study of women who identified as lesbian, bisexual, or unlabeled at the first time point, 67% had changed their identity at least once over a period of 10 years (Diamond, 2008).”
> http://midus.wisc.edu/findings/pdfs/1153.pdf
>
> “Research shows that women’s sexuality tends to be more responsive to normative influences [peer pressure] than men’s sexuality (Baumeister, 2000)”
> http://midus.wisc.edu/findings/pdfs/1153.pdf
>
> If non-heterosexuals change their attraction that much on their own, I think it’s worthwhile to rigorously study therapy to find the best practices and see what can be done.

That’s the science. As a Christian, I have every reason in the world to speak about this evidence to people who are experiencing unwanted same-sex attractions. I have a right to read it in a book. I have a right to buy a book that says it. I have a right to give someone a book that says it. California would take my money and pay themselves to prosecute me for all of that. If you’re a Christian, it’s the wrong place to live. Pay your taxes in a state where the politicians respect your liberties.

Environmentalist groups caught colluding with Russians to prop up oil prices

April 23, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

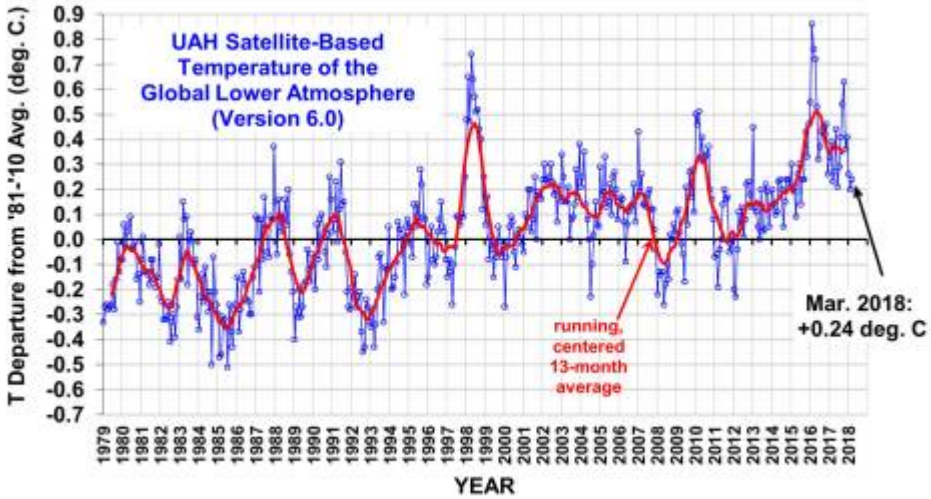

Satellite measurements of global temperature through March 2018

Who has an interest in keeping oil prices high? Environmentalists do because they want people to drive less. And Russia does because their economy has a significant oil production component. Neither the environmentalists nor Russia like that American is able to use fracking to cleanly produce natural gas, because it lowers the price of oil. How far would Russia and their environmentalist allies go to stop fracking?

The Daily Signal reports:

> New Yorkers who are missing out on the natural gas revolution could be victims of Russian spy operations that fund popular environmental groups, current and former U.S. government officials and experts on Russia worry.
>
> Natural gas development of the celebrated Marcellus Shale deposits has spurred jobs and other economic growth in neighboring Pennsylvania. But not in New York, which nearly 10 years ago banned the process of hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, to produce natural gas.
>
> Two environmental advocacy groups that successfully lobbied against fracking in New York each received more than $10 million in grants from a foundation in California that got financial support from a Bermuda company congressional investigators linked to the Russians, public documents show.
>
> The environmental groups Natural Resources Defense Council and the Sierra Club Foundation millions of dollars in grants from the San Francisco-based Sea Change Foundation.
>
> […]When New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, renewed his state's ban on fracking three years ago, the Natural Resources Defense Council issued a statement supporting the ban. So did the Sierra Club, the primary recipient of

> grants from its sister organization, the Sierra Club Foundation.
>
> Environmental activists associated with the groups receiving Sea Change Foundation grants continued to pressure Cuomo and other public officials to maintain and expand New York's fracking ban.

We know that Russia is helping dictator Bashir Assad to stay in power in Syria. It turns out that his ability to do these things is conditional on his ability to make money. The more natural gas America can get by fracking, the less influence Russia can have on the world:

> Since the U.S. is now the top producer of natural gas in the world, and well positioned to export liquefied natural gas across the globe, Russia recognizes it gradually could lose influence in parts of the world where Moscow has been the dominant supplier of oil and gas, Stiles said in a phone interview.
>
> "America's natural gas revolution has huge geopolitical ramifications, so Russia's motivation to try to block our natural gas development is easy to understand," the CIA veteran said. "If you are worried about the Russian bear rearing its ugly head in the next several years, the way to stop that and put it back into its cage is to cut it off at the knees financially."
>
> "That's what natural gas pipelines are all about and that's what fracking is all about. We are providing affordable energy to average Americans at home and our allies overseas."

Now, I'm sure that if I asked environmentalists why they are colluding with Russia, they would say that they had to everything they could to stop global warming. But is there any global warming? We know that global temperatures were higher than today during the Medieval Warming Period about a thousand years ago. Back then, as now, the sun was far more active. But solar activity has been declining lately, and is predicted to decline more. Should we expect to see a cooling period because of this?

The Stream reports on what we are seeing in the climate lately:

> Temperatures plummeted way below normal across the Northern Hemisphere this winter. Many cities in Canada, America, England, and Europe broke previous record lows. But it is not just the intensity of winter that has taken climate alarmists by surprise. It's also the length.
>
> Winter temperatures persist in many parts of Canada and Europe in late April. Some places received record amounts of snow. Some got it unexpectedly late. The prolonged winter even delayed spring planting in many regions.
>
> […]By all measures, this winter is long and severe. The implications challenge those who believe CO2 emissions are pushing global temperatures ever higher.
>
> […]Winters like this year's are not sufficient reason to claim an end to the Modern Warm Period. But they do subvert the claim of steadily, and swiftly, rising temperatures driven by CO2 emissions.
>
> […]When it comes to global temperatures, it is safe to assert (based on hundreds

> of scientific publications) that nothing unusual is happening with our climate system.
>
> Almost none of the computer climate models foresaw the 18-year absence of significant warming. No alarmist scientist warned us about the current colder-than-normal winter, which has disturbed normal life in many parts of the Northern Hemisphere.

I understand that people get scared about the future, and they like to be doing things that make them feel safer, but I think we need to be careful about restraining our energy production in order to benefit Russia. Especially if there is no global warming happening.

Mike Licona debates Bart Ehrman on the reliability of the gospels

April 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

From the Unbelievable radio show, a debate featuring one of my favorite New Testament scholars, whose most recent book on gospel differences was published by Oxford University Press, the most prestigious academic press in the world.

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is well known as a US New Testament Scholar who lost his Christian faith and now questions many core precepts of Christianity, including the Resurrection of Jesus. When Mike Licona had doubts he devoted himself to investigating the evidence and became convinced that Jesus resurrection is the only rational explanation for the facts.
>
> They debate key historical facts about the resurrection – are the letters of Paul that report the resurrection and the Gospel accounts trustworthy or theologised and changed with time? What about apparent contradictions between the Gospels? Does the consensus of scholars count as evidence, or is there a Christian bias? Can a miracle count as an explanation for historical data?

The MP3 file is here. (Note: this link works)

Snarky summary of the radio debate: (items with * are my made-up paraphrases/clarifications)

Ehrman:
– Bart's new book is about forgeries in the ancient world
– some books were falsely attributed to prominent Christian figures
– there are mistakes in the Bible

– there are mistakes in the resurrection narratives
– the defeat of inerrancy led to his conversion to liberal Christianity
– the problem of evil and suffering caused him to become a non-Christian

Licona:
– there are minimal facts that are agreed to by a broad spectrum of scholars
– the minimal facts are accepted because they pass standard historical criteria
– Fact 1: Jesus died by crucifixion
– Fact 2: Individuals and groups had visions of Jesus after his death
– Fact 3: Paul, a skeptic and an enemy, had an appearance of Jesus that converted him
– these facts are agreed to atheist scholars, liberal scholars, etc.
– virtually 100% of scholars agree with these three facts
– there is no naturalistic explanation of these three facts
– therefore, the best explanation of these three facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Ehrman:
– all historians would accept these three facts, except for maybe the group appearances
– the death of Jesus is irrelevant to the resurrection
– the second and third point can be collapsed together
– so really there is only one fact

Moderator:
– the crucifixion is relevant because Muslims don't admit that fact
– the crucifixion important because it establishes a resurrection, not a resuscitation

Ehrman:
– well, if the point is that he died, then yes, this does require a resurrection

Licona:
– the crucifixion refutes Muslims who deny that Jesus died
– the crucifixion refutes the apparent death theory (swoon theory)
– the death is required for a bodily resurrection
– it's important to know what facts most scholars, regardless of worldview, agree on
– it's important to emphasize that Licona is working from historical bedrock facts
– the resurrection is the best explanation for the historical bedrock facts

Ehrman:
– you are trying to list 3 things, but really it is just one thing – the appearances
– and not ALL scholars agree that the group visions occurred

Licona:
– name one prominent scholar who denies the group appearances

Ehrman:
– the radically leftist atheist nutcase John Dominic Crossan denies the group appearances
* Crossan is so far on the left that I look like a nutcase for even citing him
* Crossan believes in the Secret Gospel of Mark, which is a hoax – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan believes that the synoptics are LATER than gnostic forged gospels – but I still

cite Crossan
* Crossan presupposes atheism, so he cannot admit to miracle stories as a pre-supposition – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan pre-supposes religious pluralism, so he cannot allow any exclusive claims Christians make – but I still cite Crossan
* Crossan is a good historian, it's just that he is so far to the left that no one – NO ONE – agrees with his all of crazy theories
* I think it is a good idea to cite historians who pre-suppose atheism and political correctness before they sit down to do history

Licona:
– let me explain why most scholars accept the individual and group post-mortem appearances
– the best source for the appearances is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Cor 15:3-8
– Paul himself had an appearance of Jesus after Jesus' death
– Paul received this material from a source very soon after the appearances – within 1-3 years
– we know that Paul met with Jesus disciples multiple times prior to writing
– Paul probably received it from Peter and James, who were themselves eyewitnesses

Moderator:
– this early dating presumably rules out legend

Licona:
– well legends CAN start quickly
– it does show that Paul was an eyewitness
– it does show that Paul was in contact with reliable eyewitnesses

Ehrman:
– 1 Corinthians is written around 55 AD, twenty-five years after Jesus died
– it is not implausible that Paul got the creed from the disciples, who were eyewitnesses
– but you don't need a long time for legends to emerge, so that is a possibility

Licona:
– only about 3% of people could read and write back them
– instead, people had enormous capacity for memorization
– the Pharisees were particularly good at memorization
– Jews were very serious about passing along traditions accurately
– Paul, a prominent Pharisee, would have been capable of passing on early creeds accurately
– Paul, in 1 Cor 7, shows that he is willing to separate his opinions from authentic tradition
– Paul had an opportunity in 1 Cor 7 to put words into Jesus' mouth, but he wouldn't do it

Ehrman:
– cultural anthropologists show that things do get changed in some oral cultures
– in these oral cultures, it is assumed that the story teller will change the story
– only in written cultures are they careful to avoid changing the story

– in the New Testament, you can compare the same story in two different gospels, there are differences

Licona:
– Ehrman is right that the gospel writers pick and choose things from the oral tradition that they want to include in their gospels
– different oral tradition transmission schemes have more or less embellishment
– african tribes embellish more, rabbinic teaching embellishes less
* Jesus' followers would have viewed him as a rabbi, and been careful about adding to his teachings
– Paul, an eyewitness, probably received the creed in 1 Cor 15 from other eyewitnesses
– Paul speaks about going twice to Jerusalem in Galatians
– he is meeting with Peter and James to check his facts

Ehrman:
– when you look at Mark and John, there are lots of differences in the narrative

Licona:
– I agree that the gospels have differences, but the oral tradition is likely fixed

Ehrman:
– but Mark and John have different sayings
– why doesn't Mark have the same explicit high Christology that John has?

Licona:
– first, John is trying to weave the oral tradition into a compelling story
– and second, when you look in Mark, the high Christology is there in the Son of Man sayings
– the apocalyptic Son of Man is in Mark, and everywhere in the New Testament

Ehrman:
– the "apocalyptic Son of Man" isn't in John

Licona:
– what about in John 9 with the man who was born blind

Ehrman:
– where is the apocalyptic part?

Licona:
– the healed man worships Jesus because he is the Son of Man
– that links to the apocalypic passages in the Old Testament

Moderator:
– what about the differences between the gospels?

Ehrman:
* well, now is the time for me to set up an inerrantist straw man and then knock it down!
* who was at the empty tomb: one angel or two angels? we don't know, so the whole Bible is false!
* I used to be an inerrantist, so one minor difference is enough for me to dump the whole

Bible
* I'll kill you, you stupid straw man! I hate you, Moody Bible Institute! You lied to me!

Licona:
– many of these problems can be solved by realizing that the gospel writers compress time
– the stories don't have to list ALL the characters in every scene
– you don't have to force the Bible to meet some sort of wooden chronology
– the main thing is that the events happened, not that the descriptions match word for word across sources

Ehrman:
– you can't infer a miracle from history, David Hume says so
* extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, David Hume says so
* no I don't know what begging the question is, I'm not a philosopher
* no I don't remember when Bill Craig kicked my ass on this Hume objection in our debate
– the New Testament gospels contradict each other at every point, they are not reliable at all!
* they cannot even agree what Jesus' name is! There are 1 trillion variants of Jesus' name!
* "one angel vs two angels" proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point
* my expansive list of FOUR theologically insignificant variants proves that the gospels contradict each other at every point

Licona:
– um, the gospels agree on the central narrative and disagree on the peripherals
– and they agree on the minimal facts I presented, even if they disagree about the number of angels

Ehrman:
* they have to agree on everything and be inerrant! The Moody Straw Man Bible Institute says so!
* I really really really need to have the number of angels be the same, or Jesus didn't die on the cross

Licona:
– but you don't deny any of the three minimal facts I presented (crucifixion, appearances, Paul)

Ehrman:
– well, I don't know if the group appearances occurred – maybe they did
– i think Jesus died on the cross, and I think that people said they saw him alive afterward

Licona:
– if you deny the minimal facts, then you are outside the majority of scholars

Ehrman:
– the majority of scholars who agree to the minimal facts you presented are Christians
* Gerd Ludemann is an atheist Christian

* James Crossley is an atheist Christian
* Hector Avalos is an atheist Christian
* the majority of the atheist scholars are all Christians!
– VIRTUALLY EVERYBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IS A CHRISTIAN!!! (Yes, he said that)

Licona:
– you really think so?

Ehrman
– you name one non-Christian in the SBL

Licona:
– (incredulous) um, John Dominic Crossan is an atheist

Ehrman:
– but he CLAIMS TO BE A CHRISTIAN so that means HE IS A CHRISTIAN
* all you have to do to be a Christian is claim to be one
* you can even deny the existence of God and the divinity of Christ and still be one, you bigot!

Licona:
– would Jesus or the apostles recognize a Christian as being someone who doubts God's existence

Ehrman:
– my view is that Jesus and the apostles would not recognize evangelical Christians as Christians
* a non-theist can be a Christian just by claiming to be one, but evangelical Christians are not Christians even if they claim to be Christians
– Christians can't record accurate history about the resurrection because they are biased

Licona:
– on your view, if a person is a Christian then he can't write about the evidence for the resurrection
– so then similarly, you would not allow Jews to write about the historicity of the Holocaust
– because you think that if people have an interest in what they are recording then they can't be objective
– but you have to consider the evidence we have, taking the biases of the sources into account

Ehrman:
– but the only people who believe in the resurrection are Christians!

Licona:
– well, people can consider the evidence for the resurrection as non-Christians
– and then if they accept it they can become Christians

Moderator:

– what about your bias? you don't believe in God – doesn't that pre-supposition affect how you do history?

Ehrman:
– well, I presuppose naturalism, so I can't admit to anything in history that implicates supernatural causes
* no I have never heard of the arguments for the Big Bang, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, irreducible complexity, limits on mutations creating information, habitability and so on – I never heard about that stuff from my atheist university professors and even if I had I would have been expelled for talking about it because that would make people feel bad about their sinning

Licona:
– so it's not bias you are concerned about, it's that you don't want history to contradict your untested religion of naturalism?
– why not just do the history without pre-suppositions to gather the minimal facts and then see what the best explanation is?

Ehrman:
* well God is out of bounds as an explanation because I could not have got my PhD if I mentioned God
* I really needed my smart atheist professors to like me and give me good grades so God is RIGHT OUT
* ideas like a real God and moral laws and Hell makes my atheist professors uncomfortable and that means low grades for me
* I'm not really interested in butting heads with professors – it's easier to just agree with them and move on to selling books to the gullible
* My books are much more sensational than Dan Brown books, so please buy lots of them!

Licona:
– what if the historical evidence is good enough to show that Jesus rose from the dead?

Ehrman:
– well I would not call someone rising from the dead a miracle – I would call it weird
* I also think that the Big Bang is "weird" but that doesn't prove that God created the universe out of nothing
* if it's a miracle then I'm going to have to not sin, and maybe even go to Hell, and we can't have that

Licona:
– well, you accept the three minimal facts
– what if we try all the naturalistic explanations for those three facts and there are problems with all of them?
– what if the resurrection is the best explanation for the three minimal facts?

Ehrman:
– but I want to arbitrarily rule God put because I want to pre-suppose naturalism

– there is not historical reason I have to rule put supernatural explanations a priori

Licona:
– I think you are struggling with the theological implications of a historical conclusion

Ehrman:
– well when you do theology, you have to avoid grounding your theology on science or history
– theology has to be completely made up or it’s not good theology

Licona:
– I think you are letting your dislike of the implications of the resurrection determine your historical conclusions
– you have to use historical methods to gather the minimal facts that every scholar accepts, regardless of worldview
– then you weigh ALL the hypotheses, natural and supernatural, that could account for these minimal facts
– then you choose the hypothesis that best explains the minimal facts

UK police threatens those who disagree with NHS starvation of sick child #AlfieEvans

April 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UK Police threatens anyone who dares express disagreement with the NHS

By now, everyone has heard about how an NHS hospital has essentially kidnapped a sick child from his parents, and they are trying to kill the (born) child through asphyxiation, starvation and dehydration. And it's being performed by the government against the will of the child's parents.

The parents want the child back so that they can take the child to a country that has modern healthcare facilities and skilled, moral medical personnel. Italy has volunteered to provide these things, and has even sent an air ambulance to transport the child. But the NHS instead wants to kill the child, because they have decreed that the child is unfit to live, i.e. – "life unworthy of life".

The judge who initially ruled against the parents of little Alfie previously ruled that a patient in a minimally conscious state be starved to death, according to Life Site News. The appeals court judge also ruled against the child because the parents were hostile to the NHS. So, the NHS can't release the child because his parents are "hostile to the NHS" after the NHS kidnapped and starved their child. This is the kind of legal reasoning that you can expect from the judges in the UK.

Government-run healthcare in practice

In the UK, the government runs a massive health care delivery system called the NHS. The NHS takes your money through taxes and then decide how to spend it according to

their own priorities. The less they spend on healthcare, the more they can pay themselves in salary, benefits and pensions. Naturally, it's very tempting for the NHS to kill their patients in order to cut costs and reduce their workload.

The NHS administration actually pays NHS hospitals "bounties" if the hospitals kill more patients by withdrawing treatment.

The UK Telegraph explains:

> Hospitals are being paid millions of pounds to reach targets for the number of patients put on a controversial pathway for the withdrawal of life-saving treatment, according to data based on Freedom of Information requests.

The NHS regularly starves patients to death. Health care is a lot of work, and this is government. Would you go to the Post Office for health care? That's what people are doing when they go to the NHS.

The priorities of the UK police

The UK police tweeted that they are busy monitoring Twitter for speech critical of the NHS. You might think that they have better things to do, like cracking down on sex-trafficking of underage British girls which happens in many, many UK cities. But it's not politically correct to enforce laws against underage sex-trafficking, because it makes the UK's far-left immigration policies look bad.

The UK Telegraph explains what happened in the most recent underage sex-trafficking case:

> The newspaper's probe alleges that social workers were aware of the abuse in the 1990s, but that it took police a decade to launch Operation Chalice, an inquiry into child prostitution in the Telford area in which seven men were jailed.
>
> It is also claimed that abused and trafficked children were considered "prostitutes" by council staff, that authorities did not keep details of abusers from Asian communities for fear of being accused of "racism" and that police failed to investigate one recent case five times until an MP intervened.

In several other underage sex-trafficking cases, the police also failed to act because it was not politically correct.

The UK police also thought that it was a good idea to arrest a 78-year-old pensioner for defending himself against a burglar who invaded his own home. That's law enforcement, UK-style.

What does the NHS do instead of healthcare?

Here is an example of what the UK spends health care money on instead of spending it on sick children:

> Josie Cunningham checked into a clinic last week to get rid of her unborn child, enabling her to create the face she believes she needs to be a porn and glamour model.

> A series of doctors had told her the cosmetic surgery was too risky.
>
> Josie, who terminated the unplanned pregnancy at 12 weeks, told the Sunday People: “I’m having this nose job no matter what gets in my way.
>
> “Pregnancy was a major obstacle and an abortion was the answer to it – so that’s what I did.
>
> […]She had a £4,800 boob job and botox on the NHS, smoked and boozed while pregnant and admitted she had planned to abort her youngest child because she had a chance of going on Big Brother.

When government takes over control of healthcare, their ambition is simple. How can we use the money we are collecting for health care to buy votes from the voters so that we can get elected? A sick little child is useless to them, but an escort who wants to be a porn star has great value. She can vote for higher taxes, more government and better salary, benefits and pensions for the NHS employees. So, what she needs is therefore called “health care”. But what the parents of a sick child wants is not health care.

That’s what it means to go to a single payer system. You pay all your money to the government in taxes, and then they decide how to spend it to achieve their goals of buying votes and winning re-election. If you need an abortion, a sex change, breast enlargements, botox, or IVF for single women who can’t be bothered to marry, then the NHS has “health care” to trade for your vote. But if you have a sick child, then you are out of luck.

Fortunately for the NHS, their screw-ups can apparently be covered up by the judges and by the police. No American could accept such restrictions on liberty, security and prosperity. We are not slaves.

The Alfie Evans story might make you recall last year, when the NHS killed a sick child named Charlie Gard. This is not a rare occurence. I have covered literally dozens of NHS horror stories over the past 9 years. You can take a look at some of them here. The conditions in NHS hospitals are absolutely appalling, and the people who work there are lazy and incompetent. The politicians, administrators, judges and police all work together to cover up the failures, so that they can keep giving themselves exorbitant salaries, benefits and pensions at taxpayer expense.

Dr. Walter Bradley lectures on scientific evidence the creation and design of the universe

April 27, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

This lecture is special to me, because I bought a VHS tape of it just after I started working full-time, and watched it a million times. A lot of people come to their convictions about God's existence because of parents or church or intuitions, but for me it's all about the scientific evidence. This lecture changed my life. I wish more people taught their children about this evidence! This lecture was delivered at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Bradley received his B.S. in Engineering Science and his Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Texas in Austin.
>
> Dr. Bradley taught for eight years at the Colorado School of Mines before assuming a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1976.
>
> During his 24 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Bradley served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and as Director of the Polymer Technology Center, and received five College of Engineering Research Awards. He has received over $4,500,000 in research grants and has published over 140 technical articles and book chapters. He has also co-authored "The Mystery Of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Materials and of the American Scientific Affiliation and serves as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.
>
> He currently serves as Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University.

The lecture: (63 minutes lecture, 25 minutes audience Q&A)

Summary slide:

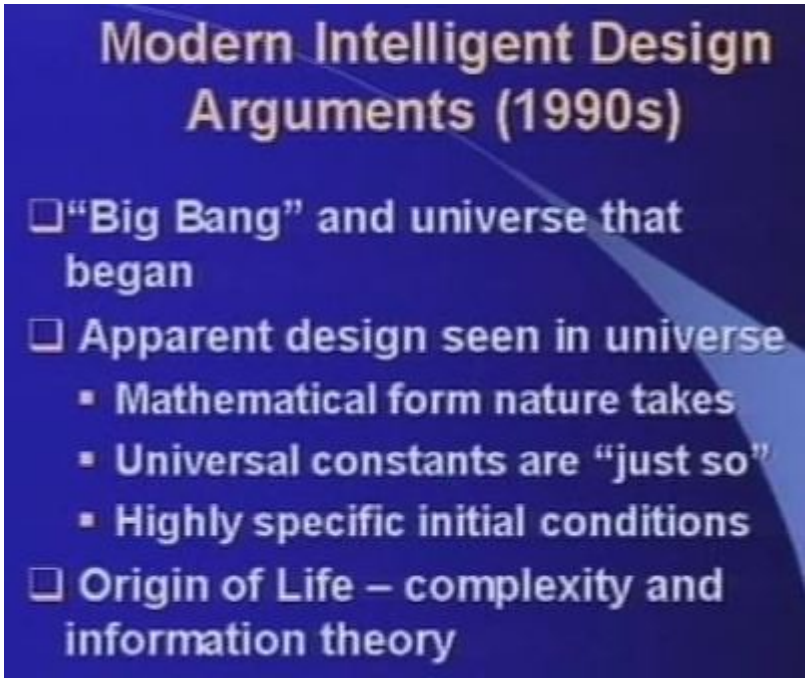

This slide summarizes the content of the lecture

Introduction:

- At the beginning of the 20th century, people believed that the progress of science was pointing away from an intelligent Creator and Designer, and towards naturalism
- A stream of new discoveries has shifted the support of science towards theism, and away from naturalism
- Richard Dawkins, an atheist, says that nature only has the appearance of design, but that if you look closer, naturalistic mechanisms can account for the appearance of design
- When deciding between design and apparent design ("designoid"), it matters whether you think there is an intelligence there to do the designing

Evidence #1: The Big Bang:

- an eternal "steady state" universe is more compatible with naturalism, but a created universe is more compatible with a Creator
- In 1929, Hubble used telescopes to observe that the light from distant galaxies was *redshifted.* The further away galaxies were, the faster they were moving away. Therefore, space is expanding in all directions, suggesting an explosive origin of the universe
- In 1965, the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation matched a prediction of the Big Bang cosmology, and of the creation event
- In 1992, the COBE space telescope allowed us to test four specific predictions of the Big Bang model, especially the predictions for light element abundances (hydrogen and helium), which matched the predictions of the creation model

Evidence #2: Simple mathematical structure of the physical laws

- the simple mathematical structure of natural laws allows us to understand these laws, make discoveries, and engineer solutions to problems
- early scientists saw the mathematical structure of the universe to mean that nature was designed by an intelligent to be understood
- the fundamental equations of the laws of the universe can be easily written on one side of one sheet of paper
- Eugene Wigner's famous paper, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Physical Sciences" makes the point that this simple structure is an unexpected gift that allows is to do science

Evidence #3: fine-tuning of the physical constants and quantities

- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stars that provide energy within specific ranges for long periods of time
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need planets with stable orbits that will not suffer from extreme temperature swings as it varies in distance from its star
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stable atomic structure
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need to have chemical diversity and correct relative abundances of each element
- organic life has minimum requirements: process energy, store information, replicate, and you can't fulfill those functions if there is only one element, e.g. – hydrogen
- the energy level from the photons from the sun have to match the energy levels of the different elements in order to drive the chemical bonding needed for life
- These requirements for life of any imaginable type depend on the values of the constants and quantities. The constants and quantities cannot vary much from what they are, or the universe will lose the characteristics (above) that allow it to support complex life of any imaginable time
- For example, ratio of strong force to electromagnetic force:
  – if 2% larger, then no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no compounds containing hydrogen, e.g. – water
  – if 5% smaller, no stable stars, heavy hydrogen would be unstable, few elements other than hydrogen

Evidence #4: initial conditions for habitability

- Universe: expansion rate of the universe must be fast enough to avoid a re-collapse, but slow enough to allow matter to clump together and form stars and planets for complex life to live on
- Planet: right distance from the star to get the right climate
- Planet: right mass to retain the right atmosphere

Evidence #5: origin of life and information theory

- It’s possible to explain every process in an automobile engine using plain old naturalistic mechanisms – no supernatural explanation is necessary to understand the processes
- But the existence of engine itself: engineering all the parts has to be explained by the work of an intelligence
- Similarly, we can understand how living systems work, but the existence of the living systems requires an intelligence
- Even the simplest living system has to perform minimal function: capture energy, store information and replicate
- Living systems are composed of objects like proteins that are composed of sequences of components complex such that the order of the components gives the overall structure function
- Developing the components for a simple living cell is very improbable – even given the large number of galaxies, stars and planets in the universe, it is unlikely that complex, embodied life would exist *anywhere* in the universe

Evidence #6: more initial conditions for habitability

- Location within the galaxy: you need to be away from the center of the galaxy, because the explosions from dying stars, and excessive radiation will kill life
- Location within the galaxy: you need to be close enough to the center in order catch the heavy elements you need for life from the explosions of other stars
- Location within the galaxy: the best location is between two arms of a spiral galaxy, where you can get the heavy elements you need from dying stars, but without being hit with explosions and harmful radiation
- Star mass: determines rate at which the sun burns, determines the energy level of photons that are used to drive chemical bonding reactions, determines the length of time the star will be stable
- Star mass: star mass must be the correct value in order to allow liquid water on the planet’s surface, while still preserving stable orbit

I wish there was more curiosity about science in churches, and young Christians understood *how critical science is* for grounding the rationality of the Christian worldview. We need to be training up more scientists who think about the big questions, like Dr. Walter Bradley.

Physicist Victor Stenger debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

April 28, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate took place on March 1, 2010 at Oregon State University.

In this debate, Victor Stenger does affirm his belief that the universe could be eternal in his second rebuttal (1:02:30), thus denying the standard Big Bang cosmology. He also denies the law of conservation of energy and asserts that something can come from nothing in his concluding speech (1:33:50). He also caused the audience to start laughing when he said that Jesus was not moral and supported slavery. There is almost no snark in this summary. Instead, I quoted Dr. Stenger *verbatim* in many places. I still think that it is very entertaining even without the snarky paraphrasing.

The debate includes 30 minutes of Q&A with the students.

Here's the video of the debate:

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

- The ontological argument
- The contingency argument
- The cosmological argument
- The moral argument
- The resurrection of Jesus (3-fact version)
- Religious experience

Dr. Stenger's opening speech:

- There is no scientific evidence for God's existence in the textbooks
- There is no scientific evidence for God acting in the universe
- God doesn't talk to people and tell them things they couldn't possibly know
- The Bible says that the Earth is flat, etc.
- There is no scientific evidence that God answers prayers
- God doesn't exist because people who believe in him are ignorant
- Human life is not optimally designed and appears to be the result of a blind, ad hoc evolutionary process
- The beginning of the universe is not ordered (low entropy) but random and chaotic
- It's theoretically possible that quantum tunneling explains the origin of the universe
- The laws of physics are not objectively real, they are "our inventions"
- Regarding the beginning of the universe, the explanation is that something came from nothing*
- Nothing* isn't really nothing, it is "the total chaos that we project existed just before the big bang"
- If something has no structure, then "it is as much nothing as nothing can be"

- Consciousness is explainable solely on the basis of material processes
- There are well-informed, rational non-believers in the world and God would not allow that

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

Stenger's argument that there is no objective evidence for God's existence:

- First, it is not required that God rely only on objective evidence in order to draw people to himself (Alvin Plantinga)
- Second, God is not required to provide evidence to everyone, only to the people who he knows would respond to him
- Third, Craig gave lots of objective evidence, from science, history and philosophy
- Stenger asks for certain evidence (answered prayers, prophecy, etc.), but Craig presented the evidence we have

Stenger's argument that the balance of energy is zero so "nothing" exists:

- if you have the same amount of assets and liabilities, it doesn't mean that nothing exists – your assets and liabilities exist
- Christopher Isham says that there needs to be a cause to create the positive and negative energy even if they balance
- the quantum gravity model contradicts observations
- the vacuum is not the same as nothing, it contains energy and matter
- the BVG theorem proves that *any* universe that is expanding must have a beginning

Stenger's argument that mental operations can be reduced to physical operations:

- mental properties are not reducible to physical properties
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with self-identity over time
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with thoughts about other things
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with free will
- substance dualism (mind/body dualism) is a better explanation for our mental experience
- God is a soul without a body

Dr. Stenger's first rebuttal:

Craig's cosmological argument:

- Craig's premise is "everything has a cause", but quantum mechanics has causeless events
- There are speculative theories about how something could have come into being uncaused out of nothing
- "I don't know of a single working cosmologist today who believes there was a singularity prior to the Big Bang"
- "If there wasn't a singularity then there's no basis for arguing that time began at

that point”
- “There’s no reason from cosmology that we know of that the universe can’t be eternal”
- “When I talk about an eternal universe, I mean a universe that has no beginning or end”
- The Hartle-Hawking model doesn’t have a beginning
- “There was no violation of energy conservation by having a universe coming from nothing”
- “The universe *could have* come from a previous universe for example or even just from a region of chaos”
- The paper by Vilenkin is counteracted by other papers (he doesn’t specify which ones)

Craig’s moral argument:

- Dr. Craig is arguing from ignorance
- But morality can be decided by humanity just like governments pass laws, and that’s objective
- Dr. Craig has too little respect for the human intellect
- I don’t need to tell me that slavery is wrong
- The Bible supports slavery
- Atheists can behave as good as theists
- Morality just evolved naturally as an aid to survival

Craig’s resurrection argument:

- No Roman historians wrote about the execution of Jesus
- The empty tomb is doubtful because it is only mentioned in the gospels, not by Paul
- John Dominic Crossan says there was no empty tomb
- Christianity only survived because the Roman empire thought that they were useful

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- There is no reason to prefer an indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics
- Dr. Stenger himself wrote that deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics are possible
- The vacuum in quantum mechanics is not nothing
- The quantum vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal
- The cosmological argument does not require a singularity
- The Hartle-Hawking model is from 1983
- Hawking says that there is a beginning of space and time *after* that model
- The Hartle-Hawking model *does still have a beginning of time* – the model is not eternal

- The BVG theorem that requires a beginning for expanding universes is widely accepted among cosmologists

Craig's moral argument:

- Stenger redefined objective to mean that most people agree with it – but that's not what objective means
- Objective means right and wrong whether anyone accepts it or not
- Richard Dawkins himself says that on atheism there is "no evil and no good" – why is he wrong?
- Even Dr. Stenger says that morality is the same as passing laws – it's arbitrary and varies by time and place
- But on his view, right and wrong are the same as deciding which side of the road to drive on
- But somethings really are right and some things are really wrong

Craig's resurrection argument:

- Josephus is a Roman historian and he wrote about Jesus, for example
- There were four biographies of Jesus are the best sources for his life
- The scholars that Stenger mentioned are on the radical fringe

Dr. Stenger's second rebuttal:

Knowledge and the burden of proof:

- Dr. Craig has to bear the burden of proof, not me – because his claim is more "extravagant"
- "I don't have to prove that a God was not necessary to create the universe"
- "I don't have to prove that a God did not design the universe and life"
- "I don't have to prove that the universe did not have a beginning"
- "I don't have to prove that God did not provide us with our moral sense"
- There are a lot of books written about how morality evolved naturally
- "I don't have to prove that the events surrounding the supposed resurrection of Jesus did not take place"
- Bart Ehrman says that the gospels are generally unreliable (Note: Ehrman accepts all 3 of Craig's minimal facts)
- Just because people are willing to die for a cause, does not make their leader God, e.g. – the Emperor of Japan

Aesthetic concerns about the universe:

- I don't like dark matter and I wouldn't have made the universe with dark matter
- I don't like the doctrine of penal substitution
- I don't like the doctrine of original sin
- I don't like the heat death of the universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion:

The case for atheism:

- Dr. Stenger had two arguments and he has to support his premises
- Dr. Craig addressed his two arguments and each premise and Dr. Stenger never came back on it

The contingency argument:

- Dr. Stenger has dropped the refutation of this argument

The cosmological argument:

- The theoretical vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal

The moral argument:

- He asserts that things are wrong, but there is no grounding for that to be objective on atheism

The resurrection of Jesus:

- There are surveys of scholars on the empty tomb and 75% of them agree with it
- Bart Ehrman agrees with all 3 of the minimal facts that Dr. Craig presented
- Ehrman's objection to the resurrection is not historical: he's an atheist – he thinks miracles are impossible

Religious experience:

- No response from Dr. Stenger

Dr. Stenger's conclusion

The cosmological argument:

- "I argued that we have very good physical reasons to understand how something can come from nothing"
- "There is a natural tendency in the universe… to go from.. simpler thing to the more complicated thing"
- The transition from a vapor to a liquid to ice shows how something could come from nothing
- "It cannot be proven that the universe had a beginning"

The moral argument:

- Objective morality, which is independent of what people think, could be developed based on what people think

- “Jesus himself was not a tremendously moral person… he had no particular regard for the poor… he certainly supported slavery… he was for the subjugation of women” (audience laughter)

The resurrection argument:

- Bart Ehrman says that the majority of the gospels are unreliable

Religious experience:

- I don’t see any evidence that there is anything more to religious experience than just stuff in their heads

God’s purpose of the world should be to make people feel happy:

- God could have made people feel happier
- God could have made people not die
- God could could have made the universe smaller: it’s too big
- God could have made it possible for humans to live anywhere “even in space”

Should we be trying to change the world from the bottom up or the top down?

April 29, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two Air Force JTACs discuss mission parameters prior to calling in CAS

Dr. Paul Gould is a professor of philosophy (PhD from Purdue) at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Here is his bio, which says, in part:

> I have a Masters in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics from Talbot School of Theology and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Purdue University.
>
> I am an Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Christian Apologetics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

What his bio page doesn't say is that he left a career in business to go onto this apologetics/philosophy track. I find that very interesting, because like most professionals with an interest in apologetics, I had the same dream – to go and do a PhD and get into a college and be a positive influence on Christian kids. But the main thing is that he has had some experience in the real world.

Anyway, Dr. Gould has written two posts on how to change the world, and I want you to look at an excerpt from the first one.

First post:

> Christians like to talk—and aspire—to changing the world. This language stems very naturally from our God-given desire to *make a difference*, to *live a life that matters*. In a very real sense, making a difference *is* to change the world. But, usually, when Christians talk about "changing the world" they mean something

> like “winning the world for Christ” or “helping the gospel to gain a hearing in culture” or “contributing toward shalom.”Recently, there have been a number of very helpful books written by folks who challenge the common view of *how* to go about the task of world-changing, and call into question the relationship between Christ and culture. One of the most important books to enter this discussion is James Davison Hunter’s *To Change the World*. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in the topic of world-change. In this post I will share his critique of the “common view” of world change. I think his critique is dead on.
>
> Hunter argued that by and large, Christians have gone about the task of world changing in completely the wrong way and the result is that Christianity in our country at least and in the western world in general, represents a weak culture.
>
> He focuses on world-view ministries (primarily from the US such as Chuck Colson’s Wilberforce Forum and Focus on the Families’ Truth Project) and those like them that offer the following view of how to change the world:
>
> Common view of world change: as we change the individual beliefs and values of persons, and change enough persons, then we will ultimately change society. This is a **bottom up approach**.
>
> On the common view, the implicit view of culture is that “the essence of culture is found in the hearts and minds of individuals” and that culture change will come as enough individual lives are transformed.
>
> Hunter argues that this approach fails to take into account cultural elites and the institutions that yield power within culture.
>
> Instead, cultural change has always been **top-down:** it is always elites—those who have cultural capital to exert influence and power—who have changed the culture. This is why the university, and the media, and the arts are so important in shaping the culture.
>
> All of this leads to a fascinating conclusion: ***some*** *ideas have consequences*—namely ideas propagated by those within society who possess cultural capital and a supporting network of other individuals and institutions also within the center of cultural influence and production.

Second post is here. The second post has a link to his review of Hunter’s book (PDF), which is published by Oxford University Press.

I agree completely with the top-down thesis of James Davison Hunter, and I think that it is a *tragedy* that the Christian parents and Christian churches don’t do a good job of challenging and guiding young Christians to study the things that will allow them to have an influence. Most Christians I talk to have a negative view of steering young Christians towards advanced degrees, or towards making a lot of money, or towards positions of cultural influence, etc. Instead of focusing on being effective, they tell me “I will do what I want to do, because God has a mysterious will for me to be happy”. I don’t buy it. I am happy to consider alternative plans that serve God better, but I don’t think

that the “I’ll do what feels good” view is interested in producing a return for God in terms of money and/or influence. Crazy plans do not work out just because we want them to. There are costs to every plan, and not every plan is as likely to lead to influencing the culture as any other plan. This is reality.

I also think it is important to steer children into positions where they can be prosperous and/or influential. Again, many Christians disagree with guiding children that way. In my experience, it is assumed that children need to be happy, and that they are the best people to decide what they should be doing in life. Well, I’m not a heavy-handed bully, but I am not letting my children do whatever they like, because they don’t have enough wisdom and experience to know what to do. For example, I am not letting my children study ballet in university. It doesn’t pay the bills, and it isn’t likely that they will have an influence compared to other choices. Money is important because money can be used to fund Christian scholars, apologetics ministries and apologetics events. Marriage is a great way to have an influence, but marriage costs money, and that means that marriage-minded people should have a plan to *pay the bills* before they consider marriage. We do not have the right to *do whatever we feel like*, because we have a boss who *expects a return on his investment*. If a person is capable of doing hard things that produce a better return (money or influence or children, etc.) then he should do that.

We have a problem in this country as it is with young people borrowing tens of thousands of dollars to study things that either don’t pay off, or that don’t allow them to have an influence. It’s not unloving to tell children the truth about the choices they make. Especially when the cost of having a child is over six figures *per child*. You can have a huge Christian influence with that kind of money if you spent it on other things, like apologetics scholars, their ministries and their events. So, if you are going to have children and spend it on them, you’d better have some sort of plan, and look for a spouse who is on board with that idea of providing God with a good return on his investment. Everything we do – including the choices to marry and have children – should be focused on serving God. If people shy away from the idea of steering children to have an influence, I don’t think it’s a good idea to get married at all. Save the money and use it for the kingdom somewhere else. Marriage is about making the best decisions you can in order to serve God, and you can’t marry someone who puts their own happiness over the need to produce that return for the boss.

Having said that, if you are already married, stick with it. I am advocating for making smarter decisions *before* you commit. And before you go off to college, ask yourself: is what you are thinking of studying worth it? Trade school is an excellent option that will give you an income that can support a family AND give to apologetics ministries, with less exposure to debt. If you must go to university, then it’s generally wiser to stick with STEM degrees, so that you can get a job and actually pay off those loans. Marriages and children are NOT free. Retirement is not free. Health care is not free. Christian apologetics ministries do not run on wishes and hopes. Christian scholars do not get their degrees for free – they need support. I think another good plan is to have one person do philosophy or history and then be supported by other people with jobs in STEM fields.

That’s what I do – I help out Christian scholars on my team to finish their graduate degrees in fields related to apologetics. Those non-STEM degrees are the best way to have an influence, but it’s easier to get them as a multi-disciplinary team effort. Everyone has to pull their weight!

And one last point. The most amazing thing in the world is when I meet people who are very very skeptical about mentoring young people and steering children towards prosperous and influential areas, even though they themselves may be facing the results of their own poor decisions. You would think that someone who has burned $60,000 on a degree in Women’s Studies and can’t find a job would be on your side about helping other young people to make better decisions, but they are often not on your side. Why is that? Somewhere along the way, this culture stopped liking the Mr. Knightleys who were praised for loving people by telling them the truth about their bad decisions. Now we think that the Emmas can do whatever they want, and no one should be giving them any guidance. How sad.

Study: couples that delay sexual activity experience higher quality relationships

April 30, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Relationship stability, quality, communication, satisfaction
From Family Studies, news about TWO new studies.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> [T]wo recently published studies call into question the validity of testing sexual chemistry early in dating.
>
> My colleagues and I published the first study a few years ago in the American Psychological Association's *Journal of Family Psychology*. This study involved a national sample of 2,035 married individuals who participated in the popular online couple assessment survey called "RELATE." **We found that the longer a dating couple waits to have sex, the better their relationship is after marriage. In fact, couples who wait until marriage to have sex report higher relationship satisfaction (20% higher), better communication patterns (12% better), less consideration of divorce (22% lower), and better sexual quality (15% better) than those who started having sex early in their dating (see Figure 2). For couples in between—those that became sexually involved later in their dating, but prior to marriage—the benefits were about half as strong.**
>
> […]These patterns were statistically significant even when controlling for a variety of other variables such as respondents' number of prior sexual partners, education levels, religiosity, and relationship length.
>
> **The second study, by Sharon Sassler and her colleagues at Cornell University, also found that rapid sexual involvement has adverse long-term implications for relationship quality.** Using data from the Marital and Relationship Survey, which provides information on nearly 600 low- to moderate-income couples living with minor children, their study examined the tempo of sexual intimacy and subsequent relationship quality in a sample of married and

> cohabiting men and women. Their analyses also suggest that delaying sexual involvement is associated with higher relationship quality across several dimensions.
>
> They discovered that the negative association between sexual timing and relationship quality is largely driven by a link between early sex and cohabitation. Specifically, sexual involvement early in a romantic relationship is associated with an increased likelihood of moving more quickly into living together, which in turn is associated with lower relationship quality. This finding supports Norval Glenn's hypothesis that sexual involvement may lead to unhealthy emotional entanglements that make ending a bad relationship difficult. As Sassler and her colleagues concluded, "Adequate time is required for romantic relationships to develop in a healthy way. In contrast, relationships that move too quickly, without adequate discussion of the goals and long-term desires of each partner, may be insufficiently committed and therefore result in relationship distress, especially if one partner is more committed than the other" (p. 710).

The rest of the post talks about two reasons why this works: improved partner selection and prioritizing communication and commitment. Improved partner selection occurs because you haven't committed too much too soon (sexually) and you have time to let things play out to see if you really fit with the other person. And if you take sex off the table, then you have to use other means in order to build emotional intimacy – communication, service, support, etc.

That's two studies, and there's a third. Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail about a new study showing the importance of chastity for relationship quality and stability.

Excerpt:

> New couples who jump into bed together on the first date do not last as long in relationships as those who wait a new study has revealed.
>
> Using a sample of almost 11,000 unmarried people, Brigham Young University discovered a direct correlation between the length and strength of a partnership and the amount of time they took to have first have sex.
>
> **The study showed that those who waited to initiate sexual intimacy were found to have longer and more positive outcomes in their relationships while those who couldn't help themselves reported that their dalliances struggled to last more than two years.**
>
> 'Results suggested that waiting to initiate sexual intimacy in unmarried relationships was generally associated with positive outcomes,' said the report authored published by the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health.
>
> 'This effect was strongly moderated by relationship length, with individuals who reported early sexual initiation reporting increasingly lower outcomes in

> relationships of longer than two years.'
>
> The study examined four sexual-timing patterns: Having sex prior to dating, initiating sex on the first date or shortly after, having sex after a few weeks of dating, and sexual abstinence.
>
> Each one of these fields yielded different results in relationship satisfaction, stability and communication in dating situations.

Here's another recent study that shows that if a woman has more than her husband as a premarital sex partner, her risk of divorce increases.

His findings:

> Using nationally representative data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, I estimate the association between intimate premarital relationships (premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) and subsequent marital dissolution. I extend previous research by considering relationship histories pertaining to both premarital sex and premarital cohabitation. I find that premarital sex or premarital cohabitation that is limited to a woman's husband is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption.**However, women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship have an increased risk of marital dissolution.**

Here's another study that makes it even more clear.

Findings:

> Data from the 1988 US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) were utilized to assess the impact of premarital sexual activity on subsequent marital stability. **Among white NSFG subjects first married in 1965-85, virgin brides were significantly less to have become separated or divorced (25%) than women who had not been virgins at marriage (35%).**
>
> **[…]The lower risk of divorce on the part of white women with no premarital sexual experience persisted even after numerous intervening and background variables were controlled.**

If you're going to talk to a young person about sex, it's a good idea to use these studies to explain what you lose by having sex too early in the relationship. Although they may respond with anecdotes to refute studies, studies are important because they represent LOTS of data points, not just one or two cherry-picked cases. My view on all this is the Bible's view – no sex before marriage. But when talking to people about this issue, I find it useful to have evidence ready in order to be convincing in every way possible.

Stop telling women that God will give them husbands later if they delay marriage now

May 1, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

Dalrock blogged a splendid post about people who claim that there is a shortage of "good men". He says that if there really were a shortage of good men, then people who want women to actually get married would be telling women not to delay marriage, but to instead get serious about marrying early, when their ability to attract husband candidates is at its peak.

Dalrock writes:

> We can see the same pattern in Dr. John Piper's recent post Why Are Women More Eager Missionaries?* Piper explains that missionary work has become a pink ghetto:
>
> …the actual situation among most evangelical faith missions is that between 80–85% of all single missionaries are women. It is a rare thing, like two out of every ten, for a single man to make missions his life's vocation, which results in the overall statistics being that one-third of those in evangelical world missions are married men, one-third are married women, and 80 percent of the last third are single women. Which means that something just less than two-thirds of the total missionary force are women.
>
> **Piper's main concern with the post however is not that there aren't enough single men doing missionary work, but that women who choose this field aren't marrying as they would like. Piper complains that the problem for husband hunting missionary women is really an exacerbated version of the same problem all Christian women have, and that is an overall lack of marriageable Christian men…**

I'll save you the quotation of Piper, but his reason why missionary women struggle to find husbands is – SHOCK! – that Christian men refuse to man up. I.e – Piper believes that women can't find husbands because men are not ready and willing to marry.

More:

> **But if Piper actually believed… that there was a severe shortage of husband material men, he would focus his attention on helping the women reading navigate this incredibly difficult situation. Overseas mission work may feel empowering for young women, but (according to Piper) single women going into the mission field are greatly handicapping their prospects in an already bleak field. His advice to young women would be to choose which was truly more important to them, being a missionary or finding a husband.**

If Piper really believed that there were a shortage of marriage-minded, marriage-capable Christian men, then Piper would be counseling women who *genuinely* want to marry to make marriage a priority when they are younger, prettier and more fertile. Some women say that they want to get married "some day". But the hidden truth is often that they just want to delay marriage in order to have fun and thrills, until they get tired of it. And then they just expect a suitable man to show up right when they need one. But do men want to marry a 35-year-old woman when they are 40 as much as they want to marry a 23-year-old woman when they are 25?

More Dalrock:

> Piper even tells a story which would be a perfect way to teach this lesson. He describes a single woman named Gladys Aylward who went to a place where she found no marriageable men, and then blamed single men for not following her and proposing marriage:
>
> "Miss Aylward talked to the Lord about her singleness. She was a no-nonsense woman in very direct and straightforward ways and she asked God to call a man from England, send him straight out to China, straight to where she was, and have him propose to me." I can't forget the next line. Elisabeth Elliot said, "With a look of even deeper intensity, she shook her little bony finger in my face and said, 'Elisabeth, I believe God answers prayer. And he called him.'" And here there was a brief pause of intense whisper. She said, "'He called him, and he never came.'"
>
> Now, that experience, I would guess, is not unique to Gladys Aylward.
>
> **If Piper really believed that Christian husbands were scarce, he would be sharing this anecdote to warn young women of the foolishness of moving away from the pool of men they hope to choose a husband from and then expecting God to send the man of their choosing across the world to propose. If we were in a culture of scarcity of good men, this would be the *obvious* lesson from this story. But we live in an age with**

> **unshakable confidence that good men are not only available all around us, but will always be abundant. If Piper believed that the husband Miss Aylward was praying for was surrounded by real life English women eager to win him as a husband, this story wouldn't be complaining about why he didn't drop everything, fly to China, and propose to a woman he had never met. If Piper believed that the man was sought after as a husband in England, he would be pointing out the foolishness of Miss Aylward flying off to China and then wondering why a man she had never met didn't show up to propose once she decided she wanted to marry.**

Miss Aylward either needed to accept that being a missionary in a secular country meant not marrying, or she needed to focus on marriage first when she was attractive to men as a life partner. Many women are propositioned for sex after they hit their mid-30s, but few of them are asked to marry. This is because men need women more when they are just starting out in their careers than when they are established in their careers.

Many women have no appreciation of how investing in a husband early causes him to be loyal to her when she is older. Women think that a husband will show up when she is ready, and be loyal to her even though she was absent during the hardships of the first decade of his career. A woman can do a lot of good for a man when he is starting out in his career and trying to save money for a house. But when those years have passed, the man's ability to work and save have been largely set – without anyone's help. If he went through those years single, then he typically will have earned less and saved less than a married man, because he did it without a wife's support. Men do better in their careers and finances when they have a wife's support. Especially in the early career, which is more stressful because of the lack of work experience. If a woman wants a man to be faithful and loyal, then she needs to choose a man who needs her, and invest in him using her youth and beauty to support him during his critical 20s and early 30s. Men respond to support during the critical years with lifelong fidelity and loyalty.

By the way, for an explanation of why men prefer not to be missionaries, read this post on Deeper Strength blog.

And one last point. I have known 3 women missionaries, and many women who thought about becoming short-term missionaries. In *every case* the women had grown up as Christians, and then gone wild in their 20s with alcohol and promiscuity. And they saw missions work as a fun and thrilling way to "atone" for their wild past. Another reason for Christian men to be skeptical of women missionaries.

Is the gospel of Mark early? Is it based on eyewitness testimony?

May 1, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

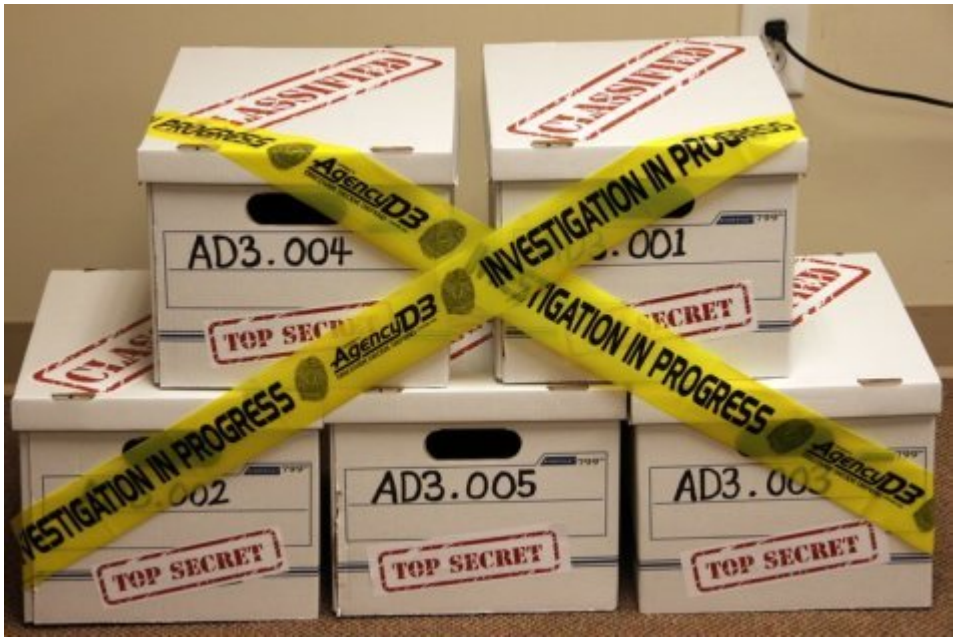

Investigation in progress

Sean McDowell tweeted this interesting article from BeThinking.org, written by New Testament historian Peter J. Williams. It contains reasons why Mark is early, eyewitness testimony. I want to focus on the criterion of embarrassment, which says that if a passage contains embarrassing information about the author or the author's cause, then it's likely to be historical.

Excerpt:

> If it were not for Mark's Gospel, Mark would be a very minor figure indeed in the beginnings of Christianity. He is certainly not someone you would ascribe Mark's Gospel to in order to give it more authority, because according to the book of Acts (*Acts 13:13* and *15:37*) he abandoned Paul, one of the early Christian leaders, during a mission. We can take it therefore that the Gospel is ascribed to him because it genuinely is by him. If it is by him then it has to be written within the lifespan of someone who was an active adult in the 50s and 60s of the first century AD.

Yeah, if you're going to make up a gospel, and you want people to believe it, then you pick an author who is more famous, like Peter.

More:

> Though the Gospel makes extraordinary claims about Jesus' miraculous activities, it seems to make no attempt to cover up the failures of the early Christian leaders. The disciples are said to misunderstand (*8:14–217*), argue about who is the greatest (*9:34*), get angry with two of the leading disciples (*10:41*), and

> ultimately abandon Jesus (*14:50*). The leading disciple, Peter, denied Jesus three times (*14:66–72*). The most unusual claim that it makes is that someone who underwent a shameful execution designed by the Romans to show that he was a loser, was in fact the Son of God.
>
> It is not just the narrative which tells embarrassing stories, the things said by Jesus could also be profoundly embarrassing. According to *15:34* Jesus died asking why God had forsaken him. It is not likely that people would make up such a saying if it hadn't really occurred. According to *7:27*, Jesus told a non-Jewish woman (a Gentile) that it was not right to take that which belonged to the Jews and throw it to 'dogs', meaning Gentiles. This is not something you would make up if you were writing a Gospel and wanted gentiles to become Christians.

Although Williams is right to say that Mark is typically dated to the early 60s, the atheist historian James Crossley dates it 37-43 in his book about the gospel of Mark.

There is a podcast by J. Warner Wallace that has some more interesting information about the gospel of Mark.

The M4A file is here.

Details:

> In this blast from the past, J. Warner examines the Gospel of Mark for signs of Peter's influence. Papias, the early church bishop, claimed Mark's Gospel was written as he sat at the feet of Peter in Rome. According to Papias, Mark scribed Peter's sermons and created the narrative we now have in our Bible. In this audio podcast, J. Warner applies Forensic Statement Analysis to Mark's text to see if Peter's fingerprints are present.

You can also read a post on some of what is in the podcast, if you don't want to listen to the podcast.

Here is the part I thought was most interesting:

> **The Omissions of the Gospel Are Consistent With Peter's Influence**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter's special input and influence, including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It's important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It's not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter's standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters 'indiscretions' in their own accounts). Here are some examples of Petrine Omissions grounded in an effort to minimize embarrassment to Peter (see Cold-Case Christianity for a more

> detailed explanation of the events summarized here):
>
> Peter's shame at the "Miraculous Catch"
> *(Mark 1:16-120 compared to Luke 5:1-11)*
>
> Peter's foolish statement at the crowded healing
> *(Mark 5:21-34 compared to Luke 8:42-48)*
>
> Peter's lack of understanding related to the parable
> *(Mark 7:14-19 compared to Matthew 15:10-18 and Acts 10:9-16)*
>
> Peter's lack of faith on the lake
> *(Mark 6:45 compared to Matthew 14:22-33)*
>
> Peter's rash statement to Jesus
> *(Mark 8:31-33 compared to Matthew 16:21-23)*
>
> Peter's statement related to money
> *(Mark 10:23-31 compared to Matthew 19:23-30)*
>
> Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial
> *(Mark 14:27-31 compared to Luke 22:31-34 and John 13:34-38)*
>
> Peter's behavior at the foot-washing
> *(Mark 14:22-26 compared to John 13:2-9)*
>
> Peter's denial and Jesus' direct stare
> *(Mark 14:66-72 compared to Luke 22:54-62)*
>
> There are a number of places in the Gospel of Mark where details related specifically to the words and actions of Peter have been omitted in what appears to be an effort to protect Peter from embarrassment. This doesn't mean Peter failed to talk about these things. He may very well have included them in his sermons and teachings. But Mark, his scribe and close friend, simply chose to omit these details related to Peter, either at Peter's request or on his own initiative.

Mark doesn't want to annoy his source, Peter, by calling him out for making mistakes. He has to include the embarrassing stories, but it's less harsh than in other gospels.

Here's another blog post from Cold Case Christianity on the same topic.

By the way, when you read the Bible, you should definitely try to put the character of Jesus into practice. My pastor has just been doing sermons on John 21 and he made a big deal out of the way that Jesus reconciles with Peter. What does Jesus do? Well, there is a charcoal fire nearby at the triple denial of Jesus scene. And when Jesus makes Peter and the others breakfast, there is a charcoal fire and a triple affirmation of Jesus. My pastor says that there are no other charcoal fires anywhere in the gospel. Jesus decided to make the restoration of Peter memorable for Peter.

So, when you have a chance to get someone back on board with a worthy mission, you should be thoughtful about how they gave it up, and take them back in a way that makes them feel that the past mistakes were canceled out.

Radical feminism changes men’s perceptions of women in the workplace

May 2, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

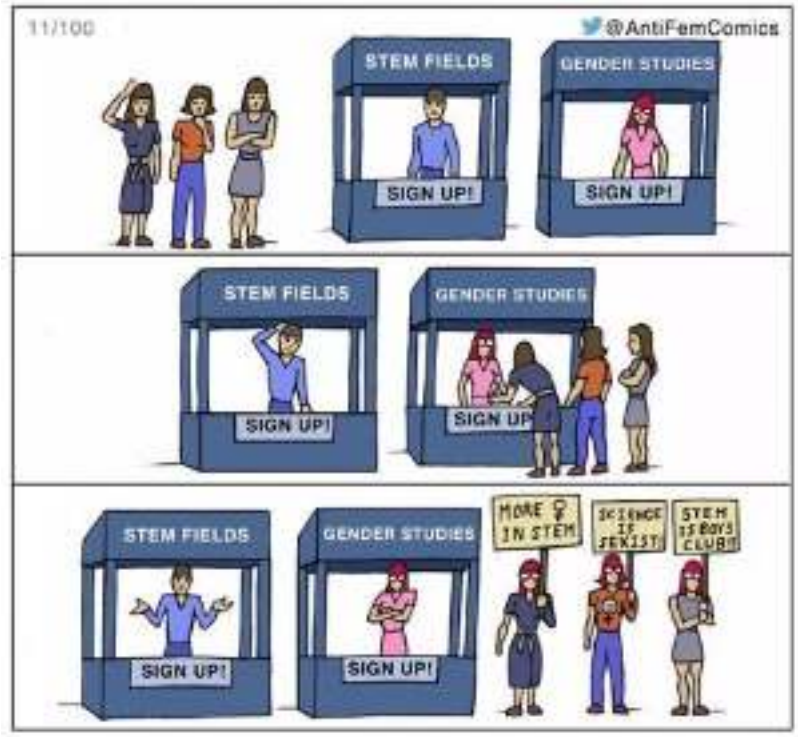

The gender disparity in STEM fields explained

Radical feminists complain a lot about sexism, but damage is self-inflicted

Lately, we’ve seen an outburst of radical feminism as more women have been equating actual rape and sexual assault with sexist comments or clumsy passes. How does this change how women are perceived in the workplace?

Here’s an article from Medium (H/T Tracy) by an anonymous male feminist.

The first point is about how women handle disagreement, compared to men:

> When James Damore was asked for feedback from his supervisor and internally circulated his google memo, it got leaked, he got fired and women stayed at home the next Day because “for emotional reasons”
>
> **A ten page summary** of data and analysis from Damore was enough to “emotional distress” the women at the company.

This lack of resilience and self-control disrupts the workplace, and results in lost productivity. If it turns into a lawsuit, the costs are even higher. This is in addition to women having fewer STEM degrees than men, working fewer hours than men, and taking months leave for pregnancy. Not to mention affirmative action hiring and promoting in order to meet quotas of women.

Second point, is increased hostility to men.

Look at this tweet from a writer at Teen Vogue:

Emily Lindin, a mainstream writer with a degree in music history, tweets her hatred of men

She has 23,000 followers on Twitter – this woman is mainstream. I looked into her background a bit. No mention of a father at home, and a self-confessed "slutty" lifestyle from her early teens onward. Her entire writing career seems to be to attack everyone who disagrees with her promiscuity.

Feminism, as an ideology, does not allow women to prefer men who exhibit traditional masculine characteristics: providing, protecting, moral and spiritual leadership, chastity, fidelity. That's "sexist". So what's left? Get drunk and have sex with the hot bad boys, since evaluating a man's character is "sexist". Then promote false accusations and misandry to get revenge against the hot bad boys you freely chose. This will only get worse as more radical feminists waste their 20s on hot bad boys, and raise more fatherless girls when they become single mothers by choice, in their 30s.

Do men want to work with women who hate men and make false accusations with people they disagree with? I'm a conservative, Christian, pro-life virgin. I disagree with all premarital sex. If this woman worked with me and found out my views, she would almost certainly get me fired.

Another article from Medium (H/T Wes) makes a third point about how conservatives are treated by liberal women in the workplace. The article is written by a female senior software engineer, who promotes STEM to women and the elderly. She is a self-described "moderate conservative".

Excerpt:

> On September 27, 2017, I decided to attend the Atlanta Google Women Techmakers' event "Idea Jam Session," which was hosted at TechSquare Labs in

> Atlanta. At that time, I was still an active member of Women Who Code, the Atlanta GDG, and Google Women Techmakers and, perhaps naively, I just assumed that I had every right to attend the event like any other member of the group because I had not been banned.
>
> Upon arriving at the event, Maggie immediately asked me to leave the room. At the door, she informed me that she would be extremely uncomfortable if I remained a member of the community because some of the views that I had expressed on Twitter are *"very harmful to gender equality"*. She then asked Daniel Sabeo, the event coordinator at TechSquare Labs, to escort me from the facility. I was deeply upset at being publicly humiliated, but left willingly without causing any disruption.
>
> Two days later, I got an email from TechSquare Labs. Daniel had discussed the incident with Allen Nance, Paul Judge, and Rodney Sampson, the owners of the facility, and he informed me that they had collectively decided to ban me and my company from using their venue or attending any of their events because they were concerned about the "safety" of their members. I later learned from a fellow developer that Maggie had, in fact, told various people that I'd been stalking her.
>
> […]The following week, Martin Omander, GDG program manager for North America, formally banned me from the Google Developer Group and Google Women Techmakers and, again, declined to provide me with any details of the complaints against me or the rules that I'd allegedly violated.

How many women are likely to attack conservatives in the workplace?

Young, unmarried women voted 78% to 22% for Obama in 2008, according to exit polls.

National Exit Polls: 2008 Performance by Unmarried Women				
	Unmarried Women Support for Obama	Unmarried Women Support for McCain	Married Women Support for Obama	Married Women Support for McCain
Performance Across various Demographics (Exit Polls)				
National (All Women)	70%	29%	47%	50%
College Educated	73%	24%	51%	46%
Non-College Educated	68%	31%	44%	54%
Young Women (18-29)	78%	22%	55%	45%
Women Under 50	74%	25%	49%	48%
Women Over 50	64%	35%	44%	53%
Women with Income >$50K	70%	27%	44%	53%
Women with Income <$50K	71%	28%	57%	41%
Women with Children	74%	25%	51%	47%
Women without Children	68%	31%	44%	53%
Source: Exit Polls				

Exit polls from the 2008 Obama vs McCain election: unmarried women voters only

Obama was a radical feminist president who voted against banning infanticide multiple times as a state senator in Illinois. 78% of young, unmarried women voted for him

anyway. Women who graduate from college in non-STEM fields are especially progressive. In my experience, young, unmarried women typically form their views by adapting to the dominant views of their community, which is overwhelmingly liberal on campus. In my experience, men are more likely to construct a worldview through reasoning and evaluating evidence.

I've personally never met a young, unmarried woman who could answer basic political questions, like naming prior terrorist attacks against the United States, US allies, or US assets abroad, or telling me the amount of the national debt. In my experience, young unmarried women are not concerned with the plight of women in Iran, Pakistan or Afghanistan. They're not concerned with spending money today that will be paid back by generations of taxpayers not yet born.

Instead, I usually hear that they are progressive because they want taxpayer-funded abortions, taxpayer-funded contraception, no-fault divorce, single mother welfare, student-loan forgiveness, etc. They want taxpayer-funded bailouts for problems caused by their own free choices. They feel that if society is paying for something, then it's "normal" and they don't have feel guilty about making poor choices. Their primary concern about politics is being able to do what they feel like without anyone disapproving. Everything bad that happens is "unexpected", and so society should have to pay for it. It wasn't their fault that their "follow-your-heart" plan didn't work out.

I don't even speak to young, unmarried women about religion and politics in the workplace. It doesn't matter if we have the same views or not. Feeling offended and going full totalitarian is just too widespread. The rational choice for men is to disengage. I can have conversations safely about religion and politics with men, even if they disagree with me.

Two black economists explain how to not be poor in America

May 3, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Walter Williams

Walter Wiliams is one of my two favorite economists, the other being Thomas Sowell.

Here is his article on wealth and poverty on Creators written by Dr. Williams.

First, real poverty is not common in America:

> There is no material poverty in the U.S. Here are a few facts about people whom the Census Bureau labels as poor. Dr. Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield, in their study "Understanding Poverty in the United States: Surprising Facts About America's Poor", report that 80 percent of poor households have air conditioning; nearly three-quarters have a car or truck, and 31 percent have two or more. Two-thirds have cable or satellite TV. Half have one or more computers. Forty-two percent own their homes. Poor Americans have more living space than the typical non-poor person in Sweden, France or the U.K. What we have in our nation are dependency and poverty of the spirit, with people making unwise choices and leading pathological lives aided and abetted by the welfare state.

Second, the "poverty" is not caused by racism, but by poor choices:

> The Census Bureau pegs the poverty rate among blacks at 35 percent and among whites at 13 percent. The illegitimacy rate among blacks is 72 percent, and among whites it's 30 percent. A statistic that one doesn't hear much about is that the poverty rate among black married families has been in the single digits for more than two decades, currently at 8 percent. For married white families, it's 5 percent. Now the politically incorrect questions: Whose fault is it to have children without the benefit of marriage and risk a life of dependency? Do people have free will, or are they governed by instincts?
>
> There may be some pinhead sociologists who blame the weak black family

> structure on racial discrimination. But why was the black illegitimacy rate only 14 percent in 1940, and why, as Dr. Thomas Sowell reports, do we find that census data "going back a hundred years, when blacks were just one generation out of slavery … showed that a slightly higher percentage of black adults had married than white adults. This fact remained true in every census from 1890 to 1940"? Is anyone willing to advance the argument that the reason the illegitimacy rate among blacks was lower and marriage rates higher in earlier periods was there was less racial discrimination and greater opportunity?

Third, avoiding poverty is the result of good choices:

> No one can blame a person if he starts out in life poor, because how one starts out is not his fault.
>
> If he stays poor, he is to blame because it is his fault. Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior. It turns out that a married couple, each earning the minimum wage, would earn an annual combined income of $30,000. The Census Bureau poverty line for a family of two is $15,500, and for a family of four, it's $23,000. By the way, no adult who starts out earning the minimum wage does so for very long.

Fourth, what stops people from making good choices is big government:

> Since President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty, the nation has spent about $18 trillion at the federal, state and local levels of government on programs justified by the "need" to deal with some aspect of poverty. In a column of mine in 1995, I pointed out that at that time, the nation had spent $5.4 trillion on the War on Poverty, and with that princely sum, "you could purchase every U.S. factory, all manufacturing equipment, and every office building. With what's left over, one could buy every airline, trucking company and our commercial maritime fleet. If you're still in the shopping mood, you could also buy every television, radio and power company, plus every retail and wholesale store in the entire nation". Today's total of $18 trillion spent on poverty means you could purchase everything produced in our country each year and then some.

Regarding those last two points, here is Thomas Sowell:

Economist Thomas Sowell blames welfare for killing the black family

To illustrate this point, I stole a graph from the Twitter feed of a famous man-blaming sociology professor who shall not be named (although his name rhymes with Vlad FillBox).

[image]

Black women were more likely to be married before welfare programs

In fact, there is a whole video featuring Thomas Sowell to go with this graph:

And an article to go with it:

> If we wanted to be serious about evidence, we might compare where blacks stood a hundred years after the end of slavery with where they stood after 30 years of the liberal welfare state. In other words, we could compare hard evidence on "the legacy of slavery" with hard evidence on the legacy of liberals.
>
> Despite the grand myth that black economic progress began or accelerated with the passage of the civil rights laws and "war on poverty" programs of the 1960s, the cold fact is that the poverty rate among blacks fell from 87 percent in 1940 to 47 percent by 1960. This was before any of those programs began.
>
> Over the next 20 years, the poverty rate among blacks fell another 18 percentage points, compared to the 40-point drop in the previous 20 years. This was the continuation of a previous economic trend, at a slower rate of progress, not the economic grand deliverance proclaimed by liberals and self-serving black "leaders."
>
> Ending the Jim Crow laws was a landmark achievement. But, despite the great proliferation of black political and other "leaders" that resulted from the laws and policies of the 1960s, nothing comparable happened economically. And there were serious retrogressions socially.
>
> Nearly a hundred years of the supposed "legacy of slavery" found most black children being raised in two-parent families in 1960. But thirty years after the liberal welfare state found the great majority of black children being raised by a single parent.

The rest of the article points out how even crime rates among blacks were caused by the implementation of soft law enforcement policies by progressives. Just look at the big cities if you want to know what it is like for blacks to be ruled by Democrats. It sucks!

You might have heard about Thomas Sowell because some celebrity I don't know anything about has been tweeting all kinds of stuff by Dr. Sowell:

Now this celebrity is tweeting my favorite economist Thomas Sowell

If everybody started to read more Thomas Sowell books, we would be much better off as a country! Only good things happen when people stop watching TV and listening to music and watching movies, and instead settle down in a chair with a Thomas Sowell book. I recommended a bunch of them in this previous post.

New study: faculty ratio of registered Democrats to Republicans is 12 to 1

May 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Daily Wire reports on the political convictions of the people who are being paid tens of thousands of dollars to "educate" our children.

Excerpt:

> An extensive study of 8,688 tenure-track professors at 51 of the 66 top-ranked liberal arts colleges in the U.S. published by the National Association of Scholars found that the ratio of faculty members registered as Democrats compared to those registered Republican is now a stunning 10.4 to 1. If two military colleges that are technically described as "liberal arts colleges" are removed from the calculations, the ratio is 12.7 to 1.
>
> The researcher, Mitchell Langbert, Associate Professor of Business at Brooklyn College, found that nearly 40% of the colleges in the study had *zero* faculty members who were registered Republican. Not a single one. Nearly 80% of the 51 colleges had so few Republican faculty members that they were statistically insignificant.

There is virtually zero ideological diversity, and that's how the university administrators want it. They know that young people are peer-driven and eager to conform to their elders, and they want to be sure that the environment at university produces little progressives. Critical thinking isn't a concern, ideological purity and adherence to dogma is their overriding concern. And they achieve their goal by discriminating against conservative students and faculty and Christian students and faculty. This is the REAL discrimination that open-minded, tolerant people should be concerned about. But since it's discrimination by progressives, no one is concerned about it. Not even the taxpayers paying the salaries of these overgrown children.

Now, on this blog, I have repeatedly told people two things. First of all, it's important that you don't go to university unless you are going into a STEM field. Anything else is just a waste of money. Second, you can save money by doing the first two years at a community college and then transferring.

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image)

The first rule is there not just because the highest paying jobs are in STEM, but because STEM is also the least dominated by progressive dogma, inside and outside the university.

More:

> When Langbert broke down the political affiliations by field, he found some clear and rather unsurprising trends: by far the highest imbalance is found in the more ideological fields, in particular the social sciences and humanities:
>
> The STEM subjects, such as chemistry, economics, mathematics, and physics, have lower D:R ratios than the social sciences and humanities. The highest D:R ratio of all is for the most ideological field: interdisciplinary studies. I could not find a single Republican with an exclusive appointment to fields like gender studies, Africana studies, and peace studies. As Fabio Rojas describes with respect to Africana or Black studies, these fields had their roots in ideologically motivated political movements that crystallized in the 1960s and 1970s.
>
> Langbert found the following ratio of Democrats to Republicans in the key academic fields (ordered from most biased to most balanced):
>
> - Communications – 108 to 0 (no registered Republicans)
> - Anthropology – 56 to 0 (no registered Republicans)
> - Religion – 70:1
> - English – 48.3:1
> - Sociology – 43.8:1
> - Art – 40.3:1
> - Music – 32.8:1
> - Theater – 29.5:1

> - Classics – 27.3:1
> - Geoscience – 27:1
> - Environmental – 25.3:1
> - Language – 21.1:1
> - Biology – 20.8:1
> - Philosophy – 17.5:1
> - History – 17.4:1
> - Psychology – 16.8:1
> - Poli Sci – 8.2:1
> - Computers – 6.3:1
> - Physics – 6.2:1
> - Mathematics – 5.6:1
> - Professional – 5.5:1
> - Economics – 5.5:1
> - Chemistry – 5.2:1
> - Engineering – 1.6:1

It's very important that we learn something from this list: Democrats don't likely to test their ideas against reality. The fields that are dominated by Democrats are the ones that involve the least hard work, the least thinking, the least testing of reality, the least production of goods and services that others will want to buy. Democrats go into these fields precisely because it allows them to paint a picture of themselves as good people using words, but without having to do any work that would allow them to sell something to others that has value. I.e. – they want to talk about how great they are, but they don't want to have to do anything that anyone else would pay for in a competitive free market.

And this is only going to stop when we cut off subsidies for higher education, which is largely given to far-left administrators and far-left non-STEM professors.

Teacher union president explains how he covers up for abusive teachers

May 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

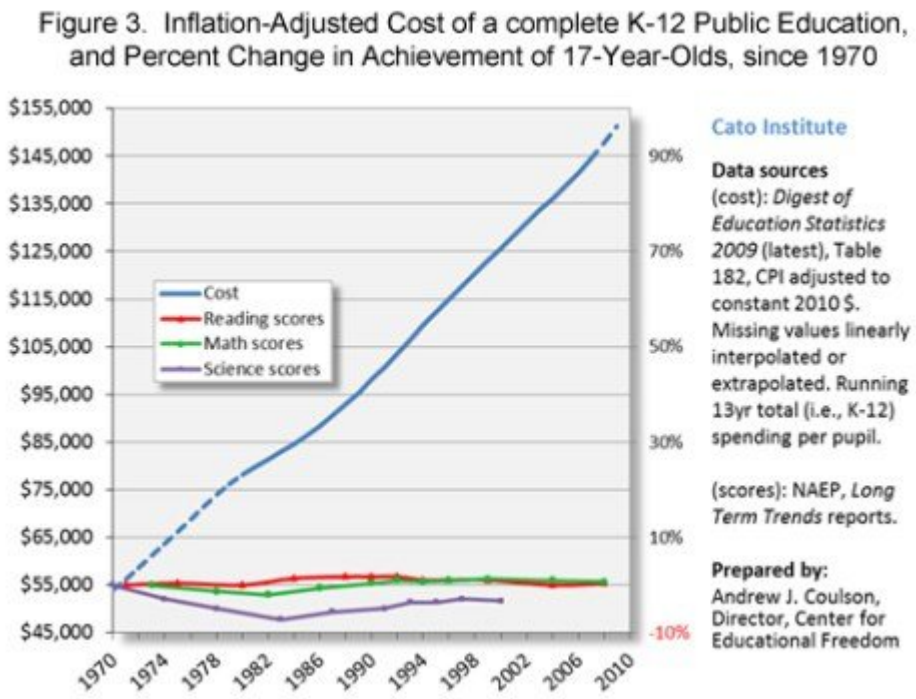

Education spending has tripled since 1970

In a previous post, I explained four reasons why education is so expensive, despite the fact that teachers produce underperforming students. But one factor was not mentioned, namely that it is nearly impossible to fire underperforming teachers. The teacher unions prevents teachers from being fired, even for criminal behavior.

The Daily Wire reports on a new Project Veritas video.

Here's the video:

And the article says:

> A new video from Project Veritas shows a New Jersey teachers union president explaining the methods he would use to cover for a teacher if the teacher physically or verbally abused their student.
>
> Undercover employees for Project Veritas taped Hamilton Township Education Association President David Perry asserting he would misrepresent the events of altercations between teachers and students by back-dating reports as well as urging the teacher to remain silent about what happened.
>
> Perry also stated that if a teacher abused their student, they should go to the union where a report could be created protecting them from students asserting that they had been abused.
>
> Some sample quotes from Perry:
>
> I got people who are on drugs. And she, five times she was fired, and I got her job

> back five times.
>
> If nobody brings it up from school, I don't say boo.
>
> Interviewer: So, after a certain point, the cameras are erased. Perry: Exactly. That's why I would never want to bring it up. The longer we wait, the longer there's no cameras.
>
> Now, if you go to the house of the board of education and report this, they're going to call the police, call parents and all that s***. We don't do that. We don't do that here. I'm here to defend even the worst people.
>
> But I don't want him coming in here with a bunch of lies. We need to know the truth so we can bend the truth.

When I see teachers holding signs, demanding more salary and benefits, the first thing I think of is how they want all of these things regardless of performance. Because no matter how poorly they perform, it's almost impossible to fire them. The union protects them. They're not asking for more money because they've done a good job. They don't have to do a good job in order to continue to be employed.

Here's an example of how unions protect poorly-performing teachers from parents (their customers!), reported by the radically leftist CNN:

> Former teacher Charlene Schmitz is behind bars in a federal detention center in Tallahassee, Florida, serving 10 years for using texts and instant messages to seduce a 14-year-old student.
>
> She has been fired from her job as a reading teacher at the high school in Leroy, Alabama.
>
> But she is still collecting a paycheck.
>
> Schmitz is appealing her federal conviction — and her firing. State charges filed in connection with the case are pending. Under the law in Alabama, she is still entitled to her $51,000-a-year salary while she appeals her firing.

She's a "reading teacher". Sigh.

If you think that's the exception, you should know that many, many teachers are kept in "rubber rooms", where they are paid their full teacher salary long after they have been banned from teaching for various crimes and abuses.

NBC News reports:

> Hundreds of New York City public school teachers accused of offenses ranging from insubordination to sexual misconduct are being paid their full salaries to sit around all day playing Scrabble, surfing the Internet or just staring at the wall, if that's what they want to do.
>
> Because their union contract makes it extremely difficult to fire them, the teachers have been banished by the school system to its "rubber rooms" — off-campus office space where they wait months, even years, for their disciplinary

> hearings.
>
> The 700 or so teachers can practice yoga, work on their novels, paint portraits of their colleagues — pretty much anything but school work. They have summer vacation just like their classroom colleagues and enjoy weekends and holidays through the school year.
>
> “You just basically sit there for eight hours,” said Orlando Ramos, who spent seven months in a rubber room, officially known as a temporary reassignment center, in 2004-05. “I saw several near-fights. `This is my seat.’ `I’ve been sitting here for six months.’ That sort of thing.”
>
> […]Because the teachers collect their full salaries of $70,000 or more, the city Department of Education estimates the practice costs the taxpayers $65 million a year. The department blames union rules.
>
> “It is extremely difficult to fire a tenured teacher because of the protections afforded to them in their contract,” spokeswoman Ann Forte said.

This is why we need to break up the government monopoly on education, abolish the federal Department of Education, break up the teacher unions, and put vouchers for education in the hands of parents. The only way this corrupt system is going to be fixed is to hand parents the money to choose their schools, and have schools and teachers have public reviews – like what you see on Amazon or Google reviews or Yelp. Teachers should all have to complete two years of full-time work in the private sector for whatever it is that they want to teach – to prove that they are at least capable of keeping a job where they can actually be fired for underperforming. Once parents are empowered to move their children around to get the best education (and to pay more to the best teachers and schools), then good teachers will be paid what they are worth, and bad teachers will be fired, and bad schools will close. This will raise the quality of education for EVERY student.

The Mysterious Drew lectures on Christianity and the culture war in Defenders

May 6, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

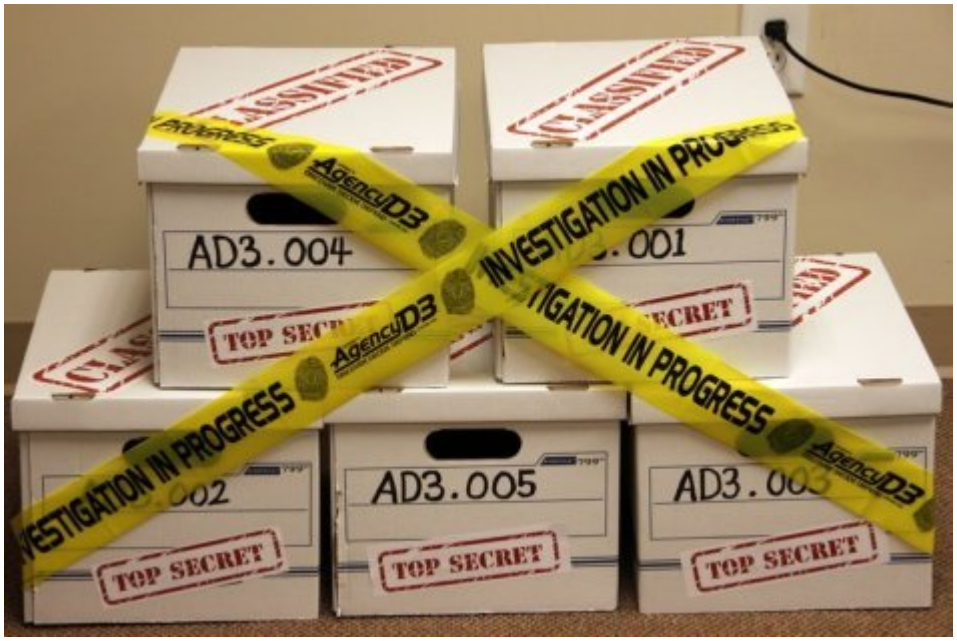

Investigation in progress

Drew taught Dr. William Lane Craig's Defenders class for two weeks in a row while Dr. Craig was in Australia. He chose to focus on secularism.

Note: Drew has some problems with the microphone for the first 2.5 minutes of part 1. Be patient.

Part 1 deals with how Europe and America became secular in different ways.

Part 1 topics:

- Secularism: the attempt to take values based on religion (e.g. – Judeo-Christian values) out of the public square
- Television programs that are targeted to more thoughtful viewers favor secular or liberal worldviews
- Consider the sexual revolution – a new set of beliefs about sex are being pushed into the culture
- Sex revolution includes: same-sex marriage, pornography, hookup culture, no-fault divorce
- The effect of the sexual revolution has been to introduce widespread fatherlessness, which is very bad for children
- The sexual revolution is being pushed in the popular culture, but also in the school sexual education programs
- You can see where secularism has led to by looking at Europe, which has largely rejected its Christian roots
- For example, Germany and Sweden are very aggressive about stamping out

homeschooling
- They do this because they are trying to push a government-approved set of beliefs and meanings onto children
- How bad could it get? You can look at how Orthodox Judaism was persecuted in Russia after the communist revolution
- How did Europe become so secular?
- Wars in Europe between Protestants and Catholics caused people to think that theistic religion was bad
- Secularists first attacked theism philosophically by trying to replace it with deism – the view that miracles do not occur
- Secularists then pushed a radical empirism which attempted to reduce religious claims to meaningless irrationality
- The Christian church responded by retreating from philosophical and theological claims and focusing on moral claims
- That's how Europe became secular, but how did America become secular?
- America became secular because Christianity was transformed from a knowledge tradition to an emotional tradition
- Pastors started to move away from presenting Christianity as *true* and instead presented it as *emotionally fulfilling*
- Pastors emphasized personal experiences instead of philosophical theology and apologetics
- European ideas arrived: deism, Darwinism, Bible criticism, etc.
- Christianity responded to this by abandoning the centers of learning it had founded (universities) into pious isolation
- As the universities became more secular, they turned out the next generation of influencers, including the media
- This retreat from intellectual engagement was augmented by a fixation on end-times speculation (e.g. Left Behind)
- (Drew talks to Jeremy, a philosophy student at Georgia State University, about whether Christianity is respected in his classes)
- How politicians and the media used the Scopes Monkey Trial to marginalize Christianity as anti-science
- The perception of Christians in the public square changed – they were viewed as ignorant, irrational and anti-science
- Instead of causing Christians to work harder at science, they became even *more* fundamentalist, and less influential
- Christians today are a tiny minority of influential groups, e.g. – scientists, media, etc.
- In contrast, secular Jews, who tend to grow up in a culture that values learning, have a much greater influence
- Even if Christians try to retreat to the country where they can homeschool, there is no hiding from the Internet
- Which organizations are working against secularism today?
- Example of what Christians can do: Plantinga's refutation of the problem of evil

- Example of what Christians can do: widespread use of ultrasound to move people to the pro-life view
- Example of what Christians can do: Liberty University's effort to produce Christians who can work in media
- A story about William Lane Craig and a secular physicist who had lost her faith

People must have liked what they heard and saw in the first week, because he got a big turnout in the second week.

Part 2 deals with practical tips for engaging in the culture.

Topics in Part 2:

- The real root cause of opposition to Christianity is from the sexual revolution
- For example, moral relativism is so popular in the university, but it is almost entirely driven by sexual liberation
- Evangelism and culture-shaping are not the same thing – each requires a different set of skills
- Where do people get their information? Public school, news media, late night comedy shows, etc.
- Two things for every Christian need to do: 1) Get informed, and 2) Get involved
- First: you do not need to be smarter than average. Dr. Craig is a leading scholar because he studies 9 hours a day
- Implying that people with influence are "smart" just provides us with an excuse not to try if we are not "smart"
- Ordinary Christians need to be willing to give up fun more than they need to be naturally "smart"
- Asks Cody: what about that Christian apologist who hung out mostly with internet atheists and then became one
- Famous quantum chemist: you're right, I am not much smarter than most people, I just work a lot harder at it
- Drew: to get informed, you should follow good Christian blogs like Apologetics 315 and Wintery Knight
- Drew knows Wintery Knight personally and WK is someone who knows apologetics but he also knows other things
- WK connects the Christian worldview to lots different things, e.g. = marriage – he can find you the right people and books
- (Drew holds up "What is Marriage?" book) This is the best book to argue the same-sex marriage issue
- (Drew hold up "The Case for Life" book) This is the best book to argue the pro-life position
- Slacktivism: don't just send people links that you find on the Internet – read the articles and books and then talk about them
- (Drew holds up the Lee Strobel "Case for" books) These are the best introductory books on basic Christian apologetics

- Audio books are a great way for people to take in the information, and you can get them for free from the library
- The Internet is not the best place for arguing about the things you learn – face to face conversations are much better
- Biola's apologetics certificate program is an excellent resource, and it's all audio lectures so you just listen to them
- You can get free apologetics audio from Apologetics 315 and Phil Fernandes
- We also need to learn how to how to change the culture and how the other side changes the culture
- To really make a difference, then a graduate degree might be for you – especially the M.A. in apologetics from Biola
- The university is also very important – Christianity needs to be represented in the university
- Influential people like Supreme Court justices come out of the university, which is why we need to be there
- The Discovery Institute is doing the most to provide a credible rival to naturalistic science
- They have a budget of $4 million dollars and they are punching way above their weight
- If every evangelical sent them $20, they'd have a budget of $1.2 billion – what could they do with that?
- (Drew puts a check for $20 for Discovery Institute in an envelope and seals it, to show how it's done)
- The Truth Project, which is put out by Focus on the Family – it's another excellent training resource
- When it comes to politics, focus on discussing policy issues, not on pushing particular candidates
- If every evangelical Christian just *pulled their own weight*, it would make a big difference
- It all starts by making the decision to take some leisure time to do things that really work

I could not agree with him more on his selections on the marriage debate and the abortion debate. I have bought at least a half-dozen of each of those for people. And I highly recommend getting the Strobel books on audio, especially the Case for a Creator. *Love that book.* Listen to it a bunch a times and you will start to talk like Lee Strobel.

I listened to all the Biola University lectures before they even had the certificate program, along with the Stand to Reason Masters Series in Christian Thought and about 60 Veritas Forum leture sets. Those things probably did the most for me to become a capable defender of Christianity.

The point he made about giving money to the Discovery Institute is important. In the last

month, I sent out $300 to a Ratio Christi chapter for a lecture they gave, and $500 for a Christian group in Canada that put on an apologetics conference.

I think he's right when he talks about everyone pulling their own weight. I spend about 2-3 hours a day reading and blogging. I donate a portion of my earnings to Christian scholars who study and/or speak at the university. I support Christian students who are doing degrees in philosophy, science and engineering. In church, I don't anything yet, but I have a network of friends who do things in church, like organize lectures, debates and apologetics book studies. My current pastor is aware of my abilities, and he's already asked me to help them with an evangelism program they are starting up.

I got started on apologetics by putting in the time on some of the things he mentioned in part 2 of his talk. The basic things to do are reading introductory books on apologetics, especially the ones on philosophy of religion, historical Jesus and physical sciences. If you can't read, then at least get hold of lectures from Biola University and listen to those, along with Lee Strobel audio books, Brian Auten interviews, William Lane Craig debates. Just put them in the car and listen, and soon you'll be sounding just like them.

Iowa’s Republican governor signs ban on abortions after unborn baby has heartbeat

May 7, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Iowas Republican Governor Kim Reynolds did the right thing

I decided to start the week off with a happy story about a powerful Republican woman taking a bold step to defend unborn children in a blue state. Here is a story from Fox News about Iowa’s governor Kim Reynolds, a Republican, who has signed a bill banning all abortions on babies who have a heartbeat! That’s pretty early on, and will cover most abortions.

Excerpt:

> Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds on Friday signed off on a law banning most abortions if a fetal heartbeat can be detected, or at about six weeks of pregnancy, The Associated Press reported.
>
> The restriction is the strictest abortion regulation in the nation, the AP said. It also said passage and enactment of the measure has set the state up for a protracted legal fight.
>
> The State House passed the legislation on Tuesday night with a 51-46 vote, Iowa Public Radio reported. It was debated for more than eight hours before House representatives decided on it. The bill passed the Senate early Wednesday with a 27-19 vote.
>
> The legislation bans abortion in all cases after six weeks of pregnancy, which critics of the legislation argue is before most women are aware they are pregnant. Up until now, a woman has been able to get an abortion in Iowa up to her 20th week.
>
> However, the measure would not ban abortion after six weeks in all cases — some exemptions include instances of rape, incest, fetal abnormalities or to save the mother’s life.

This is the earliest ban on abortion in the nation! I'm so impressed. I'd like women to make better choices about men and the timing of sexual activity so that we don't have to do terrible things in order to "resolve" unwanted pregnancies.

Life News has more details about how the bill works:

> The bill would require abortion practitioners to test for the unborn baby's heartbeat before performing an abortion. If a heartbeat is detected, the abortion would be prohibited except in cases involving medical emergency, rape, incest or fetal abnormalities deemed to be "incompatible" with life.
>
> Because an unborn baby's heartbeat is detectable by about six weeks of pregnancy, the bill would prohibit almost all abortions in Iowa.

Unfortunately, Planned Parenthood isn't going to give up their source of revenue without a legal fight:

> Immediately after Reynolds' announcement Friday, branches of Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union in Iowa responded with plans to sue the state, the AP reports.
>
> […]Because of the current make-up of the U.S. Supreme Court and lower courts, a law to prohibit abortions in the first trimester most likely would not survive a court challenge. President Donald Trump promised to appoint pro-life justices to the courts, but he would have to appoint at least one more Supreme Court judge before the Iowa legislation would have a chance of being upheld.
>
> North Dakota and Arkansas passed heartbeat bills several years ago, but federal courts struck down both laws.

Although it will be a difficult fight to save this law, at least voters will get another chance to understand that Democrats are opposed to restrictions on abortion. They want abortion through all nine months of pregnancy, and taxpayer-funded in a single-payer system. That way, abortion is as easy to obtain as getting a prescription for antibiotics.

I don't see why we can't just tell women not to have sex with men before marriage. If women withheld sex from men who were not their husbands, then men would grow up and start trying to prove themselves to women as husband candidates again. Not giving men premarital sex makes them behave much better towards women. They try harder in school, they work harder at work, they treat women with respect. They learn how to behave like husbands. What is wrong with that? Is the current status quo of using Tinder to be screwed over by hot guys working for women?

Feminism's new plan to achieve lasting happiness without giving up promiscuity

May 8, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

The article that I am linking to in TODAY's post is from the far-left Huffington Post. Please do not read the article if you are under 30. Huffington Post, like most radical feminism web sites, has dropped down to the level of 50 Shades of Gray. Reader discretion is advised. But I had to write about their article because it really shows you that radical feminists are not innocent little doves hoping for traditional marriage and children.

First, a little introduction. Radical feminism is a rejection of traditional sex roles for men and women, and the committed union of men and women in marriage.

Here is what radical feminists oppose:

- female sobriety when among the opposite sex
- male sobriety when among the opposite sex
- female chastity prior to marriage
- male chastity prior to marriage
- women preparing for the traditional roles of wife and mother
- men preparing for the traditional roles of protector, provider, moral leader and spiritual leader
- paying for their own condoms and birth control pills
- men who are pro-life and pro-natural-marriage

Radical feminism wants nothing to do with men who are sober and chaste. The only real way to decide whether a man is good or bad – for a radical feminist – is whether he is attractive looking and does not try to lead women or hold them accountable morally or

spiritually. Men are just accessories designed to provide women with fun and thrills. They are not to be selected for their ability to perform “sexist” virtues like chivalry, providing or leadership.

Now, feminists have been very unhappy lately, because their plan for forming relationships (focus on career, choose hot guys, get drunk, have premarital sex, wait by the phone, claim that all men are evil when no one calls, repeat) doesn’t work. But radical feminists don’t see the problem with their promiscuity plan. They don’t think that marriage is a good thing, because it has unfair sex roles. And they don’t think that women or men should prepare for commitment by being sober, chaste and self-sacrificial. They think that they can choose pleasure right now, and at every moment following, and that this will somehow work out to provide them with lasting love, support and intimacy as they grow older. Somehow, after they tire of sexual revolutionisting with the hot guys, they will easily be able to find a man who is simultaneously hot and sober, faithful, committed, and a great father to whichever children she decided not to abort. And if this plan doesn’t “work out”, then it’s the fault of patriarchy and toxic masculinity.

The Huffington Post article explains why radical feminists think that their plan is failing:

> *[…][S]*ome straight women have thrown their hands up in despair at the prospect of dealing with straight men. These men, who grope us and talk down to us and consistently fail to clean the bathroom — we’re supposed to make lives with them? Let them touch us?
>
> Women woke up one day to find that their husbands voted for Donald Trump and their sons have been ***posting on incel boards. Even before we heard the claims about Harvey Weinstein’s history of sexual harassment and assault and the ensuing avalanche of other horrifying Me Too allegations, we heard about our president grabbing women “by the pussy,” Bill Cosby feeding women roofies, and R. Kelly allegedly sexually exploiting young girls. So many straight men, we have been forced to accept, are bad to and for us. Why would we take the enormous risk of loving one of them?

All the bad boy leftist men they freely chose to have premarital sex with for money or career advancement failed to please them. And all men must be the same. After all, radical feminists rejected traditional male virtues and roles as “sexist”. Instead, they decided to have premarital sex with secular leftists like Bill Clinton, Anthony Weiner, Elliot Spitzer, etc. Those men are fun and thrilling, and might even help your career. If these relationships failed, then surely the relationships not chosen – the ones with the sober, chaste, responsible men – would have failed, too, right? You don’t expect a woman to have a relationship with someone who doesn’t support abortion and gay marriage, do you? How could a man who is pro-child and pro-marriage possibly be suitable for commitment and parenting? Just choose the hot ones who make you tingle, and then generalize about all men from those failed experiments.

More:

> One seductive yet impossible fantasy might be the romantic attention of a man who lacks the exhausting baggage of male entitlement.

> To find such a fantastical being, women — in fiction, at least — have turned to the sea.

Yes, the radical feminists are turning to the sea to find fictional mermen who meet their feminist ideals for relationships.

More:

> Lucy, the protagonist of The Pisces, is newly single, running out of time to finish her dissertation, and spiraling out of control.
>
> […]Despite the therapy sessions, Lucy can't stop searching for male attention to restore her sense of desirability and worth. Before each encounter with a prospect, she feels buoyant and eager, but again and again, she's left sexually and emotionally unfulfilled, in part because the men don't much care whether she's enjoying herself.
>
> One man she meets on an app — a hot younger dude in an open relationship — convinces her to have sex with him in the lobby bathroom of an upscale hotel. It's quick and mediocre. She doesn't come. Afterward, he leaves without telling her, stranding her alone at the hotel bar. Lucy thought the encounter would be something different, that it would make her feel deliriously sexy and desired. She tries not to let herself feel sad about how transparently he was using her to fulfill his fantasy while her own went entirely ignored. What she wants is for even this one-time fling to care desperately about making her come, for his world to narrow around her pleasure, even for just a few minutes.

Wow, the hot bad boys don't care about the women who choose them for irresponsible recreational premarital sex? If only there were some way to keep a man committed? It can't be marriage though, and acting like a wife. That's "sexist". I'm surprised that having recreational premarital sex with a hot, promiscuous pro-abortion pro-gay-marriage Democrat doesn't lead to the woman enjoying herself in the long term.

It's mermen to the rescue, though:

> When she begins to fall for Theo, a tautly handsome swimmer she keeps seeing in the ocean near her sister's beachside home, it seems like she may have found the something that couldn't exist. Theo looks decades younger than her, but he is fascinated by her. He seeks her out, pulling up by the rocks at the edge of the beach to talk with her night after night. He wants to kiss her, then give her oral sex for hours under the stars. Soon, she learns that there's a reason he initially stayed submerged from the waist down during their encounters: He's what we might call a merman, and instead of legs he has a scaly tail.

> Like the creature in "The Shape of Water," Theo seems to be an exception to the

> rule of toxic straight maleness. Where other men hurt, threaten and betray, these unhuman beings pleasure, console and conspire with women.
>
> […]Her ex toys with her emotions; the men she dates are sexually selfish and reckless with her health. But Theo is different, both because he has a scaly tail instead of legs, and because he proclaims to be devoted to her and her pleasure.

After some discussion about the wonders of the merman's equipment, (so important to a radical feminist!), we read this:

> ….there's also an unmistakable queerness to these mythical, human-like creatures. They transgress the boundaries of what society traditionally demands from a male body. Lucy even notes a feminine quality to Theo…
>
> […]This story is a seductive one, especially to straight women who yearn to get outside of the oppressive structures and expectations of their dating realm. What if we found men who were different? Who were in touch with their emotions, called themselves "feminist allies" for reasons other than wanting to center themselves in the movement, enjoyed giving us orgasms, texted right after the first date?

Wow, she will get treated so well, and without having to marry him (sexist!), or commit to care for his needs (patriarchy!), or fulfill loving obligations for him in a restrictive long-term commitment (slavery!).

She can have sex with a hot sexy effeminate fish who is DECADES younger than she is, who doesn't have a job or savings, and who isn't able to be a father to children in any normal sense. But who cares! As long as he wants to give her orgasms, and he's young and hot, and doesn't try to tell her to get a real degree, or to get a real job, or to grow up and get married and have children who can take care of her in her old age. The merman provides all that's important to radical feminists.

And I'm sure that this plan is sustainable, too. He will love her just as much when she is old and wrinkly, because giving a merman premarital sex always makes him commit self-sacrificially for life. That's the power of recreational premarital sex – it turns irresponsible young hot mermen into pleasure-giving slaves for life.

AbortionAlcohol AbuseBirth ControlBrain DamageDisney PrincessFatherlessFatherlessnessFeelingsFeminismFollow Your HeartHedonismMental IllnessMisandryNarcissismPremarital SexPromiscuityRadical FeminismSexual RevolutionSocialism

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16 thoughts on “Feminism’s new plan to achieve lasting happiness without giving up promiscuity”

1. **SnapperTrx** says:
   05/08/2018 at 11:02 AM
   Ha, ha, ha! Saw this coming from a mile away. Monster porn in the form of E-books has been a big seller on sites like Amazon for a few years now! Women love stories of being ravaged by were-beasts, minotaur, fish-men, you name it! If it’s violent and non-consensual in the context of the story they are all for it! Women are weird. Weirder than men or at least as weird. I say weird, maybe I mean mental!

   LikeLike

   Reply
2. **My 2 Cents** says:
   05/08/2018 at 12:31 PM
   This is a classic example of the problem that enshrines all forms of leftist political activism. The failure to grasp the distinction between fiction and reality. No matter how hard you scream, fight, or empower the state to take action, you cannot change the fact that we live in a real world that functions a certain way.

   A woman saying that she wants the freedom to have promiscuous sex without responsibilities or obligations while simultaneously always feeling happy and fulfilled as a result is kind of like someone saying they want the right to go swimming without getting wet. This just isn’t how it works. Sure, you can write a book where the heroine finds some sort of magic water that can be swam in without getting wet, but such a thing does not exist in reality.

   There’s not necessarily anything wrong with reading a work of fiction and enjoying it as a work of fiction, but leftists are repeatedly pointing to works of fiction (Black Panther, The Shape of Water, this Pisces book, etc.) to try and justify how the world is supposed to be while simultaneously neglecting the fact that it’s called fiction for a reason.

   This author thinks that all women are entitled to mermen who care about nothing except satisfying women’s desires 24/7. Great. The problem is such creatures do not exist (and it’s questionable whether or not a woman would truly find such a relationship satisfying in the long run).

   Many men wish that they could live the life of 007 James Bond, saving the world from villains and sleeping with hundreds of beautiful women who find themselves unable to resist his advances. The problem again is that this is a work of fiction, and even those men that do manage to bed multiple women typically find it unsatisfying in the long run.

   Women are free to make their own decisions and experience the natural

consequences of those decisions just as men are. No one, man or woman, is free to make their own decisions and then bend reality so that the consequences always turn out as they desire. This is something that will always dwell firmly in the land of fiction.

Like Liked by 3 people

Reply

3. **Eternity Matters** says:
05/08/2018 at 1:03 PM
They are so beyond parody it is hard to imagine. They are putting The Onion out of business. They think they are so intelligent and then are shocked when their “bro-choice” men just use them for sex.

Like Liked by 2 people

Reply

1. **Wintery Knight** says:
05/08/2018 at 1:07 PM
Just think about what abortion is. It’s saying that big strong grown ups can take risks for pleasure, and then resort to committing murder in order to get out of the consequences. What sort of imbecile thinks that it is good idea to start a relationship with someone who would commit murder in order to avoid interrupting their selfish pursuit of pleasure?
What are parents, teachers and pastors teaching women about men and marriage that they would fall this far down?

Like Liked by 4 people

Reply

4. **Greg** says:
05/08/2018 at 2:26 PM
People continue to reject wisdom. There is a reason the Bible contains boring books like proverbs that give bits of knowledge to people.

Especially when young the ideas of young people are often wrong, but now people live in prolonged adolescence. With many being from 10 to 16 in their level of emotional maturity for long sections of their adult life.

They Beleive there is no knowledge from the elders to learn. Only the random ideas they they think of in their head, see in movies and YouTube videos.

And these kind of women are no different. Personal feelings, social acceptance and emulating what they see around them is important.

Sacrifice for long term gain for self, family and others is not od any value

Like Liked by 1 person

Reply

5. **vagabond316** says:
05/08/2018 at 2:29 PM
the world is getting crazier and crazier by the minute

LikeLike

Reply

6. **earl** says:
05/08/2018 at 3:46 PM
'She can have sex with a hot sexy effeminate fish who is DECADES younger than she is, who doesn't have a job or savings, and who isn't able to be a father to children in any normal sense. But who cares! As long as he wants to give her orgasms, and he's young and hot, and doesn't try to tell her to get a real degree, or to get a real job, or to grow up and get married and have children who can take care of her in her old age. The merman provides all that's important to radical feminists.'

The feminist is looking for the 'perfect' man. The man who doesn't have sex as an idol (selfish pig) or even God as his source of worship (evil sexist Patriarch!)…she wants the man who makes her his idol of worship (which I would an effeminate white knight).

LikeLiked by 1 person

Reply

7. **A Lady of Reason** says:
05/08/2018 at 4:35 PM
It's such a shame more and more women and young girls are choosing the path to promiscuity and vulgarity in order to feel empowered. The classic "Nasty Woman" is now the norm The liberal mainstream media does no favors either, only reinforcing this societal brainwashing and condones such behavior by making girls' parents seem like backwards bigots for upholding traditional virtues. Even worse, are the radical feminist parents who are raising the next generation! Even schools are helping the radical feminist agenda. The ladies of past generations are being replaced with vulgar women and any man who wants a traditional wife is being hard pressed.
https://aladyofreason.wordpress.com/

LikeLiked by 2 people

Reply

1. **Melissa** says:
06/16/2019 at 1:07 PM
If you want a "traditional wife" then be avid about finding one. I don't see the problem with being frank to the women that a man meets and saying (VERY early on before a relationship starts, like even the first date) and saying "look,

I'm looking for XYZ in a marriage and relationship. If this isn't something you're looking for as well then let's not waste each other's time". If they do not have the same "traditional" mindset, then be upset, blog about about it to work through the feelings, and move on to the next person and see if they express your same ideals. I was frustrated by a blog that was geared at helping men to find traditional submissive wives and they suggested men beat around the bush, month after month, very gently and lightly doing small "tests" to see women's levels of agreeableness. I think this just wastes people's time. I had a man with this mindset dating me once and had said approach. It was annoying to say the least, and I finished that relationship after abruptly asking him what he was trying to get at. Once the cat was out of the bag, I asked why on Earth had he not said this on our first date?! Unfortunately, he had wasted 4 months of our time because I was not looking for a lord and master to be at the mercy of nor someone to "lead me". Women don't have a duty to marry. Women don't have a duty to have children. If you're looking to date, be upfront and abrupt about what you're looking for. I didn't want a man who was looking to lord over me and I was clear at that from the beginning with my now husband. We had the same ideals, views about women, children, men, and marriage. So far we're 11 years in and still not tired of each other.

LikeLike

Reply

8. **Regaining Thumos** says:
05/08/2018 at 6:06 PM
So that's the next step for feminism is it? Turning from real men (who have become increasingly effeminate thanks to their efforts) to fictional monster/super men who cannot and will never exist? How is this any different to the way that many young (especially Asian) males have turned to fictional women due to a combination of their own unattractive natures and the attitudes of modern women? To me there is no difference: they're both pathetic and feminism is largely to blame.

LikeLike

Reply

9. **Robert What?** says:
05/08/2018 at 6:41 PM
The purpose of Feminism is simple: to maximize women's freedom of action while minimizing their responsibility and accountability. At the same time doing the reverse for men: minimizing their freedom of action while maximizing their responsibility and accountability. It ultimately works out for no one, but that doesn't stop them pushing for it.

LikeLike

Reply

1. **Wintery Knight** says:
05/08/2018 at 6:53 PM
Women enjoy when men love them well and lead them well. The goal then should be to teach women to choose men who will love and lead well. What feminism says is that thinking about men as having certain male roles is “sexist”. So what’s left? Pick the hot guys, and try to get something going with sex. I don’t understand why a woman would think that choosing a man interested in sex (not commitment! not responsibility) and giving him what he wants without him having to earn it is a good idea. Men need to be chosen for good character. They should be chaste, so that they have demonstrated enough self-control to not cheat. They should be educated and have good jobs and money saved, so that they can give the woman a sense of security. They should not see the needs of children (born and unborn) as inconveniences to be ignored. They should not be addicted to anything that would impair their judgement or ability to serve their families. This is what women ought to be choosing. Not younger, hot-looking pro-abortion Democrats buying cocktails and looking for sex on the first date. That’s a stupid choice that doesn’t work.

Likeliked by 1 person

Reply

10. **Greg** says:
05/08/2018 at 11:40 PM
Women seem to believe that love and their magical ability will make the right guy that has never behaved. Been sober or behaved around women before, faithful and good when he commits to her.
. Then they are shocked when the man reverts to previous behaviour and breaks the commitment

LikeLike

Reply

1. **Wintery Knight** says:
05/08/2018 at 8:18 PM
They make a big deal out of the surface features of a man, believing that the character is not important, or can be easily fixed later. The truth is that a guy’s appearance is easier to fix than his past and his character.

LikeLike

Reply

2. **My 2 Cents** says:
05/08/2018 at 8:25 PM
95% of romance novels have that exact plot. A woman meets a bad boy who

has been living the wild life, sleeping with dozens of women, but then he has sex with the heroine and finds that it’s so amazing that he couldn’t possibly be satisfied with another woman ever again. They then live happily ever after. Again. It only happens in fiction.

Like Liked by 1 person

Reply

1. **Wintery Knight** says:
   05/08/2018 at 8:35 PM
   I guess this is why Dr. Laura tells people to not think that they can change people. I think men do this too, though. Focus on youth and appearance as if it were more important than character. Ha! What matters most is the ability to be content with a commitment, and expect a roller coaster of fun and thrills to be provided by the other person.

   Like Like

   Reply

Leave a comment Cancel reply

Δ

How many pro-abortion men have to be caught raping before women stop choosing them?

May 9, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Although I had a lot of fun attacking feminism in Tuesday's post, it wasn't my intention to attack feminism again today. But I feel I have to say something about a news story about New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman. Although he was a major figure in the #MeToo movement, he resigned after being accused of sexual assault by four different women.

Let's start by learning a little about the man from his own tweets:

A year before Roe v. Wade, I graduated from high school, went to Washington DC, and got a job working in an abortion clinic.

I learned an important lesson at a young age.

If a woman does not have the right to control her own body, she is not truly equal. She is not truly free.

New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman wants women to be free?
Now, let's be clear about what abortion is. Abortion is ending the life of an innocent unborn child that has human DNA distinct from either the mother or the father. It happens after two strong grown ups have agreed to have recreational sex with no plan to welcome and care for a child that they might create. They don't want to be responsible for the consequences of their own choices. If a child is conceived, then the powerful grown-ups resort to murder in order to keep the good times rolling for themselves.

That's what Democrat Attorney General Eric Schneiderman supports. And many, many young unmarried women voted for this man, precisely because he held this self-centered and irresponsible view of women, relationships and children.

In fact, radical feminists not only prefer men who have this view of relationships and sex, they insist on it.

Consider this dating guide published by a feminist writer.

Excerpt:

> 2. "What Are Your Views On Abortion?"
>
> If you're considering a sexual relationship that could potentially lead to

> pregnancy, holding conflicting views on abortion can cause a lot of tension. If you can get pregnant, you'll want to know whether someone will respect your choice to handle the pregnancy as you see fit. And if you can get someone pregnant, you want to make sure you're on the same page about what will be done about it. Even if you're not in a relationship that could lead to pregnancy, someone's views on abortion can speak volumes about their level of misogyny as well as their respect for others' bodily autonomy.

Got that? Pro-life men are mysogynistic and deny bodily autonomy. But pro-abortion men aren't misogynistic, and respect women's bodily autonomy. That's what radical feminists believe.

With that said, let's take a look at the charges against Eric Schneidernman, as reported by the New York Post.

Excerpt:

> State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman called his Sri Lankan girlfriend his "brown slave" and wanted her to refer to him as "Master," the woman says.
>
> Harvard-educated activist writer Tanya Selvaratnam told the New Yorker magazine that her yearlong affair with Schneiderman "was a fairytale that became a nightmare" — and quickly escalated into violence in the bedroom, even as he begged for threesomes.
>
> "Sometimes, he'd tell me to call him Master, and he'd slap me until I did," Selvaratnam said.
>
> "He started calling me his 'brown slave' and demanding that I repeat that I was 'his property.'"
>
> Selvaratnam said, "The slaps started after we'd gotten to know each other.
>
> "It was at first as if he were testing me. Then it got stronger and harder. It wasn't consensual. This wasn't sexual playacting. This was abusive, demeaning, threatening behavior."
>
> She said that as the violence grew, so did his sexual demands.
>
> "He was obsessed with having a threesome and said it was my job to find a woman," Selvaratnam said. "He said he'd have nothing to look forward to if I didn't and would hit me until I agreed."
>
> She said she had no intention of adding a second woman to their bed.
>
> The abuse increased until Schneiderman was not only slapping her but spitting on her and choking her, she said.
>
> "He was cutting off my ability to breathe," she said.
>
> Soon, "we could rarely have sex without him beating me."
>
> The attorney general was often fueled by booze, Selvaratnam said.
>
> And he would push her to drink, too, she said.

> “Drink your bourbon, Turnip,’’ she said he ordered her, using his nickname for her.

This is just the tip of the iceberg, there’s a lot more here at the Washington Free Beacon.

This was interesting:

> “Now that I know it’s part of a pattern, I think, God, I should have reported it,” the accuser said. “But, back then, I believed that it was a one-time incident. And I thought, He’s a good attorney general, he’s doing good things. I didn’t want to jeopardize that.”

This man is a hero of radical feminists. Here is a video featuring feminist comedian Samantha Bee:

Most women support pro-abortion men like Eric Schneiderman:

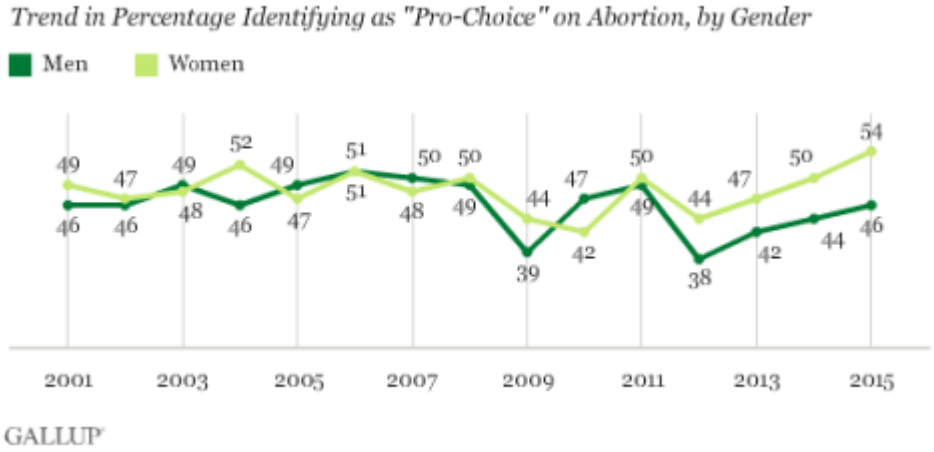

GALLUP polling: Women support abortion more than men

According to 2008 exit polls, 77% of young, unmarried women voted for a pro-abortion Democrat (Obama). Obama even voted against banning infanticide as a state senator in Illinois. Young, unmarried women had no problem voting for a supporter of infanticide (killing a baby born alive).

We know about lots of Democrats who talk about women’s rights in public, and mistreat them in private, e.g. – Ted Kennedy, Bill Cinton, John Edwards, Elliott Spitzer, Harvey Weinstein, Al Franken, etc. Some pro-abortion Democrat men kill women. Some rape women. Some sexually assault women. They are all willing to destroy a defenseless unborn child in order to escape the consequences of their selfish choices. If they are willing to kill an innocent, defenseless unborn child, they are certainly willing to sexually assault a grown woman.

Pro-abortion men are NOT the kind of men that a woman can depend on for love, fidelity, commitment and respect. It doesn’t matter how hot they are, how rich they are, or how powerful they are. If the goal is a faithful, life-long committed relationship that persists through the woman’s old age, then the answer cannot be a pro-abortion man. Just because young, unmarried women are attracted to men who are hot and non-judgmental, that does not translate into a long-term relationship where the man will be loving and leading the woman well. Women need to stop thinking that moral character doesn’t

matter when evaluating a man for a relationship. A man's refusal to condemn irresponsible behavior is not a sign of good character. A man's mistreatment of others around him is not a sign of good character. Men who don't have good character should not be chosen for relationships. Having feelings of attraction for a man does not mean that his character is suitable for loving and caring for others. Men need to be chosen based on their ability to do the job, not based on feelings of attraction.

The same women who support the pro-abortion rapists, sexual assaulters, etc. also OPPOSE men like Billy Graham and Mike Pence, who are so serious about their marriage vows that they refuse to even put themselves into situations where they might be tempted. I blogged before about how radical feminists jeered at the rules that good men impose on themselves in order to avoid even the appearance of an affair. Feminists consider Mike Pence to be a terrible person, but one feminist journalist said of Bill Clinton "I'd be happy to give him [oral sex] just to thank him for keeping abortion legal". This is the same Bill Clinton who cheated on his wife with his female subordinates, and was credibly accused of rape. But he gives feminists the tingles. Who cares about character? He's hot. And he supports abortion.

The alternative

Now, just to be clear, I am the worst freaking nightmare of a radical feminist. I am a virgin. I will not even kiss on the lips unless it's to seal an engagement. I don't buy drinks for women, unless it's one beer in a restaurant, and we're sharing it. And as far as abortion, I think life begins at conception. I also think that marriage is solely between one man and one woman, for life. Whatever it is that I'm going to do to convince a woman to marry me, it's going to be done outside of the bedroom, when she's stone-cold sober. I will get the consent of her father, first.

It is important to me that I am able to demonstrate my ability to be self-controlled and faithful to one woman, and to speak the language of love outside of the bedroom. That's what chastity is for – it demonstrates the ability to love totally apart from selfishness and lust. Fidelity is not free. Women need to be chaste themselves, and they need to insist on chastity in the men they choose. Fidelity and self-control cannot be left to chance. They are more important than surface level concerns. Instead of looking for men who want to murder children, women should be looking for men who are comfortable taking on demanding relationships and keeping their commitments even if they become difficult.

Since I have a Christian view of marriage, my marriage has a customer. My choices with women and marriage will be designed to manufacture a result for my Commanding Officer. Treating women and children badly would cause them to move away from God, and so these things are just not permitted. Women dealing with me always have that leverage – the ability to hold me accountable to that vertical commitment to our common Boss.

What is important for everyone to realize is that many women today, thanks to radical feminism, do not go after men who are prepared and suited to marriage. They do not want to marry early and have children. They want to ride the carousel with hot pro-

abortion bad boys until their looks and youth start to fade. They see marriage as boring, and children as distractions from travel and fun. They smash themselves up against pro-abortion men, and get very bitter, disrespectful and selfish. It is very hard for a marriage-minded man to marry women who graduate from the Eric Schneiderman school of relationships. Maybe we should tell women the truth for a change.

Four ways that the progress of experimental science conflicts with atheism

May 10, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

When people ask me whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism, I offer the following four basic pieces of scientific evidence that are more compatible with theism than atheism.

Here are the four pieces of evidence best explained by a Creator/Designer:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the biological information in the first replicator (origin of life)
4. the sudden origin of all of the different body plans in the fossil record (Cambrian explosion)

And I point to specific examples of recent discoveries that confirm those four arguments. Here are just a few of them:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (From an article from Caltech)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning to allow the existence of conscious, embodied life (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)
4. Evidence showing that Ediacaran fauna are not precursors to the Cambrian fossils, (from the journal Nature)

Atheists will typically reply to the recent scientific discoveries that overturned their speculations like this:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause
2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes
4. Maybe we will find a seamless chain of fossils that explain how the Cambrian explosion occurred slowly, over a long period time

Ever heard any of these responses?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the four responses of atheists to the experimental data.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
>
> †Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, USA
>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings

> have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.

> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities."
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. There is no evidence for a multiverse, but there is evidence for fine-tuning. TONS OF IT.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can't make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can't make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth's interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to

> obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into meaningful words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them.

4) The best candidate to explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian era fossils was the Ediacaran fauna, but those are now recognized as not being precursors to the Cambrian fossils.

Science Daily reports on a paper from the peer-reviewed journal Science:

> Evidence of the single-celled ancestors of animals, dating from the interval in Earth's history just before multicellular animals appeared, has been discovered in 570 million-year-old rocks from South China by researchers from the University of Bristol, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Paul Scherrer Institut and the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.
>
> […]This X-ray microscopy revealed that the fossils had features that multicellular embryos do not, and this led the researchers to the conclusion that the fossils were neither animals nor embryos but rather the reproductive spore bodies of single-celled ancestors of animals.
>
> Professor Philip Donoghue said: "We were very surprised by our results — we've been convinced for so long that these fossils represented the embryos of the earliest animals — much of what has been written about the fossils for the last ten years is flat wrong. Our colleagues are not going to like the result."
>
> Professor Stefan Bengtson said: "These fossils force us to rethink our ideas of how animals learned to make large bodies out of cells."

The trend is that there is no evolutionary explanation for the body plans that emerged in the Cambrian era. If you want to make the claim that "evolution did it", then you have to produce the data *today*. Not speculations about the future. The data we have today says no to naturalism. The only way to affirm naturalistic explanations for the evidence we have is *by faith*. But rational people know that we need to minimize our leaps of faith, and

go with the simplest and most reasonable explanation – an intelligence is the best explanation responsible for rapid generation of biological information.

Conclusion

I do think it's important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see way too much G. K. Chesterton, Francis Chan A. W. Tozer, and other untestable, ineffective jibber-jabber. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it's too hard. It's not too hard. Everyone can understand Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". That's more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works. You don't want to be anti-science and pro-speculation like atheists are. I recommend reading Uncommon Descent and Evolution News every day for a start.

Is the vastness of the universe evidence against God's existence?

May 11, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science
Physicist Hugh Ross writes about it in Salvo Magazine.

First a quick blurb about Hugh Ross:

> Hugh Ross launched his career at age seven when he went to the library to find out why stars are hot. Physics and astronomy captured his curiosity and never let go. At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver's Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or "quasars," some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

Now back to the topic "Is the vastness of the universe incompatible with God's existence?"

Here's Ross' introduction:

> Scientists seem more difficult to please than the golden-haired girl of fairy-tale fame. While Goldilocks troubled herself over the just-right porridge, chair, and bed, astronomers appear preoccupied with the size of the universe.
>
> In the days before telescopes, when an observer could count a few thousand stars in the night sky, many considered the universe too small and unimpressive to be the work of an almighty, all-knowing Creator. Only an infinite cosmos, they said, would befit an infinite deity. But then, others argued, an infinite cosmos might eliminate the need for a Creator.
>
> Thanks to the Hubble space telescope, scientists now see that the universe contains roughly 200 billion large- and medium-sized galaxies and about a

> hundred times as many dwarf galaxies. The stars in those galaxies add up to about fifty billion trillion, and they comprise a mere one percent of the mass of the observable universe.
>
> Because of the travel time of light, the universe humans can observe is really the universe of the past. What researchers know about the expansion and geometry of the universe informs us that the universe of today is at least several hundred times more enormous than the universe we can see. The universe is trillions of trillions of times larger and more spectacular than what the earliest astronomers presumed!
>
> And yet, this new knowledge of the vastness of the universe has led to new complaints. In his book, *God: The Failed Hypothesis,* Victor Stenger says, "If God created the universe as a special place for humanity, he seems to have wasted an awfully large amount of space." Stephen Hawking, in the best-selling science book of all time, *A Brief History of Time,* shares Stenger's view: "Our solar system certainly is a prerequisite for our existence. . . . But there does not seem to be any need for all these other galaxies." So now the universe is too big to befit the all-wise, all-powerful God of the Bible.

I like how he quotes an atheist physicist to get the challenge right. No sense in caricaturing the claim of your opponent.

I formalized Stenger's argument like this:

1. If all things in the universe are not done the way that Victor Stenger likes them, then there is no God.
2. All things in the universe were not done the way Victor Stenger likes them.
3. Therefore, there is no God.

I would deny premise 1, there, since there is no reason to believe that's it's true.

Anyway, let's see what Hugh Ross says:

> The hot big bang model (now firmly established by observations) tells us that at the moment of cosmic creation, the universe was infinitely or near-infinitely hot and compressed, and all the ordinary matter existed in the form of hydrogen. As the universe expanded, it cooled. The rate at which the universe expanded and cooled depended in large part on its mass—the greater the mass, the slower the expansion and cooling rate. The slower the expansion and cooling rate, the more time the universe would spend in the temperature range (13–150 million degrees Centigrade) at which nuclear fusion can occur.
>
> **Because of its mass, the universe spent about twenty seconds in the nuclear fusion temperature range when it was between three and four minutes old. As a result, 24.77 percent of the universe's hydrogen (by mass) fused into helium. Thus, when stars began to form—about 380,000 years later—they started off composed of about 75 percent**

> **hydrogen, 25 percent helium, and trace amounts of deuterium, lithium, and beryllium.**
>
> **In the nuclear furnaces of the stars themselves, more hydrogen fused into helium, and, in addition to the extra helium, all the rest of the elements that appear in the periodic table were synthesized (created). The capacity of stellar nuclear furnaces to produce an abundance of elements heavier than helium (all but two of the elements) depended critically on how much of the universe's initial hydrogen was fused into helium and heavier elements during the first several minutes after the cosmic creation event. How much fusion of the universe's primordial hydrogen actually occurred at this time depended, in turn, on the universe's mass or mass density.**
>
> If the universe's mass (or cosmic mass density) had been even the slightest bit less than a hundred times the fifty billion trillion stars occupying the observable universe, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes of its existence would have proceeded less efficiently. Thus, the cosmos would have been forever incapable of generating elements heavier than helium—elements such as carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, sodium, and potassium—all of which are essential for any conceivable kind of physical life.
>
> On the other hand, if the universe's mass had been even the slightest bit greater, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes after its beginning would have been too productive, and *all* the hydrogen in the universe eventually would have been fused (after just two generations of stars) into elements as heavy as iron or heavier. Again, all the most life-essential elements, including hydrogen itself, would have ceased to exist.

Basically, your body is made up of heavier elements, and if the universe was not as massive as it is (and as old as it is), then there would not be enough heavy elements to make you, or to make massive stars like our Sun which burn steady for long periods of time. We need the heavy elements and we need the steady source of heat.

Dr. Ross has another reason why God would use vast space and long periods of time, and if you want to read that, you can click here. I think that it's important for us all to get used to the idea that we all need to understand science apologetics. God put these evidences into the universe for us to discover and use.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

May 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!
This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin

    - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
    - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
    - the site of Jesus' grave was known
    - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
    - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
    - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
    - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
    - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
    - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age

- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women –

Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the

witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling
- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I’ve read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig’s conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty

tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

May 13, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference

between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, "I believe that there is no gold on Mars" with my saying "I do not believe that there is gold on Mars." If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There's a difference between saying, "I do not believe (p)" and "I believe (not-p)." Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.

But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.

There's a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called "presumption of atheism." At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our

> **cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.**
>
> **One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.**
>
> So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, "So is there a God or not?"

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these "subjective atheists"?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says "I lack a belief in the gravitational force!". When you engage in serious discussions with people about God's existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don't care about a person's psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over "I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God"? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: "I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!" What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: "Wintery Knight won't listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!". I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that's why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don't *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I'm not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Related posts

- Is giving to charity more rational for religious people or atheists?
- An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview
- Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?
- Did Jesus exist? Agnostic historian Bart Ehrman debates Infidel Guy
- Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?
- Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong? Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral?
- Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?
- William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech
- Can atheists be moral? Sean McDowell and James Corbett debate
- If militant atheists could form a country, what would it look like?
- Chad Meister: can atheists make sense of morality?

Even alpha male bad boys are disappointed by the Sexual Revolution

May 14, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

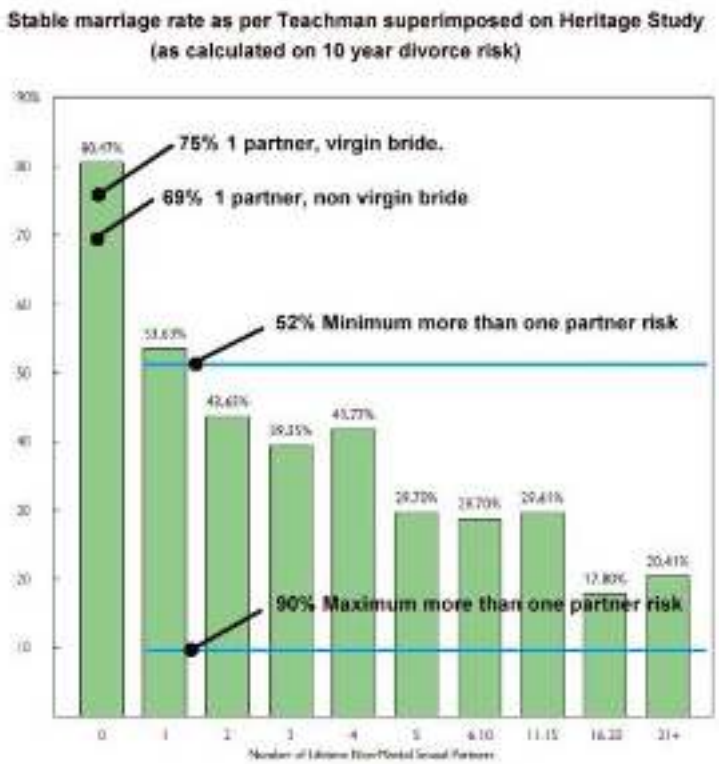

Marriage stability vs sexual partners,(Teachman et al. JAMF, August 2010)

Thanks to radical feminism's dominance in the culture, young unmarried women are very disinterested in marriage. Many of them see marriage as boring, and children as restrictive of their freedom. Instead, young women want to make sure to use their young and fertile years to pack in as much fun and thrills as they can. So what sort of men do they choose to pursue?

This article from the UK Daily Mail illustrates the problem:

> Women are often said to be the less shallow sex when it comes to what they find attractive.
>
> But a study of an online gallery of 'hot male commuters' has found that the fairer sex are just as superficial as men – as they find muscles and money the sexiest male attributes.
>
> The study based its findings on a website called Tube Crush, where women and gay men secretly take pictures of the capital's attractive men on the London Underground.
>
> […]While the authors acknowledge that gay men also use the site, they say that female responses to the 'hot commuters' suggest females have not moved on in what they find attractive beyond 'money and strength' – despite their

> advancement in society.
>
> Signs that the man is wealthy – such as a flashy watch or an expensive suit – were considered highly attractive by site users, as were powerful arm and chest muscles.
>
> But the classic image of the 'new man' – a man holding a baby – or skinnier or nerdier types of man were far less represented.

Now, in my experience, men who are getting a lot of attention because of their looks are probably the least likely to be faithful, much less commit. If the man is putting in a lot of effort into his appearance (as opposed to his education, his career, his spiritual life, etc.), he's probably doing it in order to get sexual access to a lot of women. He's not looking to commit, in short. He's looking to play the field. But it turns out that even the men who are successful at this are not happy with their success.

Consider this article from the UK Sun: (H/T Sarah)

> It sounds like every young man's idea of heaven: endless sex with a constant stream of gorgeous, up-for-it women who don't even expect a pizza date before, or a conversation afterwards – and all via a tap on your smartphone.
>
> Yet incredibly, a new generation of handsome, successful – and sexually prolific – Tinder-weary lads are claiming sex with hundreds of one-night stands is leaving them burned out, bored – and lonely.
>
> Despite bedding a bevvie of beauties, they claim they're desperate for lasting romance – and broody for children with a new wave of sexually-liberated young women who just don't want to commit.
>
> I got to know a group of these seemingly lucky men after I co-wrote the UK's biggest ever academic study into more than 2,000 British men, released this week.
>
> Called the Harry's Masculinity Report, the survey was conducted by University College London and Harry's, a new men's grooming company that's just launched in the UK.
>
> Harry's wanted to shatter the myths around masculinity, and discover what truly made modern men tick in 2017.

Here are some details:

> One of these was Simone Ippolito, 25, from Bournemouth, a self-confessed Tinder "player" for two years.
>
> The salesman and part-time model claimed: "When I first got Tinder two years ago, it was heaven. In three months I got 300 matches. They were coming so fast I couldn't keep up.
>
> "People on Tinder are only there for sex. I've been on 200 dates, and I get a result 99 per cent of the time.

> “Getting sex is too easy. You get bored of it. Tinder takes all the pleasure out of flirting. It’s not fun anymore. Tinder is literally two glasses of wine then back home for sex. There is no emotion.
>
> “It is boring, empty and lonely. You can’t have a nice conversation after mechanical sex. It’s just sex and go. Now I just want to stop it and settle down”.
>
> Talking to other single men, it rapidly became clear that while dating apps like Tinder means it’s never been easier to get sex, it’s never been harder to fall in love.
>
> This sentiment was echoed by Gary Barnett, 34, social media manager from Brighton, who’s been single for three months.
>
> “For the first time ever in human history, sex is on tap,” he says.
>
> “Nine times out of ten you don’t even have to go out on a date. If a girl likes your photos, they just come round.
>
> “If you’re half attractive you’re bombarded with offers. You can go on Tinder dates every single night of the week.
>
> “The social interaction is totally lacking. You can have sex and never talk again.
>
> “They always ask the same three questions. ‘Hi how are you?’ ‘how’s your week been?’ or ‘I love your beard/tattoos’. That’s literally code for ‘do you want to f***?’
>
> “That was really good for the first year. I filled my boots. After 50 Tinder dates, including 20 in the last two months with no sign of any ‘keepers,’ I’m over it. You get to the point where you can’t be bothered to do it anymore”.

Ah yes, the beard and tattoos. These are apparently very important for attracting women today. But it doesn’t work to attract a serious marriage-minded women to settle down with. Men are designed to want relationships with women. But not every woman is capable of having a relationship with a man. Especially after so many women have been taught by feminism not to prefer commitment-minded men who can perform the traditional male roles: protecting, providing and leading on moral and spiritual issues. Beards, muscles, shiny watches and tattoos might attract women, but it doesn’t make those women marriage-ready. In fact, the sort of women who are impressed with appearances are probably looking for fun. They are definitely NOT going to be comfortable with relationship obligations to a husband or children. To build a capacity for self-sacrificial commitment, you don’t practice having fun and thrills. You practice self-sacrificial commitment. You work on developing a worldview that makes self-sacrificial commitment rational, even when it goes against your self-interest. A worldview like Christianity, for example.

We already knew that women are unhappy with the dating scene today. And now we know that even the men who are “succeeding” are unhappy with it too, in the long term. The Sexual Revolution has messed up love and commitment for everyone.

Should we expect to know what God’s reason is for allowing evil and suffering?

May 15, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Here is an article by Steven Cowan about the problems of evil and suffering.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude.

Now let’s find out what a noseeum is, and how it relates to the existence of evil and suffering:

> However, perhaps God’s existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God’s existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By “pointless evil,” Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe’s argument may be simply stated as follows:
>
> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that

> there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the "noseeum inference." Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a "noseeum" is something that you cannot see—it is a "no-see-um." And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I "no-see-um" a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

In that example, the planet is the noseeum. Just because you look really hard, you can't be confident that the planet is not there. And similarly with the problem of evil and suffering, looking really hard and finding no reason does not mean that there is no reason. It just means that you are not in a good position to see the reason. You don't know enough to to be sure that there is no reason, because of your limitations as a human being.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous. (You can get the PDF here)

According to the paper, human beings just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a noseeum. To know for sure that there is no reason, we would need to have more knowledge than we do.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

The *best* place to learn more about no-see-ums is in this excellent lecture by Biola University professor Doug Geivett.

How long do people wait to be treated in a single-payer health care system?

May 16, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Instead of talking about single payer health care in the abstract ("wouldn't it be nice if health care were free?"), let's discuss a concrete case of a single payer health care system. Canada's health care system is a pure government-funded system. Canadian residents pay money into the system via taxation. And when they get sick, they go into a government-run hospital and ask for government-run health care. The idea of single payer health care makes a lot of politicians feel good, and it draws applause when they talk about it in the abstract. But forget the abstract. How well does it work in reality?

Here's an article from a Canadian health care policy expert, Sally C. Pipes.

She writes:

> The Canadian single-payer regime subjects thousands of patients to life-threatening delays for treatment.
>
> Our northern neighbors' wait times grow longer with each passing year. According to the Fraser Institute, a Canadian think tank, the typical patient in need of specialist treatment last year waited 21.2 weeks after referral from a general practitioner — a record high. In 1993, the median wait time was less than half that figure — 9.3 weeks.
>
> In British Columbia, the median wait is even longer — a grand total of 26.5 weeks from referral from a general practitioner to receipt of treatment from a specialist. That's more than half a year.
>
> Lengthy delays are a hallmark of single-payer. Demand for care is essentially limitless when someone else is paying the bill.
>
> But the provincial and federal governments in Canada don't have limitless resources. So they typically set a global budget for care. Doctors and hospitals can only provide so much care before their costs exceed their revenue from the government. And they can only afford to keep a limited amount of equipment operational, such as MRI machines or CT scanners.
>
> Demand for care inevitably outstrips supply. So the government has to establish wait lists.
>
> Long waits aren't merely inconvenient; they're dangerous. Consider the case of Walid Khalfallah, a British Columbian boy with severe scoliosis profiled by the Vancouver Sun in 2012. The Sun reported that he faced a three-year wait for spinal surgery, even though medical guidelines recommended a maximum wait of three months.
>
> Delays can even prove fatal. Long waits have contributed to the deaths of more than 44,000 Canadian women in the past two decades, according to a Fraser

> Institute study.
>
> Many patients would gladly pay extra to receive care more quickly. But British Columbian law makes it effectively impossible to do so.

The hardest thing to explain to Americans who are only familiar with private insurance is that if the government tells you no in a single-payer system, your only option is to take whatever money you have left (after being taxed for the single-payer system) and go outside the country. A lot of Canadian socialist politicians do exactly that, when they need reliable health care. Like Bernie Sanders, they say one thing to their naive followers, and do something else in their private lives.

So how good is American health care? Maybe Canadians are waiting in line because their health care is so much better than ours.

American health care

One of the best health care policy experts writing today is Avik Roy, who writes for Forbes magazine.

Here is a recent column, which I think is useful for helping us all get better at debating health care policy.

Excerpt:

> It's one of the most oft-repeated justifications for socialized medicine: Americans spend more money than other developed countries on health care, but don't live as long. If we would just hop on the European health-care bandwagon, we'd live longer and healthier lives. The only problem is it's not true.
>
> […]If you really want to measure health outcomes, the best way to do it is at the point of medical intervention. If you have a heart attack, how long do you live in the U.S. vs. another country? If you're diagnosed with breast cancer? In 2008, a group of investigators conducted a worldwide study of cancer survival rates, called CONCORD. They looked at 5-year survival rates for breast cancer, colon and rectal cancer, and prostate cancer. I compiled their data for the U.S., Canada, Australia, Japan, and western Europe. Guess who came out number one?

Here is the raw data:

5-Year Relative Survival Rates in Various Cancers, From the CONCORD Study (2008)

Country	Breast Women	Colorectal Men	Colorectal Women	Prostate	Average
United States	83.9%	59.1%	60.2%	91.9%	**73.8%**
Canada	82.5%	55.3%	58.9%	85.1%	**70.5%**
Australia	80.7%	56.7%	58.2%	77.4%	**68.3%**
Austria	74.9%	52.7%	55.1%	86.1%	**67.2%**
Germany	75.5%	50.1%	55.0%	76.4%	**64.3%**
Sweden	82.0%	52.8%	56.2%	66.0%	**64.3%**
Netherlands	77.6%	53.6%	55.1%	69.5%	**64.0%**
Iceland	79.0%	49.5%	54.0%	69.7%	**63.1%**
Japan	81.6%	61.1%	57.3%	50.4%	**62.6%**
Finland	80.2%	52.5%	54.0%	62.9%	**62.4%**
Italy	79.5%	50.7%	52.7%	65.4%	**62.1%**
Norway	76.3%	51.1%	55.3%	63.0%	**61.4%**
Spain	77.7%	52.5%	54.7%	60.5%	**61.4%**
Ireland	69.6%	46.0%	50.0%	62.8%	**57.1%**
Portugal	72.2%	46.5%	44.7%	47.7%	**52.8%**
UK	69.7%	42.3%	44.7%	51.1%	**52.0%**
Denmark	73.6%	44.2%	47.7%	38.4%	**51.0%**
Switzerland	76.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Health care outcomes by country and type of treatment
Click here to see the larger graph.

So, what explains this?

The article continues:

> Another point worth making is that people die for other reasons than health. For example, people die because of car accidents and violent crime. A few years back, Robert Ohsfeldt of Texas A&M and John Schneider of the University of Iowa asked the obvious question: what happens if you remove deaths from fatal injuries from the life expectancy tables? Among the 29 members of the OECD, the U.S. vaults from 19th place to…you guessed it…first. Japan, on the same adjustment, drops from first to ninth.
>
> It's great that the Japanese eat more sushi than we do, and that they settle their arguments more peaceably. But these things don't have anything to do with socialized medicine.
>
> Finally, U.S. life-expectancy statistics are skewed by the fact that the U.S. doesn't have one health-care system, but three: Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance. (A fourth, the Obamacare exchanges, is supposed to go into effect in 2014.) As I have noted in the past, health outcomes for those on government-sponsored insurance are worse than for those on private insurance.
>
> To my knowledge, no one has attempted to segregate U.S. life-expectancy figures by insurance status. But based on the data we have, it's highly likely that those on private insurance have the best life expectancy, with Medicare patients in the middle, and the uninsured and Medicaid at the bottom.

Certainly, the life expectancy in our 100% government-run health care system, the Veteran's Affairs health care system, is really, really low. They just kill the patients, give themselves bonuses, and then cover-up their failures when the investigators come.

I know that my readers who like to dig deep into economics and policy will love the links at the bottom of the article:

> For further reading on the topic of life expectancy, here are some

> recommendations. Harvard economist Greg Mankiw discusses some of the confounding factors with life expectancy statistics, citing this NBER study by June and Dave O'Neill comparing the U.S. and Canada. (Mankiw calls the misuse of U.S. life expectancy stats "schlocky.") Chicago economist Gary Becker makes note of the CONCORD study in this blog post. In 2009, Sam Preston and Jessica Ho of the University of Pennsylvania published a lengthy analysis of life expectancy statistics, concluding that "the low longevity ranking of the United States is not likely to be a result of a poorly functioning health care system."

If we're going to discuss health care, then let's discuss facts. We shouldn't be picking a health care system from the campaign speeches of politicians who tell us that we can keep our doctor, and keep our health plan, and our premiums will go down. We tried electing a charismatic deceiver in 2008, and it didn't work out. We lost our doctors, lost our health plans, and our premiums went up enormously. We can do better than single-payer health care. We can do better than socialism.

How brief was the period in which the Cambrian phyla suddenly appeared?

May 17, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Cambrian explosion refers to the sudden appearance of new body plans in the fossil record. ID proponents think that the period is between 5-10 million years at the most. Naturalists want to stretch out the period in which the body plans appear to tens of millions of years. The two sides can't both be right. What's the truth?

Evolution News has the answer.

Excerpt:

> To establish the length of the most explosive period of innovation within the Cambrian explosion itself, Meyer cites the work of MIT geochronologist Samuel Bowring and his colleagues as well the work of another group led by Smithsonian paleontologist Douglas Erwin. The Bowring-led study showed that (in their words) "the main period of **exponential diversification**" within the Cambrian lasted "only 5-6 million years" (emphasis added). Meyer explains:

> An analysis by MIT geochronologist Samuel Bowring has shown that the main pulse of Cambrian morphological innovation occurred in a sedimentary sequence spanning no more than 6 million years. Yet during this time representatives of at least sixteen completely novel phyla and about thirty classes first appeared in the rock record. In a more recent paper using a slightly different dating scheme, Douglas Erwin and colleagues similarly show that thirteen new phyla appear in a roughly 6-million-year window. (p. 73)

> […][T]ake a look first at the following figure that Bowring and his colleagues included in their definitive 1993 article, published in the journal Science. They use radiometric methods to date the different stages of the Cambrian period, including the crucial Tommotian and Atdabanian stages in which the greatest number of new animal phyla and classes arise. Note that the so-called Manykaian stage of the Cambrian period lasts about 10-14 million years. Note also that the main pulse of morphological innovation didn't begin during this stage but rather during the Tommotian and Atdabanian — a period that they describe as taking between "5 to 10 million years," and in a more detailed passage as taking about 5-6 million years.

> […]In the figure above, the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages of the Cambrian period together span only about 5 million years, starting at about 530 and ending about 525 million years ago. Bowring's figure also depicts the total number of classes and orders present at any given time during the Cambrian period. The biggest increases in morphological innovation occur during the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages. Indeed, during this period the number of known orders nearly

> quadruples. Moreover, Bowring and his colleagues also make clear that this period corresponds to the main pulse of Cambrian morphological innovation as measured by the number of new phyla and classes that first appear. They note that, while a few groups of animals do arise in the earliest Manykaian stage of the Cambrian, the most rapid period of "exponential increase of diversification," corresponding to the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages, "lasted only 5 to 6 m.y."

You can see the figure they are reference in the Evolution News article.

Also, check out these clips that explain the Cambrian explosion:

Part 1:

Part 2:

The first clip features James Valentine, a professor of biology at the University of California who just co-authored a new book on the Cambrian explosion and *is not* a proponent of intelligent design.

The consensus among scientists regarding the period of time *in which the new body plans appear* is 5-6 million years. Biologically speaking, that's a blink of an eye. You aren't going that kind of complexity and innovation in such a short period of time any more than you can expect to win the lottery by buying 5-6 million tickets when the odds of winning are 1 in a googol (10 to the 100th power – 1, followed by 100 zeroes). You don't have enough lottery tickets to make winning the lottery likely. Similarly, 5-6 million years is not enough time for naturalistic mechanisms to code brand new body plans from scratch. It would be like trying to research and write a Ph.D thesis during a single lunch hour. It's just not enough time to produce the amount of information that's required.

Democrat Nancy Pelosi joins the mainstream media in defending MS-13 gang from Trump

May 18, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By now, everyone has heard that Donald Trump, in answering a question about MS-13 from Fresno, CA police, called MS-13 gang members "animals". The Democrats and their allies in the mainstream media disagreed with characterizing MS-13 gangsters as animals. Let's see a few reactions from the Democrats and their allies in the mainstream media, then we'll see what MS-13 does.

First, the facts, from the non-partisan Real Clear Politics:

> House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi responded to President Trump calling violent MS-13 gang members "animals," at her weekly press briefing Thursday morning. Pelosi says Trump's comments as reported are a new low, and make her wonder if the president believes "we are all God's children" or not.
>
> "When the president of the United States says about undocumented immigrants, 'these are not people, these are animals,' you have to wonder, does he not believe in the spark of divinity? In the dignity and worth of every person? 'These are not people, these are animals,' from the president of the United States."
>
> "Every day you think you've seen it all, along comes another manifestation of why their policies are so inhumane," she said.
>
> "Calling people animals is not a good thing," she said, before ending the news conference and walking out.

Even radically leftist CNN makes it clear that Trump was talking about MS-13:

CNN agrees: Trump was calling MS-13 "animals"

But that makes no difference to Nancy Pelosi. She wants to open the borders to let them in, because they have a "divine spark". Pro-amnesty groups joined Pelosi in denouncing Trump's condemnation of MS-13. Liberal journalists from National Affairs and Huffington Post and Business Insider and CNBC and MSNBC and Think Progress and the New York Times and NBC News (Andrea Mitchell) the Washington Post (Jennifer Rubin) and CBS News defended MS-13. (See this Daily Wire article for all the tweets from those sources)

Here's MSNBC anchor Lawrence O'Donnell:

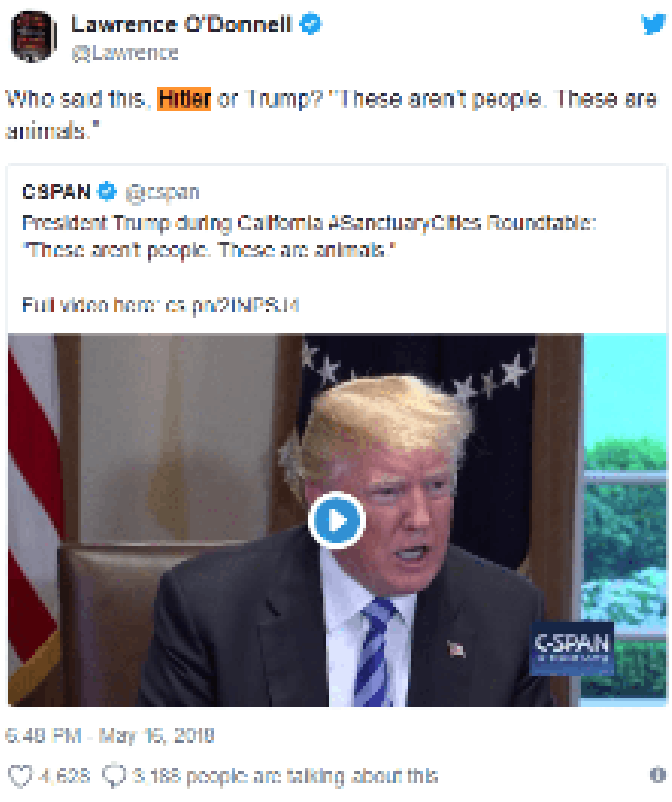

Trump is Hitler, says the mainstream news media
Those tweets are still up! This is not a misunderstanding – they know Trump was talking about MS-13.

So what does MS-13 do, exactly?

Beating little girls with baseball bats: (ABC News)

> The source explained Ayala-Rivera, a high-ranking local MS-13 leader who goes by the nickname "Noctorno," pimps out a number of underage girls from a number of states. On Aug. 1, 2017, the source said Pena-Rodriguez, Romero-Rivera, Ayala-Rivera, plus two other men, used a solid bat to beat the girl behind the single-family home along Valley View Avenue. The men reportedly took turns whacking the 15-year-old girl's flailing body — 28 swings in total. Her injuries included an "indented" buttocks, discolored arms and legs, and visible bleeding from the neck down.
>
> A second unnamed source would later tell cops that Ayala-Rivera ('Noctorno') ordered the backyard clubbing because he felt the victim was "not doing a good job as an MS-13 prostitute." The same source revealed Ayala-Rivera ('Noctorno') raked in a lot of money by trafficking teenage girls to men of all ages.
>
> […]According to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Romero-Rivera is in the United States illegally.

Gang-raping little girls: (Washington Post)

> The petite young woman was a 16-year-old Laurel High School student three years ago when she decided to skip classes one day to join two other girls at a party at a Hyattsville apartment.
>
> At the party, she said, Oscar Ramos "Casper" Velasquez took her into a bedroom, where he kissed her and told her that if she didn't have sex with him, as many as 15 other teenagers and young men at the gathering would have sex with her.
>
> When she resisted, two more young men entered the room, the woman told jurors yesterday in federal court. One man threw her on the bed and choked her, the other held down her arms and "Oscar pulled out a gun," she testified.
>
> "He put it to my head, and he said if I didn't shut up, he was going to kill me," the woman told jurors.
>
> Eight men raped her, the 19-year-old woman said. Two assaulted her simultaneously. Outside the room, she said, she heard one man say, "Five minutes each."

Murdering little girls: (ABC News)

> An MS-13 gang member has been convicted in the 2001 murder of a 13-year-old Whittier girl.
>
> On June 28, 2001, the naked body of Jacqueline Piazza was found in Elysian Park.

> She had been shot twice in the head, a statement from the district attorney's office said.
>
> Her murder remained unsolved for nearly a decade, until the Los Angeles Police Department uncovered new information and presented it to the district attorney's office, the statement said. Four men were charged in the crime in 2012.
>
> Prosecutors said the men kidnapped the victim the night before she was found and drove her to a remote area of the park, where they allegedly sexually assaulted and killed her.
>
> On Thursday, a jury found Jorge Palacios, 39, guilty of one count of first-degree murder and one count of kidnapping to commit rape.

Sex-trafficking little girls: (Washington Post)

> The 12-year-old runaway was desperate — she was out of money and had no place to stay. So she turned to the one man her friends said could help: a top MS-13 gang member.
>
> The day after they met at a party, the man drove the girl home, let her take a shower and gave her some fresh clothes. Then he told her, "We're going to work."
>
> At first, the girl didn't understand what the man meant. But everything became horribly clear after they pulled into a pharmacy parking lot and she watched another gang member return to the car with a box of condoms. The next stop was her first customer.
>
> For three months, the girl was prostituted almost daily in dingy apartments, motels and even at an auto repair shop.
>
> […]The 12-year-old was one of dozens of prostitutes, many juveniles, being sold for sex in the Washington area by members of Mara Salvatrucha, also known as MS-13, the region's largest and most dangerous street gang.

Lots more here.

Democrats and their mainstream media allies support sanctuary cities for MS-13. Anyone who disagrees is "Hitler".

Watch Nancy Pelosi defend MS-13 in her own words:

Leftists are generous with other people's money and other people's lives. It's not the rich Democrat elites and their rich allies in the mainstream media who suffer from MS-13. Nancy Pelosi has a net worth of nearly $30 million. The Democrat Party elites and the mainstream media talking heads live in gated communities, and have security systems and armed guards. They're safe from MS-13. They little girls who run away from home don't matter to them.

William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech

May 19, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Making sense of the meaning of atheism

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video. The essay is for Christians already familiar with basic apologetics.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Here's a quick couple of quotes from the essay for those who cannot watch:

> If there is no God, then any ground for regarding the herd morality evolved by homo sapiens as objectively true seems to have been removed. After all, what is so special about human beings? They are just accidental by-products of nature which have evolved relatively recently on an infinitesimal speck of dust lost somewhere in a hostile and mindless universe and which are doomed to perish individually and collectively in a relatively short time. Some action, say, incest, may not be biologically or socially advantageous and so in the course of human evolution has become taboo; but there is on the atheistic view nothing really wrong about committing incest. If, as Kurtz states, "The moral principles that govern our behavior are rooted in habit and custom, feeling and fashion,"[5] then the non-conformist who chooses to flout the herd morality is doing nothing more serious than acting unfashionably.
>
> The objective worthlessness of human beings on a naturalistic world view is

> underscored by two implications of that world view: materialism and determinism. Naturalists are typically materialists or physicalists, who regard man as a purely animal organism. But if man has no immaterial aspect to his being (call it soul or mind or what have you), then he is not qualitatively different from other animal species. For him to regard human morality as objective is to fall into the trap of specie-ism. On a materialistic anthropology there is no reason to think that human beings are objectively more valuable than rats. Secondly, if there is no mind distinct from the brain, then everything we think and do is determined by the input of our five senses and our genetic make-up. There is no personal agent who freely decides to do something. But without freedom, none of our choices is morally significant. They are like the jerks of a puppet's limbs, controlled by the strings of sensory input and physical constitution. And what moral value does a puppet or its movements have?
>
> […]Moreover, if atheism is true, there is no moral accountability for one's actions. Even if there were objective moral values and duties under naturalism, they are irrelevant because there is no moral accountability. If life ends at the grave, it makes no difference whether one lives as a Stalin or as a saint. As the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky rightly said: "If there is no immortality, then all things are permitted."

If you want a much shorter, slicker version of this argument to share, Reasonable Faith has produced this nice 5-minute video that you can tweet or share on your Facebook page or whatever:

The moral argument is the easiest argument in the world to discuss with non-Christians, as everyone has to have an answer to questions like "what makes humans valuable?" and "why should I do the right thing when it goes against my self-interest?" and "will evildoers who escape justice in this life be punished when they die?" and "do humans have free will to make moral choices?" These are interesting questions, and people can just give their opinion and then think about it as they discuss it.

If you want to show this lecture and Q&A to your apologetics group, you can find the DVD here.

You can also read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor. I found this debate very helpful for answering the question that everyone should be able to answer: "why should I be moral?"

Making sense of evil and suffering within a Christian worldview

May 20, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One thing I've noticed in talking to atheists who grew up in Christian homes is that they often leave their Christian worldview behind because of a disappointment with God. For some reason, they get this idea that God is our cosmic butler. We can do whatever we want in order to be happy, and if we want any help in this, then we just ring for him. When we encounter disappointment, our tendency is to just leave God behind.

Paul Copan explains the high points of the problems of evil and suffering in 17 minutes. (H/T Apologetics 315)

The MP3 file is here.

The video is here:

Topics:

- the question itself reveals that we are moral beings
- the problem of evil is the great interrupter of human well-being
- every philosophy of life has to address this question
- is God required to give us a life that is easy and comfortable?
- evil is a departure from good, i.e. – the way things ought to be
- a way things ought to be implies a plan for what ought to be
- human evil implies a plan for the way we ought to be
- free creatures have the ability to deviate from the plan
- where does this plan for the universe and us come from?
- how can there be a way we ought to be come from?
- evil is the flip side of good so where does good come from?
- God's own moral nature is the standard of good and evil
- where does evil from natural disasters come from?
- how dangerous natural phenomena preserve Earth's habitability
- there is a benefit from tectonic activity
- similarly, God lets humans freely choose knowing harm may result
- people are free to try to find meaning in something other than God
- God is able to use negative things to bring about positive results
- e.g. – when good people suffer, they can comfort and care for others
- can people be good enough on their own without God?

I do think it's worth thinking about whether the New Testament portrays God as our cosmic butler, just waiting on us hand and foot so that we can be happy. Personally, I think you'd have to be crazy to get that impression of God from the Bible. Especially from the life of Jesus, who suffers in order to do the will of his Father. Wouldn't it be funny if atheists were disbelieving in a God of their own making? Suffering in the pursuit of

goodness has always been the center of the Christian life. I'm not sure where people get this idea that God's job is to make us happy, according to our own desires. Seems kind of shallow. Certainly not Biblical. Do people even read the Bible any more to find out what God is really like? Maybe that's the problem.

If you want to read two *good* books for beginners on Christian Apologetics that cover a range of intermediate issues, then pick up "Passion Conviction" and the companion "Contending With Christianity's Critics". Awesome, awesome resources. The Kindle editions can often be had for $3 each on Amazon.

Trump will cut $60 million of taxpayer-funding of Planned Parenthood

May 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama speaking to Planned Parenthood

The money will instead be given to women's health care providers who do not perform abortions. I looked around to find an article that didn't just report the decision, but also what PP would do about it, and how that was likely to work out for them. In cases like this, it really matters how the policy is phrased. That determines whether it can stand up to a court challenge.

Life News reports:

> The Trump administration is announcing new regulations today to partially defund Planned Parenthood and other abortion businesses of tens of millions of tax dollars. This is the second time Trump has taken steps to revoke taxpayer funding for the nation's biggest abortion business — after yanking taxpayer from from International Planned Parenthood during his first week in office.
>
> The United States spends about $260 million in Title X funds annually for family planning for low-income individuals, and Planned Parenthood is a huge recipient of those funds, as much as $50-$60 million annually.
>
> But under the proposed "Protect Life Rule," Planned Parenthood and other abortion businesses would not receive any of those tax dollars unless they completely separate their abortion business from their taxpayer-funded services, The Washington Examiner reports. That would mean housing their

> family planning services elsewhere — potentially in separate buildings and coordinated by separate staff and organizations from its abortion enterprise.
>
> "This proposal does not necessarily defund Planned Parenthood, as long as they're willing to disentangle taxpayer funds from abortion as a method of family planning, which is required by the Title X law," a Trump administration official said. "Any grantees that perform, support, or refer for abortion have a choice – disentangle themselves from abortion or fund their activities with privately raised funds."
>
> Of course, Planned Parenthood is unwilling to do so. Abortion is its primary focus, and it already is threatening a lawsuit to stop the defunding. However, the proposal is modeled after similar Reagan administration rules that the U.S. Supreme Court upheld in Rust v. Sullivan in 1991.

The Life News article also had some helpful paragraphs about how this new policy builds on the previous pro-life policies of the Trump administration:

> The Trump administration has cut several other streams of funding to Planned Parenthood as well. Soon after Trump took office, he signed the Mexico City Policy to prevent the funding of groups that promote or perform abortions overseas. This includes the International Planned Parenthood Federation, which received tax dollars under the Obama administration.
>
> In addition, in 2017, the Trump administration cut millions of dollars in grants to Planned Parenthood through the failed Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. HHS spokesman Mark Vafiades told the New York Times last year that there is very little evidence that the program was successful. However, the abortion chain recently filed a lawsuit challenging the cuts.
>
> Planned Parenthood is the largest abortion business in America, aborting approximately 320,000 unborn babies every year. Its most recent annual report showed a record income of $1.46 billion, with about half a billion dollars coming from taxpayers.

In addition to reversing the Obama administration's funding of abortion, the Trump administration is reversing the Obama administration's policy of forcing Christian organizations to provide health insurance coverage for abortion.

Life News reported on that, as well:

> A federal district court issued an order Tuesday that permanently prevents the federal government from enforcing the Obamacare abortion-pill mandate against four Christian universities in Oklahoma represented by Alliance Defending Freedom. The order also declares that the mandate violates the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act.
>
> The Obama-era mandate forces employers, regardless of their religious or moral convictions, to provide abortion-inducing drugs, sterilization, and contraception

> through their health plans under threat of heavy penalties. The Department of Justice, under the Trump administration, abandoned its defense of the flawed mandate, which the Department of Health and Human Services implemented during the previous administration.
>
> “Religious organizations have the freedom to peacefully operate according to their beliefs without the threat of punishment by the government. Today’s order fully affirms that freedom and provides permanent protection from the mandate,” said ADF Senior Counsel Gregory S. Baylor.
>
> “These universities no longer have to fear being forced to pay fines for simply abiding by the Christian beliefs they teach and espouse, and they are no longer required to fill out forms authorizing coverage for abortion-inducing drugs,” Baylor explained. “The government has many other ways to ensure access to these drugs without forcing people of faith to violate their deepest convictions.”
>
> ADF attorneys represent Southern Nazarene University, Oklahoma Wesleyan University, Oklahoma Baptist University, and Mid-America Christian University, all of which specifically object to providing abortifacients.

I don’t think most Democrats realize just how pro-abortion the Obama administration was. But they should have been able to predict it from the multiple times that Obama voted for abortion born-alive infants when he was a state senator in Illinois. Although Trump’s record on abortion was mixed before the election, he’s been good at canceling out some of Obama’s pro-abortion policies. Good for him.

What is the fine-tuning argument for God's existence, and does the multiverse counter it?

May 22, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

One of the best arguments for the existence of a Creator and Designer of the universe is the cosmic fine-tuning argument. The argument argues that individual constants and quantities in nature cannot be much smaller or larger than they are, because it would remove the ability of the universe to support life of any kind. Dr. Michael Strauss, an experimental physicist, explains some examples of the fine-tuning in a recent post on his blog.

He writes:

> I liken the finely-tuned universe to a panel that controls the parameters of the universe with about 100 knobs that can be set to certain values. If you turn any knob just a little to the right or to the left the result is either a universe that is inhospitable to life or no universe at all.
>
> Consider the knob that controls the strength of the strong nuclear force that holds quarks inside the neutrons and protons and binds the nucleus of the atom together. If the strength were increased by 2%, the element hydrogen would be either non-existent or very rare. Without hydrogen there would be no water (H_2O) or stars that burn hydrogen as their nuclear fuel like our sun. Without hydrogen there would be no life. If the strength of the strong nuclear force were decreased by about 5%, then hydrogen would be the only element in the universe. That would simplify the periodic table and make Chemistry class very easy, but it would render life impossible.
>
> All known life in this universe is based on the element carbon, which is formed in

> the final stages of a star's life. The carbon you and I are made of is the result of the nuclear processes that occurred as previous stars ended their lives. One nice recent study showed that if the mass of the quarks that make up neutrons and protons were changed by just a few percent, then the process that makes carbon as stars die would be altered in such a way that there would not be sufficient carbon in the universe for life. The masses of the lightest sub-atomic quarks are the precise value that is required for carbon to form and for life to exist.

Regarding the multiverse, let me just quote from MIT physicist Alan Lightman, writing in Harper's magazine about the multiverse:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.
>
> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

The multiverse is not pure nonsense, it is theoretically possible.But even if there were a multiverse, the generator that makes the universes itself would require fine-tuning, so the multiverse doesn't get rid of the problem. And, as Lightman indicates, we have no independent experimental evidence for the existence of the multiverse in any case. Atheists just have to take it on faith, and hope that their speculations will be proved right. Meanwhile, the fine-tuning is just as easily explained by postulating God, and we have independent evidence for God's existence, like the the origin of biological information, the sudden appearance of animal body plans, the argument from consciousness, and so on. Even if the naturalists could explain the fine-tuning, they would still have a lot of explaining to do. Theism (intelligent causation) is the simplest explanation for all of the things we learn from the progress of science.

It's very important to understand that if these values were any different, then it's not like we would bridges on our foreheads, or have green skin, or have pointy ears, etc. That's what science fiction teaches you. And many atheists form their view of science by watching science fiction entertainment. But the truth is that the consequences of changing these values are much more consequential: no stars, no planets, no hydrogen, no heavy elements, the universe re-collapses into a hot fireball. You're not going to have complex, embodied intelligent agents running around making moral decisions and

relating to God in a world like that.

Questions like the existence of God should be NOT decided by feelings and faith and superstitious nonsense. They ought to be decided by evidence. Specifically, scientific evidence. Everyone has to account for this scientific evidence for fine-tuning within their worldview, and they have to account for it in a way that is responsible and rational. Punting to the multiverse, without any evidence for it, is neither rational nor responsible. Holding out hope that the evidence we have now will all go away is neither rational nor responsible.

By the way, if you are looking for a good book on the cosmic fine-tuning, especially for evangelism and debating with atheists, you really need to get a copy of "A Fortunate Universe". Although it is from one of the most prestigious academic presses, it is pretty funny to read, and the main points are made clearly, even if you don't understand the science. Two astrophysicists wrote it – one who believes that God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning, and one who doesn't. I really think that Christians need to get used to the idea that evangelism can be pretty easy, so long as you are arguing from peer-reviewed facts. When you get a good book on evidence for God that is not in dispute, then you are invincible. Everybody ought to believe in God in a universe with this much overt scientific evidence spilling out everywhere. Whether this Creator and Designer is the God of the Bible, who visited us as Jesus of Nazareth, takes more work to establish. Working through the emotional objections people have to God, and coaching them to take on the difficulties of living out a authentic Christian life (very unpopular!), is even harder.

What happens if young people stop caring about truth?

May 23, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

I noticed that young people are often unwilling to accept anything as true, especially when it interferes with their desire to seek happiness through an anything-goes sexuality. Often, opposition to abortion and/or homosexuality is an immediate deal-breaker. Nothing can be true if it contradicts the Sexual Revolution, including abortion and homosexuality.

Sean McDowell interviewed Abdu Murray about this problem.

Excerpt:

> **SEAN MCDOWELL:** ***Why did you write a book called "Saving Truth"? What makes you think truth needs saving?***
>
> ABDU MURRAY: Thanks for the opportunity to share about the book, Sean. The title is meant to be a double-entendre. In and of itself, truth doesn't need saving but it does need to be saved in the sense that we've lost our emphasis on it as a culture. We're in a "post-truth" society, which elevates personal preferences and feelings over facts and truth. We don't deny that truth exists, we just subordinate it to our preferences. We think that this will lead to freedom and human dignity and flourishing. But it won't. It will lead to chaos because truth no longer serves as the standard by which to judge human preferences and opinions. That's why we're seeing such vilification of "them." Whoever disagrees with our preferences is automatically a villain, even if the truth is on their side. We need to recover our love of the truth and its primacy if we're to escape the chaos that so laces our cultural climate. When we see that truth is the lens through which we should

> shape and express our preferences, we'll see the truth that we are made in God's image and that Jesus redeemed that image at the cross. We no longer see "us" vs. "them." Instead, we see each other as people in need of redemption. That's when we come to a knowledge of the saving truth – the truth that saves.

In my 20s and early 30s, I spent a lot of time reading about marriage, specifically studies on what decisions and factors were more likely to avoid divorce. This is because I wanted my future marriage to last and to have an impact. So, I would read studies on how delaying sexual activity makes the relationship more stable. And how cohabitation undermines the stability of any future marriage. And how regular church attendance improves marriage stability. I was interested in the truth. And whenever my desires for something right now (e.g. – premarital sex) conflicted with the truth in the studies, I just went along with the truth. What we're seeing today is that people don't care about truth when they are making decisions, especially when it comes to relationship quality and stability. Happiness is number one, and character means nothing. Somehow, things are just supposed to "work out" if you find the "right person". Good luck getting anyone to care what the Bible says about love and marriage, if it conflicts with sexual autonomy.

Here's a quote from agnostic Aldous Huxley that illustrates the point:

> I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way that they find most advantageous to themselves… For myself, the philosophy of meaningless was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political."
> Aldous Huxley in "*Ends and Means*", 1937

Before I saw this interview, I tweeted another interview with Abdu Murray posted on Bible Gateway.

Excerpt:

> **What do you mean that "autonomy is confused for freedom"?**
>
> **Abdu Murray:** The seed for the post-truth mindset is the human desire for autonomy. We've confused autonomy with freedom, thinking they're synonymous when they're not.
>
> Autonomy is the state of being a law unto one's self ("autos" meaning self and "nomos" meaning law). Someone who's autonomous is a law unto themselves and so he has no restraints whatsoever. An autonomous person can do or be whatever he wants, whenever he wants, however he wants. That ultimately leads to total chaos because if I'm a law unto myself and another person's "law unto themselves" conflicts with my law, who will decide who's right? It won't be truth,

> it'll be chaos (see Judges 17:6; 21:5: "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes").
>
> But true freedom is different. It requires boundaries; specifically the boundaries of truth and facts. As Chesterton pointed out, we don't have the freedom to draw a giraffe with a short neck. Freedom entails limits. True freedom is not the unfettered ability to do, say, or be whatever we want in any way we want. True freedom is the ability to do what we want, in accordance with what we should, based on what we are. What we are is children of the Most High. That's exactly why Jesus says that when we know the truth, the truth will set us free.

Abdu has written a book about how to deal with this. I'm not sure right now what his approach is. It's probably important to make some sort of defense of truth to young people, so that they understand why the boundaries help them. If they think they can break all the moral laws and that it will not close off some good outcomes to them later, then we need to correct that. We need to use evidence to show them that some decisions will increase or decrease their ability to get the best outcomes. Moreover, we somehow have to get them to accept that God, if he exists, might have something to say about their moral choices. And if God exists then they ought to care what he thinks they should be doing.

One of my best friends is a Christian woman who had an abortion after living with an atheist when she was younger. Looking back on her life, she did not have good guidance about what to look for in a man. Her mother married (and re-married) poorly, and so there was never a good role model around for her. She would often complain to me about how she was lied to by the culture. About what men to prefer. About how far to go with a man. About delaying marriage. About delaying children. About how much abortion would hurt her. About guarding her heart from men who had not demonstrated ability at husbands and father skills. When I met her, I wasn't very impressed with her education (English! Yucky!) and her career. But she had this hatred of lies, and a desperate desire to know how the world really worked.

More than almost any of my friends, she was utterly devoted to pursuing truth. I remember finding books that I had bought for her by really advanced writers like Stephen C. Meyer absolutely covered in underlining from cover to cover. Basically, she didn't trust her ability to make decisions because she felt she had been lied to. She wanted a true worldview, so that when she took some action X, she knew that it was likely to lead her to result Y. That's the love of truth that we need to teach the young people. Without a true worldview, (a Christian worldview, since Christianity is true), they will always be attempting to get to outcomes that have been closed off by their own poor decision-making and rebellion against God. I wish all of you could meet someone who had been raised without good leadership and good role models, and see how much some people at least really thirst for the truth and are anxious to make good decisions that honor what is true.

Survey of scientific literature finds that children need their mom for first 3 years

May 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Child grabs for his mom, who is leaving for work

Recently, an article published in the Wall Street Journal reported on research survey done why a far-left Democrat psychotherapist based in far-left New York City. Surprisingly, her book caused an uproar among the author's left-wing allies. How come?

Excerpt:

> Motherhood used to be as American as apple pie. Nowadays it can be as antagonistic as American politics. Ask Erica Komisar.
>
> Ms. Komisar, 53, is a Jewish psychoanalyst who lives and practices on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. If that biographical thumbnail leads you to stereotype her as a political liberal, you're right. But she tells me she has become "a bit of a pariah" on the left because of the book she published this year, "Being There: Why Prioritizing Motherhood in the First Three Years Matters."
>
> […]The premise of Ms. Komisar's book—backed by research in psychology, neuroscience and epigenetics—is that "mothers are biologically necessary for babies," and not only for the obvious reasons of pregnancy and birth. "Babies are much more neurologically fragile than we've ever understood," Ms. Komisar says. She cites the view of one neuroscientist, Nim Tottenham of Columbia University, "that babies are born without a central nervous system" and "mothers are the central nervous system to babies," especially for the first nine months after birth.
>
> What does that mean? "Every time a mother comforts a baby in distress, she's actually regulating that baby's emotions from the outside in. After three years, the baby internalizes that ability to regulate their emotions, but not until then."

> For that reason, mothers “need to be there as much as possible, both physically and emotionally, for children in the first 1,000 days.”

What’s interesting about this is how the left responds to the science. You might have heard that the left is very fond of science, but veterans of debates about God’s existence know that people on the left tend to be hostile to science that goes against their view: the Big Bang cosmology, cosmic fine-tuning, biological information, irreducible complexity, molecular machines, habitability, etc. And early childhood education is no exception.

More:

> Christian radio stations “interviewed me and loved me,” she says. She went on “Fox & Friends,” and “the host was like, your book is the best thing since the invention of the refrigerator.” But “I couldn’t get on NPR,” and “I was rejected wholesale—particularly in New York—by the liberal press.” She did appear on ABC’s “Good Morning America,” but seconds before the camera went live, she says, the interviewer told her: “I don’t believe in the premise of your book at all. I don’t like your book.”
>
> […]Ms. Komisar tells of hosting a charity gathering for millennials at her apartment. One young woman “asked me what my book was about. I told her, and she got so angry. She almost had fire coming out of her eyes, she was so angry at my message. She said, ‘You are going to set women back 50 years.’ I said, ‘Gosh, I wouldn’t want to do that.’ ”
>
> […]The needs of children get lost in all this—and Ms. Komisar hears repeatedly that the hostility to her message is born of guilt. When she was shopping for a literary agent, she tells me, “a number of the agents said, ‘No, we couldn’t touch that. That would make women feel guilty.’ ” Another time she was rejected for a speaking gig at a health conference. She quotes the head of the host institution as telling her: “You are going to make women feel badly. How dare you?”
>
> […]**“The thing I dislike the most is day care,” she says. “It’s really not appropriate for children under the age of 3,” because it is “overstimulating” given their neurological undevelopment. She cites the “Strange Situation experiments,” devised in 1969 by developmental psychologist Mary Ainsworth, a pioneer of attachment theory: “A mother and the baby are on the floor playing. The mother gets up and leaves the baby in the room alone. The baby has a separation-anxiety response. A stranger walks in; the baby has a stressed reaction to the stranger.”**
>
> […]Researchers sample the infant’s saliva and test it for cortisol, a hormone associated with stress (and inversely correlated with oxytocin). In a series of such experiments in which Ms. Komisar herself participated, “the levels were so high in the babies that the anticipation was that it would . . . in the end, cause disorders and problems.” In a more recent variant of the experiment, scientists

> use functional magnetic resonance imaging to look directly at the brain of an infant reacting to photos of the mother and of a stranger.

I spoke to a millennial co-worker in my office who is very proud of his strong feminist views. His wife just had a baby, and they stuck the baby in daycare after 3 months so that she could go back to work. I did speak to him about what the research says (daycare and public school studies are a hobby of mine!), but I try to only disagree with him on one thing at a time, and right now, we're disagreeing about cohabitation and marital stability. It's amazing how confident millennials are about taking positions on things like daycare, cohabitation, public schools, etc. without ever having consulted the relevant peer-reviewed science.

Let's look at one of the studies, to see some evidence.

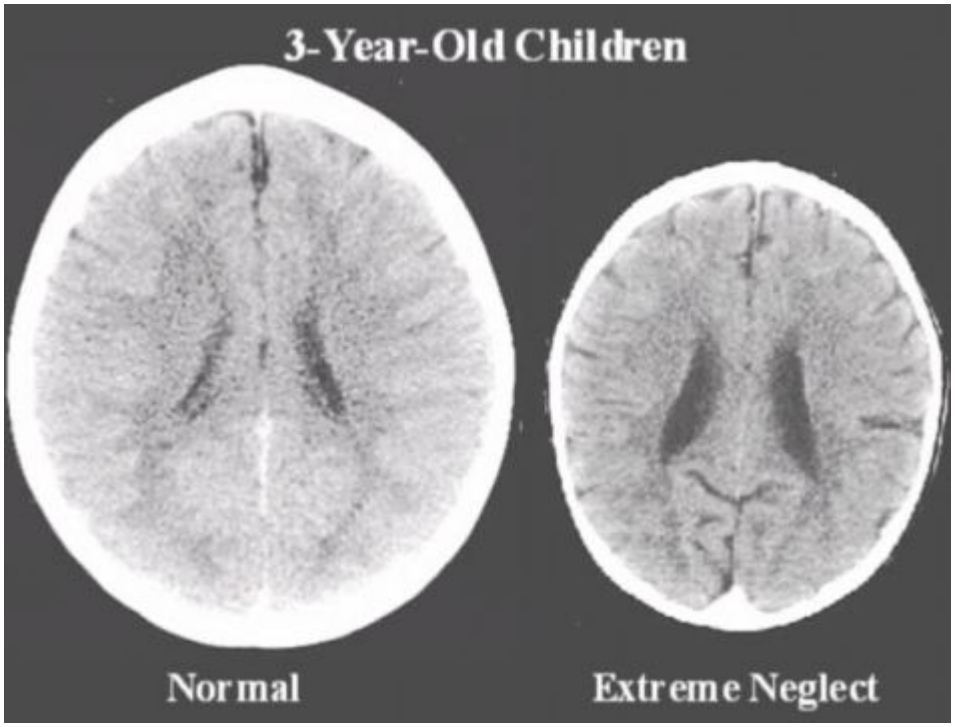

Brain scans of 3-year old children: normal vs neglected

The UK Telegraph reported on a recent study that measured the brain development of 3-year-old children.

Excerpt:

> Take a careful look at the image of two brains on this page. The picture is of the brains of two three-year-old children. It's obvious that the brain on the left is much bigger than the one on the right. The image on the left also has fewer spots, and far fewer dark "fuzzy" areas.
>
> To neurologists who study the brain, and who have worked out how to interpret the images, the difference between these two brains is both remarkable and shocking. The brain on the right lacks some of the most fundamental areas present in the image on the left. Those deficits make it impossible for that child to develop capacities that the child on the left will have: the child on the right will grow into an adult who is less intelligent, less able to empathise with others,

> more likely to become addicted to drugs and involved in violent crime than the child on the left. The child on the right is much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on welfare, and to develop mental and other serious health problems.
>
> […]The primary cause of the extraordinary difference between the brains of these two three-year-old children is the way they were treated by their mothers. The child with the much more fully developed brain was cherished by its mother, who was constantly and fully responsive to her baby.
>
> The child with the shrivelled brain was neglected and abused. That difference in treatment explains why one child's brain develops fully, and the other's does not.
>
> […]Professor Allan Schore, of UCLA, who has surveyed the scientific literature and has made significant contributions to it, stresses that the growth of brain cells is a "consequence of an infant's interaction with the main caregiver [usually the mother]".
>
> The growth of the baby's brain "literally requires positive interaction between mother and infant. The development of cerebral circuits depends on it."
>
> Prof Schore points out that if a baby is not treated properly in the first two years of life, the genes for various aspects of brain function, including intelligence, cannot operate, and may not even come into existence. Nature and nurture cannot be disentangled: the genes a baby has will be profoundly affected by the way it is treated.

I always like to consult the findings of science to find out the right way to achieve a goal. This puts off some prospective mates, who want to avoid planning and preparation so they can ride a roller-coaster of emotions and just do whatever they want to be happy in the moment. But in every other area of life, I've found that doing things the right way always involves studying and planning, then careful execution of a plan. Nobody passes an exam by going clubbing when they should be studying. Going clubbing is more fun "in the moment", but studying always gets better results.

In this case, it's very clear that keeping a mother at home for the first three years of each child would require some earning and saving by me, since men are the principal providers. And I expect that women who are looking for husbands to raise their children with will look for men who have made preparations to give the young children what they need. Not everything a man does is about looks and fun – there are real requirements here. It's very important for young people to prepare for marriage and raising children by working backward from what the science says about children's needs.

The more you read about the science, the less wiggle-room there is for feelings. Doing the right thing (saving money for a stay-at-home mom) is hard because it feels bad. But when you inform yourself with science, it makes it easier to override your bad feelings, because you know you're doing the right thing to achieve a result. If you can't bring yourself to prepare now to do things right later, then you should read more science, and

that might make it easier to do the right thing.

New study: switching male and female marriage roles makes both sexes unhappy

May 25, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Child grabs for his mom, who is leaving for work

Here's a report on a new study from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> When females were the main breadwinner in the family, they were discovered to report more symptoms of depression.
>
> However, the opposite effect was found in men: Their psychological well-being was highest when they were the primary wage-earners.
>
> Researchers at the University of Illinois examined data on nearly 1,500 men and 1,800 women, aged between 52 and 60. Their well-being was evaluated through surveys.
>
> The researchers first found that men's well-being decreased once they had exited the workforce to become home-makers.
>
> Meanwhile, the inverse was not so for women: Women's psychological well-being was not affected by leaving their jobs to become stay-at-home mothers.
>
> 'We observed a statistically significant and substantial difference in depressive symptoms between men and women in our study,' says lead researcher Karen Kramer.
>
> 'The results supported the overarching hypothesis: well-being was lower for mothers and fathers who violated gendered expectations about the division of paid labor, and higher for parents who conformed to these expectations.'

If you don't like the UK Daily Mail, CNN reported on a similar study back in 2014.

Indeed. The trouble is this: who can afford to provide for a stay-at-home wife on one salary, in a country where 30% of your income is taxed, and many things (e.g. – health care, college tuition, etc.) are way more expensive because of socialist welfare state policies? We have a $20 trillion dollar debt, and taxes are only going to go higher, making it that much harder for a working man to provide for a family – no matter how diligent he is about getting STEM degree(s) and working full time, non-stop. Marriages where the woman stays home with the children are happiest for everyone, but thanks to the voting patterns of radical feminists, husbands have been replaced by government programs, and those cost taxpayer money. You can either have a big government welfare state or you can have a stay-at-home wife. You can't have both.

I got a snarky comment on a post I wrote last week about how marriages where the husband does not work full-time are more likely to fail.

Here is the comment:

> Well done.
> I'll now await your follow-up article on the divorce rate for couples where the wife works full-time outside of the home and how men should choose a woman who has demonstrated an ability to do marriage tasks – like taking care of the household full time, raising and nuturing children, being loving and supportive of a husband when times are tough (especially if, God forbid, he should ever find himself ***unemployed*** and thus no longer a provider, in which case most wives' base and visceral impulse is to abandon him), not wanting "a career," and not insisting that her husband waste all his earnings on fun and thrills for her.

Well, I'm blogging about it again today, but if the commenter were very clever, then he would have found this post from June of 2013 entitled "STUDY SHOWS THAT FEMALE-BREADWINNER MARRIAGES ARE LESS HAPPY AND LESS STABLE".

Excerpt:

> Given these findings, it isn't surprising that when a wife earns more than her husband, the risk of divorce rises, too. To study this, the authors used a survey conducted in two waves, 1987-88 and 1992-93. (There were no more recent data available for this particular test.) Then they investigated the likelihood of a divorce in the five-year interval. For this sample, some 12 percent of all couples were divorced during this period — a sobering fact about the stability of marriages in general. But the divorce rate rose by half, to about 18 percent, for couples in which the wife earned more than the husband.

When I was a high school student, I can remember trying to decide between being an English teacher, being a prosecuting attorney, or being a software engineer. It was my Dad who pointed me towards software engineering. As an avid stock picker, my Dad was seeing tech stocks exploding in value, and he knew that I would be able to find work even if I was laid off during tough times. I am glad that I listened to his advice, although my

career still has not been easy, which is why I saved money for the two times where I was laid off (both times my subsidiary was folded by the parent company!). My reason for going into a field where I could earn more money was because I wanted to get married, have 4 children, and "heal" the experience of being neglected by my mother (who stuck me in day care after 6 weeks and worked full-time until she retired) by watching her parent my kids as a stay-at-home mom. I knew enough to know that marriage works better when the man provides and the woman focuses on the children – at least until they are 6 years old. Since then, I've discovered homeschooling, and I would definitely have done that. It's not that I am opposed to women working, it's that I am opposed to children not being raised by their mother.

As I explained in my lengthy reply to the snarky commenter, it's gotten much harder for men to be the sole provider, and have a stay at home wife and homeschooling mom:

> Regarding tough times, I think that the situation for men right now is horrible with respect to marriage and children. $20 trillion debt and a generation of unskilled snowflake millenials voting for socialism in droves. I also think that co-ed schools where teachers and administrators are 80% females produce lousy outcomes for boys (read Christina Hoff Sommers' "The War on Boys", 2nd edition). Affirmative action in higher education and in the workplace for women doesn't help men become providers, either. Men also pay the same premiums for health care as women, and yet they use far less health care: more tilting the field against men. And so on, don't even get me started on divorce courts and child custody.

If you want to do things the old-fashioned way, you definitely need to plan for it. You probably won't be able to get the outcome you want just by following your heart.

This isn't the first time that I've blogged on studies about male and female roles in marriage. If you want to get good results from your marriage, you definitely want to follow the studies below.

Related posts

- Studies show that egalitarian marriage results in less sex
- New study finds that egalitarian marriage doesn't make women happier
- Study shows that female-breadwinner marriages are less happy and less stable
- New study: higher risk of divorce when men do housework
- Study: 70% of divorces caused by domestic issues like money or housework
- New study: couples who divide housework on traditional sex roles have a lot more sex

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

May 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining what was in the podcast. (I wish more people who put out podcasts would do that).

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."

> 6. “Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though it *looks* like it could be other ways.”
> 7. “Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life.”
> 8. “Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life.”
> 9. “This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what’s the big deal?”
> 10. “The universe doesn’t look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes.”
> 11. “Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life.”
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

Courting rules: how to respect a Christian man in the style of Ephesians 5

May 27, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been thinking a lot about Christian women and respect lately, and reflecting over some of the things that I have experienced with different ones that either worked or did not work. Unfortunately, it is crunch time at work, so I might not be completely coherent in this post, but I thought I would write something out anyway.

There are times when the Bible suggests a way that Christians ought to behave, and one of those cases has to do with wives giving respect to husbands in the marriage:

Ephesians 5:21-33:

[21] Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

[22] Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

[23] For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

[24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

[25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

[26] to make her holy,cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

[27] and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

[28] In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

[29] After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—

[30] for we are members of his body.

[31] "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

[32] This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

[33] However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, **and the wife must respect her husband.**

I think it's important for us to think about how to implement the specification that the Bible sets out for men and women in marriage. The Bible sometimes sets out rules and goals for expected behaviors, which become moral obligations for anyone for follows Christ. It is up to us to convince ourselves through study that the Bible has authority to speak to us. And it is also up to us to decide the most effective way to achieve the goals that the Bible sets out. This post proposes some tips for women who want to learn how to

respect men, based on my experiences of what makes me feel respected as a man. I think this is beneficial for single women, as well, because it allows them to arouse the interest of a man *by performing good actions*.

A bit about me

There are some things you need to know about me before we can talk about what what women do to me that causes me to feel respected.

Here are some things that I want to accomplish:

- Be able to have a stay at home mother to raise our children so that they will know God, be moral and achieve great things for God in areas that matter
- Be able to fix the problem of anti-intellectualism in the church by training more and more Christians in apologetics and worldview, including politics, economics, etc.
- Be able to have a presence at the university, e.g. – by being a Christian professor, or by supporting Christian scholars, or by sponsoring Christian scholars to speak and debate at the university
- Be able to speak, write or teach about apologetics and worldview to the general public, for example people who read my blog or my co-workers, so that they either learn how to do it, or become more respectful of Christianity and its founder

I am actually working on all of those things, and many of the decisions and sacrifices that I've made so far have been to achieve those things at a higher level.

Things that women do that make me feel respected

1. Work

The first thing that really works is listening. I really feel respected when a woman listens to me explain my thoughts and feelings. This is especially true when I am talking about my work and my work day. When it comes to my work, I feel respected when a woman listens to me explain what I am doing. This allows her to be able to support me more because she understands what I am saying when I talk with terms like "unit tests", "web services", "source code repository", etc. The more time she invests in understanding software engineering (what I do for money), the more supported I will feel. I feel a lot better making sacrifices (studying hard things, working weekends, volunteering at work) when those sacrifices are understood, encouraged and supported. For example, I felt respected recently when I was working on the weekend and could not speak to a lady I really wanted to speak to. Instead of getting upset about my absence, she started making suggestions on how I could be more effective at work, by bringing healthy food so I don't go to the vending machine or my co-workers' candy dishes, by asking me about my progress every few hours. I feel respected when I can talk about my work and then be encouraged and supported in it.

2. Plan

Another area that is important to talk about is my plan. I like it when I can tell a woman the specific experiences that I had that cause me to have the plan that I have. For example, my struggles getting apologetics into the churches that I've attended have

really soured me on church leaders. Another thing I like to talk about are the Christian scholars who are my role models, and how I try to emulate them, and I want my children to emulate them, too. One lady I was speaking to has been studying areas that I care about on her own through books, lectures and debates and then going out into the world and engaging with the people around her. Sometimes just a few people, and sometimes with large groups. Recently she told me that she would like to start a group in her church to study useful books with them. This made me feel very respected. My goals matter to her, and she is trying to help with them on her own initiative, and with her own strategies. Note that women who want to respect men may find that it is useful to learn certain skills in order to be more effective at helping men with their plans. For example, she might study investing and start investing her own money, or she might study science apologetics and then engage her co-workers and friends with scientific arguments for Christian theism. She should find out what areas matter to him with respect to serving God and then come alongside him and help him.

3. Roles

A final area that is important is my roles as a man. I have been a Christian for a long time now, and I have noticed that many Christian women in the church are basically secular in the way that they choose men. Many Christian women are guided by their emotions, by pop culture notions of romance, and peer approval – even the approval of their peer group. According to the Bible, men are supposed to be the main provider for their families. So, I made the decision early in my life to prefer work to academics – so I have actually been earning money since the time I was 12 years old. My grades were As, but I was always working part-time, and in the summers. The money I earned went straight into investments, so that I would be able to afford two degrees in computer science (BS and MS) and have a nest egg saved for marriage. I had $9,000 before undergraduate school and $16,000 after, with no debts and a car. I chose computer science over English literature, because I knew that computer science was a more reliable way to earn a living. Marriages run more smoothly when money isn't a concern, so I had to take practical steps in order to avoid a known risk factor for divorce.

But women also have a role related to providing. Their role is to prefer men who take that provider obligation seriously. I feel very respected when a woman takes the time to ask me about my education, research, employment, and investments. Our culture today doesn't value men taking their provider roles seriously. Instead, many women prefer men who will not be able to exercise the authority in the home that comes from being a competent provider. They sometimes prefer to see all choices in education and work as equal, so that no man is more respected than any other man based on education, earning and saving. I see a lot of Christian women going after men who are much younger than they are, with non-STEM degrees, who have no savings, and no practical plan for financing a marriage – much less a homeschooling stay-at-home mother. That is disrespectful of the provider role, and I believe it stems from the desire to not acknowledge male leadership. When a woman minimizes the education, career and savings of the man, it diminishes her regard for his ability to navigate the world and take

responsibility. Many women want to be swept along by impressions of confidence and superficial indicators of success. But this is not wise: a man who has a gap-less resume and an investment portfolio is a good provider, and a man who lives with his parents at age 30 is not – even if he is confident, has a deep voice, nice shoes, big shoulders, and a square jaw.

To treat unequals as equals in this important area is disrespectful and unBiblical – it disrespects the Bible's mandate that the man be a good provider and instead substitutes an emotional/pop culture/peer-approval standard of what counts as a good man. Additionally, women need to have an understanding of the external conditions that strengthen a man's ability to take on the provider role. To respect a man acting as a provider also requires voting for policies that support a man's ability to work (e.g. – less regulation on business, lower corporate taxes) to keep what he earns (lower income tax, lower inflation) and to spend it the way he sees fit (privatization of health care, education, etc.) – and these issues need to be studied, not checked off on a checklist as "we agree". Studying economics and politics in depth, and being political active, are ways for women to respect men in their provider role. Women need to take action to enable policies and laws that promote liberty and prosperity. They should not be supporting policies that promote the redistribution of wealth, or reward irresponsibility and dependence. They should not support policies that punish men who work hard at being providers while rewarding men who refuse to be providers.

It also helps when a woman studies hard topics on her own – math, science, engineering and technology – and builds up her own investment portfolio. It helps her to be able to be respectful to a man because she understands exactly what he studies and exactly how hard work is and exactly how hard it is to save money in a society creeping towards socialism. A woman who experiences sacrifice and hardship herself is more likely to respect a man who does the same in order to be ready for marriage, even if she eventually gives up work when there are young children to raise. And this works for other male roles. For example, men who guard their chastity in order to protect women from infidelity should be respected for making that decision. It's important for women to study marriage research, e.g. – how factors like chastity and church attendance and cohabitation increase or decrease marriage stability, so that they have reasons and evidence to prefer men who choose to make that sacrifice.

Men also study moral questions like abortion and marriage, as well as spiritual areas like apologetics and theology, so that they can advocate for the victims of abortion and marital breakdown. Again, women must study the research on these issues so that they are able to prefer men who can do this over men who can't. Christianity is not a checkbox and you cannot equate someone who understands these issues with someone who doesn't because both attend church. When a woman puts in the effort to study apologetics, moral issues, economics and foreign policy, then a real man feels respected – because he knows that she has a standard for judging him that is a true measure of his ability to be a husband and father. It is important to treat a man who takes his male roles seriously differently from other men who do not take those male roles seriously.

Conclusion

One of the best ways to respect a man is to speak highly of his abilities in all 3 of these areas to others. If women are careful about the man they choose, then they should be able to speak highly of him with others. When a woman praises a good man, it is a signal to other men about what they should be doing in order to impress women. To change the culture and to encourage men towards marriage, women must be intentional about who they celebrate and why they celebrate them. It also helps if they understand what policies make marriage a more realistic undertaking for men, and then advocate for those policies. Again, this requires reading things like economics and law to understand what challenges a man will face from government and ideologies (feminism, socialism) should he choose to marry, and making sure that those challenges are reduced. A man feels respected when a woman has developed a detailed understanding of what marriage is about and how society needs to change to support and respect men who choose to marry and become fathers. The Bible says that divorce is morally wrong, so it is up to men and women to make decisions that reduce the risk of divorce. We can't just float through life relying on our emotions and thinking that God has a secret, mysterious plan and there is nothing for us to do. Usually, that attitude will just make us avoid learning and avoid making hard decisions to prepare for marriage, and that will not do – we are responsible to avoid divorce, and we have to make an effort in order to achieve that goal.

If any of my female readers are interested in learning about men and what men need in order to act competently as protectors, providers and moral/spiritual leaders, you can take a look at Dr. Laura Schlessinger's "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands" as well as Gary Chapman's "The Five Love Languages". And don't merely read the books – put it into practice by advocating for men and marriage from church to university to workplace to courtroom to government. Make plans to show that you respect Christian men who know what they are doing and why. Don't rely on your emotions to guide you – this is more of an obligation requires training, recon, planning and execution. (The same way that a man prepares to love a woman and then loves her – because women need love just like men need respect). Men pay attention to women who respect them, and it's much better for women to get attention from men by learning about them and helping them than by trying to bypass respecting the man to get attention by leveraging appearance and sexuality to get attention. And, of course, some men cannot be respected, so don't choose one of those.

Thinking practically about the gospel with an illustration from a war movie

May 28, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The city of Mogadishu, in Somalia, Africa

I decided to re-post one of my favorite posts for Memorial Day.

First, let's get an overview that helps us understand the context and goals of the mission we are going to discuss.

The scene is set in Somalia, Africa, in 1992. There a civil war between two warlords: Ali Mahdi and Mohammed Farah Aidid. The war has destroyed agricultural operations, and the people are starving. The United Nations are trying to help, but Aidid hijacks the food from UN aircraft so that he can use the food to gain control of the people. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis are dying of starvation. The UN requests American military forces to secure the air-dropped supplies so they can be distributed to the starving people.

In December 1992, President George H.W. Bush answers the call, sending 25,000 troops to Somalia to protect the food from the Somali warlords. However, in 1993, Bill Clinton is elected. He orders that the number of U.S. troops be reduced to 12,000. Following an attack by Aidid on Pakistani peace-keepers, the U.N. issues a resolution to capture those responsible. The U.S. armed forces have the arms and training to battle evil, so they get the call to capture Aidid and his lieutenants.

In late August 1993, Task Force Ranger is deployed to Mogadishu to capture Aidid and his lieutenants at the Olympic Hotel. The U.S. force consists of 440 troops from the Army Rangers and Army Delta Force special forces, commanded by General William Garrison. Garrison requested light armored units (Bradley Infantry Fighting vehicles) that would offer more protection than the unarmored HMMWV Humvees. Garrison was denied the light armor by the Clinton administration. Garrison requested heavier air support (AC-130 Spectre gunships) that would offer better fire support than the UH-60 Blackhawk miniguns. Garrison was denied the air support by the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration did not want the American forces to appear too heavily armed for the peace-keeping role.

The actual mission turned out to be much harder than it needed to be, because of the resources denied by the Clinton administration. Although the Aidid lieutenants were captured, Aidid himself escaped. Eighty-four American soldiers were wounded. Eighteen American soldiers were killed, and their bodies were dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. This was shown over and over by the media, and it undermined American resolve to help the Somali people. As a result, Clinton had the excuse he needed to retreat the American military.

(Source: Nova Online)

Two heroes lost their lives

Today, I want to talk about two of the men who lost their lives in Operation Gothic Serpent. They are Master Sergeant Gary I. Gordon and Sergeant First Class Randall D. Shughart – a Delta Force sniper team.

Here is a clip from the movie Blackhawk Down, which shows what happened to them:

The pilot of the downed Blackhawk was protected by the two men who volunteered to go in after him. They requested that they be inserted at the crash site, even though they knew that reinforcements were likely not going to be there in time to save them. They made the request to go and help the pilot *three times* before being allowed to go in. Their first two requests were denied by their commanding officer, because the odds against their survival were so overwhelming. The rescued pilot was later released by his captors, and the two heroes were awarded the Medal of Honor for their brave actions.

A Congressional Medal of Honor

Here is a description of the requirements to be awarded a Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through **conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of**

> **duty**:
>
> - While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States;
> - While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
> - While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

You can read the official details of their actions.

The point of this post

It is important for Christians to be familiar with real-world examples of people giving their lives in order to save the lives of others. When we see real-world examples of self-sacrifice, it helps us to understand what Jesus really achieved for us, and what he must have felt making that hard choice to volunteer to go in and rescue us. In general, my philosophy when it comes to the Bible is to make every effort to connect what the Bible says to the real world. We must not push Christianity into some far-off world of piety and feelings. We must make connections to real evidence and real life, so that what the Bible says becomes practical, and so that we have a deep friendship with and sympathy for God revealed in Jesus Christ. In real life, being willing to give your life to save someone else is hard. Understanding how that really happens will help us to value what Jesus has done for us.

Bible verses

I saw this verse on the ground outside the Airborne & Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, NC, where I went for my summer vacation in 2015. (Thanks to my friend Curby who hosted me)

Isaiah 6:8:

> [8] Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
>
> And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Here is the picture I took (yes, that is my running shoe):

"Here am I, send me" Isaiah 6:8

When confronted with an opportunity to imitate Christ in his self-sacrifice, we should think less about ourselves and our own desires, and take the opportunity to serve others effectively. We do not do what makes us happy, and we do not pursue fun and thrills. We do what heals, we do what helps others. We do not push away our responsibility to imitate Christ by caring for those in danger. Christianity is not just about "not doing bad things". It's the good things you do because of your relationship with Jesus that show your real allegiance, and give you the experience of being a Christian in deed.

And here is another good verse:

John 15:13:

> [13] Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

If you get a chance to watch the movie Blackhawk Down, then do so. I highly recommend it. You can also read the book that the movie is based on.

I love the Medal of Honor books by Edward F. Murphy. He writes about all the people who have been awarded the Medal of honor in different wars: World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

If you check my reading list, you'll find that I usually read two military books for every one book on another subject.

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

May 29, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they

take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.” And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What’s harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I’ll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, “In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home.” And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase “In order that you may know”. Same message, right?

3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don’t know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It’s really great. Acts 2:36. I’ve been a Christian 20 years and I didn’t see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can’t exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” There it is again. “Know for certain.”

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition “Christ rose from the grave,” for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, “I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave.”

3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be

> transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

How I retained my Christian faith, sobriety and chastity on a university campus

May 30, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

A couple of years ago, I was talking to a woman who grew up in a Christian home that was very focused on externals. There was a lot of bullying to get her to comply with expected Christian behavior, although the expected Christian behavior was often arbitrary, and had nothing to do with Christianity and more with just appearing "nice". There was no discussion of the evidence, no talking through objections. No focus on truth at all. She was always very curious about me, and how come I didn't drink, and how come I was able to stay a virgin through college, grad school, to the present day when so many people she knew who were raised in the church fell away from it in college. My answer was simple. I didn't grow up in a Christian home so I was never bullied into acting like a Christian beyond what I was convinced of myself. I just took my time and proved everything out before I had to act any particular way. I was in the driver's seat all the time, and that's how Christianity ought to be. The truth-seeking comes first, and then the slow process of re-prioritizing comes after. Performing for your parents and church will not survive contact with college.

Growing up, I didn't ever have to go to church. I didn't go to church until I was comfortable going. If I felt bored in church, I read an apologetics book, and I did this openly. If I didn't like the words of a song, then I didn't sing. My first youth pastor, Grant, never tried to get me to be like the other kids. He asked me what I was interested in. I said "arguing with people". He gave me books by E.J. Carnell and Alister McGrath. I read them, and that was how I acted like a Christian. When I met other Christians at the church who hadn't read anything about God's existence or the historical Jesus or the problem of evil, I didn't feel pressured to be like them. In school, there were lots of people who never did any studying or lab work. They could talk a lot about things they knew nothing about.

But because they didn't know anything, they failed tests and they couldn't put anything they learned into practice, either. People can sound so smart about things… until they actually have to take a test, or put something to use practically.

To me, if you didn't like apologetics, you were a fake and you were faking behaviors of a worldview that you had never investigated. It was really obvious to me that there was more to Christianity than just God-hollering and Scripture memorization. I did swimming lessons up until the point where I got my lifeguarding certification. At the later levels, we always had written exams as well as a practical portion including activities like treading water, swimming long distances, and rescue simulations. People who could pass the written test often failed the practical. If you fail the practical, then you fail the course. Period. No exceptions.

Knowing the truth about God's existence and character comes before acting as if God is real and God has a specific character and will for us. From the existence of God, we move on to the accuracy of the Bible, and on to theology, and then and only then do we start the outward behaviors of a Christian. If you skip to the behaviors, that is unnatural – like pretending to be a doctor when you have never been to medical school. Everyone who comes to Christianity from the outside, like me, knows how strange it is to meet people in church who talk about feelings and experiences as the basis of their worldview. Those people would never do anything serious, like making investment choices, on the basis of feelings. They would never think that merely having feelings about auto repair or Java programming enabled them to solve problems in those areas. But somehow, this is the standard operating procedure in the church. Which is why so many kids raised in the church dump their faith in college. For me, it was apologetics that made me so resistant to alcohol, sex and atheism in college. After all, if you win the argument, then why should you act like the person you defeated? They lost. That means they're wrong. I didn't feel any social pressure to behave like people who couldn't beat me in an argument.

Every single day, children raised in intact Christian homes on a diet of piety and "the Bible says" come to an understanding of what Christianity is that is fundamentally different from the knowledge they are acquiring in school or at work. And that is the beginning of their loss of faith. There should be no separation between practical areas of knowledge (e.g. – mechanical engineering) and Christianity. Christianity should not be seen as easy or shallow. We should not praise people who don't know how to talk about spiritual things intelligently to non-Christians, which is the real core "skill" that Christianity requires. Christianity is not a religion of being nice or feeling good – that's what all the other religions are trying to do. Christianity is about laying hold of the truth, and adjusting your actions to it.

Every Christian ought to be trying their best to learn how to speak intelligently to non-Christians about their faith, to the best of their ability. Especially when they are confronted with educated non-Christians – which is most of us living in the Western hemisphere. No Christian should be better at something else, like sports or school or music or anything. They should put maximum effort into Christianity, and do other things in their spare time. There is no one in my office who thinks that I know more about

computer science than I do about my Christian worldview. Computer science is my day job – I have a BS and MS and 18 years experience in it. But my co-workers know what comes first, and where my real interest and passion lies. When we go out to lunch, I talk about Christian things. That's what I'm the best at. I'm not trying to impress my co-workers by being the best at computer science. I'm trying to perform for my Audience of One, and show him that his honor and reputation are my top priorities. That quiet, hidden vertical relationship is what Christianity is all about. Not my will, Lord, but your will, be done. Tiny little steps backward from selfishness to communicate to the Lord Jesus that his goals are important to me.

My friend Stephen Bedard tweeted this, recently:

> "Frankly, I find it hard to understand how people today can risk parenthood without having studied apologetics." – William Lane Craig

Typical Christian parents expect behaviors of their children but they put in almost zero effort to answer their questions. I hear from so many Christians who fell away in college about how they dropped their faith in high school but just kept acting to please their parents. And the parents had no idea. The parents are the ones who are closest to the problem. They are the ones who should be finding out what is in the culture and the schools, and discussing it with their children. Most pastors are in the business of saying things that people like in order to pack the pews, and collect offerings. They aren't there to talk about uncomfortable topics. They're no good at responding to non-Christian thought in the culture. So it really falls on the parents to do the work of answering questions and leading.

Christianity ought to be more like engineering or lab work if you want to appeal to young people – testable, repeatable, practical. Think back to math class, and how teachers would insist that students SHOW YOUR WORK, instead of just writing the answer down. Instead of just saying "the Bible says", parents really need to show young people their work – how did they arrive at their worldview? That's what parents need to be prepared to show their children. Not singing, not feelings, not community, not family time together. Facts and evidence. Because that is the only way we know to test knowledge claims to see if they are objectively true or false. Parents who get their worldview straight will also find it much easier to act in accordance with what they say they believe. Even when the pressure is on, they will know what is true, and be able to do hard things because they want to respect what is true. Coming through a test of your Christian convictions is much easier when you do the homework first. It's just like any other test in that respect. It certainly worked for me in high school and college when I had to defend my faith to non-Christians. It also helped that I had no desire to fit in with people my own age, because they didn't have jobs. I had no respect for people who didn't work for money, which is almost everyone in high school and college.

In the church, we should respect people who are able to study these issues deeply, and then have conversations about their Christian worldview with people who don't accept that God exists, and don't believe the Bible. That is what followers of Jesus did (e.g. Acts

17). We should be especially respectful of those who are able to defend the Christian worldview using scientific evidence and historical evidence. Especially those who get PhDs and do research in testable areas of knowledge that matter to the Christian worldview. Jesus offered his own resurrection as evidence of his claims to people who didn't believe him. He liked evidence, and he had a passion for the truth. And so should we, if we claim to be his followers.

Dr. Walter Bradley

By the way, the lecture that changed my life the most is this lecture by Dr. Walter Bradley, a fabulously successful professor of mechanical engineering. I got hold of this lecture from 1997, about the time when I first started working full-time. It changed my life. Our young people are being raised to look up to attractive athletes, entertaining musicians, fideistic theologians, charismatic pastors, etc. People who have never set foot in the lion's den. Dr. Bradley is an expert in the scientific evidence relevant to the Christian worldview, and has lectured on HUNDREDS of university campuses. He is invited to speak on campus because he KNOWS what he is talking about. If parents could just start by understanding what it takes to have a career as an open, visible Christian professor on a secular university campus, that would be a good start.

Woman explains what she was told about having children when she was young

May 31, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man teaching woman proper marksmanship

This article is by Ellie Bufkin, writing for the The Federalist. I always had a suspicion that women were being told not to marry too early, and not to have kids too early, but to instead enjoy their freedom. (With all that that entails) In some cases, it was their own mothers telling them this. Here is the story of one woman who was told to follow her dreams – as long as they didn't involve marriage and children.

Excerpt:

> Since I was young, I've heard a non-stop stream of encouragement for me, as a "modern woman," to take charge of my own life, live independently, and chase my dreams. This seems like the obvious advice we should give children, except that many people spent so much time chasing their dreams and creating their bespoke lives that they forgot to have children.
>
> While growing up in the suburbs, my post-scholastic dream did not consist of finding a partner and having babies. I wanted to see the world, experience many cultures, and live without having to worry about caring for anyone else. I ended up in a fast-paced career with a propensity for hard partying, late hours, and a taste for travel and luxury.
>
> As years ticked by, I assumed my perfect life would simply fall into place when I was ready, my career would steadily improve, and I would be swept off my feet by a perfect man. I had many friends with the exact same expectations for their lives, and today, we are pretty much all still single and childless.
>
> We set our expectations so high that we never achieved them. We dated people with the same hope for impossibly perfect lives and moved from city to city,

> hoping we could achieve a greatness that was not to be.
>
> […]Liberal feminists widely consider it to be morally wrong to have children in your twenties, or to have more than two children, or to continue any unplanned pregnancy. As a species, shouldn't we want to reproduce? If we continue to reinforce the idea that having kids is a taboo choice, how long will it be before there are no children?
>
> Many of the women I went to primary and high school with never left our little hometown, and now have their own children in the exact suburb I couldn't wait to get away from. In my twenties, I pitied them. How could they be so uncurious as to never leave home? Weren't we all raised to believe that women had choices now?

The next thing I want to do is to give you some facts about infertility, and whether women have accurate beliefs about infertility.

Dina sent me this UK Daily Mail article a while back, but I held onto it until I could find something to pair it with.

It says:

> One of Britain's top NHS fertility specialists last night issued a stark warning to women: Start trying for a baby before you're 30 – or risk never having children.
>
> In a strongly worded letter to Education Secretary Nicky Morgan, consultant gynaecologist Professor Geeta Nargund has also demanded that teenagers are taught about the dangers of delaying parenthood, because of the spiralling cost to the taxpayer of IVF for women in their late 30s and 40s.
>
> […]Prof Nargund said last night: 'Ideally, if a woman is ready for a child, she should start trying by the time she is 30. She should consider having a child early because as a woman gets older, her fertility declines sharply.'
>
> If a woman started trying early enough, doctors would still have time to diagnose problems and take action before it was too late, she said.
>
> Her comments were endorsed by Professor Allan Pacey, outgoing chair of the British Fertility Society.
>
> **'You need to be trying by 30 because if there is a problem and you need surgery, hormones or IVF, then you've got five years to sort it out,' he said. 'If a woman starts trying at 35, doctors have got to sort it out when she is already on a slippery fertility slope'.**

My friend Drew found a study reported on by ABC News, that explained why the age of 30 is so important.

Excerpt:

> By the time a woman hits 30, nearly all of her ovarian eggs are gone for good, according a new study that says women who put off childbearing for too long

> could have difficulty ever conceiving.
>
> The study published by the University of St. Andrews and Edinburgh University in Scotland found that women have lost 90 percent of their eggs by the time they are 30 years old, and only have about 3 percent remaining by the time they are 40.

Now, do most women know what the experts say about infertility?

Consider this article from Aeon magazine.

It says:

> Many studies show that women are not only woefully ignorant when it comes to fertility, conception and the efficacy of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) – but they overestimate their knowledge about the subject. **For instance, a 2011 study in *Fertility and Sterility* surveyed 3,345 childless women in Canada between the ages of 20 and 50; despite the fact that the women initially assessed their own fertility knowledge as high, the researchers found only half of them answered six of the 16 questions correctly.** 72.9 per cent of women thought that: 'For women over 30, overall health and fitness level is a better indicator of fertility than age.' (False.) And 90.9 per cent felt that: 'Prior to menopause, assisted reproductive technologies (such as IVF) can help most women to have a baby using their own eggs.' (Also false.) Many falsely believed that by *not* smoking and *not* being obese they could improve their fertility, rather than the fact that those factors simply negatively affect fertility.
>
> […]**According to a 2011 study in *Human Reproduction*, which surveyed 410 undergraduate students, most overestimated a women's chances of spontaneous pregnancy in all age groups, but particularly after receiving IVF beyond age 40.** Only 11 per cent of the students knew that genetic motherhood is unlikely to be achieved from the mid-40s onward, unless using oocytes or egg cells frozen in advance. 'This can be explained by technological "hype" and favourable media coverage of very late pregnancies,' the authors concluded.

So, I guess now I'll issue my advice to women in their 20s on how to avoid being single and childless at 35.

Money gives men confidence to pull the trigger on marriage, so you should focus your efforts on men with a solid balance sheet and a gap-less resume. Beware of men who paint a rosy picture of their finances in the future that makes you feel good, but who have not demonstrated their ability to earn or save. It's much better to focus your time on a man who can marry you *right now*. The best way to tell if a man is capable of marriage is not by listening to confident words, it's by looking to see how he has prepared to perform his roles, one of which is *provider*.

Be debt free. Study STEM in school, update your resume, and get a job that pays well.

Jobs are not meant to be fun or fulfilling. You need to be preparing financially for marriage, and that means a normal 8-4:30 job in an office with 3% annual raises and 401K matching. The more you save to help your man with the down payment on your house, the better. Pursuing fun and spending money on frivolous things like travel makes you addicted to fun, which is unsuitable for the hard work and responsibilities in marriage. Working a hard job is a good way to break down your selfishness, and prepare you to take your obligations to others seriously. *Don't* live in the moment, *do* sacrifice for the future. Believe me: a woman's debt is a *serious* damper on a man's willingness to marry her.

If you went to college, chances are that you absorbed a lot of feminism. Feminism emphasizes being free of constraints, feeling happy, having fun, career over family, and independence from the needs of men and children. You need to renew your mind in order to undo the cultural denigration of marriage and children. Get yourself a marriage mentor, ask for book recommendations that will educate you about the challenges and rewards of marriage. A good marriage mentor will explain to you why marriage is a better plan than the feminist plan, and will emphasize self-denial, self-sacrifice, self-control and serving others. It's only by getting specific about marriage and parenting that your heart will change to want to work on marriage rather than work on the things that the feminist culture prefers. I recommend Dr. Laura's book on husbands, and lectures by Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse.

This talk of infertility made me think of a woman I know who just turned 30. She spent most of her 20s in relationships with huge, tall burly men. Race car drivers, etc. She liked to travel, especially to the beach. She liked ride around with in boats with buff guys. Now, at 30, she is very jaded about men and struggling to even get a date. In my experience, men are most open to marrying a woman who is young, athletic, and doesn't have baggage from fun-seeking with hot bad boys. Sexual baggage usually builds impatience, mistrust and controlling behavior in a woman. Men prefer to marry virgins who are calm, stable and not addicted to alcohol or drugs. The less experience the better. The time to focus on serious marriage-minded providers and leaders is when you have what they want to marry.

What is the best scientific theory to explain the origin of life on Earth?

June 1, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Evolution News talks about a new peer-reviewed science paper which re-caps the current origin of life situation:

> …the dominant biological paradigm — abiogenesis in a primordial soup. The latter idea was developed at a time when the earliest living cells were considered to be exceedingly simple structures that could subsequently evolve in a Darwinian way. These ideas should of course have been critically examined and rejected after the discovery of the exceedingly complex molecular structures involved in proteins and in DNA. But this did not happen. Modern ideas of abiogenesis in hydrothermal vents or elsewhere on the primitive Earth have developed into sophisticated conjectures with little or no evidential support.
>
> …independent abiogenesis on the cosmologically diminutive scale of oceans, lakes or hydrothermal vents remains a hypothesis with no empirical support…
>
> The conditions that would most likely to have prevailed near the impact-riddled Earth's surface 4.1–4.23 billion years ago were too hot even for simple organic molecules to survive let alone evolve into living complexity…
>
> The requirement now, on the basis of orthodox abiogenic thinking, is that an essentially instantaneous transformation of non-living organic matter to bacterial life occurs, an assumption we consider strains credibility of Earth-bound abiogenesis beyond the limit.
>
> The transformation of an ensemble of appropriately chosen biological monomers (e.g. amino acids, nucleotides) into a primitive living cell capable of further

> evolution appears to require overcoming an information hurdle of superastronomical proportions, an event that could not have happened within the time frame of the Earth except, we believe, as a miracle. All laboratory experiments attempting to simulate such an event have so far led to dismal failure.
>
> Before the extensive sequencing of DNA became available it would have been reasonable to speculate that random copying errors in a gene sequence could, over time, lead to the emergence of new traits, body plans and new physiologies that could explain the whole of evolution. However the data we have reviewed here challenge this point of view. It suggests that the Cambrian Explosion of multicellular life that occurred 0.54 billion years ago led to a sudden emergence of essentially all the genes that subsequently came to be rearranged into an exceedingly wide range of multi-celled life forms — Tardigrades, the Squid, Octopus, fruit flies, humans — to name but a few.
>
> …the complexity and sophistication of life cannot originate (from non-biological) matter under any scenario, over any expanse of space and time, however vast.

What is the explanation of the origin of life, then, according to true-believing atheists?

Richard Dawkins explains:

Got that? The origin of life on Earth is best explained as a result of higher aliens seeding the Earth with life. And where did those aliens come from? They evolved by chance. And can we observe or test the hypothesis that they evolved by chance? No.

Lest you think that this "aliens did it" explanation is a trick of video editing, consider this article from Scientific American.

Excerpt:

> Francis Crick (who co-discovered the structure of DNA with James Watson) and Leslie Orgel once proposed that life on Earth was the result of a deliberate infection, designed by aliens who had purposely fled mother nature's seed to a new home in the sun.
>
> […]The origins of life remains an unresolved mystery. I argue that Crick and Orgel's paper was meant both as a serious and plausible scientific alternative and as a means to criticize concurrent origins of life.

Previously, I've laid out the evidence for cosmic fine-tuning, so that we could understand how slight changes to the constants and quantities given at the Big Bang would make complex, embodied life in the universe impossible. The smallest of changes has massive effects: only hydrogen, no hydrogen, no stars, universe re-collapses into a hot fireball, etc. The atheistic response to this evidence, which has been documented in the most prestigious academic presses and peer-reviewed journals, is to either deny the evidence, or assert that there is an untestable, unobservable multiverse. As if this were not bad enough, the multiverse generator itself requires fine-tuning.

Similarly with the origin of the universe. The best atheistic responses to the origin of space, time, matter and energy from nothing, about 14 billion years ago, has been to either assert that nothing exists (Peter Atkins) or that the nothing that preceded the universe was actually something (Lawrence Krauss) or to introduce a speculative theoretical model that is disproved by observations (Sean Carroll).

So, let's take stock. We have evidence for the origin of the universe, like the cosmic microwave background radiation and the light element abundance observations. Atheist answer: either nothing exists right now, or the nothing causally prior to the universe was really something, or here is a disproved speculative theory. We have evidence of cosmic fine-tuning to allow the existence of complex, embodied intelligence. Atheist answer: the unobservable, untestable multiverse did it. We have evidence that origin of life was almost immediate after the cooling of the Earth, and that the problem is best explained by an intelligence sequencing amino acids and proteins, similar to the way that humans write code and blog posts. Atheist answer: unobservable, untestable aliens who evolved did it. This is not even to mention the Cambrian explosion. The last article I saw argued that the introduction of oxygen was the best naturalistic explanation for that. Does oxygen write genetic code?

I'll leave it to you to decide which side likes science, and which side likes science fiction. Personally, I would not be comfortable being an atheist at this time in history. We've just made too much scientific progress to still believe in stone-age mythology. I understand that atheists find Star Wars and Star Trek comforting and entertaining. I understand that real peer-reviewed science papers are boring and dull compared to science fiction. I'm not saying that we can't believe in atheism when we are children, and still reading comic books. But there comes a time when we need to grow up and be more responsible about adjusting our worldviews to match the progress of science. A child who believes in Santa Claus is cute, but it's not the same thing when a grown-up does it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Good news: more parents pulling their kids out of schools to homeschool them

June 2, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

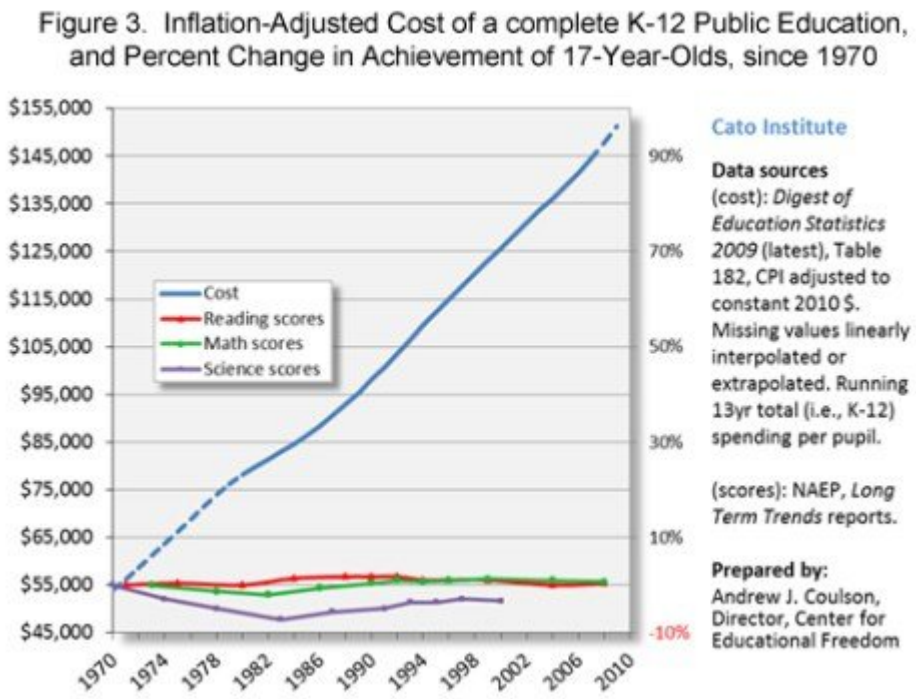

Education spending has tripled since 1970

Homeschooling is definitely NOT an easy thing to do. First, parents still have to pay taxes for the failing schools they don't want to use. Second, one parents has to give up a salary to stay home, although this is offset by not having to pay for daycare. But more parents are starting to choose homeschooling for a variety of reasons. This news article from Washington Times lays out one that I had never heard of before.

Excerpt:

> After a gunman opened fire on students in Parkland, Florida, the phones started ringing at the Texas Home School Coalition, and they haven't stopped yet.
>
> The Lubbock-based organization has been swamped with inquiries for months from parents seeking safer options for their kids in the aftermath of this year's deadly school massacres, first in Parkland and then in Santa Fe, Texas.
>
> "When the Parkland shooting happened, our phone calls and emails exploded," said coalition president Tim Lambert. "In the last couple of months, our numbers have doubled. We're dealing with probably between 1,200 and 1,400 calls and emails per month, and prior to that it was 600 to 700."
>
> […]Brian D. Ray, president of the National Home Education Research Institute in Salem, Oregon, who has conducted homeschool research for 33 years, said school safety has increasingly become an issue for parents looking at teaching their kids at home.

It’s definitely true that homeschooling is a better choice for parents seeking to pass on their worldview to their children. And I think it’s a real question whether public school administrators are doing everything possible to make schools safe. Although metal detectors and armed guards are sure ways to prevent violence, public school teachers and administrators simply don’t want to do what works. And there’s no question about what works. I recently had to renew my plates in a new county and accidentally wandered into the City Hall building. The nice armed guard standing in front of the metal detector was nice enough to point me in the right direction. That was good security.

The trouble with the schools is that, under the Obama administration, schools lost a lot of their power to remove dangerous students from the schools. This article by David French at National Review explains.

Excerpt:

> Yesterday Paul Sperry of RealClearInvestigations published a comprehensive report that reached an explosive conclusion:
>
> Despite committing a string of arrestable offenses on campus before the Florida school shooting, Nikolas Cruz was able to escape the attention of law enforcement, pass a background check and purchase the weapon he used to slaughter three staff members and 14 fellow students because of Obama administration efforts to make school discipline more lenient.
>
> […]In 2013, the Broward County school board entered into an agreement with multiple law-enforcement agencies — including the Broward County sheriff — designed to limit the number of on-campus arrests.
>
> Obama education secretary Arne Duncan even highlighted Broward County’s efforts to reduce out-of-school suspensions and try alternative forms of discipline. Broward County was reportedly “one of 53 major school districts” to adopt Obama-administration guidelines designed in part to limit law-enforcement involvement in school discipline.
>
> Sperry quoted Peter Kirsanow, a conservative member of the Commission on Civil Rights:
>
> Broward County adopted a lenient disciplinary policy similar to those adopted by many other districts under pressure from the Obama administration to reduce racial “disparities” in suspensions and expulsions. . . . In many of these districts, the drive to “get our numbers right” has produced disastrous results, with startling increases in both the number and severity of disciplinary offenses, including assaults and beatings of teachers and students.
> Sperry also wrote a comprehensive essay for the New York Post in December outlining how lax discipline policies where enabling a wave of violence against teachers and students. He detailed incidents across the country, including mass resignations of teachers after escalating assaults.
>
> In local news reports at least one former Broward school-resource officer has

> spoken bluntly about the pressure not to arrest students and said that the number of resource officers was cut in half.

The point is that it's not by accident that schools have suddenly become unsafe. It's a result of Democrat policies which favor law-breakers over student's safety. Sound familiar? That's right, it's the same leniency that Democrats show to illegal aliens who commit crimes. Remember how Nancy Pelosi defended the violent criminals in the MS-13 gang? This is normal Democrat behavior. They try to feel good about themselves and show everyone how "compassionate" they are by defending criminals while endangering the taxpayers who pay their salaries. Don't ask me why, it makes no sense to me.

Anyway, I have a cute homeschooling story about an Alabama family to from the Christian Post, which shows how good homeschooling can work.

Excerpt:

> An impressive seven of 10 homeschooled children from a Christian family in Montgomery, Alabama, which now boasts a doctor and New York City architect among them, all started college by the time they were 12; and now their parents have written a book about how they managed to pull off such staggering academic success.
>
> The parents of the 10 children, Mona Lisa and Kip Harding, are described as high school sweethearts on a website dedicated to *The Brainy Bunch Book*.
>
> "After four kids, they decided to turn to homeschooling, and their success paved the way for their children to start college by the age of 12, and go on to great careers in medicine, engineering, architecture and more," explaines the website.
>
> **Hannah, 26, is the oldest Harding child. She earned her bachelor of science in mathematics from Auburn University Montgomery and a master's degree in mathematics by the time she was 19. She is now working on a PhD in material science.**
>
> **Rosanna, 24, is now an architect in New York City and became the youngest member in the American Institute of Architects at age 23. Serena, 22, earned her bachelor's degree in biology from Huntingdon College at 17, and became one of America's youngest female doctors at 22. She is now a resident at the Naval Hospital in Bethesda.**
>
> **Their brother Heath, 17, has an master's in computer science. He earned a BA in English at 15, and he is currently working at building his tutoring and online computer business. Keith, who is 15, is pursuing a bachelor's in music at Faulkner University. Seth, just 13, is a history major at Huntingdon College, while Katrinnah, 10, is a student at Faulkner University. Their other siblings, Mariannah, 8; Lorennah, 5, and Thunder, 3, are still being homeschooled.**
>
> In an interview with KSL Kip and Mona Lisa noted that their children aren't geniuses. They simply found a way to accelerate their learning by making it fun.

> One-on-one sessions with the mother who is working on her bachelor's degree at home also helped immensely.
>
> "One teacher has 30 students on average," said Kip. "We can do better than that. Kids get left behind in a classroom. … This is where homeschooling really takes off because those kids are getting extra attention. And who's more loving than a mom and dad teaching them things?"

I think you would certainly detect problems much faster in your children's educations if you are the one teaching them.

Robin Collins and atheist Peter Millican discuss the fine-tuning of the universe for life

June 3, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

You might remember Peter Millican from the debate he had with William Lane Craig. I ranked that debate as one of the 3 best I have ever seen, along with the first Craig vs Dacey debate and the second Craig vs Sinnott-Armstrong debate.

Details:

> Science has revealed that the fundamental constants and forces of the cosmos appear to be exquisitely fine-tuned to allow a universe in which life can develop. Is God the best explanation of the incredibly improbable odds of the universe we live in being a life-permitting one?
>
> Robin Collins is a Christian philosopher and a leading advocate of the argument for God from cosmic design. Peter Millican is an atheist philosopher at Oxford University. They debate the issues.
>
> From 'Unbelievable?' on 'Premier Christian Radio', Saturday 19th March 2016.

The debate:

As usual when the atheist is an expert, there is no snark or paraphrasing in the summary.

Summary

Brierley: What is the fine-tuning argument?

Collins: the fine-tuning is structure of the universe is extremely precisely set to allow the existing of conscious, embodied agents who are capable of moral behavior. There are 3 kinds of fine-tuning: 1) the laws of nature (mathematical formulas), 2) the constants of

physics (numbers that are plugged into the equations), 3) the initial conditions of the universe. The fine-tuning exists not just because there are lots of possibilities, but there is something special about the actual state of affairs that we see. Every set of laws, parameters and initial conditions is equally improbable, but the vast majority of permutations do not permit life. The possible explanations: theism or the multiverse.

Brierley: How improbable are the numbers?

Collins: Once case is the cosmological constant (dark energy density), with is 1 part in (10 raised to 120th power). If larger, the universe expands too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form after the Big Bang. If smaller, the universe collapses in on itself before life could form. Another case is the initial distribution of mass energy to give us the low entropy we have that is necessary for life. The fine-tuning there is 1 part in (10 raised to the 10th power raised to the 123rd power).

Brierley: What do you think of the argument?

Millican: The argument is worth taking very seriously. I am a fan of the argument. The other arguments for God's existence such as the ontological and cosmological arguments are very weak. But the fine-tuning argument has the right structure to deliver the conclusion that theists want. And it is different from the traditional design argument tended to focus on biological nature, which is not a strong argument. But the fine-tuning argument is strong because it precedes any sort of biological evolution. Although the design is present at the beginning of the universe, it is not visible until much later. The argument points to at least deism, and possibly theism. The argument is not based on ignorance, it is rooted in "the latest results from the frontiers of science" (his phrase).

Brierley: Is this the best argument from natural theology?

Collins: The cosmological argument makes theism viable intuitively, but there are some things that are puzzling, like the concept of the necessary being. But the fine-tuning argument is decisive.

Brierley: What's are some objections to the fine-tuning argument?

Millican: The argument is based on recent physics, so we should be cautious because we **maybe** we will discover a natural explanation.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: The cosmological constant has been around since 1980. But the direction that physics is moving in is that there are more constants and quantities being discovered that need to be fine-tuned, not less. Even if you had a grand unified theory, that would have to be have the fine-tuning pushed into it.

(BREAK)

Millican: Since we have no experience of other laws and values from other universes, **we don't know** whether these values can be other than they are. Psychologically, humans are prone to seeing purpose and patterns where there is none, so **maybe** that's happening here.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: It is possible to determine probabilities on a single universe case, for example using multiple ways of calculating Avogadro's number all converging on the same number makes it more probable.

Millican: Yes, I willing to accept that these constants can take on other values, ("principle of indifference"). But **maybe** this principle be applied if the improbability were pushed up into the theory?

Collins: Even if you had a grand theory, selecting the grand theory from others would retain the improbability.

Brierley: What about the multiverse?

Millican: **What if** there are many, many different universes, and we happen to be in the one that is finely-tuned, then we should not be surprised to observe fine-tuning. **Maybe** a multiverse theory will be discovered in the future that would allow us to have these many universes with randomized constants and quantities. "I do think that it is a little bit of a promissary note". I don't think physics is pointing to this right now.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: I agree it's a promissary note. This is the strongest objection to the fine-tuning argument. But there are objections to the multiverse: 1) the fine-tuning is kicked back up to the multiverse generator has to be set just right to produce universes with different constants, 2) the multiverse is more likely to produce a small universe with Boltzmann brains that pop into existence and then out again, rather than a universe that contains conscious, embodied intelligent agents. I am working on a third response now that would show that the same constants that allow complex, embodied life ALSO allow the universe to be discoverable. This would negate the observer-selection effect required by the multiverse objection.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Millican: I don't see why the multiverse generator has to be fine-tuned, since **we don't know** what the multiverse generator is. I'm not impressed by the Boltzmann brains, but won't discuss. We should be cautious about inferring design because **maybe** this is a case where we are seeing purpose and design where there is none.

Brierley: Can you negate the discoverability of the universe by saying that it might be psychological?

Collins: These things are not psychological. The selected value for the cosmic microwave background radiation is fine-tuned for life and for discoverability. It's not merely a discoverability selection effect, it's optimal for discoverability. If baryon-photon value were much smaller, we would have known that it was not optimal. So that judgment cannot be explained by

Millican: That's a very interesting new twist.

Brierley: Give us your best objection.

Millican: I have two. 1) Even if you admit to the fine-tuning, this doesn't show a being who is omnipotent and omnisicient. What the fine-tuning shows is that the designer is doing

the best it can given the constraints from nature. **If I were God,** I would not have made the universe so big, and I wouldn't have made it last 14 billion years, just to make one small area that supports life. An all-powerful God would have made the universe much smaller, and much younger. 2) The fine-tuning allows life to exist in other solar systems in other galaxies. What does this alien life elsewhere mean for traditional Christian theology? The existence of other alien civilizations argues against the truth of any one religion.

Brierley: Respond to those.

Collins: First objection: with a finite Creator, you run into the problem of having to push the design of that creature up one level, so you don't really solve the fine-tuning problem. An unlimited being (non-material, not composed of parts) does not require fine-tuning. The fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than atheism. Second objection: I actually do think that it is likely that are other universes, and life in other galaxies and stars, and the doctrine of the Incarnation is easily adaptable to that, because God can take on multiple natures to appear to different alien civilizations.

Other resources (from WK)

If you liked this discussion, be sure and check out a full length lecture by Robin Collins on the fine-tuning, and a shorter lecture on his very latest work. And also this the Common Sense Atheism podcast, featuring cosmologist Luke Barnes, who answers about a dozen objections to the fine-tuning argument.

Under “racist” Trump, black unemployment plunges to record low

June 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the 2016 presidential election, about 90% of black voters voted for higher taxes, more government spending, more regulations, and more government. President Trump slashed the individual and corporate tax rates, and greatly reduced regulations on job creators. Fortunately for black voters, they didn’t get the bad economic policies they voted for.

The Daily Caller explains:

> Friday’s economic numbers were very good for America.
>
> The numbers reveal that the U.S. economy is booming and many key indicators of economic health are trending in the right direction. According to the Labor Department, the unemployment rate is 3.8 percent, the lowest in nearly two decades.
>
> 223,000 jobs were created and the May increase in payroll was bullish, surprising economists, according to NPR. However, the most historic data points seem to be centered around black unemployment. The unemployment rate for African-Americans plunged to 5.9 percent in May. That is a record low. Interestingly, the gap between white ad black unemployment has shrunk to the smallest since these numbers have been recorded. The white unemployment (3.5%) and black unemployment (5.9%) is the smallest gap since the release of these numbers, beginning in the early 1970s.

If you looked at who black voters tend to vote for, you would think that they favored gay rights, gay marriage, abortion through all 9 months of pregnancy, the destruction of the traditional family, and eradicating Christianity from the public square. Although there are a handful of black conservatives who connect their voting with their values, most black voters don’t.

It doesn’t make any difference if blacks identify as Christians. When the chips are down, most of them vote for abortion, gay rights and gay marriage:

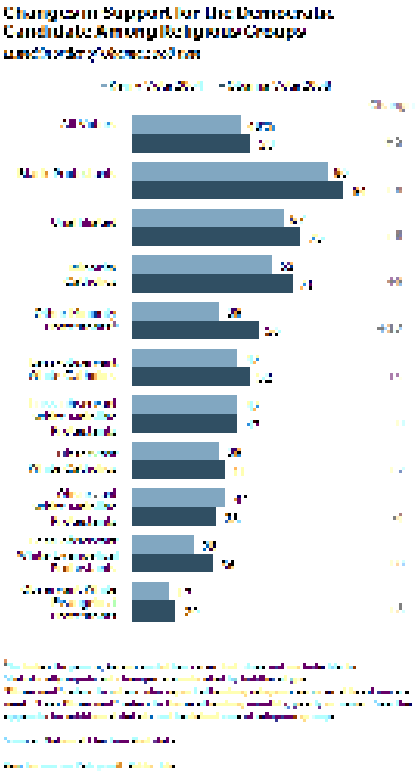

Which Religions Voted for Obama in 2008?

If you include black voters who don't identify as Protestants, the number voting for Democrats is even higher, if you can believe that. Black "Protestants" vote for Democrats at about the same rates as atheists. As a non-white Evangelical Christian, I am apparently in the minority because I vote pro-life and pro-marriage.

Should we expect black voters to know that Democrat policies do not work? Well, we should certainly expect the ones living in the largest American cities to know.

Do blacks do well when they get what they vote for?

The big cities like Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Baltimore, etc. that are so awful for law-abiding blacks to live in have been run by Democrats *for decades.*

Investors Business Daily explains:

> America is awash with troubled, dysfunctional cities that have been electing Democratic mayors for decades.
>
> - Detroit last elected a Republican mayor in 1957. It is now the model of urban failure — it's recognized more for its poverty, crime, rot and bankruptcy than the great cars that it turned out into the early 1970s. It is the poorest big city in the nation, with almost 40% of the population living below the poverty line. The website Law Street actually ranks Detroit ahead of Flint as the country's most dangerous city. Either way, it's clear that both cities have institutionalized crime problems.
>
> Detroit is also a pit of political corruption. Just in recent years, one mayor, Kwame Kilpatrick, was convicted of corruption and sent to federal prison for 28 years, while building inspectors have been indicted on federal felony bribery charges

> and a former city council member was investigated in a bribery and kickback scandal.
>
> - Chicago's last GOP mayor was elected in 1927. The nation's third-largest city is home to some of the worst inner-city violence imaginable. More than 2,300 people were shot there last year, and nearly 400 lost their lives to homicides.
>
> Its finances are just as grim. "Chicago is so broke," IBD contributor Stephen Moore explained months ago, "that its bonds are junk status, and Mayor Rahm Emanuel had to go hat in hand last week to the state capital, Springfield, for bailout money to pay the bills." Things have been rotten enough, Moore said, to send "a record number of people … fleeing Cook County, home to Chicago." Only a little more than half of the city's pension liabilities are funded.
>
> - St. Louis has been electing Democratic mayors since 1949. The Gateway to the West has become the gateway for crime. Law Street says that it's the fourth most dangerous city in the country, Forbes says it's the second. It had the sixth-highest poverty rate among big cities in 2014.
> - The last GOP mayor of Philadelphia left office in 1952. A few years ago, Moore identified it as a favorite to follow Detroit into bankruptcy.
> - Both Baltimore and Oakland had Republican mayors as late as the 1960s. In the era of Democratic rule, both are now more well known for their crime and poverty problems than for their charm and character.
> - Newark, N.J., hasn't had a GOP mayor in more than a century. It was ranked as the fifth-worst city to live in in 2015. Detroit, of course, was first.
>
> When Democrats are in control, cities tend to go soft on crime, reward cronies with public funds, establish hostile business environments, heavily tax the most productive citizens and set up fat pensions for their union friends. Simply put, theirs is a Blue State blueprint for disaster.

If you want to blame someone for the failure of the black community to get ahead, blame Democrats. They are the ones who are running things in the cities where we see all this rioting. Their policies are the cause of the poverty. You don't get job creation when you punish the job creators with high taxes and onerous regulations. You don't get fathers in the homes when you reward single motherhood by choice with welfare checks.

Supreme Court sides with Christian baker against secular left fascists and ACLU

June 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

On Monday, the Supreme Court finally ruled on one of the cases where Christian bakers were persecuted by gay couples and gay rights activitists who wanted to use the power of the government to control the behavior of Christians. Basically, the gay rights activists wanted Christians to act like non-Christians on moral issues. They were using the power of the state to force their morality on Christians. It was the height of intolerance and bigotry.

Here is the first article from Fox News that I'm linking to, written by Kristen Waggoner. Kristen is lead counsel on this Colorado case, as well as the Washington state case against the florist Barronelle Stutzman.

Excerpt:

> On Monday, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of cake artist Jack Phillips, saying the Colorado Civil Rights Commission unjustly punished him when it ordered Jack to create a custom wedding cake celebrating a same-sex wedding. As the court said, "[t]he neutral and respectful consideration to which Phillips was entitled was compromised here …. The Civil Rights Commission's treatment of his case has some elements of a clear and impermissible hostility toward the sincere religious beliefs that motivated his objection."

You'll hear a lot of lies about the case from the mainstream media.

Here's the truth:

> Jack has never refused to serve any person based on who they are or what they look like. Everyone is welcome in his shop—even the two men who sued him. In

> fact, he told those men that, even though he couldn't create a custom cake to celebrate a same-sex marriage, he would be happy to sell them anything else in his shop or design a cake for them for a different occasion.
>
> Over the years, Jack has declined to create many custom cakes because of the messages they express. If you're looking for a ghoulish Halloween cake, a boozy bachelorette-themed dessert, or a cake celebrating a divorce—Masterpiece Cakeshop isn't your place.

Here's what the Colorado Civil Rights Commission ordered Jack to do:

> The commission's order requires cake artist Jack Phillips and his staff at Masterpiece Cakeshop to design cakes for same-sex celebrations, forces him to re-educate his staff that Colorado's Anti-Discrimination Act means that artists must endorse same-sex marriage regardless of their religious beliefs, compels him to implement new policies to comply with the commission's order, and requires him to file quarterly "compliance" reports for two years. The reports must include the number of patrons declined a wedding cake or any other product and state the reason for doing so to ensure he has fully eliminated his religious beliefs from his business.

Here's an example of the hostility to Christianity of the Colorado commissioners:

> Commissioner Diann Rice makes the following comment just before denying Phillips' request to temporarily suspend the commission's re-education order:
>
> "I would also like to reiterate what we said in…the last meeting [concerning Jack Phillips]. Freedom of religion and religion has been used to justify all kinds of discrimination throughout history, whether it be slavery, whether it be the Holocaust… I mean, we can list hundreds of situations where freedom of religion has been used to justify discrimination. And to me it is one of the most despicable pieces of rhetoric that people can use – to use their religion to hurt others."

The Commissioner certainly wasn't shy about ramming her secular leftist ideology down Jack's throat, and with the full power of the secular state behind it. But she wasn't willing to allow Jack to live according to his beliefs. He had to be forced to accept her beliefs and her morality. At gunpoint, really.

Another prominent defender of liberty is David French, who used to work for the ADF, and is now at ACLJ. He wrote about the case for National Review. He addresses the all-important question about what we can expect from future rulings. Will this decision apply broadly or narrowly?

He writes:

> […][T]he Court focused on Phillips's second claim, holding (by a 7–2 margin) that Colorado violated his right to free exercise of religion when it held him in violation of state public-accommodation law. Justice Kennedy focused on two

> critical aspects of the case to support his ruling. He first condemned anti-religious comments made by state commissioners during the hearings before the Colorado Civil Rights Commission. He especially singled out a commissioner's claim that "freedom of religion" has been used to "justify all kinds of discrimination throughout history," including slavery and the Holocaust. The commissioner called Phillips's religious-freedom claim "one of the most despicable pieces of rhetoric that people can use."
>
> […]Had Kennedy stopped his opinion at that point, Phillips's victory would have been important, but profoundly limited. The obvious response would be for the commissioners to reconsider the case, cleanse their rhetoric of outright hostility, deliver the same result on a cleaner record, and put the more difficult free-speech claim right back in the Court's lap. But Kennedy didn't stop. He found a separate ground for concluding that Colorado was motivated by anti-religious animus, and that separate ground will make it difficult for states to take aim at "offensive" religious exercise, even when it occurs in a commercial context.
>
> It turns out that the state of Colorado had protected the right of bakers to refuse to create cakes with explicitly anti-gay messages.
>
> […]All bakers — regardless of religion — have the same rights and obligations. At the same time, gay and religious customers enjoy equal rights under state public-accommodation statutes. Any ruling the commission imposes will have to apply on the same basis to different litigants, regardless of faith and regardless of the subjective "offensiveness" of the message.
>
> This is a severe blow to the state. It hoped for a ruling declaring that the cake wasn't protected expression and a free-exercise analysis that simply ratified the public-accommodation law as a "neutral law of general applicability." Such a ruling would have permitted the favoritism on display in this case. It would have granted state authorities broad discretion to elevate favored messages and suppress dissent, all while operating under the fiction that they weren't suppressing protected expression or religious exercise.

It was an excellent idea for whoever asked for those anti-gay cakes to do that so that we would know that the law was not being enforced equally. Because of that, we got a broad ruling that will be applicable elsewhere. It's not everything we wanted, but it's more than I expected.

Remembering Richard Winters on D-Day: The Battle of Brecourt Manor

June 6, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Richard D. Winters Monument

The caption says, “Wars do not make men great, but they do bring out the greatness in good men.” Now let’s see what Dick Winters did during World War II.

Mission: locate and destroy enemy artillery

Brecourt Manor

I want to link to this article from Investors Business Daily about Lt. Winters action at Brecourt Manor.

> Here’s the summary of what Dick Winters did on the morning of June 6th, 1944:
>
> First Lt. Dick Winters leapt into leadership on D-Day, June 6, 1944. His commander’s aircraft was shot down as the men parachuted at 600 feet. When Winters headed to earth, he was in charge of a small platoon.

> When he landed, he had to command Company E with 148 men, because his commander had been lost along with the plane.
>
> Yet in the chaos, Winters could locate only a dozen other soldiers for their first task: take out a 50-man German artillery battery.
>
> “Winters ordered his assault force to strip down to only essential weapons — guns and grenades — to use against the well-prepared defenses, then deployed his machine guns to cover his advances,” Keith Huxen, senior director of research at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, told IBD. “Waiting for the proper moment, he led a charge across an open field, gaining the first gun placement, and then they moved down the trenches, systematically destroying each gun.
>
> “In the process, Winters discovered a map detailing all German gun positions to kill American soldiers coming up from Utah Beach, which saved many lives.”
>
> Joined by five reinforcements during the fight, Winters lost four dead and six wounded. The Yanks managed to kill 15 Nazis, capture 11 and wound many others.
>
> Winters’ maneuvers are still studied at West Point as a case of successfully attacking a fixed position, despite being outnumbered.
>
> Winters (1918-2011) was born in Ephrata, Pa., and the family moved to Lancaster when he was 8.
>
> He later attributed his character and desire to go to church regularly to his mother.
>
> Winters attended local Franklin & Marshall College and earned an economics degree with top honors in 1941. He enlisted in the Army in August to shorten his service time, rather than wait to be drafted if America was to join the war.

The diagram below shows where everything was positioned. The Rangers attacked through the trenches containing the four guns, while being raked with fire from multiple MG42 heavy machine guns across the open field.

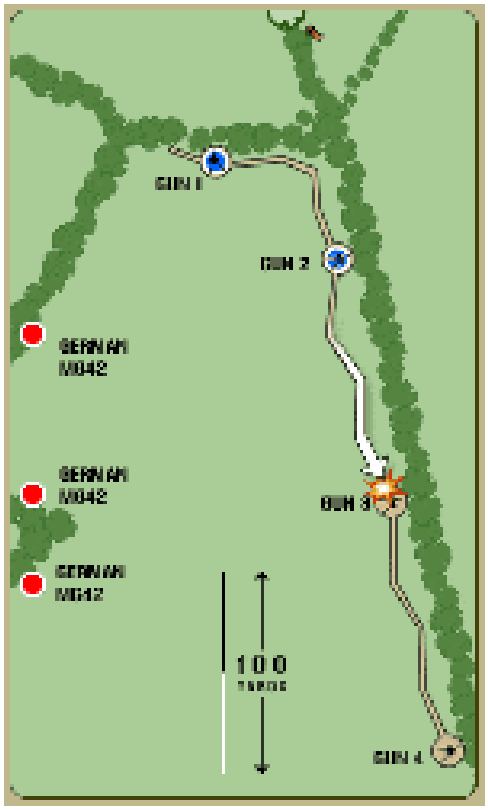

Assaulting the guns at Brecourt Manor

The operation was one of the most famous actions in the Normandy invasion, and you may have seen it portrayed in the Band of Brothers DVD series. But the article notes that when Dick Winters read the script for that series, “he asked that the profanity be cut from the dialogue of his character, since he never swore”. When the producers told him it was too late to change it, he wrote them a letter of resignation from the production, because “I don’t want these boys and girls thinking it is acceptable using profanity”. In the end, the movie makers removed the swearing by the actor portraying Winters.

If you are looking for a reason to buck the culture and stop swearing, there’s a good reason for you right there – Dick Winters never used profanity.

You can watch the scene from Band of Brothers in low resolution here:

If you play Combat Mission, like I do, you can watch a 28 minute AAR from the simulation of the battle.

Operation Market Garden

More from the article I linked above, this time from Operation Market Garden:

> Near Nijmegen on Oct. 5, Winters’ platoon was a position where any movement carried risks. Rather than retreat when fired on by a larger force behind a dike, he led a charge to the top and on the other side discovered a company of 150 Nazi SS troops. Despite having only 40 men, the Americans opened up with everything they had, then shot up a company of enemy reinforcements.
>
> The fray ended with 50 Germans dead, 11 POWs and countless wounded, with few casualties among the Americans.
>
> “This was Easy Company’s crowning achievement of the war and my apogee as a

> company commander," Winters told Kingseed. "This demonstrated its overall superiority, of every soldier, of every phase of infantry tactics: patrol, defense, attack using a base of fire, withdrawal and, above all, superior marksmanship with rifles, machine guns and mortar fire."

Dick Winters is a brave man, someone I admire him very much. And I am grateful for men like him.

I blogged about another hero of the 101st Airborne Division, Ronald Speirs, in a previous post.

Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?

June 7, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The importance of fathers for teaching children about a God who cares

Here's a lecture by New York University professor Paul Vitz to explain a connection between atheism and fatherlessness:

Here's an article by Paul Copan (related to the lecture) which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.*It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own*rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of Francois-Marie

Arouet.

- *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
- *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
- *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
- Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
- *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
- *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
- *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
- *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
- *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
- *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
- We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
- *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
- *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
- *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]

Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Here are some corrections to the list:

1) Voltaire was not an atheist but a deist who rejected claims of the Bible's inspiration, like Paine. Voltaire's aphorism, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him,"

far from being the cynical remark it is often taken for, it was meant as a retort to the atheistic clique of d'Holbach, Grimm, and others.

2) David Hume's religious views remain uncertain. He never said he was an atheist. A gentle skeptic suits him more.

3) Bertrand Russell was an agnostic.

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence of a psychological explanation for atheism, but there is also statistical evidence.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If

> his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an enormously difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary.

New study: 90% of species on Earth today originated 100,000 to 200,000 years ago

June 8, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Well, it's Friday, so I thought we would all benefit from reading about a brand new peer-reviewed study that should be the final nail in the coffin of naturalistic evolution. At least for those with an open mind who are not wedded to the philosophical assumption of naturalism.

Phys.org (which is committed dogmatically to fully naturalistic evolution) reports:

> Mark Stoeckle from The Rockefeller University in New York and David Thaler at the University of Basel in Switzerland, who together published findings last week sure to jostle, if not overturn, more than one settled idea about how evolution unfolds.
>
> It is textbook biology, for example, that species with large, far-flung populations—think ants, rats, humans—will become more genetically diverse over time.
>
> But is that true?
>
> "The answer is no," said Stoeckle, lead author of the study, published in the journal *Human Evolution*.
>
> For the planet's 7.6 billion people, 500 million house sparrows, or 100,000 sandpipers, genetic diversity "is about the same," he told AFP.
>
> The study's most startling result, perhaps, is that nine out of 10 species on Earth today, including humans, came into being 100,000 to 200,000 years ago.
>
> "This conclusion is very surprising, and I fought against it as hard as I could,"

> Thaler told AFP.
>
> That reaction is understandable: How does one explain the fact that 90 percent of animal life, genetically speaking, is roughly the same age?

Oh, oh. Pick me, pick me. I know the answer. The answer is that the biological information in living systems was put there by an intelligent agent. You know, the same way that information in books is put there by intelligent agents. And the same way that information in computer code is put there by intelligent agents. And the same way that information in blog posts is put there by intelligent agents. We know what introduces information from our own experience.

Well, what about mutation and selection? Couldn't they create all this information in a couple hundred thousand years? Well, no. You see, mutation and selection have been tested in the lab to see how much information they can produce over generations and generations. And the conclusion is clear: it is impossible for blind forces to create the amount of information we see in living systems in the short time that is available. In fact, the whole history of the universe is not enough time for evolutionary mechanisms to create the information we have in front of us.

Before we leave the paper reported by Phys.org, here is something about whether we see the gradual emergence of complexity via lots of transitional forms in nature.

Not so much:

> […][A]nother unexpected finding from the study—species have very clear genetic boundaries, and there's nothing much in between.
>
> "If individuals are stars, then species are galaxies," said Thaler. "They are compact clusters in the vastness of empty sequence space."
>
> The absence of "in-between" species is something that also perplexed Darwin, he said.

Indeed. So perplexing.

The evidence we gain from the progress of science is always perplexing to people who assume naturalism, and then try to shoehorn reality to match their religious assumptions. I have an idea. Why don't we just make science the search for truth, no holds barred? Wouldn't that be a much better way to do science? Let's just do science honestly, and stop trying to make it prove things that are comfortable for us.

If the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life, the origin of the first living system, and the sudden origin of body plans in the Cambrian explosion are impossible to account for on naturalism, then maybe we need to jettison the philosophical assumption of naturalism, and just go where the evidence leads? What's wrong with that?

Facebook, Amazon, Google and Twitter ally with leftist group linked to domestic terrorism

June 9, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

If you care about religious liberty, then you know all about religious liberty litigation groups like the Alliance Defending Freedom and the American Center for Law and Justice. These are the lawyers who argue religious liberty cases against secular-leftist fascists at the Supreme Court. In fact, Kristen Waggoner just won a case at the Supreme Court, defending Christian small business owner Jack Phillips from Colorado gay activists.

With that in mind, take a look at this story from the Daily Caller, about the big media corporations who oppose groups like the Alliance Defending Freedom.

Excerpt:

> Four of the world's biggest tech platforms have working partnerships with a left-wing nonprofit that has a track record of inaccuracies and routinely labels conservative organizations as "hate groups."
>
> Facebook, Amazon, Google and Twitter all work with or consult the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in policing their platforms for "hate speech" or "hate groups," a Daily Caller News Foundation investigation found.
>
> The SPLC is on a list of "external experts and organizations" that Facebook works with "to inform our hate speech policies," Facebook spokeswoman Ruchika Budhraja told TheDCNF in an interview.

So, most people reading this are probably thinking "what's the big deal? I'm just an ordinary mainstream Christian / conservative. My speech doesn't count as hate speech". If you're thinking that, you clearly do not know who the SPLC is.

More:

> Of the four companies, Amazon gives the SPLC the most direct authority over its platform, TheDCNF found.
>
> […]Jeff Bezos' company grants the SPLC broad policing power over the Amazon Smile charitable program, while claiming to remain unbiased.
>
> "We remove organizations that the SPLC deems as ineligible," an Amazon spokeswoman told TheDCNF.
>
> […]The Smile program allows customers to identify a charity to receive 0.5 percent of the proceeds from their purchases on Amazon. Customers have given more than $8 million to charities through the program since 2013, according to Amazon.
>
> Only one participant in the program, the SPLC, gets to determine which other groups are allowed to join it.
>
> Christian legal groups like the Alliance Defending Freedom — which recently successfully represented a Christian baker at the Supreme Court — are barred from the Amazon Smile program, while openly anti-Semitic groups remain, TheDCNF found in May.
>
> One month later, the anti-Semitic groups — but not the Alliance Defending Freedom — are still able to participate in the program.

So, Amazon actually banned a law firm that won a religious liberty case at the Supreme Court. Won that case 7-2, by the way. I wonder if Amazon considers that law firm a "hate group". And whether it considers the speech that persuaded 7 out of 9 Supreme Court judges to be "hate speech".

Ben Carson, the former Republican presidential candidate and current Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, was also labeled an "extremist" by the SPLC.

Carson responded:

> "When embracing traditional Christian values is equated to hatred, we are approaching the stage where wrong is called right and right is called wrong. It is important for us to once again advocate true tolerance," Carson said in response.

The Daily Caller article notes that the SPLC has been criticized from the left as well:

The SPLC has faced tough criticisms not just from conservatives, but from left-wing establishment publications, as well:

> "At a time when the line between 'hate group' and mainstream politics is getting thinner and the need for productive civil discourse is growing more serious, fanning liberal fears, while a great opportunity for the SPLC, might be a problem for the nation," Ben Schreckinger, now with GQ, wrote in a June 2017 piece for Politico.
>
> Washington Post Reporter Megan McArdle, while still reporting for Bloomberg, similarly criticized the SPLC's flimsy definition of "hate group" in

> September 2017. Media outlets who trust the SPLC's labels, McArdle warned, "will discredit themselves with conservative readers and donors."

First, recall from this article posted at The Federalist that the Southern Poverty Law Center was the source of the "hate map" which was used by convicted domestic terrorist Floyd Lee Corkins in his attempt to shoot and kill everyone at the Family Research Council.

Excerpt:

> Corkins would later admit that he had located Family Research Council's office on a "hate map" produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center, and he planned to shoot people in the building and smear the Chick-fil-A sandwiches on them.
>
> […]Much of the ensuing media coverage ignored or downplayed Corkins' motives, which the *Washington Post* referred to as "a detail sure to reignite the culture wars." A year later, Southern Poverty Law Center founder Morris Dees was still publicly defending the inclusion of Family Research Council on the organization's "hate map."

Just to be clear, this gay activist was convicted of domestic terrorism, and received 25 years in prison. He was stopped by a security guard, and this video is the footage of the attempted mass murder.

Let's find out more about SPLC, courtesy of this article from the centrist City Journal, a very respected source.

Here is the article from City Journal.

Excerpt:

> Ironically, the SPLC not only overlooks most of the real hate groups in operation today, along with overtly race-based organizations, such as the pro-Latino National Council of La Raza and MEChA, but also labels moderates with whom it disagrees "extremists" if they deviate from its rigid political agenda, which embraces open borders, LGBT rights, and other left-wing totems. The SPLC has branded Somali-born reformer Ayaan Hirsi Ali an "anti-Muslin extremist" for her opposition to female genital mutilation and other oppressive Islamic practices, and designated the respected Family Research Council as a "hate group" for its opposition to same-sex marriage. Likewise, the organization deems mainstream immigration-reform advocates such as the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) and Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) as hate groups. British Muslim activist Maajid Nawaz—regarded by most observers as a human rights leader—is suing the SPLC for listing him as an extremist.

More:

> Critics of the SPLC accuse the lavishly funded organization of peddling fear and smearing political opponents—mostly conservatives—as bigots. Its "Hatewatch"

> list is avowedly ideological, acknowledging that it "monitors and exposes the activities of the American radical right." Few left-wing organizations—and no Islamist groups—are branded in this way by the SPLC. Nevertheless, the SPLC, founded in 1971, has burrowed itself into the civil rights movement, the organized bar, the cloistered culture of large law firms, the education system, and even law enforcement as a champion for "the exploited, the powerless and the forgotten." Its executives are richly compensated, some in excess of $400,000 annually. Operating from palatial six-story quarters in Montgomery, Alabama (sometimes called the "Poverty Palace"), it enjoys a $300 million endowment, including more than $23 million in cash.

The non-profit rating group "Charity Watch" gives the SPLC an "F" rating. This is the lowest grade possible.

More:

> The SPLC frequently rails against public figures as "enablers" not technically designated as hate groups or extremists, such as Texas governor Greg Abbott, former congressman and presidential candidate Ron Paul, radio talk show host Glenn Beck, Fox News commentator Judge Andrew Napolitano, and Kentucky senator Rand Paul. Rush Limbaugh, the Breitbart News Network, the Boy Scouts of America, and Focus on the Family (founded by psychologist, broadcaster, and best-selling author James Dobson) have also earned the SPLC's wrath.

And finally:

> What many of the individuals and groups condemned by the SPLC have in common is a conservative orientation. Favoring traditional marriage becomes the moral equivalent of cross-burning; opposing illegal immigration or amnesty for illegal immigrants equates to advocating genocide; resisting the spread of radical Islam invokes Timothy McVeigh; and anti-tax Tea Party groups are now indistinguishable from armed militias or Holocaust deniers. Thus, dissent is de-legitimatized, and political foes are demonized.
>
> […]SPLC senior fellow Mark Potok, a 20-year veteran of the organization and editor of its "hate list"—a quarterly publication—has admitted that "our aim in life is to destroy these groups, to completely destroy them."

Previously, I blogged about a peer-reviewed study published in the journal *Academic Questions*, found that the SPLC "…fails to use objective criteria in determining which organizations should be labeled a "hate group"…". Something to keep in mind now that you know that media corporations are letting them censor content.

New study: same-sex attraction isn't fixed

June 10, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Federalist reports on what researchers have found about the nature of same-sex attraction. Is it fixed? Or does it change over time? I think that gay activists would like everyone to believe that same-sex attraction is fixed, but to learn the truth, we should look at what the scientific research says.

Excerpt:

> There is not only no scientific evidence that sexual orientation is immutable, there is conclusive scientific evidence that most people who experience exclusive same-sex attraction end up developing an interest in the opposite sex over time.
>
> This is so well established by now that scholars are busy publishing methods to measure frequency of sexual orientation change in massive longitudinal studies of youth and young adults. (I.e., How many times in nine years can we expect a homosexual sexual orientation to change? Is the change associated with lifestyle habits? Who changes more frequently: males or females?)
>
> That basic fact was already settled science when Obergefell came before the Supreme Court. Half a dozen rigorous studies could be cited from the late 1990s and early 2000s, but the most noteworthy probably remains a Cornell-led study published in 2007.
>
> In this study, Dr. Rich Savin-Williams examined a representative sample of more than 12,000 American youth, following each from the age of 16 to 22. Rather than rely on an individual's reconstruction of his or her past based on current identity, researchers met with subjects three times throughout the six-year period. Each time, they asked individuals (via a computer, to protect privacy)

> whether they had had a romantic attraction to a member of the opposite or same sex since their last interview.
>
> For instance, 17-year-old males were asked if, in the past year, they had had a romantic attraction to another male or female. About 1.5 percent reported only having a romantic attraction to other males. Five years later, when that 1.5 percent were asked about their romantic attractions since last interview, the overwhelming majority (70 percent) reported a 180-degree flip in their sexual orientation—they only had romantic feelings for women.
>
> Similarly, among females, about 40 percent switched from exclusive same-sex attraction to exclusive opposite-sex attraction. Most of the rest (45 percent of the total) reported they had feelings for both men and women. Only 1 percent of women who, at 17, reported a full year of exclusive same-sex attraction reported a similar experience in the five years that followed.

This research is in agreement with previous research on identical twin studies reported by the prestigious science journal Nature:

> When one identical twin is gay, there is about a 20% chance that the other will be as well. But because this rate is not 100%, it is thought that environmental factors play a role as well. One of the best characterized is the 'older brother effect': the chance of a man being gay increases by 33% for each older brother he has. The reason is not clear, although one hypothesis holds that the mother's immune system begins to react against male antigens and alter the fetus's development.

So, it turns out that homosexual behavior is a lot more related to free choices than it is to innate, fixed dispositions. That's what the science says. It's not what the politicians say. It's not what the Supreme Court says. It's not what Hollywood says. It's not what journalists say. But it is what science has found to be true about the universe. We are in control of our behaviors, and we have to choose things that are likely to work out in the long-term – not just what feels good to us in the moment.

Whenever I hear gay activists complaining that they have no choice but to give in to their "innate, fixed, biological" sexual attractions, I always think about how I've never been married and have had to deal with sexual attraction to the opposite sex. As a Christian, there is simply no Biblical support for sex outside of marriage. So, that means that I've had to just live with not being allowed to act on my desires. In fact, this is the normal Christian life. There was a time when people had more skepticism about their feelings and desires, and they knew that self-control was a good thing. But now it seems as if everyone is so desperate to be liked that we tell everyone yes to everything that they feel like doing. We now consider every moral viewpoint as equal to any other – all the better to do what makes us feel happy. The important goal is that we all feel good right now, and who cares about the damage that our selfishness will cause down the road? We can just act surprised when that happens and pretend that there is no such thing as cause

and effect. I can remember a time when Christians in particular had some suspicion about following your heart, because the heart was deceitful and selfish. I guess those days are over, and suddenly feelings are ruling over reason and self-control.

It's pretty clear that not everything that a person feels like doing is good for them. A lot of decisions that people make to feel good right now lead to outcomes where they or the people who are depending on them will be harmed. For example, lots of people feel like staying home from a school exam, or staying home from their jobs, or drinking alcohol all night, or taking drugs. We used to have more confidence about telling people that not everything they wanted was good for them, and to have more self-control, and to think of how their decisions would harm others. Today, society has drifted away from objective moral boundaries and self-control toward subjective feelings and moral relativism, we are all finding it more difficult to tell people that they should choose to adhere to moral standards. We always seem to be looking to big government to make our irresponsible, reckless choices to be happy in the moment "work out" somehow.

Today, when people make poor decisions that wreck their families, hurt their kids, damage their health, etc. we are more likely to tax the people who haven't been selfish and reckless in order to pay for government programs that "fix" the outcomes of the selfish, reckless people. In some countries, you can get free single mother welfare, free taxpayer-funded abortions, free sex-changes, free treatment for sexually-transmitted diseases, free rounds of IVF, and so on. Just do whatever you want and someone else who had more self-control than you did will pay for it for you. That's why we have a twenty-trillion dollar debt, which we never had during the time when we still had the courage to tell people not to do things that were risky, and would be expensive to fix when they blew up.

When did it become normal to think that cause and effect were so unpredictable that people shouldn't be blamed and held accountable for making bad decisions? When did it become normal to think that doing what feels good for ourselves should be rewarded with other people's money, through big government programs? When did it become normal to take people to court to force them to celebrate your self-centeredness, just because their disagreement with what you were doing made you feel bad?

Refugee rapes and murders 14-year-old German girl before fleeing home to Iraq

June 11, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

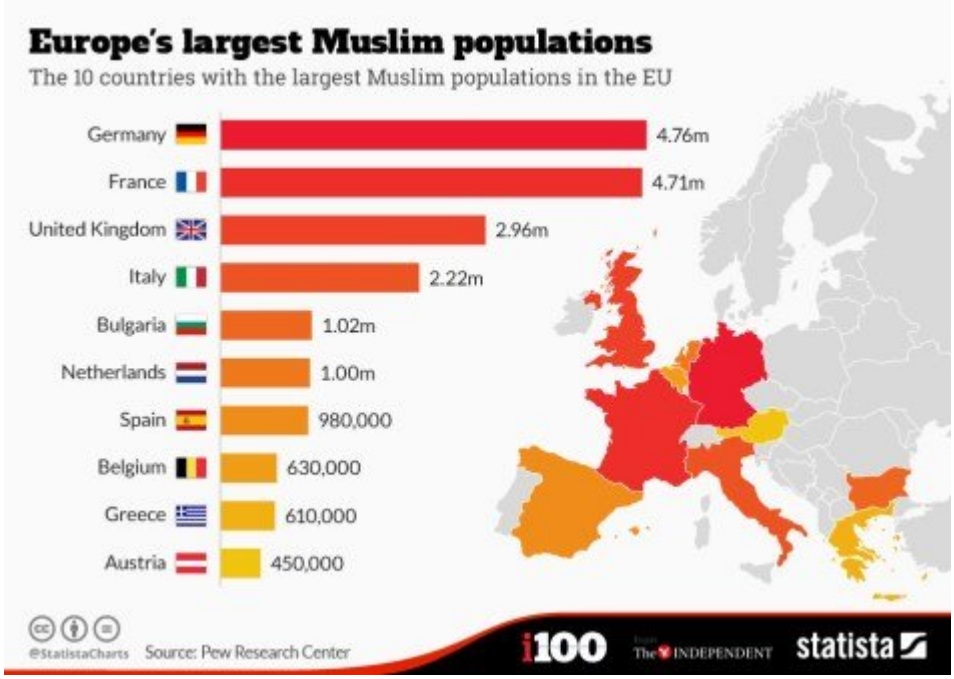

Muslim populations in Europe

I've been busy reading "The Strange Death of Europe", which is a book all about how European countries and the UK decided to invite millions of low-skilled immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries to immigrate, in order to achieve the goal of multiculturalism. Let's see how that's working out for Germany, as reported in this article from the radically leftist New York Times.

Excerpt:

> It was a gruesome murder: A 14-year-old girl was raped and strangled, her body buried under brushwood in a secluded area near the railway tracks near her hometown in western Germany.
>
> But the fact that the chief suspect is an Iraqi asylum seeker has turned a terrible crime into political dynamite.
>
> […]The killing comes on top of a deepening scandal and calls for a full-blown parliamentary investigation over allegations that civil servants may have granted asylum to as many as 1,000 migrants in exchange for money — and that some of those migrants may have been criminals or even terrorism suspects.
>
> The murder suspect, identified as Ali Bashar, a 20-year-old Iraqi, arrived in Germany in October 2015, shortly after Ms. Merkel opened the borders to hundreds of thousands of migrants. He was rejected in late 2016, but was allowed to stay in the country while his appeal was pending.
>
> […]He came to the attention of the police several times, involving allegations of

> jostling a police officer, robbing a passer-by and carrying a knife.

The New York Times saves the most interesting detail for last:

> Susanna's mother has been chronicling her daily anguish on Facebook since her daughter went missing on May 22.
>
> The entry on June 1, a week after her daughter had disappeared, directly addressed Ms. Merkel.
>
> "I turn to you with this cry for help because I feel abandoned by the German state as well as by our friend and helper (Police!!!)," the mother wrote.
>
> The last text message she received from her daughter's cellphone on May 23 was written in bad German. "Don't look for me," it said. "I come in 2 or 3 weeks."
>
> At that point Susanna was already dead.

Notice that just like in the United States with our school shootings, the people who commit the violence are known to the police, but because they are non-white, the police are unwilling to do anything about it. It reminds me of how the police in the UK covered up for the child sex-trafficking gangs in several cities, because the gangs were run by immigrants and refugees from predominantly Muslim countries. The police just isn't willing to do anything that would draw attention to the fact that their open borders multiculturalist immigration policies cause harm to law-abiding citizens. We have the same thing here with the police and politicians covering up for illegal immigrants who commit crimes.

I want to preface my comments by saying that I favor skilled immigration, and I think we benefit from allow non-white immigrants into the country, so long as they have to prove that they are able to hold onto a highly-skilled job while obeying the laws of our nation. Asians, for example, make particularly good immigrants by that criteria.

Open borders Southern Baptists

What is interesting about this is that I keep hearing about all of these compassionate Christians – mostly philosophers, missionaries and pastors and other wordsmiths – who keep telling me how important it is for the West to retreat from wars against radical Islam, and then welcome in predominantly Muslim immigrants who are displaced by our retreat. I ask them whether they understand that the Boston bomber's parents were let it by claiming to be refugees. I ask if they knew that the San Bernardino terrorist woman was background-checked by five different government agencies. And I ask them about the victims of crime by illegal immigrants who are convicted, but never deported. Their answer is that they didn't mean for it to happen. They thought that because they felt good supporting a policy, that meant that it would have good results.

I guess I have a simple question for the pro-refugee people. What would you say to the victims of this "generous" immigration policy? The ones who are blown up, shot up, raped, sexually assulted, intimidated? I think these kind, Bible quoting Christians want everyone to believe they are "nice". That's why they want to be so generous with other

people’s lives, other people’s chastity, other people’s modesty, other people’s money. One wonders how a feelings-driven religious leader like Russell Moore, who supports illegal immigration and Muslim refugees, would handle it if he or someone close to him were the victims of crimes committed by illegal immigrants or radical Muslims? I guess he probably hasn’t thought about that beyond the level of feelings and people-pleasing.

Ten scientific problems with global warming alarmism

June 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

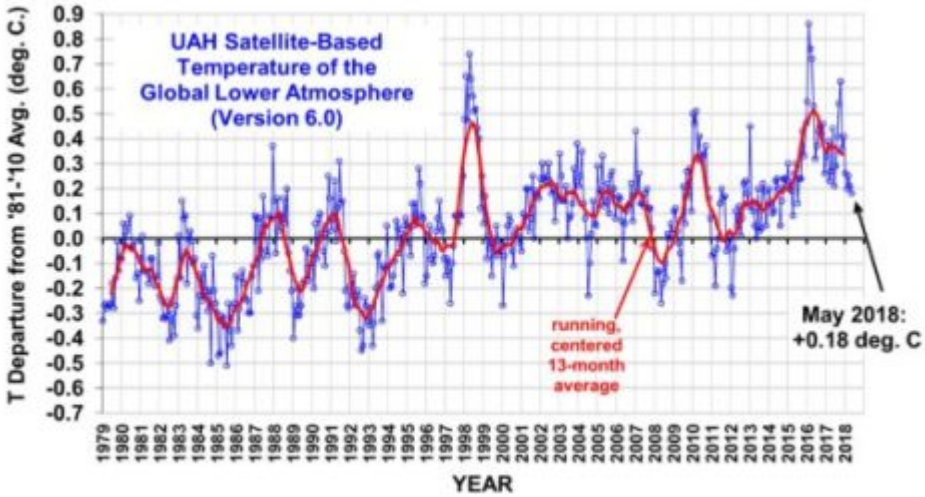

Satellite measurements of global climate from U of Alabama Huntsville

My friend Bruce posted this article from the the Daily Wire, and I think it's a good summary of the scientific evidence against global warming alarmism. After we go over this, I'll take a stab at explaining why so many non-scientists desperately want to believe that global warming is true, and why they try to push everyone else to believe it, too.

First, the list:

1. Temperature records from around the world do not support the assumption that today's temperatures are unusual.
2. Satellite temperature data does not support the assumption that temperatures are rising rapidly
3. Current temperatures are always compared to the temperatures of the 1980's, but for many parts of the world the 1980's was the coldest decade of the last 100+ years
4. The world experienced a significant cooling trend between 1940 and 1980
5. Urban heat island effect skews the temperature data of a significant number of weather stations
6. There is a natural inverse relationship between global temperatures and atmospheric CO2 levels
7. The CO2 cannot, from a scientific perspective, be the cause of significant global temperature changes
8. There have been many periods during our recent history that a warmer climate was prevalent long before the industrial revolution
9. Glaciers have been melting for more than 150 years
10. "Data adjustment" is used to continue the perception of global warming

So, we can't look at all of these in one post. Obviously, the satellite measurements are the best thing to look at, since they cannot be tampered with as easily as the ground measurements, and they show no warming for 18 years.

But let's look at number 8 instead:

> Even in the 1990 IPCC report a chart appeared that showed the medieval warm period as having had warmer temperatures than those currently being experienced. But it is hard to convince people about global warming with that information, so five years later a new graph was presented, now known as the famous hockey stick graph, which did away with the medieval warm period. Yet the evidence is overwhelming at so many levels that warmer periods existed on Earth during the medieval warm period as well as during Roman Times and other time periods during the last 10,000 years. There is plenty of evidence found in the Dutch archives that shows that over the centuries, parts of the Netherlands disappeared beneath the water during these warm periods, only to appear again when the climate turned colder. The famous Belgian city of Brugge, once known as "Venice of the North," was a sea port during the warm period that set Europe free from the dark ages (when temperatures were much colder), but when temperatures began to drop with the onset of the little ice age, the ocean receded and now Brugge is ten miles away from the coastline. Consequently, during the medieval warm period the Vikings settled in Iceland and Greenland and even along the coast of Canada, where they enjoyed the warmer temperatures, until the climate turned cold again, after which they perished from Greenland and Iceland became ice-locked again during the bitter cold winters. The camps promoting global warming have been systematically erasing mention of these events in order to bolster the notion that today's climate is unusual compared to our recent history.

That's right, the world was much warmer than it is now during the Medieval Warming Period… so warm that you could actually farm on Greenland. But now it's all frozen over.

Bruce also posted this article from Forbes magazine about the so-called consensus about global warming among scientists.

It says:

> It is becoming clear that not only do many scientists dispute the asserted global warming crisis, but these skeptical scientists may indeed form a scientific consensus.
>
> […]Only 36 percent of geoscientists and engineers believe that humans are creating a global warming crisis, according to a survey reported in the peer-reviewed Organization Studies. By contrast, a strong majority of the 1,077 respondents believe that nature is the primary cause of recent global warming and/or that future global warming will not be a very serious problem.
>
> The survey results show geoscientists (also known as earth scientists) and

> engineers hold similar views as meteorologists. Two recent surveys of meteorologists (summarized here and here) revealed similar skepticism of alarmist global warming claims.
>
> According to the newly published survey of geoscientists and engineers, merely 36 percent of respondents fit the "Comply with Kyoto" model. The scientists in this group "express the strong belief that climate change is happening, that it is not a normal cycle of nature, and humans are the main or central cause."
>
> The authors of the survey report, however, note that the overwhelming majority of scientists fall within four other models, each of which is skeptical of alarmist global warming claims.
>
> […]Taken together, these four skeptical groups numerically blow away the 36 percent of scientists who believe global warming is human caused and a serious concern.

Most people who get excited about the threat of global warming have something to gain financially from the hysteria. For example, Democrat campaign donors who own stock in solar or wind power companies that get fat government subsidies. Solyndra was one example of that.

Why do people believe weird things?

So why do people believe these things? People believe these things for the same reason that primitive people would sacrifice animals in order to get a bountiful harvest or be spared being struck by lightning. They fear the future, and they want to believe that they are doing something in order to save themselves from doom. There is something credulous in us that seeks to know and control the future. When we are told a noble lie by grant-seeking, attention-craving academics, we believe it because we want to believe it. We want to believe that the future is going to be OK, especially when all we have to do to make it OK is recycle cans and turn off our lights when we are not using them.

This is the real psychological motivation behind the desperate desire to believe in the global warming myth. We are scared, and we want someone to save us from the future. And we jump at the chance of controlling the future, especially when it means recycling cans, rather than having to deal with our own sinfulness. We invent a new morality that justifies us rather than having to comply with the old morality. Freedom to commit adultery, as long as we recycle cans to save the planet. Sanctification through purchasing carbon credits, instead of sanctification through chastity, sobriety and self-control.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

June 13, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight
Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.

4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates
- You didn't need to come out on this cold night
- Craig's arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn't listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don't require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that "every effect requires a cause"
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can't see

- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn’t have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It’s too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It’s self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That’s why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg’s own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity (“I”) is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg’s responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it’s not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It’s that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the

majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said. Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the

fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Ten sensible self-control laws that will reduce the risk of gun violence

June 14, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Air Force TACPs confirm target locations with their map

I really liked this article from Intellectual Takeout, which had a list of recommendations to reduce gun violence. Although most people today are looking at gun regulations to reduce gun violence, we actually had a lot of guns in previous generations, but a lot less gun violence. Maybe it's because more people made wiser choices.

The article says:

> 1. Don't commit suicide. This is the most common gun-related death, being about 63% of all firearm deaths in the US.
> 2. Adopt a policy of not escalating any road rage situations. If someone does something offensive on the highways have it pre-settled in your mind to react by de-escalating the situation (refrain from responding in kind) and back off to allow the heat of the moment to cool.
> 3. Do not join a gang. Violence is the accepted norm among gang members, resulting in many becoming victims of gun violence.
> 4. Do not buy or sell illegal drugs. Yes, I do know that it's the drug laws more than the drugs themselves that leads to gun violence among drug buyers and sellers. But, people already on the wrong side of the law are more likely to commit gun violence than the law-abiding population.

5. Do not get involved with abusive people. Someone who previously has physically abused a partner is more likely to do so than are those who have never engaged in such abuse.

6. Implement a personal curfew. The safest place anyone can be at 2am is at home in bed. Roaming the streets in the middle of the night exposes one to gangs, drug sellers, and other dangerous people.

7. Stay away from Gun Free Zones. One study showed that 98% of all mass shootings happen in these places. Gun Free Zone signs tell violent people this is a spot where the picking will be easy. As for everywhere else, these predators may be deterred since they have to wonder if there's already a good guy with a gun on the property.

8. Do not associate with convicted criminals. Like the abuser, violent criminals out of prison are likely to continue their habits.

9. Be aware of your surroundings. Make it a habit to look around and assess any situation you are in. Most victims of gun violence have no warning of the impending danger, the old saying "to be forewarned is to be forearmed" is pertinent here. So, no staring at your cell phone!

10. Avoid people who handle guns in an irresponsible manner. Anyone who casually or even unknowingly points a gun at someone or who does not exercise good gun safety such as carefully checking to see that a gun is unloaded is someone to be avoided.

11. Bonus Suggestion: Do not be a predator. A significant number (about 700 each year) of gun deaths are justifiable homicide wherein a victim successfully defends themselves from criminal assault.

This list of self-control laws is so different than what you see politicians proposing. This list is targeted to individuals, and it is telling them to understand how danger works, and then make adjustments in their choices and priorities in order to minimize the risk. The politicians instead want to blame inanimate objects and take away the rights of law-abiding people to defend themselves from criminals.

Is expecting self-control reasonable?

I have talked to anti-gun people about changing their behavior to minimize their risk of being a victim. Their response was that they shouldn't have to act any particular way in order to avoid bad consequences. They should just be able to make the government big enough to somehow magically stop bad things from happening to them, no matter what choices they made. Their right to pursue happiness in the moment could not be challenged in any way.

It made me think of women who want to go out wearing skimpy clothes, get drunk in bars surrounded by strange men, and then cry victim when they wake-up somewhere strange the next morning. There is a wisdom to life, and wise people don't mind that they have to show a little self-control in order to avoid bad outcomes. A woman cannot shack up with a hunky guy who has tattoos, piercings and a criminal record, and then complain when he gets violent. If you choose poorly, then you will face consequences. There is a cost to making choices based on feelings alone.

The same thing happens with people who want to study English, Journalism, and other easy subjects, then can't find jobs when they graduate with tens of thousands of dollars in loans. "It's not fair" they say "I need a bailout". "The government should raise the minimum wage, so I can be paid the same as people who studied hard STEM subjects and got more productive jobs". Again, the solution is not to blame others and punt to government, the solution is to respect the way the world works and make decisions that are likely to succeed. Don't let your feelings decide. Don't do what is free, easy and fun. Don't chase thrills and travel.

Black economist Walter Williams has a famous list of four choices that he tells young people to make in order to avoid being poor.

Here are his four choices:

1. Graduate from high school
2. Get married before you have children
3. Take any job (to start out)
4. Don't commit any crimes

I have one more to add: when you marry, marry someone who takes commitment seriously, so there is no divorce. Divorce is a wealth-killer. Pick a spouse who is able to make and keep commitments that survive their changing feelings and desires. And maybe one more: study for a STEM degree if you go to college.

Again, if you try to tell young people to make good decisions like those, they don't want to listen. But making those decisions correctly actually gets them the result they want.

Previous generations tended to emphasize the importance of understanding how the world works, and then making good decisions in order to reach a goal. Those people don't look to government to solve their problems. This generation seems to be more focused on doing what feels good, then acting surprised when it doesn't "work out". They aren't curious to find out how the world really works so they can do the right thing. They just want to do and say what makes them feel good and look good to others.

Obama administration FBI on the possibility of a Trump election win: “We’ll Stop It”

June 15, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama and his allies in the FBI

So, the Department of Justice Inspector General’s report on the FBI’s political bias came out yesterday, and I’ve rounded up some of the most interesting findings from a variety of sources. It’s important that everyone finds out just what kind of administration we had under the Democrat Barack Obama.

Here’s an article from Fox News, which listed out 7 of the most important findings.

Let’s start with #1:

> **New texts between FBI lovers Strzok and Page were ‘disappointing’ and cast a shadow over the integrity of the entire Clinton email probe**
>
> A slew of anti-Trump text messages between special counsel Lisa Page and FBI Deputy Assistant Director Peter Strzok damaged the integrity of the entire Clinton email probe, Horowitz writes.
>
> The report unearths striking new messages between the pair that were sent and received on government devices, including one in which Strzok vows to “stop” Trump from being elected just months before the presidential election.
>
> On August 8, 2016, the IG found, Page asked Strzok “[Trump’s] not ever going to become president, right? Right?!” and Strzok replied “No. No he won’t. We’ll stop it.”

Trump won’t win, because the FBI will stop it (in their spare time, between adulterous affairs).

More:

> **Five unnamed FBI employees — including one lawyer who later worked on the Mueller probe — are under scrutiny for anti-Trump bias**

> Strzok and Page are not the only FBI officials who evidenced anti-Trump bias during the Clinton email probe, Horowitz noted in the report.
>
> The watchdog identified five other unnamed individuals, including two agents and one FBI attorney who worked on the Muller Russia probe until earlier this year, who made "statements of hostility toward then-candidate Trump and statements of support for candidate Clinton," and improperly mixed "political opinions" with case-related discussions.

The FBI fumbled the investigation of Hillary Clinton's storage and transmission of classified data on an unsecured home-brew server, which allowed her to escape government record-keeping requirements.

The Daily Caller noted that the FBI slow-walked the investigation of Hillary Clinton:

> When further Clinton emails were discovered on a laptop belonging to former congressman Anthony Weiner, who is married to longtime Clinton aide Huma Abedin, the FBI agents overseeing her case took just under a month to take meaningful action, Horowitz's report found.
>
> No later than Sept. 29, 2016, FBI executives and the agents who oversaw the Clinton email investigation were informed that "that Weiner investigation agents had discovered 141,000 emails on Weiner's laptop that were potentially relevant to the [Clinton email] investigation." Comey didn't authorize a search warrant until Oct. 27, after he was briefed on them that day, the IG report found.

But do you know what was a priority? The investigation of the Trump campaign because of the Democrat-funded Russia dossier.

The Daily Caller continues:

> The FBI prioritized investigating the Trump campaign's ties to Russia over the discovered emails on Weiner's laptop, possibly due to political bias, according to the report. Anti-Trump agent Peter Strzok was intimately involved with that decision.

So, who decided that the FBI should exonerate Clinton?

Investors Business Daily explains:

> The report also, whether intentionally or not, makes it clear why the FBI had concluded early on that there wasn't a case against Clinton: President Obama had already cleared Hillary of any wrongdoing.
>
> The IG report recalls how, during a 60 Minutes interview on October 11, 2015, Obama "characterized former Secretary Clinton's use of a private email server as a 'mistake,' but stated that it did not 'pose a national security problem' and was 'not a situation in which America's national security was endangered.' Obama also stated that the issue had been 'ginned up' because of the presidential race."
>
> It goes on to say that "Obama's comments caused concern among FBI officials

> about the potential impact on the investigation."
>
> Former EAD John Giacalone told the IG, "We open up criminal investigations. And you have the President of the United States saying this is just a mistake … That's a problem, right?"
>
> Obama repeated his absolution in April 2016 — right around the time Comey was starting to draft his statement dropping the case against Clinton.
>
> "Obama stated that while former Secretary Clinton had been 'careless' in managing her emails while she was Secretary of State, she would never intentionally do anything to endanger the security of the United States with her emails."
>
> […]From Obama on down, no one ever wanted or intended to do what should have been done: Prosecute Clinton for gross negligence in her handling of highly classified material. The entire investigation was just for show.

Should we be surprised at any of this? Not at all. We already knew that the Obama administration used the IRS to persecute conservatives. These are not people who make a it a priority to do the right thing. Being secularists, they lack an objective foundation for morality. For them, morality is just customs and conventions, not an objective design for how we ought to live. Whenever morality interferes with their desire to serve their own interests, the question they ask is "will I get caught?". Instead of listening to their consciences, they think of their own feelings and how they will be perceived.

It turns out that you can't expect a man who votes in favor of infanticide multiple times (as a state senator) to take morality seriously. It doesn't matter if a man's skin color is the color you like. If he has no capacity for put moral duties above self-interest, then you should expect corruption and abuse of power. He ruined everything he touched, from religious liberty to Iran to Syria to Libya to the cost of health care to the $20 trillion national debt, and beyond. An absolute disaster of incompetence and immorality.

Canada’s Supreme Court bans Christians from practicing law in Canada

June 16, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

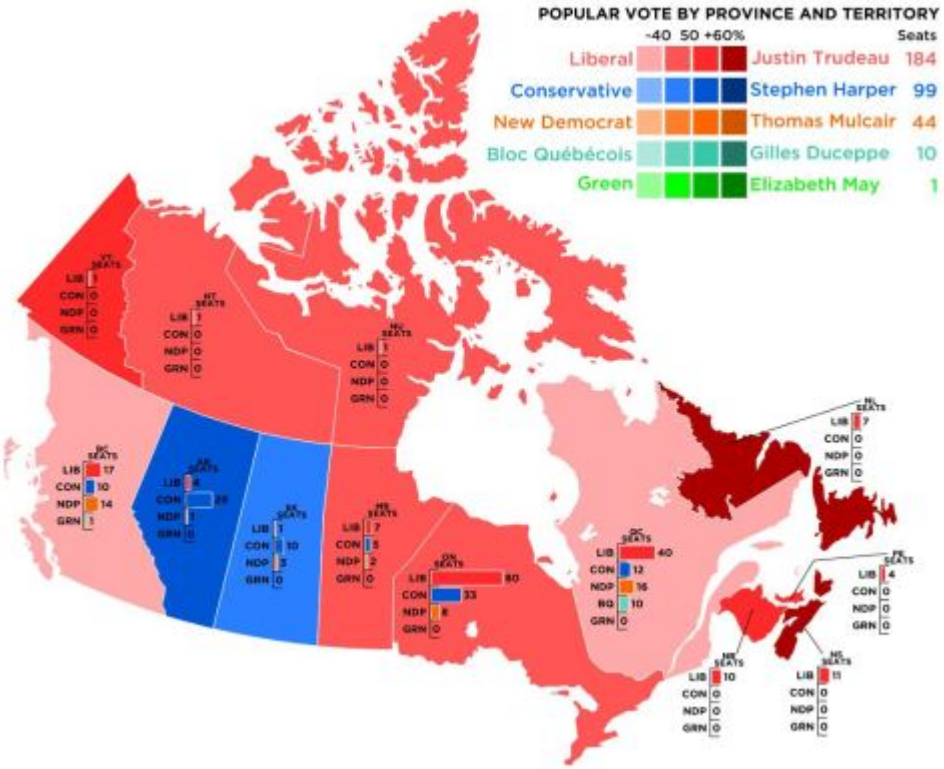

Canada election results 2015

The headline is a bit broad, but give me a minute, and I’ll explain what the judges decided. For one thing, it’s only in Ontario and British Columbia where the ban is in effect. Also, the basis of the ban is that Christians cannot be lawyers if they believe that sex before marriage or outside of marriage is morally wrong. Let’s take a look at an article from the less leftist of Canada’s National newspapers, the National Post.

Excerpt:

> Trinity Western University suffered a stinging loss in the Supreme Court of Canada on Friday, which found that law societies in B.C. and Ontario were justified in not accrediting the university’s prospective law school because of its policy on premarital sex. But no one should harbour any illusions that the pain will be limited to the small Christian school in B.C.’s Fraser Valley.
>
> The impact of the court’s decision against TWU will seriously afflict the engagement of religious communities with public life across this country, regardless of whether it’s the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army or Muslim and Jewish charitable organizations.
>
> The Supreme Court was asked to decide whether TWU’s Christian “community covenant,” in which students and staff agree to the understanding that sexual relations must be limited to heterosexual marriage — which, by definition,

> excludes homosexual relations — was a legitimate prerogative for an accredited law school. In layman's terms, the court had to discern the balance between Charter-protected religious freedoms and emerging rights of sexual minorities to live their identities freely and fully.
>
> The court ruled that the refusal of the two law societies to accredit TWU's law school was a "reasonable" balancing of rights. Its logic was that LGBTQ students would be unlikely to apply to TWU given the community-covenant requirement, so they effectively would have 60 fewer spaces available to them. Other students have access to the 16 current law schools, plus TWU's 60 spots, and that therefore constitutes an inequality. By compiling that perceived inequality with the fact that students at TWU commit to reserving sexual intimacy for within traditional Christian marriage, the court concluded that the TWU covenant created a "public interest" harm to the reputation of and public confidence in the legal profession. These outweighed, in the court's assessment, the "minor" consequences of denying religious freedom to the TWU community.

The effect of this ruling is that Bible-believing Christians who study law at the only Bible-believing law school in Canada cannot practice law in two of the most populated provinces. But Ontario is the province that contains the large city of Toronto, as well as the capital city of Ottawa. This basically means that Trinity Evangelical Law School graduates would be unable to be lawyers or judges at the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court is fine with LGBT people practicing law in Ontario and British Columbia, including at the Supreme Court, just not Christians who believe in the Bible. But those Bible-believing Christians should definitely have to pay taxes, including the taxes that go to pay for the salaries of their overlords on the Supreme Court. Basically, if you're an evangelical Christian in Canada, then you're good enough to be a slave, but not much else. You can work to pay for your secular slave masters, but you can't have the same rights as people who don't believe the Bible.

I think it goes without saying that the Supreme Court judges weren't able to get this ruling from the text of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They just made it up from their own secular leftist values. This is actually normal for judges in Canada. There are no judges on the Canadian Supreme Court who accept that the Charter overrules the will of the judges.

Here's a reaction to the ruling that I thought was interesting:

> "Perhaps most disappointing from our perspective, the majority failed to account for or even address the equality rights of prospective TWU students or TWU's freedom of association. These were issues we raised in our oral and written arguments to the court," says Schutten. "The majority says it need not address those rights claims, because it is sufficient to ask whether the violation of freedom of religion is justified." ARPA Canada believes that these other rights should play an important part in the "proportionality" analysis of the law

> societies’ decisions.

There is no freedom of religion in Canada. And there is no freedom of association in Canada. From previous rulings by Canadian Human Rights Commissions, we know that there is no freedom of speech in Canada. There is no right to self-defense from criminals in Canada. And there are no parental rights to educate your own children according to your Christian worldview in Canada. In Ontario, the man who wrote the education curriculum is now behind bars for child pornography, and the Supreme Court had nothing to say about whether that was morally wrong. For a long time, there has been covert discrimination against Bible-believing Christians in Canada, and now the Supreme Court has just shown what has been going on for decades and decades in universities and in government, in order to keep serious Christians out of positions of influence. From classroom teachers, to business owners to Supreme Court judges, Christians have been banned from the public square. Just like what happened to Jews in 1930s Germany.

Any Bible-believing Christian born in Canada has one mission: to get educated in a STEM skill that America needs, and then get out of that godless country. Kudos to those wise Christians who saw what was coming and got out early. It’s not the place for Christians to have a full and meaningful Christian life.

If we seriously want men to marry and become fathers, let's repeal no-fault divorce

June 17, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw a very good article at the Heritage Foundation web site about the importance of fathers for children. The author Virginia Allen listed out some of the benefits that fathers provide to children:

> Studies have found that children raised without a father are:
>
> - At a higher risk of having behavioral problems.
> - Four times more likely to live in poverty.
> - More likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime.
> - Twice as likely to never graduate high school.
> - At a seven times higher risk of teen pregnancy.
> - More vulnerable to abuse and neglect.
> - More likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.
> - Twice as likely to be obese.
>
> From education to personal health to career success, children who lack a father find themselves at a disadvantage to their peers raised in a two-parent household.

I was looking for a good analysis of why there's been a decline of marriage and fatherhood, and I found an article by Joe Carter on The Gospel Coalition, of all places. By looking at marriage rates and historical events that changed the marriage rate, he was able to identify the cause of the decline of marriage – and fatherhood.

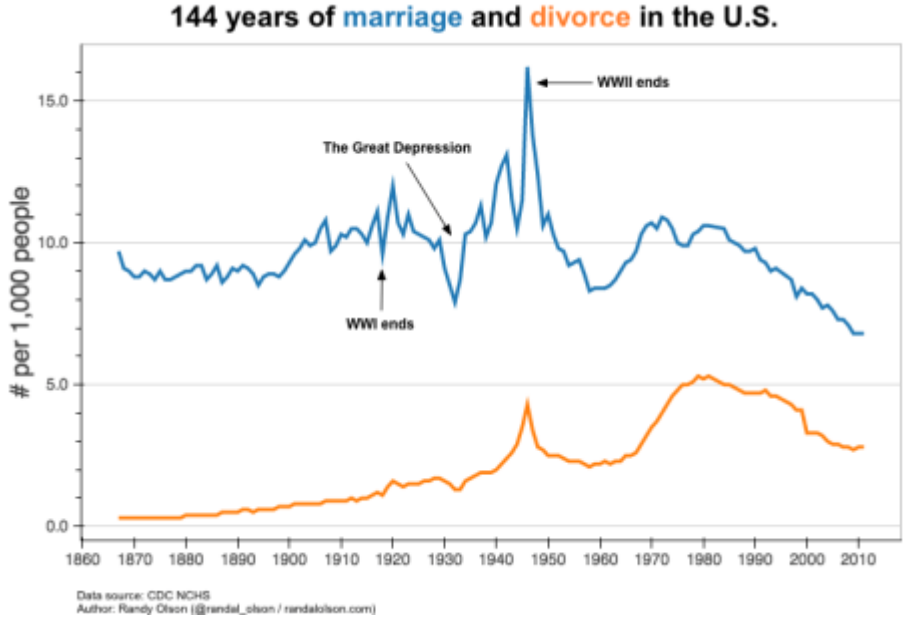

Marriage and divorce rates per capita

I'll spare you the statistical analysis, which is excellent, and give you the conclusion –

although you can guess it from the graph above:

> Now that we've explored the data, what year should we use as the marker for the beginning of the decline of marriage in the United States? I would argue for 1985, the last year that the marriage rate topped 10 percent.
>
> […]What changed in 1985 that could have led to the decline in marriage? There are likely numerous factors—which we'll examine in future articles—but one stands out in particular: By 1985, all states (except for New York) had enacted no-fault divorce legislation.

The most helpful book I know of about no-fault divorce is "Taken Into Custody", by Dr. Stephen Baskerville. He wrote a column for Crisis magazine that summarizes some of his ideas.

Excerpt:

> Feminists were drafting no-fault divorce laws in the 1940s, which the National Association of Women Lawyers now describes as "the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken."
>
> The result effectively abolished marriage as a legal contract. Today it is not possible to form a binding agreement to create a family.
>
> The new laws did not stop at removing the requirement of citing grounds for a divorce, to allow divorce by mutual consent, as deceptively advertised at the time. Instead they created unilateral and involuntary divorce, so that one spouse may dissolve a marriage without any agreement or fault by the other.

Here's what divorce does to the spouse who is the victim of the unilateral "no-fault" divorce:

> Though marriage is a civil matter, the logic quickly extended into the criminal, including a presumption of guilt against the involuntarily divorced spouse ("defendant"). Yet formal due process protections of criminal proceedings did not apply, so forcibly divorced spouses became quasi-criminals not for recognized criminal acts but for failing or refusing to cooperate with the divorce by continuing to claim the protections and prerogatives of family life: living in the common home, possessing the common property, or—most vexing of all—parenting the common children.
>
> Following from this are the horrendous civil liberties violations and flagrant invasions of family and individual privacy that are now routine in family courts. A personalized criminal code is legislated by the judge around the forcibly divorced spouse, controlling their association with their children, movements, and finances. Unauthorized contact with their children can be punished with arrest. Involuntarily divorced parents are arrested for running into their children in public, making unauthorized telephone calls, and sending unauthorized birthday cards.

In my conversations with men, no-fault divorce laws, and anti-male divorce courts are the main reasons given for why they do not pursue marriage and fatherhood. Men do not want to be coerced in a marriage with the threat of divorce by an unhappy wife. Men do not want to be subject to the government in so many areas of their lives if the wife does carry out the threat. They especially don't want to be separated from their children. One my secular male friends told me that he would not marry unless the woman had evidence in her past of hating radical feminism and no-fault divorce. This was the main criteria. He actually was able to find a woman who was a men's rights activist who hated divorce. But that was the only way he would marry.

Statistically speaking, the wife is more likely to initiate divorce than the husband. Women initiate 70% of divorces, the majority of those just because she is "unhappy". I think this is because women get into marriage based on their feelings, and they think that it is the husband's job to make them feel good. They see their happiness as the primary goal of the marriage, and see a marriage that does not make them happy as a marriage that needs to be ended. Their view of commitment really means "I'll commit so long as it makes me feel good". None of this is particularly appealing to men, who take marriage vows to mean what they say, and think that the commitment isn't conditional on being happy. (Note: if you're husband doesn't have this view of marriage, then why did you choose him out of all the other men in the world?)

Are we going to repeal no-fault divorce, then?

My experiences speaking with divorced Christian women is that they married primarily based on first impressions and emotional responses. No-fault divorce was seen as a boon to women who had married the wrong men by following their hearts. It's an interesting question to ask whether women really would want no-fault repealed. It would mean that they would have to get serious about who they marry. They would have to think about what a man does in a marriage. They would have to think about what men want out of a marriage. And they would have to say no to their feelings, both in choosing a man, and in keeping the man after the wedding.

I've been told by women that the rapid giving of sex is a way to get attention from a man without having to be respectful of him. Are women willing to stop using sex as a tool to attract the wrong men, and start developing their skills as wives and mothers in order to attract the right men? Are women willing to stop seeing relationships as "fun and thrills", and get serious about pursuing men who have marriage and children as the goal? Are wives willing to give a man what he needs in the marriage: sex, respect and obedience? Are they willing to give up the threat of divorce in the home and learn to argue rationally and compromise?

If women aren't willing to demand the repeal of no-fault divorce laws and get serious about men and marriage, then what's the point of complaining that men don't want to marry and become fathers? If you're not willing to fix the root cause of the problem, then don't complain about the problem.

The Southern Baptist Convention's progressive immigration policies threaten public safety

June 18, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Russell Moore and Barack Obama

I have a confession to make. I have really been struggling with the Southern Baptist Conventions slide into liberalism, not just on moral issues, but on policy issues as well. The straw that broke the camel's back for me is the SBC slide towards open borders. Thankfully, not everyone thinks it is "compassionate" to spend other people's money and risk other people's safety. The Heritage Foundation, my favorite think tank, is still taking the conservative view on immigration. And they do it by looking at the evidence of how open border policy is working out in other times and other places.

Here's the latest on Germany from Robin Simcox, writing at the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Diana Feldman received an unusual text message from the phone of her 14-year-old daughter, Susanna, late last month.
>
> Written in broken German, the message said she would be back home in a few weeks and that her mother should not try to find her.
>
> Yet the message was not from Susanna. She had already been raped and strangled, and her body was dumped next to some railroad tracks in the city of Wiesbaden in western Germany.
>
> […]Ali Bashar, a 20-year-old Iraqi Kurd, entered Germany in October 2015 with his parents and was a blight from the beginning. According to the BBC, he was allegedly tied to a robbery, possession of a weapon, and sexual assault on an 11-year-old girl in the refugee shelter where he lived (and where he dealtdrugs).
>
> Bashar's asylum claim was rejected toward the end of 2016, but he was allowed to stay in the country while he appealed the decision.
>
> Over 18 months later, when he killed Susanna, a decision on his appeal still had

> not been made. Days after his crime, Bashar and seven other members of his family returned to Iraq. However, he was tracked down by Kurdish authorities and extradited to Germany.
>
> Bashar has since admitted to killing Susanna.
>
> […]Hussein Khavari arrived in Europe in January 2013. He proceeded to throw a woman over a cliff that summer in Corfu, Greece, and was subsequently imprisoned for 10 years in February 2014 for attempted murder. However, he was released after just 18 months, part of a government amnesty aimed at reducing strain on its overcrowded prisons.
>
> Khavari journeyed on to Germany, where he arrived in November 2015, and claimed asylum the following February. He claimed to be a 17-year-old Afghan upon arrival, saying that his father had been killed fighting the Taliban.
>
> In October 2016, Khavari raped and strangled Maria Ladenburger, a 19-year-old German student, in Freiburg, in southwest Germany. Khavari left his still-breathing victim to drown in a nearby river after his attack. He was sentenced to life in prison.
>
> During his trial, it emerged that rather than being a 17-year-old fatherless Afghan, Khavari was a Iranian. His father was alive and well, living in Iran. Khavari's asylum claim was also undecided at the time of Ladenburger's killing.
>
> Another case from southwest Germany, this time in Kandel, saw Mia Valentin, a 15-year-old girl, being stabbed to death by her ex-boyfriend last December. The killer, Abdul D., came to Germany from Afghanistan in April 2016, claiming to be 14 years old. In reality, he is now 20.
>
> Such stories—coming in the wake of the mass sexual assault of more than 1,000 women in Germany on New Year's Eve of 2015—have a variety of consequences.

Now consider this article from June 2016 from the far-left National Public Radio, which is delighted with the new progressive policies of the SBC:

> Matthew Soerens of the evangelical refugee resettlement group World Relief praised the move, noting that churchgoers of many religious denominations are eager to aid refugees, and are "strongly opposed to governmental efforts that would block their ability to be a part of this sort of ministry."
>
> Soerens says Donald Trump's proposal to bar immigration from countries with a "proven history of terrorism" would likely keep out Christians and other religious minorities as well.

Got that? He wants to let in refugees from countries with a "proven history of terrorism". The point about Christianity is a red herring, since almost none of the refugees admitted under Obama were Christians.

CNS News explains in this article from October, 2016:

> The administration admitted a total of 12,587 Syrian refugees during the just-ended fiscal year, exceeding the target President Obama declared last fall by 2,587 (20.5 percent).
>
> Of the 12,587, the vast majority are Sunni Muslims – 12,363 (98.2 percent) – while another 103 are identified in State Department Refugee Processing Center data simply as Muslims and a further 20 as Shi'a Muslims.
>
> Sixty-eight of the 12,587 Syrian refugees (0.5 percent) are Christians. They comprise 16 Catholics, eight Orthodox, five Protestants, four Jehovah's Witnesses, one Greek Orthodox, and 34 refugees self-identified simply as Christians.

The Bible says that rape and murder are wrong. Perhaps Southern Baptist leaders like Moore and Sorens are just more concerned with political expediency than sound theology.

Keep in mind that no one in the SBC has a real private sector job where they earn money in a competitive free market by providing goods and services. When they talk about letting in refugees, they aren't going to be liable for the crimes and social costs (education, health care, public safety, etc.). That's on you, the taxpayers. And on the little girls who are raped and murdered. The SBC is not primarily concerned about underage sex-trafficking gangs run by Pakistani Muslim immigrants. Their priority is feeling good and being liked. Meeting with Obama in the Oval Office and preening for the cameras and hearing the praises of the far-left mainstream media. They like to be seen as "compassionate" by spending other people's money and risking other people's safety.

Once again, I must mention that I myself am non-white, and I favor skilled immigrants from all races. I am in favor of naturalizing skilled immigrants who can keep a high-paying job, refrain from committing crimes, and who are barred from collecting from any social welfare program for some long period of time. But refugees and unskilled immigrants should not be put on a path to naturalization under any circumstances. If individuals want to help them, they are free to help them with acts of voluntary charity. I myself am more interested in funding pro-life, pro-marriage, apologetics, etc. efforts.

Scott Klusendorf discusses abortion and euthanasia at the Summit Forum

June 19, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scott Klusendorf, President of the Life Training Institute

Here's the video, featuring my favorite pro-life speakers Scott Klusendorf. Scott is the founder and President of the Life Training Institute. LTI's mission is to make a rigorous, rational defense for pro-life positions with respect to a variety of ethical issues. If you listen to Scott, you will learn a lot, and learn it from someone who has been tested on the battlefield of ideas.

Three topics:

- right to life of the unborn
- reproductive technologies
- end of life questions

40 minutes of guided discussion, 20 minutes of Q&A. This video was apparently recorded in the summer of 2016.

Abortion:

- the 1-minute case for the pro-life position (excellent)
- dealing with those who dismiss the pro-life case as religious
- how and when do people win arguments?
- how does one get better at discussing moral issues?
- who are some of the best books to get informed about life issues?
- what are some of the best books from the other side?
- what is the SLED test? do pro-abortion scholars accept it?
- if abortion were illegal, who should be punished and how much?

- is it inflammatory and dangerous to say that abortion is killing?

Assisted reproductive technologies:

- how should we speak to people considering ARTs?
- what is the underlying issue in ART discussions?
- should pro-lifers be opposed to all use of ARTs?
- what should pro-lifers think about surrogacy?
- which books provide an introduction to ART ethics?

End of life issues:

- what is the central issue in end of life discussions?
- should treatment always be continued or are there situations where treatment can be withdrawn?

Final issues:

- if a student wants to take courses in bioethics, where should they go to take courses or do a degree?
- what is the policy situation for pro-lifers in terms of legislation and SCOTUS decision-making?
- what are some policies that pro-lifers can support as incremental measures that move the issue in the right direction?

I liked this discussion. I tried to listen as someone new to the issue and he did a good job of not assuming any prior knowledge of the debate. My favorite part was his survey of books and arguments on the other side, and what they say. I don't think that most people realize what the implications of the pro-abortion worldview really are for things like infanticide, and so on. The discussion about who should be punished for abortion and how much was new to me – and that actually came up during the last election, during the GOP primary. Personally, I would let the woman get off, and just prosecute the doctor.

It's very very good to listen to crystal clear thinking on these controversial issues from someone who has encountered the other side in their writings, and in public debates with them. Not to mention having to interact with people making decisions in these areas.

A modest proposal for dealing with illegal immigrants at the border

June 20, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Net annual cost of illegal immigration: 116 billion per year (Source: FAIR)

I want to write about Christian apologetics and moral issues, but all the news is about illegal immigration. So I feel that I must address some of the endless stream of lies and misrepresentations of the problem coming from the mainstream media.

Here is a helpful article from the Daily Signal that corrects four of the myths:

> During the White House press briefing Monday, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said: “This is a very serious issue that has resulted after years and years of Congress not taking action.”
>
> Here’s a look at four of the more questionable claims made about the enforcement action.
>
> “The Democrats forced that law upon our nation,” Trump asserted last week.
>
> Democrats, backed by some media commentators, counter that it’s not the law but a Trump administration policy.
>
> Actually, experts say, the situation is a combination of a bipartisan law and a Clinton administration policy.
>
> In 1997, the Clinton administration entered into something called the Flores Settlement Agreement, which ended a class action lawsuit first brought in the 1980s.

> The settlement established a policy that the federal government would release unaccompanied minors from custody to their parents, relatives, or other caretakers after no more than 20 days, or, alternatively, determine the "least restrictive" setting for the child.
>
> In a separate development, in 2008 the Democrat-controlled Congress approved bipartisan legislation to combat human trafficking and President George W. Bush, a Republican, signed it into law.
>
> Section 235 (g) in that law, the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, states that unaccompanied minors entering the United States must be transferred to the custody of the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement rather than to the Department of Homeland Security.
>
> The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit expanded the Flores settlement in 2016 to include children brought to the country illegally by their parents.
>
> For consistency between the provision of the anti-trafficking law and the 9th Circuit's interpretation of the Flores agreement, children who came into the country illegally with parents had to be taken into HHS custody, said Art Arthur, former general counsel for Immigration and Naturalization Services (now known as Immigration and Customs Enforcement) as well as a former federal immigration judge.
>
> "As soon as their parents are detained, the children are classified as unaccompanied," Arthur, now a resident fellow for law and policy at the Center for Immigration Studies, told The Daily Signal.
>
> Some media outlets have called the practice of separating children from parents at the border "unprecedented" or a "new low" for the United States.

That is the most important point that needs to be corrected. It's important to note that families seeking asylum that enter the country legally are NOT separated. The separation is only for people with minors who enter the country ILLEGALLY and then are caught. But the main point is that everything the media is complaining about today was legal under the Obama administration. The only difference is that the media at that time had no interest in making Obama look bad.

Now for something very helpful for this problem. Oh, it's true that Senator Ted Cruz has introduced a bill that would immediately solve the problem and prevent it from happening again. His solution drew the praise of moderate conservative David French, who normally doesn't like Ted Cruz, and favors ending family separation at the border for those caught entering the country illegally.

But that's not the only solution that's been proposed. Here is John Zmirak's solution, which he posted at The Stream.

> He writes:
>
> Since the law won't let us hold children more than 10 days, and the squealing

> elites won't let us separate them from the adults who claim to be their parents, we need a sane compromise. One that:
>
> - Respects our national sovereignty and the rule of law.
> - Keeps families together.
> - Lets our bishops go back to attending George Soros' conferences. And
> - Most important of all, heals Laura Bush's broken heart. Hasn't that woman suffered enough?
>
> My plan shifts the cost of this complex policy where it really belongs. It offers the people who clamor the loudest from illegal immigration (and profit from it more than most) the chance to also absorb its costs. In the words of Nicholas Nassim Taleb, we offer them the privilege of having some "skin in the game."
>
> Yes, Harvard and Yale of course. In fact, all the Ivies. (Yes, Cornell counts.) Also Brandeis, Stanford, Duke and even those state universities that flirt with "elite" status, such as UNC and UVA. Out of respect for Catholic bishops' firm stance on these issues, major Catholic schools should also take part, such as Georgetown and DePaul University.
>
> At each of these schools the comfortable, often lavish dormitories currently inhabited by students should be filled with migrant families. Students, for their part, will reside in tent cities constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers.

I'm having a lot of debates lately with stupid, spoiled progressive millennials. They don't know anything about the world, and they never cite anything to back up their claims. They think that they can pay off the debt by taxing the productive, but they don't know what the debt is, nor how much the productive pay in taxes. They think that universal health care will reduce health care costs, but they don't know how much it costs in other countries. They think that illegal immigrants, who by definition CANNOT pay income taxes, would be a net gain to the economy because they pay more in taxes than they use in education, health care, etc.

I really can't stand these stupid stupid young people. And that's why I have to say that the Zmirak proposal has a lot more going for it than the Cruz proposal. We definitely need to put the costs of leftist compassion onto the leftists. Maybe we could also house illegal immigrants in the homes of religious leaders who have spoken out in favor of illegal immigration.

Is anyone on the secular left not an intolerant bigoted violent domestic terrorist?

June 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Harassing women is just fine, says radical feminist UK Guardian writer

Well! Whenever there is an attack on conservatives by deranged secular leftists, I try to write about it. Over the years, there have been many – but they were infrequent. Now the left is becoming so violent that it's a daily occurrence. I decided to collect together a few articles to show you how intolerant and threatening the secular left has become.

Here's something from The Federalist by Kelsey Harkness, a female conservative:

> Jessica Valenti revealed a new standard for liberal feminists on Tuesday: Driving women out of restaurants is wrong, unless they're a Republican. If that woman is named Sec. Kirstjen Nielsen, the behavior is not only acceptable — it's to be applauded.
>
> The situation began when the head of the D.C. branch of Democratic Socialists of America tweeted the restaurant name and exact addresswhere Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen sat down for dinner. The dinner came after a very public day for Nielsen, who defended the Trump administration's decision to fully enforce U.S. immigration laws against all who illegally cross the border — a policy that in some case results in separating children from their illegal immigrant parents due to a settlement entered into in 1997 by the Clinton administration.
>
> The protesters marched through MXDC Cocina Mexicana uninterrupted for 11 minutes, screaming things at Nielsen such as, "Shame, shame, shame," "Fascist pig," 'End Texas concentration camps," and "No borders, no walls, sanctuary for all."

> The protest was supported by many on the left, including an editor at The Washington Post and Valenti, a feminist writer who recently penned a New York Times op-ed telling conservative women they can't be feminists. Valenti, who supposedly stands for the championing of women, described the harassment of Nielsen "VERY satisfying" to watch.
>
> "She should never be able to show her face in public again," she said.

So, according to this feminist writer who writes for the UK Guardian, harrassment and intimidation of women is OK, as long as the woman is conservative. Female conservatives and black conservatives seem to get the maximum level of hatred from people on the secular left. There's nothing like this level of harrassment by conservatives. If we disagree with something, we write about it or vote against it. We don't shoot you full of holes like the Bernie Sanders supporter did with the Republican legislators, and like the gun-wielding gay activist tried to do at the Family Research Council.

It wasn't just the UK Guardian, either… it's CNN, too:

6:08 AM - 20 Jun 2018

CNN says that harassing women is totally OK, if they're conservative

Another female conservative Joy Pullmann had a lot more details on the hate coming from the intolerant secular left. This is from The Federalist again:

> A few weeks ago, this same local chapter of socialists, about 60 to 70 strong, marched down the middle of the street to the northern Virginia home of Lora Ries, who assisted the Trump transition team with homeland security policy and has worked for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. They stood outside her home chanting things like: "No borders! No nation! F-ck deportation!" "Aqui estamos! No nos vamos!" (Spanish for "Here we are, we're not going.") "Lora Ries, you're a villain, locking up immigrant children." "No bans, no wall,

> sanctuary for all."
>
> […]Meanwhile, activists have also begun a doxxing campaign to enable further aggressive social agitation against the homes, privacy, and careers of people who work for ICE and other federal officials.

The "activists" screen scraped LinkedIn to find all the people who enforce the border security, in order to publish their personal information. The goal was to make them easier targets for threats, violence, harassment, vandalism, etc.

Just to remind you, the last time something like this happened, it was the Southern Poverty Law Center publishing the address of the Family Research Council, a conservative think tank. The result was that a gay activists went into the building with a gun, with the goal of mass murdering everyone inside. He was later convicted of domestic terrorism. Nothing was ever done to the SPLC.

Speaking of gay activists, consider this article from the Daily Signal about the kinds of comments that Christians get when they decline to participate in same-sex weddings.

Excerpt:

> We were penalized $135,000 for the "emotional damages" we caused by politely explaining our religious convictions and why we could not create a custom cake to celebrate a same-sex ceremony.
>
> The outrageous magnitude of that penalty—based largely on the fact that we dared to quote in our business the scriptures we hold sacred—is, we think, the type of anti-religious bias Kennedy had in mind when he determined that Jack's commissioners "violated the state's duty under the First Amendment not to base laws or regulations on hostility to a religion or religious viewpoint."
>
> We hope the justice system will undo the damage Avakian's lack of respect and neutrality has inflicted upon us. When the government acts with hostility to someone's religion or religious beliefs, citizens take that as license to treat one another with even greater hostility.
>
> While Avakian was publicly judging our religious beliefs, Nicole B. voiced her opinion on Facebook: "I hope your shop burns and you never make another cake, wh—."
>
> Matthew M. wrote: "If being a Christian means being a prejudiced, stupid piece of s—, you both are great Christians!"
>
> But Briana T.'s was one of the most painful to read: "We hope your children get cancer and die … . You are worthless."
>
> Beyond that, our business was shut down, our vehicles were vandalized, our home was broken into, and we have received more death threats than we care to count.

I was just reading a tweet by the Family Research Council on Twitter, and there are threats of violence in the replies by secularist leftists. Just in case you didn't know, the

FRC publishes research papers showing the benefits of natural marriage for children over other arrangements like cohabitation and same-sex relationships. That's it, that's how they got labeled a "hate group".

Look at the reply to their tweet below:

Threats of violence against the FRC by secular leftists abound

Is this what normal rank-and-file secular leftists are like? Should we now think that everyone who identifies as a secular leftist is a potential domestic terrorist? They seem to all either be actively involved in this violence / vandalism / intimidation / harassment, or actively condoning it. They don't make arguments. They don't marshal evidence. They just make threats. They just shout and scream. They just vandalize. They just open fire on unarmed people that they disagree with. This is the secular left in America.

Are the policies of the secular left good for children?

June 23, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Why do people think that CNN are biased leftist clowns?
The buzz on Friday was all about a fake news article put out by Time magazine, and later celebrated by CNN and the Washington Post. Let's quickly review the mistakes in the Time / CNN / Washington Post propaganda, and then we'll ask the question in the title: do people on the secular left really care about children?

The review comes from The Federalist:

> The cover features a 2-year-old Honduran girl sobbing as she looks up at Trump, with the words "Welcome to America." Inside, TIME reported the little girl was one of those separated from her mother because of the Trump administration's zero tolerance policy on families crossing the border illegally. She was taken "screaming" from her mother by border agents, the report claimed.
>
> […]"The original version of this story misstated what happened to the girl in the photo after she taken from the scene," the correction reads. "The girl was not carried away screaming by U.S. Border Patrol agents; her mother picked her up and the two were taken away together."
>
> Reuters talked to the little girl's father, who said she was not separated from her mother. The Honduran government confirmed his version of events. A border patrol agent who was at the scene, Carlos Ruiz, described what actually happened to CBS News.
>
> We were patrolling the border, it was after 10 o'clock at night. We asked her to set the kid down in front of her, not away from her … and so we can properly search the mother. So, the kid immediately started crying as she set her down. I personally went up to the mother and asked her, 'Are you doing okay, is the kid okay?' And she said, 'Yes, she's tired and thirsty and it's 11 o'clock at night.
>
> The father also revealed the mother left three other children behind, and was crossing the border in search of a job — not in search of asylum. She didn't tell any of them when she left. He told The Daily Mail the photo "broke his heart," and he didn't support her decision.
>
> "Why would she want to put our little girl through that?" he said. "But it was her decision at the end of the day."
>
> In addition, Immigration and Customs Enforcement told media outlets the mother was attempting to cross the border illegally for a second time — moving her crime from a misdemeanor up to a felony.
>
> "I don't have any resentment for my wife, but I do think it was irresponsible of her to take the baby with her in her arms because we don't know what could

> happen," the father added.
>
> He also claimed he heard the mother paid a smuggler $6,000 to get her across the border .

Even after the facts came out, Time continued to defend the piece, but then was forced to print a major correction. Time was celebrated by other #FakeNews media. CNN posted an article praising the #FakeNews story, before correcting it. The Washington Post also celebrated the #FakeNews story, until they had to issue a correction, but they hid the correction. A commonsense interpretation of these facts shows that the mainstream media really has no interest in reporting the news objectively. As I explained before, all the peer-reviewed studies show that the mainstream media is almost entirely composed of secular leftists.

But nevermind all that. I want to focus on whether the people on the secular left, and their allies in the #FakeNews media, really do have an authentic concern for children.

Do secular leftists really care about children?

This article by Trevor Grant Thomas from The American Thinker lists a few secular leftist policies that are anti-child, and then I'll excerpt one, and add some that he missed.

The list:

1. abortion (kill unwanted children)
2. welfare state (makes women to swap fathers for welfare)
3. poverty (socialism and fatherlessness kills prosperity)
4. public schools / teachers unions (against school choice and voucher programs)

The excerpt is about #2:

> Even longer than they have ignored the right to life, American liberals have worked to build a massive welfare state that has played a terrible role in the destruction of the family — especially the black family. Yesterday, Rush Limbaugh again reminded Americans which political party enabled generations of children — again, especially black children — to be separated from their parents.
>
> The Democrat Party exists on dependency, and people that escape it pose a problem. So don't buy that the Democrats care about separated families. Because, after all… the Democrat Party literally subsidized single motherhood in the black community for decades. It was called AFDC.
>
> The Democrat Party promoted a welfare policy that gave single women additional money for every child they had. The father need not ever be around. In many cases, the father was not even known, the father was not even identified because the Democrat Party assumed the role.
>
> If you want to talk about honestly separating families, the Democrat Party wrote the book on it and promoted it and campaigned on it and won elections on the basis of separated families where the government took over the economic

> responsibilities of the father.

Never forget that it was Democrats who destroyed the black family in America.

[image]
Black women were more likely to be married before welfare programs
For my contribution, I'll note that the two great redefinitions of marriage, no-fault divorce and same-sex marriage, were both championed by secular leftists. These deprived children of their biological mother or father, or both in the case of gay adoption. The sexual revolution also a project of the secular left, made sex about recreation instead of keeping it inside of a life-long commitment. Finally, the secular left under Obama increased the national debt from $10 trillion to $20 trillion. This basically means that future generations of children will have all their income taxed away to pay for the hedonism of secular leftists today. The Democrat Party is truly the party of slavery – children not yet born are their slaves.

Here is a corrected version of the Time Cover with the inaccuracies fixed:

What the Time magazine cover should have said (Source: The Daily Caller)
OK, and finally, check out this hilarious tweet by an actual journalist, Stephen Miller, who accurately predicted how CNN would attack anyone who pointed out the mistakes in the Time story. He tweeted that to Brian Stelter of CNN. And sure enough, CNN later mailed out an attack on the fact-checkers that matched Miller's prediction almost word for word.

Bible study: the importance of truth in religion

June 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here's an interesting passage of the Bible. What do you all think the practical value of this passage is?

[1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

[2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

[3] he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

[4] Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

[6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

[7] Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[8] Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

[9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me

the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me.”

[10] The astrologers answered the king, “There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

[11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.”

[12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king’s guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king’s officer, “Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?” Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.”

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

[27] Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

[29] “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

[30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

This passage is interesting to me because it shows the kind of attitude that God answers. The King in this passage was tired of hearing man-made stories from his servants – stories that were undoubtedly influenced by the servants desire to survive the King’s wrath. The servants would only have told the King things that were vague and happy, so that they could never be proved wrong or found to be judgmental or offensive. But the King was tired of that. He wanted someone with authority to tell him the truth about the way the world was.

In the rest of the chapter, Daniel interprets the dream, and concludes by saying this: “The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”. The King replies: “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

I think it is is going to be difficult for Christians living today to be able to tell people their dreams like that. But what we can do is talk about God’s miracles as revealed by science and history. We can study astrophysics, biochemistry and history and we can explain what God did in creating and fine-tuning the universe for life, in sequencing amino acids into functioning proteins, in creating brand new body plans in the Cambrian explosion, in raising Jesus from the dead as a matter of historical record, and so on. We have to show how great God is to people who do not even think he exists, and without assuming that they believe in the Bible. And we have to do it by focusing on *what is true.*

Early last week, I got a message from a friend who was interested in a girl that he met on an online dating service. She claimed to be a Christian. My friend explained why he was so interested in some of the evidences I outlined above. She was not impressed. She said “I prefer to show people Christianity is true by not judging them, by being compassionate, by introducing them to a fun and affirming community”. There was no emphasis on truth in her approach. In fact, any religious group could do those things and “establish” their religion as true, by appealing to feelings. But this is clearly not what the God of the Bible

intends for people who seek him. He is a God of truth, and truth is established by logical reasoning and supporting evidence.

There are still people out there like the King who are looking for someone who can speak to them with authority. All it takes from us is a little studying, and we can be like Daniel, too. But we have to know what God has done from science and history, and speak with authority about how we can know that God has acted *supernaturally*. Authority to speak comes from having knowledge about what we are talking about, and knowledge comes from studying and debating with people we disagree with. Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer in the God of Israel, but he was still interested in truth. That won't always be the case, but it is the case for some people.

Can parents lead their children to be effective and influential Christians?

June 25, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

I'm not going to surprise any of my regular readers by stating that I believe that fathers should lead their children to pursue advanced degrees and to reach high positions of influence. I think it is the man's job to survey the world, to decide where the battles are being fought, to encourage his children to be the best in every academic discipline, to push them to take on difficult practical tasks, to assess their strengths and weaknesses as they progress (not their likes and dislikes), and to push them towards success in areas where the battles are being fought and where they have talent.

So, for example, if I had a child, here are some areas I would steer him/her toward:

- cosmology, to study the Big Bang and fine-tuning arguments
- software engineering, to make tons of money and not have to conform to teacher's expectations
- philosophy, because that's what William Lane Craig, Jay Richards and Stephen C. Meyer did
- New Testament, because that's what Gary Habermas, N.T. Wright, and Ben Witherington did
- economics, as long as they went to Hillsdale/Grove City, then George Mason, because they could go on to politics
- law, as long as they went to Hillsdale/Grove City, then George Mason, because they could go on to politics
- biochemistry, because intelligent design is all bound up with the origin of life chemistry – but this is risky
- paleontology, because the Cambrian explosion is an excellent apologetic argument – but this is very risky

- dentist, because you can make a ton of money, and it's not regulated
- veterinarian, because you can make a ton of money, and it's not regulated
- mathematics professor, because you can influence children, but not be turfed out for your religion/politics
- medical physics, you can make a ton of money and no risk of being discriminated against
- bioinformatics, combine software engineering and biochemistry – but this is somewhat risky
- social scientist working on social issues like marriage and parenting and social policy, but this is pretty risky

I want to lead my future children towards academic excellence and effective professions where they can exert an influence. I would do this by using things like rules, standards, accountability, and moral boundaries. I would teach my children to learn to sacrifice their happiness to love God more effectively. I would encourage them to take risks, work hard, be enterprising, and to earn and save money.

I've been practicing all of this over the years on my male and female friends. I encourage them to go back to school, get advanced degrees, bring in good speakers to church and universities, show debates, read good apologetics and economics books, earn and save money, etc. The consensus view , among men and women who I've challenged, is that all this hard work is not much fun, but that they loved the feeling of being confident in their faith, and that they loved having a worldview that was comprehensive – integrating science, politics, history, economics, philosophy, foreign policy, etc. And they felt that it made them feel closer to God because they liked having the experience of defending him.

Although the leading seems to work really well on friends, but as soon as you try it on girl friends, some of them get really mad. And they don't think that it's a good parenting style either. Some Christian women say that children should do whatever they feel like doing, that every vocation is as effective as any other, and that children will rebel against high expectations and hard work, and become atheists. And worst of all, some women think that *children need to be protected from the expectations, boundaries and standards of their own fathers.* For a Christian man thinking about having a family, the thought that his children will not amount to anything is his worst nightmare. Women need to not only be comfortable with men leading the family through goal-directed parenting, but they need to encourage the men to *be leaders*.

So some women think that male parenting is bad for children, and doesn't work to produce effect Christian kids.

But is it true?

Well consider two children of famous Christian apologists.

First, Lee Strobel's son:

> Kyle Strobel is a speaker, writer, and a practitioner of spiritual formation and community transformation. His main focus is on discipleship, spiritual formation,

> and creating a community of disciples who do the same. He has done masters work in Philosophy of Religion as well as New Testament. After doing further masters work in Spiritual Formation, Kyle has started his Ph.D in theology at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland in order to help integrate the often divorced spheres of theology and spirituality.
>
> Kyle has focused his ministry on developing and equipping people to live a Jesus way of life, which is also the subtitle to his book Metamorpha: Jesus as a way of life(Baker, April 2007). Kyle and his wife Kelli live in Aberdeen, Scotland.

Second, Josh McDowell's son:

> Head of the Bible Department at *Capistrano Valley Christian Schools*, where he teaches the courses on Philosophy, Theology, and Apologetics. He graduated summa cum laude from Talbot Theological Seminary with a double Master's degree in Theology and Philosophy. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in Apologetics and Worldview Studies from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Sean received the "Educator of the Year" for San Juan Capistrano, California in 2008. His apologetics training was awarded Exemplary Status by the *Association of Christian Schools International*. Sean is listed among the top 100 apologists.

I've talked to Greg Koukl, and he is amazingly intense and thoughtful about how he is raising his kids. I asked him this personally. He has a plan. He's put a lot of thought into it. I'm sure his wife supports him leading the children. Apologists are good at persuading other people, and that is *exactly* what you do with your friends… *and with your children*. If you are tough on your friends, and that works, then you can be sure that being tough on the kids will work too.

I was talking to my friend Lindsay the other day, and asking her if she thought that any of her four homeschooled children would grow up to make a difference. Her response was very different than the women who distrust men as leaders. She said "all of them will grow up to be influential Christian conservatives. I'll see to that." That answer is music to a Christian man's ears. There's nothing a man wants to hear more than that he is leaving someone in charge who respects his desire that his children will make a difference for Christ and his Kingdom. What is the point of working so hard if your wife cannot be trusted to make something happen. Even if Lindsay somehow fails, at least she intends to achieve something.

If I have children in the future, I will have to pull money away from the ministries and scholars and conferences that I like to sponsor. My friends will not be receiving gifts and books and lectures and debates. I will have a lot less time for writing and relationships with atheists and co-worker debates. I'll have to work for many years more at a boring job to pay for stuff that's just normal every day stuff. If I have to do all that, then I would like to see that my wife is prepared to raise children, is supportive and understanding of what men do in a family, and focused on serving God effectively. And I would like to see her value the fact that a man has *demonstrated his ability to lead* by building up his friends

over the *long-term* into effective and influential Christians – by giving them time and money and setting high expectations and monitoring their progress.

Women should not be afraid of men who have a track record of leading other people to be effective and influential. In fact, they should *value* it.

Is the acceleration of the universe's expansion compatible with Hinduism?

June 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

First, a news story – and then we'll see how the accelerating universe relates to the existence of God.

Excerpt:

> Three astrophysicists who discovered that the universe's expansion is accelerating rather than decelerating, as had been expected, win the Nobel Prize in physics.
>
> Adam Riess was sure he'd spotted a blatant error in his results. It was 1997, and the young post-doc's measurements of distant, exploding stars implied that the universe was expanding at a faster and faster rate, instead of slowing down, as he had expected.
>
> It wasn't an error at all. Instead, what was at fault were some basic assumptions about the workings of the universe.
>
> On Tuesday, the Johns Hopkins University astrophysicist received the Nobel Prize in physics for the revolutionary discovery and its implications, along with team leader Brian Schmidt of Australian National University and astrophysicist Saul Perlmutter of UC Berkeley and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, who had reached the same conclusion independently.
>
> At the time of their work, astrophysicists believed that the rate of expansion of the universe — set in motion by the Big Bang 13.7 billion years ago — would be slowing down as matter was pulled together by gravity. The goal at the time was

> to figure out how rapid the deceleration was.
>
> What the two teams found instead was that the expansion of the universe was accelerating — an observation that could best be explained by the existence of a mysterious "dark energy" that pushes matter farther and farther apart.
>
> Many scientists had thought that, just as the universe started with the Big Bang, it would end with a Big Crunch — with gravity pulling all the matter in the universe inward.

Does anyone remember that week that I wrote those posts about "Why I am not a… <insert some religion here>"? I explained why I was not all kinds of different religions and denominations, including Roman Catholicism, Calvinism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, etc. Everyone was offended and we fought about it. Ah, I remember it well.

Now let's apply science to the Hindu religion and see if they go together, especially this new discovery about the expansion of the universe.

Why I am not a Hindu

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

So that's one reason why I am not a Hindu. And now we have more scientific confirmation that there is no cycle of universes coming into being and going out of being.

The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with Buddhism and Mormonism and maybe other religions. They also require an eternally existing universe.

And modern cosmology disagrees with atheism, too

I think it's important for all of you to be familiar with the scientific evidence for the Big Bang. It will help you with your cosmological argument, and it will help you to refute many, many other religions that require eternal universes, including atheism.

I wrote about how the Big Bang cosmology falsifies atheism before.

Excerpt:

> According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an

> eternally existing universe, (See the first item: “Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.”). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* The Big Bang has been confirmed by experimental evidence such as redshift measurements, light element abundances and the cosmic microwave background radiation. This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by atheist Scriptures.

The experimental evidence that confirms the Big Bang creation out of nothing falsifies many worldviews. Those who care about evidence will have to choose some other religion that is compatible with what we know from science today.

New study: college students drink more before casual sex than relationship sex

June 27, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

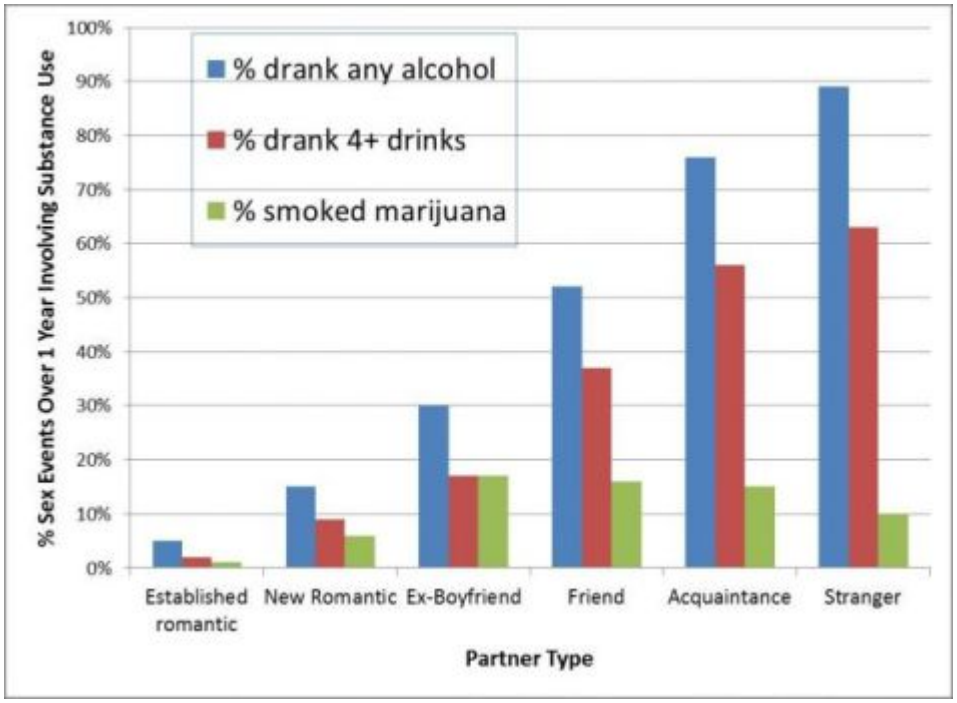

Sex events measured against intimacy level (for women only)

It turns out that college students use MORE alcohol and drugs when they have sex with strangers, and LESS alcohol and drugs when they have sex with people they are in a relationship with.

This study was reported by the far-left Psychology Today.

Excerpt:

> A recent study published in the *Journal of Sex Research* sheds some light on these questions. A research team headed by Jennifer Walsh analyzed alcohol use in almost 500 casual and 1400 romantic sexual intercourse events that happened to 300 college women on a monthly basis over a period of 12 months. Alcohol use was not very common during romantic sex: 20% of romantic encounters involved some drinking and only 5% involved heavy drinking (defined as four or more drinks). Hookups, on the other hand, were a different story: Women drank during 53% of their hookups, and drank *heavily* during 38% of all hookups.
>
> But not all hookups are created equal. There was an almost perfect linear relationship between drinking and partner closeness: The less known the partner, the more likely women drank before sex, and the more likely they drank a lot. Look at the graph I created based on their data. When the casual partner was an ex-boyfriend, for example, only 30% of hookups involved drinking and 17% heavy drinking. When the partner was a random stranger, however, 89% of hookups involved drinking and 63% involved four or more drinks!

The writer explains why this happens:

> Alcohol also provides **an excuse** to those who need one. In a world that encourages hooking up but also judges those (especially women) who engage in it too much, many seem to need it. You're a slut if you hook up with people *just because you want to*: Good girls don't actively want to hook up, and being sober means taking full responsibility for your actions. But if you can blame it on the alcohol, you're absolved of guilt. You can still be a good girl who just happened to make a mistake.

This study agrees with a study I blogged about before from the University of Virginia, which explained that college students drink before hook-ups in order to be able to explain to their friends why it wasn't their fault:

> A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."
>
> Other women observed that being drunk gives a woman license to act sexually interested in public in ways that would not be tolerated if she were sober. For instance, a University of Michigan student said, "Girls are actually allowed to be a lot more sexual when they are drunk…"
>
> A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."

Now, the first thing I thought of when I saw this article in Psychology Today was: "I wonder what criteria these college students are using in order to decide which strangers they have sex with". And then I realized. For perfect strangers, it would have to be something obvious, like physical appearance. A study found that it takes a woman 3 minutes to decide if she likes a man or not. Whatever assessment is being made in that 3 minutes surely isn't adequate for long-term plans for marriage, children and church attendance.

Don't judge me, it wasn't my fault

It reminds me of something I read a while back in a Theodore Dalrymple book. Theodore Dalrymple is the famous psychiatrist who writes books about culture in the UK. One of his books about the complete lack of personal responsibility among criminals is actually posted online.

In the chapter "Tough Love", he talks about the nurses he works with:

> All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same

signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.

This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.

Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.

This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.

Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.

At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how* they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

If Dalrymple's observations about female patients and nurses can be applied more broadly, then it explains why women initiate 70% of divorces. Women who don't want to be "forced" to be self-controlled and responsible with their choices will want an easy way to get out of it. According to Dalrymple's experience, it's not that women don't know that bad boys are lousy at marriage and fatherhood. They know it, but they choose to blind themselves to it, because it's just too much self-denial to have to be serious about making responsible choices with men and sex and marriage.

Right now, we are $20 trillion in debt, half of that thanks to Barack Obama's administration. I believe that the majority of this debt was accrued because people wanted to do what felt good to them in the moment, and then pass off the costs of their "unpredictable" mistakes onto their neighbors. The truth is that these costs will be paid by generations of young people not yet born. People shouldn't talk about how much they care about children, if their voting will force all the children of tomorrow into slavery.

One last piece of advice to men. My best friend Dina told me to always evaluate women based on their past choices, not based on the picture of themselves that they paint with words. Wise advice.

What do skeptical ancient historians think of the earliest Christian creed?

June 28, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here is a post from my friend Eric Chabot. He writes about the earliest historical source for the minimal facts about the resurrection, which is the early creed recorded by Paul in 1 Corinthians: 3-7.

1 Cor 15:3-7:

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Just in case you didn't know, Cephas is Peter, one of Jesus' closest followers.

The general consensus among scholars is the that creed goes back to within 1-3 years after the death if Jesus, when almost all the eyewitnesses were still around.

The creed

In Eric's post, he quotes very well-known skeptical historians who affirm each part of the creed.

First, the creed as a whole is respected, even by atheist scholars like John Dominic Crossan:

> Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that "I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received." The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition

> would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he "went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days" (3).

And atheist scholar Robert Funk:

> The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30 C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." — Robert Funk co-founder of the Jesus Seminar.(5)

Let's take a look at one of the parts of the creed that is respected by skeptical historians… namely, the early belief that Jesus was resurrected shortly after his death.

The early belief in the resurrection

Skeptical scholar E.P. Sanders:

> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. "I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: 'I saw him first!' 'No! I did.' Paul's tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus' followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions." "Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the 'resurrection': the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it. (14)

Skeptical scholar Bart Ehrman:

Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus' resurrection, since this is a matter of public record. (17)

> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don't doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don't have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don't think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19). (18)

You know, if all you did was give someone his post, I think that would be enough to show people that a more complete investigation of the historical Jesus was certainly a reasonable thing to do. It's amazing to me that people who grow up at this time when access to the data is so easy do not take the opportunity to look into Christianity.

List of virtually undeniable facts

Finally, below is a list of facts about the historical Jesus that are accepted by ancient historians – Christian, non-Christian, atheist.

These are compiled by non-Christian scholar E.P. Sanders:

From his book "Jesus and Judaism" (1985):

- Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.
- Jesus called disciples and spoke of there being twelve.
- Jesus confined his activity to Israel.
- Jesus was a Galilean who preached and healed.
- Jesus engaged in a controversy about the temple.
- Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem by the Roman authorities.
- After his death, his followers continued as an identifiable movement.
- At least some Jews persecuted at least parts of the new movement.

From his book "The Historical Figure of Jesus" (1993):

- Jesus was born c.4 BCE, near the time of the death of Herod the Great;
- He spent his childhood and early adult years in Nazareth, a Galilean village;
- He was baptized by John the Baptist;
- He called disciples;
- He taught in the towns, villages, and countryside of Galilee (apparently not the cities);
- He preached "the kingdom of God";
- Around the year 30 he went to Jerusalem for Passover;
- He created a disturbance in the temple area;
- He had a final meal with the disciples;
- He was arrested and interrogated by Jewish authorities, specifically the high priest;
- He was executed on the orders of the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate;
- His disciples at first fled;
- They saw him (in what sense is uncertain) after his death;
- As a consequence they believed he would return to found the kingdom;
- They formed a community to await his return and sought to win others to faith in him as God's Messiah.

The way the resurrection of Jesus is presented on TV, you would think that mythical stories about Jesus emerged decades and even centuries after the fact in other parts of the world from where the events happened. But the trouble is that no ancient historian thinks that. Only Hollywood TV producers and movie makers think that. Now, if you are getting your view of the historical accuracy of basic Christian beliefs from television and movies, then don't be surprised if you are wrong. No one is saying that you have to go to Christian pastors and preachers for the facts, but you should go to the historians. They at least know the minimal facts.

The best way for a skeptic to tackle these issues is, I think, to watch a decent debate on the resurrection of Jesus between two respected scholars. My favorite debate on the resurrection is William Lane Craig versus atheist historian James Crossley. I have a video and a summary already ready made just waiting for you to check it out. Don't worry, no one will be looking over your shoulder making you change everything your life should you be convinced. Just watch the debate and decide what you are going to do with it on your own. You don't have to change your whole life overnight. Becoming a Christian is instantaneous and easy to do. Living like a Christian is a process, and it's between you and God how fast you go. So just see what the facts are to start with and then take it from there.

Activist arrested for child pornography, soliciting sex with children

June 29, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Accused child rapist and child pornographer, etc. at Human Rights Campaign event (Photo credit: The Other McCain and this tweet)

I want to be careful here and just stick to the facts.

Let's start with the radically leftist New York Times, a former newspaper.

Excerpt:

> A Columbia University student whose global campaign against rape and sexual abuse of children earned him berths to speak alongside United Nations and State Department officials was himself charged this week with a series of sex crimes against children.
>
> […]He is charged with one count of enticement of a minor under the age of 18 to engage in sexual activity, which carries a maximum sentence of life in prison. He is also charged with one count of attempted sexual exploitation of a minor, one count of possession of child pornography and one count of receipt and distribution of child pornography, prosecutors said this week.

The far-left Washington Post reports:

> Over the course of several weeks between May and late June, prosecutors say, Davis exchanged text messages with undercover FBI agents, trying to arrange meetings with a 9-year-old girl, an 8-year-old girl and a 2-year-old boy. Davis allegedly sent the undercover agents sexually explicit photos and videos of children as young as infants and made clear that he wanted to have sex with children of any age, according to a federal criminal complaint.
>
> He also admitted to meeting a 13-year-old boy on the dating app Grindr, speaking with him on Snapchat and engaging in sexual activity with the boy at Davis's Manhattan apartment in June, according to the complaint.

> […]Davis told the agent that he is into children ages zero and up, and has "no limits," according to the complaint. He said he previously had sexual experiences with a 9-month-old boy, a 6-year-old girl and a 7-year-old boy. He sent the agent an array of disturbing photos showing adults sexually abusing naked children as young as infants.
>
> He asked another undercover agent to take nude pictures and videos of the agent's supposed 9-year-old daughter and the 2-year-old daughter of the agent's girlfriend. Davis told the agent he had "hundreds" of images of child pornography in his "collection," mostly "baby/toddler."
>
> Davis pressed the agent about meeting the 2-year-old girl. "When do u have that baby alone next," Davis asked. "I mean even for a few mins enough to FaceTime."
>
> Through a search warrant, authorities later found a trove of child pornography on Davis's cellphone. After his arrest, Davis admitted to having a sexual interest in infants and toddlers, keeping the child porn on his phone, and trying to set up meetings with the agents' children, authorities said.

Grindr is a famous app used by gay males to find strangers to have anonymous hook-up sex with solely based solely on physical appearance. It describes itself as "Grindr is the world's #1 FREE mobile social networking app for gay, bi, trans, and queer people to connect."

ABC News says that he is a Nobel Prize nominee. The Daily Mail posted a picture of him wearing a huge Hillary Clinton pin.

The Daily Wire reports something that the NYT and WaPo missed:

> Davis attended a Human Rights Campaign gala in New York in February 2017.

You can see the picture at the top of the post. You'll remember that wealthy Democrat donor and Obama-supporter Terry Bean was also charged for sex abuse of an underage male. Terry Bean co-founded the Human Rights Campaign, the largest LGBT activism organization in America.

Barronelle Stutzman religious liberty case parallels Jack Phillips case

June 30, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Barronelle Stutzman owns a flower shop in Washington state. A gay couple she had served for years decided to weaponize the secular state to punish her, when she declined to participate in their same-sex wedding. In this Fox News editorial, she explains what the gay activists in Washington state government did to her. Those already familiar with the case might want to read her editorial anyway, because it shows that that her case has parallels to the Jack Phillips case that was recently decided by the Supreme Court.

This is a very useful editorial because I think it really shows how to frame disagreement with homosexual redefinitions of marriage in a winsome way. If the police and the government come for you, it's important to understand how to explain yourself without being more offensive than you have to be.

Excerpt:

> I tried to do my work as an artist in ways that honored my religious beliefs, my home state of Washington turned my life upside down. Since then, my state has been prosecuting me because I declined, for religious reasons, one request to celebrate one event for one gay customer – a friend of mine named Rob, whom I'd been delighted to serve for nearly a decade.
>
> The Washington Supreme Court ruled against me last year with a decision that threatens to bankrupt my husband and me. But this week, the U.S. Supreme Court breathed new life into my case, sending it back to the Washington courts for further consideration.
>
> […]I'm also a Christian, and that affects every part of my life, including my work. Because I believe that all people are made in the very image of God, I serve

> everyone who enters my shop and treat them with dignity and respect.

She served gay people, but declined to participate in same-sex marriage weddings:

> But this doesn't mean that I can agree to every request. If people ask for custom arrangements to celebrate events or express messages that run up against my religious beliefs, I have to say 'no.' (This is particularly true for events like weddings that I personally attend.) Even then, I'll gladly create something else for them, or sell them any of my ready-to-purchase items.
>
> My relationship with Rob shows this. I served him for nearly a decade. I knew that he is gay, and he knew that I'm a Christian. None of that mattered. We enjoyed working with each other, and we quickly became friends. I was glad to create arrangements celebrating his partner's birthday, their anniversary, Valentine's Day, and other important life events. But when he asked me to design the flowers for his wedding, it was a different matter.

Her reason for declining to participate in the same-sex wedding was her own deeply-held religious convictions: (which are protected by law)

> My faith teaches me that marriage is sacred, and that it exists only in the uniting of a man and a woman. I cannot create custom floral art, or be part of an event, celebrating a view that contradicts what I believe God designed marriage to be.

She declined the request to participate in the wedding in a gentle way, and recommended other businesses who would do a good job:

> So when Rob asked me about his wedding, I walked him to a private part of my shop, took his hand in mine, told him why I couldn't do what he asked, and referred him to three other florists who I knew would do a good job. Rob said that he understood, and we hugged before he left.

It was the state of Washington that decided to force their secular left "morality" on her. They decided to make an example of her, in order to intimidate Christians into acting like non-Christians on moral issues. (similar to what happened in Colorado with the Civil Rights Commission vs Masterpiece Cakeshop).

But, just like Colorado gay activists in government, they did not apply the law consistently. Christian businesses were persecuted, but anti-Christian businesses were allowed to discriminate against Christians:

> Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson heard about this after Rob's partner posted something on social media. Ever since, the attorney general has relentlessly – and on his own initiative – come after me in ways he's never come after anyone else. He certainly hasn't done the same to a Seattle coffee shop owner who profanely berated and openly discriminated against Christian customers.

The consequences for Barronelle are the loss of her business and everything that she owns, and hoped to pass on to her own children:

> The attorney general doesn't just want to punish me in my role as a business owner. He's sued me in my "personal capacity," meaning that my husband and I are now at risk of losing everything we own.

The attorney general was asked to stop trying to take everything she owned, but he declined to do it. He's addicted the idea of using the power of the secular government to punish religious people who disagree with him.

> I've written the attorney general a letter urging him "to drop" the personal claims that risk stripping away "my home, business, and other assets." He won't. For him, this case has been about making an example of me – crushing me – all because he disapproves of what I believe about marriage.

And remember that the salary of this fascistic attorney general is funded in part by Barronelle's own income taxes. She's paying them to persecute her for her Christian beliefs, because the people around her – some of whom claim to be Christians – voted for bigger and bigger secular leftist government.

Discrimination against Christians

I decided to take a look at the other case that she linked to, to really understand whether the state of Washington had enforced the law differently for different people. You'll remember that the favorable decision that Jack Phillips got was conditional (in part) on the law being applied inconsistently in his home state.

Here's the story:

> A homosexual coffee shop owner refused service to a group of peaceful Christian [pro-lifers] Sunday and evicted them from his shop.
>
> The [pro-lifers] had been actively engaging people in the city for several days, sharing the gospel, holding signs exposing the abortion holocaust, and handing out literature to people of the streets. According to… Caytie Davis, the group entered Bedlam Coffee to rest and have a drink but did not engage anyone there.
>
> "We had nothing on us, we weren't distributing anything," Davis said. "We bought coffee and went upstairs." Within minutes of their arrival, the barista ran up the stairs and into the back room to alert the owner of their presence.
>
> […]When the [pro-lifers] asked why they had to leave, the owner told them, "This offends me."
>
> […]Jonathan Sutherland pointed out that the literature had been found on public property, but the owner repeatedly cut him off, saying "Shut up! Shut up!"
>
> "We tried to talk to him and he wanted nothing to do with it," Davis added.
>
> "So you're not willing to tolerate our presence?" Sutherland asked.
>
> "Will you tolerate my presence?" the man responded. Sutherland assured him

> they would. “We’re actually in your coffee shop,” he said.
>
> “Really?” the owner demanded. “If I go get my boyfriend and f*ck him in the a** right here you’re going to tolerate that?”
>
> “That would be your choice,” Sutherland answered. But the owner would not be persuaded. “Are you going to tolerate it?” he asked again. “Answer my f***ing question! No, you’re going to sit right here and f***ing watch it!”
>
> “Well, we don’t want to watch that,” said Caleb Head…
>
> “Well than I don’t have to f*cking tolerate this!” the man said. “Leave! All of you. Tell all your f*cking friends, don’t f*cking come here.”
>
> The [pro-lifers] agreed to leave, but Davis took the opportunity as they left to share the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. “Just know that Christ can save you from that lifestyle,” she said.
>
> “Yeah, I like a**,” the owner responded. “I’m not going to be saved by anything. I’d f*ck Christ in the a**. Ok? He’s hot.”
>
> As they exited… Jes Sutherland commented, “Seattle has proved itself to not be tolerant.”
>
> “Don’t act so f***ing shocked b**ch,” the owner said. “Get the f*ck out.”

The story was also reported on by a neutral source, a local radio station.

The Christians didn’t even ask the gay business owner to cater a heterosexual wedding! They were just refused service for who they were… something that Barronelle and Jack did not do. Naturally, the police and the state of Washington had nothing to say about this.

Finally, some secular leftist journalists are trying to say that what the owner of the Red Hen did to White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders was OK, because of the Jack Phillips decision. But it’s pretty obvious to anyone who is thinking rationally, that the cases are not parallel. Jack Phillips and Barronelle Stutzman both served gay people for everything except participation in a gay wedding. But the owner of the Red Hen refused to serve people based on religious convictions or political convictions. I would be fine with radical leftists refusing to participate in my heterosexual wedding, too. People on the religious right don’t believing in forcing those who disagree with them to act as if they agreed with them. And we certainly don’t believe in using the government to force them to do it. Fascism is now and always has been a left-wing enterprise, because only people on the secular left look to government as a solution to anything that makes them feel bad.

In Canada, the Christians get jail time for disagreement

By the way, if you want to read an interesting story from The Federalist about how gay activists are using police and courts to go after Christians who say things that offend them, then read about this case from Canada, where a very weird but harmless Christian is being threatened with TWO YEARS in prison for handing out pamphlets warning gay

people about the health risks of male-male sexual behavior. Although he cited numbers from the Center for Disease Control for his little pamphlets, this was apparently too much for the Canadian police, and they decided to arrest him and threaten him with jail time. And again, he is paying the salaries of the police, prosecutors and judges through his taxes.

Is there a downside to celebrating homosexuality as normal?

July 1, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When disagreements come up, it's good to look at what the evidence is

This article from Touchstone magazine has the numbers. The "CDC" is the government-run Centers for Disease Control.

It says:

> We don't hear much about the HIV/AIDS epidemic anymore. When was the last time you read an article either online or in a newspaper of general circulation, or saw a report on a television news program about HIV/AIDS? **And yet, with no media attention or public fanfare, Mr. Obama's proposed 2016 federal budget requests almost $32 billion for HIV/AIDS treatment and research, an increase of 3.1% over the prior year.** Notwithstanding the Supreme Court's recent decision finding a fundamental, constitutional "right" to homosexual and lesbian "marriage," there is a deeply dark and dangerous side to today's American homosexuality. Since the first cases of what would later become known as AIDS were reported in the United States in June of 1981, more than 1.8 million people in the U.S. are estimated to have been infected with HIV, of whom 658,507 have already died. Today, the Centers for Disease Control ("CDC") estimates that more than 1,218,400 people aged 13 years and older are living with HIV/AIDS in the United States. Of those, tragically, the CDC estimates that almost 1 in 8 (156,300 or 12.8%) are unaware of their infection. Homosexual and bisexual men who have sex with men, particularly young African-American men, continue to be the most seriously affected by HIV/AIDS. Over the past decade, approximately 50,000 people are newly infected *annually*. In 2013, the CDC estimated that 47,352 people were diagnosed with HIV infection, and an

> additional 26,688 people were diagnosed with full-blown AIDS in the United States. Again, according to the CDC, in 2012, notwithstanding medical advances, an estimated 13,712 people with AIDS died.
>
> Although African-Americans represent 12 percent of the U.S. population, but accounted for 44% of new HIV infections in 2012, and accounted for 41% of people living with HIV/AIDS. Hispanics/Latinos account for 20 percent of people living with HIV infection. Although homosexual and bisexual men who have exchanges of body fluids through anal intercourse and other sexual contact with other men represent a very small proportion of the male population in the United States, the CDC reports that they account for *78 percent of new HIV infections among males*, and 63 percent of all new infections. Importantly, in a typical year, the greatest number of new HIV infections occur in younger African-American males aged 13-24. Younger black men accounted for 45% of all new HIV infections among African-Americans, and *55% of new HIV infections among all younger homosexual and bisexual men*.

We can all think of behaviors that are not good for people. Suppose you notice your friend has started smoking, or maybe is eating too much and not exercising, or maybe's she's getting really thin and not eating enough – if you loved them, you would say something. What if they got defensive and they felt bad about being judged? I still think it's good to gently but firmly tell the truth.

In my office, I have leftists who often tell me to recycle cans. If I don't recycle cans, nothing bad will happen to me. But strangely enough, the leftists don't have anything to say about behaviors that really would hurt me, like homosexuality. Secondhand smoke? They will condemn that. But engaging in risky sexual activity? They want to celebrate that. What sense does this double standard make? Tell people the truth about what behaviors might hurt them, but do it in a gentle way. Don't just tell someone "it's wrong", either. Instead, show them the facts and the sources so they can check out the data for themselves.

Mexico elects Marxist President, what does it mean for America?

July 2, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mexico, number of murders by state, 2017 (Source: Geopolitical Futures)

Mexico has held an election, and they decided to elect someone with the policies of Hugo Chavez (Venezuela). His name is Andrés Manuel López Obrador. What does it mean for America? It means we need to build a wall on our Southern border, and quickly, too. There were a couple of great articles about the election in The Federalist.

Let's start with the first one, which emphasizes what the new government could do.

Excerpt:

> True to his left wing beliefs, his economic plan is all about taxing and spending. He calls for universal access to public colleges, raising the minimum wage and increasing spending for welfare.
>
> Yes, he wants to raise taxes and possibly clamp down on corruption to pay for these government handouts. Rather than encouraging competition, he wants to reverse the energy reforms that ended state owned Pemex's monopoly in the oil industry. He calls for an end to crude oil exports and instead, he wants to build more oil refineries to help Mexico achieve energy independence while guaranteeing employment of Pemex union workers. Rather than moving Mexico's economy forward by encouraging free trade, he wants to take Mexico backward by incentivizing agriculture, so Mexico will be self-sufficient in food production. His nationalistic economic policy suggests he's unwilling to compromise on the NAFTA negotiation with the U.S.

So, let's see what's in the list:

- raise taxes, which harms economic growth and job creation
- make higher education a state-owned monopoly
- make oil production a state-owned monopoly
- strengthen labor unions
- reduce free trade
- raise the minimum wage, which raises unemployment

We don't have to guess at how this will work out, because it's already been tried by Hugo Chavez in Venezuela. The latest news from Venezuela this week is that the military took over distribution of clean water. They're eating dogs, cats and zoo animals, and selling their bodies for something to eat. Mexico's not going to reach that point right away, but they're not special. Bad policies produce bad effects.

The article continues:

> Even if López Obrador is somehow able to keep Mexico's economy stumbling along, he has already made it clear that Mexicans and all other migrants are entitled to come to the U.S.
>
> "Very soon, with the triumph of our movement, we will defend migrants from Mexico, Central America and the whole continent and all migrants from around the world who need to leave their towns to go and make their life in the U.S.," he said at a recent campaign rally. "It's a human right we are going to defend."
>
> […]He didn't give any details on how he will "defend" all migrants' supposed human right to be in the U.S., but one reasonable guess is that he probably won't stop any migrants, whether they are Mexicans or not, from reaching the U.S. So we may see a surge of illegal crossings at our southern borders if he wins the presidency.
>
> More illegal immigrants in the U.S. may also mean higher welfare expenditures at both the state and the federal level. As Victor D. Hanson wrote, "many of the millions of Mexican expatriates in the United States who send remittances home to Mexico are themselves beneficiaries of some sort of U.S. federal, state, or local support that allows them to free up cash to send back to Mexico."

A more recent Federalist article has more, says that the real threat is not the socialist government, but the drug cartels:

> Last week, the Associated Press reported on the rise of "mass crimes" throughout Mexico, in which "whole neighborhoods [defy] police and military personnel," stealing freight trains full of merchandise or illegally tapping fuel pipelines. Much of the crime is reportedly driven by widespread despair and disgust for the government among common people, which powerful criminal syndicates are exploiting…
>
> […]Cartels across the country no longer limit their activities to drug smuggling or human trafficking, but have branched out into fuel theft, illegal fishing, mining,

> and logging. Ordinary Mexicans, especially those in rural areas, are often left with few options except to work for cartels, sometimes growing opium poppies or working as lookouts and drug mules. In some parts of the country, the “social controls” that might prevent mass crimes are simply gone, drawing comparisons to places like Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Somalia.
>
> Meanwhile, violence is rampant across the country and on track for a record number of homicides this year. In the state of Guanajuato, an agricultural and manufacturing hub northwest of Mexico City that had one of the lowest murder rates in 2010, there were more than 2,000 execution-style killings last year and more than 1,000 in the first four months of this year. In 2007, there were only 51.

Whether socialism or drug cartels, the take-away lesson for America is the same:

> If we continue to ignore the collapse of our southern neighbors and maintain our longstanding—and misbegotten—policy of benign neglect, we should expect the flow of illegal immigrants and families seeking amnesty to number not in the tens of thousands but in the hundreds of thousands, perhaps the millions. At that point, U.S. policymakers and American voters must regard the crisis for what it is: a foreign policy and national security matter, not a proxy for domestic political disputes and our never-ending culture war.

So, we’re definitely going to need that wall sooner than later.

Letting the cancer reach the healthy tissue does nothing constructive. We need to let Mexico and South America get clear on what works and what doesn’t work. If they don’t want to do the right thing in their elections, it can only mean that they haven’t hit rock bottom yet. When people want to follow their hearts, the sensible thing to do is to let them go until they destroy themselves. Unless they are willing to listen to reason, it’s a mistake to make their path to destruction more comfortable for them. Also, we need to fear the panicked grasping of the drowning person who doesn’t want the life-jacket, but instead just wants to drag us down with him. When Mexico is ready to get their lives in order, they can ask us politely to rescue them ON OUR TERMS.

Image source: geopoliticalfutures.com/mexicos-drug-war-no-closer-end/

Unmarried 34-year-old woman vows to change shark into loving, faithful husband by hand-feeding him raw meat

July 3, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Melissa Brunning dispenses advice and posts exotic selfies on her page "Wild and Free" Melissa Brunning is a 34-year-old unmarried woman who operates a Facebook page called "Wild and Free". On that page, she posts inspirational quotes about travel, fun, following your heart, as well as pictures from all her exotic vacations. The "about" section of the (public) page says "My mission is to inspire others to break free from 9-5 & live LIFE on their terms, to be WILD and FREE to follow their dreams, to explore & go on adventure".

Here is her philosophy in one photo:

Life is too short to waste time listening to people with demonstrated ability and success

Anyway, you can look at all the selfies of her with her cat, her bikinis, etc. on her personal Facebook page. The reason for this post is because Melissa met a new guy on Match.com. He has everything that she wants. He's tall. He's strong. He's smooth. He has really great teeth. And most importantly, he gives the impression that he could really lose his temper at any minute and attack other men violently. Melissa is sure that she can get around that problem somehow, though. Although the man lived 1500 miles away from her, this was no problem, because Melissa loves to travel, and this trip was a once-in-a-lifetime exotic adventure!

The West Australian reported on her date:

> Melissa Brunning was on a "once-in-a-lifetime" trip cruising the majestic Kimberley on a friend's superyacht, so when an opportunity arose to feed a placid shark she was scared, but her adventurous spirit willed her to give it a go.
>
> But it all ended in a freak shark bite incident that left the Perth woman grateful she didn't lose a finger.
>
> The last of her friends to try feeding the three to four Tawny nurse sharks hanging around the back of the boat, what Ms Brunning didn't realise until it was too late was that she shouldn't hand feed the 2m shark, rather place the piece of fish in front of her and watch it go by and suck it up.
>
> With a suction "like a Hoover", the shark sucked Ms Brunning's right index finger into its mouth full of rows of razor sharp teeth.
>
> Mobile phone footage filmed by a friend of the incident at the end of May shows Ms Brunning screaming as she's pulled from the back of the boat into the croc-infested water as the shark swims off.

Oh no! The hot alpha male bad boy ate her food, bit her, and swam away without even leaving his phone number. Typical whale! Er, I mean shark. It wasn't her fault! There was no way to predict from his appearance that he would become violent and unfaithful. It

was the shark's fault – he lied to her. He presented himself as kind and sweet. The shark's toxic masculinity was clearly to blame. #Patriarchy #MeToo

Melissa is quoted in the article about the break-up with the sharp-looking thug: "We're not meant to be in the water, if we were we'd have gills." It was a love not meant to be. But while in the hospital getting taxpayer-funded health care for the "unexpected" result of her irrational choices, a nurse gave her the phone number of a hot looking crocodile who was just being released from prison. Maybe things will work out with him? At least her friends will be envious if she posts a selfie with him.

You can have a lot of fun reading the inspirational quotes on her Wild and Free page, and even more fun if you insert something about *trying to hand feed a shark* into each one.

Here are some:

- When it feels scary to jump, that is exactly when you jump, otherwise you end up staying in the same place your whole life
- Take every chance you get in life because some things only happen once
- Life is an adventure, dare it
- Live in the moment
- When was the last time you did something for the first time?
- If it scares you, it might be a good thing to try
- Anything that gets your blood racing is probably worth doing
- Be crazy, be stupid, be silly, be weird, be whatever – because life is too short to be anything but happy

I think the common denominator here is this glorification of thrill seeking and fun, at the expense of having a slow, deliberate plan that achieves a real result. When your sole purpose in life is to have good feelings, it becomes impossible to exercise self-control for the sake of something higher, like serving God. The pattern of always choosing self, self, self becomes impossible to break.

This sort of thrill-seeking lifestyle works when you're young and pretty, but it doesn't really set you up for success in the last 50 years of your life. A woman needs to use her pre-marriage time wisely. She needs to train up her wife and mother skills, and develop patience and maturity by doing hard things. She has to train herself to keep commitments if her marriage is to last. A stable marriage requires her to get comfortable with self-sacrifice. She has to train her character to be content with stability. She needs to stop seeking thrills and learn how to delay gratification.

I am seeing this attitude of hers a lot in young Christian women. There doesn't seem to be much of a vision for marriage and family being taught to women today. Women don't see Christianity as something that overrides their pleasure-seeking and self-centeredness. Instead, they just sing praise hymns, read devotionals, listen to Joyce Meyer's prosperity gospel sermons, and focus on themselves. Nutrition, fitness and travel are all good, but they cannot be the main things in life for an authentic Christian.

Christians should be concerned with God's reputation and God's goals. Christians are

meant to serve God, not themselves. Christians have to do what works for God, like apologetics. There is no such thing as a Christian whose Facebook and Instagram page celebrates “self-love”, thrill-seeking, exotic vacations, etc. A real Christian always does what works to serve God. Jesus was good at self-denial and self-control. He was obedient to God even when it cost him his life. He didn’t go on exotic vacations and do pointless, risky things to get fun and thrills.

If you missed my previous post on radical feminists turning to mermen to get around the problem of “toxic masculinity” in normal men, then be sure to read that.

For Independence Day, let’s learn about George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

July 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Washington crosses the Delaware river before the Battle of Trenton

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position

> untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington's line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington's retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington's army at White Plains, New York, British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians

believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
>
> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for

> the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
>
> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called

> the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.
>
> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
>
> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
>
> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

What about all those other books that the Church left out the Bible?

July 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

You may sometimes hear the objection that there were lots of other gospels and books floating around at the time when the 27 books of the New Testament were standardized. The right way to answer this problem is to ask for a particular book that the challenger would like included and then to take a look at factors like the date it was written, who wrote it, and where it was written. When you look at these factors, it becomes obvious why the other books were left out.

Consider an article by Dr. Charles Quarles, who has written against an early dating of a "left out" book called the "Gospel of Peter". Why was it left out? Because Christian are mean? Maybe there's a historical reason why these books are not included.

Excerpt:

> An impressive number of clues suggest that this gospel [Peter] postdates even the latest New Testament book and belongs to the mid-second century. First, a close analysis of verbal parallels shared by the *Gospel of Peter* and the Gospel of Matthew suggests that the *Gospel of Peter* postdates Matthew and utilized that Gospel as a source… an examination of the vocabulary, grammar, and style of the two documents strongly favors the dependence of the *Gospel of Peter* on Matthew. Robert Gundry, one of the most respected experts on issues related to Matthew's style, called the phrase a "series of Mattheanisms" (Gundry, Matthew [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994], 584). Similarly, John Meier noted "when it comes to who is dependent on whom, all the signs point to Matthews priority. . . .

> The clause is a tissue of Matthean vocabulary and style, a vocabulary and style almost totally absent from the rest of the *Gospel of Peter*" (Meier, Marginal Jews, 1:117). This is consistent with a number of other Matthean features appear in the *Gospel of Peter* that all point to the dependence of the *Gospel of Peter* on Matthew.
>
> Second, other features of the *Gospel of Peter* suggest that the gospel not only postdates Matthew, but even postdates the latest book of the NT canon, the Book of Revelation. For example, although Matthew indicates that the Roman guard sealed the tomb of Jesus, *Gospel of Peter* 8:33 adds that it was sealed with seven seals. The reference to the seven seals conflicts with the immediate context. *Gospel of Peter* 8:32-33 states that all the witnesses present sealed the tomb. However, a minimum of nine witnesses were present leading readers to expect at least nine seals. The best explanation for the awkward reference to the seven seals is that the detail was drawn from Revelation 5:1. This allusion to Revelation fits well with the *Gospel of Peter* 9:35 and 12:50 reference to the day of Jesus' resurrection as the "Lord's Day" since this terminology only appears in Revelation in the NT and first in Revelation out of all ancient Christian literature. The reference to the "Lord's Day" in the *Gospel of Peter* is a shortened form that appears to be a later development from the original form appearing in Revelation.
>
> Still other features of the *Gospel of Peter* fit best with the historical data if the *Gospel of Peter* was produced in the mid-second century. The *Gospel of Peter* assumes the doctrine of Jesus' descent into Hades to preach to the dead. However, this doctrine first appears in the words of Justin Martyr around AD 150. The talking cross is a feature of other second-century literature. The *Epistula Apostolorum 16* states that during the second coming Jesus will be carried on the wings of the clouds with his cross going on before him. Similarly, the Ethiopic Apocalypse of Peter 1 describes the returning Christ as coming in a glory seven times as bright as the sun and with his cross going before his face. In a similar fashion, beginning in the late first century, Christian texts describe Christ as possessing gigantic stature. In an allegorical depiction of Jesus' supremacy and authority over the church, Shepherd of Hermas 83:1 described Christ as of such lofty stature that he stood taller than a tower. 4 Ezra 2:43, a portion of 4 Ezra dating to the middle or late third century, referred to the unusual height of the Son of God. These shared compositional strategies and features make the most sense if these documents and the *Gospel of Peter* were composed in the same milieu.

It turns out that Quarles has actually debated the views he presents in this article against John Dominic Crossan, the main proponent of the view that the Gospel of Peter is early. You can buy the audio on CDs here, or you can get the book. The CDs are highly recommended, but the book leaves out all the dialog, so I don't recommend it.

And you can read about two more rejected books, the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Judas, as well. The authors of those two articles are Craig Blomberg and Craig A. Evans, respectively. Craig Evans is also involved in the debate I mentioned with Crossan. He was able to debunk another “lost book of the Bible” called “Secret Mark”, which turned out to be a hoax.

Why are Christians allowed to eat shellfish but not allowed to have sex before marriage?

July 6, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
Here's a wonderful article from Peter Saunders.

The challenge:

> An argument frequently advanced by those attempting to defend homosexual practice is that Christians 'cherry pick' the commands in the Bible – that is, they chose to emphasise some commands while ignoring others.
>
> The Old Testament may forbid homosexual acts (Leviticus 18:2; 20:13) but it also forbids eating seafood without fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9, 10).
>
> So how can Christians then justify upholding laws on sexual morality whilst at the same time ignoring the food laws from the very same books of the Bible? Why may they eat shellfish but not be allowed to have sex outside marriage? Isn't this inconsistent and hypocritical?

The solution is that God enters into "covenants" with his people, and the terms of those covenants change.

Especially dietary laws:

> The answer to this question lies in an understanding of biblical covenants.
>
> A covenant is a binding solemn agreement made between two parties. It generally leaves each with obligations. But it holds only between the parties involved.
>
> There are a number of biblical covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic (Old),

> Davidic and New.
>
> Under the Noahic covenant, which God made with all living human beings (Genesis 9:8-17), people were able to eat anything:
>
> *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Genesis 9:3).*
>
> But under the Sinaitic (Old) Covenant, which God made with the nation of Israel, people were able to eat certain foods, but not others.

Jesus clearly created a new covenant with his followers, where the dietary laws are lifted:

> Jesus said that he had come to fulfil the 'Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). He would establish this new covenant with new laws, with himself as high priest based on his own sacrificial death on the cross.
>
> This new covenant would completely deal with sin (Hebrews 10:1-18) and protect all those who put their faith in him from God's wrath and judgement…
>
> *[…]'In the same way, after the supper (Jesus) took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you"' (Luke 22:20). '…we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Hebrews 10:10)*
>
> People would come under the protection of this new covenant, not by virtue of belonging to the nation of Israel, but through faith in Christ. In fact the function of the Old Testament Law (Sinaitic covenant) was to point to Christ as its fulfilment.
>
> […]So what then did Christ say about foods? He pronounced all foods clean for his followers to eat:
>
> *' "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (Mark 7:18-23)*
>
> Jesus was making that point that under the new covenant God required purity of the heart. Internal thoughts and attitudes were as important as external actions.

Food is OK for Christians, but sexual immorality – which includes premarital sex and adultery – are NOT OK for Christians.

I think sometimes when you are talking to people whose motivation is just to get rid of any objective moral law entirely, they tend to ask questions without really wanting a good answer. This is especially true when it comes to the morality of sex. They ask the question not to get an answer, but to justify getting rid of the moral rules governing sexuality. The answers are there for people who are willing to respect God in their decision-making to find. The answers are not found only by people who have a

reason to not want to find them.

In case you're wondering, I am one of those Christian men who takes chastity seriously. Marriage is about having a close connection with your spouse. Sure, I could break the rules and have a lot of fun now. A lot of Christians have a hard time turning down fun. But when I look at Jesus, I don't see a man who is pursuing fun and thrills. I see a man who sees a need and then sacrifices his own interests to rescue others from peril.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig at Biola U: Does God Exist?

July 7, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang
– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws

– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection
– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus

– god wouldn’t have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that’s a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that’s a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that’s a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don’t support life, that’s a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that’s a bad design

3. hitchens’ burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can’t prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig’s scientific arguments don’t go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don’t prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don’t prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn’t be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig’s evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can’t use the progress of science
– it’s too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god’s existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn’t forming his view based on evidence
– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don’t believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you’ve got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God

– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH’s evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH’s argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn’t need to be efficient

CH’s argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH’s argument that Craig’s scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH’s argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn’t need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH’s citation of Craig’s book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true
– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH’s rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH’s rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH’s argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed

– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them
– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that's a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven't even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn't prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they're growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn't improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do

– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn't need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that's why people act morally
– it's degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don't know why, because i can't ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don't hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don't believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don't agree

WC moral argument: it's not epistemology it's the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing

– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history
– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it’s just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that’s not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

Why did European countries import millions of unskilled Muslim immigrants?

July 9, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

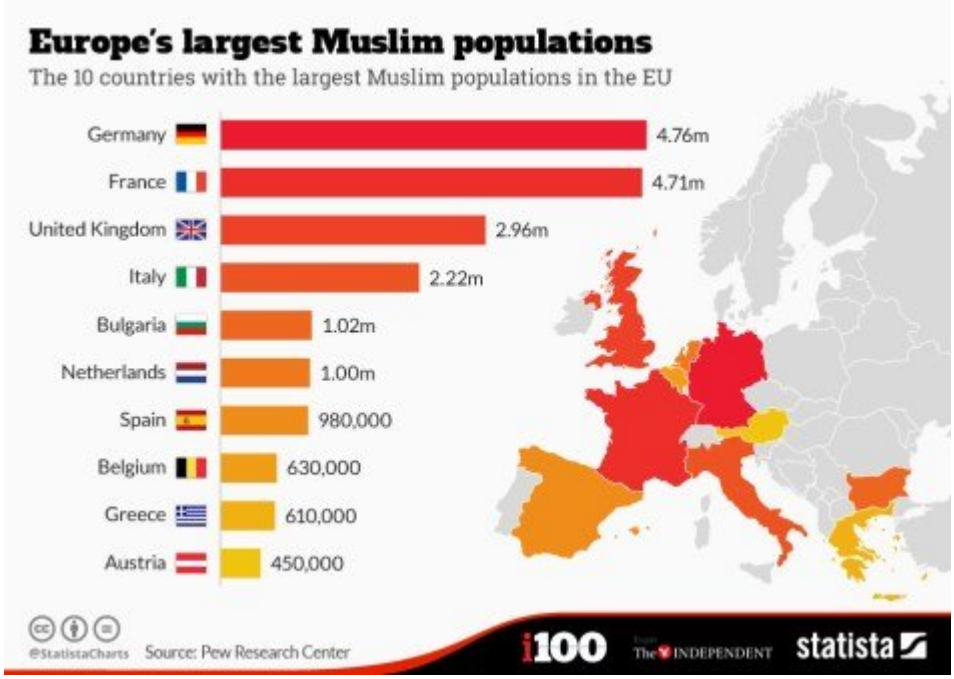

Muslim populations in Europe

As you can see in the right column of the blog, I am currently reading a book recommended to me that Dina, my wise advisor. The book is amazing. I want to put it in the hands of all the naive, leftist Christian leaders and Republicans who favor amnesty, and not building a border wall. If I can't convince you to read the book right now, at least take a look at this review of it in The Federalist.

Excerpt:

> The Strange Death of Europe" is a polemical but perceptive book culled from Murray's extended sojourns across Europe's frontiers – from the Italian island of Lampedusa, a flyspeck in the Mediterranean closer to the shores of North Africa than it is to Sicily, and to Greek islands that sit within sight of the Turkish coastline. These places have borne the brunt of the recent exodus from the Middle East and North Africa, but the author has also ventured to the remote suburbs of Scandinavia and Germany and France where many of these migrants end up. The resulting portrait is not a happy one.
>
> […]The distinguishing feature of modern Europe is its persistent ennui, shown in the inability or unwillingness "to reproduce itself, fight for itself or even take its own side in an argument." What's more, Europeans seem less stirred to face these unpleasant facts than they are fearful of interpreting them too precisely.

The book analyzes how the secular left "argued" for more immigration of low-skilled Muslims from countries that do not accept Western views on things like the respectful

treatment of women.

> The never-slacking thirst among Europe's political class for more immigration has rested on two flawed assumptions, one economic and the other normative (and usually in that order). The economic assumption cites the benefits of immigration without accounting for its costs, and seldom acknowledges that benefits accrue chiefly to the migrants themselves and to highly compensated native inhabitants. Most of the rest of society is left to foot the bill for this immense regressive redistribution of wealth from the poor (who are squeezed out of the labor force) to the rich (who benefit from cheap labor).
>
> Any public concerns about the financial downsides of this immigration – from increased pressure on housing markets to depressed wages – have been swept aside in deference to Europe's dwindling fertility rates. (In a classic instance of one erroneous public policy begetting another, Murray shrewdly notes that the political left encouraged a "one-child policy" in order to attain an "optimum global population" only later to demand mass immigration in order to lift birthrates back to replacement levels.) The problem of Europe's birth dearth is very real. The working-age population of Western Europe peaked in 2012 at 308 million – and is set to decline to 265 million by 2060.
>
> So how will immigration schemes alleviate Europe's fertility-driven strain on the welfare state? It is not clear that they will. Advocates of the rejuvenating effects of immigration are seldom obliged to spell out the wisdom of importing the poor and dispossessed of the world who generally lack the skills required for success in an advanced market economy. Can these migrants reliably be expected to contribute more in taxes than they consume in state aid? (They wouldn't be alone in their dependence on government largesse: plenty of native workers, too, are struggling mightily to cope with the creative destruction unleashed by the march of globalization and technology.)
>
> When advocates of open borders are pressed on these points, they generally repair to the normative argument. It has been claimed that when a flood of migrants started to pile up at Europe's frontiers in 2015, the issue ceased to be economic and instead became moral: tending to the needs of beleaguered strangers. Thus Europe's longstanding debate over immigration suddenly transformed into a contest between head and heart, and in a stampede of sanctimony it was decided that soft-heartedness was better hard-headedness.

What was amazing to me, is that people from these Islamic countries were able to just walk in to Europe and claim asylum. This put them on *an immediate path to citizenship*. Since there were so many people coming, their claims were not vetted. The immigrants would destroy their own identity documents after arriving in Europe, and then claim to be coming from whatever nation had a war going on, e.g. from Syria. Even if they could not speak any Syrian, they would still be let in and put on a path to citizenship! Incredible.

I have to include this:

> After the 7/7 bombings in London, polls revealed that 68 percent of British Muslims believe that British citizens who “insult Islam” should be arrested and prosecuted.

See, no problem at all integrating into Western civilization. It’s not like their just going to start raping and murdering 14-year-old Jewish girls, or start up underage sex-trafficking rings. But the people making the immigration policy don’t care about public safety. They want to appear compassionate. And they do it by spending *other people’s money* and by risking *other people’s safety*. There is no concern for the money and safety of taxpayers, the important thing is that the politicians feel good about themselves. They’re better than the people who they stick with the bill. Or the people they stick with the machete. I know that compassionate leftists like Russell Moore want me to think that they are good people, but I don’t. Because I always think of the victims of their compassion. Anyone who votes for more immigration without oversight and accountability is responsible for the harm.

For me, the most interesting part of the book was not about why secular leftist politicians decided to open up the borders, how many Muslim immigrants commit crimes against their welcoming hosts, how European activists subvert the law to welcome in more immigrants (including lying about their own rapes at the hands of Muslim refugees, to cover for the rapist), or how the police cover up crimes committed by Muslim refugees and immigrants. The most interesting part was how anyone who tries to make public safety or fiscal arguments against the mass importation of low-skilled Muslims was vilified. Careers were ended. Reputations were ruined. And then the Muslims themselves would launch lawsuits or take more violent, and even murderous, measures to silence their critics.

The psychological motivation of those who embrace postmodernism

July 10, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

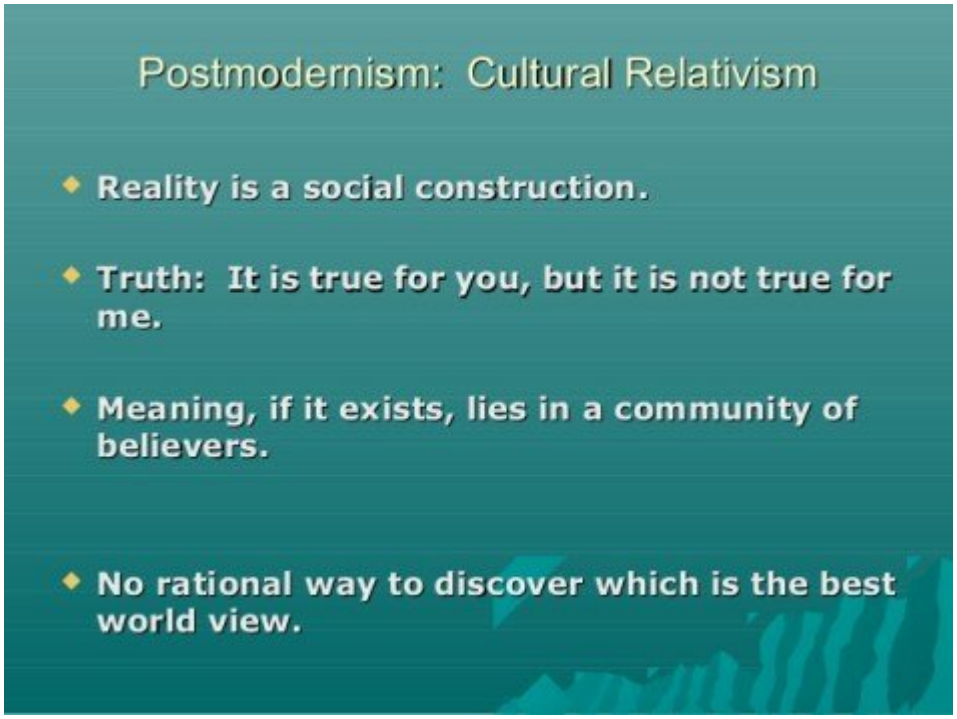

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian? Not for long

Famous analytical philosopher John Searle has written a book "Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World", explaining what's factually wrong with postmodernism. In the introduction, he explains what postmodernism is, and what motivates people to accept postmodernism.

He writes:

> […][W]hen we act or think or talk in the following sorts of ways we take a lot for granted: when we hammer a nail, or order a takeout meal from a restaurant, or conduct a lab experiment, or wonder where to go on vacation, we take the following for granted: there exists a real world that is totally independent of human beings and of what they think or say about it, and statements about objects and states of affairs in that world are true or false depending on whether things in the world really are the way we say they are. So, for example, if in pondering my vacation plans I wonder whether Greece is hotter in the summer than Italy, I simply take it for granted that there exists a real world containing places like Greece and Italy and that they have various temperatures. **Furthermore, if I read in a travel book that the average summer temperature in Greece is hotter than in Italy, I know that what the book says will be true if and only if it really is hotter on average in the summer in Greece than in Italy. This is because I take it for granted that such statements are true only if there is something independent of the**

> **statement in virtue of which, or because of which, it is true.**
>
> […]These two Background presuppositions have long histories and various famous names. The first, that there is a real world existing independently of us, I like to call "external realism." "Realism," because it asserts the existence of the real world, and "external" to distinguish it from other sorts of realism-for example, realism about mathematical objects (mathematical realism) or realism about ethical facts (ethical realism). The second view, that a statement is true if things in the world are the way the statement says they are, and false otherwise, is called "the correspondence theory of truth." This theory comes in a lot of different versions, but the basic idea is that statements are true if they correspond to, or describe, or fit, how things really are in the world, and false if they do not.

The "correspondence theory of truth" is the view of truth assumed in books of the Bible whose genre is such that that they were intended by the authors to be taken *literally*, (with allowances for symbolism, figures of speech, metaphors, hyperbole, etc.).

But what about the postmodernists, who seek to deny the objectivity of external reality?

More Searle:

> Thinkers who wish to deny the correspondence theory of truth or the referential theory of thought and language typically find it embarrassing to have to concede external realism. Often they would rather not talk about it at all, or they have some more or less subtle reason for rejecting it. In fact, very few thinkers come right out and say that there is no such thing as a real world existing absolutely, objectively, and totally independently of us. Some do. Some come right out and say that the so-called real world is a "social construct."

What is behind the denial of objective reality, and statements about external reality that are warranted by evidence?

> It is not easy to get a fix on what drives contemporary antirealism, but if we had to pick out a thread that runs through the wide variety of arguments, it would be what is sometimes called "perspectivism." Perspectivism is the idea that our knowledge of reality is never "unmediated," that it is always mediated by a point of view, by a particular set of predilections, or, worse yet by sinister political motives, such as an allegiance to a political group or ideology. And because we can never have unmediated knowledge of the world, then perhaps there is no real world, or perhaps it is useless to even talk about it, or perhaps it is not even interesting.

Searle is going to refute anti-realism in the rest of the book, but here is his guess at what is motivating the anti-realists:

> > **I have to confess, however, that I think there is a much deeper**

> > **reason for the persistent appeal of all forms of antirealism, and this has become obvious in the twentieth century: it satisfies a basic urge to power. It just seems too disgusting, somehow, that we should have to be at the mercy of the "real world." It seems too awful that our representations should have to be answerable to anything but us. This is why people who hold contemporary versions of antirealism and reject the correspondence theory of truth typically sneer at the opposing view.**
>
> […]I don't think it is the argument that is actually driving the impulse to deny realism. I think that as a matter of contemporary cultural and intellectual history, the attacks on realism are not driven by arguments, because the arguments are more or less obviously feeble, for reasons I will explain in detail in a moment. **Rather, as I suggested earlier, the motivation for denying realism is a kind of will to power, and it manifests itself in a number of ways. In universities, most notably in various humanities disciplines, it is assumed that, if there is no real world, then science is on the same footing as the humanities. They both deal with social constructs, not with independent realities. From this assumption, forms of postmodernism, deconstruction, and so on, are easily developed, having been completely turned loose from the tiresome moorings and constraints of having to confront the real world. If the real world is just an invention-a social construct designed to oppress the marginalized elements of society-then let's get rid of the real world and construct the world we want. That, I think, is the real driving psychological force behind antirealism at the end of the twentieth century.**

Now, I'll go one step further than Searle.

People, from the Fall, have had the desire to step into the place of God. It's true that we creatures exist in a universe created and designed by God. But, there is a way to work around the fact that God made the universe and the laws that the universe runs on, including logic, mathematics and natural laws. And that way is to *deny logic, mathematics and natural laws.* Postmodernists simply deny that there is any way to construct rational arguments and support the premises with evidence from the real world. That way, they imagine, they are free to escape a God-designed world, including a God-designed specification for how they ought to live. The postmoderns deny *the reliable methods of knowing about the God-created reality because logic and evidence can be used to point to God's existence, God's character, and God's actions in history.*

And that's why there is this effort to make reality "optional" and perspectival. Everyone can be their own God, and escape any accountability to the real God – the God who is easily discovered through the use of logic and evidence. I believe that this is also behind the rise of atheists, who feign allegiance to logic and science, but then express "skepticism" about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, objective

morality, the minimal facts concerning the historical Jesus, and other undeniables.

A lesson about men for marriage-minded women from the movie “High Noon”

July 11, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marine prays with his wife on their wedding day

One of my favorite movies for explaining the differences between men and women is “High Noon” (1952).

Here’s the summary from IMDB:

> Former marshal Will Kane (Gary Cooper) is preparing to leave the small town of Hadleyville, New Mexico, with his new bride, Amy (Grace Kelly), when he learns that local criminal Frank Miller has been set free and is coming to seek revenge on the marshal who turned him in. When he starts recruiting deputies to fight Miller, Kane is discouraged to find that the people of Hadleyville turn cowardly when the time comes for a showdown, and he must face Miller and his cronies alone.

The main theme of the film concerns Amy’s decision to break her wedding vows the very day that she makes them. She tells her new husband that he must bow to her will, and give up his male role as protector. When he explains his reasons for standing his ground to her practically (Miller will hunt them down) and morally (he has a duty protect the town), she dismisses both. She tells him that if he doesn’t run away from Miller and his gang with her, that she will get on the train and leave town by herself.

The intro of film shows the member’s of Miller’s gang assembling, and the words of the song explain the central conflict between husband and wife:

Here's the part of the lyrics we care about:

The noonday train will bring Frank Miller.
If I'm a man I must be brave
And I must face that deadly killer
Or lie a coward, a craven coward,
Or lie a coward in my grave.

O to be torn 'twixt love and duty!
S'posin' I lose my fair-haired beauty!
Look at that big hand move along
Nearin' high noon.

He made a vow while in State's Prison,
Vow'd it would be my life or his'n
I'm not afraid of death, but O,
What will I do if you leave me?

Do not forsake me O my darlin'
You made that promise when we wed.
Do not forsake me O my darlin'
Although you're grievin', I can't be leavin'
Until I shoot Frank Miller dead.

What's interesting is that his new wife Amy apparently does not understand the meaning of wedding vows or the natural roles of good men as protectors of the weak, and fighters against evil. Although she vowed to stick by him and help him, the minute anything threatening appears that makes her feel unhappy, she abandons her vows and abandons her man. Let's break down her mistakes now, using actual conversations from the movie.

First, she doesn't understand or respect the man she married *as a man*:

> **Kane**: *[while riding out of town]* It's no good. I've got to go back, Amy.
>
> **Amy**: Why?
>
> **Kane**: This is crazy. I haven't even got any guns.
>
> **Amy**: Then let's go on. Hurry.
>
> **Kane**: No, that's what I've been thinkin'. They're making me run. I've never run from anybody before.
>
> **Amy**: I don't understand any of this.
>
> **Kane**: *[after looking at his vest watch]* Well, I haven't got time to tell ya.
>
> **Amy**: Then don't go back, Will.
>
> **Kane**: I've got to. That's the whole thing. *[He turns the buggy around and rides back into town]*

Her feelings and her desires for the world to be a happy place for her are so strong that they cloud her judgment.

Second, she doesn't understand the threat posed by evil men:

More:

> **Kane:** I sent a man up five years ago for murder. He was supposed to hang. But up North, they commuted it to life and now he's free. I don't know how. Anyway, it looks like he's coming back.
>
> **Amy:** I still don't understand.
>
> **Kane:** He was always wild and kind of crazy. He'll probably make trouble.
>
> **Amy:** But that's no concern of yours, not anymore.
>
> **Kane:** I'm the one who sent him up.
>
> **Amy:** Well, that was part of your job. That's finished now. They've got a new marshal.
>
> **Kane:** He won't be here until tomorrow. Seems to me I've got to stay. Anyway, I'm the same man with or without this. [He pins his badge on his vest]
>
> **Amy:** Oh, that isn't so.
>
> **Kane:** I expect he'll come lookin' for me. Three of his old bunch are waiting at the depot.
>
> **Amy:** That's exactly why we ought to go.
>
> **Kane:** They'll just come after us, four of 'em, and we'd be all alone on the prairie.
>
> **Amy:** We've got an hour.
>
> **Kane:** What's an hour?…What's a hundred miles? We'd never be able to keep that store, Amy. They'd come after us and we'd have to run again, as long as we live.
>
> **Amy:** No we wouldn't, not if they didn't know where to find us. Oh Will! Will, I'm begging you, please let's go.
>
> **Kane:** I can't.
>
> **Amy:** Don't try to be a hero. You don't have to be a hero, not for me.
>
> **Kane:** I'm not trying to be a hero. If you think I like this, you're crazy.

Instead of recognizing how her feelings are deceiving her about the threat and trusting her husband, she tries to force him to accept her mistaken view of reality by threatening to abandon him.

One of Kane's ex-girlfriends has a talk with Amy, which helps her to understand who Kane is, and what is expected of her:

> **Amy**: That man downstairs, the clerk, he said things about you and Will. I've been trying to understand why he wouldn't go with me, and now all I can think of is that it's got to be because of you…Let him go, he still has a chance. Let him go.
>
> **Helen**: He isn't staying for me. I haven't spoken to him for a year – until today. I

> am leaving on the same train you are…What kind of woman are you? How can you leave him like this? Does the sound of guns frighten you that much?
>
> **Amy**: I've heard guns. My father and my brother were killed by guns. They were on the right side but that didn't help them any when the shooting started. My brother was nineteen. I watched him die. That's when I became a Quaker. I don't care who's right or who's wrong. There's got to be some better way for people to live. Will knows how I feel about it.
>
> **Helen**: I hate this town. I always hated it – to be a Mexican woman in a town like this.
>
> **Amy**: I understand.
>
> **Helen**: You do? That's good. I don't understand you. No matter what you say. If Kane was my man, I'd never leave him like this. I'd get a gun. I'd fight.
>
> **Amy**: Why don't you?
>
> **Helen**: He is not my man. He's yours.

Helen understands the need for a wife to stand by her man. But Amy's response to evil is to shut her eyes and focus on feeling good and being happy. Notice that her "better way" is unspecified – it's just a feeling she has that pacificism and no-violence will somehow "work" to stop evil. But in reality, pacifism is not a "better way" of dealing with evil – it does not work. Her pacifist response not only does not make evil go away, it actually encourages more evil. Weakness emboldens evildoers, and laying down your arms provokes them to do more evil. Will Kane knows this, but she won't listen to him.

You can watch the final gunfight here, as well as Amy's final decision:

So, this is why I really recommend this movie as a discussion-starter when you like a girl and are thinking of marrying her. It clarifies the essential problem with many young women today not being ready for marriage. To be fair, most women come around to respect their husbands and his different roles after they get married. However, the risk of divorce is so dangerous that it makes sense to bring it up for discussion before the marriage happens. Marriage is supposed to be an engine to serve God, and the success of that enterprise cannot be left to chance. You can't just rely on the fact that she says the words of the vow, you have to check to see if she has a habit of keeping her promises when it goes against her own self-interest.

Ask yourself: Who are you, as a man? And does your woman accept that you have obligations to stand up to evil and do good ? Will she support you in your battle against evil, or will the marriage just be about her feelings and desires? I would especially beware of women who think that God is speaking to them through their feelings and desires. Look at her friends: are they practical and successful? Or are they irresponsible, unaccountable and reckless? Look at her father: does he have a plan for her, and does he lead her to be practical, frugal and hard-working? If you are not going to get an ally and a supporter in a wife, then you will not be able to serve God well, as a married man. Think about it.

How can a successful writer who “is true to himself” end up poor?

July 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Lindsay sent me this article about a very successful writer who has trouble making ends meet.

The story appeared in left-leaning The Atlantic. I don’t want to rehash the whole thing, because I want to make a point.

So, first thing to quote, this guy looks like a success to others, even though he is actually really struggling:

> The Fed asked respondents how they would pay for a $400 emergency. The answer: 47 percent of respondents said that either they would cover the expense by borrowing or selling something, or they would not be able to come up with the $400 at all. Four hundred dollars! Who knew?
>
> Well, *I* knew. I knew because I am in that 47 percent.
>
> […]You wouldn’t know any of that to look at me. I like to think I appear reasonably prosperous. Nor would you know it to look at my résumé. I have had a passably good career as a writer—five books, hundreds of articles published, a number of awards and fellowships, and a small (very small) but respectable reputation. You wouldn’t even know it to look at my tax return. I am nowhere near rich, but I have typically made a solid middle- or even, at times, upper-middle-class income, which is about all a writer can expect, even a writer who also teaches and lectures and writes television scripts, as I do.

The thing I like about this guy is that he doesn’t blame anyone else but himself – he thinks that his own decisions led him to poverty. Rod Dreher has a nice list of the mistakes at American Conservative:

> **1) He chose to live in New York, which is one of the most expensive places to live in the country;**
> **2) He chose to be a writer, not the most lucrative and stable career;**
> 3) He and his wife chose to put their kids in private school, something they felt was necessary in their Brooklyn neighborhood, but an expense they could have avoided or dramatically lessened had they lived in another part of the country (they eventually moved to the Hamptons to get out of paying that tuition);
> 4) He and his wife believed their two children had “earned” the right to go to very expensive universities, and they spent everything they had, and the inheritance his parents planned to leave for him, on educating the girls;
> 5) They got caught in the housing crash and had to sell a Manhattan apartment they owned at fire sale prices;
> 6) Given the way his income as a writer is structured, taxes were a bitch (as a

> writer, trust me, this is true).

Pay close attention to 1 and 2. I would NEVER live in a garbage blue state like New York. I would rather be dead in a ditch than live in a state that is run by Democrats. I hate the high taxes and high spending of blue states. Blue states are great places to go if you want to work and have someone else steal all of your money to buy votes from lazy losers.

And as far as 2 goes, I don't think that I need to repeat my warnings to everyone about non-STEM fields.

Well, OK, I will:

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image)

Regarding the housing crash that he mentioned, Democrats caused that, by forcing banks to loan money to people who couldn't afford to pay it back. If he voted for the Democrats, then he screwed himself again.

Now, you might think that people end up poor because they want to do work that is fun and enjoyable. And that's true, I've seen that. But this guy's problem was that he just spent beyond his means. Why? Well, the writer explains that he *is compelled* to spend the money, because spending money defines who he is. He can't say no, because he thinks that he has one life, and one chance to define himself. He can't think about the future, because he has to spend every last dime today in order to be who he really wants to be.

Dreher comments:

> He felt that to choose otherwise would have made him inauthentic, untrue to himself. He felt that he deserved the life he had, and could not choose otherwise without betraying himself. I think this must be an extraordinary thing, in terms of history: people who spend recklessly to give themselves the lives they think they deserve. If you think about it, though, our culture, which valorizes Authenticity,

> encourages this.

I have to tell you, I just don't understand this. I define myself by Christian virtues – self-control, self-sacrifice, concern for others who I know personally and in my community. I'm not a spender. I am a saver by nature, and the older I get, the more grateful that I am closer to retirement than I was before. Working gets harder as you get older, even for jobs that don't require physical labor.

If you plan ahead, you can get all your working and saving done before you're 50. That was my approach. But I see other people who haven't started working full-time by 30 and even by 35. Every day when you are in school instead of working full-time in your field is a wasted day. With few exceptions, you will learn more on the job than in the classroom. You want get out of school and get working as soon as possible, with an eye to getting married as soon as possible – since marriage is a wealth building engine. The faster you start investing, the more time your money has to grow through interest and dividends.

The bottom line is that my obligation as a Christian is not to be true to myself, or anything weird like that. My obligation is to make sure I don't starve, and then to turn to the people around me and make sure that they don't starve. Sometimes, that means giving them good advice. Sometimes, it means recognizing their achievements with little gifts. But the main thing is that the world isn't safe enough for you to put off earning so that you can do what you feel is the "real you". Being independent and then serving others is more important than being the "real you".

Why are so many women with good careers being forced to freeze their eggs?

July 13, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

The New York Times says that more and more women are having to freeze their eggs because they can't find good men to marry. The NYT doesn't think that women are doing anything wrong. They blame the men for refusing to commit. According to feminism, women who value careers, abortion rights, no-fault divorce, big government, high taxes, etc. are doing everything right. But does it work?

I thought it might be a good idea to help Western women to make better decisions with men and marriage. Although setting out boundaries seems harsh and restrictive, it's actually protective and loving. If we want women to get to a stable marriage and children, (what they really need long term, after they lose their looks and youth), then we should be bold about leading them.

The first thing to point out is that the women celebrated by the New York Times are intentionally delaying marriage for their education and careers.

Another New York Times article explains:

> It could be that the new generation of millennial women is delaying having children even longer than the women who came before them, as prime childbearing years are also critical years for advancing in a career. A recent study shows that the marital pay gap that springs up after a first child is born typically does not close if the birth happens between age 25 and 35.
>
> Shannon Hettinger, a 32-year-old from Washington, D.C., said she definitely wanted children. She grew up in a large family in a small town in Pennsylvania

> and almost all her high school friends are married with children. But she moved to Washington, and spent her 20s deciding on a career. Now that she has one she loves — she works in residential real estate sales — she is not going to stop until she gets established. That means not having children for a while.
>
> "I just want to build my book of business and see where I can go from here," she said. "My whole focus is career growth. That's my No. 1 priority."
>
> "Once I achieve a certain level of success," she added, "then I'll start thinking about a family."
>
> Ivy Gray-Klein, 26, who lives in Philadelphia and works at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, said she was open to having children but cannot imagine doing so until she is 30 or 35. She wants to feel settled in her own life first. Now she has three roommates, is paying down her student loans and is working to build a little bit of savings.
>
> "I'm just really trying to get myself to a place that is solid," she said by phone. "Having a child right now would be so destabilizing. Children just seem like such an enormous financial undertaking."

As far as I'm concerned, once a woman reaches 30 , she's actually chosen not to marry, and not to have children. Marriage is something that men are willing to do with women in their early 20s. They want a woman to commit and invest herself in his life early. They don't commit to a woman who has spent her 20s running up debts, traveling, being promiscuous, etc. The pattern of selfish behavior that women get into damages their ability to be good wives and mothers later. And men know that.

But in this post, I'm discuss something that I think is responsible for women not finding good men: and that's the fact that many women *are not looking for good men*. In fact, some women are very attracted to very bad men.

Here's the first editorial about women and domestic terrorist Dzhokar Tsarnaev, one of the Boston marathon bombers.

Excerpt:

> Mostly, though, they think Dzhokhar is cute. The Bambi eyes (looking right out of his Instagram-doctored photos at you!), the hipster facial stubble, the masses of wine-dark tousled hair — adorable! Impassioned believers have written "Dzhokhar is innocent" on their hands and plastered "Innocent until proven guilty!!!!" posters around their towns. An 18-year-old waitress interviewed by the New York Post vowed to have Dzhokhar's last tweet before the bombing tattooed onto her arm: "If you have the knowledge and the inspiration all that's left is to take action."
>
> […]But the real cause of the Jahar craze more likely lies in something more primal and less pretty in the female psyche. I'm betting that women, young and old, are drawn to Dzhokhar not because he is a good-looking late adolescent but because he is a good-looking accused killer. He's a classic "bad boy" of the sort

> to whom women are chronically attracted because they want to reform them, or minister to their wounds, or be the healing presence they've never had — but mostly because they find them sexy.

That article also noted:

> It's not surprising, then, that every homicide perp on death row who is reasonably attractive has groupies. Consider the handsome (and widely philandering) Scott Peterson, sentenced in 2005 for killing his wife and unborn son and throwing their remains into San Francisco Bay. The day he checked into San Quentin, he received three dozen phone calls from smitten women, including an 18-year-old who wanted to become the second Mrs. Peterson.

Some of the tweets and other fangirl comments about Tsarnaev were collected in this New York Post article.

Lots of Western women from the UK, France, Russia, etc. all picked up and moved to the Middle East to become ISIS jihadi brides.

Excerpt:

> Western women joining Islamic State are increasingly from comfortable backgrounds and often well educated with romantic notions of adventure often quickly dispelled by the harshness of life as a "Jihadi bride", according to a British research report.
>
> Some 550 women from Western countries have left their homelands to join Islamic State, which has captured swathes of Syria and Iraq, said the report by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation at King's College, London.
>
> […]It said female recruits were increasingly younger, some from comfortable backgrounds and often well-educated, and were playing "crucial" propaganda and recruitment roles.

That article is three years old, the numbers have more than doubled since then. The most common reasons cited for leaving are romance and adventure.

Psychology Today has some comments about why some women do this:

> In her post, "Women Who Love Serial Killers," PT blogger, Katherine Ramsland, offers some suggestions about why some women can be so attracted to, or hopelessly beguiled by, the most terrifying of human predators. At first, she provides explanations from the women themselves, women who actually married these dangerously unhinged criminals. Their reasons (somewhat elaborated here) include the assumptions that:

- their love can transform the convict: from cunning and cruel, to caring, concerned, and compassionate.

- there's a wounded child nested somewhere inside the killer that can be healed through a devoted nurturance that only they can provide.
- they might share the killer's media spotlight, and so triumphantly emerge from their anonymity, and maybe in the process even land a book or movie deal (an aspiration about as cynical as it is narcissisticand self-serving).

And this is even more interesting:

> To simplify this work's findings for my present purpose, however, let me begin by emphasizing that Ogas and Gaddam find substantial evidence from Web searches, posts, and many 1,000s of romance novels that women demonstrate a strong erotic preference for dominant men. Or toward what's now commonly referred to as alpha males—in the authors' words, men who are "strong, confident, [and] swaggering [as in "cocky," and the pun is intended]." Unfortunately, what these descriptors often imply is behavior sufficiently bearish, self-centered, and insensitive as to often cross the line into a physical, mental, and emotional abuse that can be downright brutal.
>
> […]Moreover, in responding to the question as to whether some men, such as "serial killers, violent offenders, and rapists," might be too dominant for women to accept, Ogas and Gaddam note: "It turns out that killing people is an effective way to elicit the attention of many women: virtually every serial killer, including Ted Bundy, Charles Manson, and David Berkowitz, have received love letters from large numbers of female fans" (p. 98).

Women choose good-looking bad boys, because they think that they can change them:

> The fantasy that seems to be operating in such devotees, and that constitutes the plot of virtually all erotic/romantic novels written with women in mind, is that the "misogyny and jerkdom" they might have to battle with in such super-dominant males is only temporary. That it doesn't really represent the man's innermost reality. That his violence and lack of tender feelings is only the beginning of the story, and that their unsparing love, affection, and dedication can ultimately transform his character by helping him get in touch with his, well, "inner goo."

I blogged before about feminists going after pro-choice bad boys like William Clinton, Peter Strzok, Eliot Spitzer, Anthony Weiner, John Edwards, Harvey Weinstein, etc. These men support selfish policies like abortion and no-fault divorce. Women seem to not understand that men who support selfishness as policy might actually BE selfish in their own lives. Men who are able to commit and raise children are not pro-abortion and pro-divorce. Those are the men who women should be pursuing, and during their early-to-mid 20s.

New study: first life pushed back earlier, leaving less time for naturalistic magic

July 14, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Whenever you discuss origins with naturalists, it's very important to get them to explain how the first living organism emerged without any help from an intelligent agent. The origin of life is an information problem. A certain minimal amount of biological information for minimum life function has to be thrown together by chance. No evolutionary mechanisms have the potential to work until replication is already in place.

Evolution News reports on a new study that makes the window for naturalistic forces to create the first self-replicating organism even smaller.

Excerpt:

> A paper in *Nature* reports the discovery of fossil microbes possibly older, even much older, than any found previously. The lead author is biogeochemist Matthew Dodd, a PhD student at University College London. If the paper is right, these Canadian fossils could be 3.77 billion years old, or even as old as — hold onto your hat, in case you're wearing one — 4.28 billion years.
>
> From the Abstract:
>
> Although it is not known when or where life on Earth began, some of the earliest habitable environments may have been submarine-hydrothermal vents. Here we describe putative fossilized microorganisms that are at least 3,770 million and possibly 4,280 million years old in ferruginous sedimentary rocks, interpreted as seafloor-hydrothermal vent-related precipitates, from the Nuvvuagittuq belt in Quebec, Canada. These structures occur as micrometre-scale haematite tubes and filaments with morphologies and mineral assemblages similar to those of

> filamentous microorganisms from modern hydrothermal vent precipitates and analogous microfossils in younger rocks. The Nuvvuagittuq rocks contain isotopically light carbon in carbonate and carbonaceous material, which occurs as graphitic inclusions in diagenetic carbonate rosettes, apatite blades intergrown among carbonate rosettes and magnetite–haematite granules, and is associated with carbonate in direct contact with the putative microfossils.
>
> This new paper is interesting to compare with a paper from last year, Nutman et al., "Rapid emergence of life shown by discovery of 3,700-million-year-old microbial structures," also in *Nature*, which found microbial structures that are a bit younger.
>
> But the "microbial structures" from Nutman et al. 2016 are different from these new "microfossils" presented by Dodd et al. 2017. In Nutman et al., they only found stromatolite-type structures rather than actual microfossils. Some stromatolite experts were a bit skeptical that what they found were really stromatolites.
>
> But the new paper by Dodd and his colleagues, "Evidence for early life in Earth's oldest hydrothermal vent precipitates," seems to offer potential bacteria-like microfossils. They are tiny black carbonaceous spheres and "hematite tubes" which the authors think are biogenically created. We've seen more convincing ancient microfossils, but these aren't bad.
>
> According to Dodd et al., these new finds would be the oldest known microfossils, if that is in fact what they are. Very interesting. If so, that just keeps pushing unquestionable evidence of life's existence on Earth further and further back, which leaves less and less time for the origin of life to have occurred by unguided chemical evolution after Earth became habitable.
>
> **If they are in fact 4.28 billion years old, then that would mean there was life very, very early in Earth's history — as Cyril Ponnamperuma said, it's like "instant life."**

Instant life is "rational" for naturalistic fideists, but for evidence-driven people who understand the long odds on generating even a simple protein by chance, it's irrationality.

Let's recall exactly how hard it is to make even a simple protein without intelligent agency to select the elements of the sequence.

The odds of creating even a single functional protein

I've talked about Doug Axe before when I described how to calculate the odds of getting functional proteins by chance.

Let's calculate the odds of building a protein composed of a functional chain of 100 amino acids, by chance. (Think of a meaningful English sentence built with 100 scrabble letters, held together with glue)

Sub-problems:

- BONDING: You need 99 peptide bonds between the 100 amino acids. The odds of getting a peptide bond is 50%. The probability of building a chain of one hundred amino acids in which all linkages involve peptide bonds is roughly (1/2)^99 or 1 chance in 10^30.
- CHIRALITY: You need 100 left-handed amino acids. The odds of getting a left-handed amino acid is 50%. The probability of attaining at random only L–amino acids in a hypothetical peptide chain one hundred amino acids long is (1/2)^100 or again roughly 1 chance in 10^30.
- SEQUENCE: You need to choose the correct amino acid for each of the 100 links. The odds of getting the right one are 1 in 20. Even if you allow for some variation, the odds of getting a functional sequence is (1/20)^100 or 1 in 10^65.

The final probability of getting a functional protein composed of 100 amino acids is 1 in 10^125. Even if you fill the universe with pre-biotic soup, and react amino acids at Planck time (very fast!) for 14 billion years, you are probably not going to get even 1 such protein. And you need at least 100 of them for minimal life functions, plus DNA and RNA.

Research performed by Doug Axe at Cambridge University, and published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Molecular Biology, has shown that the number of functional amino acid sequences is tiny:

> Doug Axe's research likewise studies genes that it turns out show great evidence of design. Axe studied the sensitivities of protein function to mutations. In these "mutational sensitivity" tests, Dr. Axe mutated certain amino acids in various proteins, or studied the differences between similar proteins, to see how mutations or changes affected their ability to function properly. He found that protein function was highly sensitive to mutation, and that proteins are not very tolerant to changes in their amino acid sequences. In other words, when you mutate, tweak, or change these proteins slightly, they stopped working. In one of his papers, he thus concludes that "functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences," and that functional protein folds "may be as low as 1 in 10^77."

The problem of forming DNA by sequencing nucleotides faces similar difficulties. And remember, mutation and selection cannot explain the origin of the *first* sequence, because mutation and selection require replication, which does not exist until that first living cell is *already in place*.

Should people in sinful lifestyles bully churches into celebrating them?

July 15, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Anti-marriage gay activists vandalize church

This story was the topic of the most recent episode of the Reasonable Faith podcast. Basically, a conservative, apologetics-friendly church had a homosexual person who wanted to be openly gay and still be accepted as a member. After he was told by the church that he could attend the church, but not be a member, he decided to write the mainstream media to shame the church.

Here is the link to Reasonable Faith's podcast – and they have a transcript.

I want to first focus on the letter written by the gay man:

> Dear Watermark Community Church,
>
> Today I celebrate a very interesting anniversary with you. It was exactly one year ago when you told me that I was no longer worthy to serve, be in a community group, and be a member of your church.
>
> I spent years in your church battling against my homosexuality. I believed with all my heart that God would change me; I prayed for change almost daily. But when I wasn't able to change, you turned your back on me.
>
> You say our "sin" is not unique, but you treat us in a unique manner; this is unacceptable behavior. We are actual people that have actual feelings.
>
> Here we are a year later and you are still doing to others what you did to me. You are tarnishing the name of God to Christians and non-Christians alike; you should be ashamed of yourselves! Do not forget, Jesus was a angry with people just like you who said certain groups of people were not worthy to be followers of Him.
>
> Thank you for removing yourself from my life! I am who God made me to be. I

> cannot change my sexual orientation and nor would I want to. I now have internal peace and happiness unlike ever before.
>
> Jason Thomas

As Reasonable Faith notes, this is *what he said* and this is what the far-left Dallas Morning News reported. It sounds like the church was very mean to him, but is that what really happened?

Here is what the church actually wrote to him:

> Dear Jason,
>
> This is a difficult letter to write, as I am sure that it will be a difficult one to hear and receive. We genuinely care for you, love you, and want nothing more for you than to live an abundant life that is found in Jesus Christ alone.
>
> However, in our attempt to shepherd you, we have recognised a destructive pattern that prohibits us in caring for you and playing the role you desire for us to have in your life (1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28). **Specifically, your desire to actively participate in a same-sex relationship with another man, and your unwillingness to heed biblical counsel from your church to turn from that relationship, has made it exceedingly difficult to shepherd you during this time.**
>
> As we noted during our time together last Tuesday (9/29/15), and through the years, we have gently & repeatedly brought these patterns to your attention and, at times, you have heeded this counsel and repented. But now, this is no longer the case. So, in obedience to Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Corinthians 5:11, we are left with no other option but to remove you from our body and treat you as we would anyone who is living out of fellowship with God…and we lovingly, but firmly, call you back to repentance. This means that you are no longer a member of our body at Watermark. We are praying that repentance comes quickly and that you do not continue choosing a path of destruction and one that leads you away from the authority and care of the church.
>
> We recognise that these patterns are only symptoms of a heart that is either unwilling or unable to fully trust God in every area of your life, including your sexuality. We plead with you to run to the Lord and allow the Spirit of God to begin to transform your heart in a mighty way (Titus 3:3-7).
>
> In order to help you through this time, we would like to make some tangible recommendations that we hope will serve as a catalyst for true repentance and heart-change in your life. They are:
>
> 1. Faithful attendance of Re:Generation targeting the above issue, while following counsel to not be in a dating relationship during that time.
>
> 2. Meet with a Watermark staff member who shares in the same struggle (same sex attraction) who has found freedom, healing, and victory through our Savior

> Jesus Christ (just let Brandon know when you're ready to meet with him).
>
> We affirm your many gifts, your heart of kindness, and we value the way God has uniquely formed you (Psalm 139:13-14). We all pray for your repentance and full restoration so that your gifts and passions can be fully unleashed for the Kingdom of God. We love you, Jason, and stand at the gate for you and eagerly await God's restoration in your life (Luke 15:20).
>
> In Christ,
>
> The Elders of Watermark Community Church

Here is what one of my friends at Watermark who was aware of the situation told me:

> I think it's clear that Watermark was very kind and loving in their discipline and can't be called hypocritical or homophobic, and they were not trying to change the man's sexual orientation but rather simply asking him to abstain from sexual relationships. They give lots of chances before administering discipline and the process is the same each time they go through this with members. Some repent and some turn away.

As we have seen, publicizing those who disagree with homosexuality and gay marriage is a favorite tactic of the fascist left. Sometimes, it just involves smearing (e.g. – the Southern Povery Law Center). Sometimes, it involves lawfare, (e.g. – the attorney general of Washington state). Sometimes, it involves leaking the names of pro-marriage donors (e.g. – the Human Rights Campaign). Sometimes, it involves vandalism, violence and even domestic terrorism (e.g. – Floyd Lee Corkins' attack on the Family Research Council). When it comes to homosexuality and gay marriage, fascism is the normal response to dissent.

I just find it astonishing that gay activists and other radicals on the left think that they can try to *bring in the mainstream media and the law to punish the church for holding to orthodox Christian moral values.* But this is why we call sin "sin". We don't call chastity a sin, because chaste people don't behave like fascists when they hear disagreement. We don't call having lots of children a sin, because people who have lots of children don't behave like fascists if anyone disagrees with them. There is something really wrong with these behaviors that the Bible forbids. You can see why the Bible condemns certain things as sins when you look at the fascist responses to disagreement with the sin.

Look at 1 Corinthians 6:1-10:

> [1] If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people?
>
> [2] Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?
>
> [3] Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!
>
> **[4] Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a**

> **ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church?**
>
> **5 I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers?**
>
> **6 But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!**
>
> **7 The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?**
>
> 8 Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters.
>
> 9 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived:Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men
>
> 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Consider 1 Corinthians 5:9-13:

> 9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—
>
> 10 not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.
>
> 11 **But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people.**
>
> 12 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?
>
> 13 God will judge those outside. **“Expel the wicked person from among you.”**

Everyone sins. Fine. Keep it to yourself. Don’t use the law to force Bible-believing Christians to celebrate your sins. The church’s job is to help you to be more like Christ. You’re in a community where everyone is supposed to be serious about growing as a Christian and part of that involves improving your character morally. Another part means getting along with other Christians instead of being disruptive.

Regarding complaints about not being able to act on your sexual orientation, I have no sympathy. I am attracted to women, and I am a virgin, because I am not married. I am not going to church to rebel against this requirement. My job is to structure my life in such a way that it is easier to obey it, whether that involves studying the issue in the research or drawing the line long before I have to make a decision in the heat of the moment. God must be #1 in a person’s life, setting goals and policies, and our job is to make and execute effective plans that deliver results for the Boss.

By the way, do not miss this other recent article on homosexuality from Reasonable Faith.

Patient-killing replacing palliative care in Canada's single payer health care system

July 16, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Killing patients is an easy way to keep costs down

Canada has a pure single-payer health care system. That means that Canadians are taxed (average family pays $12,057 per year), and then the government decides who will get health care. As you might expect, when health care is free, the demand for it goes up. In order to cut costs, Canada decided to stop treating the elderly.

Here's an article from Canada's far-left Maclean's magazine.

Excerpt:

> Canadians were asked in 2016 to accept what is now called Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) as standard practice in the health-care system. But as the second anniversary of the federal law sanctioning assisted suicide passes this month, ambiguities embedded in the new regulatory regime are turning end-of-life care into a troubling leap of faith for doctors and patients alike.
>
> Even the Collège des Médicins in Quebec, which sped ahead with its own statute in advance of Ottawa's Bill C-14, has sounded a strong warning note about patients "choosing" medical assistance in dying purely because their preference for palliative care isn't available.

That's Quebec, but there's more patient-killing going on at the other end of the country in British Columbia:

> At the other end of the country in British Columbia, an active proponent of MAiD, acknowledges that she, too, struggled to adapt to the vagueness of the federal law. Dr. Ellen Wiebe says she ultimately concluded she would have to rely on her personal best judgment about whether or not to administer death.

Although there is a shortage of funding for palliative care in Canada, there's lots of money available for abortions, sex changes, IVF, etc.

I was able to find out about Dr. Wiebe's worldview from another earlier 2016 article in the far-left Maclean's magazine:

> Much of Wiebe's 40-year career as a family physician she has spent doing abortions, including at Vancouver's first abortion clinic, as well as patient advocacy and pioneering abortion drug research.
>
> […]She was raised in a Mennonite family in Abbotsford, B.C., and Wiebe says,"I know my Bible pretty well. I could quote it, no problem." Her mother was a homemaker, and her father was a teacher who worked for the Canadian International Development Agency, which meant Wiebe and her three siblings spent parts of their childhood in Asia and Africa with them. They were "wonderful people who loved life," says Wiebe of her parents, and their Christian beliefs were an "important part of their lives for everything and anything." But as Wiebe moved through adolescence—precociously so, finishing high school at 15—she abandoned her faith. "I lost all my religiosity by the age of 17," says Wiebe. "It was just part of being in university, questioning and wondering and learning who you are."

Looks like her parents were more focused on doing good things for the poor in foreign countries, than on teaching their own child apologetics. Abbotsford is a very conservative and beautiful part of Canada. She must have had an ideal childhood.

The Heritage Foundation notes that in the Netherlands, voluntary euthanasia has already turned into involuntary euthanasia:

> For example, euthanasia is often promoted by its champions as a last resort to alleviate suffering, but the Netherlands already has moved "from assisted suicide to euthanasia, from euthanasia for the terminally ill to euthanasia for the chronically ill, from euthanasia for physical illness to euthanasia for psychological distress and from voluntary euthanasia to nonvoluntary and involuntary euthanasia." Such "termination without request or consent" has been applied to Dutch infants as well. The concern has been that public health system rationing may exert pressure not just to limit spending on certain individuals, but also, either subtly or overtly, to coerce them to be euthanized.

And I've already blogged about how the UK's government-run NHS system pays hospitals bounties for putting patient on an end-of-life track. The new guidelines are even worse, as the UK Telegraph reports:

> New NHS guidelines on “end of life” care are worse than the Liverpool Care Pathway and could push more patients to an early grave, a leading doctor has warned.
>
> Prof Patrick Pullicino, one of the first medics to raise concerns over the pathway, said the national proposals would encourage hospital staff to guess who was dying, in the absence of any clear evidence, and to take steps which could hasten patients’ death.
>
> The Liverpool Care Pathway – which meant fluids and treatment could be withdrawn, and sedation given to the dying – was officially phased out last year, on the orders of ministers.
> It followed concern that under the protocols, thirsty patients had been denied water and left desperately sucking at sponges.

There’s government run health care for you.

I’m writing about this patient-killing issue today because I think it’s interesting to think about what health care is like in a country that is basically run by atheists, like Canada is. I personally would not like to be forced to pay taxes to pay the salary of a someone like Wiebe, and let her be in charge of my life.

Matthew Vines and Michael Brown debate homosexuality and the Bible on Moody radio

July 17, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The audio of the Matthew Vines vs Michael Brown debate is streamed here on the Moody site.

Details:

> Can you be gay and Christian? Matthew Vines says you can and he's created a viral video and best-selling book defending his view. This Saturday on Up for Debate, Vines joins host Julie Roys to debate author and leading evangelical apologist, Dr. Michael Brown. Is gay monogamy an option for Christians? Is it unloving to reject gay marriage? Listen and join the discussion this Saturday at 8 a.m. Central Time on Up for Debate!

Summary key: Julie Roys (JR), Matthew Vines (MV), Michael Brown (MB)

Summary:

Opening speeches:

- JR: Why should Christians be open to reinterpreting the Bible on homosexuality?
- MV: Consider the lives and testimonies of gay Christians. Here is my personal story.
- MV: According to the Bible, a person with same-sex attractions would have to embrace lifelong celibacy. I refuse to do that.
- MV: There are 6 passages in the Bible that are relevant to the goodness of homosexuality. All are negative.
- MV: None of these passages address gay relationships that are "long-term" and "faithful" that are based on "commitment" and "love".
- JR: You say that it is "damaging" for Christians to disagree with you views, is that true?
- MV: Yes. One of my friends declared his homosexuality and he did not feel safe to come home. He felt pain because Christians disagreed with him.
- MV: You cannot ask a person with same-sex attractions to be celibate, it causes too much harm to ask gays to abstain from sexual relationships.
- JR: Respond to Matthew.
- MB: The Bible only permits heterosexual sexuality and in every case condemns homosexual acts.
- MB: Matthew is taking his sexual preferences and activities as given, and reinterpreting the Bible to fit it.
- MB: Genesis talks about women being made to help men, and to fulfill God's commandment to procreate and fill the Earth.
- MB: The Bible speaks about the complementarity of the sexes when talking about how two become one in marriage.

- MB: I am very sensitive to the stories of people who are gay who experience discrimination as “gay Christians”.
- MB: You can feel sad for people who have two conflicting commitments, but that doesn’t mean we should redefine what the Bible says.
- JR: Stop talking, we have a break.

JR takes a caller for the next topic:

- Caller 1: I had same-sex attractions and I was able to change my sexuality.
- JR: Matthew, respond to that.
- MV: Alan Chambers of Exodus International says that 99.9% of people he worked with had not changed their gay orientation.
- MV: Lifelong celibacy is not acceptable to gays, so the Bible must be reinterpreted to suit gays.
- MB: Matthew thinks that God himself did not understand the concept of sexual orientation and inadvertently hurt gays because of his lack of knowledge.
- MB: There is a solution in the Bible for people who cannot be celibate, and that solution is heterosexual marriage
- MB: If a person is only attracted to pre-teen girls, do we then have to re-write the Bible to affirm that so they won’t be “harmed”?
- MB: Alan Chambers was speaking for his own group, and his statement does not account for the fact that thousands of people DO change.
- JR: What about the Jones/Yarhouse study that found that 38% of reparative therapy subjects were successful in changing or chastity?
- MV: (no response to the question)
- MV: (to Brown) do you accept that the Bible forces gays to live out lifelong celibacy

Another break, then Brown replies:

- MB: Yes. But change is possible.
- MV: Do you know of any Christian who acknowledged that this was the consequence of the Bible’s teaching for gays?
- MB: Paul’s explanation that the options for ALL Christians are 1) celibacy or 2) heterosexual marriage. For 2000 years.
- MV: Paul (in Romans 1) is talking about people who are not “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships.
- MV: Paul was not aware of “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships at the time he wrote his prohibitions in Romans 1.
- JR: How do you know that fixed sexual orientation is true? And that the Biblical authors would written different things if they knew?
- JR: Are there any references in the first century to “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships?
- MB: Yes, in my book I quote prominent historian N. T. Wright who documents that those relationships were known.

- MB: Matthew's view requires that God did not know about sexual orientation when ordaining the Bible's content.
- MB: Leviticus 18 is for all people, for all time. This was not just for the Jews, this was for everyone.
- MV: I am not saying that Paul was wrong because he was ignorant.
- MV: Paul was writing in a context where "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships were unknown.
- MV: NT Wright does not cite first century texts, he cites a problematic 4th century text.
- MV: Absence of 1st-century references to "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships means that God did not intend to prohibit them.
- MB: Whenever the Bible speaks about homosexuality, it is opposed to it – Old Testament and New Testament.

Another break, then the conclusion:

- JR: Respond to the Leviticus prohibition, which prohibits homosexuality for everyone, for all time.
- MV: It is a universal prohibition on male same-sex intercourse, but it does not apply to Christians.
- MV: For example, Leviticus prohibits sex during a woman's menstrual period. And Christians are not bound by that.
- MV: What is the reason for this prohibition of male-male sex in Leviticus? It's not affirm the complementarity of the sexual act.
- MV: The Bible prohibits male-male sex because it is written for a patriarchal culture.
- MV: In a patriarchal culture, women are viewed as inferior. That's why the Bible prohibits a man from taking the woman's role in sex.
- MB: The prohibition in Leviticus is a universal prohibition against male-male sex, applicable in all times and places.
- MB: Homosexual sex is a violation of the divine order.
- MB: We can see already the consequences of normalizing this: gay marriage, and supports for polygamy and polyamory.
- MV: So the earliest reference there is to a "long-term", "faithful" gay relationship is a 4th century text.
- MV: But that gay relationship is not like modern gay relationships.

I have a few comments about Vines' points below.

My comments:

Even heterosexuals who have not married are called upon to embrace lifelong celibacy. I am in my early 40s and am a virgin because I have not married. I wouldn't seek to reinrepret the Bible to allow premarital sex just because what I am doing is difficult. I would rather just do what the Bible says than reinterpret it to suit me. And it's just as hard for me to be chaste as it would be for him to be. In short, it's a character issue. He

takes his right to recreational sex as non-negotiable, and reinterprets the Bible to suit. I take the Bible as non-negotiable, and comply with it regardless of whether it seems to make me less happy. With respect to the purposes of God for me in this world, my happiness is expendable. If I don't find someone to marry, I'm going to be "afflicted" with the lifelong celibacy that Vines seems to think is torture, but let me tell you – God is happy with the contributions I am making for him, and if I have to be chaste through my whole life, I am 100% fine with that. I serve the King. And not the reverse.

Notice that he talks about "long-term" but not permanent relationships, and "faithful" but not exclusive. This is important because the statistics show that gay relationships (depending on whether it is female-female or male-male) are prone to instability and/or infidelity. I just blogged on that recently, with reference to the *published research* on the subject. Vines is talking about a situation that does not obtain in the real world – according to the data. Gay relationships do not normally value permanence and exclusivity in the way that opposite-sex marriage relationships do, especially where the couple regularly attends church. The divorce rate and infidelity rate for religious couples is *far below* the rates for gay couples, depending on the sexes involved. Vines is committed to the idea that marriage is about feelings, e.g. – "love", but that's not the public purpose of marriage. Marriage is not about love, it's about complementarity of the sexes and providing for the needs of children. We have published studies like this one showing that there are negative impacts to children who are raised by gay couples, which dovetails with studies showing that children need a mother and that children need a father. We should not normalize any relationship that exposes children to harm. We should prefer to inconvenience adults than to harm children.

Matthew Vines made an argument that Christians have to stop saying that homosexuality is wrong, because it makes gay people feel excluded. I wrote previously about the argument that gay activists use where they say "if you don't agree with me and celebrate me and affirm me, then I'll commit suicide". In that post, I quoted a prominent gay activist who made exactly that argument. I don't find the threats to self-destruction to be a convincing argument *for the truth* of the view that gay marriage being the same as heterosexual marriage. In fact, this is confirmed by a recent study which showed that features of gay relationships themselves, and not social disapproval, is to blame for high rates of suicide in the gay community.

Vines seems to want to argue that the context in which the Bible authors were writing did not allow them to address the problem of gays in "long-term", "faithful" relationships. Well, we have already seen that statistically speaking, those relationships are in the minority. One British study mentioned in the post I linked to above found that only 25% of gay couples were intact after 8 years. The number is 82% for heterosexual marriages, and that *doesn't* filter by couples who abstain from premarital sex and who attend church regularly. If you add those two criteria, the number is going to be well above 82% in my opinion. Studies show that premarital chastity and church attendance *vastly* improve the stability and quality of marriages.

In addition, Vines is trying to argue that 1) the Bible authors were not aware of "long-

term", "faithful" gay relationships and 2) their failure to explicitly disqualify these "long-term", "stable" gay sexual relationships means that the Bible actually condones them. A friend of mine pointed out that this is a textbook case of the argument from silence, where someone asserts that because something is not explicitly condemned, then it must be OK. Carried through to its logical end, that would mean that things like identity theft are OK, because they are not mentioned explicitly. Brown asserted that there was a blanket prohibition on homosexual acts. He is arguing from what we know. Vines says that "long-term", "faithful" homosexual relationships are not mentioned, and are therefore OK. He is arguing from what we don't know. And he is trying to reverse the burden of proof so that he doesn't have to show evidence for his view. Brown wouldn't take the bait. The fact of the matter is that no one for the last 2000 years of church history have taken Vines' view. Every single Christian before Vines, who were closer to Jesus' teachings than Vines, understood the verses that Brown cited to be providing a blanket prohibition on homosexual sex acts. If Vines wants to claim that the Bible condones what he wants it to condone, he has to produce some positive evidence from the text or from church history or church fathers. He has *nothing* to support his case that could convince anyone that this is what Christians have believed, and ought to believe.

Finally, if you are looking for another debate, I blogged about a debate between Michael Brown and Eric Smaw. There's a video and summaries of the opening speeches in that post.

Have you heard of Kristen Waggoner and the Alliance Defending Freedom?

July 18, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kristen Waggoner of Alliance Defending Freedom argued Jack Phillips' case before the Supreme Court. (Photo: Jeff Malet/The Heritage Foundation)

I was very surprised to see the far-left Washington Post post a balanced article on Alliance Defending Freedom. The ADF is a group of lawyers who do battle in defense of religious liberty and conscience in the Supreme Court. They have won 9 cases at the Supreme Court in the last 7 years, despite having to argue in front of a court that had a 5-4 liberal majority.

Here's some of the article:

> Two days before the announcement of Justice Anthony M. Kennedy's retirement, a woman who stood to gain from it was on the steps of the Supreme Court once again. Kristen Waggoner's blond bob was perfectly styled with humidity-fighting paste she'd slicked onto it that morning at the Trump hotel. Her 5-foot frame was heightened by a pair of nude pumps, despite a months-old ankle fracture in need of surgery. On her wrist was a silver bracelet she'd worn nonstop since Dec. 5, 2017, the day she marched up these iconic steps, stood before the justices and argued that a Christian baker could legally refuse to create a cake for a gay couple's wedding.
>
> Her job was to be the legal mind and public face of Alliance Defending Freedom., an Arizona-based Christian conservative legal nonprofit better known as ADF. Though far from a household name, the results of ADF's work are well known. Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission was just one of ADF's cases at the Supreme Court this term. The organization has had nine successful cases before the court in the past seven years, including Burwell v. Hobby

> Lobby…

I follow very few people on Twitter, only about 27-30. One of those people is Kristen Waggoner. She is the lead counsel in many of these Supreme Court cases. She is the best at what she does.

Her silver bracelet is engraved with a famous passage that I think has inspired many Christian women of courage. It's from the book of Esther. The bracelet says "For Such A Time As This". It's a phrase that is taken from Mordecai's warning to Esther that God is sovereign over her life, and that he has put her into a position to defend her whole nation from threats.

Here's the passage in context from Esther 4:6-17:

> 6 So Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate.
>
> 7 Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews.
>
> 8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to instruct her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.
>
> 9 Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said.
>
> 10 Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai,
>
> 11 "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."
>
> 12 When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai,
>
> 13 he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape.
>
> **14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"**
>
> 15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai:
>
> 16 "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

> 17 So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

Kristen Waggoner is our Esther. She actually has much better character and abilities than the real Esther .

Her biography is here on the ADF web site.

It says, in part:

> Kristen K. Waggoner serves as senior vice president of U.S. legal division and communications with Alliance Defending Freedom. In this role, Waggoner oversees the U.S. legal division, a team of 100 attorneys and staff who engage in litigation, public advocacy, and legislative support. Since she assumed this role, ADF has prevailed as lead counsel in eight U.S. Supreme Court victories, including Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission, which she argued at the Supreme Court and won. She continues as lead counsel in Arlene's Flowers v. State of Washington, which the Supreme Court remanded to the lower courts. She also served as counsel for the free speech victory that the Supreme Court handed down in National Institute of Family and Life Advocates v. Becerra.

I consider it amazing that more Christians don't know who she is. Christians tend to admire famous celebrities, athletes, artists. And prosperity gospel preachers. But these people merely *entertain* us. Kristen Waggoner is not an entertainer, she is a *warrior*. She goes into the most dangerous places and fights for the liberty of every one of us. She's become a sheep dog in order to protect the sheep. Right now, we are facing challenges from people who are trying to use the law like a weapon to bully and silence anyone who tries to live out an authentic Christian life. Powerful people are trying to say that when a Christian's liberty makes them FEEL BAD, that means that the Christian's liberty needs to be suppressed. The ADF is there to make sure that they don't succeed.

Whenever the ADF goes out to battle, I make sure to write about their cases on this blog. We should all be informed and give respect to Kristen Waggoner and everyone who works for the ADF. They are some of the most effective and influential Christians, and they deserve our gratitude and our respect.

More about her background

One of the other groups I like a lot is the Heritage Foundation, my favorite think tank. I have similar admiration and respect for the people who work there, such as Genevieve Wood and Jennifer Marshall. The Daily Signal, a news site operated by the Heritage Foundation, has posted a story about Kristen Waggoner's background.

It says:

> Waggoner grew up as Kristen Kellie Behrends in Longview, Washington, about two hours south of Seattle and an hour north of Portland.
>
> What she treasures most about her upbringing, Waggoner says, is that she was steeped in consistent values at home, church, and school that shaped her worldview without sheltering her.

> Her father taught her from Scripture about “being an Esther, being a Deborah, used by God,” she says, and that “joy and fulfillment come from having a purpose that’s bigger than ourselves.”
>
> “It’s not about us, we’re a part of a bigger story that has to do with helping human flourishing. And that just shaped my whole life, even now.”
>
> […]Once a teacher in public schools, today her father is a licensed minister in the Assemblies of God denomination. He is associate pastor of Cedar Park Church in Bothell, Washington, and superintendent of an affiliated school system.
>
> Young Kristen would go to the principal’s office to visit her father three or four times a day, sometimes because she got into trouble. In these encounters, he urged her to find and develop her talents, and apply them in a way that would honor God.
>
> And one day, Waggoner recalls, she saw clearly that defending ministries and religious freedom should be her path.
>
> […]“The right of conscience is critical to the existence of the country and is the first freedom that our other civil liberties are directly connected with,” Waggoner says. “I wanted to be a part of that—that fight to preserve it for my children and my grandchildren.”

On this blog, I put a lot of emphasis on Christians being careful about what they study in school, what jobs they take, how they manage their money, and who they choose to marry. The goal of all this is to make sure that young Christians are thoughtful about having a vision for their lives, and pursuing that vision in a way that minimizes wildness, fun and thrills. Becoming a hero doesn’t happen by accident, it takes planning and execution. There is no path to success that involves doing whatever feels good moment-by-moment. In order to make a difference, we need to be careful about doing what works, not pursuing fun and thrills in the moment.

Husband uses legally-owned firearm to rescue wife from two armed criminals

July 19, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

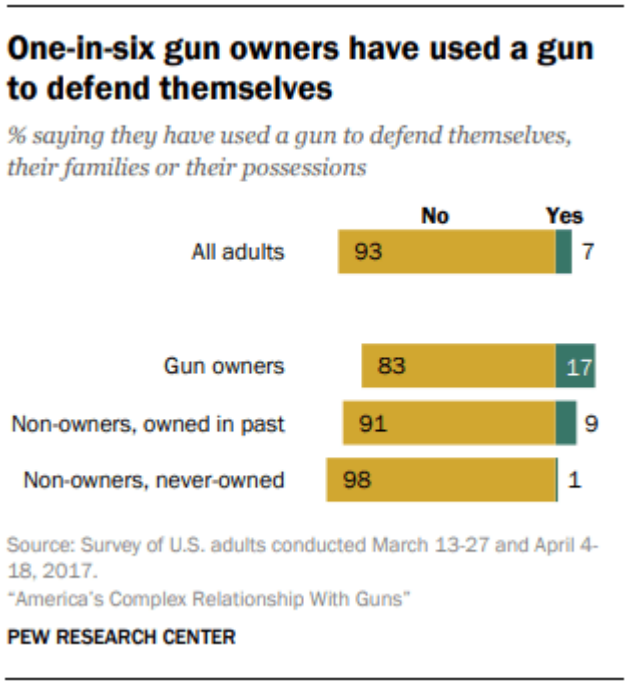

Pew Research: reported defensive gun usage

The mainstream media, and the culture at large, seems to spend a lot more time talking about multiple victim public shootings. But they ignore the times when legally-armed law-abiding citizens defend themselves from criminals. Here's an example of what that looks like, reported from KHOU Houston local news.

Excerpt:

> Investigators said it all started when the man's wife pulled into their driveway Tuesday night. Then the two armed suspects jumped out and tried to rob her.
>
> First, they took her purse, and then they tried to force her into the house. However, that is when her husband showed up.
>
> He heard the commotion from inside, grabbed his gun and ended up exchanging gunfire with the intruders.
>
> Fortunately, the couple weren't hit, but one of the suspects was hit in the head, police said. The other suspect took off running.
>
> Police said the injured suspect was taken into surgery.
>
> As for the couple, one can only imagine what was going through their mind when this was all over. Hopefully, they're able to find some peace of mind this morning, knowing they're OK.

Now, imagine you are the husband and you wake up to find two armed men in your

home, holding your wife hostage. The police are minutes away, even if you could make the phone call while the criminals waited patiently for you to do so. In this situation, what sort of remedy would be offered to you by people who want to confiscate your legally-owned firearms? What could they offer you that would rescue your wife and yourself, and prevent your house from being burglarized? I actually know progressives who hate gun usage so much that they actually don't believe in an individual's right to defend himself, his family and his property. There is this strange desire to try to "make peace" by surrendering to the most angry person in the room. Some progressives are really like this. They just don't believe that violence (or even the threat of violence) is ever the answer to dealing with evil. Progressives want to disarm you, but they don't want to do a think to make criminal activities harder for criminals.

The truth is that progressives often live in gated communities and have armed security. They want to be safe, but they don't care about YOUR safety.

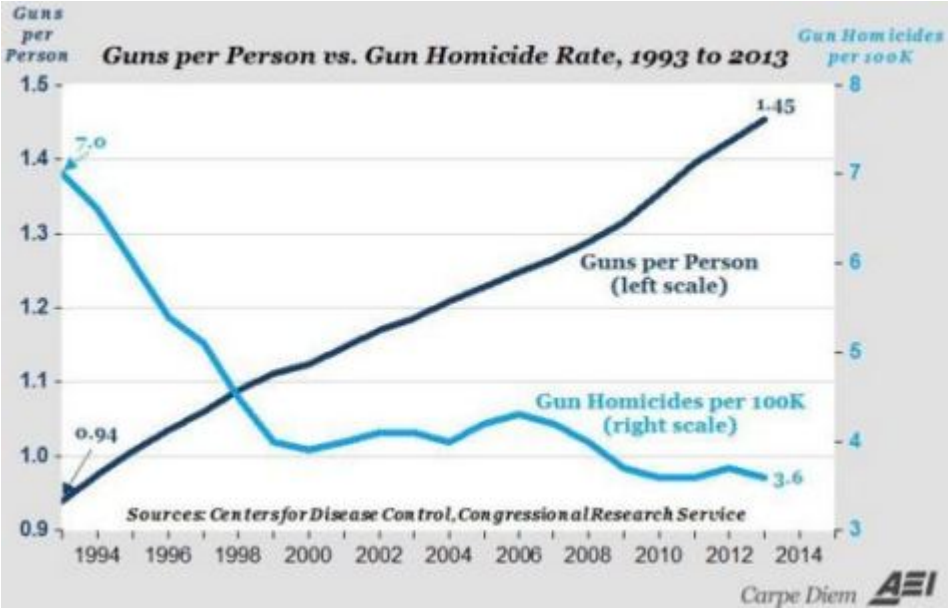

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

I think that peer-reviewed studies should be useful for assessing gun control vs gun rights policy. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, which shows that the 1997 UK gun ban caused violent crime rates to MORE THAN DOUBLE in the four years following the ban. But both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means

less crime.

One of the common mistakes I see anti-gun advocates making is to use the metric of all “gun-related deaths”. First of all, this completely ignores the effects of hand gun ownership on violent crime, as we’ve seen. Take away the guns from law-abiding people and violent crime skyrockets. But using the “gun-related deaths” number is especially wrong, because it includes suicides committed with guns. This is the majority (about two thirds) of gun related deaths, even in a country like America that has a massive inner-city gun violence problem caused by the epidemic of single motherhood by choice. If you take out the gun-related SUICIDES, then the actual number of gun homicides has decreased as gun ownership has grown.

For a couple of useful graphs related to this point, check out this post over at the American Enterprise Institute.

(Graphic is from Pew Research 2017, page 43)

Eight tips for talking to non-Christians about Christianity

July 20, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two Air Force JTACs discuss mission parameters prior to calling in CAS

From Stand to Reason – some excellent tactical advice about how to have a conversation about spiritual topics with a non-Christian.

Here's the setup:

> I overheard a conversation on the airplane coming back from my vacation in Wisconsin. A Christian gentleman was vigorously sharing his faith with a gentleman in the seat directly behind me. There are some things we can learn, both good and bad, from what I overheard and take his effort—which was a good one—and channel it in a little bit more constructive direction.
>
> So I am going to give you eight points of application.

And here are my favorites from his list:

> **3. Try to stay away from religious language, terminology, and religious affect.** This person was very religious in his whole approach. I think this is hard for us as Christians because we are brought up in a Christian environment and it's natural for us to talk this way, but it sounds weird to people outside of that environment. I think there are a lot of people who may be, in principle, interested in a bona fide, genuine relationship with God through Jesus Christ but who are not interested in the Christian religion as they perceive it. This is where I think a lot of the emergent guys have a legitimate bone to pick with Evangelicalism. Let's try not to sound like Bible-thumping fundamentalists if we can avoid it, even if that's what we are, because there's no need to sound that

> way if it puts people off. Find another way to communicate the message. Just talk in a straightforward manner. Be conscious of using religious language the other person may not understand or may think is strange. Avoid all of that so they can hear the message you're trying to communicate.
>
> **4. Focus on the truth, not personal benefits of Christianity.** I appreciated the gentleman's approach in that he kept talking about truth. One person he was talking to said he liked reincarnation. The Christian man said that even if he liked reincarnation that that didn't make it true if it's not true. Liking something is not going to change reality. That's a great point. He was focusing on the truth claims of Jesus. He wasn't giving a bunch of promises. He wasn't saying, "Jesus is my ice cream. He's a great flavor. Try him to see if you like him, too." Or, "Try Jesus because he'll make your life so wonderful." Focus on truth and not personal benefits.
>
> **5. Give evidence.** This gentleman was giving all kinds of evidence for his seatmates to consider. Good for him! You should too. You know why? Because people in the Bible did, too. Jesus, Paul, Peter, all the Apostles. If you look at the details of how they communicated their faith they gave evidence for the truth of what they were saying about Jesus. In fact, if you want to get the content of the Gospel, one of the most famous passages for the articulation of the Gospel is the beginning of 1 Corinthian 15. Paul gives all kinds of evidence. It's all right there as he is explaining the Gospel. We see that all through the New Testament. So give evidences. It's appropriate. People do respond to that even in a postmodern age.

I remember that I was once working in Chicago, and after a particular good apologetics discussion with a team of engineers, I apologized to them all for being so conservative and confident that I was right. These guys all had MS and PhD degrees in computer science from top schools like Stanford, Purdue, U of I, NIU and Northwestern. I was worried that they would think that I was some sort of fundamentalist because I was so definite about what I believed. They said "you're not a fundamentalist". And I said, "but I am ultra-conservative in my theology!". And they said "That's ok – as long as you have considered different points of view and you have objective evidence, then somehow it doesn't sound fundamentalist".

I think that's something that we need to work on. When Christianity is about truth, it's open to investigation using public evidence. At work, I have explained the structure of DNA molecules in the office and had people rolling their chairs out of their cubicles to come and see me draw amino acid chains on a white board, and calculate the probabilities with a calculator. You can be a fundamentalist, without sounding like a fundamentalist. You just have to focus on public, testable evidence.

Look here:

Make religion about truth – not personal preferences. They respect that way of talking. Don't talk about your feelings or your spiritual experiences. They can't test that. Talk to

them about history and science. They CAN test that.

Memorial of Navy SEAL and Medal of Honor recipient Michael Murphy vandalized

July 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Navy SEAL Michael Murphy wins Medal of Honor

I'm beside myself with rage at the news that some 14-year-old punk vandalized the memorial of Navy SEAL officer and Medal of Honor recipient Michael P. Murphy. I consider Murphy a hero. You may have read his story in the book "Lone Survivor", which was also made into a movie. I hope that punk kid goes to jail for what he did.

Fox News reports:

> Authorities in New York arrested a 14-year-old boy on Friday for allegedly vandalizing the memorial of a slain Navy SEAL and Medal of Honor recipient.
>
> Suffolk County Police received a call on Thursday that the Lt. Michael P. Murphy Memorial Park in Lake Ronkonkoma had been "vandalized."
>
> A picture released by police on Facebook showed that a granite stone with an image of the fallen soldier had been shattered.
>
> […]The suspect was charged with second-degree criminal mischief, and was scheduled to be arraigned in family court at a later date, Fox 5 reported.

The Washington Examiner reports on the story of a brave Navy SEAL named Michael Murphy. (H/T Mary)

Excerpt:

> Engaged in a frenzied firefight and outnumbered by the Taliban, Navy Lt. Michael Murphy made a desperate decision as he and three fellow SEALs fought for their lives on a rocky mountainside in Afghanistan's Kunar Province in 2005.
>
> In a last-ditch effort to save his team, Murphy pulled out his satellite phone, walked into a clearing to get reception and called for reinforcements as a fusillade of bullets ricocheted around him. One of the bullets hit him, but he finished the call and even signed off, "Thank you."
>
> Then he continued the battle.
>
> Dan Murphy, the sailor's father, said it didn't surprise him that his slain son nicknamed "The Protector" put himself in harm's way. Nor was he surprised that in the heat of combat his son was courteous.
>
> "That was Michael. He was cool under fire. He had the ability to process information, even under the most difficult of circumstances. That's what made him such a good SEAL officer," Murphy said.
>
> A warship bearing the name of the Medal of Honor recipient will be christened Saturday — on what would have been Murphy's 35th birthday — at Bath Iron Works, where the destroyer is being built.
>
> Murphy, who was 29 when he died, graduated from Pennsylvania State University and was accepted to multiple law schools, but decided he could do more for his country as one of the Navy's elite SEALS — special forces trained to fight on sea, air and land — the same forces that killed Osama bin Laden this week in Pakistan.
>
> […]Murphy, of Patchogue, N.Y., earned his nickname after getting suspended in elementary school for fighting with bullies who tried to stuff a special-needs child into a locker and for intervening when some youths were picking on a homeless man, said Dan Murphy, a lawyer, former prosecutor and Army veteran who served in Vietnam.
>
> Maureen Murphy said he thought he was too young to take a desk job as a lawyer. Instead, he went to officer candidate school, the first step on his journey to become a SEAL officer. He was in training during the Sept. 11 attacks, which shaped his views.
>
> His view was that there are "bullies in the world and people who're oppressed in the world. And he said, 'Sometimes they have to be taken care of,'" she said.
>
> On June 28, 2005, the day he was killed, Murphy was leading a SEAL team in northeastern Afghanistan looking for the commander of a group of insurgents known as the Mountain Tigers.

He certainly had amazing character.

What happened to Murphy in Afghanistan?

> The Operation Red Wings reconnaissance team rappelled down from a helicopter

> at night and climbed through rain to a spot 10,000 feet high overlooking a village to keep a lookout. But the mission was compromised the following morning when three local goat herders happened upon their hiding spot.
>
> High in the Hindu Kush mountains, Murphy and Petty Officers Marcus Luttrell of Huntsville, Texas; Matthew Axelson of Cupertino, Calif.; and Danny Dietz of Littleton, Colo.; held a tense discussion of the rules of engagement and the fate of the three goat herders, who were being held at gunpoint.
>
> If they were Taliban sympathizers, then letting the herders go would allow them to alert the Taliban forces lurking in the area; killing them might ensure the team's safety, but there were issues of possible military charges and a media backlash, according to Luttrell, the lone survivor.
>
> Murphy, who favored letting the goat herders go, guided a discussion of military, political, safety and moral implications. A majority agreed with him.
>
> An hour after the herders were released, more than 100 Taliban armed with AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades opened fire, attacking from higher elevation, and maneuvering to outflank the SEALs, said Gary Williams, author of "Seal of Honor," a biography of Murphy.
>
> […]As the only survivor, Luttrell has pangs of regret for voting to go along with Murphy, his best friend; he now believes the team could've survived if the goat herders were killed.

He wasn't willing to kill unarmed civilians. That's the difference between the United States and the Muslim terrorists. It's a moral difference. Michael Murphy was a good man. He used guns and violence to protect others, and he was not willing to kill unarmed civilians.

Here are the requirements for the Army version of the Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is awarded by the President in the name of Congress to a person who, while a member of the Army, distinguishes himself or herself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. The deed performed must have been one of personal bravery or self-sacrifice so conspicuous as to clearly distinguish the individual above his comrades and must have involved risk of life. Incontestable proof of the performance of the service will be exacted and each recommendation for the award of this decoration will be considered on the standard of extraordinary merit.

On a happier note, what kind of ship do you think would suit Michael Murphy? Something

that protects others, of course.

USS Michael Murphy DDG 112 Arleigh Burke

Arleigh Burke vessels have the AEGIS missile defense system and their role is to protect carrier strike groups from incoming SSMs and ASMs.

Excerpt:

> The Arleigh Burke Class destroyers are equipped with the Aegis combat system which integrates the ship's sensors and weapons systems to engage anti-ship missile threats.
>
> The Aegis system has a federated architecture with four subsystems – AN/SPY-1 multifunction radar, command and decision system (CDS), Aegis display system (ADS) and the weapon control system (WCS). The CDS receives data from ship and external sensors via satellite communications and provides command, control and threat assessment. The WCS receives engagement instruction from the CDS, selects weapons and interfaces with the weapon fire control systems.
>
> […]Lockheed Martin is developing the Aegis ballistic missile defence (BMD) capability for the Aegis combat system to engage ballistic missiles with the SM-3 missile. 15 Arleigh Burke destroyers have been fitted with the Aegis BMD system, which provides the capability for long-range surveillance, tracking and engagement of short and medium-range ballistic missiles. The system received US Navy certification for full deployment in September 2006. Work was completed on the 15 destroyers at the end of 2008 and the vessels, with three Ticonderoga cruisers, form the Aegis BMD fleet. On 30 July 2009 the Aegis BMD system was successfully tested by the US Navy on the USS Hopper (DDG 70). Aegis BMD is the main sea-based component of the US ballistic missile defence system.
>
> The weapons control systems include a SWG-1A for Harpoon, SWG-3 for Tomahawk, mk99 mod 3 missile fire control system, GWS34 mod 0 gun fire control system and mk116 mod 7 fire control system for anti-submarine systems.

Only two warships that I know of have the AEGIS system. The DDG Arleigh Burke and the CG Ticonderoga. They are extremely rare and special – just like Michael Murphy.

Michael Murphy was a devout Christian man, and a real hero. It makes me sad that he is gone. But his spirit will live on in the new warship that bears his name. If you want to read or learn more about Michael Murphy, you should pick up the book “Lone Survivor” or see the movie of that same title. I’ve read the book and seen the movie, and I highly recommend both. It’s important for Americans to understand just who is out there protecting them and protecting our allies. When you read the details, your heart changes. It’s a good idea for Christians in particular to always be thinking about self-sacrificial love, and even about how hard it is when someone lays down their life for their friends.

New study: what lifestyle choices lead to happiness for women?

July 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

In preparation for this blog post, I read an article from a far-left source about the decline of women's happiness.

Excerpt:

> As women gain political, economic and social freedoms, one would expect that they should feel even more contented relative to men. But this isn't so.
>
> The "paradox of declining female happiness" was pointed out by economists Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, who also happen to share a house and kids. They analyzed the happiness trends of US citizens between 1970 and 2005 and found a surprising result.
>
> Stevenson and Wolfers discovered that American women rated their overall life satisfaction higher than men in the 1970s. Thereafter, women's happiness scores decreased while men's scores stayed roughly stable. By the 1990s, women were less happy than men. This relative unhappiness softened after the turn of the century, but men continue to enjoy a higher sense of subjective wellbeing that is at least as high — if not higher — than women's.
>
> Those 35 years saw advances in American women's rights and financial power.

Let's take a look at a recent study that the Daily Wire reported on, to see what really makes women happy:

> Despite the onslaught of propaganda telling young girls otherwise, a recent research paper distilling data from over 30 European countries concluded that

> mothers find homemaking preferable to working full-time.
>
> Doc. PhDr. Dana Hamplová, Ph.D., a senior scientist at the Institute of Sociology, ASCR, and a current representative of the Czech Republic in the International Social Science Program, authored the paper. Addressing Betty Friedan's narrative in the book The Feminine Mystique, which claims that women are happiest and most fulfilled at work, Hamplová "explores the link between employment and subjective well-being among mothers with children under 3 years of age," reads the paper's abstract.
>
> "Analyzing multiple measures of subjective well-being, the paper shows that homemakers are generally happier than full-time workers," the scientist found.
>
> "Contrary to our expectations, homemaking was positively associated with happiness particularly among mothers who left higher quality employment for childcare. Though some variation across countries exists, it is not linked to the provision of formal childcare, duration of parental leave, or tax system," Hamplová explains.
>
> […]"Thus, similarly to several other studies, the ESS [European Social Survey] data do not corroborate Betty Friedan's idea that domesticity and housekeeping leaves women unhappy and unsatisfied," she writes. "As all 12 measures of happiness/satisfaction point to the same direction, the conclusion that mothers with younger children tend to be better off if they are not engaged in paid employment seems to be robust."

We've had lots of advancements in women's power, often coming at the expense of men (i.e. – husband candidates). For example, anti-male schools staffed by feminist administrators and feminist teachers might be great for women, but they don't produce high-earning men for women to marry. And when women vote to expand government, taxes must increase to pay for all the spending. This reduces even further the pool of men who can take on a wife and family shrinks even more because of the increased tax burden.

This article from the leftist The Atlantic explains:

> In the view that has prevailed in American education over the past decade, boys are resented, both as the unfairly privileged sex and as obstacles on the path to gender justice for girls. This perspective is promoted in schools of education, and many a teacher now feels that girls need and deserve special indemnifying consideration.
>
> […]A review of the facts shows boys, not girls, on the weak side of an education gender gap. The typical boy is a year and a half behind the typical girl in reading and writing; he is less committed to school and less likely to go to college. In 1997 college full-time enrollments were 45 percent male and 55 percent female. The Department of Education predicts that the proportion of boys in college classes will continue to shrink.

> Data from the U.S. Department of Education and from several recent university studies show that far from being shy and demoralized, today's girls outshine boys. They get better grades. They have higher educational aspirations. They follow more-rigorous academic programs and participate in advanced-placement classes at higher rates. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, slightly more girls than boys enroll in high-level math and science courses. Girls, allegedly timorous and lacking in confidence, now outnumber boys in student government, in honor societies, on school newspapers, and in debating clubs. Only in sports are boys ahead, and women's groups are targeting the sports gap with a vengeance. Girls read more books. They outperform boys on tests for artistic and musical ability. More girls than boys study abroad. More join the Peace Corps. At the same time, more boys than girls are suspended from school. More are held back and more drop out. Boys are three times as likely to receive a diagnosis of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. More boys than girls are involved in crime, alcohol, and drugs. Girls attempt suicide more often than boys, but it is boys who more often succeed. In 1997, a typical year, 4,483 young people aged five to twenty-four committed suicide: 701 females and 3,782 males.

It's important to note that women are not victims here, they are actually the ones who created the shortage of men who could earn enough money to support a family, and allow them to stay home with their children. Their "advancements in power" came at a cost: they undermined the system that produced men who were capable of handling the financial demands of a family where the wife can raise her own children.

Look at this study of how women have voted to expand government and therefore raise taxes on working men for social programs that replace husbands:

> This paper examines the growth of government during this century as a result of giving women the right to vote. Using cross-sectional time-series data for 1870–1940, we examine state government expenditures and revenue as well as voting by U.S. House and Senate state delegations and the passage of a wide range of different state laws. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue and more liberal voting patterns for federal representatives, and these effects continued growing over time as more women took advantage of the franchise. Contrary to many recent suggestions, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s, and it helps explain why American government started growing when it did.

Bigger government means higher taxes means men earn less money, after taxes. How are you supposed to keep your wife home to watch over the little ones when taxes are higher? You can't.

Two kinds of people who have tried to shame me away from Christianity

July 22, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

In my last job, I had two interesting encounters, first with a secular Jewish leftist man and second with a New Age prosperity gospel feminist Christian woman.

So let's talk about the two people.

The man who thinks that conservative Christians are stupid

The first kind of person who tried to shame me for being a Christian is the person who thinks that Christianity is stupid. This kind of person invokes things that he hears in secular leftist pop culture as if it is common knowledge that theism generally, and Christianity in particular, is false. He's watched a documentary on the Discovery channel which said that the eternally oscillating cosmology was true. Or maybe he watched a documentary on the History Channel that said that Jesus never presented himself as God stepping into history. He presents these things that he reads in the New York Times, or sees on MSNBC or hears on NPR with the authority tone that Ben Carson might take when explaining modern medicine to a witch doctor.

Here is how things usually go with him:

- Me: here are two arguments against naturalistic evolution, the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion.
- Him: but you don't believe in a young-Earth do you? I mean, you believe in evolution don't you?
- Me: let's talk about how proteins and DNA is sequenced, and the sudden origin of Cambrian body plans
- Him: (shouting) Do you believe in evolution? Do you believe in evolution?

And this:

- Me: there hasn't been any global warming for 18 years, and temperatures were warmer in the Medieval Warming Period
- Him: but you don't deny climate change, do you? everyone on NPR agrees that climate change is real
- Me: let's talk about the last 18 years of no warming, and the temperatures during the Medieval Warming Period
- Him: (shouting) Do you believe in climate change? Do you believe in climate change?

He asks these questions so he can either label me as a nut, without having to weigh the evidence I'm presenting, or have me agree with him, without having to weigh the evidence I'm presenting. It's all about ignoring the evidence, so he can get back to his busy, busy practical life – and get back to feeling smug about being smarter than others. I think a lot of men are like this – they don't want to waste their valuable time studying, they just want to jump to the right conclusion, then get back to doing whatever they want – like running marathons, or driving their kids to hockey practice, etc.

So how do you respond to a man who gets his entire worldview from the culture, but never deals with peer-reviewed evidence? Well, I think you just defeat his arguments with evidence and then present your own (peer-reviewed) evidence, and then leave it at that. If the person just wants to jump to the conclusion that all the "smart" people hold to, without doing any of the work, then you can't win. There are atheists out there who believe in the eternal oscillating universe they saw Carl Sagan talking about in their elementary school. You might try to argue for an origin of the universe by citing new evidence like the CMB and light element abundances. But sometimes, they won't care. Carl Sagan said it 50 years ago, and that settles it. It doesn't matter that the new evidence overturns the old theories, they don't care.

Do you think that Christianity will make non-Christians like you?

Consider 2 Tim 4:1-5:

1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:

[2] preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

[3] For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,

[4] and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

[5] As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

And 1 Peter 3:15-16:

[15] but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a

defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

[16] having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

If you have orthodox theological beliefs in this day and age then you are going to be shamed, humiliated and reviled by people. And it's not just having an orthodox view of who Jesus is that annoys them (e.g. – deity, exclusivity of salvation, morality, etc.). No, their disapproval spreads on into politics, especially abortion and gay marriage – basically any kind of rules around sexuality. That's what's really bugging these people, I think.

The woman who thinks Christianity is life-enhancement

This one is especially difficult when you are a young man, because we naturally look to women for approval and respect. You find yourself sitting in church or youth group, hoping for the approval and respect from the Christian women for your sound theology and effective apologetics. Little do you know that many Christian women understand Christianity as life-enhancement, designed to produce happy feelings. God is their cosmic butler whose main responsibility is to meet their needs and make their plans work out. Although you might be keen on sound theology and good apologetics arguments, she doesn't think that's important.

So how to deal with this unmet need for approval and respect from women in the church?

First thing, be careful that you don't attend a church where the pastor in preaching and picking hymns that give you the idea that God is your cosmic butler. Second, read the Bible very carefully, and understand that with respect to God's purposes for you in this world, your happiness is expendable. You cannot be looking to attractive Christian women that you happen to meet in church to support you, as many of them have long-since sold out to the culture. They are not interested in learning *evidential* apologetics to defend God's reputation, or in defending the unborn, or in defending natural marriage, or in defending the free enterprise system that supports family autonomy from the state, etc. Those things are hard and unpopular, especially for those women who were raised to think that Christianity is about life enhancement and peer-approval.

Here's 1 Cor 4:1-5 to make the point:

1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

[2] Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

[3] But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

[4] For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

[5] Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

And 2 Tim 2:4:

[4] No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

Or, since I like Ronald Speirs from Band of Brothers so much:

This is the situation in which we find ourselves, so get used to it. And believe me, I have to deal with this, too. So I have all the sympathy in the world for you. Resign yourself to the fact that no one is going to approve of you for being faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ; not secular men, not Christian women. There is no cavalry coming to rescue you.

FBI and DOJ used Democrat-funded Steele dossier to justify wiretapping of Trump campaign

July 23, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Left to right: Comey, Lynch, Clinton, McCabe

Wow, so for some time, the mainstream media had been telling me that the FBI and DOJ, during the Obama administration, never did any surveillance of the Trump campaign at the request of the Democrats. But whenever anyone asked them to release information about the basis for their investigations of Trump, they wouldn't reveal anything.

But Judicial Watch was on the case, and they finally managed to get heavily redacted copies of documents showing what the FBI and DOJ were doing during the election.

The basis of the FBI and DOJ surveillance of Trump campaign personnel was the Steele dossier, which was collected for Fusion GPS, a Democrat opposition research firm.

Fox News explains:

> On four occasions, the FBI told the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance (FISA) court that it "did not believe" former British spy Christopher Steele was the direct source for a Yahoo News article implicating former Trump aide Carter Page in Russian collusion, newly released documents reveal.
>
> Instead, the FBI suggested to the court, the September 2016 article by Michael Isikoff was independent corroboration of the salacious, unverified allegations against Trump in the infamous Steele Dossier. Federal authorities used both the Steele Dossier and Yahoo News article to convince the FISA court to authorize a surveillance warrant for Page.
>
> But London court records show that contrary to the FBI's assessments, Steele briefed Yahoo News and other reporters in the fall of 2016 at the direction of Fusion GPS — the opposition research firm behind the dossier.
>
> The revelations are contained in heavily-redacted documents released over the weekend after a Freedom of Information lawsuit by the organization Judicial Watch.

> The materials released by the DOJ include an October 2016 application to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to wiretap Page as well as several renewal applications.

So, there was only one source used as the basis for the surveillance warrant request: Steele's dossier. The articles that appeared in the mainstream media was all based on Steele himself.

Conservative Review has more on what was in the released FBI and DOJ memos:

> Over 400 pages of documents related to the FISA court warrant applications to surveil former Trump campaign operative Carter Page have been released. Now we know for certain: The unverified "Steele dossier" was used as evidence to get a warrant to spy on Page.
>
> Though heavily redacted, the documents make clear that the FBI told the FISA court Page is a Russian agent who was betraying the United States. The dossier, which was funded by the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign, served as the first piece of evidence cited to allege Page coordinated with the Russians to influence the election. The FBI cited additional evidence, an article written by Michael Isikoff for Yahoo news, but failed to disclose that Isikoff received his information from Christopher Steele, the ex-British spy who authored the dossier.
>
> What does that mean? It means that the FBI presented unverified campaign opposition research to FISA court judges to spy on Page, and the judges signed off on the applications.

So, who paid for the Steele dossier?

The far-left Washington Post explains:

> The Hillary Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee helped fund research that resulted in a now-famous dossier containing allegations about President Trump's connections to Russia and possible coordination between his campaign and the Kremlin, people familiar with the matter said.
>
> Marc E. Elias, a lawyer representing the Clinton campaign and the DNC, retained Fusion GPS, a Washington firm, to conduct the research.
>
> After that, Fusion GPS hired dossier author Christopher Steele, a former British intelligence officer with ties to the FBI and the U.S. intelligence community, according to those people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.
>
> Elias and his law firm, Perkins Coie, retained the company in April 2016 on behalf of the Clinton campaign and the DNC. Before that agreement, Fusion GPS's research into Trump was funded by an unknown Republican client during the GOP primary.
>
> The Clinton campaign and the DNC, through the law firm, continued to fund Fusion GPS's research through the end of October 2016, days before Election Day.

The FBI and DOJ didn’t tell the FISA court about who was funding the Steele dossier when they applied for the warrant. Because if they had, they would have been denied the warrant. No FISA court would approve surveillance of the Republican party if the sole basis for the warrant was uncorroborated opposition research funded by the Democrat party. In order to get the FISA warrant, the request had to be written in such a way that the funding of the Steele dossier was not revealed, and Steele was not declared to be the source of the news articles used as corroborating evidence.

Democrats oppose bill to protect faith-based adoption and foster-care agencies

July 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Anti-marriage gay activists vandalize church

Republicans are doing a good thing by making sure that Christian-owned adoption agencies and foster-care agencies are allowed to operate in line with Christian moral values. They've introduced legislation to protect these businesses from being sued because they prefer to place children in homes where a mother and a father are present. The Democrats are not happy, though.

The Federalist explains:

> A House committee passed a bill earlier this month that would allow faith-based adoption and foster-care agencies to continue operating in accord with their moral beliefs. Democrats responded calling the Child Welfare Provider Inclusion Act "disgusting, deeply immoral and profoundly offensive," "unconscionable," and "shockingly biased."
>
> The Inclusion Act was first introduced in 2014 to protect faith-based adoption agencies and foster care providers from state and local governments' discrimination against their services solely because of their religious mission to place children in loving homes with both a mother and a father. The bill sought to counteract a growing trend of invidious discrimination on the basis of faith. It became even more necessary when the city of Philadelphia moved to shut down faith-based foster-care providers earlier this year.

The law doesn't force LGBT-friendly agencies to do anything, it merely protects faith-based agencies from the kind of fascistic lawfare practices we've seen in the Masterpiece Cakeshop and Arlenes Flower's cases, where Christians are bullied by the secular state to

act as if they were non-Christians.

The article explains:

> Different providers recruit different types of families. For example, Christian providers, which often work directly with churches or other faith-based charities, usually recruit Christian families. If you get rid of some of the providers, you get rid of some of the families. The fewer providers doing the work of recruitment, the fewer homes for children.
>
> Simple enough, right? Yet the Left obfuscates by claiming LGBT couples should have a right to force providers to violate their faith or go out of business, while showing no concern for children in desperate need of families.
>
> The fact that we are talking about shutting down adoption agencies and foster care providers in the midst of a nationwide opioid crisis, where thousands of children have been displaced from their homes and need families to take care of them, shows just how radical and heartless the progressive movement has grown on any issues labeled LGBT-related. Democrats on the House Appropriations Committee, who voted unanimously to kill the Inclusion Act, made it clear: they would rather see children suffer than tolerate the very existence of faith-based providers. That position is not only indefensible, it's immoral.

It is not the Christian-owned businesses who start these wars by trying to force their views on other people, it's the secular authorities in Democrat-run cities and states who start it.

More:

> Since the legalization of same-sex marriage, faith-based child welfare providers have become an early and frequent target of the Left's pressure campaign. In 2006, Boston Catholic Charities became the first major religious organization to end its adoption services when faced with a choice between violating state law or violating its religious mission of placing children with families with both a mother and a father. Since then, authorities in San Francisco, the District of Columbia, and Illinois have followed suit, forcing faith-based agencies out of their child welfare systems. In Illinois, 3,000 children were displaced as a result.
>
> In Philadelphia, Catholic Social Services is fighting to keep its adoption agency's doors open amidst pressure from city authorities to abandon its religious mission. The city is presently facing an adoption crisis and could badly use the help of providers such as Catholic Social Services, which currently has 35 open homes for children. Instead, Philadelphia has chosen to fight these faith-based providers in court, putting radical identity politics ahead of children's real needs.
>
> […]A number of Catholic hospitals have faced lawsuits for declining to facilitate transgender mutilation procedures. States like California and Illinois have gone after pregnancy centers for refusing to promote abortion. Faith-based schools could also soon find themselves in danger of closure by blaspheming to adhere to

> leftist orthodoxy.
>
> Furthermore, there are signs even churches could eventually find themselves under attack. In Iowa and Massachusetts, houses of worship have already had to take legal measures to combat attempts to force them to open their bathrooms and other public facilities based on an individual's "gender identity," which would violate their understanding of human nature. Given current trends, it seems unlikely these will be the last attempts to force churches to substitute political correctness for their doctrine.

When the secular left presents their views, they make themselves sound so nice and tolerant. But the truth is that they are the ones who weaponize the state and law to force Christians to act against their moral convictions, or be shut down. That's actually happened with these Catholic adoption agencies.

It's very important for Christians to be discerning about what the Bible actually says about issues like sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, marriage and so on. Because if Christians don't inform themselves with facts, it's very easy for them to be dragged along into supporting a progressive agenda because it's presented to them as good and noble. We need to do a better job of thinking with our minds, instead of with our feelings. Especially when the issue is the safety and welfare of children. In the vast majority of cases, children do better with a Mom and a Dad, and that's undeniable.

Lori Alexander is right: serious Christian men prefer debt-free virgins without tattoos

July 25, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

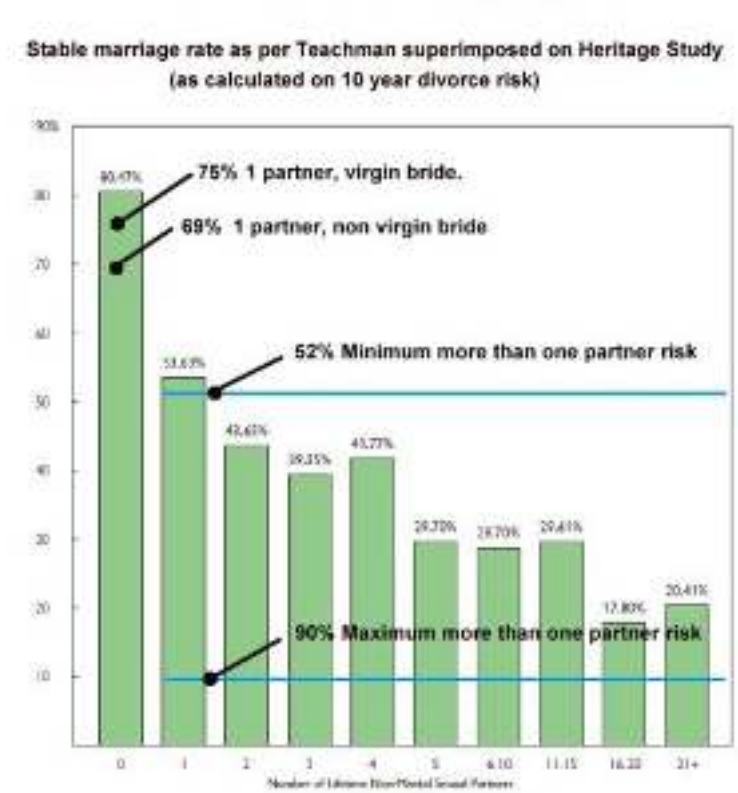

Marriage stability vs sexual partners,(Teachman et al. JAMF, August 2010)

Christian writer Lori Alexander recently wrote a blog post (H/T Lindsay) urging Christian women to do 3 things:

1. be a virgin before marriage
2. be debt-free before marriage
3. don't get any tattoos

She also urged women to be cautious about college, because it often gets them into debt. I disagree with her a little here. I always urge young women to earn a STEM degree in college, then work a few years to pay off their loans (if any) before marrying. This is because women, like men, need to have the experience of doing something hard that they don't "feel" like doing, in order to grow. STEM degrees teach young people that the world doesn't revolve around them, and that their feelings don't matter when trying to solve a problem in the real world. It's a very useful way for women and men to break themselves out of the desire for free and easy happiness that is so common in our time.

Lori's article drew enormous opposition from both secular and Christian sources. So far, the only people defending her are men's rights sites, like Dalrock (Christian) and Spawny (non-Christian). Every other "Christian" blog or news site that I read disagreed her article, and argued that premarital sex was no big deal, that having debt was no big deal, and

that having tattoos was no big deal.

Let's take a look at her three points, then I'll explain why her article is largely correct, and why she is correct about what she asserts about the criteria that godly men have for women.

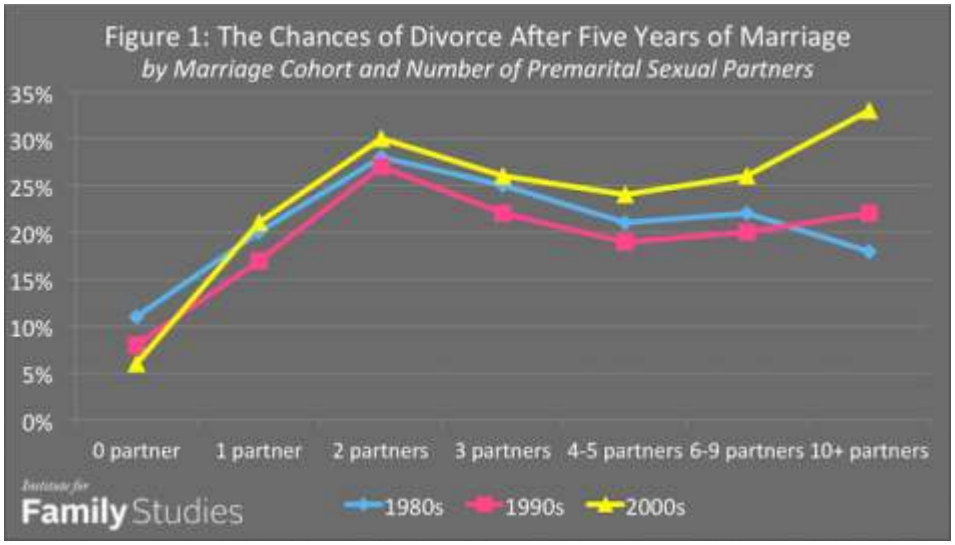

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

Virginity

Regarding her first point, virginity is commanded by the Bible, it's in line with peer-reviewed studies on marriage quality and stability. The reason that people find this difficult is that they want the freedom to give in to sexual desires without feeling shame. They want to believe that there is no permanent effect. It doesn't help that parents and pastors are terrified of telling young people, and young women in particular, that promiscuity harms marital stability. Right now, the culture is drowning in feminism. Feminism tells women that the traditional male roles of provider, protector, and spiritual leader are "sexist". The "best" men are good-looking pro-abortion bad boys. If a Christian woman is not able to think through the meaning of sex with respect to marriage enough to control herself, it seriously harms the stability of her future marriage.

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image)

Debt-free

Regarding her second point, almost everything a serious Christian man might plan to do for Christ with his marriage is impacted by finances. From education, to marriage timing, to number of children, to home ownership, early investment, to the success of children. to age of retirement. Less money means fewer choices, and less ability to counter challenges. Think of how important money for legal defense is to Christian-owned businesses who are being persecuted, for example. The reason that many people find the Bible's teaching on stewardship difficult is that they don't want to exercise self-control with money if they don't feel like it. They want to waste money seeking fun and thrills, and then act like their poverty could not be avoided. Being debt-free is an indicator of practical wisdom and self-control in a woman.

CHAPTER 9

Tattoos: Don't

This piece of advice may arrive a bit late for you, but I'd rather discomfit you than leave unsaid a reality check for younger friends.

Fads fade; tattoos don't. These permanent displays of youthful exuberance trigger at best mild amusement, but in some a serious concern about your maturity.

Whether or not you believe that concern to be fair, it is real. The tattoo you cover today will be an obstacle in some situations the rest of your life. Do you need it that much? Is it worth compromising your effectiveness?

This rule of tattoos is easily applied to many other areas of your style of living. Do you do anything to call attention to yourself or to make a statement? If so, is the attention worth it? Most such indulgences are self-defeating, whether it is idiosyncratic hair or clothes, a loud motorcycle, or—later in life—a palatial residence far beyond any ordinary need. The attention you are drawing to yourself is defeating your ambition by marking you as concerned with silly things.

Serious people do not seek attention except for serious purposes.

Chapter 9 of Hugh Hewitt's "In, But Not Of: A Guide to Christian Ambition"

Tattoos

Tattoos are a problem for serious Christian men for several reasons. First, they cost money and for no gain, and can even cause you losses in your career. Second, most people get them because of low self-esteem or vanity or to look rebellious or to look dangerous. None of these motivations should be acted upon by someone with a robust Christian worldview. The money could be better used on charity, or investments, etc. Women show what their priorities really are by how they spend their money and time. Show me a woman's bookshelf, and I'll tell you how seriously she has thought about what it means to be a Christian in all areas of life. Instead of showing me your tattoos to demonstrate your "spirituality", show me your apologetics books, to demonstrate your intellectual engagement. And tell me how you used that information to engage in conversations with educated non-Christians to answer their challenges to your faith. That way I'll know that you use your money to train do hard things in order to have an influence for Christ in serious, practical, effective ways. A woman who can defend her faith and discuss Christianity with non-Christians is demonstrating her ability to raise Christian children in a secular society.

A family praying and reading the Bible

The goal of marriage is to serve God

Today, young people have been taught to follow their hearts, and to deny that there is any authority or practical wisdom that should govern their decisions. They always imagine themselves to be exempt from moral rules, statistics, cause and effect, etc. They think they know better than everyone else – even though they do almost no research on their own. Every adviser who tells them to study computer science instead of creative writing is wrong. Their same-age friends know more about what causes divorces than peer-reviewed research papers. And money should be spent on skydiving and zip-lining, regardless of what financial experts like Dave Ramsey might say.

A woman who has made many mistakes cannot fix those mistakes with words. Rationalizations, evasions, and blame-shifting do not work to show that there has been real repentance. The man can only assess whether grace has caused any real re-prioritization of goals by evaluating her outward actions over a long period of time. Furthermore, if a woman who has made mistakes attacks those who correct her from Bible's teachings on chastity, stewardship, etc., then it's a sign that there is no real repentance.

Choosing a wife wisely doesn't mean that Christian men treat OTHER Christian women poorly. Christian men love all the Christian women. We care for them and support them. But when a man chooses a wife, he is choosing someone who will have more influence on his ability to serve God than anyone else. In my case, the goals for my marriage involve making a difference with apologetics in the church, having many children who will receive the educations and careers they need to have an influence, influencing government to promote Christian-friendly policies, charitable giving, mentoring young Christians, modeling a good marriage to others, and having a home that can serve to host discussions about issues that matter. These things are not free – they take careful planning and execution to achieve.

Lori's advice is intended for men who are serious about making their marriage produce a return for God. Men who are chaste themselves. Men who accept the Bible as an

authority. Men who earned STEM degrees, instead of easy nonsense degrees that don't lead to good careers. Men who earn 6-figure salaries, who buy houses for cash, and who are on track have a 7-figure net worth by age 50. Men who made good decisions cannot risk marrying someone who hasn't prepared for marriage. The wrong woman in the home could ruin the man's effort to produce a marriage that gives glory to God.

Not every man intends to achieve something for God with his marriage, but those who do need to choose a woman who has demonstrated ability at doing the job. For example, if the job requires marital fidelity, then chastity is a good indicator that the woman has the necessary self-control. If the job requires frugality, and practicality, then being debt-free, having a STEM degree, and having some private sector work experience are good indicators that she's qualified for the role. Nothing valuable in life is ever been achieved by being lazy, wild and irresponsible. Serious Christian men look for wives who have applied themselves to difficult tasks that they didn't feel like doing, who achieved success by remaining committed to the plan, in spite of their unhappy feelings and unmet desires.

We have a problem in the church such that we aren't serious about teaching young people to develop marriage-ready character and to make serious plans for marriage. We are teaching them to follow their hearts, and that their feelings and desires are clues about God's will for their happiness. We are teaching them to be uncomfortable with responsibilities, expectations and obligations to others. We are teaching them not to do their own research. We are teaching them not to make practical, wise plans. We are teaching them to ATTACK those who try to get them to be serious about doing what is likely to work. This approach is not working.

My own criteria for a wife are more demanding than Lori's. My advice there is only for serious Christian men who want their marriage to serve God.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

July 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.

20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University

> physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Are men allowed to have preferences about which women are best for marriage?

July 27, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

So, in my last post, I explained why men have to be careful about choosing a wife. Men have plans and they need a woman with the right skills to achieve it. Even if a woman genuinely repents her past, she may not have developed the skills for a godly man's marriage plan. For example, her 50K of student loans makes it harder to afford a stay-at-home homeschooling mother.

But many Christian women feel that there is no such thing as a Christian woman who is a bad candidate for marriage. It doesn't matter what a Christian woman did in the past, a man should not be allowed to evaluate her skills for the roles of wife and mother. After all, if God forgives a Christian woman for running up student loan debt for a useless women's studies degree, or for getting drunk and sleeping around with hawt bad boys in college, then no Christian man should hold it against her. Men are *obligated t*o disregard the past anti-marriage decisions made by women. To do anything else is to deny the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So many Christian women say.

What would happen if the shoe were on the other foot? What if it were the MAN who had been selfish, lazy and irresponsible? What if the MAN had made choices that seriously harmed his ability to perform male marriage roles like protecting and providing for his wife and children? Would marriage-ready women be *obligated* to marry this man as much as a man who had remained chaste, got a good education, built up a gapless resume, saved enough for a downpayment on a house, and taught apologetics in his home church? Is she allowed to prefer a man who has made good decisions to prepare for his marriage roles over a man who has made horrible decisions, but just hollers "grace" when anyone questions his ability to be a husband and father?

This MUST-READ article from The Federalist asks and answers that question. (H/T Lindsay)

Do you agree with the author?

> I think it's time for a conversation about another elephant in the room: this idea that women prefer physically fit men with good jobs and no criminal record. It's incredibly sexist and matriarchal to insist that women have a natural preference for men who have invested time and energy into stewarding their bodies, have shown the capability of earning a living and supporting a family, and have not gone to jail for attempting to grow 452 marijuana plants in their mother's basement.
>
> I know more than a few men who spent their twenties languishing in their parents' homes, subsisting on Cheetos and Mountain Dew, playing Xbox, watching pornography, and smoking controlled substances. If one of these men turns his life around, accepts Jesus, and starts fresh, young women have no right to overlook him as a potential mate just because he is 280 pounds, has almost no marketable skills at 30 years old, and cannot vote, serve on a jury, or own a firearm. He is created in the image of God, and accepted by Jesus! Any women who would overlook every other noble quality he possesses for basic financial security and a clean background check (not to mention browsing history) isn't a woman he should want.
>
> Men like this have often long since repented of their listless and slothful ways. If the lingering consequences of their pasts didn't stop Christ from living and dying for them, then it shouldn't stop a Christian woman from loving them, either. Period.

The Federalist article makes it clear that a man's poor choices about his education, job, obedience to the law, and physical fitness CLEARLY compromise his ability to perform his male duties to protect and provide. What about moral and spiritual leading? Well if he didn't spent his teens and 20s studying apologetics, moral issues, etc. then he isn't going to compare favorably to a man who teaches apologetics in his church, debates atheists, and writes blog posts for the Life Training Institute.

My friend Lee is a superb stay-at-home wife and mother. She says that we shouldn't accept "Jesus forgives me" as an immediate reversal of past harmful choices:

> I would note that there is a difference between just being forgiven of sin and actually repenting of it. Repenting is a turning away from and will manifest in changes; paying down debts, becoming chaste, becoming otherwise responsible and wise. Someone's past doesn't have to define their future. But that will manifest in observable and measurable changes.

She's right.

I knew a Christian woman who had 25,000 worth of student loan debt when she was 29. She wasn't using her degree, she was just working as a waitress. I found her a job as an IT project manager in an FT100 company, so she could pay off her loans. She declined, because "being a waitress is the easiest job I've ever had". She hasn't worked full-time as

a professional since January 2013. She'll say "Jesus forgives me!" and "I hate my student loans!", but the loans are even larger now, and the wasteful spending on fun and thrills hasn't stopped. Hollering "grace" and saying you hate debt doesn't make you a good steward. She's not ready to manage the finances of a household. If she had taken the job, and paid off the loans, then she would have overcome the mistake, and become marriage-ready.

So what's really behind the hysteria against men evaluating women for marriage?

Deti nails the real root problem:

> Not one person – NOT ONE PERSON – said that nonvirgins with tattoos and debt are bad people; that they are irredeemable, that they're bad Christians; that they cannot be Christians; that they're unsalvageable; that they're ugly; or that they couldn't and shouldn't marry. That is NOT what was said.
>
> All that was said was that men prefer tattooless, debtfree virgins for marriage. That's all.
>
> […]The bible… teaches repentance is the way to salvation. But repentance does not mean you no longer bear the scars of your past sins in body and mind. You do. Oh yes you do. The effects can be minimized, even overcome. But they're still there.
>
> And more to the point, what's really being complained about here is a Christian woman acknowledging that men have preferences and that men are entitled to have preferences. If women want men, then they have to satisfy those preferences or lower their standards until they find men whose preferences they can satisfy.
>
> This can't be overemphasized – it's the idea that men have preferences. Its' the idea that there's a man that's one-half of that relationship, and there are things HE wants, and HE needs, and HE desires. Why does it matter what HE wants? Why do we care about him?
>
> Men don't want to marry high N women. Men don't want to take on debt and they don't prefer markedup tatted up women who look and act like men.
>
> What this gets down to is women objecting to men having standards. Because that leads to men judging women. And that leads to men evaluating women. And that leads to men rejecting some women and accepting others. And women hate judgment and rejection, especially when it's "less than" men who are doing the judging and rejecting.

One of my editors (Mary) didn't think that some readers would know what N means. N refers to the number of sexual partners a person has had.

The reason we discuss best practices for marriage-minded women is so that young women, especially young women who lack a father in the home because of the irresponsible and selfish choices of their mothers, can get some kind of guidance about how to resist the culture's lies about men, sex and marriage. Such a woman has

NOWHERE TO GO in this culture in order to learn how to relate to men, and how to marry to a man who will love her faithfully and forever. That's not fair! We have to help her!

What Christian men are doing by promoting chastity, sobriety, good stewardship and self-control to these young women is *protecting them from a culture that lies to them*. The well-meaning Christian women who think that talking about moral boundaries and wisdom will hurt the feelings of women who have made mistakes are actually making it harder for young women who have no guidance at all. The most vulnerable ones are the ones who need to hear that chastity is wise. Doing a STEM degree is wise. Getting out of debt by spending less is wise. Not seeking attention with graffiti on your body is wise. That's what unmarried women need to hear.

It's amazing to me that so many Christians do not understand the protective value of recommending Biblical morality and Biblical wisdom to young women. They would rather sacrifice these young women to the secular culture than allow older women to feel bad about their past decisions. So many Christians seem to be more concerned about *their own feelings* than about *promoting and defending what the Bible teaches* to young people who really need help.

Are Christians responsible for making plans and making good decisions?

July 28, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful post on decision making and the will of God posted on Neil's blog. In his post, Neil explains the Biblical model for making good decisions.

Excerpt:

> **Really short version:** Aside from direct and clear personal revelation from God, you don't have access to his sovereign will when making decisions. Therefore you must look at other factors. **If it isn't moral, don't do it. If it is moral but not wise, don't do it. If it is moral and wise, then use your personal preferences.**
>
> Using this model you can end up with a wise and biblical decision, but you have avoided the traps of the "God told me to ____" routine. People who run around saying that God told them this and that convey a super-spirituality that can leave less mature believers wondering if they really have a relationship with God (i.e., "God doesn't tell me every little thing to do, so maybe I don't really know him.").

He has a helpful picture posted as well:

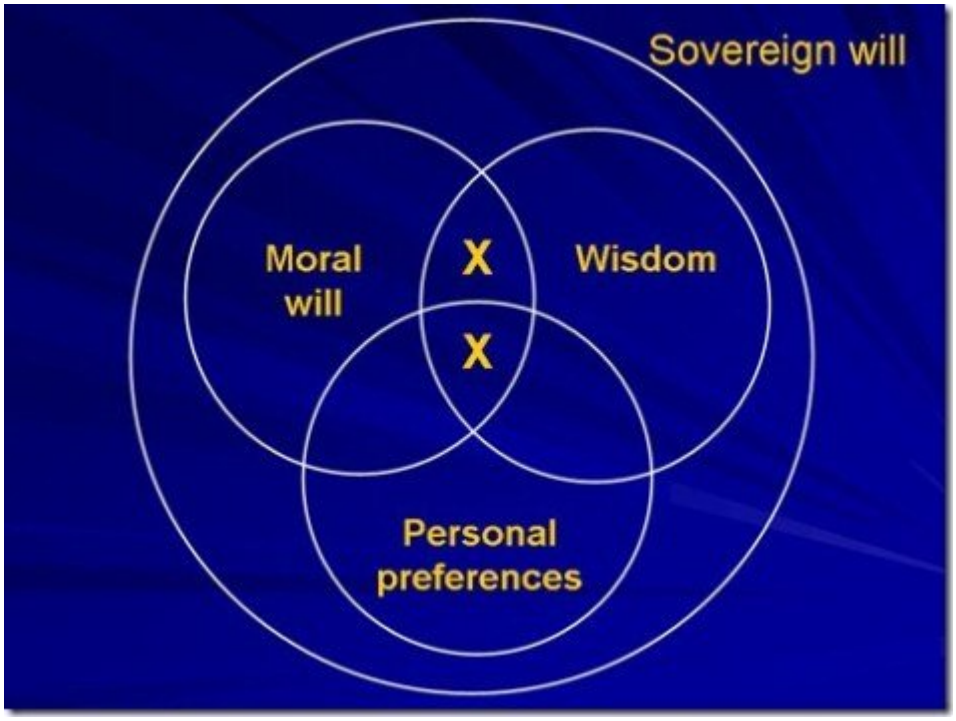

This is actually a very important topic for me, because I like making plans and making good decisions. I like being the quarterback or squad leader of my own life. I like to pick objectives and then make plans to achieve them. (Nothing too exotic, just simple stuff like saving money or reading more books)

Actually, I really oppose the idea that God has a magical fairy tale will for each person that will make them happy and fulfilled. For me, life isn't like that. I don't expect God to

lead me along like a child at a scavenger hunt. I expect to survey the battlefield where I am and then *do something* to make a difference. There are lots of things you can do that will please God. Should you focus on your career and sponsor apologetics conferences? Or should you use your spare time preparing Sunday school lessons? *There are lots of good things you could do to please God*. Your job is to pick the one that will be the most effective. It doesn't matter if it makes you happy, it only matters if it's effective and if you are good at it.

Who is Rifleman Dodd?

A while back, I was busily working my way through the U.S. Marine Corps Official Reading List, and I came across a book by C.S. Forester called *Rifleman Dodd*, or alternatively titled *Death to the French*. It's a work of historical fiction that takes place during the Napoleonic wars. The story is about a British marksman named Dodd, who is cut off from his own lines during a withdrawal maneuver. He is subsequently left to fend for himself behind enemy lines. An ordinary man might be full of despair and forget about his mission entirely. But Dodd is no ordinary man. Not only does he find a way to survive by finding food to eat, water to drink and places to sleep, but he also tries to remember his orders and to think about what he can do to advance the cause of his General, the Duke of Wellington.

Here's an excerpt from a gritty book review:

> It's about a green-coated British infantry rifleman in the Napoleonic Wars, an age when rifles were a novelty and most of the army was red-coated and carried muskets. Private Matthew Dodd gets separated from his regiment during a retreat and finds himself stranded behind enemy (French) lines in Portugal. With the occasional aid of some natives, but mostly on his own, he harasses the French with his rifle and tries to prevent them from building a bridge across the Tagus River. It's a remarkable tale of survival and solitary achievement, of a rank-and-file soldier who lives by his wits and slowly learns to make plans without orders, and shows leadership qualities and a knowledge of warfare.

I think we're in the same situation as Dodd.

There is no point in us looking for breadcrumb trails to happiness at this point. That's not the point of Christianity. The point of Christianity is friendship with God, imitation of Christ, honoring moral obligations, self-sacrificial love for your neighbor (and even your enemies!), and dedication to the truth – whether anyone else likes you or not. It's not supposed to make you happy, and it's not necessarily going to be a normal life like everyone else has. Things may not work out the way you'd like them to.

We seem to be making such a big deal about compassion and forgiveness in the Christian life these days – such a big emphasis on our feelings. Almost like we have forgotten that we have obligations to our friend. A relationship doesn't mean that one person does whatever they feel like, completely disregarding the character and goals of the other person and then is automatically granted forgiveness whenever they want it. That's not a

friendship – that's using someone else for your own ends.

For a lot of people today, Christianity only comes into play after you've made a mistake and you're feeling guilty. For example, suppose you decide to go to a party with your secular friends, then you drink too much, and you do something sexual that you shouldn't have done. Or maybe you watched some prosperity gospel preacher on TV, then made irresponsible business decisions thinking that God would bail you out and make you rich, and you went bankrupt. Most people think Christianity is for this situation: you're a Christian so that you don't have to feel guilty about sin. And so that you can tell people that God forgives you, so that they can't think anything bad about you, either. You sort of get your idea about what you should be doing *in order to feel good* from the culture, and God is just there to forgive it all when it blows up in your face.

But in my case, putting myself in a situation like that is not even possible. I'm more likely to try to plan to do something for God. Like, I might try to mentor a young Christian by sending them books. Or, I might try to teach a class in apologetics at my church. These are things that are for God, not for me. I'm not just being dragged along by the culture, and trying to find happiness by feeling good (e.g. – with alcohol) or being liked by non-Christians. And if my plans fail because the mentoree doesn't grow up into anything, or nobody comes to my apologetics class, that's when I go to God and say "I screwed up. but can I still be in your army?" And God always says yes to that. You don't have to be the best player on the team for the Coach to like you. He already likes you.

One of the great things about being a Christian is that you can never lose your identity as a Christian by failing to do something for him that you planned to do. That's what forgiveness is for. If you set out to do something for God's glory, and you mess it all up, that's OK. But I do think that, like Dodd, our ambition should not be about just making ourselves happy, or making non-Christians like us. We should be trying to make plans and carry them out for God.

That's how I understand forgiveness. It's not just something that's there for you to use to fix your feelings when you've been irresponsible while seeking your own happiness in secular ways. It's also there when you're trying to do something good for God, and you fail. A lot of times in life you try your best, but you fail, and then you lose something that you really wanted. With God, when you try your best for his glory, and fail, you don't lose your identity as a member of his team. I think that not losing your identity in Christ is even more important than not feeling guilty about selfish decision making.

So, have you got a plan to serve your General? Let's focus more on what operations we're planning for God than on being happy and being popular with non-Christians. Your life should not be all about you, with God just there to make your bad feelings go away. Your life should be about God's goals and God's interests.

Robert Gagnon debates gay activist Jayne Ozanne on Bible vs homosexuality

July 29, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I am tempted to say that this is the best podcast I have ever heard on the Unbelievable show. Do anything you have to do in order to listen to this podcast.

Details:

> Prof Robert Gagnon has become a well-known voice advocating the traditional biblical view on sexuality. In a highly charged show he debates the scriptural issues on sexuality with Jayne Ozanne, the director of Accepting Evangelicals who came out as gay earlier this year.

The MP3 file is here.

If you can only listen for 15 minutes, then start at 49 minutes in and listen from there.

The following summary is rated MUP for made-up paraphrase. Reader discretion is advised.

Summary:

Intro:

- Speaker introductions
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree that the Bible doesn't support it
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree Jesus taught male-female marriage
- Ozanne: I went to the hospital because I was sick from trying to suppress my gay desires
- Ozanne: Doctors told me that I would die if I didn't act on my gay desires
- Ozanne: I decided to reinterpret the Bible to fit with my gay desires

- Ozanne: According to my new interpretation, Jesus actually supports my gay desires

Segment 1: Genesis

- Ozanne: In Genesis the Bible says that Adam needs a woman to complete him
- Ozanne: I reinterpret this to mean that Adam needed a “complementarian human being”
- Ozanne: Genesis doesn’t say whether Eve was complemented by Adam in that chapter
- Ozanne: It’s not critical that men are complemented by women, a man could complement a man
- Ozanne: Genesis 2 doesn’t talk about children, it’s all about adult needs from a relationship
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 has never been interpreted that way in all of history
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language specifically implies a human being who is opposite/different
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language translates to complement or counterpart
- Gagnon: Genesis as a whole teaches that the sexuality is for male and female natures
- Gagnon: The extraction of something from the man that is given to the woman is complementarian
- Ozanne: I think that people can be complementary outside of male-female Genesis language
- Ozanne: I don’t want to discuss specific words and texts and Greek meanings
- Gagnon: the text has always been read and interpreted to support male/female complementarity
- Gagnon: the male-female nature argument is made because the two natures are complementary
- Ozanne: the text was interpreted by patriarchal males who treated women like property, it’s biased
- Ozanne: what is important to me is how Christ interprets Genesis (?? how does she know that?)
- Ozanne: I am passionate about my interpretation of Scripture which supports my gay desires
- Gagnon: just because a person is passionate about their interpretation it doesn’t make it right
- Gagnon: I am not arguing for the male-female view based on passion, but on scholarship, evidence and history
- Ozanne: both sides are equally passionate about their interpretations (?? so both are equally warranted?)
- Ozanne: the real question is why God “allowed” two different interpretations of Scripture

Segment 2: Is homosexuality a sin?

- Gagnon: Jesus affirmed traditional sexual morality, which forbids homosexuality
- Gagnon: Jesus teaches that marriage is male-female, and limited to two people
- Gagnon: No one in history has interpreted the Bible to say that homosexuality was not immoral
- Ozanne: Jesus came to bring life, and that means he supports homosexuality
- Ozanne: I was dying, and embracing my gay desires allowed me to live, so Jesus approves of me
- Ozanne: God says "I am who I am" and that means he approves of me doing whatever I want
- Ozanne: There is an imperative to be who I am, and that means embracing my gay desires
- Gagnon: Jesus argued that the twoness of the sexual bond is based on the twoness of the sexes
- Gagnon: Jesus did not come to gratify people's innate desires, he called people to repent of sin
- Gagnon: Jesus did reach out to sinners but he never condoned the sins they committed
- Gagnon: Jesus' outreach to tax collectors collecting too much and sexual sinners is the same: STOP SINNING
- Ozanne: I don't think that Romans 1 is talking about homosexuality
- Ozanne: I think it's talking about sexual addiction, not loving, committed gay relationships
- Ozanne: Paul was condemning pederasty in Romans 1, not loving, long-term, consensual sexual relationships between gay adults
- Gagnon: nothing in the passage limits the condemnation to pederasty
- Gagnon: the passage was never interpreted to be limited to pederasty in history
- Gagnon: rabbis and church fathers knew about committed two-adult same-sex relationships, and said they were wrong
- Gagnon: the argument for marriage is based on the broad two-nature argument, with no exceptions
- Gagnon: the condemnation is not limited to exploitative / coercive / lustful / uncommitted relationships
- Gagnon: even pro-gay scholars agree the passage cannot be interpreted Ozanne's way (he names two)

Segment 3: The showdown (49:00)

- Ozanne: I don't care how many pages people have written on this
- Ozanne: God says that "the wisdom of the wise I will frustrate" so you can't use scholars, even pro-gay scholars, to argue against my passionate interpretation
- Ozanne: I am not interested in the text or history or scholarship or even pro-gay

scholars who agree with you
- Ozanne: what decides the issue for me is my mystical feelings about God's love which makes my sexual desires moral
- Ozanne: you are certain that this is wrong, but your view does not "give life" to people
- Ozanne: your scholarship and historical analysis is "a message of death" that causes teenagers to commit suicide (= you are evil and a meany, Robert)
- Ozanne: "I pray for you and your soul" (= opposing me will land you in Hell) and "I hope that listeners will listen with their hearts" (?? instead of their minds?)
- Ozanne: you can prove anything you want with research, even two mutually exclusive conclusions, so you shouldn't rely on scholarship and research since it could be used to prove my view as well
- Ozanne: instead of relying on research, you should rely on your heart and your feelings about God's love to decide what the Bible teaches about sexual morality
- Gagnon: you are distorting the gospel in order to make your case
- Gagnon: attacking my "certainty" is an ad hominem attack to cover your dismissmal of the scholarship and history
- Gagnon: you distort the gospel to make it seem like Christ just wants us to get what we want, when we want it, with who we want it with
- Gagnon: Christ calls us to take up our cross, to lose our lives and to deny ourselves
- Gagnon: you have a notion of what "fullness of life" is, but it's not reflective of the gospel
- Gagnon: Paul's life was much more troubling than yours, mine or anyone else around here
- Gagnon: Paul was beaten, whipped, stoned, poorly sheltered, poorly clothed, poorly fed, shipwrecked, and anxious for his churches
- Gagnon: on your view, he should have been miserable and angry with God all the time
- Gagnon: but instead Paul was constantly thankful and rejoicing to be able to suffer with Jesus and look forward to the resurrection
- Gagnon: I have suffered too, but the suffering we go through never provides us with a license to violate the commandments of God
- Ozanne: "the ultimate thing is what people feel God has called them to"
- Ozanne: My goal right now is to tell young people that homosexuality is fine so they don't commit suicide
- Ozanne: the view that homosexuality is wrong is "evil and misguided"
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm in the gay community are intrinsic to homosexual unions, not caused by external disapproval of homosexuality

Segment 4: Concluding statements

- Gagnon: gay male relationships on average have more sex partners and more STDs
- Gagnon: female relationships on average have shorter-length relationships and

more mental issues
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm are because there is no complementarity / balance in the relationships
- Gagnon: everyone has some disappointment or suffering in their lives that hurts them, and that they are tempted to break the rules to fix, but we should not break the rules in order to be happy
- Ozanne: both sides are passionate, so no one can be right, and evidence proves nothing
- Ozanne: only feelings about “what God is doing” can allow us to decide what counts as sin or not
- Ozanne: the main thing that is at stake here is to make people like us, not to decide what the Bible says about sin
- Ozanne: my message to people is to do whatever you want, and ignore mean people who don’t affirm you
- Ozanne: we should be more opposed to mean people who make non-Christians feel unloved than about doing what the Bible says

New study: 1 in 8 divorces is caused by student loan debt

July 30, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I already mentioned the studies that show that marrying a non-virgin is less stable than marrying a virgin. But what about student loans? Are they a risk factor for divorce, too? I was reading over at Captain Capitalism and saw this CNBC article, which discusses data relevant to our recent discussion about whether men ought to prefer debt-free virgins without tattoos.

Excerpt:

> When it comes to student loan debt, "for richer, for poorer" doesn't quite cut it.
>
> In general, finances are the leading cause of stress in a relationship, according to a study by SunTrust Bank, but student debt takes a particularly hard toll on a marriage.
>
> More than a third of borrowers said college loans and other money factors contributed to their divorce, according to a recent report from Student Loan Hero, a website for managing education debt.
>
> In fact, 13 percent of divorcees blame student loans specifically for ending their relationship, the report found. Student Loan Hero surveyed more than 800 divorced adults in June.

Now, when deciding whether to marry and who to marry, it does make sense to me to think about what needs to be bought and how much these things cost, and where the money will come from. It just makes sense to me that people who are REALLY interested in marriage will be interested in *doing what works to prepare for marriage*. You can't just do whatever you want before marrying, because marriage involves being faithful to your spouse, and buying things that you need for the marriage enterprise, like a home, and baby stuff. It doesn't make any sense to say "I want to get married" and then not prepare for marriage by being careful about what behavior marriage requires of you.

This 2017 article from Harvard Business Review is interesting.

It says:

> Examining 46,934 resumes shared on Glassdoor by people who graduated between 2010 and 2017, the researchers looked at each person's college major and their post-college jobs in the five years after graduation. They then estimated the median pay for each of those jobs (also using Glassdoor data) for employees with five years of experience or less. Their key finding: "Many college majors that lead to high-paying roles in tech and engineering are male dominated, while majors that lead to lower-paying roles in social sciences and liberal arts tend to be female dominated, placing men in higher-paying career

> pathways, on average."

Here's the plot, and you can click it to expand it:

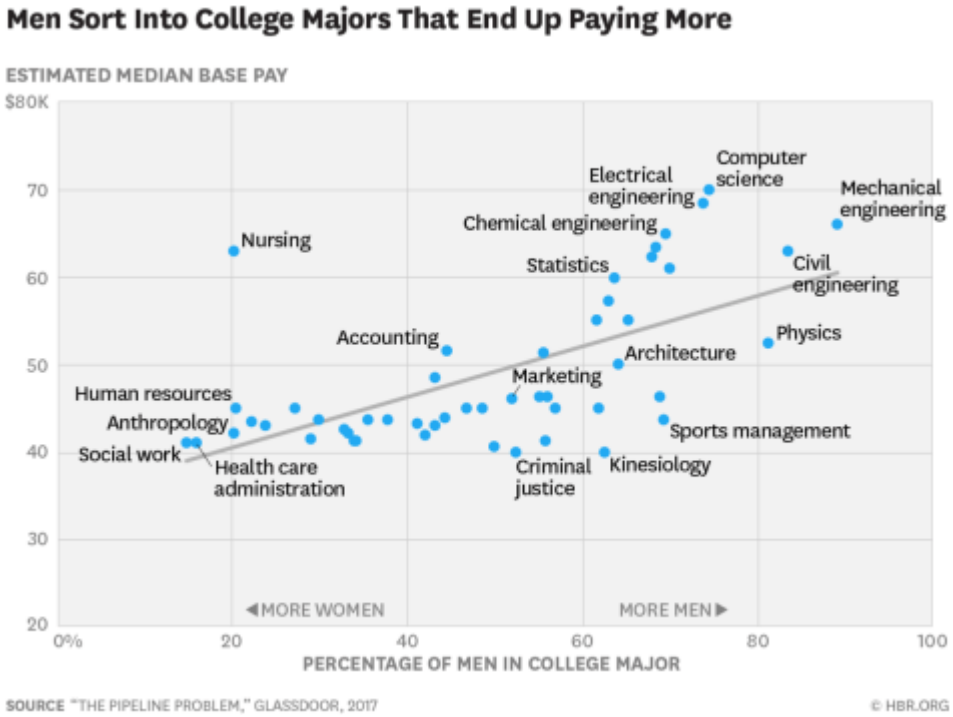

Median salaries by major, broken out by gender – don't study things at the bottom! Maybe we can just simplify this whole issue by saying "it's unwise to marry people who choose not to prepare themselves for marriage". That goes for men and women, by the way. Basically, you can avoid student loans if you study something that you don't feel like studying, and work jobs that you don't feel like working, and don't buy things that you feel like buying. Don't marry people who are led by their feelings. Marry someone who demonstrates self-control.

Anyway, I feel obligated to post a relevant Dave Ramsey video, just to remind everyone that stewardship of money is a Christian virtue, and that being forgiven by Jesus for your sins doesn't make you good with money.

This one from 2014: (H/T Robb)

When I was in high school, I was far more interested in becoming an English teacher than I was in becoming a software engineer. It was my Dad who overruled my choice of college major when I was still in high school. He had me take a first-year English course at a local university. When I saw how politicized and useless it was (they were studying all sorts of politically correct postmodern relativist stuff, instead of the Great Works, and they weren't trying to learn any wisdom from any of it), I chose computer science. I did what was likely to work, instead of what was easy and fun and made me feel good. I think this makes me a grown-up. And marriage should only be done if there are two grown-ups involved in the enterprise.

New study: “Medicare For All” would cost $32.6 trillion, but it’s actually more

July 31, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A Christian friend of mine who is divorced with children surprised me by telling me that she favored single payer health-care. I asked her if she realized that people would have to be taxed to pay for all this free health care, and she seemed to be aware of it. But even I didn’t realize how much it would really cost.

Investor’s Business Daily reports on a couple of recent studies – one from the left, and one from the far-left – that both agreed on the price tag for universal health care.

Excerpt:

> Last year, 16 Senators, including three presidential hopefuls, co-sponsored Sanders’ “Medicare for all” bill. And earlier this month, more than 70 Democrats signed on to form a “Medicare for all” caucus. Support for the bill is now something of a litmus test for Democratic hopefuls.
>
> Do they have any idea what they’re endorsing?
>
> A new study out Monday from George Mason University’s Mercatus Center finds that Sanders plan would add to federal spending in its first 10 years, with costs steadily rising from there. That closely matches other studies — including one by the liberal Urban Institute — that looked at Sanders’ plan.
>
> To put this in perspective, “Medicare for all” would the size of the already bloated federal government. Doubling corporate and individual income taxes wouldn’t cover the costs.
>
> Even this is wildly optimistic. To get to this number, author Charles Blahous had to make several completely unrealistic assumptions about savings under Sanders’ hugely disruptive plan.
>
> The first is a massive cut in payments to providers. Sanders wants to apply Medicare’s below-market rates across the board, which would amount to a roughly 40% cut in payments to doctors and hospitals. Blahous figures this will save hundreds of billions of dollars a year.
>
> But cuts of that magnitude would drive doctors out of medicine and hospitals out of business, since the only way providers can afford Medicare’s cut-rate reimbursements today is by charging private payers more.
>
> The study also assumes that shoving everyone into a government health care plan would cut administrative costs by $1.6 trillion over the next decade and prescription drug costs by $846 billion. Neither of those are likely, and wouldn’t make much of a difference in overall spending anyway. Private insurance overhead accounts for about 6% of national health spending, and drugs less than 10%.

> There's also the fact that every other federal health program has seen costs explode "unexpectedly" after they were enacted. The per-enrollee cost of ObamaCare's Medicaid expansion, for example, is almost 49% higher than expected. Medicare itself cost nearly 10 times as much as projected in its first 25 years.

The author of the Mercatus study was nominated Barack Obama to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Social Security Trust Funds. That might explain his questionable assumptions about costs. And the Urban Institute is even further to the left. There can be no doubt that the true cost of the Sanders health care plan would be much higher than what these two studies calculated it to be.

Now, you might think that we can just tax the people who earn the most money to pay for all this spending.

In 2012, John Stossel wrote this in Forbes:

> If the IRS grabbed 100 percent of income over $1 million, the take would be just $616 billion.

In 2011, the Tax Foundation explained that even if you taxed ALL THE DISPOSABLE INCOME from all the people who make $200,000 or more, you would only raise $1.53 trillion dollars:

> There's simply not enough wealth in the community of the rich to erase this country's problems by waving some magic tax wand.
>
> […]After everyone making more than $200,000/year has paid taxes, the IRS would need to take every single penny of disposable income they have left. Such an act would raise approximately $1.53 trillion. It may be economically ruinous, but at least this proposal would actually solve the problem.

Taxing the rich isn't enough to pay for single payer health care. $32.6 trillion over 10 years works out to $3.26 trillion per year. We're not going to pay that off even with $1.53 trillion a year of additional revenue. And this is assuming that the wealthy would just allow themselves to be made into slaves, and keep working even if the government takes all their money.

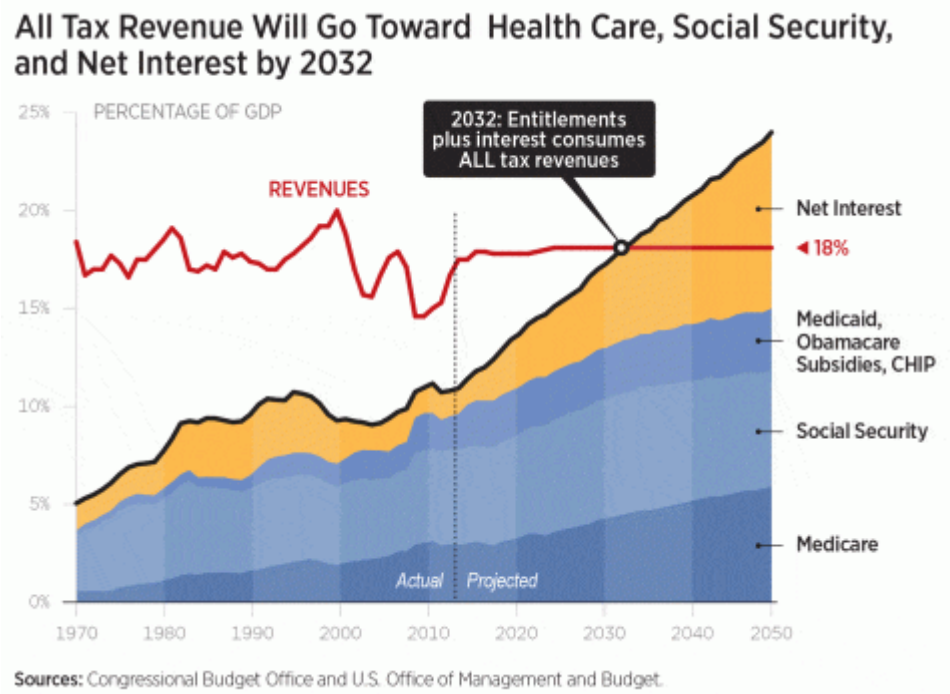

Pretty soon, our mandatory expenses will consume all of our tax revenues

Who is going to pay for all the spending we already have scheduled? As the graph above shows, things are going to get worse in the future as the big entitlement programs pay out more than current tax rates take in. I'm sure glad that I'm going to be retiring before 2032, and I'm not going to be stuck with the bill for this. It's one thing for me to get out of bed every morning to be paid only 75% of what I earn. I certainly wouldn't want to be working if the tax rates here were more like Europe, so that I'd be taking home less than half of what I earn. No thank you!

By the way, it might be a good idea to think about whether you want to have children or not before you vote. Children are expensive, and if we keep electing the big spenders like Obama, then there isn't going to be any money left over to run a family and raise kids. Think about it before you vote with your feelings only.

1 Corinthians 15: the earliest source for the basic facts about the life of Jesus

August 1, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us

First, the creed – which is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8:

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Almost all historians accept this creed as dating back to within 5 years of the death of Jesus. But why?

Here's a great article from Eric Chabot, director of Ratio Christi Apologetics Alliance, The Ohio State University to explain why.

Excerpt:

> The late Orthodox Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide was so impressed by the creed of 1 Cor. 15, that he concluded that this "formula of faith may be considered as a statement of eyewitnesses." (5)
>
> Paul's usage of the rabbinic terminology "passed on" and "received" is seen in the creed of 1 Cor. 15:3-8:

> “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.”
>
> […]While the word “received” (a rabbinical term) can also be used in the New Testament of receiving a message or body of instruction or doctrine (1 Cor.11:23; 15:1, 3; Gal. 1:9, 12 [2x], Col 2:6; 1 Thess 2:13; 4:1; 2 Thess 3:6), it also means means “to receive from another.” This entails that Paul received this information from someone else at an even earlier date. 1 Corinthians is dated 50-55 A.D. Since Jesus was crucified in 30-33 A.D. the letter is only 20-25 years after the death of Jesus. But the actual creed here in 1 Cor. 15 was received by Paul much earlier than 55 A.D.
>
> […]Even the co-founder Jesus Seminar member John Dominic Crossan, writes:
>
> “Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that “I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received.” The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he “went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days” (11).
>
> This comment by Crossan makes sense because within the creed Paul calls Peter by his Aramic name, Cephas. Hence, if this tradition originated in the Aramaic language, the two locations that people spoke Aramaic were Galilee and Judea. (12) The Greek term “historeo” is translated as “to visit” or “to interview.” (13) Hence, Paul’s purpose of the trip was probably designed to affirm the resurrection story with Peter who had been an actual eyewitness to the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:5).

I know what you’re thinking. You’re thinking “Hey WK, isn’t John Dominic Crossan that wacky liberal atheist who is on the far-left fringe of historical Jesus scholarship? So wacky, that he actually thought that Secret Gospel of Mark was *real*, instead of just being a hoax?” Yes, that’s the nutty John Dominic Crossan I mean. The very one.

Here’s a bit more about this early creed from Gary Habermas.

Quote:

> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications

of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: “It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition.”[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]

The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul’s use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus’ resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it “indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity.”[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, “the earliest tradition of all.”[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even “in use by the end of 30 AD . . . .”[9]

Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that “the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . .”[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it “goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion.”[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition “probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion.”[12] Others clearly consent.[13]

Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul’s reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus’ death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.

(3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, “Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected

> to many tests" by Paul.[15]
>
> These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.
>
> (4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

That's how solid this early creed is – even atheists like Crossan and Ludemann accept it as historically reliable. It's historical bedrock, as Michael Licona likes to say. This is the stuff that *everyone* accepts – across the ideological spectrum. How do you account for this evidence in your worldview, especially given that Paul never recanted his preaching about Jesus?

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

August 2, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.

20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

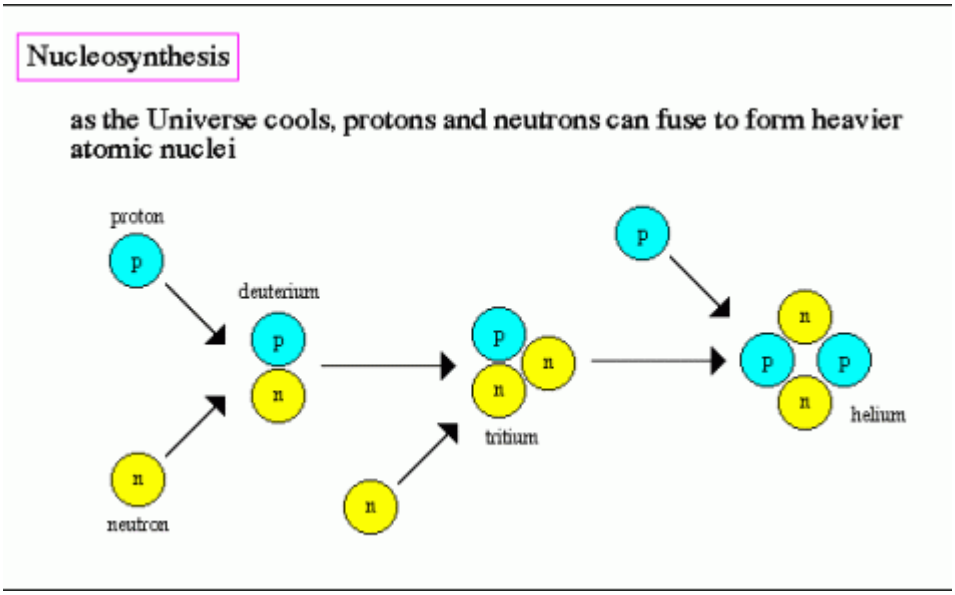

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major

> triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 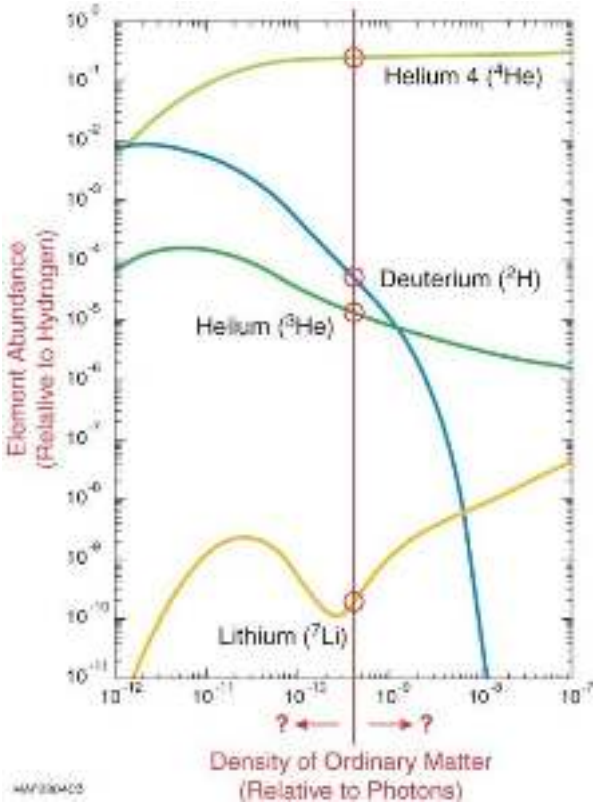
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-

> based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

The Economist: marriage is still the best place for children

August 3, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

I stopped reading The Economist when they endorsed the socialist failure Barack Obama, who doubled the national debt to $20 trillion in only 8 years. However, even a stopped clock is right twice a day. And here is one of those times.

Excerpt:

> However, there is one big reason to worry about the quality and longevity of people's intimate bonds. It is that relationships often produce children, and children are profoundly affected by how their parents get on.
>
> You could make enough confetti for a summer of weddings with all the academic papers that show how much children gain from being brought up in stable, loving families, and how much they suffer when those families break down. Culture and customs make little difference. In Japan, four-fifths of single-parent households emerge when couples divorce—a much higher share than in the West, where people usually slip into single parenthood without marrying. Japanese children living with only one parent nonetheless perform significantly worse in school tests, just as children from single-parent families do in Europe and America. In poorer countries, family breakdown can kill. According to one recent estimate, the chance that an African child will die before turning five is about 25-30 per 1,000 for those born into stable families, but 35-40 per 1,000 for the children of single, divorced or widowed parents.
>
> Marriage is not always good for children. They do not benefit when a parent marries somebody who is not their mother or father, and seem to suffer if the

> parent they live with cycles through several relationships. What they seem to need most is for their biological parents to stick together. And one strong claim that can be made for marriage is that it appears to glue parents together more tightly than any other arrangement.

This part is key, especially for those millennials who think that cohabitating before marrying makes the marriage more secure:

> Analysis of one large American data set by Kathryn Edin and Laura Tach, two sociologists, shows that 27% of marriages broke down within nine years of a child being born. By contrast, among couples who were merely cohabiting when a child appeared, 53% separated within nine years—and most of the remaining 47% were married by that point. Among couples who were dating but not living together when the child was born, 81% had split up.
>
> Again, this pattern runs across national and cultural borders. Cohabiting couples behave a bit more like married couples in countries where giving birth outside marriage is very common, such as Estonia and Norway. But they seldom attain the same level of stickiness as married couples, even after controlling for the mother's level of education.

Cohabitation doesn't work, because it's basically saying that I'm going to try the other person and see if I like the other person, and that sex is required to know if I like the other person. It doesn't really matter that you know the other person really well, because you can always get out of cohabitation just by leaving. Marriage says that I'm going to commit to the other person for life, through thick and thin. Here, both people tend to do a more thorough job of selecting their partner, perhaps even consulting fathers for advice. Why? Because getting out of a marriage is a lot harder to do, and more expensive.

In the past, I've blogged about some factors that can make your marriage pretty much divorce proof: things like chastity, not spending too much on the wedding, age of the man and woman at marriage, education levels of each spouse, number of people attending the wedding ceremony, isolation from other divorced people, church attendance, and so on. The truth is that you can engineer a marriage that's practically divorce proof. But if you insist on spontaneity and following your heart, then you aren't going to care what studies say works best. A stable marriage takes preparation, and that means making pro-marriage choices all throughout your life before your marriage, instead of doing what feels right to you in the moment. What feels good in the moment is almost never the right choice if your goal is a stable marriage.

The most important thing Christian parents need to focus on with their children

August 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

I know what you're thinking – I'm going to say apologetics. But I was actually having a talk with a young women who found the arguments for God convincing, but wasn't sure whether she was ready for a personal relationship with the God of the Bible. It got me thinking about my past and what it was about the God of the Bible that caused me to make a commitment.

If I had to say what it is that cause me to take Christianity seriously, including accepting Jesus as my Leader (more than just as my Savior), it would be the conviction that God was lining things up in my life to show himself to me. This was particularly welcome because I could see that I had not been blessed with the best situation in life to start out with.

Sean McDowell has a recent post about it, and since he is an expert in apologetics, I'm inclined to agree with him.

He writes:

> In his book *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis makes a distinction between "Gift-love" and "Need-love." As for Gift-love, he gives the example of a father who works and plans for the future well being of his family, even though he will die without seeing them benefit. As for Need-love, Lewis gives the example of a lonely and frightened child who comes to its mother's arms for comfort and protection. Such love is neither selfish nor improper, because children are intended to have nurturing mothers, and mothers are intended to care for their kids.
>
> According to Lewis, God's love for mankind is entirely Gift-love: "The Father gives all He is and has to the Son. The Son gives Himself back to the Father, and gives

> Himself to the world, and for the world to the Father, and thus gives the world (in Himself) back to the Father too." God does not *need* our love or worship. Rather, He freely loves us as an extension of His grace.
>
> But our love for God is different. While we *may* be able to offer God Gift-love, our love is primarily need based. Lewis explains: "But man's love for God, from the very nature of the case, must always be very largely, and must often be entirely, a Need-love." We desperately need God in both this world and the next.
>
> And then Lewis makes an additional (and helpful) distinction—while our objective need for God will never change, our *awareness* of that need can. And if our awareness of the need for God fades, then so may our faith. Thus, Lewis says:
>
> *There seems no reason for describing as hypocritical the short-lived piety of those whose religion fades away once they have emerged from "danger, necessity or tribulation." Why should they not have been sincere? They were desperate and howled for help. Who wouldn't?*
>
> In other words, if someone believes in God because of an immediate need for safety or comfort, then as soon as the danger or pain ends, so may the faith. How does this relate to students? Think about it. If a young person believes in God for social or relational needs in the family, church, or school, then when those needs fade, so will his or her faith. If belief in God fulfills some external need, then as soon as that need fades, or another venue provides satisfaction of that need, the student will likely abandon his or her faith (or minimally, have a *marginalized* faith).

The whole post is worth reading, because no less than Sean McDowell himself had a moment like this where he realized his own sinfulness and had to rely on Jesus for his forgiveness.

Judging from his tweets, I know that Sean is obsessed with super-heroes like Spider-Man, and so he would not be comparing himself to his peers in terms of righteousness. That sort of distance between you and Spider-Man can be really grating for boys. Inside, we feel like we are meant to be super-heroes. Many young men go into apologetics because they see it as a super-power. The problem of not measuring up is very strong for us, because we see the demands of Christianity as much greater than mere church attendance. I imagine that as Sean engaged with people using his apologetics super-power, he probably realized how difficult it was to know *everything* and give an answer to *everyone.* That's above and beyond the standard shortcomings or pride, anger, hatred, and so on that are inside of every person.

We are not super-heroes but we need to have super-human righteousness (that is, perfect righteousness) in order to stand before our Creator and Designer. The only solution is to rely on the imputed righteousness of Jesus for our super-hero status. It is a good and healthy thing to take on Jesus as King, and to imitate him. But when we fail, we must also rely on him as Savior. And thank God the Father for that provision of salvation. And indeed, I myself think of Jesus as Savior in the moments where I am conscious of my

own sin. But I need to think about him more than that, and I'll explain how next.

In my case, I wanted to be a super hero growing up, but I knew I wasn't coming from a family or a background that made super-heroes. I was saved in a non-Christian home where, thanks to my hands-off "parents", I was on a very dark path to failure. In fact, I can see where I would have ended up by just looking at where my older brother is now. That disaster is what my parents, my schools, my culture, etc. produced in him, and it would have been me except for God stepping in to make himself known. I get excited about God as initiator and architect of salvation (not without my free will to trust). When God architects a divine appointment for me to use my prepared abilities in his defense or in mentoring little ones, I praise God as author of salvation. But I forget that Christ is the one who allows me to be clean enough to participate in this plan.

My ambition from small was to be a super-hero, and this later turned into great respect for people in the military, especially those who are awarded the Medal of Honor, like Michael Murphy. I want God to give me the Medal of Honor, too. But sin ruins my ambition every day. When I am called out to serve and am found faithful and competent, I need to remember that what makes me fit for service is Christ's sacrifice on the cross. His shed blood is the cape that I put on when it is my turn to come off the bench and be who I was designed to be. It is very important to me that the God I serve is the kind of God who won't turn away from me when I fall short.

Where to get help if you have a selfish, absent or abusive mother or father

August 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Today, I want to say something this article about lambs in Scotland, written by Sheila Walsh in the The Stream.

She writes:

> I am very fond of sheep. I grew up on the west coast of Scotland with sheep all around me, field after field of white wool and incessant crying when things seemed a little off.
>
> […]Of all the lessons I have learned from these defenseless, gentle animals, the most profound is the most painful. Every now and then, a ewe will give birth to a lamb and immediately reject it. Sometimes the lamb is rejected because they are one of twins and the mother doesn't have enough milk or she is old and frankly quite tired of the whole business. They call those lambs, *bummer lambs*.
>
> Unless the shepherd intervenes, that lamb will die. So the shepherd will take that little lost one into his home and hand feed it from a bottle and keep it warm by the fire. He will wrap it up warm and hold it close enough to hear a heartbeat. When the lamb is strong the shepherd will place it back in the field with the rest of the flock.
>
> "Off you go now, you can do this, I'm right here."
>
> The most beautiful sight to see is when the shepherd approaches his flock in the morning and calls them out, "*Sheep, sheep, sheep*!"

> The first to run to him are the bummer lambs because they know his voice. It's not that they are more loved — it's just that they believe it.
>
> I am so grateful that Christ calls himself the Good Shepherd.
>
> "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice." (John 10:3-4 NLT)

My older brother and I grew up with a mother who was very much focused on her career and earning and saving money for her retirement. We were both stuck in daycare very early after being born, so that she could go back to work right away. (Me after 6 weeks) My older brother has shown the ill effects of our parents (especially our mother) not having any plan for us, especially morally and spiritually. He dropped out of college after failing his first year, never had a career. Although he has normal intelligence and mental health, he never could stick in any real job.

Although there were early warning signs when his grades started to drop in Grade 5, my parents never took responsibility to make a plan to solve it. Oh, they would yell and scream at him at report card time, but just for a day or two, and after that, nothing constructive. My brother decided that he could just ride out the flak my parents gave him on report card night, and keep going with his plan of having fun and being popular. My parents just forgot about it until the next report card day, because they did not want to be distracted from their careers, hobbies and retirement planning. When dispensing rewards, my brother was always given the same as me, despite our different levels of achievement. And my parents considered this equal dispensation of rewards regardless of performance to be a great virtue, and excellent parenting.

I had the exact same upbringing as my older brother. He actually did pretty well until Grade 5 just like me, but then our paths diverged. From Grade 5 on, his grades deterioriated. He got tired of having to study and he was more interested in the opinions of his peers and conforming to popular culture. In my case, from Grade 5 on, my grades were always high-90s. I remember taking the same classes as he did, in the same high school, with the same teachers. He got a 44 in data processing, I got a 96 with the same teacher and won the award for the entire grade. Every class I went to, the teachers would speak fondly of my older brother – he was a nice guy, very popular with his peers, good at sports. But not a very good student. How was it that I was winning awards when he had scored so poorly. Was I really his brother? How could we be so different?

The difference is that in Grade 5, he got a Gideon's New Testament and he read it and he didn't put it into practice, and in Grade 5, I got a Gideon's New Testament and I read it twice and I did put it into practice. That was the difference. I had the awareness of the moral law (i.e.- wisdom) that allowed me to judge my parents and judge my peers and judge my teachers and stand alone. When you cannot rely on anyone to lead you, be able to judge when others mistreat you is very important. That is what allows you to maintain appropriate boundaries and minimize the influence of friends and family who are teaching you self-destructive behaviors. Awareness of the moral law is what allows you to stop

trying to please people who do not want what is best for you. On the other hand, God is always willing to give you wisdom if you ask Him for it, and you can find out all about him because he has left plenty of evidence concerning his existence and character for you to find. It is in knowing God as he really is that you can find your sense of value, purpose and meaning. The God of the New Testament is the God of people who are lost and need a Savior.

For me, Christianity was a simple matter of being willing to go along with what was true, and not insisting on having fun or conforming to peer expectations. The essential characteristic of my faith, in contrast to my older brother's lack of faith, was this – I did not mind being different, so long as I never lost a debate about what was true. My obedience to Christ has never been conditional on things going my way, on being liked, or anything like that. The only thing that mattered was being factually correct. It never bothered me what other people were doing, or what other people expected me to do, so long as I was acting on what I knew to be true. And God helped me to find out what was true by motivating me to study, and leading me to him with good evidence, and good mentors. Thanks to Jesus' death on the cross, the mistakes I made early did not count against me, and they never will. Jesus' death on the cross gives me the imputed righteousness that I need to stand before God holy and blameless. This is what allows me to keep learning and keep trying no matter how much I fail on any given day.

How has this affected me? Well, this is the second thing I wanted to say about the bummer lamb analogy. Since I was a victim of this hands-off, me-first style of parenting, it's caused me to be extra sensitive about being a good spiritual leader to others in the same predicament. The people I mentor can see it in the way that I treat them . I treat them the opposite of the way that my older brother and I were treated. I care what people read. I care what courses they choose. I care what they eat. I care how they feel. I care about their finances. I care about their plans to serve God. I care about their romantic relationships. I care whether they get recognition for doing good. I care whether their life is going in the right direction. One person I mentored who once considered taking her own life wrote to me when she graduated from a STEM program, and she said this: "I wish you could have been here at my graduation. My parents only paid for this degree. You were the one who got me through it". We have never met in person, but she is going to continue to make a huge difference for Christ and His Kingdom going forward.

I think when you have been a bummer lamb, you are extra careful to make decisions that will enable you to be a good shepherd to other lambs. Being a good shepherd does not mean being pious, spiritual, mystical, etc. Being a good shepherd does not mean making the lambs feel good about making bad decisions. Being a good shepherd means understanding what God has done to lead you, and then reflecting that love back to others *in practical, self-sacrificial actions that solve actual real-world problems for other people who want to know and serve God*. If you are about to jump off a cliff, the last thing you need is someone with no wisdom or experience telling you that God is OK with you doing whatever feels good to you. What you need is someone practical and competent to give you good advice, however much that advice may make you feel bad, or block your

pursuit of fun.

One of my friends proof-read the draft of this post and told me that it made her think of 2 Cor 1:3-5:

> [3] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
>
> [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.
>
> [5] For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.“

Nothing else I do in life matters to me as much as taking care of the people I mentor, especially the ones who are lost and lacking guidance and care. I have good health, good education, good career, and great finances. But by far the most important thing I do is following the example of the Shepherd by caring for other lambs.

A woman asked me whether Hell and God's harshness caused me to doubt Christianity

August 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

I was having a chat on Friday with a brilliant agnostic young lady who knew as much about Christian apologetics as I did. It was very strange because she was only in her mid-20s, but she was talking about the Cambrian explosion, the resurrection scholarship of Dale Allison and Bart Ehrman, and so on. She had seen a lot of debates, and even knew about intelligent design. Anyway, she asked me two questions that I wanted to write about. The first was whether I thought that Hell was unfair, especially because it's determined by having correct beliefs, and the second was whether I thought that God was kind or harsh.

Regarding, I do hold to a traditional view of Hell being eternal separation from God. I don't think that God will be actively torturing people in Hell. I'm not sure if the flames are literal or figurative. But I do know that the severity of the punishment will be proportional to the amount of sinning, in the same way that the rewards in Heaven will be proportional to good actions here on Earth. The duration is the same, but the rewards and punishments fit our actions.

I don't have a problem with Hell because I've spent most of my life trying to talk to people about spiritual things. Although this young lady was very open-minded and honest and spiritual, more than most people in the church, even, I don't think that this is normal for non-Christians. Growing up around Muslims and Hindus, and having spoken to Jews, I know that there just isn't much curiosity about God and Jesus in these other religions. Believe me, I've tried to discuss spiritual things with people of all different religions, and the idea that religious beliefs should be bounded by logic and evidence is almost *nowhere* to be found. It's not even to be found among most Christians, but at least

we have scholars who you can find if you dig hard enough.

So, when people ask me about Hell, the first thing that comes into my mind is my experiences trying to get non-Christians to line up their beliefs about God and Jesus with logic and evidence. Although it may seem harsh to shut the door on people who don't want to put in the work, it doesn't seem harsh to me. I've had it with people who make everything except an investigation into God's existence a priority. I have no patience for people who think they are very intelligent in their thoughts about God, but then when they get into a discussion, it is obvious they haven't put in any effort.

Do you know what they do put a lot of effort into, though? Entertainment, fun and thrills. I can't tell you how many times I've tried to give books or debates to culturally Jewish atheists and Muslim-raised atheists and Hindus (because of family and community) in my previous jobs, and got no interest in truth whatsoever. They were too busy watching the Comedy Channel Democrats, and trying to get their kids into Ivy league schools, etc. to care about God or Jesus. And God is not going to force them into eternal life with him, they don't want it, and they're not going to get it. It's important to note that to not prioritize God is a choice. We in the West all have leisure time, and to be ignorant about God after 40 years of leisure time when you have put the time in elsewhere is unacceptable. God expects us to be curious about him and to do our due diligence in investigating him using as much intellect and effort as we put into our educations, careers, marriages, etc.

Regarding her other question about whether I think God is kind or harsh, I just decided to tell her that I didn't think that God was the kind of God who had to be nice to me so that I would like him. I explained to her that I had wanted marriage from an early age, and had prepared very hard for it, but that it had never happened. I'm not sure that God is able to cause women to freely desire the things I did to prepare for marriage, like chastity, STEM degrees, gap-less resume and savings. I'm not the smartest person in the world, and I did not have family or friends helping me to get ahead most of the time. It was very hard to get ready for marriage. But I realized very late in life that young, unmarried women tend to be interested in a man's appearance and in having fun – not marriage-ready preparation. They do not want a man who is serious about marriage and children until their mid-30s, which is far too old for my marriage plan to work. So, there's no point in me marrying now. So does this lack of marriage make me think that God is unkind? Not at all.

I do think that God has been kind to me with respect to health, education, career and finances. Also, I can understand from the Bible (2 Tim 2:3-4) why God might need an unmarried soldier to work for him. And this doesn't bother me, because I've read the Bible, and I didn't get the impression from it that God was my cosmic butler. Although many Western Christians think that God's sole purpose is to make them happy, there is no way to actually get that meaning out of the text. God's own Son has to suffer in order to love his Father self-sacrificially. So it's clear that God is not "kind" to those who love him in the sense that most people would like him to be. In fact, I would believe in God and

serve him, even if he were “harsher” with me than he is now.

So, why would I want to be a Christian, rather than just accept the scientific arguments for theism, and then just say that the New Testament is just not good enough historical evidence to warrant moving from theism to Christianity? Well, I did explain to her the minimal facts argument, and the historical criteria used to obtain them. And I also said that we all need to have some sort of historical explanation for the early belief in Jesus being God stepping into history, and for his rising from the dead.

But I think the real reason why I am a Christian, beyond the evidence, is just this daily experience of dealing with the lack of curiosity about God and Jesus (and sometimes outright self-delusion) that I see in so many people. I see it in uneducated people, unintelligent people, educated people, intelligent people. The willful ignorance about facts that matter, like the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, etc. It’s not even opposition to Christian specifics, it’s opposition to plain, well-supported scientific facts. I’ve just seen this in action so much with atheists and people of other religions that I have lost all sympathy for non-Christians with respect to what God decides to do with them.

It’s not that I am concerned by their immorality, or their hedonism, primarily. It’s that I am concerned with their lack of interest in puzzling out the big questions of life in a truth-centered way. The only people I really feel comfortable with are Christians who have been serious about proportioning belief to evidence, denying themselves fun and thrills if they have to, and putting their money and time into learning how to defend God’s honor when it’s called into question. A task that simply gets you nothing good from anyone in this world. I find it amazing that there are any of us, but that’s where I want to be – in a room with people like that who put God’s goals above their own desires and needs.

All of my close male friends are either virgins or married as virgins, and they’re all into apologetics. If you understood what it means to be in a room with people who have carefully chosen to live their lives in a quiet, humble way that’s respectful to God and self-sacrificial, then you would understand why there is no substitute for Christianity. In my case, I simply do not want God to lump me in with the people I talk to who have no curiosity about truth in religion. I am not going to be like them, grabbing for happiness, while deliberately shutting their eyes to anything that might cause them to have to take God seriously in a self-sacrificial, two-way relationship. I have more sympathy for God and his reputation and honor than I do for the majority of people who I have seen deliberately keeping him at arm’s length. They want the blessings he provides, but while avoiding the demands of a relationship with him. I’m just not going to be one of them, and I don’t care what people think.

Canadian hospital denies man's requests for assisted care, offers him euthanasia instead

August 6, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How much does "free" health care cost in Canada's single-payer system?

On this blog, I've been consistently opposed to government intervention in health care. I arrived at this position by looking at how health care works in government-run systems like the UK's NHS and Canada's single-payer health care system. We've already discussed how NHS hospitals were paid bonuses if they got more patients to die. Now Canada is doing it.

This story is from the far-left CTV News, one of Canada's national television news providers.

Excerpt:

> An Ontario man suffering from an incurable neurological disease has provided CTV News with audio recordings that he says are proof that hospital staff offered him medically assisted death, despite his repeated requests to live at home.
>
> Roger Foley, 42, who earlier this year launched a landmark lawsuit against a London hospital, several health agencies, the Ontario government and the federal government, alleges that health officials will not provide him with an assisted home care team of his choosing, instead offering, among other things, medically assisted death.
>
> Foley suffers from cerebellar ataxia, a brain disorder that limits his ability to move his arms and legs, and prevents him from independently performing daily

> tasks.
>
> In his lawsuit, Foley claims that a government-selected home care provider had previously left him in ill health with injuries and food poisoning. He claims that he has been denied the right to self-directed care, which allows certain patients to take a central role in planning and receiving personal and medical services from the comfort of their own homes.
>
> […]He is now sharing audio recordings of separate conversations he had with two health care workers at London Health Sciences Centre, where he has been stuck in a hospital bed for more than two years.
>
> In one audio recording from September 2017, Foley is heard speaking to a man about what he has described as attempts at a "forced discharge," with threats of a hefty hospital bill.
>
> When Foley asks the man how much he'd have to pay to remain in hospital, the man replies, "I don't know what the exact number is, but it is north of $1,500 a day."
>
> […]"Roger, this is not my show," the man replies. "I told you my piece of this was to talk to you about if you had interest in assisted dying."
>
> In a separate audio recording from January 2018, another man is heard asking Foley how he's doing and whether he feels like he wants to harm himself.
>
> Foley tells the man that he's "always thinking I want to end my life" because of the way he's being treated at the hospital and because his requests for self-directed care have been denied.
>
> The man is then heard telling Foley that he can "just apply to get an assisted, if you want to end your life, like you know what I mean?"

And how has the government responded to the audio recordings? The same way you would expect any government to respond – with silence:

> "I have not received the care that I need to relieve my suffering and have only been offered assisted dying. I have many severe disabilities and I am fully dependent. With the remaining time I have left, I want to live with dignity and live as independently as possible."
>
> Lawyers for the hospital were sent the audio excerpts on July 19. Foley and his lawyer have not received a response.
>
> CTV News also asked the hospital for a statement. The hospital has not responded.

This isn't the customer service that you would get in a capitalist free market where private sector businesses have to compete on price and quality for your dollars. This is single-payer health care. They have your money already, and they know that you can't go anywhere else, except to leave the country. The response of the government-run health care system to requests for better care is "go kill yourself, we already have your money".

And a lot of patients in Canada are being killed.

Wesley J. Smith explains:

> Canadian doctors and nurse practitioners have reported that they have killed almost 4,000 (3,714) patients since euthanasia was legalized in Quebec in December 2015 — after which it was legalized throughout the country by Supreme Court fiat — an act of judicial hubris quickly formalized by Parliament.
>
> Nearly 2,000 were killed in 2017, not including a few territories that did not report figures and assuming all euthanasia deaths were reported. All but one of these deaths resulted from a lethal jab — homicide — at the patients' request.
>
> […]Note that as is the usual case, the number of doctor-facilitated deaths has increased steadily since legalization. For example, there were more than 200 more such deaths in the last six months of last year than the first.

The recordings help to explain what the phrase "at the patients' request" really means.

Previously, I blogged about how the lack of money for palliative care is behind Canada's push to "suggest" euthanasia to patients who ask for better palliative care. Again, what leverage do you have if you already paid them your money in taxes? You have no leverage, and they know that.

This is what happens when government taxes people when they are well, and then decides later who to give health care to, based on the politicians deciding whose votes to buy. Naturally, the young people with less problems are given "health care", e.g. – contraceptives. abortions, sex changes, IVF, breast enlargements – because they have lots of voting ahead of them. The older people get asked to kill themselves for the good of those running this vote-buying operation.

N.T. Wright lectures on the seven mutations caused by resurrection of Jesus

August 7, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's a video of his case for the resurrection:

You can read a written version of the lecture here.

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable* apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an

invented exaltation was already available to do the job.

3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.
5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

What does the Bible say about capital punishment?

August 8, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at what the Bible says

Note: This post has a twin post which talks about the crime-preventing effect of capital punishment.

First, let's take a look at what the Bible says in general about capital punishment, using this lecture featuring eminent theologian Wayne Grudem.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

A PDF sermon outline is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?

- what did God say to Noah about CP?
- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?
- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?
- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?
- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?
- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the "whole life ethic" and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

You can find more talks by Wayne Grudem here.

Whose job is it to teach young, unmarried women not to delay marriage for fun and thrills?

August 9, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

I found a very interesting post on a blog called Oz Conservative, which is run by an Australian traditional conservative. In the post, he looks at two women who wasted their 20s on fun and thrills. Both of them are childless and unmarried. And they are complaining that they should be married with children. How did it happen?

Excerpt:

> Rachael spent her youth going out with the bad boy type:
>
> > relationships have never been my strong point. Historically, I've picked good-looking villains and addictive personalities.
> >
> > I've had a ball and many passionate experiences, but nothing functional enough to constitute a long-term future and never anyone 'normal' enough to bring home to meet the parents.
>
> Although she puts a positive spin on being single, she admits:
>
> > I'm realistic. I've probably missed the boat as far as children are concerned, and that is a shame…
> >
> > […]Yes, the life I have today is not quite the one I envisaged 20 years ago as a young woman. I foresaw a satisfying career along with 2.4 children and a handsome husband.
>
> Then there is Bibi, now 44. She tells her story this way:

> > I am staring down the barrel of a lonely future without a man, let alone children.
> >
> > And how do I find myself in this perilous position? One reason is undoubtedly that men like young women. Yes, I was young once and all that. In my 20s and 30s I wasn't exactly a supermodel, but I was constantly surrounded by men. The trouble is I wasn't necessarily looking to settle down back then…
> >
> > Now that I am, there are very few available men out there and the ones there are would be more interested in my teenage nieces than in me…
>
> […]Bibi has a lot of friends in exactly the same boat:
>
> > In my close circle of friends, there are eight of us who are single and childless. This is a generational phenomenon – we are all aged between 37 and 45.
> >
> > When our mothers were that age, such numbers would be unimaginable.
>
> Like many women writing this kind of literature, when she looks back she recognises the negative influence of feminism on her generation of women:
>
> > I think the feminist teachings of the Sixties and Seventies seeped into our brains. My mum couldn't be called a feminist, but I, too, grew up thinking we could be anything we wanted to be and have a fulfilling career, life and relationship…
>
> […]What she is trying to say here is that feminism pushed marriage and motherhood down the list of priorities ("there was more to contend with beforehand"). She admits that she was led into the magical kind of thinking I described earlier in which there is nothing in reality to limit having things as you want them to be ("we didn't realise that men wouldn't be interested … my generation was spoilt – unrealistic, even").

The comments to the post are very interesting.

I was thinking about whose job it was to warn young Christian women about these bad choices, and I remembered a passage from the Bible.

Titus 2:3-5 explains:

> [3] Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.
>
> [4] Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children,
>
> [5] to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

The problem is that many older Christian women made a lot of mistakes in their youth, especially with alcohol and premarital sex. And for most of them, it's more important that

they not feel guilty about it, than that they warn younger women not to make the same mistakes. So, instead of admitting guilt and setting boundaries, they often tell young women that it doesn't matter what you do in your 20s because God, the cosmic butler, will make everything work out in the end.

We just had a situation where one woman who had a successful marriage tried to give younger women some very basic advice about how to be attractive to marriage-minded men. And what happened was that she was attacked by pretty much everyone. The reaction seemed to be strongest from Christian women, however, who insisted that God's grace meant that Christian women didn't have to care what the Bible taught about morality and wisdom. The important thing was that they follow their desires in the moment, because to exercise self-control would be "horrible" and would "send the wrong message". Telling a woman not to do what she feels like is worse than murder, because women must always do what feels good. Who cares about the words of the Bible, when a woman has feelings that are a direct line to God's mysterious will for her happiness?

One of the commenters on this blog put it this way:

> I've been observing this phenomenon among so-called "Christians" for well over a decade. Concepts like "tolerance" and not being "judgmental" took hold in our culture and many Christians absorbed the mindset completely. If you point out that what someone is doing is sinful or might potentially lead to sinful behavior, they act defensive or turn the tables on you and say "well, you're not perfect either!" Some even say that they do certain things for the express purpose of not being "legalistic," because clearly, legalism is far worse than compromising one's witness. Jesus has become a postmodern hippie whose primary message is "let's all be cool to each other." The only sins left are transgressions against the belief that everyone is equal and worthy of acceptance.
>
> In reading the responses to Lori Alexander's article, my greatest takeaway is that people are rationalization machines. If they've made mistakes, they won't humbly acknowledge them and use the wisdom of their experience to guide others in the right direction. Instead, they'll try to find a way to argue that their mistakes weren't mistakes at all, and that the real sinner is the person who's judging them for what they did. It's a deceitful, selfish game, and anyone who plays it is an enemy of the Gospel. Their argument essentially boils down to "every woman, regardless of whatever bad decisions she's made in life, is entitled to a loving husband who'll provide for her." Same way everyone's entitled to free health care, regardless of whether sufficient medical resources exist, I suppose. It doesn't work that way, ladies.
>
> And they use this feminist scare word "shaming." How dare you "shame" me? I would go so far as to say that shaming is a good thing, because it incentivizes proper behavior. Men have good reasons for wanting their wives to be virgins, and if you remove the stigma against premarital sex, a lot of women are going to take Biblical teaching on the subject less seriously. If Christian men as a whole

> agreed that they would only marry virgins, I guarantee you that a lot of women would think twice about what kind of men they associated with. If you feel "shamed," it's probably a sign that you haven't truly repented of your sins. Sin separates us from God, and if you see your sins for what they are, you should have no problem condemning the sins that you yourself have committed and discouraging them in others.
>
> I'm sorry for this long-winded ramble, but it disgusts me how much politically correct rot has infested the churches, and this entire incident just confirms that Paul was correct to forbid women teaching. When everyone is afraid of upsetting women, we get false teachers popping up everywhere spreading a destructive message with nothing but rhetoric behind it. The end result? Fewer marriages, fewer children, fewer people taking Christian teachings seriously, and more people being miserable and lonely. Once you start ceding ground to liberalism, the whole thing eventually unravels. Lots of good Christian men and women can't find a spouse anymore, because their society has lied to them and they don't realize it until it's too late. Did their churches stand against the world? Did their churches provide them the guidance they needed? Or were their churches too afraid to be seen as "out of touch," and did they prioritize numbers over holiness and correct teaching? If we are sincere believers, it should be obvious which is more important.

Many of the women who chose to delay marriage for fun and thrills with the bad boys grew up in married Christian homes. Parents and pastors have, for one reason or another, decided that it is too unpleasant to warn young Christian women that their behavior may involve some costs in the long term. They don't want to make them feel bad, and women's feelings are so very much more important than what the Bible says, or even what peer-reviewed research on marriage best practices says. Even theologically conservative pastors just don't have the courage to address the influence that feminism has had on the goal-setting and decision-making of young, unmarried women. It's much easier to blame men when the woman's fun and thrills plan doesn't work out.

Luke Barnes discusses the fine-tuning of the fine structure constant

August 10, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

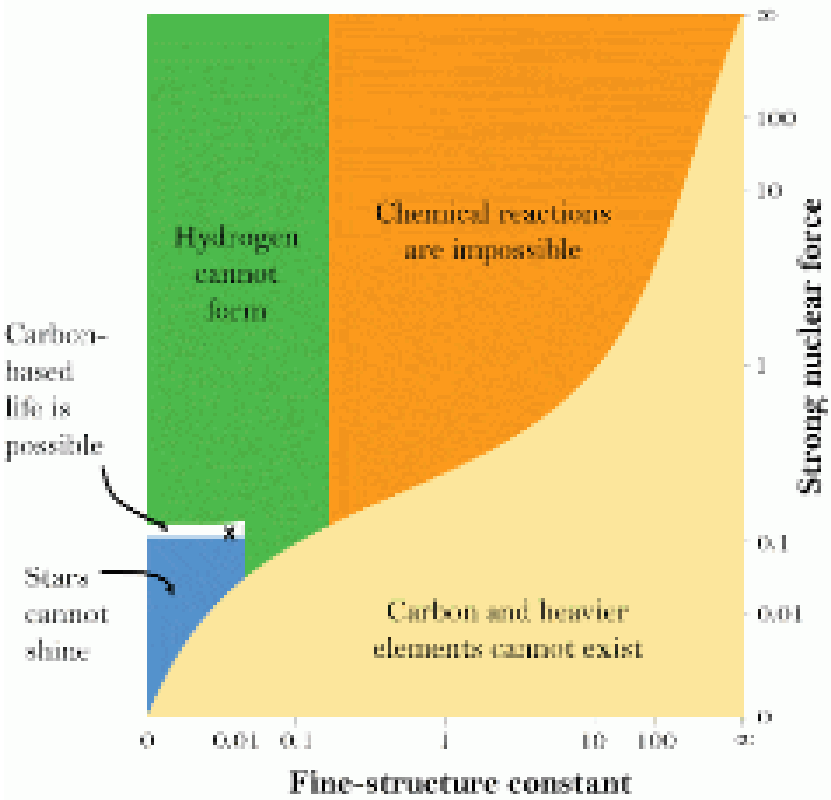

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant

Here is an article from The New Atlantis written by cosmologist Luke Barnes about one specific example of cosmic fine-tuning. (H/T Uncommon Descent via J. Warner Wallace tweet)

Excerpt:

> Today, our deepest understanding of the laws of nature is summarized in a set of equations. Using these equations, we can make very precise calculations of the most elementary physical phenomena, calculations that are confirmed by experimental evidence. But to make these predictions, we have to plug in some numbers that cannot themselves be calculated but are derived from measurements of some of the most basic features of the physical universe. These numbers specify such crucial quantities as the masses of fundamental particles and the strengths of their mutual interactions. After extensive experiments under all manner of conditions, physicists have found that these numbers appear not to change in different times and places, so they are called the fundamental constants of nature.
>
> These constants represent the edge of our knowledge. Richard Feynman called one of them — the fine-structure constant, which characterizes the amount of electromagnetic force between charged elementary particles like electrons —

> “one of the greatest damn mysteries of physics: a magic number that comes to us with no understanding by man.”
>
> […]A universe that has just small tweaks in the fundamental constants might not have any of the chemical bonds that give us molecules, so say farewell to DNA, and also to rocks, water, and planets. Other tweaks could make the formation of stars or even atoms impossible. And with some values for the physical constants, the universe would have flickered out of existence in a fraction of a second. That the constants are all arranged in what is, mathematically speaking, the very improbable combination that makes our grand, complex, life-bearing universe possible is what physicists mean when they talk about the “fine-tuning” of the universe for life.

Atheists, both rank-and-file and expert, almost universally misunderstand the fine-tuning argument. They imagine that if the constants and quantities specified at the origin of the universe were different, then humans would just have green skin, or maybe forehead ridges, or pointy ears. Atheists tend to get their view of science from science fiction in novels or television or movies. Just this week I was talking to an agnostic woman (who since reverted to atheism) and brought up the fine-tuning argument. And she said “well, maybe if the initial constants and quantities were different, then we would have evolved differently”. No, the whole point is that life *of any conceivable kind* becomes impossible if the constants and quantities are altered higher or lower. Even slightly. It’s not that you have green skin, pointy ears, and forehead ridges. It’s that you have a universe that recollapses into a hot fireball, or contains only hydrogen, or does not form stars and planets at all.

I got the impression that she hadn’t read anything about the fine-tuning from peer-reviewed scientific publications, but had just read popular responses to it from atheists with degrees in English and drama and philosophy. If you want to understand a scientific argument, then you have to go to the scientific publications, and read the science. Here is an excellent start, from two astrophysicists, and published by Cambridge University Press.

So what does the scientific evidence actually show?

Barnes explains:

> The strong nuclear force, for example, is the glue that holds protons and neutrons together in the nuclei of atoms. If, in a hypothetical universe, it is too weak, then nuclei are not stable and the periodic table disappears again. If it is too strong, then the intense heat of the early universe could convert all hydrogen into helium — meaning that there could be no water, and that 99.97 percent of the 24 million carbon compounds we have discovered would be impossible, too. And, as the chart to the right shows, the forces, like the masses, must be in the right balance. If the electromagnetic force, which is responsible for the attraction and repulsion of charged particles, is too strong or too weak compared to the strong nuclear force, anything from stars to chemical compounds would be

> impossible.
>
> Stars are particularly finicky when it comes to fundamental constants. If the masses of the fundamental particles are not extremely small, then stars burn out very quickly. Stars in our universe also have the remarkable ability to produce both carbon and oxygen, two of the most important elements to biology. But, a change of just a few percent in the up and down quarks' masses, or in the forces that hold atoms together, is enough to upset this ability — stars would make either carbon or oxygen, but not both.

It's very important that theists are well-equipped to explain how individual cases of fine-tuning work. We need to know what you lose if you alter these constants and quantities even slightly. You can read about some more examples in this previous post.

If unborn babies don’t have consciousness or don’t feel pain, may we kill them?

August 11, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about pro-life apologetics

Was having a conversation by e-mail yesterday with a pro-abortion atheist, and he gave two reasons why he supported abortion in the first and second trimester. First, he said that unborn babies can’t feel pain, so it’s OK to kill them. Second, he said that unborn babies don’t have consciousness, so it’s OK to kill them. I thought it might be useful to link to something that answers both of these objections.

Frank Beckwith is the author of “Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice“. He wrote that book for Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote four easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal. Part IV is the one that has the response to the two questions raised by my atheist friend.

Part I. The Appeal to Pity

Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem

Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?

Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Excerpt:

> Some ethicists argue that the unborn becomes fully human sometime after brain development has begun, when it becomes sentient: capable of experiencing

sensations such as pain. The reason for choosing sentience as the criterion is that a being that cannot experience anything (i.e., a presentient unborn entity) cannot be harmed. Of course, if this position is correct, then the unborn becomes fully human probably during the second trimester and at least by the third trimester. Therefore, one does not violate anyone's rights when one aborts a nonsentient unborn entity. [13]

There are several problems with this argument. First, it confuses harm with hurt and the experience of harm with the reality of harm. [14] One can be harmed without experiencing the hurt that sometimes follows from that harm, and which we often mistake for the harm itself. For example, a temporarily comatose person who is suffocated to death "experiences no harm," but he is nevertheless harmed. Hence, one does not have to experience harm, which is sometimes manifested in hurt, in order to be truly harmed.

Second, if sentience is the criterion of full humanness, then the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping would all have to be declared nonpersons. Like the presentient unborn, these individuals are all at the moment nonsentient though they have the natural inherent capacity to be sentient. Yet to countenance their executions would be morally reprehensible. Therefore, one cannot countenance the execution of some unborn entities simply because they are not currently sentient.

Someone may reply that while these objections make important points, there is a problem of false analogy in the second objection: the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping once functioned as sentient beings, though they are now in a temporary state of nonsentience. The presentient unborn, on the other hand, were never sentient. Hence, one is fully human if one was sentient "in the past" and will probably become sentient again in the future, but this cannot be said of the presentient unborn.

There are at least three problems with this response. First, to claim that a person can be sentient, become nonsentient, and then return to sentience is to assume there is some underlying personal unity to this individual that enables us to say that the person who has returned to sentience is the same person who was sentient prior to becoming nonsentient. But this would mean that sentience is not a necessary condition for personhood. (Neither is it a sufficient condition, for that matter, since nonhuman animals are sentient.) Consequently, it does not make sense to say that a person comes into existence when sentience arises, but it does make sense to say that a fully human entity is a person who has the natural inherent capacity to give rise to sentience. A presentient unborn human entity does have this capacity. Therefore, an ordinary unborn human entity is a person, and hence, fully human.

Second, Ray points out that this attempt to exclude many of the unborn from the class of the fully human is "ad hoc and counterintuitive." He asks us to "consider

> the treatment of comatose patients. We would not discriminate against one merely for rarely or never having been sentient in the past while another otherwise comparable patient had been sentient….In such cases, potential counts for everything." [15]
>
> Third, why should sentience "in the past" be the decisive factor in deciding whether an entity is fully human when the presentient human being "is one with a natural, inherent capacity for performing personal acts?" [16] Since we have already seen that one does not have to experience harm in order to be harmed, it seems more consistent with our moral sensibilities to assert that what makes it wrong to kill the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, the momentarily unconscious, and the presentient unborn is that they all possess the natural inherent capacity to perform personal acts. And what makes it morally right to kill plants and to pull the plug on the respirator-dependent brain dead, who were sentient "in the past," is that their deaths cannot deprive them of their natural inherent capacity to function as persons, since they do not possess such a capacity.

These four essays are a very good introduction to common responses to pro-abortion arguments. I recommend that people get familiar with this, as once you look into it, you will see that the abortion issue can be debated with as much confidence as William Lane Craig defends Christian theism. You will have the same access to scientific evidence and rational arguments on this topic, and so you will have the upper hand. And that's fun.

The best introductory book on the abortion / right to life issue is "The Case for Life" by pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf. The best comprehensive book is a tie between "The Ethics of Abortion" by Christopher Kaczor, and Frank Beckwith's "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice".

Atheist gets her PhD in astronomy and astrophysics and finds evidence for God

August 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Christian apologist Terrell Clemmons tweeted this testimony by Sarah Salviander, a research scientist in astronomy and astrophysics at the prestigious University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Salviander writes:

> I was born in the U.S., but grew up in Canada. My parents were socialists and political activists who thought British Columbia would be a better place for us to live, since it had the only socialist government in North America at the time. My parents were also atheists, though they eschewed that label in favor of "agnostic." They were kind, loving, and moral, but religion played no part in my life. Instead, my childhood revolved around education, particularly science. I remember how important it was to my parents that my brother and I did well in school.

I just want to point out that I hope that all you Christian parents are taking seriously the obligation to make your kids do well in school, because even if they start out as atheists when they are young, they can still find their way back to God through study, as Sarah did.

She had a bad start, that's for sure:

> I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, a time when science fiction was enjoying a renaissance, thanks largely to the popularity of *Star Wars*. I remember how fascinated I was by the original *Star Wars* trilogy. It had almost nothing to do with

> science—it's more properly characterized as space opera—but it got me thinking about space in a big way. I also loved the original *Star Trek*, which was more science fiction. The stoic and logical character of Mr. Spock was particularly appealing to me. Popular science was also experiencing a renaissance at that time, which had a lot to do with Carl Sagan's television show, *Cosmos*, which I adored. The combination of these influences led to such an intense wonder about outer space and the universe, that by the time I was nine years old I knew I would be a space scientist someday.
>
> Canada was already post-Christian by the 1970s, so I grew up with no religion. In retrospect, it's amazing that for the first 25 years of my life, I met only three people who identified as Christian. My view of Christianity was negative from an early age, and by the time I was in my twenties, I was actively hostile toward Christianity. Looking back, I realized a lot of this was the unconscious absorption of the general hostility toward Christianity that is common in places like Canada and Europe; my hostility certainly wasn't based on actually knowing anything about Christianity. I had come to believe that Christianity made people weak and foolish; I thought it was philosophically trivial. I was ignorant not only of the Bible, but also of the deep philosophy of Christianity and the scientific discoveries that shed new light on the origins of the universe and life on Earth.

She documents a phase of following Ayn Rand and embracing "Objectivism", but eventually she rejects it for failing to answer the big questions of life.

More:

> I began to focus all of my energy on my studies, and became very dedicated to my physics and math courses. I joined campus clubs, started to make friends, and, for the first time in my life, I was meeting Christians. They weren't like Objectivists—they were joyous and content. And, they were smart, too. I **was astonished to find that my physics professors, whom I admired, were Christian. Their personal example began to have an influence on me, and I found myself growing less hostile to Christianity.**

This is why I think it is so important for Christian parents to raise their children to get advanced degrees… either to become professors themselves, or to finance others (e.g. – our own children) to do advanced degrees. It is so important for university students to see Christian professors on campus. And failing that, it's important that we bring Christian speakers in to debate non-Christian speakers on the important issues. This will not happen unless we recognize how important it is, and then make a plan to achieve it.

More:

> **I had joined a group in the Center for Astrophysics and Space Sciences (CASS) that was researching evidence for the big bang. The cosmic background radiation—the leftover radiation from the big bang—provides the strongest evidence for the theory, but cosmologists**

> **need other, independent lines of evidence to confirm it. My group was studying deuterium abundances in the early universe. Deuterium is an isotope of hydrogen, and its abundance in the early universe is sensitive to the amount of ordinary mass contained in the entire universe. Believe it or not, this one measurement tells us whether the big bang model is correct.**
>
> **If anyone is interested in how this works, I'll describe it, but for now I'll spare you the gruesome details. Suffice it to say that an amazing convergence of physical properties is necessary in order to study deuterium abundances in the early universe, and yet this convergence is exactly what we get. I remember being astounded by this, blown away, completely and utterly awed. It seemed incredible to me that there was a way to find the answer to this question we had about the universe. In fact, it seems that every question we have about the universe is answerable. There's no reason it has to be this way, and it made me think of Einstein's observation that the most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it's comprehensible. I started to sense an underlying order to the universe. Without knowing it, I was awakening to what Psalm 19 tells us so clearly, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."**
>
> That summer, I'd picked up a copy of T*he Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas and was reading it in my off hours. Previous to this, I'd only known it as an exciting story of revenge, since that's what the countless movie and TV adaptations always focused on. But it's more than just a revenge story, it's a philosophically deep examination of forgiveness and God's role in giving justice. I was surprised by this, and was starting to realize that the concept of God and religion was not as philosophically trivial as I had thought.
>
> All of this culminated one day, as I was walking across that beautiful La Jolla campus. I stopped in my tracks when it hit me—I believed in God! I was so happy; it was like a weight had been lifted from my heart. I realized that most of the pain I'd experienced in my life was of my own making, but that God had used it to make me wiser and more compassionate. It was a great relief to discover that there was a reason for suffering, and that it was because God was loving and just. God could not be perfectly just unless I—just like everyone else—was made to suffer for the bad things I'd done.

The Count of Monte Cristo is one of my favorite, favorite books as well, and had the same impact on me as it did on her.

OK, that's enough for this post. Go read the rest, and please share it.

I spoke to her recently and she told me that she is working on several projects that are designed to get people more familiar with science and Bible issues. This woman is an expert Christian apologist and her life will have an influence. Are you going to be like her?

Will you mentor others to be like her? Will you marry someone like her? Will you raise children who are like her? I think we should all have a plan to study the areas that are important and have an influence for God with what we learn.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

ISIS murders two thrill-seeking millennials who were cycling across the Middle East

August 13, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It turns out that the world is a dangerous place after all

I saw this interesting article about a man and woman who decided to quit their "boring" public sector "jobs" and cycle through Africa and then through the Middle East. In this post, I want to focus on their worldviews, how people responded to the news of their deaths, and on why women are so attracted to men who don't lead them, don't protect them, and don't provide for them.

PJ Media reports:

> On August 7, the New York Times ran a story by Rukmini Callimachi about Jay Austin and Lauren Geoghegan, a young American couple, both graduates of Georgetown University, who decided to quit their humdrum office jobs and go on an epic bike ride and camping trip that would take them all over the world. "I've grown tired of spending the best hours of my day in front of a glowing rectangle, of coloring the best years of my life in swaths of grey and beige," Austin wrote. "I've missed too many sunsets while my back was turned."

I couldn't find anywhere that said what their degrees were in, but I expect that they did easy non-STEM degrees and were swimming in debt. Rather than work their way out of it, they decided to quit their jobs and go on an adventure through Africa and the Middle East, to prove to the world that evil was not real, and that all the liberal nonsense they learned in school was true.

More:

> They biked through Kyrgyzstan and entered Tajikistan. It was in that country that their journey came to an abrupt end this past July 29, when five ISIS members deliberately plowed their car into the two adventurers, killing them…

The plan they had chosen involved pointless risk-taking:

> Austin, a vegan who worked at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Geoghegan, a vegetarian who worked in a college admissions office, were both 29 years old – old enough, one would think, to have some idea of just how dangerous a route they had mapped out. A number of the countries they passed through are considered either "not free" or "partly free" by Freedom House. In several of them, it's not uncommon for roving criminal gangs – or, for that matter, police or soldiers or border officials – to rob, rape, or kill innocent travelers without provocation and with total impunity… Other perils include wild carnivores, extreme weather, unsanitary food preparation, and substandard medical care.

Now the first thing that pops out to me about this was "where are the woman's parents?" and then second "why did this woman choose this man, given that men have a role of protecting women?" But, you see, parents these days are terrified of telling their daughters "NO", and women like Lauren are very attracted to men who want to take them on "adventures", instead of marrying them and providing for them and their children. Adventures are desirable because there are no responsibilities or obligations. You get to show off to your boring friends how special you are, and how much fun you're having.

Let's take a close look at Austin's worldview, which Geoghegan found so attractive:

> "With…vulnerability," he wrote, "comes immense generosity: good folks who will recognize your helplessness and recognize that you need assistance in one form or another and offer it in spades."
>
> […]But to read Austin's blog is to see no hint of hesitation, on the part of either of them, to keep on cycling – no sign of fear that their luck might run out at any moment. Their naivete is nothing less than breathtaking. "You watch the news and you read the papers and you're led to believe that the world is a big, scary place," wrote Austin during their trek. "People, the narrative goes, are not to be trusted….I don't buy it. **Evil is a make-believe concept we've invented to deal with the complexities of fellow humans holding values and beliefs and perspectives different than our own."**

This was a man who did not have an accurate view of the world. He had enormous confidence in his own opinions, and he didn't bother informing himself with anything that would have contradicted his optimism. He was reckless and dangerous. And yet his "lack of fear" must have been very attractive to a woman who didn't want to "waste" her youth on responsibilities and obligations. She preferred his happy sounding words to any real demonstrated ability as a man. He didn't have a plan for her future. All he had to offer

was fun and thrills in the moment, and that's what she chose. And I'm certain that if things had continued, they would have broken up the relationship the minute that either of them had to fulfill some obligation that they didn't feel like doing.

And how did this arrogant, reckless optimism work out for him and his girlfriend?

> Even before Austin and Geoghegan met their untimely end, they had problems. In Namibia, Geoghegan picked up a stomach virus. (As Austin wrote on his blog: "she curls into the fetal position and rests, eyes closed, fighting chills and nausea and fatigue. There's little that we can do at the moment. I give her some ibuprofen." Whereupon they resume biking.) Also in Namibia, they were almost hit by a car while bicycling along a highway. In Botswana, they both got sick. In Zambia, Austin had a serious bike crash that sent him flying and left him bleeding all over. In Malawi, he got malaria. In Tanzania, a man tried to bully him into forking over some money. In Ceuta, a driver tried to run him over, and another rear-ended him. In Spain, Geoghegan got conjunctivitis. In Marseilles, she had to be hospitalized for an ear infection that had rendered her deaf. Given the dangers they braved, indeed, they were fortunate to have made it as far as Tajikistan.

Is this what a man is now? Someone who recklessly risks the life of a woman? Why doesn't he get a real STEM degree, get a real private sector job, and buy her a real house that she can feel safe in? Because this isn't what women are looking for today. They want fun and thrills and adventure. They push away men who try to get them to behave responsibly, and they put their trust in men who tell them what they want to hear: that they should follow their heart. And no one has anything to say about it. We tell young women that they are right to value fun and thrills and adventures. We tell young women that they are right to choose irresponsible bad boys who give them all the feelings.

The secular left was very supportive of what Austin did to his girlfriend:

> The Times article about Austin and Geoghegan drew hundreds of reader comments. A surprising number were by other people who'd bicycled or backpacked in far-off, dangerous places. Most saw Austin and Geoghegan as "heroic," "authentic," "idealistic," "inspiring," "a Beautiful example of Purity and Light." Sample reactions: "Their candle burned brightly before it was extinguished." And: "Good for them! They followed their dream." Then there's this: "I only see the beauty of two people taking steps to live the life they envision….The good experienced in their journey far far outweighs any negative." Easy to say when you're not the one in the body bag. "What is more dangerous," asked yet another reader, "exposing yourself to the world and its dangers, and living a full vivid life, or insulating yourself in a safe box, in front of screens, where the world and its marvels and dangers cannot touch you? Jay and Lauren understood that safety is its own danger. They are awesome people."

He was a bad leader, and he led her into a disaster. But that's what she wanted, and

everyone is celebrating what a great man he was.

No one is taking responsibility for letting it happen:

> Her parents, Robert and Elvira Geoghegan, said in a statement that her trip "was typical of her enthusiastic embrace of life's opportunities, her openness to new people and places, and her quest for a better understanding of the world."
>
> […]Santovasco, Austin's mother, said her son and his girlfriend were in the wrong place at the wrong time.
>
> "For them to be in this one place where they decided to kill people is unfathomable to us," she said.

These days, it's very fashionable for people to want to follow their hearts. Many people who believe in God don't really think about how to deny themselves in order to serve God. They think that it's God's job to sort of guarantee that they will be happy if they focus on their own desires. All they have to do is be reckless in their decisions, and have no fear, and God will make them fabulously happy. What the story of Austin and Geoghegan tells us is that hedonism is actually a *secular* life plan. Christians should not be doing things like that with their lives.

Do moral dilemmas undermine objective moral absolutes?

August 14, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

One reason why some people reject the existence of objective morality is because moral absolutes can conflict.

Canadian philosopher Michael Horner to explains the problem.

He writes:

> You may have been confronted with the story of the Nazi soldier coming to the door of the family who are hiding some Jewish people in their home and asking them point blankly, "Are there any Jews here?" The person telling the story then asks you, "What would you say?" or more precisely, "What should you say?"
>
> […]I think for many people the term moral absolutes connotes ideas like inflexibility and rigidity, and that there can never be exemptions. I have also found that many people believe that holding to moral absolutes means that circumstances are not relevant in a moral evaluation and that moral absolutism cannot handle moral dilemmas. But in fact it is possible to believe in moral absolutes, or as I prefer to call them objective moral values, without adhering to these connotations I have mentioned.
>
> For many people to believe in moral absolutes is to believe in rules that no other rules can ever trump. It follows from this that moral absolutes are all equal and there can never be any exemptions. But what if moral absolutes exist in a hierarchy?
>
> We know from experience that very often more than one moral rule applies to a situation. This often leads to moral dilemmas. So in the 'hiding the Jews example' the moral rule of telling the truth seems to apply to the situation, but it would

> seem that the moral rule to protect innocent human life from torture and murder applies also.
>
> If absolutes are all equal there is no way out of the dilemma. You can't choose one absolute over another because in doing so you would be violating at least one absolute which, in their view, is supposed to be inviolable.

So, in this case, it seems as if the moral absolutist is stuck in a dilemma. If you lie to save the innocent life, then that would be wrong. But if you tell the truth and hand the innocent person over to murderers, then that would be wrong. Does this really disprove objective moral absolutes?

This problem annoys me, because I know this is the kind of objection to objective morality that annoying philosophy lecturers like to push onto freshmen in order to convince them that morality is nonsense. But does the moral dilemma objection really work?

More Horner:

> […][I]f moral absolutes exist in a hierarchy and the circumstances or the situation were relevant in determining which absolute takes precedent, then there may be a solution to the moral dilemma. That is exactly what I think is the case in the example. I for one have no difficulty knowing that the morally right thing to do in that situation is to protect the life of innocent people from torture and murder rather than tell the truth to a person who has torture and murder in their plans. My moral intuitions are very clear about this.
>
> If someone objects and says, "No, you must always tell the truth. After all it is an absolute, and absolutes by definition can never be violated," I would point out that they are just using a different hierarchy, putting truth telling above protecting the life of innocent people from torture and murder. There is no way to avoid making a judgment like that since more than one absolute does apply to the situation. I would just ask them to think it through again, and once they see that they have to make a judgment based on some sort of hierarchy in that situation, then I think most people's moral intuitions will affirm that protecting the lives of innocent people from torture and murder, in that situation, trumps truth telling. There is no way to avoid choosing one over the other.

But isn't this moral relativism? After all, we are deciding what to do based on the situation! It's relativism, isn't it?

No, it isn't, because there is always one right thing to do in every situation. In every situation, you always follow the weightiest moral rule. The right thing to do does not depend on your subjective state of mind. It is an objective moral duty, and it is the same for everyone, across all times and in all places. That's what objective morality means - what is right and wrong is not determined by personal preferences or cultural conventions, which vary by time and place.

And of course, God is the ground of this hierarchy of objective moral absolutes. They existed through him before human beings even appeared, as part of his design for us, his

creatures. How we ought to behave is grounded ontologically in God’s design for us.

Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sex and sexuality at Harvard University

August 15, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Dr. Morse delivers a talk based on her book "Smart Sex" at Harvard University.

The MP3 file is here. (21 Mb) (Link in case that doesn't work)

Topics:

- the hook-up culture and its effects on men and women
- cohabitation and its effect on marriage stability
- balancing marriage, family and career
- single motherhood by choice and IVF
- donor-conceived children
- modern sex: a sterile, recreation activity
- the real purposes of sex: procreation and spousal unity
- the hormone oxytocin: when it is secreted and what it does
- the hormone vassopressin: when it is secreted and what it does
- the sexual revolution and the commoditization of sex
- the consumer view of sex vs the organic view of sex
- fatherlessness and multi-partner fertility
- how the "sex-without-relationship" view harms children

52 minutes of lecture, 33 minutes of Q&A from the Harvard students. The Q&A is worth listening to – the first question is from a gay student, and Dr. Morse pulls a William Lane Craig to defeat her objection. It was awesome! I never get tired of listening to her talk, and especially on the topics of marriage and family.

Is the Roman Catholic church serious about stopping child abuse?

August 16, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

At the risk of alienating my Catholic readers, I feel that I have to say something about the recent news story about the Catholic Church leaders abusing children of both sexes, and then covering it up. Let's start with a news article, then a reaction from a Catholic person I respect, then I'll give my thoughts about it.

Here's a news story from ABC News:

> Sexual assault survivors shared their stories after a Pennsylvania grand jury report accused hundreds of Roman Catholic priests of assaulting children.
>
> Speaking at a news conference Tuesday, several of them detailed heart-wrenching accounts of alleged sexual abuse against 301 priests across six of the state's eight dioceses.
>
> […]Pennsylvania's attorney general released the scathing report that revealed the results of a two-year investigation into hundreds of sexual abuse allegations. The probe found that at least 1,000 children had been abused at the hands of Catholic clergy members, dating back to the 1940s.
>
> "Predators in every diocese weaponized the Catholic faith and used it as a tool of their abuse," Attorney General Josh Shapiro said Tuesday. "Priests were raping little boys and girls and the men of God who were responsible for them not only did nothing, they hid it all. For decades."
>
> […]The investigation was based on official documents and secret archives from the church, according to the report. High-level church leaders allegedly covered up the abuse for years, fostering a "circle of secrecy," Shapiro said.

> "The cover up was sophisticated and, all the while, church leadership kept records of the abuse and the cover-up," Shapiro said Tuesday. "They sought to do the same things that senior church leaders and the diocese we investigated have done for decades: bury the sexual abuse by priests upon children and cover it up forever. Shamefully."

The key concern about this is the cover-up. The Roman Catholic church was more concerned with covering up for the abuse and rapes. That was their priority. They were concerned about defending the reputation of the corrupt child abusers. They were not concerned about the victims. And they were not concerned about what the Bible teaches about sexual immorality. Or what the Bible teaches about anything, really.

Matt Walsh, a conservative Catholic, had this to say in a post from June 2018, at the Daily Wire:

> I'm taking some heat on Twitter today because I said that the real problem in the Catholic Church isn't pedophilia but gay priests. As the statistics clearly show, the vast majority of predators in the clergy were homosexual and the vast majority were not pedophiles. The same study that reported those figures did try to absolve gay priests by claiming that their homosexuality had nothing to do with anything. But this is an assumption — I think a plainly absurd and unprovable assumption — that is not born out by their own statistics.
>
> And the problem goes beyond sex abuse of minors. As Rod Dreher has been reporting, and liberal publications agree, homosexuality runs rampant in the modern priesthood. Sexual activity between priests, and between priests and seminarians, is not uncommon. I think it is rather difficult to separate these facts from the fact that teen boys were so often sexually victimized. Is it just a coincidence that gay priests exist in such large numbers, protected by gay cabals within the Church, and at the same time there happen to be a bunch of priests molesting pubescent boys? Are these two realities entirely separate from one another?
>
> Take the case of the scummy Cardinal McCarrick. He has been accused of preying upon young boys. But most of the stories that have come out about him revolve around his sexual exploits with seminarians. Grown men, in other words. Yet we are told that the fact of his homosexuality is irrelevant. How could it be? If he were not a homosexual, he would not have molested boys. Who could dispute this? I'm not claiming that all homosexuals molest boys. I am claiming that only homosexuals molest boys. A non-homosexual, by definition, is not attracted to males.

Just to be clear, the Bible's teaching on sexual activity is that no one is allowed to engage in sexual activity outside of natural marriage. Period.

I don't feel comfortable listing the details of what the Catholic leaders did, but you can read about it on the Pennsylvania attorney general's web site. The important thing here is

that none of the men who did these things, or covered it up after, really expect to meet God face-to-face on the Day of Judgment. Everything they did to those children and young people was for their own pleasure and gratification. They certainly were not working for God, or advancing his interests. On the contrary, they put themselves first, and pushed young people away from God.

If I could summarize God's agenda for his human creations, it would be that we all not do anything that would push anyone away from a two-way relationship with God. That goes for everybody including atheists, by the way. Nobody, regardless of religion, should do anything that pushes anyone away from God. So do these Roman Catholics work for God? To work for God, minimally, is to put your own desires on hold, and perform actions that advance God's agenda. God's agenda, minimally, is that people come to have accurate beliefs about his existence and character. It's OK to be offensive to others by telling them the truth gently and respectfully. But it's not OK to harm them in a way that pushes them away from God, just because you want to gratify your own selfish desires.

Here's a thought about the search for truth and meaning. If you want to have a comprehensive worldview that answers the big questions, like cosmic origins, objective moral obligations, life after death, etc. then it's probably not a good idea to look to people in an organization to tell you what is true or not. Especially when the organization relies on feelings, mysticism, rituals, etc. An organization is interested in protecting the organization. When the Jehovah's Witnesses get caught lying about their failed end-of-the-world predictions, they cover it up. When the Mormons get caught lying about cosmology and archaeology, they cover it up. Organizations protect the organization. A much better plan, it seems to me, is to develop your own worldview, starting with the evidence from science and history. That's what I did, and I'm an evangelical Protestant Christian.

47-year-old divorced woman with kids sues dating agency for failing to find her a rich husband

August 17, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

Today, many women put off marriage while they're in their 20s, when they are most attractive to marriage-minded men. Some marry, but they marry based on spontaneity and feelings, and it turns into divorce. What happens next? Here's an example from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> A divorced mother-of-three who sued an 'exclusive' dating agency after it failed to find her a rich boyfriend has been handed her money back by a top judge.
>
> Tereza Burki paid £12,600 to Seventy Thirty to hunt for 'possibly the man of my dreams, the father of my child', she told the High Court in London.
>
> The 47-year-old said the agency assured her it only dealt in 'creme de la creme' matches and could introduce her to 'bachelors you dream of meeting'.
>
> But Judge Richard Parkes QC today ordered the agency to repay her fee, ruling that she had been 'deceived' by Seventy Thirty's then-managing director.
>
> And, as well as giving her her money back, the judge awarded her £500 for the 'disappointment and sadness' she suffered. Her total award was £13,100.

Burki is 47 years old today, so in 2014, I assume that she was around 43 years old. 43, as you know, is well past the normal age for having children. Women's fertility declines sharply at age 27, then takes a nose-dive at age 35. By 40, it's nearly impossible to get pregnant, which is why women who want children ought to focus on finding a good man

in their early-to-mid-20s.

More:

> When she signed up with the agency in 2014, Mrs Burki's requirements for the men she wanted to meet were 'not modest', the judge added.
>
> She wanted a wealthy man with 'a lifestyle similar or more affluent than her own' and, ideally, 'multiple residences'.
>
> But the most important factor for Mrs Burki, who lives on an upmarket street in Chelsea, West London, was that her soulmate would be prepared to have more children, as she wanted four.
>
> […]Giving evidence during the case, Mrs Burki told the judge: 'You shouldn't promise people who are in a fragile state of mind, in their mid-40s, the man of their dreams.

I'm sure that the reason Dina sent me this article is to warn me about how irresponsible women can be. After all, this woman HAD a decade in her 20s to get serious about finding a man who would commit to her, and give her children. We don't know what happened in her 20s. But judging from the enormous gap between her demands and her own attractiveness (43 and divorced with 3 children from another man), she was probably being selfish. She's very clear about what she wants from a man, but she hasn't prepared for what a man might want from her.

So let's review that.

Marriage-minded men are interested in a wife during a certain time window when the support of a woman really makes a difference. That time period is the stressful period of a man's life, when he first graduates from college or trade school and has to start his career. The first years of a career are the most stressful. And that's when having the physical, emotional, and practical support of a young, attractive, chaste woman really makes a difference. Married men do better at things like earning, saving, health, etc. than single men. Naturally, the best time to GET THIS SUPPORT is the time when the man is doing things that determine his earning, saving, health, etc.

It's not that older women have no value. It's that the woman has to be present during the critical time when a man is trying to do hard things, and he doesn't have the safety net of savings, a resume, etc. Many men move for their first jobs, which just adds another level of difficulty to those early years. When I moved for my first job, everything was difficult: eating, sleeping, cleaning, being content with chastity, etc. I had no family nearby, and I left behind all my friends. It would have been nice to have had the support of a young, and beautiful marriage-minded woman at the critical time when I needed it.

But now, after the degrees have been earned, the gapless resume filled out, the retirement accounts filled, and the house paid for, it's hardly the time for a woman over 40 to show up and demand her share, when she never invested anything into the enterprise.

And yet, many women apparently DO think like this. Many seem to have no concept of

what a man wants out of marriage, and that's why they waste their 20s doing what feels good to them, and just expecting marriage to happen without any self-denial or self-sacrifice or self-control. If they really cared about marriage, then they would prioritize understanding what marriage-minded men want and need. They would be developing marriage skills and marriage character – things like cooking, caring for others, being good with money, child care, being sober, being faithful, etc. If a woman wants a husband, then she ought to be concerned with helping him to do the things that she expects him to do as a husband.

There used to be some awareness in young women that premarital sex with hot bad boys was bad for her future husband. That focusing on partying and travel was bad for her future husband. That doing easy degrees, getting easy jobs, while going into debt was bad for future husband. Now it seems that women are making all their decisions based on what feels good for them in the moment, in total ignorance of how that ruins their ability to invest in the man who wants to marry them later. They just can't (or won't) understand how being selfish today has consequences to marriage and family tomorrow.

Do women not look at marriage-minded men doing what we are doing and think "I don't want him to have to do that alone. I want to help him, so that it's not so difficult. And if I have to learn how to do things that help him, then I will put my own needs and feelings second, and learn to do what helps him". Is there any woman out there who looks at a good, marriage-ready man, and thinks about what he needs? And about what she can do to help him? If not, then is it any wonder that men have lost interest in marriage?

I noticed that Dalrock also posted on this, and some of the comments are interesting.

Are you ready for marriage? 10 questions to find out how prepared you are

August 18, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Would you like your marriage to be long-lasting and fulfilling? Well, check out the questions below and see if you are ready for life-long wedded bliss.

1. Are you opposed to no-fault divorce laws?

No-fault divorce laws allow one spouse to leave the marriage at any time, for any reason, or for no reason at all. If you support no-fault divorce, then your view of marriage is that it's something to be entered into lightly, because it can be exited easily. You'll be walking down the aisle thinking "oh well, if it doesn't work out, I can always get a divorce". If you oppose no-fault divorce laws, then your view of marriage is that there is no escape hatch. You'll probably be a lot more careful about getting married. Since you are convinced that marriage is built to last forever, you'll have a courtship of at least 6 months, and involve both sets of parents in the process. If you put commitment above happiness, you're ready for marriage.

2. Are you opposed to abortion laws?

Abortion laws basically make it easy for two people to have recreational sex, and then get rid of any complications that result quickly and easily. This way, both the people that created the effect can escape the responsibility for what they did, and keep right on pursuing their goals and dreams. If you support abortion laws, you're really saying that you can engage in recreational sex with people who are unwilling to accept responsibility for any children that result. If you are pro-life, then you're saying that people should be careful about having sex, and be ready to take responsibility for a child, should one appear. Being responsible is good preparation for marriage.

3. Are you supportive of daycare for young kids?

Daycare services are essential for couples who need both the father and the mother to be working. The advantage of both parents working is that you can afford lots of shiny new stuff – like vacations, boats, shoes and handbags. Studies show that children don't die during daycare, although if you put a child in daycare, there will be effects on the child's behavior, such as higher anxiety and aggression. If you oppose daycare, you're putting the needs of your children above your need for shiny stuff. Putting the needs of children first is a sign that you are ready for the self-sacrifice that marriage requires.

4. Are you in favor of smaller government?

If you're in favor of smaller government, then you would rather keep taxes low so that more money stays in the family. If you support bigger government, then you think that government knows how to spend your money better than you and your spouse do. Additionally, government usually likes to spend more money than they take in. For example, in Obama's 8 years, we added $10 trillion dollars to the debt, which doubled from 10 to 20 trillion under his watch. If you oppose higher taxes and bigger government, then you want government to pass on less debt to your children. Putting your kids' financial well-being over your own is pro-marriage.

5. Are you in favor of school choice?

If you're opposed to school choice, then you think that government should decide which schools your children will attend. School choice laws allow parents to give money to the schools they think are best for the children. If a school has excellent teachers and teaches students skills that they can use in their professional lives, then parents can choose that school. Schools have to compete to provide higher quality to parents, for lower cost. If you support giving parents more choice, then you put the needs of children – especially poor, minority children – above the needs of education administrators and teacher unions. Putting kids fist is pro-marriage.

6. Are you in favor of premarital sex?

Premarital sex is really fun (so I'm told). You can have sex with people who are just really attractive, even if these people have lousy character. Your friends will be impressed, and you'll feel more attractive – like you were climbing a ladder of attractiveness with each new partner. If you combine sex with being drunk, then you can't remember anything after. And you can't feel guilty if the booze made you do it, right? On the other hand, if you present yourself to your spouse as a virgin, you are telling them that you have self-control, that you take sex as communication rather than recreation, and that they can trust you to be faithful by keeping sex inside the marriage. Trust is important for a good marriage.

7. Are you in favor of welfare for single mothers?

Sometimes, women find themselves pregnant before they are married. If you think that giving taxpayer money to women who have babies before they have husbands is a good idea, then you are rewarding behavior that creates fatherless children. Raising a child without a father causes serious behavioral problems. Boys tend to become more violent,

and are more likely to commit crimes. Girls tend to engage in sex at earlier ages. If you oppose encouraging fatherlessness with welfare, you want women to get married before they have kids. Taking the needs of children seriously is pro-marriage.

8. Are you in favor of same-sex marriage?

When a man and a man get married and acquire children, those children will not be raised with their birth mother. Similarly with lesbians, the children will not grow up with their birth father. Studies show that children suffer from not being raised by their biological parents. For example, children of same-sex parents have lower graduation rates than children raised by heterosexual couples. If you think that children have a right to a stable relationship with their biological mother and father, then you place a higher value on the needs of children as opposed to the needs of adults. That's a good sign you're ready for marriage.

9. Are you in favor of radical feminism?

Feminism shows that you think the purpose of marriage is to make women happy, and not to work as a team to serve God and raise good children. Indeed. Marriage doesn't work if the woman approaches it as an accessory. Marriage is about a man and a woman sacrificing their own interests and compromising in order to work together as a team. Husbands and children have needs that women should care about. Feminism teaches women that husbands and children are less important than their careers, hobbies and interests. Feminism is anti-marriage.

10. Are you responsible with earning, budgeting and saving money?

This one comes to us from Bob P. He says that marriages work better when both spouses are "committed to financial planning, budgeting and a renunciation of debt to support a lifestyle. Disagreement about financial issues is one of the greatest causes of marital stress." If you're able to choose a college major or a trade that you don't like, but that pays well, that's a positive. If you're able to string together jobs so that your resume is gap-less, that's a positive. If you're able to save money even though it means you're having less fun, that's a positive. If you're able to give away money to others to support them, that means you're able to sacrifice your interests for the benefit of others. That's pro-marriage.

Well, how did you do? Leave your ideas for more policies and points of view that are marriage-friendly in the comments.

William Lane Craig's secret weapon is his amazing wife Jan

August 19, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: "Godspeed" by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

I want to draw your attention to a talk on "Vision in Life" given by Dr. William Lane Craig. Dr. Craig is the ablest defender of the Christian faith operating today. He has done formal academic debates with all of the best known atheists on major university campuses in front of *thousands* of university students.

It turns out that he owes a lot of his success to his amazing wife Jan.

The MP3 file is here. (32 minutes)

This talk was Dr. Craig's chapel address to Biola University students.

About 11 minutes into the talk, Bill describes what happened after he finished his Bachelor's degree at Wheaton:

> And so I joined the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for 2 years, and was assigned to Northern Illinois University. And that was where I met my wife Jan. She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota where she had come to faith in Christ. And she had a similar vision for her life of evangelism and discipleship.
>
> And as we worked at NIU together, she with gals and I with the guys, leading students to Christ and discipling them to walk with the Lord, we fell in love. And we decided that we would be more effective if we joined forces and became a

> team.

So their reason for getting together was because they thought that they would be more effective in evangelism and discipleship if they worked as a team.

It is at this point in the talk where Bill begins to explain just how Jan molded him into the lean, mean debating machine that travels the world striking terror into the hearts of atheists.

Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

In an article on his web site, he talks about how Jan encouraged him to do his first Ph.D:

> As graduation from Trinity neared, Jan and I were sitting one evening at the supper table in our little campus apartment, talking about what to do after graduation. Neither of us had any clear leading or inclination of what we should do next.
>
> So Jan said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really like to do next?"
>
> I replied, "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to England and do a doctorate under John Hick."
>
> "Who's he?" she asked.
>
> "Oh, he's this famous British philosopher who's written extensively on arguments for the existence of God," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a cosmological argument for God's existence."
>
> But it hardly seemed a realistic idea.
>
> The next evening at supper Jan handed me a slip of paper with John Hick's address on it. "I went to the library today and found out that he's at the University of Birmingham in England," she said. "Why don't you write him a letter

> and ask him if you can do a doctoral thesis under him on the cosmological argument?"
>
> What a woman! So I did, and to our amazement and delight Professor Hick wrote back saying he'd be very pleased to supervise my doctoral work on that subject. So it was an open door!

And in the same article, he explains how Jan encouraged him to get his second Ph.D:

> As Jan and I neared the completion of my doctoral studies in Birmingham, our future path was again unclear to us. I had sent out a number of applications for teaching positions in philosophy at American universities but had received no bites. We didn't know what to do.
>
> I remember it like yesterday. We were sitting at the supper table in our little house outside Birmingham, and Jan suddenly said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really *like* to do next?"
>
> I laughed because I remembered how the Lord had used her question to guide us in the past. I had no trouble answering the question. "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to Germany and study under Wolfhart Pannenberg."
>
> "Who's he?"
>
> "Oh, he's this famous German theologian who's defended the resurrection of Christ historically," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus."
>
> Our conversation drifted to other subjects, but Jan later told me that my remark had just lit a fire under her. The next day while I was at the university, she slipped away to the library and began to research grants-in-aid for study at German universities. Most of the leads proved to be defunct or otherwise inapplicable to our situation. But there were two grants she found that were possibilities. You can imagine how surprised I was when she sprung them on me!

Both of these Ph.D experiences are also described in the talk. And the talk concludes as follows:

> **I am so thankful to be married to a woman who is tremendously resourceful, tremendously talented and energetic, who could have pursued an independent career in any number of areas, but instead, she has chose to wed her aspirations to mine, and to make it her goal to make me the most effective person I can be, for Christ. And she has been like my right arm in ministry over these many years. And it is a tremendous privilege to be a team with a person like that.**
>
> **And you young men, I would encourage you, if you marry, to find a gal who shares your vision, not some independent vision, but who is interested in aligning herself with you, and pursuing together a**

> **common vision and goal that will draw you [together], so that you will avoid the growing separateness that so often creeps into marriages.**

And now you know the rest of Bill's story. *The person you marry will have an enormous influence on the impact you will have for Christ and his Kingdom.* It is up to you to decide whether that influence is going to be positive or negative, by deciding if you will marry, and if you do marry, by deciding whom you will marry.

You may also be interested in this talk given by William Lane Craig, entitled "Healthy Relationships" (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008) (audio here) In that talk, he offers advice to Christians who want to have a marriage that is consistent with their Christian faith.

Facebook joins Twitter, Google and YouTube in deliberately purging conservative voices

August 20, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Facebook, Google, Youtube, Twitter purging conservatives (Source: The Stream)

The November mid-term elections are almost here, and progressives are doing what they can to win. Apple, Facebook, Twitter, Google and YouTube are composed entirely of secular leftists. These companies apparently only hire hardcore radical leftists, (remember James Damore?). Do these big corporations act any differently from the big government fascists in Venezuela and North Korea?

Consider this article from the Daily Caller:

> Facebook is censoring PragerU videos for violating its speech codes that prohibit so-called "hate speech" and shadow banning its posts, PragerU wrote on Twitter Friday.
>
> "We're being heavily censored on @Facebook. Our last 9 posts are reaching 0 of our 3 million followers. At least two videos were deleted last night for 'hate speech' including our recent video with @ConservativeMillen," PragerU tweeted.
>
> The official PragerU Facebook page is still up on Facebook at the time of publication. Its Facebook page reposts the same videos consistently and others can still be found on the page.
>
> However, it appears that one specific PragerU social media administrator — the one who posted the videos that Facebook considered violated its "hate speech" policies — is unable to post on behalf of PragerU, resulting only other PragerU administrators being able to see the post. No one else can see the posts.

Here are some details on the specific videos that were deleted:

> One of the deleted videos, titled, "Where Are the Moderate Muslims?" was most likely posted on Facebook on Thursday.

> The presenter, Hussein Aboubakr, states that when he was growing up, his teacher and his Imam were happy when they heard about the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11.
>
> […]Another video, titled "Make Men Masculine Again," was posted Aug. 6 and has also been deleted. The video, presented by conservative YouTube personality Allie Stuckey, presents an argument that making men feminine is both wrong and dangerous.

The Daily Signal reports that Google is making an app to censor content critical of the Marxist government of China.

Excerpt:

> Code-named "Dragonfly," Google's highly exclusive project was started in spring 2017, and only a few hundred employees are privy to it. The purpose of Dragonfly is to produce a Google app that will adhere to China's Orwellian censorship laws.
>
> The app, which could later be expanded to a computer search engine, would actively censor information deemed subversive by the state. The engine would block queries relating to democracy, human rights, religion, and events or history the state wishes to suppress.

Google has no problem with censoring voices that are critical of far-left extremism. That's their view, so they protect it from criticism.

This article on the Federalist clearly shows that Google and YouTube are deliberately censoring conservative content. (H/T Eric)

Let's start with Google ads:

> Within days, Google blocked my ad and informed my team that we had violated their policies. I called Google. The problem, they explained, was that the video had hate speech.
>
> It was a Fox Business Network video with Trish Regan interviewing me about the Russian collusion investigation. The Google employee could not find the exact offending words, but referred me to various other supervisors up the ladder.
>
> It took much of the day… with successive employees reciting Google policies that they admitted explained nothing. We concluded I should re-submit the ad and whoever was offended at Google would be forced to surface.
>
> Once again my ad was blocked, and this time my Google account was suspended… Once again I called Google and spent a day trying to figure out what was wrong… Was I too nice to President Trump? Should I have been more critical?
>
> […]The next day, Nurse Ratched at Google finally emerged. I was never given her name, but conversations with her employees indicated her sex. It was nothing

> that I or Regan had said in the video, her team explained. Huh?
>
> No, no, the problem, I was told, was in the "crawler of words along the bottom of the video." It was a quote of Trump declaring that the Robert Mueller investigation was a "witch hunt." This was apparently hate speech.

A lot of his YouTube content was also censored:

> A viral YouTube interview with me and Fox Anchor Neil Cavuto about why Hillary Clinton lost the election was penalized. The video had more than 861,000 views and was earning an average of 15,000 views a day when it suddenly went dark. On February 17, after the new censorship took hold, this video dropped to 50 views a day. That is where it has stayed ever since.
>
> Likewise, a viral YouTube interview with me and "Fox and Friends" co-host Brian Kilmeade about the election, a video that had 961,000 views and was clicking off 20,000 views a day, suddenly dropped to 30. It all happened in one day. And it has stayed there ever since.

Remember, inside these big tech companies, it's often extreme left-wing hate groups like the SPLC making the decisions:

> In January, 2018 my channel was hit by shadow-banning. Sometime that month, Google allegedly hired thousands of outside actors supplied by the infamous Southern Poverty Law Center. This was the organization that attacked Ben Carson, the only African American in Donald Trump's cabinet. They were apparently the new arbiters of decency.

In my own case, earlier in the week I sent a photo of the 6779 Twitter followers for this blog to Dina. *An hour later*, I had lost 52 followers, down to 6727! Other people reported the same thing – lost followers and shadow-banning. It only seems to happen to conservatives, though.

Study: children of same-sex couples do less well than those of married couples

August 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

The Public Discourse reports on a recent study out of Canada.

Excerpt:

> A new academic study based on the Canadian census suggests that a married mom and dad matter for children. Children of same-sex coupled households do not fare as well.
>
> There is a new and significant piece of evidence in the social science debate about gay parenting and the unique contributions that mothers and fathers make to their children's flourishing. A study published last week in the journal *Review of the Economics of the Household*—analyzing data from a very large, population-based sample—reveals that the children of gay and lesbian couples are only about 65 percent as likely to have graduated from high school as the children of married, opposite-sex couples. And gender matters, too: girls are more apt to struggle than boys, with daughters of gay parents displaying dramatically low graduation rates.
>
> Unlike US-based studies, this one evaluates a 20 percent sample of the Canadian census, where same-sex couples have had access to all taxation and government benefits since 1997 and to marriage since 2005.
>
> While in the US Census same-sex households have to be guessed at based on the gender and number of self-reported heads-of-household, young adults in the Canadian census were asked, "Are you the child of a male or female same-sex married or common law couple?" While study author and economist Douglas Allen noted that very many children in Canada who live with a gay or lesbian

> parent are actually living with a single mother—a finding consonant with that detected in the 2012 New Family Structures Study—he was able to isolate and analyze hundreds of children living with a gay or lesbian *couple* (either married or in a "common law" relationship akin to cohabitation).
>
> So the study is able to compare—side by side—the young-adult children of same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples, as well as children growing up in single-parent homes and other types of households. Three key findings stood out to Allen:
>
> children of married opposite-sex families have a high graduation rate compared to the others; children of lesbian families have a very low graduation rate compared to the others; and the other four types [common law, gay, single mother, single father] are similar to each other and lie in between the married/lesbian extremes.
>
> Employing regression models and series of control variables, Allen concludes that the substandard performance *cannot* be attributed to lower school attendance or the more modest education of gay or lesbian parents. Indeed, same-sex parents were characterized by higher levels of education, and their children were more likely to be enrolled in school than even those of married, opposite-sex couples. And yet their children are notably more likely to lag in finishing their own schooling.
>
> […]The truly unique aspect of Allen's study, however, may be its ability to distinguish gender-specific effects of same-sex households on children. He writes:
>
> the particular gender mix of a same-sex household has a dramatic difference in the association with child graduation. Consider the case of girls. . . . Regardless of the controls and whether or not girls are currently living in a gay or lesbian household, the odds of graduating from high school are considerably lower than any other household type. Indeed, girls living in gay households are only 15 percent as likely to graduate compared to girls from opposite sex married homes.
>
> Thus although the children of same-sex couples fare worse overall, the disparity is unequally shared, but is instead based on the combination of the gender of child and gender of parents. Boys fare better—that is, they're more likely to have finished high school—in gay households than in lesbian households. For girls, the opposite is true. Thus the study undermines not only claims about "no differences" but also assertions that moms and dads are interchangeable. *They're not*.

With a little digging, I found the abstract of the study:

> Almost all studies of same-sex parenting have concluded there is "no difference" in a range of outcome measures for children who live in a household with same-sex parents compared to children living with married opposite-sex parents.

> Recently, some work based on the US census has suggested otherwise, but those studies have considerable drawbacks. Here, a 20% sample of the 2006 Canada census is used to identify self-reported children living with same-sex parents, and to examine the association of household type with children's high school graduation rates. This large random sample allows for control of parental marital status, distinguishes between gay and lesbian families, and is large enough to evaluate differences in gender between parents and children. Children living with gay and lesbian families in 2006 were about 65 % as likely to graduate compared to children living in opposite sex marriage families. Daughters of same-sex parents do considerably worse than sons.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington. A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more shorter times). That's not good for children either. Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships have much higher rates of domestic violence. That's not good for children either. So we have three reasons to think that normalizing gay relationships as "marriage" would not be good for children.

The reason I am posting this is because I want people to understand why social conservatives like me propose these laws defining and promoting marriage. We do favor natural marriage for the same reason that we oppose no-fault divorce, and for the same reason why we oppose welfare for single mothers (it encourages single motherhood). We don't want to encourage people to deprive children of their mother or their father. We look at the research, and we decide that children need their mother and father. Given the choice between the needs of the child and restraining the freedom of the adults, we prefer the child's need for her mother and father. It's not just arbitrary rules, there is a reason behind the rules.

But children are not commodities. They have certain needs right out of the box. Adults should NOT be thinking about how to duct-tape a child onto any old relationship that doesn't offer the same safety and stability that opposite sex marriage offers. We should be passing laws to strengthen marriage in order to protect children, not to weaken it. Libertarians don't want to do that, because they want adults to be free to do as they please, at the expense of children. Libertarians think that the adults should be able to negotiate private contracts and have no obligations to any children who are present, or who may be present later.

Related posts

- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert

P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

Is it the man's responsibility to pursue the woman, or the other way around?

August 22, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

If you ask this question theoretically, most people will probably say that it's the man's responsibility, especially in the church. Is this because women don't like the idea of having to plan out and achieve something? Maybe. But what is interesting is that the man-pursues view is very popular in the church, even though it's not very common in the Bible. Dalrock posted something about this.

He writes:

> One comment I see from fathers with surprising regularity is that their unmarried daughter is in a great position to find a husband because she's not remotely interested in the kind of men who express interest in her.
>
> I… think this is tied into the erroneous idea that the Bible teaches that men should pursue and women should judge the performance. But it isn't the Bible that teaches this ethic, it is the religion of Courtly Love that teaches this. Think of the only two women to have books of the Bible named after them. Both Ruth and Esther pursued their eventual husbands. Ruth's pursuit of Boaz resulted in her being the grandmother of King David, which meant that Christ would come from her line. Esther's pursuit of Ahasuerus allowed her to save the Jews.

Cane Caldo was actually the first to write about this on his blog:

> According to traditionalists (and others): Men are supposed to chase, and women are supposed to be caught. Or they might say: Men are to initiate, and women are to respond.
>
> […]If you fancy yourself a traditionalist… [s]earch your Bible for a story about a

> man who woos a woman directly.

So, just consider that for a minute. Ruth is probably the best example of a woman who just makes decisions to get on with life, and happens across a wealthy single man. Then she consults with Naomi and takes action to pursue that man. It works out for her. Where in the Bible does the man pursue the woman?

Derek Ramsey was able to come up with two examples, and he commented on Dalrock's blog:

> You can find examples of all cases in the Bible: fully arranged marriages (for Isaac), where the man pursued the woman (Jacob; Hosea), where the woman pursued the man (Ruth; Esther), and where both pursued each other or it wasn't clearly stated one way or the other (Samson; Solomon). I would argue that pursuit (by either sex) is neither condemned nor encouraged. Each situation is different and there is no rule one way or the other.

I think that Derek wins the argument, here. But I still think that practically speaking, in such a time (of feminism) as this, it's much much wiser for women to take action to "pursue" men she is interested in. That doesn't mean asking men out, though.

thedeti explains in a comment:

> A man setting his sights on one or two or three women and then pursuing them really hard trying to get on their radar isn't the best way to find a woman who's interested in him and who is the best match.
>
> Instead, he should be his best version of himself, and then see which women are tossing subtle signs of interest at him. Which women just kind of show up where he is, which ones make a point to say hi to him, which ones reach out to him, which ones contact him, which ones strike up conversations with him. And then from THOSE women he should select a few he is interested in and then pursue them.
>
> That certainly isn't what most Christians are teaching their children. I certainly wasn't taught this.

And a bit later, thedeti says:

> In the current #MeToo climate, false rape allegations, and sexual harassment's current definition as "any conduct or words uttered by any man anywhere that any woman within sight or earshot didn't like", this model can be downright dangerous for men.
>
> A man can no longer just pick a few girls he's interested in and pursue them. If he selects some girls who dont' like him, he's in for a world of hurt by trying to "perform" for them. If he selects one who kind of likes him, but he makes even one wrong move or says one remotely mildly offensive thing, he's done. Not only will she know about it, all her friends will know too.

> When a woman is very interested and shows it, she'll be much more forgiving of his expected missteps. That gives him room to run, and gives a budding relationship the space it needs to germinate and grow.

Deti advises women to just show up in places where men they are interested in are, and not actively discourage them. Maybe ask him questions about what he is doing as a Christian, and ask for his advice about something he knows about, etc. And deti warns women to consider that in a culture where false accusations and frivolous no-fault divorces are everywhere, men with good educations, degrees and finances will be very careful about pursuing women.

My thoughts

I was speaking to someone who thinks that she wants to be pursued by a man. I suggested that she read the book of Ruth to counter her view. The first and most important piece of advice I gave her was to "cross the room" for any man she is interested in. Stand up, walk directly at him, and speak right in his face. Maintain eye contact and speak directly to him about things he is interested in. On another day, I told her that the most important thing you can ask a man about is his vision to serve God.

As women age and lose their beauty, the only thing that remains is the man's passion – his plan – and the place of the woman within it. Men stay in love with women who have invested in the plan they made to serve God. Naturally, it's POINTLESS to choose any man unless he has a plan to serve God effectively that he has demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice for. In my case, writing this blog is a sacrifice, and giving money to Christian apologists and pro-life debaters is a sacrifice. A woman should be skeptical about anything a man says – look at what he has already done for his vision, and whether he is actually practical and determined enough to achieve anything. That's where you'll find your place. And that's what you need to investigate in a husband candidate. Standing back and remaining passive, waiting to be pursued, is just going to attract a lot of non-Christian men who are *pursuing you for sex*. If the man is pursuing you, and he hasn't told you his vision (why he needs you as his wife anyway), then he wants sex.

The pursuit of women by non-Christian alpha male bad boys seems to be welcomed, surprisingly, by a lot of passive Christian women who kind of lie back and expect to just acquiesce to experiences that feel good. Women today don't like to think about marriage in a structured way. And they especially don't want to be asked by men about past decisions, demonstrated abilities, future wife responsibilities and obligations, etc. (How dare men evaluate them for a marriage plan!) They don't want marriage, defined as self-sacrificial commitment. They want marriage as constant tingles, supplied by an alpha male bad boy who exists solely to generate feelings of happiness in them, and feelings of envy in their girlfriends. Think about marriage as a plan? That's boring. Let's get drunk and hook up with an alpha male bad boy, and see if he calls back after the abortion.

Alpha male bad boys feel good (for a while) and this is how women get trapped into relationships with men who have no reason to commit to them. A much better strategy is to stop being attracted to alpha male bad boys, and deliberately engage in conversations

with marriage-ready men. As my friend Lindsay says, you need to learn to become attracted to men who have a vision that will survive the loss of your youth and beauty.

In my own case, I'll be able to retire at 50 with a net worth well north of 7 figures. Because of this, it would be stupid for me to waste my time pursuing Christian women whose criteria for men has nothing to do with the marriage enterprise, and is *INDISTINGUISHABLE* from the criteria used by non-Christian women. The *ONLY* thing that would catch my eye at this point is a woman who is equal to me (chaste, no tattoos, STEM degree(s), debt-free, married parents, house or savings, into apologetics, conservative politics, and between the ages of 23-28). And that's a minimum. And she can forget about being pursued by me. She'll have to approach me, and question me about what my plan is, and where she would fit into it.

I've often been told by wise female Christian advisors that I need to do a better job of showing off my situation to women. But if I spent the money on sparkly things and fun, I wouldn't be financially secure, would I? It's up to women to stop being so shallow and emotional. They need to look beyond appearances and fun. They need to have a marriage focus, and they need to choose men, show up and start investigating and investing. I simply don't have the time to flail around in a feminist culture where women, including Christian women, are woefully unqualified for the marriage enterprise. It's not my job, after having made thousands of good decisions, to risk my fortune by pursuing women who have made thousands of bad decisions (promiscuity, debt, useless degrees, etc). The entitled attitudes of women today, including Christian women, is nothing short of astonishing to men like me who have spent a lifetime being careful about being chaste, sober, practical, frugal and effective.

Alistair Begg has a great sermon series on Ruth that emphasizes Ruth's agency, and her willingness to make decisions that were practical without any sort of being led by feelings or being nudged by God. Christian women, if you want to get married, then get to work on finding a man and making it easy for him to choose you.

Bible study: Was the resurrection body of Jesus spiritual or physical?

August 23, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

So, everyone from left to right accepts the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 being dated to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, even atheists like Crossley, Ludemann and Crossan. The thing is, some people are not sure that the appearances of Jesus to individuals, groups, and skeptics really were physical appearances. They say "well, Paul's appearance was non-physical, so the other ones must have been, too".

Let's take a look.

Here's a paragraph from my friend Eric Chabot, from his blog Think Apologetics. He explains why Paul's use of the word "resurrection" to describe what the other witnesses saw means *bodily* resurrection.

He writes:

> If Paul did have a vision then the term "vision" is vague and must be defined. As Licona points out, visions are either objective (i.e., something that is seen without the use of our natural senses) or subjective (i.e., a product of our minds). The real problem is with the vision hypothesis is that it doesn't explain Paul's use of resurrection to explain what had happened to Jesus. The two words are used for resurrection in the New Testament "anastasis" (rising up) and "egersis" (waking up), both imply a physical body**.** Furthermore, the use of the word "opethe" (the Greek word for appeared) shows the Gospel writers did believe that Jesus appeared physically. "There you will see (opethe) him" (Matt. 28:7); "The Lord has risen and has appeared (opethe) to Simon" (Luke 24:24).

> When they used “opethe” here, it means that He appeared physically to them.

> So when Paul gives his list of appearances in 1 Cor. 15, the issues becomes whether the appearance to him is the same as it was to the disciples. There is no doubt the post resurrection body of Jesus (after the ascension) had to be somewhat different than the body the disciples saw. Also, whenever the New Testament mentions the word body, in the context of referring to an individual human being, the Greek word “soma” always refers to a literal, physical body.Greek specialist Robert Gundry says “the consistent and exclusive use of soma for the physical body in anthropological contexts resists dematerialization of the resurrection, whether by idealism or by existentialism.” [9] Furthermore, in N.T. Wright’s The Resurrection of the Son of God shows that the Greek word for resurrection which is “anastasis” was used by ancient Jews, pagans, and Christians as bodily in nature.

Now, I think my view on this, and I’m not sure if Eric would correct me, is that Paul got an objective but non-physical vision of Jesus. There was something there that everyone else could see and hear, in my view. But in my view Paul’s “veridical” vision was post-ascension, and so non-physical. Paul uses the word resurrection to describe what the other eyewitnesses saw (and he met them at least twice, according to Gal 1 and Gal 2), and that means physical resurrected body.

Eric Chabot writes this in another place:

> **Acts 9- Paul’s Damascus Road Experience**
>
> Here we see whatever happened, this was after the ascension. Hence, to say Paul saw the exact same Jesus before he ascended is hard to infer from the text. There simply isn’t enough information here. The Bible says, “they heard” the same voice Paul did ” (Acts 9: 7). But they “did not see anyone ” (Acts 9: 7). Notice Paul was physically blinded by the brightness of the light. One way or the other, the experience involved something that was external to Paul. It wasn’t something that was the same thing as a vision that Paul talks about in 2 Cor. 12:1. Furthermore, the phrase “he let himself be seen’” (ōphthē , aorist passive,), is the word Paul uses in 1 Cor. 15:7 to describe of his own resurrection appearance as the other ones in the creed. As Paul Barnett says:
>
> “It is sometimes claimed that the word appeared (ōphthē) means a mystical seeing, as of a vision, and that since this was what Paul “saw” it was what the other apostles “saw.” In other words, after death, Jesus was taken directly to heaven whence he “appeared” to various people, mystically, as it were. This however, is not all the meaning of Paul’s words. First, the word ōphthē, “appeared” is not limited to visionary seeing it is also used for physical seeing. Moreover, the verb raise used in the phrase ‘raised on the third day” is used elsewhere in combination with the words “from the dead” which literally means “from among the corpses.” Thus raised preceding appeared gives the latter a

> physical not a mystical meaning. Christ, as “raised from the dead” ….appeared.” Furthermore, when Paul asks “ Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?”(1 Cor. 9: 1), he is using the ordinary word horan, “to see” for physical sight. If “seeing” the Lord “raised from the dead” qualified others to be apostles, then Paul is, indeed, an apostle. It was no mere subjective vision that arrested Paul en route to Damascus. (8) .
>
> In the end, word studies can’t entirely resolve this issue. We need to remember the etymological fallacy as well. We would have to look at all the texts that speak of resurrection (including the entire 1 Cor. 15 chapter in their entire context as well as the anthropology of the New Testament. We also need to study the resurrection in light of the Second Temple Jewish period. See our reading list here for some resources that may help.

But conservative ancient historian Gary Habermas seems to think that Paul got the physical body as well.

He says:

> Now, I said before in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul could have chosen to only use the word *pneuma*. He doesn’t. He does say “spiritual,” but he’s got an adjective there. He also says, *soma*, “body.” What did Paul mean?

> Philippians Chapter 3. It’s a short chapter. There are 21 verses, but Paul says three things in one chapter that indicate he’s talking about a physical resurrection. In the opening verses he says, “I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews” and “as touching the law,” he says, “I was a Pharisee.” Now, it’s very well known that the Pharisee believed in a bodily resurrection. In fact, according to Acts 23, as Paul was being taken captive by the Romans to prevent his being killed, he shouted out to the group of people and said, “Why are you taking me? Because I believe in the resurrection of the dead?” He meant a literal resurrection.
>
> When the Pharisees heard that, they said there’s nothing wrong with this guy. But the Sadducees [who didn’t believe in the Resurrection] didn’t like it. So as a Pharisee, he’s agreeing with the Pharisees.
>
> So, the first evidence is from Philippians 3. As a Pharisee, Paul believes in a physical resurrection.
>
> Secondly, in verse 11 he says, “That I may attain the resurrection of the

> dead." Now, the normal Greek word for resurrection is *anastasis,* but in this passage, Philippians 3:11, he puts a prefix on there, ***ek*** *anastasis.* ***Ek****anastasis*, according to all Greek scholars that I know of, is translated in this passage: "The out resurrection from among the dead." Paul said, "I want to attain the out resurrection."
>
> Now, to a Jew, "out resurrection" means "what goes down is what comes up." You come out from death. And then just a few verses later, Philippians 3:20,21, he said, "From Heaven, we look for Jesus who will change our vile *soma* (body) to be like unto His glorious *soma* (or body)," when he should have said *pneuma*, according to this other view.
>
> So he's a Pharisee who believes in a physical resurrection. ***Ek*** *anastasis*—"resurrection from out among the dead ones."
>
> Thirdly, Paul says, "He Jesus will change ***my body*** to be like ***His body***."

> So right there in Philippians 3 alone, I think the picture of Jesus being some wispy spirit that appeared to him on the road to Damascus doesn't fit Paul's own data.

Yes, that's why Philippians is my favorite book. You can get so much useful theology out of it. Something about the resurrection in Phil 3, something about Jesus' divinity in Phil 2, and loads of practical advice on stewardship, charity, fellowship, endurance and practical love for others throughout. Some of it takes a little digging, but that's what commentaries are for, am I right? But I digress.

If you want to read something a little more challenging, I found a paper from the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) from their journal, where it talks more about soma and anastasis. If you want a bit of a challenge, download the PDF and read it. It's by Kirk R. MacGregor and the title is "1 Corinthians 15:3B–6A, 7 And The Bodily Resurrection Of Jesus".

Christian feminist says that husbands who provide don't deserve respect

August 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In previous posts, I've described how I tried to keep the male provider role in mind when deciding how hard to study, what to major in, what jobs to choose, and how much to save. I wanted to earn the respect of my future wife, and have leverage to lead the family according to a (known) plan that would produce results for God. But not everyone sees self-sacrificial decisions that produce results as worthy of respect.

Here is a comment from a Christian feminist:

> Based on this, and other things you've said, I… would frankly consider you ineligible for marriage. I have read some of your blog and it seems to me that you trust in your own earning power, your own planning ability, and haven't even considered that it's God who gives you the health and strength to carry out these things. Also, if you're planning to retire at 50 with this net wealth, then you're not giving enough money away. I don't want to marry a dead beat guy who can't provide. But I don't want to marry an arrogant guy who thinks he can provide better than God either.

I think what she's saying here, is that *despite* the husband's abilities as a provider, wives are not obligated to respect their husbands. Why not? Because the husband's preparation and planning to be the main provider was all a gift from God. The husband didn't sacrifice anything or make good decisions in order to become a good provider. God did that. So, the wife should just give God the respect, not her husband.

Is her view consistent with Ephesians 5:22-24, 33?

> [22] Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.
>
> [23] For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.
>
> [24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.
>
> [33] However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

What her view really means, in practice, is that the wife only has to "respect" her husband when she feels like it. And when is that? When he makes her feel happy. By doing what she tells him to do.

And, since provider ability was all God's doing, the husband didn't really make good decisions about education, work experience, and finances. God made all those good decisions. The husband doesn't actually know how to make good decisions, and so he shouldn't be making the decisions for the family.

In practice, only the wife knows what God has decided for her (and the family). God speaks to her directly, through her feelings. So really, she should just explain to her husband what God is telling her through her feelings, and the husband should submit to her decision-making.

United Methodist clergy declare their support for abortion

What does the Bible teach about women and marriage?

Consider Genesis 3:16:

> [16] To the woman he said,

> "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;
> with painful labor you will give birth to children.
> Your desire will be for your husband,
> and he will rule over you."

Is the woman's her desire for her husband a romantic or sexual desire? It is not.

Famous evangelical theologian Dr. Wayne Grudem explains in his book "Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood":

> The word translated "desire" is an unusual Hebrew word, teshûqåh. What is the meaning of this word? In this context and in this construction, it probably implies an aggressive desire, perhaps a desire to conquer or rule over, or else an urge or impulse to oppose her husband, an impulse to act "against" him. This sense is seen in the only other occurrence of teshûqåh in all the books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), and the only other occurrence of teshûqåh plus the preposition 'el in the whole Bible. That occurrence of the word is in the very next chapter of Genesis, in 4:7. God says to Cain, "Sin is crouching at the door, and its desire is for you, but you must master it" (NASB). Here the sense is very clear. God pictures sin as a wild animal waiting outside Cain's door, waiting to attack him, even to pounce on him and overpower him. In that sense, sin's "desire" or "instinctive urge" is "against" him. 20

> The striking thing about that sentence is what a remarkable parallel it is with Genesis 3:16. In the Hebrew text, six words are the same and are found in the same order in both verses. It is almost as if this other usage is put here by the author so that we would know how to understand the meaning of the term in Genesis 3:16. The expression in 4:7 has the sense, "desire, urge, impulse against" (or perhaps "desire to conquer, desire to rule over"). And that sense fits very well in Genesis 3:16 also. 21

(Quotation found on Dalrock's blog)

How Christian feminists interpret the Bible

I urge you to listen to a presentation by Dr. Wayne Grudem at a meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS). He evaluates the claims of a Christian feminist named Catherine Kroeger.

- The MP3 is here. (30 minutes)
- This MP3 is a more detailed version, with slightly worse audio, and a gap at 56-58 minutes. (68 minutes)
- Here is a written summary.

Bottom line: not every church-attending woman who paints herself as a "spiritual" Christian (with words) takes the Bible seriously as an authority (in her actions).

Men: make sure you evaluate wife-candidates thoroughly, and make sure that they demonstrate the ability to do what the Bible says, especially when it goes against their feelings and desires. Never believe words about the future. Evaluate actions in the past. Your marriage must achieve something for God, and that means you must choose someone with proven character and ability, to help you execute your plan. That is why we evaluate women before proposing. Remember, after you marry her, you will be morally obligated to love her *as Christ loved the church*. Make sure you pick someone who is easy to love *all the way*.

Air Force Technical Sergeant John A. Chapman awarded the Medal of Honor

August 25, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Air Force Technical Sergeant John Chapman, was attached to SEAL Team 6 during Operation Anaconda, during the Afghanistan War. Chapman received the Medal of Honor for his actions at the Battle of Takur Ghar.

The Air Force Times reports:

> The Battle of Takur Ghar was part of Operation Anaconda, a joint operation combining conventional forces and special operators that was one of the first major engagements of the Afghanistan War.
>
> Chapman's team, Mako 30, was one of several ordered to set up reconnaissance positions on mountaintops so as to provide overwatch and close-air support to conventional forces below.
>
> The team of SEALs helicoptered toward a mountaintop they thought was unoccupied, but it turned out to be "a hornet's nest of enemy activity" and "basically their headquarters, or their strong point," the special tactics officer said.
>
> The al Qaida fighters unleashed a barrage of fire on their Chinook, code-named Razor 03, which was struck by multiple RPGs. One of the SEALs on his team, Petty Officer 1st Class Neil Roberts, was thrown from the back into the snow below before the helicopter crash-landed about five miles away.
>
> The team — headed by Master Chief Special Warfare Operator Britt Slabinsky, the retired Navy SEAL who himself received the Medal of Honor for this battle — quickly decided that Roberts' only chance of survival would be if they got another helicopter and returned to rescue him.
>
> "They knew it had a significant chance to be a one-way mission, but they felt like that was the only chance Roberts would have to survive," the special tactics officer said. Unfortunately and unbeknownst to them, Roberts had already been killed about an hour before they returned.
>
> As the team expected, the heavily armed al Qaida fighters were prepared when they returned and once again met them with withering fire. But this time, they were able to get on the mountaintop. It was before dawn. They trudged through thigh-deep snow, wearing night vision goggles, in the "bottom of a fishbowl, surrounded on three sides by enemy with overwatching positions that are shooting down with machine guns, RPGs, heavy fire."

Keith Rocco, The Battle of Takur Ghar, National Guard Heritage Painting.)

John Chapman was on this second Chinook helicopter:

> Chapman led the charge without hesitation.
>
> “He runs essentially straight up a steep mountain into the direction of enemy fire,” the special tactics officer said.
>
> […]Chapman burst into the first bunker, killed the two enemies there in close-quarters combat and seized it. He could have stayed safe within its hardened walls, which provided plenty of cover. But instead he emerged to assault the machine gun nest in the second nearby bunker, suppressing its fire and allowing his SEAL teammates to move forward.
>
> That’s when Chapman was first wounded. The SEALs later described seeing him go down and the laser sight from his rifle, which was laying across his prone body, moving up and down with his labored breathing. Before long, they saw the laser stop moving and believed he had died.
>
> Under heavy fire, the SEALs moved back to a ridgeline and continued firing until they were pushed down the mountaintop, the special tactics officer said.

Artwork by Johnny Shumate
(Source)

Chapman was left all alone. But a third Chinook helicopter was already on the way in with reinforcements. The RPG launchers were present and capable of shooting the third Chinook down.

> Chapman was not dead, but instead unconscious and temporarily incapacitated. He awoke after a few minutes, and continued fighting the enemy in the second bunker about 10 meters away for the next hour, the special tactics officer said. There was also another group of al Qaida on top of a ridge, heavily armed with RPGs.
>
> A third Chinook, Razor 01, carrying a quick reaction force of Rangers and special tactics airmen approached shortly after 5:40 a.m. The al Qaida fighters on the ridge start to take aim with their RPGs at Razor 01. The sun had risen.

Chapman makes the decision to sacrifice his own life to protect the lives of others:

> It's impossible to know what was going through Chapman's head at that point, but the special tactics officer believes he realized the Rangers would have a better chance of survival if he could suppress that RPG fire.
>
> Chapman once again ran out from the safety of his bunker, into broad daylight. He placed himself in-between the bunker — with his back to the machine gun within — and the fighters on the ridge, and began firing.
>
> "When he stood up and got out of the bunker, I don't think he imagined he was going to survive," the special tactics officer said.
>
> Razor 01 got hit by an RPG when it was about 50 feet off the ground, the special tactics officer said, but was still able to control its landing.

The Medal of Honor (Air Force variant):

The Air Force Medal of Honor, the highest decoration in the U.S. armed forces
More:

> But it could have been much worse for Razor 1. The special tactics officer said that when Chapman opened fire on the al Qaida fighters on the ridge, he forced them to put their heads down and suppressed their RPG fire as the Chinook approached.
>
> “It’s easy to imagine that it would be a high potential for there to be a catastrophic loss of the helicopter had he not been engaging the enemy as the helicopter was on its approach,” the special tactics officer said.
>
> It’s hard to tell exactly what happened to Chapman at that point, the special tactics officer said, but the large-caliber machine gun bullets — probably from a PKM — that ultimately killed him were likely fired shortly thereafter.
>
> The Rangers poured out of Razor 01 — two were killed as soon as they emerged — and then fought for seven more hours to get to where Chapman fell. The entire battle took 17 hours from the moment when Roberts was thrown from Razor 03.

Chapman was shot 9 times, including 7 times before being killed. When his body was recovered, he had emptied 6 30-round magazines. Due to his heroic actions, the lives of several of his allies on Razor-01 were saved. It was a disastrous situation, but instead of giving up, Chapman did everything he could to fix it. Eventually, enough American forces were able to land to defeat the 400 enemy fighters. 200 enemy fighters were killed. The Americans lost 7 killed, 12 wounded.

The full Medal of Honor citation for Chapman is here.

Stephen C. Meyer: does the Big Bang cosmology disprove the existence of God?

August 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Here's the 66-minute video featuring Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, who holds the Ph.D in philosophy of science from Cambridge University, and other degrees in the hard sciences.

The lecture starts really, really slowly. You can just fast-forward to the 12 minute mark, or you might die of boredom.

Topics:

- Up until the the last 100 years or so, everyone agreed that the universe was eternal
- This is at odds with the traditional Christian view that God created the universe
- Materialism, the view that matter is all there is, requires eternally existing matter
- Discovery #1: Hubble discovers that the universe is expanding (redshift observation)
- The expanding universe was resisted by proponents of the eternal universe, like Einstein
- Some naturalists even proposed speculative static models like the steady-state model
- However, not of the speculative models fit with observations and experimental results
- Discovery #2: Penzias and Wilson discover the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Measurements of this background radiation confirmed a prediction of the Big Bang theory
- The steady-state theory was falsified of by the discovery of this background

radiation
- The oscillating model was proposed to prevent the need for an absolute beginning
- But the oscillating model is not eternal, it loses energy on each "bounce"
- A paper by Alan Guth and Marc Sher from 1982 proved that our universe will not bounce
- In addition, experiments reveal that the universe will expand forever, and not contract
- The beginning of the universe is more at home in a theistic worldview than an atheistic one
- The beginning of the universe fits in well with the Bible, e.g. – Genesis 1, Titus 1, etc.

In case you are wondering about what the evidence is for the Big Bang, here are 3 of the evidences that are most commonly offered:

> Three main observational results over the past century led astronomers to become certain that the universe began with the big bang. First, they found out that the universe is expanding—meaning that the separations between galaxies are becoming larger and larger. This led them to deduce that everything used to be extremely close together before some kind of explosion. Second, the big bang perfectly explains the abundance of helium and other nuclei like deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) in the universe. A hot, dense, and expanding environment at the beginning could produce these nuclei in the abundance we observe today. Third, astronomers could actually observe the cosmic background radiation—the afterglow of the explosion—from every direction in the universe. This last evidence so conclusively confirmed the theory of the universe's beginning that Stephen Hawking said, "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time."

By the way, Dr. Meyer also does a great job of explaining the problem of proteins, DNA and the origin of life in this lecture. And you can hear him defend his views in this debate podcast with Keith Fox and in this debate podcast with Peter Atkins. He does a great job in these debates.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason

- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

The downside of the soul mate / fairy tale view of relationships

August 27, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(Image: Husband and wife doing some woodworking together)

Astonishing article from the leftist Huffington Post, of all places. (links removed)

Excerpt:

> As millennial women, we were groomed for a white knight fantasy. From childhood favorites such as *Snow White* to adult rom-com staples such as *How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days* or *Sleepless in Seattle*, the media perpetuates a romantic storyline in which compatibility and lasting romance is something effortless, built on chance, sustained by good looks, fun dates and electric sexual chemistry. These story lines shape our expectations for romantic happiness. It is not enough to find someone with whom we are mostly compatible, who would make a good parent, with whom we could learn and grow wrinkly; now, we expect a perfect fit and an easy, instantaneous "connection." In short, we want a soul mate. But it is this desire for a soul mate that is actually the undoing of our happy ending.
>
> A "soul mate" is defined as one who is ideally suited to us, perfectly completes us, one with whom the relationship feels easy and natural. With them, a relationship is just "meant to be"… A survey of young adults conducted by the National Marriage Project found that while 84% of young adults report finding a marriage partner "very important," a full 94% of young adults say they would like to marry a soul mate, and 73% of people ages 18 – 29 believe that there is a soul mate out there for them.

Wow. That doesn't sound like a good approach to me. My approach has always been to pick the girl who was most willing to learn new things. And then to explain to her my vision for marriage and see if I could get her to work independently on that plan before I married her. I don't favor this soul mate approach at all.

Does the "soul mate" approach work?

> We heard that those who get married later and possess a college degree have fewer divorces and more stable marriages. So we spend our twenties trying to find ourselves through travel, accumulating degrees and building a career. Marriage will be the capstone of our achievements, and nothing less than tying the knot with a soul mate will suffice. But the tragic irony is that soul mate thinking makes us increasingly likely to divorce. A study of 1,400 married men and women shows that people who hold soul mate orientations are 150% more likely to end up divorced than those who do not.
>
> **The widespread cultural belief in "soul mate ideology" undermines our chances at happiness because it makes us passive receivers of idyllic romantic expectations. Further, it fosters self-centeredness; one rarely longs to be a soul mate for someone *else*, which would require effort. For this reason, believing in soul mates is one of the most dis-empowering belief systems we can adopt. As millennials, we pride ourselves on actively pursuing the life we want to live, rather than simply accepting whatever hand we are dealt. We are innovative, passionate, proactive and not afraid to take risks. Yet, there is a disconnect when it comes to our desire for lasting love. Though there are prospects around us, we forgo taking the concrete steps needed to build happy compatible relationships because we do not "feel a spark." We are passively waiting on the sidelines for love to "happen," and then wonder why it is so difficult.**

I've always felt that the soul mate approach was like the evil villain in opposition to my noble plan-based approach. My approach is to pick a woman who wants to learn and work hard. Explain your marriage plan to her, and how your marriage plan serves God. My marriage plan accomplishes four goals, for example. 1) Influence the university with apologetics, 2) influence the church with apologetics, 3) provide a model of a good marriage to people in the community, including co-workers, college students and neighbors, and 4) raise effective, influential children who will have an impact for God. Now if you are a Christian woman raised in a church that affirms the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage with this "God has a wonderful plan for your life" stuff, then a specific, non-emotional plan from a man is the last thing you want to hear about.

Their solution is for people to work at compatibility:

> Compatibility is something co-created through intentionality and conscious choice. It involves mutual sacrifice, effort and commitment for the sake of the

> other's benefit. A recent study found that of the couples who demonstrate above average daily generosity, 50% of them report being "very happy" in marriage; among the low generosity scores, only 14% can say the same. As studies indicate, selflessness is required to create mutual compatibility. It is not instantaneous, nor does it usually begin with true love's kiss.
>
> We both know from experience that there are some you naturally connect with and others you do not. This is not a call towards forced attraction or companionship. But, our romantic futures should not be placed in the hands of blind chance. It is time we roll up our sleeves and shift our expectations from unattainable perfection to realistic romance, one that accounts for imperfection. We must understand that work in a relationship is a necessary key to success, rather than an indication of imminent failure. We will be letting go of a tired plot line that sets us up for disappointment and embracing an active role in our own unique story.
>
> How refreshing to know that we do not have to be perfect to be lovable, and that our romantic success is not solely dependent on finding the "right" fit, but instead built through cultivating daily moments of generosity, sacrifice and conscious coupling.

So in my case, I am looking for a woman who listens to the plan, develops the skills for the plan and then independently engages in activities to achieve the goals of the plan. In the past, I have had women listen to the plan carefully, including my motivations and experiences that caused me to choose this plan. And they have been willing to read books, listen to lectures, watch debates, to gain the skills needed to make a difference. And they have even engaged independently with activities like public speaking, teaching classes, and so forth. But none of the women who had done that accepted the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage. They all wanted to hear a good plan, learn useful skills and then get to work. Big difference.

Twitter says that death threats against Dana Loesch’s children are permissible

August 28, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve said for some time that the mainstream media and the big tech companies discriminate against Christians and conservatives because they agree with secularists and progressives. Although the mainstream media and big tech companies want to present themselves as open-minded and fair, the truth is far different.

Take a look at this death threat by a young progressive fascist:

Milan Legius threatens to murder the children of Dana Loesch

I used to listen to Dana Loesch’s podcast all the time. The “Florida Man” segments are the funniest. She’s very mainstream, and a solid Christian and conservative.

And here is how Twitter responded to Dana Loesch’s husband when he complained about the death threat:

And here is how Twitter responded to the death threat
They reviewed it carefully. Threatening to murder Dana's children isn't in violation of Twitter Rules.

The Blaze reports:

> Over the weekend, National Rifle Association spokeswoman Dana Loesch received a flurry of despicable death threats on Twitter.
>
> […]One Twitter user wrote: "The only way these people learn is if it affects them directly. So if Dana Loesch has to have her children murdered before she'll understand, I guess that's what needs to happen."
>
> Loesch notified Twitter support who then issued this response: "Hello, Thank you for your recent report. We have reviewed your report carefully and found that there was no violation of the Twitter Rules against abusive behavior. (https://twitter.com/rules)."

That's how the secular left works.

On the one hand, they claim to be for free speech and open debate. One the other hand, we have a secular left attorney general searching the houses of pro-lifers. We have conservative professors being fired for disagreeing with liberal professors. We have Christian businesses being dragged into court, and threatened with losing everything they own. We have a Bernie Sanders supporter shooting at Republicans at a softball game. We have a gay activist who tried to shoot up the Family Research Council building convicted of domestic terrorism. We have Barack Obama using the IRS as a weapon to persecute conservative groups ahead of his re-election bid in 2012, and using the HHS to force Christian companies like Hobby Lobby and Little Sisters of the Poor to cover

abortifacients. In Wisconsin, the FBI and police conducted pre-dawn raids of the homes of top aides to Scott Walker, at the request of a Democrat district attorney. ARMED FBI and police. This is just a small sample, I could go on for hours.

All we have to do to understand how far the secular left goes to force their values and worldview on others is look at what has happened in history when the secular left has seized power. We know how this ends, because it's happened before, in different times and in different places. You can even see it today in places like North Korea, an officially atheist country, where the state owns the means of production.

How do we know if Facebook, Google, Twitter, Apple, Youtube, etc. agree with the progressive who tweeted the death threat against Dana Loesch's children? Well, at the time of writing (Monday night), his account was still functioning. Make of that what you will.

What got me started on apologetics? William Lane Craig debate transcripts

August 29, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students

Yes, William Lane Craig debate transcripts. In fact, I still read them from time to time to keep up my skills.

Here's one of my favorites, the Craig-Nielsen debate on grounding morality without God

Summary:

> THE CRAIG-NIELSEN DEBATE: GOD, MORALITY, AND EVIL
> William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen
> with annotations by William Lane Craig
> February 1991, University of Western Ontario

Best part:

> Finally, he raises the issue of immortality and says, "Death doesn't undermine moral values. In fact, things that we value become all the more precious." Well, in one sense he's right. It's the *absence of God* that undermines the objectivity of moral values, not *death*. But let's suppose that there are objective moral values. What would be undermined by the lack of immortality? I think two things.
>
> First, I think there would be no reason to adopt the moral point of view. Since you're going to die, everyone ends up the same. It doesn't make any difference whether you live as a Hitler or a Mother Teresa. There is no relationship between your moral living and your ultimate fate. And so in that sense, death undermines the reason for adopting the moral point of view rather that just being an egoist

> and living for self.
>
> Second, there's no basis for self-sacrifice on this point of view. Why should an atheist, who knows everything is going to end in death, do things that are morally right that go against self-interest? For example, a few years ago there was a terrible mid-winter air disaster in Washington, DC, as a plane crashed into a bridge spanning the Potomac River, spilling its passengers into the icy waters. And as the helicopters came to rescue these people, attention focused on one man who again and again passed by the rope ladder rather than be pulled to safety himself. Seven times he did this, and when they came again, he was gone. The whole nation turned its eyes to this man in respect and admiration for the noble act of self-sacrifice that he did. And yet on the atheistic view, that man wasn't noble. He did the *stupidest* thing possible. He should have gone for the rope ladder first, pushed others away, if necessary, in order to survive! But to give up all the brief existence he will ever have for others he didn't even know? Why? It seems to me, then, that it's not simply the absence of God that undermines objective moral values, but ethical living is also undermined by the atheistic point of view because you then have no reason to adopt the moral point of view and you have no basis for acts of self-sacrifice.
>
> By contrast, on the Christian view, where you have both God and immortality, you have the necessary presuppositions for the affirmation of objective moral values and for consistent living of the ethical life.

And another of my favorites, the Craig-Taylor debate on the ontological grounding of morality.

Summary:

> Is The Basis Of Morality Natural Or Supernatural?
> Richard Taylor and William Lane Craig
> October 1993, Union College, Schenectady, New York

Sample Craig:

> (2) I argued that moral accountability also exists under the supernaturalist view, and Professor Taylor didn't deny the point.
>
> (II) What about my critique, then, of naturalism? I said that naturalism doesn't provide a sound foundation for morality, and here I made two points:
>
> (1) On the naturalist view, objective right and wrong do not exist. Again, Professor Taylor doesn't deny this point; he just says, "Well, to say that they're conventional doesn't mean they're contemptible." Well, granted; but it *does* mean they're arbitrary, they're non–objective. There's no more difference between moral right and wrong than driving on the right–hand side of the road versus the left–hand side of the road. It's simply a societal convention. And the modern evolutionist thinks these conventions are just based in socio–biological

> evolution. According to Michael Ruse, a professor of the philosophy of science,

> The position of the modern evolutionist…is that humans have an awareness of morality…because such an awareness is of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation, no less than are hands and feet and teeth…. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, [ethics] is illusory. I appreciate that when somebody says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves…. Nevertheless…such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction and…any deeper meaning is illusory….{26}

> This is essentially the same view as Professor Taylor's. Moral values are simply rooted in socio–biological evolution, that have passed down as certain taboos and certain commands, but they have no objective validity in terms of their moral rightness or wrongness. Professor Taylor says, "But I have a high regard for people who are truly moral and decent." I don't deny that. Of course he does! But the point is that in his ethics, in his philosophy, he has no *basis* for that affirmation. What I bring is not a new set of values—I think we pretty much hold those in common—but I'm offering a secure *foundation* for those values that we all want to hold dear.
>
> You see, on Professor Taylor's view, there really isn't any objective morality. I think every one of us here tonight would agree that it's wrong to kill babies and that the holocaust was morally wrong. But in his book Professor Taylor says, "The infanticide practiced by the Greeks of antiquity did not violate their customs. If we say it was nevertheless wrong, we are only saying that it is forbidden by *our* ethical and legal rules. And the abominations practiced by the Nazis…are forbidden by our rules, and not, obviously, by theirs."{27} I submit that that is simply a patently false view of moral values and that naturalism, therefore, can't provide any objective basis for right and wrong.

And another of my favorites, the Craig-Tooley debate on the problem of evil.

Summary:

> A Classic Debate on the Existence of God
> Dr. William Lane Craig & Dr. Michael Tooley
> November 1994, University of Colorado at Boulder

Sample Craig:

> (2) Christian doctrines increase the probability of the coexistence of God and the evils in the world. Let me just mention a couple of these.
>
> (i) On the Christian view, the purpose of life is not happiness as such in this life. Rather it is the knowledge of God—which will ultimately produce true and everlasting happiness. What that means is that many evils occur in this life which might be utterly pointless with respect to producing human happiness. But they

> might not be pointless with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Dr. Tooley assumes when he talks about changes that would make this world a better place, that the purpose of life is basically to be happy in this life. And I certainly admit that you could make changes that might appear to make this life a better place, make it happier. But that's not God's purpose. So if you understand that the purpose of life is not happiness as such, I think that you can see that the existence of evil doesn't necessarily cast any improbability upon God's existence.
>
> (ii) It's also the Christian view that God's purpose spills over into eternal life. In the afterlife God will bestow a glory and happiness upon us that is incomparable to what we've suffered here on earth. And the longer we spend in eternity with Him, the more the sufferings in this life shrink by comparison to an infinitesimal instant. Dr. Tooley admits in his article that it is possible that immortality could justify such evils. But, he says, it's "very unlikely" that there is life after death. Well, I have two comments. First, I'd like him to prove that it's unlikely that there is life after death.{26} Second, I suggest that the resurrection of Jesus gives us grounds for hoping in life after death, and I've attempted to justify that historically. So given these Christian doctrines, I think you can see that the existence of God and evil is not so improbable after all.
>
> […]
>
> (4) Finally, I think that there is actually an argument for God from evil. It would go like this:
>
> (i) If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist. If there is no God, moral values are either socio-biological by-products or just expressions of personal preference.
>
> (ii) Evil exists. That's the premise of the atheist. There is real evil in the world.
>
> (iii) Therefore, objective values do exist. Some things are really wrong.
>
> (iv) Therefore, God exists.
>
> Thus the presence of evil in the world actually demonstrates God's existence because in the absence of God, there wouldn't be any distinction objectively between good and evil, between right and wrong. So although evil in one sense calls into question God's existence, in a much deeper sense, I think, it actually requires God's existence.
>
> So in the light of these four responses, I think that the argument from evil, as difficult and emotionally pressing as it might be, in the end doesn't constitute a good argument against the existence of God. So I think the four arguments given against the existence of God by Dr. Tooley are inconclusive. You've still got my six arguments for God's existence, and therefore I still think that on balance the evidence favors theism as the more rational worldview.

There are more debate transcripts on Craig's Reasonable Faith web site.

Can feminism be defended with reason and evidence? Jordan Peterson vs Cathy Newman

August 30, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Can radical feminism be defended rationally and evidentially?

There was a short discussion recently on UK Channel 4 between Canadian university professor named Jordan Peterson, and a radical feminist with an undergraduate degree in English named Cathy Newman. While you watch, imagine that she is teaching some non-STEM course that you've enrolled in. Would you dare to disagree with her?

First, the video, which has over 11 million views:

And here is an article from the UK Spectator: (paywalled)

> Whatever else anybody might think of him, Professor Peterson is a man of remarkable learning and experience, and does not appear to have arrived at any of his views by the now common means of 'I reckon'. Yet Newman, who approaches the interview with the trademark sourness she employs for everyone she expects to disagree with, treats this is just another chance to burnish her own social justice credentials and expose her guest as a bigot. Big mistake.
>
> Storming straight in with the differences between the sexes, in the opening minutes it is clear that Professor Peterson is willing to back up all his views with references, data and calm analysis.
>
> By 11 minutes in she is saying 'I think I take issue with (that)', before demonstrating that she can't. Soon she is reduced to dropping the bombshell observation that 'all women are different'. By 16.45 there is a palpable win, as Peterson points out that Newman has exactly the disagreeable and aggressive qualities that allow certain types of people to succeed. By 19.30 she is having to throw out things to him that he hasn't even said, such as 'You're saying women aren't intelligent enough to run top companies'. A minute later and she is reduced to countering empirical evidence with anecdote. Peterson presents the data about men in general and Newman responds with the 'I know plenty of men who aren't (like that)' card. Shortly after that (at 22.25) Newman is reduced to

> spluttering and then silence. She tries to pull herself together. But she can think of nothing to say.

To be honest, Cathy Newman is nothing like the women I'm friends with. All of my closest friends are Christian women. All of them are anti-feminist to some degree, with the most successful one professionally (Dina) being the wisest and most anti-feminist of all. When I think of my panel of wise Christian women advisors – each with one or more STEM degrees – I don't recognize Cathy Newman in them. But Cathy Newman does remind me of the radical feminists I encountered when I was doing my BS and MS degrees in computer science at the university.

In my experience, radical feminists debate using six tactics:

1. Deny facts or evidence because men were involved in researching them or discovering them
2. Countering empirical data with anecdotes and personal experiences
3. Taking arguments and evidence as if they are personal attacks
4. Becoming hysterical and crying
5. Claiming that disagreement with feminism will produce violence against women and women committing suicide, etc.
6. Trying to get you expelled, fired or silenced – often by making false accusations or faking hate crimes against themselves

It's important for everyone to understand the views of others in order to know how defensible our own views are. In order to get the best scholarly case for radical feminism, I like to read feminist academics like Christina Hoff Sommers, Camille Paglia, Jennifer Roback Morse, etc. who evaluate and critique radical feminist scholarship. That's how I encounter the ideas of those I disagree with (as well as listening to and watching debates).

Here's a short Factual Feminist video:

I understand the claims that are made by radical feminists, but I am also aware of what the evidence says. I don't try to stop feminists from making claims, I just study how to refute their claims.

But what about the radical feminists? Do they do a good job of understanding those who disagree with them? Let's take a look at an example which I think is representative of feminist tolerance and open-mindedness.

The Toronto Sun reports on a sociology professor who gave her students an assignment – an assignment with some very peculiar constraints.

Excerpt:

> A Ryerson University student who wanted to write a paper on the "myth" of the male-female wage gap was told by her prof that not only was she wrong, she should only rely on feminist journals for her assignment instead of business sources which "blame women," her sister says.

> Josephine Mathias, 21, a fourth-year political science student at University of Toronto, took to YouTube Wednesday to criticize the assignment given her twin Jane for a sociology class.
>
> […]After Jane sent an email describing her intention to write about the wag gap, her instructor replied that her premise was wrong, Josephine said.

Here's what the professor said:

> **"Perhaps you want to write your paper on the glass ceiling. You need to look at feminist sources on this issue…Do NOT use business sources. They blame women. The reality is patriarchy," says the instructor's email, posted online.**
>
> **In a copy of the assignment provided to the Toronto Sun by Josephine, the instructor also notes that Ontario and Canada government websites and Statistics Canada will not be considered scholarly sources.**
>
> **"Government websites state government policy that is devoid of analysis, and usually reproduces mainstream stereotypes, assumptions and misconceptions," the assignment says.**

What is interesting is that the professor makes about $167,000 a year – higher than the average professor's salary. And she's not teaching computer science or petroleum engineering. I find it interesting that another Canadian university reprimanded a grad student for showing a debate clip that offered both sides of the transgenderism debate. Leftist tolerance. Leftist open-mindedness.

Once you've paid your tuition, and the leftist has the grading pen, you lose every argument. Either you get an F, or you get expelled. If you're in the workplace, you get fired. False charges are often made. Hate crimes are faked. Anything to play the victim, rather than address the arguments and evidence. This is how people on the left "debate".

As I wrote previously, the more women embrace radical feminism, the more toxic they become to men. Not just in the classroom or the workplace, but in relationships. Who wants to marry someone whose only response to reason is fury? Men might be OK with temporary arrangements with abusive women. At least while those women have youth and beauty. But men don't marry abusive women. At least, not if they have any wisdom.

(Image source: Independent Man)

54-year-old feminist angry at dating agency for not finding her a rich husband

August 31, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kate Mulvey at age 53 expects that rich men will want to marry her

A little while ago, I blogged about a 47-year-old mother of three who sued a dating agency for failing to find her a rich husband. That was pretty bad, but I found something even worse. A 54-year-old woman who spend all her savings on a dating agency. She expected them to find her loads of rich men who want to marry her – despite her never having invested anything in them.

The UK Telegraph reports:

> Glass of wine in hand, the man sitting opposite me in the restaurant was in full flow. While he was droning on about his work commitments, I zoned in and out trying to work out how on earth I was going to get to through this first date. I had expected to meet an eligible bachelor, but he had turned out to be so boring that he made me want to stick asparagus up my nostrils.
>
> This memory came flooding back when I read about, Tereza Burki, a City financier who, last week, successfully sued a Knightsbridge-based elite matchmaking service, for the return of her £12,600 annual fee after they failed to find her the man of her dreams.
>
> A couple of years ago, I too joined an expensive matchmaking agency. I had just come out of a seven year relationship, and was on the wrong side of 50.
>
> I soon tired of online dating and receiving messages from over weight baldies

> who peppered their emails with childish emojis. I hankered to find Mr Right-for-me, a man who was suitably educated and a successful professional.
>
> And so this is how I found myself, throwing money (my entire savings to be precise) to an upmarket matchmaking agency in central London. The agency claimed to filter out the undesirables, the mediocre and give clients the personal touch, so I handed over the hefty sum of £6,000.
>
> As I waited to be matched with someone from their 'extensive database', I idly imagined my handsome date, cashmere polo neck, a bit academic and kind. We'd eat steak tartare and swap notes on our latest clever box-set find and favourite novels.
>
> The first indication that all was not as I had expected came when I met personal matchmaker at a Park Lane hotel for 'tea and an interview'… told her how I loved folk music, my favourite film was The Deer Hunter, and enjoyed weekends in the countryside.
>
> […]A few days later she emailed me with the details of W, "a successful entrepeneur who had travelled extensively and also liked folk music". When I met him at a pub in Richmond, I was shocked. I was expecting a cultured and dynamic man, instead I got a man in a pair of jeans, a moth eaten jumper and the table manners of a modern day Baldrick.
>
> And therein lies the rub. These agencies trade on their exclusivity, yet the men I met were far from the international super elite they promised.

Isn't this terrible? Clearly the dating agency is to blame. It should be easy for a penniless, feminist hedonist to find rich men who want to spend all their money taking care of a 54-year-old woman who had *literally nothing to do with the process by which they earned all that money*.

One thing we know about her for sure is that she is impractical. She is 54 years old and has just spent her last savings on a *dating agency*. From her other comments about the type of men she is looking for, we can infer that she wasted a lot of money on travel, fine dining, and other frivolous experiences designed to produce feelings of sophistication without any practical plan for preparing for the financial demands of old age. What's the point of having fun "in the moment" if you don't have any plan to allow sustainable recreation in the future, when you're too old to work?

I spent some time reading articles by Kate Mulvey, and here is what I was able to determine:

- she has no useful degrees – she paid for useless degrees in Italian and French, instead of studying something useful, like computer science or nursing or petroleum engineering. Her "writing" is all about fashion, dating and "lifestyles"
- her opinion on children: "uppity children take your time, emotions and energy" – she sees children as a detriment to her highest priority (her career). She says "I, however, have lived a life of unfettered freedom to take on projects, write books and

travel”
- she had loads of entertaining men “beating a path to [her] door” when she was younger
- she spend thousands of pounds on plastic surgery
- she blames her lack of marriage success on her being “brainier” than men
- she turned down men who wanted to marry her, as late as age 33
- her book is called “Accidental Singleton” because her approach to life – anti-marriage hedonism – has accidentally left her single and penniless at age 54

Although she talks a lot about being intelligent, it seems to me that an intelligent woman would have practical degrees, savings and an awareness of what men actually want from a woman – and WHEN they want it. Men want a woman to support them in their most difficult period, just after they graduate and hit the job market. Starting out in a career is hard because the man doesn’t have savings or a resume or references. The support of a young, attractive, virtuous woman means everything during those difficult years. This is when a wife has the most impact on her husband’s ability to earn and save, on his mental health, on his physical health, etc.

Somehow, this narcissist thinks that she can just show up in a man’s life, after he has done all his earning alone, and grab hold of the things that she never helped build. She wasted all her youth and beauty chasing experiences with attractive bad boys, but she thinks that it’s reasonable for a man to invest all his wealth in her. A woman has value to a man at the time when he is attempting to do difficult things, but lacks support.

What exactly is it that a woman like Kate has to offer a man, given her life choices? Does anyone think that this woman has marriage-character? Does anyone think that her life of selfishness and hedonism has prepared her to be a good wife? What kind of conversation about moral obligations could you have with someone who has only ever done what felt good to her in the moment? Has her string of failed relationships with hot bad boys prepared her to be trusting and unselfish? How about to be faithful? Or even to be content? What is it that she thinks that she is offering that would justify the heavy investment that she is asking for, especially in an age of no-fault-divorce and anti-male divorce courts?

I think people really underestimate how much goes into making a good wife. The character she has to develop. The skills that she has to develop. The way she treats her husband, which often comes from carefully cultivating virtues like chastity and sobriety. Her worldview, which affects whether she has practical abilities like love, forgiveness and self-control. Her ability to be good with money. Her ability to nurture others and make social connections consistent with marriage and homemaking. Her ability to bear children, and then nurture them during the critical first 5 years after – not to mention homeschooling, which is increasingly valuable in a time when underperforming government-run schools seek to indoctrinate, rather than educate, children.

Nothing about this woman makes me think that she has any marriage-related character traits or abilities. Any idiot can spend someone else’s money on their own feelings, fun

and thrills. But it takes a carefully crafted woman to really do the work of a wife. Marriage isn’t there so that women can be happy. Marriage is an enterprise. Being selfish – doing what is easy, and what feels good moment by moment – doesn’t prepare a woman for the enterprise.

New study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others

September 1, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

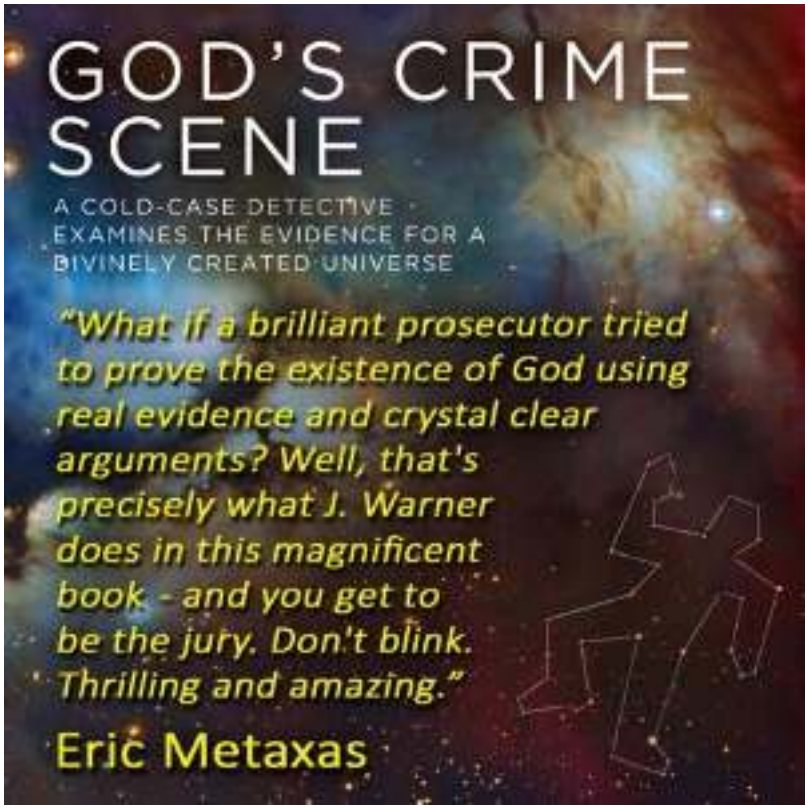

J. Warner Wallace: God's Crime Scene

This is a re-post because I am travelling today.

A while back I finished reading "God's Crime Scene", the new book by J. Warner Wallace. I wanted to post something about some studies he mentioned in Chapter 6, on free will. This is one of the places where he found evidence in a surprising area.

Wallace says that free will makes more sense if theism is true, because we have non-material souls that interact with our bodies, but are not causally determined by them. On atheism, only matter exists, and you can't get free will (or consciousness) from matter. So atheists like Sam Harris and Alex Rosenberg, for example, deny free will, because they are materialists and atheists.

Anyway, here's what he writes on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.

> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others." Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: "It seems that not only do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it."" The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here's the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons' belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you're an atheist, then your worldview is telling you that what you are doing now is the result of genetic programming and sensory inputs. You're not conscious. You can't reason. You make no free choices, including moral choices. Naturally, someone who

believes this is going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when things start to get a bit uncomfortable. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time. What difference would it make if they did, anyway – there's no afterlife on atheism.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality. My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

Mainstream media defends Pope accused of covering up homosexual sexual assaults

September 2, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama shakes hands with Pope Francis

During the past week, news stories reported that Pope Francis actually knew about the epidemic of sexual assaults and rapes by homosexual priests in the Catholic church. His response leaves a lot to be desired.

The National Catholic Register reported this earlier in the week:

> In an extraordinary 11-page written testament, a former apostolic nuncio to the United States has accused several senior prelates of complicity in covering up Archbishop Theodore McCarrick's allegations of sexual abuse, and has claimed that Pope Francis knew about sanctions imposed on then-Cardinal McCarrick by Pope Benedict XVI but chose to repeal them.
>
> Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, 77, who served as apostolic nuncio in Washington D.C. from 2011 to 2016, said that in the late 2000s, Benedict had "imposed on Cardinal McCarrick sanctions similar to those now imposed on him by Pope Francis" and that Viganò personally told Pope Francis about those sanctions in 2013.
>
> Archbishop Viganò said in his written statement, simultaneously released to the Register and other media, (see full text below) that Pope Francis "continued to cover" for McCarrick and not only did he "not take into account the sanctions that Pope Benedict had imposed on him" but also made McCarrick "his trusted counselor." Viganò said that the former archbishop of Washington advised the Pope to appoint a number of bishops in the United States, including Cardinals Blase Cupich of Chicago and Joseph Tobin of Newark.
>
> Archbishop Viganò, who said his "conscience dictates" that the truth be known as

> "the corruption has reached the very top of the Church's hierarchy," ended his testimony by calling on Pope Francis and all of those implicated in the cover up of Archbishop McCarrick's abuse to resign.

Speaking as a Protestant, I thought that Benedict was the best Pope the Roman Catholic church ever had. I used to call him "The Protestant Pope", because he had so few of the problems that Protestants like me dislike about Roman Catholic doctrines. It doesn't surprise me that he did the right thing when the crisis was brought to his attention. But his successor has not done the right thing. He has different priorities.

The New York Times reported:

> As he flew near Caribbean islands devastated by Hurricane Irma on his way back to the Vatican from Colombia on Sunday, Pope Francis said that political leaders and others who denied climate change reminded him of a passage from the psalms about man's stubbornness.
>
> […]On the flight, the pope nevertheless appealed again to Mr. Trump, this time on his decision to end President Obama's Deferred Action for Children Program, known as DACA.
>
> […]In contrast to his negative appraisal of Mr. Trump's approach to immigration, the pope praised Italy's efforts to welcome large numbers of migrants even as it sought to stem the tide of immigrants coming from Libya.

In fact, the defenders of the Pope made clear that his priorities are global warming and open borders, not following what the Bible says about sex outside of marriage.

Catholic journalist Emily Zanotti explains, in the Daily Wire:

> In a bizarre interview with a Chicago NBC affiliate, Cardinal Blaise Cupich, head of the Archdiocese of Chicago, suggested recent claims made by a former apostolic nuncio — the Vatican's envoy to the United States — that Pope Francis not only disregarded sexual abuse allegations against Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, but promoted McCarrick and sought his counsel, were going down a "rabbit hole."
>
> The Pope, Cupich told NBC, has more important things to attend to than sex abuse scandals, like climate change and immigration.
>
> "The Pope has a bigger agenda," Cardinal Cupich said. "He's got to get on with other things, of talking about the environment and protecting migrants and carrying on the work of the church. We're not going to go down a rabbit hole on this."

Clearly, this is the focus of Catholic church leadership. Global warming and open borders both help to destroy free market capitalism, and increase the size of the secular government. (Global warming alarmism allows the government to tax and regulate energy production and consumption, and open borders brings in a lot of low-skilled immigrants who tend to vote for higher taxes and more welfare spending). That's the Pope's priority. And since it's also the mainstream media's priority, they are defending

him from his critics.

Ben Shapiro, writing in the far-left Newsweek, explains:

> So, did the press leap to investigate Vigano's claims? Did they demand answers from Pope Francis? Did we see the same type of courageous, comprehensive coverage of Francis' activities that we saw from the Globe team circa 2003? Of course not.
>
> Instead, mainstream media outlets went out of their way to portray Vigano as a disgruntled conservative angry at Pope Francis' progressive interpretation of Catholic doctrine. The New York Times headlined, "Vatican Power Struggle Bursts Into Open as Conservatives Pounce." Their print headline was even worse: "Francis Takes High Road As Conservatives Pounce, Taking Criticisms Public."
>
> Yes, according to the Times, the story wasn't the sitting Pope being credibly accused of a sexual abuse cover-up—it was conservatives attacking him for it. The problem of child molestation and sexual abuse of clergy took a back seat to Francis' leftist politics, as the Times piece made clear in its first paragraph: "Since the start of his papacy, Francis has infuriated Catholic traditionalists as he tries to nurture a more welcoming church and shift it away from culture war issues, whether abortion or homosexuality. 'Who am I to judge?' the pope famously said, when asked about gay priests. Just how angry his political and doctrinal enemies are became clear this weekend…"
>
> It wasn't just the Times. On Wednesday, Reuters headlined, "Defenders rally around pope, fear conservatives escalating war." On Thursday, Reuters doubled down with this headline: "Conservative media move to front line of battle to undermine Pope Francis." The Telegraph (U.K.) reported, "Vatican analysts say the attack appears to be part of a concerted effort by conservatives to oust Pope Francis, who they dislike for his relatively liberal views…
>
> […]The media's disgraceful attempts to cover for Francis because of their love for his politics merely exposes the actual malign motivations of many in the media: they were happy to expose misconduct and evil inside the Catholic Church when the pope was a conservative; they're happy to facilitate a cover-up when the pope is a liberal.

As an evangelical conservative Christian, the Bible means more to me than the opinions of any man. The Bible is God speaking to his creatures about what their priorities ought to be. So, as a Bible-believing Christian, I'm primarily concerned about chastity, fidelity, protecting the unborn and promoting natural marriage. I wish we could all agree that these things should be our priorities. People should not be having sex outside of marriage, or cheating on their spouses. Unborn children should not be killed. Young children should grow up in stable homes with their biological mother and father present.

And I also believe in small government and low taxes, because parents need to keep the money they earn, in order to run their families properly. Parents should not be taxed to

pay for high energy costs (global warming alarmism causes higher energy costs, for example Germany and Canada) and unskilled immigrants (higher police, education and health care costs, as seen in places like France and the UK). I want strong families where children grow up loved and protected. And I think Catholics should agree with me on this.

Brown University suppresses new study showing transgenderism is not genetic

September 3, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

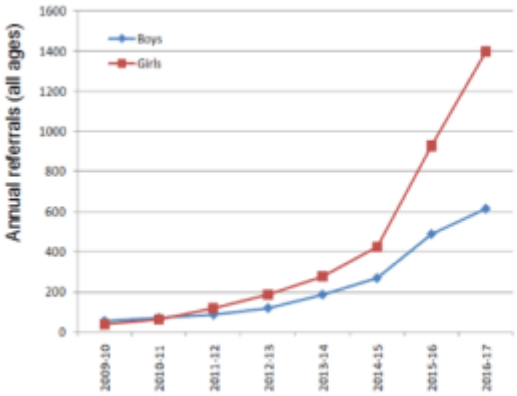

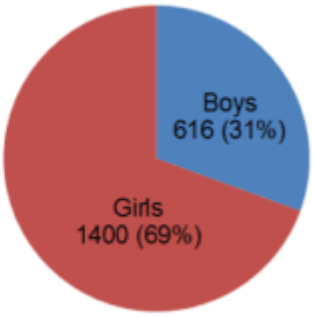

Annual referrals for 2016/17 (all ages)

What's the best explanation of this transgenderism data? Genetics or cultural pressure? Are people on the secular left interested in conforming their beliefs to what scientists discover about the universe? Do they greet the progress of science with an open heart and an open mind? Well, we already know that secular leftists are hostile to what science has shown about the origin of the universe, and the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life. But what about moral issues like transgenderism?

Consider this study, which was reported by Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> [...]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.
>
> Littman surveyed more than 250 parents of children who suddenly developed gender dysphoria symptoms during or after puberty.
>
> The pattern of clusters of teens in friend groups becoming transgender-identified, the group dynamics of these friend groups and the types of advice viewed online led her to the hypothesis that friends and online sources could spread certain beliefs. Examples include the belief that non-specific symptoms such as feeling uncomfortable in their own skins or feeling like they don't fit in — which could be a part of normal puberty or associated with trauma — should be perceived as gender dysphoria; the belief that the only path to happiness is transition; and the belief that anyone who disagrees with the teen is transphobic and should be cut out of their life.
>
> "Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group

> became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."
>
> Additionally, 62 percent of parents reported their teen or young adult had one or more diagnoses of a psychiatric disorder or neurodevelopmental disability before the onset of gender dysphoria. Forty-eight percent reported that their child had experienced a traumatic or stressful event prior to the onset of their gender dysphoria, including being bullied, sexually assaulted or having their parents get divorced.
>
> This suggests that the drive to transition expressed by these teens and young adults could be a harmful coping mechanism like drugs, alcohol or cutting, Littman said. With harmful coping mechanisms, certain behaviors are used to avoid feeling negative emotions in the short term, but they do not solve the underlying problems and they often cause additional problems, she noted.

Well, this seems like a OK study, and, as a Christian, my gut response to scientific data is to agree with it, and adjust my beliefs accordingly. I am a little concerned that her data is coming from self-selected individuals who are self-reporting, but it can be hard to find transgender test subjects.

This article at The Federalist had a few examples to illustrate the conclusion of the study:

> The study includes other eye-opening information, such as case studies of several children's stories.

- > "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends were taking group lessons together with a very popular coach. The coach came out as transgender, and, within one year, all four students announced they were also transgender."
- > "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends are part of a larger friend group that spends much of their time talking about gender and sexuality. The three natal female friends all announced they were trans boys and chose similar masculine names. After spending time with these three friends, the 14-year-old natal female announced that she was also a trans boy."

I thought this quote from that article was interesting as well, given the culture's obsession with "bullying", which is a nebulous term that can mean actual bullying, or mere disagreement.

> The study also may indicate that school "anti-bullying" programs typically created by LGBT activist organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign may help accelerate children identifying as transgender by pushing peers and

> authority figures to profusely express their support. It also may suggest that Marxist-style identity politics that brand heterosexuality as oppressive increase gender dysphoria.

Coming out as transgender means instant fame and popularity, because you're a victim, and everyone has to be nice to you… or else:

> "Great increase in popularity among the student body at large. Being trans is a gold star in the eyes of other teens," wrote one parent on the study response form. Another wrote, "not so much 'popularity' increasing as 'status' … also she became untouchable in terms of bullying in school as teachers who ignored homophobic bullying …are now all at pains to be hot on the heels of any trans bullying."

Very interesting. But the secular left had a completely different reaction to the study.

The Daily Wire reports:

> In any case, this Brown University study could not stand — any effort to actually research the environmental component of transgenderism is met with raucous calls for censorship. And Brown immediately caved. The University pulled down a news article about the study. Realistically, Brown and the journal in which the original comment was published, PLOS ONE, turned against the study because it offended politically correct sensibilities about transgenderism.

Here's what the spokeswoman for Brown University had to say about pulling the study:

> Independent of the University's removal of the article because of concerns about research methodology, the School of Public Health has heard from Brown community members expressing concerns that the conclusions of the study could be used to discredit efforts to support transgender youth and invalidate the perspectives of members of the transgender community.
>
> […]There is an added obligation for vigilance in research design and analysis any time there are implications for the health of the communities at the center of research and study.

So much for the spirit of free inquiry and academic debate on the Brown University campus. The progress of science has been overridden by the hysterical reactions of the secular left.

The future is Canada

In Canada – a country that does not have free speech protected by law – it's actually a criminal offense to make transgender people feel bad by disagreeing with them.

A Canadian human rights lawyer explained what the law is in Canada:

> Brown, who appeared with Peterson before the Senate last May to argue against Bill C-16, said a "small cadre of trans activists" have "made a successful

> revolution” by instantiating a social construct into law.
>
> Denying gender theory under Bill C-16 could result in jail or bankruptcy, he said.
>
> A human rights tribunal can levy fines, or assign a “public interest remedy,” such as sensitivity training, and non-compliance would be considered contempt of court, said Brown.
>
> […]He advised people watch the case of Barry Neufeld, a British Columbia school trustee facing a human rights complaint for “transphobia” for criticizing the province’s Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI 123) curriculum.

If you want to know what’s coming to America in ten years, just look north to Canada. Right now, we are having gay activists sue Christian business owners who refuse to take part in same-sex weddings. Canada was doing that in the late 90s and 2000s. Now Canada is arresting people, bankrupting them, and putting them in jail, for using *the wrong pronouns* when referring to transgender people. That shows you where the secular left in America would like to take our country. Are you comfortable with having your free speech limited like this?

Greg Koukl debates Michael Shermer on God, atheism, meaning and morality

September 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

The full transcript of a debate between Michael Shermer, editor of Skeptic magazine, and Greg Koukl, president of Stand to Reason. This debate occurred on Hugh Hewitt's radio show, and was moderated by Hugh Hewitt.

HH = Hugh Hewitt
GK = Greg Koukl
MS = Michael Shermer

Here is the full debate transcript from Stand to Reason.

And here's an excerpt:

GK: Right. Actually, the big question here, Hugh, is whether it's possible to be good without God. Now I'm not talking about whether it's possible to be good without a belief in God. I certainly think that's possible, but be good without God. And the answer to that question hinges entirely on precisely what you mean by good. And so I was going to give an illustration. So a man drags a young girl into the alley, he sexually abuses her, strangles here, and tosses her into the dustbin. Is that act wrong? Now I think everybody listening is going to admit it is wrong. But here is the real question. What do we mean when we say that that act of rape and abuse and murder is wrong? Are we describing the action itself, the object? Are we saying that the object, the rape, the murder, has a quality of being wrong, and therefore, wherever that rape goes, the wrongness follows it, just like your height, 6' 2", or whatever it is, is an objective quality of you. Wherever you go, your height follows you in the same way. Does the wrongness follow the rape? Well, if it's a quality of the rape, if it's an objective quality of the rape, then it does. And it doesn't matter what people think about it, or what cultures decides, or what your evolutionary conditioning is. The rape is still wrong. The other alternative is that you're not talking about the rape. You're talking about yourself. You're talking about your genetic

conditioning. You're talking about your culture's decision about that kind of thing. And if that's the case, then the truth of the wrongness of the rape is simply in the individual or the subject. And this is why philosophers distinguish between ethical objectivism and ethical subjectivism. Now there's lots of different subjectivisms in ethics. But simply put, if you're an ethical subjectivist, you're a relativist. And actual ethics don't exist. Ethics are an illusion. If you conclude that ethics are an illusion, there's lots of different ways to explain it. Michael's written a really great book, I think, called The Science Of Good And Evil. I've read most of it, and it's well written, and it's very compelling. But it's a description about how the illusion of ethics has taken place. If you want to go that route, you're welcome to go that route. But what you can't do is you can't then talk about morality as if it's objective when your explanations are subjective. So this is a problem that I think all atheists, including Michael, have to solve. Are ethics objective or relative? And if they're relative, then how can we make moral judgments that are meaningful on other people?

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Wow, let's just get right into it. Well, I don't think it's quite so black and white. That is to say I think there are provisional moral truths that exist whether there's a God or not. In other words, it's wrong, morally, absolutely morally wrong to rape and murder. And that would be true whether there was a God or not. In other words, if…is God saying that it's wrong because it's really wrong, and He's instructing us in his Holy Scripture that it's wrong? Or is it only wrong because He said so? And if it turned out there wasn't a God, would that make it okay? And my answer is no, it really is wrong, whether God says it's wrong or not. That is to say I think it really exists, a real, moral standard like that. Why? Well, because first, you could ask the person who is being affected, we should always ask the moral recipient of the act, how do you feel about being raped or murdered or stolen from or lied to. And the moral actor will tell you, it doesn't matter whether, if I could use a current example, I haven't any idea if Tiger Woods and his wife are religious or not. But you can just ask his wife whether it was morally right or wrong, and she'll tell you. It doesn't matter whether there's a God or not. It's wrong. And so that's the first principle. Just ask. Ask the moral recipient of whether it's right or wrong. But I think Greg's after something deeper, that is to say is there something even deeper still behind the moral actor's feelings about how they're treated. And the answer is yes, I think so. We're a social species. We don't live in isolation. We live as members of a group. And as such, there's no possible way our group could survive, be cohesive, be a unit of any kind of solidarity against other groups, or against a harsh environment. If there were too much violations of social norms, that is if there were constant lying and cheating and raping and murdering, there's no way a social group could hang together. And as such, as we all know, we're very tribal. We're tribal against other groups, but within our groups, we're very pro-social, altruistic, cooperative. We have a good and evil in our nature. So to this extent, I find myself interesting often in agreement with my conservative friends on most of the things they consider morally, moral truths. That is, we share the same moral values, even though I come at it from a different perspective.

HH: Greg?

GK: Yeah, I'm actually not after something deeper here, Michael. At least to start out the discussion, I'm trying to be as simple and clear and precise as possible, because it's very easy to weave together a bunch of things that sound persuasive, but turn out to be different things. Like for example, Darwinian evolution, which is a materialistic process, and here I mean the blind watchmaker thesis, the neo-Darwinian synthesis, natural selection working on mutations, and a kind of a cultural evolution that Michael has just referred to as we work together as a group to survive as a group. Those are two entirely different things. One is materialistic, Darwinian, the other one is intelligent design, quite frankly, where the group gets together and makes some determinations to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What I'm trying to do is to be able to answer the question that came up initially, is God necessary for morality, which Michael denies. It's to say well, what is it that morality, that we're trying to describe? It is either objective, and therefore an immaterial obligation that applies to certain behaviors, or it is subjective. The things that Michael described were variously subjective, evolutionary elements, subjective cultural elements, but then he affirmed that we all have good and evil in our nature, or an awareness of that. I agree with that entirely. We all are aware of those things. That's why even if we don't believe in God, we can still know morality and follow it. The question is what accounts for real, genuine objective morality?

HH: One minute to the break, Michael Shermer.

MS: I'm not arguing for cultural evolution. I'm actually arguing as part of our, what you described as materialistic, natural selection, Darwinian evolution, that it's not enough to just pretend or fake being a good group member. You actually have to believe it, feel it, and live it. So what I'm arguing is that natural selected certain moral sentiments, as Adam Smith called them, moral feelings, an actual empathy, Adam Smith talked about, we actually empathize with somebody else, we can put ourselves into their shoes and feel their pain, I'm arguing that's very real. It's every bit as real a part of our evolutionary heritage as our eyes and our hands.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, you were saying that evolutionary biology has produced a real morality.

MS: Yeah, I think really, Adam Smith had it right in his very first book, The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, long before Darwin, that we actually have in our biological nature, our human nature, the capacity to feel other people's pain. He called it empathy, we think of it often either as empathy or sympathy. That is, we really do connect to other people. A lot of good research on this now, brain scans, you can show somebody a little video of somebody they know, or have feelings for, getting pricked with a pin, and the same areas of their brain light up, the pain receptors, as in the person getting the pin prick. In other words, we have an evolved tendency to really be deeply, emotionally connected to our fellow group members. And that's why I say groups like World Vision, where you want to adopt a child, it doesn't help to show a picture of 10,000 starving African kids. What does

affect us is one child, a picture of one child with a little biography. That's how you get people to adopt a child to donate. The reason for that is because essentially they're tricking the brain, our brains into making that stranger an honorary family member, an honorary within group member, which is why I argue that free trade is one of the best ways of defusing normal tribal tensions between people. It makes them honorary friends, honorary members. Well, what's going on there is we're tricking the brain into sort of this evolutionary rule of thumb – be nice to people that are like you and that are related to you, and that you know, and that are fellow group members, and don't do what our natural tendency is, is to be tribal and xenophobic against those other guys. And free trade is one of the best things you can do for that. So I'm arguing that's actually tapping something deep within us.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, basically, I agree with Mike completely here. We do have this tendency, and it seems to be universal among humankind. The question is, what is that tendency, actually? And what is the best way to explain it? And I see like a handful of significant problems with using evolution to explain morality. The first one is that evolution is a materialistic process. And here, I'm going back to an original point, and I don't want people to lose it. There is no way that you can take molecules, and reorganize them in any fashion, over any length of time, and have pop out of the mixture an objective moral principle that's immaterial, and that applies to human beings. All you're going to get is a reorganization of the molecules. And what they can produce, and this is what Mike has done in his book, and he mentioned just s few moments ago, they can produce sentiments. They can produce feelings. They can produce behavior. But this leads us to the second problem of using evolution to explain morality, is that morality is more than sentiments, feelings and behavior. Morality entails things like motive and intention. I mean, you could have a guy walk into a garage, walk out with a hose, and is that wrong? Well, it depends. Is it his hose or somebody else's hose? Did he intend to take the other person's hose? Is he borrowing the hose? So we can see here are elements that are part of the moral thing that needs to be explained, that are immaterial, and therefore the Darwinian explanation can't even in principle go there. It can't do that job. But here's the worst problem. Regardless of what our sentiments happen to be regarding moral actions, we can feel good or feel bad or whatever, the problem is that morality is prescriptive, not merely descriptive. That is it tells us not just what we did, but what we ought to have done in the past, and what we ought to do in the future. That is not something that any Darwinian mechanism can describe, because nothing about my biology can inveigh upon me to act a certain way for moral reasons in the future. It doesn't tell me why I should be good tomorrow. This is a huge difference between these two views, the descriptive and the prescriptive. Prescriptive is part of morality, and can't even, in principle, be explained by an evolutionary materialistic system.

HH: Michael Shermer, I'll give you a start on that. We have about 45 seconds to the break, so you may want to…we'll come back after the break and pick up. But what's your start to that?

MS: Well, the start would be that again, let's not think of evolution just as nature red and tooth and claw, and it's nasty, brutish and short, but that in fact, we have this whole other social evolution. And I'm not talking about cultural evolution where we consciously make decisions, but subconsciously, because it's in part of our nature to actually, seriously, deeply feel for other people and their actions, and the consequences of our actions, so that we actually have a sense of right and wrong that we're born with, but then culture taps into and tweaks, one way or the other.

– – – –

HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, Greg had made the argument that the Darwinian model simply cannot explain immaterial concepts like morality, that there's just no way you can rearrange the molecules to get there. You're saying well, yes you can.

MS: Yeah, I think so, because if we think of morality as another suite of emotions that are involved with other people's behaviors, the consequences of our actions, how we feel about them, how people feel about us when we do these things, that's as every bit as important a biological part of our nature as anything else we talk about. So let's take a real simple emotion. When you're hungry, nobody does any calculations about the caloric input/output ratios of eating an apple versus an ice cream, although now it's posted on the walls for us to see. But we just feel hungry, and we feel hungry for certain kinds of foods. The feeling of hunger is a proxy for something else. Evolution's done the calculating for us. You need food, so we're going to, your hypothalamus is going to secrete these certain chemicals that causes your stomach to rumble and so on. When you're attracted to somebody else, a member of the opposite sex, nobody does the calculation by, let's say, a man finds a woman attractive who has a .67 hip to waist ratio, and an hourglass figure, although that is pretty much universal. Nobody walks about with calipers taking measurements of who they're going to want to date or ask out. You just look around, and you just go wow, I really find this woman attractive. It's a feeling you have, okay? So those are kind of simple emotions, but sliding up the scale, the moral emotions are really no different. When I lie to somebody, I've violated a social norm, and they respond in a very angry, hostile way. So those emotions that we both share, guilt, shame, anger, disgust, involved a social relationship that whether it was a norm violation, those are the kinds of emotions that are just like hunger and sexual attraction that are built into us by nature, by evolution. Or, if you wish, this is how God created the moral sentiments, just like He created everything else in the universe, through a process of nature. I think that's equally reasonable to argue. So I don't see that it has to be an atheistic viewpoint versus a theistic viewpoint to get to our moral sentiments. Why couldn't God have used evolution to create the moral sentiments as I've described them?

GK: Yeah, well, you don't actually believe that, I know, Mike, so this is kind of like adding God to the soup, you know, if it makes people feel better. But the basic argument is that evolution all by itself can do the trick. And I think if your listeners are listening carefully, what they're going to hear is Mike has just described, and if I'm being unfair to your assessment here, let me know, Mike, that moral feelings are simply that. They are

sophisticated emotions that do some work for us for survival, and even on a group level. Now there's a name for this. It's called emotivism. A.J. Ayer, the famous atheist, offered this description of morality. It's a relativistic scheme of morality. Morality doesn't actually exist, Ayer argued. There is no objective right or wrong. Rape isn't wrong itself. What happens is, we have feelings about it, and we express it in moral language, but rape isn't really wrong. So your listeners are going to have to ask themselves the questions. When they just survey their own moral senses, and we all have access to this, do we want to believe that scientists have figured out that really what we're doing is feeling sophisticated, complicated emotions, and that the emotions are in us, and we are not seeing anything about the action? Or does it seem like rape is wrong? Look, when I say rape is wrong, I'm talking about the rape. When I say liver is awful, I'm talking about me. I'm talking about my own tastes and preferences. It's interesting, as Michael has given his explanation, though, that he's doing, and I don't know if you are aware of this, Michael, but you're doing the very thing that I kind of warned against. You give a description of the foundations of morality that turn out to be relativistic, but then there's a smuggling of a more objectivistic morality in the back door, like when Michael says you don't have to do what your nature tells you to do, in other words, what you've been programmed by evolution to do. You can kind of rise above that. Well, now we're talking about a morality that isn't dictated by evolution, but a morality that we can employ through our acts of will, to rise above this kind of brutish evolutionary morality. And that sounds suspiciously like the very thing that I'm talking about here.

MS: But I don't mean, there's nothing to rise above by itself. Yes, we have to say rise above our tribal instincts to be xenophobic when we meet somebody who's a stranger, who's different from us. We all struggle against that, particularly in a black and white America, where there's always been this underlying tension. Indeed, so culture helps us do that – education, travel, diversity of exposure to different people. That makes you a little more tolerant. Okay, but I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about is tapping into the good part of our nature, the fact that in addition to that xenophobic tribalism we have, we also have this other side that almost never gets discussed in evolutionary…even in evolutionary circles, you'll still hear evolutionary biologists talking about, in a way that Huxley did, and Herbert Spencer did in Darwin's own time, that we have to somehow struggle mightily against our genes to overcome that nasty tendency we have to want to rape, kill, pillage and destroy. Well no, actually, we have this whole other side that's just as genetically programmed into our nature. And the point of culture – education, politics, economics and so on, is to tap into the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said.

GK: Okay, here's the question I have for you, Michael, then. You've identified that really, we have good and we have bad. That's part of, under your terms, that's part of our genetic nature, and we can choose to tap into what you call the good side. Why ever should we do such a thing if there is not a higher standard that directs our action to the better side, your words, than the bad side, your words, if really, ultimately, they are both the result of a genetic evolution, and from outside terms, neither is better than the other.

Why should we do that, Michael?

MS: Yeah, well I don’t see how entering God into the equation changes that problem at all.

GK: Well, that’s the next step. What I’m trying to show is that the should comes from the outside, and if we can demonstrate that, then we can ask…

Gosnell movie set to open in October 2018 in 100 theaters

September 6, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Empty benches where the mainstream media ought to be during the Gosnell trial

At the time of the Gosnell story, I remember that there was a nationwide, wall-to-wall media blackout. Every single mainstream media source was colluding with the others not to report on the story. It was impossible to get news for weeks, until finally the mainstream media's pro-abortion, pro-infanticide bias became the story, and they had to start reporting on the trial.

For example, Life News reported that it took ABC News 56 days to begin covering the story, and they only did it because pro-lifers marched on their headquarters:

> Fifty six days after the grisly trial of abortionist Kermit Gosnell began, ABC broke its self-imposed blackout and finally offered coverage.
>
> *World News* anchor Diane Sawyer belatedly told viewers that Gosnell was convicted on three counts of first degree murder against newborn babies, as well as on a slew of other charges. Terry Moran explained, "**For two months, jurors heard often shocking, grisly testimony**." He described the details as a "house of horrors." A house of horrors that ABC took 56 days to notice.
>
> As the Media Research Center has aggressively documented, ABC went from March 18, 2013 (the trial's start) through Monday afternoon with no coverage. Yet during the same time, the network devoted a staggering 187 minutes (or 70 segments) to other shocking criminal cases, such as Jodi Arias and Amanda Knox.

CNS News did a comparison between the Gosnell murder trial and the coverage of the gay NBA player:

> In the eight days since NBA player Jason Collins announced he was gay, the news

> media have covered the story in 2,381 places. But in the first eight days of the trial of Dr. Kermit Gosnell and his "House of Horrors" abortion business, the media covered the story in 115 places, meaning that Collins' "gay" news received more than 1,970.4% more news coverage.

Given the media blackout, I wanted to blog about the new movie about the Gosnell murders. Although the Gosnell movie was filmed in 2015, it's only being released next month. It turns out that the same sort of people who covered up for Gosnell in the mainstream media also got the release of the movie delayed.

A National Review story by the director explains what the movie is about and why its release was delayed.

Excerpt:

> The film has a gritty "just the facts, ma'am" style, is well acted, with powerful, moving performances by Dean Cain, Sarah Jane Morris, and Michael Beach, among many others, and moves like a bullet train. So why has it taken three years to be released?
>
> I realize, looking back, that I was quite naïve about how this film would be received. I truly believed that if we did it the right way, even the so-called Hollywood Left would appreciate our fairness in telling the story, see its value, and, furthermore, share our goals in getting this important story before the public.
>
> Sadly, I was wrong. As I said, this town runs on fear — the fear not only of failure but, more insidiously, of being shunned because of your political opinions. […]More than once, I was asked questions like "Are you crazy?" or "Are you sure you want to do this?"
>
> […]Fear is destructive and dangerous. Fear is what allowed Gosnell to commit multiple murders. The powers-that-be were afraid to allow inspections of his clinic, even after multiple complaints, for fear of being called racist or "anti-woman."

I was looking for some background on the two people behind the Gosnell movie, and I found an article by Terrell Clemmons over on the Salvo magazine web site. It turns out that the filmmakers were *neutral* on abortion before they looked into investigation of the Gosnell abortion clinic.

Excerpt:

> Phelim McAleer was in Pennsylvania in early 2013 doing a series of screenings of his film *FrackNation*. As he often did when travelling, he checked the local paper for interesting court cases underway, and a case concerning a doctor in Philadelphia caught his attention. And so it happened that on one of his days off, he walked into the courtroom where abortionist Kermit Gosnell was standing trial for a slew of charges including (but not limited to) murder, infanticide, and

> multiple violations of state abortion law.
>
> Phelim had seen a lot in his twenty-five years in journalism (he started his career in a part of Northern Ireland known as “Bandit Country”), but the evidence he saw that day in Room 304 of the Philadelphia Justice Center surpassed anything he’d previously encountered. The photos displayed up on a big screen—pictures of well-formed babies, some of whose necks had been snipped with scissors after live birth—were more horrific than anything he’d ever seen. All of this was shocking in itself, but what was even more astounding to him as a journalist was that the press gallery behind him was completely empty. There were *no* national journalists covering this case. Not one. *How could this be?*
>
> He returned home to Los Angeles and told his journalist partner and wife, Ann McElhinney, that he had found the next project they would work on. At first, Ann wanted nothing to do with it. This subject was foreign territory for them, way outside their wheelhouse. Besides, both she and Phelim had always considered themselves neutral on abortion. Why venture into such a hornet’s nest?
>
> Phelim ordered the court transcripts anyway, and Ann read them. Afterward, she agreed, *Yes, they would make this film.* It was more than an assent or a shared inclination. It was a *conviction*. Here was information of significant public interest, and it was shameful that no one was putting it out. A film about this *had* to be made; therefore, they would make it.

The film will open in 100 theaters, and when I looked, I saw that it was actually going to be a drive for me to get to the closest one.

It’s not surprising to me that the atheists in the mainstream media would seek to suppress the Gosnell story by not covering it. When you jettison objective morality from your worldview, you tend to fall back on a definition of morality that is more like “peer approval”. The mainstream media probably just thinks, if fewer people know the truth about this story, then they’ll still think I’m a good person for being pro-abortion. They lied and covered-up because their personal sense of moral goodness was at stake.

Scott Klusendorf defends the pro-life view on the Unbelievable radio show

September 7, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of this debate

This is a re-post of a debate on abortion.

Here are the details:

> Justin hosts a discussion between Mara Clarke of the Abortion Support Network and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Instititute. Mara believes women should decide whether to terminate a pregnancy, but Scott says that all depends on whether we are dealing with a human life in the womb.

MP3 of this show

My snarky paraphrase of the debate (not exact):

- Speaker introductions
- Klusendorf: no justification for abortion is necessary if the unborn are not human
- Klusendorf: we need to address the issue "what is the unborn?" Are the unborn human?
- Klusendorf: SLED: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency
- Klusendorf: None of these things affect the value of a human being
- Klusendorf: Even if we don't KNOW whether the unborn is human
- Mara: I'm not going to debate when life begins
- Mara: Women know when life begins by feelings

- Mara: The moral decision is “whether I can take care of this child?”
- Brierley: When is an unborn being human?
- Mara: I refuse to debate that – the real question is whether women want their babies or not
- Mara: Forced pregnancy is not OK
- Brierley: Could your justification for abortion (not wanting to care for a child) work through all 9 months?
- Mara: Late term abortions are rare, so I don’t have to answer that question
- Mara: Abortion should be OK through all 9 months of pregnancy because women cannot be restricted
- Mara: Some women are poor, they need to be able to kill expensive babies at any time
- Klusendorf: although she says she won’t debate the unborn, she does take a position
- Klusendorf: she assumes the unborn is not human, because she says that insufficient funds is justification for abortion
- Klusendorf: no one argues that you can kill a two year old because they cost money, because she thinks they are human
- Klusendorf: she is begging the question by assuming the unborn are not human, but that is the issue we must resolve
- Klusendorf: I am pro-choice on many other things, e.g. women choosing their own husbands, religion, etc.
- Klusendorf: Some choices are wrong – Mara might be right, but she needs to make the case for the unborn not being human
- Brierley: What is your reason for thinking that an unborn child is different from a 2-year old?
- Mara: An unborn child is not the same as a 2-year old, in my personal opinion
- Mara: I am not a debater, so I don’t have to provide reasoning for my assertion, I just feel it
- Mara: Not everybody agrees with Scott, they don’t have to have a rational argument, they just need to feel differently
- Mara: From my experience, when a woman doesn’t want to be pregnant, then she should be able to not be pregnant
- Mara: Women shouldn’t be punished with a baby that she doesn’t want, even if she chooses to have recreational sex
- Brierley: What do you think of women who think the unborn is human and do it anyway?
- Klusendorf: It’s interesting that they never kill their toddlers for those reasons
- Klusendorf: I layed out scientific and philosophical reasons for the humanity of the unborn
- Klusendorf: Her response was “but some people disagree with you”
- Klusendorf: People disagreed about whether slavery was wrong, or whether women should be able to vote

- Klusendorf: that doesn't mean there is no right answer – the right answer depends on the arguments
- Klusendorf: if absence of agreement makes a view false, then it makes HER pro-choice view false as well
- Klusendorf: she did make an argument for the unborn child having no rights because of the location
- Klusendorf: she needs to explain to us why location matters – what about location confers value
- Mara: I'm not going to let Scott frame my debate for me!!!
- Mara: women get pregnant and they don't want their babies! should we put them in jail!!!!
- Klusendorf: I didn't just give my opinion, I had science and philosophy, the issue is "what is the unborn?"
- Mara: philosophical and scientific debates are unimportant, I am an expert in real women's lives
- Klusendorf: Which women? Women in the womb or only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Only those outside the womb
- Klusendorf: Only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Women living outside the womb have a right to kill women inside the womb – women have bodily autonomy
- Klusendorf: then does a pregnant woman with nausea have a right to take a drug for it that will harm her unborn child?
- Mara: Unborn children are only valuable if they are wanted, unborn children only deserve protection if they are wanted
- Mara: There are restrictions on abortion – you can't get an abortion through all nine months in the US
- Mara: There is a 24-week limit in the UK as well
- Klusendorf: There are no restrictions on abortion that conflict with "a woman's health" because Supreme Court said
- Mara: where are these late term abortion clinics?
- Klusendorf: (he names two)
- Mara: that's not enough!!! we need more! where is there one in Pennsylvania?
- Klusendorf: well, there used to be Gosnell's clinic in Pennsylvania, and you could even get an infanticide there….
- Brierley: What about Dawkins' view that it is moral to abort Down's Syndrome babies?
- Klusendorf: he is ignoring the scientific case and philosophical case for the pro-life
- Klusendorf: the pro-life view is a true basis for human equality

What I wanted Scott to ask was whether sex-selection abortions were OK with her. Since her reasoning is "if it's unwanted, it has no rights", then that would mean sex-selection abortions are just fine. That's what a UK abortion expert recently argued. And I also posted recently about how sex-selection abortions are not prosecuted in the UK. If you're

looking for a war on women, there it is.

How to avoid choosing a charming, deceitful narcissist for a spouse

September 8, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

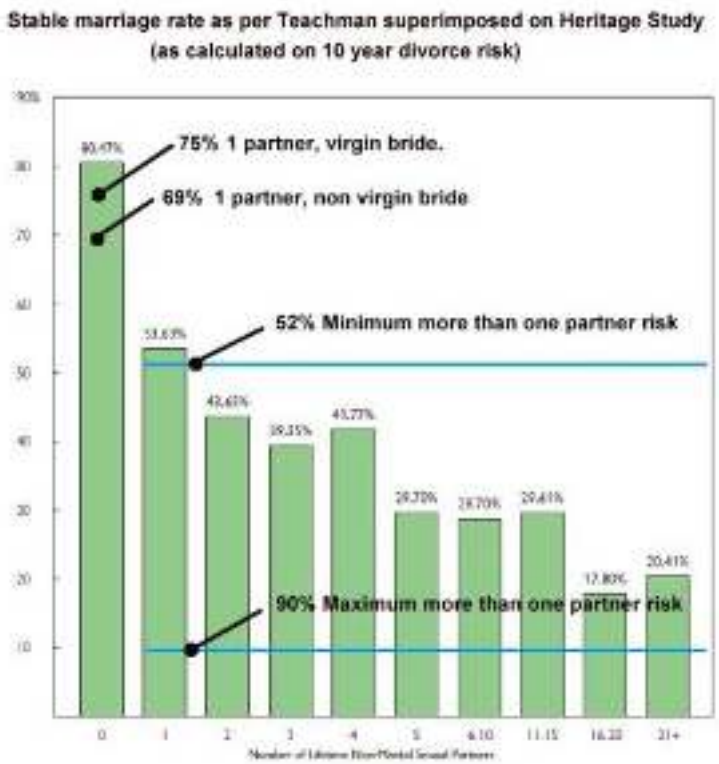

Marriage stability vs sexual partners,(Teachman et al. JAMF, August 2010)

For fun, I've decided to publish the 2000-word first draft that I normally send to my 6 female editors, because sometimes it's fun to let people know what I *really* think about things before my editors force me to make it sound much better and more persuasive.

We got a comment yesterday that I thought was worth a response.

Let's start with the comment:

> My husband was a Narcissist. He slept all over the county and never worked a day in this marriage. Plus, He couldn't decide if he was straight or gay. After my son finally left home I filed for divorce. I wish I did it sooner. Now he claims to be born again and wants to stay together. When is enough, enough?

We don't know if this woman was a Christian, was chaste, and whether the man she chose was Christian or was chaste. All we know is that the man she chose was attractive enough to easily find other women who would have sex with him despite the fact that he was married. Whatever he has, it's something that causes women who are not married to him to have sex with him. That's who the divorced woman chose to marry. His "charm" wasn't from his moral character or his deep knowledge of Christian theology and apologetics.

My first response to this was to put the responsibility on the person who had chosen the

bad husband. After all, I reasoned, everyone who takes a massive step like marriage is obligated to investigate who it is they are marrying.

But when I said that, I got some responses from women that said that she wasn't responsible for her poor choice of man, and that she was an innocent victim of his magical charming powers.

Here's Lee:

> A lot of time people don't show their worst qualities until the relationship is firmly in place, and it starts coming out slowly. It's not always as clear cut as a woman stupidly choosing an unsuitable husband who acted unsuitable from the get-go. I mean yeah, sometimes it's obvious early on and the woman is just stupid/ blind/broken/other. But we should be careful to not assume, and careful to not make harsh judgments from our ignorance.

If dangers like infidelity are not "obvious" then it's not the woman's fault that she didn't detect it. Apparently there is no way for the woman to detect it if it's not obvious, so she's not responsible.

And Mary:

> Narcissists are skilled at charming and persuading people that they're really great. And they're skilled at convincing others that their misgivings are irrational fears. Unfortunately,there are a lot of people like that. Not saying that people (men AND women, btw!) don't just sometimes choose stupidly, for bad reasons like "hotness" and excitement. But narcissists are a whole other kettle of fish. They can come out with a completely different personality once they've snagged their prey.

If a bad person is "skilled at charming", then their victim has no way of evaluating them accurately. Basically, deciding who to marry is just an activity where you talk, and decide how you feel about that person's talk. If the person is charming, then they make you feel good, and it's rational to marry them. A lot of women express this as "I want a man who is confident". It's never been explained to me how "confidence" is any evidence that the man has an ability and a past pattern of self-control and fidelity.

And Sara:

> Probably because narcissists can be very charming at first and easily win people over.
>
> […] What I was trying to say and the article pointed out is the power of narcissists is they can put people, especially women, under a spell of sorts. They are just so slick and charming that common sense goes right out the window. They don't think to verify all these things that seem obvious because they are so captivated.

All that's necessary to detect a charming narcissist is "common sense". His suitability to

do husband and father roles should be “obvious” from what he says and how he makes her feel.

So, let’s take a look at some tips for avoiding these charming narcissists who can convince you to marry them just with their words and the feelings they cause.

How to avoid marrying a charming narcissist who cheats on you

Here is some advice on how to avoid marrying a charming narcissist.

1. Evaluate a person based on objective evidence instead of how they make you feel with their words

There are a lot of lies coming out of the artists, actors, celebrities, etc. in this secular leftist culture that basically say that marriage is all about you and your feelings. If you prepared for marriage by watching movies made by pedophiles in Hollywood, and listening to music made by promiscuous musicians, and reading self-help fiction written by divorced spinsters, then you are not ready to detect a charming narcissist. Marriage is a practical enterprise, with distinct roles for husbands and wives that must be performed regardless of how either spouse feels. You need to understand and evaluate what *behaviors* are expected of husbands and wives in a marriage, and then look for *evidence* that the person you want to marry can perform those behaviors.

For example, if the behavior is fidelity, then the person should be able to demonstrate chastity and self-control during the courtship, and produce references from past girlfriends / boyfriends, and have written about chastity and self-control using research sources to explain the connection between premarital sex and marital instability. If you’re choosing with your feelings, and you haven’t done an analysis of marriage roles, and partner abilities, you’re headed for a disaster.

Just so you know, when I said this to some of the pro-irresponsibility, non-judgemental women I know, their response was to laugh in my face at the idea of asking someone’s previous partners about whether they were chaste and self-controlled. And this is why people are taken by surprise by the charming talk of narcissists. Feelings-oriented people today laugh at the idea of doing any evaluation, preferring to rely on their feelings. A lot of the failure to choose wisely is just down to people not understanding how the world works, then trying to manufacture a psycho-babble rationalization of why they screwed up.

When you’re hiring someone, you do a job interview, you test their skills, you contact their references, you do a drug test, a credit check, a criminal record check. And you have other skilled people sit in on the interviews and tests, in order to make sure that the person can really do the job they are being interviewed for. The marriage evaluation should include everything that the job interview includes *as a minimum.* Marriage is at least as complicated as choosing to hire someone for a job. If you aren’t doing the bare minimum of evaluating their education, career and finances, then you are setting yourself up for failure.

2. Learn what it takes to make morality rational, and then determine if your

candidate is capable of being moral

Because marriage deals so much with moral obligations, it's incumbent on you to read extensively on moral issues. *You yourself* should have developed worldview (through study and debate) that rationally grounds the minimum requirements for moral values and duties: 1) free will, 2) consciousness, 3) objective moral values, 4) objective moral duties, 5) a divine judge, 6) life after death. Why? Because doing the right thing isn't something that you always feel like doing. When doing the right thing goes against your feelings, you will need to have a *reason* to act against your own self-interest. And that reason is going to be because the world is the sort of place where morality is real, and independent of your feelings, where you are a free moral agent, and where is a divine judge and an afterlife.

At the center of the ability to rationally ground morality is the ability to know God is real rationally, and to defend his existence using objective evidence and logical arguments. If you don't know whether God exists based on logic and evidence, how will you evaluate whether someone else knows it? If you can't rationally ground doing the right thing when it goes against your interest, then you won't be able to know how to ask questions and investigate in order to decide whether someone else is moral or not. Marrying someone who doesn't believe in a moral lawgiver and a moral judge after death is as prudent to going into a city dump eating all your meals from what you find there.

In the specific case of fidelity, it's important to remember that some people have goals and an understanding about how poor choices right now will make those goals more difficult to obtain. It's easy to say that you want your spouse to be faithful. But what's really needed is to measure what they are really trying to achieve in life, and whether they understand how infidelity would affect those plans. If you can't see from their past decisions that they KNOW that 1) marriage and family are important enough to sacrifice for and 2) that they understand and apply the research that shows what decisions helps to make a marriage last (e.g. – no premarital sex), then, they don't really have the goals and the information that you want in a marriage partner.

Conclusion

I have to end this post with the reaction from my friend Lindsay, who is one of my reliable advisors. She responded to Lee and Mary above with this:

> There are ways to avoid marrying a narcissist, addict, abuser, or other bad man. However, most women don't know how to evaluate men because no one ever told them what to watch for or that they need to focus on long term character traits and not ignore red flags. They have been actively encouraged to follow their hearts and indoctrinated in this view since they were small children. That doesn't mean they are without blame, but they have also been let down by their families, friends, and society as a whole. Women need the eyes of family and friends on the men they date to help them see problems they might not recognize and warn them. But too often, family and friends are too uncomfortable saying something and think they are supposed to stay out of it.

> Our society has broken down and women do not have the protections they need.

Lindsay probably has the best and most successful marriage of anyone I know. She did everything right that I tell young women to do. Multiple STEM degrees, debt-free, years of private sector experience, married a virgin as a virgin herself right in the middle of her 23-27 year window, and is now a homeschooling mother of 3. Perfect, and did a thorough evaluation of her perfect husband Doug. Doug had done enormous amounts of work demonstrating through actions and achievements that he had the character and skills to be an excellent husband and father. Anyone who evaluated him beyond the surface level of talk and feelings and “confidence” would have found a gold mine of husband and father capability. Capabilities which are now on display in their marriage.

Note: in all truth, this is something that men do even more than women. Men choose entirely on appearance, they dirty themselves up with unchastity as if that has no effect on their ability to evaluate a woman properly, they read next to nothing about feminism and divorce, and then they cry and whine when the bad woman they married cleans them out in divorce courts. My recommendation to men is that they spend more time on education, career, finances, morality and Christianity, and less time getting drunk, watching sports, and having premarital sex. Get yourself some good advisors and get started early on evaluating young women for the roles of wife and mother. If they haven’t prepared for marriage like Lindsay did, dump them immediately, and move on to the next candidate.

Dennis Prager: which sin is the worst sin?

September 9, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a look at what the Bible says

In this post, Dennis Prager argues that the worst sin is when people who claim to have allegiance for God perform evil acts, thus bringing God's reputation into disrepute.

I found a Prager University video on the same topic:

Excerpt:

> The worst sin is committing evil in God's name.
>
> How do we know?
>
> From the third of the Ten Commandments. This is the only one of the ten that states that God will not forgive a person who violates the commandment.
>
> What does this commandment say?
>
> It is most commonly translated as, "Do not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. For the Lord will not hold guiltless" — meaning "will not forgive" — whoever takes His name in vain."
>
> Because of this translation, most people understandably think that the commandment forbids saying God's name for no good reason. So, something like, "God, did I have a rough day at work today!" violates the third commandment.
>
> But that interpretation presents a real problem. It would mean that whereas God could forgive the violation of any of the other commandments — dishonoring one's parents, stealing, adultery or even committing murder — He would never forgive someone who said, "God, did I have a rough day at work today!"
>
> Let's be honest: That would render God and the Ten Commandments morally incomprehensible.
>
> As it happens, however, the commandment is not the problem. The problem is the translation. The Hebrew original doesn't say "Do not take;" it says "Do not

> carry." The Hebrew literally reads, "Do not carry the name of the Lord thy God in vain."
>
> This is reflected in one of the most widely used new translations of the Bible, the New International Version, or NIV, which uses the word "misuse" rather than the word "take:"
>
> "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God."
>
> This is much closer to the original's intent.
>
> What does it mean to "carry" or to "misuse" God's name? It means committing evil in God's name.
>
> And that God will not forgive.
>
> Why not?
>
> When an irreligious person commits evil, it doesn't bring God and religion into disrepute. But when a religious person commits evil in God's name he destroys the greatest hope for goodness on earth — belief in a God who demands goodness, and who morally judges people.
>
> The Nazis and Communists were horrifically cruel mass murderers. But their evils only sullied their own names, not the name of God. But when religious people commit evil, especially in God's name, they are not only committing evil, they are doing terrible damage to the name of God.

Sean McDowell has a post about Dennis Prager's view, and he says:

> Given this context, an obvious example is Muslim radicals killing innocent people in the *name* of God. But the most recent example, which is rightly a prominent story in the news, is the rampant sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests. The story runs deeper than most people could have ever imagined, involving the systematic cover-up of over 1,000 cases against children by 300 priests in Pennsylvania *alone* over the past seventy years. The individual stories are harrowing, heart-breaking and infuriating.
>
> Sadly, these horrific actions don't merely reflect on the individual priests, but on the Catholic Church, the entire Christian faith, and religion in general. And rightly so. Can we really blame people who abandon God when his "representatives" commit such abominable crimes?
>
> As Prager has sadly, but correctly, observed: "No atheist activist is nearly as effective in alienating people from God and religion as are evil 'religious' people."

Now, I don't agree with Dennis on his ranking this sin as the worst. I would put carrying the Lord's name in vain lower, and say that rebellion against God is the worst sin. That's what I would say intellectually speaking. Emotionally speaking, I think that attacking people for their allegiance to God is the worst sin, like when gay activists go after Christian business owners for trying to take the Bible seriously about marriage, for example. Just don't get in the way of a Christian and their relationship with God, you

atheists. You’re doing something absolutely horrible when you make it harder for a Christian to follow Jesus. You might disagree with Christianity, but it would be wise not to persecute Christians, just in case we’re right about what is true.

Dennis is Jewish, so he believes that religions should be judged based on whether they produce good or not, rather than whether they are true or not. I try to listen to Dennis’ radio show as often as I can, and although he does like to discuss what we can know about God from science and history, he doesn’t think that getting the right answers to theological questions is as important as doing the right actions. I think that might be why he chose this one as the worst, because actions are more important to him. I agree with him that it is certainly very bad to invoke God in a way that makes God look bad.

CDC reports: STD rates hit all-time high for the fourth straight year

September 10, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

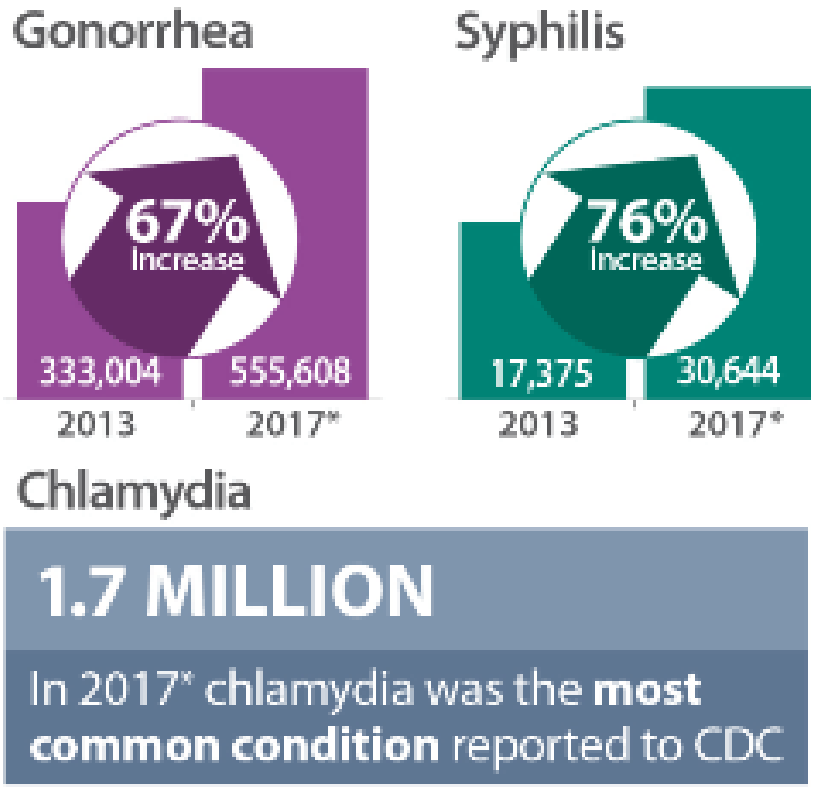

Preliminary CDC numbers for STDs in 2017

I've been blogging about skyrocketing rates of sexually-transmitted-diseases for the last few years, and particularly how it impacts high risk groups, e.g. – men who have sex with men. The attitude that the culture is taking towards this is to not make any moral judgments, but someone is going to have to pay for all the health care that is required to "fix" this problem.

Fox News reports on the latest numbers:

> Sexually-transmitted diseases continue to hit all-time highs in the U.S. with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reporting a 10 percent spike for chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis in 2017. The federal health agency said in a report released Tuesday that the numbers, which include nearly 2.3 million new cases of the aforementioned diseases, reflect a "steep, sustained increase" in STDs since 2013.
>
> "We're sliding backward," Jonathan Mermin, director of CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention, said. "It is evident the systems that identify, treat and ultimately prevent STDs are strained to near-breaking point."
>
> The data, which was presented at the 2018 STD Prevention Conference, found a 67 percent increase in gonorrhea diagnoses, which officials sounded alarm over

> due to the growing threat of untreatable strains.

The CDC gives us the numbers well enough, but like all government agencies, their attitude is not to tell the selfish adults to behave morally. They blame "stigma and discrimination" for the rise in STDs, and recommend more government as the solution. I.e. – they think that people who disapprove of sex outside of marriage are to blame for the skyrocketing rates of STDs. If we all stopped making the irresponsible, reckless people feel bad with our ignorant moral judgments, then the STD problem would immediately be solved.

Anyway, here is an article that talks about untreatable strains of gonorrhea in particular:

> Scientists have found a "superbug" strain of gonorrhea in Japan that is resistant to all recommended antibiotics and say it could transform a once easily treatable infection into a global public health threat.
>
> The new strain of the sexually transmitted disease — called H041 — cannot be killed by any currently recommended treatments for gonorrhea, leaving doctors with no other option than to try medicines so far untested against the disease.
>
> […]Gonorrhea is a bacterial sexually transmitted infection and if left untreated can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy and infertility in women.
>
> British scientists said last year that there was a real risk of gonorrhea becoming a superbug — a bacteria that has mutated and become resistant to multiple classes of antibiotics — after increasing reports of gonorrhea drug resistance emerged in Hong Kong, China, Australia and other parts of Asia.

Now, I know it's tempting (for some people who like tolerance) to say that we should let people do whatever they want to do, and not judge them. After all, we can just take some money from the wealthy in order to solve these problems without making anyone feel bad. I hear this a lot from the the "don't judge" crowd. But this time, it looks like no amount of money is going to solve this problem, and maybe the judgers were right to warn.

Syphilis is also a problem in certain high risk groups:

> The sometimes-deadly disease syphilis is exploding in the United States, with most of the increase since 1995 among men who have sex with men (MSM), according to a new report from the Atlanta-based Center for Disease Control (CDC).
>
> As recently as 2000, researchers believed the total elimination of syphilis was within reach. The recent dramatic increases in infections, coupled with the observation that syphilis closely tracks with other diseases like AIDS, have the medical and scientific community deeply concerned. The CDC report considers "the increase in syphilis among MSM is a major public health concern."
>
> According to the report, "During 2005-2013, the number of primary and

> secondary syphilis cases reported each year in the United States nearly doubled, from 8,724 to 16,663; the annual rate increased from 2.9 to 5.3 cases per 100,000 population."
>
> The report also says that "men contributed an increasing proportion of cases, accounting for 91.1% of all primary and secondary syphilis cases in 2013." Most of the increases came from men who have sex with men, which were responsible for 77% of cases in 2009 but 83.9% in 2012, what the report calls "the vast majority of male… syphilis cases."

HIV is also a problem for this same group:

> A fact sheet released at the end of June by the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) warns that HIV rates, already at epidemic proportions, are continuing to climb steadily among men who have sex with men (MSM).
>
> "Gay and bisexual men remain at the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS epidemic," says Jonathan Mermin, the director of the CDC's division of HIV/AIDS prevention.
>
> The CDC notes that while homosexual men make up only a very small percentage of the male population (4%), MSM account for over three-quarters of all new HIV infections, and nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of all new infections in 2010 (29,800).
>
> "Men who have sex with men remain the group most heavily affected by HIV in the United States," the fact sheet states.

We do have certain segments of the population who think that normal sexuality means having sex with dozens, hundreds and even thousands of partners. Just on the grounds of "they're hot". And naturally, these people are at higher risk for STDs.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

September 11, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude

others
- It’s meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can’t say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Pro-life journalist gets police protection after receiving death threats and rape threats

September 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Abortion Rights March

Most pro-lifers tend to focus more on persuading a woman not to kill a child she's already conceived. My view on abortion debating goes even further: I think that we should be persuading women not to have irresponsible sex in the first place. DC McAllister tweeted out something that I agree with, and now she's getting death threats and rape threats. This is why I have an alias.

PJ Media explains:

> Last week, PJ Media contributor and Fox News guest Denise McAllister sent out a powerful tweet denouncing the abortion movement. Little did she know, days later she would be in hiding, scared for her life. When she went public about receiving death and rape threats, pro-abortion Twitter users championed the threats against her.
>
> "At the root of [abortion] hysteria is women's unhinged desire for irresponsible sex. Sex is their god. Abortion is their sacrament," McAllister tweeted. "It's abhorrent as women have flung themselves from the heights of being the world's civilizing force to the muck and mire of dehumanizing depravity."

Now, I do think it's important to be able to make a defense for the humanity of the unborn using reason and evidence. But I like what she tweeted here. We have to also make a case that a woman should view sex outside of marriage as a mistake. A mistake that is unlikely to work out in the long run.

Anyway, you can imagine what pro-abortionists did next… these are people who think you can kill unborn babies, after all. Not the best at moral virtue. Because "don't kill the babies" is pretty much the most obvious moral rule there is.

More:

> McAllister told PJ Media that she received death and rape threats, over multiple forms of private communication.
>
> “They are threats outside of Twitter, stating they know where I live,” McAllister said. “Threats of rape and strangling. I spoke to the police. I am on home watch.”
>
> “My children are very frightened,” she added.
>
> On Sunday, she went public about the threats. “I am facing legit death & rape threats because I have dared to call out women who are hysterical about abortion and to challenge them to be responsible and not to elevate sex to the point that they’re willing to kill human life to avoid their responsibilities. How sick is that?” McAllister tweeted.
>
> Some people responded with sympathy … to the person making the death and rape threats!
>
> “People don’t react well to your extremism,” a user named Monika D. responded.

I took a look at her Twitter feed to see how things were going, and she had gone into hiding with her family, because of the rape threats, strangling threats, and death threats. Then, after she got police protection, she returned to social media. Police protection is not given unless the threat is credible.

Anyway, here’s what I want to say about this. I understand that women who have abortions are stressed and not in their right minds. But what about pro-abortion activists? When you meet someone who is pro-abortion, you’re talking to someone who is cannot answer the simplest moral questions correctly. There just is not factual, science-based case against the full humanity of the unborn. The justifications given for taking the life of an unborn child simply aren’t capable of making the act morally permissible.

Abortion is this generation’s slavery. It’s the exploitation of one class of weaker individuals by a class of stronger individuals, for the selfish gain of the stronger individuals. It really is nothing more than “I want to have sex with that hot guy, to boost my self-esteem”, followed by “I want to kill my baby so I can go on living for myself”. The point is that just like slavery, abortion is rationally indefensible to anyone capable of even basic moral reasoning. Everyone who is pro-abortion today would have own slaves. Everyone who is pro-life today would have been an abolitionist.

So, we shouldn’t expect people on the pro-abortion side of the aisle to be very concerned about doing what’s moral when it conflicts with their self-interest.

So, how far does this inability to think about right and wrong go?

Consider a few stories from the past summer:

- Democrat Charged With Threatening to Kill Top Pro-Life Congressman Chris Smith
- Man Threatens to Kill Pro-Life Members of Congress (Steve Scalise and Cathy McMorris Rodgers) and Their Children
- Planned Parenthood Volunteer Arrested for Threatening to Kill Pro-Life

Congressman's (Brian Masts) Children
- Man Drives Up to Pro-Life Advocate and Points a Loaded Rifle in His Face

Look. When you're willing to kill an unborn child, simply because the child is the wrong race, or because the child is the wrong sex, because of how it impacts you, then anything is possible. Morality simply isn't a concern for you. If you're willing to do the worst thing, then you're willing to do anything.

These are not good people, and it shows.

The production of carbon from lighter elements is fine-tuned to an amazing degree

September 13, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

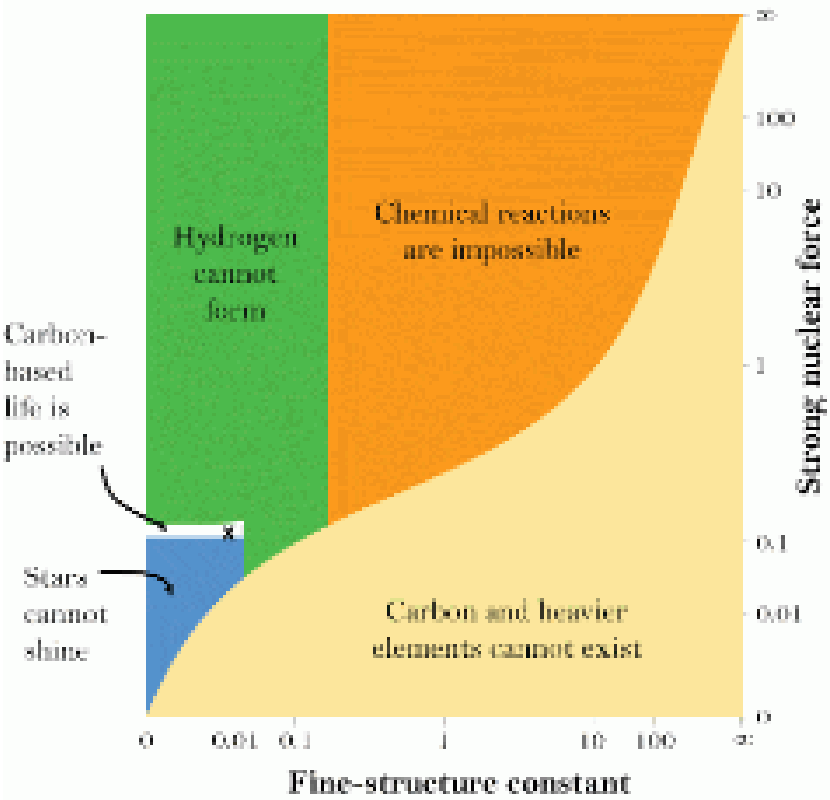

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant

If there is one thing that science fiction is good for, it's for popularizing the phrase "carbon-based life". Everyone has heard that carbon is essential for life. But do you know why carbon is so important? And did you know that the reaction that produced the carbon in our universe is actually fine-tuned, and therefore evidence for a Creator and Designer of the universe?

Hugh Ross has a new article up in Salvo magazine, which I found thanks to a post at Uncommon Descent.

Now he starts off with a discussion of how the mass density of the universe needed to be fine-tuned in order to produce elements heavier than hydrogen from the (only) hydrogen that was present at the creation event. I've talked about that reaction previously, but I won't repeat that here. Nucleosynthesis is one of the most important chemical reactions in science, and something every Christian should know and understand well enough to explain it.

You can't make complex embodied intelligent creatures such as ourselves out of only hydrogen and helium, but you can't make a life permitting universe without some hydrogen and helium. For one thing, you can't have liquid water without some hydrogen.

But the element carbon is the center hub of all of the molecules inside of us that allow for the storage and processing of information necessary for life. And it turns out that the

reaction that creates carbon from elements lighter than carbon is fine-tuned to an amazing degree.

Excerpt:

> But cosmic mass density is not the only thing that must have been exquisitely fine-tuned for the universe to contain any carbon. The nuclear resonance (or energy) levels for helium, beryllium, carbon, and oxygen also had to be exquisitely fine-tuned for carbon to exist. Here's how that happens.
>
> Stars fuse carbon and oxygen from helium through a series of reactions known as the triple-alpha process, in which three helium nuclei are combined to make one carbon nucleus. In the first step in this process, two helium nuclei (with 2 protons each) fuse together to make beryllium (which has 4 protons). Next, a helium nucleus fuses with a beryllium nucleus to make carbon (which has 6 protons). Then, some carbon nuclei fuse with helium nuclei to make oxygen (which has 8 protons).
>
> The only reason that the triple-alpha process produces any carbon or oxygen at all is because in the first step, the ground state energy level (i.e., the state of an atom when all of its electrons are at their lowest energy levels) of the beryllium-8 nucleus (containing 4 protons and 4 neutrons) almost exactly equals the ground state energy level of two helium-4 nuclei (2 protons and 2 neutrons each). In the second step, the ground state energy level of a beryllium-8 nucleus plus a helium-4 nucleus almost exactly equals the energy level of an excited state of a carbon-12 nucleus (6 protons and 6 neutrons). In the third step, the ground state energy level of a carbon-12 nucleus at 7.65 million electron volts is just slightly larger than the ground state energy level of an oxygen-16 nucleus (8 protons and 8 neutrons) at 7.12 million electron volts.[1]
>
> If it were not for the near equivalences or resonances of the nuclear energy levels of two helium nuclei relative to a beryllium nucleus, and of a beryllium nucleus plus a helium nucleus relative to a carbon nucleus, the universe would contain very little or no carbon and very little or no elements heavier than carbon. Life would be impossible.
>
> Furthermore, unless the difference in the nuclear energy levels between a carbon nucleus and an oxygen nucleus were precisely 0.53 million electron volts, the universe would contain either a lot of carbon and no oxygen or a lot of oxygen and no carbon. Either way, physical life would be impossible in the universe.
>
> In the early 1950s, astronomer Fred Hoyle and physicist Willy Fowler were the first to understand how critical the relative nuclear energy levels of helium, beryllium, carbon, and oxygen were for making life possible in the universe. Commenting on the highly fine-tuned nature of these nuclear energy levels, Hoyle wrote in an article he published in *Engineering & Science*,
>
> A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has

> monkeyed with the physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion beyond question.[2]

The article continues to explain that there is an additional problem of carbon fine-tuning related to habitability.

The carbon formation problem is one of the best examples of fine-tuning, and as you can see, it’s even admitted by atheists. It’s not the easiest one to explain (because resonance levels are not familiar in every day life), but it’s worth knowing about all three of the fine-tuning topics in the post.

Keep in mind that the more science has made progress, the more fine-tuning problems we have discovered. The trend is very bad if you are a naturalist. But very good if you are a theist. Evidence matters, and scientific evidence is the best kind of evidence.

New study: more than half of all female-to-male transgender teens attempt suicide

September 14, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Anti-marriage gay activists vandalize church

A recent study by a researcher out of Brown University found that the exploding rates of transgender young people is being driven in part by social factors. In particular, coming out as transgender gives young people instant popularity, and everyone around them feels obligated to affirm them and agree with them. Or else. What's missing? What's missing is any sort of warning about the dangers of transgenderism.

The Daily Wire reports on a new study from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Excerpt:

> A new study from the American Academy of Pediatrics found an alarming number of teens who identify as transgender or nonbinary have attempted suicide at least once, showcasing the dangers of the transgender movement. More than half of all female-to-male transgender teens, for example, have attempted to end their lives.
>
> Researchers behind the study used data collected from more than 600 teens over a 36-month period, June 2012 to May 2015, from the "Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors" survey.
>
> The study found that female-to-male trans teens had the highest suicide attempt rate of all other identity groups surveyed: 50.8%. Unsurprisingly, other gender-confused teens had outrageously high rates of suicide attempts, too. Nonbinary adolescents, meaning teens who do not identify exclusively as female or male, were found to have a 41.8% suicide attempt rate; male-to-female trans teens had a 29.9% rate; and "questioning" teens had a rate of 27.9%.

> By comparison, teens who identified as their biological sex and corresponding gender suffered relatively low (though still too high) rates: females were found to have a 17.6% rate while males had the lowest of any other group at 9.8%.

When I tell LGBT people about the health risks of their choices, and cite peer-reviewed studies, the most frequent response is that they get angry and even violent and demand approval. I have even heard threats that if I don't approve of what they feel like doing, then they will kill themselves, and their blood will be on my hands.

The thing is, there is a study about that. Even though LGBT people think that approval will make them feel better about what they are doing, it's not true. In societies where social approval and government support of LGBT behaviors are HIGHER than in America, the suicide rates are still extremely high.

Life Site News explains:

> A study out of Sweden published last month has found that suicide risk among active homosexuals is high even in a region that is highly tolerant of same-sex behaviour.
>
> Published in the *European Journal of Epidemiology*, the authors found that men in same-sex "marriages" were at three times greater risk of suicide than men who are married to women.
>
> The authors note in their abstract:
>
> Even in a country with a comparatively tolerant climate regarding homosexuality such as Sweden, same-sex married individuals evidence a higher risk for suicide than other married individuals.

Just in passing, what a strange way to respond to disagreement. I have people disagree with my chastity, my Christianity, my conservative politics, etc. all the time. It never occurs to me to threaten to commit suicide if they don't approve. I also don't try to get them fired, insult them, shame them, vandalize their property, assault them, murder them, or drag them in front of a government-run political correctness panel. I don't even mind that they use their free speech to disagree with me. After all, they are people made in the image of God, with an equal right to be in a relationship with God. I can't do anything that is going to cause them to think that God doesn't love them.

It's useful to remember that the Christian view on life is not to neglect God's design and tell people to do whatever they want. The Christian view is to tell people God's design, set boundaries, and encourage people to make good decisions. Christians don't believe in love as mere acceptance. Christians believe in "love warns". I tell young people not to run up student loan debt studying useless non-STEM degrees. They might feel bad, but it's the truth: they won't be able to find a job that allows them to pay the money back. Warning people about sexual issues is the same thing, in my mind.

Study: sex-reassignment surgery does not improve mental health of transgender people

September 15, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

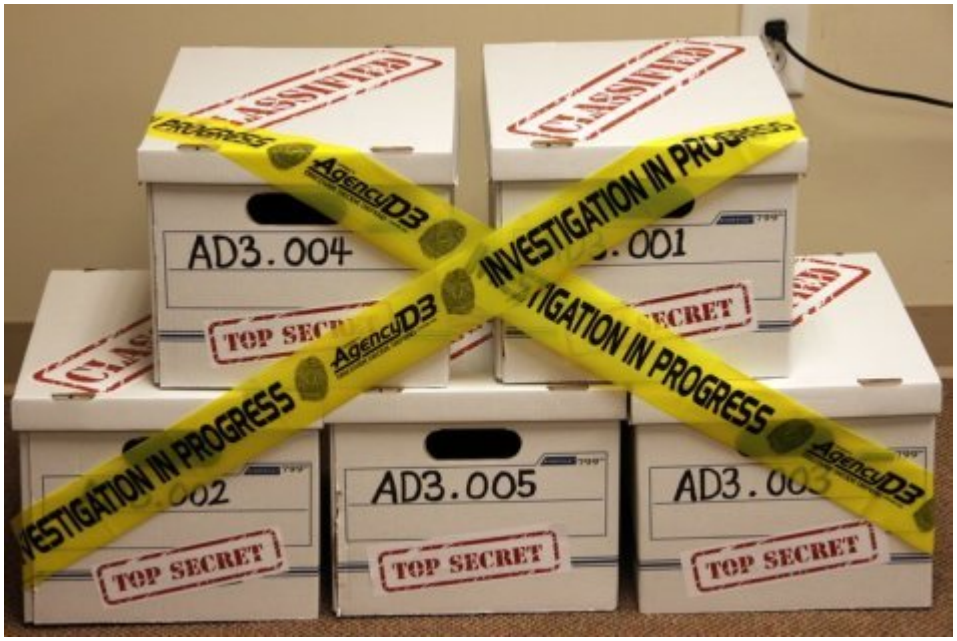

Investigation in progress

I found this peer-reviewed PLOS study while reading an article from CNS News.

The study takes a look at sex-reassigned people in pro-LGBT Sweden, between 1973 and 2003. Specifically, they aim to measure "mortality, morbidity, and criminal rate after surgical sex reassignment of transsexual persons" over a 30 year period.

The setting is important because Sweden has a much higher tolerance for gay rights than other Western countries, e.g. – America. There's virtually no dissent from the gay rights agenda in Sweden – certainly no organized dissent.

Here are the results and the conclusion:

> ### Results
>
> The overall mortality for sex-reassigned persons was higher during follow-up (aHR 2.8; 95% CI 1.8–4.3) than for controls of the same birth sex, particularly death from suicide (aHR 19.1; 95% CI 5.8–62.9). Sex-reassigned persons also had an increased risk for suicide attempts (aHR 4.9; 95% CI 2.9–8.5) and psychiatric inpatient care (aHR 2.8; 95% CI 2.0–3.9). Comparisons with controls matched on reassigned sex yielded similar results. Female-to-males, but not male-to-females, had a higher risk for criminal convictions than their respective birth sex controls.
>
> ### Conclusions
>
> Persons with transsexualism, after sex reassignment, have considerably higher risks for mortality, suicidal behaviour, and psychiatric morbidity than the general

> population. Our findings suggest that sex reassignment, although alleviating gender dysphoria, may not suffice as treatment for transsexualism, and should inspire improved psychiatric and somatic care after sex reassignment for this patient group.

So, there were higher risks of death, higher risk of suicidal behavior, and higher mental illness.

The CNS News article interviewed a Johns Hopkins University scientist who is familiar with the history of sex-reassignment surgery.

Excerpt:

> Dr. Paul R. McHugh, the Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University and former psychiatrist–in-chief for Johns Hopkins Hospital, who has studied transgendered people for 40 years, said it is a scientific fact that "transgendered men do not become women, nor do transgendered women become men."
>
> […]Dr. McHugh, who was psychiatrist-in-chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital for 26 years, the medical institute that had initially pioneered sex-change surgery – and later ceased the practice – stressed that the cultural meme, or idea that "one's sex is fluid and a matter of choice" is extremely damaging, especially to young people.
>
> […][T]here is plenty of evidence showing that "transgendering" is a "psychological rather than a biological matter," said Dr. McHugh.
>
> "In fact, gender dysphoria—the official psychiatric term for feeling oneself to be of the opposite sex—belongs in the family of similarly disordered assumptions about the body, such as anorexia nervosa and body dysmorphic disorder," said McHugh.
>
> "Its treatment should not be directed at the body as with surgery and hormones any more than one treats obesity-fearing anorexic patients with liposuction," he said.
>
> In fact, at Johns Hopkins, where they pioneered sex-change-surgery, "we demonstrated that the practice brought no important benefits," said Dr. McHugh. "As a result, we stopped offering that form of treatment in the 1970s."

Regarding the study, McHugh says this:

> The most thorough follow-up of sex-reassigned people—extending over 30 years and conducted in Sweden, where the culture is strongly supportive of the transgendered—documents their lifelong mental unrest."
>
> "Ten to 15 years after surgical reassignment, the suicide rate of those who had undergone sex-reassignment surgery rose to 20 times that of comparable peers," said McHugh.

Normally, when it comes to questions like these, I think it’s best to be guided by the evidence. What good would it do to tell someone to do something that makes them like you today (“you’re so tolerant and compassionate”) if they commit suicide tomorrow? Although people today think that being truthful and setting boundaries is “intolerant”, it can actually save someone’s life. When you stop someone from *going further* in a direction that will expose them to harm, you’re actually doing the right thing – even if they hate you right now for disagreeing with them. (That hatred of dissent is a sign that they are wrong, by the way)

Is the presupposition of naturalism in science good for the pursuit of truth?

September 16, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

This topic came up recently in a discussion, and I wanted to be sure that all my readers were aware of how to think about the work that the presupposition of naturalism does in supporting naturalistic views of science. When I was little, way back in the 1990s, Phillip E. Johnson's work on the definitions of science, evolution and creation were very important stuff. He was everywhere, doing lectures on university campuses and debates on the radio with Eugenie Scott. I was able to get a bunch of this audio from Access Research Network on AUDIO CASSETTES, but now that's all obsolete.

Thankfully, I was able to find an old column written by Johnson in the Wall Street Journal, and preserved by Access Research Network.

Excerpt:

> A Chinese paleontologist lectures around the world saying that recent fossil finds in his country are inconsistent with the Darwinian theory of evolution. His reason: The major animal groups appear abruptly in the rocks over a relatively short time, rather than evolving gradually from a common ancestor as Darwin's theory predicts. When this conclusion upsets American scientists, he wryly comments: **"In China we can criticize Darwin but not the government. In America you can criticize the government but not Darwin."**
>
> That point was illustrated last week by the media firestorm that followed the Kansas Board of Education's vote to omit macro-evolution from the list of science topics which all students are expected to master. Frantic scientists and educators warned that Kansas students would no longer be able to succeed in college or graduate school, and that the future of science itself was in danger. The *New*

> *York Times* called for a vigorous counteroffensive, and the lawyers prepared their lawsuits. Obviously, the cognitive elites are worried about something a lot more important to themselves than the career prospects of Kansas high school graduates.
>
> The root of the problem is that "science" has two distinct definitions in our culture. On the one hand, science refers to a method of investigation involving things like careful measurements, repeatable experiments, and especially a skeptical, open-minded attitude that insists that all claims be carefully tested. Science also has become identified with a philosophy known as materialism or scientific naturalism. This philosophy insists that nature is all there is, or at least the only thing about which we can have any knowledge. It follows that nature had to do its own creating, and that the means of creation must not have included any role for God. Students are not supposed to approach this philosophy with open-minded skepticism, but to believe it on faith.
>
> […]All the most prominent Darwinists proclaim naturalistic philosophy when they think it safe to do so. Carl Sagan had nothing but contempt for those who deny that humans and all other species "arose by blind physical and chemical forces over eons from slime." Richard Dawkins exults that Darwin "made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist," and Richard Lewontin has written that scientists must stick to philosophical materialism regardless of the evidence, because "we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door."

So, if you're having a discussion with a person who believes in naturalism – that everything in nature can be explained by material forces alone – then they will give you a stock response to all of your evidence for something outside of nature.

- Origin of the universe? *That's not science*
- Cosmic fine-tuning? *That's not science*
- Origin of life? *That's not science*
- Cambrian explosion? *That's not science*
- Habitability-discoverability? *That's not science*

It's not that the people who did the science around these discoveries invoked God, and that's why it's not science. On the contrary, the mainstream scientists who made these discoveries scrupulously left God out of their microscopes and telescopes. These discoveries – which have only gotten worse for the naturalists as more details emerge – do not have easy naturalistic explanations. If you ask the naturalist for an explanation, they will resort to various sorts of speculations:

- future science will undermine all our current knowledge
- we are in an unobservable multiverse that exists eternally
- aliens seeded the Earth with life, and THEY evolved
- there are lots of fossils we haven't discovered yet

- there are lots of stars and planets we haven't discovered yet

What's the answer to this arguing from ignorance?

I think ridicule is best. You need to start by telling the full story about how these discoveries were made. Name the scientists, state the dates. Tell the whole story of how the science was done. Do this for each discovery. Then, at the end, ask them which of these scientific discoveries they deny. Ask them for naturalistic explanations of the ones they accept. Pretend to be confused, then concerned about their sanity. Finally, you should be as condescending as possible, and just explain that we can't believe in fairies and unicorns. Explain things to them as if they were a child: we have to base our worldview on what science has revealed. We can't hold out for Santa Claus to come down the chimney with new science that undermines all we have discovered. We have to go with the science we have today, and the science we have today says Creator and Designer. That is the best explanation of the what we know right now. And the trend is that these discoveries are becoming even MORE difficult for naturalism to account for. I guarantee you that the average rank-and-file atheist knows more about Star Wars and Star Trek lore than they do about actual scientific discoveries that threaten their beloved religion of naturalism.

Try to make your face look like Tucker Carlson:

The Tucker Carlson face conveys a mix of confusion, disappointment and horror

For God's sake, even Richard Dawkins admitted in his debate with John Lennox that a good case can be made for a deistic God from the science we have now. If Dawkins can admit this, then you need to be extremely harsh to the village atheists.

If the word "naturalism" is all new to you, you should probably read the whole article and this longer article as well. The longer article really explains the different definitions of the words that are used in these debates. Johnson's an excellent writer, and you will learn a lot.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez explains how she will pay for $40 trillion in new spending

September 17, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Young people seem to think that implementing socialism in the United States won't cost them a thing. The truth is, the rich don't have enough money to cover all the spending that socialists want to do. It's going to be young people who are stuck with the bill, and they'll have to scale their lives down to third world levels to pay for what they voted for.

Here's a socialist (former bartender) to explain how she would pay for $40 trillion in new spending, over 10 years:

The Daily Wire reports:

> TAPPER: "Right. I get that. But the price tag for everything that you laid out in your campaign is $40 trillion over the next 10 years. I understand that Medicare for all would cost more to some wealthier people and to the government and to taxpayers, while also reducing individual health care expenditures. But I am talking about the overall package. You say it's not pie in the sky but $40 trillion is quite a bit of money. And the taxes that you talked about raising to pay for this, to pay for your agenda, only count for two [trillion dollars]. We're going by left-leaning analysts."
>
> OCASIO-CORTEZ: "Right. When you look again at how our health care works, currently we pay — much of these costs go into the private sector. So, what we see, for example, is, you know, a year ago I was working downtown in a restaurant. I went around and I asked how many of you folks have health insurance? Not a single person did. They're paying — they would have had to pay $200 a month for a payment for insurance that had an $8,000 deductible. What these represent are lower cost overall for these programs. Additionally, what this is, it's a broader agenda. We do know and acknowledge that there are political realities. They don't always happen with just a wave of a wand but we can work to make these things happen. In fact, when you look at the economic activity that it spurs — for example, if you look at my generation, millennials, the amount of economic activity that we do not engage in. The fact that we delay purchasing homes, that we don't participate in the economy as purchasing cars as fully as fully as possible is a cost. It is an externality, if you will, of unprecedented amount of student loan debt."
>
> TAPPER: "I am assuming I won't get an answer for the other $38 trillion. We'll have you back and go over that."

Some people are going to vote for her just because she's young, female, and sounds so passionate. But let's take a look at some numbers so we can understand how feasible her plans are.

First, the rich don't earn enough money to be able to pay for trillions of dollars in spending.

In 2012, John Stossel wrote this in Forbes:

> If the IRS grabbed 100 percent of income over $1 million, the take would be just $616 billion.

In 2011, the Tax Foundation explained that even if you taxed ALL THE DISPOSABLE INCOME from all the people who make $200,000 or more, you would only raise $1.53 trillion dollars:

> There's simply not enough wealth in the community of the rich to erase this country's problems by waving some magic tax wand.
>
> […]After everyone making more than $200,000/year has paid taxes, the IRS would need to take every single penny of disposable income they have left. Such an act would raise approximately $1.53 trillion. It may be economically ruinous, but at least this proposal would actually solve the problem.

Socialists want to spend $40 trillion more over 10 years, or about $4 trillion per year. Taking most of what the wealthy earn would make up less than half of that spending.

Anyway, we're not in a position to be doing any spending, because the costs of our *existing* socialist programs will be *increasing* going forward.

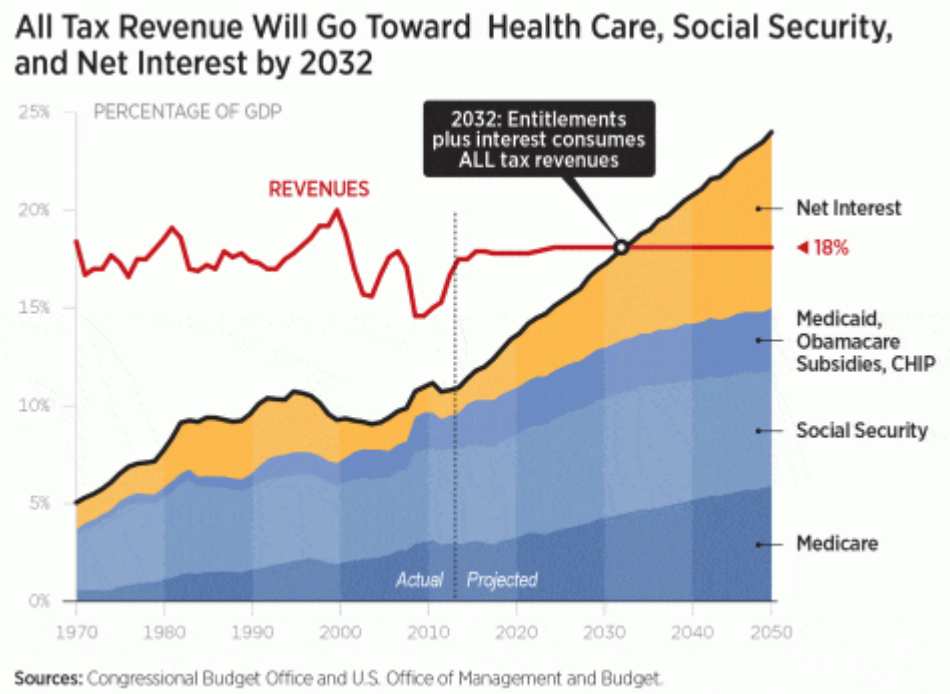

Pretty soon, our mandatory expenses will consume all of our tax revenues USA Today explains:

> After averaging 35 percent of national income from the mid-1950s through 2008, the national debt has surged to 78 percent today and is projected to reach 100 percent within a decade, and 200 percent by 2050. Even these scary estimates rest on rosy assumptions — no new military or economic crises and creditors

> willing to accept record-low interest rates from a government heading towards a debt crisis.

Just to be clear, he's talking about the debt-to-gdp ratio. When ours gets too high, interest on the debt will rise, be ause lenders aren't sure they'll be getting their money back. This will put us into a debt death spiral.

More:

> The cause of this coming debt deluge is no mystery: Social Security and Medicare are projected to run a staggering $82 trillion cash deficit over the next 30 years. We are adding 74 million retiring baby boomers to a system that provides Medicare recipients with benefits three times as large as their lifetime contributions and pays Social Security benefits typically exceeding lifetime contributions (even accounting for inflation and interest on the contributions).

We can't afford the spending we're already committed to *right now*:

> Politicians promise changes to avoid cuts in Social Security and Medicare, but their alternatives are plainly insufficient. Democrats favor tax hikes on the rich, but even doubling the highest two tax brackets to 70 and 74 percent would close just one-fifth of these programs' shortfalls — and even that assumes people keep working at 90 percent tax rates when including state and payroll taxes. Slashing defense spending to European levels would close just one-seventh of the gap. Single-payer healthcare proposals are projected by even liberal economists to increase the debt. Republicans favor cuts in antipoverty and social spending, but even the unimaginable elimination of all anti-poverty spending would close barely half of the shortfall.

So, who's going to pay for all this? It will be the people who have to work and pay income taxes for the next 30 years. The very same young Americans who are voting for socialists today. They're the ones who are going to have to survive on a fraction of what their parents earned.

But there's more. The truth is that raising taxes on the wealthy will cause enormous damage to job creators. If you look at socialist countries, the unemployment rate among young people is astronomical compared to the USA today. Why? Because these other countries have taxed and regulated businesses so much that they simply don't have money to hire people, and if they do hire people, they pay them less than what they can earn for the same work in America.

Reuters explains:

> Last December, the most recent full figures available, 25 million of the EU's workforce of 240 million were unemployed and actively looking for jobs, producing an unemployment rate of 11 percent.
>
> An additional 11 million were unemployed but had stopped looking or were not immediately available to start work, and were therefore not classified as

> unemployed. Adding them to the total would bump the jobless rate up to 15 percent.
>
> Then there were more than 9 million part-time workers who wanted to work more hours but had no opportunity to do so – they were counted as employed but felt underemployed.
>
> And finally there were those who were overqualified for their jobs and might well have been making more money elsewhere if they had found the right match for their skills.

European socialism is a kind of hybrid of socialism and capitalism, so it’s not too bad. In places like Cuba, and Venezuela, you get the real thing. I doubt that most young people really understand what is going on right now on the streets of Cuba and Venezuela. If they did, maybe they wouldn’t be voting for socialism here.

How often are accusations of rape or sexual assault false?

September 18, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Should we "automatically believe rape claims" like Jackie's UVA rape claim?

The purpose of this post is to make the case that claims of rape and sexual assault should be made to the police, investigated by the police, and then proceed to trial. We should not punish men for charges that are made outside of the criminal justice system. Let's take a look at some previous cases and studies to see why not.

Here's one reported by the far-left Newsweek:

> *Rolling Stone*'s disastrous and discredited campus rape story now has a price tag.
>
> The magazine has settled a defamation lawsuit filed by the University of Virginia fraternity at the center of the 2014 blockbuster feature by Sabrina Erdely, which was retracted after key details in the story were called into question. According to reports, *Rolling Stone* will pay a settlement amounting to $1.65 million.
>
> The article, which was published in late fall 2014, described an alleged brutal gang rape of a student named "Jackie" at a UVA fraternity. The story drew wide attention and triggered a police investigation, but it was officially retracted in April 2015 after Jackie's claims were called into question.

Why did she lie?

The Washington Examiner reports:

> Documents have shown that Jackie likely made up the gang rape to try and win the affection of fellow student Ryan Duffin. She had tried other lies to get his

> sympathy, including pretending to have a terminal illness. When that didn't work, she tried to make him jealous by inventing an attractive man who would constantly say she had a crush on someone else and he didn't understand why.
>
> When that didn't work, she went on a fake date with the fake man, and then claimed she had been gang raped. That didn't win his affection either, and the two eventually stopped talking.

She lied, because she wanted to get affection and sympathy from a boy she liked.

Here's another featuring a student at Hofstra University, reported by the NY Post:

> The Hofstra freshman who had a raunchy restroom romp and then cried rape made up the twisted tale because she didn't want her schoolmates — particularly her new boyfriend — to think she was easy, the beau told The Post yesterday.
>
> "I think she needs a psychologist. She probably felt like, 'They'll think I'm a slut,' " her boyfriend, who asked not to be identified, told The Post.
>
> Danmell Ndonye, 18, who had accused five men of gang rape, admitted the truth only when prosecutors confronted her after learning of a cellphone video that captured the whole sordid episode and showed she had willingly participated, officials said.

She lied because she didn't want her boyfriend (and others) to think that she was a slut.

Although she made a false rape accusation, she never received any jail time. In fact, she was never even charged.

Another, reported by the Associated Press:

> Nikki Yovino, 20, of South Setauket, New York, was sentenced Thursday in Bridgeport Superior Court. She agreed to serve the jail time when she pleaded guilty in June, just before jury selection was to begin, to misdemeanor charges of falsely reporting an incident and interfering with police.
>
> Yovino was attending Sacred Heart University in Fairfield when she reported being raped by two school football players at an off-campus party in Bridgeport in October 2016. But police said she later admitted making up the allegations so she wouldn't ruin a relationship with another student.
>
> […]Both players remained unidentified until Thursday, when Malik St. Hilaire came forward to speak at the sentencing and confront Yovino. The Connecticut Post reported Yovino rolled her eyes and smirked as St. Hilaire talked about how the allegations affected his life.

She lied, because she didn't want to ruin a relationship with her boyfriend. And of course there are cases where the woman just wants to get revenge on men for sex she consented to, but that later made her feel bad, as in the Duke University lacrosse case. False accusations of rape or sexual assault are used by people to get attention and sympathy, or to get an alibi when they've done something wrong, etc.

Clearly, there are cases where people lie about rape and sexual assault. That's why we need to get the police involved, and not punish anyone except in the ordinary way that laws and courts punish. Let's take a look at some studies to see how often false charges are made.

What do the studies show?

A Fox News article from a prominent equity feminist, Wendy McElroy cites several studies, here's one:

> […][The] study conducted by Eugene J. Kanin of Purdue University… examined 109 rape complaints registered in a Midwestern city from 1978 to 1987.
>
> Of these, 45 were ultimately classified by the police as "false." Also based on police records, Kanin determined that 50 percent of the rapes reported at two major universities were "false."
>
> […][E]ven a skeptic like me must credit a DNA exclusion rate of 20 percent that remained constant over several years when conducted by FBI labs. This is especially true when 20 percent more were found to be questionable.
>
> False accusations are not rare. They are common.

So, there's only a 41 percent conviction rate. DNA testing exonerates 20% of men, and makes the guilt another 20% of men "questionable". A total of 59 percent of cases didn't result in a conviction.

In false rape cases, men can spend years in jail, until the women finally admits she made the whole thing up. There are campus cases where only the accused's witnesses are consulted, only evidence confirming guilt is considered, the charges and evidence are hidden from the accused, the accused is denied legal representation, the accused is denied cross-examined of the accuser, etc.

A double standard

So, that's how men accused of sexual assault and rape are treated, but what about women?

Consider this case where a female teacher got zero jail time for sexually assaulting an underage male student. Or this case from the UK where a married mother of two was convicted of producing child pornography, but also received no jail time. It's not just that men are being denied due process when they are accused of something. It's that women ARE NOT being punished when they ARE found guilty of something. There just seems to be a widespread view that women are never responsible for their bad choices, and that men are always to blame for everything. What are women learning from this about how they should treat men in their own lives? Should we expect men to have friendships with women and pursue relationships with women in this cultural climate?

Are the Washington Post and the New York Times trustworthy or fake news?

September 19, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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[image]
Why do people think that CNN are biased leftist clowns?
If someone asked you to name the most prestigious national newspapers, you might be tempted to name the Washington Post and the New York Times. Both papers enjoy wide circulation, and they both used to have a reputation for honest journalism. But lately, people have been accusing them of publishing fake news stories in order to benefit the Democrat party. What is the truth?

Well, consider this article from The Federalist about two recent news stories, one from each paper.

Excerpt:

> The Washington Post is standing by its August 29 report that the Trump administration is cracking down on potentially fraudulent passports, although it is marked by a stunning number of reporting failures, detailed most thoroughly by The Huffington Post on Monday. Reporters and editors on the story got facts wrong, misled readers, left out key data contradicting the premise of the article, and failed to reach out to the family of a deceased man accused of fraud in the story.
>
> The initial story claimed the Trump administration is taking unprecedented action against thousands of Hispanic people living near the southern border suspected of having obtained false U.S. birth certificates. It was based largely on anecdotal evidence from immigration lawyers working in the area who said they are seeing a surge in the number of passports under scrutiny.
>
> Within hours of its publication, a Slate reporter pointed out the practice of denying passports to people issued birth certificates from midwives suspected of fraud began under the George W. Bush administration, and continued through the Barack Obama administration. The story was corrected Aug. 31 to reflect this error. The story also asserted the Trump administration is newly targeting people delivered by a Texas doctor suspected of fraud, but HuffPo reports that practice also predates this administration.
>
> After the State Department released numbers contradicting the story's premise a few days after publication, editors added a new claim — that the Trump administration was newly denying passports to people living far from the border. HuffPo found this too was a practice that predates the Trump administration.
>
> Those numbers provided by the State Department showed that not only has the rate of passport denials declined under Trump, but the number of passports

> under scrutiny has also declined. Editors issued a Sept. 1 correction to reflect that the rate was lower, but left out the numbers indicating the total number of passports under scrutiny is also lower.
>
> Following these two major corrections, reporters continued to find problems with the paper's handling of the facts and new contradictory information, particularly about the deceased doctor named in the story. The reporter did not reach out to the doctor's family for his side of the story, although he is named as under suspicion of fraud by the government. And he was wrongly identified as a gynecologist, when he is in fact a general practitioner.
>
> The family reached out to the paper immediately after the story was published, hoping to correct the record, but the paper ignored them for nearly two weeks, until HuffPo asked about the inquiries. Finally, the paper issued a third correction on Sept. 13 incorporating the family's perspective.

And what about the New York Times?

> On the same day Washington Post issued its third correction to this story, The New York Times published a hit on Nikki Haley that was problematic in a less complicated way, but more brazen in its disregard for the basics of reporting. The remains of this report are comically banal. It was initially a "bombshell" implying Haley should be potentially removed from her post as ambassador for needlessly lavish spending as the State Department implements budget cuts, but is now a toothless report on the Obama State Department's years-old decision to buy pricey curtains for a new ambassador residence.
>
> The first headline read, "Nikki Haley's View of New York Is Priceless. Her Curtains? $52,701," and was splashed next to a photo of Haley. Buried in the piece, however, was a line contradicting the impression the article was framed to create — "A spokesman for Ms. Haley said plans to buy the curtains were made in 2016, during the Obama administration. Ms. Haley had no say in the purchase, he said."
>
> After initial criticism, editors moved that line up several paragraphs, but eventually rechecked the facts and overhauled the entire frame of the story. One Obama administration official said the curtains were chosen in part for security reasons.

Now, if you look at all the corrections made by the progressive mainstream media, what you'll find is that their mistakes almost always punish the Republican party, and almost always benefit the Democrat party. No exceptions. These newspapers are allies of the Democrat party, and they know that for every 100 people who see the fake news story, only 1 person will see the correction. And this is how they sway public opinion. Fake news now, correction in a few weeks, to keep up a patina of respectability.

What do the studies show?

Here’s a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS’ “Evening News,” The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News’ “Special Report With Brit Hume” and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.
>
> The most centrist outlet proved to be the “NewsHour With Jim Lehrer.” CNN’s “NewsNight With Aaron Brown” and ABC’s “Good Morning America” were a close second and third.
>
> “Our estimates for these outlets, we feel, give particular credibility to our efforts, as three of the four moderators for the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential debates came from these three news outlets — Jim Lehrer, Charlie Gibson and Gwen Ifill,” Groseclose said. “If these newscasters weren’t centrist, staffers for one of the campaign teams would have objected and insisted on other moderators.”
>
> The fourth most centrist outlet was “Special Report With Brit Hume” on Fox News, which often is cited by liberals as an egregious example of a right-wing outlet. While this news program proved to be right of center, the study found ABC’s “World News Tonight” and NBC’s “Nightly News” to be left of center. All three outlets were approximately equidistant from the center, the report found.
>
> “If viewers spent an equal amount of time watching Fox’s ‘Special Report’ as ABC’s ‘World News’ and NBC’s ‘Nightly News,’ then they would receive a nearly perfectly balanced version of the news,” said Milyo, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia.”

Here’s a Harvard University study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> The programming studied on Fox News offered a somewhat more positive picture… of Republicans and more negative one of Democrats compared with other media outlets. Fox News stories about a Republican candidate were most likely to be neutral (47%), with the remainder more positive than negative (32% vs. 21% negative). The bulk of that positive coverage went to Giuliani (44% positive), while McCain still suffered from unflattering coverage (20% positive vs. 35% negative).
>
> When it came to Democratic candidates, the picture was more negative. Again, neutral stories had a slight edge (39%), followed by 37% negative and 24% positive. And, in marked contrast from the rest of the media, coverage of Obama was twice as negative as positive: 32% negative vs. 16% positive and 52% neutral.

> But any sense here that the news channel was uniformly positive about Republicans or negative about Democrats is not manifest in the data."

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.
>
> […]The data on contributions by broadcast network employees was compiled by CRP at the request of *The Examiner* and included all 2008 contributions by individuals who identified their employer as one of the three networks or subsidiaries. The data does not include contributions by employees of the three networks who did not identify their employer.
>
> The CRP is the organization behind OpenSecrets.org, the web site that for more than a decade has put campaign finance data within reach of anybody with an Internet connection.
>
> President Obama received 710 such contributions worth a total of $461,898, for an average contribution of $651 from the network employees. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain received only 39 contributions totaling $26,926, for an average donation of $709.

Those are the facts about media bias.

So when you read stories in conservative news media, such as The Federalist, Daily Caller, Daily Wire, Daily Signal, Washington Free Beacon, etc. about how the leftist mainstream media printed fake news again, and have to correct it, you understand why this is happening.

Is Sam Harris successful at rationally grounding objective moral values and duties?

September 20, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

I just wanted to put out a few snips from this layperson-level article on the Reasonable Faith web site. The article is about atheist scholar Sam Harris, and his attempt to provide a basis for morality on atheism.

Here's the Harris project:

> The question then is, what is the best foundation for the existence of objective moral values and duties? What grounds them? What makes certain actions good or evil, right or wrong? Traditionally, God has been the highest Good (*summum bonum*) and His commandments constitutive of our moral duties. But if God does not exist, what foundation remains for objective moral values and duties?

Dr. Craig is able to show why Harris' attempt to ground the objective moral value of humans in "human flourishing" fails, by using the law of identity to show that Harris' rule doesn't account for the possibility that those who do evil could *possibly* flourish and be happy. If Harris is right that objective morality is *identical* to human flourishing, then it cannot even be *possible* that this be the case. This can be a bit confusing to non-philosophers, though, so I'll focus on Dr. Craig's argument against Harris' attempt to ground objective moral duties.

Dr. Craig writes:

> That takes us to a second question: Does atheism provide a sound foundation for objective moral duties? Duty has to do with moral obligation and prohibition, what I ought or ought not to do. Here reviewers of *The Moral Landscape* have been merciless in pounding Harris' attempt to provide a naturalistic account of

> moral obligation. Two problems stand out.
>
> **First:** Natural science tells us only what *is*, not what *ought* to be, the case. As philosopher Jerry Fodor has written, "Science is about facts, not norms; it might tell us how we are, but it wouldn't tell us what is wrong with how we are." In particular it cannot tell us that we have a moral obligation to take actions that are conducive to human flourishing.
>
> So if there is no God, what foundation remains for objective moral duties? On the naturalistic view, human beings are just animals, and animals have no moral obligations to one another. When a lion kills a zebra, it kills the zebra, but it does not *murder* the zebra. When a great white shark forcibly copulates with a female, it forcibly copulates with her but it does not *rape* her — for there is no moral dimension to these actions. They are neither prohibited nor obligatory.
>
> So if God does not exist, why think we have any moral obligations to do anything? Who or what imposes these moral duties on us? Where do they come from? It is hard to see why they would be anything more than a subjective impression ingrained into us by societal and parental conditioning.

So we might *feel* morally obligated to do something, maybe what our herd expects of us in this time and place we live in. But on atheism those feelings are arbitrary. After all, societies have evolved where feelings of obligation are felt by people to perform suicide bombings against civilians. On atheism, those feelings are as valid and grounded as any other "duties" because they emerge from the same process in other times and places. Obligations change between time and place – they are not objectively real. But that means that our moral duties are not objective, they are arbitrary – if atheism is true. The same "socio-biological evolution" is generating opposite moral duties in different times and places. This is not "objective".

And the second objection is even more lethal:

> **Second:** "ought" implies "can." A person is not morally responsible for an action he is unable to avoid. For example, if somebody shoves you into another person, you are not to blame for bumping into this person. You had no choice. But Harris believes that *all* of our actions are causally determined and that there is no free will. Harris rejects not only libertarian accounts of freedom but also compatibilistic accounts of freedom. But if there is no free will, no one is morally responsible for anything. In the end, Harris admits this, though it's tucked away in his endnotes. Moral responsibility, he says, "is a social construct," not an objective reality: "in neuroscientific terms no person is more or less responsible than any other" for the actions they perform. His thoroughgoing determinism spells the end of any hope or possibility of objective moral duties on his worldview because we have no control over what we do.
>
> Harris recognizes that "determinism really does threaten free will and responsibility as we intuitively understand them." But not to worry! "*The illusion*

> *of free will is itself an illusion*." The point, I take it, is that we do not really have the illusion of free will. Not only is such a claim patently false phenomenologically, as any of us can attest, but it is also irrelevant. The fact remains that whether we experience the illusion of free will or not, on Harris' view we are thoroughly determined in all that we think and do and can therefore have no moral responsibilities.

On Harris' view, human beings are computers made out of meat. But if you cannot freely make moral choices, then you cannot choose to perform moral duties or not. What is amazing to me is why he wants to deny free will in the first place. He is surely very well aware of his own experience of free will, and his own consciousness, for that matter. Before we even start to look at scientific evidences against atheism like the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, etc. we already have evidence within ourselves that naturalism is false.

Just in passing, my friend Micah sent me this article about Sam Harris' academic credentials. Although Harris has a PhD in neuroscience, the underlying reality is a bit more complicated. When I watched him debate William Lane Craig, he seemed to be ignorant of simple problems with his utilitarian moral views, and his inability to ground libertarian free will. The problems with utilitarianism have been known for hundreds of years. You can watch the debate yourself and see if you think he was prepared or not.

Have you heard about Dr. Angus Menuge's ontological argument against naturalism?

September 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division test the new M-17 pistol

My friend Seth mentioned to me that he likes the argument from reason, so I thought I would post something about it from a Christian scholar who I really admire. Dr. Angus Menuge offers the best (I think) argument for the proposition that theism is the best ground for our reasoning capability.

Let's start with some information about Dr. Menuge:

> Dr. Angus Menuge joined Concordia University Wisconsin in 1991. He earned his BA from the University of Warwick, England, and his MA and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he studied philosophy, computer science and psychology. Menuge's dissertation was on the philosophy of action explanation, and his current research interests include philosophy of mind, philosophy of science and Christian apologetics.
>
> In 2003, Menuge earned a Diploma in Christian Apologetics from the International Academy of Apologetics, Evangelism and Human Rights, which meets each July in Strasbourg, France. His thesis, a critique of scientific materialism, went on to become the book *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).
>
> […]A frequent speaker, Menuge has given presentations on Christianity and culture, science and vocation, philosophy of mind, C. S. Lewis, Intelligent Design and the case against scientific materialism. He is a member of the Evangelical Philosophical Society.

Dr. Menuge presented a paper at a recent Evangelical Philosophical Society conference

for students and professors of philosophy, and you can download the paper here as a PDF. I got these straight from the source, and got permission to post them, too.

Here is the introduction to the paper that Dr. Menuge read at the EPS conference:

> The argument from reason is really a family of arguments to show that reasoning is incompatible with naturalism. Here, naturalism is understood as the idea that foundationally, there are only physical objects, properties and relations, and anything else reduces to, supervenes on, or emerges from that. For our purposes, one of the most important claims of naturalism is that all causation is passive, automatic, event causation (an earthquake automatically causes a tidal wave; the tidal wave responds passively): there are no agent causes, where something does not happen automatically but only because the agent exerts his active power by choosing to do it. The most famous version of the argument from reason is *epistemological*: if naturalism were true, we could not be justified in believing it. Today, I want to focus on the *ontological* argument from reason, which asserts that there cannot be reasoning in a naturalistic world, because reasoning requires libertarian free will, and this in turn requires a unified, enduring self with active power.
>
> The two most promising ways out of this argument are: (1) Compatibilism—even in a deterministic, naturalistic world, humans are capable of free acts of reason if their minds are responsive to rational causes; (2) Libertarian Naturalism—a self with libertarian free will emerges from the brain. I argue that neither of these moves works, and so, unless someone has a better idea, the ontological argument from reason stands.

The paper is 11 pages long, and it is awesome for those of you looking for some good discussion of one of the issues in the area of philosophy of mind.

By the way, the epistemological argument from reason (P(R) on N & E is low) is the argument made by the famous Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga. I blogged about that argument before. It's good to know BOTH of these arguments. They both work, and they are both awesome. If you put these two arguments together with William Lane Craig's moral argument, that's three strong philosophical arguments that are easy to use, but backed by solid analytic philosophy.

Powerpoint slideshow

But there is more than just the paper! At the EPS apologetics conference, which is meant for lay people as well as scholars, he presented this slideshow which I converted to PDF. The slides are easier to understand than the paper, but the paper is not too bad.

Audio from Apologetics 315

Click here for an interview with Dr. Menuge. It's up at Apologetics 315!

Details:

> Today's interview is with Dr. Angus Menuge, Professor of Philosophy

> at Concordia University, and author of *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science*. He talks about his background and work, the philosophy of mind, what reason (or reasoning) is, what materialism is as a worldview, things excluded from a materialistic worldview, methodological naturalism and materialism, accounting for free will, materialistic accounts of reason, the epistemological argument from reason, the ontological argument from reason, finding the best explanation for reason, problems with methodological naturalism, implications of materialism, practical application of the argument from reason, advice for apologists, the International Academy of Apologetics, and more.

If what Dr. Menuge says in this interview is true, and I think it is, then a person who believes in materialism can neither ground free will nor rationality! So atheism wouldn't really be freethought so much as it would be… un-free… non-thought.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Frequent denial of sex breaks the marriage covenant as much as adultery

September 22, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Let's start this post by quoting a passage from the Bible.

1 Corinthians 7:1-5:

1 Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband.

3 The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*.

5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

So with that in mind, I want to turn to a well-known Jewish talk show host named Dennis Prager, who is much loved and listened to by Christians. Dennis Prager features a lot of discussions about male-female relationships on his show, particularly during the male-female hour. In this two part series on male sexuality, he explains why women should not deprive their husbands of sex without a good reason.

Part 1 is here.

Excerpt:

> It is an axiom of contemporary marital life that if a wife is not in the mood, she

> need not have sex with her husband. Here are some arguments why a woman who loves her husband might want to rethink this axiom.
>
> First, women need to recognize how a man understands a wife's refusal to have sex with him: A husband knows that his wife loves him first and foremost by her willingness to give her body to him. This is rarely the case for women. Few women know their husband loves them because he gives her his body (the idea sounds almost funny). This is, therefore, usually a revelation to a woman. Many women think men's natures are similar to theirs, and this is so different from a woman's nature, that few women know this about men unless told about it.
>
> This is a major reason many husbands clam up. A man whose wife frequently denies him sex will first be hurt, then sad, then angry, then quiet. And most men will never tell their wives why they have become quiet and distant. They are afraid to tell their wives. They are often made to feel ashamed of their male sexual nature, and they are humiliated (indeed emasculated) by feeling that they are reduced to having to beg for sex.
>
> When first told this about men, women generally react in one or more of five ways…

He then explains the 5 ways that women respond to this.

Here's one:

> 1. You have to be kidding. That certainly isn't my way of knowing if he loves me. There have to be deeper ways than sex for me to show my husband that I love him.

I think that this is a common mistake that liberal women make because they think that men are just hairy women. But men are not women, we are different and sex means something different to men than it does to women. In the past, *most* women understood how men are different than women, but younger women have been taught that there are no differences between the sexes. To think any different is "sexism".

Here's another from the list:

> 4. You have it backwards. If he truly loved me, he wouldn't expect sex when I'm not in the mood.

Again, this is the common mistake that many younger women today make in thinking that love is a one-way street – flowing from men and children to the woman. If men and children DON'T do what the woman wants, or if they make demands on her, then they don't "love" her and she is justified in ignoring them.

Liberal women have been taught to believe that they are always victims or some group of oppressors, such as men and children or corporations. It makes them rebel against having to do anything for anyone else, because they don't want to be "oppressed". That makes them unable to accept that relationships are give-and-take, Once a commitment to love another person permanently has been made, then each person has

responsibilities to provide for the needs of the other.

I actually had a conversation with a Christian woman once who said that women should not be obligated to do things that they didn't feel like doing. I asked her if men were obligated to go to work when they didn't feel like going. She said yes, and acted as though I were crazy for asking. I just laughed, because she didn't even see the inconsistency. The truth is that men often don't feel like working, but they get up and go to work anyway, whether they like it or not (in most cases). Similarly, a women should feel obligated to have sex with her husband, even if she is not in a perfect mood for it (in most cases). Sometimes, a man stays home from work, and it's OK. And sometimes a woman says no to sex, and it's OK. But it's not OK to stop doing it for months and months with no good reason.

Part 2 is here.

Excerpt:

> Here are eight reasons for a woman not to allow not being in the mood for sex to determine whether she denies her husband sex.

He then explains the eight reasons.

Here's one of them:

> 7. Many contemporary women have an almost exclusively romantic notion of sex: It should always be mutually desired and equally satisfying or one should not engage in it. Therefore, if a couple engages in sexual relations when he wants it and she does not, the act is "dehumanizing" and "mechanical." Now, ideally, every time a husband and wife have sex, they would equally desire it and equally enjoy it. But, given the different sexual natures of men and women, this cannot always be the case. If it is romance a woman seeks — and she has every reason to seek it — it would help her to realize how much more romantic her husband and her marriage are likely to be if he is not regularly denied sex, even of the non-romantic variety.

Women have to engage their husbands if they expect their husbands to engage in the marriage as a husband and father. Men can't do their protector, provider and spiritual leader roles forever unless their needs are met at some point. Performance of these male duties is not free. Wives have to love their husbands in the way that men expect to be loved. That's what they vowed to do in the wedding, isn't it?

At the end of the article, Prager makes a general point about women that I think needs to be emphasized over and over and over:

> That solution is for a wife who loves her husband — if she doesn't love him, mood is not the problem — to be guided by her mind, not her mood, in deciding whether to deny her husband sex.

This problem of sex-withholding is so widespread, that it really makes me (although I am

a virgin) wonder what women think that marriage is about anyway. When a woman vows to love her husband, what do they think that word really means? Why do women think that men marry? What do men want that marriage provides for them? Which of those needs are the women's responsibility to provide for? I think these are questions that men should ask women. I think women should be prepared to answer them. Men should expect that women be reading books on men and marriage, and that she has relationships with men where she is giving support, respect, affirmation, affection and approval. You can learn a lot about a woman by how she treats her father, for example.

Unfortunately, many men today haven't thought through what they need from wives in a marriage. They spend their young years chasing women who are fun and sexually permissive. Every husband I asked about what they need has told me that respect, affirmation, affection and regular sex are more important than appearance and fun. Pre-marital sex, having fun, getting drunk, and going out, etc. are not the right foundation for marriage – which requires mutual self-sacrifice in order to work.

Another point: I have a friend who is very concerned that men are breaking sexual rules, but he seems oblivious to 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. I asked him privately what he thought about sex-withholding, and whether this might cause husbands to turn to pornography and even affairs, and I mentioned 1 Corinthians 7:1-5. He said: "no, it's not something I take much interest in". I was tempted to ask him if the Bible was something that he does not take much interest in.

I think he misreads 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 so that it could only be used to condemn *men*. If that were his view, then it actually worries me if well-meaning men are actually undermining marriage, by teaching women that they have no responsibilities to keep the marriage going, and helping them to feel like victims when their marriages fall apart. Sometimes even people who claim to be pro-marriage can undermine marriage practically-speaking, because of their unBiblical belief that women are "naturally good" and should not have any responsibilities in a marriage.

I thought this attitude was so interesting in view of what I read in the Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands. In that book, Dr. Laura urges women to be sensitive to their husbands' different male natures in order to avoid them looking at pornography and having affairs. Withholding sex from a man is the equivalent of a man withholding *conversation* to a woman. Sex is how a man feels loved! What's remarkable is how female callers on her show are shocked that men react badly to being deprived of sex.

I do think that some men will look at porn and cheat regardless of what their wife does sexually, but then it again falls to the woman to choose a man who has demonstrated that he has self-control – i.e., a virgin who has remained chaste with her throughout the courtship and protected her from doing sexual things outside of the covenant context. Chastity is hard, but it is how a man loves his wife self-sacrificially, before he even meets her. It should be a trait much sought after *and respected* by women. Basically, women need to be led by their minds, not by their feelings, when choosing a husband.

A man has to get up and go to work every day for his family, regardless of whether he

feels like it or not. In fact, the many decisions he has made before getting married are also made not because they make him happy, but because he needs to be responsible to his future wife and children. The decision to study science? Loving obligation. The decision to go to grad school in science? Loving obligation. The decision to work in a demanding, risky career? Loving obligation. The decision to save money and eat instant oatmeal for dinner? Loving obligation. Men don't do these things because we enjoy them. We do it because we love our wives and children self-sacrificially, *before we ever even meet them*. I think that women need to do the same.

Did Jesus appeal to evidence when reaching out to skeptics?

September 23, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

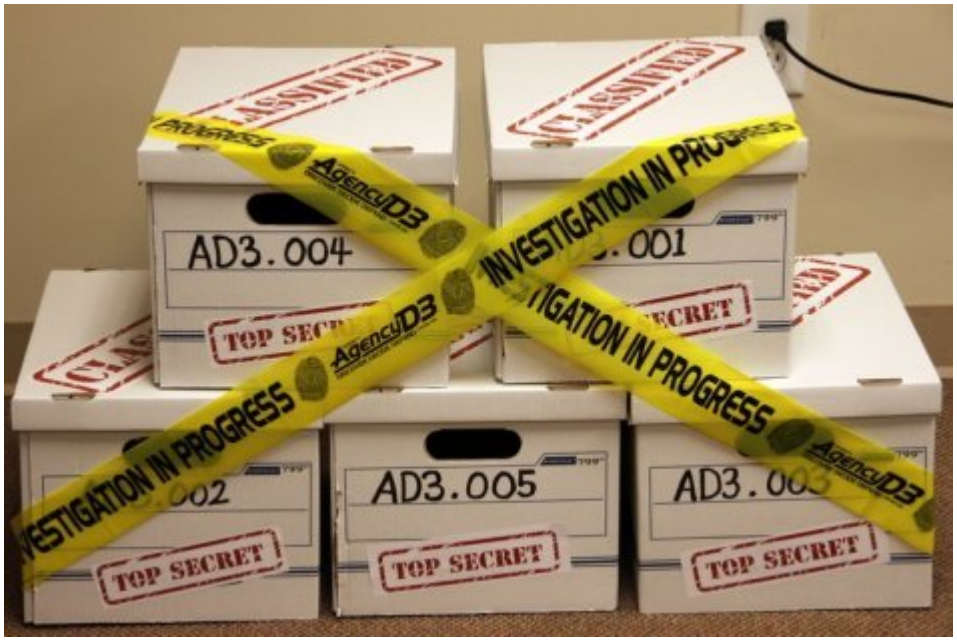

Investigation in progress

From Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi – Ohio State University.

He lists eight ways that Jesus makes his case.

Here's one of the ways:

> **2. Jesus Appealed to Evidence**
>
> Jesus knew He could not show up on the scene and not offer any evidence for His Messiahship. In his book On Jesus, Douglas Groothuis notes that Jesus appealed to evidence to confirm His claims. John the Baptist, who was languishing in prison after challenging Herod, sent messengers to ask Jesus the question: "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Matt. 11:3). This may seem an odd question from a man the Gospels present as the prophetic forerunner of Jesus and as the one who had proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah. Jesus, however, did not rebuke John's question. He did not say, "You must have faith; suppress your doubts." Instead, Jesus recounted the distinctive features of His ministry:
>
> "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me." (Matt. 11:4-6; see also Luke 7:22).
>
> Even in the Messiah Apocalypse, which is dated between 100 and 80 B.C.E mentions a similar theme as seen in Matt.11: 4-6: "He [God] frees the captives, makes the blind see, and makes the bent over stand straight…for he will heal the

> sick, revive the dead, and give good news to the humble and the poor he will satisfy, the abandoned he will lead, and the hungry he will make rich."
>
> Jesus' works of healing and teaching are meant to serve as positive evidence of His messianic identity, because they fulfill the messianic predictions of the Hebrew Scriptures. What Jesus claimed is this:
>
> 1. If one does certain kinds of actions (the acts cited above), then one is the Messiah.
> 2. I am doing those kinds of actions.
> 3. Therefore, I am the Messiah.

And:

> **5. The Miracles of Jesus**
>
> In the Bible, miracles have a distinctive purpose: they are used for three reasons:
> 1. To glorify the nature of God (John 2:11; 11:40)
> 2. To accredit certain persons as the spokesmen for God (Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3–4)
> 3. To provide evidence for belief in God (John 6:2, 14; 20:30–31). (3)
>
> Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, told Jesus, "'Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him' " (Jn. 3:1–2). In Acts, Peter told the crowd that Jesus had been "accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him" (Acts 2:22).
>
> In Matthew 12:38-39, Jesus says, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet." In this Scripture, God confirmed the Messianic claim when Jesus said the sign that would confirm his Messiahship was to be the resurrection.
>
> It is important to note that not all witnesses to a miracle believe. Jesus did not do His miracles for entertainment. They were done to evoke a response. So perhaps Paul Moser is right on target in what he calls "kardiatheology" – a theology that is aimed at one's motivational heart (including one's will) rather than just at one's mind or one's emotions. In other words, God is very interested in moral transformation.
>
> We see Jesus' frustration when His miracles did not bring the correct response from his audience. "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" (John 12:37). Jesus himself said of some, "They will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31). One result, though not the purpose, of miracles is condemnation of the unbeliever (cf. John 12:31, 37). (4)

I am forever pointing this out to people. Jesus didn't get people to follow him because he was nice. And he didn't just talk to people who agreed with him. He even promised "a

wicked generation” his resurrection as evidence for his claims. He called his resurrection “the sign of Jonah”, and it was meant for people who were looking for a “sign”. This is the way we should be – using whatever evidence we can dig up from science, history, law, and even the social sciences (when arguing moral issues).

Read the rest here. Surprise! Jesus loves to convince people, and not just by quoting the Bible to people who already accept the Bible, either. His goal was not to make people accept his claims because of their feelings, but because of the evidence he offered them.

Ford’s last witness says that she doesn’t remember a party with Kavanaugh

September 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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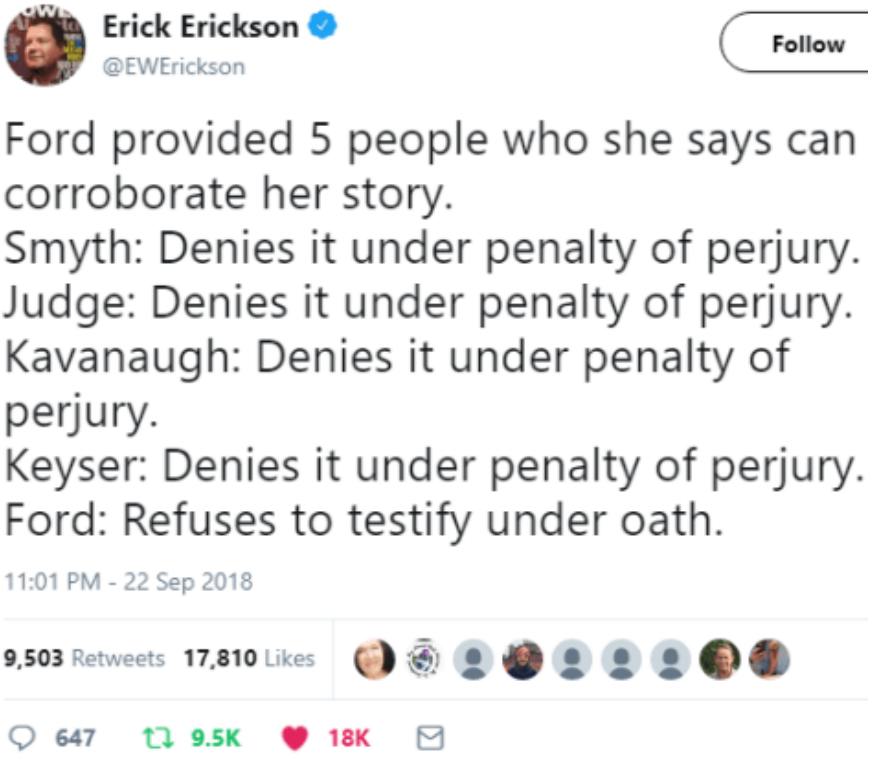

The blocking of Brett Kavanaugh is all about Roe v. Wade, and its going poorly
I am not happy with the Weekly Standard being so anti-Trump, but this article about the accusations by registered Democrat Christine Ford is interesting. She named four witnesses in her accusation of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, and all four have now refused to support her claims. Let’s take a look at an article from the Weekly Standard.

Excerpt:

> Christine Blasey Ford has claimed that four other people attended a small gathering at which she was allegedly assaulted by Brett Kavanaugh. Three of those people, PJ Smyth, Mark Judge, and Kavanaugh, have already denied any recollection of attending such a party.
>
> On Saturday night, Leland Ingham Keyser, a classmate of Ford’s at the all-girls school Holton-Arms and her final named witness, denied any recollection of attending a party with Brett Kavanaugh.
>
> “Simply put, Ms. Keyser does not know Mr. Kavanaugh and she has no recollection of ever being at a party or gathering where he was present, with, or without, Dr. Ford,” lawyer Howard J. Walsh said in a statement sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

> CNN reports that " Keyser is a lifelong friend of Ford's."
>
> Keyser previously coached golf at Georgetown University and is now executive producer of Bob Beckel's podcast. Keyser is the ex-wife of Beckel, a former Democratic operative and commentator. A search on OpenSecrets.org reveals Keyser's only political donation has been to former Democratic senator Byron Dorgan.
>
> […]All of Ford's named witnesses of the party, both male and female, have now denied any recollection of attending such a party.

This story troubles me because I keep thinking about what it will be like for Christian conservatives going forward. Will they always be blocked from positions of influence with unsupported accusations of sexual misconduct?

With that in mind, I recommend that Christian mothers and fathers take steps to teach their children how to avoid false accusations made by secular leftists.

Here's a good article by Megan Fox from PJ Media about that.

It says (in part):

> Mothers of sons everywhere should be terrified by the constant destruction of men by duplicitous, lying women and an overzealous and political Senate confirmation process. All a scheming broad has to do these days is claim that your son touched her inappropriately more than two decades ago and she can derail his career. Worse, if your son ever happens to end up in front of the Senate, U.S. senators may drive his wife to suicide. The Senate confirmation hearing for Miguel Estrada, a Bush choice, was so stressful that Estrada's wife had a miscarriage, developed a drinking problem, and overdosed on pills and died, according to The New Yorker.

She has a list of advice for parents who don't want that to happen to their children.

One of them is this:

> 1. Take him to church and make sure the lessons stick
>
> Make sure your son knows how to treat others, what his moral obligations to himself and his family are, and to follow God's laws in regards to dating and marriage. Try to impart the importance of saving sex for marriage. What can happen to him if he fails to do that (poverty, child support, disease, death, false rape charge) isn't worth it.

People sometimes ask me how it's possible for me to treat conservative Christian women so well, and then write such harsh judgments of non-Christian women on my blog. Well, I think that Christian men should treat serious Christian women well, but not everyone who claims to be a Christian really is one. Regarding non-Christian leftist women, my advice is don't talk to them, don't do anything for them. There are plenty of women who take Christianity seriously who we can pay attention to and help instead. Youth and beauty are

not a good measures of a woman's character. Good women are chaste and sober and self-controlled. I don't it's possible to do a relationship with a woman who is drinking a lot, pursuing fun and thrills, etc.

More good advice:

> 3. Teach your son to assume he will one day have a position of high importance and encourage him to live accordingly
>
> This is the Mike Pence school of behavior that will serve him well. Do not be alone with a woman who is not your wife if you are married. If you are not married, then try to have witnesses when dealing with women. Double-dating may soon be the only smart thing for a man to do when looking for a mate to protect himself from dangerous women who would like to hurt him. Teach him that anything he might say or do today could affect him and cost him a job 30 years from now. Show him what's happening to Brett Kavanaugh. Teach him to choose his friends wisely, to stay sober, and to stay away from shenanigans that could come back and haunt him.

If you're planning to have an influence, then you need to understand that there are secular leftist women out there who will use false accusations in order to stop you from making a difference. If your goal is to get on the Supreme Court and reverse Roe v. Wade, understand that according to Gallup polls, almost all young unmarried women want to keep abortion legal. There is a significant group of young unmarried women who think that they should prioritize drinking a lot, and having recreational sex with hot bad boys. They see taxpayer-funded contraceptives and taxpayer-funded abortions as part of their plan to have a lot of sex with hot bad boys. They will do anything to stop pro-life men from putting an end to their fun.

This third one is my favorite:

> 4. Don't trust women
>
> […]Contrary to the saccharine platitude that "women don't lie," women lie all the time. They lie like crazy. The younger they are, the more they lie and scheme. It's probably the rage of hormones and insecurity that contribute to it, but most women lie and scheme. Teach your sons to search out morally upstanding girls and to avoid drama queens. The religious ones are usually better. Stay very far away from party girls and girls who use drugs or drink underage. Those girls are momentarily fun, but ultimately trouble. Teach him to stay away from those girls.

Now, when wise people tell women to avoid rape by being careful how much they drink, and what they wear, and where they go for fun and parties, women tend to get mad and say "don't tell me what to do, just let me do what I want, and tell men not to rape". Men, if you think that you should be able to drink what you want, wear what you want, and go wherever you want seeking pleasure, you are mistaken. The costs to you if you get slapped with a false accusation or a false paternity suit or a frivolous divorce will be disastrous. You need to take responsibility for your own decisions, and that means having

an *accurate* view of how women really are, so that you know how to tell the sheep from the goats. All women are not the same inside, and inside is where it really matters – especially at a time like this. Men need to avoid women who are let by their feelings, and prefer women who do the right thing when they don't feel like it.

My previous post reviewed what studies say about whether accusations of rape and sexual assault are likely to be true.

Conservative mothers reflect on what frivolous accusations mean for their son's futures

September 25, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

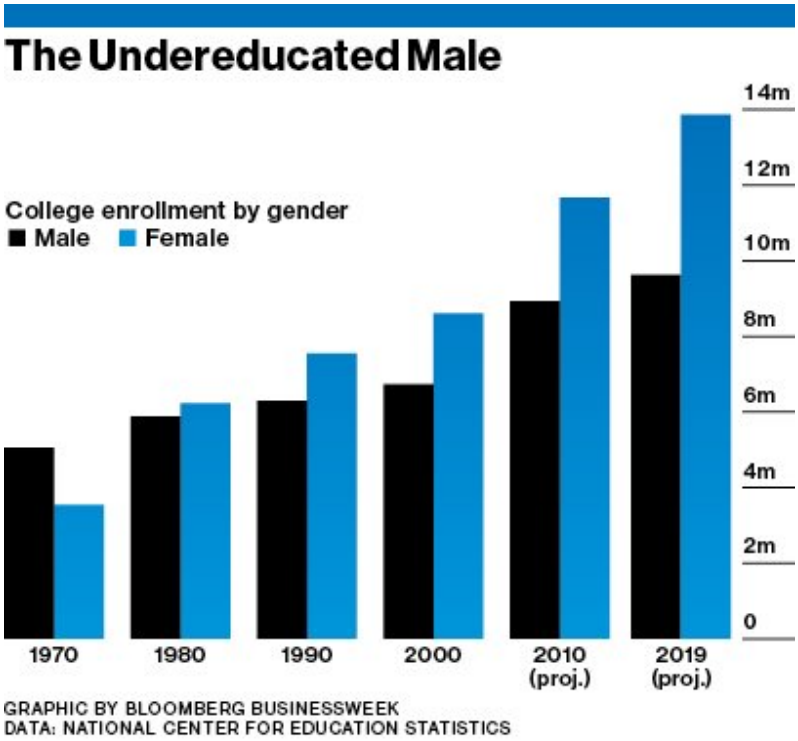

Boys are enrolling in university at a much lower rate than girls

Yesterday, I blogged about Megan Fox, a conservative mother of a son, who had some advice for young men who want to make a difference. She advised them to treat women and sex in accordance with Christian values, to document situations that could be misconstrued later, to live their lives as if they would one day be in a position of influence, and to remember that women "lie and scheme", especially young, unmarried women.

I noticed that she linked to another article on PJ Media, by another mother of two boys named Sarah Hoyt. Sarah's article is called "When Every Boy Is Guilty, Every Girl Becomes a Monster".

She writes:

> Let me tell you about my experience with Colorado Springs area public schools while raising two boys:
>
> In Manitou Springs, in first grade, my older son started making poems to girls.
>
> […]I got a phone call saying he was sexually harassing a girl. Since at 6 he didn't know how to spell "harassment" and would be uncertain on the meaning of "sexual" (both boys were far less curious than I was at their ages) I begged leave to differ, marched down to the school like the wrath of mom and demanded proof. At which point I was given a very bad, rather innocent poem. I mean the

> boy didn't even say he wanted to kiss her. Just that she was pretty and her eyes were like stars.

Writing poems to a girl is harassment, because the boy is 6 years old.

But that's not all, there's more:

> Next came elementary school in Colorado Springs. Younger son (slower developing than his brother, and at that time completely unaware of the difference in "vive la difference.") was in third grade.
>
> […]Apparently, my son had a little friend who happened to be a girl. He was trying to get her attention so they could play the "space game"… There were other kids in the way, and she couldn't hear him shout. So he reached – through the other kids – and touched her three times.
>
> At which point, all hell broke loose.
>
> Apparently a playground guard thought this girl was "very pretty" and "all the little boys were interested in her" (yes, third grade. Is anyone else getting a creepy vibe?), so when younger son touched her "on the butt" (playground guard's version) the playground guard KNEW what she had to do.
>
> She descended upon the kids, whisked the little girl to counseling and the little boy to the principal's office to be threatened with suspension and the police.
>
> I asked my son, right there, in front of all of them, what he'd confessed to.
>
> He said they'd told him touching someone on the butt was sexual harassment so he'd confessed to that.

The child had no idea what sexual harassment even was, but the female playground guard was sure that's what he had done. Public schools are 80%+ female teachers and administrators, most of whom have non-STEM degrees and little to no private sector work experience. Are you really going to hand your boys to them? You better come up with a better plan than that if you want your boys to have an influence.

Here's another article from The Federalist, written by Melissa Danford, a homeschooling mother of four boys.

She writes:

> I cannot accept a world in which my sons will be raised under the tyranny of a lawless, vindictive society that wants to subdue and oppress men in the name of equality for women. It's time to take a stand. Mammas, we have to fight for our men, because they are in danger. My father is, my husband is, and my sons are. Your father is, your husband is, and your sons are. This madness will consume them all.

It would be nice if her views were widespread, but they are not. The Wall Street Journal reports on a recent poll:

> By 3 percentage points, men want Republicans rather than Democrats to control Congress, 47% to 44%. Women, by contrast, favor Democratic control by 25 percentage points — 58% to 33%. Among white voters, the gender disparity was the largest since 2008.

I blogged previously about how 77% of young, unmarried women supported Barack Obama in 2008. Women support abortion, gay marriage, and big government in larger numbers than men.

Why do young, unmarried women favor big government? In my experience young, unmarried women struggle with moral rules. They feel that they are exempt from cause and effect, because they are *special*. They want to do whatever they feel like doing "in the moment", e.g. – getting drunk and having premarital sex with hot bad boys for fun. And they don't want to be judged for it, or lose out on anything good further down the road. This attitude leads them to vote for a big government that will pay for their mistakes, and give them life outcomes equal to the married women who made wiser decisions. Unfortunately for men, we are seeing right now what happens when Democrats are put into positions of power by the votes of these young, unmarried women. Conservative Christian young men hoping to have an influence will always have to be watching their backs for their next accuser.

Kavanaugh: “I did not have sex in high school or for many years thereafter”

September 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brett Kavanaugh, his wife, and his two daughters

So, Brett Kavanaugh did an interview where he and his wife answered questions about the vague and unsupported charges being made against him by registered Democrat women. In the interview, he explained that he did not have sex in high school or for many years thereafter, which is what you would expect from a Christian conservative.

Here’s part of the transcript from Daily Wire:

> **Brett Kavanaugh:** […]When I was in high school – and I went to an all boys catholic high school, a judgment (ph) high school, where I was focused on academics and athletics, going to church every Sunday at Little Flower, working on my service projects, and friendship, friendship with my fellow classmates and friendship with girls from the local all girls Catholic schools.
>
> And yes, there were parties. And the drinking age was 18, and yes, the seniors were legal and had beer there. And yes, people might have had too many beers on occasion and people generally in high school – I think all of us have probably done things we look back on in high school and regret or cringe a bit, but that’s not what we’re talking about.
>
> We’re talking about an allegation of sexual assault. I’ve never sexually assaulted anyone. I did not have sexual intercourse or anything close to sexual intercourse in high school or for many years there after. And the girls from the schools I went

> to and I were friends —
>
> **Martha MacCallum:** So you're saying that through all these years that are in question, you were a virgin?
>
> **Brett Kavanaugh:** That's correct.
>
> **Martha MacCallum:** Never had sexual intercourse with anyone in high school –
>
> **Brett Kavanaugh:** Correct.

I know this is going to be hard to believe for the average Democrat, since they seem to be incapable of understanding how seriously religious people take the moral demands of their religion. But take it from me, there are Christians who take the Bible's teaching on sobriety and chastity seriously. I'm in my early 40s and still a virgin, and I'm sure I'm not the only one. Sex is for marriage. Period. People who are serious about their faith order their lives in a way such that they maintain their sobriety and chastity. Real Christians do.

Anyway, here's a short clip showing his response above:

The full video is here.

But there's something else I want to say about this, and about my alias.

Clarence Thomas

You see, I have known that women on the secular left made false charges for some time. My first exposure to the idea that women lied against innocent men for their own reasons was in Harper Lee's book "To Kill a Mockingbird", which I read in my freshman year of high school. The victim of the lies was a colored man, like me. I understood the message of the book very clearly.

This story came to life during the nomination of my favorite Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas. Clarence Thomas looks a bit like me – we're both non-white males. When I saw the Democrats put forward a woman who made unverifiable claims to try to stop a pro-life man from reaching the Supreme Court, I learned a valuable lesson. Secular leftists women will lie and ruin a man's career in order to protect their right to have sex with hot bad boys, and escape the consequences. That's what this is all about – promiscuity and abortion.

Take a look at Clarence Thomas' response to the Democrat lies, and think about how this would have affected a young non-white male watching this, and thinking about his future, and wanting to have an influence as a Christian:

Sometimes, I look back on this testimony and think whether what happened to Clarence Thomas made me distrust women. Once I realized that women – that any woman – was capable of lying like this to punish a good man, I stopped believing that women were trustworthy by default. Certainly, what happened to Clarence Thomas pushed me towards becoming a software engineer – a high-earning, male-dominated field where I would have limited exposure to false accusations.

Later on, I would read the exit polls of elections. I experienced shock and disbelief about how many young, unmarried women wanted to identify as Democrats and support

Democrat policies. It really became clear to me that I had to make decisions about education, career and finance that would avoid the risk of secular leftist women finding out what I really believed, and making false accusations at me to hold me back in my career, and in my life plan. I wasn't quick enough at this, because once a woman who found out that I was a virgin and believed in chastity before marriage spread it all over a company I was interning with. Fortunately, this was just a contract job. But I was not offered a full-time job with them afterwards. I learned my lesson from that. Most good men can probably tell you a story like that – when they learned that being a good person would draw a hostile response from women who were interested in pursuing fun and thrills against the moral law, then escaping judgment and consequences afterwards.

I think women who imagine that they want to get married some day should really think about what message their silence in the face of injustices to people like Clarence Thomas and Brett Kavanaugh sends to young, successful conservative Christian men. Women, we are watching you. And we are evaluating you to see whether you are on the side of the radical feminists, or on the side of Christianity and conservative pro-family policies. So far, most women I've met seem to have a lot more allegiance for feminism than they do for morality, marriage and family.

Defending good men is not something that you can cram for at the last minute after wasting your life having fun with the wrong people and pushing policies that promoted selfishness. Good men will ask you questions, and if you've been on the secular left most of your life, you won't know how to respond, and you won't have any demonstrated actions to show that your allegiance is with us, instead of with the liars.

Don't cry to good men later that you want marriage when you didn't do anything to defend the honor and reputation of good men when we were under attack.

Did Christine Ford name Kavanaugh as her attacker before his Supreme Court nomination?

September 27, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brett Kavanaugh, his wife, and his two daughters

I wanted to post something that collects together what we know about Christine Ford's accusation against Kavanaugh. She released her opening statement for the Thursday hearing on Wednesday night. I read various articles from conservative and liberal sources to ferret out the most interesting details of this case for you. I hope you will enjoy it.

National Review posted about it:

> Ford repeats her accusations against Kavanaugh but names no new witnesses and gives no new information. She also confirms that she did not name Kavanaugh as the alleged assailant to anyone "outside of therapy" "until July 2018" when she "saw press reports stating that Brett Kavanaugh was on the "short list" of potential Supreme Court nominees":
>
> I do not recall each person I spoke to about Brett's assault, and some friends have reminded me of these conversations since the publication of The Washington Post story on September 16, 2018. But until July 2018, I had never named Mr. Kavanaugh as my attacker outside of therapy.
>
> This all changed in early July 2018. I saw press reports stating that Brett Kavanaugh was on the "short list" of potential Supreme Court nominees. I thought it was my civic duty to relay the information I had about Mr. Kavanaugh's conduct so that those considering his potential nomination would know about the

> assault.

This part is important:

> **Per the Washington Post, Kavanaugh's name is not in the therapist's notes:**
>
> **The therapist's notes, portions of which were provided by Ford and reviewed by The Washington Post, do not mention Kavanaugh's name but say she reported that she was attacked by students "from an elitist boys' school" who went on to become "highly respected and high-ranking members of society in Washington."**

And it concludes:

> Which is to say that we have an accusation that has not been corroborated by any of the named witnesses, all of whom have either said that it categorically did not happen, or that they do not know Brett Kavanaugh, or that they have no memory of any such party or event; that is strenuously denied by the accused; and that was not fleshed out to anyone other than the accuser's husband until the day Kavanaugh's name became national news.

Ford's only support comes from sworn affidavits of people who say that she TOLD THEM that she was assaulted. Did she name Kavanaugh to them? I looked over the affidavits. Her husband's affidavit says that she named Kavanaugh in 2012 to the therapist. But we KNOW from the Washington Post that the therapist's notes don't name Kavanaugh, so we don't have evidence that her husband told the truth. And he's hardly an unbiased witness. The Keith Koegler affidavit names Kavanaugh, but only from an e-mail he got from Ford on or after June 29, 2018. And two others (Adela Gildo-Mazzon and Rebecca White) don't mention Kavanaugh by name AT ALL. Just that she said she was attacked.

Remember, all these affidavits prove is that she TOLD THEM about an attack, NOT that the attack actually happened the way she is telling now.

Something else she claimed was also falsified.

The Daily Caller reports:

> Ford's claim that there were "4 boys and a couple of girls" at the party contradicts Ford and her lawyer's other accounts of how many people were present.
>
> In her letter to Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Ford claimed that there were "four others" present. She also told The Washington Post that there were "four boys at the party" and two — Kavanaugh and his friend, Mark Judge — in the room where the assault allegedly occurred.
>
> Ford's lawyer, Debra Katz, later told CNN that there were four guys and one other girl at the party.
>
> […]**Since Ford's allegations were first made public, there have been**

> **three different accounts of how many people were at the party she claims to have been assaulted at: four boys, four boys and one girl, and four boys and a couple of girls.**
>
> Kavanaugh, Judge and two other alleged party attendees all say they do not recall the party in question or any assault.

One of her named witnesses is her lifelong friend Leland Keyser.

The anti-Trump Weekly Standard notes:

> On Saturday night, Leland Ingham Keyser, a classmate of Ford's at the all-girls school Holton-Arms and her final named witness, denied any recollection of attending a party with Brett Kavanaugh.
>
> "Simply put, Ms. Keyser does not know Mr. Kavanaugh and she has no recollection of ever being at a party or gathering where he was present, with, or without, Dr. Ford," lawyer Howard J. Walsh said in a statement sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee.
>
> CNN reports that "Keyser is a lifelong friend of Ford's."
>
> Keyser previously coached golf at Georgetown University and is now executive producer of Bob Beckel's podcast. Keyser is the ex-wife of Beckel, a former Democratic operative and commentator. A search on OpenSecrets.org reveals Keyser's only political donation has been to former Democratic senator Byron Dorgan.

What about the polygraph? Well, her lawyers administered a polygraph in August 2018, that consisted of only two questions.

CBS News explains:

> Following Ford's interview she was given a polygraph examination with the following two questions:
>
> 1. Is any part of your statement false?
> 2. Did you make up any part of your statement?
>
> Ford answered "no" to both questions.

Kavanaugh was *not named in the two-question polygraph test.*

Ford's lawyers are refusing to release details about the polygraph to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

A Wall Street Journal columnist tweets:

Kimberley Strassel
@KimStrassel

Follow

More: Judiciary Committee sent letter today to Ford's attnys requesting 1) audio/visual recordings taken during Fords's polygraph; and 2) charts/data used in drawing polygraph conclusions. Ford's attnys just now refused to supply, saying such material not "important." Really?

9:54 PM - 26 Sep 2018

Kimberley Strassel is a columnist for Wall Street Journal.
Polygraphs are inadmissible in court because they are considered to be unreliable as evidence.

Could Ford have gotten Kavanaugh mixed up with a different man? Yes! In fact, two men have come forward claiming to be Ford's attacker.

The Daily Wire reports:

> Politico congressional reporter Burgess Everett reported the summary from the Judiciary Committee, which stated: "Committee staff have a second interview with a man who believes he, not Judge Kavanaugh, had the encounter with Dr. Ford in the summer of 1982 that is the basis of her allegation. He described his recollection of their interaction in some detail."
>
> A second Politico reporter, Elana Schor, added that the Judiciary also had a phone interview with a second man who also believed that he may have assaulted Ford in the summer of 1982.

That would explain why she told the people in her affidavits about the attack, but only recently named Kavanaugh as the attacker.

Moderate senator Lindsey Graham rips Democrats for unfair treatment of Kavanaugh

September 28, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brett Kavanaugh, his wife, and his two daughters

Democrats have accused Kavanaugh of drugging and raping women, participating in gang rapes and operating a gang-rape ring (when he was a high school student). I tweeted a lot about the hearing on Thursday, but the comments of Lindsey Graham, a moderate centrist Republican, was the best response to the Democrat's charges against Kavanaugh.

First, here is a good sample of how the Democrats questioned Kavanaugh during the hearing, to evaluate his suitability for the Supreme Court of the United States of America: (5 minutes)

Kavanaugh threw up too much, farted too much, etc. when he was 16 years old.

Senator Lindsey Graham also questioned Kavanaugh: (5 minutes)

He's so angry that his thoughts are all jumbled up. But you can get the basic idea of what he's saying.

Real Clear Politics had the transcript, here's some of it:

> SEN. LINDSEY GRAHAM (R-SC): If you wanted an FBI investigation, you could have come to us. What you want to do is destroy this guy's life, hold this seat open and hope you win in 2020. You've said that, not me.
>
> […]This is the most unethical sham since I've been in politics. And if you really

> wanted to know the truth, you sure as hell wouldn't have done what you've done to this guy.
>
> […]Boy, you all want power. God, I hope you never get it. I hope the American people can see through this sham.
>
> That you knew about it and you held it. You had no intention of protecting Dr. Ford. none. She's as much of a victim as you are.
>
> God, I hate to say it because these [Democrats] have been my friends, but… [t]his is going to destroy the ability of good people to come forward because of this crap. Your high school yearbook. You have interacted with professional women all your life, not one accusation. You're supposed to be Bill Cosby when you're a junior and senior in high school. And all of a sudden you got over it. It's been my understanding that if you drug women and rape them for two years in high school, you probably don't stop.
>
> […]To my Republican colleagues: If you vote no, you are legitimizing the most despicable thing I have seen in my time in politics.

I listened to reactions from people like Dana Loesch, Buck Sexton and Matt Walsh to Lindsey Graham on their podcasts, and they were as shocked as I was. This is the guy who, throughout his career, bent over backwards to cut compromise deals with Democrats in the Senate. He's been centrist moderate as a Republican senator. I have nothing good to say about him. I supported his last primary challenger, and was disappointed when Graham won the primary.

So I really have no idea what is going on here – this is the last thing I would have expected from Graham. But it does tell you something about how unfair the Kavanaugh hearings were.

Here is Senator Graham sounding less angry, and more coherent, talking to the news media – the same news media that fawned over his RINO actions for so many years: (5 minutes)

PJ Media summarized the video above:

> "I feel ambushed," Graham told reporters at the conclusion of the hearing this afternoon.
>
> "When it comes to where it happened," Graham said, "I still don't know. I don't know when it happened. She says she's 100% certain it did happen. I bet you Judge Kavanaugh will say I'm 100% sure I didn't do it."
>
> He said the people named by Ford as corroborating witnesses "don't know what Ms. Ford's talking about." In addition, "She can't tell how she got home and how she got there and that's the facts I'm left with. A nice lady who has come forward it to tell a hard story that's uncorroborated."
>
> "And this is enough, " he said. "God help anybody else who gets nominated," Graham continued. **"Based on what I heard today, you could not get a**

> **search warrant or an arrest warrant because you don't know the location, you don't know the time, you don't have any corroboration."**
>
> Graham said all he heard today was a bunch of speeches from politicians who have politicized the confirmation process..
>
> The South Carolina senator, who has a background as a prosecutor and a judge, said, "I didn't find her allegations to be corroborated against Mr. Kavanaugh. I don't doubt something happened to her… but she can't tell me the house, the city, the month of the year."
>
> "When you have a emotional accusation and an emotional denial," he explained, "you use the rule of law, the presumption of innocence attaches to the person accused. You have to give them… time and location. You ask is there anybody to verify this, and when you give hames all of them goes the other way."
>
> Asked about whether Graham thought there should be a full investigation, the visibly angry Graham said, "If you really believe we needed an investigation for this, why didn't you tell us in August? The FBI is going to tell us what? What house are they going to go to? What city are they going to go to? Who are they going to talk to because they can't tell us the month, barely the year."
>
> "This is all delay" on the part of Democrats, he told reporters. "I'm not going to reward people for playing a political game." He said Ford "is just as much a victim as, I think, Brett Kavanaugh. Somebody betrayed her trust. And we know who she gave the letter to and the people that betrayed her trust, they owe her an apology."

There were not enough specific details in Ford's testimony to warrant a search warrant, an arrest warrant, or any further investigation. In any case, the Democrats had the allegations in July, but they didn't ask for an investigation then, because they wanted to drag out the confirmation process past the mid-terms.

The Senate Judiciary Committee vote on Kavanaugh is scheduled for Friday morning, a full Senate procedural vote on Saturday, and the full Senate confirmation vote on Tuesday. Already, Bob Corker, who was on the fence about Kavanaugh has tweeted that he will support Kavanaugh. A tweet from a reporter from The Atlantic suggests that Democrat Joe Manchin will do the same. A tweet from a Washington Post reporter Friday morning says Jeff Flake will vote for Kavanaugh. We're still waiting to hear from center-left Republican senators Lisa Murkowski and Susan Collins, as well as red-state Democrats Joe Donelly and Heidi Heitkamp.

More Lindsey Graham on video here. (8 minutes)

Large-scale UK study confirms the importance of fathers to children

September 29, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail.

Excerpt:

> A father's love is as important to a child's emotional development as a mother's, a large-scale study has confirmed.
>
> Examining the cases of more than 10,000 sons and daughters revealed how a cold or distant father can damage a child's life, sometimes for decades to come.
>
> The review of 36 studies from around the world concluded that his love is at least as important to youngsters as that of their mothers.
>
> Researcher Professor Ronald Rohner said that fatherly love is key to development and hopes his findings will motivate more men to become involved in caring for their offspring.
>
> 'In the US, Great Britain and Europe, we have assumed for the past 300 years that all children need for normal healthy development is a loving relationship with their mother,' he said.
>
> 'And that dads are there as support for the mother and to support the family financially but are not required for the healthy development of the children.
>
> 'But that belief is fundamentally wrong. We have to start getting away from that idea and realise the dad's influence is as great, and sometimes greater, than the mother's.'
>
> His conclusions came after he examined data from studies in which children and adults were asked how loving their parents were.

> Questions included if they were made to feel wanted or needed, if their parents went out of their way to hurt their feelings and if they felt loved.
>
> Those taking part also answered questions about their personality. These ranged from 'I think about fighting or being mean' to 'I think the world is a good, happy place'.
>
> Tallying the results showed that those rejected in childhood felt more anxious and insecure as well as hostile and aggressive.
>
> Many of the problems carried over into adulthood, reported the study published in the journal Personality and Social Psychology Review.
>
> Crucially, a father's love was often just as important as a mother's. In some cases, it was even more so. One reason for this may be that rejection is more painful when it comes from the parent the child regards as more powerful or respected.

You can read more about how fatherlessness damages children here.

I think the first question we should ask the people who want to redefine marriage is this: "which parent to do you think that a child can do without? the mother or the father?". We must do everything we can as a society to keep both of a child's natural parents in the home while the child grows up. If we really care about children, then we should prefer to meet their needs, even if the grown-ups have to be a bit more responsible in their decision making. if the conflict is between innocent children and selfish grown-ups, then the children should win.

We need laws and policies that promote traditional marriage, not laws and policies that break it down and destroy it. Repealing no-fault divorce, lowering subsidies for single motherhood, and making shared parenting the default position, would all help solve the problem. Policies like school choice and lower corporate tax rates helps men to be able to perform in their role as provider. We have to be practical and ask: "what makes men capable of marriage and parenting?" If we want strong fathers, then it makes sense to ask how to make fatherhood more reasonable: what do men need in order to do what we want them to do?

Christians should be especially concerned about the presence of fathers, given the evidence I blogged about before showing how the presence of quality fathers is essential for passing Christian beliefs on to children. Churches need to ask themselves tough questions: Are we teaching women how to choose men based on practical concerns and proven abilities in our churches? And are we doing a good job of attracting men to churches by promoting the masculine, practical aspects of Christianity that men like – like science, apologetics debates, economics and foreign policy?

Are all sins equally bad? Or are there degrees of severity for different sins?

September 30, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

This question came up recently so I did some digging on theology web sites to find what Bible verses applied to the question.

Here's what Ligonier said:

> It's clear that we have different degrees of sin when we consider the warnings of Scripture. There are at least twenty-two references in the New Testament to degrees of rewards that are given to the saints in heaven. There are different levels, different rewards, and different roles in heaven. The Bible warns us against adding to the severity of our judgment. Jesus said to Pontius Pilate, "He who delivered me over to you has the greater sin" (John 19:11). Jesus measures and evaluates guilt, and with the greater guilt and greater responsibility comes the greater judgment. It's a motif that permeates the New Testament.
>
> The idea of gradation of sin and reward is based upon God's justice. If I commit twice as many sins as another person, justice demands that the punishment fits the crime. If I've been twice as virtuous as another person, justice demands that I get more of a reward. God tells us that entrance into heaven will be only on the basis of the merit of Christ, but once we get to heaven, rewards will be dispensed according to works. Those who have been abundant in good works will receive an abundant reward. Those who have been derelict and negligent in good works will have a small reward in heaven. By the same token, those who have been grievous enemies of God will have severe torments in hell. Those who have been

> less hostile will have a lesser punishment at the hands of God. He is perfectly just, and when He judges, He will take into account all of the extenuating circumstances. Jesus said, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak" (Matt. 12:36).

A while back, my friend Dina sent me a sermon where that exact passage (John 19) was brought up by the pastor.

I think the correct position is that *any sin* is enough to separate you from God, but some sins are more severe than others in God's objective standard of right and wrong.

OK, that was fine and good, but then I noticed a few days later that Michael Krueger had also blogged about this "all sin are equal" view, too.

Krueger says this:

> First, to say all sins are the same is to confuse the *effect* of sin with the *heinousness* of sin. While all sins are equal in their effect (they separate us from God), they are not all equally heinous.
>
> Second, the Bible differentiates between sins. Some sins are more severe in terms of impact (1 Cor 6:18), in terms of culpability (Rom 1:21-32), and in terms of the judgment warranted (2 Pet 2:17; Mark 9:42; James 3:1).

Even more Bible references, so we're not on the wrong track.

So then why do some people insist that all sins are equal? It turns out that it is coming from the secular ideal of *non-judgmentalism*.

Krueger explains:

> We should begin by observing that this phrase does not come from Scripture. People do not use it because it appears in the Bible. Why then do they use it?
>
> One reason, as noted above, is that some Christians use this phrase to uphold the seriousness of sin. It is viewed as a way to remind people not to be dismissive about their sin or regard it is a triviality.
>
> Others use this phrase as way to "flatten out" all sins so that they are not distinguishable from each other. Or, to put it another way, this phrase is used to portray all human beings as precisely the same. If all sins are equal, and all people sin, then no one is more holy than anyone else.
>
> In a world fascinated with "equality," this usage of the phrase is particularly attractive to folks. It allows everyone to be lumped together into a single undifferentiated mass.
>
> Such a move is also useful as a way to prevent particular behaviors from being condemned. If all sins are equal, and everyone is a sinner, then you are not allowed to highlight any particular sin (or sinner).
>
> Needless to say, this usage of the phrase has featured largely in the recent cultural debates over issues like homosexuality. Yes, homosexuality is a sin,

> some Christians reluctantly concede. But, they argue, all sins are equal in God's sight and therefore it is no different than anything else. Therefore, Christians ought to stop talking about homosexuality unless they are also willing to talk about impatience, anger, gluttony, and so on.

Krueger also posted this fascinating follow up post, where he looks at how the phrase is being used by people on Twitter.

Look at these tweets:

- All sins are equal. People tend to forget that. There is no bigger or smaller sin. Being gay and lying, very equal.
- all sins are equal in God's eyes. whatever you're doing, is no better than what someone else is doing.
- If you have sex before marriage please don't come on social media preaching about the wrongs of homosexuality. All sins are equal
- Need people to realize that all sins are equal… don't try to look down on me or question my faith just cuz you sin differently than I do.
- Don't understand why you're so quick to judge me, when all sins are equal. So much for family..
- if you think being gay is a sin, let me ask you something, have you not done anything wrong in your life? all sins are equal. we're sinners
- Nope no difference at all. All sins are equal no matter what you're running for. The bible says do not judge lest ye be judged
- A huge problem I have with religion is the notion that all sins are equal. Like pre-martial sex and murder are the same amount t of bad.
- people do bad things because they believe that all sins are equal and ~god~ loves y'all equally so he's going to forgive you naman ha ha ha
- It a sin to condemn another sinner and their actions. All sins are equal. So what makes you better than the person you're condemning?
- I think so b/c having sex before marriage doesn't make you less of a women then if you waited until marriage.. all sins are equal soo
- friendly reminder, all sins are equal in gods eyes so you're not better than I am in any way. please worry about your own sins before mine.

> People don’t like when I suggest abortion as an option. This is a free country and all sins are equal so mind your business!!!

> What I do is no worse than wat you do… all sins are equal no matter what it is… a sin is a sin

> to god all sins are equal so you have no right to compare your sins to someone else’s bc in the end it doesn’t matter

The first thing that I noticed is that premarital sex and homosexuality are the most popular sins. I would think that divorce and abortion would be up there in the rankings, as well.

Something strange has happened in our society such that more and more people want to be led by their feelings, rather than be bounded by rules or standards. When people get caught breaking moral rules, rather than be accountable, they attack the person judging them. They would rather escape the judgment of their peers than admit fault and try to fix the mistake, and do better next time.

It’s so bad now, that the people who *have* morals and who *make* moral judgments are seen as the real bad people. The immoral people are on the offense, and even trying to ban people from being able to disagree with them. We’re seeing that with people who are being attacked for defending natural marriage against divorce and redefinition of marriage. In France, they want to make speech critical of abortion a criminal offense. And in Canada, they’ve now made speech critical of the gay agenda a criminal offense. (It’s already a human rights tribunal offense)

What is even more interesting is when the people who push the “don’t judge me” line try to justify it from the Bible. Very strange, but we seem to have forgotten the value of setting moral boundaries. Now moral boundaries are “evil”. Instead, having compassion for people who break the moral boundaries and harm themselves and others is “good”.

I had no idea that there were so many people making decisions based on feelings

October 1, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brett Kavanaugh, his wife, and his two daughters

I've been reading about Christine Ford's accusation against Brett Kavanaugh a lot. Ford hasn't been able to provide any specific details about when and where this assault happened, or who was present, or how she got to and from the place where it happened. I listened to a few debates on the facts of the case, and no one on Ford's side could produce any *evidence* to back up her story.

Rob Tracinski posted an interesting article at The Federalist. He had been engaging with many people who "believed" in Ford's story on Twitter.

He writes:

> There is only one fundamental dividing line in the reaction to the televised hearings about accusations against Brett Kavanaugh, and it's not solely a partisan one. It's the line between those who judged the hearing based on emotions and those who judged it based on reason.
>
> The testimony of Kavanaugh's accuser, Christine Blasey Ford, added nothing of substance to the claims already reported. She was still unable to place her accusation at a specific time and place, to fill in many of the gaps in her recollections, or to find a single other person supposedly present who could confirm any aspect of her story. It remains a vague claim with no corroborating evidence.

> Based on reason and evidence alone, you would have to conclude that we have gotten no farther in the case and are not likely to get any farther.
>
> […]But evidence and logic are not what we heard about in most of the reactions to the hearings. What we heard about is how the testimony made people *feel*.
>
> The attack on logic began before the hearings, with commenters pointing to quotes saying the case against Kavanaugh is "plausible" and "believable"—but providing no actual evidence that it actually did happen—then describing this as "compelling." But "plausible" is the opposite of compelling. Direct evidence *compels* belief, logically speaking. Someone's speculations about what *might* have happened have no logical standing and compel nothing.
>
> Or consider the phrase you probably heard a thousand times today: that Kavanaugh should not be confirmed because he is "credibly accused." What does that mean? What makes the accusation "credible," and what evidentiary status does that give it? A vague accusation with no independent corroboration from the very people the accuser herself described as witnesses doesn't sound all that credible to me.
>
> But you will look in vain for any clear standard of what is "credible." It is not an evidentiary term but an emotional one. All it means is "this is something I feel like believing."
>
> People are not judging credibility based on evidence. They are judging based on how the two witnesses made them feel, which is to say that they base it on a purely emotional reaction—a reaction heavily influenced by partisan loyalties that prejudice you for or against the two witnesses.
>
> So we get pure appeals to emotion like this one: "I can't imagine how many thousands of women, around the world, are in tears as they listen to Christine Blasey Ford's voice cracking." Kavanaugh's voice cracked, too. Does that mean we should also embrace his side of the story?
>
> The ability to jerk tears in the audience does not constitute evidence, and if all important issues are to be resolved by the test of who is a more charismatic speaker, then impartial justice becomes impossible. On this issue, Conor Friedersdorf makes a highly relevant point: "I've studied too many criminal trials that sent innocents to jail or that acquitted the guilty to trust that a mass audience can distill whether anyone is telling the truth or not by consulting their gut while watching testimony."
>
> This was the problem from the very beginning. Everyone was talking about how each of the witnesses "looks" and about what's "sympathetic"—as if it's all about the feels, rather than evidence or logic.

One far-left feminist named Ana Marie Cox tweeted that she didn't believe Kavanaugh's tears because "the boyfriend that abused me cried a lot":

> When it's all about feelings, the logic must be bent and twisted to fit. So when

> Kavanaugh became emotional while describing his young daughter's reaction to this case, it wasn't proof of a man who loves his daughter. No, it was proof that he was abuser. Why? Because "The boyfriend that abused me cried a lot." Get the logic here? Because one man was abusive and cried in an attempt to get sympathy from his victim, then any man who cries is therefore an abuser. This line was repeated a lot, mostly by women citing an abusive man in their own lives, sometimes a father but usually an ex-boyfriend or ex-husband.

Note that whenever a woman has a defective father, that man was *chosen by her mother*. Her mother is responsible for the choice of *this man* and the choice to make babies with *this man.* Similarly, a woman who has a defective ex-boyfriend or ex-husband is responsible for her choice of *this boyfriend* or *this husband*. Although women often blame men for treating them badly, in almost every case, the harm results from *a woman's own choices*. The choice to drink too much, the choice to go to parties, the choice to pursue an attractive irresponsible bad boy, etc.

NPR posted a poll on the trial, and the poll found that:

- 32% of men believe Kavanaugh's account, 28% believe Ford.
- 35% of women believe Ford's account, 20% believe Kavanaugh.

Why are so many women opposed to Kavanaugh?

Well, thanks to feminism, many women find it very hard to choose men who are good at commitment, self-sacrifice and marriage roles. Feminists consider the traditional male roles to be "sexist", so they don't choose men who can perform the traditional male roles. In pre-feminist times, women looked for men who were chaste, sober, good providers, good with children (e.g. pro-life), serious about religion, serious about moral character, and who put the needs of others first. They chose men who would be good at marriage. But because of feminism, choosing men based on "rigid gender identities" for a "sexist" institution like marriage is simply not done. Men who are good at marriage are "boring", and the best men are the men who let women be as selfiish as they want to be. So, feminists marry men like Ted Kennedy, Anthony Weiner and Bill Clinton because those men are "feminists" who believe that recreational sex, abortion and no-fault divorce are good things.

I had a female friend who I used to work with in my last job who once showed me a web site filled with pictures of men's faces. Some of them were normal people, and some of them were crazy. And she proudly told me that she was able to pick which ones were crazy with 100% accuracy. She was so proud of her ability to judge men based on appearances. She had complete confidence in her feelings and intuitions. In fact, she got some kind of crazy thrill out of making decisions based on her feelings. The freedom to choose without having any evidence was intoxicating to her. Logic? Evidence? Those things were restrictive and would take away her freedom to make herself happy. She married an atheist devotee of Ayn Rand, despite being Catholic herself. And naturally, they divorced. Trying to think through whether a person who extols the virtue of

selfishness can enter an institution like *marriage* is hard work. She decided to just make the decision based on appearances, feelings and intuitions. I'm sure that today she would tell me how untrustworthy, scary and evil all men are, too.

Feminists want to choose men based on how the man makes them feel, rather than by evaluating his suitability for commitment. This plan never works, and it makes these women very, very bitter. In fact, the same women who are believing Ford based on their feelings, without any evidence, are the ones choosing bad men based on their feelings, without any evidence that he is able to do the job of a husband and father. The problem is the same – making decisions with feelings instead of being bound by the evidence.

William Lane Craig debates Daniel Came: Does God exist?

October 2, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

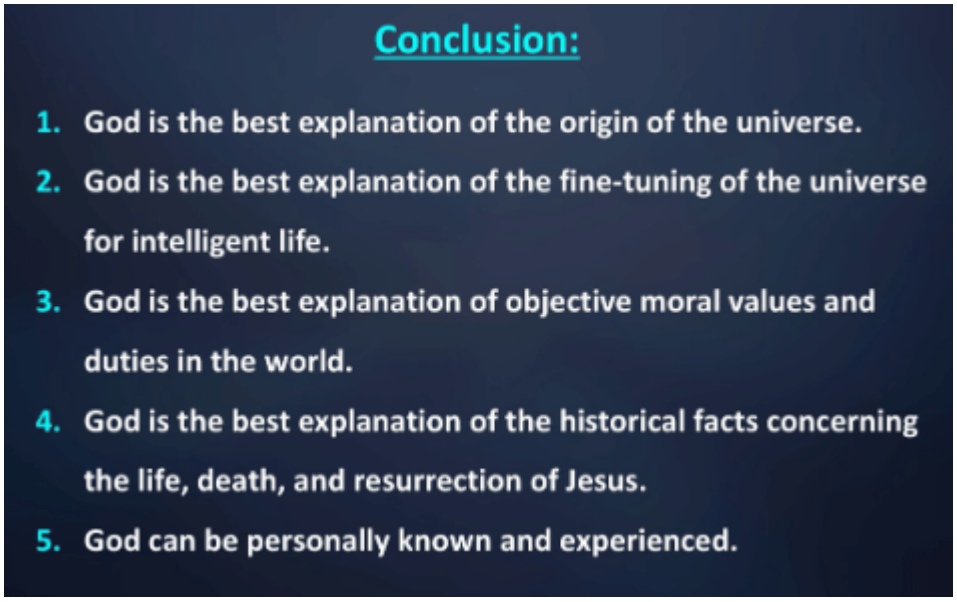

Dr. Craig's opening speech summary slide

The video of the debate was posted by ReasonableFaith.org – Dr. Craig's organization. This debate occurred in March 2017 at the University of Dublin, in Ireland.

The video: (91 minutes)

My non-snarky summary is below.

Dr. Craig's opening speech

Two claims:

1. There are good reasons to think that theism is true.
2. There are not comparably good reasons to think that atheism is true.

Five reasons for God's existence:

1. The beginning of the universe
– actual infinite past is mathematically impossible
– BGV theorem: any universe that is on balance expanding in its history (like ours) cannot be past eternal

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– slight changes to quantities and constants prevent a universe from supporting complex embodied life
– the multiverse response of atheists conflicts with observations, e.g. the Boltzmann Brains problem

3. Objective moral values
– God's existence is required to ground objective moral values and duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus

– there are good reasons to accept the most widely accepted facts about the historical Jesus (empty tomb, appearances, early widespread belief in the resurrection)
– the best explanation of these minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

5. Experience God directly
– in the absence of any defeaters to belief in God, a person can experience God directly

Dr. Daniel Came's opening speech

1. The hiddenness of God
– if God wants a personal relationship with us, and a relationship with God would be the greatest good for us
– God ought to reveal himself to us, but he does not reveal himself to many people, the "non-resistant non-believers"

2. The inductive problem of evil
– many evil events occur that are pointless – there is no morally sufficient reason why God would allow them to occur
– examples: animal suffering, children born with disease, tsunamis
– the theistic response to this is that humans are not in a position to know whether there are morally sufficient reasons, due to our limitations of knowing the consequences
– but this ripple effect defense has 4 possible outcomes, 3 of which don't do the job of justifying

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

1. The hiddenness of God
– God's goal is not to make his existence known, but to draw them into a love relationship
– it's speculative that overt displays of God's existence would draw people to him in a love relationship, they might resent his bullying
– atheist would have to prove that God could draw more people into a love relationship with him by revealing himself more overtly

2. The inductive problem of evil
– as humans, we are not in a position to know for certain that any apparently pointless evil really is pointless
– William Alston article: 6 limitations of human knowing make it impossible to judge that an evil is actually "pointless"
– Dr. Came says that there are 4 possibilities for the ripple effects, and since 3 are bad, it's likely that there are not morally sufficient reasons for a apparently pointless evil
– it is logically fallacious to assert probability conclusions without knowing the probabilities of those 4 options
– there is actually an argument from evil: since the problem of evil requires an objective standard of good and evil by which to measure, and God is the only possible ground of objective morality, then pressing the problem of evil actually requires the atheist to assume God, in order to ground this objective moral standard

Dr. Came's first rebuttal

3. Objective moral values

– there are naturalistic theories of moral realism where objective moral duties and objective moral values exist in a naturalistic universe
– I'm not saying that any of them are correct, but there are many theories about object morality in a naturalistic universe

There are naturalistic theories for all of the 5 arguments that Dr. Craig presented. It is Dr. Craig's responsibility to present those naturalistic theories and prove that they are not as good as his explanations. I'm not going to defend (or even name!) a single naturalistic theory for any of these 5 arguments by Dr. Craig.

Dr. Craig's explanations for the 5 evidences he gave can't be admitted, because we have to know how God did something *in naturalistic terms* before we can know that God did it supernaturally. Explanations are only valid if they are naturalistic.

1. The beginning of the universe
– naturalism explains how the universe expands after it came into being, so that explains how it came into being
– the God explanation, that God created the universe out of nothing, is not admissible, because it is not naturalistic
– how does God, as an unembodied mind interact with the physical world?
– the only agency that we know about is human agents, and we have bodies, so how could God perform actions without having a body?

The theistic hypothesis does not make any predictions, but naturalism makes lots of testable predictions. God could do anything, so he is not constrained and is therefore untestable. We can't infer God as an explanation in principle because we can't predict what is more probable if God exists than if he does not.

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the university was not set up to make embodied intelligence plausible, because the vast majority of the universe is hostile to life
– there are models of the multiverse that escape the Boltzmann Brains problem that Dr. Craig raised

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

Some of Dr. Craig's arguments are deductive (e.g. – the beginning of the universe, objective moral values), so that the conclusion follows from the premises if the premises are true. The resurrection passes the standard tests for historical explanations.

1. The beginning of the universe
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for an ultimate beginning of the universe

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for a design of the universe to support life
– he has to prove that intelligences has to be attached to bodies
– human beings are non-physical minds united to physical bodies
– naturalistic attempts to explain mental operations fail

– the arguments *prove* that unembodied minds exist
– the vast expanse of the universe is required in order to form the galaxies, stars and heavy elements needed for complex life
– why expect that the entire universe should be small, or that life would be everywhere?
– a non-fine-tuned world is more likely in the multiverse, and in a multiverse, we are more likely to have a Boltzmann brain world than a world with complex, embodied life
– Dr. Came has not advanced any naturalistic explanation for the fine-tuning

3. Objective moral values
– non-theistic ethical theories cannot account for the ontological foundations of objective moral values and duties
– atheistic theories of moral realism simply assume objective moral values out of thin air
– it is especially hard to find any basis for objective moral duties in the absence of God

Dr. Came's second rebuttal

5. Religious experience
– Dr. Craig should not bring up religious experience in a debate where arguments and evidence are central
– people who have dreams, hallucinations and psychotic delusions could appeal to religious experience
– religious experience is by no means universal, and it is possible to doubt it

3. Objective moral values
– there are lots of atheists who hold to objective moral values
– Dr. Craig has to explain how God grounds objective moral values and duties
– Dr. Craig has to explain why atheist moral realist theories don't work to ground objective moral values and duties

1. The beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig claims that something can't come from nothing, that's not an argument
– there are numerous models that don't require an absolute beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig cites the BGV theorem, but Guth (one of the authors) says that only the inflation has a beginning, not the whole universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion

1. The beginning of the universe
– on theism, there is an efficient cause, but no material cause, for the origin of the universe
– on atheism, there is neither an efficient cause nor a material cause, for the origin of the universe: that's worse!
– if he thinks that there are models of the universe that don't require a beginning, then let him name a viable eternal model of the universe
– he never refuted the mathematical argues against an infinite past

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– nothing to refute

3. Objective moral values

– God is a better ground for morality than humans, because he is ultimate, and not contingent and arbitrary
– God is a being who is worthy of worship, and therefore command his creatures with moral duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus
– nothing to refute

5. Religious experience
– only justified because there are no defeaters to it

1. The hiddenness of God
– atheist has to show that if God's existence were more obvious, that it would result in more people being drawn to him

2. The inductive problem of evil
– Dr. Came's argument was logically fallacious, and makes errors in probability theory

Dr. Came's conclusion

Sometimes, people can't prove something, but lack of evidence is a justification for doubting it, e.g. – werewolves.

If none of Craig's arguments work, then it follows that it is not rational to believe that God exists, and it is rational to believe that God does not exist.

Atheists shouldn't have a burden of proof for what they know, only theists have a burden of proof for what they know.

My thoughts

One quick point. If life were common everywhere then atheists would infer that God wasn't involved in it. Period. "Life is everywhere, so it's common, why do we need a designer?" they'd say. I agree with Dr. Came about denouncing religious experience in a formal debate. I don't like when Dr. Craig brings this up, but I see why he does it – he's an evangelist, and that's a good thing, too. I just worry about how it looks to atheists, although it's good for sincere seekers. I'm not the one on the stage, though, Dr. Craig is.

I think the point about more overt revealing by God would annoy people and make them turn away. Think of how gay people respond to the suggestion that there is anything wrong with them, with rage, vandalism, threats, coercion, attempts to get you to lose your job and business, and using government as a weapon to fine and imprison you. It's really obvious to me that more God does not mean more *love* of God. For those who don't want God, the hiddenness is respect for their choice to put pleasure above the search for truth. (I mean the gay activists – I have great sympathy for people who struggle with same-sex unwanted attractions because they were impacted by a failed bond with their parent of the same sex as they are).

Whenever I meet people like Dr. Came, I always urge them to keep investigating and pursuing truth, because they will find it if they are sincerely seeking after God. Some atheists do sincerely seek God, but I don't know any who haven't found him. I'm not sure if that's because those atheists who claim to be non-resistant and rational are in fact

resistant and non-rational, or what the real reason is. If you believe the Bible, *all* unbelief is non-rational and resistant (see Romans 1). Regarding the werewolves, we don't have any good arguments for werewolves, we do have good arguments for God. Dr. Came didn't refute the arguments that Craig raised, nor did his own arguments for atheism work. And there are many, many more arguments (origin of life, Cambrian explosion, habitability-discoverability, molecular machines) that Craig did not raise, too.

Will Christine Ford be charged with perjury after her ex-boyfriend's sworn testimony?

October 3, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brett Kavanaugh, his wife, and his two daughters

Christine Ford's ex-boyfriend told the Senate Judiciary Committee *under oath* that he witnessed her coaching a friend on how to take a polygraph. So what? Well, Ford told the Senate Judiciary Committee that she "NEVER" (her words) coached anyone else about polygraphs. Looks like someone is going to be facing perjury charges all right, and not about farting or drinking beer!

First, The Federalist recalls how Ford answered questions about her polygraph at her Senate Judiciary Committee hearing:

> At last week's hearing, Ford was specifically asked by Rachel Mitchell, an experienced sex crimes prosecutor who was hired by the committee to question Ford and Kavanaugh, whether she had advised anyone on how to take a polygraph.
>
> "Have you ever had discussions with anyone, beside your attorneys, on how to take a polygraph?" Mitchell asked.
>
> "Never," Ford responded.
>
> "And I don't just mean countermeasures," Mitchell said, "but I mean just any sort of tips, or anything like that."
>
> "No," Ford said.

> "[H]ave you ever given tips or advice to somebody who was looking to take a polygraph test?" Mitchell continued.
>
> "Never," Ford replied again.

The Federalist article has the full statement.

The Wall Street Journal notes: (it's pay-walled)

> The statement was reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Dr. Ford's lawyers didn't respond to a request for comment.
>
> The writer's name was redacted. In the letter to the committee, the writer said that he dated Dr. Ford from 1992 to 1998, found her to be "truthful" and said he had no ill will toward her.
>
> He wrote that she never told him she was a victim of sexual assault or mentioned Judge Kavanaugh's name.
>
> He said that while they were dating, Dr. Ford lived with a female friend. That person was interviewing for a federal job. The writer said he witnessed Dr. Ford help her friend prepare to take a lie-detector test.
>
> Because of her background in psychology, the writer said, Dr. Ford was able to help her friend understand "what to expect, and how polygraphs worked," putting her mind at ease about the forthcoming test.
>
> In his letter, Sen. Grassley wrote that Dr. Ford's testimony at the hearing "raises specific concerns about the reliability of her polygraph examination results. The Senate therefore needs this information."

National Review adds:

> The two dated for six years and Ford never expressed a fear of flying or closed spaces, traits she told the committee she struggles with, he said.
>
> The man also claims Ford lied about and then admitted to charging a credit card they used to share for about $600 of merchandise.

Personally, I don't believe her story, and now that we have evidence that she perjured herself, I'd like to see her face criminal charges and spend some time in prison.

And I'd like to see her lawyers investigated and disbarred, if they are found guilty. And I want them to explain who is paying their lawyer fees and for Ford's polygraph. If Ford or Ford's lawyers are linked to George Soros, then we can certainly do something about George Soros' influence in America.

And we can have an FBI investigation of Diane Feinstein's on-staff Chinese spy – and find out what he was doing working for her for 20 years. I'd like that investigation to last as long as the media took smearing Trump with Russia collusion nonsense.

But first, let's confirm Kavanaugh. This week. I want all the Democrat senators in red states to go on the record on where they stand on Kavanaugh. I want it done before the

mid-terms, so everyone in Indiana, Montana, West Virginia, North Dakota, and Missouri are very clear about who they should vote for in the mid-terms.

Note: at the time of writing (Tuesday night) this story had only been reported on National Review, The Federalist, the Washington Examiner, Fox News, the Daily Caller, and other right of center outlets. Not one far-left news media source, e.g. – CNN, MSNBC, ABC, NBC, CBS, NYT, WaPo, etc. had a thing to say about it. This failure to report happens ALL THE TIME (remember the Gosnell trial?) Remember that next time you are consuming fake news from the progressive mainstream news media. They lie.

What are the historical arguments for the empty tomb narrative?

October 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

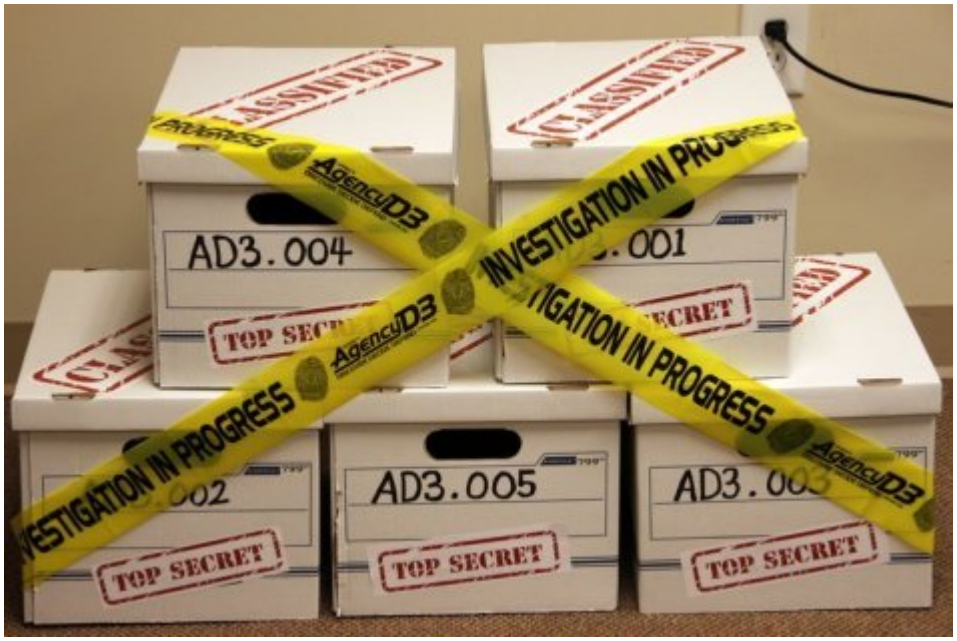

Investigation in progress

I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb

was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

A few quotes from atheist historians not from Dr. Craig's article: (thanks to Eric of Ratio Christi OSU)

> Michael Goulder (Atheist NT Prof. at Birmingham) "…it goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion." ["The Baseless Fabric of a Vision," in Gavin D'Costa, editor, Resurrection Reconsidered (Oxford, 1996), 48.]
>
> Gerd Lüdemann (Atheist Prof of NT at Göttingen): "…the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus…not later than three years… the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE." [The Resurrection of Jesus, trans. by Bowden (Fortress, 1994), 171-72.]
>
> Robert Funk (Non-Christian scholar, founder of the Jesus Seminar): "…The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30

> C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." [Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, The Acts of Jesus, 466.]

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s. For example, the atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark some time in the 40s. (See the debate below)

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say "The President is hosting a dinner at the White House" and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the "high priest" as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus' death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

So we are dealing with very early sources for the empty tomb.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as "Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women" and "Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female."
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was

> worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

What are the historical arguments for the post-mortem appearances of Jesus?

October 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi Ohio State University has a *great* post up about the post-mortem appearances of Jesus.

The post contains:

- a list of the post-mortem resurrection appearances
- quotations by skeptical historians about those appearances
- alternative naturalistic explanations of the appearances
- responses to those naturalistic explanations

Although there is a lot of research that went into the post, it's not very long to read. The majority of scholars accept the appearances, because they appear in *so many different sources* and because some of those sources are very early, especially Paul's statement of the early Christian creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, which is from about 1-3 years after Jesus was executed by the Romans. Eric's post lists out some of the skeptical scholars who the appearances, and you can see how they allude to the historical criteria that they are using. (If you want to sort of double-check the details, I blogged about how historians investigate ancient sources before)

Let's take a look at some of the names you might recognize:

> **E.P. Sanders:**
>
> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my

> judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. “I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: ‘I saw him first!’ ‘No! I did.’ Paul’s tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus’ followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions.” “Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the ‘resurrection’: the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it.”[1]
>
> **Bart Ehrman:**
>
> It is a historical fact that some of Jesus’ followers came to believe that he had been raised from the dead soon after his execution. We know some of these believers by name; one of them, the apostle Paul, claims quite plainly to have seen Jesus alive after his death. Thus, for the historian, Christianity begins after the death of Jesus, not with the resurrection itself, but with the belief in the resurrection.[2]
>
> **Ehrman also says:**
>
> We can say with complete certainty that some of his disciples at some later time insisted that . . . he soon appeared to them, convincing them that he had been raised from the dead.[3]
>
> **Ehrman also goes onto say:**
>
> Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus’ resurrection, since this is a matter of public record.[4]
>
> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don’t doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don’t have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don’t think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19).[5]
>
> **Marcus Borg**
>
> The historical ground of Easter is very simple: the followers of Jesus, both then and now, continued to experience Jesus as a living reality after his death. In the early Christian community, these experiences included visions or apparitions of Jesus. [8]

The references to Paul are because of the early creed he records in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, and his conversations with the other eyewitnesses in Galatians. Eric has another post where he goes over that early creed, and it is something that every Christian should know

about. It’s really kind of surprising that you never hear a sermon on that early creed in church, where they generally sort of assume that you believe everything in the Bible on faith. But skeptical historians don’t believe in the post-mortem appearances by faith – they believe it (in part) because of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

If you want to see a Christian scholar make the case for the resurrection appearances in a debate, then here is a post I wrote with the video, audio and summary of the William Lane Craig vs James Crossley debate on the resurrection.

How does the lynching of Brett Kavanaugh affect Christian men who want to have an influence?

October 6, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brett Kavanaugh, his wife, and his two daughters

Well, on Friday, I asked one of the atheist senior software engineers I work with how he felt about the Kavanaugh nomination. He told me three things. First, that they shouldn't give a job that lasts "40 years" to someone who got angry about being accused of being a gang rapist. Second, he had not followed the Kavanaugh news for a week. And third, that Trump was a horrible President, and hadn't don't *anything* right.

Here is a comprehensive summary of the Kavanaugh confirmation process from famous religious liberty defender David French.

Here's what's in it:

- the overall pattern of sensational accusations being made, then unraveling after investigations prove them false
- the left's insistence that Kavanaugh *disprove* the allegations, rather than the accusers having to *prove* them
- the left's claim that Kavanaugh's defense against the allegations shows that he doesn't have the temperament for SCOTUS
- the evidential problems with Christine Ford's accusation
- the evidential problems with Deborah Ramirez's accusation
- the evidential problems with Julie Swetnick's accusation
- the charge that Brett Kavanaugh committed perjury when talking about his drinking

and his high school yearbook

Let's focus on the most credible accusation from Christine Ford:

> It's an assault that verges on attempted rape. But the evidence simply doesn't support this claim. In fact, her claim is worse than just "uncorroborated," it's contradicted – sometimes even by her own testimony and her own evidence. And her behavior since bringing the claim raises further doubts about its veracity.
>
> Consider the following, undisputed facts about her testimony and the evidence she's provided. Not one of the witnesses that she's put forward have backed her version of events – not even her own friends. At best they've said they have no recollection of the party. Her friend, Leyland Keyser, went further, declaring through her attorney that "Simply put, Ms. Keyser does not know Mr. Kavanaugh and she has no recollection of ever being at a party or gathering where he was present, with, or without, Dr. Ford."
>
> Moreover, Dr. Ford herself has provided conflicting accounts of her age at the time of the attack and the number of attendees at the party. Even the evidence of the details of the attack isn't uniform. Her therapists' notes allegedly indicate that four boys were present, not just Kavanaugh and Judge. She claims these notes are erroneous, but contemporaneous notes of a conversation are almost always far more reliable than a years-later recollection of that same conversation.
>
> Dr. Ford's conduct since coming forward has also been disturbing. When making a serious claim against another person, it is the obligation of the accuser to come forward with evidence. Instead, she has withheld evidence – including her complete therapists' notes and the complete polygraph record. She has defied the Senate Judiciary Committee and refused to fully cooperate with its investigation. In a civil litigation context, the persistent refusal to hand over relevant evidence can lead to dismissal of a plaintiff's claim. In this context, it should at the very least lead to a negative inference about the contents of the withheld evidence.

The article did not cover the sworn statement of Ford's boyfriend, which directly contradicted her testimony under oath. This would open her up to charges of perjury, if pursued. And the article also didn't mention how many of her stories meant to delay the confirmation process were falsified after being investigated, e.g. – her fear of flying which kept her from testifying on time.

What the Kavanaugh lynching means for Christian men

I am concerned about what young Christian men will have learned from the false accusations against Kavanaugh. Is it worth it to be sober and chaste in order to do well in school, and get good jobs? Well, the message of the Kavanaugh fiasco is that everything you do can be undone with a few false accusations. If you rise too high, then the secular left can destroy your reputation, your career, get you fired, destroy your finances by

forcing you to defend yourself in court, etc. Good degrees and good jobs take a lot of hard work and self-sacrifice, especially in a time when progressives are receiving preferential treatment. Is it worth it to try?

Suppose a young Christian man were clever and avoided all alcohol and sex in high school and college, like I did. Suppose he did two STEM degrees in order to get into a male-dominated field like I did. I've worked in FT100 companies that aggressively promoted abortion and gay rights. I saw women who were outspoken proponents of same-sex marriage get promoted over conservatives with real STEM skills. Imagine I were going for a promotion in competition with a leftist woman. She could make up any story she wanted without any evidence in order to get me fired. This is what the Kavanaugh case clearly shows.

One final point. Is it worth it for a Christian conservative man to get married and have children in an environment like this? If a man is fired from his job on a false charge, it puts a serious strain on his marriage. I am watching what gay activists are doing to Christian business-owners right now. Death threats, vandalism, organizing protests, negative reviews… trying to make it impossible for Christians and conservatives to earn a living. Trying to make it so that their children starve. Christian men who want to have an influence aren't stupid. They count the cost of every decision before making it. A man who has a wife and kids is simply not as free to be who he really is and say what he really thinks as a man who is unmarried and who uses an alias.

A lot of Christians seem to like to say how great it is that they focus on "spiritual things" while ignoring politics. Well, when those Christians see secular leftists climbing into power and ruling over what Christians can say or do, I hope they will remember that all it takes for evil men to triumph is for good men to do nothing. Every time the secular left puts on a show of intimidation, more and more young Christians will get the message: you can't win, so don't try. The secular leftists are *fascists* – they will use power, threats of violence, and violence itself in order to neutralize the influence of those who make them feel ashamed of what they are doing.

Related posts

- Will Christine Ford be charged with perjury after her ex-boyfriend's sworn testimony?
- I had no idea that there were so many people making decisions based on feelings
- Moderate senator Lindsey Graham rips Democrats for unfair treatment of Kavanaugh
- Did Christine Ford name Kavanaugh as her attacker before his Supreme Court nomination?
- Kavanaugh: "I did not have sex in high school or for many years thereafter"

Bible study: what does the Christian concept of "grace" mean?

October 7, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A good shepherd rescuing a lost sheep, who had no hope

My friend Wessel sent me this sermon a few days ago because I was looking for a good sermon on grace. Some of my friends pitched in with sermons, but this one from a South African church was BY FAR the best. I've listened to it 3 times already. The speaker sounds exactly like one of best friends from university, Andrew, who is from South Africa.

I'm testing out a new file download service, so I hope this works… here is the MP3 file. (7 megabytes, 30 minutes) [FIXED!]

Let me know if you can't download that.

The text of the sermon is Genesis 48:1-20:

> 1 Some time later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him.
>
> 2 When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed.
>
> 3 Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me
>
> 4 and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.'
>
> 5 "Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and

Simeon are mine.

[6] Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers.

[7] As I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

[8] When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, "Who are these?"

[9] "They are the sons God has given me here," Joseph said to his father.

Then Israel said, "Bring them to me so I may bless them."

[10] Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them.

[11] Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too."

[12] Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground.

[13] And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him.

[14] But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger,and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.

[15] Then he blessed Joseph and said,

"May the God before whom my fathers
  Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully,
the God who has been my shepherd
  all my life to this day,

[16] the Angel who has delivered me from all harm
  —may he bless these boys.
May they be called by my name
  and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac,
and may they increase greatly
  on the earth."

[17] When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.

[18] Joseph said to him, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."

[19] But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a

> people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations."
>
> 20 He blessed them that day and said,
>
> "In your[c] name will Israel pronounce this blessing:
> 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'"
>
> So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

So, in this story, God continues his tradition of choosing the lowly people in the world instead of the people who are seen as "better". God does this in many cases, because he has a big heart for people who are born in a bad position. Normally in the world, people always choose what they think is best for them. They choose the prettiest girl. They choose the most tallest man. Those who need a little extra help or care are passed over. God sometimes does the complete opposite of this. Instead of choosing the obvious "best person", he chooses a much lower person, and he lifts them up to do great things.

Consider 1 Corinthians 1:26-31:

> 26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called.Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.
>
> 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.
>
> 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,
>
> 29 so that no one may boast before him.
>
> 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.
>
> 31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

The speaker in the sermon explains the idea of grace by talking about sheep and shepherds. He explains that unlike clever homing pigeons, sheep are prone to wandering off and they aren't able to find their way home. Sometimes, they get lost, and sometimes they even wander into danger. A bad shepherd would just say that he only wanted to have the best sheep – the smartest ones or the richest ones or the best looking ones or the most popular ones. But a good shepherd is sorry for the sheep that needs the most help, and is the most lost, and in the most danger. God is like a good shepherd. God sends his Son to die to atone for the sins of the bad sheep in this world, even when they didn't deserve it. (John 3:16-17) That's grace. But he also arranges the world in a way that bad sheep have an opportunity to reach out and find him. (Acts 17:24-27) That's grace, too.

In my own life, I have often found myself being excluded or discounted by people, usually because of my skin color or because of my early childhood poverty or because I just struggle to understand what I'm expected to say and to do. But a funny thing often

happens. Right when I am feeling the worst about being excluded, God comes along and gives me something special to do, that makes me forget about being excluded. And that's been my experience of grace, ever since I was little and even to this day. The honor of being allowed to participate in God's plan makes me forget what it feels like to be excluded. The very best things I've achieved in my life are the times where God showed me someone who started out life in a terrible situation (usually because of the selfish decisions of their irresponsible parents) and then I participated in God's plan to lead them out of the mess they started out from.

I think one of the biggest reasons why some Christians stick with Christianity through thick and thin is that they have this experience of grace. This experience of grace means that no matter what, that sheep is going to loyal to that shepherd who chose him when he was at his lowest and most vulnerable. The first part of the choosing is obviously Jesus dying on the cross to atone for your rebellion. But after that, God carefully reveals himself to the sheep. And then there is the guidance that helps the sheep to avoid destroying himself with sin. If the sheep makes mistakes, the good shepherd has already laid down his life to pay for them. This is a lot of effort being put into this rescue operation. It's difficult for people who have never experienced grace to realize how real and life-transforming it is. For those who have not experienced it, I really recommend that you pray to God, in the name of Jesus, and ask him to give you grace.

There are still things in my life where God has decided that he is not going to fix it. And, strangely enough, that doesn't make me disloyal to him at all. Why not? Well, you have to read the Bible and understand that Jesus was not spared from suffering or death in his loyal obedience to God. He wasn't given everything he wanted to feel happy all the time. When you understand that this is the character of your shepherd, then it's much easier for you to put up with the things you lack, too.

Has increased education spending in schools improved student performance in test scores?

October 8, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I want a raise, I work harder, but lazy teachers quit working to hold signs

One of my friends has been having a debate with one of his former teachers about whether spending more money on government-run education improves tests scores. He tried posting some evidence, but she just dismissed that by claiming:

1. If we hadn't spent more money, then the student test scores would have gone down instead of staying the same.
2. Most of the money that government spends on education goes to vouchers and private schools, not public schools
3. Economists at prestigious think tanks like that Cato Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and the American Enterprise Institute cannot be trusted to accurately cite the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics because of the Koch Brothers
4. You can't compare the test scores of American students with the test scores of Asian students who outperform them, (for less government spending), because math is different in Asia compared to America

Let's look at some data and see if her arguments are correct.

Does more spending mean higher student performance?

National Review reported on data collected in the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which spans all 50 states.

Look:

> Comparing educational achievement with per-pupil spending among states also calls into question the value of increasing expenditures. While high-spending

> Massachusetts had the nation's highest proficiency scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, low-spending Idaho did very well, too. South Dakota ranks 42nd in per-pupil expenditures but eighth in math performance and ninth in reading. The District of Columbia, meanwhile, with the nation's highest per-pupil expenditures ($15,511 in 2007), scores dead last in achievement.

The student test scores are dead last, but National Review notes that "according to the National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, D.C. was spending an average of $27,460 per pupil in 2014, the most recent year for which data are available." They are spending the most per-pupil, but their test scores are dead last.

CBS News reported on another recent study confirming this:

> Decades of increased taxpayer spending per student in U.S. public schools has not improved student or school outcomes from that education, and a new study finds that throwing money at the system is simply not tied to academic improvements.
>
> The study from the CATO Institute shows that American student performance has remained poor, and has actually declined in mathematics and verbal skills, despite per-student spending tripling nationwide over the same 40-year period.
>
> "The takeaway from this study is that what we've done over the past 40 years hasn't worked," Andrew Coulson, director of the Center For Educational Freedom at the CATO Institute, told Watchdog.org. "The average performance change nationwide has declined 3 percent in mathematical and verbal skills. Moreover, there's been no relationship, effectively, between spending and academic outcomes."
>
> The study, "State Education Trends: Academic Performance and Spending over the Past 40 Years," analyzed how billions of increased taxpayer dollars, combined with the number of school employees nearly doubling since 1970, to produce stagnant or declining academic results.
>
> "The performance of 17-year-olds has been essentially stagnant across all subjects despite a near tripling of the inflation-adjusted cost of putting a child through the K-12 system," writes Coulson.

Where did the numbers come from? The Koch Brothers? No:

> Data from the U.S. Department of Education incorporating public school costs, number of employees, student enrollment and SAT scores was analyzed to explore the disparity between increased spending and decreasing or stagnant academic results.

Well, at least government-run monopoly schools outperform private private schools, right? No:

> […][P]rivate schools, where students excel over public school peers, …manage to

> operate at budgets about 34 percent lower than taxpayer-funded schools, US Finance Post reports.
>
> Public schools spend, on average, $11,000 per student, per year.
>
> Coulson noted an Arizona study he conducted which showed that the average per-pupil spending at private schools was only about 66 percent of the cost of public schools.

A more recent state-specific study from 2016 found that this is still the case.

This problem gets even worse when you look at test scores from other countries, where even less is spent on education.

As the Washington Post reported at the end of 2016:

> When it comes to math, U.S. high school students are falling further behind their international counterparts, according to results released Tuesday of an ongoing study that compares academic achievement in 73 countries. And the news is not much better in reading and science literacy, where U.S. high schoolers have not gained any ground and continue to trail students in a slew of developed countries around the globe.
>
> In the latest Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) measuring math literacy in 2015, U.S. students ranked 40th in the world. The U.S. average math score of 470 represents the second decline in the past two assessments — down from 482 in 2012 and 488 in 2009. The U.S. score in 2015 was 23 points lower than the average of all of the nations taking part in the survey.

More money is being spent, but the scores are DECREASING.

Now, why is it that increased government spending in the public school monopoly doesn't improve student performance? Well, one reason is that very little of the money makes it to the classroom.

Where does all the money go?

Let's look at four places where the money spent on the government-run public school monopoly ends up.

Administration

First, a lot of it gets paid to administrations who implement politically correct programs designed to turn the impressionable young people into little secular socialists.

Here's a helpful chart from the American Enterprise Institute:

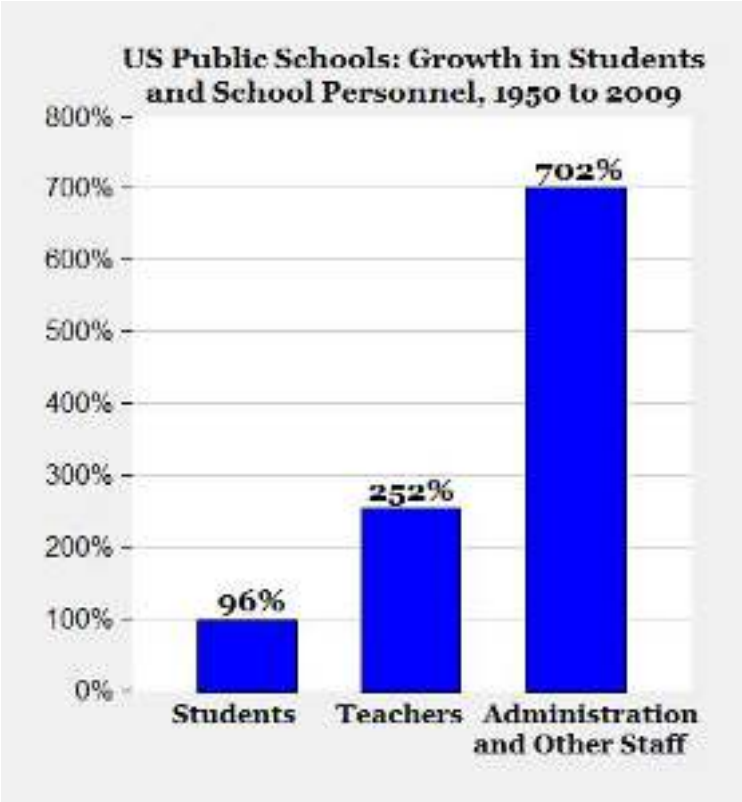

Where does taxpayer money spent on the public school monopoly go?
I guess if a school wants to make things like Planned Parenthood sex education and LGBT indoctrination into priorities, then they would need more administrators.

Pensions

Second, education employees get enormous pensions, which are paid by taxpayers and negotiated by their unions. You would never see pensions this large in the private sector.

This is from the leftist Brookings Institute, from 2014:

> This figure shows we now spend nearly $1,100 per student on retirement benefits. The average public school student teacher ratio is 16 to 1. So we are spending about $17,000 per year per teacher in pension contributions.
>
> […]The National Council on Teacher Quality writes,
>
> In 2014 teacher pension systems had a total of a half trillion dollars in unfunded liabilities—a debt load that climbed more than $100 billion in just the last two years. Across the states, an average of 70 cents of every dollar contributed to state teacher pension systems goes toward paying off the ever-increasing pension debt, not to future teacher benefits (p. iii).
>
> While we are spending a huge amount to fund teacher pensions, most of that spending doesn't go to attracting the best teachers. It's paying off past debts.

We can't hire good teachers, because all the education spending of today is paying for the gold-plated pensions of yesterday.

That was 2014. The numbers are even worse today. Teachers contribute very, very little to their pensions, but the benefits are enormous compared to what the private sector taxpayers get in Social Security. (Which is going to be bankrupt by 2034, as reported by

the far-left PBS)

Teacher training

Third, a lot of it is spent on teacher training, because apparently teaching multiplication, Shakespeare or geography changes every year, so the teachers need tens of thousands of dollars in annual training.

The Washington Post reports on a recent study:

> A new study of 10,000 teachers found that professional development — the teacher workshops and training that cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year — is largely a waste.
>
> The study released Tuesday by TNTP, a nonprofit organization, found no evidence that any particular approach or amount of professional development consistently helps teachers improve in the classroom.
>
> […]The school districts that participated in the study spent an average of $18,000 per teacher annually on professional development. Based on that figure, TNTP estimates that the 50 largest school districts spend an estimated $8 billion on teacher development annually. That is far larger than previous estimates.
>
> And teachers spend a good deal of time in training, the study found. The 10,000 teachers surveyed were in training an average of 19 school days a year, or almost 10 percent of a typical school year, according to TNTP.

Maybe if more of the money spent on education were spent directly on hiring teachers, then we would see an improvement. Unfortunately, a lot of the money meant for teachers goes to the teacher unions. How do they spend that money?

Political Contributions

Finally, this is from OpenSecrets.org, concerning political contributions made in the most recent election cycle:

Rank	Organization	Total Contributions	To Dems & Liberals	To Repubs & Conserve	Pct to Dems & Liberals
1	Fahr LLC	$90,585,670	$90,585,670	$0	100.0%
2	Renaissance Technologies	$59,139,938	$33,414,305	$25,250,600	56.9%
3	Las Vegas Sands	$44,362,166	$51,435	$44,333,430	0.1%
4	Paloma Partners	$41,961,900	$41,958,600	$3,300	100.0%
5	Service Employees International Union	$39,389,570	$39,387,460	$2,100	100.0%
6	Adelson Drug Clinic	$38,847,300	$40,000	$38,830,000	0.1%
7	Newsweb Corp	$38,802,040	$38,796,640	$0	100.0%
8	NextGen Climate Action	$35,459,288	$35,459,288	$0	100.0%
9	American Federation of Teachers	$33,599,605	$33,589,580	$10,700	100.0%
10	Priorities USA/Priorities USA Action	$33,470,302	$33,470,302	$0	100.0%
11	National Education Assn	$29,774,140	$29,426,584	$347,306	98.8%
12	Laborers Union	$29,086,698	$28,386,961	$474,925	96.4%
13	Soros Fund Management	$28,708,898	$27,561,598	$679,700	97.6%

Top Political Contributors in 2016 election cycle

The two largest teacher unions came in at #9 and #11. Most of their donations go to Democrat Party. Democrats believe (against the evidence) that spending more money in the government-run public school monopoly will improve student performance on tests.

So, what's the solution?

The solution is that we abolish the federal Department of Education, which has done nothing to improve the quality of education for students. We need to push the education of children back down to the state and local levels. We need to empower parents to choose the schools that work best for their children by giving parents vouchers. We need to increase tax-free education savings accounts to help parents with school expenses. We should also give free college tuition to homeschooled students who are admitted to STEM programs at any college or university. We can take the money from the pensions of the union administrators, after we abolish ever single public sector teacher union in the country, and seize all their assets and pensions. If that's not enough money, then we can seize all the pensions of Department of Education employees – a just punishment for their failure to produce results while still taking taxpayer money.

Finally, we should allow people who already have private sector experience doing things like STEM to become teachers. Let's face it: the departments that grant Education degrees have the lowest entrance requirements, and produce the least competent adults. People with years of private sector work experience teach better than people with Education degrees. Let's open up teaching to people who have experience in the private sector doing software engineering, statistics, nursing, etc. and then we'll have qualified teachers.

Pro-abortion man assaults pro-life woman at peaceful demonstration

October 9, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Huma Abedin (left), Harvery Weinstein (center), Hillary Clinton (right)

I'm getting a little annoyed at how pro-abortion men are widely perceived to be superior to pro-life men. These days, men without any moral boundaries are "better", because they don't tell women what's right or wrong. Well, here's the truth: if a man is willing to put recreational sex above the obligation to care for innocent human beings, then he's not a good man.

Here's the video of the assault:

And here's the story that goes with it, from Fox News.

Excerpt:

> Jordan Hunt has been identified as the culprit behind the attack after a video of him spin-kicking the woman went viral. He deleted his social media accounts after the backlash.
>
> In the video, he is seen approaching a group of pro-life activists and engaging them in a discussion about abortion before suddenly kicking an activist and ripping a Campaign Life ribbon off her jacket and fleeing the scene.
>
> […]Marie-Claire Bissonnette, the 27-year-old woman involved in the incident, is the youth coordinator with Campaign Life Coalition and has since spoken out about the ordeal.
>
> "He kicked me in the shoulder, my phone went flying," Bissonnette told the Toronto Sun. "I start shouting for someone to call police and before he runs away, he goes up to me and I had a ribbon on my jacket indicating the leader, he tore it off my chest."

> She said that the kick left her with minor pain and those who saw the incident "were in shock."
>
> […]"It's not the first time I've experienced physical aggression from people who disagree with our message," she told the newspaper. "I don't think it's acceptable to show any physical violence to anyone who disagrees with you. The perpetrator should know that."

In the last week, I've been seeing a lot of tweets from pro-abortion men who are very angry that their right to have recreational sex "without consequences" might be impacted by the new Supreme Court Justice, Brett Kavanaugh. Although they make a big deal about being "pro-woman", they are really thinking about their own ability to have sex without having to take responsibility for their actions.

Let's think through what a woman should be looking for in a man, by working backwards.

Getting old alone is difficult. So women should be thinking about how to keep a man committed to them after they lose start to lose their youth and beauty. The simplest way to not grow old alone is to invest early and often in a man who does what he promises to do even when it doesn't feel good. Pro-abortion men are not the kind of men who make commitments that require them to sacrifice their own interests. After all, if a man thinks that it is OK to kill an unborn child in order to maximize his own pleasure, then he can't be relied upon to put the woman's interests above his own selfishness.

A good man never tells a woman to put selfishness above moral obligations, either. A good man always builds a woman up, and doesn't think about what he can get from her first. Good men want to build women up so that it's safe to commit to them, and to have children with them. Good men know that women need to be encouraged and cared for so that they are able to do the right things. And that means telling women the truth, and telling women "no" if the woman wants to do something morally wrong or reckless. Telling a woman yes when she wants to do something morally wrong isn't loving her. It isn't setting her up to be the kind of woman a man can commit to, and build a life with.

Although pro-abortion men seem to be better to feminists today, because they don't tell women what's right and wrong, they are actually worse, in the long run. Such men are no good for self-sacrificial love. Women should choose to avoid them, no matter how good they make women feel "in the moment".

John Lennox and Paul Davies discuss aliens and the origin of life

October 10, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

An amazing debate about the origin of life and the cosmic fine-tuning between a Christian and a materialist agnostic. John Lennox is AWESOME in this debate, and he only talks for a tiny part of the debate. He's very gracious, and focused the discussion on the areas that we care about. Paul Davies is an EXCELLENT scientist and well aware of what Christians believe. This is a great debate, very easy to listen to. Justin, the moderator, does a great job controlling a fantastic discussion.

Details

What does it take for life to get going in our universe? Is there intelligence in the stars or right under our nose? Renowned astrophysicist Paul Davies chats to Oxford Professor of Mathematics John Lennox.

A popular science author, Davies is also the Chair of the SETI post detection task force. His latest book "The Eerie Silence" which marks SETI's 50th anniversary examines the likelihood of the universe producing life elsewhere.

John Lennox is a Christian Mathematician and philosopher. He is the author of "God's Undertaker: has science buried God?" and has debated Richard Dawkins on several occasions.

Davies' work on the fine tuning of the universe for life has been sympathetic to theism. In this programme Lennox challenges Davies to look to design not just in cosmology but in the cell. They also chat about what the discovery of ET would mean for Christian theology.

Summary

Justin:

- Is there meaning in the universe?

Paul:

- We have no evidence for or against intelligent life elsewhere in the universe
- The vastness of the universe makes me think there is life elsewhere
- Humans are capable of observing and understanding the universe
- It seems the universe has the ability to create observers to understand it
- If one species has this ability, then we should expect others to do it

John:

- The fact that we can observe the universe and do science has cosmic significance
- Our rare habitable planet and our ability to do science is suggestive of purpose
- So science itself points to an extra-terrestrial intelligence: GOD
- The complexity of life and consciousness itself points away from atheism
- Monotheism gave birth to science
- Human minds capable of doing science are not compatible with atheistic materialism

Justin:

- Why do you say that either we are the only life or there are many different kinds of life?

Paul:

- There are lots of factors that have to be met to have a site for simple life
- These are related to the fine-tuning of cosmic constants, e.g. gravitational force
- But there are also factors that have to be met for originating intelligent life
- Things like convergence, self-organization, etc.
- So the cosmic requirements and evolutionary requirements are different
- Darwinian evolution doesn’t solve the problem of the origin of life
- 50 years ago, skepticism about alien life existing anywhere was excessive
- Today, credulity about alien life exiting everywhere is excessive
- The naturalist is searching for a process that creates life easily

John:

- Paul agrees that there is no theory for a naturalistic origin of life
- This is fatal for the idea that life can emerge elsewhere in the universe
- We have not discovered any law that produces life without an intelligence

- Consider the method used by SETI used to detect an alien intelligence
- Why can't this method be applied to the origin of life on Earth?
- Why can't an intelligence created specified complexity (functional information)?
- Why can't an intelligence created epigenetics and protein folding?

Paul:

- Darwinian evolution can add new biological information after life begins

John:

- Darwinian evolution assumes a mutating replicating life form to act on

Paul:

- You can't generate specified complexity by using physical laws
- You can't generate specified complexity by chance
- At this point we are guessing as to how life might have formed

John:

- Why do we have to rule out an intelligent cause a priori
- If you can recognize an intelligence in outer space, why not in living systems?

Paul:

- I don't mind the word "intelligence", it's the word "signal"
- I oppose the idea that God or aliens manipulated physical stuff to create life
- It's an "ugly explanation and very unappealing both theologically and scientifically"
- I prefer the idea that the universe has processes to self-organize and create complexity
- When it comes to supernatural meddling by God, "I don't want that"
- If I were God, I would create the universe so that I would not have to intervene
- I think God would be more clever if he did not have to intervene
- My preferences about what is "clever" determines what scientific conclusions are allowed

John:

- Humans already have experience with their non-material minds to move atoms (matter)
- If God is a mind, then there is no reason why he cannot move atoms (matter)

Paul:

- My mind is physical, so are you saying that God is physical?
- If God intervenes in the universe, then what is he doing now?

John:

- There is a distinction between acts of creation and providential upholding the universe
- God is also speaking to people and drawing humans toward him
- God is spirit, not material

Paul:

- How can a non-physical entity cause effects on the physical world?

John:

- What science reveals that there is information needed for the origin of life
- Information requires an intelligence to create it, just as with human who write books
- That's not God of the gaps – it's an inference based on what we know today

Paul:

- We may be able to explain the origin of life later, using matter, law and chance
- What you're saying is that God tinkers with the genome
- If you say that God intervened once, then he intervenes all the time, everywhere!
- I don't want a God who tinkers in the genome
- if God could intervene in the universe that would remove its intelligibility

John:

- Look at the cover of this book – when I read words, I infer an intelligence
- There are bad gaps that the progress of science closes
- There are good gaps that science opens, showing the need for intelligence
- On the one hand, you say we have no theory of the origin of life
- On the other hand, you know that an intelligent designer wasn't involved
- If we don't know how life began, why do you rule God out a priori?

Paul:

- What scientists want to do is to explain the universe without involving God
- naturalists want to use science to discover only materialist explanations
- The purpose of SETI is to prove that there is other life in the universe
- This would then show that there is a naturalistic way of making life
- I agree that information in living systems is real hard to explain materialistically
- I believe in the power of emergence
- We might discover laws that prove that complexity can emerge without intelligence
- The discovery of alien life would help to show that no intelligence is needed to make life

Justin:

- What sort of cosmic fine-tuning is needed at the Big Bang for life to occur?

Paul:

- It’s true that the universe appears extremely fine-tuned for life to exist
- The typical answer from naturalists is that there is a multiverse
- But the multiverse “falls far short” of providing a good answer to the fine-tuning
- It’s irrational to appeal to massive numbers of unseen universes to explain fine-tuning
- The design and purpose seen in the universe may be due to God or it may be emergent

John:

- The fine-tuning is real and the multiverse is a desperate attempt to evade the creator
- Sir Martin Rees (an atheist) says he “prefers” the multiverse to a designer
- Scientists are not supposed to prefer anything except what is true

Justin:

- Would the discovery of aliens hurt Christianity, because of the belief in the uniqueness of humans?

Paul:

- Christians believe that Jesus came to save HUMANS specifically, not animals or aliens
- If we were to discover intelligent aliens, it would challenge traditional religions
- What will God do with alien races? Multiple incarnations? Or just preach the gospel to them?

John:

- We don’t know if the aliens exist, first of all – it’s speculative
- The Bible teaches that humans bear the image of God
- We just don’t know whether alien species are also made in God’s image

Democrat Phil Bredesen's staff say he is lying to Tennessee voters to appear moderate

October 11, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Conservative Marsha Blackburn is running for Senate in Tennessee

I hope everyone knows about James O'Keefe, and the excellent undercover videos that he makes for his Project Veritas operation. One of the most important Senate races in the country is the race to fill an open seat in Tennessee. Regular readers know that I am a huge admirer of Marsha Blackburn – a pro-life conservative. She is running against a far-left progressive named Phil Bredesen.

Here is the latest from Project Veritas:

> Project Veritas Action Fund has released a second undercover video from campaigns during this 2018 election season. This report exposes Tennessee staffers from Phil Bredesen's U.S. Senate campaign revealing his willingness to court moderate voters through deceit. This was especially evidenced by Bredesen's recent statement suggesting he would, if he was already in the Senate, vote to confirm now Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh.
>
> […]Maria Amalla and Will Stewart, staffers in Bredesen's campaign, both say on hidden camera that if he were in the Senate, Bredesen would not actually have voted to confirm then-Judge Brett Kavanaugh. They explained that the statement Bredesen issued in support of Kavanaugh was a political ploy to gain the support of moderate voters in Tennessee.
>
> JOURNALIST: "Like he wouldn't really vote yes [for Kavanaugh,] would he?"
>
> AMALLA: "No, it's a political move… He thinks that like we're down like half a point right now. It's like really close and we're losing by a point or two. So he

> thinks that if like by saying this he's appealing to more moderate republicans and he'll get more of them to vote for us."
>
> ---
>
> JOURNALIST: "I was so confused because I just can't believe he would actually vote [for Kavanaugh.]"
>
> STEWART: "He wouldn't. But he's saying he would… Which I don't know if it makes it worse or better. No, it makes it better…"
>
> When asked to clarify that Bredesen is only saying he'd vote for Kavanaugh to "get the Republican vote," Amalla, a field organizer for Bredesen's campaign, affirmed, "Yes." Amalla reiterated, "[Bredesen] thought that like by coming out in support [of Justice Kavanaugh] that it would get more republicans on his side. He wasn't doing as well in the rural parts."

Here's the full video:

I have written about Marsha Blackburn 68 times since I started blogging in early 2009. She is one of my favorite conservatives. In all honesty, I would vote for her against pretty much anyone running against her. She is endorsed by the NRA , the Chamber of Commerce, and the pro-life Susan B. Anthony List.

Other Senate races: (current polls from Real Clear Politics)

TOP SENATE RACES	POLL AVERAGE
Florida Rick Scott (R)	Nelson (D) +2.4
Tennessee Marsha Blackburn (R)	Blackburn (R) +2.7
Indiana Mike Braun (R)	Donnelly (D) +2.5
Missouri Josh Hawley (R)	Hawley (R) +0.4
Montana Matt Rosendale (R)	Tester (D) +3.0
Arizona Martha McSally (R)	Sinema (D) +1.8
Nevada Dean Heller (R)	Rosen (D) +1.2
North Dakota Kevin Cramer (R)	Cramer (R) +8.7
Texas Ted Cruz (R)	Cruz (R) +6.0

Poll averages for critical Senate races

The Tennessee Senate race is one of the most important races, but there are other close ones. If you live in one of these states, make sure you get registered and get out to vote. If you can put up a yard sign (I have three of them, one for each Republican candidate) then you should do that. I also got bumper stickers from the campaign office, and bought magnet stickers to stick them on, so that I can switch them back and forth between my cars.

Look, I believe that if we can get another 2-3 more conservative senators into the Senate, then we might see judges even more conservative than Brett Kavanaugh. My favorite candidate is Raymond Kethledge, but I'd like Amy Barrett to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg. We could get these two justices on the Supreme Court, but only if we take Senate elections seriously. Yard signs are good. Bumper stickers are good. Going door to door is good. Making calls to get out the vote is good. Do all you can if you're in one of these critical states.

The Gosnell movie opens today in 750 theaters, and I'm going to see it!

October 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Empty benches at the Gosnell trial reserved for the mainstream news media

Since I'm going to see the Gosnell movie today, I thought I would read a few articles to remind me of the facts. The best article was by the film makers themselves, writing for the Daily Signal.

They say:

> In progressive Pennsylvania, here was a doctor, Kermit Gosnell, an African-American, he's in his early 70s now, who ran an abortion clinic for 30 years, where he routinely, and these are not my words, this is the grand jury's words, where he routinely delivered babies alive and then cut their necks with scissors.
>
> And he did this for 30 years. That's why in the eyes of the grand jury and also ABC's Terry Moran, he was described as America's biggest serial killer, which is the phrase we use in the film.
>
> There's so many details that are worth dwelling on in a way. He trained his untrained staff to do this while he wasn't there, and when I say untrained staff, these are people posing as nurses, who have a seventh-grade education and have a cocktail of alcoholism, mental health issues, and criminal difficulties. People who would not be … as the detective in the case, Jim Wood, said, "You wouldn't let them mow your lawn, let alone give people anesthesia."
>
> This is who gave anesthesia and, in fact, the best anesthesiologist in the

> premises was a 15-year-old. I'll just repeat that once more for anyone who didn't hear it. A 15-year-old, one-five, a teenager, who actually took her job very seriously and created a cheat sheet for herself so that she could try to remember, so she'd look at somebody and go, "A bit of pink, a bit of red," and she would do kind of a cocktail of the anesthesia drugs based on that.
>
> There are cats walking around in this clinic. The doctor, when he did turn up, which was late in the evening, would eat breakfast cereal in the same room where people were having these procedures. Plus, he cut the legs, the feet and legs in some cases, off some of these babies and kept them in jars like trophies.
>
> And two women dead.

Here's the trailer (2 minutes):

What's interesting about the story is how many people on the left covered for Gosnell, and how many more people on the left tried to censor the Gosnell movie. The Federalist had a good article about it. The (very left-wing) Pennsylvania government refused to do anything about Gosnell, the (very left-wing) Philadelphia authorities didn't want to do anything about Gosnell, the mainstream news media, e.g. – CNN, the Washington Post, NPR, etc. refused to cover the trial, Kickstarter banned the campaign to fund the Gosnell movie, and now far-left Facebook is censoring ads for the movie. And finally, after the movie was made, theaters didn't want to show it, because it was "too controversial". Nobody wanted to cover the trial, and nobody wants you to see the movie.

The screenplay was written by famous Hollywood screenwriter Andrew Klavan, and has some well known actors in the cast. The trial dialogue is taken directly from the court transcripts. It's opening in 750 theaters today. And it's rated PG-13, because they aren't showing any graphic images. The emphasis will be on the trial, the conflict will be between the police and those wanting to cover-up the crime, and the suspense will be over the jury's verdict.

I see one movie in the theaters every few years. The last one was "13 Hours" in 2016. But I'm going to go see this one, because I wrote about 25 posts about the story, and I want to see what went on at the trial.

Find a theater here.

What’s behind the epidemic of false rape accusations on campus?

October 13, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students puking in toilet

Heather McDonald is concerned about the feminist left’s effort to undermine the presumption of innocence for men accused of rape. She makes an argument in the prestigious City Journal that there is actually a reason why we should not believe women’s rape claims, especially in an age of feminism, until we have the evidence that proves that the man being accused is guilty.

First, she gives an example of the fake rape charge made by the Columbia University student Emma Sulkowicz. I’ll omit the history of consent before, during, and after the sex and go straight to the reason for the false accusation:

> It wasn’t until eight months after their August 2012 coupling that Sulkowicz filed a campus-rape charge, alleging that Nungesser had anally raped her while she struggled and told him to stop. She claims that she waited so long to file so as to avoid re-traumatizing herself. **Nungesser argues that she was simply chagrined that they had not become an exclusive couple.**

Reason magazine actually reported that she texted Nungesser to come over and “f*** me in the butt”. We have that text, and we know that this happened. So what happened? She had painful sex with a guy, and the relationship ended, and she wanted to shame him for breaking up with her after she gave him recreational sex. She felt she was entitled to a relationship after doing so much.

Here's another one where the consent was documented before during and after the act, and the woman made a false accusation after because she was disappointed that the sex did not result in a relationship:

> In September 2013, two freshmen at Occidental College in Southern California had sex after both had been on a 24-hour drinking binge.
>
> **Jane reported their coupling to campus authorities only after seeing that John was unaffected emotionally by it, whereas she, having lost her virginity, felt distracted and unable to concentrate.**

He was found guilty of rape and expelled.

In another case:

> **In another case, a female student was caught by her boyfriend while cheating on him with another male student.** She then filed a complaint of assault against that second male. The morning after their sexual encounter, they had exchanged texts. He wrote: "How do I compare with your boyfriend?" She responded to the boy she later accused of rape: "You were great."

Saying no to the hot guy would have deprived her of a pleasurable experience. The rape charge got her out of being sanctioned by her boyfriend and judged by her peers. She probably couldn't even understand why her boyfriend was angry, or why her friends thought less of her. After all, it's her right to pursue happiness, and nobody should judge her.

So, what's really happening? What's really happening is that women are consenting to sex, sometimes after having chosen to get drunk, then when they sober up and realize how it makes them look to others – their boyfriends, their peers, their family, their pastors – they use rape charges as an excuse to rehabilitate their reputation. Regret over consensual sex is driving the rape accusations.

MacDonald explains:

> Our booze-fueled hook-up culture has made relations between men and women messier than ever, leaving many girls and women with pangs of regret—but those regrets do not equal rape. If we were actually in the midst of an "epidemic of sexual assault," as New Jersey senator Cory Booker asserted the evening of the Ford-Kavanaugh hearings, we would presumably have seen women and girls take protective actions, such as avoiding frat parties and flocking to single-sex schools. None of those protective actions has occurred, however. Either women are too clueless to avoid patent danger, or the epidemic of sexual assault is a fiction. All evidence points to the latter conclusion.

I have some thoughts about this, too.

In my experience dealing with women on college campuses, they tend to want a relationship, but the only men they are attracted to are hot bad boys who refuse to

commit to them with marriage before having sex. So, the women give the hot non-committing bad boys the sex, thinking that the sex will be so good that it will lead to a relationship. The alcohol is used to provide an excuse later on, if the sex doesn't result in a relationship. And if it doesn't result in a relationship, they accuse the hot bad boy of rape in order to restore their reputation with their friends, ("I'm not a slut"), and punish the hot bad boy for not committing to them.

The more distrust there is between men and women, the fewer men and women will get married. What should we do? We should encourage women to stop drinking so much, to stop choosing men for fun and thrills, to stop having recreational sex, and to stop blaming their own poor choices on men.

UPDATE: Glenn found a great article at The Federalist which talks about women making poor choices, then blaming the bad men they freely chose:

> But in the Me Too era and under the burgeoning expectation of enthusiastic consent, the first questions asked are something like, "What kind of horrible man would do this?" and, "How can we make him pay for this crime yucky way he behaved toward women?" Any attempt to ask why a woman would invite a man into her bedroom late into the evening if she didn't want to have sex with him, accept the offer of a third date after she really didn't enjoy the first two, or continue a years-long sexual relationship even though sometimes the sex made her feel bad, are considered victim blaming. It is as though we are to believe that the woman involved has no agency, no free will, and no control over her own choices.

A lot of harmful and costly social outcomes happen when women choose bad men, and do bad things with those men. Abortion, divorce, single mother welfare, fatherlessness, and deterring good men from having relationships (because women are seen as crazy and irresponsible). We'd better start holding women accountable to make better decisions about men, and prioritize marriage over fun and thrills.

Robin Collins lectures on the fine-tuning argument at Pepperdine University

October 14, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
Details:

> Dr. Robin Collins is a Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Messiah College. Collins is the foremost defender of what is known as the teleological argument for the existence of God. He has a background in both physics and philosophy and will be discussing how the specific physical constants and conditions in the universe are finely-tuned for intelligent life and how this "fine-tuning" gives us reason to believe in a Creator.

Here is the video:

Topics:

- the constants and quantities set at the origin of the universe is fine-tuned for conscious, embodied intelligences like us
- three kinds of fine-tuning: 1) laws of nature, 2) constants, 3) quantities
- examples of 1): gravity, electromagnetism, strong force, quantization, Pauli exclusion principle
- examples of 2): **gravitational constant**, **cosmological constant**,
- examples of 3): initial distribution of mass-energy
- in addition to fine-tuning for life, there is also fine-tuning for discoverability
- Naturalistic response to the evidence: the multiverse hypothesis
- problems with the multiverse hypothesis
- additional topics

I put the ones I am ready to speak on in bold. I recommend you learn those as well in order to illustrate the fine-tuning with evidence when you present it. It’s important to understand that if the constants and quantities change, it’s not that you still have life, but just with pointy ears and/or green skin. It’s that you don’t have stars or planets or heavy elements or chemical reactions. Things that are necessary for complex, intelligent life forms of any conceivable kind.

Does Google’s anti-conservative bias affect its products and services?

October 15, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Google’s new motto

Recently, there were two news stories making their bias even more obvious. A leaked video showed Google executives lamenting Hillary Clinton’s, and a leaked briefing revealed how Google favors European-style censorship over free speech. In addition, one of their senior managers tweeted vicious vulgarities against the Republican party.

Let’s start with the leaked video, which was reported by the Epoch Times.

Excerpt:

> A confidential video recorded at Google has been leaked to the press, exposing top leadership openly bemoaning Hillary Clinton’s 2016 loss and discussing how President Donald Trump’s election “conflicts with many” of the company’s values.
>
> The full recording, originally marked as “Internal Only,” that was leaked to Breitbart by an anonymous source depicts the company’s first all-hands weekly meeting after the 2016 presidential election. The unabashed remarks from top leaders reflect a sunken and depressed mood—some are on the edge of tears over the election results—while at the same time express a desire to fight Trump’s policies and reshape public opinion.
>
> Co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin, vice presidents Kent Walker and Eileen Naughton, CFO Ruth Porat, and CEO Sundar Pichai all spoke at length during the hourlong meeting.
>
> Throughout the meeting, executives switched back and forth between emotional and combative discourse, as they discussed potential plans for using the company’s powerful resources.
>
> “I certainly find this election deeply offensive and I know many of you do too,” Google co-founder Sergey Brin said. “It conflicts with many of our

> [company's] values."
>
> Meanwhile, CFO Ruth Porat said they have an obligation to "fight for what's right and to never stop fighting for what's right."
>
> "Our values are strong," she said. "We will fight to protect them and we will use the great strength and resources and reach we have to continue to advance really important values."
>
> At one point, Porat appeared to hold back tears when recalling the moment she realized Hillary Clinton could lose.

Here's a clip of the highlights:

Alone, the video would be damning, but it just the latest in a sequence of news stories showing Google's anti-American bias.

Here's a story from last week, reported by Breitbart:

> An internal company briefing produced by Google and leaked exclusively to Breitbart News argues that due to a variety of factors, including the election of President Trump, the "American tradition" of free speech on the internet is no longer viable.
>
> […]But the 85-page briefing, titled "The Good Censor," admits that Google and other tech platforms now "control the majority of online conversations" and have undertaken a "shift towards censorship" in response to unwelcome political events around the world.
>
> Examples cited in the document include the 2016 election and the rise of Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) in Germany.

Does Google have a plan to influence elections by incorporating biased, inaccurate information in their products and services? Consider this article from the Daily Caller, which reports on internal e-mails from their marketing department:

> A newly revealed tranche of emails between Google executives reportedly details how the company supported rides for Hispanic voters in the 2016 election, which one executive characterized as being an effort to boost turnout for Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton.
>
> According to an email chain between Google executives obtained by Fox News' Tucker Carlson and Breitbart News, Google's Multicultural Marketing development head Eliana Murillo sent out an email the day after the 2016 election detailing that Google had "supported partners like Voto Latino to pay for rides to the polls in key states," which she characterized as a "silent donation."
>
> "We even helped them create ad campaigns to promote the rides (with support from HOLA folks who rallied and volunteered their time to help)," Murillo said. "We supported Voto Latino to help them land an interview with Sen. Meza of Arizona (key state for us) to talk about the election and how to use Google search

> to find information about how to vote. They were a strong partner, among many in this effort."
>
> "Ultimately, after all was said and done, the Latino community did come out to vote, and completely surprised us," Murillo wrote in the email. "We never anticipated that 29% of Latinos would vote for Trump. No one did. We saw headlines like this about early voter turn out and thought that this was finally the year that the 'sleeping giant' had awoken."
>
> Murillo noted that 71 percent of Latinos voted for Clinton and that "that wasn't enough." She said that despite efforts to remain "objective," that Trump's win was "devastating for our Democratic Latino community."

Google spent their own money in order to boost the turnout of a group that they thought would help Democrats get elected.

Here's Tucker Carlson reporting on the leaked e-mail:

Just last week, a manager at Google tweeted out hate speech against the Republican party:

> In a Twitter rant over the weekend, Google design lead Dave Hogue claimed Republicans will "descend into the flames" of hell, and described members of the GOP as "treasonous" and "evil" following the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court.
>
> "You are finished, @GOP. You polished the final nail for your own coffins. F***. YOU. ALL. TO. HELL," posted Hogue. "I hope the last images burned into your slimy, evil, treasonous retinas are millions of women laughing and clapping and celebrating as your souls descend into the flames."

Note that the F-word was not censored, because this person has no self-control, or respect for people who disagree with his own biased viewpoints. Google likes him, though – they made him a manager. He apparently has the emotional stability to rise high at Google.

I think the case is pretty clear about Google's bias. It might be time for the federal government to step in and make sure that they aren't influencing elections with biased, inaccurate information delivered by their products and services.

Previously, I blogged about how Google allies with a leftist group linked to convicted domestic terrorist Floyd Corkins, and how Google seeks to discredit conservative sources in their search engine, and how Google fired a senior engineer for disagreeing with radical feminism, and how Google censored pro-life videos, and how Google censored conservative videos from Prager University, and how Google started a worldwide campaign to push for same-sex marriage.

Why are Western feminists silent about rapes committed outside the United States?

October 16, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yazidi sex slave survivor Nadia Murad is awarded the Nobel Prize

My personal opinion on rape (a violent sexual attack that results in genital penetration without consent) is that the attacker should be killed or castrated (if male). Is the left against rape? They don't seem to tell women how to minimize risk, and they don't seem be concerned about rapes committed by their interesectional allies. Take a look at this article from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> As feminists were busy peddling their "War on Women" narrative in the U.S., Yazidi sex slave survivor Nadia Murad was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize for fighting a real War on Women in the Middle East.
>
> Nadia was honored for her efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, together with Dr. Denis Mukwege of the Democratic Republic of Congo, who has been a relentless healer and advocate for women.
>
> […]Nadia was abducted in northern Iraq in August 2014, when ISIS took over her village. Militants gave the Yazidi people—a Kurdish and Arabic-speaking religious minority—two choices: Convert to Islam or die. Refusing to give in, Nadia watched men get massacred and family members march to their graves.
>
> At just 21 years old, she was kidnapped alongside an estimated 3,000 other Yazidi women and girls, traded as sex slaves from one ISIS fighter to another. She

> was forced to pray, dress up, and apply makeup in preparation for her rape, which was often committed by gangs.

How much have we heard from the Western feminists about this, as opposed to Christine Ford's fairy tale?

> While any comparison between Nadia's story and the accusations leveled against newly minted Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh would be completely unfair, it is fair to wonder how news of uncorroborated allegations of gang rape brought by porn lawyer Michael Avenatti can overshadow a gang rape survivor-turned-women's advocate being honored with the most prestigious award in the world.
>
> For years, it seemed the world didn't care about Nadia's story and the thousands of others like it. It took two years for then-Secretary of State John Kerry to declare crimes against Yazidis, Christians, and Shiite Muslims genocide, and the United Nations as well.
>
> […]…the Obama administration did little to hold ISIS accountable for its crimes or to alleviate the suffering of survivors. The Trump administration is trying to right those wrongs by providing aid to the most vulnerable victims of ISIS genocide, but a lot of work remains to be done.

The author, Kelsey Harkness, wonders why American feminists get so involved with unsubstantiated charges, when there are real rapes going on *regularly* in other countries.

Let's face it: the only people who are in a position to stop the rapes going on in places like Iraq are the U.S. Armed Forces. It certainly isn't Code Pink. And how does the secular left treat the Armed Forces? They want to cut their funding, retreat them out of countries where women have no rights at all, and destroy their fighting ability by pushing liberal policies on them. If you're not in favor of the American Armed Forces being properly equipped and doing their jobs to keep our enemies in check, then you're not in favor of someone being there to protect Yazidi women from rape. Period. End of issue. Everyone who voted for Obama, and withdrawal from Iraq, voted to let ISIS rape Yazidi women.

What about Hillary Clinton?

What's amazing to me is how people on the secular left in America want everyone to believe that they are the party who cares the most about women. But as I've argued before, most men and women who support Democrats do so because want to have irresponsible recreational sex without consequences. That is their main issue. But then they turned around and (in 2016) voted for a woman who covered up credible accusations of sexual assault *and even rape* against her husband, in the 2016 presidential election.

Here's a story about Hillary Clinton from the Daily Wire:

> During a CBS "Sunday Morning" interview, correspondent Tony Dokoupil asked Hillary if her husband should have stepped down after his affair with Monica

> Lewinsky — and his blatant lie to the American people when he said “I did not have sexual relations with that woman.”
>
> “Absolutely not,” she said.
>
> “It wasn’t an abuse of power?” Dokoupil asked.
>
> “No. No.” Why, you ask? Hillary said the relationship was not an abuse of power because Lewinsky “was an adult.” At the time of the affair, Clinton was 49, Lewinsky was 22.
>
> Bill Clinton was also accused numerous times of sexual assault. In 1994, Paula Jones initiated a sexual harassment lawsuit against Clinton, claiming that he pulled out his penis and told her to “kiss it.” In 1998, Kathleen Willey alleged that Clinton groped her in a hallway in 1993. That same year, Juanita Broaddrick alleged that Clinton had raped her in the spring of 1978. Bill also carried on an affair with lounge singer Gennifer Flowers, and Arkansas State Troopers said they often procured women for the then-governor.

When I think about how secular leftists supported the biggest RAPE APOLOGIST in the history of our nation, it seems ridiculous to me that they would try to present themselves as caring about women. What they care about is recreational sex and abortion, and they’ll abandon real women who need real help if that gets them what they want.

What do Democrats think about North Korea?

Last point. Democrats love to lecture us all on how wonderful things are in atheist countries that have socialism. Well, North Korea’s official state religion is atheism, and they have full-blown communism- the government owns all the means of production. What is it like to be a woman there?

When was the last time you heard a Democrat criticize North Korea? How could they – North Korea is everything they aspire to. And the U.S. Constitution is everything they hate.

Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist

October 17, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

Dina sent me news of an exciting episode of Unbelievable, which features Lawrence Krauss, who debated William Lane Craig. Krauss’ book was also reviewed in the New York Times.

Details:

> Lawrence Krauss is a Cosmologist at Arizona State University who describes himself as an “anti-theist”. His latest book “A Universe From Nothing” has received both acclaim and criticism for its attempt to answer the question “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Debating the issue with Krauss is Rodney Holder, Course director at the Faraday Institute, Cambridge. An astrophysicist and priest by background. In a lively exchange they debate whether Krauss’ “nothing” is “nothing”, fine tuning and multiverses, scientific knowledge, miracles and the usefulness of theology and philosophy.

This debate is quite entertaining, and do not be intimidated if your don’t understand science. You can understand pretty easily who is arguing based on facts and who is speculating about unobservable, untestable entities. At one point, Krauss actually denies that there is any fine-tuning in the universe, so please see this link to refute that claim as well as this podcast which explains some examples of fine-tuning. Krauss gets a bit angry at the beginning, but calms down.

Quotation marks are for direct quotes, italics is for made-up snark. See below the summary for more posts that are related to this one.

Summary of the discussion: (picked up at 9:30 when they start talking about the

book)

Brierley:

- explain your theory of how the universe can come into being from nothing

Krauss:

- the nothing that preceded the universe is “no space, no time, no universe”
- theists say that God is responsible for creating the universe out of this nothing
- but the laws of nature can create the universe uncaused out of nothing

Holder:

- Krauss sometimes writes that the nothing is really a quantum vacuum, but that is not nothing
- He even acknowledges in his book that a quantum vacuum is not nothing
- He thinks that the nothing has properties, even though it has no being
- It has the property of being unstable
- It has the property of being acted on by quantum fields
- It has the property of being acted on by gravity

Krauss:

- But nothing can have the potential to do things inside it
- For example suppose you have an electron, *which is not nothing*
- If it jumps from one level to another, it emits light
- There was no potential for the light in the electron, but it was there as part of atomic structure

Holder:

- But in cases like that, there is something physical that has the potential

Krauss:

- Well, how did God makes the universe then if it had no potential?

Holder:

- God existed, and the potential for creating the universe in himself

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times

Krauss:

- It was written by a philosopher, so I dismissed it

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the Scientific American

Krauss:

- These book reviewers have not even read my book!

Krauss:

- Science will be able to figure out how to make something from nothing in the future
- We are even now speculating about interesting questions, like is there a multiverse?

Brierley:

- Consider the critical review of your book in the New York Times
- The author of the review claims that you equivocate on the term "nothing"
- In order to get things to pop into being, you have to make "nothing" mean "something"
- Reviewer: none of Krauss' theories explain how something can come from actual nothingness

Krauss:

- In physics, something and nothing are not that different
- The reviewer doesn't understand the physics
- He doesn't understand quantum field theory
- You could call a quantum vacuum "nothing", *(this is the vacuum fluctuation model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*
- Maybe there is an eternally existing multiverse that we can't observe or test scientifically
- Maybe it has laws that we don't know about which allow our universe to pop into being
- Maybe this popping into being is uncaused
- (alarmed) Who made God? Who made God?

Holder:

- God is eternal and necessary

Krauss:

- (interrupting, angry) What does it mean for something to be necessary?

Holder:

- Basically, you have to decide whether there is more evidence that the necessary being God or a multiverse

Brierley:

- So Dr. Krauss are you willing to say that the universe is a brute fact, in some sense, and requires no explanation

Krauss:

- (angry) Religious people are stupid because they just assume brute facts, *not like me and my unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry) Religious people are against the progress of science, they don't want to figure out how things work

Brierley:

- But isn't it possible that naturalists can be opposed to the progress of science?
- What about the way the Fred Hoyle opposed the Big Bang because he wanted an eternal universe

Krauss:

- (angry) But naturalists like me let the facts determine our beliefs, *like the facts about the eternal unobservable, untestable multiverse*
- (angry, shouting) Philosophers are stupid, they know nothing!

=== Break ===

Brierley:

- Do you see any evidence of purpose in the universe?

Krauss:

- Well maybe I would believe if the stars lined up to spell out a message from God

Brierley:

- Actually no, that wouldn't be evidence for God on your multiverse view
- if there an infinite number of universes existing for an infinite amount of time, then anything can happen no matter how unlikely it is
- therefore, no evidence could convince you that God exists, since the unobservable, untestable, eternal multiverse can make anything it wants

Krauss:

- That's a true statement, *and very convenient for atheists who don't want to be*

accountable to God, don't you think?

Brierley:

- Back to the multiverse, how does it solve the fine-tuning?

Krauss:

- "We have no idea if the universe is fine-tuned for life", *even though the atheist Martin Rees who endorsed Krauss' book wrote his own book about the fine-tuning of the universe called "Just Six Numbers"*
- Inflationary theory does suggest a way to create multiple universes, *(this is the chaotic inflationary model, refuted by William Lane Craig in a peer-reviewed publication in an astrophysics journal – get the full text of the article here)*

Brierley:

- But this theory is still very much a hypothesis, isn't it? We can't observe *or test* this hypothesis can we?

Krauss:

- "No, and that is really important to state"
- "I'm an empiricist, so if you can't falsify it and if you can't test it then it's not science"
- In my book, I speculate about a way that we could test the multiverse theory

Holder:

- Yes, in principle, the multiverse would be scientific if you could test it through other theories like inflationary theory
- There are a lot of speculations about multiverse theory, but no evidence from predictions that were validated in the lab

Krauss:

- "I agree completely with everything you just said"

Brierley:

- Roger Penrose agrees with Holder that the multiverse theory is too speculative
- (To Holder) Isn't the multiverse theory better than positing a completely different kind of being, which is God?

Holder:

- The multiverse theory is extremely speculative
- Even if the multiverse were true, you would still need to explain the multiverse

Krauss:

- People don't oppose my book because it's full of self-contradictory speculations
- People oppose my book because they are stupid and ignorant

Holder:

- There are things that exist that science cannot measure, like objective morality
- It's possible to give explanations for moral behavior by appealing to evolution
- But that does not ground self-sacrificial morality, such as what occurs in the Christian life

Brierley:

- Dawkins says there is no purpose or morality in in the universe, do you agree?

Krauss:

- "There is certainly no evidence of any of that"

Brierley:

- In the book, you talk about how we live in a special time in the universe's history to be able to do science, *(i.e. – The Privileged Planet hypothesis)*
- You also write about how all the discoveries were are making will not be communicated to anyone in other places in the universe
- So what is the meaning of doing science on your view? And why are you sad at the knowledge that will not be available to people in the future?
- Are you longing for some kind of purpose?

Krauss:

- No, I just get enjoyment from studying the universe with science to gain understanding

Holder:

- What do you make of Einstein's statement about the unexpected comprehensibility of the universe
- Theists would say that this is because God wanted us to study and understand and gain knowledge

Krauss:

- "It is remarkable that the universe is comprehensible"

Brierley:

- Why is the universe comprehensible?

Krauss:

- Well, maybe the universe just has to be that way

Brierley:

- What do you make of the heat death of the universe, when all life in the universe will die out?

Krauss:

- That's the way the universe is

=== BREAK ===
Krauss:

- I wouldn't want to live in a universe where there was a God
- God is a cosmic Saddam Hussein
- "Religious people turn their minds off" and believe in God for consolation

Holder:

- First, Jesus is the revelation of God and he is no Saddam Hussein
- Second, the Christian life is anything but easy, we are facing some persecution already in the UK
- Third, there is also the problem of being accountable to God when we die
- It's very much like science – Christianity is the way it is, not the way we want it to be

Krauss:

- "If you don't believe in him, you don't get any of the benefits, so you have to believe"
- "And then if you've done something wrong, you're going to be judged for it"
- "So I don't want to be judged by God, I want to be… that's the bottom line"

Holder:

- Well, Jesus has died to pay the price for those things we've done wrong
- Although we will have to face the charges for what we've done, believers will ultimately be forgiven

Finally, Peter Sean Bradley note that Krauss is now walking back his rhetoric in response to criticisms from people like atheist John Horgan.

Related posts

- William Lane Craig debates Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?
- Lawrence Krauss debates “A Universe From Nothing” with an astrophysicist
- William Lane Craig debates Victor Stenger: Does God Exist?
- Brian Auten interviews philosopher Robin Collins on the fine-tuning argument
- Luke Barnes reviews Victor Stenger’s critique of cosmic fine-tuning
- A review of Lawrence Krauss’ book “A Universe From Nothing”

My conversation about morality with an atheist millennial man

October 18, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A meme that was posted on the WK Facebook page, by the new meme admin

I spent some time talking to an atheist millennial recently. He considers himself a moral person, and he is very helpful to others. I asked him to define morality, and he said that morality was feeling good, and helping other people to feel good. I was trying to think of a way to punch a hole in his feelings-based utilitarianism. How could I show him that happy feelings are not a good basis for morality?

Now, you're probably thinking that abortion is the most obvious example of something that is morally wrong – it's just killing a baby because adults don't want to take responsibility for their foolish pursuit of pleasure. But atheists typically don't think of unborn children as people. They usually believe in naturalistic evolution, and they are committed to a view of reality where the universe is an accident, human beings are accidents, there are no objective human rights, and biological evolution progresses because the strong survive while the weak die. So you aren't going to be able to generate a moral standard that includes compassion for weak unborn children on that scenario. If the rule is "let's do what makes us happy", and the unborn child can't voice her opinion, then the selfish grown-ups win.

Instead, I decided to focus on fatherlessness. I asked him whether he thought that fatherlessness harmed children. Surprisingly, he said that it didn't, and that he had a relative who was doing a great job raising fatherless kids. I asked him if he had ever looked at the research on what father absence does to children. He hadn't. Then I asked

him if a system of sexual rules based on “me feeling good, and other people around me feeling good”, was likely to protect children. He went silent.

Well, that was the end of that conversation. And I think it was a nice window into how millennials – who are absolutely clueless about what research says about sex, dating, marriage and parenting – think about relationships. They’re making decisions based on their feelings, then acting surprised when their “common sense” decisions based on happiness “in the moment” blow up in their faces, and destroy the lives of their children, including their unborn children.

Unfortunately, young people are having children outside of a marriage commitment more and more.

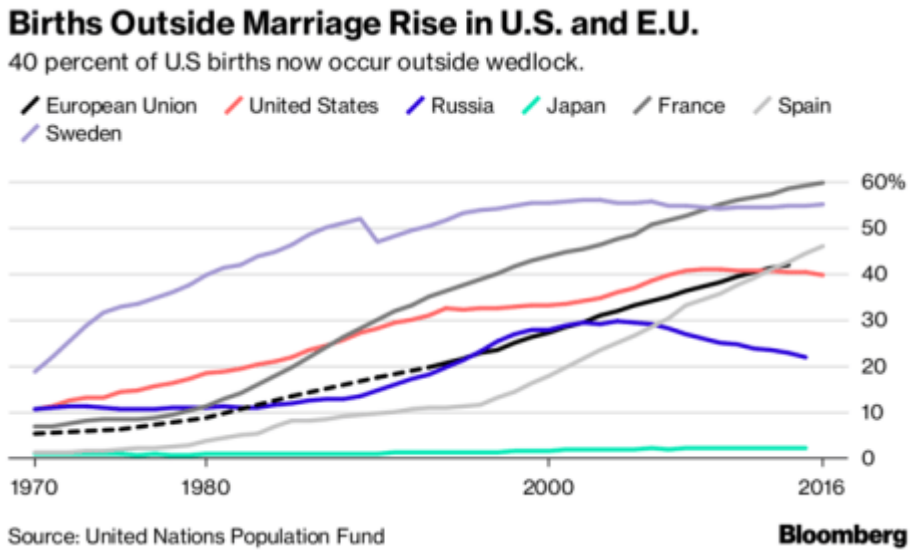

Out-of-wedlocks births rising as cohabitation replaces marriage

Far-left Bloomberg News reports:

Forty percent of all births in the U.S. now occur outside of wedlock, up from 10 percent in 1970, according to an annual report released on Wednesday by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the largest international provider of sexual and reproductive health services. That number is even higher in the European Union.

The EU has a higher rate of fatherless births because they have high taxes and big government to allow women to have children without having to commit to a husband:

> The EU likely sees more births out of wedlock because many member countries have welfare systems that support gender-balanced child care, said Michael Hermann, UNFPA’s senior adviser on economics and demography, in an interview. Public health care systems, paid paternal leave, early education programs and tax incentives give unwed parents support beyond what a partner can provide.

More welfare and more government services make it easier for women to pursue relationships with men who aren’t interested in marriage. Hot bad boys who give them all the tingles. Big government makes those boring, predictable marriage-ready men dispensable. Big government also makes it much harder for a man who does marry to

afford a stay-at-home mother for his kids, because he has to pay higher taxes for big government.

More:

> The data show such births in the U.S. and EU are predominantly to unmarried couples living together rather than to single mothers, the report says.
>
> […]Jones also noted that the rise in births outside of marriage is closely correlated to delays in childbearing. "Women are claiming their ground professionally," she said. "Delaying motherhood is a rational decision when you consider the impact it can have on your career, and that's contributing to this trend."
>
> [….]The traditional progression of Western life "has been reversed," said John Santelli, a professor in population, family health and pediatrics at Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health. "Cohabiting partners are having children before getting married. That's a long-term trend across developing nations."
>
> Regardless of marital status, more couples are choosing not to have kids at all. The U.S. fertility rate hit a historic 30-year low last year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hermann said the rise in births outside of wedlock has actually mitigated the decline in fertility, which "would be much steeper if women weren't having children outside marriage."

What's interesting about this anti-marriage article is that they have nothing to say about the research showing that cohabitation – and also marriages that occur after a period of cohabitation – are inferior to no-cohabitation marriages. People who are serious about self-control, and who are serious about committing through thick and thin, tend to have longer lasting marriages. But we don't prioritize chastity, fidelity and self-sacrificial commitment anymore, because that relationships that require self-denial make us unhappy.

The article concludes: "We can't go back to the '50s". Right. Because if feelings-based "morality" is assumed, then any choice between adult happiness and children's happiness will favor the adults. Today's young people carefully AVOID any evidence that contradicts their new "happiness-morality". They act surprised when their unstable relationships dissolve, leaving children separated from their fathers. Marriage requires that both partners have a system of morality that puts the commitment above happy feelings. People have to be accustomed to doing things that feel bad, just because they are good and moral things to do according to an objective standard of morality. The new atheist morality of happy feelings doesn't develop the character needed for commitment.

If you ask an atheist millennial, they think they are doing a great job of being "moral". They don't see the messes they are making for children as something that they are causing themselves, with their own foolish feelings-based decision-making. They think they know everything about relationships through their feelings. They think that they are exempt from the patterns of cause and effect in the peer-reviewed research.

Fact-checking the fact-checkers: is Politifact reliable or biased?

October 19, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Politifact is a web site run by some left-wing journalists at the Tampa Bay Times. As you might expect from academic studies of media bias, their content might as well be written by the Democrat Party. But it's not enough to just declare Politifact a Democrat propaganda operation – I need to actually give you details and examples. And so I will, in the rest of this post.

Let's start with two recent examples, then I'll show you the worst example of media bias I have ever seen from Politifact.

Missouri Senate Race

Here's one analysis from the Daily Wire:

> On Tuesday, Politifact, which purports to be a neutral fact-checking website but in fact leans heavily to the left, got caught protecting a member of the Democratic Party: Democratic Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill.
>
> Politifact took issue with the ad from The Senate Leadership Fund, a pro-Republican super PAC, that claimed that McCaskill said "normal people" could afford private planes.
>
> […]After they were corrected, Politifact acknowledged the mistake, writing,
>
> Initially, we published this fact-check with a rating of False, because based on the video available, it did not appear that McCaskill was talking about private planes. After publication, we received more complete video of the question-and-answer session between McCaskill and a constituent that showed she was in fact responding to a question about private planes, as well as a report describing the meeting. We re-assessed the evidence, archived the original version here, and published the version you see here with a new rating of Half True. We apologize for the error.

Daily wire also linked to some more failed Politifact "fact checks": here, here, and here.

Arizona Senate Race

Politifact also screwed up their fact-check for the Arizona Senate race.

The Daily Caller explains:

> PolitiFact incorrectly labeled it "mostly false" that Democratic Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema "protested troops in a pink tutu" during its live fact-check of the Arizona Senate debate Monday night.
>
> It's an established fact that Sinema, a former Green Party activist who co-founded an anti-war group, wore a pink tutu at one of the multiple anti-war

> protests she attended in 2003.
>
> "While we were in harm's way, she was protesting our troops in a pink tutu," Republican candidate Martha McSally, a former Air Force fighter pilot, said during Monday night's debate.

Here's their Politifact's evaluation of McSally's claim:

Who are you going to believe? Politifact, or your own eyes?
And here's the photo of Kyrsten Sinema, protesting the troops, in a pink tutu:

Anti-war Democrat Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema in a pink tutu
The Daily Caller notes:

> A 2003 Arizona State University news article at the time described Sinema

> wearing "something resembling a pink tutu" at one of the protests.
>
> […]Sinema openly associated with fringe elements of the far-left during her anti-war activism.
>
> She promoted an appearance by Lynne Stewart, a lawyer who was convicted of aiding an Islamic terrorist organization, in 2003.
>
> Sinema also reportedly partnered with anarchists and witches in her anti-war activism and said she did "not care" if Americans wanted to join the Taliban.

Colonel Martha McSally, as I've blogged about before, is a former U.S. Air Force A-10 fighter pilot, and squadron commander. She logged a lot of hours leading actual combat missions against America's enemies – the sorts of people who sell and rape Yazidi girls. She fought them.

And now for the big one: Politifact's fact-checking of Obamacare.

Obama's claims about Obamacare

Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine, wrote about Politifact's assessment of Obama's promise to Americans about keeping their health plans after Obamacare.

In 2008, before the presidential election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about Obamacare "True":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site's "Truth-O-Meter" to evaluate this claim: "Under Barack Obama's health care proposal, 'if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.'"

And she concluded:

> […]…people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama's plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his statement True."

Roy notes:

> PolitiFact's pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 campaign.

Here's the screen capture from 2008:

The Truth-O-Meter Says:

Under Barack Obama's health care proposal, "if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it."

Barack Obama on Tuesday, October 7th, 2008 in a debate in Nashville, Tenn.

Obama's plan expands existing system

Barack Obama defended his health care plan during a debate in Nashville, Tenn., on Oct. 7, 2008. His opponents have attacked his plan as "government-run" health care.

Share this story:

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"No. 1, let me just repeat, if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it," Obama said. "All I'm going to do is help you to lower the premiums on it. You'll still have choice of doctor."

Obama is accurately describing his health care plan here. He advocates a program that seeks to build on the current system, rather than dismantling it and starting over.

Politifact says that everyone who likes their health care plan can keep it

Before the election, it's true! And Obama got re-elected, because people believed that. But what happened after the election?

In 2013, after the 2012 election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about Obamacare "Pants On Fire":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama's infamous promise—that "if you like your health care plan, you can keep it"—its 2013 "Lie of the Year."
>
> […][N]one of the key facts that made that promise "impossible" in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President's plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan

Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."

Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."

Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact said one thing before the election, and the opposite afterwards

So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, but it's election time so they don't say that. It's not like the critical assessments of Obamacare from health policy experts were not out there between 2007-2012. I know, because I blogged on every study and report on the predicted effects

of the law that I could find. But the intellectually lazy journalism-major clowns at Politifact couldn’t be bothered to read those studies and reports.

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

October 20, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here's a debate with a well-qualified atheist and Dr. Craig.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any

errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It's not

just that the settings are unlikely, it's that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a "herd morality" that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved "herd morality". However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are

true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It’s possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It’s also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is “Does God Exist?”. If Dr. Millican answers “no” then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God’s existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don’t see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the

need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to

nothing.

We don’t have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can’t be an abstract object because they don’t cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we’ve never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have “algorithmic properties” as well as physical properties, it doesn’t mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that’s not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God’s goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God’s goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can’t translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can’t be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can’t be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don’t permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about spending, saving and charity

October 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

A practical lecture on money – spending, saving, charitable giving – from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

I like the way that Wayne Grudem navigates the Bible finding the passages that tell you who God is, so that you can make better decisions by analyzing alternatives and choosing the one that gives your Boss a maximum return on investment. He's very practical.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Spending:

- Christianity does not teach asceticism (= don't enjoy anything in this world), Paul condemns it in 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- When you buy nice things, even if it is a little more expensive, it's an opportunity to be thankful for nice things that God has provided
- Even being rich is OK, but don't let it make you haughty and arrogant, and don't set your hopes on your money (see 1 Tim 6:17)
- It is important for you to earn money, and you are supposed to use it to support yourself and be independent
- It is possible to overspend and live recklessly (Luke 15:13) and it's also possible to overspend and live too luxuriously
- *Increasing your income through career progression is wise*, because it allows you to give away more and save more

- God gives us freedom to decide how much we spend, how much we give away, and how much we save
- every choice a Christian makes with money will give him or her more or less reward in his or her afterlife
- Do not spend more than you have – you should make every effort to get out of debt as quickly as possible

Saving:

- Saving money is wise so you can help yourself and others, and have money in your old age when you will not be working
- If you do not save your own money, you end up being dependent on others (e.g. – family or taxpayers)
- Not saving money for the future is a way of "putting God to the test" (Matt 4:7)
- You are to "be dependent on no one", to the extent that you can (1 Thes 4:12)
- We don't know the future, that's why we should prepare for an emergency, and buy insurance to guard (James 4:13-17)
- It's right for us to learn how to save to be able to buy bigger assets, like a car or a college education
- Saving and investing in stocks and bonds lets people in business start and grow companies, creating jobs and new products
- *Don't over-save, trusting too much in money more than you trust in God* (Ps 62.10; Matt 6:19,24; Luke 12:15-21)

Giving:

- it is required for the people of God to give something out of what they earn, but no percentage is specified (Deut 26:12-13)
- you do not give money to become right with God, you can't earn your salvation
- *a Christian gives to show God that you trust him to take care of you, and to experience trusting him through your giving*
- the quality of your resurrection life with God is affected by giving you do for the Kingdom (Phil 4, Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:18-19)
- when you get involved in the lives of others and give to them, you have the joy of experiencing caring for others (Acts 20:35)
- it's possible to give too little, but it's also possible to give too much – be careful about pride creeping in as well

The first part of this lecture made me think of my treat for the week, which is to get a double chicken burrito bowl after my weight lifting. It is very easy to say grace when you are hovering over a double chicken burrito bowl. It is good to have nice things especially when it makes you thankful for what you have.

I was so happy listening to this talk because he was condemning bad stewardship, which I see in a lot of young people these days. I was happy until he got to the part about

trusting in your savings for your security, and then I thought – that's what I do wrong! I save a lot but it's not just for emergencies and to share with others, like he was saying – I want a sense of security. This was more of a temptation in my 20s than it is now in my 30s, though.

Charity should hurt

I can remember being in my first full-time job as a newly hired junior programmer when the 2001 recession struck. I would cry while signing checks to support William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith ministry, because I was so scared. I had no family or friends where I lived to help me if anything went wrong, and that's been the story of my working life. If anything goes wrong, there is no backup. But it's that experience of crying when I gave that allows me to say today "that's when I became the man I am, that's what a man does when he is a follower of Jesus". If you are not doing the actions of charity, then you will not having the experience of trusting God and letting him lead you. There is more to the Christian life than just saying the right things – you have to do the right things.

Don't follow your heart

If you're scared about giving when you are young, then do what I did in my 20s: work 70-hour weeks, get promoted often, and save everything you earn. I volunteered every Saturday for 9 months in order to get my first white-collar part-time job when I was still in high-school. The faster you increase your savings, the easier it's going to be to take a *genuine interest* in caring for the people around you. Read Phil 1 (fellowship), Phil 2 (concern for others), and Phil 4 (charity). Turn off your emotions and desires when it comes to choosing what to study and what work to do, and put Philippians into practice. Your freedom to give is very much tied to the quality of your decisions of what to study, where to work, how much you spend on entertainment, and so on. That's why you need to turn off your feelings and desires and do what works, even it it's not fun, and even if it involves responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

Indiana Senate candidate Joe Donelly on judges, amnesty, abortion, tax cuts, spending, welfare

October 22, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

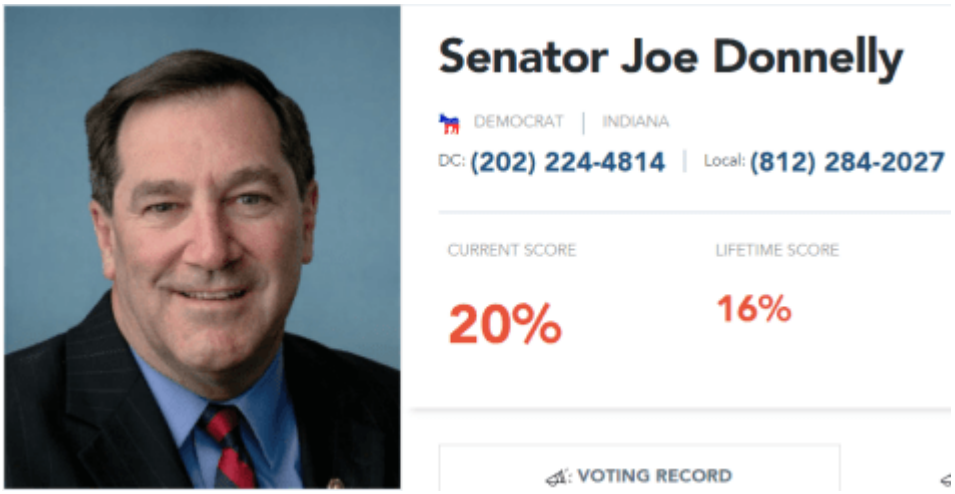

Heritage Action Scorecard for Democrat Joe Donnelly Indiana

A lot of American voters tend to approach elections like they approach food, clothes and entertainment. They choose what they like "in the moment". But feelings about appearances is not the right way to measure a candidate. The right way to measure is by looking at the voting record. So let's do that with Democrat Senate candidate Joe Donnelly of Indiana.

Democrat Senate candidate Joe Donnelly of Indiana

The Heritage Foundation is a respected Washington think tank, and they've collected together all the votes of the candidates.

Here are some of the votes that I found the most interesting:

For restricting choice in health insurance:

> Disapproval of the Trump Administration's "Short-Term, Limited Duration Insurance" Rule10/10/2018The Senate voted on a Joint Resolution (S.J. Res. 63) providing for congressional disapproval of the rule issued by the Trump administration related to "Short-Term, Limited Duration Insurance." Sponsored by Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.), S.J. Res. 63 would use the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to overturn a new Trump era rule that would expand the availability of affordable short-term, limited duration health plans to one year.

Against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh:

> To confirm Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court10/05/2018The Senate voted on the confirmation of D.C. Circuit Court Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. Judge Kavanaugh was nominated by President Donald Trump on July 9th, 2018 and was included in The Heritage Foundation's original list of potential

> Supreme Court nominees.

For wasteful government spending:

> Bloated $855 Billion CROMNIBUS Spending Package09/18/2018Back in March, President Trump nearly vetoed a $1.3 trillion omnibus spending bill promising the American people that he “will never sign another bill like this again.” One of the President’s objections to the omnibus was its lack of conservative policy riders – particularly sufficient funding for border security – combined with increases in the Democrats’ spending priorities. Six months later Republicans and the President find themselves in a similar situation.

Against defunding Planned Parenthood:

> Paul Amendment to defund Planned Parenthood08/23/2018To prohibit Federal funds being made available to a Planned Parenthood and other abortion facilities.

For individual mandates in health care:

> Motion to table Cruz, Cotton, Lee, Johnson D.C. Individual Mandate Amendment to Senate Minibus08/01/2018The Senate will vote on an amendment offered by Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) to Fiscal 2019 Interior-Environment, Financial Services, Agriculture, and Transportation-HUD Appropriations Act (H.R. 6147). The amendment would prohibit funding for the District of Columbia’s Health Insurance Requirement Amendment Act, essentially Obamacare’s individual mandate penalty applied to the district. Heritage Action supports the amendment and is opposed to the motion to table it.

For welfare entitlements without work requirement:

> 2018 Food Stamp and Farm Bill06/28/2018This month, the Senate could vote on the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (S. 3042), more commonly known as the “farm bill.” Despite repeated calls to enact work requirements for food stamp recipients and to reform runaway farm subsidies, the Senate Agriculture Committee approved a farm bill that maintains dysfunctional and distortive status quo welfare and agricultural policies.

Against cuts in government spending:

> Rescissions Package to Cut Spending from Expired and Unnecessary Programs06/20/2018This week, the Senate will vote on the Trump administration’s rescissions request to cut spending by nearly $15 billion, titled the Spending Cuts to Expired and Unnecessary Programs Act (H.R. 3). Under current law, the Senate has until June 22nd to approve the House-passed bill under expedited rules.

For control of the Internet by left-wing IT corporations:

> Repeal of the FCC's "Restoring Internet Freedom" rule05/16/2018The Senate voted on a Joint Resolution (S.J. Res. 52) providing for congressional disapproval of the rule issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) related to "Restoring Internet Freedom." Sponsored by Sen. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), S.J. Res. 52 would use the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to reestablish draconian net neutrality regulations imposed on broadband internet service providers under former President Obama's FCC. Those net neutrality rules were recently repealed by the FCC under the courageous leadership of Chairman Ajit V. Pai.

For amnesty for illegal immigrants:

> Cloture for Schumer-Rounds-Collins Amnesty Amendment02/15/2018The Schumer-Rounds-Collins amnesty proposal, revealed by the "Common Sense Coalition" drew fire from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which said the bill would "effectively make the United States a Sanctuary Nation." Entitled the "Immigration Security and Opportunity Act," this legislation provides amnesty and a path to citizenship to millions of illegal immigrants, fails to end chain migration and establish a merit-based immigration system for the 21st century, fails to secure the southern border, and undermines internal enforcement immigration policy.

Against tax cuts:

> Tax Cuts and Jobs Act Final Vote12/20/2017This week, the House and Senate will vote on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R. 1), the most significant tax reform and tax cut legislative initiative since the 1986 tax reform package passed under President Ronald Reagan. The bill would make sweeping changes to the individual and corporate codes, and eliminate Obamacare's individual mandate penalty.

Against tax-deferred education savings plans:

> Expanding 529 Savings Plans12/01/2017The Senate could vote on an amendment (#1725) offered by Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R. 1) that expands higher education savings plans to include K-12 private school tuition and homeschool expenses. This amendment would help expand school choice by allowing families to use 529 account funds to help pay for private elementary and secondary education, including homeschooling.

Against repeal of government-run health care:

> Repeal Title I of Obamacare10/19/2017The Senate will vote on an amendment (#1430) offered by Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) to H. Con. Res. 71 that would repeal Title I of Obamacare. This amendment expands the budget resolution's existing deficit neutral reserve fund for legislation that repeals Obamacare to specifically include the repeal of Title I of Obamacare.

Against de-funding of Planned Parenthood:

> Disapproval of Title X Funds for Planned Parenthood03/30/2017This week the House of Representatives is expected to vote on H.J.Res. 43, sponsored by Rep. Diane Black (R-TN), a disapproval resolution of the final rule submitted by Obama's Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) relating to compliance with Title X requirements by project recipients in selecting sub-recipients. Title X of the Public Health Service Act provides federal funds to states for family planning grants. Once states receive the funds, they have the ability to prioritize sub-recipients, directing funds to organizations like community health centers and family health clinics. While federal law prohibits government funding for abortion, it does allows certain public dollars, like the Title X grants, to support abortion providers if the funds are directed to non-abortion related health services. Under this exception, Planned Parenthood has been eligible to receive Title X funds, per the states' discretion.

If you live in this state, please consider sharing this article to let everyone know how this candidate has voted in the past.

If you would like to read something about his Republican rival, this article from National Review covers that.

Montana Senate candidate Jon Tester on judges, amnesty, abortion, tax cuts, spending, welfare

October 22, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

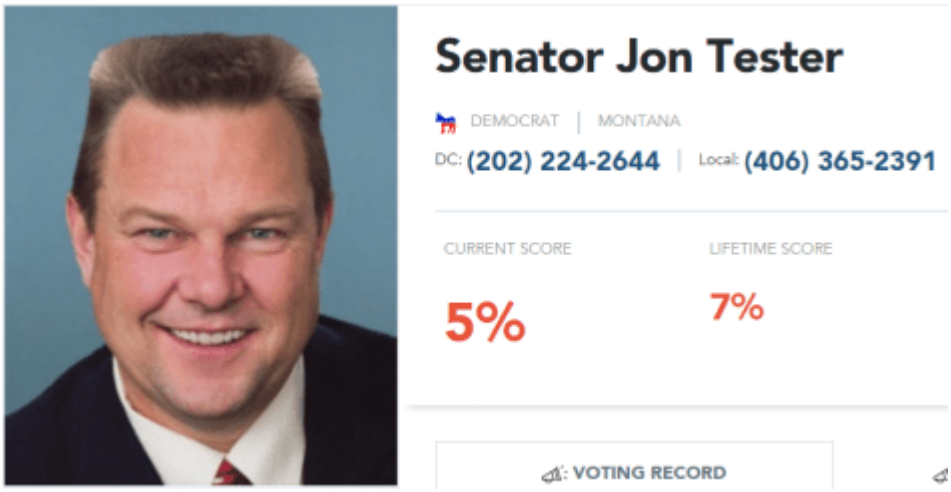

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If you would like to read something about his Republican rival, this article from Great Falls Tribune covers that.

Does God’s omniscience conflict with human free will?

October 23, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Here’s the setup for the question, from Come Reason Ministries.

Excerpt:

> Hello,
>
> Christian doctrine holds that God is all knowing (1 John 3:20), and humans have free will (Deuteronomy 30:19 is my favorite example). however, at my favorite apologetics debate board, I have seen skeptics raise an objection to these points several times. the basic logic behind their arguments is this:
>
> 1. A being with free will, given two options A and B, can freely choose between A and B.
> 2. God is omniscient (all-knowing).
> 3. God knows I will choose A.
> 4. God cannot be wrong, since an omniscient being cannot have false knowledge.
> 5. From 3 and 4, I will choose A and cannot choose B.
> 6. From 1 and 5, omniscience and free will cannot co-exist.
>
> I have read many counter-arguments from apologetics sites, but they were either too technical (I couldn’t understand them), or not satisfying. so, I was wondering what would your input be on this issue?
>
> Thank you,
>
> Justin

Ever heard that one? I actually had that one posed to me by a guy I used to work with who had a Ph.D in computer science from Northwestern. So this is an objection you may actually hear.

Here's Lenny Eposito's answer:

> Hi Justin,
>
> Thanks for writing. This is a great question as it shows how even those who appeal to logic can have biases that blind them. Let's examine this argument and see if it follows logically.
>
> Premises 1 and 2 in your outline above are the main premises to the argument and are not disputed. The Christian worldview argues that every human being is a free moral agent and is capable of making choices simply by exercising their will, not under compulsion or because of instinct. Also, it is a long held doctrine of Christianity that God is all-knowing. The Bible says that God knows "the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10)." For omniscience to be truly knowledgeable it must be correct knowledge, so premise number 4 is also granted.
>
> However, point number 5 is where the logic falters. Those who argue in this manner make the mistake of thinking that because God possesses knowledge about a specific matter, then he has influenced it. That does not follow at all. Just because God can foresee which choice you will make, it does not mean you couldn't still freely choose the other option.
>
> Let me give you an example. I have a five year old son. If I were to leave a chocolate chip cookie on the table about a hour before dinner time and my son was to walk by and see it, I know that he would pick up the cookie and eat it. I did not force him to make that decision. In fact, I don't even have to be in the room at all. I think I know my son well enough, though, to tell you that if I come back into the kitchen the cookie will be gone. His act was made completely free of my influence, but I knew what his actions would be.
>
> In examining the argument, the assumption is made in premise 3 that because God knows I will choose A somehow denies me the choice of B. That is the premise that Christianity rejects. Omniscience and free will are not incompatible and it is a non-sequitor to claim otherwise.
>
> Thank you Justin for this interesting question. I pray that you will continue to defend the gospel of our Lord and may He continue to bless you as you seek to grow in Him.

That's a great answer and should work in ordinary conversations.

More technical

J.W. Wartick maps out the arguments more fully with symbolic logic here on his Always Have A Reason blog. But I'll just excerpt the gist of it.

Excerpt:

> It is necessarily true that if God knows x will happen, then x will happen. But then if one takes these terms, God knowing x will happen only means that x will happen, not that x will happen *necessarily.* Certainly, God's foreknowledge of an event means that that event will happen, but it does *not* mean that the event could not have happened otherwise. If an event happens necessarily, that means the event could not have happened otherwise, but God's foreknowledge of an event doesn't somehow transfer necessity to the event, it only means that the event will happen. It could have been otherwise, in which case, God's knowledge would have been different.
>
> […]Perhaps I could take an example. Let's say that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow (and I do hope I will, I don't like missing classes!). God knows in advance that I'm going to go to classes tomorrow. His knowledge of this event means that it will happen, but it doesn't mean that I couldn't choose to stay in and sleep for a while, or play my new copy of Final Fantasy XIII, or do something more useless with my time. If I chose to, say, play Final Fantasy XIII (a strong temptation!), then God simply would have known that I would play FFXIII. His knowledge does not *determine* the outcome, His knowledge is simply *of the outcome*.

If we choose A, God would foreknow A. If we choose B, God would foreknow B. His foreknowledge of our choices is contingent on our making free choices.

Florida Senate candidate Bill Nelson on judges, amnesty, abortion, tax cuts, spending, welfare

October 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

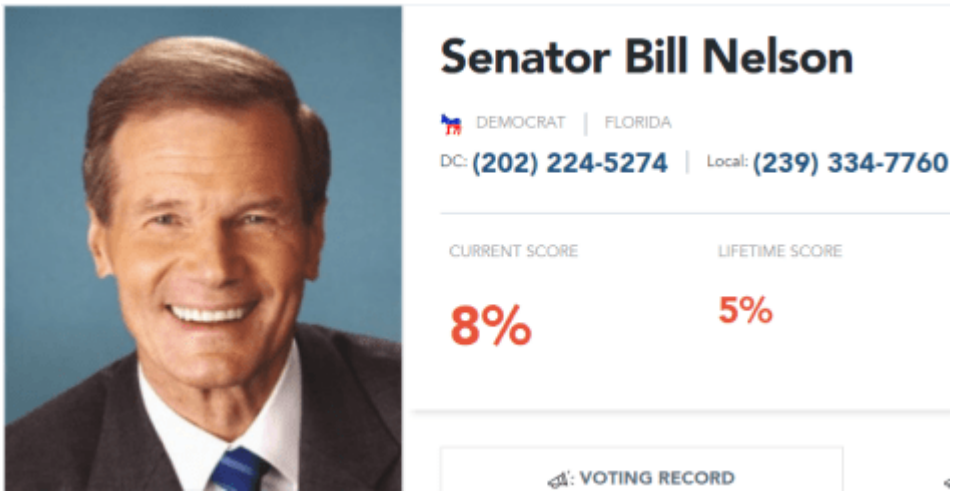

Heritage Action Scorecard for Democrat Bill Nelson Florida

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Democrat Senate candidate Bill Nelson of Florida

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Here are some of the votes that I found the most interesting:

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Missouri Senate candidate Claire McCaskill on judges, amnesty, abortion, tax cuts, spending, welfare

October 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

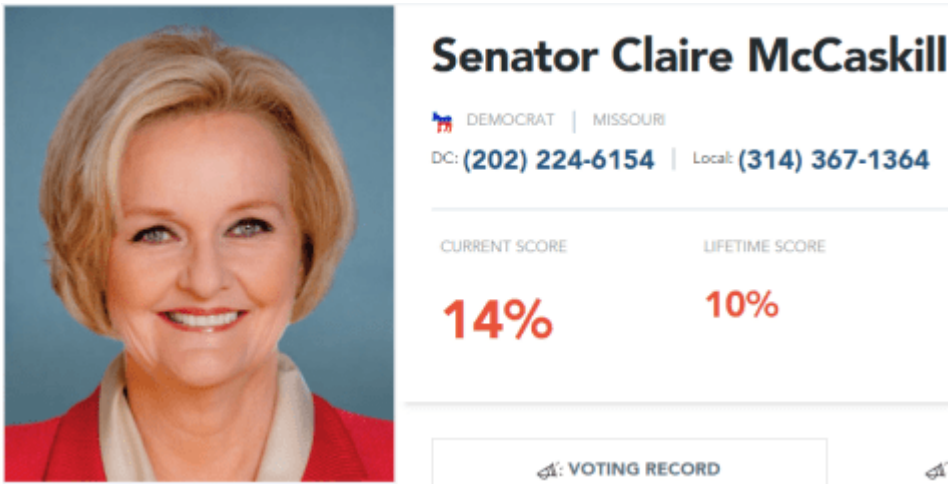

Heritage Action Scorecard for Democrat Claire McCaskill Missouri

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New York Times: bomb technicians say devices had hallmarks of fake explosives

October 25, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Why do people think that CNN are biased leftist clowns?
I just wanted to post something about the reports we're all hearing about devices that look like bombs that are being sent to a few prominent Democrats. Although the death threats to Republicans, mob violence against Republicans, and bombs sent to Republicans were not news, the mainstream media has decided that this is news, and so I must respond.

Here is an article from the far-left New York Times.

They write:

> Some bomb technicians who studied photos of the device that circulated on social media suggested that the bomb sent to CNN had hallmarks of fake explosives — the kind more typically depicted on television and in movies, rather than devices capable of detonating.
>
> A digital clock was taped to the middle of the pipe, a feature that experts say is typically shown on fictional bombs in an attempt to ratchet up dramatic tension, but unnecessary in real life.
>
> In fact, bombmakers generally avoid attaching visible clocks to their devices to keep from tipping off their targets about when the bombs are set to explode.

That's not stopping CNN from running wall-to-wall coverage about how real their bomb is, though.

Do you know what wasn't news, though? The packages delivered to Republicans.

The same NYT article explains:

> Earlier this month, federal authorities said they intercepted multiple packages suspected of containing the lethal substance ricin, addressed to Mr. Trump and at least two top Pentagon officials. In February, an envelope containing a white, powdery substance that investigators later determined was cornstarch was sent to the Manhattan apartment of Donald Trump Jr.'s mother-in-law.

One ex-Navy EOD bomb disposal expert tweeted out his skepticism on Twitter:

> A few observations from a former bomb disposal officer (i.e. Me):
>
> 1. Proper pipe bombs don't have wires connected to both ends. That's dumb.
>
> 2. You can find timers / remote control receivers WAY smaller than whatever that white box is. A proper timer would best be stored inside the pipe, making it fully encapsulated. That thing is just silly looking.

> 3. “Hoax Devices” are FAR more common than real ones.
>
> 4. Bottom Line: Whoever made that wanted it to be painfully obvious to anyone and everyone that it’s a “bomb.” This is nearly the same as a bundle of road flares wrapped together with an old-timey alarm clock ticking away.

I think we need to be cautious about this because we know that people on the left are prone to faking hate crimes against themselves.

We’re two weeks out of mid-terms right now, and the Democrat candidates need all the help they can get from the media. This news story definitely helps the Democrats counter the #jobsNotMobs theme of Republican candidates. That’s why I think we should be skeptical and wait for the evidence.

Just to be clear, whoever sent those packages should be found guilty of domestic terrorism, and sentenced accordingly. However, we don’t know who is responsible right now.

Arizona Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema on judges, amnesty, abortion, tax cuts, spending, welfare

October 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Heritage Action Scorecard for Democrat Kyrsten Sinema Arizona

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Against cuts to wasteful government spending:

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> supplementary message from President Trump earlier this week.

Against repealing regulations that hurt small businesses:

> Rollback of onerous bank regulations from the Dodd-Frank Act05/22/2018The House voted on the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act (S. 2155), introduced by Chairman Mike Crapo (R-Idaho). This bill provides targeted exemptions for smaller banks from various Dodd-Frank regulations put in place after the housing market collapse and financial crisis in 2008.

Against cutting subsidies for inefficient energy sources:

> Biggs Farm Bill Amendment to Repeal Bioenergy Subsidy Program05/17/2018The House voted on and failed to pass an amendment offered by Rep. Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.) to H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. This amendment would repeal all Department of Agriculture biofuel and energy subsidy programs contained within Title IX of the 2014 Farm Bill.

For welfare entitlements without work requirement:

> McClintock Work Requirement Farm Bill Amendment05/17/2018The House voted on and failed to pass an amendment offered by Rep. Tom McClintock (R-Calif.) to H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. The McClintock proposal amends SNAP work requirements to repeal geographic area waivers and allow states to exempt only five percent of SNAP recipients. Additionally, the amendment sets the same work requirement for married parents as for single parents, reducing a long-standing marriage penalty.

Against Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act:

> Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (H.R.4712)01/19/2018This week, the House will vote on the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (H.R. 4712), introduced by Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.). This legislation requires that appropriate medical care be given to any child who survived an attempted abortion, and establishes criminal penalties for health care practitioners that violate this requirement (the mother of a child born alive may not be prosecuted) and a civil right of action to enforce the law.

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Against the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act:

> Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (H.R. 36)10/03/2017This week, the House will vote on the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (H.R. 36), introduced by Rep. Trent Franks (R-Ariz.). This legislation would protect unborn children by preventing abortions 20 weeks after conception, at which time scientific evidence suggests the child can feel pain. In 2015, a similar bill passed the House by a 242-184 vote.

Against cutting funding for global warming alarmism:

> Norman Amendment to Cut EPA Funding09/13/2017The House will vote on an amendment offered by Rep. Ralph Norman (R-S.C.) to H.R. 3354, the fiscal year 2018 omnibus spending measure. The amendment would reduce total appropriations to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by $1,869,087,000.

Against allowing the U.S. Armed forces to use cost-effective, capable energy sources for their operations:

> Buck NDAA Amendment to Alternative Energy Requirements07/13/2017The House will vote on an amendment offered by Rep. Ken Buck (R-CO) to H.R. 2810, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2018. This amendment would prohibit funding for the renewable energy mandate at the Department of Defense (DOD) and prohibit the Secretary of Defense from purchasing alternative energy unless it is equivalent to conventional energy in terms of cost and capability. Alternative energy research is exempted under this amendment.

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> This week the House of Representatives is expected to vote on H.J.Res. 43, sponsored by Rep. Diane Black (R-TN), a disapproval resolution of the final rule submitted by Obama’s Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) relating to compliance with Title X requirements by project recipients in selecting sub-recipients. Title X of the Public Health Service Act provides federal funds to states for family planning grants. Once states receive the funds, they have the ability to prioritize sub-recipients, directing funds to organizations like community health

> centers and family health clinics. While federal law prohibits government funding for abortion, it does allows certain public dollars, like the Title X grants, to support abortion providers if the funds are directed to non-abortion related health services. Under this exception, Planned Parenthood has been eligible to receive Title X funds, per the states' discretion.

Against the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Act:

> No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act of 2017 (H.R. 7)01/24/2017This week the House will vote on the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act of 2017 (H.R. 7). Sponsored by Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ), the bill would establish a permanent, government-wide prohibition on federal taxpayer funding of abortion and health benefits plans that include coverage of abortion, as well as prevent federal tax dollars from being entangled in abortion coverage under Obamacare.

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> Obamacare Repeal Budget Resolution01/13/2017On Friday, the House will consider a concurrent resolution (S. CON. RES. 3). While the resolution will technically set the congressional budget for the United States Government for the remaining eight months of fiscal year 2017, its only functional purpose will be to produce reconciliation instructions that unlock fast track authority that Congress can then use to repeal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). Separately, there is an expectation that the fiscal year 2018 budget resolution will reflect the longstanding conservative values embedded in previous GOP budgets. But to be absolutely clear, adopting S. CON. RES 3 is the only way to expedite the repeal of Obamacare.

Against accountability and transparency in government regulation:

> REINS Act (H.R. 26)01/05/2017This week, the House will vote on the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act of 2017 (H.R. 26). The bill, introduced by Rep. Doug Collins (R-GA) 79%, would increase accountability for and transparency in the federal regulatory process by requiring Congress to approve all new major regulations.

If you live in this state, please consider sharing this article to let everyone know how this candidate has voted in the past.

Nevada Senate candidate Jacky Rosen on gay rights, amnesty, abortion, tax cuts, spending, welfare

October 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Heritage Action Scorecard for Democrat Jacky Rosen Nevada

A lot of American voters tend to approach elections like they approach food, clothes and entertainment. They choose what they like "in the moment". But feelings about appearances is not the right way to measure a candidate. The right way to measure is by looking at the voting record. So let's do that with Democrat Senate candidate Jacky Rosen of Nevada.

Democrat Senate candidate Jacky Rosen of Nevada

The Heritage Foundation is a respected Washington think tank, and they've collected together all the votes of the candidates.

Here are some of the votes that I found the most interesting:

For wasteful government spending:

> Bloated $855 Billion CROMNIBUS Spending Package09/26/2018Back in March, President Trump nearly vetoed a $1.3 trillion omnibus spending bill promising the American people that he "will never sign another bill like this again." One of the President's objections to the omnibus was its lack of conservative policy riders – particularly sufficient funding for border security – combined with increases in the Democrats' spending priorities. Six months later Republicans and the President find themselves in a similar situation.

Against cuts to wasteful government spending:

> Rescissions Package to Cut Spending from Expired and Unnecessary Programs06/07/2018Today, the House will vote on the Spending Cuts to Expired and Unnecessary Programs Act (H.R. 3), introduced by House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), as modified by the Rules committee to adjust to a

> supplementary message from President Trump earlier this week.

Against repealing regulations that hurt small businesses:

> Rollback of onerous bank regulations from the Dodd-Frank Act05/22/2018The House voted on the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act (S. 2155), introduced by Chairman Mike Crapo (R-Idaho). This bill provides targeted exemptions for smaller banks from various Dodd-Frank regulations put in place after the housing market collapse and financial crisis in 2008.

Against cutting subsidies for inefficient energy sources:

> Biggs Farm Bill Amendment to Repeal Bioenergy Subsidy Program05/17/2018The House voted on and failed to pass an amendment offered by Rep. Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.) to H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. This amendment would repeal all Department of Agriculture biofuel and energy subsidy programs contained within Title IX of the 2014 Farm Bill.

For welfare entitlements without work requirement:

> McClintock Work Requirement Farm Bill Amendment05/17/2018The House voted on and failed to pass an amendment offered by Rep. Tom McClintock (R-Calif.) to H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. The McClintock proposal amends SNAP work requirements to repeal geographic area waivers and allow states to exempt only five percent of SNAP recipients. Additionally, the amendment sets the same work requirement for married parents as for single parents, reducing a long-standing marriage penalty.

Against Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act:

> Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (H.R.4712)01/19/2018This week, the House will vote on the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (H.R. 4712), introduced by Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.). This legislation requires that appropriate medical care be given to any child who survived an attempted abortion, and establishes criminal penalties for health care practitioners that violate this requirement (the mother of a child born alive may not be prosecuted) and a civil right of action to enforce the law.

Against tax cuts:

> Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R.1)12/20/2017This week, the House and Senate will vote on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R. 1), the most significant tax reform and tax cut legislative initiative since the 1986 tax reform package passed under President Ronald Reagan. The bill would make sweeping changes to the individual and corporate codes, and eliminate Obamacare’s individual mandate penalty.

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Against cutting funding for wasteful government-run monopolies:

> Budd Amendment to Eliminate $900 million Amtrak 'Earmark'09/06/2017The House will vote on an amendment offered by Rep. Ted Budd (R-N.C.) to H.R. 3354, the fiscal year 2018 omnibus spending measure. The amendment would eliminate $900 million in specifically designated spending contained in the Transportation-Housing and Urban Development (T-HUD) appropriations bill that would go directly to the Gateway project – a $29.5 billion tunnel, bridge and infrastructure project intended to improve Amtrak's passenger rail service between Newark and New York City. Partial funding for this project comes from eliminating the wasteful Obama-era Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program.

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Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

October 27, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
This is one of my favorite lectures.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips.

Here is a clip:

The full video can be watched on Vimeo:

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range

in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

It's a good lecture explaining a couple of basic arguments for a cosmic Creator and Designer. If you add the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion (Stephen C. Meyer's arguments), then you will be solid on the basic scientific arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

What theory of truth should a Bible-believing Christian accept?

October 28, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

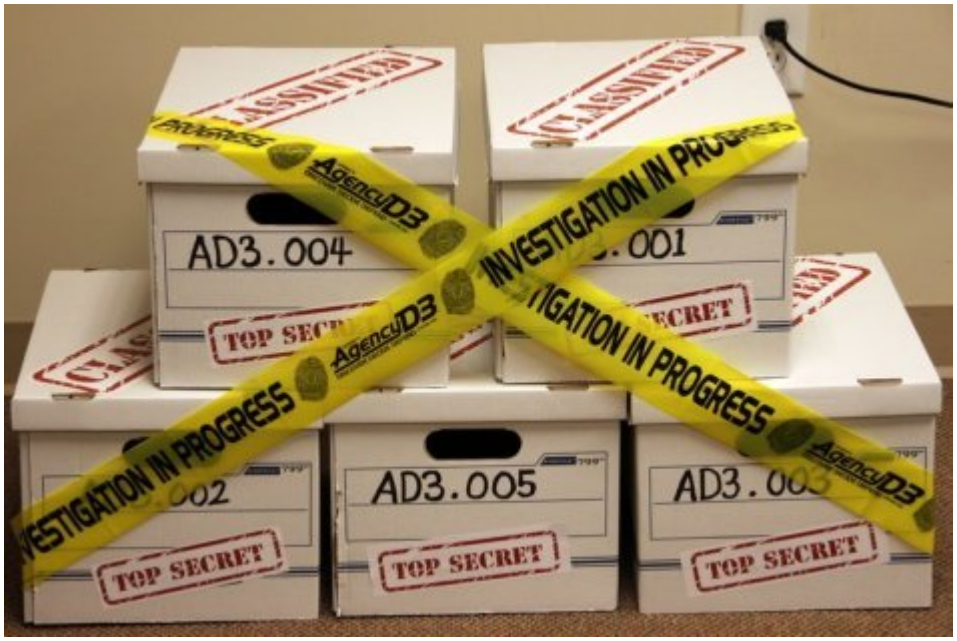

Investigation in progress

I was just thinking to myself this week about why I keep running into people who identify as Christians who are open and unrepentant about habitual sin. Now, I'm not perfect, but you don't see me out there in public saying that the Bible is wrong. I would not claim that some behavior that was condemned by all previous generations of Christians is suddenly ok.

So, I thought and thought and thought about it, and here is what I came up with. Somehow, people have come to a view of Christianity that tells them that Christianity is not something that is true about the universe out there. Instead, Christianity is "true" in the sense that it "works for them".

So they aren't saying that God actually exists or that Jesus actually rose from the dead, because they don't know if those things are objectively true. They're just saying that they like some Christian words and behaviors because those things make them feel good. Christianity is not something they could defend as objectively true to any non-Christian using reason and evidence. They like how the idea of a loving God makes them feel. Or maybe they like invoking the idea of "do not judge" when someone questions their destructive choices or immorality. But they don't actually submit to these ideas as "true" in the same way that they take the instructions on a medicine bottle as true.

Here's a post by Aaron Brake at Stand to Reason, that explains three different views of truth. He calls the view that I talked about the "pragmatic view of truth". He says that the pragmatic view is that things are true if they "work" for the individual. So, in the case of my Christians-who-deny-Jesus-as-Lord, these people pick and choose things that work for them out of Christianity, e.g. – the love of God, the "do not judge" fragment, the women

taken in adultery, etc. But they leave out the moral obligations that Christians have believed for thousands of years, e.g. – no sex before marriage, marriage is between a man and woman for life, divorce is pretty much always unjustified, and adultery is never OK under any circumstances.

Here is the view of truth that he thinks is best:

> Finally, there is the **correspondence theory** of truth: *truth is when an idea, belief, or statement matches (or corresponds with) the way the world actually is (reality).*
>
> This may rightly be labeled the "common sense" view of truth. While not taught explicitly in Scripture, it is assumed throughout both the Old and New Testaments. The correspondence theory of truth states that an idea, belief, or statement is true if it matches, or corresponds with, reality. In this sense, reality is the truth-maker, and the idea, belief, or statement is the truth-bearer. When the truth-bearer (an idea) matches the truth-maker (reality), they are said to stand in an "appropriate correspondence relationship," and truth obtains.
>
> Consider the following statements:
>
> 1. Donald Trump is the current President of the United States.
> 2. The city of Los Angeles is located in California.
> 3. Elective abortion kills an innocent human being.
>
> Are these statements *true*? They are if, in fact, they match reality. Statement number 1 is true if, in reality, Donald Trump is the current President of the United States. Statement 2 is true if, in fact, the city of Los Angeles is located in California. And statement 3 is true if elective abortion really does kill an innocent human being. Easy enough, right? Aristotle put it this way:
>
> To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true; so that he who says anything that it is, or that it is not, will say either what is true or what is false.
>
> **A Case for Correspondence**
>
> Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland notes two main arguments which have been advanced in favor of the correspondence theory of truth: the descriptive and the dialectical.
>
> The descriptive argument simply presents specific cases that help illustrate the concept of truth. For example, in Moreland's bookstore case, an individual named Joe has the thought "Richard Swinburne's book *The Evolution of the Soul* is in the bookstore." When Joe enters the bookstore and sees the book, he actually experiences truth, a correspondence relation between his thought and reality. Again, this is the "common sense" definition of truth since it is the view we all presuppose in our daily actions and speech; i.e., everyone assumes the correspondence theory of truth when reading a medicine label or dialing a phone

> number.

That theory of truth is the normal theory of truth, and it's the one used in the Bible, e.g. – Elijah on Mount Carmel, Jesus calling his resurrection the Sign of Jonah. If the Bible teaches something, then that teaching is true, because it conforms to the way the world really is. Objective reality makes the Bible's statements true or false. It's true whether people like it or not.

Here's what I suspect is true of all the liberal Christians that I've met. None of them will have looked into things like the existence of God or the resurrection to see if they are objectively true. They'll not even be interested in lifting a finger to study in order to find out whether those things are true. If they evangelize, they'll tell stories about their own life experiences and feelings, and try to "sell" Christianity based on felt needs being met. They'll not waste a second on studying the laws of logic, or science or history in order to demonstrate Christian claims as true – especially the ones that don't "ring true" to them.

It makes me think of that post that I wrote about John Searle and his suspicion about why people become postmodern relativists. He thinks it's so that they can deny reality if reality constrains their will to pursue happiness. I've actually seen this when people break all the rules in their selfish pursuit of happiness, and then when it all explodes in their face, they claim that life is unpredictable, and it wasn't their fault. The rejection of the correspondence theory of truth is – I think – rooted in this desire to dismiss anything that could act as a brake on their hedonism. They don't care that you can produce studies after studies showing that fatherlessness is bad for children. If God didn't give them a husband, then they are perfectly justified in having children through a sperm donor, and raising the fatherless child with welfare money. The simplest way out of your Bible verses and fatherlessness studies is for them to say that doing wrong "works for them" and so it's "true for them".

If Republicans are going to hold the House, they'll need the votes of black Americans

October 29, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michigan Senate candidate John James

I've been following the Michigan Senate race between Republican John James and Democrat Debbie Stabenow. James, a black conservative, flew attack helicopters in Iraq, and now runs a private sector business. You can't get more rooted in reality than that. What I've noticed about James is his challenge to other blacks to vote for ideas and ideals.

Here's his latest ad:

The Washington Examiner notes:

> "The Democratic business model is reliant upon keeping black folks dependent on the government," James said in the ad. "Countless people have died for our right to think and to vote for ourselves, yet Democratic leadership asks us to outsource our voice on a straight-ticket ballot to a godless party that neither represents our values nor our economic best interests."
>
> "We've marched from Selma to New York, we've rebelled from Watts to Detroit, and ain't nothing changed in 50 years," he said. "The Democratic Party leadership cares more about the black vote than the black people. And it's time to wake up."
>
> James, a West Point graduate who served as a commander in aviation missions in Iraq, released his new ad in Detroit on the same day that former president Barack Obama is set to visit that city to campaign for Democrat Debbie Stabenow.
>
> James said in an interview, "The ad is not meant to divide or attack his fellow Michiganders. It is a criticism of the party leadership that took God out of its platform and left Detroit the most segregated city in America."
>
> Stabenow has consistently held a healthy double-digit lead over James, but has

> seen that cushion evaporate in the past month.
>
> On Thursday, a Free Press poll conducted by EPIC-MRA of Lansing Michigan put her lead at 7 percentage points. That same poll showed her up 23 points in September.
>
> On Oct. 29, Vice President Mike Pence will host a rally in Grand Rapids for James, who returned home from his military service to run his family's business.

James is the first black Republican to run for statewide office in Michigan in four decades.

Why should blacks vote for a Republican? Black unemployment is at a record low (along with Hispanic unemployment).

USA Today noted:

> September's 3.7 percent unemployment rate, a nearly 50-year low, is helping all U.S. workers, but it's especially beneficial to disadvantaged groups that have struggled to land jobs — like black teenagers.
>
> The jobless rate for African-Americans age 16 to 19 fell from 20.1 percent to 19.3 percent last month, the lowest on records dating to 1972.

If blacks were just voting on objective criteria – raw numbers – they'd vote for Republicans.

Against dependency on the government

I also noted that James is a strong believer in male leadership, and that got him trouble with the anti-male left:

Right now, we have an epidemic in the black community where black women are choosing men poorly, and creating fatherless children in homes who are more likely to be dependent on government. As a non-white conservative, I find this upsetting, because it means that non-whites are arriving at different life outcomes from other Americans through their own choices. When poor choices are made early on in life, it's difficult to recover even when you learn from your mistakes.

I don't see how the black community is ever going to recover from a 70% out-of-wedlock birth rate unless they start shaming black women for having sex with men who are not willing to commit to leading a family before they have sex. There are single black men of good character who could have been chosen instead. Men who would commit before asking for sex. But if women make choices based on appearances and feelings, then the bad boys will get picked every time.

The Democrat party has an interest in making more people dependent on government, and that's why they favor government programs that incentivize making fatherless children. Democrats promote premarital sex and welfare programs to blacks, which discourages good black men from working and marrying. They also oppose school choice, so that parents are forced to put their children into failing schools staffed by unionized teachers who are unaccountable. If we're going strictly on policy, then the Republican party has a lot more to offer black Americans than the Democrats.

New study: virgins have happiest marriages, more sex partners means more unhappiness

October 30, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Although we live in a culture that is dominated by the thoughts and opinions of secular leftists, science provides useful information for those who want defend Biblical morality. Consider the issue of sexuality and marriage. Secular leftists claim that sex outside of marriage is natural, and produces happiness. Bible believing Christians and Jews say chastity is best. Who is right?

Here is the latest study authored by Dr. Nicholas Wolfinger, a sociologist at the University of Utah. His previous book on relationships was published by Oxford University Press. In his analysis of the data, Wolfinger controlled for divorce rates, religiosity, and socioeconomic status.

Here's the most important graph:

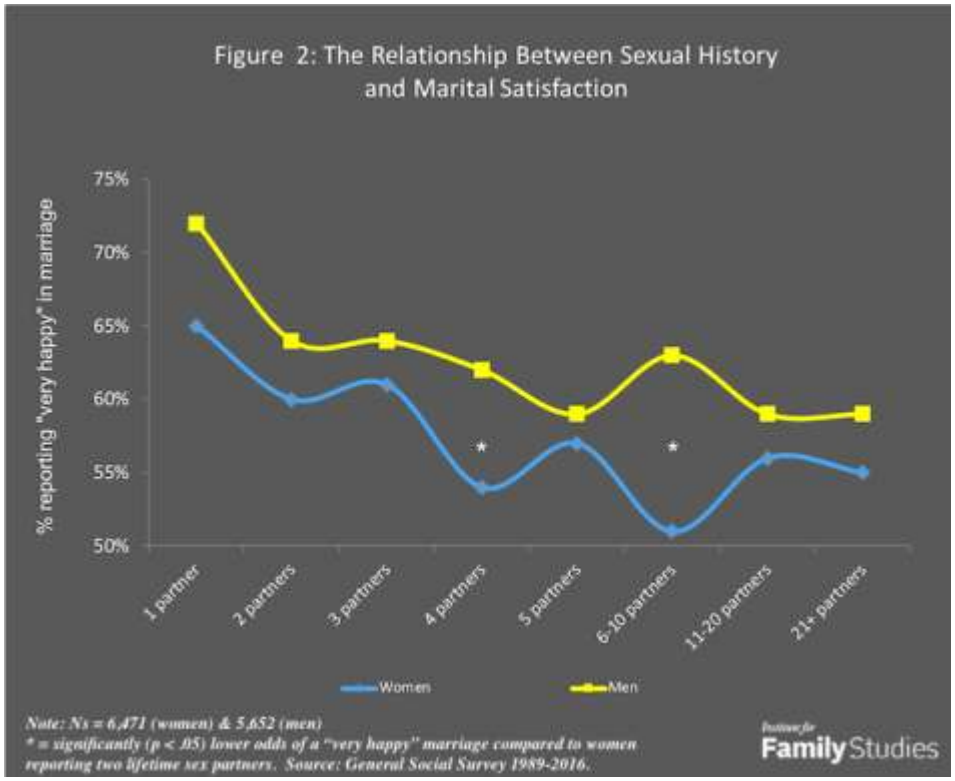

Study: virgins have the happiest marriages, more partners means less happiness

Other factors that increased marital happiness: having a 4-year college degree (5%), having a salary > 78K (5%), regular church attendance (6%). Notice that women are more dissatisfied with marriage (in general) than men are, and they tend to blame the spouse they freely chose for that unhappiness.

The Federalist also reported on previous research relevant to this study:

> Psychologists Galena K. Rhoades and Scott M. Stanley found that women who have had sex with someone other than their husband report statistically significant drops in marital quality over those who don't. A 2004 study by

> sociologist Jay Teachman showed that intimate premarital activities such as cohabitation and intercourse increased the rate of marital dissolution by anywhere between 28 and 109 percent, depending on the activity.

Wolfinger also noted in a previous study that only 5% of women were virgins when they married.

Wolfinger noted that a possible explanation for the link between promiscuity and unhappiness is that people look back on their past partners and compare their spouse unfavorably to them. This is especially the case with women. My concern about this is that feminism has taught women to try to increase their social standing by having hook-up sex with attractive bad boys. If those women ever marry, they do it when they are older, less fertile, and less attractive. The husband they eventually "settle" for will (in their minds) always compare unfavorably to the hot bad boys they had sex with when they were younger and prettier. This, I believe, is what leads to their unhappiness with the man they chose to marry.

More partners also means more marital instability

In a previous post, I blogged about several studies linking virginity to marital stability. Couples who don't have sex before marriage, or even who delayed it, reported better communication, higher satisfaction, better quality sex, and a lower chance of divorce.

Men ought to be aware of this research when they are choosing a spouse. Obviously, you want a virgin, for the increased happiness and increased stability. For marriage-friendly character, you want to avoid women who are promiscuous thrill-seekers. You want to avoid women who run up debt doing easy non-STEM degrees and traveling. You want to avoid women who hook up with hot bad boys aren't serious about commitment. Women who choose fun and thrills in their teens and 20s are setting a pattern of using sex as a way to get happiness in the moment. Later on, they'll continue that pattern of seeing relationships as commodities that are designed to make them feel good, moment by moment. They'll look at marriage as a way to fulfill *their* needs. They'll have internalized the view that relationships are not commitments to invest in self-sacrificially. The pattern will be: "if it doesn't make me feel happy right now, then it should be ended". Men who aren't serious about evaluating the character of the women for the marriage enterprise are running the risk of divorce, it's that simple.

The best way to make sure that you have a clear head when evaluating a woman is to stay sober, and keep her hands off of you. When a man refuses to let a woman cloud his judgment with sex, then she is forced to learn how to love him, help him, and submit to his leadership. Male chastity encourages women who have been influenced by feminism to abandon selfishness, fun-seeking, and thrill-seeking, so that they learn to care for others. Male chastity also helps a man to resist older women who chose bad boys in their teens and 20s and want to get married to a good provider in their 30s. The studies discussed above clearly show that such women are more likely to be unhappy, and their future marriages are more likely to be unstable. Avoid them.

The 5 Taliban commanders that Obama traded for a deserter have returned to the Taliban

October 31, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNN politics

Bowe Bergdahl pleads guilty to desertion, faces up to life in prison

By Devon M. Sayers and Holly Yan, CNN

Updated 7:27 PM ET, Mon October 16, 2017

Private Bowe Bergdahl pled guilty to charges of mischief and desertion

We live in a world where people get their news by watching far-left news media. They're sure that Obama did a great job, but they can't remember exactly what he did that was so great. When Obama asserts that he led a "scandal-free" administration, they just nod their heads like trained seals. They can't remember any of Obama's scandals.

One such scandal is Obama's decision to trade five senior Taliban commanders – who were captured on the battlefield – for a Private for walked off his post (deserted) in Afghanistan. He abandoned his brothers in a combat zone. Perpetual liar Susan Rice – who falsely blamed the Benghazi terrorist attack on a YouTube video – claimed that Bergdahl was a hero who had "served honorably". It was only later that Bergdahl was charged with mischief and treason. And he pleaded guilty to those charges. It should be noted that he isn't just a "deserter". He put down his weapons and took off his uniform and sought refuge with enemy forces. He's not just a deserter, he's a traitor. Exactly the kind of person who Democrats admire.

Did Bergdahl's desertion have any consequences for his brothers in the military? Yes. When his absence was discovered, ground and air assets were diverted from their missions in order to search for him, to "rescue" him. Not just a few assets, but a huge number of assets were diverted to searching for him. U.S. troops *lost their lives* searching for him. Some were maimed and injured searching for him. And what's more, if you've read the book "Red Platoon", you know that other operations were impacted. Men were

killed in Eastern Afghanistan at the Battle of Keating, because their close air support assets were re-tasked with searching for Bergdahl.

At the time of the trade, Obama *promised* that these five Taliban commanders would never again attack U.S. Armed Forces on the battlefield. That was how he justified the trade.

Time magazine reported:

> When U.S. President Barack Obama agreed in May to exchange five Taliban detainees from Guantanamo Bay for Bowe Bergdahl, a U.S. soldier who had been held captive for five years, his political opponents had a field day. They warned that the detainees risked returning to Afghanistan, and to militancy. Obama, with the backing of the government of Qatar that had agreed to host the men, promised that they would be kept far from the battlefield.

Here is the latest news from the Washington Free Beacon:

> The five members of the Afghan Taliban who were released from the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay in exchange for captured American Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl in 2014 have joined the Taliban's political office in Qatar, according the insurgent group's spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid.
>
> […]"The Taliban are bringing back their old generation, which means the Taliban have not changed their thinking or their leadership," said Haroun Mir, a political analyst in Kabul. "What we are more worried about is if tomorrow the Taliban say 'we are ready to negotiate,' who will represent Kabul? That is the big challenge because the government is so divided, not just ideologically but on ethnic lines."
>
> […]President Barack Obama received backlash in 2014 when his administration orchestrated the prisoner swap for Bergdahl, prompting him to defend his decision.

The Obama administration favored our enemies at the expense of our own armed forces in so many ways.

They rewarded convicted traitor Private Bradley Manning with a pardon for his treason, and a free sex change – paid for by taxpayers. He leaked so many military secrets to our enemies, but the Obama administration had to protect him from his punishment, because they agreed with what he did. Later on, he would run as a Democrat, because that's what he is.

The Obama administration forced many policies on the military that were designed to reduce our effectiveness. Sometimes, it was overt, like canceling the deal to help Poland with missile defense. Or backing out of Syria in order to hand it to the Russians. Or give Iran a green light and $400 million dollars to research nuclear weapons. Or forcing the U.S. Navy to use green energy. The list goes on and on. I personally know people who left the military because of the Obama administration's anti-military policies.

And it's not just the armed forces, it's our spies and diplomats. Instead of pushing an

agenda of world peace, the State Department antagonized other nations by pushing for legalized abortion and same-sex marriage. Hillary Clinton, the Secretary of State, was allowed to operate a private, unsecure e-mail server in her bathroom. She sent and received classified e-mails over that server. And we know know that the server was hacked by the Chinese.

During the Obama administration, our allies were continuously disappointed. Our enemies were continuously emboldened. The Democrats did not take the job of protecting taxpayers seriously. No one who cares about projecting American strength and values abroad should ever vote for the Democrat party.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

November 1, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here is Dr. William Lane Craig giving a long-form argument for the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus, and taking questions from the audience.

The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the

Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early dating
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthewand whether it is intended to be historical or apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza

Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is “The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus” and the best comprehensive book is “The Resurrection of Jesus“.

Abortion debate: a secular case against legalized abortion

November 2, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about being only two months old

Note: this post has a twin! Its companion post on a secular case against gay marriage is here.

Now, you may think that the view that the unborn deserve protection during pregnancy is something that you either take on faith or not. But I want to explain how you can make a case for the right to life of the unborn, just by using reason and evidence.

To defend the pro-life position, I think you need to sustain 3 arguments:

1. The unborn is a living being with human DNA, and is therefore human.
2. There is no morally-relevant difference between an unborn baby, and one already born.
3. None of the justifications given for terminating an unborn baby are morally adequate.

Now, the pro-abortion debater may object to point 1, perhaps by claiming that the unborn baby is either not living, or not human, or not distinct from the mother.

Defending point 1: Well, it is pretty obvious that the unborn child is not inanimate matter. It is definitely living and growing through all 9 months of pregnancy. (Click here for a video that shows what a baby looks like through all 9 months of pregnancy). Since it has human DNA, that makes it a human. And its DNA is different from either its mother or

father, so it clearly not just a tissue growth of the father or the mother. More on this point at Christian Cadre, here. An unborn child cannot be the woman's own body, because then the woman would have four arms, four legs, two heads, four eyes and two different DNA signatures. When you have two different human DNA signatures, you have two different humans.

Secondly, the pro-abortion debater may try to identify a characteristic of the unborn that is not yet present or developed while it is still in the womb, and then argue that because the unborn does not have that characteristic, it does not deserve the protection of the law.

Defending point 2: You need to show that the unborn are not different from the already-born in any meaningful way. The main differences between them are: *size, level of development, environment* and *degree of dependence*. Once these characteristics are identified, you can explain that none of these differences provide moral justification for terminating a life. For example, babies inside and outside the womb have the same value, because location does not change a human's intrinsic value.

Additionally, the pro-abortion debater may try to identify a characteristic of the already-born that is not yet present or developed in the unborn, and then argue that because the unborn does not have that characteristic, that it does not deserve protection, (e.g. – sentience). Most of the these objections that you may encounter are refuted in this essay by Francis Beckwith. Usually these objections fall apart because they assume the thing they are trying to prove, namely, that the unborn deserves less protection than the already born.

Finally, the pro-abortion debater may conceded your points 1 and 2, and admit that the unborn is fully human. But they may then try to provide a moral justification for terminating the life of the unborn, regardless.

Defending point 3: I fully grant that it is sometimes justifiable to terminate an innocent human life, if there is a moral justification. Is there such a justification for abortion? One of the best known attempts to justify abortion is Judith Jarvis Thomson's "violinist" argument. This argument is summarized by Paul Manata, one of the experts over at Triablogue:

> Briefly, this argument goes like this: Say a world-famous violinist developed a fatal kidney ailment and the Society of Music Lovers found that only you had the right blood-type to help. So, they therefore have you kidnapped and then attach you to the violinist's circulatory system so that your kidneys can be used to extract the poison from his. To unplug yourself from the violinist would be to kill him; therefore, pro-lifers would say a person has to stay attached against her will to the violinist for 9 months. Thompson says that it would be morally virtuous to stay plugged-in. But she asks, "Do you have to?" She appeals to our intuitions and answers, "No."

Manata then goes on to defeat Thomson's proposal here, with a short, memorable

illustration, which I highly recommend that you check out. More info on how to respond to similar arguments is here.

Here is the best book for beginners on the pro-life view.

For those looking for advanced resources, Francis Beckwith, a professor at Baylor University, published the book Defending Life, with Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Kavanaugh rape accuser put forward by Democrats admits she made it all up to get attention

November 3, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brett Kavanaugh, his wife, and his two daughters

The Supreme Court is important to Christians and conservatives because it decides whether rights like free speech, freedom of religion, right to self-defense, etc. will be respected by government. During the last Supreme Court hearing, Democrats put forward a number of rape accusations to block a conservative nominee. We're now finding out how credible those accusations were.

Judy Munro-Leighton

The Daily Caller reports:

> A woman who acknowledged falsely accusing Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh of rape is being referred to the FBI and Department of Justice for investigation, according to an official letter.
>
> Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley said in a letter sent Friday to FBI Director Christopher Wray and Attorney General Jeff Sessions that the woman, Judy Munro-Leighton, admitted Thursday that she falsely claimed in an email to committee staff on Oct. 3 that Kavanaugh and a friend had raped her.
>
> In the email, Munro-Leighton claimed to be the author of an anonymous letter sent to California Democratic Sen. Kamala Harris on Sept. 19. In that letter, a person who signed the letter as "Jane Doe" claimed Kavanaugh and a friend

> raped her in the back of a car.
>
> Grassley, an Iowa Republican, said investigators quickly discovered that Munro-Leighton was a "left-wing activist" who is decades older than Kavanaugh.
>
> But after reaching Munro-Leighton on Thursday, she admitted "that she had not been sexually assaulted by Judge Kavanaugh and was not the author of the original 'Jane Doe' letter."
>
> Munro-Leighton said that she "just wanted to get attention" for her "ploy."

When the mainstream media reported that Kavanaugh was "credibly accused" of rape by multiple women, this is the kind of accusation they were referring to. Credibly accused by very respectable, stable, accomplished women who had nothing to gain by coming forward and reporting their truth.

Was this accusation a deliberate coordinated effort between Democrat senators and this left-wing activist? We'll find out, as long as the Democrats don't win the Senate and stop the investigation. Right now it looks about 50-50 that the Democrats will win the Senate, but that depends on the voter turnout. They're almost certainly going to end all investigations in the House when they win the House on Tuesday. It's virtually guaranteed that the Democrats will win the House on Tuesday.

Previously, another false rape accuser put forward by the Democrats to block Kavanaugh was also caught lying.

Julie Swetnick

Real Clear Politics recalls how the mainstream media reported her baseless accusations:

> Julie Swetnick, one of the women accusing Judge Brett Kavanaugh of sexual assault, talks about gang-rape parties with NBC's Kate Snow. Swetnick said she was drugged and gang-raped by Kavanaugh and friend Mark Judge. NBC News stated that Swetnick's claims could not be independently verified.
>
> Swetnick is represented by Michael Avenatti, who is also the attorney for adult film actress Stormy Daniels.
>
> "I cannot specifically say that he was one of the ones who assaulted me," Swetnick acknowledged.

She's now been referred to the FBI for a criminal investigation:

> Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley today referred Julie Swetnick and her attorney Michael Avenatti to the Justice Department for criminal investigation relating to a potential conspiracy to provide materially false statements to Congress and obstruct a congressional committee investigation, three separate crimes, in the course of considering Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court of the United States.

Swetnick's allegation was seized upon by Democrat politicians and activists as a "credible" accusation. She couldn't be lying, because she had such a great career. She

was respected – she had so many security clearances. The mainstream media told us how respected and emotionally stable she was. Feinstein presented the accusation in the Senate hearing, asking Kavanaugh if he was guilty of being a gang rapist. It later emerged that Swetnick preferred method of having sex was with multiple men at the same time.

Who benefits from a false rape accusation?

During the hearing, Democrat senators told the Kavanaugh accusers who had contacted them (?) things like "You had absolutely nothing to gain" by making these accusations. Is that true?

This LifeZette article reports:

> Ford has raked in an estimated $1 million from crowdfunding campaigns supporting her and several book deals, RealClearInvestigations reported.
>
> "You had absolutely nothing to gain by bringing these facts to the Senate Judiciary Committee," Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) memorably said during Ford's September testimony, as Breitbart noted.
>
> "I want to thank you," Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) also said during the September hearing. "Because you clearly have nothing to gain for what you have done."
>
> […]Ford has also reached hero status in Palo Alto, California, her home town.
>
> Mayor Liz Kniss, a Democrat, announced this month that she planned to honor Ford in a public ceremony at a Palo Alto City Council meeting.

What about Kavanaugh, did he get to keep the money raised for him, and will he get book deals from liberal publishers?

> While Kavanaugh reportedly has turned down hundreds of thousands of dollars raised for him and his family through a GoFundMe campaign,Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, has raked in a million bucks — and several book deal offers.
>
> Kavanaugh declined over $600,000 in small donations that had been collected during his confirmation hearings, Yahoo reported, as he endured divisive and bitter rhetoric nationally over his nomination, public protests, and multiple unfounded accusations regarding sexual assault.

If the Democrats take control the Senate on Tuesday, we can expect that all of Trump's future Supreme Court picks will face a similar horde of false rape accusations. The difference will be that the Senate committee, which will be run by Democrats, won't be investigating the accusers' claims, and they won't be referring them to the FBI for criminal investigations if they're caught lying. It will just be the accusers, their Democrat allies in the Senate, and the lapdog liberal media, against Kethledge or Barrett or whoever the nominee happens to be.

Facts vs feelings in the debate on gun control vs self-defense

November 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a splendid at the Daily Signal article that ought to be read by everyone who has an opinion about the conflict between gun confiscation vs self-defense.

Here are the 8 points made in the article, then I'll comment on my favorite one:

> 1. Violent crime is down and has been on the decline for decades.
> 2. The principal public safety concerns with respect to guns are suicides and illegally owned handguns, not mass shootings.
> 3. A small number of factors significantly increase the likelihood that a person will be a victim of a gun-related homicide.
> 4. Gun-related murders are carried out by a predictable pool of people.
> 5. Higher rates of gun ownership are not associated with higher rates of violent crime.
> 6. There is no clear relationship between strict gun control legislation and homicide or violent crime rates.
> 7. Legally owned firearms are used for lawful purposes much more often than they are used to commit crimes or suicide.
> 8. Concealed carry permit holders are not the problem, but they may be part of the solution.

Whenever we discuss gun violence, it's very important to exclude suicides using a gun from the overall rate of gun deaths. Once you do that, you will find that the rate of violent crime has been declining as more and more law-abiding Americans have gone through the process to purchase a firearm for self-defense.

Let's talk about the gun homicide rate and how the steady increase in firearm ownership has affected that. When you look at the graph below, keep in mind that two thirds of the homicide are *suicides committed with a firearm.*

Here is a graph:

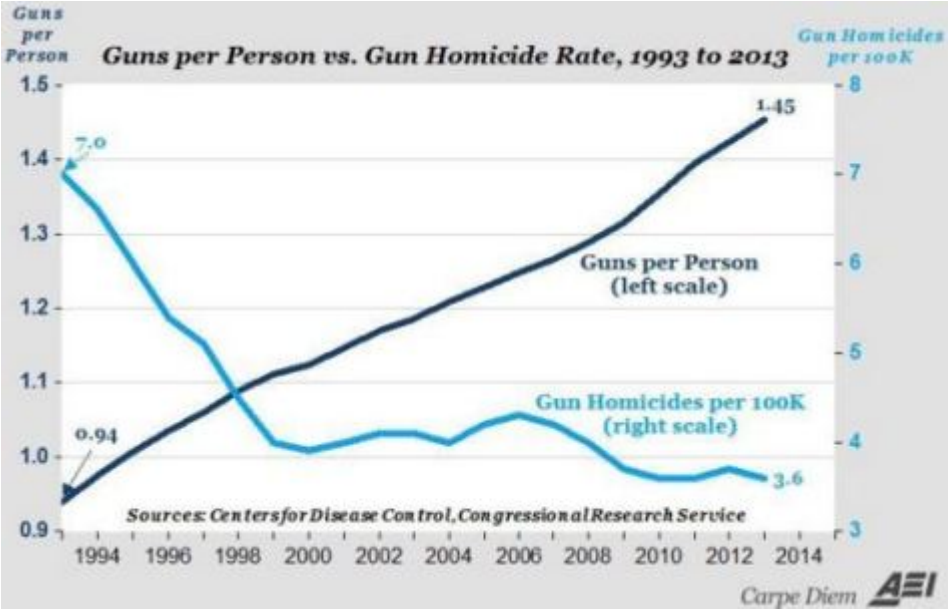

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

The question I want to address is this: why would someone want to own a gun in the first place?

Here are the points from the list of eight points that are relevant to that question:

> **Higher rates of gun ownership are not associated with higher rates of violent crime.**
>
> - Switzerland and Israel have much higher gun ownership rates than the United States but experience far fewer homicides and have much lower violent crime rates than many European nations with strict gun control laws.
> - Higher rates of concealed carry permit holders are even more strongly associated with reduction in violent crime than are “right-to-carry” states. The probable reason for this is that “right-to-carry” studies often include “open carry” states, which have not been shown to correlate with more people actually carrying or even owning firearms. Rates of concealed carry permit holders are better indicators of the number of people who actually possess and carry firearms within a given population.
>
> **There is no clear relationship between strict gun control legislation and homicide or violent crime rates.**
>
> - Homicide and firearm homicide rates in Great Britain spiked in the years immediately following the imposition of severe gun control measures, despite the fact that most developed countries continued to experience a downward trend in these rates. This is also pointed out by noted criminologist John Lott in his book “The War on Guns.”
> - Similarly, Ireland’s homicide rates spiked in the years immediately following the country’s 1972 gun confiscation legislation.
> - Australia’s National Firearms Act appears to have had little effect on suicide and homicide rates, which were falling before the law was enacted and

continued to decline at a statistically unremarkable rate compared to worldwide trends.
- According to research compiled by John Lott and highlighted in his book "The War on Guns," Australia's armed and unarmed robbery rates both increased markedly in the five years immediately following the National Firearms Act, despite the general downward trend experienced by other developed countries.
- Great Britain has some of the strictest gun control laws in the developed world, but the violent crime rate for homicide, rape, burglary, and aggravated assault is much higher than that in the U.S. Further, approximately 60 percent of burglaries in Great Britain occur while residents are home, compared to just 13 percent in the U.S., and British burglars admit to targeting occupied residences because they are more likely to find wallets and purses.
- It is difficult to compare homicide and firearm-related murder rates across international borders because countries use different methods to determine which deaths "count" for purposes of violent crime. For example, since 1967, Great Britain has excluded from its homicide counts any case that does not result in a conviction, that was the result of dangerous driving, or in which the person was determined to have acted in self-defense. All of these factors are counted as "homicides" in the United States.

Legally owned firearms are used for lawful purposes much more often than they are used to commit crimes or suicide.

- In 2013, President Barack Obama ordered the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to assess existing research on gun violence. The report, compiled by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council, found (among other things) that firearms are used defensively hundreds of thousands of times every year.
- According to the CDC, "self-defense can be an important crime deterrent." Recent CDC reports acknowledge that studies directly assessing the effect of actual defensive uses of guns have found "consistently lower injury rates among gun-using crime victims compared with victims who used other self-protective strategies."
- Semi-automatic rifles (such as the AR-15) are commonly used as self-defense weapons in the homes of law-abiding citizens because they are easier to control than handguns, are more versatile than handguns, and offer the advantage of up to 30 rounds of protection. Even Vox has published stories defending the use of the AR-15.
- AR-15s have been used to save lives on many occasions [list omitted by WK]

Concealed carry permit holders are not the problem, but they may be

> **part of the solution.**
>
> - Noted criminologist John Lott found that, as a group, concealed carry permit holders are some of the most law-abiding people in the United States. The rate at which they commit crimes generally and firearm crimes specifically is between one-sixth and one-tenth of that recorded for police officers, who are themselves committing crimes at a fraction of the rate of the general population.
> - Between 2007 and 2015, murder rates dropped 16 percent and violent crime rates dropped 18 percent, even though the percentage of adults with concealed carry permits rose by 190 percent.
> - Regression estimates show a significant association between increased permit ownership and a drop in murder and violent crime rates. Each percentage point increase in rates of permit-holding is associated with a roughly 2.5 percent drop in the murder rate.
> - Concealed carry permit holders are often “the good guy with a gun,” even though they rarely receive the attention of the national media. Concealed carry permit holders were credited with saving multiple lives [list omitted by WK]

So, I think that those points provide a very necessary balance for the “ban guns” crowd. Gun ownership is a vital part of a free citizen’s right to self-defense. People who want to discuss gun confiscation vs self-defense need to be aware of the way guns are really used by law-abiding people to protect themselves and their families.

Who is better on health care? Republicans (Ted Cruz) or Democrats (Bernie Sanders)?

November 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that the Democrats are trying to focus on health care in the 2018 mid-terms, so I thought I would re-post a debate on health care between Ted Cruz and Bernie Sanders. I think debates are always a good idea, because you have to listen to both sides. If you can't watch the full debate, there's a good article summarizing the main points further down.

Here is the full video:

It's 90 minutes long. No commercials. This was basically a debate of similar substance to the William Lane Craig debates, where actual economic evidence was *continuously produced* in order to show who was telling the truth, and who was just trying to be popular by saying what people who are uneducated at economics want to hear. In short: there was a clear winner and loser in this debate, and it was clear all the way through, and was reinforced over and over every time evidence was produced. The person producing the evidence would turn his back on the camera, and return to his podium to get the evidence. That person won the debate by being grounded in reality.

Also, the questions were excellent, especially from the small business owners who were impacted by Obamacare. The moderators were biased towards Sanders, but not excessively.

For those who cannot watch, there is an article at the Daily Signal.

Full text:

> In a prime-time debate on CNN this week, Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Ted Cruz, R-Texas, discussed "The Future of Obamacare" in America. Cruz, a leading critic of the law, used the moment to outline the law's failures.
>
> Here are four things Cruz said about Obamacare:
>
> 1) "Now, nobody thinks we're done once Obamacare is repealed. Once Obamacare is repealed, we need commonsense reform that increases competition, that empowers patients, that gives you more choices, that puts you in charge of your health care, rather than empowering government bureaucrats to get in the way. And these have been commonsense ideas."
>
> 2) "Indeed, I don't know if the cameras can see this, but in 70 percent of the counties in America, on Obamacare exchanges, you have a choice of one or two health insurance plans, that's it … It's interesting. You look at this map, this also very much looks like the electoral map that elected Donald Trump. It's really quite striking that the communities that have been hammered by this disaster of a law said enough already."
>
> During one of the more powerful moments in the debate, Cruz held up aHeritage

> Foundation chart showing viewers how many counties in the U.S. have access to only one or two insurers under Obamacare. Additionally, only 11 percent of counties have access to four or more insurance providers.
>
> 3) “Whenever you put government in charge of health care, what it means is they ration. They decide you get care and you don’t. I don’t think the government has any business telling you you’re not entitled to receive health care.”
>
> The U.S. should not envy other health care systems, especially Canada and the United Kingdom, Cruz said. He referred to a governor from Canada who came to the U.S. specifically to have heart surgery.
>
> 4) “That’s why I think the answer is not more of Obamacare, more government control, more of what got us in this mess. Rather, the answer is empower you. Give you choices. Lower prices. Lower premiums. Lower deductibles. Empower you and put you back in charge of your health care.”
>
> Obamacare is burdening Americans. The average deductible for a family on a bronze plan is $12,393, according to a HealthPocket analysis. According to aneHealth report, the average nationwide premium increase for individuals is 99 percent and 140 percent for families from 2013-2017.

I really recommend you watch this debate, because it these things were done on a weekly or monthly basis, then people would be able to think critically about what they are presented with from the mainstream media, Hollywood elites and liberal academics.

Why should an independent voter vote Republican in the mid-terms?

November 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

After Trump tax cuts, real GDP growth far exceeds Obama years

I have a friend in Canada who asks me about American politics. For some reason, the first things out of my mouth are always the latest scandals about Democrats. I am just getting started when she says "no, no, no… don't tell me why I shouldn't vote Democrat. Tell me why I should vote Republican." Well, there are three good reasons to vote Republican. Job creation, law and order, national security.

Let's look at the first one. The latest economic numbers came in last week, and they were very good for the country, and for the Republicans.

The Washington Post reported on the numbers:

> Hiring surged and wages grew more than they have in almost a decade, the government said Friday in a report seized on by Republicans just before the midterm elections as evidence their policies are delivering for American workers.
>
> In a key economic snapshot before Tuesday's vote, the Labor Department's monthly jobs report showed that the typical worker's earnings rose by 3.1 percent in the past year — the biggest such leap since 2009.
>
> Federal economists reported 250,000 new jobs in October, the 97th straight month of gains, and the unemployment rate remained at a nearly half-century low of 3.7 percent, underlining the strong fundamentals of the economy, despite stock market jitters.
>
> […]The strong jobs creation last month defied expectations, even by Trump's top economist, Kevin Hassett, who said he had been bracing for a dip in hiring after Hurricane Michael pummeled the Florida panhandle and Georgia.
>
> "We were expecting a number way below this, so it was a big surprise," Hassett said. "We've got extraordinary job growth even in the face of literal head winds from a hurricane."
>
> […]Every major sector added employees, including manufacturing, where there

> has been evidence that the tariffs are starting to bite. Hispanic unemployment hit a new low of 4.4 percent.
>
> "This is the best labor environment in over a decade," said Joseph Brusuelas, chief economist at RSM U.S., an international consulting firm.
>
> African American unemployment, at 6.2 percent, is close to an all-time low, although it still remains nearly double the white unemployment rate.

Investors Business Daily, a national newspaper focused on the stock market, recalls what things were like during 8 years of socialism under Barack Obama:

> During the Obama years, labor force growth slowed to well below 1% a year, while productivity grew at just 1%. Wage growth was exceedingly slow. These alone explain why the economy never managed 3% growth in any year during Obama's time in office.
>
> "Under President Obama, the growth in the labor force … slowed dramatically to less than half the rate of the previous four presidencies," as Real Clear Markets described the Obama record in early 2017, as his second term ended. "The labor-force participation rate has dropped to its lowest level in decades, 62.8% compared to a peak of 67.1% in the late 1990s."
>
> Why did this happen? High taxes, excessive regulation, ObamaCare, Dodd-Frank, wasteful "stimulus," and a host of other misbegotten policies that sped up departures from the labor force and curbed business investment.
>
> The declining labor participation rate, in particular, hurt. Labor force growth during the Obama era was a meager 0.4% a year. At the same time, productivity grew less than 1% a year. Meanwhile, as the New York Times recently admitted, an "invisible" recession in business investment hit the economy in 2014 and lasted until 2016.

But what changed? What did Trump do differently?

> […][A]t the same time the wage data came out, another equally telling report emerged: Productivity. It showed that productivity grew 2.2% in the third quarter, after jumping 3% in the second quarter. That was the fastest burst of productivity growth in four years.
>
> By comparison, since World War II, productivity has grown by an average of about 2% a year. It was why the American economy performed so well during that time. But since the end of the Internet boom in 2000, productivity has slowed to about 1% or so.
>
> […]Productivity typically begins rising when businesses invest in new equipment and training for their workers, in pursuit of new products, new markets, new innovations. Productivity, as the cliche goes, is the secret sauce of all successful economies.
>
> And productivity is the real reason why workers are getting wage hikes. Trained

> workers are worth more in our new, fast-growth economy.
>
> But beyond even that, as economists will tell you, the rate of growth of productivity, the rate of growth of business investment and the rate of growth of your labor force essentially define the speed limit of your economy. All three are rising right now.

Trump's plan was to cut the corporate tax rate, cut individual tax rates, cut small business tax rates, and de-regulate the economy. That worked. Workers learned more, earned more, and kept more of what they earned. Trump bet everything on America's risk-taking entrepreneurs, and he won. Bigly.

What would Democrats do if they win the House on Tuesday (which is likely)? They want to make workers more expensive to hire, by raising the minimum wage. Their plan is to take money away from job creators, in order to bribe young, low-information voters to vote Democrat.

Investors Business Daily explains:

> In California, New York, and other states where the $15 minimum wage has been adopted, we've seen dozens of businesses — many of them small businesses — close because a wage hike is simply unaffordable. Others have raised their prices or laid off employees to cope with the higher wage floor. Take Reaching Beyond Care, a child-care provider in Oakland, which was converted to a part-time after-school program. Or consider Long Island's Tropical Smoothie Cafe, which "now schedules one less person per hour and expects employees to work faster."
>
> We're talking jobs, jobs, and more lost jobs. In California, a $15 minimum wage is expected to cost the state as many as 400,000 jobs. It's a similar story in cities like Seattle, and Flagstaff, Ariz. Are unemployed workers truly better off when hourly wages increase?

Independent voters tend to be more practical and numbers-driven than members of either party. Their demand? Show us the money. Well, we had lots of time to observe how the policies of Democrats worked under Obama, and where the Democrats in Democrat-run cities want to take us. And we also know what works, because Trump has done it for all to see. If you want to have job security, more productivity, higher wages, and keep more of what you earn, then vote Republican. Vote for what works. Not for what feels good.

Trump re-imposes sanctions on Iran, leading sponsor of Islamic terrorism

November 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Obama stopped all sanctions on Iran, and gave them $1.7 billion, putting Israel at risk
Which mistake was Obama's worst? Was it causing people to lose their doctors? Was it raising their health care premiums by thousands? Doubling the national debt from 10 to 20 trillion dollars? Those mistakes can all be reversed. But what about Iran, the largest sponsor of terrorism in the world? Obama ended sanctions on Iran, and sent them $1.7 billion to help them to develop nuclear weapons. How do you reverse that?

Well, that's hard to fix.You might be curious about what Iran is doing with all that money. Well, they are involved in fighting the West in various places like Syria and Yemen, and they also sponsor terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

Here's an example of some of their recent work, as reported by the radically leftist Washington Post:

> Denmark is leading a push for new E.U. sanctions against Iran, after its intelligence agencies blamed Tehran for a foiled plot to assassinate an Iranian dissident on Danish soil. The plot was already uncovered in September and triggered a massive police operation, in which Denmark shut down streets and bridges nationwide.
>
> Agencies revealed only this week that the operation probably had prevented what they say was a plan to kill a member of the Arab separatist movement ASMLA, which advocates for carving out an independent Arab state from Iran. A suspect of Iranian origin was arrested two weeks ago.

Recall that Obama had to shut down an investigation of Iran's involvement with drug smuggling in order to get his deal passed.

It came out recently that Obama was so desperate to give the Iranian regime this money, that he actually stopped an investigation into drug-smuggling by Iran's terrorist ally, Hezbollah.

The Stream reports on the story:

> President Barack Obama torpedoed a DEA-led effort to stop Hezbollah from smuggling cocaine into the country. POLITICO broke the bombshell news Sunday night. The reason for allowing the Iran-backed terror group's criminal enterprise to continue? Obama's desperate desire for better relations and a nuclear deal with Iran.
>
> The DEA teamed with dozens of agencies here and abroad in 2008 after discovering Hezbollah had grown beyond Middle East politics and thuggery into international crime. The special task force was called Project Cassandra. For eight years Project Cassandra worked to unravel Hezbollah's drug and weapons trafficking, money laundering and other criminal activities.
>
> […]Project Cassandra traced the crime syndicate to "the innermost circle of Hezbollah and its state sponsors in Iran."

What should Trump do to roll back the damage that Obama did?

Well, Trump already started by withdrawing from Obama's Iran deal, but he can't get back that $1.7 billion. That money is gone. But there is something else he can do… he can restore the sanctions against Iran that Obama lifted.

Here is the latest news about the Trump administration, reported by the NY Post:

> Secretary of State Mike Pompeo argued that the new Iran sanctions – going into effect one day before the U.S. midterm elections – are tough enough to keep the Islamic Republic from pursuing a nuclear weapon.
>
> "No one is going to argue that Secretary Pompeo isn't hard on Iran and no one is going to argue that President Trump isn't doing the same," Pompeo told Chris Wallace on "Fox News Sunday."
>
> […]"The Iranian banks that engage in sanctionable behavior will be sanctioned by the Department of Treasury, period, full stop."
>
> […]On "Face the Nation" Pompeo confirmed that "European countries will not be permitted to do business with both the United States and with Iran."
>
> […]The Trump administration is reimposing a second round of sanctions against Iran on Monday after the president withdrew in May from the Iran nuclear deal, which was brokered by former President Obama.

This all sounds good to me – at least America is leading from the front and battling against evil, using a mix of diplomacy, sanctions and military preparedness. Iran

understands strength, and they'll be much less likely to pursue terrorism, drug smuggling and assassinations now. It really does matter who is in charge. People who care about the harm that evil nations cause should vote for Republicans, so that evil nations are deterred instead of emboldened.

Today, your vote will make a difference in these 14 close Senate races

November 6, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Leans Dem	Toss Up	Leans GOP
MI: Stabenow (D)	AZ: Open (R)	TN: Open (R)
MN2: Smith (D)	FL: Nelson (D)	TX: Cruz (R)
NJ: Menendez (D)	IN: Donnelly (D)	
WI: Baldwin (D)	MO: McCaskill (D)	
OH: Brown (D)	MT: Tester (D)	
	NV: Heller (R)	
	WV: Manchin (D)	

Toss-up Senate races to be decided on Tuesday (Source: RCP)
I think it's almost beyond dispute that the Republicans will lose the House of Representatives on Tuesday, but the Senate is still in the balance. Above is a list of the toss-up Senate races. If you are in one of these states then you really need to vote today.

Republican candidates (by state)

- **Arizona**: Martha McSally
- **Florida**: Rick Scott
- **Indiana**: Mike Braun
- **Michigan**: John James
- **Minnesota**: Karin Housley
- **Missouri**: Josh Hawley
- **Montana**: Matt Rosendale
- **Nevada**: Dean Heller
- **New Jersey**: Bob Hugin
- **Ohio**: Jim Renacci
- **Tennessee**: Marsha Blackburn
- **Texas**: Ted Cruz
- **West Virginia**: Patrick Morrissey
- **Wisconsin**: Leah Vukmir

When I look over this list, the names that really stand out to me are Ted Cruz and Marsha Blackburn – two conservatives with proven records on pretty much everything I care about. But there are also some interesting new candidates, especially John James. He's in a tight race against Debbie Stabenow, a career politician.

John James is an Apache helicopter pilot and business owner

Fox News talked about him a bit in an article about the 5 of the races where the underdog has a chance at defeating the entrenched incumbent:

> Ahead of Election Day, Republican John James gained steam in his quest to unseat longtime incumbent Sen. Debbie Stabenow. The Michigan Democrat has held her seat since 2001 and led James by double digits last month — but recent polling reflects a tightening race.
>
> Both an EPIC-MRA poll and a Mitchell Research & Communications poll from late October showed Stabenow in the lead by just 7 points. An Emerson poll had her up by 9 points. In comparison, an EPIC-MRA poll had Stabenow ahead by 23 points in September.
>
> "John James is giving 43-year politician Debbie Stabenow the fight of her political life, and there's zero question she'll be running scared these final days," Tori Sachs, James' campaign manager, told Fox News in a statement.
>
> Jake Davison, the editor of Inside Michigan Politics, told Fox News that James, an Army veteran, is "an absolute star" who has "the base really fired up."
>
> James has been endorsed by President Trump and multiple people in his administration have hit the campaign trail for the Republican candidate. The Ending Spending Action Fund super PAC, funded by GOP mega-donors, also launched a $1 million advertising campaign buy for James ahead of the election as strategists told Politico the race is closer than some may expect.
>
> Fox News has ranked the race as likely Democrat.

If you're in Michigan, you really need to make an effort to get this man elected on Tuesday. We rarely get rock star candidates like this, and we need to pull out all the stops to send him to the Senate.

Surprisingly, James isn't the only pilot we're running – we also have former squadron

leader Martha McSally, who flew the A-10 Thunderbolt in combat. She's running for Senate in Arizona. Her race is currently a toss-up, because her radically leftist opponent is pretending to be a Republican in spite of her hard-left record.

Patrick Morissey in West Virginia is also seeing a late surge against Joe Manchin, who voted against de-funding Planned Parenthood.

Why should you vote Republican?

Famous conservative Ben Shapiro, an orthodox Jew, listed 10 reasons why people should vote conservative, for Real Clear Politics.

His list:

1. The Courts
2. The Investigations
3. Impeachment
4. The Economy
5. Foreign Policy
6. Polarizing Culture Wars
7. Attacks on Religious Liberty
8. The Twisting Of Social Media
9. The Democrat-Media Complex
10. Mob Rule

The ones I care the most about are the courts and religious liberty. I do not want to be compelled by leftists (whose salaries I pay with my taxes) to act as if I am a secular leftist. I am not a secular leftist, and I want to be able to work and save without having to *act like* a secular leftist.

Let's look at some of his points:

> 6. Polarizing Culture Wars. We've already seen the Democrats suggest that mob politics is the new normal. We've seen the Democrats capitalize on racial issues to polarize the country; we've seen them try to divide Americans by class and sex as well. With the platform of Congress, look for Democrats to attempt a series of divisive maneuvers intended to relaunch the culture wars in new and frightening ways.
>
> 8. The Twisting Of Social Media. Democrats have made a habit of threatening our biggest social media companies with investigations and regulations should they fail to crack down on conservative perspectives. Democrats, angry at Hillary Clinton's 2016 loss, blamed companies like Facebook for so-called "fake news," and attributed Clinton's utter incompetence to the impact of Russian bots. Democrats don't believe any of that, but they've frightened social media companies into cracking down on free speech, as a leaked report from Google to Breitbart News showed this week. Social media companies are deeply afraid of

> Democrats punishing them for failing to target conservatives. Don't be surprised if those social media companies escalate their efforts to do just that.
>
> 9. Radical Growth of the Democrat-Media Complex. We already know that the mainstream media institutions are dominated by Democratic supporters. And we know that those Democratic supporters will parrot any talking points the Democratic Party pushes. But with Democrats in power pushing every line of attack simultaneously, the media's never-ending firehose of anti-Republican propaganda will merely widen the nozzle. If you're worried about media bias now, wait until Democrats control the Congress and put President Trump in their sights.
>
> 10. Mob Rule. Democrats believe that they must lash out in anger in order to win in 2018. If they do win, they'll double down on that anger, hoping it carries them to victory in 2020. Like the mobs invading the Senate and the steps of the Supreme Court? Enjoying top Democratic officials nodding and smiling at crowds harassing Republicans in restaurants? Get ready for much, much more. The only way to shut down the Democrats' new mob rule strategy is to stop them cold at the ballot box.

Think about the way that things have been going in the culture. The secular left owns the public schools, higher education, Hollywood, hedge funds, the mainstream media, big government, the courts… they occupy all of the commanding heights of culture. If you think that they won't use that power to coerce you, you're mistaken. And you only have to look at what happens to Christians and conservatives in Europe, Canada and other countries where the left rules. Be sure that you take time to vote today, and share something on your wall to encourage everyone you know to vote as well.

Is asking “Am I going to Hell?” a good rebuttal to scientific arguments for theism?

November 7, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

I want to use this woman’s story to show how sensible atheists reach a belief in God.

Excerpt:

> I don’t know when I first became a skeptic. It must have been around age 4, when my mother found me arguing with another child at a birthday party: “But how do you know what the Bible says is true?” By age 11, my atheism was so widely known in my middle school that a Christian boy threatened to come to my house and “shoot all the atheists.” My Christian friends in high school avoided talking to me about religion because they anticipated that I would tear down their poorly constructed arguments. And I did.
>
> As I set off in 2008 to begin my freshman year studying government at Harvard (whose motto is *Veritas*, “Truth”), I could never have expected the change that awaited me.
>
> It was a brisk November when I met John Joseph Porter. Our conversations initially revolved around conservative politics, but soon gravitated toward religion. He wrote an essay for the *Ichthus*, Harvard’s Christian journal, defending God’s existence. I critiqued it. On campus, we’d argue into the wee hours; when apart, we’d take our arguments to e-mail. Never before had I met a Christian who could respond to my most basic philosophical questions: How does one understand the Bible’s contradictions? Could an omnipotent God make a stone he could not lift? What about the Euthyphro dilemma: Is something good because God declared it so, or does God merely identify the good? To someone like me, with no Christian background, resorting to an answer like “It takes faith” could

> only be intellectual cowardice. Joseph didn't do that.
>
> And he did something else: He prodded me on how inconsistent I was as an atheist who nonetheless believed in right and wrong as objective, universal categories. Defenseless, I decided to take a seminar on meta-ethics. After all, atheists had been developing ethical systems for 200-some years. In what I now see as providential, my atheist professor assigned a paper by C. S. Lewis that resolved the Euthyphro dilemma, declaring, "God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God."
>
> Joseph also pushed me on the origins of the universe. I had always believed in the Big Bang. But I was blissfully unaware that the man who first proposed it, Georges Lemaître, was a Catholic priest. And I'd happily ignored the rabbit trail of a problem of what *caused* the Big Bang, and what *caused* that cause, and so on.
>
> By Valentine's Day, I began to believe in God. There was no intellectual shame in being a deist, after all, as I joined the respectable ranks of Thomas Jefferson and other Founding Fathers.
>
> I wouldn't stay a deist for long. A Catholic friend gave me J. Budziszewski's book Ask Me Anything, which included the Christian teaching that "love is a commitment of the will to the true good of the other person." This theme—of love as sacrifice for true good—struck me. The Cross no longer seemed a grotesque symbol of divine sadism, but a remarkable act of love. And Christianity began to look less strangely mythical and more cosmically beautiful.

So, I want to point out the progression of her beliefs from atheist to deist to Christian. First, she listened to the scientific arguments for God's existence, which took her to deism, which is a variety of theism where God just creates the universe and then doesn't interfere with it after. Those arguments, the Big Bang and the cosmic fine-tuning, were enough for her to falsify atheism and prove some sort of theism. After that, she remained open to the evidence for Christian theism, and finally got there after looking at other evidence.

But this makes me think of how some of the atheists that I talk to do the exact opposite of what she did. I start off by explaining to them scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer. I explain the mainstream discoveries that confirm an origin of the universe (e.g. – light element abundance predictions and observations), and I cite specific examples of fine-tuning, (e.g. – the gravitational constant). I explain protein sequencing and folding, and calculate the probabilities of getting a protein by chance. I explain the sudden origin of the phyla in the Cambrian explosion, and show why naturalistic explanations fail. I talk about the fine-tuning needed to get galaxies, solar systems and planets to support life. But many of these atheists don't become deists like the honest atheist in the story. Why not?

Well, the reason why not is because they interrupt the stream of scientific evidence coming out of my mouth and they start to ask me questions that have nothing to do with what we can know through science. See, evangelism is like building a house. You have to

start with the foundation, the walls, the plumbing, the electricity, etc., but you can't know all the specific details about furniture and decorations at the beginning. But militant atheists don't care that you are able to establish the foundations of Christian theism – they want to jump right to the very fine-grained details, and use that to justify not not building anything at all. Just as you are proving all the main planks of a theistic worldview with science, they start asking "am I going to Hell?" and telling you "God is immoral for killing Canaanite children", etc. They want to stop the construction of the house by demanding that you build everything at once. But, it is much easier to accept miracles like the virgin birth if you have a God who created the universe first. The foundation comes first, it makes the later stuff easier to do.

So rather than adjust their worldview to the strong scientific evidence, and then leave the puzzling about Hell and Old Testament history for later, they want to refute the good scientific arguments with "Am I going to Hell?". How does complaining about Hell and unanswered prayer a response to *scientific evidence*? It's not! But I think that this does explain why atheists remain atheists in the face of all the scientific evidence against naturalism. They insulate their worldview from the progress of science by focusing on their emotional disappointment that they are not God and that God isn't doing what they want him to do. That's the real issue. Authority and autonomy. In my experience, they are usually not accountable to science, although there are, thank God, exceptions to that rule.

Stop telling women that God will give them husbands later if they delay marriage now

November 8, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

Dalrock blogged a splendid post about people who claim that there is a shortage of "good men". He says that if there really were a shortage of good men, then people who want women to actually get married would be telling women not to delay marriage, but to instead get serious about marrying early, when their ability to attract husband candidates is at its peak.

Dalrock writes:

> We can see the same pattern in Dr. John Piper's recent post Why Are Women More Eager Missionaries?* Piper explains that missionary work has become a pink ghetto:
>
> …the actual situation among most evangelical faith missions is that between 80–85% of all single missionaries are women. It is a rare thing, like two out of every ten, for a single man to make missions his life's vocation, which results in the overall statistics being that one-third of those in evangelical world missions are married men, one-third are married women, and 80 percent of the last third are single women. Which means that something just less than two-thirds of the total missionary force are women.
>
> **Piper's main concern with the post however is not that there aren't enough single men doing missionary work, but that women who choose this field aren't marrying as they would like. Piper complains that the problem for husband hunting missionary women is really an exacerbated version of the same problem all Christian women have, and that is an overall lack of marriageable Christian men…**

I'll save you the quotation of Piper, but his reason why missionary women struggle to find husbands is – SHOCK! – that Christian men refuse to man up. I.e – Piper believes that women can't find husbands because men are not ready and willing to marry.

More:

> **But if Piper actually believed… that there was a severe shortage of husband material men, he would focus his attention on helping the women reading navigate this incredibly difficult situation. Overseas mission work may feel empowering for young women, but (according to Piper) single women going into the mission field are greatly handicapping their prospects in an already bleak field. His advice to young women would be to choose which was truly more important to them, being a missionary or finding a husband.**

If Piper really believed that there were a shortage of marriage-minded, marriage-capable Christian men, then Piper would be counseling women who *genuinely* want to marry to make marriage a priority when they are younger, prettier and more fertile. Some women say that they want to get married "some day". But the hidden truth is often that they just want to delay marriage in order to have fun and thrills, until they get tired of it. And then they just expect a suitable man to show up right when they need one. But do men want to marry a 35-year-old woman when they are 40 as much as they want to marry a 23-year-old woman when they are 25?

More Dalrock:

> Piper even tells a story which would be a perfect way to teach this lesson. He describes a single woman named Gladys Aylward who went to a place where she found no marriageable men, and then blamed single men for not following her and proposing marriage:
>
> "Miss Aylward talked to the Lord about her singleness. She was a no-nonsense woman in very direct and straightforward ways and she asked God to call a man from England, send him straight out to China, straight to where she was, and have him propose to me." I can't forget the next line. Elisabeth Elliot said, "With a look of even deeper intensity, she shook her little bony finger in my face and said, 'Elisabeth, I believe God answers prayer. And he called him.'" And here there was a brief pause of intense whisper. She said, "'He called him, and he never came.'"
>
> Now, that experience, I would guess, is not unique to Gladys Aylward.
>
> **If Piper really believed that Christian husbands were scarce, he would be sharing this anecdote to warn young women of the foolishness of moving away from the pool of men they hope to choose a husband from and then expecting God to send the man of their choosing across the world to propose. If we were in a culture of scarcity of good men, this would be the *obvious* lesson from this story. But we live in an age with**

> **unshakable confidence that good men are not only available all around us, but will always be abundant. If Piper believed that the husband Miss Aylward was praying for was surrounded by real life English women eager to win him as a husband, this story wouldn't be complaining about why he didn't drop everything, fly to China, and propose to a woman he had never met. If Piper believed that the man was sought after as a husband in England, he would be pointing out the foolishness of Miss Aylward flying off to China and then wondering why a man she had never met didn't show up to propose once she decided she wanted to marry.**

Miss Aylward either needed to accept that being a missionary in a secular country meant not marrying, or she needed to focus on marriage first when she was attractive to men as a life partner. Many women are propositioned for sex after they hit their mid-30s, but few of them are asked to marry. This is because men need women more when they are just starting out in their careers than when they are established in their careers.

Many women have no appreciation of how investing in a husband early causes him to be loyal to her when she is older. Women think that a husband will show up when she is ready, and be loyal to her even though she was absent during the hardships of the first decade of his career. A woman can do a lot of good for a man when he is starting out in his career and trying to save money for a house. But when those years have passed, the man's ability to work and save have been largely set – without anyone's help. If he went through those years single, then he typically will have earned less and saved less than a married man, because he did it without a wife's support. Men do better in their careers and finances when they have a wife's support. Especially in the early career, which is more stressful because of the lack of work experience. If a woman wants a man to be faithful and loyal, then she needs to choose a man who needs her, and invest in him using her youth and beauty to support him during his critical 20s and early 30s. Men respond to support during the critical years with lifelong fidelity and loyalty.

By the way, for an explanation of why men prefer not to be missionaries, read this post on Deeper Strength blog.

A Harvard University student explains how evidence changed her mind about God

November 9, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Harvard University student discovers apologetics

Here's a must-read article about the effectiveness of apologetics on college campuses in Christianity Today.

Excerpt:

> I don't know when I first became a skeptic. It must have been around age 4, when my mother found me arguing with another child at a birthday party: "But how do you know what the Bible says is true?" By age 11, my atheism was so widely known in my middle school that a Christian boy threatened to come to my house and "shoot all the atheists." My Christian friends in high school avoided talking to me about religion because they anticipated that I would tear down their poorly constructed arguments. And I did.
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> It was a brisk November when I met John Joseph Porter. Our conversations initially revolved around conservative politics, but soon gravitated toward religion. He wrote an essay for the *Ichthus*, Harvard's Christian journal, defending God's existence. I critiqued it. On campus, we'd argue into the wee hours; when apart, we'd take our arguments to e-mail. Never before had I met a Christian who could respond to my most basic philosophical questions: How does one

> understand the Bible's contradictions? Could an omnipotent God make a stone he could not lift? What about the Euthyphro dilemma: Is something good because God declared it so, or does God merely identify the good? To someone like me, with no Christian background, resorting to an answer like "It takes faith" could only be intellectual cowardice. Joseph didn't do that.
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Now, I'm going to get into a lot of trouble for saying this, but I think that if you are a Christian and you are in a secular university, then you really need to have put in the effort to study the areas of science, history and philosophy that are relevant to the Christian faith. This is regardless of your personal abilities or field of study. We must all make an effort regardless of how comfortable we are with things that are hard for us to learn.

Granted, most people today are not interested in truth, because we just have this cultural preoccupation with having fun and feeling good and doing whatever we want to do whenever we want to do it. Most atheists I've met are like that, but some are more honest, open-minded, and they just have never encountered any good reasons or evidence to think that God exists and that Jesus is anything other than a man. There are a lot of atheists like that who are just waiting to hear some decent evidence. Our job is to prepare for them and then engage them, if they are willing to be engaged.

I think that definition of love she cited – self-sacrifice for the true good of another person – is important. I don't think that ordinary Christians like you or me spends time on apologetics because we "like" it. I know lots of Christians who are in tough, expensive

academic programs trying to get the skills they need to defend truth in areas that matter. They do this because they know that there are people out there who are interested in truth, and who are willing to re-prioritize their lives if the truth is made clear to them. We need to be willing to serve God by doing hard things that work.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Jim Wallis debates Jay Richards on Christianity and economics

November 10, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I have the video of a debate on the topic of what Christians should think about economics and economic policies. In addition to the video, I summarized the two opening speeches and the two rebuttals, for those who prefer to read rather than watch. We'll start with a short biography about each of the debaters.

The video recording:

The debaters

Jay Richards:

> Jay Richards, Ph.D., is a Senior Fellow of the Discovery Institute where he directs the Center on Wealth, Poverty and Morality, and is a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Faith, Work & Economics. Most recently he is the co-author with James Robison of the best-selling *Indivisible: Restoring Faith, Family, and Freedom Before It's Too Late".*
>
> In addition to writing many academic articles, books, and popular essays on a wide variety of subjects, he recently edited the new award winning anthology, *God & Evolution: Protestants, Catholics and Jews Explore Darwin's Challenge to Faith* . His previous book was *Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem* (HarperOne, May 2009), for which he received a Templeton Enterprise Award in 2010.
>
> […]In recent years, he has been a Contributing Editor of The American at the American Enterprise Institute, a Visiting Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, and a Research Fellow and Director of Acton Media at the Acton Institute. Richards has a B.A. with majors in Political Science and Religion, an M.Div. (Master of Divinity) and a Th.M. (Master of Theology), and a Ph.D. (with honors) in philosophy and theology from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Jim Wallis:

> Jim Wallis (born June 4, 1948) is a Christian writer and political activist. He is best known as the founder and editor of *Sojourners* magazine and as the founder of the Washington, D.C.-based Christian community of the same name. Wallis is well known for his advocacy on issues of peace and social justice. […]He works as a spiritual advisor to President Barack Obama.
>
> […]In 2010, Wallis admitted to accepting money for Sojourners from philanthropist George Soros after initially denying having done so. […]In 2011, Wallis acknowledged that Sojourners had received another $150,000.00 from Soros' Open Society Foundation.

Wallis just came out this month in favor of gay marriage. He is also a strong supporter of Barack Obama, who is radically pro-abortion. Some pro-lifers have argued that Barack Obama has the same views on abortion as Kermit Gosnell, because Obama voted twice to allow abortions on babies who were already born alive.

The format of the debate

- 20 minute opening speeches
- 10 minute rebuttals
- 10 minutes of discussion
- Q&A for the remainder

SUMMARY

I use italics below to denote my own observations.

Jim Wallis' opening speech:

My goal is to spark a national conversation on the "common good".

A story about my son who plays baseball.

The central goal of Christianity is to promote the "common good".

Quotes "Catholic social teaching" which values "human flourishing".

The "common good" is "human flourishing".

Is the purpose of Christianity is to make sure that everyone has enough material stuff or to preach the gospel?

When Christians go on mission trips, it's good that they focus on things like human trafficking.

Democrat John Lewis is the "conscience of the U.S. Congress".

John Lewis gets a 0% rating from the American Conservative Union in 2012.

John Lewis gets a 8% rating from the American Conservative Union in 2011.

John Lewis gets a 2.29% lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union.

Nothing is going well in Washington right now except comprehensive immigration reform.

Does he think that Christianity means giving 20-30 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship, while skilled engineers cannot even get green cards, even though there is a shortage of them? Does he think that the other people in society who earn more than they receive from the government ought to be taxed more in order to provide more services and benefits to those who earn less than they take from the government?

Jay Richards' opening speech:

Two topics: 1) what is the common good? 2) what should Christians do to promote the common good?

Catholicism defines the "common good" as "Indeed, the common good embraces the sum of those conditions of the social life whereby men, families and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection."

We have natural ends that we are supposed to be achieving and some places, like South Korea, are better for allowing that to happen.

The common good is broader and prior to any sort of political specification.

It's not the political good or what the state is supposed to do.

It's not about the communal good, as in Soviet Russia, where the communal good was above individual and familial good.

The common good is the social conditions that promote the things that we humans have in common as individuals and members of family.

The common good takes account of who we are as individuals and in associations with other individuals, e.g. – families.

Christians don't have to be doing the same things to promote the common good, e.g. – pastors, entrepreneurs, etc.

The church, as the church, has as its primary goal making disciples of all nations.

But even in that capacity, the church should be interested in more than just conversions and saving souls.

We also have to care about God's created reality including things like physics, education, etc.

How should Christians promote the common good in politics?

Question: when is coercion warranted?

In Romans 13, Paul says that the state does have power to coerce to achieve certain ends, like justice.

Most Christians think that there are some things where the state can use coercion, for example, to prevent/punish murder.

It is OK for the police to use coercive force to maintain public order and the rule of law.

But we need to ask whether other things are legitimate areas for the state to use coercive force.

We should only give the state power to coerce when there is no other way to achieve a goal.

We need to leverage the science of economics in order to know how to achieve the common good.

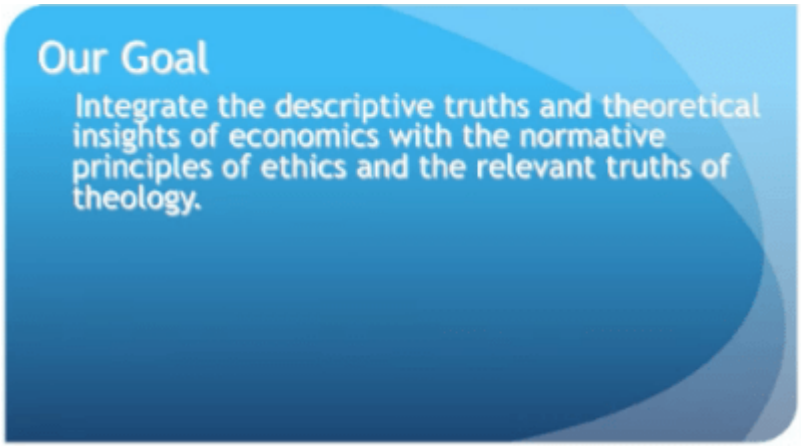

Jay Richards' main point in the debate

Henry Hazlitt: "The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups."

For example, what happens if we raise the federal minimum wage to $50. What happens next for all groups? That's what we need to ask in order to know which policies achieve the common good.

When it comes to economics a lot of things have been tried in other places and times.

We can know what works and doesn't work by studying what was tried before and in other places.

Many things are counter-intuitive – things that sound good don't work, things that sound bad do work.

Principle: "We are our brother's keeper". Christians have an obligation to care for their neighbors.

We all agree on the goal. But how do we do things that will achieve that goal?

We have to distinguish aspirations from principles and prudential judgment.

Principle: We should provide for the material needs of the poor.

Prudence: Seeing the world as it is, and acting accordingly.

Example policies: which minimum wage is best? None? $10? $20?

We decide based on seeing how different economic policies achieve the goal of helping the poor.

Jim Wallis' first rebuttal:

Jesus commanded us to "care for the poor and help to end poverty".

Actually, Jesus thought that acknowledging him and giving him sacrificial worship was more important than giving money to the poor, see Matthew 26:6-13:

[6] While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper,

[7] a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

[8] When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked.

[9] "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

[10] Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

[11] The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me.

[12] When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.

[13] Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

It's not clear to me whether Jim Wallis thinks that preaching is more important than redistributing wealth to address material inequality.

I like what Jesus said in a TV series, even though it's not in the Bible when an actor playing Jesus said to "change the world".

Jesus never said to "change the world" in the Bible. Should we be concerned that he is quoting a TV actor playing Jesus instead of Jesus.

Here is a terrific story about Bill Bright.

I love Catholic social teaching.

Quote: "All are responsible for all".

I go to the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland every year. I spoke once at 7 AM on the 4th floor.

It's a funny place for a Christian to be if they care about the poor – rubbing shoulders with leftist elites. He must have named a dozen high-profile people that he spoke with during the debate, as if he could win the debate by some sort of argument from name-dropping. He mentioned the Davos thing several times!

The greatest beneficiary of government actions to deal with the economic crisis was Wall Street banks.

I'm going to tell you a story about what a Washington lawyer says to Jesus.

I've had conversations with business leaders where I tell them to integrate moral truths.

I talk about the Good Samaritan parable.

Quote: "Do you love your undocumented neighbor?"

Quote: "Do you love your Muslim neighbor?"

Jay Richards' first rebuttal:

Who is responsible for your own children? Who knows the most about them?

Parents should have more discretion over their children because they have more knowledge about their child and what's best for them.

The Good Samaritan doesn't show that government should confiscate wealth through taxation and redistribute it.

The Good Samaritan emphasizes voluntarily charity to help people who are not necessarily your immediate neighbor.

Some of the things we do should be for the good of other people in other countries.

But then we are back to leveraging economics to know what policies are good for those other people in other countries.

The principle of subsidiarity: if a problem can be addressed by a lower level of society (family) then we shouldn't make higher levels (government) address it.

The best place to take care of children is within the family.

Only if the family fails should wider and wider spheres get involved.

Although we want to think of the common good in a global sense, we don't want to lose sight of the fact

The financial crisis: we need to integrate moral truths, but also economic truths.

We don't want to assume policies based on intuitions, we want to check our intuitions using economic principles.

Why did we have a financial crisis in mortgages, but not in commodities futures or technology, etc.?

Greed is a contributing factor in all areas of business.

Something more was going on in the mortgage markets than just greed.

There were specific policies that caused the mortgage lending crisis.

The root cause of the problem were "affordable housing policies" that lowered lending restrictions on low income people.

The policy ended up degrading the underwriting standards on loans.

Government intruded into the market and undermined the normal ways of

People were getting massive loans with no income, no jobs, no assets and no down payment.

The federal government created a market for risk loans by guaranteeing

There was a government imposed quota on mortgage lenders such that 50% of their loans had to be given to high-risk borrowers.

That is what led to the financial crisis. Not the free market, but intrusions into the free market.

These policies were well-meaning and implemented by people from both parties. But they had bad effects.

Marine Captain earned Medal of Honor fighting communists in North Korea

November 11, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's go from the top down to set the context for the profile of William E. Barber.

Map of the Korean War

In the summer of 1950, North Korean communists launch a completely unprovoked attack across the 38th parallel against their peaceful, democratic neighbors, the South Koreans. The Americans immediately sent an invasion force by sea to drive them out. The North Koreans easily manage to take over the capital Seoul, and the allies are left with only one port in the southeast – Pusan. In September of 1950, American forces land an invasion force at Inchon, cutting off the North Korean invasion force surrounding Pusan. The North Koreans retreat, and there is hope that American forces will be home by Christmas. But then, unbeknownst to the Americans, the Chines communists invade North Korea from the north and surround the American forces near the Chosin reservoir, threatening to annihilate an entire Marine division.

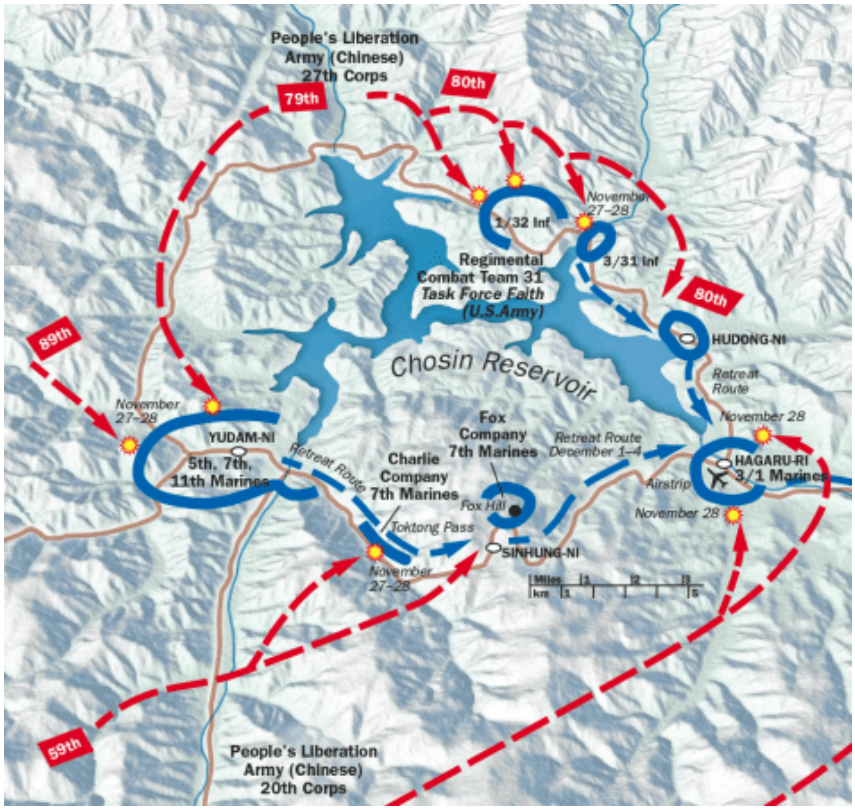

The Marines at Yudam-Ni are surrounded and must retreat to Hagaru-Ri

As you can see from the map, there are a whole bunch of American troops fighting to the north/east and south/west of the Chosin Reservoir. The marines near Yudam-Ni need to retreat along a road called the MSR (main supply road) back to Hagaru-Ri. But in order to conduct that retreat, they have to hold onto the vital Toktong pass, which is overwatched by Fox company from their position on Fox Hill. Can Charlie company and Fox company hold off the entire Chinese 59th division (10,000 men) with only two companies (about 250 men each)?

U.S. Marines “The Chosin Few”, December 1950

Well, the book I read (which Dina gave me for Christmas), was about Fox company and their defense of the Toktong pass. This is what the leftist New York Times had to say about the man in charge of Fox company (“F company”) in a 2002 article:

> Col. William E. Barber, who won the Medal of Honor for his leadership of a vastly outnumbered company under siege on a snowy hilltop in one of the worst defeats in Marine history, the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in 1950, died on April 19 at his home in Irvine, Calif. He was 82.
>
> The cause was bone-marrow cancer, said Jerry Courtier, a friend who hopes to write Colonel Barber’s biography.
>
> The reservoir is south of the Yalu River, which separates North Korea from China. After the Americans had pushed the North Koreans almost to the Yalu, 150,000 Chinese troops unexpectedly crossed the river into North Korea. Colonel Barber’s unit, Company F of the Second Battalion of the Seventh Marines, First Marine Division, was on a hill that commanded the Toktong Pass, a vital gap between Yudam Ni and Hagaru Ri, two towns separated by 78 miles.
>
> The stakes were huge. If F Company yielded its position, 8,000 marines at Yudam Ni would be cut off from the 3,000 at Haguru Ri by tens of thousands of Chinese troops.
>
> Through five days and six nights in subzero weather and often swirling snow, Colonel Barber, then a captain, inspired his men, outnumbered more than five to one, to cling to their tenuous positions. He was shot in a bone near his groin on the second day but continued to make the rounds of the hill. He likened the wound to a bee sting.
>
> When the unit was ordered to withdraw and fight its way to safety, Captain Barber refused. Three times, the enemy broke through the line, only to be repulsed.
>
> ”I knew that we could probably hold, and I knew that if we didn’t hold we could exact a very heavy toll,” he said in an interview in 1976 with The Los Angeles Times.
>
> His citation for the nation’s top medal said that he commanded his men from a stretcher. But Hector A. Cafferata Jr., who as a rifleman won the Medal of Honor in the same battle, insisted that Captain Barber refused the stretcher.
>
> ”He walked the line, he kept us together,” said Mr. Cafferata, who was beside Captain Barber when he was shot.
>
> In the mayhem, the Chinese blew whistles, beat cymbals and tooted bugles as they repeatedly attacked. Coffee froze before men could drink it, and some of the wounded died because plasma froze with no way to thaw it.
>
> When the battle was over, more than 1,000 enemy soldiers were dead. Of Captain Barber’s original 240 men, 82 were able to walk away.

> Gen. Raymond G. Davis, who was a lieutenant colonel in the Marines, received a Medal of Honor for leading the unit that rescued F Company.
>
> William Earl Barber was born on Nov. 30, 1919, in Dehart, Ky. He attended what is now Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky., for two years and enlisted in the Marines, at the age of 21, in 1940.
>
> He was so good at shooting a rifle that he was made a weapons instructor. After volunteering for parachute training, he demonstrated such proficiency that he became a parachute instructor.
>
> In World War II, he was promoted to sergeant in 1942 and commissioned a second lieutenant in 1943. He was a rifle platoon commander at Camp Pendleton, Calif., when his unit was shipped to the Pacific.
>
> Colonel Barber was in the first wave to hit Iwo Jima, where he was wounded twice. He received the Silver Star for bravery in addition to two Purple Hearts. At a ceremony on the 50th anniversary of the battle in 1995, he said:
>
> ”I am older now, as you are, but I can still see the colors of that February morning. The sky. The island. And sometimes I think I can hear the noise of battle.”
>
> He was treated in Japan for his wounds and returned to the United States, where he worked as a recruiter, among other positions. He was promoted to captain in 1949 and was in the force that occupied Japan.
>
> When he joined F Company in Korea, he saw a raggedy unshaven bunch and immediately ordered the the troops to shave, shine their shoes and look like marines. He suggested that his new charges resembled Pancho Villa’s bandits.
>
> ”He was one tough guy,” Mr. Cafferata said. ”He was by the book.”

He was by the book. He enlisted in the Marines because he was grateful to his country for allowing him to escape poverty and go into college, and he wanted to give something back.

You can read a review of the book I read about Fox company, and read about some of the details of what it was like for those men. You’ll never look at your own troubles the same way again. You can also read about Barber’s Medal of Honor citation here.

The Medal of Honor, Navy and Marines variant

So, now that I am done with that book, I have moved on to another Korean War book that Dina gave me, this one about George company. The Korean War might have been our most just war – defending a peaceful democratic ally from a totalitarian communist regime. You just have to compare North Korea and South Korea today to understand the stakes. North Korea is basically a godless concentration camp that tortures and murders its people if they so much as think the wrong thoughts about the atheist state. South Korea is free and prosperous, where the people have human rights, like the right to free speech and freedom of religion.

It's important for me to read about the hardships that real heroes face, so that I don't complain too much about my own tiny struggles. When you read about the struggles of great American soldiers, so many good things happen to you. Your own problems get smaller, your humility and gratitude get bigger. And you are reminded about why America is a great country, and what American character is really like. These things are not taught by leftists in the public schools. They are not talked about by leftists in the mainstream media. They are not presented by leftists in the Hollywood film industry. If you want to know the real America, you have to find it yourself.

Florida election supervisors trying to steal Senate and Governor wins from Republicans

November 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought this was an interesting story. In Florida, Republicans won the elections for Senate and Governor. But the people counting votes in Broward and Palm Beach refused to finalize their vote counts. And they are preventing any journalists from filming how they are counting the votes.

The Federalist explains what the problem is:

> Three days after election night, when Gov. Rick Scott delivered a victory speech and held a comfortable margin of votes against Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson, loads of ballots favoring the Democratic candidate mysteriously turned up in Palm Beach and Broward counties — where one official has a history of violating election laws.
>
> State law requires that all early and by-mail votes be tabulated within 30 minutes of the polls closing, but three days later, Broward County Supervisor of Elections Dr. Brenda Snipes still refuses to specify how many people voted, how many ballots have been tabulated, and how many are left to count.
>
> Since Tuesday, 80,000 new votes have mysteriously turned up in Broward County and another 15,000 in Palm Beach County. These newly discovered ballots have been "breaking almost 3-to-1 in favor of Democrats," narrowing the margin between these two candidates to likely force a recount after Saturday's noon deadline requiring all counties to turn over election results to the state Division of Elections.

Daily Wire reports that reporters who want to film them counting the votes are being threatened with arrest:

> […][The] Palm Beach Post… explains that elections supervisor, Susan Bucher, broke from normal practice by banning cameras from recording the ballot review process, which Gov. Rick Scott — who is waiting to see if he was elected to the senate — accused of "incompetence."
>
> Police were brought in to keep journalists out and block their view.
>
> NBCUniversal, Fox Television, and Scripps Media sued Bucher over her refusal to let the media cover the public event. Marissa Bagg, a reporter for NBC 6 Miami, posted the emergency petition on Twitter, writing that the media outlets were suing "Susan Bucher and the Palm Beach County Canvassing Board for refusing to allow us to record video while they review ballots in a public meeting."

What doesn't the Demcrat elections officer want the journalists to see? Well for one thing, the two Democrat candidates who lost want the votes of non-citizens to be counted.

The Federalist explains:

> During review of provisional ballots to determine whether a recount is justified in the tight Florida governor, senate, and agriculture commission races, Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections Susan Bucher identified a voter as a non-citizen and declared that the ballot would not be counted.
>
> Attorneys representing the Democratic candidate for senate Bill Nelson and the Democratic candidate for governor Andrew Gillum objected.

This tweet from Andrew Guest notes that the Broward county election supervisor has a very bad history being fair with elections: (H/T Daily Wire)

1. Illegally destroying ballots (Sun Sentinel, May 14, 2016)
2. Absentee ballots that never arrived (Miami Herald, November 6, 2016)
3. Fellow democrats accused her precinct of individual and systemic breakdowns that made it difficult for voters to cast regular ballots (Miami Herald, November 4, 2014)
4. Posted election results half an hour before polls closed – a very clear violation of election law. (Miami Herald, November 2, 2016)
5. Sued for leaving amendments off of ballots (Miami Herald, October 20, 2016)
6. Claiming to not have the money to notify voters when their absentee ballot expired (Sun Sentinel, November 8, 2016)
7. Having official staffers campaign on official time (Broward Beat, July 20, 2016)
8. Problems printing mail ballots (Miami Herald, November 2, 2016)
9. Accusations of ballot stuffing (Heritage, August 1, 2017)
10. Voters receiving ballots with duplicate pages (Miami Herald, November 2, 2016)
11. Slow results and piles of ballots that cropped up way after Election Day (The Capitolist, November 8, 2016)
12. Opening ballots in private, breaking Florida law (Politico, August 13, 2016)

Broward County Supervisor of Elections, Brenda Snipes

The tweet has all the links to the stories, and as you can see, they are pretty reliable sources.

Current Florida Governor Rick Scott has filed a lawsuit demanding that Snipes reveal how many ballots Broward county has. She is way over the deadline, and hasn't revealed the number of ballots.

Secular leftists demand Christian student senator resign for disagreeing with them

November 13, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Isabella Chow, a Christian woman encircled by secular leftist fascists

I had to blog about this story about a tough girl at UC Berkeley who is taking a lot of heat for her Christian beliefs. It would have been easier for her to keep them private. But they forced her to vote, and she had to respect her conscience. Campus Reform posted an article about the facts of the case.

It says:

> Isabella Chow is an elected student senator who represents the Associated Students of the University of California party Student Action. But after choosing to abstain from voting on a resolution to oppose the recent Title IX changes proposed by President Donald Trump, Chow's own party disavowed her.
>
> The proposed Title IX changes lack a legal definition of gender, effectively limiting "gender identity" to one's physical sex, according to the Wall Street Journal. The resolution before the Berkeley student government was a statement of opposition to these proposed changes, intended to display solidarity with members of the LGBT community, specifically "transgender, intersex, nonbinary and gender nonconforming students," as reported by the independent student newspaper the *Daily Californian*.

That article was from November 9th, but The College Fix had some news in their article posted Monday:

> Chow has faced intense backlash over her position, with numerous individuals slamming her on social media (one commenter on Facebook called Chow a "mental imbecile") as well as in person. **The response has been so hostile**

that Chow has made changes to how she gets around campus. “I don’t feel safe walking alone to class and take precautions not to walk alone at night,” Chow said.

Chow provided *The Fix* with multiple Internet postings openly accusing her of bigotry and hatred. One, from student senator Teddy Lake, said that Chow’s Christian beliefs “were not beliefs at all— they were hateful prejudices that deserve nothing less than the strongest condemnation.”

Several posts on the website Reddit were filled with angry comments. One commenter accused Chow of “sanctimonious holier-than-thou bullsh*t,” and another said: “She’s a horrible person.”

The editors of *The Daily Californian* published an editorial calling for Chow’s resignation, accusing her of “publicly dismissing the identities of individuals on campus” and “eras[ing] and dehuman[izing]” numerous Berkeley students.

“Chow used her powerful public platform to negate entire experiences and identities. UC Berkeley students cannot allow and accept leaders like Chow to make decisions on their behalf,” the editors wrote.

The campus’s Queer Alliance Resource Center, meanwhile, produced a statement in opposition to Chow.

“Her ‘love’ is no protection against the current oppression faced by trans, intersex, and non-binary individuals. Instead, her ‘love’ pads her condescending disapproval towards us and reminds us of our history of surviving so-called ‘love.’ Senator Chow’s ‘love’ is not of warmth and compassion but of judgement and disapproval. We cannot sit idly by while Chow sits on moral high ground casting moral judgements,” the statement reads.

The Center also produced a petition calling on Chow to resign.

[…]At a student senate meeting last week, numerous members of the Berkeley community publicly expressed their opinions, almost all of them explicitly critical of Chow.

“I condemn Isabella Chow’s words, not because they’re different from mine, but because they are dangerous, and inherently prejudiced. I encourage Senator Chow to reach a dialogue with queer-affirming Christian communities that LGBT existence is compatible with the love of God,” one student said.

Another attendee said to Chow: “Your Christian morals should not be in our student government or for any government; and if you cannot separate your religion from your job as a senator, please resign.”

Another accused Chow of “speaking words of hate, mashed under the name of love.”

Chow eventually approached *The Daily Californian* asking if the publication would run either a statement or an op-ed by her. *The Daily* refused to publish either.

She has sunk a ton of money into her education, and now she is at the mercy of far-left professors and TAs. For her sake, I hope that she is working toward a STEM degree. It will help her to find work going forward. This is definitely going to affect her whole life going forward – a lot of big companies aren't going to hire someone like her who refuses to go along with the LGBT agenda. I hope she's prepared for that.

Resiliency

I was watching this video from Prager University on resiliency, and it was talking about several ways that a person can make themselves defensible against unexpected setbacks.

Watch:

I think it's important for Christians to think carefully about what they will study and where they work. Having a good education and money makes it easier to deal with threats like the ones arrayed against Isabella. It allows you to find work more easily, to move if you have to, etc. It's important to train your character by studying hard things, doing hard things and finishing what you start. Having a platform to tell your story is important. Having a network of accomplished friends helps, too.

If you marry, then marry someone with courage and strength, who will stand by you, and help you to persist. It's a serious mistake to marry someone who doesn't understand Christianity *as service*, and who doesn't have any strength to deploy in case of a crisis. If you're being attacked, you want a stable partner who has strength in practical areas, and informed convictions. Not someone who is drowning in sin, narcissism, student loan debt, peer pressure, drug addiction, reckless thrill-seeking, etc.

Some jobs and cities have a lot of anti-Christian progressives. It's easier to avoid those if you have a good education, practical skills and a good resume. Often, the influence you have is going to be determined by the decisions you make to make yourself resilient. My ambition has always been to have an influence without allowing the secular left to easily silence me. If they know where I work, and where I live, then they can put pressure on me to recant my views. Conversely, if I am careful about education, career and finance, then I can put pressure on them to back off if they challenge me.

As we saw when fascists broke down the door at Tucker Carlson's home, we are living in a time of secular leftist facism. And this fascism is defended even by the elites in the mainstream media.

Here's a concept every Christian should know that people in information security speak about… being a "hard target":

> A **hard-target** is a person who, due to their actions and/or appropriate protective measures, is able to minimize existing risks and thus most likely represents an unattractive target. Originally, these two terms come from the military and relate to protected and unprotected targets.

The Christian life is a lot more *strategic* than churches teach us. We're obsessed with compassion, feelings, and not being judged. Instead, we should be focused on having an

influence and making ourselves into hard targets for the secular culture. We have a sanitized view of how sin corrupts non-Christians, allowing them to do unspeakable evils to Christians who merely *disagree* with them. We think that secular leftists will behave like moral people, as if denying God's existence makes no difference to a person's ability to be moral. We think that nihilists will respect our basic human rights – human rights that they can't even rationally ground in their worldview. And we think that God's job is to protect us and make us feel good no matter how unprepared and reckless we are.

If you want to have an influence, then you need to make every decision *wisely*, in order to prepare for the day when your cover is blown behind enemy lines. Remember, with respect to God's purposes in the world, your happiness is expendable.

Are Mormon doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

November 14, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out

> of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that although Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is

> central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-

> Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

Further study

If you want a nice long PDF to print out and read at lunch (which is what I did with it) you can grab this PDF by Michael Licona, entitled "Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock".

Democrat Michael Avenatti made famous by CNN arrested for domestic violence

November 15, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Avenatti, Democrat hero, defender of women and women's rights
Michael Avenatti is the lawyer connected to one of Trump's accusers (Swetnick) who is now under FBI criminal investigation for "potentially false statements". He appeared many times on CNN and MSNBC during the Kavanaugh hearings. He calls himself "an advocate for women's rights".

Here is the latest reported by The Federalist, and confirmed by tweets by the Los Angeles Police Department.

Excerpt:

> Avenatti was arrested Wednesday after a woman reportedly filed felony domestic violence charges against him following an incident that allegedly occurred between the two on Tuesday, then a second confrontation the next day.
>
> "We're told her face was 'swollen and bruised' with 'red marks' on both cheeks," TMZ reports.
>
> We're told security brought her inside the building, took her upstairs and Michael showed up 5 minutes later and ran into the building. He screamed repeatedly, 'She hit me first.'
>
> […]Cops showed up and escorted Avenatti into a corner of the apartment lobby and spoke with him for 5 to 10 minutes and then took him into custody.

CNN loved to have Avenatti on to discuss women's rights and how mean Republicans are to women. Even when there were more important news stories, they just kept bringing

him on, and on, and on. How often?

The Washington Free Beacon noted:

> The Washington Free Beacon analyzed 108 appearances by Avenatti on MSNBC and CNN over a 64-day period from March 7 to May 10. To calculate his earned media time, the Free Beacon multiplied the length of his appearances on a program by its "National Publicity Value" determination from media monitoring site TVEyes.com.
>
> The total came out to $174,631,598.07 from at least 65 CNN appearances and 43 MSNBC appearances. Avenatti's favorite shows include CNN's "Anderson Cooper 360" (at least 20 interviews), MSNBC's "The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell" (14), CNN's "New Day" (12), CNN's "Tonight with Don Lemon" (eight), and MSNBC's "Deadline White House" (seven).

65 appearances on CNN over a 64-day period? CNN really liked him. Maybe they really liked what he had to say to their audience about women's rights, and violence against women.

But other mainstream media shows also had him on to talk about how mean Republicans supposedly are to women:

> Avenatti has also been featured on CBS comedy show "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," Showtime's "The Circus," NBC's "Megyn Kelly Today," ABC's "The View," HBO's "Real Time with Bill Maher," and network morning shows "Today," "CBS This Morning," and "Good Morning America."

In light of his arrest, consider these screenshots of Avenatti's web site.

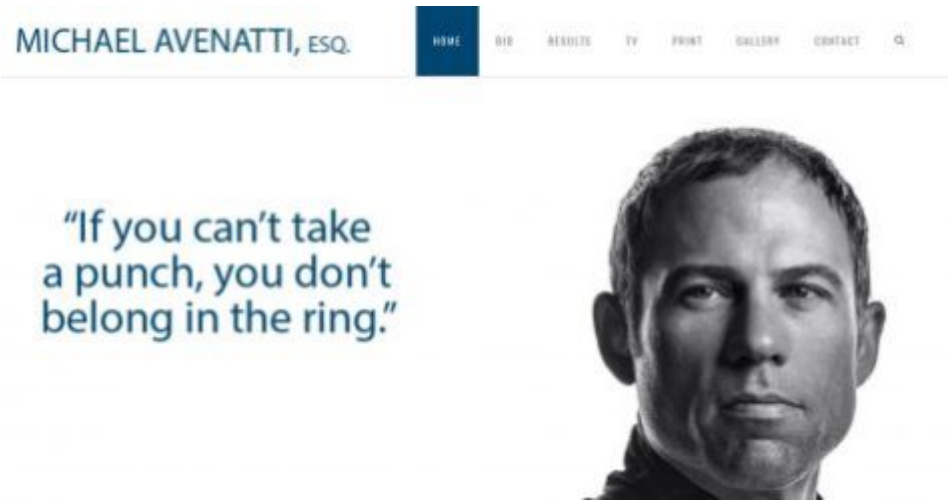

Michael Avenatti cares a lot about domestic violence against women

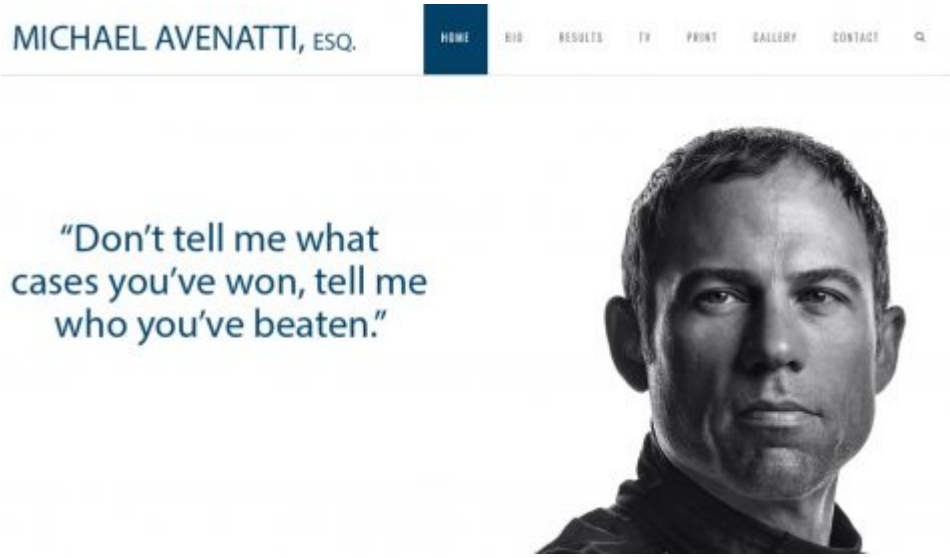

Michael Avenatti cares a lot about domestic violence against women

Would you say that he has what it takes to follow in the footsteps of Bill Clinton, and win the Democrat presidential nomination, as their anointed champion of women's rights? It looks like he's running for President in 2020. As a Democrat. Of course.

According to this tweet from a Daily Wire reporter, everyone except CNN reported on the arrest of CNN's star lawyer promptly. I wonder what caused CNN to delay reporting on the arrest of their frequent guest? The delayed reporting makes me wonder what they really think about domestic violence, sexual assault, and rape.

Democrat women seem to really like bad boys like Bill Clinton, Elliot Spitzer, John Conyers, Anthony Weiner… and the twice-divorced Michael Avenatti. They think that pro-abortion Democrat men are great defenders of "women's rights", and therefore very attractive and desirable. It never made sense to me, though, why women find a man's willingness to kill his own innocent unborn children an attractive trait. If a man will stand by while a woman kills an "inconvenient" child, then it seems to me that he could do anything to a grown woman. Domestic violence is mild when compared to murdering an innocent unborn child. When Democrat pro-abortion men commit domestic violence against women, it certainly doesn't surprise me. Why does it surprise the Democrat women who love them so much?

Tad Hopp accumulated $100,000 of college debt, now he wants a taxpayer bailout

November 16, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

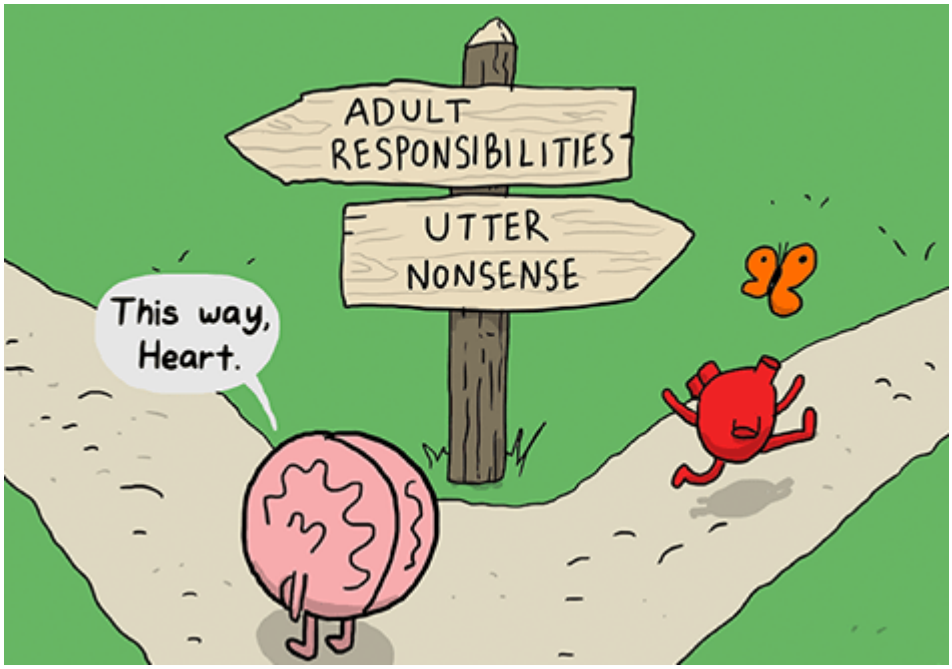

Brain vs Heart, from: theawkwardyeti.com

Here's an interesting editorial from a "Christian" left blog. (H/T Acton Institute via Lindsay)

The author, Tad Hopp is graduating a PCUSA seminary – an extremely liberal, left-wing denomination.

He writes:

> I graduated college in 2007.
>
> […] I majored in English, not exactly what most people consider a 'marketable' or 'practical' degree…
>
> […]I went to a somewhat expensive private school…
>
> […]I did what many students in their last year of high school do: I went to the school where I felt I was being called…
>
> […]I do not regret my four years at my undergraduate institution one bit.
>
> [….]When I graduated college, I owed nearly $50,000 in student loan debt and was unemployed for almost six months before I finally found a low-paying office job.
>
> […]"Can't find a job? Well, you should have majored in something more 'practical', like economics or business or medicine." Yeah, that *would* be great…if those were the subjects where my skills and passions lie. They're not.
>
> […]I felt called to go to seminary.

> […]I will graduate seminary with close to six figures worth of student loan debt.

Let’s take stock of what he’s said so far:

- he studied English, a language that he already spoke, which has one of the lowest employment rates
- he was warned by people who knew something about earning and saving money not to study English
- he went to a school he couldn’t afford to go to, and he graduated with $50,000 in debt
- he went to seminary, another subject that doesn’t pay, and added another $50,000 or so of debt
- he says that he doesn’t have to study subjects that lead to a career because he isn’t “passionate” about them
- he “followed his heart” by going to the school that he had mystical, emotional, intuitions about = “calling”

My advice to Tad at this point would be for him to take the Bible seriously when it says this:

2 Thessalonians 3:10:

> 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

And 1 Timothy 5:8:

> 8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

The Bible is giving us the goal of working. So what should we do to be able to reach that goal? Why should anyone hire us? What is working really about? It’s those kinds of questions that should guide what we study in school, and what jobs we pursue.

We know what careers have the highest starting salaries and mid-career salaries:

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image) (Source)

Why do some people get paid more than others? The answer is supply and demand. Prices are a way of determining what is most valued by your fellow man. Business owners pay more to people who offer their customers more value. If you really want to serve your neighbor, you have to learn something they really want, but can't easily obtain. And then you will be paid more. You can't do what makes you happy. You have to do what makes customers happy. That's how the free market works – you make money when you provide something of value to others. You make money when you serve others. This is something that is very hard for self-centered, feelings-driven young progressives to grasp. But it's something older Americans all know.

More Tad:

> Is the PCUSA doing anything to address this crisis?
>
> […]What has our government done to address this issue?
>
> […]I, like so many in my generation, voted for Obama…
>
> […]It seems to me that we've bought into the lie that student loan debt is brought on by the individual person…
>
> […]You know what I think might stimulate the economy? Automatically cancelling every single outstanding student loan!

He insists that the results of his own choices aren't his fault. But didn't he make the choices about what to study? Didn't he make the choice to follow his heart? Didn't he disregard the advice of people who urged him to be practical? Who is to blame, if not he, himself?

Tad needs to push away all his friends who told him to "follow his heart" and stick close by his friends who told him to focus on providing value to others. Don't look for advice

from dreamers, look for advice from doers. Dreamers talk. But doers have *demonstrated* the ability to create plans that work to achieve *results*.

By the way, some of you might be wondering how serious this person was about his Christianity. Well, in another post, he comes out as gay. So clearly the Bible is being interpreted in a way where feelings are overturning the plain meanings of words. People who read the Bible closely never come away with the message that they should follow their hearts.

Democrat Congressman proposes using nuclear weapons to enforce gun confiscation

November 17, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Eric Swalwell
@RepSwalwell

Replying to @Rambobiggs

And it would be a short war my friend. The government has nukes. Too many of them. But they're legit. I'm sure if we talked we could find common ground to protect our families and communities.

11/16/18, 3:22 PM

Don't resist confiscation of your semi-automatic, or Dems will nuke you

Do you have a semi-automatic gun? That's a gun that fires one bullet for every one trigger pull. Most handguns and rifles are semi-automatic. Well, if you have one, then there's a Democrat planning to confiscate it. And if you don't want to give it up, then he says that he would use nuclear weapons to *destroy you*.

NBC News reports:

> A Democratic congressman has proposed outlawing [semi-automatic guns] and forcing existing owners to sell their weapons or face prosecution, a major departure from prior gun control proposals that typically exempt existing firearms.
>
> […]Swalwell proposes that the government should offer up to $1,000 for every weapon covered by a new ban, estimating that it would take $15 billion to buy back roughly 15 million weapons — and "criminally prosecute any who choose to defy [the buyback] by keeping their weapons."
>
> In the past, Democrats and gun safety groups have carefully resisted proposals that could be interpreted as "gun confiscation," a concept gun rights groups have often invoked as part of a slippery slope argument against more modest proposals like universal background checks.
>
> Swalwell addressed these arguments directly, saying he and other Democrats

> had been too deferential to Second Amendment activists and should follow the lead of teenage survivors of the Parkland shooting who have been more strident.

The Washington Times reported on Swalwell's plan to deal with those who refuse to disarm themselves:

> Rep. Eric Swalwell, California Democrat, warned gun owners Friday that any fight over firearms would be "a short one," because the federal government has an extensive cache of nuclear weapons.
>
> After Joe Biggs tweeted that Mr. Swalwell "wants a war" over the Second Amendment, Mr. Swalwell responded, "And it would be a short war my friend."
>
> "The government has nukes. Too many of them. But they're legit," the congressman tweeted. "I'm sure if we talked we could find common ground to protect our families and communities."

People who purchase firearms legally are among the most law-abiding people in the country. Make no mistake. This Democrat lawmaker isn't threatening to take guns away from criminals. He is proposing to confiscate the guns of law-abiding Americans, who simply want to defend their families and their property from criminals.

It's very interesting to think about all the law-abiding gun owners in states like Arizona, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Michigan, etc. who voted for Democrat senators in the 2018 mid-terms, isn't it? What were they thinking, when they elected Democrats? Or maybe they weren't thinking at all. When elections are happening, it's important to look at the records of the candidates, not what they say in ads and at campaign events.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

I think that peer-reviewed studies should be useful for assessing gun control vs gun rights policy. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, which shows that the 1997 UK gun ban caused violent crime rates to MORE THAN DOUBLE in the four years following the ban. But both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

One of the common mistakes I see anti-gun advocates making is to use the metric of all "gun-related deaths". First of all, this completely ignores the effects of hand gun ownership on violent crime, as we've seen. Take away the guns from law-abiding people

and violent crime skyrockets. But using the “gun-related deaths” number is especially wrong, because it includes suicides committed with guns. This is the majority (about two thirds) of gun related deaths, even in a country like America that has a massive inner-city gun violence problem caused by the epidemic of single motherhood by choice. If you take out the gun-related SUICIDES, then the actual number of gun homicides has decreased as gun ownership has grown.

For a couple of useful graphs related to this point, check out this post over at the American Enterprise Institute.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

November 18, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!
Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change

> his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

38-year-old single mother of seven, pregnant with twins, demands better government housing

November 19, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

38-year-old single mother with 7 kids, 2 more on the way

I saw this article about an unmarried woman, pregnant with twins, who already has 7 children from a variety of men. She is currently living in a 4-bedroom house paid for by taxpayers. She is angry because the government isn't giving her enough money to pay for her lifestyle choices.

This article comes from the UK Daily Mail:

> A 38-year-old mother-of-seven who is pregnant with twins is begging to be rehoused from her 'hellish' four-bedroom council flat which she says isn't good enough for her.
>
> […]The single mother said: 'My relationship with some of my children is at breaking point, we can't keep living like this.
>
> […]'I just want to get out of this hell. I'd rather live anywhere else, as long as it is not in here. It has been really tough.
>
> 'I'm feeling down every night and sometimes you just feel like giving up. But I just have to keep going for the sake of the kids.'

She can fix everything that's gone wrong with a little more taxpayer money. That will make it unnecessary for her to choose men who commit before sex, and let her have the freedom to choose the "best" men for relationships.

More:

> After spending a month in various hotels, West Lothian Council found them the flat in Bathgate and they moved in on September 20.

> But after moving into her new Bathgate property, Ms Burns complained that the flat did not come with a television…

She wasn't even provided with a taxpayer-funded telly! How else to people get televisions except from welfare programs?

Anyway, how did this happen? Well, it happens because women are increasingly choosing men who are not willing to marry first, and using premarital sex and cohabitation to land them. Something that the previous generation of married women from 50 years ago would never have done.

The Daily Caller explains:

> Unmarried couples are having roughly 40 percent of all births in the U.S., marking a trend that may be detrimental to the upbringing of those children.
>
> For the first time in U.S. history, out-of-wedlock births in America are largely a result of cohabitation, according to the United Nations Population Fund 2018 State of World report released Wednesday. Single mothers had nearly 90 percent of out-of-wedlock births in 1968, but that number decreased to 53 percent in 2017, according to the Pew Research Center.
>
> "Compared to children of married parents, those with cohabiting parents are more likely to experience the breakup of their families, be exposed to 'complex' family forms, live in poverty, suffer abuse, and have negative psychological and educational outcomes," according to the Institute for Family Studies (IFS).
>
> […]Children with single parents have the highest rates of poverty followed by children living with unmarried, cohabiting parents, the IFS reported.
>
> Between 2006 and 2010, 23 percent of births to married women were unintended while 51 percent of births to unmarried cohabiting women were unintended. That number rose to 67 percent for unmarried women not cohabiting.
>
> **Two-thirds of cohabiting parents split up before their child reaches age 12, while only a quarter of married parents divorce, according to an April 2017 Brookings Institution report.**

The problem of fatherless children is getting worse. And taxpayers will be on the hook to pay for it – that's what the story of the 38-year-old woman shows. Productive people have to pay when women are not persuaded to make better decisions about which men to have relationships with, and when to have sex.

My experience

I know three young women who are cohabitating right now. I have had a few conversations with them about what they are studying, what jobs they want to get, and what their plans for the future are.

All three of these women have never married, and are in their early 20s and attractive. Two of them have children. The live-in boyfriends are getting sex without having to

commit first. The boyfriends (judging from photos) seem to have been chosen purely for looks. Tall, muscles, beards, tattoos, piercings, etc. Obviously, none of them is a Christian. There just isn't anything in society telling young women that a Christian worldview matters in a relationship. And none of the men has a STEM degree, a career or savings -they're too young to have those things to prove their ability to provide. But they're still co-habitating, and get all the benefits of a wife without having to have proven themselves capable of the responsibilities, expectations and obligations of a husband.

Each of these women is spending the young and attractive period of her life in unstable relationships with men who think of sex as recreational, rather than something that is saved for inside the marriage covenant. If their past relationships fail, they will have a much harder time finding a good man. They will have sexual baggage. They will probably have children from another man. They will have bitterness and mistrust towards men. They will be selfish and unwilling to give to a future husband. The same women who will complain that no one will marry them at age 35 are the ones who could *easily* have had a *marriage-ready* man at age 25.

Making monergism make sense: reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

November 20, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

This article at Free Thinking Ministries was written by my friend Tim Stratton. In it, presents a view of God's sovereignty over salvation without falling into the error of double-predestination.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Many reformed folks *(freely?)* choose to reject Molinism because they contend that this theological view "smells of synergism." What is this stench that reportedly makes John Calvin turn over in his grave? Simply put, synergism is the view that man plays at least a small part in his own salvation process. Monergism, on the other hand, is the view that God is the author of salvation from beginning to end.
>
> Since Molinism affirms that man is free to choose to reject God's saving grace or not, many Calvinists jump to the conclusion and assume that Molinism must be synergistic. This does not necessarily follow.[1] Consider one possible model:
>
> 1- God, by nature, is a volitional unmoved mover who is free to choose between options in accord with His nature. (This is supported via the *Kalam* and the *Argument from Time*).
>
> 2- By God's grace, humans are created in the "image of God." By nature, then, we are free to choose between options in accord with our nature. (This is supported via the *Freethinking Argument*).
>
> 3- Adam & Eve freely chose to disobey God and this sin completely separates

> humanity from God. This is what it means to have a "totally depraved sin nature." (Every aspect of man is separated from God).
>
> 4- In this state of depraved separation from God (sin nature), humans do not even know God exists if merely left to our own devices.
>
> 5- If humans do not even know God exists, then, left to our own devices and **apart from God's grace**, it would be impossible to choose to love and follow God (thus, Pelagianism is impossible on this view).
>
> 6- God, in His love for all people, provides amazing prevenient grace to all people (Romans 1:20), writing the law on the human heart (Romans 2:15), conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-9), and draws all men (John 12:32). This is commonly referred to as "common grace."
>
> 7- Therefore, by God's grace, human nature has changed from a "totally separated from God nature" to a nature that has now experienced enough divine revelation (influences) allowing all mankind to start making some free and volitional choices in accord with our new nature; namely, to choose to resist God's grace and revelation, or not.[2] Mankind is without excuse because we do not have to resist what God has made clear (Romans 1:18-20).[3]
>
> *[Note: According to Calvinist, Matt Slick (albeit inadvertently), Mark 4:10-12 implies that if an unregenerate person gets access to clear and accurate information, then they possess the ability to become Christians!]*
>
> 8- If one does not reject or continually resist the grace and revelation God provides them, then God will continually provide more and more until the person reaches the point of "no return" and will become saved.
>
> Thus, God does *ALL* the work in salvation from beginning to end on this Molinistic model; all the human can do is freely resist God's grace and revelation, but he or she does not have to! The human does nothing to gain salvation apart from God's grace on this Monergistic Model of Molinism.

I think that Stratton's formulation above does indeed keep God as the sole initiator of salvation. And that's good. But it also makes sure that human who resist God's leading are responsible for their choice to resist God, and that's good. We want salvation to be 100% by faith alone in Christ alone. But we don't want God to be the cause of people not being saved. On Stratton's view, God wants everyone to be saved. If anyone is saved, it's because God did ALL THE WORK to lead them and secure their salvation with the death of Jesus on the cross. But, on Stratton's view, humans do get a choice – the choice to trust God or not. And so, if a person is not saved, then it's their fault – not God's. This works.

Read his whole post, and see what you think about it.

Boys underperform at school because feminists block attempts to help them

November 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

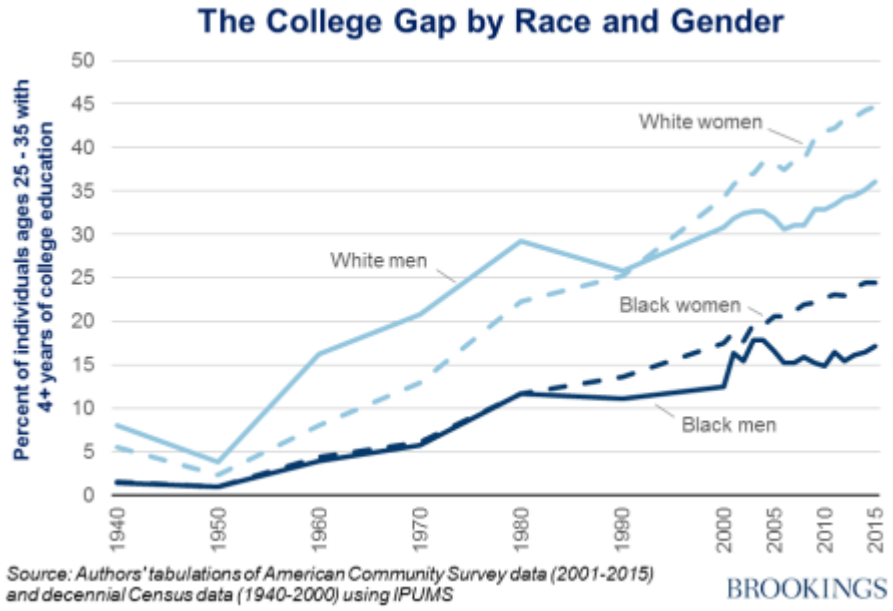

College graduation rates for men and women (Source: Brookings Institute)

Britain is a country that is absolutely dominated by radical feminists. And it affects everything from their collectivist views on economic policy, to their pro-criminal views in the justice system, to their open-borders views on immigration, their preference for government-run healthcare, their hatred of self-defense, and so on. So, I wouldn't expect to see an article about the plight of boys in a feminist society published in a British newspaper.

Nevertheless, here is an article from the UK Telegraph that explains how the public schools are handling the problem of underperforming boys.

It says:

> Britain's education system is failing to tackle the "astonishing" underperformance of boys as feminists have made the topic "taboo", the former head of the university admissions service has warned.
>
> Mary Curnock Cook, who was chief executive of Ucas until last year, said the fact that boys are falling behind in education is a national scandal – yet it is such an "unfashionable" topic to discuss that it has become "normalised".
>
> Girls outperform boys in all aspects of education, from primary school to GCSEs and A-level results. Last year, 57 per cent of women went to university compared to 43 per cent of men, a gap that has widened significantly over the last decade.
>
> […]Ms Curnock Cook said that the debate about gender equality tends to be dominated by issues such as the gender pay gap and the glass ceiling.
>
> "But those are work issues, not education issues," she said. "Quite often

> initiatives to support men do meet derision from feminists."
>
> When attempts are made to address men's issues, they are ridiculed and are met with the "wrath" of feminist and gender equality groups, she said.
>
> Last month the only university in the UK with a men's officer scrapped the role after the candidate withdrew due to "harassment".

But, it's happening in America as well.

An article from 2013 appeared in the far-left The Atlantic. It explains how the school system punishes boys and favors girls – from kindergarten to the workplace, where women receive affirmative action preferences.

Excerpt:

> Boys in *all* ethnic groups and social classes are far less likely than their sisters to feel connected to school, to earn good grades, or to have high academic aspirations. A recent working paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research documents a remarkable trend among high-achieving students: In the 1980s, nearly the same number of top male and female high school students said they planned to pursue a postgraduate degree (13 percent of boys and 15 percent of girls). By the 2000s, 27 percent of girls expressed that ambition, compared with 16 percent of boys. During the same period, the gap between girls and boys earning mostly A's nearly doubled—from three to five percentage points.
>
> This gap in education engagement has dire economic consequences for boys. A 2011 Brookings Institution report quantifies the economic decline of the median male: For men ages 25 to 64 with no high school diploma, median annual earnings have declined 66 percent since 1969; for men with only a high school diploma, wages declined by 47 percent. Millions of male workers, say the Brookings authors, have been "unhitched from the engine of growth." The College Board delivered this disturbing message in a 2011 report about Hispanic and African-American boys and young adults: "Nearly half of young men of color age 15 to 24 who graduate from high school will end up unemployed, incarcerated or dead." Working-class white boys are faring only slightly better. When economist Andrew Sum and his colleagues at the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University examined gender disparities in the Boston Public Schools, they found that for the class of 2007, among blacks and Hispanics, there were 186 females for every 100 males attending a four-year college or university. For white students: 153 females to every 100 males.

Just like in the UK, American feminists oppose doing anything to help boys:

> In the U.S., a powerful network of women's groups works ceaselessly to protect and promote what it sees as female interest. But there is no counterpart working for boys—they are on their own.

Previously, I blogged about a study showing that female teachers grade boys lower than girls.

It's important for parents to understand that the problem of boys underperforming in school and work is not caused by boys. It's not with video games, it's not with sports, or anything else that anti-male people might blame. The problem with boys not learning and boys not working is caused by an education system dominated by anti-male feminists who systematically discriminate against boys, making it harder for them to learn the skills they need to find work.

The problem isn't going to be fixed by airhead feminist pastors and other male "leaders" telling boys to "man up". The problem is going to be fixed when parents realize that radical feminism is hostile to boys, and that institutions that are dominated by radical feminism are damaging to boys. I have a Jewish friend named Ari who homeschools all his children. He spends a lot of time and effort on this. He told me that sending boys to public schools is child abuse. I used to laugh at him when he said that. What a funny exaggeration, I thought. Now I'm not so sure he was joking.

The pilgrims experiment with communism before the second Thanksgiving

November 22, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

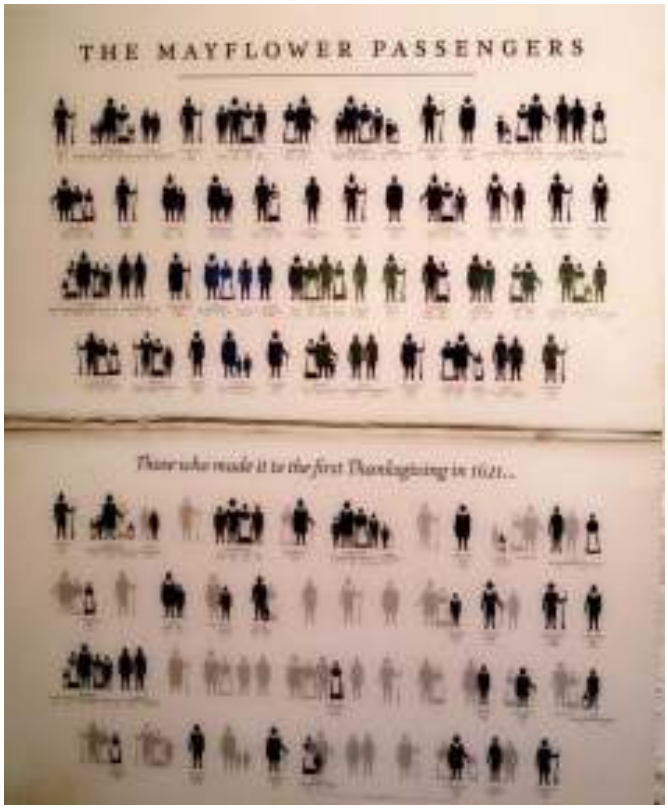

Less than half the original pilgrims made it to the the first Thanksgiving

Here's an article from The Stream about the second Thanksgiving, by Dante Witt. I like this article because it tells us so much about the character of the United States of America. Why are we so conservative about economics?

She briefly retells the story of how the pilgrims were helped by Squanto, which I blogged about in a previous Thanksgiving Day post, then she talks about the troubles they had next.

Excerpt:

> Although Squanto's farming techniques worked better than their old ones, the pilgrims still could not produce enough food. Was it bad luck? Bad soil? No. The Mayflower pilgrims were part of a joint stock company which stipulated that the pilgrims would pool their resources, and receive a share of the profit.
>
> The strategy turned out to be deeply misguided, working about as well as various communist economic schemes hundreds of years later. The sad state of the colony after two years of communism, wrote William Bradford, "may well evidence the vanity of that conceit of Plato's and the other ancients applauded by some of later times; that the taking away of property and the bringing of community into a commonwealth would make them happy and flourishing; as if they were wiser than God" (p. 121).

> So the pilgrims amended their contract so that each family was now responsible for its own provision. The difference was stark. Bradford explained:
>
> This had good success, for it made all hands very industrious, so that more corn was planted than could have been by any other means the Governor could use, and saved him a great deal of trouble, and gave far better content. The women now went willingly into the field, and took their little ones with them to set corn; which before would allege weakness and inability; whom to have compelled would have been thought great tyranny and oppression.
>
> In fact, it's estimated the colonists planted about six times the crops they would have planted otherwise.

That shows where Americans get their views of economics, but what about the praying and the gratitude?

More:

> With new farming techniques and an amended government, the pilgrims did all they humanly could to ward off starvation. But they could not control the weather. A drought settled on the colony and threatened to kill the corn before the harvest. Recognizing with the Psalmist that "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it," the colonists turned to God. According to Bradford, they "set apart a solemn day of humiliation to seek the Lord by humble & fervent prayer, in this great distress." What was the outcome?
>
> And he was pleased to give them a gracious & speedy answer, both to their own & the Indians admiration, that lived amongst them. For all the morning, and greatest part of the day, it was clear weather & very hot, and not a cloud or any sign of rain to be seen, yet toward evening it began to overcast, and shortly after to rain, with such sweet and gentle showers, as gave them cause of rejoicing, & blessing God. It came, without either wind, or thunder, or any violence, and by degrees in that abundance, as that the earth was thoroughly wet and soaked therewith. Which did so apparently revive & quicken the decayed corn & other fruits, as was wonderful to see, and made the Indians astonished to behold. (p. 131)
>
> Seeing the speedy results of the Puritans' prayers, an Indian named Hobanak said, "Now I see that the Englishman's God is a good God, for he hath heard you, and sent you rain, and that without storms and tempests and thunder, which usually we have with our rain, which breaks down our corn, but yours stands whole and good still; surely your God is a good God." (pp. 64-5)
>
> Then William Bradford again proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving to God, the forerunner of the American tradition of Thanksgiving.

So, this story explains why the United States has this character that values the free enterprise system, hard work, individual achievement, prayer, and gratitude. These are

the values that make us American, that made us into such a great nation.

Study: the early Earth's atmosphere contained oxygen

November 23, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Here's a paper published in the prestigious peer-reviewed science journal *Nature*, entitled "The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere". This paper is significant because it undermines naturalistic scenarios for the origin of life.

Evolution News explains what the paper is about.

Excerpt:

> A recent *Nature* publication reports a new technique for measuring the oxygen levels in Earth's atmosphere some 4.4 billion years ago. The authors found that by studying cerium oxidation states in zircon, a compound formed from volcanic magma, they could ascertain the oxidation levels in the early earth. Their findings suggest that the early Earth's oxygen levels were very close to current levels.
>
> […]Miller and Urey conducted experiments to show that under certain atmospheric conditions and with the right kind of electrical charge, several amino acids could form from inorganic compounds such as methane, ammonia, and water. Several experiments have been done using various inorganic starting materials, all yielding a few amino acids; however, one key aspect of all of these experiments was the lack of oxygen.
>
> If the atmosphere has oxygen (or other oxidants) in it, then it is an oxidizing atmosphere. If the atmosphere lacks oxygen, then it is either inert or a reducing atmosphere. Think of a metal that has been left outside, maybe a piece of iron. That metal will eventually rust. Rusting is the result of the metal being oxidized.

> With organic reactions, such as the ones that produce amino acids, it is very important that no oxygen be present, or it will quench the reaction. Scientists, therefore, concluded that the early Earth must have been a reducing environment when life first formed (or the building blocks of life first formed) because that was the best environment for producing amino acids. The atmosphere eventually accumulated oxygen, but life did not form in an oxidative environment.
>
> The problem with this hypothesis is that it is based on the assumption that organic life must have formed from inorganic materials. That is why the early Earth must have been a reducing atmosphere. Research has been accumulating for more than thirty years, however, suggesting that the early Earth likely did have oxygen present.
>
> […]Their findings not only showed that oxygen was present in the early Earth atmosphere, something that has been shown in other studies, but that oxygen was present as early as 4.4 billion years ago. This takes the window of time available for life to have begun, by an origin-of-life scenario like the RNA-first world, and reduces it to an incredibly short amount of time. Several factors need to coincide in order for nucleotides or amino acids to form from purely naturalistic circumstances (chance and chemistry). The specific conditions required already made purely naturalist origin-of-life scenarios highly unlikely. Drastically reducing the amount of time available, adding that to the other conditions needing to be fulfilled, makes the RNA world hypothesis or a Miller-Urey-like synthesis of amino acids simply impossible.

So here's where we stand. If you are a materialist, then you need a reducing environment on the early Earth in order to get organic building blocks (amino acids) from inorganic materials. However, the production of these organic building blocks (amino acids) *requires* that the early Earth atmosphere be oxygen-free. And the problem with this new research, which confirms previous research, is that the early Earth contained huge amounts of oxygen – the same amount of oxygen as we have today. This is lethal to naturalistic scenarios for creating the building blocks of life on the Earth's surface.

Other problems

If you would like to read a helpful overview of the problems with a naturalistic scenario for the origin of life, check out this article by Casey Luskin.

Excerpt:

> The "origin of life" (OOL) is best described as the chemical and physical processes that brought into existence the first self-replicating molecule. It differs from the "evolution of life" because Darwinian evolution employs mutation and natural selection to change organisms, which requires reproduction. Since there was no reproduction before the first life, no "mutation – selection" mechanism was operating to build complexity. Hence, OOL theories cannot rely upon natural

> selection to increase complexity and must create the first life using only the laws of chemistry and physics.
>
> There are so many problems with purely natural explanations for the chemical origin of life on earth that many scientists have already abandoned all hopes that life had a natural origin on earth. Skeptical scientists include Francis Crick (solved the 3-dimensional structure of DNA) and Fred Hoyle (famous British cosmologist and mathematician), who, in an attempt to retain their atheistic worldviews, then propose outrageously untestable cosmological models or easily falsifiable extra-terrestrial-origin-of-life / panspermia scenarios which still do not account for the natural origin of life. So drastic is the evidence that Scientific American editor John Horgan wrote, "[i]f I were a creationist, I would cease attacking the theory of evolution … and focus instead on the origin of life. This is by far the weakest strut of the chassis of modern biology."[3]

The article goes over the standard problems with naturalistic scenarios of the origin of life: wrong atmosphere, harmful UV radiation, interfering cross-reactions, oxygen levels, meteorite impacts, chirality, etc.

Most people who are talking about intelligent design at the origin of life talk about the information problem – how do you get the amino acids to form proteins and how do you get nucleotide bases to code for amino acids? But the starting point for solving the sequencing problem is the construction of the amino acids – there has to be a plausible naturalistic scenario to form them.

Trump names pro-life scientist to National Science Board

November 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Maureen Condic

On Friday, I was reading an article in the Christian Research Journal by prominent pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf, and he was analyzing a pro-abortion scholar. But he ended his article with this quote, where he mentions some of the best pro-life scholars.

He wrote:

> In a 2008 Los Angeles Times op-ed piece, abortion-choice advocates Kate Michelman and Frances Kissling lament that a new generation of pro-life advocates present "a sophisticated philosophical and political challenge" to what once was considered a settled debate.
>
> Pollitt largely ignores that challenge. She dreams of a day when cleaning out wombs is just another form of housekeeping. Nowhere in her text do you get the sense she's interacted with leading pro-life thinkers such as Francis Beckwith, Maureen Condic, or Christopher Kaczor. And while Pollitt may indeed fire up like-minded abortion-advocates, she's no pro when it comes to engaging the best arguments from pro-life apologists.

Now, I recognize Beckwith and Kaczor. I've purchased their books. They are seen as two of the top pro-life scholars. And I remember I've cited Condic as an authority on the science of fetal development, in this post.

It's great that we have pro-life scholars like Beckwith, Kaczor and Condic, but it would be even better if those pro-life scholars were in positions of influence. They would have to have the right credentials, of course. But we also need someone to put them in high

positions.

Life News reports:

> A nationally-recognized scientist who has testified in support of unborn babies is President Donald Trump's new choice for the National Science Board.
>
> Dr. Maureen Condic, an associate professor at the University of Utah who specializes in neurobiology, is widely known for her work on spinal cord repair, according to the Salt Lake Tribune. Earlier this month, Trump chose her to fill one of the 25 seats on the National Science Board.
>
> "I'm just thrilled that it's an opportunity to serve my country and the greater scientific community," Condic said in response to the news.
>
> She obtained her Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley, and is a widely published scientist whose works have appeared in a variety of peer-reviewed journals.
>
> Her work has been instrumental to the pro-life movement in its pursuit to protect unborn babies from painful abortions. In 2003, Condic testified before Congress that unborn babies have the capacity to feel pain as early as eight weeks.
>
> "The neural circuitry responsible for the most primitive response to pain, the spinal reflex, is in place by 8 weeks of development," she explained. "This is the earliest point at which the fetus experiences pain in any capacity."
>
> She asked lawmakers to pass the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act to protect unborn babies from the "cruel" and unnecessary pain of abortion.
>
> "Imposing pain on any pain-capable living creature is cruelty," Condic said. "And ignoring the pain experienced by another human individual for any reason is barbaric. We don't need to know if a human fetus is self- reflective or even self-aware to afford it the same consideration we currently afford other pain-capable species. We simply have to decide whether we will choose to ignore the pain of the fetus or not."

Many states have passed laws banning abortions when the unborn child can feel pain. And 13 states have laws that include the facts on fetal pain in mandatory counseling. Dr. Condic deserves the credit for her work on the research that supports this legislation.

In addition, earlier this year, the Senate voted on a bill to ban abortions where the unborn child can feel pain:

> Next week, the Senate will vote on the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (S. 2311), introduced by Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.). This legislation would protect unborn children by preventing abortions 20 weeks after fertilization, at which time scientific evidence suggests the unborn child can feel pain. The House passed a similar bill last fall by a vote of 237 to 189.

Unfortunately, the Democrats in the Senate were able to defeat the Senate bill. Still, it

really helps the pro-life cause for Dr. Condic to get into a position of influence. Maybe we will get a second chance to pass this legislation, when we have more pro-life senators like newly elected Marsha Blackburn.

Jay Richards answers the objection “Who Designed the Designer?”

November 25, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

So I have presented the evidence for a cosmic beginning and for cosmic fine-tuning many times to atheists, going slowly over the history of cosmology and astrobiology, pointing out the discoveries that led all the science-accepting grown-ups to accept the Big Bang cosmology and the cosmic fine-tuning.

A couple of examples of evidence for the cosmic beginning: cosmic microwave background radiation and nuclesosynthesis.

And some examples of cosmic fine-tuning would be the gravitational force and the strong force.

The response from atheists who listen to this evidence is usually something along the lines of “Am I going to Hell?” and “Who made God?” or “Who Designed the Designer?”

Well, I’ve answered the Am I Going To Hell response to scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer in another place. The response to the who made God question is simple: 1) scientists acknowledge the Big Bang as the beginning of all space, matter and time itself. 2) the cause of the beginning of time must exist outside of time, and the cause is therefore eternal, and CANNOT therefore come into being itself.

For an answer to the last question about the Designer, let’s turn to Jay Richards, probably my favorite Christian thinker, (tied with Stephen C. Meyer).

Watch this for two minutes:

I just want to make sure that everyone gets the two points there.

First point is obvious. When it comes to objects that have the appearance of design, we

have to look at the features of the object itself. If the object exhibits hallmarks of design, e.g. – specified complexity, irreducible complexity, etc., then we have to compare the design and non-design explanations for the object and choose which is the most reasonable. We do not need to know anything about who the designer(s) are, and you can see this in other areas like SETI, where nothing at all may be known about the originator of a coded message from space, yet still naturalists can accept that a coded message was sent (e.g. – first 100 prime numbers in beats and pauses).

The second point is that atheists have to account for the fine-tuning within their worldview as well, and give an explanation that is more probable than a Designer.

Questions like "Who made God?" and "Who Designed the Designer?" are asked in order to *avoid having to provide an explanation for the scientific evidence we have today.* It's not that atheists have the answer to the evidence, it's that they want to ask silly questions in order to avoid having to comply (rationally speaking) with the scientific evidence they see with their own eyes. Today, we have the scientific evidence for a beginning of the universe, and for fine-tuning of the universe to support complex, embodied intelligent agents. So that's why you need to focus them on the important question: *what is the explanation for the scientific evidence within an atheistic framework – how do they fit the scientific evidence we have today into their worldview?*

You have to watch out for their response of forced ignorance in the face of scientific evidence and demand that they deal with the scientific evidence that we have today. The more progress we have made in science in the last 50 years, the stronger the evidence for a cosmic beginning and for cosmic fine-tuning have become. This isn't going away. Denial of today's evidence and hoping for reversals of what we know today is not a rational response to the scientific evidence of today.

Let me give you a case in point. There was a recent debate where a prominent atheist said he was not even sure that the universe began to exist, despite the fact that this is guaranteed under the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem. The BGV theorem says that any universe that is on balance expanding must have a cosmic beginning. (And our universe will be expanding outward, eternally) Atheists like to clump together on atheist podcasts, atheist blogs and atheist chat rooms where they can all agree amongst themselves that the universe didn't have a beginning and wasn't designed – so that they can keep living as if no one designed them for a purpose that might interfere with their desires. But this is just willful ignorance in the face of solid scientific evidence, and we need to demand that they account for the scientific evidence we have today within their worldview. We can't allow them to continue in their Flat-Earth worldview because they just plug their ears and shut their eyes to the progress of science. Self-inflicted ignorance is not a rational response to the progress of science.

Fascist Twitter permanently bans conservative, no warnings, no explanations, no appeals

November 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hello,

Your account was permanently suspended due to multiple or repeat violations of the Twitter Rules: https://twitter.com/rules.

This account will not be restored.

Please do not respond to this email as replies and new appeals for this account will not be monitored.

Thanks,

Far-left fascist monopoly Twitter bans a conservative with no warnings, no previous violations, and no indication of which tweet violated their rules

Although Twitter allows tweets from radical leftist anti-Semites like Louis Farrakhan, they permanently ban moderate conservatives with no explanation of which specific rules those conservatives violated. There are no warnings. There is no appeal. It's time for the government to step in and break up the big social media monopolies.

Here's the story from The Federalist:

> Federalist Contributor Jesse Kelly was permanently suspended from Twitter on Sunday for "repeat violations of the Twitter rules," according to a message from Twitter Support. Kelly is a combat Veteran Marine, conservative radio host, and former Republican candidate for U.S. Congress.
>
> Twitter did not explain what rules Kelly violated, or if there was a specific tweet in question.
>
> […]Kelly is a frequent guest on Fox News, and ironically, his last appearance on Tucker Carlson's show was to discuss online censorship.

All we have is a copy of Twitter's message (screenshot above), about the permanent ban. No other reasons were given.

Requests for more information from conservative journalists were ignored, and no specific

reasons for the permanent ban were given.

Note that a permanent Twitter ban isn't a ban where they just ask you to delete specific Tweets that violate their rules. In the past, Twitter asked a Canadian feminist to delete a tweet where she said that a transgender woman was a biological man. You can't say that a woman has to have a vagina on Twitter – that's hate speech, and you'll be banned if you say that. She was allowed to delete the offending tweets to get her account back. Kelly was not told which of his tweets was offensive, he was just permanently banned.

But do you know what isn't banned on Twitter? Saying that all Jews are termites. That tweet is fine with them, because it comes from a leftist. The account that tweeted that is still active.

The Times of Israel reports:

> The Anti-Defamation League on Thursday called on Twitter to remove tweets by Louis Farrakhan, the anti-Semitic Nation of Islam leader, from the social network after he posted a video in which he appeared to compare Jews to termites.
>
> But when the Buzzfeed news site asked Twitter whether Farrakhan's latest post violated its newly announced policy against "dehumanizing language," it was told the religious leader was not in violation of any rules.

It's time for the government to step in and break up this corporate monopoly. And maybe we need to have some civil suits with some billion dollar decisions against these left-wing fascists, for violating first amendment rights of conservatives.

Tactics: the worst mistake a Christian can make when doing apologetics

November 27, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian

worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important

for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it. I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within

his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent’s weakness.

Woman raised by two lesbian parents speaks out: I missed my Dad

November 28, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Heather Barwick

This is from The Federalist. Just so you know, the author is a former same-sex marriage advocate.

She writes:

> Gay community, I am your daughter. My mom raised me with her same-sex partner back in the ’80s and ’90s. She and my dad were married for a little while. She knew she was gay before they got married, but things were different back then. That’s how I got here. It was complicated as you can imagine. She left him when I was two or three because she wanted a chance to be happy with someone she really loved: a woman.

> My dad wasn’t a great guy, and after she left him he didn’t bother coming around anymore.
>
> Do you remember that book, “Heather Has Two Mommies”? That was my life. My mom, her partner, and I lived in a cozy little house in the ‘burbs of a very liberal and open-minded area. Her partner treated me as if I was her own daughter. Along with my mom’s partner, I also inherited her tight-knit community of gay and lesbian friends.

But now she opposes same-sex marriage because it became apparent to her through her own life experience and the experience of having children that children need a mother and father.

She writes:

> Growing up, and even into my 20s, I supported and advocated for gay marriage. It’s only with some time and distance from my childhood that I’m able to reflect on my experiences and recognize the long-term consequences that same-sex parenting had on me. And it’s only now, as I watch my children loving and being

> loved by their father each day, that I can see the beauty and wisdom in traditional marriage and parenting.

> Same-sex marriage and parenting withholds either a mother or father from a child while telling him or her that it doesn't matter. That it's all the same. But it's not. A lot of us, a lot of your kids, are hurting. My father's absence created a huge hole in me, and I ached every day for a dad. I loved my mom's partner, but another mom could never have replaced the father I lost.
>
> I grew up surrounded by women who said they didn't need or want a man. Yet, as a little girl, I so desperately wanted a daddy. It is a strange and confusing thing to walk around with this deep-down unquenchable ache for a father, for a man, in a community that says that men are unnecessary. There were times I felt so angry with my dad for not being there for me, and then times I felt angry with myself for even wanting a father to begin with. There are parts of me that still grieve over that loss today.

> I'm not saying that you can't be good parents. You can. I had one of the best. I'm also not saying that being raised by straight parents means everything will turn out okay. We know there are so many different ways that the family unit can break down and cause kids to suffer: divorce, abandonment, infidelity, abuse, death, etc. But by and large, the best and most successful family structure is one in which kids are being raised by both their mother and father.

I recommend reading the whole thing.

Dawn Stefanowicz said similar things about her experience raised by her Dad and his gay partner in this interview posted on MercatorNet. This is mature subject matter.

It says:

> **MercatorNet:** How did you feel about what was going on around you?
>
> **Stefanowicz**: You become used to it and desensitised. I was told at eight years old not to talk about this but I knew that something was wrong. I was not thinking "this is right or wrong" but I was disturbed by what I was experiencing. I was unhappy, fearful, anxious and confused. I was not allowed to tell my father that his lifestyle upset me. You can be four-years-old and questioning, "Where is Daddy?" You sense women are not valued. You think Daddy doesn't have time for you or Daddy is too busy to play a game with you. All this is hard because as a child this is the only experience you have.
>
> **MercatorNet:** How did this affect your relationship with others?
>
> **Stefanowicz**: I had a hard time concentrating in school on day-to-day subjects and with peers. I felt insecure. I was already stressed out by an early age. I'm now in my 40s. You're looking at life-long issues. There is a lot of prolonged and unresolved grief in this kind of home environment and with what you witness in

> the subcultures.
>
> It took me until I was into my 20s and 30s, after making major life choices, to begin to realise how being raised in this environment had affected me. Unfortunately, it was not until my father, his sexual partners and my mother had died, that I was free to speak publicly about my experiences.

And:

> **MercatorNet:** Why do so few children speak out?
>
> **Stefanowicz:** You're terrified. Absolutely terrified. Children who open up these family secrets are dependent on parents for everything. You carry the burden that you have to keep secrets. You learn to put on an image publicly of the happy family that is not reality. With same-sex legislation, children are further silenced. They believe there is no safe adult they can go to.

As I've written here before there are several completely non-religious reasons to oppose same-sex marriage. But the one that is surely the easiest to understand is that children need a mother and a father, and when they don't have both they miss having both. In general, children do better with their mom and dad close by as they they are growing up. That's a very good reason to promote the traditional definition of marriage – one man, one woman, for life. Period. I don't want to have any part in depriving children of the safety and security of their mothers and fathers. It's a scary thing to grow up in the world and not have two people who are YOURS. Who are interested in your development, and whose bond to you is irrevocable and undeniable.

Christian mother Asia Bibi is being hunted house-by-house in Pakistan

November 29, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The sign the Pakistani men are holding should read "Hang Asia"

Have you heard about Asia Bibi? She's the Christian woman who was imprisoned because of unsubstantiated charges made against her by her neighbors in Pakistan. Although she was finally found innocent, she remains in Pakistan. But she can't live there because radicals trying to kill her. And they don't want to let her leave the country.

The radically leftist UK Guardian says:

> The family of Asia Bibi, the Christian woman who spent eight years on death row in Pakistan for blasphemy before being acquitted three weeks ago, claim they are being hunted by extremists going house to house with their photographs to try to track them down.
>
> Bibi's family have been in hiding since her acquittal by the country's supreme court. She is in protective custody as part of a deal between the government and a hardline Islamic party, under which violent protests were called off while a review of the court ruling was undertaken.
>
> Bibi's lawyer, relatives and supporters have appealed for the family to be given asylum in a European or north American country.

Although the United Kingdom has taken in millions of unskilled immigrants from the Middle East – including many who started sex-trafficking rings using underage British girls – they don't want to take in Bibi. Why not?

A few months ago, I added the book "The Strange Death of Europe" to my reading list on the blog. It talks about the immigration policies of all the European nations, and what happens to people who question those policies. Not just to their careers, but to their lives.

That book was written by Douglas Murray, and he wrote a column about Asia Bibi in National Review.

He writes:

> Her case has had ramifications throughout Pakistani society in the years since. For instance, it provoked the statement by the brave governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, which led to his own murder by one of his own bodyguards. In the days since her release from jail, there have been mass protests in Pakistan where thousands of enraged fanatics have called, literally, for Asia Bibi's head.
>
> […][T]oday there are reports that the British government has said that it will not offer asylum to Asia Bibi. The reason being "security concerns" — that weasel term now used by all officialdom whenever it needs one last reason to avoid doing the right thing. According to this report, the government is concerned that if the U.K. offered asylum to Bibi it could cause "unrest among certain sections of the community." … The "community" that the British government will be scared of is the community that comes from the same country that has tortured Asia Bibi for the last eight years.
>
> The government is right to expect a backlash. There have been cases before of this "community" expressing its views. From the book-burnings and protests over *The Satanic Verses* affair in 1989 to the mass protest against cartoonists, which was the "community's" response to the Charlie Hebdo massacre in 2015, the Pakistani Muslim community in the U.K. has never been shy of expressing its views. Occasionally you even get a case like that at Easter 2016, when a Muslim from Bradford drove up to Glasgow to kill another Muslim (a shopkeeper called Asad Shah) because Mr. Shah came from a minority Muslim group that his killer deemed heretical. Which you might say is another example of "diversity."

These days, many people are voting for policies on the basis of how it makes them feel about themselves, or how it makes them look to others. As long as they aren't spending their own money, or risking their own safety, these feelings-based voters want to be *very* generous. *Very* generous spending other people's money. *Very* generous risking other people's safety. Is that real generosity?

We should definitely have a system that allows highly-skilled immigrants to come here to work. And if they prove that they are hard-working and law-abiding, then they should be able to apply for permanent residency. But we also need to be careful about bringing people in who will not respect basic human rights, like Asia Bibi's right to religious liberty. That's not compassion, it's foolishness.

By the way, don't expect Western feminists to say anything about Asia Bibi's situation. That would be going against their "intersectional" allies – something they aren't willing to do.

Unmarried 35-year-old woman reflects on her adventurous life of fun, travel and serial cohabitation

November 30, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

I found an interesting article featuring a 35-year-old woman who is alarmed that her approach to life has left her in debt and single, with a gap-filled resume of short-term jobs. I thought it might be useful for young women to read this, and consider whether making "rash" decisions and being "adventurous" works out.

She writes:

> I feel like a ghost. I'm a 35-year-old woman, and I have nothing to show for it. My 20s and early 30s have been a twisting crisscross of moves all over the West Coast, a couple of brief stints abroad, multiple jobs in a mediocre role with no real upward track. I was also the poster child for serial monogamy. My most hopeful and longest lasting relationship (three and a half years, whoopee) ended two years ago. We moved to a new town (my fourth new city), created a home together, and then nose-dived into a traumatic breakup that launched me to my fifth and current city and who-knows-what-number job.

Rash decisions, adventure, exploring…. and lots of debt:

> For all these years of quick changes and rash decisions, which I once rationalized as adventurous, exploratory, and living an "original life," I have nothing to show for it. I have no wealth, and I'm now saddled with enough debt from all of my moves, poor decisions, and lack of career drive that I may never be able to retire. I have no career milestones and don't care for my line of work all that much anyway, but now it's my lifeline, as I only have enough savings to buy a hotel

> room for two nights.

No STEM degree, which means she doesn't like to study hard things that can be tested against the real world for correctness:

> I used to consider myself creative — a good writer, poetic, passionate, curious. Now, after many years of demanding yet uninspiring jobs, multiple heartbreaks, move after move, financial woes, I'm quite frankly exhausted.

Surprised by aging and poor health:

> Also, within the past year I've had a breast-cancer scare and required surgery on my uterus due to a fertility issue. On top of that, I'm 35 and every gyno and women's-health website this side of the Mississippi is telling me my fertility is dropping faster than a piano falling out of the sky. Now I'm looking into freezing my eggs, adding to my never-ending financial burden, in hopes of possibly making something of this haunted house and having a family someday with a no-named man.

She's still trying to be the sexpot 25-year-old she used to be:

> I'm dating. I'm working out and working hard. Listening to music I enjoy and loving my cat. Calling my mom…. I'm drinking too much… And with men I date, I feel pressure to make something of the relationship too soon (move in, get married, "I have to have kids in a couple of years"; fun times!). **All the while still trying to be the sexpot 25-year-old I thought I was until what seemed like a moment ago.**

But her plan hasn't worked out:

> I used to think I was the one who had it all figured out. Adventurous life in the city! Traveling the world! Making memories! Now I feel incredibly hollow. And foolish. How can I make a future for myself that I can get excited about out of these wasted years? What reserves or identity can I draw from when I feel like I've accrued nothing up to this point with my life choices?

Well, I've known women like this, and I think we're going to see more and more women like this as the society becomes more secular and feminist. I want to say something about whether she is sincere about wanting to get married and have children, and what women should do to avoid ending up like her.

Do women today understand male nature and marriage?

This woman's demonstrated life plan is that she chose whatever made her feel good from age 18-35+, and now wants to enter into a marriage some time after age 35. And what does marriage mean to her? Has she prioritized entering the traditional roles of wife and mother? Don't listen to her words. Look at her actions. Her actions show that marriage and children were of NO importance to her. And her current approach to getting married

and having kids is the same as ever – work out in order to look hot, and try to coerce a man who signs up for recreational sex with no commitment into becoming a man who makes a life-long commitment to provide for her and her children (which is the opposite of what he signed up for). She wants marriage now for the same reason that she's wanted anything: for fun, thrills, adventure and to keep up with her girlfriends who are already married.

What kind of man should she have been pursuing from age 18 to 35, if she really wanted marriage and children? Well, the first thing to realize is that not all men want marriage. And the next thing to realize is that women who are serious about marriage need to focus ONLY on men who want to marry. All the men that the women quoted above wanted in her youth didn't want to marry. They wanted premarital recreational sex with her, and that was fine with her – she chose them, and disregarded the men who were interested in marriage.

A man who was interested in marrying her would have:

- ….told her no to sex before marriage (because the more sexual partners a woman has, the less happy she will be in marriage, and the more unstable her marriage will be).
- …led her to become better at being a wife and mother, by discouraging her thrill-seeking, traveling and wasteful spending, and instead encouraging her focus on a STEM education, career and getting debt-free.
- …led her to develop a Christian worldview in which she would understand the importance of marriage and children, and learn to sacrifice her own interests to love and care for others.

Was she interested in getting ready for marriage? No. She never chose those marriage-minded men. She didn't want to be a wife. The men she chose were chosen for fun, for thrills, and to show off their outward appearance to her girlfriends.

So, who are the men in this group of marriage-minded men? How do you recognize them? Marriage-minded men are interested in marriage because they want to *lead a home*. They will have invested a lot of time learning how to protect others, how to provide, and how to debate and lead on moral and spiritual issues. Marriage-minded men see the marriage enterprise as a way of advancing the causes that they care about most. Women who *really* want to get married will recognize those men, and pursue those men. And they'll do it early, so that they can invest in their husbands early and be young enough to have children.

Does the Miller-Urey experiment tell us anything about how life originated on Earth?

December 1, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

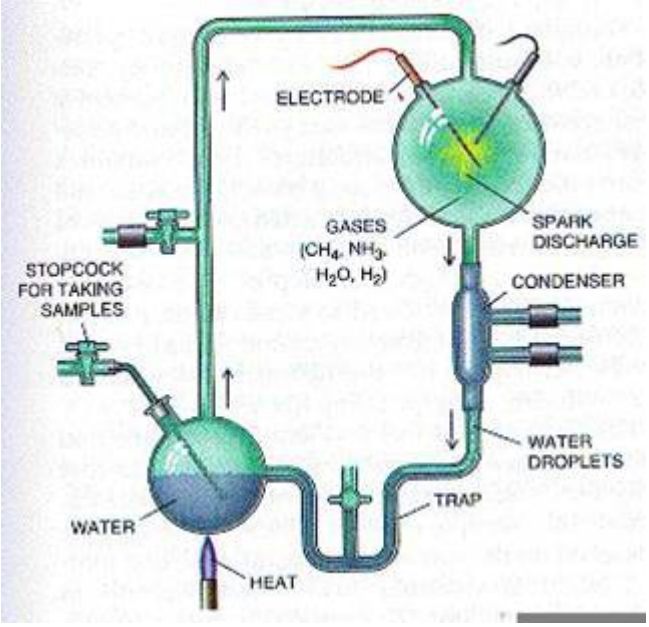

The Miller-Urey experiments

There are two problems related to the origin of the first living cell, on atheism:

1. The problem of getting the building blocks needed to create life – i.e. the amino acids
2. The problem of creating the functional sequences of amino acids and proteins that can support the minimal operations of a simple living cell

Normally, I concede the first problem and grant the atheist all the building blocks he needs. This is because step 2 is impossible. There is no way, on atheism, to form the sequences of amino acids that will fold up into proteins, and then to form the sequences of proteins that can be used to form everything else in the cell, including the DNA itself. But that's tomorrow's topic.

Today, let's take a look at the problems with step 1.

The problem of getting the building blocks of life

Now you may have heard that some scientists managed to spark some gasses to generate most of the 20 amino acids found in living systems. These experiments are called the "Miller-Urey" experiments.

The IDEA center has a nice summary of origin-of-life research that explains a few of the main problems with step 1.

Miler and Urey used the wrong gasses:

> Miller's experiment requires a reducing methane and ammonia atmosphere,[11, 12] however geochemical evidence says the atmosphere was hydrogen, water, and

> carbon dioxide (non-reducing).[15, 16] The only amino acid produced in a such an atmosphere is glycine (and only when the hydrogen content is unreasonably high), and could not form the necessary building blocks of life.[11]

Miller and Urey didn't account for UV of molecular instability:

> Not only would UV radiation destroy any molecules that were made, but their own short lifespans would also greatly limit their numbers. For example, at 100ºC (boiling point of water), the half lives of the nucleic acids Adenine and Guanine are 1 year, uracil is 12 years, and cytozine is 19 days[20] (nucleic acids and other important proteins such as chlorophyll and hemoglobin have never been synthesized in origin-of-life type experiments[19]).

Miller and Urey didn't account for molecular oxygen:

> We all have know ozone in the upper atmosphere protects life from harmful UV radiation. However, ozone is composed of oxygen which is the very gas that Stanley Miller-type experiments avoided, for it prevents the synthesis of organic molecules like the ones obtained from the experiments! Pre-biotic synthesis is in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. The chemistry does not work if there is oxygen because the atmosphere would be non-reducing, but if there is no UV-light-blocking oxygen (i.e. ozone – O_3) in the atmosphere, the amino acids would be quickly destroyed by extremely high amounts of UV light (which would have been 100 times stronger than today on the early earth).[20, 21, 22] This radiation could destroy methane within a few tens of years,[23] and atmospheric ammonia within 30,000 years.[15]

And there were three other problems too:

> At best the processes would likely create a dilute "thin soup,"[24] destroyed by meteorite impacts every 10 million years.[20, 25] This severely limits the time available to create pre-biotic chemicals and allow for the OOL.

> Chemically speaking, life uses only "left-handed" ("L") amino acids and "right-handed" ("R)" genetic molecules. This is called "chirality," and any account of the origin of life must somehow explain the origin of chirality. Nearly all chemical reactions produce "racemic" mixtures–mixtures with products that are 50% L and 50% R.

Two more problems are not mentioned in the article. A non-peptide bond anywhere in the chain will ruin the chain. You need around 200 amino acids to make a protein. If any of the bonds is not a peptide bond, the chain will not work in a living system. Additionally, the article does not mention the need for the experimenter to *intervene* in order to prevent interfering cross-reactions that would prevent the amino acids from forming.

Now keep in mind that even if you get the building blocks, you are left with the sequencing problem. Like the letters of the words in this blog post, the building blocks of

life also need to be put in a meaningful sequence in order to do work in a living system – but that's another topic for another day.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

December 2, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)

- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

#FakeNews NPR’s forced to correct anti-Trump story hours after publication

December 3, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

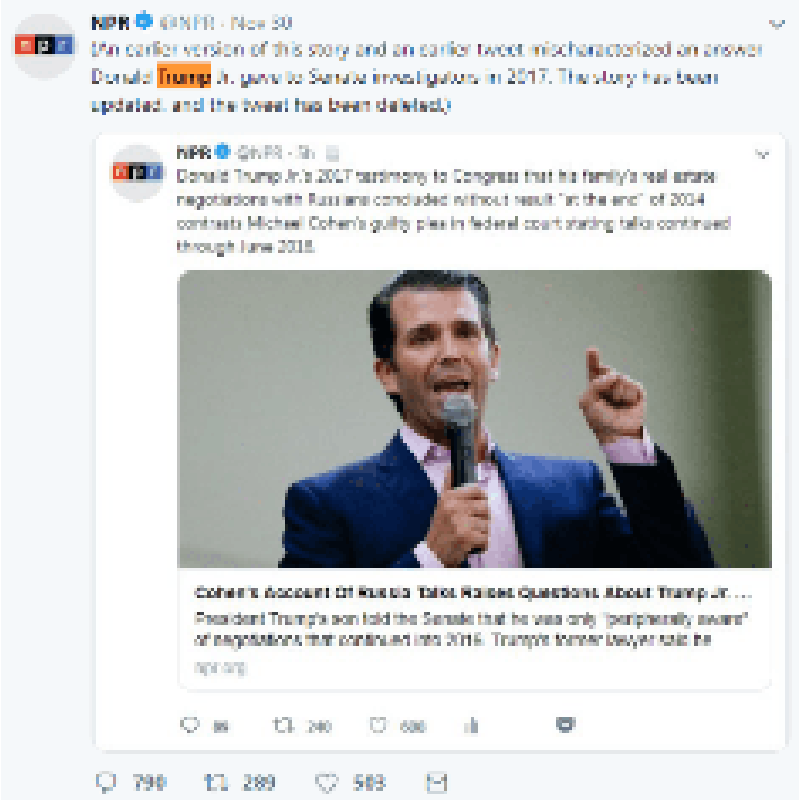

NPR #fakeNews: edits deceptive post, changes title, deletes tweet

A few people in my office listen to NPR and they think that it’s an unbiased news source. So I think it is important to analyze how NPR lies about the news, and how they respond when other journalists from conservative sources catch them in a lie. The story in question is about Donald Trump Jr.’s Senate testimony.

Molly Hemingway, who writes for the The Federalist, was the first to notice NPR’s deception. The title of her article at The Federalist us “NPR Blatantly Lies About Donald Trump Jr.’s 2017 Senate Testimony“.

She writes:

> NPR falsely claimed that Donald Trump Jr.’s testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in September 2017 conflicted with an account given by a former attorney for President Donald Trump.
>
> Here is NPR’s false write-up of that testimony:
>
> Trump Jr. told the Senate Judiciary Committee in September 2017 that although there had been negotiations surrounding a prospective Trump Tower in Moscow, they concluded without result ‘at the end’ of 2014.
>
> ‘But not in 2015 or 2016?’ Trump Jr. was asked.
>
> ‘Certainly not ’16,’ he said. ‘There was never a definitive end to it. It just died of

> deal fatigue.'
>
> Trump's account contrasts with the new version of events given by Cohen on Thursday in a guilty plea in federal court. In that new version, Cohen says the discussions with at least one Russian government official and others in Moscow continued through June 2016, well into Trump's presidential campaign.
>
> In fact, Senate investigators were asking Trump Jr. about a series of efforts to develop property in Russia, going back several years. Reporter Phil Ewing (reporter Tim Mak contributed to the story) conflates one of those efforts with another separate effort. That conflation results in the false news report.

That's from her article on the day the false story was posted. NPR did not issue a correction to the story for 5 hours. But a lot was going on to save the story during that 5 hours, because NPR wanted to spread the story around. Then later they could admit it was a lie, the better for the Democrat party.

The original article from NPR is here.

The original title is "Trump Jr.'s 2017 Testimony Conflicts With Cohen's Account Of Russian Talks".

The original story said this:

> Donald Trump Jr.'s testimony to Congress about his family's real estate negotiations with powerful Russians does not comport with the new version laid out by Donald Trump's ex-attorney Michael Cohen, official transcripts show.

After the lie was discovered, that title changed into "Cohen's Account Of Russia Talks Raises Questions About Trump Jr. 2017 Testimony".

And the paragraph claiming that there is a conflict disappeared.

In situations like this, the false story is shared and re-tweeted thousands of times. The correction is shared and re-tweeted a tiny fraction of that. The effect is that the public is deceived by the original story, and never sees the correction. NPR knows this is how social media works. If they wanted to really reverse the damage, then they would have retracted the story, fired all the reporters involved, and posted a correction on their front page. You have to judge their intent by how far they go to fix the damage they caused.

It's time to cut off all taxpayer funding of NPR and PBS. I'm fine with them being stupid and deluded, but I don't see why I should have to pay them to do it.

William Lane Craig on the unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

December 4, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

You might remember that Dr. Craig used a new argument in his debate with Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia.

My notes on the debate record it thus:

> The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
>
> - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
> - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
> - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
> - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see

And now Dr. Craig has expanded on it in the Q&A section of his Reasonable Faith web site.

The question:

> Dear Dr Craig
>
> Firstly can I thank you for all your work. My faith in Christ has been enormously strengthened through studying your work in apologetics in particular and I have grown in confidence in my Christian witness.

> My question relates to numbers and mathematics as a whole. On the Defenders podcast you state that as God is the only self-existent, necessary being, numbers and mathematical objects, whilst being useful, don't actually exist as these too would exist necessarily and independently of God. If this is the case, how can it be that mathematics is so easily applied to the natural world? Surely if mathematics only existed in our minds, we would expect to see no correlation between it and how the physical world actually is?
>
> Michael
>
> United Kingdom

Excerpt from the answer:

> As philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng points out, for the non-theistic realist, the fact that physical reality behaves in line with the dictates of acausal mathematical entities existing beyond space and time is "a happy coincidence" (*Mathematics and Reality* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 239). Think about it: If, *per impossibile*, all the abstract objects in the mathematical realm were to disappear overnight, there would be no effect on the physical world. This is simply to reiterate that abstract objects are causally inert. The idea that realism somehow accounts for the applicability of mathematics "is actually very counterintuitive," muses Mark Balaguer, a philosopher of mathematics. "The idea here is that in order to believe that the physical world has the nature that empirical science assigns to it, I have to believe that there are causally inert mathematical objects, existing outside of spacetime," an idea which is inherently implausible (*Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 136).
>
> By contrast, the theistic realist can argue that God has fashioned the world on the structure of the mathematical objects. This is essentially what Plato believed. The world has mathematical structure as a result.

This argument was also made by mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley in a lecture he gave on scientific evidence for an intelligent designer. You can read an essay that covers some of the material in that lecture at Leadership University.

Excerpt:

> The physical universe is surprising in the simple mathematical form it assumes. All the basic laws of physics and fundamental relationships can be described on one side of one sheet of paper because they are so few in number and so simple in form (see table 1.1).
>
> […]It has been widely recognized for some time that nature assumes a form that is elegantly described by a relatively small number of simple, mathematical relationships, as previously noted in table 1.1. None of the various proposals presented later in this chapter to explain the complexity of the universe address

> this issue. Albert Einstein in a letter to a friend expressed his amazement that the universe takes such a form (Einstein 1956), saying:
>
> You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world to the degree that we may speak of such comprehensibility as a miracle or an eternal mystery. Well, a priori one should expect a chaotic world which cannot be in any way grasped through thought. . . . The kind of order created, for example, by Newton's theory of gravity is of quite a different kind. Even if the axioms of the theory are posited by a human being, the success of such an enterprise presupposes an order in the objective world of a high degree which one has no a priori right to expect. That is the "miracle" which grows increasingly persuasive with the increasing development of knowledge.
>
> Alexander Polykov (1986), one of the top physicists in Russia, commenting on the mathematical character of the universe, said: "We know that nature is described by the best of all possible mathematics because God created it." Paul Davies, an astrophysicist from England, says, "The equations of physics have in them incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe" (Davies 1984). Successful development of a unified field theory in the future would only add to this remarkable situation, further reducing the number of equations required to describe nature, indicating even further unity and integration in the natural phenomena than have been observed to date.

The whole paper that started this off is called "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics", and it is a must read for advanced Christian defenders. You can read the whole thing here.

Pro-life Irish nurses, doctors and midwives will be forced to participate in abortions

December 5, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn Baby – 10 weeks old

The dream of the pro-abortion left is not only to have abortion on demand. They also want four more things: 1) that pro-life medical personnel be forced to participate in it, 2) that pro-life taxpayers be forced to fund it, 3) that pro-life companies be forced to cover it in their insurance plans, and 4) that speech critical of abortion be silenced.

Here's the latest from Ireland, reported by Life News:

> Abortion politics are nearing a boiling point in Ireland as hundreds of doctors, nurses and midwives say pro-abortion politicians have repeatedly ignored their concerns.
>
> Parliament is getting close to passing a radical pro-abortion bill that would legalize abortion for any reason up to 12 weeks of pregnancy and up to six months in a wide variety of circumstances. It would force taxpayers to pay for abortions and force Catholic hospitals to provide them. The bill also strictly limits conscience protections for medical professionals like them.
>
> Government leaders want medical workers to be ready to begin aborting unborn babies Jan. 1, 2019, but the medical community is pushing back.
>
> The Irish Examiner reports about 500 nurses and midwives signed a petition to Health Minister Simon Harris urging him to support better conscience protections. They said they are afraid of being forced out of their profession because they do

> not want to participate in the killing of unborn babies.
>
> […]The letter comes just a few days after dozens of doctors stormed out of an emergency meeting about the abortion legislation. They said political leaders have been ramming through the bill without consulting the medical community or giving it ample time to prepare. Many doctors also fear being forced to help abort unborn babies against their consciences.
>
> "Ireland is one of the only countries where abortion services will be through GPs [general practitioners], it is usually through clinics. In most countries patients self-refer to clinics," said Dr. Illona Duffy, an OB-GYN.
>
> "GPs will be left dealing with this complicated process. This is being done without consultation and without taking our concerns into consideration," she said.

If you remember, here in America, Obama tried to force Christian-owned companies like Hobby Lobby to cover drugs that cause abortions (after conception has already occurred). He was only defeated when he lost at the Supreme Court.

During Trump's first two years, pro-life bills were introduced in the House:

- Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (H.R.4712)
- Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (H.R. 36)
- Disapproval of Title X Funds for Planned Parenthood (H.J.Res. 43)
- No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act of 2017 (H.R. 7)

And in the Senate:

- Paul Amendment to defund Planned Parenthood
- Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (S. 2311)

But Democrats voted against them.

What should we expect from the Democrats once they take over the House of Representatives? Well, one of the first things they will do is vote to repeal the Hyde Amendment, which prevents U.S. taxpayer money from being used to fund abortions. Democrats are extreme on abortion policy, but that's what you get when you make abortion legal, and then hand the reins of power to Democrats.

We will never see pro-life bills come out of the House of Representatives, now that the Democrats are in control.

Can atheist morality prevent Neil DeGrasse Tyson from raping a student?

December 6, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Richard Dawkins on atheism, morality, free will and human rights
Well, I'm been monitoring the morality of prominent atheists and noting a lot of shortcomings. In this post, I'll first look at the allegations against prominent atheist Neil deGrasse Tyson, then review the morality of other atheists: Richard Dawkins, Lawrence Krauss and Richard Carrier.

Daily Wire has the latest on Neil deGrasse Tyson:

> Dr. Katelyn Allers, an associate professor of physics and astronomy at Bucknell University, claims Tyson allegedly groped her at an American Astronomical Society after-party in 2009.
>
> Tyson's former assistant Ashley Watson described an incident in which he allegedly pressured her to join him at his apartment for wine. Later, he made several advances, claims Watson, who says she quit her job after the event.
>
> These two allegations come one year after musician Tchiya Amet accused Tyson of raping her during graduate school.

Now let's look at Richard Dawkins:

> I want to raise another question that interests me. Why are we so obsessed with monogamous fidelity in the first place?
>
> […]Why should you deny your loved one the pleasure of sexual encounters with others, if he or she is that way inclined?
>
> I, for one, feel drawn to the idea that there is something noble and virtuous in rising above nature in this way.
>
> […]And why don't we all admire — as I increasingly do — those rare free spirits confident enough to rise above jealousy, stop fretting about who is "cheating on" whom.

What about his ability to stay married?:

> In 1984, Dawkins divorced his wife of 17 years, Marian Stamp; later that same year, he married Eve Barham. Dawkins also divorced Barham, though the precise circumstances of this divorce are unclear. He married science fiction actress Lalla Ward in 1992; at present, the two are still married.

Alas, that last quote is outdated. He was legally separated in 2016 from Lalla Ward. This is what I would expect, given his view on the morality of marital fidelity.

Now famous atheist Lawrence Krauss:

> Hensley said… Krauss made a comment about her eye makeup, and got very close to her face. Suddenly, he lifted her by the arms and pushed her onto the bed beneath him, forcibly kissing her and trying to pull down the crotch of her tights. Hensley said she struggled to push him off. When he pulled out a condom, Hensley said, she got out from under him, said "I have to go," and rushed out of the room.

> […]BuzzFeed News has learned that the incident with Hensley is one of many wide-ranging allegations of Krauss's inappropriate behavior over the last decade — including groping women, ogling and making sexist jokes to undergrads, and telling an employee at Arizona State University, where he is a tenured professor, that he was going to buy her birth control so she didn't inconvenience him with maternity leave.

And famous atheist Richard Carrier:

> In a recent blog post, entitled "Coming Out Poly + A Change of Life Venue", the esteemed Dr. Richard Carrier PhD, discusses his "coming out" as polyamorous, an "orientation" that he just discovered at the young age of 47.
>
> […]Carrier claims that after 17 years of marriage, he cheated on his wife multiple times, for reasons that he won't disclose. In the midst of his infidelity, he suddenly "discovered" (as a middle aged man) that he was polyamorous. Even though his wife attempted to make the marriage work by allowing him to see other women under the guise of an "open marriage", Carrier still decided to kick her to the curb. So in Carrier's view, his affairs were not a mistake, but rather a fun new "lifestyle choice" that he will pursue, regardless of the past commitment to his wife.

Atheist Michael Shermer has also been accused of rape, but I don't think the allegations are credible enough to quote. Although he does admit having sex outside of marriage with her, which disgusts me.

Let's be frank. Although there are some conservative atheists, the majority of them favor relaxing the moral rules on sexuality and marriage. Most atheists are more concerned about stopping religious people from setting the rules around sex and marriage than they are about following the moral law. I think that the rising popularity of atheism is significantly to blame for the breakdown of the family, and the harm that's being caused to children who have to struggle with defective or absent parents. Although there are exceptions, most atheists are more concerned about adult selfishness than they are with the needs of children (especially unborn children). Even if they don't intend for children to suffer from their decisions, children do indeed suffer. Children do best in marriages that are faithful and stable, and the Sexual Revolution – which was championed by the secular left – has clearly not helped help children to get what they need.

What does it take for a person to have a reason to be moral?

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Theism rationally grounds all 5 of these. Atheism cannot ground *any of them.*

It's easy enough for an atheist to imitate the people around him when he is in a society grounded in Judeo-Christian values. But when no one is around to watch him, what reason does he have to do the right thing? And what is the right thing, in an accidental universe?

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Older career woman calls Dennis Prager show to warn young women about marriage

December 7, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I used to listen to the Dennis Prager show all the time, and my favorite hour was the male-female hour, which is the second hour every Wednesday. In that hour, you will hear some of the most frank discussion of male and female issues. In a recent male-female hour, a 50-year old woman called in to give advice to younger women.

Prager explains in National Review:

> Every Wednesday, the second hour of my national radio show is the "Male/Female Hour." A few weeks ago, a woman named Jennifer called in. For reasons of space, I have somewhat shortened her comments. Every young woman should read them. This is precisely what she said:
>
> Dennis, I want to get right to it. I'm 50 years old with four college degrees. I was raised by a feminist mother with no father in the home. My mother told me get an education to the maximum level so that you can get out in the world, make a lot of money. And that's the path I followed. I make adequate money. I don't make a ton of money. But I do make enough to support my own household.
>
> I want to tell women in their 20s: Do not follow the path that I followed. You are leading yourself to a life of loneliness. All of your friends will be getting married and having children, and you're working to compete in the world, and what you're doing is competing with men. Men don't like competitors. Men want a partner. It took me until my late 40s to realize this.
>
> And by the time you have your own household with all your own bills, you can't get off that track, because now you've got to make the money to pay your bills. It's hard to find a partner in your late 40s to date because you also start losing self-confidence about your looks, your body. It's not the same as it was in your 20s. You try to do what you can to make your life fulfilling. I have cats and dogs. But it's lonely when you see your friends having children, going on vacations, planning the lives of their children, and you don't do anything at night but come home to your cats and dogs. I don't want other women to do what I have done.

How did this happen to her?

Somebody asked me the other day, "Why did you stay single and never have kids?" There's answers: Because I was brainwashed by my mother into this. But it's hard and it's shameful to tell people, "I don't know. I ran out of time."

There's not a good answer for it except "I was programmed to get into the workforce, compete with men and make money." Supposedly, that would be a fulfilling life. But I was told that by a feminist mother who was divorced, who hated her husband — my father.

She tried to steer me on what she thought was the right path, but feminism is a lie. That's

what I want women to know.

I didn't realize this until late in life. I want to tell women: Find someone in your 20s. That's when you're still very cute. That's when you're still amiable to working out problems with someone. It's harder in your 50s, when you've lived alone, to compromise with someone, to have someone in your home and every little thing about them annoys you because you're so used to being alone. It's hard to undo that, so don't do what I did. Find someone in your 20s.

Now I have a lot I want to say about this column, but I really liked what Robert Stacy McCain said in his post.

He wrote:

> There is an entire category of self-help books by Christian women whose devotion to "traditional family values" somehow never resulted in them walking down the aisle, and so they write about the "godly single" life and offer relationship advice (which would seem to be the blind leading the blind, so to speak). [Older traditional conservative unmarried women] often blame men for their failure, complaining that men need to "man up." The more likely explanation, of course, is that these women actually had matrimonial opportunities in their youth, but just didn't play their cards right and, rather than confess their errors — "Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea máxima culpa" — instead rationalize their failure by scapegoating men.

I don't want young women to be wasting their teens and 20s like this woman is, choosing men for relationships using criteria that have nothing at all to do with marriage, or what a man does in a marriage:

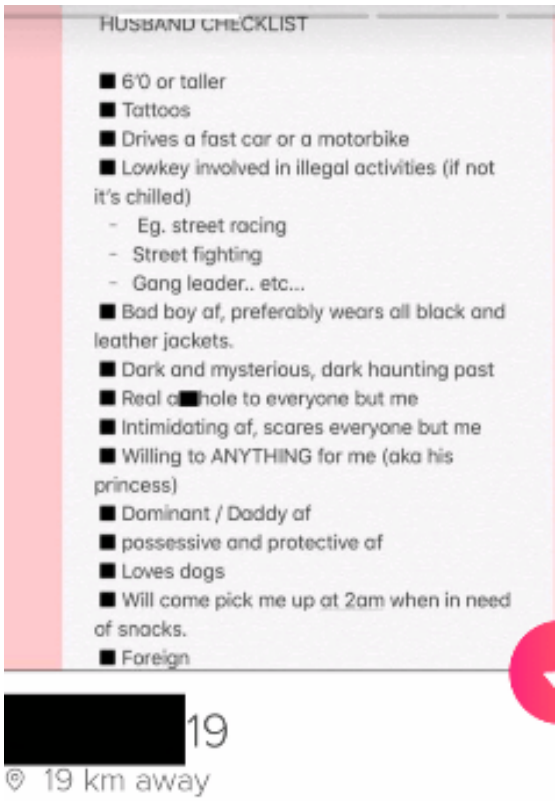

She's looking for drama, domestic violence and instability – not for a husband
I would advise young, unmarried women today not to indulge in drunkenness and promiscuity in their late teens and 20s. We know from studies that virgin brides make for a more stable and happier marriage. Given the divorce laws, and the high number of divorces for unhappiness, it makes sense to be a virgin and choose a virgin to marry. I think young women should focus their energy on relationships with men who don't want sex before marriage, but would prefer to commit and start a family. Although these men may not be "attractive" according to superficial criteria, they should be selected because they are good at marriage, and want to marry sooner, rather than later.

On the other hand, I would advise successful man to choose a woman who is attracted to his abilities as a husband and father. Choose a woman who respects your ability to be serious, to be self-controlled, to be focused on serving others, and to achieve what you set out to achieve. Men need respect more than they need oxygen. In order to get that respect, a man *has to* choose a woman who has, from earliest times, preferred men who have good moral character, demonstrated leadership ability, and a proven record of achieving what he set out to achieve by wise decision-making.

Where are all the good women?

Captain Capitalism says that although successful men would like to have a wife and children, they are not finding any women who are qualified to be wives and mothers.

He writes:

> It is a very REAL fact men are facing today when it comes to marriage – that the only younger women out there to date and potentially marry up are all brainwashed, leftist, NPC women. They ALL vote democrat. They ALL are feminists. They ALL put their career above everything else. They ALL have crippling debts. They ALL have dubious careers. And to any man who takes having a wife and forming a family seriously, these women are simply unqualified for the job. This isn't to say literally "all" women are like this (there are engineers, accountants, and traditional women), but the statistics are so skewed, so bad, there is effectively no choice for most men today.

There's a wonderful opportunity here for Christian women to distinguish themselves from women who aren't making good decisions about men and marriage.

For example, I think it's a good idea for women to have a worldview that is pro-marriage. I even wrote a post about that, with 10 questions to evaluate whether you have a marriage-friendly worldview.

It's also a good idea for young Christian women to prepare to how to discuss their faith intelligently with a man. I put together a helpful list of 10 questions that a woman who is serious about her Christian faith should be able to answer.

Ideally, it would be common for Christian women to understand how to discuss their faith in a reasoned way with non-Christians, using scientific and historical evidence. That will prepare her to evaluate a man's spiritual leadership ability, and to answer the questions

that serious Christian men will ask her to see if she is ready for marriage. Men ask these questions because we think about choosing someone who has an authentic faith in order to raise our children. The idea of putting an informed Christian woman in the mother role excites us. Note: men know that debt-free wives can have children sooner, and that means we will get more children. If you want to get married, and have lots of children, then choose a STEM degree, so you can get out of debt quickly with only a few years of work.

Christian women should be more serious about preparing for marriage, and choosing marriage-minded men, than this lady:

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

There's no question today that women have the intelligence and ability to succeed in careers. We should be teaching them to apply their intelligence and ability to understanding how to prepare for marriage. They should understand when men want to marry and why men want to marry, and then govern their own decisions and priorities so that they achieve the goal of getting married. Not every man is marriage-ready and commitment-focused. But if women are serious about marriage, then they should choose to get into relationships ONLY with those men who are serious about marriage. They shouldn't choose to waste their best years on fun with men who don't want to commit to them.

Matthew Vines and Michael Brown debate homosexuality and the Bible on Moody radio

December 8, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The audio of the Matthew Vines vs Michael Brown debate is streamed here on the Moody site.

Details:

> Can you be gay and Christian? Matthew Vines says you can and he's created a viral video and best-selling book defending his view. This Saturday on Up for Debate, Vines joins host Julie Roys to debate author and leading evangelical apologist, Dr. Michael Brown. Is gay monogamy an option for Christians? Is it unloving to reject gay marriage? Listen and join the discussion this Saturday at 8 a.m. Central Time on Up for Debate!

Summary key: Julie Roys (JR), Matthew Vines (MV), Michael Brown (MB)

Summary:

Opening speeches:

- JR: Why should Christians be open to reinterpreting the Bible on homosexuality?
- MV: Consider the lives and testimonies of gay Christians. Here is my personal story.
- MV: According to the Bible, a person with same-sex attractions would have to embrace lifelong celibacy. I refuse to do that.
- MV: There are 6 passages in the Bible that are relevant to the goodness of homosexuality. All are negative.
- MV: None of these passages address gay relationships that are "long-term" and "faithful" that are based on "commitment" and "love".
- JR: You say that it is "damaging" for Christians to disagree with you views, is that true?
- MV: Yes. One of my friends declared his homosexuality and he did not feel safe to come home. He felt pain because Christians disagreed with him.
- MV: You cannot ask a person with same-sex attractions to be celibate, it causes too much harm to ask gays to abstain from sexual relationships.
- JR: Respond to Matthew.
- MB: The Bible only permits heterosexual sexuality and in every case condemns homosexual acts.
- MB: Matthew is taking his sexual preferences and activities as given, and reinterpreting the Bible to fit it.
- MB: Genesis talks about women being made to help men, and to fulfill God's commandment to procreate and fill the Earth.
- MB: The Bible speaks about the complementarity of the sexes when talking about how two become one in marriage.

- MB: I am very sensitive to the stories of people who are gay who experience discrimination as “gay Christians”.
- MB: You can feel sad for people who have two conflicting commitments, but that doesn’t mean we should redefine what the Bible says.
- JR: Stop talking, we have a break.

JR takes a caller for the next topic:

- Caller 1: I had same-sex attractions and I was able to change my sexuality.
- JR: Matthew, respond to that.
- MV: Alan Chambers of Exodus International says that 99.9% of people he worked with had not changed their gay orientation.
- MV: Lifelong celibacy is not acceptable to gays, so the Bible must be reinterpreted to suit gays.
- MB: Matthew thinks that God himself did not understand the concept of sexual orientation and inadvertently hurt gays because of his lack of knowledge.
- MB: There is a solution in the Bible for people who cannot be celibate, and that solution is heterosexual marriage
- MB: If a person is only attracted to pre-teen girls, do we then have to re-write the Bible to affirm that so they won’t be “harmed”?
- MB: Alan Chambers was speaking for his own group, and his statement does not account for the fact that thousands of people DO change.
- JR: What about the Jones/Yarhouse study that found that 38% of reparative therapy subjects were successful in changing or chastity?
- MV: (no response to the question)
- MV: (to Brown) do you accept that the Bible forces gays to live out lifelong celibacy

Another break, then Brown replies:

- MB: Yes. But change is possible.
- MV: Do you know of any Christian who acknowledged that this was the consequence of the Bible’s teaching for gays?
- MB: Paul’s explanation that the options for ALL Christians are 1) celibacy or 2) heterosexual marriage. For 2000 years.
- MV: Paul (in Romans 1) is talking about people who are not “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships.
- MV: Paul was not aware of “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships at the time he wrote his prohibitions in Romans 1.
- JR: How do you know that fixed sexual orientation is true? And that the Biblical authors would written different things if they knew?
- JR: Are there any references in the first century to “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships?
- MB: Yes, in my book I quote prominent historian N. T. Wright who documents that those relationships were known.

- MB: Matthew's view requires that God did not know about sexual orientation when ordaining the Bible's content.
- MB: Leviticus 18 is for all people, for all time. This was not just for the Jews, this was for everyone.
- MV: I am not saying that Paul was wrong because he was ignorant.
- MV: Paul was writing in a context where "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships were unknown.
- MV: NT Wright does not cite first century texts, he cites a problematic 4th century text.
- MV: Absence of 1st-century references to "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships means that God did not intend to prohibit them.
- MB: Whenever the Bible speaks about homosexuality, it is opposed to it – Old Testament and New Testament.

Another break, then the conclusion:

- JR: Respond to the Leviticus prohibition, which prohibits homosexuality for everyone, for all time.
- MV: It is a universal prohibition on male same-sex intercourse, but it does not apply to Christians.
- MV: For example, Leviticus prohibits sex during a woman's menstrual period. And Christians are not bound by that.
- MV: What is the reason for this prohibition of male-male sex in Leviticus? It's not affirm the complementarity of the sexual act.
- MV: The Bible prohibits male-male sex because it is written for a patriarchal culture.
- MV: In a patriarchal culture, women are viewed as inferior. That's why the Bible prohibits a man from taking the woman's role in sex.
- MB: The prohibition in Leviticus is a universal prohibition against male-male sex, applicable in all times and places.
- MB: Homosexual sex is a violation of the divine order.
- MB: We can see already the consequences of normalizing this: gay marriage, and supports for polygamy and polyamory.
- MV: So the earliest reference there is to a "long-term", "faithful" gay relationship is a 4th century text.
- MV: But that gay relationship is not like modern gay relationships.

I have a few comments about Vines' points below.

My comments:

Even heterosexuals who have not married are called upon to embrace lifelong celibacy. I am in my early 40s and am a virgin because I have not married. I wouldn't seek to reinrepret the Bible to allow premarital sex just because what I am doing is difficult. I would rather just do what the Bible says than reinterpret it to suit me. And it's just as hard for me to be chaste as it would be for him to be. In short, it's a character issue. He

takes his right to recreational sex as non-negotiable, and reinterprets the Bible to suit. I take the Bible as non-negotiable, and comply with it regardless of whether it seems to make me less happy. With respect to the purposes of God for me in this world, my happiness is expendable. If I don't find someone to marry, I'm going to be "afflicted" with the lifelong celibacy that Vines seems to think is torture, but let me tell you – God is happy with the contributions I am making for him, and if I have to be chaste through my whole life, I am 100% fine with that. I serve the King. And not the reverse.

Notice that he talks about "long-term" but not permanent relationships, and "faithful" but not exclusive. This is important because the statistics show that gay relationships (depending on whether it is female-female or male-male) are prone to instability and/or infidelity. I just blogged on that recently, with reference to the *published research* on the subject. Vines is talking about a situation that does not obtain in the real world – according to the data. Gay relationships do not normally value permanence and exclusivity in the way that opposite-sex marriage relationships do, especially where the couple regularly attends church. The divorce rate and infidelity rate for religious couples is *far below* the rates for gay couples, depending on the sexes involved. Vines is committed to the idea that marriage is about feelings, e.g. – "love", but that's not the public purpose of marriage. Marriage is not about love, it's about complementarity of the sexes and providing for the needs of children. We have published studies like this one showing that there are negative impacts to children who are raised by gay couples, which dovetails with studies showing that children need a mother and that children need a father. We should not normalize any relationship that exposes children to harm. We should prefer to inconvenience adults than to harm children.

Matthew Vines made an argument that Christians have to stop saying that homosexuality is wrong, because it makes gay people feel excluded. I wrote previously about the argument that gay activists use where they say "if you don't agree with me and celebrate me and affirm me, then I'll commit suicide". In that post, I quoted a prominent gay activist who made exactly that argument. I don't find the threats to self-destruction to be a convincing argument *for the truth* of the view that gay marriage being the same as heterosexual marriage. In fact, this is confirmed by a recent study which showed that features of gay relationships themselves, and not social disapproval, is to blame for high rates of suicide in the gay community.

Vines seems to want to argue that the context in which the Bible authors were writing did not allow them to address the problem of gays in "long-term", "faithful" relationships. Well, we have already seen that statistically speaking, those relationships are in the minority. One British study mentioned in the post I linked to above found that only 25% of gay couples were intact after 8 years. The number is 82% for heterosexual marriages, and that *doesn't* filter by couples who abstain from premarital sex and who attend church regularly. If you add those two criteria, the number is going to be well above 82% in my opinion. Studies show that premarital chastity and church attendance *vastly* improve the stability and quality of marriages.

In addition, Vines is trying to argue that 1) the Bible authors were not aware of "long-

term", "faithful" gay relationships and 2) their failure to explicitly disqualify these "long-term", "stable" gay sexual relationships means that the Bible actually condones them. A friend of mine pointed out that this is a textbook case of the argument from silence, where someone asserts that because something is not explicitly condemned, then it must be OK. Carried through to its logical end, that would mean that things like identity theft are OK, because they are not mentioned explicitly. Brown asserted that there was a blanket prohibition on homosexual acts. He is arguing from what we know. Vines says that "long-term", "faithful" homosexual relationships are not mentioned, and are therefore OK. He is arguing from what we don't know. And he is trying to reverse the burden of proof so that he doesn't have to show evidence for his view. Brown wouldn't take the bait. The fact of the matter is that no one for the last 2000 years of church history have taken Vines' view. Every single Christian before Vines, who were closer to Jesus' teachings than Vines, understood the verses that Brown cited to be providing a blanket prohibition on homosexual sex acts. If Vines wants to claim that the Bible condones what he wants it to condone, he has to produce some positive evidence from the text or from church history or church fathers. He has *nothing* to support his case that could convince anyone that this is what Christians have believed, and ought to believe.

Finally, if you are looking for another debate, I blogged about a debate between Michael Brown and Eric Smaw. There's a video and summaries of the opening speeches in that post.

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

December 9, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to video)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

Here's the debate:

Summary

Note: the following debate summary is rated "S" for Snarky. Reader discretion is advised.

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism

- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program
- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent
- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do

maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true
- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not

repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to

the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms

can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah
- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet 9 from Outer Space!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren’t going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

Socialist Macron attacks protesters in France: armored vehicles, tear gas, water cannons, riot police

December 10, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Queen of France tells the peasants what to do if they can't afford gas

France's socialist leader Macron raised gas taxes in order to encourage people to drive their cars less. His gas taxes were supposed to reduce carbon emissions, and "stop global warming". The people who have to pay those taxes, many of whom voted for him, protested. So Macron decided to persuade them.

The radically leftist New York Times reported on what Macron did:

> Vincent Picard describes himself as a "militant ecologist." But when protesters took to the streets to express their rage over a planned increase in France's fuel tax, Mr. Picard joined their ranks.
>
> He acknowledges that the tax might encourage the conservation considered critical for a healthy planet. But with the nearest train station 35 minutes away, he has to drive to work every day.
>
> "I am conscious that we have reached the end of fossil fuels and that we have to modify our habits," said Mr. Picard, a 32-year-old pastry maker from northern France. But, he added, "You have to continue to live."
>
> The gas tax is part of an effort started by France in 2014 to regularly raise the tax on fossil fuels to fight global climate change.
>
> The so-called Yellow Vest protests against the tax increase have become the

> biggest obstacle yet to such attempts to encourage conservation and alternative energy use.
>
> […]Mr. Picard, the pastry chef, for instance, earns €1,280 a month, or about $1,450, after payroll taxes. For him, the planned tax increase of 6 or 7 cents per liter of gas "is enormous," he said.

Wow, the "ecologist" (pastry chef) wants to save the planet, but he doesn't want to have to pay for it.

This tweet made me laugh out loud:

>
>
>
> I would be willing to bet a pay check that she's a single mother

She doesn't like the socialism she voted for, either. Taxing the rich made her feel so good, until she found out that the government thinks she is rich, and taxed her.

But isn't green energy working in Canada?

But France isn't the only socialist country passing carbon taxes to stop the global warming monster. Canada is doing it too, especially in the province of Ontario, where they switched from nuclear power to wind power.

Here is a helpful graphic from the Fraser Institute, a Canadian think tank that focuses on fiscal policy:

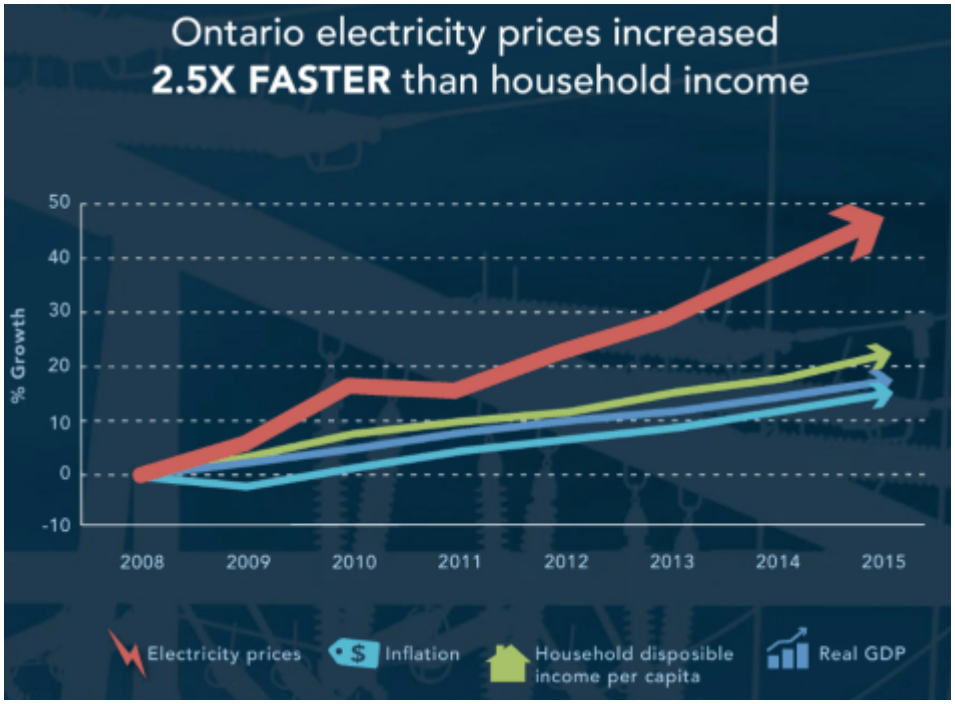

Let's shutter the nuclear plants, and move to wind power! It's for the planet!

But it's not just green energy, they wanted a carbon tax, too. Environmentally conscious Canadian voters handed their socialist leader Trudeau a majority government two years ago. But now that they are getting the carbon tax that they voted for, they're having second thoughts about paying for it.

Far-left Bloomberg News reports:

> Two years ago, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a set of aggressive policies to reduce his country's greenhouse gas emissions, centered on a nationwide price on carbon.
>
> As that price is about to take effect, growing opposition has put Trudeau on the defensive and has provincial governments rolling back other measures, raising questions about the appetite of this oil-exporting country to tackle climate change.
>
> […]The growing backlash to Canada's climate push reflects a number of changes, experts say. Those include widespread anger in Ontario as electricity prices soared in recent years, driven in part by a shift to renewables.

Canada's environment minister "Climate Barbie" (she has no earned degrees in climate science, or any applied science, but she sure is glamorous and hawt) says they're going ahead with the carbon tax:

> Catherine McKenna, Canada's minister of environment and climate change, said in an interview that the dangers associated with global warming meant her government had to cut emissions. She said the government would proceed with its plan in the face of provincial

> > opposition.

Canadian socialists felt so good when they elected a socialist. They wanted their carbon tax, and they thought the rich would pay for it. But just like the socialist voters in France, they are learning that they are going to have to pay for it. It felt so good to save the planet by voting for socialism… voting didn't cost a thing, and it *felt so good*. You can tell your friends "I voted socialist", and they'll think you're compassionate and caring. But then the bill came, and you find out that you have to pay for what you voted for.

>
> French voters voted for socialism, and they're also getting fascism for free

The nice thing about consumption taxes (e.g. – gas taxes and carbon taxes), is that *everyone has to pay for it.* Income taxes are only pad by people who earn money. But consumption taxes are paid by everyone. If France is any indication about what's ahead for Canada, then we should soon see young Canadian socialists choking on tear gas. (Maybe they will think that's an improvement from the pot they're smoking now that they legalized it). It's time for Canadian socialists to understand the price they have to pay for their belief in global warming mythology. Bring. It. On.

The Wintery Knight’s favorite Bible verses

December 11, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Dina asked me to post my favorite Bible verses, so here are 8 of my favorites.

Psalm 27:14:

> [11] Teach me Your way, O Lord,
> And lead me in a level path
> Because of my foes.
>
> [12] Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries,
> For false witnesses have risen against me,
> And such as breathe out violence.
>
> [13] *I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord
> In the land of the living.
>
> **[14] Wait for the Lord;**
> **Be strong and let your heart take courage;**
> **Yes, wait for the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**
>
> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

Matthew 5:13:

> 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
>
> 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
>
> **13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**
>
> 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
>
> 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

2 Timothy 2:4:

> 1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
>
> [2] The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
>
> [3] Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[4] No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.**
>
> [5] Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

Daniel 3:18:

> [13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.
>
> [14] Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?
>
> [15] Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?”
>
> [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we

> do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.
>
> [17] If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire;and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
>
> **[18] But *even* if *He does* not,let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."**

Esther 4:14:

> [10] Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai:
>
> [11] "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days."
>
> [12] They related Esther's words to Mordecai.
>
> [13] Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> **[14] For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"**

Philippians 1:9:

> [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> [4] always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> [5] in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> [6] *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> [7] For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
>
> [8] For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> [10] so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
>
> [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Numbers 13:30:

> [25] When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,
>
> [26] they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.
>
> [27] Thus they told him, and said, “We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.
>
> [28] Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.
>
> [29] Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.”
>
> **[30] Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.”**

If you have a favorite Bible verse or two, post them in the comments.

New study: 70% of households headed by immigrants are collecting welfare

December 12, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Net annual cost of illegal immigration

The Washington Times reports on the latest numbers from the Census Bureau.

Excerpt:

> The latest Census Bureau numbers find that more than seven of 10 households headed by immigrants in California, and nearly the same amount in Texas, are on the taxpayer dole.
>
> […]According to the latest numbers from 2014, fully 63 percent of non-citizens are living off at least one welfare program. That translates into 4.68 million households.
>
> […]"Concern over immigrant welfare use is justified, as households headed by non-citizens' use means means-tested welfare at high rates," said the Center for Immigration Studies, in its report on the numbers. "Non-citizens in the data include illegal immigrants, long-term temporary visitors like guest workers, and permanent residents who have not naturalized."
>
> What's most troublesome about the Census findings is the fact that the 63 percent of non-citizens on welfare actually grows to 70 percent for those who stay in-country 10 years or longer — meaning the entitlement mind only solidifies.

> Meaning non-citizens on welfare don't tend to get off welfare.

The reason I am posting about this study is because of the widespread perception on the left that all opposition to illegal immigration is just caused by racism. And similarly, support for border security has nothing to do with preventing crime and protecting our national security. It's all caused by racism too. Well, when you look at a study like this, you can clearly see that people who oppose illegal immigration and support border security have other things on their minds than racism.

Right now, we are nearly $22 trillion in debt. And it's climbing by over $1 trillion per year. We're already spending too much money. Interest on the debt is becoming a larger and larger part of our budget, leaving less money for real priorities like defense and infrastructure. Someone is going to have to pay for all these handouts that are driving us into debt. Young people people have the most to lose, because they have their whole professional lives ahead of them.

I just want to be clear about something. I am very much in favor of skilled immigration. I think that people who come here to WORK should be allowed to come here to WORK. While they are WORKING they should be ineligible for collecting any money from the government. They should not be able to vote or influence elections. They should not be able to bring any of their non-working relatives here. They should be deported if they commit a felony. They should be deported if they lose or quit their jobs. And if they are able to keep working, following the law, and staying off the dole, for a period of 10 years, then they should be allowed to apply for green cards. But our current system isn't oriented towards skilled immigrants. All the concern on the left AND on the right AND in the churches is about refugees and illegal immigrants.

Personally, I think we could be a LOT more accepting of skilled immigrants if we got rid of all the welfare programs. After all, if there is no welfare to be collected, then why would people even want to come here? The only reason they would come would be for the right reason – for liberty. And in order to stay, they would have to work and follow the law. That's who we want to bring in. If we *only* brought in law-abiding workers, then we could be a lot more *generous* about letting people of all races in.

And from a political point of view, we don't do well when we import a bunch of big government liberals from countries that don't accept American ideals, like individual liberty and limited government.

As far as I'm concerned, there should only be two paths to citizenship for immigrants: skilled labor and military service. And both of those for 10 years minimum. But that's not how the current system works. I just want everyone to understand that this is not an issue that has no effect on taxpayers. If we bring in unskilled immigrants and refugees, then we are going to have to pay for their schooling, their health care, and maybe even basics like food and spending money.

Like we saw in my post about the rioting environmentalists in France, leftists are all for big spending – until they realize that they are going to be taxed to pay for it. Then, they start rioting to get out of being taxed to pay for what they voted for. Well, YOU'RE going

to be taxed to pay for the unskilled immigrants brought in by “generous” politicians of both parties. Are you doing so well in your own lives that you have extra money to throw around to other people?

J. Warner Wallace: different answers to the question "why are you a Christian?"

December 13, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

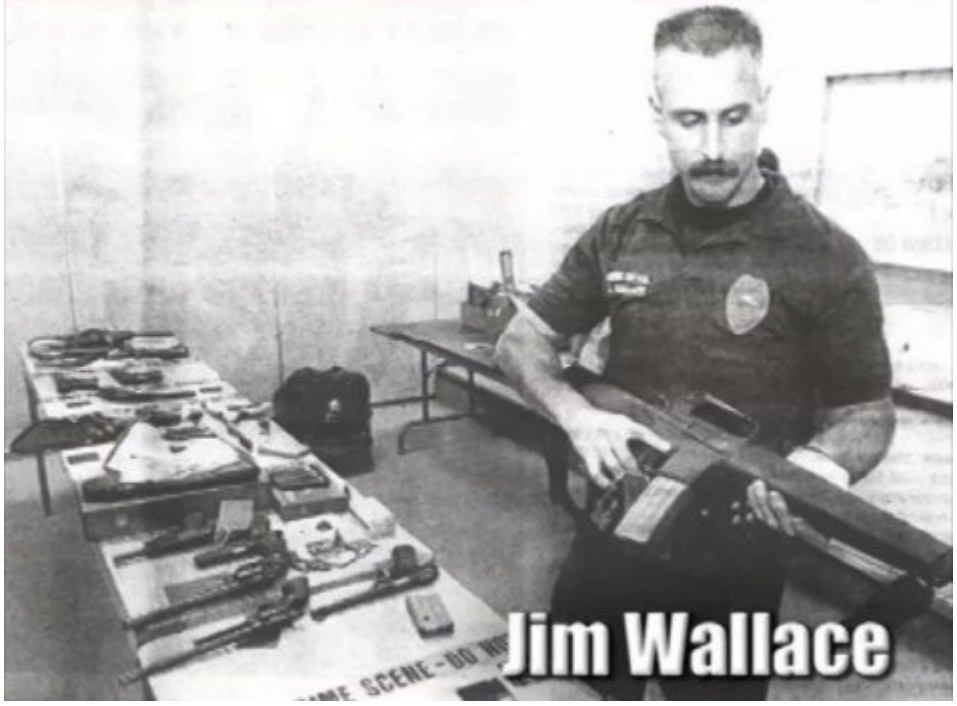

LAPD homicide detective Jim Wallace examining an assault rifle

I sometimes think about the horrible experiences I had encountering "normal" Christians in American churches after having become a Christian on my own through reading the New Testament, reading apologetics, and watching William Lane Craig debates. I heard a lot of different reasons to be a Christian from the church Christians, and what struck me was 1) their reasons had nothing to do with objective truth, and 2) their reasons hadn't prepared them to have serious conversations about Christianity with non-Christians.

Well, J. Warner Wallace recently posted an episode of his podcast about this, and I thought that this might be useful to people who (like me) were confused by what they found in the church.

Here is the video:

And he has a blog post about it, where he explains all the responses to the question "why are you a Christian?" which he got from the church – none of which were like his answer for why he became a Christian.

Here are some answers that were not like his answer:

> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because I Was Raised in the Church**
> I didn't come from a Christian family. I wasn't raised in the church or by people who attended church regularly. While students often tell me this is the reason they're Christians, this wasn't the case for me.
>
> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because My Friends Were Christians**
> I also didn't know any Christians. I was never invited to church by anyone as a

> child, and although I knew Christians in my college years, none of these folks ever invited me to church either. My friends were all happy atheists. I didn't become a Christian to be part of a club.
>
> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because I Wanted to Know God**
> I can honestly say I had no interest in God growing up, while in college, or while a young married man. I felt no "hole" in my life, had no yearning for the transcendent, no sense something was missing. I was happy and content. I didn't become a Christian to fulfill some need.
>
> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because I Wanted to Go to Heaven**
> I was also comfortable with my own mortality. Sure it would be nice if we could all live forever, but that's just not the way it is. Live life to the fullest, enjoy your friends and family while you have them, and stop whining. I didn't become a Christian because I was afraid of dying.
>
> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because I Needed to Change My Life**
> My life prior to becoming a Christian was *great*. I had a meaningful and fulfilling career, a beautiful family, an incredible wife, and lots of friends. I wasn't struggling and looking for a solution. I didn't become a Christian to stop beating my wife or to sober up.

I'm sure that all my readers know that Wallace is a homicide detective, and an evidentialist. He handles evidence and builds cases with evidence, and that's how he approaches his worldview as well. So he didn't answer any of those.

Wallace's answer was different:

> […][A]lthough these reasons might motivate students to *start* their journey, I hope these aren't the only reasons they're *still here*. I'm not sure any of these motivations will suffice when push comes to shove, times get tough or students face the challenges of university life. In the end,*truth* matters more than anything else. I'm not looking for a useful delusion, a convenient social network, or an empty promise. I just want to know what's true. I think the students I met in Montreal resonated with this approach to Christianity. They are already members of the Church, have friends in the group, understand the importance of a relationship with God and the promise of Heaven. Now they want to know if any of this stuff is *true*. It's our job, as Christian Case Makers, to provide them with the answer.

I'm actually much harder on church Christians than he is, because I found that the more fideistic the Churchian, the less you could count on them to act like authentic Christians. I have never met an evidential apologist who was soft on moral questions or tough theology, for example. To me, if you have an evidentialist approach to Christianity, then you have no problem with things like a *bodily* resurrection of Jesus, with *exclusive* salvation through faith alone in Christ alone, with a *literal* eternal separation from God called Hell, and so on.

What about people in other religions? Well, if evidence is your first concern, then it doesn't bother you that someone of a different religion won't be saved. For example, I like my Mormon friends, but I know that they're wrong in their belief in an eternal universe. When I present evidence to them for the beginning of the universe, they just tell me that science isn't as important to them as the burning in the bosom, their family, their community, etc. Well, if those things are more important to you than knowing the truth about God as he really is, then I'm fine with whatever God decides to do with you when you eventually get old, die and face judgement.

A truth-centered approach to life makes you indifferent to what people think of you. And that's something that we could all use as Christians, especially those Christians who are more driven by feelings than by facts. A lot of people raised in the church drop out because they go somewhere (e.g. – college) where they are made to feel bad for being different. That's not a problem for evidentialists. We like to be right. *We don't care* what people *who are wrong* think about us. Christians should all read 1 Corinthians 4:1-4, and accept the fact that being truth-centered isn't going to make you popular.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Christian teacher fired for not using transgender person's preferred pronouns

December 14, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

People who push progressive social policies tend to think that they are the tolerant ones. Many people who want to feel compassionate and be seen to be compassionate go along with them. After all, nobody wants the leftists to feel bad, right? In today's post, we'll see how leftists can sometimes make those who disagree with them feel really bad.

The Daily Signal explains:

> A Virginia high school teacher was sacked Thursday for allegedly misgendering a student, marking the first time in the state that an educator has lost a job for using biological pronouns to refer to a student.
>
> The West Point School Board voted unanimously 5-0 to fire Peter Vlaming who teaches French at the school, according to the Richmond Times-Dispatch.
>
> Vlaming, 47, was charged with discrimination after failing to use male pronouns to address a biologically female student. Vlaming did not intentionally misgender the student, but avoided using any pronouns to address or talk about the student in order to accord with his Christian faith, the Times-Dispatch reported.
>
> "I'm totally happy to use the new name," Vlaming told local NBC affiliate WWBT. "I'm happy to avoid female pronouns not to offend because I'm not here to provoke … but I can't refer to a female as a male, and a male as a female in good conscience and faith."

Vlaming has a wife and four children, and he has been fired by the public school administrators *right before Christmas*.

Honestly, I would not have done any different. People have a right to name themselves,

but they don't have a right to force me to participate in their self-delusion. He used her preferred name, but he would not use her preferred sex. Unfortunately, he's working in a public school system filled with unionized Democrat teachers and administrators. He didn't stand a chance. And public schools are taxpayer-funded. Vlaming and other Christians paid for the salaries of the leftists who had him fired. Which is why Christians should never support government-run public schools.

National Review has the teacher's comments about his termination.

> Vlaming's lawyer called the school's requirement "unconstitutional compelled speech."
>
> "Public schools have no business compelling people to express ideological beliefs that they don't hold. This isn't just about a pronoun; this is about forcing someone to endorse an ideology under threat of losing his job," said attorney Shawn A. Voyles. "My client has always respected this student's rights and continues to do so; he simply asked that his rights be respected as well. Unfortunately, the school board refused to consider any solutions that would respect the freedoms of everyone involved."

I'm not a lawyer, but it sounds like he is using the same defense as other Christians have used to win at the Supreme Court.

There's a Go Fund Me for the family here. According to Rod Dreher, the Go Fund Me has been verified legitimate.

William Lane Craig offers advice to Christians considering marriage

December 15, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

This post is a 3 in one: one lecture, one question and answer, and another lecture – all on different topics.

I got this lecture from the Reasonable Faith web site.

Dr. William Lane Craig is the top living Christian apologist and debater in the world today, and has 2 Masters degrees and 2 Ph.Ds. He also has scores of academic publications including books from Oxford University Press, etc.

The MP3 file is here. (14.5 Mb, about 41 minutes)

The transcript is here.

Topics:

- the stresses of ministry on marriages
- the Christian position on divorce
- balancing marriage with academic pursuits
- the importance of marrying the right person
- Dr. Craig's politically incorrect advice for choosing a spouse
- Advice for men: Marry someone who believes in you and who supports you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be the kind of person who can commit to being a helper and supporter
- Advice for men: Beware of the career woman who will put their career over supporting you in your calling
- Advice for women: Be careful about marrying if you think that your goals are more

important than your husband's goals
- Advice: Don't try to find the right person *for you* but instead focus on learning about marriage and preparing for marriage
- Advice: Flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, love and peace
- Advice: God intends for sex to be within the bounds of marriage, so you need to guard yourself against unchastity
- Advice for men: be careful what images and movies you see with the goal of keeping your chastity
- Advice: your highest responsibility after your relationship with God is your spouse, and your studies are third
- Advice: it's better to drop classes or give up your graduate studies entirely rather than destroy your marriage
- Advice for women: understand that you have to work at the marriage in order to help your man finish his studies
- Advice: set aside a period of the day for communicating and bonding with your spouse
- Advice: cultivate the ability to talk with your spouse on a personal level, and maintain eye contact
- Advice for men: do not break eye contact with your wife, and also hold her hand when communicating
- Advice: do not be embarrassed to seek out a marriage counselor, but make it a good counselor
- Advice: don't just be doing stuff for your mate, but also be vulnerable and transparent with your mate
- How your relationship with your wife helps you with your relationship with God
- How do you handle the rebellion of children without being overbearing and authoritarian?

There is a period of Q&A at the end. There is another piece of advice that comes out in the Q&A for women: take an interest in your spouse's work even if you don't care about it, and ask him about it every day and try to understand it. Go to the man's workplace and see what he does. Go to his presentations. Get involved in the man's ministry and help him in practical ways. Another piece of advice is to not paper over the differences – it's good to argue, because it means that problems are being confronted and worked through. Husbands should have a good male friend to talk to, and wives should have a good female friend to talk to.

I like how Dr. Craig has thought about how to have a successful marriage, how to choose the right woman, and how to love his wife. I like how he calls out men on the chastity thing. I think that chastity is more important for men than for women, because it's the men who take the lead in choosing and pursuing the right woman for their plan, and their judgment cannot be clouded by the desire for premarital sex.

It's the man who is accountable for making the marriage count for God, he will never be

able to achieve anything if chooses a wife is merely pretty, rather than being a good learner, resourceful, hard-working, organized and effective. She is the one who has to be chief of staff and take care of the details of his plan to lead the family. (In my case, the plan is 1) impact the church with apologetics, 2) impact the university with apologetics, 3) advocate for laws and policies that protect religious liberty, right to life, marriage and family, and 4) raise Children who will remain Christian and have an influence for Christ and his Kingdom). A man can't choose a woman who is merely attractive and fun-loving – she will never be willing to *commit to doing the hard work* that will allow the family to achieve anything as a team.

This is important: don't choose a woman who isn't willing to help you with your plan to serve God. And don't choose a woman who is more interested in fun and thrills than learning and working to achieve a goal. If she is not able to commit to tasks and finish what she starts, then she is not for you. That's what good women do – they are not content to talk about big plans and not achieve then, they are doers. They find ways to get the job done through organization, discipline and self-sacrifice.

Secondly, here is my previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for married couples, where he gives 5 points of advice for married couples.

Here are the main pieces of advice Dr. Craig gives:

1. *Resolve that there will be no divorce*
2. *Delay having children*
3. *Confront problems honestly*
4. *Seek marital counseling*
5. *Take steps to build intimacy in your relationship*

And here's the controversial one (#2):

> 2. *Delay having children.* The first years of marriage are difficult enough on their own without introducing the complication of children. Once children come, the wife's attention is necessarily diverted, and huge stresses come upon you both. Spend the first several years of marriage getting to know each other, working through your issues, having fun together, and enjoying that intimate love relationship between just the two of you. Jan and I waited ten years before having our first child Charity, which allowed me the finish graduate school, get our feet on the ground financially, establish some roots, and enjoy and build our love relationship until we were really ready to take on the responsibilities of parenthood. The qualifier here is that if the wife desperately wants children now, then the husband should accede to her wish to become a mother, rather than withhold that from her. Her verdict should be decisive. But if you both can agree to wait, things will probably be much easier.

Third and finally, here is a previous post on Dr. Craig's advice for choosing a good spouse, with illustrations from his own marriage.

For example, Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

If you want to hear another Christian husband talk about how his wife supports him, listen to this lecture called "Giants in the Land" with Dr. Walter Bradley. It's actually my favorite lecture. I also really like his testimony lecture. If you're looking for guidance, these are some of the people I would recommend.

Peter J. Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospel narratives

December 16, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the evidence

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?

- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?
- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

Paul Copan responds to questions frequently asked by postmodern relativists

December 17, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Four articles from Paul Copan over at the UK site "BeThinking". Each article responds to a different slogan that you might hear if you're dealing with non-Christians on the street.

"That's just your interpretation!"

Some of his possible responses:

- Gently ask, 'Do you mean that your interpretation should be preferred over mine? If so, I'd like to know why you have chosen your interpretation over mine. You must have a good reason.'
- Remind your friend that you are willing to give reasons for your position and that you are not simply taking a particular viewpoint arbitrarily.
- Try to discern if people toss out this slogan because they don't like your interpretation. Remind them that there are many truths we have to accept even if we don't like them.
- 'There are no facts, only interpretations' is a statement that is presented as a fact. If it is just an interpretation, then there is no reason to take it seriously.

More responses are here.

"You Christians are intolerant!"

Some of his possible responses:

- If you say that the Christian view is bad because it is exclusive, then you are also at that exact moment doing the very thing that you are saying is bad. You have to be

exclusive to say that something is bad, since you exclude it from being good by calling it bad.
- There is a difference, a clear difference between tolerance and truth. They are often confused. We should hold to what we believe with integrity but also support the rights of others to disagree with our viewpoint.
- Sincerely believing something doesn't make it true. You can be sincere, but sincerely wrong. If I get onto a plane and sincerely believe that it won't crash then it does, then my sincerity is quite hopeless. It won't change the facts. Our beliefs, regardless of how deeply they are held, have no effect on reality.

More responses are here.

"That's true for you, but not for me!"

Some of his possible responses:

- If my belief is only true for *me*, then why isn't your belief only true for you? Aren't you saying you want me to believe the same thing you do?
- You say that no belief is true for everyone, but you want everyone to believe what you do.
- You're making universal claims that relativism is *true* and absolutism is *false*. You can't in the same breath say, 'Nothing is universally true' *and* 'My view is universally true.' Relativism falsifies itself. It claims there is *one* position that is true – *relativism!*

More responses are here.

"If you were born in India, you'd be a Hindu!"

Some of his possible responses:

- Just because there are many different religious answers and systems doesn't automatically mean pluralism is correct.
- If we are culturally conditioned regarding our religious beliefs, then why should the religious pluralist think his view is *less* arbitrary or conditioned than the exclusivist's?
- If the Christian needs to justify Christianity's claims, the pluralist's views need just as much substantiation.

More responses are here.

And a bonus: "How do you know you're not wrong?".

Did your science textbook teach that embryo drawings prove evolution?

December 18, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

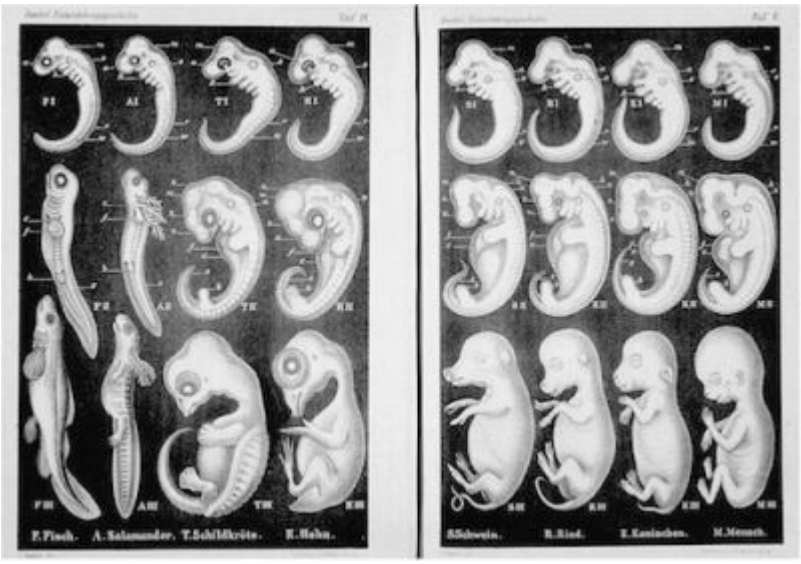

Haeckel's embryos and scientific fraud

Jonathan Wells, a biologist with Ph.Ds from Yale and UC Berkeley, writes about one example of fake evidence here:

> Charles Darwin thought that "by far the strongest" evidence that humans and fish are descended from a common ancestor was the striking similarity of their early embryos. According to Darwin, the fact that "the embryos of the most distinct species belonging to the same class are closely similar, but become, when fully developed, widely dissimilar… reveals community of descent." [2] To illustrate this, German Darwinist Ernst Haeckel made some drawings in the 1860s to show that the embryos of vertebrates (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals) look almost identical in their earliest stages.
>
> But Haeckel faked his drawings. Not only do they distort vertebrate embryos by making them appear more similar than they really are (in a way that Stephen Jay Gould wrote "can only be called fraudulent" [3]), but they also omit classes and stages that do not fit Darwin's theory. *Most significantly, Haeckel omitted the earliest stages, in which vertebrate embryos are strikingly different from each other.* The stage he portrayed as the first is actually midway through development. Yet according to Darwin's logic, early *dis*-similarities do *not* provide evidence for common ancestry.
>
> Haeckel used his faked drawings to support not only Darwinian evolution, but also his own "Biogenetic Law," which stated that embryos pass through the adult stages of their ancestors in the process of development.
>
> …Haeckel's drawings were exposed as fakes by his own contemporaries, and his Biogenetic Law was thoroughly discredited by 20th century biologists. It is now

> generally acknowledged that early embryos never resemble the adults of their supposed ancestors. A modern version of recapitulation claims that early embryos resemble the *embryos* of their ancestors, but since fossil embryos are extremely rare, this claim is little more than speculation based on the assumption that Darwin's theory is true.

Now the standard response from Darwinists: *no textbooks are still using the fraudulent embryo images*.

You can see the actual faked pictures from the modern textbooks here. These textbooks were being produced as late as 2004, even though the fraud was detected in the 1800s! Is this the vaunted self-correction of science, or science being twisted to support social and political goals?

And this excerpt from that article is interesting:

> Some Darwinists continue to deny that there has been any misuse of Haeckel in recent times. If that is the case, why did Stephen Jay Gould attack how textbooks use Haeckel in 2000? Gould wrote: "We should… not be surprised that Haeckel's drawings entered nineteenth-century textbooks. But we do, I think, have the right to be **both astonished and ashamed by the century of mindless recycling that has led to the persistence of these drawings in a large number, if not a majority, of modern textbooks!**" (emphasis added) Similarly, in 1997, the leading embryologist Michael K. Richardson lamented in the journal *Anatomy and Embyology* that "Another point to emerge from this study is the **considerable inaccuracy of Haeckel's famous figures**. These drawings are **still widely reproduced in textbooks** and review articles, and continue to exert a significant influence on the development of ideas in this field." (emphases added)

Here is a link to the peer-reviewed journal Science, where there is an article talking about the fraudulent embryo drawings. Yes – the drawings really are fraudulent.

And finally, Casey Luskin has a new post up at Evolution News that lists all the textbooks that contain the fraudulent drawings. One is dated 2013! The drawings just keep getting recycled over and over as a "proof" of evolution.

Trump-Russia dossier author was hired by Democrats to help Hillary Clinton contest 2016 election result

December 19, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama and his corrupt ally in the FBI

Before we get started on the testimony of Christopher Steele, the author of the Trump-Russia dossier that was used to obtain a FISA warrant to spy on members of President's Trump's campaign, let's recall how the dossier came into being. For that, we'll go to an article from October 2017, published in the radically leftist Washington Post.

It says:

> The Hillary Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee helped fund research that resulted in a now-famous dossier containing allegations about President Trump's connections to Russia and possible coordination between his campaign and the Kremlin, people familiar with the matter said.
>
> Marc E. Elias, a lawyer representing the Clinton campaign and the DNC, retained Fusion GPS, a Washington firm, to conduct the research.
>
> After that, Fusion GPS hired dossier author Christopher Steele, a former British intelligence officer with ties to the FBI and the U.S. intelligence community, according to those people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.
>
> Elias and his law firm, Perkins Coie, retained the company in April 2016 on behalf of the Clinton campaign and the DNC.

Got that? Democrat Clinton and Democrat DNC hire Democrat law firm. Democrat law firm hires Democrat PR firm Fusion GPS. Democrat PR firm Fusion GPS hires Christopher Steele, who then produces the Steele dossier. The Steele dossier was then used to obtain the FISA warrant that allowed the FBI to spy on members of the Trump campaign.

National Review explains:

> […][I]t is crystal clear that the Steele dossier, an unverified Clinton-campaign product, was the driving force behind the Trump–Russia investigation.
>
> Based on the dossier, the FBI told the FISA court it believed that Carter Page, who had been identified by the Trump campaign as an adviser, was coordinating with the Russian government in an espionage conspiracy to influence the 2016 election.
>
> This sensational allegation came from Christopher Steele, the former British spy. The FISA court was not told that the Clinton campaign was behind Steele's work. Nor did the FBI and Justice Department inform the court that Steele's allegations had never been verified. To the contrary, each FISA application — the original one in October 2016, and the three renewals at 90-day intervals — is labeled "" (bold caps in original). And each one makes this breathtaking representation:
>
> The FBI has reviewed this verified application for accuracy in accordance with its April 5, 2001 procedures, which include sending a copy of the draft to the appropriate field office(s).
>
> In reality, the applications were never verified for accuracy.

The latest from this week is that the dossier author, Christopher Steele, has admitted that the purpose of the dossier was to allow Hillary Clinton to contest the 2016 election, in case she lost.

The Washington Times reports:

> British ex-spy Christopher Steele, who wrote the Democrat-financed anti-Trump dossier, said in a court case that he was hired by a Democratic law firm in preparation for Hillary Clinton challenging the results of the 2016 presidential election.
>
> He said the law firm Perkins Coie wanted to be in a position to contest the results based on evidence he unearthed on the Trump campaign conspiring with Moscow on election interference.

Recall that this dossier has been the basis of nearly TWO YEARS of groundless speculation about Trump-Russia collusion from the Democrat "journalists" in the mainstream media. TWO YEARS, all because of a Democrat-funded dossier whose purpose was to allow Clinton to challenge the results of the 2016 presidential election.

For the record, disgraced FBI directorJames Comey has lied over and over again about how who paid for the Steele dossier.

The Daily Caller explains:

> Former FBI Director James Comey falsely claimed throughout two recently congressional interviews that Republicans were the initial backers of the infamous Steele dossier, which alleges a vast conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russian government to influence the 2016 election.
>
> Comey claimed twice in an interview Monday with the House Judiciary and House

> Oversight Committees that Republicans initially commissioned the work of Christopher Steele, the former British spy behind the dossier. He made similar claims twice more in an interview with the same committees on Dec. 7.
>
> “I remember being told that Steele’s work had been funded first by Republicans opposed to Trump, then by Democrats opposed to Trump,” Comey said at one point during Monday’s interview, according to a transcript of the session.

When Congressman Mark Meadows questioned Comey about who paid for the Trump-Russia dossier, Comey replied “Who Cares?” and “It Didn’t Matter!”

James Comey, his Democrat defenders, and their allies in the mainstream media have every reason to distort the truth, but now you have the facts.

More and more women are asking why they can't find a good man to marry

December 20, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

In the last few months, I've met 5 different Christian women in their 30s who all asked me the same question: where are all the good men who want to marry me?

Christian men's rights blogger Dalrock had two different posts where he described the answer to this question.

Here is the first post from Dalrock that concisely illustrates the problem:

> As I wrote in A very long season, feminists don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husbands than absolutely necessary. As if to prove this very point, 30 year old Mona Chalabi writes in the NY Times* I Want My 2.3 Bonus Years:
>
> If I could prolong my time as a young adult by, say, 2.3 years, here is a list of things I would like to do:
>
> • Go to more parties. Preferably wild parties that I can think about, years later, at mild parties.
>
> […]• Have more romantic partners.
>
> […]• Get a bit higher up the career ladder a bit earlier on. That would probably boost my earnings, giving me more financial security. I could use that money to go to more parties, get a membership to a fancy gym and maybe even meet a romantic partner on the ab machines.
>
> To drive the message home, the image at the top of the article is a cartoon of a

> resentful Chalabi giving her future husband the side eye for her lost years of sampling penises!

Surely, this must be an isolated case just for New York Times feminists, right? It's not widespread, is it?

Second post from Dalrock:

> Margaret Wente at the Globe and Mail* asks where all the good men have gone. Wente comes to the conclusion that women need a sex cartel:
>
> …it's up to us to make the rules. "Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" my father used to say. It drove me crazy when he said that. Now, it's dawned on me that he was right.
>
> Since the women's cartel collapsed, women's bargaining power has seriously eroded. That's why so many single women hate Tinder, which has further commodified sex for the benefit of men. Women are just another consumer good in the shop window.
>
> The apex fallacy aside, Wente is partially right. Women (as a group) have signaled to men that what they really want are exciting sexy badboys, not boring loyal dudes. **It isn't that women no longer want to marry beta providers, they just don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husband than absolutely necessary.**
>
> As a result, some up and coming boring loyal dudes aren't knocking themselves out in their twenties while they wait for their future wife to tire of having sex with other men.

If you wonder why men are no longer performing in school, and exchanging careers for video games, the answer is simple. Men have realized that young women today, under the influence of feminism, are not interested in traditional husbands during their late teens and 20s. During these years, women are interested in travel, fun, drinking, hook-ups and cohabitation with amoral atheists. This is what I have personally observed. In the minds of young women, the highest value men are good-looking men who have no religion, and make no moral judgments, and are left of center politically – especially on abortion. There are many good men who are romantic about women from their youth, and want to get married. But when they see what young women really want, they just give up on school and work, since doing the traditional male roles has no value to young women. Many good men even give up on morality and Christianity because they want a relationship with a woman so badly.

More from second post:

> What Wente doesn't understand is that timing is everything. From an economic point of view, women are dividing up sexual access that traditionally would have been reserved only for their husband into two blocks. The first block contains their most attractive and fertile years, and it is dedicated to no strings sex with

> exciting badboys. Then, once women reach what Rollo calls the epiphany phase, they want to bargain sexual access in their remaining (older and less fertile) years for maximum beta bucks.
>
> The problem with this strategy is (generally speaking) not that the previously overlooked beta men will refuse to marry the suddenly reformed party girls. The problem is that young men now look at the men 3-5 (and even 5-10) years older than them and don't see an indication that signaling provider status will make them attractive to women. They also see a society that holds married fathers in contempt**. Most of these men are still working hard in their late teens and twenties to prepare to signal provider status in their 30s. But a growing minority of young men are no longer doing so. These men are instead working like women. Once the reformed party girls are ready to find Mr. Beta Bucks, there is a shortage of 30 something men who fit the bill. Even worse, no amount of complaining or shaming will cause the missing beta providers to go back in time and spend the prior decade preparing for this moment.

I'm one of the last men who followed the marriage-preparedness script for traditional men who wanted to marry and have four children and have a stay-at-home homeschooling mom to raise them from birth to graduate school. I find myself now in my early 40s, with a 6-figure income and a nearly 7-figure net worth. I declined to use those assets to play the field with hot bad girls, preferring instead to keep my sexual past completely clean for my eventual wife. However, what I observed in my late teens and 20s and even early 30s was a complete lack of interest in marriage ability, from non-Christian women and Christian women alike. Christian women aren't learning to value early marriage from their married parents or their evangelical churches. None of the traditional husband skills are valued by young women, i.e. – chastity, gapless resume, alcohol abstinence, undergraduate and graduate STEM degrees, experience nurturing and mentoring others, stewardship of earned income.

I recently caused an uproar on my Facebook page by saying that even if the perfect woman showed up right now to marry me, I would not pursue her because the critical time where the woman could have applied maximum youth, beauty and fertility as a wife to make an impact on my education, early career, health, and finances has passed. A younger woman develops value to her husband precisely by applying herself to him and to her family in these critical early years. Men who have experienced this self-sacrificial love and support are loyal to their wives even after their wives lose their youth and beauty. Why? Because the men know that they are much better than they could have been, having enjoyed that early investment of value made by their young wives.

Young women very supportive of premarital sex

As Christian writer Matt Walsh notes in a recent article at the Daily Wire, this "follow your heart" focus on happiness in women is lethal to marital stability, and men know it.

Excerpt:

> There was an article in *Cosmo* this week with a title that summarizes all that's wrong with *Cosmo* and modern society as a whole: "I eloped at 25, divorced at 26, and dated my way across Europe all summer." Of course, by "dated my way across Europe" she means that she slept with half the continent.
>
> The author, Elise, says she "started fighting" with her husband and within a few months they both decided that their differences were irreconcilable. Despite counseling, she says, "neither of us was happy." So, exhausted from 12 whole months of marriage, Elise embarked on a voyage of self-discovery and STD cultivation. She met random dudes in half a dozen countries and had sex with them, learning quite a lot as she went, though she can't really explain what exactly she learned or why sex was a necessary component in learning it. Finally, she came home and started dating some other guy. The end.
>
> Well, not really the end. 20 years from now I'm sure we'll get the follow up article: "I'm alone and miserable and it's everyone's fault but mine." **After all, you may be able to fill the emptiness in your soul with frivolous sex when you're young and physically desirable, but that phase is fleeting. People who don't want to "waste" their beauty and youth on a spouse, so they waste it instead on strangers who don't love them or even care what happens to them tomorrow, will be shocked when a tomorrow comes where even strangers aren't interested anymore. This is where the single-minded, utterly selfish pursuit of "happiness" at all costs inevitably leads: to rejection, despair, and a quiet, unnoticed death on a lonely hospital bed.**
>
> As Elise helpfully demonstrated, "do what makes you happy" is poison in a marriage. Many a vow has been broken because one or both partners decide to

> chase “happiness” instead of commitment, fidelity, and love. “I deserve to be happy,” reports the legion of serial divorcees, as they drift on to the next spouse, and the next, and the next, and the next, looking for the one — *the* one, finally — who might cure the misery they’ve inflicted on themselves. Increasingly unhappy, yet increasingly convinced that they deserve to be.

And this follow your heart to happiness situation is alive and well in the church today. Marriage-minded Christian men who have prepared for husband roles are surprised to find that there is often little or no difference between Elise and the Christian women the church produces. Christian men who desire to invest in a marriage that is stable, productive and influential have nowhere to turn for a wife who is able and willing to help. In my experience, the problem with happiness-focused women who delay marriage is never discussed in churches from the pulpit. The “good men to marry” that today’s 30-something women are looking for were plentiful back when those same women were in their early-to-mid 20s.

New study: white progressives are more racist against minorities than white conservatives

December 21, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

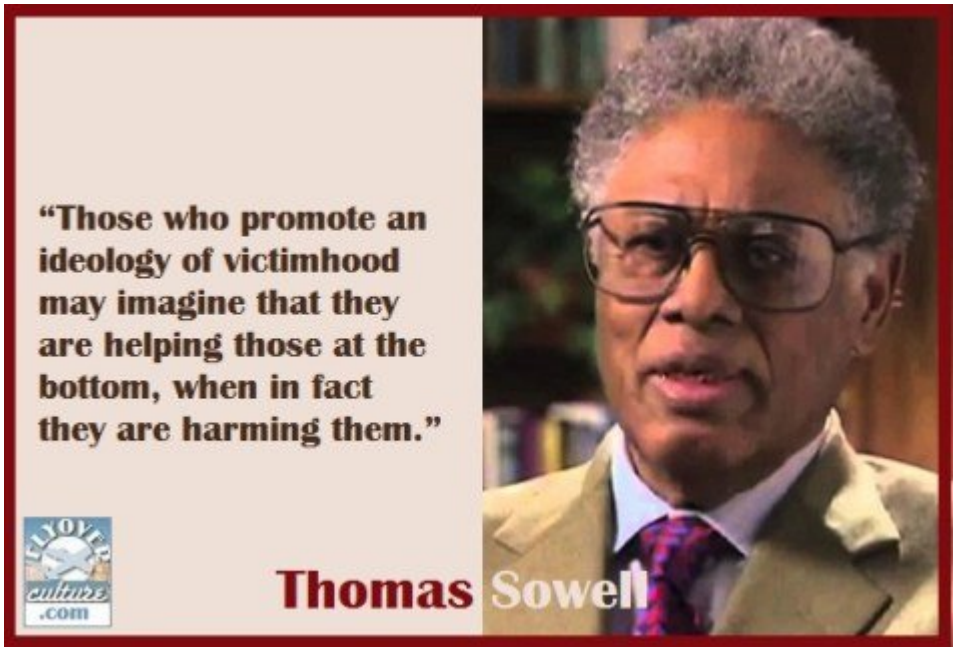

Dr. Thomas Sowell, Hoover Institute, Stanford University

What's the definition of racism? Well, it seems to me that a person is racist if they treat people of a different skin color differently than they treat people of their own skin color. So, if a white person treats a black person differently than they do a white person, then the white person is a racist. Because they're discriminating on the basis of skin color. So, who are the real racists? Conservatives? Or Progressives?

The Yale School of Management reports on a new academic study that provides the definitive answer to the question:

> According to new research by Cydney Dupree, assistant professor of organizational behavior at Yale SOM, white liberals tend to downplay their own verbal competence in exchanges with racial minorities, compared to how other white Americans act in such exchanges. The study is scheduled for publication in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.
>
> […]Dupree and her co-author, Susan Fiske of Princeton University, began by analyzing the words used in campaign speeches delivered by Democratic and Republican presidential candidates to different audiences over the years. They scanned 74 speeches delivered by white candidates over a 25-year period. Approximately half were addressed to mostly-minority audiences—at a Hispanic small business roundtable discussion or a black church, for example. They then paired each speech delivered to a mostly-minority audience with a comparable speech delivered at a mostly-white audience—at a mostly-white church or university, for example. The researchers analyzed the text of these speeches for

> two measures: words related to competence (that is, words about ability or status, such as “assertive” or “competitive”) and words related to warmth (that is, words about friendliness, such as “supportive” and “compassionate”).
>
> […]The team found that Democratic candidates used fewer competence-related words in speeches delivered to mostly minority audiences than they did in speeches delivered to mostly white audiences. The difference wasn’t statistically significant in speeches by Republican candidates… There was no difference in Democrats’ or Republicans’ usage of words related to warmth.

More testing confirmed the patronizing white supremacist attitude of whites on the political left:

> They designed a series of experiments in which white participants were asked to respond to a hypothetical or presumed-real interaction partner. For half of these participants, their partner was given a stereotypically white name (such as “Emily”); for the other half, their partner was given a stereotypically black name (such as “Lakisha”). Participants were asked to select from a list of words for an email to their partner.
>
> […]The researchers found that liberal individuals were less likely to use words that would make them appear highly competent when the person they were addressing was presumed to be black rather than white. No significant differences were seen in the word selection of conservatives based on the presumed race of their partner.

Conservatives aren’t racist at all – they’re color blind.

One of the reasons why I get along so well with white conservatives is that they don’t patronize me with low expectations, the way that white leftists patronize non-whites. The view of white progressives is similar to the view of white supremacist racists – they think that there is something defective about people like me because of our non-white skin color.

White supremacists and white progressives agree on this: that non-white people aren’t competent enough to make our own decisions. We need help from big government in order to do what whites can do without help. We need to be told what to think for our own good, and shamed if we step out of line. It’s amazing to me that white racist progressives are seen as “compassionate”, when they are the ones who actually believe in the racial inferiority of non-whites.

Terrorist attack: two Scandinavian women beheaded while traveling in Morocco

December 22, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tourists murdered in Morocco
The Daily Caller reports: (H/T Terrell)

> Norwegian police confirmed Friday that the recently-surfaced video of a female Scandinavian student being beheaded is likely authentic.
>
> The bodies of 28-year-old Maren Ueland from Norway and 24-year-old Louisa Vesterager Jespersen were recovered and flown to Casablanca on Friday, according to Deustche Welle. The two were reportedly killed in Morocco's Atlas Mountains earlier this week, and video has since emerged online that appears to show one of them screaming as her head is severed with a knife.
>
> At least one of the alleged perpetrators reportedly has ties to ISIS, reports The Daily Beast.
>
> "There is no concrete evidence indicating the video is not real," Norway's National Criminal Investigation Service said.
>
> Thirteen arrests have been made in what is believed to be an act of terror.
>
> Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen called the killings "politically motivated and thus an act of terror."

News Corp Australia had some information about the attackers:

> On Tuesday police detained a suspect said to belong to a militant group in Marrakesh. Three other suspects were subsequently arrested in the city, the Central Bureau for Judicial Investigations said.
>
> They were named as:
>
> ● Rachid Afatti, a 32-year-old small businessman from Al Kayed, a village in rural Harbil, 30km outside Marrakech;
>
> ● Ouziad Younes, a 27-year-old carpenter from the Marrakech suburb of Al Azzouzia;
>
> ● Ejjoud Abdessamad, 25, from the Zeroual district of Marrakech.
>
> Police have not released details of the fourth man arrested yesterday after police seized a cache of knives found on a bus in Marrakech.

The BBC article I looked at had a photo of 3 of the men:

Morrocan police released this photo of 3 of the 4 suspects

Now, if I had known those women, and they told me about their plans to go hiking in Morocco, I would have told them not to go. I would have told them not to go, even if they went with male friends, or had a male guide, or whatever. It's important to be alert and not put yourself in situations where you will be isolated and exposed to harm.

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

On a related note, I wanted to share a story from Windsor, Ontario Canada, where a 76-year-old woman died as a result of her injuries from another attack by a 21-year-old man.

The Windsor Star reports: (H/T Stephanie)

> The elderly Windsor woman who suffered severe injuries in a shocking beating on Ganatchio Trail last year has died in hospital.
>
> Sources have confirmed that Sara Anne Widholm, 76, died at Windsor Regional Hospital on Saturday, Dec. 15.
>
> "She was a faithful and beloved member of our church, Riverside Baptist, and we will miss her dearly, but now she is whole and at peace in heaven with her Lord Jesus," said Pastor Brandon Taylor, leader of the church where Widholm and her

> husband were members.
>
> […]On the morning of Oct. 8, 2017, Widholm was walking on the Ganatchio Trail and cleaning it of litter, as was her regular habit, when she became the victim of an attack that Windsor police have described as "vicious" and "unprovoked."
>
> […]The long list of injuries included multiple brain hemorrhages, a life-threatening blood clot, extensive skull fractures, and fractured vertebrae.
>
> […]Later the same day as the attack, police arrested Windsor resident Habibullah Ahmadi in relation to the crime.
>
> Ahmadi — who goes by the first name Daniel and is now 22 — was initially charged with aggravated assault, but the charge was upgraded to attempted murder.

Canada is a country that has embraced open borders and mass migration from Middle Eastern countries, so it's interesting to see how Canadian leaders responded to the story.

Frontpage magazine reported on that:

> Attacker Habibullah Ahmadi was 21, a full adult, but police never released his booking photo. News reports described him as a "Windsor man," who goes by the name "Daniel." Local and national news stories contained no statements from Habibullah Ahmadi, nor any indication that he had declined an interview. Likewise, news reports contained no quotes from Habibullah Ahmadi's family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, or fellow students in Windsor.
>
> Habibullah Ahmadi, a male of 21, attacked a defenseless woman, 75, but local and national feminists did not cite the attack as an example of violence against women or toxic masculinity. Likewise, no statement against violence emerged after the attack finally claimed Widholm's life.
>
> Windsor mayor Drew Dilkens tweeted that Widholm "exemplified the can-do Windsor spirit and my most sincere condolences go out to her family for their loss." It was as though she had died of natural causes, and no mention of the violent attack.
>
> Former Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynn, a crusader against bullying, never offered a statement on the case. Current Premier Doug Ford of the Progressive Conservative Party did not issue a comment. News reports turn up no proclamations on the attack from Lisa Gretzky, a New Democratic Party MPP for Windsor, or from the NDP provincial leader Andrea Horwath.

I thought this was interesting about Trudeau, who likes to present himself as a great moral human being because of his tolerance:

> Last January, an 11-year-old Toronto girl charged that a man had twice cut her hijab. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau denounced the attack, which turned out to be a hoax. The son of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau had nothing to say about the attack on Anne Widholm, which was not a hoax.

And the national media has been silent as well:

> The one-year anniversary of the attack passed without notice in local and national media. Police and court authorities weren't exactly keep the public posted about the case.
>
> Last July, CTV news said AM800 News, CKLW, has learned that a date for Habibullah's trial would be set sometime in January 2019, though no official court or police document was cited. The CTV piece came headlined, "Windsor man going to trial for alleged Ganatchio Trail attack," and the story cited "an alleged vicious attack of an elderly woman." From the start, there was nothing "alleged" about it, and the report offered no insight on the attacker.

I can understand that it is compassionate to risk your own life for someone else, and generous to spend your own money on someone else. What I don't understand is when politicians want to claim to be compassionate and generous when they risk other people's lives and spend other people's money.

Two Christian women threatened with jail time for refusing to celebrate LGBT events

December 23, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Is it safe to live as a Bible-believing Christian in America? We all know that you can live comfortably as a "Christian" by just behaving in compliance with whatever the secular left tells you. But what happens to you if you take the Bible seriously on moral issues? Is it easy to live consistently with the Bible in America?

Consider this article from Daily Wire:

> Two female Christian artists in Arizona who refuse to make custom-art for same sex weddings could actually be jailed for sticking to their religious beliefs.
>
> Joanna Duka and Breanna Koski , who own Brush & Nib Studio, make custom artwork using painting, calligraphy and handlettering. They filed suit against the city of Phoenix, as a Phoenix city ordinance threatens them with up to six months and/or a fine of $2,500 each day they refuse to make the artwork. First the women filed in state court to overturn the ordinance, but lost in a court of appeals, prompting them to appeal to the state's Supreme Court, which said on November 20 it would hear the case.

There's a video about the case from Fox News:

In other news, Christian baker Jack Phillips is STILL in trouble with the secular left fascists in Colorado. Although he won his case at the Supreme Court, the LGBT activists and their allies in the state government are still going after him to punish him for his Christian beliefs.

The Federalist had a really, really good article about it:

> On June 26, 2017, the day the Supreme Court agreed to hear Phillips' case,

> Autumn Scardina, a transgender attorney and activist, called Masterpiece Cakeshop and asked Phillips to design a custom cake with a blue exterior and a pink interior to symbolize a transition from male to female. Phillips politely turned Scardina down. “I was stunned,” the lawyer risibly claimed in her complaint to the Civil Rights Commission.
>
> Scardina, of course, didn’t accidentally ask the most famous Christian baker in the nation to make a “transition” cake. Scardina is leading a crusade against Phillips. In one call, Scardina allegedly asked for “an image of Satan smoking marijuana.” In another, members of “the Church of Satan” asked for “a three-tiered white cake” with a “large figure of Satan, licking a nine inch black Dildo.” “I would like the dildo to be an actual working model that can be turned on before we unveil the cake,” went the request. You can just sense the sanctimonious smugness of people who think this sort of thing is edgy.
>
> In any event, the state of Colorado has allied itself with such activists, formally determining that there was probable cause that Phillips had indeed discriminated against Scardina based on “gender identity.” Of course the baker’s refusal to make dildo and pentagram cakes only proves that Phillips isn’t specifically antagonistic to the newly consecrated belief in malleable “gender identity,” but that he’s shown a consistent adherence to his less malleable Christian values.
>
> It’s those values that upset Scardina and members of the Colorado Civil Rights Commission. Though they can’t say it explicitly, most progressives are fine with discrimination against religious groups. In their hierarchy of moral concerns, free expression isn’t nearly as concerning as the hurt feelings of an aggrieved gay couple. And Colorado is again complicit in another attack on the Constitution. Until SCOTUS comes down with a ruling that explicitly protects religious liberty from state-sponsored attacks on faith, they’ll keep trying.
>
> But it goes well beyond those legal concerns. Activists — including the civil rights commission — are trying to destroy a man for thought crimes. This state-sponsored harassment isn’t only about Phillip’s modest business in Lakewood, Colorado, although that’s surely part of it. It’s a warning to all those with unpopular opinions to stay in line.

I’ve found myself thinking about how to live in a world where every day you get up to go to work, your livelihood is threatened by secular left fascists who want to use the government as a weapon to destroy your basic God-given human rights. And the only answers I can come up with to this are 1) avoid putting my children into public schools run by the secular left, and 2) retire as early as possible so that I don’t have to deal with the coming generation of social justice warriors in an office setting.

First, I need to avoid dealing with the secular left in public schools (my future children) or the workplace. This is because a lot of legal problems start when the secular left finds out what Christian parents are teaching their children. The easiest way to not deal with public schools is to not get married, unless you marry a woman who has carefully made pro-

marriage decisions with her education, career and finances. Decisions designed to keep her future children out of the public schools. It's very rare to find a young, unmarried Christian woman who has made correct decisions to protect her future family from the secular left, though. Thanks to the uncritical acceptance of radical feminism in the church – right under the noses of traditional conservative male pastors – most don't want to homeschool and they haven't made the right choices in education,career and finances to help their future husband afford homeschooling and/or private schools, anyway.

How about the workplace? Well, it's fine for now if, for example, you live in a red state and you're in the private sector and you're working in a STEM field. But there's a generation of unstable social justice warriors coming through the assembly line of government schools, and they're going to hit the workplace shortly. I don't want to be there when they finally arrive. The easiest way to get out of the workplace early is to have enough money saved so that you can retire early. But this is getting harder to do. In our culture, we're always hearing that "good people" only have one acceptable way to vote: for higher taxes, more unskilled immigration and more government spending. This is the case even in conservative churches. Just last month, my Southern Baptist pastor told our Bible study that "Jesus was a refugee", which is in keeping with the Democrat talking points of open borders leftists like Russell Moore. The more we vote for government to be the "solution" to people's bad choices, the higher taxes will go, and the more exposed Christians are going to be to troubles in the workplace.

Well, I probably track these religious liberty stories more than most. And I worry about it more than most, too. I am more prepared than most to avoid having my conscience violated by the secular left. But I don't see things getting better. There just isn't any seriousness among Christians to hold the line on Biblical teachings and values. We've long ago dumped the masculine aspects of Christianity – uncomfortable theological truths and politically incorrect moral rules – for a more feminine focus on non-judgmentalism, feelings, self-esteem, universalism, etc. In the church today, you're unlikely to win an argument about a moral issue by citing the Bible and then supporting your claim with peer-reviewed evidence. Instead, the church decided that the highest authority is to conform to the demands of people whose best argument is "agree with me, or I'll commit suicide due to bad feelings!" That apparently has a lot of weight in the feminized church today. But not with me.

Did the early church invent the divinity of Jesus over a long period of time?

December 24, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

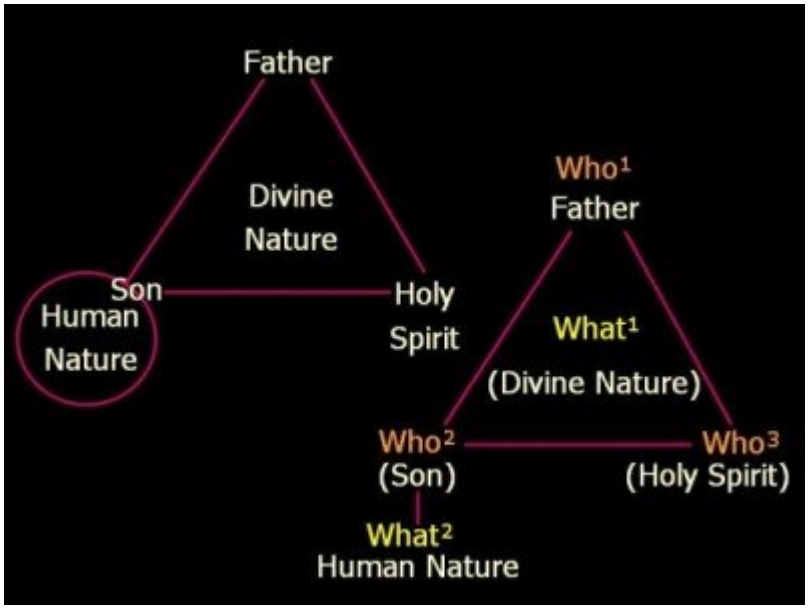

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time,

most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word

of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]“He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

[7]“But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]“What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God’s *unique* Son.

The “Q” source for Matthew and Luke

Here’s Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier “Q” source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Dr. William Lane Craig answers questions about Jesus in the New York Times

December 25, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students at Purdue University

Nicholas Kristof, a secular leftist writer for the New York Times, is interested in Jesus, but he doesn't want a Jesus who can perform miracles. He decided to ask the best living philosphical theologian, Dr. William Lane Craig, some questions. As you'll see, Dr. Craig's answers to his questions are perfect for the secular left audience of the New York Times.

Before we start looking at the questions and answers, I want to mention one important point. When discussing Christianity, it's very important that Christians not allow the atheist to nitpick about minor details of Christian history or Christian theology. The Christian needs to ALWAYS redirect the discussion to the question of God's existence. There, we are strongly supported by mainstream science. Only when the skeptic accepts a Creator and Designer can we allow ourselves to be moved on to specific points of theology or history.

Like this:

- Skeptic: was Jesus born of a virgin?
- Christian: do you accept a Creator and Designer of the universe?
- Skeptic: no
- Christian: then let's discuss the scientific evidence for that first

And again:

- Skeptic: am I going to Hell?
- Christian: do you accept a Creator and Designer of the universe?

- Skeptic: no
- Christian: then let's discuss the scientific evidence for that first

Why is this important? It's important because most skeptics are fundamentalists. They think that if they can refute Christianity on an edge case issue, then the core crumbles. It's very important to frame the discussion so that the skeptic understands that there are core claims of Christianity which are important and strongly evidenced, and there are less important claims, and also claims that are not well evidenced. The goal of any discussion with a skeptic is to get them to accept the important core claims which are strongly evidenced. If they accept the core, that's enough to get them out of atheism, and into a relationship with God, where they can continue to grow.

I wrote a whole post about this that you can read later, but let's get to the interview with Dr. Craig.

Let's start with the first question and answer:

> **Kristof**: Merry Christmas, Dr. Craig! I must confess that for all my admiration for Jesus, I'm skeptical about some of the narrative we've inherited. Are you actually confident that Jesus was born to a virgin?
>
> **Craig**: Merry Christmas to you, too, Nick! I'm reasonably confident. When I was a non-Christian, I used to struggle with this, too. But then it occurred to me that for a God who could create the entire universe, making a woman pregnant wasn't that big a deal! Given the existence of a Creator and Designer of the universe (for which we have good evidence), an occasional miracle is child's play. Historically speaking, the story of Jesus' virginal conception is independently attested by Matthew and Luke and is utterly unlike anything in pagan mythology or Judaism. So what's the problem?

Did you notice what Dr. Craig did there? Regarding the evidence from science, Dr. Craig has defended that in two separate academic books, both with Oxford University Press. (Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology and God? A Debate Between A Christian and An Atheist)

Here it is again:

> **Kristof**: How do you account for the many contradictions within the New Testament? For example, Matthew says Judas hanged himself, while Acts says that he "burst open." They can't both be right, so why insist on inerrancy of Scripture?
>
> **Craig**: I don't insist on the inerrancy of Scripture. Rather, what I insist on is what C.S. Lewis called "mere Christianity," that is to say, the core doctrines of Christianity. Harmonizing perceived contradictions in the Bible is a matter of in-house discussion amongst Christians. What really matters are questions like: Does God exist? Are there objective moral values? Was Jesus truly God and truly man? How did his death on a Roman cross serve to overcome our moral

> wrongdoing and estrangement from God? These are, as one philosopher puts it, the "questions that matter," not how Judas died.

For those who are concerned by this answer, you should know Dr. Craig is the former president of the Evangelical Philosophical Society, and they do indeed sign a statement of faith that includes inerrancy. But again, an interview in the New York Times is *not the place* to focus on defending inerrancy. This is the place to have secular left elites contend with the *core claims* of Christianity.

In the next question and answer, notice how Dr. Craig refuses to yield that the skeptic is rational and evidence-driven. You should never let atheists assume that atheism is the "default" view of people who are reasonable and evidence-driven. Atheism is NOT the default view for reasonable people who are evidence-driven. Atheism is a furious retreat *away from* reason and evidence. In particular, it's a refusal to bound your worldview with science and history.

More Dr. Craig:

> **Kristof**: Over time, people have had faith in Zeus, in Shiva and Krishna, in the Chinese kitchen god, in countless other deities. We're skeptical of all those faith traditions, so should we suspend our emphasis on science and rationality when we encounter miracles in our own tradition?
>
> **Craig**: I don't follow. Why should we suspend our emphasis on science and rationality just because of weakly evidenced, false claims in other religions? I champion a "reasonable faith" that seeks to provide a comprehensive worldview that takes into account the best evidence of the sciences, history, philosophy, logic and mathematics. Some of the arguments for God's existence that I've defended, such as the arguments from the origin of the universe and the fine-tuning of the universe, appeal to the best evidence of contemporary science. I get the impression, Nick, that you think science is somehow incompatible with belief in miracles. If so, you need to give an argument for that conclusion. David Hume's famous argument against miracles is today recognized, in the words of philosopher of science John Earman, as "an abject failure." No one has been able to do any better.

This is the book he's alluding to, there. Oxford University Press.

Please read the whole interview.

If you have non-Christian friends who think that all the "smart people" reject Christianity, and you don't now how to talk to them, why not send them this article from the New York Times? There are also resources that you can use to train yourself to answer questions like he did.

Some people reading may not like Dr. Craig's approach. That might be because you're only able to talk about Christianity to people by quoting the Bible to them. Maybe you think that quoting the Bible to a non-Christian will cause them to become a Christian. This approach, (I call it the "magic words" approach), is popular in many churches. It will work

on people who are already Christians, but it won't work on non-Christians, since they don't accept the Bible. It's also not how anyone in the New Testament talked about spiritual things. (See Acts 17 for an example, or read what Jesus does to prove his claims to skeptics in the gospel of John). If you want to discuss Christianity outside the church, then I recommend Dr. Craig's approach.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Study: children of same-sex couples do less well than those of married couples

December 26, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

The Public Discourse reports on a recent study out of Canada.

Excerpt:

> A new academic study based on the Canadian census suggests that a married mom and dad matter for children. Children of same-sex coupled households do not fare as well.
>
> There is a new and significant piece of evidence in the social science debate about gay parenting and the unique contributions that mothers and fathers make to their children's flourishing. A study published last week in the journal *Review of the Economics of the Household*—analyzing data from a very large, population-based sample—reveals that the children of gay and lesbian couples are only about 65 percent as likely to have graduated from high school as the children of married, opposite-sex couples. And gender matters, too: girls are more apt to struggle than boys, with daughters of gay parents displaying dramatically low graduation rates.
>
> Unlike US-based studies, this one evaluates a 20 percent sample of the Canadian census, where same-sex couples have had access to all taxation and government benefits since 1997 and to marriage since 2005.
>
> While in the US Census same-sex households have to be guessed at based on the gender and number of self-reported heads-of-household, young adults in the Canadian census were asked, "Are you the child of a male or female same-sex married or common law couple?" While study author and economist Douglas Allen noted that very many children in Canada who live with a gay or lesbian

> parent are actually living with a single mother—a finding consonant with that detected in the 2012 New Family Structures Study—he was able to isolate and analyze hundreds of children living with a gay or lesbian *couple* (either married or in a "common law" relationship akin to cohabitation).
>
> So the study is able to compare—side by side—the young-adult children of same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples, as well as children growing up in single-parent homes and other types of households. Three key findings stood out to Allen:
>
> children of married opposite-sex families have a high graduation rate compared to the others; children of lesbian families have a very low graduation rate compared to the others; and the other four types [common law, gay, single mother, single father] are similar to each other and lie in between the married/lesbian extremes.
>
> Employing regression models and series of control variables, Allen concludes that the substandard performance *cannot* be attributed to lower school attendance or the more modest education of gay or lesbian parents. Indeed, same-sex parents were characterized by higher levels of education, and their children were more likely to be enrolled in school than even those of married, opposite-sex couples. And yet their children are notably more likely to lag in finishing their own schooling.
>
> […]The truly unique aspect of Allen's study, however, may be its ability to distinguish gender-specific effects of same-sex households on children. He writes:
>
> the particular gender mix of a same-sex household has a dramatic difference in the association with child graduation. Consider the case of girls. . . . Regardless of the controls and whether or not girls are currently living in a gay or lesbian household, the odds of graduating from high school are considerably lower than any other household type. Indeed, girls living in gay households are only 15 percent as likely to graduate compared to girls from opposite sex married homes.
>
> Thus although the children of same-sex couples fare worse overall, the disparity is unequally shared, but is instead based on the combination of the gender of child and gender of parents. Boys fare better—that is, they're more likely to have finished high school—in gay households than in lesbian households. For girls, the opposite is true. Thus the study undermines not only claims about "no differences" but also assertions that moms and dads are interchangeable. *They're not*.

With a little digging, I found the abstract of the study:

> Almost all studies of same-sex parenting have concluded there is "no difference" in a range of outcome measures for children who live in a household with same-sex parents compared to children living with married opposite-sex parents.

> Recently, some work based on the US census has suggested otherwise, but those studies have considerable drawbacks. Here, a 20% sample of the 2006 Canada census is used to identify self-reported children living with same-sex parents, and to examine the association of household type with children's high school graduation rates. This large random sample allows for control of parental marital status, distinguishes between gay and lesbian families, and is large enough to evaluate differences in gender between parents and children. Children living with gay and lesbian families in 2006 were about 65 % as likely to graduate compared to children living in opposite sex marriage families. Daughters of same-sex parents do considerably worse than sons.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington. A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more shorter times). That's not good for children either. Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships have much higher rates of domestic violence. That's not good for children either. So we have three reasons to think that normalizing gay relationships as "marriage" would not be good for children.

The reason I am posting this is because I want people to understand why social conservatives like me propose these laws defining and promoting marriage. We do favor natural marriage for the same reason that we oppose no-fault divorce, and for the same reason why we oppose welfare for single mothers (it encourages single motherhood). We don't want to encourage people to deprive children of their mother or their father. We look at the research, and we decide that children need their mother and father. Given the choice between the needs of the child and restraining the freedom of the adults, we prefer the child's need for her mother and father. It's not just arbitrary rules, there is a reason behind the rules.

But children are not commodities. They have certain needs right out of the box. Adults should NOT be thinking about how to duct-tape a child onto any old relationship that doesn't offer the same safety and stability that opposite sex marriage offers. We should be passing laws to strengthen marriage in order to protect children, not to weaken it. Libertarians don't want to do that, because they want adults to be free to do as they please, at the expense of children. Libertarians think that the adults should be able to negotiate private contracts and have no obligations to any children who are present, or who may be present later.

Related posts

- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert

P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

Socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez says Jesus was a refugee: is she right?

December 27, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This meme provides a good quick response to the challenge

I keep hearing that Jesus was a refugee from people on the left like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. In fact, things have gotten so bad, that even my Southern Baptist pastor told us the same thing in a recent Wednesday night Bible study! I think we better take a look at this, in case anyone else needs a response.

Fox News reports on the tweet:

> U.S. Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y. wished her Twitter followers a Merry Christmas Tuesday by referring to the newborn Jesus as a "refugee."
>
> "Joy to the World!" Ocasio-Cortez wrote. "Merry Christmas everyone – here's to a holiday filled with happiness, family, and love for all people. (Including refugee babies in mangers + their parents.)"

And here is the response, in the same article:

> Mary and Joseph are not depicted as refugees in the Nativity story. According to the Gospel of Luke, Joseph brings the pregnant Mary to Bethlehem so that he may enroll in a census ordered by the Roman emperor Agustus. The couple are forced to take shelter in the stable where Jesus is born due to a lack of room at the inn.
>
> However, in the Gospel of Matthew, Mary and Joseph flee into Egypt with the

> infant Jesus after King Herod of Judea orders the murder of every boy aged two and under in Bethlehem after the Magi ask him where to find the newborn "King of the Jews." The Holy Family escape the slaughter and are told by an angel to return to Israel once Herod is dead.

The second part seems to be more like a refugee situation, until you remember that both Judea and Egypt were different states of the same Roman Empire. The strict definition of a refugee from the United Nations, recognizes persons as refugees:

> "who are outside their country of nationality or habitual residence and unable to return there owing to serious and indiscriminate threats to life, physical integrity or freedom resulting from generalized violence or events seriously disturbing public order."

Did Joseph and Mary cross national boundaries by moving from one Roman-ruled province to another? Did they cross national boundaries illegally? Did they intend to remain permanently? The answers to those questions are NO, NO and NO. So they were not refugees according to the standard meaning of the word.

People try to make the Jesus-birth narrative into an immigration situation because they want Jews and Christians to support open borders. The problem is that the Bible has a lot to say about immigration, and it doesn't support the left's open borders agenda.

I always find it funny when atheists on the political left want to misuse the Bible to try to get political support from Jews and Christians. It makes me wonder whether the secular leftists take the Bible seriously as an auhtority on any other issue.

Is Ocasio-Cortez willing to take Jesus seriously on marriage being defined as a commitment between one woman and one man? How about Jesus' rejection of no-fault divorce? How about Jesus' view of the exclusivity of salvation? I think you know where what the secular leftists would say about Jesus as an authority on those issues. Most secular leftists don't take Jesus seriously on any issue. Many don't even think he existed as a historical figure. But that doesn't stop secular leftists from trying to win over religious Jews and Christians by appealing to their emotions.

What concerns me about this promotion of illegal immigration and refugees, though, is that people forget who pays the bills for all of this compassion. Ocasio-Cortez isn't tell you what she's going to do with HER OWN money when she promotes illegal immigration and refugees. She's telling you what she's going to do with YOUR money. And she's telling you that so that you will think that she's a very generous, compassionate person. The truth is that her supporters who click retweet and like on her stuff do that in order to communicate that they are also good and generous people.

Everyone is doing what feels good, and what makes them look good to others, but are they willing to pay for it? If Democrats had to PAY FOR the things they claim to want, then would they be in favor of those things? You need only look at the French leftists who voted for Emmanuel Macron to stop global warming, and then they rioted when he passed a gas tax that would stop global warming. Leftists shouldn't be seen as rational

people. They vote in order to feel good and look good to others. When they get what they voted for, they riot in order to get out of it. The same people who elected Ocasio-Cortez will riot against her policies once they realize that they are the ones who have to pay for what they voted for.

Mainstream media and Democrat politicians silent after illegal immigrant murders police officer

December 28, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

California Police Officer Ronil Singh

Did you hear about the news story of a California police officer being murdered by an illegal immigrant during a traffic stop? Well, if you get your news from left-wing media sources, then you probably didn't. The North American news media had almost nothing to say about it. I only found the story on a British newspaper's web site, the UK Telegraph.

They wrote:

> A manhunt has been launched after an illegal immigrant gunman shot dead a California police officer during a traffic stop.
>
> The suspect had been stopped for possible drink driving when he shot the officer, Ronil Singh.
>
> […]Stanislaus County Sheriff Adam Christianson in California said authorities have identified, but won't yet name the illegal immigrant suspect.
>
> They believed he was still in the area, around 100 miles southeast of San Francisco, and was armed and dangerous.
>
> Sheriff Christianson said: "This suspect is in our country illegally. He doesn't belong here. He is a criminal.
>
> "The sheriff's office will spare no expense in hunting down this criminal."
>
> Fighting back tears the local police chief Randy Richardson said Mr Singh, 33, originally from Fiji, had a newborn son, and was an "American patriot".
>
>> The police chief said: "He came to America with one purpose, and that was to serve this country.
>>
>> […]"Please remember the man. Yes, he was a police officer, but he was a

> human being. His five-month old he will never hear talk, he will never see his son walk because a coward took his life."

I just want to remind everyone that it's not just police officers who get murdered in open border / sanctuary city states like California. It's unarmed civilians, too.

Remember the story of Kate Steinle? She was just walking with her family on a pier in San Francisco when an illegal immigrant – who had been deported many times – used an illegal firearm to murder her for no reason at all.

The Miami Herald reported at the time:

> It was July 1, 2015, and Kate Steinle was walking with her father on Pier 14 in San Francisco.
>
> But seemingly out of nowhere, a bullet ricocheted off the concrete and struck the unsuspecting 32-year-old in the back, according to NBC News. She died two hours later in a nearby hospital.
>
> On Thursday, a jury found Kate's accused killer, 45-year-old Jose Ines Garcia Zarate, not guilty on charges of murder, assault with a deadly weapon and involuntary manslaughter, The Washington Post reported. Garcia Zarate, a Mexican citizen who has been **deported from the United States five times**, was found guilty of possessing a weapon as a felon.
>
> The defense argued that Garcia Zarate, **a seven-time felon**, found the gun, a Sig Sauer P239, on the pier and accidentally fired it when he picked it up, according to KTVU. That same weapon had been stolen four days earlier from an off-duty Bureau of Land Management Ranger's car.

Zarate was acquitted of murder and assault charges against Kate Steinle. That's right. He was ACQUITTED of murder and assault charges. He had been deported FIVE TIMES before this, and convicted of felonies SEVEN TIMES. In my view, every single California leftist should be tried and convicted of murder and assault, for allowing things like this to happen.

Republicans tried to introduce a law to stop killings like this from happening. They called it "Kate's Law". It was supposed to give tougher penalties to illegal immigrants who are deported and then re-enter the country to commit MORE crimes. The bill went up for a vote in the California house, and 166 Democrats voted against "Kate's Law". Only 24 Democrats voted for the law.

DID YOU GET THAT???? 166 DEMOCRATS OUT OF 190 DEMOCRATS VOTED AGAINST A LAW GIVING STRONGER PENALTIES TO ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WHO ARE DEPORTED, THEN RETURN TO AMERICA, COMMIT MORE CRIMES, AND ARE CAUGHT AND SENTENCED AGAIN.

My purpose in writing about this

I just want to make sure that people understand that when I report on these issues, I am not concerned with the race of the person who does the killing. I am not white myself. I am concerned with the politicians and the news media who do not want to protect law-

abiding taxpayers in this country from criminals. If you cross the border illegally, then you are a criminal.

We have ways that allow people to come into the country legally. I am in favor of making it easier for skilled, law-abiding people of all races come into the country legally. I am not in favor of illegal immigrants entering out country and then breaking more laws, while imposing costs on law-abiding taxpayers for welfare, schools, health care, policing, and so on. We need skilled immigrants of every race who want to follow the law, pay taxes, and never collect welfare. But we don’t need unskilled illegal immigrants who commit crimes, increase government spending, and collect welfare.

Build. The. Wall.

New study: men and women have different goals and expectations when cohabitating

December 29, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

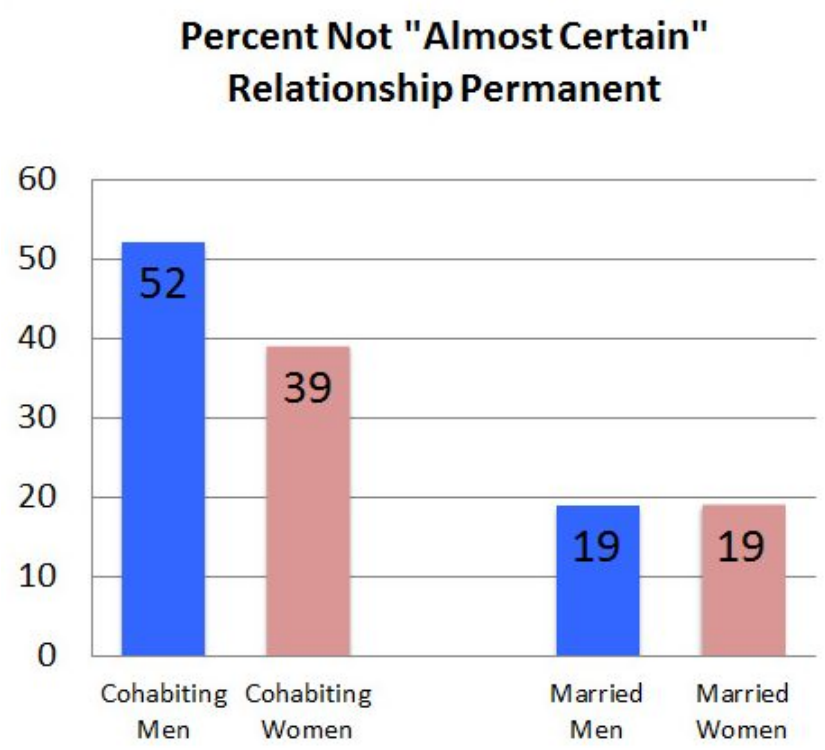

Cohabitating men don't see cohabitation as permanent, but married men do see marriage as permanent

Consider this fascinating article from the radically-leftist The Atlantic, authored by marriage researcher W. Bradford Wilcox. The article discusses the different beliefs of cohabitating men and women regarding goals and expectations for relationships.

Excerpt:

> According to a new paper from RAND by sociologists Michael Pollard and Kathleen Mullan Harris, cohabiting young adults have significantly lower levels of commitment than their married peers. This aversion to commitment is particularly prevalent among young men who live with their partners.
>
> Pollard and Harris found that the majority of cohabiting young men do not endorse the maximum indicator of relationship permanence: 52 percent of cohabiting men between ages 18 and 26 are not "almost certain" that their relationship is permanent. Moreover, a large minority (41 percent) of men report that they are not "completely committed" to their live-in girlfriends. By contrast, only 39 percent of cohabiting women in the same age group are not "almost certain" their relationship will go the distance, and only 26 percent say they are not "completely committed". Not surprisingly, the figures above and below also indicate that married women *and* men are much less likely to exhibit the low

> levels of commitment characteristic of many cohabiting relationships today.
>
> […]The only thing worse than being in a relationship for years with an uncommitted person, it would seem, is marrying one. Research by psychologists Scott Stanley and Galena Rhoades, spotlighted in a *New York Times* op-ed last year, suggests that cohabiting couples are in for trouble when they "slide" into cohabitation and then marriage rather than "decide" to take the same steps. Their work indicates that many couples begin living together without clear expectations, common values, or a shared commitment to one another. And after a time, some of these couples get married, in part because friends, family, and they themselves think it's the logical next step. But without common values and a shared sense of commitment, the couples who slide into cohabitation and marriage, instead of purposely deciding to deepen their commitment to one another, are more likely to divorce.
>
> Stanley and Rhoades illustrate this point by pointing to the research on cohabitation, engagement, and divorce. Women who cohabit prior to engagement are about 40 percent more likely to divorce, compared to those who do not cohabit. By contrast, couples who cohabit after an engagement do not face a higher divorce risk. Those who cohabit only after engagement or marriage also report higher marital quality, not just lower odds of divorce. Stanley and Rhoades think that "sliders" are more likely than "deciders" to cohabit prior to an engagement, and to have trouble in their marriage if they go on to tie the knot. On the other hand, couples who deliberately choose to move in together after a public engagement or wedding are more likely to enjoy the shared commitment that will enable their relationship to last.
>
> So, given the low levels of commitment and the gender mismatch in expectations often found among today's cohabiting couples, young men and especially women who aspire to a strong and stable marriage should take caution when considering moving in together.

You can click through the article to see the graphs he is talking about in the excerpt. Highly recommended. Just be aware Wilcox that accepts feminism (i.e. – promiscuity, no-fault-divorce, career-focus, day care, etc.) as non-negotiable improvements that should not be rolled back. His view is that men should just man up and continue to marry feminists like they used to marry non-feminists, even though marriage isn't as good of a deal for men as it used to be before feminism.

It turns out that women cannot just pick a good-looking guy and drift into a commitment by stringing together good days and good experiences. A man who is looking for recreational premarital sex with a woman before marriage is not looking for marriage, but recreation. Marriage is a commitment to work hard, be disciplined, be self-sacrificial and to compromise with another person – all in close quarters. When choosing a mate, you need to look for someone who is good at commitments. Not someone who is good at fun.

The ability to have fun with a man is not a good predictor of marital success because fun

is unrelated to the things that a man really does in a marriage: protect, provide, and lead on moral and spiritual issues. Similarly, the ability to impress your friends with a man's appearance or entertainment value does not make a commitment work. What makes a commitment work… is a man who demonstrates that he is good at making plans and achieving goals through discipline and hard work. Marriage requires making plans and achieving goals more than it requires having fun. Recreational premarital sex is about having fun – not making plans and achieving goals. Instead of talking about the next good time with a man, maybe women need to learn to talk about the mechanics of marriage with a man. And talk about the man's roles in a marriage with a man. And then they need to learn to avoid men who don't have plans and who aren't ready to perform those roles. There are plenty of men who are not "bad boys" who do have plans and who are ready to perform traditional male roles. Young women: don't waste your youth and beauty on men who are not ready to commit.

A final point. I have noticed today that women tend to avoid men who have strong, exclusive views on moral questions and spiritual questions. The minute a man expresses a moral point of view or a theological argument, women tend to want to avoid him. Sometimes they fear rejection from men with definite convictions. Sometimes they resent male leadership. And there are other reasons to avoid strong men. The problem is that a man who has definite moral views is exactly the kind of man who is likely to be trustworthy and predictable in the marriage. And a man who has definite spiritual views is exactly the kind of man who is going to have some sort of overarching plan for the marriage (AND PARENTING) beyond mere pleasure. You wouldn't choose someone who was guided by hedonism to be your stock broker or your medical doctor, because doing a hard job requires self-sacrifice and discipline. The same rule applies to choosing husbands. Husbands have duties that are typically best performed by moral, spiritual men.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

December 30, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two bears fight it out, and may the best bear win!

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates).

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it! Normally, Dr. Craig debates at major universities in front of students and faculty.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes

- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes,

lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is

a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

Facebook bans Franklin Graham for “hate speech”, Google YouTube shadow-bans pro-life videos

December 31, 2018 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Facebook banned Franklin Graham for posting “hate speech”

There were some really interesting stories of censorship by big technology on the weekend. First story is about famous Christian pastor and evangelist Franklin Graham, son of Billy Graham. Facebook didn’t like what he shared, so they decided to ban him from their platform.

The Washington Times reports:

> The Rev. Franklin Graham was kicked off Facebook for defending North Carolina’s “bathroom bill,” which the social-media giant’s review team decided was hate speech.
>
> Facebook acknowledged over the weekend it had banned the prominent evangelist over transgender issues and called the 24-hour ban a mistake that it had already undone. But Mr. Graham was having none of it Sunday, calling the move “a personal attack towards me” and an example of the censorship that Silicon Valley has in store for Christians and/or conservatives.
>
> A spokesman for Facebook told the Charlotte Observer on condition of anonymity that the review team had decided a 2016 post violated rules against “dehumanizing language” and exclusion of people based on, among other things, sexual orientation and gender self-identification. The post was deleted and Mr. Graham prevented from using the service for 24 hours.

I was thinking about this story when another news story popped up, this one about a transgender woman (a biological man) who screamed obscenities and treatened violence against a male store clerk and a female customer at a GameStop store.

Here's the video: (WARNING: AWFUL VULGAR LANGUAGE)

And the story was reported by Daily Wire:

> The video starts with the trans individual cussing out the male GameStop clerk after being offered store credit rather than a refund.
>
> "I don't want credit, you're going to give me my f***ing money back," the customer yells.
>
> A woman not in the view of the camera took issue with the trans person's vulgar language.
>
> "Excuse me, sir, there's a young man in here — you need to watch your mouth," she says in a calm voice.
>
> The trans person instantly becomes aggressive, screaming, "Excuse me — it is ma'am! It is ma'am!"
>
> "I'm sorry. I can call the police if you'd like me to. You need to settle down," the woman responds, keeping her calm tone.
>
> "You need to settle down!" the enraged customer screams back at her, pointing at her face. "You need to settle down and mind your business!"
>
> The trans person then turns to the clerk: "Ma'am! Once again: ma'am!"
>
> "I said, 'both of you,'" contends the young employee.
>
> "No, you said, 'sir'; once again, it's ma'am!" the trans person screams in response, before threatening to fight him. "Mother f***er! Take it outside! You wanna call me 'sir' again? I will show you a f***ing sir!"
>
> The aggressive customer then kicks downs products in the store and walks toward the exit door, but then turns back around.
>
> […]"I plan on telling the entire LGBTQ community," he tells the employee. "You're going to lose money over this."

Indeed, anyone who disagrees with the LGBTQ community will lose money over it. And maybe even their means of earning money, too. That's the way things are going these days, and the big technology companies certainly agree with punishing the wicked for their "hate speech".

Meanwhile, over at YouTube, which is owned by Google, pro-life videos are being shadow-banned, because a pro-abortion journalist complained that she didn't like seeing pro-life material in her search results.

The Daily Wire reports:

> After a reporter from the leftist site Slate contacted YouTube, complaining that search results when using the term "abortion" featured a plethora of videos that

> were anti-abortion, including some from the pro-life group Live Action and others featuring staunch pro-life advocate Daily Wire Editor-in-Chief Ben Shapiro, suddenly the platform reputedly reflected a change with more videos featured that were pro-abortion or simply not pro-life.
>
> On December 23, Shapiro's various videos were found behind at least 40 others; videos from Live Action, whose videos have garnered over 140 million views, were far beyond the 150th video to be seen.
>
> April Glaser, writing for Slate, trumpeted her part in effecting the apparent change at YouTube. She started by comparing the results of conducting a search for "abortion" on Google as opposed to YouTube:
>
> When you Google "abortion," the top results are relatively staid considering the divisiveness of the topic in American life. There's a link to information about the procedure from Planned Parenthood, a Google map of nearby abortion providers, a link to an overview of anti-abortion and pro-choice arguments from the nonpartisan procon.org, and links to various news sources like the New York Times and the New Yorker.
>
> Glaser writes that she emailed YouTube on December 14 complaining about the search results, and voila! She wrote on December 21, "By the end of this week, the top results (which are dynamic) included a news segment in Tamil, a video in which the director Penny Marshall (who died this week) 'Opens Up on Drugs and Her Abortion,' and a clip of an anti-abortion advocate responding to the abortion-legalization law passed in Ireland. Anti-abortion content meant to enrage or provoke viewers was no longer purely dominating the results, though they still looked very different from the generally more sober Google results."

So, if you're wondering how the big Silicon Valley / Seattle technology companies work, it's simple. If you disagree with their far-left socially progressive agenda, then they either ban you outright, or they drop your content down in their search results.

Google's censorship of Wintery Knight

In my own case, the number of Google search referrals from this blog has dropped 90% since Google lost the 2016 election to Trump. That's when Google decided to get serious about censoring my content and dropping it in their search results. Once upon a time, Google would send me 1000 search referrals for every 1 sent by DuckDuckGo. But now, DuckDuckGo is sending me more search referrals than Google. If I search for keywords I've written about, my results are far, far back in Google's search results. But on Duck Duck Go, my blog is usually in the top 10. My friends have verified this.

If you haven't tried DuckDuckGo, please give it a try, and switch. They are now using Bing for maps, and Yelp for store reviews. The search results are more accurate than Google's biased results.

Study: raising children without a father causes harm to the children

January 1, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I thought it might be a good idea to take a look at a recent research paper on father absence. My purpose in posting this study is to remind people to think about what children need when making relationship decisions. Fathers are more of a necessity for children than a nice-to-have.

The paper about a large-scale study was posted at NCBI NIH.

The abstract says:

> The literature on father absence is frequently criticized for its use of cross-sectional data and methods that fail to take account of possible omitted variable bias and reverse causality. We review studies that have responded to this critique by employing a variety of innovative research designs to identify the causal effect of father absence, including studies using lagged dependent variable models, growth curve models, individual fixed effects models, sibling fixed effects models, natural experiments, and propensity score matching models. Our assessment is that studies using more rigorous designs continue to find negative effects of father absence on offspring well-being, although the magnitude of these effects is smaller than what is found using traditional cross-sectional designs. The evidence is strongest and most consistent for outcomes such as high school graduation, children's social-emotional adjustment, and adult mental health.

I was curious to see what specific problems fatherlessness causes for children, according

to this redo of previous studies.

The conclusion explains:

> The body of knowledge about the causal effects of father absence on child well-being has grown during the early twenty-first century as researchers have increasingly adopted innovative methodological approaches to isolate causal effects. We reviewed 47 such articles and find that, on the whole, articles that take one of the more rigorous approaches to handling the problems of omitted variable bias and reverse causality continue to document negative effects of father absence on child well-being, though these effects are stronger during certain stages of the life course and for certain outcomes.
>
> We find strong evidence that father absence negatively affects children's social-emotional development, particularly by increasing externalizing behavior. These effects may be more pronounced if father absence occurs during early childhood than during middle childhood, and they may be more pronounced for boys than for girls. There is weaker evidence of an effect of father absence on children's cognitive ability.
>
> Effects on social-emotional development persist into adolescence, for which we find strong evidence that father absence increases adolescents' risky behavior, such as smoking or early childbearing. The evidence of an effect on adolescent cognitive ability continues to be weaker, but we do find strong and consistent negative effects of father absence on high school graduation. The latter finding suggests that the effects on educational attainment operate by increasing problem behaviors rather than by impairing cognitive ability.
>
> The research base examining the longer-term effects of father absence on adult outcomes is considerably smaller, but here too we see the strongest evidence for a causal effect on adult mental health, suggesting that the psychological harms of father absence experienced during childhood persist throughout the life course. The evidence that father absence affects adult economic or family outcomes is much weaker. A handful of studies find negative effects on employment in adulthood, but there is little consistent evidence of negative effects on marriage or divorce, on income or earnings, or on college education.
>
> Despite the robust evidence that father absence affects social-emotional outcomes throughout the life course, these studies also clearly show a role for selection in the relationship between family structure and child outcomes. In general, estimates from IFE, SFE, and PSM models are smaller than those from conventional models that do not control for selection bias. Similarly, studies that compare parental death and divorce often find that even if both have significant effects on well-being, the estimates of the effect of divorce are larger than those of parental death, which can also be read as evidence of partial selection.

Right now, we're living in a time where people think that it's ok to do whatever they feel

like doing. People seem to treat relationships as if they are meant to provide the grown-ups with satisfaction, and the needs of the children are often neglected. Any kind of warning or appeal to evidence is dismissed by those who want to bend and break the rules.

Well, when you take a look at the studies, you actually find that there are rules about how to go about relationships in order to achieve results. It seems to me that children's needs ought to be an important consideration when making relationship decisions. Men shouldn't have babies with bad mothers, and women shouldn't have babies with bad fathers. It ought to be an important criterion for choosing a mate and conducting a relationship: are we making decisions protecting children and giving them what they need?

And it turns out that there are studies that tell you how to prepare for making a stable commitment, too. Like this one, which found that the number of premarital sex partners reduces relationship stability and quality. This is just an example, there are many more studies that provide a lot more information about how to do things right.

I think today, people want to make decisions about what to do based on feelings. If it feels good, do it. But this approach doesn't work anywhere in life. It doesn't work when choosing a major, when choosing a job, when choosing how to spend money. It just never works. Nothing useful is ever achieved by putting feelings above reason and evidence.

People shouldn't be surprised when they break the rules and then get negative outcomes. It just takes a little reading first to find out what is likely to work and what isn't. There are real victims to bad decisions. There are mistakes that can't be fixed with happy talk and a positive attitude. We seem to have gotten addicted to the idea that every damaging mistake can be fixed by making everyone around say happy words about the mistake. But the truth is that when you make bad decisions, the damage exists independently of what people say about it.

It's not the mean people making moral judgments that causes fatherless kids to have higher anxiety or be more violent or get pregnant earlier or abuse drugs. It's the fatherlessness. The only hope that children have to avoid the consequences of bad decisions by parents is for the moral people to set boundaries and teach moral wisdom with evidence.

How well is Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's socialism working out in socialist Venezuela?

January 2, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez says Socialism loves you, and has a wonderful plan for your life Well, it looks like young people are getting more and more exciting about the prospect of voting in socialism. We have a $22 trillion debt, we're running $1 trillion plus deficits, and now's the time for the government to take over the economy and give everybody free everything!!! Well, trouble is, that's actually been tried… in Venezuela.

The Daily Wire reports:

> Once considered the wealthiest country in Latin America, Venezuela has become a socialist hellhole where girls as young as 14 are selling their bodies in exchange for a few bucks a "service" and heterosexual men are prostituting themselves out on the gay sex market. These desperate souls are trying to escape the economic policies advocated here in United States by the Left's increasingly mainstream Bernie Sanders/Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez wing.
>
> A Fox News report from journalist Hollie McKay exposed the socialism-induced horror show on the trail from Venezuela to neighboring Colombia. "Thousands upon thousands of Venezuelans pour into Colombia over the crowd cross-country bridge, their faces gaunt, carrying little more than a backpack. Rail-thin women cradle their tiny babies, and beg along the trash-strewn gutters. Teens hawk everything from cigarettes to sweets and water for small change," McKay reports.
>
> Malnourished girls and women are selling anything they can, including their bodies, breast milk, and hair, to survive, reports McKay. Females as young as 14 are receiving a reported seven dollars on average "per service"; a woman's hair might be sold in exchange for a measly $10-30.
>
> And as desperate Venezuelans hand over their papers and identification to "pimp

> types," sex trafficking has become the norm. Men are selling themselves, too: straight men, some being trafficked, are performing gay sex acts in exchange for money.

Well, is it really that bad to let strangers with STDs rape you in exchange for food? That sounds like a sex-positive socialist paradise to me!

But wait! There's more socialist paradise:

> Last year, The Daily Beast reported that starving Venezuelans had resorted to killing pets and zoo animals for food while dictator Nicolas Maduro and his fellow chubby elites maintained access to everything they need. "One morning in August at the metropolitan zoo in the torrid city of Maracaibo, workers were shocked to find the bones of a buffalo and some wild pigs inside their cages with clear signs of mutilation. Thieves allegedly stole the meat to eat what they could and sell the rest on the local market," said the report.
>
> Back in Venezuela, suicide is up, particularly with children and teens, health care is basically nonexistent since an estimated 55% of the nation's medical professionals have fled the country, and at least 70% of the population are estimated to be suffering from acute malnutrition and starvation.

Wow, talk about animal rights. They're so far ahead of us that they stopped keeping animals in cages! Yay, animal rights. And think of how good all these suicides are for the overpopulation problem? Venezuela has global warming on the run. After all, dead people can't drive cars and emit greenhouse gasses. Everything is awesome when socialists rule. We should definitely elect people who want us to be like Venezuela. And Cuba. And North Korea.

Related posts

- Venezuela solves hunger by banning bread lines, and solves crime by banning self-defense
- And now slavery: Venezuela's socialist policies lead to forced labor camps
- Do young Americans know how well socialism is working in Venezuela?
- How well are Democrat Party economic policies working out in Venezuela?
- How well does socialism work in countries and cities that adopt it?
- How well are Democrat economic policies working in Venezuela and Argentina?
- Marco Rubio's speech exposing the horrors of socialism in Cuba and Venezuela
- Obama silent as Venezuelan government violently represses democratic opposition
- How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?
- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia's economy to grow? What causes Venezuela's economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama's buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company

- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank
- Obama restores diplomatic ties with Venezuela and Syria

Feminist presents sophisticated arguments for abortion to elite scholars in rigorous academic debate

January 3, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Abortion rights activist takes on pro-life doctors in formal academic debate

I love to watch formal academic debates, with timed speeches, where scholars with published work get to interact with one another. Even if my side loses, I learn something, because I learn what I can and cannot press in a discussion with the other side. Debates between scholars helps me to tolerate listening quietly to people I disagree with. All good things.

But not everyone agrees with me about this. Some people just prefer to present their views to those who are easily manipulated and uncritical, so that they will change their minds because of stories and feelings, instead of reason and evidence.

Here's a story about it from Life News:

> Have you seen the video going around about kids meeting someone who is post-abortive? The video does not talk about the psychological consequences of having an abortion, or talk about how to help women and families who are post-abortive heal from their abortion. No, it normalizes abortion so that 10 and 11-year-olds grow up to think taking an innocent human life is okay–and that no one ever regrets their abortion.

And the actual video:

I noticed that Nathan Apodaca wrote a *reasonable* response to the content of the video, over at Human Defense initiative.

He writes:

> The most common theme in the entire video is the host's avoidance of the real issue: Can we kill the preborn? What is the preborn?
>
> […]The problem with the video is the spokeswoman for "Shout Your Abortion," along with several of the teenagers in the piece, constantly do what philosopher Francis Beckwith aptly calls "Begging the question"; that is, they assume what they should be trying to prove.
>
> Consider the first few conversations. We (the audience) are told indirectly that sometimes mistakes happen, that people can't afford a child, and other issues influence the decision to get an abortion.
>
> Poverty is obviously a problem, along with people who think they will not be able to afford a child, but a question never gets asked: why stop with abortion to alleviate these problems? Why not allow parents to kill their newborns and toddlers as well to alleviate any problems that may arise? The answer is most assuredly a firm "No, that's different."
>
> Ah, but that is the question! Why are the preborn so different we may kill them if we so please? This never seems to occur to anyone in the video, but it does raise a further question which deserves an answer: if the preborn are also human, just like babies and toddlers, should we really be killing them, or should we protect them, just like toddlers and newborns?

OK, this is important.

In the debate over atheism, I always advise you to disregard everything that anyone says until we get the atheist to come to terms with the evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine-tuning – mainstream science. The same thing is the case with the abortion debate. I don't want to hear any sob-stories about poor people, and so on, until I get a scientific answer to the question "what is the unborn?" Let's decide what's true based on what mainstream science tells us.

And guess what? Just like the atheism debate, mainstream science is completely on our side. The same rigorous experimental science that establishes the beginning of the universe, and the fine-tuning of the universe for life, also establishes that a new living human being is created at the moment of conception, with a different DNA signature than either the mother or the father. It's a new human being! And this is the scientific view – the same view you see in textbooks on human development. (Lots of citations in that PDF, you should download it and share it – it came from the lady that Trump just appointed to the National Science Board)

But it's not just science textbooks that agree that abortion takes the life of an unborn child, even pro-abortion scholars concede that, as Nathan explains:

> Something else Amelia and her interviewees miss is the many times supporters of abortion have called abortion for what it is: the intentional killing of an innocent human being.

There are three separate links to citations by abortion defenders in that citation.

Another important point is that abortion defenders always point to something that unborn children can't do, and use that as the basis for excluding them. But the truth is that their criteria excludes a lot of other people:

> […][O]ne of the teenagers makes the off-the-cuff remark that "Like your arm is incapable of complex thought, a baby in the womb isn't, either."
>
> No one bothers to defend this view though, and it is just asserted as if it settles the debate. The problem is, so what? Why does complex thought grant us a protection against being intentionally killed, instead of being protected because we are human in the first place? He never expands on this concept.
>
> And how much complex thought is necessary in order to be protected from being killed? We never get an explanation. Some people, like the sleeping, the mentally ill, and someone in a medically induced coma may happen to not be capable at a given point in time to exercise complex thought; but it seems ludicrous to think they can be justifiably excluded from the community of human beings with a right to not be killed.

I have a whole post about the different criteria that pro-abortion people use to exclude the unborn from the right to life, and in every case, they end up excluding other people who even they would admit have the right to life.

The argument that seems to be the most convincing to the children is the "pro-lifers are stinky poopyheads" argument, also known as the *ad hominem* fallacy in formal logic.

Nathan responds:

> This claim is a flat out lie, and is painfully obvious to anyone paying the slightest bit of attention. Pro-lifers regularly step up to help those in need. In north San Diego county alone, there are more pro-life resource centers for women (and men) in need than abortion clinics. In my own hometown, Escondido, two pro-life pregnancy resource centers provide healthcare to those who need it. There are even pro-lifers opening up housing and adoption referrals for women who choose to keep their babies, but are homeless and in need of a place to stay. "Shout Your Abortion", the organization the host represents, does none of this, and doesn't help women who decide not to have an abortion find support.
>
> […]This isn't all. Consider the following: groups and affiliates like the Obria Group, CareNet, LifeLine, Heartbeat International, and the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates (NIFLA) connect people in need to *thousands* of care centers; many of whom operate with no tax dollars or government subsidies whatsoever.

Slave owners used similar "arguments" against abolitionists who didn't like them owning slaves: calling them names, to make other people not want to oppose slavery. Well, I guess if your audience is a bunch of children, then this might be persuasive to them.

Why do so many atheist historians think that 1 Corinthians 15 is reliable history?

January 4, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

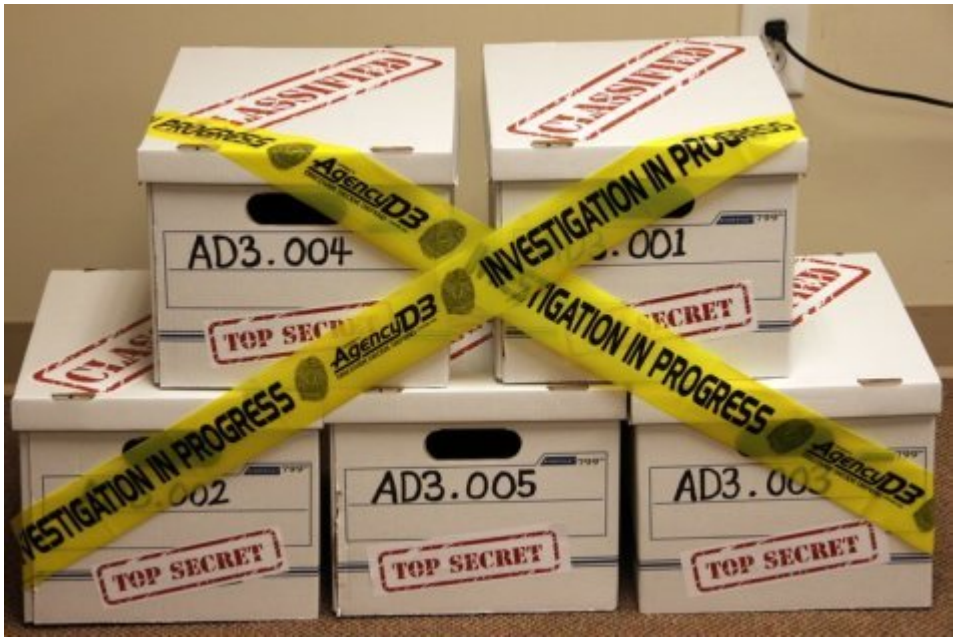

Investigation in progress

Which passage of the Bible is the favorite of Christians who like to defend the Christian worldview? I don't mean which one is most inspirational… I mean "which one is the most useful for winning arguments?" Well, when it comes to the historical Jesus, the most important passage has to be 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

The tradition in 1 Corinthians 15 is an early creed that was received from the eyewitnesses Peter and John when Paul visited them several times in Jerusalem, as documented in Galatians 1 and 2, where Paul meets the eyewitnesses. And of course, Paul records his own eyewitness experience, documented in 1 Cor 15:8.

So, is this passage accepted as historically reliable by all ancient historians? Or only by the Bible-believing ones?

Here's something posted by Dr. William Lane Craig about the 1 Corinthians 15 passage:

> The evidence that Paul is not writing in his own hand in I Cor. 15.3-5 is so powerful that all New Testament scholars recognize that Paul is here passing on a prior tradition. In addition to the fact that Paul explicitly says as much, the passage is replete with non-Pauline characteristics, including, in order of appearance: (i) the phrase "for our sins" using the genitive case and plural noun is unusual for Paul; (ii) the phrase "according to the Scriptures" is unparalleled in Paul, who introduces Scriptural citations by "as it is written"; (iii) the perfect passive verb "has been raised" appears only in this chapter and in a pre-Pauline confessional formula in II Tim. 2.8; (iv) the phrase "on the third day" with its ordinal number following the noun in Greek is non-Pauline; (v) the word

> “appeared” is found only here and in the confessional formula in I Tim. 3.16; and (vi) “the Twelve” is not Paul’s nomenclature, for he always speaks of the twelve disciples as “the apostles.”
>
> Now the visit during which Paul may have received this tradition is the visit you mention three years after his conversion on the road to Damascus (Gal. 1.18). This puts the tradition back to within the first five years after Jesus’ death in AD 30. So there’s not even an apparent inconsistency with Paul’s appropriating the language of the formula to encapsulate the Gospel he was already preaching during those first three years in Damascus.

Ancient historian Gary Habermas loves to read non-Christian scholars… and then he writes about what THEY think about Jesus in peer-reviewed articles, published in academic journals. Let’s look at this one: *Dialog: A Journal of Theology, Vol. 45; No. 3 (Fall, 2006), pp. 288-297; published by Blackwell Publishing, UK.*

He writes:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: “However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul’s.”[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul’s own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: “It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition.”[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]

This is important:

> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the

> brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

He's an eyewitness (verse 8), and he met with the other eyewitnesses, James and Peter. 1 Corinthians is early. Galatians is early. The creed is extremely early – right after the events occurred. There was no time for legends to develop.

And atheistic / critical historians agree, the creed is reliable:

> Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]
>
> Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]
>
> Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.
>
> (3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]
>
> These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially

> given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.
>
> (4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

Now, some of the people he lists are really biased against the supernatural, and they really hate the idea that the claims of Christianity exclude other religions. And yet they don't deny the historical reliability of 1 Corinthians 15, or that it is based on eyewitness testimony.

That's why when you watch debates about the historical Jesus, you see skeptical historians like Bart Ehrman, Gerd Ludemann, James Crossley, Michael Goulder, etc. accepting that the disciples thought they saw Jesus after his death. They're not just being nice to Dr. Craig when they give him that. They are forced to accept it, because it passes the historical tests. Every Christian ought to be aware of which passages of the New Testament are seen by the broad spectrum of ancient historians as "historical", regardless of their various biases. You can believe everything in the Bible. But when you debate non-Christians, you have to use the historical core of Christianity which successfully passes historical analysis.

You can see the creed used as evidence in the debate between James Crossley and William Lane Craig.

Stephen C. Meyer and Doug Axe discuss 5 major problems with macro-evolution

January 5, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

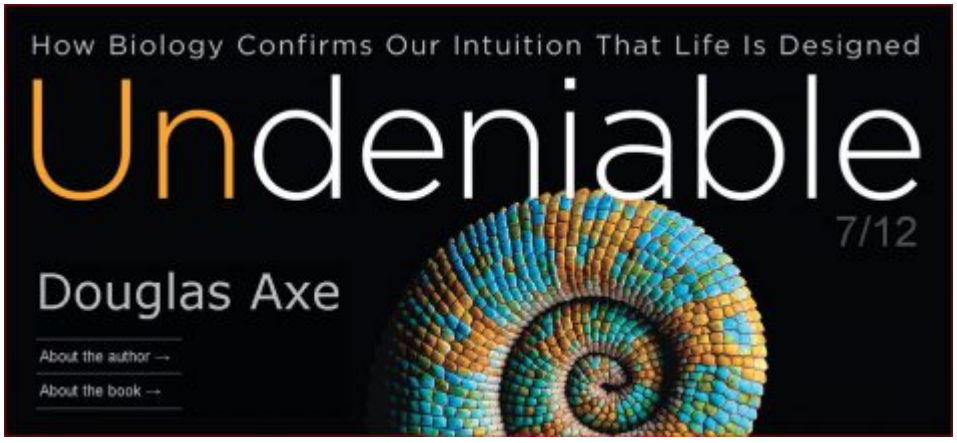

Undeniable: How Biology Confirms Our Intuition That Life Is Designed

The host of the Cross Examined radio show Dr. Frank Turek talks with Stephen C. Meyer and Doug Axe about a recent conference of Royal Society scientists discussing the problems with the theory of macro-evolution.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- about the Royal Society conference
- the main topic was whether naturalistic mechanisms can produce new body plans and new organ types
- no one disputes micro-evolution: beaks changing size, antibiotic resistance
- many of the naturalistic scientists admitted the problems with current naturalistic theories, but they don't want to embrace the need for a designer
- none of the proposals that were debated solved the real problems with macro-evolution
- Problem #1: the sudden origin of body plans in the fossil record
- Problem #2: the origin of information (e.g. – in protein molecule)
- Problem #3: need for favorable early mutations (for body plans)
- Problem #4: the problem of epigenetics
- Problem #5: the universality of the design intuition

Some of these problems have actually gotten *worse* for naturalistic evolution as our scientific knowledge has grown.

If you want the two *best* books on intelligent design, get Dr. Meyer's "Signature in the Cell" and "Darwin's Doubt". I should note that Dr. Meyer is not a young Earth creationist, and has defended the Big Bang cosmology as a solid evidence for a Creator of the universe. Being in favor of an old universe and an old Earth is compatible with being opposed to evolution – *because of scientific reasons.*

Can atheists rationally ground objective moral values and duties?

January 6, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Here's Dr. William Lane Craig explaining why atheists can't help themselves to objective morality, given a worldview of atheism:

He presents 3 reasons why in the video, all of which are also discussed in his Defenders class:

> The mention of Plato brings to mind another possible atheistic response to the first premise of the moral argument that *if God does not exist, then objective moral values and duties do not exist*. Plato thought that the Good just exists as a sort of self-subsistent idea, as an entity in and of itself. Indeed, it is the most real thing in reality. The Good simply exists. If you find this difficult to grasp, join the company! Nevertheless, that is what Plato believed. Later Christian thinkers, like Augustine, equated Plato's Good with the nature of God. God's nature is the Good, and so it was anchored in a concrete object, namely, God. But for Plato, at least, the Good just sort of existed on its own as a kind of self-existent idea.
>
> Some atheists might say that moral values, like Justice, Mercy, Love, and Forbearance, just exist all on their own as sort of abstract moral objects. They have no other foundation; they just exist. We can call this view Atheistic Moral Platonism. According to this view, moral values are not grounded in God. They just exist all on their own.
>
> Unintelligibility of Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> What might we say by way of response to Atheistic Moral Platonism? Let me make three responses. First, it seems to me that this view is just unintelligible. I

> simply don't understand what it means. What does it mean, for example, to say that the moral value Justice just exists? I understand what it means to say that a *person* is just or that some *action* is just, but what does it even mean to say that in the absence of any persons or any objects at all, that Justice just exists? It is hard to understand even what this means. Moral values seem to be properties of persons, and so it is hard to understand how Justice can just exist as a sort of abstraction.
>
> Lack of Moral Obligation on Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> Secondly, a major weakness of this view is that it provides no basis for objective moral duties. Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that moral values like Justice, Love, Forbearance, and Tolerance just exist on their own. Why would that lay any sort of moral obligation upon me? Why would the existence of this realm of ideas make it my duty to be, say, merciful or loving? Who or what lays such an obligation upon me? Why would I have the moral duty to be merciful or loving? Notice that on this view moral vices like Greed, Hatred, and Selfishness presumably also exist as abstractions. In the absence of any moral law giver, what obligates me to align my life with one set of these abstract ideas rather than with some other set of abstract ideas? There just doesn't seem to be any basis at all for moral duty in this view. In the absence of a moral law giver, Atheistic Moral Platonism lacks any basis for moral obligation.
>
> Improbability of Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> Finally, thirdly, it is fantastically improbable that the blind evolutionary process should spit forth exactly those kinds of creatures that align with the existence of this realm of abstract values.1 Remember that they have no relationship with each other at all. The natural realm and this abstract moral realm are completely separate. And yet, lo and behold, the natural realm has by chance alone evolved exactly those kind of creatures whose lives align with these moral duties and values. This seems to be an incredible coincidence when you think about it. It is almost as if the moral realm knew that we were coming! I think it is a far more plausible view to say that both the natural realm and the moral realm are under the sovereignty of a divine being, who is both the creator of natural laws that govern the physical universe and whose commands constitute the moral laws that govern our ethical duties. This is a more coherent view of reality. Theism is a more coherent view because these two realms of reality don't fall apart in this disjointed way. They are both under the sovereignty of a single natural and moral law giver.
>
> For those three reasons, Atheistic Moral Platonism is a less plausible view than theistic based ethics such as I have been defending.

And now, I must be mean to the atheists, because I think this me too nonsense is just ridiculous, desperate intellectual dishonesty.

I remember having a conversation with one of my IT project managers who was an

atheist, and she asked me what I thought would happen to dogs when they died. I said "well on your view of atheism, they don't have an afterlife, so they just rot away when we bury them and they get eaten by worms". She was aghast and said "no they don't, they go to Heaven". That was just her wishful thinking, there. And that's what morality on atheism is: wishful thinking. It's just an appearance package that gets bolted onto absolute meaninglessness and hedonism. And even if the atheist tries to make traditional decisions in their own lives, they typically push for full-on dismantling of Judeo-Christian values, especially in the sexual realm. And that spills over into abortion, divorce, same-sex marriage and government restraints on free speech, conscience and religious liberty.

Dear atheists: you cannot duct tape morality onto nihilism and have it be rational. We know you're doing it to feel good about yourselves and to appear normal instead of wearing your nihilism openly. But your faked morality is not even close to the morality of theists, and especially not of Christian theists. Christians go against their self-interest because we imitate the self-sacrificial love of Christ, who gave himself as a ransom to save others. That makes no sense on an atheistic worldview, since this life is all you have, and there is no afterlife where your actions are in the context of a relationship with that self-sacrificial Son of God. In any case, free will doesn't exist on atheism, so that means no moral choices regardless. These are the common sense implications of atheist first principles, and in fact that's what you hear expressed from the finest atheist scholars: no free will, no right and wrong, no life after death.

If you want to see what atheists really think about morality, then take a look at this post featuring Matt Dillahunty, where he is asked to condemn the Holocaust as objectively wrong, and he refuses to do it. That's intellectually consistent atheist morality right there. If the universe is an accident, and human beings evolved by accident, then there is no way things ought to be, and no way we ought to act. And no one is there is no ongoing two-way relationship for our conduct to be part of, anyway. On atheism, human beings will die out individually and collectively in the heat death of the universe. Once the heat death of the universe arrives, there will be no one left to care how we lived after we're dead – there is no one waiting for us who cares how we act towards him and towards others. Atheists can arbitrarily put any limits they want on their actions, based on what makes them feel good, and what makes people like them, perhaps taking account the arbitrary customs and conventions of the time and place they find themselves in. But it's delusional and irrational make-believe for atheists to claim that morality is rational on their worldview.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones

- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Democrat Congresswoman calls for 70% tax rate to fund complete overhaul of energy production and usage

January 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

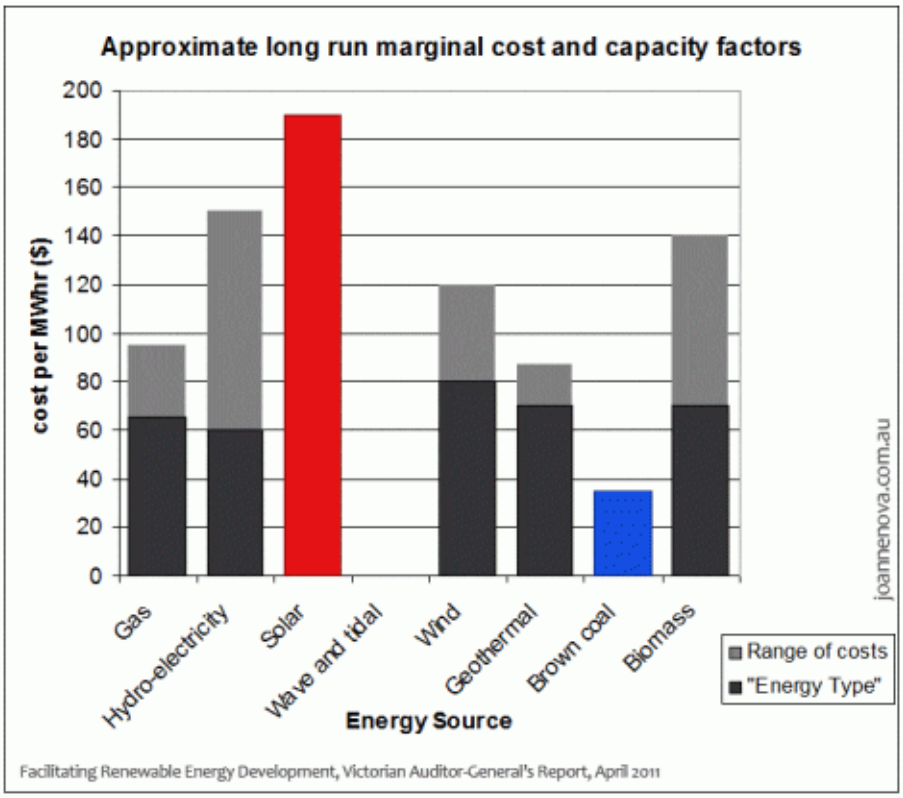

Cost of renewable wind and solar energy

A top Democrat Congresswoman has announced her plan to convert all American businesses and individuals away from low-cost energy production (natural gas, etc.) to high-cost "green" energy sources. The new government spending will require a tax rate of 70%, which means you (or your employer) will be taking home 30% of what they work for. Let's look at the consequences of this plan.

Here is the report from Daily Signal:

> Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is ready to tax the rich to make her Green New Deal a reality.
>
> "People are going to have to start paying their fair share in taxes," the recently elected New York Democrat told TV show "60 Minutes" in an interview set to air Sunday.
>
> Speaking of prior decades' taxation rates in the country, Ocasio-Cortez added, "Once you get to the tippy tops, on your 10 millionth dollar, sometimes you see tax rates as high as 60 or 70 percent."

What is this money for? To convert all existing energy production away from low-cost energy sources:

> Among its goals are meeting "100 percent of national power" demand through renewable sources, retrofitting "every residential and industrial building for state-of-the-art energy efficiency, comfort, and safety," and eliminating "greenhouse gas emissions from the manufacturing, agricultural, and other industries."
>
> Those changes are going to come with real costs. According to an editorial for Investor's Business Daily, moving the economy away from fossil fuels to 100 percent renewable energy will come "at a cost of about $5.2 trillion over 20 years."

You'll be paying more for energy usage. And what's more, your EMPLOYER will be paying more for energy usage, which means that a lot of people will be losing their jobs in order to make ends meet.

> Even if we're willing to shoulder the costs, it's, well, impossible to achieve.
>
> "Producing 100 percent of electricity from renewable sources is a practical impossibility in the near future," stated a report issued by the Senate Republican Policy Committee in December.

Keep in mind that Ocasio-Cortez also wants to spend another $32 trillion over 10 years nationalizing the health care industry and turning it into an expensive single payer scheme. In Canada, single payer health care costs the average family about $11,000 in taxes, and they get inferior health care (long wait times, lower success rates for cancer / disease treatments, etc.). In 2018, the entire federal budget was $4 trillion. Adding $3.2 trillion (for single payer health care) and $0.52 trillion (for green energy total makeover) will DOUBLE the current budget, and give us $5 trillion dollar annual deficits. The entire national debt is currently $22 trillion, and we'd be adding $5 trillion per year to it. Interest payments on the debt would quickly take over the budget, blocking out all other spending.

Three points

I want to make three points about this.

First, even if we take every penny from "the tippy top" producers in America, we can't afford a fraction of what all these big government programs will cost. In 2011, the Tax Foundation explained that even if you taxed ALL THE INCOME from all the people who make $200,000 or more, you would only raise $1.53 trillion dollars. We have to come up with $5 trillion annually to cover all this spending.

In any case, the rich are already paying "their fair share of taxes":

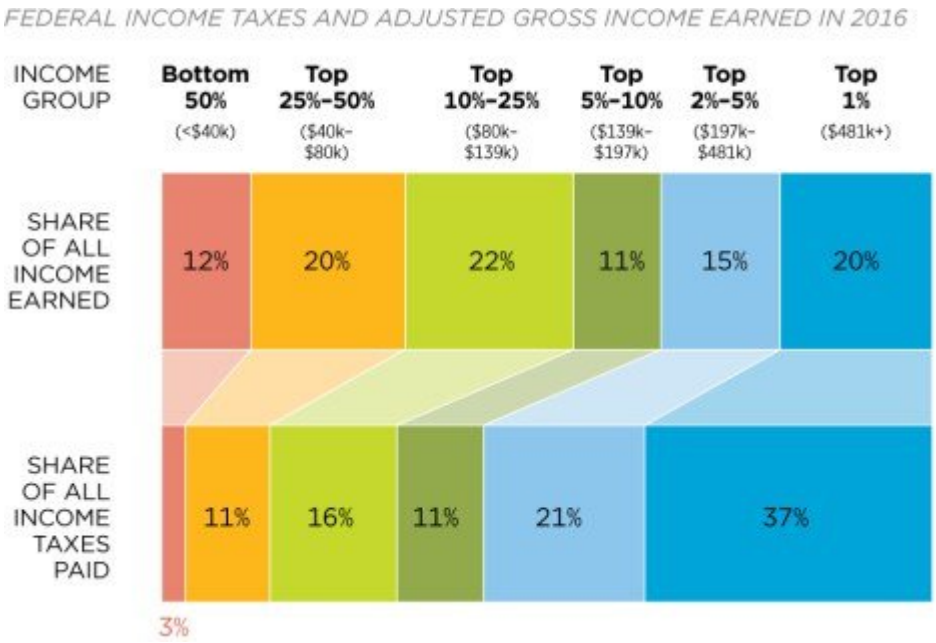

The highest earners already pay the most taxes

Half the country doesn't pay income tax at all, and that's only going to increase because Democrats keep importing uneducated, unskilled immigrants.

Secondly, raising the tax rates does not guarantee that you will get more money from the people you are taxing. The same person who works 70-hour weeks in order to keep 70% of the $200,000 they earn will not work as hard if you only let them keep 30% of the $200,000 they earn. What will they do instead? Well, they can leave the country. They can hide their income by moving into the underground economy. They can downsize their business by laying off young, inexperienced workers. But most likely, they will just take a break, and reduce the amount of hours, so that they work normal hours in an easy job.

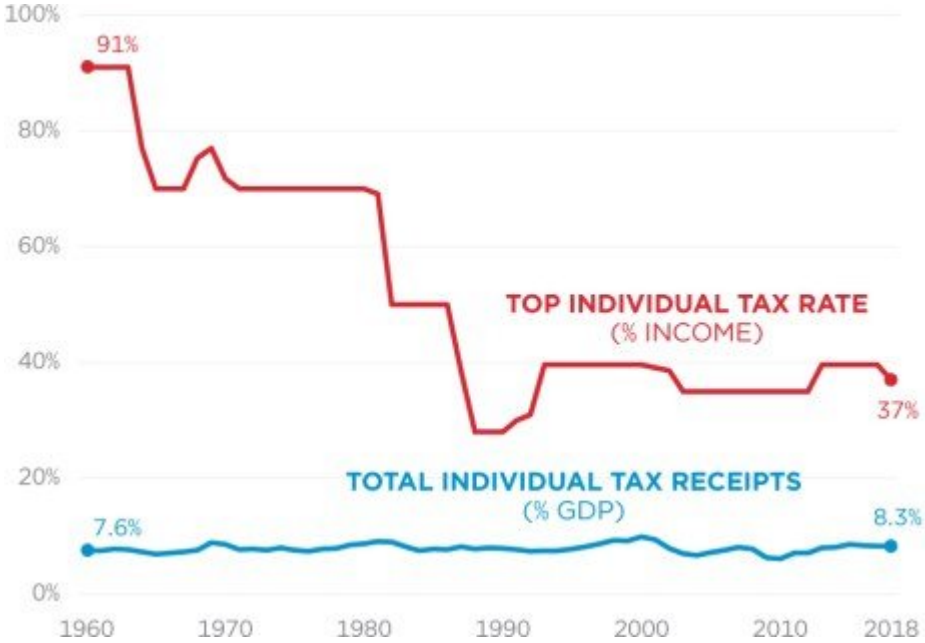

Raising tax rates just causes people to work less and pay less

Democrats are the party of slavery, so they think that they can enslave people and those people will keep working. It's not true. People are not slaves, and if you take most of what they earn, they they will stop working. I would personally quit my job and scale down to a regular job if someone raised my taxes over the 30% I pay right now.

Third, U.S. emissions already way down under Trump, because one of the first things he did was deregulate the energy industry, setting them free to innovate. Surprise! If the American people decides that pollution is a problem, then private sector businesses are going to have to solve that problem, since they can only profit by pleasing their customers. The American energy businesses were able to come up with innovative drilling techniques to extract natural gas, with virtually zero impact on the environment.

The Washington Times explains:

> The Environmental Protection Agency announced Wednesday that U.S. greenhouse gas emissions dropped by 2.7 percent last year, the first year of the Trump presidency, even as the administration slashed environmental regulations and global emissions continued to climb.

The United States has cut carbon emissions more than any other country on the planet, despite not taking part in socialist climate accords:

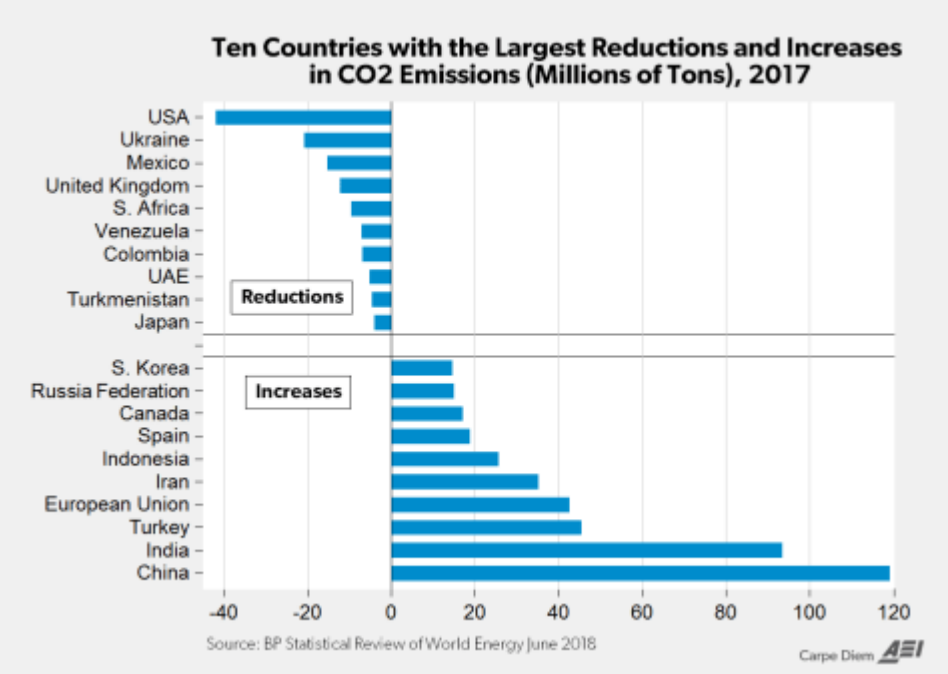

United states carbon emissions have declined more than any other country

The problem with Democrat like Ocasio-Cortez is that don't see how allowing businesses to innovate can lead to solutions to problems like carbon emissions. And that's because they don't have any serious experience in the private sector solving problems for customers in exchange for their money.

I hope everyone understands that the truth about Ocasio-Cortez is very different from the image that she portrays. She likes to present herself as "Alex from the Bronx". But the truth is that she grew up in Yorktown Heights, which is over 80% white, with an average household income of $116,741 a year. Her father was an architect and partner in an architecture firm. She attended the prestigious Boston University, which currently charges $70,000 a year for tuition. She interned with former Democrat Senator Ted Kennedy. And the reason she likes socialism is because she failed to get a job in the field she was educated in. She was working as a bartender until age 29. She spent a quarter

million on her education, and didn’t use it. And that spectacular failure of a woman is now deciding how the earnings of people far more educated and successful than she is will be spent. I want nothing to do with her.

Second black man found dead at home of wealthy LGBT Democrat megadonor

January 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wealthy Democrat donor Ed Buck and wealthy Democrat Hillary Clinton

I'm not going to have a lot to say about this as commentary, because I just want to stick with the facts. Please be restrained with your comments.

Story from Fox News:

> A man died early Monday at the West Hollywood home of prominent Democratic donor Ed Buck, his attorney confirmed to Fox News — 17 months after a male escort died in the same apartment.
>
> […]Buck, a well-known figure in LGBT political circles, has given more than $500,000 to a range of Democratic groups and candidates — including former President Barack Obama, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti.
>
> In July of last year, prosecutors declined to file charges against Buck in the death of Gemmel Moore, a male escort whose body was found in Buck's apartment in July 2017. According to a coroner's report, Buck's apartment was full of drug paraphernalia, including 24 syringes containing brown residue, five glass pipes with white residue and burn marks, a plastic straw with possible white residue, clear plastic bags with white powdery residue and a clear plastic bag containing a piece of crystal-like substance.
>
> Moore's death initially was ruled an accidental methamphetamine overdose, but the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office re-opened the investigation after writings in Moore's journal implicated Buck in his drug use.

The well-known pro-LGBT web site The Advocate reported that the second man was also a young black man. And they had more about the diaries of the first victim:

> "I've become addicted to drugs and the worst one at that," Moore wrote in his journal in December 2016. "Ed Buck is the one to thank. He gave me my first injection of crystal meth."
>
> […]Community activists like Jasmyne Cannick have accused Los Angeles officials of declining to prosecute Buck in 2017 thanks to his contributions to powerful politicians such as Hillary Clinton, California Gov. Jerry Brown, L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti, and numerous West Hollywood City Council members.

The Advocate reported that the second death is also the result of an overdose of drugs.

Not the first time

This is not the first time that a wealthy LGBT Democrat has gotten himself into trouble.

The far-left New York Times reports:

> The mayor of Seattle, Ed Murray, said on Tuesday that he would resign after announcing in May that he would not seek a second term. Several men have comeforward to accuse Mr. Murray of sexually abusing them decades ago, when they were underage.
>
> The announcement came just hours after The Seattle Times published a story with an account by a fifth man, Mr. Murray's cousin, who said Mr. Murray had abused him in the 1970s.
>
> [..]Mr. Murray, 62, a Democrat, is the city's first openly gay mayor, and had served in the State Legislature for many years before being elected in 2013.
>
> […]**The liberal Mr. Murray is generally considered a father of Washington's same-sex marriage law, which he pressed in the State Legislature for years.**

The radically-leftist New York Times isn't about to tell you what this Democrat gay-marriage activist actually did – that's not news that's fit to print. For that you have to go to Life Site News.

This happens a lot

Here's another story from the far-left CNN, of all places. Headline: "Obama backer, Democratic fundraiser Terry Bean charged in sexual abuse case".

Excerpt:

> A prominent supporter of President Barack Obama and co-founder of the Human Rights Campaign was arrested last week on charges of sodomy and sexual abuse related to what authorities said was an encounter with a juvenile male.
>
> Terrence Bean, 66, a major Democratic donor and a celebrated gay-rights activist, was indicted on two felony charges of sodomy and a misdemeanor count of sexual abuse by a grand jury and arrested in Oregon Wednesday, according to a statement from the Portland Police Bureau.
>
> […]The charges relate to an alleged encounter the two had with a 15-year-old

> boy in Oregon last year, The Oregonian reported.
>
> […]Bean, a real-estate developer and co-founder of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund and the Human Rights Campaign, is a powerful figure in Democratic politics.
>
> The Oregonian reported that he helped raise more than half a million dollars for Obama's 2012 re-election campaign, and Federal Election Commission records show he's contributed thousands to Democrats, including former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and others.
>
> Photos posted online show him with the Obamas, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and aboard Air Force One with the President.
>
> In remarks at a 2009 Human Rights Campaign dinner, President Obama thanked Bean, calling him a "great friend and supporter."

Again, a reminder to be careful with your comments. This is not the sort of content that the tech leaders at Google, Apple, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. want to see, so we have to be careful to stick to the facts.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

January 9, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference

between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, "I believe that there is no gold on Mars" with my saying "I do not believe that there is gold on Mars." If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There's a difference between saying, "I do not believe (p)" and "I believe (not-p)." Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.

But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.

There's a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called "presumption of atheism." At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our

> **cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.**
>
> **One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.**
>
> So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, "So is there a God or not?"

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these "subjective atheists"?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says "I lack a belief in the gravitational force!". When you engage in serious discussions with people about God's existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don't care about a person's psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over "I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God"? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: "I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!" What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: "Wintery Knight won't listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!". I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that's why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don't *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I'm not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Related posts

- Is giving to charity more rational for religious people or atheists?
- An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview
- Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?
- Did Jesus exist? Agnostic historian Bart Ehrman debates Infidel Guy
- Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?
- Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong? Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral?
- Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?
- William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech
- Can atheists be moral? Sean McDowell and James Corbett debate
- If militant atheists could form a country, what would it look like?
- Chad Meister: can atheists make sense of morality?

My discussion with a woman whose husband was killed by a drunk-driving illegal immigrant

January 10, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Net annual cost of illegal immigration

Before we get to my conversation with my friend whose husband was killed in a car accident when an illegal immigrant with NO driver's license, NO auto insurance, who was intoxicated from alcohol, I wanted to show you a news story that shows how things like this are not so unusual.

Here's the story from the Daily Caller:

> A multi-vehicle crash last week that claimed the life of the son of a Knoxville, Tennessee fire department captain was the result of a "chain reaction" begun by an illegal immigrant driving in the wrong lane, investigators said.
>
> Pierce Kennedy Corcoran, 22, the son of Knoxville Fire Department spokesperson Captain D.J. Corcoran, was driving a Honda Civic south on Knoxville's Chapman Highway the evening of December 29 when a Chevrolet pickup truck driven by Franco Cambrany Francisco-Eduardo reportedly veered into their lane and struck the vehicle.
>
> [...]44-year-old Franco Cambrany Francisco-Eduardo, an illegal immigrant, was arrested and charged with criminally negligent homicide as well as having no driver's license or proof of financial responsibility, according to the News Sentinel, and was jailed without bond pending ICE action.

Since Tennessee is *NOT* a sanctuary state, the criminal will not be released to re-enter the United States illegally, and then commit another crime, and another, and another. This is what would happen in sanctuary states where Democrats govern. Instead, Tennessee handed the killer over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

People like to say that most illegal immigrants don't commit violent crimes, but the real conclusion to draw here is that if this illegal immigrant had NOT been in the country, then that 22-year-old son would still be alive for his parents. He shouldn't have been here. We can't control the violent crimes of people who are supposed to be here, but that doesn't mean that we should make things WORSE by letting in people who should not be here.

You can read the statement from the victim's mother here.

It happened to someone I know

A friend of the blog had her husband killed by an illegal immigrant who was driving drunk, without a driver's license. I had a call with her on Wednesday night to find out what happened. The illegal immigrant was driving in the wrong direction in their lane at full speed. Her husband was killed, she went into a coma, and her young child was injured. The illegal immigrant was drunk. He had no driver's license. He had no auto insurance. When they caught him, he was packing his bags to go back to Mexico. And after serving his sentence, he was released without any kind of civil suit against him.

She was not able to get any restitution from the ranch that illegally employed him. She was not able to get any restitution from the strip bar where he became intoxicated before the accident. She was not able to get any restitution from the car dealer who sold him a car without requiring a driver's license and proof of insurance.

After his release, it would be easy for him to re-enter the country illegally, and commit another crime. This happens all the time, for example, in the case of the illegal immigrant who just murdered a legal immigrant policy officer in California. That criminal had been deported FIVE TIMES, but he just kept walking through our border again and again.

I think it is *very important* to focus on the stories of the law-abiding victims of illegal immigrants who commit crimes. Not all illegal immigrants commit crimes. But all the crimes committed by illegal immigrants could have been deterred by tougher border security.

Whenever I hear Democrat politicians talking about illegal immigration, they are always silent about the law-abiding taxpayers who are impacted by illegal immigration. But those same Democrat politicians who like to spend YOUR money and risk YOUR lives are not liable for restitution if their lax immigration policies cost you *your* money or *your* life.

The cost of unskilled immigrants to taxpayers

Even if illegal immigrants don't commit violent crimes, there is still a cost to taxpayers.

The Washington Times reports on the latest numbers from the Census Bureau.

Excerpt:

> The latest Census Bureau numbers find that more than seven of 10 households

> headed by immigrants in California, and nearly the same amount in Texas, are on the taxpayer dole.
>
> […]According to the latest numbers from 2014, fully 63 percent of non-citizens are living off at least one welfare program. That translates into 4.68 million households.
>
> […]What's most troublesome about the Census findings is the fact that the 63 percent of non-citizens on welfare actually grows to 70 percent for those who stay in-country 10 years or longer — meaning the entitlement mind only solidifies.
>
> Meaning non-citizens on welfare don't tend to get off welfare.

If we want to let in more people from other countries, then we should loosen up our process for admitting skilled immigrants who 1) have a job offer and are continuously employed and 2) pay taxes and 3) follow the law, 4) cannot collect one dime of welfare money, and 5) cannot bring in any relatives through chain migration. We should speed up the process for skilled immigrants to get their permanent residency. At the same time, we should build the wall, implement e-verify, prosecute businesses that hire illegal immigrants to the full extent of the law, and we should cut off all federal money for states that contain sanctuary cities.

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

January 11, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they

take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.” And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What’s harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I’ll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, “In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home.” And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase “In order that you may know”. Same message, right?

3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don’t know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It’s really great. Acts 2:36. I’ve been a Christian 20 years and I didn’t see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can’t exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” There it is again. “Know for certain.”

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition “Christ rose from the grave,” for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, “I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave.”

3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be

> transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech

January 12, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Making sense of the meaning of atheism

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video. The essay is for Christians already familiar with basic apologetics.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Here's a quick couple of quotes from the essay for those who cannot watch:

> If there is no God, then any ground for regarding the herd morality evolved by homo sapiens as objectively true seems to have been removed. After all, what is so special about human beings? They are just accidental by-products of nature which have evolved relatively recently on an infinitesimal speck of dust lost somewhere in a hostile and mindless universe and which are doomed to perish individually and collectively in a relatively short time. Some action, say, incest, may not be biologically or socially advantageous and so in the course of human evolution has become taboo; but there is on the atheistic view nothing really wrong about committing incest. If, as Kurtz states, "The moral principles that govern our behavior are rooted in habit and custom, feeling and fashion,"[5] then the non-conformist who chooses to flout the herd morality is doing nothing more serious than acting unfashionably.
>
> The objective worthlessness of human beings on a naturalistic world view is

> underscored by two implications of that world view: materialism and determinism. Naturalists are typically materialists or physicalists, who regard man as a purely animal organism. But if man has no immaterial aspect to his being (call it soul or mind or what have you), then he is not qualitatively different from other animal species. For him to regard human morality as objective is to fall into the trap of specie-ism. On a materialistic anthropology there is no reason to think that human beings are objectively more valuable than rats. Secondly, if there is no mind distinct from the brain, then everything we think and do is determined by the input of our five senses and our genetic make-up. There is no personal agent who freely decides to do something. But without freedom, none of our choices is morally significant. They are like the jerks of a puppet's limbs, controlled by the strings of sensory input and physical constitution. And what moral value does a puppet or its movements have?
>
> […]Moreover, if atheism is true, there is no moral accountability for one's actions. Even if there were objective moral values and duties under naturalism, they are irrelevant because there is no moral accountability. If life ends at the grave, it makes no difference whether one lives as a Stalin or as a saint. As the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky rightly said: "If there is no immortality, then all things are permitted."

If you want a much shorter, slicker version of this argument to share, Reasonable Faith has produced this nice 5-minute video that you can tweet or share on your Facebook page or whatever:

The moral argument is the easiest argument in the world to discuss with non-Christians, as everyone has to have an answer to questions like "what makes humans valuable?" and "why should I do the right thing when it goes against my self-interest?" and "will evildoers who escape justice in this life be punished when they die?" and "do humans have free will to make moral choices?" These are interesting questions, and people can just give their opinion and then think about it as they discuss it.

If you want to show this lecture and Q&A to your apologetics group, you can find the DVD here.

You can also read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor. I found this debate very helpful for answering the question that everyone should be able to answer: "why should I be moral?"

If we seriously want men to marry and become fathers, let's repeal no-fault divorce

January 13, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw a very good article at the Heritage Foundation web site about the importance of fathers for children. The author Virginia Allen listed out some of the benefits that fathers provide to children:

> Studies have found that children raised without a father are:
>
> - At a higher risk of having behavioral problems.
> - Four times more likely to live in poverty.
> - More likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime.
> - Twice as likely to never graduate high school.
> - At a seven times higher risk of teen pregnancy.
> - More vulnerable to abuse and neglect.
> - More likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.
> - Twice as likely to be obese.
>
> From education to personal health to career success, children who lack a father find themselves at a disadvantage to their peers raised in a two-parent household.

I was looking for a good analysis of why there's been a decline of marriage and fatherhood, and I found an article by Joe Carter on The Gospel Coalition, of all places. By looking at marriage rates and historical events that changed the marriage rate, he was able to identify the cause of the decline of marriage – and fatherhood.

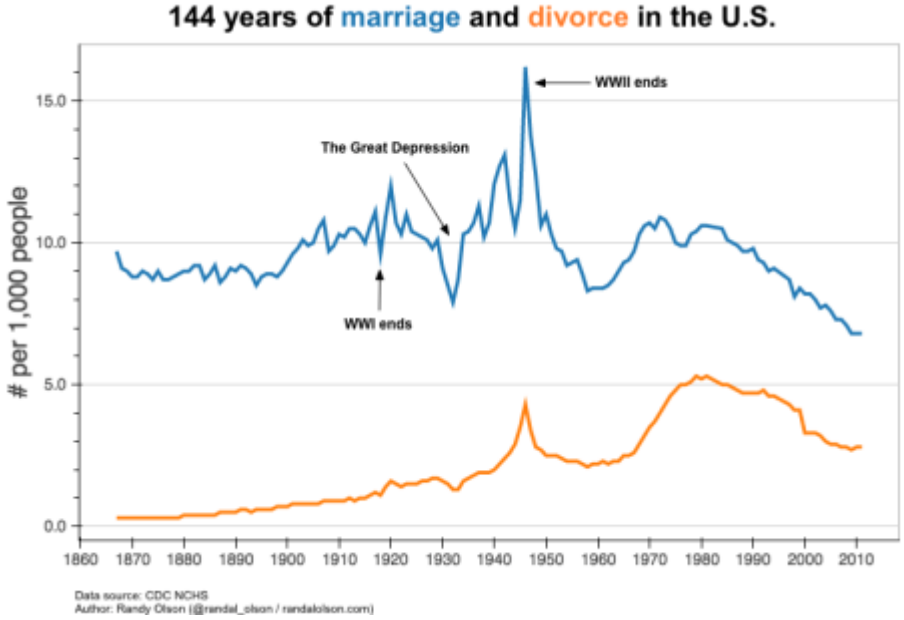

Marriage and divorce rates per capita

I'll spare you the statistical analysis, which is excellent, and give you the conclusion –

although you can guess it from the graph above:

> Now that we've explored the data, what year should we use as the marker for the beginning of the decline of marriage in the United States? I would argue for 1985, the last year that the marriage rate topped 10 percent.
>
> […]What changed in 1985 that could have led to the decline in marriage? There are likely numerous factors—which we'll examine in future articles—but one stands out in particular: By 1985, all states (except for New York) had enacted no-fault divorce legislation.

The most helpful book I know of about no-fault divorce is "Taken Into Custody", by Dr. Stephen Baskerville. He wrote a column for Crisis magazine that summarizes some of his ideas.

Excerpt:

> Feminists were drafting no-fault divorce laws in the 1940s, which the National Association of Women Lawyers now describes as "the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken."
>
> The result effectively abolished marriage as a legal contract. Today it is not possible to form a binding agreement to create a family.
>
> The new laws did not stop at removing the requirement of citing grounds for a divorce, to allow divorce by mutual consent, as deceptively advertised at the time. Instead they created unilateral and involuntary divorce, so that one spouse may dissolve a marriage without any agreement or fault by the other.

Here's what divorce does to the spouse who is the victim of the unilateral "no-fault" divorce:

> Though marriage is a civil matter, the logic quickly extended into the criminal, including a presumption of guilt against the involuntarily divorced spouse ("defendant"). Yet formal due process protections of criminal proceedings did not apply, so forcibly divorced spouses became quasi-criminals not for recognized criminal acts but for failing or refusing to cooperate with the divorce by continuing to claim the protections and prerogatives of family life: living in the common home, possessing the common property, or—most vexing of all—parenting the common children.
>
> Following from this are the horrendous civil liberties violations and flagrant invasions of family and individual privacy that are now routine in family courts. A personalized criminal code is legislated by the judge around the forcibly divorced spouse, controlling their association with their children, movements, and finances. Unauthorized contact with their children can be punished with arrest. Involuntarily divorced parents are arrested for running into their children in public, making unauthorized telephone calls, and sending unauthorized birthday cards.

In my conversations with men, no-fault divorce laws, and anti-male divorce courts are the main reasons given for why they do not pursue marriage and fatherhood. Men do not want to be coerced in a marriage with the threat of divorce by an unhappy wife. Men do not want to be subject to the government in so many areas of their lives if the wife does carry out the threat. They especially don't want to be separated from their children. One my secular male friends told me that he would not marry unless the woman had evidence in her past of hating radical feminism and no-fault divorce. This was the main criteria. He actually was able to find a woman who was a men's rights activist who hated divorce. But that was the only way he would marry.

Statistically speaking, the wife is more likely to initiate divorce than the husband. Women initiate 70% of divorces, the majority of those just because she is "unhappy". I think this is because women get into marriage based on their feelings, and they think that it is the husband's job to make them feel good. They see their happiness as the primary goal of the marriage, and see a marriage that does not make them happy as a marriage that needs to be ended. Their view of commitment really means "I'll commit so long as it makes me feel good". None of this is particularly appealing to men, who take marriage vows to mean what they say, and think that the commitment isn't conditional on being happy. (Note: if your husband doesn't have this view of marriage, then why did you choose him out of all the other men in the world?)

Are we going to repeal no-fault divorce, then?

My experiences speaking with divorced Christian women is that they married primarily based on first impressions and emotional responses. No-fault divorce was seen as a boon to women who had married the wrong men by following their hearts. It's an interesting question to ask whether women really would want no-fault repealed. It would mean that they would have to get serious about who they marry. They would have to think about what a man does in a marriage. They would have to think about what men want out of a marriage. And they would have to say no to their feelings, both in choosing a man, and in keeping the man after the wedding.

I've been told by women that the rapid giving of sex is a way to get attention from a man without having to be respectful of him. Are women willing to stop using sex as a tool to attract the wrong men, and start developing their skills as wives and mothers in order to attract the right men? Are women willing to stop seeing relationships as "fun and thrills", and get serious about pursuing men who have marriage and children as the goal? Are wives willing to give a man what he needs in the marriage: sex, respect and obedience? Are they willing to give up the threat of divorce in the home and learn to argue rationally and compromise?

If women aren't willing to demand the repeal of no-fault divorce laws and get serious about men and marriage, then what's the point of complaining that men don't want to marry and become fathers? If you're not willing to fix the root cause of the problem, then don't complain about the problem.

New survey of 20 studies about breast cancer – abortion link

January 14, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've blogged about a half-dozen studies from different countries on the link between abortion and breast cancer. It's always interesting to keep up with the research, so we know what to tell young people about the likely consequences of their choices with sex and abortion. The survey was reported by Life News.

Excerpt:

> In 2018, the Breast Cancer Prevention Institute funded and published "Induced Abortion as an Independent Risk Factor for Breast Cancer: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Studies on South Asian Women" in *Issues in Law and Medicine*. (A meta-analysis looks at separate but similar studies in order to use the pooled data for statistical significance. It is regarded by scientists as very strong evidence.)
>
> Of the 20 studies analyzed, 16 were done on Indian women. The meta-analysis found a **151%** increased risk of breast cancer after an induced abortion.
>
> In 2014, "Breast Cancer and Induced Abortion," an analysis also published in Issues in Law and Medicine, revealed that the incidence of breast cancers increased 10-14 years after an abortion. This analysis was consistent with the known biology of breast cancer. There was no statistically significant increase in breast cancer risk before 10 years and after 14 years of an abortion.
>
> Induced abortion in India, referred to as "Medical Termination of Pregnancy," was legalized in 1971. Sons are most highly prized and sex selection abortions, although illegal, are not uncommon.
>
> A study published in the Lancet 2006 and based on conservative assumptions, reported that the practice of sex-selection accounts for about a half million missing female births yearly. Over the past two decades this translates into the abortion of some 10 million female fetuses.

Abortion is especially a problem for Indian women, because – as in China – India is very pro-abortion. Both India and China have a very pro-abortion culture, and sex-selection abortion is seen as normal.

Here are a couple of studies that focused on China and Chinese women who choose abortion.

Study 1: (September 2010)

> Based on the expression of estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2/neu (HER2), breast cancer is classified into several subtypes: luminal A (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2-), luminal B (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2+), HER2-

> overexpressing (ER-, PR-, and HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-, PR-, and HER2-). The aim of this case-control study is to determine reproductive factors associated with breast cancer subtypes in Chinese women. A total of 1,417 patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the First Affiliated Hospital, China Medical University, Shenyang, China between 2001 and 2009 and 1,587 matched controls without a prior breast cancer were enrolled.
>
> […]Postmenopause and spontaneous abortion were inversely associated with the risk of luminal tumors. By contrast, multiparity, family history of breast cancer and **induced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer**.

Study 2: (March 2010)

> OBJECTIVE: To explore the risk factors of breast cancer for better control and prevention of the malignancy.
>
> METHODS: The clinical data of 232 patients with pathologically established breast cancer were investigated in this 1:1 case-control study to identify the risk factors of breast cancer.
>
> RESULTS: The history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and**multiple abortions were the statistically significant risk factors of breast cancer**, while breast feeding was the protective factor.
>
> CONCLUSION: A history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and multiple abortions are all risk factors of breast cancer.

Those are both about abortion and breast cancer in China.

And more recently, I blogged about a very recent study from China which concluded thus:

> IA is significantly associated with an increased risk of breast cancer among Chinese females, and the risk of breast cancer increases as the number of IA increases. If IA were to be confirmed as a risk factor for breast cancer, high rates of IA in China may contribute to increasing breast cancer rates.

The effect seems to be most observable for women who have induced abortions before ever completing a pregnancy.

Even though the United States has massively focused on breast cancer screening and treatment, (in contrast to other cancers, such as prostate cancer), the rate of breast cancer has not declined:

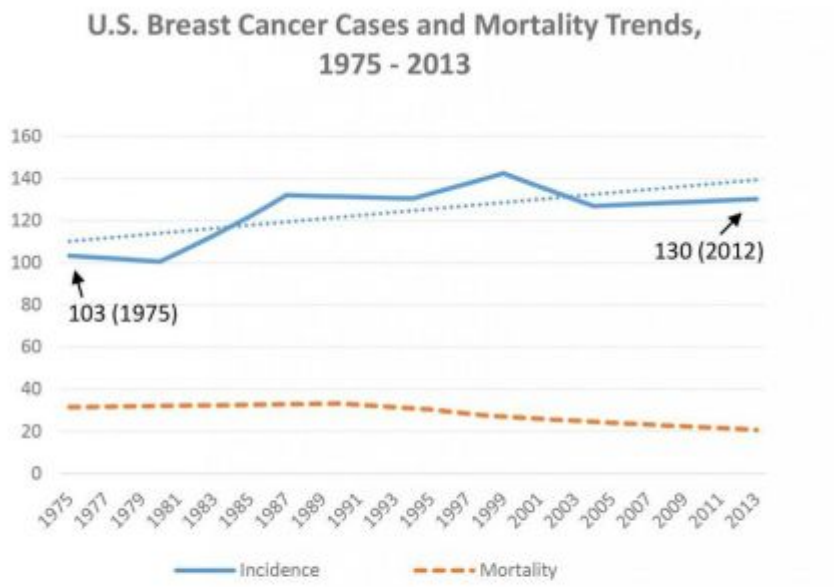

Invasive breast cancer incidence, and deaths (mortality). Rates are per 100,000 women. Incidence source is SEER 9 data accessed by from the SEER website on Oct 20, 2016. A trend line generated with Microsoft Excel software (dots) demonstrates the upward pattern since 1975.

Breast cancer rates have been rising since abortion was legalized (Source)

We have so much attention on breast cancer in the West. Many charities raising money for it. Policy changes to promote early testing. Taxpayer money being spent to stop it. And yet the rate has not gone down. It started going up right around the time abortion became legal.

Stopping abortion

So, what about legislative solutions to this problem? I noticed that the new Senator from Tennessee Marsha Blackburn has already introduced a new piece of legislation designed to stop taxpayer-funding of abortion.

> Newly elected Sen. Marsha Blackburn announced Thursday that she has introduced her first bill in the Senate, one that would end federal funding to all abortion providers, including Planned Parenthood.
>
> "Tennesseans and the American people do not want their tax dollars funding abortions," Blackburn, R-Tenn., said in a statement posted on her Twitter page Friday.
>
> Blackburn, 66, was elected to the Senate on Nov. 6, beating Democrat Phil Bredesen, a former governor. She had previously represented Tennessee in the U.S. House since 2003, and before that, served in the state Senate.

Republicans have introduced similar bills in the House and Senate, but they usually get defeated by Democrats, who are in favor of taxpayer-funding for abortion through *all nine months of pregnancy*.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

January 15, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining the outline of the podcast.

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though

> it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

How to avoid being the victim of toxic masculinity

January 16, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

I see that Gillette has come out with a male-bashing ad that blames all men for the sins of a few very bad men. I thought it might be a good idea for me to write something to women to help them to avoid being the victim of toxic masculinity. My post will have two parts: 1) choosing good men and 2) policies that produce good men.

Preparing to evaluate a man

If you don't want toxic masculinity, then you have to choose a man who is not toxic. Men must be evaluated, and the toxic ones must be rejected – *even if they are attractive and produce feelings of desire and excitement*. How do you learn how to evaluate men? Well, you have to know how to talk to them about the things that are relevant to their roles as husbands and fathers. It's not enough to ask a man "how did your day go?" Shallow questions don't protect you from toxic masculinity. You need to ask questions that actually surface the true character of the man, and whether he has done anything verifiable to prepare himself to lead a family. The only way to evaluate HIM is to have prepared YOURSELF in advance. You prepare yourself by reading serious papers and books about men and marriage and parenting. Only then will you be able to judge how much he knows, and how good he is at doing what a man does in a committed relationship. It's just like a job interview.

For example, men should be pro-life, because they should care about protecting the weak from the strong. If you – as a woman – do not understand how to make a case for the right to life of unborn children YOURSELF, then how will you be able to evaluate men to determine whether THEY take seriously the obligation to protect the weak from the strong? If you don't know anything about pro-life legislation and Supreme Court cases, then how will you evaluate a man's knowledge of those areas? You have to do YOUR homework first, so that you are able to evaluate the character of a man.

Which policies create men who are toxic?

Fatherlessness creates toxic masculinity.

If a man is growing up without a father, then he will never see a man treating a woman well, even after she has lost her youth and beauty. The first thing that children notice about their fathers is that he lives at home. But they also know that he gets up early each day to go to work for the family. And they know that if there is anything scary, like a spider or a noise, then father is the one who protects the mother. Father is the one who teaches a child that authority (and punishment) is not done out of anger, but out of love. Father is the one who sets moral boundaries, lives out moral rules, and reads the Bible to the children. Fathers demonstrate how to control superior strength, because can never act towards his wife in a way that could destroy the marriage.

Boys learn the complexity of women by watching their fathers interact with their mothers. Growing up with a father and a mother is the complete opposite of pornography. In porn, boys see only the woman's outward appearance with no context of a commitment, and no long-term plan where husband and wife are partners. Porn reduces her to an object designed only to please his needs. Marriage shows cooperation between man and woman in order to make the relationship stable and productive. Boys in father-present homes have a much broader and deeper database of interactions to draw on when dealing with women. In particular, boys learn what skills and abilities a man demonstrates to a woman in order to signal to her that he is interested in marrying her.

So, if you oppose toxic masculinity, then you have to be against fatherlessness. You have to be for marriage as the best place for children to grow up. And to be for marriage, is to be against every policy that threatens marriage. You must be against no-fault divorce. Against single-mother welfare. Against the Sexual Revolution. Against recreational premarital sex. Against delaying marriage for fun and careers. And against feminism – which teaches women that evaluating a man for traditional marriage roles is "sexist".

People on the secular left complain the most about toxic masculinity but they are the ones doing the most to promote policies that create it. Secular leftists can't tear down the theism that rationally grounds morality, and then complain when institutions like marriage – which are built on objective moral values and duties – are destroyed. It doesn't matter if a secular leftist wishes for toxic masculinity to disappear. If they say nothing about women choosing hot bad boys for relationships, then they are in favor of toxic masculinity. If they say nothing about the destruction of marriage and fatherless children, then they are in favor of toxic masculinity. You can't kill the engine that produces good men, and then complain that the bad men who are left don't treat you well.

Conclusion

To review: to avoid toxic masculinity, you should 1) prepare yourself (by studying) so you can evaluate men for their ability to perform distinct male marriage roles, and 2) promote policies in which boys are raised in homes with a father loving their mother in a lifelong commitment. If you deny either of these things, then you're not opposed to toxic

masculinity at all. You might say you don’t like it, but you’re not doing anything to avoid choosing it, and you’re not doing anything to produce young men who avoid it.

I think that women today are complaining about “toxic masculinity” precisely because they feel entitled to choose men based on outward appearance, give them recreational premarital sex, and then expect that those men will treat them with respect and care. It doesn’t work that way. Hot bad boys don’t respond to recreational premarital sex by transforming themselves into faithful husbands with impeccable moral character. If you want good character, then evaluate men to find it and then choose it. Period.

What do research studies say about the bond between fathers and daughters?

January 17, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas senator Ted Cruz, his wife Heidi Cruz and their two daughters

Many people today think that biological fathers are not essential for raising daughters. In fact, we even support this view by passing no-fault divorce laws, single-mother welfare laws, and by opposing shared parenting laws. The story goes that children do fine without their biological father in the home. Having children is something that women decide to do, and the man is superfluous. So I thought it might be a good idea to take a look at the research.

Here is a recent article from the centrist Institute for Family Studies.

It says:

> The dynamic between fathers and their daughters has been characterized by one expert as the most "fragile and unstable" when compared to other parent-child relationships.[1] It can be further described as one of the most powerful and vital relationships to individuals, communities, and nations. For instance, fathers have a profound impact on their daughters' body image,[2] clinical depression, eating disorders,[3] self-esteem, and life satisfaction,[4] to name but a few.
>
> But of all the unique contributions a father makes in his daughter's life, perhaps there is none of greater significance than in the area of sexual development and activity and romantic relationships.
>
> - Numerous studies have discovered female pubertal timing occurs later in girls whose fathers are consistently present in their life.[5]
> - An extensive body of research has revealed that early pubertal maturation in girls is associated with a variety of negative biological, psychological, and

> social outcomes, including, mood disorders,[6] substance abuse,[7] adolescent pregnancy,[8] and a variety of cancers of the reproductive system.[9]
> • Fatherless daughters are seven times more likely to become pregnant as teens.[10]
>
> […]The conditions in our culture of both rampant fatherlessness and sexual promiscuity are incompatible with forming secure and healthy relationships with boys and with establishing stable families for the next generation. A young girl's sexual development can significantly outpace her neurological and emotional development—the very resources needed to guide her sexual choices.
>
> Herein lies the danger. Much of our culture today promotes sexual activity but void of healthy attachment or true intimacy. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that high levels of father involvement (regardless of dad's marital status) are predictive of high levels of intimacy, commitment, and trust in young female adults' romantic relationships; whereas low levels of father involvement are predictive of the opposite.[11]

And:

> How a father treats both his daughter and her mother can help a young woman feel safe and secure in her relationships with the boys and men in her life, including her future husband. Family scientists and evolutionary psychologists have discovered that girls appear to be born with an emotional, relational, and evolutionary void that a father is designated to fill. If left vacant, girls will be more likely to seek to fill it in with other, unhealthier substitutes. The father-daughter relationship is the one that best teaches young women about true love and intimacy, self-worth, and respect.
>
> **Professor Linda Nielsen summarized this in one profound sentence: "[T]he father has the greater impact on the daughter's ability to trust, enjoy, and relate well to the males in her life."**

So, a father's love keeps her from getting into relationships with boys before the boys are ready to commit to her. By the way, I don't think that boys should even be allowed to TALK to girls about a relationship, unless they have a STEM degree, and two years of private sector work experience. I really *hate* when unemployed, penniless boys waste a girl's time when they can't afford to commit to her. People think I am pretty rough on women, but I really am much meaner to men who don't have STEM degrees and gapless resumes. (I guess a skilled trade would work as well, in place of the STEM degree – something like electrician, for example).

Anyway, back to the research. When a woman is deciding which men to have sex with, she has to be thinking of more than just her own needs. She has to choose a man who is going to stick around long enough to raise her daughters, so that they grow up with the confidence to resist the advances of boys who aren't ready to commit. To be pro-woman means to be pro-daughter, and that means that women need to be persuaded to be

careful about the choice of sex partner, and the timing of sexual activity. This is why people used to keep sex for marriage in the past: to protect children by making sure that they would get the stability and engagement they need from their parents.

Also, I have talked about the research about father-son bond in a different post.

If you want to do right for your children, then you need to control yourself and make wise choices. And if you're struggling to make good choices, then don't leave it up to your emotions and peer approval. Disregard your emotions. Disregard peer approval. Instead, let your decision-making be guided by your Christian convictions, and strengthened with scientific evidence. The Bible tells you not to have sex before you're married, and science tells you why this is good policy. The Bible gives you the goals, and science tells you how to how the world works, so you know how to make plans that will make sure you are never in a place where you are pressured to do the wrong thing. The more science you pack into your head, the easier it will be for you to convince yourself to do the right thing, and to convince your partner to do the right thing. Science takes moral decision-making outside the realm of feelings and opinions.

And if your partner says "I don't care about the needs of our future children", then you have a good reason to dump them and move on. You can't be in a relationship with someone who thinks that children's needs are less important than adult desires. In fact, the whole design for relationships should start with what children need from the marriage and parents, and work backward from there to the obligations on the man and the woman. And men and women ought to discuss this. What are we trying to achieve with this relationship anyway? And what is the right way to achieve it? This is where the research comes in – it shows you how to do it right.

Research from the Heritage Foundation

- Marriage: Still the Safest Place For Women and Children
- Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty

The backlash against Karen Pence reveals the fascist ambitions of the secular left

January 18, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Pence family: Karen is on the right

I saw this story about Mike Pence's splendid wife Karen getting a job teaching in a Christian school. The school has Biblical views on sexuality, i.e. – no sex outside of marriage and marriage defined as one woman and one man. Well, the mainstream media didn't a Christian woman behaving like a Christian in public, and they decided to shame her for being a Christian.

Here are the facts from the centrist Washinton Examiner:

> The story at issue is that Pence has resumed teaching at a school that "does not allow gay students," and otherwise discriminates against homosexuals. Well, that's a rather slanted way to describe the situation.
>
> The school requires adherence to beliefs that include rejection of all forms of pre- or extramarital sex, specifically including heterosexual activity outside of marriage. It's not homosexuality per se the school disapproves of; it's the act of sex except as pro-sanctioned by the Bible. This may sound strange to those with oh-so-modern sensibilities, but it's hardly invidious discrimination.
>
> […]Yet that crucial context, that the school bans its students from engaging in all forms of sexual activity considered immoral by Christians, is buried (if included at all) in multiple leading news outlets in the bowels of stories beneath headlines and lead paragraphs portraying the school as being particularly " anti-gay."

If you're relying on the mainstream media for your news sources, then you're almost certainly being lied to.

The secular leftists in the media always Christian moral rules as bad things that exclude

and hurt people's feelings. The secular left treats the feelings of being offended or excluded as more important than the Constitutional rights of freedom of religion and freedom of association.

What was interesting to me about this article was the tone of the original story from the Washington Post.

This article from The Federalist explains:

> It's progressive dogma that leads Harvard-educated Washington Post editor to incredulously ask how traditional Christian schools can even "happen" in contemporary American society. She is not merely questioning whether Second Lady Karen Pence is right or wrong to teach at a Christian school –after all, Americans are free to be critical of people's faith (well most)—but rather how the existence of a school that adhere to the teachings of a church that counters progressive dogma can exist at all.
>
> This is the same progressive moral dogma that justifies years-long attacks on the livelihood of Christian bakers and florists. It's the same dogma that justifies coercing nuns to offer the rite of birth control. If one doesn't adhere to these commandments, the state, the most powerful institution in the world, will sue them into submission.

The secular leftist wonders "how can people who disagree with me be allowed to exist at all?"

The Daily Caller noted:

> Several progressive groups including the NOH8 Campaign, the Human Rights Campaign and The Trevor Project targeted Karen and the school over its faith-based policies. The Trevor Project even announced it plans to send 100 copies of a book depicting the Pences' pet rabbit as homosexual to the school.

If you ask the secular leftists in the mainstream media "what would you do about Karen Pence and Christian schools, if you had all the power in the world, and were not accountable to anyone?" And the answer is pretty clear from their treatment of Christian bakers, florists, wedding photographers. The would use any means necessary in order silence and coerce Bible-believing Christians into behaving like progressive atheists. And why not? This has been the pattern of the secular left throughout history. Just look at Stalin, Mao, and the other secular leftist tyrants in atheist countries.

Ben Shapiro to the rescue

So where is the church on this? Well, I have noticed that many Christian pastors have nothing to say about politics, or any of the conflicts between Christians and the secular left. A friend of mine from Ohio just sent me this clip of pastor Alistair Begg, a pious fundamentalist pastor with limited real-world abilities, denouncing those who take political issues seriously. I am so sick and tired of these useless pastors who are coasting on the religious liberty that was provided for them by bolder men in ages past. (Aside:

Wayne Grudem is pretty good on policy and politics, though)

But wait! The battlefield has not been abandoned by everyone. You see, Orthodox Jews have the same kinds of rules for their religious schools as evangelical Christians do. So, the task of defending Christian religious liberty was taken up by Orthodox Jew and conservative superhero Ben Shapiro.

Here is this Thursday podcast:

Watching Ben reminds me of being at university, feeling very alone, and then discovering videos of William Lane Craig debating atheists on campus. “Is anyone going to speak up for us?” Yes. Someone is going to speak up for us. Make sure you subscribe to Ben’s podcast. I never miss a single episode.

Is the vastness of the universe evidence against God's existence?

January 19, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
Physicist Hugh Ross writes about it in Salvo Magazine.

First a quick blurb about Hugh Ross:

> Hugh Ross launched his career at age seven when he went to the library to find out why stars are hot. Physics and astronomy captured his curiosity and never let go. At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver's Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or "quasars," some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

Now back to the topic "Is the vastness of the universe incompatible with God's existence?"

Here's Ross' introduction:

> Scientists seem more difficult to please than the golden-haired girl of fairy-tale fame. While Goldilocks troubled herself over the just-right porridge, chair, and bed, astronomers appear preoccupied with the size of the universe.
>
> In the days before telescopes, when an observer could count a few thousand stars in the night sky, many considered the universe too small and unimpressive

> to be the work of an almighty, all-knowing Creator. Only an infinite cosmos, they said, would befit an infinite deity. But then, others argued, an infinite cosmos might eliminate the need for a Creator.
>
> Thanks to the Hubble space telescope, scientists now see that the universe contains roughly 200 billion large- and medium-sized galaxies and about a hundred times as many dwarf galaxies. The stars in those galaxies add up to about fifty billion trillion, and they comprise a mere one percent of the mass of the observable universe.
>
> Because of the travel time of light, the universe humans can observe is really the universe of the past. What researchers know about the expansion and geometry of the universe informs us that the universe of today is at least several hundred times more enormous than the universe we can see. The universe is trillions of trillions of times larger and more spectacular than what the earliest astronomers presumed!
>
> And yet, this new knowledge of the vastness of the universe has led to new complaints. In his book, *God: The Failed Hypothesis,* Victor Stenger says, "If God created the universe as a special place for humanity, he seems to have wasted an awfully large amount of space." Stephen Hawking, in the best-selling science book of all time, *A Brief History of Time,* shares Stenger's view: "Our solar system certainly is a prerequisite for our existence. . . . But there does not seem to be any need for all these other galaxies." So now the universe is too big to befit the all-wise, all-powerful God of the Bible.

I like how he quotes an atheist physicist to get the challenge right. No sense in caricaturing the claim of your opponent.

I formalized Stenger's argument like this:

1. If all things in the universe are not done the way that Victor Stenger likes them, then there is no God.
2. All things in the universe were not done the way Victor Stenger likes them.
3. Therefore, there is no God.

I would deny premise 1, there, since there is no reason to believe that's it's true.

Anyway, let's see what Hugh Ross says:

> The hot big bang model (now firmly established by observations) tells us that at the moment of cosmic creation, the universe was infinitely or near-infinitely hot and compressed, and all the ordinary matter existed in the form of hydrogen. As the universe expanded, it cooled. The rate at which the universe expanded and cooled depended in large part on its mass—the greater the mass, the slower the expansion and cooling rate. The slower the expansion and cooling rate, the more time the universe would spend in the temperature range (13–150 million degrees Centigrade) at which nuclear fusion can occur.

> **Because of its mass, the universe spent about twenty seconds in the nuclear fusion temperature range when it was between three and four minutes old. As a result, 24.77 percent of the universe's hydrogen (by mass) fused into helium. Thus, when stars began to form—about 380,000 years later—they started off composed of about 75 percent hydrogen, 25 percent helium, and trace amounts of deuterium, lithium, and beryllium.**
>
> **In the nuclear furnaces of the stars themselves, more hydrogen fused into helium, and, in addition to the extra helium, all the rest of the elements that appear in the periodic table were synthesized (created). The capacity of stellar nuclear furnaces to produce an abundance of elements heavier than helium (all but two of the elements) depended critically on how much of the universe's initial hydrogen was fused into helium and heavier elements during the first several minutes after the cosmic creation event. How much fusion of the universe's primordial hydrogen actually occurred at this time depended, in turn, on the universe's mass or mass density.**
>
> If the universe's mass (or cosmic mass density) had been even the slightest bit less than a hundred times the fifty billion trillion stars occupying the observable universe, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes of its existence would have proceeded less efficiently. Thus, the cosmos would have been forever incapable of generating elements heavier than helium—elements such as carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, sodium, and potassium—all of which are essential for any conceivable kind of physical life.
>
> On the other hand, if the universe's mass had been even the slightest bit greater, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes after its beginning would have been too productive, and *all* the hydrogen in the universe eventually would have been fused (after just two generations of stars) into elements as heavy as iron or heavier. Again, all the most life-essential elements, including hydrogen itself, would have ceased to exist.

Basically, your body is made up of heavier elements, and if the universe was not as massive as it is (and as old as it is), then there would not be enough heavy elements to make you, or to make massive stars like our Sun which burn steady for long periods of time. We need the heavy elements and we need the steady source of heat.

Dr. Ross has another reason why God would use vast space and long periods of time, and if you want to read that, you can click here. I think that it's important for us all to get used to the idea that we all need to understand science apologetics. God put these evidences into the universe for us to discover and use.

New study: what choices should women make in order to achieve happiness?

January 20, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

In preparation for this blog post, I read an article from a far-left source about the decline of women's happiness.

Excerpt:

> As women gain political, economic and social freedoms, one would expect that they should feel even more contented relative to men. But this isn't so.
>
> The "paradox of declining female happiness" was pointed out by economists Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, who also happen to share a house and kids. They analyzed the happiness trends of US citizens between 1970 and 2005 and found a surprising result.
>
> Stevenson and Wolfers discovered that American women rated their overall life satisfaction higher than men in the 1970s. Thereafter, women's happiness scores decreased while men's scores stayed roughly stable. By the 1990s, women were less happy than men. This relative unhappiness softened after the turn of the century, but men continue to enjoy a higher sense of subjective wellbeing that is at least as high — if not higher — than women's.
>
> Those 35 years saw advances in American women's rights and financial power.

Let's take a look at a recent study that the Daily Wire reported on, to see what really makes women happy:

> Despite the onslaught of propaganda telling young girls otherwise, a recent research paper distilling data from over 30 European countries concluded that

> mothers find homemaking preferable to working full-time.
>
> Doc. PhDr. Dana Hamplová, Ph.D., a senior scientist at the Institute of Sociology, ASCR, and a current representative of the Czech Republic in the International Social Science Program, authored the paper. Addressing Betty Friedan's narrative in the book The Feminine Mystique, which claims that women are happiest and most fulfilled at work, Hamplová "explores the link between employment and subjective well-being among mothers with children under 3 years of age," reads the paper's abstract.
>
> "Analyzing multiple measures of subjective well-being, the paper shows that homemakers are generally happier than full-time workers," the scientist found.
>
> "Contrary to our expectations, homemaking was positively associated with happiness particularly among mothers who left higher quality employment for childcare. Though some variation across countries exists, it is not linked to the provision of formal childcare, duration of parental leave, or tax system," Hamplová explains.
>
> […]"Thus, similarly to several other studies, the ESS [European Social Survey] data do not corroborate Betty Friedan's idea that domesticity and housekeeping leaves women unhappy and unsatisfied," she writes. "As all 12 measures of happiness/satisfaction point to the same direction, the conclusion that mothers with younger children tend to be better off if they are not engaged in paid employment seems to be robust."

We've had lots of advancements in women's power, often coming at the expense of men (i.e. – husband candidates). For example, anti-male schools staffed by feminist administrators and feminist teachers might be great for women, but they don't produce high-earning men for women to marry. And when women vote to expand government, taxes must increase to pay for all the spending. This reduces even further the pool of men who can take on a wife and family shrinks even more because of the increased tax burden.

This article from the leftist The Atlantic explains:

> In the view that has prevailed in American education over the past decade, boys are resented, both as the unfairly privileged sex and as obstacles on the path to gender justice for girls. This perspective is promoted in schools of education, and many a teacher now feels that girls need and deserve special indemnifying consideration.
>
> […]A review of the facts shows boys, not girls, on the weak side of an education gender gap. The typical boy is a year and a half behind the typical girl in reading and writing; he is less committed to school and less likely to go to college. In 1997 college full-time enrollments were 45 percent male and 55 percent female. The Department of Education predicts that the proportion of boys in college classes will continue to shrink.

> Data from the U.S. Department of Education and from several recent university studies show that far from being shy and demoralized, today's girls outshine boys. They get better grades. They have higher educational aspirations. They follow more-rigorous academic programs and participate in advanced-placement classes at higher rates. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, slightly more girls than boys enroll in high-level math and science courses. Girls, allegedly timorous and lacking in confidence, now outnumber boys in student government, in honor societies, on school newspapers, and in debating clubs. Only in sports are boys ahead, and women's groups are targeting the sports gap with a vengeance. Girls read more books. They outperform boys on tests for artistic and musical ability. More girls than boys study abroad. More join the Peace Corps. At the same time, more boys than girls are suspended from school. More are held back and more drop out. Boys are three times as likely to receive a diagnosis of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. More boys than girls are involved in crime, alcohol, and drugs. Girls attempt suicide more often than boys, but it is boys who more often succeed. In 1997, a typical year, 4,483 young people aged five to twenty-four committed suicide: 701 females and 3,782 males.

It's important to note that women are not victims here, they are actually the ones who created the shortage of men who could earn enough money to support a family, and allow them to stay home with their children. Their "advancements in power" came at a cost: they undermined the system that produced men who were capable of handling the financial demands of a family where the wife can raise her own children.

Look at this study of how women have voted to expand government and therefore raise taxes on working men for social programs that replace husbands:

> This paper examines the growth of government during this century as a result of giving women the right to vote. Using cross-sectional time-series data for 1870–1940, we examine state government expenditures and revenue as well as voting by U.S. House and Senate state delegations and the passage of a wide range of different state laws. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue and more liberal voting patterns for federal representatives, and these effects continued growing over time as more women took advantage of the franchise. Contrary to many recent suggestions, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s, and it helps explain why American government started growing when it did.

Bigger government means higher taxes means men earn less money, after taxes. How are you supposed to keep your wife home to watch over the little ones when taxes are higher? You can't.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

January 20, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus in a debate by saying that the resurrection is the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. Minimal facts are the parts of the New Testament that meet a set of strict historical criteria. These are the facts that skeptical historians agree with, totally apart from any religious beliefs.

So what are the criteria that skeptical historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria

> are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."
>
> In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> (1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
>
> (2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
>
> (3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
>
> (4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
>
> (5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
>
> (6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.
>
> Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for

the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book.

Try this approach instead:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection

8. Don’t let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And remember that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I’ve read is the one by Robert H. Stein in “Contending with Christianity’s Critics“. It’s a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion “God raised Jesus from the dead”. That whole book is really very, very good.

Human Rights Campaign co-founder charged with sex abuse of underaged boy

January 21, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

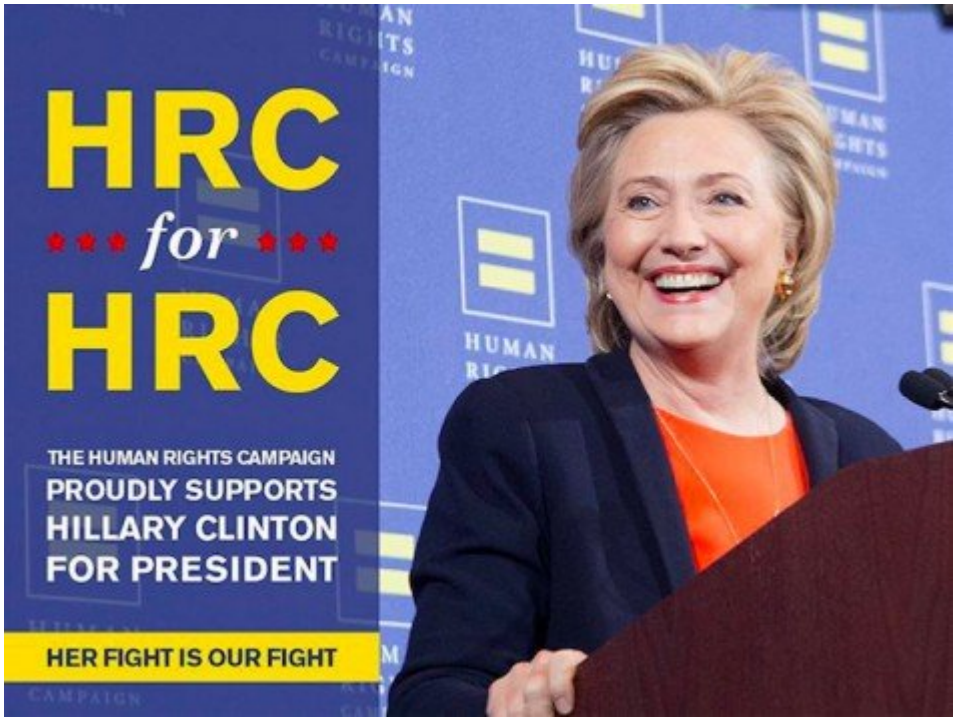

Hillary Clinton and her ally, the Human Rights Campaign

Hey, have you ever seen those bumper stickers with a yellow equal sign on a blue background? That is the symbol of the Human Rights Campaign. They have the support of prominent Democrats, like Hillary Clinton, and Barack Obama, who have spoken at their events. Today's post is about the co-founder of the HRC.

Fox News reports about the co-founder of the HRC:

> Prominent Democrat donor Terry Bean was indicted earlier this month on two counts of sodomy and one count of sex abuse for allegedly having sex with a teenage boy.
>
> Bean was arraigned Thursday on the charges, TV station KGW8 reported. He pleaded not guilty and was taken into custody at Lane County jail in Oregon. He was released Thursday and told KGW8 he was "innocent."
>
> The indictment was filed on Jan. 4 but made public following the arraignment.
>
> Bean, a gay rights activist who donated almost $70,000 of his own money to former President Barack Obama's campaign, was charged with sexual abuse in 2014 but the case was dismissed after the alleged victim did not testify. Prosecutors refiled the charges after this, court records stated, according to The Oregonian. The "alleged victim is not named in the new indictment" but the dates are similar to the previous charges, KGW8 noted.
>
> Bean, a real estate developer, and his former boyfriend, Kiah Lawson, allegedly

> had sex with a 15-year-old boy in a Eugene, Oregon, hotel in September 2013. They allegedly used the app Grindr to arrange the sexual encounter. Lawson was also charged but his case was dismissed.

The Human Rights Campaign has a lot of corporate partners, who agree with the vision of Terry Bean and his organization. You can see a list of HRC corporate supporters right here.

Anyway, this isn't the first time that something like this has happened.

The far-left New York Times reported on a recent case:

> The mayor of Seattle, Ed Murray, said on Tuesday that he would resign after announcing in May that he would not seek a second term. Several men have come forward to accuse Mr. Murray of sexually abusing them decades ago, when they were underage.
>
> The announcement came just hours after The Seattle Times published a story with an account by a fifth man, Mr. Murray's cousin, who said Mr. Murray had abused him in the 1970s.
>
> [..]Mr. Murray, 62, a Democrat, is the city's first openly gay mayor, and had served in the State Legislature for many years before being elected in 2013.
>
> […]**The liberal Mr. Murray is generally considered a father of Washington's same-sex marriage law, which he pressed in the State Legislature for years.**

In a previous blog post, I listed SIX more cases like this:

- a university professor at USC
- a member of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission
- two men who adopted nine children
- two men who adopted a boy
- an activist who ran an organization for boys
- two men who adopted a boy from Russia

It happens all the time, and with very prominent people. Allies and donors to the secular left elite. Yet, the mainstream media never seems to have much to say about these cases. I wonder why.

What does morality mean to atheists?

Should we be surprised when wealthy Democrat men take advantage of underage boys? I don't see why, given that belief in God is on the decline in our society.

Let's review what objective morality (moral realism) really means in practice for atheists:

> In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe

> that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.
>
> (Richard Dawkins, “God’s Utility Function,” Scientific American, November, 1995, p. 85)

Whatever morality atheists try to claim, the truth is that their worldview cannot ground it rationally. This universe is an accident. There are no objective human rights. There is no objective morality. There is no free will nor moral agency. There is no judge of our actions when we die. Other human beings are just lumps of matter to be used for our own pleasure, as long as we are powerful enough to escape the disapproval of those accursed Bible-believers. Can you expect people to behave morally when public expressions of Christianity are effectively banned by the secular left?

Twitter ignores CNN journalist's inciting violence against pro-life students

January 22, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When is it OK to incite violence against people on Twitter? Well, you just have to be a CNN journalist, and your victim just has to be a white male. In the past few days, journalists from CNN and other mainstream media outlets have called for violence against Catholic high school students.

Here is the story from Daily Wire:

> When an edited clip of Catholic teenagers surrounding a Native American man first emerged, it was billed as evidence of racist high school students harassing an Indigenous person.
>
> Journalists, celebrities, and others with blue checkmarks on Twitter rushed to condemn the kids as racists, even though it was clear from the beginning that something was amiss.
>
> As The Daily Wire's Emily Zanotti previously reported, the original video does not show what it was alleged to have shown and was clearly taken out of some larger context. Still, this did not stop the verified Twitter users from condemning and threatening kids based on no more evidence than the media's say so and the fact that they were white boys wearing Make America Great Again hats.
>
> On Monday morning, Mediate posted an article collecting some of the various tweets that have since been deleted after more information became available and exonerated the students who were waiting for a bus when they were taunted with racial slurs from some Black Hebrew Israelites and confronted by the Native Americans.

That Daily Wire article explains how a New York Times journalist named Kara Swisher tweeted several times that the boys in the edited video clip were Nazis. Actual Nazis.

Another New York Times editor named Tina Jordan accused the students in the edited clip of racism, despite his never speaking a word!

New York Times editor calls Catholic students racists

But there were THREE CNN employees who attacked the Catholic students on Twitter.

Here’s the first CNN journalist:

Another CNN journalist incites violence against Christian students

Here’s another CNN journalist:

Another CNN journalist attacks Christian parents and teachers

This tweet from CNN employee Reza Aslan is still up at time of writing:

CNN journalist calls for violence against Christian student

There was a lot more discussion of the biased news media on the Ben Shapiro podcast from Monday night. He was furious.

Ben Shapiro responds to media bias

Here is the full show:

At 14:30, Ben Shapiro does something that that CNN would not do. He shows the confrontation in context.

The video clearly shows the students ignoring anti-white racism directed against them, and it also shows that Phillips walked right up to them. They didn't accost him. He walked up to the students, and banged his drum right in their faces. He sought out the crowd, walked into the middle of it, and caused the confrontation.

CNN could not do show the confrontation in context, because it did not fit with their progressive Democrat narrative. And CNN could not interview the students, they only interviewed the liar, because he agreed with them.

This resulted in the students and their parents being harrassed, and targeted with threats of violence, and even death threats. Death threats, thanks to false journalism by CNN. This is nothing more than libel that incited violence against innocent people.

Ben Shapiro only talks about the confrontation for the first 30 minutes or so, but I still think it is worth watching just so that people have the appropriate level of distrust for the mainstream media.

Should we expect to know what God’s reason is for allowing evil and suffering?

January 23, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Here is an article by Steven Cowan about the problems of evil and suffering.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude.

Now let’s find out what a noseeum is, and how it relates to the existence of evil and suffering:

> However, perhaps God’s existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God’s existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By “pointless evil,” Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe’s argument may be simply stated as follows:
>
> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that

> there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the "noseeum inference." Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a "noseeum" is something that you cannot see—it is a "no-see-um." And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I "no-see-um" a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

In that example, the planet is the noseeum. Just because you look really hard, you can't be confident that the planet is not there. And similarly with the problem of evil and suffering, looking really hard and finding no reason does not mean that there is no reason. It just means that you are not in a good position to see the reason. You don't know enough to to be sure that there is no reason, because of your limitations as a human being.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous. (You can get the PDF here)

According to the paper, human beings just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a noseeum. To know for sure that there is no reason, we would need to have more knowledge than we do.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

The *best* place to learn more about no-see-ums is in this excellent lecture by Biola University professor Doug Geivett.

Did Australia's ban on guns lower violent crime rates and lower suicide rates?

January 24, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

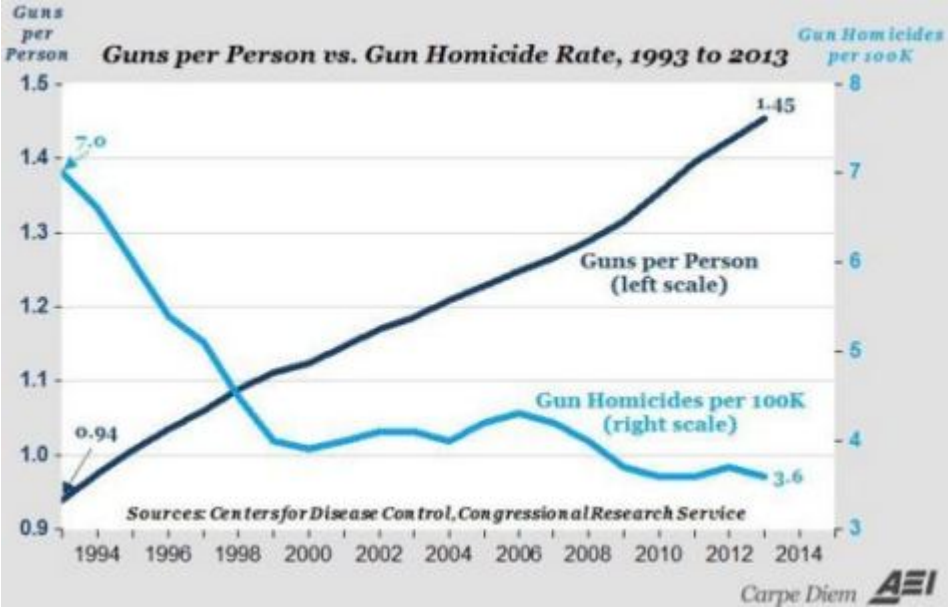

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

Someone asked me about what I thought of Australia's experience banning the use of handguns for self-defense against criminals, and so I thought I would link to an article from The Federalist, then explain what peer-reviewed studies say about the issue.

Let's start with The Federalist.

It says:

> The argument, as Vox's headline puts it, is "Australia confiscated 650,000 guns. Murders and suicides plummeted."
>
> The piece, along with many gun control advocates, cites a Harvard University study whose conclusion begins with this line: "It does not appear that the Australian experience with gun buybacks is fully replicable in the United States." Not a great start for Vox's angle, but I digress.
>
> The study doesn't conclude that "murders and suicides plummeted" in Australia after the 1996 gun ban, as Vox claims in its headline. Instead, it focuses solely on firearm-related murders and suicides.

After the gun ban, violent crime rates were up:

> Yes, as with the gun-happy United States, the murder rate is down in Australia. It's dropped 31 percent from a rate of 1.6 per 100,000 people in 1994 to 1.1 per 100,000 in 2012.But it's the only serious crime that saw a consistent decline post-ban.
>
> In fact, **according to the Australian government's own statistics, a number of serious crimes peaked in the years after the ban.**

> **Manslaughter, sexual assault, kidnapping, armed robbery, and unarmed robbery all saw peaks in the years following the ban, and most remain near or above pre-ban rates. The effects of the 1996 ban on violent crime are, frankly, unimpressive at best.**
>
> **It's even less impressive when again compared to America's decrease in violent crime over the same period.** According to data from the U.S. Justice Department, violent crime fell nearly 72 percent between 1993 and 2011. Again, this happened as guns were being manufactured and purchased at an ever-increasing rate.

So although you have fewer firearm-related deaths when you disarm law-abiding civilians, violent crime increases, because there is now NO deterrence to criminals. Even a criminal with a knife can rob, rape and murder someone who is unarmed.

What about suicide rates?

Look:

> The Australian gun ban's effect on suicide in the country isn't any better. While Vox repeats the Harvard study's claim that firearm-related suicides are down 57 percent in the aftermath of the ban, Lifeline Australia reports that overall suicides are at a ten-year high. The Australian suicide prevention organization claims suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians 15 to 44 years old. So, while Australians kill themselves with firearms less often, it seems they don't actually take their own lives any less often than before the ban.

So, overall suicides are not down, people simply found other ways to kill themselves. So the gun ban had no effect on the overall suicide rate. But it did raise the violent crime rate. Should we be surprised by this? Actually, this is consistent with peer-reviewed research.

Gun crime also skyrocketed after the 1996 gun ban. The Washington Free Beacon reports.

Excerpt:

> Australia has seen a rise in gun crime over the past decade despite imposing an outright ban on many firearms in the late 1990s.
>
> Charges for crimes involving firearms have increased dramatically across the island nation's localities in the past decade according to an analysis of government statistics conducted by *The New Daily*. It found that gun crimes have spiked dramatically in the Australian states of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania. In Victoria, pistol-related offenses doubled over the last decade. In New South Wales, they tripled. The other states saw smaller but still significant increases.
>
> Experts said that the country's 1996 ban on most semi-automatic firearms has actually driven criminals to those guns. "The ban on semi-automatics created

> demand by criminals for other types of guns," professor Philip Alpers of the University of Sydney told *The New Daily*. "The criminal's gun of choice today is the semi-automatic pistol."
>
> […]Regardless of the reasons for the jump in gun crime, the numbers reveal the true size of Australia's illegal gun market. "Taken together, the data suggests that despite our tough anti-gun laws, thousands of weapons are either being stolen or entering the country illegally," *The New Daily* said. "The fourfold rise in handgun-related charges in NSW in the past decade points to the existence of a big illegal market for concealable firearms that seems to have been underestimated in the past."

If you take guns away from law-abiding people (which is what Australia did), then *only* criminals will have guns. And that means that the criminals will become bolder in the face of their disarmed victims.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

I think that peer-reviewed studies should be useful for assessing gun control vs gun rights policy. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, which shows that the 1997 UK gun ban caused violent crime rates to MORE THAN DOUBLE in the four years following the ban. But both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

One of the common mistakes I see anti-gun advocates making is to use the metric of all "gun-related deaths". First of all, this completely ignores the effects of hand gun ownership on violent crime, as we've seen. Take away the guns from law-abiding people and violent crime skyrockets. But using the "gun-related deaths" number is especially wrong, because it includes suicides committed with guns. This is the majority (about two thirds) of gun related deaths, even in a country like America that has a massive inner-city gun violence problem caused by the epidemic of single motherhood by choice. If you take out the gun-related SUICIDES, then the actual number of gun homicides has decreased as gun ownership has grown.

For a couple of useful graphs related to this point, check out this post over at the American Enterprise Institute.

Which side of the abortion rights debate is backed by scientific evidence?

January 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn Baby – 10 weeks old

Once upon a time I didn't know much about the case for abortion rights or the case for the right to life of unborn children. My reason for not reading much about it is that I thought that it was kind of a subjective issue. But, I started a project to read 1-2 books on every conceivable topic, including one on abortion. Lo and behold, it turned out that one side did have the backing of science.

This article from The Public Discourse explains: (links removed)

> The following are typical examples—only three of the many, many we could cite. These are from standard texts by embryologists, developmental biologists, and microbiologists:
>
> "Human life begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm unites with a female gamete or oocyte (ovum) to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marked the beginning of each of us as a unique individual." "A zygote is the beginning of a new human being (i.e., an embryo)." Keith L. Moore, The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology, 7th edition.
>
> "Fertilization is the process by which male and female haploid gametes (sperm and egg) unite to produce a genetically distinct individual." Signorelli et al., Kinases, phosphatases and proteases during sperm capacitation, Cell Tissue

> Research.
>
> “Although life is a continuous process, fertilization (which, incidentally, is not a ‘moment’) is a critical landmark because, under ordinary circumstances, a new, genetically distinct human organism is formed when the chromosomes of the male and female pronuclei blend in the oocyte” (emphasis added; Ronan O’Rahilly and Fabiola Mueller, Human Embryology and Teratology, 3rd edition.

The genetically distinct part is key – this unborn child is has a different DNA signature (a human signature) than either the mother or the father. Nothing will be added or taken away from this new signature as the unborn child grows. It never changes.

More:

> These authorities all agree because the underlying science is clear. At fertilization—or, more precisely, when the sperm (a male sex cell) fuses with the oocyte (a female sex cell, more commonly referred to as an egg)—each of them ceases to be, and a new entity, one that is both genetically and functionally distinct from either parent, is generated. This new entity, initially a single totipotent cell, then divides into two cells, then (asynchronously) three, then four, eight, and so on, enclosed all the while by a membrane inherited from the oocyte (the zona pellucida), which then dissolves during implantation, allowing for continued growth in the direction of maturity as a member of the species. Even prior to implantation, however, these cells and membrane function as parts of a whole that regularly and predictably develops into the more mature stages of a complex human body.
>
> How do we know that the result of sperm-oocyte fusion is a new entity, rather than a continuation of the oocyte? We know that a new entity exists because, once the sperm penetrates the oocyte, a completely new trajectory of biological development commences. The biological activity of an oocyte is directed toward successful fertilization; the biological activity of sperm is directed toward penetration of an oocyte. The biological activity of the new entity that results when sperm and oocyte fuse, however, is directed toward nothing less than the development of a mature human organism, distinct from either parent. Further, this new entity’s activities are directed not by instructions from the mother’s body, as some people wrongly suppose, but by its own unique set of instructions, especially the blueprint for development contained in its unique genetic material. The mother’s body recognizes the zygote and then the embryo as an entity distinct from itself. In fact, the embryo must send out chemical signals to prevent the mother’s immune system from attacking it. The embryo also emits chemical signals that induce changes in the lining of the mother’s uterus to enable successful implantation.
>
> If this embryo is provided a suitable environment, nutrition, and protection from deliberate attack, serious injury, or disease, it will develop to the mature stage of a human organism. Thus, from the zygote stage onward this distinct, new

> organism has all of the internal resources—in its genetic and epigenetic structure—needed to develop itself (or, rather, himself or herself, since in the human sex is determined from the very beginning) to the mature stage of a human organism. At no point after fertilization—implantation, gastrulation, birth, puberty, etc.—does a fundamental change in biological trajectory occur. These subsequent stages of development are simply the unfolding of the zygote's inherent dynamism toward human organismal maturity. This shows that the zygote already is a human organism—a member of the species Homo sapiens—albeit at an early stage of his or her development.

So, since I like to win arguments with science, I just took the side of the debate that was backed by science. I really hate to lose debates, you know. I really like to cite scientific evidence when I'm debating.

The crime of abortion, it seems to me, is that you are depriving a human being of his or her future, because of your convenience right now. Human beings don't have the right to take away the futures of other human beings because they want to be unburdened by the results of their own actions. We shouldn't resort to violence in order to escape responsibility for our own actions. In almost every case, (except to save the life of the mother), killing the unborn child isn't justified. It's actually very scary to me that anyone would think that hurting other people was a reasonable response to one's own diminished happiness. How did we ever get to a place in society when people don't think that taking responsibility to care for the unborn child is morally better than killing the unborn child? It's a baby for goodness sake. We ought to be serious about setting up our lives and controlling ourselves so that we never hurt an unborn child.

Frank Turek lectures on the case against same-sex marriage

January 26, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker Frank Turek:

> Dr. Frank Turek is a dynamic speaker and award-winning author or coauthor of four books: Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to make their Case, I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, Correct, Not Politically Correct and Legislating Morality. As the President of CrossExamined.org, Frank presents powerful and entertaining evidence for Christianity at churches, high schools and at secular college campuses that often begin hostile to his message. He has also debated several prominent atheists including Christopher Hitchens and David Silverman, president of American Atheists.
>
> Frank hosts an hour-long TV program each week called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist that is broadcast Wednesday nights on DirecTV Channel 378 (the NRB Network). His radio program called CrossExamined with Frank Turek airs on 122 stations every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. eastern and is available continuously on the free CrossExamined App.
>
> A former aviator in the US Navy, Frank has a master's degree from the George Washington University and a doctorate from Southern Evangelical Seminary. He and his wife, Stephanie, are blessed with three grown sons.

Frank Turek is one of my favorite speakers, and I admire him for being willing to take a public stand on controversial issues like gay marriage. He's actually had to pay a price for that in his professional life, and I blogged about that before.

Here's the lecture on gay marriage, featuring Christian apologist Frank Turek.

Outline:

Outline of Frank Turek's lecture on same sex marriage
Introduction:

- how to present your case against marriage safely
- Christians are required to go beyond tolerance
- loving another person can mean opposing the person when they want to do something wrong, even if they hate you
- what did Jesus say about marriage? (see Matt 19:4-6)
- what did Jesus say about sexual morality? (Matt 15, Matt 19)

Summary:

- the same-sex marriage debate is about whether to compel people who disagree with the gay lifestyle to validate and normalize it
- P1: the government has an interest in marriage because it perpetuates and stabilizes society – this is the purpose of marriage
- P2-4: government can take 3 kinds of stances towards behaviors: promote, permit or prohibit
- government promotes behaviors when it has an interest in them
- same-sex relationships should be permitted, but not promoted
- Q1: if same-sex marriage had serious negative consequences, would you reconsider their position?
- Q2: are heterosexual relationships the same as homosexual relationships?
- Q3: what would society be like if everyone married according to the natural marriage definition: one woman, one man, for life?
- Q4: what would society be like if everyone married according to the same-sex marriage definition: man/man and woman/woman?
- Should Christians care about law and politics? or should they just preach the gospel?
- They should care because people often get their cues about what is moral and

immoral based on what is legal and illegal
- Many of the social problems we see today can be traced back to problems with marriage and family
- Children do much better when they have a relationship with their mother and their father
- Same-sex marriage necessarily destroys the relationship between a child and its mother or its father
- When a country embraces same-sex marriage, it reinforces the idea that marriage is not about making and raising children
- same-sex marriage shifts the focus away from the needs of the children to the feelings of desires of the selfish adults
- does homosexuality impose any health and mental health risks?
- what has the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage been in Massachusetts to individuals, schools, businesses and charities?
- how same-sex marriage poses a threat to religious liberty
- how should you respond to the view that homosexuality is genetic?

And at the very end, he shows this short video, which is only 5 minutes and explains the logic of opposing the redefinition of marriage:

My biggest concern is religious liberty, and we are seeing how same-sex marriage has proven to be incompatible with religious liberty. But I also care about children… I want them to have mothers and fathers who put their needs first. Marriage is about a commitment – it is the subjugation of feelings and desires to responsibilities and obligations. It is a promise. A promise to commit to love your spouse and children regardless of feelings and desires. It requires more self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice. Not less.

How do you respond to the conquests and wars in the Old Testament?

January 27, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

John Berea has an article about it on his web site.

Here's his overview:

> In the Old Testament are the military campaigns of Israel inconsistent with being led by a just and loving God, and inconsistent with his own commands? Here, I would like to make the case for consistency and justness.
>
> 1. **The nations of Canaan were evil, harming others, and needed to be stopped.** They had carried out incest with children/grandchildren and performed child sacrifice by fire. (Lev 18:6-30, Deut 12:31, Deut 18:9-10, Psalm 106:35, 37-38) They launched unprovoked attacks on Israel (Ex 17:8-9, Num 21:1, Num 21:2-23, 33) and even guerrilla attacks against Israel's "stragglers in the rear of the march when you were exhausted and tired." (Deut 25:18)
>
> **2. Warfare language was likely rhetorical.** There are five reasons to support the rhetorical nature of language such as "completely destroy" (Hebrew תחרימו, literally "ban") in Deut 20:17. It likely meant a destruction of armed soldiers, buildings, and religious icons.
>
> 1. Semitic language professor and NIV, NAB, and ESV bible translator Richard Hess argues that Hebrew "ban" is "stereotypical for describing all the inhabitants of a town or region, without predisposing the reader to assume anything further about their ages or even their genders" and "need not require that there really were children, senior citizens, or women there who

were put to death" even when followed by the terms "men and women" (Joshua 8:25) or "young and old" (Joshua 8:25).

2. In Israel's destruction of enemies we see phrases like "left no survivor" and "utterly destroyed all who breathed" (Joshua 10:40, Judges 1:8). But in Joshua 21:12-13 the author has no problem telling us these people were still there afterward: "if you ever turn away and make alliances with these nations that remain near you… God will no longer drive out these nations". In 1 Sam 15:3-4 Israel was to "strike down the Amalekites. Destroy everything that they have. Don't spare them. Put them to death–man, woman, child, infant, ox, sheep, camel, and donkey alike." In 15:8 Saul "executed all Agag's people" and Agag himself was killed in 15:33. But later in 1 Sam 27:8 we're told they're still there and " had been living in that land for a long time". Hundreds of years later in Esther 3:1 we're even told Haman was an Agagite, a descendant of the Amalekite king Agag.
3. Most verses on the subject speak of "driving out" and "dispossessing" the land rather than language suggestive of genocide. E.g. Num 33:51-53, in "the land of Canaan, you must drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images, all their molten images, and demolish their high places. You must dispossess the inhabitants of the land and live in it, for I have given you the land to possess it." It's the same story in Lev 18:25, Num 23:31-32, Deut 6:19, 9:4, 18:12, Joshua 3:10, and 23:9.
4. Jer 4:20 suggests inhabitants fled before armies arrived: "At the sound of the horseman and bowman every city flees; They go into the thickets and climb among the rocks"
5. Deut 7:22 specifically says that Israel was forbidden to "destroy them all at once" and instead they would be expelled "little by little".

So either all of these verses contradict one another, or the conquest language was rhetorical.

3. Many of the "cities" were probably military outposts. For example with Jericho and Ai, Richard Hess argues there are no references to noncombatants (apart from Rahab), no archaeological evidence of non-military use, the term melek (Hebrew מלכי) for "king" of the cities often meant mean a military leader in Canaan (e.g. in Joshua 2:2), they were located at defensive positions, and Jericho and Ai weren't described as a large city as Gibeon and Hazor explicitly were.

4. A just God requires wrath. It's not possible to have a God who is just but not wrathful–otherwise wrongdoers continue unabated. Paranormal investigator James Randi wrote in Skeptic Magazine, "I accuse the Christian god of murder by allowing the Holocaust to take place" yet Dawkins and Hitchens condemn God for judgment against the Canaanites. Which is it? Ultimately the

> the problem is we view death as the ultimate judgment, when in the theological context of the bible it’s only a graduation to what’s next with accountability for what we’ve done with what we were given.

The four points are developed with links for support. If you get this question a lot, it’s a good resource to bookmark.

Also, if you’re looking for a short video to share, here is a 6-minute one featuring Frank Turek:

That’s from commenter WorldGoneCrazy. It’s really good.

Spotify joins Google, Youtube, Facebook and Twitter in censoring Prager University

January 28, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prager University explains the central insights of the conservative worldview

Have you ever wondered who is doing a good job of countering the lies of the secular left? Alliance Defending Freedom does a good job on defense at the Supreme Court, but who is on offense, changing the culture? I think one answer that no one would disagree with is Prager University.

Certainly, the secular leftists in Big Technology agree, which is why they keep censoring Prager University videos and ads.

The Daily Caller explains:

> Music-streaming platform Spotify removed PragerU's advertisements from its platform, noting the content does not comply with the company's editorial policies, The Daily Caller News Foundation has learned.
>
> "Our policy team has re-reviewed the ads that you have submitted through Ad Studio and determined that the content of the ads do not comply with our editorial policies," Spotify noted in an email to PragerU.
>
> […]"Our policy team has made the decision to stop all existing ads and not approve new ads coming through in the future. Please let us know if you have any questions or require further clarification," the email adds.
>
> Most of the ads are tame and direct listeners to click on the conservative group's website to learn more about "intersectionality" and other social issues.
>
> PragerU frequently complains about censorship on YouTube and other social media platforms. The group filed a lawsuit in 2017 against Google and Google-owned YouTube, alleging unlawful censorship.
>
> […]Spotify has not yet responded to TheDCNF's repeated requests for comment

> about the nature of the ads or the reason for the expulsion.

Censorship is nothing new to big technology companies like Google. They have enormous problems dealing with intellectual diversity, because their secular left worldview is not supportive of diversity and inclusion. They literally can't stand to hear ideas expressed that are different from their own, and they're not afraid to use force to silence or coerce those who disagree with them.

Google believes in censorship so much that they are developing a search engine for China that censors any content that the atheistic regime decides is objectionable. China is famous for being massive human rights violators, and they are currently cracking down on religious liberty, especially for Christians. I would imagine that Google, being a left-wing fascistic company, is sympathetic with these goals. These big tech companies are run by secular leftists, and so they are not very different in their beliefs and goals from other secular leftist totalitarians throughout history. Atheists don't have a rational basis for human rights like free speech, freedom of religion, the right to life and freedom of association.

I thought it might be a good idea for me to post a few of my favorite Prager University videos.

Antonia Okafor:

Ayaan Hirsi Ali:

Christina Hoff Sommers:

Allie Stuckey:

Dave Rubin:

So, there you have four videos with women – two of whom were non white. And the last is Dave Rubin who is gay! But every video taught the basics of the conservative position on different issues. Still, the secular left has to censor all of these videos, because they disagree with this speech.

It's a good idea for you to follow Prager University on Facebook and Twitter, but also bookmark their main site. Their main site cannot be censored by the big secular left tech companies.

New study: prenatal exposure to smoked or ingested marijuana harms children

January 29, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

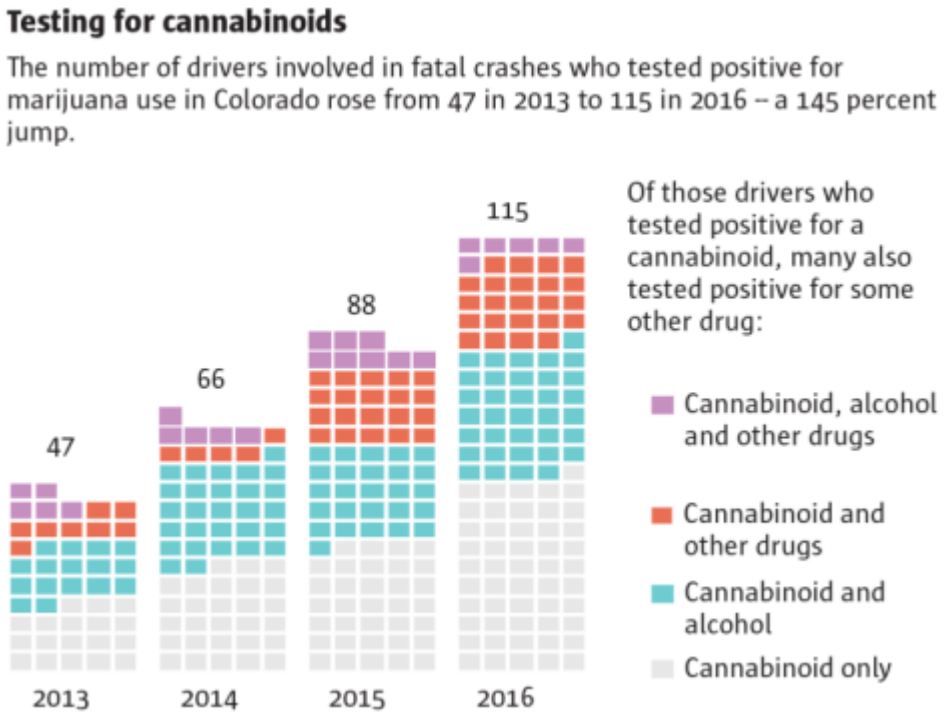

CO drivers involved in fatal crashes who used marijuana (Source: Denver Post)

Whenever debating moral issues, I find that the most useful approach is to is to appeal to scientific studies. Although people today tend to be skeptical of philosophical or religious arguments, they can't deny the success of science in solving problems in the real world. With that said, here is a recent study showing some previously unknown effects of marijuana use.

The Scientist reports:

> When marijuana is ingested or smoked during pregnancy, exogenous cannabinoids enter the blood and cross easily through the placental barrier due to their highly lipophilic nature. Pairing this ready availability with slow pharmacokinetics—active metabolites continue circulating for up to five days depending on dosage and frequency of use—fetal exposure to the active compounds in cannabis is both efficient and prolonged.
>
> […]To date, the three largest longitudinal studies of the children of women who smoked marijuana once a week or more during their pregnancies have identified remarkably consistent outcomes during early development and through young adulthood. In infants, these include increased impulsivity, hyperactivity, and delinquent behaviors, as well as memory dysfunction and decreased IQ scores. During adolescence and early adulthood, fetal cannabis exposure has been linked to persistent reduction in memory and concentration, higher rates of drug use, and an increased incidence of hyperactivity, signs of depression, and

> psychotic and schizophrenic-like symptoms. These mental health issues are further evidenced by increased reports from both parents and schoolteachers of problematic behavior and delinquency in cannabis-exposed kids.

What I thought was most interesting was how the intuitions of pregnant women in America conflict with what the science showed:

> […]70 percent of women in the United States believe that there is "slight or no risk of harm" in using cannabis during pregnancy. And about 4 percent of pregnant women in the US report using the drug during gestation, just like Carol. Of expectant moms between the ages of 18 and 25, this number is nearly 7.5 percent.

It's a scary thing when a person generates their views by how they make them feel, or whether other people like them for their views. But that seems to be so popular these days, especially with the young people. Right and wrong is decided by how consenting adults feel about things, in the moment. It seems to me that the only way to break through the feelings is with science that shows the real consequences of the immoral behavior.

(Image source: Denver Post)

Related posts

- New study: marijuana triples risk of high blood pressure
- New study: college students who lost access to marijuana improved their grades
- New study: long-term marijuana use causes decline in memory in middle age
- New 20-year study: long-term use of cannabis raises risk of mental health problems
- Report: Negative impacts from the legalization of marijuana in Colorado
- Welfare cash used to purchase marijuana in Colorado
- New study: even casual use of marijuana / cannabis alters brain
- New study: teen pot use could hurt brain and memory
- New study finds connection between early use of marijuana and mental illness
- New study: marijuana use by teens is linked to permanent brain abnormalities
- New study: smoking marijuana raises risk of having a stroke
- New study: smoking marijuana/cannabis permanently lowers IQ

Are the Galapagos finch beaks evidence of Darwinian evolution?

January 30, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
Jonathan Wells has an article about it at Evolution News.

It says:

> When Charles Darwin visited the Galápagos Islands in 1835, he collected specimens of the local wildlife. These included some finches that he threw into bags, many of them mislabeled. Although the Galápagos finches had little impact on Darwin's thinking (he doesn't even mention them in *The Origin of Species*), biologists who studied them a century later called them "Darwin's finches" and invented the myth that Darwin had correlated differences in the finches' beaks with different food sources (he hadn't). According to the myth, Darwin was inspired by the finches to formulate his theory of evolution, thoughaccording to historian of science Frank Sulloway "nothing could be further from the truth."
>
> In the 1970s, biologists studied a population of medium ground finches on one of the islands in great detail. When a severe drought left only large, hard-to-crack seeds, 85 percent of the birds perished. The survivors had beaks that were about 5 percent larger than the average beak size in the original population. The biologists estimated that if similar droughts occurred once every ten years, the population could become a new species in only 200 years. In a 1999 booklet defending evolution, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences called the finches "a particularly compelling example" of the origin of species.
>
> **But after the drought, birds with smaller beaks flourished again, and the average beak size of the population returned to normal. No net evolution had occurred.** No matter; Darwin's finches became an icon of

> evolution that is still featured in most biology textbooks.
>
> In the 1980s, a population of large ground finches, with larger beaks than the medium ground finches, migrated to the island. When a drought in 2004-2005 again reduced the food supply, the medium and large ground finch populations both declined. But since even the largest beaks among the medium ground finches were no match for the beaks of the large ground finches, the latter pretty much monopolized the larger seeds and the former had to make do with smaller seeds. This time, the medium ground finches that survived the drought had beaks that were *smaller* than the average size in the original population. Biologists studying the finches argued that birds with smaller beaks were better able to eat the tiny seeds that were left after the large ground finches ate the big ones, and they concluded that this was again an example of "evolutionary change."
>
> **[…]Wait a minute. Average beak size increased slightly during one drought, only to return to normal after the rains return. Then average beak size decreased slightly during another drought. A region of DNA is correlated with beak size. And somehow that tells us how finches evolved in the first place?**

There is an important distinction to make between micro-evolution and macro-evolution. Changes within a type is micro-evolution. Evolving a new organ type or body plan is macro-evolution. There is plenty of evidence for micro-evolution, but no evidence for macro-evolution.

What needs to be proven by the Darwinists is that the same process that results in different average beak size in a population of finches after a drought can create the finches in the first place. I think that Darwinists are credulous – they believe what they want to believe because they want to believe it, even if the evidence is incredibly weak. Darwinists must demonstrate that *heritable variations can result in the generation of new organ types and body plans.* Changes in average beak size is not interesting. What is needed is to show how the beaks, much less the wings, evolved in the first place.

Icons of Evolution

Jonathan has actually written about a number of misleading things that you may mind in Biology textbooks.

Here are the sections in his book "Icons of Evolution":

- The Miller-Urey Experiment
- Darwin's Tree of Life
- Homology in Vertebrate Limbs
- Haeckel's Embroys
- Archaeopteryx–The Missing Link
- Peppered Moths
- Darwin's Finches

- Four-Winged Fruit Flies
- Fossil Horses and Directed Evolution
- From Ape to Human: The Ultimate Icon

Dr. Wells holds a Ph.D in Molecular and Cell Biology from the University of California at Berkeley.

Five states passing legislation to allow abortion up to 40 weeks, and after birth

January 31, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

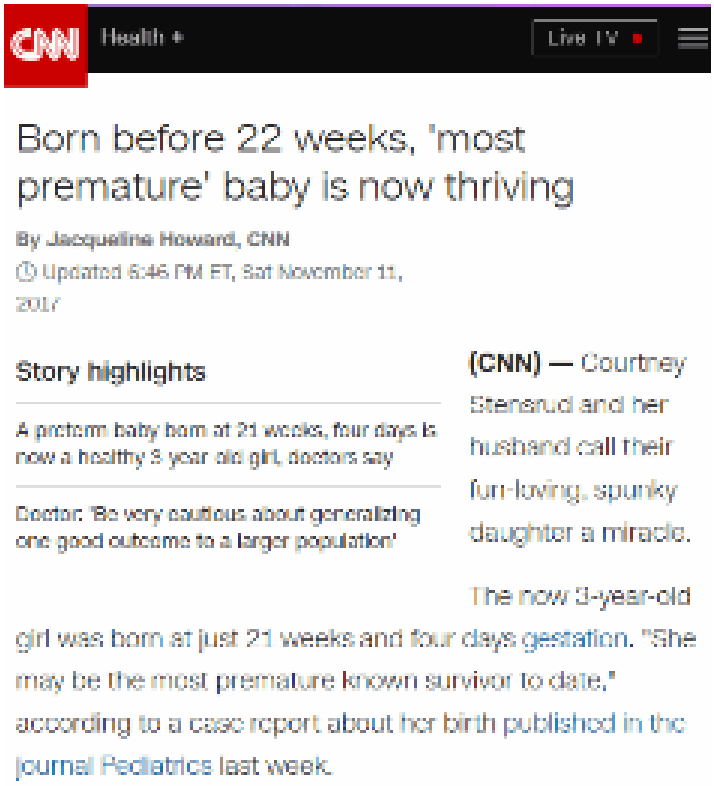

CNN Health + Live TV

Born before 22 weeks, 'most premature' baby is now thriving

By Jacqueline Howard, CNN

Updated 6:46 PM ET, Sat November 11, 2017

Story highlights

A preterm baby born at 21 weeks, four days is now a healthy 3 year old girl, doctors say

Doctor: 'Be very cautious about generalizing one good outcome to a larger population'

(CNN) — Courtney Stensrud and her husband call their fun-loving, spunky daughter a miracle.

The now 3-year-old girl was born at just 21 weeks and four days gestation. "She may be the most premature known survivor to date," according to a case report about her birth published in the journal Pediatrics last week.

CNN: Unborn baby born at 21 weeks is now "thriving" at 3 years old

Last week the Governor of New York signed a law that makes abortion legal right up to birth. But other Democrat governors are willing to do the same thing in their states. We're really seeing Democrats reveal their real priorities now. It's not job creation, it's infanticide.

So Virginia is going infanticide, next. Here is video of a Democrat legislator being questioned about her infanticide bill:

So will the bill get signed into law? Here's the latest report about the Democrat Governor of Virginia from The Federalist:

> When asked about the controversial late term abortion bill presented in Virginia's House of Delegates this week, Governor Ralph Northam said a fully developed child born in the third trimester would be kept alive, but the physician and mother would get to discuss and decide whether to take its life or not.
>
> "If a mother is in labor…the infant would be delivered. The infant would be kept comfortable. The infant would be resuscitated if that's what the mother and the family desired, and then a discussion would ensue between the physicians and mother," Northam said on WTOP's "Ask The Governor" segment this morning.

Here's the Governor in his own words:

Just to be clear, if people are deciding whether the baby should live or die after it's been born, that's infanticide. Babies are viable at 22 weeks, so there will be abortions being performed on *viable* babies, from 22-36 weeks, and even after birth.

Next, there's Rhode Island.

The author of the Rhode Island bill, Edith Ajello, says:

> […]The Rhode Island Reproductive Health Care Act, co-sponsored by state Sen. Gayle L. Goldin and Rep. Edith H. Ajello, would strip away even minor, common-sense abortion regulations – ones that a strong majority of Americans support. It would eliminate all protections for unborn babies and codify *Roe v. Wade* into state law in case the U.S. Supreme Court overturns the ruling.
>
> Ajello described protections for unborn babies as "insidiously restrictive, harmful and patriarchal reproductive laws." Her bill would even repeal the state partial-birth abortion ban and fetal homicide law, which provides justice to pregnant mothers whose unborn babies are killed by abusive partners, drunken drivers or others whose illegal actions cause the death of the unborn baby.
>
> The ACLU, which supports Ajello's bill, has claimed fetal homicide laws are problematic because they treat "a fetus as a person."
>
> […]Earlier this month, [Rhode Island Gov. Gina] Raimondo promised to support the pro-abortion bill in her State of the State address, NBC 10 reports.

Life News reports that more states are introducing legislation to remove all restrictions on abortion:

> New York, Vermont, New Mexico and now Rhode Island politicians are pushing radical pro-abortion legislation that could legalize the killing of unborn babies for basically any reason up to birth in their states.
>
> Earlier this week, Rhode Island lawmakers introduced legislation to keep abortion legal and unrestricted if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*, the AP reports.

So it's New York, Virginia, Rhode Island, New Mexico and Vermont.

The only silver lining to this cloud that I can think of is that Democrat voters who don't pay attention to the news will hear about this and reconsider whether they want to be on the side of people who don't think that a baby is a baby, even when it's just about to be born, or has just been born.

(Image source: CNN)

Transgender woman gets light sentence for attempted axe murder of three

February 1, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The attacker (pictured above) had never met any of the three victims

This story out of Australia is about a very controversial topic. Basically, a biological man pleaded not guilty because of insanity, after attacking three random people with an axe. Please be careful with your comments as well, as big technology companies censor anything written about transgenderism.

Australia News reported: (WARNING: article has graphic photos of one of the victims)

> Transgender Amati, a trade union organiser, went prowling with the axe after storming out of a disastrous Tinder date hours earlier.
>
> She was dosed up on psychedelic "love drug" MDA, antidepressants, cannabis, vodka and transgender hormones, the court heard.
>
> Just after 1am she wrote online: "One day I am going to kill a lot of people", and sent a message to one of the women she had been on a date with saying: "Most people deserve to die, I hate people".
>
> She listened to the dark-themed song Flatline by US metal band Periphery and changed her Facebook status to: "Humans are only able to destroy, to hate, so that is what I shall do."
>
> After doing a lap of the shop and attacking Ben she swung the axe at Sharon, who was at the counter buying milk.
>
> Amati tried to hit her a second time as she lay sprawled on the ground but narrowly missed.
>
> CCTV showed her then calmly walking away across the forecourt.
>
> She also tried to kill a homeless man nearby, then feigned unconsciousness when cops tracked her down in the front garden of a house.

> Her police interview hours after the bloody rampage showed her coldly refusing to answer questions.
>
> In a steady voice, Amati says over and over: “I respectfully choose to exercise my right to remain silent”.
>
> Her lawyers tried to claim insanity but that was rejected by the jury.
>
> While on remand she spent time in three women’s jails where she bullied other inmates, reports news.com.au.

The Australia News article was one of the only ones to provide details of the injuries, and the impact to the victims.

Let’s look at the first victim:

> A court heard the blade missed his brain by millimetres as it sliced through his nose and eye socket.
>
> Plastic surgeons rebuilt his face with four titanium plates. He can feel the one round his eye moving under his skin when he touches it.
>
> Ben, whose wife was pregnant, did not want cops to tell her what happened but later spoke to her by phone from hospital.
>
> He was vomiting blood that was pouring down his throat from his mangled nose.
>
> Ben spoke out today two years on from the January 2017 horror in Sydney, Australia, to hit out at Amati’s sentence.
>
> He said she was “calculating” and “not remorseful”, adding: “She’ll do her time easily and get paroled in mid-2021. It’s played out perfectly for her, perhaps better than she expected.”

The attacker received a sentence far below standard:

> Amati was handed a sentence of nine years with a non-parole period of 4½ years after being convicted of three counts of attempted murder.
>
> A petition demanding a tougher sentence says the standard penalty for attempted murder is ten years without parole.

So the standard sentence is ten years without parole, and this person will serve less than half the minimum sentence prescribed by law. How did that happen? Who knows. The light sentence for this attacker certainly won’t deter any similar future attacks, which is bad for the future victims of similar attacks.

Also interesting is that carrying a defensive weapon of any kind is prohibited in Australia. So the victims were defenseless. They just had to call the police while bleeding out, and wait for them to arrive. If the victims had tried to defend themselves with a defensive weapon, they would have been arrested, and charged with a crime.

The Australia Telegraph explains:

> Possessing any object specifically for the purpose of self-defence, lethal or non-

> lethal, is a criminal offence. There are many women, raped and/or murdered, who would have been liable to prosecution had they been carrying anything that might have saved them.
>
> […]Prohibited self-defence items include pepper sprays, mace, clubs and personal Tasers. In some States carrying a pocketknife is illegal and even wearing a bulletproof vest is banned.

It was interesting to read reader comments about the attack, too. When I read the story on the radically leftist Buzz Feed, I noticed in the comments how one transgender person said that the victims of the attack were "OK". A commenter replied and said that the victims were not "OK". This comment – that the victims were *not OK* – was met with multiple responses claiming that the commenter was "transphobic" and "hateful" and unable to "understand words with more than 4 letters in them." I thought that was interesting.

Dr. Walter Bradley lectures on scientific evidence for the creation and design of the universe

February 2, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

This lecture is special to me, because I bought a VHS tape of it from Access Research Network just after I started working full-time, and watched it a million times. A lot of people come to their convictions about God's existence because of parents or church or intuitions, but for me it's all about the scientific evidence. This lecture changed my life. I wish more people taught their children about this evidence! This lecture was delivered at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Bradley received his B.S. in Engineering Science and his Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Texas in Austin.
>
> Dr. Bradley taught for eight years at the Colorado School of Mines before assuming a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1976.
>
> During his 24 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Bradley served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and as Director of the Polymer Technology Center, and received five College of Engineering Research Awards. He has received over $4,500,000 in research grants and has published over 140 technical articles and book chapters. He has also co-authored "The Mystery Of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Materials and of the American Scientific Affiliation and serves as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.
>
> He currently serves as Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University.

The lecture: (63 minutes lecture, 25 minutes audience Q&A)

Summary slide:

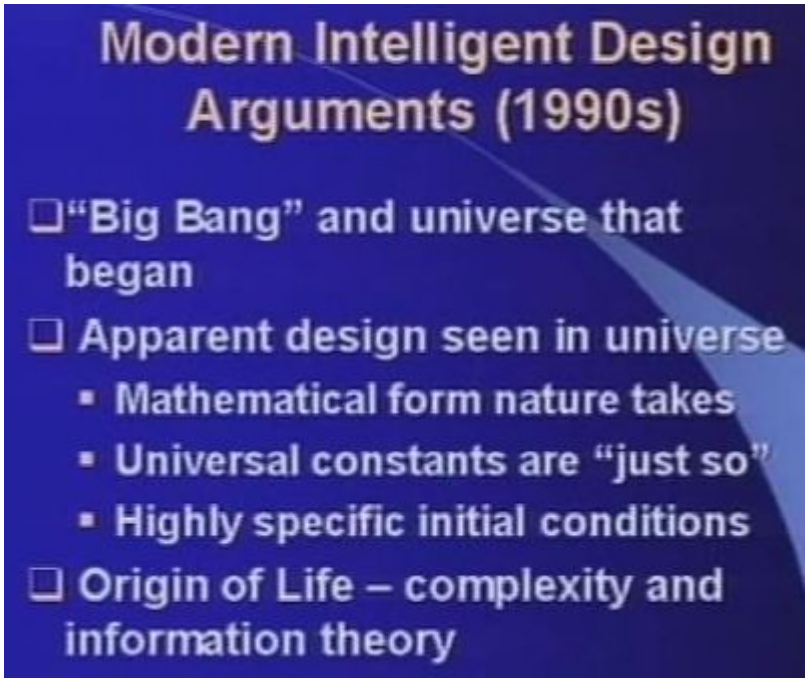

This slide summarizes the content of the lecture

Introduction:

- At the beginning of the 20th century, people believed that the progress of science was pointing away from an intelligent Creator and Designer, and towards naturalism
- A stream of new discoveries has shifted the support of science towards theism, and away from naturalism
- Richard Dawkins, an atheist, says that nature only has the appearance of design, but that if you look closer, naturalistic mechanisms can account for the appearance of design
- When deciding between design and apparent design ("designoid"), it matters whether you think there is an intelligence there to do the designing

Evidence #1: The Big Bang:

- an eternal "steady state" universe is more compatible with naturalism, but a created universe is more compatible with a Creator
- In 1929, Hubble used telescopes to observe that the light from distant galaxies was *redshifted.* The further away galaxies were, the faster they were moving away. Therefore, space is expanding in all directions, suggesting an explosive origin of the universe
- In 1965, the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation matched a prediction of the Big Bang cosmology, and of the creation event
- In 1992, the COBE space telescope allowed us to test four specific predictions of the Big Bang model, especially the predictions for light element abundances (hydrogen and helium), which matched the predictions of the creation model

Evidence #2: Simple mathematical structure of the physical laws

- the simple mathematical structure of natural laws allows us to understand these laws, make discoveries, and engineer solutions to problems
- early scientists saw the mathematical structure of the universe to mean that nature was designed by an intelligent to be understood
- the fundamental equations of the laws of the universe can be easily written on one side of one sheet of paper
- Eugene Wigner's famous paper, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Physical Sciences" makes the point that this simple structure is an unexpected gift that allows is to do science

Evidence #3: fine-tuning of the physical constants and quantities

- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stars that provide energy within specific ranges for long periods of time
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need planets with stable orbits that will not suffer from extreme temperature swings as it varies in distance from its star
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stable atomic structure
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need to have chemical diversity and correct relative abundances of each element
- organic life has minimum requirements: process energy, store information, replicate, and you can't fulfill those functions if there is only one element, e.g. – hydrogen
- the energy level from the photons from the sun have to match the energy levels of the different elements in order to drive the chemical bonding needed for life
- These requirements for life of any imaginable type depend on the values of the constants and quantities. The constants and quantities cannot vary much from what they are, or the universe will lose the characteristics (above) that allow it to support complex life of any imaginable time
- For example, ratio of strong force to electromagnetic force:
  – if 2% larger, then no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no compounds containing hydrogen, e.g. – water
  – if 5% smaller, no stable stars, heavy hydrogen would be unstable, few elements other than hydrogen

Evidence #4: initial conditions for habitability

- Universe: expansion rate of the universe must be fast enough to avoid a re-collapse, but slow enough to allow matter to clump together and form stars and planets for complex life to live on
- Planet: right distance from the star to get the right climate
- Planet: right mass to retain the right atmosphere

Evidence #5: origin of life and information theory

- It’s possible to explain every process in an automobile engine using plain old naturalistic mechanisms – no supernatural explanation is necessary to understand the processes
- But the existence of engine itself: engineering all the parts has to be explained by the work of an intelligence
- Similarly, we can understand how living systems work, but the existence of the living systems requires an intelligence
- Even the simplest living system has to perform minimal function: capture energy, store information and replicate
- Living systems are composed of objects like proteins that are composed of sequences of components complex such that the order of the components gives the overall structure function
- Developing the components for a simple living cell is very improbable – even given the large number of galaxies, stars and planets in the universe, it is unlikely that complex, embodied life would exist *anywhere* in the universe

Evidence #6: more initial conditions for habitability

- Location within the galaxy: you need to be away from the center of the galaxy, because the explosions from dying stars, and excessive radiation will kill life
- Location within the galaxy: you need to be close enough to the center in order catch the heavy elements you need for life from the explosions of other stars
- Location within the galaxy: the best location is between two arms of a spiral galaxy, where you can get the heavy elements you need from dying stars, but without being hit with explosions and harmful radiation
- Star mass: determines rate at which the sun burns, determines the energy level of photons that are used to drive chemical bonding reactions, determines the length of time the star will be stable
- Star mass: star mass must be the correct value in order to allow liquid water on the planet’s surface, while still preserving stable orbit

I wish there was more curiosity about science in churches, and young Christians understood *how critical science is* for grounding the rationality of the Christian worldview. We need to be training up more scientists who think about the big questions, like Dr. Walter Bradley.

Why don’t men go to church anymore? The decline of male church attendance

February 3, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church sucks, that’s why men are bored there

I most recently spent half a year at a PCA church, and then another half a year at a Southern Baptist church. I attended Sunday services as well as Wednesday night Bible study. I am now looking for a new church. For now, I just look around for a sermon I like and listen to that. In this post, I’ll explain why I think men don’t like church.

There are three areas where churches fail to attract men:

1. Apologetics
2. Feminism, sex and marriage
3. Policy and current events

Apologetics

The PCA church discouraged me from becoming a member of the church because they said that conversion to Christianity due to reason and evidence was contrary to their teachings, and a “red flag”. Their words. I didn’t try to fight them on it, because they are Reformed Presbyterian, and this is their actual view. Their approach to apologetics was “pre-suppositional”, which is to say, they try to convince people to become Christians by asking them to assume that the Bible is infallible, without any argumentation or evidence. Naturally, this doesn’t work, so they aren’t trained to answer any serious questions from non-Christians. (1 Pet 3:15-16)

The Reformed Baptist SBC church is led by people like Russell Moore and Al Mohler, who take the “magic words” approach to evangelism. I.e. – they think that people become Christians just by speaking Bible verses out of context to them. So, when the atheist asks

“do you have any evidence for God’s existence?” or “do you have any evidence for Jesus’ resurrection?”, their response is to quote Bible verses to the atheist, which have nothing to do with those topics. Christianity has lost so much influence in the culture under their approach, which is not even Biblical. (Mat 12:38–41)

These approaches to evangelism are not used in any other area of human endeavor. No one replies to questions about auto mechanics, or software engineering, or gardening, or cooking, by spouting Bible verses. In literally every other area of human endeavor, the laws of logic and supporting evidence are seen as assets when making claims to know something about the world to someone who disagrees with you.

Feminism, Sex and Marriage

First wave feminism simply asked for women to be given the same liberty and opportunity as men. That was good. But later versions of destroyed all distinctions between men and women. By destroying femininity, feminism directed women away from the traditional life plan of marriage, children and home-making.

Feminism changed how women voted. Today, about 75% of young, unmarried women vote for policies like taxpayer-funded birth control, taxpayer-funded abortion, no-fault divorce, affirmative action for women in schools and in the workplace, taxpayer-funded daycare, public schools, single-mother welfare, social security, etc. These policies and programs raised tax rates, and grew government, making it easier for women to have children without having to choose a marriage-ready man she wasn’t attracted to. Instead, she could choose men she was attracted to, and just use government programs as a substitute provider if it didn’t “work out”. Thanks to feminism, we have a 42% out-of-wedlock birth rate, and it’s rising. Few female college graduates are debt-free. About 5% of women emerge from college as virgins.

Under feminism, the traditional male roles and virtues were deemed “sexist”. Women were shamed for choosing early marriage, large families, and stable men who were good at being husbands and fathers. Instead, women today chose men based on appearance. They spend their 20s and early 30s giving men who will not commit to them premarital sex. The men who are getting sex thrown at them have no interest in Judeo-Christian values, chastity, fidelity, commitment or raising children. Women mistake the men’s willingness to have sex and cohabitate as signs that they are close to marriage. But in fact, chasing the hot bad boys just eats up the chastity, youth and beauty that could have made them interesting to the marriage-minded men they scorned. Later on, they realize that they’ve wasted their 20s on bad boys, but by then they are not attractive for marriage.

What has the response been to feminism from pastors and churches? They accept the anti-male, anti-marriage policies, that came out of feminism. They accept the promiscuity, and the marriage-delaying that came from feminism. Today, pastors just try to bully the men who were passed over to marry the women who had previously rejected them, despite the higher risk of divorce caused by the women’s past behavior.

Policy and current events

Most pastors are anti-intellectual, and they believe that this is a virtue, since they are focused narrowly on what the Bible explicitly says. Because of this, they aren't able to understand which laws and policies allow Christianity and Christian families to flourish. I agree that what the Bible speaks about is of the highest importance. But we need to understand how to achieve the goals that the Bible states, as well as how to counter the forces that threaten the achievement of those goals.

For example, Christianity thrives when marriage thrives. Christianity is passed on from parents to children. Anything that threatens marriage, or interferes with parental authority, weakens the influence of Christianity. So, policies like higher taxes, no-fault divorce, SOGI laws, all harm the Christian family, while policies like lower taxes, protections for Christian businesses, protection for Christian schools (statements of faith, moral codes), etc. are all good for Christian families. But most pastors never talk about policies or laws, because they don't think about how to defend the Christian worldview, how to educate Christian children, how to promote marriage, how promote Christian moral values in the public square. Even protecting the right to life of unborn children is ignored.

As the churches lose relevance, it becomes tempting for pastors to accept what the secular left promotes as good and true and beautiful. The big one is pastors pushing for redistribution of wealth by the secular government as a solution to "poverty", even though the Bible only sanctions voluntary charity. This diminishes the cultural relevance of the church and elevates the secular government. SBC leaders like Russell Moore champion amnesty for refugees and unskilled illegal immigrants, not realizing how it will harm Christian institutions and values down the road to import large numbers of people who will eventually vote for policies like higher taxes, bigger government, etc.

If unborn babies don’t have consciousness or don’t feel pain, may we kill them?

February 4, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about pro-life apologetics

Was having a conversation by e-mail yesterday with a pro-abortion atheist, and he gave two reasons why he supported abortion in the first and second trimester. First, he said that unborn babies can’t feel pain, so it’s OK to kill them. Second, he said that unborn babies don’t have consciousness, so it’s OK to kill them. I thought it might be useful to link to something that answers both of these objections.

Frank Beckwith is the author of “Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice“, which was published by Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote four easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal. Part IV is the one that has the response to the two questions raised by my atheist friend.

Part I. The Appeal to Pity

Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem

Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?

Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Excerpt:

> Some ethicists argue that the unborn becomes fully human sometime after brain development has begun, when it becomes sentient: capable of experiencing

sensations such as pain. The reason for choosing sentience as the criterion is that a being that cannot experience anything (i.e., a presentient unborn entity) cannot be harmed. Of course, if this position is correct, then the unborn becomes fully human probably during the second trimester and at least by the third trimester. Therefore, one does not violate anyone's rights when one aborts a nonsentient unborn entity. [13]

There are several problems with this argument. First, it confuses harm with hurt and the experience of harm with the reality of harm. [14] One can be harmed without experiencing the hurt that sometimes follows from that harm, and which we often mistake for the harm itself. For example, a temporarily comatose person who is suffocated to death "experiences no harm," but he is nevertheless harmed. Hence, one does not have to experience harm, which is sometimes manifested in hurt, in order to be truly harmed.

Second, if sentience is the criterion of full humanness, then the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping would all have to be declared nonpersons. Like the presentient unborn, these individuals are all at the moment nonsentient though they have the natural inherent capacity to be sentient. Yet to countenance their executions would be morally reprehensible. Therefore, one cannot countenance the execution of some unborn entities simply because they are not currently sentient.

Someone may reply that while these objections make important points, there is a problem of false analogy in the second objection: the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping once functioned as sentient beings, though they are now in a temporary state of nonsentience. The presentient unborn, on the other hand, were never sentient. Hence, one is fully human if one was sentient "in the past" and will probably become sentient again in the future, but this cannot be said of the presentient unborn.

There are at least three problems with this response. First, to claim that a person can be sentient, become nonsentient, and then return to sentience is to assume there is some underlying personal unity to this individual that enables us to say that the person who has returned to sentience is the same person who was sentient prior to becoming nonsentient. But this would mean that sentience is not a necessary condition for personhood. (Neither is it a sufficient condition, for that matter, since nonhuman animals are sentient.) Consequently, it does not make sense to say that a person comes into existence when sentience arises, but it does make sense to say that a fully human entity is a person who has the natural inherent capacity to give rise to sentience. A presentient unborn human entity does have this capacity. Therefore, an ordinary unborn human entity is a person, and hence, fully human.

Second, Ray points out that this attempt to exclude many of the unborn from the class of the fully human is "ad hoc and counterintuitive." He asks us to "consider

> the treatment of comatose patients. We would not discriminate against one merely for rarely or never having been sentient in the past while another otherwise comparable patient had been sentient….In such cases, potential counts for everything." [15]
>
> Third, why should sentience "in the past" be the decisive factor in deciding whether an entity is fully human when the presentient human being "is one with a natural, inherent capacity for performing personal acts?" [16] Since we have already seen that one does not have to experience harm in order to be harmed, it seems more consistent with our moral sensibilities to assert that what makes it wrong to kill the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, the momentarily unconscious, and the presentient unborn is that they all possess the natural inherent capacity to perform personal acts. And what makes it morally right to kill plants and to pull the plug on the respirator-dependent brain dead, who were sentient "in the past," is that their deaths cannot deprive them of their natural inherent capacity to function as persons, since they do not possess such a capacity.

These four essays are a very good introduction to common responses to pro-abortion arguments. I recommend that people get familiar with this, as once you look into it, you will see that the abortion issue can be debated with as much confidence as William Lane Craig defends Christian theism. You will have the same access to scientific evidence and rational arguments on this topic, and so you will have the upper hand. And that's fun.

The best introductory book on the abortion / right to life issue is "The Case for Life" by pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf. The best comprehensive book is a tie between "The Ethics of Abortion" by Christopher Kaczor, and Frank Beckwith's "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice".

Senate Democrats block legislation protecting babies from being killed after birth

February 5, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What does it really mean to be "pro-choice" on abortion?

A lot of conservatives complain that Republicans don't pass enough pro-life legislation when they hold the House, Senate and White House. The truth is, the House Republicans DID pass some pro-life legislation from 2016-2018. Some of it got signed into law, but most of it died in the Senate, because of the Democrats.

The Washington Times reports on a bill – Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act – that just died in the Senate:

> An effort by Senate Republicans to enhance protections for newborns who survive abortions, spurred by New York and Virginia bills making it easier to perform late-term procedures, was blocked Monday by Democrats.
>
> […]"There are only two sides of the debate on the floor debate tonight: You're either for babies, or you're defending infanticide," said Mr. Sasse in his floor speech. "That is actually what the legislation is that's before us."
>
> […]The Sasse bill would require medical practitioners caring for infants born alive after botched abortions to "exercise the same degree of professional skill and care to protect the newborn as would be offered to any other child born alive at the same gestational age."
>
> "It also requires that the living child, after appropriate care has been given, be immediately transported and admitted to a hospital," said the Sasse press release. "Currently federal law does not adequately protect a born child who

> survives an abortion."

Unfortunately for the little babies, the bill did not pass:

> Republicans said they would keep pressing for the bill, while pro-life groups denounced Democrats for standing in the way of the legislation.
>
> "Senate Democrats had the chance today to prove they are not the party of infanticide, and instead they doubled down on extremism," said Susan B. Anthony List President Marjorie Dannenfelser.

It's not unreasonable to request expedited processing for a bill that ought to pass unanimously. After all, who would vote against a born baby?

Here's what "moderate" Democrat Dianne Feinstein had to say about infanticide:

> Sen. Dianne Feinstein, California Democrat, blasted the Sasse bill as "just the latest attack in the decades-long Republican effort to eliminate a woman's right to control her own body."

So, you make a bill outlawing infanticide, and 40 Republican senators co-sponsor it. But the bill dies anyway, because Democrats won't support it.

The abortion debate was never about weeks or months or viability. Talking about when an unborn baby becomes a human being was just a rhetorical smokescreen to dehumanize unborn children, the same way that skin color was used to dehumanize slaves. Democrats always knew that unborn babies were human beings at every moment during pregnancy. They're strong. The baby is weak. The baby is in their way. Who cares about reason and evidence? Who cares about right and wrong? If something gets in your way, just kill it, and then silence anyone who makes you feel bad about your selfishness.

I would be very careful about electing people who are willing to kill innocent children who get in the way of their pleasure-seeking. If they aren't willing to control their hedonism to protect innocent children, they certainly aren't going to put the brakes on for you.

Atheist Lawrence Krauss offers the best argument against Christianity

February 6, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Richard Dawkins on atheism, morality, free will and human rights
Although there are some pretty smart atheists out there, none is smarter than the venerable Lawrence Krauss. Well, Krauss has been thinking about atheism quite a bit since his debate with William Lane Craig, and he's come up with an argument that simply can't be defeated.

Buzzfeed reports on Krauss' new argument against Christian theism:

> **When Melody Hensley** first met Lawrence Krauss, she was a 29-year-old makeup artist at a department store, and he was one of her intellectual idols. She ran an atheist website in her spare time and had just started volunteering for the Center for Inquiry (CFI), a nonprofit group committed to promoting science and reason above faith. She was hoping to build a career in the burgeoning "skeptics" movement, and Krauss was one of its brightest luminaries.
>
> At a CFI event in November 2006, Krauss asked Hensley for her card, and later, as she was leaving, asked her if she was "of age." She brushed off the odd question, excited to meet a star skeptic. When he later emailed to invite her to dinner, she accepted.
>
> "I didn't care if he flirted with me, I just wanted to be around somebody important, and I also wanted to get a job in this field," Hensley told BuzzFeed News. "I thought I could handle myself."
>
> They made a plan to eat in the restaurant at the Washington, DC, hotel where Krauss was staying, Hensley recalled. But first he asked her to come up to his room while he wrapped up some work. He seemed in no rush to leave, she said, ordering a cheese plate and later champagne, despite her suggestion that they go down to dinner.
>
> Then, Hensley said, Krauss made a comment about her eye makeup, and got very close to her face. Suddenly, he lifted her by the arms and pushed her onto the bed beneath him, forcibly kissing her and trying to pull down the crotch of her tights. Hensley said she struggled to push him off. When he pulled out a condom, Hensley said, she got out from under him, said "I have to go," and rushed out of the room.
>
> Krauss told BuzzFeed News that what happened with Hensley in the hotel room was consensual. In that room, "we mutually decided, in a polite discussion in fact, that taking it any further would not be appropriate," he told BuzzFeed News by email.

> But Hensley said that is untrue. “It was definitely predatory,” she said. “I didn’t want that to happen. It wasn’t consensual.”

The argument is supported by many interlocking evidences from different fields of study:

> BuzzFeed News has learned that the incident with Hensley is one of many wide-ranging allegations of Krauss’s inappropriate behavior over the last decade — including groping women, ogling and making sexist jokes to undergrads, and telling an employee at Arizona State University, where he is a tenured professor, that he was going to buy her birth control so she didn’t inconvenience him with maternity leave. In response to complaints, two institutions — Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, and the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, Ontario — have quietly restricted him from their campuses. Our reporting is based on official university documents, emails, and interviews with more than 50 people.

So, here is how the argument goes formally:

Premise 1. If Christianity is true, then sex outside of a natural marriage is wrong.

Premise 2. Sex outside of a natural marriage is not wrong.

Conclusion: Therefore, Christian theism is not true. (MT)

This argument seems to hold a lot of sway with many atheists, like Richard Dawkins, Richard Carrier, Michael Shermer, and so on. Pretty much everyone who makes a career out of disproving Christianity is familiar with this powerful argument.

Although this is an excellent argument (I call it the argument from immorality), it should be noted that it is not a new argument at all. It’s actually discussed in the Bible of all places, in Romans chapter 1.

Romans 1:18-25:

> [18] The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,
>
> [19] since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.
>
> [20] For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.
>
> [21] For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.
>
> [22] Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools
>
> [23] and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.
>
> [24] Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

> [25] They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised.Amen.

In my experience, atheists reject the evidence for Christianity because they don't want the moral changes that come with Christianity. Even the atheists I know who claim to be "moral" nevertheless promote immorality through their political actions, voting for a world where moral evils like abortion and pedophilia cannot be judged. They also vote to suppress the disagreement of Christians, and celebrate when the state silences Christian expressions of disapproval for immorality. Actions tell what is going on much more than words.

UPDATE:

New York Times: Arizona State Suspends Lawrence Krauss During Inquiry Over Sexual Misconduct Accusations

Gizmodo: Science Organizations Cancel Lawrence Krauss Events After Sexual Harassment Allegations

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Democrat senator imposes religious test to disqualify Trump judicial nominee

February 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Court of Appeals nominee Neomi Rao

If you listened to the state of the union on Tuesday night, you heard about some very good results that the Trump administration has produced. I disagreed with some of his policies, especially the infrastructure spending. But one thing Trump has done wasn't emphasized enough: nominating conservative judges.

Unfortunately for Trump, the Democrats are doing everything they can to block his judicial nominations. And they are even trying to discredit them because of their religious convictions.

The Daily Signal reports:

> The Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday held its first judicial confirmation hearing of the year for Neomi Rao, who is President Donald Trump's nominee for the vacancy left by new Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.
>
> […]The daughter of Indian immigrants, Rao is a graduate of Yale University and the University of Chicago Law School. After graduation, she clerked for Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit and for Thomas on the Supreme Court.
>
> She then served in the White House Counsel's Office under President George W. Bush and on the Senate Judiciary Committee as counsel to then-Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah.
>
> Since 2006, Rao has been a faculty member at the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University, where she focused on administrative and constitutional law.

Sounds like a pretty good resume. And she is conservative, too. Republicans need to nominate conservative women and conservative visible minorities in order to destroy the false narrative pushed by the secular left that Republicans are “racist” and “sexist”. And it’s for exactly that reason – to preserve their false narrative – that Democrats attack female and minority conservatives the hardest.

Here are some of the attacks against Rao:

> Several senators brought up an article Rao wrote about date rape while she was an undergraduate at Yale. In the article, she suggested that women should take measures to avoid becoming victims.
>
> Sens. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., and Kamala Harris, D-Calif., both implied that Rao was placing the blame on victims rather than on rapists. Rao clarified—several times—that she was simply advocating commonsense steps young women on campus could take to avoid becoming a victim. Chief among them is not excessively drinking alcohol.
>
> It’s the same advice her mother gave her, she said, and it’s what she tells her children today. Rao clearly stated that the blame for a horrendous crime such as rape always lies with the perpetrator and never with the victim.

So now, telling women to be responsible with alcohol consumption is a disqualification for being nominated as a judge. Because you can’t give women any advice about how to live wisely – that’s “anti-women”. It’s anti-women to warn women about the possible consequences of their choices? Democrats say it is.

PJ Media reports on some especially troubling questioning from Cory “I’m Spartacus” Booker.

Here’s the video:

Here’s the text:

> Booker seized on Rao’s 2008 article opposing the Supreme Court decision Lawrence v. Texas, which decriminalized homosexual activity. He then directly asked her, “Are gay relationships in your opinion immoral?”
>
> “I am not sure the relevance of that,” Rao responded.
>
> “Do you think gay relationships are immoral?” he continued.
>
> “I do not,” Rao said.
>
> “Do you believe they are a sin?” Booker pressed.
>
> “My personal views on any of these subjects are things I would put to one side,” the nominee said.
>
> “So you’re not willing to say whether you believe it is sinful for a man — for two men — to be married?” the senator pressed once again.
>
> “No,” Rao responded.
>
> “Excuse me?” Booker said.

> “My response is that these personal views are ones that I would put to one side. Whatever my personal views are on the subject, I would faithfully follow the precedent of the Supreme Court,” the nominee said.

Disgusting. It’s like the Spanish Inquisition, except from the secular left. Democrats think that if you are a religious Jew, Muslim or Christian, then the Democrats don’t thin that you can serve effectively as a judge. The only morality that is acceptable to them is based on secularism and leftism. And this happened in America, where we the right to be religous in our Constitution.

Senator Ted Cruz came to the defense of Rao:

Cruz said:

> The Senate Judiciary Committee should not be a theater for mischaracterizing or twisting nominees’ records or views. Nor should it be an avenue for persecution.
>
> We’ve seen a growing pattern among Senate Democrats of hostility to religious faith. I have to say I was deeply troubled a few minutes ago to hear questioning of a nominee, asking your personal views on what is sinful.
>
> In my view that has no business in this committee. **Article Six of the Constitution says there should be no religious test for any public office**. We have also seen Senate Democrats attack what they have characterized as religious dogma. We’ve seen Senate Democrats attack nominees for their own personal views on salvation.
>
> I don’t believe this is a theological court of inquisition. I think the proper avenue of investigation is a nominee’s record. So Ms Rao, let me talk about your record. Let me ask you about your actual record, which is what this committee should be looking at, not our own personal religious views or your religious views, whatever they may be.

Remember since isn’t the first time this has happened – they did the same thing with Amy Barrett, telling her that her Catholic dogma was unacceptable in a judge.

Should big government socialists take over the free enterprise system?

February 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has some ideas about proper economic policy

Why did so many people vote for communist regimes in the last hundred years? Communist leaders – who had no demonstrated achievements in economic policy – simply promised voters all sorts of free stuff, e.g. – a guaranteed job, free health care, paid retirement, etc. When the expected benefits didn't appear, the communist leaders blamed others for their failures, and naturally, those others had to die.

Think that couldn't happen here? Well, a lot of leading Democrats sure sound like communist leaders. Promising to confiscate legally-owned firearms. Promising to abolish private health insurance. Promising to nationalize private retirement accounts. And promising to replace our current energy industry with a new government-controlled green energy industry.

Let's look at that last one: the new government-controlled energy industry.

The Federalist reports on the Green New Deal plan.

> A number of Democratic Party presidential hopefuls — including Cory Booker, Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, Kirsten Gillibrand, Julián Castro, and Beto O'Rourke, for starters — have already endorsed or expressed support for the "Green New Deal" (GND). Today, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Edward J. Markey dropped details about her plan.
>
> […]While some of the specifics need to be ironed out, the plan's authors assure that this "massive transformation of our society" needs some "clear goals and a timeline." The timeline is ten years. Here are some of the goals:

- **Ban affordable energy.** GND calls for the elimination of all fossil fuel energy production, the lifeblood of American industry and life, which

includes not only all oil but also natural gas — one of the cheapest sources of American energy, and one of the reasons the United States has been able to lead the world in carbon-emissions reduction.

- **Eliminate nuclear energy.** The GND also calls for eliminating all nuclear power, one of the only productive and somewhat affordable "clean" energy sources available to us, in 11 years. This move would purge around 20 percent of American energy production so you can rely on intermittent wind for your energy needs.

- **Eliminate 99 percent of cars.** The authors state that the GND would like to replace every "combustion-engine vehicle" — trucks, airplanes, boats, and 99 percent of cars — within ten years. Charging stations for electric vehicles will be built "everywhere," though how power plants will provide the energy needed to charge them is a mystery.

- **Gut and rebuild every building in America.** Markey and Cortez want to "retrofit every building in America" with "state of the art energy efficiency." I repeat, "every building in America." That includes every home, factory, and apartment building, which will all need, for starters, to have their entire working heating and cooling systems ripped out and replaced with…well, with whatever technology Democrats are going invent in their committee hearings, I guess.

- **Eliminate air travel.** GND calls for building out "highspeed rail at a scale where air travel stops becoming necessary."

- **A government-guaranteed job.** The bill promises the United States government will provide every single American with a job that includes a "family-sustaining wage, family and medical leave, vacations, and a pension." You can imagine that those left in the private sector would be funding these through some unspecified "massive" taxation.

- **Free education for life.** GND promises free college or trade schools for every American.

- **A salubrious diet.** The GND promises the government will provide "healthy food" to every American.

- **A house.** The GND promises that the government will provide, "safe, affordable, adequate housing" for every American citizen.

- **Free money.** The GND aims to provide, and I am not making this up, "economic security" for all who are "unable or unwilling" to work.

> **Ban meat.** Ocasio-Cortez admits that we can't get zero emissions in 10 years "because we aren't sure that we'll be able to fully get rid of farting cows and airplanes that fast." The only way to get rid of farting cows is to get rid of beef.

Have any of these ideas been tried in any states? Trains seem to run over budget when they are built, and they fail to turn a profit afterwards. But most of these have not been tried anywhere, so how are we supposed to know how much they will cost to implement, and whether they will actually work?

Now, you might be wondering where the dancing bartender will get all the money for these plans. After all, the cost of the Green New Deal has been figured at $49 trillion over the first 10 years. (And that's in addition to the government takeover of healthcare "Medicare for All", which costs $32 trillion over 10 years). She's going to have to take it from someone… maybe from the top earners?

Just one problem with that:

> The plan itself seems to insinuate that billionaires can pay for the whole thing. Of course, best case scenario, it is estimated that instituting a top marginal tax rate of 70 percent would raise a little more than $700 billion over that decade.

Are you beginning to see where the 100 million murders by government came from? When a plan fails to work as promised, what will the communist leaders do? Will they say that communism has failed, and step down from power? Or will they find people to blame for their failures, in order to stay in power? Historically speaking, it's always been the latter. You can even see how it happens today, in places like North Korea and Venezuela.

From "The Black Book of Communism", (Harvard University Press: 1997)

The Road to Serfdom

I want to recommend to everyone a famous book about how socialism leads to mass murder by government. The book is written by Nobel prize winner F. A. Hayek. This is one of my favorite books on economics. The full PDF of the book is available for download on archive.org.

The audio version is available FOR FREE on YouTube:

Outline:

- 00:17 Foreword
- 37:58 Preface
- 41:51 Preface 1976
- 50:09 Introduction
- 1:08:46 Ch1 The Abandoned Road
- 1:37:31 Ch2 The Great Utopia
- 1:54:46 Ch3 Individualism and Collectivism
- 2:18:32 Ch4 The Inevitability of Planning
- 2:45:52 Ch5 Planning and Democracy
- 3:20:06 Ch6 Planning and the Rule of Law
- 3:54:33 Ch7 Economic Control and Totalitarianism
- 4:23:01 Ch8 Who, Whom
- 5:00:49 Ch9 Security and Freedom
- 5:31:27 Ch10 Why the Worst Get On Top
- 6:11:01 Ch11 The End of Truth
- 6:38:41 Ch12 The Socialist Roots of Nazism
- 7:09:40 Ch13 The Totalitarians in Our Midst
- 7:54:43 Ch14 Material Conditions and Ideal Ends
- 8:33:17 Ch15 The Prospects of International Order
- 9:14:55 Ch16 Conclusion

All you need is 8.5 hours to listen to it. You won't regret it, I promise. I have listened to the audiobook at least a dozen times. If that's too long, there is a condensed version of the book.

They Hayek Center talks about condensed version of the book:

> Max Eastman and the editors of *Reader's Digest* wrote the condensed version of Friedrich Hayek's "The Road to Serfdom" (pdf), which was read by millions of Americans at home and by servicemen all of the world when it was published in April of 1945. It was the *Reader's Digest* condensed version which turned Hayek's little book into an American sensation — and Hayek into a public celebrity. *The Reader's Digest* had a circulation at the time of more the 5 million copies, and the little journal was provided to each American serviceman, at home and abroad.

> […]An additional 600,000 copies of the condensed version were later printed and distributed through the Book of the Month club and by non-profit civic groups.

Can you imagine what it would have been like to live at a time where everyone clearly understood the danger of letting government administrators centrally plan an economy? But the new generation of young Americans have lost that knowledge, and they are voting for the people who will lead them down the road to serfdom.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

February 9, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight
Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.

4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates
- You didn't need to come out on this cold night
- Craig's arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn't listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don't require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that "every effect requires a cause"
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can't see

- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn’t have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It’s too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It’s self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That’s why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg’s own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity (“I”) is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg’s responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it’s not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It’s that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the

majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said. Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the

fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Bible study: what difference does the resurrection of Jesus make?

February 10, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here's an article from Bible.org, written by famous New Testament manuscript expert Dan Wallace. (H/T Eric Chabot, Ratio Christi OSU)

There is a lot in this article, but I'll just snip out one that I think is interesting.

First, what does the Old Testament say about the doctrine of the resurrection in Judaism?

> The resurrection of the dead was not *plainly* revealed in the OT until very late in salvation history. It was not until the Jews were taken in captivity, in the sixth century BC, that this was clearly articulated. Daniel 12:1-2 is the principal text: it speaks of the resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous:
>
> At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (RSV)
>
> Why was it not *clearly* revealed till then? It was not revealed until there was a *felt* need for it. When the Jews had no present (because of the captivity) they had to look to the future. The revelation of the resurrection came at precisely the time when the people of God needed *hope* for the future.
>
> What is significant about this is how masterful are God's insights into human nature. In the NT era, one religious group in Palestine did not embrace the

> resurrection as a true doctrine: the Sadducees (cf. Mark 12:18)–that is why they were "sad, you see!" The Sadducees were in charge of the temple. They derived their income from the sacrifices. In a sense, they were the precursors to modern TV evangelists. They had it good! They were the rich aristocracy that ran the place.
>
> **Those who have it good in this life don't often long for the next. The Sadducees illustrate this. The resurrection is a truth especially precious to those who are poor and those who are hopeless. It is precious to those who long for heaven enough that earth holds no sway over them.**

This means something to me. I didn't grow up with parents who had any plan for me. I had to figure out what I was supposed to be doing with my life on my own, because they were both too busy doing their own things. This is true even to this day. After I became a Christian, there were many things that I wanted to achieve in this life. But for a variety of reasons, those most of those things never happened. I wanted to do great things for God, like getting married, having a family, getting a PhD and teaching computer science in a secular university. But things that I had intended to do for God just didn't happen the way I had hoped.

I often find myself thinking of Heaven, and having that eternal perspective on this life. One of the things that is the hardest to accept is that being a Christian makes many things I'd like to do a lot harder. It certainly didn't open any doors at school, or now, at work. I'm glad my salvation doesn't depend on achieving anything in particular. And I'm especially glad that my salvation doesn't depend on what anyone thinks of me. I find it almost impossible in this culture to get any respect by doing the things that I think are really important.

I think if a person were really successful at what they tried to do, then it would be really hard for them to give up living and go to be with Jesus. That's not a problem for me, though. If fact, if the resurrection were not true, then I wouldn't be able to say that my life was a very good life, measuring success the way people do.

The resurrection teaches correct apologetics methodology

Did you know that Jesus provided the resurrection as evidence for those who were skeptical of his claims to be God stepping into history?

Here's an article from Got Questions? on the "Sign of Jonah", which appears in the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

It says:

> The phrase "sign of Jonah" was used by Jesus as a typological metaphor for His future crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Jesus answered with this expression when asked by the Pharisees for miraculous proof the He was indeed the Messiah. The Pharisees remained unconvinced of Jesus' claims about Himself, despite His having just cured a demon-possessed man who was both blind and mute. Shortly after the Pharisees accused Jesus of driving out demons by the

> power of Satan, they said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.” He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here” (Matthew 12:38–41).
>
> To fully appreciate the answer that Jesus gave, we must go to the Old Testament book of Jonah. In its first chapter, we read that God commanded the prophet Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and warn its people that He was going to destroy it for its wickedness. Jonah disobediently ran from the Lord and headed for the city of Tarshish by boat. The Lord then sent a severe storm that caused the crew of the ship to fear for their lives. Jonah was soon thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish where he remained for “three days and three nights” (Jonah 1:15–17). After the three-day period, the Lord caused the great fish to vomit Jonah out onto dry land (Jonah 2:10).
>
> It is this three days that Jesus was referring to when He spoke of the sign of Jonah.

I often bring up the Sign of Jonah when I am dealing with Christians who don’t want to learn how to explain their faith to non-Christians persuasively. I’m glad that story is in there!

The resurrection is a very important part of the life of the Christian. I argued in this post that it makes a difference to your feelings about your own life, and it makes a difference to your case-making with non-Christians.

UK police ignore underage sex-trafficking to focus on policing people's thoughts

February 11, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scotland Police has time for monitoring social media

By now most people have heard about how gangs of Middle Eastern immigrants formed sex-trafficking rings in the UK. Some of the girls and/or their mothers went to the UK police for help, but the UK police wouldn't do anything because the sex-traffickers were men of Middle Eastern descent. They didn't want to be accused of "racism" for protecting underage fatherless white girls from gang-rape.

So, what are the UK police up to instead? Well, their top priority is policing people's speech and even their thoughts.

The UK Daily Mail report on a recent incident:

> A mother was arrested in front of her children and locked up for seven hours after referring to a transgender woman as a man online.
>
> Three officers detained Kate Scottow at her home before quizzing her at a police station about an argument with an activist on Twitter over so-called 'deadnaming'.
>
> The 38-year-old, from Hitchin, Hertfordshire, had her photograph, DNA and fingerprints taken and remains under investigation.
>
> More than two months after her arrest on December 1, she has had neither her mobile phone or laptop returned…
>
> […]Writing on online forum Mumsnet, Mrs Scottow – who has also been served with a court order that bans her from referring to her accuser as a man – claimed: 'I was arrested in my home by three officers, with my autistic ten-year-old daughter and breastfed 20-month-old son present.
>
> 'I was then detained for seven hours in a cell with no sanitary products (which I said I needed) before being interviewed then later released under investigation … I was arrested for harassment and malicious communications because I called

> someone out and misgendered them on Twitter.'

They needed three police officers to arrest this dangerous criminal, to let her neighbors know how dangerous her hate speech was.

Does this happen a lot in the UK? Well, you just have to go back a few weeks to find another case.

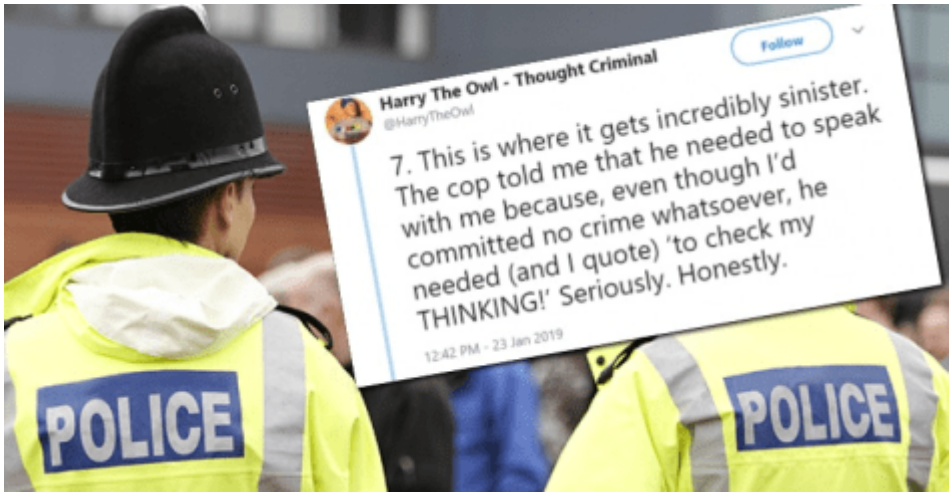

Limericks are illegal in the UK, if they make people feels sad

Here is the UK Telegraph to report on another recent incident:

> A docker from Humberside has been investigated by police over a limerick he posted on Twitter after an officer claimed it constitutes a 'hate incident' against transgender people.
>
> Harry Miller, 53, from Lincoln was contacted on Wednesday by a community cohesion officer following a complaint that had been made about the plant and machinery dealer's social media posts.
>
> Citing 30 potentially offensive tweets, the PC singled out a limerick Mr Miller had retweeted which questioned whether transgender women are biological women.
>
> […]Even though no crime was committed, sharing the limerick online was recorded as a 'hate incident'.
>
> […]After Mr Miller questioned why the complainant was being described as a "victim" if no crime had been committed, the officer told him: "We need to check your thinking".

The fact is, having the police show up at your door to investigate you is a daily occurrence in the UK. They need to do this intimidation and harassment, so that the other taxpayers who pay their salaries understand that their speech is being monitored.

But if police resources are being dedicated to policing other people's thoughts, then some other crimes won't get any attention from police.

UK police ignore underage sex-trafficking

What kinds of crimes might be ignored by the UK police, because they are busy policing Twitter tweets that make people feel sad?

The UK Daily Mail reports:

> A victim of the ring said she was ‘let down’ by police and the Crown Prosecution Service because the issue of [Middle Eastern immigrant] gangs grooming young white girls was ‘unheard of’ at the time.
>
> The girl, who was 15 when she was targeted by the gang, reported the abuse to police in August 2008 but the CPS decided not to prosecute because they did not believe a jury would find her ‘credible’.

The Evening Standard reports:

> Police and council leaders today apologised for their failings as a gang of paedophiles was convicted at the Old Bailey of serial abuse of schoolgirls while in care.

> The girls, some as young as 11, were drugged, raped, trafficked and used as prostitutes while supposedly in the safe-keeping of the local authority in Oxford.
>
> […]**Today five men of Pakistani origin and two from North Africa were convicted of more than 40 charges spanning eight years.**
>
> […]The charges involved six girls between the ages of 11 and 15 who were abused over nine years in the Cowley area of Oxford.
>
> […]Girl D told how, at the age of 11, she was branded with a heated hairpin by a trafficker and loaned to other abusers for £600 an hour.
>
> Over five years she was repeatedly raped by large groups of men in what she described as “torture sex”.
>
> […]**Another victim, Girl A, complained of her plight to police on two occasions but no one was charged.**

In the UK, being yourself and expressing yourself is a crime, because it’s important that people on the left don’t have their feelings hurt.

Keep in mind what the secular left is doing in other countries now, because these will be the policies of the Democrat Party 5-10 years down the road. We have to learn what the Democrats are planning by looking at what the secular leftists are doing in countries where they are the majority. There isn’t a Democrat politician in the USA who doesn’t agree 100% with these UK policies.

Lori Alexander is right: serious Christian men prefer debt-free virgins without tattoos

February 12, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

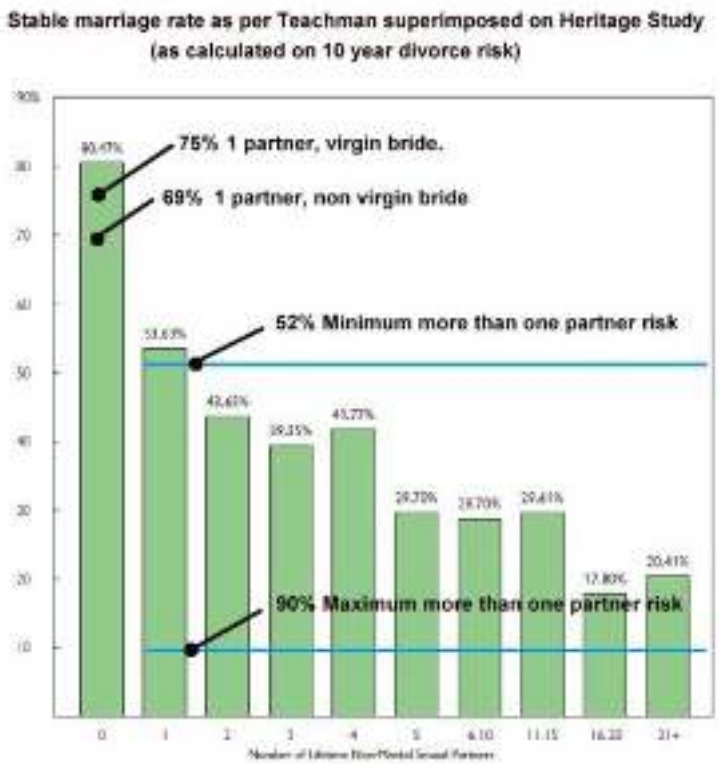

Marriage stability vs sexual partners,(Teachman et al. JAMF, August 2010)

Christian writer Lori Alexander recently wrote a blog post (H/T Lindsay) urging Christian women to do 3 things:

1. be a virgin before marriage
2. be debt-free before marriage
3. don't get any tattoos

She also urged women to be cautious about college, because it often gets them into debt. I disagree with her a little here. I always urge young women to earn a STEM degree in college, then work a few years to pay off their loans (if any) before marrying. This is because women, like men, need to have the experience of doing something hard that they don't "feel" like doing, in order to grow. STEM degrees teach young people that the world doesn't revolve around them, and that their feelings don't matter when trying to solve a problem in the real world. It's a very useful way for women and men to break themselves out of the desire for free and easy happiness that is so common in our time.

Lori's article drew enormous opposition from both secular and Christian sources. So far, the only people defending her are men's rights sites, like Dalrock (Christian) and Spawny (non-Christian). Every other "Christian" blog or news site that I read disagreed her article, and argued that premarital sex was no big deal, that having debt was no big deal, and

that having tattoos was no big deal.

Let's take a look at her three points, then I'll explain why her article is largely correct, and why she is correct about what she asserts about the criteria that godly men have for women.

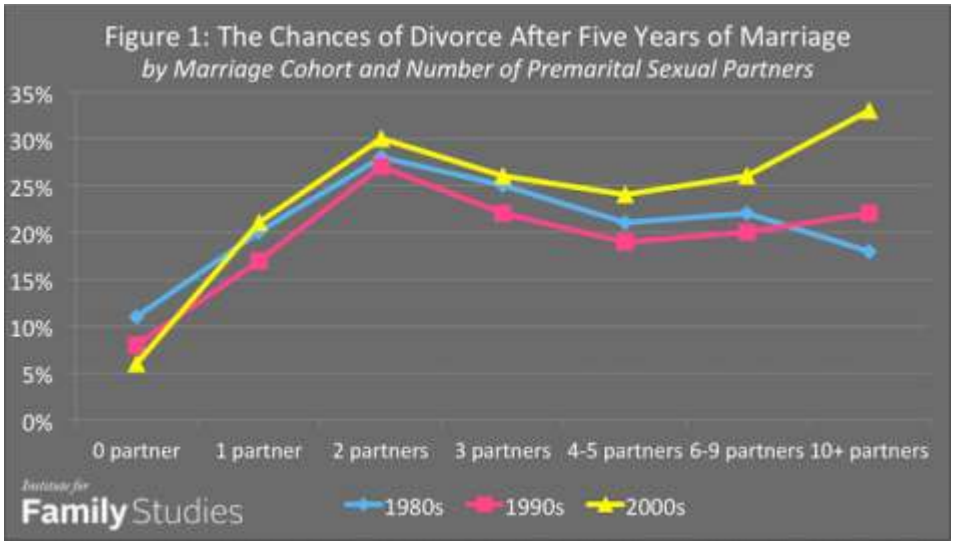

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

Virginity

Regarding her first point, virginity is commanded by the Bible, it's in line with peer-reviewed studies on marriage quality and stability. The reason that people find this difficult is that they want the freedom to give in to sexual desires without feeling shame. They want to believe that there is no permanent effect. It doesn't help that parents and pastors are terrified of telling young people, and young women in particular, that promiscuity harms marital stability. Right now, the culture is drowning in feminism. Feminism tells women that the traditional male roles of provider, protector, and spiritual leader are "sexist". The "best" men are good-looking pro-abortion bad boys. If a Christian woman is not able to think through the meaning of sex with respect to marriage enough to control herself, it seriously harms the stability of her future marriage.

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image)

Debt-free

Regarding her second point, almost everything a serious Christian man might plan to do for Christ with his marriage is impacted by finances. From education, to marriage timing, to number of children, to home ownership, early investment, to the success of children. to age of retirement. Less money means fewer choices, and less ability to counter challenges. Think of how important money for legal defense is to Christian-owned businesses who are being persecuted, for example. The reason that many people find the Bible's teaching on stewardship difficult is that they don't want to exercise self-control with money if they don't feel like it. They want to waste money seeking fun and thrills, and then act like their poverty could not be avoided. Being debt-free is an indicator of practical wisdom and self-control in a woman.

· CHAPTER 9 ·

Tattoos: Don't

This piece of advice may arrive a bit late for you, but I'd rather discomfit you than leave unsaid a reality check for younger friends.

Fads fade; tattoos don't. These permanent displays of youthful exuberance trigger at best mild amusement, but in some a serious concern about your maturity.

Whether or not you believe that concern to be fair, it is real. The tattoo you cover today will be an obstacle in some situations the rest of your life. Do you need it that much? Is it worth compromising your effectiveness?

This rule of tattoos is easily applied to many other areas of your style of living. Do you do anything to call attention to yourself or to make a statement? If so, is the attention worth it? Most such indulgences are self-defeating, whether it is idiosyncratic hair or clothes, a loud motorcycle, or—later in life—a palatial residence far beyond any ordinary need. The attention you are drawing to yourself is defeating your ambition by marking you as concerned with silly things.

Serious people do not seek attention except for serious purposes.

Chapter 9 of Hugh Hewitt's "In, But Not Of: A Guide to Christian Ambition"

Tattoos

Tattoos are a problem for serious Christian men for several reasons. First, they cost money and for no gain, and can even cause you losses in your career. Second, most people get them because of low self-esteem or vanity or to look rebellious or to look dangerous. None of these motivations should be acted upon by someone with a robust Christian worldview. The money could be better used on charity, or investments, etc. Women show what their priorities really are by how they spend their money and time. Show me a woman's bookshelf, and I'll tell you how seriously she has thought about what it means to be a Christian in all areas of life. Instead of showing me your tattoos to demonstrate your "spirituality", show me your apologetics books, to demonstrate your intellectual engagement. And tell me how you used that information to engage in conversations with educated non-Christians to answer their challenges to your faith. That way I'll know that you use your money to train do hard things in order to have an influence for Christ in serious, practical, effective ways. A woman who can defend her faith and discuss Christianity with non-Christians is demonstrating her ability to raise Christian children in a secular society.

A family praying and reading the Bible

The goal of marriage is to serve God

Today, young people have been taught to follow their hearts, and to deny that there is any authority or practical wisdom that should govern their decisions. They always imagine themselves to be exempt from moral rules, statistics, cause and effect, etc. They think they know better than everyone else – even though they do almost no research on their own. Every adviser who tells them to study computer science instead of creative writing is wrong. Their same-age friends know more about what causes divorces than peer-reviewed research papers. And money should be spent on skydiving and zip-lining, regardless of what financial experts like Dave Ramsey might say.

A woman who has made many mistakes cannot fix those mistakes with words. Rationalizations, evasions, and blame-shifting do not work to show that there has been real repentance. The man can only assess whether grace has caused any real re-prioritization of goals by evaluating her outward actions over a long period of time. Furthermore, if a woman who has made mistakes attacks those who correct her from Bible's teachings on chastity, stewardship, etc., then it's a sign that there is no real repentance.

Choosing a wife wisely doesn't mean that Christian men treat OTHER Christian women poorly. Christian men love all the Christian women. We care for them and support them. But when a man chooses a wife, he is choosing someone who will have more influence on his ability to serve God than anyone else. In my case, the goals for my marriage involve making a difference with apologetics in the church, having many children who will receive the educations and careers they need to have an influence, influencing government to promote Christian-friendly policies, charitable giving, mentoring young Christians, modeling a good marriage to others, and having a home that can serve to host discussions about issues that matter. These things are not free – they take careful planning and execution to achieve.

Lori's advice is intended for men who are serious about making their marriage produce a return for God. Men who are chaste themselves. Men who accept the Bible as an

authority. Men who earned STEM degrees, instead of easy nonsense degrees that don't lead to good careers. Men who earn 6-figure salaries, who buy houses for cash, and who are on track have a 7-figure net worth by age 50. Men who made good decisions cannot risk marrying someone who hasn't prepared for marriage. The wrong woman in the home could ruin the man's effort to produce a marriage that gives glory to God.

Not every man intends to achieve something for God with his marriage, but those who do need to choose a woman who has demonstrated ability at doing the job. For example, if the job requires marital fidelity, then chastity is a good indicator that the woman has the necessary self-control. If the job requires frugality, and practicality, then being debt-free, having a STEM degree, and having some private sector work experience are good indicators that she's qualified for the role. Nothing valuable in life is ever been achieved by being lazy, wild and irresponsible. Serious Christian men look for wives who have applied themselves to difficult tasks that they didn't feel like doing, who achieved success by remaining committed to the plan, in spite of their unhappy feelings and unmet desires.

We have a problem in the church such that we aren't serious about teaching young people to develop marriage-ready character and to make serious plans for marriage. We are teaching them to follow their hearts, and that their feelings and desires are clues about God's will for their happiness. We are teaching them to be uncomfortable with responsibilities, expectations and obligations to others. We are teaching them not to do their own research. We are teaching them not to make practical, wise plans. We are teaching them to ATTACK those who try to get them to be serious about doing what is likely to work. This approach is not working.

My own criteria for a wife are more demanding than Lori's. My advice there is only for serious Christian men who want their marriage to serve God.

Are men allowed to have preferences about which women are best for marriage?

February 13, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

So, in my last post, I explained why men have to be careful about choosing a wife. Men have plans and they need a woman with the right skills to achieve it. Even if a woman genuinely repents her past, she may not have developed the skills for a godly man's marriage plan. For example, her 50K of student loans makes it harder to afford a stay-at-home homeschooling mother.

But many Christian women feel that there is no such thing as a Christian woman who is a bad candidate for marriage. It doesn't matter what a Christian woman did in the past. A man should never evaluate her skills for the roles of wife and mother. After all, if God forgives a Christian woman for running up student loan debt for a useless women's studies degree, or for getting drunk and sleeping around with hawt bad boys in college, then no Christian man should hold her past decisions against her when choosing a wife. Men are *obligated t*o disregard the past anti-marriage decisions made by women. To do anything else is to deny the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So many Christian women say.

What would happen if the shoe were on the other foot? What if it were the MAN who had been selfish, lazy and irresponsible? What if the MAN had made choices that seriously harmed his ability to perform male marriage roles like protecting and providing for his wife and children? Would marriage-ready women be *obligated* to marry this man as much as a man who had remained chaste, got a good education, built up a gapless resume, saved enough for a downpayment on a house, and taught apologetics in his home church? Is she allowed to prefer a man who has made good decisions to prepare for his marriage roles over a man who has made horrible decisions, but just hollers "grace" when anyone questions his ability to be a husband and father?

This MUST-READ article from The Federalist asks and answers that question. (H/T Lindsay)

Do you agree with the author?

> I think it's time for a conversation about another elephant in the room: this idea that women prefer physically fit men with good jobs and no criminal record. It's incredibly sexist and matriarchal to insist that women have a natural preference for men who have invested time and energy into stewarding their bodies, have shown the capability of earning a living and supporting a family, and have not gone to jail for attempting to grow 452 marijuana plants in their mother's basement.
>
> I know more than a few men who spent their twenties languishing in their parents' homes, subsisting on Cheetos and Mountain Dew, playing Xbox, watching pornography, and smoking controlled substances. If one of these men turns his life around, accepts Jesus, and starts fresh, young women have no right to overlook him as a potential mate just because he is 280 pounds, has almost no marketable skills at 30 years old, and cannot vote, serve on a jury, or own a firearm. He is created in the image of God, and accepted by Jesus! Any women who would overlook every other noble quality he possesses for basic financial security and a clean background check (not to mention browsing history) isn't a woman he should want.
>
> Men like this have often long since repented of their listless and slothful ways. If the lingering consequences of their pasts didn't stop Christ from living and dying for them, then it shouldn't stop a Christian woman from loving them, either. Period.

The Federalist article makes it clear that a man's poor choices about his education, job, obedience to the law, and physical fitness CLEARLY compromise his ability to perform his male duties to protect and provide. What about moral and spiritual leading? Well if he didn't spent his teens and 20s studying apologetics, moral issues, etc. then he isn't going to compare favorably to a man who teaches apologetics in his church, debates atheists, and writes blog posts for the Life Training Institute.

My friend Lee is a superb stay-at-home wife and mother. She says that we shouldn't accept "Jesus forgives me" as an immediate reversal of past harmful choices:

> I would note that there is a difference between just being forgiven of sin and actually repenting of it. Repenting is a turning away from and will manifest in changes; paying down debts, becoming chaste, becoming otherwise responsible and wise. Someone's past doesn't have to define their future. But that will manifest in observable and measurable changes.

She's right.

I knew a Christian woman who had 25,000 worth of student loan debt when she was 29. She wasn't using her degree, she was just working as a waitress. I found her a job as an IT project manager in an FT100 company, so she could pay off her loans. She declined, because "being a waitress is the easiest job I've ever had". She hasn't worked full-time as

a professional since January 2013. She'll say "Jesus forgives me!" and "I hate my student loans!", but the loans are even larger now, and the wasteful spending on fun and thrills hasn't stopped. Hollering "grace" and saying you hate debt doesn't make you a good steward – and you'll *need to be a good steward* if you are in a marriage. She's not ready to manage the finances of a household. If she had taken the job, and paid off the loans, then she would have overcome the mistake, and become marriage-ready.

So what's really behind the hysteria against men evaluating women for marriage?

Deti nails the real root problem:

> Not one person – NOT ONE PERSON – said that nonvirgins with tattoos and debt are bad people; that they are irredeemable, that they're bad Christians; that they cannot be Christians; that they're unsalvageable; that they're ugly; or that they couldn't and shouldn't marry. That is NOT what was said.
>
> All that was said was that men prefer tattooless, debtfree virgins for marriage. That's all.
>
> […]The bible… teaches repentance is the way to salvation. But repentance does not mean you no longer bear the scars of your past sins in body and mind. You do. Oh yes you do. The effects can be minimized, even overcome. But they're still there.
>
> And more to the point, what's really being complained about here is a Christian woman acknowledging that men have preferences and that men are entitled to have preferences. If women want men, then they have to satisfy those preferences or lower their standards until they find men whose preferences they can satisfy.
>
> This can't be overemphasized – it's the idea that men have preferences. Its' the idea that there's a man that's one-half of that relationship, and there are things HE wants, and HE needs, and HE desires. Why does it matter what HE wants? Why do we care about him?
>
> Men don't want to marry high N women. Men don't want to take on debt and they don't prefer markedup tatted up women who look and act like men.
>
> What this gets down to is women objecting to men having standards. Because that leads to men judging women. And that leads to men evaluating women. And that leads to men rejecting some women and accepting others. And women hate judgment and rejection, especially when it's "less than" men who are doing the judging and rejecting.

One of my editors for this post (Mary) didn't think that some readers would know what N refers to, so I'll tell you. N refers to the number of sexual partners a person has had.

The reason we discuss best practices for marriage-minded women is so that young women, especially young women who lack a father in the home, can get some kind of guidance about how to resist the culture's lies about men, sex and marriage. Such a woman has NOWHERE TO GO in this culture in order to learn how to relate to men, and

how to marry to a man who will love her faithfully and forever. That’s not fair! We have to help her!

What Christian men are doing by promoting chastity, sobriety, good stewardship and self-control to these young women is *protecting them from a culture that lies to them*. The well-meaning Christian women who think that talking about moral boundaries and wisdom will hurt the feelings of women who have made mistakes are actually making it harder for young women who have no guidance at all. The most vulnerable ones are the ones who need to hear that chastity is wise. Doing a STEM degree is wise. Getting out of debt by spending less is wise. Not seeking attention with graffiti on your body is wise. That’s what unmarried women need to hear.

It’s amazing to me that so many Christians do not understand the protective value of recommending Biblical morality and Biblical wisdom to young women. They would rather sacrifice these young women to the secular culture than allow older women to feel bad about their past decisions. So many Christians seem to be more concerned about *their own feelings* than about *promoting and defending what the Bible teaches* to young people who really need help.

Why should a woman marry a man while she's still under 25?

February 14, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

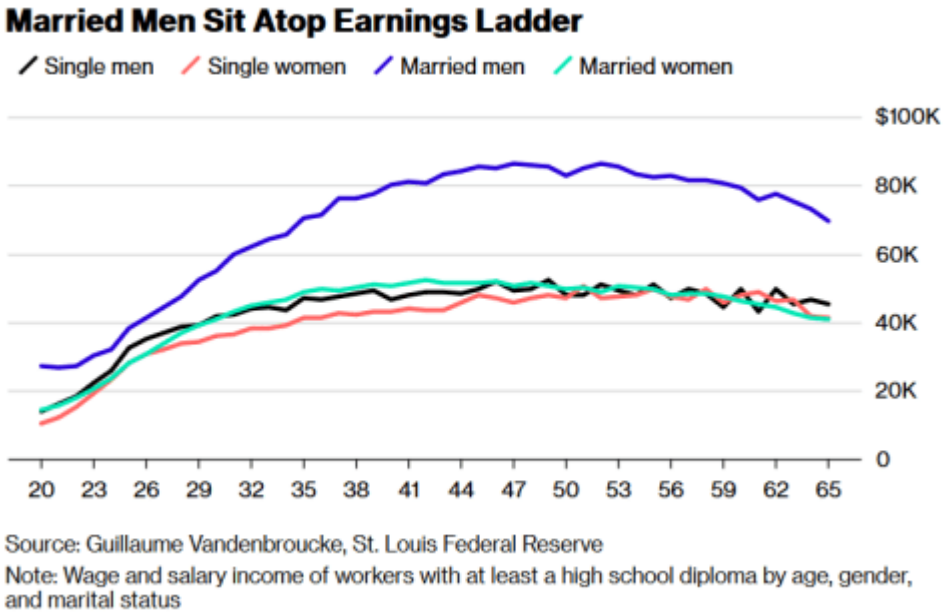

Married men seem to enjoy a boost in earnings between age 22-45

I saw a bunch of pro-marriage friends were tweeting about this article from the St. Louis Federal Reserve which talks about how well married men do financially compared to single men, and using it as a reason to argue that men should get married. The article from the St. Louis Reserve doesn't have much commentary, but this article from the far-left Washington Post by Brad Wilcox has a lot to say.

Excerpt:

> Marriage has a transformative effect on adult behavior, emotional health, and financial well-being—particularly for men.
>
> […]Men who get married work harder and more strategically, and earn more money than their single peers from similar backgrounds. Marriage also transforms men's social worlds; they spend less time with friends and more time with family; they also go to bars less and to church more.
>
> […]Our research, featured in a recent report, "For Richer, For Poorer: How Family Structures Economic Success in America," indicates that men who are married work about 400 hours more per year than their single peers with equivalent backgrounds. They also work more strategically: one Harvard study found that married men were much less likely than their single peers to quit their current job unless they had lined up another job.
>
> This translates into a substantial marriage premium for men. On average, young married men, aged 28-30, make $15,900 more than their single peers, and married men aged 44-46 make $18,800 more than their single peers.

> That's even after controlling for differences in education, race, ethnicity, regional unemployment, and scores on a test of general knowledge. What's more: the marriage premium operates for black, Hispanic, and less-educated men in much the same way as it does for men in general.
>
> For instance, men with a high-school degree or less make at least $17,000 more than their single peers.

So, what about these differences between married men and single men? Are men able to earn more if they have a wife to support them and care for their needs? Or is it just that women prefer men who are already able to take care of themselves?

Well, in most cases, it's the former:

> 2. Married men are motivated to maximize their income. For many men, this responsibility ethic translates into a different orientation toward work, more hours, and more strategic work choices. Sociologist Elizabeth Gorman finds that married men are more likely to value higher-paying jobs than their single peers.
>
> This is partly why studies find that men increase their work hours after marrying and reduce their hours after divorcing. It's also why married men are less likely to quit a current job without finding a new job. Indeed, they are also less likely to be fired than their single peers.
>
> 3. Married men benefit from the advice and encouragement of their wives. Although there is less research on this, we suspect that men also work harder and more strategically because they are encouraged to do so by their wives, who have an obvious interest in their success. One study appears to buttress this point, finding that men with better-educated wives earn more, even after controlling for their own education.
>
> 4. Employers like married men with children. There is evidence that employers prefer and promote men who are married with children, especially compared to their childless male peers and to mothers. Married men are often seen as more responsible and dedicated workers and are rewarded with more opportunities by employers. While illegal bias and long-held stereotypes appear to play a role in this historic preference, it nonetheless helps explain why married family men get paid more.

Now what's the purpose of me writing this? Well, I'm actually NOT writing this to pressure men to get married. Why not? Because although marriage was a pretty good deal 100 years ago, it's not as good of a deal under the current laws and policies, e.g. – no-fault divorce, the threats of false accusations, the Sexual Revolution, etc. So I wouldn't advise a man to rush into marriage to just *anybody* in order to get the financial (and health) benefits of having a wife. Marriage is only safe when you choose a woman carefully.

But I am writing this to women who are being told by the culture to delay marriage, and especially to delay marriage to use your youth and beauty to "have fun" with boys who won't commit to marriage. If a woman loves a *marriage-focused* man and really wants to

take care of him and support him, then early marriage is one of the very best ways to really help him during the years (22-45) when it really makes a difference. Marrying a man who wants marriage when you're still young means that he will have many, many measurable benefits.

It's important to marry a man when the marriage has the potential to do the most good for him in areas like health, career, finances and children. Men typically don't want to marry women who are older, because they have more sexual experience and because they get used to giving a man sex in order to get him to do what she wants. Once a woman gets used to doing this, it becomes much harder to trust a good man to lead, and to give a man respect as a leader.

In addition, men know that women never change who they are really attracted to. If a woman chooses superficially attractive men who won't commit over and over, then even if she "settles" for a man later on, she probably won't be able to be attracted him. Men know not to choose women who won't value them for their traditional moral values, conservative politics and ability to perform traditional male roles like providing. Men know that a woman who feels that she is "settling" for less than she deserves is more likely to disrespect him, and to withhold sex from him.

Now pro-marriage parents and pro-marriage pastors will typically tell you that they want to let their daughters decide when to marry, so that they will be happy having "fun" before marriage, and happy being provided for after marriage. But when those women are done playing the field and in their mid-thirties, their relatives and pastors are not thinking about what men's interests are. They're thinking about how to get this woman married, regardless of the man's interests. And men know that. So they aren't going to be bullied or shamed into a marriage after the window when it benefits them has closed. If parents and pastors want their daughters married AT ALL, then they need to encourage women to be self-controlled and marriage-focused EARLY.

New study: parrots have similar brain mechanisms to humans

February 15, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A cockatoo uses a little tool he made to reach a snack

OK, it's a fun Friday post. I guess most of my readers know that I love almost all the birds, and especially parrots. I have owned parrots most of my life, and want to get more, too. I also like to feed the wild birds who come to visit my house. One reason I like them so much is that they are very intelligent and obviously designed by a very clever engineer.

First, let me explain what convergence is, then we'll look at a recent peer-reviewed scientific publication.

We have to start this Science Daily post with the definition of convergence in biology.

> In evolutionary biology, convergent evolution is the process whereby organisms not closely related (not monophyletic), independently evolve similar traits as a result of having to adapt to similar environments or ecological niches.
>
> It is the opposite of divergent evolution, where related species evolve different traits.
>
> On a molecular level, this can happen due to random mutation unrelated to adaptive changes; see long branch attraction. In cultural evolution, convergent evolution is the development of similar cultural adaptations to similar environmental conditions by different peoples with different ancestral cultures. An example of convergent evolution is the similar nature of the flight/wings of insects, birds, pterosaurs, and bats.
>
> All four serve the same function and are similar in structure, but each evolved independently.

So, naturalists say that if two organisms have traits that are similar, it must mean that the trait evolved once in their ancestors, and then the modern species inherited the trait from those ancestors. If evolution is true, the only mechanism they have to develop traits shared by two organisms is mutation and selection. The problems occur when two organisms share similar traits, but they have no recent common ancestor, and no recent shared evolutionary history of mutation and selection.

Here's the latest study from the New Scientist:

> To learn more how these birds' brains develop, Mello and his team compared the genome of the blue-fronted Amazon parrot with that of 30 other birds. They found that regions of the parrot genome that regulate when and how genes for brain development are turned on are the same as those found in humans. These so-called ultra-conserved elements evolved in both species at different times, but with similar results.

Well, parrots and humans are completely different creatures, with no recent evolutionary history, and no recent common ancestors. So, if these changes are due to evolution, then we should see them in the very very very distance common ancestor shared by birds and humans. But then shouldn't they be in all the other animals who descend from that very very very distant common ancestor to?

Watch this:

I'll tell you what the real explanation is: the real explanation is that God created birds and humans. And, like a clever engineer, he re-used components that produced the behavior he wanted in his birds and his humans. We know how this works, because this is how intelligent agents write code today. Why do we need a naturalistic theory that requires magic to work, when we have a simple explanation that we can observe every time someone writes a blog post, or some code, or anything with information in it?

Anyway, however you feel about that, try to be kind to birds, as they are much smarter and more sensitive than most people think. Put out some bird feeders in the yard, if you don't have an outdoor cat. And if you do have a cat, then why not put a bell on it, or keep it indoors?

Related posts

- Study: biological convergence found in human and squid eye genes
- Convergence detected in the genetic structure of bats and dolphins
- How biological convergence falsifies Darwinian evolution
- Science Daily reports on genetic convergence in bats and whales
- What kinds of predictions does intelligent design theory make?
- Is universal common ancestry based on established facts?

Is the gospel of Mark early? Is it based on eyewitness testimony?

February 16, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

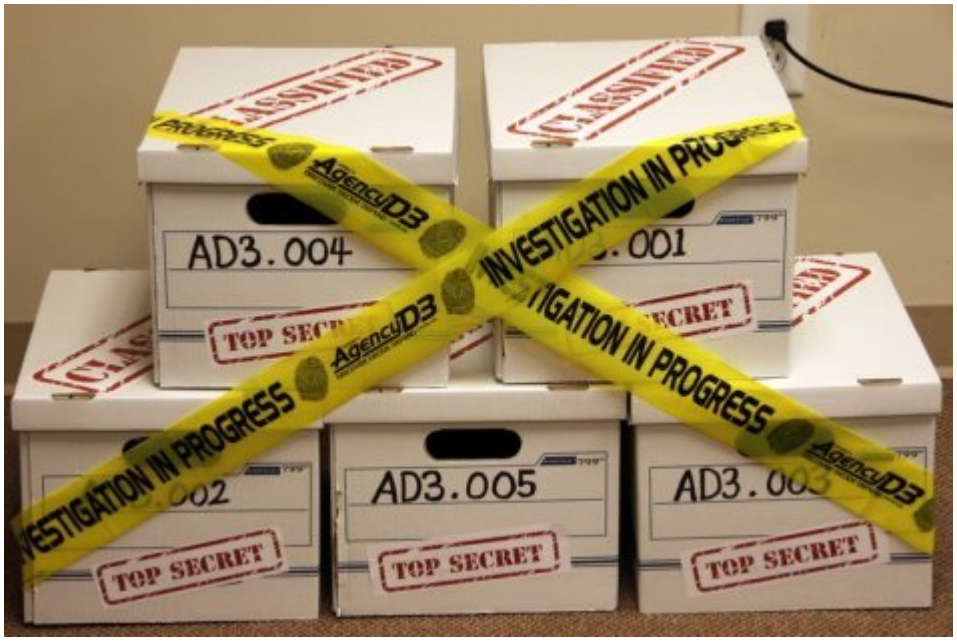

Investigation in progress

Sean McDowell tweeted this interesting article from BeThinking.org, written by New Testament historian Peter J. Williams. It contains reasons why Mark is early, eyewitness testimony. I want to focus on the criterion of embarrassment, which says that if a passage contains embarrassing information about the author or the author's cause, then it's likely to be historical.

Excerpt:

> If it were not for Mark's Gospel, Mark would be a very minor figure indeed in the beginnings of Christianity. He is certainly not someone you would ascribe Mark's Gospel to in order to give it more authority, because according to the book of Acts (*Acts 13:13* and *15:37*) he abandoned Paul, one of the early Christian leaders, during a mission. We can take it therefore that the Gospel is ascribed to him because it genuinely is by him. If it is by him then it has to be written within the lifespan of someone who was an active adult in the 50s and 60s of the first century AD.

Yeah, if you're going to make up a gospel, and you want people to believe it, then you pick an author who is more famous, like Peter.

More:

> Though the Gospel makes extraordinary claims about Jesus' miraculous activities, it seems to make no attempt to cover up the failures of the early Christian leaders. The disciples are said to misunderstand (*8:14–217*), argue about who is the greatest (*9:34*), get angry with two of the leading disciples (*10:41*), and

> ultimately abandon Jesus (*14:50*). The leading disciple, Peter, denied Jesus three times (*14:66–72*). The most unusual claim that it makes is that someone who underwent a shameful execution designed by the Romans to show that he was a loser, was in fact the Son of God.
>
> It is not just the narrative which tells embarrassing stories, the things said by Jesus could also be profoundly embarrassing. According to *15:34* Jesus died asking why God had forsaken him. It is not likely that people would make up such a saying if it hadn't really occurred. According to *7:27*, Jesus told a non-Jewish woman (a Gentile) that it was not right to take that which belonged to the Jews and throw it to 'dogs', meaning Gentiles. This is not something you would make up if you were writing a Gospel and wanted gentiles to become Christians.

Although Williams is right to say that Mark is typically dated to the early 60s, the atheist historian James Crossley dates it 37-43 in his book about the gospel of Mark.

There is a podcast by J. Warner Wallace that has some more interesting information about the gospel of Mark.

The M4A file is here.

Details:

> In this blast from the past, J. Warner examines the Gospel of Mark for signs of Peter's influence. Papias, the early church bishop, claimed Mark's Gospel was written as he sat at the feet of Peter in Rome. According to Papias, Mark scribed Peter's sermons and created the narrative we now have in our Bible. In this audio podcast, J. Warner applies Forensic Statement Analysis to Mark's text to see if Peter's fingerprints are present.

You can also read a post on some of what is in the podcast, if you don't want to listen to the podcast.

Here is the part I thought was most interesting:

> **The Omissions of the Gospel Are Consistent With Peter's Influence**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter's special input and influence, including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It's important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It's not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter's standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters 'indiscretions' in their own accounts). Here are some examples of Petrine Omissions grounded in an effort to minimize embarrassment to Peter (see Cold-Case Christianity for a more

> detailed explanation of the events summarized here):
>
> Peter's shame at the "Miraculous Catch"
> *(Mark 1:16-120 compared to Luke 5:1-11)*
>
> Peter's foolish statement at the crowded healing
> *(Mark 5:21-34 compared to Luke 8:42-48)*
>
> Peter's lack of understanding related to the parable
> *(Mark 7:14-19 compared to Matthew 15:10-18 and Acts 10:9-16)*
>
> Peter's lack of faith on the lake
> *(Mark 6:45 compared to Matthew 14:22-33)*
>
> Peter's rash statement to Jesus
> *(Mark 8:31-33 compared to Matthew 16:21-23)*
>
> Peter's statement related to money
> *(Mark 10:23-31 compared to Matthew 19:23-30)*
>
> Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial
> *(Mark 14:27-31 compared to Luke 22:31-34 and John 13:34-38)*
>
> Peter's behavior at the foot-washing
> *(Mark 14:22-26 compared to John 13:2-9)*
>
> Peter's denial and Jesus' direct stare
> *(Mark 14:66-72 compared to Luke 22:54-62)*
>
> There are a number of places in the Gospel of Mark where details related specifically to the words and actions of Peter have been omitted in what appears to be an effort to protect Peter from embarrassment. This doesn't mean Peter failed to talk about these things. He may very well have included them in his sermons and teachings. But Mark, his scribe and close friend, simply chose to omit these details related to Peter, either at Peter's request or on his own initiative.

Mark doesn't want to annoy his source, Peter, by calling him out for making mistakes. He has to include the embarrassing stories, but it's less harsh than in other gospels.

Here's another blog post from Cold Case Christianity on the same topic.

By the way, when you read the Bible, you should definitely try to put the character of Jesus into practice. My pastor has just been doing sermons on John 21 and he made a big deal out of the way that Jesus reconciles with Peter. What does Jesus do? Well, there is a charcoal fire nearby at the triple denial of Jesus scene. And when Jesus makes Peter and the others breakfast, there is a charcoal fire and a triple affirmation of Jesus. My pastor says that there are no other charcoal fires anywhere in the gospel. Jesus decided to make the restoration of Peter memorable for Peter.

So, when you have a chance to get someone back on board with a worthy mission, you should be thoughtful about how they gave it up, and take them back in a way that makes them feel that the past mistakes were canceled out.

Bible study: why would a loving God make a terrible place like Hell?

February 17, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

It's time for us to take a look in the Bible and make some sense of it, again. Today's question is really "what does God expect us to be doing with our lives?" but I wanted the title of this post to be more eye-catching for non-Christians.

Why do people go to Hell?

Let's start with finding out what we are supposed to be doing, and then we'll know why there is a place like Hell for people who don't do that to be separated from God.

Everyone has a moral obligation to choose how to use their time wisely during their life time. People everywhere, in all times and places, have had the choice of whether to spend more time thinking about the "big questions" or more time having fun and being selfish. Thinking about the big questions logically leads a person to making discoveries about God's existence and character. Once the people who think about the "big questions" discover the answers to those big questions, they are morally obligated to use their free will to love God using all their capabilities.

Bible verse break:

Deuteronomy 4:27-30:

> 27 The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the Lord will drive you.
>
> 28 There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell.

> 29 But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul.
>
> 30 When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the Lord your God and obey him.

At a bare minimum, loving God also means obeying the moral law. But I think there is a lot more to loving God than just obeying rules. Each person is also obligated to engage in and support enterprises that help others to know God as he really is. If a person fails to use their free will to love God, then that person is *sinning*. Notice that on my view, being nice to your neighbor is relatively unimportant compared to being nice to God. Jesus' first commandment is to love God, and that vertical dimension is much more important than horizontal dimension of loving your neighbor.

Bible verse break, again – this time Paul is explaining what he does to love God:

Philippians 1:3-19:

> 3 I thank my God every time I remember you.
>
> 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy
>
> 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,
>
> 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> 7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.
>
> 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> 9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,
>
> 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,
>
> 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.
>
> 12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.
>
> 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.
>
> 14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.
>
> 15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill.
>
> 16 The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.

> 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition,not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains.
>
> 18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.
>
> Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,
>
> 19 for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

So we are supposed to be telling people the gospel, which is the good news about who God is, and what he has done for us to bring us into a right relationship with him, despite our lack of curiosity about him, and our focus on ourselves instead of him. The pre-condition to loving God and sharing the gospel is knowing what his character is really like. Most people are born into a certain religion or learn it from their parents or their culture and they either adopt it without thinking or they reject it without thinking. They are not interested in investigating who God is using reason and evidence, including scientific and historical evidence.

On the Christian view, the best thing you can possibly do with your time is to investigate whether God is real, and what he is like. It's wrong to say that investigating doesn't matter or that all religions are the same. In fact, when you actually look into these things like you do any other area of knowledge, with logic and evidence, you do arrive at knowledge of who God is. And that's because God has left clues of who he is in the natural world and in history – he expects us to be looking for him. He is as real as any other person you know, and his character is as defined as any other person you know.

Bible verse break:

Acts 17:26-27:

> 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.
>
> 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

I think that the result of any honest investigation is going to be that the Christian religion is going to be found to be more true in its major claims than any other religion. I.e. – people who conduct an honest investigation are going to find that the Christian claims about the universe coming into being out of nothing, and of Jesus rising from the dead, etc. will be validated by the progress of science and historical inquiry.

But since people have a natural tendency to focus on making themselves happy, not many investigations occur. They know that if Christianity is true, they would have to engage in radical self-denial and self-sacrificial love. They know they would have to sober, be chaste, be different, and not be liked because of their exclusive view. And people don't want to do that, so an honest investigation *never even gets started.*

Instead, what you find non-Christians doing is hoping in speculations to justify their flight from the demands of the God who is there. We want to be free to make ourselves happy, and that means that we have to keep the real God who is there and who is not silent at arms length. That's what non-Christians do – they use their time on Earth to push God away so they can focus on themselves and their own happiness. In fact, even Christians do it, which is why we rely on Jesus as a sacrifice for our sin. We could come near to God and work on the things that he would like us to work on without some way to get past our own rebellion. For those who grasp the sacrifice of Jesus as an atonement for our rebellion, cooperation with God becomes possible.

One of the problems that Christians have today is that we do not really understand what sin is. We think that sin is about hurting other people or making other people feel bad. But actually, the sinfulness of a person has little to do with that, and much more to do with how we respond to God. We have a moral obligation to know God and to include God in all of our decision making. Hell is the place that God has made for people who turn away from him. A person chooses Hell when she refuses to investigate whether God is there and who God is, so that she does not have to adjust her choices to respect God.

Will the mainstream media correct their #FakeNews stories after they're caught?

February 18, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Why do people think that the mainstream media is biased?
So, we've had three stories that reported over and over in the mainstream media. The Trump-Russia collusion story, the Jussie Smollett hate crime, and the Covington kids hate crime. All three stories had doubts cast on them. So how did the media respond to the new information?

Well, everyone knows about the Trump-Russia collusion story, but that came to an end last week with this Senate Intelligence Committee report.

NBC News reported:

> After two years and 200 interviews, the Senate Intelligence Committee is approaching the end of its investigation into the 2016 election, having uncovered no direct evidence of a conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia, according to both Democrats and Republicans on the committee.

Now the mainstream media made much of the Trump-Russia collusion charges. But did they admit their mistake after the truth came out? Not at all.

Newsbusters explains:

> It's been two days since NBC's exclusive reporting that the Senate Intelligence Committee has found no material evidence of collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia, and as of yet none of the three major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) have given it even a single second of coverage in their evening newscasts. Considering these networks have given the Russia probe a massive 2,202 minutes of airtime, their silence on this major development is deafening.

The mainstream media isn't going to spend nearly as much time reporting the facts that challenge their narrative, because that would make their Democrat allies look bad.

Well, fine, but what about the Covington kids? The mainstream media believed every story about that event that made the Trump supporting kids look bad. But then video emerged that countered their narrative. Did the mainstream media correct themselves?

Life News reports:

> The liberal media took another massive blow on Wednesday after an independent investigation found that the high school students of Covington Catholic didn't harass anyone last month at the Lincoln Memorial. Effectively proving that the liberal media reports about them were smears and lies, all three broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) and principal Spanish-language

> networks (Telemundo and Univision) omitted the findings from their evening reports.

One of the mainstream media sources moved to the next scandal, instead:

> Instead of reporting on the Covington Kids being vindicated, ABC's World News Tonight gave more airtime to Empire star Jussie Smollett despite the continued absence of evidence he was assaulted.

So what about that alleged hate crime against Jussie Smollett? Well, Democrat politicians, Hollywood celebrities and the mainstream media spent a great deal of time blaming Trump supporters for the attack. Even though evidence was a problem from the very beginning.

And then CBS News reported this:

> A source close to the investigation confirms to CBS News the brothers told detectives Smollett paid them to participate in the alleged attack on January 29 and that they purchased the rope — which was found around Smollett's neck — at a nearby hardware store. The source said detectives have evidence to corroborate the sale, something the men's attorney alluded to Friday night.
>
> […]Police said the two men — identified as Ola and Abel Osundairo — were captured on surveillance video at the time that Smollett said he was attacked.
>
> Ola Osundairo is connected to Smollett through the hit show "Empire" where he played a prisoner in season two.
>
> Both brothers apparently left Chicago on the day of the alleged attack and were detained when they returned Wednesday. Chicago detectives tore through their apartment looking for clues, and an evidence log shows they found ropes, masks and bleach. They were released Friday night without charges.

And how did the mainstream media respond? Most of them responded with silence. Because this isn't want they wanted to believe, so they didn't report it. Tweets were being deleted by people who backed Smollett's account (check my Twitter feed for some examples of famous Democrats deleting their tweets, without apology).

So, if you're relying on mainstream media to tell you the truth about what's going on in the world, then I have to ask you: why do you trust the mainstream media to report the facts?

An actual hate crime just happened, but the national news media is silent about it

February 19, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fascist socialist Democrat thugs prefer violence to civil debate

An actual hate crime just occurred, but you won't have heard about it. The victim of this hate crime is a straight white male Republican. The gunman is an angry hate-filled Democrat. This crime won't be reported as national news, because the people on the secular left – journalists, celebrities, socialists – agree with the gunman. So it's like the crime never happened.

Here's the story from ABC local news in Kentucky:

> A Tennessee man is in jail after being accused of pulling a gun on a Sam's Club customer Saturday.
>
> According to the police report, officers were called to Sam's Club due to a person with a gun.
>
> According to the alleged victim Terry Pierce, a man pulled a gun on him because he was wearing a Make America Great Again (MAGA) hat.
>
> "I have as much right to wear that hat and support my country and my president as he has not to," said Pierce.
>
> The police report confirms that the suspect, identified as James Phillips, admitted to flipping off Pierce and Pierce's wife because of their hats.
>
> Pierce tells 13 News that he was shopping with his wife when Phillips "Pulled a .40 caliber out and stuck it in my face, backed up and said, 'It's a good day for you to die.'"

> Pierce went on to tell 13 News, “I said, ‘Then pull the trigger. Put the gun down and fight me or pull the trigger. Whichever one you want.’ And he backed up and he said it again, he said, ‘It’s a good day for you to die.'”
>
> Pierce said the Phillips then took off. That’s when Pierce followed him out into the parking lot.
>
> “I went out the front of the store to confront him again and that’s when I got him in his car. He couldn’t leave because his mother was still in the store. And we were having a verbal altercation outside,” said Pierce.
>
> Pierce added, “He tried telling me I assaulted him and I said, ‘I never touched you.'”
>
> According to the police report, surveillance video confirms Pierce’s story that he did not put his hands on Phillips.

Now, I know what journalists on the secular left will say to this story. It’s the same thing they said about the Covington kids. It’s hate speech to smile at someone while wearing a Trump-supporter hat, so of course a violent response is justified. This is how journalists on the secular left think.

In a recent post, Newsbusters contrasted the coverage of fake hate crimes that fit their narrative with coverage of real hate crimes that don’t.

> As NewsBusters managing editor Curtis Houck documented early Sunday morning, between January 29 and February 14, the networks spent 101 minutes and 22 seconds helping to push Smollett’s claims of being assaulted by racist and homophobic Trump supporters.
>
> […]In sharp contrast, when a young white man was kidnapped for two days in the run-up to then President-elect Trump’s inauguration and tortured live on Facebook by black teens, the story was there and gone in just four days. As Houck also exposed on January 4, 2017, both ABC’s World News Tonight and NBC Nightly News skipped the story while CBS Evening News allocated a mere 27 seconds.

I’m troubled by this story of a Democrat pulling a gun on people who are just out shopping. We have elections so that the majority can decide who will be in charge. If you lose the election, then wait for the next one, and persuade people with reason and evidence to vote for your candidate. Now you can’t even go shopping without some Democrat fascist thug pointing a gun at you and threatening to shoot you.

William Lane Craig explains how Christianity explains evil and suffering

February 20, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

A lot of people in the West complain too much about any little suffering they have to experience. But sometimes, when a very harsh suffering is felt by someone who has tried to follow Jesus, an explanation is necessary. I found something very good on the Reasonable Faith web site, written by Dr. William Lane Craig.

He makes the following points:

1. *We are not in a good position to assess the probability of whether God has morally sufficient reasons for the evils that occur.*
2. *The Christian faith entails doctrines that increase the probability of the co-existence of God and evil.*
3. *Relative to the full scope of the evidence, God's existence is probable.*

I've written before about point #1, in which Dr. Craig's describes the limitations of human knowledge that make it hard for us to know for certain that a specific evil or suffering does not have a good reason for God to allow it. And I've written about #3, in which Dr. Craig makes some arguments for God's existence. But #2 might be new to some of you, so let's look at that.

He makes four sub points in section 2 about Christian doctrines that make the existence of evil and suffering more reasonable.

- 2. a)*The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.*
- 2. b) *Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and His purpose.*

- 2. c) *The knowledge of God spills over into eternal life.*
- 2. d) *The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.*

My favorite one is 2. a), so let's look at that one. He says:

> 2. a. *The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.* One reason that the problem of evil seems so puzzling is that we tend to think that if God exists, then His goal for human life is happiness in this world. God's role is to provide comfortable environment for His human pets. But on the Christian view this is false. We are not God's pets, and man's end is not happiness in this world, but the knowledge of God, which will ultimately bring true and everlasting human fulfillment. Many evils occur in life which maybe utterly pointless with respect to the goal of producing human happiness in this world, but they may not be unjustified with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Innocent human suffering provides an occasion for deeper dependency and trust in God, either on the part of the sufferer or those around him. Of course, whether God's purpose is achieved through our suffering will depend on our response. Do we respond with anger and bitterness toward God, or do we turn to Him in faith for strength to endure?

You know, I always get confused when I see Christians trying to follow the script of the world and trying to make themselves feel good with consumer purchases, travel, fun experiences, showing off to others, etc. When I read the story of Jesus, it's pretty clear that the normal Christian life, if the person is following Jesus at all, is about suffering the disapproval and opposition of non-Christians while you remain faithful and obedient to God. Today, there's probably no better example of this than defending unborn children from adult selfishness. Although, defending born children from selfish adults who seek to deprive children of their biological mother and father is pretty bad, too. Nobody is going to like you for restricting their fun (i.e. – abortion, divorce, adultery, homosexuality, etc.), but being willing to take the heat from non-Christians for the sake of promoting what God thinks is right is true Christianity. It's what Jesus would do.

Anyway, the one I've been thinking about more lately is 2. d), where Dr. Craig writes this:

> *2. d) The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.* To know God, the source of infinite goodness and love, is an incomparable good, the fulfillment of human existence. The sufferings of this life cannot even be compared to it. Thus, the person who knows God, no matter what he suffers, no matter how awful his pain, can still say, "God is good to me," simply by virtue of the fact that he knows God, an incomparable good.

I sometimes feel pretty stressed out about Americans who were born in conservative states, raised by two married Christian parents, attended Christian schools and youth groups, and then abandoned their faith for atheism as soon as they hit college. It really bothers me how people who had all these advantages turned their backs on God, and they're ungrateful for all their blessings. They show no curiosity about God – they don't

want to know him. But when you read the gospels to see what Jesus has to say about these sorts of people, it’s very comforting. He really sees the problem, and he is on the side of the little guy who has to struggle to be faithful and obedient to God. The Bible has nothing to say to people who are able to feel happy and successful apart from God. It speaks to people who are struggling to follow God. Even when things are difficult, Jesus speaks to the problem of being an alien and a stranger in a world that turns its back on him.

Dave Rubin interviews my favorite economist: Thomas Sowell

February 21, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Thomas Sowell – the best economics teacher you will ever learn from

Two half-hour interviews with my FAVORITE economist, Thomas Sowell. If you haven't read any books by Thomas Sowell, then you don't know how wonderful economics can be. Thomas Sowell stands for the proposition that before you adopt an economic policy, you have to consider what incentives it will create for *everyone* involved. And he backs up his ideas with studies that span the whole range of times and places. It turns out that many bad ideas have already been disproved in different times and places, and Thomas Sowell knows them all. Thomas Sowell is a man of facts and evidence.

Description of part one:

> Dr. Thomas Sowell (Economist) joins Dave to discuss his Marxist past, free speech on campuses, distinguishing between classical liberalism and libertarianism, and his new book "Discrimination & Disparities.

Part one:

"This idiot has stumbled on something that will ruin us all". LOL!

Description of part two:

> Dr. Thomas Sowell (Economist and Author) joins Dave to discuss the role of government, the problem with minimum wage laws, his experience as a black conservative, debunking systemic racism, the importance of common decency, and his new book "Discrimination & Disparities."

Part two:

In the comments, Dave explains that YouTube has demonetized the video. I suppose that this is because the video contains conservative ideas, and YouTube is owned by the far-left Google.

Anyway, I recommend getting your hands on some Thomas Sowell books.

This one seems to be a collection of introductory essays:

The Thomas Sowell Reader

I haven't read it, but it has the highest reviews of any of his books. What I would recommend is picking up one of the OLDER versions of his "Basic Economics":

Basic Economics

You can get a used one for a couple of bucks. I read the second edition a while back, and I remember that just reading the first 3 chapters knocked my socks off. Some helpful person even uploaded the audio of the edition I read to YouTube. Just listen to the first 3-4 chapters, and you'll see what I mean. No one who wants to understand how the world *really works* can ignore Thomas Sowell.

One that I still haven't read that's short and sweet is:

The Vision of the Anointed

But a later book that is similar is actually my favorite Thomas Sowell book:

Intellectuals and Society

I also liked this one a lot:

Economic Facts and Fallacies

I once dated a homeschooled girl who came from a large, rural family. This family produced brilliant children, but the parents didn't really believe in college. I told the girl that to marry me, she would have to get a college degree. She and her parents didn't really like that, and we broke up. However, I did tell her that she should read Thomas Sowell, because she had some left of center views on public policy, e.g. – health care. I found out later that she went on to read SIX Thomas Sowell books in two months. After that, she went on to get a BA in economics via distance learning, with a 4.0 GPA! I think part of that transformation is due to the Thomas Sowell books. Thomas Sowell changes lives.

I have to include this clip of Thomas Sowell from a long time ago:

He understood the things we are fighting about today *decades ago*. This man should have been our first black president.

By the way, Dave Rubin does a lot of good interviews. This one that he did with Larry Elder was worth watching.

Two black economists explain how to end poverty in America

February 22, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Walter Williams

Walter Wiliams is one of my two favorite economists, the other being Thomas Sowell.

Here is his article on wealth and poverty on Creators written by Dr. Williams.

First, real poverty is not common in America:

> There is no material poverty in the U.S. Here are a few facts about people whom the Census Bureau labels as poor. Dr. Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield, in their study "Understanding Poverty in the United States: Surprising Facts About America's Poor", report that 80 percent of poor households have air conditioning; nearly three-quarters have a car or truck, and 31 percent have two or more. Two-thirds have cable or satellite TV. Half have one or more computers. Forty-two percent own their homes. Poor Americans have more living space than the typical non-poor person in Sweden, France or the U.K. What we have in our nation are dependency and poverty of the spirit, with people making unwise choices and leading pathological lives aided and abetted by the welfare state.

Second, the "poverty" is not caused by racism, but by poor choices:

> The Census Bureau pegs the poverty rate among blacks at 35 percent and among whites at 13 percent. The illegitimacy rate among blacks is 72 percent, and among whites it's 30 percent. A statistic that one doesn't hear much about is that the poverty rate among black married families has been in the single digits for more than two decades, currently at 8 percent. For married white families, it's 5 percent. Now the politically incorrect questions: Whose fault is it to have children without the benefit of marriage and risk a life of dependency? Do people have free will, or are they governed by instincts?
>
> There may be some pinhead sociologists who blame the weak black family

> structure on racial discrimination. But why was the black illegitimacy rate only 14 percent in 1940, and why, as Dr. Thomas Sowell reports, do we find that census data "going back a hundred years, when blacks were just one generation out of slavery … showed that a slightly higher percentage of black adults had married than white adults. This fact remained true in every census from 1890 to 1940"? Is anyone willing to advance the argument that the reason the illegitimacy rate among blacks was lower and marriage rates higher in earlier periods was there was less racial discrimination and greater opportunity?

Third, avoiding poverty is the result of good choices:

> No one can blame a person if he starts out in life poor, because how one starts out is not his fault.
>
> If he stays poor, he is to blame because it is his fault. Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior. It turns out that a married couple, each earning the minimum wage, would earn an annual combined income of $30,000. The Census Bureau poverty line for a family of two is $15,500, and for a family of four, it's $23,000. By the way, no adult who starts out earning the minimum wage does so for very long.

Fourth, what stops people from making good choices is big government:

> Since President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty, the nation has spent about $18 trillion at the federal, state and local levels of government on programs justified by the "need" to deal with some aspect of poverty. In a column of mine in 1995, I pointed out that at that time, the nation had spent $5.4 trillion on the War on Poverty, and with that princely sum, "you could purchase every U.S. factory, all manufacturing equipment, and every office building. With what's left over, one could buy every airline, trucking company and our commercial maritime fleet. If you're still in the shopping mood, you could also buy every television, radio and power company, plus every retail and wholesale store in the entire nation". Today's total of $18 trillion spent on poverty means you could purchase everything produced in our country each year and then some.

Regarding those last two points, here is Thomas Sowell:

Economist Thomas Sowell blames welfare for killing the black family

To illustrate this point, here's a graph with some helpful data taken from the U. S. Census.

[image]

Black women were more likely to be married before welfare programs

In fact, there is a whole video featuring Thomas Sowell to go with this graph:

And an article to go with it:

> If we wanted to be serious about evidence, we might compare where blacks stood a hundred years after the end of slavery with where they stood after 30 years of the liberal welfare state. In other words, we could compare hard evidence on "the legacy of slavery" with hard evidence on the legacy of liberals.
>
> Despite the grand myth that black economic progress began or accelerated with the passage of the civil rights laws and "war on poverty" programs of the 1960s, the cold fact is that the poverty rate among blacks fell from 87 percent in 1940 to 47 percent by 1960. This was before any of those programs began.
>
> Over the next 20 years, the poverty rate among blacks fell another 18 percentage points, compared to the 40-point drop in the previous 20 years. This was the continuation of a previous economic trend, at a slower rate of progress, not the economic grand deliverance proclaimed by liberals and self-serving black "leaders."
>
> Ending the Jim Crow laws was a landmark achievement. But, despite the great proliferation of black political and other "leaders" that resulted from the laws and policies of the 1960s, nothing comparable happened economically. And there were serious retrogressions socially.
>
> Nearly a hundred years of the supposed "legacy of slavery" found most black children being raised in two-parent families in 1960. But thirty years after the liberal welfare state found the great majority of black children being raised by a single parent.

The rest of the article points out how even crime rates among blacks were caused by the

implementation of soft law enforcement policies by progressives. Just look at the big cities if you want to know what it is like for blacks to be ruled by Democrats. It sucks!

If everybody started to read more Thomas Sowell books, we would be much better off as a country! Only good things happen when people stop watching TV and listening to music and watching movies, and instead settle down in a chair with a Thomas Sowell book. I recommended a bunch of them in a previous post.

47-year-old divorced woman with kids sues dating agency for failing to find her a rich husband

February 23, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

Today, many women put off marriage while they're in their 20s, when they are most attractive to marriage-minded men. Some marry, but they marry based on spontaneity and feelings, and it turns into divorce. What happens next? Here's an example from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> A divorced mother-of-three who sued an 'exclusive' dating agency after it failed to find her a rich boyfriend has been handed her money back by a top judge.
>
> Tereza Burki paid £12,600 to Seventy Thirty to hunt for 'possibly the man of my dreams, the father of my child', she told the High Court in London.
>
> The 47-year-old said the agency assured her it only dealt in 'creme de la creme' matches and could introduce her to 'bachelors you dream of meeting'.
>
> But Judge Richard Parkes QC today ordered the agency to repay her fee, ruling that she had been 'deceived' by Seventy Thirty's then-managing director.
>
> And, as well as giving her her money back, the judge awarded her £500 for the 'disappointment and sadness' she suffered. Her total award was £13,100.

Burki is 47 years old today, so in 2014, I assume that she was around 43 years old. 43, as you know, is well past the normal age for having children. Women's fertility declines sharply at age 27, then takes a nose-dive at age 35. By 40, it's nearly impossible to get pregnant, which is why women who want children ought to focus on finding a good man

in their early-to-mid-20s.

More:

> When she signed up with the agency in 2014, Mrs Burki's requirements for the men she wanted to meet were 'not modest', the judge added.
>
> She wanted a wealthy man with 'a lifestyle similar or more affluent than her own' and, ideally, 'multiple residences'.
>
> But the most important factor for Mrs Burki, who lives on an upmarket street in Chelsea, West London, was that her soulmate would be prepared to have more children, as she wanted four.
>
> […]Giving evidence during the case, Mrs Burki told the judge: 'You shouldn't promise people who are in a fragile state of mind, in their mid-40s, the man of their dreams.

I'm sure that the reason Dina sent me this article is to warn me about how irresponsible some women can be. After all, this woman HAD a decade in her 20s to get serious about finding a man who would commit to her, and give her children. We don't know what happened in her 20s. But judging from the enormous gap between her demands and her own attractiveness (43 and divorced with 3 children from another man), she was probably being selfish. She's very clear about what she wants from a man, but she hasn't prepared for what a man might want from her.

So let's review that.

Marriage-minded men are interested in a wife during a certain time window when the support of a woman really makes a difference. That time period is the stressful period of a man's life, when he first graduates from college or trade school and has to start his career. The first years of a career are the most stressful. And that's when having the physical, emotional, and practical support of a young, attractive, chaste woman really makes a difference. Married men do better at things like earning, saving, health, etc. than single men. Naturally, the best time to GET THIS SUPPORT is the time when the man is doing things that determine his earning, saving, health, etc.

It's not that older women have no value. It's that the woman has to be present during the critical time when a man is trying to do hard things, and he doesn't have the safety net of savings, a resume, etc. Many men move for their first jobs, which just adds another level of difficulty to those early years. When I moved for my first job, everything was difficult: eating, sleeping, cleaning, being content with chastity, etc. I had no family nearby, and I left behind all my friends. It would have been nice to have had the support of a young, and beautiful marriage-minded woman at the critical time when I needed it.

But now, after the degrees have been earned, the gapless resume filled out, the retirement accounts filled, and the house paid for, it's hardly the time for a woman over 40 to show up and demand her share, when she never invested anything into the enterprise.

And yet, many women apparently DO think like this. Many seem to have no concept of

what a man wants out of marriage, and that's why they waste their 20s doing what feels good to them, and just expecting marriage to happen without any self-denial or self-sacrifice or self-control. If they really cared about marriage, then they would prioritize understanding what marriage-minded men want and need. They would be developing marriage skills and marriage character – things like cooking, caring for others, being good with money, child care, being sober, being faithful, etc. If a woman wants a husband, then she ought to be concerned with helping him to do the things that she expects him to do as a husband.

There used to be some awareness in young women that premarital sex with hot bad boys was bad for her future husband. That focusing on partying and travel was bad for her future husband. That doing easy degrees, getting easy jobs, while going into debt was bad for future husband. Now it seems that women are making all their decisions based on what feels good for them in the moment, in total ignorance of how that ruins their ability to invest in the man who wants to marry them later. They just can't (or won't) understand how being selfish today has consequences to marriage and family tomorrow.

Do women not look at marriage-minded men doing what we are doing and think "I don't want him to have to do that alone. I want to help him, so that it's not so difficult. And if I have to learn how to do things that help him, then I will put my own needs and feelings second, and learn to do what helps him". Is there any woman out there who looks at a good, marriage-ready man, and thinks about what he needs? And about what she can do to help him? If not, then is it any wonder that men have lost interest in marriage?

I noticed that Dalrock also posted on this, and some of the comments are interesting.

Wayne Grudem debates Richard Glover on the Bible, poverty and foreign aid

February 24, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

A great episode of the Unbelievable podcast. This is a great debate. I really enjoyed it. All three speakers were excellent putting forward their points. It's nice to hear an American voice, a British voice and an Australian voice debating an important issue. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Details:

> Wayne Grudem is a theologian known for his conservative approach to both doctrine and economics. His new book "The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution" (co-authored with economist Barry Asmus) makes the case that pouring aid into developing countries is a failed strategy. Grudem debates whether the Bible supports free market, capitalist economics with Australian economist and theologian Richard Glover who wrote a critique of the book for the Australian Bible Society.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

Grudem:

- The Bible speaks to all of life, including economics, stewardship, government
- The study of economics helps us to understand how to take care of the poor
- My job is to apply the teachings of the Bible to all of life

Brierley:

- What’s your thesis in the book?

Grudem:

- A good system is one where the poor have the opportunity to earn and save from their labor
- Book is a response to a Kenyan couple Grudem met at a London conference on business and Christianity
- Book is not concerned with how individuals and groups can do charity to help the poor
- Our church already does that and we support individuals and groups doing charity
- The book is concerned with how should nations be transformed in order to grow economically
- What should the laws, policies and cultural beliefs of a nation be in order for it to not be poor?
- The book lists factors that have moved nations from poverty to prosperity in different times and places
- The thesis of the book is this: government should set their people free to be able to produce more
- We advocate freedom in economics: freedom to work, freedom to save, freedom to start businesses
- We believe that this free enterprise view is consistent with the Bible in a number of places
- E.g. – private property is good for prosperity (thou shall not steal) but forbidden by communism

Brierley:

- What about the church sharing in communities in Acts 2 and Acts 4?

Grudem:

- That is not redistribution of wealth among individuals and businesses by a secular government
- Those passages showed that there was voluntary sharing among Christians, which is not communism

Brierley:

- What’s wrong with Grudem’s book?

Glover:

- The book emphasizes the Bible and the goal is to help the poor in poor countries
- Criticism 1: the book doesn’t engage with non-free-market perspectives on economics

- Criticism 2: the book doesn't survey all that the Bible says about economics

Brierly:

- For 1) what is one of the views that is not considered?

Glover:

- Jeffrey Sachs says that nations need a leg up before they can grow economically
- Ha-Joon Chang says that free enterprise was not how the wealthy nations became wealthy

Grudem:

- We do engage with other points of view, especially Jeffrey Sachs in the book
- The trouble with leftist views on economic development is that it does not work in practice
- NO COUNTRY has even been lifted out of poverty by foreign aid
- He says we don't cite enough from the wisdom literature: we have 64 citations in the index
- He says we don't cite enough from the gospels: we have 42 citations in the index
- He says we don't cite enough from the epistles: we cite 22 of 27 epistles in the index
- Some economists won't criticize cultural and moral values that hurt prosperity
- As Christians, we think that moral and cultural values are part of the problem that needs solving

Brierley:

- What about foreign aid?

Grudem:

- Foreign aid doesn't help: a lot of the money goes into government and rulers can be corrupt
- Instead of encouraging people to start businesses, it tells people to go into government to get aid money
- Economists (lists 3) are saying that foreign aid entrenches corrupt government in power, does no good

Brierley:

- If it's not working, should we keep doing it?

Glover:

- When there is an immediate need, we should do it, even if it is not a long-term

solution: we need both

Brierley:

- Should we stop foreign aid completely?

Grudem:

- Voluntary charitable giving from individuals and churches to help poor countries is good
- Me and my co-author are both active on our church board that helps poor countries with urgent needs
- Food and doctors are urgent needs, and we should help, but it doesn't lift countries out of poverty
- We need a long-term solution that helps poor countries produce their own food and doctors
- We are criticizing 1) government to government aid and 2) IMF/World bank to government aid
- We have had pushback because 500,000 people make a living from this foreign aid industry
- No country has ever been lifted out of poverty into sustainable prosperity
- That's the definition of insanity: continuing to do the same thing that has never worked

Brierley:

- Does the Bible support free enterprise as a way of creating sustainable prosperity?

Glover:

- When I said the Bible was absent from his book, absent was a bad choice of words
- But the hundreds of references he listed were not dealth with *in depth*
- In the Scriptures, God is the one who provides (e.g. – in Ephesians, Sermon on the Mount)
- The Bible is less focused on his people making money, and more focus on sharing basics, like food
- Secular governments should just take it from people who have food and give it to hungry people
- In 2 Cor 8-9, Paul talks about voluntary sharing so everyone will be equal

Brierley:

- Does 2 Cor 8-9 undermine the free enterprise system you champion in the book?

Grudem:

- The sharing in the Bible solves cases of urgent need, it does not lift countries from poverty to sustainable prosperity
- Some older translations say “equality” in 2 Cor 8:13-14, but newer translations (e.g. – ESV) say “fairness”
- The Greek word is translated as “fairly” the only other place it appears in the NT (Col 4:1), in every translation
- God uses the means of human work and productivity to provide (daily bread is baked, doesn’t just fall from Heaven)
- In general, there’s no provision in Scripture for a person to be dependent on donations for their entire lives
- God promises Israel fields and mountains to tend and mine, but prosperity is from work, not depending on others

Brierley:

- Does the Bible support this focus on work?

Grudem:

- Working is highly praised in Scripture, (lists Bible passages that favor work over dependency)
- Countries that were exposed to this notion of work and productivity have been more prosperous

Glover:

- Jeffrey Sachs and other development economists don’t say you can be prosperous through dependence
- They say that it is a necessary part of leading to nations out of poverty into poverty

Grudem:

- It’s never worked. What nation has become prosperous through foreign aid?

Glover:

- There are lots of nations, especially in Africa, where foreign aid has helped lift them out of poverty

Grudem:

- Name one country in Africa where foreign aud has lifted them out of poverty into sustainable prosperity

Glover:

- I can’t think of one right now.

Grudem:

- Our book contains a map of Africa and we looked at every nation's per capita income
- No nation has been able to rise out of poverty through dependence on foreign aid
- The only close one is Botswana, but they have abundant freedoms, Christian morals, less corrupt government
- So Botswana is the best case and they became prosperous through becoming productive, not foreign aid

Brierley:

- Is he right to say that charity is a short-term solution, but that it's not good long-term for prosperity?

Glover:

- Yes, and work is a very important focus in the Scriptures as he says.
- But since the Fall work has been much harder, and may not have the outcomes that we would like

Grudem:

- I also believe in emergency aid for when catastrophies happen, like floods and famines
- But dependence on foreign aid enriches corrupt rulers and does not create the productivity that leads to sustained prosperity

Brierley:

- Can foreign aid be used to give poor nations a leg up on becoming prosperous?

Grudem:

- Dambisa Moyo, Oxford-educated economist from Zambia, says stop the aid, it's doing more harm than good
- Jeffrey Sachs' view is that foreign aid hasn't worked yet, but just keep trying a bit more
- What works: limited government, rule of law, fair courts, documented property rights, low taxes, stable currency
- People are creative and want to work, we just have to get government out of the way and let people work, earn and save

Brierley:

- Is this free enterprise system supported by the Bible?

Glover:

- The wealthy nations of the world did not become wealthy through productive work and free enterprise policies
- Ha-Joon Chang: free enterprise policies have never brought a country from poverty to wealth
- E.g. – wealth is created through tariffs (not by innovating and by economic freedom?)

Grudem:

- I've read Ha-Joon Chang's book, and his examples are very selective and limited
- Index of Economic Freedom: the freest countries are the most prosperous, the least free countries are the most poor
- When you look at macro data, instead of very selective examples, the free enterprise system is best for prosperity

Glover:

- The book doesn't do enough to engage with leftist economists (he doesn't say which ones)
- Just because nations who are free are rich, doesn't mean freedom causes productivity
- There are parts of the Bible that doesn't support the free enterprise system (he names none)

Grudem:

- The Bible is focused on work not dependency, and charity not government redistribution
- The best way to help the poor in other countries is by encouraging work and productivity

Do Republicans do anything about de-funding Planned Parenthood?

February 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young pro-life women protest Planned Parenthood

I keep getting comments from people on the blog and on the blog's Facebook page saying that Republicans never do anything about de-funding Planned Parenthood. Is that true? Or is this belief just held in ignorance by people who don't follow legislation very closely? Let's take a look at a vote that's happening today in the Senate.

Life News reports:

> The Senate will cast a vote on Monday to try to break the Democrat filibuster against a bill to stop infanticide.
>
> As LifeNews reported, pro-abortion Senator Patty Murray blocked a vote on a bill from pro-life Republican Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska that would stop infanticide nationwide. And in the House, Democrats have blocked a request by Republicans to vote on a bill that would stop infanticide a total of six times.
>
> Earlier this month. Nebraska Senator Ben Sasse had wanted to vote on a bill to protect babies born alive after failed abortions.
>
> The Senate vote would have come days after New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law new legislation that allows abortions up to birth and after Virginia Governor Ralph Northam backed infanticide during a radio interview — saying that he's perfectly content if doctors and parents discuss letting disabled babies die after birth.
>
> Sasse asked of the Senate for unanimous consent to vote on legislation that

> would offer them appropriate Medical Care and treatment.
>
> However, speaking on behalf of pro-abortion Senate Democrats, pro-abortion Senator Patty Murray, a Democrat from Washington State, stood up and objected to the vote.

The truth is, the House Republicans DID pass some pro-life legislation from 2016-2018. Some of it got signed into law, but most of it died in the Senate, because of the Democrats.

Also, in the Senate, the new Senator from Tennessee (Marsha Blackburn) has already introduced a new piece of legislation designed to stop taxpayer-funding of abortion. The bill is sponsored by 25 other Republican senators.

Excerpt:

> Republican Sen. Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee introduced her first bill in the Senate. The proposed law, S. 105, the Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act, is a counterpart to a similar bill introduced in the House of Representatives. The legislation seeks to deny funding to abortion organizations, including Planned Parenthood.
>
> […]"Today, I introduced my first bill in the United States Senate, S. 105, the Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act, which strips all abortion providers, including Planned Parenthood, of federal funding," she wrote. "Tennesseans and the American people do not want their tax dollars funding abortions. They have made this position clear time and again. Hardworking taxpayers do not want to subsidize the business of abortion providers and entities such as Planned Parenthood."

The bill has not yet passed the Senate, which is the first step in making it law.

Meanwhile, at the state level, Tennessee Republicans are advancing a bill designed to ban all abortions after 6 weeks:

> Tennessee lawmakers passed a bill Wednesday to protect unborn babies from abortion once they have a detectable heartbeat.
>
> State House Bill 77, sponsored by Rep. Micah Van Huss, would protect almost all unborn babies in Tennessee by prohibiting abortions once an unborn baby's heartbeat is detectable, about six weeks. Exceptions would be allowed for medical emergencies. Violators could be charged with a felony and face up to 15 years in prison.

The state's moderate Republican governor Bill Lee has already promised to sign the bill if it reaches his desk.

Meanwhile, President Trump is doing his part to defund Planned Parenthood as much as he can using administrative power.

Life News reports:

> President Donald Trump today finalized an administrative rule that would partially defund the Planned Parenthood abortion business and deprive it of as much as $60 million in taxpayer dollars. This action adds to President Trump's record of defunding the Planned Parenthood abortion company.
>
> The abortion chain receives about $50 million to $60 million in Title X funds annually, but that could change now that the new rules are being implemented. The administration's changes to Title X family planning grants have angered the abortion chain Planned Parenthood, prompting a lawsuit, but they provide hope for life-affirming pregnancy centers, which can now compete with the abortion giant for the federal funds.

There really isn't any point in rank-and-file Republicans complaining about elected Republican legislators. They are doing their jobs of introducing legislation. Sometimes, the legislation passes. Sometimes it's defeated. The outcome of these votes depends on whether we elect enough pro-life Republicans. Saying that "Republicans do nothing to stop abortion" is not only factually incorrect, but it is actually pro-abortion, because it discourages Republican voters from donating and working hard to be involved in the political process.

In my experience, people who say things like this are cynical losers who have failed at life. Their fatalistic pessimistic outlook makes them feel in control. They justify their inactivity by warning others not to try because the system is rigged. We should oppose these ignorant, conspiracy-minded losers whenever they open their mouths.

All six Democrat senators running for president in 2020 vote against bill to ban infanticide

February 26, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wil Trump remember how Democrats voted during his re-election campaign? Republicans introduced a bill in the Senate to require that doctors must provide medical care to babies BORN ALIVE during an abortion. There were 50 Republicans present for the vote. All 50 supported the bill. But 44 out 47 Democrats present voted for infanticide, including 6 who are running for President in 2020.

Here's how McConnell introduced the bill: (H/T Pulpit & Pen)

> But first, in a few hours the Senate will vote on advancing a straight-forward piece of legislation to protect newborn babies.
>
> This legislation is simple. It would simply require that medical professionals give the standard care and treatment to newborn babies who have survived an attempted abortion as any other newborn baby would receive in any other circumstances.
>
> It isnt about new restrictions on abortion. It isn't about changing options available to women. It's just about recognizing that a newborn baby is a newborn baby, period.
>
> This Bill would make clear that in the United States of American, in the year 2019, the medical professionals on-hand when a baby is born alive need to maintain their basic ethical and professional responsibilities to that newborn.

> It would make sure our laws reflect the fact that the human rights of newborn boys and girls are innate. They don't come and go based on whatever the circumstances. If that medical professional comes face-to-face with a baby who's been born alive, they are looking at a human being with human rights, period.

So how did it go? Well, *all the Republicans in the Senate voted for it*. And *none of them voted against it*. The bill failed, though. It failed because 44 Democrat senators voted against it, and it needs 60 votes to pass.

What I think is interesting from a strategic point of view is that 6 of the 44 senators who voted against it are running for President.

Here are the 6, maybe 7, Democrat senators running for President:

- Cory Booker
- Kirsten Gillibrand
- Kamala Harris
- Amy Klobuchar
- Elizabeth Warren
- Bernie Sanders
- Sherrod Brown (maybe)

If one of those candidates ends up being the Democrat nominee, Trump will be able to use their vote on this infanticide bill in debates and in election ads.

And it's not just these Democrat Presidential candidates – infanticide is now the mainstream view of most Democrat politicians.

Life News reports that more states are introducing legislation to remove all restrictions on abortion:

> New York, Vermont, New Mexico and now Rhode Island politicians are pushing radical pro-abortion legislation that could legalize the killing of unborn babies for basically any reason up to birth in their states.
>
> Earlier this week, Rhode Island lawmakers introduced legislation to keep abortion legal and unrestricted if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*, the AP reports.

It was just New York, Virginia, Rhode Island, New Mexico and Vermont at the end of January.

But in February, Illinois can be added to the list:

> "The Democratic supermajority's proposals now pending in the Illinois General Assembly are the most pro-abortion legislative measures of their type in the country," said Peter Breen, Vice President and Senior Counsel for the Thomas More Society, and former Illinois House Minority Floor Leader. "The barbaric procedures promoted by this legislation are nothing short of infanticide. These bills go well beyond the recent New York law and would turn Illinois into a third-

> trimester abortion destination and an underage abortion haven.”

Will Democrat voters get on board with infanticide? I think some of their liberal special interest groups will. But think about how independents supported Trump’s opposition to infanticide in his State of the Union speech. I think that the Democrats are being forced to move their party too far to the left to win another election. All it takes is for pro-lifers to introduce legislation, have them vote on it, and then make the appropriate election ads.

No one can win a presidential by appealing only to their base. It comes down to who wins the independents. Trump is now the moderate candidate on social issues. The Democrats are pro-abortion extremists. They won’t win a majority of independents in a general election. They’ve just slid too far to the left.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig at Biola U: Does God Exist?

February 27, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students
Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang

– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws
– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection

– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus
– god wouldn't have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that's a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that's a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that's a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don't support life, that's a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that's a bad design

3. hitchens' burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can't prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig's scientific arguments don't go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don't prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don't prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn't be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig's evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can't use the progress of science
– it's too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god's existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn't forming his view based on evidence

– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don't believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you've got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God
– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH's evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH's argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn't need to be efficient

CH's argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH's argument that Craig's scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH's argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn't need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH's citation of Craig's book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true

– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH's rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH's rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH's argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed
– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them

– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that’s a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven’t even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn’t prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they’re growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn’t improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do
– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn’t need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that’s why people act morally
– it’s degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don’t know why, because i can’t ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don’t hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don’t believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don’t agree

WC moral argument: it’s not epistemology it’s the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing
– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history

– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it's just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that's not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Facebook censors criticism of Democrat Party, especially before “important elections”

February 28, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Big social media companies like Google, YouTube and Twitter are very open about censoring and shadow-banning conservative voices. These companies do not support free speech or ideological diversity. They are careful to hire only those who share their secular leftism and fascism. But sometimes, one accidentally hires a non-fascist, and we get a glimpse at the internal workings of company.

Here’s Project Veritas, doing the journalism that the mainstream media won’t do:

> Project Veritas has obtained and published documents and presentation materials from a former Facebook insider. This information describes how Facebook engineers plan and go about policing political speech. Screenshots from a Facebook workstation show the specific technical actions taken against political figures, as well as “[e]xisting strategies” taken to combat political speech.
>
> […]According to the insider, the documents revealed a routine suppression of the distribution of conservative Facebook pages. The technical action she repeatedly saw, and for which Project Veritas was provided documentation, was labeled ActionDeboostLiveDistribution. Said the insider, “I would see [this term] appear on several different conservative pages. I first noticed it with an account that I can’t remember, but I remember once I started looking at it, I also saw it on Mike Cernovich’s page, saw it on Steven Crowder’s page, as well as the Daily Caller’s page.”
>
> Conservative commentator Steven Crowder’s page had been suppressed before in April 2016, and Crowder told Project Veritas they settled a dispute related to the issue with Facebook out of court. Asked for comment on this story, Steven Crowder’s attorney Bill Richmond said:
>
> “Louder With Crowder is investigating the allegations of concealed stream throttling by Facebook. The accusations are deeply troubling given the previously settled dispute with Facebook uncovered by Gizmodo.com, which found the show was targeted by Facebook workers with secret audience restrictions on political grounds alongside other prominent conservative voices.”
>
> A screenshot of an action log on Mike Cernovich’s Facebook page provided by the insider, shows the tag. The insider believes that the “deboost” code suppresses the distribution of livestream videos on Facebook. Project Veritas spoke to a current Facebook employee off the record who said that the code could limit a video’s visibility in news feeds, remove sharing features, and disable interactive notifications.

> When approached for comment, author and filmmaker Mike Cernovich said the troubling issue is that Facebook could just "make stuff up" about people through these systems. "Facebook, or an individual at Facebook, has the unilateral power to create false allegations against someone he or she doesn't like. The person accused not only can't do anything about the allegation, they don't even have an idea the allegation was made," said Cernovich.
>
> The insider says that unlike many actions that Facebook content moderators can take against pages, the "deboost" action, which appears to occur algorithmically, does not notify the page's owner.
>
> […]Upon further review, the insider says she did not notice the tag on any left-wing pages.

Here's a screencap of one the documents that was leaked:

Yes, their meme content is seriously bad, but let's examine Troll behavior more broadly rather than just focus on content. Trolls are involved in many destructive behaviors on Facebook, including:

- Raids
  - Coordinated attacks on groups, pages, and individuals
- Doxing and Harrassement
  - Targeting specific individuals, e.g. Sophie Labelle
    - https://io9.gizmodo.com/transgender-creator-of-assigned-male-webcomic-facing-de-1795442512
- False reporting of groups, pages, and individuals to Facebook Ops
- Toxic meme creation and templating for widespread dissemination to various FB groups and pages
- Black Propaganda
- Red-pilling normies to convert them to their worldview
  - example video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c31NAbNF7PM

Facebook doesn't want people to see conservative videos

So, the question is, what is that "example video", which Facebook says is "troll behavior" that must be censored? Well, it's a video produced by a mainstream conservative journalist who works for The Blaze, a mainstream conservative news site:

> The video linked in the presentation was made by Lauren Chen, a conservative commentator who now hosts a program on BlazeTV. "If you actually watch the video you can see that it clearly isn't abusive or promoting harassment, the video was a criticism of social justice," said Chen when asked for comment on this story. She added that "the video actually promotes equality and individualism."

What's the purpose of all of this censorship? Why, to suppress conservative voices before important elections, of course:

> Yamamoto and de la Rubia's presentation says that "troll accounts," can have their internet bandwidth limited and experience forced glitches like frequent "auto-logout[s]" and the failed upload of comments. These "special features" would be triggered "leading up to important elections."

This isn't the first time that Facebook has been caught censoring conservatives in order to help their allies in the Democrat Party.

Remember this story about Franklin Graham?

Facebook banned Franklin Graham for "hate speech"
The Washington Times reports:

> The Rev. Franklin Graham was kicked off Facebook for defending North Carolina's "bathroom bill," which the social-media giant's review team decided was hate speech.
>
> Facebook acknowledged over the weekend it had banned the prominent evangelist over transgender issues and called the 24-hour ban a mistake that it had already undone. But Mr. Graham was having none of it Sunday, calling the move "a personal attack towards me" and an example of the censorship that Silicon Valley has in store for Christians and/or conservatives.
>
> A spokesman for Facebook told the Charlotte Observer on condition of anonymity that the review team had decided a 2016 post violated rules against "dehumanizing language" and exclusion of people based on, among other things, sexual orientation and gender self-identification. The post was deleted and Mr. Graham prevented from using the service for 24 hours.

I guess Facebook thinks that anyone who is serious about Christianity needs to be "de-boosted", i.e. – have their free speech censored by fascists on the secular left.

And what about this article from the Daily Caller:

> Facebook is censoring PragerU videos for violating its speech codes that prohibit so-called "hate speech" and shadow banning its posts, PragerU wrote on Twitter

> Friday.
>
> “We’re being heavily censored on @Facebook. Our last 9 posts are reaching 0 of our 3 million followers. At least two videos were deleted last night for ‘hate speech’ including our recent video with @ConservativeMillen,” PragerU tweeted.
>
> The official PragerU Facebook page is still up on Facebook at the time of publication. Its Facebook page reposts the same videos consistently and others can still be found on the page.
>
> However, it appears that one specific PragerU social media administrator — the one who posted the videos that Facebook considered violated its “hate speech” policies — is unable to post on behalf of PragerU, resulting only other PragerU administrators being able to see the post. No one else can see the posts.

What kind of people work at Facebook? They are not moral people. They do not understand basic human rights. They do not respect free speech and they don’t value diversity of opinion. They are ignorant, intolerant, close-minded, bigoted fascists.

Why did a transgender gay rights activist burn down his own home?

March 1, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Didn't we just have a case where a gay activist faked a hate crime against himself in order to shame his political enemies for disagreeing with him on policy and morality? Well, that was last week. This week it's another gay activist,. The fake hate crime was arson and five animals were killed in the burning home.

The Daily Wire reports:

> Michigan prosecutors charged 54-year-old Nikki Joly — a transgender person — for allegedly burning down their own home in 2017 in what investigators appear to believe was intended to be a fake hate crime.
>
> The LGBT activist — whose five pets were killed in the fire — had allegedly received threats in the past and was instrumental in leading a battle for LGBT rights in Jackson, Michigan.
>
> "Authorities later determined the fire was intentionally set, but the person they arrested came as a shock to both supporters and opponents of the gay rights movement," The Detroit News reported on Monday. "It was the citizen of the year — Nikki Joly."

It was two dogs and three cats, by the way.

He lied to the police, perhaps hoping that someone else would be blamed for the crime that he committed:

> Two weeks after the fire, Joly was questioned for four hours by a city police detective and two FBI agents.
>
> During the interview, he drooped his head, staring at the floor, not looking at his

> interlocutors, according to the report. He didn't admit setting the fire and didn't deny it, either.

This MLive article speculated about two possible motives:

> Joly's church set him and Moore up in a hotel room and aided in collecting clothes and money as the couple lost everything and had no insurance. Joly received more than $50,000 in donations after the fire, according to the report.
>
> […]A $60,000 insurance claim was paid to the owner of the home, Stephen Carlson. Joly was in the process of buying the home for $57,000 through a land contract, paying $621.54 a month beginning in June 2015, the report says.
>
> Security footage confirmed Carlson was shopping at Meijer at the time of the fire, ruling him out as a suspect, according to police.
>
> Joly missed about a year of payments on the house before receiving aid from St. John's Church, which paid $6,700 to help get Joly caught up and settle a lawsuit with Carlson.
>
> […]Joly, witnesses told police, also had a volatile temperament and would often call people who did not agree with him a bigot, or homophobic.
>
> While dozens of people told police Joly loved his pets and would never willfully harm them, some believed Joly thought there was a lack of controversy following the city's inaugural Pride Parade, and may have started the fire to spark outrage, according to the report.

Burning down your own house is pretty extreme, but I found another fake hate crime that was even more shocking, in my opinion. It just makes me feel bad for the person who did this – except that he was trying to blame innocent people who disagreed with him for the crimes he committed against himself.

Here is another story from the left-wing Associated Press.

They write:

> A man who reported someone beat him and carved a homophobic slur into his arm staged the attacks, authorities in rural Utah said Tuesday.
>
> Millard County Sheriff Robert Dekker said Rick Jones, 21, could face charges after officers investigating the series of reported attacks found inconsistencies in the evidence. The Delta man eventually acknowledged faking the harassment, Dekker said.
>
> […]Jones has since begun mental health treatment, the lawyer said.
>
> The purported attacks began with a beating at his family's pizza business in April that left Jones with head and facial bruising.
>
> Five days later, the family's home was found spray-painted with a homophobic slur. On June 10, a rock and a molotov cocktail were thrown through the window of the home. That same day, the business was spray-painted, broken into and

> robbed of $1,000.
>
> Jones told KSL-TV earlier this month he believed he was targeted because he is gay.
>
> Dekker said prosecutors are considering possible charges including filing a false report and reckless burning.

I wonder if we'll get another one of these fake hate crimes next week?

By the way, there was a news story about an actual hate crime committed this week, reported by The College Fix. This one has a video of the actual hate crime being committed. But it was not national news, because the victim was a Trump supporter.

Canadian elementary schools vote to promote gay activism during Gay Pride month

March 2, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ontario governor Kathleen Wynne and Canada's president Justin Trudeau

The Daily Wire reports on the latest gay rights story from Canada:

> Every elementary school in Ontario, Canada, will be forced to fly the gay pride flag for at least one week in June, which is Pride Month in the province.
>
> […]"The rainbow flag, symbol of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, will fly in front of all public elementary schools for at least one week during Pride Month in June," reported Windsor Star.
>
> Greater Essex County District School Board vice chairman Julia Burgess, who introduced the motion, said the flag will let students know that "we have their back."

Julia's motion to force all elementary schools to promote the gay activist agenda was supported by 9 out of 10 school board trustees.

The lone dissenter was swiftly shut down by by chairwoman Jessica Sartori:

> Linda Qin, the sole trustee to question the mandate explained that the flag might confuse such young children, particularly with concern to gender identity.
>
> […]Qin was told her time was up, according to Windsor Star, and was cut off by chairwoman Jessica Sartori.

> "Who wouldn't be proud to fly that flag?" an emotional Sartori asked, who said she flies the gay pride flag at her home.

It's important to note that not only will there be no opt-out for schools, but there is also no opt-out for parents. Parents have to pay mandatory taxes for the salaries of public school teachers and administrators like Julia and Jessica.

Julia and Jessica didn't do difficult STEM degrees in college. And when they graduated, they couldn't find jobs programming software in the private sector. Since they needed something to do, being proper feminists, they decided to spend their days pushing their progressive values onto other people's children, at taxpayer expense. It sure beats getting married and having to raise children of your own under the leadership of a provider husband. The public schools of every country are filled with women like Julia and Jessica, who think that their feelings-based method of evaluating religion and morality should be pushed onto everyone else's children.

Daily Wire notes that this is not the only school district doing this:

> As noted by LifeSiteNews, Peel District School Board similarly voted in May to fly the gay pride flag. "The board was lobbied by Pride Employee Resource Group (PERG) and heard emotional appeals in favor of raising the flag from parents of 'gender-creative' children and homosexual parents in a May meeting packed with LGBT activists wearing pink," reported the outlet.

What will happen to parents who oppose having their children indoctrinated by radical leftists, at their own expense? Well, the province of Ontario thinks that dissent from their agenda is "child abuse", so they will seize the children of those parents.

The Daily Caller explains:

> Ontario passed a law Thursday that gives the government the right to take away children from families that don't accept their kid's chosen "gender identity."
>
> Parents who oppose or criticize the LGBT agenda will be considered potential "child abusers" and may have their children taken away by the state, according to the new bill. If the parents are ruled to be abusers by failing to wholeheartedly support their child's gender choice, that child "can be removed from that environment and placed into protection where the abuse stops."
>
> […]The old law allowed parents to "direct the child's education and religious upbringing" but now says a parent must influence a child's education and upbringing "in accordance with the child's or young person's creed, community identity and cultural identity."

It passed 63-23.

I think it's important to remember who is behind all of the recent education policies in Ontario. His name is Ben Levin. Remember him?

Life Site News reports.

Excerpt:

> Ben Levin, the man who “appeared to have it all,” was today sentenced to three years in prison for three child pornography offences.
>
> […]A member of Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne’s transition team, Levin was deputy minister of education in 2009 when he and then-minister of education Wynne developed the “equity and inclusive education strategy,” part of which was the 2010 radical sex-ed curriculum shelved by then-Premier Dalton McGuinty after parental backlash. The 2015 sex-ed curriculum is virtually the same as the 2010 version.
>
> […]The curriculum, to be rolled out this September, prematurely sexualizes children by introducing homosexuality in Grade 3, masturbation in Grade 6, and oral and anal sex in Grade 7.

> […]Levin himself claimed in a 2010 interview: “I was the deputy minister of education. In that role, I was the chief civil servant. I was responsible for the operation of the Ministry of Education and everything that they do; I was brought in to implement the new education policy.”
>
> […]Levin pled guilty on March 3, 2015, to three of an original seven child pornography related charges.
>
> McArthur related how in 2010, Levin created a profile on an “alternative sexual lifestyle networking site” frequenting chat-rooms on “incest” and “teens.” He subsequently “came to the attention of three undercover officers.”
>
> In the course of sex-chats with these officers, Levin “wrote a story detailing the violent sexual abuse of a child” and “counseled another officer, posing as a young mother, to sadistically sexually assault her eight-year-old daughter.”
>
> […]He “collected child pornography over two years.
>
> […]Levin also had a list of about 1,750 online contacts with whom he communicated on “subversive sexual interests,” primarily “sexual contact between parents and children.”
>
> In his sex-chats, Levin “normalized the subject of the sexual touching of children.”
>
> […]The “sadistic overtones to the counseling adds a disturbing dimension to the offence,” McArthur stated, noting that psychiatrist Dr. Julian Gojer testified that Levin had a “pedophiliac interest in children” which was “intense” for three to four years. Gojer stated Levin “had sadistic impulses that seemed interwoven with his pedophilic interest” and “was on the extreme end of the sadomasochistic spectrum as it relates to the sexual abuse of children.”

I don’t think that it is a stretch to say that his views on sexuality and children reflect the broader views of Canadian progressives as a whole, and their allies in the public schools. The difference is that he just got caught.

What makes these Ontario liberals any different than the Democrat liberals we have in America? Nothing. They’re the same ideas as American Democrats hold to, but Canada is just further along at implementing them.

Canadian court rules that parents can't prevent children from obtaining hormone replacement therapy

March 3, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada Election 2015: Socialists in red, Communists in Orange, Conservatives in blue

Yesterday, I blogged about how progressive politicians and public school administrators allied in order to promote gay activist policies to young children in the state of Ontario, in Canada. I also mentioned how their child sex education curriculum was designed by a convicted pedophile. But they're not the only state pushing gay activism against the parents who pay their salaries.

The Federalist first reported on the story in the last week of February:

> Clark* first found out that his 12-year-old daughter Maxine was being treated as a boy by her school when he saw her new name in her class's grade seven yearbook. "Quinn" was the new name her counselor had helped her pick out, and Maxine's school district in Delta, British Columbia, Canada, had decided that "Quinn" should be treated, for all intents and purposes, as a boy.
>
> The district apparently felt justified in leaving Maxine's father completely out of the loop. Maxine's school district was operating by the BC Ministry of Education's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Policy, according to which Clark had no right to know his daughter's "preferred sex, gender, or name" at school.

Keep in mind that the policies of schools in Canada are often developed in conjunction with gay rights groups, who are consulted first, so that the schools can avoid costly "discrimination" lawsuits from gay rights lawyers later on.

More:

> Maxine's counselors at school … referred Maxine and her mother, Sarah, to a "Dr." Wallace Wong — a psychologist and LGBT activist who predictably decided that Maxine should be referred to a children's hospital for testosterone injections when she was only 13. Not to be outdone, the children's hospital asked Maxine's parents for permission to begin injecting Maxine with testosterone on her very first visit. Clark said no and refused to sign.
>
> From the middle of August until October, the hospital worked Clark over, trying to get his consent. When he finally refused, the hospital dropped a bombshell threat: simply put, they declared that they didn't need Clark's or Sarah's permission for that matter. In a letter mailed December 1, 2018, Dr. Brenden Hursh informed Clark that they would begin treatment on Maxine in two weeks, without Clark's consent. BC Children's Hospital believed Maxine was a "mature minor," who could receive treatment against the wishes of *both* her parents, according to section 17 of the BC Infants Act.

Well, as you can see, the school teachers, school administrators, courts and hospital doctors (all taxpayer-funded actors), are anxious to get started on "treating" the child with drugs. Only the parent is in the way. I guess he thinks that he should be trusted to raise his own child as he sees fit, rather than to just pay the salaries of these public sector agents and then let them decide for him.

In Canada, people are seen as competent enough to earn money, but not competent enough to spend their money as they see fit. A (large) portion of taxpayer's income is taken from them in the form of mandatory taxes, and it is then given to teachers, education bureaucrats, hospital administrators and courts in order to regulate their choices to be more in line with progressive values.

So what did the courts decide?

Here is the latest from The Federalist in the first week of March:

> On Wednesday, the Supreme Court of British Columbia, Canada ordered that a 14-year-old girl receive testosterone injections without parental consent. The court also declared that if either of her parents referred to her using female pronouns or addressed her by her birth name, they would be considered guilty of family violence.
>
> As previously reported, Maxine* was encouraged by her school counselor in BC's Delta School District to identify as a boy while in seventh grade. When Maxine was 13 years old, Dr. Brenden Hursh and his colleagues at BC Children's Hospital decided that Maxine should begin taking testosterone injections in order to develop a more masculine appearance.

Keep in mind that because the money for health care is extracted from taxpayers *before they choose their medical treatment*, taxpayers have no right to decide what treatments

they will and will not get. It's the politicians and the hospital administrators who decide. This is what single-payer health care means. You pay your income to the government, and the government decides whether you will be treated, when you will be treated, and even what treatments are appropriate for you. And if you disagree with that, there is no opt-out, except to leave the country. Although they might interpret your disapproval of their decision-making on parenting issues as a "mental illness", and prescribe you with appropriate treatments for that – e.g. – confining you to a mental institution where your rebellion against the rule of bureaucrats can receive the proper medical attention.

As I noted in yesterday's post about gay rights in Canada, some Canadian states have passed laws to allow the government to seize children from parents who refuse to respect the will of government bureaucrats.

The Daily Caller explains:

> Ontario passed a law Thursday that gives the government the right to take away children from families that don't accept their kid's chosen "gender identity."
>
> Parents who oppose or criticize the LGBT agenda will be considered potential "child abusers" and may have their children taken away by the state, according to the new bill. If the parents are ruled to be abusers by failing to wholeheartedly support their child's gender choice, that child "can be removed from that environment and placed into protection where the abuse stops."
>
> […]The old law allowed parents to "direct the child's education and religious upbringing" but now says a parent must influence a child's education and upbringing "in accordance with the child's or young person's creed, community identity and cultural identity."

That bill passed 63-23. So you can imagine what sort of sympathy you could expect from Canadians as a whole if you dissented from this law.

Republicans introduce new federal legislation to expand school choice

March 4, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I were giving advice to the Republican party about how to win in 2020, I would advise them to focus on three priorities. Lowering unemployment, reforming the criminal justice system, and expanding school choice. They should also paint the Democrats as the party of infanticide, Green New Deal and elimination of private health insurance.

So far, Trump has done an excellent job of encouraging private sector job creators to create millions of new jobs. Unemployment is at a record low, and that's important for persuading Black and Hispanic voters to vote for smart policies instead of tribal identity and envy. I don't agree with with reforming criminal justice to favor criminals, but that will help with minority voters as well. But what we really need to do is provide Black and Hispanic voters with a way to get their children out of failing public schools. Public schools are filled with lazy, unionized Democrat teachers and administrators who care more about indoctrinating kids with Democrat propaganda than teaching them job skills that will make them independent, self-sufficient adults.

The Republican party knows that school choice is a win for them, and they are doing something about it.

Here's the latest from the American Enterprise Institute, a think tank that promotes fiscally conservative policies:

> Today, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos joined Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), and Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-Ala.), to announce new federal legislation that would establish a federal tax-credit expanding school choice. The proposal would give dollar-for-dollar tax credits to individuals and corporations who donate to state designated scholarship granting organizations (SGOs). While its particulars bear scrutiny, the "Education Freedom Scholarship" (EFS) proposal's overall design is a solid attempt to walk a tightrope of backing state efforts at school choice while protecting against federal meddling now and in the future. Unfortunately, a number of critics on the right are too quick to react on their fears, and too slow in remembering what is holding back school choice.

Some conservatives and libertarians worry that solving the problem of underforming schools from the top down is a political overreach, but the AEI policy analyst writing the article says that the Republican bill doesn't have that problem:

> As I wrote back in 2017, backing state developed tax-credit scholarships is the best, and probably only, way the federal government could support state efforts without overreaching. It would not be a federal program, but a tax credit that supports programs where states are explicitly responsible for policy particulars.
>
> […]No doubt, the bill would need to be explicitly structured to ensure the states'

> primary role, and durably prevent federal overreach; fortunately defending states' role is a paramount feature of the bill's design.

School choice is a nice issue for Republicans, because it allows them to point out the hypocritical nature of Democrat politicians. Democrat politicians are essentially hypocritical. They want to ban guns for you, but they have armed security to protect themselves. It's the same thing for education. They want to ban private schools for your children, but their own children all attend private schools.

Rank	Organization	Total Contributions	To Dems & Liberals	To Repubs & Conservs	Pct to Dems & Liberals
1	Fahr LLC	$90,585,670	$90,585,570	$0	100.0%
2	Renaissance Technologies	$59,130,938	$33,414,305	$25,256,600	56.9%
3	Las Vegas Sands	$44,362,166	$51,436	$44,333,430	0.1%
4	Paloma Partners	$41,961,900	$41,958,600	$3,300	100.0%
5	Service Employees International Union	$39,389,570	$39,387,460	$2,100	100.0%
6	Adelson Drug Clinic	$38,847,300	$40,000	$38,830,000	0.1%
7	Newsweb Corp	$38,802,040	$38,796,640	$0	100.0%
8	NextGen Climate Action	$35,459,288	$35,459,288	$0	100.0%
9	American Federation of Teachers	$33,590,605	$33,580,580	$10,700	100.0%
10	Priorities USA/Priorities USA Action	$33,470,302	$33,470,302	$0	100.0%
11	National Education Assn	$29,774,140	$29,426,584	$347,306	98.8%
12	Laborers Union	$28,888,684	$28,386,961	$474,825	98.4%
13	Soros Fund Management	$28,708,898	$27,561,598	$670,700	97.6%

The top Political Contributors in 2016 election cycle includes two teacher unions Democrats are obligated by teacher unions, (e.g. – the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers), to vote against parents who want their children to get a better education. That's because teacher unions are some of the biggest Democrat donors. Teacher unions just want more salary and bigger benefits, despite the evidence that clearly shows that more education spending doesn't produce better student achievement.

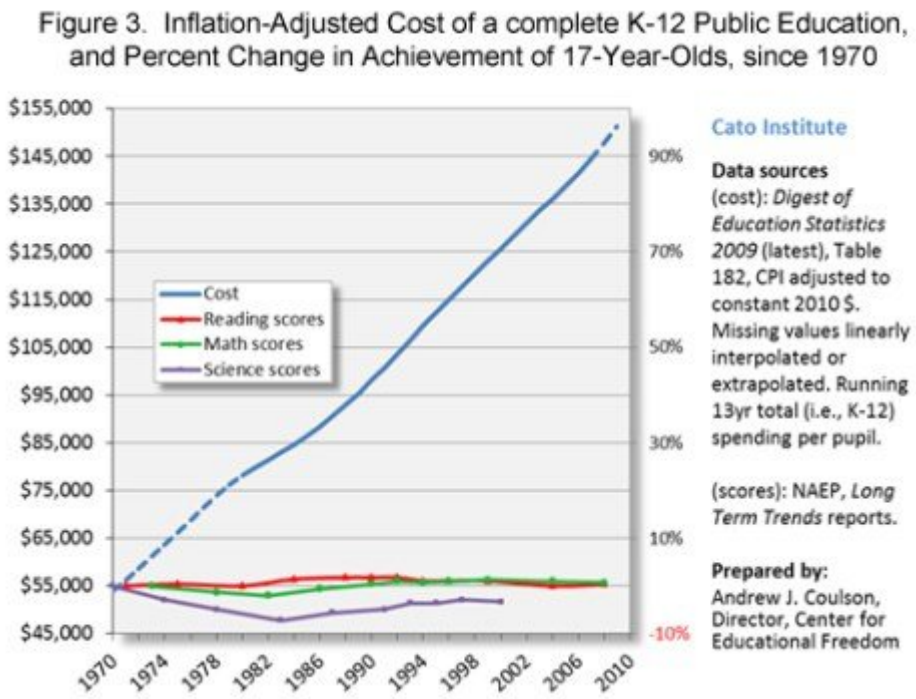

Education spending has tripled since 1970

Here's a study from 2012 published in the journal "Education and Urban Society". It says:

> The possibility is examined that school choice programs could be a means to reducing the achievement gap. Data based on meta-analytic research and the examination of nationwide data sets suggest that school choice programs that include private schools could reduce the achievement gap by 25%. The propounding of this possibility is based on research indicating that the achievement gap in faith-based schools is generally 25% narrower than one finds in public schools. Results of these studies suggest that both the racial achievement gap and the socioeconomic achievement gap are reduced by the same degree (25%). The significance of these results is discussed, especially as it pertains to the attitudes that people frequently have toward school choice.

Not only do children do better in non-public schools, but the competition forces public schools to focus less on leftist indoctrination, and more on reading, writing and math.

This study from the on-partisan National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) explains why.

It says:

> A school that is more productive is one that produces higher achievement in its pupils for each dollar it spends. In this paper, I comprehensively review how school choice might affect productivity. I begin by describing the importance of school productivity, then explain the economic logic that suggests that choice will affect productivity, and finish by presenting much of the available evidence on school choice and school productivity. The most intriguing evidence comes from three important, recent choice reforms: vouchers in Milwaukee, charter schools in Michigan, and charter schools in Arizona. I show that public school

> students' achievement rose significantly and rapidly in response to competition, under each of the three reforms. Public school spending was unaffected, so the productivity of public schools rose, dramatically in the case in Milwaukee.

School choice makes public schools perform better because competition between providers always lowers the cost and increases the quality of services and products being provided to the consumers. Consumers always suffer when there is a monopoly. This is why people are more satisfied purchasing goods from Amazon and Netflix than they are lining up at the post office or the department of motor vehicles. The free market serves the consumer.

I was raised in a poor background, and I am a visible minority. If Republicans want to get the votes of people in my community, it makes sense to put in place policies that allow people like me to get a good education so we can get good jobs and do better than our parents did. Republicans should be all about equipping people to be independent and self-sufficient. These are conservative goals.

Study: women seeking to have a child should start before age 32

March 5, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

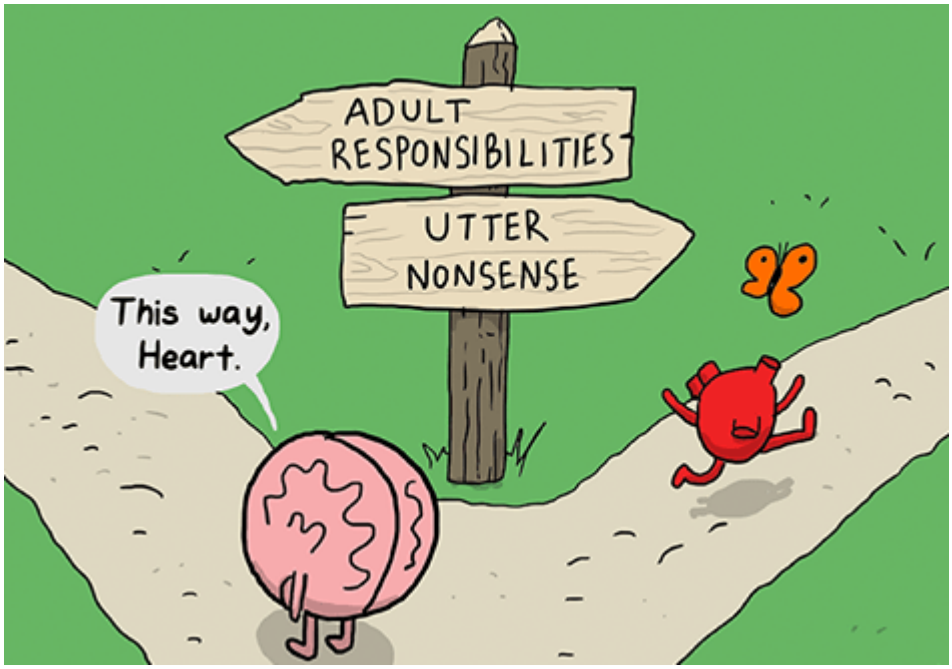

Brain vs Heart, from: theawkwardyeti.com

Dina sent me this sobering piece of research from the New Scientist which is perfect for all the young feminists who have been taught in college that marriage should be put off, and women can easily get pregnant after age 40.

Excerpt:

> It's a question many people will ask themselves at some point in their lives: when should I start a family? If you know how many children you'd like, and whether or not you would consider, or could afford, IVF, a computer model can suggest when to start trying for your first child.
>
> Happy with just one? The model recommends you get started by age 32 to have a 90 per cent chance of realising your dream without IVF. A brood of three would mean starting by age 23 to have the same chance of success. Wait until 35 and the odds are 50:50 (see "When to get started").
>
> The suggestions are based on averages pulled from a swathe of data so don't give a personal prediction. And of course, things aren't this simple in real life – if only family size and feelings about IVF were the only factors to consider when planning a family. But the idea behind the model is to help people make a decision by condensing all the information out there into an accessible form.
>
> "We have tried to fill a missing link in the decision-making process," says Dik Habbema at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, one of the creators of the model. "My son is 35 and many of his friends have a problem deciding when to have children because there are so many things they want to

> do.”
>
> It’s a scenario that will be familiar to many; the age at which people have their first child has been creeping up over the last 40 or so years. For example, the average age at which a woman has her first child is 28 in the UK and has reached 30 in Italy, Spain and Switzerland. In the US, the birth rate for women in their 20s has hit a record low, while the figures for those over 35 have increased over the last few decades.
>
> The decision is more pressing for women thanks to their limited supply of eggs, which steadily drop in quantity and quality with age. Female fertility is thought to start declining at 30, with a more significant fall after the age of 35.
>
> […]The new model incorporates data from studies that assess how fertility naturally declines with age. The team took information on natural fertility from population data collected over 300 years up to the 1970s, which includes data on 58,000 women.

I have often tried to talk to young women about the need to get their lives in gear. I advise them to work summers during high school, obtain a STEM degree in university, minimize borrowing money by going to community college for the generic prerequisites, don’t have premarital sex, get a job related to their STEM field straight out of college, pay off their debts, move out of their parents’ house, start investing from the first paycheck, marry between age 25-30, and then start having children after the first two “stabilizing” years of marriage. This is sound advice, rooted in my careful reconnaissance of the things that human beings care about and need in their old age. This advice is not bullying, it comes from reading many, many relevant papers. It comes from putting the knowledge gained from reading the papers into practice, and seeing results where appropriate.

I am giving you the numbers. Straight out of a peer-reviewed study. Don’t follow your heart. Don’t listen to your friends. Follow the science. Make your decisions within the boundaries of reality. God will not save you from foolish decisions.

Related posts

- Top fertility specialist advises women: don’t wait till 30 to try to have children
- Should Christians be motivated by the fear of missing out (FOMO)?
- New study: marrying in your mid-to-late 20s confers benefits
- Fertility and pregnancy: how long can a woman wait before having a baby?
- Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sex and sexuality at Harvard University

Alliance Defending Freedom defeats secular left fascist Colorado Civil Rights Commission

March 6, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

When we last heard about Jack Phillips, we had good news: he won his case against the Colorado LGBT fascists at the Supreme Court. But they weren't done persecuting him, yet! Almost immediately after the SCOTUS win, they charged him again for refusing to bake another LGBT cake. Fortunately for Jack, the Alliance Defending Freedom defended him again.

Here's the latest from Daily Wire:

> Christian cake artist Jack Phillips has scored a major victory after facing years of continuous persecution for his religious beliefs from LGBT activists and the Colorado Civil Rights Commission.
>
> The Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a Christian nonprofit that advocates for religious freedom and traditional values, announced Tuesday that the Colorado Civil Rights Commission "will dismiss its most recent charges against cake artist Jack Phillips in the wake of newly discovered evidence of the state's ongoing hostility toward religious freedom."
>
> In response to the clearly-targeted harassment of Mr. Phillips, ADF attorneys filed *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Elenis*.
>
> "We're pleased that the state will be dismissing its case against Jack," said ADF attorney Kristen Waggoner, who represented Phillips in *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission.* "This is the second time the state has launched a failed effort to prosecute him. While it finally appears to be getting the message that its anti-religious hostility has no place in our country, the state's decision to target Jack has cost him more than six-and-a-half years of his

> life, forcing him to spend that time tied up in legal proceedings."

This sort of coercion by the secular left happens *all the time.*

I've reported on this blog about fake hate crimes, vandalism, violence, threats, death threats, attempted firings, actual firings, and many other power plays. So why do secular left fascists insist on persecuting people who disagree with them on moral issues? Why are they so comfortable using polical power to coerce others against their conscience?

Well, it turns out that there are some behaviors that the Bible calls sinful. And when people perform those behaviors, they start to feel guilty about what they are doing. That's because God made people to not sin. Now, some people deal with these feelings of guilt about their sin by repenting, and turning towards God, and trusting him. But others just shut their minds to the evidence for God's existence, e.g. – the Big Bang cosmology, the fine-tuning, the origin of life. Without God, they are forced into the view that objective morality, free will, and moral duties are all illusory. But they still feel badly about their sin. In order to deal with those bad feelings, they try to force everyone who still accepts morality to celebrate their abandonment of morality. And when asking others to agree doesn't work, they go on to shame, silence and/or coerce others. And as we've seen on this blog, this can involve doing pretty much anything you can imagine. Sin makes people do terrible, terrible things to those who disagree with sin.

Are Christians tolerant?

Now let's switch sides. What does a Christian do when faced with disagreement from a non-Christian? Well, Christians learn by watching God what to do with sinners. What does God do? God provides evidence of his existence to those who are open minded, and he leads those who trust him to make better moral decisions so that they don't harm themselves and others by being self-centered. Christians also debate and disagree with arguments and evidence. Also, consider that God could squash everyone who disagreed with him right now, but he doesn't. He's giving them their whole lives to decide what to do with him. He offers evidence, forgiveness and leadership to those are open-hearted, and open-minded. But the others, he just leaves alone for now. And that's what Christians do with non-Christians. We leave them alone. While a non-Christian is still alive, they have to be appealed to rationally, and treated with love and care. They have value because they were made in the image of God, to know the God who made them in a personal relationship. Christians believe that if a person doesn't believe in Christ as Lord and Savior, then that person shouldn't be forced to act as if they do by threats, violence, etc.

Tolerance and the secular left

But what about the secular left? The secular left are fascists, because they want Christians to behave as if they were non-Christians. And that's why Christians need to do everything they can in the realm of law and policy to prevent secular leftists from getting into power. Secular leftists can't ground objective morality or natural human rights on their worldview. Human rights have no meaning for secular leftists – they're just nonsense. So, for them, anything is permissible in their quest to force others to approve

of them. That’s why secular leftists need to be kept as far away from political power as the East is from the West. If you want to know what happens when they get it, just look at the atrocities committed by atheistic regimes in the 20th century, e.g. – the Soviety Union. People on the secular left are not moral people. Morality is the furthest thing from their minds.

N.T. Wright lectures on the seven mutations caused by resurrection of Jesus

March 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's a video of his case for the resurrection:

You can read a written version of the lecture here.

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable* apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an

invented exaltation was already available to do the job.

3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.
5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

Should government get out of the marriage business?

March 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Here are three articles by Jennifer Roback Morse posted at The Public Discourse. The articles answer the charge from social liberals and libertarians that government should "get the government out of marriage".

Here's the first article which talks about how government will still be involved in marriage, even if we get rid of the traditional definition of marriage, because of the need for dispute resolution in private marriage contracts. She uses no-fault divorce as an example showing how it was sold as a way to get government out of the divorce business. But by making divorce easier by making it require no reason, it increased the number of disputes and the need for *more government intervention* to resolve these disputes.

Here's the second article which talks about how the government will have to expand to resolve conflicts over decisions about who counts as a parent and who gets parental rights. With traditional marriage, identifying who the parents are is easy. But with private marriage contracts where the parties are not the biological parents, there is a need for the state to step in and assign parental rights. Again, this will require an expansion of government to resolve the disputes.

Here's the third article which talks about how marriage is necessary in order to defend the needs and rights of the child at a time when they cannot enter into contracts and be parties to legal disputes.

The third article was my favorite, so here is an excerpt from it:

> The fact of childhood dependence raises a whole series of questions. How do we get from a position of helpless dependence and complete self-centeredness, to a

> position of independence and respect for others? Are our views of the child somehow related to the foundations of a free society? And, to ask a question that may sound like heresy to libertarian ears: Do the needs of children place legitimate demands and limitations on the behavior of adults?
>
> I came to the conclusion that a free society needs adults who can control themselves, and who have consciences. A free society needs people who can use their freedom, without bothering other people too much. We need to respect the rights of others, keep our promises, and restrain ourselves from taking advantage of others.
>
> We learn to do these things inside the family, by being in a relationship with our parents. We can see this by looking at attachment- disordered children and failure-to-thrive children from orphanages and foster care. These children have their material needs met, for food, clothing, and medical care. But they are not held, or loved, or looked at. They simply do not develop properly, without mothers and fathers taking personal care of them. Some of them never develop consciences. But a child without a conscience becomes a real problem: this is exactly the type of child who does whatever he can get away with. A free society can't handle very many people like that, and still function.
>
> In other words I asked, "Do the needs of society place constraints on how we treat children?" But even this analysis still views the child from society's perspective. It is about time we look at it from the child's point of view, and ask a different kind of question. *What is owed to the child*?
>
> **Children are entitled to a relationship with both of their parents. They are entitled to know who they are and where they came from. Therefore children have a legitimate interest in the stability of their parents' union, since that is ordinarily how kids have relationships with both parents. If Mom and Dad are quarreling, or if they live on opposite sides of the country, the child's connection with one or both of them is seriously impaired.**
>
> **But children cannot defend their rights themselves. Nor is it adequate to intervene after the fact, after harm already has been done. Children's relational and identity rights must be protected proactively.**
>
> **Marriage is society's institutional structure for protecting these legitimate rights and interests of children.**

I recommend taking a look at all three articles and becoming familiar with the arguments in case you have to explain why marriage matters and why we should not change it. I think it is important to read these articles and to be clear that to be a libertarian doctrine does not protect the right of a child to have a relationship with both his or her parents. Nor does libertarianism promote the idea that parents ought to stick together for their children. Libertarianism means that adults get to do what they want, and no one speaks for the kids.

The purpose of marriage is to make adults make careful commitments, and restrain their desires and feelings, so that children will have a stable environment with their biological parents nearby. We do make exceptions, but we should not celebrate exceptions and we should not subsidize exceptions. It’s not fair to children to have to grow up without a mother or father just so that adults can pursue fun and thrills.

Wage gap: are women paid less than men because of discrimination?

March 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Far-left social media giant Google pays men less than women

Liberal feminist Hanna Rosin takes a look at this question in the far-left Slate, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The official Bureau of Labor Department statistics show that the median earnings of full-time female workers is 77 percent of the median earnings of full-time male workers. But that is very different than "77 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men." The latter gives the impression that a man and a woman standing next to each other doing the same job for the same number of hours get paid different salaries. That's not at all the case. "Full time" officially means 35 hours, but men work more hours than women. That's the first problem: We could be comparing men working 40 hours to women working 35.

> How to get a more accurate measure? First, instead of comparing annual wages, start by comparing average weekly wages. This is considered a slightly more accurate measure because it eliminates variables like time off during the year or annual bonuses (and yes, men get higher bonuses, but let's shelve that for a moment in our quest for a pure wage gap number). By this measure, women earn 81 percent of what men earn, although it varies widely by race. African-American women, for example, earn 94 percent of what African-American men earn in a typical week. Then, when you restrict the comparison to men and women working 40 hours a week, the gap narrows to 87 percent.

> But we're still not close to measuring women "doing the same work as men." For

> that, we'd have to adjust for many other factors that go into determining salary. Economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn did that in a recent paper, "The Gender Pay Gap.".”They first accounted for education and experience. That didn't shift the gap very much, because women generally have at least as much and usually more education than men, and since the 1980s they have been gaining the experience. The fact that men are more likely to be in unions and have their salaries protected accounts for about 4 percent of the gap. The big differences are in occupation and industry. Women congregate in different professions than men do, and the largely male professions tend to be higher-paying. If you account for those differences, and then compare a woman and a man doing the same job, the pay gap narrows to 91 percent. So, you could accurately say in that Obama ad that, "women get paid 91 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men."

I believe that the remainder of the gap can be accounted for by looking at other *voluntary* factors that differentiate men and women.

The Heritage Foundation says that a recent study puts the number at 95 cents per dollar.

Excerpt:

> Women are more likely than men to work in industries with more flexible schedules. Women are also more likely to spend time outside the labor force to care for children. These choices have benefits, but they also reduce pay—for both men and women. When economists control for such factors, they find the gender gap largely disappears.
>
> A 2009 study commissioned by the Department of Labor found that after controlling for occupation, experience, and other choices, women earn 95 percent as much as men do. In 2005, June O'Neil, the former director of the Congressional Budget Office, found that "There is no gender gap in wages among men and women with similar family roles." Different choices—not discrimination—account for different employment and wage outcomes.

A popular article by Carrie Lukas in the Wall Street Journal agrees.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Labor's Time Use survey shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. One would expect that someone who works 9% more would also earn more. This one fact alone accounts for more than a third of the wage gap.
>
> […]Recent studies have shown that the wage gap shrinks—or even reverses—when relevant factors are taken into account and comparisons are made between men and women in similar circumstances. In a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30, the research firm

> Reach Advisors found that women earned an average of 8% more than their male counterparts. Given that women are outpacing men in educational attainment, and that our economy is increasingly geared toward knowledge-based jobs, it makes sense that women's earnings are going up compared to men's.

When women make different choices about education and labor that are more like what men choose, they earn just as much or more than men.

Read or listen to F. A. Hayek's classic book "The Road to Serfdom" for free

March 9, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

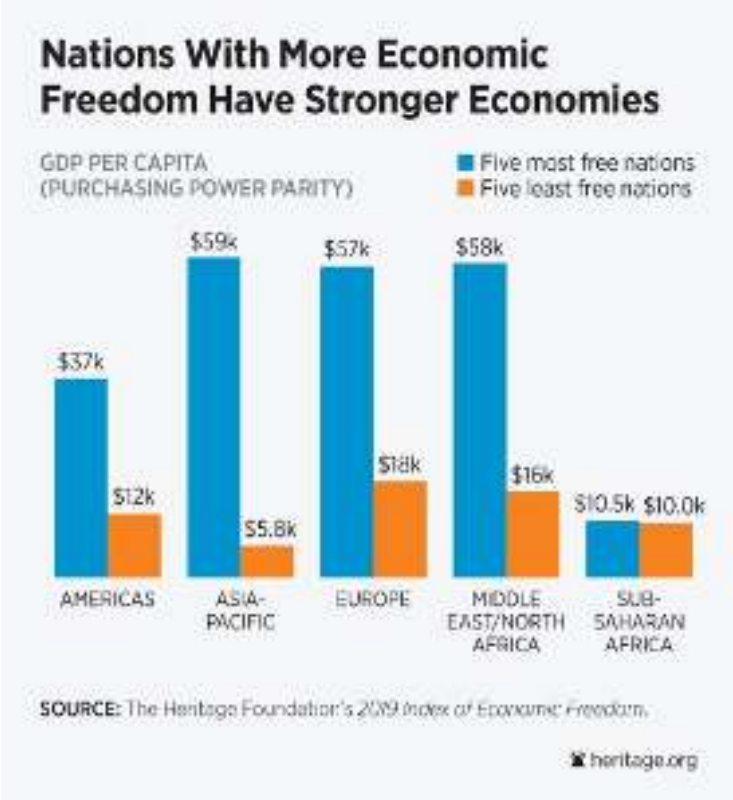

No matter where you go, more freedom means more prosperity

I want to recommend to everyone a famous book about how socialism leads to mass murder by government. The book is written by Nobel prize winner F. A. Hayek. This is one of my favorite books on economics. The full PDF of the book is available for download on archive.org.

The audio version is available FOR FREE on YouTube:

Outline:

- 00:17 Foreword
- 37:58 Preface
- 41:51 Preface 1976
- 50:09 Introduction
- 1:08:46 Ch1 The Abandoned Road
- 1:37:31 Ch2 The Great Utopia
- 1:54:46 Ch3 Individualism and Collectivism
- 2:18:32 Ch4 The Inevitability of Planning
- 2:45:52 Ch5 Planning and Democracy
- 3:20:06 Ch6 Planning and the Rule of Law
- 3:54:33 Ch7 Economic Control and Totalitarianism
- 4:23:01 Ch8 Who, Whom

- 5:00:49 Ch9 Security and Freedom
- 5:31:27 Ch10 Why the Worst Get On Top
- 6:11:01 Ch11 The End of Truth
- 6:38:41 Ch12 The Socialist Roots of Nazism
- 7:09:40 Ch13 The Totalitarians in Our Midst
- 7:54:43 Ch14 Material Conditions and Ideal Ends
- 8:33:17 Ch15 The Prospects of International Order
- 9:14:55 Ch16 Conclusion

All you need is 8.5 hours to listen to it. You won't regret it, I promise. I have listened to the audiobook at least a dozen times. If that's too long, there is a condensed version of the book.

They Hayek Center talks about condensed version of the book:

> Max Eastman and the editors of *Reader's Digest* wrote the condensed version of Friedrich Hayek's "The Road to Serfdom" (pdf), which was read by millions of Americans at home and by servicemen all of the world when it was published in April of 1945. It was the *Reader's Digest* condensed version which turned Hayek's little book into an American sensation — and Hayek into a public celebrity. *The Reader's Digest* had a circulation at the time of more the 5 million copies, and the little journal was provided to each American serviceman, at home and abroad.
>
> […]An additional 600,000 copies of the condensed version were later printed and distributed through the Book of the Month club and by non-profit civic groups.

Can you imagine what it would have been like to live at a time where everyone clearly understood the danger of letting government administrators centrally plan an economy? But the new generation of young Americans have lost that knowledge, and they are voting for the people who will lead them down the road to serfdom.

Was Stalin an atheist? Is atheism or communism responsible for mass murders?

March 10, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Let's take a look at what Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

Let's see more from a peer-reviewed journal article authored by Crispin Paine of the University College, London:

> Atheist propaganda and the struggle against religion began immediately after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917. While social change would, under Marxist theory, bring religion to disappear, Leninists argued that the Party should actively help to eradicate religion as a vital step in creating 'New Soviet Man'. The energy with which the Party struggled against religion, though, varied considerably from time to time and from place to place, as did its hostility to particular faith groups. The 1920s saw the closure of innumerable churches and synagogues (and to a

> lesser extent mosques) and the active persecution of clergy and harassment of believers. From 1930, though, Stalin introduced a less aggressive approach, and wartime support for the government earned for the Russian Orthodox Church, at least, a level of toleration which lasted until Stalin's death. Under Khrushchev antireligious efforts resumed, if spasmodically, and they lasted until the end of the Soviet Union.

An article from the pro-communism Marxist.com web site says this about Stalin:

> During the ultra-left period of forcible collectivisation and the Five Year Plan in Four an attempt was made to liquidate the Church and its influence by government decree. Starting in 1929 churches were forcibly closed and priests arrested and exiled all over the Soviet Union. The celebrated Shrine of the Iberian Virgin in Moscow – esteemed by believers to be the "holiest" in all Russia was demolished – Stalin and his Government were not afraid of strengthening religious fanaticism by wounding the feelings of believers as Lenin and Trotsky had been! Religion, they believed, could be liquidated, like the kulak, by a stroke of the pen. The Society of Militant Atheists, under Stalin's orders, issued on May 15th 1932, the "Five Year Plan of Atheism" – by May 1st 1937, such as the "Plan", "not a single house of prayer shall remain in the territory of the USSR, and the very concept of God must be banished from the Soviet Union as a survival of the Middle Ages and an instrument for the oppression of the working masses."!

Now, if all you read were atheist web sites, you'd think that Stalin loved religion and wasn't opposed to Christianity at all. An atheist I know told me that Stalin was a Christian because that's what he was as a child at one point. Funny sort of way to carry out your Christian faith, isn't it? If you read atheist web sites, you'd expect Stalin to have had the career of a William Lane Craig or a J.P. Moreland. And yet in the fever swamp of atheist web sites, this is what they tell themselves. They believe it because they want to believe it. They have to believe it, in order to keep God at bay.

Now, if you were going to pick a hero of the Christian faith, you'd probably pick a real fundamentalist like William Wilberforce, who freed the slaves – because of his evangelical Christian convictions. Wilberforce took Christianity seriously – he believed every verse of the Bible, he tried to convert people to his faith, and he pushed his faith on others by passing laws. He was the worst nightmare of atheism – a politically active Evangelical Christian.

But who is a great atheist who was politically active? When I think of a great atheist, someone who really did the most to oppose the "lie" of God's existence, I think of Josef Stalin. So what kind of morality can we expect from someone who takes the message of Richard Dawkins and Dan Barker seriously and has the political power to really do something about it?

The Ukraine Famine

Take a look at this UK Daily Mail article about a great achievement of the atheist Josef Stalin, which occurred in 1932-1933.

Excerpt:

> Now, 75 years after one of the great forgotten crimes of modern times, Stalin's man-made famine of 1932/3, the former Soviet republic of Ukraine is asking the world to classify it as a genocide.
>
> The Ukrainians call it the Holodomor – the Hunger.
>
> Millions starved as Soviet troops and secret policemen raided their villages, stole the harvest and all the food in villagers' homes.
>
> They dropped dead in the streets, lay dying and rotting in their houses, and some women became so desperate for food that they ate their own children.
>
> If they managed to fend off starvation, they were deported and shot in their hundreds of thousands.
>
> So terrible was the famine that Igor Yukhnovsky, director of the Institute of National Memory, the Ukrainian institution researching the Holodomor, believes **as many as nine million may have died.**
>
> […]Between four and five million died in Ukraine, a million died in Kazakhstan and another million in the north Caucasus and the Volga.
>
> By 1933, 5.7 million households – somewhere between ten million and 15 million people – had vanished. They had been deported, shot or died of starvation.

This is what follows when you believe that the universe is an accident, that there is no objective good and evil, that human beings are just animals, that no God will hold us accountable, and that human beings are not made in the image of God for the purpose of freely choosing to come into a relationship with him. The Ukrainian famine is an action that came from a man whose worldview was *passionate atheism.*

Atheism today

You might think that today's atheists are much different than Josef Stalin, but understand that according to a recent survey of atheists conducted by atheists, 97% of atheists are pro-abortion. How many people have been killed by abortion? 56 million in the United States alone. Atheists in a society like ours, founded on Judeo-Christian values, are obviously going to live a lot better than Stalin. For one thing, they don't have the power that Stalin had to eradicate theism, although you can see Stalinism in the anti-Christian activities of groups like the Freedom From Religion Foundation. But take away the Judeo-Christian foundations of this society, and what would you see atheists doing?

Remember the words of Richard Dawkins:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by

> rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

Now, having said that, I readily admit that many atheists adopt Judeo-Christian values if their society is saturated with them, but they are acting better than their worldview requires. They are acting *inconsistently* with what atheism really teaches. It's good for us that they do, but for how long?

New study: children of working single mothers are 25% more likely to be obese

March 11, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

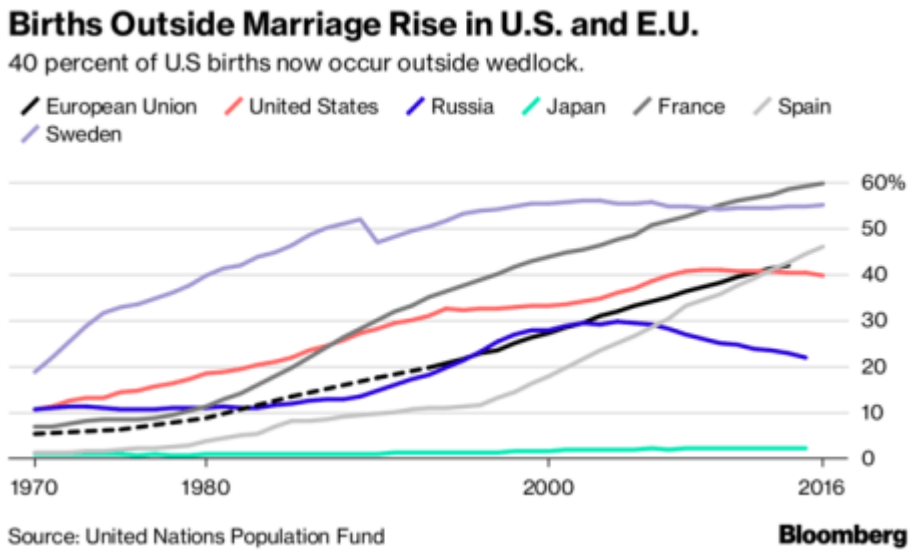

Out-of-wedlocks births rising as cohabitation replaces marriage

It's getting to be very common for women to have children out of wedlock, especially since many countries increase welfare programs design to encourage single motherhood. That's because of feminism, which encourages women to ignore the traditional male virtues, like commitment, and tradional commitment itself (because marriage is "sexist"). But do children do well in the fatherless homes created by feminism and welfare?

Here's a recent study reported in the UK Sun. (H/T Thomas)

Excerpt:

> SCIENTISTS have laid the blame for Britain's childhood obesity epidemic at the door of working mothers, in a new study.
>
> The shocking findings also claim the kids of mums who work are negatively affected – whereas the father's employment appears to have no "significant effect".
>
> A study carried out by University College London looked at 20,000 families, and is the first to link mums who work to the weight of their children.
>
> Professor Emla Fitzsimons told The Sunday Times: "We find that children whose mothers work are more likely to have increased sedentary behaviour and poorer dietary habits."
>
> Researchers said the bizarre findings were more obvious for single mums who work full-time, but also revealed a pattern with mums who work and have a partner.
>
> But the study added it doesn't matter if mums work full-time or part-time, their

> child is still more likely to be fatter than that of a non working mum.
>
> It describes obesity as "the most common chronic disease of childhood and likely to persist into adulthood with far-reaching effects".
>
> And found teens and children have gained weight over the past four decades along with a rise in working mums – with kids of single working mothers 25 per cent more likely to be overweight.
>
> It suggested kids of mums who work full time are 29 per cent less likely to eat a regular breakfast and 19 per cent more likely to watch TV for more than three hours a day.

The UK is one of the countries that most strongly embraced feminism, and sought to encourage fatherlessness with unfair divorce laws, unfair divorce courts, and generous benefits for women who divorced with kids or never bothered to even marry before having kids. It's common now for UK single mothers to just have sex with the hottest guys they can find, knock out babies with all the different "fathers", and sit back and collect welfare. Welfare funded by the ever-shrinking supply of working husbands, who typically earn the most, and therefore pay the most in taxes.

But's not just working SINGLE mothers who have problems.

The UK Daily Mail (reporting on the same study) notes that the increase in obese children mirrors the growth in women working part-time or full-time outside the home:

> […][T]he dramatic increase in the numbers of obese children and teenagers over the past four decades had been accompanied by a similarly sharp rise in the employment of mothers.
>
> In the UK, the proportion of working mothers with children under the age of five rose from 31 per cent in 1980 to 58 per cent in 2008.

The UK prioritized getting women out of the home and working, and handing children off to day cares and public schools. Even the conservative party refused to give women a tax incentive to raise their young children. They gave the tax credit to working mothers instead, encouraging more women to abandon their children for work.

The Root Cause of the Problem

We really need to discourage women from starting up relationships with men who aren't interested in commitment. When women treat relationships as a source of "fun" instead of as an enterprise aimed at commitment and stability, they often end up raising fatherless kids. The problems begin with the woman's choice of man, and her purpose for the relationship. If she expects the relationship to be about entertaining her, then she will choose an entertaining man. One who doesn't expect her to do anything she doesn't feel like doing, and has no particular plan for her, or raising children well.

Many women today, even Christian women, love to laugh and scorn the idea that there are any "best practices" for relationships. They know everything there is to know – without having to read any studies that might force them to control their desires and

make plans to succeed that involve self-denial and wisdom. But if you ignore the studies, you can be certain that you and your children will pay the price. There's no sense expect hunky fun bad boys to "man up" after you've already given them premarital sex. The time to get men to act like a man is when the woman chooses who to have a relationship with. If you choose a MAN, who protects, provides and leads on moral and spiritual issues, then you get a REAL MAN who is already MANNED UP.

The solution to problems like abortion and fatherless children is to encourage young women to make better decisions when choosing men for relationships – and to prioritize marriage as the goal of their relationships, too. It would be nice if pastors preached a little self-control, chastity and anti-feminism to women in churches. So far, though, I've never seen it. The Christian church approach to the problems caused by fatherlessness seems to be "let women make poor choices, then tell them it's not their fault, then blame men".

Recent examples of law-abiding gun owners defending themselves from criminals

March 12, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
A woman defending herself from an armed home invader with her handgun
I've noticed that people outside America sometimes don't understand why Americans are so committed to owning firearms. Well, first of all, it's specified in our Constitution that we are allowed to keep and bear arms. And second of all, it's not always feasible to call the police and wait for them to arrive when a criminal shows up and menaces us or our loved ones.

And I have an example from just last week from ABC local news.

Excerpt:

> A robbery suspect was killed and a second ran away after a liquor store clerk opened fire in southeast Houston, police say.
>
> The clerk opened fire during a robbery Wednesday night at Mike's Liquor Store in the 8700 block of MLK Boulevard near Reed.
>
> Houston police said that at least two armed suspects went into the store, where two employees were working at the time.
>
> One of the employees had a concealed handgun license and got into a shootout with the suspects.
>
> The robbery suspect who was shot managed to escape, but died a short time later just south of the store.
>
> The suspect's body was found by police, who put two and two together after receiving a call for a robbery at the store.
>
> The employees were not injured.

Now, you might think that this self-defense stuff only happens once or twice a year, and the rest of the times guns are coming alive by themselves, and just flying around shooting children randomly. But actually, the number of defensive gun uses *far outweighs* the number of accidental deaths.

The Daily Signal had an article on this, with a bunch more examples from last month.

I just grabbed a few of my favorites from the article:

> - **Feb. 5**: A Nashville, Tennessee, woman was attacked from behind by a would-be purse thief, who proceeded to repeatedly slam the woman's head into a wall when she resisted him. The woman's husband heard her cries for help and came to her defense, firing his gun at the thief and causing him to flee.

- **Feb. 9**: When three armed men attempted to rob a Little Caesars restaurant in North Fort Myers, Florida, a patron inside pulled his own firearm to defend other customers. One suspect was shot and the other two fled.

- **Feb. 12**: A homeowner in Jackson County, Georgia, heard someone trying to break into her house through a window. She found a man standing outside and warned him not to come into the house. Nevertheless, the man broke the glass window, so the armed homeowner shot him.

- **Feb. 13**: Sullivan County, Tennessee, Sheriff Jeff Cassidy praised the actions of a concealed carry permit holder who ended a deadly domestic violence incident at a dentist's office. The armed citizen shot and detained an active shooter who killed his wife and may have planned to harm others in the office.

- **Feb. 20**: A 79-year-old Commerce, Georgia, homeowner called 911 to report a burglary in progress after she heard someone breaking into her home. The burglar ignored her threats and came in through an upstairs window before police could arrive. The homeowner shot at the burglar, who was so scared that he hid in a closet until the police arrived.

- **Feb. 26**: The Mobile County, Alabama, Sheriff's Office posted a Facebook video showing an armed local homeowner's recent encounter with two would-be burglars. The burglars attempted to enter the occupied home in broad daylight, and were only deterred when the homeowner fired her handgun at them.

- **Feb. 28**: Two men helped rescue a woman from a would-be kidnapper in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, after seeing her struggle to escape on the side of the road. After the two men stopped their car, one of them pulled out his handgun, prompting the suspect to flee. He was later apprehended and confessed to kidnapping the woman.

Daily Signal did the same thing for January, and I grabbed a few of my favorites for January, too:

- **Jan. 2:** The security officer of a grocery store in Loomis, California, confronted a couple suspected of shoplifting. When one of them pulled a knife and tried to stab the security guard, a good Samaritan with a concealed weapons permit drew his firearm, stopped the confrontation, and held the couple at the scene until law enforcement arrived.

- **Jan. 9:** An Arizona man awoke to the sound of four intruders breaking into his home. He flicked his lights on and off several times to warn the intruders that someone was home, hoping this would cause them to flee. But the intruders proceeded to smash windows and enter through the back door. The homeowner opened fire, hitting all four intruders and killing one.

- **Jan. 10:** A Florida resident held an intruder at gunpoint until law enforcement could arrive. The man had broken into the garage and was in the process of filling his bag with the homeowner's firearms and ammunition.

- **Jan. 23:** Police responded to a 9-1-1 call from St. Louis, Missouri, resident who used his firearm to protect the other people in his home from three armed men attempting to force their way inside. One intruder was shot and killed on the scene while the other two fled.

- **Jan. 28**: A woman arrived at her Campobello, South Carolina, home to find it being burglarized for the second time in just a few weeks. She shot one of the three intruders, while the other two fled the scene and were later arrested by law enforcement

It's very important that law-abiding people be allowed to defend themselves and their loved ones from criminals. And that's why law-abiding Americans are so committed to being able to own firearms and obtain concealed carry permits.

Ben Shapiro promotes books that challenge atheism and naturalistic evolution on his podcast

March 13, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Come here, Mr. Dragon, I want a word with you

So, I was listening Ben Shapiro's podcast, and he mentioned how he had been reading Stephen C. Meyer's "Signature in the Cell", which makes the case for intelligent design in the origin of the first living system. Dr. Meyer is a Christian, and got his PhD from Cambridge University. His work is the most effective statement of the case for intelligent design. His second book, "Darwin's Doubt", strengthens his argument for intelligent design by discussing the sudden origin of body plans in the fossil record.

Ben also mentioned that he was reading agnostic biologist Michael Denton's book "Evolution: Still a Theory in Crisis", which is a comprehensive argument against naturalistic evolution. If that were not enough, he has previously mentioned reading "On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision" by Dr. William Lane Craig, and Ed Feser's book "Five Proofs of the Existence of God". He's already had Ed Feser on his podcast, and William Lane Craig was mentioned as a future guest.

I posted this good news on my Facebook page and declared something like: 1) "Wow! Isn't it great that this Jewish conservative thinker is publicizing arguments to his audience that will help people explore belief in God, and evaluate naturalistic evolution?" and 2) "I wish that more Christians were reading these books, and that pastors in the churches encouraged Christians to read them, too".

In a later dialog, I also mentioned how good it was for Jordan Peterson to have tweeted an article about the minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus to his massive audience.

Peterson also had a dialog with William Lane Craig where Dr. Craig presented his arguments for Christianity. Many people went to that dialog to hear Dr. Peterson, but they came away having heard the arguments of Dr. Craig – the most able defender of Christianity today. I considered both the tweet and the dialog to be good things, because any time evidence for the Christian worldview is promoted to large audiences, it is good for the Kingdom of God. Most people haven't heard of this evidence, and they are settling these important questions based on their feelings, or what the popular culture tells them. It is good for people who are still deciding the big questions to know that there is real evidence to evaluate before they decide.

Two women disagreed

Imagine my surprise when two Christian women I was friends with on Facebook disapproved of my two observations.

The first one said this exactly:

"What difference does it make if he has all the knowledge in the world and not Christ? Maybe I'm missing something?"

And the second one is even worse than the first:

"What good is the evidence, though, if people remain in unbelief toward Jesus, as Peterson and Shapiro do."

Does the Bible support the use of evidence?

As I blogged before, the Bible records believers in God using evidence to convince non-believers from the start through to the finish. Whether it's the miracles of Moses, Elijah on Mount Carmel, or Jesus' miracles, or the resurrection, you can barely find a page where evidence is not being *presented to non-believers* in order to get them to believe. That is God's approach, it's seen in Jesus offering "the Sign of Jonah" (his resurrection) to unbelievers. These people were not saved FIRST. Evidence was presented to them FIRST. Evidence was part of God's saving initiative in the lives of these non-believers. They were expected to evaluate and respond to the evidence when it was presented to them.

Why did they say it?

So then why not get excited when influential people promote resources filled with evidence relevant to the big questions of life?

First, some people think of Christianity as being about themselves. One Christian woman I worked for once told me why she wouldn't read books about apologetics: "there's enough unhappiness in the world already, I'm sure God doesn't want me to do anything that would make me feel unhappy". This woman was a troop leader for the "Calvinettes", the Reformed equivalent of the Girl Scouts. She saw Christianity as being about her, and her feelings. Any expectations, responsibilities, obligations, etc. in the Bible could easily be dismissed, because she knew (from her feelings) that God would never want her to do anything that would make her feel unhappy.

Her view was: "Who cares about those people over there in the university, in Hollywood, in government, and in the Supreme Court, who are discussing whether God exists and

whether evolution is true? I shouldn't have to do any work to convince them that the Christian worldview is correct about these big questions." It doesn't matter to some people whether Christianity is respected as a "live option" in the marketplace of ideas. It doesn't matter whether the rationality of the Christian worldview is diminished in the culture. They don't care about being ready with an answer to questions from college professors, co-workers, and children. God's concern for the universe begins and ends with *their happiness*.

There are conversations going on out there in the culture about big questions. How did the universe begin? Does God exist? How did life begin? Is there life after death? Is anything really right or wrong? We should read good books in order to know how to participate in those conversations with non-Christians. And we should rejoice when influential non-Christians recommend those books to people still leaning and deciding those big questions.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

William Lane Craig answers: how can the four gospels be independent sources?

March 14, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

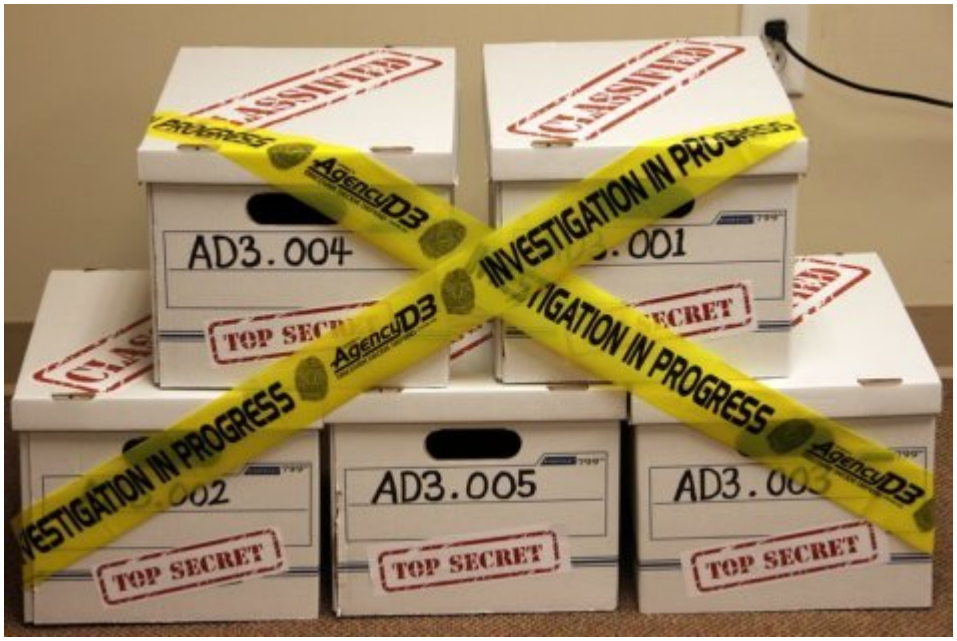

Investigation in progress

Previously, I blogged about the historical criteria that historians use to evaluate documents. One of the criteria is "multiple independent sources". If a story is reported in multiple independent sources, then historians are more likely to evaluate it as historically accurate. But how about the four gospels? Are they independent sources? The answer might not be what you expect.

Here's how the question was put to Dr. Craig:

> The latest video, "Did Jesus Rise From the Dead," is especially compelling, but I had a question about it. In the part one video, you cite as evidence, the Gospels plus Acts and First Corinthians and you refer to them as "independent" and "unconnected" sources. But this isn't exactly true, is it? After all, two of these books were written by the same author, Luke, and so Luke and Acts are connected by authorship. Furthermore, isn't it true that much information relayed in Matthew and Luke were taken from Mark? This two facts would make it untrue to call the Gospels "independent" and "unconnected" would they not?

Here's the video he's talking about:

Dr. Craig answers the question in his latest question of the week. I think this answer is important for those who aren't aware of how the gospels are organized.

He writes:

> The objection is based on a simple misunderstanding. It assumes that the sources I'm referring to are the books of the New Testament. But that's not what

> I'm talking about.
>
> New Testament critics have identified a number of sources behind the New Testament, sources on which the New Testament authors drew. For example, Matthew and Luke drew not only upon Mark as a source but also upon a source which scholars designate "Q," which appears to have been a source containing Jesus' sayings or teachings. Thus, if you could show that a saying in Matthew or Luke appears in both Mark and Q, that would count as multiple, independent attestation.

What does this mean? It means that although there is overlap between Matthew and Luke, called "Q", there are actually three independent sources there: Matthew's source, called M. Luke's source, called L. And the material common to Matthew and Luke, which therefore PRE-DATES Matthew and Luke, called Q.

Dr. Craig lists out several independent sources in his full reply:

1. the pre-Markan Passion story used by Mark
2. the rest of the gospel of Mark has a source
3. Matthew's source (M)
4. Luke's source (L)
5. John's gospel which is very different from Mark, Luke and Matthew
6. the sermons in Acts have a source
7. the early creed found in Paul's 1 Corinthians 15

So if you are trying to lay out something from the New Testament, and you can find it in two of these sources, and at least one of them is very early, you're in pretty good shape.

Although the questioner and the other critics might question the "minimal facts" that pass the historical tests, many of these facts are not questioned by even atheistic scholars.

Here's a useful tip for non-professionals who want to disagree with Dr. Craig. Dr. Craig publishes his arguments in academic presses like Oxford University Press, not to mention scholarly peer-reviewed journals. He's also debated his ideas against famous atheist historians like Gerd Ludemann, Marcus Borg, James Crossley, Bart Ehrman, etc. So it's probably a good idea for people who want to disagree with him to first read some academic literature, or at least ask a professional. Before you post your YouTube video. You could even just ask a professional atheist historian. They will tell you what's wrong with an argument like your "the sources are not independent" argument. Just check yourself before you post something in public. A lot of people who are still puzzling out these questions will look at a mistake like this, and immediately dismiss atheism as a sloppy, anti-intellectual worldview.

You can watch more of Dr. Craig's videos in his playlist, here. These are especially useful for people who want to get the overall scope of the battlefield before deciding where to focus in study. Everybody should know about all of these arguments regardless of where

you choose to specialize.

Will paying teachers more money improve student performance?

March 15, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Public school teachers in Oklahoma, Kentucky, West Virginia and Arizona are striking this spring, affecting hundreds of thousands of students. The teachers say that spending more money on education will help children learn more. There's an excellent article by Joy Pullmann in The Federalist that looks at whether increasing spending raises student performance. (H/T Vanessa)

Oklahoma teachers want a $10,000 raise, and Arizona teachers want a 20% increase in base pay. I don't know about you, but I didn't get anything near that for my annual raise.

Educational bureacracy

Will raising taxes on taxpayers in order to spend more on education improve student performance? Joy says we can look at the past in order to understand whether spending more money gets results.

She writes:

> Research has also long and conclusively shown that school spending hikes usually don't go to teachers, they go to administrators and other bloat outside classrooms. So the kids are just unions' human shields on their way to raid the kids' public bank accounts — again.
>
> […]As the Cato Institute's Neal McCluskey has shown, U.S. public K-12 spending has skyrocketed over the past 50 years with no improvement in academic outcomes. Other researchers repeatedly find increasing spending doesn't help students. That's because, as noted above, schools typically don't send more money to classrooms, they use it to increase bureaucracy and nonacademic programming.

Got that? When taxpayers throw money at public schools, the teachers don't see very much of that money. It gets put into education administrators and indoctrinators – people whose sole job is to make sure that the children accept secular left values.

Check out this graph of education spending compared to test scores:

Figure 1.

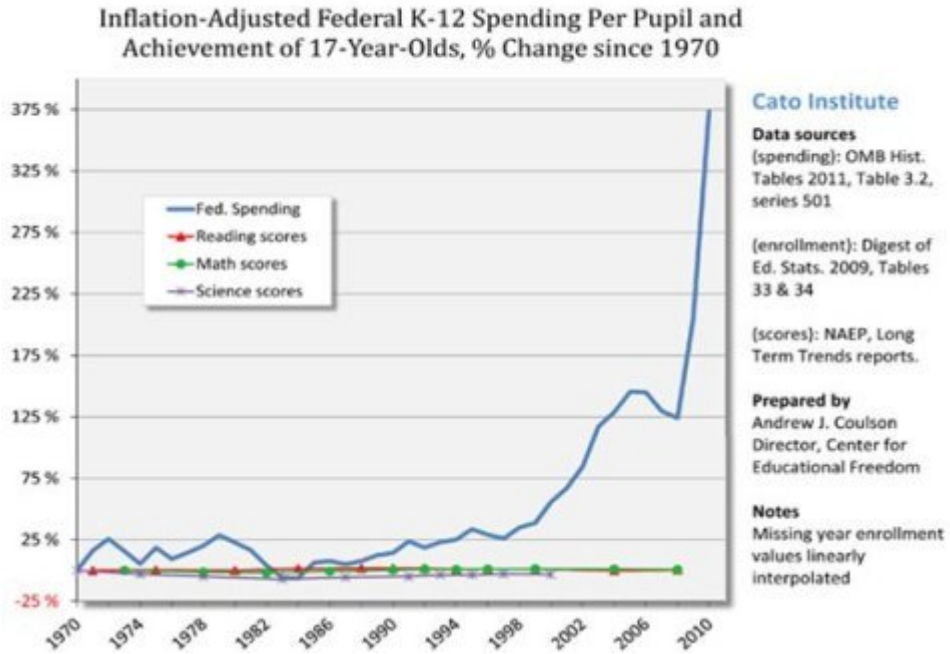

Federal spending has increased astronomically, but test scores are flat

Spending more doesn't produce the results that parents are looking for, for their children. Parents want children to *learn what they need to find work and become financially independent*. But teachers, adminsitrators, etc. have a very different goal: making little secular leftists. And that's what they use increased funding for that. Numbers don't lie.

Another way that public schools waste money is by promising massive gold-plated public sector pensions to teachers – pensions that no private sector taxpayer would ever get themselves. And they use any increase in their budgets to pay the pensions of teachers who are retired, and not helping students to learn.

Teacher pensions

I saw a really nice map of the United States over at Daily Signal, with all the outstanding pensions liabilities, and the amount ranges from about $7600 in Tennessee (the best state in the union) to tens of thousands in the big blue socialist states.

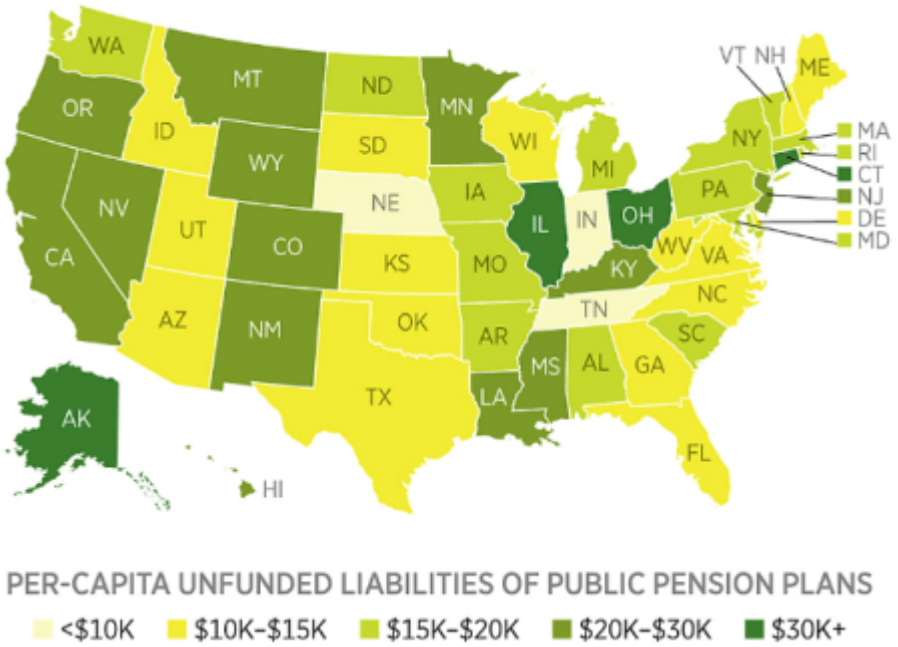

Unfunded pension liabilities for public sector workers

Joy explains:

> States promised such outsized retirement benefits to the last generation of public-school teachers that they're paying off this promise with current revenues. A national average of $6,800 per year per teacher pays former teachers' pensions that state and local governments failed to save up for while those teachers were working. That's money that could have instead boosted current teachers' salaries. The problem is only going to get worse as more baby boomers retire and legislatures continue to hide their heads in the sand.
>
> It's not just that states and districts failed to save up for pensions they knew would come due, it's that they offered literally the cushiest pensions available to teachers, notes a 2016 study: "as a group, [teachers] have by far the highest retirement costs, even compared with other public-sector employees. While the average civilian employee receives $1.78 for retirement benefits per hour of work, public school teachers receive $6.22 per hour in retirement compensation."

Like I said, I don't have a pension funded by taxpayers. I'm having to saving for *my own* retirement, as well of the retirement of these wealthy government workers. Public sector benefits are paid by taxpayers in the private (free market) sector. We are the ones wh have to make products and services that consumers are actually willing to pay for in a free market. Unlike teachers, I can't go on strike if I feel I'm not paid enough. If I go on strike, I'll be fired. But they go on strike, holding children hostage to get more money. With no guarantee of improved student performance.

Joy also notes that teachers are actually vastly overpaid already, based on what their marketable skills:

> […][R]esearch finds teachers are overpaid by an average of 50 percent relative to their skills and mental abilities. The overage comes almost exclusively from

> their fat benefit packages.

The reason they complain about pay is because the majority of their pay is going into extravagant health care, paid time off, pension, paid training, etc. benefits. When you add back all those benefits, they're being overpaid compared to an equivalent private sector worker.

Regulations

Another factor that lowers student performance is that the fact that teachers are highly regulated. Instead of spending their time teaching students, they are forced to waste time doing other non-teaching tasks.

Joy explains:

> Education regulations are almost always decided by non-teachers, and the effects are about what you would guess from that fact. Rather than benefiting students, these regulations typically require or justify ever-expanding employment for the very bureaucrat types who come up with them. I'm talking about things like teacher licensing mandates, which researchers have long found do not improve teacher quality and traffic in disproven education fads (but do provide easy-access cash cows for state departments of education and teacher colleges since teachers are required to keep buying their products to maintain certification); ever-increasing testing and data-entry mandates; centralized curriculum mandates like Common Core; centralized teacher evaluation and ratings systems; and the massive data entry required to document things like student behavior problems and special education services.

More money being wasted that doesn't help students to learn more at all.

So what's the solution?

The solution is to allow parents to choose who provides their children with an education, instead of having the money automatically taxed and spent by a massive secular left education bureaucracy. If teachers have their money in their hands, they will spend it where they can get the best quality for the best price – just like they do in *every other area of their lives*. That might be scary for teachers, administrators and indoctrinators, but in a free market, the parents should not be obligated to pay for something they don't want. We should be concerned about the children first and foremost.

Astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on intelligent design and habitability

March 16, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Here is a lecture that talks about intelligent design and eclipses. There are 5 video clips that make up the full lecture.

The playlist for all 5 clips is here.

About the speaker

> Guillermo Gonzalez is an Associate Professor of Physics at Grove City College. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington and has received fellowships, grants and awards from such institutions as NASA, the University of Washington, the Templeton Foundation, Sigma Xi (scientific research society) and the National Science Foundation.

Learn more about the speaker here.

The lecture

Here's part 1 of 5:

And the rest are here:

- Part 2 of 5
- Part 3 of 5
- Part 4 of 5
- Part 5 of 5

Total time: 43 minutes.

Topics:

- What is the Copernican Principle?
- Is the Earth's suitability for hosting life rare in the universe?
- Does the Earth have to be the center of the universe to be special?
- How similar to the Earth does a planet have to be to support life?
- What is the definition of life?
- What are the three minimal requirements for life of any kind?
- Requirement 1: A molecule that can store information (carbon)
- Requirement 2: A medium in which chemicals can interact (liquid water)
- Requirement 3: A diverse set of chemical elements
- What is the best environment for life to exist?
- Our place in the solar system: the circumstellar habitable zone
- Our place in the galaxy: the galactic habitable zones
- Our time in the universe's history: the cosmic habitable age
- Other habitability requirements (e.g. – metal-rich star, massive moon, etc.)
- The orchestration needed to create a habitable planet
- How different factors depend on one another through time
- How tweaking one factor can adversely affect other factors
- How many possible places are there in the universe where life could emerge?
- Given these probabilistic resources, should we expect that there is life elsewhere?
- How to calculate probabilities using the "Product Rule"
- Can we infer that there is a Designer just because life is rare? Or do we need more?

The corelation between habitability and measurability.

- Are the habitable places in the universe also the best places to do science?
- Do the factors that make Earth habitable also make it good for doing science?
- Some places and times in the history of the universe are more habitable than others
- Those exact places and times also allow us to make scientific discoveries
- Observing solar eclipses and structure of our star, the Sun
- Observing stars and galaxies
- Observing the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Observing the acceleration of the universe caused by dark matter and energy
- Observing the abundances of light elements like helium of hydrogen
- These observations support the big bang and fine-tuning arguments for God's existence
- It is exactly like placing observatories on the tops of mountains
- There are observers existing in the best places to observe things
- This is EXACTLY how the universe has been *designed for making scientific discoveries*

This lecture was delivered by Guillermo Gonzalez in 2007 at the University of California at

Davis. If you like this lecture, but maybe want something a bit more user friendly, check out “The Privileged Planet” DVD, or watch it online here (first 60 minutes of that video).

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

March 17, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!
This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin

    - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
    - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
    - the site of Jesus' grave was known
    - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
    - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
    - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
    - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
    - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
    - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age

- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women –

Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the

witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling
- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty

tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

How would the Democrats' "Equality Act" affect Christians and conservatives?

March 18, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

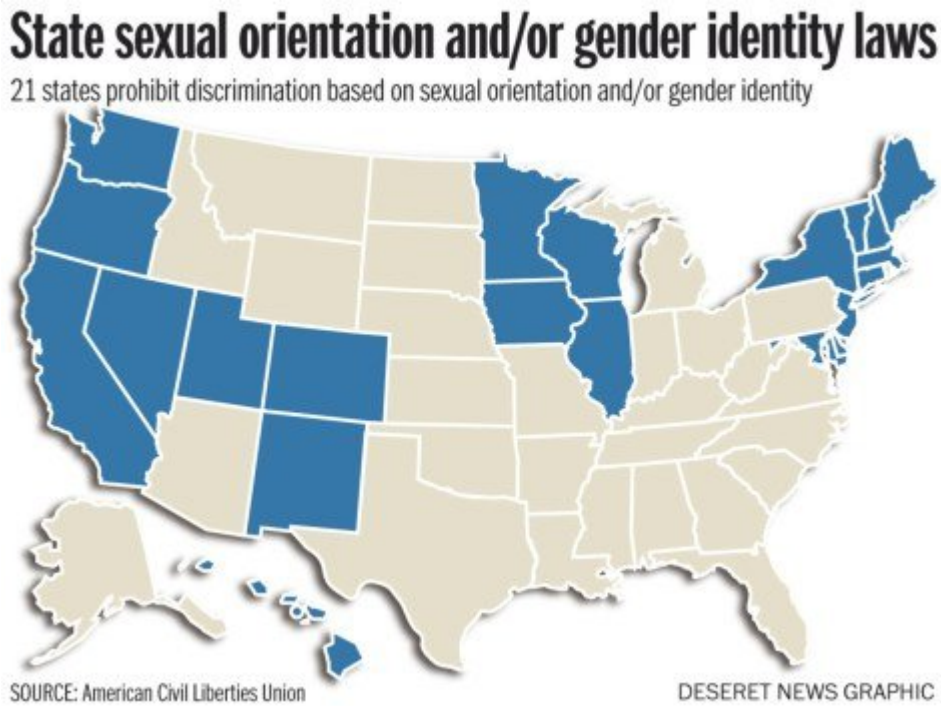

21 states have SOGI anti-discrimination laws

I'm following this Equality Act legislation as it moves through the House of Representatives. The bill would prohibit individuals and businesses from discriminating by sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). These SOGI laws already exist at the state level, in places where Christians are being sued and coerced to affirm and celebrate gay rights.

Here is a good article from The Stream, explaining 7 ways that the law would affect you:

1. It would penalize Americans who don't affirm new sexual norms or gender ideology.
2. It would compel speech.
3. It could shut down charities.
4. It would allow more biological males to defeat girls in sports.
5. It could be used to coerce medical professionals.
6. It could lead to more parents losing custody of their children.
7. It would enable sexual assault.

Let's take a quick look at some examples of these changes already in progress.

I'm not covering #1, because everyone knows about the case against the Washington state florist, and the case against the Colorado baker and the case against the New Mexico wedding photographers.

For #2, here's an example:

> Virginia high school teacher Peter Vlaming lost his job for something he did not say.
>
> A county school board voted unanimously to fire the veteran teacher over the objections of his students after he refused to comply with administrators' orders to use masculine pronouns in referring to a female student who identifies as transgender.

If this goes national, I could get into the same sort of trouble at work for misgendering a co-worker or a customer.

For #3, I'd already heard about how foster parent and adoption agencies in some SOGI anti-discrimination states shut down because they couldn't place children in traditional-marriage homes.

Here's a different example:

> In Anchorage, Alaska, a biological male born Timothy Paul Coyle goes by the name of Samantha Amanda Coyle. On two occasions, Coyle tried to gain access to the city's Downtown Soup Kitchen Hope Center, a shelter for homeless, abused, and trafficked women.
>
> In one attempt, authorities said, Coyle was inebriated and had gotten into a fight with a staffer at another shelter, so Hope Center staff paid Coyle's fare to the emergency room to receive medical attention. Coyle sued the center for "gender identity discrimination."

If thise goes national, you can expect that any social services organization would be charged with discrimination for any attempt to separate out men from women in bathrooms, showers, sleeping ares, etc.

For #4, we know already that biological males are identifying as women, and now biological women are unable to compete with them to win any prizes.

Here's an example of #5, where medical professionals can be coerced to perform sex-change surgeries:

> Under state sexual orientation and gender identity laws, individuals who identify as transgender have sued Catholic hospitals in California and New Jersey for declining to perform hysterectomies on otherwise healthy women who wanted to pursue gender transition.

For #6, I've blogged recently about how Canada allows the government to seize children from parents who disagree with gay rights and transgender transitioning.

But it happens in the USA, too:

> In Ohio, a judge removed a biological girl from her parents' custody after they declined to help her "transition" to male with testosterone supplements.
>
> After the Cincinnati Children's Hospital's Transgender Health Clinic recommended these treatments for the girl's gender dysphoria, the parents

> wanted to pursue counseling instead. Then the county's family services agency charged the parents with abuse and neglect, and the judge terminated their custody.
>
> Similar cases are proceeding through the courts with children as young as 6 years old.

And for number #7, I've blogged before about sexual assaults in bathrooms and other places by transgender women (biological men).

Here's an example:

> A complaint under investigation by federal education officials alleges that a boy who identifies as "gender fluid" at Oakhurst Elementary School in Decatur, Georgia, sexually assaulted Pascha Thomas' 5-year-old daughter in a girls' restroom. The boy had access to the girls' restroom because of Decatur City Schools' transgender restroom policy.
>
> School authorities refused to change the policy even after Thomas reported the assault. Eventually, she decided to remove her daughter from school for the girl's emotional well-being and physical safety.

As in all the examples mentioned, if the Equality Act became law, like the Democrats want it to, then any of these things could happen to you, if you decline to celebrate or participate in the gay agenda.

Although the Constitution lays out rights, those rights don't matter to Democrats, your exercise of those rights makes people engaged in LGBT lifestyles *feel unhappy*. Their unhappy feelings trump your Constitution rights. At least that's the case if the Democrats pass their bills, and appoint their judges to the courts.

Why are so many educated, successful women struggling to find a husband?

March 19, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

The New York Times says that more and more women are having to freeze their eggs because they can't find good men to marry. The NYT doesn't think that women are doing anything wrong. They blame the men for refusing to commit. According to feminism, women who value careers, abortion rights, no-fault divorce, big government, high taxes, etc. are doing everything right. But does it work?

I thought it might be a good idea to help Western women to make better decisions with men and marriage. Although setting out boundaries seems harsh and restrictive, it's actually protective and loving. If we want women to get to a stable marriage and children, (what they really need long term, after they lose their looks and youth), then we should be bold about leading them.

The first thing to point out is that the women celebrated by the New York Times are intentionally delaying marriage for their education and careers.

Another New York Times article explains:

> It could be that the new generation of millennial women is delaying having children even longer than the women who came before them, as prime childbearing years are also critical years for advancing in a career. A recent study shows that the marital pay gap that springs up after a first child is born typically does not close if the birth happens between age 25 and 35.
>
> Shannon Hettinger, a 32-year-old from Washington, D.C., said she definitely wanted children. She grew up in a large family in a small town in Pennsylvania

> and almost all her high school friends are married with children. But she moved to Washington, and spent her 20s deciding on a career. Now that she has one she loves — she works in residential real estate sales — she is not going to stop until she gets established. That means not having children for a while.
>
> "I just want to build my book of business and see where I can go from here," she said. "My whole focus is career growth. That's my No. 1 priority."
>
> "Once I achieve a certain level of success," she added, "then I'll start thinking about a family."
>
> Ivy Gray-Klein, 26, who lives in Philadelphia and works at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, said she was open to having children but cannot imagine doing so until she is 30 or 35. She wants to feel settled in her own life first. Now she has three roommates, is paying down her student loans and is working to build a little bit of savings.
>
> "I'm just really trying to get myself to a place that is solid," she said by phone. "Having a child right now would be so destabilizing. Children just seem like such an enormous financial undertaking."

The thing about women wanting to pursue their careers in their 20s is that this is the time when they have the most attractiveness to a man as a wife and mother. The woman's 20s are the perfect time for her to be searching through the men in her life, looking for the ones who are serious about marriage, while rejecting the ones who just want sex before marriage, cohabitation, and other irresponsible "fun". Most women who are focusing on their careers will still be in relationships during their 20s, but since they can't afford to be "encumbered" by marriage, they'll be spending time with guys who don't want to commit. This is NOT a good way for a woman to prepare her character for marriage. Flings and break-ups with bad boys do not cause a woman to be trusting with a good man later on.

However, are women ever really attracted to good men? Suppose a woman chased bad boys in her 20s, while focusing on her career, then got serious at 30 and started looking for marriage-read men. Would she really be *attracted* to those marriage-ready men, after all that time spent choosing the bad boys who would not commit?I think many marriage-ready men know that most women who are 30 or over have kept busy in relationships with bad boys. And they don't want to be married to a woman who finds them unattractive. So the real problem with men not marrying women who are over 30 is the that many women *are not trained to be attracted to good men in their 20s*.

Here's an LA Times editorial about women and domestic terrorist Dzhokar Tsarnaev, one of the Boston marathon bombers.

Excerpt:

> Mostly, though, they think Dzhokhar is cute. The Bambi eyes (looking right out of his Instagram-doctored photos at you!), the hipster facial stubble, the masses of wine-dark tousled hair — adorable! Impassioned believers have written

> “Dzhokhar is innocent” on their hands and plastered “Innocent until proven guilty!!!!” posters around their towns. An 18-year-old waitress interviewed by the New York Post vowed to have Dzhokhar’s last tweet before the bombing tattooed onto her arm: “If you have the knowledge and the inspiration all that’s left is to take action.”
>
> […]But the real cause of the Jahar craze more likely lies in something more primal and less pretty in the female psyche. I’m betting that women, young and old, are drawn to Dzhokhar not because he is a good-looking late adolescent but because he is a good-looking accused killer. He’s a classic “bad boy” of the sort to whom women are chronically attracted because they want to reform them, or minister to their wounds, or be the healing presence they’ve never had — but mostly because they find them sexy.

That article also noted:

> It’s not surprising, then, that every homicide perp on death row who is reasonably attractive has groupies. Consider the handsome (and widely philandering) Scott Peterson, sentenced in 2005 for killing his wife and unborn son and throwing their remains into San Francisco Bay. The day he checked into San Quentin, he received three dozen phone calls from smitten women, including an 18-year-old who wanted to become the second Mrs. Peterson.

Some of the tweets and other fangirl comments about Tsarnaev were collected in this New York Post article.

Lots of Western women from the UK, France, Russia, etc. all picked up and moved to the Middle East to become ISIS jihadi brides.

Excerpt:

> Western women joining Islamic State are increasingly from comfortable backgrounds and often well educated with romantic notions of adventure often quickly dispelled by the harshness of life as a “Jihadi bride”, according to a British research report.
>
> Some 550 women from Western countries have left their homelands to join Islamic State, which has captured swathes of Syria and Iraq, said the report by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation at King’s College, London.
>
> […]It said female recruits were increasingly younger, some from comfortable backgrounds and often well-educated, and were playing “crucial” propaganda and recruitment roles.

That article is three years old, the numbers have more than doubled since then. The most common reasons cited for leaving are romance and adventure.

Psychology Today has some comments about why some women do this:

> In her post, “Women Who Love Serial Killers,” PT blogger, Katherine Ramsland, offers some suggestions about why some women can be so attracted to, or hopelessly beguiled by, the most terrifying of human predators. At first, she provides explanations from the women themselves, women who actually married these dangerously unhinged criminals. Their reasons (somewhat elaborated here) include the assumptions that:
>
> - their love can transform the convict: from cunning and cruel, to caring, concerned, and compassionate.
> - there’s a wounded child nested somewhere inside the killer that can be healed through a devoted nurturance that only they can provide.
> - they might share the killer’s media spotlight, and so triumphantly emerge from their anonymity, and maybe in the process even land a book or movie deal (an aspiration about as cynical as it is narcissisticand self-serving).

And this is even more interesting:

> To simplify this work’s findings for my present purpose, however, let me begin by emphasizing that Ogas and Gaddam find substantial evidence from Web searches, posts, and many 1,000s of romance novels that women demonstrate a strong erotic preference for dominant men. Or toward what’s now commonly referred to as alpha males—in the authors’ words, men who are “strong, confident, [and] swaggering [as in “cocky,” and the pun is intended].” Unfortunately, what these descriptors often imply is behavior sufficiently bearish, self-centered, and insensitive as to often cross the line into a physical, mental, and emotional abuse that can be downright brutal.
>
> […]Moreover, in responding to the question as to whether some men, such as “serial killers, violent offenders, and rapists,” might be too dominant for women to accept, Ogas and Gaddam note: “It turns out that killing people is an effective way to elicit the attention of many women: virtually every serial killer, including Ted Bundy, Charles Manson, and David Berkowitz, have received love letters from large numbers of female fans” (p. 98).

Women choose good-looking bad boys, because they think that they can change them:

> The fantasy that seems to be operating in such devotees, and that constitutes the plot of virtually all erotic/romantic novels written with women in mind, is that the “misogyny and jerkdom” they might have to battle with in such super-dominant males is only temporary. That it doesn’t really represent the man’s innermost reality. That his violence and lack of tender feelings is only the beginning of the story, and that their unsparing love, affection, and dedication can ultimately transform his character by helping him get in touch with his, well,

> “inner goo.”

I don’t think it’s wrong for women to do STEM degrees, and even go to graduate school, and work a couple of years in the private sector. The problems occur when they want to have relationships during those years, but not with men who want to commit. The experiences they have with the hot bad boys in that time cause them to be disatisfied with marriage-minded men (self-control, frugality, provider ability, chastity, loyalty, mentoring, etc.) later on when they do want to marry. And marriage-minded men KNOW THAT. We aren’t going to be tricked into marriage to someone who finds the shallow characteristics of irresponsible bad boys more attractive than men who have demonstrated ability at the husband and father roles.

A woman asked me whether Hell and God's harshness caused me to doubt Christianity

March 21, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

I was having a chat on Friday with a brilliant agnostic young lady who knew as much about Christian apologetics as I did. It was very strange because she was only in her mid-20s, but she was talking about the Cambrian explosion, the resurrection scholarship of Dale Allison and Bart Ehrman, and so on. She had seen a lot of debates, and even knew about intelligent design. Anyway, she asked me two questions that I wanted to write about. The first was whether I thought that Hell was unfair, especially because it's determined by having correct beliefs, and the second was whether I thought that God was kind or harsh.

Regarding, I do hold to a traditional view of Hell being eternal separation from God. I don't think that God will be actively torturing people in Hell. I'm not sure if the flames are literal or figurative. But I do know that the severity of the punishment will be proportional to the amount of sinning, in the same way that the rewards in Heaven will be proportional to good actions here on Earth. The duration is the same, but the rewards and punishments fit our actions.

I don't have a problem with Hell because I've spent most of my life trying to talk to people about spiritual things. Although this young lady was very open-minded and honest and spiritual, more than most people in the church, even, I don't think that this is normal for non-Christians. Growing up around Muslims and Hindus, and having spoken to Jews, I know that there just isn't much curiosity about God and Jesus in these other religions. Believe me, I've tried to discuss spiritual things with people of all different religions, and the idea that religious beliefs should be bounded by logic and evidence is almost *nowhere* to be found. It's not even to be found among most Christians, but at least

we have scholars who you can find if you dig hard enough.

So, when people ask me about Hell, the first thing that comes into my mind is my experiences trying to get non-Christians to line up their beliefs about God and Jesus with logic and evidence. Although it may seem harsh to shut the door on people who don't want to put in the work, it doesn't seem harsh to me. I've had it with people who make everything except an investigation into God's existence a priority. I have no patience for people who think they are very intelligent in their thoughts about God, but then when they get into a discussion, it is obvious they haven't put in any effort.

Do you know what they do put a lot of effort into, though? Entertainment, fun and thrills. I can't tell you how many times I've tried to give books or debates to culturally Jewish atheists and Muslim-raised atheists and Hindus (because of family and community) in my previous jobs, and got no interest in truth whatsoever. They were too busy watching the Comedy Channel Democrats, and trying to get their kids into Ivy league schools, etc. to care about God or Jesus. And God is not going to force them into eternal life with him, they don't want it, and they're not going to get it. It's important to note that to not prioritize God is a choice. We in the West all have leisure time, and to be ignorant about God after 40 years of leisure time when you have put the time in elsewhere is unacceptable. God expects us to be curious about him and to do our due diligence in investigating him using as much intellect and effort as we put into our educations, careers, marriages, etc.

Regarding her other question about whether I think God is kind or harsh, I just decided to tell her that I didn't think that God was the kind of God who had to be nice to me so that I would like him. I explained to her that I had wanted marriage from an early age, and had prepared very hard for it, but that it had never happened. I'm not sure that God is able to cause women to freely desire the things I did to prepare for marriage, like chastity, STEM degrees, gap-less resume and savings. I'm not the smartest person in the world, and I did not have family or friends helping me to get ahead most of the time. It was very hard to get ready for marriage. But I realized very late in life that young, unmarried women tend to be interested in a man's appearance and in having fun – not marriage-ready preparation. They do not want a man who is serious about marriage and children until their mid-30s, which is far too old for my marriage plan to work. So, there's no point in me marrying now. So does this lack of marriage make me think that God is unkind? Not at all.

I do think that God has been kind to me with respect to health, education, career and finances. Also, I can understand from the Bible (2 Tim 2:3-4) why God might need an unmarried soldier to work for him. And this doesn't bother me, because I've read the Bible, and I didn't get the impression from it that God was my cosmic butler. Although many Western Christians think that God's sole purpose is to make them happy, there is no way to actually get that meaning out of the text. God's own Son has to suffer in order to love his Father self-sacrificially. So it's clear that God is not "kind" to those who love him in the sense that most people would like him to be. In fact, I would believe in God and

serve him, even if he were “harsher” with me than he is now.

So, why would I want to be a Christian, rather than just accept the scientific arguments for theism, and then just say that the New Testament is just not good enough historical evidence to warrant moving from theism to Christianity? Well, I did explain to her the minimal facts argument, and the historical criteria used to obtain them. And I also said that we all need to have some sort of historical explanation for the early belief in Jesus being God stepping into history, and for his rising from the dead.

But I think the real reason why I am a Christian, beyond the evidence, is just this daily experience of dealing with the lack of curiosity about God and Jesus (and sometimes outright self-delusion) that I see in so many people. I see it in uneducated people, unintelligent people, educated people, intelligent people. The willful ignorance about facts that matter, like the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, etc. It’s not even opposition to Christian specifics, it’s opposition to plain, well-supported scientific facts. I’ve just seen this in action so much with atheists and people of other religions that I have lost all sympathy for non-Christians with respect to what God decides to do with them.

It’s not that I am concerned by their immorality, or their hedonism, primarily. It’s that I am concerned with their lack of interest in puzzling out the big questions of life in a truth-centered way. The only people I really feel comfortable with are Christians who have been serious about proportioning belief to evidence, denying themselves fun and thrills if they have to, and putting their money and time into learning how to defend God’s honor when it’s called into question. A task that simply gets you nothing good from anyone in this world. I find it amazing that there are any of us, but that’s where I want to be – in a room with people like that who put God’s goals above their own desires and needs.

All of my close male friends are either virgins or married as virgins, and they’re all into apologetics. If you understood what it means to be in a room with people who have carefully chosen to live their lives in a quiet, humble way that’s respectful to God and self-sacrificial, then you would understand why there is no substitute for Christianity. In my case, I simply do not want God to lump me in with the people I talk to who have no curiosity about truth in religion. I am not going to be like them, grabbing for happiness, while deliberately shutting their eyes to anything that might cause them to have to take God seriously in a self-sacrificial, two-way relationship. I have more sympathy for God and his reputation and honor than I do for the majority of people who I have seen deliberately keeping him at arm’s length. They want the blessings he provides, but while avoiding the demands of a relationship with him. I’m just not going to be one of them, and I don’t care what people think.

Controversial study on Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria and transgenderism re-published

March 22, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

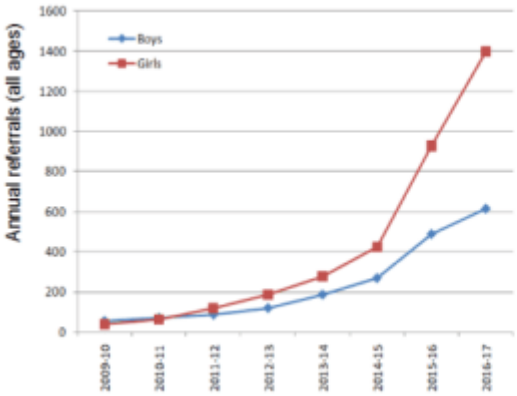

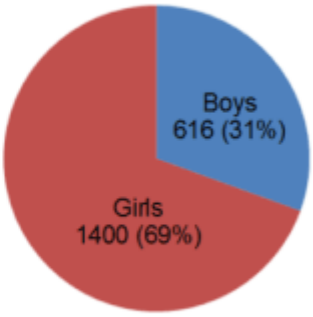

Annual referrals for 2016/17 (all ages)

What's the best explanation of this transgenderism data? Genetics or cultural pressure? I blogged before about a study out of Brown University, which concluded that transgender behavior in children developed rapidly as a result of factors like peer pressures, social media, mental disorders, trauma, etc. I.e. – it's not genetic. Brown University retracted it because some people complained. Well, it's now been republished. Let's see if there were any mistakes found.

Here's how the study was first reported by Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> [...]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.

Peer pressure / The Internet:

> The pattern of clusters of teens in friend groups becoming transgender-identified, the group dynamics of these friend groups and the types of advice viewed online led her to the hypothesis that friends and online sources could spread certain beliefs.
>
> [....]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

Mental disorders / traumatic events:

> Additionally, 62 percent of parents reported their teen or young adult had one or

> more diagnoses of a psychiatric disorder or neurodevelopmental disability before the onset of gender dysphoria. Forty-eight percent reported that their child had experienced a traumatic or stressful event prior to the onset of their gender dysphoria, including being bullied, sexually assaulted or having their parents get divorced.

This article at The Federalist had a few examples to illustrate the conclusion of the study. I'll pick two.

> The study includes other eye-opening information, such as case studies of several children's stories.

- > "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends were taking group lessons together with a very popular coach. The coach came out as transgender, and, within one year, all four students announced they were also transgender."
- > "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends are part of a larger friend group that spends much of their time talking about gender and sexuality. The three natal female friends all announced they were trans boys and chose similar masculine names. After spending time with these three friends, the 14-year-old natal female announced that she was also a trans boy."

I thought this quote from that article was interesting as well, given the culture's obsession with "bullying", which is a nebulous term that can mean actual bullying, or mere disagreement.

> The study also may indicate that school "anti-bullying" programs typically created by LGBT activist organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign may help accelerate children identifying as transgender by pushing peers and authority figures to profusely express their support.

Coming out as transgender means instant fame and popularity, because you're a victim, and everyone has to be nice to you… or else:

> "Great increase in popularity among the student body at large. Being trans is a gold star in the eyes of other teens," wrote one parent on the study response form. Another wrote, "not so much 'popularity' increasing as 'status' … also she became untouchable in terms of bullying in school as teachers who ignored homophobic bullying …are now all at pains to be hot on the heels of any trans bullying."

Well, we've had a delay of 6 months for Littman to answer her critics and submit her work to even more extensive peer-review. And now the study has been re-published in PLOS

One. So were there any mistakes in it? Does it still reach the same conclusions?

The College Fix reports:

> Here's what actually changed, according to *PLOS One*:
>
> Other than the addition of a few missing values in Table 13, the Results section is unchanged in the updated version of the article.

So, the results didn't change, and that means that the conclusions stand. So what was the problem originally? The problem originally was that the research didn't confirm the biased politically correct views of the secular leftists.

She lost her consulting job anyway

However, that's not the whole story. I looked up her interview from this week on Quillette, and she got to tell her side of the story.

Two parts stood out to me.

This part, where she contrasted the favoral response of research scientists and clinical scientists with the angry outbursts of a social worker:

> The third presentation was the smallest and least research-oriented audience of the three. In contrast to the other presentations, the vast majority of the comments were made by one person who I later learned was a social worker. Again, I tried to answer politely with comments such as "Actually, the scientific literature says the following…"; "Actually, social media can be both a positive and a negative influence, not just positive…"; "Actually, this method of data collection has been used in many studies…" But because her interruptions were so frequent and argumentative in nature, it quickly created a tense and adversarial tone in the room.

This part, where she explains the mob that contacted her employers and got her fired:

> The worst outcome for me personally was losing my consulting job over this issue. Shortly after my paper came out, some local clinicians who are opposed to my research wrote a letter of complaint about the work and demanded that I be fired immediately. It was an interesting demand, as my consulting work was unrelated to gender dysphoria. Nonetheless, I was called in to several meetings to answer questions about my research… After the meetings, the leadership explained to me that their decision not to renew my contract was not related to the quality of my work but rather that they, as an agency, needed to remain neutral and not take sides regarding the issues raised in the letter.

Do you know what this whole episode reminded me of? It reminded me of the stories of scientists who publish work critical of Darwinian evolution, and work critical of the man-made catastophic global warming hypothesis. It seems as if the viewpoints of secular leftists are decide by emotions, and then defended with rage, coercion and harassment. What does it say about secular leftism that they respond to scientific progress with rage

and censorship?

Mueller’s report ends media’s 22-month #FakeNews campaign against Trump’s re-election

March 23, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Why do people think that CNN are biased leftist clowns?
The 22-month-long investigation of Trump-Russia collusion ended yesterday. By now, everyone has heard that there will be no indictments for the Trump campaign for collusion with the Russians. We don’t have the full content of the final report produced by Mueller, but we do know that there will be no additional indictments.

In this post, I want to recall for everyone who paid for the dossier, how the dossier was used to spy on members of the Trump Campaign, and then list out some of the people who pushed the (false) Trump-Russia collusion allegations the most.

Let’s start with this article from Friday night, by the Daily Caller:

> CNN political analyst Gloria Borger admitted that the president is “vindicated” by the conclusion of the probe, but did so in a roundabout way, focusing on the political implications for the president’s past critiques of the Mueller team.
>
> “So if, if as Jeffrey is saying, they get great news, the great news is, first of all, there’s no more indictments. But if suddenly the president has to say those angry Democrats who were working with Bob Mueller were actually just part of a Justice Department doing its job after he has criticized the Justice Department, then he’s now vindicated.”

CNN’s admission is important, because they’ve been caught authoring several false reports about the story:

> The network, ever desperate to get the biggest scoop on the Russia probe, falsely claimed as far back as June 2016 that Trump adviser Anthony Scaramucci was under investigation for alleged ties to Russia. In December 2017, CNN inaccurately said that Donald Trump Jr. had special access to Democratic documents stolen by WikiLeaks.

OK, very good. CNN certainly deserves credit for reporting on Mueller’s final report accurately, even though it falsifies their Trump-Russia collusion narrative of the past 22 months. But what about the other groups that pushed the false Trump-Russia collusion narrative? BuzzFeed, the Washington Post, the New York Times, MSNBC, etc. And what about the many unhinged Democrat politicians, including Adam Schiff and Ted Lieu. Will they spend the next 22 months undoing the damage they’ve done to the American election process? How else would you see this 22-month charade, except as a deliberate effort by Democrats in the mainstream media to discredit the Republican party before the 2020 elections?

What was the Steele dossier?

So, let's look at an article from October 2017, published in the radically leftist Washington Post. (One of the sources that pushed the now discredited Trump-Russia dossier the hardest)

It says:

> The Hillary Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee helped fund research that resulted in a now-famous dossier containing allegations about President Trump's connections to Russia and possible coordination between his campaign and the Kremlin, people familiar with the matter said.
>
> Marc E. Elias, a lawyer representing the Clinton campaign and the DNC, retained Fusion GPS, a Washington firm, to conduct the research.
>
> After that, Fusion GPS hired dossier author Christopher Steele, a former British intelligence officer with ties to the FBI and the U.S. intelligence community, according to those people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.
>
> Elias and his law firm, Perkins Coie, retained the company in April 2016 on behalf of the Clinton campaign and the DNC.

Got that? Democrat Clinton and Democrat DNC hire Democrat law firm. Democrat law firm hires Democrat PR firm Fusion GPS. Democrat PR firm Fusion GPS hires Christopher Steele, who then produces the Steele dossier. The Steele dossier was then used to obtain the FISA warrant that allowed the FBI to spy on members of the Trump campaign.

Last week, Steele himself admitted that he used unverified blog posts from random users posted on a website called iReport.com – which just allowed anyone to post any article they wanted online with no journalism or fact-checking of any kind.

The Washington Examiner explains:

> According to deposition transcripts released this week, Steele said last year he used a 2009 report he found on CNN's iReport website and said he wasn't aware that submissions to that site are posted by members of the public and are not checked for accuracy.
>
> A web archive from July 29, 2009 shows that CNN described the site in this manner: "iReport.com is a user-generated site. That means the stories submitted by users are not edited, fact-checked, or screened before they post."

Steele just Googled for information and put these unchecked user-generated "stories" into the dossier. And then the dossier was used to get the FBI surveillance warrants.

And Steele knew what he was doing:

> When asked about his methodology for searching for this information, Steele described it as "what we could call an open source search," which he defined as "where you go into the Internet and you access material that is available on the Internet that is of relevance or reference to the issue at hand or the person under

> consideration."
>
> Steele said his dossier contained "raw intelligence" that he admitted could contain untrue or even "deliberately false information."

Remember, the Steele dossier was the basis for the FBI's FISA surveillance warrants against Trump. And that's what we have been hearing about from Democrat politicians and their allies in the far-left news media for the last 22 months.

This investigation cost a huge amount of taxpayer dollars. It damaged the credibility of the Trump administration enormously. And it smeared all Republican voters, because we supposedly voted for a crooked corrupt President.

When will Hillary Clinton be investigated?

Previously, I blogged about actual collusion between Hillary Clinton and Russia, regarding the sale of uranium rights. We did not have a 22-month investigation of that. Just think how few low-information Democrat voters know about *that* scandal. We also did not have a 22-month investigation of Clinton's unsecure, private e-mail server that was deliberately designed to evade the government's legal requirements for record-keeping about government business. But the mainstream media didn't have a thing to say about either of those investigations. Why should we trust them about anything?

Can a person believe in both God and Darwinian evolution?

March 24, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

The term for a person who believes in fully naturalistic evolution but who also believes in God is "theistic evolutionist".

Terrell Clemmons takes a look at one organization of theistic evolutionists "Biologos", and makes a distinction between their public statements and the real implications of their public statements.

Here is the PR / spin definition of theistic evolution:

> Evolutionary creation is "the view that all life on earth came about by the God-ordained process of evolution with common descent. Evolution is a means by which God providentially achieves his purposes in creation." This view, also called *theistic evolution*, has been around since the late nineteenth century, and BioLogos promotes it today in a variety of religious and educational settings.

And here is the no-spin definition of theistic evolution:

> As Dr. Stephen Meyer explains it, the central issue dividing Bio-Logos writers from intelligent design theorists is BioLogos's commitment to methodological naturalism (MN), which is not a scientific theory or empirical finding, but an arbitrary rule excluding non-material causation from the outset. "Unfortunately," Meyer writes,
>
> methodological naturalism is a demanding doctrine. The rule does not say "try finding a materialistic cause but keep intelligent design in the mix of live possibilities, in light of what the evidence might show." Rather, MN tells you that

> you simply must posit a material or physical cause, whatever the evidence.
>
> **What this means, according to BioLogos's own epistemology, is that God is objectively undiscoverable and unknowable—a tenet that sits squarely at odds with Christian orthodoxy, which has for centuries held that God is clearly discernible in the natural world (e.g., Romans 1:20).** Obviously, this is theologically problematic, but Meyer also points out that theistic evolution faces problems from a scientific standpoint as well, as the technical literature among evolutionary biologists is moving *away* from the Darwinian mechanism.

Whenever I talk to theistic evolutionists, I try to stop them from talking about the Bible or their faith, because that's not what is interesting to me. I don't really care about their history as a religious person, or where they go to church, or who their pastor is. When I talk about origins and evolution, I only care about the science. What the ordinary process of scientific inquiry tells us about nature? Does nature have the capacity to create all of the varieties of life without any intelligent agency playing a role? Or, are there parts of nature that are similar to computer programs, blog posts, and term papers, where the best explanation of the effect is an intelligent agent choosing how to arrange the parts to achieve functionality?

I don't accept molecules-to-man unguided evolution. This is not because I start with faith and let faith override the findings of science. It's because I think that if you look at specific areas of natural history, there is clear evidence of intelligent agency, such as in the origin of life, or the Cambrian explosion. These effects in nature are well-studied and well-understood, and they look much more like the code that a computer scientist (like me) writes than the simplistic "order" created by wind erosion or crystalline patterns or anything the blind forces of nature could produce. Blind forces are observed to make small changes – short or long finch beaks, fruit flies with 4 wings and no balancers, bacterial resistances.

What's also interesting is how often theistic evolutionists drop the theism but keep the evolution.

Consider this article about Stephen Matheson from Evolution News:

> Biologist Stephen Matheson is a longtime critic of the theory of intelligent design. His extensive attacks on Stephen Meyer's *Signature in the Cell*, for one, ranged from the substantive to the trivial and personal. The tone was frequently…abrasive, and we responded at the time. With Arthur Hunt, Dr. Matheson has debated Dr. Meyer in a forum at Biola University. Formerly a professor at an Evangelical Christian school, Calvin College, Matheson is still listed as a Blog Author at the theistic evolutionary website *BioLogos*, where it notes that he enjoys "explor[ing] issues of science and Christian faith."
>
> Well, his theistic evolutionary explorations have now terminated. As he reports on his personal blog page, where he took a hiatus of more than five years along

> with a break from his teaching, he is “happily” no longer a Christian.

OK. Now that’s just one case, but what about Howard Van Till, also of Calvin College?

Salvo magazine takes a look at what he wrote in a recent book:

> In what follows I shall use the term “naturalism,” when unqualified, to represent neither more nor less than *the rejection of supernaturalism.* Stated positively, naturalism is committed to the belief that all events that occur within this Universe are consistent with and adequately explained by the system of natural causes. This commitment necessarily entails the additional belief that the system of natural causes is fully adequate to account for all events that transpire. Focusing on the issue of the Universe’s formational economy, we can say that naturalism—as here defined -entails the RFEP.

He now gives presentations for atheist groups entitled “From Calvinism to Freethought”. Freethought is a euphemism for atheism.

Now, for the big three Western monotheistic religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. To deny supernaturalism IS to deny the robust theism present in the world’s big three monotheistic religions. Van Till denies theism as commonly understood now. And again, this isn’t because of the science. His heavy handed naturalistic assumption squashed out any kind of serious inquiry into areas like the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine tuning, the origin or life, the Cambrian explosion, biological convergence, so-called junk DNA, deleterious mutations, and so on. Places where you can see that naturalistic forces cannot do the creating that Van Till has faith that they can.

And for the record, I am an *enthusiastic* supporter of the standard Big Bang cosmology, and a 4.5 billion year Earth. My problem with evolution is not Bible-based, it’s science-based. If the science shows the need for intelligent causes, and I think it does, then I think that the naturalists need to adjust their assumptions and pre-suppositions to match the evidence. We have blog posts and computer science code, that’s evidence for a programmer. We have DNA and proteins and sudden origin of body plans, that’s evidence for a programmer, too.

Let’s review how Russia colluded with Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama

March 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNN reported on a false allegation for 22 months

For the last 22 months, we’ve seen the media keep up a constant drumbeat about how Trump colluded with Russia to sell Russian corporations uranium rights in exchange for donations to the Clinton Foundation. Oh, wait, the media hasn’t said anything about that. So, there was an investigation, and the investigation went on forever, and found nothing.

The Federalist reports:

> In a four-page letter provided to Congress on Sunday, Attorney General William Barr officially revealed that Special Counsel Robert Mueller did not find any evidence that President Donald Trump or members of his campaign treasonously colluded with the Russian government to steal the 2016 election from Hillary Clinton.

No collusion:

> “The Special Counsel’s investigation did not find that the Trump campaign or anyone associated with it conspired or coordinated with Russia in its efforts to influence the 2016 presidential election,” Barr’s letter to Congress noted.

No obstruction of justice:

> The investigation headed by Mueller also examined whether Trump obstructed justice at any point related to ongoing investigations of Russian interference. In his letter, Barr stated that Mueller’s investigation was unable to demonstrate that the president broke the law by interfering with law enforcement.

Just to count the cost of the investigation, it was:

- 19 lawyers
- 40 FBI agents, intelligence analysts, forensic accountants, and more

- 2,800+ subpoenas
- 500 search warrants
- 500 witnesses
- over $25 MILLION in taxpayer dollars

Remember, this isn't the first time that the media reported constantly on a story that fit their radically-leftist narrative, but then was later disproven with evidence. Remember how they breathlessly reported the charge that Brett Kavanaugh ran a secret gang rape cartel? How about when the Covington kids literally assaulted a peaceful native American who literally served overseas in Vietnam? How about the faked Jussie Smollett hate crime? This happens *all the time.*

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presents Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov with a "reset button"

Here's some collusion with Russia

Remember this article from the radically leftist New York Times?

> At the heart of the tale are several men, leaders of the Canadian mining industry, who have been major donors to the charitable endeavors of former President Bill Clinton and his family. Members of that group built, financed and eventually sold off to the Russians a company that would become known as Uranium One.
>
> Beyond mines in Kazakhstan that are among the most lucrative in the world, the sale gave the Russians control of one-fifth of all uranium production capacity in the United States. Since uranium is considered a strategic asset, with implications for national security, the deal had to be approved by a committee composed of representatives from a number of United States government agencies. **Among the agencies that eventually signed off was the State Department, then headed by Mr. Clinton's wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton.**
>
> **As the Russians gradually assumed control of Uranium One in three**

> **separate transactions from 2009 to 2013, Canadian records show, a flow of cash made its way to the Clinton Foundation. Uranium One's chairman used his family foundation to make four donations totaling $2.35 million. Those contributions were not publicly disclosed by the Clintons, despite an agreement Mrs. Clinton had struck with the Obama White House to publicly identify all donors. Other people with ties to the company made donations as well.**

Why didn't that get investigated for 22 months by a Special Consel duting the Obama administration? Why didn't the mainstream news mendia report on that for 22 months ahead of the 2016 presidential election?

Obama promised Russian president Dmitri Medvedev "more flexibility" after the 2012 election

Russia colluded with Barack Obama

And speaking of collusion with Russia, how come this was never investigated:

Why didn't *actual collusion with the Russians* deserve a 22-month Special Counsel investigation? Why didn't the media run that clip for 22 months asking why Obama was colluding with the Russians? You don't have to look very far in his foreign policy to see actual examples where we sided with the Russians against our allies, such as when Obama backed out of giving missile defense to Poland. Or when Obama stood by and did nothing after Russia ran tanks into Georgia in 2008. Or when Obama refused to sell anti-tank weapons to Ukraine, after Ukraine was invaded by Russia. Obama's entire foreign policy was pro-Russia! It was right there in the open.

By the way, Trump did sell 210 Javelin anti-tank missiles to Ukraine, to defend themselves from Russia. But did the mainstream news media report on that? How exactly is selling anti-tank missiles to Russia's enemies "collusion with Russia"?

What about Obama?

What about the Obama administration? Were they ever investigated for their *many scandals?*

The Obama administration running guns to Mexican drug cartels so they could call for more gun control when those guns were used to kill Border Patrol agents. Or the Obama administration using the IRS as a weapon against conservative get-out-the-vote organizations, just before his re-election campaign. And on and on. The media had nothing to say about those scandals.

Video, audio and summary of intelligent design discussion, with Ben Shapiro and Stephen C. Meyer

March 26, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephen C. Meyer and Ben Shapiro discuss evolution and intelligent design

This is a must-see / must-hear conversation. Famous conservative Ben Shapiro discusses evolution and intelligent design with Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, author of "Signature in the Cell" (origin of life) and "Darwin's Doubt" (fossil record). These are the two best books on intelligent design. Their conversation covers the most important issues in the origins debate.

So to start, here's the full video:

And here is a link to the audio. You can download the MP3 there.

Someone actually put out an outline on Youtube, with a time-based index, so I'll just steal that as a base, and add to it:

- 1:34 What is your scientific background? Science undergraduate degree, professional geologist, later did a PhD in philosophy of science from Cambridge University.
- 2:39 What is the difference between intelligent design and creationism? Creationism starts from the Bible and posits a shorter history of the universe. ID starts from the data of the natural world and is neutral about the age of the Earth / universe. Meyer accepts the old-Earth.
- 3:36 How is Intelligent Design a scientific theory? The discovery of DNA reveals that code is central to living systems. Intelligent design uses the method of "inference to the best explanation" in order to argue that the best explanation for the code is an intelligent agent.
- 6:10 What evidence would have to arise to make Intelligent Design Falsifiable? If a naturalistic mechanism was discovered that could produce biological information using the probabilistic resources of the universe, and the time available, then intelligent design would be falsified.

- 7:26 Is religion separate from science or intertwined within it? There are three views: science is totally separate from religion, science is in total conflict with religion, science and religion agree on some issues, e.g. – the origin of the universe and Genesis 1:1. There are areas where science and religion overlap.
- 9:55 Why are the most prominent Darwinians also militant atheists? Evolution is a theory that tries to explain nature using naturalistic mechanisms, so it is compatible with atheism.
- 10:45 What does the theory of evolution say? The term evolution has multiple meanings, and should be defined before discussions. It can refer to change over time. It can refer to animals changing slightly to adapt to enviromental changes. It can refer to the idea that all animals evolved from simpler life forms, and that there is a tree of life showing how different types of organisms share common ancestors. And it can refer to the idea that purely undirected processes can explain the history of life using purely materialistic forces. It's that final view that intelligent design challenges.
- 13:15 Where is the discontinuity in naturalistic processes in the development of life? The first discontinuity is the origin of simple life from non-living components. The second discontinuity is the sudden appearance of different body plans in a very narrow window of time in the Cambrian era.
- 15:42 Why does information theory suggest that code requires some sort of designer? DNA is a true information-bearing system identical to the software in computers, e.g. – operating system, applications.
- 19:45 Can information be created by random mutation, and favorable mutations preserved by natural selection? Just as in software code, instructions must be added in order to develop new functionality. Random additions of characters will almost always degrade biological function. The number of possible sequences that do nothing useful is vastly higher than the number of sequences that perform biological functions. Doug Axe did research on this at Cambridge University, and he found that the number of functional sequences of amino acids is 1 in 10 to the 77th power. Given the probabilistic resources (replicating organisms)and the time available, it is extremely unlikely to find sequences that have functional information by chance.
- 25:05 What about Stephen Jay Gould's model of punctuated equilibrium – doesn't it explain the sudden jumps in information? Gould's mechanism is accurate according to the fossil record, which shows a lot of jumps. But he did not have a naturalistic explanation for sudden jumps in biological function. Darwinian mechanisms work slowly and would (in theory) produce different body plans gradually. But this is not what the fossil record shows.
- 27:22 What is the mechanism for injecting information in the theory of intelligent design? The information comes in from an intelligence when new major body plans appear, and minor variations within types could be explained by evolution.
- 29:25 Does the Miller-Urey experiment provide a naturalistic explanation for the building blocks necessary for the origin of life? The MU experiment only produced a few types of amino acids, it doesn't say anything about how to sequence the amino

acids in order to form protein folds that can perform biological functions. The MU experiment also pre-supposes conditions on the early Earth (reducing gases) that do not match what was there (oxidyzing or neutral gases).

- 32:00 Is the RNA world hypothesis is a good explanation for the origin of life? Evolution requires that replication already be in place, because evolution assumes that mutations appear during the replication. The RNA world hypothesis suggests that sequences contain information, but also catalyze origin of life chemistry. The problem with RNA world is that it starts with self-replicating systems. And those replicating systems require the scientist to inject information into the system to get even the simplest replication started.
- 34:56 How do scientists respond to the critiques of Darwinism proposed by intelligent design advocates? By and large, they accept them. They think that mutation and selection works once living systems are in place, but they realize it has no explanation for the origin of life or the sudden origin of body plans. (Tells about the conference of the Royal Society, where problems with Darwinian mechanisms were discussed, and the 2003 MIT Press book by Muller and Newman).
- 37:16 Why do people hold to Darwinian evolution in the face of these problems? Many scientists presuppose methodological naturalism, which requires that any explanation for the origin of life and the origin of major body plans involve materialist explanations only. No intelligent agents are allowed. The problems occur when assumption of naturalism causes scientists to propose incorrect explanations for what we observe in nature. It's also not clear how naturalistic mechanisms could produce organisms who are capable of reason and free will.
- 40:43 Does naturalistic evolution have an answer for conscious minds, reasoning, free will? No, consider the work of atheist scholar Thomas Nagel, who argues in his book "Mind and Cosmos" (Oxford University Press 2012) that the existence of mind is a disproof of the neo-Darwinian explanation for life. Darwinism stops us from accepting the reality of minds.
- 42:06 So do naturalistic evolutionists have to explain away the mind as an illusion? First, we humans have immediate experience of consciousness, reason and free will. Second, our whole legal system is based on the idea free will, because you can't hold someone guilty unless they chose to do something they knew was wrong. Third, we have an epidemic of suicide among young people. This is caused by a crisis of meaning. Intelligent design opens up the possibility of their being a mind behind the universe, who we could have a relationships with.
- 44:53 Why aren't schools allowed to be honest about the problems with neo-Darwinian evolution? The intellignt design view is to that teachers should be allowed to teach all the vidence for Darwinian evolution, and also discuss some of the problems with the theory. Students learning science should not be told that everything is solved. Students learn science better when they are presented with peer-reviewed evidence for and against a theory, rather than being indoctrinated.
- 47:37 Is intelligent design theory connected to God? Intelligent design infers from the information content in nature that a mind with capabilities like ours injected

information into living systems. Intelligent design is agnostic about the designer, because in principle, embodied or unembodied agents could inject information into living systems. Intelligent design is friendly to theism, because theists will immediately identify the mind as God. Furthermore, the fine-tuning in the initial conditions of the universe is another intelligent design argument. In that case, since the design occurs at the beginning of the universe, the intelligent agent acting prior to the creation of the universe would have to be supernatural, i.e. – God.

- 50:53 Can naturalists say that the imposition of "function" on a sequence is arbitrary, in the same way that the English language is arbitrary? This won't work, because *biological function* is not arbitrary in the same way as language. Biological function is not arbitrary, because sequences can be tested for function *objectively* by observing whether sequences can perform functions necessary for life, e.g. – replication.
- 52:43 Doesn't the multiverse explain away the improbabilities of the fine-tuning, the origin of life, and the development of life? No, because all models of the multiverse require fine-tuning in the mechanism that generates the different universes.
- 55:42 What about cosmological models that eliminate the beginning of the universe? The standard Big Bang model and the inflationary model both posit a beginning of the universe. There is also the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theory which proves that any universe that is expanding requires a beginning. The only chance for naturalists is quantum cosmologies, but this doesn't work because 1) it requires an abstract reality of mathematics to actualize the physical universe, but this presupposes a mind. 2) The model requires an earlier input of information, which can only have come from a mind.

If you listen to this lecture, or watch the video, and you enjoyed it, then please share. If you have questions, I can try to answer them for you – just leave your question in the comments, or shoot me an e-mail, or message me from the blog's Facebook page, or direct message me on Twitter. I've invested a lot of time in this, and have been studying intelligent design since the late 1990s.

By the way, I listen to the Ben Shapiro podcast, (and the Andrew Klavan podcast), every day. I never miss an episode, and I think if you give them a try, you'll enjoy them, too.

Jay Richards: How to end poverty in 10 tough steps

March 27, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jay Richards: How to end poverty in 10 tough steps

Why are some nations more prosperous than others? Is it because the wealthier nations exploit the poorer ones, keeping them poor? Or are there certain policies, laws, and cultural beliefs that lead to prosperity? Dr. Jay Richards delivers a lecture for Impact 360, in which he identifies 10 different factors that lift nations out of poverty, and explains why they work.

Summary:

1. Establish and maintain the rule of law.
2. Focus the jurisdiction of government on maintaining the rule of law, and limit its jurisdiction over the economy and the institutions of civil society.
3. Implement a formal property system with consistent and accessible means for securing a clear title to property one owns.
4. Encourage economic freedom: Allow people to trade goods and services unencumbered by tariffs, subsidies, price controls, undue regulation, and restrictive immigration policies.
5. Encourage stable families and other important private institutions that mediate between the individual and the state.
6. Encourage belief in the truth that the universe is purposeful and makes sense.
7. Encourage the right cultural mores—orientation to the future and the belief that progress but not utopia is possible in this life; willingness to save and delay gratification; willingness to risk, to respect the rights and property of others, to be diligent, to be thrifty.
8. Instill a proper understanding of the nature of wealth and poverty—that wealth is created, that free trade is win-win, that risk is essential to enterprise, that trade-offs are unavoidable, that the success of others need not come at your expense, and that you can pursue legitimate self-interest and the common good at the same time.

9. Focus on your comparative advantage rather than protecting what used to be your competitive advantage.
10. Work hard.

Solving economic problems is just like solving any other problem. First, we read to learn what has been proven to work. Then, we do what works. I want to encourage Christians to move beyond good intentions to good results when voting for economic policies. Often, people on the left want to "fix" inequalities by doing what feels good to them, or what sounds good to them. Economics is about choosing policies that we know have worked in other times and places.

Let's talk more about #4 from Richards' list.

Economic freedom linked to prosperity

Consider the book "The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution" by famous conservative theologian Wayne Grudem.

You can even read an article about it from the left-wing Christian Post here:

> In a presentation of his new book at the Family Research Council, biblical theologian Wayne Grudem argued that poor countries can become rich only by producing their own prosperity, and that the free market is not only the economic answer, but in tune with the Bible's moral teachings.
>
> "Every nation that has escaped poverty has done so by producing its own prosperity," said Grudem, professor of theology and biblical studies at Phoenix Seminary in Arizona. Perhaps best known for his book Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, Grudem presented the key themes in his new book The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution. The very first of his 79 factors to help nations escape poverty in "a free market economy."
>
> […]Grudem argued that the wealth of a country is determined by its per-capita income – the average amount of money each citizen makes. The only way to increase this is to increase the production of goods and services, creating more wealth for everyone, he said.
>
> […]The professor pointed to 79 factors to help a country produce more goods and services, in three different key areas: the economic system, government, and cultural beliefs and values.
>
> For the economic system, Grudem mentioned the Index of Economic Freedom, a report put out by the Heritage Foundation to judge each country's openness to trade and wealth creation.

You can find the Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom right here. Take a look at the countries at the top… these countries also have a very high per capita income. Their citizens are earning a lot of money by selling what they produce to willing customers. The ones at the bottom are run by socialist governments. You wouldn't want to try to make a living in Venezuela or Cuba or North Korea. But these are the places that

American socialists admire and support. Does that tell you something about what they would do to you, if they got hold of the reins of government?

The Fraser Institute in Canada did a similar ranking of economic freedom (economic freedom = low taxes, low regulation, free trade), and they concluded:

> Countries in the top quartile (25 per cent) of economic freedom (such as the U.K., Japan and Ireland) had an average per-capita income of US$40,376 in 2016 compared to US$5,649 for the bottom quartile countries (such as Venezuela, Iran and Zimbabwe). And life expectancy is 79.5 years in the top quartile of countries compared to 64.4 years in the bottom quartile.

Economic freedom works best.

Is it the man's responsibility to pursue the woman, or the other way around?

March 28, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

If you ask this question theoretically, most people will probably say that it's the man's responsibility, especially in the church. Is this because women don't like the idea of having to plan out and achieve something? Maybe. But what is interesting is that the man-pursues view is very popular in the church, even though it's not very common in the Bible. Dalrock posted something about this.

He writes:

> One comment I see from fathers with surprising regularity is that their unmarried daughter is in a great position to find a husband because she's not remotely interested in the kind of men who express interest in her.
>
> I… think this is tied into the erroneous idea that the Bible teaches that men should pursue and women should judge the performance. But it isn't the Bible that teaches this ethic, it is the religion of Courtly Love that teaches this. Think of the only two women to have books of the Bible named after them. Both Ruth and Esther pursued their eventual husbands. Ruth's pursuit of Boaz resulted in her being the grandmother of King David, which meant that Christ would come from her line. Esther's pursuit of Ahasuerus allowed her to save the Jews.

Cane Caldo was actually the first to write about this on his blog:

> According to traditionalists (and others): Men are supposed to chase, and women are supposed to be caught. Or they might say: Men are to initiate, and women are to respond.
>
> […]If you fancy yourself a traditionalist… [s]earch your Bible for a story about a

> man who woos a woman directly.

So, just consider that for a minute. Ruth is probably the best example of a woman who just makes decisions to get on with life, and happens across a wealthy single man. Then she consults with Naomi and takes action to pursue that man. It works out for her. Where in the Bible does the man pursue the woman?

Derek Ramsey was able to come up with two examples, and he commented on Dalrock's blog:

> You can find examples of all cases in the Bible: fully arranged marriages (for Isaac), where the man pursued the woman (Jacob; Hosea), where the woman pursued the man (Ruth; Esther), and where both pursued each other or it wasn't clearly stated one way or the other (Samson; Solomon). I would argue that pursuit (by either sex) is neither condemned nor encouraged. Each situation is different and there is no rule one way or the other.

I think that Derek wins the argument, here. But I still think that practically speaking, in such a time (of feminism) as this, it's much much wiser for women to take action to "pursue" men she is interested in. That doesn't mean asking men out, though.

thedeti explains in a comment:

> A man setting his sights on one or two or three women and then pursuing them really hard trying to get on their radar isn't the best way to find a woman who's interested in him and who is the best match.
>
> Instead, he should be his best version of himself, and then see which women are tossing subtle signs of interest at him. Which women just kind of show up where he is, which ones make a point to say hi to him, which ones reach out to him, which ones contact him, which ones strike up conversations with him. And then from THOSE women he should select a few he is interested in and then pursue them.
>
> That certainly isn't what most Christians are teaching their children. I certainly wasn't taught this.

And a bit later, thedeti says:

> In the current #MeToo climate, false rape allegations, and sexual harassment's current definition as "any conduct or words uttered by any man anywhere that any woman within sight or earshot didn't like", this model can be downright dangerous for men.
>
> A man can no longer just pick a few girls he's interested in and pursue them. If he selects some girls who dont' like him, he's in for a world of hurt by trying to "perform" for them. If he selects one who kind of likes him, but he makes even one wrong move or says one remotely mildly offensive thing, he's done. Not only will she know about it, all her friends will know too.

> When a woman is very interested and shows it, she'll be much more forgiving of his expected missteps. That gives him room to run, and gives a budding relationship the space it needs to germinate and grow.

Deti advises women to just show up in places where men they are interested in are, and not actively discourage them. Maybe ask him questions about what he is doing as a Christian, and ask for his advice about something he knows about, etc. And deti warns women to consider that in a culture where false accusations and frivolous no-fault divorces are everywhere, men with good educations, degrees and finances will be very careful about pursuing women.

My thoughts

I was speaking to someone who thinks that she wants to be pursued by a man. I suggested that she read the book of Ruth to counter her view. The first and most important piece of advice I gave her was to "cross the room" for any man she is interested in. Stand up, walk directly at him, and speak right in his face. Maintain eye contact and speak directly to him about things he is interested in. On another day, I told her that the most important thing you can ask a man about is his vision to serve God.

As women age and lose their beauty, the only thing that remains is the man's passion – his plan – and the place of the woman within it. Men stay in love with women who have invested in the plan they made to serve God. Naturally, it's POINTLESS to choose any man unless he has a plan to serve God effectively that he has demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice for. In my case, writing this blog is a sacrifice, and giving money to Christian apologists and pro-life debaters is a sacrifice. A woman should be skeptical about anything a man says – look at what he has already done for his vision, and whether he is actually practical and determined enough to achieve anything. That's where you'll find your place. And that's what you need to investigate in a husband candidate. Standing back and remaining passive, waiting to be pursued, is just going to attract a lot of non-Christian men who are *pursuing you for sex*. If the man is pursuing you, and he hasn't told you his vision (why he needs you as his wife anyway), then he wants sex.

The pursuit of women by non-Christian alpha male bad boys seems to be welcomed, surprisingly, by a lot of passive Christian women who kind of lie back and expect to just acquiesce to experiences that feel good. Women today don't like to think about marriage in a structured way. And they especially don't want to be asked by men about past decisions, demonstrated abilities, future wife responsibilities and obligations, etc. (How dare men evaluate them for a marriage plan!) They don't want marriage, defined as self-sacrificial commitment. They want marriage as constant tingles, supplied by an alpha male bad boy who exists solely to generate feelings of happiness in them, and feelings of envy in their girlfriends. Think about marriage as a plan? That's boring. Let's get drunk and hook up with an alpha male bad boy, and see if he calls back after the abortion.

Alpha male bad boys feel good (for a while) and this is how women get trapped into relationships with men who have no reason to commit to them. A much better strategy is to stop being attracted to alpha male bad boys, and deliberately engage in conversations

with marriage-ready men. As my friend Lindsay says, you need to learn to become attracted to men who have a vision that will survive the loss of your youth and beauty.

In my own case, I'll be able to retire at 50 with a net worth well north of 7 figures. Because of this, it would be stupid for me to waste my time pursuing Christian women whose criteria for men has nothing to do with the marriage enterprise, and is *INDISTINGUISHABLE* from the criteria used by non-Christian women. The *ONLY* thing that would catch my eye at this point is a woman who is equal to me (chaste, no tattoos, STEM degree(s), debt-free, married parents, house or savings, into apologetics, conservative politics, and between the ages of 23-28). And that's a minimum. And she can forget about being pursued by me. She'll have to approach me, and question me about what my plan is, and where she would fit into it.

I've often been told by wise female Christian advisors that I need to do a better job of showing off my situation to women. But if I spent the money on sparkly things and fun, I wouldn't be financially secure, would I? It's up to women to stop being so shallow and emotional. They need to look beyond appearances and fun. They need to have a marriage focus, and they need to choose men, show up and start investigating and investing. I simply don't have the time to flail around in a feminist culture where women, including Christian women, are woefully unqualified for the marriage enterprise. It's not my job, after having made thousands of good decisions, to risk my fortune by pursuing women who have made thousands of bad decisions (promiscuity, debt, useless degrees, etc). The entitled attitudes of women today, including Christian women, is nothing short of astonishing to men like me who have spent a lifetime being careful about being chaste, sober, practical, frugal and effective.

Alistair Begg has a great sermon series on Ruth that emphasizes Ruth's agency, and her willingness to make decisions that were practical without any sort of being led by feelings or being nudged by God. Christian women, if you want to get married, then get to work on finding a man and making it easy for him to choose you.

The kalam cosmological argument defended in a peer-reviewed science journal

March 29, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the peer-reviewed article. It appears in a scientific journal focused on astrophysics.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

Here's an excerpt in which the author, Dr. William Lane Craig, explains the Big Bang cosmology:

> The monumental significance of the Friedman-Lemaitre model lay in its historization of the universe. As one commentator has remarked, up to this time the idea of the expansion of the universe "was absolutely beyond comprehension. Throughout all of human history the universe was regarded as fixed and immutable and the idea that it might actually be changing was inconceivable."{8} But if the Friedman-Lemaitre model were correct, the universe could no longer be adequately treated as a static entity existing, in effect, timelessly. Rather the universe has a history, and time will not be matter of indifference for our investigation of the cosmos. In 1929 Edwin Hubble's measurements of the red-shift in the optical spectra of light from distant galaxies,{9} which was taken to indicate a universal recessional motion of the light sources in the line of sight, provided a dramatic verification of the Friedman-Lemaitre model. Incredibly, what Hubble had discovered was the isotropic expansion of the universe predicted by Friedman and Lemaitre. It marked a veritable turning point in the history of science. "Of all the great predictions that

> science has ever made over the centuries," exclaims John Wheeler, "was there ever one greater than this, to predict, and predict correctly, and predict against all expectation a phenomenon so fantastic as the expansion of the universe?"{10}
>
> As a GTR-based theory, the Friedman-Lemaitre model does not describe the expansion of the material content of the universe into a pre-existing, empty, Newtonian space, but rather the expansion of space itself. This has the astonishing implication that as one reverses the expansion and extrapolates back in time, space-time curvature becomes progressively greater until one finally arrives at a singular state at which space-time curvature becomes infinite. This state therefore constitutes an edge or boundary to space-time itself. P. C. W. Davies comments,
>
> > An initial cosmological singularity . . . forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity. . . . On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.{11}
>
> The popular expression "Big Bang," originally a derisive term coined by Fred Hoyle to characterize the beginning of the universe predicted by the Friedman-Lemaitre model, is thus potentially misleading, since the expansion cannot be visualized from the outside (there being no "outside," just as there is no "before" with respect to the Big Bang).{12}
>
> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"{13}
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Every theist should be able to understand and defend this argument. It is a scientific refutation of materialism, and it is supported by six lines of scientific evidence – all of which emerged as science has progressed.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe

3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

Those are the scientific discoveries that have led us to the beginning of the universe, which support's Dr. Craig's argument.

This is the kind of evidence I expect all Christian theists to be using when discussing the question of whether God exists. Scientific evidence. When talking to non-Christians, we first need to show that we understand science, because science is a reliable and respected way of getting knowledge about the universe. Non-Christians do not accept the Bible, but they do accept science, so we begin evangelism with science. Science (experimental, testable, repeatable science) should set limits on what anyone can believe – including non-Christians, who might otherwise not be inclined to listen to Bible verses and theology. Important: it's not a good idea to discuss the resurrection of Jesus with a person who does not accept the scientific evidence for a Creator of the universe.

The Big Bang is not compatible with atheism

According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by the atheistic worldview.

54-year-old feminist angry at dating agency for not finding her a rich husband

March 30, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kate Mulvey at age 53 expects that rich men will want to marry her

A little while ago, I blogged about a 47-year-old mother of three who sued a dating agency for failing to find her a rich husband. That was pretty bad, but I found something even worse. A 54-year-old woman who spend all her savings on a dating agency. She expected them to find her loads of rich men who want to marry her – despite her never having invested anything in them.

The UK Telegraph reports:

> Glass of wine in hand, the man sitting opposite me in the restaurant was in full flow. While he was droning on about his work commitments, I zoned in and out trying to work out how on earth I was going to get to through this first date. I had expected to meet an eligible bachelor, but he had turned out to be so boring that he made me want to stick asparagus up my nostrils.
>
> This memory came flooding back when I read about, Tereza Burki, a City financier who, last week, successfully sued a Knightsbridge-based elite matchmaking service, for the return of her £12,600 annual fee after they failed to find her the man of her dreams.
>
> A couple of years ago, I too joined an expensive matchmaking agency. I had just come out of a seven year relationship, and was on the wrong side of 50.
>
> I soon tired of online dating and receiving messages from over weight baldies

> who peppered their emails with childish emojis. I hankered to find Mr Right-for-me, a man who was suitably educated and a successful professional.
>
> And so this is how I found myself, throwing money (my entire savings to be precise) to an upmarket matchmaking agency in central London. The agency claimed to filter out the undesirables, the mediocre and give clients the personal touch, so I handed over the hefty sum of £6,000.
>
> As I waited to be matched with someone from their 'extensive database', I idly imagined my handsome date, cashmere polo neck, a bit academic and kind. We'd eat steak tartare and swap notes on our latest clever box-set find and favourite novels.
>
> The first indication that all was not as I had expected came when I met personal matchmaker at a Park Lane hotel for 'tea and an interview'… told her how I loved folk music, my favourite film was The Deer Hunter, and enjoyed weekends in the countryside.
>
> […]A few days later she emailed me with the details of W, "a successful entrepreneur who had travelled extensively and also liked folk music". When I met him at a pub in Richmond, I was shocked. I was expecting a cultured and dynamic man, instead I got a man in a pair of jeans, a moth eaten jumper and the table manners of a modern day Baldrick.
>
> And therein lies the rub. These agencies trade on their exclusivity, yet the men I met were far from the international super elite they promised.

Isn't this terrible? Clearly the dating agency is to blame. It should be easy for a penniless, feminist hedonist to find rich men who want to spend all their money taking care of a 54-year-old woman who had *literally nothing to do with the process by which they earned all that money*.

One thing we know about her for sure is that she is impractical. She is 54 years old and has just spent her last savings on a *dating agency*. From her other comments about the type of men she is looking for, we can infer that she wasted a lot of money on travel, fine dining, and other frivolous experiences designed to produce feelings of sophistication without any practical plan for preparing for the financial demands of old age. What's the point of having fun "in the moment" if you don't have any plan to allow sustainable recreation in the future, when you're too old to work?

I spent some time reading articles by Kate Mulvey, and here is what I was able to determine:

- she has no useful degrees – she paid for useless degrees in Italian and French, instead of studying something useful, like computer science or nursing or petroleum engineering. Her "writing" is all about fashion, dating and "lifestyles"
- her opinion on children: "uppity children take your time, emotions and energy" – she sees children as a detriment to her highest priority (her career). She says "I, however, have lived a life of unfettered freedom to take on projects, write books and

travel”
- she had loads of entertaining men “beating a path to [her] door” when she was younger
- she spend thousands of pounds on plastic surgery
- she blames her lack of marriage success on her being “brainier” than men
- she turned down men who wanted to marry her, as late as age 33
- her book is called “Accidental Singleton” because she thinks that her approach to life – anti-marriage hedonism – has “accidentally” left her single and penniless at age 54 (as if it wasn’t her fault!)

Although she talks a lot about being intelligent, it seems to me that an intelligent woman would have practical degrees, savings and an awareness of what men actually want from a woman – and WHEN they want it. Men want a woman to support them in their most difficult period, just after they graduate and hit the job market. Starting out in a career is hard because the man doesn’t have savings or a resume or references. The support of a young, attractive, virtuous woman means everything during those difficult years. This is when a wife has the most impact on her husband’s ability to earn and save, on his mental health, on his physical health, etc.

Somehow, this narcissist thinks that she can just show up in a man’s life, after he has done all his earning alone, and grab hold of the things that she never helped build. She wasted all her youth and beauty chasing experiences with attractive bad boys, but she thinks that it’s reasonable for a man to invest all his wealth in her. A woman has value to a man at the time when he is attempting to do difficult things, but lacks support.

What exactly is it that a woman like Kate has to offer a man, given her life choices? Does anyone think that this woman has marriage-character? Does anyone think that her life of selfishness and hedonism has prepared her to be a good wife? What kind of conversation about moral obligations could you have with someone who has only ever done what felt good to her in the moment? Has her string of failed relationships with hot bad boys prepared her to be trusting and unselfish? How about to be faithful? Or even to be content? What is it that she thinks that she is offering that would justify the heavy investment that she is asking for, especially in an age of no-fault-divorce and anti-male divorce courts?

I think people really underestimate how much goes into making a good wife. The character she has to develop. The skills that she has to develop. The way she treats her husband, which often comes from carefully cultivating virtues like chastity and sobriety. Her worldview, which affects whether she has practical abilities like love, forgiveness and self-control. Her ability to be good with money. Her ability to nurture others and make social connections consistent with marriage and homemaking. Her ability to bear children, and then nurture them during the critical first 5 years after – not to mention homeschooling, which is increasingly valuable in a time when underperforming government-run schools seek to indoctrinate, rather than educate, children.

Nothing about this woman makes me think that she has any marriage-related character

traits or abilities. Any idiot can spend someone else’s money on their own feelings, fun and thrills. But it takes a carefully crafted woman to really do the work of a wife. Marriage isn’t there so that women can be happy. Marriage is an enterprise. Being selfish – doing what is easy, and what feels good moment by moment – doesn’t prepare a woman for the enterprise.

How to be an alpha male and signal manliness without being a promiscuous predator

March 31, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

These days, there seems to be a perception that in order to be an alpha male, you have to become a pick-up artist and sleep with a whole bunch of fatherless women, then ghost them (don't talk to them any more). But as a Christian man, that's all off-limits to me. Still, my best friend Dina tells me that I am an alpha male, despite being a virgin. How can that be?

In this post, I'm going to lay out three ways for a Christian man to be an alpha male without being a promiscuous predator who preys on vulnerable fatherless girls.

1. Never let a woman override your vision to serve Christ

It can be challenging to project the attitude of aloofness that women associate with strength while still being a good, moral man. One way to do that is to self-sacrificially invest your time, money and effort into some enterprise that benefits Christ. For example, in my case, I've invested time in learning apologetics, having a blog as a platform, and giving charity to invest in organizations to do apologetics events. I was pressured from Christian women to "tone it down" for their friends and family. I was also pressured to redirect my attention from apologetics to their need to have a good time (travel, zip-lining, skydiving, surfing were mentioned as good ways to spend my money on them). Alpha males don't give up their mission in order to get the girl.

It is tempting for a man to let a woman re-focus his time, money and effort on giving her what she wants. If she is his wife, then some of that will be legitimate, just as some government spending is legitimate because it is Constitutional. A man should love his wife, protect her and provide for her. But he should not be distracted for other frivolous priorities that have nothing to do with a Christian marriage plan. Christian women often

absorb secular left priorities from the culture, and they expect Christian men to give them what the culture says they ought to want or need, e.g. – putting the kids in daycare and public schools so she can have a career like her non-Christian friends. Alpha males put their own vision above what the secular left culture says they should be doing.

2. Never let a woman disrespect your leadership / mentoring role

It's important for you to have areas of your life where you actually know what you are talking about, and have demonstrated success at mentoring others. In my case, those areas are education, career and finances. I have invested time in learning what to study. And I achieved a BS and MS in computer science. I have invested time in learning how to interview, what skills to train, and what jobs to take, and how to keep a job. And I achieved a 20-year+ gap-less resume with good companies, using good skills. I have chosen not to borrow money at interest (ever), not to spend money on travel / fun / thrills, and to invest early and often. And I have achieved a six-figure income and will have a 7-figure net worth by my mid-forties. A man needs to have areas like that where he studies and achieves, so that he knows how to advise others, and has a record of successful mentoring.

I sometimes mentor women. Some of them listen to me and some do not. I've gotten women to drop their non-STEM majors to study engineering or computer science. I've gotten women to stop wasting money on fun and thrills, in order to pay off their debts and start investing and giving to charity. I've gotten women to dump hot bad boys who would not commit, and choose commitment-minded men. I've gotten women to quit bad jobs in order to take better jobs. In the areas where I have demonstrated competence, I expect women to respect my leadership, even if it makes them feel bad in the short term. Men signal alpha male status when they obtain good results in their mentoring activities.

Also, I'm just going to throw this out there: "spiritual leadership" does not mean telling a woman that God really is speaking to her through her feelings, when she wants to make impulsive, impractical decisions that are likely to result in failure.

3. Never let a woman stop you from expressing your moral convictions

In the 2012 election, most single / unmarried / divorced women voted pro-abortion and pro-gay-marriage.

Excerpt:

> **NBC News national exit polling shows that 67 percent of unmarried women said they voted for Obama. That's in line with the 2008 election, when 70 percent of single women helped usher the president into office. This proves it wasn't a single-election phenomenon: unmarried women have solidified into a powerful voting force, experts say.**
>
> […]By the way — this isn't just young women, Maatz pointed out. Many of the

> single women voters were over 50 — divorced, widowed or never married.

These women voted for a candidate who voted multiple times for *infanticide* as a state senator in Illinois. Why is this? Well, young unmarried women are more influenced by feelings like compassion. They tend to see themselves as “exempt” from moral standards, because they are constantly told that they are “special”. They tend to see the predictable consequences of poor choices as “unexpected”, causing them to think that people aren’t responsible for their own poor choices. As a result, they tend to be more progressive in their voting, and less Christian in their moral convictions.

A man can signal his alpha male status to women by being bold and persuasive on moral issues (and issues of policy that touch on moral issues). This may not work on all women, but it will work on the ones he should be interested in for wife and mother roles. Men should never just express their feelings about moral issues, or just tell about their experiences. Men ought to go further, and make logical arguments supported by scientific evidence. Instead of sharing “their opinion” (subjective), they ought to press those who disagree to change their minds. It is the studying of arguments and evidence that allows the Christian man to signal alpha male status when these moral issues are debated.

Conclusion

My friend Dina likes to say that the essence of manliness is when a man refuses to let a woman redirect him away from his vision and his moral convictions by using sex, sexual attraction, the promise of sex, or by withholding sex (from her husband). I think men can learn something from her definition. Women are useful as helpers, but we shouldn’t automatically assume that they are wise and virtuous, and give them the authority to rule over us in areas where we ought to lead. Dina also says never to trust women’s words, when deciding whether they will respect your leadership in your vision and moral convictions. Before you marry a woman, you must observe her taking the initiative to perform independent actions that help you with your vision – actions that go against her own feelings and desires. The most important part about being an alpha male is not losing your alpha male status by marrying someone who won’t respect it.

Twitter suspends account of pro-life movie "Unplanned", deletes 99% of their followers

April 1, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Facebook, Google, Youtube, Twitter purging conservative speech (Source: The Stream)

Wow, big social media companies like Facebook, Google, Youtube and Twitter are really ratcheting up their suppression of any accounts that challenge their allies in the Democrat Party. For example, on the weekend Twitter decided to suspend the account of the new pro-life movie "Unplanned". And then they deleted 99,000 of their followers.

PJ Media reports:

> The pro-life movie Unplanned surprised at the box office its opening weekend, taking 5th place with $6.1 million. That didn't stop Twitter from attacking the film twice in one weekend, however.
>
> The movie's Twitter account was briefly suspended on Saturday, mere hours after its release on Friday. On Sunday, the account seems to have mysteriously lost 99,000 of its 100,000 followers.

There was a backlash against the suspension of the account. Twitter didn't provide any rule that was violated, but they reinstated the account – with zero followers. People trying to re-follow the account were prevented from doing so, including the author of the PJ Media article:

> I attempted to follow the page, but the same thing happened to me.

However, the movie performed so well at the box office that they are expanding the number of theaters next week to 1,700:

> Despite the Twitter suspension and sudden mysterious loss of followers, Unplanned racked up more than $6.1 million at the box office, despite being predicted to take in only $2-3 million. Even more impressive, the film only

> played on 1,060 screens, earning an average of $5,770 per screen.
>
> On Sunday, the film announced that its distributor, Pure Flix, will add an additional 600 screens for a count of 1,700 screens next week.
>
> The movie also earned an A+ rating from CinemaScore, and it has a 93 percent positive rating on RottenTomatoes.

I'd make sure that you go see it as soon as possible. Remember what happend to the Gosnell movie, last time? The theaters pulled it very early, even though it was doing very well.

This isn't the first time that Twitter has censored voices critical of their allies in the Democrat Party. Remember when they refused to allow a pro-life election ad from (now Senator) Marsha Blackburn? Or when they censored a pro-life ads from the well-known pro-life Susan B. Anthony List group? Or when they said that death threats against conservative Dana Loesch were permissible? They also allowed threats of violence to be made against the pro-life Covington students. They also blocked pro-life ads from Live Action. Basically, they censor anything that makes their pro-abortion allies in the Democrat Party look bad.

I understand that companies make mistakes, but why are all the mistakes made by these big social media companies *in favor* of their allies in the Democrat Party? Is it because they don't want their allies in the Democrat Party to lose elections?

Can parents with a transgender child expect help from counselors, teachers, doctors and judges?

April 2, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

The Stream had an interesting article written by a motherwho explained what happened when she went to experts for help for her a daughter. Her daughter wanted everyone around her to treat her as if she were a boy. The experts didn't much care what the mother had to say, they just assumed that the child was the authority, and the parents were expected to toe the lie… or else.

She writes:

> If you take your child to a clinic to seek help, affirmative care means the therapist must follow the child's lead. The professionals must accept a child's professed gender identity. In fact, this is the law in many states.
>
> Under "conversion therapy" bans, questioning a child's professed gender identity is now illegal.
>
> […]Parents are encouraged to refer to him as their "daughter" and let him choose a feminine name. Teachers are told to let him use the girls' bathroom at school. Therapists will reassure parents that social transition is harmless and reversible.
>
> […]The "experts" tell parents that it is harmful to question their children's beliefs, that they must support their children's medical transition, which includes a lifetime dependence on hormones, and that if parents do not comply, their children will be at higher risk of suicide.

The medical personnel prescribed hormone altering drugs to the child:

> Once the teenage years begin, affirmative care means giving young people

> cross-sex hormones. Girls as young as 12 are prescribed testosterone for lifetime usage, while boys are given estrogen.
>
> These are serious hormonal treatments that impact brain development, cardiovascular health, and may increase the risk of cancer.

And it's not just drugs, it's surgery, too:

> For girls, one standard procedure is called "gender-affirming top surgery," also known as a double mastectomy. They are performed on girls as young as 13 years old — otherwise healthy girls who believe they are transgender.
>
> […]There are also teenage girls undergoing radical hysterectomies in the name of gender identity.

Now, the first thing that occurred to me when reading this story was: what happens if the parents don't want to go along with this? And also, how did these pro-transgender non-parent actors even find out about it?

Canada

In Canada, transgender children can approach teachers in the government-run public schools, and medical personnel in the government-run health care system. And then those government workers can take the parents to the government-run courts to get the will of the secular left state imposed on the parents.

The Federalist first reported on the story in the last week of February:

> > Clark* first found out that his 12-year-old daughter Maxine was being treated as a boy by her school when he saw her new name in her class's grade seven yearbook. "Quinn" was the new name her counselor had helped her pick out, and Maxine's school district in Delta, British Columbia, Canada, had decided that "Quinn" should be treated, for all intents and purposes, as a boy.

According to education policy, parents have no right to know their child's "preferred sex, gender, or name" at school.

More:

> Maxine's counselors at school … referred Maxine and her mother, Sarah, to a "Dr." Wallace Wong — a psychologist and LGBT activist who predictably decided that Maxine should be referred to a children's hospital for testosterone injections when she was only 13. Not to be outdone, the children's hospital asked Maxine's parents for permission to begin injecting Maxine with testosterone on her very first visit. Clark said no and refused to sign.
>
> From the middle of August until October, the hospital worked Clark over, trying to get his consent. When he finally refused, the hospital dropped a bombshell

> threat: simply put, they declared that they didn't need Clark's or Sarah's permission for that matter.

The Federalist later reported that the courts had sided with the government-run school and the government-run health care personnel against the parents.

Ohio

You might wonder what happens in America, if parents choose to fight the experts on the secular left.

Here's a recent example reported at the Daily Wire:

> On Friday, Ohio parents were denied custody of their daughter for not being supportive enough of her alleged transgenderism.
>
> The 17-year-old biologically female child identifies as a boy and claims she has suicidal thoughts over her parents' lack of support for her transgenderism (they won't, for example, call her by her new chosen male name). The parents were fighting for custody of their daughter back from the state in an effort to stop potential transgender hormone treatment.

The Hamilton County Judge, Sylvia Sieve Hendon, took the child away from the parents, so that the child could get transgender hormon replacement therapy.

I thought this part was very interesting:

> The parents' Christian faith was used against them in the case by Donald Clancy of the Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office.

I looked at where Hamilton County is, thinking that it would be in a liberal city like Toledo or Cleveland, or even Columbus. But it's actually a suburb of Cincinnati, close to Indiana. I assume that the judge, like all government workers, is paid out of the money taken from peope like the parents in taxes. They're paying this judge to do this to them.

Be careful how you vote

In cases like this, I always like to remind Christians to remember how they vote. Many Christians think that a big secular government should be empowered to hand out welfare, stop global warming, provide free sex changes, free abortions and free contraceptives, etc. But they don't understand that a big secular government does not care about religious liberty, parental autonomy, or conscience rights. They care about redistributing taxpayer money to buy the votes of people who depend on government.

When the secular leftists control so much of society (the schools, the hospitals, regulations on business, and even regulating free speech!), it's harder and harder to be a Christian with integrity. Eventually, you're going to conflict with the secular left, because they're just everywhere. That's why Christians should never vote for bigger government. It increases the area of conflict, while simultaneously draining away the money we would need to defend outselves. Because bigger government requires higher taxes, and that

means less of what you earn can be used to fight back against the secular leftists.

What is the best introductory book about pro-life apologetics?

April 3, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this message

Do you like to argue about controversial things? Of course you do. And so does Scheming Unborn Baby, (pictured above). But have you schemed as much as Scheming Unborn Baby does before he gets into controversial discussions?

Here's an excellent book review of the best pro-life book for ordinary people. It's written by famous pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf from the Life Training Institute.

Excerpt:

The Case for Life by Scott Klusendorf is an absolutely outstanding defense of the pro-life position with regard to the abortion debate. Being familiar with Scott's work through Stand to Reason I was looking forward to this book with much anticipation. Scott is one of the most able, articulate, persuasive, and winsome pro-life speakers in the country and his book does not fail to deliver.

He's got chapter-by-chapter breakdowns, so let's look at some of them:

In **chapter five** Scott addresses the nature of truth and the topic of *moral relativism*, a view of morality our culture is saturated with to the core. Addressing this topic becomes absolutely necessary given its prevalence and the fact that often the claims of pro-lifers are misunderstood. This is seen in such cliches as "Don't like abortion? Don't have one!" or "I'm personally opposed to abortion but I think it should remain legal." In short, pro-lifers are not making subjective preference claims when they say abortion is morally

wrong but rather objective truth claims. Scott lays out some fundamental problems with moral relativism as well as a brief history outlining the move from moral realism to moral non-realism.

In **chapter six** Scott exposes the myth of moral neutrality. Both sides of the abortion debate have views they want to legislate and it is impossible for the state to remain neutral. However, it is often pro-lifers who are accused of trying to "legislate morality" while pro-abortion choice advocates get a free pass. In short, pro-lifers are dismissed as "religious" because of an unwillingness by pro-abortion choice advocates to address the issues. This is intellectually dishonest. How bout we stick with science?

And more:

In chapters **ten through fifteen** Scott addresses some of the most common arguments put forth by pro-abortion choice advocates. These include "Women will die from illegal abortions," "You shouldn't force your view on others," "Pro-lifers should broaden their focus," "Rape justifies abortion," "Men can't get pregnant," and "It's my body, I'll decide." The fundamental problem with most of these objections is that they beg the question. They assume the unborn is not a human person.

One more chapter – I've never seen chapters like this before:

In **chapter sixteen** Scott outlines four essential tasks that pastors concerned with biblical truth need to accomplish:

First, Christian pastors need to emphasize a biblical view of human value and ensure their congregation understands that abortion unjustly takes the life of an innocent human being. Second, they need to equip their congregation with pro-life apologetics so they can compete in the marketplace of ideas. Third, they need to emphasize the healing power of the gospel of Jesus Christ and preach repentance and forgiveness for post-abortion men and women. Finally, Christian pastors need to overcome their fear that abortion is a distraction, their fear of driving people away who might otherwise hear the gospel, and their fear of offending people with abortion-related content.

If you want to see Scott speak, here's a new-ish 42-minute lecture:

If you like that, consider getting the book. Scheming Unborn Baby recommends it, and so do I.

Democrat presidential candidates propose giving citizenship to millions of illegal immigrants

April 4, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Net annual cost of illegal immigration to taxpayers

The Democrat position on border security, as we know from that last few months, is that they would prefer that the government be shut down rather than build a wall. One Democrat presidential candidate even wants to give millions more illegal immigrants amnesty. Is there any reason why American taxpayers should be concerned about his plan?

The radically leftist Dallas Morning News reports:

> Democratic presidential hopeful Julián Castro on Tuesday unveiled a detailed immigration plan that would offer a path to citizenship for millions of immigrants in the country without authorization.

He's not the only one.

Fox News reports that Robert O'Rourke proposes something similar:

> Days after saying he'd support eliminating U.S.-Mexico border barriers, former U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke has released a 10-point plan that argues that strict border enforcement encourages illegal immigration and that calls for giving millions of undocumented immigrants a path to citizenship.
>
> […]During an interview with MSNBC host Chris Hayes, O'Rourke said he would take down the wall between the U.S. and Mexico. Along the nearly 2,000-mile

> U.S.-Mexico border, there are about 700 miles of fencing.

Byron York writes in the Washington Examiner that the Border Patrol numbers show there is a crisis at the Southern border. Basically, since the Democrats and the courts have blocked Trump's attempts to secure the border and deport illegal aliens. Things are a lot worse at the border than they used to be, even under previous administrations.

Byron writes:

> In a matter of months, migrants knew Trump could not stop them from entering the country illegally — and staying.
>
> It should surprise no one that the numbers headed up again, to 396,579 in 2018. Now, crossings have gone through the roof, with 76,103 apprehensions in February of 2019 and 100,000-plus in March, numbers that could have come from the early- and mid-2000s.
>
> And the numbers do not tell the whole story. In the Clinton-Bush years, the overwhelming number of illegal crossers were single, adult men trying to avoid detection as they sneaked across the border. When caught, they were quickly returned. So when 1.2 million were caught crossing, that did not mean that 1.2 million stayed in the United States.
>
> Now, however, the nature of the flow has changed. Today, the large majority of those caught crossing are families and unaccompanied children. They are not trying to sneak in, they are crossing for the purpose of giving themselves over to the Border Patrol. They do that knowing U.S. law forbids them being returned, or separated, or even held for more than a few days. In short order, they are released into the United States.
>
> It seems safe to say that more illegal crossers are staying in the U.S. than in the days of Clinton and Bush.

Well, that's not good.

I thought it would be useful to highlight a couple of stories about law-abiding Americans who have been affected by all of this "compassion" from the Democrat party and their allies on the courts.

Here's one from CBS News Louisiana:

> Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry has announced the arrest of an undocumented immigrant accused of more than 100 counts of sex crimes.
>
> Miguel Martinez, 44, was arrested on 100 counts of possession of pornography involving juveniles under the age of 13 years old, one count of production under the age of 13, and one count of sexual battery of a juvenile under the age of 13.
>
> […]Martinez was previously deported in 2005.
>
> He is a registered sex offender in California, Landry said.

Previously deported, and a registered sex offender. I don't think that we should elect a

Democrat to give him citizenship.

Here's one from NewJersey.com:

> The man charged with raping and strangling a jogger in Jersey City's Lincoln Park had already been deported twice, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials said.
>
> Jorge Rios, who was identified by ICE officials as Jorge Alberto Rios-Doblado, is from Honduras and "has been removed from the country on two prior occasions, in 2003 and 2004," according to ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operation (ICE-ERO) in Newark. ICE officials also said Rios initially entered the country illegally.

He was deported before? Maybe we should have some sort of deterrent to keep out repeat offenders, like a wall or something?

Look, we have procedures for bringing in skilled immigrants. We should bring in immigrants using those procedures. If people want to come across our border illegally, they should be deported. We shouldn't elect someone who wants to take down border walls and give people who broke the law to come here a path to citizenship.

Left-wing hate group faces numerous claims of sexual harassment, gender discrimination and racism

April 5, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Southern Poverty Law Center was connected to a 2012 domestic terrorism attack on a Washington think tank

You might remember how gay activist Floyd Lee Corkins II used the Southern Poverty Law Center's "hate map" to plan and execute a mass shooting domestic terrorism attack against the Family Research Council office in 2012. But just recently, the SPLC has run into major, major problems.

Let's start with a summary from the Washington Examiner of what the SPLC has done:

> In 2015, the discredited organization was forced to apologize to renowned neurosurgeon and now Housing and Urban Development Secretary Dr. Ben Carson for including him in its "Extremist Files" a year earlier.
>
> Two years before that, an attempted mass murderer had stormed into the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the Family Research Council, a conservative group maligned by the SPLC with its "hate group" label, carrying a firearm and 15 Chick-fil-A sandwiches. His goal was to kill as many FRC employees as possible and smear their faces with the sandwiches. He told the FBI that his choice of target had been inspired by SPLC's designation of FRC as a "hate group."
>
> […]Across the hall from FRC at the time was the headquarters of Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative legal advocate that has since also landed on the SPLC's "hate group" list for our work litigating religious freedom, life, and marriage and family issues. We were given this designation by the SPLC even as we were earning nine victories at the U.S. Supreme Court since 2011.

Even after the SPLC was connected to domestic terrorism, (Corkins was convicted of domestic terrorism), the SPLC refused to remove the FRC, a respected socially conservative think tank, from their "hate map". Isn't that ironic? The group that inspired a hate crime refuses to stop hating the victim of the hate crime.

But there is some good news. Senator Tom Cotton (R. – AR) has noticed the claims against the SPLC, and he's going to do something about it.

PJ Media reports:

> On Tuesday, Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) sent a letter to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) demanding an investigation into whether or not the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) should lose its tax-exempt status. His letter comes after weeks of turmoil with the SPLC struggling with scandals of alleged racism and sexism. The organization fired its co-founder, saw its president and other leaders resign, and lost a prominent member of its board.
>
> "I am writing to urge you to investigate whether the Southern Poverty Law Center should retain its classification as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization," Cotton begins his letter. "Recent news reports have confirmed the long-established fact that the SPLC regularly engages in defamation of its political opponents. In fact, the SPLC's defining characteristic is to fundraise off of defamation."
>
> Cotton notes that "the SPLC has accrued more than $500 million in assets. According to the group's most recent financial statement, it holds $121 million offshore in non-U.S. equity funds. The SPLC uses these assets to pay its executives lavish salaries far higher than the comparable household average."
>
> […]"Based on these reports, and in the interest of protecting taxpayer dollars from a racist and sexist slush fund devoted to defamation, I believe that the SPLC's conduct warrants a serious and thorough investigation," Cotton writes.

But wait! There's more good news:

> Last December, Baltimore lawyer Glen Keith Allen filed a mammoth lawsuit against the far-left smear factory. Among other things, he alleged that the SPLC's penchant for attacking "far-right groups" and primarily Republicans constituted a violation of the rules for 501(c)(3) status. Tax-exempt groups under this status cannot engage in political campaigning.
>
> […]In 2017, the charity navigation website GuideStar marked each organization on the SPLC list as a "hate group" on its website. Liberty Counsel filed a lawsuit. Shortly thereafter, the Christian nonprofit D. James Kennedy Ministries filed a lawsuit against Amazon and the SPLC, after realizing that it was excluded from Amazon Smile over the SPLC list.

Huge technology corporations like Facebook, Amazon, Google, YouTube, Twitter and PayPal all parter with the SPLC hate group. I wonder how the people who work for these

companies feel about their “business partner” now, after all of these claims of sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and racism have come out. By the way, Amazon removed the Alliance Defending Freedom from their Amazon Smile program as well.

If these companies are actively promoting the Democrat Party and their allies through their business practices, maybe it would be a good idea for the government to investigate them, too?

How to avoid choosing a charming, deceitful narcissist for a spouse

April 6, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Here's some helpful advice for women about choosing a man
For fun, I've decided to publish the 2000-word first draft that I normally send to my 6 female editors, because sometimes it's fun to let people know what I *really* think about things before my editors force me to make it sound much better and more persuasive.

We got a comment a while back that I thought was worth a response.

Let's start with the comment:

> My husband was a Narcissist. He slept all over the county and never worked a day in this marriage. Plus, He couldn't decide if he was straight or gay. After my son finally left home I filed for divorce. I wish I did it sooner. Now he claims to be born again and wants to stay together. When is enough, enough?

We don't know if this woman was a Christian, was chaste, and whether the man she chose was Christian or was chaste. All we know is that the man she chose was attractive enough to easily find other women who would have sex with him despite the fact that he was married. Whatever he has, it's something that causes women who are not married to him to have sex with him. That's who the divorced woman chose to marry. His "charm" wasn't from his moral character or his deep knowledge of Christian theology and apologetics.

My first response to this was to put the responsibility on the person who had chosen the bad husband. After all, I reasoned, everyone who takes a massive step like marriage is obligated to investigate who it is they are marrying.

But when I said that, I got some responses from women that said that she wasn't responsible for her poor choice of man, and that she was an innocent victim of his magical charming powers.

Here's Lee:

> A lot of time people don't show their worst qualities until the relationship is firmly in place, and it starts coming out slowly. It's not always as clear cut as a woman stupidly choosing an unsuitable husband who acted unsuitable from the get-go. I mean yeah, sometimes it's obvious early on and the woman is just stupid/blind/broken/other. But we should be careful to not assume, and careful to not make harsh judgments from our ignorance.

If dangers like infidelity are not "obvious" then it's not the woman's fault that she didn't detect it. Apparently there is no way for the woman to detect it if it's not obvious, so she's not responsible.

And Mary:

> Narcissists are skilled at charming and persuading people that they're really great. And they're skilled at convincing others that their misgivings are irrational fears. Unfortunately,there are a lot of people like that. Not saying that people (men AND women, btw!) don't just sometimes choose stupidly, for bad reasons like "hotness" and excitement. But narcissists are a whole other kettle of fish. They can come out with a completely different personality once they've snagged their prey.

If a bad person is "skilled at charming", then their victim has no way of evaluating them accurately. Basically, deciding who to marry is just an activity where you talk, and decide how you feel about that person's talk. If the person is charming, then they make you feel good, and it's rational to marry them. A lot of women express this as "I want a man who is confident". It's never been explained to me how "confidence" is any evidence that the man has an ability and a past pattern of self-control and fidelity.

And Sara:

> Probably because narcissists can be very charming at first and easily win people over.
>
> […] What I was trying to say and the article pointed out is the power of narcissists is they can put people, especially women, under a spell of sorts. They are just so slick and charming that common sense goes right out the window. They don't think to verify all these things that seem obvious because they are so captivated.

All that's necessary to detect a charming narcissist is "common sense". His suitability to do husband and father roles should be "obvious" from what he says and how he makes her feel.

So, let's take a look at some tips for avoiding these charming narcissists who can convince you to marry them just with their words and the feelings they cause.

How to avoid marrying a charming narcissist who cheats on you

Here is some advice on how to avoid marrying a charming narcissist.

1. Evaluate a person based on objective evidence instead of how they make you feel with their words

There are a lot of lies coming out of the artists, actors, celebrities, etc. in this secular leftist culture that basically say that marriage is all about you and your feelings. If you prepared for marriage by watching movies made by pedophiles in Hollywood, and listening to music made by promiscuous musicians, and reading self-help fiction written by divorced spinsters, then you are not ready to detect a charming narcissist. Marriage is a practical enterprise, with distinct roles for husbands and wives that must be performed regardless of how either spouse feels. You need to understand and evaluate what

behaviors are expected of husbands and wives in a marriage, and then look for *evidence* that the person you want to marry can perform those behaviors.

For example, if the behavior is fidelity, then the person should be able to demonstrate chastity and self-control during the courtship, and produce references from past girlfriends / boyfriends, and have written about chastity and self-control using research sources to explain the connection between premarital sex and marital instability. If you're choosing with your feelings, and you haven't done an analysis of marriage roles, and partner abilities, you're headed for a disaster.

Just so you know, when I said this to some of the pro-irresponsibility, non-judgemental women I know, their response was to laugh in my face at the idea of asking someone's previous partners about whether they were chaste and self-controlled. And this is why people are taken by surprise by the charming talk of narcissists. Feelings-oriented people today laugh at the idea of doing any evaluation, preferring to rely on their feelings. A lot of the failure to choose wisely is just down to people not understanding how the world works, then trying to manufacture a psycho-babble rationalization of why they screwed up.

When you're hiring someone, you do a job interview, you test their skills, you contact their references, you do a drug test, a credit check, a criminal record check. And you have other skilled people sit in on the interviews and tests, in order to make sure that the person can really do the job they are being interviewed for. The marriage evaluation should include everything that the job interview includes *as a minimum.* Marriage is at least as complicated as choosing to hire someone for a job. If you aren't doing the bare minimum of evaluating their education, career and finances, then you are setting yourself up for failure.

2. Learn what it takes to make morality rational, and then determine if your candidate is capable of being moral

Because marriage deals so much with moral obligations, it's incumbent on you to read extensively on moral issues. *You yourself* should have developed worldview (through study and debate) that rationally grounds the minimum requirements for moral values and duties: 1) free will, 2) consciousness, 3) objective moral values, 4) objective moral duties, 5) a divine judge, 6) life after death. Why? Because doing the right thing isn't something that you always feel like doing. When doing the right thing goes against your feelings, you will need to have a *reason* to act against your own self-interest. And that reason is going to be because the world is the sort of place where morality is real, and independent of your feelings, where you are a free moral agent, and where is a divine judge and an afterlife.

At the center of the ability to rationally ground morality is the ability to know God is real rationally, and to defend his existence using objective evidence and logical arguments. If you don't know whether God exists based on logic and evidence, how will you evaluate whether someone else knows it? If you can't rationally ground doing the right thing when it goes against your interest, then you won't be able to know how to ask questions and

investigate in order to decide whether someone else is moral or not. Marrying someone who doesn't believe in a moral lawgiver and a moral judge after death is as prudent to going into a city dump eating all your meals from what you find there.

In the specific case of fidelity, it's important to remember that some people have goals and an understanding about how poor choices right now will make those goals more difficult to obtain. It's easy to say that you want your spouse to be faithful. But what's really needed is to measure what they are really trying to achieve in life, and whether they understand how infidelity would affect those plans. If you can't see from their past decisions that they KNOW that 1) marriage and family are important enough to sacrifice for and 2) that they understand and apply the research that shows what decisions helps to make a marriage last (e.g. – no premarital sex), then, they don't really have the goals and the information that you want in a marriage partner.

Conclusion

I have to end this post with the reaction from my friend Lindsay, who is one of my reliable advisors. She responded to Lee and Mary above with this:

> There are ways to avoid marrying a narcissist, addict, abuser, or other bad man. However, most women don't know how to evaluate men because no one ever told them what to watch for or that they need to focus on long term character traits and not ignore red flags. They have been actively encouraged to follow their hearts and indoctrinated in this view since they were small children. That doesn't mean they are without blame, but they have also been let down by their families, friends, and society as a whole. Women need the eyes of family and friends on the men they date to help them see problems they might not recognize and warn them. But too often, family and friends are too uncomfortable saying something and think they are supposed to stay out of it. Our society has broken down and women do not have the protections they need.

Lindsay probably has the best and most successful marriage of anyone I know. She did everything right that I tell young women to do. Multiple STEM degrees, debt-free, years of private sector experience, married a virgin as a virgin herself right in the middle of her 23-27 year window, and is now a homeschooling mother of 3. Perfect, and did a thorough evaluation of her perfect husband Doug. Doug had done enormous amounts of work demonstrating through actions and achievements that he had the character and skills to be an excellent husband and father. Anyone who evaluated him beyond the surface level of talk and feelings and "confidence" would have found a gold mine of husband and father capability. Capabilities which are now on display in their marriage.

What is the fine-tuning argument for God's existence, and does the multiverse counter it?

April 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

One of the best arguments for the existence of a Creator and Designer of the universe is the cosmic fine-tuning argument. The argument argues that individual constants and quantities in nature cannot be much smaller or larger than they are, because it would remove the ability of the universe to support life of any kind. Dr. Michael Strauss, an experimental physicist, explains some examples of the fine-tuning in a recent post on his blog.

He writes:

> I liken the finely-tuned universe to a panel that controls the parameters of the universe with about 100 knobs that can be set to certain values. If you turn any knob just a little to the right or to the left the result is either a universe that is inhospitable to life or no universe at all.
>
> Consider the knob that controls the strength of the strong nuclear force that holds quarks inside the neutrons and protons and binds the nucleus of the atom together. If the strength were increased by 2%, the element hydrogen would be either non-existent or very rare. Without hydrogen there would be no water (H_2O) or stars that burn hydrogen as their nuclear fuel like our sun. Without hydrogen there would be no life. If the strength of the strong nuclear force were decreased by about 5%, then hydrogen would be the only element in the universe. That would simplify the periodic table and make Chemistry class very easy, but it would render life impossible.
>
> All known life in this universe is based on the element carbon, which is formed in

> the final stages of a star's life. The carbon you and I are made of is the result of the nuclear processes that occurred as previous stars ended their lives. One nice recent study showed that if the mass of the quarks that make up neutrons and protons were changed by just a few percent, then the process that makes carbon as stars die would be altered in such a way that there would not be sufficient carbon in the universe for life. The masses of the lightest sub-atomic quarks are the precise value that is required for carbon to form and for life to exist.

Regarding the multiverse, let me just quote from MIT physicist Alan Lightman, writing in Harper's magazine about the multiverse:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.
>
> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

The multiverse is not pure nonsense, it is theoretically possible.But even if there were a multiverse, the generator that makes the universes itself would require fine-tuning, so the multiverse doesn't get rid of the problem. And, as Lightman indicates, we have no independent experimental evidence for the existence of the multiverse in any case. Atheists just have to take it on faith, and hope that their speculations will be proved right. Meanwhile, the fine-tuning is just as easily explained by postulating God, and we have independent evidence for God's existence, like the the origin of biological information, the sudden appearance of animal body plans, the argument from consciousness, and so on. Even if the naturalists could explain the fine-tuning, they would still have a lot of explaining to do. Theism (intelligent causation) is the simplest explanation for all of the things we learn from the progress of science.

It's very important to understand that if these values were any different, then it's not like we would bridges on our foreheads, or have green skin, or have pointy ears, etc. That's what science fiction teaches you. And many atheists form their view of science by watching science fiction entertainment. But the truth is that the consequences of changing these values are much more consequential: no stars, no planets, no hydrogen, no heavy elements, the universe re-collapses into a hot fireball. You're not going to have complex, embodied intelligent agents running around making moral decisions and

relating to God in a world like that.

Questions like the existence of God should be NOT decided by feelings and faith and superstitious nonsense. They ought to be decided by evidence. Specifically, scientific evidence. Everyone has to account for this scientific evidence for fine-tuning within their worldview, and they have to account for it in a way that is responsible and rational. Punting to the multiverse, without any evidence for it, is neither rational nor responsible. Holding out hope that the evidence we have now will all go away is neither rational nor responsible.

By the way, if you are looking for a good book on the cosmic fine-tuning, especially for evangelism and debating with atheists, you really need to get a copy of "A Fortunate Universe". Although it is from one of the most prestigious academic presses, it is pretty funny to read, and the main points are made clearly, even if you don't understand the science. Two astrophysicists wrote it – one who believes that God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning, and one who doesn't. I really think that Christians need to get used to the idea that evangelism can be pretty easy, so long as you are arguing from peer-reviewed facts. When you get a good book on evidence for God that is not in dispute, then you are invincible. Everybody ought to believe in God in a universe with this much overt scientific evidence spilling out everywhere. Whether this Creator and Designer is the God of the Bible, who visited us as Jesus of Nazareth, takes more work to establish. Working through the emotional objections people have to God, and coaching them to take on the difficulties of living out a authentic Christian life (very unpopular!), is even harder.

Are Nordic countries succeeding with socialism like Bernie Sanders says?

April 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

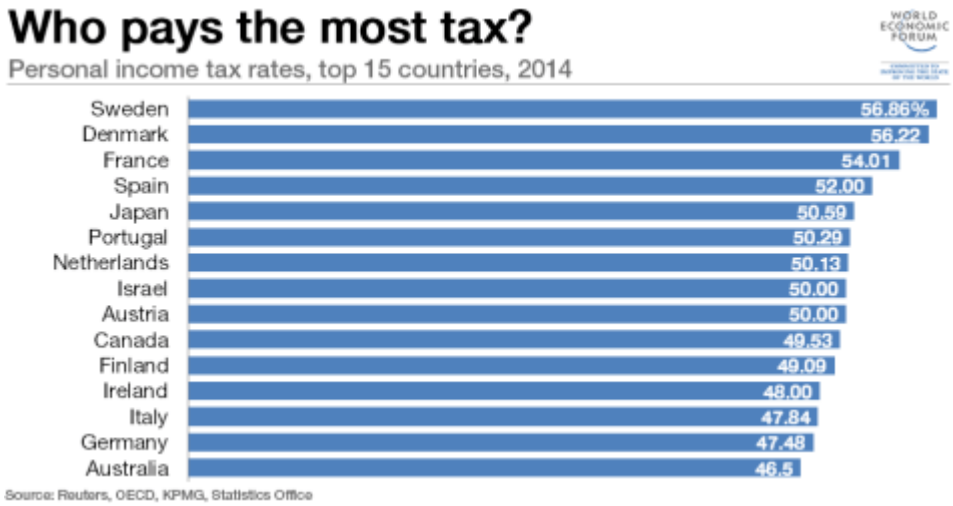

Individials pay extremely high income taxes in Nordic countries

Last week, I saw back to back studies on Nordic countries reported by the far-left UK Independent and Barron's magazine. We're probably going to hear more about how great socialism is from socialists, and since they seem to point to Nordic countries as proof, we should probably look at the studies and see what the truth is.

Let's start with the report from Barron's. You'll have heard of Barron's if you're an investor.

It says:

> Although there are areas—especially in taxes and labor market regulation—where socialist elements still exist in the Nordics, the region is by no means socialist today. In fact, according to the Heritage Foundation's index of economic freedom, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, and Denmark rank among the 30 most capitalist countries in the world.

These countries used to be socialist in the 1970s and 1980s. Socialism means a huge government work force, high taxes, massive regulation of private sector businesses, and massive spending on welfare programs. You didn't have to marry before having children, the government would give you welfare. You didn't have to take care of yourself, the government would give you free health care. You didn't have to save for retirement, the government would give you a pension.

The article mentions one country in particular – Sweden. And here is what socialism looked like in Sweden:

> In 1960, for every 100 "market-financed" Swedes (i.e. those who derived their income predominantly from private enterprise), there were 38 who were "tax-financed" (i.e. dependent on the public sector for their income, whether as civil

> servants or as recipients of payments from the state). Thirty years later, that number had risen to 151—in other words, there were significantly more people living off of the state than paying into the system. This reflects Sweden's move away from a capitalist free-market economy to a socialist model.

When people talk about socialism, they mean more people living off the state than paying into the system.

But socialism can't last forever. Eventually, the people in the private sector realize that they are keeping less and less of what they earn, and they stop working, or just leave. The article notes that IKEA, which started out in Sweden, moved out to avoid paying the 57% corporate tax rate.

Eventually, and this is the part that Bernie Sanders is ignorant about, Sweden slashed or eliminated taxes across the board, then cut their government spending on welfare, subsidies and gv:

> A major tax reform in 1990/91 slashed corporate taxes from 57% to 30%. Income from shares was exempted from taxation, while capital gains from shares were taxed at only 12.5%.
>
> The top marginal income-tax rate was set at around 50%, a reduction by 24 to 27 percentage points for the majority of the workforce. The proportion of earners taxed at a marginal rate of over 50% dropped from over half to only 17% paying income tax to the central government.
>
> The reforms continued over the following years: in 2004, the estate tax of up to 30% was scrapped. Today, there is no estate tax in Sweden. The abolition of the wealth tax, which had already been cut, came into effect retroactively as of 1 January 2007. The corporate tax rate continued to decline, getting cut from 30% to 26.3% in 2009 and to 22% in 2013. Property tax rates were also cut substantially.
>
> Between 1993 and 2000, social spending dropped from 22.2% to 16.9% of GDP, economic subsidies from 8.7% to 1.8% and public-sector payroll costs from 18.2% to 15.6%.

Sweden might be a little further ahead of some of the other Nordic countries. Over in Finland, they are still climbing out of it, and the massive government spending is so hard for socialists to cut.

Here's a story from Finland about their government-run health care system – the same kind that Bernie is always bragging about, and telling us how well it works in Finland.

Far-left Reuters reports:

> Finland's coalition government resigned on Friday a month ahead of a general election, saying it could not deliver on a healthcare reform package that is widely seen as crucial to securing long-term government finances.
>
> Healthcare systems across much of the developed world have come under

> increasing stress in recent years as treatment costs soar and people live longer, meaning fewer workers are supporting more pensioners.
>
> Nordic countries, where comprehensive welfare is the cornerstone of the social model, have been among the most affected. But reform has been controversial and, in Finland, plans to cut costs and boost efficiency have stalled for years.

The very health care systems that Bernie lectures American voters about are all in decline and failing:

> Other Nordic countries have also grappled with the need to cut costs. Sweden is to gradually raise its retirement age and has opened up parts of the healthcare system to the private sector in a bid to boost efficiency.
>
> Denmark will gradually increase the retirement age to 73 – the highest in the world – while cutting taxes and unemployment benefits to encourage people to work more.

If you learned anything from this article, I'd like you to do me a favor. Please share and/or tweet this post, or share and/or tweet the posts from Barron's and Reuters. We have an election coming up in 2020, and right now, the people are being lied to by foolish socialist politicians who talk and talk about things they have no knowledge about. We need to correct the views of the American people with facts. We can't make the mistake of electing Democrats who are terrible at health care, and only good at making promises to spending taxpayer money. They have *no idea* how economics actually works in the real world, and we need to do everything we can to keep them out of power.

Why are Christians allowed to eat shellfish but not allowed to have sex before marriage?

April 9, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
Here's a wonderful article from Peter Saunders.

The challenge:

> An argument frequently advanced by those attempting to defend homosexual practice is that Christians 'cherry pick' the commands in the Bible – that is, they chose to emphasise some commands while ignoring others.
>
> The Old Testament may forbid homosexual acts (Leviticus 18:2; 20:13) but it also forbids eating seafood without fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9, 10).
>
> So how can Christians then justify upholding laws on sexual morality whilst at the same time ignoring the food laws from the very same books of the Bible? Why may they eat shellfish but not be allowed to have sex outside marriage? Isn't this inconsistent and hypocritical?

The solution is that God enters into "covenants" with his people, and the terms of those covenants change.

Especially dietary laws:

> The answer to this question lies in an understanding of biblical covenants.
>
> A covenant is a binding solemn agreement made between two parties. It generally leaves each with obligations. But it holds only between the parties involved.
>
> There are a number of biblical covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic (Old),

> Davidic and New.
>
> Under the Noahic covenant, which God made with all living human beings (Genesis 9:8-17), people were able to eat anything:
>
> *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Genesis 9:3).*
>
> But under the Sinaitic (Old) Covenant, which God made with the nation of Israel, people were able to eat certain foods, but not others.

Jesus clearly created a new covenant with his followers, where the dietary laws are lifted:

> Jesus said that he had come to fulfil the 'Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). He would establish this new covenant with new laws, with himself as high priest based on his own sacrificial death on the cross.
>
> This new covenant would completely deal with sin (Hebrews 10:1-18) and protect all those who put their faith in him from God's wrath and judgement…
>
> *[…]'In the same way, after the supper (Jesus) took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you"' (Luke 22:20). '…we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Hebrews 10:10)*
>
> People would come under the protection of this new covenant, not by virtue of belonging to the nation of Israel, but through faith in Christ. In fact the function of the Old Testament Law (Sinaitic covenant) was to point to Christ as its fulfilment.
>
> […]So what then did Christ say about foods? He pronounced all foods clean for his followers to eat:
>
> *' "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (Mark 7:18-23)*
>
> Jesus was making that point that under the new covenant God required purity of the heart. Internal thoughts and attitudes were as important as external actions.

Food is OK for Christians, but sexual immorality – which includes premarital sex and adultery – are NOT OK for Christians.

I think sometimes when you are talking to people whose motivation is just to get rid of any objective moral law entirely, they tend to ask questions without really wanting a good answer. This is especially true when it comes to the morality of sex. They ask the question not to get an answer, but to justify getting rid of the moral rules governing sexuality. The answers are there for people who are willing to respect God in their decision-making to find. The answers are not found only by people who have a

reason to not want to find them.

In case you're wondering, I am one of those Christian men who takes chastity seriously. Marriage is about having a close connection with your spouse. Sure, I could break the rules and have a lot of fun now. A lot of Christians have a hard time turning down fun. But when I look at Jesus, I don't see a man who is pursuing fun and thrills. I see a man who sees a need and then sacrifices his own interests to rescue others from peril.

What should Christians do in order to reduce fatherlessness and abortion?

April 10, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should we tell women to expect men to commit to them after recreational premarital sex?

Last week, I tweeted something that was very popular, although I got some disagreements with it. I tweeted that if we encouraged women to not have sex with men before the men married them, then there would be almost no fatherless children.

Here's the exact tweet:

Fatherlessness is caused by women's poor choices about men, sex, and marriage. If women married good men before having sex, there would be almost no fatherlessness. Strange that some "Christians" have sex before marriage, when that is prohibited in the Bible.

Now, the reason I focused on women in this tweet is because many women expect premarital sex to lead to a relationship, and eventually marriage. It is good for them to want a relationship and marriage. But the bad boys that many women tend to prefer aren't choosing premarital sex *in order to get to marriage or children*. They have no desire for anything beyond the premarital sex. It seems reasonable to me that if I help women to see their mistaken view, then it would prevent a lot of fatherlessness (not to mention abortion and divorce) later on. If women prefer men who *commit first* instead of those who *want commitment-free sex* then we will see less sex outside marriage, less fatherlessness, and less abortion.

I decided to expand on my tweet in this post.

We need to teach young women that premarital sex does not cause men to become faithful husbands

Even women who have recreational sex with a lot of different men have this expectation that it will lead to relationships and eventually a committment, in which the man makes all their dreams come true and does whatever they want to make them feel happy at all times. This isn't marriage, of course, but it is what they imagine that giving a hot bad boy premarital sex will lead to.

Here is what one 26-year-old writes: (language warning)

Age 19-22 Some boyfriends are somewhere in here. But it was where my body count really took off. If a guy liked me, which I now understand, was simple attraction, ***I thought sex would seal the deal, and they would get to know me more after, and fall in love with me.*** *Let's all pause to laugh together at my naivete.* ***I promise you every (almost) guy, I thought I could have a relationship with.*** *It never happened. At best they were regulars. Long-term I had 2 serious boyfriends.*

A lot of women choose hot bad boys because the hot bad boys give them feelings "in the moment", and impress their friends. They think that marriage is supposed to make them happy all the time, and so they want the bad boy to commit. This is why so many young women give the bad boys sex, to make the happy feelings last. And many think that they are on a path to marriage with the hot bad boy if they can keep him around by giving him premarital sex, or cohabitation.

But is this what marriage is about – making the woman feel happy in the long-term? Of course not. Marriage is about self-sacrificial love, self-denial, self-control, faithfulness, and raising children. So, women should be taught to choose men who prepare for *actual* marriage (men who have chosen chastity, gap-less resume, frugality, mentoring, no drugs or alcohol, apologetics). These traits are directly related to the responsibilities of a husband and father in a marriage (fidelity, love, fatherhood, provider, pastoring, etc). Fathers and pastors should be aware of the research about what traits and skills lead to stable and successful marriages, and be able to support their claims with studies when teaching women. For example, they should know about the studies showing how women's number of premarital sex partners affects her contentedness in her marriage, the marriage quality, and the marriage stability.

That's the point I was trying to make in my tweet.

Marriage requires self-sacrificial moral behavior

Fathers and pastors need to teach young people how to check a mate for the ability to behave morally, which is a necessary pre-requisite for a marriage commitment. The bare minimum foundation for moral behavior is a theistic worldview. A Designer of the universe. Objective moral laws. An immaterial soul that allows free choices. Accountability when you die. And meaningfulness of moral choices because of that

ongoing relationship with the Designer in the afterlife. Moral behavior depends on the existence of God, so the mate-chooser should know evidence for that too, and be able to evaluate the mate on his knowledge of that evidence. People shouldn't take the claim to be religious or spiritual at face value, they should want to see the reasons and evidence that support the claim. The rational grounding of moral behavior is important for marriage, and it needs to be checked, instead of just felt with intuitions. Young people should be taught to prefer mates who have demonstrated the ability to act morally in situations where it goes against their self-interest to be moral. After all, once the mate-chooser chooses a mate, every immoral thing he/she suffers from their chosen mate was a result of his/her choice of mate.

The goal is to prevent harm to children

Some Christian women disagree with my goal of stopping fatherlessness and abortion by telling women to make better choices. Instead, they want to support women who use premarital sex to try to land a hot bad boy. They say that if the woman's sex-first plan doesn't work out, that's not her fault, because all hot bad boys should feel obligated to marry after being given premarital sex. One woman wrote me 2500 words in response to my tweet to tell me (repeatedly, and in great detail) that the Bible is seen as an authority even by hot non-Christian bad boys. If this is the kind of advice that young women are getting from older women, then it's no wonder we have a 42% out-of-wedlock birth rate, and 1 million unborn children being killed every year.

But I don't think that encouraging women to make feelings-based choices will work to reduce fatherlessness. When you're dealing with hot bad boys, they don't care about the Bible, and so you can't try to convince them to do anything that the Bible says. The only solution is for good women to pass them by, and instead choose good men who want to make a commitment first. If women leave the hot bad boys alone, and concentrate on marriage-minded men, then we won't have so much fatherlessness or abortion.

Google employees revolt against having a black, female conservative on advisory board

April 11, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kay Coles James is president of the Heritage Foundation, my favorite think tank

My favorite think tank in all the world is the Heritage Foundation. Almost all of my favorite policy researchers work there. The president is a conservative black lady named Kay Cole James. Any company would be thrilled to have her on an advisory board. But not Google. A bunch of their employees revolted against her.

Here's an article from the Daily Caller about it:

> Google staffers are in revolt, demanding the removal of Heritage Foundation President Kay Coles James from an advisory board the company convened on artificial intelligence. A petition with more than 2,000 signatories from within the company was published on Medium on Monday, with the title "Googlers Against Transphobia and Hate."
>
> The petition's signers described the appointment of Coles, a black grandmother, as a "weaponization of the language of diversity."
>
> The petition was promoted internally within the company by five individuals, some of whom have a history of leftist agitation.
>
> […]One of them, Meredith Whittaker, who leads Google's Open Research Group, posted on a private Google listserv that, "I would disagree that their views are important to consider when those views include erasing trans people, targeting immigrants and denying climate change."
>
> […]Whittaker shot down this idea, "Instead [of] recognizing the historical gravity of our position, and rising to meet the occasion, we've invited a vocal bigot whose hand is on the lever of U.S. policy to shape our views on where, and how, to 'responsibly' apply this tech.

There's no diversity of thought at Google. Remember what happened to James Damore, when he suggested that there were differences between men and women? They ended up firing him for holding to view that most Americans agree with. He even had research papers to support his arguments, but they didn't care… it offended people on the left, so he had to go.

I'm blogging about this today, even though it occurred last week, because Kay wrote about it in the far-left Washington Post on Monday.

She wrote:

> Last week, less than two weeks after the AI advisory council was announced, Google disbanded it. The company has given in to the mentality of a rage mob. How can Google now expect conservatives to defend it against anti-business policies from the left that might threaten its very existence?
>
> I was deeply disappointed to see such a promising idea abandoned, but the episode was about much more than just one company's response to intolerance from the self-appointed guardians of tolerance.
>
> It was symptomatic of where America is heading. Whether in the streets or online, angry mobs that heckle and threaten are not trying to change hearts and win minds. They're trying to impose their will through intimidation. In too many corners of American life, there is no longer room for disagreement and civil discourse. Instead, it's agree or be destroyed.
>
> […]Being attacked is not new for me. As a black, conservative, pro-life, evangelical woman, I have spent most of my life being called names and being denounced for my beliefs.

I guess Google isn't really committed to the only kind of diversity that matters: intellectual diversity.

By the way, my Google traffic on this blog has dropped off by 90% since the 2016 election. I think Google decided to get serious after they lost that elction (and tape emerged of their senior executives literally crying about their candidate losing).

This record of bias against even moderates and libertarians is a concern to me, because we previously saw that Google feels that it is their obligation to manipulate search results (and YouTube videos) in order to benefit their allies in the Democrat party. If Google really is altering their products and services to promote Democrats, then maybe it's time for the federal government to step in and regulate them, so that our basic human rights are not infringed by far-left fascist extremists.

Related posts

- Spotify joins Google, Youtube, Facebook and Twitter in censoring Prager University
- Facebook bans Franklin Graham for "hate speech", Google YouTube shadow-bans pro-life videos
- Does Google's anti-conservative bias affect its products and services?

- Facebook joins Twitter, Google and YouTube in deliberately purging conservative voices
- Google now censoring conservative news, while giving leftist propaganda a free pass
- Google censors conservative video lectures from Prager University on YouTube
- How Google, Facebook and Twitter brainwash users against conservatism
- Google starts worldwide campaign to legalize gay marriage, Target donates to gay activists

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez mocks decorated Navy SEAL Dan Crenshaw for not fighting terrorism enough

April 12, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Navy SEAL Dan Crenshaw and bartender/waitress Alexander Ocasio-Cortez

Wow, the more AOC opens her mouth, the more I think that she must be some kind of Republican plant. This time, Republican Congressman Dan Crenshaw, a former Navy SEAL who lost an eye fighting terrorists, disagreed with Ilhan Omar, a Muslim Democrat Congresswoman. AOC decided to defend Omar, and shame Crenshaw for not doing enough to fight terrorism.

You can watch the 20-second clip of Omar here.

In the clip, she tells CAIR (the Council of American-Islamic Relations) that:

CAIR was founded after 9/11, because they recognized that some people did something and that all of us were starting to lose access to our civil liberties.

So, according to her, a terrorist attack committed by Muslim extremists is "some people did something", and her biggest concern about a terrorist attack that killed 3000 Americans is the loss of civil liberties faced by Muslims.

Dan Crenshaw saw the clip, and he tweeted this.

First Member of Congress to ever describe terrorists who killed thousands of Americans on 9/11 as "some people who did something".

Unbelievable.

Just to be clear, I know that not all Muslims talk like this, but I have direct experience with Muslims on my mom's side of the family. They're all Muslims. There are good Muslims who believe in liberty and even help America fight abroad. I read about the Muslims who helps us fight radical Islam in my military history books. But there are also some that don't like liberty, don't like Jews, and don't like America. I have met them in my own

family.

Anyway, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez came to the rescue of Omar against Dan Crenshaw, matching her experience fighting terrorism as a 29-year-old bartender and server against the Navy SEAL who lost an eye while fighting terrorism. Crenshaw earned 2 Bronze Stars (one with Valor), the Purple Heart, and the Navy Commendation Medal with Valor.

She tweeted to Dan Crenshaw:

You refuse to cosponsor the 9/11 Victim's Compensation Fund, yet have the audacity to drum resentment towards Ilhan w/completely out-of-context quotes.

In 2018, right-wing extremists were behind almost ALL US domestic terrorist killings. Why don't you go do something about that?

That's right, Ms. Bartender-Waitress, or whatever your name is. You tell that cowardly, useless Navy SEAL who lost an eye fighting terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq how to fight terrorism. Also, feel free to make up facts about domestic terrorism, as well.

Young people today. Wow.

This is the Democrat Party, folks. Half of America thinks they should be in power. Which is why when it's election time, you need to do more than just vote. You need to go door-to-door, post signs, have a bumper sticker, and work a phone bank. Because we cannot have overgrown children who were born rich, and have achieved nothing their entire lives, running this country.

What's CAIR?

So, who is CAIR? CAIR is the Council on American-Islamic Relations, an unindicted co-conspirator in a criminal case about fundraising for an Islamic terrorist group.

> The FBI is severing its once-close ties with the nation's largest Muslim advocacy group, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, amid mounting evidence that it has links to a support network for Hamas.
>
> All local chapters of CAIR have been shunned in the wake of a 15-year FBI investigation that culminated with the conviction in December of Hamas fundraisers at a trial where CAIR itself was listed as an unindicted co-conspirator.
>
> The U.S. government has designated Hamas as a terrorist organization.

During the Obama years, the FBI worked closely with CAIR to make sure that no one was critical of Islam in America. According to former attorney general Loretta Lynch , her "greatest fear" was not that Americans would be killed in a terrorist attack, but that the terrorist attacks would cause ordinary Americans to express criticism of radical Islam.

Peter J. Williams debates Bart Ehrman on his book "Misquoting Jesus"

April 13, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Peter J. Williams, an expert on New Testament reliability

I have to re-post this debate between Bart Ehrman and Peter J. Williams, because Dr. Williams just followed me on Twitter. I noticed that he had re-tweeted one of the two senators I follow on Twitter, so I re-tweeted him. I like Tom Cotton and Josh Hawley, and he re-tweeted Senator Hawley talking about free speech.

Bart Ehrman posted the debate audio on YouTube:

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is the US author of the bestselling book "Misquoting Jesus" (In the UK "Whose word is it?"). He calls into question the authority of the New Testament as scribal changes over time have changed the documents.
>
> So can we trust the scripture? Bible scholar Peter Williams believes in the reliability of the New Testament and that Bart's prognosis is far too pessimistic.

This post is a re-post from 2011. I have been listening to this lecture by Peter J. Williams on "Misquoting Jesus" this week, and it reminded me to re-post this debate. (I checked to make sure the MP3 link is still good, and it is)

Summary of the Williams-Ehrman debate:

Note: this summary is *snarky*. If you want an accurate view of the debate, then listen to it. My summary is meant to be humorous.

Ehrman:

- I had a mystical experience in childhood and became an evangelical Christian
- I went to Moody Bible Institute, and they told me that the Bible was inerrant
- For a while, I was committed to the view that there are no mistakes in the Bible
- At Princeton, I was taught *and graded* by professors who did not accept inerrancy
- By a strange coincidence, I began to see that the Bible did have errors after all!
- We don't have the original documents written by the original authors, we only have thousands of copies
- if the words of the Bible are not completely inerrant, then none of it is historical
- if all of the words in all the copies of the Bible are not identical, then none of it is historical

Williams:

- I would say the New and Old testaments are the Word of God
- We don't need to have the original Greek writings in order to believe in the authority of the Bible
- I believe in inerrancy, but doesn't mean there are no problems
- the doctrine of inerrancy has always referred to the original Greek copies, not the translations

Moderator:

- what are the main points of Misquoting Jesus?

Ehrman:

- we don't have the originals of any of the books of the New Testament
- we have copies that are much later, sometimes even centuries later!!1!
- the copies we have all differ from one another – they were changed by scribes!!1!
- we have 5000 manuscripts in the original Greek language
- there are hundreds of thousands of differences!!1!
- most of the differences don't matter
- some differences are significant for meaning or doctrine
- errors are propagated because the next scribe inherits the mistake of their source copy
- a large gap between the time of writing and the first extant copy means more errors have crept in

Williams:

- the reason we have so many variants is because the number of manuscripts is large

Angry Jesus or compassionate Jesus in Mark

Ehrman:

- most manuscripts say that Jesus was compassionate when healing a leper, but one says he was angry
- it makes a huge huge huge really really big difference if Jesus is compassionate or angry
- the whole Bible needs to be thrown out because of this one word between different in one manuscript

Williams:

- this variant is important for understanding the passage, but it has no great meaning
- the change is probably just an accident – the two words are very similar visually in Greek
- it's just an accident – it emerged in one manuscript, and it impacted a few more
- the tiny number of manuscripts that have the error are geographically isolated
- I'm pretty sure that WK prefers the angry Jesus anyway – so who cares?

Ehrman:

- no! someone changed it deliberately! it's a conspiracy! you should buy my book! it's a *big deal*!!!!!1!!1!one!!eleventy-one!

The woman caught in adultery in John

Ehrman:

- it is isn't in any of the earliest manuscripts
- this is an apocryphical story that some scribe deliberately inserted into the text
- most people don't even know about this! it's a cover-up! you need to buy my scandalous book!

Williams:

- that's right, it's a late addition by some overzealous scribe
- and it's clearly marked as such in every modern Bible translation
- the only people who don't know about this are people who don't read footnotes in their Bible
- and in any case, this isn't a loss of the original words of the New Testament – it's an addition

Grace of God or apart from God in Hebrews

Ehrman:

- well this is just a one word difference, but it makes a huge huge really really big difference!
- the words are very similar, so it's could be an accident I guess
- but it wasn't! this was a deliberate change! it's a conspiracy! it's a cover-up!

scandal!
- buy my book! It’s almost as good as Dan Brown!

Moderator:

- hmmmn…. I kind of like “apart from God” – why is this such a big scandal again?

Ehrman:

- you don’t care? how can you not care? it has to be inerrant! or the whole thing is false!
- Moody Bible Institute says!

Williams:

- yeah Bart is always saying that every change is deliberate but it’s just an accident
- the words are very similar, just a few letters are different, this is clearly an accident
- I have no problem with apart from God, or by the Grace of God
- please move on and stop screaming and running around and knocking things over

Moderator:

- but what if pastors try to use this passage in a sermon?

Williams:

- well, one word doesn’t make a big different, the meaning that appears is fine for preaching
- it’s only a problem for people who treat the Bible as a magic book with magical incantations
- they get mad because if one word is out of place then the whole thing doesn’t work for their spell
- then they try to cast happiness spells but the spells don’t work and they experience suffering
- the suffering surprises them since they think that fundamentalism should guarantee them happiness
- then they become apostates and get on TV where they look wide-eyed and talk crazy

Ehrman:

- hey! are you talking about me? a lot of people buy my books! i am a big success!
- it is very important that people don’t feel bad about their sinning you know!

Is Misquoting Jesus an attack?

Williams:

- it’s rhetorically imbalanced and misleading
- it tries to highlight change and instability and ignore the majority of the text that is stable
- he makes a big deal out of 5 or so verses that are different from the mainstream text
- he says that scribes deliberately changed the scriptures, but he doesn’t prove that
- it’s just as likely that the differences are just scribal errors made by accident

Ehrman:

- well, maybe the variants aren’t a big deal, but what about one angel vs. two angels?
- that’s a significant issue! significant enough for me to become an apostate – a *rich* apostate
- if one word is different because of an accident, then the whole Bible cannot be trusted
- it has to be completely inerrant, so a one word difference means the whole thing is unreliable
- we don’t even know if Jesus was even named Jesus, because of one angel vs two angels!!!1!
- buy my book! you don’t have to read it, just put it on your shelf, then you’ll feel better about not having a relationships with God – because who’s to say what God really wants from you? Not the Bible!

Have you heard about Dr. Angus Menuge's ontological argument against naturalism?

April 14, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division test the new M-17 pistol

My friend Seth mentioned to me that he likes the argument from reason, so I thought I would post something about it from a Christian scholar who I really admire. Dr. Angus Menuge offers the best (I think) argument for the proposition that theism is the best ground for our reasoning capability.

Let's start with some information about Dr. Menuge:

> Dr. Angus Menuge joined Concordia University Wisconsin in 1991. He earned his BA from the University of Warwick, England, and his MA and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he studied philosophy, computer science and psychology. Menuge's dissertation was on the philosophy of action explanation, and his current research interests include philosophy of mind, philosophy of science and Christian apologetics.
>
> In 2003, Menuge earned a Diploma in Christian Apologetics from the International Academy of Apologetics, Evangelism and Human Rights, which meets each July in Strasbourg, France. His thesis, a critique of scientific materialism, went on to become the book *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).
>
> […]A frequent speaker, Menuge has given presentations on Christianity and culture, science and vocation, philosophy of mind, C. S. Lewis, Intelligent Design and the case against scientific materialism. He is a member of the Evangelical Philosophical Society.

Dr. Menuge presented a paper at a recent Evangelical Philosophical Society conference

for students and professors of philosophy, and you can download the paper here as a PDF. I got these straight from the source, and got permission to post them, too.

Here is the introduction to the paper that Dr. Menuge read at the EPS conference:

> The argument from reason is really a family of arguments to show that reasoning is incompatible with naturalism. Here, naturalism is understood as the idea that foundationally, there are only physical objects, properties and relations, and anything else reduces to, supervenes on, or emerges from that. For our purposes, one of the most important claims of naturalism is that all causation is passive, automatic, event causation (an earthquake automatically causes a tidal wave; the tidal wave responds passively): there are no agent causes, where something does not happen automatically but only because the agent exerts his active power by choosing to do it. The most famous version of the argument from reason is *epistemological*: if naturalism were true, we could not be justified in believing it. Today, I want to focus on the *ontological* argument from reason, which asserts that there cannot be reasoning in a naturalistic world, because reasoning requires libertarian free will, and this in turn requires a unified, enduring self with active power.
>
> The two most promising ways out of this argument are: (1) Compatibilism—even in a deterministic, naturalistic world, humans are capable of free acts of reason if their minds are responsive to rational causes; (2) Libertarian Naturalism—a self with libertarian free will emerges from the brain. I argue that neither of these moves works, and so, unless someone has a better idea, the ontological argument from reason stands.

The paper is 11 pages long, and it is awesome for those of you looking for some good discussion of one of the issues in the area of philosophy of mind.

By the way, the epistemological argument from reason (P(R) on N & E is low) is the argument made by the famous Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga. I blogged about that argument before. It's good to know BOTH of these arguments. They both work, and they are both awesome. If you put these two arguments together with William Lane Craig's moral argument, that's three strong philosophical arguments that are easy to use, but backed by solid analytic philosophy.

Powerpoint slideshow

But there is more than just the paper! At the EPS apologetics conference, which is meant for lay people as well as scholars, he presented this slideshow which I converted to PDF. The slides are easier to understand than the paper, but the paper is not too bad.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life

- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

How a Bible-believing Christian won election to the Wisconsin Supreme Court

April 15, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

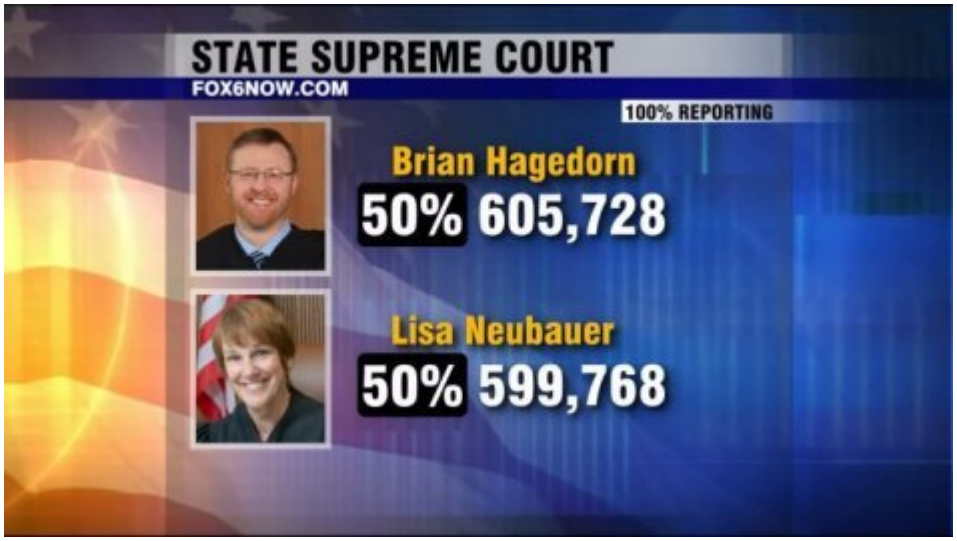

Wisconsin Supreme Court candidate Brian Hagedorn

First, let's go over the news story for this blog post, and then I'll have comments after. The news story comes to us from the purple state of Wisconsin, which recently handed former Governor Scott Walker a narrow loss to his Democrat opponent Tony Evers. The news story is about a recent election for a seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

Here's the story from National Review.

They write:

> On Wednesday, liberal-backed Wisconsin supreme court candidate Lisa Neubauer formally conceded to conservative-backed Brian Hagedorn after the official canvas of the vote only increased Hagedorn's lead of roughly 6,000 votes out of 1.2 million ballots cast.
>
> As we reported last week, Hagedorn's victory was nothing short of stunning. His campaign had been left for dead by some business groups in the state after his opponents attacked him as an anti-LGBT bigot for founding a private Christian school that upholds traditional Christian beliefs about marriage and sex. The Wisconsin Realtors Association withdrew its endorsement, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce decided to stay out of the race.
>
> […]The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign reported that liberal groups backing Neubauer outspent conservative groups backing Hagedorn by as much as a 14-1 margin until the last week of the race, when the RSLC swooped in with a million-dollar ad campaign. It didn't erase the disparity between conservative and liberal spending in the state, but did narrow the gap.

Here's one of the ads that helped Hagedorn to win:

I was curious who the outside groups were campaigning against Hagedorn, and it turned

out to be groups like Planned Parenthood, the big abortion providers who sell the body parts of children whose mothers didn't want them. I guess they were afraid that he might put a stop to the taxpayer-funding of their business.

Basically, the question being decided in the election was "is it allowable for a Bible-believing Christian to hold elected office?"

And the answer in Wisconsin was, surprisingly, "yes". A different National Review article explains how grass roots conservatives turned the tide:

> The attacks on Hagedorn's religious views "just lit an incredible grassroots fire," says Brian Reisinger, a Republican strategist in Wisconsin who has worked for Scott Walker and Senator Ron Johnson. "They were calling this guy a bigot. They were saying that he was speaking to hate groups" because he had spoken to Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative legal group that backs religious freedom.
>
> As a law student, Hagedorn also wrote on a blog that "Planned Parenthood is a wicked organization more committed to killing babies than to helping women." The narrator in one TV ad claimed that Hagedorn would outlaw abortion "even when a woman's health is in danger."

I know we should be happy that Hagedorn won his election, and in a purple state no less. But reading about these attacks against Christians from the secular left really made me unhappy. It's just so strange to see one group of people so committed to making other people celebrate their sexual behaviors against their own conscience. But maybe the bullying of Christians has come to a point where even ordinary people are starting to say "enough".

This article from the New York Post explains:

> Conservative activist Mary Magdalen Moser, a poll worker for the Republicans, sensed a turn in the tide. She was infuriated by the media's treatment of Hagedorn — and she knew the populist coalition that put Trump in office would be electrified.
>
> "Wisconsinites have always been a very open bunch," she told me. "As long as you stay out of our way, we let you do your own thing. People were incensed that Neubauer went after Hagedorn's faith."
>
> […]"Trump and Hagedorn won because they didn't back down," said Moser, a 56-year-old who lives in Kenosha. Though she grew up in a Democratic home and has never registered with either party, she calls the treatment of Hagedorn a tipping point.
>
> "Freedom of religion cannot be perverted into freedom from religion," Moser said. "Tolerance must remain a two-way street, especially in our judicial branch."

So, it turns out that mistreating evangelical Christians isn't a winning strategy all the time. At least, it wasn't this time. So what's the way forward?

Well, I think that we who are conservative Christians need to do a better job of reading the news and sharing articles about how the secular left is using political power to silence and coerce Christians. The left is pushing an agenda in the culture that conservative Christians are predators, but the truth is we have less rights than non-Christians. Non-Christians don't get dragged through the mud in public so they get fired. Non-Christians don't get dragged into human rights courts for offending people.

I think we need to work on our brand as Christians, too. Being a Christian ought to mean things like chastity, sobriety, charitable giving, and stable marriages with lots of well-adjusted children. We should embrace our reputation as morally straight, and just try to show that off to others. Share when we make charitable donations. Share about our volunteering. Share about our marriages and children. Share about how much we show love for other Christians.

New study: same-sex attraction isn't fixed

April 16, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Federalist reports on what researchers have found about the nature of same-sex attraction. Is it fixed? Or does it change over time? I think that gay activists would like everyone to believe that same-sex attraction is fixed, but to learn the truth, we should look at what the scientific research says.

Excerpt:

> There is not only no scientific evidence that sexual orientation is immutable, there is conclusive scientific evidence that most people who experience exclusive same-sex attraction end up developing an interest in the opposite sex over time.
>
> This is so well established by now that scholars are busy publishing methods to measure frequency of sexual orientation change in massive longitudinal studies of youth and young adults. (I.e., How many times in nine years can we expect a homosexual sexual orientation to change? Is the change associated with lifestyle habits? Who changes more frequently: males or females?)
>
> That basic fact was already settled science when Obergefell came before the Supreme Court. Half a dozen rigorous studies could be cited from the late 1990s and early 2000s, but the most noteworthy probably remains a Cornell-led study published in 2007.
>
> In this study, Dr. Rich Savin-Williams examined a representative sample of more than 12,000 American youth, following each from the age of 16 to 22. Rather than rely on an individual's reconstruction of his or her past based on current identity, researchers met with subjects three times throughout the six-year period. Each time, they asked individuals (via a computer, to protect privacy)

> whether they had had a romantic attraction to a member of the opposite or same sex since their last interview.
>
> For instance, 17-year-old males were asked if, in the past year, they had had a romantic attraction to another male or female. About 1.5 percent reported only having a romantic attraction to other males. Five years later, when that 1.5 percent were asked about their romantic attractions since last interview, the overwhelming majority (70 percent) reported a 180-degree flip in their sexual orientation—they only had romantic feelings for women.
>
> Similarly, among females, about 40 percent switched from exclusive same-sex attraction to exclusive opposite-sex attraction. Most of the rest (45 percent of the total) reported they had feelings for both men and women. Only 1 percent of women who, at 17, reported a full year of exclusive same-sex attraction reported a similar experience in the five years that followed.

This research is in agreement with previous research on identical twin studies reported by the prestigious science journal Nature:

> When one identical twin is gay, there is about a 20% chance that the other will be as well. But because this rate is not 100%, it is thought that environmental factors play a role as well. One of the best characterized is the 'older brother effect': the chance of a man being gay increases by 33% for each older brother he has. The reason is not clear, although one hypothesis holds that the mother's immune system begins to react against male antigens and alter the fetus's development.

So, it turns out that homosexual behavior is a lot more related to free choices than it is to innate, fixed dispositions. That's what the science says. It's not what the politicians say. It's not what the Supreme Court says. It's not what Hollywood says. It's not what journalists say. But it is what science has found to be true about the universe. We are in control of our behaviors, and we have to choose things that are likely to work out in the long-term – not just what feels good to us in the moment.

Whenever I hear gay activists complaining that they have no choice but to give in to their "innate, fixed, biological" sexual attractions, I always think about how I've never been married and have had to deal with sexual attraction to the opposite sex. As a Christian, there is simply no Biblical support for sex outside of marriage. So, that means that I've had to just live with not being allowed to act on my desires. In fact, this is the normal Christian life. There was a time when people had more skepticism about their feelings and desires, and they knew that self-control was a good thing. But now it seems as if everyone is so desperate to be liked that we tell everyone yes to everything that they feel like doing. We now consider every moral viewpoint as equal to any other – all the better to do what makes us feel happy. The important goal is that we all feel good right now, and who cares about the damage that our selfishness will cause down the road? We can just act surprised when that happens and pretend that there is no such thing as cause

and effect. I can remember a time when Christians in particular had some suspicion about following your heart, because the heart was deceitful and selfish. I guess those days are over, and suddenly feelings are ruling over reason and self-control.

It's pretty clear that not everything that a person feels like doing is good for them. A lot of decisions that people make to feel good right now lead to outcomes where they or the people who are depending on them will be harmed. For example, lots of people feel like staying home from a school exam, or staying home from their jobs, or drinking alcohol all night, or taking drugs. We used to have more confidence about telling people that not everything they wanted was good for them, and to have more self-control, and to think of how their decisions would harm others. Today, society has drifted away from objective moral boundaries and self-control toward subjective feelings and moral relativism, we are all finding it more difficult to tell people that they should choose to adhere to moral standards. We always seem to be looking to big government to make our irresponsible, reckless choices to be happy in the moment "work out" somehow.

Today, when people make poor decisions that wreck their families, hurt their kids, damage their health, etc. we are more likely to tax the people who haven't been selfish and reckless in order to pay for government programs that "fix" the outcomes of the selfish, reckless people. In some countries, you can get free single mother welfare, free taxpayer-funded abortions, free sex-changes, free treatment for sexually-transmitted diseases, free rounds of IVF, and so on. Just do whatever you want and someone else who had more self-control than you did will pay for it for you. That's why we have a twenty-trillion dollar debt, which we never had during the time when we still had the courage to tell people not to do things that were risky, and would be expensive to fix when they blew up.

When did it become normal to think that cause and effect were so unpredictable that people shouldn't be blamed and held accountable for making bad decisions? When did it become normal to think that doing what feels good for ourselves should be rewarded with other people's money, through big government programs? When did it become normal to take people to court to force them to celebrate your self-centeredness, just because their disagreement with what you were doing made you feel bad?

New study: there has been NO surge in “hate crimes” since Trump was elected

April 17, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this “epidemic” of hate crimes just like the Smollett hoax?

I see that a lot of people in the mainstream media are talking about a rise in “hate crimes” since Donald Trump was elected. I was skeptical, because these are the same people who droned on and on about the self-inflicted hate crime hoax of gay activist Jussie Smollett. Well, we finally got some research from a university professor on this, and guess what? The mainstream media lied again!

First, the facts. It’s undeniable that hate crimes reported to the FBI are up. The article below says that there’s been an increase of 17% since Trump took office. But there are two reasons for that: 1) the number of police departments reporting crimes to the FBI has increased, and 2) the majority of the newly reported hate crimes are hoaxes.

The far-left Detroit News reports:

> The surge has little to do with Trump and his red hat brigade. This according to Will Reilly, a Kentucky State University associate professor, who extensively researched hate-fueled violence in America for his book Hate Crime Hoax.
>
> “Almost all of that surge is due to the simple fact that in 2017 the number of police departments reporting hate crimes to the FBI increased by 1,000,” says Reilly. “The surge narrative is pretty dishonest.”

And what about hoaxes?

> Reilly studied 409 reported hate crimes over the past five years that received media attention. They include incidents such as the racist graffiti at Eastern Michigan University and the minority woman in Grand Rapids who claimed a group of white men urinated on her.
>
> "In major cases, almost all of them have been hoaxes," Reilly says. "The number of hate crime hoaxes actually exceeds the number of convictions. The majority of these high-profile incidents never happened."

The same article goes on to talk about the supposed epidemic of police violence against blacks. The mainstream media has a reason to blow that out of proportion – it helps their Democrat allies if more black people are scared into voting for Democrats than Republicans. You see, Democrats love crime. They want to disarm law-abiding civilians, restrict the ability of law enforcement to protect law-abiding people, import more criminals via illegal immigration, shorten criminal sentences, and give felons the right to vote. Bernie Sanders even wants people who are in jail to have the right to vote. So, the media has been trying to smear police to make all of this pro-criminal "compassion" seem rational.

But:

> It's also a false narrative that white cops are targeting African American men, Reilly says.
>
> In 2015, he says, of the 1,200 Americans killed by police, just 258 were black, and only 17 of those were unarmed and shot by white officers. And yet, his research indicates just 10 percent of the media coverage of police violence focused on the non-black victims.
>
> "White guys shot by police under identical circumstances never become national stories," Reilly say.
>
> […]"It's worth noting that that interracial crime is not a huge threat in America," says Reilly, who is African American. "Eighty-five percent of whites are killed by other whites. Ninety-four percent of blacks are killed by other blacks."

There are some crimes that occur that are not reported by the mainstream media, though.

A rape and murder the media didn't report

Here's an example of a crime that won't be reported in the mainstream media. It was reported in the New York Post:

> The fiend busted for raping a New Jersey jogger before drowning her in a lake is an illegal immigrant from Honduras who had already been kicked out of the US twice before, authorities said Thursday.
>
> Jorge Rios, 33, was deported from the US first in 2003 and then again in 2004, but snuck back across the border at some point after that, they said.
>
> Surveillance video showed that Rios stalked Carolina Cano, 45, before

> he strangled her with a cellphone cord, raped and drowned her as she was out for an early morning jog in Jersey City's Lincoln Park on March 24, authorities said.

Her disappearance was noticed when she did not show up for church.

This sort of thing is happening more and more frequently, as the Democrats are successful at preventing Republicans from securing the border.

Here is another case from Knoxville, TN, where an illegal immigrant who had prior arrests struck and killed a woman with his vehicle.

Well,the mainstream media had a lot to say about the fake self-inflicted hate crime hoax of LGBT activist Jussie Smollett. But they didn't have a word to say about this church-going woman who was raped and murdered by an illegal immigrant. They can't blame crimes committed by illegal immigrants on Trump, so stories like this are not newsworthy. The Democrat party needs all the help it can get from the news media in 2020, you know.

What is the definition of marriage according to Jesus?

April 18, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

I noticed that there is some silly Democrat running around harassing Mike Pence because he accepts Jesus' definition of marriage. What's annoying about this particular Democrat is that he calls himself a Christian, despite being in a gay relationship with another man. I thought it might be a good idea to remind everyone what the actual definition of marriage is, according to Jesus.

Here's what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
>
> 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"

> 8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”
>
> 11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don’t overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are supposed to be willing to endure suffering rather than side with non-Christians against God’s authority.

Matt Walsh had a fine article about this issue.

He said:

> As Christians, our goal is not to avoid being like the big bad “other Christians,” but to strive to be like Christ Himself. This is one of the advantages to having an Incarnate God. He went around acting and speaking and teaching and generally functioning in our realm, thereby giving us a model to follow. This is the model of a loving and merciful man, and *also* a man of perfect virtue who fought against the forces of evil, condemned sin, defended his Father in Heaven with sometimes violent force, spoke truth, and eventually laid down His life for those He loved (which would be all of us).
>
> […]This is what it means to believe in Christ. Not just to believe that He existed, but to believe that Christ is Truth itself, and that everything He said and did was totally and absolutely and irreversibly true forever and always. Many Christians today — not only the ones in the video, but millions alongside them — seem to think we can rightly claim to have “faith” in Jesus or a “relationship” with Him while still categorically denying much of His Word. This is a ridiculous proposition. We can’t declare, in one breath, that Christ is Lord, and in the next suggest that maybe God got it wrong on this or that point. Well, we *can* make that declaration, but we expose our belief as fraudulent and self-serving. We worship a God we either invented in our heads, which is a false idol, or a God who is fallible, which is a false idol.

If you really accept Jesus as God, then you can’t think he is wrong when he explains what marriage is. Period. End of issue.

Real Christians don’t make excuses for sin. Real Christians present the gospel. The gospel

is that all men have rebelled against God and fallen short of perfect submission to and obedience of him. For this, they deserve to be separated from God eternally. Jesus paid the price for this rebellion on the cross, and anyone who accepts him as Savior *and Lord* will be with God eternally after they die. There is no salvation apart from Jesus. That's what Christians say. And they say it regardless of how weird they look, and how many non-Christians don't like them for saying it.

William Lane Craig explains the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement

April 19, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Probably one of the most common questions that you hear from people who don't fully understand Christianity is this question: "why did Jesus have to die?". The answer that most Christians seem to hold to is that 1) humans are rebelling against God, 2) Humans deserve punishment for their rebellion, 3) Humans cannot escape the punishment for their rebellion on their own, 4) Jesus was punished in the place of the rebellious humans, 5) Those who accept this sacrifice are forgiven for their rebelling.

Are humans rebellious?

Some people think that humans are not really rebellious at all, but it's actually easy to see. You can see it just by looking at how people spend their time. Some of us have no time for God at all, and instead try to fill our lives with material possessions and experiences in order to have happy feelings. Some of us embrace just the parts of God that make us feel happy, like church and singing and feelings of comfort, while avoiding the hard parts of that vertical relationship; reading, thinking and disagreeing with people who don't believe the truth about God. And so on.

This condition of being in rebellion is universal, and all of us are guilty of breaking the law at some point. All of us deserve to be separated from God's goodness and love. Even if we wanted to stop rebelling, we would not be able to make up for the times where we do rebel by being good at other times, any more than we could get out of a speeding ticket by appealing to the times when we drove at the speed limit, (something that I never do, in any case).

This is not to say that all sinners are punished equally – the degree of punishment is proportional to the sins a person commits. However, the standard is perfection. And

worse than that, the most important moral obligation is a *vertical* moral obligation. You can't satisfy the demands of the moral law just by making your neighbor happy, while treating God like a pariah. The first commandment is to love God, the second is to love your neighbor. Even loving your neighbor requires you to tell your neighbor the truth – not just to make them feel good. The *vertical* relationship is more important than the *horizontal* one, and we've all screwed up the vertical relationship. We all don't want God to be there, telling us what's best for us, interfering with our fun. We don't want to relate to a loving God if it means having to care what he thinks about anything that we are doing.

Who is going to pay for our rebellion?

The Christian answer to the problem of our rebellion is that Jesus takes the punishment we deserve in our place.

However, I've noticed that on some atheist blogs, they don't like the idea that someone else can take our punishment for us to exonerate us for crimes that we've committed. So I'll quote from this post by the great William Lane Craig, to respond to that objection.

Excerpt:

> The central problem of the Penal Theory is, as you point out, understanding how punishing a person other than the perpetrator of the wrong can meet the demands of justice. Indeed, we might even say that it would be wrong to punish some innocent person for the crimes I commit!
>
> It seems to me, however, that in other aspects of human life we do recognize this practice. I remember once sharing the Gospel with a businessman. When I explained that Christ had died to pay the penalty for our sins, he responded, "Oh, yes, that's imputation." I was stunned, as I never expected this theological concept to be familiar to this non-Christian businessman. When I asked him how he came to be familiar with this idea, he replied, "Oh, we use imputation all the time in the insurance business." He explained to me that certain sorts of insurance policy are written so that, for example, if someone else drives my car and gets in an accident, the responsibility is imputed to me rather than to the driver. Even though the driver behaved recklessly, I am the one held liable; it is just as if I had done it.
>
> Now this is parallel to substitutionary atonement. Normally I would be liable for the misdeeds I have done. But through my faith in Christ, I am, as it were, covered by his divine insurance policy, whereby he assumes the liability for my actions. My sin is imputed to him, and he pays its penalty. The demands of justice are fulfilled, just as they are in mundane affairs in which someone pays the penalty for something imputed to him. This is as literal a transaction as those that transpire regularly in the insurance industry.

So, it turns out that the doctrine of substitionary atonement is not as mysterious or as objectionable as everyone seems to think it is.

Jeff Hester debates William Lane Craig on the topic “Is Belief in God Rational in a Scientific Age?”

April 20, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an accurate protrayal of what went down in this debate

I was very excited to see a recent debate by Christian philosopher William Lane Craig against atheist astronomer Jeff Hester. When I summarize a debate, I do a fair, objective summary if the atheist is intelligent and informed, as with Peter Millican, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong or Austin Dacey. But the following summary is rated VS for Very Snarky, and you’ll soon see why.

The debate itself starts at 29 minutes:

The audio is very poor.

Dr. Craig’s opening speech

Dr. Craig went first, and he presented 4 arguments, as well as the ontological argument which I won’t summarize or discuss. He later added another argument for theism from the existence of the universe that does not require an origin of the universe.

A1. Counter-examples

Theists who are elite scientists cannot be “irrational”, for example: Allan Sandage, Gustav Tammann, George Ellis, Don Page, Christopher Isham

A2. Kalam cosmological argument

1. Whatever begins to exist requires a cause.

2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe requires a cause.

A3. Fine-tuning of the universe to permit complex intelligent life

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is due either to physical necessity, chance or design.
2. It is not due to physical necessity or chance.
3. Therefore it is due to design.

A4. Moral argument

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.
2. Objective moral values and duties do exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Dr. Hester's opening speech

Dr. Hester went second and presented two arguments which both committed the genetic fallacy, a logical fallacy that makes the arguments have no force.

Hester starts his opening speech by asserting that Albert Einstein was irrational, because he denied quantum mechanics.

Hester explains that he became an atheist at 15. This would have been before the evidence for the origin of the universe became widespread, before we had very many examples of fine-tuning, before the discovery that the origin of life problem is a problem of the origin of complex, specifed information, etc. What kind of reasons can a 15-year-old child have for becoming an atheist? It's hard to say, but I would suspect that they were psychological. Children often desire autonomy from moral authorities. They want to be free to pursue pleasure. They don't want to be thought of as superstitious and morally straight by their non-religious peers.

Later on in the debate, Hester volunteers that he hated his father because his father professed to be a Christian, but he was focused on his career and making money. In the absence of any arguments for atheism, it's reasonable to speculate that Hester became an atheist for psychological reasons. And as we'll see, just like the typical 15-year-old child, he has no rational basis for atheism. What's astonishing is how he continues to hold to the atheism of his teens when it has been falsified over and over by scientific discoveries in the years since.

Dr. Craig's deductive arguments do have premises that reach a conclusion through the laws of logic. On the contrary, he just asserts that God exists as his conclusion, and then says that this assertion is the best explanation of a gap in our scientific knowledge. Some of the gaps in our scientific knowledge he uses in his arguments are: 1) he doesn't understand why the Sun moves through the sky, so God exists, 2) he doesn't understand why the wind blows, so God exists.

What counts as "rational" are things that have not been disproved. The progress of science has shown that the universe did not need a casuse in order to begin to exist, and

also there is no cosmic fine-tuning.

A1. The success of evolution in the software industry proves that there is no God

All hardware and software is developed using genetic algorithms that exactly match Darwinian processes. All the major computer companies like Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Apple, etc. are just generating products using mutation and selection to evolve products over long periods of time. If you look over a typical software engineering degree, it's all about Darwinian evolution, and nothing about design patterns, object-oriented design, etc.

This widespread use of evolution in the software industry undermines all of the arguments for God's existence. Evolution caused the origin of the universe. Evolution explains why the universe is fine-tuned for life. Evolution, which requires replication already be in place in order to work, explains the origin of the first self-replicating organism.

A2. Theist's view of the world is just a result of peer pressure from their tribes

All of Dr. Craig's logical arguments supported by scientific evidence don't matter, because he got them from a primitive tribe of Christians that existed 2000 years ago. Everyone gets their view of origins, morality, meaning in life, death, etc. from their tribes. Except me, I'm getting my beliefs from reason and evidence because I'm a smart atheist. I don't have an atheist tribe in the university that would sanction me if I disagreed with nonsense like homosexuality is 100% genetic, transgenderism, man-made catastrophic global warming, fully naturalistic evolution, aliens seeded the Earth with life, infanticide is moral, socialism works, overpopulation will cause mass starvation, nuclear winter, etc. Also, my argument isn't the genetic fallacy at all, because smart atheists don't commit elementary logical fallacies that even a first-year philosophy student would know.

A3. Our brains evolved so our rational faculties are unreliable, so God does not exist

The logical reasoning that Dr. Craig uses to argue for theism are all nonsense, because human minds just have an illusion of consciousness, an illusion of rationality, and an illusion of free will. Everything Dr. Craig says is just deluded nonsense caused by chemicals in his brain. He has cognitive biases the undermine all his logical arguments and scientific evidence. He just invented an imaginary friend with super powers. Except me, I'm a smart atheist, so I actually have real consciousness, real reasoning powers, and no cognitive biases. Also, my argument isn't the genetic fallacy at all, because my arguments would not get an F in a first-year philosophy course.

Discussion

I'm not going to summarize everything in the discussion, or the question and answer time. I'm just going to list out some of the more interesting points.

Dr. Craig asks him how it is that he has managed to escape these biases from tribalism, projection, etc. He talks about how brave and noble atheist rebels are. The moderator

asks him the same question. He repeats how brave and noble atheist rebels are.

Dr. Hester is asked whether he affirms a causeless beginning of the universe or an eternal universe. He replies he states that the universe came into being without a cause, because causality doesn't apply to the beignning of the universe. He also asserts with explanation that Borde, Guth and Vilenkin have undermined the kalam cosmological argument, mentioning a web site.

Dr. Craig replied to this phantom argument after the debate on Facebook:

> Speaking of which, although I haven't had time to consult the website mentioned by Dr. Hester concerning Guth and Vilenkin on the kalam cosmological argument, I know the work of these two gentlemen well enough to predict what one will find there. Since neither one is yet a theist (so much, by the way, for the dreaded confirmation bias!), they have to reject at least one of the premises of the kalam cosmological argument.
>
> Guth wants to deny premiss (2) The universe began to exist–for which Vilenkin has rebuked him. Guth would avoid the implications of their theorem by holding our hope for the Carroll-Chen model, which denies the single condition of the BGV theorem. This gambit is, however, unsuccessful, since the Carroll-Chen model does so only by positing a reversal of the arrow of time at some point in the finite past. This is not only highly non-physical, but fails to avert the universe's beginning, since that time-reversed, mirror universe is no sense in our past. The model really postulates two different universes with a common beginning.
>
> So Vilenkin is forced to deny premiss (1) Whatever begins to exists has a cause. He says that if the positive energy associated with matter exactly counterbalances the negative energy associated with gravity, then the net sum of the energy is zero, and so the conservation of energy is not violated if the universe pops into being from nothing! But this is like saying that if your assets exactly balance your debts, then your net worth is zero, and so there does not need to be a cause of your financial situation! As Christopher Isham points out, there still needs to be "ontic seeding" in order to create the positive and negative energy in the first place, even if on balance their sum is zero.

Dr. Hester is asked how he explains the evidence for fine-tuning. He literally says that "Life is fine-tuned for the Universe", i.e. – that evolution will create living beings regardless of the laws of physics, constants, etc. For example, he thinks that in a universe with a weaker stong force, which would have only hyrogen atoms, evolution would still evolve life. And in a universe that recollapses in a hot fireball, and never forms stars or planets, evolution would produce life. Physicist Luke Barnes, who was commenting on the YouTube chat for the video, said this:

> "Life is fine-tuned for the Universe" – complete ignorance of the field. Read a book.

Hester tries to cite Jeremy England to try to argue for life appearing regardless of what

the laws of physics are. Barnes comments:

> Jeremy England's work supports no such claim.

Hester appealed to the multiverse, which faces numerous theoretical and observational difficulties. For example, the multiverse models have to have some mechanism to spawn different universes, but these mechanisms themselves require fine-tuning, as Robin Collins argues. And the multiverse is falsified observationally by the Boltzmann brains problem. It was so ironic that Hester claimed to be so committed to testing theories. The mutliverse theory cannot be tested experimentally, and must be accepted on faith.

Dr. Hester is asked how he grounds morality on atheism. He says there are no objective moral values and duties. He instead lists off a bunch of Christian beliefs which he thinks are objectively wrong. Even his statements about these moral issues are misinformed. For example, he asserts that homosexuality is causally determined by biology, but this is contradicted by identical twin studies that have a rate of 20-40% where both twins are gay.

Dr. Hester is asked about free will, which is required in order to make moral choices. He denies the existence of free will, which undermines his earlier statements about morality. Morality is only possible if humans can make free choices to act in accordance with a moral standard. So, he claims that Christians are immoral, then he claims that they have no freedom to act other than they do.

Dr. Hester also volunteered that his father believed in the prosperity gospel, and tithed in order to be rewarded with money by God. Dr. Craig immediately says "no wonder you're in rebellion against Christianity". Indeed.

Dr. Hester is asked about his view that human beings are unable to unable to perceive the world objectively. How is he able to perceive the world objectively, when all of the rest of us are unable to? His response is that he is just smarter than everyone else because his ideas have never been falsified by testing.

Scoring the debate

Dr. Craig's 5 arguments went unrefuted. Hester's argument about genetic algorithms was ludicrous to anyone who understands software engineering. His arguments about tribalism and unreliable mental faculties were self-refuting, and committed the genetic fallcy. At several points, Hester denied mainstream science in favor of untested and untestable speculations. It was the worst defeat of atheism I have ever witnessed. He was uninformed and arrogant. He didn't know what he was talking about, and he tried to resort to speculative, mystical bullshit to cover up his failure to meet Dr. Craig's challenge.

I have to debate a co-worker on Trump-Russia collusion, here are my notes

April 22, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The media spent 2 years pushing a fake news story paid for by Democrats

Well, now that the Mueller report is out, I am dealing with a bunch of angry progressives at work. They want to know how why their favorite mainstream media sources got the Trump-Collusion story so wrong. One of them even asked me to go to lunch so that I could explain why the story fell apart. I made some notes in preparation for the lunch, and I've written them up below.

So, basically I wanted to get a bunch of articles together that trace the whole narrative from start to finish. Let's see an outline first.

The Trump-Russia collusion story that was trumpted by the progressive media for the last two years was a joint effort between the Hillary Clinton campaign and high-ranking members of the FBI during the Obama administration.

The goal was to get the government to spy on the Trump campaign, in order neutralize his administration, if he won the 2016 election.

Here's the left-leaning The Hill, reporting on an important finding from October 2018:

> Congressional investigators have confirmed that a top FBI official met with Democratic Party lawyers to talk about allegations of Donald Trump-Russia collusion weeks before the 2016 election, and before the bureau secured a search warrant targeting Trump's campaign.

> Former FBI general counsel James Baker met during the 2016 season with at least one attorney from Perkins Coie, the Democratic National Committee's private law firm.
>
> That's the firm used by the DNC and Hillary Clinton's campaign to secretly pay research firm Fusion GPS and Christopher Steele, a former British intelligence operative, to compile a dossier of uncorroborated raw intelligence alleging Trump and Moscow were colluding to hijack the presidential election.

The article notes that Perkins Coie is the "Democratic National Committee's private law firm".

The Federalist reports that the Obama presidential election campaign also paid $972,000 to Perkins Coie in 2016 alone:

> Former president Barack Obama's official campaign organization has directed nearly a million dollars to the same law firm that funneled money to Fusion GPS, the firm behind the infamous Steele dossier. Since April of 2016, Obama For America (OFA) has paid over $972,000 to Perkins Coie, records filed with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) show.
>
> […]Federal records show that Hillary Clinton's official campaign organization, Hillary For America, paid just under $5.1 million to Perkins Coie in 2016. The DNC paid nearly $5.4 million to the law firm in 2016.
>
> […]The Washington Post reported last week that Perkins Coie, an international law firm, was directed by both the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and Hillary Clinton's campaign to retain Fusion GPS in April of 2016 to dig up dirt on then-candidate Donald Trump. Fusion GPS then hired Christopher Steele, a former British spy, to compile a dossier of allegations that Trump and his campaign actively colluded with the Russian government during the 2016 election. Though many of the claims in the dossier have been directly refuted, none of the dossier's allegations of collusion have been independently verified. Lawyers for Steele admitted in court filings last April that his work was not verified and was never meant to be made public.

In addition, Fox News reports that the FBI paid Christopher Steele ELEVEN TIMES in 2016. So this dossier was funded by Democrats from many different groups. They probably thought that no one would ever find out who was behind it.

But why would the FBI and the FISA court accept the Democrat-funded dossier as a basis to spy on the Democrat's main political rival? Answer: there were Democrats in the FBI who covered up the source of funding for the Steele dossier, as well as the anti-Trump bias of the dossier's author.

The Washington Examiner reported on the released text messages from highly-placed anti-Trump Democrat Lisa Page within the FBI in March 2019:

> The text messages, between then-Deputy Director of the FBI Andrew McCabe,

> who was later fired, and former FBI attorney Lisa Page — who was having an affair with FBI agent Peter Strzok — were obtained by Fox News.
>
> They reveal that Stuart Evans, deputy assistant attorney general of DOJ's National Security Division at the time, had "continued concerns" about the "possible bias" of a source being used in the FISA application but that Lisa Page had a sense of urgency about the FISA application being submitted quickly and was considering ending "the hold up" with "a high-level push."
>
> "OI [Office of Intelligence] now has a robust explanation re any possible bias of the chs [Confidential Human Source] in the package," Page texted McCabe on Oct. 12, 2016. "Don't know what the holdup is now, other than Stu's continued concerns. Strong operational need to have in place before Monday if at all possible, which means to ct tomorrow. I communication you and boss's green light to Sty earlier, and just sent an email to Stu asking where things stood. This might take a high-level push. Will keep you posted."
>
> Page said she would press the issue with Evans by "invoking" McCabe's name. Further texts show that a meeting would eventually be set up including then-Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates at the direction of the White House. The FISA application, relaying heavily on Steele's dossier, would be submitted to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court just days later.
>
> Then-Director of the FBI James Comey ultimately signed off on the application to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court for approval to surveil Carter Page. It was dated nine days after the Page-McCabe texts: Oct. 21 2016.
>
> The specific funding of Steele's dossier was never mentioned to the FISA court, either during that first application or during three subsequent FISA renewals. Steele's anti-Trump fervor and determination to provide his dossier to the media and members of the U.S. government later became well known.

I think there's enough information in this post to show why the mainstream media ought to have known better than to push a "collusion" narrative on the strength of the Steele dossier and the FBI spying on the Trump campaign. The whole collusion plot was funded lock, stock and barrel by Democrats. The reason why the mainstream media reported on a #FakeNews story for two years was because they wanted to sway voters away from Trump in the 2018 elections. It's only now that they are trying to step away from it so they can pretend to be unbiased.

Voting rights for terrorists and rapists, death penalty for unborn babies up to 9 months

April 23, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Boston Marathon terrorist about to place bomb behind 8-year-old child

Wow. It seems to me that the Democrats had a pretty good chance of competing against Trump in the 2020 election, with their presumed nominee, Bernie Sanders. He's wildly popular with young people. He's raising tons of money from rich progressives. All Bernie has to do is just not say anything crazy, and he'll be competitive. Unfortunately, he can't control himself.

Here's a report from the radically-leftist Boston Herald:

> U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders says the right to vote should extend to those in jail — even the Boston Marathon bomber.
>
> "If somebody commits a serious crime — sexual assault, murder — they're going to be punished," Sanders said in his CNN town hall talk Monday night. But, "I think the right to vote is inherent to our democracy. Yes, even for terrible people."

The majority of convicted criminals would vote Democrat if they could, because Democrats are less strict on crime than Republicans. Democrats are always looking to allow more people who will vote Democrat to vote. They want to lower the voting age, because young people who don't pay taxes naturally vote for free stuff. And they also want to import low-skilled immigrants and put them on a path to citizenship. Low-skilled immigrants pay less into the system than they use in education, health care, etc. They also vote Democrat.

Medicare for All

Bernie also has a long list of big spending programs, because he thinks that $22 trillion in

debt and trillion dollar deficits is no big deal. But the truth is, we're already out of money for the big social welfare programs that Democrats already passed. We certainly don't have money for any new ones.

Far-left CBS News explains:

> Social Security is on a path to become insolvent in 2035, with only enough money cover about 80 percent of its obligations.
>
> Medicare would become insolvent even sooner, by 2026, if no changes are made to payroll taxes or how health providers are paid.
>
> […][M]any Democratic presidential candidates are calling for expanding Medicare benefits — even proposing "Medicare for All" — rather than addressing the program's worsening finances.

How will Democrats pay for MORE spending when we can't pay for the spending we already have? Tax increases won't be enough, so they'll have to nationalize private 401K retirement plans like other socialist nations have.

And what about Medicare for All? Well, they can just seize the money that's being used to buy private health insurance now, and put everyone into a government-run single payer system. That's what happens in Canada right now. People who pay taxes pay for the all the costs, but they still have to get in line behind those who don't pay anything in taxes. The average cost (to middle-class taxpayers) is about $11,000 per year. That's a lot more than people pay for private health insurance which delivers higher quality care. But the costs are higher for less quality, because the people who pay into the system are covering the people who don't pay.

And remember, abortion through all nine months of pregnancy is taxpayer-funded in Canada's single payer system. Pro-life taxpayers subsidize abortions. If you don't like it, you can leave the country.

Infanticide

All of the Democrat presidential candidates support infanticide, according to this article from The Stream:

> On February 25, 44 Democrat senators, including all 6 declared presidential candidates, voted against the Born Alive Protection Act. Put another way, they voted for infanticide.

New candidate Pete Buttigieg is also in favor of infanticide: abortion through all nine months of pregnancy.

If you're voting for a Democrat in 2020, then you're going to get infanticide if they win. No use complaining later that you're pro-life if you support the killing of viable unborn children who survive botched abortions.

Raising the minimum wage

Another policy supported by many Democrats is raising federal minimum wage rates.

Let's take a look at a study reported in the Daily Caller:

> California's minimum wage increase has cost the state thousands of jobs worth of growth in the state's booming restaurant industry, according to a recent study by the University of California Riverside.
>
> California passed a bill in 2016 to bring the state's minimum wage up to $15 an hour. For businesses with more than 25 employees, the state's minimum wage rose to $12 in January and will hit $15 in January of 2022. Other businesses have until 2023 before the full $15-an-hour minimum takes effect.
>
> […]Researchers also found that the minimum wage slowed growth more in low-income areas.
>
> […]Researchers estimate that the minimum wage increases will cost the state roughly 30,000 jobs from 2017 to 2022.

If you force businesses to pay workers more, them employers are left with no choice but to lay off workers, or cut hours.

Minimum wage jobs are entry level jobs. They're not meant to allow people to buy a house, have children, or travel the world on private jets. People get them in order to get something on their resumes so that they can move up to more challenging jobs that pay more. If a person doesn't want to move up to a more challenging job that pays more, then they shouldn't be complaining that they can't make the same life choices as software engineers, nurses and electricians. Jobs don't all pay the same, because some are harder than others.

If voters chose candidates based on whether their policies would actually work to prevent poverty, they would never vote for Democrats. But so many people in America don't vote based on what results policies will achieve. They vote in order to feel something about themselves. Transferring wealth from "rich" employers to "poor" minimum wage workers feels good. So they vote for it. And when those workers are laid off, they don't care because they've already stopped paying attention.

New study: regular churchgoers and married people most satisfied with their love life

April 24, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

One of the curious things about me is that I love to read studies in order to understand what to do in order to reach a goal. My goal is to find the "best practices" that are likely to achieve good outcomes for things I am trying to do. One of the things that we should all be concerned about is having a good love life. Well, believe it or not, there are studies about that!

Consider this article from Science Daily.

Excerpt:

> Regular churchgoers, married people or those who enjoy harmonious social ties are most satisfied with their love life. This also goes for people who are currently in love or who experience the commitment and sexual desire of their partners, says Félix Neto and Maria da Conceição Pinto of the Universidade do Porto in Portugal. Their findings, published in an article in Springer's journal *Applied Research in Quality of Life,* look at the influences on love life satisfaction throughout one's adult life.

> The researchers associate love with the desire to enter into, maintain, or expand a close, connected, and ongoing relationship with another person. In turn, love life satisfaction is a purely subjective, overall measurement of someone's actual enjoyment of love. To investigate the factors that influence this across various age groups, 1,284 adult Portuguese women and men ranging between 18 and 90 years old were asked to evaluate and weigh specific facets of their own love lives by using the Satisfaction With Love Life Scale.

> […]**While education does not impact a person's love life satisfaction, religious involvement does. The finding that believers and regular churchgoers are positive about their love lives is in line with previous studies that associate religious involvement with better mental health and greater satisfaction with life and sexual relationships in general.**

Previously, I blogged about a study reported in USA Today, which showed that people who attend church have lower divorce rates than those who don't attend church.

Excerpt:

> It's been proclaimed from pulpits and blogs for years — Christians divorce as much as everyone else in America.
>
> But some scholars and family activists are questioning the oft-cited statistics, saying Christians who attend church regularly are more likely to remain wed.
>
> […]The various findings on religion and divorce hinge on what kind of Christians are being discussed.
>
> **Wright combed through the General Social Survey, a vast demographic study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and found that Christians, like adherents of other religions, have a divorce rate of about 42%. The rate among religiously unaffiliated Americans is 50%.**
>
> **When Wright examined the statistics on evangelicals, he found worship attendance has a big influence on the numbers. Six in 10 evangelicals who never attend had been divorced or separated, compared to just 38% of weekly attendees.**
>
> […]Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there's been some confusion.
>
> "You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees," he said.
>
> **Wilcox's analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.
>
> "There's something about being a nominal 'Christian' that is linked to a lot of negative outcomes when it comes to family life," Wilcox said.

Whenever I talk to atheists about marital satisfaction and marital stability, they always tell me these myths about how atheists divorce less, have more and better sex, and are happier in their marriages than religious people. But when I ask them for studies, they

don’t have any. It’s like they believe things without any evidence at all.

In addition, atheists have lower marriage rates than religious people. That’s not surprising, since marriage only works if both people are willing to give up on pleasure in the moment in order to build something together, over the long term.

Now clearly, there are going to be atheists with great marriages that never break up. But individual cases do not overturn peer-reviewed research studies. The fact is that marriage is an institution that is soaked through with moral values and moral obligations. If you think that morality is just arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place, as is logically consistent with atheism, then the odds are that you won’t be able to stay married for long – if you even get married at all.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

April 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.

20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University

> physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

April 26, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

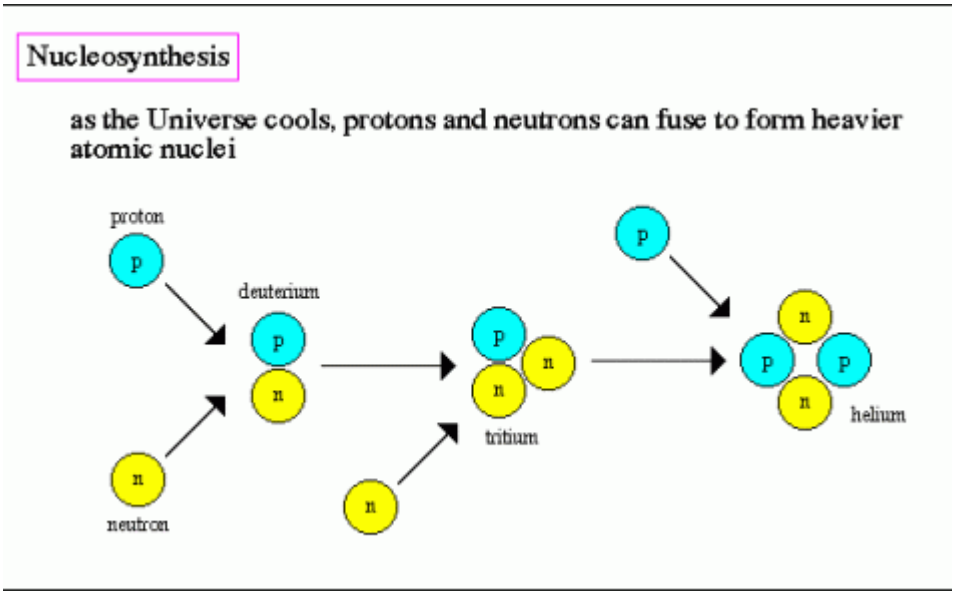

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major

> triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 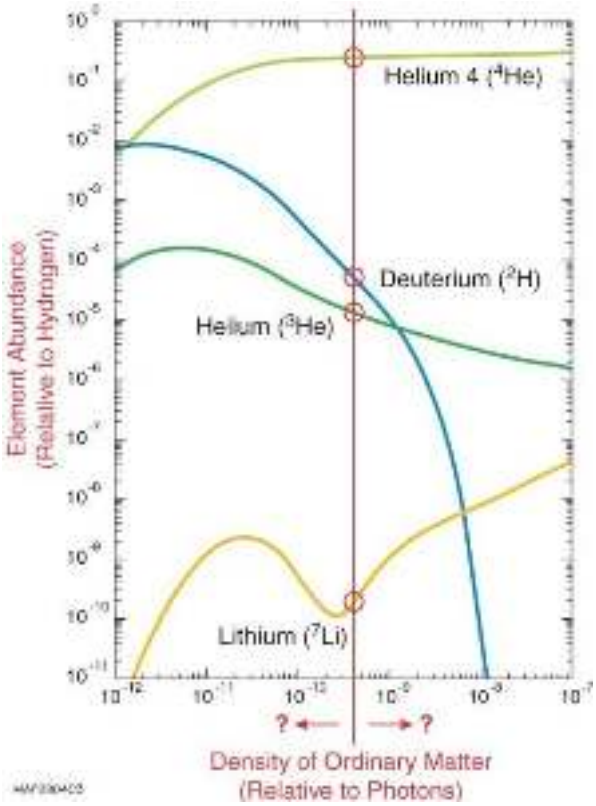
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-

> based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

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Fascist Canadian Justice Francesca Marzari overrules father's freedoms of thought and speech

April 27, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Honourable Madam Justice Francesca V. Marzari

This story of a transgender child in the left-leaning province of British Columbia shows what the political left would do in America if they were in power. In a previous post, I reported on how the public schools, the government-run health care system, and the government-run courts all conspired to give the child testosterone injections, over the father's objections.

Here is the latest from The Federalist:

> Last week, Justice Francesca Marzari of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, Canada, declared a father guilty of "family violence" against his 14-year-old daughter on the sole basis that he had engaged in "expressions of rejection of [her] gender identity." These "expressions" revolved entirely around his polite refusal to refer to his daughter as a boy in private, and his steady choice to affirm that she is a girl in public.
>
> […]Her father, Clark*, strongly objects to this treatment and immediately sought to reverse the decision in the BC Court of Appeal. Hoping to raise awareness of his case, Clark gave a number of interviews to media outlets, including The Federalist. In these interviews, he repeatedly referred to his daughter as a girl, stating to The Federalist that "she is a girl. Her DNA will not change through all these experiments that they do."
>
> While many might take this to be an honest statement of biological fact, Marzari quoted it as a prime example of Clark's "family violence of a public denial

> of [Maxine's] gender identity." Marzari convicted Clark of this violence, and issued a "protection order" preventing him from speaking to journalists or the public about his case.
>
> […]What Marzari found particularly egregious, however, was not Clark's private interactions with his daughter but his "continued willingness to provide interviews to the media … in which he identifies [Maxine] as female, uses a female name for [Maxine] … and expresses his opposition to the therapies [Maxine] has chosen." According to the court, this willingness placed Maxine at "a significant risk of harm."
>
> […]Marzari argued that the "people and organizations" to whom Clark granted interviews had shown themselves "fundamentally opposed" to transgender ideology, yet Clark "continued to support the media organizations posting his commentary with additional interviews." This kind of attitude was, in Marzari's view, justification for enjoining Clark from sharing any information with journalists—or with practically anyone outside his legal team—about his daughter's "sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical health, medical status or therapies."
>
> The court also emphasized that Clark must not allow relevant documents (petitions, affidavits, letters, court orders, etc.) to come into the hands of third parties not "authorized by order of this court," or with "written consent" from his daughter.

If father refers to his daughter as female again, then he will be arrested!

Excerpt:

> At about the same time that story was published, the Supreme Court issued an additional, more heavy-handed "protection order" from the same ruling. The three-page document declares that the father, Clark*, will henceforth be subject to arrest, immediately and "without warrant" if any police officer has "reasonable" grounds to believe that he has in any way referred to his daughter as a girl in public or in private.
>
> The new order further stipulated not only that Clark must not discuss his daughter's sex or gender identity in public, but also that he cannot share court documents describing his own gag order. On the one hand, this demand may seem ironic, since it covers a publicly available court ruling. On the other hand, the injunction is so broad that it naturally includes the very document upon which it is written and that document–with its threats of immediate arrest without warrant–has not, as of yet, been made available on the court's website.

So you have an anti-science judge, who is paid by the tax dollars of this father, overruling him as the biological father, and imposing her own far-left opinions as law. Why would any moral Christian man marry and start a family in Canada, when immoral far-left atheist leftists can take his money for their salary, and then overrule his basic human

rights and parental authority? No free man would live in a country that treats him like a slave. Unfortunately, men are treated like slaves in Canada. The only solution is to get out.

It's not surprising that the courts would censor him from speaking to the news media. In Canada, the government is run by radical secular leftists, who see any speech critical of the secular left agenda as potential violence. So, for decades in Canada, the government and the courts have issued gag orders on pro-life activists, and they even imprison those who speak out against abortion and same-sex marriage. Nurses and doctors who expose abortion extremism and infanticide are regularly censored b the government and the courts, for example. There is nothing like the first amendment in Canada. On the contrary. The progressives in government have made "offensive speech" a criminal offense.

More:

> While the main thrust of Marzari's ruling focused on Clark's public statements, Marzari also ordered that Clark be enjoined from "exposing" Maxine to any materials that might "question whether [her] gender identity is real or the treatments [she] seeks are in [her] best interests."

Well, enough of that. Let's talk about the legal system in Canada.

Although the university system is funded in part by pro-life and pro-marriage taxpayers through mandatory taxes, the law schools are effectively closed to Christians or conservatives. If any manage to get through law school, then they are barred from practicing law. And of course it's impossible for anyone right of center to be appointed to a government position on the courts, because of discrimination and bias.

There is no free speech or freedom of thought in Canada

This article about religious liberty in Canada is from Vancouver Sun.

Excerpt:

> Ontario's top court has dismissed an appeal from a private Christian university that forbids sexual intimacy outside heterosexual marriage, denying its proposed law school accreditation in the province.

The key point about the code of conduct is that it doesn't discriminate against any particular group, e.g. – LGBT. It also forbids excessive drinking and premarital sex by heterosexuals:

> **It includes requiring students to abstain from gossip, obscene language, prejudice, harassment, lying, cheating, stealing, pornography, drunkenness and sexual intimacy "that violates the sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman."**

Now read this next part carefully. Although there was no legal support for denying a

Christian university religious liberty and freedom of association, there was the hurt feelings of the LGBTQ community:

> **“The part of TWU’s Community Covenant in issue in this appeal is deeply discriminatory to the LGBTQ community, and it hurts,” the appeal court ruling said. “The LSUC’s decision not to accredit TWU was indeed a reasonable conclusion.”**

In Canada “it hurts” means the end of human rights like religious liberty and freedom of association. Why? Because the Christian community in Canada has – for decades – voted to increase the size of government at the expense of liberty, in order to get free stuff. It doesn’t matter if the Christians who wanted a Christian university are hurt. Or that the Christian students at TWU are hurt. Only the hurt of the LGBT community matters, and their hurt changes laws, criminalizes dissent and annihilates natural rights. There are no such things as freedom of religion and freedom of conscience in Canada. There never was free speech, either. Anything that might hurt the feelings of left-wing groups has to be made criminal.

I’ll put this as plainly as anyone can: Canadian “Christians” have been voting to transfer wealth and power to a big secular government for years. They wanted government to cover health care, and now the government thinks that health care is providing free sex changes, free IVF and free abortions. Canadian “Christians” wanted their 30 pieces of silver more than they wanted the freedom to act as if the Bible was true in public. It turns out that the more wealth and power that you transfer to a secular leftist government, the more likely they are to trample all over the basic human rights of anyone who disagrees with their ideology.

This sort of thing happens all the time in Canada. Remember the case where another female judge overruled a biological father who grounded his daughter for sending nude pictures of herself using her father’s computer? This is normal in Canada, where biological fathers are competent enough to pay taxes, but not competent enough to parent their own children.

If any of this sounds unappealing to you, remember this at election time. The only way to stop the fascism of the secular left is to elect small-government conservatives who respect the basic human rights in our Constitution, such as the right to free speech and religious liberty. If you want to keep these rights, you will have to vote appropriately, and encourage others to vote appropriately.

Alexander Vilenkin: “All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning”

April 28, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve decided to explain why physicists believe that there was a creation event in this post. That is to say, I’ve decided to let famous cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin do it.

From Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Did the cosmos have a beginning? The Big Bang theory seems to suggest it did, but in recent decades, cosmologists have concocted elaborate theories – for example, an eternally inflating universe or a cyclic universe – which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos. Now it appears that the universe really had a beginning after all, even if it wasn’t necessarily the Big Bang.
>
> At a meeting of scientists – titled “State of the Universe” – convened last week at Cambridge University to honor Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday, cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University in Boston presented evidence that the universe is not eternal after all, leaving scientists at a loss to explain how the cosmos got started without a supernatural creator. The meeting was reported in *New Scientist* magazine (Why physicists can’t avoid a creation event, 11 January 2012).
>
> […]In his presentation, Professor Vilenkin discussed three theories which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos.

The three theories are chaotic inflationary model, the oscillating model and quantum gravity model. Regular readers will know that those have all been addressed in William Lane Craig’s peer-reviewed paper that evaluates alternatives to the standard Big Bang cosmology.

But let’s see what Vilenkin said.

More:

> One popular theory is eternal inflation. Most readers will be familiar with the theory of *inflation*, which says that the universe increased in volume by a factor of at least 10^78 in its very early stages (from 10^−36 seconds after the Big Bang to sometime between 10^−33 and 10^−32 seconds), before settling into the slower rate of expansion that we see today. The theory of *eternal inflation* goes further, and holds that the universe is constantly giving birth to smaller “bubble” universes within an ever-expanding multiverse. Each bubble universe undergoes its own initial period of inflation. In some versions of the theory, the bubbles go both backwards and forwards in time, allowing the possibility of an infinite past. Trouble is, the value of one particular cosmic

parameter rules out that possibility:

> But in 2003, a team including Vilenkin and Guth considered what eternal inflation would mean for the Hubble constant, which describes mathematically the expansion of the universe. They found that the equations didn't work (Physical Review Letters, DOI: 10.1103/physrevlett.90.151301). "You can't construct a space-time with this property," says Vilenkin. It turns out that the constant has a lower limit that prevents inflation in both time directions. "It can't possibly be eternal in the past," says Vilenkin. "There must be some kind of boundary."

A second option explored by Vilenkin was that of a cyclic universe, where the universe goes through an infinite series of big bangs and crunches, with no specific beginning. It was even claimed that a cyclic universe could explain the low observed value of the cosmological constant. But as Vilenkin found, there's a problem if you look at the *disorder* in the universe:

> Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists – nothing like the one we see around us.
>
> One way around that is to propose that the universe just gets bigger with every cycle. Then the amount of disorder per volume doesn't increase, so needn't reach the maximum. But Vilenkin found that this scenario falls prey to the same mathematical argument as eternal inflation: if your universe keeps getting bigger, it must have started somewhere.

However, Vilenkin's options were not exhausted yet. There was another possibility: that the universe had sprung from an eternal cosmic egg:

> Vilenkin's final strike is an attack on a third, lesser-known proposal that the cosmos existed eternally in a static state called the cosmic egg. This finally "cracked" to create the big bang, leading to the expanding universe we see today. Late last year Vilenkin and graduate student Audrey Mithani showed that the egg could not have existed forever after all, as quantum instabilities would force it to collapse after a finite amount of time (arxiv.org/abs/1110.4096). If it cracked instead, leading to the big bang, then this must have happened before it collapsed – and therefore also after a finite amount of time.
>
> "This is also not a good candidate for a beginningless universe," Vilenkin concludes.

> So at the end of the day, what is Vilenkin's verdict?
>
> > "All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

This is consistent with the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin Theorem, which I blogged about before, and which William Lane Craig leveraged to his advantage in his debate with Peter Millican.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past. *No one* denies the expansion of space in our universe, and so we are left with a cosmic beginning. Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

Conclusion

If the universe came into being out of nothing, which seems to be the case from science, then the universe has a cause. Things do not pop into being, uncaused, out of nothing. The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

Now, let's have a discussion about this science in our churches, and see if we can't train Christians to engage with non-Christians about the evidence so that everyone accepts what science tells us about the origin of the universe.

How long do people wait to be treated in a single-payer health care system?

April 29, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Instead of talking about single payer health care in the abstract ("wouldn't it be nice if health care were free?"), let's discuss a concrete case of a single payer health care system. Canada's health care system is a pure government-funded system. Canadian residents pay money into the system via taxation. And when they get sick, they go into a government-run hospital and ask for government-run health care. The idea of single payer health care makes a lot of politicians feel good, and it draws applause when they talk about it in the abstract. But forget the abstract. How well does it work in reality?

Here's an article from a Canadian health care policy expert, Sally C. Pipes.

She writes:

> The Canadian single-payer regime subjects thousands of patients to life-threatening delays for treatment.
>
> Our northern neighbors' wait times grow longer with each passing year. According to the Fraser Institute, a Canadian think tank, the typical patient in need of specialist treatment last year waited 21.2 weeks after referral from a general practitioner — a record high. In 1993, the median wait time was less than half that figure — 9.3 weeks.
>
> In British Columbia, the median wait is even longer — a grand total of 26.5 weeks from referral from a general practitioner to receipt of treatment from a specialist. That's more than half a year.
>
> Lengthy delays are a hallmark of single-payer. Demand for care is essentially limitless when someone else is paying the bill.
>
> But the provincial and federal governments in Canada don't have limitless resources. So they typically set a global budget for care. Doctors and hospitals can only provide so much care before their costs exceed their revenue from the government. And they can only afford to keep a limited amount of equipment operational, such as MRI machines or CT scanners.
>
> Demand for care inevitably outstrips supply. So the government has to establish wait lists.
>
> Long waits aren't merely inconvenient; they're dangerous. Consider the case of Walid Khalfallah, a British Columbian boy with severe scoliosis profiled by the Vancouver Sun in 2012. The Sun reported that he faced a three-year wait for spinal surgery, even though medical guidelines recommended a maximum wait of three months.
>
> Delays can even prove fatal. Long waits have contributed to the deaths of more than 44,000 Canadian women in the past two decades, according to a Fraser

> Institute study.
>
> Many patients would gladly pay extra to receive care more quickly. But British Columbian law makes it effectively impossible to do so.

You can read more about wait times in Canada in this report:

> The total wait time that patients face can be examined in two consecutive segments.
>
> From referral by a general practitioner to consultation with a specialist. The waiting time in this segment increased from 8.5 weeks in 2015 to 9.4 weeks this year. This wait time is 155% longer than in 1993, when it was 3.7 weeks. The shortest waits for specialist consultations are in Ontario (7.2 weeks) while the longest occur in New Brunswick (21.5 weeks).
>
> From the consultation with a specialist to the point at which the patient receives treatment. The waiting time in this segment increased from 9.8 weeks in 2015 to 10.6 weeks this year. This wait time is 88% longer than in 1993 when it was 5.6 weeks, and more than three weeks longer than what physicians consider to be clinically "reasonable". The shortest specialist-to-treatment waits are found in Saskatchewan (7.9 weeks), while the longest are in Nova Scotia (17.7 weeks).

You can read more about the cost of Canadian health care in this report. The average cost is about $13,000 per household per year.

The hardest thing to explain to Americans who are only familiar with private insurance is that if the government tells you no in a single-payer system, your only option is to take whatever money you have left (after being taxed for the single-payer system) and go outside the country. A lot of Canadian socialist politicians do exactly that, when they need reliable health care. Like Bernie Sanders, they say one thing to their naive followers, and do something else in their private lives.

So how good is American health care? Maybe Canadians are waiting in line because their health care is so much better than ours.

American health care

One of the best health care policy experts writing today is Avik Roy, who writes for Forbes magazine.

Here is a recent column, which I think is useful for helping us all get better at debating health care policy.

Excerpt:

> It's one of the most oft-repeated justifications for socialized medicine: Americans spend more money than other developed countries on health care, but don't live as long. If we would just hop on the European health-care bandwagon, we'd live longer and healthier lives. The only problem is it's not true.
>
> […]If you really want to measure health outcomes, the best way to do it is at the

> point of medical intervention. If you have a heart attack, how long do you live in the U.S. vs. another country? If you're diagnosed with breast cancer? In 2008, a group of investigators conducted a worldwide study of cancer survival rates, called CONCORD. They looked at 5-year survival rates for breast cancer, colon and rectal cancer, and prostate cancer. I compiled their data for the U.S., Canada, Australia, Japan, and western Europe. Guess who came out number one?

Here is the raw data:

5-Year Relative Survival Rates in Various Cancers, From the CONCORD Study (2008)

Country	Breast Women	Colorectal Men	Colorectal Women	Prostate	Average
United States	83.9%	59.1%	60.2%	91.9%	**73.8%**
Canada	82.5%	55.3%	58.9%	85.1%	**70.5%**
Australia	80.7%	56.7%	58.2%	77.4%	**68.3%**
Austria	74.9%	52.7%	55.1%	86.1%	**67.2%**
Germany	75.5%	50.1%	55.0%	76.4%	**64.3%**
Sweden	82.0%	52.8%	56.2%	66.0%	**64.3%**
Netherlands	77.6%	53.6%	55.1%	69.5%	**64.0%**
Iceland	79.0%	49.5%	54.0%	69.7%	**63.1%**
Japan	81.6%	61.1%	57.3%	50.4%	**62.6%**
Finland	80.2%	52.5%	54.0%	62.9%	**62.4%**
Italy	79.5%	50.7%	52.7%	65.4%	**62.1%**
Norway	76.3%	51.1%	55.3%	63.0%	**61.4%**
Spain	77.7%	52.5%	54.7%	60.5%	**61.4%**
Ireland	69.6%	46.0%	50.0%	62.8%	**57.1%**
Portugal	72.2%	46.5%	44.7%	47.7%	**52.8%**
UK	69.7%	42.3%	44.7%	51.1%	**52.0%**
Denmark	73.6%	44.2%	47.7%	38.4%	**51.0%**
Switzerland	76.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Health care outcomes by country and type of treatment
Click here to see the larger graph.

So, what explains this?

The article continues:

> Another point worth making is that people die for other reasons than health. For example, people die because of car accidents and violent crime. A few years back, Robert Ohsfeldt of Texas A&M and John Schneider of the University of Iowa asked the obvious question: what happens if you remove deaths from fatal injuries from the life expectancy tables? Among the 29 members of the OECD, the U.S. vaults from 19th place to…you guessed it…first. Japan, on the same adjustment, drops from first to ninth.
>
> It's great that the Japanese eat more sushi than we do, and that they settle their arguments more peaceably. But these things don't have anything to do with socialized medicine.
>
> Finally, U.S. life-expectancy statistics are skewed by the fact that the U.S. doesn't have one health-care system, but three: Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance. (A fourth, the Obamacare exchanges, is supposed to go into effect in 2014.) As I have noted in the past, health outcomes for those on government-sponsored insurance are worse than for those on private insurance.
>
> To my knowledge, no one has attempted to segregate U.S. life-expectancy figures by insurance status. But based on the data we have, it's highly likely that those on private insurance have the best life expectancy, with Medicare patients

> in the middle, and the uninsured and Medicaid at the bottom.

If we're going to discuss health care, then let's discuss facts. We shouldn't be picking a health care system from the campaign speeches of politicians who tell us that we can keep our doctor, and keep our health plan, and our premiums will go down. We tried electing a charismatic deceiver in 2008, and it didn't work out. We lost our doctors, lost our health plans, and our premiums went up enormously. We can do better than single-payer health care. We can do better than socialism.

Study: couples that delay sexual activity experience higher quality relationships

April 30, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Relationship stability, quality, communication, satisfaction
From Family Studies, news about TWO new studies.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> [T]wo recently published studies call into question the validity of testing sexual chemistry early in dating.
>
> My colleagues and I published the first study a few years ago in the American Psychological Association's *Journal of Family Psychology*. This study involved a national sample of 2,035 married individuals who participated in the popular online couple assessment survey called "RELATE." **We found that the longer a dating couple waits to have sex, the better their relationship is after marriage. In fact, couples who wait until marriage to have sex report higher relationship satisfaction (20% higher), better communication patterns (12% better), less consideration of divorce (22% lower), and better sexual quality (15% better) than those who started having sex early in their dating (see Figure 2). For couples in between—those that became sexually involved later in their dating, but prior to marriage—the benefits were about half as strong.**
>
> […]These patterns were statistically significant even when controlling for a variety of other variables such as respondents' number of prior sexual partners, education levels, religiosity, and relationship length.
>
> **The second study, by Sharon Sassler and her colleagues at Cornell University, also found that rapid sexual involvement has adverse long-term implications for relationship quality.** Using data from the Marital and Relationship Survey, which provides information on nearly 600 low- to moderate-income couples living with minor children, their study examined the tempo of sexual intimacy and subsequent relationship quality in a sample of married and

> cohabiting men and women. Their analyses also suggest that delaying sexual involvement is associated with higher relationship quality across several dimensions.
>
> They discovered that the negative association between sexual timing and relationship quality is largely driven by a link between early sex and cohabitation. Specifically, sexual involvement early in a romantic relationship is associated with an increased likelihood of moving more quickly into living together, which in turn is associated with lower relationship quality. This finding supports Norval Glenn's hypothesis that sexual involvement may lead to unhealthy emotional entanglements that make ending a bad relationship difficult. As Sassler and her colleagues concluded, "Adequate time is required for romantic relationships to develop in a healthy way. In contrast, relationships that move too quickly, without adequate discussion of the goals and long-term desires of each partner, may be insufficiently committed and therefore result in relationship distress, especially if one partner is more committed than the other" (p. 710).

The rest of the post talks about two reasons why this works: improved partner selection and prioritizing communication and commitment. Improved partner selection occurs because you haven't committed too much too soon (sexually) and you have time to let things play out to see if you really fit with the other person. And if you take sex off the table, then you have to use other means in order to build emotional intimacy – communication, service, support, etc.

That's two studies, and there's a third. Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail about a new study showing the importance of chastity for relationship quality and stability.

Excerpt:

> New couples who jump into bed together on the first date do not last as long in relationships as those who wait a new study has revealed.
>
> Using a sample of almost 11,000 unmarried people, Brigham Young University discovered a direct correlation between the length and strength of a partnership and the amount of time they took to have first have sex.
>
> **The study showed that those who waited to initiate sexual intimacy were found to have longer and more positive outcomes in their relationships while those who couldn't help themselves reported that their dalliances struggled to last more than two years.**
>
> 'Results suggested that waiting to initiate sexual intimacy in unmarried relationships was generally associated with positive outcomes,' said the report authored published by the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health.
>
> 'This effect was strongly moderated by relationship length, with individuals who reported early sexual initiation reporting increasingly lower outcomes in

> relationships of longer than two years.'
>
> The study examined four sexual-timing patterns: Having sex prior to dating, initiating sex on the first date or shortly after, having sex after a few weeks of dating, and sexual abstinence.
>
> Each one of these fields yielded different results in relationship satisfaction, stability and communication in dating situations.

Here's another recent study that shows that if a woman has more than her husband as a premarital sex partner, her risk of divorce increases.

His findings:

> Using nationally representative data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, I estimate the association between intimate premarital relationships (premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) and subsequent marital dissolution. I extend previous research by considering relationship histories pertaining to both premarital sex and premarital cohabitation. I find that premarital sex or premarital cohabitation that is limited to a woman's husband is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption.**However, women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship have an increased risk of marital dissolution.**

Here's another study that makes it even more clear.

Findings:

> Data from the 1988 US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) were utilized to assess the impact of premarital sexual activity on subsequent marital stability. **Among white NSFG subjects first married in 1965-85, virgin brides were significantly less to have become separated or divorced (25%) than women who had not been virgins at marriage (35%).**
>
> **[…]The lower risk of divorce on the part of white women with no premarital sexual experience persisted even after numerous intervening and background variables were controlled.**

If you're going to talk to a young person about sex, it's a good idea to use these studies to explain what you lose by having sex too early in the relationship. Although they may respond with anecdotes to refute studies, studies are important because they represent LOTS of data points, not just one or two cherry-picked cases. My view on all this is the Bible's view – no sex before marriage. But when talking to people about this issue, I find it useful to have evidence ready in order to be convincing in every way possible.

Previously, I blogged on studies that showed that the number of premarital sex partners increases unhappiness in the marriage, which raises the risk of divorce. Read and be wise about sexuality!

Before socialists in Venezuela could run over protesters, they had to ban gun ownership

May 1, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Three socialist fools: Barack Obama, Nicolas Maduro, Hugo Chavez

I watched a very sad video from Venezuela, where the socialists who ran the country into the ground are trying to hold onto power by using violence against the people. I feel that it is important for people who were cheering for socialism in Venezuela to see for themselves what happens after socialists take power.

Here is the video:

How can the government have such little respect for the people that they were elected to serve? Answer: they can do that because they don't think that the people can do anything about it.

Fox News explains:

> As Venezuela continues to crumble under the socialist dictatorship of President Nicolas Maduro, some are expressing words of warning – and resentment – against a six-year-old gun control bill that stripped citizens of their weapons.
>
> "Guns would have served as a vital pillar to remaining a free people, or at least able to put up a fight," Javier Vanegas, 28, a Venezuelan teacher of English now exiled in Ecuador, told Fox News. "The government security forces, at the beginning of this debacle, knew they had no real opposition to their force. Once things were this bad, it was a clear declaration of war against an unarmed population."
>
> Under the direction of then-President Hugo Chavez, the Venezuelan National Assembly in 2012 enacted the "Control of Arms, Munitions and Disarmament Law," with the explicit aim to "disarm all citizens." The law took effect in 2013, with only minimal pushback from some pro-democracy opposition figures, banned the legal commercial sale of guns and munitions to all – except

> government entities.
>
> Chavez initially ran a months-long amnesty program encouraging Venezuelans to trade their arms for electrical goods. That year, there were only 37 recorded voluntary gun surrenders, while the majority of seizures – more than 12,500 – were by force.
>
> In 2014, with Nicolás Maduro at the helm following Chavez's death but carrying through his socialist "Chavista" policies, the government invested more than $47 million enforcing the gun ban – which has since included grandiose displays of public weapons demolitions in the town square.
>
> […]The punishment for illicit carrying or selling a weapon now is 20 years behind bars.

I have this big quote there so that people can sort of get the picture of how socialists work. The socialists never come right out and say that they're going to confiscate all the guns so they can run you over with an armored vehicle. They start with "gun surrender" programs, where people turn in their guns for nothing. Then they do "gun buyback" programs, where they give you back some of the money that you paid them in taxes in order to get your guns. It's only later when they feel safe that they go door to door with armed men and confiscare the rest of the guns. At that point, there is nothing that you can do to them when they seize all the water, food, electricity, etc. for themselves. And that's what happened in Venezuela: the rich socialist politicians have everything, the people who voted for them have nothing.

Ben Shapiro wrote about the how the socialists destroyed the Venezuelan economy in The Daily Wire from 2017.

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, Maduro dragged opposition leaders Leopoldo Lopez and Antonio Ledezma off to prison; on Sunday, the dictatorship killed some ten people during election riots.
>
> […]Maduro is, of course, the successor to thug dictator Hugo Chavez, who seized power in January 1999 through election, and then proceeded to nationalize foreign oil projects, socialize virtually every other industry, institute price and wage controls, ratchet up tariffs, and entirely destroy the economy of one of the most natural-resources-blessed countries on the planet. Chavez took office with promises to end income inequality in the country. Instead, his brutish regime exacerbated poverty to the point of crisis – but at least they minimized income inequality! Just for good measure, Chavez also essentially destroyed the free press and made employment in key industries contingent on loyalty to his regime.
>
> The consequences: no bread, no sugar, no toilet paper, ordinary citizens hunting dogs in the streets and waiting in line outside bakers not for bread, but for the ability to comb through the garbage for crumbs. Hyperinflation has set in:

> according to CNBC, “On Friday, $1 equaled 10,389 bolivars. Earlier this week, on Monday, it was worth 8,820 bolivars. At the start of this year, $1 equaled 3,164 bolivars, according to the unofficial exchange rate calculated by dolartoday.com, which millions of Venezuelans use.” Venezuelan hospitals lack gloves, soap, water, paper. Electrical blackouts aren’t infrequent. Caracas has become the most violent city in the Western hemisphere.

And what did all this nationalizing of industry and redistribution of wealth from productive people to non-productive people achieve?

The Daily Wire reports:

> A Fox News report from journalist Hollie McKay exposed the socialism-induced horror show on the trail from Venezuela to neighboring Colombia. “Thousands upon thousands of Venezuelans pour into Colombia over the crowd cross-country bridge, their faces gaunt, carrying little more than a backpack. Rail-thin women cradle their tiny babies, and beg along the trash-strewn gutters. Teens hawk everything from cigarettes to sweets and water for small change,” McKay reports.
>
> Malnourished girls and women are selling anything they can, including their bodies, breast milk, and hair, to survive, reports McKay. Females as young as 14 are receiving a reported seven dollars on average “per service”; a woman’s hair might be sold in exchange for a measly $10-30.
>
> And as desperate Venezuelans hand over their papers and identification to “pimp types,” sex trafficking has become the norm. Men are selling themselves, too: straight men, some being trafficked, are performing gay sex acts in exchange for money.
>
> […]Last year, The Daily Beast reported that starving Venezuelans had resorted to killing pets and zoo animals for food while dictator Nicolas Maduro and his fellow chubby elites maintained access to everything they need.
>
> […]Back in Venezuela, suicide is up, particularly with children and teens, health care is basically nonexistent since an estimated 55% of the nation’s medical professionals have fled the country, and at least 70% of the population are estimated to be suffering from acute malnutrition and starvation.

Venezuela elected a socialist who had zero achievements at pleasing customers. He had no experience helping people to get jobs. He had no demonstrated ability at producing more doctors, more nurses, etc. All he had was the promise that he would take from the wealthy, and give to the poor. And now we know the result of that rhetoric for the stupid, economically-illiterate people who voted for appearances, words and feelings, instead of concrete achievements.

If you vote because someone makes you feel that your own problems are someone else’s fault, you will lose.

Related posts

- Venezuela solves hunger by banning bread lines, and solves crime by banning self-defense
- And now slavery: Venezuela's socialist policies lead to forced labor camps
- Do young Americans know how well socialism is working in Venezuela?
- How well are Democrat Party economic policies working out in Venezuela?
- How well does socialism work in countries and cities that adopt it?
- How well are Democrat economic policies working in Venezuela and Argentina?
- Marco Rubio's speech exposing the horrors of socialism in Cuba and Venezuela
- Obama silent as Venezuelan government violently represses democratic opposition
- How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?
- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia's economy to grow? What causes Venezuela's economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama's buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank

The psychological motivation of those who embrace postmodernism

May 2, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

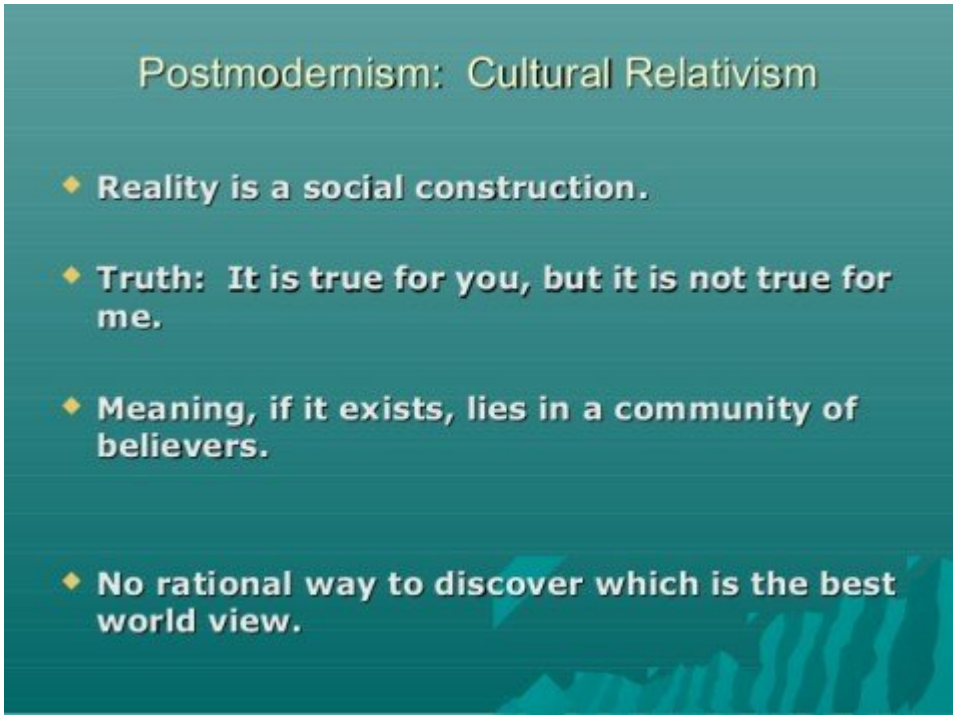

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian? Not for long

Famous analytical philosopher John Searle has written a book "Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World", explaining what's factually wrong with postmodernism. In the introduction, he explains what postmodernism is, and what motivates people to accept postmodernism.

He writes:

> […][W]hen we act or think or talk in the following sorts of ways we take a lot for granted: when we hammer a nail, or order a takeout meal from a restaurant, or conduct a lab experiment, or wonder where to go on vacation, we take the following for granted: there exists a real world that is totally independent of human beings and of what they think or say about it, and statements about objects and states of affairs in that world are true or false depending on whether things in the world really are the way we say they are. So, for example, if in pondering my vacation plans I wonder whether Greece is hotter in the summer than Italy, I simply take it for granted that there exists a real world containing places like Greece and Italy and that they have various temperatures. **Furthermore, if I read in a travel book that the average summer temperature in Greece is hotter than in Italy, I know that what the book says will be true if and only if it really is hotter on average in the summer in Greece than in Italy. This is because I take it for granted that such statements are true only if there is something independent of the**

> **statement in virtue of which, or because of which, it is true.**
>
> […]These two Background presuppositions have long histories and various famous names. The first, that there is a real world existing independently of us, I like to call "external realism." "Realism," because it asserts the existence of the real world, and "external" to distinguish it from other sorts of realism-for example, realism about mathematical objects (mathematical realism) or realism about ethical facts (ethical realism). The second view, that a statement is true if things in the world are the way the statement says they are, and false otherwise, is called "the correspondence theory of truth." This theory comes in a lot of different versions, but the basic idea is that statements are true if they correspond to, or describe, or fit, how things really are in the world, and false if they do not.

The "correspondence theory of truth" is the view of truth assumed in books of the Bible whose genre is such that that they were intended by the authors to be taken *literally*, (with allowances for symbolism, figures of speech, metaphors, hyperbole, etc.).

But what about the postmodernists, who seek to deny the objectivity of external reality?

More Searle:

> Thinkers who wish to deny the correspondence theory of truth or the referential theory of thought and language typically find it embarrassing to have to concede external realism. Often they would rather not talk about it at all, or they have some more or less subtle reason for rejecting it. In fact, very few thinkers come right out and say that there is no such thing as a real world existing absolutely, objectively, and totally independently of us. Some do. Some come right out and say that the so-called real world is a "social construct."

What is behind the denial of objective reality, and statements about external reality that are warranted by evidence?

> It is not easy to get a fix on what drives contemporary antirealism, but if we had to pick out a thread that runs through the wide variety of arguments, it would be what is sometimes called "perspectivism." Perspectivism is the idea that our knowledge of reality is never "unmediated," that it is always mediated by a point of view, by a particular set of predilections, or, worse yet by sinister political motives, such as an allegiance to a political group or ideology. And because we can never have unmediated knowledge of the world, then perhaps there is no real world, or perhaps it is useless to even talk about it, or perhaps it is not even interesting.

Searle is going to refute anti-realism in the rest of the book, but here is his guess at what is motivating the anti-realists:

> > **I have to confess, however, that I think there is a much deeper**

> > **reason for the persistent appeal of all forms of antirealism, and this has become obvious in the twentieth century: it satisfies a basic urge to power. It just seems too disgusting, somehow, that we should have to be at the mercy of the "real world." It seems too awful that our representations should have to be answerable to anything but us. This is why people who hold contemporary versions of antirealism and reject the correspondence theory of truth typically sneer at the opposing view.**
>
> […]I don't think it is the argument that is actually driving the impulse to deny realism. I think that as a matter of contemporary cultural and intellectual history, the attacks on realism are not driven by arguments, because the arguments are more or less obviously feeble, for reasons I will explain in detail in a moment. **Rather, as I suggested earlier, the motivation for denying realism is a kind of will to power, and it manifests itself in a number of ways. In universities, most notably in various humanities disciplines, it is assumed that, if there is no real world, then science is on the same footing as the humanities. They both deal with social constructs, not with independent realities. From this assumption, forms of postmodernism, deconstruction, and so on, are easily developed, having been completely turned loose from the tiresome moorings and constraints of having to confront the real world. If the real world is just an invention-a social construct designed to oppress the marginalized elements of society-then let's get rid of the real world and construct the world we want. That, I think, is the real driving psychological force behind antirealism at the end of the twentieth century.**

Now, I'll go one step further than Searle.

People, from the Fall, have had the desire to step into the place of God. It's true that we creatures exist in a universe created and designed by God. But, there is a way to work around the fact that God made the universe and the laws that the universe runs on, including logic, mathematics and natural laws. And that way is to *deny logic, mathematics and natural laws.* Postmodernists simply deny that there is any way to construct rational arguments and support the premises with evidence from the real world. That way, they imagine, they are free to escape a God-designed world, including a God-designed specification for how they ought to live. The postmoderns deny *the reliable methods of knowing about the God-created reality because logic and evidence can be used to point to God's existence, God's character, and God's actions in history.*

And that's why there is this effort to make reality "optional" and perspectival. Everyone can be their own God, and escape any accountability to the real God – the God who is easily discovered through the use of logic and evidence. I believe that this is also behind the rise of atheists, who feign allegiance to logic and science, but then express "skepticism" about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, objective

morality, the minimal facts concerning the historical Jesus, and other undeniables.

New York Times finally admits FBI spied on Trump campaign during Obama administration

May 3, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The only collusion and treason was committed by Democrats

Well, now that the 2018 mid-terms are over, the mainstream media thinks it's OK to admit that the whole Trump-Russia collusion . The latest admission is from the radically leftist New York Times, which published two ACTUAL Nazi cartoons last week. I guessed they were sorry, because on Thursday, they published a story about how the Obama administration spied on Trump's campaign.

The Federalist reports on the New York Times story:

> Following months of angry claims by journalists and Democratic operatives that the Obama administration never spied on Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, The New York Times admitted Thursday that multiple overseas intelligence assets were deployed against associates of the Republican nominee. It is not the first time the Times has revealed widespread spying operations against the campaign.
>
> In addition to noting that long-time informant Stefan Halper was tasked with collecting intelligence on the Trump campaign, the Times story details how a woman was sent overseas under a fake name and occupation to oversee the spy operation. The woman's real name is not mentioned in the article, though the Times says she went by "Azra Turk" and has a relationship with an unidentified federal intelligence agency.

> […]he NYT also admits in its article that the aggressive and unprecedented action of deploying spies and luring American targets overseas to collect intelligence on a rival political campaign "yielded no fruitful information." It is not clear whether information collected by Halper and "Turk" was used to justify formal spy warrants against any U.S. citizens.

The spies didn't get anything on Trump, because there was nothing to get. But that doesn't change the fact that American law enforcement spied on American citizens, completely outside of any criminal investigation.

So why is the New York Times reporting on this now?

More:

> The leak that fueled the Thursday NYT bombshell was likely placed in anticipation of the formal release of even more damaging information about how U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies potentially abused their authority to punish the government's political enemies. The article specifically references the forthcoming release of an extensive inspector general review of potential improprieties at the Department of Justice (DOJ).
>
> By leaking the information to the friendliest of friendly reporters, including Michael Schmidt at the Times, the individuals who ran the anti-Trump operation are likely hoping to spin the news in their favor.

Right now, Attorney General Barr is promising to launch the real investigation – the investigation that matters. That is, the investigation in to the attempted coup by Democrats within the Obama administration and their allies in the mainstream media.

Mollie writes:

> So long as anti-Trump operatives controlled the FBI and DOJ, this type of leaking and concealing of information worked well. Most major media outlets have chosen to ignore the spying scandal in favor of non-stop anti-Trump advocacy. That left actual fact-finding and truth-seeking to a small group of media outlets and a handful of elected lawmakers tasked with oversight of the nation's spy agencies.

By the way, there was also a news story on Thursday about how the Democrat Party colluded with Ukraine to try to win the 2016 election.

Finally, some real collusion

Fox News reports on a story from the leftist The Hill:

> Ukraine's embassy wrote that a Democratic National Committee (DNC) insider reached out in 2016 seeking dirt on President Trump's team, according to a bombshell new reportThursday that further fueled Republican allegations that Democrats were the ones improperly colluding with foreign agents during the

> campaign.
>
> Ambassador Valeriy Chaly said DNC contractor Alexandra Chalupa pushed for Ukraine's then-President Petro Poroshenko to mention Paul Manafort's ties to Ukraine publicly during a visit to the U.S., and sought detailed financial information on his dealings in the country, The Hill reported. At the time, Manafort was Trump's campaign chairman.
>
> […]Federal Election Commission (FEC) records confirm that Chalupa's firm provided various services to the DNC in 2016, and that the DNC paid Chalupa more than $412,000 from 2004 to 2016.
>
> […]Ukrainian law enforcement officials said earlier this month they had a slew of evidence of collusion and wrongdoing by Democrats and were trying to share the information with U.S. officials in the Justice Department.

Do you remember what was Trump accused of? He was accused of trying to get opposition research from a foreign country in order to damage an opponent's election campaign. And now we find out from this report that the Democrat National Committee did EXACTLY that. Will we now have a two-year investigation with a special counsel and non-stop media coverage for that? It seems only fair that we do, don't you think? This is actual collusion here.

This two-year investigation created by Hillary's refusal to accept defeat basically destroyed Republican candidates in the 2018 mid-terms. We lost so many races because the media poisoned the American voters against us with their fake news stories. I want to see something proportional done to the Democrats so that everyone is crystal clear about what really happened.

The seven fatal flaws of moral relativism

May 4, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Moral relativism is the view that moral values and moral duties do not exist in reality, but only exist as opinions in people's minds. When you ask a moral relativist where the belief that stealing is wrong comes from, he may tell you that it is his opinion, or that it is the opinion of most people in his society. But he cannot tell you that stealing is wrong independent of what people think, because morality (on moral relativism) is just personal preference.

So what's wrong with it?

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Salvo magazine web site.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in

> silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like “It’s wrong to push your own morality on others”. This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don’t let them make any moral statements without asking them first to ground morality on their worldview. And that’s because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can’t answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people’s personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It’s all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be “it depends”. It depends on the person who is speaking because it’s a subjective claim, not an objective claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

So, practically speaking, everyone has to decide whether right and wrong are real – objectively real. If they are objectively real, that means that there is a right way for human beings to behave, and a wrong way for human beings to behave. It means that things that are really objectively wrong like rape are wrong for all times and all places, regardless of what individuals and societies might think of it. In order to rationally ground that kind of morality, you have to have a foundation for it – a cosmic Designer who decides for all times and places what the conduct of his creatures ought to be. And then our moral duties are duties that are owed to this Designer. It is like playing football or playing a boardgame – the person who invents the game decides the rules. But if there is no designer of the game, then there are no rules.

Without a designer of the universe, the question of how we ought to act is decided by people in different times and different places. It’s arbitrary and variable, and therefore it doesn’t do the job of prescribing behavior authoritatively. It’s very important not to get involved in any serious endeavor with another person or persons if they don’t have a sense of right and wrong being absolute and fixed. A belief in objective moral values is a necessary pre-requisite for integrity.

Facebook bans Christian apologist David Wood for posting the death threats he received

May 5, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Facebook, Google, Youtube, Twitter purging conservative speech (Source: The Stream)

I got banned from Facebook for 3 days this past week, for a post that I shared on my personal account to my 45 friends. I'll tell you what I posted below, but more important than me is famous Christian apologist David Wood. He received several suspensions from Facebook for posting threats he received, and for being critical of N*zism. Finally, he just quit entirely.

Here is his video on YouTube, which he explains what got him banned four times in a row:

He shows the five things in particular:

- he posted a threat from someone who wanted to r*pe his mother in front of him
- he posted a historical photo showing Hitl*r with his ideological allies
- he posted another threat from someone who wanted to r*pe his wife in front of him
- he posted another threat from someone who wanted to "chop chop chop" his head off
- he posted another historical photo of someone dissenting from N*zism

So what can we infer from this? Well, if Facebook was angry at the people who posted the r*pe threats and the death threats, then they would have taken on those people. But Facebook censored David, the victim of those threats, instead. And similarly with the shaming of N*zis. If they disagreed with the N*zis, they could have let David's posts stay. They decided to censor David instead. I think it's pretty clear what that means.

By the way, if you would like to learn more about the people who Facebook favors over David Wood, this excellent article from The Daily Caller will prove helpful.

My 3-day suspension from Facebook

I also got a 3-day suspension from Facebook last week, for posting a video of several men rescuing a dog who was stuck in some flowing water and in danger of drowning. I originally posted it on Twitter, and I made two points above the video. First, I explained why I thought that it was wrong for everyone to shame all men for t*xic masculinity, when clearly some men were using their masculinity for good. Second, I said that the women who found men to be t*xic should remember that they often choose those men. I then took a screenshot of the tweet, and posted it on my *personal account* on Facebook, where ONLY my 45 close friends who know me in real life could see it. This was not posted to the blog's public page, but to my personal page, to an audience of 45 people.

Here's the video:

You can see why Facebook would ban this, it makes masculinity look good. And that's against Facebook's Communisty Standards. And you can't tell women who complain about men to just avoid the ones who are dangerous, because that would imply that women have some responsibility to make wise choices. I think they do, but Facebook disagrees with me, and thinks I should be banned.

Well, I asked around, and I found that no one had complained about the post. But apparently, Facebook found that it opposed their "Communisty Standards", so I got banned anyway.

Going forward

So what did I learn from this? Well, I learned to keep voting Republican, because they're the only ones who seem to be concerned with censorship by the big social media companies. And that's probably because the censorship by fascist companies like Facebook always seems to go in one direction – against Christians, against conservatives.

I think anyone who wants to make a difference on this misandry issue should consider sharing news stories, videos, etc. that put good men in a positive light. It's important to intentionally counteract the cesspool of the secular left by promoting good content. Anything that shows a happy marriage, good use of legal firearms for self-defense, a family with a lot of children, homeschooling children, long-lasting marriage, chastity, etc. is bad for the secular left, and therefore bad for Facebook. Post all the good stuff you can.

By the way, you can find me here on MeWe and Minds, if you want to connect with me there. Those platforms don't censor Christians or conservatives.

New study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others

May 6, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

TO DENY THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL IS TO MAKE MORALITY IMPOSSIBLE

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE

Is it possible to choose to be moral if we are machines made out of meat?
A while back I finished reading "God's Crime Scene", the new book by J. Warner Wallace. I wanted to post something about some studies he mentioned in Chapter 6, on free will. This is one of the places where he found evidence in a surprising area.

Wallace says that free will makes more sense if theism is true, because we have non-material souls that interact with our bodies, but are not causally determined by them. On atheism, only matter exists, and you can't get free will (or consciousness) from matter. So atheists like Sam Harris and Alex Rosenberg, for example, deny free will, because they are materialists and atheists.

Anyway, here's what he writes on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward

> others." Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: "It seems that not only do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it."" The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here's the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons' belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you're an atheist, then you are a physical object. And like every other physical object in the universe, your behavior is determined by genetic programming (if you're alive) and external inputs. Material objects do not have the ability to make free choices, including moral choices.

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists

can’t ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that’s what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject “decides” to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) “Decisions” made like that aren’t conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we’ve made them, then we don’t have free will in any meaningful sense.

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin’s views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That’s the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

(Source)

If you don’t have free will, then you can’t make moral choices, and you can’t be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality. Can you imagine trying to get into any sort of enterprise with someone who has this view of moral choices? A marriage, or a business arrangement, etc? It would be crazy to expect them to behave morally, when they don’t even think that moral choices is possible. It just excuses all sorts of bad behavior, because no one is responsible for choosing to do the right thing.

Believers in materialism are going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn’t rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

Choosing to do the right thing

I think what atheists like to say is “I can be moral, too”. That’s not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when doing the right thing sets you back. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of

Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me about their ability to do the right thing when it was hard for them to do it. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality. My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

Watch: Democrat legislator harasses elderly woman praying outside abortion clinic

May 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Pro-abortion Democrat, and misogynist

I follow Senator Ted Cruz on Twitter, and he tweeted out a video posted by the legislator in question. The legislator, from Philadelphia, is a Democrat. And he thought it would be a great idea to go to the local Planned Parenthood clinic, and film himself in an interaction with an elderly woman who was praying outside.

Here's the video: (Must-see!)

(Another link, another link, another link – in case that video is taken down)

And Life News has the story:

> A pro-abortion Democrat lawmaker posted a video of himself harassing a peaceful pro-life protester while invoking his office last week in Pennsylvania.
>
> Pennsylvania state Rep. B**** S*** repeatedly bullied the pro-life woman in an unhinged rant as she stood alone outside a Planned Parenthood in his district in southeastern Pennsylvania.
>
> S*** called the woman a "racist" and her sidewalk counseling "grotesque." He followed her around, hurtling insults at her; and at one point, he got in her face with his camera and ignored her requests to leave her alone.

He wanted to get the woman's address for some reason, maybe for vandalism, or something more violent. He's famous for being an openly gay college football player, so he's definitely strong enough to be a physical danger to her. People like to talk about toxic masculinity and bullying, and I don't know if I've ever seen a better example of toxic

masculinity than from this bully. He clearly has no idea how his greater height, physical strength, etc. would be perceived and experienced by an elderly woman. Or maybe he does, and he just doesn't care.

I think a lot of Democrats like to think that they are representing women, but they are only nice to women who agree with them. If a woman is pro-life, or has actual Christian convictions, then this is how they get treated. This interview of the Democrat reports him saying that he's an atheist. I thought it was interesting how a self-confessed atheist started lecturing a religious person on how to be religious. Not sure why so many godless people think that they should be trusted as an authority on religion. His biography says that he was raised Catholic and stopped attending church at 16. Whatever was going on in his head at the time, you can be sure that it wasn't evidence that convinced him to do that.

Now a man is designed to have an inclination to protect children, animals, anything weak, from strong aggressors. But abortion changes all that. When a man decides that inconvenient children can be killed for the benefit of the selfish adults who made her, then all bets on morality are really off. He's willing to kill an innocent unborn child that gets in his way. So anything is possible. She should really be afraid of him, even there in broad daylight.

I think the lady did the right thing, by calling the police.

Town Hall reports that he may have broken a state law:

> Pennsylvania Democratic State Rep. B**** S*** thought it his duty to videotape and harass a pro-life woman protesting against abortion outside a Planned Parenthood clinic in his district, repeatedly telling the unnamed woman he had the same constitutional right to film as she did to protest. While Americans have the right to record protesters in Pennsylvania, the state also has a strict a two-party consent state, meaning even in public both parties involved in a conversation must give consent to be audio or video recorded. At various points in the video, Rep. S*** indicates he wants to have a conversation, to each time the women says no and does not give permission to record.

But this is Philadelphia, the city of Kermit Gosnell, so they have a habit of overlooking violence against women if abortion rights are at stake.

Life News says that this isn't the first time that he's tried to use coercion to bully those who disagree with him:

> LifeNews recently learned of a second video that S*** posted several weeks ago where he made a similar request. He offered his viewers $100 to identify four pro-life women who were peacefully praying outside the same Planned Parenthood.
>
> His requests suggest that the state representative may be trying to intimidate pro-life advocates through doxxing, an online practice where a person's name and contact information are posted publicly online usually to encourage

> harassment.

The women, who he called “pseudo-Christians”, were just praying outside the clinic. I guess he thinks that if they were really Christians, then they’d endorse homosexuality, abortion, and the entire secular leftist platform – something which would be at odds with the Bible, and Christianity down through the centuries. But I guess his need to not feel “shamed” is more important than their freedom of religion, and freedom of speech. His feelings matter more than your rights, so he’s justified in silencing you.

I have spent a lot of my life studying scientific, philosophical and historical evidence for theism in general, and Christianity in particular, but there is another argument for Christianity that is personally convincing to me… although I would never use it in a debate. And that argument is how the Bible describes sin. I read how the Bible describes sexual sin in Romans 1, and then I see how sexual sin sometimes causes people to hate others and to use force to coerce, silence or destroy them. This is why the Bible calls some behaviors “sinful”, because people who do them know it’s wrong, but they think they can make the guilt from rebellion go away by coercing those around them to celebrate the sin. By the way, I include abortion, divorce, adultery, premarital sex and even drug or gambling addictions as sins.

He seems to be unable to control his temper when faced with people who haven’t turned their backs on the God of the Bible, and who are actually doing hard things in order to promote the moral values of the God of the Bible. There is something about Christians taking God seriously that offends him, and his response to their authentic self-sacrificial service to God is hatred and violence. It’s probably a good idea for us who take the Bible seriously to be seen acting self–sacrificially on our convictions. It bothers atheists, and that’s a good thing.

Colorado shooter hated Christians for disagreeing with homosexuality, praised Democrat Obama

May 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Richard Dawkins on atheism, morality, free will and human rights
This is just a quick post of the straight facts from the reliable Washington Times. The Washington Times reported on his views and values from his social media accounts. It turns out he's a Democrat who attacked President Trump, praised President Obama, and posted all sorts of hateful criticism of Christians, because of the Bible's teaching on sexuality and natural marriage.

The Washington Times reports:

> Devon Erickson, 18, has been held in the attack at STEM School Highlands Ranch in which seven students were injured and one killed, reported 9News, the Denver NBC news outlet.
>
> […]Mr. Erickson had said on social media, according to a report in Heavy.com, that he hated Christians for their teaching on homosexuality and his accounts suggested suggested he was not a fan of President Trump.
>
> "You know what I hate? All these Christians who hate gays, yet in the bible, it says in Deuteronomy 17:12-13, if someone doesn't do what their priest tells them to do, they are supposed to die. It has plenty of crazy stuff like that. But all they get out of it is 'ewwwwww gays,'" he wrote on Facebook a couple years ago.
>
> In 2016, his account shared a video of Seth Meyers attacking President Trump, and in 2015, "he shared an Occupy Democrats post praising then President Barack Obama," according to Heavy.

In addition, the Washington Examiner reports that one of the other suspects is a transgender male (biological female):

> The second suspect in yesterday's shooting at STEM School Highlands Ranch has been identified as a "juvenile female," although the person is reportedly transgender.
>
> Authorities say the shooting, which left one student dead and eight others wounded, was perpetrated by 18-year-old Devon Erickson and an unnamed minor. The ABC local affiliate has reported the minor is transgender and is transitioning from woman to man.

That's all we know right now, but I think it's useful for us to consider whether the majority of these shootings are committed by people on the secular left.

I can't think of a single act of violence committed by a Bible-believing conservative, because such acts are forbidden by the Bible. But for people who don't like the Bible,

these things are natural and normal. The universe is an accident, humans evolved from slime, there is no such thing as divine-grounded human rights, there's no free will, no life after death, no design for how we ought to be, and life is just Darwinian survival of the fittest.

So many shooters are on the secular left

I remember when that socialist support of Bernie Sanders shot up the Republicans at their softball game.

The Washington Examiner reported on that shooting:

> The shooter blamed for Wednesday's bloody attack on a Republican congressional baseball team shared a tie with the 2012 gunman who attacked the conservative Family Research Council in Washington.
>
> Both were fans of the Southern Poverty Law Center.
>
> James T. Hodgkinson, 66, of Illinois, liked the SPLC on his Facebook page, along with other liberal groups such as Media Matters and MoveOn.org. Since the shooting, his page has been dismantled, but Secrets saw it as did WND and Conservative Review.
>
> […]In the 2012 shooting at FRC that injured a security guard, convicted domestic terrorist Floyd Lee Corkins II said he targeted the group because the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) identified them as a "hate group" due to their traditional marriage views.
>
> "Southern Poverty Law lists anti-gay groups," Corkins told interrogators in a video, which FRC obtained from the FBI. "I found them online, did a little research, went to the website, stuff like that."
>
> At the time, Secrets reported that Corkins, who pleaded guilty to terrorism charges, said in court that he hoped to "kill as many as possible and smear the Chick-Fil-A sandwiches in victims' faces, and kill the guard."
>
> The shooting occurred after an executive with Chick-Fil-A announced his support for traditional marriage, angering same-sex marriage proponents."
>
> The Southern Poverty Law Center still lists FRC as an "anti-gay" hate group on the "hate map" Corkins used. "The SPLC's reckless labeling has led to devastating consequences," said FRC President Tony Perkins. "Because of its 'hate group' lists, a deadly terrorist had a guidemap to FRC and other organizations. Our staff is still reeling from the attack, and the chilling effect this could have on organizations that are simply fighting for their values is outrageous."

And what about Devin Kelley, the Texas shooter who shot unarmed Christians in a church?

The New York Post reports:

> Texas church shooter Devin Kelley was a “creepy” atheist “outcast” who never fit in and berated religious believers on social media, according to former friends and classmates.
>
> “He was always talking about how people who believe in God we’re stupid and trying to preach his atheism,” wrote former classmate Nina Rose Nava in a Facebook post, according to the Daily Mail.

I could go on and on and on… Navy Yard shooter Aaron Alexis – Obama supporter. Discovery Channel shooter James Lee – radical environmentalist and anti-capitalist. Arizona shooter Jared Loughner – Marxist and atheist.

Do you know any progressive atheists who think that religious people are “stupid”? Who think that the Bible’s teachings on chastity and marriage are “evil”? I see them all the time in the mainstream media news channels, and on the Comedy Channel shows. There seems to be a lot of them in Hollywood, and in the Democrat Party, etc. It seems as though it’s very popular for mass murderers to think that Christians are “stupid” and their moral values are “evil”.

Update:

The male shooter is fatherless, son of an illegal immigrant with criminal convictions.

Statistician analyzes effects of UK and Australia gun bans on violent crime rates

May 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

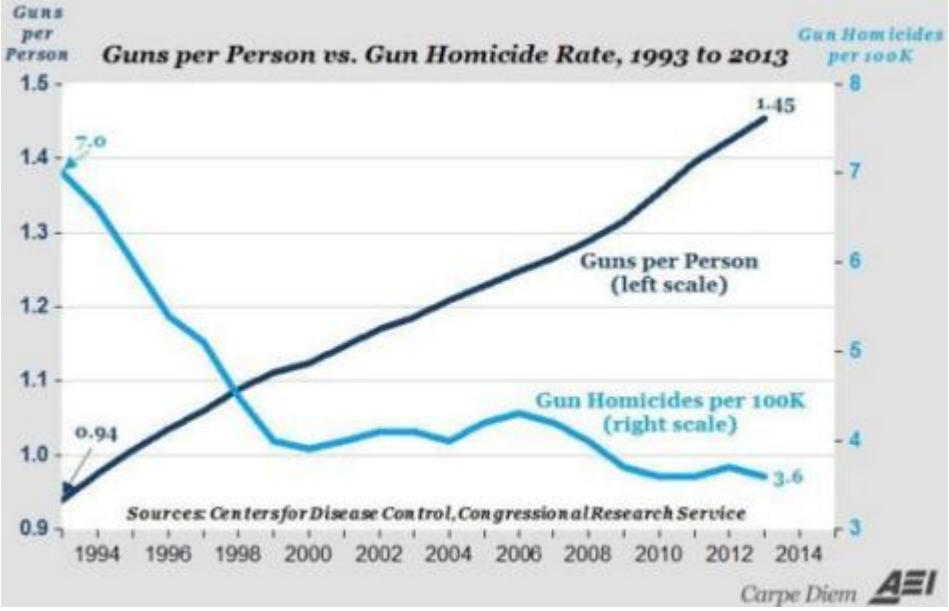

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

I found this op-ed in the radically-leftist Washington Post, of all places. The author took a look at the evidence on gun violence for Five Thirty Eight, and decided that gun control policies would not help the problems that we are actually facing.

Excerpt:

> Leah Libresco is a statistician and former newswriter at FiveThirtyEight, a data journalism site. She is the author of "Arriving at Amen."
>
> Before I started researching gun deaths, gun-control policy used to frustrate me. I wished the National Rifle Association would stop blocking common-sense gun-control reforms such as banning assault weapons, restricting silencers, shrinking magazine sizes and all the other measures that could make guns less deadly.
>
> Then, my colleagues and I at FiveThirtyEight spent three months analyzing all 33,000 lives ended by guns each year in the United States, and I wound up frustrated in a whole new way. We looked at what interventions might have saved those people, and the case for the policies I'd lobbied for crumbled when I examined the evidence. The best ideas left standing were narrowly tailored interventions to protect subtypes of potential victims, not broad attempts to limit the lethality of guns.
>
> I researched the strictly tightened gun laws in Britain and Australia and concluded that they didn't prove much about what America's policy should be. Neither nation experienced drops in mass shootings or other gun related-crime that could be attributed to their buybacks and bans. Mass shootings were too rare in Australia for their absence after the buyback program to be clear

> evidence of progress. And in both Australia and Britain, the gun restrictions had an ambiguous effect on other gun-related crimes or deaths.

I've written before about how banning handguns in the UK doubled the violent crime rate in the next four years. That's not ambiguous in my book! But this is 538 and Washington Post, so we can't expect them to agree with the evidence all the way, or they'd be conservatives. Regarding Australia's gun ban, violent crime rates rose after they confiscated guns as well. It's very important to look at the data on these issues, because on liberal web sites, they basically run headlines claiming the exact opposite of what studies show, and this is eaten up by their anti-intellectual leftist readers.

More:

> When I looked at the other oft-praised policies, I found out that no gun owner walks into the store to buy an "assault weapon." It's an invented classification that includes any semi-automatic that has two or more features, such as a bayonet mount, a rocket-propelled grenade-launcher mount, a folding stock or a pistol grip. But guns are modular, and any hobbyist can easily add these features at home, just as if they were snapping together Legos.
>
> As for silencers — they deserve that name only in movies, where they reduce gunfire to a soft puick puick. In real life, silencers limit hearing damage for shooters but don't make gunfire dangerously quiet. An AR-15 with a silencer is about as loud as a jackhammer. Magazine limits were a little more promising, but a practiced shooter could still change magazines so fast as to make the limit meaningless.
>
> **As my co-workers and I kept looking at the data, it seemed less and less clear that one broad gun-control restriction could make a big difference. Two-thirds of gun deaths in the United States every year are suicides. Almost no proposed restriction would make it meaningfully harder for people with guns on hand to use them.**
>
> […]**However, the next-largest set of gun deaths — 1 in 5 — were young men aged 15 to 34, killed in homicides. These men were most likely to die at the hands of other young men, often related to gang loyalties or other street violence. And the last notable group of similar deaths was the 1,700 women murdered per year, usually as the result of domestic violence. Far more people were killed in these ways than in mass-shooting incidents, but few of the popularly floated policies were tailored to serve them.**

This excerpt is basically correct, and I've explained in the past that inner-city gun violence is caused by fatherlessness, which is caused by the decisions that women make about men and when to have sex with them. Unless we are willing to tell women not to have sex with thuggish bad boys, then we aren't going to get rid of inner-city gun violence. We certainly shouldn't be paying women welfare money to have more fatherless

children, if we want to stop gun violence. We're not serious about gun violence, or we would ban single mother welfare, and give tax incentives for children who are raised in a home where the child's biological is present and committed to the child's mother for life. No one on the left who complains about gun violence is serious about solving the root cause of gun violence. Because they don't want to be guided by facts.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).
>
> Upon the passage of The Firearms Act (No. 2) in 1997, British Deputy Home Secretary Alun Michael boasted: "Britain now has some of the toughest gun laws in the world." The Act was second handgun control measure passed that year, imposed a near-complete ban on private ownership of handguns, capping nearly eighty years of increasing firearms restrictions. Driven by an intense public campaign in the wake of the shooting of schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland, Parliament had been so zealous to outlaw all privately owned handguns that it rejected proposals to exempt Britain's Olympic target-shooting team and handicapped target-shooters from the ban.

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were

> committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

CNN Contributor claims that an unborn baby is “not a human being”

May 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, just when you thought public relations couldn’t get any worse for the mainstream news media, CNN decides to grab a shovel and keep digging. This time, there was a discussion of abortion law, and the CNN journalist decided to announce her opinion that unborn children in the womb are not actually human beings at all.

Watch this:

The Federalist reported on the story, and I’ll quote them here for those who can’t watch the video:

> On CNN’s “Primetime with Chris Cuomo” on Monday night, a segment on the legality of state-level fetal heartbeat bills quickly spiraled into a chaotic debate about whether unborn children should be considered human beings. CNN contributor and erstwhile New York City Democratic politician Christine Quinn said, “When a woman is pregnant, that is not a human being inside of her.”
>
> When guest Rick Santorum asked CNN Host Chris Cuomo if he disagreed “that at the moment of conception that a child is human and alive?” Cumono replied that means it’s “viable.” When Santorum asked, “Is it biologically a human life?” Quinn shouted, “No!”
>
> Cuomo and Quinn teamed up in pushing back on Santorum as he articulated what science tells us about unborn humans. At every stage of human life — as an embryo, a fetus, or after five weeks of age when his or her heartbeat can be detected by an ultrasound — an unborn child has his or her own unique DNA.
>
> He or she has a unique genetic code, blood type, sex, and race, all which can differ from his or her mother and father’s. This unique individual is developed inside a women’s body, but is not part of a women’s body, and cannot be regulated as the mother’s property, Santorum argued.

Um, scientists understand very well what the DNA signature of the human species looks like, and unborn babies do indeed have a human DNA signature. One that is unique to them, and not the same as either parent. It’s a new person.

I looked up her biography to see if she was just a guest speaker, but apparently she really is an actual CNN Contributor:

> Christine Callaghan Quinn is an American politician. A member of the Democratic Party, she formerly served as the Speaker of the New York City Council. The third person to hold this office, she was the first female and first openly gay speaker. Quinn is a CNN political contributor.

Wow! So now CNN “journalists” are in open denial of scientific facts about embryology

and human reproduction.

Here's Chris Cuomo explaining that there simply is no case for the right to life of the unborn based on logic and evidence:

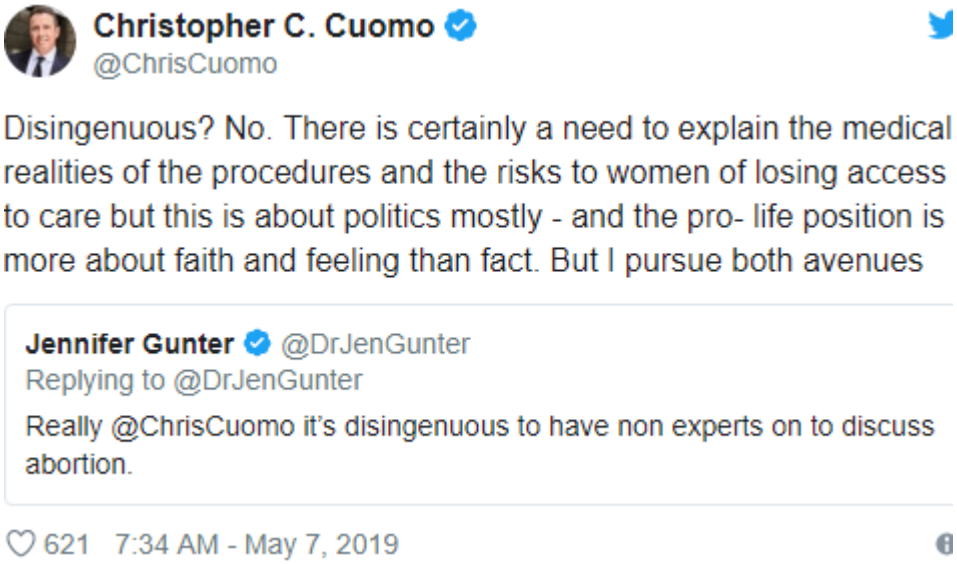

CNN says "The pro- life position is more about faith and feeling than fact"
Really? Then how come I can find sophisticated defenses of the pro-life position from prestigious academic presses, like this one published by Cambridge University Press? How about this one from Routledge, a leading academic press? But we can't expect CNN to be informed about such things, because CNN isn't in the business of communicating truth to their audience.

CNN's audience is vanishing

I wonder how that is working out for them in the new media ratings?

Oh, here's an article from CNS News about that:

> According to the latest television audience data from Nielsen, CNN's prime time audience fell 26% in April 2019 compared to its audience in April 2018. Total audience in prime time for CNN last month was only 767,000 viewers, reported Forbes.
>
> For comparison, MSNBC came in second place with 1.66 million viewers and the Fox News Channel (FNC) led the pack in prime time with 2.395 million viewers, said Forbes.

Wow, not working out too well. Well, they could always hire some conservatives if they want to get serious about reporting the news, instead of just doing campaign ads for the Democrat Party.

Something to share

My friend Nathan sent me this hilarious video of a Canadian pro-life advocate doing a parody of pro-abortion rhetoric. Except, it's not really a parody if they really believe it, is it?

This might be worth sharing, to help your friends think clearly about right to life issues:

Indeed.

Look, there are academics who favor abortion rights over the right to life of the unborn. And we feature them on this blog, and we show academics debates on this blog that allow them to present their ideas. I know what the the best people on the other side have to say when they make their case. And that apparently makes me more honest and informed than CNN.

If white Americans are racist, how come Asians do so well in America?

May 9, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

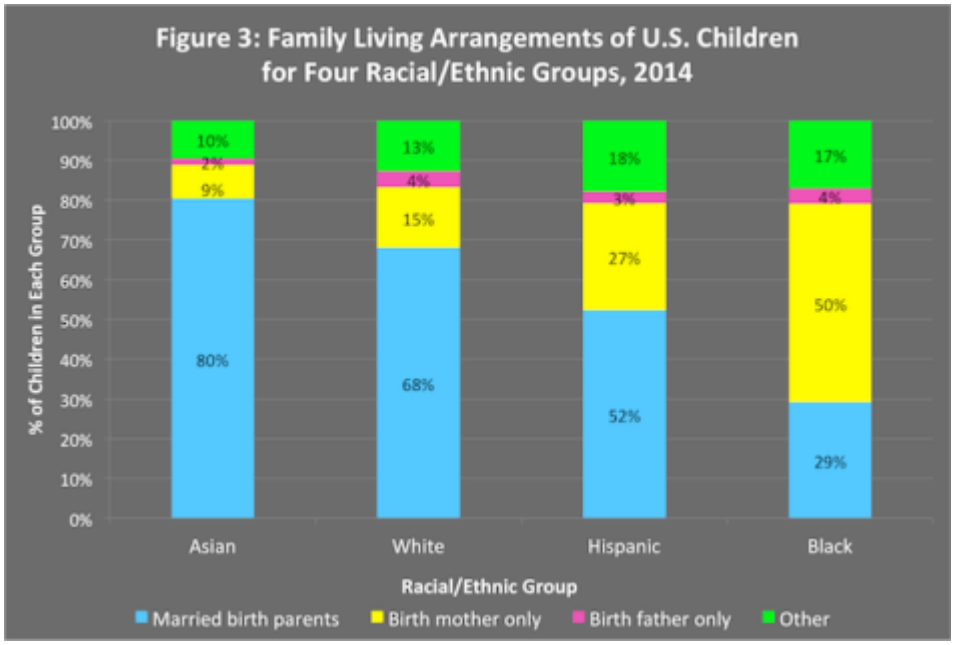

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

This article is written by the far-left radical Nicholas Kristof, writing in the radically-leftist New York Times. (A former newspaper)

Excerpt:

> THIS is an awkward question, but here goes: Why are Asian-Americans so successful in America?
>
> It's no secret that Asian-Americans are disproportionately stars in American schools, and even in American society as a whole. Census data show that Americans of Asian heritage earn more than other groups, including whites. Asian-Americans also have higher educational attainment than any other group.
>
> […]Does the success of Asian-Americans suggest that the age of discrimination is behind us?

> A new scholarly book, "The Asian American Achievement Paradox," by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, notes that Asian-American immigrants in recent decades have started with one advantage: They are highly educated, more so even than the average American. These immigrants are disproportionately doctors, research scientists and other highly educated professionals.
>
> It's not surprising that the children of Asian-American doctors would flourish in the United States. But Lee and Zhou note that kids of working-class Asian-Americans often also thrive, showing remarkable upward mobility.

Part of the problem is that non-Asian Americans take a passive view of life, believing that

high grades come to those who are naturally smart – not to those who work harder:

> There's also evidence that Americans believe that A's go to smart kids, while Asians are more likely to think that they go to hard workers… Asian-American kids are allowed no excuse for getting B's — or even an A-. The joke is that an A- is an "Asian F."

And, as the image I posted above shows, Asian girls are given boundaries on their sexuality, causing them to choose men who will be good husbands and fathers, and making those men marry before being given sex – factors proven to improve marital stability:

> Strong two-parent families are a factor, too. Divorce rates are much lower for many Asian-American communities than for Americans as a whole, and there's evidence that two-parent households are less likely to sink into poverty and also have better outcomes for boys in particular.

So, let's be real – if white racial discrimination held non-white groups back, then Asians would be in the same situation as blacks and hispanics. But Asians are not being held back, because of their strong marriage culture and focus on hard work. Whites don't hold anyone back. This is just a myth that Democrats use to make blacks (and hispanics) think that they need government to save them from the bogeyman. Asians don't need saving, and neither should any other non-white groups.

We can start by shaming women of all races who choose to have sex with men who are not ready for marriage. There are lots of men out there who are willing to marry, and that should be what women are looking for most if all in a man. That change alone will probably erase most of the achievement gap between different racial groups. Does anyone have the courage to tell young women (of all races) to be more responsible with their sexual decisions? The out-of-wedlock birth rate for blacks is over 70%. This causes massive poverty and crime in the black community. Does anyone have the courage to tell blacks that they are doing this to themselves?

New study: more than half of all female-to-male transgender teens attempt suicide

May 10, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Anti-marriage gay activists vandalize church

A recent study by a researcher out of Brown University found that the exploding rates of transgender young people is being driven in part by social factors. In particular, coming out as transgender gives young people instant popularity, and everyone around them feels obligated to affirm them and agree with them. Or else. What's missing? What's missing is any sort of warning about the dangers of transgenderism.

The Daily Wire reports on a new study from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Excerpt:

> A new study from the American Academy of Pediatrics found an alarming number of teens who identify as transgender or nonbinary have attempted suicide at least once, showcasing the dangers of the transgender movement. More than half of all female-to-male transgender teens, for example, have attempted to end their lives.
>
> Researchers behind the study used data collected from more than 600 teens over a 36-month period, June 2012 to May 2015, from the "Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors" survey.
>
> The study found that female-to-male trans teens had the highest suicide attempt rate of all other identity groups surveyed: 50.8%. Unsurprisingly, other gender-confused teens had outrageously high rates of suicide attempts, too. Nonbinary adolescents, meaning teens who do not identify exclusively as female or male, were found to have a 41.8% suicide attempt rate; male-to-female trans teens had a 29.9% rate; and "questioning" teens had a rate of 27.9%.

> By comparison, teens who identified as their biological sex and corresponding gender suffered relatively low (though still too high) rates: females were found to have a 17.6% rate while males had the lowest of any other group at 9.8%.

When I tell LGBT people about the health risks of their choices, and cite peer-reviewed studies, the most frequent response is that they get angry and even violent and demand approval. I have even heard threats that if I don't approve of what they feel like doing, then they will kill themselves, and their blood will be on my hands.

The thing is, there is a study about that. Even though LGBT people think that approval will make them feel better about what they are doing, it's not true. In societies where social approval and government support of LGBT behaviors are HIGHER than in America, the suicide rates are still extremely high.

Life Site News explains:

> A study out of Sweden published last month has found that suicide risk among active homosexuals is high even in a region that is highly tolerant of same-sex behaviour.
>
> Published in the *European Journal of Epidemiology*, the authors found that men in same-sex "marriages" were at three times greater risk of suicide than men who are married to women.
>
> The authors note in their abstract:
>
> Even in a country with a comparatively tolerant climate regarding homosexuality such as Sweden, same-sex married individuals evidence a higher risk for suicide than other married individuals.

Just in passing, what a strange way to respond to disagreement. I have people disagree with my chastity, my Christianity, my conservative politics, etc. all the time. It never occurs to me to threaten to commit suicide if they don't approve. I also don't try to get them fired, insult them, shame them, vandalize their property, assault them, murder them, or drag them in front of a government-run political correctness panel. I don't even mind that they use their free speech to disagree with me. After all, they are people made in the image of God, with an equal right to be in a relationship with God. I can't do anything that is going to cause them to think that God doesn't love them.

It's useful to remember that the Christian view on life is not to neglect God's design and tell people to do whatever they want. The Christian view is to tell people God's design, set boundaries, and encourage people to make good decisions. Christians don't believe in love as mere acceptance. Christians believe in "love warns". I tell young people not to run up student loan debt studying useless non-STEM degrees. They might feel bad, but it's the truth: they won't be able to find a job that allows them to pay the money back. Warning people about sexual issues is the same thing, in my mind.

Nanotechnology expert Dr. James Tour assesses origin of life research

May 11, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

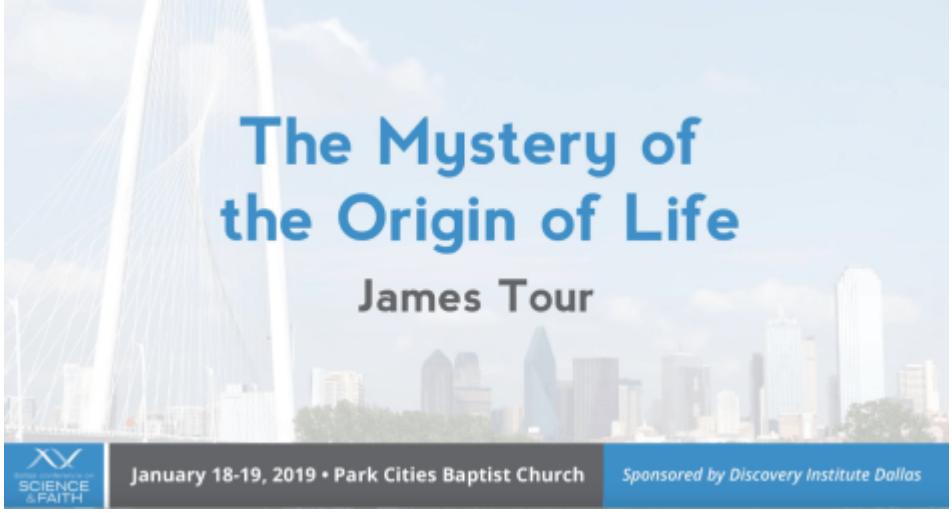

What is involved in creating life from non-life?

Well, a couple of weeks ago I watched lectures from a recent Science and Faith Conference that occurred at Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. I also sent the lectures to my STEM women advisors to get their opinions. It was unanimous that Tour's talk on origin of life research was the best. So let's see his bio, then we'll take a look at his lecture.

Dr. James Tour:

> James M. Tour, a synthetic organic chemist, received his Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Syracuse University, his Ph.D. in synthetic organic and organometallic chemistry from Purdue University, and postdoctoral training in synthetic organic chemistry at the University of Wisconsin and Stanford University.
>
> After spending 11 years on the faculty of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of South Carolina, he joined the Center for Nanoscale Science and Technology at Rice University in 1999 where he is presently the T. T. and W. F. Chao Professor of Chemistry, Professor of Computer Science, and Professor of Materials Science and NanoEngineering.
>
> Tour's scientific research areas include nanoelectronics, graphene electronics, silicon oxide electronics, carbon nanovectors for medical applications, green carbon research for enhanced oil recovery and environmentally friendly oil and gas extraction, graphene photovoltaics, carbon supercapacitors, lithium ion batteries, CO2 capture, water splitting to H2 and O2, water purification, carbon nanotube and graphene synthetic modifications, graphene oxide, carbon composites, hydrogen storage on nanoengineered carbon scaffolds, and synthesis of single-molecule nanomachines which includes molecular motors and

> nanocars.
>
> […]Tour has over 650 research publications and over 120 patents.

As he explains in the lecture, his research has frequently been used in the private sector to solve real world problems.

His lecture:

Evolution News had a short blurb of the lecture:

> Rice University chemist James Tour almost defies description in a video now up of his amazing presentation at Discovery Institute's 2019 Dallas Conference on Science and Faith.
>
> At one point he asks for a show of hands of fellow synthetic chemists in the (large) audience. It turns out there are a couple and he demands that they stand up and call him a liar if anything he says isn't true. His message is an alternatively scathing and hilarious indictment of claims from the origin-of-life studies community. Dr. Tour's work in nanotechnology, an ulta-ultra-painstaking field, provides the backdrop for his demonstration that origins scientists don't have the slightest idea how the first life was somehow naturally synthesized by blind, mindless forces.
>
> The field hasn't advanced an inch in 60-plus years. "Everyone's clueless on this but no one wants to admit it." Great scientists writing in the highest profile science journals are "lying to you" when they assert otherwise. "Show me the chemistry" of abiogenesis, he says. "It's not there."
>
> Jim Tour is without parallel. Truly, I'd love to hear from our materialist critics how they would answer any of this.

At the conference, Tour's lecture was accompanied by other great lectures on the origin of the universe and also the Cambrian explosion by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. Jay Richards spoke on fine-tuning and habitability. You can find the links to those lectures on the Discovery Institute YouTube channel.

What we liked about the lecture by Dr. James Tour was that he did not dumb down the content for a church audience. I was sending screen captures of his slides and short video clips to my best friend Dina while I watched it. I was very excited to see someone so accomplished in his research and entrepreneurship being honest with the laypeople in the church. And I loved the church for letting him speak like a scientist. I didn't understand everything he was saying about the science, but I always understood the point he was trying to make.

Let this lecture encourage to raise your children to focus on science, math, engineering and technology, because you can clearly see the value that we have in Dr. James Tour. We need hundreds more scientists who go to the best schools and make a difference.

I really hope that some of the younger Christians will understand the importance of making scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer more widely known. Learn the

areas of science where God’s existence can be detected, and put the time in learning how to make those arguments.

Dr. William Lane Craig interviewed on the Ben Shapiro Show Sunday Special

May 12, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. William Lane Craig on the Ben Shapiro Sunday special

The episode of the Ben Shapiro show that we've all been waiting for is here! They discuss arguments for God's existence in the first 25 minutes. The spend the first 26 minutes on arguments for God,and the next 16 minutes on Christian distinctives. They spend a bunch more time responding to common arguments for atheism, and finally Ben asks Dr. Craig how he became a Christian.

Summary:

> William Lane Craig, philosopher, theologian, and best selling author of numerous books including "On Guard: Defending Your Faith With Reason And Precision," joins Ben to discuss the hard sciences vs. philosophy, the cosmological and ontological arguments, Jesus, slavery, gay marriage, and much more.

Video:

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Why are we seeing such a decline in religious belief in America?
- Why are mainline denominations in Christianity and Judaism emptying out?
- What was the driver behind the move away from religion starting in the 1960s?
- Why is their a gap in the university and in the broader culture between reason and religious belief?
- What is the strongest argument for God's existence?
- What is the most compelling argument for God's existence for this culture?
- Respond to Richard Dawkins' challenge that God needs a cause.
- Why does the universe have to have a cause?

- Does Darwinian evolution provide grounds for our awareness of objective moral values and duties?
- What is the strongest objection to the cosmological argument?
- What is the strongest objection to the moral argument?
- What about the objection that the existence of the universe is just a “brute fact” and doesn’t need an explanation for it’s existence?
- What about David Hume’s objection to the law of causality?
- What about objections to the cause of the universe from apparently uncaused events in quantum mechanics?
- What is the ontological argument, and why is it frequently dismissed?
- How do we get from an unmoved mover to a moral God?
- Which arguments show that God is a mind?
- How do you show that God is present and active in time now?
- How do you move from God as Creator, Designer and moral lawgiver to a God who has revealed himself to human beings?
- Who does Jesus claim to be in the gospels, and what is the evidence that his claims were correct?
- From the Jewish perspective, this narrative has some problems. First, merely declaring yourself as the Messiah is not seen as a punishable offense.
- Second, the real problem is that Jesus vision of himself as the Messiah is completely different than how Jews have understood the Messiah. The Messiah in Judaism has always been a political figure who is destined to restore the Kingdom of Israel, bringing more Jews back to Israel, etc. Claiming to be God, though would be blasphemy and a punishable offense.
- Why is resurrection proof of divinity? Wasn’t Lazarus also raised from the dead?
- The gospels were written decades after the events they claim to describe. Should we still see them as reliable enough to infer that the resurrection really happened?
- Couldn’t legends have been introduced in the gap between the events and the time that the events were recorded?
- Is it enough for us to have a Creator God, or is there a reason for God to reveal himself to us?
- Tell us about your experience debating atheist scholars on university campuses.
- Has any an atheist ever caused you to doubt your arguments?
- The problem of human evil is easy to respond to, but how do you respond to the problem of natural evil, i.e. – suffering from events in the natural world, such as birth defects or natural disasters.
- Atheists like to bring up specific disagreements they have with the Bible, e.g. – same-sex marriage, abortion, slavery, genocide. How would you respond to those?
- Regarding slavery in the Bible, isn’t it the case that people sometimes do things that are not prescribed by God, and the Bible merely records that?
- How would you respond then to people who push for same-sex marriage by arguing that this is a case where God wanted same-sex marriage, but couldn’t press for it because the people were not capable at that time and in that culture?

- When discussing specific issues of morality, do you try to argue from a natural law perspective or from the morality in the Bible?
- How would you respond to someone like Jordan Peterson who approaches religion teachings pragmatically, focusing on behaviors rather than the rational grounding of those behaviors?
- How do you speak to young people about God without them losing interest?
- How did you become a Christian?
- As the influence of Judeo-Christian religion recedes, what do you see filling the void, and how do you see that affecting Western civilization going forward?

Atheist gets her PhD in astronomy and astrophysics and finds evidence for God

May 13, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Christian apologist Terrell Clemmons tweeted this testimony by Sarah Salviander, a research scientist in astronomy and astrophysics at the prestigious University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Salviander writes:

> I was born in the U.S., but grew up in Canada. My parents were socialists and political activists who thought British Columbia would be a better place for us to live, since it had the only socialist government in North America at the time. My parents were also atheists, though they eschewed that label in favor of "agnostic." They were kind, loving, and moral, but religion played no part in my life. Instead, my childhood revolved around education, particularly science. I remember how important it was to my parents that my brother and I did well in school.

I just want to point out that I hope that all you Christian parents are taking seriously the obligation to make your kids do well in school, because even if they start out as atheists when they are young, they can still find their way back to God through study, as Sarah did.

She had a bad start, that's for sure:

> I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, a time when science fiction was enjoying a renaissance, thanks largely to the popularity of *Star Wars*. I remember how fascinated I was by the original *Star Wars* trilogy. It had almost nothing to do with

> science—it's more properly characterized as space opera—but it got me thinking about space in a big way. I also loved the original *Star Trek*, which was more science fiction. The stoic and logical character of Mr. Spock was particularly appealing to me. Popular science was also experiencing a renaissance at that time, which had a lot to do with Carl Sagan's television show, *Cosmos*, which I adored. The combination of these influences led to such an intense wonder about outer space and the universe, that by the time I was nine years old I knew I would be a space scientist someday.
>
> Canada was already post-Christian by the 1970s, so I grew up with no religion. In retrospect, it's amazing that for the first 25 years of my life, I met only three people who identified as Christian. My view of Christianity was negative from an early age, and by the time I was in my twenties, I was actively hostile toward Christianity. Looking back, I realized a lot of this was the unconscious absorption of the general hostility toward Christianity that is common in places like Canada and Europe; my hostility certainly wasn't based on actually knowing anything about Christianity. I had come to believe that Christianity made people weak and foolish; I thought it was philosophically trivial. I was ignorant not only of the Bible, but also of the deep philosophy of Christianity and the scientific discoveries that shed new light on the origins of the universe and life on Earth.

She documents a phase of following Ayn Rand and embracing "Objectivism", but eventually she rejects it for failing to answer the big questions of life.

More:

> I began to focus all of my energy on my studies, and became very dedicated to my physics and math courses. I joined campus clubs, started to make friends, and, for the first time in my life, I was meeting Christians. They weren't like Objectivists—they were joyous and content. And, they were smart, too. I **was astonished to find that my physics professors, whom I admired, were Christian. Their personal example began to have an influence on me, and I found myself growing less hostile to Christianity.**

This is why I think it is so important for Christian parents to raise their children to get advanced degrees… either to become professors themselves, or to finance others (e.g. – our own children) to do advanced degrees. It is so important for university students to see Christian professors on campus. And failing that, it's important that we bring Christian speakers in to debate non-Christian speakers on the important issues. This will not happen unless we recognize how important it is, and then make a plan to achieve it.

More:

> **I had joined a group in the Center for Astrophysics and Space Sciences (CASS) that was researching evidence for the big bang. The cosmic background radiation—the leftover radiation from the big bang—provides the strongest evidence for the theory, but cosmologists**

> **need other, independent lines of evidence to confirm it. My group was studying deuterium abundances in the early universe. Deuterium is an isotope of hydrogen, and its abundance in the early universe is sensitive to the amount of ordinary mass contained in the entire universe. Believe it or not, this one measurement tells us whether the big bang model is correct.**
>
> **If anyone is interested in how this works, I'll describe it, but for now I'll spare you the gruesome details. Suffice it to say that an amazing convergence of physical properties is necessary in order to study deuterium abundances in the early universe, and yet this convergence is exactly what we get. I remember being astounded by this, blown away, completely and utterly awed. It seemed incredible to me that there was a way to find the answer to this question we had about the universe. In fact, it seems that every question we have about the universe is answerable. There's no reason it has to be this way, and it made me think of Einstein's observation that the most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it's comprehensible. I started to sense an underlying order to the universe. Without knowing it, I was awakening to what Psalm 19 tells us so clearly, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."**
>
> That summer, I'd picked up a copy of T*he Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas and was reading it in my off hours. Previous to this, I'd only known it as an exciting story of revenge, since that's what the countless movie and TV adaptations always focused on. But it's more than just a revenge story, it's a philosophically deep examination of forgiveness and God's role in giving justice. I was surprised by this, and was starting to realize that the concept of God and religion was not as philosophically trivial as I had thought.
>
> All of this culminated one day, as I was walking across that beautiful La Jolla campus. I stopped in my tracks when it hit me—I believed in God! I was so happy; it was like a weight had been lifted from my heart. I realized that most of the pain I'd experienced in my life was of my own making, but that God had used it to make me wiser and more compassionate. It was a great relief to discover that there was a reason for suffering, and that it was because God was loving and just. God could not be perfectly just unless I—just like everyone else—was made to suffer for the bad things I'd done.

The Count of Monte Cristo is one of my favorite, favorite books as well, and had the same impact on me as it did on her.

OK, that's enough for this post. Go read the rest, and please share it.

I spoke to her recently and she told me that she is working on several projects that are designed to get people more familiar with science and Bible issues. This woman is an expert Christian apologist and her life will have an influence. Are you going to be like her?

Will you mentor others to be like her? Will you marry someone like her? Will you raise children who are like her? I think we should all have a plan to study the areas that are important and have an influence for God with what we learn.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

How will men adapt to violence against men and false accusations?

May 14, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

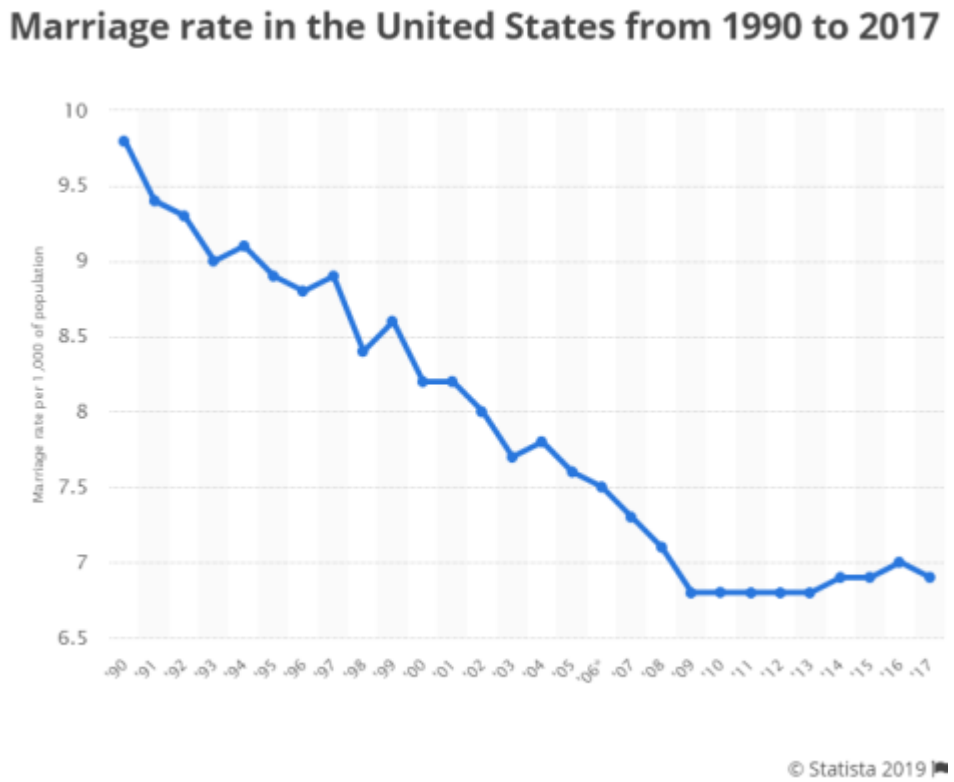

A massive decline in marriage rate (per 1,000 of population in America)

A couple of women who write for the Daily Wire keep posting scary stories of men being mistreated by women. I'm going to link to a few of their stories below, from last week. Then I want to say something about why these sorts of events are happening so frequently, and what message it sends to men who might want to have a committed relationship with a woman.

The two women writers at Daily Wire are Amanda Prestigiacamo and Ashe Schow.

Here is one from May 8th, by Amanda:

> Thirty-six-year-old Kenan Basic spent weeks in jail, lost his relationship, and was repeatedly slandered after a woman falsely accused him of sexual misconduct.
>
> According to Australia-based 7NEWS, Basic was accused of "indecently assaulting and stalking" Caitlyn Gray, a 19-year-old woman, after he stopped to help her when her car broke down late last year.
>
> Basic apparently spent two hours fixing Gray's vehicle. As shown by surveillance footage, the smiling pair seem happy, hugging after the car is fixed and eventually parting ways. But according to the news station, "Gray told police Basic had allegedly propositioned her for sex in return for his help before he pursued her in the car and later indecently assaulted her at a different location." Authorities investigating the incident called Basic's behavior "predatory."

> Months later, however, the truth about the incident finally came out: Basic never assaulted the woman. The 19-year-old confessed to police during an interrogation that she fabricated evidence and made up the assault whole-cloth.

So what lesson would a man learn from this? Well, he would learn that women can't be trusted to be grateful when they are given help.

More:

> The falsely accused man noted that he's "never been jailed, never had a criminal record or anything."
>
> "I always help people, all my life," he said. "And this was the first time a snake bit me."
>
> The 36-year-old said he'll "probably never help again, ya know. I don't want that to happen again."

I don't know why this woman made this false accusation. Studies show that women generally make false accusations for attention, for an alibi, to get revenge, or to get sympathy after they've chosen to have sex with someone who ignored them after. This case doesn't fit any of these scenarios. Maybe she felt slighted because he didn't try anything with her, and that made her feel unattractive. But the message to good men who want to help women is clear: the risk is too great.

Here's another story from May 11th, by Ashe:

> Ah to be one of those poor, oppressed women who have fewer privileges than men.
>
> A woman like Jazzmin Fry, who was so oppressed that when she stabbed a complete stranger — a man — with one of her stilettos for literally no reason, she only had to pay a $250 fine as punishment. Her conviction wasn't even recorded outside of the press.
>
> […]The victim, Kyle Johns, 19, was taken to the hospital and needed two staples in his head to repair the wound.

What lesson will men learn from stories like this one? Well, they'll learn that there is a double standard in the justice system, such that men are held accountable for their choices, but women are not. That's because men are seen as responsible for their actions, and women are not seen as responsible – no matter how much harm they cause.

Ashe says:

> Women in the justice system — whether in Australia, or the U.K., or the U.S. — get off much easier than men for the same crimes. One of the biggest disparities can be found in sexual assaults against minors. When women commit these crimes — whether against a young boy or girl, or teenager — they receive much lighter sentences than men do for the same crime.
>
> As I have written previously, men who abuse children (rightly) receive harsh

> punishments. A 32-year-old man who sexually abused a young girl over the course of several years faced 366 years to life in prison. Yet a 25-year-old woman who pleaded guilty to raping young boys at a trailer park only received five years probation.
>
> […]In 2012, University of Michigan professor Sonja Starr researched the gender disparities in federal criminal cases and found that "men receive 63% longer sentences on average than women do" and that "Women are … twice as likely to avoid incarceration if convicted."

Men are very aware of disparities in the criminal justice system, but when I talk to women about it, they are rarely aware of it. But this is just one example of an area where men are at a disadvantage, and the problem only gets worse as more and more feminists take control of legislation, law enforcement and criminal courts. Almost every man knows a story of about how divorce courts treated a man badly, whether it be with unfair alimony or child support, false accusations, or even jail. And it seems like all the momentum in society is to make everything better for women, and worse for men. This is easily seen by looking at studies of how the public schools – which are dominated by female teachers and administrators – discriminate against boys.

Here's a third one from May 13th, by Amanda:

> A false accusation of sexual assault turned deadly last month in Utah when a teen girl's brother sought vengeance over the claim of sexual assault that never was.
>
> A 16-year-old girl, whose identity has not been revealed because she's a minor, told her 17-year-old brother that Michael Fife, 62, sexually assaulted her on a Cache Valley Transit District (CVTD) bus. The 17-year-old tracked down Fife and physically attacked him when he got off the bus; wounds from the altercation left him dead.
>
> According to Logan Police Department, reviewed surveillance footage from the bus revealed that the alleged assault never happened.

According to the police, "the video showed Mr. Fife walking past the girl, but no sexual assault occurred." Did she lie just to see what effect it would have on her brother?

My thoughts

Here is a fourth story about an NFL player *who refused to have sex with a woman*, and he was falsely charged with raping her, as reported on May 10th, in The College Fix.

This one is important, because this guy lost millions of dollars in salary, because he was kept out of the NFL two years, when his accuser had no evidence whatsoever. That's how unfair the system has become for men, and men with more to lose have more reason to avoid any relationships with women. Men with more money have more to lose to a false accusation. And these stories are so common in our age.

When a man measures up how much a woman adds to his life, and compares it to the risk of being cleaned out on a fact-free false accusation, it’s not a good value proposition. Women often look at things only from the woman’s point of view, and so they are mystified by how men could think like this. They just can’t seem to put themselves into men’s shoes to understand how dangerous women have become to men. And then men get told how weak and cowardly they are for refusing to ask women out, for refusing to commit, etc.

I think that the only women who are safe are women who have put in the effort to learn about these injustices towards men. If you are interested in a woman for a relationship, then ask her to name a few challenges that men face in this anti-male society. Ask her if she has a male relative who has faced a false accusation. Ask her if she has experience battling for men’s rights. If she doesn’t stand up for good men before marriage, she won’t respect you after marriage.

Women of the previous generation knew how to prepare herself for wife and mother roles, and present herself to a man in order to persuade him to marry her. Too many women in today’s generation have lost that ability to be feminine. They have lost the ability to be a real friend and support to a man. They don’t want to nurture his ability to be a masculine leader in a home.

It is rare to find a woman who is putting in the work to learn about things like abortion, divorce, and same-sex marriage. Most of them are instead focused on single motherhood by choice, delaying marriage for career, surrogacy, etc. Most women aren’t prepared to fight against anti-marriage, anti-child forces, and men sense from this that they aren’t serious about marriage as it really is: a self-sacrificial commitment requiring female *and male* natures.

Most young, unmarried women take on the priorities of the culture: animal rights, global warming, equal pay, abortion rights, gun control, higher taxes, single payer healthcare, public schools, etc. But most know very little about how to prepare themselves for a husband, or prepare themselves to provide for their children.

The production of carbon from lighter elements is fine-tuned to an amazing degree

May 15, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

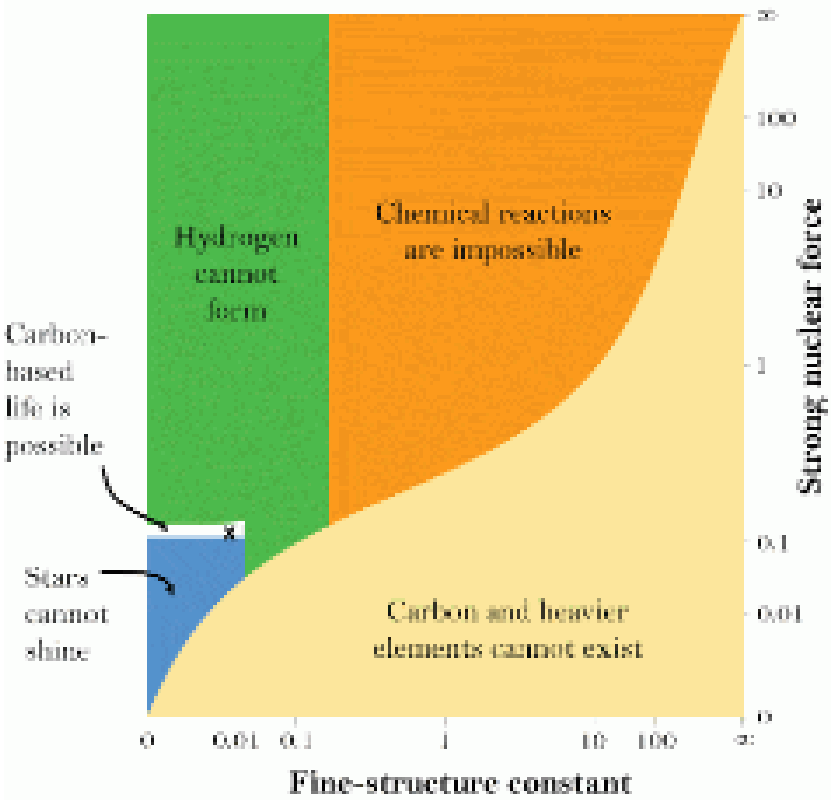

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant

If there is one thing that science fiction is good for, it's for popularizing the phrase "carbon-based life". Everyone has heard that carbon is essential for life. But do you know why carbon is so important? And did you know that the reaction that produced the carbon in our universe is actually fine-tuned, and therefore evidence for a Creator and Designer of the universe?

Hugh Ross has a new article up in Salvo magazine, which I found thanks to a post at Uncommon Descent.

Now he starts off with a discussion of how the mass density of the universe needed to be fine-tuned in order to produce elements heavier than hydrogen from the (only) hydrogen that was present at the creation event. I've talked about that reaction previously, but I won't repeat that here. Nucleosynthesis is one of the most important chemical reactions in science, and something every Christian should know and understand well enough to explain it.

You can't make complex embodied intelligent creatures such as ourselves out of only hydrogen and helium, but you can't make a life permitting universe without some hydrogen and helium. For one thing, you can't have liquid water without some hydrogen.

But the element carbon is the center hub of all of the molecules inside of us that allow for the storage and processing of information necessary for life. And it turns out that the

reaction that creates carbon from elements lighter than carbon is fine-tuned to an amazing degree.

Excerpt:

> But cosmic mass density is not the only thing that must have been exquisitely fine-tuned for the universe to contain any carbon. The nuclear resonance (or energy) levels for helium, beryllium, carbon, and oxygen also had to be exquisitely fine-tuned for carbon to exist. Here's how that happens.
>
> Stars fuse carbon and oxygen from helium through a series of reactions known as the triple-alpha process, in which three helium nuclei are combined to make one carbon nucleus. In the first step in this process, two helium nuclei (with 2 protons each) fuse together to make beryllium (which has 4 protons). Next, a helium nucleus fuses with a beryllium nucleus to make carbon (which has 6 protons). Then, some carbon nuclei fuse with helium nuclei to make oxygen (which has 8 protons).
>
> The only reason that the triple-alpha process produces any carbon or oxygen at all is because in the first step, the ground state energy level (i.e., the state of an atom when all of its electrons are at their lowest energy levels) of the beryllium-8 nucleus (containing 4 protons and 4 neutrons) almost exactly equals the ground state energy level of two helium-4 nuclei (2 protons and 2 neutrons each). In the second step, the ground state energy level of a beryllium-8 nucleus plus a helium-4 nucleus almost exactly equals the energy level of an excited state of a carbon-12 nucleus (6 protons and 6 neutrons). In the third step, the ground state energy level of a carbon-12 nucleus at 7.65 million electron volts is just slightly larger than the ground state energy level of an oxygen-16 nucleus (8 protons and 8 neutrons) at 7.12 million electron volts.[1]
>
> If it were not for the near equivalences or resonances of the nuclear energy levels of two helium nuclei relative to a beryllium nucleus, and of a beryllium nucleus plus a helium nucleus relative to a carbon nucleus, the universe would contain very little or no carbon and very little or no elements heavier than carbon. Life would be impossible.
>
> Furthermore, unless the difference in the nuclear energy levels between a carbon nucleus and an oxygen nucleus were precisely 0.53 million electron volts, the universe would contain either a lot of carbon and no oxygen or a lot of oxygen and no carbon. Either way, physical life would be impossible in the universe.
>
> In the early 1950s, astronomer Fred Hoyle and physicist Willy Fowler were the first to understand how critical the relative nuclear energy levels of helium, beryllium, carbon, and oxygen were for making life possible in the universe. Commenting on the highly fine-tuned nature of these nuclear energy levels, Hoyle wrote in an article he published in *Engineering & Science*,
>
> A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has

> monkeyed with the physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion beyond question.[2]

The article continues to explain that there is an additional problem of carbon fine-tuning related to habitability.

The carbon formation problem is one of the best examples of fine-tuning, and as you can see, it’s even admitted by atheists. It’s not the easiest one to explain (because resonance levels are not familiar in every day life), but it’s worth knowing about all three of the fine-tuning topics in the post.

Keep in mind that the more science has made progress, the more fine-tuning problems we have discovered. The trend is very bad if you are a naturalist. But very good if you are a theist. Evidence matters, and scientific evidence is the best kind of evidence.

U.S. birth rate hits record low, despite secular left's obsession with "overpopulation"

May 16, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

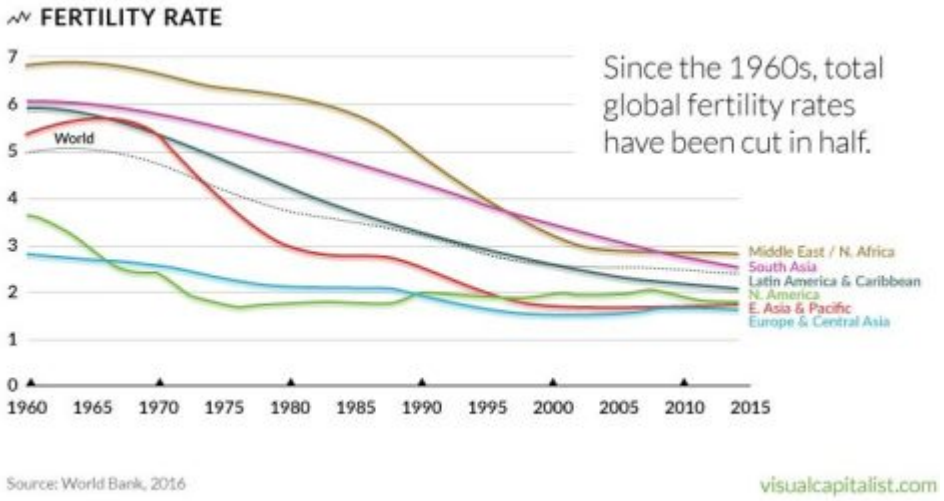

Total fertility rates have decreased globally by about half since 1960.

I had lunch with one of my co-workers on the secular left recently. I asked him what his biggest concern with the world. After telling me that he was a "libertarian", he said that he was alarmed that people were having too many babies. I asked him what he wanted to do about it. He said keep abortion legal, and use the government to stop people from reproducing. Some libertarian!

Anyway, he was just factually wrong about the overpopulation, and I had to launch into a long, detailed explanation of replacement rates, birth rates across the world, and how the prosperity created by capitalism has caused birth rates to decline in even poorer countries. I also explained to him that once a country dips below the replacement fertility rate (2.1 births per woman), it never returns. I concluded my refutation of his assertion by stating that he should be more worried about underpopulation than overpopulation.

Anyway, I had to repeat the same explanation again with another secular leftist that same week. So when I saw this recent Daily Caller article about a new report from the US Centers for Disease Control, I figured I might as well equip you guys to respond to other people with the same wrong view.

It says:

> The United States birth rate hit a record low in 2018 with numbers reflecting the lowest birthrates in the past 30 years, reports say.
>
> A new report from the National Center for Health Statistics at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reveals that almost every age group of women under 35 showed birth rate declines in 2018. The provisional number of births in the U.S. in 2018 was 3,788,235, down 2% since 2017. For every 1,000 women, the fertility rate declined 2% from 2017 to 1,728.0 births.
>
> Birth rates had reached a record low in 2017 as well, marking a continuing trend

> of declining birth rates over the past four years, according to CNN.
>
> […]These 2018 birth rate numbers are below the necessary threshold needed for population replacement, which is 2,100 births per 1,000 women, CNN reports.

So we're down to 1.73 births in the USA, which is below the 2.1 rate needed to maintain current population levels.

This new report isn't an outlier. It confirms what we knew about from previous reports.

Here's an earlier report from the far-left Pew Research Center, reported by the radically-leftist Slate, of all places.

Excerpt:

> A report issued last month by the Pew Research Center found that immigrant births fell from 102 per 1,000 women in 2007 to 87.8 per 1,000 in 2012. That helped bring the overall U.S. birthrate to a mere 64 per 1,000 women—not enough to sustain our current population.

> **Moreover, the poor, highly fertile countries that once churned out immigrants by the boatload are now experiencing birthrate declines of their own. From 1960 to 2009, Mexico's fertility rate tumbled from 7.3 live births per woman to 2.4, India's dropped from six to 2.5, and Brazil's fell from 6.15 to 1.9. Even in sub-Saharan Africa, where the average birthrate remains a relatively blistering 4.66, fertility is projected to fall below replacement level by the 2070s.** This change in developing countries will affect not only the U.S. population, of course, but eventually the world's.

Now I have a couple tools for you to share to those people who might have irrational views of this issue.

Useful videos

This video explains what's wrong with overpopulation fears:

And this one explains what the replacement rate number is:

You can share those for people who don't have time to read. It at least makes the point, even if it doesn't link to a reputable report.

A useful podcast

This podcast featuring famous economist Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse will be useful for you to understand why the overpopulation myth is something you should be concerned about.

The MP3 file is here. (from 1/22/2010)

Topics:

- how the transition from country to city discourages child-bearing
- how religion impacts how many children parents have
- what is the US birth rate, is it high enough?

- can we just import immigrants to alleviate the low birth rate?
- has increased prosperity encouraged people to have more children?
- how has the purpose of sex changed after the sexual revolution?
- how does the demographic crisis threaten entitlement programs?
- what do we learn from the declining birth rate in Japan?
- how does population growth impact stock market performance?

This podcast explains how some countries aren’t making enough young workers to pay for the social programs needed by a growing number of elderly people wanting to retire.

Please share the post if you found it useful.

Does abortion reduce violent crime? Does abortion reduce child abuse?

May 17, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

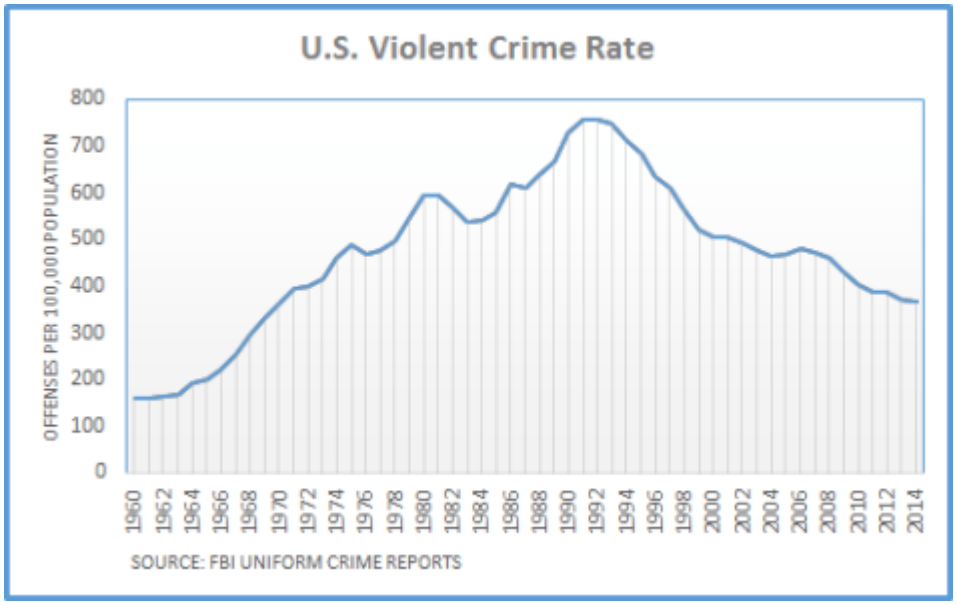

If abortion reduces crime, why does the evidence show that it doesn't?

Grr, my annoying co-workers are at it again this morning. This time, it's the man who annoyed me about overpopulation fears, which I responded to earlier this week. He says to me this morning that Alabama is going to have a big problem with violent crime because they've stopped abortions. These sorts of views are common among TV-watchers, but not among those study-readers.

Life Site News reports on a Yale Law & Economics Research Paper.

First, let's see the abstract:

> Abortion may prevent the birth of "unwanted" children, who would have relatively small investments in human capital and a higher probability of crime. On the other hand, some research suggests that legalizing abortion increases out-of-wedlock births and single parent families, which implies the opposite impact on investments in human capital and thus crime. The question is: what is the net impact? We find evidence that legalizing abortion increased murder rates by around about 0.5 to 7 percent. Previous estimates are shown to suffer from not directly linking the cohorts who are committing crime with whether they had been born before or after abortion was legal.

And now, let's see the Life Site News article:

> Law professors John R. Lott, Jr. of Yale Law School and John E. Whitley of the University of Adelaide found that legalizing abortion increased murder rates by up to seven percent. They concluded that legalizing abortion is a contributing factor to the great increase in out-of-wedlock births and single parent families,

> which in turn contribute to increased crime rates. Since 1970, the percentage of single-parent households in the United States has nearly tripled, from 11 percent to 32 percent, and the percentage of out-of-wedlock births has nearly quadrupled, from 11 percent to 43 percent of all children.7 Children born out-of-wedlock and raised by only one parent have a significantly higher incidence of crime.
>
> There are many other fundamental problems with the conclusion that legalized abortion leads to a decrease in crime.
>
> Statistician David Murray confirmed that young males between the ages of 17 and 25 commit the majority of crimes. However, if abortion had reduced crime, the crime rates in the United States would have dropped first among young people. They did not. Instead, the number of crimes committed by older people dropped first. Nearly 60% of the decline in murder since 1990 involved killers aged 25 and older — who were born before Roe v. Wade.8
>
> Murray also found that other nations with high abortion rates showed a large increase in crime about eighteen years after they legalized abortion. For example, in Great Britain, which legalized abortion in 1968, violent crime has been rising steeply since about 1985 — exactly when it should have been declining, according to the Donohue-Levitt thesis. Additionally, Russia, with the highest abortion rate on earth, has experienced a tidal wave of every kind of violent crime following the breakup of the Soviet Union.9
>
> FBI statistics showed that the murder rate in 1993 for 14- to 17-year-olds in the USA (born in the years 1975-1979, which had very high abortion rates) was 3.6 times higher than that of kids who were the same age in 1984 (who were born in the pre-legalization years of 1966-1970). Additionally, since Black women were having abortions at a much higher rate than White women, we should have expected the murder rate among Black youth to have declined beginning in about 1991. Instead, it increased more than five hundred percent from 1984 to 1993.10
>
> Finally, the huge increase in violent crime that peaked in 1991 and then began to decline is more closely related to the crack epidemic, not abortion. The Donohue-Levitt study confirms that the crime rate rose and fell exactly where crack cocaine was most easily available — in the large cities and among young Black males.11 This is also confirmed by the rise in crime during the time period 1984 to 1991, after a decline from 1980 to 1984. If abortion were the primary cause of a decline in violent crime, the crime rate would have been relatively stable during the time period 1980 to 1991.

By the way, a good book to buy on this is John Lott's "Freedomnomics: Why the Free Market Works and Other Half-Baked Theories Don't". One third of the book covers this topic.

And if you're wondering what caused the decline in violent crime rates in the 1990s, the

answer to that is that it was multiple factors. Better policing, mandatory sentencing laws, legalized concealed carry laws, and other factors were responsible.

Abortion and child abuse

Sometimes, pro-abortion people put forward a similar argument about abortion preventing child abuse. This argument seems intuitive, but from an evidence point of view, it's false.

Here's a report from Life News about a study out of Bowling Green State University.

Excerpt:

> For decades, evidence has existed showing abortion contributes to a rise in child abuse. Now a new study by a post-abortion research institute and Bowling Green State University professors finds that women who have abortions are more likely to abuse their children.
>
> **Published in the medical journal Acta Paediatrica, the study found that women who have had abortions are 2.4 times more likely to physically abuse their children.** Pro-life advocates say it proves the need for providing women with post-abortion counseling to help deal with the emotional trauma of the abortion.
>
> […]The authors suggested that "emotional difficulties and unresolved grief responses" from pregnancy loss, whether voluntary or involuntary, could have a negative impact on women's mental health and lead to unhealthy parenting responses.
>
> According to the Illinois-based Elliot Institute, which released information about the study's findings, prior surveys "have linked pregnancy loss to an increase in grief reactions, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, all of which can have a negative impact on parent/child relationships."
>
> The post-abortion research group also points to a 2002 study published in the Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology that found abortion has been linked to an increase in substance abuse and thoughts of suicide, which could also contribute to child abuse.
>
> The new study also found that women who had more than one miscarriage or stillbirth were more likely to engage in child abuse than women who had just one. However, women who had abortions were more likely to abuse their children whether they had one or more than one abortion.
>
> "Regardless of the specific mechanisms at play, maternal history of one induced abortion does appear to be a marker for increased risk of physical abuse," the authors concluded.

Whenever I read about how studies contradict people's intuitions about what will and will not work, it makes me sad that so many people who live life on intuitions and feelings are

still allowed to vote. If only we had a society where reason and evidence were seen as indispensable for building up your view of the world.

By the way, if you're looking for a good article for debating other aspects of the Alabama pro-life law, my friend William, who loves to debate everything, and he always wins, just posted this article about 9 myths about the Alabama pro-life law.

General advice on countering your co-workers

I found that if I passed on TV and movies, I could buy pretty much any book I wanted that has research-based responses to these common questions from secular leftists. All it takes is a commitment to dedicate your book-buying budget to the task of responding to challenges, instead of producing feelings.

I notice a lot of Christian women in my office reading fiction books, while the Christian men are always talking about TV and movies. Fiction and entertainment are useless for putting forward Bible-based views and supporting evidence in controversial discussions. Instead of wasting your money on fiction and entertainment, listen closely to what people in your office are saying, and then purchase and train with resources that help you to serve God in these discussions. Bible verses and prayers alone will not equip you to serve in difficult situations.

House Democrats pass Equality Act bill to put sexual orientation and gender identity above religious liberty

May 18, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

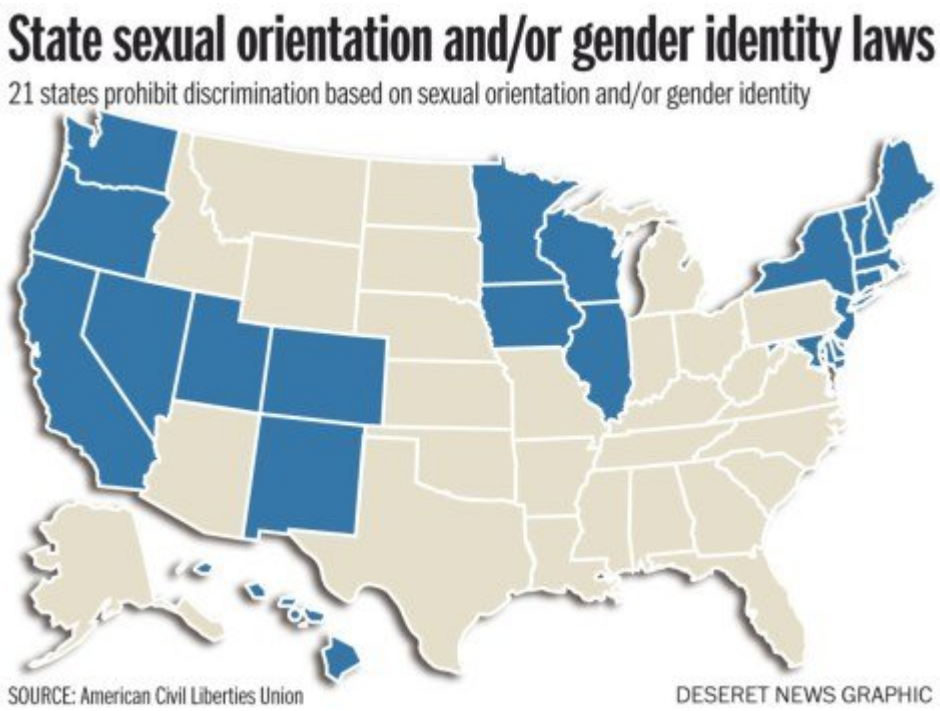

21 states have SOGI anti-discrimination laws

Remember watching that video of the fascist thug Democrat Brian Sims, as he bullied the pro-life lady who was praying outside of an abortion clinic? Well, imagine that abusing Christians who take the Bible seriously became the law of the land, and a minority of secular leftist were empowered to use government as a weapon to silence and coerce Bible-believing Christians.

Regular readers will be familiar with the cases where gay activists went after bed and breakfasts, wedding venues, photographers, florists, bakers, etc. who refused to participate in celebrations of same-sex marriage. Christians oppose same-sex marriage, because the leader of the religion defined marriage as being between one man and one woman. However, religious liberty wasn't a defense in these cases, because these states had passed "SOGI laws", which made it illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Equality Act is a Democrat bill that forces all the states without SOGI laws to allow gay activists to weaponize government against Christians, forcing them to participate in non-Christian celebrations of gay activism.

The Federalist described some effects of the bill:

> On the surface, the "Equality" Act is supposed to protect LGBT folks from discrimination by adding the categories of sexual orientation and gender identity to all federal civil rights laws, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It would make claims of discrimination related to these characteristics legally actionable in the

> way racism is, and applying to virtually every area of life: the workplace, education, banking, jury service, federal funding, housing, medicine and psychiatry, and all public facilities.
>
> It is a power grab in the guise of anti-discrimination. A bait-and-switch. It's another attempt by a ruling micro-clique to exert mega-control over everyone else's lives, including those it purports to protect. It allows the Mass State to maximize bureaucracy and social engineering, especially by its huge regulation of speech and expression. It erodes individual rights while claiming to uphold them.
>
> Sane people of goodwill have a host of good reasons to object to the so-called Equality Act. And many of those reasons have been written up, including the de-sexing of toilets and showers, the compelled speech inherent in pronoun protocols and severe punishment for "misgendering," the promised harassment of business owners, the invasion of girls' and women's sports by biological men who force on them an unequal playing field, the utter contempt for individual conscience, and more.
>
> The net result of this act would be a huge inequality of power accrued to the state and drained from the individual.

Other areas that would be affected: tax exempt status for churches, private college admissions, scholarships and curricula, moral standards in Christian organizations, forced transgender treatments at hospitals and health clinics, foster and adoption agencies could not prefer naturally married couples.

The author of that article lists five specific effects of the law:

1. It Undermines Everyone's First Amendment Rights
2. The Ambiguities in the Bill Threaten the Rule of Law
3. Nudge Toward a Chinese-style Social Credit System
4. Redefining Humanity By Outlawing Sex Distinctions
5. It Enshrines Socially Destructive Identity Politics

Let's see what the article says about #2:

> The first thing that should hit any reader of the so-called Equality Act is the ambiguity of its language, especially with the bill's outright emphasis throughout on "perceptions."
>
> […]Consider how much the "Equality" Act would rely on bureaucratic and court actors to divine the "perception" of the perpetrator or victim of so-called discrimination: it would have to calculate your intent, read your mind, check out your body language, pick you apart for any suggestion of malice. For example, it repeatedly refers to sexual orientation and gender identity as "actual or perceived." Many times throughout, the text notes that discrimination (or identity?) involves "perception or belief even if inaccurate" (emphasis mine).

> This dependence on perception or belief about a person's self-identity did not exist before. The language of this proposed law is more fluid than gender fluidity on steroids, and it's wild stuff to push, especially at the federal level. It invites no end of accusations and lawfare that bodes ill for society and promises much human wreckage. The only people "empowered" by such a scam are those on the upper levels of this newly devised food chain who can call the shots.

Here's more about #3 for those who didn't know about the China social credit system:

> If passed, we shouldn't be surprised if it eventually produces a social credit system not unlike what is happening in China, whereby your livelihood, education, career, mobility, and access to goods and services is based on a literal "score" of your compliance with government policy. To paraphrase Sir Richard Scruton's excellent observation of how that works in China, I'd say that the so-called Equality Act would help create robots out of Americans, with the state programming what they can say and do.
>
> As more people self-censor because of the risk of losing their livelihoods and social status, they simply become more prone to robotic compliance and conformity with limits on their speech. This is fast becoming the case in China, where citizens feel the need to build up their "social credit" to be allowed access to jobs, education, housing, and who knows what other goods and services. The so-called Equality Act's restrictions on First Amendment freedoms would be a big step in that direction.

A social credit system that scores you for conformity would be a logical effect of the intent of the Equality Act: to punish free expression in just about every sphere of life, including the workplace, at school, in the public square, and in all public facilities, and any place that might be connected with federal funding. (By the way, Scruton was punished—stripped of his chairmanship of an architectural commission in Britain—simply for explaining what the social credit system does to people in China. That should be another lesson for us here.)

Just to be clear, I live in a state with no SOGI law, and I still write about studies, etc. that are critical of the gay agenda from behind an alias. The second that this Equality Act becomes law, I would instantly have to delete this blog, my Facebook page, and my Twitter in case "discrimination" was "perceived" by an LGBT activist based on my previous writings, and they decided to investigate.

William Lane Craig: was Jesus crucified for being a political threat to the Romans?

May 19, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's investigate the historical facts

I blogged previously about William Lane Craig's appearance on the Ben Shapiro show. One thing that didn't seem to come up was Ben's own explanation for the rapid belief among the followers of Jesus in his bodily resurrection, and his identity as the Jewish Messiah. I guess Dr. Craig did some digging and found out Ben's view, because he posted a response to Ben on Facebook.

Here it is:

NOTE ON THE BEN SHAPIRO INTERVIEW

I'm grateful to Ben Shapiro for inviting me to appear on his program and for his excellent interview. Prior to going on the show, I prepared a brief on his view that Jesus was a political revolutionary who got himself crucified. As it turned out, the issue never came up, and the brief, like most of them I prepare, remained unused. But I share it here with you in case this issue ever comes up in your conversations.

Jesus as a Violent Revolutionary

This view was suggested by SGF Brandon back in the 1960s but has been virtually universally rejected by scholars. Why?

Four reasons:

1. It would require us to regard as inauthentic all of Jesus' moral teachings concerning non-violence, turning the other cheek, loving one's enemies, etc.

John Meier, A Marginal Jew, vol. 3, pp. 566-67:
"Jesus' inclusive outreach to all of Israel in the end time, his emphasis on mercy and forgiveness, his rejection of retaliation, and his exhortation to love even one's enemies lay at the opposite end of the Palestinian-Jewish spectrum from violence-prone zealotry."

2. Roman authorities never regarded Jesus or his followers as enemies.

When Messianic pretenders or prophets arose, the Roman authorities acted pre-emptively, decisively, and ruthlessly to destroy them. For example,
A.D. 36 a Samaritan prophet led people up Mt. Gerizim. Pilate immediately sent cavalry and infantry to attack them and destroy them.
A.D. 45 a man named Theudas led people to the Jordan River to part the waters. Fadus sent cavalry in a surprise attack and killed and captured many.
A.D. 50s a prophet called the Egyptian led followers to the Mt. of Olives to watch the walls of Jerusalem fall. Felix sent Roman troops to slaughter all of them.
But Roman troops were never sent to attack the followers of Jesus, either during his lifetime or after his death.

3. During Jesus' ministry Palestine was at relative peace.
All of the above examples occurred after Jesus' death. During Jesus' lifetime Palestine was basically at peace.

John Meier: "the fatal flaw of this approach is its presupposition that there was one or more organized and armed groups of Jewish revolutionaries active in Palestine c.a. A.D. 28-30. . . . But, as far as the historical record permits us to judge, there were no organized, armed groups of Jewish revolutionaries active during Jesus' public ministry."

So obviously Jesus did not lead such a group.

4. The evidence is that Jesus rejected being the Messiah in a militaristic sense.
I agree that Jesus thought of himself as the Messiah, but not in the military sense of a warrior-king.

James D.G. Dunn, Jesus Remembered, p. 653: Jesus ignored or refused or rejected the dominant current understanding of the Messiah as a royal and military power like Herod the Great.

Jesus ran contrary to the chief priests' and the people's expectations. Mk 15.31-2: "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe."

Most Jewish people I talk to don't really have a thought out explanation for the basic historic facts about Christianity. They tend to treat the New Testament as forbidden, and just keep the bare historical facts about Christianity at arm's length. So, even if I put forward a minimal facts case for the resurrection, for example, they tend to not want to engage with it. They won't deny facts, and they won't put up an alternative explanation. The best response I've heard is the one Ben gave: Jesus didn't achieve the things that Jews expected the Messiah to achieve, so we're still waiting on the real Messiah. And Dr. Craig's response to that was, well if Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, and God raised him from the dead, then God thinks that he's the Messiah.

What I've noticed in listening to my favorite Jewish conservatives like Dennis Prager, Ben Shapiro, etc. is that Jews don't put as much emphasis on testing religious claims as evangelical Protestants do. I have had evangelical Prostestants write to me about all kinds of scientific breakthroughs and historical discoveries, asking me what impact this or that has on the truth of Christianity. In my opinion, even conservative Jews don't invest as

much time into that sort of thing. They seem to be respectful of all religions that produce people who keep to the general moral teachings of the Old Testament. This is nice for me, because I do take those moral teachings seriously. But I remember someone asking Dennis Prager how to choose a religion, and his first rule was not to disrupt your family or community. That is something that no Christian like me could say.

After all, we have this from the founder of Christianity:

Matthew 10:34-38:

34 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35 For I have come to turn

"'a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—

36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'

37 "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Just to be clear, that sword is meant to divide, not do violence, OK? I actually told that verse to my mother when I was breaking with the Islamic religion she was trying to push me into when I was young. She did not like it!

Also, Christians have this:

John 18:36-37:

36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."

37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

So, Christianity is a truth-centered religion. Getting the beliefs correct comes first, and the good actions follow from that. It's not primarily about feeling good, about family acceptance, not about community cohesion, or even being a "good person". It's about recognizing Jesus for who he is – Lord and Savior – and giving Jesus acknowledgement and respect in your priorities and actions.

Rugby player has $4 million contract canceled because he tweeted Bible verses about sin

May 20, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rugby Australia CEO Raelene Castle

I used to think that if you were really good at your job, then it wouldn't matter if you were serious about your Christian beliefs, because no one would fire you. But I guess that's not true when it comes to the conflict between gay rights and the Bible. On Friday, an Australian rugby player had his contract canceled because he shared some Bible verses on social media.

Here's the story from the UK Daily Mail:

> Israel Folau says he 'deeply saddened' by Rugby Australia's decision to tear up his $4million rugby contract, but his religious beliefs should not stop him from playing the sport.
>
> The decision, which was announced on Friday afternoon, makes the devout Christian the first Australian athlete dismissed for expressing religious beliefs after sharing a homophobic Instagram post.
>
> […]'The Christian faith has always been a part of my life and I believe it is my duty as a Christian to share God's word.
>
> 'Upholding my religious beliefs should not prevent my ability to work or play for my club and country.'

The words he cited are from 1 Corinthians 6:9-14 which are about sin and repentance and

who will be admitted to the Kingdom of God.

Just to be clear, the Christian position on sexuality is that you cannot have sex outside of marriage. And the Christian position on marriage is that it is one man and one woman for life. Authentic Bible-believing Christians may fail to live out that standard, but they can never take any other stance than that in public. If you are a Christian, you cannot say that sex outside of marriage is fine with God. If you are a Christian you cannot say that redefinitions of natural marriage are OK with God. There's only one kind of authentic Christian, and that's the kind that takes the Bible as authoritative, including on moral issues. Telling someone they can't quote the Bible in public is essentially telling them that they can't be a Christian in public.

Whenever things like this happen to Christians who are serious about their beliefs, I always try to find out what the people who take away their livelihood have to say about it. These people usually think of themselves as very tolerant and open-minded, so it's interesting to hear how they keep their self-image after firing someone for their religious beliefs.

The article says:

> In a press conference this afternoon, Rugby Australia CEO Raelene Castle said Folau was a 'great player' but that everyone has the right to be respected regardless of sexuality, race, gender or religion.
>
> […]'Our clear message today is that we need to stand by our values and the qualities of inclusion, passion, integrity, discipline, respect and teamwork.'
>
> Ms Castle said she had told all rugby players in Australia that RA supports their rights to their own beliefs.
>
> 'But when we are talking about inclusiveness in our game, we are talking about respecting differences as well,' she said.
>
> 'When we say rugby is a game for all, we mean it. People need to feel safe and welcoming in the game, regardless of their race, background or sexuality.
>
> […]'I'm confident because those players understand that everybody has a right to their own views or religious beliefs, and as long as they continue to express them in a respectful way we will continue to support them,' she said.
>
> […]Ms Castle said she was 'disappointed' that Folau had not apologised.

So, did the rugby player have a right to be respected regardless of his religion? No, he needed to be fired. Did she respect his differences? No, she fired him. She says that authentic Christian quoting the Bible on social media is not being a Christian "in a respectful way". So there's a non-Christian telling a Christian how to behave like a Christian. And after she fires you, she's disappointed that you didn't apologize to her for not being Christian in a respectful way.

My thoughts

I have two thoughts about this. First, if you want to be public about your Christianity and keep your job, then you need to have an alias. Because of this intimidation from secular left fascists, Christians are refusing to speak out on moral issues on a daily basis. To help you to be more comfortable speaking out, you should have an alias. I have blogged about sexual issues and marriage many, many times on this blog, often citing peer-reviewed research in order to support the Christian position on these issues. And so far, no one has been able to get me fired. My goal is to have an influence. I want to do as much as I can without letting the fascists on the other side stop me.

Second, I've noticed that it's increasingly common for Christians to side with the gay activists against other Christians. And that's because Christianity has become so much about feelings and self-esteem that many people who claim to be Christians think that Christianity should always make them feel good and be popular. If all you have is feelings, it's pretty easy to put your need to feel good above the need to defend what the Bible teaches.

For those who would like to be bolder but don't know how, the Bible actually has an answer to that in 1 Pet 3:15. In order to be bold, you need to be prepared. By reading books outside of the Bible, you'll equip yourself with evidence so that you can debate non-Christians who don't accept the Bible. They may not accept the Bible, but they have to accept evidence, or they'll look stupid and irrational.

The most important thing Christian parents need to focus on with their children

May 21, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

I know what you're thinking – I'm going to say apologetics. But I was actually having a talk with a young women who found the arguments for God convincing, but wasn't sure whether she was ready for a personal relationship with the God of the Bible. It got me thinking about my past and what it was about the God of the Bible that caused me to make a commitment.

If I had to say what it is that cause me to take Christianity seriously, including accepting Jesus as my Leader (more than just as my Savior), it would be the conviction that God was lining things up in my life to show himself to me. This was particularly welcome because I could see that I had not been blessed with the best situation in life to start out with.

Sean McDowell has a recent post about it, and since he is an expert in apologetics, I'm inclined to agree with him.

He writes:

> In his book *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis makes a distinction between "Gift-love" and "Need-love." As for Gift-love, he gives the example of a father who works and plans for the future well being of his family, even though he will die without seeing them benefit. As for Need-love, Lewis gives the example of a lonely and frightened child who comes to its mother's arms for comfort and protection. Such love is neither selfish nor improper, because children are intended to have nurturing mothers, and mothers are intended to care for their kids.
>
> According to Lewis, God's love for mankind is entirely Gift-love: "The Father gives all He is and has to the Son. The Son gives Himself back to the Father, and gives

> Himself to the world, and for the world to the Father, and thus gives the world (in Himself) back to the Father too." God does not *need* our love or worship. Rather, He freely loves us as an extension of His grace.
>
> But our love for God is different. While we *may* be able to offer God Gift-love, our love is primarily need based. Lewis explains: "But man's love for God, from the very nature of the case, must always be very largely, and must often be entirely, a Need-love." We desperately need God in both this world and the next.
>
> And then Lewis makes an additional (and helpful) distinction—while our objective need for God will never change, our *awareness* of that need can. And if our awareness of the need for God fades, then so may our faith. Thus, Lewis says:
>
> *There seems no reason for describing as hypocritical the short-lived piety of those whose religion fades away once they have emerged from "danger, necessity or tribulation." Why should they not have been sincere? They were desperate and howled for help. Who wouldn't?*
>
> In other words, if someone believes in God because of an immediate need for safety or comfort, then as soon as the danger or pain ends, so may the faith. How does this relate to students? Think about it. If a young person believes in God for social or relational needs in the family, church, or school, then when those needs fade, so will his or her faith. If belief in God fulfills some external need, then as soon as that need fades, or another venue provides satisfaction of that need, the student will likely abandon his or her faith (or minimally, have a *marginalized* faith).

The whole post is worth reading, because no less than Sean McDowell himself had a moment like this where he realized his own sinfulness and had to rely on Jesus for his forgiveness.

Judging from his tweets, I know that Sean is obsessed with super-heroes like Spider-Man, and so he would not be comparing himself to his peers in terms of righteousness. That sort of distance between you and Spider-Man can be really grating for boys. Inside, we feel like we are meant to be super-heroes. Many young men go into apologetics because they see it as a super-power. The problem of not measuring up is very strong for us, because we see the demands of Christianity as much greater than mere church attendance. I imagine that as Sean engaged with people using his apologetics super-power, he probably realized how difficult it was to know *everything* and give an answer to *everyone.* That's above and beyond the standard shortcomings or pride, anger, hatred, and so on that are inside of every person.

We are not super-heroes but we need to have super-human righteousness (that is, perfect righteousness) in order to stand before our Creator and Designer. The only solution is to rely on the imputed righteousness of Jesus for our super-hero status. It is a good and healthy thing to take on Jesus as King, and to imitate him. But when we fail, we must also rely on him as Savior. And thank God the Father for that provision of salvation. And indeed, I myself think of Jesus as Savior in the moments where I am conscious of my

own sin. But I need to think about him more than that, and I'll explain how next.

In my case, I wanted to be a super hero growing up, but I knew I wasn't coming from a family or a background that made super-heroes. I was saved in a non-Christian home where, thanks to my hands-off "parents", I was on a very dark path to failure. In fact, I can see where I would have ended up by just looking at where my older brother is now. That disaster is what my parents, my schools, my culture, etc. produced in him, and it would have been me except for God stepping in to make himself known. I get excited about God as initiator and architect of salvation (not without my free will to trust). When God architects a divine appointment for me to use my prepared abilities in his defense or in mentoring little ones, I praise God as author of salvation. But I forget that Christ is the one who allows me to be clean enough to participate in this plan.

My ambition from small was to be a super-hero, and this later turned into great respect for people in the military, especially those who are awarded the Medal of Honor, like Michael Murphy. I want God to give me the Medal of Honor, too. But sin ruins my ambition every day. When I am called out to serve and am found faithful and competent, I need to remember that what makes me fit for service is Christ's sacrifice on the cross. His shed blood is the cape that I put on when it is my turn to come off the bench and be who I was designed to be. It is very important to me that the God I serve is the kind of God who won't turn away from me when I fall short.

What happens when we die? Is there a resurrection? Is there a Heaven and a Hell?

May 22, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

One of the questions that everyone should ask themselves is "what happens to me when I die?" Well, I'm an evangelical Protestant Christian, and I think that view of the world is correct according to logic and evidence. Well, I found an article on this that provides the philosophical theology perspective, from Dr. William Lane Craig. You can't do better than him.

He writes:

> The first and most fundamental truth that we must hold on to is that *the biblical hope of immortality is physical, bodily resurrection*. I repeat: The biblical hope for immortality is physical, bodily resurrection. The biblical hope is *not* that the soul will someday be separated from the body and fly off to heaven and be forever with God in heaven in this disembodied existence. That's actually a very Greek understanding of the afterlife, from the Greek philosophers like Plato, and it's very different from the Jewish-Hebrew way of thinking of the afterlife. For Jews and for the early Christians alike, the hope of immortality was not the immortality of the soul alone but rather the resurrection of the body. This physical body will be raised from the dead and transformed to immortal life.

He cites 1 Cor 15:20 and Phil 3:20-21 as support.

And do we get our resurrection bodies right away?

> Now that raises the next question: *When* do we receive our resurrection bodies?

> When do we get our resurrection body? Is it immediately upon death? When we die, do we immediately receive our resurrection body? Well, the answer to that is, no. That idea fails to take seriously the physical nature of the resurrection. The resurrection body is not some different body. It is *this* body transformed into a glorious, immortal, Spirit-filled, incorruptible form. So if we received our resurrection body immediately upon death, the graves of all the Christians would be empty! There would be no corpses left in the tombs because our resurrection bodies are the transformation of this earthly body. Therefore, the resurrection doesn't take place immediately upon death. Rather the Scriptures are fairly clear that this takes place at the second coming of Christ, when Christ returns to earth.

He cites 1 Cor 15:21-23, 51-52 for support, as well as 1 Thes 4:13-17.

And what about the time in between death and the second coming of Christ? After all, in Luke 23:39-43, Jesus tells the dying thief who believes in him that he'll be with Jesus in Paradise that very day:

39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence?

41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

43 Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Dr. Craig says:

> [T]he Bible indicates is that the soul does survive the death of the body. Human death does not mean extinction. Human death is simply the separation of the soul from the body. While the body dies biologically and decays away, the soul continues to exist and continues to live in a disembodied state. In between your death and your resurrection you will exist as a disembodied soul, a soul without a body, in a conscious state.

And he cites Phil 1:21-24, where it talks about how life after death, but before the resurrection, is an improvement, because he will be with Christ, which is "far better". Those who don't accept Jesus as Lord and Savior will also have a life after death, but apart from Christ. And they'll also have a resurrection, but not to eternal life with Christ:

> In John 5 there's a very interesting passage where Jesus speaks about the resurrection, and He says that there will be a resurrection, not only of the righteous dead, but even also of the unrighteous dead. John 5:28-29. Look at this saying by Jesus: "Do not marvel at this. For the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of

> condemnation." Jesus envisions that all people will be raised from the dead. Those who are believers, the righteous dead, will be raised to the resurrection of life; but the unrighteous dead, those who have rejected God's grace and His love, will be raised to the resurrection of condemnation.

Dr. Craig also talks about the story of Lazarus, where the rich man, who is not saved, is in Hades, which is the Greek word for the Hebrew word "Sheol", which you may recognize from the Psalms.

Dr. Craig writes:

> When people die, the righteous go to be with Christ, where they will await their resurrection from the dead. The damned go to Hades, where they are in a disembodied state where they await their resurrection to final judgment. Only then are people ushered in to their *final* state, which is heaven or hell.

I cannot wait until I get my resurrection body. I have a very good idea of what I'd like it to be, too. I think about the resurrection a lot, and really look forward to it. I had a difficult life in many ways. There are things that have not been resolved, like not being married, and being stuck as a virgin! And then there's the troubles I sometimes have at work, when atheists who are younger and more dedicated than me make me feel inadequate. I was a hard worker in my 20s and 30s, but now in my 40s, I just feel like I would rather be doing things I really care about, and it's sometimes hard to focus, especially when retirement is just around the corner – around age 50.

Sometimes, I find myself driving home in my beautiful city and state, and I just think, the most important things are not all this prosperity and freedom God blessed me with, but that vertical relationship with God. And I wish I was doing more to really show Jesus that he is Lord of my life. But my hope is that in the end, I will share in his vindication, being clothed in a righteousness that I did not earn myself.

Yale University computer science professor takes a look at protein formation probabilities

May 23, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

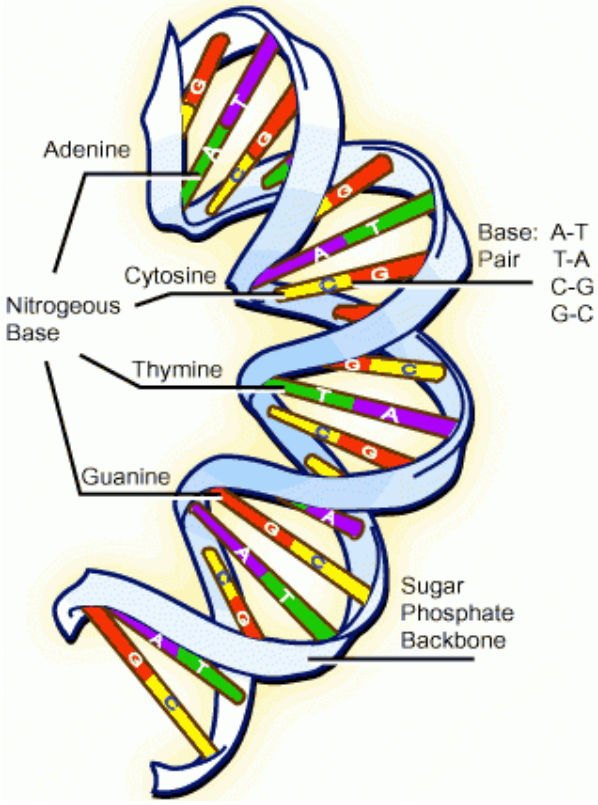

How did life begin?

When I was in graduate school, we studied a book called “Mirror Worlds”, authored by famous computer science professor David Gelernter at Yale University. This week, I noticed that Dr. Gelernter had written an article in the prestigious Claremont Review of Books. In his article, he applies his knowledge of computer science to the problem of the origin of life.

Evolution, if it is going to work at all, has to explain the problem of how the basic building blocks of life – proteins – can emerge from non-living matter. It turns out that the problem of the origin of life is essentially a problem of information – of code. If the components of proteins are ordered properly, then the sequence folds up into a protein that has biological function. If the sequence is not good, then just like computer code, it won’t run.

Here’s Dr. Gelernter to explain:

> How to make proteins is our first question. Proteins are chains: linear sequences of atom-groups, each bonded to the next. A protein molecule is based on a chain of amino acids; 150 elements is a “modest-sized” chain; the average is 250. Each link is chosen, ordinarily, from one of 20 amino acids. A chain of amino acids is a polypeptide—“peptide” being the type of chemical bond that joins one amino acid to the next. But this chain is only the starting point: chemical forces among the links make parts of the chain twist themselves into helices; others straighten

> out, and then, sometimes, jackknife repeatedly, like a carpenter's rule, into flat sheets. Then the whole assemblage folds itself up like a complex sheet of origami paper. And the actual 3-D *shape* of the resulting molecule is (as I have said) important.
>
> Imagine a 150-element protein as a chain of 150 beads, each bead chosen from 20 varieties. But: only certain chains will work. Only certain bead combinations will form themselves into stable, useful, *well-shaped* proteins.
>
> So how hard *is* it to build a useful, well-shaped protein? Can you throw a bunch of amino acids together and assume that you will get something good? Or must you choose each element of the chain with painstaking care? It happens to be *very* hard to choose the right beads.

Gelernter decides to spot the Darwinist a random sequence of 150 elements. Now the task the Darwinist is to use random mutation to arrive at a sequence of 150 links that has biological function.

> [W]hat are the chances that a random 150-link sequence will create such a protein? Nonsense sequences are essentially random. Mutations are random. Make random changes to a random sequence and you get another random sequence. So, close your eyes, make 150 random choices from your 20 bead boxes and string up your beads in the order in which you chose them. What are the odds that you will come up with a useful new protein?
>
> […]The total count of *possible* 150-link chains, where each link is chosen separately from 20 amino acids, is 20^{150}. In other words, *many*. 20^{150} roughly equals 10^{195}, and there are only 10^{80} atoms in the universe.
>
> What proportion of these many polypeptides are useful proteins? Douglas Axe did a series of experiments to estimate how many 150-long chains are capable of stable folds—of reaching the final step in the protein-creation process (the folding) and of holding their shapes long enough to be useful. (Axe is a distinguished biologist with five-star breeding: he was a graduate student at Caltech, then joined the Centre for Protein Engineering at Cambridge. The biologists whose work Meyer discusses are mainly first-rate Establishment scientists.) He estimated that, of all 150-link amino acid sequences, 1 in 10^{74} will be capable of folding into a stable protein. To say that your chances are 1 in 10^{74} is no different, in practice, from saying that they are zero. It's not surprising that your chances of hitting a stable protein that performs some useful *function*, and might therefore play a part in evolution, are even smaller. Axe puts them at 1 in 10^{77}.
>
> In other words: immense is so big, and tiny is so small, that neo-Darwinian evolution is—*so far*—a dead loss. Try to mutate your way from 150 links of gibberish to a working, useful protein and you are guaranteed to fail. Try it with ten mutations, a thousand, a million—you fail. The odds bury you. It can't be

> done.

Keep in mind that you need many, many proteins in order to have even a simple living cell. (And that's not even considering the problem of organizing the proteins into a system).

So, if you're a naturalist, then your only resources to explain the origin of life are chance and mutation. As Dr. Gelernter shows, naturalistic explanations won't work to solve even part of the problem. Not even with a long period of time. Not even if you use the entire universe as one big primordial soup, and keep trying sequences for the history of the universe. It just isn't possible to arrive at sequences that have biological function in the time available, using the resources available. The only viable explanation is that there is a computer scientist who wrote the code without using trial and error. Something that ordinary software engineers like myself and Dr. Gelernter do all the time. We know what kind of cause is adequate to explain functioning code.

New study: 90% of species on Earth today originated 100,000 to 200,000 years ago

May 24, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Well, it's Friday, so I thought we would all benefit from reading about a brand new peer-reviewed study that should be the final nail in the coffin of naturalistic evolution. At least for those with an open mind who are not wedded to the philosophical assumption of naturalism.

Phys.org (which is committed dogmatically to fully naturalistic evolution) reports:

> Mark Stoeckle from The Rockefeller University in New York and David Thaler at the University of Basel in Switzerland, who together published findings last week sure to jostle, if not overturn, more than one settled idea about how evolution unfolds.
>
> It is textbook biology, for example, that species with large, far-flung populations—think ants, rats, humans—will become more genetically diverse over time.
>
> But is that true?
>
> "The answer is no," said Stoeckle, lead author of the study, published in the journal *Human Evolution*.
>
> For the planet's 7.6 billion people, 500 million house sparrows, or 100,000 sandpipers, genetic diversity "is about the same," he told AFP.
>
> The study's most startling result, perhaps, is that nine out of 10 species on Earth today, including humans, came into being 100,000 to 200,000 years ago.
>
> "This conclusion is very surprising, and I fought against it as hard as I could,"

> Thaler told AFP.
>
> That reaction is understandable: How does one explain the fact that 90 percent of animal life, genetically speaking, is roughly the same age?

Oh, oh. Pick me, pick me. I know the answer. The answer is that the biological information in living systems was put there by an intelligent agent. You know, the same way that information in books is put there by intelligent agents. And the same way that information in computer code is put there by intelligent agents. And the same way that information in blog posts is put there by intelligent agents. We know what introduces information from our own experience.

Well, what about mutation and selection? Couldn't they create all this information in a couple hundred thousand years? Well, no. You see, mutation and selection have been tested in the lab to see how much information they can produce over generations and generations. And the conclusion is clear: it is impossible for blind forces to create the amount of information we see in living systems in the short time that is available. In fact, the whole history of the universe is not enough time for evolutionary mechanisms to create the information we have in front of us.

Before we leave the paper reported by Phys.org, here is something about whether we see the gradual emergence of complexity via lots of transitional forms in nature.

Not so much:

> […][A]nother unexpected finding from the study—species have very clear genetic boundaries, and there's nothing much in between.
>
> "If individuals are stars, then species are galaxies," said Thaler. "They are compact clusters in the vastness of empty sequence space."
>
> The absence of "in-between" species is something that also perplexed Darwin, he said.

Indeed. So perplexing.

The evidence we gain from the progress of science is always perplexing to people who assume naturalism, and then try to shoehorn reality to match their religious assumptions. I have an idea. Why don't we just make science the search for truth, no holds barred? Wouldn't that be a much better way to do science? Let's just do science honestly, and stop trying to make it prove things that are comfortable for us.

If the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life, the origin of the first living system, and the sudden origin of body plans in the Cambrian explosion are impossible to account for on naturalism, then maybe we need to jettison the philosophical assumption of naturalism, and just go where the evidence leads? What's wrong with that?

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

May 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here's a debate with a well-qualified atheist and Dr. Craig.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any

errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It's not

just that the settings are unlikely, it's that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a "herd morality" that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved "herd morality". However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are

true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It’s possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It’s also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is “Does God Exist?”. If Dr. Millican answers “no” then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God’s existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don’t see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the

need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to

nothing.

We don’t have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can’t be an abstract object because they don’t cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we’ve never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have “algorithmic properties” as well as physical properties, it doesn’t mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that’s not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God’s goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God’s goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can’t translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can’t be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can’t be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don’t permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Pediatric endocrinologist traces the history of transgender medicine

May 26, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

History of transgender medicine

I can't remember who sent me this lecture featuring Dr. Qu3ntin V4n M3t3r, MD, FCP, but I liked it so much I decided to write a post about it. First, we'll take a look at his credentials, then I'll post the video of the lecture, and a brief summary with not too many controversial details. Then I will link to a Wall Street Journal article by one of the other physicians mentioned, Dr. P4ul McHu8h.

So, first, the background of Dr. Qu3ntin V4n M3t3r:

> Dr. V4n M3t3r graduated from the College of William and Mary in 1969. He attended the Medical College of Virginia where he received his medical degree in 1973. Dr. V4n M3t3r did his pediatric internship in 1973 and 1974, and his pediatric residency from 1974 to 1976, at the Naval Regional Medical Center in Oakland, through the University of California, San Francisco. He completed his pediatric endocrinology fellowship from 1978 to 1980 at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.
>
> Dr. V4n M3t3r worked as a staff pediatric endocrinologist at the Naval Hospital in San Diego from 1980 to 1986 and was Chairman and Director of the residency training program at the Naval Hospital Oakland from 1986 to 1991. In 1991, he retired from a 20-year career in the Navy Medical Corps and moved to the Atlanta area where he joined the Fayette Medical Clinic as a Pediatrician and Pediatric Endocrinologist. To better serve the ever-expanding population of pediatric patients with endocrine disorders, he developed his own full-time endocrine practice, which today bears his name. He is a clinical associate professor of Pediatrics at both the Emory University and Morehouse Schools of Medicine.

In addition to the professorships, he has a number of board certifications and professional

memberships, listed at the link above.

Here's the video of the lecture:

And here's my brief summary, which has no controversial details.

- speaker biography
- the history of the transgender medicine movement
- major figures in the transgender medicine movement
- the origin of the term gender
- the origin of the term gender dysphoria
- early results of the transgender medicine movement
- other results from transgender clinics from Canada and Netherlands
- the scholarship of the transgender medicine movement
- current transgender research
- effective responses

The lecture has about 450,000 views.

If you don't have 40 minutes to watch the lecture, then you can read an article that summarizes the lecture.

In the lecture, he mentioned two other physcians, K3nn3th Zuck3r and P4ul McHu8h.

I found a good article by the latter in the Wall Street Journal, which I blogged about previously.

You can grab the PDF of the full text of the WSJ article here.

I also found a useful summary of the science of transgenderism on the web site of one of the medical associations mentioned in the lecture.

Another lecture

Finally, YouTube suggested another lecture featuring some other physicians. I watched that one too, and it talked about some of the repercussions from treating young children with drugs and / or surgeries.

The video is here:

And I found an article about this lecture for those who don't have an hour to watch it as well. I watched this one as well.

Thinking practically about the gospel with an illustration from a war movie

May 27, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The city of Mogadishu, in Somalia, Africa

I decided to re-post one of my favorite posts for Memorial Day.

First, let's get an overview that helps us understand the context and goals of the mission we are going to discuss.

The scene is set in Somalia, Africa, in 1992. There a civil war between two warlords: Ali Mahdi and Mohammed Farah Aidid. The war has destroyed agricultural operations, and the people are starving. The United Nations are trying to help, but Aidid hijacks the food from UN aircraft so that he can use the food to gain control of the people. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis are dying of starvation. The UN requests American military forces to secure the air-dropped supplies so they can be distributed to the starving people.

In December 1992, President George H.W. Bush answers the call, sending 25,000 troops to Somalia to protect the food from the Somali warlords. However, in 1993, Bill Clinton is elected. He orders that the number of U.S. troops be reduced to 12,000. Following an attack by Aidid on Pakistani peace-keepers, the U.N. issues a resolution to capture those responsible. The U.S. armed forces have the arms and training to battle evil, so they get the call to capture Aidid and his lieutenants.

In late August 1993, Task Force Ranger is deployed to Mogadishu to capture Aidid and his lieutenants at the Olympic Hotel. The U.S. force consists of 440 troops from the Army Rangers and Army Delta Force special forces, commanded by General William Garrison. Garrison requested light armored units (Bradley Infantry Fighting vehicles) that would offer more protection than the unarmored HMMWV Humvees. Garrison was denied the light armor by the Clinton administration. Garrison requested heavier air support (AC-130 Spectre gunships) that would offer better fire support than the UH-60 Blackhawk miniguns. Garrison was denied the air support by the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration did not want the American forces to appear too heavily armed for the peace-keeping role.

The actual mission turned out to be much harder than it needed to be, because of the resources denied by the Clinton administration. Although the Aidid lieutenants were captured, Aidid himself escaped. Eighty-four American soldiers were wounded. Eighteen American soldiers were killed, and their bodies were dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. This was shown over and over by the media, and it undermined American resolve to help the Somali people. As a result, Clinton had the excuse he needed to retreat the American military.

(Source: Nova Online)

Two heroes lost their lives

Today, I want to talk about two of the men who lost their lives in Operation Gothic Serpent. They are Master Sergeant Gary I. Gordon and Sergeant First Class Randall D. Shughart – a Delta Force sniper team.

Here is a clip from the movie Blackhawk Down, which shows what happened to them:

The pilot of the downed Blackhawk was protected by the two men who volunteered to go in after him. They requested that they be inserted at the crash site, even though they knew that reinforcements were likely not going to be there in time to save them. They made the request to go and help the pilot *three times* before being allowed to go in. Their first two requests were denied by their commanding officer, because the odds against their survival were so overwhelming. The rescued pilot was later released by his captors, and the two heroes were awarded the Medal of Honor for their brave actions.

A Congressional Medal of Honor

Here is a description of the requirements to be awarded a Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through **conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of**

> **duty**:
>
> - While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States;
> - While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
> - While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

You can read the official details of their actions.

The point of this post

It is important for Christians to be familiar with real-world examples of people giving their lives in order to save the lives of others. When we see real-world examples of self-sacrifice, it helps us to understand what Jesus really achieved for us, and what he must have felt making that hard choice to volunteer to go in and rescue us. In general, my philosophy when it comes to the Bible is to make every effort to connect what the Bible says to the real world. We must not push Christianity into some far-off world of piety and feelings. We must make connections to real evidence and real life, so that what the Bible says becomes practical, and so that we have a deep friendship with and sympathy for God revealed in Jesus Christ. In real life, being willing to give your life to save someone else is hard. Understanding how that really happens will help us to value what Jesus has done for us.

Bible verses

I saw this verse on the ground outside the Airborne & Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, NC, where I went for my summer vacation in 2015. (Thanks to my friend Curby who hosted me)

Isaiah 6:8:

> [8] Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
>
> And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Here is the picture I took (yes, that is my running shoe):

"Here am I, send me" Isaiah 6:8

When confronted with an opportunity to imitate Christ in his self-sacrifice, we should think less about ourselves and our own desires, and take the opportunity to serve others effectively. We do not do what makes us happy, and we do not pursue fun and thrills. We do what heals, we do what helps others. We do not push away our responsibility to imitate Christ by caring for those in danger. Christianity is not just about "not doing bad things". It's the good things you do because of your relationship with Jesus that show your real allegiance, and give you the experience of being a Christian in deed.

And here is another good verse:

John 15:13:

> [13] Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

If you get a chance to watch the movie Blackhawk Down, then do so. I highly recommend it. You can also read the book that the movie is based on.

I love the Medal of Honor books by Edward F. Murphy. He writes about all the people who have been awarded the Medal of honor in different wars: World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

If you check my reading list, you'll find that I usually read two military books for every one book on another subject.

The downside of the soul mate / fairy tale view of relationships

May 28, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(Image: Husband and wife doing some woodworking together)

Astonishing article from the leftist Huffington Post, of all places. (links removed)

Excerpt:

> As millennial women, we were groomed for a white knight fantasy. From childhood favorites such as *Snow White* to adult rom-com staples such as *How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days* or *Sleepless in Seattle*, the media perpetuates a romantic storyline in which compatibility and lasting romance is something effortless, built on chance, sustained by good looks, fun dates and electric sexual chemistry. These story lines shape our expectations for romantic happiness. It is not enough to find someone with whom we are mostly compatible, who would make a good parent, with whom we could learn and grow wrinkly; now, we expect a perfect fit and an easy, instantaneous "connection." In short, we want a soul mate. But it is this desire for a soul mate that is actually the undoing of our happy ending.
>
> A "soul mate" is defined as one who is ideally suited to us, perfectly completes us, one with whom the relationship feels easy and natural. With them, a relationship is just "meant to be"… A survey of young adults conducted by the National Marriage Project found that while 84% of young adults report finding a marriage partner "very important," a full 94% of young adults say they would like to marry a soul mate, and 73% of people ages 18 – 29 believe that there is a soul mate out there for them.

Wow. That doesn't sound like a good approach to me. My approach has always been to pick the girl who was most willing to learn new things. And then to explain to her my vision for marriage and see if I could get her to work independently on that plan before I married her. I don't favor this soul mate approach at all.

Does the "soul mate" approach work?

> We heard that those who get married later and possess a college degree have fewer divorces and more stable marriages. So we spend our twenties trying to find ourselves through travel, accumulating degrees and building a career. Marriage will be the capstone of our achievements, and nothing less than tying the knot with a soul mate will suffice. But the tragic irony is that soul mate thinking makes us increasingly likely to divorce. A study of 1,400 married men and women shows that people who hold soul mate orientations are 150% more likely to end up divorced than those who do not.
>
> **The widespread cultural belief in "soul mate ideology" undermines our chances at happiness because it makes us passive receivers of idyllic romantic expectations. Further, it fosters self-centeredness; one rarely longs to be a soul mate for someone *else*, which would require effort. For this reason, believing in soul mates is one of the most dis-empowering belief systems we can adopt. As millennials, we pride ourselves on actively pursuing the life we want to live, rather than simply accepting whatever hand we are dealt. We are innovative, passionate, proactive and not afraid to take risks. Yet, there is a disconnect when it comes to our desire for lasting love. Though there are prospects around us, we forgo taking the concrete steps needed to build happy compatible relationships because we do not "feel a spark." We are passively waiting on the sidelines for love to "happen," and then wonder why it is so difficult.**

I've always felt that the soul mate approach was like the evil villain in opposition to my noble plan-based approach. My approach is to pick a woman who wants to learn and work hard. Explain your marriage plan to her, and how your marriage plan serves God. My marriage plan accomplishes four goals, for example. 1) Influence the university with apologetics, 2) influence the church with apologetics, 3) provide a model of a good marriage to people in the community, including co-workers, college students and neighbors, and 4) raise effective, influential children who will have an impact for God. Now if you are a Christian woman raised in a church that affirms the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage with this "God has a wonderful plan for your life" stuff, then a specific, non-emotional plan from a man is the last thing you want to hear about.

Their solution is for people to work at compatibility:

> Compatibility is something co-created through intentionality and conscious choice. It involves mutual sacrifice, effort and commitment for the sake of the

> other’s benefit. A recent study found that of the couples who demonstrate above average daily generosity, 50% of them report being “very happy” in marriage; among the low generosity scores, only 14% can say the same. As studies indicate, selflessness is required to create mutual compatibility. It is not instantaneous, nor does it usually begin with true love’s kiss.
>
> We both know from experience that there are some you naturally connect with and others you do not. This is not a call towards forced attraction or companionship. But, our romantic futures should not be placed in the hands of blind chance. It is time we roll up our sleeves and shift our expectations from unattainable perfection to realistic romance, one that accounts for imperfection. We must understand that work in a relationship is a necessary key to success, rather than an indication of imminent failure. We will be letting go of a tired plot line that sets us up for disappointment and embracing an active role in our own unique story.
>
> How refreshing to know that we do not have to be perfect to be lovable, and that our romantic success is not solely dependent on finding the “right” fit, but instead built through cultivating daily moments of generosity, sacrifice and conscious coupling.

So in my case, I am looking for a woman who listens to the plan, develops the skills for the plan and then independently engages in activities to achieve the goals of the plan. In the past, I have had women listen to the plan carefully, including my motivations and experiences that caused me to choose this plan. And they have been willing to read books, listen to lectures, watch debates, to gain the skills needed to make a difference. And they have even engaged independently with activities like public speaking, teaching classes, and so forth. But none of the women who had done that accepted the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage. They all wanted to hear a good plan, learn useful skills and then get to work. Big difference.

Famous pick-up artist Roosh V urges men not to act like clowns for casual sex

May 29, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

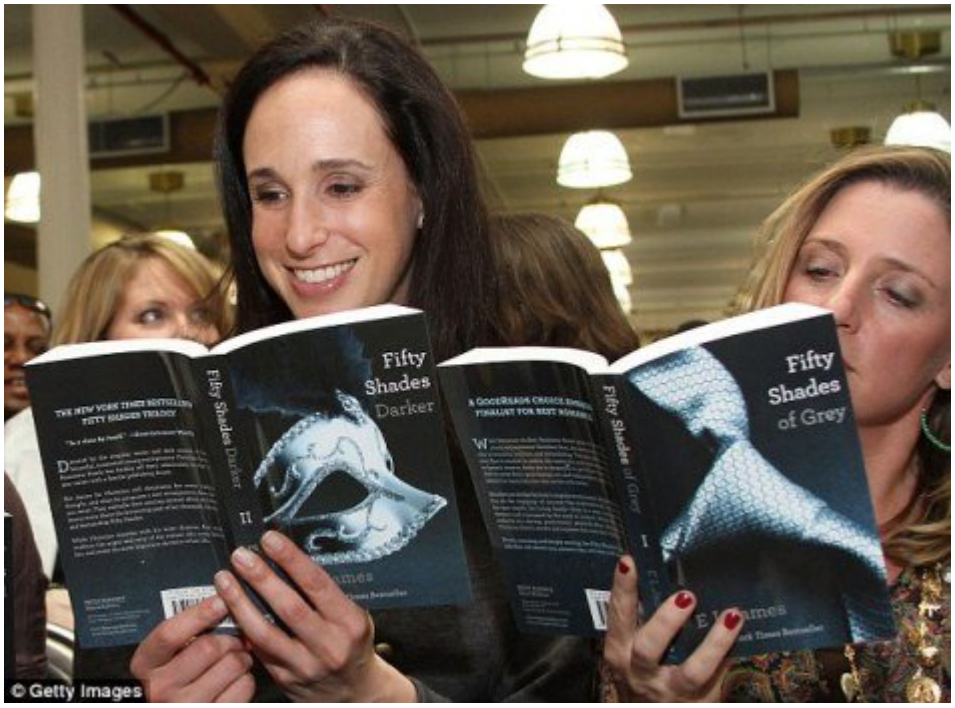

Fifty Shades was popular with women, including "Christian" women – why?

Is it meaningful and rewarding for men to spend their time and money pursuing casual sex? I would expect that men who tried and failed to obtain casual sex to say that it's a waste of time and money. But what about a man who was so successful at obtaining casual sex that he wrote bestselling books about it? Did he find his achievements meaningful in the end?

Roosh V is a well-known pick-up artist who is a master at seducing women. He's traveled all over the world and seduced many women from many countries.

In a post from April 2019, he reaches a startling conclusion about his success:

> I began pursuing women for mostly sexual reasons in 2001. I must've logged tens of thousands of hours into the task. I've been also traveling or living abroad near continuously since 2007. I've spent *a lot* of time trying to fornicate, fornicating, traveling to more effectively fornicate, and writing over a million words about fornication. What did I learn from all that? It's an experience that gets more dull with repetition, like any other experience. However, it also leaves you with a massive hangover where you find yourself at a loss. What was the point of all that? Is there anything I've truly gained? What lasting glory have I achieved? If I wasn't a writer, I would have nothing to "show" for my efforts besides memories that are as likely to make me cringe as give me happiness.
>
> If society were healthy, and if women were more traditional, most of my time would have been spent writing different kinds of books, maybe concerning

> religion or history. I would have a family, and spend much of my time nurturing the love between them without degenerate interference from the government or cultural elites. […]While there is nothing in life that is solid, my family and community would give me a stronger feeling of continuity. Tomorrow, things that are likely to be here would still be there, compared to the easy-come-easy-go modern lifestyle **where putting your penis inside a girl is not even close to a guarantee you'll see her again**, and where any job you have, or apartment you live in, is as transitory as the next bus that rolls down the street.
>
> […]**As I approach 40 years of age, I see most of my hedonistic and travel pursuits as expensive life lessons than a source of meaning. My nature, and I believe the nature of most masculine men I meet, is one of creation, strength, and provision for family, things we're increasingly not allowed to do, or allowed to do only at impossible cost.**

Indeed. Speaking for myself, one of the main reasons that I've avoided casual sex (or premarital sex of any kind) is because from earliest days, I could not stomach the idea of a woman that I had sex with walking away. So, my education, career and finance decisions were oriented to winning the heart of *one* woman who would commit to me for life, so that we could built something nice for the Lord together.

In another post, from March 2014, Roosh explains why casual sex didn't provide him with validation:

> There is definitely not a single woman alive in the Western world who *needs* a man. While in the past a woman had to put forth effort to obtain a husband who would help her survive, today she is protected by a welfare state that ensures she will never go hungry or spend one night on the street.
>
> […]From a young age, girls are brainwashed to believe that they don't need men and that the key to their happiness is self-empowerment by sleeping around and becoming a corporate wage slave. It's hard to dispute the notion that a woman who believes she doesn't need a man won't make as good of a relationship partner as one who does. She will treat you as a distraction to her more important job, girls' nights out, and social networking validation happy time. Men have become an utterly replaceable and expendable commodity in a girl's life. Her interest in a man is not unlike her interest in a new television show or Apple product, and your only hope is to have sex with her as many times as possible until her attraction diminishes and she moves on to the next guy in line.
>
> Women don't seek out comfort or stability in men anymore—they seek entertainment. They seek distraction. They seek hedonistic pleasure. […]Once the entertainment or novelty you provide her declines—and it inevitably will—she moves on to something or someone else. In essence, the only way you can keep a girl is if you adopt the mentality of a soap opera writer, adding a cliffhanger to the end of each episode that keeps a woman interested when being a good man

> no longer does.
>
> When I look at myself in the mirror, I don't see a man who has improved himself over the years to be the best that his genes allow—I see a glittery skirt that a girl encounters in the mall. Is the skirt too expensive or is it on sale? Is there only one left of her size or is the rack full of them? Does she already have something similar or is it totally novel? Does her friends think it's cute or just alright? After trying it on, does it flatter her body or make her look fat? Either she makes the impulsive decision to buy the skirt or not, because odds are she won't come back for it. There are so many stores with so many skirts that she will soon forget it, forever. We are like glittery pieces of fashion to women—items that she truly doesn't need. Not only has she already collected so many of them, but she can easily obtain more within walking distance from where she lives. She can even browse online from home while in her pajamas through a nearly unlimited selection.
>
> **We are not men in the traditional sense—we are clowns.**

Well, I'm a virgin who never spent money or time pursuing casual sex, and precisely because I refuse to be any woman's clown. It's very easy for a man to not be a woman's clown. All he has to do is choose a woman who will let him lead her, instead of a woman who wants him to entertain her. Women use the offer of premarital sex in order to get men to stop trying to lead them. Men who don't mind acting like clowns in order to get sex will take this bargain. Men who expect women to rise up to the roles of wife and mother will reject the bargain. A Christian man's goal is to lead a woman away from her self-centeredness, feelings, desires and need for peer-approval, so that she can perform the roles of wife and mother.

How to avoid becoming a clown for casual sex

So, let me give some advice for men about how to get into relationships where they can lead a woman upward, and avoid becoming her clown. It begins and ends with the woman you choose, because some women will let you lead, while others will not.

Research (here, here) shows that women who are virgins are more likely to be content in their marriages, and therefore less likely to financially ruin you with a frivolous divorce. Therefore, women who are virgins are to be preferred. Women who abstain from alcohol, drugs and tattoos should be preferred. Women who have a conservative father who they have respected should be preferred. Women who have STEM degrees should be preferred. Women who are debt-free should be preferred. Women who have challenging STEM careers in the private sector should be preferred. Women who don't want to outsource the education of their children to daycare, public schools, etc. should be preferred. Women who want three or more children should be preferred. Women who think that a man's earnings should not be taxed to pay for husband-substitute social programs should be preferred. Women who have demonstrated public opposition to no-fault divorce, premarital sex, abortion and same-sex marriage should be preferred.

Women who blame and shame other women for choosing hot bad boys should be preferred. Women who can demonstrate knowledge of intermediate-level science apologetics (e.g. Stephen C. Meyer, Michael Behe, Hugh Ross, etc.) should be preferred. (Philosophical and historical apologetics are useful, but are not forceful enough in a debate). Women who avoid fun and thrills (beaches, FOMO travel, reading fiction, thrill-seeking, etc.) should be preferred. Women who serve others (elderly, disabled, etc.) should be preferred.

Basically, you're looking for someone who is comfortable with responsibilities, expectations and obligations. You're looking for someone who respects your demonstrated ability in areas like education, career and finance. (You have led other people to do well in education, career, finances, ministry, etc. right?) You're looking for someone who lets her logical reasoning override her feelings and intuitions when she makes decisions.

The retreat from male leadership

It used to be the case that you could count on pastors to warn Christian men about wasting their time and money on women who wanted them to be clowns instead of leaders. Even the progressive fideist John Piper wrote against women rebelling against male leadership way back in 1983. Men used to be wary of this desire of women to usurp the leadership role from men. But today, it seems like men are anxious to dance to a woman's tune – reducing themselves to spineless commodities, like a pair of shoes or a handbag. But men were not designed to be women's accessories, men were designed to lead. When you tell a woman no to premarital sex, there is the possibility of leading her out of the pig sty of feminism and socialism. But if you say yes to her, you become her clown. If you waste all your 20s and 30s clowning for casual sex, you will have no meaningful legacy. To any man who works for the Lord, this is unacceptable. Christian men, you were bought at a price, and you are expected to produce a return.

Therefore, focus your attention on an early marriage to a good woman, and avoid the hot bad girls who just want to pump and dump you for their own pointless entertainment. If you can't find a decent wife, then it's better to remain a virgin and put points on the board some other way.

Andy Bannister and Michael Ruse discuss how atheists find meaning in life

May 30, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, and may the best horse win!
I'm summarizing the most recent episode of the Unbelievable show.

Details:

> Atheist philosopher Michael Ruse joins Justin as we spend a second week looking at Andy Bannister's new book 'The atheist who didn't exist'.
>
> Its amusingly titled chapters include 'The Peculiar Case of the Postmodern Penguin (or: Why Life without God is Meaningless). Michael and Andy debate whether it's a problem that atheists can't have meaning with a 'capital M'.

Here is a summary of the discussion between Ruse and Bannister, and my comments below the summary.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- Ruse: ultimate questions are serious questions, and some religions are attempting to provide serious answers to those questions
- Ruse: there is a psychological element to belief in God but it's not a complete explanation, but it can apply to non-belief as well
- Bannister: there are psychological reasons why people would prefer unbelief (quotes Thomas Nagel and Aldous Huxley)
- Bannister: (to Ruse) what do you think would follow next if you got new information that caused you to believe in God?
- Ruse: I'd feel scared, I'd think of all the reasons that God would dislike me, rather

than any reasons why God would save me
- Bannister: according to the Bible, God is not so much interested in mere belief, but in active trust in him
- Ruse: without being smug, I just completed 50 years as a college professor of philosophy, and I have a sense of worth from that
- Ruse: if God turns up, and says that 50 years of being a professor is not good enough, well, I don't know God, I'm sorry, I did my best
- Brierley: Andy, explain to us this story of how a penguin explained to you how he invented a subjective meaning in life for himself?
- Brierley: (reads the story)
- Bannister: when it comes to reading a book, the real meaning is the meaning the author intended the book to have
- Bannister: readers can inject their own meaning into the book that has nothing to do with it, but the author gives the real meaning
- Bannister: meaning in life is like reading a book – you can make up your own meaning, but the author's meaning is the real meaning
- Brierley: (to Ruse) on atheism, is there any objective meaning?
- Ruse: "obviously, someone like myself cannot have meaning with a capital M in that sense"
- Ruse: the real question is and atheist can find a sense of self-worth, "I find that I'm happier within myself, I can find meaning"
- Bannister: what would you say to someone who drinks away the family inheritance and gets the same sense of happiness you have?
- Bannister: what would you say to all the people who are unable to get "a sense of self-worth" from their career, because of where they are born, sickness, etc.
- Ruse: I have nothing to offer them, some people are born into such awful situations that they are bound to be bad people
- Ruse: these unfair accidents of birth, etc., fits with atheism better
- Ruse: what we should do is change society so that more people can build a sense of self-worth through achievements
- Ruse: that way, they can say to God "I used my talents" so they can create feelings of self-worth and happiness (apart from God)
- Bannister: meaning in life cannot be answered without answering questions related to identity, value, which are rooted in the overall worldview
- Bannister: on the Christian worldview, you have an infinite worth, your value isn't determined by circumstances, earnings, friends, etc.
- Bannister: your value comes from what Jesus was willing to pay to save you, namely, giving his own life for you
- Bannister: when I travel to meet other Christians in other parts of the world, they have a happiness that should not be there if they are getting happiness from wealth, fame, achievements, etc.
- Bannister: but when you come to the West, many people who have wealth, fame, achievement, etc. are unhappy

- Ruse: well maybe who look after a flock of sheep every day may get a sense of self-worth from that, or from other jobs
- Ruse: I do take Christianity very seriously, it is a grown-up proposal to answer grown-up questions – it works if it is *true*
- Ruse: we don't have to follow Nietzche's statement that if there is no God, there is no meaning in life – we can find a middle way, we can achieve meaning in life by using our talents to achieve things
- Bannister: I disagree with Michael, I don't think that the meaning you invent for yourself is authentic meaning
- Bannister: distracting yourself with amusing things and happiness is not an answer to the problem
- Brierley: (to Ruse) are you saying that you have searched for ultimate meaning, and you are settling for subjective meaning?
- Ruse: my subjective meaning is not second class to objective meaning, "I feel a real deep sense of achievement, of meaning, of self-worth, of having used my talents properly, and I don't feel in any sense a sense of regret" (what matters to him is how he feels)
- Bannister: notice how Michael keeps bringing in value judgments. e.g. – "use my talents well", that implies that there is a right way and a wrong to use your talents, which assumes an objective scale of right and wrong, which makes no sense in atheism
- Bannister: an atheist can sit in a sun room and enjoy the feelings of happiness generated by the light and heat of the Sun, without asking whether there is a Sun out there
- Bannister: ultimately, at the end of the day, my concern is not whether something makes me happy or makes me feel fulfilled
- Bannister: ultimately, at the end of the day, I think there is only one real reason to wrestle with these questions of meaning, and that is to find truth
- Ruse: sometimes we reach a point where we cannot get to true answers to some questions, sometimes we look for truth, but then give up and confess "I cannot find it" and then move on from there

Is it possible to dispense with God's advice on your decision-making and achieve something that affects a lot of people, or makes people like you, or makes you famous, etc., and then have *that* please God? "Look, God, I did something I liked that affected a lot of people, and made them feel happy as they were on their way to Hell because they rejected you". Will rap musicians answer God by pointing to 50 years of leading people away from chastity with godless music? A lot of people went to see the "NWA" movie that celebrated musicians who have an anti-Christian view of women and violence. Can NWA present their "artistic work" to God and claim that God should be pleased with their successful efforts to get rich and famous? Having feelings of achievement doesn't mean anything to God.

So what is the standard? How you imitate Jesus – *self-control, self-denial and self-sacrifice*

to honor God – that is the standard. If I had to choose between giving up two hours of my life to summarize this discussion for my readers, and all the fame and fortune that people who make godless TV shows, movies and music have, I would choose to make this debate summary. My goal in life is not to have fun, thrills, travel and feel happy *in this world*. I have a Boss. Doing without fun, thrills, travel and happy feelings in order to put points on the board for my Boss is objectively meaningful. It's may not seem like much compared to what James Bond does in million-dollar movies, but at least I am wearing the right uniform, and playing for the right team.

I was telling Dina recently, isn't it remarkable how rarely in our culture that people actually talk about the big questions? If you look out at the culture, everything seems to be about feeling good, having fun, being liked by others. Not much about ultimate questions, and certainly not a truth-based assessment of the alternatives. .

Luke Barnes on the fine-tuning of the strong force and fine structure constant

May 31, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By now, anyone who has had discussions about scientific evidence for the existence of God knows about the fine-tuning argument. In a nutshell, if the fundamental constants and quantities given in the Big Bang were even slightly other than they are, then the universe itself would not be hospitable for complex, embodied intelligent life.

Here is an article from The New Atlantis written by Australian cosmologist Luke Barnes.

Excerpt:

> Today, our deepest understanding of the laws of nature is summarized in a set of equations. Using these equations, we can make very precise calculations of the most elementary physical phenomena, calculations that are confirmed by experimental evidence. But to make these predictions, we have to plug in some numbers that cannot themselves be calculated but are derived from measurements of some of the most basic features of the physical universe. These numbers specify such crucial quantities as the masses of fundamental particles and the strengths of their mutual interactions. After extensive experiments under all manner of conditions, physicists have found that these numbers appear not to change in different times and places, so they are called the fundamental constants of nature.
>
> […]A universe that has just small tweaks in the fundamental constants might not have any of the chemical bonds that give us molecules, so say farewell to DNA, and also to rocks, water, and planets. Other tweaks could make the formation of stars or even atoms impossible. And with some values for the physical constants, the universe would have flickered out of existence in a fraction of a second. That the constants are all arranged in what is, mathematically speaking, the very improbable combination that makes our grand, complex, life-bearing universe possible is what physicists mean when they talk about the "fine-tuning" of the universe for life.

Let's look at an example – the strong force. Not only must the strong force be fine-tuned so we have both hydrogen and helium, but the ratio of the strong force must also be fine-tuned with the fine structure constant.

Barnes writes:

> The strong nuclear force, for example, is the glue that holds protons and neutrons together in the nuclei of atoms. If, in a hypothetical universe, it is too weak, then nuclei are not stable and the periodic table disappears again. If it is too strong, then the intense heat of the early universe could convert all hydrogen into helium — meaning that there could be no water, and that 99.97 percent of

> the 24 million carbon compounds we have discovered would be impossible, too. And, as the chart to the right shows, the forces, like the masses, must be in the right balance. If the electromagnetic force, which is responsible for the attraction and repulsion of charged particles, is too strong or too weak compared to the strong nuclear force, anything from stars to chemical compounds would be impossible.

Here's the chart he's referencing:

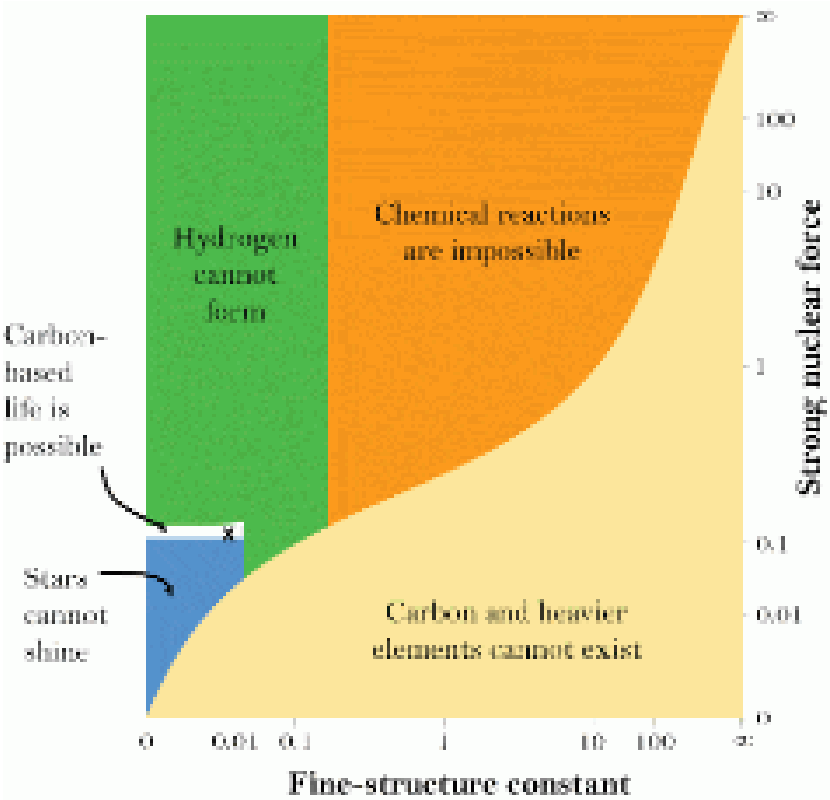

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant

As you can see from the chart, most of the values that the constants could take would make complex, embodied intelligent life impossible.

We need carbon (carbon-based life) because they form the basis of the components of life chemistry, e.g. proteins, sugars, etc. We need hydrogen for water. We need chemical reactions for obvious reasons. We need the light from the stars to support plant and animal life on the surface of a planet. And so on. In almost every case where you change the values of these constants and quantities and ratios from what they are, you will end up with a universe that does not support life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind under these laws of physics. And we don't have any alternative laws of physics in this universe.

By the way, just to show you how mainstream these examples of fine-tuning are, I thought I would link to a source that you're all going to be familiar with: The New Scientist.

The fine-tuning of the force of gravity

So here is an article from the New Scientist about a different constant that also has to be

fine-tuned for life: the force of gravity.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe‘s birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What’s more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Notice how the article also mentioned “the universe’s birth”, which is part of mainstream science.

When I’m writing to you about things like the origin of the universe, or the cosmic fine-tuning, I’m not talking to you about things that pastors found in the Bible. These discoveries are known and accepted by mainstream scientists. It’s amazing that people are constructing their worldviews without having to account for the birth of the universe and this cosmic fine-tuning. We all, as rational individuals, have to bound our view of the universe with the findings of science. Right now, those findings support the existence of a Creator and a Designer. So why am I seeing so many atheists who are just plain ignorant about these facts? Maybe we should tell them about this evidence. Maybe we should ask them why they don’t account for scientific evidence when forming their beliefs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason

- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Justice Department to begin antitrust investigation of anti-conservative Google

June 1, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Google's new motto – we really need to start calling them "Goolag"
It's troubling to me when large corporations ally with one political party or another. The videos of Google executives mourning Hillary's loss, Google's firing of non-Democrat engineers, and documented bias in Google's products clearly indicate that Google favors the Democrat party. So, it's about time for the government to step in and stop the corporate fascism.

Breitbart News reports:

> The *Wall Street Journal* reports that the U.S. Justice Department is preparing to begin an antitrust investigation into Google that could see the tech giant come under a new wave of scrutiny from regulators. According to people familiar with the matter, the antitrust division of the Justice Department has been gathering information and preparing for the investigation for weeks.
>
> The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which shares antitrust authority with the Justice Department, has previously conducted antitrust investigations into Google on a broader scale but closed the investigation in 2013 with no action taken.
>
> […]The FTC and Justice Department have been discussing which group will oversee further antitrust investigations of Google, with the FTC agreeing to give the Justice Department full jurisdiction over Google. Now that an understanding has been reached between the two government bodies, the Justice Department is preparing to conduct an in-depth investigation into Google.
>
> […]Those familiar with the matter stated that the Justice Department has been in contact with third-party groups that have been critical of Google in the past.

Breitbart News had also reported on how Google used their products to influence elections:

> New research from psychologist and search engine expert Dr. Robert Epstein shows that biased Google searches had a measurable impact on the 2018 midterm elections, pushing tens of thousands of votes towards the Democrat candidates in three key congressional races, and potentially millions more in races across the country.
>
> The study, from Epstein and a team at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology (AIBRT), analyzed Google searches related to three highly competitive congressional races in Southern California. In all three races, the Democrat won — and Epstein's research suggests that Google search bias may have tipped them over the edge.
>
> The research follows a previous study conducted in 2016 which showed that biased Google results pushed votes to Hillary Clinton in the presidential election. Democrats and Google executives have disputed these findings.
>
> […]Users performing Google searches related to the three congressional races the study focused on were significantly more likely to see pro-Democrat stories and links at the top of their results.

That's now the only study that's been done on Google's pro-Democrat bias.

Here's another reported by the UK Daily Mail:

> Google's bias towards left-wing media outlets has been laid bare by an algorithm which detected that it favors sites including CNN and The New York Times over others.
>
> According to data compiled by researchers from Northwestern University, the search engine promoted those sites over others repeatedly in November 2017.
>
> Of the 6,302 articles that appeared in Google's 'top stories' page that month after a term was searched, more than 10 percent were by CNN.
>
> The New York Times was the second most favored and accounted for 6.5 percent of articles. The Washington Post was third with 5.6 percent.
>
> By contrast, Fox News, the most right-wing outlet in mainstream media, was the source of just three percent of the stories which appeared.

See for yourself:

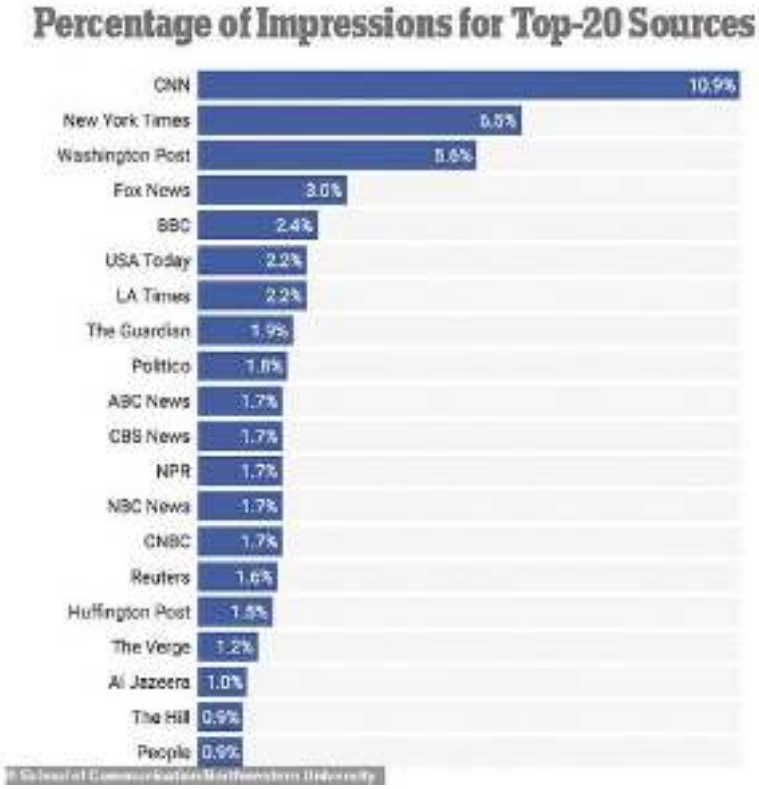

Study: Google uses its products and services to supports Democrat Party

Just this week, another story came out about Google discriminating against employees who do not support the Democrat Party.

The Daily Caller reports:

> A Republican Google software engineer has written an open letter describing a culture of left-wing "outrage mobs" that make use of the company's anonymous bias reporting channels to shut down dissent.
>
> The open letter, published Tuesday morning on Medium, was written by software engineer Mike Wacker, who was reported himself multiple times via the company's anonymous reporting tools.
>
> "If left unchecked," Wacker wrote, "these outrage mobs will hunt down any conservative, any Christian, and any independent free thinker at Google who does not bow down to their agenda."
>
> In one case, Wacker describes a fellow Republican employee who was reported for saying nice things about the University of Toronto academic Jordan Peterson. He was given a note in writing that said, "One Googler raised a concern that you that you appeared to be promoting and defending Jordan Peterson's comments about transgender pronouns, and this made them feel unsafe at work."
>
> Wacker himself was twice reported via the company's anonymous reporting channels.

The full article by Wacker is here on Medium. Keep in mind that we have so many stories like this coming out of Google. The James D'Amore story was big, but it's not the only one.

Google executives caught on film

Here are some highlights of that sting video that I mentioned featuring Google executives crying about the Democrat election loss:

Alone, the video would be damning, but it just the latest in a sequence of news stories showing Google's anti-American bias.

Previously on this blog, I've covered the following stories of Google bias:

- Google employees revolt against having a black, female conservative on advisory board
- Spotify joins Google, Youtube, Facebook and Twitter in censoring Prager University
- Facebook bans Franklin Graham for "hate speech", Google YouTube shadow-bans pro-life videos
- Does Google's anti-conservative bias affect its products and services?
- Facebook joins Twitter, Google and YouTube in deliberately purging conservative voices
- Google now censoring conservative news, while giving leftist propaganda a free pass
- Google censors conservative video lectures from Prager University on YouTube
- How Google, Facebook and Twitter brainwash users against conservatism
- Google starts worldwide campaign to legalize gay marriage, Target donates to gay activists

I personally have seen Google search engine traffic for this blog go down literally 90% since Trump's election. My search engine referrals from DuckDuckGo are higher than what I get from Google. I believe that's when they decided to get serious about helping their allies in the Democrat party. What I'd like to see is the company broken up into small-cap units, and the executives investigated for possible criminal activities, e.g. – collusion with the Democrat Party and unlawful termination of non-Democrat employees. They used American liberty and the free market to make their fortunes, but they're anti-American.

Bible study: Esther as an example of bravery and God’s providence

June 2, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

I’ve been listening to this FREE two-volume series on the book of Esther featuring pastor Alistair Begg. A whole bunch of interesting things stuck out to me, so I’ll write about one of them today.

First, Esther is a Jewish woman whose father or mother died when she was young. She was adopted by Mordecai, another Jew. She was very beautiful, so she was picked to be part of the Persian King’s harem. In fact, she is so beautiful that the King chooses her to be the Queen.

Now there is an enemy of the Jews in the King’s court named Haman, and he manages to get the King to create an edict that says that all the Jews will be killed. Mordecai calls Esther to tell her that she has to stop the King from ordering this edict.

But Esther is out of favor with the King, and hasn’t been asked to come in to visit him for some time. To go in and see the King without being summoned is a capital offense. Unless the King gives permission, she would be killed for intruding on the King. But in the end, she agrees to speak up and say something.

It all gets resolved in Esther chapter 4.

Esther 4:1-17:

> 1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly.

> 2 He went as far as the king’s gate, for no one was to enter the king’s gate clothed in sackcloth.
>
> 3 In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.
>
> 4 Then Esther’s maidens and her eunuchs came and told her, and the queen writhed in great anguish. And she sent garments to clothe Mordecai that he might remove his sackcloth from him, but he did not accept them.
>
> 5 Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king’s eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her, and ordered himto go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.
>
> 6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king’s gate.
>
> 7 Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king’s treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.
>
> 8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people.
>
> 9 Hathach came back and related Mordecai’s words to Esther.
>
> 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him to reply to Mordecai:
>
> 11 “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.”
>
> 12 They related Esther’s words to Mordecai.
>
> 13 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”
>
> 15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai,
>
> 16 “Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.”
>
> 17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

What Mordecai is saying here is that God is sovereign over the events that are taking place, and that even if Esther makes a free decision to not intercede to save her people,

then God will do something else. Somehow, telling her that makes her agree to take the risk and go in to see the King. Even though it is illegal to go in to see the King, she is going to risk her life and do it. And the message there is that God made her beautiful, and placed her in the palace, for exactly this purpose. Her beauty has a purpose.

Before then, she may not have been the most morally pure Jew, nor the most faithful Jew, nor some great authority on theology or apologetics. She was probably keeping her faith pretty hidden. But in that one moment, she rises above being an orphan, above being a harem girl, and above being just a pretty face. God can use anyone – even a silly girl who spends all day in front of a mirror playing with cosmetics – to achieve his ends. She is not Daniel. But today she is getting the call, anyway. It's on her.

What is the lesson here? God can use *anybody.* It doesn't mean that you shouldn't be moral, study theology, and study apologetics, and keep your character clean so you have self-control. It means that any believer is just one step away from glory, no matter what they did in the past. That's how God rolls.

Further study

If you are interested in the story of Esther, then you should listen to the entire series by Alistair Begg.

- Volume 1 is here (download all in a zip file)
- Volume 2 is here (download all in a zip file)

The point I am making in this post is in this lecture.

Esther is about two themes: 1) how should a believer in God live in a society where believers are a minority? and 2) even when things look really out of control, God is in control, and is never more than one step away from saving his people.

I have a lot of Christian apologist friends who struggle to go to church, and struggle to read the Bible. The links above will take you to some great preaching on one of the most interesting books of the Bible. Go there, grab the MP3s, and listen to them with no distractions.

Why did European countries import millions of unskilled Muslim immigrants?

June 3, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

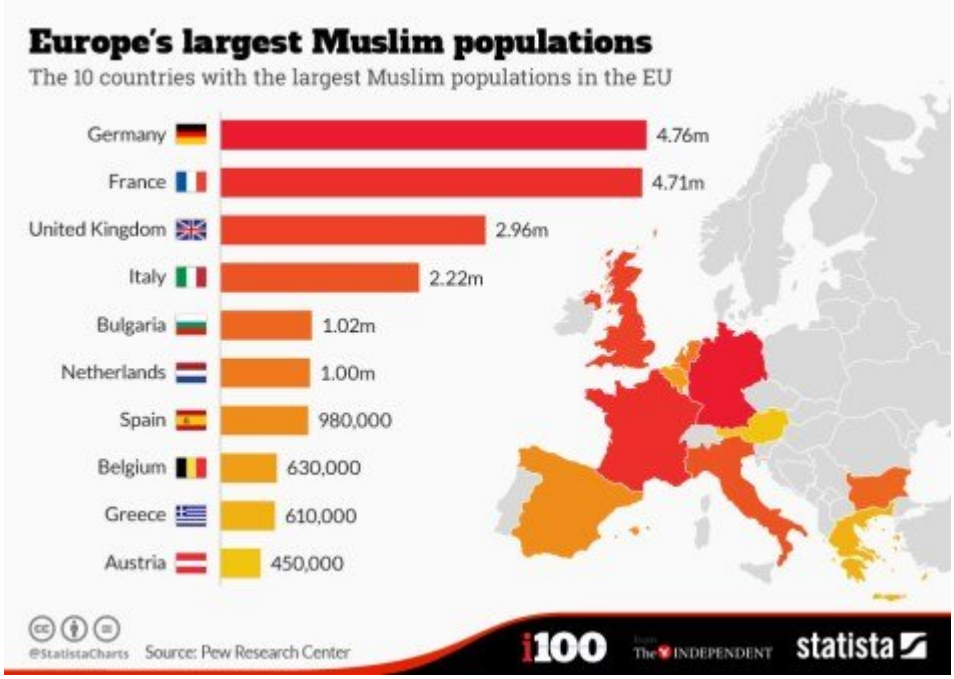

Muslim populations in Europe

I am currently reading a book recommended to me by Dina, my wise advisor. The book is amazing. I want to put it in the hands of all the naive, leftist Christian leaders and Republicans who favor amnesty, and not building a border wall. If I can't convince you to read the book right now, at least take a look at this review of it in The Federalist.

Excerpt:

> "The Strange Death of Europe" is a polemical but perceptive book culled from Murray's extended sojourns across Europe's frontiers – from the Italian island of Lampedusa, a flyspeck in the Mediterranean closer to the shores of North Africa than it is to Sicily, and to Greek islands that sit within sight of the Turkish coastline. These places have borne the brunt of the recent exodus from the Middle East and North Africa, but the author has also ventured to the remote suburbs of Scandinavia and Germany and France where many of these migrants end up. The resulting portrait is not a happy one.
>
> […]The distinguishing feature of modern Europe is its persistent ennui, shown in the inability or unwillingness "to reproduce itself, fight for itself or even take its own side in an argument." What's more, Europeans seem less stirred to face these unpleasant facts than they are fearful of interpreting them too precisely.

The book analyzes how the secular left "argued" for more immigration of low-skilled Muslims from countries that do not accept Western views on things like the respectful treatment of women.

> The never-slacking thirst among Europe's political class for more immigration has rested on two flawed assumptions, one economic and the other normative (and usually in that order). The economic assumption cites the benefits of immigration without accounting for its costs, and seldom acknowledges that benefits accrue chiefly to the migrants themselves and to highly compensated native inhabitants. Most of the rest of society is left to foot the bill for this immense regressive redistribution of wealth from the poor (who are squeezed out of the labor force) to the rich (who benefit from cheap labor).
>
> Any public concerns about the financial downsides of this immigration – from increased pressure on housing markets to depressed wages – have been swept aside in deference to Europe's dwindling fertility rates. (In a classic instance of one erroneous public policy begetting another, Murray shrewdly notes that the political left encouraged a "one-child policy" in order to attain an "optimum global population" only later to demand mass immigration in order to lift birthrates back to replacement levels.) The problem of Europe's birth dearth is very real. The working-age population of Western Europe peaked in 2012 at 308 million – and is set to decline to 265 million by 2060.
>
> So how will immigration schemes alleviate Europe's fertility-driven strain on the welfare state? It is not clear that they will. Advocates of the rejuvenating effects of immigration are seldom obliged to spell out the wisdom of importing the poor and dispossessed of the world who generally lack the skills required for success in an advanced market economy. Can these migrants reliably be expected to contribute more in taxes than they consume in state aid? (They wouldn't be alone in their dependence on government largesse: plenty of native workers, too, are struggling mightily to cope with the creative destruction unleashed by the march of globalization and technology.)
>
> When advocates of open borders are pressed on these points, they generally repair to the normative argument. It has been claimed that when a flood of migrants started to pile up at Europe's frontiers in 2015, the issue ceased to be economic and instead became moral: tending to the needs of beleaguered strangers. Thus Europe's longstanding debate over immigration suddenly transformed into a contest between head and heart, and in a stampede of sanctimony it was decided that soft-heartedness was better hard-headedness.

What was amazing to me, is that people from these Islamic countries were able to just walk in to Europe and claim asylum. This put them on *an immediate path to citizenship*. Since there were so many people coming, their claims were not vetted. The immigrants would destroy their own identity documents after arriving in Europe, and then claim to be coming from whatever nation had a war going on, e.g. from Syria. Even if they could not speak any Syrian, they would still be let in and put on a path to citizenship! Incredible.

I have to include this:

> After the 7/7 bombings in London, polls revealed that 68 percent of British Muslims believe that British citizens who “insult Islam” should be arrested and prosecuted.

See, no problem at all integrating into Western civilization. It’s not like their just going to start raping and murdering 14-year-old Jewish girls, or start up underage sex-trafficking rings. But the people making the immigration policy don’t care about public safety. They want to appear compassionate. And they do it by spending *other people’s money* and by risking *other people’s safety*. There is no concern for the money and safety of taxpayers, the important thing is that the politicians feel good about themselves. They’re better than the people who they stick with the bill. Or the people they stick with the machete. I know that compassionate leftists like Russell Moore want me to think that they are good people, but I don’t. Because I always think of the victims of their compassion. Anyone who votes for more immigration without oversight and accountability is responsible for the harm.

For me, the most interesting part of the book was not about why secular leftist politicians decided to open up the borders, how many Muslim immigrants commit crimes against their welcoming hosts, how European activists subvert the law to welcome in more immigrants (including lying about their own rapes at the hands of Muslim refugees, to cover for the rapist), or how the police cover up crimes committed by Muslim refugees and immigrants. The most interesting part was how anyone who tries to make public safety or fiscal arguments against the mass importation of low-skilled Muslims was vilified. Careers were ended. Reputations were ruined. And then the Muslims themselves would launch lawsuits or take more violent, and even murderous, measures to silence their critics.

Did “thousands of women” die in “back alley abortions” before Roe v. Wade?

June 4, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I get into debates about abortion, and sometimes my opponent will complain that if Roe v. Wade were overturned, then thousands of women would die in illegal abortions. Well, if that ever happens to you, this post will help you to know how to respond to it.

First of all, if Roe v. Wade were overturned, then each of the 50 states would pass legislation deciding when abortions would be legal.

Here’s a map taken from the Washington Examiner:

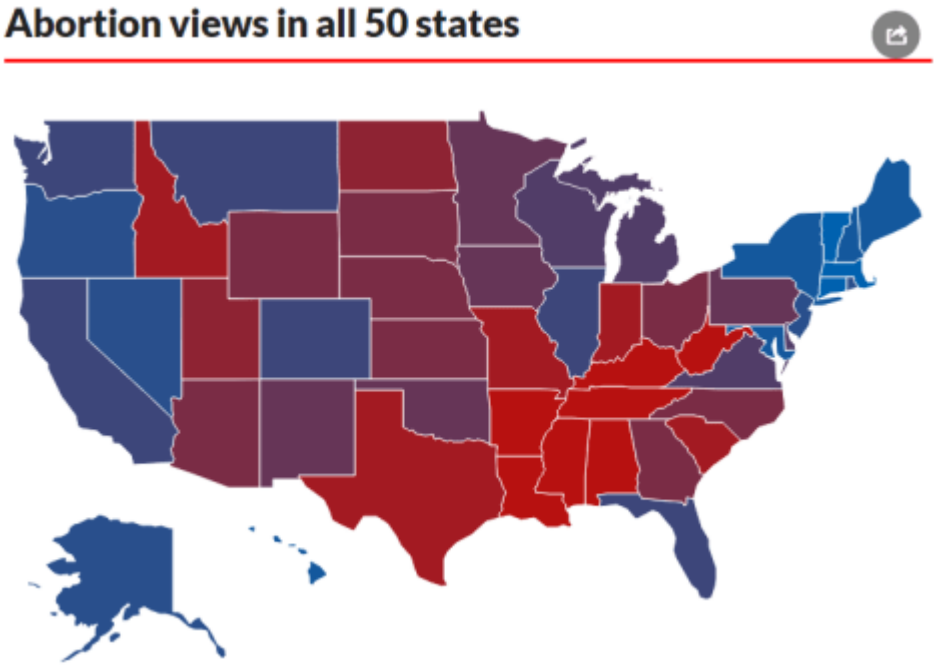

Abortion rights after Roe v. Wade is overturned
Red states are more pro-life than blue states in this map. For example, New York is ranked #6, and Tennessee is ranked #45.

So, if a woman did have irresponsible sex with a hot bad boy, then she easily could terminate her child in one of the blue states.

Second, the number thrown around by abortion advocates is not accurate. It’s simply not true that “thousands of women” were dying from poorly-performed abortions when abortion was still illegal. Actually, abortions were performed by trained medical personnel, but it just wasn’t reported to the police.

Here’s a recent article from the radically leftist Washington Post:

> Erica Sackin, a Planned Parenthood spokeswoman, directed us to a 2014 policy statement issued by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG): “*It is estimated that before 1973, 1.2 million U.S. women resorted to illegal abortion each year and that unsafe abortions caused as many as 5,000 annual deaths.*”

> There is no citation in the statement for the estimate of "as many as 5,000 annual deaths," even though many of the other sentences are carefully documented. None of the citations around this sentence supports the figure, and there is no explanation about how it was calculated.
>
> […]Meanwhile, Sackin also sent a variety of reports, many of which were referenced in a footnote in a document published by NARAL Pro-Choice America. One of the citations especially caught our eye: Frederick Taussig, "Abortion Spontaneous and Induced: Medical and Social Aspects," (1936).

Why was a study from 1936 being cited? Because in 1936, we didn't have antibiotics! People were dying all the time from any kind of surgery – not just abortion.

More:

> The advent of antibiotics such as penicillin and improved medical procedures suddenly made abortion less risky. Another prominent researcher, Christopher Tietze, argued in a 1948 paper that the number of deaths from abortion was rapidly declining because of three reasons: contraceptive methods had improved so fewer women were getting pregnant, abortion providers were getting better at avoiding infections, and many lives had been saved because of the introduction of sulfa drugs and penicillin.
>
> […]The data collected by Tietze showed 2,677 deaths from abortion in 1933, compared with 888 in 1945, with much of the decline in septic cases associated with illegal abortions. (The numbers also include deaths from "therapeutic abortions," permitted by law, and "spontaneous abortions.")
>
> By 1959, a leading researcher wrote: "Abortion is no longer a dangerous procedure. This applies not just to therapeutic abortions as performed in hospitals but also to so-called illegal abortions as done by physicians. In 1957, there were only 260 deaths in the whole country attributed to abortions of any kind. In New York City in 1921, there were 144 abortion deaths, in 1951 there were only 15."
>
> The writer was Mary Steichen Calderone, at the time medical director of Planned Parenthood. She attributed the decline in the mortality rate to antibiotics and the fact that 90 percent of illegal abortions were done by trained physicians.

OK, so abortion advocates cite the study from 1936, which already relies on questionable estimates, because they know that the later numbers are far, far lower – thanks to the widespread use of antibiotics. They're lying, essentially, because lying helps them to persuade people who think with their feelings, and don't look too closely at facts.

My third point is simple. Even if women hurt themselves during abortions, that wouldn't be a reason to legalize abortion. Bank robbers hurt themselves during bank robberies, and drug dealers hurt themselves during drug deals. We do not legalize criminal activities just because criminals get hurt during the commission of those activities. So the real question is, what is the unborn? If the unborn is a living human being, then abortion on

demand takes the life of an innocent human being without justification, and should therefore be illegal.

UPDATE: My pro-life friend Nathan sent me a fourth response:

There is a difference today that did not exist in 1973. We have a pro-life movement. We have over 2,000 pregnancy care ministries and clinics operating throughout the continental United States. I highly doubt these clinics will just disappear overnight if abortion became illegal nationwide. Women and children will still be in need, and the free market principles that enable charity to flourish will be there to help.

Given this reality, will proponents of abortion now finally step forward to help provide the support to women necessary so they never have to choose a back alley abortion? Given how they have worked themselves into a panic about rusty coat hangers, it seems they would be the most motivated to do so. The fact many don't seem to want to do so is telling: They just want to justify their own support for abortion, regardless of whether it helps women or not.

What do Democrats like Joe Biden think about the moral teachings of Jesus in the Bible?

June 5, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Enraged Democrat Joe Biden howls out his hatred for Bible-believing Christians

Joe Biden gave a speech to the largest gay rights organization in the United States, the HRC. The co-founder of the HRC, Terry Bean, was recently charged with sexual abusing a 15-year-old boy. Do you disagree with what Terry Bean is charged with? If so, then I think it's important to know how far Joe Biden would go to punish you for your refusal to approve and celebrate Terry Bean.

Here's the report on the speech from PJ Media:

> Biden announced at an event in Ohio on Saturday that his number one priority, if elected, will be to enshrine LGBTQ rights into federal law via the Equality Act, a contentious, Orwellian effort by left-wing bullies to silence Christians who believe biblical teachings on marriage and reject the view that boys can be girls and girls can be boys.
>
> During a half-hour speech at the Hum4n R1ghts C4mp4ign's annual gala in Columbus, Ohio, Biden said, "It's wrong and it is immoral what [the Trump administration] is doing," citing efforts to bar transgender troops from the U.S. military and protect medical providers from being forced to violate their consciences.
>
> […]During his speech Biden portrayed LGBTQ individuals as victims, ignoring the fact that it is people of faith who have been the big losers in this war of ideas. Bakery owners are being sued out of existence, medical professionals are being pressured to embrace transgender ideology, and major corporations are pulling their business out of states that seek to protect religious freedom —

> which, by the way, is what made Mike Pence Public Enemy #1 in the eyes of the cultural revolutionaries.
>
> […]"The current vice president uses religious freedom as an excuse to license discrimination across broadly [sic] areas and denying LGBTQ Americans their basic rights. It is wrong and it is immoral what they are doing," he declared.
>
> "Just look at how much damage has been done in the past two weeks," Biden said. […]The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced plans to allow homeless shelters to turn away transgender people. This is beyond the scope of anything remotely what we've seen before."

To be clear, when he's talking about homeless shelters, he's talking about putting biological males in with women who are victims of sexual abuse. But if the HRC pays the piper, then the HRC calls the tune. They're certainly calling the tune for many of our largest corporations.

When Joe Biden talks about people's "beliefs", he means the beliefs of Bible-believing Christians that might cause them to disagree with gay activists like Terry Bean. He's talking about their right to refuse to participate in, subsidize or celebrate LGBT initiatives, such as same-sex marriage, sex-change surgeries, HRT drug treatments for children, etc. He's talking about forcing parents to step aside while doctors and educators give hormone blockers to their children. Drugs that can have permanent effects. He basically wants to give gay activists like Terry Bean a veto over the Bible, the church, Christian organizations and Christian parents. A veto backed by the full force of the government.

By the way, the Terry Bean story wasn't the first time that prominent Democrats have been involved in sex with underage boys. I'll give just one more example. The Democrat mayor of Seattle – a champion of same-sex marriage in the state of Washington – was also charged, and resigned.

Now, the teaching of the Bible is pretty clear. No sex outside of marriage, and marriage defined as between one woman and one man. The definition of marriage is straight out of the mouth of Jesus. If you deny that, then you don't accept Jesus as anything other than a normal man. Now, it's a free country. Non-Christians should be able to vote how they please, and act how they please. But we need to be clear that no Democrat politician accepts the Bible as an authority on moral issues, and that no Democrat politician thinks that Jesus is other than a normal man. No Democrat politician thinks that Jesus knew what he was talking about when he spoke authoritatively about chastity and marriage. Democrat politicians like Joe Biden think Terry Bean knows more these moral issues than Jesus, and that's why Joe Biden is speaking at the HRC rather than speaking at a Bible-believing organization like Liberty University or the Family Research Council or the Alliance Defending Freedom.

To be clear, I have no problem with people on the other side, like Dave Rubin, who disagree with me on moral issues. Dave lives his life in a way that would not be permissible for a Bible-believing Christian. But Dave accepts and defends my right to disagree with him on moral issues. That is not what we have with Democrat politicians

like Joe Biden, who want to use the power of the state to suppress basic human rights, like free speech, freedom of association, parental authority, etc. I don’t want to force other people to act as if they believed what I believe. But I don’t think Bible-believing Christians should vote for someone who wants to use the power of government to force me to act as if I believed what they believe.

Remembering Richard Winters on D-Day: The Battle of Brecourt Manor

June 6, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Richard D. Winters Monument

The caption says, “Wars do not make men great, but they do bring out the greatness in good men.” Now let’s see what Dick Winters did during World War II.

Mission: locate and destroy enemy artillery

Brecourt Manor

I want to link to this article from Investors Business Daily about Lt. Winters action at Brecourt Manor.

> Here’s the summary of what Dick Winters did on the morning of June 6th, 1944:
>
> First Lt. Dick Winters leapt into leadership on D-Day, June 6, 1944. His commander’s aircraft was shot down as the men parachuted at 600 feet. When Winters headed to earth, he was in charge of a small platoon.

> When he landed, he had to command Company E with 148 men, because his commander had been lost along with the plane.
>
> Yet in the chaos, Winters could locate only a dozen other soldiers for their first task: take out a 50-man German artillery battery.
>
> “Winters ordered his assault force to strip down to only essential weapons — guns and grenades — to use against the well-prepared defenses, then deployed his machine guns to cover his advances,” Keith Huxen, senior director of research at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, told IBD. “Waiting for the proper moment, he led a charge across an open field, gaining the first gun placement, and then they moved down the trenches, systematically destroying each gun.
>
> “In the process, Winters discovered a map detailing all German gun positions to kill American soldiers coming up from Utah Beach, which saved many lives.”
>
> Joined by five reinforcements during the fight, Winters lost four dead and six wounded. The Yanks managed to kill 15 Nazis, capture 11 and wound many others.
>
> Winters’ maneuvers are still studied at West Point as a case of successfully attacking a fixed position, despite being outnumbered.
>
> Winters (1918-2011) was born in Ephrata, Pa., and the family moved to Lancaster when he was 8.
>
> He later attributed his character and desire to go to church regularly to his mother.
>
> Winters attended local Franklin & Marshall College and earned an economics degree with top honors in 1941. He enlisted in the Army in August to shorten his service time, rather than wait to be drafted if America was to join the war.

The diagram below shows where everything was positioned. The Rangers attacked through the trenches containing the four guns, while being raked with fire from multiple MG42 heavy machine guns across the open field.

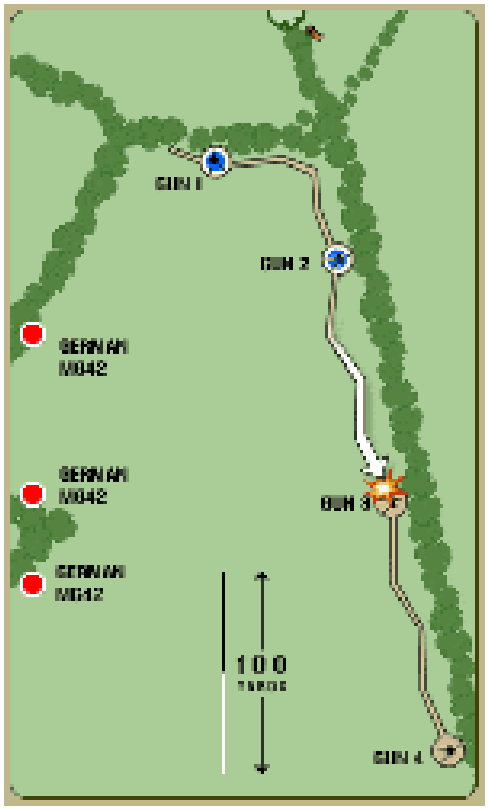

Assaulting the guns at Brecourt Manor

The operation was one of the most famous actions in the Normandy invasion, and you may have seen it portrayed in the Band of Brothers DVD series. But the article notes that when Dick Winters read the script for that series, “he asked that the profanity be cut from the dialogue of his character, since he never swore”. When the producers told him it was too late to change it, he wrote them a letter of resignation from the production, because “I don’t want these boys and girls thinking it is acceptable using profanity”. In the end, the movie makers removed the swearing by the actor portraying Winters.

If you are looking for a reason to buck the culture and stop swearing, there’s a good reason for you right there – Dick Winters never used profanity.

You can watch the scene from Band of Brothers in low resolution here:

If you play Combat Mission, like I do, you can watch a 28 minute AAR from the simulation of the battle.

Operation Market Garden

More from the article I linked above, this time from Operation Market Garden:

> Near Nijmegen on Oct. 5, Winters’ platoon was a position where any movement carried risks. Rather than retreat when fired on by a larger force behind a dike, he led a charge to the top and on the other side discovered a company of 150 Nazi SS troops. Despite having only 40 men, the Americans opened up with everything they had, then shot up a company of enemy reinforcements.
>
> The fray ended with 50 Germans dead, 11 POWs and countless wounded, with few casualties among the Americans.
>
> “This was Easy Company’s crowning achievement of the war and my apogee as a

> company commander," Winters told Kingseed. "This demonstrated its overall superiority, of every soldier, of every phase of infantry tactics: patrol, defense, attack using a base of fire, withdrawal and, above all, superior marksmanship with rifles, machine guns and mortar fire."

Dick Winters is a brave man, someone I admire him very much. And I am grateful for men like him.

I blogged about another hero of the 101st Airborne Division, Ronald Speirs, in a previous post.

Meet four heroes of the D-Day invasion of Normandy on June 6th, 1944

June 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

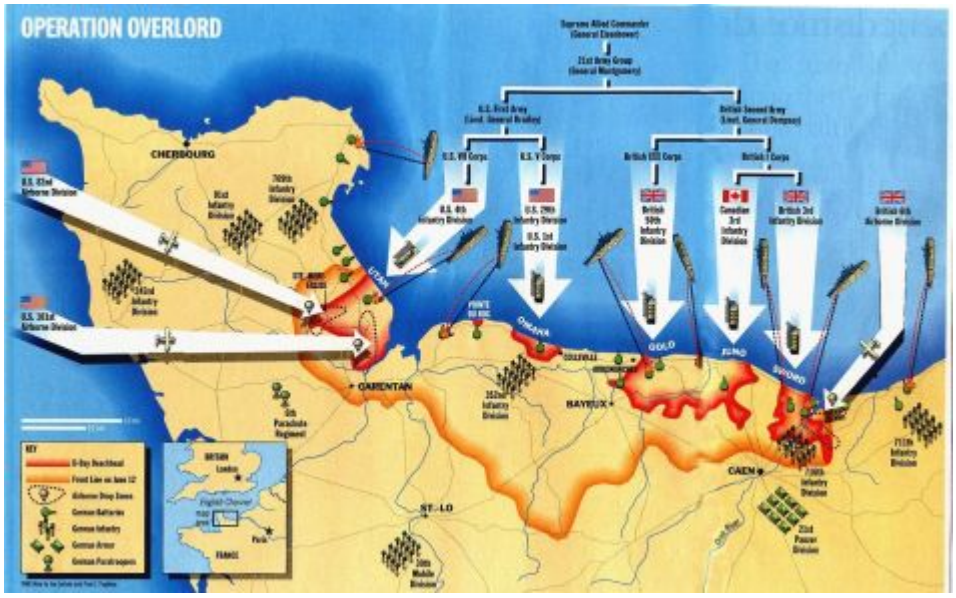

Map of D-Day landings (click for larger image) (courtesy of Time magazine)

I thought it might be a good idea to write up something about D-Day in order to help people understand some of our military history, and to put the spotlight on some real heroes. I don't regard artists, athletes, dancers, singers, actors, or other celebrities as heroes. It really alarms me that so many people know more about these fake heroes than they do about real ones.

Weakness emboldens aggressors

For one thing, many people don't understand how British and American libertarian isolationism made World War 2 into a much bigger mess than it needed to be. As historian Victor Davis Hanson explains in the lecture I linked below, the Allied nations were much stronger and better equipped than the Axis nations before the war started. But Germany and Japan didn't think that the Allied nations would do anything if they were aggressive. We know this from their writings and correspondence. They thought that British and Americans were just too scared of blood and death to ever go to war to stop them.

Germany and Japan tested their hypothesis out by re-arming and annexing territory from their neighbors. Britain and America were led by libertarian isolationists, so they didn't fight back. The aggressors correctly understood that libertarian isolationists didn't have the will to oppose them, even if they were weaker than the Allies. But the more they re-armed and annexed territory, the stronger they became. The Allied nations waited too long to confront them. And that's why World War 2 was much harder to win than it needed to be.

Libertarian isolationism actually causes wars, because weakness emboldens aggressors. This is the lesson of history. But since libertarian isolationists don't study history, (too

busy with legalizing drugs, legalizing prostitution, promoting abortion, and redefining marriage), they haven't learned the lessons of history.

Here's a very good lecture about the causes of World War 2 by an actual military historian, Victor Davis Hanson:

So, that's the first point I wanted to make: libertarian isolationism causes wars. Although libertarians claim to oppose war, they actually cause war, due to their weakness in the face of evil. So who stops wars? People who favor a strong defense, and show a willingness to fight back against aggression are the ones who REALLY oppose wars. This is called "peace through strength", and you can see it in action in the Cold War, where Ronald Reagan defeated the Soviet Union by making their aggression costly.

Heroes of D-Day

My second concern was to promote the real heroes of D-Day, over the fictional heroes of movies, fiction, music, dancing, sports, and other entertainment nonsense.

Here are the four heroes I chose:

- Major John Howard
- Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort
- Brigadier General Norman Cota
- Major Richard Winters

Let's take a look at each of them.

John Howard

So let's take the heroes in order. Major John Howard led elements of the British 6th Airborne Division to take two vital bridges southeast of Sword beach. He did this in order to prevent German socialist counterattacks coming from the east. After they took the bridges, they had to repulse German tanks with nothing more than their useless PIAT (Projector Infantry Anti-Tank) grenade launchers. The PIAT was nothing more than a grenade launcher powered by a coiled spring. It was very inaccurate, and only effective to 50 yards. But that's all the British paratroops had to stop tanks, and they made it work. You can read about him in this book by Stephen E. Ambrose, entitled: "Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944". This New York Times article tells the story in brief. He also is played by Richard Todd in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Benjamin Vandervoort

Lt. Col. Ben Vandervoort served with the 82nd Airborne Division. I read about how he lead an infantry attack against German Tiger tanks (!) and infantry in Stephen E. Ambrose's book "Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany". Ben Vandervoort broke his ankle during the D-Day landing, but he insisted that the medic just "lace it up tight" so that he could supervise the attacking and holding of Ste. Mere Eglise, southwest of Utah beach, against a vastly superior enemy force. This article tells about how he defended against elite German SS infantry and heavy Tiger tanks at Trois-Ponts, during the Battle of the Bulge. He was outgunned

and outnumbered 20 to 1, and had just a few lightly-armed soldiers, two low-power 57mm anti-tank guns and some bazookas. He is portrayed by John Wayne in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Norman Cota

Brig. General Norman Cota is my favorite person in World War 2. At 51 years old, he nevertheless landed at D-Day, and rallied terrified Army Rangers to follow him up the bluff, by telling them that Rangers ought to lead the way. "Rangers Lead The Way" later became the motto of the Army Rangers. He always led from the front, demonstrating how to attack a German machine gun position in a farmhouse to a group of American soldiers who were pinned down. He actually grabbed a bunch of grenades and led the assault team against a heavy machine gun! You can read about him in this short article. You can read about him in Stephen E. Ambrose's "D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II". He is portrayed by Robert Mitchum in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Richard Winters

Major Richard Winters served in the 101st Airborne Division. Winters led an assault against a superior force of heavy machine guns and 105mm field guns. His tactics were so brilliant that they are still studied at West Point today. You can see Richard Winters and Carwood Lipton in the HBO "Band of Brothers" series, or read this book by Stephen E. Ambrose entitled "Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne, from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest", which is the basis for that series.

OK, we're done. But I'll post some video clips from Band of Brothers:

Carentan:

Foy:

Bloody Gulch:

Night Patrol:

I hope this convinces you that military heroes are far more important than the "heroes" of fiction and entertainment. It's alarming to me that people invest more and have more respect for characters in Hollywood science fiction movies, and other such make-believe nonsense. We need to be rooted in reality. In reality, men who fight and die fighting evil to protect your freedoms are the real heroes. People who take military history seriously are able to give respect and gratitude where it is due – a very important part of being a mature, moral human being.

Jim Wallis debates Jay Richards on Christianity and economics

June 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I have the video of a debate on the topic of what Christians should think about economics and economic policies. In addition to the video, I summarized the two opening speeches and the two rebuttals, for those who prefer to read rather than watch. We'll start with a short biography about each of the debaters.

The video recording:

The debaters

Jay Richards:

> Jay Richards, Ph.D., is a Senior Fellow of the Discovery Institute where he directs the Center on Wealth, Poverty and Morality, and is a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Faith, Work & Economics. Most recently he is the co-author with James Robison of the best-selling *Indivisible: Restoring Faith, Family, and Freedom Before It's Too Late".*
>
> In addition to writing many academic articles, books, and popular essays on a wide variety of subjects, he recently edited the new award winning anthology, *God & Evolution: Protestants, Catholics and Jews Explore Darwin's Challenge to Faith* . His previous book was *Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem* (HarperOne, May 2009), for which he received a Templeton Enterprise Award in 2010.
>
> […]In recent years, he has been a Contributing Editor of The American at the American Enterprise Institute, a Visiting Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, and a Research Fellow and Director of Acton Media at the Acton Institute. Richards has a B.A. with majors in Political Science and Religion, an M.Div. (Master of Divinity) and a Th.M. (Master of Theology), and a Ph.D. (with honors) in philosophy and theology from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Jim Wallis:

> Jim Wallis (born June 4, 1948) is a Christian writer and political activist. He is best known as the founder and editor of *Sojourners* magazine and as the founder of the Washington, D.C.-based Christian community of the same name. Wallis is well known for his advocacy on issues of peace and social justice. […]He works as a spiritual advisor to President Barack Obama.
>
> […]In 2010, Wallis admitted to accepting money for Sojourners from philanthropist George Soros after initially denying having done so. […]In 2011, Wallis acknowledged that Sojourners had received another $150,000.00 from Soros' Open Society Foundation.

Wallis just came out this month in favor of gay marriage. He is also a strong supporter of Barack Obama, who is radically pro-abortion. Some pro-lifers have argued that Barack Obama has the same views on abortion as Kermit Gosnell, because Obama voted twice to allow abortions on babies who were already born alive.

The format of the debate

- 20 minute opening speeches
- 10 minute rebuttals
- 10 minutes of discussion
- Q&A for the remainder

SUMMARY

I use italics below to denote my own observations.

Jim Wallis' opening speech:

My goal is to spark a national conversation on the "common good".

A story about my son who plays baseball.

The central goal of Christianity is to promote the "common good".

Quotes "Catholic social teaching" which values "human flourishing".

The "common good" is "human flourishing".

Is the purpose of Christianity is to make sure that everyone has enough material stuff or to preach the gospel?

When Christians go on mission trips, it's good that they focus on things like human trafficking.

Democrat John Lewis is the "conscience of the U.S. Congress".

John Lewis gets a 0% rating from the American Conservative Union in 2012.

John Lewis gets a 8% rating from the American Conservative Union in 2011.

John Lewis gets a 2.29% lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union.

Nothing is going well in Washington right now except comprehensive immigration reform.

Does he think that Christianity means giving 20-30 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship, while skilled engineers cannot even get green cards, even though there is a shortage of them? Does he think that the other people in society who earn more than they receive from the government ought to be taxed more in order to provide more services and benefits to those who earn less than they take from the government?

Jay Richards' opening speech:

Two topics: 1) what is the common good? 2) what should Christians do to promote the common good?

Catholicism defines the "common good" as "Indeed, the common good embraces the sum of those conditions of the social life whereby men, families and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection."

We have natural ends that we are supposed to be achieving and some places, like South Korea, are better for allowing that to happen.

The common good is broader and prior to any sort of political specification.

It's not the political good or what the state is supposed to do.

It's not about the communal good, as in Soviet Russia, where the communal good was above individual and familial good.

The common good is the social conditions that promote the things that we humans have in common as individuals and members of family.

The common good takes account of who we are as individuals and in associations with other individuals, e.g. – families.

Christians don't have to be doing the same things to promote the common good, e.g. – pastors, entrepreneurs, etc.

The church, as the church, has as its primary goal making disciples of all nations.

But even in that capacity, the church should be interested in more than just conversions and saving souls.

We also have to care about God's created reality including things like physics, education, etc.

How should Christians promote the common good in politics?

Question: when is coercion warranted?

In Romans 13, Paul says that the state does have power to coerce to achieve certain ends, like justice.

Most Christians think that there are some things where the state can use coercion, for example, to prevent/punish murder.

It is OK for the police to use coercive force to maintain public order and the rule of law.

But we need to ask whether other things are legitimate areas for the state to use coercive force.

We should only give the state power to coerce when there is no other way to achieve a goal.

We need to leverage the science of economics in order to know how to achieve the common good.

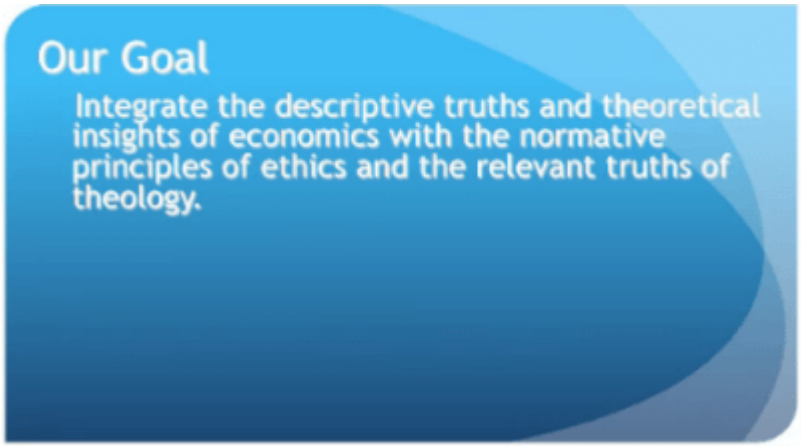

Jay Richards' main point in the debate

Henry Hazlitt: "The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups."

For example, what happens if we raise the federal minimum wage to $50. What happens next for all groups? That's what we need to ask in order to know which policies achieve the common good.

When it comes to economics a lot of things have been tried in other places and times.

We can know what works and doesn't work by studying what was tried before and in other places.

Many things are counter-intuitive – things that sound good don't work, things that sound bad do work.

Principle: "We are our brother's keeper". Christians have an obligation to care for their neighbors.

We all agree on the goal. But how do we do things that will achieve that goal?

We have to distinguish aspirations from principles and prudential judgment.

Principle: We should provide for the material needs of the poor.

Prudence: Seeing the world as it is, and acting accordingly.

Example policies: which minimum wage is best? None? $10? $20?

We decide based on seeing how different economic policies achieve the goal of helping the poor.

Jim Wallis' first rebuttal:

Jesus commanded us to "care for the poor and help to end poverty".

Actually, Jesus thought that acknowledging him and giving him sacrificial worship was more important than giving money to the poor, see Matthew 26:6-13:

[6] While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper,

[7] a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

[8] When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked.

[9] "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

[10] Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

[11] The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me.

[12] When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.

[13] Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

It's not clear to me whether Jim Wallis thinks that preaching is more important than redistributing wealth to address material inequality.

I like what Jesus said in a TV series, even though it's not in the Bible when an actor playing Jesus said to "change the world".

Jesus never said to "change the world" in the Bible. Should we be concerned that he is quoting a TV actor playing Jesus instead of Jesus.

Here is a terrific story about Bill Bright.

I love Catholic social teaching.

Quote: "All are responsible for all".

I go to the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland every year. I spoke once at 7 AM on the 4th floor.

It's a funny place for a Christian to be if they care about the poor – rubbing shoulders with leftist elites. He must have named a dozen high-profile people that he spoke with during the debate, as if he could win the debate by some sort of argument from name-dropping. He mentioned the Davos thing several times!

The greatest beneficiary of government actions to deal with the economic crisis was Wall Street banks.

I'm going to tell you a story about what a Washington lawyer says to Jesus.

I've had conversations with business leaders where I tell them to integrate moral truths.

I talk about the Good Samaritan parable.

Quote: "Do you love your undocumented neighbor?"

Quote: "Do you love your Muslim neighbor?"

Jay Richards' first rebuttal:

Who is responsible for your own children? Who knows the most about them?

Parents should have more discretion over their children because they have more knowledge about their child and what's best for them.

The Good Samaritan doesn't show that government should confiscate wealth through taxation and redistribute it.

The Good Samaritan emphasizes voluntarily charity to help people who are not necessarily your immediate neighbor.

Some of the things we do should be for the good of other people in other countries.

But then we are back to leveraging economics to know what policies are good for those other people in other countries.

The principle of subsidiarity: if a problem can be addressed by a lower level of society (family) then we shouldn't make higher levels (government) address it.

The best place to take care of children is within the family.

Only if the family fails should wider and wider spheres get involved.

Although we want to think of the common good in a global sense, we don't want to lose sight of the fact

The financial crisis: we need to integrate moral truths, but also economic truths.

We don't want to assume policies based on intuitions, we want to check our intuitions using economic principles.

Why did we have a financial crisis in mortgages, but not in commodities futures or technology, etc.?

Greed is a contributing factor in all areas of business.

Something more was going on in the mortgage markets than just greed.

There were specific policies that caused the mortgage lending crisis.

The root cause of the problem were "affordable housing policies" that lowered lending restrictions on low income people.

The policy ended up degrading the underwriting standards on loans.

Government intruded into the market and undermined the normal ways of

People were getting massive loans with no income, no jobs, no assets and no down payment.

The federal government created a market for risk loans by guaranteeing

There was a government imposed quota on mortgage lenders such that 50% of their loans had to be given to high-risk borrowers.

That is what led to the financial crisis. Not the free market, but intrusions into the free market.

These policies were well-meaning and implemented by people from both parties. But they had bad effects.

Why doesn’t God make his existence more obvious to people?

June 9, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

Have you ever heard someone say that if God existed, he would give us more evidence? This is called the “hiddenness of God” argument. It’s also known as the argument from “rational non-belief”.

Basically the argument is something like this:

1. God is all powerful
2. God is all loving
3. God wants all people to know about him
4. Some people don’t know about him
5. Therefore, there is no God.

In this argument, the atheist is saying that he’s looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that’s logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden when our eternal destination depends on our knowledge of his existence.

What reason could God have for remaining hidden?

Dr. Michael Murray, a brilliant professor of philosophy at Franklin & Marshall College, has found a reason for God to remain hidden.

His paper on divine hiddenness is here:

"Coercion and the Hiddenness of God", American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us. Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him. God places a higher value on people having the free will to respond to him, and if he shows too much of himself he takes away their free choice to respond to him, because once he is too overt about his existence, people will just feel obligated to belief in him in order to avoid being punished.

But believing in God just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants for us. If it is too obvious to us that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and behave morally out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out of interest *in him*, just like we might try to get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God's veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don't seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to reach out to us and draw us to him. But I do think that we are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist's argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. In order to derive a contradiction, God MUST NOT have any possible reason to remain hidden. If he has a reason for remaining hidden that is consistent with his goodness, then the argument will not go through.

When Murray offers a possible reason for God to remain hidden in order to allow people to freely respond to him, then the argument is defeated. God wants people to respond to him freely so that there is a genuine love relationship – not coercion by overt threat of damnation. To rescue the argument, the atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free choice of his creatures to reject him.

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007).

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion

- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Police handcuff and arrest black pastor for preaching plain gospel message

June 10, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Four white policemen arrest black pastor for preaching the gospel

I try to stay informed about countries that are more advanced on the path of secular leftism, such as Canada and Venezuela. Canada is about 10 years ahead of us down the path of secular leftism. They legalized same-sex marriage 10 years before we did. They started persecuting Christian businesses 10 years before we did. And now they're arresting Christian pastors.

Consider this article from the Christian Post:

> Pastor David Lynn of Christ Forgiveness Ministries was arrested on June 4, 2019 for preaching the Gospel publicly in Toronto, Canada. The neighborhood he was preaching in was Church-Wellesley Village. This neighborhood is known to be a place where many of the LGBTQ community in Toronto reside. His ministry is currently on an outdoor preaching tour throughout the 22 districts of Toronto. June 4, happened to be the day they scheduled for that district.
>
> It is not uncommon for someone to think "open-air preaching" and "LGBTQ neighborhood" and immediately jump to thoughts of preachers condemning homosexuals to hell. However, Pastor Lynn's preaching was some of the most loving and gracious preaching I have ever seen and heard. Which is why it is outrageous that he was arrested.

You can even watch the whole video here:

More:

> The entire time of preaching was livestreamed via Facebook and can be found on

> YouTube. Throughout the video, it is surprising to see the reaction of those who were listening to Lynn's preaching. The more love he poured out, the more hate and resistance he received. As anyone can see if they view the video, Pastor Lynn was respectful and kind throughout all of his time preaching. As he shared the Gospel, he also made statements like "We are here to tell you that we hate nobody." He emphasized God's love again and again.
>
> He proceeded to ask those protesting him if they would be willing to tolerate him as a Christian. But those listening were unwilling to dialogue, and many asked him to leave the street corner.
>
> Throughout the encounter he was very calm and collected, not entering into any disrespectful or condemnatory dialogue.
>
> Canada does have hate speech laws. However, there is no way that his preaching could be deemed as hate-speech. Lynn stated while preaching, "Everyone is accepted….and that is what we preach as Christians."

This pastor was very careful to avoid singling out any particular group as "sinful". Instead, he said that everyone is sinful, and everyone needs forgiveness for their sin. That is the standard Christian view.

More:

> In order to not make anyone listening feel singled out, he said "Jesus died for the sinner…. Every heterosexual has sin. Every homosexual has sin. Sin is when we violate the laws of God…." He did not target any particular group of people or single out homosexuality.

He was assaulted by the people who disagreed with him, but the police didn't arrest them – they arrested him:

> Though he was very loving throughout the entire encounter, tensions escalated, and people began to form a mob of protest around him. As he tried to walk away from the most adamant protesters, they crowded in on him and would not let him move. All throughout the encounter, as he tried to walk away from them, they pressed in on him and blocked him. At times, they even pressed their bodies against him, which in technicality is assault.
>
> When the police arrived, rather than dealing with those that were assaulting Pastor Lynn, the police blamed Lynn for creating a disturbance of peace. Even upon his request to deal with those who had assaulted him, the police would not listen to him.

You can clearly see that in Canada, the police don't care about basic human rights. Those policemen have been taught secular leftism. They don't know anything about "human rights". They only know that to keep their jobs, they must do as the secular leftists in power tell them. The laws are not based on morality. The laws are based on the need for the secular leftist elites to be able to do what they need to do without anyone disagreeing

with them. The police aren't the guardians of the moral law, they're just hired muscle there to enforce the will of the secular left.

Rights like free speech and religious liberty DO NOT EXIST in Canada. Christians and conservatives have a duty to pay taxes to their secular left overlords, but they don't have a right to disagree with their secular left overlords. They don't have a right to live their lives as Christians, and run their families as Christians. If they try to act like Christians, then they wind up in front of a Human Rights Commission, or a criminal court, or in a jail cell.

And there is no freedom of the press in Canada. If a Canadian tries to expose any of the abuses of human rights to the public, the courts will send the police to their door to arrest them. You see, they want to suppress the human rights of those who disagree with them, but they don't want anyone to know about it. They want people to believe that Canada is as free as the United States, so they don't want reports about their heavy-handed totalitarianism to get out to the rest of the world. This suppression of the truth by force has always been the standard operating procedure of the secular left – in every country where they have seized power.

If you don't want this for America, then you have to vote against the secular left, and do your part to persuade others not to vote for them.

Related Posts

- Fascist Canadian Justice overrules father's freedoms of thought and speech
- Canadian court rules that parents can't prevent children from obtaining hormone replacement therapy
- Canadian elementary schools vote to promote gay activism during Gay Pride month
- Canadian hospital denies man's requests for assisted care, offers him euthanasia instead
- Canada's Supreme Court bans Christians from practicing law in Canada
- How secularism and socialism killed marriage and family in Canada
- Canada's prime minister explains why pro-life groups are not eligible for job grants
- Fascism in Canada: grad student dragged into kangaroo court for showing debate clip
- Canadian province blocks Christian couple from adopting children
- Ontario, Canada government bans pro-life sidewalk counselors
- Canada passes criminal law against undesired gender pronouns
- Canadian judge bans pro-life ads, because free speech makes people feel bad
- Canada's Liberal Party criminalizes spanking of children by parents
- If you want to know what's ahead for America, look north to Canada

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

June 11, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here is Dr. William Lane Craig giving a long-form argument for the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus, and taking questions from the audience.

The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the

Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early dating
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthewand whether it is intended to be historical or apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza

Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is “The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus” and the best comprehensive book is “The Resurrection of Jesus“.

Report: Pinterest demotes and/or censors pro-life, conservative, and Christian content

June 12, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Report: Pinterest censors Christians, conservatives, and pro-lifers

Well, Project Veritas has done it again! This time, they made contact with a whistleblower inside Pinterest, who produced documentation showing how Pinterest censors content that is opposed to the Democrat party. It's not just fringe content: they're censoring Ben Shapiro, Live Action, Bible verses, and undercover videos of Planned Parenthood organ harvesting operations.

Here's the press release from Project Veritas:

> Project Veritas has **received and published documents** from an insider at Pinterest. The documents, which include product code, Slack messages, and internal policies, reveal terms and websites that Pinterest apparently censors.
>
> In an interview, the Pinterest insider who leaked the documents explains how the company censors pro-life and Christian content on the website.

Live Action, PJ Media, TeaParty.org all blocked:

> "I was pretty surprised," said the Pinterest insider in an interview, when s/he discovered that pro-life group LiveAction.org was added to a "porn domain block list." The insider explained that the "block list" was intended to be a collection of pornographic websites that Pinterest uses in order ensure that pornography cannot be posted. LiveAction.org is not a pornographic website, instead it is the

> web domain of a prominent pro-life advocacy group.
>
> The insider explained that websites on a "domain block list" cannot be linked in posts made by users. While investigating, Project Veritas tried to post the LiveAction.org link on Pinterest and failed to do so, receiving an error message that read, "*Sorry! Your request could not be completed.*" Project Veritas reviewed the list of websites from the "porn domain block list" and was able to confirm that along with LiveAction.org, websites like zerohedge.com, pjmedia.com, teaparty.org and other various conservative websites were also listed. The majority of the document lists pornographic websites.

They actually suspended Live Action's account after the report of bias came out. Project Veritas revealed that the blocking of Live Action was requested by employee Megan McClellan. Her name was on the block request.

Notice that these sites that were blocked are all critical of the Democrat party.

Let's see some more evidence from the report.

Bible verses, Easter are marked "Brand Unsafe":

> Project Veritas also received a large text file titled "Sensitive Terms List." The insider said the file contains search terms that Pinterest considers "sensitive," and that the terms are modified in search results according to different value assignments. According to the insider and supporting documents, terms are assigned an "abusive," "sensitive," and "brand unsafe" value.
>
> Some of the actions that can be taken on search terms include: blocking auto-complete results in the search bar, providing an advisory message when a term is searched for, removing the term from recommended or trending feeds, and blocking email or push notifications. Search results are also modified based on the values that are applied to terms.
>
> Project Veritas reviewed the "Sensitive Terms List" and discovered that Christianity-related terms like "christian easter" and "bible verses" were marked as "brand unsafe." The insider explained to Project Veritas in an interview that such terms are removed from auto-complete search results.

For me, the most interesting part was the censoring of the Planned Parenthood undercover videos. These videos were investigated and found to be undoctored. So there is nothing unreliable about them. But they are harmful to the Democrat party, so maybe Pinterest thought that they could help Democrats by altering their products and services to censor anti-Democrat content.

The censoring of Harvard-Law graduate Ben Shapiro was also interesting, as you can see him on all sorts of television shows on any given night, from far-left CNN to centrist Fox News, and everything in between. Why would Pinterest classify a well-educated, popular and respected conservative pundit as worthy of censorship? One of the documents released by Project Veritas cited a 26-year-old Pinterest employee calling this famous

Orthodox Jew a “white supremacist”, despite the fact that he was the number one target of white supremacist threats in a prior year.

Newsbusters notes:

> Jewish conservative Ben Shapiro has been labelled by Pinterest Public Policy/Social Impact employee Ifeoma Ozuma as a “white supremacist.” According to the anonymous whistleblower, this took place during an internal war room discussion where “policymakers were making decisions about content.” Any mention of Shapiro discussing Islam was added to the sensitive terms watchlist.

I looked up this employee on LinkedIn, and she didn’t seem to be very well informed about anything. Maybe Pinterest just hires unqualified people, solely based on their political allegiance to the Democrat party?

But this employee is just one example of a company-wide bias against Christians and conservatives. I was trying to guess why they have this bias. Maybe it’s because they are allied with the Democrat party, so they just censor content that makes Democrats look bad?

They certainly have no bias against content that supports the Democrat party on their platform.

Newsbusters noted:

> When researchers tried to pin images from pro-abortion giant Planned Parenthood, they faced no such censorship. Similarly, while they faced no problem searching for “Muslim” or “Jewish” content, the search bar included no references to “Christian” imagery. In fact users had to use codes to work around the system so they could try to share Christian content.
>
> […]Curiously, where people had to workaround the programming of the autocomplete bar to find Christian content, searching “atheist” immediately led to jokes and memes at the expense of religious believers, especially Christians. This writer immediately came across an image of a crucifix made entirely out of the word “lies” and one featuring an image of Mary holding the infant Christ captioned “If there has been DNA testing 2000 years ago, we wouldn’t have this fairytale today.”

But Pinterest isn’t the only one accused of censorship.

This blog has suffered from all sorts of censorship since Trump won the 2016 election. Our Google traffic referrals are down over 90%, reducing our daily page visits by about 66%. Our Twitter followers has increased by 100 in the past year, but in previous years, it went up about 2000 per year. Are big tech companies that intent on punishing Christian conservatives? If they are hell-bent on censoring Christians and conservatives, then maybe we should have a federal investigation into their business to see if they’ve broken any laws.

New study: 1 in 8 divorces is caused by student loan debt

June 13, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to make plans in advance and calculate everything out before I try to do anything. This is the curse of being a software engineer. We're taught to take a test-first approach to design. So, when I think about marriage, I naturally think about what tests marriage is supposed to pass, and work backwards from there to requirements for each of the spouses.

Here's some research from CNBC that might help young people to avoid a divorce, if they respect the research in their choices.

Excerpt:

> When it comes to student loan debt, "for richer, for poorer" doesn't quite cut it.
>
> In general, finances are the leading cause of stress in a relationship, according to a study by SunTrust Bank, but student debt takes a particularly hard toll on a marriage.
>
> More than a third of borrowers said college loans and other money factors contributed to their divorce, according to a recent report from Student Loan Hero, a website for managing education debt.
>
> In fact, 13 percent of divorcees blame student loans specifically for ending their relationship, the report found. Student Loan Hero surveyed more than 800 divorced adults in June.

Here is a link to the full study from Student Loan Hero.

I think in general, you can't just do whatever you want before marrying and jump into it unprepared. Marriage involves specific requirements in order to work, such as being faithful to your spouse, and buying things that you need for the marriage enterprise, like a home, and baby stuff. It doesn't make any sense to say "I want to get married" and then not prepare for marriage by being careful about preparing for the behaviors marriage that requires of you. Being debt-free is one of those behaviors that marriage requires of you.

So how can we be debt-free, so that the marriage will be stable? Well, one way to be debt-free is to find a way to learn skills that will allow you to get a job without going to college, like being a self-taught software engineer. One of my friends actually did that, and now he's with a very good software company as a remote worker. But if you're going to go to college, you can avoid debt by studying something that will get you a high-paying job when you graduate.

This 2017 article from Harvard Business Review is interesting.

It says:

> Examining 46,934 resumes shared on Glassdoor by people who graduated between 2010 and 2017, the researchers looked at each person's college major and their post-college jobs in the five years after graduation. They then estimated the median pay for each of those jobs (also using Glassdoor data) for employees with five years of experience or less. Their key finding: "Many college majors that lead to high-paying roles in tech and engineering are male dominated, while majors that lead to lower-paying roles in social sciences and liberal arts tend to be female dominated, placing men in higher-paying career pathways, on average."

Here's the plot, and you can click it to expand it:

Men Sort Into College Majors That End Up Paying More

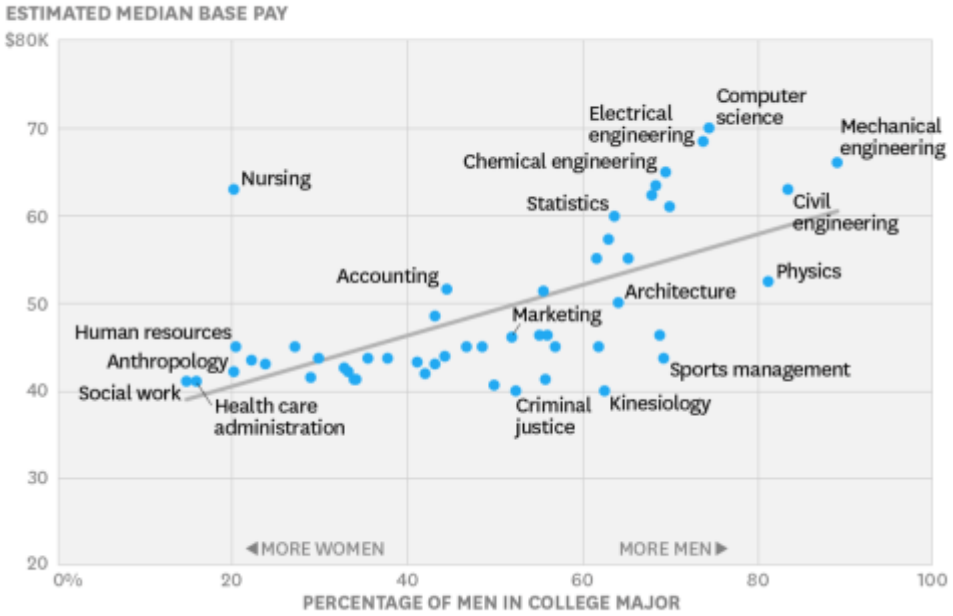

SOURCE "THE PIPELINE PROBLEM," GLASSDOOR, 2017 © HBR.ORG

Median salaries by major, broken out by gender – don't study things at the bottom!

As you can see from the graph, it's especially important to share the message about choosing a major, salaries and student loan debt with WOMEN, because as the graph shows, they tend to choose the wrong majors, if the goal is to pay off student loans and avoid divorce. Everyone who wants marriage to go smoothly needs to choose majors that are near the top of the graph, like nursing, chemical engineering, computer science, or mechanical engineering. It doesn't make sense to go to college if you aren't going to graduate in one of these high-paying fields.

As you might expect from the graph, women hold the majority of student loan debt, according to the Boston Globe, and that's because women tend to choose majors that don't result in good-paying jobs. And we already saw how this becomes a risk factor for divorce.

Student loans delay marriage and children

Another interesting piece of data, reported by The Consumerist, is that people with student loans tend to delay marriage, which means the couple has fewer children:

> As consumers navigate life's financial journey, they are faced with major financial milestones, like buying a home. But student loans are also delaying consumers from reaching these goals.
>
> Survey respondents report delaying homeownership (23 percent), buying or leasing a car (23 percent), having children (10 percent) and getting married (9 percent) because of their student loan burdens.

So, it's not just that there is an increased risk of divorce from student loans, but there's also fewer children, which means a diminished legacy. I can't speak for how others would see this, but for myself, I want to pass on my beliefs to as many effective, influential Christian children as I can.

Anyway, I feel obligated to post a relevant Dave Ramsey video, just to remind everyone that stewardship of money is a Christian virtue, and that being forgiven by Jesus for your sins doesn't automatically make you good with money. It takes planning and stewardship.

This one from 2014: (H/T Robb)

When I was in high school, I was far more interested in becoming an English teacher than I was in becoming a software engineer. It was my Dad who overruled my choice of college major when I was still in high school. He had me take a first-year English course at a local university. When I saw how politicized and useless it was (they were studying all sorts of politically correct postmodern relativist stuff, instead of the Great Works, and they weren't trying to learn any wisdom from any of it), I chose computer science. I did what was likely to avoid divorce, and likely to support having many children.

How to apologize effectively: responsibility, restitution, repentance

June 14, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I guess everyone already knows about Gary Chapman and his 5 Love Languages. But have you heard of his 5 Love Languages of apologies?

I want to focus on two of them that I think are important, because I don't want people to think that just saying "I'm sorry" is good enough.

Here they are (straight out of his book):

Apology Language #3: Making Restitution

In the public arena, our emphasis upon restitution is based upon our sense of justice. The one who commits the crime should pay for the wrongdoing. In contrast, in the private sphere of family and other close relationships, our desire for restitution is almost always based upon our need for love. After being hurt deeply, we need the reassurance that the person who hurt us still loves us.

"How could they love me and do that?" is the question that lingers in our minds. The words "I'm sorry; I was wrong" may not be enough.

For some people, restitution is their primary apology language. For them the statement, "It is not right for me to have treated you that way," must be followed with "What can I do to show you that I still care about you?" Without this effort at restitution, this person will question the sincerity of the apology. They will continue to feel unloved even though you may have said, "I am sorry; I was wrong." They wait for the reassurance that you genuinely love them.

The question, then, is how do we make restitution in the most effective way? Since the

heart of restitution is reassuring the spouse or family member that you genuinely love him or her, it is essential to express restitution in the love language of the other person.

[…]If restitution is the primary apology language of an individual, then this becomes the most important part of the apology. “I’m sorry; I was wrong” will never be taken as sincere if these words are not accompanied by a sincere effort at restitution. They wait for the assurance that you still genuinely love them. Without your effort to make amends, the apology will not have the desired results of forgiveness.

Apology Language #4: Genuinely Repenting

The word repentance means “to turn around” or “to change one’s mind.” In the context of an apology, it means that an individual realizes that his or her present behavior is destructive. The person regrets the pain he or she is causing the other person, and he chooses to change his behavior.

Without genuine repentance, the other languages of apology may fall on deaf ears. What people who’ve been hurt want to know is, “Do you intend to change, or will this happen again next week?”

How then do we speak the language of repentance?

> - **It begins with an expression of intent to change.** When we share our intention to change with the person we have offended, we are communicating to them what is going on inside of us. They get a glimpse of our heart—and this often is the language that convinces them we mean what we say.
> - **The second step down the road of repentance is developing a plan for implementing change.**Often apologies fail to be successful in restoring the relationship because there is no plan for making positive change.
> - **The third step down the road of repentance is implementing the plan.** Following through with the plan gives evidence to the offended party that your apology was sincere.

Most people do not expect perfection after an apology, but they do expect to see effort.

Thus, expressing your desire to change and coming up with a plan is an extremely important part of an apology to this person. Inviting the offended person to help you come up with a plan for change is perhaps the best way to effectively show repentance.

Here are some practical tips that I recommend to someone who has done something morally wrong and who wants to apologize.

To fix the problem you need more than talk

To me, the only thing that needs an apology is breaking a moral rule – you can’t beat someone up for just making a mistake. Whenever someone breaks a moral rule with me, like disrespecting me or being selfish, then I pick out a book for them to read and ask them to read it and then write something about how what they learned in the book

applies to what they did to me. I don’t pick very long books! But I do this for a very important reason.

The very important reason is that I don’t trust people who just agree with me. I don’t trust people’s words. If someone is really sorry about something, then I want them to read something that describes the moral rule that they broke, and to be willing to listen to the feelings of the person they harmed by breaking that rule. That goes a long way in my mind.

Scott Klusendorf discusses abortion and euthanasia at the Summit Forum

June 15, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scott Klusendorf, President of the Life Training Institute

Here's the video, featuring my favorite pro-life speakers Scott Klusendorf. Scott is the founder and President of the Life Training Institute. LTI's mission is to make a rigorous, rational defense for pro-life positions with respect to a variety of ethical issues. If you listen to Scott, you will learn a lot, and learn it from someone who has been tested on the battlefield of ideas.

Three topics:

- right to life of the unborn
- reproductive technologies
- end of life questions

40 minutes of guided discussion, 20 minutes of Q&A. This video was apparently recorded in the summer of 2016.

Abortion:

- the 1-minute case for the pro-life position (excellent)
- dealing with those who dismiss the pro-life case as religious
- how and when do people win arguments?
- how does one get better at discussing moral issues?
- who are some of the best books to get informed about life issues?
- what are some of the best books from the other side?
- what is the SLED test? do pro-abortion scholars accept it?
- if abortion were illegal, who should be punished and how much?

- is it inflammatory and dangerous to say that abortion is killing?

Assisted reproductive technologies:

- how should we speak to people considering ARTs?
- what is the underlying issue in ART discussions?
- should pro-lifers be opposed to all use of ARTs?
- what should pro-lifers think about surrogacy?
- which books provide an introduction to ART ethics?

End of life issues:

- what is the central issue in end of life discussions?
- should treatment always be continued or are there situations where treatment can be withdrawn?

Final issues:

- if a student wants to take courses in bioethics, where should they go to take courses or do a degree?
- what is the policy situation for pro-lifers in terms of legislation and SCOTUS decision-making?
- what are some policies that pro-lifers can support as incremental measures that move the issue in the right direction?

I liked this discussion. I tried to listen as someone new to the issue and he did a good job of not assuming any prior knowledge of the debate. My favorite part was his survey of books and arguments on the other side, and what they say. I don't think that most people realize what the implications of the pro-abortion worldview really are for things like infanticide, and so on. The discussion about who should be punished for abortion and how much was new to me – and that actually came up during the last election, during the GOP primary. Personally, I would let the woman get off, and just prosecute the doctor.

It's very very good to listen to crystal clear thinking on these controversial issues from someone who has encountered the other side in their writings, and in public debates with them. Not to mention having to interact with people making decisions in these areas.

Unmarried 35-year-old woman reflects on her adventurous life of fun, travel and serial cohabitation

June 16, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

I found an interesting article featuring a 35-year-old woman who is alarmed that her approach to life has left her in debt and single, with a gap-filled resume of short-term jobs. I thought it might be useful for young women to read this, and consider whether making "rash" decisions and being "adventurous" works out.

She writes:

> I feel like a ghost. I'm a 35-year-old woman, and I have nothing to show for it. My 20s and early 30s have been a twisting crisscross of moves all over the West Coast, a couple of brief stints abroad, multiple jobs in a mediocre role with no real upward track. I was also the poster child for serial monogamy. My most hopeful and longest lasting relationship (three and a half years, whoopee) ended two years ago. We moved to a new town (my fourth new city), created a home together, and then nose-dived into a traumatic breakup that launched me to my fifth and current city and who-knows-what-number job.

Rash decisions, adventure, exploring…. and lots of debt:

> For all these years of quick changes and rash decisions, which I once rationalized as adventurous, exploratory, and living an "original life," I have nothing to show for it. I have no wealth, and I'm now saddled with enough debt from all of my moves, poor decisions, and lack of career drive that I may never be able to retire. I have no career milestones and don't care for my line of work all that much anyway, but now it's my lifeline, as I only have enough savings to buy a hotel

> room for two nights.

No STEM degree, which means she doesn't like to study hard things that can be tested against the real world for correctness:

> I used to consider myself creative — a good writer, poetic, passionate, curious. Now, after many years of demanding yet uninspiring jobs, multiple heartbreaks, move after move, financial woes, I'm quite frankly exhausted.

Surprised by aging and poor health:

> Also, within the past year I've had a breast-cancer scare and required surgery on my uterus due to a fertility issue. On top of that, I'm 35 and every gyno and women's-health website this side of the Mississippi is telling me my fertility is dropping faster than a piano falling out of the sky. Now I'm looking into freezing my eggs, adding to my never-ending financial burden, in hopes of possibly making something of this haunted house and having a family someday with a no-named man.

She's still trying to be the sexpot 25-year-old she used to be:

> I'm dating. I'm working out and working hard. Listening to music I enjoy and loving my cat. Calling my mom…. I'm drinking too much… And with men I date, I feel pressure to make something of the relationship too soon (move in, get married, "I have to have kids in a couple of years"; fun times!). **All the while still trying to be the sexpot 25-year-old I thought I was until what seemed like a moment ago.**

But her plan hasn't worked out:

> I used to think I was the one who had it all figured out. Adventurous life in the city! Traveling the world! Making memories! Now I feel incredibly hollow. And foolish. How can I make a future for myself that I can get excited about out of these wasted years? What reserves or identity can I draw from when I feel like I've accrued nothing up to this point with my life choices?

Well, I've known women like this, and I think we're going to see more and more women like this as the society becomes more secular and feminist. I want to say something about whether she is sincere about wanting to get married and have children, and what women should do to avoid ending up like her.

Do women today understand male nature and marriage?

This woman's demonstrated life plan is that she chose whatever made her feel good from age 18-35+, and now wants to enter into a marriage some time after age 35. And what does marriage mean to her? Has she prioritized entering the traditional roles of wife and mother? Don't listen to her words. Look at her actions. Her actions show that marriage and children were of NO importance to her. And her current approach to getting married

and having kids is the same as ever – work out in order to look hot, and try to coerce a man who signs up for recreational sex with no commitment into becoming a man who makes a life-long commitment to provide for her and her children (which is the opposite of what he signed up for). She wants marriage now for the same reason that she's wanted anything: for fun, thrills, adventure and to keep up with her girlfriends who are already married.

What kind of man should she have been pursuing from age 18 to 35, if she really wanted marriage and children? Well, the first thing to realize is that not all men want marriage. And the next thing to realize is that women who are serious about marriage need to focus ONLY on men who want to marry. All the men that the women quoted above wanted in her youth didn't want to marry. They wanted premarital recreational sex with her, and that was fine with her – she chose them, and disregarded the men who were interested in marriage.

A man who was interested in marrying her would have:

- ….told her no to sex before marriage (because the more sexual partners a woman has, the less happy she will be in marriage, and the more unstable her marriage will be).
- …led her to become better at being a wife and mother, by discouraging her thrill-seeking, traveling and wasteful spending, and instead encouraging her focus on a STEM education, career and getting debt-free.
- …led her to develop a Christian worldview in which she would understand the importance of marriage and children, and learn to sacrifice her own interests to love and care for others.

Was she interested in getting ready for marriage? No. She never chose those marriage-minded men. She didn't want to be a wife. The men she chose were chosen for fun, for thrills, and to show off their outward appearance to her girlfriends.

So, who are the men in this group of marriage-minded men? How do you recognize them? Marriage-minded men are interested in marriage because they want to *lead a home*. They will have invested a lot of time learning how to protect others, how to provide, and how to debate and lead on moral and spiritual issues. Marriage-minded men see the marriage enterprise as a way of advancing the causes that they care about most. Women who *really* want to get married will recognize those men, and pursue those men. And they'll do it early, so that they can invest in their husbands early and be young enough to have children.

Should Christian men expect a wife / mother candidate to know how to defend the Christian worldview?

June 17, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

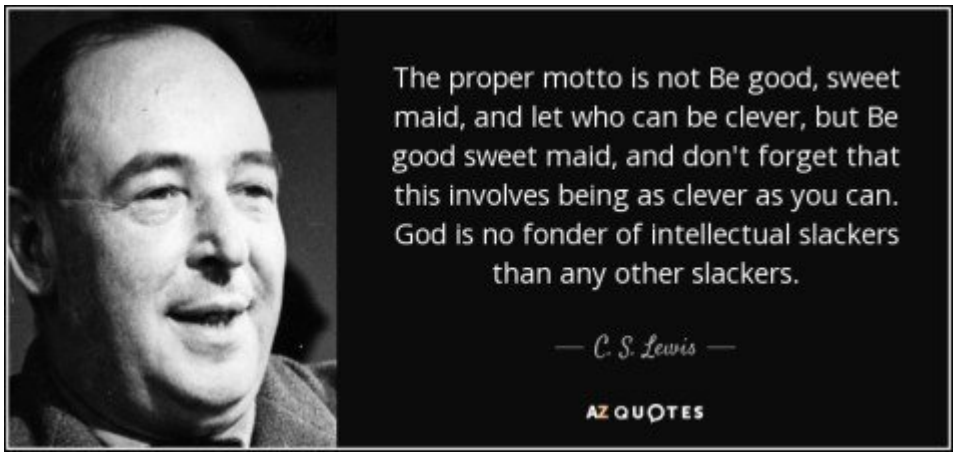

C.S. Lewis has some words to live by for you

Over the weekend I debated with Christian feminists about marriage on The Transformed Wife Facebook page. At one point, I asserted that Christian women ought to have some knowledge of how to defend their faith using scientific and historical evidence. Some women asked me: "are you joking?" In this post, I'll explain why I'm serious, and then I'll ask them some questions of my own.

Let's start with Jesus. Jesus set an example by showing the importance of knowing how to answer questions and challenges from skeptics in the New Testament. His favorite way to answer a challenge was by using evidence to support his truth claims.

So, take this story that's in Mark 2:1-12, Matthew 9:1-8 and Luke 5:17-26. This story is accepted even by skeptical historians because it's in three different books, and one of them is early (Mark).

In each version of the story, there are 4 steps:

1. Jesus forgives the sins of a paralyzed man
2. The Pharisees say that he doesn't have authority to forgive sins
3. Jesus miraculously heals the paralyzed man
4. Jesus explains the evidence of the healing supports his claim that he has authority to forgive sins

And this is an example that you will find repeated in many places in the life of Jesus. You can see it in the Old Testament as well, where God performs miracles so that people who don't believe in his existence or respect the Scriptures can still be convinced.

Christian apologetics is the skill of being able to give a defense for the Christian worldview when presented with a challenge from a non-Christian.

So, who has to be ready with a defense?

Look at 1 Peter 3:15-16:

[15] But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

[16] keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

This passage applies to every one who claims to be a disciple of Jesus, whether they like to prepare a defense or not. How much work must you put into it? It depends on the sophistication of the challenges you get. In the mountains of Pakistan, you don't need to know much because there might not be a sophisticated challenge. In an American society filled with college graduates, the challenges are more difficult. So you will need to prepare a lot more, because the challenges will be a lot harder.

Those who take this passage seriously are doing something difficult, and time-consuming, in order to serve Christ. Buying books costs money. Reading books takes time. Debating with non-Christians can make you look bad to others. But the Bible commands us to be ready with answers for the people around us. Sometimes, doing what the Bible says makes us feel bad, or look bad to others. But we have do what the Bible says anyway. Part of being a real Christian is being obedient even if it feels bad or makes you look bad.

William Lane Craig on apologetics and the culture

What's in an apologetics book?

So, with that said, let's look at the table of contents of my favorite introduction to Christian apologetics, which is "Is God Just a Human Invention?" written by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow.

In that book, you will find 18 topics.

1. Is Faith Irrational? (Commentary by: Gregory Koukl)
2. Are Science and Christianity at Odds? (Commentary by: John Warwick Montgomery)
3. Are Miracles Possible? (Commentary by: Gary R. Habermas)

4. Is Darwinian Evolution the Only Game in Town? (Commentary by: William A. Dembski)
5. How Did the Universe Begin? (Commentary by: R. Douglas Geivett)
6. How Did Life Begin? (Commentary by: Fazale R. Rana)
7. Why Is the Universe Just Right for Life? (Commentary by: Jay W. Richards)
8. Has Science Shown There Is No Soul? (Commentary by: Dale Fincher and Jonalyn Fincher)
9. Is God Just a Human Invention? (Commentary by: Garry DeWeese)
10. Is Religion Dangerous? (Commentary by: Douglas Groothuis)
11. Does God Intend for Us to Keep Slaves? (Commentary by: Paul Copan)
12. Is Hell a Divine Torture Chamber? (Commentary by: Frank Turek)
13. Is God a Genocidal Bully? (Commentary by: Clay Jones)
14. Is Christianity the Cause of Dangerous Sexual Repression? (Commentary by: Kerby Anderson)
15. Can People Be Good Without God? (Commentary by: Mark D. Linville)
16. Is Evil Only a Problem for Christians? (Commentary by: Randy Alcorn)
17. What Good Is Christianity? (Commentary by: Glenn S. Sunshine)
18. Why Jesus Instead of the Flying Spaghetti Monster? (Commentary by: Darrell L. Bock)

Prominent atheist scholars are quoted in each chapter to introduce the challenges, and then scholarly arguments and evidence are presented to defend the Christian worldview. The language is simple enough, but the material is solid enough to use in a real debate. I would say that introductory books like this one are more than enough to equip you for everyone who will challenge you.

Why are these 18 topics important? Because these are the questions that atheists ask. These are the questions that cause Christians to leave the faith. These are the questions that your children will face in high school and college, which might cause them to leave the faith.

Let’s start with chapter one. One of the most prominent arguments by atheists is that faith is irrational. This chapter allows you to define faith using the Bible’s definition of faith, which relies on logic and evidence.

Atheists also say that Christianity is at war with science. In chapter 2, they discuss the history of science and how Christianity provided the framework that allowed scientific method to take root and flourish.

Atheists like to claim that miracles are impossible. Chapter 3 defends the view that God, if he exists, is capable of interacting with his created world.

Atheists love to put forward Darwinism as means to deny that God is the designer of life. Chapter 4 explains the concept of intelligent design, and why intelligent design is a better explanation for the history of life.

Atheists love to talk about how the universe has always existed, and there’s no need for a Creator. Chapter 5 contains a philosophical argument that is supported by mainstream

science to argue that the universe had a beginning, just like the Bible says.

Atheists love to argue that life can emerge from non-life, and the process is simple. Chapter 6 is written by a biochemist, and it takes a look at the real complexity of the simplest living cell.

Atheists like to argue that the universe itself is just an accident, and there is no need for a Designer. Chapter 7 introduces the scientific evidence for fine-tuning and habitability.

Atheists like to say that there is no soul and no afterlife. Chapter 8 gives some arguments for the existence of the soul.

Atheists like to argue that Christians invent God because God makes them feel good. But chapter 9 explains that having an all-powerful God who can hold humans accountable is the last thing any human would want to invent.

Atheists like to talk about how religion, with it's habit of teaching to believe in things that can't be tested, causes religious people to do a lot of harm. Chapter 10 takes a look at the real record of Christianity as a force for good in the world.

Atheists like to talk about slavery in the Bible. Chapter 11 talks about what the Bible really says, and provides some rational responses to the accusation.

Atheists like to talk about eternal punishment in Hell isn't a just punishment for just getting a few questions wrong on a theology exam. Chapter 12 provides an explanation and defense of the concept of Hell.

Atheists love to talk about how God commanded the Israelites to attack their enemies in the Bible. Chapter 13 explains who their enemies really were, and what was really happening in those wars.

Atheists feel that unrestricted sexual activity is very healthy and normal, and that the Biblical prohibitions outside of male-female marriage are repressive and unhealthy. Chapter 14 explains why God has these rules in place, and supports his rules with evidence.

Atheists love to assert that they don't need God, because they can behave morally on their own. Chapter 15 explains how to answer this claim by talking about how well atheism grounds objective moral values, objective moral duties, free will and moral accountability: the minimum requirements for objective morality.

Atheists think that the mere existence of natural disasters and human immorality are incompatible with the God of the Bible. Chapter 16 explains why this argument doesn't work, and why even the concept of evil requires God to exist.

I have an atheist friend in my office who can't defeat my scientific arguments for the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning and the origin of life. But still, he says to me, even if God exists, why would that matter to my life? Chapter 17 explains what difference Christianity makes in a person's life.

Atheists think that the life of Jesus has no relevance to their life, and that he has nothing to offer them anyway. Chapter 18 explains the uniqueness of Jesus and explains why his resurrection is relevant to our lives today.

It’s important to understand that this book is not on the level of A. W. Tozer, G.K. Chesterton, Francis Chan, John Piper, etc. Those authors write for a Christian audience and therefore they do not equip you to answer realistic challenges from non-Christians. But the apologetics book we looked at actually equips you to answer challenges from non-Christians using logical arguments and evidence from mainstream history and science. You can use the material in that book in discussions outside the confines of your home and your church.

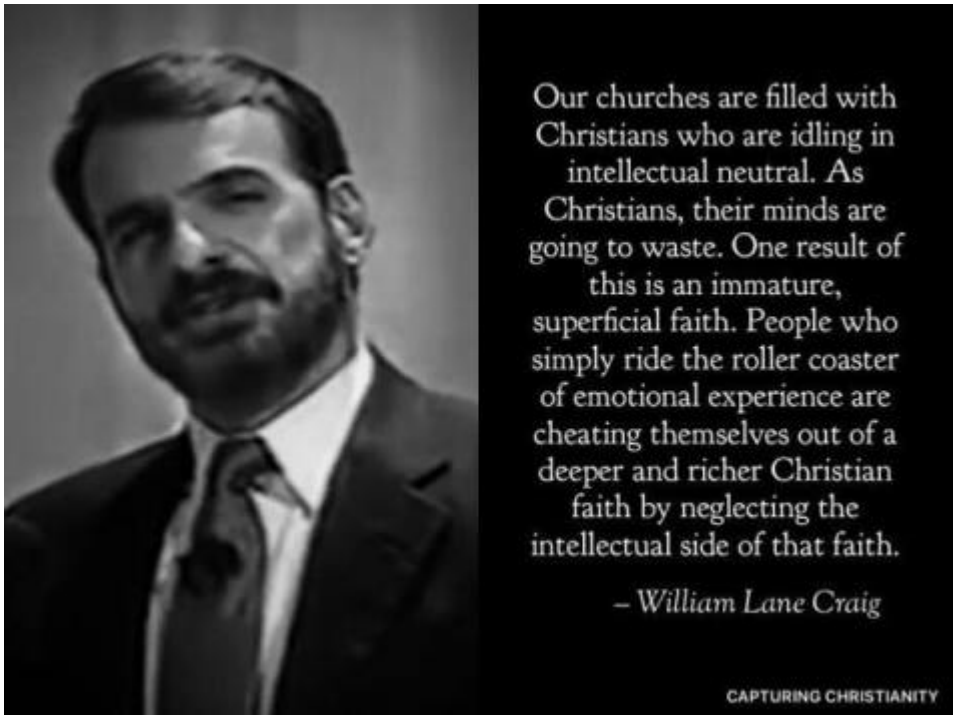

Dr. W. L. Craig: churches don’t prepare Christians to answer skeptics

Wife candidates ought to know apologetics

So, back to my original point about how some Christian feminists responded when I said that during courtship, I ask women questions about how much preparation they have done to answer objections from atheists, like the ones answered in this book. Am I joking?

Well, I think the problem is that Christian feminists don’t understand how Christian men view marriage. Christian men are interested in marriage because they think that their marriage will be an enterprise that produces a return for God. They like the idea of having a clean, comfortable home to host debate viewings and discussions over dessert with skeptics. They like the idea of raising children who will be effective and influential. Men don’t see marriage a means of making us feel better, or having fun, or getting our peers to approve of us. We see it as a way to promote Jesus’ agenda in the world. A Christian man loves his wife *precisely because* she is his partner in serving God.

So, some questions for all the Christian feminists out there. Are you aware of the actual objections that non-Christians have to the Christian worldview? Have you ever put in any effort to prepare to respond to these objections? Have you trained yourself to be calm and persuasive during discussions about Christianity?

Reading devotions or authors like Rachel Hollis, Beth Moore, and Jen Hatmaker won’t

teach a Christian woman anything useful about defending the Christian worldview against atheist objections. And those books also won't teach you how to evaluate a man to see whether he knows how to defend the Christian worldview, either. You have to study apologetics to know how to evaluate how much a candidate for husband and father roles knows about defending his faith. You have to protect yourself from men who lie about being Christians.

Having a rationally-grounded Christian worldview is essential to the roles of wife and mother. A Christian man cannot be confident about the trustworthiness of a Christian woman's convictions unless she demonstrates her ability to defend those convictions to non-Christians in the ordinary way that she can surely defend other truth claims in areas where she does have the knowledge. If I ask a Christian nurse to defend the claim that germs are real, she will appeal to logic and evidence. I expect her to have put in as much work into defending the claims of Christianity, and to use the same methods: logic and evidence.

Is Sam Harris successful at rationally grounding objective moral values and duties?

June 18, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

I just wanted to put out a few snips from this layperson-level article on the Reasonable Faith web site. The article is about atheist scholar Sam Harris, and his attempt to provide a basis for morality on atheism.

Here's the Harris project:

> The question then is, what is the best foundation for the existence of objective moral values and duties? What grounds them? What makes certain actions good or evil, right or wrong? Traditionally, God has been the highest Good (*summum bonum*) and His commandments constitutive of our moral duties. But if God does not exist, what foundation remains for objective moral values and duties?

Dr. Craig is able to show why Harris' attempt to ground the objective moral value of humans in "human flourishing" fails in the first part of his article, but I want to focus on the second part. Can Sam Harris' atheism rationally ground his claim that human can make genuine moral choices?

Dr. Craig writes:

> Does atheism provide a sound foundation for objective moral duties? Duty has to do with moral obligation and prohibition, what I ought or ought not to do. Here reviewers of *The Moral Landscape* have been merciless in pounding Harris' attempt to provide a naturalistic account of moral obligation. Two problems stand out.
>
> **First:** Natural science tells us only what *is*, not what *ought* to be, the case. As philosopher Jerry Fodor has written, "Science is about facts, not norms; it might

> tell us how we are, but it wouldn't tell us what is wrong with how we are." In particular it cannot tell us that we have a moral obligation to take actions that are conducive to human flourishing.
>
> So if there is no God, what foundation remains for objective moral duties? On the naturalistic view, human beings are just animals, and animals have no moral obligations to one another. When a lion kills a zebra, it kills the zebra, but it does not *murder* the zebra. When a great white shark forcibly copulates with a female, it forcibly copulates with her but it does not *rape* her — for there is no moral dimension to these actions. They are neither prohibited nor obligatory.
>
> So if God does not exist, why think we have any moral obligations to do anything? Who or what imposes these moral duties on us? Where do they come from? It is hard to see why they would be anything more than a subjective impression ingrained into us by societal and parental conditioning.

So we might *feel* morally obligated to do something, maybe what our herd expects of us in this time and place we live in. But on atheism those feelings are arbitrary. After all, societies have evolved where feelings of obligation are felt by people to perform suicide bombings against civilians. On atheism, those feelings are as valid and grounded as any other "duties" because they emerge from the same process in other times and places. Obligations change between time and place – they are not objectively real. But that means that our moral duties are not objective, they are arbitrary – if atheism is true. The same "socio-biological evolution" is generating opposite moral duties in different times and places. This is not "objective".

And the second objection is even more lethal:

> **Second:** "ought" implies "can." A person is not morally responsible for an action he is unable to avoid. For example, if somebody shoves you into another person, you are not to blame for bumping into this person. You had no choice. But Harris believes that *all* of our actions are causally determined and that there is no free will. Harris rejects not only libertarian accounts of freedom but also compatibilistic accounts of freedom. But if there is no free will, no one is morally responsible for anything. In the end, Harris admits this, though it's tucked away in his endnotes. Moral responsibility, he says, "is a social construct," not an objective reality: "in neuroscientific terms no person is more or less responsible than any other" for the actions they perform. His thoroughgoing determinism spells the end of any hope or possibility of objective moral duties on his worldview because we have no control over what we do.
>
> Harris recognizes that "determinism really does threaten free will and responsibility as we intuitively understand them." But not to worry! "*The illusion of free will is itself an illusion*." The point, I take it, is that we do not really have the illusion of free will. Not only is such a claim patently false phenomenologically, as any of us can attest, but it is also irrelevant. The fact remains that whether we experience the illusion of free will or not, on Harris'

> view we are thoroughly determined in all that we think and do and can therefore have no moral responsibilities.

On Harris' view, human beings are computers made out of meat. But if you cannot freely make moral choices, then you cannot choose to perform moral duties or not. What is amazing to me is why he wants to deny free will in the first place. He is surely very well aware of his own experience of free will, and his own consciousness, for that matter. Before we even start to look at scientific evidences against atheism like the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, etc. we already have evidence within ourselves that naturalism is false.

Just in passing, my friend Micah sent me this article about Sam Harris' academic credentials. Although Harris has a PhD in neuroscience, the underlying reality is a bit more complicated. When I watched him debate William Lane Craig, he seemed to be ignorant of simple problems with his utilitarian moral views, and his inability to ground libertarian free will. The problems with utilitarianism have been known for hundreds of years. You can watch the debate yourself and see if you think he was prepared or not.

If you accept Jesus and become a Christian, will God make you happy?

June 19, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

This is a wonderful, wonderful post from Amy Hall, who writes for the Stand to Reason blog.

She writes:

> I had a brief interaction with an atheist on Twitter a couple of weeks ago that unexpectedly turned to the issue of suffering when she said:
>
> You clearly never had a time you were hurt. I don't mean sick. I don't mean heart broken. I mean literally a near death experience or rape or abusive relationship…. You can keep floating on a [expletive] cloud thinking Jesus will do everything for you but it's a lie. What makes you so special?
>
> That surprised me at first because it didn't seem to have anything to do with the tweet she was responding to, and I was confused as to why she would assume I'd never been through anything traumatic. But then in subsequent tweets, when she revealed she had been raped, it became clear that her trauma had played a central role in her becoming an outspoken, obviously angry "antitheist." She's a self-described antitheist now because she thinks Christianity teaches Jesus "will do everything for you" to give you a perfect life, and now she knows that's a lie. The rape proved her understanding of Christianity false.
>
> So it made sense for her to reason that since I believe Christianity is true, I must still be under the delusion that Jesus is making my life special, which means I obviously never encountered any evil or suffering to shake that delusion.

All right, readers. I don't want any of you to be thinking that if you become a Christian

that these things should be expected to happen:

- you will feel happy all the time
- you will be able to sense God's secret plan for your life through your feelings
- God's secret plan for your life will automatically work, even though it's crazy
- God will give you a perfect spouse and lots of money without you having to study anything hard, or do any hard work
- you get permission to do things that that make you happy, even if they are expressly forbidden by the Bible
- you don't have to do anything that makes you feel bad (e.g. – talk to non-Christians about Christian truth claims), because God wants you to be happy

No! Where do people get this idea that if they convert to Christianity, then God will become their cosmic butler?

Amy has the answer: (emphasis mine)

> Hear me, everyone: **This is a failure of the church.**
>
> A friend of mine who was deeply suffering once said to me that many Christians are in for "an epic letdown" when they realize their preconceived notions about what God is expected to do for us are false. Pastors who preach a life-improvement Jesus are leading people down this precarious path to disillusionment.
>
> If suffering disproves your Christianity, you've missed Christianity. The Bible is filled with the suffering of those whom God loves. The central event of the Bible is one of suffering. Love involves suffering. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." That means suffering.

It's the church. It's the focus on happy things and having of happy feelings and happy songs and preaching designed to make us feel good. I would say the comforting devotional reading doesn't help to make us any tougher or more practical, either. That happy-clappy stuff just gives you a false sense of safety about your precarious situation. God's job is not to prevent you from suffering. In fact, even if you make really smart, practical decisions, you can expect to get creamed *anyway*.

Please take 15 minutes and read the book of 1 Peter in the New Testament.

Here's a summary from GotQuestions.org:

> **Purpose of Writing:** 1 Peter is a letter from Peter to the believers who had been dispersed throughout the ancient world and were under intense persecution. If anyone understood persecution, it was Peter. He was beaten, threatened, punished and jailed for preaching the Word of God. He knew what it took to endure without bitterness, without losing hope and in great faith living an obedient, victorious life. This knowledge of living hope in Jesus was the message

> and Christ's example was the one to follow.
>
> **Brief Summary:** Though this time of persecution was desperate, Peter reveals that it was actually a time to rejoice. He says to count it a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ, as their Savior suffered for them. This letter makes reference to Peter's personal experiences with Jesus and his sermons from the book of Acts. Peter confirms Satan as the great enemy of every Christian but the assurance of Christ's future return gives the incentive of hope.
>
> **Practical Application:** The assurance of eternal life is given to all Christians. One way to identify with Christ is to share in His suffering. To us that would be to endure insults and slurs from those who call us "goodie two shoes" or "holier than thou." This is so minor compared to what Christ suffered for us on the Cross. Stand up for what you know and believe is right and rejoice when the world and Satan aim to hurt you.

Recently, I blogged about how suffering is compatible with an all-powerful God, so you might want to read that too if you missed it.

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life by J. P. Moreland

June 20, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

I found this essay on After All, but it looks like their site is not working well, so I'm just going to steal it and post it here, in case it disappears completely. This is one of my favorite short essays on utilitarianism, and it's a wonder that the thing can't stay up somewhere. Well, it will have a home here now. I'd be surprised to see anyone else be this awesome in a measly 1000 words as Dr. Moreland is below.

—-

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life

What Is Utilitarianism?

Utilitarianism (also called consequentialism) is a moral theory developed and refined in the modern world by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). It can be defined as follows:

> *An action or moral rule is right if and only if it maximizes the amount of nonmoral good produced in the consequences that result from doing that act or following that rule compared with other acts or rules open to the agent.*

By focusing on three features of utilitarianism, we can clarify this definition.

(1) Utilitarian theories of value.

What is a nonmoral good? Utilitarians deny that there are any moral actions or rules that are intrinsically right or wrong. But they do believe in objective values that are nonmoral.

Hedonistic utilitarians say that the only intrinsic good is pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Quantitative hedonists (Bentham) say that the amount of pleasure and pain is the

only thing that matters in deciding between two courses of action, I should do the one that produces the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain (measured by factors like the duration and intensity of the pleasure). Qualitative hedonists (Mill) say that pleasure is the only intrinsic good, but the type of pleasure is what is important, not the amount. They would rank pleasures that come from reading, art, and friendship as more valuable than those that come from, say, a full stomach.

Pluralistic utilitarians say there are a number of things that have intrinsic, nonmoral value: pleasure, friendship, health, knowledge, freedom, peace, security, and so forth. For pluralists, it is not just the pleasure that comes from friendship that has value but also friendship itself.

Currently, the most popular utilitarian view of value is subjective preference utilitarianism. This position says it is presumptuous and impossible to specify things that have intrinsic nonmoral worth. So, they claim, intrinsic value ought to be defined as that which each individual subjectively desires or wants, provided these do not harm others. Unfortunately, this view collapses into moral relativism.

(2) Utilitarians and maximizing utility.

Utilitarians use the term utility to stand for whatever good they are seeking to produce as consequences of a moral action (e.g., “pleasure” for the hedonist, “satisfaction of subjective preference” for others). They see morality in a means-to-ends way. The sole value of a moral action or rule is the utility of its consequences. Moral action should maximize utility. This can be interpreted in different ways, but many utilitarians embrace the following: the correct moral action or rule is the one that produces the greatest amount of utility for the greatest number of people.

(3) Two forms of utilitarianism: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.

According to act utilitarianism, an act is right if and only if no other act available maximizes utility more than the act in question. Here, each new moral situation is evaluated on its own, and moral rules like “don’t steal” or “don’t break promises” are secondary The moral agent must weigh available alternatives and choose the one that produces the best consequences. Rule utilitarianism says that correct moral actions are done in keeping with correct moral rules, However, no moral rule is intrinsically right or wrong. Rather, a correct moral rule is one that would maximize utility if most people followed it as opposed to following an alternative rule. Here, alternative rules (e.g., “don’t lie” vs. “don’t lie unless doing so would enhance friendship”) are compared for their consequences, not specific actions.

What Is Wrong with Utilitarianism?

Several objections show the inadequacy of utilitarianism as a normative moral theory.

First, utilitarianism can be used to justify actions that are clearly immoral. Consider the case of a severely deformed fetus. The child is certain to live a brief, albeit painless life. He or she will make no contribution to society. Society, however, will bear great expense. Doctors and other caregivers will invest time, emotion, and effort in adding mere hours to the baby's life. The parents will know and love the child only long enough to be heartbroken at the inevitable loss. An abortion negates all those "utility" losses. There is no positive utility lost. Many of the same costs are involved in the care of the terminally ill elderly. They too may suffer no pain, but they may offer no benefit to society. In balancing positives and negatives, and excluding from the equation the objective sacredness of all human life, we arrive at morally repugnant decisions. Here deontological and virtue ethics steer us clear of what is easier to what is right.

Second, in a similar way, utilitarianism denies the existence of supererogatory acts. These are acts of moral heroism that are not morally obligatory but are still praiseworthy. Examples would be giving 75 percent of your income to the poor or throwing yourself on a bomb to save a stranger. Consider the bomb example. You have two choices — throwing yourself on the bomb or not doing so. Each choice would have consequences and, according to utilitarianism, you are morally obligated to do one or the other depending on which option maximized utility. Thus, there is no room for acts that go beyond the call of morality.

Third, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of human rights and human dignity. If enslaving a minority of people, say by a lottery, would produce the greatest good for the greatest number, or if conceiving children only to harvest their parts would do the same, then these could he justified in a utilitarian scheme. But enslavement and abortion violate individual rights and treat people as a means to an end, not as creatures with intrinsic dignity as human beings. If acts of abortion, active euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and so forth maximize utility, then they are morally obligatory for the utilitarian. But any moral system that makes abortion and suicide morally obligatory is surely flawed.

Finally, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of motives and character. We should praise good motives and seek good character because such motives and character are intrinsically valuable. But utilitarianism implies that the only reason we should praise good motives instead of bad ones, or seek good character instead of bad character, is because such acts would maximize utility. But this has the cart before the horse. We should praise good motives and blame bad ones because they are good or bad, not because such acts of praising and blaming produce good consequences.

In sum, it should be clear that utilitarianism is an inadequate moral theory. Unfortunately, ours is a pragmatic culture and utilitarianism is on the rise. But for those of us who follow Christ, a combination of virtue and deontological ethics is a more adequate view of common sense morality found in natural law and of the moral vision contained in the Bible.

Why is America so much more prosperous than other nations?

June 21, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It occurred to me that young people are being taught in government-run schools that central planning of the economy by the federal government works better than allowing states to decide policy for themselves. Naturally, the students – lacking life experience and at the mercy of the unionized teacher's grading pen – have no choice except to be indoctrinated. But what are the facts?

The genius of America is that the Founding Fathers allowed the federal government to only have power in certain areas of life. Other areas of policy were delegated to the states. This allows states to try different policies to see what works best, or even just what works best for them. Then the other states have the option to emulate that success, or continue doing what doesn't work. States that do what works will see more success, with more businesses and people migrating to their states. States that persist in doing what doesn't work will see business and taxpayers flee. That is the genius of America's design.

Federalism encourages states to operate according to the "principle of subsidiarity", which is an economic principle that states that problems are best solved at the lowest level possible (individual -> family -> church – > business -> community -> local government -> state government -> federal government). This is because the people at the lowest level have the most KNOWLEDGE about how to solve the problem.

Case study: right-to-work laws

Let's look at an example – unions and right to work laws. Starting after world war 2, some states decided to pass right to work laws. These laws allowed workers to decide for themselves whether to join a union or not. Since workers had the choice about whether to join the union, the union had to care about the workers and advocate for them, instead of enriching themselves at the expense of the workers via corruption and thuggery.

Here is how different states adopted right to work laws at different times:

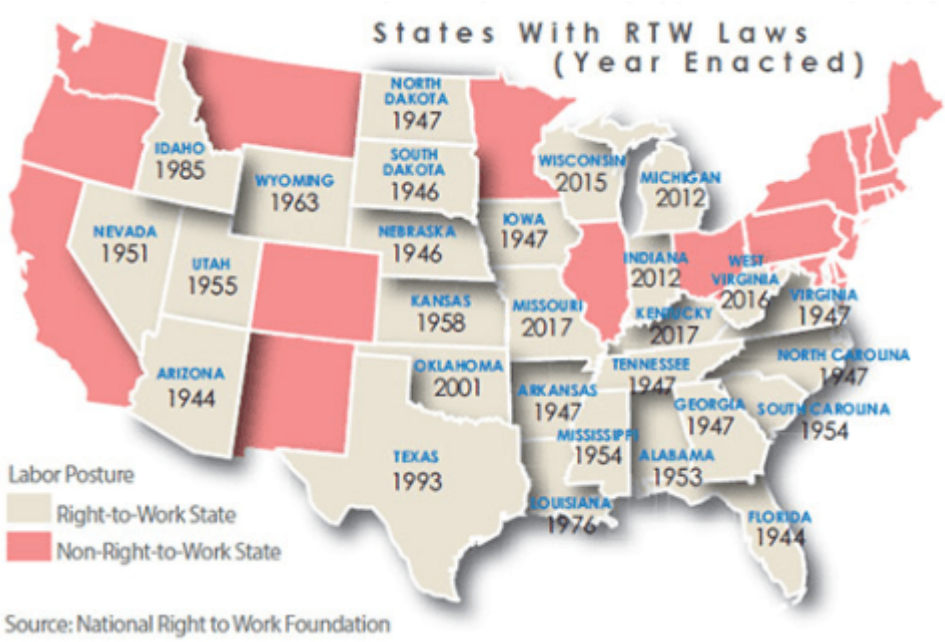

Map of states showing adoption of right-to-work laws

What happened in these states? Well job creating businesses started to move from forced-union-membership states to right-to-work states. Why? Because unions were stopping them from innovating. Companies would figure out new ways to improve productivity, such as using machines and computers. But the unions would step in and insist that the old ways were best. The unions wanted their union members to just be able to do the same job, e.g. – pulling a lever over and over, for the entire 35 years of their career. And the unions wanted their members to be paid like a software engineer or a doctor for pulling a lever over and over. The unions also wanted to make sure that underperforming workers could never be fired, or replaced. And so on. Companies realized that they couldn't compete in a global market like this, so they got up and left for right-to-work states.

Here's what happened next:

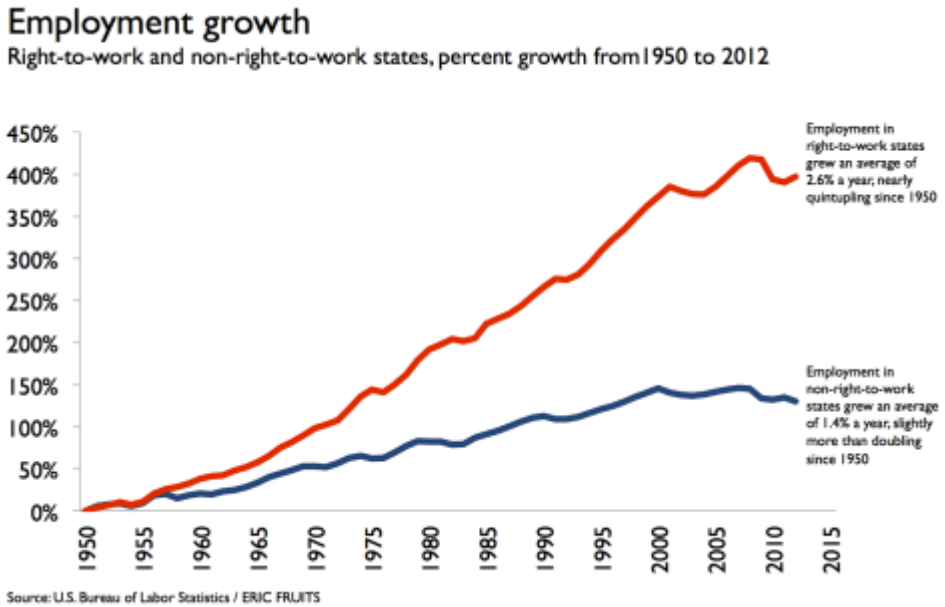

Rates of employment in forced union states vs right to work states

States with right-to-work laws never said that there couldn't be unions, only that workers

wouldn't have to join a union to work. And in right-to-work states, not only did workers not join unions, they voted not to unionize at all. This resulted in a massive decline in private sector unions in America:

Decline in private sector union membership

As a result of job creating businesses not being hampered by union corruption and thuggery, American businesses quickly outpaced their rivals in forced union membership states in productivity, as measured by GDP. They also outpaced the productivity per worker in other economically illiterate countries. Why? Because allowing companies to innovate meant that workers were using more machinery and computers to do their jobs. They learned new skills. Underperforming workers could be replaced with workers who were willing to grow and adapt. Non-union workers higher productivity allowed them to find other jobs if they were laid off.

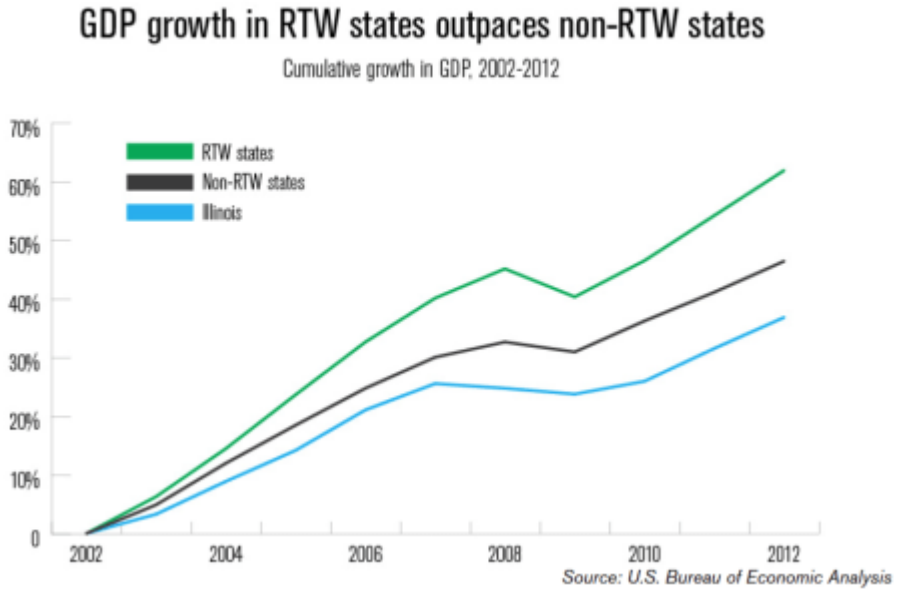

Right to work states innovate, creating more skilled workers
The job security of the American worker comes from his improved worker productivity – not from the union. Not only did unemployment go down in right to work states (more jobs!) but salaries and benefits also increases, as companies had to compete with each other for workers. However, companies were ok with paying more for workers, because they would rather pay ONLY the workers who deserved it, rather than pay one rate for all union workers, regardless of performance.

This article from the far-left New York Times explains how slaries and benefits rise when job creators move to right-to-work states: Income Rises When Right-to-Work Laws Are Passed because job creators must offer workers a lot in order to get them to sign. Not just salaries and benefits, but realistic development plans to grow the workers skills, making them even more resistant to layoffs and economic downturns.

Quote:

> While some persons may favor right-to-work laws largely on philosophical grounds (people should have the freedom to decide whether they want to belong to a union or not), the major reason I support such laws is that they seem to promote prosperity — specifically, higher incomes. Real personal income in the right-to-work states rose nearly twice as much as in other states from 1970 and 2013.
>
> To be sure, most of that reflected higher population growth in right-to-work states — there was massive in-migration to these states from the states denying workers the right to not join a union. Yet even after correcting for population growth, income per person on average rose somewhat more in the right to work jurisdictions. Capital moves to right-to-work states with a more stable labor environment, and that increases labor demand and, ultimately, income and wages.

Although unions mostly died out in the private sector, the ones that remained actually functioned well as unions – focusing on their workers instead of enriching union bosses. They had to, because if they didn't, then the workers would just opt out of them. The only places where unions still survive is in the public sector, i.e. – government. This is because government is (by law) a monopoly, where consumers have no choice except to accept the garbage that they are offered. They can't go anywhere else for a lower price, or a better product, or a better service. Public sector unions are immune to innovation, because they lobby the government to prevent any improvement or accountability.

Here is an example of a public sector union's effort to "help the customer":

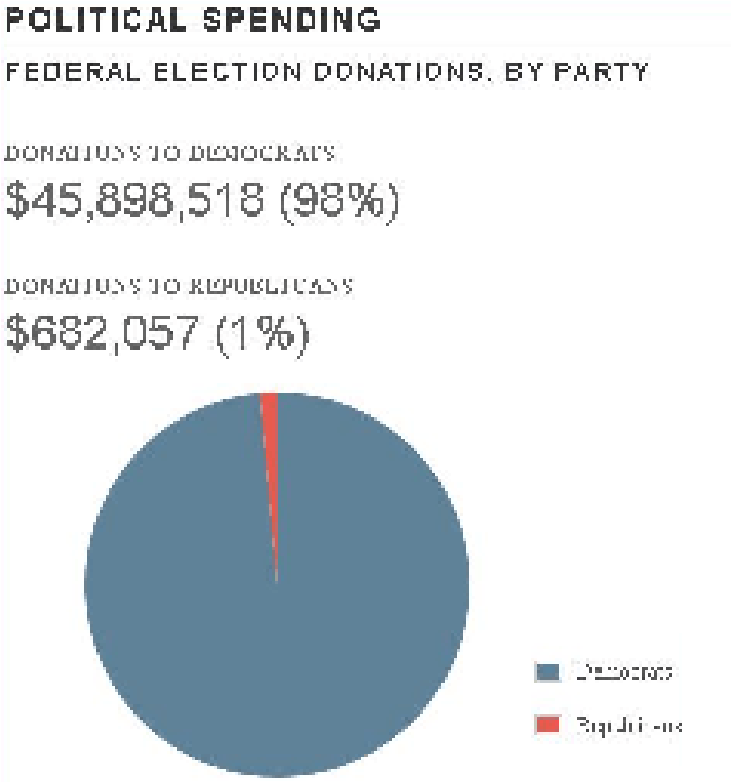

Political contributions by the American Federation of Teachers union

And here's what those efforts to "help the customer" produced for the customer:

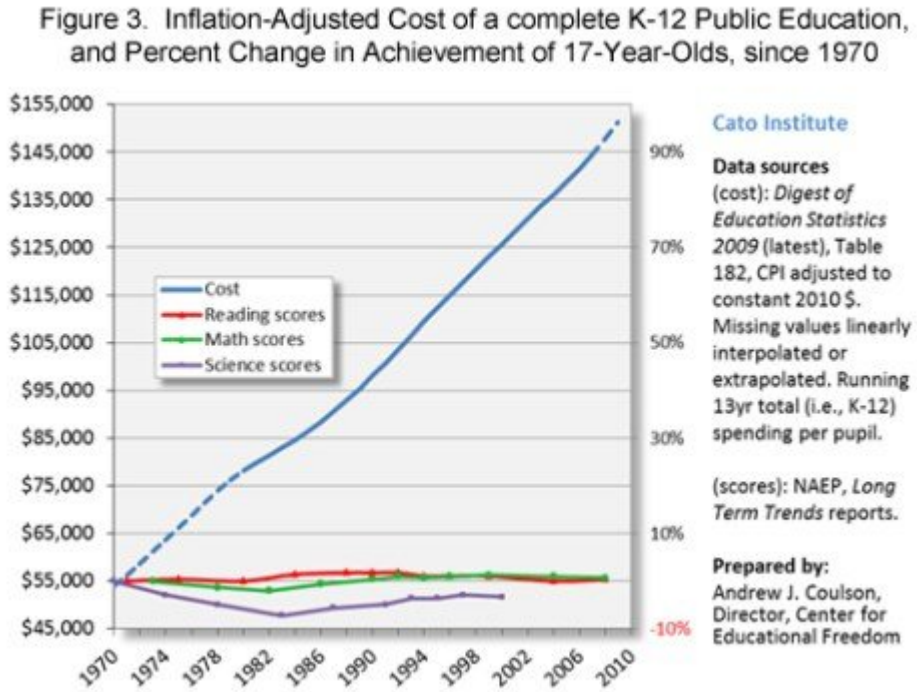

Education spending has tripled since 1970

They aren't really helping the customer, are they? What they do is collect dues, enrich their union leaders, intimidate their opponents with threats and force, and then give money to secular left politicians to prevent their customers from opting out of a system that doesn't produce higher quality and lower prices for the customer. The secular left politicians pass laws that prevent the customers (parents) from being able to get a better product (education for their children) for a lower price. We should abolish public sector unions in order to get the benefits for the customer that we see in the private sector.

New “Science Uprising” video series seeks to counter naturalist dogma

June 22, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

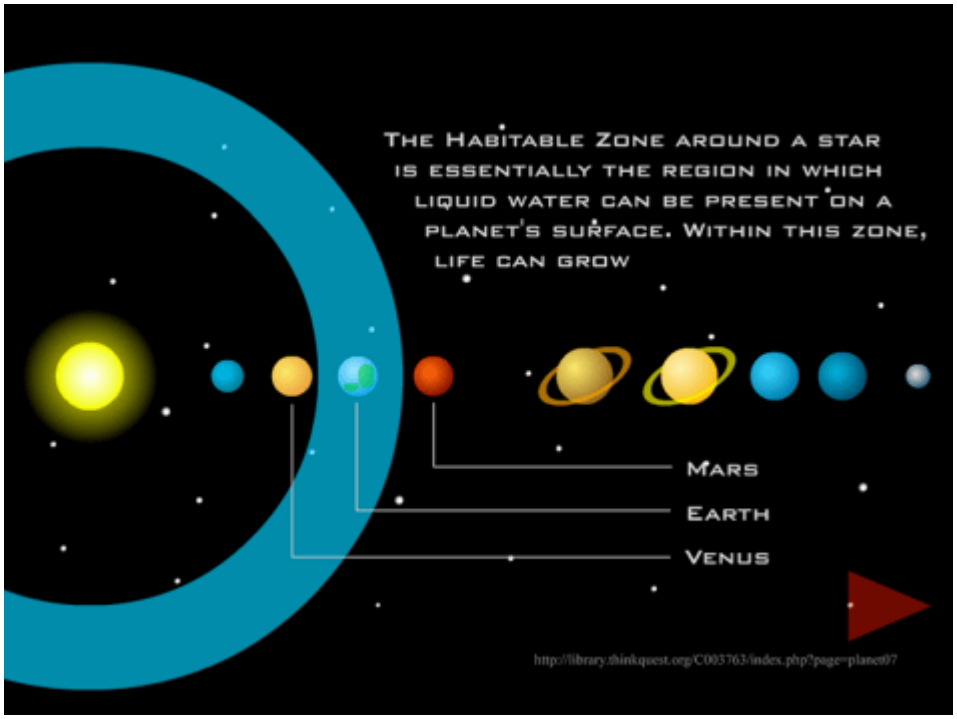

The Circumstellar Habitable Zone, where liquid water could potentially exist

What is the nature of reality? Is the universe self-existing and eternal or did it coming into being? Can we attribute the the diversity of life to natural processes, or was their a designing agent involved? Whether people have thought deeply about these questions or not, they all live their lives as if one view or another were true. Is there any way to educate these busy people?

I found an article in CNS News about a new series of short videos that challenge the naturalistic view of origins that dominates society today.

Excerpt:

> A new YouTube series, *Science Uprising*, challenges the notion that the smart money is on atheism.
>
> I was part of the creative team behind the project. One of our aims was to reach Generation Z, “digital natives” who get much of their impression of the wider world from the internet, including streaming services like YouTube.
>
> This generation tends to encounter well-articulated arguments for unbelief much earlier than their parents did, and they often encounter those arguments online. *Science Uprising* is among an increasingly rich body of online video material that pushes back against the flood of anti-theistic online propaganda.
>
> The video series features researchers at the forefront of the intelligent design movement, including Lehigh University biochemist Michael Behe and Cambridge-

> trained philosopher of science Stephen Meyer. But it also feature some top researchers outside this circle, including renowned research psychiatrist Jeffrey Schwartz, leading synthetic organic chemist James Tour, and physicist Frank Tipler. For you physics/cosmology folks out there—yes, that Tipler.
>
> Each *Science Uprising* video is 6-8 minutes long, fast-paced, and produced by filmmakers with extensive experience in the television industry. David Arabia, whose camera work can be seen on the popular History Channel series *Mountain Men*, headed up the project.
>
> Each episode begins with a masked host who appears to hack into television and internet feeds around the country to offer a contrary perspective. One moment people in restaurants, classrooms, living rooms, Times Square, etc., are watching science popularizers like Bill Nye and Neal DeGrasse Tyson peddle a vision of man and nature as mere matter in motion. The next moment, the hacker host has replaced them onscreen to question their claims and introduce the episode topic.
>
> In the first episode, released June 3, Carl Sagan famously intones that "the cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be," then the masked host crackles onto the screen and asks, "How do they know the cosmos is all there is?"
>
> In the second episode, released Monday, evolutionary biologist Jerry Coyne tells his audience that free will is an illusion since humans are essentially just "robots made out of meat." The masked host then asks, "Are you and I really robots?"
>
> The point of this hacker framing device isn't that we live in an Orwellian police state. The United States enjoys tremendous press freedom—a freedom we are taking full advantage of through this video series. The idea, rather, is that if you passively absorb mainstream media and public education in the West, you will get a blinkered sense of what the latest scientific evidence suggests about the nature and origin of humankind and the cosmos.
>
> Subsequent episodes will be released every Monday into July. They explore everything from DNA and genetic mutations to the curious way Earth and the laws of nature appear to be fine-tuned to allow for life. Each video includes one or more experts providing evidence that reality is more than matter, and that the world is charged with purpose and design.

Here is the first video:

And here is the second video:

And here is the third video:

And the fourth video:

If you want to share something on your wall to start a discussion, then these videos would be a good choice. Of course, to be able to debate these topics, you might need to read an article or a book about each topic. But that’s what I had to do, and it’s pretty fun to win arguments and beat up atheists.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

June 23, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude

others
- It’s meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can’t say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Radical feminist magazine Teen Vogue promotes legalization of prostitution

June 24, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ten Vogue urges young women to legalize sex trafficking of women

Third wave feminism promotes the conditions that allow women to bypass the traditional path to marriage (chastity, courtship, marriage, children, stay at home wife and mother) and "have sex like a man" without any shame or repercussions. They want sex outside of marriage is seen as normal. sex outside of marriage is seen as normal.

Here's the latest article "Why Sex Work is Real Work" from Teen Vogue, a feminist magazine that is read by millions of teenage girls.

> They write:
>
> [C]ontinued criminalization of sex work and sex workers is a form of violence by governments and contributes to the high level of stigma and discrimination.
>
> […]But governments often fail to accept the evidence for the economic and social bases for sex work; the ILO estimates that "sex workers support between five and eight other people with their earnings. Sex workers also contribute to the economy." Governments ignore the nuanced histories and contexts in different countries and thus continue to wrongfully offer blanket solutions and "rescue" models that advocate for partial decriminalization or continued criminalization. They also ignore the wishes of sex workers, who want full decriminalization, as supported by the Global Commission on HIV and the Law, and the Lancet, as well as human rights organizations like Amnesty International.

Now, since the author is a radical feminist, you can imagine what she would say to my suggestions that instead of incentivizing women to avoid sex work, we should instead provide incentives for women to be chaste, stay debt-free, choose marriage-minded men, marry before having sex. She would say that this life plan would stigmatize women who have sex before marriage with men who won't commit. She would say that this life plan would stigmatize women who choose to raise girls without a father (who are far more likely to engage in sex work). She would say that the most important thing government can do is to promote a "good" lifestyle for women that would make the women who want sex with hot bad boys outside of marriage feel "bad" about their own choices. What we need, she thinks, is laws and social spending that allow women who make poor choices and raise fatherless daughters to escape shame, stigma and discrimination.

But what comes next, after countries have decriminalized "sex work" as Teen Vogue urges?

The far-left UK Guardian explains:

> Until his dramatic fall from grace, Jürgen Rudloff was the self-proclaimed "brothel king" of Germany. Owner of a chain of clubs he boasted was the "the largest marketplace for sex in Europe", he was every inch the well-dressed entrepreneur, a regular face on reality TV and chat shows.
>
> Rudloff is now serving a five-year sentence for aiding and abetting trafficking. His trial laid bare the misery and abuse of women working as prostitutes at his club who, according to court documents, were treated like animals and beaten if they didn't make enough money. His imprisonment has dismantled the idea of Germany's "clean prostitution" industry and raised troubling questions about what lies behind the legalised, booming sex trade.
>
> Prostitution – legalised in Germany in 2002 – is worth an annual €15bn (£13.4bn), and more than a million men visit prostitutes every day. The change in the law led to a rise in "super brothels", attracting tourists from countries where such establishments are illegal.
>
> […]Rudloff's high-volume, low-cost model only works if the supply of women is enough to satisfy demand and bring enough customers through the doors.
>
> According to court documents, this became a problem for Paradise almost immediately. There weren't enough women to fill the clubs. So Rudloff's friends in the industry offered to help him out.
>
> […]In a trial lasting almost a year, testimony from the jailed pimps revealed that trafficking was crucial to the success of Rudloff's business.

Legalizing prostitution *inevitably* leads to sex-trafficking, and the radical feminists who promote legalized prostitution to young women know that. They know that if they remove moral and legal barriers to legalized prostitution, then they will cause more young women to find it attractive, leading to easier targets for sex-trafficking. Sex-trafficking is the end goal of the radical feminists.

Don't believe me? I'll prove it.

Women's March says that banning sex-trafficking of women is wrong
I remember when the Women's March came out in favor of sex-trafficking, because they didn't want women to feel shame, stigma and discrimination for having sex outside of marriage.

Well, here's an article from The Federalist to explain.

Excerpt:

> Last Friday, the FBI seized Backpage.com, a website well known for facilitating the sale of trafficked minors, mostly girls, for sex all over the United States. On Monday, seven top Backpage officials were arrested after being indicted on 93 counts, including money laundering and facilitating prostitution, 17 cases of which involve trafficking victims as young as 14. *The Washington Post* says Backpage earned an estimated $500 million in prostitution-related revenue since its launch in 2004.
>
> The National Center on Missing and Exploited Children reports that 73 percent of all child sex trafficking cases it has handled involved Backpage.com. According to the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, Backpage reached 97 countries and was the world's largest single facilitator of sex trafficking. NCOSE also reports that from January 2013 to March 2015, 99 percent of Backpage's global revenue was attributable to prostitution advertising. During that time, it made nearly $51 million from prostitution ads in California alone.

The rest of the The Federalist article makes clear that nothing in that web site's operations made sex-trafficking "safer" for women. In fact, the whole "sex work" business

is dangerous for women:

> We do know, thanks to the research of Melissa Farley at Prostitution Research and Education, that 70 percent of those in the sex industry link their entry to prior sexual abuse.
>
> Most say they entered as minors, which in the United States qualifies as trafficking. Many enter feeling they have no other options, reducing the sense of free choice in the matter. Once they're in, 89 percent of "sex workers" say they want to get out of the industry but feel they have limited options. You don't call an industry safe when women are coerced into it and have difficulty getting out.
>
> According to Farley's comprehensive studies, as many as 99 percent of those in the sex industry have said they experienced violence within it.

And of course, in the feminized UK, radical feminists voted in regime after regime of secular leftists, who imported thousands of unskilled workers from Muslim countries, who proceeded to immediately set up sex-trafficking rings where young girls were taken from their single mothers and passed around at parties like a cigarette. Taking women out of married homes where they will be influenced by their biological fathers and taught Judeo-Christian values like chastity, sobriety, and self-control is the primary aim of the radical feminists. And if a few teenage girls need to be sex-trafficked, then too bad for them. The important thing is that young women grow up without fathers, have sex outside of marriage, and depend on the government to help them with "health care": contraceptives, abortions and treatment for STDs. Women must never choose men to be husbands and fathers in a married home: that's sexist.

Keep in mind that the VAST MAJORITY of the young women who enter sex work do so because their mothers freely chose to have sex outside of marriage to men who they were attracted to on a superficial level: tall, piercings, tattoos, bad boy, criminal record, etc. As a society, we're more concerned with preventing these women from being shamed (and supporting their recklessness with taxpayer dollars) then we are with encouraging them towards the marriage life plan: chastity, sobriety, courting, marriage, being a stay-at-home wife and mother. We attacked the "shaming" of reckless single mothers that created sex-trafficking instead, thinking that eliminating the moral boundaries that protected daughters from their mother's hypergamy was the real target.

Whenever you see a girl in difficult circumstances, always remember that this is the result of a chain of reckless decisions by her mother, and her mother's mother, and so on, to flout the moral law by choosing irresponsible, immoral men that she found more attractive than "boring" men who were chaste, sober, Christians looking for marriage before sex. And always remember that these women were encouraged in their choices about who to have sex with and when to have sex by radical feminists, who were MORE ANXIOUS to have these women avoid moral judgment ("shame, stigma and discrimination"), probably because they felt that their own moral failures would look better if they could trick more younger women into repeating (and surpassing) their own moral failures. Third-wave feminism is ultimately a movement by adult sluts to escape

the shame of their slutting by manipulating younger women away from chastity, sobriety, marriage and wed motherhood with lies.

The war on Christianity and moral judgment by radical feminists in the end results in subsequent generations of women living in conditions that Christian stay at home wives and mothers of generations could not possibly have imagined. But this is what happened when we decided that out public policy and laws should be based on feelings and compassion, rather than on moral laws grounded in the Christian worldview. When non-judgmental intuitions are elevated about moral boundaries to sin, the end result is far worse than the “shaming” that the tolerance crowd sought to eliminate in the first place.

Why are college tuition and college textbooks so expensive?

June 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

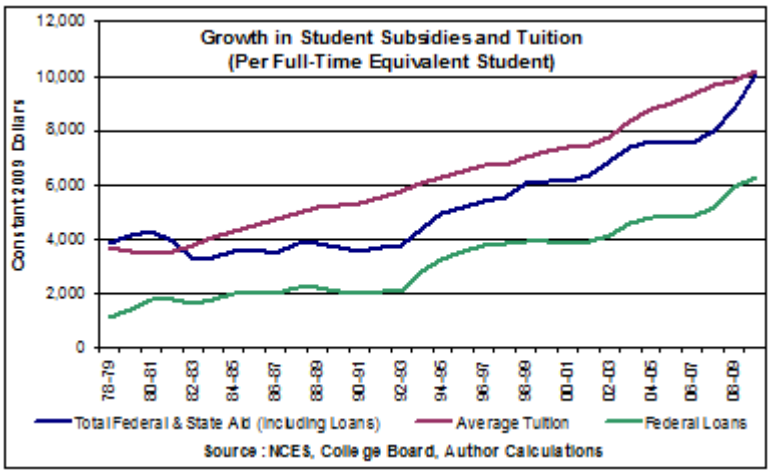

As subsidies increase, so do tuition costs

This article from Investors Business Daily is very helpful.

It says:

> Grey Gordon and Aaron Hedlund, economists at Indiana University and the University of Missouri, developed a method to test various explanations for the share rise in tuition costs. Is it state funding cuts? Or the increased wage premium for a college degree? Or is it related to general cost increases in the services industries?
>
> Not exactly. In a working paper published by the National Bureau of Economic Research the economists report that these factors contributed insignificantly to the rapid rise in tuition between 1987 and 2010.
>
> What did account for almost all of it was, ironically enough, the massive explosion in federal aid over the past several decades. Federal aid — in the form of subsidized loans, grants and tax credits — shot up 134% in the past 15 years, according to the College Board. It's climbed 22% just under President Obama.
>
> Combined with state aid, the government is pouring more than $239 billion a year into programs designed to make college less expensive.
>
> What the authors found is that all this aid money has simply let college administrators spend more and jack up tuition to pay for it, without hurting enrollment. The result is there to see for anyone who visits a college campus these days — gourmet kitchens, luxurious dorms, shiny new administrative buildings, beautiful landscapes, state of the art workout facilities, etc.
>
> […]Not only does the increased federal aid lead to higher tuition, the authors found, but it perversely leads to "more debt, and in the absence of higher labor market returns, more loan default inevitably occurs."

This hypothesis – that it is government subsidies that drive up tuition rates – is supported in the radically leftist New York Times, of all places.

This is by Paul F. Campos, law professor at the radically leftist UC Boulder, explains that government handouts is causing the rise in college tuition:

> […][T]he astonishing rise in college tuition correlates closely with a huge increase in public subsidies for higher education. If over the past three decades car prices had gone up as fast as tuition, the average new car would cost more than $80,000.
>
> […]As the baby boomers reached college age, state appropriations to higher education skyrocketed, increasing more than fourfold in today's dollars, from $11.1 billion in 1960 to $48.2 billion in 1975. By 1980, state funding for higher education had increased a mind-boggling 390 percent in real terms over the previous 20 years. This tsunami of public money did not reduce tuition: quite the contrary.

But where is the money going? Is it mostly going to research? To the classroom? To hire more and better professors?

No:

> Interestingly, increased spending has not been going into the pockets of the typical professor. Salaries of full-time faculty members are, on average, barely higher than they were in 1970. Moreover, while 45 years ago 78 percent of college and university professors were full time, today half of postsecondary faculty members are lower-paid part-time employees, meaning that the average salaries of the people who do the teaching in American higher education are actually quite a bit lower than they were in 1970.
>
> **By contrast, a major factor driving increasing costs is the constant expansion of university administration. According to the Department of Education data, administrative positions at colleges and universities grew by 60 percent between 1993 and 2009, which Bloomberg reported was 10 times the rate of growth of tenured faculty positions.**
>
> **Even more strikingly, an analysis by a professor at California Polytechnic University, Pomona, found that, while the total number of full-time faculty members in the C.S.U. system grew from 11,614 to 12,019 between 1975 and 2008, the total number of administrators grew from 3,800 to 12,183 — a 221 percent increase.**

Do you wonder why college is so liberal? It's because instead of hiring professors to teach you how to do useful work for money, they are hiring useless administrators who just enforce politically correct secular leftism onto the students.

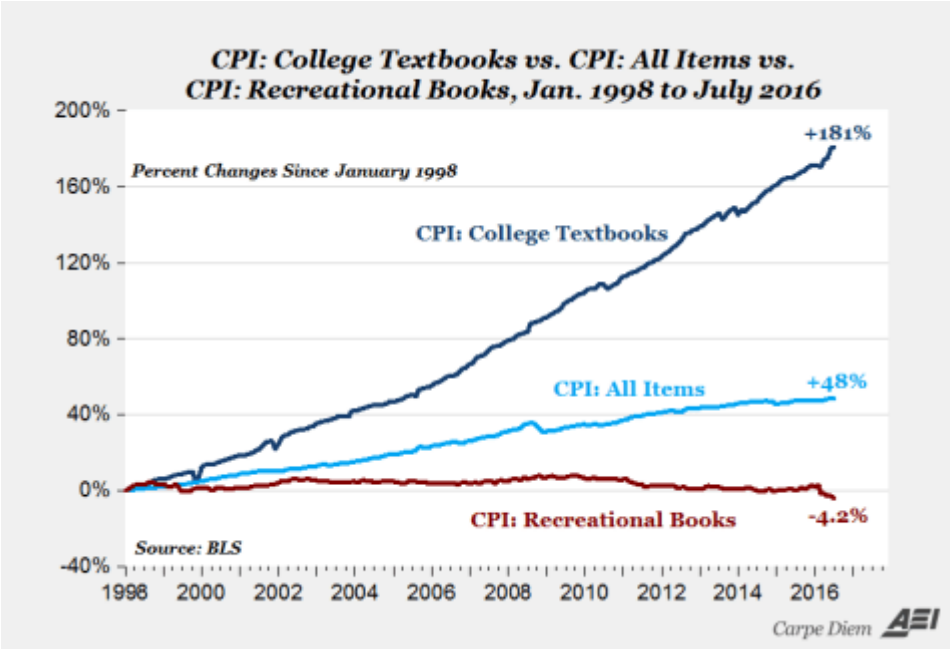

The cost of college text books is skyrocketing

College textbook prices are also going way up because of government subsidies.

> One way the textbook market is insulated from competition and market forces is that the professor, not the student, makes the decision on the textbook for a course, and it's probably the case that many professors are unaware of the retail cost of the books they assign for their students. And once the professor decides on a textbook, there are no substitutes for the new edition of the book assigned. If a professor assigns Mankiw's *Principles of Economics* textbook, students can't substitute McConnell's*Principles of Economics* textbook.
>
> Another reason for skyrocketing textbook prices could be that they are being fueled by easy and cheap credit in the form of student loan debt, which now exceeds $1.36 trillion and has doubled in less than eight years, and tripled in the last decade! Students borrow money not just for college tuition and fees, but also to finance the purchase of textbooks that now routinely cost more than $300, and sometimes approach $400.

What should young people considering college do? If you're going to college or trade school, go to a low-cost school. Do a STEM degree (e.g. petroleum engineering) or learn to do a trade that pays well (e.g. – electrician). Try to get tuition assistance even if it means going to a less prestigious school. And work at every opportunity you get in the most serious job you can find. Don't spend your money – save it. Especially don't spend your money on fun, vacations and alcohol. As soon as you grow up, you're going to wish you could have it all back.

Google internal document calls prominent Jews Dennis Prager and Ben Shapiro “Nazis”

June 26, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Google’s new motto – should we start calling them “Goolag” now?
I’ve been following the anti-Christian, anti-conservative bias of Big Tech for years now, and blogging about each new revelation. We’ve seen pro-Democrat bias over and over in the products and services of Facebook, Google, YouTube, Twitter, Spotify, Pinterest, etc. But I never thought I’d see Jewish exegete Dennis Prager and Orthodox Jew Ben Shapiro called “Nazis”.

But before we see who called these Jews “Nazis”, let’s see how a Google Executive in charge of censoring content explained in precise language how Google alters its products and services to benefit the Democrat Party.

The Daily Wire reports:

> A new Project Veritas video that includes testimony from a whistleblower, leaked internal documents, and undercover footage of a Google employee discussing how the company is working to prevent “the next Trump situation” has been pulled by YouTube, a platform owned by Google, “due to a privacy claim by a third party.” This is the second Project Veritas Big Tech exposé video taken down by the platform in two weeks.
>
> On Monday, Project Veritas released its latest Big Tech report, this time focusing on ways an insider says Google manipulates what information its users access in order to promote an ideological and political agenda. In the video, the whistleblower — whose identity is protected — walks Project Veritas’ James O’Keefe through internal Google documents that he says show that the search engine is a “highly biased political machine” that manipulates searches for the purpose of promoting its “fair and equitable” priorities, filtering out or deemphasizing even factual information if its creators deem that information “unfair.” To accomplish this, the company works to prevent “algorithmic

> unfairness."
>
> The video features clips of Project Veritas undercover reporters' secretly recorded discussion with Jen Gennai — head of Google's "Responsible Innovation" team, which monitors the responsible implementation of A.I. technologies — in a restaurant in San Francisco. In the video, she discusses the rationale behind the company's A.I. principles. "The reason we launched our A.I. principles is because people were not putting that line in the sand, that they were not saying what's fair and what's equitable so we're like, well we are a big company, we're going to say it," she says, adding: "The people who voted for the current president do not agree with our definition of fairness."
>
> […]"We all got screwed over in 2016, again it wasn't just us, it was — the people got screwed over, the news media got screwed over, like, everybody got screwed over — so we're rapidly been like, what happened there and how do we prevent it from happening again," she says in another clip.
>
> […]By the end of the day, YouTube pulled the video "due to a privacy claim by a third party."

Although the video has been pulled from YouTube (which is owned by Google), the video can still be seen here.

But that's not all. Leaked internal Google documents label Dennis Prager and Ben Shapiro as "Nazis".

The Daily Wire reports:

> A newly-published leaked document contains what appears to be an email exchange among Google employees participating in a "transparency-and-ethics" discussion that includes a reference to PragerU, Jordan Peterson, and Ben Shapiro as "nazis using the dog whistles."
>
> The document was published by Project Veritas Tuesday, a day after the conservative group released its report on how political and ideological bias influences the ways in which Google connects users to content. The group obtained the "newly leaked document from Google" via their tipline.
>
> […]"Today it is often 1 or 2 steps to nazis, if we understand that PragerU, Jordan Peterson, Ben Shapiro et al are nazis using the dog whistles you mention in step 1," reads the email that appears to have been sent to over a dozen other Google employees. "I can receive these recommendations regardless of the content of what I'm looking at, and I have recorded thousands of internet users sharing the same experience. I don't think correctly identifying far-right content is beyond our capabilities. But if it is, why not go with Meredith's suggestion of disabling the suggestion feature?"

I've already blogged before about how YouTube censors videos from Prager University, and how Google fires conservative software engineers. (That latter thing just happened

again, by the way, but it's getting so common that I didn't even blog about it). But I never thought they'd do this to Dennis Prager and Ben Shapiro.

Google-related companies donate 90% to Democrats

This firing of the Republican software engineer makes me wonder whether Google has a policy of discriminating against employees to make sure that no Republicans can work at Google.

According to the Washington Examiner, Google, YouTube and other Google-linked companies gave 90% of their political donations to Democrats:

> A study released Thursday found that 90 percent of political donations by Google, YouTube, and other subsidiaries of Alphabet have gone to Democrats.
>
> In 2016, when Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton, Alphabet employees donated more than $5.8 million to Democratic candidates and causes, while only $403,042 was contributed to Republicans. Ninety-four percent of Alphabet contributions in that year went to Democrats.

Would that be a sign that their products and services are biased to support Democrats?

Google executives caught on film

Here are some highlights of a sting video featuring Google executives crying about the Democrat election loss:

This was filmed a company-wide meeting, and it clearly communicates the political bias of Google leadership to their employees. The message seems to be: "if you want to work here, you have to be a Democrat" and "if you want to rise in this company, then you have to be a Democrat". Does this open adoration for the Democrat party by Google executives affect Google products and services?

Studies show bias in Google products and services

What about the study showing that they promote progressive news sources ahead of conservative or unbiased ones?

Breitbart News reported in March 2019 on how Google used their products to influence elections:

> New research from psychologist and search engine expert Dr. Robert Epstein shows that biased Google searches had a measurable impact on the 2018 midterm elections, pushing tens of thousands of votes towards the Democrat candidates in three key congressional races, and potentially millions more in races across the country.
>
> The study, from Epstein and a team at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology (AIBRT), analyzed Google searches related to three highly competitive congressional races in Southern California. In all three races,

> the Democrat won — and Epstein's research suggests that Google search bias may have tipped them over the edge.

This confirms a previous study from 2016:

> The research follows a previous study conducted in 2016 which showed that biased Google results pushed votes to Hillary Clinton in the presidential election. Democrats and Google executives have disputed these findings.
>
> […]Users performing Google searches related to the three congressional races the study focused on were significantly more likely to see pro-Democrat stories and links at the top of their results.

Here's another study reported in May 2019 by the UK Daily Mail:

> Google's bias towards left-wing media outlets has been laid bare by an algorithm which detected that it favors sites including CNN and The New York Times over others.
>
> According to data compiled by researchers from Northwestern University, the search engine promoted those sites over others repeatedly in November 2017.
>
> Of the 6,302 articles that appeared in Google's 'top stories' page that month after a term was searched, more than 10 percent were by CNN.
>
> The New York Times was the second most favored and accounted for 6.5 percent of articles. The Washington Post was third with 5.6 percent.
>
> By contrast, Fox News, the most right-wing outlet in mainstream media, was the source of just three percent of the stories which appeared.

See for yourself the difference it makes:

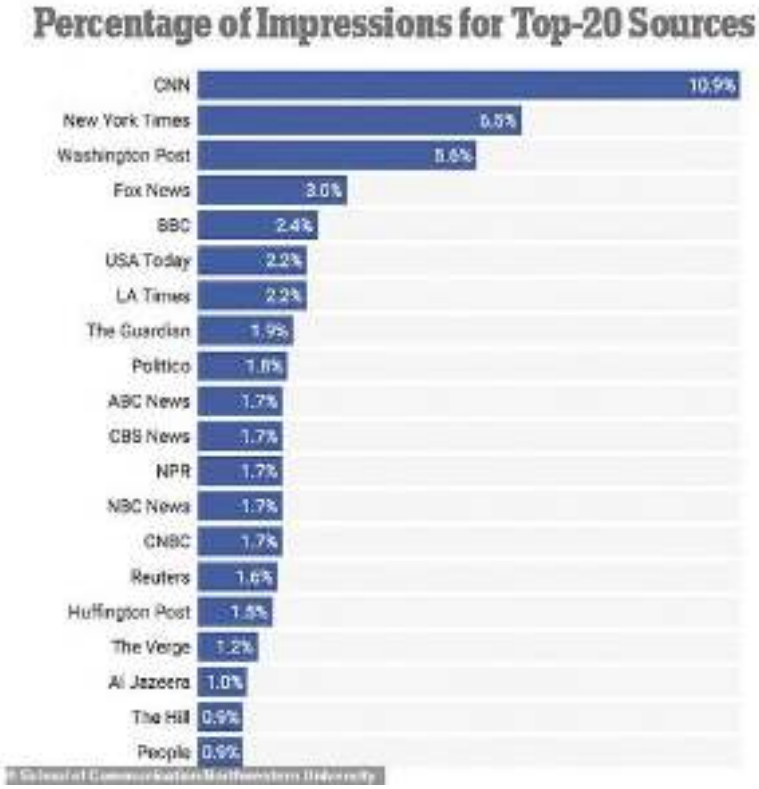

Study: Google uses its products and services to supports Democrat Party
I think we really need an investigation to get to the bottom of this.

Now, you might be thinking, what can we do to stop Google, YouTube and other big technology fascists? And the answer is, you need to switch to alternatives like DuckDuckGo.

And you need to vote Republican, and do everything you can to help Republicans win elections.

Republican Senators Ted Cruz and Josh Hawley are all over these companies.

Senator Ted Cruz:

Are there any SENIOR EXECUTIVES AT GOOGLE who voted for Donald Trump? She's not aware of any. What about the $1.315 million given to Hillary Clinton in 2016 by Google employees and $0 given to Donald Trump? She has no answer.

Senator Josh Hawley:

Congressman Louie Gohmert adds this on his official Congressional web site:

> Congressman Louie Gohmert (TX-01) released the following statement today regarding the undercover video of Google released by Project Veritas:
>
> "This video shows Google's biases are now a threat to a free and fair election, all while they hide behind the immunity given by Congress years ago when they were supposed to be a simple 'town square' where everyone's voice could be heard without biased results. In fact, Google references a significant role they see themselves fulfilling in the 2020 elections. This discovery should set off alarm bells throughout the country. It is no secret that Google has a political agenda. Multiple brave tech insiders have stepped forward and exposed Google's

> censorship of content and specialized algorithms. This media giant's 'social justice narrative' should distress all Americans who value a free and open society. Google should not be deciding whether content is important or trivial and they most assuredly should not be meddling in our election process. They need their immunity stripped and to be properly pursued by class action lawsuits by those they have knowingly harmed."

> projectveritas.comInsider Blows Whistle & Exec Reveals Google Plan to Prevent "Trump situation" in 2020 on Hidden Cam

I used to be a regular listener of Dennis Prager, but I switched over to Ben Shapiro and Andrew Klavan, because their podcasts are free. My favorite hour on conservative radio is Dennis Prager's "male-female hour", which had some of the most reality-based talk about men and women you could find anywhere. These two Jewish talk show hosts are extremely popular with Christian conservatives. It's not evangelical Christian conservatives who have a problem with Jews. It's the secular leftist socialists who run Big Tech.

Related posts

- Justice Department to begin antitrust investigation of anti-conservative Google
- Google employees revolt against having a black, female conservative on advisory board
- Spotify joins Google, Youtube, Facebook and Twitter in censoring Prager University
- Facebook bans Franklin Graham for "hate speech", Google YouTube shadow-bans pro-life videos
- Does Google's anti-conservative bias affect its products and services?
- Facebook joins Twitter, Google and YouTube in deliberately purging conservative voices
- Google now censoring conservative news, while giving leftist propaganda a free pass
- Google censors conservative video lectures from Prager University on YouTube
- How Google, Facebook and Twitter brainwash users against conservatism
- Google starts worldwide campaign to legalize gay marriage, Target donates to gay activists

Does the “legacy of slavery” explain black women’s 72% out-of-wedlock birth rate?

June 27, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

James White asks: does the Bible apply to black women?

I don’t like Calvinist theologian James White very much, but at least he’s willing to defend the moral teachings of the Bible against the woke identity politics that is taking over Christian churches. A few months ago he tweeted something very controversial (see above), and got into a lot of hot water with fake Christians. In this post, I’ll explain why he is right.

So, as you can see above, James is concerned that black women are having so many abortions, and he thinks that the solution to this is to encourage black women to take the Bible’s advice on sexual morality. Shocking, I know.

If you read the replies to his tweet on Twitter, you’ll see millions and millions of comments calling him a racist, and telling him that slavery is to blame for EVERYTHING that black women do wrong. Basically, the James haters say that black women can do anything they want, and should never be told that it’s wrong according to the Bible, because their bad choices are all the fault of slavery. So the Bible doesn’t even apply to them, or something.

Here is an example from a radical feminist progressive named Karen Swallow Prior:

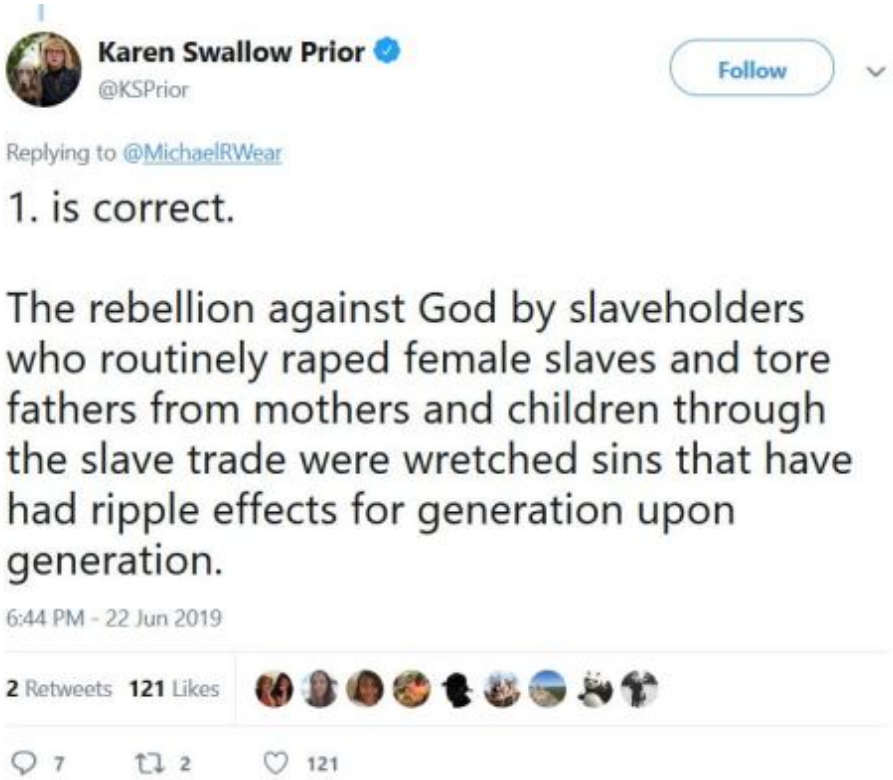

Karen Swallow Prior says that unlike whites, blacks have no moral agency

According to the fake Christians, it's not that black women make poor choices with sex, it's that the ghosts of white slavers who raped their great-great-great grandmothers reach through time with magic and force them to have sex with hunky bad boys who won't commit to them before sex. It's not rap music calling black women hoes! It's the ghosts of slavery past. And even if this ghost theory isn't true, we shouldn't tell black women not to sin, because… it would hurt their feelings. After all, the Bible isn't a book that's designed to set boundaries to prevent self-destructive behaviors. It encourages us to listen to our hearts, be reckless, and sin as much as we can.

So when did black community problems with sex and abortion start? Did it start with slavery times? Actually, blacks were doing GREAT at marriage and sexual matters just 50 years ago.

This reply to James White explained:

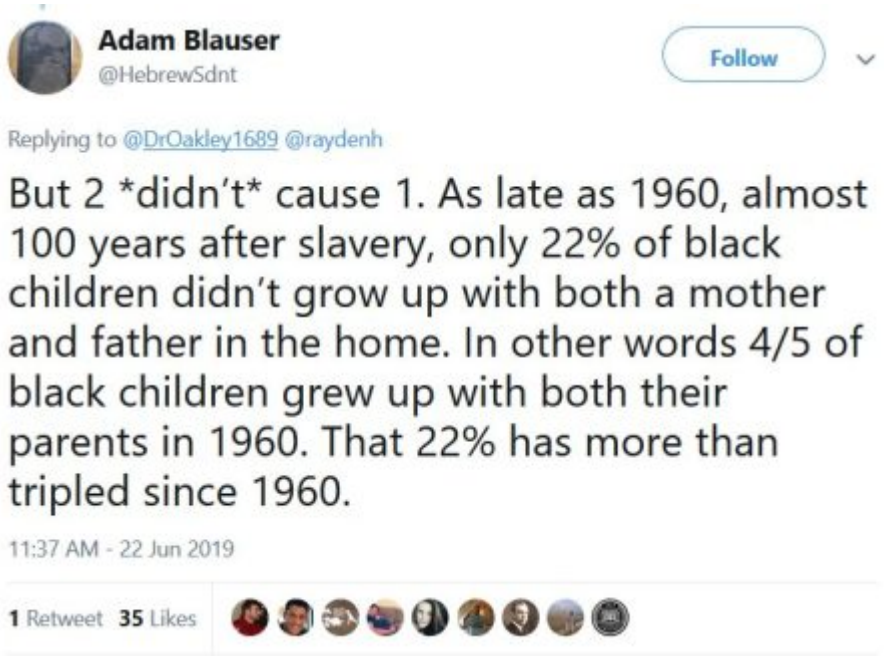

Blacks married at rates comparable to whites before welfare
That's true. Black children weren't fatherless, so they weren't having early sex outside of marriage, and so they weren't getting abortions.

As the header graphic shows, black women were just as likely to be married as white women in the 1960s, FAR AFTER the days of slavery.

The reason that the graph is going upward is because daughters raised in fatherless homes tend to engage in sexual activity at younger ages, because they are seeking approval from a man which their (single) mother cannot give them. It's a tragic downwards spiral, and it affects all races. The only way to stop it is to tell women to choose marriage-minded men (not hot bad boys) and marry before having sex, like the Bible says. But woke fake Christians think the Bible is too mean, and better to allow sin by saying that sin is inevitable because slavery ghosts or something.

What's neat is that black men who take Christianity seriously are totally on board with the facts:

Black man here. Can confirm that the Bible applies to black women.
On this blog, I don't talk about my ethnicity myself, for confidentiality reasons, but I have said that my skin is darker than Barack Obama. I'm not white or Asian. And the reason that I don't fall into this trap of causing babies to be born out of wedlock is because I think that when the Bible says that sex outside of marriage is a sin, that this is true. I

don’t make excuses or shift blame. It’s incumbent on me to obey, since I claim to be a follower of Jesus.I’m not interested in identity politics. I’m not interested in racial divisions. I’m not interested in blame-shifting. The rules are the rules. And my following of the rules caused me to not cause abortions, according to Christian specifications. Period.

When it comes to sex outside of marriage, the answer of every Bible believing Christian is simple: I’m against it. That is the correct answer, and anything more or less than this answer is demonic. If you are a Christian, sex outside of marriage is always morally wrong. And if you try to justify it, or blame someone else, in order to excuse it, then you’re not a Christian at all. If you try to make excuses for why someone did it, you’re not a Christian. Whether you have had it and been forgiven, or never had it, the answer is always the same: it’s morally wrong. Don’t do it. Never do it.

What I am seeing from people who are critical of James White’s tweet is that they are basically trying to attack those who make moral judgments based on what the Bible says. They want to make room for sinners to sin. The root of abortion sin is sexual sin. Real Christians discourage sexual sin, and therefore protect unborn children. Fake Christians want to be liked by appearing compassionate, so they make excuses for sexual sin. If you take the Bible seriously on morality, you won’t be liked. Those who try to excuse sin do so because their need to be liked is more important than their need to promote what the Bible teaches.

Some fake Christians will say “oh, but I do think the Bible is right about sex and marriage, but we have to care about slavery reparations and global warming and refugees and illegal immigrants and trasnsgender rights, too”. Baloney. An authentic Christian is concerned about the things that the Bible teaches are “major” things. Drunkenness is a major thing. Sexual immorality is a major thing. Divorce is a major thing. Homosexuality is a major thing. If you meet a Christian who treats those issues as minor issues, and instead majors in what the secular left tells them are major issues, then you’re talking to a fake Christian.

Christianity isn’t a brain-dead faith. You get your priorities from the Bible, and you argue those priorities using facts. The facts about marriage rates are clear and they show that the problems in the black community aren’t caused by slavery. They’re caused by single mother welfare programs. Those welfare programs taught women of all races that they didn’t have to listen to their fathers when choosing men. Those welfare programs taught women that feelings were a better guide in relationships than the Bible. Those welfare programs taught women that their eyes were a better judge of character than performance of traditional marriage roles. Those welfare programs taught women that recreational sex was a way to get a man to commit and stop being a bad boy. We need to go back to the root cause of the problem. The root cause of the problem was making excuses for disobedience to the Bible, and transferring money from married homes to out-of-control women. Of all races.

Woman explains what she was told about having children when she was young

June 28, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man teaching woman proper marksmanship

This article is by Ellie Bufkin, writing for the The Federalist. I always had a suspicion that women were being told not to marry too early, and not to have kids too early, but to instead enjoy their freedom. (With all that that entails) In some cases, it was their own mothers telling them this. Here is the story of one woman who was told to follow her dreams – as long as they didn't involve marriage and children.

Excerpt:

> Since I was young, I've heard a non-stop stream of encouragement for me, as a "modern woman," to take charge of my own life, live independently, and chase my dreams. This seems like the obvious advice we should give children, except that many people spent so much time chasing their dreams and creating their bespoke lives that they forgot to have children.
>
> While growing up in the suburbs, my post-scholastic dream did not consist of finding a partner and having babies. I wanted to see the world, experience many cultures, and live without having to worry about caring for anyone else. I ended up in a fast-paced career with a propensity for hard partying, late hours, and a taste for travel and luxury.
>
> As years ticked by, I assumed my perfect life would simply fall into place when I was ready, my career would steadily improve, and I would be swept off my feet by a perfect man. I had many friends with the exact same expectations for their lives, and today, we are pretty much all still single and childless.
>
> We set our expectations so high that we never achieved them. We dated people with the same hope for impossibly perfect lives and moved from city to city,

> hoping we could achieve a greatness that was not to be.
>
> […]Liberal feminists widely consider it to be morally wrong to have children in your twenties, or to have more than two children, or to continue any unplanned pregnancy. As a species, shouldn't we want to reproduce? If we continue to reinforce the idea that having kids is a taboo choice, how long will it be before there are no children?
>
> Many of the women I went to primary and high school with never left our little hometown, and now have their own children in the exact suburb I couldn't wait to get away from. In my twenties, I pitied them. How could they be so uncurious as to never leave home? Weren't we all raised to believe that women had choices now?

The next thing I want to do is to give you some facts about infertility, and whether women have accurate beliefs about infertility.

Dina sent me this UK Daily Mail article a while back, but I held onto it until I could find something to pair it with.

It says:

> One of Britain's top NHS fertility specialists last night issued a stark warning to women: Start trying for a baby before you're 30 – or risk never having children.
>
> In a strongly worded letter to Education Secretary Nicky Morgan, consultant gynaecologist Professor Geeta Nargund has also demanded that teenagers are taught about the dangers of delaying parenthood, because of the spiralling cost to the taxpayer of IVF for women in their late 30s and 40s.
>
> […]Prof Nargund said last night: 'Ideally, if a woman is ready for a child, she should start trying by the time she is 30. She should consider having a child early because as a woman gets older, her fertility declines sharply.'
>
> If a woman started trying early enough, doctors would still have time to diagnose problems and take action before it was too late, she said.
>
> Her comments were endorsed by Professor Allan Pacey, outgoing chair of the British Fertility Society.
>
> **'You need to be trying by 30 because if there is a problem and you need surgery, hormones or IVF, then you've got five years to sort it out,' he said. 'If a woman starts trying at 35, doctors have got to sort it out when she is already on a slippery fertility slope'.**

My friend Drew found a study reported on by ABC News, that explained why the age of 30 is so important.

Excerpt:

> By the time a woman hits 30, nearly all of her ovarian eggs are gone for good, according a new study that says women who put off childbearing for too long

> could have difficulty ever conceiving.
>
> The study published by the University of St. Andrews and Edinburgh University in Scotland found that women have lost 90 percent of their eggs by the time they are 30 years old, and only have about 3 percent remaining by the time they are 40.

Now, do most women know what the experts say about infertility?

Consider this article from Aeon magazine.

It says:

> Many studies show that women are not only woefully ignorant when it comes to fertility, conception and the efficacy of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) – but they overestimate their knowledge about the subject. **For instance, a 2011 study in *Fertility and Sterility* surveyed 3,345 childless women in Canada between the ages of 20 and 50; despite the fact that the women initially assessed their own fertility knowledge as high, the researchers found only half of them answered six of the 16 questions correctly.** 72.9 per cent of women thought that: 'For women over 30, overall health and fitness level is a better indicator of fertility than age.' (False.) And 90.9 per cent felt that: 'Prior to menopause, assisted reproductive technologies (such as IVF) can help most women to have a baby using their own eggs.' (Also false.) Many falsely believed that by *not* smoking and *not* being obese they could improve their fertility, rather than the fact that those factors simply negatively affect fertility.
>
> […]**According to a 2011 study in *Human Reproduction*, which surveyed 410 undergraduate students, most overestimated a women's chances of spontaneous pregnancy in all age groups, but particularly after receiving IVF beyond age 40.** Only 11 per cent of the students knew that genetic motherhood is unlikely to be achieved from the mid-40s onward, unless using oocytes or egg cells frozen in advance. 'This can be explained by technological "hype" and favourable media coverage of very late pregnancies,' the authors concluded.

So, I guess now I'll issue my advice to women in their 20s on how to avoid being single and childless at 35.

Money gives men confidence to pull the trigger on marriage, so you should focus your efforts on men with a solid balance sheet and a gap-less resume. Beware of men who paint a rosy picture of their finances in the future that makes you feel good, but who have not demonstrated their ability to earn or save. It's much better to focus your time on a man who can marry you *right now*. The best way to tell if a man is capable of marriage is not by listening to confident words, it's by looking to see how he has prepared to perform his roles, one of which is *provider*.

Be debt free. Study STEM in school, update your resume, and get a job that pays well. Jobs are not meant to be fun or fulfilling. You need to be preparing financially for

marriage, and that means a normal 8-4:30 job in an office with 3% annual raises and 401K matching. The more you save to help your man with the down payment on your house, the better. Pursuing fun and spending money on frivolous things like travel makes you addicted to fun, which is unsuitable for the hard work and responsibilities in marriage. Working a hard job is a good way to break down your selfishness, and prepare you to take your obligations to others seriously. *Don't* live in the moment, *do* sacrifice for the future. Believe me: a woman's debt is a *serious* damper on a man's willingness to marry her.

If you went to college, chances are that you absorbed a lot of feminism. Feminism emphasizes being free of constraints, feeling happy, having fun, career over family, and independence from the needs of men and children. And most of all, it teaches mistrust and disrespect of male leadership. Not every man can be trusted and respected as a leader, and that's why it's on you to choose a man who can be trusted and respected as a leader. Most married women will tell you that leadership in moral and spiritual areas is the most difficult and valuable quality to get in a man. Get yourself a marriage mentor, ask for book recommendations that will educate you about the challenges and rewards of marriage. A good marriage mentor will explain to you why marriage is a better plan than the feminist plan, and will emphasize self-denial, self-sacrifice, self-control and serving others. It's only by getting specific about marriage and parenting that your heart will change to want to work on marriage rather than work on the things that the feminist culture prefers. I recommend Dr. Laura's book on husbands, and lectures by Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse.

This talk of infertility made me think of a woman I know who just turned 30. She spent most of her 20s in relationships with huge, tall burly men. Race car drivers, etc. She liked to travel, especially to the beach. She liked ride around with in boats with buff guys. Now, at 30, she is very jaded about men and struggling to even get a date. In my experience, men are most open to marrying a woman who is young, athletic, and doesn't have baggage from fun-seeking with hot bad boys. Sexual baggage usually builds impatience, mistrust, disrespect and controlling behavior in a woman. Men prefer to marry virgins who are calm, stable and not addicted to alcohol or drugs. The time to focus on serious marriage-minded providers and leaders is when you have what men need from a woman for a marriage.

Toxic masculinity: Heroic Chick-Fil-A employee jumps through drive-through window

June 29, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Chick-Fil-A manager asks customers to pray for sick employee

In America today, there is widespread opposition to male nature. Male aggression should be suppressed by the state. Weapons like guns or knives should be banned by the state. Public schools should discourage men from being masculine. When women are mistreated by the immoral men they freely choose, it shows that all men are immoral. Are men good for anything?

Here's a story of a good man using a weapon to protect a little child, as reported in the Daily Wire.

Excerpt:

> On Wednesday, a teenage boy working at a Chick-fil-A in Flowery Branch, Georgia, looked through the drive-thru window and noticed that a 6-year-old boy in a car in the drive-thru lane was choking. Not wasting a second, Logan Simmons jumped through the drive-thru window and ran to the car, where he found the mother of the boy begging for someone to help her save her child from being choked by a seatbelt that had gotten tangled around his neck. Simmons said later, "You could see he was turning red and losing pigmentation in his face … I just jumped out the window and ran straight down to the car. I think it was the quickest option. It was right there and I saw the other car right there."
>
> The quick-thinking Simmons yanked out his pocketknife and cut the young child free. After the incident, Simmons recalled, "I'm still kind of shocked right now myself that all this has happened."
>
> Simmons' mother Teri told WSBTV, "He'd been home for a couple of hours and he said nonchalantly, 'I saved a kid's life today,' and I was like 'What?'" She added, "I'm amazed he didn't panic. As his mother, I would have panicked. I'd be running around going, 'Oh my gosh! What do we do?'"

> An hour after the incident, the boy's mother called Simmons and thanked him.

Christians should always be different, and this isn't the first time a Chick-Fil-A employee has seized the moment to express their Christian convictions through actions:

Behold:

> Simmons' actions are characteristic of Chick-fil-A employees; The Daily Wire reported in late August 2017 that a female manager at a Houston Chick-fil-A sent a boat to help an elderly couple to save their possessions in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey…
>
> In June 2018, a video showed a Chick-fil-A employee running after a customer who had driven away without their order.
>
> In May 2019, The Daily Wire reported that employees at an East Ridge, Tennessee, restaurant helped a customer change a flat tire on his truck after it broke down in the drive-thru lane.

I think it's significant that he was carrying a knife. Young men should always carry something sharp, just so that they are prepared for challenges like this. Although in the UK, a state run by secular leftist feminists, carrying a knife like that would be illegal. Because law-abiding men cannot be trusted to use weapons responsibly in the secular left UK.

Here's the video of him jumping through the drive-through window:

So, initially, I wanted to go on a rant about how masculinity is shamed by feminist elites. But I have been thinking about how pastors portray Christianity in American society, and I wanted to say something about that instead.

Acting on moral convictions

First point is about how secular leftists don't risk themselves for others, because they think they only have one life, and the purpose of that life is their own happiness. A secular leftist kills an unborn child in order to continue his or her own happiness. There's no higher objective moral law to override selfishness. Why rock the boat of societal expectations to save someone else? After all, unborn babies aren't going to praise you for saving them, but you'll get a lot of praise from powerful people if you support sexual irresponsibility and murdering innocent children. Just like you would get a lot of praise from slave-owners for defending slavery.

Isaiah 6:8 Here I am, Lord. Send me!

Bottom-up Christianity

Christianity used to be understood in a more masculine way. Following Christ used to mean training your character and making practical decisions.

Character: Christians trained their character by setting boundaries on themselves to avoid sinning. The futher back you stood from sin, e.g. – not drinking AT ALL, not having sex AT ALL, not gambling AT ALL, not wasting money on fun AT ALL, the easier it was for you to take action that the people around you didn't have the moral certainty to take. After all, a person who drinks, pursues recreational sex, etc. is focused on their own desires. Desire is poison. The more you take action to satisfy your desires, the less sensitive you become with the needs of people around you. The more you worry about making non-Christians approve of you, the less you are able to take bold actions that reflect *your own* Christian convictions. Bold moral actions come from the discipline you build up from thousands of unseen actions to be self-controlled.

Today, Christians treat God as a cosmic butler and supernatural gumball machine. Who sets the overall direction of a Christian life? Well, each person does, through their feelings. God "leads" them to do whatever they really feel like doing. I have met women who felt led to divorce their husbands or have extra marital affairs. Why? Because Christianity isn't about self-denial and self-sacrifice. It's about living your best life now. God doesn't speak to you through the words of the Bible. He speaks to you through your feelings. And his job is to make your feelings-driven desires "work out". Instead of being sober, chaste, prudent, self-controlled and frugal, you need to take reckless actions in order to produce feelings of happiness and exhilaration. Zip-lining! Travel! Skydiving! Surfing! Shacking up with an atheist. Living in New York City and paying $2500 in rent.

Be moral, Be practical, Be ready

Being moral means focusing on holiness. Say no to things that make you feel good in the moment. Say no to drinking and recreational sex. Say no to getting the approval of non-Christian friends.Don’t let the culture set your priorities for you.

And I want Christians to be more practical. Instead of treating Christianity as a cosmic fire brigade that rushes out to save you from the messes you make with reckless hedonism, instead do boring things that work. Cultivate skills that can be used to help others. Don’t spend money on fun. Study hard degrees. Be a good steward of your money. Give to other Christians who run enterprises that serve the Lord.

Paul Helm debates William Lane Craig on Calvinism and Reformed theology

June 30, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

I listened to this excellent discussion between Dr. William Lane Craig and Oxford University Calvinist philosopher Dr. Paul Helm. I think this is a useful discussion in general because atheists often bring up problems with Calvinism as objections to Christianity in general, such as:

- If God knows the future, then I don't have free will
- If God controls everything, then I am not responsible for my sinning
- If God has to override my free will to be saved, then I am not responsible for being damned if God doesn't choose me

Details:

> If God ordains the future, can humans have free will? Are people predestined for salvation? And what does the Bible say on the matter? William Lane Craig is a Christian philosopher and leading proponent of Molinism, a view of divine sovereignty that seeks to reconcile God's fore-ordination with human free will. Paul Helm is a leading Calvin Scholar. He defends the view that God predestines the future, limiting human freedom.

MP3 of this show

Or listen on YouTube:

I was surprised because my Calvinist friend Dina thought that Dr. Helm won this debate, but I thought that Dr. Craig won. So without further ado, here is the snark-free summary of the discussion. I also sent the summary to Dina to make sure that it was reasonably fair and accurate. She said it was biased, but she was predestined to say that. Anyway, there's a commentary on the debate over at Michael's Theology blog.

Summary:

JB: Has Lewis had any impact on your apologetics?

Craig: Not as a scholar, but more as a model of a scholar who leaves a legacy through his published work

JB: How did you become interested in Calvinism?

Helm: Starting from childhood, and lately writing more on Calvinism from a philosophical point of view

JB: How do you view God's sovereignty?

Helm: Strong view of divine sovereignty, God is sovereign over all events, but that doesn't mean that they are determined by him

JB: What is Calvin's legacy?

Helm: He amplified an existing concept of predestination, and wrote on many other topics

JB: What is Molinism?

Craig: Molina affirms divine sovereignty as Paul Helm does, but he also affirms libertarian free will

Craig: Every event that occurs happens by God's will or by God's permission

JB: What about open theism?

Craig: Paul and I both oppose open theism

JB: How does Molinism reconcile human free will and divine sovereignty

Craig: God has knowledge of what would happen under any set of circumstances

Craig: God has knowledge of everything that COULD happen, and he has knowledge of everything that WILL happen

Craig: God knows what each person freely choose to do in any set of circumstances and he can place people in times and places where he is able to achieve his ends without violating creaturely freedom and creaturely responsibility

JB: How does this apply to the issue of salvation?

Craig: The circumstances in which God puts a person includes God leading people to him and he foreknows who will respond to his leading

Craig: God has ordered the world in such a way that he foreknows the exact people who will free respond to his leading if he puts them in certain circumstances

JB: Does God want to save the maximum of people?

Craig: My own view is that God does order the world in such a way that the maximum number of people will respond to God's drawing them to himself

JB: Is the Molinist view gaining ground?

Craig: Yes, Calvinists and open theists are both moving towards it, and Molinism is the dominant view among philosophical theologians

JB: Why has Molinism not convinced you?

Helm: It’s an unnecessary theory, God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge covers what middle knowledge covers

Helm: Calvinism has a stronger view of sin, such that God has to act unilaterally and irrestibly to save them

JB: Are creatures free on your view?

Helm: My view of free will is weaker than Craig’s view of free will

Craig: For the Calvinist, grace is irresistible, but for the Molinist, grace is effective when it is met with a response from the creature

Craig: The Bible affirms the strong view of free will, when it says that in certain circumstances people can freely choose to do other than they do

Helm: But if a person is in circumstances X and they are free, then why don’t they choose something that isn’t what God can foresee

Craig: In identical circumstances, a person has the freedom to choose, and God doesn’t determine what they choose, he just foreknows what they choose

Helm: How can God foreknow what people will freely do if people have this strong view of freedom that allows them to do anything? God would not know what people can freely do if they really are free

Craig: God has knowledge of what his creatures would freely do in any set of circumstances, he has knowledge of subjunctive statements

Craig: The Scripture is filled with statements that show that God has this knowledge of what people would do in other circumstances (e.g. – 2 Cor 2:8)

Helm: I am not denying that the Bible is full of subjunctive statements, but if humans have real libertarian free will, then God cannot know what they will do

Craig: I think God does preordain everything, Molinism has a strong sense of divine sovereignty BUT the foreordaining is done with the knowledge of what humans would do in any circumstances, so that what God ordains achieves his ends, but without violating creaturely free will

Craig: I take at face value the passages of the Bible where it says that God wants all persons to be saved

Craig: When the Bible says that God wants ALL persons to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), the Bible means that God wants ALL persons to be saved

Craig: So either universalism is true OR there is something that stops all from being saved outside of God

Craig: the something that prevents all from being saved is creaturely free will

Helm: Most people don’t have the opportunity to hear the gospel, so God doesn’t want all to be saved

Helm: People can still be responsible for what God “fore-ordains”

JB: Can a person really be responsible for wickedness if they didn’t freely choose it?

Helm: Even though God is the only one who can act unilaterally to make save people, the people who act wickedly are still responsible

Craig: Molinism provides an answer to the problem of why not all people have heard the gospel, because by using middle knowledge he is able to know who would respond to the gospel if they heard it and he places those people in the times and places where they will hear it

Craig: That solution means that NO ONE is lost because they have not heard the gospel

Craig: There is Biblical support for (Acts 17:27) God choosing the times and places where people will live SO THAT they will be led by him and be able to respond to his leading

JB: Is God the author of sin, on Calvinism?

Craig: If Calvinists define providence to mean causal determinism, then he is the cause of every effect including human actions, and he is the one who causes people to sin

Craig: This view (determinism) impugns the character of God

Helm: I don't think that sovereignty requires determinism

Helm: God has mysterious resources – which I cannot specify – that reconcile his sovereignty with human responsibility for wickedness

JB: But if God is the cause of people doing wrong things, then how can they be responsible for it?

Helm: Well, humans do cause their own actions

Craig: Helm is right to say that God has resources to reconcile God's sovereignty with free will and human responsibility, and that resource is not an unknown mystery, it's middle knowledge

Craig: I can affirm everything in the Westminster Confession except for the one clause where they expressly repudiate middle knowledge as the mechanism for reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

Helm: Well, Calvinists have a strong view of sin so that humans cannot respond to God's leading

Craig: Yes, and that's why humans need prevenient grace in order to respond to him

Craig: God has to take the initiative and draw people to himself or they cannot be saved, but that grace is resistible, and that's what the Bible teaches (Acts 7:51), so humans are still responsible if they resist God

Helm: My view of grace is that it is monergistic and irrestible, it is a unilateral action on the part of God, like pulling someone out of an icy pond which they can't get out of

JB: If humans freely choose to respond to God's drawing and leading, does that diminish grace?

Helm: Many are called but few are chosen

Craig: Molinism does not require synergism – which is the idea that humans are partly responsible for their salvation

Craig: In Eph 2:8, Scripture is clear that faith opposite to works, and responding to God's drawing is not meritorious

JB: So receiving a gift is not meritorious?

Craig: It's the passive acceptance of what someone else has done for you

Helm: But doesn't this mean that you can lose your salvation, because you can accept and resist the gift of salvation?

Craig: That's a separate question that Christians can differ on, but if the Holy Spirit indwells a person and seals them, then that would argue for the view that salvation cannot be revoked

JB: Doesn't Romans 8 teach Calvinism pretty clearly?

Helm: This is called the "golden chain", and it does support Calvinism

Craig: Actually, this text is no problem for Molinists because the first link in the chain is foreknowledge, which, if it incorporates middle knowledge, is no problem for Molinists

Craig: What God is electing in Romans 8 is a specific group of people that he knows in advance of creating the universe will freely respond to his drawing them to him

Craig: In Acts 4:27-28, it is talking about God's foreknowledge, which involves and incorporates knowledge of what any individual would freely choose if placed in those circumstances

JB: If God actualizes a set plan with set circumstances for everyone, isn't that very similar to Calvinism?

Craig: Yes! It's a strong statement of divine sovereignty

Helm: Foreknowledge doesn't mean that God knows what people would do, it's just refering to God "knowing his own mind" about what he wants to do

JB: How do you respond to the fairness of God unilaterally and specifically choosing some people for salvation and choosing other people for damnation (because he refuses to act unilaterally for them)?

Helm: God ordinarily bypasses other people in the Bible, like when he chooses the Jews as his chosen people

Craig: The problem with that is that the Bible clearly teaches that God has a genuine will that all will be saved and he makes a genuine offer of salvation to all people

Craig: Also, just being a Jew and a member of the chosen people doesn't mean you were saved, because some Jews rebelled against God

Craig: And there were also people outside of the Jewish people who were righteous and in a relationship with God, like Job

Helm: "the fabric of our faith" depends on God's choice and his not-choice, it is fundamental to the Bible and to God's character, and choosing them "effectively" (irrestibly and unilaterally)

Helm: The idea of God considering "possible worlds", some of which are feasible and not

feasible, with conflicts between the wills of free creatures in different circumstances, and then actualizing one world that achieve these ends is very messy

Craig: Some worlds may not feasible for God to create, for example a world in which everyone is saved – it is logically possible, but may not be feasible

Craig: God will not exercise any divine coercion to force people to go to Heaven against their own will

Helm: If God chooses a world because it is feasible, then he doesn't love me directly, he is choosing a world, not individuals

Craig: Well, when God actualizes a world, he specifically knows which individuals will be saved within that world, but without disrespecting free will

Craig: The world isn't primary, the individuals are primary

Helm: I think that middle knowledge can he included in God's natural knowledge and free knowledge

Craig: The knowledge of what people would do in different circumstances is based on the freedom of the individuals

JB: Make your conclusions!

Craig: Molinism is a Biblical model for reconciling divine sovereignty with human freedom

Helm: It is intellectually mystifying to introduce this strong view of human freedom and it is not Biblical

Are Mormon doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

July 1, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out

> of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is

> central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-

> Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

Further study

If you want a nice long PDF to print out and read at lunch (which is what I did with it) you can grab this PDF by Michael Licona, entitled "Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock".

Reminder: lack of border security will eventually lead to unrestricted abortion

July 2, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Can you be pro-life and vote Democrat? Well, as we saw in the Democrat debates, all the Democrat candidates were in favor of open borders. And illegal immigrants tend to vote for higher taxes and more government, in order to get benefits from government provided by high-producing taxpayers. The net result of importing millions of big government voters is unrestricted abortion.

Here's a nice article from Catholic journalist John Zmirak, who is so conservative that I could swear he's a evangelical Protestant.

He writes:

> I wrote this a long time ago: "Immigration decides whether America will be saved. Abortion determines whether it deserves to be."
>
> That sums up most of my politics. Not because I don't care about other issues. Of course I do. But these two are what you might call "existential." And they are also connected.
>
> You see, the immigration issue decides a lot of others. In fact, it's the tipping point for most of the topics conservatives care about. This for a simple and bluntly practical reason: Most immigrants vote Democrat.
>
> […]In many states that last year elected a pro-life, pro-family member of the Senate or the House, the vote margins were relatively close, and Hispanics voted two-to-one in favor of the pro-abortion Democrats. Had the voting rolls been padded with recently legalized immigrants … how many of these seats would still be in the hands of liberal Democrats who favor abortion on demand for all nine months (if need be, paid for by the taxpayer), gay "marriage," explicit sex education and countless other measures that violate the most fundamental premises of the natural law?
>
> […][Let's say we] grant amnesty — the full rights of citizenship, including the right to vote, collect government benefits and use affirmative action at the expense of (for instance) impoverished white male war veterans — to the estimated 10-12 million illegal immigrants in America. We would be adding at the very least 6.3-8 million liberal, pro-abortion voters. No, these recent illegals need not, by the laws of physics, vote for liberal, pro-abortion Democrats. But that is how they will vote, and anyone who tells you otherwise is lying.

> […][N]ew arrivals overwhelmingly tend to vote liberal and pro-choice. … Don't believe us? Ask the Pew Research Center, which found in 2012:
>
> "Hispanics are more likely than the general public to say they would rather have a bigger government which provides more services than a smaller government

> which provides fewer services.
>
> “Some 75% of Hispanics hold this view; just 19% say they prefer a smaller government. By contrast, just 41% of the public at large voice support for a bigger government.
>
> “Support for a larger government is highest among immigrant Latinos, with 81% holding this view.”

What’s really interesting to me in what he wrote is how he talked about how Roman Catholics, who are supposed to be pro-life, are actually in favor of abortion, because of their support for illegal immigration.

Hold on to your hats, this is very strong medicine, especially for Catholics:

> The U.S. Catholic bishops, who beckon these immigrants into the country and profit from their arrival, could help. They could make it a priority to evangelize such new Americans on their duty to vote for just laws that preserve innocent life. Instead of voting for their own perceived tribal and economic interests (i.e. more free money from the government). No sign of the bishops attempting that, alas.
>
> […]As I’ve pointed out here before, the bishops collected 40% of their budget last year from federal contracts for non-profits. Most of those contracts were for serving immigrants. So their bottom line is at stake. Likewise filling the pews, since 40% of U.S.-born Catholics leave the Church and never come back. Immigrants briefly warm their empty seats, before leaving too. So immigration is a bottom line, life-or-death issue for these bishops. Abortion’s only a life and death issue to the babies. And the bishops don’t get a check from the feds for each baby saved.
>
> Maybe if we could figure out some kind of bounty like that, we’d see the bishops fighting as hard for unborn babies as most do for de facto open borders.

What I found most interesting is how rank-and-file Catholics are more likely to vote Democrat than Republican. And that’s especially true of Catholic women.

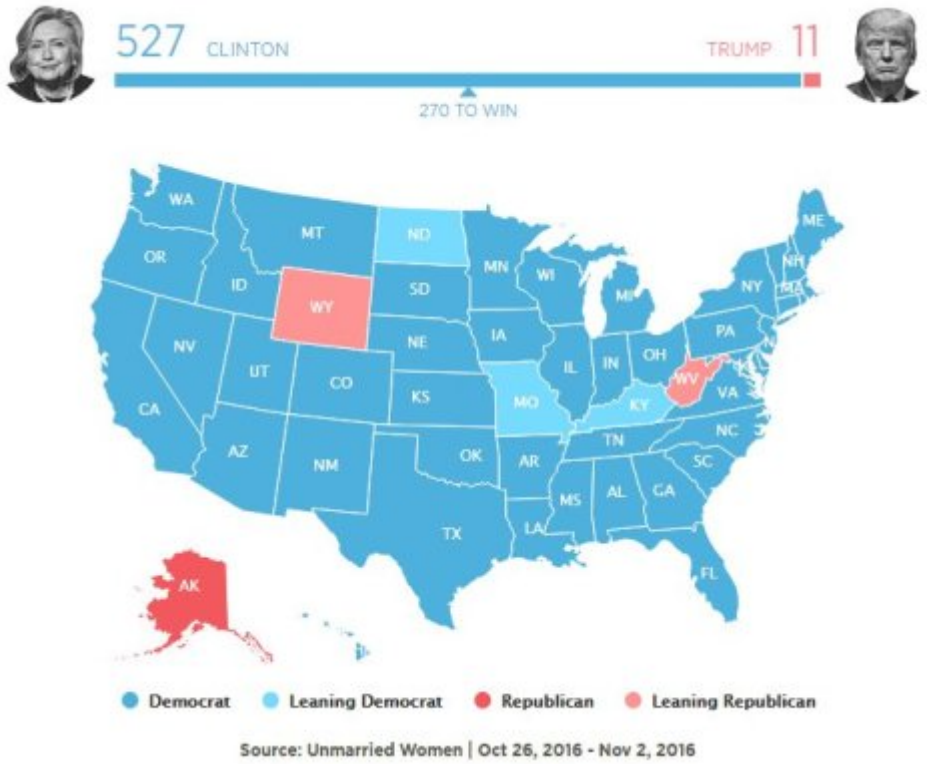

SurveyMonkey election poll cross tabs for unmarried women Nov 2016

Especially Catholic women

Here are the results from a recent survey of Catholic women:

> According to America's nationally representative survey of Catholic women, 55 percent of Catholic women who intend to vote in 2018 plan to vote for Democrats, while 37 percent plan to vote for Republicans. Three-quarters of all Catholic women intend to vote in 2018.
>
> […]Overall, the survey found that 59 percent of Catholic women are Democrats or lean Democratic, whereas 38 percent are Republican or lean Republican. (Those numbers decrease to 41 percent Democratic and 24 percent Republican without "leaners.")

I'm not sure if these Democrat-voting Catholic women realize the long-term consequences of their voting on issues like abortion, but they should. At least, they should if they hope to get married, because marriage-minded men probably aren't interested in marrying a woman who favors murdering innocent people as an "antidote" to reckless, premarital sex. No marriage-minded man would put a woman who supports abortion with her voting in charge of his children.

Is Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez telling the truth about treatment of illegal immigrants?

July 3, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

AOC photo-op: crying over a fake fence in a parking lot

I do think it's important that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement treat illegal immigrants humanely while they are awaiting processing. But I'm not sure if Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is the right person to keep them accountable. She went down to the border to inspect how ICE is doing with detainees, but I don't think she did a very good job of investigating, for two reasons.

Here's an article from the Washington Examiner about her visit.

First, she never actually did a tour of the facilities, and instead spent her time yelling at ICE personnel in a manner they found threatening:

> Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., screamed at federal law enforcement agents "in a threatening manner" during a visit to a Border Patrol facility in El Paso, Texas, and refused to tour the facility, according to two people who witnessed the incident.
>
> A group of 14 House Democrats, including Ocasio-Cortez, and their aides kicked off their visit to the region at about 11 a.m. MST Monday at the El Paso Station on Hondo Pass Drive.
>
> The group was standing inside the station near an area where migrants are held when Ocasio-Cortez left them to sit inside a nearby holding area with a family as the other lawmakers and aides were briefed on station operations.

> “She comes out screaming at our agents, right at the beginning [of the tour] … Crying and screaming and yelling,” said one witness who said he was stunned by the outburst in front of approximately 40 people.
>
> “The agents, they wanted to respond, but they held back because she’s a congressional delegate. But when you have someone yelling at you in a threatening manner … ” the same person said. “They were like, ‘Hey, you need to kinda step back.’”

Wow, I hope no one comes to my place of work and yells at me in a threatening way. You would think that she would have learned the importance of being courteous to employees from her many years as a bartender and waitress, but I think all this Congresswoman prestige has gone to her head. Now she thinks it’s OK to yell at people who she perceives as lower class than she is. I wouldn’t treat people in law enforcement like that. That’s just disrespectful.

Second, border security officials disagreed with her statements about them, as reported by Fox News: (H/T Dad)

> Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., traveled to the border on Monday with almost a dozen members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, as she blasted border officials as “violent” and “inhumane” — while claiming agents forced migrant women and children being detained in cells to drink toilet water.
>
> “They are not drinking out of the toilet—no Border Patrol agent is going to make anyone drink out of the toilet,” former U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) director Tom Homan said on Fox News’ “America’s Newsroom” Tuesday. “It’s just ridiculous on its face.”
>
> Homan alleged that Ocasio-Cortez was “clearly, intentionally misinforming the American public.”
>
> “She’s lost all credibility,” he said.
>
> Homan suggested she was simply referring to the “apparatus” in holding cells that has an attached sink and toilet, but two separate water lines.
>
> “You’re drinking out of the same apparatus, the same piece of equipment, but there are two separate water lines—one going to the commode, one going to the sink,” Homan explained. “… [T]hey are designed that way to try to save space and make it more comfortable for the people who are in those facilities.”

AOC has voted against bills to fund border patrol, which would allow them to improve their facilities to accomodate the huge number of illegal immigrants. But she always votes against them! She even voted against the one that was just passed by the rest of her Democrat colleagues in the House of Representatives. That bill would have given $4.6 billion dollars to help the illegal immigrants. Why would she go cry at the border, then vote against helping the people she’s supposedly crying about? Isn’t there a word for that? I think it starts with an “H”.

Now, you might say “this is just AOC, she thinks the world will explode in 12 years, too”. But she is the first of a new generation of brainwashed young people coming out of our public school system. Young Democrats seem to just re-tweet and like and share her lies just because what she says sounds nice to them. In this life, you will never achieve what you set out to achieve if you deceive yourself. There are going to be an awful lot of young Democrats who vote for one thing, and get something else that they did not expect. It will be just like those low-skill workers who voted for minimum wage increases, then found themselves out of a job because their employers couldn’t pay for it.

(Image source)

For Independence Day, let’s learn about George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

July 4, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Washington crosses the Delaware river before the Battle of Trenton

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position

> untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington's line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington's retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington's army at White Plains, New York, British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians

believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
>
> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for

> the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
>
> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called

> the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.
>
> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
>
> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
>
> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

How to falsify a religion using scientific or historical evidence

July 5, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

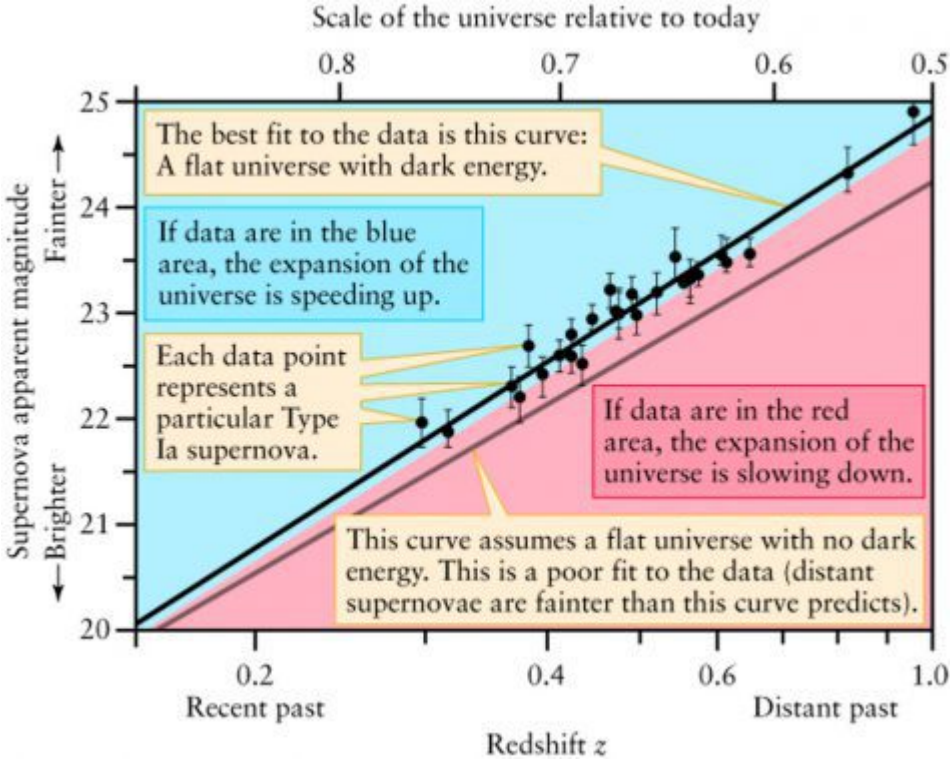

Will the universe expand forever, or will it collapse and bounce?
(Image source)

What I often see among atheists is this tendency to set up expectations of how God would have acted and then complain that he doesn't met those expectations. I don't think that this is a good way to argue against a religion, because it's subjective. God isn't obligated to comport with atheist expectations. A much better way of evaluating religions is to test the claims each makes against evidence.

So in this post, I wanted to show how a reasonable person can evaluate and reject different worldviews using evidence.

Falsifying a religion using science

Consider this argument:

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a

collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

Notice how the oscillating model is falsified by mathematics and experimental evidence. Remarkable, when you remember how the public schools would play Carl Sagan videos which promoted this no-Creator model of the universe.

The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with atheism, Buddhism, Mormonism, etc. because they also require an eternally existing universe.

Atheism in particular is incompatible with the universe "coming into being", because that would be a supernatural cause – a cause that created the natural world. According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.*

Falsifying a religion using history

Consider this argument:

1. To be a Muslim, you must believe that the Koran is without error.
2. The Koran claims that Jesus did not die on a cross. (Qur'an, 4: 157-158)
3. The crucifixion of Jesus is undisputed among non-Muslim historians, including atheist historians.
4. Therefore, it is not rational for me to become a Muslim.

I'm going to support the premise that Jesus was crucified by citing historians from all backgrounds.

Consider some quotes from the (mostly) non-Christian scholars below:

> "Jesus' death as a consequence of crucifixion is indisputable." Gert Lüdemann
>
> "That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be." J.D. Crossan
>
> "The passion of Jesus is part of history." Geza Vermes
>
> Jesus' death by crucifixion is "historically certain". Pinchas Lapide
>
> "The single most solid fact about Jesus' life is his death: he was executed by the Roman prefect Pilate, on or around Passover, in the manner Rome reserved particularly for political insurrectionists, namely, crucifixion." Paula Fredriksen
>
> "The support for the mode of his death, its agents, and perhaps its co-agents, is overwhelming: Jesus faced a trial before his death, was condemned, and was executed by crucifixion." L.T. Johnson

> “One of the most certain facts of history is that Jesus was crucified on orders of the Roman prefect of Judea, Ponitus Pilate.” Bart Ehrman

That’s 7 famous historians: 3 atheists, 3 Jews and 1 moderate Catholic. The atheists, Ludemann, Crossan and Ehrman, have all debated against the resurrection of Jesus with William Lane Craig. Johnson is the moderate Catholic, the rest are Jewish historians. The Koran was written in the 7th century. That is why no professional historian accepts the Koran as more authoritative than the many earlier Christian and non-Christian sources for the crucifixion story. Many of the sources for the crucifixion are dated to the 1st century. It’s not faith. It’s history.

I have seen debates with Muslim scholars, and I have never once heard them cite a non-Muslim historian to the effect that Jesus was not crucified. To my knowledge, there is no (non-Muslim) historian who denies the crucifixion of Jesus in his published work.

Can Christianity be falsified by science or history?

Yes. If you prove that the universe is eternal than would falsify the Bible’s claim that God created the universe out of nothing. That would be a scientific disproof. If you could find the body of Jesus still inside a tomb, that would falsify the Bible’s claim about a resurrection. That would be a historical disproof. The nice thing about Christianity is that we make lots of testable claims. When someone claims to be a Christian, it’s a good thing if they can show how they arrived at that conclusion. Being able to square God’s existence with science, and Jesus’ resurrection with history are two crucial steps to showing the reasonableness of Christianity.

Why do Christian men prefer to marry virgins?

July 6, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Here's some helpful advice for women about choosing a man
Some Christian women argue that chastity is an "idol" that detracts from Jesus' "gospel of forgiveness". Basically, they claim that although premarital sex is a sin, it shouldn't stop a man from marrying them, because they can just make the sin disappear by asking Jesus for forgiveness. But does this really address the underlying concern that men with have marrying a non-virgin?

Let's start with an example (reported by Daily Wire), then analyze what is going on here:

> Though "The Bachelorette" star Hannah Brown has been open about her Christian faith this past season, she also openly boasted about premarital sex as if it were no big deal.
>
> "I have had sex, and, honestly, Jesus still loves me," Brown said on Monday's episode.
>
> […]Brown later spoke with Entertainment Tonight about her religious views on Christ, which boil down to a "personal relationship with Jesus" without doctrinal accountability.
>
> "Regardless of anything that I've done … well people might think, 'Oh, that deserves a scarlet letter.' That's not how it works. I can do whatever — I sin daily and Jesus still loves me. It's all washed and if the Lord doesn't judge me and it's all forgiven, then no other man, woman … can judge me," Brown told Entertainment Tonight.

So to start with, Transformed Wife has a spiritual reflection this, which you can read. The Bible teaches that sex outside of marriage is rebellion against God, and Jesus tells people who sin that they are forgiven, but that they should "sin no more". Sinning no more is hard. But *what should be easy* is not telling everyone that sinning is OK, like Hannah Brown did. She doesn't think that the Bible has the authority to say NO to her feelings and desires. Already, this is a red flag for men who feel that they can't trust a woman who is willing to throw out Bible verses when it goes against her desires.

Even among Christians, premarital sex is the rule, not the exception:

> As many as 80 percent of unmarried evangelical young adults have had sex, according to an analysis of a study on sexual activity in the upcoming October issue of Relevant, a Christian magazine.
>
> Young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 who identify themselves as evangelicals are almost as sexually active as their non-Christian peers, according to the article "(Almost) Everyone's Doing It."

This study from Live Science makes clear that young people see avoiding commitment as an intended benefit of premarital sex.

> Two-thirds of participants said they had been in a "friends with benefits" relationship, and 36 percent said they currently were in one. The main advantage of such a relationship was "no commitment" (reported by 59.7 percent of participants), which was followed closely by "have sex" (55.6 percent).

Let's decide what premarital sex tells marriage-minded Christian men about a woman.

What a woman's choice to have recreational premarital sex tells a marriage-minded man

What kind of men do women choose for recreational premarital sex? Well, they choose men who *don't commit to marriage before sex.* It's not as if women are choosing these men because they are good at commitment behaviors; sobriety, fidelity, charity, protecting children, etc. A premarital-sex woman thinks that a no-commitment man is the best man. If she thought that a marriage-minded man were best, she'd be giving him sex – after marrying him. She uses her temporary supply of youth and beauty to reward the no-commitment man for his "superiority". What makes him superior? A bunch of superficial traits like height, tattoos, piercings, arrogance, etc. – basically, he's fun in the moment.

The commitment man is bad, because he just wants to *burden* her with a "boring" marriage commitment. Commitment requires moral boundaries that would reduce her fun. For example, the commitment man might tell her "these research papers say that it's best for our newborn if you quit your job and stay home, instead of putting them into daycare". Or he might say, "we can't afford your shopping" or "your smoking is bad for our pregnant baby". And she doesn't want to deal with this "controlling" behavior – not right now, anyway. Her youth and beauty needs to be used to chase her real priority, which is fun with the hot bad boys. Marriage is not her first priority, it's her last resort.

Marriage-minded men can't lead a family if they marry a woman who does not respect them

So, suppose that a woman passes up marriage-minded men during her young and pretty years. Should a marriage-minded man pursue her after she's done having fun?

Well, what does her past decision-making reveal about her character? She prefers no-commitment men, and her goal is fun.So how can a woman who chose no-commitment men suddenly change herself completely around and start to like men with commitment skills, (chastity, sobriety, frugality, mentoring, etc.). Marriage-minded men marry in order to lead. But will a woman who prefers no-commitment men and fun allow a man she sees as "boring" and "controlling" to lead her? A wise commitment-man must choose a woman who respects his preparation for and focus on commitment.

Now the woman might say that she's changed, and now she is ready to get serious with a

real man. But what reasons does a man have to think that her change is genuine? What has she read to change her mind? What actions show that she wants a man to lead in moral and spiritual areas? What evidence is there that she is now an activist against feminism, promiscuity, abortion, divorce, socialism and single motherhood? Isn't a man entitled to ask for some evidence of what caused her to change her mind about which men are good, and what relationships are for?

Suppose that her sudden change is just because she recognizes that her recreational premarital sex approach to getting a no-commitment man to commit *hasn't worked*. So she hasn't changed which men she is attracted to, but now she just wants financial support and the social respectability of marriage. From a man she doesn't admire, doesn't respect, will not support, and will not follow. Is that a good value proposition for a commitment-man?

Marriage-minded men don't marry in order to give a woman who prefer no-commitment men financial support and social respect. We marry in order to lead a family with the support of a woman who respects our focus on marriage and commitment. We don't trust last-second conversions to the pro-patriarchy position. We have to be convinced that a woman really repented of her past, and now has a deep, Christian understanding of men, marriage and parenting. This is a nearly impossible task given the myths about men and marriage that are floating around in this secular leftist culture of feminism and misandry. In order to accept that the woman has changed, we expect to see the work you did to change your behavior patterns and beliefs from anti-marriage to pro-marriage. I have met a few women who have done this, including some of my trusted advisors… but it's rare.

The importance of evidence in making selfish, reckless behavior unthinkable

My female advisors are always telling me to be more positive in my writing. "You must tell women what to do after mistakes have already been made!" OK, women: the solution is simple, and it's found in Romans 12:1-2. You have to change your criteria for men, and your vision of marriage by consuming evidence that makes your prior decisions unthinkable. You must train yourself to disregard your feelings, your desires and cultural pressure. And then you must put your new mind into practice with your actions, including promoting your new vision for men, sex and marriage to other people in public. These actions will signal to men that you are serious about marriage.

So, I'll just link to my previous posts about peer-reviewed scientific research, which shows the scientific backing for the Bible's teaching on this topic:

- delaying sexual activity leads to higher quality marriages
- more premarital sex leads to more marital unhappiness, raising risk of no-fault divorce

The evidence is necessary because evidence helps everyone to do the right thing, regardless of feelings, desires and peer approval.

You wouldn’t waste your money on tattoos, alcohol, cigarettes and travel if you understood the financial demands of retirement and how to invest in order to be ready for retirement. Knowledge of investing and retirement overrides feelings, desires and peer pressure. If women do not prioritize learning the “boring” evidence about best practices for men, sex and marriage, then they will decide how to live based on their feelings, desires and the culture. In a secular left culture like this, a man with chastity and a good fortune will be attracted to women who have deliberately walled off sin by strengthening their ability to be good at marriage with evidence.

If you’re looking for somewhere to start, I recommend “The Sacred Search” by Gary Thomas and “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands” by Dr. Laura Schlessinger.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

July 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining the outline of the podcast.

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though

> it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

Google fires another Republican engineer who disagreed with Democrat party policies

July 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The firing happened in early June, but I was busy at the time, and didn't blog about it. This isn't the first time that Google has fired software engineers for disagreeing with Democrat party policies. The last one, you'll remember, was James D'Amore. This time, it's Mike Wacker, who was fired for expressing Republican views and dissenting from Google "reporting" policies.

The Daily Caller reports:

> A Republican Google software engineer has written an open letter describing a culture of left-wing "outrage mobs" that make use of the company's anonymous bias reporting channels to shut down dissent.
>
> The open letter, published Tuesday morning on Medium, was written by software engineer Mike Wacker, who was reported himself multiple times via the company's anonymous reporting tools.
>
> "If left unchecked," Wacker wrote, "these outrage mobs will hunt down any conservative, any Christian, and any independent free thinker at Google who does not bow down to their agenda."
>
> In one case, Wacker describes a fellow Republican employee who was reported for saying nice things about the University of Toronto academic Jordan Peterson. He was given a note in writing that said, "One Googler raised a concern that you that you appeared to be promoting and defending Jordan Peterson's comments about transgender pronouns, and this made them feel unsafe at work."
>
> Wacker himself was twice reported via the company's anonymous reporting channels.

The full article by Wacker is here on Medium. Keep in mind that we have so many stories like this coming out of Google. The James D'Amore story was big, but it's not the only one. Google apparently fires any employee who is caught disagreeing with the company's political objectives.

Google-related companies donate 90% to Democrats

This firing of the Republican software engineer makes me wonder whether Google has a policy of discriminating against employees to make sure that no Republicans can work at Google.

According to the Washington Examiner, Google, YouTube and other Google-linked companies gave 90% of their political donations to Democrats:

> A study released Thursday found that 90 percent of political donations by Google,

> YouTube, and other subsidiaries of Alphabet have gone to Democrats.
>
> In 2016, when Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton, Alphabet employees donated more than $5.8 million to Democratic candidates and causes, while only $403,042 was contributed to Republicans. Ninety-four percent of Alphabet contributions in that year went to Democrats.

Would that be a sign that their products and services are biased to support Democrats?

Google executives caught on film

Here are some highlights of a sting video featuring Google executives crying about the Democrat election loss:

This was filmed a company-wide meeting, and it clearly communicates the political bias of Google leadership to their employees. The message seems to be: "if you want to work here, you have to be a Democrat" and "if you want to rise in this company, then you have to be a Democrat". Does this open adoration for the Democrat party by Google executives affect Google products and services?

When pressed for answers about their pro-Democrat bias, Google spokespersons have nothing to say.

Here's Republican senator Ted Cruz asking questions:

Are there any SENIOR EXECUTIVES AT GOOGLE who voted for Donald Trump? She's not aware of any. What about the $1.315 million given to Hillary Clinton in 2016 by Google employees and $0 given to Donald Trump? She has no answer.

I have some questions of my own. Would Google fire any employees that did give money to Republicans? Would Google prevent employees who gave to Republicans from advancing in the company? Would these political contributions to Democrats be a sign that the products and services offered by Google are biased to support Democrats? It seems to me that the firings that we know about, and the complete lack of donations to Republicans show that Google is discriminating against conservatives, so that they are unwilling to go on the record as supporting Republican candidates.

Studies show bias in Google products and services

What about the study showing that they promote progressive news sources ahead of conservative or unbiased ones?

Breitbart News reported in March 2019 on how Google used their products to influence elections:

> New research from psychologist and search engine expert Dr. Robert Epstein shows that biased Google searches had a measurable impact on the 2018 midterm elections, pushing tens of thousands of votes towards the Democrat candidates in three key congressional races, and potentially millions more in races across the country.

> The study, from Epstein and a team at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology (AIBRT), analyzed Google searches related to three highly competitive congressional races in Southern California. In all three races, the Democrat won — and Epstein's research suggests that Google search bias may have tipped them over the edge.

This confirms a previous study from 2016:

> The research follows a previous study conducted in 2016 which showed that biased Google results pushed votes to Hillary Clinton in the presidential election. Democrats and Google executives have disputed these findings.
>
> […]Users performing Google searches related to the three congressional races the study focused on were significantly more likely to see pro-Democrat stories and links at the top of their results.

Here's another study reported in May 2019 by the UK Daily Mail:

> Google's bias towards left-wing media outlets has been laid bare by an algorithm which detected that it favors sites including CNN and The New York Times over others.
>
> According to data compiled by researchers from Northwestern University, the search engine promoted those sites over others repeatedly in November 2017.
>
> Of the 6,302 articles that appeared in Google's 'top stories' page that month after a term was searched, more than 10 percent were by CNN.
>
> The New York Times was the second most favored and accounted for 6.5 percent of articles. The Washington Post was third with 5.6 percent.
>
> By contrast, Fox News, the most right-wing outlet in mainstream media, was the source of just three percent of the stories which appeared.

See for yourself the difference it makes:

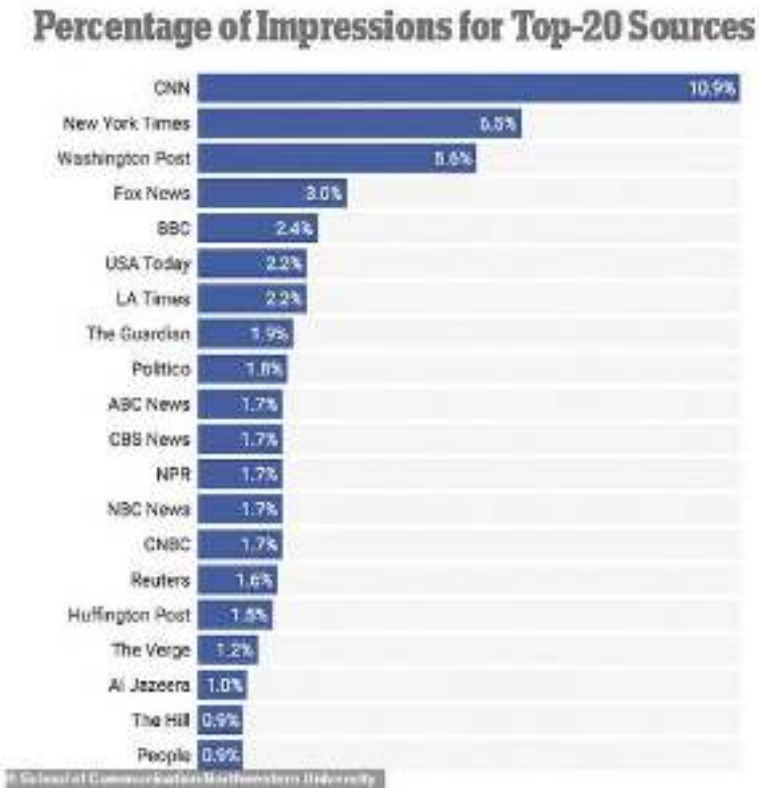

Study: Google uses its products and services to supports Democrat Party
I think we really need an investigation to get to the bottom of this.

Related posts

- Google internal document calls prominent Jews Dennis Prager and Ben Shapiro "Nazis"
- Justice Department to begin antitrust investigation of anti-conservative Google
- Google employees revolt against having a black, female conservative on advisory board
- Spotify joins Google, Youtube, Facebook and Twitter in censoring Prager University
- Facebook bans Franklin Graham for "hate speech", Google YouTube shadow-bans pro-life videos
- Does Google's anti-conservative bias affect its products and services?
- Facebook joins Twitter, Google and YouTube in deliberately purging conservative voices
- Google now censoring conservative news, while giving leftist propaganda a free pass
- Google censors conservative video lectures from Prager University on YouTube
- How Google, Facebook and Twitter brainwash users against conservatism
- Google starts worldwide campaign to legalize gay marriage, Target donates to gay activists

New study: galactic habitable zone depends on fine-tuning of cosmological constant

July 9, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

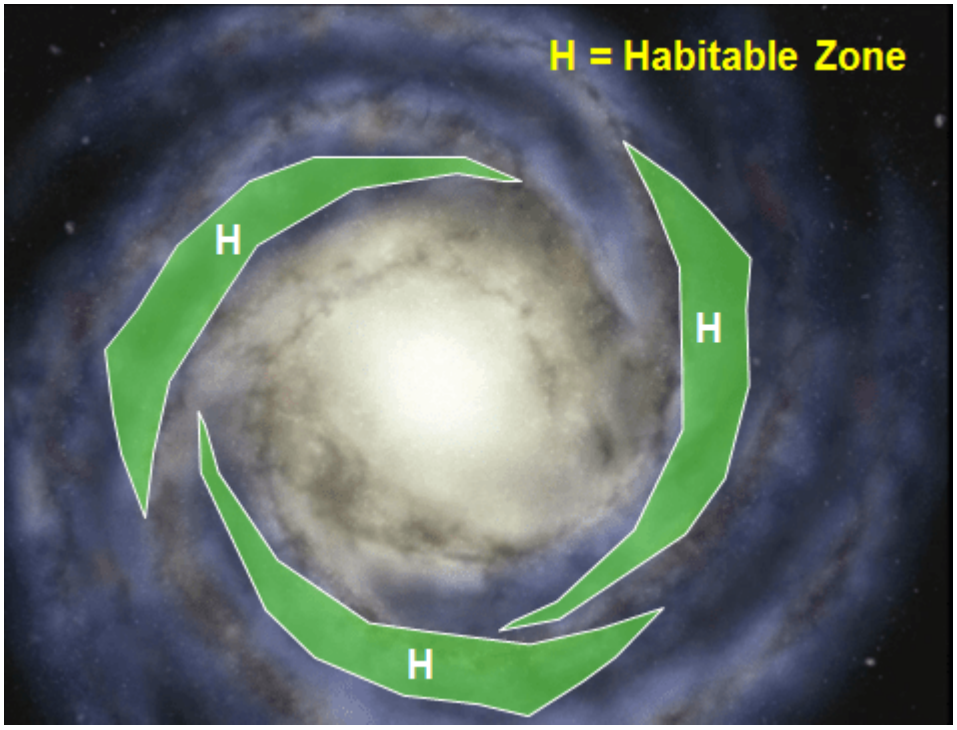

The galactic habitable zone (GHZ) is shown in green superimposed on a spiral galaxy

This is going to be old news to readers of this blog who are familiar with the Michael Strauss, Walter Bradley and Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on habitability and fine-tuning. But, it's nice to see these ideas show up in one of the most prestigious peer-reviewed science journals in the world (if not *the* most prestigious).

Here's the article from Science.

It says:

> Scientists have known for several years now that stars, galaxies, and almost everything in the universe is moving away from us (and from everything else) at a faster and faster pace. Now, it turns out that the unknown forces behind the rate of this accelerating expansion—a mathematical value called the cosmological constant—may play a previously unexplored role in creating the right conditions for life.
>
> That's the conclusion of a group of physicists who studied the effects of massive cosmic explosions, called gamma ray bursts, on planets. They found that when it comes to growing life, it's better to be far away from your neighbors—and the cosmological constant helps thin out the neighborhood.
>
> "In dense environments, you have many explosions, and you're too close to them," says cosmologist and theoretical physicist Raul Jimenez of the University of Barcelona in Spain and an author on the new study. "It's best to be in the

> outskirts, or in regions that have not been highly populated by small galaxies—and that's exactly where the Milky Way is."
>
> Jimenez and his team had previously shown that gamma ray bursts could cause mass extinctions or make planets inhospitable to life by zapping them with radiation and destroying their ozone layer. The bursts channel the radiation into tight beams so powerful that one of them sweeping through a star system could wipe out planets in another galaxy. For their latest work, published this month in *Physical Review Letters*, they wanted to apply those findings on a broader scale and determine what type of universe would be most likely to support life.
>
> The research is the latest investigation to touch on the so-called anthropic principle: the idea that in some sense the universe is tuned for the emergence of intelligent life. If the forces of nature were much stronger or weaker than physicists observe, proponents note, crucial building blocks of life—such fundamental particles, atoms, or the long-chain molecules needed for the chemistry of life—might not have formed, resulting in a sterile or even completely chaotic universe.

Basically, the best place for a galaxy that permits complex, embodied life to exist is one where you can pick up enough heavy elements from dying stars nearby, but not be in an area that is so crowded by stars that you will be murdered by intense gamma radiation when they die.

The cosmological constant has to be set just right that we spread out enough to make space between spiral arms for life-permitting solar systems, but no so spread out that we cannot pick up the heavy elements we need for a metal-rich star, a moon, and the bodies of the intelligent agents themselves.

More:

> **As it turns out, our universe seems to get it just about right. The existing cosmological constant means the rate of expansion is large enough that it minimizes planets' exposure to gamma ray bursts, but small enough to form lots of hydrogen-burning stars around which life can exist. (A faster expansion rate would make it hard for gas clouds to collapse into stars.)**
>
> Jimenez says the expansion of the universe played a bigger role in creating habitable worlds than he expected. "It was surprising to me that you do need the cosmological constant to clear out the region and make it more suburbanlike," he says.

Remember, this is only one of many characteristics that must obtain in order for a have a location in the universe that can support complex, embodied life of any conceivable kind.

Let's review the big picture

Time for me to list out some of the things that are required for a galaxy, solar system and

planet to support complex embodied life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind given these laws of physics.

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

It's not easy to make a planet that supports life. For those who are interested in reaching out to God, he has left us an abundance of evidence for his existence – and his attention to detail.

And remember, these requirements for a habitable planet are downstream from the cosmic fine-tuning of constants and quantities that occurs at the Big Bang. No point in talking about the need for plate tectonics if *you only have hydrogen in your universe.* The habitability requirements are a *further* problem that comes after the fine-tuning problem.

Resources

The best book to read on this topic is "The Privileged Planet", by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards. The latter is one of my absolute favorite Christian scholars, a real renaissance man. If the book is too much, there is a DVD by the same name that covers everything you need to know at a high level. Just FYI, Gonzalez made the cover of Scientific American in 2001, for his research on habitable zones. This is real evidence you can discuss with anyone, anywhere.

You can also watch the DVD for FREE on YouTube. Not sure how long that will be there. If you like it, buy the DVD, so you can show your friends.

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- Four ways the Earth is fine-tuned for life, and one more
- Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas
- Fine-tuning the habitable zone: tidal-locking and solar flares
- Is silicon-based life a possible alternative for carbon-based life?
- Jupiter deflects comets and asteroids that might otherwise hit Earth
- How common is it for a star to support complex, embodied life?
- Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University
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Billionaire Democrat donor and Clinton ally accused of sex-trafficking underage girls

July 10, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

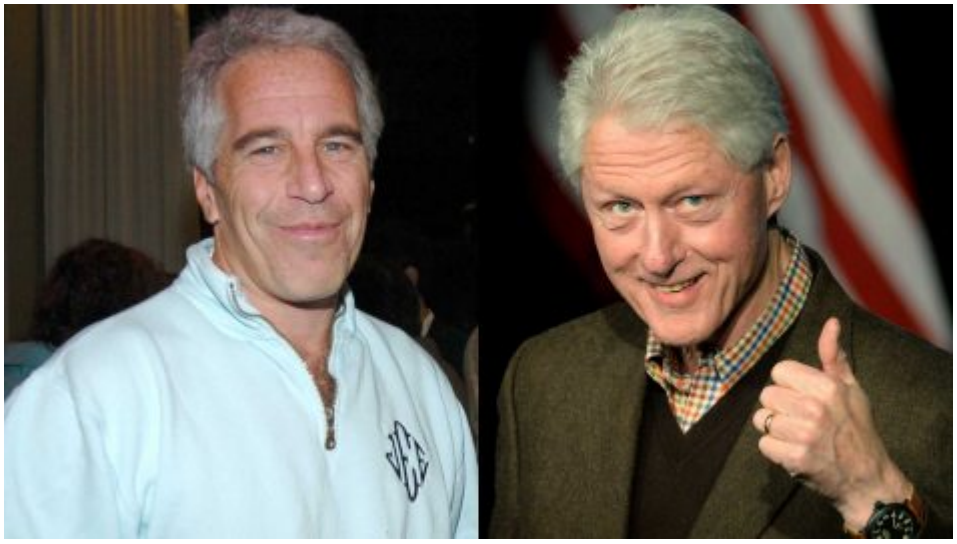

Jeffrey Epstein and Bill Clinton

After following the Jeffrey Epstein story for a few days, I decided to write about it. In a nutshell, a billionaire Democrat donor with connections to Bill Clinton and other Democrat elites was accused of sex-trafficking underage girls. I think this story reveals the heart of the Democrat party, and why they are so focused on separating daughters from fathers, and destroying marriage.

Here is the latest from Fox News:

> Former President Bill Clinton was a much more frequent flyer on a registered sex offender's infamous jet than previously reported, with flight logs showing the former president taking at least 26 trips aboard the "Lolita Express" — even apparently ditching his Secret Service detail for at least five of the flights, according to records obtained by FoxNews.com.
>
> Clinton's presence aboard Jeffrey Epstein's Boeing 727 on 11 occasions has been reported, but flight logs show the number is more than double that, and trips between 2001 and 2003 included extended junkets around the world with Epstein and fellow passengers identified on manifests by their initials or first names, including "Tatiana." The tricked-out jet earned its Nabakov-inspired nickname because it was reportedly outfitted with a bed where passengers had group sex with young girls.
>
> […][Epstein] allegedly had a team of traffickers who procured girls as young as 12 to service his friends on "Orgy Island," an estate on Epstein's 72-acre island, called Little St. James, in the U.S. Virgin Islands.
>
> […]Police in Palm Beach, Fla., launched a year-long investigation in 2005 into Epstein after parents of a 14-year-old girl said their daughter was sexually

> abused by him. Police interviewed dozens of witnesses, confiscated his trash, performed surveillance and searched his Palm Beach mansion, ultimately identifying 20 girls between the ages of 14 and 17 who they said were sexually abused by Epstein.
>
> […]One victim, in sworn deposition testimony, said Epstein began sexually assaulting her when she was 13 years old and molested her on more than 50 occasions over the next three years.

So the most important point to make is that Jeffrey Epstein made many, many donations to Democrat politicians and the Democrat party.

OpenSecrets.org, which tracks political donations, explains:

> From 1989 up until 2003, Epstein donated more than $139,000 to Democratic federal candidates and committees and over $18,000 to Republican candidates and groups, according to data from OpenSecrets. Notable recipients include former President Bill Clinton and former Senator Bob Packwood, a Republican. In 2003, a couple of years before a full-scale investigation into the allegations of sexual exploitation of underage girls, his political giving abruptly stopped.
>
> From 1999 to 2003, Epstein donated $77,000 to Democrats John Kerry, Richard Gephardt, Chris Dodd, and other high-profile politicians and committees. Dodd received a $1,000 contribution from Epstein during his reelection campaign in 2003, however, the contribution was returned in 2006.
>
> After a hiatus in political giving during the investigations into his sexual abuse, Epstein gave to independent Connecticut House candidate Gwendolyn Beck in 2014 and U.S. Virgin Islands Democratic Delegate Stacey Plaskett both in 2016 and the most recent midterms (Epstein owns a private island in the Virgin Islands called Little Saint James).
>
> Most recently, Epstein contributed $10,000 to the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in October 2018.

Keep in mind that this isn't the first Democrat mega-donor who has been accused of behavior like this. You just have to take a trip to Hollywood to see many, many wealthy Democrats who have been accused of similar things… and worse. Yet we (not me) keep buying their movies.

The key to the Democrat party

So, now I want to say something about what this means about the Democrat party as a whole.

My view of the Democrat party is that their top priority is abortion. And this support for abortion is the key to all their other policies.

Think about what would have happened if Jeffrey Epstein or Bill Clinton got a young underage prostitute pregnant. They would want to escape the judgement of those nasty

Christians, and they would want to avoid having their fun-seeking impacted by the need to provide for the child. And that's why the Democrats support abortion. Their number one goal is to destroy anything that interferes with their desire to have recreational sex.

Now you might say, well, their plan won't work, because we have the institution of marriage, so that girls are being raised by their biological fathers. And the churches will teach women to be chaste, and to prioritize marriage and children. But the Democrats have a plan to get the fathers out of the homes, and reduce the influence of Christianity on young women.

First, they push feminism, which results in women denouncing chastity, marriage and traditional male roles as "sexist". So, instead of women choosing men who are traditional, they choose what their eyes can see: hot bad boys. Second, they destroy marriage with no-fault divorce, single mother welfare, etc. This gets the biological fathers out of the homes, and away from the daughters, so that the Democrat elites can farm plenty of underage women for their sex-trafficking. Third, they normalize premarital sex in the schools, by having abortion providers come in to teach women all about "sex education". Fourth, they make contraceptives and abortions taxpayer-funded healthcare, so that premarital sex is free. Fifth, they have Hollywood remove every last vestige of normal romantic relationships, marriage and parenting from movies.

Their policies allow them to farm fatherless women who can then be raped, assaulted and abused by powerful men. And then there is a cultural push to shame people with traditional values, so that no one can judge them as morally wrong. In Christianity, each woman is made in the image of God, to know God in a personal relationship. It's the job of Christian men to treat women as sisters, helping them to grow stronger, wiser and holier. But that's not the view of women held by secular leftist men. They believe that the strong have a right to exploit the weak, in order to satisfy their selfish desires. For them, it's survival of the fittest, and life ends at the grave – so have all the fun you can, and who cares who gets hurt?

And the powerful men have female allies. Epstein had women helping him to find his victims. And remember how Hillary Clinton defended her husband from credible accusations of rape and sexual assault, and the feminist left nearly elected her President. Some women willingly assist Democrat men, because they want the help of these powerful men in achieving their own ambitions.

That's the Democrat party in a nutshell. All the other policies that sound so nice, (e.g. – amnesty for millions of low-skilled illegal immigrants, raising the minimum wage, etc.), are just vote-buying schemes to get what they really want: sex-trafficking of underage girls, with abortion on demand (including infanticide) to get them out of trouble if there are any "issues". Issues = unborn babies.

If you really want to understand the true nature of the Democrat party, then look to the leaders. The adulterers, the divorcers, the pedophiles, the rapists, the sex-traffickers, etc. That's their real priority. The rest is just a smokescreen.

Will raising the minimum wage cause job creators to lay off employees?

July 11, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Basic economics: if you raise the price, then people will buy less of it

Right now, all the candidates for President from the Democrat party are competing with one another to see who can buy the most votes using taxpayer money. One popular Democrat policy to buy votes is to raise the minimum wage. Democrats reason that minimum wage increases are great, because workers will have more money to buy stuff. What could go wrong?

Well, I want to talk about this policy from a theoretical point of view, then give an example of how it works in practice.

Abstract from a National Bureau of Economic Research study:

> We estimate the minimum wage's effects on low-skilled workers' employment and income trajectories. Our approach exploits two dimensions of the data we analyze. First, we compare workers in states that were bound by recent increases in the federal minimum wage to workers in states that were not. Second, we use 12 months of baseline data to divide low-skilled workers into a "target" group, whose baseline wage rates were directly affected, and a "within-state control" group with slightly higher baseline wage rates. **Over three subsequent years, we find that binding minimum wage increases had significant, negative effects on the employment and income growth of targeted workers**.
>
> […]Over the late 2000s, the average effective minimum wage rose by 30 percent

> across the United States. **We estimate that these minimum wage increases reduced the national employment-to-population ratio by 0.7 percentage point.**

That comes out to 1.4 million workers who lost their jobs, thanks to minimum wage mandates.

Why does it hurt young and unskilled workers most? Because those workers don't produce as much as older, more experienced workers. So, if all the salaries go up, employers keep the most experienced employees and lay off the youngest, and least experienced employees. This is why the youth unemployment rates of socialist countries in Europe are so much higher than the overall unemployment rate. And just to be clear, minorities are disproportionately harmed by minimum wage laws, since they are the ones who are often trying to move up through those entry-level jobs.

Here's an example of how this works in reality, from San Francisco, a Democrat-run city.

ABC News reports:

> San Francisco's minimum wage is currently $11.05 an hour. By July of 2018, the minimum wage in San Francisco will be $15 an hour. That increase is forcing Borderlands Bookstore to write its last chapter now.
>
> […]Borderlands was turning a small profit, about $3,000 last year. Then voters approved a hike in the minimum wage, a gradual rise from $10.75 up to $15 an hour.
>
> "And by 2018 we'll be losing about $25,000 a year," he said.
>
> It's an unexpected plot twist for loyal customers.
>
> **"You know, I voted for the measure as well, the minimum wage measure," customer Edward Vallecillo said. "It's not something that I thought would affect certain specific small businesses. I feel sad."**

That was in 2018, but strangely enough, Democrat voters haven't learned their lesson. They still think you can vote people more money, and not ask where the money is coming from.

Shawn sent me this story about Seattle, another Democrat-run city.

Excerpt:

> Restaurants Unlimited, a Seattle-based chain with restaurant locations in 47 US cities, announced on Sunday it was seeking Chapter 11 protection, citing "progressive" wage laws.
>
> The company, which has operated since the Lyndon Johnson Administration, said rising labor costs—part of a national trend of government-mandated minimum increases—were part of its decision.
>
> "Over the past three years, the company's profitability has been significantly impacted by progressive wage laws along the Pacific coast that have increased

> the minimum wage," Chief Restructuring Officer David Bagley said in court filings, The Seattle Times reports. "As a large employer in the Seattle metro market, for instance, the company was one of the first in the market to be forced to institute wage hikes."
>
> […]BLS data show that New York City experienced its sharpest decline in restaurant jobs since 9/11 following its passage of a $15 minimum wage law. In California, a local newspaper recently detailed how an entire business district virtually disappeared following the city's aggressive minimum wage push.
>
> Restaurants Unlimited's announcement came a day before the Congressional Budget Office released a report estimating that a House bill designed to raise the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour would cost 1.3 million jobs.

Now, you might say to me "But Wintery, Democrats are the party of the little guy, why would they vote for something that would leave workers unemployed?" And there are two answers to that. First, Americans who work for a living tend to not look to the government for support. Second, Americans who work for a living tend to dislike when their taxes are raised to pay for people who aren't working. Democrats are the party of higher taxes and bigger government. They always oppose letting people keep what they earn, and they always want the government to take free market solutions to health care, etc. so they can use the provision of health care to buy votes. So for them, kicking 1.3 million people out of work is a benefit.

When it comes to economics, we know what works. Trump cut taxes, and unemployment for all races is at a record low. If you want to reverse that, and have more people unemployed, living off taxpayer's, then vote for Democrats.

Can a man marry a woman who thinks that all male leadership is “sexist”?

July 12, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These days, many people of both sexes graduate college with a lot of student loan debt and no marketable skills at all. What do they learn? Well, they don’t learn anything, but they are brainwashed to believe in secular leftist dogma. And they’re also brainwashed to dismiss all opposition to secular leftist dogma by labeling it as “sexist”, “racist”, “homophobic”, “xenophobic”, etc.

I wrote previously about how men don’t like to marry non-virgins. I argued that women with a lot of sexual experience have proven that they prefer men who have “no-commitment” abilities. And those women also avoid men who have commitment abilities. I argued that if a man marries a woman with a lot of experience of giving no-commitment men sex, then she probably wouldn’t respect and admire his marriage-oriented skills enough to let him lead the home.

I believe that the brainwashing that women get when they do non-STEM degrees in liberal arts programs in college is the cause of their resistance to the leadership of marriage-minded men.

How does a marriage happen? Basically, a marriage-minded man prepares himself for marriage by denying himself “fun” in order to position himself to be a husband and father. He studies hard STEM subjects in order to get good jobs. His resume is gap-free. He started working early, and didn’t take summers off. He saves his money. He understands beliefs that are incompatible with marriage, such as pro-abortion, pro-divorce, etc. and he is able to argue against them. When he meets a woman, he presents his preparations to her, and tries to get her to focus on behaviors that will put her on a path to becoming a wife and mother. If she follows his lead, then she becomes safe for him to marry. He is able to see how she listens to his marriage plan, and adjusts her behavior in order to help him to execute the plan.

So what does this leadership look like? Well, in my case, I’ve tried to get women to switch from non-STEM to STEM degrees. To quit easy jobs like waitress and teacher and get hard jobs like IT Project Manager or Software Engineer. To stop wasting money on thrill-seeking and instead pay off loans, then invest. To stop watching TV and movies, and start reading good non-fiction books about marriage, parenting, apologetics, economics, etc. And to inform themselves about marriage related topics, e.g. – divorce, infertility, child development, homeschooling, daycare, school choice. Basically, getting them to drop childish anti-marriage and anti-family behaviors, and take up mature pro-marriage and pro-family behaviors, so that they become useful partners for a marriage enterprise.

But what about non-STEM college programs? What does college teach young women about this marriage-focused leadership from marriage-minded men? It depends on what she studies. If she does a STEM degree, she’ll have been forced to be accountable to

reality in her assignments and exams. She'll get a decent job and pay off student loans, allowing her husband to quickly buy her a house and give her children to raise while she's still young. But, if she does a non-STEM degree, then not only will she probably have student loan debt and a useless degree and low-pay jobs, but she'll also have been brainwashed with all sorts of anti-marriage and anti-family beliefs and behaviors. That's because non-STEM programs are nothing more than brainwashing in secular leftist dogma. And I have an example of how this works in real life.

Everything too hard for her to learn or do is "sexist"

In the example below, a male expert on climate science corrects a female journalist about climate science. She dismisses his correction (not shown) as sexism.

Feminist journalist shames science expert as "sexist"
Here is the biography of the male PhD in meteorology:

Ryan Maue is a research meteorologist. He has developed and maintained a popular weather maps and climate data service based on the world's best numerical weather prediction systems. During his graduate studies at Florida State University, he researched extratropical and tropical cyclones, utilizing mesoscale models and large reanalysis datasets, and published multiple peer-reviewed articles. After his PhD in 2010, Maue was awarded a National Research Council postdoctoral associateship at the Naval Research Lab in Monterey, California where he focused on global weather prediction and verification.

And here is the biography of the female journalist with the BA in journalism:

She has a BA in journalism, and knows literally nothing about climate science, and has achieved literally nothing of value in the field of climate science that anyone would be willing to pay her for.

Crying "sexist" is literally everything that her degree in journalism taught her to do. She

has one skill: how to dismiss expertise in reality-based practical disciplines as “sexist”, and therefore inferior to her feelings and intuitions.

Should marriage-minded men marry feminists?

So let’s ask and answer one simple question: should a marriage-minded man marry a woman who dismisses leadership from qualified men as “sexist”?

Let’s review the red flags of secular leftist feminist women:

- she’s pro-abortion, so she thinks murdering an innocent child is how selfish adults escape the consequences of their own reckless actions
- she’s pro-divorce, and will not hesitate for a second to break a commitment that makes her unhappy
- she’s an atheist, so she can’t rationally ground the basic requirements of morality: free will, objective moral laws, etc. and therefore cannot be relied on to behave morally against her own self-interest
- she’s a socialist, so she views money earned by the husband as the property of the secular left government
- she’s a feminist, so she believes sex is recreational, and need not be reserved for a husband and wife in a covenant marriage, and she thinks that newborns should be tossed into daycare then public schools
- she believes in same-sex marriage, so she thinks that children can be deprived of a relationship with their biological mother and/or father, for the benefit of selfish adults
- etc.

Does this sound like she’s ready for a husband and children?

But more than the worldview issues are the practical issues. A woman with a non-STEM degree didn’t want to study subjects that are accountable to reality. She didn’t want to be a pharmacist, a nurse or a software engineer – those jobs would require her to produce work that corresponds to reality, and has value in the real world. People like her who graduate with non-STEM degrees don’t understand anything about how the world really works. They don’t understand economics, so they’re socialists. They can’t be reasoned with, because their views are determined by what makes them feel good, look good to peers, and what gives them maximum autonomy to pursue pleasure with minimum accountability. When secular leftists feminists crash and burn at self-sufficiency, they blame everyone else instead of themselves. All of these character traits make them really difficult to get along with in a marriage.

Can women like this be fixed up for marriage and motherhood? Well, that would require them to be open to marriage-minded men who would be able to lead them towards marriage and motherhood behaviors. But how did Emily respond to leadership from a male with real-world demonstrated ability in a practical area? She called his attempt to lead her “sexist”. And that is the standard response of secular leftist feminist women to

male leadership. If you tell them to study computer science, you're "sexist". If you tell them to stop wasting money, you're "sexist". If you tell them to stop getting drunk, you're "sexist". If you tell them to read a book on economics, you're "sexist". If you tell them to watch a William Lane Craig debate, you're "sexist". If you tell them to eat healthy and lift weights, you're "sexist". If you tell them to get a challenging job, you're "sexist". If you tell them to stop having recreational sex with bad boys, you're "sexist". Every attempt to focus a secular leftist feminist woman on preparing for marriage and motherhood is called "sexist".

If women would only listen to what men ask of them as future wives and future mothers, and build themselves up for wife and mother roles, then women would never struggle to find husbands. No man in his right mind can risk marriage to a secular leftist feminist. There is no "secular leftist feminist" path to marriage. No amount of immodesty and premarital sex from a secular leftist feminist is enough to trick a man into *marrying* her. That might work on some men to get sex, but it's not going to work to get her to marriage and children.

Christian scholar obtains PhD after pro-abortion fascists tried to suppress his research

July 13, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

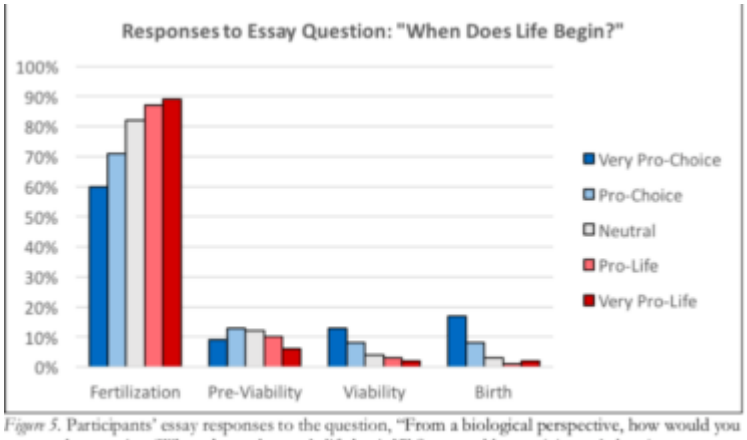

Figure 5. Participants' essay responses to the question, "From a biological perspective, how would you answer the question 'When does a human's life begin?'" Separated by participants' abortion stances.

Survey: when does human life begin?

I've been following a situation at the University of Chicago, where a Christian scholar was researching scientific arguments for when life begins by surveying biologists across the nation. In this post, I want to focus on how biologists responded to being asked scientific questions about when life begins, and also how the University of Chicago tried to stop the scholar's research and block his PhD.

Here;s the summary from The College Fix:

> Steven Jacobs has described some of his time in the academy as "agony."
>
> The University of Chicago PhD spent the last half-decade in a grueling fight to gather and publish research related to the American abortion debate. During that time he was ridiculed, mocked and defamed; accused of committing academic dishonesty, politicizing science and conducting his work with personal bias; compared to the Ku Klux Klan; and in general painted as an unprofessional radical who was, in one academic's words, "not deserving of a PhD degree."
>
> All of this came about simply because Jacobs asked thousands of scientists several questions about when they believe human life begins – questions one respondent referred to as a "trap" and another called "horribly manipulative."
>
> The results of Jacobs' work would eventually reveal a stunning fact about American academia in the field of biology: professors overwhelmingly agree with the pro-life position that human lives begin at conception. Gathering that data, arguing it, and getting it published, however, was a crushing and drawn-out affair.

The overwhelming consensus among these biologists (over 80%) was that life begins at fertilization, exactly as pro-life advocates say. But the vast majority of these biologists were pro-abortion, because they didn't think that murder was morally wrong.

It really was an ordeal, because Jacobs is a white, Christian male. So he had everything against him in the university. You can tell from some of the responses he got how hostile most academic biologists are to Christianity and especially to the pro-life position.

The College Fix has some of the interesting details on the censorship from people at his own university:

> At one point, Jacobs said, an academic specifically instructed him not to speak with *The Fix*, citing several articles it has published about the abortion debate on college campuses. The professor was concerned that any reporting done by *The Fix* on Jacobs' work "could be used by pro-life advocates."
>
> […]Jacobs' advisor told him to halt his data-gathering, though eventually that advisor would defend Jacobs before the school's ethics committee, after which the research was allowed to continue.
>
> […]However, after beginning the survey again, this time in September 2016, "my study was once again canceled within a week." Jacobs' advisor was beleaguered with accusations that he himself "had no integrity for even approving [the] research."
>
> […][W]hen he approached his advisor to restart the study, he was shocked to find that the supervisor had changed his mind about the undertaking.
>
> […]That advisor would eventually step down from supervising Jacobs' work.
>
> […]"I was told that my survey seemed like it was developed by the Ku Klux Klan; I was told that my work could expedite the extinction of the human race; I was told that I should be ashamed of myself since I was damaging the reputation of the University of Chicago," Jacobs said.
>
> […]Eventually, after numerous rejections, Jacobs found a professor willing to serve as a principal investigator over his research. He continued to face relentless pushback from his academic community. At one point there was concern that the ethics committee "would not only stop my data collection, once and for all, but that they could invalidate all of the data I had collected," rendering it useless for study.
>
> Over the next year, while preparing his thesis, Jacobs continued to receive criticism from his former advisor, who claimed that the premise of the research was a "red herring."
>
> "In the days leading up to my defense, he made me remove any mention of that study from my dissertation's abstract, accused me of sounding like a pro-life pundit, and said that he didn't want to have his name on a document that could be cited by pro-life people," Jacobs said.
>
> At Jacobs' dissertation defense, that advisor pushed back against Jacobs' thesis, stating that he was "worried that pro-life people would use my work" and that "it would be a poor representation of the University of Chicago, if that were to happen."

The comments from some of the respondents were interesting, revealing that many people in academia are filled with hate and rage against people they disagree with:

> One respondent to Jacobs' survey "accused me of nefarious intentions and threatened to sabotage my work by telling other biologists to not participate in my study," the scholar said. That professor "ultimately reported me to my school's ethics committee."
>
> […] "Abortion has been legal for over 40 years. It's time for all the religious nuts to get over it," said another.

It's certain that he won't be able to find work in secular academia, because they are very intolerant of a diversity of ideas.

> "I have gotten the sense that this has been talked about a lot," he said. "I've been regularly told I can't get a job in academia. I've been told don't try. I've been told maybe a Christian school would hire me. "

Everyone who works in the secular academy has to agree with the Democrat party, otherwise, they are ejected from academia.

Frank Turek lectures on the case against same-sex marriage

July 14, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker Frank Turek:

> Dr. Frank Turek is a dynamic speaker and award-winning author or coauthor of four books: Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to make their Case, I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, Correct, Not Politically Correct and Legislating Morality. As the President of CrossExamined.org, Frank presents powerful and entertaining evidence for Christianity at churches, high schools and at secular college campuses that often begin hostile to his message. He has also debated several prominent atheists including Christopher Hitchens and David Silverman, president of American Atheists.
>
> Frank hosts an hour-long TV program each week called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist that is broadcast Wednesday nights on DirecTV Channel 378 (the NRB Network). His radio program called CrossExamined with Frank Turek airs on 122 stations every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. eastern and is available continuously on the free CrossExamined App.
>
> A former aviator in the US Navy, Frank has a master's degree from the George Washington University and a doctorate from Southern Evangelical Seminary. He and his wife, Stephanie, are blessed with three grown sons.

Frank Turek is one of my favorite speakers, and I admire him for being willing to take a public stand on controversial issues like gay marriage. He's actually had to pay a price for that in his professional life, and I blogged about that before.

Here's the lecture on gay marriage, featuring Christian apologist Frank Turek.

Outline:

Outline of Frank Turek's lecture on same sex marriage
Introduction:

- how to present your case against marriage safely
- Christians are required to go beyond tolerance
- loving another person can mean opposing the person when they want to do something wrong, even if they hate you
- what did Jesus say about marriage? (see Matt 19:4-6)
- what did Jesus say about sexual morality? (Matt 15, Matt 19)

Summary:

- the same-sex marriage debate is about whether to compel people who disagree with the gay lifestyle to validate and normalize it
- P1: the government has an interest in marriage because it perpetuates and stabilizes society – this is the purpose of marriage
- P2-4: government can take 3 kinds of stances towards behaviors: promote, permit or prohibit
- government promotes behaviors when it has an interest in them
- same-sex relationships should be permitted, but not promoted
- Q1: if same-sex marriage had serious negative consequences, would you reconsider their position?
- Q2: are heterosexual relationships the same as homosexual relationships?
- Q3: what would society be like if everyone married according to the natural marriage definition: one woman, one man, for life?
- Q4: what would society be like if everyone married according to the same-sex marriage definition: man/man and woman/woman?
- Should Christians care about law and politics? or should they just preach the gospel?
- They should care because people often get their cues about what is moral and

immoral based on what is legal and illegal
- Many of the social problems we see today can be traced back to problems with marriage and family
- Children do much better when they have a relationship with their mother and their father
- Same-sex marriage necessarily destroys the relationship between a child and its mother or its father
- When a country embraces same-sex marriage, it reinforces the idea that marriage is not about making and raising children
- same-sex marriage shifts the focus away from the needs of the children to the feelings of desires of the selfish adults
- does homosexuality impose any health and mental health risks?
- what has the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage been in Massachusetts to individuals, schools, businesses and charities?
- how same-sex marriage poses a threat to religious liberty
- how should you respond to the view that homosexuality is genetic?

And at the very end, he shows this short video, which is only 5 minutes and explains the logic of opposing the redefinition of marriage:

My biggest concern is religious liberty, and we are seeing how same-sex marriage has proven to be incompatible with religious liberty. But I also care about children… I want them to have mothers and fathers who put their needs first. Marriage is about a commitment – it is the subjugation of feelings and desires to responsibilities and obligations. It is a promise. A promise to commit to love your spouse and children regardless of feelings and desires. It requires more self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice. Not less.

Is the Big Bang cosmology a theistic or atheistic theory of cosmic origins?

July 15, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Dr. Michael Strauss is a practicing particle physics employed as a professor at University of Oklahoma. He does research in particle physics at CERN, a large hadron collider. It's safe to assume that he knows something about experimental physics.

Here's what he writes about Christians and the Big Bang at his new blog:

> When my children were young, I would often drive to the home of the person babysitting my kids, usually a young teenage girl, pick her up, then drive her back to my house. In the car I would ask questions about her interests or her school. In addition, I would sometimes ask a question that intrigued me since I am a scientist and a Christian, "Do you think the Big Bang is a theistic theory or an atheistic theory?" Now that question is not on most people's list of babysitter interview questions, but I was interested to know their answer even though it would not affect their monetary tip. Every time I asked this question I always got the same answer, that the Big Bang is an atheistic theory. This is just one example of the fact that many kids growing up in an evangelical church environment have the perception that the Big Bang is an idea which removes God as the creator. It seems that many Christians may disdain the Big Bang.
>
> Subsequent conversations with people of all ages have shown me that many individuals (1) don't really understand what the Big Bang is, (2) don't know the scientific evidence for the Big Bang, and (3) don't comprehend the theistic significance of the Big Bang. So let's explore these ideas a little bit.

Here is his overview of the scientific evidence for the Big Bang:

> There are three primary observations that are best explained by the Big Bang. First, the universe is expanding so that it must have had a beginning of expansion in the past. Second, because the universe was once very hot, we can still see the remnants of that heat in the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) radiation. The latest measurements of the CMB spectrum made by the Planck satellite (shown above) agrees almost perfectly with theoretical calculations using the standard Big Bang cosmological model (see the plot at the end of this post). Third, the theory predicts the amount of primordial light elements that should have been created in the first few minutes of the Big Bang, like hydrogen and helium. Again the observations and the theoretical calculations align almost exactly. A few other observations are supported by Big Bang predictions, like the distribution of galaxies and primordial gas. The agreement between what we measure and what is expected from a Big Bang is so remarkable that just about all scientists accept the Big Bang as the origin of our universe, despite its implication that the universe had a beginning.
>
> Does this scientific evidence support theism, or atheism?
>
> Because we don't have any observations that tell us exactly what happened "in the beginning" of our universe, we can only speculate. But let me point out the obvious. All of the observations we do have, and all the theoretical calculations, and even some projective calculations like the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem… give credence to the conclusion that all of the space, time, matter, and energy of this universe had a beginning. **The Big Bang is a misnomer for it is not some kind of explosion since there was nothing that existed to explode. It is the origin of the universe. So if this universe had a beginning, then the cause of the universe can not be a part of the universe. The cause must be transcendent, like the Christian idea of God.** Is the fact that all the evidence points to our universe having a transcendent cause proof for God? No, but it is extremely powerful evidence. If one hundred years ago you had predicted that scientists would obtain unambiguous evidence about the history of the universe for 13.8 billion years, all of its lifetime except the first fraction of a second, and that all of the evidence would point to an actual beginning consistent with a transcendent cause, I don't think anyone would have taken you seriously. But that is exactly what has happened. **Theists could not have outlined a better scenario to support theism. The scientific facts are completely consistent with the statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."**

I know how I account for this scientific discovery in my worldview: a non-physical mind that existed eternally created the physical universe at time t=0. But how do atheists, who can only explain the world by appealing to matter, explain the origin of matter itself?

Here's Oxford University professor of physical chemistry (and atheist) Peter Atkins

explaining how he grounds the Big Bang cosmology:

Easy! Nothing actually exists, according to Peter Atkins.

What about a theoretical physicist, like Lawrence Krauss? Well, he just redefines the nothing that causally preceded the origin of the universe so that it is actually something. Pure speculation, and it goes against the experimental scientific evidence we have. Exactly what you'd expect from a man who wrote a book about "the physics of Star Trek".

Each of us has to come to terms with this scientific evidence. What could have caused the beginning of the universe? It can't be matter, because this was the beginning of all the matter in the universe. It has to be a *mind.*

Although most theists have no problem with this scientific evidence, atheists really hate it. When I tell them about this evidence, they tell me that in a few years or decades, all the evidence for a beginning we have now will have gone away. "How do you know that?" I ask. We have faith" they reply. I don't think anyone should deny the objective reality we all share just because it's what they want to believe.

Antifa Democrat cites AOC's "concentration camp" rhetoric in domestic terrorism manifesto

July 16, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ICE detention centers are literally mass murdering US citizens

I remember when a Bernie bro who worked for Bernie Sanders' campaign took a gun and shot at Republican legislators who were just playing baseball. It seems like domestic terrorism attacks are being committed by Democrats more and more. Just this past week, one of their Democrat brown shirt fascists committed more violence, and even cited AOC's rhetoric in his "manifesto".

Here's the latest domestic terrorism committed by Democrats, reported by the Daily Wire:

> According to a local report, a man that authorities say attacked an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facility in Tacoma, Washington over the weekend repeatedly used the same "concentration camp" rhetoric which socialist Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) injected into U.S. politics last month, in a manifesto that he allegedly wrote.
>
> The attacker, whom The Daily Wire is not naming, identified himself as part of the far-left extremist group Antifa in the document, according to CBS-affiliate KIRO-7. The attacker "was armed with a rifle and incendiary devices that he was tossing at the Northwest Detention Center early Saturday morning."
>
> KIRO-7 adds: "Friends say he did make a statement in this manifesto he sent to them Friday night. In it he says, 'i regret that i will miss the rest of the revolution,' he wrote, 'doing what i can to help defend my precious and wondrous people is an experience too rich to describe. i am antifa.'"
>
> KIRO-7's report included a link to the manifesto, where the attacker used the term "concentration camps" four times and referred to them as being "corporate for profit."
>
> Ocasio-Cortez injected the rhetoric into the national political discussion last month after she made the dubious claim during an Instagram live video.

What did AOC think about this domestic terrorist?

AOC: If you support the detention of illegal immigrants, then you're Hitler

The Daily Wire reports on her reaction to the terrorist attack:

> After an attempted terror attack by a self-identified far-left Antifa member against an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facility in Tacoma, Washington on Saturday, a reporter from Rebel Media asked freshmen Democrats if they would condemn the attack, Antifa violence, and violence in general. Unsurprisingly, "fresh face" lawmakers, namely Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), and Ilhan Omar (D-MN), refused to utter such a simple condemnation.
>
> Omar, amazingly, apparently thought the questioning was funny, laughing when she was asked about the far-left violence.
>
> "Will you condemn Antifa?" the Rebel's Keean Bexte asked Ocasio-Cortez and Omar. "Do you feel like you have any sort of responsibility for their actions?"
>
> […]Omar, stone-faced, again refused to answer.
>
> "Do you feel like you bear any responsibility for what happened?" the reporter continued. "Ms. Cortez, do you feel responsible at all?"
>
> Directing his attention to both representatives, Bexte against asked: "Will you tell Americans not to be violent anymore?"
>
> This is when Rep. Omar, holding her Starbucks drink, is seen and heard laughing on video.

It's not just AOC who is apparently inspiring domestic terrorists. Consider this story from the Washington Free Beacon:

> Democratic freshman Rep. Ilhan Omar (D., Minn.) has been holding a series of

> secret fundraisers with groups that have been tied to the support of terrorism, appearances that have been closed to the press and hidden from public view.
>
> The content of these speeches, given to predominately Muslim audiences, remains unknown, prompting some of Omar's critics to express concern about the type of rhetoric she is using before these paying audiences, particularly in light of the lawmaker's repeated use of anti-Semitic tropes in public.
>
> Omar recently spoke in Florida at a private event hosted by Islamic Relief, a charity organization long said to have deep ties to groups that advocate terrorism against Israel. Over the weekend, she will appear at another private event in California that is hosted by CAIR-CA PAC, a political action committee affiliated with the Council on American Islamic Relations, or CAIR a group that was named as an unindicted co-conspirator in a massive terror-funding incident.
>
> Omar's appearance at these closed-door forums is raising eyebrows in the pro-Israel world due to her repeated and unapologetic public use of anti-Semitic stereotypes accusing Jewish people of controlling foreign policy and politics. With Omar's popularity skyrocketing on the anti-Israel left, it appears her rhetoric is translating into fundraising prowess.

So here you have socialists who hate Jews. Where have I seen a political party that championed socialism and anti-Semitism before? Oh yes, in 1930s Germany. And those German socialists also used violence and vandalism to press their socialist anti-Semitic agenda.

I'm concerned, because I think that socialists like AOC and Omar and Tlaib represent the future of the Democrat party. They're wildly popular with young Democrats. Young Democrats agree with them on eliminating private health insurance, eliminating gasoline-powered cars, capitulating to radical terrorists in the Middle East, persecuting Christians who dissent from the LGBT agenda, and subsidizing infanticide with taxpayer dollars. I think this violence-inducing rhetoric is the future of the Democrat party. There is no tolerance for American ideals on the secular left.

How often are accusations of rape or sexual assault false?

July 17, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should we "automatically believe rape claims" like Jackie's UVA rape claim?

The purpose of this post is to make the case that claims of rape and sexual assault should be made to the police, investigated by the police, and then proceed to trial. We should not punish men for charges that are made outside of the criminal justice system. Let's take a look at some previous cases and studies to see why not.

Here's one reported by the far-left Newsweek:

> *Rolling Stone*'s disastrous and discredited campus rape story now has a price tag.
>
> The magazine has settled a defamation lawsuit filed by the University of Virginia fraternity at the center of the 2014 blockbuster feature by Sabrina Erdely, which was retracted after key details in the story were called into question. According to reports, *Rolling Stone* will pay a settlement amounting to $1.65 million.
>
> The article, which was published in late fall 2014, described an alleged brutal gang rape of a student named "Jackie" at a UVA fraternity. The story drew wide attention and triggered a police investigation, but it was officially retracted in April 2015 after Jackie's claims were called into question.

Why did she lie?

The Washington Examiner reports:

> Documents have shown that Jackie likely made up the gang rape to try and win the affection of fellow student Ryan Duffin. She had tried other lies to get his

> sympathy, including pretending to have a terminal illness. When that didn't work, she tried to make him jealous by inventing an attractive man who would constantly say she had a crush on someone else and he didn't understand why.
>
> When that didn't work, she went on a fake date with the fake man, and then claimed she had been gang raped. That didn't win his affection either, and the two eventually stopped talking.

She lied, because she wanted to get affection and sympathy from a boy she liked.

Here's another featuring a student at Hofstra University, reported by the NY Post:

> The Hofstra freshman who had a raunchy restroom romp and then cried rape made up the twisted tale because she didn't want her schoolmates — particularly her new boyfriend — to think she was easy, the beau told The Post yesterday.
>
> "I think she needs a psychologist. She probably felt like, 'They'll think I'm a slut,' " her boyfriend, who asked not to be identified, told The Post.
>
> Danmell Ndonye, 18, who had accused five men of gang rape, admitted the truth only when prosecutors confronted her after learning of a cellphone video that captured the whole sordid episode and showed she had willingly participated, officials said.

She lied because she didn't want her boyfriend (and others) to think that she was a slut.

Although she made a false rape accusation, she never received any jail time. In fact, she was never even charged.

Another, reported by the Associated Press:

> Nikki Yovino, 20, of South Setauket, New York, was sentenced Thursday in Bridgeport Superior Court. She agreed to serve the jail time when she pleaded guilty in June, just before jury selection was to begin, to misdemeanor charges of falsely reporting an incident and interfering with police.
>
> Yovino was attending Sacred Heart University in Fairfield when she reported being raped by two school football players at an off-campus party in Bridgeport in October 2016. But police said she later admitted making up the allegations so she wouldn't ruin a relationship with another student.
>
> […]Both players remained unidentified until Thursday, when Malik St. Hilaire came forward to speak at the sentencing and confront Yovino. The Connecticut Post reported Yovino rolled her eyes and smirked as St. Hilaire talked about how the allegations affected his life.

She lied, because she didn't want to ruin a relationship with her boyfriend. And of course there are cases where the woman just wants to get revenge on men for sex she consented to, but that later made her feel bad, as in the Duke University lacrosse case. False accusations of rape or sexual assault are used by people to get attention and sympathy, or to get an alibi when they've done something wrong, etc.

Clearly, there are cases where people lie about rape and sexual assault. That's why we need to get the police involved, and not punish anyone except in the ordinary way that laws and courts punish. Let's take a look at some studies to see how often false charges are made.

What do the studies show?

A Fox News article from a prominent equity feminist, Wendy McElroy cites several studies, here's one:

> […][The] study conducted by Eugene J. Kanin of Purdue University… examined 109 rape complaints registered in a Midwestern city from 1978 to 1987.
>
> Of these, 45 were ultimately classified by the police as "false." Also based on police records, Kanin determined that 50 percent of the rapes reported at two major universities were "false."
>
> […][E]ven a skeptic like me must credit a DNA exclusion rate of 20 percent that remained constant over several years when conducted by FBI labs. This is especially true when 20 percent more were found to be questionable.
>
> False accusations are not rare. They are common.

So, there's only a 41 percent conviction rate. DNA testing exonerates 20% of men, and makes the guilt another 20% of men "questionable". A total of 59 percent of cases didn't result in a conviction.

In false rape cases, men can spend years in jail, until the women finally admits she made the whole thing up. There are campus cases where only the accused's witnesses are consulted, only evidence confirming guilt is considered, the charges and evidence are hidden from the accused, the accused is denied legal representation, the accused is denied cross-examined of the accuser, etc.

A double standard

So, that's how men accused of sexual assault and rape are treated, but what about women?

Consider this case where a female teacher got zero jail time for sexually assaulting an underage male student. Or this case from the UK where a married mother of two was convicted of producing child pornography, but also received no jail time. It's not just that men are being denied due process when they are accused of something. It's that women ARE NOT being punished when they ARE found guilty of something. There just seems to be a widespread view that women are never responsible for their bad choices, and that men are always to blame for everything. What are women learning from this about how they should treat men in their own lives? Should we expect men to have friendships with women and pursue relationships with women in this cultural climate?

Legal immigrant businesswoman from Jamaica announces challenge to AOC

July 18, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scherie Murray for Congress, Republican – NY

My favorite people in the world are non-white legal immigrants from socialist countries who embrace America, and attack socialism. The Democrat party has been taken over by America-haters who want to turn America into a third-world socialist dictatorship. But they face challenges from conservatives who came to America legally, and who are thankful for liberty, prosperity and security.

Here's a news story from Daily Wire about a New York Republican woman who immigrated legally from Jamaica. She is challenging AOC and socialism. She has achieved far more success in business and economics than AOC.

Excerpt:

> Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) is not going to go unchallenged in 2020, with a growing number of Republicans having announced their candidacy in recent days, including one who would meet the freshman Democrat's qualifications for being a member of "The Squad" — except for the whole "radical socialist" part, that is.
>
> "I'm a Jamaican immigrant. And I love America. Not the America radical socialists want to see, but the America that is a land of opportunity for all. That's what I'm fighting for," New York businesswoman Scherie Murray, 38, declared in a series of social media posts Wednesday announcing her candidacy for the Republican nomination in Ocasio-Cortez's district (tweets below).
>
> In her campaign launch, Murray has made clear that she's not going to pull any punches on her potential opponent. "There's a crisis in Queens and it's called AOC," Murray said in a tweet she's pinned to the top of her page. "She isn't worried about us — she's worried about being famous. That's why I'm running for Congress."
>
> "You deserve someone who will fight for you, not fight for the limelight. Someone

> who will build bridges, not burn them down," said Murray in a post presenting her official 2020 announcement video. "Lawmakers should be working together to build a stronger, safer, more prosperous America, but your representative in Washington chooses self-promotion over service, conflict over constituents, resistance over assistance," Murray says in the video.
>
> "Queens and the Bronx need someone who will create jobs instead of turning them away," Murray says in reference to Ocasio-Cortez's opposition to the Amazon HQ2 deal, which would have brought 25,000 jobs to her district and nearly $30 billion in tax revenues to the state.
>
> In an interview with Fox News Wednesday, Murray elaborated on her opposition to Ocasio-Cortez, stressing her "job-killing Green New Deal" and "killing the Amazon New York deal" as some of the reasons she believes the congresswoman needs to be unseated. She also takes aim at the Democrats' "Mediare-for-All" as something that will ultimately destroy quality health insurance in the U.S.

Here's her announcement video:

And one of her tweets says this:

I'm a Jamaican immigrant. And I love America. Not the America radical socialists want to see, but the America that is a land of opportunity for all. That's what I'm fighting for.

Six thousand retweets and 21 thousand likes for that tweet.

She loves America! And I hope that she beats AOC in the next election. The primaries will be held on June 23rd, 2020. I'm looking forward to seeing her win, and then debate AOC on business and economics. It will be a contest between an entrepreneur with an actual resume against a bartender / waitress who was born with a silver spoon in her mouth, and failed to achieve anything in the free market.

By the way, did you see this video showing how the new fresh faces of the Democrat party refused to condemn a terrorist attack committed by a far-left Democrat party terrorist?

I blogged previously about how the terrorist had cited AOC's "concentration camp" rhetoric in his manifesto. It really makes me concerned that people who don't think that terrorism is wrong have taken over the Democrat party. Who voted for these people?

Twitter bans free speech activist after she responds to hate speech from transgender activist

July 19, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J3551c4 Y4n1v

Remember L1nd54y 5h3ph3rd, the Canadian graduate student who was sanctioned by her university for showing a video clip that presented both sides of the transgender debate? Well, a transgender activist tweeted hateful comments at her about her womb and her pregnancy, and when she replied, Twitter decided to permanently ban her from their platform, with no appeal.

Here's the story from the famous Canadian blog The Post Millennial:

> One of Canada's most outspoken free speech advocates, L1nd54y 5h3ph3rd, has been permanently suspended from Twitter. The suspension comes after a jousting match with a notorious trans woman named JY who has been accused of predatory behaviour toward children and making frivolous human rights complaints.
>
> *The Post Millennial* reached out to 5h3ph3rd who said, "I got suspended for two tweets (although they didn't tell me exactly which tweets were the problem so I am giving my best guess): last night, JY tweeted that I have a loose vagina from pushing a 10 pound baby out, but JY still has a "tight pussy" (in reality, JY still has male genitalia according to the proceedings of the current human rights tribunals he's been testifying in; and in reality I had a C-section and a 6 pound 10 oz baby)."

> "I replied that this is something a man who has no functional romantic relationships with women would say, but that, I guess that describes him pretty well. Then, Y4n1v mocked a reproductive abnormality I have (a septate uterus), and so I replied saying 'at least I have a uterus, you fat ugly man.' I thought, 'I can't allow him to make these misogynistic remarks about me and not fight back.' I deleted the comments I made this morning but found out was suspended in the afternoon."

After making the hate-filled, anti-woman comments and getting the response, Y4n1v took the response to Twitter and demanded that L1nd54y should be banned. Twitter complied. A straight woman is further down on the intersectionality totem pole than a transgender woman, so the straight woman loses her rights to free speech.

By the way, here is a short 5-minute of L1nd54y 5h3ph3rd explaining what Twitter did to her:

You might also have heard about a progressive feminist named M38h4n Murphy, who was also banned from Twitter because of complaints by Y4n1v. Twitter banned her, despite her impeccable progressive feminist credentials.

More about Y4n1v:

> According to Y4n1v, estheticians should be obliged to provide waxing services to a female-identifying trans person and religious and cultural views should not interfere with the ability to access that service.
>
> "The people that discriminated against me are forcing their beliefs on society," said Y4n1v.
>
> While Y4n1v disregards the cultural or religious beliefs of the esthetician, she is making the ballsy argument that people should be forced to wax clients with male genitalia if they self-identify as a woman.
>
> To wax a client's penis, an individual must handle the scrotum and the shaft of the penis.
>
> Individuals with a penis can get erections during the process, some even leak a small amount of pre-ejaculate.
>
> While the thought of forcing anyone to handle a sexual organ as a mandatory part of their non-medical job sounds insane, especially when you consider the potential for predatory behaviour, the Human Rights Tribunal actually seems to be taking it very seriously instead of treating it as an absurd farce.
>
> […]Should J3551c4 win, women working out of their homes who provide waxing services to women will be told that they will have to handle a penis against their will in the province of B.C

The story has even been picked up in one of Canada's national newspapers. The specific details of the trial cannot be reported, because the British Columbia courts slapped a publication ban on the trial, so that no one would find out how the government of Canada

essentially forces ordinary women into prostitution at gunpoint, if an LGBT activist requests it.

Y4n1v has 16 open lawsuits against women who declined to perform genital waxes on Y4n1v. But that's the sort of person who has the full support of the government in Canada. No one in the courts or the government is capable of making rational moral decisions, because the country has long since abandoned Judeo-Christian moral values, and the framework of beliefs that made those moral values binding. You can't just start with Judeo-Christian moral values, take out God, and have the thing hold together. And now even people on the left are starting to realize that concepts like "justice" and "fairness" don't exist in a vacuum.

This really happened. And if we aren't careful how we vote, it could easily happen here. There is no doubt in my mind that if the Democrats occupied the House, Senate and Presidency, then this sort of thing would happen here.

By the way, it's not just Twitter that bans disagreement with transgenderism. The popular blogging platform WordPress also does, despite presenting themselves as champions of free speech.

Something completely unrelated

I saw this interesting story in the UK Daily Mail, and I just thought I'd put it into this post as a sort of random, unrelated story:

> Describing the stabbing, prosecution barrister Richard Atkins QC said: 'CCTV captured what can only be described as a frenzied attack.
>
> 'She lunged and attacked him about the head and neck area using both knives, making repeated attempts to stab him.'
>
> Mr Knibbs was caught 'completely off-guard', with the 52-year-old recalling the sight of his own blood.
>
> Mr Atkins said: 'He was aware of blood pumping out of his neck and could see it on the wall behind him.'
>
> Despite being stabbed in the throat, in a blow which nicked both his carotid artery and jugular vein, Mr Knibbs managed to grab both J35k4's wrists while shocked colleagues rushed to his aid.
>
> In the melee, two other men – Tim Begley and Kevan Taylor – were injured as J35k4 resisted, before half a dozen workers managed to pin her to the ground until police arrived.
>
> […][Knibbs] had also suffered a stroke during the assault, resulting in partial permanent sight-loss.
>
> […]Prosecutor Mr Atkins said that J35k4 told a psychiatrist after the incident that 'she fantasised about going to the Alexander Stadium and killing all of the staff'.

This isn't the first time something like that has happened, either. I blogged about another

case of violence previously, as well as a case of a faked hate crime.

Why are so many women with good careers being forced to freeze their eggs?

July 20, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this woman choosing a path that leads to marriage?

The New York Times says that more and more women are having to freeze their eggs because they can't find good men to marry. The NYT doesn't think that women are doing anything wrong. They blame the men for refusing to commit. According to feminism, women who value careers, abortion rights, no-fault divorce, big government, high taxes, etc. are doing everything right. But does it work?

I thought it might be a good idea to help Western women to make better decisions with men and marriage. Although setting out boundaries seems harsh and restrictive, it's actually protective and loving. If we want women to get to a stable marriage and children, (what they really need long term, after they lose their looks and youth), then we should be bold about leading them.

The first thing to point out is that the women celebrated by the New York Times are intentionally delaying marriage for their education and careers.

Another New York Times article explains:

> It could be that the new generation of millennial women is delaying having children even longer than the women who came before them, as prime childbearing years are also critical years for advancing in a career. A recent study shows that the marital pay gap that springs up after a first child is born typically does not close if the birth happens between age 25 and 35.

> Shannon Hettinger, a 32-year-old from Washington, D.C., said she definitely wanted children. She grew up in a large family in a small town in Pennsylvania and almost all her high school friends are married with children. But she moved to Washington, and spent her 20s deciding on a career. Now that she has one she loves — she works in residential real estate sales — she is not going to stop until she gets established. That means not having children for a while.
>
> "I just want to build my book of business and see where I can go from here," she said. "My whole focus is career growth. That's my No. 1 priority."
>
> "Once I achieve a certain level of success," she added, "then I'll start thinking about a family."
>
> Ivy Gray-Klein, 26, who lives in Philadelphia and works at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, said she was open to having children but cannot imagine doing so until she is 30 or 35. She wants to feel settled in her own life first. Now she has three roommates, is paying down her student loans and is working to build a little bit of savings.
>
> "I'm just really trying to get myself to a place that is solid," she said by phone. "Having a child right now would be so destabilizing. Children just seem like such an enormous financial undertaking."

As far as I'm concerned, once a woman reaches 30 , she's actually chosen not to marry, and not to have children. Marriage is something that men are willing to do with women in their early 20s. They want a woman to commit and invest herself in his life early. They don't commit to a woman who has spent her 20s running up debts, traveling, being promiscuous, etc. The pattern of selfish behavior that women get into damages their ability to be good wives and mothers later. And men know that.

But in this post, I'm discuss something that I think is responsible for women not finding good men: and that's the fact that many women *are not looking for good men*. In fact, some women are very attracted to very bad men.

Here's the first editorial about women and domestic terrorist Dzhokar Tsarnaev, one of the Boston marathon bombers.

Excerpt:

> Mostly, though, they think Dzhokhar is cute. The Bambi eyes (looking right out of his Instagram-doctored photos at you!), the hipster facial stubble, the masses of wine-dark tousled hair — adorable! Impassioned believers have written "Dzhokhar is innocent" on their hands and plastered "Innocent until proven guilty!!!!" posters around their towns. An 18-year-old waitress interviewed by the New York Post vowed to have Dzhokhar's last tweet before the bombing tattooed onto her arm: "If you have the knowledge and the inspiration all that's left is to take action."
>
> […]But the real cause of the Jahar craze more likely lies in something more primal and less pretty in the female psyche. I'm betting that women, young and

> old, are drawn to Dzhokhar not because he is a good-looking late adolescent but because he is a good-looking accused killer. He's a classic "bad boy" of the sort to whom women are chronically attracted because they want to reform them, or minister to their wounds, or be the healing presence they've never had — but mostly because they find them sexy.

That article also noted:

> It's not surprising, then, that every homicide perp on death row who is reasonably attractive has groupies. Consider the handsome (and widely philandering) Scott Peterson, sentenced in 2005 for killing his wife and unborn son and throwing their remains into San Francisco Bay. The day he checked into San Quentin, he received three dozen phone calls from smitten women, including an 18-year-old who wanted to become the second Mrs. Peterson.

Some of the tweets and other fangirl comments about Tsarnaev were collected in this New York Post article.

Lots of Western women from the UK, France, Russia, etc. all picked up and moved to the Middle East to become ISIS jihadi brides.

Excerpt:

> Western women joining Islamic State are increasingly from comfortable backgrounds and often well educated with romantic notions of adventure often quickly dispelled by the harshness of life as a "Jihadi bride", according to a British research report.
>
> Some 550 women from Western countries have left their homelands to join Islamic State, which has captured swathes of Syria and Iraq, said the report by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation at King's College, London.
>
> […]It said female recruits were increasingly younger, some from comfortable backgrounds and often well-educated, and were playing "crucial" propaganda and recruitment roles.

That article is three years old, the numbers have more than doubled since then. The most common reasons cited for leaving are romance and adventure.

Psychology Today has some comments about why some women do this:

> In her post, "Women Who Love Serial Killers," PT blogger, Katherine Ramsland, offers some suggestions about why some women can be so attracted to, or hopelessly beguiled by, the most terrifying of human predators. At first, she provides explanations from the women themselves, women who actually married these dangerously unhinged criminals. Their reasons (somewhat elaborated here) include the assumptions that:

- their love can transform the convict: from cunning and cruel, to caring, concerned, and compassionate.
- there's a wounded child nested somewhere inside the killer that can be healed through a devoted nurturance that only they can provide.
- they might share the killer's media spotlight, and so triumphantly emerge from their anonymity, and maybe in the process even land a book or movie deal (an aspiration about as cynical as it is narcissisticand self-serving).

And this is even more interesting:

> To simplify this work's findings for my present purpose, however, let me begin by emphasizing that Ogas and Gaddam find substantial evidence from Web searches, posts, and many 1,000s of romance novels that women demonstrate a strong erotic preference for dominant men. Or toward what's now commonly referred to as alpha males—in the authors' words, men who are "strong, confident, [and] swaggering [as in "cocky," and the pun is intended]." Unfortunately, what these descriptors often imply is behavior sufficiently bearish, self-centered, and insensitive as to often cross the line into a physical, mental, and emotional abuse that can be downright brutal.
>
> […]Moreover, in responding to the question as to whether some men, such as "serial killers, violent offenders, and rapists," might be too dominant for women to accept, Ogas and Gaddam note: "It turns out that killing people is an effective way to elicit the attention of many women: virtually every serial killer, including Ted Bundy, Charles Manson, and David Berkowitz, have received love letters from large numbers of female fans" (p. 98).

Women choose good-looking bad boys, because they think that they can change them:

> The fantasy that seems to be operating in such devotees, and that constitutes the plot of virtually all erotic/romantic novels written with women in mind, is that the "misogyny and jerkdom" they might have to battle with in such super-dominant males is only temporary. That it doesn't really represent the man's innermost reality. That his violence and lack of tender feelings is only the beginning of the story, and that their unsparing love, affection, and dedication can ultimately transform his character by helping him get in touch with his, well, "inner goo."

I blogged before about feminists going after pro-choice bad boys like William Clinton, Peter Strzok, Eliot Spitzer, Anthony Weiner, John Edwards, Harvey Weinstein, etc. These men support selfish policies like abortion and no-fault divorce. Women seem to not understand that men who support selfishness as policy might actually BE selfish in their own lives. Men who are able to commit and raise children are not pro-abortion and pro-divorce. Those are the men who women should be pursuing, and during their early-to-mid

20s.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

July 21, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!
Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change

> his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

J.P. Moreland asks: does truth matter when choosing a religion?

July 22, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

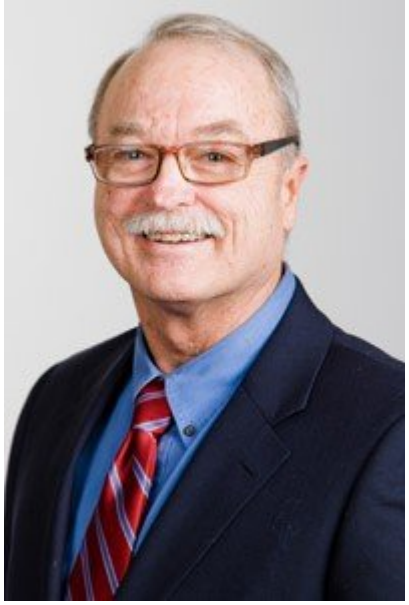

Dr. J.P. Moreland

This lecture contains Moreland's famous "Wonmug" illustration. Ah, memories! If you don't know who Wonmug is, you can find out in this lecture.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Is it intolerant to think that one religion is true?
- Is it more important to be loving and accepting of people regardless of worldview?
- How should Christians approach the question of religious pluralism?
- How does a person choose a religion anyway?
- Who is Wonmug, and would you like to be like Wonmug?
- Is it enough that a belief "works for you", or do you want to believe the truth?
- Can all the religions in the world be true?
- Is it wise to pick and choose what you like from all the different religions?
- Is it possible to investigate which religion is true? How?
- Which religions are testable for being true or false?
- How you can test Christianity historically (very brief)

I'm posting this, because I've noticed that there's an awful lot of cultural Christianity in red states. Basically, if you ask someone if they are a Christian, and they say yes, they don't usually mean that they think it's true and that they've investigated whether it's true. They usually just mean that they like it, or it makes them feel good, or that's how they were raised, etc. My worry about this is that if Christianity isn't adopted because it's true, then no one is going to do any work or self-sacrifice for it. And I think that

Christianity won’t survive the challenges of the secular culture if parents and pastors don’t understand that Christianity will require work, if it’s going to be presented to people as TRUE in a persuasive way.

Why is truth important? People are willing to invest in projects self-sacrificially if they think that they are involved in something true. So, you might enroll in a chemistry program in college because you expect to come out with true beliefs about chemistry. You’ll do the work and solve the problems because you think that chemistry is real. But if you think that chemistry is just made up nonsense with no use at all, you’re probably not going to work at it and sacrifice for it. You’ll probably just find something else to do with your life that’s easier and more fun. That’s why the truth question is really important.

Apologetics in the gospel of John

July 23, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

John is my favorite gospel, because the thing reads like a well constructed essay. The author makes a number of claims about who Jesus was, and supplies evidence for each claim. There is nothing extraneous to John's thesis, the whole thing that he wrote is designed to make a case.

My friend Eric Chabot wrote a post on his blog on the use of apologetics in the gospel of John. (H/T J. Warner Wallace tweet)

Here is his thesis:

> In this post, I will highlight some of the different ways John utilizes apologetics in his testimony of who Jesus is.

He talks about how God has his messengers use evidence:

> 3.Signs and Miracles
>
> While actions by other prophets such as Ezekiel and Jeremiah etc. show some significant parallels to Jesus, Jesus is closer to the actions of the Jewish sign prophetssuch as Moses. "Signs" have a specific apologetic function in that they are used to provide evidence for people to believe the message of God through a prophet of God. Hence, the signs Moses does proves he is truly sent from God. Moses had struggled with his prophetic call when he said " But they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say 'The Lord did not appear to you.' (Exod. 4:1). God assures Moses that the "signs" will confirm his call:
>
> God says, "I will be with you. And this will be אות *"the sign"* to you that it is I who

> have sent you" (Exod. 3:12).
>
> "If they will not believe you," God said, "or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground." (Exod 4: 8-9).
>
> We see the signs are used to help people believe.
>
> Moses "performed *the "signs" before* the people, and they believed; … they bowed down and worshiped" (Exod. 4:30–31)

So what did Jesus do?

> "Works" are directly related to the miracles of Jesus (Jn. 5:20; 36;10:25; 32-28; 14:10-12; 15:24) and is synonymous with "signs." Interestingly enough, when Jesus speaks of miracles and he calls them "works" he doesn't refer to Exod. 4:1-9, but to Num. 16:28, "Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord." For example:
>
> Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. *The works* that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me" (John 10:25).
>
> If I am not doing *the works* of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe *the works,* that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." (John 10:37-38).
>
> But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, *the very works* that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me (John 5: 36)
>
> **"Sign"(*sēmeion*) is used seventy-seven times (forty-eight times in the Gospels). As far as the "signs' Jesus does, 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 42:18; 61:1). In John's Gospel, Jesus performs three "signs," at the beginning of his ministry; the water turned into wine at Cana at Galilee (2:1-12), the healing of the son of the royal official at Capernaum (4:46-64), and catching of the fish in the sea of Galilee (21:1-14). The link between the first two signs in Jn 2:12 while the link between the last two are seen in Jn 7:1, 3-4, 6, 9. Jesus follows the pattern of Moses in that he reveals himself as the new Moses because Moses also had to perform three "signs" so that he could be recognized by his brothers as truly being sent by God (Exod 4: 1-9). In the exchange between Nicodemus said to Jesus, Nicodemus said, We know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous *signs* you are doing if God were not with him" (John 3:2)**
>
> Also, regarding miracles, in some cases the miracle is a witness against those who reject this evidence. John grieved: "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" (John

> 12:37). One result, though not the purpose, of miracles is condemnation of the unbeliever (cf. John 12:31, 37).

The gospel of John is *so good.* Or is it that Jesus is just so good to not be like some idiot who just says things that no one can test? That would be stupid and annoying – it's much better for Jesus to do these signs so that people could believe him about his identity and purpose. Do you like Jesus? I like Jesus.

I read John a long time ago, when I was about 10 or 11 years old.I can't remember what I thought of it, but it probably had a very good effect on me as far as making me think that Christianity was something that I ought to look into. The gospel of John is that good. Philippians is still my favorite book of the Bible (because it's practical, duh), but John is the best introduction. It's the first thing a non-Christian should read to at least understand what Christianity is all about. Everybody should at least know that!

Why don’t men today talk to women about commitment and marriage?

July 24, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

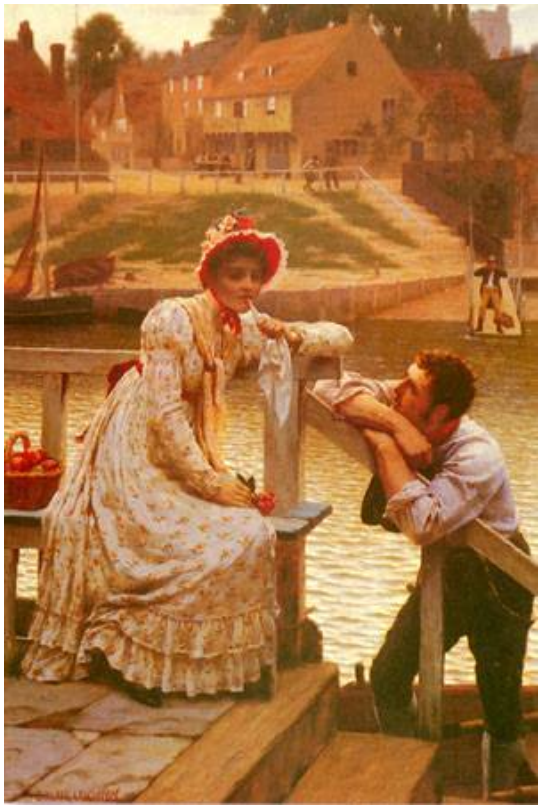

Painting: “Courtship”, by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

I saw this essay from a young woman named Jordana Narin who is explaining how she feels about not being able to talk seriously to a man she chose to have premarital sex with on multiple occasions. She is a radical feminist and has a non-STEM degree in creative writing. The essay was published in the radically leftist New York Times.

First kiss:

> I met [a guy] at summer camp in the Poconos at 14, playing pickup basketball by day and talking in the mess hall late into the night. Back home we lived only 30 minutes apart, but I didn’t see him again until 11th grade, when we ran into each other at a Halloween party in a Lower Manhattan warehouse.
>
> […]Under the muted flashes of a strobe light, we shared our first kiss.

No communication:

> We stayed in touch for the rest of high school, mostly by text message.

> […]Every time his name popped up on my phone, my heart raced.
>
> Still, we were never more than semiaffiliated, two people who spoke and loved to speak and kissed and loved to kiss and connected and were scared of connecting.

Where is this relationship going? This boy has no job and no savings and no proven record of steady work – and therefore he *cannot afford to marry anyone.* Why is she even *talking* to a man who cannot afford to marry her? He is not able to marry her, and handle getting her pregnant.

More:

> Two years after our first kiss, we were exchanging "I've missed you" messages again. It was a brisk Friday evening in our first semesters of college when I stepped off a train and into his comfortable arms.
>
> He had texted weeks earlier on Halloween (technically our anniversary) to ask if I would visit. We had not talked since summer, and I was trying to forget him. We had graduated from high school into the same inexpressive void we first entered in costume, where an "I've missed you" was as emotive as one got.

Long gaps in between text messages – they have nothing to talk about, and there is no purpose to the relationship. This is the man she chose. Nevertheless, they are away from their parents, and so she had sex with him, choosing to lose her virginity to a man she was not married to.

And then:

> Naïvely, I had expected to gain clarity, to finally admit my feelings and ask if he felt the same. But I couldn't confess, couldn't probe. Periodically I opened my mouth to ask: "What are we doing? Who am I to you?" He stopped me with a smile, a wink or a handhold, gestures that persuaded me to shut my mouth or risk jeopardizing what we already had.
>
> On the Saturday-night train back to Manhattan, I cried. Back in my dorm room, buried under the covers so my roommates wouldn't hear, I fell asleep with a wet pillow and puffy eyes.
>
> The next morning I awoke to a string of texts from him: "You get back OK?" "Let's do it again soon :)"

So my question for you is this: should a woman who has recreational sex with a jobless man she barely knows expect to have real relationships, including a marriage relationship?

There's an interview that goes with it on the radically leftist NPR web site, but I saved a copy of the MP3 file here in case it disappears.

In the interview, she says:

> **"Everyone in college uses Tinder," she said, referring to the wildly popular dating and hook-up app. "You can literally swipe right and find someone just to hang out for the night.**

And:

> "**In a different time, my grandparents, my great grandparents, they might have thought they were missing out on casual sex.** But since my generation has been saddled down with that, we kind of look to the past and say well, wasn't that nice. I think both are optimal. **I'm a huge feminist, and I think women should be able to do whatever they want to do. If a woman wants to have tons of casual sex, she totally should.** But I think that there should be the option. And they shouldn't be gendered, women and men. But there should be the option of being in a relationship."

Right. Young women like her accept radical feminism, which basically means that they think that the traditional path to marriage must be avoided, because it's "sexist" and "controlling". Chastity is sexist. Stay at home wife is sexist. Stay at home motherhood is sexist. She believes that women should prioritize recreational sex and career, marry later, and continue her career by placing the children in daycare and public schools. Any attempt by a marriage-minded man to get her to stop drinking, being promiscuous, having a career, and giving the kids to strangers is "sexist" and "controlling". Is radical feminism a path to relationships and marriage?

How should marriage-minded men perceive a woman's past choices to have premarital sex?

Consider this story from the Ottawa Sun about a woman who didn't want to say no to sex right now, but wanted to get married "some day":

> A New York woman is facing charges after police say she lied about being raped by two football players at a party to get sympathy from a prospective love interest.
>
> Nikki Yovino, 18, has been charged with falsely reporting an incident and tampering with or fabricating physical evidence.
>
> Last October Yovino reported that she had been sexually assaulted in a bathroom by two Sacred Heart University football players at an off-campus party.
>
> The men, however, said it had been consensual.
>
> Capt. Brian Fitzgerald tells WABC-TV another student informed authorities of explicit text messages between the three. He says one man also recorded some of the incident on his cellphone.
>
> "She admitted that she made up the allegation of sexual assault against (the football players) because it was the first thing that came to mind and she didn't want to lose (another male student) as a friend and potential boyfriend. She stated that she believed when (the other male student) heard the allegation it would make him angry and sympathetic to her," said an affidavit, according to the New York Post.

Two. Football. Players. ***At the same time.***

She wanted a “relationship” with this other guy. She didn’t see why the “opportunity” to have premarital sex with two no-commitment bad boys at the same time should be rejected. After all, the man who would eventually have a relationship with her and marry her would presumably be OK with her choice. Because her choice was a good sign that she was ready for wife and mother roles.

I think that every single choice by a woman to have premarital sex with a no-commitment man is committing infidelity and adultery against her future husband. It’s a sign that she doesn’t have the self-control to value commitment over fun. She won’t be able to respect her husband as a leader, and be faithful (and sexually available) to him. She doesn’t see sex as a gift for the man who promises to take care of her. She sees sex as something to give to bad men to get validation and entertainment. And if she does marry later, I doubt that she will be as generous sexually with her husband. There is an *epidemic* of sex-withholding these days being committed by women who don’t see the man they took wedding vows with as worth of the energetic sex they freely gave to the no-commitment bad boys in their youth. Women who give bad boys premarital sex don’t see husband and father ability as desirable and worth rewarding.

No man can marry a “huge feminist”

Most men are not interested in committing to, or discussing commitment with, women who put pleasure above self-control. Most non-Christian men will have sex with a hedonistic women, but they won’t commit to them. Why would a man commit to a narcissist? If a man’s role is just to be ruled by the “huge feminist”, then there is no reason to discuss commitment or to commit. Radical feminists believe that relationships are about their plans and their needs. They are not interested in responsibilities, expectations or obligations to men or to children. Most men, even secular men, understand that such women are not suitable for commitment.

Will anyone explain marriage to these women?

Whenever I tell my Christian women mentors about what I am seeing today, they always say that women need to have marriage explained to them. But today, no one has the courage to tell young women that radical feminism is not the path to marriage. Instead, they are taught by parents and pastors to blame and shame men for not marrying them, as if their past decision-making had prepared their character for the roles of wife and mother.

Walter Bradley asks: what is religion really supposed to be about?

July 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

This lecture is based on the book "Truth in Religion" by famous philosopher Mortimer J. Adler. At the time of writing the book, he was not a Christian, but there is still a lot of value in the book for Christians who are trying to understand what religion should really be about.

About the speaker

The speaker is one of my top 3 favorite speakers of all time in Christian apologetics, Dr. Walter Bradley. (The other two are Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Michael Strauss)

Here's a biography:

> Dr. Bradley received his B.S. in Engineering Science and his Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Texas in Austin.
>
> Dr. Bradley taught for eight years at the Colorado School of Mines before assuming a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1976.
>
> During his 24 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Bradley served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and as Director of the Polymer Technology Center, and received five College of Engineering Research Awards. He has received over $4,500,000 in research grants and has published over 140 technical articles and book chapters. He has also co-authored "The Mystery Of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Materials and of the American Scientific Affiliation and serves as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.

You can read more about his recent research on how to use coconuts to make car parts in this article from Science Daily.

The MP3 file is here. (31 minutes + Q&A)

Topics:

- what is pluralism?
- what is multiculturalism?
- what is relativism?
- some propositions are true culturally – just for certain groups in certain times (cultures)
- some proposition are true trans-culturally – true independently of what anyone wants or feels
- Mathematical truth is trans-cultural – it is true regardless of cultural fashions
- Scientific truth is trans-cultural – it is true regardless of cultural fashions
- Some truths are not like this – cooking traditions, clothing traditions and greeting traditions
- These kinds of truths are NOT trans-cultural, they vary by culture
- The question is – is religion true like math and science, or true depending on the culture
- Some people think that your religion depends on where you were born or what your family believes
- Religions make conflicting claims about the way the world really is, so they can't all be true
- And these conflicts are at the core of the religions – who God is, how can we be related to him, etc.
- So if religions convey trans-cultural truth, then either one is true or none are true
- If they are not trying to convey trans-cultural truth, then they are not like math and science
- Let's assume that religion is the same as trans-cultural truth
- How can we know which religion is true? 1) the laws of logic, 2) empirical testing against reality
- Logical consistency is needed to make the first cut – self-contradictory claims cannot be true
- To be true trans-culturally, a proposition must at least NOT break the law of non-contradiction
- According to Mortimer Adler's book, only Christianity, Judaism and Islam are not self-contradictory
- All the others can be excluded on the basis of overt internal contradictions on fundamental questions
- The others that are self-contradictory can be true culturally, but not trans-culturally
- The way to proceed forward is to test the three non-contradictory religions against science and history
- One of these three may be true, or they could all be false
- We can test the three by evaluating their conflicting truth claims about the historical

Jesus
- Famous skeptics have undertaken studies to undermine the historical Jesus presented in the Bible
- Lew Wallace, Simon Greenleaf and Frank Morrison assessed the evidence as atheists and became Christians
- There is a lot of opposition in culture to the idea that one religion might be true
- But if you take the claims of Jesus at face value, he claims to be the unique revelation of God to mankind
- Either he was telling the truth about that, or he was lying, or he was crazy
- So which is it?

Why don't religious people ask if their religion is true?

People seem to be chicken these days about claiming that their religion is true. It's easier to say that my religion is true for me, and your religion is true for you – reduce it to personal preferences. So long as everyone is sincere about what they believe, then that's the most important thing, right?

But it is NOT TRUE that you can believe whatever you want as long as you are sincere – sincerity doesn't mean that you can't be mistaken. I can jump off the top of the Sears Tower and be sincere in my belief that I will float down like a feather, but that doesn't make my belief true. If you want to have a good relationship with God, you have to know things about him, not just have sincere beliefs. You have to know whether he exists and what he is like – *really*. It's not enough to have sincere beliefs that are not actually true.

I think that God's existence and character can be assessed and known based on logic and evidence. I think that God exists independently of whether I want him to or not, and I think that his character and desires are not the same as *my* character and desires. And I don't really care what my neighbors think of my disagreeing with them, my goal is not to keep silent and to just *get along with them* and *be happier in my community*.

God's first commandment to us is not to love our neighbor – that's number two. Number one is to love him. And how can we love him, if we don't want to know him. And how can we love him, if we don't tell people the truth about him when they ask us?

That message is not going to win us a lot of friends, but our job as Christians is to tell how and why God stepped into history. Jesus expects us to be his ambassadors and to carry out the task of evangelism faithfully, and to suffer with him and – if necessary – to be rejected like he was rejected.

Information Enigma: 21-minute video explains intelligent design

July 26, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

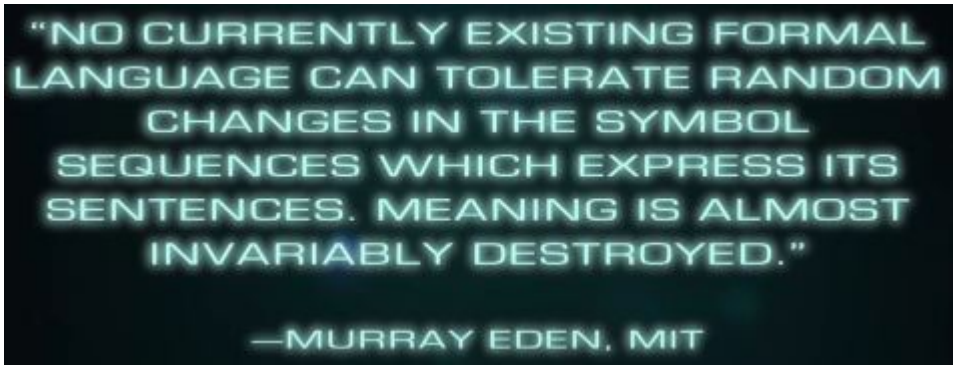

Can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
The video is here:

I have read and listened and watched a lot of material on intelligent design, but I have never seen so much value packed into such a short lecture. I really hope you'll watch this and that it's helpful to you.

Summary:

- the big question when discussing the origin of life: where did the information in living systems come from?
- Until 530 million years ago, the oceans were largely devoid of life
- In a 10 million year period, many new forms of animal life emerged
- New biological forms of life require new information
- the discovery of DNA shows that living systems work because cells have information that allows them to build the components of molecular machines: cell types, proteins, etc.
- can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
- normally, random mutations tend to degrade the functionality of information, e.g. – randomly changing symbols in an applications code does not usually introduce useful new functions, it usually renders what is there non-functional
- the majority of possible sequences will NOT have functions, so random mutations will more likely give you non-functional code, rather than functional code
- example: a bicycle lock with 4 numbers has many possible sequences for the 4 numbers, and only one of them has unlock functionality, the rest have no functionality
- if you have lots of time, then you might be able to guess the combination, but if the lock as has 10 billion numbers, and only one combination that unlocks, you can spend your whole life trying to unlock it and won't succeed
- how likely is it to arrive at a functional protein or gene by chance? Is it more like the 4-dial lock (can be done with lots of time) or the 10 billion dial lock (amount of time

required exceeds the time available)?
- the probability is LOW because there is only one sequence of numbers that has unlock function
- consider a short protein of 150 amino acids has 10 to the 195th power possible sequences
- if many of these sequences of amino acides had biological function, then it might be easier to get to one by random mutation and selection than it is with a lock that only unlocks for ONE sequence
- how many of the possible sequences have biological function?
- Thanks to research done by Douglas Axe, we now know that the number of functional amino acid sequences for even a short protein is incredibly small…
- Axe found that the odds of getting a functional sequence of amino acids that will fold and have biological function is 1 in 10 to the 77th power
- Is that number too improbable to reach by chance? well, there are 10 to 65th atoms in the entire Milky Way galaxy… so yes, this is a very improbable outcome
- can random genetic mutations search through all the sequences in order to find the one in 10 to the 77th power one that has biological function? It depends on how much guessers we have and how many guesses we get in the time available
- even with the entire 3.5 billion year history of life on Earth, only about 10 to the 40th organisms have ever lived, which far smaller fraction of the 10 to the 77th total sequences
- even with a very fast mutation rate, you would not be able to reach a functional protein even with all that time, and even with all those organisms

I was once having a discussion with a woman about the research that Axe did at the Cambridge University lab. He published four articles in the Journal of Molecular Biology. I held out one of the papers to her and showed her the numbers. She said over and over "I hate the Discovery Institute! I hate the Discovery Institute!" Well, yeah, but you can't make the Journal of Molecular Biology go away with hating the Discovery Institute. JMB is peer-reviewed, and this was experimental evidence – not a theory, not a hypothesis.

We have been blessed by the Creator and Designer of the universe in this time and place with *overwhelming evidence* – an abundance of riches. For those who have an open mind, this is what you've been waiting for to make your decision. For the naturalists who struggle so mightily to block out the progress of experimental science, they'll need to shout louder and shut their eyes tighter and push harder to block their ears. Maybe if they keep screaming "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" over and over to themselves, they will be able to ignore the real science a little longer.

The Wintery Knight’s favorite Bible verses

July 27, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Dina asked me to post my favorite Bible verses, so here are 8 of my favorites.

Psalm 27:14:

> [11] Teach me Your way, O Lord,
> And lead me in a level path
> Because of my foes.
>
> [12] Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries,
> For false witnesses have risen against me,
> And such as breathe out violence.
>
> [13] *I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord
> In the land of the living.
>
> **[14] Wait for the Lord;**
> **Be strong and let your heart take courage;**
> **Yes, wait for the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**
>
> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

Matthew 5:13:

> 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
>
> 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
>
> **13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**
>
> 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
>
> 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

2 Timothy 2:4:

> 1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
>
> [2] The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
>
> [3] Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[4] No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.**
>
> [5] Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

Daniel 3:18:

> [13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.
>
> [14] Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?
>
> [15] Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?”
>
> [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we

> do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.
>
> [17] If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire;and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
>
> **[18] But *even* if *He does* not,let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."**

Esther 4:14:

> [10] Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai:
>
> [11] "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days."
>
> [12] They related Esther's words to Mordecai.
>
> [13] Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> **[14] For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"**

Philippians 1:9:

> [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> [4] always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> [5] in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> [6] *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> [7] For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
>
> [8] For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> [10] so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
>
> [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Numbers 13:30:

> [25] When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,
>
> [26] they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.
>
> [27] Thus they told him, and said, “We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.
>
> [28] Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.
>
> [29] Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.”
>
> **[30] Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.”**

If you have a favorite Bible verse or two, post them in the comments.

What do ancient non-Christian sources tell us about the historical Jesus?

July 28, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

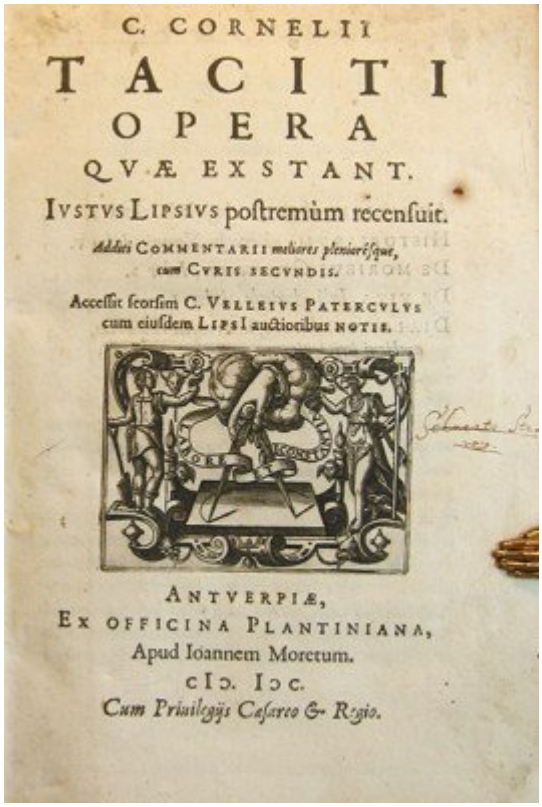
C. CORNELII
TACITI
OPERA
QVÆ EXSTANT.
IVSTVS LIPSIVS postremùm recensuit.
Addit COMMENTARII meliores pleniorésque, cum CVRIS SECVNDIS.
Accessit seorsim C. VELLEIVS PATERCVLVS cum eiusdem LIPSI auctioribus NOTIS.
ANTVERPIÆ,
EX OFFICINA PLANTINIANA,
Apud Ioannem Moretum.
CIↃ. IↃC.
Cum Priuilegijs Cæsareo & Regio.

The Annals, by Roman historian Tacitus

This article from Biblical Archaeology covers all the non-Christian historical sources that discuss Jesus.

About the author:

> Lawrence Mykytiuk is associate professor of library science and the history librarian at Purdue University. He holds a Ph.D. in Hebrew and Semitic Studies and is the author of the book Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200–539 B.C.E. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004).

Here are the major sections:

- Roman historian Tacitus
- Jewish historian Josephus
- Greek satirist Lucian of Samosata
- Platonist philosopher Celsus
- Roman governor Pliny the Younger
- Roman historian Suetonius
- Roman prisoner Mara bar Serapion

And this useful excerpt captures the broad facts about Jesus that we get from just the

first two sources:

> We can learn quite a bit about Jesus from Tacitus and Josephus, two famous historians who were not Christian. Almost all the following statements about Jesus, which are asserted in the New Testament, are corroborated or confirmed by the relevant passages in Tacitus and Josephus. These independent historical sources—one a non-Christian Roman and the other Jewish—confirm what we are told in the Gospels:31
>
> 1. He existed as a man. The historian Josephus grew up in a priestly family in first-century Palestine and wrote only decades after Jesus' death. Jesus' known associates, such as Jesus' brother James, were his contemporaries. The historical and cultural context was second nature to Josephus. "If any Jewish writer were ever in a position to know about the non-existence of Jesus, it would have been Josephus. His implicit affirmation of the existence of Jesus has been, and still is, the most significant obstacle for those who argue that the extra-Biblical evidence is not probative on this point," Robert Van Voorst observes.32 And Tacitus was careful enough not to report real executions of nonexistent people.
>
> 2. His personal name was Jesus, as Josephus informs us.
>
> 3. He was called Christos in Greek, which is a translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, both of which mean "anointed" or "(the) anointed one," as Josephus states and Tacitus implies, unaware, by reporting, as Romans thought, that his name was Christus.
>
> 4. He had a brother named James (Jacob), as Josephus reports.
>
> 5. He won over both Jews and "Greeks" (i.e., Gentiles of Hellenistic culture), according to Josephus, although it is anachronistic to say that they were "many" at the end of his life. Large growth
> in the number of Jesus' actual followers came only after his death.
>
> 6. Jewish leaders of the day expressed unfavorable opinions about him, at least according to some versions of the Testimonium Flavianum.
>
> 7. Pilate rendered the decision that he should be executed, as both Tacitus and Josephus state.
>
> 8. His execution was specifically by crucifixion, according to Josephus.
>
> 9. He was executed during Pontius Pilate's governorship over Judea (26–36 C.E.), as Josephus implies and Tacitus states, adding that it was during Tiberius's reign.
>
> Some of Jesus' followers did not abandon their personal loyalty to him even after his crucifixion but submitted to his teaching. They believed that Jesus later appeared to them alive in accordance with prophecies, most likely those found in the Hebrew Bible. A well-attested link between Jesus and Christians is that Christ, as a term used to identify Jesus, became the basis of the term used to identify his followers: Christians. The Christian movement began in Judea, according to Tacitus. Josephus observes that it continued during the first century. Tacitus

> deplores the fact that during the second century it had spread as far as Rome.

I remember reading the 1996 book by Gary Habermas entitled "The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ". This book is a little before the time of most of you young Christian apologists, but back before the time of Lee Strobel and J. Warner Wallace, this is the stuff we all read. Anyway, in the book he makes a list of all that can be known about Jesus from external sources. And fortunately for you, you don't have to buy the book because you can read chapter 9 of it right on his web site.

From Tacitus he gets this:

> From this report we can learn several facts, both explicit and implicit, concerning Christ and the Christians who lived in Rome in the 60s A.D. Chronologically, we may ascertain the following information.
>
> (1) Christians were named for their founder, Christus (from the Latin), (2) who was put to death by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilatus (also Latin), (3) during the reign of emperor Tiberius (14 37 A.D.). (4) His death ended the "superstition" for a short time, (5) but it broke out again, (6) especially in Judaea, where the teaching had its origin.
>
> (7) His followers carried his doctrine to Rome. (8) When the great fire destroyed a large part of the city during the reign of Nero (54 68 A.D.), the emperor placed the blame on the Christians who lived in Rome. (9) Tacitus reports that this group was hated for their abominations. (10) These Christians were arrested after pleading guilty, (11) and many were convicted for "hatred for mankind." (12) They were mocked and (13) then tortured, including being "nailed to crosses" or burnt to death. (14) Because of these actions, the people had compassion on the Christians. (15) Tacitus therefore concluded that such punishments were not for the public good but were simply "to glut one man's cruelty."

And from Josephus he gets this:

> (1) Jesus was known as a wise and virtuous man, one recognized for his good conduct. (2) He had many disciples, both Jews and Gentiles. (3) Pilate condemned him to die, (4) with crucifixion explicitly being mentioned as the mode. (5) The disciples reported that Jesus had risen from the dead and (6) that he had appeared to them on the third day after his crucifixion. (7) Consequently, the disciples continued to proclaim his teachings. (8) Perhaps Jesus was the Messiah concerning whom the Old Testament prophets spoke and predicted wonders. We would add here two facts from Josephus' earlier quotation as well. (9) Jesus was the brother of James and (10) was called the messiah by some.

So when you are reading the New Testament, these facts are the framework that you read within. It's a good starting point when dealing with people who have never looked into who Jesus was and what he taught and what his followers believed about him, right from the start.

Feminist explains how she chose to drink alcohol before recreational sex

July 29, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students puking in toilet

Guess where I'm linking today? To a radical feminist web site named Jezebel, to an article written by a radical feminist who writes for the radically leftist Slate.

No, I'm not crazy. Just read it:

> Much of the conversation around alcohol and sex has focused on assault—the line at which intoxication becomes incapacitation, for instance—**but what we fail to mention is how haunted people can be by the sex they actually, technically consented to.**
>
> […]I wonder what my sex life would even look like if alcohol hadn't been there. Alcohol gave me comfort in my own body, and it allowed me to turn my erotic curiosity and hunger for experience into an action plan. I was tired of being the stuttering girl sucking in her stomach after the lights went out. I wanted to be the woman who roamed wild and free.
>
> Alcohol also helped me cut the girlish strings on my heart, an action my college years demanded. Three months into my freshman year, I split a six pack with a dashing sophomore, and we wound up partially clothed on his bed, my bare legs wrapped around his waist, my hands around his neck. I pulled back slightly and asked him the question, the naive question of a girl who does not yet understand her fate: "What does this mean?"

> He looked past me, into his studio apartment, and then back into my eyes. “It means that I’m a 19-year-old boy, and we’re having fun.”

What is interesting is that she didn’t see this man’s using her for fun after getting her drunk as any disqualification for a serious relationship. On the contrary, she believes that a serious relationship built on self-sacrificial love and commitment that lasts through difficulties can be found in a man who uses her for fun sex:

> I’m not saying I didn’t enjoy that night with the dashing sophomore. I’m saying the fun part for me might have been turning our physical intimacy into a sustained attachment.

Amazing. She wasn’t looking for men with good educations, good jobs, lots of savings, who were sober and chaste – they would have made her unhappy with their bossy leading, and strict plans about courting and marriage. She thought that she could get to live-long married love by choosing what was free, easy and fun in the moment.

She is 35 now, and still single. I’m sure if you ask her, she would like to be married “some day”, but who would say that her past decisions were good preparation for the challenges of marriage? Marriage is about self-sacrificial love, and endurance. To prepare for marriage, you practice self-denial and self-control. You learn how to accept expectations, obligations and responsibilities. You grow up.

Anyway, back to the article. She *choose the alcohol* herself, and she did it for a very specific reason:

> I wanted to have fun, too. *And alcohol evened the score***.** I cared less about everything when I was drinking: What you thought of me, what I looked like in this dress, whether that taco was warm or cold when I stuffed it in my mouth. I don’t want to make it sound like I drank *in order to* have sex. I drank for a million reasons.
>
> […]Booze downshifted my intense body consciousness, and it revved up my bravado. Sex was scary—but alcohol made me feel safe.

She drank in order to have sex. Got it? *She chose to get drunk in order to feel safe about having sex.* Many young women think that recreational sex with hot guys is a pathway to marriage. They drink in order to make progress towards the marriage they want – the marriage to the man who is fun. Not the man who is serious. They don’t want the serious man who makes plans for marriage, and expects the woman to sober up, behave responsibly and honor obligations.

Why are millenials acting like children into adulthood?

This reminds me of the Institute for American Values study. Despite their name, it is not a conservative organization

Look at this citation from p. 15:

> A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up.
>
> **A Yale University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up."**
>
> **A New York University student observed, "[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking."**
>
> **A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."**
>
> **[…]A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."**

I hope that many of the men out there who refuse to hold women accountable for their own desires start to understand that not everything a woman wants is good, and not every plan a woman makes will work. Sometimes, you need to calmly and constructively challenge them about their priorities, plans and actions. It's for their own good.

University of Louisville attacks professor of psychiatry for disagreeing with transgenderism

July 30, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

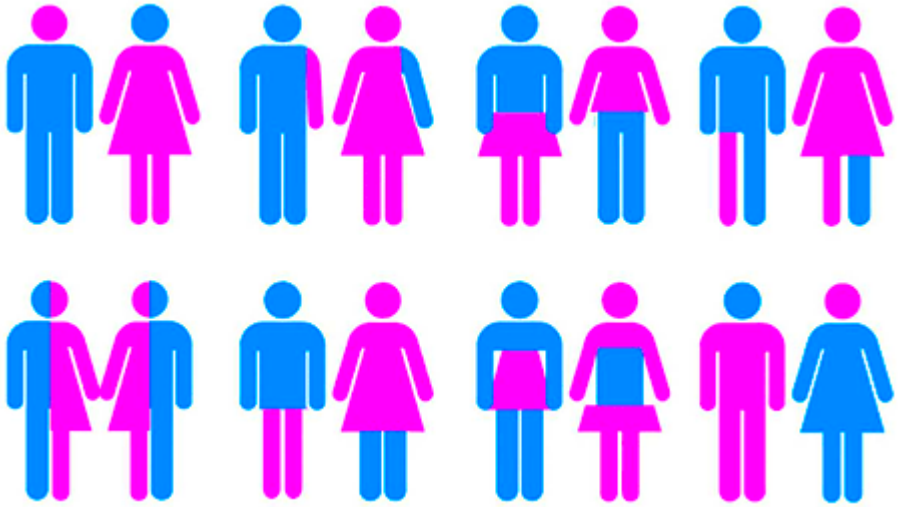

Thinking about transgenderism

A while back, I watched a panel of scholars discussing the science behind transgender doctrine. The panel was hosted by the Heritage Foundation, my favorite think tank. One of the participants was Dr. Allan M. Josephson, a distinguished professor of psychiatry at the University of Louisville. He disagreed with the official position of the secular left on transgenderism. And now he's in big trouble.

Here's the video, entitled "Gender Dysphoria in Children: Understanding the Science and Medicine":

National Review posted an interview with Dr. Josephson.

Here is the intro:

> Dr. Allan Josephson discusses academic freedom, child welfare, gender ideology, and the price he has paid for his principles.
> Allan M. Josephson is a distinguished psychiatrist who, since 2003, has transformed the division of child and adolescent psychiatry and psychology at the University of Louisville from a struggling department to a nationally acclaimed program. In the fall of 2017 he appeared on a panel at the Heritage Foundation and shared his professional opinion on the medicalization of gender-confused youth. The university responded by demoting him and then effectively firing him.

As soon as the video of the panel came out, his employer came after him:

> **MK:** How stressful has this ordeal been?
>
> **AJ:** It has had various phases. The first phase was "this just can't be happening to me." I was very successful and very well liked. I built my division up from a few people to probably 15 and we had a clinic of almost 30 people. I was banned

> from faculty meetings. I was banned from certain kinds of interactions with staff and told what I could and couldn't say to people. And this was a place that I built, you know. And then the stress of one's personal relationships. My family worried about me, friends worried about me. It was probably was six months before I felt comfortable and was sleeping again. You know, the personal stress is pretty enormous, but then I decided to do something.

The professor expresses concerns about how cursory the evaluations of the children are, and about how transgender health clinics seem to work more like stores, where people just walk in and demand the prescriptions and treatments they want.

Dr. Josephson has decided to put forward a legal challenge to his employer, which is important for others who may also want to disagree without being fired by their employers.

This story made me think of a story that I saw last year from the UK, where a doctor was fired for refusing to participate in transgenderism.

The New York Post reports:

> A UK doctor who was fired for refusing to refer to transgender people by their preferred gender pronoun says there is a "climate of fear" in his profession with staff "trained to inform" on one another for breaching discrimination laws.
>
> Dr. David Mackereth's contract as a medical assessor for the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) was terminated three weeks ago on the grounds that his refusal to use transgender pronouns could be considered harassment under the 2010 Equality Act.
>
> The 55-year-old said his refusal to comply with the edict from the DWP has effectively ended his career, as he would never be hired for another government or National Health Service job again.

So, it's not safe now to disagree with transgenderism. If you do, then your job is at risk. What a change this is from just a few years ago, when free speech was not limited by the feelings of other people. I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but I don't think that hurt feelings should be allowed to impose restrictions on free speech.

Yale computer science professor David Gelernter expresses doubts about Darwinism

July 31, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

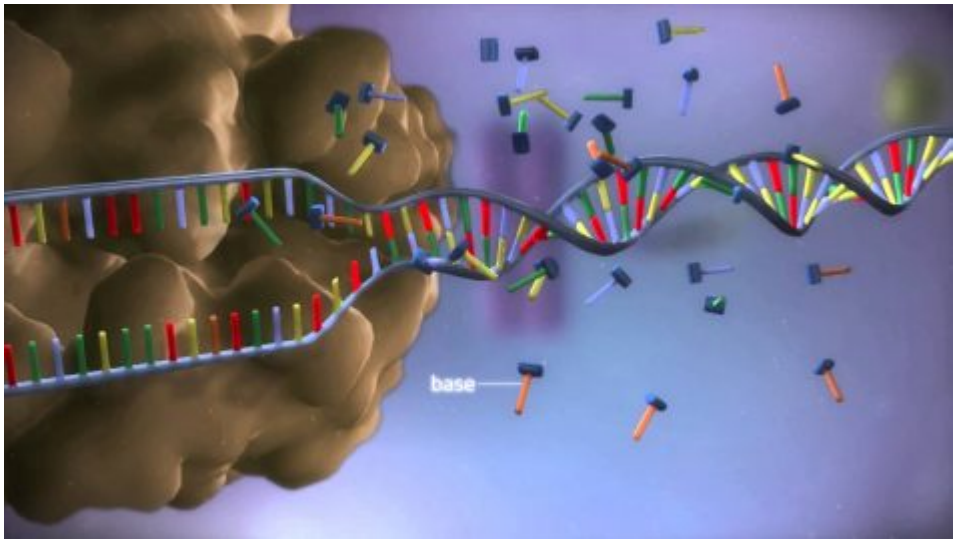

How did life begin?

I had to learn about David Gelernter when I was doing my Masters in computer science. We studied his book "Mirror Worlds". A few weeks ago, I blogged about his impressions of the difficulty in forming a simple protein by chance – something that naturalistic mechanisms would have to do in order to avoid intelligent agency as a cause in nature. He found it very unlikely. But there's more!

Recently, my friend Terrell sent me a video featuring Peter Robinson (who hosts the splendid Uncommon Knowledge show out of Stanford University), and three interesting people. First, there was Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, who is one of my two favorite thinkers. I've blogged on his work about the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion here many times. Then, there was Dr. David Berlinski, a secular Jewish professor of mathematics, who has studied origins issues. And then Dr. David Gelernter, who teaches computer science at Yale University, and is a legend in computer science research.

Here's the video: (H/T Terrell)

Here is an article by Jennifer Kabbany in The College Fix about the video.

She writes about his recent Claremont Review of Books article, as well as the interview above:

> In May, the *Claremont Review of Books* published a column by Gelernter headlined "Giving Up Darwin." In it, he explained how his readings and discussions of Darwinian evolution and its competing theories, namely intelligent design, have convinced him Darwin had it wrong.
>
> In particular, he cited Stephen Meyer's 2013 book *Darwin's Doubt* as well as *The Deniable Darwin* by David Berlinski. The professor expanded on his views in an interview with Stanford University's Hoover Institution that was published last

> week.
>
> Gelernter stops short of fully embracing intelligent design, both in his essay and during his interview. He said in his interview he sees intelligence in Earth's design, and has no quarrel with ID proponents, but notes the world a mess, its suffering far outweighs its goodness.
>
> "My argument is with people who dismiss intelligent design without considering, it seems to me — it's widely dismissed in my world of academia as some sort of theological put up job — it's an absolutely serious scientific argument," Gelernter said during his interview. "In fact it's the first and most obvious and intuitive one that comes to mind. It's got to be dealt with intellectually."

I found this part the most interesting, since we are seeing so much intolerance from the secular left, whenever anyone disagrees with their dogma:

> Gelernter said he likes many of his colleagues at Yale, that they are his friends, but when he looks at "their intellectual behavior, what they have published — and much more importantly what they tell their students — Darwinism has indeed passed beyond a scientific argument as far as they are concerned. You take your life in your hands to challenge it intellectually. They will destroy you if you challenge it."
>
> "Now, I haven't been destroyed, I am not a biologist, and I don't claim to be an authority on this topic," Gelernter added, "but what I have seen in their behavior intellectually and at colleges across the West is nothing approaching free speech on this topic. It's a bitter, fundamental, angry, outraged rejection [of intelligent design], which comes nowhere near scientific or intellectual discussion. I've seen that happen again and again."
>
> Gelernter acknowledges "I am attacking their religion and I don't blame them for being all head up, it is a big issue for them."

Dr. Gelernter cited three arguments in his article: the origin of life, and the Cambrian explosion, and genetic entropy. In the first two problems, there is a problem of huge amounts of biological information coming into being . We know that software engineers can write code like that, but there is no Darwinian mechanism for writing that much code and that short of a time period. The third problem shows that Darwinian mechanisms not only don't produce functional code – they actually *break it down*.

I've covered both of the arguments before on this blog, but if you really want the details, you should pick up the books that convinced Dr. Gelernter: Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's "Signature in the Cell" and "Darwin's Doubt". Each book tackles one of the arguments. For the third problem, a good book is Dr. Michael Behe's "Darwin Devolves". Even if you just read something *about* each book, then you'll know about the arguments for intelligent causes being the best explanation for the history of life on this planet.

Study: relationship problems, not family rejection, leading cause of higher gay suicides

August 1, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Life Site News reports.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> While many assume that family rejection is the leading cause of depression among LBGTI individuals, a new study has found that in fact the problem appears to stem predominantly from the higher incidence of relationship problems among homosexuals.
>
> Dr. Delaney Skerrett led a team of researchers from the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP) in studying suicides in Queensland. He found that a leading cause of suicide among "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex" (LGBTI) people is stress from their romantic partners.
>
> "We tend to assume that the psychological distress LGBTI people are often going through is due to family rejection. But it seems that's not so much the case. The conflict seems to be largely related to relationship problems, with partners," Dr. Skerrett said.
>
> In fact, he said, "The numbers are telling us there's a general acceptance at the family level," something he said is "great" and "really heartening!"
>
> Instead, the study, which was published on April 2 in *Asia Pacific Psychiatry*, found that "LGBT individuals experienced relationship problems more often" than heterosexuals, "with relationship conflict also being more frequent than in non-LGBT cases."

> That confirms previous studies finding that homosexuals also face higher rates of intimate partner violence than heterosexuals. A 2007 study in the *Journal of Urban Health*, which is published by the New York Academy of Medicine, found that 32 percent of homosexuals have been abused by at least one partner during their lifetime.
>
> The researchers with AISRAP also found that a higher percentage of homosexuals took their lives [out] of despondency, rather than other psychological illnesses. While one-eighth of all Queensland suicide victims had been diagnosed with a psychosis that impaired their judgment, Skerrett reports "there were no such diagnoses among LGBT individuals." The conclusion adds to the consensus that depression disproportionately besets active homosexuals.

Previously, I blogged about a gay activist who thought that disagreement with gay rights caused gays to commit suicide. I wonder what he would do with a study like this? I also blogged previously about the "epidemic" of domestic violence among gays, and the article I linked to for that was from the left-leaning Atlantic Monthly.

But there's more to say – let's look at an individual case now, which will put some meat on the bones of the studies.

Here's an article from the liberal New York Times.

Here's the set up:

> BOB BERGERON was so relentlessly cheery that people sometimes found it off-putting. If you ran into him at the David Barton Gym on West 23rd Street, where he worked out nearly ever morning at 7, and you complained about the rain, he would smile and say you'd be better off focusing on a problem you could fix.
>
> That's how Mr. Bergeron was as a therapist as well, always upbeat, somewhat less focused on getting to the root of his clients' feelings than altering behavior patterns that were detrimental to them: therapy from the outside-in.
>
> Over the last decade, he built a thriving private practice, treating well-to-do gay men for everything from anxiety to coping with H.I.V. Mr. Bergeron had also begun work as a motivational speaker, giving talks at gay and lesbian centers in Los Angeles and Chicago. In February, Magnus Books, a publisher specializing in gay literature, was scheduled to print a self-help guide he had written, "The Right Side of Forty: The Complete Guide to Happiness for Gay Men at Midlife and Beyond."
>
> It was a topic he knew something about. Having come out as gay in the mid-1980s, Mr. Bergeron, 49, had witnessed the worst years of the AIDS epidemic and emerged on the other side. He had also seen how few public examples there were of gay men growing older gracefully.
>
> He resolved to rewrite the script, and provide a toolbox for better living.
>
> "I've got a concise picture of what being over 40 is about and it's a great perspective filled with happiness, feeling sexy, possessing comfort relating to

> other men and taking good care of ourselves," Mr. Bergeron said on his Web site. "This picture will get you results that flourish long-term."
>
> But right around New Year's Eve, something went horribly wrong. On Jan. 5, Mr. Bergeron was found dead in his apartment, the result of a suicide that has left his family, his friends and his clients shocked and heartbroken as they attempt to figure out how he could have been so helpful to others and so unable to find help himself.

Look:

> To his friends, Mr. Bergeron maintained a positive tone. He went on vacation, dated some, visited museums.
>
> Still, he privately expressed misgivings about what the future held. Olivier Van Doorne, a patient of Mr. Bergeron and the creative director of SelectNY, a fashion advertising firm, recalled Mr. Bergeron telling him that every gay man peaks at one point in his life.
>
> "He said a number of times: 'I peaked when I was 30 or 35. I was super-successful, everyone looked at me, and I felt extremely cool in my sexuality.' "
>
> Mr. Siegel, the therapist who supervised Mr. Bergeron in the early days of his career, said: "Bob was a very beautiful younger man, and we talked a lot about how that shapes and creates a life. The thesis of his book is based very much on his own personal experience with that. And the book also emphasized what to do when you're not attractive or you no longer have the appeal you once had. The idea was to transcend that and expand your sexual possibilities."

And:

> With the book about to be printed, Mr. Bergeron became convinced that he'd written too much about the shame and isolation involved with hooking up online; that people weren't even really doing that anymore, now that phone apps like Grindr and Scruff had come along.
>
> His book, he felt, had become antiquated before it even came out.
>
> […]Though some of his friends, Mr. Rappaport among them, wondered whether drugs were involved, leading to a crash Mr. Bergeron did not anticipate, the suicide seemed to have been carried out with methodical precision. On an island in the kitchen, Mr. Bergeron had meticulously laid out his papers. There was a pile of folders with detailed instructions on top about whom to call regarding his finances and his mortgage. Across from that he placed the title page of his book, on which he also wrote his suicide note. In it he told Mr. Sackheim and Mr. Rappaport that he loved them and his family, but that he was "done."
>
> As his father remembered it, Mr. Bergeron also wrote, "It's a lie based on bad information."
>
> An arrow pointed up to the name of the book.

> The inference was clear. As Mr. Bergeron saw it at the end of his life, the only right side of 40 was the side that came before it.

I think that the problem is that in the gay lifestyle, you have a typically male emphasis on physical appearance, sex and pleasure. There is none of the moderating influence of women, which tends to push men into commitments, responsibility and stability. Stuff that provides fulfillment and meaning and purpose after you lose your youth and appearance.

If you really love a person, then you don't tell them that the dangerous thing they want to do is not dangerous. That's not love. It's easier for you to approve of them and be liked by everyone, but it's not love.

‘Sex and the City’ inspiration Candace Bushnell reaches age 60 childless and alone

August 2, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man and woman working on a computer upgrade

Did you know that there is a real woman who inspired the feminist fairy tale TV show “Sex in the City”? She had an enormous influence on young women, who wanted the glamour, fun, and consequence-free sex with “high value” no-commitment men. Most women who adopted the values of the show probably thought that this path would eventually lead to marriage and children.

My friend Chris sent me this article from Fox News, which talks the woman who inspired the show’s storyline.

It says:

> “Sex and the City” may have left a trailblazing legacy for women on television, but the book’s original author now thinks her independent lifestyle may not have been as rewarding.
>
> Candace Bushnell, 60, who wrote the original 1997 novel which spawned the successful TV series for HBO, opened up to Sunday Times Magazine about her 2012 divorce, admitting it made her realize how not starting a family made her feel “truly alone.”
>
> “When I was in my 30s and 40s, I didn’t think about it,” she recalled. “Then when I got divorced and I was in my 50s, I started to see the impact of not having children and of truly being alone. I do see that people with children have an anchor in a way that people who have no kids don’t.”

I do think that it’s important for young women to really consider where they want to be when they are 30, 40, 50, etc. A wise person should seek to pattern their decisions off of

the decisions of people who have reached the goals that they themselves want to reach. Candace Bushnell clearly has failed to achieve her goals. And those who listen to her will, likewise, fail to achieve the goals of marriage and children.

Making decisions today to achieve goals tomorrow

It's important not to put too much faith in TV shows. Or any fiction.

Whenever I see women reading books in the office, I always ask them: is that fiction or non-fiction? In 19 years of full-time work, I have never had a woman answer non-fiction. And they usually answer "romance". Well, I supposed if you were a fictional character, then you might take the advice of fictional characters. But if you are a real person, then you should look at the way the world really works. You should read peer-reviewed research, and take the advice of real people who have come up from humble beginnings to achieve the goals that you want to achieve.

After all, if your goal was to retire at 50, wouldn't it make sense to read books about investing, and take the advice of successful investors? It certainly *would not* make sense to imitate the characters in TV shows and movies made by Hollywood divorcers, adulterers, rapists and pedophiles. And yet so many women do the latter with marriage and children decision-making. They seem to derive some sort of unquestionable emotional delight from making important decisions based on appearances, intuitions, peer-approval, etc.

Why listen to celebrities, teachers, politicians, etc. who have infidelities, no children, failed marriages, etc.? Why make decisions by counting votes from your no-achievement peer group? If you want to reach a goal, then there is only one way to proceed, and that's by consulting the evidence, and seeking guidance from those with demonstrated results.

For example, when I was choosing which state to live in, I made a spreadsheet and filled it with all sorts of rankings of the 50 states that I pulled out of research papers and reports. I looked at things like infrastructure, income tax, economic growth, business friendliness, cost of living, tax as a % of income, abortion laws, support for traditional marriage, single motherhood, gun laws, concealed carry laws, fiscal solvency, etc. I moved here, and I've become very wealthy as a result. And my state has actually moved upward in gun rights rankings, fiscal solvency rankings, tax rankings, etc. since I got here. We're even trying to pass pro-life laws! When you make decisions using evidence and when you listen to good advice from people who have real achievements, you succeed.

Don't make decisions about sex, marriage and children by "following your heart". That's the lesson.

Are gay relationships more stable than straight ones?

August 3, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

Let's look at this post from The Public Discourse and see if gay relationships are as stable, or even more stable, than straight ones.

Excerpt:

> The [NFSS] study found that the children who were raised by a gay or lesbian parent as little as 15 years ago were usually conceived within a heterosexual marriage, which then underwent divorce or separation, leaving the child with a single parent. That parent then had at least one same-sex romantic relationship, sometimes outside of the child's home, sometimes within it. To be more specific, among the respondents who said their mother had a same-sex romantic relationship, a minority, 23%, said they had spent at least three years living in the same household with both their mother and her romantic partner. Only 2 out of the 15,000 screened spent a span of 18 years with the same two mothers. Among those who said their father had had a same-sex relationship, 1.1% of children reported spending at least three years together with both men.
>
> This strongly suggests that the parents' same-sex relationships were often short-lived, a finding consistent with the broader research on elevated levels of instability among same-sex romantic partners. **For example, a recent 2012 study of same-sex couples in Great Britain finds that gay and lesbian cohabiting couples are more likely to separate than heterosexual couples.[3] A 2006 study of same sex marriages in Norway and Sweden**

> **found that "divorce risk levels are considerably higher in same-sex marriages"[4] such that Swedish lesbian couples are more than three times as likely to divorce as heterosexual couples, and Swedish gay couples are 1.35 times more likely to divorce (net of controls).** Timothy Biblarz and Judith Stacey, two of the most outspoken advocates for same-sex marriage in the U.S. academy, acknowledge that there is more instability among lesbian parents.[5]

This paper from the Family Research Council makes the same point:

> The 2003-2004 Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census surveyed the lifestyles of 7,862 homosexuals. Of those involved in a "current relationship," only 15 percent describe their current relationship as having lasted twelve years or longer, with five percent lasting more than twenty years.[4] While this "snapshot in time" is not an absolute predictor of the length of homosexual relationships, it does indicate that few homosexual relationships achieve the longevity common in marriages.
>
> In *The Sexual Organization of the City,* University of Chicago sociologist Edward Laumann argues that "typical gay city inhabitants spend most of their adult lives in 'transactional' relationships, or short-term commitments of less than six months."[5]
>
> A study of homosexual men in the Netherlands published in the journal *AIDS* found that the "duration of steady partnerships" was 1.5 years.[6]
>
> In his study of male homosexuality in *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, Pollak found that "few homosexual relationships last longer than two years, with many men reporting hundreds of lifetime partners."[7]
>
> In *Male and Female Homosexuality,* Saghir and Robins found that the average male homosexual live-in relationship lasts between two and three years.[8]

It's a Grindr lifestyle. And it's not a good environment for meeting the needs of children. (Example)

There is one study (Rosenfeld, 2014) that tries to argue against the conclusion of all these other studies, and the problems with it are discussed in this post.

The right way to think about gay marriage is to think about it as an extension of no-fault divorce. The same feminists and leftists who pushed for the legalization of no-fault divorce told us back then that the children would be fine, that children are resilient. No-fault divorce *was a change in the definition of marriage.* The leftists said that divorce would never become widespread, and that it would not harm children in any way. It was all a pack of lies. If the practices of the gay lifestyle become conflated with marriage, then marriage will come to denote relationships engaged in for "love" not children, such that unchastity, infidelity, increased domestic violence and frequent break-ups are incorporated back into the definition of marriage. Marriage is about permanence,

exclusivity and building an environment that can welcome children and supply for their needs. It’s not about government giving people respect for their romantic feelings. Those are volatile. What government ought to be rewarding is lifelong commitment.

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

August 4, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

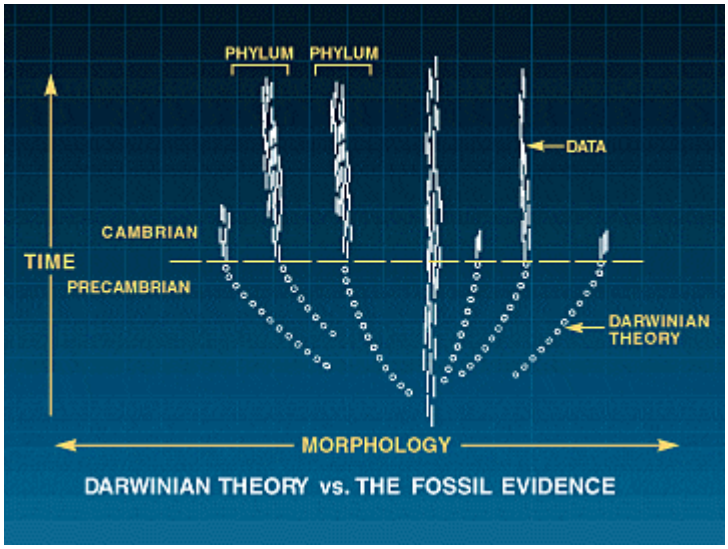

Cambrian Explosion

Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien "The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang" in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a

> unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and
> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

You can get a DVD of the lecture and other great lectures from Access Research Network. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

If you'd like to see Dr. Meyer defend his views in a debate with someone who reviewed

his book about the Cambrian explosion, you can find that in this previous post.

Further study

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

How well is Canada's "Medicare for All" health care working for patients?

August 5, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wait times for health care treatment in Canada (Source: Fraser institute)

I get into conversations about politics with my co-workers about who they like in the 2020 election. And I also ask them which particular policies of the candidates they like best. The one they like most is Medicare for All, with "for All" including illegal immigrants. When I ask them which country has got Medicare for All working, they say "Canada". Let's take a look at Canada's health care system.

Here's a nice article from Mona Charen, posted in TownHall.

She writes:

> It's true that all Canadian citizens and legal residents (though not immigrants there illegally) get "free" health care, but only in the sense that you don't get a bill after seeing a doctor or visiting a hospital. Medical care is subsidized by taxes, but the price comes in another form as well — rationing. A 2018 report from the Fraser Institute, a Canadian think tank, found that wait times between seeing a general practitioner and a specialist average 19.8 weeks. That's the average. There are variations among specialties. Those hoping to see an orthopedist wait an average of 39 weeks in Nova Scotia, while those seeking an oncologist wait about 3.8 weeks.
>
> […]Imagine the anxiety of learning that you need an MRI to find out whether the mass in your breast is anything to worry about and then being told that the next available appointment is in 10 weeks. In addition to the psychic price, Canadians who had to wait for treatment expended an average of $1,822 out of pocket last year, due to lost wages and other costs. The Fraser Institute also calculated the

> value of the lost productivity of those waiting for treatment — nearly $5,600 per patient, totaling $5.8 billion nationally.
>
> […]When there's an artificial shortage of a good or service, a black market usually follows. I have heard from several Canadians that paying doctors bribes to jump the line is not uncommon. But Canada has another pressure reliever: Ninety percent of Canadians live within 90 miles of the U.S. border, and medical centers in Buffalo, Chicago, Rochester and elsewhere receive tens of thousands of Canadian patients every year.

Regarding that last point, I've written many times about socialist politicians in Canada electing to travel to the United States for care, and that's because (as you might expect) health care outcomes for Canadians are vastly inferior to health care outcomes for Americans. And keep in mind that the delay from specialist to GP does not take into account the delay to see the GP, or the delay from seeing the specialist to actually getting treatment.

And how much are Canadians spending for the privilege of waiting 19.8 weeks to see a specialist? Well, the average cost of Canadian health care is about $13,000 per household per year, paid through taxes. What that means is that people who work pay for all the health care being provided, including the health care for people who don't work. But when it's time to get treatment, those who pay the bills get in line behind those who don't pay anything.

So how good is American health care? Maybe Canadians are waiting in line because their health care is so much better than ours.

American health care

One of the best health care policy experts writing today is Avik Roy, who writes for Forbes magazine.

Here is a recent column, which I think is useful for helping us all get better at debating health care policy.

Excerpt:

> If you really want to measure health outcomes, the best way to do it is at the point of medical intervention. If you have a heart attack, how long do you live in the U.S. vs. another country? If you're diagnosed with breast cancer? In 2008, a group of investigators conducted a worldwide study of cancer survival rates, called CONCORD. They looked at 5-year survival rates for breast cancer, colon and rectal cancer, and prostate cancer. I compiled their data for the U.S., Canada, Australia, Japan, and western Europe. Guess who came out number one?

The United States came out number one, and you can click here to see the larger graph of the complete results.

Some people like to point out that the United States has a low life expectancy, but there's a problem with those numbers.

The article continues:

> Another point worth making is that people die for other reasons than health. For example, people die because of car accidents and violent crime. A few years back, Robert Ohsfeldt of Texas A&M and John Schneider of the University of Iowa asked the obvious question: what happens if you remove deaths from fatal injuries from the life expectancy tables? Among the 29 members of the OECD, the U.S. vaults from 19th place to…you guessed it…first. Japan, on the same adjustment, drops from first to ninth.
>
> It's great that the Japanese eat more sushi than we do, and that they settle their arguments more peaceably. But these things don't have anything to do with socialized medicine.
>
> Finally, U.S. life-expectancy statistics are skewed by the fact that the U.S. doesn't have one health-care system, but three: Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance. (A fourth, the Obamacare exchanges, is supposed to go into effect in 2014.) As I have noted in the past, health outcomes for those on government-sponsored insurance are worse than for those on private insurance.
>
> To my knowledge, no one has attempted to segregate U.S. life-expectancy figures by insurance status. But based on the data we have, it's highly likely that those on private insurance have the best life expectancy, with Medicare patients in the middle, and the uninsured and Medicaid at the bottom.

If we're going to discuss health care, then let's discuss facts. We shouldn't be picking a health care system from the campaign speeches of politicians who tell us that we can keep our doctor, and keep our health plan, and our premiums will go down. We tried electing a charismatic deceiver in 2008, and it didn't work out. We lost our doctors, lost our health plans, and our premiums went up astronomically. We can do better than single-payer health care. We can do better than socialism.

How to test a white conservative to see if they are racist

August 6, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

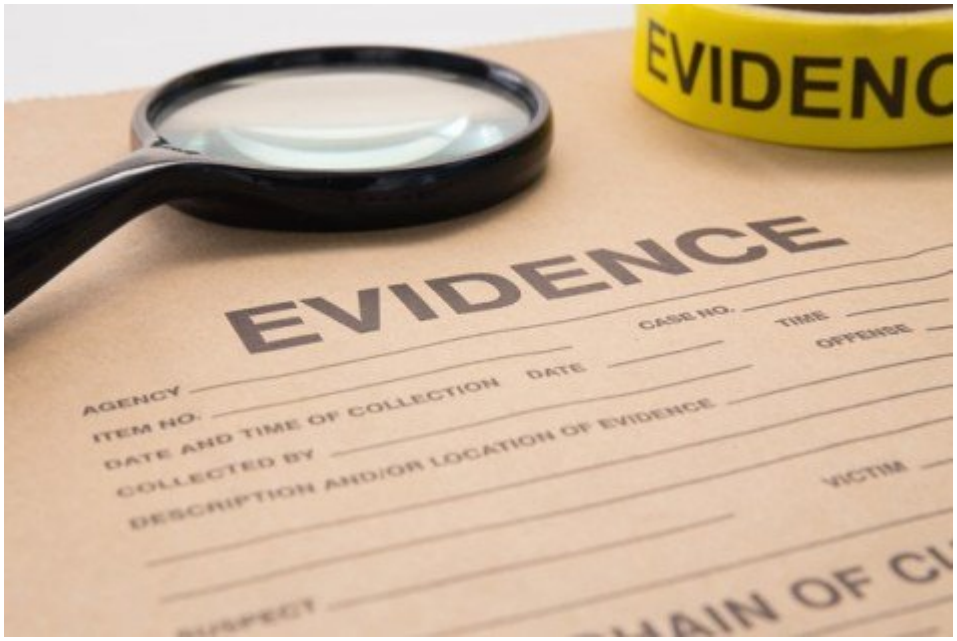

Let's take a look at the left's accusations of racism

I've noticed that a lot of people on the left like to cry "racism" whenever anyone disagrees with them about any of their policies. If a conservative opposes Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, banning all guns, infanticide or gay marriage, the response from the left is always to cry "racism". As if there is no content at all to the conservative worldview. Let's take a look at this.

Here is a Daily Signal column by famous Jewish conservative Dennis Prager:

> So here is a way to show it is a lie.
>
> Ask any white conservative, including one who supports Trump, the following three questions:
>
> 1). Do you have more in common with, and are you personally more comfortable in the company of, a white leftist or a black conservative?
>
> 2). Would you rather have nine white leftists or nine black conservatives on the U.S. Supreme Court?
>
> 3). Would you rather your child marry a black Christian conservative or a white non-Christian liberal?
>
> A white racist would prefer the whites in each case.
>
> I have asked these questions of thousands of Trump supporters at lectures and on my radio show.
>
> Not once has a white Trump-supporting conservative said he or she would be more comfortable in the presence of a white leftist than a black conservative, or

> would prefer an all-white liberal Supreme Court to an all-black conservative Supreme Court.
>
> Not once has a white Christian conservative said he or she would prefer his or her child marry a white non-Christian liberal rather than a black Christian conservative.
>
> If you're an honest leftist, this should present a powerful challenge to your belief that all white conservatives are racist.

Now, I'm not white (and one day in the future I'll be revealing more about me and my story), and I talk to white conservatives all the time. They are tired of being called "racist" when trying to make the case for conservative views, e.g. – school vouchers, legal gun ownership, protection of the unborn, etc. Since I agree with them, they want to grab me and bring me to their debates and have me explain all the reasons why I hold the conservative beliefs that I do – just to take skin color out of the equation. Because their reasons are my reasons. We read the same people: Thomas Sowell, John Lott, Mark Levin, Victor Davis Hanson, Francis J. Beckwith, Ryan T. Anderson, etc. My arguments and evidence are the same as theirs.

The non-racism of white conservatives should be no surprise to anyone. Who is the favorite economist of white conservatives? Thomas Sowell, a black economist. And who is the favorite Senator of white conservatives? Ted Cruz, a Cuban lawyer. And who is the favorite radio show host of white conservatives? Ben Shapiro, an orthodox Jew. And who is their favorite Supreme Court Justice? The most conservative one, Clarence Thomas – who is black. And who leads the favorite think tank of white conservatives? Kay Cole James, a black woman, who is president of the Heritage Foundation. And white conservatives love legal immigrants, and love to hear their stories of becoming citizens by following the rules. They love to hear anyone express love for America.

White conservatives couldn't care less about another conservative's skin color. Or sex, for that matter. They only care about one thing: that the person loves the Constitution, the Declaration, the Bill of Rights, and the founding ideals of the country as a whole.

It's actually the secular left that is obsessed with dividing people into groups and making them feel like victims. They want to push these groups into supporting a bigger secular government, higher taxes and less liberty. A successful black conservative and a legal immigrant would be their worst nightmare.

Update: just this morning, one of the white conservatives in my office, who was really upset that Trump is getting blamed for gun violence, invited me and a white progressive co-worker for lunch next Monday. He was trying to make me talk to the progressive in the office, and I was. But we were going long, so now we're going to lunch!

Was Hitler a Christian? Is Nazism similar to Christianity?

August 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

One of the strangest things I have heard from atheists is the assertion that Christianity is somehow connected to the fascism, such as the fascism that existed under Adolf Hitler. Two posts by Jewish author Jonah Goldberg from National Review supply us with the facts to set the record straight.

Let's start with the first post.

Here are some of the points:

1) Hitler wanted Christianity removed from the public square

> Like the engineers of that proverbial railway bridge, the Nazis worked relentlessly to replace the nuts and bolts of traditional Christianity with a new political religion. The shrewdest way to accomplish this was to co-opt Christianity via the Gleichschaltung while at the same time shrinking traditional religion's role in civil society.

2) Hitler banned the giving of donations to churches

> Hitler banned religious charity, crippling the churches' role as a counterweight to the state. Clergy were put on government salary, hence subjected to state authority. "The parsons will be made to dig their own graves," Hitler cackled. "They will betray their God to us. They will betray anything for the sake of their miserable little jobs and incomes."

3) Hitler replaced Christian celebrations with celebrations of the state

> Following the Jacobin example, the Nazis replaced the traditional Christian

> calendar. The new year began on January 30 with the Day of the Seizure of Power. Each November the streets of central Munich were dedicated to a Nazi Passion play depicting Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch. The martyrdom of Horst Wessel and his "old fighters" replaced Jesus and the apostles. Plays and official histories were rewritten to glorify pagan Aryans bravely fighting against Christianizing foreign armies. Anticipating some feminist pseudo history, witches became martyrs to the bloodthirsty oppression of Christianity.

4) Hitler favored the complete elimination of Christianity

> When some Protestant bishops visited the Fuhrer to register complaints, Hitler's rage got the better of him. "Christianity will disappear from Germany just as it has done in Russia . . . The Germanrace has existed without Christianity for thousands of years . . . and will continue after Christianity has disappeared . . . We must get used to the teachings of blood and race."

5) Hitler favored the removal of mandatory prayers in schools

> In 1935 mandatory prayer in school was abolished…

6) Hitler favored the banning of Christmas carols and nativity plays

> …and in 1938 carols and Nativity plays were banned entirely.

7) Hitler abolished religious instruction for children

> By 1941 religious instruction for children fourteen years and up had been abolished altogether….

And now the second post.

8) Hitler opposed the ideas of universal truth and objective moral absolutes

> …Just as the Nazi attack on Christianity was part of a larger war on the idea of universal truth, whole postmodern cosmologies have been created to prove that traditional religious morality is a scam, that there are no fixed truths or "natural" categories, and that all knowledge is socially constructed.

Practically everything this man believed was 100% anti-Christian. But he fits in fine on the secular left.

Conclusion

Adolf Hitler was a man influenced by two big ideas: evolution and socialism. His party was the national SOCIALIST party. He favored a strong role for the state in interfering with the free market. He was in favor of regulating the family so that the state could have a bigger influence on children. And he favored the idea of survival of the fittest. His ideas are 100% incompatible with Christianity and with capitalism as well. Christians value individual rights and freedoms, small government and the autonomy of the family against the state. The commandments about not coveting and not stealing are *incompatible* with

redistribution of wealth from those who produce to those who “need”. The differences are clear and significant. The Bible favors *voluntary charity by individuals and churches*. It does not favor redistribution of wealth by a secular government *to equalize life outcomes regardless of personal responsibility*.

Ignorant atheists and their myths

In a recent debate between Matt Dillahunty and David Robertson, Dillahunty made the claim that Hitler was a Christian, because in a campaign speech, he told a Catholic audience that secular schools were bad, and religious schools were good. Dillahunty thought that this meant that Hitler was a Christian. Robertson asked him when those words were spoken, and whether they formed the basis of any POLICY after Hitler was elected. Dillahunty didn’t know, because he just cited the quotation without knowing anything about the context, or about the historical period. Robertson informed him that the words were spoken in a *campaign speech*, prior to Hitler’s rise to power, and that nothing in Hitler’s policies ever took the words seriously after he came to power. It was the equivalent of Obama claiming to support natural marriage, then legalizing same-sex marriage once elected. He lied in order to be elected. This kind of ignorance is very prominent in the atheist (“secular humanist”) community, which survives on mythology which is never subjected to rational inquiry. Here’s another good example of this ignorance.

Incidentally, Dillahunty later said, in the same debate no less, that he “didn’t know” if the Holocaust was morally wrong. Right – because *on atheism right and wrong are meaningless concepts*, rationally speaking. They are reduced to personal preferences only, where each opinion is as valid as the opposite opinion, since there is no *objective* standard by which to judge different opinions. That’s why atheists can’t make moral judgements about *anything*, they just have preferences, like their preference for certain foods and certain clothes. Very important to realize this when talking to atheists, because they use moral language to describe their personal feelings and opinions.

Whenever I hear atheists speculating about whether Hitler was a Christian, I immediately know that they have not investigated anything very carefully, and are merely being insulting. It’s not worth having a conversation with people who are stupid AND insulting.

Democrat legislator doxes Republican donors and publishes their names and employers

August 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a bunch of violent fascist thugs

In the past, when the secular left has seized power, they intimidated people on the center-right from participating in politics. Not just tearing down their election signs, but death threats, vandalism, even murder. So when a Democrat legislator publishes the names and employers of Republican donors, it's very disturbing. This is actual fascism. Let's take a look at the news story.

The Daily Caller reports:

> Democratic Texas Rep. Joaquin Castro on Monday tweeted the names and employers of 44 San Antonio residents who donated the federal maximum to President Donald Trump's reelection campaign.
>
> Castro, whose district includes much of San Antonio, claimed the donors "are fueling a campaign of hate that labels Hispanic immigrants as 'invaders.'" Castro is the twin brother of Democratic presidential candidate Julian Castro and chairs his presidential campaign.
>
> "Sad to see so many San Antonians as 2019 maximum donors to Donald Trump," the congressman wrote, proceeding to name local businesses whose owners gave the maximum to Trump's campaign. Eleven of the 44 donors shown in Rep. Castro's post listed their employment as "retired."

Steve Scalise, who was grievously wounded by gunshots fired by a socialist Bernie Sanders campaign worker, commented:

> House Minority Whip Steve Scalise was harshly critical of Rep. Castro as well, warning the Democratic congressman: “This isn’t a game. It’s dangerous, and lives are at stake. I know this firsthand.”

Many, many different people have reported the tweet to Twitter, but the Tweet has stayed up all day. Twitter thought that intimidating non-Democrats so that they don’t participate in elections was a good use of their products and services.

What might Democrats do with information like this? Well, earlier this week, a socialist supporter of Elizabeth Warren instigated a mass shooting in Dayton, Ohio.

> The Ohio gunman described himself on social media as a pro-Satan “leftist” who wanted Joe Biden’s generation to die off, hated President Trump and law enforcement, and hoped to vote for Sen. Elizabeth Warren for president.
>
> In the early hours of Sunday morning, rifle-wielding Connor Betts rampaged through a Dayton entertainment district, killing his sister and eight other people and leaving dozens of others wounded before police killed him.
>
> “I want socialism, and i’ll not wait for the idiots to finally come round to understanding,” he wrote in one tweet, according to Heavy.com.

Don’t forget how Obama incited violence against police officers, just before there was a mass shooting of Dallas police officers. This actually happens all the time. I posted four tweets on our Facebook page featuring members of the mainstream media inciting violence against Republicans, some of them by telling outright lies that they later had to retract. Even if it doesn’t come to murder, Democrats get Republicans fired for their views all the time. That’s why I have an alias.

Here is one:

MSNBC lies about Trump in order to incite violence
Here's another one:

More incitement of violence against Trump by MSNBC
So, what should we make of this?

Well, there's an election coming along. You should definitely be paying attention to the news, and sharing articles that will help you to influence people around you. So many of my friends use social media to just about their own lives. And there is a place for that. But it's also important to have an influence. Don't share things that are insulting, just share material about policy or evidence, like a study on Canadian health care or a study on how law-abiding concealed carry permitholders are or a study on how unborn children feel pain. We can't just concentrate on *our lives* and *our families* and *our communities*. We have to care about the laws that affect our ability to be who we are. Posting a peer-reviewed study isn't very controversial, and it isn't very hard to defend against people who don't have studies of their own.

You could put out a yard sign for your local Republican candidate. You could contact your local Republican party office and volunteer to work the phones, go door-to-door, or participate in get-out-the-vote. No one will ever find out that you volunteered. You could donate to candidates who reflect your values. I really like Senator Ted Cruz, Senator Marsha Blackburn, Senator Josh Hawley, Senator Tom Cotton, Congressman Mark Green, and Congressman Dan Crenshaw, for example. There are lots of things you could do, and if you want to participate in elections without being intimidated by thugs, then the time is now.

Twitter locks GOP senator's account for posting the death threats he received from Democrats

August 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

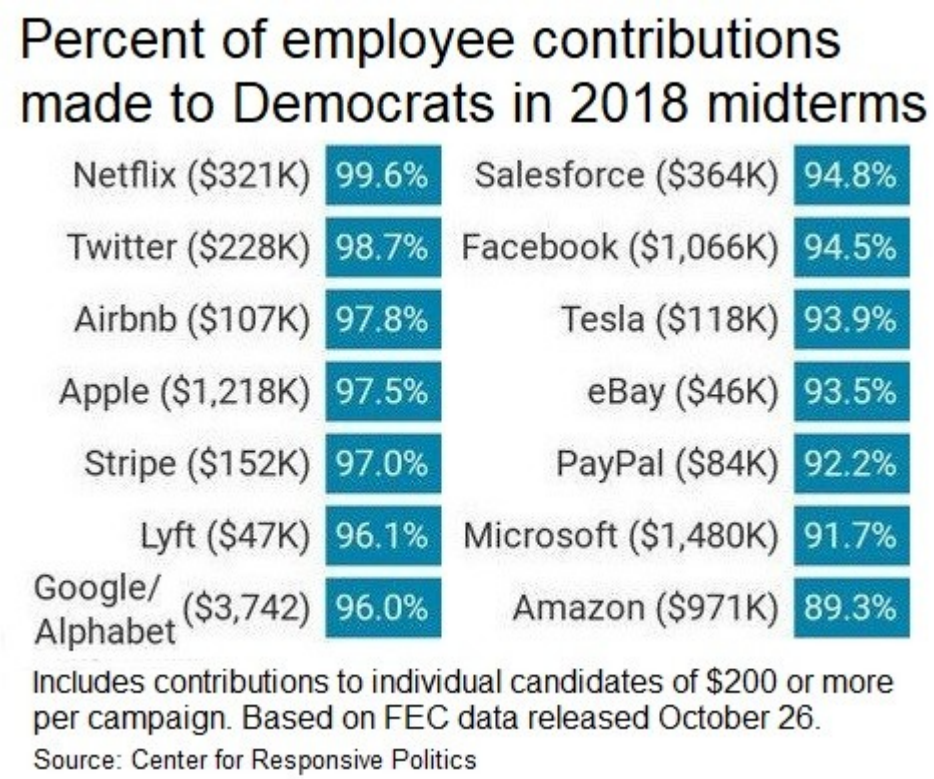

Political donations / contributions by employees of Big Tech companies

Twitter is concerned that their Democrat party allies will look bad if Republicans are allowed to post the death threats they receive from them. Twitter locked the account for Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell re-election campaign. Their goal is to prevent American voters from seeing the truth about the Democrat party, so that Trump loses in 2020.

Here's the story from the Fox News:

> A group of protesters supporting gun control gathered outside the home of Sen. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. where one expressed that someone should "stab the motherf—er in the heart."
>
> […]Approximately 25 demonstrators stood on the sidewalk near McConnell's Louisville home, shouting "No Trump, no KKK, no Fascist USA!" while others called him names like "Murder Turtle" and made loud noises by banging objects and dragging a shovel back and forth on the ground as a group of security personnel stood between the protestors and the home, WLKY reported.
>
> "The b—- is home — we keep seeing the lights go on and off," another protester can be heard shouting. "This h– really thought he was going to get ready to be at home after he hurt his little punk ass shoulder. B—-, don't nobody give a f—! F–k your thoughts and prayers, Mitch. F— you, f— your wife, f— everything you stand

> for. ”

A video of the protesters threatening violence against McConnell went viral, until it was taken down by Twitter. The video made Democrats look like violent fascists, and Twitter felt that this was bad for their Democrat party allies in the 2020 election. Twitter did allow the hashtag #MassacreMitch to trend on their platform earlier in the week. Not a single leftist was locked out of their account for inciting violence on Twitter. Twitter didn't care about Mitch McConnell's safety at all.

I noticed that a journalist from the Daily Wire also tweeted the video, and his account was also locked by Twitter. Because that's what fascists do with a free press – they censor them.

Twitter doesn't censor tweets by violent Democrats

He had a long series of tweets telling the story of what happened to him. I've got them all in one place here. What I thought was interesting was how Twitter ignored a tweet from Democrat Reza Aslan, a former CNN contributor, who called for Republican Kellyanne Conway "a depraved evil" that needed to be "eradicated". Aslan's account is still unlocked, and he still has his blue check mark. Twitter also left up tweets by a Democrat activist named Louis Farrakhan, who compared Jews to "termites". Another Democrat named Peter Fonda "called for women in the Trump administration to stripped naked and physically beaten" and for "Trump admin officials to have their kids taken from them and thrown in cages with pedophiles". Twitter's response? It was all fine with them – Fonda's account remained unlocked, and his blue check mark remains. Because the censorship on Twitter only goes one way – against Republicans.

The Daily Wire journalist concludes:

> By suspending McConnell's re-election campaign for exposing the violent rhetoric directed at McConnell, which was allowed to foment on Twitter for days, Twitter is interfering in the 2020 elections in a manner to help Democrats and hurt Republicans
> mentions.
>
> By suspending me for telling the truth, Twitter is making it clear that they seek to control the news media and only allow content on their platform that does not expose the evil, projection, and hypocrisy of the political Left.
>
> Do not be surprised if they permanently ban me.

If you're looking for collusion designed to throw an election, you just found it.

Are there any non-violent Democrats?

We're seeing a lot of violence from members of the Democrat party, aren't we? Just last week we saw attacks by mainstream Democrats who were concerned about advancing socialism and stopping global warming. But electing Democrats was too slow for them, so they decided to take matters into their own hands – with guns. Just like so many

Democrat shooters have before them.

There's actually a nationwide movement of secular left fascists in America now called "antifa". They are similar to armed militias in other socialist regimes, such as Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. And look – they have guns.

These secular left fascists are the brown shirts of the Democrat party

If you don't like the idea of someone coming to your house in the night with guns and threatening your life, then you'd better start making a plan NOW to make persuasive arguments supported by evidence to the people around you. Make sure that they understand what progressives believe, and what progressives would do to dissenters from their Communist agenda, if they ever took power.

The worst mistake you can make when defending the Christian worldview

August 9, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian

worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important

for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it. I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within

his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent’s weakness.

Even alpha male bad boys are disappointed by the Sexual Revolution

August 10, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

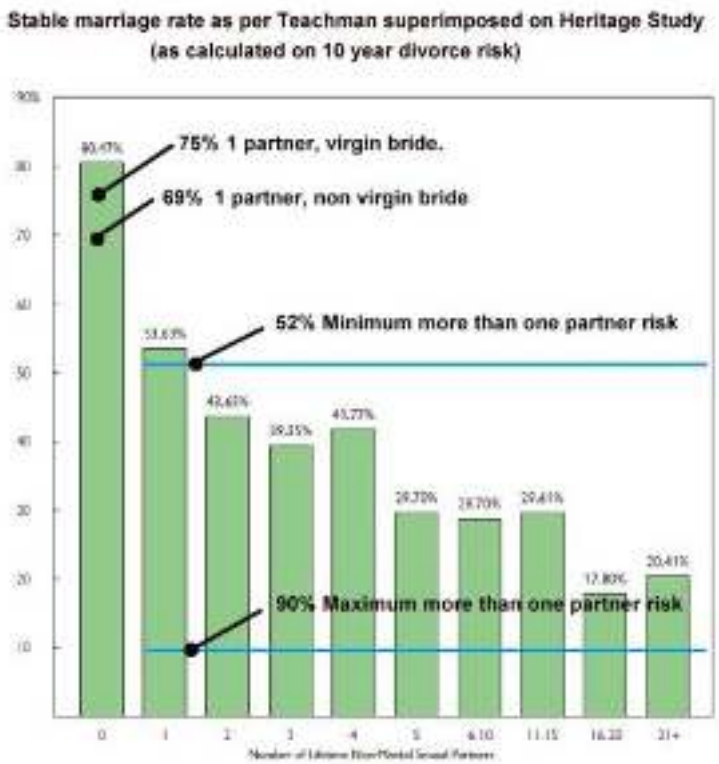

Marriage stability vs sexual partners,(Teachman et al. JAMF, August 2010)

Thanks to radical feminism's dominance in the culture, young unmarried women are very disinterested in marriage. Many of them see marriage as boring, and children as restrictive of their freedom. Instead, young women want to make sure to use their young and fertile years to pack in as much fun and thrills as they can. So what sort of men do they choose to pursue for that?

This article from the UK Daily Mail has the answer:

> Women are often said to be the less shallow sex when it comes to what they find attractive.
>
> But a study of an online gallery of 'hot male commuters' has found that the fairer sex are just as superficial as men – as they find muscles and money the sexiest male attributes.
>
> The study based its findings on a website called Tube Crush, where women and gay men secretly take pictures of the capital's attractive men on the London Underground.
>
> […]While the authors acknowledge that gay men also use the site, they say that female responses to the 'hot commuters' suggest females have not moved on in what they find attractive beyond 'money and strength' – despite their

> advancement in society.
>
> Signs that the man is wealthy – such as a flashy watch or an expensive suit – were considered highly attractive by site users, as were powerful arm and chest muscles.
>
> But the classic image of the 'new man' – a man holding a baby – or skinnier or nerdier types of man were far less represented.

Now, in my experience, men who are getting a lot of attention because of their looks are probably the least likely to be faithful, much less commit. If the man is putting in a lot of effort into his appearance (as opposed to his education, his career, his spiritual life, etc.), he's probably doing it in order to get sexual access to a lot of women. He's not looking to commit, in short. He's looking to play the field. But it turns out that even the men who are successful at this are not happy with their success.

Consider this article from the UK Sun: (H/T Sarah)

> It sounds like every young man's idea of heaven: endless sex with a constant stream of gorgeous, up-for-it women who don't even expect a pizza date before, or a conversation afterwards – and all via a tap on your smartphone.
>
> Yet incredibly, a new generation of handsome, successful – and sexually prolific – Tinder-weary lads are claiming sex with hundreds of one-night stands is leaving them burned out, bored – and lonely.
>
> Despite bedding a bevvie of beauties, they claim they're desperate for lasting romance – and broody for children with a new wave of sexually-liberated young women who just don't want to commit.
>
> I got to know a group of these seemingly lucky men after I co-wrote the UK's biggest ever academic study into more than 2,000 British men, released this week.
>
> Called the Harry's Masculinity Report, the survey was conducted by University College London and Harry's, a new men's grooming company that's just launched in the UK.
>
> Harry's wanted to shatter the myths around masculinity, and discover what truly made modern men tick in 2017.

Here are some details:

> One of these was Simone Ippolito, 25, from Bournemouth, a self-confessed Tinder "player" for two years.
>
> The salesman and part-time model claimed: "When I first got Tinder two years ago, it was heaven. In three months I got 300 matches. They were coming so fast I couldn't keep up.
>
> "People on Tinder are only there for sex. I've been on 200 dates, and I get a result 99 per cent of the time.

> “Getting sex is too easy. You get bored of it. Tinder takes all the pleasure out of flirting. It’s not fun anymore. Tinder is literally two glasses of wine then back home for sex. There is no emotion.
>
> “It is boring, empty and lonely. You can’t have a nice conversation after mechanical sex. It’s just sex and go. Now I just want to stop it and settle down”.
>
> Talking to other single men, it rapidly became clear that while dating apps like Tinder means it’s never been easier to get sex, it’s never been harder to fall in love.
>
> This sentiment was echoed by Gary Barnett, 34, social media manager from Brighton, who’s been single for three months.
>
> “For the first time ever in human history, sex is on tap,” he says.
>
> “Nine times out of ten you don’t even have to go out on a date. If a girl likes your photos, they just come round.
>
> “If you’re half attractive you’re bombarded with offers. You can go on Tinder dates every single night of the week.
>
> “The social interaction is totally lacking. You can have sex and never talk again.
>
> “They always ask the same three questions. ‘Hi how are you?’ ‘how’s your week been?’ or ‘I love your beard/tattoos’. That’s literally code for ‘do you want to f***?’
>
> “That was really good for the first year. I filled my boots. After 50 Tinder dates, including 20 in the last two months with no sign of any ‘keepers,’ I’m over it. You get to the point where you can’t be bothered to do it anymore”.

Ah yes, the beard and tattoos. These are apparently very important for attracting women today. But it doesn’t work to attract a serious marriage-minded women to settle down with. Men are designed to want relationships with women. But not every woman is capable of having a relationship with a man. Especially after so many women have been taught by feminism not to prefer commitment-minded men who can perform the traditional male roles: protecting, providing and leading on moral and spiritual issues. Beards, muscles, shiny watches and tattoos might attract women, but it doesn’t make those women marriage-ready. In fact, the sort of women who are impressed with appearances are probably looking for fun. They are definitely NOT going to be comfortable with relationship obligations to a husband or children. To build a capacity for self-sacrificial commitment, you don’t practice having fun and thrills. You practice self-sacrificial commitment. You work on developing a worldview that makes self-sacrificial commitment rational, even when it goes against your self-interest. A worldview like Christianity, for example.

We already knew that women are unhappy with the dating scene today. And now we know that even the men who are “succeeding” are unhappy with it too, in the long term. The Sexual Revolution has messed up love and commitment for everyone.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

August 11, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

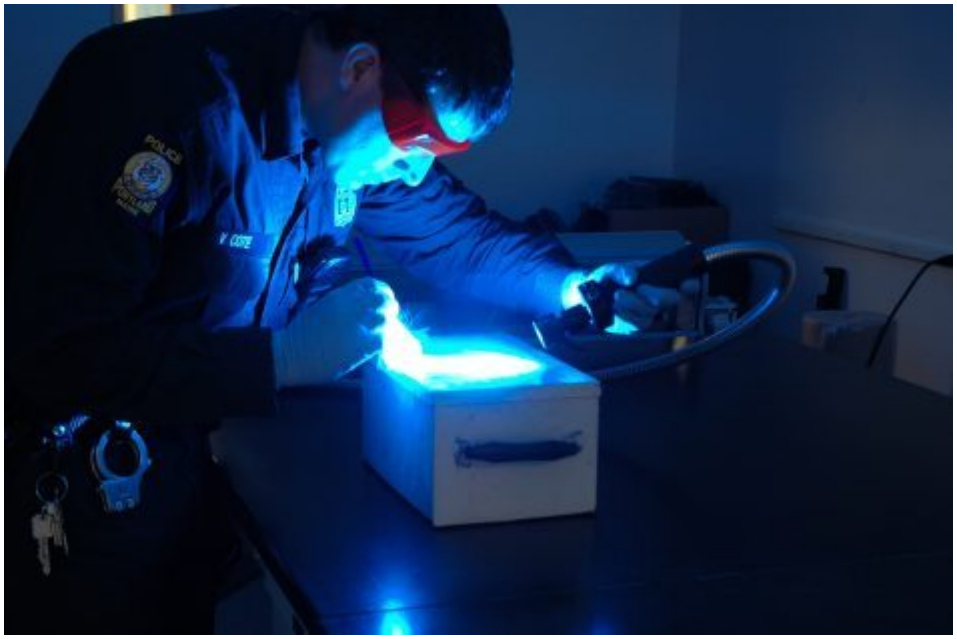

Policeman investigates crime scene for evidence

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus in a debate by saying that the resurrection is the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. Minimal facts are the parts of the New Testament that meet a set of strict historical criteria. These are the facts that skeptical historians agree with, totally apart from any religious beliefs.

So what are the criteria that skeptical historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a

saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called “Indications of Authenticity” or “Signs of Credibility.”

In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus’ life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.

What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:

(1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.

(2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.

(3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.

(4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.

(5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.

(6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.

For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, “The ‘Criteria’ for Authenticity,” in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.

Notice that these “criteria” do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus’ life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same “criteria” are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur’an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the “criteria” do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels’ every claim attributed to Jesus

> in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book. You want to look at it as a historical book, and use historical criteria to get to some facts that critical historians would accept. From that, it's possible to make a case for the resurrection, which is the guarantee that the words of Jesus are authoritative. Including the words of Jesus where he describes the Bible as a whole as God's revelation of Himself to his creatures.

Here is the approach I use when talking to non-Christian co-workers:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria

4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection
8. Don't let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And remember that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. That passages is universally accepted as early, eyewitness testimony from Paul, and represents the core of early Christian beliefs about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Everyone who takes evidence seriously has to account for that early creed, which passes the historical tests I outlined above.

The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I've read is the one by Robert H. Stein in "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It's a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion "God raised Jesus from the dead". That whole book is really very, very good.

New study: white police officers not more likely to shoot black suspects

August 12, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

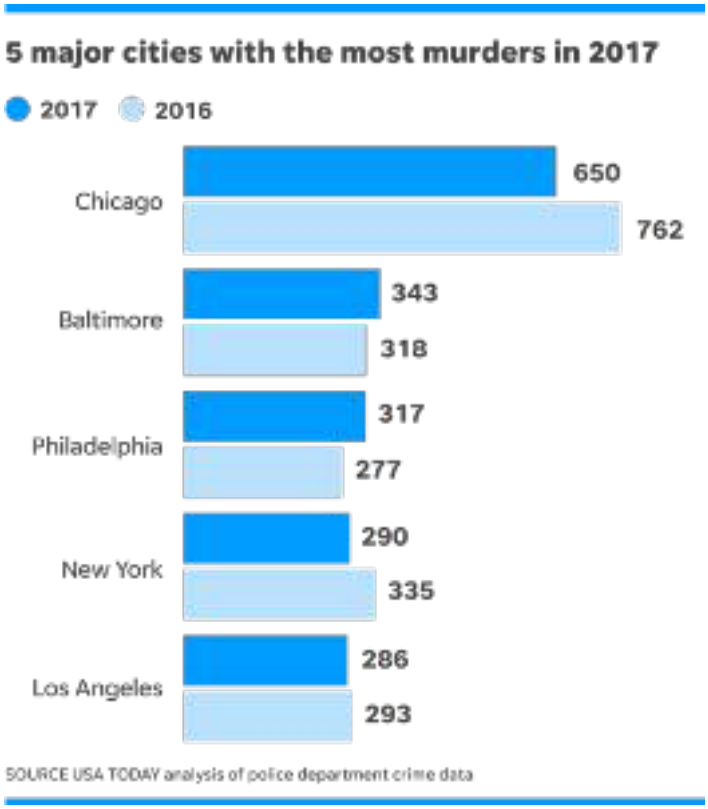

Murder rates in major U.S. cities – all run by Democrats

Whenever people disagree about controversial things, the best way to proceed is to look at what the evidence says. In this case, we've got a new PNAS study authored by professors at several different universities which concludes that white officers are not more likely to shoot black civilians than black or Hispanic police officers.

Heather McDonald writes about it in the centrist National Review:

> A new study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* demolishes the Democratic narrative regarding race and police shootings, which holds that white officers are engaged in an epidemic of racially biased shootings of black men. It turns out that white officers are no more likely than black or Hispanic officers to shoot black civilians. It is a racial group's rate of violent crime that determines police shootings, not the race of the officer. The more frequently officers encounter violent suspects from any given racial group, the greater the chance that members of that racial group will be shot by a police officer. In fact, if there is a bias in police shootings after crime rates are taken into account, it is against white civilians, the study found.
>
> The authors, faculty at Michigan State University and the University of Maryland at College Park, created a database of 917 officer-involved fatal shootings in 2015 from more than 650 police departments. Fifty-five percent of the victims

> were white, 27 percent were black, and 19 percent were Hispanic. Between 90 and 95 percent of the civilians shot by officers in 2015 were attacking police or other citizens; 90 percent were armed with a weapon. So-called threat-misperception shootings, in which an officer shoots an unarmed civilian after mistaking a cellphone, say, for a gun, were rare.

This study builds on previous work, which also showed that white police officers were not more biased than other officers to shoot black civilians.

McDonald notes that progressive policy of hiring more minority police officers won't reduce the rates of shootings of minority civilians, since all races fire their weapons at minority civilians at roughly the same rate.

The real problem with outrage at white police officers is that it doesn't address the problem of black-on-black crime, which is a FAR greater threat to black victims of crime.

A recent editorial by George Mason University professor of economics Walter Williams explains:

> Each year, roughly 7,000 blacks are murdered. Ninety-four percent of the time, the murderer is another black person.
>
> According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1976 and 2011, there were 279,384 black murder victims. Using the 94-percent figure means that 262,621 were murdered by other blacks.
>
> Though blacks are 13 percent of the nation's population, they account for more than 50 percent of homicide victims. Nationally, the black homicide victimization rate is six times that of whites, and in some cities, it's 22 times that of whites.
>
> Coupled with being most of the nation's homicide victims, blacks are most of the victims of violent personal crimes, such as assault and robbery.
>
> […]It's a tragic commentary to be able to say that young black males have a greater chance of reaching maturity on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan than on the streets of Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Oakland, Newark and other cities.

And all those cities are run by Democrats. And they have been run by Democrats for decades. Democrat policies don't work to solve the problem how making cities safer for blacks.

The real root cause behind crime is, of course, fatherlessness, as this interview about fatherless boys in the Daily Signal with Warren Farrell makes clear:

> They're far more likely to be the mass shooters. About 90% of the mass shooters that I studied since Columbine have been boys brought up in homes that have minimal or no father involvement or products of divorce or so on. And so that really shocked me to see that common denominator.
>
> I then looked beyond that and went to ISIS recruits. There was a big study of ISIS recruits that found that the common denominator among ISIS recruits was dad

> deprivation, but not only among the boys, but also the female ISIS recruits as well, which, of course, are in much smaller numbers.
>
> Then I started looking at prisoners and the prison population. We all know that 93% of the prisoners are male, but what very few people know is that about 90% of those 93% are dad-deprived boys.

Kay Cole James, the president of the Heritage Foundation (my favorite think tank), wrote about some of her ideas on how to solve the problem for Fox News.

She writes:

> First, we must ensure that we're encouraging families to stay together and that fathers and mothers raise their children together. Decades of studies have shown that children raised in single-parent homes are statistically more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, exhibit poor social behaviors, and commit violent crimes. They're also more likely to drop out of school, which often leaves them struggling to find good-paying jobs as adults.
>
> We could go a long way toward strengthening inner-city families by changing the system of government assistance that routinely weakens them.
>
> A child of welfare, I can tell you that an overreliance on government assistance has deprived millions of children of the love and security they would have gotten from a family with two parents.

In the rest of the article, she explains how she was able to put that into practice, and what results she obtained by doing it.

Welfare "frees" women to try to start relationships with men who demonstrate no ability or willingness to commit. She doesn't have to care about whether he is chaste, sober, drug-free, loyal, educated, a hard worker, etc. because the government is taking over the role of provider. The side effect of this is the high inner-city crime rates that we observe in cities that reward women for making fatherless children with men they never vetted for commitment ability.

Should a husband take special measures to assure his wife of his fidelity to her?

August 13, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Painting: "St. George and the Dragon", by Paolo Uccello (~1456)

I wanted to re-post this story about Mike Pence and his rule about never being alone with another woman, because I have been thinking about the importance of Christian convictions in the process of relationships. Specifically, the importance of a man being a Christian, and understanding the world well enough to make a plan that achieves the results that he sets out to achieve.

Here is the story reported in The Stream:

> It sounds like Vice President Mike Pence really loves his wife and really values his marriage.
>
> Yesterday *The Washington Post* ran a sweet profile of second lady Karen Pence noting her meek, steady influence on her husband. Interviews with friends and colleagues revealed that Mrs. Pence is a prayer warrior. She's also passionate about art therapy and works to help military families.
>
> **But Karen Pence's quiet power was not what set off a million talking heads on Twitter. No, it was the matter-of-fact statement that Mike and Karen Pence abide by a version of the Billy Graham Rule. In a 2002 interview, then-congressman Pence said he doesn't drink without his wife present, nor does he dine alone with other women.**
>
> **This common-sense rule stands out in a town like DC, where many, many marriages have fallen apart because of affairs.**

Indeed.

Regular readers of my blog know that I almost always take the side of men against young, unmarried women who have been influenced by feminism. But that doesn't mean that I think that men who find a good woman and then commit to her in marriage should do as they please. Not only do I approve of what Pence is doing for his wife, but I consider his actions *essential and required* for any husband. At the very least, every Christian husband has to come to some sort of understanding with his wife about how he intends to protect her from infidelity. And he needs to be realistic about the role that alcohol plays, as well as peer-pressure and opportunity. In a place like Washington, D.C. it becomes even more of a necessity to have these discussions. Every husband who claims to be a follower of Jesus has a responsibility to be a provider, a protector and a leader on moral and spiritual issues. Part of that protector role is protecting his wife from infidelity. Since he is the leader, he needs to have a plan to make sure that neither husband nor wife is exposed to temptation beyond what either can resist.

But look at how people on the secular left responded to the Pence rule: they claimed that Pence was "sexist" and that he could never allow any woman to occupy a position of authority with this rule – even though he had a female lieutenant governor while keeping to this rule.

Newsbusters reports:

> Some on the left went crazy, criticizing the VP's respectful stance as old-fashioned, demeaning to women, or even sharia-esque.
>
> "Pence's rule doesn't honor his wife," MTV News Senior National Correspondent Jamil Smith tweeted. "It uses antiquated ideas about gender and public scorn to place new responsibility upon her shoulders."
>
> Slate contributor Heather Schwedel accused the politician of holding "a pretty radically retrograde mindset" that views women "primarily as sexual temptations." Schwedel also quoted formerly evangelical journalist Elizabeth Spiers, who ridiculously wondered if "Pence could argue that he shouldn't have to hire women on a religious freedom basis."
>
> Linking to Schwedel's piece, TeenVogue writer Lily Herman revealed her complete misunderstanding of the VP's practice. "Mike Pence basically doesn't interact with women," she tweeted.
>
> Others made illogical attempts to prove Pence's hypocrisy.
>
> […]"Sincere question. How is this different from extreme repressive interpretations of Islam ("Sharia Law!") mocked by people like Mike Pence," queried NYT contributor Xeni Jardin.
>
> St. Louis Post columnist Aisha Sultan agreed, commenting: "He's waaay more Muslim than Obama ever was."

Mollie Z. reported on even more secular leftist screeching at The Federalist, and she

commented:

> Infidelity destroys intimacy, happiness, and marriages themselves. But it happens because of the strong temptation that exists every day for most healthy people. When marriages end, the associated costs are financial, emotional, and physical. Divorce tends to be hard on men, women, and children. It harms economic and health outcomes for children, and decreases women's standard of living over the course of their lifetimes. Guarding against it is smart.
>
> […]**If divorce rates weren't sky-high and if infidelity weren't a problem faced by millions of couples, mocking Pence for the means by which he keeps his marriage intact might make more sense. Heck, if the human condition weren't such that we all find it difficult to do the right thing, the mockery also might make sense.**
>
> **As it is, Pence's smart tactics for avoiding the kind of marital failure that could destroy him, his wife, their family, and the lives of those around them is to be commended and celebrated.**

I think I know what it is that is animating people to mock Pence's thoughtful plan. It's not mockery that is just coming from the secular left, either. The fundamental thing that Pence is doing is this: he is making a plan to achieve the result he wants, and then following through on the plan. The plan does not allow him to play fast and loose with boundaries. He has to exercise self-control well before he is faced with an impossible situation. He has to give up on some freedom and exercise self-control in order to draw a line well before he comes to the line that he cannot cross. In short, Pence has made a plan on his own that is not Biblical, but that will help him to achieve the goal that the Bible sets for him: do not commit adultery.

I think that there are people on the secular left AND on the religious right alike who don't want to give up any freedom, nor make any plan. They just want to pursue pleasure and be driven by their feelings. They don't want to say no to anything or have any self-control. This is a problem I see in secular leftists and low-grade feelings-based Christians, too. Naturally, secular leftists lack moral wisdom enough to exercise self-control, that's a given. But what happens to people on the religious right is that they want to punt to the Bible, and piety and feelings to such an extent that they are destroyed by their own foolishness. Because the Bible only specifies goals, lazy Christians often lean too much on God, refusing to think that there is any wisdom elsewhere that could make the achievement of Biblical goals easier.

That's why you see a lot of young Christians getting into trouble. If you have a goal to achieve for your Boss, you have to make a plan to achieve it. You can't just follow your feelings and then blame everyone else when you fail. You can't do what you feel like doing, refusing to exercise self-denial and self-control throughout a plan, then complain that you didn't achieve the goal. No one does well on an exam if they don't come to class, do the homework, and study for the exam.

What about results?

What about the approach of secular leftist women who attack Pence? What kind of men do they choose, and do these men produce results like Pence and Pence's rule do?

This splendid article from The Stream explores the decisions of the radical feminists, noting that Democrat women pick men like Anthony Weiner and Bill Clinton.

It concludes:

> What feminists really claim to want from men is a milder version of Jenner: Someone who suppresses, beats down, and denies what it means to be a man. Who internalizes the guilt that feminism sprays men with like a firehose. And yet who (like Jenner) is somehow still attracted to women. A tame man, a damaged man, a man who is no threat at all.
>
> At least that's what feminists think they want. In fact, they're probably secretly more attracted to Clinton. They'd be better off with Pence. What they'll end up with is Weiner.
>
> Who said that there's no justice in the world?

What we are seeing today is a generation of people inside and outside the church who laugh at moral rules like chastity. Instead of choosing chaste partners and being intelligent about settle moral boundaries, they think that they can achieve the same outcome (lifelong married love) with their own made-up "morality". When you look around at the great crises of our time: abortion, divorce, single motherhood, you can clearly see that each begins with a decision to take what makes me feel good and disregard moral rules. Naturally, the people who break the rules never imagine that they will not get the same lifelong, married love that the rule-followers get. But of course, it doesn't work like that. What the rule-breakers really get is Bill Clinton and Anthony Weiner. They fail the exam because they refused to prepare for it.

Why do so many Christian musicians, artists, athletes and celebrities leave the faith?

August 14, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Several people sent me the story about a former Hillsong worship leader who decided to leave Christianity. Since we've had a few high profile departures, I thought it might be worth giving my very controversial view on Christian musicians, artists, athletes and celebrities. I've always been suspicious of celebrities claiming to be Christians and there's a very simple reason why.

Anyway, here is the story sent to me by Tiasunep, published in the Christian Today.

It says:

> Hillsong worship leader has reportedly walked away from the Christian faith after posting a – since removed – Instagram update in which he said he was "not in anymore".
>
> […]"Time for some real talk… I'm genuinely losing my faith.. and it doesn't bother me… like, what bothers me now is nothing… I am so happy now, so at peace with the world.. it's crazy / this is a soapbox moment so here I go xx how many preachers fall? Many. No one talks about it.
>
> "How many miracles happen. Not many. No one talks about it. Why is the Bible full of contradictions? No one talks about it. How can God be love yet send 4 billion people to a place, all coz they don't believe? No one talks about it.
>
> "Christians can be the most judgemental people on the planet – they can also be some of the most beautiful and loving people… but it's not for me. I am not in any more."
>
> […]Science keeps piercing the truth of every religion," he writes.

> “Lots of things help people change their lives, not just one version of God. Got so much more to say, but for me, I keeping it real.
>
> […]The news has saddened many in the Christian scene who were still getting over a similar announcement made a few weeks ago by Joshua Harris, author of *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*.
>
> Within the space of a week, he announced that he was separating from his wife and that he had fallen away from the Christian faith.

It looks to me like no one has ever made the evidential case for a Christian worldview to him, and he’s just crumbling because he doesn’t have answers to basic, ordinary questions.

In modern secular America, authentic Christianity is spelled A-P-O-L-O-G-E-T-I-C-S

In primitive areas of the world, a person could be a sincere Christian without knowing how to answer basic questions about scientific evidence for a creator, historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus, philosophical defenses to the problems of evil and suffering, etc. But this is modern America, and there are atheists in the universities and in the workplace and just everywhere. If you meet someone in America who claims to be a Christian, it’s guaranteed that this person will have met atheists in these places. If this Christian has not put in any effort to learn how to answer basic questions about God’s existence, the resurrection, the problem of evil, etc, and they are regarded as very pious and spiritual, you should immediately distrust their claim to be a Christian.

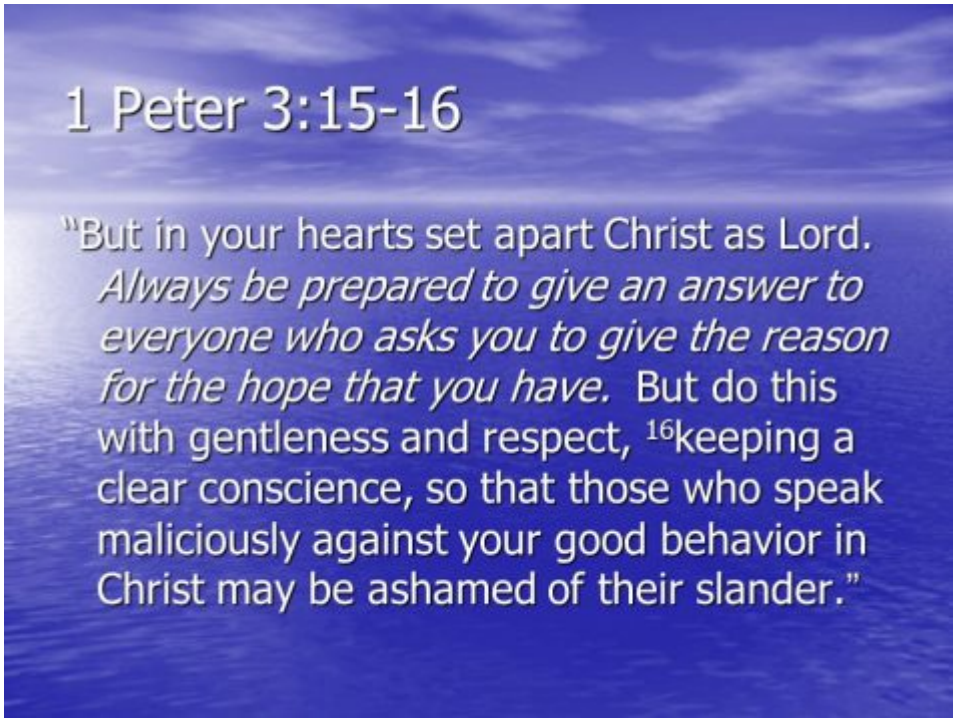

1 Peter 3:15-16

Authentic Christians will be appropriately moved by the existence of people who not only do not accept a Creator, but also deny Jesus as Lord and Savior. And since the example of using reason and evidence to respond to skeptics is everywhere in the Bible, then sincere

Bible believers will likewise want to find a way to answer people who question the Christian worldview. If you look at a Christian, and you can't find anything in their writings or words that interacts with Christian scholarship and responds to popular challenges to the Christian worldview, then you're looking at a fake Christian. Such a person is merely posing as a Christian for feelings, fame and peer approval. Every real Christian is concerned about defending God's reputation and character. And the way that this is done in the Bible – and today – is with evidential apologetics.

There is no mature Christian worldview that majors in praise hymns, social justice, essential oils, devotional reading, etc. Today, right now, your co-worker is an atheist. Today, right now, your child's professor is an atheist. If you haven't put in the time to prepare a defense to the challenges right in front of your face – challenges that affect you and your legacy in Christ – but you have plenty of time to major in the minors for fame and fortune, then that's a sign that you don't have a Christian worldview. If all your Christianity is just having feelings, devotional reading and singing praise songs, then you need to ask yourself whether you're not on the same road as this Hillsong worship leader.

Young people should be learning apologetics from their parents, pastors and other Christian leaders

It's not surprising to me that the Hillsong worship leader is an apostate. What's surprising to me is that anyone at all who is raised in any American church is able to preserve their faith for very long after leaving home. The churches in America do a poor job of equipping Christians to answer the most basic questions about the Christian worldview. Questions that could easily be answered after a few Lee Strobel books, or some True U DVDs. But in Christian homes and Christians churches, young people are never exposed to the challenges of non-Christians. They never do any investigations to learn how to respond to them. Then when they get to college, they feel (rightly) as if they've been brainwashed and indoctrinated by people in the church who were divorced from reality. And then they quit on Christianity. I see it all the time.

If you're going to pick someone to look up to as a Christian, then choose people who have put in the time to study the truth claims of the Christian worldview enough to defend them to other scholars, using arguments and evidence. I admire people like William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer, Michael Licona who actually debate non-Christians on university campuses and other public forums. In contrast, an entertainer isn't usually qualified to defend truth claims.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang cosmology
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones

- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Making sense of evil and suffering within a Christian worldview

August 15, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

One thing I've noticed in talking to atheists who grew up in Christian homes is that they often leave their Christian worldview behind because of a disappointment with God. For some reason, they get this idea that God is our cosmic butler. We can do whatever we want in order to be happy, and if we want any help in this, then we just ring for him. When we encounter disappointment, our tendency is to just leave God behind.

Paul Copan explains the high points of the problems of evil and suffering in 17 minutes. (H/T Apologetics 315)

The MP3 file is here.

The video is here:

Topics:

- the question itself reveals that we are moral beings
- the problem of evil is the great interrupter of human well-being
- every philosophy of life has to address this question
- is God required to give us a life that is easy and comfortable?
- evil is a departure from good, i.e. – the way things ought to be
- a way things ought to be implies a plan for what ought to be
- human evil implies a plan for the way we ought to be
- free creatures have the ability to deviate from the plan
- where does this plan for the universe and us come from?
- how can there be a way we ought to be come from?

- evil is the flip side of good so where does good come from?
- God’s own moral nature is the standard of good and evil
- where does evil from natural disasters come from?
- how dangerous natural phenomena preserve Earth’s habitability
- there is a benefit from tectonic activity
- similarly, God lets humans freely choose knowing harm may result
- people are free to try to find meaning in something other than God
- God is able to use negative things to bring about positive results
- e.g. – when good people suffer, they can comfort and care for others
- can people be good enough on their own without God?

I do think it’s worth thinking about whether the New Testament portrays God as our cosmic butler, just waiting on us hand and foot so that we can be happy. Personally, I think you’d have to be crazy to get that impression of God from the Bible. Especially from the life of Jesus, who suffers in order to do the will of his Father. Wouldn’t it be funny if atheists were disbelieving in a God of their own making? Suffering in the pursuit of goodness has always been the center of the Christian life. I’m not sure where people get this idea that God’s job is to make us happy, according to our own desires. Seems kind of shallow. Certainly not Biblical. Do people even read the Bible any more to find out what God is really like? Maybe that’s the problem.

New study: parrots have similar brain mechanisms to humans

August 16, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A cockatoo uses a little tool he made to reach a snack

OK, it's a fun Friday post. I guess most of my readers know that I love almost all the birds, and especially parrots. I have owned parrots most of my life, and want to get more, too. I also like to feed the wild birds who come to visit my house. One reason I like them so much is that they are very intelligent and obviously designed by a very clever engineer.

First, let me explain what convergence is, then we'll look at a recent peer-reviewed scientific publication.

We have to start this Science Daily post with the definition of convergence in biology.

> In evolutionary biology, convergent evolution is the process whereby organisms not closely related (not monophyletic), independently evolve similar traits as a result of having to adapt to similar environments or ecological niches.
>
> It is the opposite of divergent evolution, where related species evolve different traits.
>
> On a molecular level, this can happen due to random mutation unrelated to adaptive changes; see long branch attraction. In cultural evolution, convergent evolution is the development of similar cultural adaptations to similar environmental conditions by different peoples with different ancestral cultures. An example of convergent evolution is the similar nature of the flight/wings of insects, birds, pterosaurs, and bats.
>
> All four serve the same function and are similar in structure, but each evolved independently.

So, naturalists say that if two organisms have traits that are similar, it must mean that the trait evolved once in their ancestors, and then the modern species inherited the trait from those ancestors. If evolution is true, the only mechanism they have to develop traits shared by two organisms is mutation and selection. The problems occur when two organisms share similar traits, but they have no recent common ancestor, and no recent shared evolutionary history of mutation and selection.

Here's the latest study from the New Scientist:

> To learn more how these birds' brains develop, Mello and his team compared the genome of the blue-fronted Amazon parrot with that of 30 other birds. They found that regions of the parrot genome that regulate when and how genes for brain development are turned on are the same as those found in humans. These so-called ultra-conserved elements evolved in both species at different times, but with similar results.

Well, parrots and humans are completely different creatures, with no recent evolutionary history, and no recent common ancestors. So, if these changes are due to evolution, then we should see them in the very very very distance common ancestor shared by birds and humans. But then shouldn't they be in all the other animals who descend from that very very very distant common ancestor to?

Watch this:

I'll tell you what the real explanation is: the real explanation is that God created birds and humans. And, like a clever engineer, he re-used components that produced the behavior he wanted in his birds and his humans. We know how this works, because this is how intelligent agents write code today. Why do we need a naturalistic theory that requires magic to work, when we have a simple explanation that we can observe every time someone writes a blog post, or some code, or anything with information in it?

Anyway, however you feel about that, try to be kind to birds, as they are much smarter and more sensitive than most people think. Put out some bird feeders in the yard, if you don't have an outdoor cat. And if you do have a cat, then why not put a bell on it, or keep it indoors?

Related posts

- Study: biological convergence found in human and squid eye genes
- Convergence detected in the genetic structure of bats and dolphins
- How biological convergence falsifies Darwinian evolution
- Science Daily reports on genetic convergence in bats and whales
- What kinds of predictions does intelligent design theory make?
- Is universal common ancestry based on established facts?

New study: Angus Reid Institute analyzes Canada's single payer healthcare system

August 17, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The cost of healthcare for average Canadian households

I found two interesting studies from Canada's Angus Reid Institute describing single payer health care in Canada. I'm very interested in find out what things are like in countries that have true government-run health care. A typical Canadian family pays $13,000+ per year per household for healthcare, or about $585,000 over their working lives. What are they getting for all that money?

Here is the first Angus Reid article:

> The study finds more than 2 million Canadians aged 55 and older face significant barriers when accessing the health care system in their province, such as being unable to find a family doctor or experiencing lengthy wait-times for surgery, diagnostic tests, or specialist visits.
>
> Moreover, most Canadians in this age group have at least some difficulty getting the care they want or need in a timely manner.
>
> The study focuses on the health care experiences of older Canadians, as well as their assessments of the quality of care they receive.

According to the article, 31% of respondents (aged 55 and older) rated access to the government's healthcare system as "easy". 48% had "moderate" problems with access, and 21% had "major" problems with access.

Remember: in the Canadian system, you pay your money up front in taxes, and then they

decide how much healthcare you will get *later* – and how soon you will get it. If you worked from ages 20 to age 65, then your household will have paid 45 x $13,000 = $585,000 into the system, in order to get "moderate" problems with accessing healthcare after you're aged 55.

And the Canadian system DOES NOT cover prescription drugs.

The second Angus Reid article explains:

> This second part of the study finds one-in-six Canadians (17%) in the 55-plus age group – a figure that represents upwards of 1.8 million people – say that they or someone else in their household have taken prescription drugs in a way other than prescribed because of cost.
>
> One-in-ten (10%) have decided to simply not fill a prescription because it was too expensive, and a similar number (9%) have decided not to renew one for the same reason. One-in-eight (12%) have taken steps to stretch their prescriptions, such as cutting pills or skipping doses.
>
> Some 17 per cent of Canadians 55 and older have done at least one of these things, and that proportion rises among those who have greater difficulty accessing other aspects of the health care system.

In a previous blog post, I reported on how Canadians have to wait in order to see their GP doctor. If that doctor refers them to a specialist, then they have to wait to see the specialist. And if that specialist schedules surgery, then they have to wait for their surgery appointment. The delays can easily go from weeks to months and even years. The MEDIAN delay from GP referral to treatment is 19.5 weeks.

But remember – they paid into the system FIRST. The decisions about when and if they will be treated are made later, by experts in the government. This is what it means for a government monopoly to run health care. There are no free exchanges of money for service in a competitive free market. Costs are controlled by delaying and withholding treatment. And no one knows this better than elderly Canadians themselves. But by the time they realize how badly they've been swindled, it's too late to get their money back out. You can't pull your tax money out of government if you are disappointed with the service you receive. There are no refunds. There are no returns.

William Lane Craig debates Daniel Came: Does God exist?

August 18, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

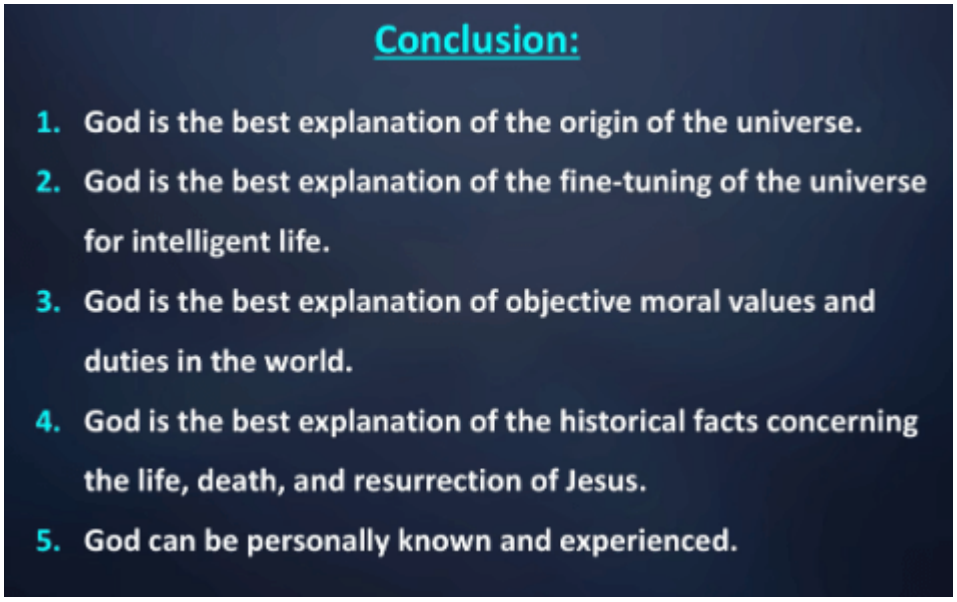

Dr. Craig's opening speech summary slide

The video of the debate was posted by ReasonableFaith.org – Dr. Craig's organization. This debate occurred in March 2017 at the University of Dublin, in Ireland.

The video: (91 minutes)

My non-snarky summary is below.

Dr. Craig's opening speech

Two claims:

1. There are good reasons to think that theism is true.
2. There are not comparably good reasons to think that atheism is true.

Five reasons for God's existence:

1. The beginning of the universe
– actual infinite past is mathematically impossible
– BGV theorem: any universe that is on balance expanding in its history (like ours) cannot be past eternal

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– slight changes to quantities and constants prevent a universe from supporting complex embodied life
– the multiverse response of atheists conflicts with observations, e.g. the Boltzmann Brains problem

3. Objective moral values
– God's existence is required to ground objective moral values and duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus

– there are good reasons to accept the most widely accepted facts about the historical Jesus (empty tomb, appearances, early widespread belief in the resurrection)
– the best explanation of these minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

5. Experience God directly
– in the absence of any defeaters to belief in God, a person can experience God directly

Dr. Daniel Came's opening speech

1. The hiddenness of God
– if God wants a personal relationship with us, and a relationship with God would be the greatest good for us
– God ought to reveal himself to us, but he does not reveal himself to many people, the "non-resistant non-believers"

2. The inductive problem of evil
– many evil events occur that are pointless – there is no morally sufficient reason why God would allow them to occur
– examples: animal suffering, children born with disease, tsunamis
– the theistic response to this is that humans are not in a position to know whether there are morally sufficient reasons, due to our limitations of knowing the consequences
– but this ripple effect defense has 4 possible outcomes, 3 of which don't do the job of justifying

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

1. The hiddenness of God
– God's goal is not to make his existence known, but to draw them into a love relationship
– it's speculative that overt displays of God's existence would draw people to him in a love relationship, they might resent his bullying
– atheist would have to prove that God could draw more people into a love relationship with him by revealing himself more overtly

2. The inductive problem of evil
– as humans, we are not in a position to know for certain that any apparently pointless evil really is pointless
– William Alston article: 6 limitations of human knowing make it impossible to judge that an evil is actually "pointless"
– Dr. Came says that there are 4 possibilities for the ripple effects, and since 3 are bad, it's likely that there are not morally sufficient reasons for a apparently pointless evil
– it is logically fallacious to assert probability conclusions without knowing the probabilities of those 4 options
– there is actually an argument from evil: since the problem of evil requires an objective standard of good and evil by which to measure, and God is the only possible ground of objective morality, then pressing the problem of evil actually requires the atheist to assume God, in order to ground this objective moral standard

Dr. Came's first rebuttal

3. Objective moral values

– there are naturalistic theories of moral realism where objective moral duties and objective moral values exist in a naturalistic universe
– I'm not saying that any of them are correct, but there are many theories about object morality in a naturalistic universe

There are naturalistic theories for all of the 5 arguments that Dr. Craig presented. It is Dr. Craig's responsibility to present those naturalistic theories and prove that they are not as good as his explanations. I'm not going to defend (or even name!) a single naturalistic theory for any of these 5 arguments by Dr. Craig.

Dr. Craig's explanations for the 5 evidences he gave can't be admitted, because we have to know how God did something *in naturalistic terms* before we can know that God did it supernaturally. Explanations are only valid if they are naturalistic.

1. The beginning of the universe
– naturalism explains how the universe expands after it came into being, so that explains how it came into being
– the God explanation, that God created the universe out of nothing, is not admissible, because it is not naturalistic
– how does God, as an unembodied mind interact with the physical world?
– the only agency that we know about is human agents, and we have bodies, so how could God perform actions without having a body?

The theistic hypothesis does not make any predictions, but naturalism makes lots of testable predictions. God could do anything, so he is not constrained and is therefore untestable. We can't infer God as an explanation in principle because we can't predict what is more probable if God exists than if he does not.

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the university was not set up to make embodied intelligence plausible, because the vast majority of the universe is hostile to life
– there are models of the multiverse that escape the Boltzmann Brains problem that Dr. Craig raised

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

Some of Dr. Craig's arguments are deductive (e.g. – the beginning of the universe, objective moral values), so that the conclusion follows from the premises if the premises are true. The resurrection passes the standard tests for historical explanations.

1. The beginning of the universe
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for an ultimate beginning of the universe

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for a design of the universe to support life
– he has to prove that intelligences has to be attached to bodies
– human beings are non-physical minds united to physical bodies
– naturalistic attempts to explain mental operations fail

– the arguments *prove* that unembodied minds exist
– the vast expanse of the universe is required in order to form the galaxies, stars and heavy elements needed for complex life
– why expect that the entire universe should be small, or that life would be everywhere?
– a non-fine-tuned world is more likely in the multiverse, and in a multiverse, we are more likely to have a Boltzmann brain world than a world with complex, embodied life
– Dr. Came has not advanced any naturalistic explanation for the fine-tuning

3. Objective moral values
– non-theistic ethical theories cannot account for the ontological foundations of objective moral values and duties
– atheistic theories of moral realism simply assume objective moral values out of thin air
– it is especially hard to find any basis for objective moral duties in the absence of God

Dr. Came's second rebuttal

5. Religious experience
– Dr. Craig should not bring up religious experience in a debate where arguments and evidence are central
– people who have dreams, hallucinations and psychotic delusions could appeal to religious experience
– religious experience is by no means universal, and it is possible to doubt it

3. Objective moral values
– there are lots of atheists who hold to objective moral values
– Dr. Craig has to explain how God grounds objective moral values and duties
– Dr. Craig has to explain why atheist moral realist theories don't work to ground objective moral values and duties

1. The beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig claims that something can't come from nothing, that's not an argument
– there are numerous models that don't require an absolute beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig cites the BGV theorem, but Guth (one of the authors) says that only the inflation has a beginning, not the whole universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion

1. The beginning of the universe
– on theism, there is an efficient cause, but no material cause, for the origin of the universe
– on atheism, there is neither an efficient cause nor a material cause, for the origin of the universe: that's worse!
– if he thinks that there are models of the universe that don't require a beginning, then let him name a viable eternal model of the universe
– he never refuted the mathematical argues against an infinite past

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– nothing to refute

3. Objective moral values

– God is a better ground for morality than humans, because he is ultimate, and not contingent and arbitrary
– God is a being who is worthy of worship, and therefore command his creatures with moral duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus
– nothing to refute

5. Religious experience
– only justified because there are no defeaters to it

1. The hiddenness of God
– atheist has to show that if God's existence were more obvious, that it would result in more people being drawn to him

2. The inductive problem of evil
– Dr. Came's argument was logically fallacious, and makes errors in probability theory

Dr. Came's conclusion

Sometimes, people can't prove something, but lack of evidence is a justification for doubting it, e.g. – werewolves.

If none of Craig's arguments work, then it follows that it is not rational to believe that God exists, and it is rational to believe that God does not exist.

Atheists shouldn't have a burden of proof for what they know, only theists have a burden of proof for what they know.

My thoughts

One quick point. If life were common everywhere then atheists would infer that God wasn't involved in it. Period. "Life is everywhere, so it's common, why do we need a designer?" they'd say. I agree with Dr. Came about denouncing religious experience in a formal debate. I don't like when Dr. Craig brings this up, but I see why he does it – he's an evangelist, and that's a good thing, too. I just worry about how it looks to atheists, although it's good for sincere seekers. I'm not the one on the stage, though, Dr. Craig is.

I think the point about more overt revealing by God would annoy people and make them turn away. Think of how gay people respond to the suggestion that there is anything wrong with them, with rage, vandalism, threats, coercion, attempts to get you to lose your job and business, and using government as a weapon to fine and imprison you. It's really obvious to me that more God does not mean more *love* of God. For those who don't want God, the hiddenness is respect for their choice to put pleasure above the search for truth. (I mean the gay activists – I have great sympathy for people who struggle with same-sex unwanted attractions because they were impacted by a failed bond with their parent of the same sex as they are).

Whenever I meet people like Dr. Came, I always urge them to keep investigating and pursuing truth, because they will find it if they are sincerely seeking after God. Some atheists do sincerely seek God, but I don't know any who haven't found him. I'm not sure if that's because those atheists who claim to be non-resistant and rational are in fact

resistant and non-rational, or what the real reason is. If you believe the Bible, *all* unbelief is non-rational and resistant (see Romans 1). Regarding the werewolves, we don't have any good arguments for werewolves, we do have good arguments for God. Dr. Came didn't refute the arguments that Craig raised, nor did his own arguments for atheism work. And there are many, many more arguments (origin of life, Cambrian explosion, habitability-discoverability, molecular machines) that Craig did not raise, too.

Are you ready for marriage? 10 questions to find out how prepared you are

August 19, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Would you like your marriage to be long-lasting and fulfilling? Well, check out the questions below and see if you are ready for life-long wedded bliss.

1. Are you opposed to no-fault divorce laws?

No-fault divorce laws allow one spouse to leave the marriage at any time, for any reason, or for no reason at all. If you support no-fault divorce, then your view of marriage is that it's something to be entered into lightly, because it can be exited easily. You'll be walking down the aisle thinking "oh well, if it doesn't work out, I can always get a divorce". If you oppose no-fault divorce laws, then your view of marriage is that there is no escape hatch. You'll probably be a lot more careful about getting married. Since you are convinced that marriage is built to last forever, you'll have a courtship of at least 6 months, and involve both sets of parents in the process. If you put commitment above happiness, you're ready for marriage.

2. Are you opposed to abortion laws?

Abortion laws basically make it easy for two people to have recreational sex, and then get rid of any complications that result quickly and easily. This way, both the people that created the effect can escape the responsibility for what they did, and keep right on pursuing their goals and dreams. If you support abortion laws, you're really saying that you can engage in recreational sex with people who are unwilling to accept responsibility for any children that result. If you are pro-life, then you're saying that people should be careful about having sex, and be ready to take responsibility for a child, should one appear. Being responsible is good preparation for marriage.

3. Are you supportive of daycare for young kids?

Daycare services are essential for couples who need both the father and the mother to be working. The advantage of both parents working is that you can afford lots of shiny new stuff – like vacations, boats, shoes and handbags. Studies show that children don't die during daycare, although if you put a child in daycare, there will be effects on the child's behavior, such as higher anxiety and aggression. If you oppose daycare, you're putting the needs of your children above your need for shiny stuff. Putting the needs of children first is a sign that you are ready for the self-sacrifice that marriage requires.

4. Are you in favor of smaller government?

If you're in favor of smaller government, then you would rather keep taxes low so that more money stays in the family. If you support bigger government, then you think that government knows how to spend your money better than you and your spouse do. Additionally, government usually likes to spend more money than they take in. For example, in Obama's 8 years, we added $10 trillion dollars to the debt, which doubled from 10 to 20 trillion under his watch. If you oppose higher taxes and bigger government, then you want government to pass on less debt to your children. Putting your kids' financial well-being over your own is pro-marriage.

5. Are you in favor of school choice?

If you're opposed to school choice, then you think that government should decide which schools your children will attend. School choice laws allow parents to give money to the schools they think are best for the children. If a school has excellent teachers and teaches students skills that they can use in their professional lives, then parents can choose that school. Schools have to compete to provide higher quality to parents, for lower cost. If you support giving parents more choice, then you put the needs of children – especially poor, minority children – above the needs of education administrators and teacher unions. Putting kids first is pro-marriage.

6. Are you in favor of premarital sex?

Premarital sex is really fun (so I'm told). You can have sex with people who are just really attractive, even if these people have lousy character. Your friends will be impressed, and you'll feel more attractive – like you were climbing a ladder of attractiveness with each new partner. If you combine sex with being drunk, then you can't remember anything after. And you can't feel guilty if the booze made you do it, right? On the other hand, if you present yourself to your spouse as a virgin, you are telling them that you have self-control, that you take sex as communication rather than recreation, and that they can trust you to be faithful by keeping sex inside the marriage. Trust is important for a good marriage.

7. Are you in favor of welfare for single mothers?

Sometimes, women find themselves pregnant before they are married. If you think that giving taxpayer money to women who have babies before they have husbands is a good idea, then you are rewarding behavior that creates fatherless children. Raising a child without a father causes serious behavioral problems. Boys tend to become more violent,

and are more likely to commit crimes. Girls tend to engage in sex at earlier ages. If you oppose encouraging fatherlessness with welfare, you want women to get married before they have kids. Taking the needs of children seriously is pro-marriage.

8. Are you in favor of same-sex marriage?

When a man and a man get married and acquire children, those children will not be raised with their birth mother. Similarly with lesbians, the children will not grow up with their birth father. Studies show that children suffer from not being raised by their biological parents. For example, children of same-sex parents have lower graduation rates than children raised by heterosexual couples. If you think that children have a right to a stable relationship with their biological mother and father, then you place a higher value on the needs of children as opposed to the needs of adults. That's a good sign you're ready for marriage.

9. Are you in favor of radical feminism?

Feminism shows that you think the purpose of marriage is to make women happy, and not to work as a team to serve God and raise good children. Indeed. Marriage doesn't work if the woman approaches it as an accessory. Marriage is about a man and a woman sacrificing their own interests and compromising in order to work together as a team. Husbands and children have needs that women should care about. Feminism teaches women that husbands and children are less important than their careers, hobbies and interests. Feminism is anti-marriage.

10. Are you responsible with earning, budgeting and saving money?

This one comes to us from Bob P. He says that marriages work better when both spouses are "committed to financial planning, budgeting and a renunciation of debt to support a lifestyle. Disagreement about financial issues is one of the greatest causes of marital stress." If you're able to choose a college major or a trade that you don't like, but that pays well, that's a positive. If you're able to string together jobs so that your resume is gap-less, that's a positive. If you're able to save money even though it means you're having less fun, that's a positive. If you're able to give away money to others to support them, that means you're able to sacrifice your interests for the benefit of others. That's pro-marriage.

Well, how did you do? Leave your ideas for more policies and points of view that are marriage-friendly in the comments.

What is the Southern Poverty Law Center?

August 20, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Southern Poverty Law Center was connected to a 2012 domestic terrorism attack

We hear a lot in the news about an organization called the "Southern Poverty Law Center", or SPLC. Big technology companies and news media corporations rely on the SPLC to tell them about "hate groups". But did you know that the SPLC was once directly linked to anti-Christian, anti-conservative domestic terrorism? The attack happened way back in August 2012.

Here is a recent USA Today editorial by Jessica Prol Smith, in which she recalls the act domestic terrorism that nearly claimed her life.

She writes:

> I'll never forget the moment I learned we were on lockdown. It was Aug.15, 2012. My frustration mingled with fear. Trapped on the sixth floor, we knew someone had been shot. We knew we couldn't leave yet. We knew little else.
>
> While I was missing lunch, a crime scene played out in the office lobby below me. My coworker and friend Leo wasn't armed, but he had played the quick-thinking and inadvertent hero, disarming a young man on a mission to kill me and as many of my colleagues as possible. The gunman had packed his backpack with ammo and 15 Chick-fil-A sandwiches — later admitting that he had planned to smear them on our lifeless faces as a political statement. Leo took a bullet in the arm but managed to hold the attacker until law enforcement arrived.
>
> […]The assailant acknowledged later in FBI testimony that he had selected our office precisely because the SPLC had labeled my employer a "hate group."

She was working for the Family Research Council, a Washington D.C. think tank that specializes in abortion policy, marriage policy, and religious liberty issues. Just to be clear, they have a bunch of people with doctorates who write research papers that lawmakers then use to make policy. This is a prestigious organization, but that didn't save them from

a gay activist with a gun.

She continues:

> For years, the left-wing interest group has used its "hate group" list to promote the fiction that violent neo-Nazis and Christian nonprofits peacefully promoting orthodox beliefs about marriage and sex are indistinguishable. Sometimes, it has apologized to public figures it has smeared, and it recently paid out millions to settle a threatened defamation lawsuit.
>
> These shameful secrets are no longer hidden in shadows. The New York Times, Politico, NPR and a host of other mainstream publications are reporting on the corruption and widening credibility gap. The SPLC dismissed its co-founder in March, and its president has resigned amidst numerous claims of sexual harassment, gender discrimination and racism within the organization — a parade of disgraces that vividly force the conclusion: The SPLC is hollow, rotten and failing at the very virtues it pretends to celebrate.
>
> […]Jobs and years have passed, and I work now for Alliance Defending Freedom. ADF ranks among "the top performing firm(s)" litigating First Amendment cases, according to the Empirical SCOTUS blog, and is the "Christian legal powerhouse that keeps winning at the Supreme Court," according to The Washington Post.
>
> And yes, my new employer has also attracted one of the SPLC's spurious hate labels.

I actually do not accept that there are ANY hate groups on the political right. If you understand right-wing as meaning what it meant at the founding: free markets, individual liberties, constitutional government, federalism, rule of law, etc., then there is nothing hateful about being a conservative. There is nothing about race differences in right-wing ideology. On the other hand, it's left-wing groups like the Black Panthers, KKK, La Raza and the Democrat party who are constantly trying to divide people into groups by race.

Recently, we saw a mass shooting in Dayton committed by a socialist who supports Elizabeth Warren, and two mass shootings by eco-terrorists in Christchurch, New Zealand and El Paso, Texas. And there was also a recent domestic terrorism attack committed by Antifa in Tacoma Washington, which could have killed hundreds of people:

> A burning vehicle sending flames shooting high above a perimeter fence can be seen in new surveillance video obtained by Fox News that shows an attack by an armed Antifa supporter last month at a local Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Washington state. The assault was ultimately foiled, but a former acting director of the agency said it could have killed "hundreds."
>
> "Thank God for the Tacoma P.D.," ICE former Acting Director Tom Homan said on "Fox & Friends" on Thursday. "Their professionalism and quick response prevented the loss of hundreds and hundreds of lives, so hats off to them and

> their quick response."

I could be mistaken, but Antifa appears to be the fascist shock troops of the anti-Semitic socialist Democrat party, similar to the Brown Shirts who helped Adolf Hitler's anti-Semitic socialist party to seize power in 1930s Germany.

Does the SPLC label any left-wing groups as "hate groups"? Not that I'm aware of.

I think it's important for people to understand that groups like SPLC might just be trying to deflect criticism from far-left hate groups by labeling mainstream groups they disagree with as "hate groups". And sometimes, that false labeling results in real violence against mainstream Christians and conservatives.

New study: As Christianity declines, so do stable relationships and marriage

August 21, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man and woman working on a computer upgrade together

Mark Regnerus is a sociologist at the University of Texas, Austin. He publishes a lot of his books with Oxford University Press. So, his research methods are generally seen as reliable. I noticed that he had done a survey of views on religion, sexuality and marriage in 2018, and he published a popular level article about it earlier this week. I think it's worth taking a look at his findings.

He writes:

> Let me offer a word about the survey. I call it the *American Political and Social Behavior* survey, which interviewed 5,285 Americans in November 2018, just days after the midterm election. The data collection was conducted by Ipsos… a research firm with a very strong record of generating high-quality data for academic projects.

Here are his findings:

Characteristics of the Unreligious in 2018 and 2015, compared with Catholics and Evangelicals (in 2018)

	Unreligious in 2018	Unreligious in 2015	Catholics in 2018	Evangelicals in 2018
Percentage of the population	20.3%	14.6%	23.8%	9.5%
Average age	37.8	37.7	41.3	42.0
Female	40%	40%	53%	49%
Married	49%	48%	58%	67%
Married (among 20-29-year-olds only)	22%	20%	19%	37%
Cohabiting	13%	13%	9%	3%
Cohabiting (among 20-29-year-olds only)	23%	17%	18%	9%
Ever been divorced	16%	15%	17%	21%
Average number of biological children	1.0	0.8	1.5	1.8
Intact family of origin	62%	61%	69%	68%
Loving atmosphere in family of origin (% agrees)	67%	59%	75%	77%
Ever cheat on current spouse or partner?	14%	12%	13%	9%
Self-identifies as 100% Heterosexual (women)	66%	71%	92%	96%
Self-identifies as 100% Heterosexual (men)	83%	84%	90%	95%
Self-identifies as 100% Homosexual (women)	2%	2%	0.4%	0%
Self-identifies as 100% Homosexual (men)	6%	7%	4%	1%
Average freq of sex in past 2 weeks (among married)	2.0	2.2	2.5	2.5
Marriage is outdated (% agrees)	24%	20%	10%	2%
Cohabitation is okay (% agrees)	78%	70%	55%	19%
No-strings-attached sex is okay (% agrees)	80%	71%	43%	14%
Sometimes extramarital sex can be okay (% agrees)	24%	18%	10%	3%
Polyamorous relationships are okay (% agrees)	58%	43%	19%	6%
Supports abortion rights	80%	76%	39%	14%
Teen hormonal/surgical transition okay (% agrees)	47%	---	26%	4%

Source: *American Political and Social Behavior* survey, Americans age 20-60.

Views of unreligious, Catholic and evangelical Americans (click to expand)

This is interesting:

> Even when I limit the group to respondents below age thirty—which is just north of the median age at marriage in the United States—it is notable that 22 percent of the unreligious are married and 23 percent are currently cohabiting, not radically different from the 19 and 18 percent of Catholics that are married and cohabiting, respectively. For comparison, 37 and 9 percent of younger evangelicals are married and cohabiting, respectively. The cohabiting habits of the unreligious, however, have shifted—note the uptick in cohabitation—six percentage points in just under four years. That amounts to a 35 percent increase. **Since it's unlikely that the unreligious have recently changed their minds about the morality or pragmatics of living together, my bet is in the other direction: cohabiting leads many to no longer identify as religious at all.**

Got that part in bold? Their attitudes are changing because of their sexual behaviors. So, if you want to reverse the decline of Christianity, we're going to need to come up with some arguments and evidence to counter the sexual revolution. And on this blog, we've done that many times, looking at studies showing the future instability of marriages that occur after cohabitation. I've never heard a church preach on that, though. And it's not something that even many Christian apologists focus on. Most Christian apologists, particularly the women, tend to focus on soft arguments,. They stay away from arguments about morality, because it's divisive and abrasive to their desired audience. However, if the goal is persuading people that Christianity is a viable worldview, then we need to focus more on sexuality.

More Regnerus:

> [O]n each of seven attitude measures I examined, the unreligious are notably more permissive than even the spiritual-but-not-religious (not shown). Nearly 80 percent of unreligious Americans agree (or strongly agree) that cohabitation is okay, no-strings-attached sex is okay, and abortion should be a legal right. This is all unsurprising. But even some of the more radically "progressive" attitudes demonstrate strong support among the unreligious: 24 percent agree that it is "sometimes permissible for a married person to have sex with someone other than his/her spouse." (I thought perhaps women would differ from men here, but they didn't—or at least not by much.) Although few Americans are actually in polyamorous living arrangements, the unreligious would support them should someone choose such an arrangement; 58 percent of them agreed that "it is okay for three or more consenting adults to live together in a sexual/romantic relationship," a percentage that is far more supportive than Catholics or evangelicals. Among the latter, only 6 percent thinks polyamory could be okay.
>
> A more interesting theme, however, is the surge in support for such alternatives. On each statement, note the rise in agreement that has occurred in just under four years. Polyamory tops the list—a 35-percent leap in the share of unreligious who now endorse polyamorous arrangements (from 43 to 58 percent). Even support for extramarital affairs grew by one-third (from 18 to 24 percent). The unreligious aren't alone here. Catholics, too, have witnessed liberalization in attitudes. Evangelical numbers display a more modest uptick, and from lower starting points.

The non-religious people in my office who were raised Christian like to tell me that the existence of the Christian God isn't important to them, because they can achieve marriage via cohabitation, and behave like good people without the need for any sort of framework to rationally ground it. They think that you can just pull out God, and the marriage will stay the same. They expect the people they start relationships with to act on Christian morality, even if the worldview was rejected as superstitious nonsense. But as you can see from the data, removing God has an enormous effect on the person's ability to be stable and faithful. The truth is that when you take out the vertical relationships with God, then the blueprint for the relationship becomes completely different. Relationships used to be seen as an enterprise where each person's primary commitment was to lead and protect their spouse before delivering them to God with faith intact. Now, relationships are contingent on continuous happiness.

More Regnerus:

> Only 66 percent of unreligious women say they are "100% Despite the permissive reputation of the unreligious, their actual *marital* sexual frequency is lower than that of Catholic and evangelical couples—at two instances in the past two weeks. As has been documented extensively in the past few years, the frequency of sex among American couples—whether cohabiting or married—has

> been declining at statistically significant rates. This pattern has not spared the godless.

I think this is interesting. I believe that men are facing an epidemic of sex-withholding from their wives, and I have an idea why that is. Today, women most commonly use sex to “jump start” a relationship with men who they perceive as “high value”, but who refuse to commit to them. This behavior is not focused on men who have commitment abilities, e.g. – provider, moral leader, spiritual leader, accurate worldview rooted in logic and evidence. Instead, most women use sex to get men who have the appearance of high value, e.g. – tall, tattoos, piercings, violent tendencies, exciting, fun, etc. Having established that pattern over and over with no-commitment bad boys, they marry someone who they see as beneath them, and then withhold sex. Commitment isn’t worthy of sex. It’s the man’s appearance and entertainment value that makes him worthy of sex. The comparison of this low-quality man to previous partners makes women more likely to initiate divorce for “unhappiness” later on.

Do Christians have a higher divorce rate than atheists?

August 22, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

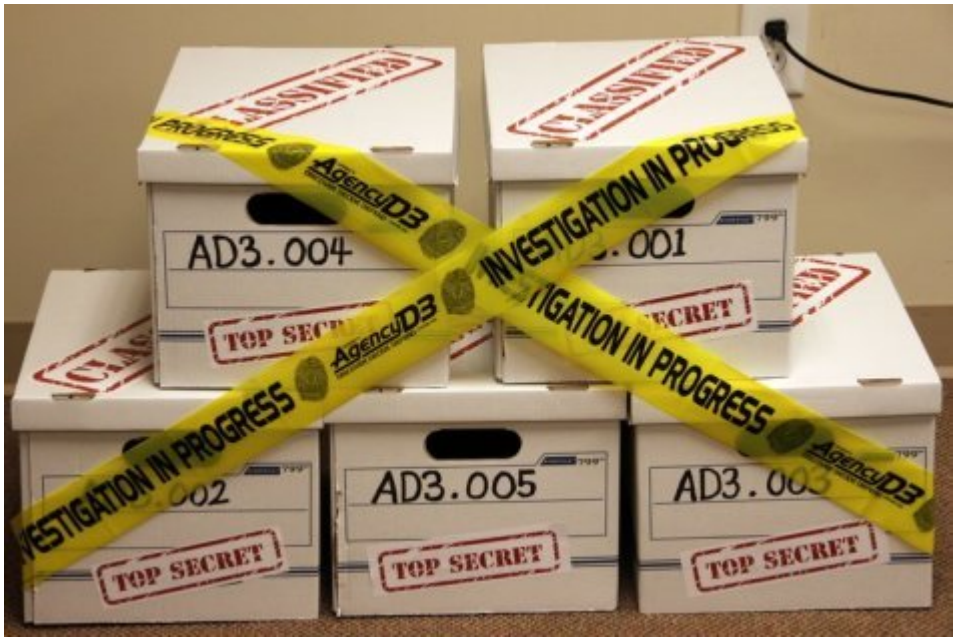

Investigation in progress

I've been having discussions with atheists lately, and finding out that in the atheist community, a lot of false beliefs persist because they (as a group) insulate themselves from rational inquiry. Basically, one of them says something that makes Christians look bad, and the rest of them believe it without ever looking into it, or even listening to a critical point of view. Anything that makes Christians look stupid and/or evil is *believed without question*.

It's not just the big lies like "the universe is eternal", "Jesus never existed", "unborn babies aren't human beings", "the multiverse explains away the cosmic fine-tuning", "the origin of life is a solved problem: aliens seeded the Earth with life", "the Cambrian explosion occurred over tens of millions of years", "moral realism is perfectly rational in an accidental universe where humans evolved randomly", etc.. Sometimes, it's just ordinary stuff like divorce rates between Christians and atheists.

I thought I would re-post this USA Today article from 2011 about that.

Excerpt:

> It's been proclaimed from pulpits and blogs for years — Christians divorce as much as everyone else in America.
>
> But some scholars and family activists are questioning the oft-cited statistics, saying Christians who attend church regularly are more likely to remain wed.
>
> "It's a useful myth," said Bradley Wright, a University of Connecticut sociologist who recently wrote "Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites … and Other Lies You've Been Told."

> “Because if a pastor wants to preach about how Christians should take their marriages more seriously, he or she can trot out this statistic to get them to listen to him or her.”
>
> The various findings on religion and divorce hinge on what kind of Christians are being discussed.
>
> Wright combed through the General Social Survey, a vast demographic study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and found that Christians, like adherents of other religions, have a divorce rate of about 42%. The rate among religiously unaffiliated Americans is 50%.
>
> When Wright examined the statistics on evangelicals, he found worship attendance has a big influence on the numbers. Six in 10 evangelicals who never attend had been divorced or separated, compared to just 38% of weekly attendees.
>
> […]Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, agrees there’s been some confusion.
>
> “You do hear, both in Christian and non-Christian circles, that Christians are no different from anyone else when it comes to divorce and that is not true if you are focusing on Christians who are regular church attendees,” he said.
>
> **Wilcox’s analysis of the National Survey of Families and Households has found that Americans who attend religious services several times a month were about 35% less likely to divorce than those with no religious affiliation.**
>
> Nominal conservative Protestants, on the other hand, were 20% more likely to divorce than the religiously unaffiliated.
>
> “There’s something about being a nominal ‘Christian’ that is linked to a lot of negative outcomes when it comes to family life,” Wilcox said.

So, please do bookmark this information for the next time you hear an atheist make this argument. Obviously, you can’t expect people who are not serious about their religion to be bound by the moral duties imposed by that religion. People who attend church regularly are probably more serious about their religion, and also probably more informed about what their holy book says. If their holy book is the Bible, then there are very few options for divorce.

An article from Focus on the Family by Amy Tracy explains when divorce is allowed according to the Bible.

> God is very clear, however, that He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). He also says, “So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate” (Matthew 19:6). According to the New Testament, there are two justifications for divorce: infidelity (Matthew 5:32) and desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15).

So divorce is not something a Bible believing Christian can do for frivolous reasons, unless he wants to be in rebellion against God. Not everyone who claims to be a Christian is a Christian. But if you take the time to evaluate someone and make sure they are really a Christian, then it will greatly reduce the risk of no-fault divorce.

The future of marriage in the church

We’re probably not going to keep our low divorce rate unless we start to get serious about learning how to discuss moral issues practically, using evidence. Take premarital sex as an example. I’ve never been in a church where they explained the hormones that are released during sex that cause you to bond to the person you’re having sex with. You would have to look in books or listen to lectures in order to understand the problem with having sex with someone you are not committed to – how it causes you to hold back your emotions for fear of a break-up. The church doesn’t have much to say about the social effects of single motherhood by choice or the effects of gay parenting on children. Nor do they have any positive vision to offer men about how they can serve God by marrying carefully. Now is probably a good time to start thinking deeply about how to have a good relationship, how to have a good marriage, how to raise children who will make a difference.

Why does God let people suffer? Why is there so much evil in the world?

August 23, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

I just wanted to draw your attention to this 4 page essay by Joe Manzari, which is the best darn summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen. The problem of evil is an objection to the existence of God based on the presence of evil or suffering in the world. The arguments basically infer that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then there should not *be* any evil or suffering.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An exampel of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate

free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omnipotent being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order for the character of humans to develop through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to*

show that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that premise 2 is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil that we observe more compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.
   Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life. And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.
2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   We humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. Part of knowing God is knowing what he designed us to do – to love him and to love others. And so, the less we know about God, the more we stray from his design for our lives.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.

(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.
(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That's right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I've been through… but then, that's why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about spending, saving and charity

August 24, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

A practical lecture on money – spending, saving, charitable giving – from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

I like the way that Wayne Grudem navigates the Bible finding the passages that tell you who God is, so that you can make better decisions by analyzing alternatives and choosing the one that gives your Boss a maximum return on investment. He's very practical.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Spending:

- Christianity does not teach asceticism (= don't enjoy anything in this world), Paul condemns it in 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- When you buy nice things, even if it is a little more expensive, it's an opportunity to be thankful for nice things that God has provided
- Even being rich is OK, but don't let it make you haughty and arrogant, and don't set your hopes on your money (see 1 Tim 6:17)
- It is important for you to earn money, and you are supposed to use it to support yourself and be independent
- It is possible to overspend and live recklessly (Luke 15:13) and it's also possible to overspend and live too luxuriously
- *Increasing your income through career progression is wise*, because it allows you to give away more and save more

- God gives us freedom to decide how much we spend, how much we give away, and how much we save
- every choice a Christian makes with money will give him or her more or less reward in his or her afterlife
- Do not spend more than you have – you should make every effort to get out of debt as quickly as possible

Saving:

- Saving money is wise so you can help yourself and others, and have money in your old age when you will not be working
- If you do not save your own money, you end up being dependent on others (e.g. – family or taxpayers)
- Not saving money for the future is a way of "putting God to the test" (Matt 4:7)
- You are to "be dependent on no one", to the extent that you can (1 Thes 4:12)
- We don't know the future, that's why we should prepare for an emergency, and buy insurance to guard (James 4:13-17)
- It's right for us to learn how to save to be able to buy bigger assets, like a car or a college education
- Saving and investing in stocks and bonds lets people in business start and grow companies, creating jobs and new products
- *Don't over-save, trusting too much in money more than you trust in God* (Ps 62.10; Matt 6:19,24; Luke 12:15-21)

Giving:

- it is required for the people of God to give something out of what they earn, but no percentage is specified (Deut 26:12-13)
- you do not give money to become right with God, you can't earn your salvation
- *a Christian gives to show God that you trust him to take care of you, and to experience trusting him through your giving*
- the quality of your resurrection life with God is affected by giving you do for the Kingdom (Phil 4, Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:18-19)
- when you get involved in the lives of others and give to them, you have the joy of experiencing caring for others (Acts 20:35)
- it's possible to give too little, but it's also possible to give too much – be careful about pride creeping in as well

The first part of this lecture made me think of my treat for the week, which is to get a double chicken burrito bowl after my weight lifting. It is very easy to say grace when you are hovering over a double chicken burrito bowl. It is good to have nice things especially when it makes you thankful for what you have.

I was so happy listening to this talk because he was condemning bad stewardship, which I see in a lot of young people these days. I was happy until he got to the part about

trusting in your savings for your security, and then I thought – that's what I do wrong! I save a lot but it's not just for emergencies and to share with others, like he was saying – I want a sense of security. This was more of a temptation in my 20s than it is now in my 30s, though.

Charity should hurt

I can remember being in my first full-time job as a newly hired junior programmer when the 2001 recession struck. I would cry while signing checks to support William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith ministry, because I was so scared. I had no family or friends where I lived to help me if anything went wrong, and that's been the story of my working life. If anything goes wrong, there is no backup. But it's that experience of crying when I gave that allows me to say today "that's when I became the man I am, that's what a man does when he is a follower of Jesus". If you are not doing the actions of charity, then you will not having the experience of trusting God and letting him lead you. There is more to the Christian life than just saying the right things – you have to do the right things.

Don't follow your heart

If you're scared about giving when you are young, then do what I did in my 20s: work 70-hour weeks, get promoted often, and save everything you earn. I volunteered every Saturday for 9 months in order to get my first white-collar part-time job when I was still in high-school. The faster you increase your savings, the easier it's going to be to take a *genuine interest* in caring for the people around you. Read Phil 1 (fellowship), Phil 2 (concern for others), and Phil 4 (charity). Turn off your emotions and desires when it comes to choosing what to study and what work to do, and put Philippians into practice. Your freedom to give is very much tied to the quality of your decisions of what to study, where to work, how much you spend on entertainment, and so on. That's why you need to turn off your feelings and desires and do what works, even it it's not fun, and even if it involves responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

How I retained my Christian faith, sobriety and chastity on a university campus

August 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

A couple of years ago, I was talking to a woman who grew up in a Christian home that was very focused on externals. There was a lot of bullying to get her to comply with expected Christian behavior, although the expected Christian behavior was often arbitrary, and had nothing to do with Christianity and more with just appearing "nice". There was no discussion of the evidence, no talking through objections. No focus on truth at all. She was always very curious about me, and how come I didn't drink, and how come I was able to stay a virgin through college, grad school, to the present day when so many people she knew who were raised in the church fell away from it in college. My answer was simple. I didn't grow up in a Christian home so I was never bullied into acting like a Christian beyond what I was convinced of myself. I just took my time and proved everything out before I had to act any particular way. I was in the driver's seat all the time, and that's how Christianity ought to be. The truth-seeking comes first, and then the slow process of re-prioritizing comes after. Performing for your parents and church will not survive contact with college.

Growing up, I didn't ever have to go to church. I didn't go to church until I was comfortable going. If I felt bored in church, I read an apologetics book, and I did this openly. If I didn't like the words of a song, then I didn't sing. My first youth pastor, Grant, never tried to get me to be like the other kids. He asked me what I was interested in. I said "arguing with people". He gave me books by E.J. Carnell and Alister McGrath. I read them, and that was how I acted like a Christian. When I met other Christians at the church who hadn't read anything about God's existence or the historical Jesus or the problem of evil, I didn't feel pressured to be like them. In school, there were lots of people who never did any studying or lab work. They could talk a lot about things they knew nothing about.

But because they didn't know anything, they failed tests and they couldn't put anything they learned into practice, either. People can sound so smart about things… until they actually have to take a test, or put something to use practically.

To me, if you didn't like apologetics, you were a fake and you were faking behaviors of a worldview that you had never investigated. It was really obvious to me that there was more to Christianity than just Jesus-hollering and Scripture memorization. I did swimming lessons up until the point where I got my lifeguarding certification. At the later levels, we always had written exams as well as a practical portion including activities like treading water, swimming long distances, and rescue simulations. People who could pass the written test often failed the practical. If you fail the practical, then you fail the course. Period. No exceptions.

Knowing the truth about God's existence and character comes before acting as if God is real and God has a specific character and will for us. From the existence of God, we move on to the accuracy of the Bible, and on to theology, and then and only then do we start the outward behaviors of a Christian. If you skip to the behaviors, that is unnatural – like pretending to be a doctor when you have never been to medical school. Everyone who comes to Christianity from the outside, like me, knows how strange it is to meet people in church who talk about feelings and experiences as the basis of their worldview. Those people would never do anything serious, like making investment choices, on the basis of feelings. They would never think that merely having feelings about auto repair or Java programming enabled them to solve problems in those areas. But somehow, this is the standard operating procedure in the church. Which is why so many kids raised in the church dump their faith in college. For me, it was apologetics that made me so resistant to alcohol, sex and atheism in college. After all, if you win the argument, then why should you act like the person you defeated? They lost. That means they're wrong. I didn't feel any social pressure to behave like people who couldn't beat me in an argument.

Every single day, children raised in intact Christian homes on a diet of piety and "the Bible says" come to an understanding of what Christianity is that is fundamentally different from the knowledge they are acquiring in school or at work. And that is the beginning of their loss of faith. There should be no separation between practical areas of knowledge (e.g. – mechanical engineering) and Christianity. Christianity should not be seen as easy or shallow. We should not praise people who don't know how to talk about spiritual things intelligently to non-Christians, which is the real core "skill" that Christianity requires. Christianity is not a religion of being nice or feeling good – that's what all the other religions are trying to do. Christianity is about laying hold of the truth, and adjusting your actions to it.

Every Christian ought to be trying their best to learn how to speak intelligently to non-Christians about their faith, to the best of their ability. Especially when they are confronted with educated non-Christians – which is most of us living in the Western hemisphere. No Christian should be better at something else, like sports or school or music or anything. They should put maximum effort into Christianity, and do other things in their spare time. There is no one in my office who thinks that I know more about

computer science than I do about my Christian worldview. Computer science is my day job – I have a BS and MS and 19 years experience in it. But my co-workers know what comes first, and where my real interest and passion lies. When we go out to lunch, I talk about Christian things. That's what I'm the best at. I'm not trying to impress my co-workers by being the best at computer science. I'm trying to perform for my Audience of One, and show him that his honor and reputation are my top priorities. That quiet, hidden vertical relationship is what Christianity is all about. Not my will, Lord, but your will, be done. Tiny little steps backward from selfishness to communicate to the Lord Jesus that his goals are important to me.

My friend Stephen Bedard tweeted this, recently:

> "Frankly, I find it hard to understand how people today can risk parenthood without having studied apologetics." – William Lane Craig

Typical Christian parents expect behaviors of their children but they put in almost zero effort to answer their questions. I hear from so many Christians who fell away in college about how they dropped their faith in high school but just kept acting to please their parents. And the parents had no idea. The parents are the ones who are closest to the problem. They are the ones who should be finding out what is in the culture and the schools, and discussing it with their children. Most pastors are in the business of saying things that people like in order to pack the pews, and collect offerings. They aren't there to talk about uncomfortable topics. They're no good at responding to non-Christian thought in the culture. So it really falls on the parents to do the work of answering questions and leading.

Christianity ought to be more like engineering or lab work if you want to appeal to young people – testable, repeatable, practical. Think back to math class, and how teachers would insist that students SHOW YOUR WORK, instead of just writing the answer down. Instead of just saying "the Bible says", parents really need to show young people their work – how did they arrive at their worldview? That's what parents need to be prepared to show their children. Not singing, not feelings, not community, not family time together. Facts and evidence. Because that is the only way we know to test knowledge claims to see if they are objectively true or false. Parents who get their worldview straight will also find it much easier to act in accordance with what they say they believe. Even when the pressure is on, they will know what is true, and be able to do hard things because they want to respect what is true. Coming through a test of your Christian convictions is much easier when you do the homework first. It's just like any other test in that respect. It certainly worked for me in high school and college when I had to defend my faith to non-Christians. It also helped that I had no desire to fit in with people my own age, because they didn't have jobs. I had no respect for people who didn't work for money, which is almost everyone in high school and college.

In the church, we should respect people who are able to study these issues deeply, and then have conversations about their Christian worldview with people who don't accept that God exists, and don't believe the Bible. That is what followers of Jesus did (e.g. Acts

17). We should be especially respectful of those who are able to defend the Christian worldview using scientific evidence and historical evidence. Especially those who get PhDs and do research in testable areas of knowledge that matter to the Christian worldview. Jesus offered his own resurrection as evidence of his claims to people who didn't believe him. He liked evidence, and he had a passion for the truth. And so should we, if we claim to be his followers.

Dr. Walter Bradley

By the way, the lecture that changed my life the most is this lecture by Dr. Walter Bradley, a fabulously successful professor of mechanical engineering. I got hold of this lecture from 1997, about the time when I first started working full-time. It changed my life. Our young people are being raised to look up to attractive athletes, entertaining musicians, fideistic theologians, charismatic pastors, etc. People who have never set foot in the lion's den. Dr. Bradley is an expert in the scientific evidence relevant to the Christian worldview, and has lectured on HUNDREDS of university campuses. He is invited to speak on campus because he KNOWS what he is talking about. If parents could just start by understanding what it takes to have a career as an open, visible Christian professor on a secular university campus, that would be a good start.

A lesson about men for marriage-minded women from the movie “High Noon”

August 26, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marine prays with his wife on their wedding day

One of my favorite movies for explaining the differences between men and women is “High Noon” (1952).

Here’s the summary from IMDB:

> Former marshal Will Kane (Gary Cooper) is preparing to leave the small town of Hadleyville, New Mexico, with his new bride, Amy (Grace Kelly), when he learns that local criminal Frank Miller has been set free and is coming to seek revenge on the marshal who turned him in. When he starts recruiting deputies to fight Miller, Kane is discouraged to find that the people of Hadleyville turn cowardly when the time comes for a showdown, and he must face Miller and his cronies alone.

The main theme of the film concerns Amy’s decision to break her wedding vows the very day that she makes them. She tells her new husband that he must bow to her will, and give up his male role as protector. When he explains his reasons for standing his ground to her practically (Miller will hunt them down) and morally (he has a duty protect the town), she dismisses both. She tells him that if he doesn’t run away from Miller and his gang with her, that she will get on the train and leave town by herself.

The intro of film shows the member’s of Miller’s gang assembling, and the words of the song explain the central conflict between husband and wife:

Here's the part of the lyrics we care about:

The noonday train will bring Frank Miller.
If I'm a man I must be brave
And I must face that deadly killer
Or lie a coward, a craven coward,
Or lie a coward in my grave.

O to be torn 'twixt love and duty!
S'posin' I lose my fair-haired beauty!
Look at that big hand move along
Nearin' high noon.

He made a vow while in State's Prison,
Vow'd it would be my life or his'n
I'm not afraid of death, but O,
What will I do if you leave me?

Do not forsake me O my darlin'
You made that promise when we wed.
Do not forsake me O my darlin'
Although you're grievin', I can't be leavin'
Until I shoot Frank Miller dead.

What's interesting is that his new wife Amy apparently does not understand the meaning of wedding vows or the natural roles of good men as protectors of the weak, and fighters against evil. Although she vowed to stick by him and help him, the minute anything threatening appears that makes her feel unhappy, she abandons her vows and abandons her man. Let's break down her mistakes now, using actual conversations from the movie.

First, she doesn't understand or respect the man she married *as a man*:

> **Kane**: *[while riding out of town]* It's no good. I've got to go back, Amy.
>
> **Amy**: Why?
>
> **Kane**: This is crazy. I haven't even got any guns.
>
> **Amy**: Then let's go on. Hurry.
>
> **Kane**: No, that's what I've been thinkin'. They're making me run. I've never run from anybody before.
>
> **Amy**: I don't understand any of this.
>
> **Kane**: *[after looking at his vest watch]* Well, I haven't got time to tell ya.
>
> **Amy**: Then don't go back, Will.
>
> **Kane**: I've got to. That's the whole thing. *[He turns the buggy around and rides back into town]*

Her feelings and her desires for the world to be a happy place for her are so strong that they cloud her judgment.

Second, she doesn't understand the threat posed by evil men:

More:

> **Kane:** I sent a man up five years ago for murder. He was supposed to hang. But up North, they commuted it to life and now he's free. I don't know how. Anyway, it looks like he's coming back.
>
> **Amy:** I still don't understand.
>
> **Kane:** He was always wild and kind of crazy. He'll probably make trouble.
>
> **Amy:** But that's no concern of yours, not anymore.
>
> **Kane:** I'm the one who sent him up.
>
> **Amy:** Well, that was part of your job. That's finished now. They've got a new marshal.
>
> **Kane:** He won't be here until tomorrow. Seems to me I've got to stay. Anyway, I'm the same man with or without this. [He pins his badge on his vest]
>
> **Amy:** Oh, that isn't so.
>
> **Kane:** I expect he'll come lookin' for me. Three of his old bunch are waiting at the depot.
>
> **Amy:** That's exactly why we ought to go.
>
> **Kane:** They'll just come after us, four of 'em, and we'd be all alone on the prairie.
>
> **Amy:** We've got an hour.
>
> **Kane:** What's an hour?…What's a hundred miles? We'd never be able to keep that store, Amy. They'd come after us and we'd have to run again, as long as we live.
>
> **Amy:** No we wouldn't, not if they didn't know where to find us. Oh Will! Will, I'm begging you, please let's go.
>
> **Kane:** I can't.
>
> **Amy:** Don't try to be a hero. You don't have to be a hero, not for me.
>
> **Kane:** I'm not trying to be a hero. If you think I like this, you're crazy.

Instead of recognizing how her feelings are deceiving her about the threat and trusting her husband, she tries to force him to accept her mistaken view of reality by threatening to abandon him.

One of Kane's ex-girlfriends has a talk with Amy, which helps her to understand who Kane is, and what is expected of her:

> **Amy**: That man downstairs, the clerk, he said things about you and Will. I've been trying to understand why he wouldn't go with me, and now all I can think of is that it's got to be because of you…Let him go, he still has a chance. Let him go.
>
> **Helen**: He isn't staying for me. I haven't spoken to him for a year – until today. I

> am leaving on the same train you are…What kind of woman are you? How can you leave him like this? Does the sound of guns frighten you that much?
>
> **Amy**: I've heard guns. My father and my brother were killed by guns. They were on the right side but that didn't help them any when the shooting started. My brother was nineteen. I watched him die. That's when I became a Quaker. I don't care who's right or who's wrong. There's got to be some better way for people to live. Will knows how I feel about it.
>
> **Helen**: I hate this town. I always hated it – to be a Mexican woman in a town like this.
>
> **Amy**: I understand.
>
> **Helen**: You do? That's good. I don't understand you. No matter what you say. If Kane was my man, I'd never leave him like this. I'd get a gun. I'd fight.
>
> **Amy**: Why don't you?
>
> **Helen**: He is not my man. He's yours.

Helen understands the need for a wife to stand by her man. But Amy's response to evil is to shut her eyes and focus on feeling good and being happy. Notice that her "better way" is unspecified – it's just a feeling she has that pacificism and no-violence will somehow "work" to stop evil. But in reality, pacifism is not a "better way" of dealing with evil – it does not work. Her pacifist response not only does not make evil go away, it actually encourages more evil. Weakness emboldens evildoers, and laying down your arms provokes them to do more evil. Will Kane knows this, but she won't listen to him.

You can watch the final gunfight here, as well as Amy's final decision:

So, this is why I really recommend this movie as a discussion-starter when you like a girl and are thinking of marrying her. It clarifies the essential problem with many young women today not being ready for marriage. To be fair, most women come around to respect their husbands and his different roles after they get married. However, the risk of divorce is so dangerous that it makes sense to bring it up for discussion before the marriage happens. Marriage is supposed to be an engine to serve God, and the success of that enterprise cannot be left to chance. You can't just rely on the fact that she says the words of the vow, you have to check to see if she has a habit of keeping her promises when it goes against her own self-interest.

Ask yourself: Who are you, as a man? And does your woman accept that you have obligations to stand up to evil and do good ? Will she support you in your battle against evil, or will the marriage just be about her feelings and desires? I would especially beware of women who think that God is speaking to them through their feelings and desires. Look at her friends: are they practical and successful? Or are they irresponsible, unaccountable and reckless? Look at her father: does he have a plan for her, and does he lead her to be practical, frugal and hard-working? If you are not going to get an ally and a supporter in a wife, then you will not be able to serve God well, as a married man. Think about it.

New poll: few Millennials describe belief in God as “very important”

August 27, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

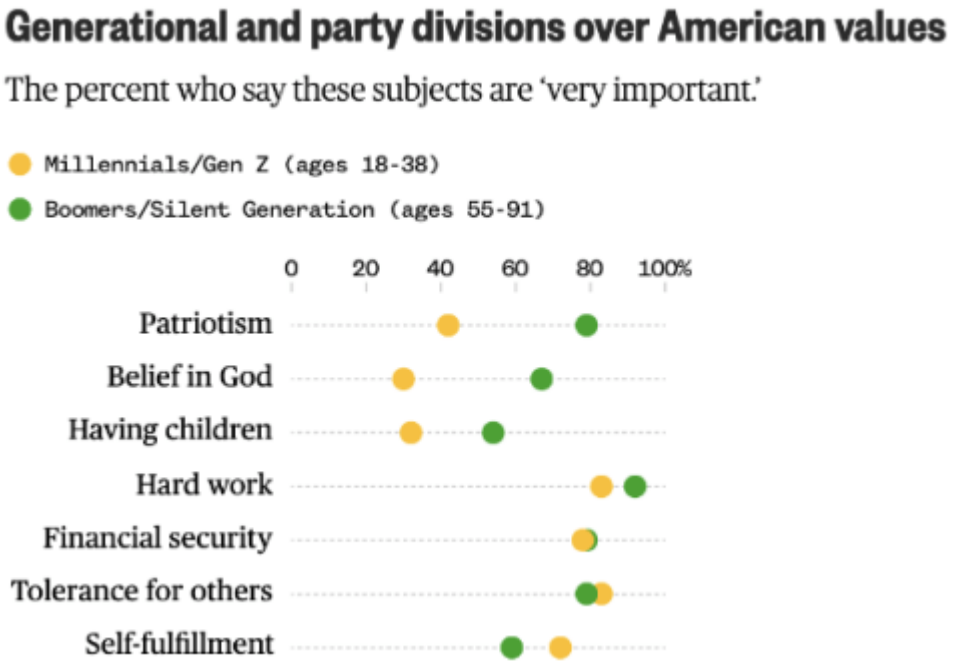

Beliefs of millennials and boomers

I saw a very interesting article that compared the attitudes of young people about things like patriotism, religion, freedom, etc. The numbers are very discouraging.

So, here’s the article from the Washington Examiner:

> The importance of patriotism, faith in God, and having children is significantly lower among millennials and Generation Z, compared to previous generations.
>
> In a new poll conducted by the *Wall Street Journal* and NBC News, nearly 80% of people aged 55-91 said being patriotic is important to them, while only 42% of millennials and Generation Z, or those aged 18-38, said the same. Thirty percent of millennials and Generation Z said religion was important, compared to the over 75% of baby boomers, with just over 30% of millennials and Generation Z saying it was important to have children.
>
> Areas where the younger generations had placed higher importance compared to boomers were tolerance for others and self-fulfillment, with financial security being almost tied between the two age groups.

I’m sure that everyone has seen other polls showing the decline of Christianity, especially in mainline and Catholic churches. Evangelicals are declining less, but they are still declining.

The reason I linked to this post is because I’ve noticed that some Christians don’t really think that there is anything to be concerned about. Everything is working fine, they say. Whatever we’re doing right now must be working, because there is no decline. We’re

winning, and if you think otherwise, then you're just complaining.

Well, I don't really know why there is this decline, all I can do is speak from my experiences. I've met people through my blog who did lose their faith in college, and I've met ex-Christians in my office, too. I asked them what the problem was, and it seems to be that when they were growing up, they often bullied into behaving like a Christian without being able to ask any questions about whether it was true. And then as soon as they got to college away from their parents and pastors, they just dumped the whole thing.

I remember listening to an amazing lecture a while back by Dr. Scott Waller. I think it was a lecture he gave for the Stand to Reason "Masters Series in Christian Thought" in 2003. The lecture was about Postmodernism in the University. Postmodernism is the view that there are no true or false views, especially with "soft" issues like religion and morality. In the lecture, he talked about how a father had sent his devout Christian son to university, and the son had returned an atheist after one semester. I remember Dr. Waller quoting the son telling his parents "I have come to think of my time growing up in this house as the dark period of my life". The father was very upset. So Dr. Waller told him what to do. He said, you're going to need to read a few books on the most common questions that your son has, and then work through the answers with him. And he made a little pile of books about common questions that college students ask, and pushed the pile across the table to the father. And the father pushed the books back across the table to Dr. Waller, and said "well, I don't have time for reading so many books… but could you just talk to him instead?"

Another thing that seems to cause a lot of young people to leave the faith in college is sex. Now if I were trying to convince someone to be responsible about sex, I'd try to show them studies and statistics to explain why there really are best practices to relationships and marriage. For example, I'd might show them that the number of premarital sex partners increases marital instability, or that sliding into cohabitation early tends to make marriages less stable. But this takes a bit of work, and you have to work through it with the young people. I just don't know if parents really reason with their kids like this. But in churches, I've noticed that trying to make an argument using evidence isn't very popular. To me, if I were trying to be convincing to someone about something, I would use evidence. It's just natural to me to make a case if I'm trying to be persuasive. But making a case just hasn't been a really big priority in the churches I've attended.

So, I guess if I had to give any advice to parents of children, or pastors in churches, it would be that Christianity is in decline, and we need to do more than just order people to memorize Bible verses and creeds, go to church, etc. It's hard for me to know what's really going on in everyone's home, and in everyone's church. But I don't think that whatever we're doing in our homes and churches is working to convince young people that belief in God is very important.

New study: the cheapest and most effective way to reduce carbon emissions is to plant more trees

August 28, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What's the best solution to higher carbon emissions?

Many people favor Big Government solutions to the problem of carbon emissions. For example, the Green New Deal proposed by the Democrats would abolish all gas, oil and coal energy. That plan would raise taxes and require massive restrictions on free markets and individual consumers. But there is a better way, and it was just published in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal Science.

Economist Robert P. Murphy wrote a very interesting article about the new study for the Mises Institute.

He writes:

> A recent article in the *Guardian* trumpeted the findings of a new study published in *Science* that found massive tree planting would be — by far — the cheapest and most effective approach to mitigating climate change. Ironically, the new thinking shows the pitfalls of political approaches to combating so-called "negative externalities." The good news about tree planting disrupts the familiar narrative about carbon taxes that even professional economists have been feeding the public for years.

He quotes the Guardian article so:

> Planting billions of trees across the world is by far the biggest and cheapest way to tackle the climate crisis, according to scientists, who have made the first calculation of how many more trees could be planted without encroaching on

> crop land or urban areas.
>
> As trees grow, they absorb and store the carbon dioxide emissions that are driving global heating. **New research estimates that a worldwide planting programme could remove two-thirds of all the emissions that have been pumped into the atmosphere by human activities, a figure the scientists describe as "mind-blowing".**
>
> […]"This new quantitative evaluation shows [forest] restoration isn't just one of our climate change solutions, it is overwhelmingly the top one," said Prof Tom Crowther at the Swiss university ETH Zurich, who led the research. "What blows my mind is the scale. I thought restoration would be in the top 10, **but it is overwhelmingly more powerful than all of the other climate change solutions proposed."**

OK, so this plan will work, but will it cost less than the $52.6 to $93 trillion dollars over 10 years needed for the Green New Deal?

Yes:

> Citing a figure that planting a new tree costs roughly 30 cents, Prof. Crowther remarked that we could plant the target of 1 trillion trees by spending about $300 billion.

Just FYI, the cost per household for the Green New Deal is between $361,010 and $653,010, according to the Washington Free Beacon.

As a conservative, I recognize that sometimes I have to be willing to spend taxpayer money on a small government solution in order to avoid other big government solutions to a problem. The same thing is true for individual health savings accounts funded by a government voucher. I don't like spending taxpayer money, but sometimes spending a little is better than creating a huge bureaucracy that will require spending a lot more.

Bible study: responsibilities and obligations in Philippians 1-4

August 29, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here are some parts of Philippians that speak to an issue that I think is a problem today for many Christians – self-centeredness.

Philippians 2 talks about the importance of not being self-centered, but instead being focused on the needs of others.

Phil 2:1-8:

> 2 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,[2] make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. [3] Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; [4] do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. [5] Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, [6] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. [8] Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

And Phil 2:19-23:

> [19] But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may

> be encouraged when I learn of your condition. [20] For I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. [21] For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. [22] But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child *serving* his father.

Nothing very complicated here, it's important to look out for the interests of others and to be concerned about their welfare.

I think it's a good idea to be practical about partnering with people, and instead of just speaking words like "I care" or "I'll pray for you", try to find out what needs to be done and do it. Solve the problem with actions. Prayer is important, of course, because so much of what happens to that other person is in God's hands. You aren't going to be around all the time, but God is, so talk to him about the other person and what you're planning to do. But you must also do your part, and do it intelligently and effectively. (The New Testament book of James talks about the need to accompany good wishes with actions that solve the problem)

Also don't just stand back and give orders while feeling righteous. Many people want to influence others by just quoting the Bible, putting on pious airs, or using mere words. This doesn't work in any area of the real world. Instead, take a more active approach. Think about the problem that is preventing someone from serving Christ well, and then act to make it easier for the person to do the right thing.

I've been able to achieve good success by praying AND performing supportive actions, rather than by issuing commands or prayer alone. For example, I've gotten people to transition for useless careers into IT careers, got them to pay off their high-interest debts, got them to switch their majors from something useless to something useful, got them to move on from an abortion or a divorce, got them to not commit suicide, listened to their health problems, helped them pass the GRE or the GMAT or something, got them to take a better job, got them to do a public speaking engagement, taught them how to debate their atheist brother, sponsored a Christian speaker at their university, helped them recover from bad parents, etc. It's pretty fun to partner with people to further the Kingdom, but if you just leave it at prayer and giving orders, you won't get the same good results.

All it takes to move from prayer alone to prayer and solutions is to think about other people like a puzzle, and then sacrifice some of your time or your money to build them up. I have a lot of experience doing this, but it's not something that I learned to do in church. Church doesn't teach you to be practical about following the Bible intelligently and with your own initiative. It's set up to favor emotions (singing) and passive listening. To be active, you have to think about the Bible from a higher strategic level. Think about who Jesus is, and then follow his example. Don't read the Bible in order to just feel happy or sound pious, instead try to make a plan to really DO good. Your goal should be to achieve a result in line with Jesus' character and goals.

By the way, part of being able to partner with other people to solve problems with actions

is being capable yourself. Don’t study stupid things in college. Don’t get into debt. Don’t try to fill your days with fun and thrills. Instead, study hard things, get hard jobs in the private sector, save your money, and learn useful skills. That way, you’ll be able to do more when something more than passive words or feelings is needed. One time, a woman I knew severely hurt her hand at work. She has OCD, and liked to clean the stairs in her house every day. She has a furry cat who drops fur everywhere. So she was lugging this heavy vacuum up and down the stairs every day. And spending a lot of time ironing with an old-fashioned heavy iron, too. So I bought her a hand vacuum and a fancy new iron. With the extra time she saved, she was able to do more reading, public speaking and helping others. Doing Christianity well means making yourself strong, so you can look after others with more than just feelings, piety and prayers.

Philippians is my favorite book of the Bible. And the most important thing about Philippians is that it’s good to be focused on other people, and not on ourselves, and to think of the interests of others, not our own interests. It’s good to get down into the weeds of other people’s problems, and act to self-sacrificially to solve them. Read the book (it’s short) and see if there are not people who you could partner with by helping them solve problems so they can be more effective.

What will the Republican and Democrat plans for the economy mean for you?

August 30, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

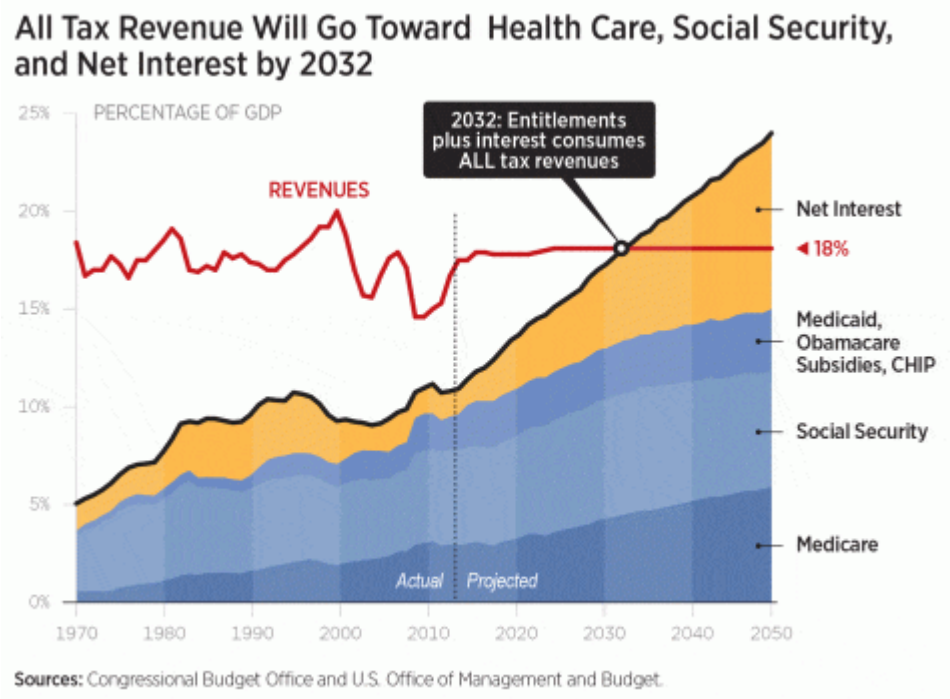

Pretty soon, our mandatory expenses will consume all of our tax revenues

I found two very good articles about the Republican and Democrat plans for taxing and spending. On the one hand, there's an article about the effects of the Trump tax cuts, posted at the Washington Times. On the other hand, there's an article posted at the radically leftist Vox, about the cost of Democrat party spending plans. I wonder which one is better for you and your family?

First, let's look at the effects of the Trump tax cuts:

> Almost immediately, numerous employers — including Boeing, AT&T, FedEx, CVS, and others — began offering bonuses to their employees. Nearly 200 companies, including Walmart, announced wage hikes due to the 2017 tax cut. Still others enjoyed higher contributions to their retirement plans.
>
> The benefits soon went beyond that, however. The tax cut contributed to the strong economy we've been enjoying, leading many businesses to hire more and more workers. The United States added more than 2.6 million new jobs in the year following the passage of the tax cut — nearly a 25 percent increase from the previous year.
>
> Unemployment is way down, with jobless claims at their lowest since 1969, thanks in large part to the tax cut.
>
> […]The Heritage Foundation used IRS data to produce a special report last year that shows how widespread the tax benefits truly are.

> They found that in 2018 taxpayers would save an average of $1,400. Even better, married couples with two children would save more than twice that: $2,917.

So, that sounds pretty good if you're a taxpayer. You got to keep more of the money you earned, and spend it on the things you wanted for yourself and your loved ones. If that money had gone to government, then government employees would have taken half for their own salaries and benefits, and then the rest might have been spent in a wasteful way by someone who never earned it.

By the way, you might think that taking less money from the people who earn it would cause tax revenues to go down. But that's not the case. Whenever you allow job creators and workers to keep more of what they earn, they work harder and take more risks developing better products and services. This naturally results in more revenue to the government from increased economic activity. In Feburary of 2018, after the tax cuts were in effect a whole year, federal revenues were $1.4 billion HIGHER than the previous year.

But let's see what the Democrats can do for the taxpayer, by looking at this article in the far-left Vox.

It says:

> Sanders has proposed a Social Security expansion, including higher cost-of-living adjustments and higher minimum benefit levels, that the liberal Tax Policy Center estimates will cost $188 billion over the next decade.
>
> The Tax Policy Center also scores the Sanders "free college" proposal at $807 billion over the next decade. (Note that free college benefits students from wealthy families and those whose tuition is currently affordable.)
>
> Next, the center estimates that Sanders's proposal of up to 12 weeks of paid family leave for new parents and for people with serious health conditions would cost another $270 billion.
>
> Those costs, however, pale beside the cost of replacing private insurance, including copayments, with a Medicare-for-all plan. The liberal Urban Institute estimates that Sanders's single-payer health plan would add $32 trillion in federal costs over the decade.
>
> […]Ocasio-Cortez and Senate Democrats also want to guarantee a job for anyone who wants one, at $15 per hour plus benefits. The liberal Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, commissioned a report by outside scholars Darrick Hamilton, William Darity, and Mark Paul that estimates the cost of a more modest proposal along these lines (with a lower wage, for example). It suggested the cost would be $56,000 apiece for 9.7 million enrollees, for a total of $6.8 trillion over the next decade.
>
> […]Finally, Senate Democrats have promised $1 trillion for new infrastructure, and House Democrats are rallying around legislation to pay off all $1.4 trillion in

> student loan debt — both of which the far left generally supports. I will exclude vague promises such as universal pre-K and expanded special education funding.
>
> Total cost: $42.5 trillion in new proposals over the next decade, on top of the $12.4 trillion baseline deficit.

OK, that does sound like a lot of money, but the rich are just sitting on trillions and trillions of dollars that they aren't even using, right? So the total cost of all this spending is only $42.5 trillion of new spending and $12.4 trillion of existing spending, for a total of about $55 trillion dollars over the next 10 years. I'm sure that if we just raised taxes by 5% on the rich, we could easily raise 10 times that amount, right?

Not quite.

In 2011, the Tax Foundation explained that even if you taxed ALL THE INCOME from all the people who make $200,000 or more, you would only raise $1.53 trillion dollars:

> So taking half of the yearly income from every person making between one and ten million dollars would only decrease the nation's debt by 1%. Even taking every last penny from every individual making more than $10 million per year would only reduce the nation's deficit by 12 percent and the debt by 2 percent. There's simply not enough wealth in the community of the rich to erase this country's problems by waving some magic tax wand.
>
> Finally, to put everything in perspective, think about what would need to be done to erase the federal deficit this year: After everyone making more than $200,000/year has paid taxes, the IRS would need to take every single penny of disposable income they have left. Such an act would raise approximately $1.53 trillion. It may be economically ruinous, but at least this proposal would actually solve the problem.

Now, if I were a rich person making over $200,000 a year, and someone came along and told me they would take all of it, I would not continue to work. And I doubt they would either. But taking all this money from "the rich" would just barely cover the BASELINE deficit of $12.4 trillion over the next 10 years. It would not cover the new $42.5 trillion of Democrat spending plans.

Think about that. What that means is that can't pay for their spending even if they take every penny from "the rich". Do you know what that means? It means they're going to have to take money from YOU, the ordinary middle class American taxpayer. Something to keep in mind.

New study: there is no gay gene that causes homosexuality

August 31, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Homosexuality and the progress of science
I heard one of the authors of this new study commenting on how he was a gay man, and the purpose of his research was to show a genetic basis for homosexuality, in order to make it equal to race. His goal was to make it impossible to disagree with homosexual behavior, because homosexual behavior would be seen as natural and normal. Let's see if his new study helps him out.

The blog of the peer-reviewed journal PLOS One reported on the new study, which was published in the prestigious journal Science.

Excerpt:

> The once-prevailing concept of a "gay gene" dictating sexual orientation has been put to rest in a powerhouse study published today in *Science*. The work brilliantly illustrates the very nature of science: evolving with the input of new data, especially the large-scale contributions of bioinformatics and crowd-sourcing.
>
> "We formed a large international consortium and collected data for more than 500,000 people, comparing DNA and self-reported sexual behavior. This is approximately 100 times bigger than any previous study on this topic," said lead author Andrea Ganna, of the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Finland and an instructor at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, opening a news conference earlier this week.
>
> […]The investigation estimates a genetic contribution to same-sex sexual behavior as under 1 percent, thanks to analysis of a trove of data from the UK Biobank and the consumer genetic testing company 23andme.

So, there you have it, there is no gay gene. But this is of course something we've known for decades, as all the previous studies had found the same thing.

The normal way that people do these studies is to analyze identical twins, and see how often both identical twins are gay.

> Eight major studies of identical twins in Australia, the U.S., and Scandinavia during the last two decades all arrive at the same conclusion: gays were not born that way.
>
> "At best genetics is a minor factor," says Dr. Neil Whitehead, PhD. Whitehead worked for the New Zealand government as a scientific researcher for 24 years, then spent four years working for the United Nations and International Atomic

> Energy Agency. Most recently, he serves as a consultant to Japanese universities about the effects of radiation exposure. His PhD is in biochemistry and statistics.
>
> Identical twins have the same genes or DNA. They are nurtured in equal prenatal conditions. If homosexuality is caused by genetics or prenatal conditions and one twin is gay, the co-twin should also be gay.
>
> "Because they have identical DNA, it ought to be 100%," Dr. Whitehead notes. But the studies reveal something else. "If an identical twin has same-sex attraction the chances the co-twin has it are only about 11% for men and 14% for women."
>
> Because identical twins are always genetically identical, homosexuality cannot be genetically dictated. "No-one is born gay," he notes. "The predominant things that create homosexuality in one identical twin and not in the other have to be post-birth factors."
>
> Dr. Whitehead believes same-sex attraction (SSA) is caused by "non-shared factors," things happening to one twin but not the other, or a personal response to an event by one of the twins and not the other.

By the way, a previous study also found that transgender behavior was not genetic, but was clearly linked to environmental factors such as peer approval and social media.

Here is the report from Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.
>
> Littman surveyed more than 250 parents of children who suddenly developed gender dysphoria symptoms during or after puberty.
>
> […]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

A previous study also found that children are more likely to be gay if they are raised by gay adults. It was reported in AOL News.

Excerpt:

> Walter Schumm knows what he's about to do is unpopular: publish a study arguing that gay parents are more likely to raise gay children than straight parents. But the Kansas State University family studies professor has a detailed

> analysis that past almost aggressively ideological researchers never had.
>
> […]His study on sexual orientation, out next month, says that gay and lesbian parents are far more likely to have children who become gay. “I’m trying to prove that it’s not 100 percent genetic,” Schumm tells AOL News.
>
> His study is a meta-analysis of existing work. First, Schumm extrapolated data from 10 books on gay parenting… [and] skewed his data so that only self-identified gay and lesbian children would be labeled as such.
>
> […]Schumm concluded that children of lesbian parents identified themselves as gay 31 percent of the time; children of gay men had gay children 19 percent of the time, and children of a lesbian mother and gay father had at least one gay child 25 percent of the time.
>
> […]Finally, Schumm looked at the existing academic studies… In all there are 26 such studies. Schumm ran the numbers from them and concluded that, surprisingly, 20 percent of the kids of gay parents were gay themselves. When children only 17 or older were included in the analysis, 28 percent were gay.

It’s very important for people to understand that there is a trend in society to make every behavior traditionally seen as sinful into something caused by genetics. The twin goals of this effort are to insulate the behaviors from criticism, and to minimize evaluation of the effects of these behaviors on society as a whole. The genetic argument was used extensively to normalize same-sex marriage and transgenderism. I have seen the genetic argument used to defend other behaviors like pedophilia and incest. But the scientific research does nothing to support any of these arguments. What’s amazing is how a majority of people in the Unites have such false beliefs about the scientific research. They vastly overestimate the number of gay people, and also the influence of genetics.

How should we respond to doubts and challenges to Christian beliefs or practices?

September 1, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The tracks are out ahead, but Spider-Man arrives just in time to save the day!

Something happened this week that really provided the watching non-Christian world with a good example of what it means to be an authentic Christian. It was such a good story, that I shared it with my non-Christian co-workers. They were so impressed that they asked me to go to lunch with them so they could tell me why they abandoned their faiths after being raised Christian.

The story starts with a famous Christian musician named Marty Sampsons expressing doubts about Christianity, because he was exposed to challenges to his faith, and not getting any answers from people in the church. Instead, when he expressed his doubts, people who had formerly treated him very well started to insult him and post condemning Bible verses on his Instagram. Instead of listening to his questions, and actually putting in some effort to craft a plan and where everyone could work together, his critics just refused to learn anything or do anything with him to work on the problem.

To be honest, this is often what church people do when they are confronted with challenging thoughts or behaviors. In my office, one of my co-workers who had been raised in the church and then left it in college asked me “what did you expect? People leave the church all the time because this is how Christian parents and church people respond to doubts and challenges. They insult you, drag up everything personal that you ever told them, and slander you to other people. It’s a hate mob. They specialize in being judgmental. They don’t put in any effort to actually solve the problem. And that’s exactly why people DON’T go to church.” He actually used the word “unchristian” to describe church-trained Christians who responded to Mary Sampsons.

I have to admit, my co-worker had a point. I’ve experienced the unwillingness of Christians to take doubts and challenges seriously myself. When I express concerns about

whether the church is preparing young people for the challenges of college, the church parents and leaders always stand above me, and reply with Bible verses, sermons, commands, judgments or worse. They don't want to get down into the trenches and work with me to solve the problem. And there's always the offer to "pray about it". That response seems to just dump every problem on God. What I'd really like to see is people in the church who interrupt their happy lives in order to do something self-sacrificially with the people who have the challenges, in order to solve the problem.

Most of the people who responded to Marty Sampsons on his Instagram were not effective to solve the actual problem. But there were two exceptions.

CBN had the story:

> Two Christian apologists have reached out with some helpful ideas for Marty Sampson, the former worship leader and songwriter for Hillsong Worship who publicly announced he was struggling to believe anymore.
>
> Using their online platforms, they're offering resources to assist the singer. Apologist and author William Lane Craig made Sampson the subject of his Aug. 26 podcast titled *A Musician Struggles With His Faith*. In the 23-minute program, Craig answers Sampson's questions dealing with his doubts about the Christian faith.
>
> […][Dr.] Craig also recommended for fellow believers to support Sampson in his search for the answers to his questions, instead of blasting him with judgmental comments.
>
> "Now is not the time for condemnation and criticism," Craig told his listeners. "Now is the time to say, 'Here are some resources that can help you in your search, and I'll come alongside you and help you as I can.'"
>
> Craig is a research professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology and a professor of philosophy at Houston Baptist University and the founder of the ministry Reasonable Faith.
>
> Likewise, apologist and author Mike Licona and his wife, Debbie, posted a YouTube video in which they discuss Sampson's questions for those Christians who may find themselves doubting their faith. In the 38-minute video, the couple talks about several books and other resources for people to use.
>
> In the video, Licona, associate professor in theology at Houston Baptist University and the president of the ministry Risen Jesus, said the questions "are difficult questions, and they're deserving of thoughtful, reasonable answers."

Debbie Licona, the wife of famous evidential Christian apologist Michael Licona, also arranged a discussion between two Christian scholars and an atheist scholar about the resurrection.

And here's why this was the right thing to do:

1. Marty felt edified by the Debbie-arranged discussion, and he was not insulted by it.

It was certainly much more practical and thoughtful than the responses on his Instagram, where some Christians just posted Bible verses threatening him with Hell.

2. The right way to engage a non-Christian is always self-sacrificial love. If you are taking your time, money and effort to think of a plan, and then self-sacrificially invest in that person co-operatively, then you are doing love the right way. Debbie's approach is correct because she is putting in work in order to get involved in the other person's life from alongside them, not standing over them.
3. Debbie's approach follows the evidence-focused model in the Bible. God is always having his prophets or his Son use evidence to confirm their claims to non-believers. Just think of Moses and Pharaoh, or Elijah on Mount Carmel, or Jesus with the healing of the paralytic or the resurrection.
4. Salvation is a gift from God. God is the General who is in charge of the overall effort to save someone from their rebellion against him. Individual Christians are just some of the tools he uses to achieve his aims. Outcomes are none of our business. Our business is to pursue his goals for other people in a manner that is consistent with Christ's example of self-denial, self-sacrifice, humility and use of evidence.

So, the next time someone asks you questions about Christianity, or refuses to go to church, or whatever, you need to remember who you are working for, and respond like Debbie did. Don't act in a way that pushes them further away from God. Take challenges to Christian belief and practice seriously. Control your tongue. Read books. Invest yourself. Come alongside the challenger, and solve the problem co-operatively.

Don’t dismiss best practices for Christian living as “legalism” and “denying grace”

September 2, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

On Sunday, I listened to a very interesting discussion between Sean McDowell and Jessica van der Wyngaard on Justin Brierley’s Unbelievable show. The topic was on the pros and cons of purity culture. I didn’t know a thing about “purity culture”, and had never read any books about it. I didn’t really disagree with anyone on the podcast, but I did want to say something about it in a blog post.

Description:

20 years ago Joshua Harris was the poster boy of the evangelical ‘purity movement’ having authored the bestselling book ‘I Kissed Dating Goodbye’. Today, Harris regrets writing the book, and has also recently changed his mind about Christianity.

Justin is joined by Jessica van der Wyngaard, director of the documentary film ‘I Survived I Kissed Dating Goodbye’, and Christian apologist Sean McDowell, to discuss purity culture, singleness and the Joshua Harris story.

The MP3 file is here.

First, here’s a brief summary of what everyone said on the podcast:

- JW: the book urged people to give up dating in favor of courting and suggested other rules that would guarantee a successful marriage to your soul-mate
- JW: some of the rules proposed by the book were not Biblical
- JW: I’m not a virgin and I’m in early-30s, but I accept that we should teach what the Bible says about abstinence
- SM: purity culture is the idea that if you remain sexually pure, God will give you a spouse and bless you in the future
- SM: purity culture is the idea that if you have premarital sex, you will be tainted

forever
- SM: I'm afraid that those reacting against purity culture will build a sexual ethic solely based on their shame, their hurt, their concern about legalism, and this will not help the next generation
- SM: let's have a balanced Biblical approach to sexuality instead
- SM: there is scientific data to back up the Bible's teaching that marriages work better when sex occurs only within a marriage
- SM: it's a mistake to define your spiritual standing based on whether you are a virgin or not
- SM: following the Bible's rules for sexuality is an important part of discipleship
- SM: the Bible is replete with examples of people restoring their standing before God through forgiveness and redemption

Right now, we are living in a secular culture where people are hooking up, having premarital sex, living together, and breaking up far more often than in the past. There is this pattern of choosing partners based on secular criteria: outward appearance and ability to entertain. And this approach to dating – choosing people for the wrong reasons, and trying to force a commitment using premarital sex – is now common practice, even among Christians.

I think people should have a plan to counter this trend that's realistic and guided by studies and evidence. For example, studies show that people who have no sexual partners before marriage are more likely to still be married 10 years later. Studies show that cohabitation negatively impacts the stability of a future marriage. It's difficult to accept that this is the way the world is, but if a stable marriage is a goal for you, then you should care about the best practices for having a stable marriage.

Take a different example. Suppose you have a lot of shame and bad feelings over having run up $90,000 of student loans. Now your retirement will be much more difficult. The answer to these feelings of shame is not to say that you can invoke "grace" and that will make everything OK. It won't. It might help you to make better decisions going forward, but that debt is going to affect your future spouse, your future marriage and your future children.

There are real costs to these behaviors for your future, and being forgiven through Jesus' atonement isn't going to instantly make the effects of those choices disappear. It's good to warn young people about these costs. It's also good to help people who have made mistakes undo the damage by investing in them. I don't want us to throw out evidence-based best practices as "legalism", because they help us to reach the discipleship goals specified for us in the Bible.

The goals of the Bible (e.g. – not aborting, not divorcing) are good goals. If we find out from science that premarital promiscuity or cohabitation reduce our odds of achieving that goal, then it's a mistake to dismiss that evidence because it make us feel bad about our past. It's not legalism to investigate evidence and consult wise advisors in order to choose how best to achieve goals like marriage. That's actually being wise. Making good

decisions doesn't give you the right to be proud and compare yourself to others, but it is good to make good decisions for yourself, and to share your reasoning with those who ask you.

I agree with the speakers that purity culture is wrong to promise people a happy marriage if they only keep their virginity. That's just the prosperity gospel, and it really is not a Biblical view of the Christian life.

People who choose to have premarital sex haven't separated themselves from marriage. But studies indicate that they have damaged the stability of their future marriage *if they do nothing to counteract the effects of their choices.* And I think there is more to counteracting these bad effects than just stating to your partner "Jesus forgives me, so you can't judge me". The focus of the "no-rules because I feel ashamed" crowd doesn't seem to be on taking the damage seriously and fixing it. Their focus seems to be on not being judged.

I don't think that a cursory response ("don't judge me!") is adequate to undo the damage from premarital sex. But if a person is willing to be honest about their past, and put in the work to understand the effects of premarital sex on their future marriage, renew their minds, and re-establishing their bonding ability, then they should be able to *fully* counteract the damage. I have met people who have done this, and you can see in their choices and lifestyle that there's been a complete turning against their former use of sex for fun and attention and self-esteem. It's not "idolizing virginity and idolizing marriage" to look at the data, and make choices that are likely to lead to a stable marriage.

Joe Biden promises to confiscate all multi-round magazines, disarm church-goers

September 3, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

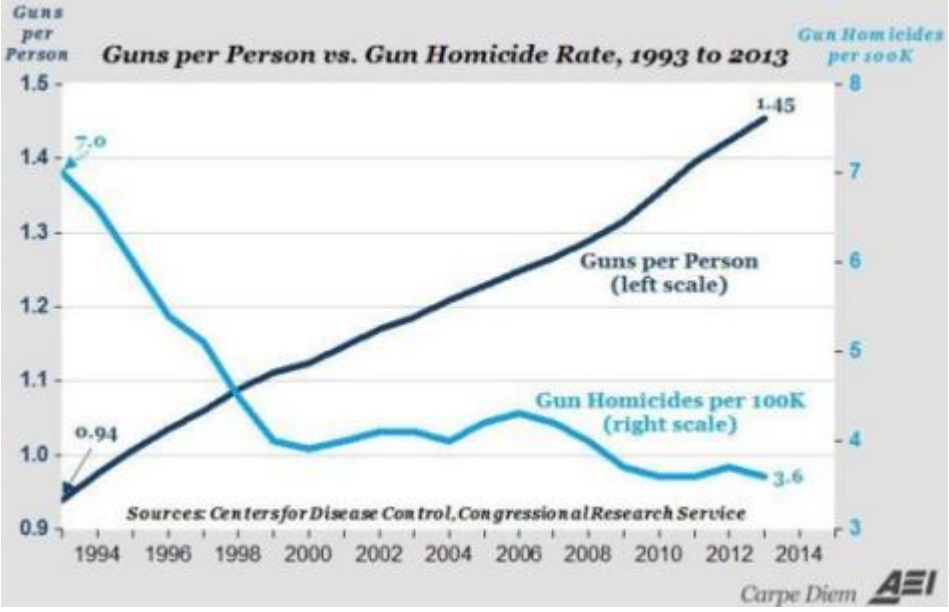

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

In the wake of mass shootings by people who don't obey the law, Democrat presidential candidates are vowing to confiscate ALL semi-automatic pistols and rifles, as well as ban magazines with more than one bullet. They believe that by taking weapons from law-abiding Americans, they will be able to stop violence committed by those who don't care about laws. Will that work?

First, let's get the news from the Daily Wire:

> Democrat presidential candidate Joe Biden went far to the left on the issue of guns on Monday, telling reporters that he wants to ban magazines that hold "multiple bullets" — which means all magazines.
>
> Biden, who made the remarks while talking to the press during a campaign stop in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, said there should be "no compromise" on guns as he also voiced his anger at the state of Texas for allowing people to carry firearms in places of worship to defend themselves from those who seek to harm others.
>
> "And we're talking about loosening access, to have guns, to be able to take them into places of worship, I mean, it is absolutely irrational. It's totally irrational," Biden said. "The idea that we don't have elimination of assault-type weapons, magazines that can hold multiple bullets in them, it's absolutely mindless."
>
> "It's no violation of the Second Amendment," Biden falsely claimed.
>
> Biden's extreme gun control push, if ever enacted, would effectively ban the overwhelming majority of handguns, all semi-automatic shotguns and rifles, and many hunting rifles which use magazines.

We've actually had a number of mass shootings where left-wing atheists attacked Christians during worship. I guess Joe Biden has an alternative plan for protecting Christians from far-left atheist Democrats. Maybe he plans to show up at the mass shootings in churches, and have a talk with the shooters about following gun laws.

Not to be outdone, here's another candidate promising to ban all semi-automatic weapons, pistols AND rifles.

The Daily Wire reports:

> Far-left Democratic presidential candidate Robert Francis O'Rourke announced over the weekend that if he is elected president, he intends to confiscate tens of millions of semi-automatic firearms from law-abiding Americans.
>
> O'Rourke made the remarks while campaigning in Charlottesville, Virginia, on Saturday when he was asked by a reporter how he plans to address peoples' fears that the government is going to come and take many of their semi-automatic firearms.
>
> O'Rourke responded: "I want to be really clear, that's exactly what we are going to do. Americans who own [the technically undefinable sub-class of semi-automatic firearms referred to as "assault weapons"] will have to sell them to the government."

It's amazing to me that there is so much evidence that gun violence is caused by fatherlessness, but Democrats don't want to do anything about it. If we stopped giving women welfare money for having babies before they are married, gun violence would dry up in a second. We've always had access to guns in this country, but it was wasn't a problem when every child had a mother and father.

If strict laws were effective, then why do we see such high rates of gun violence precisely in Democrat-run areas where law-abiding people are prohibited from owning weapons to defend themselves from criminals? Mass shootings get a lot of press, but the truth is that more people died in Chicago last week in ordinary crimes than died in the most recent mass shooting in Odessa, TX.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a

> monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England"s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

Federal appeals court rules that Christians can't be forced to act like atheists

September 4, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

The state of Minnesota is one of the most progressive states in the union. A while back, they passed a law making it illegal for Christians to exercise free speech or religious liberty. For example, the atheists who run Minnesota wanted to force a Christian couple to operate their business as atheists. Or go to jail. So the Christian couple took them to court. They lost. Then they appealed.

The Daily Caller reports:

> A federal appeals court has revived a legal challenge to the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA), ruling for the first time that religious business owners can invoke free speech rights when refusing to service a same-sex wedding.
>
> The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sided with Carl and Angel Larsen, a Christian couple who operate a video production company called Telescope Media Group. The Larsens want to expand their business to include weddings, but state officials say the MHRA requires the Larsens to accommodate both same-sex and opposite sex partners.
>
> **"Minnesota's interpretation of the MHRA interferes with the Larsens' speech in two overlapping ways," Judge David Stras wrote for a divided three-judge panel. "First, it compels the Larsens to speak favorably about same-sex marriage if they choose to speak favorably about opposite-sex marriage. Second, it operates as a content-based regulation of their speech."**
>
> […]Elsewhere in the decision, Stras wrote that the MHRA regulates speech based on content, another violation. The majority said the safer course for the Larsens

> would be to avoid the wedding business altogether, a type of "compelled self-censorship" that violates free speech rights.

But the appeal decision was not unanimous. A radically-leftist Obama-appointed judge dissented:

> "What they cannot do is operate a public accommodation that serves customers of one sexual orientation but not others. And make no mistake, that is what today's decision affords them license to do."

So, if you run a business in America, then the atheist judges who rule over you can compel you to run your business like an atheist.

I found a short 6-minute video of the couple on the ADF YouTube account:

I was thinking about this decision overnight, and wondering if atheists also can compel pro-life doctors or nurses to act like atheists against their consciences.

And the answer is yes – at least in states run by the Democrat party.

The Federalist explains:

> The Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has put the University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMMC) on notice after employees reported being forced to help with abortions against their moral objections.
>
> A Catholic nurse at UVMMC was allegedly forced to assist with an elective abortion, despite previously telling her employer that she objects to participating in abortions for reasons of conscience. According to HHS's investigation, the nurse was told she would be treating a patient who had experienced a miscarriage. When she walked into the procedure room, the doctor allegedly said to her, "Don't hate me." The nurse asked for a replacement, but was allegedly told no. The abortion was not an emergency procedure, but an elective one. Fearing losing her job, the nurse relented.
>
> "This should never happen in America. There is room for disagreement on these issues without having to coerce people to choose between a career dedicated to supporting life versus instances or circumstances where they are being forced to take a life," Roger Severino, head of HHS's Office of Civil Rights, told reporters on Wednesday.
>
> The hospital began performing elective abortions in 2017, but did not inform all employees, "many of which had already informed" the hospital of their objections to assisting in abortions, Severino said.
>
> […]UVMMC recently created a new policy that allows punishing staffers who refuse to participate in abortions when the hospital is short-staffed.

Vermont is, of course, a state dominated from top to bottom by the Democrat party.

When the state engages in barbarism, they are made uncomfortable by the presence of

conscientious objectors. The easiest way to make those dissenters go away is to threaten them with starvation by taking their jobs. And if that doesn’t work, you can always go full fascist and move on to imprisonment, or execution. It would not be the first time these things have happened in regimes run by the secular left. In an accidental universe, where humans evolved by accident, there are no human rights, and no objective standard for how humans ought to act. Secular leftists are very sure of themselves, and they feel warranted in forcing their views on others. This sort of thing has happened many, many times in places where the political leaders had kicked God out of their minds.

Do illegal immigrants commit more crimes than law-abiding residents?

September 5, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

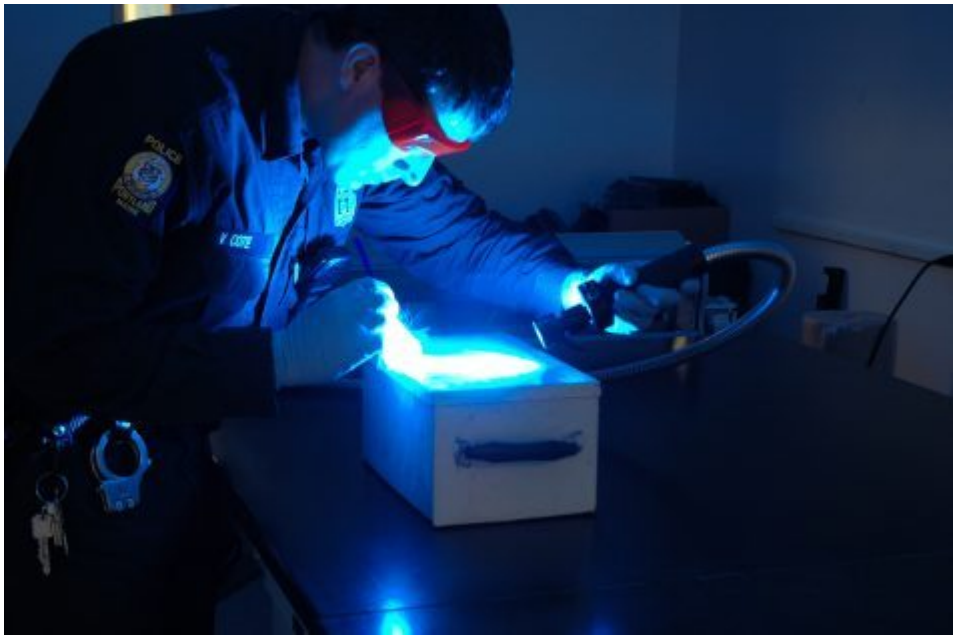

Policeman investigates crime scene for evidence

I've had people on the left tell me that illegal immigrants commit fewer crimes than law-abiding US residents, so when I came across this article from the Daily Signal, I knew I had to share it. They managed to get hold of a Department of Justice report featuring a comprehensive breakdown of all crimes committed. And they even go over local crimes rates for illegal immigrants.

Here's Hans Von Spakovsky writing for the Daily Signal:

> Opponents of federal efforts to enforce the immigration laws enacted by Congress repeatedly claim that illegal immigrants are "less likely" to commit crimes than U.S. citizens—and thus represent no threat to public safety.
>
> But that's not true when it comes to federal crimes.
>
> Noncitizens constitute only about 7% of the U.S. population. Yet the latest data from the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics reveals that noncitizens accounted for nearly two-thirds (64%) of all federal arrests in 2018. Just two decades earlier, only 37% of all federal arrests were noncitizens.
>
> These arrests aren't just for immigration crimes. Noncitizens accounted for 24% of all federal drug arrests, 25% of all federal property arrests, and 28% of all federal fraud arrests.
>
> In 2018, a quarter of all federal drug arrests took place in the five judicial districts along the U.S.-Mexico border. This reflects the ongoing activities of Mexican drug cartels. Last year, Mexican citizens accounted for 40% of all federal arrests.
>
> In fact, more Mexicans than U.S. citizens were arrested on charges of committing

> federal crimes in 2018.
>
> Migrants from Central American countries are also accounting for a larger share of federal arrests, going from a negligible 1% of such arrests in 1998 to 20% today.

Now, people on the left like to say that of course illegal immigrants commit more federal crimes, because their federal crimes mostly involve immigration violations. I don't know about you, but that list of arrests didn't sound like "mostly immigration violations" to me.

Anyway, we actually do have numbers for border states regarding local crimes committed. Here's an example from a very well-known border state:

> A recent report from the Texas Department of Public Safety revealed that 297,000 noncitizens had been "booked into local Texas jails between June 1, 2011 and July 31, 2019." So these are noncitizens who allegedly committed local crimes, not immigration violations.
>
> The report noted that a little more than two-thirds (202,000) of those booked in Texas jails were later confirmed as illegal immigrants by the federal government.
>
> According to the Texas report, over the course of their criminal careers those illegal immigrants were charged with committing 494,000 criminal offenses.
>
> Some of these cases are still being prosecuted, but the report states that there have already been over 225,000 convictions. Those convictions represent: 500 homicides; 23,954 assaults; 8,070 burglaries; 297 kidnappings; 14,178 thefts; 2,026 robberies; 3,122 sexual assaults; 3,840 sexual offenses; 3,158 weapon charges; and tens of thousands of drug and obstruction charges
>
> These statistics reveal the very real danger created by sanctuary policies. In nine self-declared sanctuary states and numerous sanctuary cities and counties, officials refuse to hand over criminals who are known to be in this country illegally after they have served their state or local sentences.

OK, that's not so good. And remember, none of those illegal aliens need to be here. We have methods for allowing immigrants to come here legally, and those methods also allow us to to keep out people who are dangerous to residents who pay taxes.

Here's an example from the Daily Caller of some recent crimes (all in August) that were committed in a Democrat-dominated sanctuary area:

> A sixth illegal immigrant was arrested in Montgomery County, Maryland, this month for sex crimes; this time, a Salvadoran national accused of molesting a 12-year-old girl and her younger brother.
>
> Nestor Lopez-Guzman, 21, was arrested by Montgomery County Police on Aug. 18. A friend of the 12-year-old victim told a school counselor that her friend had been molested by Lopez-Guzman, according to the police report. The victim then confirmed that the abuse had been occurring over the past six months.
>
> […]Five other illegal immigrants have been arrested in Montgomery County,

> Maryland, since July 25 on sex crime-related charges. On Aug. 14, for example, ICE issued a detainer against Salvadoran national Nelson Reyes-Medrano, who is accused of raping a 16-year-old girl at knifepoint. In another case in the last month, two illegal immigrants were charged with repeatedly raping an 11-year-old.

Now, if you ask Democrats what their plan is to protect law-abiding taxpayers from criminals like this, they'll say that their plan is to make law-abiding taxpayers pay for all the health care of illegal immigrants. No, really, that's literally their plan. As for the children being raped, their answer is "we don't care".

These sorts of crimes will stop when the victims of these crimes are allowed to sue the Democrat politicians who allow open borders and sanctuary cities.

Is there anything in the atheistic worldview that rationally grounds human rights?

September 6, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

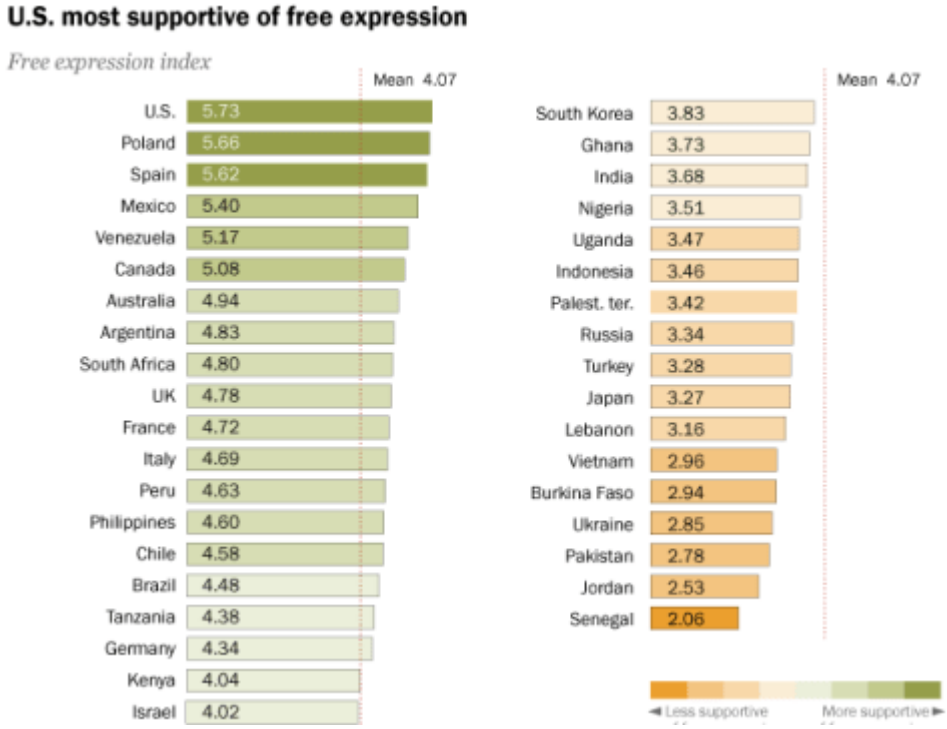

Support for free speech in different countries (Source: Pew Research)

I think it's useful for Christians in America to look at what is happening to Christians in other countries, so that we can understand what the future holds for us. Most other countries are further along the road to secularism than America is, so you can how a secular government reacts when a Christian exercises his or her free speech rights in public.

Here's an example from Finland:

> A Christian politician who is under police investigation for sharing a Bible verse on Facebook has spoken out about her shocking ordeal.
>
> In June, Finnish politician Päivi Räsänen called out the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland for its participation in the Helsinki Pride events, sharing a passage from Romans 1 to prove her point.
>
> As a result, authorities opened an investigation into Räsänen, who is a member of The Christian Democrats party and also the former Minister of the Interior.
>
> Speaking to Faithwire, Räsänen said that she was motivated to share the scripture after hearing her church denomination had decided to endorse events that are in contradiction with God's word.

She perceives that the government's criminal investigation of her "offensive speech" will cause other Christians to be frightened about speaking out against sin in public:

> One of the most shocking elements of this case is that the authorities have decided to charge the politician with "agitation against an ethnic group" — an accusation that she believes is not only false, but also something that will also have grave ramifications for the Finnish Christian community and freedom of religion as a whole.
>
> "Already the fact that a police investigation has been started and there is a suspect of a crime has a significant effect to freedom of speech and religion in practice," she told Faithwire.
>
> "I am worried that the police investigation has had a chilling effect among Christians. It seems that many Christians in my country are now hiding and going to the closet now that the LGBT-community has come out to the public."
>
> The politician said she was concerned that Christians will become increasingly less inclined to share scripture on public platforms out of a fear that they are will be arrested for offending a certain group of people.

Wow, she's right about that. Unfortunately, in America, I have yet to see pastors in any church I've attended warning people about the loss of liberties that Christians experience when they are ruled by atheists. And I attend conservative PCA and SBC churches, although I would not attend an SBC church any more.

Here's another story from South Africa, where a Christian doctor has lost his medical license for merely expressing pro-life views:

> A hearing by the Health Professions Council of SA (HPCSA) against an anti-abortion doctor got off to a rocky start and had to be temporarily adjourned on Tuesday in Cape Town.
>
> Jacques de Vos, 32, is facing charges of unprofessional conduct and was prohibited from practising medicine due to his views on abortion.
>
> The former intern at 2 Military Hospital in Wynberg allegedly told a patient more than two years ago that a foetus was a human being. He allegedly likened abortion to killing an unborn human, while working for the gynaecology division during his intern year.
>
> At the hearing it emerged that De Vos was only a week short of finishing his medical degree before he did his community service.

South Africa is a communist country, which means that the rulers of the country are atheists. Communism is an atheistic ideology that does not recognize human rights. This is because in order to have human rights, you need a God to design the universe with those rights, such that other humans have to respect those rights. Atheism starts with an accidental universe, and finishes with humans that evolved accidentally, through a process of evolution that was random and unplanned. So, it's not surprising to see governments in atheistic countries mistreating Christians, and using the power of government to compel them to act like atheists.

It would be nice to see leaders in churches setting aside some time to warn Christians about the dangers of being ruled by atheists. But what I see happening with young people is that atheism is being sold to them as glamorous through false ideologies. Socialism, which has only ever made people poor, is presented to them as a solution to poverty. The Southern Baptist church that I recently attended was mostly concerned with opening up our borders to refugees and illegal aliens, and equalizing incomes by giving power to a secular government. If it were up to me, they'd be focused on evidential apologetics, rolling back radical feminism, and explaining how the free market system produces prosperity. But they have other priorities. By the time Bible-believing Christian leaders realize that anything is going on, it will be too late to stop it.

How parents and churches can make better women than the Bachelorette Hannah Brown

September 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

My friend Carla sent me a video from a TV show called the Bachelorette, in which a woman named Hannah Brown explains why she thinks that having recreational premarital sex is compatible with Christianity. In this post, I wanted to explain to Christian parents and churches why serious Christian men do not consider women like Hannah Brown to be appropriate candidates for marriage.

First, if you haven't seen the clip, you can watch it here:

So I just wanted to go over what I think marriage is for, and then try to judge whether Hannah Brown's view of men, sex and marriage offers me any value. I think this will be useful for parents and churches, because I think a lot of Christian men see marriage the same way as I do.

So, when I think of marriage, I'm looking for a partner who can help me to achieve goals that are consistent with the character of God revealed in the ministry of his son Jesus. So, what did Jesus do? Jesus demonstrated the existence of God by showing people evidence (miracles). Jesus taught people about what moral choices they should make and how to treat others. Jesus taught people that marriage is for one man and one woman, and that children should not be prevented from knowing God. And Jesus taught that people who sin can be forgiven, but that they should "sin no more".

So, let's take a look at what marriage-minded Christian men are looking for, and then decide whether Hannah Brown is doing a good job of preparing herself for marriage.

I'd like to model a successful, fruitful marriage to non-Christians, e.g. college students, neighbors, co-workers

A lot of people these days aspire to be married with children, and I want my marriage to be an advertisement to them for how Christianity provides a moral framework for that. So, a marriage candidate should demonstrate that she is good at making and keeping commitments, and investing in other people's lives self-sacrificially, with a goal of making them grow in their knowledge and influence as Christians. She should also be good at tasks that are related to being a wife and mother, like cooking, cleaning, caring for children, managing money, and so on. She should be a virgin and demonstrate self-control when it comes to things like drinking alcohol, frivolous travel, and managing money. Regarding sex, men are aware of studies that show that the number of premarital sex partners that a woman has is related to her contentment in her future marriage. The more no-commitment hawt bad boys a woman has sex with before marriage, the less content she will be with the "loser" she has to "settle for" when she hits 30. Marriage-minded men understand that women who "settle" for them later on were *never* attracted to commitment skills. We don't want to deal with sex-withholding, porn usage, emotional affairs, adultery, and divorce.

I'd like to facilitate discussions with students and faculty about whether the claims of Christian worldview are true

I would like my wife to be familiar with how to discuss and defend the claims of Christianity using evidence. For example, God's existence, Jesus' resurrection, etc. I do not mean that she should share her feelings and experiences with non-Christians. I do not mean that she should give her opinions or quote Bible verses to non-Christians. I mean that she should be able to appeal to mainstream scientific and historical evidence when making her case for the core claims of the Christian worldview. Being familiar with the work of people like William Lane Craig, Lee Strobel, Sean McDowell, J. Warner Wallace, etc. is sufficient. She should also be able to defend against objections to the Christian worldview, e.g. – suffering, hiddenness, pluralism, postmodernism, etc. I'm really looking for evidence that she is aware of areas where the culture is challenging Christianity, e.g. – abortion, natural marriage, socialism, border security, environmental stewardship, etc. and that she is able to be persuasive against the secular left with reasons and evidence.

I'd like to raise many effective and influential children who promote the Christian worldview and conditions that allow the practice of Christianity to flourish to society as a whole

In order to have many children, the woman has to be serious about making herself ready or marriage early, and pursuing marriage-ready men early. She should not be spending her late teens and 20s using her finite supply of youth and beauty trying pursuing temporary relationships with men who have superficial qualities. It eats into the "honeymoon period" that she could be giving her future husband, and it reduces the time

available for making more children. Regular sex and emotional support are huge gifts that a woman gives to a man, and they should be reserved for a man who commits to love her, lead her, and provide for her and her children. Since she is busy in her 20s riding the carousel with not-her-husband men, she won't have any effect on her husband's early career, which means that her husband will have less money to support having more children later on. I'm also looking for evidence that she is investing in relationships with other people that causes them to be more competent and effective in their Christian lives. For example, she could be getting people to be better with money – leading them by example to study hard STEM subjects, get real jobs in the private sector, avoid student loans. Something that shows that she is able to navigate the real world successfully, and isn't just wasting her time chasing fun and thrills.

I'd like to have an influence on the laws and policies in my community so that behaving as a consistent Christian is not subject to interference from the secular left

I'd like her to demonstrate that she's going to keep the Christian worldview that she has in the face of pressures from the secular left culture. So, I'm looking for her to be aware of where Christian values are impacted by laws and policies. And I'm looking for her to have strong convictions herself and also to be persuasive to others in debates and discussions. It's very easy for women to tell men what they want to hear when it comes to issues like abortion, gay rights, definition of marriage, socialism, environmentalism, border security, national debt, etc. Opinions are easy. What's not easy is having conversations where arguments are made, and supported by factual evidence. I would definitely want to see her taking pro-marriage and pro-family views in her conversations, but also in her writings, and in her activism. A man needs support and understanding when he is engaged in providing for a family, being a spiritual and moral leader, and protecting his family from outside threats. Many of the laws and policies that young Christian women find attractive are incompatible with what a Christian man does as a father and husband.

Conclusion

So, I think it's pretty clear when you look at Hannah Brown that she has none of these things. But she is a perfect example of what I see being produced by Christian parents and Christian pastors today. She really is not exceptional in any way, she is the normal Christian woman. On the one hand, she hollers Jesus, reads the Bible, sings praise hymns, attends church, and knows just enough about Christianity to satisfy parents and pastors that she is serious about her faith (until she throws the mask off on the first day of college). But to the Christian men who evaluate her for marriage, she has nothing at all that we want in a wife and mother.

Chris Sinkinson debates John Hick on religious pluralism and salvation

September 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

Looks like Justin Brierley on the Unbelievable radio show found a pastor with a Ph.D in philosophy, and he can really whip some ass. And that's a good thing, because he is taking on one of the two leading proponents of religious pluralism, in my opinion, (the other being Paul Knitter).

The players:

> John Hick is a noted philosopher and theologian who is a proponent of a pluralist view of religion – that there is one light (God) but many lampshades (religious expressions).
>
> Chris Sinkinson is a pastor and Bible tutor who has critiqued Hick's work. He says that pluralism empties Christianity of any content and in its own way disrespects other religions more than his own exclusivist stance.

The MP3 file is here. (Note: This link works)

Justin does a great job as moderator of this debate. He said what I was thinking of saying a number of times during the debate.

Anyway, here is my snarky summary. I creatively paraphrase some of the things that Hick says to make it more clear. And funny.

—-

Hick:
– had an experience looking at the buildings of other religions
– other religions have buildings, so all religions are equal
– I spent some time in the East, and met nice Eastern people
– since Eastern people are nice that means all religions are equal

Justin:
– isn't Jesus' claim to be the exclusive path to salvation offensive?

Sinkinson:
– all religions that are exclusive and have to deal with religious pluralism
– even John Hick writes polemically in favor of his own view
– even John Hick thinks that religions that are exclusive are false

Justin:
– what about the blind man and the elephant?
– the story seems to say that other people have a partial grasp?
– but the story-teller himself has the privileged view
– so isn't the religious pluralist just as arrogant as exclusivists?

Hick:
– well, it's not arrogant to claim to have the right answer
– Jesus never made the claim to be God incarnate
– Jesus never made the claim to be the exclusive path to God
– historians don't think that John's gospel is reliable because it is late
– the proclamation of exclusivity was added by evangelists much later

Sinkinson:
– the historians who doubt the high Christology are radical skeptics
– the mainstream of historical scholarship accepts a high Christology
– the EARLIEST history about Jesus has the highest Christology

Hick:
– the moderate scholars do think Jesus was divine but that he didn't think he was divine
– the phrase "Son of God" was used to describe any remarkable person
– only later did the early church turn the generic term into "God the Son"

Sinkinson:
– there is reflection on Jesus' identity and developments, but not invention
– Jesus and his followers were in trouble precisely for linking him to deity
– why else would Jesus get into trouble and get crucified?

Hick:
– the Romans crucified him because people were saying he was the Messiah
– but the Messiah was not identified as being divine, but political
– and that's why the Romans crucified him

Justin:
– do you (Sinkinson) think that people in other religions can be saved?

Sinkinson:
– the traditional view is exclusivism
– the other world religions are logically contradictory with Christianity
– you have to respect their differences – they are not the same as Christianity
– exclusivists allow that people can be saved by responding to natural theology
– and there are also other cases where non-Christians are saved, like old testament saints

and babies who die in infancy

Hick:
– but people’s religions are based on where they are born
– so it’s not fair for God to expect people to be saved in one religion only

Sinkinson:
– the plurality of religions grouped by location doesn’t make christianity false
– that would be the genetic fallacy – rejecting an idea because of its origin
– the real question to consider is whether it is true
– and even the objection assumes that God is a God of love, who should be fair
– but how do you know that God is loving? that is an exclusive view
– how can the “blob” ultimate of religious pluralism be “loving” and “fair”

Hick:
– the ultimate reality is loving or not loving depending on each person’s religion

Sinkinson:
– but some religions and theistic and some are atheistic
– how can those God exist and not exist?

Hick:
– God is beyond everyone’s understanding, except mine
– God is beyond all definitions, except mine
– God is beyond all human understanding, except mine
– i’m not contradicting myself, it’s a mystery! a mystery!
– as long as you don’t look to closely, they’re all the same!
– allow me to tell you about God, which no one can do but me

Justin:
– doesn’t your religious pluralism mean that Christianity is false?

Hick:
– well, Christianity can’t be true, because it disagrees with other religions
– Christianity can’t falsify other religions, that would be mean to them
– other religions are just as “profound” as Christianity – and that’s what matters – not whether a religion makes true claims
– some religions are older than Christianity, that means they can’t be disagreed with
– we can’t let Christianity be true, because then some people will feel bad
– if people feel bad, then they don’t like me and then I feel bad
– if there’s one thing I know about the unknowable ultimate reality, it’s that it wants me to be liked by lots of people

Sinkinson:
– your view seems to be agnosticism – that nothing can be known about the “ultimate real”
– if we can’t express in words what God is like, then why are you saying what God is like?

Hick:

– the indescribable ultimate is described (falsely, but interestingly) by various tradition

Sinkinson:
– does the “ultimate real” exist?

Hick:
– no

Justin:
– are all the exclusive religions wrong, and only you are right?

Hick:
– all propositions about God in all the religions are false
– the experience of being deluded and having feelings about your delusions is “valid” in all religions
– all religions are equally good ways to believe false things and to have feelings about your false beliefs
– only my propositions about God are true
– everyone who disagrees with me is wrong

Sinkinson:
– so all the propositions of all the religions are wrong
– but all the experiences and feelings are “right”

Hick:
– yes
– all propositions about God are humanly constructed, and so false
– except mine – mine are true!

Sinkinson:
– so everything distinctive about Christianity are literally false?

Hick:
– yes, Christian doctrines are all false
– because if they were true, other religions would be false, and they would feel bad
– and we can’t have that, because everyone has to like me
– only things that don’t offend people in other religions can be true

Sinkinson:
– so do we have to then treat all religions as non-propositional?

Hick:
– well just don’t ask people about the content of their beliefs
– just treat their religion as non-cognitive rituals, feelings and experiences
– don’t inquire too deeply into it, because all religions are all nonsense
– i’m very respectful and tolerant of different religions!

Sinkinson:
– but Muslims, for example, think their religion is making truth claims

Hick:
– but there can be tolerance as long as you treat religions as non-propositional nonsense

Sinkinson:
– um, I have a higher respect for religions than you do
– I actually consider that the claims of other religions could be true
– I think that other religions make truth claims and not nonsense claims

Hick:
– well they are all useful because they are all false
– I don't emphasize beliefs, I emphasize living, experiences and feelings
– as long as everyone accepts my view and rejects their religion, we'll all be tolerant

Justin:
– erm, isn't that an exclusive claim?
– you're trying to say that your view of what religion is is right, and everyone else is wrong

Hick:
– I'm not arrogant, I just think that all the religions of the worlds are false
– only my statements about religion are true – everyone else is wrong
– I'm tolerant, and Christians are arrogant

Justin:
– but you think Sinkinson's view is wrong
– why should we accept your view and deny his view?

Hick:
– His view of salvation is false, and mine is true

Sinkinson:
– you use words with set meanings, but you mean completely different things
– when I say salvation, I mean deliverance from sins through Jesus

Hick:
– I get to decide what salvation means for everyone, you intolerant bigot

Sinkinson:
– but that word has a specific meaning that has held true in all of Christian history
– but what you mean by salvation is people having subjective delusions that are not true

Hick:
– I don't like using the word salvation

Sinkinson:
– but you just used it!
– and you think that it is present in different world religions, but it isn't

Hick:
– God is unknowable and indescribable
– God isn't a wrathful God though
– and the Christian description of God is false
– Evangelical Christians are mean
– I had experiences with people of other faiths

– and these experiences taught me that religions that think that the universe is eternal are true
– as long as you reduce religion to behaviors and not truth, then religions are all good at producing behaviors
– if you just treat all religions as clothing fashion and food customs, they are all valid
– the main point of religion is for people to agree on cultural conventions and stick to them
– never mind the propositional statements of religions… who cares about truth? not me!
– but Christianity is definitely false

Sinkinson:
– the Judeo-Christian God is different – he reveals himself to humans
– he is distinct from the other religions
– he is personal, and is loving but also angry at sin

Hick:
– But God isn't a person, and he isn't a non-person
– I can't say what he is – I'll offend someone if I say anything at all!
– except Christians – I can offend them because they are arrogant bigots
– I'm also very spiritual – I meditate on my breathing

Sinkinson:
– you can't assess a religion by the experiences that people have
– people who have weird experiences do all kinds of evil things
– so the real question has to be about truth – is the New Testament reliable?, etc.

General Mattis: Obama covered up Iran terrorist attack on U.S. soil to save Iran deal

September 9, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How far did Obama go to give Iran nuclear weapons?

Everywhere I turn in the mainstream media, I'm told how the Obama administration was the most scandal-free administration in history. There wasn't even a hint of corruption, according to the mainstream media. I'm beginning to think that it's a good test of intelligence to ask a person how many Obama scandals they can name. In this post, I want to look at an Obama scandal that the media ignored.

First, let's start with a list of Obama scandals:

- 1. Operation Fast and Furious
- 2. Benghazi.
- 3. The IRS targeted conservative organizations.
- 4. The DOJ seized Associated Press phone records as well as phone and email records from Fox News reporter James Rosen.
- 5. The NSA conducted mass surveillance against American citizens without a warrant.
- 6. The Obama administration paid ransom to Iran for hostages, and lied to the American people about it.
- 7. Hillary's email scandal.
- 8. The Environmental Protection Agency poisoned a Colorado river.
- 9. The EPA also broke federal law in promoting a regulation.
- 10. The GSA scandal.
- 11. The Secret Service scandal.

This list doesn't even include many of the foreign policy scandals of the administration, like leaking classified information, trading a deserter for 5 senior Taliban commanders, releasing the traitor Bradley/Chelsea Manning early, etc. I mean, the list could be twice that length. But you would never know about any of these if you relied on the mainstream

media, or their “fact checkers”, because they are Democrats and they lie to cover up for their party.

Here is the latest scandal, reported by the Washington Examiner:

> Former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis says he predicted years ago that Iran would escalate its provocations against the United States — and he partly blames the Obama administration’s anemic reaction to an Iranian plot to bomb a restaurant in Washington, D.C.
>
> […]Mattis says Washington didn’t even inform him when Iran committed an “act of war” on American soil.
>
> […]As Mattis writes, “Attorney General Eric Holder said the bombing plot was ‘directed and approved by elements of the Iranian government and, specifically, senior members of the Qods Force.’ The Qods were the Special Operations Force of the Revolutionary Guards, reporting to the top of the Iranian government.”
>
> […]“In my view, we had to hold Iran to account and strike back when attacked. But there was a reason for the administration’s restraint. The administration was secretly negotiating with Iran, although I was not privy to the details at the time.”
>
> Those negotiations would lead to the Iran nuclear deal, signed in 2015. Mattis is critical of the agreement, which President Trump withdrew from last year. “In my military judgment, America had undertaken a poorly calculated, long-shot gamble. At the same time, the administration was lecturing our Arab friends that they had to accommodate Iran as if it were a moderate neighbor in the region and not an enemy committed to their destruction,” Mattis writes. **“As long as its leaders consider Iran less a nation-state than a revolutionary cause, Iran will remain a terrorist threat potentially more dangerous than Al Qaeda or ISIS.”**

So, Obama covered for a terrorist attack attempted by Iran against a U.S. ally on U.S. soil.But that’s not the only time that Obama covered for Iran in order to save his Iran deal.

Here is another one, reported by the far-left New York Post:

> The Obama administration stymied a sprawling investigation into the terror group Hezbollah — and its highly lucrative drug- trafficking networks — to protect the Iran nuclear deal, according to a bombshell report.
>
> A team at the Drug Enforcement Administration had been working for almost a decade to bring down the Iran-backed militant organization’s sophisticated $1 billion-a-year drug ring, which laundered money and smuggled cocaine into the United States, Politico reported.
>
> **But the departments of Justice and Treasury repeatedly undermined agents’ efforts to arrest and prosecute key members of the criminal network — because the Obama White House feared upsetting Tehran**

> **ahead of the nuclear agreement, according to Politico.**
>
> Former Treasury official Katherine Bauer even admitted in little-noticed testimony to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs last February that “under the Obama administration . . . these [Hezbollah-related] investigations were tamped down for fear of rocking the boat with Iran and jeopardizing the nuclear deal.”

In my opinion, Obama made the Iran deal happen because he wanted to send $1.7 billion in cash to Iran to help them to develop nuclear weapons that they could then use against their enemy Israel. And that’s the foreign policy that every single Democrat voter voted for when they voted for him in 2008 and again in 2012. They believed in destroying Israel and they paid a terrorist-sponsoring, drug-smuggling nation to do their dirty work for them. Hitler would have been proud.

Wage gap: are women paid less than men because of discrimination?

September 10, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

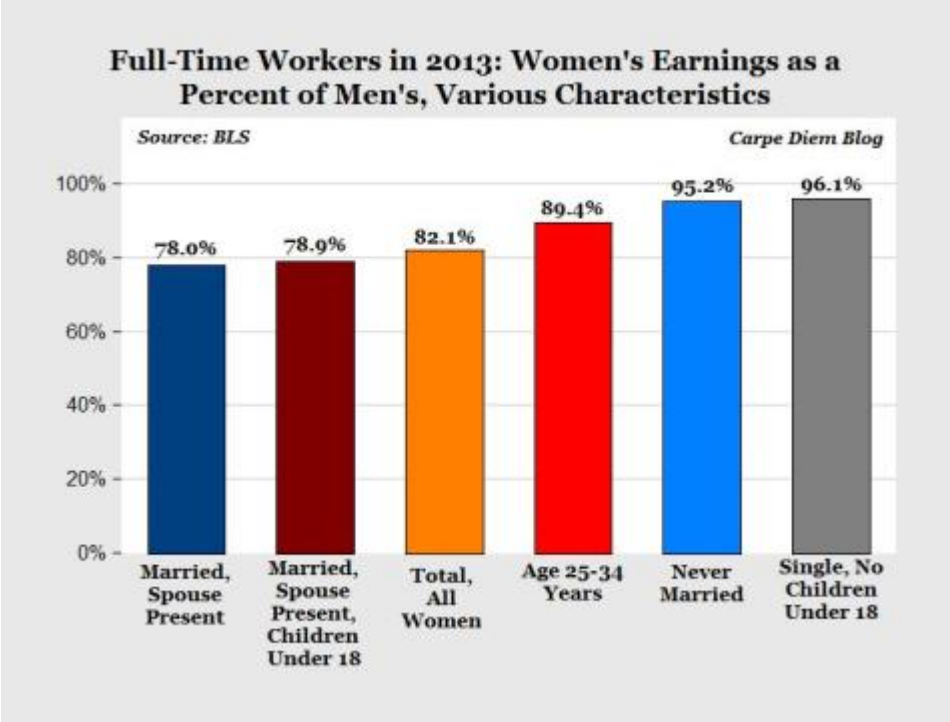

The pay gap is caused by women's preference for having children

Liberal feminist Hanna Rosin takes a look at this question in the far-left Slate, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The official Bureau of Labor Department statistics show that the median earnings of full-time female workers is 77 percent of the median earnings of full-time male workers. But that is very different than "77 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men." The latter gives the impression that a man and a woman standing next to each other doing the same job for the same number of hours get paid different salaries. That's not at all the case. "Full time" officially means 35 hours, but men work more hours than women. That's the first problem: We could be comparing men working 40 hours to women working 35.

> How to get a more accurate measure? First, instead of comparing annual wages, start by comparing average weekly wages. This is considered a slightly more accurate measure because it eliminates variables like time off during the year or annual bonuses (and yes, men get higher bonuses, but let's shelve that for a moment in our quest for a pure wage gap number). By this measure, women earn 81 percent of what men earn, although it varies widely by race. African-American women, for example, earn 94 percent of what African-American men earn in a typical week. Then, when you restrict the comparison to men and

> women working 40 hours a week, the gap narrows to 87 percent.

> But we're still not close to measuring women "doing the same work as men." For that, we'd have to adjust for many other factors that go into determining salary. Economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn did that in a recent paper, "The Gender Pay Gap.".”They first accounted for education and experience. That didn't shift the gap very much, because women generally have at least as much and usually more education than men, and since the 1980s they have been gaining the experience. The fact that men are more likely to be in unions and have their salaries protected accounts for about 4 percent of the gap. The big differences are in occupation and industry. Women congregate in different professions than men do, and the largely male professions tend to be higher-paying. If you account for those differences, and then compare a woman and a man doing the same job, the pay gap narrows to 91 percent. So, you could accurately say in that Obama ad that, "women get paid 91 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men."

I believe that the remainder of the gap can be accounted for by looking at other *voluntary* factors that differentiate men and women.

The Heritage Foundation says that a recent study puts the number at 95 cents per dollar.

Excerpt:

> Women are more likely than men to work in industries with more flexible schedules. Women are also more likely to spend time outside the labor force to care for children. These choices have benefits, but they also reduce pay—for both men and women. When economists control for such factors, they find the gender gap largely disappears.
>
> A 2009 study commissioned by the Department of Labor found that after controlling for occupation, experience, and other choices, women earn 95 percent as much as men do. In 2005, June O'Neil, the former director of the Congressional Budget Office, found that "There is no gender gap in wages among men and women with similar family roles." Different choices—not discrimination—account for different employment and wage outcomes.

A popular article by Carrie Lukas in the Wall Street Journal agrees.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Labor's Time Use survey shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. One would expect that someone who works 9% more would also earn more. This one fact alone accounts for more than a third of the wage gap.
>
> […]Recent studies have shown that the wage gap shrinks—or even reverses—when relevant factors are taken into account and comparisons are

> made between men and women in similar circumstances. In a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30, the research firm Reach Advisors found that women earned an average of 8% more than their male counterparts. Given that women are outpacing men in educational attainment, and that our economy is increasingly geared toward knowledge-based jobs, it makes sense that women's earnings are going up compared to men's.

When women make different choices about education and labor that are more like what men choose, they earn just as much or more than men.

Correcting four myths about the history of the Crusades

September 11, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Crusader

Here is an interesting article from Intercollegiate Studies Institute.

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

If you asked me what are the two best books on the Crusades, I would answer God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades by Baylor professor Rodney Stark and The Concise History of the Crusades by Professor Thomas F. Madden. If you get this question a lot from atheists, then I recommend you pick these up. Anything by Rodney Stark is useful for Christians, in fact.

Facebook uses pro-abortion “fact checkers” to label pro-life pages “fake news”

September 12, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Facebook banned evangelist Franklin Graham for “hate speech”

Recently, this blog’s Facebook page reached 5000 likes. We were immediately hit with a fact-check by a secular leftist, who labeled an satirical meme image as “fake news”. Facebook informed me that they would be lowering our distribution for not being secular leftists. In fact, Facebook is censoring anyone who disagrees with the Democrat party, because the 2020 election is almost here.

Here’s the story from the Daily Caller:

> Live Action founder and President Lila Rose said Facebook allowed abortionists to fact check Live Action content and label it as misinformation.
>
> Facebook cited a fact check from two third-party fact checkers, telling Rose and Live Action that their statement “abortion is never medically necessary” was both inaccurate and misleading.
>
> The Aug. 30 fact check, published in Health Feedback, targeted an August 9 video that included the statement “abortion is never medically necessary.” Another video shared by Live Action featuring Dr. Kendra Kolb explaining why abortion is never medically necessary was also fact checked.

Live Action’s page was punished for posting “fake news”, according to Facebook’s pro-abortion “fact-checkers”. There is no way to appeal a fact-check.

Live Action decided to make their case known to the Republican party, and they have responded.

Fox News reports:

> Four Republican senators blasted Facebook for 'censorship' over the tech giant's recent fact check of pro-life organization Live Action.
>
> In a letter today to CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Senators Josh Hawley of Missouri, Ted Cruz of Texas, Kevin Cramer of North Dakota and Mike Braun of Indiana condemn the company's "pattern of censorship" and demand that it issue a correction, remove any restrictions placed on Live Action and its founder Lila Rose, as well as submit to a "meaningful" external audit.

Let's look at two Facebook "fact checkers", and an example of their "fact-checking" and see how objective and non-partisan they are.

Let's look at the first far-left Facebook partner: Politifact. Politifact is just a group of journalists from the Tampa Bay Times newspaper.

Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine, writes about Politifact's assessment of Obama's promise to Americans about keeping their health plans after Obamacare.

2008 PolitiFact before the election: 'We rate his statement True'

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site's "Truth-O-Meter" to evaluate this claim: "Under Barack Obama's health care proposal, 'if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.'" The article assures us in its headline that "Obama's plan expands [the] existing system," and continues that "Obama is accurately describing his health care plan here…It remains to be seen whether Obama's plan will actually be able to achieve the cost savings it promises for the health care system. But people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama's plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his statement True."
>
> […]As per PolitiFact's usual M.O., Holan didn't seek out any skeptical health-policy experts to suss out the veracity of Senator Obama's signature claim. Instead, its sources included Jonathan Cohn, a passionate Obamacare supporter at *The New Republic*, and various interviews and statements of Mr. Obama. Holan simply took the "keep your plan" promise at face value, dismissing as dishonest anyone who dared suggest that Obama's claim would be impossible to keep. "His opponents have attacked his plan as 'government-run' health care," she wrote, the scare-quotes around "government-run" being visible to all.
>
> PolitiFact's pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of

> the 2008 campaign.

Here’s the screen capture from 2008:

The Truth-O-Meter Says:

Under Barack Obama's health care proposal, "if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it."

Barack Obama on Tuesday, October 7th, 2008 in a debate in Nashville, Tenn.

Obama's plan expands existing system

Barack Obama defended his health care plan during a debate in Nashville, Tenn., on Oct. 7, 2008. His opponents have attacked his plan as "government-run" health care.

TRUE

Share this story:

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"No. 1, let me just repeat, if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it," Obama said. "All I'm going to do is help you to lower the premiums on it. You'll still have choice of doctor."

Obama is accurately describing his health care plan here. He advocates a program that seeks to build on the current system, rather than dismantling it and starting over.

Politifact caught with its pants on fire
Before the election, it’s true! And Obama got re-elected, because people believed that. But what happened after the election?

2013 PolitiFact after the election: ‘We rate his statement Pants On Fire’

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama’s infamous promise—that “if you like your health care plan, you can keep it”—its 2013 “Lie of the Year.”
>
> […]On November 4, Jacobson rated as “Pants on Fire” the President’s new claim that “what we said was, you can keep [your plan] if it hasn’t changed since the law passed.” Both pieces were edited by Angie Drobnic Holan, who had initially granted PolitiFact’s seal of approval to Senator Obama’s 2008 promise. Holan delivered the *coup de grâce*, declaring as PolitiFact’s “Lie of the Year” the “keep your plan” promise.
>
> “The promise was impossible to keep,” says Holan in her December piece. Now she tells us! But none of the key facts that made that promise “impossible” in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President’s plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan
Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."

Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."

Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact says: we were just kidding! Kidding!

So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, except when Politifact wants to collude with the Democrat party to influence elections.

What about Snopes?

The Daily Caller explains:

> Snopes' main political fact-checker is a writer named Kim Lacapria. Before writing for Snopes, Lacapria wrote for Inquisitr, a blog that — oddly enough — is known for publishing fake quotes and even downright hoaxes as much as anything else.
>
> […]She described herself as "openly left-leaning" and a liberal. She trashed the Tea Party as "teahadists." She called Bill Clinton "one of our greatest" presidents. She claimed that conservatives only criticized Lena Dunham's comparison of voting to sex because they "fear female agency."
>
> […]Lacapria — in another "fact check" article — argued Hillary Clinton hadn't included Benghazi at all in her infamous "we didn't lose a single person in Libya" gaffe. Lacapria claimed Clinton only meant to refer to the 2011 invasion of Libya (but not the 2012 Benghazi attack) but offered little fact-based evidence to support her claim.

It's groups like far-left groups like Politifact and Snopes who are spotting "fake news" for Facebook.

Bible study: what does the Christian concept of "grace" mean?

September 13, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A good shepherd rescuing a lost sheep, who had no hope

My friend Wessel sent me this sermon a few days ago because I was looking for a good sermon on grace. Some of my friends pitched in with sermons, but this one from a South African church was BY FAR the best. I've listened to it 3 times already. The speaker sounds exactly like one of best friends from university, Andrew, who is from South Africa.

I'm testing out a new file download service, so I hope this works… here is the MP3 file. (7 megabytes, 30 minutes) [FIXED!]

Let me know if you can't download that.

The text of the sermon is Genesis 48:1-20:

> 1 Some time later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him.
>
> 2 When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed.
>
> 3 Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me
>
> 4 and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.'
>
> 5 "Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and

Simeon are mine.

[6] Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers.

[7] As I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

[8] When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, "Who are these?"

[9] "They are the sons God has given me here," Joseph said to his father.

Then Israel said, "Bring them to me so I may bless them."

[10] Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them.

[11] Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too."

[12] Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground.

[13] And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him.

[14] But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger,and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.

[15] Then he blessed Joseph and said,

"May the God before whom my fathers
  Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully,
the God who has been my shepherd
  all my life to this day,

[16] the Angel who has delivered me from all harm
  —may he bless these boys.
May they be called by my name
  and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac,
and may they increase greatly
  on the earth."

[17] When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.

[18] Joseph said to him, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."

[19] But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a

> people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations."
>
> 20 He blessed them that day and said,
>
> "In your[c] name will Israel pronounce this blessing:
> 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'"
>
> So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

So, in this story, God continues his tradition of choosing the lowly people in the world instead of the people who are seen as "better". God does this in many cases, because he has a big heart for people who are born in a bad position. Normally in the world, people always choose what they think is best for them. They choose the prettiest girl. They choose the most tallest man. Those who need a little extra help or care are passed over. God sometimes does the complete opposite of this. Instead of choosing the obvious "best person", he chooses a much lower person, and he lifts them up to do great things.

Consider 1 Corinthians 1:26-31:

> 26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called.Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.
>
> 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.
>
> 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,
>
> 29 so that no one may boast before him.
>
> 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.
>
> 31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

The speaker in the sermon explains the idea of grace by talking about sheep and shepherds. He explains that unlike clever homing pigeons, sheep are prone to wandering off and they aren't able to find their way home. Sometimes, they get lost, and sometimes they even wander into danger. A bad shepherd would just say that he only wanted to have the best sheep – the smartest ones or the richest ones or the best looking ones or the most popular ones. But a good shepherd is sorry for the sheep that needs the most help, and is the most lost, and in the most danger. God is like a good shepherd. God sends his Son to die to atone for the sins of the bad sheep in this world, even when they didn't deserve it. (John 3:16-17) That's grace. But he also arranges the world in a way that bad sheep have an opportunity to reach out and find him. (Acts 17:24-27) That's grace, too.

In my own life, I have often found myself being excluded or discounted by people, usually because of my skin color or because of my early childhood poverty or because I just struggle to understand what I'm expected to say and to do. But a funny thing often

happens. Right when I am feeling the worst about being excluded, God comes along and gives me something special to do, that makes me forget about being excluded. And that's been my experience of grace, ever since I was little and even to this day. The honor of being allowed to participate in God's plan makes me forget what it feels like to be excluded. The very best things I've achieved in my life are the times where God showed me someone who started out life in a terrible situation (usually because of the selfish decisions of their irresponsible parents) and then I participated in God's plan to lead them out of the mess they started out from.

I think one of the biggest reasons why some Christians stick with Christianity through thick and thin is that they have this experience of grace. This experience of grace means that no matter what, that sheep is going to loyal to that shepherd who chose him when he was at his lowest and most vulnerable. The first part of the choosing is obviously Jesus dying on the cross to atone for your rebellion. But after that, God carefully reveals himself to the sheep. And then there is the guidance that helps the sheep to avoid destroying himself with sin. If the sheep makes mistakes, the good shepherd has already laid down his life to pay for them. This is a lot of effort being put into this rescue operation. It's difficult for people who have never experienced grace to realize how real and life-transforming it is. For those who have not experienced it, I really recommend that you pray to God, in the name of Jesus, and ask him to give you grace.

There are still things in my life where God has decided that he is not going to fix it. And, strangely enough, that doesn't make me disloyal to him at all. Why not? Well, you have to read the Bible and understand that Jesus was not spared from suffering or death in his loyal obedience to God. He wasn't given everything he wanted to feel happy all the time. When you understand that this is the character of your shepherd, then it's much easier for you to put up with the things you lack, too.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig at Biola U: Does God Exist?

September 14, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students

Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang

– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws
– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection

– naturalistic explanations don’t work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it’s just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC’s arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley’s argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn’t have done it that way
– god wouldn’t have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus
– god wouldn’t have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that’s a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that’s a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that’s a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don’t support life, that’s a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that’s a bad design

3. hitchens’ burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can’t prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig’s scientific arguments don’t go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don’t prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don’t prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn’t be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig’s evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can’t use the progress of science
– it’s too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god’s existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn’t forming his view based on evidence

– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don't believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you've got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God
– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH's evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH's argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn't need to be efficient

CH's argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH's argument that Craig's scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH's argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn't need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH's citation of Craig's book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true

– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH's rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH's rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH's argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed
– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them

– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that’s a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven’t even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn’t prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they’re growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn’t improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do
– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn’t need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that’s why people act morally
– it’s degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don’t know why, because i can’t ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don’t hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don’t believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don’t agree

WC moral argument: it’s not epistemology it’s the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing
– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history

– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it's just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that's not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

How to respond to an atheist who complains about slavery in the Bible

September 15, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I often hear atheists going on and on about how the Bible has this evil and that evil. Their favorite one seems to be slavery. Here are three things I say to atheists when they push this objection.

The Bible and slavery

First, you should explain to them what the Bible actually says about slavery. And then tell them about the person responsible for stopping slavery in the UK: a devout evangelical named William Wilberforce.

Here's an article that works.

Excerpt:

> We should compare Hebrew debt-servanthood (many translations render this "slavery") more fairly to apprentice-like positions to pay off debts — much like the indentured servitude during America's founding when people worked for approximately 7 years to pay off the debt for their passage to the New World. Then they became free.
>
> In most cases, servanthood was more like a live-in*employee*, temporarily embedded within the employer's household. Even today, teams trade sports players to another team that has an owner, and these players belong to a franchise. This language hardly suggests slavery, but rather a formal contractual agreement to be fulfilled — like in the Old Testament.3

Second, inform them that moral values are not rationally grounded on atheism. In an

accidental universe, there is no way we ought to be. There is no design for humans that we have to comply with. There are no objective human rights, like the right to liberty (that would block slavery) or the right to life (that would block abortion). Although you may find that most atheists act nicely, the ones who really understand what atheism means and live it out consistently are not so nice.

Atheism and moral judgments

Second, inform them that moral values are not rationally grounded on atheism. In an accidental universe, there is no way we ought to be. There is no design for humans that we have to comply with. There are no objective human rights, like the right to liberty (that would block slavery) or the right to life (that would block abortion). Although you may find that most atheists act nicely, the ones who really understand what atheism means and live it out consistently are not so nice.

Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

When people like Dawkins talk about morality, you have to understand that they are pretending. To them, morality is just about personal preferences and cultural conventions. They just think that questions of right and wrong are *arbitrary*. Things that are wrong in one time and place are right in another. Every view is as right as any other, depending on the time and place. That's atheist morality.

What's worse than slavery? Abortion!

Third, you should ask the atheist what he has done to oppose abortion. Abortion is worse than slavery, so if they are sincere in thinking that slavery is wrong, then they ought to think that abortion is wrong even more. So ask them what they've done to oppose the practice of abortion. That will tell you how sincere they are about slavery.

Here's Richard Dawkins explaining what he's done to stop abortion:

That's right. The head atheist supports killing born children.

Is the gospel of Mark early? Is it based on eyewitness testimony?

September 16, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

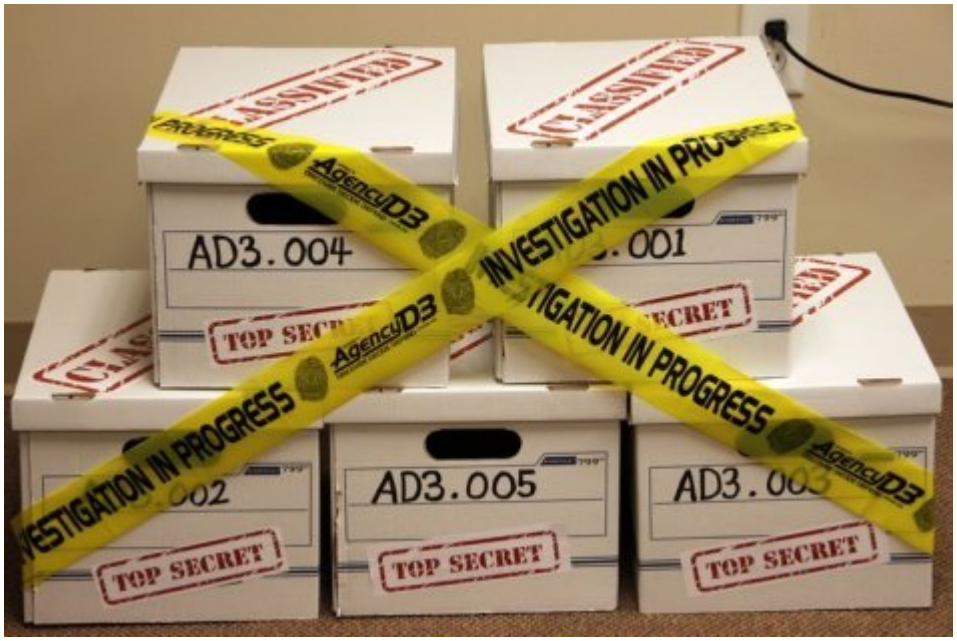

Investigation in progress

Sean McDowell tweeted this interesting article from BeThinking.org, written by New Testament historian Peter J. Williams. It contains reasons why Mark is early, eyewitness testimony. I want to focus on the criterion of embarrassment, which says that if a passage contains embarrassing information about the author or the author's cause, then it's likely to be historical.

Excerpt:

> If it were not for Mark's Gospel, Mark would be a very minor figure indeed in the beginnings of Christianity. He is certainly not someone you would ascribe Mark's Gospel to in order to give it more authority, because according to the book of Acts (*Acts 13:13* and *15:37*) he abandoned Paul, one of the early Christian leaders, during a mission. We can take it therefore that the Gospel is ascribed to him because it genuinely is by him. If it is by him then it has to be written within the lifespan of someone who was an active adult in the 50s and 60s of the first century AD.

Yeah, if you're going to make up a gospel, and you want people to believe it, then you pick an author who is more famous, like Peter.

More:

> Though the Gospel makes extraordinary claims about Jesus' miraculous activities, it seems to make no attempt to cover up the failures of the early Christian leaders. The disciples are said to misunderstand (*8:14–217*), argue about who is the greatest (*9:34*), get angry with two of the leading disciples (*10:41*), and

> ultimately abandon Jesus (*14:50*). The leading disciple, Peter, denied Jesus three times (*14:66–72*). The most unusual claim that it makes is that someone who underwent a shameful execution designed by the Romans to show that he was a loser, was in fact the Son of God.
>
> It is not just the narrative which tells embarrassing stories, the things said by Jesus could also be profoundly embarrassing. According to *15:34* Jesus died asking why God had forsaken him. It is not likely that people would make up such a saying if it hadn't really occurred. According to *7:27*, Jesus told a non-Jewish woman (a Gentile) that it was not right to take that which belonged to the Jews and throw it to 'dogs', meaning Gentiles. This is not something you would make up if you were writing a Gospel and wanted gentiles to become Christians.

Although Williams is right to say that Mark is typically dated to the early 60s, the atheist historian James Crossley dates it 37-43 in his book about the gospel of Mark.

There is a podcast by J. Warner Wallace that has some more interesting information about the gospel of Mark.

The M4A file is here.

Details:

> In this blast from the past, J. Warner examines the Gospel of Mark for signs of Peter's influence. Papias, the early church bishop, claimed Mark's Gospel was written as he sat at the feet of Peter in Rome. According to Papias, Mark scribed Peter's sermons and created the narrative we now have in our Bible. In this audio podcast, J. Warner applies Forensic Statement Analysis to Mark's text to see if Peter's fingerprints are present.

You can also read a post on some of what is in the podcast, if you don't want to listen to the podcast.

Here is the part I thought was most interesting:

> **The Omissions of the Gospel Are Consistent With Peter's Influence**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter's special input and influence, including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It's important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It's not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter's standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters 'indiscretions' in their own accounts). Here are some examples of Petrine Omissions grounded in an effort to minimize embarrassment to Peter:

> Peter's shame at the "Miraculous Catch"
> *(Mark 1:16-120 compared to Luke 5:1-11)*
>
> Peter's foolish statement at the crowded healing
> *(Mark 5:21-34 compared to Luke 8:42-48)*
>
> Peter's lack of understanding related to the parable
> *(Mark 7:14-19 compared to Matthew 15:10-18 and Acts 10:9-16)*
>
> Peter's lack of faith on the lake
> *(Mark 6:45 compared to Matthew 14:22-33)*
>
> Peter's rash statement to Jesus
> *(Mark 8:31-33 compared to Matthew 16:21-23)*
>
> Peter's statement related to money
> *(Mark 10:23-31 compared to Matthew 19:23-30)*
>
> Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial
> *(Mark 14:27-31 compared to Luke 22:31-34 and John 13:34-38)*
>
> Peter's behavior at the foot-washing
> *(Mark 14:22-26 compared to John 13:2-9)*
>
> Peter's denial and Jesus' direct stare
> *(Mark 14:66-72 compared to Luke 22:54-62)*
>
> There are a number of places in the Gospel of Mark where details related specifically to the words and actions of Peter have been omitted in what appears to be an effort to protect Peter from embarrassment. This doesn't mean Peter failed to talk about these things. He may very well have included them in his sermons and teachings. But Mark, his scribe and close friend, simply chose to omit these details related to Peter, either at Peter's request or on his own initiative.

Mark doesn't want to annoy his source, Peter, by calling him out for making mistakes. He has to include the embarrassing stories, but it's less harsh than in other gospels.

Here's another blog post from Cold Case Christianity on the same topic.

New York Times forced to correct smear of Justice Brett Kavanaugh

September 17, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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[image]
Why do people think that the mainstream news media is biased?
It's very troubling to me that people in my office who are on the left still think that mainstream news organizations and "fact checkers" are unbiased and reliable. When the mainstream news media or "fact checkers" are caught in a mistake, my co-workers never seem to become aware of it. They live in a bubble, consuming "news" that confirms what they already want to believe about the world.

Here's an example where the New York Times printed smears against Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, and then had to issue a correction.

The Daily Wire reports:

> The New York Times was forced to correct a smear article on Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh after it was revealed that they excluded exculpatory evidence from their report.
>
> "An earlier version of this article, which was adapted from a forthcoming book, did not include one element of the book's account regarding an assertion by a Yale classmate that friends of Brett Kavanaugh pushed his penis into the hand of a female student at a drunken dorm party," The Times wrote in a correction. "The book reports that the female student declined to be interviewed and friends say that she does not recall the incident. That information has been added to the article."

So, they *printed an entire article* about an alleged assault against this female student, and the actual female student declined to be interviewed and did not recall the incident.

According to John McCormack of National Review:

> "Omitting this fact from the New York Times story is one of the worst cases of journalistic malpractice in recent memory."

That's mainstream news media, in a nutshell. In cases of fake news, the fake news story is always trumpeted on the front page. The correction gets printed days later, somewhere further back in the newspaper. If a correction is printed at all.

But what about the fact-checkers? Surely they must be more reliable about checking facts, before printing fake news, right?

What about Snopes?

Well, let's consider Snopes, a famous fact-checker used by all the Big Tech companies to independently fact-check conservative web sites.

Here's Snopes claiming that AOC DID NOT say that photos of the 9/11/01 terrorist attack were "triggering".

Snopes says AOC did not say it

But their own story says that AOC DID say that photos of the 9/11/01 terrorist attack were "triggering":

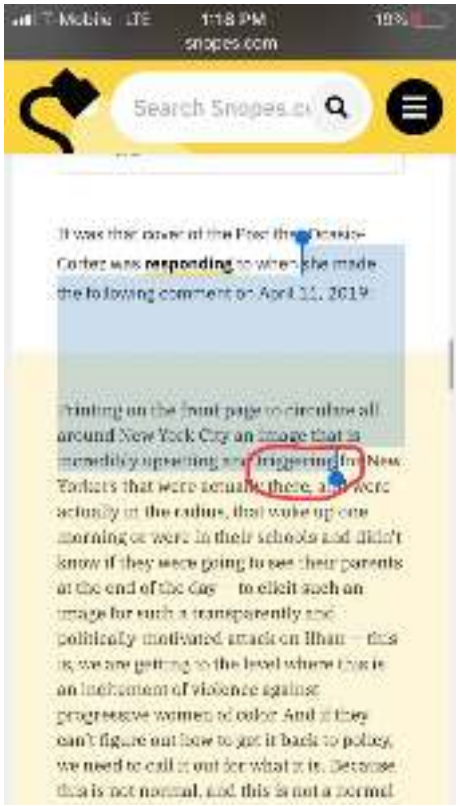

Snopes says AOC did say it, in their own article

Well, that's just Snopes. Maybe other fact-checkers are different.

What about Politifact?

Politifact screwed up a fact-check during the Arizona 2018 Senate race.

The Daily Caller explains:

> PolitiFact incorrectly labeled it “mostly false” that Democratic Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema “protested troops in a pink tutu” during its live fact-check of the Arizona Senate debate Monday night.
>
> It’s an established fact that Sinema, a former Green Party activist who co-founded an anti-war group, wore a pink tutu at one of the multiple anti-war protests she attended in 2003.

Here’s their Politifact’s evaluation of McSally’s claim:

Who are you going to believe? Politifact, or your own eyes?
And here’s the photo of Kyrsten Sinema, protesting the troops, in a pink tutu:

Anti-war Democrat Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema in a pink tutu
The Daily Caller notes:

> A 2003 Arizona State University news article at the time described Sinema wearing "something resembling a pink tutu" at one of the protests.

The mainstream media, e.g. – the New York Times, and the major fact-checkers, e.g. Snopes and Politifact, are constantly making mistakes likes this. People need to understand that the major fact-checkers are not specially-trained investigators. They're mostly just journalists – and journalists are known to donate *overwhelmingly* to Democrat candidates. I've blogged before about peer-reviewed studies showing the far-left bias of mainstream media journalists.

I'm not saying that journalists are just a bunch of uneducated losers who ran up student loan debt while getting drunk, getting high and being promiscuous in college. I'm just saying that journalism is not engineering. Engineers are accountable to reality. They have to solve problems in reality. Journalists often have very little education in reality based fields like math, science and engineering. They often haven't learned to think critically. They are often swayed by feelings and peer pressure. You couldn't trust these people to do anything useful for you, like fix your car, give you anesthetic, or program a computer, etc. They don't have reality-based skills that produce useful results. Their product is feelings – they allow a certain segment of society to persist in their feelings-based delusions. Their customers pay journalists for comfortable lies that affirm their moral superiority over their political enemies.

We need to have accurate views of the reliability of the mainstream media and the so-called fact-checkers, so we can be skeptical when we hear claims that sound far-fetched or made-up. Fake news is real, and it happens more often than you think.

Two reasons why Christians and conservatives should not donate to United Way

September 18, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Well, it's that time of year again, when corporations bully their employees into donating to the United Way. This week, I've already been bullied by Human Resources, my manager, his manager, and several members of the United Way partner team inside the company. I've been *ordered* to fill out an online pledge form and *ordered* to attend the United Way events.

So, I thought it might be a good idea to take my revenge on my employer by urging all Bible-believing Christians to avoid donating to the United Way. *Please share this post if you agree with it!*

Let's start with abortion. The United Way gives TONS of money to fund abortion providers.

In 2008, United Way affiliates send $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood:

> The national United Way does fund Planned Parenthood; their website states:
>
> United Way funded programs through Planned Parenthood include community health maintenance, e.g. communicable disease prevention; medical care service; family planning; health education; public awareness services; and family preservation and strengthening services, e.g. counseling and family life education.
>
> Nationally in 2008, local United Ways distributed an estimated $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood agencies.
>
> Any finances being donated to Planned Parenthood (even if not specifically for abortion services) will free up more of their money to be used toward abortion services.

In 2015, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Last year, on the heels of shocking videos showing the Planned Parenthood abortion business selling the body parts of aborted babies, a new expose' from a group that monitors corporations that finance the abortion giant reveals the United Way is a major donor. That expose found United Way agencies giving $2 million to the abortion giant.
>
> A new expose' released this week shows that figure has increased to $3 million.

In 2016, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Analysis of the most recent IRS Form 990 filings and other documentation found 62 United Way affiliates sent $2,756,799 to Planned Parenthood abortion organizations in tax year 2016. 2ndVote's latest findings indicate an increase of

> $168,806 from the $2,590,994 United Way funneled to Planned Parenthood in 2015.

We're living in a time when abortion rights involves such issues as sex-selection abortions, race-selection abortions, covering up statutory rapists, Democrat support for infanticide, attacking Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, selling the body parts of unborn babies, etc. I don't think we can count on United Way to come down on the right side of these issues. We're already being forced to fund abortions with our tax dollars, thanks to Democrats. I don't think we should give any more money to abortion providers and their secular leftist allies.

That's abortion. What about gay rights? We've seen a lot of pressure on traditional values coming from the secular left lately. They redefined marriage AGAIN to deprive children of their biological mothers or fathers. They're pushing for the Equality Act, which would have huge religious liberty repercussions for Christians.

Texas attorney Maria Martinez explains on the American Thinker:

> The Equality Act is more draconian that any state or city conversion therapy ban to date because it takes away the traditional constitutional exemption for religious freedom. The act specifically states that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) may not be invoked as a defense, marking the *first time in history that Congress has limited the reach of RFRA*. This means that it could become illegal for Christian pastors, churches, schools, and ministries to communicate a message that sexual orientation or gender identity can change. The Equality Act is unprecedented in its overreach, impacting even adults who are *willingly seeking counseling*.
>
> By contrast, therapy of any kind that pushes a person *toward* same-sex attraction or gender transition is not impacted by the law at all.
>
> Banning counseling isn't the only thing the Equality Act will do:
>
> - Parents could lose custody of their children if they decline to assist in their gender transition. Parents in Ohio recently lost custody of their female child because they would not give her testosterone supplements to help her "transition" to look like a male.
> - Doctors and hospitals could be subject to lawsuits for refusing to perform so-called "sex change" surgeries. In California and New Jersey, Catholic hospitals are already being sued for discrimination for refusing to perform these surgeries.
> - Battered women's shelters could be required to admit members of the opposite sex. In Anchorage, Alaska, a male who was refused access to a shelter for abused and trafficked women sued the shelter for "gender identity discrimination."

> Faith-based adoption and foster care agencies that believe that children do best with both a mother and a father could be forced to shut down. This has already occurred in at least six states in this country.

I wonder what United Way thinks about attacks on Bible-believing Christians by LGBT activists? All I could find on the Facebook page of the national organization was this:

Where does United Way stands on gay rights vs religious liberty?
I don't find that very encouraging, do you? And this is not the only pro-LGBT image I found on United Way Facebook pages. By the way, I saved a copy of their Facebook page, in case it disappears.

As a Bible-believing Christian, maybe I would be better off giving money to an organization that protects religious liberty, like Alliance Defending Freedom. I understand that many people who call themselves Christians think that the United Way's positions are compatible with the Bible. But not everyone who calls herself a Christian actually takes the Bible seriously. Especially when it interferes with their career advancement and peer approval. This is especially true of people who work in Human Resources.

Please, don't give money to the United Way

You don't HAVE to give money to the United Way, just because the godless progressives in your office try to bully you into it. Instead, why not send the money to the Life Training Institute, or Ratio Christi, or Alliance Defending Freedom? These are groups do operate on Bible-based principles. I do think that Christians need to be careful about who they donate their money to. It doesn't make sense for Christians to get up and go to work and earn money, and then give it away to anti-Christian groups who want Christianity to disappear from American life. Paul talks about how God rewards those who give gifts to partner for the gospel in Philippians. Make sure that you are not wasting your money on anything less.

Duke University bans Christian club for adhering to Christian principles

September 19, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UVA students following their leftist masters

Duke University… I remember blogging about them before. The first time, they falsely accused members of their lacrosse team of rape. The second time, a gay Duke University employee was arrested for selling his adopted 5-year-old to other gay men for sex. So, not a very good university. And they're going to be an even worse university after banning Christian clubs on campus.

Here's the story from The College Fix:

> The Christian student organization Young Life excludes two categories from leadership: "persons who engage in sexual misconduct or who practice a homosexual lifestyle."
>
> The latter is apparently a ban on *practicing* homosexuals, not Christians who identify as gay and believe their faith requires them to remain celibate.
>
> The Duke Student Government Senate didn't see a distinction, and used the organization's orthodox Christian beliefs on sexuality to deny official recognition to a proposed Young Life chapter last week.

This isn't the first time that something like this has happened to Christians on secular university campuses. Before Duke University, there was Tufts University and Vanderbilt University.

Tufts University:

Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, is the latest higher education facility to crack down on student-led religious groups. In a recent move, the school's student government banned the Tufts Christian Fellowship (TCF), an evangelical organization. The decision was made because TCF, which is the campus' chapter of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, requires that those serving in leadership positions must embrace "basic

biblical truths of Christianity."

The group's demand that leaders be Bible-believing Christians was found to be in violation of Tuft's non-discrimination policy. Last month, the Judiciary recommended that the belief requirement be moved from the constitution's bylaws to its mission statement; while the bylaws are legally-binding, the mission statement is not. TCF didn't comply and, now, the group is officially unrecognized by the university.

Vanderbilt University:

> Vanderbilt University has decided that Christian student groups that hold traditional Christian religious views are not welcome on campus. They will no longer be recognized as valid student organizations. Vanderbilt's reason is that such groups require that their leaders be Christian—that is, that their leaders embrace certain core principles of Christianity and try to live according to these principles. In Vanderbilt's view, religious beliefs and standards "discriminate" against those students who do not subscribe to them. Therefore, student religious groups with religious beliefs and standards are banned.
>
> The situation would be unbelievable—were it not true. The issue came to a head this year when a student group at Vanderbilt Law School, the Christian Legal Society, submitted its "constitution" to the university. The constitution provided that the group's leaders should believe in the Bible and in Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior; that they should be willing to lead members in worship, prayer, and Bible study; and that they should "strive to exemplify Christ-like qualities." Vanderbilt's Director of Religious Life, Reverend Gretchen Person, replied that such views were forbidden. Vanderbilt's policies "do not allow" religious groups to have such an "expectation/qualification of officers," she wrote. Last week, the administration officially declared the policy that Vanderbilt will exclude student religious groups that "impose faith-based or belief-based requirements for membership or leadership."

It's probably a good idea for Christian parents to do a thorough evaluation of universities before sending your children there. Not every university beliefs in basic human rights like free speech or freedom of association or freedom of religion. But they all believe in separating you from your money, which is why you need to be careful. By the way, I don't recommend joining Young Life, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade / CRU. The only good Christian club on campus is Ratio Christi. Make sure the university you pick has a chapter.

Greg Koukl debates Michael Shermer on God, atheism, meaning and morality

September 20, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

The full transcript of a debate between Michael Shermer, editor of Skeptic magazine, and Greg Koukl, president of Stand to Reason. This debate occurred on Hugh Hewitt's radio show, and was moderated by Hugh Hewitt.

HH = Hugh Hewitt
GK = Greg Koukl
MS = Michael Shermer

Here is the full debate transcript from Stand to Reason.

And here's an excerpt:

GK: Right. Actually, the big question here, Hugh, is whether it's possible to be good without God. Now I'm not talking about whether it's possible to be good without a belief in God. I certainly think that's possible, but be good without God. And the answer to that question hinges entirely on precisely what you mean by good. And so I was going to give an illustration. So a man drags a young girl into the alley, he sexually abuses her, strangles here, and tosses her into the dustbin. Is that act wrong? Now I think everybody listening is going to admit it is wrong. But here is the real question. What do we mean when we say that that act of rape and abuse and murder is wrong? Are we describing the action itself, the object? Are we saying that the object, the rape, the murder, has a quality of being wrong, and therefore, wherever that rape goes, the wrongness follows it, just like your height, 6' 2", or whatever it is, is an objective quality of you. Wherever you go, your height follows you in the same way. Does the wrongness follow the rape? Well, if it's a quality of the rape, if it's an objective quality of the rape, then it does. And it doesn't matter what people think about it, or what cultures decides, or what your evolutionary conditioning is. The rape is still wrong. The other alternative is that you're not talking about the rape. You're talking about yourself. You're talking about your genetic

conditioning. You're talking about your culture's decision about that kind of thing. And if that's the case, then the truth of the wrongness of the rape is simply in the individual or the subject. And this is why philosophers distinguish between ethical objectivism and ethical subjectivism. Now there's lots of different subjectivisms in ethics. But simply put, if you're an ethical subjectivist, you're a relativist. And actual ethics don't exist. Ethics are an illusion. If you conclude that ethics are an illusion, there's lots of different ways to explain it. Michael's written a really great book, I think, called The Science Of Good And Evil. I've read most of it, and it's well written, and it's very compelling. But it's a description about how the illusion of ethics has taken place. If you want to go that route, you're welcome to go that route. But what you can't do is you can't then talk about morality as if it's objective when your explanations are subjective. So this is a problem that I think all atheists, including Michael, have to solve. Are ethics objective or relative? And if they're relative, then how can we make moral judgments that are meaningful on other people?

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Wow, let's just get right into it. Well, I don't think it's quite so black and white. That is to say I think there are provisional moral truths that exist whether there's a God or not. In other words, it's wrong, morally, absolutely morally wrong to rape and murder. And that would be true whether there was a God or not. In other words, if…is God saying that it's wrong because it's really wrong, and He's instructing us in his Holy Scripture that it's wrong? Or is it only wrong because He said so? And if it turned out there wasn't a God, would that make it okay? And my answer is no, it really is wrong, whether God says it's wrong or not. That is to say I think it really exists, a real, moral standard like that. Why? Well, because first, you could ask the person who is being affected, we should always ask the moral recipient of the act, how do you feel about being raped or murdered or stolen from or lied to. And the moral actor will tell you, it doesn't matter whether, if I could use a current example, I haven't any idea if Tiger Woods and his wife are religious or not. But you can just ask his wife whether it was morally right or wrong, and she'll tell you. It doesn't matter whether there's a God or not. It's wrong. And so that's the first principle. Just ask. Ask the moral recipient of whether it's right or wrong. But I think Greg's after something deeper, that is to say is there something even deeper still behind the moral actor's feelings about how they're treated. And the answer is yes, I think so. We're a social species. We don't live in isolation. We live as members of a group. And as such, there's no possible way our group could survive, be cohesive, be a unit of any kind of solidarity against other groups, or against a harsh environment. If there were too much violations of social norms, that is if there were constant lying and cheating and raping and murdering, there's no way a social group could hang together. And as such, as we all know, we're very tribal. We're tribal against other groups, but within our groups, we're very pro-social, altruistic, cooperative. We have a good and evil in our nature. So to this extent, I find myself interesting often in agreement with my conservative friends on most of the things they consider morally, moral truths. That is, we share the same moral values, even though I come at it from a different perspective.

HH: Greg?

GK: Yeah, I'm actually not after something deeper here, Michael. At least to start out the discussion, I'm trying to be as simple and clear and precise as possible, because it's very easy to weave together a bunch of things that sound persuasive, but turn out to be different things. Like for example, Darwinian evolution, which is a materialistic process, and here I mean the blind watchmaker thesis, the neo-Darwinian synthesis, natural selection working on mutations, and a kind of a cultural evolution that Michael has just referred to as we work together as a group to survive as a group. Those are two entirely different things. One is materialistic, Darwinian, the other one is intelligent design, quite frankly, where the group gets together and makes some determinations to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What I'm trying to do is to be able to answer the question that came up initially, is God necessary for morality, which Michael denies. It's to say well, what is it that morality, that we're trying to describe? It is either objective, and therefore an immaterial obligation that applies to certain behaviors, or it is subjective. The things that Michael described were variously subjective, evolutionary elements, subjective cultural elements, but then he affirmed that we all have good and evil in our nature, or an awareness of that. I agree with that entirely. We all are aware of those things. That's why even if we don't believe in God, we can still know morality and follow it. The question is what accounts for real, genuine objective morality?

HH: One minute to the break, Michael Shermer.

MS: I'm not arguing for cultural evolution. I'm actually arguing as part of our, what you described as materialistic, natural selection, Darwinian evolution, that it's not enough to just pretend or fake being a good group member. You actually have to believe it, feel it, and live it. So what I'm arguing is that natural selected certain moral sentiments, as Adam Smith called them, moral feelings, an actual empathy, Adam Smith talked about, we actually empathize with somebody else, we can put ourselves into their shoes and feel their pain, I'm arguing that's very real. It's every bit as real a part of our evolutionary heritage as our eyes and our hands.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, you were saying that evolutionary biology has produced a real morality.

MS: Yeah, I think really, Adam Smith had it right in his very first book, The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, long before Darwin, that we actually have in our biological nature, our human nature, the capacity to feel other people's pain. He called it empathy, we think of it often either as empathy or sympathy. That is, we really do connect to other people. A lot of good research on this now, brain scans, you can show somebody a little video of somebody they know, or have feelings for, getting pricked with a pin, and the same areas of their brain light up, the pain receptors, as in the person getting the pin prick. In other words, we have an evolved tendency to really be deeply, emotionally connected to our fellow group members. And that's why I say groups like World Vision, where you want to adopt a child, it doesn't help to show a picture of 10,000 starving African kids. What does

affect us is one child, a picture of one child with a little biography. That's how you get people to adopt a child to donate. The reason for that is because essentially they're tricking the brain, our brains into making that stranger an honorary family member, an honorary within group member, which is why I argue that free trade is one of the best ways of defusing normal tribal tensions between people. It makes them honorary friends, honorary members. Well, what's going on there is we're tricking the brain into sort of this evolutionary rule of thumb – be nice to people that are like you and that are related to you, and that you know, and that are fellow group members, and don't do what our natural tendency is, is to be tribal and xenophobic against those other guys. And free trade is one of the best things you can do for that. So I'm arguing that's actually tapping something deep within us.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, basically, I agree with Mike completely here. We do have this tendency, and it seems to be universal among humankind. The question is, what is that tendency, actually? And what is the best way to explain it? And I see like a handful of significant problems with using evolution to explain morality. The first one is that evolution is a materialistic process. And here, I'm going back to an original point, and I don't want people to lose it. There is no way that you can take molecules, and reorganize them in any fashion, over any length of time, and have pop out of the mixture an objective moral principle that's immaterial, and that applies to human beings. All you're going to get is a reorganization of the molecules. And what they can produce, and this is what Mike has done in his book, and he mentioned just s few moments ago, they can produce sentiments. They can produce feelings. They can produce behavior. But this leads us to the second problem of using evolution to explain morality, is that morality is more than sentiments, feelings and behavior. Morality entails things like motive and intention. I mean, you could have a guy walk into a garage, walk out with a hose, and is that wrong? Well, it depends. Is it his hose or somebody else's hose? Did he intend to take the other person's hose? Is he borrowing the hose? So we can see here are elements that are part of the moral thing that needs to be explained, that are immaterial, and therefore the Darwinian explanation can't even in principle go there. It can't do that job. But here's the worst problem. Regardless of what our sentiments happen to be regarding moral actions, we can feel good or feel bad or whatever, the problem is that morality is prescriptive, not merely descriptive. That is it tells us not just what we did, but what we ought to have done in the past, and what we ought to do in the future. That is not something that any Darwinian mechanism can describe, because nothing about my biology can inveigh upon me to act a certain way for moral reasons in the future. It doesn't tell me why I should be good tomorrow. This is a huge difference between these two views, the descriptive and the prescriptive. Prescriptive is part of morality, and can't even, in principle, be explained by an evolutionary materialistic system.

HH: Michael Shermer, I'll give you a start on that. We have about 45 seconds to the break, so you may want to…we'll come back after the break and pick up. But what's your start to that?

MS: Well, the start would be that again, let's not think of evolution just as nature red and tooth and claw, and it's nasty, brutish and short, but that in fact, we have this whole other social evolution. And I'm not talking about cultural evolution where we consciously make decisions, but subconsciously, because it's in part of our nature to actually, seriously, deeply feel for other people and their actions, and the consequences of our actions, so that we actually have a sense of right and wrong that we're born with, but then culture taps into and tweaks, one way or the other.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, Greg had made the argument that the Darwinian model simply cannot explain immaterial concepts like morality, that there's just no way you can rearrange the molecules to get there. You're saying well, yes you can.

MS: Yeah, I think so, because if we think of morality as another suite of emotions that are involved with other people's behaviors, the consequences of our actions, how we feel about them, how people feel about us when we do these things, that's as every bit as important a biological part of our nature as anything else we talk about. So let's take a real simple emotion. When you're hungry, nobody does any calculations about the caloric input/output ratios of eating an apple versus an ice cream, although now it's posted on the walls for us to see. But we just feel hungry, and we feel hungry for certain kinds of foods. The feeling of hunger is a proxy for something else. Evolution's done the calculating for us. You need food, so we're going to, your hypothalamus is going to secrete these certain chemicals that causes your stomach to rumble and so on. When you're attracted to somebody else, a member of the opposite sex, nobody does the calculation by, let's say, a man finds a woman attractive who has a .67 hip to waist ratio, and an hourglass figure, although that is pretty much universal. Nobody walks about with calipers taking measurements of who they're going to want to date or ask out. You just look around, and you just go wow, I really find this woman attractive. It's a feeling you have, okay? So those are kind of simple emotions, but sliding up the scale, the moral emotions are really no different. When I lie to somebody, I've violated a social norm, and they respond in a very angry, hostile way. So those emotions that we both share, guilt, shame, anger, disgust, involved a social relationship that whether it was a norm violation, those are the kinds of emotions that are just like hunger and sexual attraction that are built into us by nature, by evolution. Or, if you wish, this is how God created the moral sentiments, just like He created everything else in the universe, through a process of nature. I think that's equally reasonable to argue. So I don't see that it has to be an atheistic viewpoint versus a theistic viewpoint to get to our moral sentiments. Why couldn't God have used evolution to create the moral sentiments as I've described them?

GK: Yeah, well, you don't actually believe that, I know, Mike, so this is kind of like adding God to the soup, you know, if it makes people feel better. But the basic argument is that evolution all by itself can do the trick. And I think if your listeners are listening carefully, what they're going to hear is Mike has just described, and if I'm being unfair to your assessment here, let me know, Mike, that moral feelings are simply that. They are

sophisticated emotions that do some work for us for survival, and even on a group level. Now there's a name for this. It's called emotivism. A.J. Ayer, the famous atheist, offered this description of morality. It's a relativistic scheme of morality. Morality doesn't actually exist, Ayer argued. There is no objective right or wrong. Rape isn't wrong itself. What happens is, we have feelings about it, and we express it in moral language, but rape isn't really wrong. So your listeners are going to have to ask themselves the questions. When they just survey their own moral senses, and we all have access to this, do we want to believe that scientists have figured out that really what we're doing is feeling sophisticated, complicated emotions, and that the emotions are in us, and we are not seeing anything about the action? Or does it seem like rape is wrong? Look, when I say rape is wrong, I'm talking about the rape. When I say liver is awful, I'm talking about me. I'm talking about my own tastes and preferences. It's interesting, as Michael has given his explanation, though, that he's doing, and I don't know if you are aware of this, Michael, but you're doing the very thing that I kind of warned against. You give a description of the foundations of morality that turn out to be relativistic, but then there's a smuggling of a more objectivistic morality in the back door, like when Michael says you don't have to do what your nature tells you to do, in other words, what you've been programmed by evolution to do. You can kind of rise above that. Well, now we're talking about a morality that isn't dictated by evolution, but a morality that we can employ through our acts of will, to rise above this kind of brutish evolutionary morality. And that sounds suspiciously like the very thing that I'm talking about here.

MS: But I don't mean, there's nothing to rise above by itself. Yes, we have to say rise above our tribal instincts to be xenophobic when we meet somebody who's a stranger, who's different from us. We all struggle against that, particularly in a black and white America, where there's always been this underlying tension. Indeed, so culture helps us do that – education, travel, diversity of exposure to different people. That makes you a little more tolerant. Okay, but I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about is tapping into the good part of our nature, the fact that in addition to that xenophobic tribalism we have, we also have this other side that almost never gets discussed in evolutionary…even in evolutionary circles, you'll still hear evolutionary biologists talking about, in a way that Huxley did, and Herbert Spencer did in Darwin's own time, that we have to somehow struggle mightily against our genes to overcome that nasty tendency we have to want to rape, kill, pillage and destroy. Well no, actually, we have this whole other side that's just as genetically programmed into our nature. And the point of culture – education, politics, economics and so on, is to tap into the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said.

GK: Okay, here's the question I have for you, Michael, then. You've identified that really, we have good and we have bad. That's part of, under your terms, that's part of our genetic nature, and we can choose to tap into what you call the good side. Why ever should we do such a thing if there is not a higher standard that directs our action to the better side, your words, than the bad side, your words, if really, ultimately, they are both the result of a genetic evolution, and from outside terms, neither is better than the other.

Why should we do that, Michael?

MS: Yeah, well I don’t see how entering God into the equation changes that problem at all.

GK: Well, that’s the next step. What I’m trying to show is that the should comes from the outside, and if we can demonstrate that, then we can ask…

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

September 21, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference

between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.

But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.

There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that “There is no God” is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that “There is a God.” Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God’s existence. He confesses that he doesn’t know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term “atheist,” you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with “non-theist.” So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word ‘atheist’ has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix ‘a-’ being read in this same way in ‘atheist’ as it customarily is in . . . words as ‘amoral’ . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. “The Presumption of Atheism,” by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word “atheist” trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our

> **cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.**
>
> **One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.**
>
> So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, "So is there a God or not?"

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these "subjective atheists"?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says "I lack a belief in the gravitational force!". When you engage in serious discussions with people about God's existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don't care about a person's psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over "I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God"? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: "I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!" What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: "Wintery Knight won't listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!". I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that's why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don't *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I'm not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Related posts

- Is giving to charity more rational for religious people or atheists?
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- Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?
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- Chad Meister: can atheists make sense of morality?

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

September 22, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they

take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.” And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What’s harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I’ll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, “In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home.” And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase “In order that you may know”. Same message, right?

3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don’t know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It’s really great. Acts 2:36. I’ve been a Christian 20 years and I didn’t see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can’t exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” There it is again. “Know for certain.”

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition “Christ rose from the grave,” for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, “I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave.”

3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be

> transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

If we seriously want men to marry and become fathers, let's repeal no-fault divorce

September 23, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I saw a very good article at the Heritage Foundation web site about the importance of fathers for children. The author Virginia Allen listed out some of the benefits that fathers provide to children:

> Studies have found that children raised without a father are:
>
> - At a higher risk of having behavioral problems.
> - Four times more likely to live in poverty.
> - More likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime.
> - Twice as likely to never graduate high school.
> - At a seven times higher risk of teen pregnancy.
> - More vulnerable to abuse and neglect.
> - More likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.
> - Twice as likely to be obese.
>
> From education to personal health to career success, children who lack a father find themselves at a disadvantage to their peers raised in a two-parent household.

I was looking for a good analysis of why there's been a decline of marriage and fatherhood, and I found an article by Joe Carter on The Gospel Coalition, of all places. By looking at marriage rates and historical events that changed the marriage rate, he was able to identify the cause of the decline of marriage – and fatherhood.

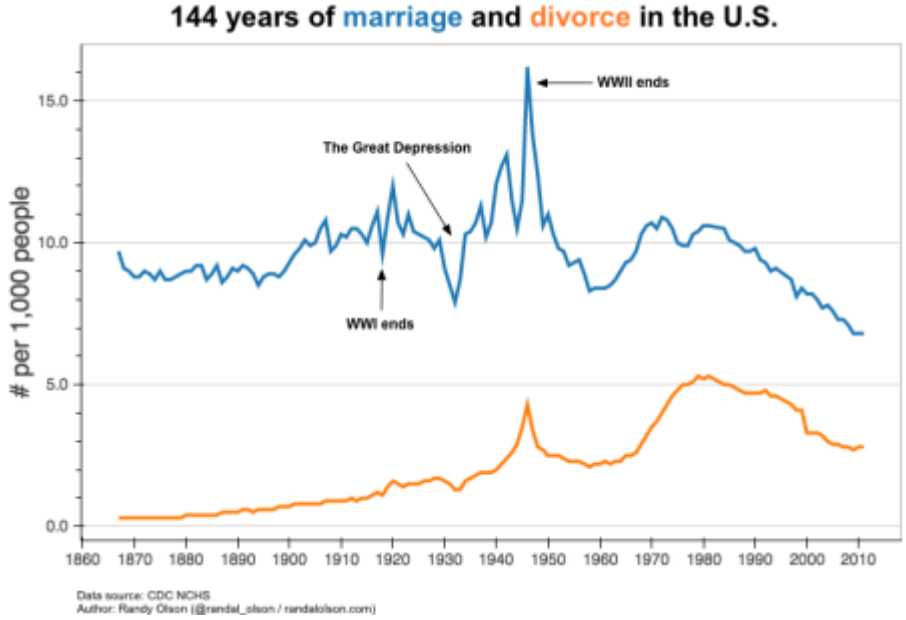

Marriage and divorce rates per capita

I'll spare you the statistical analysis, which is excellent, and give you the conclusion –

although you can guess it from the graph above:

> Now that we've explored the data, what year should we use as the marker for the beginning of the decline of marriage in the United States? I would argue for 1985, the last year that the marriage rate topped 10 percent.
>
> […]What changed in 1985 that could have led to the decline in marriage? There are likely numerous factors—which we'll examine in future articles—but one stands out in particular: By 1985, all states (except for New York) had enacted no-fault divorce legislation.

The most helpful book I know of about no-fault divorce is "Taken Into Custody", by Dr. Stephen Baskerville. He wrote a column for Crisis magazine that summarizes some of his ideas.

Excerpt:

> Feminists were drafting no-fault divorce laws in the 1940s, which the National Association of Women Lawyers now describes as "the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken."
>
> The result effectively abolished marriage as a legal contract. Today it is not possible to form a binding agreement to create a family.
>
> The new laws did not stop at removing the requirement of citing grounds for a divorce, to allow divorce by mutual consent, as deceptively advertised at the time. Instead they created unilateral and involuntary divorce, so that one spouse may dissolve a marriage without any agreement or fault by the other.

Here's what divorce does to the spouse who is the victim of the unilateral "no-fault" divorce:

> Though marriage is a civil matter, the logic quickly extended into the criminal, including a presumption of guilt against the involuntarily divorced spouse ("defendant"). Yet formal due process protections of criminal proceedings did not apply, so forcibly divorced spouses became quasi-criminals not for recognized criminal acts but for failing or refusing to cooperate with the divorce by continuing to claim the protections and prerogatives of family life: living in the common home, possessing the common property, or—most vexing of all—parenting the common children.
>
> Following from this are the horrendous civil liberties violations and flagrant invasions of family and individual privacy that are now routine in family courts. A personalized criminal code is legislated by the judge around the forcibly divorced spouse, controlling their association with their children, movements, and finances. Unauthorized contact with their children can be punished with arrest. Involuntarily divorced parents are arrested for running into their children in public, making unauthorized telephone calls, and sending unauthorized birthday cards.

In my conversations with men, no-fault divorce laws, and anti-male divorce courts are the main reasons given for why they do not pursue marriage and fatherhood. Men do not want to be coerced in a marriage with the threat of divorce by an unhappy wife. Men do not want to be subject to the government in so many areas of their lives if the wife does carry out the threat. They especially don't want to be separated from their children. One my secular male friends told me that he would not marry unless the woman had evidence in her past of hating radical feminism and no-fault divorce. This was the main criteria. He actually was able to find a woman who was a men's rights activist who hated divorce. But that was the only way he would marry.

Statistically speaking, the wife is more likely to initiate divorce than the husband. Women initiate 70% of divorces, the majority of those just because she is "unhappy". I think this is because women get into marriage based on their feelings, and they think that it is the husband's job to make them feel good. They see their happiness as the primary goal of the marriage, and see a marriage that does not make them happy as a marriage that needs to be ended.

Are we going to repeal no-fault divorce, then?

No-fault divorce was seen as a boon to women who had married the wrong men by following their hearts. It's an interesting question to ask whether women really would want no-fault repealed. It would mean that they would have to get serious about who they marry, instead of just getting into marriage based on feelings. They would have to evaluate men according to expectations of what a man does in a marriage, instead of on feelings. They would have to think about what men want out of a marriage, and prepare themselves to provide for his needs. They would have to say no to their feelings, when choosing a man, and in keeping a man after the wedding.

If women aren't willing to demand the repeal of no-fault divorce laws and get serious about men and marriage, then what's the point of complaining that men don't want to marry and become fathers? If you're not willing to fix the root cause of the problem, then don't complain about the problem.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

September 24, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)

- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Does global warming alarmism cause mass shootings of immigrants by eco-terrorists?

September 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Elizabeth Warren is telling people that we have 11 years to live

Before you can show why someone is wrong, you have to first prove that they are wrong. Right now, voices on the secular left are crying out that we have only 12 years to live unless we empower the federal government to completely revamp how Americans generate and consume electricity, Let's take a look at their reasons for their views, and then see where their rhetoric leads.

Let's start with this article from Reason about the doomsday predictions of darling of the left Greta Thunberg:

> Such catastrophic thinking is similar to AOC's equally apocalyptic statement that "The world is gonna end in 12 years" and Warren's contention that "we've got, what, 11 years, maybe" to cut our emissions in half to save the planet.
>
> As *Reason*'s Ronald Bailey has documented, such predictions stem from a fundamental misreading of a 2018 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). That report offered up predictions in the growth of global economic activity, how it might be affected by climate change, and how reducing greenhouse gases might increase planetary GDP. It did not specify anything like a 10- to 12-year window after which extinction or amelioration is inevitable.

OK, but a lot of people are listening to the rhetoric of the environmental extremists, and they DO believe it. It doesn't matter that they don't have a background in science. They just believe what they hear. And some of them have decided to take matters into their own hands to stop global warming – by stopping the people who create emissions, with violence.

Quilette explains:

> For over 50 years, environmentalists have argued that a significant down-sizing

of American living standards is required to prevent environmental catastrophe. They have been attacking the American lifestyle since the 1960s, and Walmart since the 1990s. The El Paso shooting suspect named his manifesto "The Inconvenient Truth," a title nearly identical to the 2006 documentary about Al Gore's slideshow on global warming. In it, Gore says: "The truth about the climate crisis is an inconvenient one that means we are going to have to change the way we live our lives."

[…]The suspect clearly states that his decision to kill immigrants was, in significant measure, because of their impact on the natural environment. "Of course these migrants and their children have contributed to the problem, but are not the sole cause of it," he writes. "The American lifestyle affords our citizens an incredible quality of life."

The El Paso suspect said he was partly inspired by the suspected shooter of Muslim immigrants in New Zealand in March, who also made clear in a manifesto that environmental concerns motivated his anti-immigrant ones. "Why focus on immigration and birth rates when climate change is such a huge issue?" the New Zealand shooting suspect asks. "Because they are the same issue, the environment is being destroyed by overpopulation, we Europeans are one of the groups that are not overpopulating the world."

It is not surprising that the two manifestos echoed environmentalist ideas. For two centuries, prominent scientists, conservationists, and journalists, have blamed immigrants, the poor, and non-whites for their degradation of the natural environment. Much of what we call "environmentalism" is simply a repackaging of the ideas of 19th-century economist Thomas Malthus. He believed overpopulation of the poor would deplete resources, and that the ethical thing to do was let the poor die of hunger and disease to prevent more hunger and disease in the future. "Instead of recommending cleanliness to the poor, we should encourage contrary habits," he wrote, "and court the return of the plague." The British government and media used Malthus' ideas to justify the policies that led to mass starvation in Ireland from 1845 to 1849.

After the Second World War, leading conservationists embraced Malthus' view that overpopulation would result in resource depletion. Their concerns were directed at poor non-whites in other countries, particularly India, even though North Americans and Europeans consumed and produced an order of magnitude more resources and pollution. Anti-humanist environmentalism came full bloom in Stanford biologist Paul Ehrlich's 1968 Sierra Club book, *The Population Bomb*, which used dehumanizing language similar to that used by today's anti-immigrant activists. In the opening pages of his book, Ehrlich depicted poor people in India as animals, "screaming…begging…defecating and urinating."

More recently, environmentalists and scientists concerned about overpopulation tried to get the Sierra Club to oppose immigration from Mexico and other Latin

> American countries, expressing the concern that, by adopting an American lifestyle, immigrants will use up supposedly scarce natural resources—the same argument used by the El Paso shooting subject—and increase pollution.
>
> Both the El Paso and New Zealand suspects echo the exaggerated rhetoric of environmentalists. “Nothing is conserved,” wrote the New Zealand shooting suspect. “The natural environment is industrialized, pulverized and commoditized.” The El Paso suspect blames “consumer culture” for plastic and electronic waste, and “urban sprawl” for environmental degradation.

So, when you see people shooting at immigrants, the reason they don’t like immigrants is not because of their race. The eco-terrorists don’t like immigrants because the eco-terrorists think that they have too many children. And concern about the world becoming overpopulated is a core belief of global warming alarmists. That’s why you keep reading stories about how the secular left thinks that it is going to save the planet by not having children.

Naturally, eco-terrorists on the secular left will be in favor of abortion. I have talked to mainstream Democrats in my office who want to use government coercion, including forced abortions, to stop “high” birth rates in poorer countries. But what if people with high birth rates won’t have the abortions that the eco-terrorists want them to have? Well, that’s when the eco-terrorists pick up weapons and go on a shooting spree. And that’s what all this unhinged rhetoric about global warming doomsday predictions produces. The secular left complains about the very mass shootings that are caused by their global warming alarmism.

And guess what? The public schools have been turning out millions and millions of environmental radicals for the past few decades. So, we’re probably going to be see more eco-terrorism, rather than less, in the near term.

Should Christians who vote for socialism expect to keep their religious liberty?

September 26, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Four white Canadian police officers arrest black pastor

I saw two interesting news stories about how Catholic hospitals were targeted by the secular left government and courts. The first story comes from progressive state of California, where the courts wanted to force the Catholics to perform sex-reassignment surgeries on transgender people. The second story comes from Canada, where the state wanted the hospital to perform euthanasia.

Here's Evolution News reporting on the first story:

> A Catholic hospital chain known as Dignity Health refused to perform a hysterectomy on a transgendered male, as against Catholic moral teaching. The patient sued for discrimination, but the case was dismissed on the basis that the hospital was legally following its faith principles. Alas, a Court of Appeals reversed the decision, reinstating the case to the active docket.

Here's the court's decision – they said it was illegal discrimination on the basis of "gender identity":

> The pleading alleges that Mercy allows doctors to perform hysterectomies as treatment for other conditions but refused to allow Dr. Dawson to perform the same procedure as treatment for Minton's gender dysphoria, a condition that is unique to transgender individuals. Denying a procedure as treatment for a condition that affects only transgender persons supports an inference that Dignity Health discriminated against Minton based on his gender identity.

So, the secular courts, which are filled with government employees whose salaries are

paid by Catholic taxpayers, decided that Catholics don't have a right to act like Catholics. In California, Christians must be forced to act like atheists. Or else be punished by the legal system.

Here's the second story out of Canada, from Global News:

> Under the threat of a possible court challenge, Nova Scotia has quietly changed its policy on medically assisted dying at a Catholic hospital in the province.
>
> In a statement to Global News, the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) says: "Assessments and provision of MAiD [medical assistance in dying] will be available in a section of St. Martha's Regional Hospital complex at the Antigonish Health and Wellness Centre."
>
> St. Martha's Regional Hospital was exempt from assisted dying services as the result of a 1996 agreement between the Nova Scotia government and the Sisters of St. Martha that gave control of the hospital to the Nova Scotia government.
>
> The agreement made medical assistance in dying forbidden at the hospital in Antigonish, N.S. The Sisters of St. Martha say they believe in protecting life until the end.

Because Canada has a "Medicare for All", single-payer health care system, all payment for medical services is performed by the secular left government. Christian nurses, doctors, hospitals, etc. thought that it was "compassionate" for government to take over the provision of health care, so they allowed the government to come in and take control of their hospitals. Today, Christians have a choice. They can either perform abortions, sex-changes, IVF (which usually involves discarding embryos), breast enlargements, etc. OR they can stop practicing medicine.

American Christians in non-SOGI-states should take note of how the secular left treats Christians in health care. This is how they want to treat Christians in every area – public, and private. It's already happening in Canada. Teachers, police, lawyers, judges can come into your home, and tell you how to live, and how to raise your children according to secular leftist values. And Christians in Canada are paying the atheist progressives to rule.

Remember: *the government that is big enough to give you everything you want – free schools, free health care, free education, etc. – is big enough to take everything you have.*

It would be nice if Christian parents and Christian churches had taught young people about the critical importance for *smaller government* as a requirement for a society that allows religious liberty. I see a lot of concern from Christians about global warming, illegal immigrants, refugees, etc. But not much about which policies allow Christians act like Christians in public.

I know that Christian parents are so busy, and Christian churches are not really places where young people can develop a Christian worldview. If you learn anything from a Christian upbringing, you learn how to color pictures, memorize Bible verses, say "the

Bible says so”, and sing praise hymns. Is all that good protection against the policies of the secular left? How many young people today who were raised in the church think that “medicare for all”, “green new deal”, etc. won’t affect their religious liberty? How many of them know what it’s like to be a Christian in atheist socialist states like North Korea – or even in less communist countries like Canada?

What are undesigned coincidences, and how are they used in apologetics?

September 27, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Air Force TACPs confirm target locations with their map

When you're reading the Bible, you may find passages in one book that are mysterious on their own, but then they make sense if you add missing details from a parallel account from a different source inside or even outside the Bible. I think these "undesigned coincidences" are helpful for answering the question of that skeptics often ask: "is the Bible history or myth?" Let's see some examples.

So, there are two kinds of undersigned coincidences. In the "internal" kind, the clearing up is done by another source in the same book. In the external kind, the clearing up is done by a source outside the same book.

Here's an article from Apologetics UK with some internal examples:

> In John 6:1-7, we are told:
>
> Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Festival was near.When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

> Now, Philip is a fairly minor character in the New Testament. And one might, naturally, be inclined to wonder why Jesus hasn't turned to someone a little higher in the pecking order (such as Peter or John). A partial clue is provided in John 1:44: "Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida." Likewise, John 12:21 refers to "Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee"
>
> And what is so significant about Philip being from the town of Bethsaida? We don't learn this until we read the parallel account in Luke's gospel (9:10-17). At the opening of the account (verses 10-11) we are told, "When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing."
>
> And so, we are informed by Luke that the event was actually taking place in Bethsaida — the town from which Philip was from! Jesus thus turns to Philip, whom, he believed, would be familiar with the area. Notice too that Luke does not tell us that Jesus turned to Philip.
>
> But it gets even more interesting still. In Matthew 11, Jesus denounces the unrepentant cities, saying, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." The reader is left wondering what miracles were performed in these cities. We are not told in Matthew's gospel. It is only in light of Luke's account of the feeding of the five thousand (chapter 9), in which we are told of the event's occurrence in Bethsaida, that this statement begins to make sense!

This one is pretty clever:

> In Matthew 2 6:67-68, we read, "Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"" This raises the natural question, why are they asking "Who hit you?" It is not until we read the parallel account in Luke's gospel (22:64) that we learn that they had blindfolded him, thereby making sense of their taunts "Who hit you?"

Another one:

> In Luke 23:1-4, w e read,
> Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king."
>
> So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"
>
> "You have said so," Jesus replied.

> Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”
> On the surface, this seems to be a rather strange declaration to make. Jesus has just declared Himself to be a King, and has been charged with subverting the nation and opposing paying taxes to Caesar. Why has Pilate found no basis for a charge against him?
>
> The answer lies in the parallel account in John’s gospel (18:33-38):
>
> Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”
>
> “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”
> “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”
>
> Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”
>
> “You are a king, then!” said Pilate.
>
> Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”
>
> “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.
>
> It is only when you read John’s account that you learn that Jesus had told Pilate that “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

And the same article has some external undesigned coincidences:

> In Matthew 2:22, we are told:
>
> But when [Joseph] heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being waned by God in an dream, he left for the regions of Galilee…
>
> Josephus’ Antiquities 17.3.1 tells us that the domain of Herod the Great was divided among his sons, with Archelaus having authority in Judea but not in Galilee, which was governed by his younger brother, Herod Antipas.
>
> We also know that Archelaus had acquired quite a bloody reputation (e.g. Antiquities 17.13.1-2 and 17.9.3). The latter of these references describes how Archelaus slaughtered 3,000 Jews at Passover. Thus, Joseph decides not to return to Judea and, instead, goes further north to the regions of Galilee, governed by Herod Antipas.

And another one:

> In Matthew 2:22, Archeleaus is reigning as king in Judea; in Matthew 27:2, Pilate is governor of Judea; in Acts 12:1, Herod is king of Judea; and in Acts 23:33, Felix is governor of Judea. This becomes extremely confusing.
>
> But here's the thing: Josephus attests to the accuracy of every one of these titles. Herod the Great was made King of Judea by Mark Anthony. Archelaus was deposed in the year 6 A.D., after only a ten-year reign, and a series of procurators ruled over Judea (of whom Pilate was fifth). The Herod of Acts 12 is Agrippa I. He was made king by Claudius Caesar. After his death, Judea was, once again, placed under the government of procurators (one of them being Felix).

And another one:

> When Luke tells us of the riot in Ephesus, he reports that the city clerk tells the crowd that "There are proconsuls". A proconsul is a Roman authority to whom a complaint may be taken. Normally, there was only one proconsul. Just at that particular time, however, there seems to have been two as a result of the assassination of Silanus (the previous proconsul) by poisoning in the Fall of AD 54, by the two imperial stewards at the urging of Nero's mother. This event is independently documented by Tacitus in his Annals (13.1). Indeed, Luke's accuracy has allowed historians to date the event which Luke narrates with incredible precision since we know when Silanus was poisoned.

If you think that these are clever, then share this post, and encourage your non-Christian friends and family to consider one of the many reasons why so many scholars have considered the New Testament books to be so reliable.

I wish that Christian parents and pastors were more thoughtful about how they present the Bible to young people. Instead of just saying "the Bible says" and praising blind faith acceptance of the Bible, why don't we think a little harder, and look for some confirmation of the Bible from historical methods like undesigned coincidences, and from non-Biblical authors, and from archaeology, etc.? Surely adding more evidence for taking the Bible seriously is the right approach, if the goal is to be persuasive? It's not like we're see good results from the current "blind faith" approach to raising Christian children, right?

Robin Collins and atheist Peter Millican discuss the fine-tuning of the universe for life

September 28, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

You might remember Peter Millican from the debate he had with William Lane Craig. I ranked that debate as one of the 3 best I have ever seen, along with the first Craig vs Dacey debate and the second Craig vs Sinnott-Armstrong debate.

Details:

> Science has revealed that the fundamental constants and forces of the cosmos appear to be exquisitely fine-tuned to allow a universe in which life can develop. Is God the best explanation of the incredibly improbable odds of the universe we live in being a life-permitting one?
>
> Robin Collins is a Christian philosopher and a leading advocate of the argument for God from cosmic design. Peter Millican is an atheist philosopher at Oxford University. They debate the issues.
>
> From 'Unbelievable?' on 'Premier Christian Radio', Saturday 19th March 2016.

The debate:

As usual when the atheist is an expert, there is no snark or paraphrasing in the summary.

Summary

Brierley: What is the fine-tuning argument?

Collins: the fine-tuning is structure of the universe is extremely precisely set to allow the existing of conscious, embodied agents who are capable of moral behavior. There are 3 kinds of fine-tuning: 1) the laws of nature (mathematical formulas), 2) the constants of

physics (numbers that are plugged into the equations), 3) the initial conditions of the universe. The fine-tuning exists not just because there are lots of possibilities, but there is something special about the actual state of affairs that we see. Every set of laws, parameters and initial conditions is equally improbable, but the vast majority of permutations do not permit life. The possible explanations: theism or the multiverse.

Brierley: How improbable are the numbers?

Collins: Once case is the cosmological constant (dark energy density), with is 1 part in (10 raised to 120th power). If larger, the universe expands too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form after the Big Bang. If smaller, the universe collapses in on itself before life could form. Another case is the initial distribution of mass energy to give us the low entropy we have that is necessary for life. The fine-tuning there is 1 part in (10 raised to the 10th power raised to the 123rd power).

Brierley: What do you think of the argument?

Millican: The argument is worth taking very seriously. I am a fan of the argument. The other arguments for God's existence such as the ontological and cosmological arguments are very weak. But the fine-tuning argument has the right structure to deliver the conclusion that theists want. And it is different from the traditional design argument tended to focus on biological nature, which is not a strong argument. But the fine-tuning argument is strong because it precedes any sort of biological evolution. Although the design is present at the beginning of the universe, it is not visible until much later. The argument points to at least deism, and possibly theism. The argument is not based on ignorance, it is rooted in "the latest results from the frontiers of science" (his phrase).

Brierley: Is this the best argument from natural theology?

Collins: The cosmological argument makes theism viable intuitively, but there are some things that are puzzling, like the concept of the necessary being. But the fine-tuning argument is decisive.

Brierley: What's are some objections to the fine-tuning argument?

Millican: The argument is based on recent physics, so we should be cautious because we **maybe** we will discover a natural explanation.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: The cosmological constant has been around since 1980. But the direction that physics is moving in is that there are more constants and quantities being discovered that need to be fine-tuned, not less. Even if you had a grand unified theory, that would have to be have the fine-tuning pushed into it.

(BREAK)

Millican: Since we have no experience of other laws and values from other universes, **we don't know** whether these values can be other than they are. Psychologically, humans are prone to seeing purpose and patterns where there is none, so **maybe** that's happening here.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: It is possible to determine probabilities on a single universe case, for example using multiple ways of calculating Avogadro's number all converging on the same number makes it more probable.

Millican: Yes, I willing to accept that these constants can take on other values, ("principle of indifference"). But **maybe** this principle be applied if the improbability were pushed up into the theory?

Collins: Even if you had a grand theory, selecting the grand theory from others would retain the improbability.

Brierley: What about the multiverse?

Millican: **What if** there are many, many different universes, and we happen to be in the one that is finely-tuned, then we should not be surprised to observe fine-tuning. **Maybe** a multiverse theory will be discovered in the future that would allow us to have these many universes with randomized constants and quantities. "I do think that it is a little bit of a promissary note". I don't think physics is pointing to this right now.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: I agree it's a promissary note. This is the strongest objection to the fine-tuning argument. But there are objections to the multiverse: 1) the fine-tuning is kicked back up to the multiverse generator has to be set just right to produce universes with different constants, 2) the multiverse is more likely to produce a small universe with Boltzmann brains that pop into existence and then out again, rather than a universe that contains conscious, embodied intelligent agents. I am working on a third response now that would show that the same constants that allow complex, embodied life ALSO allow the universe to be discoverable. This would negate the observer-selection effect required by the multiverse objection.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Millican: I don't see why the multiverse generator has to be fine-tuned, since **we don't know** what the multiverse generator is. I'm not impressed by the Boltzmann brains, but won't discuss. We should be cautious about inferring design because **maybe** this is a case where we are seeing purpose and design where there is none.

Brierley: Can you negate the discoverability of the universe by saying that it might be psychological?

Collins: These things are not psychological. The selected value for the cosmic microwave background radiation is fine-tuned for life and for discoverability. It's not merely a discoverability selection effect, it's optimal for discoverability. If baryon-photon value were much smaller, we would have known that it was not optimal. So that judgment cannot be explained by

Millican: That's a very interesting new twist.

Brierley: Give us your best objection.

Millican: I have two. 1) Even if you admit to the fine-tuning, this doesn't show a being who is omnipotent and omnisicient. What the fine-tuning shows is that the designer is doing

the best it can given the constraints from nature. **If I were God,** I would not have made the universe so big, and I wouldn't have made it last 14 billion years, just to make one small area that supports life. An all-powerful God would have made the universe much smaller, and much younger. 2) The fine-tuning allows life to exist in other solar systems in other galaxies. What does this alien life elsewhere mean for traditional Christian theology? The existence of other alien civilizations argues against the truth of any one religion.

Brierley: Respond to those.

Collins: First objection: with a finite Creator, you run into the problem of having to push the design of that creature up one level, so you don't really solve the fine-tuning problem. An unlimited being (non-material, not composed of parts) does not require fine-tuning. The fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than atheism. Second objection: I actually do think that it is likely that are other universes, and life in other galaxies and stars, and the doctrine of the Incarnation is easily adaptable to that, because God can take on multiple natures to appear to different alien civilizations.

Other resources (from WK)

If you liked this discussion, be sure and check out a full length lecture by Robin Collins on the fine-tuning, and a shorter lecture on his very latest work. And also this the Common Sense Atheism podcast, featuring cosmologist Luke Barnes, who answers about a dozen objections to the fine-tuning argument.

Two UK pre-teens suspended from school for asking to be exempted from LGBT indoctrination

September 29, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Susan Papas, Headteacher at Heavers Farmer Primary School

A long time ago, non-Christians would respond to moral judgments by saying "don't force your morality on me". At the time, you might have thought that secular leftists thought that it was wrong to force morality on other people, and they wanted to force that rule on those who judged them. But we now know that secular leftists LOVE to force THEIR morality on other people who disagree with them.

Here's what happened:

> On June 20, Farrell, sitting next to his friend Kaysey in class, asked his year 5 class teacher, "Sir, please may I not take part in this lesson?" when the teacher handed out LGBT material for colouring. The teacher refused permission saying that the LGBT lesson was part of the curriculum.
>
> After class, the form teacher is said to have accused Farrell of using "homophobic language" for allegedly saying, "LGBT sucks and LGBT's dumb," which the child denies.
>
> Farrell, who was sitting with female pupil Kasey says he is a Christian and told a "visitor teacher" he did not "accept LGBT" because of his religion.
>
> The teacher asked the two children, "Do you want them to die?" "We said no," Farrell replied. If, however, they went back to their countries, they would be punished for being gay, Farrell told the teacher.
>
> The teacher asked Farrell where he was from. Farrell said he was of "African Jamaican" heritage, and because there "everybody is Christian and Catholic, so they don't accept LGBT."

The head of the school, Susan Papas, suspended the two children from school for five days for asking not to take part in the LGBT indoctrination.

But she did more than that:

> Later, Ms Papas shouted at the two children in front of the class, according to Kaysey. “How dare you? You are a disappointment to the school,” Papas told the two children outside the classroom.
>
> Papas then put the children in different rooms and asked Kasey [sic]: “How dare you say that you want to kill LGBT people?” Kasey replied: “I didn’t say kill.” Papas then shouted at her and said, “Yes, you did, and don’t lie.”
>
> Kaysey, a pentecostal Christian, says she was kept in detention for five hours from 10am to 3pm.

So, if you say to a secular leftist “I disagree”, what they hear is a threat of violence. They feel that disagreeing with them makes you an evil person, and they are entitled to use force to stop you from being evil. There is no “agree to disagree” with a secular leftist.

Life Site News reports:

> Kaysey’s and Farrell’s version of the story, which differs widely from what their teacher and the head of their school alleged, has been corroborated by their classmates.

Elsewhere:

> Kaysey also noted that Papas’ daughter, School Manager and Deputy Safeguarding Officer Attie Copeman-Papas, is a lesbian, and that Assistant Headteacher Robert Askey is gay.
>
> […]This isn’t the first time Papas’ militant promotion of the LGBT agenda has roused the ire of parents at the school, which educates 750 pupils in a highly multicultural and multi-religious borough of London.
>
> In June 2018, parents threatened to protest at a Gay Pride parade organized by the school on its playground.
>
> Papas had invited parents to watch the “Proud to Be Me!” parade and join in celebrating “the rainbow of things that make them and their family special.”

Alas, there is no space in that rainbow for anyone who disagrees with Susan Papas.

So, the first thing to note is that this school is a “community school”, which is the UK way of saying “public school”. This is a government-run school. Government schools do not compete in a free market. They are funded by mandatory taxes. Parents are taxed, and then they access to the schools that the government provides to them. It’s a monopoly. They get paid regardless of how they perform.

So, if you want to be able to buy the education for your children that fits your values, then you should vote for lower taxes and less government, so that money for education stayed in your hands. When the parents keep the money they earn, then they can choose how the children are educated. When the government taxes your money, then Susan

Papas decides what your children will believe.

Unfortunately, even the majority of Christians now believe that the secular leftists in government make better decisions about moral issues than Christian parents do. That's why so many of us vote for higher taxes, and more government spending.

Who should feed the children? Who should treat illnesses? Who should care for refugees and illegal immigrants? Who should give money to the poor? Who should care for the environment? Who should teach people about sex and abortion? Many Christians today say government should do all these things. Young Christians don't care about preventing government from trampling on Christian values. The priorities of young Christians are whatever the secular left says they are: refugees, illegal immigrants, global warming, free government education, gay rights, government-run health care.

When you vote for higher taxes and bigger government, you're voting to let Susan Papas decide what your children will believe. You're voting to let her to punish your children if they don't believe what Susan Papas believes. We can do better.

More and more women are asking why they can't find a good man to marry

September 30, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

In the last few months, I've met 5 different Christian women in their 30s who all asked me the same question: where are all the good men who want to marry me?

Christian men's rights blogger Dalrock had two different posts where he described the answer to this question.

Here is the first post from Dalrock that concisely illustrates the problem:

> As I wrote in A very long season, feminists don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husbands than absolutely necessary. As if to prove this very point, 30 year old Mona Chalabi writes in the NY Times* I Want My 2.3 Bonus Years:
>
> If I could prolong my time as a young adult by, say, 2.3 years, here is a list of things I would like to do:
>
> • Go to more parties. Preferably wild parties that I can think about, years later, at mild parties.
>
> […]• Have more romantic partners.
>
> […]• Get a bit higher up the career ladder a bit earlier on. That would probably boost my earnings, giving me more financial security. I could use that money to go to more parties, get a membership to a fancy gym and maybe even meet a romantic partner on the ab machines.
>
> To drive the message home, the image at the top of the article is a cartoon of a

> resentful Chalabi giving her future husband the side eye for her lost years of sampling penises!

Surely, this must be an isolated case just for New York Times feminists, right? It's not widespread, is it?

Second post from Dalrock:

> Margaret Wente at the Globe and Mail* asks where all the good men have gone. Wente comes to the conclusion that women need a sex cartel:
>
> …it's up to us to make the rules. "Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" my father used to say. It drove me crazy when he said that. Now, it's dawned on me that he was right.
>
> Since the women's cartel collapsed, women's bargaining power has seriously eroded. That's why so many single women hate Tinder, which has further commodified sex for the benefit of men. Women are just another consumer good in the shop window.
>
> The apex fallacy aside, Wente is partially right. Women (as a group) have signaled to men that what they really want are exciting sexy badboys, not boring loyal dudes. **It isn't that women no longer want to marry beta providers, they just don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husband than absolutely necessary.**
>
> As a result, some up and coming boring loyal dudes aren't knocking themselves out in their twenties while they wait for their future wife to tire of having sex with other men.

If you wonder why men are no longer performing in school, and exchanging careers for video games, the answer is simple. Men have realized that young women today, under the influence of feminism, are not interested in traditional husbands during their late teens and 20s. During these years, women are interested in travel, fun, drinking, hook-ups and cohabitation with amoral atheists. This is what I have personally observed. In the minds of young women, the highest value men are good-looking men who have no religion, and make no moral judgments, and are left of center politically – especially on abortion.

There are actually many other men who don't meet this standard – marriage-minded men – who want to get married young and have children. But when these men see what young women really want, they just give up on school and work, since doing the traditional male roles has no value to young women. Many good men even give up on morality and Christianity, because they want a relationship with a woman so badly. They know that women don't want marriage-minded men when women are youngest and prettiest.

More from second post:

> What Wente doesn't understand is that timing is everything. From an economic point of view, women are dividing up sexual access that traditionally would have

> been reserved only for their husband into two blocks. The first block contains their most attractive and fertile years, and it is dedicated to no strings sex with exciting badboys. Then, once women reach what Rollo calls the epiphany phase, they want to bargain sexual access in their remaining (older and less fertile) years for maximum beta bucks.
>
> The problem with this strategy is (generally speaking) not that the previously overlooked beta men will refuse to marry the suddenly reformed party girls. The problem is that young men now look at the men 3-5 (and even 5-10) years older than them and don't see an indication that signaling provider status will make them attractive to women. They also see a society that holds married fathers in contempt**. Most of these men are still working hard in their late teens and twenties to prepare to signal provider status in their 30s. But a growing minority of young men are no longer doing so. These men are instead working like women. Once the reformed party girls are ready to find Mr. Beta Bucks, there is a shortage of 30 something men who fit the bill. Even worse, no amount of complaining or shaming will cause the missing beta providers to go back in time and spend the prior decade preparing for this moment.

I'm one of the last men who followed the marriage-preparedness script for traditional men who wanted to marry and have four children and have a stay-at-home homeschooling mom to raise them from birth to graduate school. I find myself now in my mid-40s, with a 6-figure income and a 7-figure net worth. I never used my success to play the field with hot bad girls. I wanted to keep my sexual past completely clean for my eventual wife. However, what I observed in my late teens and 20s and even early 30s was a complete lack of interest in marriage ability, from non-Christian women and Christian women alike. Christian women aren't learning to value early marriage from their married parents or their evangelical churches. None of the traditional husband skills are valued by young women, i.e. – chastity, gapless resume, alcohol abstinence, undergraduate and graduate STEM degrees, experience nurturing and mentoring others, stewardship of earned income.

I recently caused an uproar on my Facebook page by saying that even if the perfect woman showed up right now to marry me, I would not pursue her because the critical time where the woman could have applied maximum youth, beauty and fertility as a wife to make an impact on my education, early career, health, and finances has passed. A younger woman develops value to her husband precisely by applying herself to him and to her family in these critical early years. Men who have experienced this self-sacrificial love and support are loyal to their wives even after their wives lose their youth and beauty. Why? Because the men know that they are much better than they could have been, having enjoyed that early investment of value made by their young wives.

Young women very supportive of premarital sex

As Christian writer Matt Walsh notes in a recent article at the Daily Wire, this "follow your heart" focus on happiness in women is lethal to marital stability, and men know it.

Excerpt:

> There was an article in *Cosmo* this week with a title that summarizes all that's wrong with *Cosmo* and modern society as a whole: "I eloped at 25, divorced at 26, and dated my way across Europe all summer." Of course, by "dated my way across Europe" she means that she slept with half the continent.
>
> The author, Elise, says she "started fighting" with her husband and within a few months they both decided that their differences were irreconcilable. Despite counseling, she says, "neither of us was happy." So, exhausted from 12 whole months of marriage, Elise embarked on a voyage of self-discovery and STD cultivation. She met random dudes in half a dozen countries and had sex with them, learning quite a lot as she went, though she can't really explain what exactly she learned or why sex was a necessary component in learning it. Finally, she came home and started dating some other guy. The end.
>
> Well, not really the end. 20 years from now I'm sure we'll get the follow up article: "I'm alone and miserable and it's everyone's fault but mine." **After all, you may be able to fill the emptiness in your soul with frivolous sex when you're young and physically desirable, but that phase is fleeting. People who don't want to "waste" their beauty and youth on a spouse, so they waste it instead on strangers who don't love them or even care what happens to them tomorrow, will be shocked when a tomorrow comes where even strangers aren't interested anymore. This is where the single-minded, utterly selfish pursuit of "happiness" at all costs inevitably leads: to rejection, despair, and a quiet, unnoticed death on a lonely hospital bed.**
>
> As Elise helpfully demonstrated, "do what makes you happy" is poison in a marriage. Many a vow has been broken because one or both partners decide to

> chase “happiness” instead of commitment, fidelity, and love. “I deserve to be happy,” reports the legion of serial divorcees, as they drift on to the next spouse, and the next, and the next, and the next, looking for the one — *the* one, finally — who might cure the misery they’ve inflicted on themselves. Increasingly unhappy, yet increasingly convinced that they deserve to be.

And this follow your heart to happiness situation is alive and well in the church today. Marriage-minded Christian men who have prepared for husband roles are surprised to find that there is often little or no difference between Elise and the Christian women the church produces. Christian men who desire to invest in a marriage that is stable, productive and influential have nowhere to turn for a wife who is able and willing to help. In my experience, the problem with happiness-focused women who delay marriage is never discussed in churches from the pulpit. The “good men to marry” that today’s 30-something women are looking for were plentiful back when those same women were in their early-to-mid 20s.

Are Nordic countries succeeding with socialism like Bernie Sanders says?

October 1, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

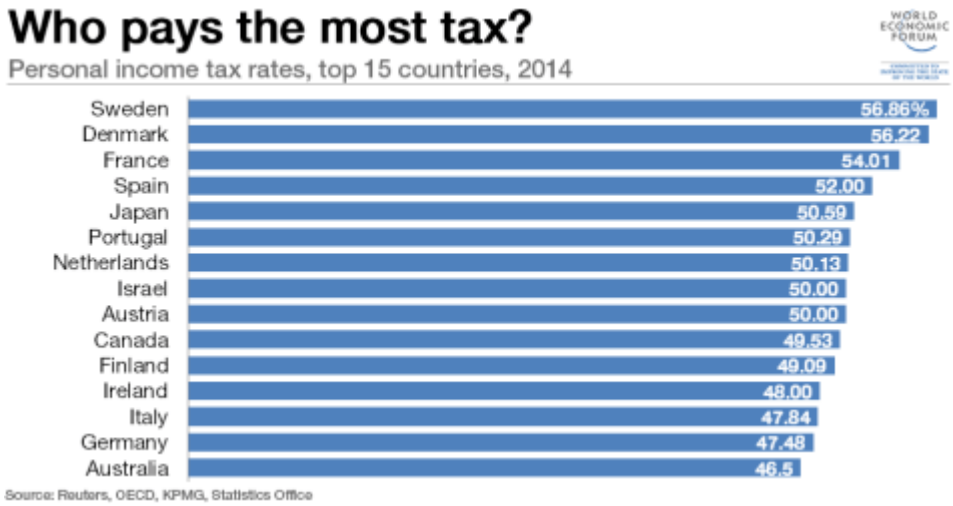

Individials pay extremely high income taxes in Nordic countries

Last week, I saw back to back studies on Nordic countries reported by the far-left UK Independent and Barron's magazine. We're probably going to hear more about how great socialism is from socialists, and since they seem to point to Nordic countries as proof, we should probably look at the studies and see what the truth is.

Let's start with the report from Barron's. You'll have heard of Barron's if you're an investor.

It says:

> Although there are areas—especially in taxes and labor market regulation—where socialist elements still exist in the Nordics, the region is by no means socialist today. In fact, according to the Heritage Foundation's index of economic freedom, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, and Denmark rank among the 30 most capitalist countries in the world.

These countries used to be socialist in the 1970s and 1980s. Socialism means a huge government work force, high taxes, massive regulation of private sector businesses, and massive spending on welfare programs. You didn't have to marry before having children, the government would give you welfare. You didn't have to take care of yourself, the government would give you free health care. You didn't have to save for retirement, the government would give you a pension.

The article mentions one country in particular – Sweden. And here is what socialism looked like in Sweden:

> In 1960, for every 100 "market-financed" Swedes (i.e. those who derived their income predominantly from private enterprise), there were 38 who were "tax-financed" (i.e. dependent on the public sector for their income, whether as civil

> servants or as recipients of payments from the state). Thirty years later, that number had risen to 151—in other words, there were significantly more people living off of the state than paying into the system. This reflects Sweden's move away from a capitalist free-market economy to a socialist model.

When people talk about socialism, they mean more people living off the state than paying into the system.

But socialism can't last forever. Eventually, the people in the private sector realize that they are keeping less and less of what they earn, and they stop working, or just leave. The article notes that IKEA, which started out in Sweden, moved out to avoid paying the 57% corporate tax rate.

Eventually, and this is the part that Bernie Sanders is ignorant about, Sweden slashed or eliminated taxes across the board, then cut their government spending on welfare, subsidies and gv:

> A major tax reform in 1990/91 slashed corporate taxes from 57% to 30%. Income from shares was exempted from taxation, while capital gains from shares were taxed at only 12.5%.
>
> The top marginal income-tax rate was set at around 50%, a reduction by 24 to 27 percentage points for the majority of the workforce. The proportion of earners taxed at a marginal rate of over 50% dropped from over half to only 17% paying income tax to the central government.
>
> The reforms continued over the following years: in 2004, the estate tax of up to 30% was scrapped. Today, there is no estate tax in Sweden. The abolition of the wealth tax, which had already been cut, came into effect retroactively as of 1 January 2007. The corporate tax rate continued to decline, getting cut from 30% to 26.3% in 2009 and to 22% in 2013. Property tax rates were also cut substantially.
>
> Between 1993 and 2000, social spending dropped from 22.2% to 16.9% of GDP, economic subsidies from 8.7% to 1.8% and public-sector payroll costs from 18.2% to 15.6%.

Sweden might be a little further ahead of some of the other Nordic countries. Over in Finland, they are still climbing out of it, and the massive government spending is so hard for socialists to cut.

Here's a story from Finland about their government-run health care system – the same kind that Bernie is always bragging about, and telling us how well it works in Finland.

Far-left Reuters reports:

> Finland's coalition government resigned on Friday a month ahead of a general election, saying it could not deliver on a healthcare reform package that is widely seen as crucial to securing long-term government finances.
>
> Healthcare systems across much of the developed world have come under

> increasing stress in recent years as treatment costs soar and people live longer, meaning fewer workers are supporting more pensioners.
>
> Nordic countries, where comprehensive welfare is the cornerstone of the social model, have been among the most affected. But reform has been controversial and, in Finland, plans to cut costs and boost efficiency have stalled for years.

The very health care systems that Bernie lectures American voters about are all in decline and failing:

> Other Nordic countries have also grappled with the need to cut costs. Sweden is to gradually raise its retirement age and has opened up parts of the healthcare system to the private sector in a bid to boost efficiency.
>
> Denmark will gradually increase the retirement age to 73 – the highest in the world – while cutting taxes and unemployment benefits to encourage people to work more.

If you learned anything from this article, I'd like you to do me a favor. Please share and/or tweet this post, or share and/or tweet the posts from Barron's and Reuters. We have an election coming up in 2020, and right now, the people are being lied to by foolish socialist politicians who talk and talk about things they have no knowledge about. We need to correct the views of the American people with facts. We can't make the mistake of electing Democrats who are terrible at health care, and only good at making promises to spending taxpayer money. They have *no idea* how economics actually works in the real world, and we need to do everything we can to keep them out of power.

Survey of scientific literature finds that children need their mom for first 3 years

October 2, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Child grabs for his mom, who is leaving for work

Recently, an article published in the Wall Street Journal reported on a research survey done by a far-left Democrat psychotherapist based in far-left New York City. Surprisingly, her book caused an uproar among the author's left-wing allies. How come?

Excerpt:

> Motherhood used to be as American as apple pie. Nowadays it can be as antagonistic as American politics. Ask Erica Komisar.
>
> Ms. Komisar, 53, is a Jewish psychoanalyst who lives and practices on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. If that biographical thumbnail leads you to stereotype her as a political liberal, you're right. But she tells me she has become "a bit of a pariah" on the left because of the book she published this year, "Being There: Why Prioritizing Motherhood in the First Three Years Matters."
>
> […]The premise of Ms. Komisar's book—backed by research in psychology, neuroscience and epigenetics—is that "mothers are biologically necessary for babies," and not only for the obvious reasons of pregnancy and birth. "Babies are much more neurologically fragile than we've ever understood," Ms. Komisar says. She cites the view of one neuroscientist, Nim Tottenham of Columbia University, "that babies are born without a central nervous system" and "mothers are the central nervous system to babies," especially for the first nine months after birth.
>
> What does that mean? "Every time a mother comforts a baby in distress, she's actually regulating that baby's emotions from the outside in. After three years, the baby internalizes that ability to regulate their emotions, but not until then."

> For that reason, mothers "need to be there as much as possible, both physically and emotionally, for children in the first 1,000 days."

What's interesting about this is how the left responds to the science. They don't want to see anything that challenges their desires to focus on fun in the short-term, but have marriage and successful children in the long-term.

More:

> Christian radio stations "interviewed me and loved me," she says. She went on "Fox & Friends," and "the host was like, your book is the best thing since the invention of the refrigerator." But "I couldn't get on NPR," and "I was rejected wholesale—particularly in New York—by the liberal press." She did appear on ABC's "Good Morning America," but seconds before the camera went live, she says, the interviewer told her: "I don't believe in the premise of your book at all. I don't like your book."
>
> […]Ms. Komisar tells of hosting a charity gathering for millennials at her apartment. One young woman "asked me what my book was about. I told her, and she got so angry. She almost had fire coming out of her eyes, she was so angry at my message. She said, 'You are going to set women back 50 years.' I said, 'Gosh, I wouldn't want to do that.' "
>
> […]The needs of children get lost in all this—and Ms. Komisar hears repeatedly that the hostility to her message is born of guilt. When she was shopping for a literary agent, she tells me, "a number of the agents said, 'No, we couldn't touch that. That would make women feel guilty.' " Another time she was rejected for a speaking gig at a health conference. She quotes the head of the host institution as telling her: "You are going to make women feel badly. How dare you?"
>
> […]**"The thing I dislike the most is day care," she says. "It's really not appropriate for children under the age of 3," because it is "overstimulating" given their neurological undevelopment. She cites the "Strange Situation experiments," devised in 1969 by developmental psychologist Mary Ainsworth, a pioneer of attachment theory: "A mother and the baby are on the floor playing. The mother gets up and leaves the baby in the room alone. The baby has a separation-anxiety response. A stranger walks in; the baby has a stressed reaction to the stranger."**
>
> […]Researchers sample the infant's saliva and test it for cortisol, a hormone associated with stress (and inversely correlated with oxytocin). In a series of such experiments in which Ms. Komisar herself participated, "the levels were so high in the babies that the anticipation was that it would . . . in the end, cause disorders and problems." In a more recent variant of the experiment, scientists use functional magnetic resonance imaging to look directly at the brain of an infant reacting to photos of the mother and of a stranger.

You'd think that people would be happy to find out how the world works, and adjust their decisions to match. But they're not. The only good evidence is evidence that confirms their desires and ideology.

Let's look at one of the studies, to see some evidence.

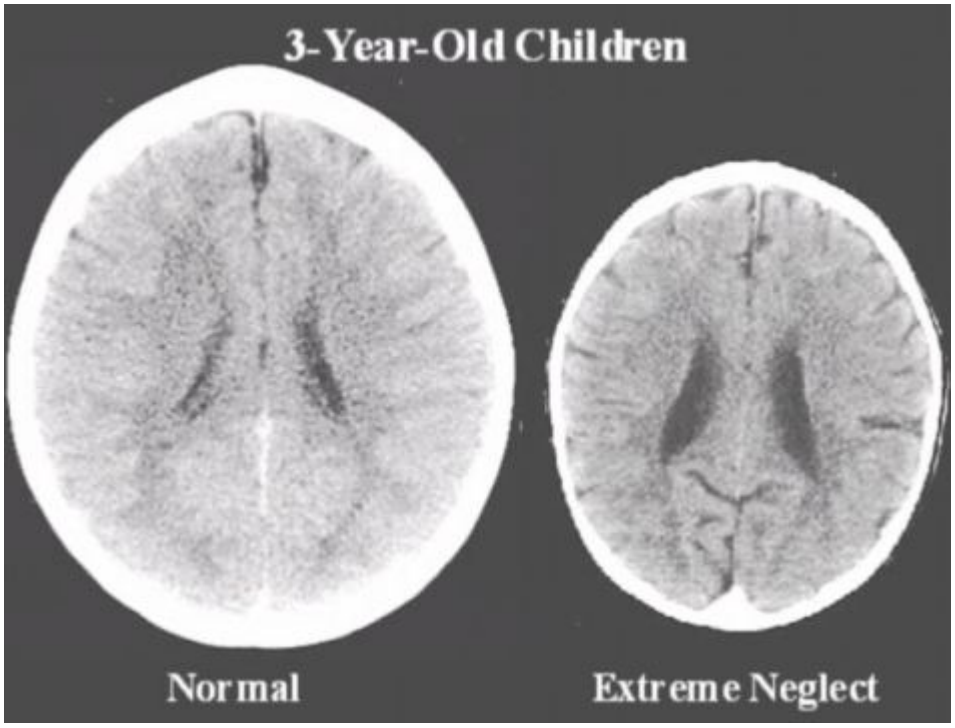

Brain scans of 3-year old children: normal vs neglected

The UK Telegraph reported on a recent study that measured the brain development of 3-year-old children.

Excerpt:

> Take a careful look at the image of two brains on this page. The picture is of the brains of two three-year-old children. It's obvious that the brain on the left is much bigger than the one on the right. The image on the left also has fewer spots, and far fewer dark "fuzzy" areas.
>
> To neurologists who study the brain, and who have worked out how to interpret the images, the difference between these two brains is both remarkable and shocking. The brain on the right lacks some of the most fundamental areas present in the image on the left. Those deficits make it impossible for that child to develop capacities that the child on the left will have: the child on the right will grow into an adult who is less intelligent, less able to empathise with others, more likely to become addicted to drugs and involved in violent crime than the child on the left. The child on the right is much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on welfare, and to develop mental and other serious health problems.
>
> […]The primary cause of the extraordinary difference between the brains of these two three-year-old children is the way they were treated by their mothers. The child with the much more fully developed brain was cherished by its mother,

> who was constantly and fully responsive to her baby.
>
> The child with the shrivelled brain was neglected and abused. That difference in treatment explains why one child's brain develops fully, and the other's does not.
>
> […]Professor Allan Schore, of UCLA, who has surveyed the scientific literature and has made significant contributions to it, stresses that the growth of brain cells is a "consequence of an infant's interaction with the main caregiver [usually the mother]".
>
> The growth of the baby's brain "literally requires positive interaction between mother and infant. The development of cerebral circuits depends on it."

I like bringing science to bear on moral issues. The more you read about the science, the less wiggle-room there is for feelings. Doing the right thing (e.g. – saving money for a stay-at-home mom) is hard because it feels bad. But when you inform yourself with science, it makes it easier to override your bad feelings, because you know you're doing the right thing to achieve a result.

Why do so many atheist historians think that 1 Corinthians 15 is reliable history?

October 3, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

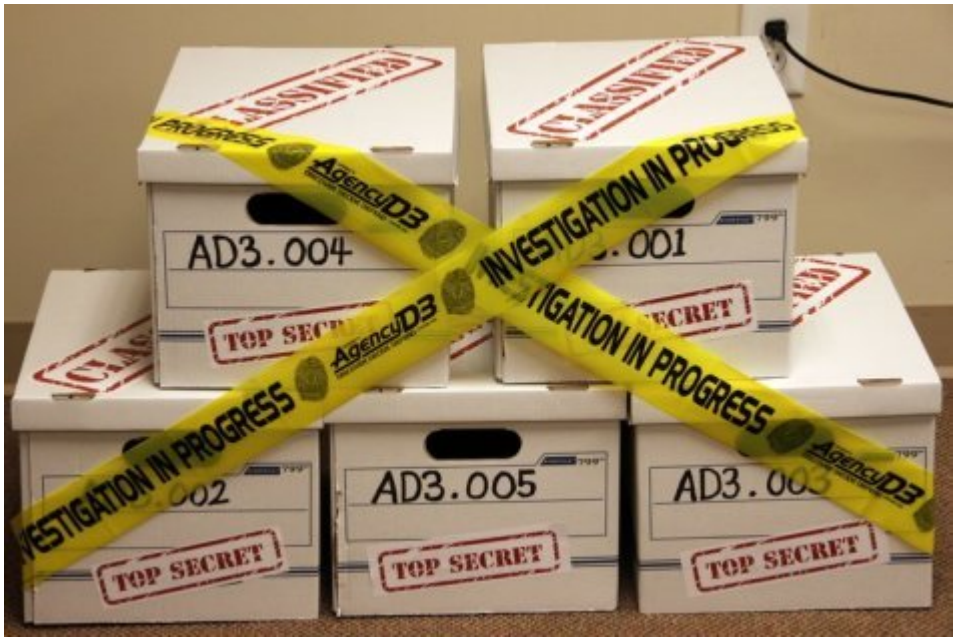

Investigation in progress

Which passage of the Bible is the favorite of Christians who like to defend the Christian worldview? I don't mean which one is most inspirational… I mean "which one is the most useful for winning arguments?" Well, when it comes to the historical Jesus, the most important passage has to be 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

The tradition in 1 Corinthians 15 is an early creed that was received from the eyewitnesses Peter and John when Paul visited them several times in Jerusalem, as documented in Galatians 1 and 2, where Paul meets the eyewitnesses. And of course, Paul records his own eyewitness experience, documented in 1 Cor 15:8.

So, is this passage accepted as historically reliable by all ancient historians? Or only by the Bible-believing ones?

Here's something posted by Dr. William Lane Craig about the 1 Corinthians 15 passage:

> The evidence that Paul is not writing in his own hand in I Cor. 15.3-5 is so powerful that all New Testament scholars recognize that Paul is here passing on a prior tradition. In addition to the fact that Paul explicitly says as much, the passage is replete with non-Pauline characteristics, including, in order of appearance: (i) the phrase "for our sins" using the genitive case and plural noun is unusual for Paul; (ii) the phrase "according to the Scriptures" is unparalleled in Paul, who introduces Scriptural citations by "as it is written"; (iii) the perfect passive verb "has been raised" appears only in this chapter and in a pre-Pauline confessional formula in II Tim. 2.8; (iv) the phrase "on the third day" with its ordinal number following the noun in Greek is non-Pauline; (v) the word

> “appeared” is found only here and in the confessional formula in I Tim. 3.16; and (vi) “the Twelve” is not Paul’s nomenclature, for he always speaks of the twelve disciples as “the apostles.”
>
> Now the visit during which Paul may have received this tradition is the visit you mention three years after his conversion on the road to Damascus (Gal. 1.18). This puts the tradition back to within the first five years after Jesus’ death in AD 30. So there’s not even an apparent inconsistency with Paul’s appropriating the language of the formula to encapsulate the Gospel he was already preaching during those first three years in Damascus.

Ancient historian Gary Habermas loves to read non-Christian scholars… and then he writes about what THEY think about Jesus in peer-reviewed articles, published in academic journals. Let’s look at this one: *Dialog: A Journal of Theology, Vol. 45; No. 3 (Fall, 2006), pp. 288-297; published by Blackwell Publishing, UK.*

He writes:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: “However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul’s.”[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul’s own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: “It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition.”[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]

This is important:

> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the

> brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

He's an eyewitness (verse 8), and he met with the other eyewitnesses, James and Peter. 1 Corinthians is early. Galatians is early. The creed is extremely early – right after the events occurred. There was no time for legends to develop.

And atheistic / critical historians agree, the creed is reliable:

> Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]
>
> Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]
>
> Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.
>
> (3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]
>
> These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially

> given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.
>
> (4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

Now, some of the people he lists are really biased against the supernatural, and they really hate the idea that the claims of Christianity exclude other religions. And yet they don't deny the historical reliability of 1 Corinthians 15, or that it is based on eyewitness testimony.

That's why when you watch debates about the historical Jesus, you see skeptical historians like Bart Ehrman, Gerd Ludemann, James Crossley, Michael Goulder, etc. accepting that the disciples thought they saw Jesus after his death. They're not just being nice to Dr. Craig when they give him that. They are forced to accept it, because it passes the historical tests. Every Christian ought to be aware of which passages of the New Testament are seen by the broad spectrum of ancient historians as "historical", regardless of their various biases. You can believe everything in the Bible. But when you debate non-Christians, you have to use the historical core of Christianity which successfully passes historical analysis.

You can see the creed used as evidence in the debate between James Crossley and William Lane Craig.

My short and sweet summary of the Trump-Ukraine events from the past month

October 4, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Adam Schiff lied about collusion with the Democrat "whistleblower"

So, recently the Democrats decided to collude with a disgruntled CIA analyst and registered Democrat, in order to help him to make a hearsay complaint against President Trump. The mainstream media then colluded with the Democrats in order to promote the hearsay complaint to their audiences. Let's retrace the major steps of the story, and then see how it affected Trump's fundraising numbers.

This is what we know about the whistleblower:

> BREAKING: The whistleblower is a registered Democrat & CIA analyst who was detailed before the 2016 election to the Obama White House,where he worked on the NSC's Ukraine desk & met w anti-Trump Ukrainian officials before being sent packing by the Trump NSC & becoming disgruntled.

The first interesting point is that the Democrats relaxed the standards for whistleblower reports, to allow people who were not direct witnesses to file reports.

> Between May 2018 and August 2019, the intelligence community secretly eliminated a requirement that whistleblowers provide direct, first-hand knowledge of alleged wrongdoings. This raises questions about the intelligence community's behavior regarding the August submission of a whistleblower complaint against President Donald Trump. The new complaint document no

> longer requires potential whistleblowers who wish to have their concerns expedited to Congress to have direct, first-hand knowledge of the alleged wrongdoing that they are reporting.

So, since they dropped the requirement for first-hand knowledge, the complainant could expedite to Congress without it.

The second interesting point is that the Democrats lied about the contents of the phone call, and had to walk back their lies.

Epoch Times reports:

> Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) added words that were not spoken by President Donald Trump while reading from a transcript of the callbetween Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky during a House Intelligence Committee hearing on Sept. 26.

> […]Rep. Mike Turner (R-Ohio) later called Schiff out.
>
> "While the chairman was speaking I had someone text me, 'is he just making this up?'" Turner said. "And yes, yes he was. Because sometimes fiction is better than the actual words or the text. But luckily the American public are smart and they have the transcript. They've read the conversation, they know when someone's just making it up."
>
> After Turner's remarks, Schiff told those assembled: "My colleague is right … it's not okay."

And this is not something that the mainstream media did much to correct – they liked Schiff's false version, and they didn't want to correct him. NBC News posted the video without noting that Schiff later admitted that he was not telling the truth.

Third, the Democrats were caught lying again about not having met the whistleblower prior to his report being submitted. The whistleblower did indeed meet with Adam Schiff's committee, although Schiff denied that his committee spoke to the whistleblower before the charges became public:

> *The New York Times* reported on Thursday that House Intelligence Committee Chairman Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) had advance knowledge of the outline of the whistleblower complaint against President Donald Trump before the complaint was filed, and that Schiff's office advised the whistleblower on how to effectively create the complaint.
>
> However, in a September 17, 2019 interview with MSNBC, Rep. Schiff said his office had not spoken "directly" with the whistleblower and that the whistleblower had not been advised "by the inspector general or the director of national intelligence (DNI)" on how to communicate with Congress:

"Schiff's office advised the whistleblower on how to effectively create the complaint."

The Wall Street Journal comments:

> If all this has a somewhat familiar feel of subterfuge and ambush, it should. The episode is redolent of the sneak attack on Brett Kavanaugh. An unknown person levels nasty allegations; a Democratic lawmaker (in that case, Sen. Dianne Feinstein) conceals the claim before springing it at an opportune moment; the media jumps on board to distort and inflame the story. Lost in the carnage are little things like fairness, standards and due process.

So, what about the whistleblower's report? Did Trump withhold military aid from Ukraine in exchange for favors?

No, the military aid was sent to Ukraine on schedule, without their having to do anything for Trump:

> The United States military aid to Ukraine was sent as scheduled, according to a spokesperson for the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), putting in context a key claim by an anonymous intelligence community whistleblower whose complaint was followed by a Democrat-led impeachment inquiry.
>
> The whistleblower claimed that the president had suspended all security assistance to Ukraine. Instead, the aid underwent a routine review process after a so-called footnote was placed on the funds to Ukraine and was disbursed on or ahead of schedule, a senior administration official told The Epoch Times on Oct. 2. The aid underwent the review around the time White House officials were considering a broad range of foreign aid cuts.
>
> […]Instead of the abrupt suspension, the aid package underwent a typical process, the administration spokesman said. The budget office was simultaneously considering a rescissions package that could impact nine other countries.

Well, did Ukraine at least *think* that Trump was withholding aid in exchange for investigating Biden corruption?

No, they didn't:

> Ukrainian officials did not think that President Trump was using U.S. aid as a bargaining chip when he and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky spoke in July. According to BuzzFeed News, at the time of the infamous phone call now used as the basis for Democrats' latest impeachment efforts, the Ukrainian president thought U.S. aid was already on its way. This aligns with what The New York Times reported last week in regards to the Zelensky government not thinking aid might be withheld.

Is that what you've been hearing from Democrat politicians, the mainstream media and your uninformed co-workers? Me neither.

Other questions

Did Vice President Biden really get the Ukraine prosecutor pulled off investigating the Ukraine company that was paying his cocaine-snorting son $50,000 a month?

> The fired prosecutor at the center of the Ukraine controversy said during a private interview with President Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani earlier this year that he was told to back off an investigation involving a natural gas firm that was linked to Joe Biden's son, according to details of that interview that were handed over to Congress by the State Department's inspector general Wednesday.
>
> Fox News obtained a copy of Giuliani's notes from his January 2019 interview with fired Ukrainian prosecutor Viktor Shokin in which he claimed that his "investigations stopped out of fear of the United States."

Joe Biden also told reporters that he had never met with anyone connected to his son's "business dealings", but then a photograph was reported, showing Joe Biden, his son Hunter Biden, and Devon Archer, who served on the board of the Ukrainian natural gas company Burisma Holdings with Hunter. Again, the mainstream media was mostly silent about that discovery.

Which candidate colluded with foreign governments in the 2016 election?

> Ukrainian government officials tried to help Hillary Clinton and undermine Trump by publicly questioning his fitness for office. They also disseminated documents implicating a top Trump aide in corruption and suggested they were investigating the matter, only to back away after the election. And they helped Clinton's allies research damaging information on Trump and his advisers, a Politico investigation found.
>
> A Ukrainian-American operative who was consulting for the Democratic National Committee met with top officials in the Ukrainian Embassy in Washington in an effort to expose ties between Trump, top campaign aide Paul Manafort and Russia, according to people with direct knowledge of the situation.

Recall that the Trump-Russia collusion charges all came about due to opposition research purchased by a Democrat PR firm that was hired by a Democrat law firm working for the Clinton campaign. And that's why the Mueller report found no evidence of collusion, and no evidence of obstruction.

So, what effect has all of this had on Trump?

> Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden raised $15.2 million in the third quarter fundraising period, his campaign announced Thursday… Meanwhile President Trump's campaign and the Republican National Committee combined to raise a record $125 million last quarter and ended the period with more than $156 million cash on hand.

Listen. Now is the time for you to make a difference in the 2020 election. Share the articles that I linked to above on social media. Donate to the Trump campaign, or to a good conservative 2020 candidate. When yard signs become available, go get one, and put it on your lawn. I'm going to do it, and I want you to do it, too.

Elizabeth Warren and AOC agree: give convicts and illegal immigrants welfare, enact rent control

October 5, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Elizabeth Warren has a much better way to spend the money you earn

This week, Warren and AOC announced their support for giving taxes paid by U.S. citizens, permanent residents and people here legally on work permits to illegal immigrants. Watch the video below, and read the story, and ask yourself whether you think it is your job to pay for welfare for people who wouldn't even go through the process of coming into this country legally.

Here's a short video clip from Fox News:

The Washington Free Beacon reports:

> Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren endorsed a Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D., N.Y.) policy proposal that includes taxpayer-funded welfare benefits for illegal immigrants.
>
> Ocasio-Cortez's proposal, dubbed "A Just Society," calls for nationwide rent control and bans the federal government from denying welfare benefits based on an individual's immigration status and previous criminal convictions. Warren became the first Democratic presidential candidate to endorse the plan, calling it "just the type of bold, comprehensive thinking we'll need" to make "big, structural change."
>
> […]Ocasio-Cortez's proposal, consisting of six separate bills, calls for the expansion of welfare. Bills three and four make it illegal for the federal government to deny welfare benefits to ex-convicts and illegal immigrants.
>
> […]The last bill in Ocasio-Cortez's proposal establishes health care, housing, and healthy food as government-provided rights.
>
> […]The legislation does not address how to pay for the rising cost of welfare, nor does it explain how it would accomplish its goals.

Remember, AOC and Warren already have the Green New Deal on the table, and the cost for that is $94.4 trillion over 10 years. So where will they get the money for this new plan? Would they do it with their own money? No, they want to do it with *your* money. They want to do it with *your employer's* money. They want to do it with the money earned by the companies *in your 401K plan.*

By the way, regarding the rent control. If there is one thing that you learn in Economics 101, it's that rent control policies do more harm than good. It causes a shortage of living space for the poor, because the people who rent out living space cannot make enough money as they can in other investments. So, they stop investing in rental properties.

The Free Beacon article notes:

> Ocasio-Cortez's second bill, titled "The Place to Prosper Act," calls for federal rent control by imposing a 3 percent national cap on annual rent increases. Similar legislation has failed at the local level amid concerns that such policies increased housing prices while limiting supply. A recent study by the American Economic Association found that San Francisco rent control policy "drove up market rents in the long run, ultimately undermining the goals of the law." The Council of Economic Advisers found that in 11 metropolitan areas with housing regulations, deregulation would reduce homelessness by an average of 31 percent. More than 80 percent of economists surveyed by the University of Chicago in 2012 found rent control to be bad policy.

This is not controversial. Harvard University economist Greg Mankiw is the author of a very widely used economics textbook. In his textbook, he has a section where he reports on what economists (academic and professional) agree on, across the ideological spectrum. The *number one item on the list, with the highest level of agreement, is that rent control does not work.*

He writes:

> My textbook covers business cycle theory toward the end of the book (the last four chapters) precisely because that theory is controversial. I believe it is better to introduce students to economics with topics about which there is more of a professional consensus. In chapter two of the book, I include a table of propositions to which most economists subscribe, based on various polls of the profession. Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:

> 1. **A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)**

You can read the rest of the list on his blog, but AOC and her ally Elizabeth Warren probably disagree with *all of them*. And that's who the American left are looking to for leadership. People with no knowledge. People with no achievements. People who have

never solved economic problems in the private sector in their entire lives. Warren and AOC have no demonstrated achievements in the area of economic policy. There are just speaking words that make them feel good, and get applause. They don’t know what happens next, if they ever get their ideas put into law.

If you’re not already paying off your debts and saving money, you’d better start. Because when these Democrat demagogues get power, you are going to feel the effects of their economic illiteracy where you live and where you work. Remember Obamacare? We lost our doctors, we lost our health plans, and the costs of our health insurance went up. If you elect an imbecile to make policy decisions, you will be made to feel the effects of your choices.

Christian man shares his story of being banned by Canada's armed forces for disagreeing with Islam

October 6, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canadian police officers arrest black pastor for preaching the gospel

I got an essay from a Christian man who lives in Canada who served with the armed forces, but was banned from re-enlistment for expressing orthodox Christian views online about Islam. On this blog, I have urged Christians not to entrust a secular government with too many responsibilities, because it results in diminished liberty. I hope my readers will learn something from his story.

The remained of this post is written by the Canadian writer.

I was in the Canadian army several years ago, and while during this brief period of my life I was somewhat eager to get out. It just wasn't a good time and I had chosen a less than ideal trade. I also had a difficult time telling myself I did the right thing. My 3 year engagement was valuable in some ways, I made some of my best friends there, and it made me into somewhat of a disciplined civilian, one might say. After my release from the army, I went to school and studied Christian apologetics and philosophy, which gave me an excellent outlet to share ideas. I had taken a course on Islam through Veritas evangelical seminary, which was very informative. I had learned that Islam shares many core ideas of Christianity, but there was also something about it which undoubtedly drives much of the terrorist activity in the world. I decided I could no longer evaluate Islam through what the media was telling me, or some of the attitudes towards Islam I may have picked up in the army. Given the time in which I was in the army (2005-2008), during the Afghanistan conflict, no doubt there was a great deal of vilification of our enemy in order to dehumanize them. This seems to be how war works, as it makes it

easier to kill who you believe to be sub-human.

No doubt, Islam has been heavily politicized since then. It has become the preferred religion of the Liberal party in Canada; the object of tolerance, and the line of demarcation, which if you do not tolerate you are a racist, even if you so much as raise concern with regards to its violent roots, and current activity. Either way, I had to understand it for myself.

Is this a misappropriated religion, used by those who would be violent anyway as a pretext to carry out their actions? Is there room for reform within Islam, can a believer move away from the violent passages in the Quran, and adopt a more peaceful form of Islam without compromising essential beliefs?
Without getting into the details of my piece, I answered these questions in the negative, while leaving open the very real possibility that a genuinely peaceful person might be a Muslim, that we might hold two, or more, conflicting ideas at once. I published my ideas on my former blog.

Since then, I had reapplied with the army, I even did my aptitude test again, bringing up my score, in order to open up a more desirable occupation than before. My chosen occupation was intelligence, and I was almost in. I suppose it was appropriate that the recruiter gathered their intelligence on me, and found my apologetics blog.

During the recruiting process, one form which all candidates must sign is “Operation Honour,” instantiated by General Jonathan Vance, an initiative not in place during my previous engagement. This outlines an understanding that members must not sexually harass, or discriminate against other CF members, and such can be grounds for dismissal, which seems reasonable.

I was called into the recruiting centre, and my reapplication to the military was closed due to this post, this post which expressed views criticizing a set of ideas, Islam, as a private citizen.

I had argued, with the recruiters, how no specific person was accused of violence, and how the piece was only intended to draw out the problems I saw contained within. They would have none of it, and were set on a year long deferral. It became clear to me that our freedoms of speech were under attack, and in order to hold jobs in government one cannot hold views contrary to the current cultural milieu. I have since had the opportunity to reapply, but with such a wax nose initiative in place, where any disagreement one might voice against a particular worldview, I am unsure how one’s career could survive in an atmosphere of whistleblowers, and where people’s feelings are a metric for one’s worthiness in the forces. Literally anything which rubs another the wrong way, any concern or disagreement, can become a nightmare for a member.

Would not the mere presence of me, a Christian, be an affront to Islam, or even a homosexual/LGBTQ member? The simple affirmation of Jesus being the Son of God is blasphemy to Islam, which only affirms Him as a prophet. How is anyone to function in such an environment as both a private citizen and a state employee, one which professes inclusivity, but has their own ideas of exclusivity in mind? In the name of tolerance, it

does seem that our government, and its agencies, have become some of the most intolerant and divisive amongst us. They seem more interested in catering to special interest groups, rather than evaluating ideas, which is ironic considering my intended trade—intelligence, which examines sociopolitical influences on a region, ideas that might be useful for command decisions.

If Islam were the peaceful religion our politicians claim it to be, wouldn't this be a valuable thing for a person in a command position to know? One could use this knowledge to reform violent practitioners away from their erroneous ways. Yet, they have chosen to protect it by brute political force, rather than allowing open discussion.

Sure, I was initially bitter about this, but it was a valuable lesson, and it has shown me how under the brief influence of a very pseudo-liberal government, how our basic freedoms of thought and speech become attacked, freedoms which I thought our military was interested in preserving, at home and abroad. I suppose it was a valuable awakening to no longer see the state as the preservers of morality, let alone our basic freedoms. For this, we need to look elsewhere.

Related posts

- Religious Liberty Is Eroding in Canada. Here's What Americans Should Learn (Heritage Foundation)
- Canada Stifles Religious Freedom (National Review)
- What Canada's Attack on Religious Liberty Means for Americans (CBN)
- Religious Freedom in Retreat: Canada's Courts versus Physicians' Liberties (Law & Liberty)

Under Trump, Black and Hispanic unemployment rates drop to 50-year record low

October 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

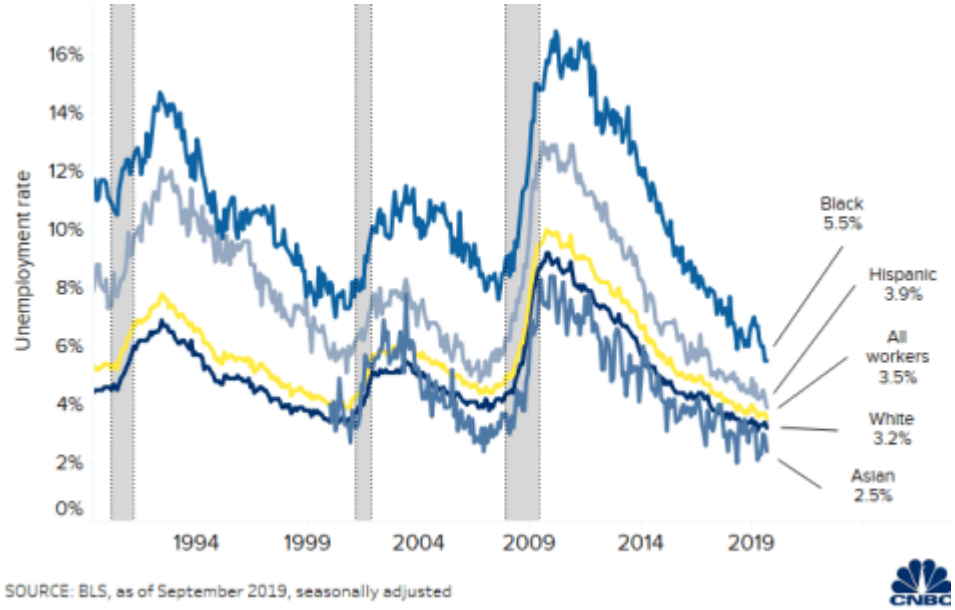

Black and Hispanic unemployment rates drop to 50-year record low

A lot happened on the weekend in current events that I wanted to write about. Elizabeth Warren got caught lying about being a victim (again). Audio and e-mail evidence emerged showing that the Democrat National Committee colluded with Ukraine to boost Hillary during the 2016 election. I might write about those later on this week, but today I wanted to focus on something positive.

So, by now everyone knows that Trump has delivered a record low unemployment rate for blacks and for Hispanics:

> There have never been more Black and Hispanic Americans in the workforce, Friday's Labor Department job report showed.
>
> The jobless rate for Hispanics hit a record low of 3.9% in September, while African Americans maintained its lowest rate ever, 5.5%.
>
> The Hispanic women unemployment rate was 3.8% in September and the Black adult women jobless rate was 4.6%.
>
> "The best numbers that we've ever had: African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Women, everything. We have the best numbers that we've had in many, many, many decades, " President Donald Trump told reporters on Friday.
>
> The unemployment rate for Asian Americans was 2.5% in September.

I sometimes try to bring this up with white leftists in my office, who insist that Trump is a racist. I ask them which policy is hurting non-whites the most. They have no answer. Then I bring up the record low unemployment rates for blacks and Hispanics. Their response is

that he has racism in his heart, and it doesn't show up in his policies. That's a funny sort of racism. But I think Trump is realizing that he has to do something about this perception of him among low-information voters. And so he did.

Here's the story from the Daily Caller:

> President Donald Trump implicitly addressed the institution of slavery in the United States during an event with young black supporters on Friday, asserting that black Americans did more to build the nation than they are given credit for.
>
> […]"African Americans built this nation," the president said to applause. "You built this nation."
>
> "You know, you're just starting to get real credit for that, okay? I don't know if you know that. You're just starting to get — you built the nation. We all built it. But you were such a massive part of it — bigger than you were given credit for," Trump stated. "But through generations of blood, sweat, and tears and — you deserve a government that defends your interests, protects your families, and cares for our own citizens first."
>
> […]Trump also brought up a statement he made during his 2016 presidential campaign, when he urged black people to leave the Democratic Party because they had not done enough for black Americans.

That's good, but something significant happened at the summit that I wanted you to see.

Daily Caller again:

> Turning Point USA's Benny Johnson shared video of what happened when the president brought the young woman to the podium. Mahalet, once an abandoned, impoverished orphan from Ethiopia, earned smiles and cheers from the president and the gathered crowd.
>
> "I'm not really good with prayers or anything like that but I just want to say thank you, Mr. President, and I know we have a political warfare right now, but I strongly believe that it is a spiritual one as well," Mahalet said to cheers from the crowd.
>
> "And I want to make sure that I mean, I know that Americans are gonna wake up and we're gonna get back to looking to God instead of social media and we're gonna look back to Jesus because Jesus saves and this country was founded upon the Constitution, was built on Godly principles and we're gonna fight for that," she said. "And I just want to encourage you guys to pray every day for this nation."
>
> "Dear God, I'm not really good at this," Mahalet laughed. "But I just want to say thank you so much for giving us this opportunity to be in the White House. Thank you for giving us a great leader like Trump, Mr. Donald Trump, and I would like to thank you for waking up our nation."
>
> She continued, asking God for protection both for the nation and for the

> president, adding, “God, I believe that you gave him to us and I believe that he’s gonna accomplish so much more. I know you have more for us.”
>
> “Jesus I ask you to protect us and walk with us and in Jesus’ name the enemy tries to attack us every single day,” Mahalet concluded. “He tries to discourage us but he has no room. He has no room, no more, and that’s all I have to say.”

Here’s the video:

I can’t believe that happened in the White House, of all places. The secular left fascists must be furious about it.

And that’s not all, something else happened on the weekend.

Daily Wire reports:

> Music icon and fashion bigwig Kanye West has once again demonstrated that his support for President Trump stems from a deep conviction within himself rather than a momentary burst of “dragon energy.”
>
> Over the weekend, while speaking before his audience at another of his Sunday Services, this time in Salt Lake City, West argued that for black Americans, voting for a candidate based solely on skin color is a form of “mental slavery.” The rapper even lauded the Republican Party’s history on race relations, starting all the way back to when Abraham Lincoln helped free the slaves.
>
> “That’s the Republican Party that freed the slaves,” West said, as reported by the Washington Examiner.
>
> Kanye West added that he has every right to support whomever he wants for whatever reason and that his skin color should have nothing to do with it.
>
> “And we got the right, right? We got a right to our opinions, right?” he asked. “You black, so you can’t like Trump? I ain’t never made a decision only based on my color. That’s a form of slavery, mental slavery.”

I’m not quite ready to tell everyone my story yet, but I have said many times that I’m a non-white conservative. I would like to see the day when non-white voters start to think about politics with their minds, instead of with tribalism. If you look at Republican policies, they are better for non-whites than Democrat policies. You can see Democrat policies in Detroit, Baltimore, New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Cleveland, etc. These policies are not working for non-whites. We can do better than secular left socialism.

Hundreds of young transgender people seeking help to return to original sex

October 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

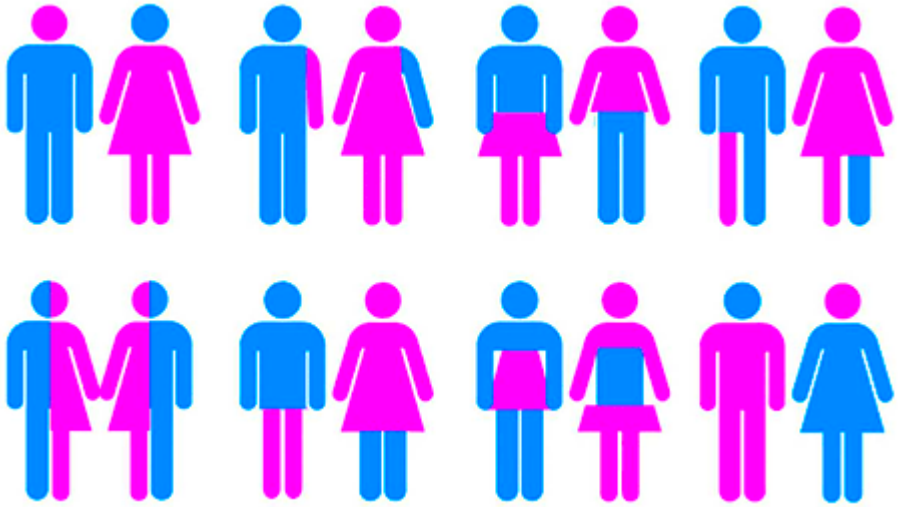

Thinking about transgenderism

I know that in my office, the people on the left are very adamant about gay rights. And they basically equate disagreement with gay marriage and transgenderism with racism. But what if some people who are in those lifestyles aren't happy with their choices, and are looking for someone to talk to about getting out of it?

Here's a story from UK Sky News about transgender people with regrets:

> Hundreds of young transgender people are seeking help to return to their original sex, a woman who is setting up a charity has told Sky News.
>
> Charlie Evans, 28, was born female but identified as male for nearly 10 years before detransitioning.
>
> The number of young people seeking gender transition is at an all-time high but we hear very little, if anything, about those who may come to regret their decision.
>
> […]Charlie detransitioned and went public with her story last year – and said she was stunned by the number of people she discovered in a similar position.
>
> "I'm in communication with 19 and 20-year-olds who have had full gender reassignment surgery who wish they hadn't, and their dysphoria hasn't been relieved, they don't feel better for it," she says.
>
> […]Charlie says she has been contacted by "hundreds" of people seeking help – 30 people alone in her area of Newcastle.

That story from Sky News didn't really drill into any details, but I found a good case study at the Daily Signal:

> Two years ago, I was a healthy, beautiful girl heading toward high school

> graduation. Before long, I turned into an overweight, pre-diabetic nightmare of a transgender man.
>
> I won't place the full blame on health care providers, because I should have known better. But they sure helped me do a lot of harm to myself—and they made a hefty buck doing it.
>
> […]The first step was to find a therapist who would write me a letter to start me on male hormones.
>
> I soon found a therapist who said she would help me, and I told her I wanted to start the hormones on my 19th birthday, which was only five weeks off. She required only a one-hour appointment each week.
>
> That's hardly enough time to get to know someone. Yet those five hours got me an official letter that unlocked the doors for me to get hormone therapy and become a "man."
>
> […]But by this time, I'd seen the promotional videos. I was convinced that my gender is what was "off," and the therapist guided me along and made me feel like a sex change is what I needed.
>
> By this point, my friends were also encouraging me to transition… Others were too afraid to say anything against it, because after all, it was 2017. I never got pushback from anyone.
>
> In reality, of course, I was not a boy, and hearing otherwise was the last thing I needed. I was simply insecure about being tomboyish and a lesbian in public.
>
> My therapist never once tried to sit down with me and figure that out.
>
> […]Not once did she tap the brakes to keep me from gender transition.

The doctor prescribed testosterone injections:

> The injections of male hormones started to have their effect, but not in the way I expected. I started gaining more and more weight. My skin started to get more and more puffy and discolored. My blood started to thicken.
>
> The doctor's office was running bloodwork for me every three months, and it actually said I was now pre-diabetic—something that was totally new for me.
>
> My gender-transition doctor said not to worry, but I decided to see another doctor for a second opinion. He said my thickening blood put me at risk for a heart attack or stroke.
>
> I did this to myself for almost a year. During that time, I gained 50 pounds and was miserable.

This part was the most interesting to me:

> I started feeling regret.
>
> Unfortunately, I was stuck: I had already declared to everyone that this was who I was. I had changed my gender, **and I had forced people to play along with**

> **it** and call me by a new name: Jaxson. **At work, men had to be OK with their former female co-worker now using the same restroom as them.**
>
> **Everyone was walking on eggshells around me—and people fell in line for fear of what might happen if they objected. (Employers are already being sued over this kind of thing, after all.)**

Indeed. People are losing their jobs when they disagree with transgenderism these days:

> But the Department for Work and Pensions panel ruled that Mackereth's biblical view of gender conflicts with fundamental rights:

> *Irrespective of our determinations above, all three heads, belief in Genesis 1:27, lack of belief in transgenderism and conscientious objection to transgenderism in our judgment are incompatible with human dignity and conflict with the fundamental rights of others, specifically here, transgender individuals.*

> "Without intellectual and moral integrity, medicine cannot function and my 30 years as a doctor are now considered irrelevant compared to the risk that someone else might be offended," Mackareth said.

Having Christian convictions about male and female is no defense to being terminated in the UK. The Democrats have already passed the "Equality Act" in the House, and that would bring this level of persecution of dissenters to America.

Why don’t men go to church anymore? The decline of male church attendance

October 9, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church sucks, that’s why men are bored there

I most recently spent half a year at a PCA church, and then another half a year at a Southern Baptist church. I attended Sunday services as well as Wednesday night Bible study. I am now looking for a new church. For now, I just look around for a sermon I like and listen to that. In this post, I’ll explain why I think men don’t like church.

There are three areas where churches fail to attract men:

1. Apologetics
2. Feminism, sex and marriage
3. Policy and current events

Apologetics

The PCA church discouraged me from becoming a member of the church because they said that conversion to Christianity due to reason and evidence was contrary to their teachings, and a “red flag”. Their words. I didn’t try to fight them on it, because they are Reformed Presbyterian, and this is their actual view. Their approach to apologetics was “pre-suppositional”, which is to say, they try to convince people to become Christians by asking them to assume that the Bible is infallible, without any argumentation or evidence. Naturally, this doesn’t work, so they aren’t trained to answer any serious questions from non-Christians. (1 Pet 3:15-16)

The Reformed Baptist SBC church is led by people like Russell Moore and Al Mohler, who take the “magic words” approach to evangelism. I.e. – they think that people become Christians just by speaking Bible verses out of context to them. So, when the atheist asks

“do you have any evidence for God’s existence?” or “do you have any evidence for Jesus’ resurrection?”, their response is to quote Bible verses to the atheist, which have nothing to do with those topics. Christianity has lost so much influence in the culture under their approach, which is not even Biblical. (Mat 12:38–41)

These approaches to evangelism are not used in any other area of human endeavor. No one replies to questions about auto mechanics, or software engineering, or gardening, or cooking, by spouting Bible verses. In literally every other area of human endeavor, the laws of logic and supporting evidence are seen as assets when making claims to know something about the world to someone who disagrees with you.

Feminism, Sex and Marriage

First wave feminism simply asked for women to be given the same liberty and opportunity as men. That was good. But later versions of destroyed all distinctions between men and women. By destroying femininity, feminism directed women away from the traditional life plan of marriage, children and home-making.

Feminism changed how women voted. Today, about 75% of young, unmarried women vote for policies like taxpayer-funded birth control, taxpayer-funded abortion, no-fault divorce, affirmative action for women in schools and in the workplace, taxpayer-funded daycare, public schools, single-mother welfare, social security, etc. These policies and programs raised tax rates, and grew government, making it easier for women to have children without having to choose a marriage-ready man she wasn’t attracted to. Instead, she could choose men she was attracted to, and just use government programs as a substitute provider if it didn’t “work out”. Thanks to feminism, we have a 42% out-of-wedlock birth rate, and it’s rising. Few female college graduates are debt-free. About 5% of women emerge from college as virgins.

Under feminism, the traditional male roles and virtues were deemed “sexist”. Women were shamed for choosing early marriage, large families, and stable men who were good at being husbands and fathers. Instead, women today chose men based on appearance. They spend their 20s and early 30s giving men who will not commit to them premarital sex. The men who are getting sex thrown at them have no interest in Judeo-Christian values, chastity, fidelity, commitment or raising children. Women mistake the men’s willingness to have sex and cohabitate as signs that they are close to marriage. But in fact, chasing the hot bad boys just eats up the chastity, youth and beauty that could have made them interesting to the marriage-minded men they scorned. Later on, they realize that they’ve wasted their 20s on bad boys, but by then they are not attractive for marriage.

What has the response been to feminism from pastors and churches? They accept the anti-male, anti-marriage policies, that came out of feminism. They accept the promiscuity, and the marriage-delaying that came from feminism. Today, pastors just try to bully the men who were passed over to marry the women who had previously rejected them, despite the higher risk of divorce caused by the women’s past behavior.

Policy and current events

Most pastors are anti-intellectual, and they believe that this is a virtue, since they are focused narrowly on what the Bible explicitly says. Because of this, they aren't able to understand which laws and policies allow Christianity and Christian families to flourish. I agree that what the Bible speaks about is of the highest importance. But we need to understand how to achieve the goals that the Bible states, as well as how to counter the forces that threaten the achievement of those goals.

For example, Christianity thrives when marriage thrives. Christianity is passed on from parents to children. Anything that threatens marriage, or interferes with parental authority, weakens the influence of Christianity. So, policies like higher taxes, no-fault divorce, SOGI laws, all harm the Christian family, while policies like lower taxes, protections for Christian businesses, protection for Christian schools (statements of faith, moral codes), etc. are all good for Christian families. But most pastors never talk about policies or laws, because they don't think about how to defend the Christian worldview, how to educate Christian children, how to promote marriage, how promote Christian moral values in the public square. Even protecting the right to life of unborn children is ignored.

As the churches lose relevance, it becomes tempting for pastors to accept what the secular left promotes as good and true and beautiful. The big one is pastors pushing for redistribution of wealth by the secular government as a solution to "poverty", even though the Bible only sanctions voluntary charity. This diminishes the cultural relevance of the church and elevates the secular government. SBC leaders like Russell Moore champion amnesty for refugees and unskilled illegal immigrants, not realizing how it will harm Christian institutions and values down the road to import large numbers of people who will eventually vote for policies like higher taxes, bigger government, etc.

Elizabeth Warren likes to paint herself as a victim, but is she telling the truth?

October 10, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

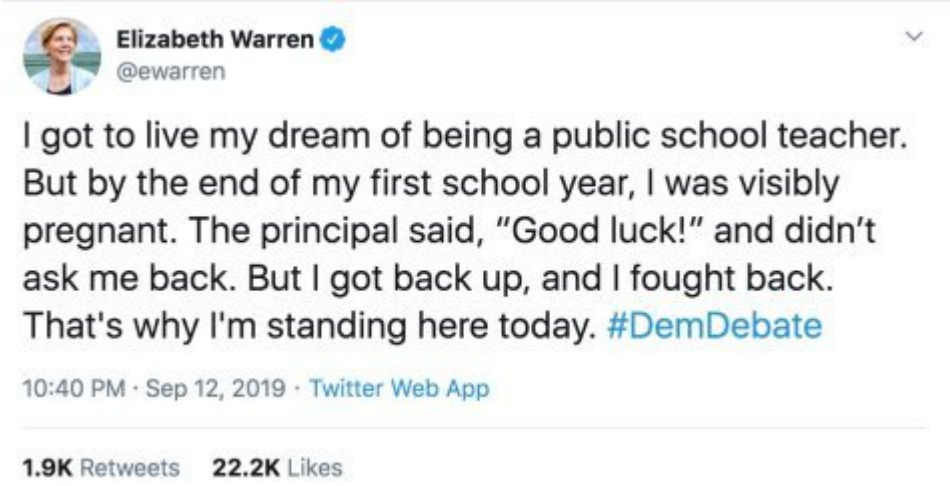

Elizabeth Warren says she was a victim of discrimination

Everyone knows that Elizabeth Warren claims Native American ancestry, and that she publicized a blood test showing that she has very little Native American ancestry. But that's not the only time she's made claims like this. In the past, she claimed that when she was pregnant and working as a teacher, that her male boss hired a replacement for her. Is she telling the truth? Let's see.

The Daily Caller explains what she's been saying:

> Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren has repeatedly claimed on the presidential campaign trail that she was pushed out of her job as a special needs teacher after one year because she was "visibly pregnant" — but she told a different story in 2007.
>
> The Democratic senator today portrays herself as a victim of discrimination; however, in 2007 she linked her departure to lacking proper credentials for a permanent teaching position.
>
> Warren said during a September presidential debate that she "made it as a special needs teacher. … But at the end of that first year, I was visibly pregnant. And back in the day, that meant that the principal said to me — wished me luck and hired someone else for the job."
>
> She similarly said at a campaign rally in May that she would "probably" still be teaching today, "but back in the day, before unions, the principal, by the time we got to the end of the first year, I was visibly pregnant. And the principal did what principals did in those days: They wished you luck, showed you the door and hired someone else for the job."

Well, did things really happen like she says they did?

Surprisingly, this one is pretty easy to decide, because there are records of hiring and firing for the county where she worked.

The Washington Free Beacon reports:

> The Riverdale Board of Education approved a second-year teaching contractfor a young Elizabeth Warren, documents show, contradicting the Democratic presidential candidate's repeated claims that she was asked not to return to teaching after a single year because she was "visibly pregnant."
>
> Minutes of an April 21, 1971, Riverdale Board of Education meeting obtained by the *Washington Free Beacon* show that the board voted unanimously on a motion to extend Warren a "2nd year" contract for a two-days-per-week teaching job. That job is similar to the one she held the previous year, her first year of teaching. Minutes from a board meeting held two months later, on June 16, 1971, indicate that Warren's resignation was "accepted with regret."
>
> […]Warren's campaign did not respond to a request for comment on the board of education records.

Just to re-cap the last time she claimed to be a victim, let's go back to the Daily Caller article from above:

> Warren has already faced scrutiny for laying claim to Native American heritage for years. For example, Warren listed herself as "American Indian" while applying for a legal license in 1986.
>
> A genetic test showed that Warren possesses a minuscule fraction of Native American DNA. Republican Florida Sen. Marco Rubio is actually more Native American than Warren is.

And she doesn't like people asking about it. She gets very angry when people ask her for evidence, and insists that people should just believe her because she claims it. Like Rachel Dolezal, that white woman who claimed to be black. For some reason, the same people who thought that a white woman claiming to be black was morally wrong are perfectly find with a white woman claiming to be a Native American. She's going to be the Democrat nominee!

It's very popular on the secular left these days to try to convince people to support leftist policies by lying about being a victim. And this will work on a large segment of the population that only listens to progressive news media, and doesn't check the facts for themselves. We should probably make a plan to have an influence on our neighbors before the election by sharing the truth about her claims of victimhood.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

October 11, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.

20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University

> physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

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- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

October 12, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

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20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

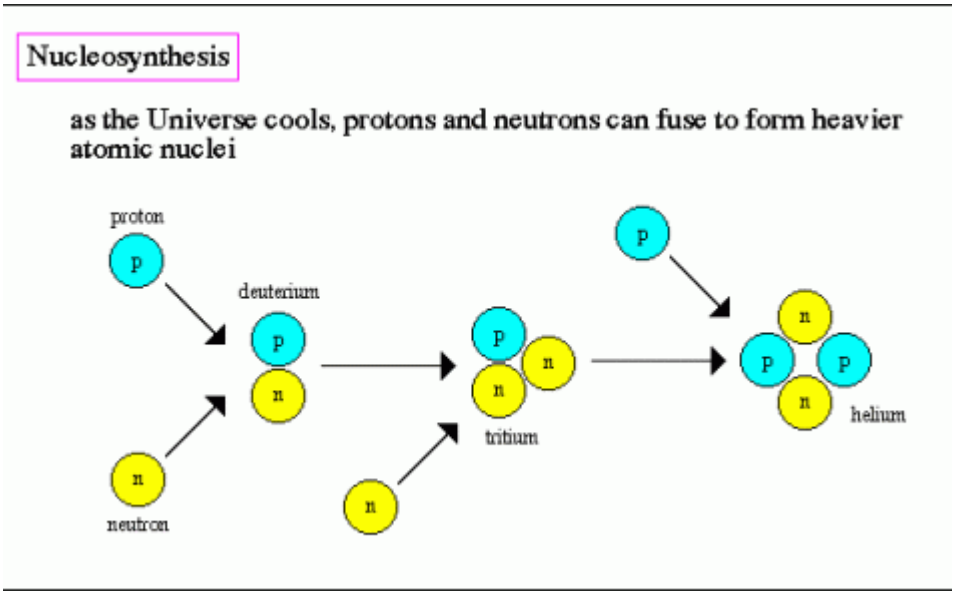

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major

> triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 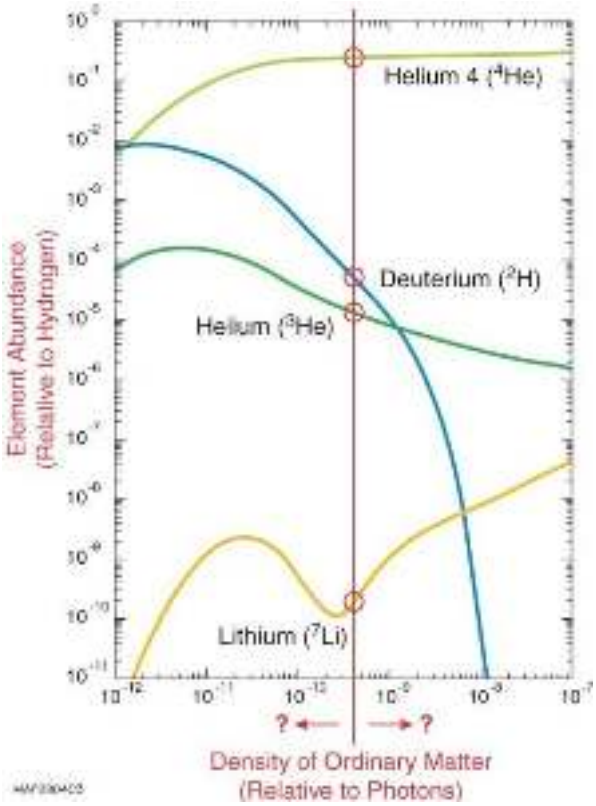
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-

> based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

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William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

October 13, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight
Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.

4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates
- You didn't need to come out on this cold night
- Craig's arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn't listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don't require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that "every effect requires a cause"
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can't see

- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn’t have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It’s too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It’s self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That’s why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg’s own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity (“I”) is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg’s responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it’s not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It’s that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the

majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said. Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the

fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

What did Democrat presidential candidates say at the CNN forum on LGBT issues?

October 14, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrat presidential candidate Joe Biden raging against Christians

I was at the National Conference on Christian Apologetics in Charlotte, North Carolina last week, so I missed reporting on the Democrat presidential candidate discussion of LGBT issues hosted by CNN. But there were a few things said by the candidates that I think that Christian voters need to know about.

Here's a clip of some of the weirdest things that were said:

And here's a story about the event from the Washington Free Beacon:

> Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D., Mass.) called her previous stance on taxpayer funds going to sex reassignment surgeries wrong.
>
> "I think that was a bad answer," Warren said, reneging on her 2012 criticism of a federal court's ruling that Massachusetts must provide sex reassignment surgery to a convicted murderer.
>
> Warren's comments follow the release of her plan for LGBTQ Americans on Thursday. Among other proposals, Warren has promised to direct the Bureau of Prisons to imprison transgender individuals in facilities in accordance with their gender identity.

Elizabeth Warren is the front-runner in the Democrat primary. But what I found the most disturbing was a comment from Robert "Beto" O'Rourke, who is from TEXAS of all places.

A different Washington Free Beacon article explains:

> **Presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke (D., Texas) said he would strip religious institutions of their tax exempt status if they oppose same-sex**

> **marriage.**
>
> "We are going to stop those who are infringing upon the human rights of our fellow Americans," the former congressman said during CNN's Equality Town Hall on Thursday.
>
> CNN host Don Lemon pressed O'Rourke on the particulars of his plan for LGBT Americans.
>
> "Do you think religious institutions like colleges, churches, charities, should they lose their tax exempt status if they oppose same sex marriage?" Lemon asked.
>
> **O'Rourke answered with an unequivocal yes, and stressed that as president, he would make punishing religious organizations a priority.**
>
> "There can be no reward, no benefit, no tax break for anyone or any institution, any organization in America that denies the full human rights and the full civil rights of every single one of us," O'Rourke said.

You might think that Joe "Bloody-Eyes" Biden would be more moderate. He spoke recently at an event put on by the Hum4n R1ghts C4mp4ign about what he would do if elected president.

Here's the report on the speech from PJ Media:

> Biden announced at an event in Ohio on Saturday that his number one priority, if elected, will be to enshrine LGBTQ rights into federal law via the Equality Act, a contentious, Orwellian effort by left-wing bullies to silence Christians who believe biblical teachings on marriage and reject the view that boys can be girls and girls can be boys.
>
> During a half-hour speech at the Hum4n R1ghts C4mp4ign's annual gala in Columbus, Ohio, Biden said, "It's wrong and it is immoral what [the Trump administration] is doing," citing efforts to bar transgender troops from the U.S. military and protect medical providers from being forced to violate their consciences.
>
> […]During his speech Biden portrayed LGBTQ individuals as victims, ignoring the fact that it is people of faith who have been the big losers in this war of ideas. Bakery owners are being sued out of existence, medical professionals are being pressured to embrace transgender ideology, and major corporations are pulling their business out of states that seek to protect religious freedom — which, by the way, is what made Mike Pence Public Enemy #1 in the eyes of the cultural revolutionaries.
>
> […]"The current vice president uses religious freedom as an excuse to license discrimination across broadly [sic] areas and denying LGBTQ Americans their basic rights. It is wrong and it is immoral what they are doing," he declared.
>
> "Just look at how much damage has been done in the past two weeks," Biden said. […]The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced plans to

> allow homeless shelters to turn away transgender people. This is beyond the scope of anything remotely what we've seen before."

To be clear, when he's talking about homeless shelters, he's talking his support for putting biological males into women's shelters, where many of the women will have suffered sexual abuse.

I really enjoyed what Ben Shapiro had to say about this CNN event last Friday:

When a political party picks a political candidate, they normally pick candidates who are the most moderate, so they can win the general election. So, when you're looking at these statements by Warren and O'Rourke and Biden, just keep in mind that these are the moderate people in the Democrat party. I wonder what the real Democrats would do to people who disagree with LGBT rights?

By the way, if you would like to know more about the HRC group, then check out my previous post on their co-founder.

I’m not a Jehovah’s Witness for the same reason I’m not a global warming alarmist

October 15, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the summer, a couple of Jehovah’s Witness ladies were going door-to-door and they stopped by my house while I was out mowing. I decided to talk to them. They asked me why I was an evangelical Protestant rather than a JW. Rather than go into a lot of theology about the Trinity and the Watchtower translation, I decided to to just tell them about the false predictions their group has made.

So, let’s just quickly review that using this article from Watchman fellowship, which quotes JW publications:

> Initially the organization taught the “battle of the Great Day of God Almighty” (Armageddon) would end in 1914. Every kingdom of the world would be overthrown in 1914 which was “God’s date” not for the beginning but “for the *end”* of the time of trouble.
>
> “…we consider it an established truth that the final end of the kingdoms of this world, and the full establishment of the Kingdom of God, will be accomplished by the end of A.D. 1914” (Watchtower founder, Charles Taze Russell, *The Time is at Hand,* p. 99).
>
> “…the ‘battle of the great day of God Almighty’ (Rev. 16:14), which will end in A.D. 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth’s present rulership, is already commenced” (*Ibid.,* p. 101).
>
> “CAN IT BE DELAYED UNTIL 1914?…our readers are writing to know if there may not be a mistake in the 1914 date. They say that they do not see how present conditions can last so long under the strain. We see no reason for changing the figures – nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God’s dates not ours. But bear in mind that the end of 1914 is not the date for the *beginning,* but for the *end* of the time of trouble” (*Watch Tower,* 15 July 1894, p. 226).

Clearly, the world did not end in 1914, and it did not end at subsequent JW predictions, either, e.g. 1925, 1975.

So, as the title of the post says that I can’t be a global warming alarmist for the same reason I can’t be a Jehovah’s Witness: failed predictions.

Here’s an excellent article from Daily Signal by famous black economist Walter Williams, who explains the connection:

> As reported in The New York Times (Aug. 1969) Stanford University biologist Paul Ehrlich warned: “The trouble with almost all environmental problems is that by the time we have enough evidence to convince people, you’re dead. We must

> realize that unless we're extremely lucky, everybody will disappear in a cloud of blue steam in 20 years."
>
> In 2000, David Viner, a senior research scientist at University of East Anglia's climate research unit, predicted that in a few years winter snowfall would become "a very rare and exciting event. Children just aren't going to know what snow is."
>
> In 2004, the U.S. Pentagon warned President George W. Bush that major European cities would be beneath rising seas. Britain will be plunged into a Siberian climate by 2020. In 2008, Al Gore predicted that the polar ice cap would be gone in a mere 10 years. A U.S. Department of Energy study led by the U.S. Navy predicted the Arctic Ocean would experience an ice-free summer by 2016.
>
> In May 2014, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius declared during a joint appearance with Secretary of State John Kerry that "we have 500 days to avoid climate chaos."
>
> Peter Gunter, professor at North Texas State University, predicted in the spring 1970 issue of The Living Wilderness:

> Demographers agree almost unanimously on the following grim timetable: by 1975 widespread famines will begin in India; these will spread by 1990 to include all of India, Pakistan, China and the Near East, Africa. By the year 2000, or conceivably sooner, South and Central America will exist under famine conditions. … By the year 2000, thirty years from now, the entire world, with the exception of Western Europe, North America, and Australia, will be in famine.

> Ecologist Kenneth Watt's 1970 prediction was, "If present trends continue, the world will be about four degrees colder for the global mean temperature in 1990, but eleven degrees colder in the year 2000." He added, "This is about twice what it would take to put us into an ice age."

Williams concludes:

> Today's wild predictions about climate doom are likely to be just as true as yesteryear's. The major difference is today's Americans are far more gullible and more likely to spend trillions fighting global warming. And the only result is that we'll be much poorer and less free.

We have known for decades that the Earth's temperatures were much warmer during the "Medieval Warming Period", hundreds of years ago. But some people are just having irrational fears about overpopulation, resource shortages, etc. and so they will promote nonsense to try to scare people into doing what they want. World history is full of pious-sounding attention-seeking hoaxsters who try to scare the gullible masses into giving them money and/or power. It's not new.

New study: outstanding student loans reduce a woman's odds of marrying

October 16, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

MAJORS WITH HIGH MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR WOMEN*

First Field of Degree 5% code	Percent Female	Median Female Earnings
Pharmacy Pharmaceutical Sciences	42	100,000
Information Sciences	26	75,000
Chemical Engineering	23	72,000
Computer Science	22	70,000
Electrical Engineering	7	70,000
Mechanical Engineering	7	70,000
Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering	17	67,000
Computer Engineering	14	67,000
Business Economics	30	64,000
Civil Engineering	13	62,000

** Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.*

Top 10 majors with the highest median earnings for women

First, the study, which was published in *Demographic Research.*

Abstract:

> BACKGROUND
>
> With increasing levels of student loan debt, the path to economic stability may be less smooth than it was for earlier generations of college graduates. This paper explores this emerging trend by assessing whether or not student loan debt influences family formation.
>
> OBJECTIVE
>
> The objective of this study is to examine whether student loan debt delays marriage in young adulthood, whether or not the relationship between student loan debt and marriage differs for women and for men, and if this relationship attenuates during the years immediately after college graduation.
>
> METHODS We estimate a series of discrete-time hazard regression models predicting the odds of first marriage as a function of time-varying student loan debt balance, using a nationally representative sample of bachelor's degree recipients from the 1993 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (N = 9,410).

> **RESULTS We find that the dynamics of loan repayment are related to marriage timing for women, but not for men. Specifically, an increase of $1,000 in student loan debt is associated with a reduction in the odds of first marriage by 2 percent a month among female bachelor degree recipients during the first four years after college graduation. This relationship attenuates over time.**
>
> CONCLUSION Our study lends support to the proposition that the financial weight of monthly loan repayments impedes family formation in the years immediately following college graduation – however, only for women. This finding questions traditional models of gender specialization in family formation that emphasize the economic resources of men.

I think that a woman who is serious about studying something that will allow her to get a job related to her field so she can quickly pay off her loans in the first few years is a very good sign of RESPECT for a man, and for his role as primary/sole provider. Men choose tough majors / trades for a reason, and they do tough jobs for a reason. When a woman chooses something hard to study and then chooses a hard job to do to pay off her loans, it's showing to her man that she respects what he is doing to provide for the family. I think this is something that parents need to encourage young women to do, but so often parents focus too much on spiritual / emotional concerns instead of practical wisdom when leading their kids.

When a woman asks a man to work to pay for the marriage – with all the costs of home, furniture, diapers, tuition, etc. – she is asking him for a commitment to work until he is 65. That is a lot to ask, and it is very hard to accept this from a woman who doesn't understand the difficulty of earning and saving money.

So what do I recommend to a woman? I recommend she do a STEM degree, pay off her debts, guard her chastity, marry young when she is fertile, have a few years of work to pay off student loans and get used to the workplace, demonstrate ability in apologetics and mentoring others, etc. A wife needs to have a lot more skills than just being pretty and young. There are things she has to do in the marriage – things that take preparation. The more accustomed she is to hard work and self-sacrifice, the easier she will take to her role in the marriage. Women who are used to having to do hard things that they don't feel like doing make the best wives and mothers. It's something that a woman can grow into, if she lets herself be challenged to grow.

My friend Amy is fond of telling me that people usually adapt to their friends. So if all your friends are very spiritual and impractical, and they don't have jobs or savings, then chances are you'll be like them, too. To get out of debt, don't take financial advice from people who, in their own lives, show no evidence of knowing what to study, how to find a job, how to save money, and so on. Instead of pushing away the people who "rain on your parade" with wisdom, grab them and keep them close. Watch what they do. Talk to them about your finances. Rely on them to hold you accountable for choosing a good major, updating your resume, and continuously growing your salary, through annual raises or job

changes. That’s how you get better.

I don’t say these things in order to make women feel bad, or limit their freedom unnecessarily. I tell women to make good decisions to prepare for marriage, to practice self-denial and self-sacrifice, to choose the right men, to not be scared away by strong providers and men with moral and religious convictions. Although on one level, women can be scared off by men who have firm and definite convictions, they need to understand that these men are the most reliable men to marry. Men who don’t make demands on women usually don’t respond well to demands that women make on them. A strict moral and theological framework can seem scary to a woman – she might feel scared that she could be rejected. But it’s exactly these convictions that ground a man’s ability to keep loving her, to stick with her, and to encourage and support her as she grows.

Instead of being frightened by men who ask her to do good things, she should view it as an asset, not a liability. And the more she listens to his leading and grows, the more independent and capable she will be. She will *feel better* about doing hard things and playing a role. Better than she would feel about always choosing the easy way and then finding herself without accomplishments. Demanding men can be bad, but not if the demands they make are to build the woman up. The demand that a woman be serious about paying her debts with a real plan might seem scary to some women, but the study shows that this is good advice for her to be more attractive – to *any man* who might want to marry her.

Democrat presidential candidate proposes door-to-door confiscation of legally obtained firearms

October 17, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

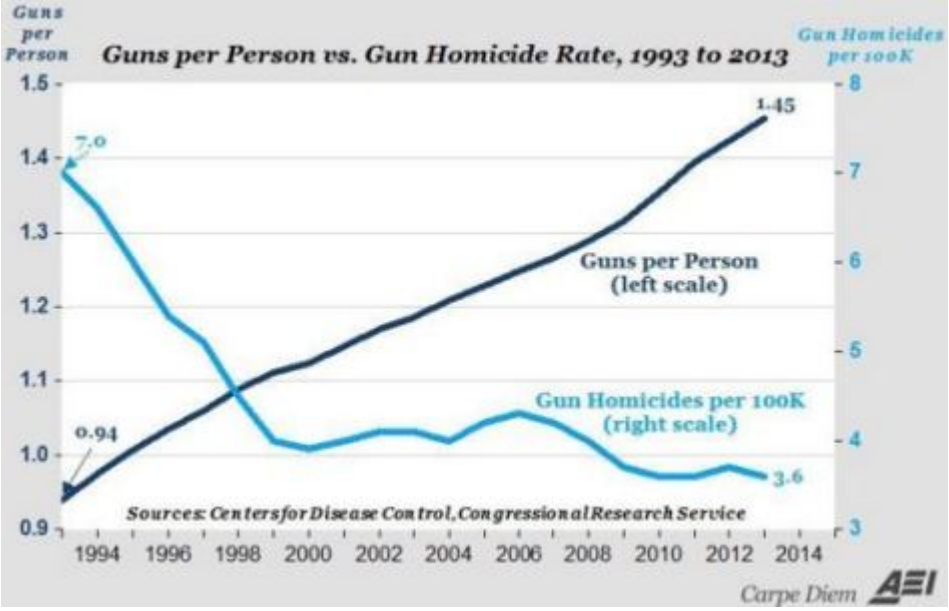

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

So, there was a debate on Tuesday night, and something interesting was said by Robert O'Rourke. He presented a solution to violent crime. Instead of proposing tougher sentences on criminals who commit crimes with weapons, he proposed sending armed policemen to the homes of *law-abiding* gun owners and confiscating their means of self-defense from armed criminals.

The Daily Caller reports:

> Democratic presidential hopeful Beto O'Rourke conceded Wednesday that his proposed gun control plan might result in sending police officers door to door to enforce compliance.
>
> After weeks of insisting that his plan — a mandatory buyback program for "assault weapons" such as AR-15s and AK-47s — would not lead to door-to-door confiscation, O'Rourke admitted to "Morning Joe" host Joe Scarborough that failure to comply would have to result in "a visit by law enforcement to recover that firearm."

Wow. So Democrats have more concern about the firearms of law-abiding gun-owners than they do about illegally-obtained firearms used by criminals to commit crimes. I can guarantee you that if you stiffened the penalties for using weapons during a crime, you would get fewer people using weapons to commit crimes. But Democrats don't want to target criminals. They want to disarm the victims of criminals.

So let's just take a quick look at some stories of law-abiding gun owners using their firearms to defend themselves. Remember, these stories of self-defense would become

impossible if Democrats are elected.

The Daily Signal reports on self-defense stories from just last month alone – here are a few:

> Sept. 1, San Antonio, Texas: A young woman shot and injured a man who was trying to break into her home through a back window at 2 a.m., police said. The man later was determined to be the woman's ex-boyfriend, though she did not know who the intruder was at the time she fired.
>
> Sept. 3, Houston: After a woman parked her vehicle outside her home in the early hours of the morning, two men approached the driver's side window and attempted to rob her. The woman drew her firearm from her purse and fired two rounds at the men, who ran away, police said. One would-be robber was wounded in the process and later was charged with aggravated robbery. The woman told local reporters: "I got the gun for that purpose, but I never thought I would really have to use it. . . . I saved my own life."
>
> Sept. 8, Virginia Beach, Virginia: A Florida man was shot and paralyzed by his stepdaughter after he broke into his estranged wife's Virginia home and assaulted both the wife and stepdaughter with a wrench. Investigators said they later found garbage bags, zip ties, duct tape, and various weapons in the man's car, along with a journal detailing his plans to kill his wife.
>
> Sept. 11, Cherokee County, Georgia: A homeowner used her firearm to defend herself against a man who started banging on her doors and windows. The homeowner did not know the man and yelled at him to leave, and he temporarily retreated. The man returned and became even more aggressive, threatening to kill the homeowner, who had armed herself with a firearm. When the man began to approach the homeowner, she shot and killed him, police said.
>
> Sept. 19, Miami-Dade County, Florida: A lunch break for an armed Good Samaritan took a heroic turn when she intervened to stop a brutal robbery and assault occurring outside a Popeyes restaurant. The woman fired her handgun at an assailant as he pummeled a bleeding and helpless victim lying on the concrete, police said. The rounds missed the assailant, but the shots were enough to make him run away. The woman told reporters this was the first time she had fired her gun outside a gun range, and that although it was "an intense moment," she just "had to stop" the assailant. "I just had to save the guy's life," she said. "That's all I did was try to save someone's life." Police later arrested the assailant.
>
> Sept. 26, Redding, California: A holder of a concealed carry permit helped intervene in a kidnapping after it became clear to him that another customer at a gas station was holding a woman against her will. Earlier in the evening, the man had assaulted the woman's sister before forcing the woman into his car and driving off, police said. The permit holder noticed the woman was in distress, confronted the man, and held him at gunpoint until law enforcement arrived.

When I see Democrats talking about taking the legal firearms of law-abiding people, the first thing that comes into my mind is that they have armed security, and live in very wealthy neighborhoods with gates and security guards and security systems. They'll be fine. Maybe that's why they're so care-free about depriving you of your right to defend yourself and your loved ones from criminals.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by

economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

What do research studies say about the bond between fathers and daughters?

October 18, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas senator Ted Cruz, his wife Heidi Cruz and their two daughters

Many people today think that biological fathers are not essential for raising daughters. In fact, we even support this view by passing no-fault divorce laws, single-mother welfare laws, and by opposing shared parenting laws. The story goes that children do fine without their biological father in the home. Having children is something that women decide to do, and the man is superfluous. So I thought it might be a good idea to take a look at the research.

Here is a recent article from the centrist Institute for Family Studies.

It says:

> The dynamic between fathers and their daughters has been characterized by one expert as the most "fragile and unstable" when compared to other parent-child relationships.[1] It can be further described as one of the most powerful and vital relationships to individuals, communities, and nations. For instance, fathers have a profound impact on their daughters' body image,[2] clinical depression, eating disorders,[3] self-esteem, and life satisfaction,[4] to name but a few.
>
> But of all the unique contributions a father makes in his daughter's life, perhaps there is none of greater significance than in the area of sexual development and activity and romantic relationships.
>
> - Numerous studies have discovered female pubertal timing occurs later in girls whose fathers are consistently present in their life.[5]
> - An extensive body of research has revealed that early pubertal maturation in girls is associated with a variety of negative biological, psychological, and

> social outcomes, including, mood disorders,[6] substance abuse,[7] adolescent pregnancy,[8] and a variety of cancers of the reproductive system.[9]
> • Fatherless daughters are seven times more likely to become pregnant as teens.[10]
>
> […]The conditions in our culture of both rampant fatherlessness and sexual promiscuity are incompatible with forming secure and healthy relationships with boys and with establishing stable families for the next generation. A young girl's sexual development can significantly outpace her neurological and emotional development—the very resources needed to guide her sexual choices.
>
> Herein lies the danger. Much of our culture today promotes sexual activity but void of healthy attachment or true intimacy. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that high levels of father involvement (regardless of dad's marital status) are predictive of high levels of intimacy, commitment, and trust in young female adults' romantic relationships; whereas low levels of father involvement are predictive of the opposite.[11]

And:

> How a father treats both his daughter and her mother can help a young woman feel safe and secure in her relationships with the boys and men in her life, including her future husband. Family scientists and evolutionary psychologists have discovered that girls appear to be born with an emotional, relational, and evolutionary void that a father is designated to fill. If left vacant, girls will be more likely to seek to fill it in with other, unhealthier substitutes. The father-daughter relationship is the one that best teaches young women about true love and intimacy, self-worth, and respect.
>
> **Professor Linda Nielsen summarized this in one profound sentence: "[T]he father has the greater impact on the daughter's ability to trust, enjoy, and relate well to the males in her life."**

So, a father's love keeps her from getting into relationships with boys before the boys are ready to commit to her. By the way, I don't think that boys should even be allowed to TALK to girls about a relationship, unless they have a STEM degree, and two years of private sector work experience. I really *hate* when unemployed, penniless boys waste a girl's time when they can't afford to commit to her. People think I am pretty rough on women, but I really am much meaner to men who don't have STEM degrees and gapless resumes. (I guess a skilled trade would work as well, in place of the STEM degree – something like electrician, for example).

Anyway, back to the research. When a woman is deciding which men to have sex with, she has to be thinking of more than just her own needs. She has to choose a man who is going to stick around long enough to raise her daughters, so that they grow up with the confidence to resist the advances of boys who aren't ready to commit. To be pro-woman means to be pro-daughter, and that means that women need to be persuaded to be

careful about the choice of sex partner, and the timing of sexual activity. This is why people used to keep sex for marriage in the past: to protect children by making sure that they would get the stability and engagement they need from their parents.

Also, I have talked about the research about father-son bond in a different post.

If you want to do right for your children, then you need to control yourself and make wise choices. And if you're struggling to make good choices, then don't leave it up to your emotions and peer approval. Disregard your emotions. Disregard peer approval. Instead, let your decision-making be guided by your Christian convictions, and strengthened with scientific evidence. The Bible tells you not to have sex before you're married, and science tells you why this is good policy. The Bible gives you the goals, and science tells you how to how the world works, so you know how to make plans that will make sure you are never in a place where you are pressured to do the wrong thing. The more science you pack into your head, the easier it will be for you to convince yourself to do the right thing, and to convince your partner to do the right thing. Science takes moral decision-making outside the realm of feelings and opinions.

And if your partner says "I don't care about the needs of our future children", then you have a good reason to dump them and move on. You can't be in a relationship with someone who thinks that children's needs are less important than adult desires. In fact, the whole design for relationships should start with what children need from the marriage and parents, and work backward from there to the obligations on the man and the woman. And men and women ought to discuss this. What are we trying to achieve with this relationship anyway? And what is the right way to achieve it? This is where the research comes in – it shows you how to do it right.

Research from the Heritage Foundation

- Marriage: Still the Safest Place For Women and Children
- Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty

Jeff Hester debates William Lane Craig on the topic “Is Belief in God Rational in a Scientific Age?”

October 19, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an accurate protrayal of what went down in this debate

I was very excited to see a recent debate by Christian philosopher William Lane Craig against atheist astronomer Jeff Hester. When I summarize a debate, I do a fair, objective summary if the atheist is intelligent and informed, as with Peter Millican, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong or Austin Dacey. But the following summary is rated VS for Very Snarky, and you’ll soon see why.

The debate itself starts at 29 minutes:

The audio is very poor.

Dr. Craig’s opening speech

Dr. Craig went first, and he presented 4 arguments, as well as the ontological argument which I won’t summarize or discuss. He later added another argument for theism from the existence of the universe that does not require an origin of the universe.

A1. Counter-examples

Theists who are elite scientists cannot be “irrational”, for example: Allan Sandage, Gustav Tammann, George Ellis, Don Page, Christopher Isham

A2. Kalam cosmological argument

1. Whatever begins to exist requires a cause.

2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe requires a cause.

A3. Fine-tuning of the universe to permit complex intelligent life

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is due either to physical necessity, chance or design.
2. It is not due to physical necessity or chance.
3. Therefore it is due to design.

A4. Moral argument

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.
2. Objective moral values and duties do exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Dr. Hester's opening speech

Dr. Hester went second and presented two arguments which both committed the genetic fallacy, a logical fallacy that makes the arguments have no force.

Hester starts his opening speech by asserting that Albert Einstein was irrational, because he denied quantum mechanics.

Hester explains that he became an atheist at 15. This would have been before the evidence for the origin of the universe became widespread, before we had very many examples of fine-tuning, before the discovery that the origin of life problem is a problem of the origin of complex, specifed information, etc. What kind of reasons can a 15-year-old child have for becoming an atheist? It's hard to say, but I would suspect that they were psychological. Children often desire autonomy from moral authorities. They want to be free to pursue pleasure. They don't want to be thought of as superstitious and morally straight by their non-religious peers.

Later on in the debate, Hester volunteers that he hated his father because his father professed to be a Christian, but he was focused on his career and making money. In the absence of any arguments for atheism, it's reasonable to speculate that Hester became an atheist for psychological reasons. And as we'll see, just like the typical 15-year-old child, he has no rational basis for atheism. What's astonishing is how he continues to hold to the atheism of his teens when it has been falsified over and over by scientific discoveries in the years since.

Dr. Craig's deductive arguments do have premises that reach a conclusion through the laws of logic. On the contrary, he just asserts that God exists as his conclusion, and then says that this assertion is the best explanation of a gap in our scientific knowledge. Some of the gaps in our scientific knowledge he uses in his arguments are: 1) he doesn't understand why the Sun moves through the sky, so God exists, 2) he doesn't understand why the wind blows, so God exists.

What counts as "rational" are things that have not been disproved. The progress of science has shown that the universe did not need a casuse in order to begin to exist, and

also there is no cosmic fine-tuning.

A1. The success of evolution in the software industry proves that there is no God

All hardware and software is developed using genetic algorithms that exactly match Darwinian processes. All the major computer companies like Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Apple, etc. are just generating products using mutation and selection to evolve products over long periods of time. If you look over a typical software engineering degree, it's all about Darwinian evolution, and nothing about design patterns, object-oriented design, etc.

This widespread use of evolution in the software industry undermines all of the arguments for God's existence. Evolution caused the origin of the universe. Evolution explains why the universe is fine-tuned for life. Evolution, which requires replication already be in place in order to work, explains the origin of the first self-replicating organism.

A2. Theist's view of the world is just a result of peer pressure from their tribes

All of Dr. Craig's logical arguments supported by scientific evidence don't matter, because he got them from a primitive tribe of Christians that existed 2000 years ago. Everyone gets their view of origins, morality, meaning in life, death, etc. from their tribes. Except me, I'm getting my beliefs from reason and evidence because I'm a smart atheist. I don't have an atheist tribe in the university that would sanction me if I disagreed with nonsense like homosexuality is 100% genetic, transgenderism, man-made catastrophic global warming, fully naturalistic evolution, aliens seeded the Earth with life, infanticide is moral, socialism works, overpopulation will cause mass starvation, nuclear winter, etc. Also, my argument isn't the genetic fallacy at all, because smart atheists don't commit elementary logical fallacies that even a first-year philosophy student would know.

A3. Our brains evolved so our rational faculties are unreliable, so God does not exist

The logical reasoning that Dr. Craig uses to argue for theism are all nonsense, because human minds just have an illusion of consciousness, an illusion of rationality, and an illusion of free will. Everything Dr. Craig says is just deluded nonsense caused by chemicals in his brain. He has cognitive biases the undermine all his logical arguments and scientific evidence. He just invented an imaginary friend with super powers. Except me, I'm a smart atheist, so I actually have real consciousness, real reasoning powers, and no cognitive biases. Also, my argument isn't the genetic fallacy at all, because my arguments would not get an F in a first-year philosophy course.

Discussion

I'm not going to summarize everything in the discussion, or the question and answer time. I'm just going to list out some of the more interesting points.

Dr. Craig asks him how it is that he has managed to escape these biases from tribalism, projection, etc. He talks about how brave and noble atheist rebels are. The moderator

asks him the same question. He repeats how brave and noble atheist rebels are.

Dr. Hester is asked whether he affirms a causeless beginning of the universe or an eternal universe. He replies he states that the universe came into being without a cause, because causality doesn't apply to the beignning of the universe. He also asserts with explanation that Borde, Guth and Vilenkin have undermined the kalam cosmological argument, mentioning a web site.

Dr. Craig replied to this phantom argument after the debate on Facebook:

> Speaking of which, although I haven't had time to consult the website mentioned by Dr. Hester concerning Guth and Vilenkin on the kalam cosmological argument, I know the work of these two gentlemen well enough to predict what one will find there. Since neither one is yet a theist (so much, by the way, for the dreaded confirmation bias!), they have to reject at least one of the premises of the kalam cosmological argument.
>
> Guth wants to deny premiss (2) The universe began to exist–for which Vilenkin has rebuked him. Guth would avoid the implications of their theorem by holding our hope for the Carroll-Chen model, which denies the single condition of the BGV theorem. This gambit is, however, unsuccessful, since the Carroll-Chen model does so only by positing a reversal of the arrow of time at some point in the finite past. This is not only highly non-physical, but fails to avert the universe's beginning, since that time-reversed, mirror universe is no sense in our past. The model really postulates two different universes with a common beginning.
>
> So Vilenkin is forced to deny premiss (1) Whatever begins to exists has a cause. He says that if the positive energy associated with matter exactly counterbalances the negative energy associated with gravity, then the net sum of the energy is zero, and so the conservation of energy is not violated if the universe pops into being from nothing! But this is like saying that if your assets exactly balance your debts, then your net worth is zero, and so there does not need to be a cause of your financial situation! As Christopher Isham points out, there still needs to be "ontic seeding" in order to create the positive and negative energy in the first place, even if on balance their sum is zero.

Dr. Hester is asked how he explains the evidence for fine-tuning. He literally says that "Life is fine-tuned for the Universe", i.e. – that evolution will create living beings regardless of the laws of physics, constants, etc. For example, he thinks that in a universe with a weaker stong force, which would have only hyrogen atoms, evolution would still evolve life. And in a universe that recollapses in a hot fireball, and never forms stars or planets, evolution would produce life. Physicist Luke Barnes, who was commenting on the YouTube chat for the video, said this:

> "Life is fine-tuned for the Universe" – complete ignorance of the field. Read a book.

Hester tries to cite Jeremy England to try to argue for life appearing regardless of what

the laws of physics are. Barnes comments:

> Jeremy England's work supports no such claim.

Hester appealed to the multiverse, which faces numerous theoretical and observational difficulties. For example, the multiverse models have to have some mechanism to spawn different universes, but these mechanisms themselves require fine-tuning, as Robin Collins argues. And the multiverse is falsified observationally by the Boltzmann brains problem. It was so ironic that Hester claimed to be so committed to testing theories. The mutliverse theory cannot be tested experimentally, and must be accepted on faith.

Dr. Hester is asked how he grounds morality on atheism. He says there are no objective moral values and duties. He instead lists off a bunch of Christian beliefs which he thinks are objectively wrong. Even his statements about these moral issues are misinformed. For example, he asserts that homosexuality is causally determined by biology, but this is contradicted by identical twin studies that have a rate of 20-40% where both twins are gay.

Dr. Hester is asked about free will, which is required in order to make moral choices. He denies the existence of free will, which undermines his earlier statements about morality. Morality is only possible if humans can make free choices to act in accordance with a moral standard. So, he claims that Christians are immoral, then he claims that they have no freedom to act other than they do.

Dr. Hester also volunteered that his father believed in the prosperity gospel, and tithed in order to be rewarded with money by God. Dr. Craig immediately says "no wonder you're in rebellion against Christianity". Indeed.

Dr. Hester is asked about his view that human beings are unable to unable to perceive the world objectively. How is he able to perceive the world objectively, when all of the rest of us are unable to? His response is that he is just smarter than everyone else because his ideas have never been falsified by testing.

Scoring the debate

Dr. Craig's 5 arguments went unrefuted. Hester's argument about genetic algorithms was ludicrous to anyone who understands software engineering. His arguments about tribalism and unreliable mental faculties were self-refuting, and committed the genetic fallcy. At several points, Hester denied mainstream science in favor of untested and untestable speculations. It was the worst defeat of atheism I have ever witnessed. He was uninformed and arrogant. He didn't know what he was talking about, and he tried to resort to speculative, mystical bullshit to cover up his failure to meet Dr. Craig's challenge.

Dennis Prager explains what feminism has achieved for women

October 20, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man and woman working on a computer upgrade

Dennis Prager has summarized many of my viewpoints on this blog in a tiny, tiny little article. He calls it "Four Legacies of Feminism".

Read the whole glorious thing and bask in its wisdom!

Full text:

> As we approach the 50th anniversary of the publication of Betty Friedan's feminist magnum opus, *The Feminine Mystique*, we can have a perspective on feminism that was largely unavailable heretofore.
>
> And that perspective doesn't make feminism look good. Yes, women have more opportunities to achieve career success; they are now members of most Jewish and Christian clergy; women's college sports teams are given huge amounts of money; and there are far more women in political positions of power. But the prices paid for these changes — four in particular — have been great, and outweigh the gains *for women*, let alone for men and for society.
>
> 1) The first was the feminist message to young women to have sex just as men do. There is no reason for them to lead a different sexual life than men, they were told. Just as men can have sex with any woman solely for the sake of physical pleasure, so, too, women ought to enjoy sex with any man just for the fun of it. The notion that the nature of women is to hope for at least the possibility of a long-term commitment from a man they sleep with has been dismissed as sexist nonsense.
>
> As a result, vast numbers of young American women had, and continue to have,

what are called “hookups”; and for some of them it is quite possible that no psychological or emotional price has been paid. But the majority of women who are promiscuous do pay prices. One is depression. *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat recently summarized an academic study on the subject: “A young woman’s likelihood of depression rose steadily as her number of partners climbed and the present stability of her sex life diminished.”

Long before this study, I had learned from women callers to my radio show (an hour each week — the “Male-Female Hour” — is devoted to very honest discussion of sexual and other man-woman issues) that not only did female promiscuity coincide with depression, it also often had lasting effects on women’s ability to enjoy sex. Many married women told me that in order to have a normal sexual relationship with their husband, they had to work through the negative aftereffects of early promiscuity — not trusting men, feeling used, seeing sex as unrelated to love, and disdaining their husband’s sexual overtures. And many said they still couldn’t have a normal sex life with their husband.

2) The second awful legacy of feminism has been the belief among women that they could and should postpone marriage until they developed their careers. Only then should they seriously consider looking for a husband. Thus, the decade or more during which women have the best chance to attract men is spent being preoccupied with developing a career. Again, I cite woman callers to my radio show over the past 20 years who have sadly looked back at what they now, at age 40, regard as 20 wasted years. Sure, these frequently bright and talented women have a fine career. But most women are not programmed to prefer a great career to a great man and a family. They feel they were sold a bill of goods at college and by the media. And they were. It turns out that most women without a man do worse in life than fish without bicycles.

3) The third sad feminist legacy is that so many women — and men — have bought the notion that women should work outside the home that for the first time in American history, and perhaps world history, vast numbers of children are not primarily raised by their mothers or even by an extended family member. Instead they are raised for a significant part of their childhood by nannies and by workers at daycare centers. Whatever feminists may say about their only advocating choices, everyone knows the truth: Feminism regards work outside the home as more elevating, honorable, and personally productive than full-time mothering and making a home.

4) And the fourth awful legacy of feminism has been the demasculinization of men. For all of higher civilization’s recorded history, becoming a man was defined overwhelmingly as taking responsibility for a family. That notion — indeed the notion of masculinity itself — is regarded by feminism as the worst of sins: patriarchy.

Men need a role, or they become, as the title of George Gilder’s classic book on

> single men describes them: *Naked Nomads*. In little more than a generation, feminism has obliterated roles. If you wonder why so many men choose not to get married, the answer lies in large part in the contemporary devaluation of the husband and of the father — of men as men, in other words. Most men want to be honored in some way — as a husband, a father, a provider, as an accomplished something; they don't want merely to be "equal partners" with a wife.
>
> In sum, thanks to feminism, very many women slept with too many men for their own happiness; postponed marriage too long to find the right man to marry; are having hired hands do much of the raising of their children; and find they are dating boy-men because manly men are so rare.
>
> Feminism exemplifies the truth of the saying, "Be careful what you wish for — you may get it."

I wish I could add something to this, but I can't because every time I think of something to add, he says it in the next sentence. I think it's so important for women to read about feminism, and to understand how women used to approach men and marriage before feminism. Women today don't realize how their priorities have been changed from older generations, because of the promotion of feminism in the culture. Women today ought to take a step back and think about what works for them in the long term. What kind of man is the best kind? What do men want out of marriage? What should men and women do now to prepare for marriage?

If you like Prager's short essay, then this medium essay arguing against feminism authored by Barbara Kay would be nice follow-up.

Non-Christian historian Bart Ehrman attended a Christian apologetics conference

October 21, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

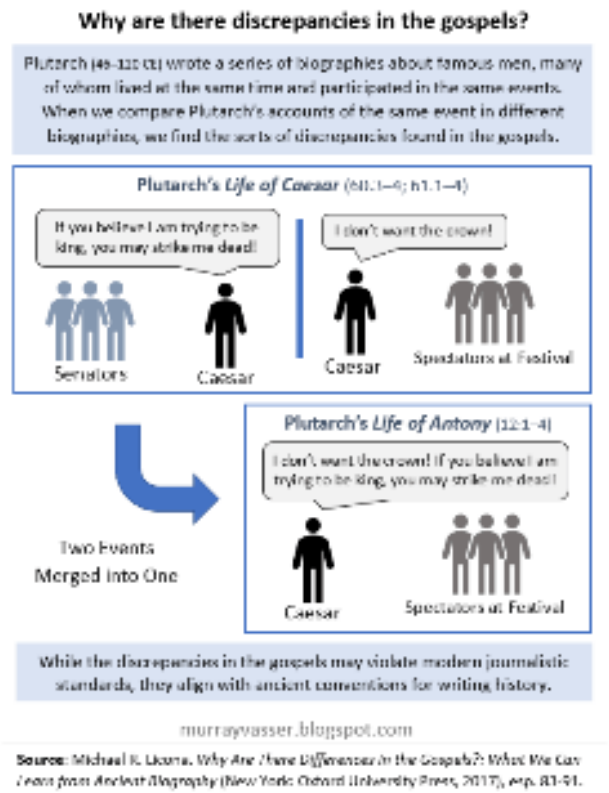

Are we allowed to look at the Bible as a historical document?

My summaries of Bart Ehrman's debates mock him for being a rigid Moody Bible Institute fundamentalist whose blind faith was shattered by 1) minor Bible difficulties, 2) disappointment that God allows good people to suffer, 3) wanting to look smart to his professors, and 4) the desire to make lots of money selling apostasy porn to the New York Times set. But maybe he is not as bad as I thought.

Consider this blog post in which Ehrman reports on his experiences at a recent apologetics conference, where he met with a few of the more effective and engaging evangelical scholars.

He writes:

> I spent yesterday at a conservative evangelical apologetics conference outside of Chicago and, as you might imagine, I was the odd person out. But I was very well received, people were overwhelmingly gracious and receptive and openly grateful that I had come. There were jokes about being thrown into the lions' den, but it didn't really feel like it. It felt like I was speaking to a crowd that wanted to hear, respected what I said, and simply fundamentally disagreed. **In particular there was a group of current Moody Bible Institute students there; really interesting, interested, and good humored, and we had a great time together.**

> **What I was most interested in was how Christian apologetics – the intelligent "defense" of the claims of the faith – has changed in the many years since I was involved in the movement, shifted in ways I never would have imagined, very much away from our old fundamentalist assumptions and assertions into a far more reasonable and intellectually sustainable form of discourse that requires actual research and knowledge rather than hard-core theological assertion based on completely dubious premises.**
>
> […]The issue at the conference were the "Contradictions" in the New Testament. How does one deal with apparent or real contradictions and still remain committed to an evangelical view of Scripture as inspired by God and in some sense "inerrant"?
>
> […]The discussions yesterday (well, most of them) were at a much, much higher academic/intellectual level than ones I've had, say, during a recent debate on the blog. I think some of the positions staked out yesterday were utterly, demonstrably, mind-bogglingly simply WRONG. But they were advanced with the kind of learning and historical knowledge that we simply didn't see back in my apologetics days in the mid-1970s.
>
> Roughly speaking I was hearing two positions, neither of them ones we were taught and advanced in the day (in my circles). One of the two strikes me as completely tenable, though again, only in a sense.
>
> Our old position, back then, was that any contradiction in the New Testament Gospels (or the Bible, for that matter; but yesterday we were talking only about the Gospels) can in fact be reconciled if you look closely and deeply enough at the matter. ANY contradiction. To be sure, there may be places where you aren't sure HOW to reconcile them, but in principle they are all reconcilable in one way or another.
>
> And, as a corollary, everything the Bible says is literally true. There are no mistakes, of any kind, whatsoever, in the Bible.
>
> […]None of the three speakers yesterday has that view, even though they call the Bible inerrant and affirm that it is completely reliable. Their views strike me as odd – that they can admit there are, technically speaking, incorrect statements in the Bible but that it is still without error. But they consider my old view (no mistakes of any kind whatsoever) as a dated kind of fundamentalism that is simply not held by thinking Christians any more, and, even more interesting, that my objections to their views are rooted in fundamentalist views that I myself don't accept but that I'm assuming in order to attack their alternative views. In other words, they think I'm kicking a dead horse.
>
> Interesting.

And here are the two views that were presented:

> One is indeed to "reconcile" them as best as possible; or, the term they appear to prefer, "harmonize" them: that is take the two texts that appear to contradict each other and show how they actually fit together, possibly in a complicated way, into a harmonized whole so that they round out and complement each other, rather than stand at odds with one another.
>
> […]The current view seems to be much more open to the possibility that there are places that we simply can't figure it out, places that do appear to be contradictory. And here is the KICKER. When they (the evangelicals who take this view) admit there are apparent contradictions, then they say that the details are not important. What matters is the major message. The ultimate point. The big picture. The gist. The gist of what a passage is trying to teach is what is inspired and inerrant. Not the picayune details.
>
> That is to say – a phrase you hear a lot in these circles – "the Bible is inerrant in what it affirms." That is, it makes no mistakes in what what it is trying to teach.
>
> So you might have a story in which Jesus heals someone, found, say, in both Matthew and Luke. There may be small contradictory details: in one he heals the person before he does this other thing, in the other he heals the person after he does the other thing. Small discrepancy. But the story is not trying to teach *when* Jesus did the miracle. It's trying to teach that he did the miracle. And it is inerrant about that. He *did* do the miracle.
>
> We never ever would have allowed that back in my days at Moody Bible Institute. But it's becoming a thinking-person's view among evangelicals who believe in the inerrancy of the Bible, apparently.
>
> But the other change – the second position – strikes me as even more significant, a real step toward traditional scholarship, which tries to explain WHY there are contradictions, and then goes on to say that since we know why they are there, they are not really contradictions.

The reason I am posting this is because we are facing a problem in the church, the problem of massive numbers of young people leaving Christianity:

> Christianity continues to decline among U.S. adults as the number of adults identifying as "nothing in particular" increases, Pew Research Center found.
>
> The number of American adults who describe themselves as Christian dropped 12 percentage points over the past decade and the number of both Protestants and Catholics in the U.S. has dropped, according to Pew Research data released Thursday.
>
> Surveys Pew conducted over the phone between 2018 and 2019 found 65% of American adults describe themselves as Christian. Meanwhile, 26% of American adults identify as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular," a number that increased from 17% in 2009.
>
> "The data shows that the trend toward religious disaffiliation documented in the

> Center's 2007 and 2014 Religious Landscape Studies, and before that in major national studies like the General Social Survey (GSS), has continued apace," according to Pew.

I was recently at the National Conference on Christian Apologetics, where I saw a debate featuring Michael Licona. Licona is an informed historian who published a book with Oxford University Press about differences in the gospels and the genre of ancient biography.

A video of the debate is here:

Licona argues that ALL ancient authors used "compositional devices" such as "time compression", which would explain the differences between the gospel accounts. These compositional devices are found in the works of other authors of that period. Most people I polled in the audience liked both debaters, but they thought that Mike Licona won. Licona also emphasized over and over, in his speech, how questions about contradictions, gospel authorship, etc. do not undermine the core of Christianity, which is the bodily resurrection of Jesus. This is important, because even questions about peripheral issues should not affect the core, which is on solid historical grounds.

I think Ehrman's post shows why apologetics is important for having productive conversations with non-Christians about the Christian worldview. Remember what happened to Antony Flew when someone took the time to share the evidence for a cosmic beginning and fine-tuning and origin of life with him. Bye-bye atheism. This is how the world really works – evidence is important to finding truth. Evangelism works best when we use reason and evidence to make our case that the Christian worldview is true.

We are living in a time when belief in God has been boosted by significant discoveries in the realm of science: origin of the universe, fine-tuning, habitability, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, molecular machines, etc. We have amazing work coming out of philosophers of religion like Alvin Plantinga, William Lane Craig, J.P. Moreland, etc. And now we are seeing ground-breaking, high-quality work coming out of scholars like Richard Bauckham, N.T. Wright, Craig Keener, and Michael Licona. When is the church going to realize the importance of scholarly research for evangelism?

Alabama woman Jessica Taylor announces her candidacy for Congress by bashing socialism

October 22, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prattville, Alabama attorney and businesswoman Jessica Taylor

I love to feature conservative women who want to run for office and make a difference in the laws and policies of our nation. A long time back, I supported Michele Bachmann for President over all the other candidates. I wrote dozens and dozens of posts promoting her policies. But the truth is, we have lots of good conservative women candidates, with conservative accomplishments. Here's a new one.

Take a look at this short campaign ad from Jessica Taylor.

The ad:

Love that accent.

The Federalist Papers reports:

> An Alabama business woman, Jessica Taylor, just called out our favorite socialist superstar, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, in an ad announcing her candidacy for Alabama's 2nd Congressional district.
>
> The ad starts by showcasing candidate Taylor's basketball career and her career in public service before she then turns here ire on Ocasio-Cortez and her so-called "squad."
>
> "Like you, I'm tired of arrogant socialists like AOC who've never even run a lemonade stand telling us how we should live in Alabama and that more government is the answer," Taylor said.

> She continues by promoting her support for President Trump and her conservative views, like support for the right to life.
>
> “Even though it might trigger a few liberals, I’ll fight to protect life, the Second Amendment, our borders, our military, our families, and President Trump from socialists in the swamp, and I won’t apologize for it,” Taylor added.

If you like this ad, and like the idea of a conservative woman with a good story running for Congress, then why not share the video on your page? I think it’s interesting. We need more conservatives in Congress, and I don’t care what sex or color they are.

Court rules that father must affirm that his son is a girl

October 23, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Most people today who have noticed that men are hesitant to get married, or even get into relationships, with women. But few outside of the men's rights movement are aware of the real reasons. Although it's fashionable to mock men as weaklings for their cautiousness with women and marriage, it takes a little more work to look beyond the insults and find the real root causes.

So, with that in mind, consider this story from the red state of Texas, about a man whose ex-wife took him to court to force their 7-year-old boy to transition (via drugs and surgery) to becoming female.

Here's the first from Life Site News, posted in December 2018:

> A six-year-old Texas boy is being dressed and presented as a girl by his mother; at the same time, she is threatening the boy's father legally for not going along with her plan for their son to live as a girl.
>
> J4m35 lives as a girl when with his mother, but when with his father and given the choice, the six-year-old boy lives as a boy.

Court order:

> J3ffr3y Y0ng3r is currently prohibited by court order from affirming in any way his son's sex, including imparting Christian teaching on gender and sexuality to J4m35.

Child abuse charges against the father for disapproving:

> 4nn3 G30rgu1a5 has charged Y0ng3r, her ex-husband and J4m35's father, with child abuse for not affirming their son as a transgender "girl," according to court documents.

Restraining order blocking father's contact with the boys:

> She has also sought restraining orders against Y0ng3r, she is trying to terminate his parental rights, and also seeks to compel Y0ng3r to pay for J4m35's visits with a transgender-affirming therapist and for medical procedures to "transition" J4m35 to a girl.

Chemical castration and sex-reassignment surgery:

> The controversial "treatment" could include hormonal sterilization that could begin in as soon as two years when J4m35 turns eight, in preparation for J4m35 to later have "sexual reassignment" surgery.

Father loses all parental rights:

> The court has awarded her the sole right to consent to psychiatric and psychological treatment of J4m35 and his twin brother Jude, rendering the boys' father unable to get a second opinion.

Child Protective Services:

> Y0ng3r is even prohibited from cutting his sons' hair, having been reported by a teacher to Texas Child Protective Services for giving J4m35 a haircut.

Father gets the bill:

> Since the cost for psychological and psychiatric treatment of children is considered child support in Texas, a website on the case created by friends of the family says, and current Texas statutes being what they are, Y0ng3r could be "forced to pay for the sexual mutilation of his own son."

And here is the latest from Life Site News about the outcome of the trial:

> A jury has ruled against J3ffr3y Y0ng3r, the father who is trying to protect his seven-year-old son, J4m35, from chemical castration via a gender "transition."
>
> […]The jury's decision likely means that Mr. Y0ng3r will be required to "affirm" J4m35 as a girl, despite his religious and moral objections, and will also be forced to take a class on transgenderism.

Although it was a jury trial, I just want to point out that the judge overseeing the trial is a woman, and G30rgu1a5 has two female lawyers leading the questioning of witnesses. The therapist who diagnosed the boy with gender dysphoria is also a (gay) woman, and founder of Da11as Ra1nb0w C0uns3l1ng. So a panel of women is overruling the wishes of the child's father for his son, and this apparently isn't a problem for anyone.

The American Conservative noted that G30rgu1a5 is not the biological mother of the boys. They were conceived with Y0ng3r's sperm and eggs from an egg donor. This is an immediate red flag to me, as women who use IVF are often feminists who deliberately delayed child-bearing during their fertile years for their careers.

By the way, the story has also been reported in The Blaze, the Daily Caller, Daily Wire, Christian Post, etc.

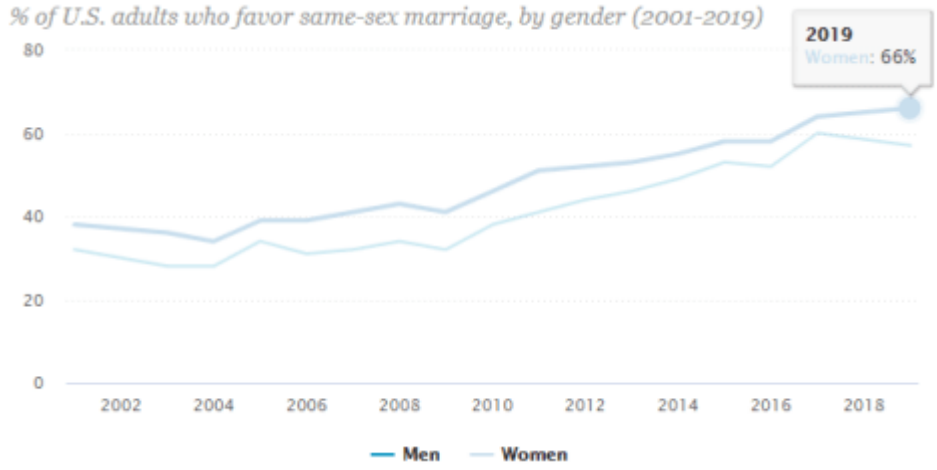

Support for gay marriage by gender (Source: Pew Research 2019)

My thoughts

First, everyone who reads this blog knows that I am forever blaming women for their poor choice of men, and poor choices of when to have sex. Well, it works exactly the same in reverse: Jeff Y0ng3r should not have married this woman. I blame him for this mess.

Second, there is no concern in the church about the challenges facing marriage-minded men in this society. Christian men receive no support from the church when they try to lead on moral or spiritual issues that conflict with women's emotions and preference for non-judgmentalism. In my opinion, it's very likely that if I were somehow married to this crazy lady, that my church would side with her against me, just because she is a woman. After all, what are people learning in church about male headship or defenses against feminism or LGBT? NOTHING. The church's goal is to produce feelings and community. They prioritize essential oils and praise hymns. What good is that to me against an army of anti-Christian teachers, doctors, therapists, lawyers, judges, and powerful gay rights groups? I'm not going to get involved in a situation where I am wasting a lot of time and money losing legal battles.

Finally, I just wanted to point out that marriage-minded men are aware of how the government is stepping in and overruling their authority as fathers and husbands. It's not just in obvious ways, like no-fault divorce, higher taxes, big government meddling in families, Equality Act, etc. It's also in subtle ways, e.g. – men are forced to pay into a public school system that is dominated by secular leftist administrators and teachers. Stories like the one above show a growing intrusion by government into Christian men's lives, which is made possible by higher taxes and more government spending. The money for big government intrusions comes out of Christian homes. The bigger the government, the less money and fewer degrees of freedom the husband / father has to execute his plan. And this is something we have to address if we expect Christian men to take the risk of getting married and having kids. "Man up and jump off this cliff that feminism and socialism has made!" isn't going to cut it.

Atheist Jerry Coyne explains why morality is impossible for atheists

October 24, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson about to do philosophy

Let's review what you need in your worldview in order to have a rationally grounded system of morality.

You need 5 things:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you

just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Theism rationally grounds all 5 of these. Atheism cannot ground *any of them.*

Let's take a look at #4: free will and see how atheism deals with that.

Atheism and free will?

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will. (Note: link is dead)

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality.

Here are some more atheists to explain how atheists view morality.

William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud

> and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

When village atheists talk about how they can be moral without God, it's important to ask them to justify the minimum requirements for rational morality. Atheists may act inconsistently with their worldview, believing in free will, expecting praise and blame for complying with the arbitrary standards of their peer group, etc. But there is nothing more to morality on atheism that imitating the herd – at least when the herd is around to watch them. And when the herd loses its Judeo-Christian foundation – watch out. That's when the real atheism comes out – the atheism that we've seen before in countries that turned their backs on God, and the moral law. When God disappears from a society, anything is permissible.

Gay rights activist Congresswoman admits to affair with younger campaign staffer

October 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Katie Hill speaking for the Human Rights Campaign, a major gay rights group

When I saw all these stories coming out about Hollywood elites and Democrat mega-donors exposed for sexual harassment, pedophilia, rape, etc., I really started to wonder whether there is anything more to the Democrat party than championing sexual perversion and inflicting the consequences of that onto children, born and unborn. Here's the latest Democrat sex scandal in the news.

Here's the Washington Examiner reporting:

> California Democratic Rep. Katie Hill was still paying consulting fees to her campaign staffer and former lover Morgan Desjardins, 24, as recently as last month.
>
> According to FEC Records, since April 2019, Hill's campaign has paid a little over $14,000 in fundraising-related consulting fees to Desjardins, doling out around $2,500 most months. Additionally, between 2017 and 2018, she made around $50,000 as a senior campaign staffer.
>
> Hill, who is facing a House Ethics Committee investigation over allegations she had an intimate relationship with her legislative director, Graham Kelly, found herself under scrutiny after a nude photo of her brushing Desjardin's hair was posted on the RedState.
>
> Hill, 32, has admitted her relationship with Desjardins during her successful

> campaign for a House seat based in northern Los Angeles County but disputed any inappropriate relationship between her and Kelly occurred.
>
> The image was posted along with text messages sent between Hill, the congresswoman's estranged husband Kenny Heslep, whom she is divorcing, and Desjardins. According to the texts posted at RedState, the trio had an intimate three-way relationship during Hill's first campaign for office, but it soured quickly after she won her race and went to Washington, D.C.

Now, the problem with having sex with your subordinates is that there is a power dynamic, because you are paying them. It's easy to see what Katie Hill did as sexual assault and even rape, because her employees may have felt that they had to do whatever she wanted, e.g. – threesomes, with her, or they would lose their jobs. This is why companies outlaw relationships between employees – they don't want people to use power within the company to pressure subordinates into sexual activities. Yet Democrats do this *all the time* and the mainstream media is silent about it.

Remember, even the pious, moral Muslim Ilhan Omar is now divorcing her husband because she had an affair with someone she was paying with campaign funds:

> Rep. Ilhan Omar has filed for divorce from the father of her three kids, claiming the marriage is "irretrievable" — amid allegations that she had an affair with DC-based political consultant Tim Mynett.
>
> […]In August, The Post was first to report that DC-based doctor Beth Mynett had filed for divorce from her husband, Tim Mynett, alleging that he was carrying on an affair with Omar.
>
> All the while, Omar's campaign fund was paying Tim Mynett's firm for work, including for travel.

Are Democrats really obsessed with sexual deviancy? Well, consider Democrats like Bill Clinton, Anthony Weiner, Eliot Spitzer, Eric Schneiderman, Ed Murray, etc. It seems like they are always involved in sex scandals. And in fact you can even see wealthy Democrat mega-donors like Jeffrey Epstein and Terry Bean getting charged with having sex with underage people all the time. (Terry Bean is the co-founder of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest gay rights group in the nation). The Democrat politicians who take money from the sexual deviants then try to change America to make what their donors are doing seem normal and even praiseworthy. That's why Hillary Clinton threatened the women who accused her husband of rape and sexual assault.

Sexual deviancy seems to be the main plank in the Democrat party platform, and all the rest of the rhetoric about "free this" and "free that" is just to buy the votes needed to make all sorts of adult selfishness and sexual exploitation of the weak legal, and even immune to dissent and disapproval. Which is why Democrats are always using the government to attack Christians who disapprove of adult selfishness and sexual exploitation of the weak.

Now I have a question for you. What is it that young Democrat women are hoping to

achieve by supporting the party of sexual deviance? Do they think that this will lead them to a faithful man, a stable marriage, well-behaved children and a peaceful home? If so, then maybe we ought to be having talks with young women about what sort of worldview grounds self-sacrificial love, commitment, and objective moral obligations. It sure isn't the secular leftist nihilistic worldview of the Democrat party. If they want a Mike Pence marriage, then why not tell them to get the worldview of Mike Pence? They certainly won't get to a Mike Pence marriage with the worldview of Katie Hill.

If you want to read more about Katie Hill's destructive relationships, check out this story from Red State, which has blurred photos and text messages.

Peter Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospels

October 26, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics that hits the spot

This is a lecture I found from British historian Dr. Peter J. Williams.

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?

- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?
- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate. That link contains a link to the audio of the debate as well as my snarky summary. It's very snarky.

William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech

October 27, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Making sense of the meaning of atheism

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video. The essay is for Christians already familiar with basic apologetics.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Here's a quick couple of quotes from the essay for those who cannot watch:

> If there is no God, then any ground for regarding the herd morality evolved by homo sapiens as objectively true seems to have been removed. After all, what is so special about human beings? They are just accidental by-products of nature which have evolved relatively recently on an infinitesimal speck of dust lost somewhere in a hostile and mindless universe and which are doomed to perish individually and collectively in a relatively short time. Some action, say, incest, may not be biologically or socially advantageous and so in the course of human evolution has become taboo; but there is on the atheistic view nothing really wrong about committing incest. If, as Kurtz states, "The moral principles that govern our behavior are rooted in habit and custom, feeling and fashion,"[5] then the non-conformist who chooses to flout the herd morality is doing nothing more serious than acting unfashionably.
>
> The objective worthlessness of human beings on a naturalistic world view is

> underscored by two implications of that world view: materialism and determinism. Naturalists are typically materialists or physicalists, who regard man as a purely animal organism. But if man has no immaterial aspect to his being (call it soul or mind or what have you), then he is not qualitatively different from other animal species. For him to regard human morality as objective is to fall into the trap of specie-ism. On a materialistic anthropology there is no reason to think that human beings are objectively more valuable than rats. Secondly, if there is no mind distinct from the brain, then everything we think and do is determined by the input of our five senses and our genetic make-up. There is no personal agent who freely decides to do something. But without freedom, none of our choices is morally significant. They are like the jerks of a puppet's limbs, controlled by the strings of sensory input and physical constitution. And what moral value does a puppet or its movements have?
>
> […]Moreover, if atheism is true, there is no moral accountability for one's actions. Even if there were objective moral values and duties under naturalism, they are irrelevant because there is no moral accountability. If life ends at the grave, it makes no difference whether one lives as a Stalin or as a saint. As the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky rightly said: "If there is no immortality, then all things are permitted."

If you want a much shorter, slicker version of this argument to share, Reasonable Faith has produced this nice 5-minute video that you can tweet or share on your Facebook page or whatever:

The moral argument is the easiest argument in the world to discuss with non-Christians, as everyone has to have an answer to questions like "what makes humans valuable?" and "why should I do the right thing when it goes against my self-interest?" and "will evildoers who escape justice in this life be punished when they die?" and "do humans have free will to make moral choices?" These are interesting questions, and people can just give their opinion and then think about it as they discuss it.

You can read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor. I found this debate very helpful for answering the question that everyone should be able to answer: "why should I be moral?"

Nanotechnology expert Dr. James Tour assesses origin of life research

October 28, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

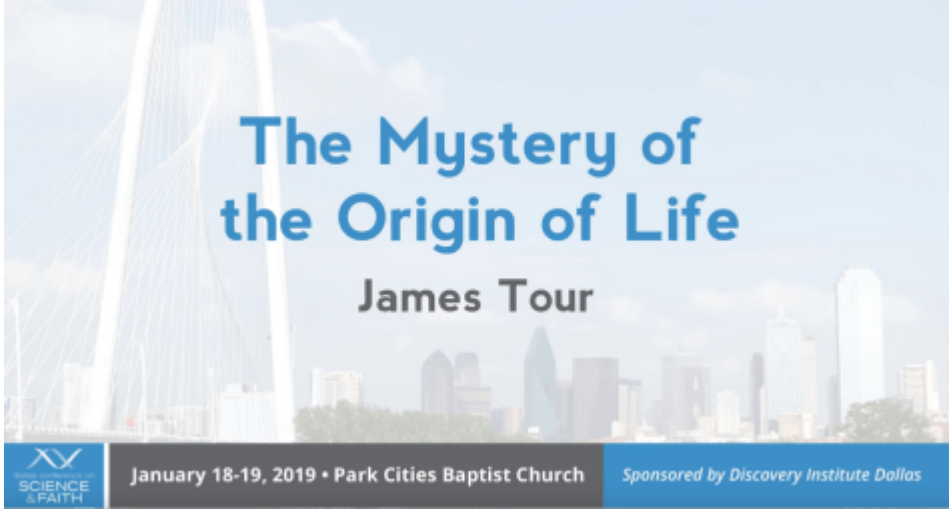

What is involved in creating life from non-life?

I noticed that Eric Chabot who runs the Ratio Christi chapter at the Ohio State University has arranged a lecture on the origin of life scheduled for tonight (Monday, October 28th, 2019). If any of you are free this evening, and near Columbus, Ohio, maybe you can make it to the lecture?

Recently, I watched lectures from a recent Science and Faith Conference that occurred at Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. I sent the lectures to my STEM women advisors to get their opinions. It was unanimous that Tour's talk on origin of life research was the best. So let's see his bio, then we'll take a look at his lecture.

Dr. James Tour:

> James M. Tour, a synthetic organic chemist, received his Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Syracuse University, his Ph.D. in synthetic organic and organometallic chemistry from Purdue University, and postdoctoral training in synthetic organic chemistry at the University of Wisconsin and Stanford University.
>
> After spending 11 years on the faculty of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of South Carolina, he joined the Center for Nanoscale Science and Technology at Rice University in 1999 where he is presently the T. T. and W. F. Chao Professor of Chemistry, Professor of Computer Science, and Professor of Materials Science and NanoEngineering.
>
> Tour's scientific research areas include nanoelectronics, graphene electronics, silicon oxide electronics, carbon nanovectors for medical applications, green carbon research for enhanced oil recovery and environmentally friendly oil and gas extraction, graphene photovoltaics, carbon supercapacitors, lithium ion batteries, CO2 capture, water splitting to H2 and O2, water purification, carbon

> nanotube and graphene synthetic modifications, graphene oxide, carbon composites, hydrogen storage on nanoengineered carbon scaffolds, and synthesis of single-molecule nanomachines which includes molecular motors and nanocars.
>
> […]Tour has over 650 research publications and over 120 patents.

As he explains in the lecture, his research has frequently been used in the private sector to solve real world problems.

His lecture:

Evolution News had a short blurb of the lecture:

> Rice University chemist James Tour almost defies description in a video now up of his amazing presentation at Discovery Institute's 2019 Dallas Conference on Science and Faith.
>
> At one point he asks for a show of hands of fellow synthetic chemists in the (large) audience. It turns out there are a couple and he demands that they stand up and call him a liar if anything he says isn't true. His message is an alternatively scathing and hilarious indictment of claims from the origin-of-life studies community. Dr. Tour's work in nanotechnology, an ulta-ultra-painstaking field, provides the backdrop for his demonstration that origins scientists don't have the slightest idea how the first life was somehow naturally synthesized by blind, mindless forces.
>
> The field hasn't advanced an inch in 60-plus years. "Everyone's clueless on this but no one wants to admit it." Great scientists writing in the highest profile science journals are "lying to you" when they assert otherwise. "Show me the chemistry" of abiogenesis, he says. "It's not there."
>
> Jim Tour is without parallel. Truly, I'd love to hear from our materialist critics how they would answer any of this.

At the conference, Tour's lecture was accompanied by other great lectures on the origin of the universe and also the Cambrian explosion by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. Jay Richards spoke on fine-tuning and habitability. You can find the links to those lectures on the Discovery Institute YouTube channel.

What we liked about the lecture by Dr. James Tour was that he did not dumb down the content for a church audience. I was sending screen captures of his slides and short video clips to my best friend Dina while I watched it. I was very excited to see someone so accomplished in his research and entrepreneurship being honest with the laypeople in the church. And I loved the church for letting him speak like a scientist. I didn't understand everything he was saying about the science, but I always understood the point he was trying to make.

Let this lecture encourage to raise your children to focus on science, math, engineering and technology, because you can clearly see the value that we have in Dr. James Tour.

We need hundreds more scientists who go to the best schools and make a difference.

I really hope that some of the younger Christians will understand the importance of making scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer more widely known. Learn the areas of science where God’s existence can be detected, and put the time in learning how to make those arguments.

William Lane Craig explains how Christianity explains evil and suffering

October 29, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

A lot of people in the West complain too much about any little suffering they have to experience. But sometimes, when a very harsh suffering is felt by someone who has tried to follow Jesus, an explanation is necessary. I found something very good on the Reasonable Faith web site, written by Dr. William Lane Craig.

He makes the following points:

1. *We are not in a good position to assess the probability of whether God has morally sufficient reasons for the evils that occur.*
2. *The Christian faith entails doctrines that increase the probability of the co-existence of God and evil.*
3. *Relative to the full scope of the evidence, God's existence is probable.*

I've written before about point #1, in which Dr. Craig's describes the limitations of human knowledge that make it hard for us to know for certain that a specific evil or suffering does not have a good reason for God to allow it. And I've written about #3, in which Dr. Craig makes some arguments for God's existence. But #2 might be new to some of you, so let's look at that.

He makes four sub points in section 2 about Christian doctrines that make the existence of evil and suffering more reasonable.

- 2. a)*The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.*
- 2. b) *Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and His purpose.*

- 2. c) *The knowledge of God spills over into eternal life.*
- 2. d) *The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.*

My favorite one is 2. a), so let's look at that one. He says:

> 2. a. *The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.* One reason that the problem of evil seems so puzzling is that we tend to think that if God exists, then His goal for human life is happiness in this world. God's role is to provide comfortable environment for His human pets. But on the Christian view this is false. We are not God's pets, and man's end is not happiness in this world, but the knowledge of God, which will ultimately bring true and everlasting human fulfillment. Many evils occur in life which maybe utterly pointless with respect to the goal of producing human happiness in this world, but they may not be unjustified with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Innocent human suffering provides an occasion for deeper dependency and trust in God, either on the part of the sufferer or those around him. Of course, whether God's purpose is achieved through our suffering will depend on our response. Do we respond with anger and bitterness toward God, or do we turn to Him in faith for strength to endure?

You know, I always get confused when I see Christians trying to follow the script of the world and trying to make themselves feel good with consumer purchases, travel, fun experiences, showing off to others, etc. When I read the story of Jesus, it's pretty clear that the normal Christian life, if the person is following Jesus at all, is about suffering the disapproval and opposition of non-Christians while you remain faithful and obedient to God. Today, there's probably no better example of this than defending unborn children from adult selfishness. Although, defending born children from selfish adults who seek to deprive children of their biological mother and father is pretty bad, too. Nobody is going to like you for restricting their fun (i.e. – abortion, divorce, adultery, homosexuality, etc.), but being willing to take the heat from non-Christians for the sake of promoting what God thinks is right is true Christianity. It's what Jesus would do.

Anyway, the one I've been thinking about more lately is 2. d), where Dr. Craig writes this:

> *2. d) The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.* To know God, the source of infinite goodness and love, is an incomparable good, the fulfillment of human existence. The sufferings of this life cannot even be compared to it. Thus, the person who knows God, no matter what he suffers, no matter how awful his pain, can still say, "God is good to me," simply by virtue of the fact that he knows God, an incomparable good.

I sometimes feel pretty stressed out about Americans who were born in conservative states, raised by two married Christian parents, attended Christian schools and youth groups, and then abandoned their faith for atheism as soon as they hit college. It really bothers me how people who had all these advantages turned their backs on God, and they're ungrateful for all their blessings. They show no curiosity about God – they don't

want to know him. But when you read the gospels to see what Jesus has to say about these sorts of people, it’s very comforting. He really sees the problem, and he is on the side of the little guy who has to struggle to be faithful and obedient to God. The Bible has nothing to say to people who are able to feel happy and successful apart from God. It speaks to people who are struggling to follow God. Even when things are difficult, Jesus speaks to the problem of being an alien and a stranger in a world that turns its back on him.

New study: virgins have happiest marriages, more sex partners means more unhappiness

October 30, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Although we live in a culture that is dominated by the thoughts and opinions of secular leftists, science provides useful information for those who want defend Biblical morality. Consider the issue of sexuality and marriage. Secular leftists claim that sex outside of marriage is natural, and produces happiness. Bible believing Christians and Jews say chastity is best. Who is right?

Here is the latest study authored by Dr. Nicholas Wolfinger, a sociologist at the University of Utah. His previous book on relationships was published by Oxford University Press. In his analysis of the data, Wolfinger controlled for divorce rates, religiosity, and socioeconomic status.

Here's the most important graph:

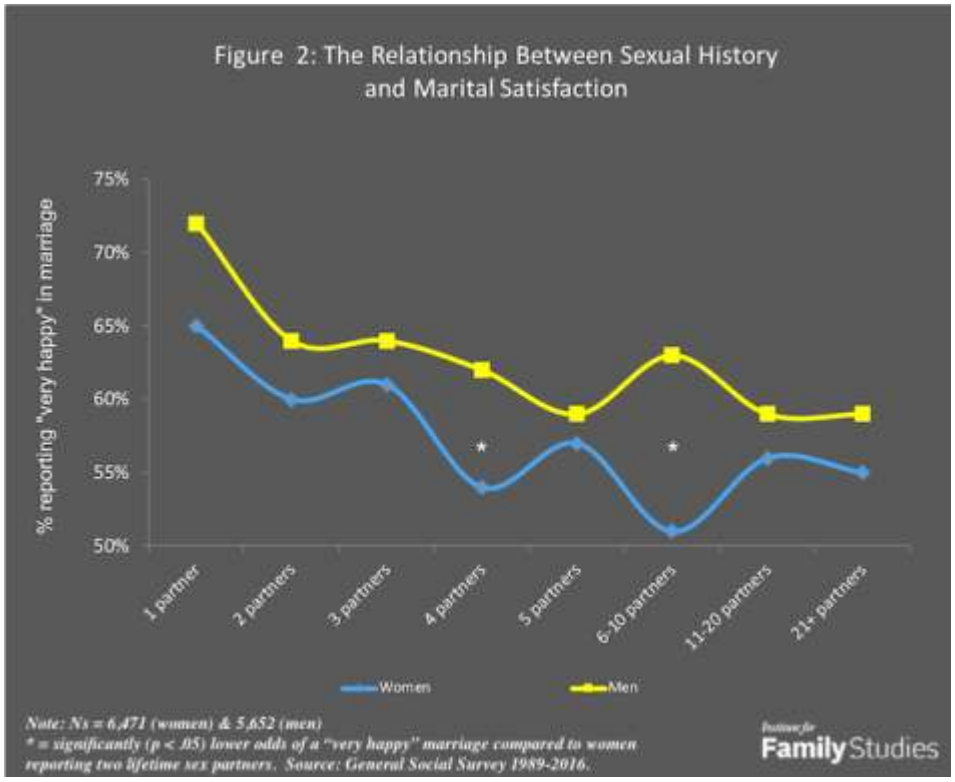

Study: virgins have the happiest marriages, more partners means less happiness

Other factors that increased marital happiness: having a 4-year college degree (5%), having a salary > 78K (5%), regular church attendance (6%). Notice that women are more dissatisfied with marriage (in general) than men are, and they tend to blame the spouse they freely chose for that unhappiness.

The Federalist also reported on previous research relevant to this study:

> Psychologists Galena K. Rhoades and Scott M. Stanley found that women who have had sex with someone other than their husband report statistically significant drops in marital quality over those who don't. A 2004 study by

> sociologist Jay Teachman showed that intimate premarital activities such as cohabitation and intercourse increased the rate of marital dissolution by anywhere between 28 and 109 percent, depending on the activity.

Wolfinger also noted in a previous study that only 5% of women were virgins when they married.

Wolfinger noted that a possible explanation for the link between promiscuity and unhappiness is that people look back on their past partners and compare their spouse unfavorably to them. This is especially the case with women. My concern about this is that feminism has taught women to try to increase their social standing by having hook-up sex with attractive bad boys. If those women ever marry, they do it when they are older, less fertile, and less attractive. The husband they eventually "settle" for will (in their minds) always compare unfavorably to the hot bad boys they had sex with when they were younger and prettier. This, I believe, is what leads to their unhappiness with the man they chose to marry.

More partners also means more marital instability

In a previous post, I blogged about several studies linking virginity to marital stability. Couples who don't have sex before marriage, or even who delayed it, reported better communication, higher satisfaction, better quality sex, and a lower chance of divorce.

Men ought to be aware of this research when they are choosing a spouse. Obviously, you want a virgin, for the increased happiness and increased stability. For marriage-friendly character, you want to avoid women who are promiscuous thrill-seekers. You want to avoid women who run up debt doing easy non-STEM degrees and traveling. You want to avoid women who hook up with hot bad boys aren't serious about commitment. Women who choose fun and thrills in their teens and 20s are setting a pattern of using sex as a way to get happiness in the moment. Later on, they'll continue that pattern of seeing relationships as commodities that are designed to make them feel good, moment by moment. They'll look at marriage as a way to fulfill *their* needs. They'll have internalized the view that relationships are not commitments to invest in self-sacrificially. The pattern will be: "if it doesn't make me feel happy right now, then it should be ended". Men who aren't serious about evaluating the character of the women for the marriage enterprise are running the risk of divorce, it's that simple.

The best way to make sure that you have a clear head when evaluating a woman is to stay sober, and keep her hands off of you. When a man refuses to let a woman cloud his judgment with sex, then she is forced to learn how to love him, help him, and submit to his leadership. Male chastity encourages women who have been influenced by feminism to abandon selfishness, fun-seeking, and thrill-seeking, so that they learn to care for others. Male chastity also helps a man to resist older women who chose bad boys in their teens and 20s and want to get married to a good provider in their 30s. The studies discussed above clearly show that such women are more likely to be unhappy, and their future marriages are more likely to be unstable. Avoid them.

We can see how Democrat presidential candidates would govern from Democrat-run states

October 31, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

California's ignorant Democrat governor Jerry Brown keeps failing

A lot of low-information voters decide who they are going to vote for based on the words the candidates speak, and how those words make them feel, and what their peers will think of them. They see their vote as membership in a club, not as a way to get policies that will actually produce real-world results. Thankfully, we can know what results Democrats produce by looking at Democrat-run states.

Let's start with the Democrat-dominated state of California, which has pursued some of the most aggressive Green New Deal policies in recent years. The prediction from Democrats is that Green New Deal energy policies will lower the cost of energy and produce abundant energy to fuel economic growth. Is that what happened?

Consider this article from National Review:

> More than 2 million people are going without power in Northern and Central California, in the latest and biggest of the intentional blackouts that are, astonishingly, California's best answer to the risk of runaway wildfires.
>
> […]The same California that has boldly committed to transitioning to 50 percent renewable energy by 2025 — and 100 percent renewable energy by 2045 — can't manage its existing energy infrastructure.
>
> […]California governor Gavin Newsom, who has to try to evade responsibility for this debacle while presiding over it, blames "dog-eat-dog capitalism" for the state's current crisis. It sounds like he's referring to robber barons who have descended on the state to suck it dry of profits while burning it to the ground. **But Newsom is talking about one of the most regulated industries in the state — namely California's energy utilities, which answer to the state's public utilities commission.**

So, what happened? What happened is that the Democrats pursued a pretty standard

play book in which they regulated the energy industry, forcing them to focus on green energy. And the result of that policy was higher electricity prices, higher gas prices and blackouts. By the way, the utility company has filed for bankruptcy, which is certainly not going to help matters.

They really should have known that this would happen, because other countries, like Germany and Canada for example, tried it first. And the results are the same: higher electricity prices and rotating blackouts. Is it any wonder that business owners are fleeing the state, or outsourcing their operations to areas that are more reality-based?

But that's not all. What else do environmentalists do? They block the thinning out of forests which prevents forest fires. So what happened next?

> Meanwhile, California has had a decades-long aversion to properly clearing forests. The state's leaders have long been in thrall to the belief that cutting down trees is somehow an offense against nature, even though thinning helps create healthier forests. Biomass has been allowed to build up, and it becomes the kindling for catastrophic fires.
>
> As Chuck DeVore of the Texas Public Policy Foundation points out, a report of the Western Governors' Association warned of this effect more than a decade ago, noting that "over time the fire-prone forests that were not thinned, burn in uncharacteristically destructive wildfires."
>
> In 2016, then-governor Jerry Brown actually vetoed a bill that had unanimously passed the state legislature to promote the clearing of trees dangerously close to power lines.

The result of their environmentalist policies? Massive wild fires. California already has a homeless epidemic going on, and the wildfires will only make that problem worse.

But that's not all, there's more failure to achieve in other areas:

> Californians know that having tens of thousands of homeless in their major cities is untenable. In some places, municipal sidewalks have become open sewers of garbage, used needles, rodents, and infectious diseases.
>
> Yet no one dares question progressive orthodoxy by enforcing drug and vagrancy laws, moving the homeless out of cities to suburban or rural facilities, or increasing the number of mental hospitals.
>
> Taxpayers in California, whose basket of sales, gasoline, and income taxes is the highest in the nation, quietly seethe while immobile on antiquated freeways that are crowded, dangerous, and under nonstop makeshift repair.
>
> Gas prices of $4 to $5 a gallon—the result of high taxes, hyper-regulation, and green mandates—add insult to the injury of stalled commuters. Gas tax increases ostensibly intended to fund freeway expansion and repair continue to be diverted to the state's failing high-speed rail project.
>
> Residents shrug that the state's public schools are among the weakest in the

> nation, often ranking in the bottom quadrant in standardized test scores. Elites publicly oppose charter schools, but often put their own kids in private academies.
>
> Californians know that to venture into a typical municipal emergency room is to descend into a modern Dante's Inferno. Medical facilities are overcrowded. They can be as unpleasant as they are bankrupting to the vanishing middle class that must face exorbitant charges to bring in an injured or sick child.
>
> No one would dare to connect the crumbling infrastructure, poor schools, and failing public health care with the non-enforcement of immigration laws, which has led to a massive influx of undocumented immigrants from the poorest regions of the world, who often arrive without fluency in English or a high school education.
>
> Stores are occasionally hit by swarming looters. Such Wild West criminals know how to keep their thefts under $950, ensuring that such "misdemeanors" do not warrant police attention. California's permissive laws have decriminalized thefts and break-ins. The result is that San Francisco now has the highest property crime rate per capita in the nation.

Nothing is working. It's a complete disaster. And it has to be blamed on Democrats, because they have super-majorities in the state House and state Senate, not to mention the Democrat governor.

Although Democrats like to present themselves as science-based and intelligent, the best way to measure scientific understanding and intelligence is by comparing intentions to results. Smart, reality-based people achieve what they tell others they will achieve. If a Democrat claims that they will get X result (e.g. – you can keep your doctor, you can keep your health plan, your health insurance premiums will go down) and they get opposite results across the board, then you know that they are not scientifically-literate or intelligent.

The best way to get the results you want is to elect people with a record of achieving results. That's why we look at a candidate's resume and references before hiring them – at least in the private sector. Democrat voters should know better than to hire candidates based on appearances and words and feelings. We need to learn from their failures.

How do LGBT activists respond to free speech discussions of LGBT issues?

November 1, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What should we think about LGBT activists?

I like to have some diversity in my Twitter feed, so I follow some people who disagree with me. One of those people is Andy Ngo, who is gay. I started to follow Andy because he does a good job reporting on the secular leftist fascist movement in America (Antifa), fake hate crimes and false accusations. The tweet above is from Andy, and after I read the story he linked, I decided to write about it.

Here's the story from The Post Millennial.

> Word spread quickly on social media this evening that Simon Fraser University has backed out of its decision to host the event entitled "#GIDYVR: How Media Bias Shapes the Gender Identity Debate" on November 2nd.
>
> In addition to Vancouver feminist Meghan Murphy, the event was slated to feature *Quillette* Canadian editor Jonathan Kay and *The Post Millennial* contributor Anna Slatz, and was co-organized by Mark Collard, an SFU professor of anthropology, Amy Eileen Hamm, Holly Stamer, and GIDYVR. Free speech activist Lindsay Shepherd was set to moderate.
>
> Collard, who had originally sponsored the event and assisted in booking the venue at SFU's Harbour Centre campus, decided to withdraw his support for the event after speaking to senior director of campus public safety, Tim Marron. Marron explained that there was a high risk of violence as a result of the event.

> […]*The Post Millennial* also reached out to Meghan Murphy, who told us, "We are still going to fight this. GIDYVR is in touch with our lawyer, Jay Cameron, from the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms in order to put pressure on SFU to keep our booking. Apparently, there was a meeting involving a trans activist group, and security determined that there was a viable threat of violence from this group.

The article notes that Marron thought that after meeting with the trans activist group, that on a scale of 1 to 10, the probability of violence was an 11.

It looks like it would be a pretty interesting event. I've blogged about Meghan Murphy before. She's a feminist, so I don't agree with her on many things. And I blogged about Lindsay Shepherd, and I don't agree with her on many things. But I wouldn't stop them from speaking in public. I don't see why in a free country that people can't get together on campus to debate and disagree about something controversial. Unless it's not a free country at all?

One thing is clear. If I were presenting my views to other people, and their response was that my disagreement with them would cause them to kill themselves, then I would really wonder about whether their views were able to be defended rationally and evidentially. And if they said that their response to disagreeing views was to resort to vandalism, fake hate crimes, lawsuits, death threats, violence and even attempted murder (e.g. – the domestic terrorism attack by the gun-wielding gay activist Floyd Lee Corkins II against the Family Research Council headquarters), then I would just lump that person in with the other fascists in history, like Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, etc. All on the secular left, notice.

Here is a good rule that applies to everyone: If you can't make your case for your views using reason and evidence, but must instead use threats of violence to cancel out free speech that offends you, then you're a fascist, no different than any other fascist, except that maybe you lack the means at this time to achieve the results they did in a society that still is running on the fumes of Judeo-Christian moral standards. As a conservative, I am fine with free speech that disagrees with me. I don't use threats, coercion and violence against those who disagree with me. Think what you want. Say what you want. It ought to be like that in a free country.

Elizabeth Warren's health care plan: how much will it cost, how much will your taxes rise?

November 2, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Elizabeth Warren seems to be the likely Democrat nominee, so it it makes sense for us to take a look at her policy proposals and count the cost. Her signature proposal is a plan to outlaw private health insurance and move everyone to government-run health care, paid for though mandatory taxation. How much will that cost, and how much will the taxes on the middle class go up in order to pay for it?

Before we go too far with that, take a look at the budget numbers. I got these from the web site of the Democrats in the House of Representatives:

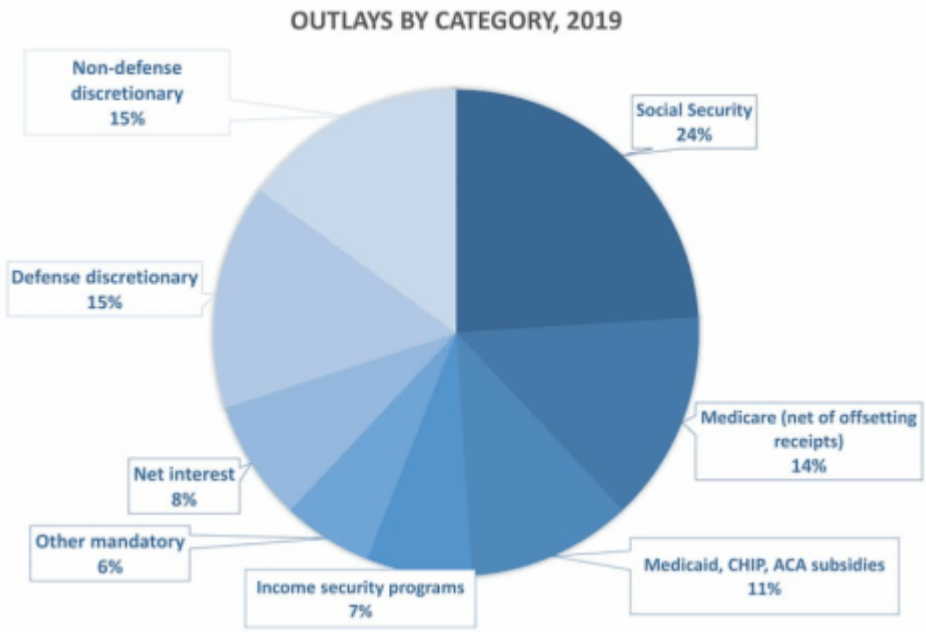

The 2019 federal budget, according to House Democrats

According to the House Democrats budget web site, the 2019 federal budget has $3.451 trillion in revenue, $4.411 trillion in spending, for an annual deficit of $-960 billion. And keep in mind that we are $23 trillion in debt already. This would be like saying that your annual income is $34, 510. You're spending $44, 110 per year. You are adding $9,600 to your debt every year. And you are already $230,000 in debt (and paying interest on that).

In other words, America is in no position to be spending more money. We're already in debt, and adding to the debt each year. So how much more money would you have to spend for Elizabeth Warren's health care plan?

> For months, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D—Mass.) has hedged on the question of whether she would raise middle class taxes to pay for Medicare for All, the single-payer health care plan she says she supports. Warren has stuck with a talking point about total costs, saying that the middle class would pay less, while critics, political rivals, and even liberal economists friendly to single payer have argued that the enormous additional government spending required by such a plan

> would inevitably hit the middle class.
>
> Today, Warren released a plan to finance Medicare for All at a total price tag of nearly $52 trillion, including about $20 trillion of new government spending (an estimate that is probably low). Although her plan declares that no middle-class taxes will be necessary to finance the system, it includes what is effectively a new tax on employers that would undoubtedly hit middle-class Americans.

So , Warren admits that the total cost of her plan is $52 trillion over 10 years. Warren needs to come up with $5.2 trillion per year to pay for her plan. Is there that much money available by taxing only the wealthy?

The wealthiest Americans don't have enough money to cover even $2 trillion in additional spending – assuming they continue to work in America as much as they did before the government took MOST of their earnings:

> CRFB reinforced their prior work indicating that taxes on "the rich" could at best fund about one-third of the cost of single payer. Their proposals include $2 trillion in revenue from raising tax rates on the affluent, another $2 trillion from phasing out tax incentives for the wealthy, another $2 trillion from doubling corporate income taxes, $3 trillion from wealth taxes, and $1 trillion from taxes on financial transactions and institutions.
>
> Several of the proposals CRFB analyzed would raise tax rates on the wealthiest households above 60 percent. At these rates, economists suggest that individuals would reduce their income and cut back on work, because they do not see the point in generating additional income if government will take 70 (or 80, or 90) cents on every additional dollar earned. While taxing "the rich" might sound publicly appealing, at a certain point it becomes a self-defeating proposition—and several proposals CRFB vetted would meet, or exceed, that point.

So, Warren is going to have to lean on the middle class for the remaining $3.2 trillion, even if the rich hold still while the government takes 70-90 percent of what they earn. (Unlikely)

Warren likes to tell everyone that her plan will make costs go down. I guess she thinks that government oversight of health care will be more efficient than private sector oversight of health care. Maybe she believes that people in government are more careful about spending taxpayer money than people in private businesses are about spending their own money? In any case, studies from centrist and center-left think tanks disagree with Warren:

> Warren and her defenders will likely try to shift the discussion back to total costs, but that's just a way of repeating the dodge that has dogged her campaign for much of the year. Warren will no doubt claim that costs would go down under her plan, but there are reasons to doubt this, including an analysis from health care economist Kenneth Thorpe finding that under a Sanders-style plan, more than 70

> percent of people who currently have private insurance would see costs increase, as well as an Urban Institute analysis projecting that single-payer plans would raise national health care spending by $7 trillion over a decade.

All we have right now to weight against these studies is Warren's own words, as a candidate wanting to win a popularity contest.

Warren herself says that there would be enormous job losses in the health care industry:

> Democratic Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren admitted Wednesday that Medicare for All could result in two million lost jobs.
>
> In an interview with New Hampshire Public Radio, the Democratic presidential contender said she concurs with a study from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst that said socialized medicine would probably have a devastating impact on the those working in the current private health care industry.

This would create similar health care shortages and waiting lists (with people dying on waiting lists) that we see in single-payer systems such as Canada and the Veteran's Affairs health care system. Except far worse.

And keep in mind that the middle class pays for health care in Canada:

> Socialized medicine in Canada anything but free. The [Fraser Institute] think-tank reported that the average Canadian family spends over $12,000 in taxes on government-funded health care.

That is how single-actually works. We need to look at how single-payer health care works in reality, and not form our opinions of it based on a candidate's WORDS during an ELECTION CAMPAIGN. Let's look at evidence, and not just vote for things that sound good and make us feel good and make our friends like us.

How will Elizabeth Warren pay for her $52 trillion government-run health care plan?

November 3, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, in yesterday's post, we talked about our current budget of $4 trillion dollars, our $3 trillion of revenues, our $1 trillion annual budget deficit, and our $23 trillion in accumulated national debt. We also talked about how Elizabeth Warren's health care plan would add $5.2 trillion to our annual budget, and how we only get about $2 trillion in revenue if we take almost everything the wealthiest taxpayers earn.

Warren likes to talk about how her plan will reduce health care costs. She thinks that government workers (think of the DMV and the post office) will be more efficient about increasing quality and reducing costs than the private sector (think of Apple and Amazon) is. Is she correct?

Let's take a look at this article from Reason:

> Warren and her defenders will likely try to shift the discussion back to total costs, but that's just a way of repeating the dodge that has dogged her campaign for much of the year. Warren will no doubt claim that costs would go down under her plan, but there are reasons to doubt this, including an analysis from health care economist Kenneth Thorpe finding that under a Sanders-style plan, more than 70 percent of people who currently have private insurance would see costs increase, as well as an Urban Institute analysis projecting that single-payer plans would raise national health care spending by $7 trillion over a decade.

There isn't any magic in Warren's plan that would lover the costs to the point where the middle class would not have to pay for her spending:

> Indeed, much of Warren's plan is based on unlikely, and at times outright fantastical, assumptions about what sort of additional revenue could be raised, what health care costs could be contained, and what might be politically feasible. Among other things, she proposes raising $400 billion by passing comprehensive immigration reform, which, given the politics of immigration policy, is only a little more realistic than planning to pay off your mortgage by winning the lottery. *The Washington Examiner*'s Philip Klein has published a useful roundup of Warren's less plausible ideas; the takeaway is that even if Warren somehow managed to raise the enormous amounts of tax she proposes, it probably would still not be anywhere close to enough to finance her plan. (More on this in a future post.)
>
> In some ways, Warren's plan amounts to a list of technically sophisticated magic asterisks. It is as much an attempt to obscure the economic and political feasibility of passing and implementing a single-payer health care plan as a good-faith attempt to describe what it would practically require.
>
> Yet in another way, it reveals something about both Warren and the economic

> reality of single-payer: Despite running a campaign based on wonky academic credentials and detail-oriented policy chops, Warren has, until now, repeatedly refused to directly answer questions about precisely how she would finance Medicare for All and whether she would foist new taxes on the middle class. Turns out she didn't dodge the question because the answer was complex or hard to explain. She dodged it because the answer was so simple it could be expressed in a single word: *yes*.

So, let's just state the obvious. We're talking about a person who pretended to be an Indian in order to get into Harvard, and who lied about being fired from her teaching job for being pregnant. If we're looking at her education, we don't find any evidence that she understands health care policy, or even basic economics. If we're looking at her work experience, there's no evidence there that she was ever able to produce results in health care administration. There are people who have been able to reform health care in a way that reduces costs, reduces taxes, improves quality of care, and covers more people. But not Elizabeth Warren.

Price of healthcare per Canadian household (Source: Fraser Institute)

What about Canada?

I think it's worth remembering how much government-run health care costs in countries that have adopted "Medicare for All" plans.

I found two interesting studies from Canada's Angus Reid Institute describing single payer health care in Canada. I'm very interested in find out what things are like in countries that have true government-run health care. A typical Canadian family pays $13,000+ per year per household for healthcare, or about $585,000 over their working lives. What are they getting for all that money?

Here is the first Angus Reid article:

> The study finds more than 2 million Canadians aged 55 and older face significant barriers when accessing the health care system in their province, such as being unable to find a family doctor or experiencing lengthy wait-times for surgery, diagnostic tests, or specialist visits.
>
> Moreover, most Canadians in this age group have at least some difficulty getting the care they want or need in a timely manner.
>
> The study focuses on the health care experiences of older Canadians, as well as their assessments of the quality of care they receive.

According to the article, 31% of respondents (aged 55 and older) rated access to the government's healthcare system as "easy". 48% had "moderate" problems with access, and 21% had "major" problems with access.

The second Angus Reid article explains:

> This second part of the study finds one-in-six Canadians (17%) in the 55-plus age group – a figure that represents upwards of 1.8 million people – say that they or someone else in their household have taken prescription drugs in a way other than prescribed because of cost.
>
> One-in-ten (10%) have decided to simply not fill a prescription because it was too expensive, and a similar number (9%) have decided not to renew one for the same reason. One-in-eight (12%) have taken steps to stretch their prescriptions, such as cutting pills or skipping doses.
>
> Some 17 per cent of Canadians 55 and older have done at least one of these things, and that proportion rises among those who have greater difficulty accessing other aspects of the health care system.

In a previous blog post, I reported on how Canadians have to wait in order to see their GP doctor. If that doctor refers them to a specialist, then they have to wait to see the specialist. And if that specialist schedules surgery, then they have to wait for their surgery appointment. The delays can easily go from weeks to months and even years. The MEDIAN delay from GP referral to treatment is 19.5 weeks.

Wait times in weeks (Source: Maclean's magazine)

Also, the Canadian system does NOT cover prescription drugs.

Please share this article and yesterday's because we have an election coming up, and votes need to know the facts.

Trump takes action on unemployment, healthcare, environment, refugees, adoption

November 4, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a Canadian friend named McKenzie who sometimes reviews my blog post drafts. She usually says the same two things: 1) this post should be one third as long as it is, and 2) don't tell me any more about why Democrats are bad, tell me why Republicans are good. So, in this post, I will tell you 5 reasons why Republicans are good, all from news stories about events from the last week alone.

Let's start with healthcare. I've been bashing Elizabeth Warren on healthcare for a couple of posts. What are the Republicans going to do about healthcare?

Here's Daily Signal:

> The White House is making a strong push against Democrats' "Medicare for All" proposal, laying out a "Health Care for You" agenda to boost competition and transparency, lower prescription prices, and produce greater affordability in health-related costs.
>
> […]The White House also has touted $6 billion spent over two years to target opioid addiction. This has contributed to a decrease in opioid deaths for the first time in almost two decades, officials say.
>
> […]Prescription prices are declining to levels not seen since the 1960s, according to the White House.
>
> The Trump administration reduced approval times for medicines regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. Trump signed into law Right-to-Try legislation to allow critically ill patients to access potentially lifesaving medicines that haven't yet been fully approved by the FDA.
>
> Trump also signed a $1 billion increase in funding for researching Alzheimer's disease and launched the End HIV/AIDS in America Initiative to stop transmission of the AIDS virus in the nation by 2030.
>
> The president last year signed the VA MISSION Act, which reforms existing programs in the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide more care for veterans in the communities where they live, with the aim of minimizing travel. The measure includes paying for veterans to get medical care outside VA facilities and also established walk-in community clinics for veterans.

Are Republicans doing anything to earn the votes of black Americans in 2020?

Breitbart reports:

> The unemployment rate for African Americans fell to 5.4 percent in October, the lowest level on record.
> This is the third consecutive month of record-low unemployment. September's

> 5.5 percent matched the record set in August.
>
> The unemployment rate for black men hit a record low of 5.1 percent, down three-tenths from the month prior. That was lower than the previous record low of 5.2 set in December 1973.

OK, I have white Democrat co-workers who think that this is proof of Trump's racism. Not kidding. But I think it's good.

But what about restrictions on energy production? We don't want to end up with blackouts like those Democrats in California, do we?

The Daily Signal reports:

> The Environmental Protection Agency will propose easing rules on disposal of coal ash, the residue from burning coal, to make it less likely the federal government would shutter a coal-fired utility plant, in an announcement set for Monday.
>
> The move is part of what has been a larger deregulation push by the Trump administration to roll back strict Obama-era regulations that the industry viewed as the previous administration's "war on coal," that pushed to shut down many coal-fired power plants.
>
> […]Coal ash is frequently recycled, and used as material for wallboard and concrete. Thus, according to the EPA, the rule could provide more resources for building the nation's highways and for agricultural purposes. Coal ash reuse also conserves natural resources and provides viable alternatives to disposal, the agency contends.
>
> "This demonstrates our support for reuse of coal ash," Wright said.
>
> More than 500 units at approximately 260 coal-fired facilities may be impacted by Monday's proposed rule, according to the EPA.

More coal means lower energy costs, and recycling coal by-products to build and repair highways sounds good.

But what about life issues? What is Trump doing about abortion?

The Daily Signal reports:

> Under a proposed new rule from the Department of Health and Human Services announced Friday, the federal government no longer will withhold federal grant money from faith-based adoption providers that won't compromise their views on same-sex marriage.
>
> […]The proposed HHS rule clarifies that the federal government won't discriminate against charitable organizations that don't handle adoptions for same-sex couples when it comes to allocating federal grants. The proposed rule clarifies all federal nondiscrimination laws enacted by Congress will be enforced in awarding grants. Sexual orientation and gender identity are not currently

> covered under nondiscrimination laws enacted by Congress.

OK, it's hard to deny that more adoption means less abortions. It certainly won't hurt to make it easier for adoption agencies to place unwanted children in loving homes.

OK, fine, but what about the refugees? There is a crime epidemic going on in Europe, because they keep welcoming in low-skilled non-English-speakers into their country, without checking them properly for risk factors.

Daily Wire reports:

> President Donald Trump announced on Friday that the administration was restricting the intake of refugees into the United States to the lowest-level on record under the current refugee system.
>
> In a memo to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Trump announced that he was setting the refugee cap at 18,000 refugees for Fiscal Year 2020 — 12,000 lower than Trump's cap for Fiscal Year 2019, and "the lowest number since the modern refugee system was created nearly 40 years ago," The Washington Times reported.
>
> The Trump administration reportedly considered going even lower when they first entertained the idea over the summer, cutting the number all the way down to nearly *zero*.

I remember when Obama wanted the cap set to 110,000 refugees. But he didn't want them to live in his mansion or pay with him with his own money. He wanted them to live next to your children's school, and pay for them with your money. So compassionate! Refugees are a problem for private voluntary charities, not for government, paid for by taxpayers who can barely make ends meet already.

Well, so I guess we do have reasons for wanting to elect Republicans in 2020! If you agree, then share the post! We can't ALWAYS be relying on attacking Democrats to reach the people in the middle who decide elections. We have to tell them what Republicans will do that is different from what Democrats will do.

William Lane Craig's secret weapon is his amazing wife Jan

November 5, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: "Godspeed" by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

I'm re-posting this classic post because it was mentioned in the latest episode of the Reasonable Faith podcast.

I want to draw your attention to a talk on "Vision in Life" given by Dr. William Lane Craig. Dr. Craig is the ablest defender of the Christian faith operating today. He has done formal academic debates with all of the best known atheists on major university campuses in front of *thousands* of university students.

It turns out that he owes a lot of his success to his amazing wife Jan.

The MP3 file is here. (32 minutes)

This talk was Dr. Craig's chapel address to Biola University students.

About 11 minutes into the talk, Bill describes what happened after he finished his Bachelor's degree at Wheaton:

> And so I joined the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for 2 years, and was assigned to Northern Illinois University. And that was where I met my wife Jan. She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota where she had come to faith in Christ. And she had a similar vision for her life of evangelism and discipleship.
>
> And as we worked at NIU together, she with gals and I with the guys, leading

> students to Christ and discipling them to walk with the Lord, we fell in love. And we decided that we would be more effective if we joined forces and became a team.

So their reason for getting together was because they thought that they would be more effective in evangelism and discipleship if they worked as a team.

It is at this point in the talk where Bill begins to explain just how Jan molded him into the lean, mean debating machine that travels the world striking terror into the hearts of atheists.

Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

In an article on his web site, he talks about how Jan encouraged him to do his first Ph.D:

> As graduation from Trinity neared, Jan and I were sitting one evening at the supper table in our little campus apartment, talking about what to do after graduation. Neither of us had any clear leading or inclination of what we should do next.
>
> So Jan said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really like to do next?"
>
> I replied, "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to England and do a doctorate under John Hick."
>
> "Who's he?" she asked.
>
> "Oh, he's this famous British philosopher who's written extensively on arguments for the existence of God," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a cosmological argument for God's existence."
>
> But it hardly seemed a realistic idea.
>
> The next evening at supper Jan handed me a slip of paper with John Hick's

> address on it. “I went to the library today and found out that he’s at the University of Birmingham in England,” she said. “Why don’t you write him a letter and ask him if you can do a doctoral thesis under him on the cosmological argument?”
>
> What a woman! So I did, and to our amazement and delight Professor Hick wrote back saying he’d be very pleased to supervise my doctoral work on that subject. So it was an open door!

And in the same article, he explains how Jan encouraged him to get his second Ph.D:

> As Jan and I neared the completion of my doctoral studies in Birmingham, our future path was again unclear to us. I had sent out a number of applications for teaching positions in philosophy at American universities but had received no bites. We didn’t know what to do.
>
> I remember it like yesterday. We were sitting at the supper table in our little house outside Birmingham, and Jan suddenly said to me, “Well, if money were no object, what would you really *like* to do next?”
>
> I laughed because I remembered how the Lord had used her question to guide us in the past. I had no trouble answering the question. “If money were no object, what I’d really like to do is go to Germany and study under Wolfhart Pannenberg.”
>
> “Who’s he?”
>
> “Oh, he’s this famous German theologian who’s defended the resurrection of Christ historically,” I explained. “If I could study with him, I could develop a historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus.”
>
> Our conversation drifted to other subjects, but Jan later told me that my remark had just lit a fire under her. The next day while I was at the university, she slipped away to the library and began to research grants-in-aid for study at German universities. Most of the leads proved to be defunct or otherwise inapplicable to our situation. But there were two grants she found that were possibilities. You can imagine how surprised I was when she sprung them on me!

Both of these Ph.D experiences are also described in the talk. And the talk concludes as follows:

> **I am so thankful to be married to a woman who is tremendously resourceful, tremendously talented and energetic, who could have pursued an independent career in any number of areas, but instead, she has chose to wed her aspirations to mine, and to make it her goal to make me the most effective person I can be, for Christ. And she has been like my right arm in ministry over these many years. And it is a tremendous privilege to be a team with a person like that.**
>
> **And you young men, I would encourage you, if you marry, to find a gal**

> **who shares your vision, not some independent vision, but who is interested in aligning herself with you, and pursuing together a common vision and goal that will draw you [together], so that you will avoid the growing separateness that so often creeps into marriages.**

And now you know the rest of Bill's story. *The person you marry will have an enormous influence on the impact you will have for Christ and his Kingdom.* It is up to you to decide whether that influence is going to be positive or negative, by deciding if you will marry, and if you do marry, by deciding whom you will marry.

You may also be interested in this talk given by William Lane Craig, entitled "Healthy Relationships" (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008) (audio here) In that talk, he offers advice to Christians who want to have a marriage that is consistent with their Christian faith.

LGBT activist calls for “hardball” “fight” to empty the church pews of Christians

November 6, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Transgender woman calls for “hardball” “fight” to “empty the pews”

Previously, I blogged about how transgender activists shut down a discussion of transgender issues on a university campus in Canada. You might think that suppressing debate and disagreement is something that only happens north of border. But an LGBT activist with 50,000 Twitter followers is being re-tweeted by prominent people on the left after demanding a “fight” to “empty the pews”.

Look at this Twitter thread from “Chrissy Str00p“, a transgender woman:

> The Christian Right has won its culture war under the noses of “liberal elites.” Long before Trump, abstinence only #FakeSexEd came to dominate public schools. Abortion became effectively inaccessible in most areas.
>
> We’re fighting to take ground back and even to realize rights that have never been fully realized, and it’s time we understood that. We’re the goddamn Rebel Alliance; the Empire is in power.
>
> If we win big in 2020—far and away not a given—we need to play hardball.
>
> **#EmptyTheP3ws**
>
> I’m talking adding justices to the Supreme Court hardball (Roe is lost in the meantime, and likely Obergefell and even Griswold into the bargain). Maybe even finding a way to remove Kavanaugh and Gorsuch from the bench hardball. They

> hold their seats illegitimately.
>
> The Christian Right will impose minority authoritarian rule for as long as it can, and it's about g*dd*m time we started acting like we're fighting an anti-democratic force, a real threat to democracy and human rights, because we f*cking are, and not by choice.
>
> Get in the fight.

Now, you have to ask yourself, given the previous post about transgender activists using threats of violence to suppress basic human rights like free speech, what does Str00p mean by emptying the pews? How does Str00p intend to get the Christians in those pews to vacate the pews? Does Str00p sound like a tolerant, law-abiding person who respects a diversity of views? Does Str00p sound like someone who engages in rational debate?

I don't mind that Str00p has those views, or speaks them. I hope Str00p's words don't incite violence against Christians, as they could easily be interpreted to be a call for violence by someone mentally unstable. It's happened before. Remember the gay activist Floyd Lee Corkins II, who was sentenced to 25 years in prison for domestic terrorism, after attacking the Family Research Council building armed with a gun? We just don't know what Str00p meant.

I hope that Christians take note of Str00p's views, and that they don't just vote in 2020. I'd like Christians to get informed, and be persuasive to their undecided neighbors using facts and evidence. All it takes for Str00p to win is for us to be so intimidated by Str00p's rhetoric that we decide that it's not worth it to share facts and evidence with our neighbors. If you have to use an alias to share facts and evidence with your neighbors, then get an alias.

YouTube bans video featuring pediatrician who disagrees with transgender activism

November 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

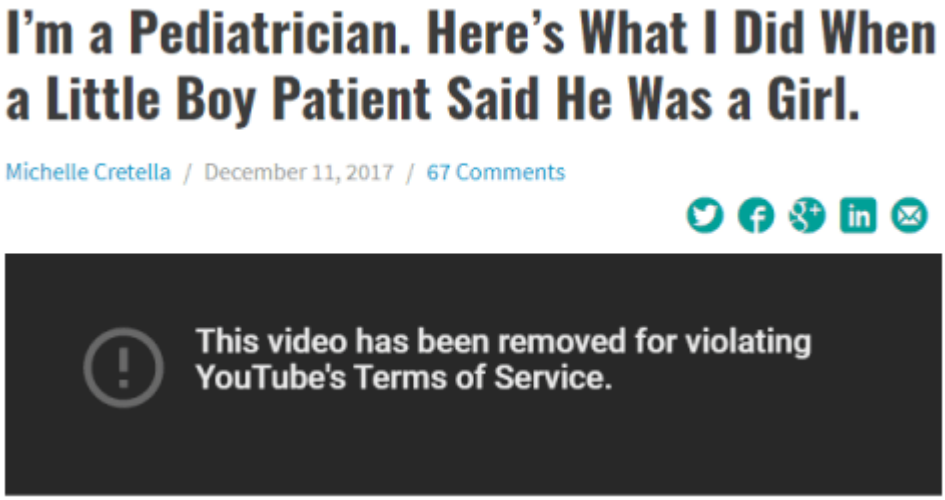

Big Tech companies censoring criticism of Democrat policies

On this blog, I've been reporting on how big technology companies, many of them based in very liberal Silicon Valley, love to censor anything that makes the Democrat party look bad. Well, the Democrat party has embraced the transgender agenda pretty hard, with the "Equality Act". So, the Silicon Valley left wants to use their power to censor anything that argues against that agenda.

Consider this article from the Daily Signal:

> "See, if you want to cut off a leg or an arm, you're mentally ill, but if you want to cut off healthy breasts or a penis, you're transgender."
>
> Those are the words of Dr. Michelle Cretella, a pediatrician with many years' experience and the executive director of the American College of Pediatricians, in a Daily Signal video published in 2017.
>
> It's a sentence YouTube will not allow the doctor to say about children and gender identity issues.
>
> The Daily Signal recently learned that our video of Cretella had been removed from YouTube. In its place, YouTube displayed this message: "This video has been removed for violating YouTube's policy on hate speech."
>
> Over the past few months, The Daily Signal worked with YouTube to try to reach a resolution. Ultimately, we were told the only way we could get the video back on YouTube was to delete the previously mentioned sentence.
>
> In other words, we had two choices: censor the doctor's words or have no video on the world's biggest video platform.

The parent company of YouTube is Google. Which is why I use the DuckDuckGo search engine.

The Federalist notes:

> This is not the first time this has happened to a conservative news outlet or conservative organization. In June, YouTube demonetized comedian Steven Crowder after a pressure campaign by a gay Vox writer. In 2016, YouTube restricted educational videos from the conservative, nonprofit educational organization PragerU. The videos in question included a wide range of subjects from national security and foreign policy, to the Second Amendment and abortion. PragerU ended up suing the Google-owned YouTube for unlawful censorship and free speech discrimination.
>
> This is not a one time occurrence, but a consistent attempt to de-platform conservatives and conservative thought from the largest video platform in the world.

The reason I'm concerned about this is because I keep seeing examples of transgender activists expressing hostility to free speech, and religious liberty. I hope that people are seeing what gay rights really means in practice, and will be appropriately engaged during the 2020 election campaign. There are many ways to help. You can make donations. You can get out the vote. You can put up a yard sign. You can share articles on facts and evidence that are critical of Democrat positions.

If it's too sensitive for you to argue about social issues like abortion and LGBT activism, then you can share articles critical of socialist policies – about how they require raising taxes, and don't work. If you want to share articles and evidence about social and moral issues, then it might be a good idea to get yourself an alias, because the left does come after people who disagree with them.

Think about it. We are dealing with people who use power to censor ideas that they disagree with. They don't want to debate those who disagree, they want to censor them. And if we've learned anything about the secular left from history, it's that if they fail to stop undesired views with censorship, then they resort to violence. The time to stop it is during the election. And the way to stop it is by getting informed, and winning arguments with reason and evidence. Something the left, e.g. – Google and YouTube, is not capable of doing.

Pregnant woman uses legally-owned firearm to protect her family from home invaders

November 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Women have a right to defend their lives from criminals

I think it's important for people to vote Republican to really understand all the different policies that Republicans stand for, even if they don't agree with them. Pro-choice Republicans should understand the arguments for pro-life. Pro-union Republicans should understand the arguments for free trade. And anti-gun Republicans should understand the arguments for self-defense.

Here's an article from Fox 9 local news that explains why it is that Republicans want law-abiding citizens to be able to own guns.

It says:

> A Florida woman who was eight-months pregnant and came out wielding an AR-15 rifle reportedly saved her husband and pre-teen daughter last week from a pair of violent intruders who'd broken into the family's home — with the gun-toting matriarch fatally striking one of the men, who was later found dead in a nearby ditch.
>
> Jeremy King was at his home in Lithia, 25 miles southeast of Tampa, at 9 p.m. Wednesday night when two armed men, wearing masks and hoods, broke inside.
>
> "As soon as they had got the back door opened, they had a pistol on me and was grabbing my 11-year-old daughter," King told Bay News 9. "I'm telling them, 'I have nothing for you,' and they're like, 'Give me everything you got.' It became

> real violent, real fast."
>
> King said one of the burglars pistol-whipped him and another kicked him in the head, creating a commotion that attracted the attention of his wife, who walked into the room to see what the noise was — and soon found herself dodging a bullet.
>
> The woman, who was not identified, reportedly retreated and grabbed an AR-15 that was legally inside their house, returning to the room and shooting the intruders, hitting one of them.
>
> "When he came toward the back door in her line of sight, she clipped him," King said of his wife. "He made it from my back door to roughly 200 feet out in the front ditch before the AR did its thing."
>
> […]"Them guys came in with two normal pistols and my AR stopped it. [My wife] evened the playing field and kept them from killing me," King said, noting he suffered a fractured eye socket, a fractured sinus cavity and a concussion, and needed "20 stitches and three staples in my head."

Now, what is it that Democrats have to offer this woman? They want to disarm her, by sending police door-to-door to confiscate her means of self-defense. The Democrats aren't going to confiscate the weapons of the criminals – oh, no, no, no. Because criminals don't register their firearms and pass background checks. The Democrats want criminals to keep their illegally obtained firearms. But the Democrats want the law-abiding taxpayers *who pay their salaries* to be disarmed.

What happens with women don't have guns to defend themselves? Well, there was a good article about that from earlier in the week from the Daily Caller:

> At least nine members of a Mormon family, three women and six children, were killed Monday in a deadly ambush while they were traveling near the southern border.
>
> Three vehicles were traveling between the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Sonora on Monday when cartel members attacked them, according to the attorney general of the State of Chihuahua, CNN reported. Alex LeBaron, a family member of the victims, said the attack took the lives of two infants, four children, and three women.
>
> All of those killed held dual U.S.-Mexican citizenship, he said.
>
> "Women and children (between 14 years old and 10 months) were massacred, burnt alive. Mothers were screaming for the fire to stop," LeBaron said.
>
> […]One child was gunned down while trying to escape, and others were trapped inside a flaming vehicle.

Again, what would the Democrats have to offer these women and children? Well, the Democrats are glad that these women and children didn't upset the nice criminals by defending themselves. You'll recall that Obama even had an operation called "Fast and

Furious” to supply the Mexican drug cartels with firearms, so that he could call for more gun control when those guns made their way back into America. Democrats are fine with guns in the hands of criminals – it’s YOU they don’t trust.

The Human Rights Campaign, their Democrat allies and their corporate sponsors

November 9, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist and Democrat donor Terry Bean and his good friend Barack Obama

Recently, we found out that Democrat billionaire donor Jeffrey Epstein ran an underage sex-trafficking ring, where he would provide underage women to his Democrat allies for sex. He was later killed in prison before he could reveal all the Democrats who used his underage women sex slaves. I wonder if sexual immorality like that is normal for prominent Democrats and Democrat donors?

Here's the latest news on a story I've been following and writing about for years, reported by KOIN 6 Portland local news: (H/T Tweet by Andy Ngo who is gay, but not a gay activist)

> Terry Bean, the high-profile Democratic donor and activist, **bailed out of jail the same day he was arrested** Wednesday afternoon by Portland police. His lawyer, Derek Ashton – who was arrested hours earlier – also posted bail and was released from jail.
>
> Court documents say the men arranged a $200,000 payment to a 15-year-old boy to make sex abuse charges against Bean go away.
>
> Bean was arrested on a warrant accusing him of 2 counts of 3rd-degree sodomy — both felonies — and a misdemeanor sexual abuse charge on a case that was first filed in 2015.
>
> In court records PPB Detective Jeff Myers said Ashton and the boy's lawyer worked on a civil settlement.
>
> Myers detailed an elaborate scheme to keep investigators from finding the boy. The boy told the detective his own lawyer helped him hide.
>
> "She told me not to talk to certain people, she told me to go on the run at a

> certain point," the detective quoted the boy as saying. "So, if I did testify I was told I wasn't supposed to get my money. So that's why I did not testify. And that's why my attomey told me to go on the run."
>
> Myers wrote the boy's lawyer gave him a "burner" phone and cash, and worked to hide him in a cabin in the mountains outside of Portland.

Uh, well, that doesn't make rich Democrats look very good. But let's look at this completely different story about a different Democrat gay rights activist.

The far-left New York Times reports:

> The mayor of Seattle, Ed Murray, said on Tuesday that he would resign after announcing in May that he would not seek a second term. Several men have comeforward to accuse Mr. Murray of sexually abusing them decades ago, when they were underage.
>
> The announcement came just hours after The Seattle Times published a story with an account by a fifth man, Mr. Murray's cousin, who said Mr. Murray had abused him in the 1970s.
>
> [..]Mr. Murray, 62, a Democrat, is the city's first openly gay mayor, and had served in the State Legislature for many years before being elected in 2013.
>
> […]**The liberal Mr. Murray is generally considered a father of Washington's same-sex marriage law, which he pressed in the State Legislature for years.**

Oh no! It's the same thing. Another person who pushed for gay marriage is accused of underage sex with boys.

You can read more about what the mayor actually did in Life Site News.

OK, how about this story – this one is completely different!

From KTAR News in Arizona.

Excerpt:

> A former LGBT youth and diversity liaison for Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton has been charged with 13 counts of sex crimes with a minor.
>
> Caleb Michael Laieski is accused of having sex with a 14-year-old boy last year. He was 17 at the time, but Arizona law said children under the age of 15 can't legally consent to sex, even with another minor.
>
> […]Laieski gained national attention in 2011 when he appeared in a documentary about bullying and discussed issues involving gay youth with both President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden.

Life Site News has some more details.

Excerpt:

> When the younger boy begged Laieski to go with him to the police, Laieski told

> him no. He said he was negotiating with Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius over a possible White House job, and he worried that if anyone found out he'd been involved in a crime, he'd lose the opportunity.

Oh no, it's the same thing again. Another Democrat championing gay rights and having sex with underage boys, then covering it up.

OK, new story! This time for sure it will be different!

From the San Francisco Chronicle.

Excerpt:

> Veteran gay rights advocate and former San Francisco Human Rights Commission staffer Larry Brinkin pleaded guilty Tuesday to possessing child pornography.
>
> Brinkin, 67, changed his plea in a deal with the district attorney's office that will result in a sentencing recommendation of six months in county jail, six months of home detention, five years of probation and lifetime registration as a sex offender.
>
> Brinkin, who worked as a senior contract compliance officer with the rights commission until his 2010 retirement, was arrested in June 2012. Authorities said e-mail attachments were found on his America Online subscriber's account that contained images of toddlers engaged in sex acts with men.
>
> […]During his 22-year tenure at the rights commission, Brinkin helped craft the city's Equal Benefits Ordinance, which became a national model for workplace equality for gays and lesbians. When he retired, the Board of Supervisors declared the week of Feb. 1, 2010, as Larry Brinkin Week.

Wow. That wasn't different at all. It seems to happen all the time, but all the mainstream media talks about is Trump, Trump, Trump. And they don't even talk about Democrat billionaire sex-trafficker Jeffrey Epstein, who was murdered before he could reveal the Democrats who used his underage sex slaves.

Why I admire people in the armed forces more than famous entertainers

November 10, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've noticed that many Christians can tell me a lot about famous entertainers. It doesn't matter if it's singers, musicians, actors, athletes, etc., they seem to know details of their biographies, achievements, etc. And it doesn't really matter if those people are Christians, or whether they have performed actions consistent with a Christian worldview in their private lives.

Anyway, speaking for myself, I mostly admire two kinds of people. The first kind is the kind I blog about here all the time: Christian scholars engage non-Christians intellectually using logic and evidence. The second kind, as you can tell from my reading list, is people who distinguish themselves in conflict with those who oppose the principles and policies that allow me to live out my Christian life. And I am especially interested when people who are fighting evil (imperialists, Nazis, socialists, communists, leftists, etc.) exhibit Christ-like character in risking their lives to save others, or in giving their lives to save others.

Lt. Walt Chewning charges unto burning F-6F Hellcat to save trapped pilot

Anyway, today is November 10th, so I have a war story to tell you that happened on November 10th, 1943.

> Lieutenant (later Lieutenant Commander) Walter Lewis Chewning of Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, steps on the burning fuel tank of an F6F-3 Hellcat flown by Ensign (later Lieutenant) Byron Milton Johnson of Potter, Nebraska to effect a successful rescue of the pilot on November 10, 1943. Johnson had flown out to USS Enterprise from Barbers Point, Hawaii, enroute to Makin Atoll in the Gilberts to

> support the United States Army invasion, which occurred on November 20, 1943. The afternoon of November 10, Johnson took off in F6F Hellcat Number 30 for a routine training exercise. He immediately developed engine trouble and requested an emergency landing. He was waved off three times as he struggled to maintain control, but his tail hook caught the third arresting gear wire, and Johnson's Hellcat was slammed into the deck, coming to rest in the port catwalk. The plane came to rest on its external belly fuel tank, which started to leak. As the engine vibrated horribly as the propeller bent itself on the deck, sparks ignited the fuel. The hard landing had jammed Johnson's canopy closed, shearing the retaining pin; he could not exit the plane. Chewning, who had joined the ship October 2, 1943 as Enterprise new catapult officer, scrambled out of the catwalk and came through the smoke. Stepping on the burning belly tank, he forced open the canopy and pulled Johnson to safety.

He received the two highest non-combat medals available:

> Chewning was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his actions.

He was a well-educated and accomplished person before joining the Navy:

> Chewning played soccer and Lacrosse at Cornell while studying Mechanical Engineering, breaking his rib and left ankle in one game. He graduated in 1936 and studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before joining the Navy in January 1941. He was the assistant to the Chief Engineer at the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania before joining USS Enterprise. He served as Enterprise's catapult officer until December 1944, when he transferred to Dutch Harbor Naval Air Station in Alaska as ordinance officer. Chewning served in the Navy until December 1949; he also was awarded the Bronze Star. After the war he assisted research and development for various aeronautical companies, the United States Air Force, and the fledgling National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Motion picture film of the crash, taken from Enterprise's bridge, was shown as part of the television program "Victory at Sea" on January 25, 1953. Chewning and Johnson gave interviews to several newspapers about the accident after the program aired.

You can see a video clip of the rescue here, from 5:35 to 6:00. I found a colorized version of the picture above here:

Lt. Walt Chewning charges unto burning F-6F Hellcat to save trapped pilot
This image was colourized from the original by Paul Reynolds.

What I thought was interesting about Chewning was how he had everything going for him in terms of his education and career, but he chose to join the Navy anyway, in order to defend his country from Japanese imperialism. Those who understand how the Japanese treated prisoners and conquered peoples will know which side of that conflict was good, and which side was evil. Chewning wasn't some sort of loser who took risks for fun and thrills. It had to be a risk where the prize was worth the risk. And he had the humility to consider others better than himself, so that their life was worth the risking of his own. Many people on the secular left who like to talk about how generous, compassionate and virtuous they are are unable to make moral judgments against evils like Japanese imperialism – much less take self-sacrificial action against them.

I just think that it's important for young Christians to have the right kind of heroes. The heroes who are promoted to young Christians by the cultural elites are not usually the right role models. And there is a reason for that. The secular leftists don't want young Christians to be emulating people who excel according to the standards of the Christian worldview. We are in a religion where self-sacrificial love is the centerpiece. Taking trouble on yourself for someone else. Doing your job, when it goes against your own self-interest. Let's not allow a bunch of godless socialist celebrities to pick and choose who we hold in high regard.

Marine Captain earned Medal of Honor fighting communists in North Korea

November 11, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's go from the top down to set the context for the profile of William E. Barber.

Map of the Korean War

In the summer of 1950, North Korean communists launch a completely unprovoked attack across the 38th parallel against their peaceful, democratic neighbors, the South Koreans. The Americans immediately sent an invasion force by sea to drive them out. The North Koreans easily manage to take over the capital Seoul, and the allies are left with only one port in the southeast – Pusan. In September of 1950, American forces land an invasion force at Inchon, cutting off the North Korean invasion force surrounding Pusan. The North Koreans retreat, and there is hope that American forces will be home by Christmas. But then, unbeknownst to the Americans, the Chines communists invade North Korea from the north and surround the American forces near the Chosin reservoir, threatening to annihilate an entire Marine division.

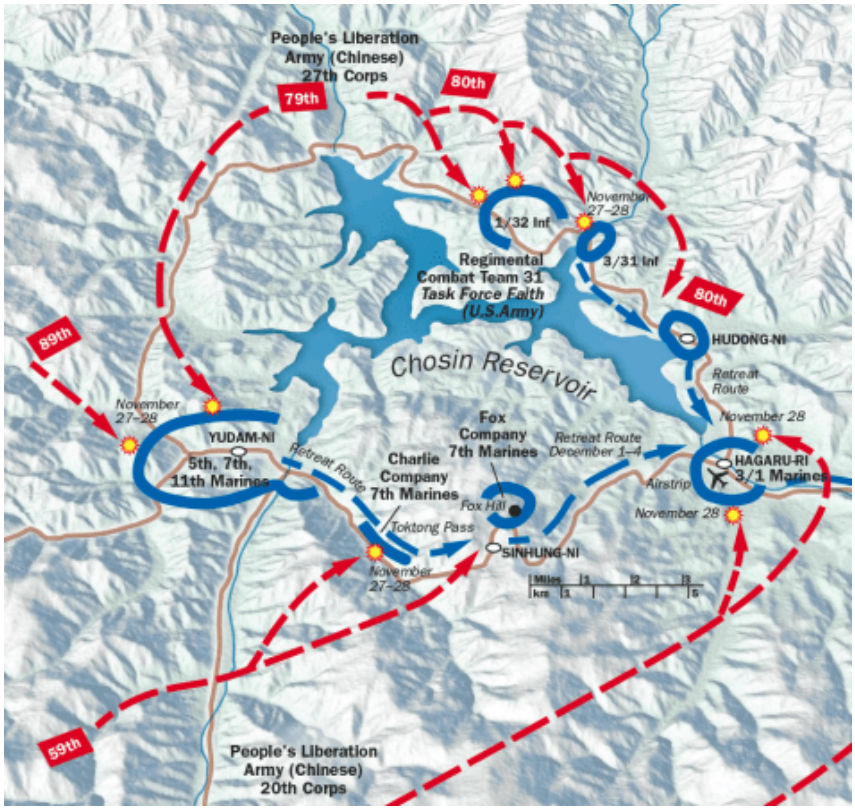

The Marines at Yudam-Ni are surrounded and must retreat to Hagaru-Ri

As you can see from the map, there are a whole bunch of American troops fighting to the north/east and south/west of the Chosin Reservoir. The marines near Yudam-Ni need to retreat along a road called the MSR (main supply road) back to Hagaru-Ri. But in order to conduct that retreat, they have to hold onto the vital Toktong pass, which is overwatched by Fox company from their position on Fox Hill. Can Charlie company and Fox company hold off the entire Chinese 59th division (10,000 men) with only two companies (about 250 men each)?

U.S. Marines “The Chosin Few”, December 1950

Well, the book I read (which Dina gave me for Christmas), was about Fox company and their defense of the Toktong pass. This is what the leftist New York Times had to say about the man in charge of Fox company (“F company”) in a 2002 article:

> Col. William E. Barber, who won the Medal of Honor for his leadership of a vastly outnumbered company under siege on a snowy hilltop in one of the worst defeats in Marine history, the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in 1950, died on April 19 at his home in Irvine, Calif. He was 82.
>
> The cause was bone-marrow cancer, said Jerry Courtier, a friend who hopes to write Colonel Barber’s biography.
>
> The reservoir is south of the Yalu River, which separates North Korea from China. After the Americans had pushed the North Koreans almost to the Yalu, 150,000 Chinese troops unexpectedly crossed the river into North Korea. Colonel Barber’s unit, Company F of the Second Battalion of the Seventh Marines, First Marine Division, was on a hill that commanded the Toktong Pass, a vital gap between Yudam Ni and Hagaru Ri, two towns separated by 78 miles.
>
> The stakes were huge. If F Company yielded its position, 8,000 marines at Yudam Ni would be cut off from the 3,000 at Haguru Ri by tens of thousands of Chinese troops.
>
> Through five days and six nights in subzero weather and often swirling snow, Colonel Barber, then a captain, inspired his men, outnumbered more than five to one, to cling to their tenuous positions. He was shot in a bone near his groin on the second day but continued to make the rounds of the hill. He likened the wound to a bee sting.
>
> When the unit was ordered to withdraw and fight its way to safety, Captain Barber refused. Three times, the enemy broke through the line, only to be repulsed.
>
> ”I knew that we could probably hold, and I knew that if we didn’t hold we could exact a very heavy toll,” he said in an interview in 1976 with The Los Angeles Times.
>
> His citation for the nation’s top medal said that he commanded his men from a stretcher. But Hector A. Cafferata Jr., who as a rifleman won the Medal of Honor in the same battle, insisted that Captain Barber refused the stretcher.
>
> ”He walked the line, he kept us together,” said Mr. Cafferata, who was beside Captain Barber when he was shot.
>
> In the mayhem, the Chinese blew whistles, beat cymbals and tooted bugles as they repeatedly attacked. Coffee froze before men could drink it, and some of the wounded died because plasma froze with no way to thaw it.
>
> When the battle was over, more than 1,000 enemy soldiers were dead. Of Captain Barber’s original 240 men, 82 were able to walk away.

> Gen. Raymond G. Davis, who was a lieutenant colonel in the Marines, received a Medal of Honor for leading the unit that rescued F Company.
>
> William Earl Barber was born on Nov. 30, 1919, in Dehart, Ky. He attended what is now Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky., for two years and enlisted in the Marines, at the age of 21, in 1940.
>
> He was so good at shooting a rifle that he was made a weapons instructor. After volunteering for parachute training, he demonstrated such proficiency that he became a parachute instructor.
>
> In World War II, he was promoted to sergeant in 1942 and commissioned a second lieutenant in 1943. He was a rifle platoon commander at Camp Pendleton, Calif., when his unit was shipped to the Pacific.
>
> Colonel Barber was in the first wave to hit Iwo Jima, where he was wounded twice. He received the Silver Star for bravery in addition to two Purple Hearts. At a ceremony on the 50th anniversary of the battle in 1995, he said:
>
> ”I am older now, as you are, but I can still see the colors of that February morning. The sky. The island. And sometimes I think I can hear the noise of battle.”
>
> He was treated in Japan for his wounds and returned to the United States, where he worked as a recruiter, among other positions. He was promoted to captain in 1949 and was in the force that occupied Japan.
>
> When he joined F Company in Korea, he saw a raggedy unshaven bunch and immediately ordered the the troops to shave, shine their shoes and look like marines. He suggested that his new charges resembled Pancho Villa’s bandits.
>
> ”He was one tough guy,” Mr. Cafferata said. ”He was by the book.”

He was by the book. He enlisted in the Marines because he was grateful to his country for allowing him to escape poverty and go into college, and he wanted to give something back.

You can read a review of the book I read about Fox company, and read about some of the details of what it was like for those men. You’ll never look at your own troubles the same way again. You can also read about Barber’s Medal of Honor citation here.

The Medal of Honor, Navy and Marines variant

So, now that I am done with that book, I have moved on to another Korean War book that Dina gave me, this one about George company. The Korean War might have been our most just war – defending a peaceful democratic ally from a totalitarian communist regime. You just have to compare North Korea and South Korea today to understand the stakes. North Korea is basically a godless concentration camp that tortures and murders its people if they so much as think the wrong thoughts about the atheist state. South Korea is free and prosperous, where the people have human rights, like the right to free speech and freedom of religion.

It's important for me to read about the hardships that real heroes face, so that I don't complain too much about my own tiny struggles. When you read about the struggles of great American soldiers, so many good things happen to you. Your own problems get smaller, your humility and gratitude get bigger. And you are reminded about why America is a great country, and what American character is really like. These things are not taught by leftists in the public schools. They are not talked about by leftists in the mainstream media. They are not presented by leftists in the Hollywood film industry. If you want to know the real America, you have to find it yourself.

The kalam cosmological argument defended in a peer-reviewed science journal

November 12, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Here's the peer-reviewed article. It appears in a scientific journal focused on astrophysics.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

Here's an excerpt in which the author, Dr. William Lane Craig, explains the Big Bang cosmology:

The monumental significance of the Friedman-Lemaitre model lay in its historization of the universe. As one commentator has remarked, up to this time the idea of the expansion of the universe "was absolutely beyond comprehension. Throughout all of human history the universe was regarded as fixed and immutable and the idea that it might actually be changing was inconceivable."{8} But if the Friedman-Lemaitre model were correct, the universe could no longer be adequately treated as a static entity existing, in effect, timelessly. Rather the universe has a history, and time will not be matter of indifference for our investigation of the cosmos. In 1929 Edwin Hubble's measurements of the red-shift in the optical spectra of light from distant galaxies,{9} which was taken to indicate a universal recessional motion of the light sources in the line of sight, provided a dramatic verification of the Friedman-Lemaitre model. Incredibly, what Hubble had discovered was the isotropic expansion of the universe predicted by Friedman and Lemaitre. It marked a veritable turning point in the history of science. "Of all the great predictions that science has ever made over the centuries," exclaims John Wheeler, "was there ever one greater than this, to predict, and predict correctly, and predict against all expectation a phenomenon so fantastic as the expansion of the universe?"{10}

As a GTR-based theory, the Friedman-Lemaitre model does not describe the expansion of the material content of the universe into a pre-existing, empty, Newtonian space, but rather the expansion of space itself. This has the astonishing implication that as one reverses the expansion and extrapolates back in time, space-time curvature becomes progressively greater until one finally arrives at a singular state at which space-time curvature becomes infinite. This state therefore constitutes an edge or boundary to space-time itself. P. C. W. Davies comments,

> An initial cosmological singularity . . . forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity. . . . On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.{11}

The popular expression "Big Bang," originally a derisive term coined by Fred Hoyle to characterize the beginning of the universe predicted by the Friedman-Lemaitre model, is thus potentially misleading, since the expansion cannot be visualized from the outside (there being no "outside," just as there is no "before" with respect to the Big Bang).{12}

The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at

> the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"{13}
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Every theist should be able to understand and defend this argument. It is a scientific refutation of materialism, and it is supported by six lines of scientific evidence – all of which emerged as science has progressed.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe
3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

Those are the scientific discoveries that have led us to the beginning of the universe, which support's Dr. Craig's argument.

This is the kind of evidence I expect all Christian theists to be using when discussing the question of whether God exists. Scientific evidence. When talking to non-Christians, we first need to show that we understand science, because science is a reliable and respected way of getting knowledge about the universe. Non-Christians do not accept the Bible, but they do accept science, so we begin evangelism with science. Science (experimental, testable, repeatable science) should set limits on what anyone can believe – including non-Christians, who might otherwise not be inclined to listen to Bible verses and theology. Important: it's not a good idea to discuss the resurrection of Jesus with a person who does not accept the scientific evidence for a Creator of the universe.

A helpful short video:

The Big Bang is not compatible with atheism

According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by the atheistic worldview.

Christians should support natural marriage because it protects children from adult selfishness

November 13, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

I have been following Katy Faust's work on Twitter. She runs the organization "Them Before Us". She fights laws and policies which allow adults to put their desires above the needs of children. And especially a child's need for a relationship with his or her mother and father. In a recent article for The Federalist, she takes on a Joshua Harris, who is attacking traditional Christian moral values.

She writes:

> In a recent interview, newly ex-mega-church pastor Joshua Harris and author of the 1990s best-seller "I Kissed Dating Goodbye" remarked that the support President Trump has received from the evangelical community has been "incredibly damaging to the gospel and to the church." I'd wager Harris is projecting something fierce.
>
> In August, Harris announced that he and his wife Shannon were divorcing, that he no longer considers himself a Christian, and that he regrets "standing against marriage equality." Just in case the point was lost on any of us, he followed up his announcement by posting a picture of himself eating a rainbow donut at the Vancouver Pride parade.
>
> **It's no coincidence that Harris reversed himself on biblical teachings on sex and marriage while abandoning the core tenets of the faith.**
>
> **The denial of sexual and marital norms by believers is often adjacent to a rejection of the core tenets of the faith. That's because to arrive at these "inclusive" and "affirming" positions on marriage, Christians must exalt intoxicants such as emotion over uncompromising scripture,**

> **tradition, and natural law. Once you shift the authority from sola scriptura to sola feels, it's only a matter of time before every other orthodox teaching finds itself on the woke chopping block.**

I love this SO MUCH.

If I had to pick one conclusion that I have found to be true in 30 years of debating Christian truth claims, it would be that the normal process for becoming an atheist has nothing to do with reason or evidence. People abandon their faith in their teens, long before they have ever done any research into whether Christianity is true. And why? Because they know that their desire to be free of the moral demands of Christianity is true. And they know that their desire to be liked by their non-Christian friends is true.

Katy explains that she loves loves to discuss and debate with non-Christians and LGBT people about the issue she cares about: natural marriage and children's rights. But she gets annoyed with Christian leaders who misunderstand the gospel.

She writes:

> Whether approaching the issue from a natural law perspective where male and female complementarity features prominently, or considering the most widely ratified treaty in human history outlines a child's right to be known and loved by their mother and father, or through the lens of scripture where God joins together man and woman in life-long union because he is seeking "godly offspring" (Malachi 2), Christian leaders have no excuse for getting marriage wrong.
>
> Zip. Zero. Nada. Their more-tolerant-than-Jesus definition of marriage (Mark 10:6-9) is, to use Harris' own words, incredibly damaging not only to the church, but to the most vulnerable as well.
>
> The reality is that Christians cannot get gay marriage wrong unless they first get the gospel wrong. Progressive Christians are under the wrong impression that ours is a gospel of affirmation: the idea that God affirms everything we think and say and do and want. This misconceived notion of the gospel believes that for God to genuinely love us, he has to love everything about us.
>
> In this self-esteem-driven, everyone-gets-a-prize culture, a God who sometimes disapproves of our thoughts and behavior (*cough* Psalm 19:14) appears to be quite a bigot. In the "Born This Way" version of the Gaga gospel, Matthew 5:29 would read, "If your right eye causes you to stumble, by all means, redefine the word 'stumble' because, well, I wouldn't want you to lose an eye now, would I?"
>
> An honest reading of scripture reveals that ours is not a gospel of affirmation. Leave aside the 613 laws of the Old Testament in which God is rigidly un-affirming as he imposes devastating consequences on his people when they misuse their words, money, bodies, land, and worship. The New Testament and the gospels are also brimming with commands to put off behaviors that displease God and put on an entirely new nature.

Katy likes to tweet a lot of stories where children who have been impacted by divorce or same-sex marriage or donor-conception or surrogacy speak about how they feel about not having a relationship with their father or mother (or both). But she also knows how to argue against adult selfishness using data.

My advice to Christians is this. If you want to have confidence when defending the Christian teaching on marriage, or defending the rights of children to a Mom and a Dad, then you need to be equipped with research, statistical evidence and stories of those who have been impacted. Being a Christian means advocating for the teachings of Jesus. Jesus cared about children, and he wanted adults to act in a way towards children that would help those children to come to know him and follow him. We should not be affirming adult selfishness when it harms the children who are made to know God.

I think one of the reasons why people like Joshua Harris are abandoning the faith is because abandoning the morality came first. And before the abandoning of morality, there was a refusal to get informed about the harm that sin does. Instead of putting in the time to look at the evidence, they just altered their worldviews in order to feel good and be liked. Well, feeling good and being liked has never been important to the Christian life. But valuing truth, defending Christian convictions with evidence, and protecting the weak from the strong is found everywhere in the New Testament.

What is the criterion of embarrassment, and what are some examples of it?

November 14, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

The criterion of embarrassment is just one of the historical criteria used to select the parts of a piece of ancient literature that are likely to be historical. Other things in the source may have happened, but we can't know them as history. If significant parts of a text are historical, it is possible to accept it as historical until there are specific reasons to say that some part of it is NOT historical.

Here is William Lane Craig's list of criteria for a saying or event to be historical:

1. Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
2. Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
3. Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
4. Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
5. Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
6. Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.

The criteria is the same for liberal historians and conservative historians, although some historians weight one criteria more than others when trying to evaluate the historicity of

different New Testament parts.

What's amazing is that even liberal historians will give you facts that are embarrassing to the authors as "historical".

Anyway, here are 8 examples of parts of the New Testament that exhibit the criterion of embarrassment, thanks to theologian C. Michael Patton.

1. Jesus' Baptism
2. Jesus' Family Did Not Believe
3. John the Baptist's Doubt
4. The Disciples Doubted After the Resurrection
5. Jesus Does not Know the Time of His Coming
6. Women are the First to Witness the Resurrection
7. Jesus Cursed a Fig Tree
8. Death and Resurrection of Christ

I think 6 and 8 are the ones I want you to take away with you when you finish this post.

Here they are:

> Women are the First to Witness the Resurrection
>
> This is one that is often brought up. Craig Keener puts it well enough: "The witness of women at the tomb is very likely historical, precisely because it was so offensive to the larger culture — not the sort of testimony one would invent. Not all testimony was regarded as being of equal merit; the trustworthiness of witnesses was considered essential. Yet most of Jesus' Jewish contemporaries held much less esteem for the testimony of women than for that of men; this suspicion reflects a broader Mediterranean limited trust of women's speech and testimony also enshrined in Roman law." (Keener, The Historical Jesus, 331)

And:

> Death and Resurrection of Christ
>
> This easily escapes our notice since the basic story of Christ is so well known. However, both the death and resurrection of Christ are, from the standpoint of the culture of the day, embarrassing and damaging. Concerning the death of Christ on a cross, Paul sees this problem: "But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Cor. 1:23). The word used for "stumbling block" is skandalon. Louw-Nida defines this as "that which causes offense and thus arouses opposition." Why? Because the Jews would never have thought their Messiah would have been hung on a tree. "Cursed is one who hangs on a tree" (Gal. 3:13; Deut 21:23). The Greeks thought of the resurrection as foolishness as they were dualist, essentially believing that the material world was evil and the spiritual world good. They would have scoffed at the idea that Christ returned to physical form. This is why later Greeks attempted to adapt the

> Christ story, doing away with the physical resurrection. Marcion is the most famous promoter of this view (see Docitism).

Now, when you are talking about the New Testament to your non-believing friends, you definitely want to draw attention to passages that are embarrassing to the authors. It will help you to be more convincing when you explain the New Testament like a historian.

By the way, you can read an entire post I did on *all the criteria* that historians use to evaluate ancient historical documents.

What can Christians learn from the bravest naval aviator at the Battle of Midway?

November 15, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been reading lots of books about the World War II battles in the Pacific theater lately, and I wanted to write a post about one of the heroes I found who was the most compelling to me. You may have seen him in the old 1976 Midway movie or the new 2019 Midway movie. But neither movie tells the full story. The man I am talking about is Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.

John Waldron was the leader of the torpedo bomber squadron on the Hornet. This squadron was composed of outdated and slow Devastator torpedo bombers, armed with the Mark 13 Mod 1 torpedoes, which malfunctioned about 90% of the time.

I found an article on the Federalist that tells the story of John Waldron:

> Now there are countless men and woman who deserve to be singled out for their valor, but with the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Midway just around the corner, I thought it would be appropriate to call your attention to one of the bravest men who ever lived. A man who, knowing he was facing certain death, led the first attack against the Japanese aircraft carriers and played a direct role in what would be a decisive victory for the United States, and a defeat from which Japan would never recover. That man was Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.
>
> Now for those who don't know, the Battle of Midway was the turning point in the Pacific theater. The Japanese had an elaborate plan that involved attacking the U.S. base on Midway Island in order to lure the Americans into a battle which the Japanese High command felt their experience and tactics would overwhelm and annihilate the American fleet. With no significant U.S. naval presence, Hawaii and the entire West Coast would be at risk of invasion. But the Americans broke the Japanese code and set a trap of their own – hoping to destroy their enemy's carriers and thereby establish U.S. dominance in the Pacific. And that was exactly what happened : The U.S. fleet surprised the Japanese, sank their four carriers, and took the first real step to winning the Second World War.
>
> John Waldron was 42 years old when the *USS Hornet* steamed towards Midway on June 1st, 1942. Born and raised on a reservation in South Dakota, he had never seen the ocean until he attended the Naval Academy. It wasn't long after he graduated that he moved into naval aviation. He had been assigned to be the squadron leader of the *Hornet's* torpedo bombers in late 1941 and had been drilling his men tirelessly ever since. Waldron had the reputation of a tough as nails, no-nonsense commander. Not surprising, since Waldron was a direct descendant of the warriors from the Oglala Lakota tribe – part of the Great Sioux Nation. The tough skin he developed came from decades of derision from his peers over his meager beginnings, and from the racism directed at his Native

> American heritage. Waldron didn't care what anyone thought of him – all he wanted to do was fight for his country. He was a natural leader and his men would follow him into the gates of Hell, which, as fate would have it, is exactly what they would do in the upcoming battle.
>
> On the morning of June 4th, the Americans were ready to spring their trap, but in the preflight briefing aboard the *Hornet* there was a problem. Stanhope Ring, who was in command of the carrier's air group, directed his pilots to head northwest of the last reported position of the Japanese fleet. Waldron disagreed with this decision, feeling that they should head in the exact direction of that last sighting. He wasn't shy about expressing this opinion, much the displeasure of Ring. Waldron continued to lobby his superior officer several times after the briefing ended, but to no avail.

The Federalist article doesn't talk much about Stanhope Ring, but the book I just finished called "The Battle of Midway" by Craig L. Symonds did. Ring was a very tall, good-looking, and white officer who had breezed up the chain of command thanks to his good looks and confident manner. He loved to show off for cameras, and pull rank on subordinates. He was too proud to admit that Waldron was right in front of the other pilots.

More:

> The air strike force took off from the deck of the *Hornet* – fighters, dive bombers, and the 15 planes in Waldron's torpedo squadron. This force would be joined in the air by similar strike forces from the other U.S. carriers – the *Yorktown* and the *Enterprise*. Shortly after the Hornet's air group was airborne, Waldron couldn't contain his anger anymore. He broke radio silence to tell Ring that they were headed in the wrong direction. He repeated that comment and Ring issued a terse reply that he was in charge of this group and to stay the hell off the radio. Waldron waited a couple of minutes before replying "The hell with you" and peeled his squadron off and headed due west, where he felt the Japanese fleet was.
>
> Less than an hour later, Waldron was proved right. He had led his squadron on a direct line to the enemy. Waldron broke radio silence again to signal to Ring that he had found the fleet, but Ring and the rest of the *Hornet's* planes were too far away to hear. So now, Waldron was faced with a brutal decision. If he went in to attack, he would do so without any fighter protection, and they'd be totally at the mercy of the Japanese fighters. To make matters worse, the U.S. planes (Douglas Devastators) were hopelessly outdated aircraft – their top speed was about a third of what the Japanese fighters could do. They had hoped to get the newer Grumman Avengers, but the *Hornet* had left Pearl Harbor before they had arrived from the mainland. All of this meant that Waldron and Torpedo 8 were looking at a suicidal attack run. […]Waldron got on the radio again and told his men "We will go in. We won't turn back. Former strategy cannot be used. We will attack. Good luck!"

> And with that, the planes of Torpedo 8 closed up their formation and bore down on the Japanese fleet, some seven miles distant.
>
> The Japanese fighters quickly pounced on the Americans, who were going in low and slow – the only way torpedo bombers can attack. One by one the planes from Torpedo 8 were shot down. […]Every single plane in Torpedo 8 was destroyed and not one torpedo hit a Japanese ship.

Not only were the torpedo bombers of John Waldron's VT-8 (Hornet) shot down, but two more waves led by Eugene Lindsey VT-6 (Enterprise) and Edward Massey VT-3 (Yorktown) were also repulsed without a hit.

More:

> History might have viewed Waldron's attack as more insane than brave, and utterly pointless….except for what happened next. Shortly after his failed attack, the torpedo squadron from the *Enterprise* attacked the fleet – and right after that the torpedo squadron from the *Yorktown*. Both of those squadrons had devastating casualties as well (10 of 14 planes lost and 10 of 12 respectively) without inflicting any damage on any Japanese ship. But these three attacks in succession drew the Japanese fighter cover down so low, that it left their carriers exposed to dive bomber attacks. It also burned up a lot of fuel for the fighters, who now needed to land before they could continue their defense of the fleet. The attacks also forced the Japanese carriers into defensive maneuvers, so they were unable to land any planes or launch any for a strike on the American carriers.

In addition to using up their fuel and coming down to low altitude, the Japanese CAP (combat air patrol) fighters also used up most of their dangerous 20 mm ammunition. They mostly had much weaker 7.7 mm ammunition remaining when the dive bombers from the Enterprise and Yorktown arrived.

More:

> As the Japanese were trying to compose themselves after the three fierce but harmless attacks, the American dive bombers from the *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* arrived and quickly struck. Within minutes, three of the Japanese carriers were in flames – the heart of the Imperial Navy had been gutted.
>
> […]The other planes from the Hornet never found the Japanese ships. Ring kept his planes flying in that northwesterly direction until they were too low on fuel to keep going. They returned to the *Hornet* with their full payload of bombs.
>
> […]Now, there were a lot of heroes that day – some who lived and some who died, but the valor that John Waldron displayed in defying orders he knew were wrong and then attacking the enemy when he knew it meant certain death, place him on a special level. His actions directly helped the Americans win this crucial battle, which turned the tide of the war in the favor of the United States. He got

> the Navy Cross for his actions that day, but it seems astonishing to me that he wasn't awarded the Medal of Honor – he is definitely worthy of it.

You can learn more about the Battle of Midway in this helpful video:

So, here is what I wanted to say about this.

John Waldron was not properly equipped by his organization to make a difference at Midway. His planes were too old and slow, his torpedoes almost never worked. His leader was an arrogant, incompetent coward who prevented him from leading others to find and attack the actual targets. The only way he could do something to his enemy was to disobey orders and go off on his own. If he had lived, he probably would have been court-martialed for insubordination. After Waldron was shot down, every single one of the men in his squadron continued their attack until they too were all shot down. Everyone watching must have thought "what a waste of effort". It was only later that it became evident to all that what he did was necessary for the second wave to succeed.

This plaque at the United States Naval Academy Club honors the three commanders of the torpedo bomber squadrons:

[image]
Plaque honoring the Midway torpedo bomber squadron commanders
According to the Family Research Council, the plaque reads:

> The torpedo attacks of Waldron, Lindsey, and Massey had followed hard upon each other by luck. What was not luck, but the soul of the United States in action, was the willingness of the torpedo plane squadrons to go in against hopeless odds. This was the extra ounce of martial weight that in a few decisive minutes tipped the balance of history.

When I read this story, it immediately occurred to me that this is the problem that serious Christians are facing today. Parents and pastors are not equipping young people to actually make a difference. Instead of finding and fighting the real targets: atheism, feminism, communism, etc., all our forces have been sent on wild goose chases, so that now "Christians" are actually trying to work on the priorities of the secular left, e.g. – climate change, wealth redistribution, affirming sexual immorality, open borders, etc.

The few of us who actually know how to do our jobs are poorly equipped. We are prevented from leading by organizations that are focused on feelings rather than results. We can only hope that our decision to attack against hopeless odds somehow paves the way for a second wave to succeed. It has happened before, and that's why we should be brave and continue to engage our opponents using tools that work (philosophy of religion, evidential apologetics, scientific research, historical evidence, chastity, sobriety, self-control, good stewardship of our educations, careers and finances, effective charitable giving, self-sacrificial love, etc.).

Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on sex and sexuality at Harvard University

November 16, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Dr. Morse delivers a talk based on her book "Smart Sex" at Harvard University.

The MP3 file is here. (21 Mb) (Link in case that doesn't work)

Topics:

- the hook-up culture and its effects on men and women
- cohabitation and its effect on marriage stability
- balancing marriage, family and career
- single motherhood by choice and IVF
- donor-conceived children
- modern sex: a sterile, recreation activity
- the real purposes of sex: procreation and spousal unity
- the hormone oxytocin: when it is secreted and what it does
- the hormone vassopressin: when it is secreted and what it does
- the sexual revolution and the commoditization of sex
- the consumer view of sex vs the organic view of sex
- fatherlessness and multi-partner fertility
- how the "sex-without-relationship" view harms children

52 minutes of lecture, 33 minutes of Q&A from the Harvard students. The Q&A is worth listening to – the first question is from a gay student, and Dr. Morse pulls a William Lane Craig to defeat her objection. It was awesome! I never get tired of listening to her talk, and especially on the topics of marriage and family.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

November 17, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
This is one of my favorite lectures.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips.

Here is a clip:

The full video can be watched on Vimeo:

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range

in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

It's a good lecture explaining a couple of basic arguments for a cosmic Creator and Designer. If you add the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion (Stephen C. Meyer's arguments), then you will be solid on the basic scientific arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Let’s check in on Britain’s first married gay couple and see how they’re doing

November 18, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

A long time ago in 2011, I wrote a long article looking at the research about same-sex relationships. The research said that sexual relationships between men were more likely to be unstable, promiscuous, and involve domestic violence. Also, it said that same-sex relationships harm children, not just because of the instability but because of the loss of relationships with biological parents.

So let’s take a look at one famous very wealthy gay couple from the UK, and see if we find any evidence of this in their story.

This article is from the UK Daily Mail:

> Britain’s first gay fathers have ended their 32-year relationship after one of them fell ‘head over heels’ in love with their daughter’s boyfriend.
>
> Barrie Drewitt-Barlow, 50, is now living with the husband he is currently divorcing as well as their five children and his new boyfriend, 25-year-old Scott Hutchison.
>
> Mr Huchison, who has always been openly bisexual, has previously dated Mr Drewitt-Barlow’s 19-year-old daughter, Saffron.

Mr. Drewitt-Barlow’s current “husband” is named Tony, and he is 55 years old.

> The family, originally from Essex, now live in Florida. The children refer to Tony as ‘Dad’, Mr Drewitt-Barlow as ‘Daddy’ and Mr Hutchison as ‘stepdad’.
>
> The shocking move comes two years after Saffron and Mr Hutchison reportedly planned to have their own twins using a surrogate. The pair claim their relationship was never sexual.
>
> […]Mr Drewitt-Barlow and his husband Tony became the UK’s first gay fathers in

> 1999 when a surrogate gave birth to twins Saffron and Aspen.
>
> […]Twins Saffron and Aspen will be 20 next month and were conceived using donor eggs from Tracie McCune before being carried in surrogate Rosalind Bellamy.
>
> Each husband is father to one of the twins, so although they were born at the same time they are in fact half-siblings.
>
> However, Aspen does have an identical twin, 16-year-old Orlando.
>
> The embryo which Aspen came from split in two while it was in the lab and Orlando was frozen for four years before being put into the womb of another surrogate, Donna.
>
> Donna acted as surrogate again for the couple's second set of twins – who were born nine years ago.
>
> The eggs were from a Brazilian model that Mr Drewitt-Barlow spotted on a catwalk and paid £35,000.
>
> […]The pair, who are now worth £40million, went on to have five children using other surrogates and egg donors.
>
> They fought in court for their right to be on their children's birth certificates as father and father and became the first gay couple allowed to do so.
>
> In 2006 they became civil partners and got married as soon as it was legal in the UK in 2014.

Although they don't seem to be doing very well at commitment, fidelity, children's needs before adult selfishness department, they nevertheless wanted to move forward from re-defining marriage to eliminate complementary sexes to eliminating religious liberty:

> The couple, who previously challenged churches' right to opt out of gay weddings, also caused controversy by supporting gender selection and hand-picking beautiful egg donors.

My original 2011 article mentioned how expanding gay rights in other countries had let to the elimination of real rights, like freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, and so on. And I cited a lot of articles from countries that were showing these problems.

Right now, we are seeing how aspects of marriage which used to be seen as central to the marriage enterprise (chastity, permanent commitment, sexual exclusivity, parenting by biological mother and father, etc.) are disappearing as society accepts that happiness-focused marriage as practiced by gay activists is the same as the old commitment-fidelity-children's-rights marriage. When you lump what gay activists are doing in marriage in with what used to be considered marriage before no-fault divorce and before same-sex marriage, you understand that what marriage means is changing to include behaviors that were viewed as different from natural marriage.

Christians used to believe that marriage was a life-long commitment to self-sacrificially

love their spouse, no matter what troubles were encountered, and no matter how they felt. Marriage was not seen as an engine for producing feelings of happiness. Marriage was about being a disciple of Christ, pursuing holiness, and fighting the world to deliver your spouse to Jesus, with a life demonstrated effective allegiance to Christ. Even non-Christians were aware of this vision of marriage, and it influenced how they approached marriage.

But what is it about now? Happiness:

> The couple began to drift apart as their sex life dwindled and Mr Drewitt-Barlow's snoring forced the pair into separate beds.
>
> Husband Tony also suffered from cancer in 2006 and suffered bad health for the last three years because of treatment related to it.
>
> While his is now in remission, it was his hospital admission for osteoradionecrosis in his jaw that sent Mr Drewitt-Barlow into the arms of Scott – who had been his PA for seven years.

Happiness is the goal for marriage once marriage has drifted away from the example of Christ's self-sacrificial love for his bride, the church. And happiness does not last. Commitment does.

Here are some sample wedding vows from back when Christianity was taken seriously as something that had authority over feelings. Take a look at what marriage vows used to say about marriage. It was all about commitment, and gender-specific obligations tailored to the particular needs of the man and the woman.

We don't have that any more, because a bunch of feelings-driven people in the church decided that it was more important for Christians to feel good and look good to non-Christians, than to study how to defend the truth-claims of the Bible on controversial issues like sex and marriage.

Why are Christians allowed to eat shellfish but not allowed to have sex before marriage?

November 19, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
Here's a wonderful article from Peter Saunders.

The challenge:

> An argument frequently advanced by those attempting to defend homosexual practice is that Christians 'cherry pick' the commands in the Bible – that is, they chose to emphasise some commands while ignoring others.
>
> The Old Testament may forbid homosexual acts (Leviticus 18:2; 20:13) but it also forbids eating seafood without fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9, 10).
>
> So how can Christians then justify upholding laws on sexual morality whilst at the same time ignoring the food laws from the very same books of the Bible? Why may they eat shellfish but not be allowed to have sex outside marriage? Isn't this inconsistent and hypocritical?

The solution is that God enters into "covenants" with his people, and the terms of those covenants change.

Especially dietary laws:

> The answer to this question lies in an understanding of biblical covenants.
>
> A covenant is a binding solemn agreement made between two parties. It generally leaves each with obligations. But it holds only between the parties involved.
>
> There are a number of biblical covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic (Old),

> Davidic and New.
>
> Under the Noahic covenant, which God made with all living human beings (Genesis 9:8-17), people were able to eat anything:
>
> *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Genesis 9:3).*
>
> But under the Sinaitic (Old) Covenant, which God made with the nation of Israel, people were able to eat certain foods, but not others.

Jesus clearly created a new covenant with his followers, where the dietary laws are lifted:

> Jesus said that he had come to fulfil the 'Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). He would establish this new covenant with new laws, with himself as high priest based on his own sacrificial death on the cross.
>
> This new covenant would completely deal with sin (Hebrews 10:1-18) and protect all those who put their faith in him from God's wrath and judgement…
>
> *[…]'In the same way, after the supper (Jesus) took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you"' (Luke 22:20). '…we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Hebrews 10:10)*
>
> People would come under the protection of this new covenant, not by virtue of belonging to the nation of Israel, but through faith in Christ. In fact the function of the Old Testament Law (Sinaitic covenant) was to point to Christ as its fulfilment.
>
> […]So what then did Christ say about foods? He pronounced all foods clean for his followers to eat:
>
> *' "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (Mark 7:18-23)*
>
> Jesus was making that point that under the new covenant God required purity of the heart. Internal thoughts and attitudes were as important as external actions.

Food is OK for Christians, but sexual immorality – which includes premarital sex and adultery – are NOT OK for Christians.

I think sometimes when you are talking to people whose motivation is just to get rid of any objective moral law entirely, they tend to ask questions without really wanting a good answer. This is especially true when it comes to the morality of sex. They ask the question not to get an answer, but to justify getting rid of the moral rules governing sexuality. The answers are there for people who are willing to respect God in their decision-making to find. The answers are not found only by people who have a

reason to not want to find them.

In case you're wondering, I am one of those Christian men who takes chastity seriously. Marriage is about having a close connection with your spouse. Sure, I could break the rules and have a lot of fun now. A lot of Christians have a hard time turning down fun. But when I look at Jesus, I don't see a man who is pursuing fun and thrills. I see a man who sees a need and then sacrifices his own interests to rescue others from peril.

What did early church fathers think about abortion and infanticide?

November 20, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn Baby – 10 weeks old

I noticed that the Southern Baptists over at ERLC had a post up which seemed to say that preaching against abortion was morally wrong, because it hurts women's feelings. This didn't seem like a very traditional Christian view to me.

The author Phoebe Cates writes:

> So, you don't have to post internet memes and videos, display bumper stickers, or make rude comments to tell me how terrible abortion is. Nor do you need to shout it from street corners or pulpits—I know. My mother knows. Over 66% of women know.

I quoted her from Pulpit and Pen, and it looks like the post has been edited to remove this shaming of pro-life apologists.

The author thinks that women do think abortion is wrong, despite the fact that young, unmarried women vote overwhelmingly for abortion rights in elections. Her goal doesn't seem to be to convince women not to have abortions by making a case for the right to life of the unborn. Her goal seems to be to stop Christians from making women feel judged when they kill their children. Her focus is on women's feelings, not the right to life of unwanted children.

The church has been changing a lot lately to accept the teachings of radical feminism.

Radical feminism urges women to abandon chastity, delay marriage, get on birth control, and have reckless recreational sex with attractive, no-commitment men, while pursuing their careers. And abortion is fine with these Christians, because they think it's just a method of birth control to be used to help women to avoid being "punished with a baby" as Obama said. The concern of these Christians about abortion isn't that it kills babies, it's that women feel judged when they kill babies.

So, what did Christians used to believe about protecting children before they tossed out the Bible for radical feminism?

This is from Birds of the Air.

Summary:

> Recently I came across a reading of the Didache. "The *what*?" you may ask. The Didache is a book written somewhere in the first or second century. For a long time it was up for consideration as Scripture. It was believed to be the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Eventually it was agreed that the book was an excellent book, but not inspired Scripture. So I was pleased to be able to download this admirable book containing good teachings from the early Church fathers.
>
> The book seemed to be largely a lot of quotes from Scripture. You'll learn the basic rules of Christianity — "First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself." You'll learn that "grave sins" are forbidden, like adultery, murder, fornication, and so on. (They specifically include pederasty in the list.) There are instructions regarding teachers, prophets, Christian assembly, and so on. Lots of the normal, good stuff. But, since this was written sometime prior to 200 AD, I was somewhat surprised at this instruction: "You shall not murder a child by abortion" (Didache, Ch 2).

I got curious about what babies look like when they are just a few weeks old, so I went looking for pictures of them.

This post from Life News has ten excellent pictures of life inside the womb.

Here's my favorite from 10 weeks:

Unborn Baby – 10 weeks old

This is a first trimester baby!

I decided to go hunting to see what is developed at this time, and found this list:

> - From this week until birth, the developing organism is called a fetus.
> - The fetus is now the size of a small strawberry.
> - The feet are 2mm long (one tenth of an inch).
> - The neck is beginning to take shape.
> - The body muscles are almost developed. Baby has begun movement.
> - While still too small for you to feel, your little one is wriggling and shifting.
> - The jaws are in place. The mouth cavity and the nose are joined.
> - The ears and nose can now be seen clearly.
> - Fingerprints are already evident in the skin.
> - Nipples and hair follicles begin to form.
>
> The unborn baby is now called a fetus. Though the fetus is constantly moving, you will not be able to actually feel fetal movement for several more weeks. All of the organs, muscles, and nerves are in place and beginning to function. As the hands and feet develop fingers and toes, they have lost their paddle like look. The touch pads on the fingers form and already have fingerprints.
>
> During this week of pregnancy the crown to rump length of the fetus is 0.9 inch to 1.2 inches (22 to 30mm), weight 0.07 ounce (2gm). They are now on the way to forming their testicles or ovaries, getting ready for the next generation. Until the ninth week of fetus development, the fetal reproductive apparatus is the same one for the both sexes. The head is still large and curves into chest.

> Each week your uterus grows larger with the baby growing inside it. You may begin to see your waistline growing thicker by this time. A pelvic exam will detect that your uterus has grown from it’s normal, size of your fist, to a little bigger than a grapefruit.

Fascinating!

What is the fine-tuning argument for God's existence, and does the multiverse counter it?

November 21, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

One of the best arguments for the existence of a Creator and Designer of the universe is the cosmic fine-tuning argument. The argument argues that individual constants and quantities in nature cannot be much smaller or larger than they are, because it would remove the ability of the universe to support life of any kind. Dr. Michael Strauss, an experimental physicist, explains some examples of the fine-tuning in a recent post on his blog.

He writes:

> I liken the finely-tuned universe to a panel that controls the parameters of the universe with about 100 knobs that can be set to certain values. If you turn any knob just a little to the right or to the left the result is either a universe that is inhospitable to life or no universe at all.
>
> Consider the knob that controls the strength of the strong nuclear force that holds quarks inside the neutrons and protons and binds the nucleus of the atom together. If the strength were increased by 2%, the element hydrogen would be either non-existent or very rare. Without hydrogen there would be no water (H_2O) or stars that burn hydrogen as their nuclear fuel like our sun. Without hydrogen there would be no life. If the strength of the strong nuclear force were decreased by about 5%, then hydrogen would be the only element in the universe. That would simplify the periodic table and make Chemistry class very easy, but it would render life impossible.
>
> All known life in this universe is based on the element carbon, which is formed in

> the final stages of a star's life. The carbon you and I are made of is the result of the nuclear processes that occurred as previous stars ended their lives. One nice recent study showed that if the mass of the quarks that make up neutrons and protons were changed by just a few percent, then the process that makes carbon as stars die would be altered in such a way that there would not be sufficient carbon in the universe for life. The masses of the lightest sub-atomic quarks are the precise value that is required for carbon to form and for life to exist.

Regarding the multiverse, let me just quote from MIT physicist Alan Lightman, writing in Harper's magazine about the multiverse:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.
>
> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

The multiverse is not pure nonsense, it is theoretically possible.But even if there were a multiverse, the generator that makes the universes itself would require fine-tuning, so the multiverse doesn't get rid of the problem. And, as Lightman indicates, we have no independent experimental evidence for the existence of the multiverse in any case. Atheists just have to take it on faith, and hope that their speculations will be proved right. Meanwhile, the fine-tuning is just as easily explained by postulating God, and we have independent evidence for God's existence, like the the origin of biological information, the sudden appearance of animal body plans, the argument from consciousness, and so on. Even if the naturalists could explain the fine-tuning, they would still have a lot of explaining to do. Theism (intelligent causation) is the simplest explanation for all of the things we learn from the progress of science.

It's very important to understand that if these values were any different, then it's not like we would bridges on our foreheads, or have green skin, or have pointy ears, etc. That's what science fiction teaches you. And many atheists form their view of science by watching science fiction entertainment. But the truth is that the consequences of changing these values are much more consequential: no stars, no planets, no hydrogen, no heavy elements, the universe re-collapses into a hot fireball. You're not going to have complex, embodied intelligent agents running around making moral decisions and

relating to God in a world like that.

Questions like the existence of God should be NOT decided by feelings and faith and superstitious nonsense. They ought to be decided by evidence. Specifically, scientific evidence. Everyone has to account for this scientific evidence for fine-tuning within their worldview, and they have to account for it in a way that is responsible and rational. Punting to the multiverse, without any evidence for it, is neither rational nor responsible. Holding out hope that the evidence we have now will all go away is neither rational nor responsible.

By the way, if you are looking for a good book on the cosmic fine-tuning, especially for evangelism and debating with atheists, you really need to get a copy of "A Fortunate Universe". Although it is from one of the most prestigious academic presses, it is pretty funny to read, and the main points are made clearly, even if you don't understand the science. Two astrophysicists wrote it – one who believes that God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning, and one who doesn't. I really think that Christians need to get used to the idea that evangelism can be pretty easy, so long as you are arguing from peer-reviewed facts. When you get a good book on evidence for God that is not in dispute, then you are invincible. Everybody ought to believe in God in a universe with this much overt scientific evidence spilling out everywhere. Whether this Creator and Designer is the God of the Bible, who visited us as Jesus of Nazareth, takes more work to establish. Working through the emotional objections people have to God, and coaching them to take on the difficulties of living out a authentic Christian life (very unpopular!), is even harder.

Where to get help if you have a selfish, absent or abusive mother or father

November 22, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Today, I want to say something this article about lambs in Scotland, written by Sheila Walsh in the The Stream.

She writes:

> I am very fond of sheep. I grew up on the west coast of Scotland with sheep all around me, field after field of white wool and incessant crying when things seemed a little off.
>
> […]Of all the lessons I have learned from these defenseless, gentle animals, the most profound is the most painful. Every now and then, a ewe will give birth to a lamb and immediately reject it. Sometimes the lamb is rejected because they are one of twins and the mother doesn't have enough milk or she is old and frankly quite tired of the whole business. They call those lambs, *bummer lambs*.
>
> Unless the shepherd intervenes, that lamb will die. So the shepherd will take that little lost one into his home and hand feed it from a bottle and keep it warm by the fire. He will wrap it up warm and hold it close enough to hear a heartbeat. When the lamb is strong the shepherd will place it back in the field with the rest of the flock.
>
> "Off you go now, you can do this, I'm right here."
>
> The most beautiful sight to see is when the shepherd approaches his flock in the morning and calls them out, "*Sheep, sheep, sheep*!"

> The first to run to him are the bummer lambs because they know his voice. It's not that they are more loved — it's just that they believe it.
>
> I am so grateful that Christ calls himself the Good Shepherd.
>
> "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice." (John 10:3-4 NLT)

My older brother and I grew up with a mother who was very much focused on her career and earning and saving money for her retirement. We were both stuck in daycare very early after being born, so that she could go back to work right away. (Me after 6 weeks) My older brother has shown the ill effects of our parents (especially our mother) not having any plan for us, especially morally and spiritually. He dropped out of college after failing his first year, never had a career. Although he has normal intelligence and mental health, he never could stick in any real job.

Although there were early warning signs when his grades started to drop in Grade 5, my parents never took responsibility to make a plan to solve it. Oh, they would yell and scream at him at report card time, but just for a day or two, and after that, nothing constructive. My brother decided that he could just ride out the flak my parents gave him on report card night, and keep going with his plan of having fun and being popular. My parents just forgot about it until the next report card day, because they did not want to be distracted from their careers, hobbies and retirement planning. When dispensing rewards, my brother was always given the same as me, despite our different levels of achievement. And my parents considered this equal dispensation of rewards regardless of performance to be a great virtue, and excellent parenting.

I had the exact same upbringing as my older brother. He actually did pretty well until Grade 5 just like me, but then our paths diverged. From Grade 5 on, his grades deterioriated. He got tired of having to study and he was more interested in the opinions of his peers and conforming to popular culture. In my case, from Grade 5 on, my grades were always high-90s. I remember taking the same classes as he did, in the same high school, with the same teachers. He got a 44 in data processing, I got a 96 with the same teacher and won the award for the entire grade. Every class I went to, the teachers would speak fondly of my older brother – he was a nice guy, very popular with his peers, good at sports. But not a very good student. How was it that I was winning awards when he had scored so poorly. Was I really his brother? How could we be so different?

The difference is that in Grade 5, he got a Gideon's New Testament and he read it and he didn't put it into practice, and in Grade 5, I got a Gideon's New Testament and I read it twice and I did put it into practice. That was the difference. I had the awareness of the moral law (i.e.- wisdom) that allowed me to judge my parents and judge my peers and judge my teachers and stand alone. When you cannot rely on anyone to lead you, be able to judge when others mistreat you is very important. That is what allows you to maintain appropriate boundaries and minimize the influence of friends and family who are teaching you self-destructive behaviors. Awareness of the moral law is what allows you to stop

trying to please people who do not want what is best for you. On the other hand, God is always willing to give you wisdom if you ask Him for it, and you can find out all about him because he has left plenty of evidence concerning his existence and character for you to find. It is in knowing God as he really is that you can find your sense of value, purpose and meaning. The God of the New Testament is the God of people who are lost and need a Savior.

For me, Christianity was a simple matter of being willing to go along with what was true, and not insisting on having fun or conforming to peer expectations. The essential characteristic of my faith, in contrast to my older brother's lack of faith, was this – I did not mind being different, so long as I never lost a debate about what was true. My obedience to Christ has never been conditional on things going my way, on being liked, or anything like that. The only thing that mattered was being factually correct. It never bothered me what other people were doing, or what other people expected me to do, so long as I was acting on what I knew to be true. And God helped me to find out what was true by motivating me to study, and leading me to him with good evidence, and good mentors. Thanks to Jesus' death on the cross, the mistakes I made early did not count against me, and they never will. Jesus' death on the cross gives me the imputed righteousness that I need to stand before God holy and blameless. This is what allows me to keep learning and keep trying no matter how much I fail on any given day.

How has this affected me? Well, this is the second thing I wanted to say about the bummer lamb analogy. Since I was a victim of this hands-off, me-first style of parenting, it's caused me to be extra sensitive about being a good spiritual leader to others in the same predicament. The people I mentor can see it in the way that I treat them . I treat them the opposite of the way that my older brother and I were treated. I care what people read. I care what courses they choose. I care what they eat. I care how they feel. I care about their finances. I care about their plans to serve God. I care about their romantic relationships. I care whether they get recognition for doing good. I care whether their life is going in the right direction. One person I mentored who once considered taking her own life wrote to me when she graduated from a STEM program, and she said this: "I wish you could have been here at my graduation. My parents only paid for this degree. You were the one who got me through it". We have never met in person, but she is going to continue to make a huge difference for Christ and His Kingdom going forward.

I think when you have been a bummer lamb, you are extra careful to make decisions that will enable you to be a good shepherd to other lambs. Being a good shepherd does not mean being pious, spiritual, mystical, etc. Being a good shepherd does not mean making the lambs feel good about making bad decisions. Being a good shepherd means understanding what God has done to lead you, and then reflecting that love back to others *in practical, self-sacrificial actions that solve actual real-world problems for other people who want to know and serve God*. If you are about to jump off a cliff, the last thing you need is someone with no wisdom or experience telling you that God is OK with you doing whatever feels good to you. What you need is someone practical and competent to give you good advice, however much that advice may make you feel bad, or block your

pursuit of fun.

One of my friends proof-read the draft of this post and told me that it made her think of 2 Cor 1:3-5:

> [3] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
>
> [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.
>
> [5] For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.“

Nothing else I do in life matters to me as much as taking care of the people I mentor, especially the ones who are lost and lacking guidance and care. I have good health, good education, good career, and great finances. But by far the most important thing I do is following the example of the Shepherd by caring for other lambs.

Pediatric endocrinologist traces the history of transgender medicine

November 23, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

History of transgender medicine

I can't remember who sent me this lecture featuring Dr. Qu3ntin V4n M3t3r, MD, FCP, but I liked it so much I decided to write a post about it. First, we'll take a look at his credentials, then I'll post the video of the lecture, and a brief summary with not too many controversial details. Then I will link to a Wall Street Journal article by one of the other physicians mentioned, Dr. P4ul McHu8h.

So, first, the background of Dr. Qu3ntin V4n M3t3r:

> Dr. V4n M3t3r graduated from the College of William and Mary in 1969. He attended the Medical College of Virginia where he received his medical degree in 1973. Dr. V4n M3t3r did his pediatric internship in 1973 and 1974, and his pediatric residency from 1974 to 1976, at the Naval Regional Medical Center in Oakland, through the University of California, San Francisco. He completed his pediatric endocrinology fellowship from 1978 to 1980 at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.
>
> Dr. V4n M3t3r worked as a staff pediatric endocrinologist at the Naval Hospital in San Diego from 1980 to 1986 and was Chairman and Director of the residency training program at the Naval Hospital Oakland from 1986 to 1991. In 1991, he retired from a 20-year career in the Navy Medical Corps and moved to the Atlanta area where he joined the Fayette Medical Clinic as a Pediatrician and Pediatric Endocrinologist. To better serve the ever-expanding population of pediatric patients with endocrine disorders, he developed his own full-time endocrine practice, which today bears his name. He is a clinical associate professor of Pediatrics at both the Emory University and Morehouse Schools of Medicine.

In addition to the professorships, he has a number of board certifications and professional

memberships, listed at the link above.

Here's the video of the lecture:

And here's my brief summary, which has no controversial details.

- speaker biography
- the history of the transgender medicine movement
- major figures in the transgender medicine movement
- the origin of the term gender
- the origin of the term gender dysphoria
- early results of the transgender medicine movement
- other results from transgender clinics from Canada and Netherlands
- the scholarship of the transgender medicine movement
- current transgender research
- effective responses

The lecture has about 560,000 views.

If you don't have 40 minutes to watch the lecture, then you can read an article that summarizes the lecture.

In the lecture, he mentioned two other physcians, K3nn3th Zuck3r and P4ul McHu8h.

I found a good article by the latter in the Wall Street Journal, which I blogged about previously.

You can grab the PDF of the full text of the WSJ article here.

I also found a useful summary of the science of transgenderism on the web site of one of the medical associations mentioned in the lecture.

Another lecture

Finally, YouTube suggested another lecture featuring some other physicians. I watched that one too, and it talked about some of the repercussions from treating young children with drugs and / or surgeries.

The video is here:

And I found an article about this lecture for those who don't have an hour to watch it as well. I watched this one as well.

Dr. William Lane Craig interviewed on the Ben Shapiro Show Sunday Special

November 24, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. William Lane Craig on the Ben Shapiro Sunday special

I'm re-posting this old episode of the Ben Shapiro show. They discuss arguments for God's existence in the first 25 minutes. The spend the first 26 minutes on arguments for God,and the next 16 minutes on Christian distinctives. They spend a bunch more time responding to common arguments for atheism, and finally Ben asks Dr. Craig how he became a Christian.

Summary:

> William Lane Craig, philosopher, theologian, and best selling author of numerous books including "On Guard: Defending Your Faith With Reason And Precision," joins Ben to discuss the hard sciences vs. philosophy, the cosmological and ontological arguments, Jesus, slavery, gay marriage, and much more.

Video:

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Why are we seeing such a decline in religious belief in America?
- Why are mainline denominations in Christianity and Judaism emptying out?
- What was the driver behind the move away from religion starting in the 1960s?
- Why is their a gap in the university and in the broader culture between reason and religious belief?
- What is the strongest argument for God's existence?
- What is the most compelling argument for God's existence for this culture?
- Respond to Richard Dawkins' challenge that God needs a cause.
- Why does the universe have to have a cause?

- Does Darwinian evolution provide grounds for our awareness of objective moral values and duties?
- What is the strongest objection to the cosmological argument?
- What is the strongest objection to the moral argument?
- What about the objection that the existence of the universe is just a “brute fact” and doesn’t need an explanation for it’s existence?
- What about David Hume’s objection to the law of causality?
- What about objections to the cause of the universe from apparently uncaused events in quantum mechanics?
- What is the ontological argument, and why is it frequently dismissed?
- How do we get from an unmoved mover to a moral God?
- Which arguments show that God is a mind?
- How do you show that God is present and active in time now?
- How do you move from God as Creator, Designer and moral lawgiver to a God who has revealed himself to human beings?
- Who does Jesus claim to be in the gospels, and what is the evidence that his claims were correct?
- From the Jewish perspective, this narrative has some problems. First, merely declaring yourself as the Messiah is not seen as a punishable offense.
- Second, the real problem is that Jesus vision of himself as the Messiah is completely different than how Jews have understood the Messiah. The Messiah in Judaism has always been a political figure who is destined to restore the Kingdom of Israel, bringing more Jews back to Israel, etc. Claiming to be God, though would be blasphemy and a punishable offense.
- Why is resurrection proof of divinity? Wasn’t Lazarus also raised from the dead?
- The gospels were written decades after the events they claim to describe. Should we still see them as reliable enough to infer that the resurrection really happened?
- Couldn’t legends have been introduced in the gap between the events and the time that the events were recorded?
- Is it enough for us to have a Creator God, or is there a reason for God to reveal himself to us?
- Tell us about your experience debating atheist scholars on university campuses.
- Has any an atheist ever caused you to doubt your arguments?
- The problem of human evil is easy to respond to, but how do you respond to the problem of natural evil, i.e. – suffering from events in the natural world, such as birth defects or natural disasters.
- Atheists like to bring up specific disagreements they have with the Bible, e.g. – same-sex marriage, abortion, slavery, genocide. How would you respond to those?
- Regarding slavery in the Bible, isn’t it the case that people sometimes do things that are not prescribed by God, and the Bible merely records that?
- How would you respond then to people who push for same-sex marriage by arguing that this is a case where God wanted same-sex marriage, but couldn’t press for it because the people were not capable at that time and in that culture?

- When discussing specific issues of morality, do you try to argue from a natural law perspective or from the morality in the Bible?
- How would you respond to someone like Jordan Peterson who approaches religion teachings pragmatically, focusing on behaviors rather than the rational grounding of those behaviors?
- How do you speak to young people about God without them losing interest?
- How did you become a Christian?
- As the influence of Judeo-Christian religion recedes, what do you see filling the void, and how do you see that affecting Western civilization going forward?

Impeachment hearings causing Independent voters to turn against Democrats

November 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

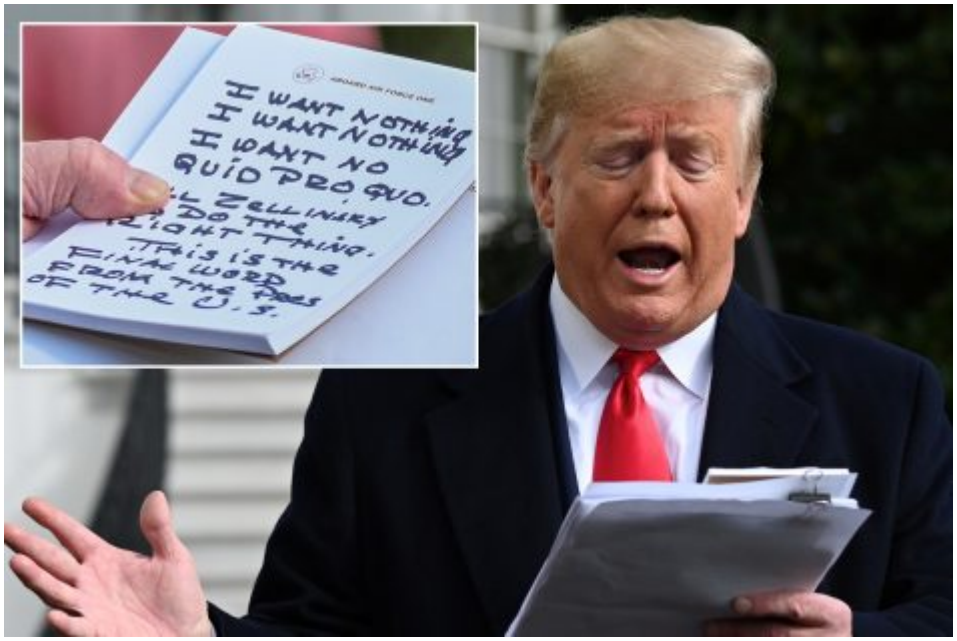

Trump reading out impeachment hearing testimony to reporters

Good news, everyone! Last week, I was posting a lot of videos from the impeachment hearings, featuring Devin Nunes, Elise Stefanik, John Ratcliffe, Jim Jordan and others. Although the mainstream news media reporters were anxious for the Democrat witnesses to provide evidence to impeach Trump, it didn't work out. And now independents are turning against the Democrats.

Here's a good summary from The Federalist:

> Emerson polling showed that support for impeachment flipped since October from 48 percent support with 44 percent opposing to now 45 percent opposed and 43 percent in support. Among key independents, the switch was even more pronounced. In October, 48 percent supported impeaching President Donald Trump, with 39 percent opposed. Now, 49 percent of independents oppose impeachment, while only 34 percent support it.
>
> A new Marquette University Law School poll found that 40 percent of registered voters in the swing state of Wisconsin think that Trump should be impeached and removed from office, while 53 percent do not think so. Another 6 percent weren't sure.
>
> A new Gallup poll shows that Trump's approval has ticked up two points since the impeachment drama began, with 50 percent of Americans opposed to it and 48 percent in support. Henry Olsen notes that Gallup polls all adults, not just registered voters, meaning that a poll of registered voters would have Trump's job approval even higher and impeachment opposed by closer to a 52-46 margin.

Even more interesting are the numbers for black voters, who traditionally vote Democrat. The Epoch Times reports:

> Both polls—Rasmussen, which usually tilts Republican, and Emerson, which is considered even-handed—came out almost exactly the same, putting Trump's support among blacks at a surprising, almost astonishing, 34 percent. Typically, Republicans poll in single digits among blacks.
>
> "Game Changer" may be one of the great clichés of our our time, but this would actually be one. If even remotely true, Democrats should be having a nervous breakdown. They depend more than ever on African-Americans for success in elections. If Trump were to garner even 18 percent of the black vote, he would easily win in 2020. If he had anything close to the 34 percent, it would be a runaway, a disaster for the Democrats.

So, those are good numbers for Trump. What happened at the hearings? Well, the Democrats were trying to prove that Trump had held up foreign aid to Ukraine, in order to get them to investigate why Joe Biden's son was collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars when Joe Biden was vice president. But it turned out that no one in the new Ukrainian government thought that their aid was being held up. And that the aid was released after a short delay over concerns that the new Ukraine government was as corrupt as the last one. Once those concerns were investigated, the aid was released. And the aid included lethal defensive anti-tank weapons, something that Obama had never done for Ukraine. And there was never any investigation of Hunter Biden before the aid was released. So, there was no quid pro quo.

I posted a lot of videos showing all the admissions on Facebook, but this 1-minute video was the slam dunk of the hearing:

The mainstream media reported that Ambassador Sondland had said the exact opposite as what you see in the video above, and that's just because they don't expect American voters to look at the video of the hearing.

So, what did we learn from all this? We learned that Trump doesn't like to give American taxpayer dollars to other countries. He thinks that their immediate neighbors ought to help them, not America. And we learned that Trump is concerned that we not throw money away to corrupt regimes. And we learned that far from withholding aid, Trump gave them USEFUL anti-tank Javelin missiles, something that Obama was never willing to do. And he didn't get any investigation of any Bidens before that aid was sent.

The Federalist article notes that viewership of the hearings decreased as they went on, probably because people realized that there was no evidence there.

> Media outlets did all they could to bolster Schiff's show and ran the impeachment hearings non-stop, as if Schiff's inquiry had a legitimacy it never quite managed to earn on the merits. But instead of viewership increasing over time, it decreased.
>
> […]While the argument for impeachment was difficult to understand, Democrats'

> own witnesses kept making Trump's case against "the swamp" for him. There is no question that these bureaucrats, sometimes using third-hand information, were deeply opposed to Trump, his policies, and his behavior. Their problem was that they were not elected president. In fact, they weren't elected anything. Some of them were political appointees — a testament to the awful job Trump has done at finding personnel who can accomplish his policy goals — and other times they were career bureaucrats.
>
> […]In part because Schiff and his team seemed confused about what case they were prosecuting, questions to witnesses were almost always leading, but never focused on a particular or consistent goal. Conversely, Republicans kept focused during their questions, always pointing out that the witnesses didn't actually have first-hand information, or were basing their views on their own conjecture, a shaky basis for impeachment.
>
> In general, Republican members did a surprisingly good job on cross examining witnesses. The Democrats kept rolling out new star witnesses, and some, such as Gordon Sondland and Lt. Col. Alex Vindman had opening statements that were quite strong for Democrats. Their opening statements withered under strong GOP questioning.

I was thinking about what the Republicans should do next, and wondering whether they should vote to advance the impeachment investigation to the Senate. Democrats were able to make the hearings look bad for Trump at the beginning, before Republicans could question the Democrat witnesses.

Initially, Schiff insisted that this whistleblower testify. Schiff repeatedly demanded that testimony. That all changed the precise moment that it was revealed the whistleblower had communicated with Schiff's staff, something both the whistleblower and Schiff had been dishonest about.

> Republicans hammered Schiff about his self-serving about face, even if the media wanted to pretend it wasn't a big deal. They also reminded him that they weren't being allowed to call their own witnesses, ask questions, use transcripts of previous depositions, and other things that a fair proceeding would allow. It worked to their benefit.

But imagine if the Republicans were the ones calling witnesses, and they were given more time to ask questions of the leaker, the whistleblower, Adam Schiff, etc. to really find out who is behind all of this. It might be worth it to get all of this settled properly.

Why is it so difficult for a working man to be sole provider and leader of a home?

November 26, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

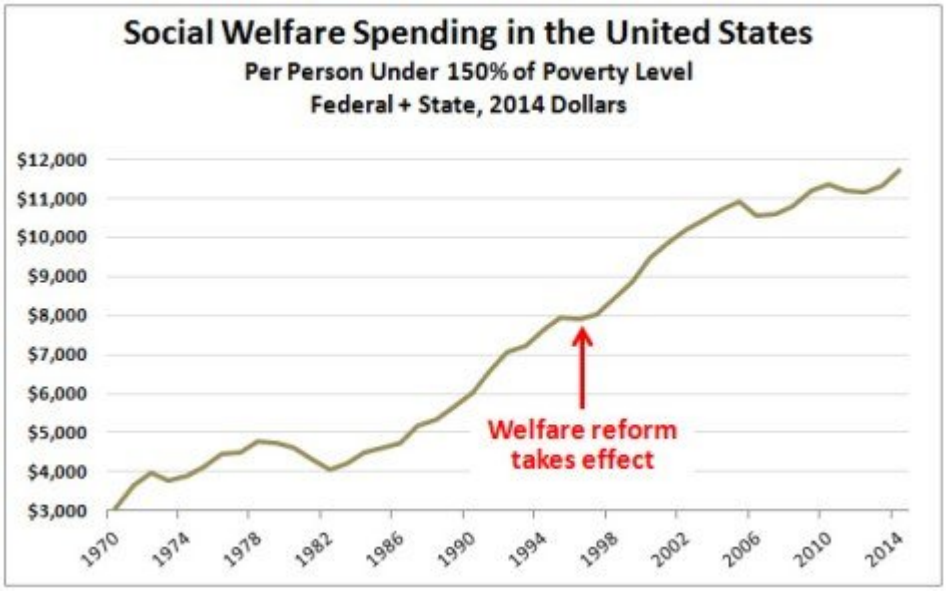

Welfare spending

So, I've noticed that many men who are interested in marriage have been running into problems with their plans. One challenge is the problem of the financial costs of marriage. In order to undertake a marriage enterprise, men have to believe that they can pay the bills. And this is especially challenging to men who want a stay-at-home wife to raise their children.

*Please note that I am talking about unmarried (never married, divorced) women throughout this post.

Here's my argument for why I think that feminism has made it harder for men to afford to get married:

1. Feminism caused no-fault divorce.
2. No-fault divorce laws led to more frequent divorces.
3. Divorced women turn to government for financial support.
4. Taxes increase in order to pay for more government spending.
5. Men who were interested in marriage were hit with higher taxes, which made marriage enterprise financially unfeasible for them.

Here's the evidence for each point.

1. Feminism was behind no-fault divorce, according to this feminist, pro-no-fault-divorce writer.

Excerpt:

> Households of 2010 don't look quite like they did in 1969, when no-fault divorce actually was a controversial topic and these counter-arguments held some

> weight. The working dad/stay-at-home mom model of the middle class has been replaced by two-parent earner households and a growing number of working mom/stay-at-home dad arrangements. In working poor and impoverished families, the one-parent provider model was never the norm. **No-fault divorce seemed scary when it had never before existed, but the truth is that its introduction was long overdue. Feminist groups at the time supported no-fault divorce, as it provided women an escape hatch from desperately unhappy marriages in a society where they were already disadvantaged on almost every level, regardless of their marital status.** Imagine an abusive marriage in 1968, when the court-savvy abuser could actually force the victim to stay in the relationship forever. Imagine that now, and you know why domestic violence attorneys are in full support of introducing no-fault divorce to New York. And the judges aren't the only problem.

Note that the author of this piece thinks that it is not women's fault that they choose men who they then want to divorce. It's not the woman's fault that she is unhappy with the man she courted with and then chose and then made vows to. She isn't responsible for choosing a good man with chastity, sobriety, moral convictions, etc. She thinks that women shouldn't be held responsible for their choices. Also, feminists think that children do fine without fathers.

2. Easier divorces means more divorces.

Abstract:

> This paper analyzes a panel of 18 European countries spanning from 1950 to 2003 to examine the extent to which the legal reforms leading to "easier divorce" that took place during the second half of the 20th century have contributed to the increase in divorce rates across Europe. We use a quasi-experimental set-up and exploit the different timing of the reforms in divorce laws across countries. We account for unobserved country-specific factors by introducing country fixed effects, and we include country-specific trends to control for time-varying factors at the country level that may be correlated with divorce rates and divorce laws, such as changing social norms or slow moving demographic trends. We find that the different reforms that "made divorce easier" were followed by significant increases in divorce rates. **The effect of no-fault legislation was strong and permanent, while unilateral reforms only had a temporary effect on divorce rates. Overall, we estimate that the legal reforms account for about 20 percent of the increase in divorce rates in Europe between 1960 and 2002.**

It seems obvious, but more evidence never hurts. About 70% of divorces are initiated by women, either because they chose to marry the wrong man, or because they become unhappy with the right man.

3. Marital instability causes women to vote for bigger government for security.

Excerpt:

> Giving women the right to vote significantly changed American politics from the very beginning. Despite claims to the contrary, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue, and these effects continued growing as more women took advantage of the franchise. Similar changes occurred at the federal level as female suffrage led to more liberal voting records for the state's U.S. House and Senate delegations. In the Senate, suffrage changed voting behavior by an amount equal to almost 20 percent of the difference between Republican and Democratic senators. Suffrage also coincided with changes in the probability that prohibition would be enacted and changes in divorce laws.
>
> […]More work remains to be done on why women vote so differently, but our initial work provides scant evidence that it is due to self-interest arising from their employment by government. **The only evidence that we found indicated that the gender gap in part arises from women's fear that they are being left to raise children on their own (Lott and Kenny 1997).** If this result is true, the continued breakdown of the family and higher divorce rates imply growing political conflicts between the sexes.

Bigger government must be paid for by higher taxes, which makes it harder for one working man's income to provide for a family. In fact, feminists *wanted* men to be displaced as sole-providers. They would prefer that women are "equal" to men, and that means making women get out and work like men. It was no concern of theirs that children would be raised by strangers in daycares and government schools.

4. Women are in fact observed to vote for bigger government.

Excerpt:

> On Tuesday, the nation made history. It made history in electing the first African American president; it made history in building a bigger margin for the first female Speaker of the House; it made history in delivering the biggest Democratic margin since 1964; it made history in sending a record number of people to the polls and the highest percentage turnout since the 1960 election. Analysts will spend the next few months sifting through the data, trying to figure out what happened and why. Historians will likely spend the next several years and decades studying this election, as well. But one thing is immediately clear. **Unmarried women played a pivotal role in making this history and in changing this nation. They delivered a stunning 70 to 29 percent margin to Barack Obama and delivered similarly strong margins in races for Congress and the U.S. Senate. Although unmarried women have voted Democratic consistently since marital status has been was tracked, this election represents the highest margin recorded and a 16-point net gain**

> **at the Presidential level from 2004.**

In fact, there was a recent (2011) study showing that unmarried women do in fact vote for higher taxes and more government as a substitute for a husband's provider role.

Abstract:

> The last three decades have witnessed the rise of a political gender gap in the United States wherein more women than men favor the Democratic party. We trace this development to the decline in marriage, which we posit has made men richer and women poorer. Data for the United States support this argument. **First, there is a strong positive correlation between state divorce prevalence and the political gender gap – higher divorce prevalence reduces support for the Democrats among men but not women. Second, longitudinal data show that following marriage (divorce), women are less (more) likely to support the Democratic party.**

What follows from voting Democrat?

If more people vote for Democrats then we will get higher taxes to pay for all the government spending. Higher taxes means that a married man can no longer retain enough of his earnings to support a family. And that means his wife has to work, and that means that his children will learn what the daycare workers and government school teachers decide they should learn.

But what do men want out of marriage? Men don't want to marry a stressed-out competitor, and be yelled at in their own home. They want a homemaker who is focused on her husband and children. They want their children raised by someone who shares *their worldview*. Men want to produce moral, influential, independent children. Men want to be respected in their homes as sole provider. Men marry in order to lead on moral and spiritual issues. And men understand that a woman who doesn't work outside the home usually makes a more feminine, supportive partner in the marriage enterprise.

If society, including the parents of daughters and the pastors of daughters, have decided that women don't have to care about what men want out of marriage, then they should not be surprised that men don't want marriage. Men may have no-commitment temporary sexual relationships with a secular left feminist who has been focused on her own feminist projects: travel, student loans, promiscuity, career, etc. But they certainly do not marry those women. When it comes to marriage, men want women who embrace the roles of wife and mother. And unlike shoes and handbags, we get a vote about whether or not the marriage happens.

Guest post: Fred Rogers, the patron saint of niceness

November 27, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fred Rogers and Francois Clemmons on the Mr. Rogers show

The following is a guest post by a friend who wants to remain anonymous. He is a Christian apologist who works in the software industry.

The marketing machine for the latest Tom Hanks movie portrayal of Mister Rogers is in full swing. And they're trying hard to sell the movie to the Christian community. A recent Christian Post article claims:

'Mister Rogers' Neighborhood' was Fred Rogers' mission field, wife Joanne says

> "One of the most important things we accept and know is that Fred was first and foremost a minister in the Presbyterian Church," Joanne Rogers told The Christian Post.

The trouble with this is that if the show was Fred Roger's mission field, he failed because people know him more for being nice than for preaching Jesus.

It's telling that one of the most common "surprising facts" shared about Mr Rogers is that he was a Presbyterian minister. If we hadn't been told this, we wouldn't know it based on his work and legacy.

A commenter on Facebook writes:

> His job was to do a kids show not to proselytize. Did Jesus go around preaching when He was called to be a carpenter? No He did His job.
>
> I'm sure people asked Mr. Rogers what his motivation was and there's nothing wrong with having private conversations about it and not using the television to preach. People don't watch kids shows to be preached at. That would be a misuse of his platform!

Is that true? Let's take the case of Fred Rogers's longtime friend and frequent show guest, Francois Clemmons. In addition to being a talented broadway actor, Francois Clemmons is proudly gay. And there's no indication that Fred Rogers pressed Francois Clemmons to repent and turn to Jesus.

> "He says he'll never forget the day Rogers wrapped up the program, as he always did, by hanging up his sweater and saying, "You make every day a special day just by being you, and I like you just the way you are." This time in particular, Rogers had been looking right at Clemmons, and after they wrapped, he walked over.
>
> Clemmons asked him, "Fred, were you talking to me?"
>
> "Yes, I have been talking to you for years," Rogers said, as Clemmons recalls. "But you heard me today."
>
> "It was like telling me I'm OK as a human being," Clemmons says. "That was one of the most meaningful experiences I'd ever had.""

Which is even more sad when you consider that Fred Rogers took a brave stand against racism.

He found racism to be an important enough subject to import the foot washing example of Jesus but there's no indication that he called Francois Clemmons to repent for his sinful lifestyle choice.

> "But did Mr. Rogers ever condemn you?
>
> No. He said, "Sometimes people do get married and they settle down, they live a different life. You can't go to the those [gay] clubs. . .That may not be the answer for you, Franc; you have to consider something else. What, I'm not sure. But that may not be the route for you.""

I don't expect, nor would I advocate for, Fred Rogers to do nothing but condemn Francois Clemmons. But it's pretty telling that in all of their years working together, with Fred knowing Francois's sexual orientation, that Fred never saw fit to tell him where his sinful lifestyle would eventually lead according to Scripture and plead with him to repent.

Fred Rogers is being lionized by popular media. You have to ask yourself why. Especially in a culture that *still* condemns Chick-fil-A for what its founder's son said nearly a decade ago. The reason is not because Fred Rogers looked like Jesus. Quite the contrary. It's because Fred Rogers was soft and effeminate. Fred Rogers is what the world *wants*

Christians to look and act like so they can more easily push around and otherwise mold Christians.

Again, our commenter on Facebook responds:

> A children's show on a public network is no place to be preaching the gospel. Should a flight attendant spend all their time preaching and trying to convert people!? They have a job to do. If the Holy Spirit moves them to say something then fine but you're going to turn people off if you're acting like a salesperson and not doing your actual job! I am dead serious. The workplace is to be professional and do your job. If you want to preach be a preacher. Otherwise be careful how and when you bring it up. You have a whole private personal life on your time off to get involved in that kind of stuff!

Do we expect Christians to be sharing their faith all the time they are at work? No. Like every other profession the flight attendant has certain required duties to perform. But we are told to work as if for the glory of God (Colossians 3:23). At the very least that means that there is a mode of working that marks us as Christians. Part of that is the joy and peace that Fred Rogers displayed, yes, but that inevitably leads to others wondering about the source of that joy and peace (1 Peter 3:15). And that's when an opportunity arises to explain to nonbelievers who Jesus is and why we should _want_ to pay the greatest price (Matthew 13:45-46) of giving up our own lives, characterized by sin (2 Timothy 2:25), to follow him.

If Francois Clemmons never felt judged by Fred Rogers then that is a serious condemnation on the ministry of Fred Rogers. It means, at the very least, that Fred Rogers was not doing his job in calling Francois to repentance so that he could come to a knowledge of the truth. The only truth that has any hope in saving anyone.

The true story of Thanksgiving: Squanto's miraculous path to Plymouth

November 28, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

"The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth" by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe (1914)
God's providence in action, as reported by Eric Metaxas in the Wall Street Journal.

Full text:

> The story of how the Pilgrims arrived at our shores on the Mayflower—and how a friendly Patuxet native named Squanto showed them how to plant corn, using fish as fertilizer—is well-known. But Squanto's full story is not, as National Geographic's new Thanksgiving miniseries, "Saints & Strangers," shows. That might be because some details of Squanto's life are in dispute. The important ones are not, however. His story is astonishing, even raising profound questions about God's role in American history.
>
> Every Thanksgiving we remember that, to escape religious persecution, the Pilgrims sailed to the New World, landing at Plymouth Rock in 1620. But numerous trading ships had visited the area earlier. Around 1608 an English ship dropped anchor off the coast of what is today Plymouth, Mass., ostensibly to trade metal goods for the natives' beads and pelts. The friendly Patuxets received the crew but soon discovered their dark intentions. A number of the braves were brutally captured, taken to Spain and sold into slavery.
>
> One of them, a young man named Tisquantum, or Squanto, was bought by a group of Catholic friars, who evidently treated him well and freed him, even allowing him to dream of somehow returning to the New World, an almost unimaginable thought at the time. Around 1612, Squanto made his way to London, where he stayed with a man namedJohn Slany and learned his ways and language. In 1618, a ship was found, and in return for serving as an interpreter,

Squanto would be given one-way passage back to the New World.

After spending a winter in Newfoundland, the ship made its way down the coast of Maine and Cape Cod, where Squanto at last reached his own shore. After 10 years, Squanto returned to the village where he had been born. But when he arrived, to his unfathomable disappointment, there was no one to greet him. What had happened?

It seems that since he had been away, nearly every member of the Patuxets had perished from disease, perhaps smallpox, brought by European ships. Had Squanto not been kidnapped, he would almost surely have died. But perhaps he didn't feel lucky to have been spared. Surely, he must have wondered how his extraordinary efforts could amount to this. At first he wandered to another Wampanoag tribe, but they weren't his people. He was a man without a family or tribe, and eventually lived alone in the woods.

But his story didn't end there. In the bleak November of 1620, the Mayflower passengers, unable to navigate south to the warmer land of Virginia, decided to settle at Plymouth, the very spot where Squanto had grown up. They had come in search of religious freedom, hoping to found a colony based on Christian principles.

Their journey was very difficult, and their celebrated landing on the frigid shores of Plymouth proved even more so. Forced to sleep in miserably wet and cold conditions, many of them fell gravely ill. Half of them died during that terrible winter. One can imagine how they must have wept and wondered how the God they trusted and followed could lead them to this agonizing pass. They seriously considered returning to Europe.

But one day during that spring of 1621, a Wampanoag walked out of the woods to greet them. Somehow he spoke perfect English. In fact, he had lived in London more recently than they had. And if that weren't strange enough, he had grown up on the exact land where they had settled.

Because of this, he knew everything about how to survive there; not only how to plant corn and squash, but how to find fish and lobsters and eels and much else. The lone Patuxet survivor had nowhere to go, so the Pilgrims adopted him as one of their own and he lived with them on the land of his childhood.

No one disputes that Squanto's advent among the Pilgrims changed everything, making it possible for them to stay and thrive. Squanto even helped broker a peace with the local tribes, one that lasted 50 years, a staggering accomplishment considering the troubles settlers would face later.

So the question is: Can all of this have been sheer happenstance, as most versions of the story would have us believe? The Pilgrims hardly thought so. To them, Squanto was a living answer to their tearful prayers, an outrageous miracle of God. Plymouth Colony Governor William Bradford declared in his journal that Squanto "became a special instrument sent of God" who didn't leave them "till

> he died.”
>
> Indeed, when Squanto died from a mysterious disease in 1622, Bradford wrote that he wanted “the Governor to pray for him, that he might go to the Englishmen’s God in heaven.” And Squanto bequeathed his possessions to the Pilgrims “as remembrances of his love.”
>
> These are historical facts. May we be forgiven for interpreting them as the answered prayers of a suffering people, and a warm touch at the cold dawn of our history of an Almighty Hand?

America is truly a blessed nation. Why this story is not taught in all the schools of the nation is beyond me.

U.S. birth rate hits record low, despite secular left's obsession with "overpopulation"

November 29, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

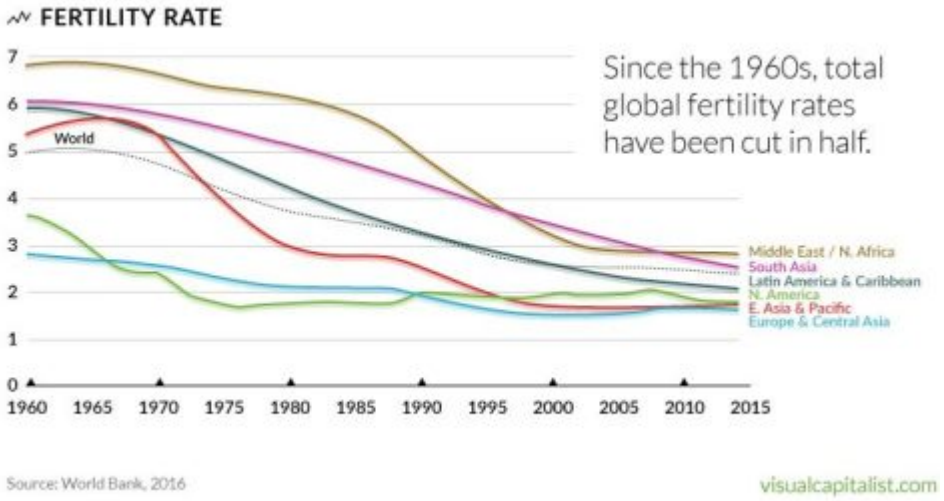

Total fertility rates have decreased globally by about half since 1960.

I had lunch with one of my co-workers on the secular left recently. I asked him what his biggest concern with the world. After telling me that he was a "libertarian", he said that he was alarmed that people were having too many babies. I asked him what he wanted to do about it. He said keep abortion legal, and use the government to stop people from reproducing. Some libertarian!

Anyway, he was just factually wrong about the overpopulation, and I had to launch into a long, detailed explanation of replacement rates, birth rates across the world, and how the prosperity created by capitalism has caused birth rates to decline in even poorer countries. I also explained to him that once a country dips below the replacement fertility rate (2.1 births per woman), it never returns. I concluded my refutation of his assertion by stating that he should be more worried about underpopulation than overpopulation.

Anyway, I had to repeat the same explanation again with another secular leftist that same week. So when I saw this recent Daily Caller article about a new report from the US Centers for Disease Control, I figured I might as well equip you guys to respond to other people with the same wrong view.

It says:

> The United States birth rate hit a record low in 2018 with numbers reflecting the lowest birthrates in the past 30 years, reports say.
>
> A new report from the National Center for Health Statistics at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reveals that almost every age group of women under 35 showed birth rate declines in 2018. The provisional number of births in the U.S. in 2018 was 3,788,235, down 2% since 2017. For every 1,000 women, the fertility rate declined 2% from 2017 to 1,728.0 births.
>
> Birth rates had reached a record low in 2017 as well, marking a continuing trend

> of declining birth rates over the past four years, according to CNN.
>
> […]These 2018 birth rate numbers are below the necessary threshold needed for population replacement, which is 2,100 births per 1,000 women, CNN reports.

So we're down to 1.73 births in the USA, which is below the 2.1 rate needed to maintain current population levels.

This new report isn't an outlier. It confirms what we knew about from previous reports.

Here's an earlier report from the far-left Pew Research Center, reported by the radically-leftist Slate, of all places.

Excerpt:

> A report issued last month by the Pew Research Center found that immigrant births fell from 102 per 1,000 women in 2007 to 87.8 per 1,000 in 2012. That helped bring the overall U.S. birthrate to a mere 64 per 1,000 women—not enough to sustain our current population.

> **Moreover, the poor, highly fertile countries that once churned out immigrants by the boatload are now experiencing birthrate declines of their own. From 1960 to 2009, Mexico's fertility rate tumbled from 7.3 live births per woman to 2.4, India's dropped from six to 2.5, and Brazil's fell from 6.15 to 1.9. Even in sub-Saharan Africa, where the average birthrate remains a relatively blistering 4.66, fertility is projected to fall below replacement level by the 2070s.** This change in developing countries will affect not only the U.S. population, of course, but eventually the world's.

Now I have a couple tools for you to share to those people who might have irrational views of this issue.

Useful videos

This video explains what's wrong with overpopulation fears:

And this one explains what the replacement rate number is:

You can share those for people who don't have time to read. It at least makes the point, even if it doesn't link to a reputable report.

A useful podcast

This podcast featuring famous economist Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse will be useful for you to understand why the overpopulation myth is something you should be concerned about.

The MP3 file is here. (from 1/22/2010)

Topics:

- how the transition from country to city discourages child-bearing
- how religion impacts how many children parents have
- what is the US birth rate, is it high enough?

- can we just import immigrants to alleviate the low birth rate?
- has increased prosperity encouraged people to have more children?
- how has the purpose of sex changed after the sexual revolution?
- how does the demographic crisis threaten entitlement programs?
- what do we learn from the declining birth rate in Japan?
- how does population growth impact stock market performance?

This podcast explains how some countries aren’t making enough young workers to pay for the social programs needed by a growing number of elderly people wanting to retire.

Please share the post if you found it useful.

How to be an alpha male and signal manliness without being a promiscuous predator

November 30, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

These days, there seems to be a perception that in order to be an alpha male, you have to become a pick-up artist and sleep with a whole bunch of fatherless women, then ghost them (don't talk to them any more). But as a Christian man, that's all off-limits to me. Still, my best friend Dina tells me that I am an alpha male, despite being a virgin. How can that be?

In this post, I'm going to lay out three ways for a Christian man to be an alpha male without being a promiscuous predator who preys on vulnerable fatherless girls.

1. Never let a woman override your vision to serve Christ

It can be challenging to project the attitude of aloofness that women associate with strength while still being a good, moral man. One way to do that is to self-sacrificially invest your time, money and effort into some enterprise that benefits Christ. For example, in my case, I've invested time in learning apologetics, having a blog as a platform, and giving charity to invest in organizations to do apologetics events. I was pressured from Christian women to "tone it down" for their friends and family. I was also pressured to redirect my attention from apologetics to their need to have a good time (travel, zip-lining, skydiving, surfing were mentioned as good ways to spend my money on them). Alpha males don't give up their mission in order to get the girl.

It is tempting for a man to let a woman re-focus his time, money and effort on giving her what she wants. If she is his wife, then some of that will be legitimate, just as some government spending is legitimate because it is Constitutional. A man should love his wife, protect her and provide for her. But he should not be distracted for other frivolous priorities that have nothing to do with a Christian marriage plan. Christian women often

absorb secular left priorities from the culture, and they expect Christian men to give them what the culture says they ought to want or need, e.g. – putting the kids in daycare and public schools so she can have a career like her non-Christian friends. Alpha males put their own vision above what the secular left culture says they should be doing.

2. Never let a woman disrespect your leadership / mentoring role

It's important for you to have areas of your life where you actually know what you are talking about, and have demonstrated success at mentoring others. In my case, those areas are education, career and finances. I have invested time in learning what to study. And I achieved a BS and MS in computer science. I have invested time in learning how to interview, what skills to train, and what jobs to take, and how to keep a job. And I achieved a 20-year+ gap-less resume with good companies, using good skills. I have chosen not to borrow money at interest (ever), not to spend money on travel / fun / thrills, and to invest early and often. And I have achieved a six-figure income and will have a 7-figure net worth by my mid-forties. A man needs to have areas like that where he studies and achieves, so that he knows how to advise others, and has a record of successful mentoring.

I sometimes mentor women. Some of them listen to me and some do not. I've gotten women to drop their non-STEM majors to study engineering or computer science. I've gotten women to stop wasting money on fun and thrills, in order to pay off their debts and start investing and giving to charity. I've gotten women to dump hot bad boys who would not commit, and choose commitment-minded men. I've gotten women to quit bad jobs in order to take better jobs. In the areas where I have demonstrated competence, I expect women to respect my leadership, even if it makes them feel bad in the short term. Men signal alpha male status when they obtain good results in their mentoring activities.

Also, I'm just going to throw this out there: "spiritual leadership" does not mean telling a woman that God really is speaking to her through her feelings, when she wants to make impulsive, impractical decisions that are likely to result in failure.

3. Never let a woman stop you from expressing your moral convictions

In the 2012 election, most single / unmarried / divorced women voted pro-abortion and pro-gay-marriage.

Excerpt:

> **NBC News national exit polling shows that 67 percent of unmarried women said they voted for Obama. That's in line with the 2008 election, when 70 percent of single women helped usher the president into office. This proves it wasn't a single-election phenomenon: unmarried women have solidified into a powerful voting force, experts say.**
>
> […]By the way — this isn't just young women, Maatz pointed out. Many of the

> single women voters were over 50 — divorced, widowed or never married.

These women voted for a candidate who voted multiple times for *infanticide* as a state senator in Illinois. Why is this? Well, young unmarried women are more influenced by feelings like compassion. They tend to see themselves as “exempt” from moral standards, because they are constantly told that they are “special”. They tend to see the predictable consequences of poor choices as “unexpected”, causing them to think that people aren’t responsible for their own poor choices. As a result, they tend to be more progressive in their voting, and less Christian in their moral convictions.

A man can signal his alpha male status to women by being bold and persuasive on moral issues (and issues of policy that touch on moral issues). This may not work on all women, but it will work on the ones he should be interested in for wife and mother roles. Men should never just express their feelings about moral issues, or just tell about their experiences. Men ought to go further, and make logical arguments supported by scientific evidence. Instead of sharing “their opinion” (subjective), they ought to press those who disagree to change their minds. It is the studying of arguments and evidence that allows the Christian man to signal alpha male status when these moral issues are debated.

Conclusion

My friend Dina likes to say that the essence of manliness is when a man refuses to let a woman redirect him away from his vision and his moral convictions by using sex, sexual attraction, the promise of sex, or by withholding sex (from her husband). I think men can learn something from her definition. Women are useful as helpers, but we shouldn’t automatically assume that they are wise and virtuous, and give them the authority to rule over us in areas where we ought to lead. Dina also says never to trust women’s words, when deciding whether they will respect your leadership in your vision and moral convictions. Before you marry a woman, you must observe her taking the initiative to perform independent actions that help you with your vision – actions that go against her own feelings and desires. The most important part about being an alpha male is not losing your alpha male status by marrying someone who won’t respect it.

Report: Chick-Fil-A donates to Southern Poverty Law Center, other anti-Christian groups

December 1, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Southern Poverty Law Center was connected to a 2012 domestic terrorism attack on a Washington think tank

I'm re-posting my post about the Southern Poverty (SPLC), since it emerged this week that Chick-Fil-A had not only ceased donations to the conservative Family Research Council (FRC), but had now started donations to the Southern Poverty Law Center. You might remember that the SPLC was an accessory to the domestic terrorism attack on the FRC in 2012. That's where Chick-Fil-A is now.

First, here's the article from Townhall:

> In 2017 Chick-fil-A donated money to the same corrupt SPLC that still outrageously lists FRC as a "hate group."
>
> […]Covenant House, a homeless shelter for youth, takes pride in its promotion of all things LGBTQ. They even marched in the New York "Gay Pride" parade to show their inclusivity cred. Guess the Salvation Army (which admittedly has an issue with partially supporting abortion in cases of rape, incest and "life and health" of the mother) should've flown some co-opted rainbow colors to keep their hundreds of thousands in funding. Whoops. Looks like Covenant is the new Salvation.
>
> Chick-fil-A funds the deeply political YWCA, a radically pro-abortion and pro-LGBTQ organization that repeatedly partners with Planned Parenthood.
>
> Chick-fil-A also funds the DC-based New Leaders Council that identifies as a "hub of progressive millennial thought leadership" which exists to "support one another along their individual path to a more progressive political and cultural landscape."

> Chick-fil-A has given a sizable donation ($50k) to The Pace Center for Girls, yet another pro-abortion organization. The education and advocacy group featured radical pro-abortion feminist Gloria Steinem (the "I Had An Abortion" activist who declared that birthing children is the "fundamental cause of climate change") as their keynote speaker for their most recent girls' Summit.
>
> […]Chick-fil-A also gives tens of thousands to Chris 180 ($27,500 in 2017, $25k in 2019), a pro-LGBT behavioral health and child welfare service agency. The organization boasts of being awarded the "Leader in Supporting and Serving LGBT Families and Youth from the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRC)." Nothing promotes human degradation quite like the pro-abortion HRC—the multi-million dollar LGBT powerhouse that recently pushed for the legalization of prostitution in D.C.
>
> […]And then there's Junior Achievement (JA), which inarguably does some phenomenal work with education and entrepreneurship. They're the recipients of hundreds of thousands a year from Chick-fil-A. In 2016, though, JA joined a coalition (Georgia Prospers) of pro-LGBT organizations in their "Too Busy to Hate" campaign to politically oppose religious liberty legislation (specifically the First Amendment Defense Act) from passing in Georgia.

So, that's where Chick-Fil-A is donating the money that you give them for their "Christian chicken". For my part, I have stopped eating there, because I cannot patronize any organization that gives money to the SPLC.

So, let's review what the SPLC does.

You might remember how gay activist Floyd Lee Corkins II used the Southern Poverty Law Center's "hate map" to plan and execute a mass shooting domestic terrorism attack against the Family Research Council office in 2012. But just recently, the SPLC has run into major, major problems.

Let's start with a summary from the Washington Examiner of what the SPLC has done:

> In 2015, the discredited organization was forced to apologize to renowned neurosurgeon and now Housing and Urban Development Secretary Dr. Ben Carson for including him in its "Extremist Files" a year earlier.
>
> Two years before that, an attempted mass murderer had stormed into the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the Family Research Council, a conservative group maligned by the SPLC with its "hate group" label, carrying a firearm and 15 Chick-fil-A sandwiches. His goal was to kill as many FRC employees as possible and smear their faces with the sandwiches. He told the FBI that his choice of target had been inspired by SPLC's designation of FRC as a "hate group."
>
> […]Across the hall from FRC at the time was the headquarters of Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative legal advocate that has since also landed on the SPLC's "hate group" list for our work litigating religious freedom, life, and

> marriage and family issues. We were given this designation by the SPLC even as we were earning nine victories at the U.S. Supreme Court since 2011.

FRC is still listed on the “hate map” on SPLC’s web site.

Big technology corporations like PayPal all partner with the SPLC. I wonder how the people who work for these companies feel about their “business partner” now, after all of these claims of sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and racism have come out.

Does abortion reduce violent crime? Does abortion reduce child abuse?

December 2, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

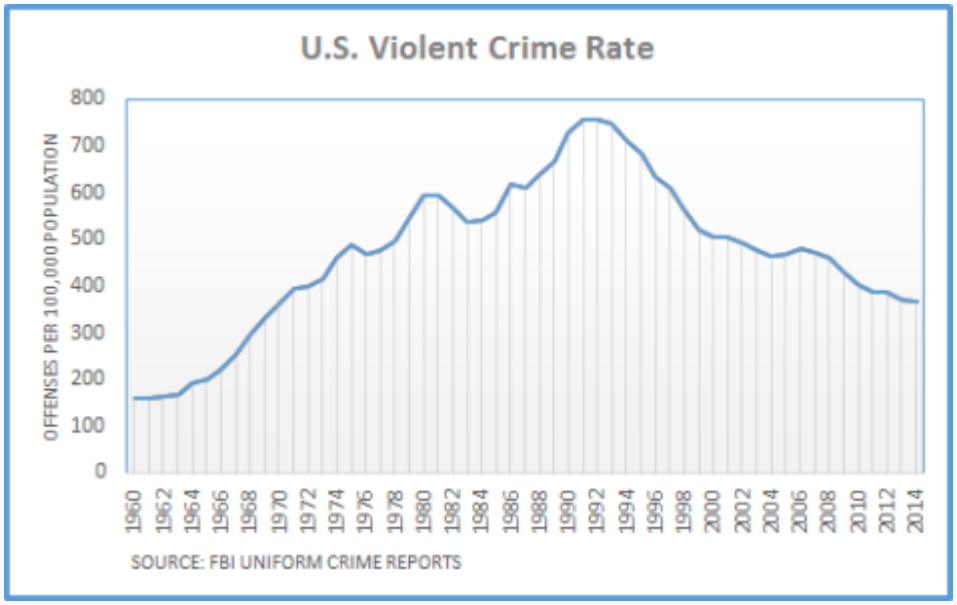

If abortion reduces crime, why does the evidence show that it doesn't?

Grr, my annoying co-workers are at it again this morning. This time, it's the man who annoyed me about overpopulation fears, which I responded to earlier this week. He says to me this morning that Alabama is going to have a big problem with violent crime because they've stopped abortions. These sorts of views are common among TV-watchers, but not among those study-readers.

Life Site News reports on a Yale Law & Economics Research Paper.

First, let's see the abstract:

> Abortion may prevent the birth of "unwanted" children, who would have relatively small investments in human capital and a higher probability of crime. On the other hand, some research suggests that legalizing abortion increases out-of-wedlock births and single parent families, which implies the opposite impact on investments in human capital and thus crime. The question is: what is the net impact? We find evidence that legalizing abortion increased murder rates by around about 0.5 to 7 percent. Previous estimates are shown to suffer from not directly linking the cohorts who are committing crime with whether they had been born before or after abortion was legal.

And now, let's see the Life Site News article:

> Law professors John R. Lott, Jr. of Yale Law School and John E. Whitley of the University of Adelaide found that legalizing abortion increased murder rates by up to seven percent. They concluded that legalizing abortion is a contributing factor to the great increase in out-of-wedlock births and single parent families,

> which in turn contribute to increased crime rates. Since 1970, the percentage of single-parent households in the United States has nearly tripled, from 11 percent to 32 percent, and the percentage of out-of-wedlock births has nearly quadrupled, from 11 percent to 43 percent of all children.7 Children born out-of-wedlock and raised by only one parent have a significantly higher incidence of crime.
>
> There are many other fundamental problems with the conclusion that legalized abortion leads to a decrease in crime.
>
> Statistician David Murray confirmed that young males between the ages of 17 and 25 commit the majority of crimes. However, if abortion had reduced crime, the crime rates in the United States would have dropped first among young people. They did not. Instead, the number of crimes committed by older people dropped first. Nearly 60% of the decline in murder since 1990 involved killers aged 25 and older — who were born before Roe v. Wade.8
>
> Murray also found that other nations with high abortion rates showed a large increase in crime about eighteen years after they legalized abortion. For example, in Great Britain, which legalized abortion in 1968, violent crime has been rising steeply since about 1985 — exactly when it should have been declining, according to the Donohue-Levitt thesis. Additionally, Russia, with the highest abortion rate on earth, has experienced a tidal wave of every kind of violent crime following the breakup of the Soviet Union.9
>
> FBI statistics showed that the murder rate in 1993 for 14- to 17-year-olds in the USA (born in the years 1975-1979, which had very high abortion rates) was 3.6 times higher than that of kids who were the same age in 1984 (who were born in the pre-legalization years of 1966-1970). Additionally, since Black women were having abortions at a much higher rate than White women, we should have expected the murder rate among Black youth to have declined beginning in about 1991. Instead, it increased more than five hundred percent from 1984 to 1993.10
>
> Finally, the huge increase in violent crime that peaked in 1991 and then began to decline is more closely related to the crack epidemic, not abortion. The Donohue-Levitt study confirms that the crime rate rose and fell exactly where crack cocaine was most easily available — in the large cities and among young Black males.11 This is also confirmed by the rise in crime during the time period 1984 to 1991, after a decline from 1980 to 1984. If abortion were the primary cause of a decline in violent crime, the crime rate would have been relatively stable during the time period 1980 to 1991.

By the way, a good book to buy on this is John Lott's "Freedomnomics: Why the Free Market Works and Other Half-Baked Theories Don't". One third of the book covers this topic.

And if you're wondering what caused the decline in violent crime rates in the 1990s, the

answer to that is that it was multiple factors. Better policing, mandatory sentencing laws, legalized concealed carry laws, and other factors were responsible.

Abortion and child abuse

Sometimes, pro-abortion people put forward a similar argument about abortion preventing child abuse. This argument seems intuitive, but from an evidence point of view, it's false.

Here's a report from Life News about a study out of Bowling Green State University.

Excerpt:

> For decades, evidence has existed showing abortion contributes to a rise in child abuse. Now a new study by a post-abortion research institute and Bowling Green State University professors finds that women who have abortions are more likely to abuse their children.
>
> **Published in the medical journal Acta Paediatrica, the study found that women who have had abortions are 2.4 times more likely to physically abuse their children.** Pro-life advocates say it proves the need for providing women with post-abortion counseling to help deal with the emotional trauma of the abortion.
>
> […]The authors suggested that "emotional difficulties and unresolved grief responses" from pregnancy loss, whether voluntary or involuntary, could have a negative impact on women's mental health and lead to unhealthy parenting responses.
>
> According to the Illinois-based Elliot Institute, which released information about the study's findings, prior surveys "have linked pregnancy loss to an increase in grief reactions, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, all of which can have a negative impact on parent/child relationships."
>
> The post-abortion research group also points to a 2002 study published in the Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology that found abortion has been linked to an increase in substance abuse and thoughts of suicide, which could also contribute to child abuse.
>
> The new study also found that women who had more than one miscarriage or stillbirth were more likely to engage in child abuse than women who had just one. However, women who had abortions were more likely to abuse their children whether they had one or more than one abortion.
>
> "Regardless of the specific mechanisms at play, maternal history of one induced abortion does appear to be a marker for increased risk of physical abuse," the authors concluded.

Whenever I read about how studies contradict people's intuitions about what will and will not work, it makes me sad that so many people who live life on intuitions and feelings are

still allowed to vote. If only we had a society where reason and evidence were seen as indispensable for building up your view of the world.

By the way, if you're looking for a good article for debating other aspects of the Alabama pro-life law, my friend William, who loves to debate everything, and he always wins, just posted this article about 9 myths about the Alabama pro-life law.

General advice on countering your co-workers

I found that if I passed on TV and movies, I could buy pretty much any book I wanted that has research-based responses to these common questions from secular leftists. All it takes is a commitment to dedicate your book-buying budget to the task of responding to challenges, instead of producing feelings.

I notice a lot of Christian women in my office reading fiction books, while the Christian men are always talking about TV and movies. Fiction and entertainment are useless for putting forward Bible-based views and supporting evidence in controversial discussions. Instead of wasting your money on fiction and entertainment, listen closely to what people in your office are saying, and then purchase and train with resources that help you to serve God in these discussions. Bible verses and prayers alone will not equip you to serve in difficult situations.

What determines the prices of goods and services in a market economy?

December 3, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

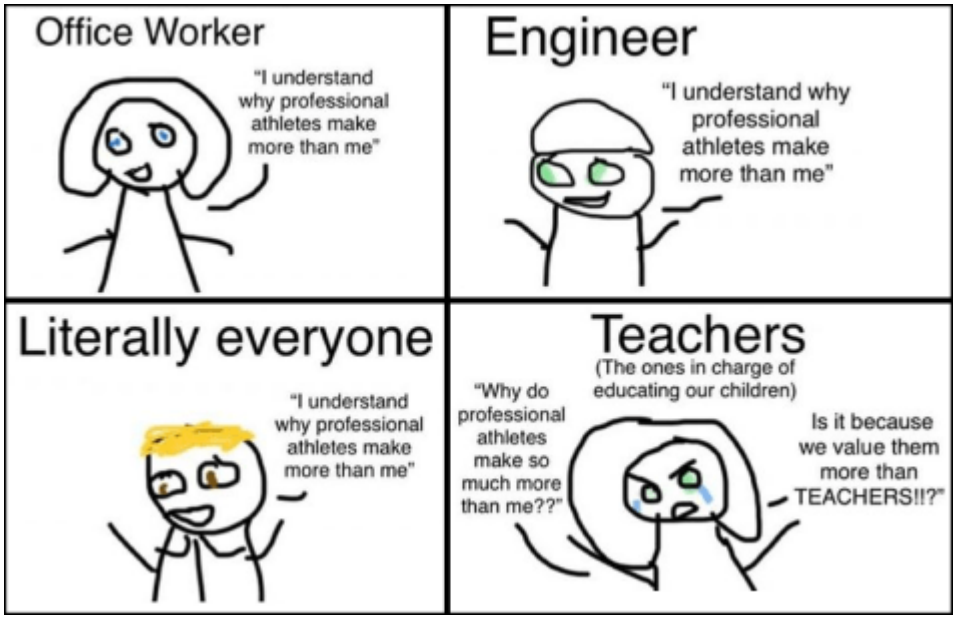

Basic Economics: In a free market, prices are set by supply and demand

A few days ago, I posted the meme above on the blog's Facebook page. The meme makes fun of unionized public school teachers, who feel entitled to the same salary and benefits as doctors, software engineers, etc. in the private sector. I thought that all Americans were familiar with basic economics. But judging from some of the comments to the meme, that is not the case. This post will help.

So, the point of this meme is simple, it's to point out that the teachers who belong to teacher unions are ignorant of basic economics, specifically, the law of supply and demand. As we'll see in a minute, this is literally lesson 1 of Economics 101.

When there is more demand for a product or service than there is a supply for it, then prices go up. When there is more supply for a product or service than there is a demand for it, prices go down.

A good place to see this explained is in a book by famous black economist Thomas Sowell. Thomas Sowell has written many books, but he wrote one book in particular for people who have no knowledge of basic economics. It's called "Basic Economics: A Citizen's Guide to the Economy". And the first few chapters explain how prices are set by supply and demand:

1. What is Economics?
2. The Role of Prices
3. Price Controls
4. An Overview of Prices

Most people who commented on the meme had some knowledge of basic economics, and

how prices are determined.

Here's Bruce:

> Wages–the prices of labor–are set by free people bidding in an open market for the labor of people willing to work. They are not set by an emperor weighing abstractions. There are 3.7 million teachers working in the US, and only about 5000 professional athletes.

And Chris:

> My coworkers and I (we are fintech people with highly specialized knowledge and computer skills) were talking about some computer-related consultants who are so specialized and so good that they command hundreds (if not thousands of dollars per hour). The top of the top cyber security guys, who do presentations at conferences on threats and vectors? Yeah, thousands if not tens of thousands of dollars per hour.

So far, so good. But others argued that the prices of goods and services are determined by a sinister cabal of politicians and other elites, who paid athletes lots of money in order to distract the masses with "bread and circuses". Now, I know what you're thinking. How does paying athletes MORE get people to care about sports? It doesn't. Actually, it's the (widespread) demand to see the performance of (scarce) elite athletes that causes the wages of those athletes to increase. It's not a conspiracy – it's free people making choices about what they want to buy in a free market.

It turns out that there are two views of how wages are set in an economy:

> The labor theory of value (LTV) is a theory of value that argues that the economic value of a good or service is determined by the total amount of "socially necessary labor" required to produce it.
>
> LTV is usually associated with Marxian economics… The LTV is central to Marxist theory, which holds that the working class is exploited under capitalism, and dissociates price and value. Marx did not refer to his own theory of value as a "labour theory of value".
>
> Mainstream neoclassical economics tends to reject the need for a LTV, concentrating instead on a theory of price determined by supply and demand.

Marxists economists believe that the value of a good or service is determined by the social utility of the work produced. But classical ("free market") economists believe that value is determined by the scarcity of the good or service relative to the demand from consumers.

So, a Marxist economist might say "teaching English is valuable because it is relevant and meaningful". But, a classical economist would say "conducting a security audit on distributed point-of-sale system is valuable, because few people can do it, but many people want it".

So, the conspiracy theorists view of economics, which asserts that teachers should be paid more than software engineers and doctors, is actually based on Marxist (atheistic) assumptions. And yet many of the people who hold to the conspiracy view of prices fancy themselves to be Christians and conservatives.

I've noticed that school teachers and non-STEM university students and professors are very likely to hold to the conspiracy theory view of prices and wages. Robert Nozick wrote a paper about why this happens. It turns out that "wordsmiths" (his word) are conditioned by their performance in the classroom to expect success in the free market economy. But when they find that their "brilliance" in English poetry, Medieval history, or lesbian dance theory has no value to anyone else, they fall in with these Marxist assumptions and conspiracy theory views of the economy. It's a coping mechanism for people who value academic acclaim more than doing something useful for their neighbors.

Consider this article from College Pulse about a survey of 10,590 undergraduate students:

> Students with certain majors are far more likely than their peers to approve of socialism. Philosophy majors, in particular, have a positive view of socialism. Nearly 8 in 10 (78%) say they view the economic system favorably, followed by 64% of anthropology majors, and 58% of both English and international relations majors. Accounting and finance majors are least likely to view socialism positively (20% and 22% respectively).

Do you know what accounting and finance students have to study? *Basic economics.*

I noticed that the practical commenters who were trying to explain why teachers earn less than software engineers all had some experience working for a living in the private sector. A couple of them mentioned how studying economics on their own had led them to a correct understanding of how the economy works. That's what happened to me, as well.

As soon as I got my first job as a software engineer, and finished my study of Christian apologetics, the very next thing I studied was economics. It was Dr. Jay Richards who got me interested in it, when I heard him speaking about economics in an apologetics lecture for Stand to Reason. I contacted him, and he recommended the works of two famous economists, F. A. Hayek and Thomas Sowell. And that's what I want to recommend to you, too. Our continued liberty and prosperity depends on ordinary Americans taking the time to educate themselves about basic economics.

Economist asks whether policies of white liberals will protect blacks from crime

December 4, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Walter Williams

So, I've been talking about famous black economist Thomas Sowell, who helped me to form my views on economics in so many areas. But there's another black economist who is very famous. My Dad sent me an article by Walter Williams where he looks at crime statistics and race. This is something that affects my family, because we aren't white. When it comes to crime, which policies work to protect us?

Here is the column, which was published on Daily Wire:

> Let's… turn to a recent article by Heather Mac Donald, who is a senior fellow at the New York-based Manhattan Institute. She is a contributing editor of City Journal, and a New York Times bestselling author. Her most recent article, "A Platform of Urban Decline," which appeared in Manhattan Institute's publication Eye On The News, addresses race and crime. She reveals government statistics you've never read before.
>
> According to leftist rhetoric, whites pose a severe, if not mortal, threat to blacks. Mac Donald says that may have once been true, but it is no longer so today. To make her case, she uses the latest Bureau of Justice Statistics 2018 survey of criminal victimization. Mac Donald writes: "According to the study, there were 593,598 interracial violent victimizations (excluding homicide) between blacks and whites last year, including white-on-black and black-on-white attacks. Blacks committed 537,204 of those interracial felonies, or 90 percent, and whites committed 56,394 of them, or less than 10 percent. That ratio is becoming more skewed, despite the Democratic claim of Trump-inspired white violence. In 2012-13, blacks committed 85 percent of all interracial victimizations between blacks and whites; whites committed 15 percent. From 2015 to 2018, the total number of white victims and the incidence of white victimization have grown as

> well."
>
> There are other stark figures not talked about often. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting for 2018, of the homicide victims for whom race was known, 53.3% were black, 43.8% were white and 2.8% were of other races. In cases where the race of the offender was known, 54.9% were black, 42.4% were white, and 2.7% were of other races.

So, what are the policies proposed to protect blacks from being the victims of crime? Well, there are three.

1. white liberals want to encourage black women to raise fatherless children by normalizing sex before marriage, and paying black women to have children outside of marriage.
2. white liberals want to confiscate the weapons that law-abiding blacks use to defend themselves from criminals.
3. white liberals want to deny blacks school choice, trapping them into failing schools so that they can't get out of dangerous neighborhoods by rising in education, career and finance.

In another column from Townhall, Williams quotes Malcolm X, who had a low opinion of these policies:

> Malcolm X said: "The worst enemy that the Negro have is this white man that runs around here drooling at the mouth professing to love Negros and calling himself a liberal, and it is following these white liberals that has perpetuated problems that Negros have. If the Negro wasn't taken, tricked or deceived by the white liberal, then Negros would get together and solve our own problems. I only cite these things to show you that in America, the history of the white liberal has been nothing but a series of trickery designed to make Negros think that the white liberal was going to solve our problems. Our problems will never be solved by the white man."

I think that blacks will do much better than they are now when they stop listening to the "compassion" of white liberals, and start looking at how they do living and working in a time of Republican policies. We have record low black unemployment now. It's a curious sort of racism that believes in blacks to forge their own destinies, earning and choosing their way to success.

But some problems are not fixable with policies.

Williams notes:

> The most devastating problems that black people face today have absolutely nothing to do with our history of slavery and discrimination. Chief among them is the breakdown of the black family, wherein 75 percent of blacks are born to single, often young, mothers. In some cities and neighborhoods, the percentage

> of out-of-wedlock births is over 80. Actually, “breakdown” is the wrong term; the black family doesn’t form in the first place. This is entirely new among blacks.
>
> According to the 1938 Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, that year only 11 percent of black children were born to unwed mothers. As late as 1950, female-headed households constituted only 18 percent of the black population. Today it’s close to 70 percent. In much earlier times, during the late 1800s, there were only slight differences between the black family structure and those of other ethnic groups. In New York City in 1925, 85 percent of kin-related black households were two-parent households. Welfare has encouraged young women to have children out of wedlock. The social stigma once associated with unwed pregnancy is all but gone.

You can’t blame “the legacy of slavery” for the breakdown of the black family, because the black family was working great long after slavery was abolished.

So let me say something about myself and my marriage plan.

Because of my skin color, it would be natural for me to look to start a family with a black woman. According to marriage statistics, marriages where both spouses are the same color tend to succeed. But because of my Christian faith, I have to be a virgin myself, and I have to look for a virgin as a bride. But this standard is dead in the black community. Recreational sex with hot bad boys the rule, instead of choosing men who commit before sex. According to research, abstaining from sex before marriage is the best way to ensure that any children that are conceived in the marriage will grow up in a stable relationship with a father (me) in the home.

Unfortunately, white liberals don’t support me in these behaviors and plans. And black women agree with white liberals. They vote overwhelmingly for anti-marriage policies like promoting recreational sex in the schools, abortion, single mother welfare, no-fault divorce, redefining marriage to remove the requirement for complementary genders, etc.

According to exit polls, 98% of black women vote Democrat. They don’t do this by flipping a coin – they believe in Democrat policies. No marriage-minded man is going to be interested in entering a lifelong commitment with someone who supports anti-marriage policies.

Self-refuting statements defined and some common examples

December 5, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

A common thing that I see is people trying to wall off arguments they don't like by stating a slogan, like "you shouldn't push your moral rules on other people" or "that's true for you, but not for me". Those slogans are meant to get the person out of having to be reasonable about respecting moral obligations, or having to consider how the world really works when choosing what to do.

Here is a fine article by Aaron, who writes at Apologetics Junkie.

Excerpt:

> A self-defeating (or self-refuting) statement is one that fails to meet its own standard. In other words, it is a statement that cannot live up to its own criteria. Imagine if I were to say,
>
> I cannot speak a word in English.
>
> You intuitively see a problem here. I told you in English that I cannot speak a word in English. This statement is self-refuting. It does not meet its own standard or criteria. It self-destructs.
>
> The important thing to remember with self-defeating statements is that they are necessarily false. In other words, there is no possible way for them to be true. This is because they violate a very fundamental law of logic, the law of non-contradiction. This law states that A and non-A cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense. For example, it is not possible for God to exist and not exist at the same time and in the same sense. This would violate the law of non-contradiction. So if I were to say, "God told me He doesn't exist" you would

> see intuitively the obvious self-refuting nature of this statement.

Aaron goes on to explain how to deal with self-refuting statements in the article.

Here are 20 examples of self-refutation, just to encourage you to click through and read it:

> 1. There is no truth.
> 2. You can't know truth.
> 3. No one has the truth.
> 4. All truth is relative.
> 5. It's true for you but not for me.
> 6. There are no absolutes.
> 7. No one can know any truth about religion.
> 8. You can't know anything for sure.
> 9. You should doubt everything.
> 10. Only science can give us truth.
> 11. You can only know truth through experience.
> 12. All truth depends on your perspective.
> 13. You shouldn't judge.
> 14. You shouldn't force your morality on people.
> 15. You should live and let live.
> 16. God doesn't take sides.
> 17. You shouldn't try to convert people.
> 18. That's just your view.
> 19. You should be tolerant of all views.
> 20. It is arrogant to claim to have the truth.

Have you ever heard any of those? It's amazing how often I hear statements like that when discussing interesting things like moral issues and politics with young people. The trick to being prepared to answer these is to learn lots of them. Then you recognize them when you hear them.

Add yours in the comments!

I’m learning about transgenderism from this transgender activist’s activism

December 6, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J3551c4 Y4n1v

Well, previously I had blogged about this transgender activist named Y4n1v who tried to force Canadian women to wax Y4n1v’s male genitals despite the fact that they only did waxes on women. There was something about the idea of forcing women to touch Y4n1v against their will that seemed like a great idea to Y4n1v. And now Y4n1v wants to force gynecologists to touch Y4n1v’s male genitals.

Here’s the latest from The Federalist:

> Transgender Canadian and semi-professional complainer Jessica Y4n1v, who is a biological male, tweeted Monday that he was “shocked” to be turned away from a gynecologist.
>
> […]Y4n1v gained notoriety this past year for filing a complaint with the British Colombia Human Rights Tribunal against a group of home-based estheticians who refused to wax the complainant’s male genitalia. “The people that discriminated against me are forcing their beliefs on society,” Y4n1v said while representing himself before the tribunal, according to The Post Millennial.

Y4n1v says that it’s those people who are “forcing their beliefs on society”. They’re the fascists who are using government to force people who disagree with them to act against their worldview, beliefs and conscience.

Here are the latest Y4n1v tweets:

> Gynaecologists form a part of the multidisciplinary team who engage with transgender and non-binary patients, either as part of the transition stage performing surgery or managing pre- or post-transition gynaecological problems.

> The @cpsbc_ca [College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia] has confirmed to me that the refusal I've received is discrimination under the BC Human Rights Code and against their code of Ethics.

> So @cpsbc_ca I'll file a complaint with you today about that clinic. Trans people need to be included, not excluded from society. Pre and post gender affirming surgery care is super important!

And apparently, Canada is a very good place to do this sort of thing to women, because Canada is more secular and progressive and woke than the United States. In America, those nasty Christians want women to get married for life to a husband who loves them and gives them children and takes care of them. But in Canada, the secular left dominates, and they're more concerned about transgender women using the government as a weapon to bully women to fondle Y4n1v's genitals in order to avoid being arrested and put on trial and sent to jail.

Now, I know that all of our government-run institutions are trying their best to accommodate transgenderism. Heck, Obama even gave Bradley Manning a sex change at taxpayer expense, as a reward for betraying all our military secrets. Anything to help out his good friend Bradley Manning. So, I know that it's coming here too.

So, this is what I find interesting about transgenderism, and it's ideological precursor, same-sex marriage. When these things were presented to us, we were told that these things would not have any impact on our lives. It was just about living and letting others live. But now we know that Christians are being dragged into courts for refusing to celebrate this redefinition of marriage that destroys the aspect of *complementary sexes* – which is central to marriage. But it's not just us. It's the women on female sports teams who are being displaced by biological men. And it's not just them. It's the domestic violence victims in women's shelters. And it's not just them. It's the prisoners in women's prisons. And it's not just them. It's the girls in women's bathrooms. And it's not just them. It's female waxing employees. And it's not just them. Now it's female gynecologists who need to be forced into sex work.

And keep in mind that radical feminists also want pro-life nurses and doctors to perform abortion. Surprise, again! The secular left in Canada and America are just as totalitarian and fascist as the secular left in North Korea, the USSR, or any other godless communist country. Atheism is incompatible with human rights, because you can't rationally ground human rights in an accidental, materialist universe.

A lot of people pick on me because they think that I am not in favor of feminism, since I tell women what they must do in order to succeed at education, career, marriage, child-

bearing, etc. by consulting research for best practices. But I would never ever allow women to be forced into sex work against their will. But, surprise! It turns out that it’s actually people on the left who really hate women.

Most Americans think cohabitation leads to a stable marriage, but what does the data say?

December 7, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

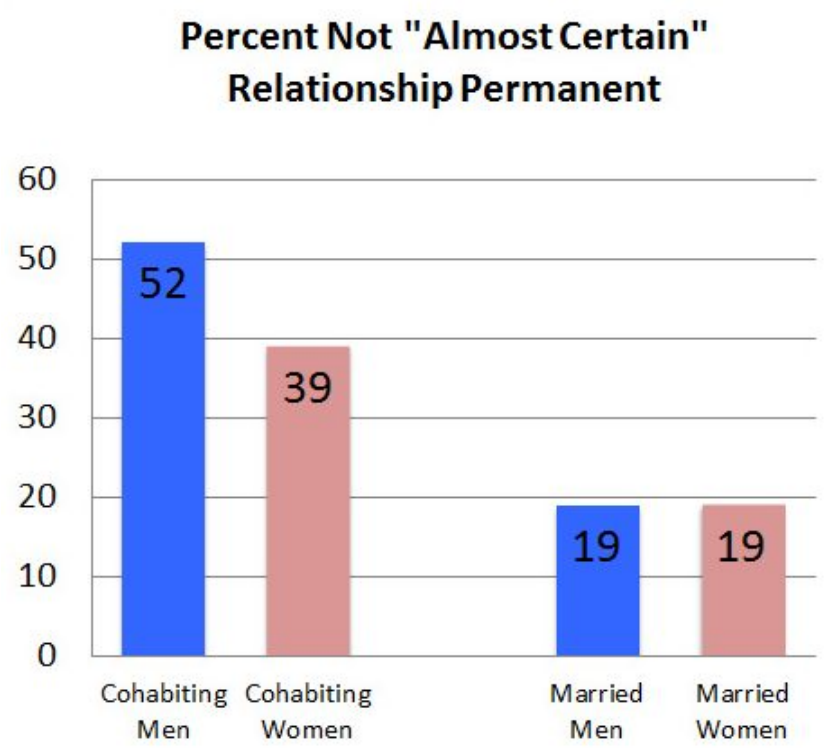

Men who cohabitate are not certain that the relationship is permanent

If there's one thing that ought to lead people to Christianity, it's the proven ability of the Christian moral rules to guide believers away from the sins that destroy them. A lot of modern "Christians" have reduced Christianity to being about their feelings and their community, while allowing the culture to determine their goals and moral boundaries. But that won't protect them from danger.

Cohabitation describes the situation of a couple moving into the same home and being sexually active, but without any legally-recognized commitment. It's extremely popular among young people today, and even Christians.

Consider this article from The Federalist about cohabitation:

> A new Pew Research Center study shows Americans both cohabitate ("live with an unmarried partner") and find cohabitation acceptable more than before.
>
> […]More young adults have cohabited than have married. Pew's analysis in the summer of 2019 of the National Survey of Family Growth found that, for the first time ever, the percentage of American adults aged 18-44 who have ever cohabited with a partner (59 percent) exceeded the percentage of those who have ever married (50 percent).

I thought this was very interesting, especially for the Christian parents and pastors who

imagine that their lovely pious daughters all have a Christian worldview just because they sing in the church choir:

> Just 14 percent hold a view consistent with a biblical sexual ethic, that cohabitation with an unmarried romantic partner outside of marriage is “never acceptable.”

Just to be clear, in my life I’ve met about 6 non-Christian men who cohabitated with women, and every single one of them cohabitated with a Christian-raised woman. That should tell you what young women are being told about relationships in their homes and churches about sex and marriage. “Do whatever you want”.

So what purpose does cohabitation serve?

> A majority of Americans (69 percent) say that “it is acceptable for an unmarried couple to live together even if they don’t plan to get married.” They may assume that they can decrease their chances of a bad marriage and increase their chances of a good one by giving the relationship a cohabitation “test run.”
>
> […]A plurality of Americans believe cohabitating before marriage yields more successful unions. Nearly half of Americans (48 percent) believe that couples who live together before marriage “have a better chance of having a successful marriage.” This view is even more prevalent among young adults aged 18-29 (63 percent).
>
> Another 38 percent of all Americans say cohabitation “doesn’t make much difference” on marital success. Only 13 percent of Americans believe cohabiting couples have “a worse chance” of having a successful marriage.
>
> […]Most Americans believe cohabitating couples raise children just as well as married couples. Pew also surveyed people’s opinions about cohabiting couples raising children, and 59 percent of Americans declared that cohabiting couples “can raise children just as well as married couples.” Again, the younger respondents were most likely to have a favorable view of cohabitation: among adults aged 18 to 49, 67 percent agreed cohabiting couples do just as well, while 32 percent said: “Married couples do a better job raising children.”

Yes, cohabitation seen as a test run, and it’s supposed to make stable marriage more likely and not be harmful to children at all.

But why think that a test run should be part of getting married? After all, when I buy a parrot from the pet store, I don’t expect to later return that parrot. Why not? Because I am not buying the parrot to enhance MY life. I am buying the parrot to make a commitment to care for the parrot. Whether the parrot fulfills any of my needs is irrelevant to me. I want the bird in my house so that I can decide what it eats, what it drinks, and invest myself into making it happy, according to its birdish nature. This is because I think that parrots have value in and of themselves, and they deserve a certain quality of life. When I buy the parrot, I am guaranteeing a permanent commitment to the

bird to provide for its needs, physical and emotional. And that commitment carries forward to the time (now) when the bird is elderly, and can't even fly up to his cage or down to the floor. He calls for me, and I go over and pick him up and move him. That's commitment.

Cohabitation, on the other hand, is the practice of saying to another *human being*: "I am going to try you out as an entertaining commodity in my home, but if you don't fulfill *my needs* then I'm going to send you right back." That's not a commitment. That's self indulgence. It's defining a relationship as *entertainment* that is designed to meet *my needs* and *make me happy*. And that's because the concept of commitment in relationships is not presented to young people at any time in their lives. Not from parents. Not in churches. Not in the secular left culture as a whole. Everything is a consumer good designed for the purpose of entertainment – including people. It was only the Christian worldview that had a view of people as creatures made by God for eternal life, so that marriage was about guarding the other person's faith, and building them up to achieve all the things that God wanted them to achieve for his purposes.

But does cohabitation really work to create stable relationships? After all, anyone can find a partner when they're young and pretty. The real question is whether that partner will stick around when you're old and ugly and can't be as "fun" as you used to be.

Here's a recent (2018) study on cohabitation and stability:

> A new study published in the *Journal of Marriage and Famil*y finds that the "premarital cohabitation effect" lives on, despite what you've likely heard. The premarital cohabitation effect is the finding that those who live together prior to marriage are more likely, not less, to struggle in marriage.
>
> […]Michael Rosenfeld and Katharina Roesler's new findings suggest that there remains an increased risk for divorce for those living together prior to marriage, and that prior studies suggesting the effect has gone away had a bias toward short versus longer-term effects. **They find that living together before marriage is associated with lower odds of divorce in the first year of marriage, but increases the odds of divorce in all other years tested, and this finding holds across decades of data.**

Strategy advice to those who debate this issue: just be aware that Team Secular Leftist is using papers that have short-range samples, which don't show the instability problem, because they deliberately cherry-pick recently married couples.

And what about children raised in cohabitating relationships?

> While Americans are optimistic about the ability of cohabiting couples to raise children, a study published by the American College of Pediatricians in 2014 reported that children whose parents cohabit face a higher risk of: "premature birth, school failure, lower education, more poverty during childhood and lower incomes as adults, more incarceration and behavior problems, single parenthood, medical neglect and chronic health problems both medical and psychiatric, more

> substance, alcohol and tobacco abuse, and child abuse," and that "a child conceived by a cohabiting woman is at 10 times higher risk of abortion compared to one conceived in marriage."

I'm just going to be blunt here. The majority of young people are progressives, and they vote for candidates who believe in abortion through all nine months of pregnancy, and even after birth. Why? Because they don't want to have their right to seek happiness impacted by the needs of other people. Progressives believe that children, if they exist at all, should enhance the lives of their adult owners. No one should be surprised that people who think that killing inconvenient children is moral are willing to inflict other bad outcomes on them by raising them in an unstable cohabitation environment.

Christian philosopher (Craig) vs atheist scientist (Atkins) debate: Does God Exist?

December 8, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a video of a debate from the Reasonable Faith speaking tour in the UK, between Christian philosopher Dr. William Lane Craig and atheist chemist Dr. Peter Atkins.

Here is the video:

This is a must-see debate. It was extremely fun to watch, and I have a snarky summary of the opening speeches below.

Details:

> On Wednesday 26th October 2011 William Lane Craig debated Peter Atkins on the topic: *Does God Exist?* This debate took place at the University of Manchester as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig. The debate was chaired by Christopher Whitehead, Head of Chemistry School at the University. Post-debate discussion was moderated by Peter S Williams, Philosopher in Residence at the Damaris Trust, UK.

Dr. William Lane Craig:

> **William Lane Craig** (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich in 1984.

Dr. Peter Atkins:

> **Peter William Atkins** (born 10 August 1940) is a British chemist and former Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Lincoln College. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public,

> including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.
>
> Atkins studied chemistry at the University of Leicester, obtaining a bachelor's degree in chemistry, and – in 1964 – a PhD for research into electron spin resonance spectroscopy, and other aspects of theoretical chemistry. Atkins then took a postdoctoral position at the UCLA as aHarkness Fellow of the Commonwealth fund. He returned to Oxford in 1965 as fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, and lecturer in physical chemistry (later, professor of physical chemistry).

I am happy when debates like this come out. I have friends who are Christians who doubt the importance of apologetics in evangelism, because they don't think that apologists can prove anything or win arguments. I have friends who are skeptical of using arguments that assume a 14-billion year old universe, because they think that the Big Bang is compatible with atheism (!). I have friends who think that philosophical arguments have no persuasive force. I have friends who think that nothing can be proven from history, beyond a reasonable doubt. I have co-workers who ask me whether anyone wins these debates. I think that this debate answers all of those questions.

This debate clearly shows why Christians should not shy away from studying science, philosophy and history. We will not discover anything that harms Christian theism by thinking logically and by looking at the evidence. To the contrary, it is the atheist who makes war on the progress of science, and who is forced to resist the clear experimental evidence, and to resort to baseless speculations and blind faith. If you want to see a good debate with an intelligent atheist, I recommend watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican instead. But if you want to see a really, really overwhelming defeat for atheism, watch this debate. It is very clear at the end of this debate why Richard Dawkins refused to debate William Lane Craig at Oxford.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING SPEECHES

I only had time to summarize the first two speeches. Keep in mind that Dr. Craig always shines in his rebuttals, and this debate is no different. So you'll want to watch those rebuttals. Dr. Atkins *literally* says in this debate in his first rebuttal "There was nothing here originally. There is nothing here now. But it is an interesting form of nothing which seems to be something." And the audience laughs nervously. This debate is like that. You will see a clear winner and clear loser in this debate. This fight is decided by knockout.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

1. the origin of the universe
2. the moral argument
3. the resurrection of Jesus

Peter Atkins opening speech:

1. Dr. Craig is stupid, lazy and evil:
– Dr. Craig's arguments are old: from the 11th century! Old arguments can't be true
– Dr. Craig is just asserting that "God did it" because he is lazy

– Dr. Craig feels pressured to agree with the theistic majority
– Dr. Craig needs a psychological crutch to comfort him
– Dr. Craig is fearful of death
– Dr. Craig is just wishing for an eternal life of bliss
– Dr. Craig is driven by his heart, and not by his head

2. Origin of the universe:
– Maybe the universe is eternal and has no beginning – we don't know
– Maybe mommy universes can give birth to daughter universes
– It is naive to think that a cause is needed to cause the creation of the universe from nothing
– Science is just about to show how it is possible that something appears out of nothing without cause
– Some scientists have already begun to speculate about about how something can come into being out of nothing
– Maybe nothing is not really nothing, but it is actually something
– It would be admitting defeat to say that God created the universe out of nothing

3. Fine-Tuning:
– It could be the case that the fundamental constants are not variable
– It could be the case that the fine-tuning of the cosmic constants is a happy accident
– It could be the case that there are billions of billions of unobservable universes that are not fine tuned
– It could be the case that the cosmic constants in these billions and billions of unobservable universes are all random so that some are fine-tuned
– Anyone who infers that an intelligence is the best explanation of a finely-tuned set of life-permitting cosmic constants is lazy

4. Purpose:
– Philosophers and theologians are stupid
– I don't think that there is purpose in the universe
– I think that the universe is more grand if there is no purpose, so there is no purpose

5. Miracles:
– I don't think that miracles happen
– The resurrection is a fabrication
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't exist
– It could be the case that Jesus wasn't really crucified
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't really die after being crucified
– It could be the case that the disciples stole his body
– It could be the case that the women went to the wrong hole in the ground
– the gospels are political propaganda written long after the events they are reporting on

6. Theodicy:
– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing humans to perform actions that result in suffering

– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing nature to cause suffering

7. Morality:

– customs and conventions emerges arbitrarily in different times and places based on an awareness of the consequences of actions, as well as various anecdotes and experiences

– these customs and conventions are decided based on the goal for survival, in much the same way as politeness and manners emerge for decorum and to avoid offense

– it is childish to presume that there is an umpire God who decides moral values and duties

8. Religious believers are stupid, lazy and evil:

– the notion of God has arisen because people are stupid and want to be comforted

– there are no arguments or evidences for belief in God

– people who believe in God do not think, but instead take refuge in incomprehensible nonsense

Are feminists right to think that gender-neutral marriage makes women happier?

December 9, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

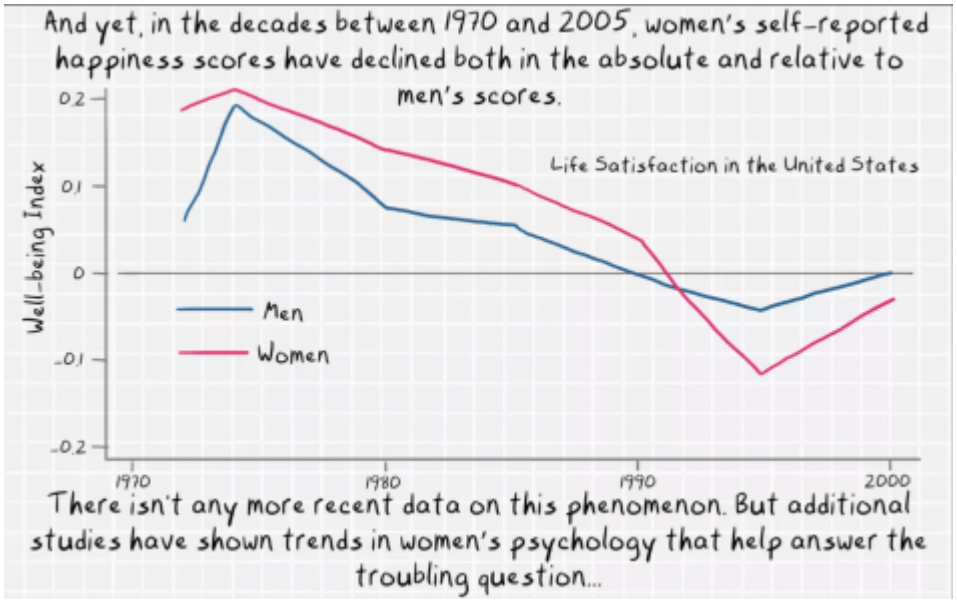

Male and female happiness throughout America's adoption of radical feminism

I was reading this article by a feminist fiction writer on Vox, where she explains that although feminists have gotten what they wanted (careers, contraceptives, promiscuity, abortion, no-fault-divorce, daycare, etc. it hasn't made them happier. So, what does this feminist fiction writer think would make feminists happier?

She gives two reasons why women women are still unhappy after feminism has been adopted by our society:

- men don't do enough housework
- women are not as successful as men because they are discriminated against, the so-called "glass ceiling"

I think those complaints are pretty popular among feminists. Let's take a look at some studies to see if her opinions are supported by peer-reviewed studies.

First study:

> COUPLES who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a study has found.

> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled *Equality in the Home*, said.

Second study:

> Researchers at the University of Illinois examined data on nearly 1,500 men and 1,800 women, aged between 52 and 60. Their well-being was evaluated through surveys.
>
> The researchers first found that men's well-being decreased once they had exited the workforce to become home-makers.
>
> Meanwhile, the inverse was not so for women: Women's psychological well-being was not affected by leaving their jobs to become stay-at-home mothers.

Third study:

> A study called "Egalitarianism, Housework and Sexual Frequency in Marriage," which appeared in The American Sociological Review last year, surprised many, precisely because it went against the logical assumption that as marriages improve by becoming more equal, the sex in these marriages will improve, too. Instead, it found that when men did certain kinds of chores around the house, couples had less sex. Specifically, if men did all of what the researchers characterized as feminine chores like folding laundry, cooking or vacuuming — the kinds of things many women say they want their husbands to do — then couples had sex 1.5 fewer times per month than those with husbands who did what were considered masculine chores, like taking out the trash or fixing the car. It wasn't just the frequency that was affected, either — at least for the wives. The more traditional the division of labor, meaning the greater the husband's share of masculine chores compared with feminine ones, the greater his wife's reported sexual satisfaction.

Regarding the pay gap, that is entirely caused by women's own choices. E.g. – the choice to study creative writing instead of petroleum engineering, the choice to work 35 hour weeks instead of 70 hour weeks, etc.

Fourth study: (summarized by AEI economist)

> When the [Bureau of Labor Statistics] reports that women working full-time in 2018 earned 81.4% of what men earned working full-time, that is very much different from saying that women earned 81.4% of what men earned for doing exactly the same work while working the exact same number of hours in the same occupation, with exactly the same educational background and exactly the same years of continuous, uninterrupted work experience, and with exactly the same marital and family (e.g., number of children) status. As shown above, once we start controlling individually for the many relevant factors that affect earnings, e.g., hours worked, age, marital status, and having children, most of the raw earnings differential disappears.

Fifth study:

> This study leads to the unambiguous conclusion that the differences in the compensation of men and women are the result of a multitude of factors and

> that the raw wage gap should not be used as the basis to justify corrective action. Indeed, there may be nothing to correct. The differences in raw wages may be almost entirely the result of the individual choices being made by both male and female workers.

I think that women are entitled to make their own decisions, but they aren't allowed to force the rest of us to subsidize their failures and celebrate their destructive outcomes.

I could go on, but I think enough has been said to show that research is very much at odds with feminist rhetoric. They *feel* they know what will make them happy and we gave them everything they asked for. They eliminated shaming of promiscuity with sex education. They get preferential treatment in the schools in a female-dominated education system.They are hired because of affirmative action quotas. They get expensive daycare, government schools, welfare and other programs. Taxes are raised to equalize outcomes for divorced women who choose men for feelings, and then nuke their own marriage enterprise. We have been on a long experiment of giving feminists everything they *felt* they wanted, at the expense of men's rights and children's rights, and it hasn't even produced the results that feminists *felt* it would.

The social costs of feelings-based decision-making

Let's look at two examples of policies that feminists asked for in the past, which didn't work out the way they wanted.

I can understand why feminists would introduce sex education. They *felt* that "if everyone is having sex, then I won't be the only one chasing attention from hot no-commitment bad boys by giving them recreational sex before marriage". They wanted to eliminate the standards of chastity and marriage-focused dating and normalize fun-focused drunken promiscuity. And they got that. But since they didn't consult any research and evidence about how that would affect their future marriage stability and marriage happiness, they are even more unhappy than before.

How about no-fault divorce? No-fault divorce was brought in by a coalition of feminists, Marxists and trial lawyers. The Marxists want to destroy the family in order to increase dependence on the state. The trial lawyers wanted to make money. And the feminists thought that the standard approach to courting and marriage was just too much work. They didn't want to be chaste. They didn't want to be sober. They didn't want to evaluate a man for traditional husband and father roles. The no-fault divorce laws gave them an escape from the messes caused by *their own feelings-driven choices*. But divorce just makes makes men and women much poorer, and passes the costs of supporting single mothers onto taxpayers.

And the costs of the failures of feminism are passed onto taxpayers.

Consider this study:

> This paper examines the growth of government during this century as a result of giving women the right to vote. Using cross-sectional time-series data for

> 1870–1940, we examine state government expenditures and revenue as well as voting by U.S. House and Senate state delegations and the passage of a wide range of different state laws. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue and more liberal voting patterns for federal representatives, and these effects continued growing over time as more women took advantage of the franchise. Contrary to many recent suggestions, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s, and it helps explain why American government started growing when it did.

We are already $22 trillion in debt, partly because of feminism's replacement of husbands and families with higher taxes and big government. Every time we transfer money from tax-paying men to feminists to fix their mistakes, it leaves less money in the hands of the men who actually want to get married. The declining value of marriage after feminism for men explains why marriage is being delayed, and why marriage rates are plunging.

The Christian view of marriage

In other places, I have written about the evidence for a Christian worldview:

- The cosmological argument and the Big Bang cosmology
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

If Christianity is true, then we have inherited a design for marriage and family which includes male and female roles.

Here is what Jesus says about marriage and divorce in Matthew 19:4:

> [4] "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' [5] and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? [6] So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

Jesus does not approve of no-fault divorce.

And here's what Jesus said about premarital sex ("fornication") in Mark 7:20-23:

> [20] He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. [21] For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, [22] adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. [23] All these evils come from inside and defile a person.

Jesus does not approve of premarital sex.

Christians should not show even a hint of sexual immorality, (premarital sex and no-fault divorce), nor should they partner with those who approve of sexual immorality and no-fault divorce, according to Ephesians 5:

> [3] **But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality**, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. [4] Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. [5] For of this you can be sure: No immoral, **impure** or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.[a] [6] Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. [7] **Therefore do not be partners with them.**

Christians should not partner with feminists.

And this is one of the most famous passages on male and female roles in the Bible, also from Ephesians 5:

> [22] **Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. [24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.**
>
> [25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her [26] to make her holy, cleansing[b] her by the washing with water through the word, [27] and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. [28] In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— [30] for we are members of his body. [31] "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." [32] This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. [33] However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, **and the wife must respect her husband.**

Christians do not approve of egalitarian marriage which erases sex differences in husband and wife roles.

Most women in the church, and most of their “conservative” pastors, don’t believe that Jesus is an authority about chastity, marriage and male headship. They agree with feminists about premarital sex and no-fault divorce and egalitarian marriage. But the feminist design for women isn’t working out for women – that’s undeniable. Should we really be surprised that feminist’s feelings were not better for women than the Creator’s own design?

The psychological motivation of those who embrace postmodernism

December 10, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

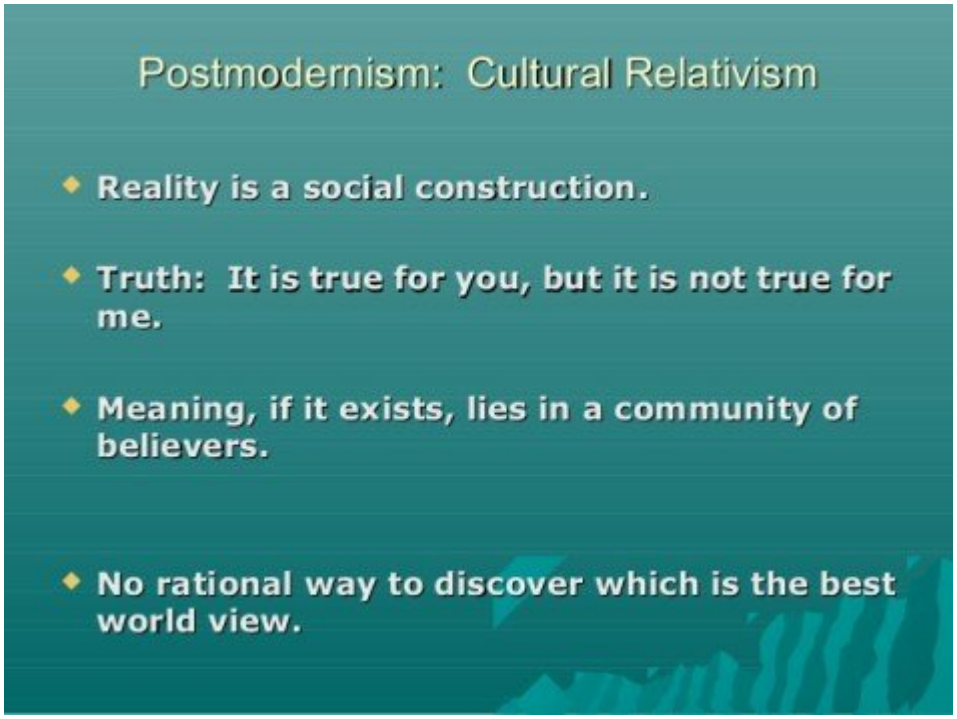

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian? Not for long

Famous analytical philosopher John Searle has written a book "Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World", explaining what's factually wrong with postmodernism. In the introduction, he explains what postmodernism is, and what motivates people to accept postmodernism.

He writes:

> […][W]hen we act or think or talk in the following sorts of ways we take a lot for granted: when we hammer a nail, or order a takeout meal from a restaurant, or conduct a lab experiment, or wonder where to go on vacation, we take the following for granted: there exists a real world that is totally independent of human beings and of what they think or say about it, and statements about objects and states of affairs in that world are true or false depending on whether things in the world really are the way we say they are. So, for example, if in pondering my vacation plans I wonder whether Greece is hotter in the summer than Italy, I simply take it for granted that there exists a real world containing places like Greece and Italy and that they have various temperatures. **Furthermore, if I read in a travel book that the average summer temperature in Greece is hotter than in Italy, I know that what the book says will be true if and only if it really is hotter on average in the summer in Greece than in Italy. This is because I take it for granted that such statements are true only if there is something independent of the**

> **statement in virtue of which, or because of which, it is true.**
>
> […]These two Background presuppositions have long histories and various famous names. The first, that there is a real world existing independently of us, I like to call "external realism." "Realism," because it asserts the existence of the real world, and "external" to distinguish it from other sorts of realism-for example, realism about mathematical objects (mathematical realism) or realism about ethical facts (ethical realism). The second view, that a statement is true if things in the world are the way the statement says they are, and false otherwise, is called "the correspondence theory of truth." This theory comes in a lot of different versions, but the basic idea is that statements are true if they correspond to, or describe, or fit, how things really are in the world, and false if they do not.

The "correspondence theory of truth" is the view of truth assumed in books of the Bible whose genre is such that that they were intended by the authors to be taken *literally*, (with allowances for symbolism, figures of speech, metaphors, hyperbole, etc.).

But what about the postmodernists, who seek to deny the objectivity of external reality?

More Searle:

> Thinkers who wish to deny the correspondence theory of truth or the referential theory of thought and language typically find it embarrassing to have to concede external realism. Often they would rather not talk about it at all, or they have some more or less subtle reason for rejecting it. In fact, very few thinkers come right out and say that there is no such thing as a real world existing absolutely, objectively, and totally independently of us. Some do. Some come right out and say that the so-called real world is a "social construct."

What is behind the denial of objective reality, and statements about external reality that are warranted by evidence?

> It is not easy to get a fix on what drives contemporary antirealism, but if we had to pick out a thread that runs through the wide variety of arguments, it would be what is sometimes called "perspectivism." Perspectivism is the idea that our knowledge of reality is never "unmediated," that it is always mediated by a point of view, by a particular set of predilections, or, worse yet by sinister political motives, such as an allegiance to a political group or ideology. And because we can never have unmediated knowledge of the world, then perhaps there is no real world, or perhaps it is useless to even talk about it, or perhaps it is not even interesting.

Searle is going to refute anti-realism in the rest of the book, but here is his guess at what is motivating the anti-realists:

> > **I have to confess, however, that I think there is a much deeper**

> > **reason for the persistent appeal of all forms of antirealism, and this has become obvious in the twentieth century: it satisfies a basic urge to power. It just seems too disgusting, somehow, that we should have to be at the mercy of the "real world." It seems too awful that our representations should have to be answerable to anything but us. This is why people who hold contemporary versions of antirealism and reject the correspondence theory of truth typically sneer at the opposing view.**
>
> […]I don't think it is the argument that is actually driving the impulse to deny realism. I think that as a matter of contemporary cultural and intellectual history, the attacks on realism are not driven by arguments, because the arguments are more or less obviously feeble, for reasons I will explain in detail in a moment. **Rather, as I suggested earlier, the motivation for denying realism is a kind of will to power, and it manifests itself in a number of ways. In universities, most notably in various humanities disciplines, it is assumed that, if there is no real world, then science is on the same footing as the humanities. They both deal with social constructs, not with independent realities. From this assumption, forms of postmodernism, deconstruction, and so on, are easily developed, having been completely turned loose from the tiresome moorings and constraints of having to confront the real world. If the real world is just an invention-a social construct designed to oppress the marginalized elements of society-then let's get rid of the real world and construct the world we want. That, I think, is the real driving psychological force behind antirealism at the end of the twentieth century.**

Now, I'll go one step further than Searle.

People, from the Fall, have had the desire to step into the place of God. It's true that we creatures exist in a universe created and designed by God. But, there is a way to work around the fact that God made the universe and the laws that the universe runs on, including logic, mathematics and natural laws. And that way is to *deny logic, mathematics and natural laws.* Postmodernists simply deny that there is any way to construct rational arguments and support the premises with evidence from the real world. That way, they imagine, they are free to escape a God-designed world, including a God-designed specification for how they ought to live. The postmoderns deny *the reliable methods of knowing about the God-created reality because logic and evidence can be used to point to God's existence, God's character, and God's actions in history.*

And that's why there is this effort to make reality "optional" and perspectival. Everyone can be their own God, and escape any accountability to the real God – the God who is easily discovered through the use of logic and evidence. I believe that this is also behind the rise of atheists, who feign allegiance to logic and science, but then express "skepticism" about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, objective

morality, the minimal facts concerning the historical Jesus, and other undeniables.

The seven fatal flaws of moral relativism

December 11, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Moral relativism is the view that moral values and moral duties do not exist in reality, but only exist as opinions in people's minds. When you ask a moral relativist where the belief that stealing is wrong comes from, he may tell you that it is his opinion, or that it is the opinion of most people in his society. But he cannot tell you that stealing is wrong independent of what people think, because morality (on moral relativism) is just personal preference.

So what's wrong with it?

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Salvo magazine web site.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in

> silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like “It’s wrong to push your own morality on others”. This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don’t let them make any moral statements without asking them first to ground morality on their worldview. And that’s because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can’t answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people’s personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It’s all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be “it depends”. It depends on the person who is speaking because it’s a subjective claim, not an objective claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

So, practically speaking, everyone has to decide whether right and wrong are real – objectively real. If they are objectively real, that means that there is a right way for human beings to behave, and a wrong way for human beings to behave. It means that things that are really objectively wrong like rape are wrong for all times and all places, regardless of what individuals and societies might think of it. In order to rationally ground that kind of morality, you have to have a foundation for it – a cosmic Designer who decides for all times and places what the conduct of his creatures ought to be. And then our moral duties are duties that are owed to this Designer. It is like playing football or playing a boardgame – the person who invents the game decides the rules. But if there is no designer of the game, then there are no rules.

Without a designer of the universe, the question of how we ought to act is decided by people in different times and different places. It’s arbitrary and variable, and therefore it doesn’t do the job of prescribing behavior authoritatively. It’s very important not to get involved in any serious endeavor with another person or persons if they don’t have a sense of right and wrong being absolute and fixed. A belief in objective moral values is a necessary pre-requisite for integrity.

Making monergism make sense: reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

December 12, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

This article at Free Thinking Ministries was written by my friend Tim Stratton. In it, presents a view of God's sovereignty over salvation without falling into the error of double-predestination.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Many reformed folks *(freely?)* choose to reject Molinism because they contend that this theological view "smells of synergism." What is this stench that reportedly makes John Calvin turn over in his grave? Simply put, synergism is the view that man plays at least a small part in his own salvation process. Monergism, on the other hand, is the view that God is the author of salvation from beginning to end.
>
> Since Molinism affirms that man is free to choose to reject God's saving grace or not, many Calvinists jump to the conclusion and assume that Molinism must be synergistic. This does not necessarily follow.[1] Consider one possible model:
>
> 1- God, by nature, is a volitional unmoved mover who is free to choose between options in accord with His nature. (This is supported via the *Kalam* and the *Argument from Time*).
>
> 2- By God's grace, humans are created in the "image of God." By nature, then, we are free to choose between options in accord with our nature. (This is supported via the *Freethinking Argument*).
>
> 3- Adam & Eve freely chose to disobey God and this sin completely separates

> humanity from God. This is what it means to have a "totally depraved sin nature." (Every aspect of man is separated from God).
>
> 4- In this state of depraved separation from God (sin nature), humans do not even know God exists if merely left to our own devices.
>
> 5- If humans do not even know God exists, then, left to our own devices and **apart from God's grace**, it would be impossible to choose to love and follow God (thus, Pelagianism is impossible on this view).
>
> 6- God, in His love for all people, provides amazing prevenient grace to all people (Romans 1:20), writing the law on the human heart (Romans 2:15), conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-9), and draws all men (John 12:32). This is commonly referred to as "common grace."
>
> 7- Therefore, by God's grace, human nature has changed from a "totally separated from God nature" to a nature that has now experienced enough divine revelation (influences) allowing all mankind to start making some free and volitional choices in accord with our new nature; namely, to choose to resist God's grace and revelation, or not.[2] Mankind is without excuse because we do not have to resist what God has made clear (Romans 1:18-20).[3]
>
> *[Note: According to Calvinist, Matt Slick (albeit inadvertently), Mark 4:10-12 implies that if an unregenerate person gets access to clear and accurate information, then they possess the ability to become Christians!]*
>
> 8- If one does not reject or continually resist the grace and revelation God provides them, then God will continually provide more and more until the person reaches the point of "no return" and will become saved.
>
> Thus, God does *ALL* the work in salvation from beginning to end on this Molinistic model; all the human can do is freely resist God's grace and revelation, but he or she does not have to! The human does nothing to gain salvation apart from God's grace on this Monergistic Model of Molinism.

I think that Stratton's formulation above does indeed keep God as the sole initiator of salvation. And that's good. But it also makes sure that human who resist God's leading are responsible for their choice to resist God, and that's good. We want salvation to be 100% by faith alone in Christ alone. But we don't want God to be the cause of people not being saved. On Stratton's view, God wants everyone to be saved. If anyone is saved, it's because God did ALL THE WORK to lead them and secure their salvation with the death of Jesus on the cross. But, on Stratton's view, humans do get a choice – the choice to trust God or not. And so, if a person is not saved, then it's their fault – not God's. This works.

Read his whole post, and see what you think about it.

Socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez says Jesus was a refugee: is she right?

December 13, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This meme provides a good quick response to the challenge

I keep hearing that Jesus was a refugee from people on the left like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. In fact, things have gotten so bad, that even my Southern Baptist pastor told us the same thing in a recent Wednesday night Bible study! I think we better take a look at this, in case anyone else needs a response.

Fox News reports on the tweet:

> U.S. Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y. wished her Twitter followers a Merry Christmas Tuesday by referring to the newborn Jesus as a "refugee."
>
> "Joy to the World!" Ocasio-Cortez wrote. "Merry Christmas everyone – here's to a holiday filled with happiness, family, and love for all people. (Including refugee babies in mangers + their parents.)"

And here is the response, in the same article:

> Mary and Joseph are not depicted as refugees in the Nativity story. According to the Gospel of Luke, Joseph brings the pregnant Mary to Bethlehem so that he may enroll in a census ordered by the Roman emperor Agustus. The couple are forced to take shelter in the stable where Jesus is born due to a lack of room at the inn.
>
> However, in the Gospel of Matthew, Mary and Joseph flee into Egypt with the

> infant Jesus after King Herod of Judea orders the murder of every boy aged two and under in Bethlehem after the Magi ask him where to find the newborn "King of the Jews." The Holy Family escape the slaughter and are told by an angel to return to Israel once Herod is dead.

The second part seems to be more like a refugee situation, until you remember that both Judea and Egypt were different states of the same Roman Empire. The strict definition of a refugee from the United Nations, recognizes persons as refugees:

> "who are outside their country of nationality or habitual residence and unable to return there owing to serious and indiscriminate threats to life, physical integrity or freedom resulting from generalized violence or events seriously disturbing public order."

Did Joseph and Mary cross national boundaries by moving from one Roman-ruled province to another? Did they cross national boundaries illegally? Did they intend to remain permanently? The answers to those questions are NO, NO and NO. So they were not refugees according to the standard meaning of the word.

People try to make the Jesus-birth narrative into an immigration situation because they want Jews and Christians to support open borders. The problem is that the Bible has a lot to say about immigration, and it doesn't support the left's open borders agenda.

I always find it funny when atheists on the political left want to misuse the Bible to try to get political support from Jews and Christians. It makes me wonder whether the secular leftists take the Bible seriously as an auhtority on any other issue.

Is Ocasio-Cortez willing to take Jesus seriously on marriage being defined as a commitment between one woman and one man? How about Jesus' rejection of no-fault divorce? How about Jesus' view of the exclusivity of salvation? I think you know where what the secular leftists would say about Jesus as an authority on those issues. Most secular leftists don't take Jesus seriously on any issue. Many don't even think he existed as a historical figure. But that doesn't stop secular leftists from trying to win over religious Jews and Christians by appealing to their emotions.

What concerns me about this promotion of illegal immigration and refugees, though, is that people forget who pays the bills for all of this compassion. Ocasio-Cortez isn't tell you what she's going to do with HER OWN money when she promotes illegal immigration and refugees. She's telling you what she's going to do with YOUR money. And she's telling you that so that you will think that she's a very generous, compassionate person. The truth is that her supporters who click retweet and like on her stuff do that in order to communicate that they are also good and generous people.

Everyone is doing what feels good, and what makes them look good to others, but are they willing to pay for it? If Democrats had to PAY FOR the things they claim to want, then would they be in favor of those things? You need only look at the French leftists who voted for Emmanuel Macron to stop global warming, and then they rioted when he passed a gas tax that would stop global warming. Leftists shouldn't be seen as rational

people. They vote in order to feel good and look good to others. When they get what they voted for, they riot in order to get out of it. The same people who elected Ocasio-Cortez will riot against her policies once they realize that they are the ones who have to pay for what they voted for.

How to tell if a woman is looking for a man who will lead the home

December 14, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

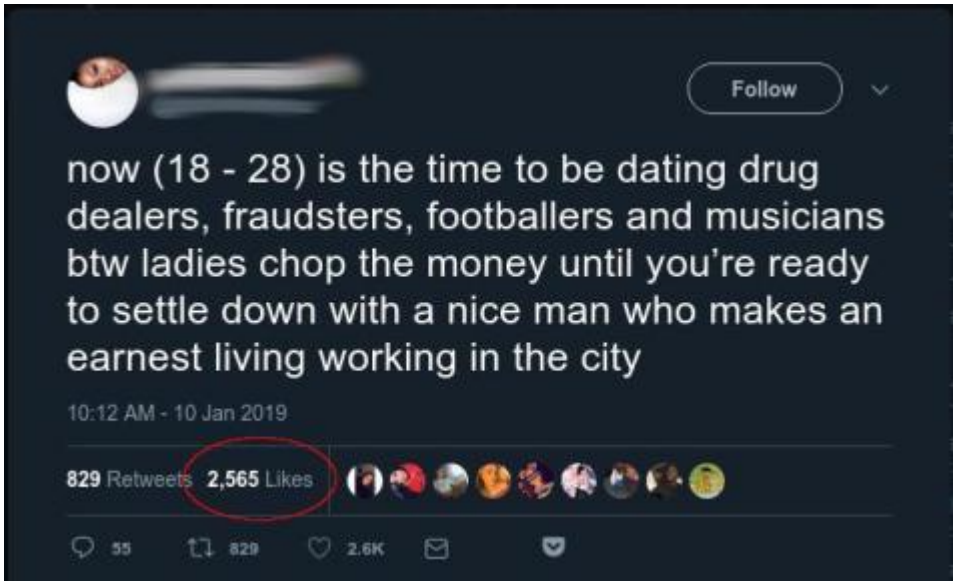

What is the modern woman's view of marriage?

I enjoy reading Dalrock's blog. Recently, he posted a couple of posts (first and second) about theologian Doug Wilson. A friend gave me Wilson's book "Reforming Marriage", and I did not find it to be a helpful guide to marriage. So, I was interested to see what Dalrock found in Wilson's other writings.

Here's one quote that Dalrock found:

> As the apostle Paul is urging young women to marry, he lets a very interesting comment fall in passing. "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (1 Tim. 5:14). The word translated here as "guide the house" is oikodespotein. **The wife is to be the ruler or despot of the home.**

And:

> A wife therefore has true authority over her home which no one, including her husband, can take away from her.
>
> […]In a certain sense, a husband… is an honored and permanent guest… **he should learn to see himself as a guest.**

Now, that seems to contradict the traditional view that men are supposed to be leaders in the home. I don't think that Christian women are well-served by pastors who dispute the traditional view.

Here's what the Bible says about it in Ephesians 5:

> [22] Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.
> [23] For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the

> church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

It turns out that this denial of male headship shows up in how women approach relationships.

I have a male friend who is actively dating with the goal of marrying. He has a STEM degree and a good career, earns enough money to fund a home and children. He has his own house, and he has spent a lot of time studying apologetics and engaging in debates. He also attends church and Bible study weekly, and runs an apologetics discussion group. He spends his time researching moral issues and he is very persuasive at defending the Christian faith. Defending God's reputation calmly and effectively is a daily occurrence for him. So, he is able to do the traditional male roles: protector, provider, moral leader, spiritual leader. A 5 minute conversation with him would show that he is well-equipped for husband and father roles.

So I was asking him how things were going with his new lady. On his last date was telling her about his adventures debating some moral issue. Rather than asking him for details about the exchange, or saying her own view on the issue, she completely shut down and refused to discuss it at all! And she wouldn't even recognize that what he was doing was praiseworthy, in order to encourage him. You would think that a guy would be able to impress a self-described Christian woman with his efforts to promote Christian truth claims and Christian moral values. But it turns out that a many Christian women don't look for *anything seriously Christian in a man or in a marriage*. And they don't see *moral leadership* or even *spiritual leadership* as central to what a man does as leader of his home.

And I think part of the reason why women are so passive on dates is because they don't see their role as picking a man *who will lead them*. The denial of male headship leads to the failure to evaluate the man about his skills and achievements in traditional male roles (protector, provider, moral leader, spiritual leader).

It really bothers me that "complementarian" pastors are either unable or unwilling to tell women that the Bible has something to say about how to prepare for marriage, and who they choose to marry. I think that parents and pastors think that if the woman is young and pretty and has a degree and a job and totes around a Bible that she is qualified for marriage. But that would be like telling a fighter pilot that his plane is ready for a mission against the secular culture when his plane has no cannon rounds, no bombs, no missiles, no spark plugs and no fuel – no maintenance of any kind. A man who has bigger goals for his Christian life is looking for more from a wife than praise hymns and romance novels.

In a secular society, practical Christianity is about apologetics and moral issues like abortion, gay rights, big government socialism, public schools, college indoctrination, Hollywood, global warming, Darwinism, etc. That's where the battle is right now. It would be nice for a Christian man to go on a date with a church-attending girl, and have her talk about her latest efforts to defend the unborn, to promote natural marriage, or even to talk about policies that mattered to the family: school choice, homeschooling, consumer-driven healthcare, etc. That signals to a man that she would be a good *partner* in a Christ-

focused marriage enterprise.

If you’re a young woman wanting to impress a Christian man with your qualifications for marriage, then check out my marriage questions, and see how you do.

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

December 15, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here's a debate with a well-qualified atheist and Dr. Craig.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any

errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It's not

just that the settings are unlikely, it's that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a "herd morality" that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved "herd morality". However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are

true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It’s possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It’s also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is “Does God Exist?”. If Dr. Millican answers “no” then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God’s existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don’t see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the

need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to

nothing.

We don’t have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can’t be an abstract object because they don’t cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we’ve never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have “algorithmic properties” as well as physical properties, it doesn’t mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that’s not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God’s goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God’s goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can’t translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can’t be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can’t be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don’t permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Chris Wallace interviews James Comey about FBI surveillance of Trump's 2016 campaign

December 16, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Left to right: Comey, Lynch, Clinton, McCabe

I used to watch Chris Wallace on Fox News Sunday but I gave up because he was just too progressive. He seemed to go easy on Democrat politicians. Well, imagine my surprise to see this article over at the Daily Wire, about Chris Wallace's *grilling* of disgraced FBI director James Comey. And I do have the video to go with it. It's nice to see Comey have to answer questions about the new IG report.

The Daily Wire article says:

> Fox News host Chris Wallace aggressively questioned disgraced former FBI Director James Comey on Sunday over Justice Department inspector general Michael Horowitz's report on the FBI's misconduct in surveilling the Trump campaign during the 2016 election, which happened under Comey's leadership.
>
> […]Wallace grilled Comey for numerous prior claims that he made to the media which turned out to be false, including that the report vindicated him, that the FISA process was followed, that the entire case was handled in a responsible manner, and his suggestion that the anti-Trump dossier was a small part of what was used to obtain a FISA warrant on Trump campaign adviser Carter Page.
>
> Comey repeatedly tried to wiggle himself out of tough questions, to which Wallace responded by asking, "Everything that we're talking about here. Did you know that, in fact, the Steele report was the key for probable cause? Did you know that the FBI had talked to the Russian contact and he said what Steele said – he had told him was not true? Did you know this? You're the FBI director."

Video:

The basis of the FBI and DOJ surveillance of Trump campaign personnel was the Steele dossier, which was collected for Fusion GPS, a Democrat opposition research firm.

Fox News explains:

> On four occasions, the FBI told the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance (FISA) court that it “did not believe” former British spy Christopher Steele was the direct source for a Yahoo News article implicating former Trump aide Carter Page in Russian collusion, newly released documents reveal.
>
> Instead, the FBI suggested to the court, the September 2016 article by Michael Isikoff was independent corroboration of the salacious, unverified allegations against Trump in the infamous Steele Dossier. Federal authorities used both the Steele Dossier and Yahoo News article to convince the FISA court to authorize a surveillance warrant for Page.
>
> But London court records show that contrary to the FBI’s assessments, Steele briefed Yahoo News and other reporters in the fall of 2016 at the direction of Fusion GPS — the opposition research firm behind the dossier.
>
> The revelations are contained in heavily-redacted documents released over the weekend after a Freedom of Information lawsuit by the organization Judicial Watch.
>
> The materials released by the DOJ include an October 2016 application to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to wiretap Page as well as several renewal applications.

So, there was only one source used as the basis for the surveillance warrant request: Steele’s dossier. The articles that appeared in the mainstream media was all based on Steele himself.

So, who paid for the Steele dossier?

The far-left Washington Post explains:

> The Hillary Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee helped fund research that resulted in a now-famous dossier containing allegations about President Trump’s connections to Russia and possible coordination between his campaign and the Kremlin, people familiar with the matter said.
>
> Marc E. Elias, a lawyer representing the Clinton campaign and the DNC, retained Fusion GPS, a Washington firm, to conduct the research.
>
> After that, Fusion GPS hired dossier author Christopher Steele, a former British intelligence officer with ties to the FBI and the U.S. intelligence community, according to those people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.
>
> Elias and his law firm, Perkins Coie, retained the company in April 2016 on behalf of the Clinton campaign and the DNC. Before that agreement, Fusion GPS’s research into Trump was funded by an unknown Republican client during the GOP primary.
>
> The Clinton campaign and the DNC, through the law firm, continued to fund Fusion GPS’s research through the end of October 2016, days before Election Day.

The FBI and DOJ didn't tell the FISA court about who was funding the Steele dossier when they applied for the warrant. Because if they had, they would have been denied the warrant. No FISA court would approve surveillance of the Republican party if the sole basis for the warrant was uncorroborated opposition research funded by the Democrat party. In order to get the FISA warrant, the request had to be written in such a way that the funding of the Steele dossier was not revealed, and Steele was not declared to be the source of the news articles used as corroborating evidence.

Just keep in mind that this is the same James Comey who protected Hillary Clinton when she was caught running a private, unsecure e-mail server that allowed her to escape the government's restrictions on e-mail communication. She deleted 30,000 e-mails and used Bleach Bit to destroy the evidence of her e-mail server after she was found out.

This man should put on trial for treason, and he should be forced to give up the names of the people in the Obama administration who were working with him to influence the 2016 election.

Are gay activists telling the truth about violence against transgender people?

December 17, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

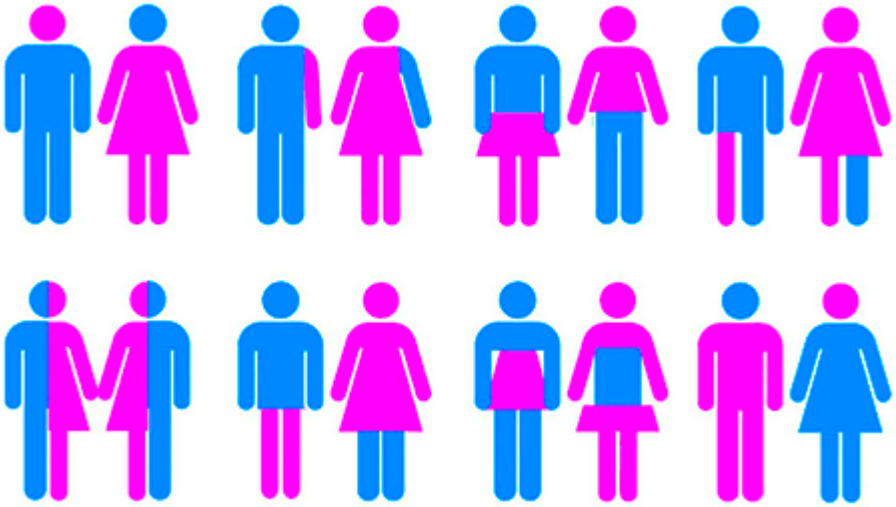

Thinking about transgenderism

I've been interviewing people to see how their views on moral issues are formed, especially the Christians. I noticed that most people don't have time to consult evidence when forming their opinions. Whether they have a progressive worldview or the conservative view, it's just easier to form that view based on wanting to feel good and be like instead of based on evidence.

Here's some evidence from Quillette about one issue where views are often formed from feelings and peer-approval, instead of reason and evidence:

> The claim that there's an "epidemic" of fatal anti-transgender violence in the United States has been made widely in recent years. A Google search for the phrase "epidemic of anti-trans violence" turns up pieces from the *New York Times*, NBC National News, ABC National News, and the Human Rights Campaign, a leading LGBT lobby group—among 2,500,000 other results. The HRC's primary on-point article was headlined 'A National Epidemic: Fatal Anti-Transgender Violence,' while the *Times* led with 'Eighteen Transgender Killings This Year Raise Fears of an Epidemic.' Transgender Day of Remembrance has been celebrated since the late 1990s to honor those "members of the transgender community whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence," and the American Medical Association has stated on record that fatal attacks on transgender people—particularly minority trans women—constitute a large part of an "epidemic of violence" against the trans community.

What's interesting is that even the far-left Human Rights Campaign, which leads the fight to suppress free speech critical of the gay agenda, admits that the numbers are tiny:

> The Human Rights Campaign maintains a year-by-year database containing

> every known case of a transgender individual being killed by violent means, and gives this number as 29 in 2017, 26 in 2018, and 22 in 2019. Not only do these figures not reflect a year-by-year increase in attacks on trans persons—they are remarkably consistent, and may be trending slightly downwards—they also indicate that the trans murder rate is significantly lower than the murder rate for Americans overall.
>
> Let's crunch the numbers. Taking the HRC's highest recent estimate of trans fatalities (29) as representative, and assuming the transgender population to be 0.6 per cent of the U.S. population—although some trans activists argue the true figure is as high as 3 per cent, which would make the murder rate even lower—the total number of murders in a hypothetical all-trans USA would be roughly 4,800 per year (4,833). In other words, if you multiply the population of the US (327,167,434) by 0.6 per cent you get a current transgender population estimate of 1,963,004.6, and if you divide that figure by 29 (the number of murders) you get 67,690—one murder per 67,690 trans citizens. That works out as a projected annual total of 4,833 murders (327,167,434/67,690) in an all-trans America, with an annual murder rate of 1.48 per 100,000 Americans. That's about one-fourth of the actual current murder rate: there were 16,214 recorded homicides in the United States in 2018 (five per 100,000) and 17,294 in 2017. While LGBT advocates may be correct that there is some under-reporting of the transgender murder rate because not all trans individuals are "out," the fact is that the murder rate for trans people would have to increase by 300-400 per cent to match the murder rate for the general population.

Well, to be fair, even one person being murdered is too much, but most of these victims were not killed because of any kind of discrimination or "hate":

> Not only is there no "epidemic" of murders of transgender individuals, it's also not true that most trans murders are motivated by "hate." The first case I reviewed while researching this article, that of Claire Legato, involved a trans woman killed while attempting to break up a physical dispute over a financial debt between her own mother and a close family friend. This was not atypical. The conservative writer Chad Greene, himself a member of the LGBT community, recently reviewed a sample of 118 of the cases of anti-trans homicide compiled by the Human Rights Campaign. His conclusion: exactly four of the perpetrators were clearly motivated by "anti-trans bias," animus, or hatred. In contrast, 37 of the murders were due to domestic violence, and 24 involved sex workers and were largely the result of the dangerous working conditions associated with illegal sex work.
>
> […]In addition to not being hate crimes, the majority of transgender murders are intra-racial. According to Greene, whose conclusions align with my own analysis, 34 of the 37 identified murderers of black trans persons killed between 2015 and 2019 (89.5 per cent) are themselves black.

I think these numbers are useful to have at hand, should someone try to convince you to accept their view by claiming that not accepting their view has led to “a national epidemic” of violence. I’m against trying to convince people by bullying them with victimhood in any case. If you have a rational case that some view is morally right or wrong, then make your case. I am always very interested to see how secular leftists try to argue for a moral standard that is binding on those who disagree with them, when they believe the universe is a random accident with no plan or purpose.

Are Christians treated fairly by the public schools that their taxes pay for?

December 18, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A group of feminists protesting people they disagree with

I was having a conversation about education with a co-worker this week who has four kids in public schools. She and her husband both work and pay taxes for these schools. Although the public schools are pretty good in our area, I still wish that Christians didn't have to pay taxes to fund these schools. It's not just that they typically underperform. They also discriminate against Christians.

Here's an example reported by Christian Headlines, and tweeted by the Family Research Council – a conservative think tank:

> A Montana high school violated federal law and practiced religious discrimination last month when it revoked the Fellowship of Christian Athletes' status as a school-sponsored club, a religious liberty legal group says.
>
> Alliance Defending Freedom sent a letter Dec. 11 to Bozeman High School, threatening a lawsuit if the school does not reinstate FCA as a school-sponsored club by Dec. 18.
>
> The school revoked FCA's official status in November after several students raised concerns over the national organization's stance on the definition of marriage. FCA's statement of faith says "God instituted marriage between one man and one woman as the foundation of the family and the basic structure of human society." FCA's adult leaders are required to support the statement and a code of conduct that affirms a biblical definition of sexuality.
>
> "Your actions violate federal law under the Equal Access Act and ignore 30-year Supreme Court precedent protecting the rights of religious student clubs to be treated equally with other student clubs," the ADF letter says. "Refusing to recognize FCA as a school-sponsored club because of its religious mission and

> denying it the same privileges as other non-curricular clubs is illegal."
>
> The high school currently recognizes 34 clubs, including the Environmental Awareness Club, the Sexuality and Gender Alliance, the Human Rights Club and the Key Club. FCA, though, is not one of them.
>
> Because of its unofficial status, the local FCA is prohibited from making schoolwide announcements or meeting on campus during non-instructional hours. Additionally, its flyers must bear a yellow sticker (which signifies that it is not school-sponsored).

This is what happens when American voters think that it's a good idea to shovel taxpayer money into the hands of public school teachers instead of keeping their money and spending it on an education for their children that doesn't violate their basic human rights.

Now, what I found interesting was how the school found out about the club's "offense".

The article says:

> As Christian Headlines previously reported, the controversy began when four female students raised concerns over the national organization's position on marriage. The students said the national organization was guilty of discriminating against LGBT individuals.

So, the club was sanctioned by the public school because four anti-Christian girls were offended that a group of Christians had Christian views on a moral issues. These girls oppose freedom of religion, and they oppose freedom of association. Why? Because they are offended, and their feelings matter more than the basic human rights of other people.

Just to be clear, that definition of marriage comes right out of the words of Jesus.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
>
> 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"

> 8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”
>
> 11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don’t overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them.

The new “Marriage Story” movie is a false picture of divorce

December 19, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

I think Sean McDowell is the best scholar to recommend to people who are interested in getting better at defending their faith. He has a splendid wide-reaching worldview, and conservative positions on controversial issues that other apologists won’t touch. He tweeted out a very interesting article from Suzanne Venker, where she reviews a new movie.

You might remember that Suzanne Venker is a pro-marriage writer who thinks that radical feminism has harmed women, and discouraged men from marrying. Here is what she had to say about the new feminist movie “Marriage Story” in The Federalist.

> “Marriage Story” is billed as an intense drama about a stage director [Charlie] and his actor wife [Nicole] “who struggle through a grueling, coast-to-coast divorce that pushes them to their personal and creative extremes.” Although the couple has an 8-year-old son, the focus of the film is… about Nicole’s feelings, Nicole’s choices, Nicole’s needs, and Nicole’s desires. Charlie just goes along for the ride. What choice does he have? Based on a 2017 report by Stanford’s Michael Rosenfeld, this story seems to align with divorce trends, as women initiate 69 percent of divorces in the United States.
>
> Indeed, “Marriage Story” is a predictable feminist screed. Its message couldn’t have been more glaring if it tried: **Marriage is a jail sentence for women. If you’re not happy, leave. Oh, and take the kid with you. And while you’re at it, you might as well sabotage your husband’s livelihood, forcing him**

> **to uproot the life you both built and move across the country in order to be able to see his son for half the amount of time he normally would, thereby irrevocably altering the course of this father-son relationship — particularly since Nicole's new man has entered the equation.**
>
> […]What you won't learn is that "Marriage Story" beautifully demonstrates the madness of modern-day childhood. No one's supposed to mention that because to look at what's happened between Charlie and Nicole through Henry's eyes would destroy the narrative. To focus on what writer and director Noah Baumbach wanted to — "telling a love story by doing it in the course of a divorce" — it is crucial to dismiss Henry's needs, because to a child, divorce is no love story.

By the way, speaking of children's rights, parents should definitely read Katy Faust's latest article in The Federalist.

I wanted to suggest a much better movie about divorce than "Marriage Story". When I was young, I went through this phase of wanting to grow up very fast. I just could not stand being around people my own age, with their obsessions with popularity and fun. So, I got myself a white collar job and started renting every classic movie in the movie rental place. Two of my favorites were "Kramer vs Kramer" and "Ordinary People". They made much better movies back then. Kramer vs Kramer is the one about divorce which I think accurately portrays the effects of divorce on children.

Here is the summary from the far-left Wikipedia: (I'm leaving out the ending)

> Ted Kramer (Dustin Hoffman) is a workaholic advertising executive who has just been assigned a new and very important account. Ted arrives home and shares the good news with his wife Joanna (Meryl Streep) only to find that she is leaving him. She leaves Ted to raise their son Billy (Justin Henry) by himself. Ted and Billy initially resent one another as Ted no longer has time to carry his increased workload, and Billy misses his mother's love and attention. After months of unrest, Ted and Billy learn to cope and gradually bond as father and son.
>
> Ted befriends his neighbor Margaret (Jane Alexander), who had initially counseled Joanna to leave Ted if she was that unhappy. Margaret is a fellow single parent, and she and Ted become kindred spirits. One day, as the two sit in the park watching their children play, Billy falls off the jungle gym, severely cutting his face. Ted sprints several blocks through oncoming traffic carrying Billy to the hospital, where he comforts his son during treatment.
>
> Fifteen months after she walked out, Joanna returns to New York to claim Billy, and a custody battle ensues. During the custody hearing, both Ted and Joanna are unprepared for the brutal character assassinations that their lawyers unleash on the other. Margaret is forced to testify that she had advised an unhappy Joanna to leave Ted, though she also attempts to tell Joanna on the stand that her husband has profoundly changed. Eventually, the damaging facts that Ted

> was fired because of his conflicting parental responsibilities which forced him to take a lower-paying job come out in court, as do the details of Billy's accident.[3] His original salary was noted as "$33,000 a year" (equivalent to $114,000 in 2018), whereas he was forced to admit that his new salary was only "$28,200" (equivalent to $97,000 in 2018), after Joanna has told the court that her "present salary" as a sportswear designer is "$31,000 a year".[3]
>
> The court awards custody to Joanna, a decision mostly based on the Tender years doctrine. Ted discusses appealing the case, but his lawyer warns that Billy himself would have to take the stand in the resulting trial. Ted cannot bear the thought of submitting his child to such an ordeal, and decides not to contest custody.

I come from a legal immigrant family of non-whites, and there just WAS no divorce anywhere in our family. We're half Muslim and half Hindu, and we just don't divorce. There was a lot of fighting in my family growing up, but divorce was out of the question for my parents. But I remember having to deal with the violent tempers of boys in my public schools who had divorced parents. Divorce really hurt those kids. That's why I try to blog about it here – the Bible is against divorce, and I want to explain to Christians why God's rules against divorce ought to be respected.

I'm not going to link to studies here about how divorce affects children, because I've done that in other places. I just wanted to let you know that feminism is strong in our culture, and they want to make divorce into a creative adventure. Don't let movies sway you away from what the Bible teaches. And when you defend what the Bible teaches about divorce, make sure you have the facts about radical feminism's promotion of divorce and how divorce affects men and children.

Guest post: Joseph, did you know?

December 20, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us

Well, I gave the reins of the blog over to my friend the senior software engineer last time, and it was one of the most popular posts of the year. So, we're doing it again. I don't know where he finds the time to write these things. This time, he has written a post analyzing the conduct of Joseph during the story of Mary becoming pregnant with a very special child.

If you haven't heard it already, I encourage you to go listen to the classic holiday song "Mary Did You Know?"

Not because it is filled with inspirational content. Quite the opposite. It regularly gets panned, and rightfully so, as an example of a song with a great melody but terrible theology. More can be written about that song along, but I will simply leave you with this: Yes, Mary Knew.

But this post isn't about Mary. It's about Joseph. What did he know?

To find out, let's turn to Matthew 1. Skip past the genealogy. Yes, it contains useful lessons on its own. And let's look at verses 18-25:

> 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.
>
> 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.
>
> 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to

> him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.
>
> 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”
>
> 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:
>
> 23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
> and they shall call his name Immanuel”
> (which means, God with us).
>
> 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,
>
> 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

After genealogies, Matthew opens not with a focus on Mary, but with the focus on Joseph. We’re likely used to reading this passage in Church and especially at Christmas time knowing what’s going to happen next. But let’s step back and look at this from Joseph’s perspective.

First, we need to understand what Joseph’s relationship was with Mary. We are told that they were betrothed but not married. While we have those same distinctions today, our emphasis on weddings is the opposite to what the emphasis would have been in Joseph and Mary’s time. And that’s because marriage has historically been viewed as a financial transaction.

> Until late in the Middle Ages, marriage consisted of two ceremonies that were marked by celebrations at two separate times, with an interval between. First came the betrothal [erusin]; and later, the wedding [nissuin].
>
> […]Marriage, as with any type of purchase, consisted of two acts. First the price was paid and an agreement reached on the conditions of sale. Sometime later the purchaser took possession of the object. In marriage, the mohar was paid and a detailed agreement reached between the families of the bride and groom. This betrothal was followed by the wedding, when the bride was brought into the home of the groom, who took actual possession of her.

There is no prescribed duration of time between betrothal and wedding but most of the sources I’ve read say the norm (and even recommended by some Rabbis) was a year. However, the interval between betrothal and wedding could be shortened depending on circumstances. So it’s reasonable to think that Matthew’s gospel opens up somewhere in the year between when Joseph and Mary, and their families, have hammered out, signed, and celebrated their betrothal and when Joseph took Mary into the home he was preparing for her.

It was in this time of waiting and anticipation that Mary comes to Joseph and tells him she’s pregnant. We may be tempted to read that in the modern sense of Mary telling

Joseph privately, just between the two of them. But the reality is that Mary's friends and family knew she was pregnant. This wasn't something that could easily be hidden. Mary claims divine intervention. Although we, in the 21st century, know this is true, put yourself in Joseph's position for a minute. Nothing like that had ever happened before. There is no prior reason to expect or believe such a claim. So, Joseph is right in rejecting this explanation and instead decides to dissolve the betrothal.

This is the right decision for Joseph to make. We tend to gloss over this point but I think it's worth considering in our time where the very suggestion that men prefer debt-free virgins without tattoos is met with shock and rage.

It was not merely Joseph but Joseph's family that had a contract with Mary's family. In our time we treat engagements and marriages as if they were only the concern of the individuals who fell in love. The Jewish understanding of marriage is not focused on the individual and neither should we be when reading Matthew.

Joseph had three options for dissolving his unconsummated marriage. He could publicly accuse Mary of being promiscuous. He could quietly dissolve the contract by claiming he was displeased with her. And finally, he could move the taking-home ceremony up and claim the child as his own. Each one of these paths is distinctly different and deserves to be examined.

Public accusation and divorce

Since Joseph and Mary had already signed a contract, and the only thing left to do was take her home and consummate the marriage, Joseph could have made a big deal about Mary violating the terms of their contract. Deuteronomy 22:13-30 has a lot to say here and while it's worth reading I'll sum it up by saying this route involved an awful lot of drama. And again, unlike modern marriage dissolutions where the state tries to cover over the ugliness of tearing a one-flesh (i.e. consummated) union apart, the law in Deuteronomy 22 was to air all the grievances.

This would necessitate that Joseph accuse not Mary but Mary's father of not doing his job in guarding Mary's virtue.

> 20 If, however, this accusation is true, and no proof of the young woman's virginity can be found,
>
> 21 she shall be brought to the door of her father's house, and there the men of her city will stone her to death. For she has committed an outrage in Israel by being promiscuous in her father's house. You must purge the evil from among you.

To go down this route Joseph would first have to come to the conclusion that Mary was evil.

Instead, Joseph's decision to divorce Mary quietly not only spared Mary's life. It also spared Mary's father from a world of pain and shame.

Displeasure

For years I thought this was the only alternative to simply continuing on with the wedding and that Joseph's decision to put Mary away quietly was a cop-out. But it turns out that a quiet divorce was allowed for exactly this in Deuteronomy 24:1-4

> 1 If a man marries a woman, but she becomes displeasing to him because he finds some indecency in her, he may write her a certificate of divorce,a hand it to her, and send her away from his house.
>
> 2 If, after leaving his house, she goes and becomes another man's wife,
>
> 3 and the second man hates her, writes her a certificate of divorce, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house, or if he dies,
>
> 4 the husband who divorced her first may not marry her again after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination to the LORD. You must not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

This could have been either before the wedding or after but there is a strong indication here that this is before the marriage has been consummated. I would argue that Joseph was still wisely holding this option in reserve even after the angel visited him by refusing to have sex with Mary until after the child was born. We know that Joseph eventually fully accepted Mary and the Angel's explanation for Jesus's conception, since he went on to have more children, that were fully his own, with Mary.

Shotgun wedding

It's not uncommon for couples to fail in resisting the urge to come together sexually prior to their wedding night. As a response, most cultures have an acceptable way to fast-track marriages between couples who fail to wait until the wedding to consummate their union (e.g. Exodus 22:16-17). While such a situation is certainly shameful, it is not irreconcilable. It is certainly more desirable for the couple to go ahead and get married and form a family than it is for the child to be born outside of wedlock in a broken home.

I think it's worth highlighting that Joseph's initial decision to divorce Mary on the grounds of displeasure was counted to him as both righteous and loving. Righteous in the sense that he couldn't simply ignore the fact that his wife had been unfaithful as far as he knew. And loving because, while the evidence of being with child wasn't hard to deny, he didn't have the other half of the equation needed to bring a solid charge against Mary. Presumably Mary had not acted dishonorably before and had offered him an explanation, no matter how odd or implausible, for her condition. So in light of this complicated circumstance Joseph decided not to act on the righteous fury he was no doubt feeling.

Enter into this the angel of God.

The angel that appeared to Joseph provided an additional witness and evidence to corroborate Mary's account of her pregnancy. It's not that Mary's word was untrustworthy because she was a woman. Though that is certainly a factor. It's that without evidence of divine intervention her story makes no sense. And like all miracles in Scripture, Mary's conception of Jesus comes with God proclaiming his handiwork.

God provided the seeds of doubt in the circumstances of Jesus's birth for anyone looking

for an excuse to not believe Jesus is the promised Messiah. That's likely why Matthew opens up with a robust genealogy. Because I imagine the #1 argument against Jesus by the Jews of the day was that he wasn't pure enough to be what they were looking for in the promised messiah. In the New Testament, Christ regularly hides himself and invites men to seek him out. It's incredible to think that even the circumstance surrounding his birth presents a stumbling block to the hard hearted.

What else did we expect from the promise made in Isaiah 17:14 quoted by Matthew in verse 23? The Hebrew grammar in Isaiah indicates that it will be the child's mother who provides her son with a name. There's no socially acceptable way for the promised sign in Isaiah to come about. From the beginning the promised messiah would be controversial.

And that controversy would start in the most intimate human relationship. Between husband and wife. Like Martha and Mary, Joseph was presented a choice. He had to decide whether to trust the angel and take the risk of accepting Mary into his house and the child he knew was not his.

And to counter the terrible song this post started with. Here's a Christmas song featuring Joseph.

How to help fatherlessness women make better choices about men and marriage

December 21, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Here's some helpful advice for women about choosing a man
I found a YouTube video featuring a conversation about the fundamental problem that I see with young, unmarried women: their decision to have recreational premarital sex with hot guys throughout their teens and 20s. I realize that this is controversial, but I think by listening to a woman who did this, we can get some clues about how to talk them out of it.

Here is the conversation: (just listen to the first 7 minutes to start)

Note: this conversation contains vulgar language. Listener discretion is advised.

Molyneux gets her talking about the most important question that women who fail with men never want to answer: why did your mother choose this awful, awful man, to be your father out of all the other men in the world? At the end, she really has learned her lesson and gives a good warning to other young women at the crossroads.

Summary of key admissions:

- Caller: I'm a 41-year-old single white female who was a bad girl in my 20s. I was raised fatherless by a loving Christian mom. Question: what caused me to fail at life and be living with my (divorced) mother?
- I was gifted, very intellectual, top of the class
- My mom is a very caring person
- My mom approached my Dad when he was already in another relationship (i.e. – her mom was the woman her father cheated with on another woman, then her mom married this cheating man and he dumped the previous woman)
- My mom was very attractive, and could have chosen different men, but she was really attracted to this terrible man
- My mom had a desire to get away from her strict parents, who she resented
- when I was 15 I chose a man, I had recreational sex with him before marriage, and he stalked me and humiliated me
- I felt like an adult at age 15, and I had sex with this man then so that I could put childhood behind me and become an adult
- My mother counter-acted the absence of my Dad by raising me as a Christian – she was a radical, intense Christian and that hyper-religiosity made me not want to talk about sex with her
- My mom divorced my father because he was a jerk
- My mom did not mind that he had other children from past relationships, was underemployed, and was lazy

- I used to sneak out of my room and sit on the back porch and drink alcohol with the neighbor kids
- My mom was a worrier and a control freak, so I rebelled against her warnings and attempts to set boundaries on my wildness
- I and my 15-year-old recreational sex partner used a condom from my devout Christian mother's drawer
- I had sex with 5 different boyfriends from age 15-18 and caught mono
- My mom had temporary boyfriends after the divorce
- In my 20s, "there wasn't much to do except go out and drink". "two to three times a week, me and my girlfriends would get dressed up, go to the clubs, and try to attract hot guys".
- From 21-30, I stopped looking for relationships, I just hooked up with hot guys for one-night stands and FWBs
- I felt better about myself, more confident and in control when I would drink and have one-night stands with these hot guys
- "I don't know why I was so focused on looks" in these guys
- The hooking up stopped at 30, then dating (with sex) resumed
- I realized that the hot guys I wanted were not going to settle down, especially with new younger women available
- From 15 to now, I've slept with 60 different men, sometimes repeatedly, and on and off
- I never admitted the true number of men I slept with to any of these men
- last relationship was 5 years ago (at age 36)
- I have lost interest in sex, and lost interest in men
- I don't have the mental toughness to be in a relationship
- I have "been broken" by too many failed relationships
- nobody told me that my decisions with men were not going to go well

In the final 8 minutes where Stefan explains the larger consequences of women's choices for civilization is very important, I think. I was surprised that he spoke directly to the "hot" alpha males that women want and told them that they are breaking women, and share the blame for destroying our civilization. The thing is, I don't think those hot alpha males care about civilization, or anything except for themselves. So I don't think it's going to work to speak to these degenerate men. We have to speak to the women. They are the ones who aspire to marriage and security, and they make the choices that do not lead to the future they want.

I think we need to teach young women, especially fatherless women, to connect their choices with men to the tasks that men actually perform in a married home. I am talking about non-Christian women AND Christian women. What do men do in a marriage on a day-to-day basis? They protect. They provide. They lead on moral issues. They lead on spiritual issues. So, we need to sit down with women and tell them what is important in a man. I have heard Christian women tell me how they married non-Christian men who they were attracted to for superficial reasons, then spent the rest of their lives watching their

children grow up without a spiritual leader in the home. I want this to stop happening.

I think the problem is that we need stronger men who are willing to confront women and speak about moral boundaries so that young women who don't have guidance can at least have the opportunity to make better choices. What we need less is men who agree with women who are making bad decisions. And we need less men who blame that bad men that women freely choose for being bad. Bad men are going to be bad. The only way forward is to tell women not to choose them. This is hard to do, but it is the loving thing to do. It's not loving to tell women that they can expect the man they choose to give them the traditional male roles when they chose him for superficial qualities that have nothing to do with the traditional male roles.

Podcast: Was Jesus a socialist? Does Christianity teach socialism?

December 22, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a deep dive into the Bible

I noticed that Christianity Today, which has turned hard left in recent years, is now openly endorsing socialism. So, I thought it might be a good idea to listen to this new episode of the Think Biblically podcast, which deals with the issue of Christianity and socialism. The hosts actually brought an economist on to define socialism, then they analyze the teachings of Jesus.

Here's the description: (H/T Nathan)

> It has not been uncommon for advocates of virtually every economic system to invoke Jesus in support of their views, though some of the most ardent advocates for both capitalism and socialism did not have any particular religious views themselves (Rand, Marx). Over the years, some of the more recent advocates of socialist type economic arrangements have appealed to Jesus and the gospels in support of such systems. Economist Lawrence Reed helps us sort out the application of the teaching of Jesus to economics and its relevance for economic life today. Join us for this provocative conversation as he tackles the question of Jesus and socialism.
>
> Show notes, including a full transcript, are available at: biola.edu/thinkbiblically

Topics:

- who plans the economy in socialism?
- who should own the means of production in socialism?

- how should wealth be distributed in socialism?
- what tools does socialism use to provide people with health care, employment, security, etc.
- which countries have adopted socialism? North Korea? Cuba? Venezuela? How about the Scandinavian countries?
- what in the New Testament has caused people to think that Jesus was a socialist?
- did Jesus ever advocate for concentrating power in the government in order to meet the material needs of people?
- did Jesus ever advocate for voluntary charity in order to meet the material needs of people?
- in our experience, is government seen to be more compassionate or less compassionate than individual people?
- does voluntary charity have any advantages over forced redistribution by a powerful central government?
- what about the example of common possessions among the earliest Christians?
- what is the Bible's view of wealth? is it always bad to be wealthy, or does it matter how you obtained it and how you use it?
- what does the parable of the talents tell us about socialism vs capitalism?
- what does the parable of the good Samaritan tell us about socialism vs capitalism?
- what does the parable of the three different shifts of workers tell us about socialism vs capitalism?
- what about socialist policies and higher tax rates in countries like Canada and Scandinavian countries?

I have to be honest. I think that some of the economics reasoning about the parables was a stretch, because those parables are talking mainly about other topics, not economics. But it's true that the parables aren't friendly to socialism even if they are interpreted as being about economics.

UK judge rules in favor of firing people who disagree with transgenderism

December 23, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

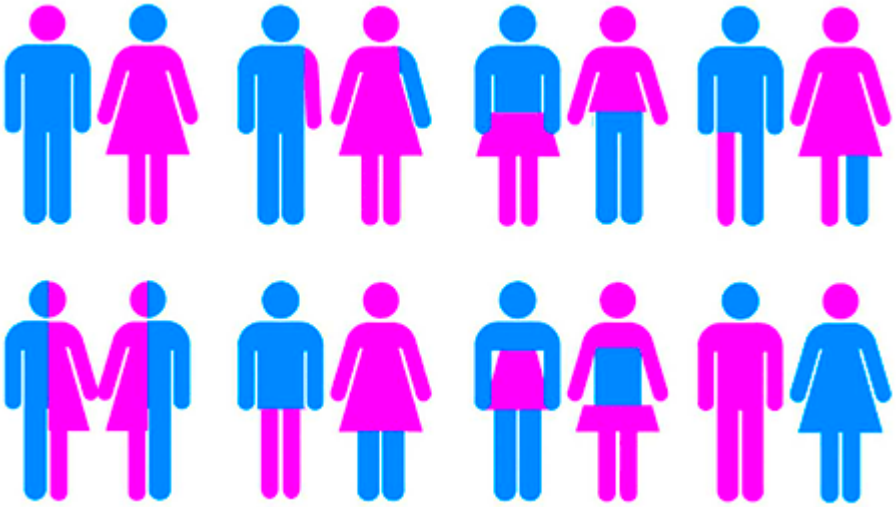

Thinking about transgenderism

This case is from the UK, but keep in mind that the United States is just a few years off from this, depending on who wins the presidency in 2020. A woman tweeted that transgender women (biological men) are not the same as biological women. The judge ruled that it should be legal to *fire employees* who say that a transgender woman (biological man) is not the same a biological woman.

Here is the story from Insider:

> A judge in the UK ruled on Wednesday that it was legal for a leading think tank to fire a worker for arguing publicly that transgender women are not real women.
>
> The Centre for Global Development (CGD) sacked tax expert Maya Forstater in March 2019 over a series of tweets in which she supported the notion that "men cannot change into women."
>
> She sued the CGD on grounds of discrimination, but her argument was rejected by a judge, who said her position on the issue is "not worthy of respect" and does not enjoy legal protection.
>
> […]Before her dismissal Forstater was accused by her managers of using "offensive and exclusionary" language and "fear-mongering," the Times of London reported.

The judge said that the defendant "is absolutist in her view of sex and it is a core component of her belief that she will refer to a person by the sex she considered appropriate even if it violates their dignity and/or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment."

NBC News had an article up where the author explained why the ruling was justified:

> This, then, is what Forstater wanted the courts to uphold: Her right to make her co-workers uncomfortable… her right to be… rude and disrespectful in social and professional contexts; and her right to disrespect U.K. law, which defines transgender women as women and transgender men as men…
>
> Courts, of course, tend to look askance at being asked to rule that an employee should be allowed to harm their employers and co-workers based on "philosophical beliefs" they've decided are both "biological truths" and tantamount to religious canon.

Indeed. So the mainstream view among the progressive elites is that not affirming the views of transgender people is "harming" them. And the right way to stop dissent from the LGBT agenda is to have these people fired, so that they have to choose between feeding their family and supporting the LGBT agenda. And this is all fine with the "compassion" crowd, who are more concerned with the feelings of transgender people than with free speech and conscience rights.

By the way, the UK judge's position is the same as about half the people in this country – the half that votes for the Democrat Party. The Democrats in the House have already passed a bill called the Equality Act, which would make American laws match the UK laws that make it acceptable for people who express disagreement with the LGBT agenda to be fired.

Personal application

I've noticed that a lot of evangelical pastors and leaders are drifting away from the teachings of the Bible on sex, marriage and morality in general. And it's becoming a real question about how far they will go with this. Like, I don't know where "conservative" evangelical pastors and leaders would stand on this question of firing someone who isn't "generous" about accepting a transgender person's preferred pronouns.

Based on what I'm seeing right now, I don't expect that Bible-believing conservatives who disagree with LGBT agenda are going to get any help from the "conservative" evangelical pastors and leaders . And that affects how free those Bible-believing conservatives are to be generous about taking on additional responsibilities, like charitable contributions, marriage, and children. After all, if the "conservative" evangelical pastors and leaders aren't concerned when a secular leftist fires a dissenter from LGBT orthodoxy, then why should that dissenter take on additional obligations to others that reduce his ability to survive being fired?

Here is what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:

> [32] I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord.
>
> [33] But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—
>
> [34] and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about

> the Lord’s affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband.
>
> [35] I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

And here’s Paul again in 2 Timothy:

> [3] Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
>
> [4] No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.

I do understand that evangelical pastors and leaders think that men just marry for love, and they don’t even think about how much providing for a wife and children costs. But that’s delusional. Men DO calculate the costs of having a wife and children, and they understand that it is easier to be faithful on controversial issues when you are a single man, than when you are burdened with a wife and children. If pastors don’t want to do anything to defend free speech from the secular left, that makes marriage less attractive to men who are committed to fighting the secular left.

Wages of low-income workers have risen faster than middle and high income workers

December 24, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In Trump's America, low-wage workers see the highest wage increases

By now, everyone has heard about how the unemployment rate is at a record low. Not only that, but the unemployment rates for women, blacks and hispanics are also at record lows. But did you know that wages have been increasing at the highest rate for *low-income workers*? That's right. It's low-wage workers who are seeing their incomes go up the most.

Here's an analysis done by an economist at Indeed.com, one of the largest online job boards:

> The US economy added 130,000 jobs in August, and the unemployment rate was flat at 3.7%.
>
> After this report, we can all take a breath, but not a big one. While we are still seeing many of the disconcerting trends of the past few months, the labor market continues to grow at a healthy rate.
>
> Before assuming that the total job growth number in August is skewed because of Census hiring, remember that these are real jobs taken by real workers. Even if you remove government hiring, which accounts for around 34,000 jobs, this is still a number that is high enough to keep up with population growth. This month's report reflects a slowing labor market but not necessarily one heading straight for a recession.
>
> **Wage growth strongest for low-wage industries**
>
> At this point in the expansion, we'd expect wage growth to pick up, but it is continuing to stall. In fact, wage growth continues to be strongest for workers in lower-wage industries. Labor force participation grew in the month, signaling a

> labor market still drawing workers off the sidelines. Job seekers are still benefiting from this job market, but let's not count on this lasting forever.

That analysis was done in August of this year, and as you may have heard, the numbers since then have been even better.

CNBC explained:

> The jobs market turned in a stellar performance in November, with nonfarm payrolls surging by 266,000 and the unemployment rate falling to 3.5%, according to Labor Department numbers released Friday.
>
> Those totals easily beat the Wall Street consensus. Economists surveyed by Dow Jones had been looking for solid job growth of 187,000 and saw the unemployment rate holding steady from October's 3.6%.
>
> […]In addition to the robust November gains, revisions brought up totals from the two previous months. September's estimate went up 13,000 to 193,000 and the initial October count increased by 28,000 to 156,000. Those changes added 41,000 to the previous tallies and brought the 2019 monthly average to 180,000, compared with 223,000 in 2018.

So my point here is simple. Democrats are mad because they lost the election, and they really aren't interested in whether president Trump is doing a good job or a bad job. The thing is, president Trump is doing a *terrific job* if all you care about is numbers. I understand that Democrats love their New York infanticide, their Seattle mayor pedophilia, their Democrat FBI agent adultery, their black face Virginia governor, their Clinton-funded Steele dossier, etc. But for the rest of us who just want to have a job, keep what we earn, and spend it how we want, this has been a great presidency.

It's not just low unemployment and increased wages. Conservatives are happy about a never-ending stream of conservative judges filling up vacancies on federal courts.

Far-left Politico is not too happy about this:

> The Senate confirmation of Lawrence VanDyke and Patrick Bumatay to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals this month brought to nine the number of appointments President Donald Trump has made to the 29-member bench that serves as the last stop for nearly all legal complaints lodged in nine Western states. Democratic-appointed judges now hold a three-seat majority, compared with 11 at the start of Trump's presidency.
>
> If the trend continues, it represents a major shift in the liberal wing of the judiciary, meaning lawsuits for progressive causes won't find a friendly ear as easily as they have. The circuit has been the go-to venue for activist state attorneys eager to freeze Trump policies on health care, immigration and other social issues. It ruled against Trump's weakening of Obamacare's contraceptive mandate, as well as multiple versions of his travel ban.
>
> It's now weighing the administration's overhaul of the federal family planning

> program, the “public charge” rule that denies green cards for individuals who participate in programs like Medicaid — and it could take up the “conscience rule” allowing health providers to opt out of providing care on religious or moral grounds.
>
> […]The 9th Circuit isn’t the only court whose makeup has changed through Trump’s conservative nominees and McConnell’s singular focus on confirming judges. The 1st Circuit in Boston and 3rd Circuit in Philadelphia now have Republican-appointed majorities.
>
> […]A 9th Circuit panel of four Democratic appointees and seven Republican appointees in July allowed the administration’s overhaul of the Title X federal family planning program to take effect. The policy bars clinics that provide or refer patients for abortions from receiving program funds for reproductive health services like STD screenings and contraception and prompted Planned Parenthood to quit over the change. Another 9th Circuit panel this year ruled in favor of letting Trump’s Justice Department distribute grants to cities that use the money to crack down on illegal immigration.
>
> […]The Trump administration will likely seek a reversal of two separate lower court injunctions against the health provider conscience rule and has been asked by DOJ to freeze a recent nationwide hold on Trump’s order to deny legal immigrants entry to the U.S. if they can’t cover their health care costs.

If you have some time, and you want to really understand why the Democrats are so angry, I really recommend this recent show featuring Andrew Klavan:

And I also wanted to reflect on what the booming Trump economy has meant to me personally. I made more money from my mutual funds this year than I earned as a senior software engineer! I understand that “orange man bad” and “impeach the m*th*rf#$%&r. But I cannot deny that I am doing well financially, and it’s very clear from economists that this is directly the result of massive tax cuts, deregulation, and smart trade policies.

Politics isn’t about how you feel, and how you look to your friends. It’s more important than that. We need to have policies that solve problems for people who are struggling to get their American dream. Donald Trump has delivered those policies, and the results are not subject to debate. We have the numbers, and the numbers are very, very good.

Did the early church invent the divinity of Jesus over a long period of time?

December 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

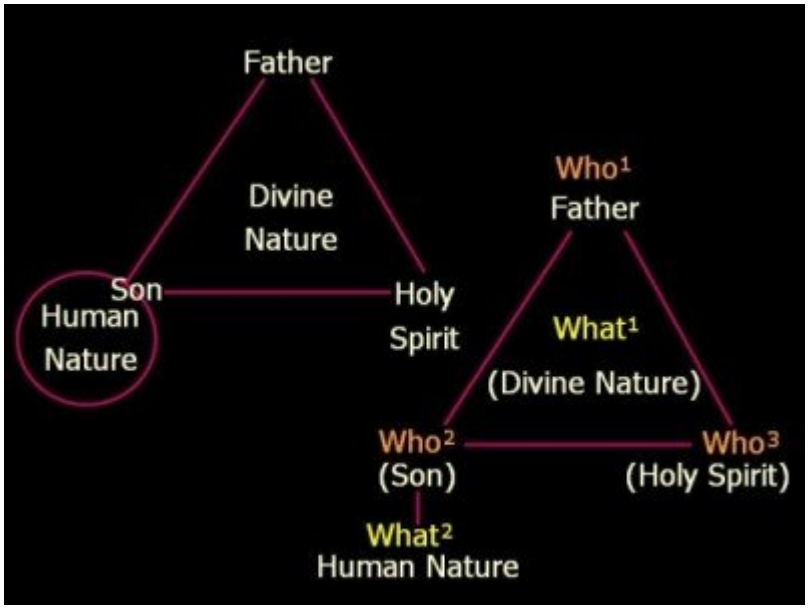

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time,

most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word

of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]“He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

[7]“But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]“What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God’s *unique* Son.

The “Q” source for Matthew and Luke

Here’s Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier “Q” source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

For Christmas Day, let’s remember George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

December 25, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Washington crosses the Delaware river before the Battle of Trenton

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position

> untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington's line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington's retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington's army at White Plains, New York, British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians

believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
>
> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for

> the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
>
> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called

> the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.
>
> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
>
> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
>
> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

J. Warner Wallace: I am not a Christian because it works for me

December 26, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a must-read post from Cold-Case Christianity author J. Warner Wallace.

Excerpt:

> Life on this side of my decision hasn't always been easy. It's been nearly seventeen years since I first trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. I still struggle to submit my prideful will to what God would call me to do. Christianity is not easy. It doesn't always "work" for me. There are times when I think it would be easier to do it the old way; easier to cut a corner or take a short cut. There are many times when doing the right thing means doing the most difficult thing possible. There are also times when it seems like non-Christians have it easier, or seem to be "winning". It's in times like these that I have to remind myself that I'm not a Christian because it serves my own selfish purposes. I'm not a Christian because it "works" for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn't always been easy.
>
> I'm a Christian because it is true. I'm a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I'm a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative.

I think this is important. There are people who I know who claim to be Christian, but they are clearly believing that God is a mystical force who arranges everything in their lives in order to make them happy. They are not Christians because it's true, but because of things like comfort and community. But people ought to become Christians because they think it's true. Truth doesn't necessarily make you happy, though. Truth can impose

intellectual obligations and moral obligations on you. Seeing God as he really is doesn't help us to "win" at life, as the culture defines winning.

Winning in Christianity doesn't mean making lots of money, or being famous, or winning human competitions, or being approved of by lots of people. Winning for a Christian might involve things like building relationships with people and leading them to know that God exists and who Jesus is. That has no cash value, and it's not going to make you famous. Actually, it will probably cost you money and time, and make you unpopular with a lot of people.

The Bible doesn't promise that people who become Christians will be happier. Actually, it promises that Christians will suffer for doing the right things. Their autonomy will suffer, as they sacrifice their own interests and happiness in order to make God happy, by serving his interests. Christianity isn't something you add on to your before-God life in order to achieve your before-God goals. When you become a Christian, you get a new set of goals, based on God's character and his design for you. And although you might be very successful in the world as part of serving God, there is no guarantee of that. Christianity is not life enhancement.

Does the “legacy of slavery” explain black women’s 72% out-of-wedlock birth rate?

December 27, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

James White asks: does the Bible apply to black women?

I don’t like Calvinist theologian James White very much, but at least he’s willing to defend the moral teachings of the Bible against the woke identity politics that is taking over Christian churches. A few months ago he tweeted something very controversial (see above), and got into a lot of hot water with fake Christians. In this post, I’ll explain why he is right.

So, as you can see above, James is concerned that black women are having so many abortions, and he thinks that the solution to this is to encourage black women to take the Bible’s advice on sexual morality. Shocking, I know.

If you read the replies to his tweet on Twitter, you’ll see millions and millions of comments calling him a racist, and telling him that slavery is to blame for EVERYTHING that black women do wrong. Basically, the James haters say that black women can do anything they want, and should never be told that it’s wrong according to the Bible, because their bad choices are all the fault of slavery. So the Bible doesn’t even apply to them, or something.

Here is an example from a radical feminist progressive named Karen Swallow Prior:

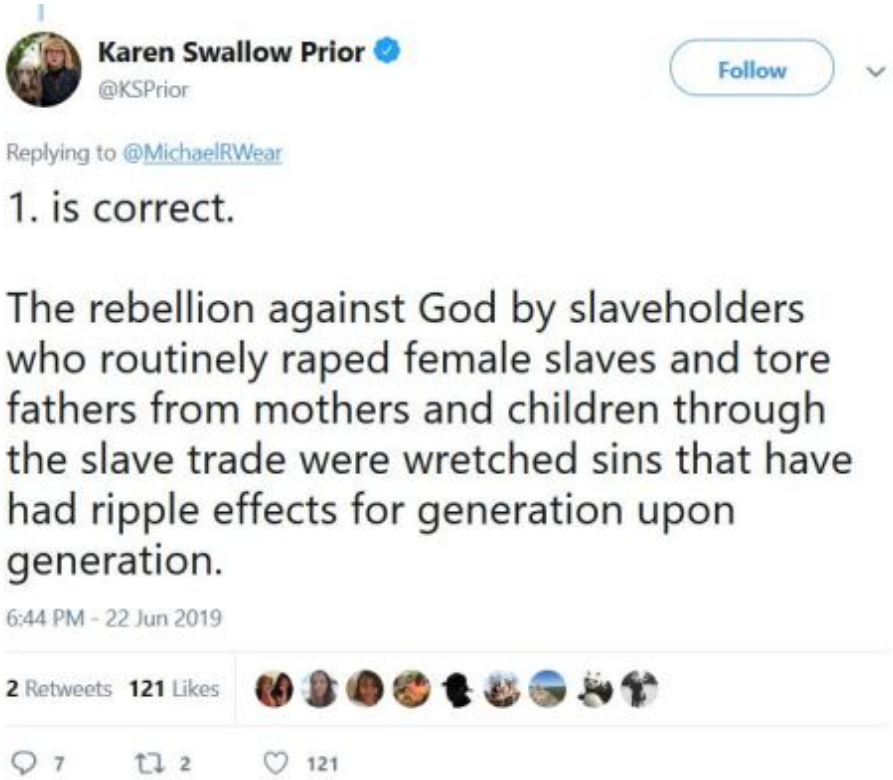

Karen Swallow Prior says that unlike whites, blacks have no moral agency

According to the fake Christians, it's not that black women make poor choices with sex, it's that the ghosts of white slavers who raped their great-great-great grandmothers reach through time with magic and force them to have sex with hunky bad boys who won't commit to them before sex. It's not rap music calling black women hoes! It's the ghosts of slavery past. And even if this ghost theory isn't true, we shouldn't tell black women not to sin, because… it would hurt their feelings. After all, the Bible isn't a book that's designed to set boundaries to prevent self-destructive behaviors. It encourages us to listen to our hearts, be reckless, and sin as much as we can.

So when did black community problems with sex and abortion start? Did it start with slavery times? Actually, blacks were doing GREAT at marriage and sexual matters just 50 years ago.

This reply to James White explained:

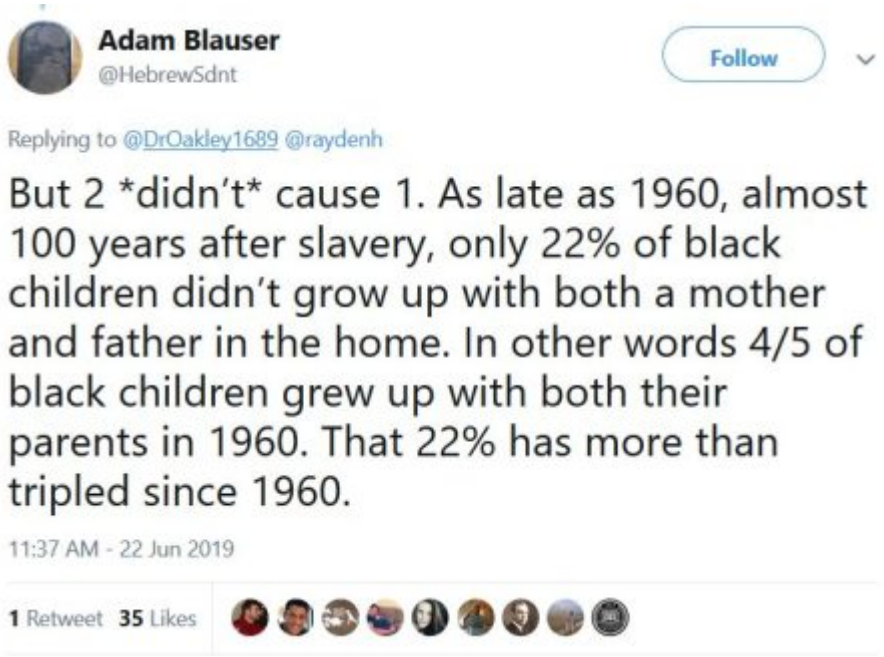

Blacks married at rates comparable to whites before welfare
That's true. Black children weren't fatherless, so they weren't having early sex outside of marriage, and so they weren't getting abortions.

As the header graphic shows, black women were just as likely to be married as white women in the 1960s, FAR AFTER the days of slavery.

The reason that the graph is going upward is because daughters raised in fatherless homes tend to engage in sexual activity at younger ages, because they are seeking approval from a man which their (single) mother cannot give them. It's a tragic downwards spiral, and it affects all races. The only way to stop it is to tell women to choose marriage-minded men (not hot bad boys) and marry before having sex, like the Bible says. But woke fake Christians think the Bible is too mean, and better to allow sin by saying that sin is inevitable because slavery ghosts or something.

What's neat is that black men who take Christianity seriously are totally on board with the facts:

Black man here. Can confirm that the Bible applies to black women.
On this blog, I don't talk about my ethnicity myself, for confidentiality reasons, but I have said that my skin is darker than Barack Obama. I'm not white or Asian. And the reason that I don't fall into this trap of causing babies to be born out of wedlock is because I think that when the Bible says that sex outside of marriage is a sin, that this is true. I

don’t make excuses or shift blame. It’s incumbent on me to obey, since I claim to be a follower of Jesus.I’m not interested in identity politics. I’m not interested in racial divisions. I’m not interested in blame-shifting. The rules are the rules. And my following of the rules caused me to not cause abortions, according to Christian specifications. Period.

When it comes to sex outside of marriage, the answer of every Bible believing Christian is simple: I’m against it. That is the correct answer, and anything more or less than this answer is demonic. If you are a Christian, sex outside of marriage is always morally wrong. And if you try to justify it, or blame someone else, in order to excuse it, then you’re not a Christian at all. If you try to make excuses for why someone did it, you’re not a Christian. Whether you have had it and been forgiven, or never had it, the answer is always the same: it’s morally wrong. Don’t do it. Never do it.

What I am seeing from people who are critical of James White’s tweet is that they are basically trying to attack those who make moral judgments based on what the Bible says. They want to make room for sinners to sin. The root of abortion sin is sexual sin. Real Christians discourage sexual sin, and therefore protect unborn children. Fake Christians want to be liked by appearing compassionate, so they make excuses for sexual sin. If you take the Bible seriously on morality, you won’t be liked. Those who try to excuse sin do so because their need to be liked is more important than their need to promote what the Bible teaches.

Some fake Christians will say “oh, but I do think the Bible is right about sex and marriage, but we have to care about slavery reparations and global warming and refugees and illegal immigrants and trasnsgender rights, too”. Baloney. An authentic Christian is concerned about the things that the Bible teaches are “major” things. Drunkenness is a major thing. Sexual immorality is a major thing. Divorce is a major thing. Homosexuality is a major thing. If you meet a Christian who treats those issues as minor issues, and instead majors in what the secular left tells them are major issues, then you’re talking to a fake Christian.

Christianity isn’t a brain-dead faith. You get your priorities from the Bible, and you argue those priorities using facts. The facts about marriage rates are clear and they show that the problems in the black community aren’t caused by slavery. They’re caused by single mother welfare programs. Those welfare programs taught women of all races that they didn’t have to listen to their fathers when choosing men. Those welfare programs taught women that feelings were a better guide in relationships than the Bible. Those welfare programs taught women that their eyes were a better judge of character than performance of traditional marriage roles. Those welfare programs taught women that recreational sex was a way to get a man to commit and stop being a bad boy. We need to go back to the root cause of the problem. The root cause of the problem was making excuses for disobedience to the Bible, and transferring money from married homes to out-of-control women. Of all races.

Does the Bible say that you should forgive someone who does not repent?

December 28, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Kevin Lewis, a professor of Theology and Law at the conservative Biola University, was asked this question:

> Recently, I was reading Dr. Kenneth Bailey's "Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes" (IVP press 2008). When commenting on Matthew 6:12-13, he writes,
>
> "It is a common human assumption that the violator of the rights of others must ask for forgiveness before the wronged party can be expected to accept the apology and grant forgiveness…But Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when when there is no confession of guilt… There is a voice from the cross that echoes across history to all saying 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' Neither Pilate nor the high priest nor the centurion offered any apology to Jesus, yet he prayed for divine forgiveness…(p.125)"

And here's some of his response copied with permission from his Facebook note:

> First, regarding God and His forgiveness, it is undisputed in orthodox Christian theology that God does not forgive everyone. The doctrine of Hell is a sufficient proof of the lack of universal forgiveness by God.
>
> Next, it is clear that God does not forgive without repentance. This doctrine is taught in a number of texts. For example, in Luke 13:3 Jesus says, "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." In Mark 1:15 John the Baptist commands that

we must “repent and believe the Gospel.” The connection between repentance and forgiveness of sins (i.e. “salvation”) is seen throughout the Scriptures. For example, in Acts 2:38 repentance is directly connected as a condition for the remission of sins. For additional examples of this connection see Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30-31; Romans 2:4-5; II Corinthians 7:10; II Tim. 2:25-26.

So since we are to be imitators of God and forgive in the same way God forgives, we would expect the Scriptures to be consistent, stating that the condition of repentance is required to be fulfilled before believers are required to forgive each other’s sins. It does.

Jesus stated in Luke 17:3, “If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.” Here, the meaning is clear. The word “if” (Grk. ean) introduces the condition for a rebuke and for granting forgiveness. If (subjunctive) a person sins, we must (imperative) rebuke him, and if (subjunctive) he repents, we must (imperative) forgive him. This is as clear a statement as you will find on the subject. Forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance—and this is one of the same criteria that God requires before He forgives sin.

This principle of permitting believers to withhold forgiveness unless the condition of repentance is satisfied is also explicitly seen in Matthew 18:15-17. Compared with the Luke 17:3 text above, the situation is the same. If a brother sins, reprove him; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. Here, the word “reprove” is used rather than “rebuke” and the word “listen” is employed rather than “repent,” but the meaning is virtually identical to Luke 17:3. What we see in Matthew 18 is an escalation of the issue and the result if the person fails to repent (i.e. “listen”). If the person fails to repent, we are to shun him in all appropriate ways (v. 17).

[…]Finally, I would make the case that it is harmful to a person to forgive him without requiring repentance. As seen above, the Bible is clear that sin requires a rebuke. Ignoring sin teaches sinners that sin does not bring consequences. This is harmful to their souls. Continuing to have the benefit of a righteous relationship with another and yet remain in sin against that person results in fostering a habituation of sinful inclinations in their soul, which God says brings about suffering and death.

Moreover, since the ultimate purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation, it is meaningless and harmful to forgive when no reconciliation may be had with the sinner. We cannot “walk together” in a biblical manner in righteous peace when the unrepentant sinner walks in unrighteousness. Necessarily, there is a conflict and a want of shalom. Their soul is headed in a different direction than the believer’s soul; they are walking away from God and we cannot have fellowship with darkness. God has no intimate fellowship with unrepentant people, and that is the model for Christians as well (See Matt. 18).

> Regarding personal anger issues commonly raised by Christian psychologists, these types of psychologists unbiblically make unconditional forgiveness a part of therapy. By contrast, however, if a counselee will not forgive after the offending party has truly repented, the counselee sins, and this kind of unforgiveness may be one of the causes of his or her problems. But this is a separate issue from universal and unconditional forgiveness raised above.
>
> Human beings in the image of God may be angry in appropriate ways (Eph.4:26, 31). There is a time to love and a time to hate (Ecclesiastes 3:8). The notion that Christians cannot ever hate, be angry, or lack forgiveness is an unbiblical concept. God Himself is eternally angry with sin, but He is certainly not a psychological basket case. He loves, hates, and is angry in appropriate ways. Our task as believers is to imitate this. Be angry with and hate sin appropriately (Rom. 12:9) and love what good appropriately. For example, righteous anger can evolve beyond the biblical limits to become malice, slander, and bitterness while, to give another example, an appropriate love of food can evolve beyond the biblical limits into gluttony.

I agree with Kevin, and I think it is a helpful tool for people to insist on seeing some sort of repentance and restitution from someone who wrongs you before you trust them again. If they are not even sorry for what they've done, and they refuse to explain why what they did is wrong, then they can't be forgiven, and you can't trust them again.

I think this is the key passage – Luke 17:3-4:

Luke 17:3-4:

3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

That's Jesus speaking, there.

Also, I was having a debate with someone who disagrees with all this, and while debating with her, I thought of another example.

Luke 18:9-14:

9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

13 But the tax collector,standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who

exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So again, no forgiveness without repentance.

Forgiveness is what happens when someone who is sinned against treats the sinner as if he had never sinned. It is not on the balance sheet. It is not brought to mind. It is not held against them in the future. The forgiver trusts the sinner again as if the previous sin had never happened.

In divine (vertical) forgiveness, there is no forgiveness without repentance. There are Bible verses above to show that.

My argument is twofold. First, there is a clear teaching of Jesus explaining the sequence of sin and forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness, between humans (Luke 17:3). The verses cited by the forgive without repentance crowd don't show the mechanics of how to forgive, they are making the point that if you want God to forgive you, you should forgive others. The parable in Luke 18:9-14 affirms this again – repentance always precedes forgiveness.

Second, we have an obligation to imitate God, and that means imitating the way he forgives those who sin against him. When I raise that with the unconditional forgiveness crowd, they want to insist that there is a difference, that the word "forgive" means different things. I'm not convinced.

Finally, I do think that forgiving someone is obligatory if they sincerely repent, and even if they screw up again and again. So long as the repentance is sincere, (like if there is restitution and a genuine effort to show an understanding how the sin affected the wronged party in writing), *then forgiveness should be automatic*.

Alan E. Kurschner argues that there is serious textual doubt about the originality of Luke 23:34a, a text used by the pro-unconditional-forgiveness crowd. He has a journal article coming out on it, but a synopsis of his argument is here.

He also wrote this in a comment on this blog:

> Second, on Matt 6:15, this is what I have to say. Notice the then-clause: "neither will your Father forgive your sins." This would require universalism on the Father's part according to the unconditional interpretation given the first half: "But if you do not forgive others their sins." Since everyone has wronged the Father is the Father required to forgive everyone even if they are not seeking forgiveness?

So I think the case for the forgiveness being conditional on repentance is pretty strong, especially when serious harm has been caused.

Video, audio and summary of intelligent design discussion, with Ben Shapiro and Stephen C. Meyer

December 29, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephen C. Meyer and Ben Shapiro discuss evolution and intelligent design
(Re-posting this for those who missed it the first time around)

This is a must-see / must-hear conversation. Famous conservative Ben Shapiro discusses evolution and intelligent design with Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, author of "Signature in the Cell" (origin of life) and "Darwin's Doubt" (fossil record). These are the two best books on intelligent design. Their conversation covers the most important issues in the origins debate.

So to start, here's the full video:

And here is a link to the audio. You can download the MP3 there.

Someone actually put out an outline on Youtube, with a time-based index, so I'll just steal that as a base, and add to it:

- 1:34 What is your scientific background? Science undergraduate degree, professional geologist, later did a PhD in philosophy of science from Cambridge University.
- 2:39 What is the difference between intelligent design and creationism? Creationism starts from the Bible and posits a shorter history of the universe. ID starts from the data of the natural world and is neutral about the age of the Earth / universe. Meyer accepts the old-Earth.
- 3:36 How is Intelligent Design a scientific theory? The discovery of DNA reveals that code is central to living systems. Intelligent design uses the method of "inference to the best explanation" in order to argue that the best explanation for the code is an intelligent agent.
- 6:10 What evidence would have to arise to make Intelligent Design Falsifiable? If a naturalistic mechanism was discovered that could produce biological information using the probabilistic resources of the universe, and the time available, then

intelligent design would be falsified.

- 7:26 Is religion separate from science or intertwined within it? There are three views: science is totally separate from religion, science is in total conflict with religion, science and religion agree on some issues, e.g. – the origin of the universe and Genesis 1:1. There are areas where science and religion overlap.
- 9:55 Why are the most prominent Darwinians also militant atheists? Evolution is a theory that tries to explain nature using naturalistic mechanisms, so it is compatible with atheism.
- 10:45 What does the theory of evolution say? The term evolution has multiple meanings, and should be defined before discussions. It can refer to change over time. It can refer to animals changing slightly to adapt to enviromental changes. It can refer to the idea that all animals evolved from simpler life forms, and that there is a tree of life showing how different types of organisms share common ancestors. And it can refer to the idea that purely undirected processes can explain the history of life using purely materialistic forces. It's that final view that intelligent design challenges.
- 13:15 Where is the discontinuity in naturalistic processes in the development of life? The first discontinuity is the origin of simple life from non-living components. The second discontinuity is the sudden appearance of different body plans in a very narrow window of time in the Cambrian era.
- 15:42 Why does information theory suggest that code requires some sort of designer? DNA is a true information-bearing system identical to the software in computers, e.g. – operating system, applications.
- 19:45 Can information be created by random mutation, and favorable mutations preserved by natural selection? Just as in software code, instructions must be added in order to develop new functionality. Random additions of characters will almost always degrade biological function. The number of possible sequences that do nothing useful is vastly higher than the number of sequences that perform biological functions. Doug Axe did research on this at Cambridge University, and he found that the number of functional sequences of amino acids is 1 in 10 to the 77th power. Given the probabilistic resources (replicating organisms)and the time available, it is extremely unlikely to find sequences that have functional information by chance.
- 25:05 What about Stephen Jay Gould's model of punctuated equilibrium – doesn't it explain the sudden jumps in information? Gould's mechanism is accurate according to the fossil record, which shows a lot of jumps. But he did not have a naturalistic explanation for sudden jumps in biological function. Darwinian mechanisms work slowly and would (in theory) produce different body plans gradually. But this is not what the fossil record shows.
- 27:22 What is the mechanism for injecting information in the theory of intelligent design? The information comes in from an intelligence when new major body plans appear, and minor variations within types could be explained by evolution.
- 29:25 Does the Miller-Urey experiment provide a naturalistic explanation for the building blocks necessary for the origin of life? The MU experiment only produced a

few types of amino acids, it doesn't say anything about how to sequence the amino acids in order to form protein folds that can perform biological functions. The MU experiment also pre-supposes conditions on the early Earth (reducing gases) that do not match what was there (oxidyzing or neutral gases).

- 32:00 Is the RNA world hypothesis is a good explanation for the origin of life? Evolution requires that replication already be in place, because evolution assumes that mutations appear during the replication. The RNA world hypothesis suggests that sequences contain information, but also catalyze origin of life chemistry. The problem with RNA world is that it starts with self-replicating systems. And those replicating systems require the scientist to inject information into the system to get even the simplest replication started.
- 34:56 How do scientists respond to the critiques of Darwinism proposed by intelligent design advocates? By and large, they accept them. They think that mutation and selection works once living systems are in place, but they realize it has no explanation for the origin of life or the sudden origin of body plans. (Tells about the conference of the Royal Society, where problems with Darwinian mechanisms were discussed, and the 2003 MIT Press book by Muller and Newman).
- 37:16 Why do people hold to Darwinian evolution in the face of these problems? Many scientists presuppose methodological naturalism, which requires that any explanation for the origin of life and the origin of major body plans involve materialist explanations only. No intelligent agents are allowed. The problems occur when assumption of naturalism causes scientists to propose incorrect explanations for what we observe in nature. It's also not clear how naturalistic mechanisms could produce organisms who are capable of reason and free will.
- 40:43 Does naturalistic evolution have an answer for conscious minds, reasoning, free will? No, consider the work of atheist scholar Thomas Nagel, who argues in his book "Mind and Cosmos" (Oxford University Press 2012) that the existence of mind is a disproof of the neo-Darwinian explanation for life. Darwinism stops us from accepting the reality of minds.
- 42:06 So do naturalistic evolutionists have to explain away the mind as an illusion? First, we humans have immediate experience of consciousness, reason and free will. Second, our whole legal system is based on the idea free will, because you can't hold someone guilty unless they chose to do something they knew was wrong. Third, we have an epidemic of suicide among young people. This is caused by a crisis of meaning. Intelligent design opens up the possibility of their being a mind behind the universe, who we could have a relationships with.
- 44:53 Why aren't schools allowed to be honest about the problems with neo-Darwinian evolution? The intellignt design view is to that teachers should be allowed to teach all the vidence for Darwinian evolution, and also discuss some of the problems with the theory. Students learning science should not be told that everything is solved. Students learn science better when they are presented with peer-reviewed evidence for and against a theory, rather than being indoctrinated.
- 47:37 Is intelligent design theory connected to God? Intelligent design infers from

the information content in nature that a mind with capabilities like ours injected information into living systems. Intelligent design is agnostic about the designer, because in principle, embodied or unembodied agents could inject information into living systems. Intelligent design is friendly to theism, because theists will immediately identify the mind as God. Furthermore, the fine-tuning in the initial conditions of the universe is another intelligent design argument. In that case, since the design occurs at the beginning of the universe, the intelligent agent acting prior to the creation of the universe would have to be supernatural, i.e. – God.

- 50:53 Can naturalists say that the imposition of "function" on a sequence is arbitrary, in the same way that the English language is arbitrary? This won't work, because *biological function* is not arbitrary in the same way as language. Biological function is not arbitrary, because sequences can be tested for function *objectively* by observing whether sequences can perform functions necessary for life, e.g. – replication.
- 52:43 Doesn't the multiverse explain away the improbabilities of the fine-tuning, the origin of life, and the development of life? No, because all models of the multiverse require fine-tuning in the mechanism that generates the different universes.
- 55:42 What about cosmological models that eliminate the beginning of the universe? The standard Big Bang model and the inflationary model both posit a beginning of the universe. There is also the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theory which proves that any universe that is expanding requires a beginning. The only chance for naturalists is quantum cosmologies, but this doesn't work because 1) it requires an abstract reality of mathematics to actualize the physical universe, but this presupposes a mind. 2) The model requires an earlier input of information, which can only have come from a mind.

If you listen to this lecture, or watch the video, and you enjoyed it, then please share. If you have questions, I can try to answer them for you – just leave your question in the comments, or shoot me an e-mail, or message me from the blog's Facebook page, or direct message me on Twitter. I've invested a lot of time in this, and have been studying intelligent design since the late 1990s.

By the way, I listen to the Ben Shapiro podcast, (and the Andrew Klavan podcast), every day. I never miss an episode, and I think if you give them a try, you'll enjoy them, too.

Law-abiding gun owner stops attempted mass shooting at church

December 30, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

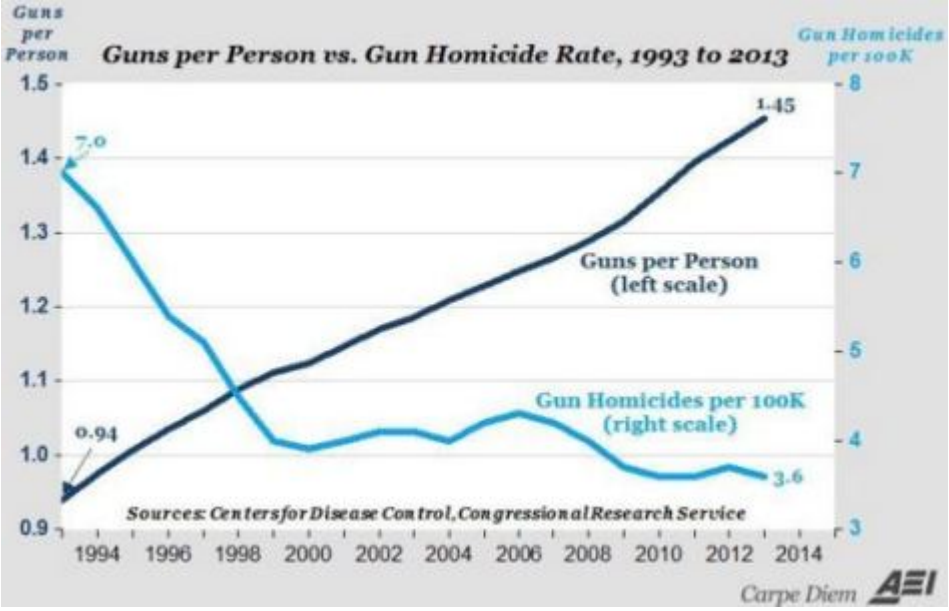

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

I often struggle to explain to my Canadian and British friends what the second amendment is, and why Americans insist on being able to legally own firearms. I normally make the argument from academic studies to show that banning guns leads to more violent crime, while concealed carry laws reduce violent crime. But sometimes, it's nice to illustrate the statistics with a case study.

MSN.com reports on a story of an attempted mass-shooting that occurred on the weekend at a church:

> A gunman has killed one person and critically injured another inside a packed Texas church during a livestreamed service before he was shot dead by an armed member of the congregation.
>
> […]Video of the livestream shows a person wearing a large coat, with the hood covering his head, standing up and walking over toward another man at the back of the room.
>
> The shooter appears to say something to the man, prompting him to point in a direction at the back of the church.
>
> In a matter of seconds, the shooter whips out what appears to be a shotgun and fires two rounds.
>
> One of the shots hits a man who stood up in the back of the church and the other shot hits the man the victim had spoken too.
>
> After the second shot was fired, the gunman attempted to flee the scene before he was shot by an armed member of the congregation.

> […]According to one member of the church, the victim had spoken to one of the deacons in the back of the church before he opened fire.
>
> The member wrote on Facebook that another deacon 'who is a concealed carry instruction, and retired law enforcement officer, shot the guy before he could fire a third time!'
>
> That deacon has not been identified but according to CBS 11, he is actually a former FBI agent and part of the church's security.

Here's some video coverage from the far-left CBS News:

More about the man who took down the criminal.

Here is what Joe Biden, leading Democrat presidential candidate, has to offer the Christians in that church:

> Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden attacked Texas Governor Greg Abbott earlier this year for signing a bill into law that allowed lawful gun owners to carry firearms in places of worship, repeatedly calling Abbott's decision "irrational."
>
> […]"Dealing with firearms, it is irrational, with all due respect to the governor of Texas, irrational what they are doing," Biden told reporters on September 2. "On the very day you see a mass shooting … and we're talking about loosening access to have guns, to be able to take them into places of worship, it's just absolutely irrational. It's totally irrational."
>
> […]Biden continued, saying that any weapon that was capable of carrying "magazines that can hold multiple bullets" should be banned – which is nearly all firearms.
>
> […]Later asked if there could be any compromises with Republicans on the issue, Biden responded, "None. None on this. I think this is no compromise. This is one we have to just push, and push, and push, and push, and push."

Biden has armed security everywhere he goes. He just doesn't want *you* to have armed security.

Just picture in your mind what would have happened in that church if Joe Biden had prevented law-abiding church members from carrying weapons to defend themselves. That is the goal of every Democrat – they want to disarm law-abiding people, and leave them at the mercy of criminals who don't obey gun laws.

I want to link to this column from famous black economist Thomas Sowell to help people understand how frequently law-abiding Americans use legally-owned firearms to prevent crimes.

He writes:

> We all know that guns can cost lives because the media repeat this message endlessly, as if we could not figure it out for ourselves. But even someone who

> reads newspapers regularly and watches numerous television newscasts may never learn that guns also save lives — much less see any hard facts comparing how many lives are lost and how many are saved.
>
> But that trade-off is the real issue — not the Second Amendment or the National Rifle Association, which so many in the media obsess about. If guns cost more lives than they save, we can always repeal the Second Amendment. But if guns save more lives than they cost, we need to know that, instead of spending time demonizing the National Rifle Association.
>
> The defensive use of guns is usually either not discussed at all in the media or else is depicted as if it means bullets flying in all directions, like the gunfight at the O.K. Corral. But most defensive uses of guns do not involve actually pulling the trigger.
>
> If someone comes at you with a knife and you point a gun at him, he is very unlikely to keep coming and far more likely to head in the other direction, perhaps in some haste, if he has a brain in his head. Only if he is an idiot are you likely to have to pull the trigger — and if an idiot with a knife is coming after you, you had better have a trigger to pull.
>
> Surveys of American gun owners have found that 4 to 6 percent reported using a gun in self-defense within the previous five years. That is not a very high percentage but, in a country with 300 million people, that works out to hundreds of thousands of defensive uses of guns per year.
>
> Yet we almost never hear about these hundreds of thousands of defensive uses of guns from the media, which will report the killing of a dozen people endlessly around the clock. The murder of a dozen innocent people is unquestionably a human tragedy. But that is no excuse for reacting blindly by preventing hundreds of thousands of other people from defending themselves against meeting the same fate.
>
> Although most defensive uses of guns do not involve actually shooting, nevertheless, the total number of criminals killed by armed private citizens runs into the thousands per year.

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic studies by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book is published by the University of Chicago Press
- The Malcolm book is published by Harvard University Press

The book by economist John Lott compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study found that after the UK banned guns, violent crime rates *doubled* in four years.

What is the definition of marriage according to Jesus?

December 31, 2019 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

I noticed that there is some silly Democrat running around harassing Mike Pence because he accepts Jesus' definition of marriage. What's annoying about this particular Democrat is that he calls himself a Christian, despite being in a gay relationship with another man. I thought it might be a good idea to remind everyone what the actual definition of marriage is, according to Jesus.

Here's what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
>
> 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"

> 8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”
>
> 11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don’t overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are supposed to be willing to endure suffering rather than side with non-Christians against God’s authority.

Matt Walsh had a fine article about this issue.

He said:

> As Christians, our goal is not to avoid being like the big bad “other Christians,” but to strive to be like Christ Himself. This is one of the advantages to having an Incarnate God. He went around acting and speaking and teaching and generally functioning in our realm, thereby giving us a model to follow. This is the model of a loving and merciful man, and *also* a man of perfect virtue who fought against the forces of evil, condemned sin, defended his Father in Heaven with sometimes violent force, spoke truth, and eventually laid down His life for those He loved (which would be all of us).
>
> […]This is what it means to believe in Christ. Not just to believe that He existed, but to believe that Christ is Truth itself, and that everything He said and did was totally and absolutely and irreversibly true forever and always. Many Christians today — not only the ones in the video, but millions alongside them — seem to think we can rightly claim to have “faith” in Jesus or a “relationship” with Him while still categorically denying much of His Word. This is a ridiculous proposition. We can’t declare, in one breath, that Christ is Lord, and in the next suggest that maybe God got it wrong on this or that point. Well, we *can* make that declaration, but we expose our belief as fraudulent and self-serving. We worship a God we either invented in our heads, which is a false idol, or a God who is fallible, which is a false idol.

If you really accept Jesus as God, then you can’t think he is wrong when he explains what marriage is. Period. End of issue.

Real Christians don’t make excuses for sin. Real Christians present the gospel. The gospel

is that all men have rebelled against God and fallen short of perfect submission to and obedience of him. For this, they deserve to be separated from God eternally. Jesus paid the price for this rebellion on the cross, and anyone who accepts him as Savior *and Lord* will be with God eternally after they die. There is no salvation apart from Jesus. That's what Christians say. And they say it regardless of how weird they look, and how many non-Christians don't like them for saying it.

New study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others

January 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

TO DENY THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL IS TO MAKE MORALITY IMPOSSIBLE

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE

Is it possible to choose to be moral if we are machines made out of meat?
A while back I finished reading "God's Crime Scene", the new book by J. Warner Wallace. I wanted to post something about some studies he mentioned in Chapter 6, on free will. This is one of the places where he found evidence in a surprising area.

Wallace says that free will makes more sense if theism is true, because we have non-material souls that interact with our bodies, but are not causally determined by them. On atheism, only matter exists, and you can't get free will (or consciousness) from matter. So atheists like Sam Harris and Alex Rosenberg, for example, deny free will, because they are materialists and atheists.

Anyway, here's what he writes on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward

> others." Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: "It seems that not only do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it."" The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here's the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons' belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you're an atheist, then you are a physical object. And like every other physical object in the universe, your behavior is determined by genetic programming (if you're alive) and external inputs. Material objects do not have the ability to make free choices, including moral choices.

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists

can’t ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that’s what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject “decides” to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) “Decisions” made like that aren’t conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we’ve made them, then we don’t have free will in any meaningful sense.

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin’s views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That’s the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

(Source)

If you don’t have free will, then you can’t make moral choices, and you can’t be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality. Can you imagine trying to get into any sort of enterprise with someone who has this view of moral choices? A marriage, or a business arrangement, etc? It would be crazy to expect them to behave morally, when they don’t even think that moral choices is possible. It just excuses all sorts of bad behavior, because no one is responsible for choosing to do the right thing.

Believers in materialism are going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn’t rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

Choosing to do the right thing

I think what atheists like to say is “I can be moral, too”. That’s not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when doing the right thing sets you back. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of

Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me about their ability to do the right thing when it was hard for them to do it. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality. My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George reflect on the legalization of same-sex marriage

January 2, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

Same-sex "marriage" has been the law of the land for 10 years, now. As with the first redefinition of marriage – no-fault divorce – many unexpected problems have arisen. I found an article by two famous social conservative professors in USA Today, where they explain.

Excerpt:

> [I]n 2013, [the Supreme Court] struck down the federal definition of marriage as a male-female union in a 5-4 ruling.
>
> […]Same-sex marriage advocates told the public that they sought only the "freedom to marry." Same-sex couples were already free to live as they chose, but legal recognition was about the definition of marriage for all of society. It was about affirmation — by the government and everyone else.
>
> It's unsurprising that once a campaign that used to cry "live and let live" prevailed, it began working to shut down Catholic adoption agencies and harass evangelical bakers and florists. This shows it was never really about "live and let live" — that was a merely tactical stance.
>
> […]While these were the early effects of redefinition, the more profound consequences will be to marriage itself. Law shapes culture; culture shapes beliefs; beliefs shape action. The law now effectively teaches that mothers and fathers are replaceable, that marriage is simply about consenting adult relationships, of whatever formation the parties happen to prefer. This undermines the truth that children deserve a mother and a father — one of each.

Traditional marriage had the notions of exclusivity and permanence embedded into it.

These were seen as necessary to safeguard vulnerable children, who are the natural outcome of natural marriage. But what if you take out the complementary genders, and make marriage about the romantic feelings of adults?

> It also undercuts any reasonable justification for marital norms. After all, if marriage is about romantic connection, why require monogamy? There's nothing magical about the number two, as defenders of "polyamory" point out. If marriage isn't a conjugal union uniting a man and a woman as one flesh, why should it involve or imply sexual exclusivity? If it isn't a comprehensive union inherently ordered to childbearing and rearing, why should it be pledged to permanence?
>
> […]But same-sex marriage is a catalyst for further erosion. Already, we see respectable opinion-makers mainstreaming "throuples," "ethical nonmonogamy" and "open relationships."

The progressive elites got rid of natural marriage without even thinking about why marriage was there in the first place. Marriage was traditionally seen as being an exclusive, permanent commitment – and that commitment provided the stability needed for children. Marriage required you to look for a partner who was good at self-control (exclusivity) and commitment (permanence). But when judges decided that marriage was just about two people having romantic feelings, it opened up the door to all of these other "lifestyles".

I'm just thinking right now about how to stop this. I know that social conservatives are trying to highlight the damage that is being caused by focusing relationships on adult happiness instead of children's needs and rights. But I still don't hear any sort of thoughtful presentation of marriage as a *commitment enterprise*, where two adults suppress their own selfishness in order to make a promise to love and care for this other person. Does anyone see relationships as being a self-sacrificial commitment to another person, and to any children who result? Or are we locked into this view that the goal of relationships is to make my spouse, my children, and everyone else make me feel good and look good?

Feminist single mother confused when daughter seeks male attention with sexy photos

January 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Captain Capitalism shared this story about a single mother in radically-leftist French Canada. And she raised her fatherless daughter with all sorts of feminist propaganda, especially rejecting traditional femininity. But what happens when her fatherless girl has to choose between feminist theory and her need to get approval from men?

The story is from the CBC:

> Last summer, I stumbled onto my teenage daughter's social media account. What I found confirmed my worst fear: I had failed to raise a feminist.
>
> There, among the pouty-faced selfies, was a photo of her posing, Sports Illustrated-style, on a jet ski in her bikini, brandishing her middle finger at the camera with a smirk on her face.
>
> […]All her life, I've tried to model feminism: taking her on marches for women's rights, reading to her from books like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's We Should all be Feminists and surrounding her with a community of strong, independent female friends.
>
> I realize now that the wisdom of my mother's "Women's Lib" generation doesn't cover the challenges of raising a feminist daughter in the 21st century.
>
> […]We want our girls to grow up brave, confident and assertive.

On this blog, I've written many times about the harm that feminism does to women. Basically, in the old days, women could be honest about what they really wanted. They wanted a husband to care for them, give them economic security, and they wanted to

raise children and keep a home. They might get a degree and work while looking for a husband, but they really wanted a stable marriage, and to be needed by their husband and children most of all.

But feminism taught young women that traditional goals were “sexist” and therefore to be avoided. Instead of marrying early and having children, women were taught to delay marriage for their careers. Instead of learning how to objectively evaluate a man for his ability as a provider, protector, moral leader and spiritual leader, women were taught to prefer men who gave them entertainment and excitement in the moment.

Well, this single mother obviously has feelings about how to achieve the goal of having a daughter who is brave confident and assertive. But what does the objective research say about how to achieve that goal?

Here’s an article from the pro-feminist Institute for Family Studies:

> Today’s fathers also seem to be having a greater impact on their daughters’ academic and career choices than fathers in previous generations. For example, women who were born in the 1970s are three times more likely than those born at the beginning of the twentieth century to work in the same field as their fathers—a finding that researchers have attributed not just to society’s changing gender roles but also to daughters receiving more mentoring from their fathers.
>
> Another question on many people’s minds is: how does a father influence his daughter’s romantic life—who she dates, when she starts having sex, and the quality of her relationships with men? Not surprisingly, a girl who has a secure, supportive, communicative relationship with her father is less likely to get pregnant as a teenager and less likely to become sexually active in her early teens. This, in turn, leads to waiting longer to get married and to have children—largely because she is focused on achieving her educational goals first.
>
> The well-fathered daughter is also the most likely to have relationships with men that are emotionally intimate and fulfilling. During the college years, these daughters are more likely than poorly-fathered women to turn to their boyfriends for emotional comfort and support and they are less likely to be “talked into” having sex. As a consequence of having made wiser decisions in regard to sex and dating, these daughters generally have more satisfying, more long-lasting marriages. What is surprising is not that fathers have such an impact on their daughters’ relationships with men, but that they generally have more impact than mothers do.
>
> Their better relationships with men may also be related to the fact that well-fathered daughters are less likely to become clinically depressed or to develop eating disorders. They are also less dissatisfied with their appearance and their body weight. As a consequence of having better emotional and mental health, these young women are more apt to have the kinds of skills and attitudes that lead to more fulfilling relationships with men.
>
> An emerging body of research suggests one more way that dads may shape their

> daughters' mental health and relationships in adulthood: scholars have found an intriguing link between the way daughters deal with stress as adults and the kind of relationships they had with their dads during childhood. For example, undergraduate women who did not have good relationships with their fathers had lower than normal cortisol levels. And people with low cortisol levels tend to be overly sensitive and overly reactive when confronted with stress. Indeed, the low cortisol daughters were more likely than the higher cortisol daughters (who had the better relationships with their dads) to describe their relationships with men in stressful terms of rejection, unpredictability or coercion.

If the single mother in our story really wanted her daughter to be brave, confident and assertive, then she should have 1) made herself into the kind of person that a commitment-minded man is attracted to, and 2) evaluated men for their commitment-ability and then chosen one to have babies with based on their ability to commit. For example, if she had chosen a Christian man who took the Bible seriously on morality and spirituality, then that man would have stuck around, modeled how to love his wife, and taken an interest in his children. Someone who is able to make commitments and keep his word. And according to the research, that (traditional, "sexist") approach would have done a lot more to reach the goal of having a brave, confident and assertive daughter. The feminist approach to raising children is exactly what DOESN'T work.

The problem with the single mother feminist is that her feminist worldview is based on her feelings instead of on research. She probably had bad experiences with the hot bad boys she freely chose, and then drew the wrong conclusions from those experiences. E.g. – "I gave my body to a hot bad boy to make him like me, and he dumped me. I felt weak, but it wasn't my fault for choosing him. It was his fault for not changing into a good man after I gave him premarital sex. Now I'm going to stop being a weak girl, and drink like a man, have sex like a man, and have a career like a man, and this will work to raise a strong daughter. Welfare, daycare and public schools are all I need!"

The priceless gift that mothers give their daughters when they marry a good man is the gift of teaching them how to make a man like them without appealing to them with exposed skin and commitment-free sex. When a man is present in the home, and is treated with respect by his wife, the daughters learn that which male behaviors are best, and how to encourage and support good men who demonstrate those behaviors. Daughters who have fathers don't feel the need to seek male attention with skin and sex, the way that many fatherless girls do. They get attention from their fathers for being good and for achieving and for caring for other people around them. They are attracted to men who give them attention for their character and achievements, just like their fathers did.

Wayne Grudem debates Richard Glover on the Bible, poverty and foreign aid

January 4, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

A great episode of the Unbelievable podcast. This is a great debate. I really enjoyed it. All three speakers were excellent putting forward their points. It's nice to hear an American voice, a British voice and an Australian voice debating an important issue. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Details:

> Wayne Grudem is a theologian known for his conservative approach to both doctrine and economics. His new book "The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution" (co-authored with economist Barry Asmus) makes the case that pouring aid into developing countries is a failed strategy. Grudem debates whether the Bible supports free market, capitalist economics with Australian economist and theologian Richard Glover who wrote a critique of the book for the Australian Bible Society.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

Grudem:

- The Bible speaks to all of life, including economics, stewardship, government
- The study of economics helps us to understand how to take care of the poor
- My job is to apply the teachings of the Bible to all of life

Brierley:

- What’s your thesis in the book?

Grudem:

- A good system is one where the poor have the opportunity to earn and save from their labor
- Book is a response to a Kenyan couple Grudem met at a London conference on business and Christianity
- Book is not concerned with how individuals and groups can do charity to help the poor
- Our church already does that and we support individuals and groups doing charity
- The book is concerned with how should nations be transformed in order to grow economically
- What should the laws, policies and cultural beliefs of a nation be in order for it to not be poor?
- The book lists factors that have moved nations from poverty to prosperity in different times and places
- The thesis of the book is this: government should set their people free to be able to produce more
- We advocate freedom in economics: freedom to work, freedom to save, freedom to start businesses
- We believe that this free enterprise view is consistent with the Bible in a number of places
- E.g. – private property is good for prosperity (thou shall not steal) but forbidden by communism

Brierley:

- What about the church sharing in communities in Acts 2 and Acts 4?

Grudem:

- That is not redistribution of wealth among individuals and businesses by a secular government
- Those passages showed that there was voluntary sharing among Christians, which is not communism

Brierley:

- What’s wrong with Grudem’s book?

Glover:

- The book emphasizes the Bible and the goal is to help the poor in poor countries
- Criticism 1: the book doesn’t engage with non-free-market perspectives on economics

- Criticism 2: the book doesn't survey all that the Bible says about economics

Brierly:

- For 1) what is one of the views that is not considered?

Glover:

- Jeffrey Sachs says that nations need a leg up before they can grow economically
- Ha-Joon Chang says that free enterprise was not how the wealthy nations became wealthy

Grudem:

- We do engage with other points of view, especially Jeffrey Sachs in the book
- The trouble with leftist views on economic development is that it does not work in practice
- NO COUNTRY has even been lifted out of poverty by foreign aid
- He says we don't cite enough from the wisdom literature: we have 64 citations in the index
- He says we don't cite enough from the gospels: we have 42 citations in the index
- He says we don't cite enough from the epistles: we cite 22 of 27 epistles in the index
- Some economists won't criticize cultural and moral values that hurt prosperity
- As Christians, we think that moral and cultural values are part of the problem that needs solving

Brierley:

- What about foreign aid?

Grudem:

- Foreign aid doesn't help: a lot of the money goes into government and rulers can be corrupt
- Instead of encouraging people to start businesses, it tells people to go into government to get aid money
- Economists (lists 3) are saying that foreign aid entrenches corrupt government in power, does no good

Brierley:

- If it's not working, should we keep doing it?

Glover:

- When there is an immediate need, we should do it, even if it is not a long-term

solution: we need both

Brierley:

- Should we stop foreign aid completely?

Grudem:

- Voluntary charitable giving from individuals and churches to help poor countries is good
- Me and my co-author are both active on our church board that helps poor countries with urgent needs
- Food and doctors are urgent needs, and we should help, but it doesn't lift countries out of poverty
- We need a long-term solution that helps poor countries produce their own food and doctors
- We are criticizing 1) government to government aid and 2) IMF/World bank to government aid
- We have had pushback because 500,000 people make a living from this foreign aid industry
- No country has ever been lifted out of poverty into sustainable prosperity
- That's the definition of insanity: continuing to do the same thing that has never worked

Brierley:

- Does the Bible support free enterprise as a way of creating sustainable prosperity?

Glover:

- When I said the Bible was absent from his book, absent was a bad choice of words
- But the hundreds of references he listed were not dealth with *in depth*
- In the Scriptures, God is the one who provides (e.g. – in Ephesians, Sermon on the Mount)
- The Bible is less focused on his people making money, and more focus on sharing basics, like food
- Secular governments should just take it from people who have food and give it to hungry people
- In 2 Cor 8-9, Paul talks about voluntary sharing so everyone will be equal

Brierley:

- Does 2 Cor 8-9 undermine the free enterprise system you champion in the book?

Grudem:

- The sharing in the Bible solves cases of urgent need, it does not lift countries from poverty to sustainable prosperity
- Some older translations say “equality” in 2 Cor 8:13-14, but newer translations (e.g. – ESV) say “fairness”
- The Greek word is translated as “fairly” the only other place it appears in the NT (Col 4:1), in every translation
- God uses the means of human work and productivity to provide (daily bread is baked, doesn’t just fall from Heaven)
- In general, there’s no provision in Scripture for a person to be dependent on donations for their entire lives
- God promises Israel fields and mountains to tend and mine, but prosperity is from work, not depending on others

Brierley:

- Does the Bible support this focus on work?

Grudem:

- Working is highly praised in Scripture, (lists Bible passages that favor work over dependency)
- Countries that were exposed to this notion of work and productivity have been more prosperous

Glover:

- Jeffrey Sachs and other development economists don’t say you can be prosperous through dependence
- They say that it is a necessary part of leading to nations out of poverty into poverty

Grudem:

- It’s never worked. What nation has become prosperous through foreign aid?

Glover:

- There are lots of nations, especially in Africa, where foreign aid has helped lift them out of poverty

Grudem:

- Name one country in Africa where foreign aud has lifted them out of poverty into sustainable prosperity

Glover:

- I can’t think of one right now.

Grudem:

- Our book contains a map of Africa and we looked at every nation's per capita income
- No nation has been able to rise out of poverty through dependence on foreign aid
- The only close one is Botswana, but they have abundant freedoms, Christian morals, less corrupt government
- So Botswana is the best case and they became prosperous through becoming productive, not foreign aid

Brierley:

- Is he right to say that charity is a short-term solution, but that it's not good long-term for prosperity?

Glover:

- Yes, and work is a very important focus in the Scriptures as he says.
- But since the Fall work has been much harder, and may not have the outcomes that we would like

Grudem:

- I also believe in emergency aid for when catastrophies happen, like floods and famines
- But dependence on foreign aid enriches corrupt rulers and does not create the productivity that leads to sustained prosperity

Brierley:

- Can foreign aid be used to give poor nations a leg up on becoming prosperous?

Grudem:

- Dambisa Moyo, Oxford-educated economist from Zambia, says stop the aid, it's doing more harm than good
- Jeffrey Sachs' view is that foreign aid hasn't worked yet, but just keep trying a bit more
- What works: limited government, rule of law, fair courts, documented property rights, low taxes, stable currency
- People are creative and want to work, we just have to get government out of the way and let people work, earn and save

Brierley:

- Is this free enterprise system supported by the Bible?

Glover:

- The wealthy nations of the world did not become wealthy through productive work and free enterprise policies
- Ha-Joon Chang: free enterprise policies have never brought a country from poverty to wealth
- E.g. – wealth is created through tariffs (not by innovating and by economic freedom?)

Grudem:

- I've read Ha-Joon Chang's book, and his examples are very selective and limited
- Index of Economic Freedom: the freest countries are the most prosperous, the least free countries are the most poor
- When you look at macro data, instead of very selective examples, the free enterprise system is best for prosperity

Glover:

- The book doesn't do enough to engage with leftist economists (he doesn't say which ones)
- Just because nations who are free are rich, doesn't mean freedom causes productivity
- There are parts of the Bible that doesn't support the free enterprise system (he names none)

Grudem:

- The Bible is focused on work not dependency, and charity not government redistribution
- The best way to help the poor in other countries is by encouraging work and productivity

Astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on intelligent design and habitability

January 5, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Here is a lecture that talks about intelligent design and eclipses. There are 5 video clips that make up the full lecture.

The playlist for all 5 clips is here.

About the speaker

> Guillermo Gonzalez is an Associate Professor of Physics at Grove City College. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington and has received fellowships, grants and awards from such institutions as NASA, the University of Washington, the Templeton Foundation, Sigma Xi (scientific research society) and the National Science Foundation.

Learn more about the speaker here.

The lecture

Here's part 1 of 5:

And the rest are here:

- Part 2 of 5
- Part 3 of 5
- Part 4 of 5
- Part 5 of 5

Total time: 43 minutes.

Topics:

- What is the Copernican Principle?
- Is the Earth's suitability for hosting life rare in the universe?
- Does the Earth have to be the center of the universe to be special?
- How similar to the Earth does a planet have to be to support life?
- What is the definition of life?
- What are the three minimal requirements for life of any kind?
- Requirement 1: A molecule that can store information (carbon)
- Requirement 2: A medium in which chemicals can interact (liquid water)
- Requirement 3: A diverse set of chemical elements
- What is the best environment for life to exist?
- Our place in the solar system: the circumstellar habitable zone
- Our place in the galaxy: the galactic habitable zones
- Our time in the universe's history: the cosmic habitable age
- Other habitability requirements (e.g. – metal-rich star, massive moon, etc.)
- The orchestration needed to create a habitable planet
- How different factors depend on one another through time
- How tweaking one factor can adversely affect other factors
- How many possible places are there in the universe where life could emerge?
- Given these probabilistic resources, should we expect that there is life elsewhere?
- How to calculate probabilities using the "Product Rule"
- Can we infer that there is a Designer just because life is rare? Or do we need more?

The corelation between habitability and measurability.

- Are the habitable places in the universe also the best places to do science?
- Do the factors that make Earth habitable also make it good for doing science?
- Some places and times in the history of the universe are more habitable than others
- Those exact places and times also allow us to make scientific discoveries
- Observing solar eclipses and structure of our star, the Sun
- Observing stars and galaxies
- Observing the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Observing the acceleration of the universe caused by dark matter and energy
- Observing the abundances of light elements like helium of hydrogen
- These observations support the big bang and fine-tuning arguments for God's existence
- It is exactly like placing observatories on the tops of mountains
- There are observers existing in the best places to observe things
- This is EXACTLY how the universe has been *designed for making scientific discoveries*

This lecture was delivered by Guillermo Gonzalez in 2007 at the University of California at

Davis. If you like this lecture, but maybe want something a bit more user friendly, check out “The Privileged Planet” DVD, or watch it online here (first 60 minutes of that video).

Are snowflakes and libertarians right to worry that killing Iranian terrorists will start a war?

January 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Neville Chamberlain Obama: peace in our time

I talked to a few progressives and libertarians on the weekend. They seemed to think that Trump's decision to sanction two Iranian generals would lead to war. Now, I asked the libertarians and progressives a bit about how World War 2 started. They didn't know anything about how it started. Let's see what Trump did in Iran, and then look at WW2 history to see if it is likely to stop or start a war.

Before I start, I just want to say that someone shared a post by far-left filmmaker Michael Moore claiming that Americans had ever heard of Soleimani or the Quds Force. Here are my previous 134 posts on Iran, my previous 9 posts on the Quds Force, and my previous post on Soleimani. Speak for yourself, Michael Moore.

First, who is Solemani, and what is the Quds Force? The New York Times explains:

> More than any other American military operation since the invasion of Iraq, the assassination yesterday of Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani, the head of Iran's Qods Force of its Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, is a seismic event. The killings of Osama bin Laden and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leaders of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, were certainly meaningful, but they were also largely symbolic, because their organizations had been mostly destroyed. Taking out the architect of the Islamic Republic's decades-long active campaign of violence against the United States and its allies, especially Israel, represents a tectonic shift in Middle

> Eastern politics.
>
> […]In Lebanon, Mr. Suleimani built Lebanese Hezbollah into the powerful state within a state that we know today. A terrorist organization receiving its funds, arms and marching orders from Tehran, Hezbollah has a missile arsenal larger than that of most countries in the region. The group's success has been astounding, helping to cement Iran's influence not just in Lebanon but farther around the Arab world.
>
> Building up on this successful experience, Mr. Suleimani spent the last decade replicating the Hezbollah model in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, propping up local militias with precision weapons and tactical know-how. In Syria, his forces have allied with Russia to prop up the regime of Bashar al-Assad, a project that, in practice, has meant driving over 10 million people from their homes and killing well over half a million. In Iraq, as we have seen in recent days, Mr. Suleimani's militias ride roughshod over the legitimate state institutions. They rose to power, of course, after participating in an insurgency, of which he was the architect, against American and coalition forces. Hundreds of American soldiers lost their lives to the weapons that the Qods Force provided to its Iraqi proxies.

I think this part is worth emphasizing – Solemani was the aggressor in the Iraq embassy attack, and he has a record of attacking American armed forces:

> Soleimani, who was designated and sanctioned by the U.N., E.U., and U.S. alike, directly approved Tuesday's U.S. embassy storming in Baghdad by Iranian proxy militia Kataib Hezbollah, and was credibly assessed by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as actively planning more "imminent" attacks against hard American assets in the Middle East, has been directly active in the mass murder of Americans. He personally oversaw the mass arming of Shiite Iraqi insurgents and it is estimated that the IRGC-QF targeted and killed over 600 Americans in Iraq from 2003–2011. The State Department asserts that this personally amounts to a whopping 17% of all deaths of U.S. military personnel during the Iraq War.

So, far from Trump's response being disproportionate, this was actually a long-overdue response. It was even overdue from Trump.

The message that Iran got after 8 years of Obama was clear: acts of aggression committed by Iran against the United States and her allies would be rewarded, including the $1.7 BILLION payoff from the Obama administration. The Obama administration's policy was isolationism and appeasement. And this was fine with Democrat voters, because not a single Democrat voter (or libertarian) knew anything about Iran, the Iran deal, Soleimani, or the Quds Force. They are low-information voters.

Now let's see how World War 2 started.

Here is a helpful lecture by military historian Victor Davis Hanson.

Germany re-armed in 1936. Austria was annexed in 1938. The Rhineland was re-occupied in 1938. Czechoslovakia was invaded in 1939. And the allied democracies did nothing to

stop Hitler. Similarly, Japan also re-armed, broke treaties and invaded neighbors. And the allied democracies did nothing to stop them, despite having superior planes, tanks, and ships. This allowed the Axis powers time to research better weapons, re-arm, and gain a strategic advantage. The Axis powers could have been stopped early on, at a much lower cost in blood and treasure. It was the libertarians and the progressives with their policies of isolationism and appeasement that made World War 2 much worse than it needed to be.

VDH explains:

> Hitler assumed the United States either could not or would not offer much military help to his intended European targets.
>
> Why, then, did a relatively weak Nazi Germany between 1939 and 1941 believe that it could take on much of the world, and inspire Axis partners such as Italy and Japan to follow its suicidal lead?
>
> The answer is obvious. British and French appeasement, Soviet collaboration and American isolation had together convinced Hitler and his Axis allies that the victors of World War I were more eager to grant concessions at any cost than were the defeated.

In the lecture, VDH explains that we know from the writings of the leaders of Germany and Japan that they interpreted the isolationist / appeasement policies of the libertarian progressives as weakness, and this is what caused them to re-arm and attack their neighbors. Prior to the historical start of WW2, the Western nations had better tanks, planes and ships than the Axis powers. But they refused to use them to deter the Axis powers. And that's why World War 2 was much more costly and bloody than it needed to be.

Finally, I should quickly note that America pursued a different strategy in the Cold War, under Ronald Reagan. Reagan was villified by the libertarians and progressives for taking a strong stand against communism. Instead of appeasing and isolating, he put America on a war footing, making aggression costly to the Soviet Union. This approach worked to avoid an actual World War 3. Although his critics attacked him for being pro-war, his tough approach was exactly what was needed to cause the bully to back down.

Si Vis Pacem, Para Bellum

Did “thousands of women” die in “back alley abortions” before Roe v. Wade?

January 7, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I get into debates about abortion, and sometimes my opponent will complain that if Roe v. Wade were overturned, then thousands of women would die in illegal abortions. Well, if that ever happens to you, this post will help you to know how to respond to it.

First of all, if Roe v. Wade were overturned, then each of the 50 states would pass legislation deciding when abortions would be legal.

Here’s a map taken from the Washington Examiner:

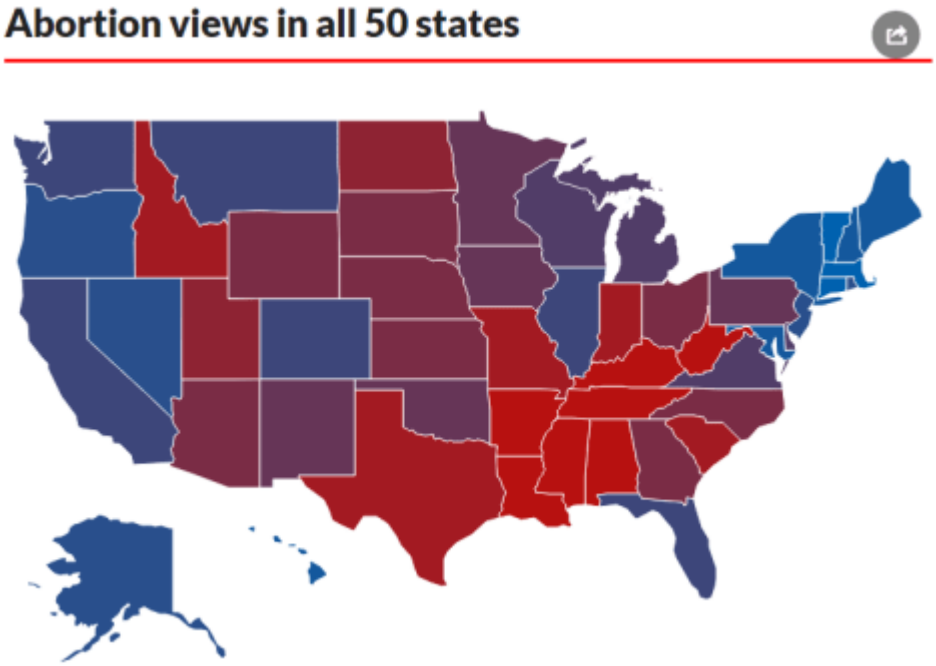

Abortion rights after Roe v. Wade is overturned
Red states are more pro-life than blue states in this map. For example, New York is ranked #6, and Tennessee is ranked #45.

So, if a woman did have irresponsible sex with a hot bad boy, then she easily could terminate her child in one of the blue states.

Second, the number thrown around by abortion advocates is not accurate. It’s simply not true that “thousands of women” were dying from poorly-performed abortions when abortion was still illegal. Actually, abortions were performed by trained medical personnel, but it just wasn’t reported to the police.

Here’s a recent article from the radically leftist Washington Post:

> Erica Sackin, a Planned Parenthood spokeswoman, directed us to a 2014 policy statement issued by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG): “*It is estimated that before 1973, 1.2 million U.S. women resorted to illegal abortion each year and that unsafe abortions caused as many as 5,000 annual deaths.*”

> There is no citation in the statement for the estimate of "as many as 5,000 annual deaths," even though many of the other sentences are carefully documented. None of the citations around this sentence supports the figure, and there is no explanation about how it was calculated.
>
> […]Meanwhile, Sackin also sent a variety of reports, many of which were referenced in a footnote in a document published by NARAL Pro-Choice America. One of the citations especially caught our eye: Frederick Taussig, "Abortion Spontaneous and Induced: Medical and Social Aspects," (1936).

Why was a study from 1936 being cited? Because in 1936, we didn't have antibiotics! People were dying all the time from any kind of surgery – not just abortion.

More:

> The advent of antibiotics such as penicillin and improved medical procedures suddenly made abortion less risky. Another prominent researcher, Christopher Tietze, argued in a 1948 paper that the number of deaths from abortion was rapidly declining because of three reasons: contraceptive methods had improved so fewer women were getting pregnant, abortion providers were getting better at avoiding infections, and many lives had been saved because of the introduction of sulfa drugs and penicillin.
>
> […]The data collected by Tietze showed 2,677 deaths from abortion in 1933, compared with 888 in 1945, with much of the decline in septic cases associated with illegal abortions. (The numbers also include deaths from "therapeutic abortions," permitted by law, and "spontaneous abortions.")
>
> By 1959, a leading researcher wrote: "Abortion is no longer a dangerous procedure. This applies not just to therapeutic abortions as performed in hospitals but also to so-called illegal abortions as done by physicians. In 1957, there were only 260 deaths in the whole country attributed to abortions of any kind. In New York City in 1921, there were 144 abortion deaths, in 1951 there were only 15."
>
> The writer was Mary Steichen Calderone, at the time medical director of Planned Parenthood. She attributed the decline in the mortality rate to antibiotics and the fact that 90 percent of illegal abortions were done by trained physicians.

OK, so abortion advocates cite the study from 1936, which already relies on questionable estimates, because they know that the later numbers are far, far lower – thanks to the widespread use of antibiotics. They're lying, essentially, because lying helps them to persuade people who think with their feelings, and don't look too closely at facts.

My third point is simple. Even if women hurt themselves during abortions, that wouldn't be a reason to legalize abortion. Bank robbers hurt themselves during bank robberies, and drug dealers hurt themselves during drug deals. We do not legalize criminal activities just because criminals get hurt during the commission of those activities. So the real question is, what is the unborn? If the unborn is a living human being, then abortion on

demand takes the life of an innocent human being without justification, and should therefore be illegal.

UPDATE: My pro-life friend Nathan sent me a fourth response:

There is a difference today that did not exist in 1973. We have a pro-life movement. We have over 2,000 pregnancy care ministries and clinics operating throughout the continental United States. I highly doubt these clinics will just disappear overnight if abortion became illegal nationwide. Women and children will still be in need, and the free market principles that enable charity to flourish will be there to help.

Given this reality, will proponents of abortion now finally step forward to help provide the support to women necessary so they never have to choose a back alley abortion? Given how they have worked themselves into a panic about rusty coat hangers, it seems they would be the most motivated to do so. The fact many don't seem to want to do so is telling: They just want to justify their own support for abortion, regardless of whether it helps women or not.

Are atheists unbiased about the question of God's existence?

January 8, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Brian Auten has a book review posted up at Apologetics 315.

The book is "If There's A God, Why Are There Atheists?", by theologian R.C. Sproul. R.C. Sproul is one of my favorite theologians. The book in question has a very, very special place in my heart, because I think that it is one of the major reasons why I was able to resist pernicious ideas like religious pluralism and postmodernism for so long. Once you put on the glasses of Romans 1 and see for the first time what man is really doing with respect to God, you can never see things the same again. I'll say more about this at the end, but let's see what Brian wrote first.

The review

So often, you hear atheists complaining about religion is nothing but wish-fulfillment or some sort of crutch for people who are frightened by a variety of things. They think that God is invented to solve several problems. 1) how does the world work?, 2) is there meaning to suffering and evil?, 3) why should I be moral?, and 4) what will happen to me and my loved ones when I die?. On the atheistic view, God is just a crutch that people cling to out of weakness and ignorance. But is this really the case?

Sproul starts the book by investigating three atheists who sought to explain religious belief as a result of psychological factors.

Brian writes:

> Before tackling the psychology of atheism, Sproul spends a chapter on the psychology of theism, from the perspective of Freud's question "If there is no God, why is there religion?"11 What follows is an overview of various psychological explanations of theistic belief: Feuerbach's "religion is a dream of

> the human mind."12 Marx's belief that religion is "due to the devious imagination of particular segment of mankind."13 And Nietzche's idea that "religion endures because weak men need it."14 The author properly reiterates: "We must be careful to note that the above arguments can never be used as proof for the nonexistence of God. They can be useful for atheists who hear theists state that the only possible explanation for religion is the existence of God."15 That being said, Sproul also reveals what these arguments presume:

> Their arguments already presupposed the nonexistence of God. They were not dealing with the question, Is there a God? They were dealing with the question, Since there is no God, why is there religion?16

> Sproul points out the weaknesses of each of these approaches and says "there are just as many arguments showing that unbelief has its roots in the psychological needs of man."

Wow, could that really be true? What are the real reasons why people reject God? Does the Bible have anything to say about what those reasons are?

Brian cites Sproul's contention:

> The New Testament maintains that unbelief is generated not so much by intellectual causes as by moral and psychological ones. The problem is not that there is insufficient evidence to convince rational beings that there is a God, but that rational beings have a natural hostility to the being of God.
>
> […]Man's desire is not that the omnipotent, personal Judeo-Christian God exist, but that He not exist.

In Romans 1:18-23, the apostle Paul explains what is really going on:

> 18The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,
>
> 19since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.
>
> 20For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.
>
> 21For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.
>
> 22Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools
>
> 23and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Do you believe that? I believe that. I have never in my life met an atheist who varied from what Paul is saying here.

On this blog, I have presented many, many arguments for theism in general, and Christian theism in particular:

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Sproul explains why atheists cannot allow themselves to live according to the evidence that is presented to them:

> The cumulative effect of this knowledge that is clearly seen is to leave men 'without excuse.' Herein lies the basis of the universal guilt of man. No one can claim ignorance of the knowledge of God. No one can cite insufficient evidence for not believing in God. Though people are not persuaded by the evidence, this does not indicate an insufficiency in the evidence, but rather an insufficiency in man.
>
> […]The basic stages of man's reaction to God can be formulated by means of the categories of trauma, repression, and substitution.
>
> […]If God exists, man cannot be a law unto himself. If God exists, man's will-to-power is destined to run head-on into the will of God.

So, it's pretty clear that there are huge implications to the question of God's existence, and that the atheist will be affected by these implications when weighing evidence.

Here's something Thomas Nagel, an excellent atheist philosopher, and not one of these idiots like Dawkins or Hitchens, said:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true

> and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."
>
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)"

The rest of the book review, and the book, deals with explaining in detail how atheists respond to an all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator/Designer. I encourage you to click through and read the whole book review. You can read the review, and the book, and then investigate for yourself whether the atheists are effected by this bias against moral accountability.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

January 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude others

- It’s meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can’t say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms

and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

54-year-old feminist angry at dating agency for not finding her a rich husband

January 10, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kate Mulvey at age 53 expects that rich men will want to marry her

A little while ago, I blogged about a 47-year-old mother of three who sued a dating agency for failing to find her a rich husband. That was pretty bad, but I found something even worse. A 54-year-old woman who spend all her savings on a dating agency. She expected them to find her loads of rich men who want to marry her – despite her never having invested anything in them.

The UK Telegraph reports:

> Glass of wine in hand, the man sitting opposite me in the restaurant was in full flow. While he was droning on about his work commitments, I zoned in and out trying to work out how on earth I was going to get to through this first date. I had expected to meet an eligible bachelor, but he had turned out to be so boring that he made me want to stick asparagus up my nostrils.
>
> This memory came flooding back when I read about, Tereza Burki, a City financier who, last week, successfully sued a Knightsbridge-based elite matchmaking service, for the return of her £12,600 annual fee after they failed to find her the man of her dreams.
>
> A couple of years ago, I too joined an expensive matchmaking agency. I had just come out of a seven year relationship, and was on the wrong side of 50.
>
> I soon tired of online dating and receiving messages from over weight baldies

> who peppered their emails with childish emojis. I hankered to find Mr Right-for-me, a man who was suitably educated and a successful professional.
>
> And so this is how I found myself, throwing money (my entire savings to be precise) to an upmarket matchmaking agency in central London. The agency claimed to filter out the undesirables, the mediocre and give clients the personal touch, so I handed over the hefty sum of £6,000.
>
> As I waited to be matched with someone from their 'extensive database', I idly imagined my handsome date, cashmere polo neck, a bit academic and kind. We'd eat steak tartare and swap notes on our latest clever box-set find and favourite novels.
>
> The first indication that all was not as I had expected came when I met personal matchmaker at a Park Lane hotel for 'tea and an interview'… told her how I loved folk music, my favourite film was The Deer Hunter, and enjoyed weekends in the countryside.
>
> […]A few days later she emailed me with the details of W, "a successful entrepreneur who had travelled extensively and also liked folk music". When I met him at a pub in Richmond, I was shocked. I was expecting a cultured and dynamic man, instead I got a man in a pair of jeans, a moth eaten jumper and the table manners of a modern day Baldrick.
>
> And therein lies the rub. These agencies trade on their exclusivity, yet the men I met were far from the international super elite they promised.

Isn't this terrible? Clearly the dating agency is to blame. It should be easy for a penniless, feminist hedonist to find rich men who want to spend all their money taking care of a 54-year-old woman who had *literally nothing to do with the process by which they earned all that money*.

One thing we know about her for sure is that she is impractical. She is 54 years old and has just spent her last savings on a *dating agency*. From her other comments about the type of men she is looking for, we can infer that she wasted a lot of money on travel, fine dining, and other frivolous experiences designed to produce feelings of sophistication without any practical plan for preparing for the financial demands of old age. What's the point of having fun "in the moment" if you don't have any plan to allow sustainable recreation in the future, when you're too old to work?

I spent some time reading articles by Kate Mulvey, and here is what I was able to determine:

- she has no useful degrees – she paid for useless degrees in Italian and French, instead of studying something useful, like computer science or nursing or petroleum engineering. Her "writing" is all about fashion, dating and "lifestyles"
- her opinion on children: "uppity children take your time, emotions and energy" – she sees children as a detriment to her highest priority (her career). She says "I, however, have lived a life of unfettered freedom to take on projects, write books and

travel”
- she had loads of entertaining men “beating a path to [her] door” when she was younger
- she spend thousands of pounds on plastic surgery
- she blames her lack of marriage success on her being “brainier” than men
- she turned down men who wanted to marry her, as late as age 33
- her book is called “Accidental Singleton” because she thinks that her approach to life – anti-marriage hedonism – has “accidentally” left her single and penniless at age 54 (as if it wasn’t her fault!)

Although she talks a lot about being intelligent, it seems to me that an intelligent woman would have practical degrees, savings and an awareness of what men actually want from a woman – and WHEN they want it. Men want a woman to support them in their most difficult period, just after they graduate and hit the job market. Starting out in a career is hard because the man doesn’t have savings or a resume or references. The support of a young, attractive, virtuous woman means everything during those difficult years. This is when a wife has the most impact on her husband’s ability to earn and save, on his mental health, on his physical health, etc.

Somehow, this narcissist thinks that she can just show up in a man’s life, after he has done all his earning alone, and grab hold of the things that she never helped build. She wasted all her youth and beauty chasing experiences with attractive bad boys, but she thinks that it’s reasonable for a man to invest all his wealth in her. A woman has value to a man at the time when he is attempting to do difficult things, but lacks support.

What exactly is it that a woman like Kate has to offer a man, given her life choices? Does anyone think that this woman has marriage-character? Does anyone think that her life of selfishness and hedonism has prepared her to be a good wife? What kind of conversation about moral obligations could you have with someone who has only ever done what felt good to her in the moment? Has her string of failed relationships with hot bad boys prepared her to be trusting and unselfish? How about to be faithful? Or even to be content? What is it that she thinks that she is offering that would justify the heavy investment that she is asking for, especially in an age of no-fault-divorce and anti-male divorce courts?

I think people really underestimate how much goes into making a good wife. The character she has to develop. The skills that she has to develop. The way she treats her husband, which often comes from carefully cultivating virtues like chastity and sobriety. Her worldview, which affects whether she has practical abilities like love, forgiveness and self-control. Her ability to be good with money. Her ability to nurture others and make social connections consistent with marriage and homemaking. Her ability to bear children, and then nurture them during the critical first 5 years after – not to mention homeschooling, which is increasingly valuable in a time when underperforming government-run schools seek to indoctrinate, rather than educate, children.

Nothing about this woman makes me think that she has any marriage-related character

traits or abilities. Any idiot can spend someone else’s money on their own feelings, fun and thrills. But it takes a carefully crafted woman to really do the work of a wife. Marriage isn’t there so that women can be happy. Marriage is an enterprise. Being selfish – doing what is easy, and what feels good moment by moment – doesn’t prepare a woman for the enterprise.

William Lane Craig: Christians are idling in intellectual neutral

January 11, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video is 40 minutes long.

The full transcript is available here on the Reasonable Faith web site. (H/T Think Apologetics)

Excerpt:

> No one has issued a more forceful challenge to Christians to become intellectually engaged than did Charles Malik, former Lebanese ambassador to the United States, in his address at the dedication of the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois. Malik emphasized that as Christians we face two tasks in our evangelism: saving the soul and saving the mind, that is to say, not only converting people spiritually, but converting them intellectually as well. And the Church is lagging dangerously behind with regard to this second task. Our churches are filled with people who are spiritually born again, but who still think like non-Christians. Mark his words well:
>
> I must be frank with you: the greatest danger confronting American evangelical Christianity is the danger of anti-intellectualism. The mind in its greatest and deepest reaches is not cared for enough. But intellectual nurture cannot take place apart from profound immersion for a period of years in the history of thought and the spirit. People who are in a hurry to get out of the university and start earning money or serving the church or preaching the gospel have no idea of the infinite value of spending years of leisure conversing with the greatest minds and souls of the past, ripening and sharpening and enlarging their powers of thinking. The result is that the arena of creative thinking is vacated and abdicated to the enemy.
>
> Malik went on to say:
>
> It will take a different spirit altogether to overcome this great danger of anti-intellectualism. For example, I say this different spirit, so far as philosophy alone—the most important domain for thought and intellect—is concerned, must see the tremendous value of spending an entire year doing nothing but poring intensely over the *Republic* or the *Sophist* of Plato, or two years over the *Metaphysics* or the *Ethics* of Aristotle, or three years over the *City of God* of Augustine. But if a start is made now on a crash program in this and other domains, it will take at least a century to catch up with the Harvards and Tübingens and the Sorbonnes—and by then where will these universities be?
>
> What Malik clearly saw is the strategic position occupied by the university in shaping Western thought and culture. Indeed, the single most important

> institution shaping Western society is the university. It is at the university that our future political leaders, our journalists, our lawyers, our teachers, our scientists, our business executives, our artists, will be trained. It is at the university that they will formulate or, more likely, simply absorb the worldview that will shape their lives. And since these are the opinion-makers and leaders who shape our culture, the worldview that they imbibe at the university will be the one that shapes our culture.

And:

> The great Princeton theologian J. Gresham Machen warned on the eve of the Fundamentalist Controversy that if the Church loses the intellectual battle in one generation, then evangelism would become immeasurably more difficult in the next:
>
> False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. Under such circumstances, what God desires us to do is to destroy the obstacle at its root.
>
> The root of the obstacle is to be found in the university, and it is there that it must be attacked. Unfortunately, Machen's warning went unheeded, and biblical Christianity retreated into the intellectual closets of Fundamentalism, from which it has only recently begun to re-emerge. The war is not yet lost, and it is one which we must not lose: souls of men and women hang in the balance.

This lecture is an excellent opportunity for us all to ask ourselves: what are we doing to influence the university? Do you have a plan?

Many of the strongest people who are now opposed to Christianity raised in two-parent Christian homes, and went to church for a decade before going off to the university. I'm thinking especially of people like Tim Gill, in Colorado. At university (and even increasingly in high school) they turned away from Christianity. All their peers and the adults could not answer their questions. As adults, they were able to get money, power and influence. Many of them are using it against Christ and his kingdom – kicking away the ladder that they climbed to success on. Why is this? Unfortunately, many of us are not willing to do what works – pick up the Lee Strobel books and read them. Especially "The Case for a Creator".

New study: Angus Reid Institute analyzes Canada's single payer healthcare system

January 12, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The cost of healthcare for average Canadian households

I found two interesting studies from Canada's Angus Reid Institute describing single payer health care in Canada. I'm very interested in find out what things are like in countries that have true government-run health care. A typical Canadian family pays $13,000+ per year per household for healthcare, or about $585,000 over their working lives. What are they getting for all that money?

Here is the first Angus Reid article:

> The study finds more than 2 million Canadians aged 55 and older face significant barriers when accessing the health care system in their province, such as being unable to find a family doctor or experiencing lengthy wait-times for surgery, diagnostic tests, or specialist visits.
>
> Moreover, most Canadians in this age group have at least some difficulty getting the care they want or need in a timely manner.
>
> The study focuses on the health care experiences of older Canadians, as well as their assessments of the quality of care they receive.

According to the article, 31% of respondents (aged 55 and older) rated access to the government's healthcare system as "easy". 48% had "moderate" problems with access, and 21% had "major" problems with access.

Remember: in the Canadian system, you pay your money up front in taxes, and then they

decide how much healthcare you will get *later* – and how soon you will get it. If you worked from ages 20 to age 65, then your household will have paid 45 x $13,000 = $585,000 into the system, in order to get "moderate" problems with accessing healthcare after you're aged 55.

And the Canadian system DOES NOT cover prescription drugs.

The second Angus Reid article explains:

> This second part of the study finds one-in-six Canadians (17%) in the 55-plus age group – a figure that represents upwards of 1.8 million people – say that they or someone else in their household have taken prescription drugs in a way other than prescribed because of cost.
>
> One-in-ten (10%) have decided to simply not fill a prescription because it was too expensive, and a similar number (9%) have decided not to renew one for the same reason. One-in-eight (12%) have taken steps to stretch their prescriptions, such as cutting pills or skipping doses.
>
> Some 17 per cent of Canadians 55 and older have done at least one of these things, and that proportion rises among those who have greater difficulty accessing other aspects of the health care system.

In a previous blog post, I reported on how Canadians have to wait in order to see their GP doctor. If that doctor refers them to a specialist, then they have to wait to see the specialist. And if that specialist schedules surgery, then they have to wait for their surgery appointment. The delays can easily go from weeks to months and even years. The MEDIAN delay from GP referral to treatment is 19.5 weeks.

But remember – they paid into the system FIRST. The decisions about when and if they will be treated are made later, by experts in the government. This is what it means for a government monopoly to run health care. There are no free exchanges of money for service in a competitive free market. Costs are controlled by delaying and withholding treatment. And no one knows this better than elderly Canadians themselves. But by the time they realize how badly they've been swindled, it's too late to get their money back out. You can't pull your tax money out of government if you are disappointed with the service you receive. There are no refunds. There are no returns.

In the UK, which crime is worse? Sex trafficking, gang-rape or hate speech?

January 13, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Scotland Police has time for monitoring social media

Whenever a story about sex-trafficking in the UK comes out, I always make sure to blog about it. Over the years, I must have blogged about a half-dozen sex-trafficking rings. I always point out how the sex-traffickers are ignored by the police, because of their Middle East origins. But the police in the UK aren't useless. On the contrary, they are busy with more serious crimes.

Here is the latest story from the UK Daily Mail:

> The rape and grooming of a vulnerable teenage girl was not investigated until five years after police were first informed, a court has heard.
>
> Nine men, mostly from Sheffield, went on trial today accused of raping the girl when she was aged between 15 and 17 – treating her 'like a piece of meat' and abusing her 'for their own sexual gratification'.
>
> A tenth man is accused of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.
>
> The abuse was carried out when the teenage victim was drunk or on drugs, supplied by the grooming gang, jurors were told.
>
> The complainant first told police about being raped and used for under-age sex in 2011 but no investigation was carried out or crime recorded, Sheffield Crown Court heard.
>
> When the victim initially disclosed 'one rape and incidents of sex with adult men as a minor' to police, no crime was recorded by South Yorkshire Police.

Here are the names of the accused men:

- Usman Din, 35
- Tony Juone, 61
- Kamaran Mahmoodi, 39

- Shangar Ibrahimi, 30
- Farhad Mirzaie, 29
- Kawan Omar Ahmed, 31
- Saman Mohammed, 41
- Jasim Sammad Mohammed, 37
- Nzar Anwar, 40
- Saba Moussa Mohammad, 41

In the UK, the mass importation of unskilled Middle Eastern immigrants was promoted by the Labour Party (equivalent to our Democrat party) as a way to undo the conservative Christian majority.

Hate speech is a more important crime

Now the police didn't have any time for the sex-trafficking and gang-raping of a teenage girl, because they were busy with more important things.

The UK Daily Mail report on a recent incident:

> A mother was arrested in front of her children and locked up for seven hours after referring to a transgender woman as a man online.
>
> Three officers detained Kate Scottow at her home before quizzing her at a police station about an argument with an activist on Twitter over so-called 'deadnaming'.
>
> The 38-year-old, from Hitchin, Hertfordshire, had her photograph, DNA and fingerprints taken and remains under investigation.
>
> More than two months after her arrest on December 1, she has had neither her mobile phone or laptop returned…
>
> […]Writing on online forum Mumsnet, Mrs Scottow – who has also been served with a court order that bans her from referring to her accuser as a man – claimed: 'I was arrested in my home by three officers, with my autistic ten-year-old daughter and breastfed 20-month-old son present.
>
> 'I was then detained for seven hours in a cell with no sanitary products (which I said I needed) before being interviewed then later released under investigation … I was arrested for harassment and malicious communications because I called someone out and misgendered them on Twitter.'

They needed three police officers to arrest this dangerous criminal, to let her neighbors know how dangerous her hate speech was.

Does this happen a lot in the UK? Well, you just have to go back a few weeks to find another case.

Here is the UK Telegraph to report on another recent incident:

> A docker from Humberside has been investigated by police over a limerick he

> posted on Twitter after an officer claimed it constitutes a 'hate incident' against transgender people.
>
> Harry Miller, 53, from Lincoln was contacted on Wednesday by a community cohesion officer following a complaint that had been made about the plant and machinery dealer's social media posts.
>
> Citing 30 potentially offensive tweets, the PC singled out a limerick Mr Miller had retweeted which questioned whether transgender women are biological women.
>
> […]Even though no crime was committed, sharing the limerick online was recorded as a 'hate incident'.
>
> […]After Mr Miller questioned why the complainant was being described as a "victim" if no crime had been committed, the officer told him: "We need to check your thinking".

They have "community cohesion" officers, but they don't have police officers who investigate sex-trafficking and gang-raping of teens. Oh, and you can't defend yourself from criminals with a firearm , either. That's illegal in the UK. You just have to let the criminal rape you and kill you. They are a very advanced country – much better than the United States.

UK police ignore underage sex-trafficking

What kinds of crimes might be ignored by the UK police? Here are some previous crimes that were ignored by the police.

The UK Daily Mail reports:

> A victim of the ring said she was 'let down' by police and the Crown Prosecution Service because the issue of [Middle Eastern immigrant] gangs grooming young white girls was 'unheard of' at the time.
>
> The girl, who was 15 when she was targeted by the gang, reported the abuse to police in August 2008 but the CPS decided not to prosecute because they did not believe a jury would find her 'credible'.

The Evening Standard reports:

> The girls, some as young as 11, were drugged, raped, trafficked and used as prostitutes while supposedly in the safe-keeping of the local authority in Oxford.

> […]**Today five men of Pakistani origin and two from North Africa were convicted of more than 40 charges spanning eight years.**
>
> […]The charges involved six girls between the ages of 11 and 15 who were abused over nine years in the Cowley area of Oxford.
>
> […]Girl D told how, at the age of 11, she was branded with a heated hairpin by a trafficker and loaned to other abusers for £600 an hour.

> Over five years she was repeatedly raped by large groups of men in what she described as “torture sex”.
>
> […]**Another victim, Girl A, complained of her plight to police on two occasions but no one was charged.**

We have to learn what the Democrat party is planning for tomorrow by looking at what similar secular leftists are doing in other countries today. There isn’t a Democrat politician in the USA who doesn’t agree 100% with these UK policies. The only reason they haven’t been enacted here is because they don’t have the majorities in the House and Senate. Yet.

New study: which group of voters correctly answered questions about basic facts?

January 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

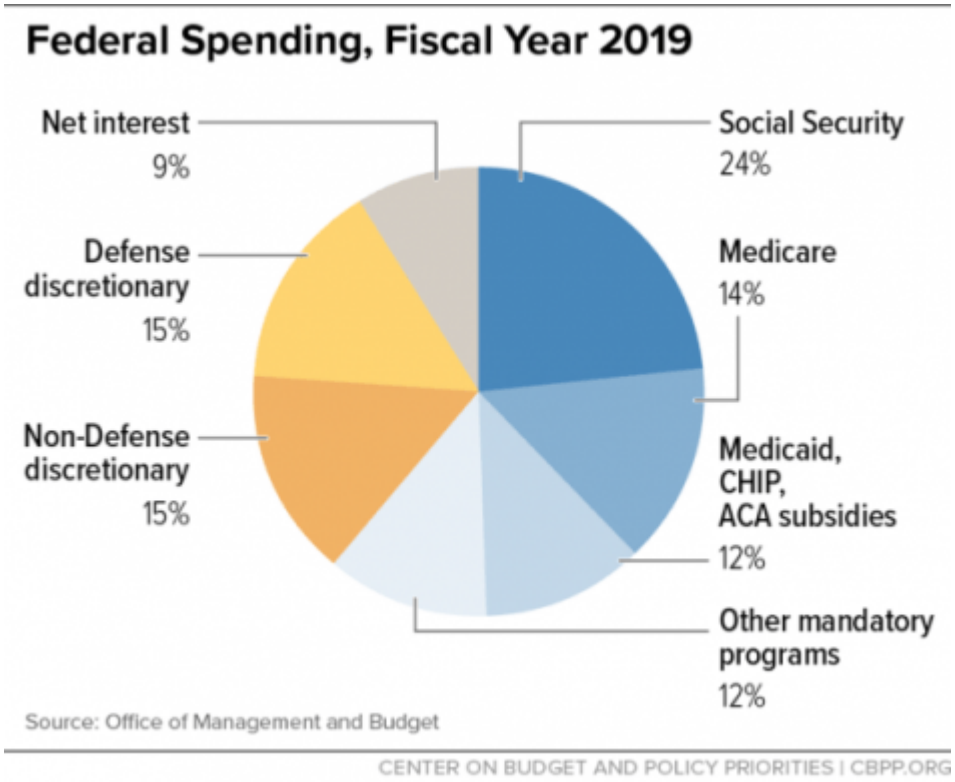

Let's take a look at some data and learn how the world really works

The non-partisan web site Just Facts has been cited as an authority by IBM, PBS, Vanderbilt University, the Wall Street Journal, etc. In their latest study, they tested conservative and progressive voters to see which group had reality-based views of education, taxes, healthcare, national debt, pollution, government spending, Social Security, global warming, energy, hunger, and poverty.

Here is what they measured:

> The findings are from a nationally representative annual survey commissioned by Just Facts, a non-profit research and educational institute. The survey was conducted by Triton Polling & Research, an academic research firm that used sound methodologies to assess U.S. residents who regularly vote.
>
> While most polls measure public opinion, this unique one measures voters' knowledge of major issues facing the nation—such as education, taxes, healthcare, national debt, pollution, government spending, Social Security, global warming, energy, and hunger.

I just wanted to list out a few of the questions, so that you would be able to see the topics, and know that the answers are *measurable quantities*. This is important because we want to know which groups of voters understand just the facts about the world we live in.

Education sample question:

On average across the United States, how much do you think public schools spend per year to educate each classroom of students? Less or more than $150,000 per classroom per year?

> **Correct Answer:** More than $150,000. The average cost to educate a classroom of public school students is about $332,000 per year.
>
> Correct answer given by 36% of all voters, 26% of Democrat voters, 45% of Trump voters, 46% of males, 28% of females, 25% of 18 to 34 year olds, 40% of 35 to 64 year olds, and 33% of 65+ year olds.

Taxes sample question:

On average, who would you say pays a greater portion of their income in federal taxes: The middle class or the upper 1% of income earners?

> **Correct Answer:** The upper 1%. The Congressional Budget Office, the U.S. Treasury, and the Tax Policy Center have all documented that households in the top 1% of income pay an average effective federal tax rate of about 33%, while middle-income households pay about 13%. These tax rates account for nearly all income and federal taxes.
>
> Correct answer given by 18% of all voters, 6% of Democrat voters, 30% of Trump voters, 21% of males, 15% of females, 11% of 18 to 34 year olds, 19% of 35 to 64 year olds, and 19% of 65+ year olds.

Spending sample question:

Do you think the federal government spends more money on social programs, such as Medicare, education, and food stamps—or does the federal government spend more money on national defense, such as the Army, Navy, and missile defense?

> **Correct Answer:** Social programs. In 2018, 62% of federal spending was for social programs, and 18% was for national defense. In 1960, the opposite was true, and 53% of federal spending was for national defense, while 21% was for social programs.
>
> Correct answer given by 36% of all voters, 14% of Democrat voters, 59% of Trump voters, 40% of males, 33% of females, 23% of 18 to 34 year olds, 36% of 35 to 64 year olds, and 41% of 65+ year olds.

National debt sample question:

What about federal government debt? The average U.S. household owes about $122,000 in consumer debt, such as mortgages and credit cards. Thinking about all federal government debt broken down to a per household basis, do you think the average federal debt per U.S. household amounts to more or less than the average consumer debt per U.S. household?

> **Correct Answer:** More than $122,000. Federal debt is now $23.1 trillion or about $180,000 for every household in the United States.
>
> Correct answer given by 77% of all voters, 76% of Democrat voters, 81% of Trump voters, 75% of males, 80% of females, 84% of 18 to 34 year olds, 79% of 35 to 64 year olds, and 75% of 65+ year olds.

Global warming sample question:

Thinking about the whole planet, do you think the number and intensity of hurricanes and tropical storms have generally increased since the 1980s?

> **Correct Answer:** No. Comprehensive global data shows that the number and intensity of cyclones and hurricanes has been roughly level since the 1980s. This data was originally published in the journal Geophysical Research Letters in 2011 and updated this year. Likewise, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has reported: "There is low confidence in any observed long-term (i.e., 40 years or more) increases in tropical cyclone activity (i.e., intensity, frequency, duration), after accounting for past changes in observing capabilities." Regional data that extends back for more than century shows the same.
>
> Correct answer given by 32% of all voters, 4% of Democrat voters, 59% of Trump voters, 40% of males, 25% of females, 19% of 18 to 34 year olds, 36% of 35 to 64 year olds, and 30% of 65+ year olds.

Pollution sample question:

Thinking about the United States, in your opinion, is the air generally more polluted than it was in the 1980s?

> **Correct Answer:** No. EPA data shows that ambient levels of all criteria air pollutants have declined significantly since the 1980s. Criteria air pollutions are those that are deemed by the administrator of the EPA to be widespread and to "cause or contribute to air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare…." Likewise, combined emissions of hazardous air pollutants have declined by about 50% since the 1990s.
>
> Correct answer given by 56% of all voters, 44% of Democrat voters, 67% of Trump voters, 67% of males, 46% of females, 47% of 18 to 34 year olds, 63% of 35 to 64 year olds, and 49% of 65+ year olds.

Energy sample question:

Without government subsidies, which of these technologies do you think is the least expensive method for generating electricity? Wind turbines, solar panels, or natural gas power plants?

> **Correct Answer:** Natural gas power plants. Determining the costs of electricity-generating technologies is complex, but data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows that natural gas is considerably less expensive than wind,

> and wind is considerably less expensive than solar.
>
> Correct answer given by 40% of all voters, 23% of Democrat voters, 57% of Trump voters, 53% of males, 29% of females, 25% of 18 to 34 year olds, 43% of 35 to 64 year olds, and 41% of 65+ year olds.

Hunger sample question:

On an average day, what portion of U.S. households with children do you believe will have at least one child who experiences hunger? Less than 1%, 1% to 10%, or more than 10%?

> **Correct Answer:** Less than 1%. Per the latest data from the USDA, 0.14% or less than one out of every 700 U.S. households with children have any child who experiences hunger on an average day. This includes children who are hungry due to poverty, not those who skip meals because they are late for school, don't feel like eating, or are trying to lose weight.
>
> Correct answer given by 12% of all voters, 2% of Democrat voters, 22% of Trump voters, 15% of males, 9% of females, 3% of 18 to 34 year olds, 12% of 35 to 64 year olds, and 13% of 65+ year olds.

Social Security sample question:

Some policymakers are proposing that individuals be allowed to save and invest some of their Social Security taxes in personal accounts instead of paying these taxes to the Social Security program. In your view, do you think such proposals generally improve or harm the finances of the Social Security program?

> **Correct Answer:** Improve. As shown by analyses conducted by the chief actuary of the Social Security Administration and a bipartisan presidential commission, proposals to give Social Security an element of personal ownership generally strengthen the program's finances. Although some tax revenues that would have gone to the program instead go to people's personal retirement accounts, these tax revenues are more than offset by the savings of not paying these individuals full benefits.
>
> Correct answer given by 22% of all voters, 11% of Democrat voters, 33% of Trump voters, 28% of males, 17% of females, 31% of 18 to 34 year olds, 20% of 35 to 64 year olds, and 23% of 65+ year olds.

Health care sample question:

In 2010, Congress passed and President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act, also known as "Obamacare." This law uses price controls to save money in the Medicare program. Do you think these price controls will worsen Medicare patients' access to care?

> **Correct Answer:** Yes. As explained by Medicare's actuaries, the price controls in the Affordable Care Act will cut Medicare prices for many medical services over the next three generations to "less than half of their level under the prior law." The actuaries have been clear that this will likely cause "withdrawal of providers

> from the Medicare market" and "severe problems with beneficiary access to care."
>
> Correct answer given by 50% of all voters, 17% of Democrat voters, 80% of Trump voters, 53% of males, 46% of females, 38% of 18 to 34 year olds, 52% of 35 to 64 year olds, and 49% of 65+ year olds.

Poverty sample question:

Including government benefits and private charity, how much worth of goods and services do the poorest 20% of U.S. households consume on average each year? Less than $20,000, $20,000 to $40,000, or more than $40,000?

> **Correct Answer:** According to the latest government data, the poorest 20% of U.S. households consumed an average of $57,049 of goods and services per household in 2010.
>
> Correct answer given by 13% of all voters, 6% of Democrat voters, 20% of Trump voters, 13% of males, 14% of females, 15% of 18 to 34 year olds, 16% of 35 to 64 year olds, and 9% of 65+ year olds.

You can read the full methodology, references and results.

PLEASE SHARE the article if you liked it. There's nothing in here to fight about, and no one should be offended.

I’m learning about Bernie Sanders from his employees and supporters

January 15, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

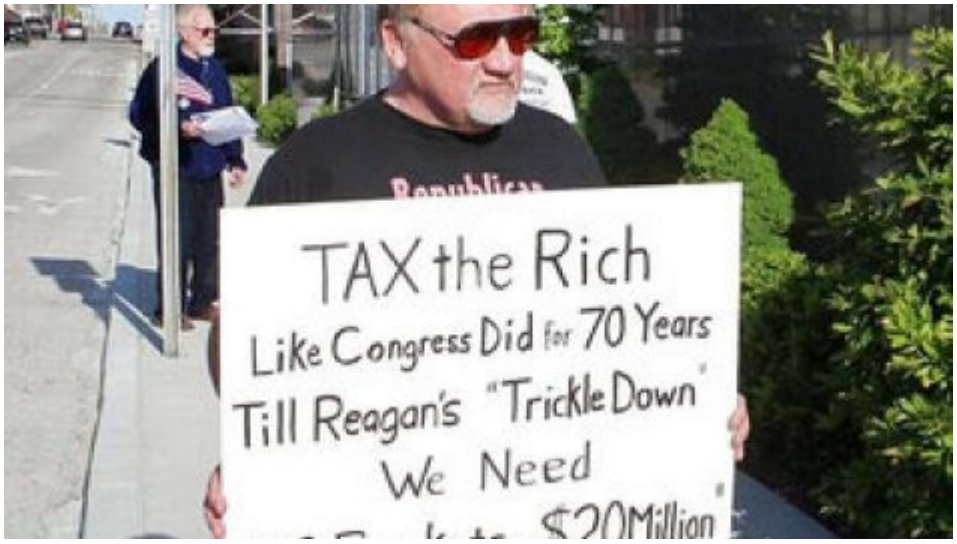

This Bernie Sanders supporter shot Republican Congressmen at a baseball game

One way to learn about a political candidate is by looking at the kinds of people who work for them. Candidates don’t say anything in their campaign speeches or campaign ads that might hurt their chances of being elected. But if you listen to their employees, and look at the actions of their employees, you can find out where they stand. Let’s look at two employees of Bernie Sanders.

Here is the latest reported by the Daily Wire:

> A far-left campaign staffer for 2020 Democratic Party presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) appeared to repeatedly advocate for the use of extreme violence in an undercover video that was released on Tuesday by James O’Keefe’s Project Veritas.
>
> Sanders campaign Iowa field organizer Kyle Jurek was busted making the following statements in a variety of settings:

- **On reaching people that he deems to be “fascists”:** “The only thing that works, the only thing that fascists understand is violence. So, the only way you can confront them is with violence.”
- **On what happens if Trump is re-elected:** “F***ing cities burn.”
- **On if Trump supporters should be “re-educated”:** “I mean, we gotta try, so like, in Nazi Germany after the fall of the Nazi party there was a s**t ton of the populace that was f***ing Nazified. Germany had to spend billions of dollars re-educating their f***ing people to not be Nazis. Like, we’re probably going to have to do the same f***ing thing here. That’s kind of

> what Bernie's whole f***ing like, 'hey, free education for everybody!' because we're going to have to teach you to not be a f***ing Nazi."

- **On Soviet gulags:** "There's a reason Joseph Stalin had gulags, right?"

- **On what will happen if Sanders does not win the Democratic nomination:** "If Bernie doesn't get the nomination or it goes to a second round at the DNC convention, f***ing Milwaukee will burn. It'll start in Milwaukee and then when they f***ing, and when the police push back on that, other cities will just f***ing [explosion sound and gesture]. … Be ready to be in Milwaukee for the DNC convention. That's all I'm gonna say. …"

- **On using violence against those who use offensive free speech:** "Whatever it takes, and that's why they're like 'oh, anti-fascists are violent,' it's because we're willing to go above and beyond what the law says is acceptable, like oh free speech, yeah like they try to be like 'oh you're against free speech' and no, we're not against free speech, we're against f***ing hate speech, and if your speech is something that like these people shouldn't exist, then I don't give a f*** if it's free speech or not, you don't need, like free speech has repercussions. … Yeah, there are consequences to your f***ing speech, right? And if your speech is calling for the elimination of people based on race, or gender, or religious like for whatever reason, things that people can't change, then you should expect a f***ing violent reaction and you deserve a violent reaction because that's just not an acceptable thing. It's not acceptable."

- **On wanting to "throw down":** "I'm ready to throw down now. I don't want to wait and have to wait for f***ing DNC [against] the billionaire class. The f***ing media, pundits. Walk into that MSNBC studios, drag those motherf***ers out by their hair and light them on fire in the streets."

- **On what will happen to those who oppose Sanders' agenda:** "Well, I'll tell you what, in Cuba, what did they do to reactionaries? … Do you wants to fight against the revolution? You're gonna die for it motherf***er."

And here is the video:

OK, fine. So that's what the people who work for Bernie Sanders say. But what about their actions? Do they actually put their words into practice in their actions?

The far-left Washington Post explains:

> The man suspected of firing dozens of rounds into an Alexandria baseball field Wednesday morning has been identified by federal law enforcement officials as James T. Hodgkinson, 66, of Belleville, Ill.

> A Facebook page belonging to a person with the same name includes pictures of Democratic presidential candidate, Bernie Sanders, and rhetoric against President Trump, including a post that reads: “Trump is a Traitor. Trump Has Destroyed Our Democracy. It’s Time to Destroy Trump & Co.”

Now, you might say, “well that’s not what Bernie Sanders believes, that’s just what his employees and supporters believe”. The thing is, Bernie Sanders has been defending communist regimes FOR DECADES, and those regimes kill millions and millions of innocent people. So you really have to look at what Bernie Sanders says about those murderous communist regimes if you want to know what he thinks is an acceptable cost for implementing the communism he admires so much.

Here is a good re-cap about what Bernie Sanders has said in the past about countries that adopted communism:

Naturally, Bernie Sanders is not going to say anything in an election campaign that would cause voters to not vote for him. That’s why it’s important to look at his employees, supporters, and previous statements.

Yale University computer science professor takes a look at protein formation probabilities

January 16, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

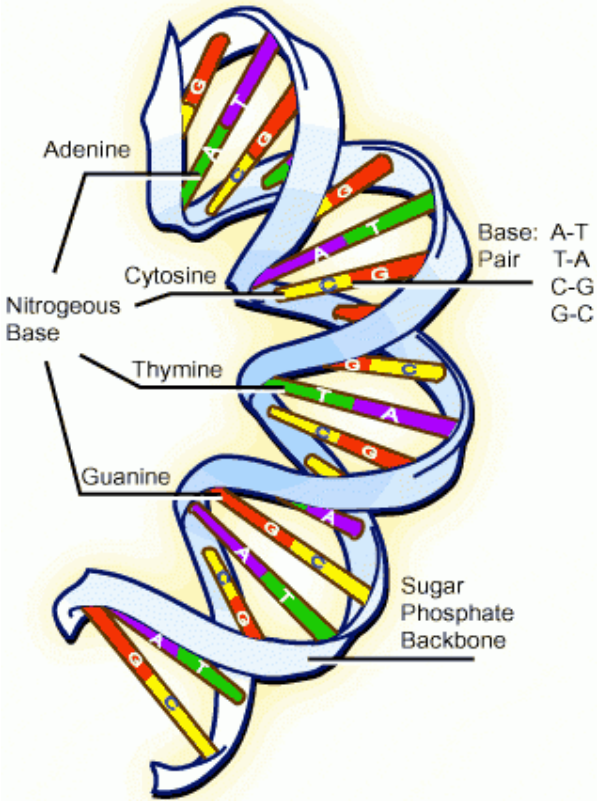

How did life begin?

When I was in graduate school, we studied a book called "Mirror Worlds", authored by famous computer science professor David Gelernter at Yale University. This week, I noticed that Dr. Gelernter had written an article in the prestigious Claremont Review of Books. In his article, he applies his knowledge of computer science to the problem of the origin of life.

Evolution, if it is going to work at all, has to explain the problem of how the basic building blocks of life – proteins – can emerge from non-living matter. It turns out that the problem of the origin of life is essentially a problem of information – of code. If the components of proteins are ordered properly, then the sequence folds up into a protein that has biological function. If the sequence is not good, then just like computer code, it won't run.

Here's Dr. Gelernter to explain:

> How to make proteins is our first question. Proteins are chains: linear sequences of atom-groups, each bonded to the next. A protein molecule is based on a chain of amino acids; 150 elements is a "modest-sized" chain; the average is 250. Each link is chosen, ordinarily, from one of 20 amino acids. A chain of amino acids is a polypeptide—"peptide" being the type of chemical bond that joins one amino acid to the next. But this chain is only the starting point: chemical forces among the links make parts of the chain twist themselves into helices; others straighten

> out, and then, sometimes, jackknife repeatedly, like a carpenter's rule, into flat sheets. Then the whole assemblage folds itself up like a complex sheet of origami paper. And the actual 3-D *shape* of the resulting molecule is (as I have said) important.
>
> Imagine a 150-element protein as a chain of 150 beads, each bead chosen from 20 varieties. But: only certain chains will work. Only certain bead combinations will form themselves into stable, useful, *well-shaped* proteins.
>
> So how hard *is* it to build a useful, well-shaped protein? Can you throw a bunch of amino acids together and assume that you will get something good? Or must you choose each element of the chain with painstaking care? It happens to be *very* hard to choose the right beads.

Gelernter decides to spot the Darwinist a random sequence of 150 elements. Now the task the Darwinist is to use random mutation to arrive at a sequence of 150 links that has biological function.

> [W]hat are the chances that a random 150-link sequence will create such a protein? Nonsense sequences are essentially random. Mutations are random. Make random changes to a random sequence and you get another random sequence. So, close your eyes, make 150 random choices from your 20 bead boxes and string up your beads in the order in which you chose them. What are the odds that you will come up with a useful new protein?
>
> […]The total count of *possible* 150-link chains, where each link is chosen separately from 20 amino acids, is 20^{150}. In other words, *many*. 20^{150} roughly equals 10^{195}, and there are only 10^{80} atoms in the universe.
>
> What proportion of these many polypeptides are useful proteins? Douglas Axe did a series of experiments to estimate how many 150-long chains are capable of stable folds—of reaching the final step in the protein-creation process (the folding) and of holding their shapes long enough to be useful. (Axe is a distinguished biologist with five-star breeding: he was a graduate student at Caltech, then joined the Centre for Protein Engineering at Cambridge. The biologists whose work Meyer discusses are mainly first-rate Establishment scientists.) He estimated that, of all 150-link amino acid sequences, 1 in 10^{74} will be capable of folding into a stable protein. To say that your chances are 1 in 10^{74} is no different, in practice, from saying that they are zero. It's not surprising that your chances of hitting a stable protein that performs some useful *function*, and might therefore play a part in evolution, are even smaller. Axe puts them at 1 in 10^{77}.
>
> In other words: immense is so big, and tiny is so small, that neo-Darwinian evolution is—*so far*—a dead loss. Try to mutate your way from 150 links of gibberish to a working, useful protein and you are guaranteed to fail. Try it with ten mutations, a thousand, a million—you fail. The odds bury you. It can't be

> done.

Keep in mind that you need many, many proteins in order to have even a simple living cell. (And that's not even considering the problem of organizing the proteins into a system).

So, if you're a naturalist, then your only resources to explain the origin of life are chance and mutation. As Dr. Gelernter shows, naturalistic explanations won't work to solve even part of the problem. Not even with a long period of time. Not even if you use the entire universe as one big primordial soup, and keep trying sequences for the history of the universe. It just isn't possible to arrive at sequences that have biological function in the time available, using the resources available. The only viable explanation is that there is a computer scientist who wrote the code without using trial and error. Something that ordinary software engineers like myself and Dr. Gelernter do all the time. We know what kind of cause is adequate to explain functioning code.

Why should a woman marry a man while she's still under 25?

January 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

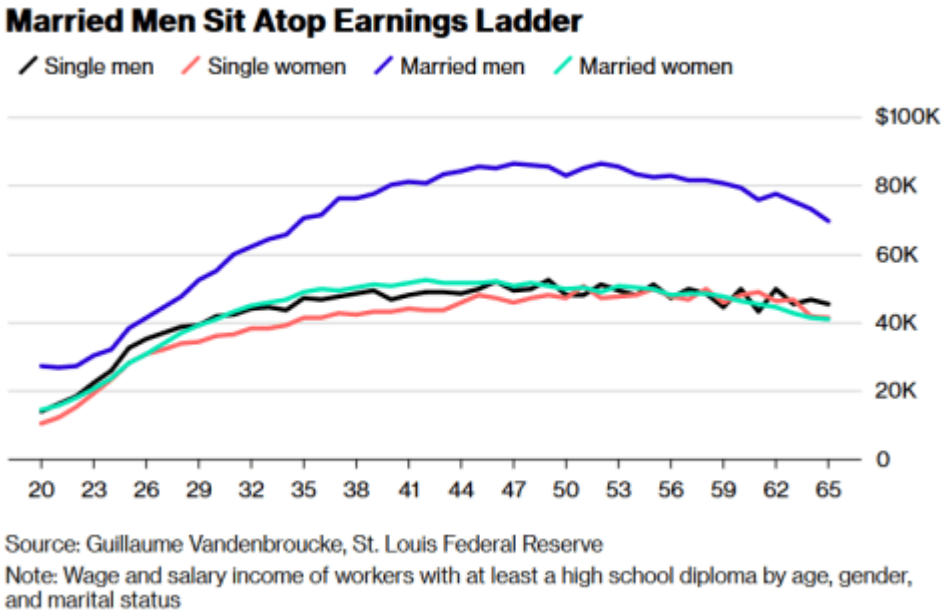

Married men seem to enjoy a boost in earnings between age 22-45

I saw a bunch of pro-marriage friends were tweeting about this article from the St. Louis Federal Reserve which talks about how well married men do financially compared to single men, and using it as a reason to argue that men should get married. The article from the St. Louis Reserve doesn't have much commentary, but this article from the far-left Washington Post by Brad Wilcox has a lot to say.

Excerpt:

> Marriage has a transformative effect on adult behavior, emotional health, and financial well-being—particularly for men.
>
> […]Men who get married work harder and more strategically, and earn more money than their single peers from similar backgrounds. Marriage also transforms men's social worlds; they spend less time with friends and more time with family; they also go to bars less and to church more.
>
> […]Our research, featured in a recent report, "For Richer, For Poorer: How Family Structures Economic Success in America," indicates that men who are married work about 400 hours more per year than their single peers with equivalent backgrounds. They also work more strategically: one Harvard study found that married men were much less likely than their single peers to quit their current job unless they had lined up another job.
>
> This translates into a substantial marriage premium for men. On average, young married men, aged 28-30, make $15,900 more than their single peers, and married men aged 44-46 make $18,800 more than their single peers.

> That's even after controlling for differences in education, race, ethnicity, regional unemployment, and scores on a test of general knowledge. What's more: the marriage premium operates for black, Hispanic, and less-educated men in much the same way as it does for men in general.
>
> For instance, men with a high-school degree or less make at least $17,000 more than their single peers.

So, what about these differences between married men and single men? Are men able to earn more if they have a wife to support them and care for their needs? Or is it just that women prefer men who are already able to take care of themselves?

Well, in most cases, it's the former:

> 2. Married men are motivated to maximize their income. For many men, this responsibility ethic translates into a different orientation toward work, more hours, and more strategic work choices. Sociologist Elizabeth Gorman finds that married men are more likely to value higher-paying jobs than their single peers.
>
> This is partly why studies find that men increase their work hours after marrying and reduce their hours after divorcing. It's also why married men are less likely to quit a current job without finding a new job. Indeed, they are also less likely to be fired than their single peers.
>
> 3. Married men benefit from the advice and encouragement of their wives. Although there is less research on this, we suspect that men also work harder and more strategically because they are encouraged to do so by their wives, who have an obvious interest in their success. One study appears to buttress this point, finding that men with better-educated wives earn more, even after controlling for their own education.
>
> 4. Employers like married men with children. There is evidence that employers prefer and promote men who are married with children, especially compared to their childless male peers and to mothers. Married men are often seen as more responsible and dedicated workers and are rewarded with more opportunities by employers. While illegal bias and long-held stereotypes appear to play a role in this historic preference, it nonetheless helps explain why married family men get paid more.

Now what's the purpose of me writing this? Well, I'm actually NOT writing this to pressure men to get married. Why not? Because although marriage was a pretty good deal 100 years ago, it's not as good of a deal under the current laws and policies, e.g. – no-fault divorce, the threats of false accusations, the Sexual Revolution, etc. So I wouldn't advise a man to rush into marriage to just *anybody* in order to get the financial (and health) benefits of having a wife. Marriage is only safe when you choose a woman carefully.

But I am writing this to women who are being told by the culture to delay marriage, and especially to delay marriage to use your youth and beauty to "have fun" with boys who won't commit to marriage. If a woman loves a *marriage-focused* man and really wants to

take care of him and support him, then early marriage is one of the very best ways to really help him during the years (22-45) when it really makes a difference. Marrying a man who wants marriage when you're still young means that he will have many, many measurable benefits.

It's important to marry a man when the marriage has the potential to do the most good for him in areas like health, career, finances and children. Men typically don't want to marry women who are older, because they have more sexual experience and because they get used to giving a man sex in order to get him to do what she wants. Once a woman gets used to doing this, it becomes much harder to trust a good man to lead, and to give a man respect as a leader.

In addition, men know that women never change who they are really attracted to. If a woman chooses superficially attractive men who won't commit over and over, then even if she "settles" for a man later on, she probably won't be able to be attracted him. Men know not to choose women who won't value them for their traditional moral values, conservative politics and ability to perform traditional male roles like providing. Men know that a woman who feels that she is "settling" for less than she deserves is more likely to disrespect him, and to withhold sex from him.

Now pro-marriage parents and pro-marriage pastors will typically tell you that they want to let their daughters decide when to marry, so that they will be happy having "fun" before marriage, and happy being provided for after marriage. But when those women are done playing the field and in their mid-thirties, their relatives and pastors are not thinking about what men's interests are. They're thinking about how to get this woman married, regardless of the man's interests. And men know that. So they aren't going to be bullied or shamed into a marriage after the window when it benefits them has closed. If parents and pastors want their daughters married AT ALL, then they need to encourage women to be self-controlled and marriage-focused EARLY.

Is Tim Keller right to say that New York City brings the gospel to Christians?

January 18, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Can New York City teach Christians about the gospel? (Source)

Here is a short guest post from my friend the software engineer.

Tim Keller dusted off an old pearl of wisdom of his and re-posted it on twitter. I discovered it on Facebook as many of my friends were making fun of it. One Twitter user remarked:

> I think it's been three years since the last time you tweeted this. I predict no misunderstanding this time.

To which Keller responded:

> It happens every time. Hard to understand this–unless you realize how much the city can teach us and how much we learn about Christ through common grace, other Christians, the humbling that happens here. Oh well.

I can conjure up in my mind a way for this to not be meaningless tripe. It could be that Keller has in mind the number of ways men made in the image of god remind him of god's grace and represent an opportunity to live out the sacrifice Jesus called us to.

But I have a hard time believing it doesn't mean something else. That Keller has in mind here that we should allow the city and its emergent values to exert undue influence over us. I have a hard time believing this because I don't see Keller's church actively changing the culture around them and thereby setting an example for the rest of us to follow.

I would further submit that one of the reasons Tim Keller's church has not been successful in changing the city is that they are too busy succumbing to the social justice influences that are popular today.

Why don't people take churches like Keller's seriously anymore? Perhaps it's precisely because those churches have, as Keller tweeted, allowed the city to bring them the gospel.

OK That's it for my friend's post. I was supposed to add two of my beefs with Tim Keller. The first one is that he's far left on questions of origins.

Here's an article from Creation.com. I am not a young Earth creationist, I'm an old Earth creationist. Still, my YEC software engineer friend (a different software engineer) tells me that they are the best and largest YEC site.

They say:

> Timothy Keller, author of The Reason for God (see our review), recently authored a paper for the theistic evolutionary organization Biologos (see Evolutionary syncretism: a critique of Biologos) titled "Creation, Evolution, and Christian Laypeople" (read the entire paper here). In this paper, he wrestles with how to present science to Christian laypeople in such a way that evolution and the Bible seem compatible.
>
> […]Keller devotes several pages to showing that believing that evolution happened as a biological process does not necessarily mean that one has to embrace the "Grand Theory of Evolution" involving naturalism and social Darwinism.

The young Earth creationists are concerned that evolution is not what God described in the Bible. Old Earth creationists think it's worse than that. Not only does evolution not agree with the Bible, it doesn't agree with good science either. The problem with Keller is his disagreement with what mainstream science shows about the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, etc.

But that's not the only problem with Tim Keller.

Here is what he says about a statement signed by conservative Christians disagreeing with "social justice":

> A controversial statement signed by more than 9,000 evangelicals and Christian organizations deploring social justice as a dangerous concept to the Gospel, belittles Christians who talk about race and justice, says Tim Keller, founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City.
>
> […]The Statement on Social Justice & the Gospel was released early this month with initial signers including John MacArthur of Grace Community Church, who recently denounced evangelicalism's "newfound obsession" with social justice.
>
> Among other things, the statement notes that: "Specifically, we are deeply

> concerned that values borrowed from secular culture are currently undermining Scripture in the areas of race and ethnicity, manhood and womanhood, and human sexuality. The Bible's teaching on each of these subjects is being challenged under the broad and somewhat nebulous rubric of concern for 'social justice.'

If you want to know what Tim Keller really thinks about moral issues, you can read his opinion / editorial in the far-left New York Times, where he has nothing to say about the traditional teachings of the Christian worldview (voluntary charity, chastity, pro-life, natural marriage, not coveting your neighbor's wealth, limited government, people defined by the content of their character instead of the color of their skin).

Moderate conservative Doug Wilson notes:

> So get the vantage of two hundred years from now, and have a doctoral student in American history examine Keller's op-ed piece for any reference at all to abortion, or to the fact that Planned Parenthood, subsidized by our tax dollars, sells baby parts. It is not there.
>
> […]So why *didn't* more churches apply what the Bible requires of slave-owners two hundred years ago? The answer is that back then it would have taken *courage* to do so, just as it would take courage today for Keller to denounce Planned Parenthood in *The New York Times*.
>
> Keller *does* denounce sins in this piece. But he is still being careful because the sins he denounces are safe sins to denounce—we know this because they are all the sins that the secular world routinely uses to denounce the conservative Christian world. There is the sin of not working for "better public schools," or not working for a "justice system weighted against the poor," or "to end racial segregation," or failing to "lift up the poor." It is as though we found John the Baptist chiding the Israelites for failing to see the moral imperatives contained within Herod's economic stimulus programs.

And that's because the readers of the New York Times, and the residents of the city of New York are pro-abortion (which is the equivalent of slavery in our modern times). In fact, New York is pro-infanticide – they have a law that allows infanticide. And this did not deserve a mention from Tim Keller in his New York Times editorial. Perhaps he thinks that infanticide is one of the things that New York city has to teach traditional Christians about the gospel.

How brief was the period in which the Cambrian phyla suddenly appeared?

January 19, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

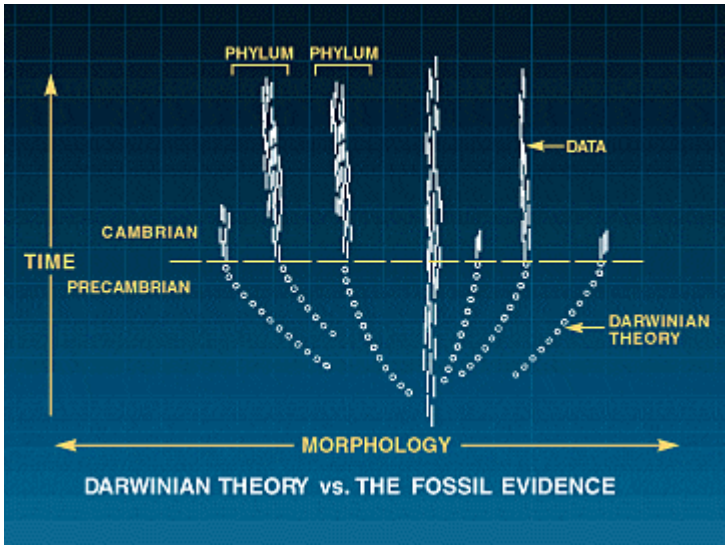

Cambrian Explosion

The Cambrian explosion refers to the sudden appearance of new body plans in the fossil record. ID proponents think that the period is between 5-10 million years at the most. Naturalists want to stretch out the period in which the body plans appear to tens of millions of years. The two sides can't both be right. What's the truth?

Evolution News has the answer.

Excerpt:

> To establish the length of the most explosive period of innovation within the Cambrian explosion itself, Meyer cites the work of MIT geochronologist Samuel Bowring and his colleagues as well the work of another group led by Smithsonian paleontologist Douglas Erwin. The Bowring-led study showed that (in their words) "the main period of **exponential diversification**" within the Cambrian lasted "only 5-6 million years" (emphasis added). Meyer explains:

> An analysis by MIT geochronologist Samuel Bowring has shown that the main pulse of Cambrian morphological innovation occurred in a sedimentary sequence spanning no more than 6 million years. Yet during this time representatives of at least sixteen completely novel phyla and about thirty classes first appeared in the rock record. In a more recent paper using a slightly different dating scheme, Douglas Erwin and colleagues similarly show that thirteen new phyla appear in a roughly 6-million-year window. (p. 73)

> […][T]ake a look first at the following figure that Bowring and his colleagues included in their definitive 1993 article, published in the journal Science. They use radiometric methods to date the different stages of the Cambrian period, including the crucial Tommotian and Atdabanian stages in which the greatest

> number of new animal phyla and classes arise. Note that the so-called Manykaian stage of the Cambrian period lasts about 10-14 million years. Note also that the main pulse of morphological innovation didn't begin during this stage but rather during the Tommotian and Atdabanian — a period that they describe as taking between "5 to 10 million years," and in a more detailed passage as taking about 5-6 million years.

> […]In the figure above, the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages of the Cambrian period together span only about 5 million years, starting at about 530 and ending about 525 million years ago. Bowring's figure also depicts the total number of classes and orders present at any given time during the Cambrian period. The biggest increases in morphological innovation occur during the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages. Indeed, during this period the number of known orders nearly quadruples. Moreover, Bowring and his colleagues also make clear that this period corresponds to the main pulse of Cambrian morphological innovation as measured by the number of new phyla and classes that first appear. They note that, while a few groups of animals do arise in the earliest Manykaian stage of the Cambrian, the most rapid period of "exponential increase of diversification," corresponding to the Tommotian and Atdabanian stages, "lasted only 5 to 6 m.y."

You can see the figure they are reference in the Evolution News article.

Also, check out these clips that explain the Cambrian explosion:

Part 1:

Part 2:

The first clip features James Valentine, a professor of biology at the University of California who just co-authored a new book on the Cambrian explosion and *is not* a proponent of intelligent design.

The consensus among scientists regarding the period of time *in which the new body plans appear* is 5-6 million years. Biologically speaking, that's a blink of an eye. You aren't going that kind of complexity and innovation in such a short period of time any more than you can expect to win the lottery by buying 5-6 million tickets when the odds of winning are 1 in a googol (10 to the 100th power – 1, followed by 100 zeroes). You don't have enough lottery tickets to make winning the lottery likely. Similarly, 5-6 million years is not enough time for naturalistic mechanisms to code brand new body plans from scratch. It would be like trying to research and write a Ph.D thesis during a single lunch hour. It's just not enough time to produce the amount of information that's required.

What can we learn about communist leaders from the record of history?

January 20, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

The Democrats are running a lot of communist candidates in the 2020 election, so I thought it might be a good idea to take a look at what communist leaders have done in history. First, let's see how the atheistic worldview of communist leaders affected religious people.

Here is what Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

What's the attitude of Democrat candidates to Bible-believing Christians? My read is that they think that Christian values need to be suppressed by the government lest they offend Democrat voters, who seem to be very easily offended these days. You can already see their animus towards Christians in their Equality Act, which eradicates conscience rights in order to protect (some) LGBT people from feeling offended.

The Ukraine Famine

Take a look at this UK Daily Mail article about Josef Stalin.

Excerpt:

> Now, 75 years after one of the great forgotten crimes of modern times, Stalin's man-made famine of 1932/3, the former Soviet republic of Ukraine is asking the world to classify it as a genocide.
>
> The Ukrainians call it the Holodomor – the Hunger.
>
> Millions starved as Soviet troops and secret policemen raided their villages, stole the harvest and all the food in villagers' homes.
>
> They dropped dead in the streets, lay dying and rotting in their houses, and some women became so desperate for food that they ate their own children.
>
> If they managed to fend off starvation, they were deported and shot in their hundreds of thousands.
>
> So terrible was the famine that Igor Yukhnovsky, director of the Institute of National Memory, the Ukrainian institution researching the Holodomor, believes **as many as nine million may have died.**
>
> […]Between four and five million died in Ukraine, a million died in Kazakhstan and another million in the north Caucasus and the Volga.
>
> By 1933, 5.7 million households – somewhere between ten million and 15 million people – had vanished. They had been deported, shot or died of starvation.

The Holodomor is just one of the atrocities committed by Soviet Union communists. You may also have heard that they operated a system of labor camps for dissidents that killed millions more. The total number of people killed by Stalin is estimated at 20 to 40 million.

Stalin actually wasn't very good at mass murder compared to another communist, Mao Zedong.

> Can you name the greatest mass murderer of the 20th century? No, it wasn't Hitler or Stalin. It was Mao Zedong.
>
> According to the authoritative "Black Book of Communism," an estimated 65 million Chinese died as a result of Mao's repeated, merciless attempts to create a new "socialist" China. Anyone who got in his way was done away with — by execution, imprisonment or forced famine.
>
> For Mao, the No. 1 enemy was the intellectual. The so-called Great Helmsman reveled in his blood-letting, boasting, "What's so unusual about Emperor Shih Huang of the China Dynasty? He had buried alive 460 scholars only, but we have buried alive 46,000 scholars." Mao was referring to a major "accomplishment" of the Great Cultural Revolution, which from 1966-1976 transformed China into a great House of Fear.
>
> The most inhumane example of Mao's contempt for human life came when he

> ordered the collectivization of China's agriculture under the ironic slogan, the "Great Leap Forward." A deadly combination of lies about grain production, disastrous farming methods (profitable tea plantations, for example, were turned into rice fields), and misdistribution of food produced the worse famine in human history.
>
> Deaths from hunger reached more than 50 percent in some Chinese villages. The total number of dead from 1959 to 1961 was between 30 million and 40 million — the population of California.
>
> […]Mao kept expanding the laogai, a system of 1,000 forced labor camps throughout China. Harry Wu, who spent 19 years in labor camps, has estimated that from the 1950s through the 1980s, 50 million Chinese passed through the Chinese version of the Soviet gulag. Twenty million died as a result of the primitive living conditions and 14-hour work days.

Whenever I bring up the historical record of communism to Democrats, they always tell me that their leaders have good intentions. But the communist leaders of the past aren't any different from the communist leaders of today. Communist leaders all start out with noble ambitions of wanting to help the poor. The problem is that they don't know anything about economics, so whatever they try doesn't work. Communist policies like nationalizing private industries, printing money, purging wealthy people, imposing tariffs, and imposing price controls cause enormous poverty. And then they need someone to blame for their failure to produce the results they promise.

If we were serious about helping the poor, then we would elect leaders who had experience lifting the poor out of poverty. A business leader or a governor of a state. It's not a popularity contest. We need to choose someone who has already had success at helping the poor. And the best way to help the poor is by helping them to find work so they can earn their own success and chart their own course. After all it's not words that affect our lives. Or the feelings we have about words we like. What affects our lives is policies that produce results. Intentions and rhetoric don't matter, ultimately.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

January 21, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here is Dr. William Lane Craig giving a long-form argument for the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus, and taking questions from the audience.

The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the

Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early dating
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthewand whether it is intended to be historical or apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza

Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is “The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus” and the best comprehensive book is “The Resurrection of Jesus“.

Luke Barnes on the fine-tuning of the strong force and fine structure constant

January 22, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By now, anyone who has had discussions about scientific evidence for the existence of God knows about the fine-tuning argument. In a nutshell, if the fundamental constants and quantities given in the Big Bang were even slightly other than they are, then the universe itself would not be hospitable for complex, embodied intelligent life.

Here is an article from The New Atlantis written by Australian cosmologist Luke Barnes.

Excerpt:

> Today, our deepest understanding of the laws of nature is summarized in a set of equations. Using these equations, we can make very precise calculations of the most elementary physical phenomena, calculations that are confirmed by experimental evidence. But to make these predictions, we have to plug in some numbers that cannot themselves be calculated but are derived from measurements of some of the most basic features of the physical universe. These numbers specify such crucial quantities as the masses of fundamental particles and the strengths of their mutual interactions. After extensive experiments under all manner of conditions, physicists have found that these numbers appear not to change in different times and places, so they are called the fundamental constants of nature.
>
> […]A universe that has just small tweaks in the fundamental constants might not have any of the chemical bonds that give us molecules, so say farewell to DNA, and also to rocks, water, and planets. Other tweaks could make the formation of stars or even atoms impossible. And with some values for the physical constants, the universe would have flickered out of existence in a fraction of a second. That the constants are all arranged in what is, mathematically speaking, the very improbable combination that makes our grand, complex, life-bearing universe possible is what physicists mean when they talk about the "fine-tuning" of the universe for life.

Let's look at an example – the strong force. Not only must the strong force be fine-tuned so we have both hydrogen and helium, but the ratio of the strong force must also be fine-tuned with the fine structure constant.

Barnes writes:

> The strong nuclear force, for example, is the glue that holds protons and neutrons together in the nuclei of atoms. If, in a hypothetical universe, it is too weak, then nuclei are not stable and the periodic table disappears again. If it is too strong, then the intense heat of the early universe could convert all hydrogen into helium — meaning that there could be no water, and that 99.97 percent of

> the 24 million carbon compounds we have discovered would be impossible, too. And, as the chart to the right shows, the forces, like the masses, must be in the right balance. If the electromagnetic force, which is responsible for the attraction and repulsion of charged particles, is too strong or too weak compared to the strong nuclear force, anything from stars to chemical compounds would be impossible.

Here's the chart he's referencing:

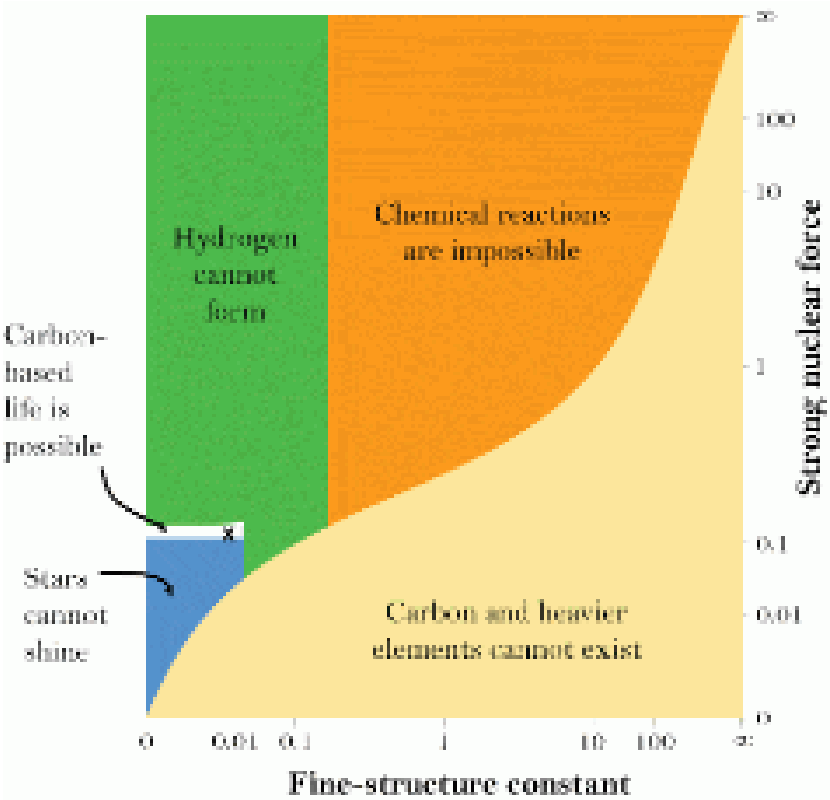

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant

As you can see from the chart, most of the values that the constants could take would make complex, embodied intelligent life impossible.

We need carbon (carbon-based life) because they form the basis of the components of life chemistry, e.g. proteins, sugars, etc. We need hydrogen for water. We need chemical reactions for obvious reasons. We need the light from the stars to support plant and animal life on the surface of a planet. And so on. In almost every case where you change the values of these constants and quantities and ratios from what they are, you will end up with a universe that does not support life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind under these laws of physics. And we don't have any alternative laws of physics in this universe.

By the way, just to show you how mainstream these examples of fine-tuning are, I thought I would link to a source that you're all going to be familiar with: The New Scientist.

The fine-tuning of the force of gravity

So here is an article from the New Scientist about a different constant that also has to be

fine-tuned for life: the force of gravity.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe‘s birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What’s more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Notice how the article also mentioned “the universe’s birth”, which is part of mainstream science.

When I’m writing to you about things like the origin of the universe, or the cosmic fine-tuning, I’m not talking to you about things that pastors found in the Bible. These discoveries are known and accepted by mainstream scientists. It’s amazing that people are constructing their worldviews without having to account for the birth of the universe and this cosmic fine-tuning. We all, as rational individuals, have to bound our view of the universe with the findings of science. Right now, those findings support the existence of a Creator and a Designer. So why am I seeing so many atheists who are just plain ignorant about these facts? Maybe we should tell them about this evidence. Maybe we should ask them why they don’t account for scientific evidence when forming their beliefs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason

- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Transgender activist arrested for assault, also faces civil suits

January 23, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

J3551c4 Y4n1v

I'm learning about transgenderism by reading about this transgender activist from Canada. Previously, I blogged about how the transgender activist (named Y4n1v) had tried to force women to wax Y4n1v's genitalia. Y4n1v also tried to get female gynecologists to perform examinations of Y4n1v's genatalia. The latest news is even stranger than before.

Here is the latest news from The Post Millennial:

> Je551ca Y4n1v was arrested for the assault of a Canadian journalist on over the weekend. According to Keean Bexte, the journalist who was assaulted by Y4n1v on camera outside of the B.C. courts on January 14, 2020, Y4n1v spent time behind bars on the charge of assault. She may face up to five years for the assault.
>
> That same day, Y4n1v falsely accused TPM's own Amy Eileen Hamm of sexual assault while at the courtroom. Hamm is suing Y4n1v for defamation.
>
> […]When reached for comment, Bexte said, "Y4n1v has been ordered to cease all contact with me, both directly and indirectly. I can't wait for the day when Y4n1v is put away for the long haul. He is dangerous and unpredictable."
>
> Even if Y4n1v is behind bars, the civil litigations brought by Bexte and Hamm against Y4n1v for assault and defamation respectively can proceed. According to

> Bexte, Y4n1v would be court-ordered to appear for the civil litigations as planned.
>
> Y4n1v was released back into the community after the arrest and will appear in court in February. She will also appear in court in February for two prohibited weapons charges.

Just to be clear, the weapons charge is against Canada's firearms law.

This reminds me of the "It's Ma'am!" person at Gamestop:

> The video begins with a transgender woman (name unknown) threatening to "fight" a GameStop employee after he allegedly called the transgender customer who identifies as a woman a "sir."
>
> […]"Excuse me, it's ma'am, it is ma'am," states the transgender woman to the other woman off camera before threatening to call the police department on the increasingly furious customer.
>
> "You need to settle down and mind your business," the transgender states to the lady off-screen.
>
> The transgender woman then states to the GameStop employee that he must not use "sir" but in the video, he does say "sir" again, in which viewers are unaware who that was directed to.
>
> The woman in pink then states to the employee, "motherf***er – take it outside – you wanna call me sir again, I will show you a f**king sir!"
>
> She then urges the employee yet again to "take it outside."
>
> "Motherf**ker!" shouts out the transgender women who then attempted to destroy property by kicking over a few Gamestop "bundle gaming consult packages" and walking towards the exit.
>
> […]"I plan on telling the entire LGBTQ community," the transgender women yells back at the employee, "You're going to lose money over this."

By the way, while reading stories on TPM, I happened upon a post about a transgender woman MMA fighter who was fighting biological women and breaking their bones in order to win matches:

> Fox, a male to female transgender athlete, destroyed Erika Newsome in a Coral Gables, FL, MMA fight during which [he]"secured a grip on Newsome's head… With [his]hands gripping the back of Newsome's skull, [he] delivered a massive knee, bringing [his] leg up while pulling [his] opponent's head down. The blow landed on Newsome's chin and dropped her, unconscious, face-first on the mat." That was Newsome's last pro fight.
>
> […]Fox also beat Tamikka Brents, giving her a concussion and breaking 7 orbital bones.

Now, I am pretty critical of feminism on this blog. My reason for being opposed to

feminism is precisely because I think that the attempt by feminists to deny their female nature, and act like men, is harmful to everyone. Normally feminism hurts women in non-violent ways, by teaching them that traditional male roles aren't valuable when choosing a man. But this skull-cracking goes above and beyond that. This is what happens when the standard that says that men should be gentle to women goes out the window because feminism says that men and women are identical, and men have no special duty to be careful with women.

The rise of feminism also meant that feelings became more important than traditional moral standards. Moral standards are too "judgmental". Society instead made "right" mean "whatever makes the most easily-offended people feel good". So, you can't exclude a biological man from competing in a women-only sporting event, because of hurt feelings. Feminism also said that male and female natures were "social constructs" and that men and women are "identical". That's why a man can call himself a woman and crack another woman's skull and be seen as a hero by people who have taken feminism's denial of biological sex differences to its logical conclusion.

Should Christian men expect a wife / mother candidate to know how to defend the Christian worldview?

January 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is the Christian worldview true? Can we know that it is true?
A while back, I was debating some Christian feminists about what men want from a wife and mother. At one point, I asserted that Christian women ought to have some knowledge of how to defend their faith using scientific and historical evidence. Some women asked me: "are you joking?" In this post, I'll explain why I'm serious, and then I'll ask them some questions of my own.

Let's start with Jesus. Jesus set an example by showing the importance of knowing how to answer questions and challenges from skeptics in the New Testament. His favorite way to answer a challenge was by using evidence to support his truth claims.

So, take this story that's in Mark 2:1-12, Matthew 9:1-8 and Luke 5:17-26. This story is accepted even by skeptical historians because it's in three different books, and one of them is early (Mark).

In each version of the story, there are 4 steps:

1. Jesus forgives the sins of a paralyzed man
2. The Pharisees say that he doesn't have authority to forgive sins
3. Jesus miraculously heals the paralyzed man
4. Jesus explains the evidence of the healing supports his claim that he has authority

to forgive sins

And this is an example that you will find repeated in many places in the life of Jesus. You can see it in the Old Testament as well, where God performs miracles so that people who don't believe in his existence or respect the Scriptures can still be convinced.

Christian apologetics is the skill of being able to give a defense for the Christian worldview when presented with a challenge from a non-Christian.

So, who has to be ready with a defense?

Look at 1 Peter 3:15-16:

[15] But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

[16] keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

This passage applies to every one who claims to be a disciple of Jesus, whether they like to prepare a defense or not. How much work must you put into it? It depends on the sophistication of the challenges you get. In the mountains of Pakistan, you don't need to know much because there might not be a sophisticated challenge. In an American society filled with college graduates, the challenges are more difficult. So you will need to prepare a lot more, because the challenges will be a lot harder.

Those who take this passage seriously are doing something difficult, and time-consuming, in order to serve Christ. Buying books costs money. Reading books takes time. Debating with non-Christians can make you look bad to others. But the Bible commands us to be ready with answers for the people around us. Sometimes, doing what the Bible says makes us feel bad, or look bad to others. But we have do what the Bible says anyway. Part of being a real Christian is being obedient even if it feels bad or makes you look bad.

William Lane Craig on apologetics and the culture

What's in an apologetics book?

So, with that said, let's look at the table of contents of my favorite introduction to

Christian apologetics, which is "Is God Just a Human Invention?" written by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow.

In that book, you will find 18 topics.

1. Is Faith Irrational? (Commentary by: Gregory Koukl)
2. Are Science and Christianity at Odds? (Commentary by: John Warwick Montgomery)
3. Are Miracles Possible? (Commentary by: Gary R. Habermas)
4. Is Darwinian Evolution the Only Game in Town? (Commentary by: William A. Dembski)
5. How Did the Universe Begin? (Commentary by: R. Douglas Geivett)
6. How Did Life Begin? (Commentary by: Fazale R. Rana)
7. Why Is the Universe Just Right for Life? (Commentary by: Jay W. Richards)
8. Has Science Shown There Is No Soul? (Commentary by: Dale Fincher and Jonalyn Fincher)
9. Is God Just a Human Invention? (Commentary by: Garry DeWeese)
10. Is Religion Dangerous? (Commentary by: Douglas Groothuis)
11. Does God Intend for Us to Keep Slaves? (Commentary by: Paul Copan)
12. Is Hell a Divine Torture Chamber? (Commentary by: Frank Turek)
13. Is God a Genocidal Bully? (Commentary by: Clay Jones)
14. Is Christianity the Cause of Dangerous Sexual Repression? (Commentary by: Kerby Anderson)
15. Can People Be Good Without God? (Commentary by: Mark D. Linville)
16. Is Evil Only a Problem for Christians? (Commentary by: Randy Alcorn)
17. What Good Is Christianity? (Commentary by: Glenn S. Sunshine)
18. Why Jesus Instead of the Flying Spaghetti Monster? (Commentary by: Darrell L. Bock)

Prominent atheist scholars are quoted in each chapter to introduce the challenges, and then scholarly arguments and evidence are presented to defend the Christian worldview. The language is simple enough, but the material is solid enough to use in a real debate. I would say that introductory books like this one are more than enough to equip you for everyone who will challenge you.

Why are these 18 topics important? Because these are the questions that atheists ask. These are the questions that cause Christians to leave the faith. These are the questions that your children will face in high school and college, which might cause them to leave the faith.

Let's start with chapter one. One of the most prominent arguments by atheists is that faith is irrational. This chapter allows you to define faith using the Bible's definition of faith, which relies on logic and evidence.

Atheists also say that Christianity is at war with science. In chapter 2, they discuss the history of science and how Christianity provided the framework that allowed scientific method to take root and flourish.

Atheists like to claim that miracles are impossible. Chapter 3 defends the view that God, if he exists, is capable of interacting with his created world.

Atheists love to put forward Darwinism as means to deny that God is the designer of life. Chapter 4 explains the concept of intelligent design, and why intelligent design is a better explanation for the history of life.

Atheists love to talk about how the universe has always existed, and there's no need for a Creator. Chapter 5 contains a philosophical argument that is supported by mainstream science to argue that the universe had a beginning, just like the Bible says.

Atheists love to argue that life can emerge from non-life, and the process is simple. Chapter 6 is written by a biochemist, and it takes a look at the real complexity of the simplest living cell.

Atheists like to argue that the universe itself is just an accident, and there is no need for a Designer. Chapter 7 introduces the scientific evidence for fine-tuning and habitability.

Atheists like to say that there is no soul and no afterlife. Chapter 8 gives some arguments for the existence of the soul.

Atheists like to argue that Christians invent God because God makes them feel good. But chapter 9 explains that having an all-powerful God who can hold humans accountable is the last thing any human would want to invent.

Atheists like to talk about how religion, with it's habit of teaching to believe in things that can't be tested, causes religious people to do a lot of harm. Chapter 10 takes a look at the real record of Christianity as a force for good in the world.

Atheists like to talk about slavery in the Bible. Chapter 11 talks about what the Bible really says, and provides some rational responses to the accusation.

Atheists like to talk about eternal punishment in Hell isn't a just punishment for just getting a few questions wrong on a theology exam. Chapter 12 provides an explanation and defense of the concept of Hell.

Atheists love to talk about how God commanded the Israelites to attack their enemies in the Bible. Chapter 13 explains who their enemies really were, and what was really happening in those wars.

Atheists feel that unrestricted sexual activity is very healthy and normal, and that the Biblical prohibitions outside of male-female marriage are repressive and unhealthy. Chapter 14 explains why God has these rules in place, and supports his rules with evidence.

Atheists love to assert that they don't need God, because they can behave morally on their own. Chapter 15 explains how to answer this claim by talking about how well atheism grounds objective moral values, objective moral duties, free will and moral accountability: the minimum requirements for objective morality.

Atheists think that the mere existence of natural disasters and human immorality are incompatible with the God of the Bible. Chapter 16 explains why this argument doesn't work, and why even the concept of evil requires God to exist.

I had an atheist co-worker who couldn't really defeat the scientific arguments for God's existence, but he would say that even if God exists, why would that matter to my life? Chapter 17 explains what difference Christianity makes in a person's life.

Atheists think that the life of Jesus has no relevance to their life, and that he has nothing to offer them anyway. Chapter 18 explains the uniqueness of Jesus and explains why his resurrection is relevant to our lives today.

I guess that many people think that reading a Christian book means reading Christian fiction or Christian devotions – things that are entertaining or produce feelings. But fiction and devotions do not equip you to answer realistic questions from non-Christians.

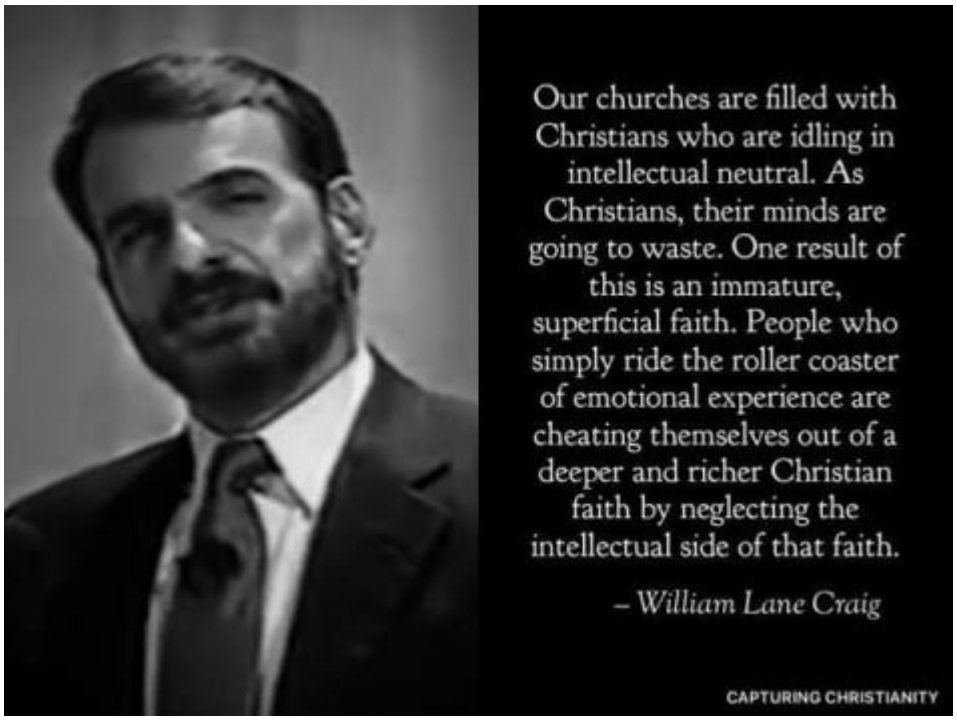

Dr. W. L. Craig: churches don't prepare Christians to answer skeptics

Wife candidates ought to know apologetics

So, back to my original point about how some Christian feminists responded when I said that during courtship, I ask women questions about how much preparation they have done to answer objections from atheists, like the ones answered in this book. Am I joking?

Well, I think the problem is that Christian feminists don't understand how Christian men view marriage. Christian men are interested in marriage because they think that their marriage will be an enterprise that produces a return for God. They like the idea of having a clean, comfortable home to host debate viewings and discussions over dessert with skeptics. They like the idea of raising children who will be effective and influential. Men don't see marriage a means of making us feel better, or having fun, or getting our peers to approve of us. We see it as a way to promote Jesus' agenda in the world. Men are looking for a woman who think that Christianity is true, so that they will have a wife who will act like a Christian when it goes against her self-interest. Men want a wife who knows how to persuade others that Christianity is true – first the children, then others.

Donald Trump is the first sitting US President to address March for Life

January 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama speaking to Planned Parenthood

I am old enough to remember when Americans voted for a pro-abortion president for two terms. He voted for *infanticide* twice, as a state senator in Illinois. He subsidized abortion with taxpayer money. He forced Christian organizations to cover abortions. He forced Christian doctors and nurses to perform and assist in abortions. And he appointed pro-abortion judges.

Obama would never have address pro-lifers at March for Life. But Trump is planning to do just that today! He is the first sitting present to actually join pro-lifers and take part in the events in person.

Donald Trump to speak at March for Life 2020

There was a good interview between two pro-lifers discussing how Trump has done on the pro-life issue.

Here is what one of them said:

> Stanek answered that she admired Bush for signing the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act and Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act into law, but what set Trump apart was that "he is just so proactive."
>
> "I think saying that Trump is the most pro-life president we've ever had isn't to slight other presidents like President Bush and President Reagan," she explained. "It's to say that he is fitting the mold that we've always hoped for of being verbal, vocal about it," from calling out Hillary Clinton for believing "in the ninth month you can take the baby and rip the baby out of the womb," to his use of blunt language like "execute the baby" to discuss infanticide.
>
> "President Trump is going gangbusters, is hiring people in the administration who are like-minded on abortion," Stanek said. "They set the policy…he has issued executive orders and administrative orders…just about everything we've ever asked him to do, he's done."

I found some statements of Trump's pro-life achievements but the best one by far was from Susan B. Anthony List:

> **Appointed Pro-Life Judges**
>
> In April, 2017, Judge Neil Gorsuch was successfully confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. And in October, 2018, Judge Brett Kavanaugh was successfully confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. To date, 157 of President Trump's judicial

nominees have been confirmed, including two Supreme Court justices, forty-three U.S. Courts of Appeals judges, and one hundred thirteen District Court judges.

Permitted States to Defund Planned Parenthood of Title X Funds

In April 2017, Congress sent a bill to President Trump's desk that permits states to defund Planned Parenthood of Title X family planning funds passed in Congress. President Trump signed the bill which reverses an Obama-era rule that disbarred states from doing so. Because this was passed using the Congressional Review Act, future Administrations cannot enact a similar rule to Obama's.

Stopped Tax Dollars Funding Abortion Overseas

President Trump not only reinstated the Mexico City Policy, but expanded it to the new Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance program. This new policy ensures that our tax dollars are protected from funding the abortion industry overseas across ALL global health spending, not just family planning dollars. The Bush-era Mexico City Policy protected roughly $500 million in spending – the new Trump policy protects over $8.8 billion overseas aid from funding abortion.

Defunded the Pro-Abortion UNFPA

The UNFPA has long been complicit in China's oppressive population control activities, including birth limitation policies and forced abortions. President Trump's State Department cut U.S. Taxpayer funding to the UNFPA.

Required Health Insurance Companies to Disclose if Plans Cover Abortion

The Trump Administration Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) issued a rule requiring that insurers specify in each plan Summary of Benefits whether the plan covers abortion.

Settlements & New Rule Regarding HHS Mandate

The Departments of HHS, Treasury, and Labor issued two interim final rules, which means they took effect immediately, while allowing a comment period, that provide permanent, enforceable relief from the previous HHS mandate for both religious objectors, such as Little Sisters of the Poor, and moral objectors, such as Susan B. Anthony List. The new rule also exempts private employers and educational institutions that have sincerely held religious beliefs or moral objections against providing contraceptives or abortifacient drugs.

New Office for Conscience Protection at HHS

In May 2019, the Trump administration finalized new regulations to strengthen enforcement of federal laws protecting the conscience rights of health care workers who do not want to participate in abortion. The regulations clarify what recourse is available to victims of discrimination under the law and what penalties the HHS Office of Civil Rights may enforce for violations. Additionally, in January 2018, the Department of Health & Human Services announced the

> creation of the Conscience and Religious Freedom Division within the Office for Civil Rights. This new office works to protect health care professionals who do not want to participate in abortion. In May, 2019, HHS issued a proposed rule amending Obama-era regulations, clarifying that Section 1557 shall not force a recipient of federal funding to provide or pay for an abortion. It shall also be consistent with the First Amendment and with pro-life provisions, conscience provisions and religious liberty protections in current law.
>
> **Allowed States to Defund Planned Parenthood of Medicaid Funds**
>
> The Obama administration attempted to prevent states from defunding Planned Parenthood of Medicaid dollars, issuing guidance claiming this may be a violation of federal law. In January 2018, the Trump administration rescinded this guidance, allowing states to defund Planned Parenthood of Medicaid dollars as they see fit.
>
> **Cut Planned Parenthood's Tax Funding by up to $60 Million**
>
> In February, 2019, the Trump administration finalized the Protect Life Rule to redirect Title X family planning program funds away from the abortion industry. The rule advances President Trump's promise to stop taxpayer funding of abortion businesses like Planned Parenthood, who will no longer receive Title X funding if they choose not to comply.
>
> **Canceled Huge Contract for Taxpayer-Funded Experimentation with Body Parts of Aborted Babies**
>
> In June, 2019, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced they would not renew a major contract with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) to fund research using the body parts of aborted babies. (learn more)

My favorite was the conscience protections! I really hate the idea of being forced by secular leftists to violate my conscience.

I think it's very important for pro-life voters of all parties to understand that Trump has taken action on pro-life concerns. He listened to pro-life leaders, and did far more than other Republican presidents who were pro-life in name only. Americans often have this annoying habit of forming their opinions based on what they feel and what they hear in the culture. But we need to be informed voters. Let's look at the facts and decide based on actions.

Controversial study on Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria and transgenderism re-published

January 25, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

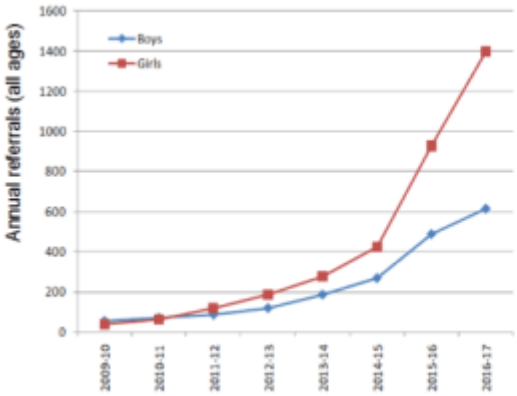

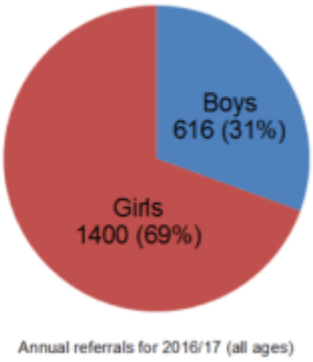

What's the best explanation of this transgenderism data? Genetics or cultural pressure? I blogged before about a study out of Brown University, which concluded that transgender behavior in children developed rapidly as a result of factors like peer pressures, social media, mental disorders, trauma, etc. I.e. – it's not genetic. Brown University retracted it because some people complained. Well, it's now been republished. Let's see if there were any mistakes found.

Here's how the study was first reported by Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> [...]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.

Peer pressure / The Internet:

> The pattern of clusters of teens in friend groups becoming transgender-identified, the group dynamics of these friend groups and the types of advice viewed online led her to the hypothesis that friends and online sources could spread certain beliefs.
>
> [....]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

Mental disorders / traumatic events:

> Additionally, 62 percent of parents reported their teen or young adult had one or

> more diagnoses of a psychiatric disorder or neurodevelopmental disability before the onset of gender dysphoria. Forty-eight percent reported that their child had experienced a traumatic or stressful event prior to the onset of their gender dysphoria, including being bullied, sexually assaulted or having their parents get divorced.

This article at The Federalist had a few examples to illustrate the conclusion of the study. I'll pick two.

> The study includes other eye-opening information, such as case studies of several children's stories.

- > "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends were taking group lessons together with a very popular coach. The coach came out as transgender, and, within one year, all four students announced they were also transgender."
- > "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends are part of a larger friend group that spends much of their time talking about gender and sexuality. The three natal female friends all announced they were trans boys and chose similar masculine names. After spending time with these three friends, the 14-year-old natal female announced that she was also a trans boy."

I thought this quote from that article was interesting as well, given the culture's obsession with "bullying", which is a nebulous term that can mean actual bullying, or mere disagreement.

> The study also may indicate that school "anti-bullying" programs typically created by LGBT activist organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign may help accelerate children identifying as transgender by pushing peers and authority figures to profusely express their support.

Coming out as transgender means instant fame and popularity, because you're a victim, and everyone has to be nice to you… or else:

> "Great increase in popularity among the student body at large. Being trans is a gold star in the eyes of other teens," wrote one parent on the study response form. Another wrote, "not so much 'popularity' increasing as 'status' … also she became untouchable in terms of bullying in school as teachers who ignored homophobic bullying …are now all at pains to be hot on the heels of any trans bullying."

Well, we've had a delay of 6 months for Littman to answer her critics and submit her work to even more extensive peer-review. And now the study has been re-published in PLOS

One. So were there any mistakes in it? Does it still reach the same conclusions?

The College Fix reports:

> Here's what actually changed, according to *PLOS One*:
>
> Other than the addition of a few missing values in Table 13, the Results section is unchanged in the updated version of the article.

So, the results didn't change, and that means that the conclusions stand. So what was the problem originally? The problem originally was that the research didn't confirm the biased politically correct views of the secular leftists.

She lost her consulting job anyway

However, that's not the whole story. I looked up her interview from this week on Quillette, and she got to tell her side of the story.

Two parts stood out to me.

This part, where she contrasted the favoral response of research scientists and clinical scientists with the angry outbursts of a social worker:

> The third presentation was the smallest and least research-oriented audience of the three. In contrast to the other presentations, the vast majority of the comments were made by one person who I later learned was a social worker. Again, I tried to answer politely with comments such as "Actually, the scientific literature says the following…"; "Actually, social media can be both a positive and a negative influence, not just positive…"; "Actually, this method of data collection has been used in many studies…" But because her interruptions were so frequent and argumentative in nature, it quickly created a tense and adversarial tone in the room.

This part, where she explains the mob that contacted her employers and got her fired:

> The worst outcome for me personally was losing my consulting job over this issue. Shortly after my paper came out, some local clinicians who are opposed to my research wrote a letter of complaint about the work and demanded that I be fired immediately. It was an interesting demand, as my consulting work was unrelated to gender dysphoria. Nonetheless, I was called in to several meetings to answer questions about my research… After the meetings, the leadership explained to me that their decision not to renew my contract was not related to the quality of my work but rather that they, as an agency, needed to remain neutral and not take sides regarding the issues raised in the letter.

Do you know what this whole episode reminded me of? It reminded me of the stories of scientists who publish work critical of Darwinian evolution, and work critical of the man-made catastophic global warming hypothesis. It seems as if the viewpoints of secular leftists are decide by emotions, and then defended with rage, coercion and harassment. What does it say about secular leftism that they respond to scientific progress with rage

and censorship?

Ted Cruz’s new impeachment podcast is now number one in America

January 26, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The most popular podcast in the USA: Ted Cruz and Michael Knowles

I was in the gym on Saturday doing a combination weights and cardio session. I had time to listen to the first four episodes of the new podcast, hosted by Michael Knowles of the Daily Wire, and featuring guest Ted Cruz. If you are looking for something easy to listen to, easy to understand , that will give you just the facts, this is your podcast.

I don’t have iTunes, so I found the audio of the episodes on Podcast Republic. You can download them there, but they’re also on YouTube. I’m skipping episode 1 because it was not very informative. I don’t understand everything they were saying, because I’m just a software engineer, but I tried my best to make notes.

Episode 2: The charges (January 23rd)

Notes:

- two articles of impeachment “abuse of power” and “obstruction of Congress”
- abuse of power: delaying military aid in exchange for two investigations: 1) 2016 election interference and 2) why Hunter Biden was being paid a lot of money to work for a Ukrainian company called “Burisma Natural Gas”
- The second article of impeachment is “obstruction of Congress” – the Democrats are claiming that: Trump did not allow witnesses to testify, defying subpoenas, and refusing to produce documents
- Ukraine got the aid, and neither investigation was launched

- quid pro quos are standard operating procedure in American foreign policy, e.g. – Obama giving money to Iran in exchange for a promise not to develop nuclear weapons
- If Trump had a valid reason for asking Ukraine to ask Ukraine to do these corruption investigations before getting aid, then the impeachment charges are groundless
- The Democrats don't want Hunter Biden to testify
- The Republicans can call Hunter Biden to testify with only 51 votes
- The House Democrats called 17 prosecution witnesses, but they wouldn't allow the House Republicans to call any witnesses
- There will be a vote on new witnesses in the coming week. If it passes the trial continues, if not, it goes to final judgement
- If there are new witnesses, the Republicans WILL call Hunter Biden
- Hunter Biden will almost certainly plead the 5th
- But they can force Hunter Biden to testify in exchange for immunity
- Republicans want to find out whether Joe Biden abused his power by withholding U.S. aid to Ukraine in exchange for having a Ukrainian prosecutor fired, who was investigating Hunter Biden and Burisma for corruption

Episode 3: Burisma and Hunter Biden (January 24th)

Notes:

- House Democrats claimed that there is *no good reason* to investigate Burisma for corruption
- This opens the way for Republicans to present evidence for why Burisma should be investigated for corruption
- Even the Democrat's own witness Lt. Col. Vindman has asserted that Burisma is "a corrupt entity"
- Burisma is a private company that was run by the company's Industry minister, and he was getting rich by giving out energy licenses to companies in exchange for money
- Hunter Biden was named to the board of Burisma right after Burisma had funds frozen by Britain's serious fraud unit
- Hunter Biden has no skills or experience in natural gas
- Hunter Biden was paid between $600,000 – $1,000,000 per year
- Hunter Biden gave an interview where he admitted that he was unlikely to to be appointed to the board, except that his father was Vice President of the United States
- Joe Biden responded to the charges of corruption against Burisma by threatening to withhold aid from Ukraine until the prosecutor who was investigating Burisma was fired
- Cruz presents a timeline, showing how Hunter Biden was appointed right after Burisma funds were frozen, and the prosecutor began investigating Burisma
- After Biden demanded that the prosecutor be fired, he was fired, and then Biden

released 1 billion dollars of aid to Ukraine
- The Democrats have not investigated the Burisma-Biden quid pro quo, and the Democrats have been blocking the Republicans attempt to investigate
- It's the responsibility of the president to investigate corruption inside the United States
- The Democrats are accusing Trump of threatening to withhold aid in exchange for favors, and Biden actually did threaten to withhold aid in exchange for favors

Finally, at one point in one of the podcasts, Cruz explained that the important part of the aid – the Javelin anti-tank guided missiles – were never held up.

Now, I know what you're thinking… how on Earth did this thing get to be the number one podcast? Well, if you listen to the quality of the podcast, you'll see why. You get so much clarity, in such a small number of words. It's extremely entertaining – a suspense novel.

And guess what? It looks like we might get some resolution to this impeachment trial soon.

Check out this story from far-left Politico:

> If the Senate decides to consider new impeachment trial witnesses and documents next week, Sen. Josh Hawley plans to try and force votes on everyone from Adam Schiff to Joe Biden.
>
> The Missouri Republican is preparing to file subpoena requests for witnesses and documents that Democrats and Republicans alike won't want to vote on. Hawley's strategy harmonizes with plans from GOP Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas and Rand Paul of Kentucky to force votes to hear from Hunter Biden, the former vice president's son who was on the board of Ukrainian energy company Burisma.
>
> […]If the witness vote succeeds, Hawley aims to force votes on subpoenas for House Intelligence Chairman Schiff (D-Calif.), Vice President Biden, Hunter Biden, Intelligence Community Inspector General Michael Atkinson, the still-unnamed whistleblower who reported Trump's July call with the Ukrainian president and a reported acquaintance of the whistleblower's.

In episode 4, Cruz says that the most likely outcome is that 51 senators vote against new witnesses, it goes to final judgment, Trump is acquitted. The next most likely outcome is 51 senators vote for new witnesses, the Democrats call John Bolton and the Republicans call Hunter Biden. The third mostly likely outcome is voting for more witnesses, and calling more witnesses.

By the way, if you have iTunes, please subscribe to the podcast and rate it 5 stars. Perhaps we can get some independents to listen if they notice how popular it is. I am so excited that so many people are going straight for the most intelligent podcast. It's sometimes fun to put down the entertainment, and just really get to understand the details of something important.

Don't miss episode 5, (which had just come out at time of writing), they're going to be

covering what the Trump defense lawyers said.

What is masculinity, and why do leftists oppose it?

January 27, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Air Force TACPs confirm target locations with their map and GPS

My friend Adina shared a splendid article from the American Thinker with me. People often ask me why I speak about policy and politics so much on a Christian apologetics blog. My usual answer is that things like money and religious liberty are central to how Christians run their lives. But this article made me think of a deeper reason, one that's been the driving force in my life for a long time.

First, let's see some of the article, then I'll talk about why this article is a key to really understanding men like me.

Excerpt:

> An ongoing mantra of the left is that everyone is a victim, with a singular carve-out for white men. A large group of the female population has embraced this chant.
>
> While there may be a number of grievances put forth by this movement, there also comes a theme that is particularly dangerous: the feminist attack on masculinity. This is derived not only from feminists; it comes from the left in general.
>
> There has emerged a war on masculinity. Why? Because masculine men are harder to control under tyrannical socialism. The modern beta male, on the other hand, craves socialism. This is why the left has branded masculinity as toxic: it stands as a roadblock to their endgame.

That's the thesis of the article, and here is a snippet that I want to talk about:

> The feminist hatred for masculinity is only another tool in the toolbox of communism. Masculinity tends to make a man individualistic. Individualistic men are capitalists, not communists. They are men who cherish individual liberty, and they rely on themselves rather than on government. Self-reliance is a four-letter word for leftists, and masculine men are generally self-reliant. Beta males like Pajama Boy rely on government, and such modern men, devoid of any semblance of masculinity, are ideal for leftist indoctrination.
>
> Were the frontiersmen communists or capitalists? How about the cowboys? How about the Navy SEALs or Army Rangers? Sure, the press may find in the military a few Che Guevara t-shirt-wearing idiots and parade them all over the place, but I am willing to bet that the majority of SEAL Team 6 comprises masculine capitalists.
>
> What games do young boys play? They pretend to be cowboys. They pretend to be soldiers. They don't pretend to be soviet textile workers slaving under Stalin's system. They don't pretend to be entitled Millennial brats who congregate at Starbucks and talk about the wonders of socialism, either. Most boys hit the ground embracing masculinity. Some maintain it, but many have it berated out of them by the weak society they walk in or by their leftist parents.
>
> Masculinity leads a man to seek to better himself in many regards, while collectivism thrives on mediocrity. Collectivism in this country is sought by the lazy who don't want to work but feel entitled to free handouts of all kinds.

I can confirm from my reading of SEAL and Ranger autobiographies that they are overwhelmingly conservative in their politics.

OK, so two points about this. First, I grew up in a very liberal environment where masculinity was already under attack starting from elementary school. It started in the public schools with the lazy public school teachers. In college, I saw lazy college students doing non-STEM degrees because they were easy. And then they wanted bailouts for their unpaid student loans.

I really noticed it when I worked for the government during a couple of summers. Most people in unionized jobs just don't have the marketable skills to make it in the private sector, where people are paid based on performance and can easily be fired for failure to perform. Public schools and government are two places where people who can't perform go in order to make money without having to perform. Even their raises are defined by collective bargaining, not individual merit. (My public school system even went on strike, and I would see the teachers holding signs in order to get paid more, instead of doing what normal people do, and producing more). Working in the public sector just not acceptable to people who want to work hard and advance by merit.

The more I experienced this, as a student and as a government employee, the more I realized that I wanted to get as far away as possible from laws and policies that reflect a desire to provide security for lazy people. I wanted these people out of my life. I didn't want them getting my money. I did not want them making the rules that I had to live by. I

wanted to cut government funding and enact right-to-work and school choice laws. Just to stop the forced funding of lazy people through mandatory taxes. I didn't yet realize that there was any masculine-feminine distinction going on, I just knew that these were lazy people, they made poor choices because of their desire for fun and laziness, and they ought to be starving, not getting paid. And as the left started to crack down on free speech, guns, and other freedoms, I started a lifelong journey from blue states to red states. I just wanted nothing to do with these people interfering in my life, and leeching off of me. I wanted to post pictures of a Steyr Aug on Twitter and tag all my female public school teachers and their nanny state allies, who didn't like guns because "they are loud and scary". (Note: I do not yet own a Steyr Aug. Maybe some day.).

My second point is about how this denigration of masculinity works out in relationships.

I wanted to get married pretty much from high school. Since I didn't have a stay at home mom, I decided early on that I wanted that for my children. I can remember thinking about this in my junior year of high school (grade 11). So, I talked to my Dad about it, and he suggested that I not follow my dream of becoming an English teacher, and instead focus on computer science. I was just as good at computer science as English literature in those days – good enough for the class awards every year in both subjects. So, I got the BS and the MS, and then moved to find work that would pay a lot. And I saved a lot of what I earned.

Fast forward to my relationships. What I found is that women who were influenced by leftism had *zero respect* for my ability to lead in areas like education, career and finance. Since they had been taught that masculinity was toxic, they would often prefer younger, penniless, unemployed students who were more easily manipulated. They resented that I would offer them advice about what to study, where to work, and how to save more, which – along with apologetics and raising parrots – is about the only stuff I'm qualified to give advice about! Basically, they had been trained to see male competence as toxic. Male leadership – even when it was clearly demonstrated from past success – was toxic. And the "best" men were the men who let them make decisions based on their feelings, which mostly involved pursuing fun and being irresponsible – and sometimes even immoral. Men exist to give women "feelings", and for no other purpose than that.

Well, that's what I wanted to say about how my experience with anti-masculinity in education, career and relationships has affected me. My masculinity came about naturally, as a result of encountering leftism in different areas of my life. And I think having to deal with it up close just pushed me further in the masculine direction. That is not to say that I am a promiscuous, risk-taking thug. I'm chaste, I'm a software engineer, I don't drink, I have no tattoos or piercings, I've never been arrested, and I've saved most of what I earned. But if I could move to a place where government kept out of my business and out of my wallet, then I'd move. If I could find a woman who respected the strengths of men, then I'd marry her.

I basically want to be in a place where the government and the women around me are respectful of my different priorities and different life goals. Unfortunately, I'm living in a

time of great foolishness, and much of that has been brought about by leftism. Much of my income is confiscated so that other people can spend it and call themselves “generous” with money they did not, and could not, earn themselves. My liberty is constrained, and the people who cost me money or do me harm – illegal immigrants, criminals, terrorists, etc. – are treated better than I am. All in the name of “compassion”. We are in a time and place where people in high places are at war with masculinity. I wish I could opt out of every nanny state policy, but there’s no opt-out.

College professors donate to Democrats over Republicans 95 to 1

January 28, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

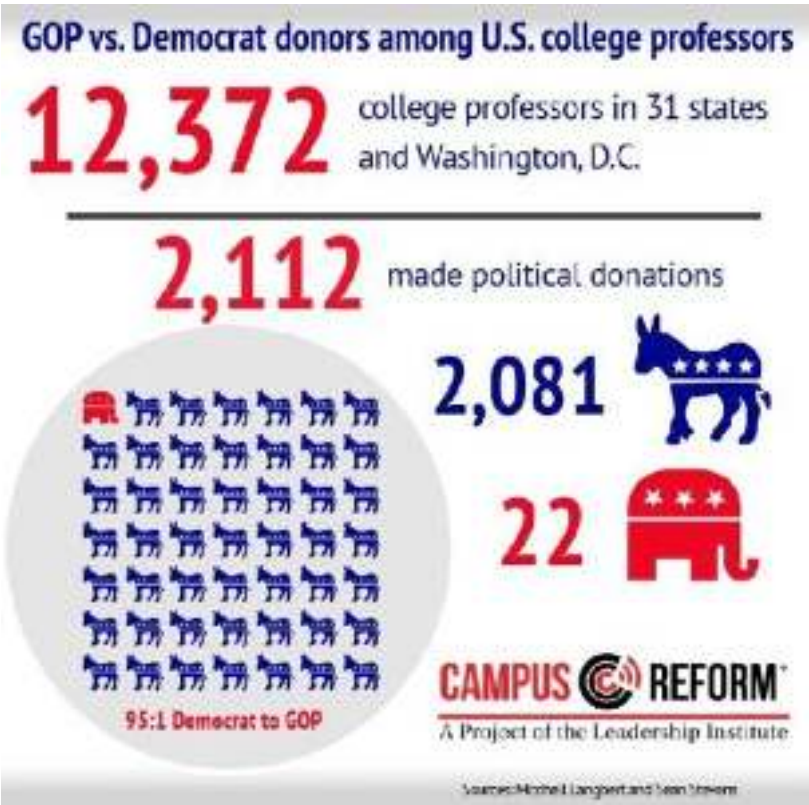

Where do college professors send their political donations?

Why is it that college students, including Christian college students, are becoming so progressive? It's because their professors are all progressive. This isn't just my opinion. You can look at the breakdown of political donations made by college professors to see how many of them donate to Republicans vs Democrats.

Here is the latest from Campus Reform:

> A recent study found that U.S. college professors donate exclusively to Democrats over Republicans by a 95:1 ratio.
>
> Two researchers, Heterodox Academy Director of Research Sean Stevens and Brooklyn College Professor Mitchell Langbert conducted the study, published by the National Association of Scholars. They looked at the political donations of 12,372 college professors at universities in 31 states and the District of Columbia during the past two election cycles in 2015-16 and 2017-18.
>
> Stevens and Langbert conducted their study by looking at political donation data available from the Federal Election Commission.
>
> Of those professors, 2,112 made political donations, 2,081 of which were donated to Democrats. Just 22 of those 2,112 professors donated to Republicans. Nine professors donated to both Republicans and Democrats, according to the study.

> The findings indicate that professors donated to Democrats more than Republicans by a 95:1 ratio. In addition to the number of professors who donated to Democrats versus Republicans, the study also revealed how many professors are registered to vote as Democrats compared with professors who are registered as Republicans. Nearly half of the 12,372 professors — 48.5 percent — are registered Democrats while just 5.7 percent are registered Republicans.

Given that, it's not hard to see why Democrats like Elizabeth Warren want to provide those college professors with $1.3 trillion of taxpayer money – which is what the student loan bailout does.

What explains all of this?

Consider this essay by secular libertarian professor Robert Nozick who explains why university professors are liberal.

Excerpt:

> What factor produced feelings of superior value on the part of intellectuals? I want to focus on one institution in particular: schools. As book knowledge became increasingly important, schooling–the education together in classes of young people in reading and book knowledge–spread. Schools became the major institution outside of the family to shape the attitudes of young people, and almost all those who later became intellectuals went through schools. There they were successful. They were judged against others and deemed superior. They were praised and rewarded, the teacher's favorites. How could they fail to see themselves as superior? Daily, they experienced differences in facility with ideas, in quick-wittedness. The schools told them, and showed them, they were better.
>
> The schools, too, exhibited and thereby taught the principle of reward in accordance with (intellectual) merit. To the intellectually meritorious went the praise, the teacher's smiles, and the highest grades. In the currency the schools had to offer, the smartest constituted the upper class. Though not part of the official curricula, in the schools the intellectuals learned the lessons of their own greater value in comparison with the others, and of how this greater value entitled them to greater rewards.
>
> The wider market society, however, taught a different lesson. There the greatest rewards did not go to the verbally brightest. There the intellectual skills were not *most* highly valued. Schooled in the lesson that they were most valuable, the most deserving of reward, the most entitled to reward, how could the intellectuals, by and large, fail to resent the capitalist society which deprived them of the just deserts to which their superiority "entitled" them? Is it surprising that what the schooled intellectuals felt for capitalist society was a deep and sullen animus that, although clothed with various publicly appropriate reasons, continued even when those particular reasons were shown to be inadequate?

It's very important to understand what is motivating university professors, especially

ones who are in departments divorced from reality, like English and victim studies of various sorts. They are literally teaching classes in topic that have no accountability to reality. It’s just indoctrination in what the professor believes. These professors think they are smart, but they don’t earn anything like productive people in the private sector, e.g. – software engineers. It creates a deep sense of inferiority that makes them hostile to the capitalist system. Their only hope is a powerful government that redirects money from those who serve customers (private sector companies) to “wordsmiths” like themselves.

What repentance looks like: successful pick-up artist converts, unpublishes his books

January 29, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

Many of you will know about a very successful pick-up artist named RooshV. Roosh has many written books about how to bed women in different countries. But something funny happened recently… Roosh converted to Orthodox Christianity (large O). I blogged about it, and I was very cautious, but also hopeful. Well, some time has passed since that first blog post, and there is some big news.

Read this from his blog:

> In May of last year I unpublished 11 of my books because they were leading men directly to sin. That action was not enough. Today I have unpublished several more books, including my top seller Game, along with numerous articles, videos, podcasts, and forum postings.
>
> The prospect of banning Game last May was too difficult, even though my conscience was bothered by the contents… It made sense to ban all my Bang books, which explicitly instructed men how to have casual sex, and it wasn't that hard on my wallet since they were older books that had passed their sales peak, but if I were to ban Game as well, my income would be wiped out. I prayed on the issue, asking God to help me make the right decision.

He explains that "Game" is a recent book that is his biggest source of income, but he didn't like what was in it:

> The book… trained and steered men for the main purpose of achieving bodily pleasure through casual sex. In some ways, it even wired men's brains to view

> women as objects to be won purely through knowledge, effort, and physical attractiveness. Even my book Day Bang, which has no sexual content, trained men to see women as objects to be won for pleasurable ends through the mathematics of approaching a lot of women in the hopes of finding one who was horny and loose. When faced with a hard life decision, I would pray for guidance, but this decision was easy: the books had to go.

Now, I don't think that Roosh is saying that all women are just wonderful and pure as the driven snow. I think he would agree with me when I say treat good women well – good women who love God, and prefer good men to bad ones. For the ones who prefer bad men and don't want God, just avoid them. It's never OK to treat any woman as "prey" or objectify them. They're made to know God too, just like the men, and we need to treat them like that.

I really like this part below. We should all be thankful that God doesn't ask us for more than we can bear. Because Jesus lived among us, he understands our weaknesses. The Holy Spirit draws us gently, letting us choose to resist his leading or to not resist it:

> […]I lament more the colossal amount of time I wasted on these works than monies lost.
>
> Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? —Mark 8:34-37
>
> It's worth noting how patient God was by not compelling me to complete a change I couldn't handle. The first round of book unpublishing felt exceedingly stressful, and I wrestled with the issue for many days. God saw my distress and allowed my conscience to remain clear upon banning only some of the books, which still fell short of His expectations. He let me complete the [speaking] tour with no worries about where my future income would come from. Once the tour was completed, and I rested for a month, he deemed me ready for the next step. He enlightened a fellow Christian to help re-activate my conscience, and then allowed me to complete the job of removing the rest of my books when I was spiritually stronger and more able to handle the prospect of not earning a sufficient income. This time around, I was only mildly afflicted for one night before becoming overjoyed at the prospect of making an honest living. I'm happy to announce my retirement as a peddler of sex.

Isn't it crazy to think that someone is taking the Bible seriously on issues that will cause him so much financial distress? But that's how God is. God isn't our cosmic butler, or our boyfriend. Jesus says that he wants to be number one in our hearts, and that if we desire other things more than we desire him, then we can't have him. Roosh's thorough repentance is a pretty rare thing to find, even among many "conservative" Christians. It's certainly a challenge for me to be that good. How did Roosh re-prioritize his life so well

after a life of recreational sex? Because God reached out to him, just like Paul said in Acts 17:24-27. We are saved by grace, and not through our own efforts.

In the rest of his post, he explains what practical adjustments he is going to make so that he is able to keep his conscience clear. Men are good at making ends meet so that we can be who we really are, and not compromise our convictions. We don't allow our feelings to distract us, so that we end up in a place where it is too difficult to keep to our principles.

We should always be thankful when someone turns back to Christ after a time away. People who turn back to God can have strong convictions and make a huge difference. It shows the power of God to transform those who have turned away from him. Whenever things look grim in the world, always remember that God has the power to lead non-Christians to repentance. Hope is never lost, God is always actively seeking a relationship with every single one of us.

By the way, it would be worth it for you to ask God to continue to lead Roosh, and to make a difference to the people who respect him. He has a large following, and now Roosh has something even better for them than what he had for them before. It's good for a man to control himself so that he can turn off his selfishness and kind to a good woman. It's good for a man to stop grading women with his eyes, and instead look to help the ones who are open to turning away from themselves to instead grow in their faith. Ignore the bad ones, help the ones who are willing to serve God.

N.T. Wright: what is the best explanation for the early belief in a bodily resurrection?

January 30, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's investigate the historical facts

Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are progressive). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's a video of his case for the resurrection:

You can read an article similar to the lecture here.

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable* apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> The Christian claim from the beginning was that the question of Jesus's resurrection was a question, not of the internal mental and spiritual states of his followers a few days after his crucifixion, but about something that had happened in the real, public world.
>
> This "something" left not only an empty tomb, but a broken loaf at Emmaus and footprints in the sand by the lake among its physical mementoes. It also left his followers with a lot of explaining to do, but with a transformed worldview which is only explicable on the assumption that something really did happen, even though it stretched their existing worldviews to breaking point.
>
> What I want to do here is to examine this early Christian claim, to ask what can be said about it historically, and to enquire, more particularly, what sort of "believing" we are talking about when we ask whether we – whether "we" be scientists or historians or mathematicians or theologians – can "believe" that which "the resurrection" actually refers to.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when

he died?

2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an invented exaltation was already available to do the job.
3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.
5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

Are Mormon doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

January 31, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out

> of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is

> central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-

> Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

All six Democrat senators running for president in 2020 vote against bill to ban infanticide

February 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wil Trump remember how Democrats voted during his re-election campaign? Republicans introduced a bill in the Senate to require that doctors must provide medical care to babies BORN ALIVE during an abortion. There were 50 Republicans present for the vote. All 50 supported the bill. But 44 out 47 Democrats present voted for infanticide, including 6 who are running for President in 2020.

Here's how McConnell introduced the bill: (H/T Pulpit & Pen)

> But first, in a few hours the Senate will vote on advancing a straight-forward piece of legislation to protect newborn babies.
>
> This legislation is simple. It would simply require that medical professionals give the standard care and treatment to newborn babies who have survived an attempted abortion as any other newborn baby would receive in any other circumstances.
>
> It isnt about new restrictions on abortion. It isn't about changing options available to women. It's just about recognizing that a newborn baby is a newborn baby, period.
>
> This Bill would make clear that in the United States of American, in the year 2019, the medical professionals on-hand when a baby is born alive need to maintain their basic ethical and professional responsibilities to that newborn.

> It would make sure our laws reflect the fact that the human rights of newborn boys and girls are innate. They don't come and go based on whatever the circumstances. If that medical professional comes face-to-face with a baby who's been born alive, they are looking at a human being with human rights, period.

So how did it go? Well, *all the Republicans in the Senate voted for it*. And *none of them voted against it*. The bill failed, though. It failed because 44 Democrat senators voted against it, and it needs 60 votes to pass.

What I think is interesting from a strategic point of view is that 6 of the 44 senators who voted against it are running for President.

Here are the 6, maybe 7, Democrat senators running for President:

- Cory Booker
- Kirsten Gillibrand
- Kamala Harris
- Amy Klobuchar
- Elizabeth Warren
- Bernie Sanders
- Sherrod Brown (maybe)

If one of those candidates ends up being the Democrat nominee, Trump will be able to use their vote on this infanticide bill in debates and in election ads.

And it's not just these Democrat Presidential candidates – infanticide is now the mainstream view of most Democrat politicians.

Life News reports that more states are introducing legislation to remove all restrictions on abortion:

> New York, Vermont, New Mexico and now Rhode Island politicians are pushing radical pro-abortion legislation that could legalize the killing of unborn babies for basically any reason up to birth in their states.
>
> Earlier this week, Rhode Island lawmakers introduced legislation to keep abortion legal and unrestricted if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*, the AP reports.

It was just New York, Virginia, Rhode Island, New Mexico and Vermont at the end of January.

But in February, Illinois can be added to the list:

> "The Democratic supermajority's proposals now pending in the Illinois General Assembly are the most pro-abortion legislative measures of their type in the country," said Peter Breen, Vice President and Senior Counsel for the Thomas More Society, and former Illinois House Minority Floor Leader. "The barbaric procedures promoted by this legislation are nothing short of infanticide. These bills go well beyond the recent New York law and would turn Illinois into a third-

> trimester abortion destination and an underage abortion haven.”

Will Democrat voters get on board with infanticide? I think some of their liberal special interest groups will. But think about how independents supported Trump’s opposition to infanticide in his State of the Union speech. I think that the Democrats are being forced to move their party too far to the left to win another election. All it takes is for pro-lifers to introduce legislation, have them vote on it, and then make the appropriate election ads.

No one can win a presidential by appealing only to their base. It comes down to who wins the independents. Trump is now the moderate candidate on social issues. The Democrats are pro-abortion extremists. They won’t win a majority of independents in a general election. They’ve just slid too far to the left.

NFL approves deceptive Michael Bloomberg anti-gun ad for Super Bowl, but bans pro-life ads

February 2, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

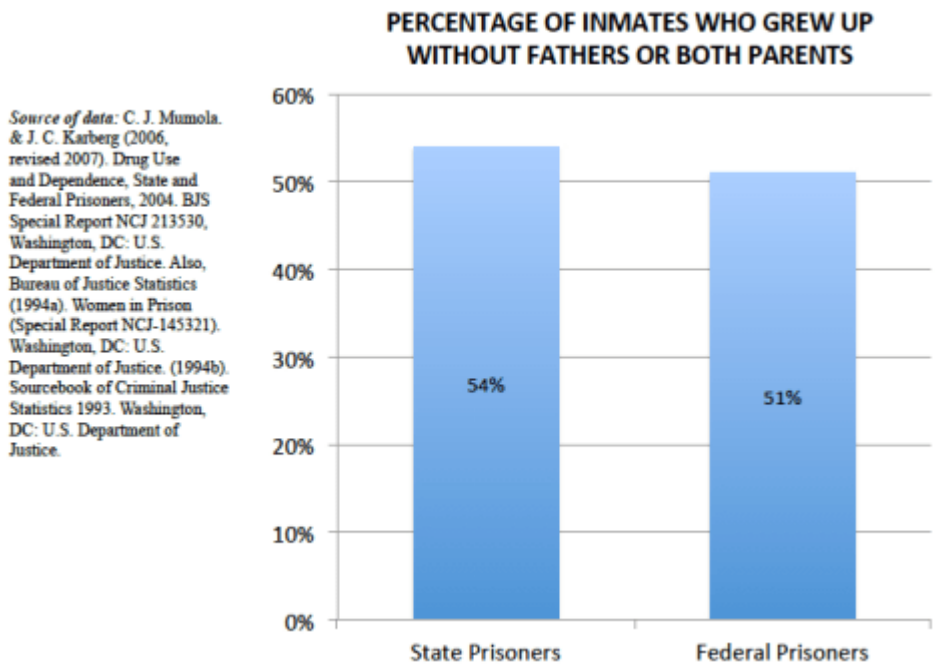

I haven't watched an NFL game since Tim Tebow stopped playing football. I stopped watching because I saw how differently NFL football sportscasters treated Tebow compared to Colin Kaepernick. I also noticed that Fox Sports fired a broadcaster for disagreeing with homosexuality. The NFL and their broadcasters are secular leftists, so I shouldn't be giving them my money.

Fox Sports is at it again by banning a pro-life ad while airing pro-LGBT ad.

Life News reports:

> FOX Sports apparently has no problem airing controversial ads during the 2020 Super Bowl — just not a pro-life commercial.
>
> According to NBC News, this year's big game between the Kansas City Chiefs and the San Francisco 49ers will include a commercial featuring drag queens/LGBTQ activists.
>
> Meanwhile, pro-life advocates with the new Faces of Choice organization said they have been waiting at least six months for an answer from FOX about their ad.
>
> The drag queen ad from Sabra hummus already is stirring up controversy. It features drag queens Kim Chi and Miz Cracker from "RuPaul's Drag Race."
>
> […]Faces of Choice leaders said they have been trying for more than six months to purchase ad time during the Super Bowl, but FOX Sports has repeatedly ignored them.

According to ABC News, the NFL also rejected a pro-Second-Amendment ad that didn't even show any guns, but merely praised defending your home and family.

But the NFL does allow misleading ads from anti-gun sources, like Democrat presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg.

Fox News reports:

> Democratic presidential candidate Mike Bloomberg's $10 million 2020 Super Bowl ad includes a misleading statistic concerning the number of children killed in violent gun-related crimes, and inaccurately suggests that an adult victim of gun crime in Texas was a child, Fox News has found.
>
> In the raw and emotional one-minute spot, Calandrian Simpson Kemp recalls her son's death: "On a Friday morning, George was shot. George didn't survive. I just kept saying, 'You cannot tell me that the child that I gave birth to, is no longer here.' Lives are being lost every day. It is a national crisis."
>
> A statistic immediately appears on the screen: "2,900 CHILDREN DIE FROM GUN VIOLENCE EVERY YEAR." The number is not attributed to any source.
>
> However, a recent report from the Bloomberg-founded group Everytown for Gun Safety came up with that same number — **but only when it included teenagers ages 18 and 19 in the calculation.** Bloomberg's advertisement makes no mention of older teenagers and suggests that the statistic is referring to younger children only. Washington Free Beacon reporter Stephen Gutowski found that once adults were removed from the calculation, the number dropped by nearly half.
>
> Additionally, court documents from a Texas state appellate court reviewed by Fox News show that the victim referenced in the advertisement, George Kemp, was 20 years old at the time of his death.
>
> "On September 26, 2013, just before midnight, the police received a dispatch for shots fired," the court wrote in its opinion, which denied an attempt to throw out evidence in the case. "When they arrived, they discovered a deceased male, later identified as George Kemp, age 20, lying face down in a pool of blood."
>
> The court said the case arose from a "gang-related shooting," writing that "two groups of young men" had met that night "for a fight," including a group led by "B. Dilworth, which included … Kemp."
>
> Those details were not disclosed in Bloomberg's advertisement.

So it was gang violence and her "child" was ***20 years old***. But Bloomberg isn't going to tell you that. And the NFL executives are happy to show his lies – they don't care about self-defense against criminals. They all have armed security.

The ad doesn't say whether the woman in question got pregnant outside of marriage with some hot bad boy. But I noticed that she is black, and the fatherless rate for the (very progressive) African American black community is about 70%. Fatherless children are

statistically far more prone to join gangs, and get into criminal behavior. By the way, speaking as a non-white conservative, that 70% out of wedlock birth number for black women might give you a hint about why men like me struggle to find marriage-ready women.

Here are the facts:

> **A study of adolescents convicted of homicide in adult court found that at the time of the crimes, 42.9 percent of their parents had never been married, 29.5 percent were divorced and 8.9 percent were separated. Less than 20 percent of these children were from married parent households.**
> Patrick Darby, Wesley Allan, Javad Kashani, Kenneth Hartke and John Reid, "Analysis of 112 Juveniles Who Committed Homicide: Characteristics and a Closer Look at Family Abuse," *Journal of Family Violence* 13 (1998): 365-374.
>
> **Boys who are fatherless from birth are 3.061 times as likely to go to jail as peers from intact families, while boys who do not see their father depart until they are 10 to 14 years old are 2.396 times as likely to go to jail as peers from intact families.** Cynthia C. Harper and Sara S. McLanahan, "Father Absence and Youth Incarceration," Journal of Research on Adolescence 14 (2004): 369-397
>
> **"Among married two-parent families, whether white or black, the crime rate was very low. The capacity and determination to maintain stable married relationships, not race, was cited as the pivotal factor. Chaotic, broken communities resulted from chaotic, broken families."** Patrick Fagan, "The Real Root Causes of Violent Crime: The Breakdown of Marriage, Family, and Community," The Heritage Foundation, Backgrounder #1026, March 1995.

You can't put an ad in the Super Bowl urging women to get married before having sex, because that sounds like some sort of antiquated religious teaching. And Democrat-voting women don't believe in Christian morals. Michael Bloomberg certainly doesn't have the balls to run an ad against women who are irresponsible with sex. He doesn't care about the root cause of crime and violence, and the NFL is happy to show his lies because they don't care either.

I'm going to continue not watching NFL football. I don't give them any money, and I don't watch their advertisers. I'm astonished that conservatives and Christians continue to throw money at the NFL, Disney, ESPN, Hollywood and other secular leftists. It just goes to show you that when the need for entertainment goes against moral convictions, the need for entertainment wins every time. Just to be clear, I don't watch any American pro-sports. And I watch about 1 (conservative) movie per year in theaters. I don't have cable, Netflix, Hulu or any other left-wing entertainment service.

If Elizabeth Warren wins in 2020, expect her to end Christian private schools

February 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Elizabeth Warren will says Christian schools are her enemy

It's hard to see into the minds of the Democrat party candidates to know what they believe about God. But I think that support for infanticide and opposition to Christian churches, schools and other organizations is a pretty good sign of what they really believe. Elizabeth Warren for example is pretty clearly not a Christian, and has an obvious contempt for the Bible.

Here's the story from Western Journal:

> On Sunday Sen. Elizabeth Warren shared a HuffPost article on Twitter bashing private Christian schools for having "anti-LGBTQ+ policies."
>
> The article focused attention on a U.S. Supreme Court case attacking Montana private religious schools and attempting to take away tax credits to individuals who contributed to private schools because the money supports policies that "discriminate against LGBTQ staff and employees."
>
> Such policies include having bathrooms designated for people according to their biological gender and hiring faculty and staff who abide by Christian marriage values.
>
> "States should focus on funding public schools, not private ones — especially ones that maintain anti-LGBTQ+ policies. We must ensure every kid–especially

> LGBTQ+ kids–can get a high-quality public education," Warren tweeted.

The article explains that these Christians schools respect what the Bible teaches in various areas. Some schools expect teaches to be Christians. Others affirm a Biblical view of sexuality – sex allowed only within a heterosexual marriage. Some of them just don't want men in women's bathrooms. But none of this is OK with Elizabeth Warren, because she thinks that the hurt feelings of LGBT people are more important than the Constitutional rights of Christians.

Why might Warren be taking this position? Well, Democrats have traditionally enjoyed massive support from public schools. And public schools see private schools as threats to their monopoly. When private schools offer children a better education, public schools prefer to shut them down rather than work harder.

Take a look at these donations by the American Federation of Teachers:

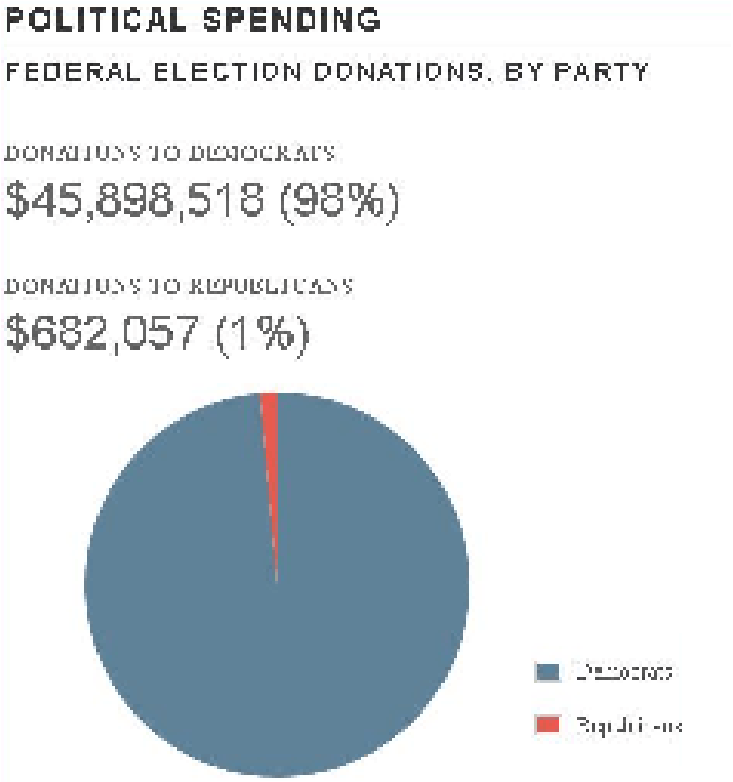

Political contributions by the American Federation of Teachers union

The article notes:

> Public school groups have been vocal about their feelings towards the case, claiming that it "could have a devastating effect on education and play a major role in disintegrating the U.S. doctrine of the separation of church and state."
>
> Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said that this case could turn the American understanding of "separation of church and state" upside down, and that "it will basically change over 200 years of practice in the United States," The Daily Wire reported.
>
> Those in favor of public funding for private schools argue that school choice and voucher programs give lower income students the same opportunities as

> students from more well-to-do families.

Democrats like to talk about how they don’t take money from “big corporations”. But if you take a look at that graph above, you’ll see that some people have bought themselves a whole lot of influence with the Democrat party. Do these unionized public school teachers and administrators have YOUR interests at heart?

Voting rights for terrorists and rapists, death penalty for unborn babies up to 9 months

February 4, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Boston Marathon terrorist about to place bomb behind 8-year-old child

Wow. It seems to me that the Democrats had a pretty good chance of competing against Trump in the 2020 election, with their presumed nominee, Bernie Sanders. He's wildly popular with young people. He's raising tons of money from rich progressives. All Bernie has to do is just not say anything crazy, and he'll be competitive. Unfortunately, he can't control himself.

Here's a report from the radically-leftist Boston Herald:

> U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders says the right to vote should extend to those in jail — even the Boston Marathon bomber.
>
> "If somebody commits a serious crime — sexual assault, murder — they're going to be punished," Sanders said in his CNN town hall talk Monday night. But, "I think the right to vote is inherent to our democracy. Yes, even for terrible people."

The majority of convicted criminals would vote Democrat if they could, because Democrats are less strict on crime than Republicans. Democrats are always looking to allow more people who will vote Democrat to vote. They want to lower the voting age, because young people who don't pay taxes naturally vote for free stuff. And they also want to import low-skilled immigrants and put them on a path to citizenship. Low-skilled immigrants pay less into the system than they use in education, health care, etc. They also vote Democrat.

Medicare for All

Bernie also has a long list of big spending programs, because he thinks that $22 trillion in

debt and trillion dollar deficits is no big deal. But the truth is, we're already out of money for the big social welfare programs that Democrats already passed. We certainly don't have money for any new ones.

Far-left CBS News explains:

> Social Security is on a path to become insolvent in 2035, with only enough money cover about 80 percent of its obligations.
>
> Medicare would become insolvent even sooner, by 2026, if no changes are made to payroll taxes or how health providers are paid.
>
> […][M]any Democratic presidential candidates are calling for expanding Medicare benefits — even proposing "Medicare for All" — rather than addressing the program's worsening finances.

How will Democrats pay for MORE spending when we can't pay for the spending we already have? Tax increases won't be enough, so they'll have to nationalize private 401K retirement plans like other socialist nations have.

And what about Medicare for All? Well, they can just seize the money that's being used to buy private health insurance now, and put everyone into a government-run single payer system. That's what happens in Canada right now. People who pay taxes pay for the all the costs, but they still have to get in line behind those who don't pay anything in taxes. The average cost (to middle-class taxpayers) is about $11,000 per year. That's a lot more than people pay for private health insurance which delivers higher quality care. But the costs are higher for less quality, because the people who pay into the system are covering the people who don't pay.

And remember, abortion through all nine months of pregnancy is taxpayer-funded in Canada's single payer system. Pro-life taxpayers subsidize abortions. If you don't like it, you can leave the country.

Infanticide

All of the Democrat presidential candidates support infanticide, according to this article from The Stream:

> On February 25, 44 Democrat senators, including all 6 declared presidential candidates, voted against the Born Alive Protection Act. Put another way, they voted for infanticide.

New candidate Pete Buttigieg is also in favor of infanticide: abortion through all nine months of pregnancy.

If you're voting for a Democrat in 2020, then you're going to get infanticide if they win. No use complaining later that you're pro-life if you support the killing of viable unborn children who survive botched abortions.

Raising the minimum wage

Another policy supported by many Democrats is raising federal minimum wage rates.

Let's take a look at a study reported in the Daily Caller:

> California's minimum wage increase has cost the state thousands of jobs worth of growth in the state's booming restaurant industry, according to a recent study by the University of California Riverside.
>
> California passed a bill in 2016 to bring the state's minimum wage up to $15 an hour. For businesses with more than 25 employees, the state's minimum wage rose to $12 in January and will hit $15 in January of 2022. Other businesses have until 2023 before the full $15-an-hour minimum takes effect.
>
> […]Researchers also found that the minimum wage slowed growth more in low-income areas.
>
> […]Researchers estimate that the minimum wage increases will cost the state roughly 30,000 jobs from 2017 to 2022.

If you force businesses to pay workers more, them employers are left with no choice but to lay off workers, or cut hours.

Minimum wage jobs are entry level jobs. They're not meant to allow people to buy a house, have children, or travel the world on private jets. People get them in order to get something on their resumes so that they can move up to more challenging jobs that pay more. If a person doesn't want to move up to a more challenging job that pays more, then they shouldn't be complaining that they can't make the same life choices as software engineers, nurses and electricians. Jobs don't all pay the same, because some are harder than others.

If voters chose candidates based on whether their policies would actually work to prevent poverty, they would never vote for Democrats. But so many people in America don't vote based on what results policies will achieve. They vote in order to feel something about themselves. Transferring wealth from "rich" employers to "poor" minimum wage workers feels good. So they vote for it. And when those workers are laid off, they don't care because they've already stopped paying attention.

Summary, MP3 audio, video clips, and Democrat responses for Trump's 2020 State of the Union

February 5, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump State of the Union SOTU 2020

The speech is posted at the White House web site, along with a transcript. In this post, I'll try to mention the main topics and the Democrat reactions. Summary: Trump didn't appeal to feelings. He cited objective facts and figures to support his achievements, and he illustrated the benefits of his policies by pointing out the stories of specific people in the audience. Best! SOTU! Ever!

You can watch the video here: (transcript)

The MP3 file is here.

Main topics:

- call for unity
- tax cuts
- de-regulation
- job creation, especially in manufacturing
- rising wages
- millions of people lifted out of welfare programs
- fair trade
- new free trade agreements, e.g. USMCA
- infrastructure improvement
- immigration reform
- border security
- cracking down on human trafficking and sex trafficking
- preventing crimes committed by criminal illegal aliens

- rolling back Obamacare mandates
- allow critically ill patients “right to try” lifesaving drugs
- cutting healthcare costs
- cutting prescription drug costs
- reform VA healthcare
- more spending on medical research
- energy production boom
- for the first time, USA is net exporter of energy
- criminal justice reform to help non-violent offenders
- school choice to put poor children in better schools
- asks Congress to pass late-term abortion ban
- America first foreign policy
- more military spending
- getting NATO allies to spend more on their military
- making peace with North Korea
- promoting democracy and prosperity in Venezuela
- destroying Islamic State (ISIS) in the Middle East
- focus on counterterrorism (not nation building) in Afghanistan
- America’s greatness

Clips:

Celebrating child born at 21 weeks, calling for late term abortion ban:

Rush Limbaugh Presidential Medal of Freedom:

School choice scholarships for poor children:

Religious liberty and second amendment:

Surprise military homecoming for family:

Democrat reponses

Democrat sat on their hands for school choice:

> Numerous Democrats appeared to not celebrate a fourth-grade black girl who received a scholarship on Tuesday night from President Donald Trump during the State of the Union Address.
>
> […]“The next step forward in building an inclusive society is making sure that every young American gets a great education and the opportunity to achieve the American Dream,” Trump said. “Yet, for too long, countless American children have been trapped in failing government schools. To rescue these students, 18 States have created school choice in the form of Opportunity Scholarships.”
>
> “The programs are so popular, that tens of thousands of students remain on waiting lists,” Trump continued. “One of those students is Janiyah Davis, a fourth grader from Philadelphia. Janiyah’s mom Stephanie is a single parent. She would do anything to give her daughter a better future. But last year, that future was

> put further out of reach when Pennsylvania's [Democrat] Governor vetoed legislation to expand school choice for 50,000 children."
>
> […]"Janiyah and Stephanie are in the gallery this evening," Trump continued. "But there is more to their story. Janiyah, I am pleased to inform you that your long wait is over. I can proudly announce tonight that an Opportunity Scholarship has become available, it is going to you, and you will soon be heading to the school of your choice!"
>
> "Now, I call on the Congress to give 1 million American children the same opportunity Janiyah has just received," Trump continued. "Pass the Education Freedom Scholarships and Opportunity Act — because no parent should be forced to send their child to a failing government school."

Democrats sat on their hands for record low unemployment, high wages, and a booming stock market:

> Democrat members of the House and Senate largely refused to celebrate the Trump administration's economic successes for minority communities and women on Tuesday night during President Donald Trump's State of the Union Address.
>
> […]From the instant I took office, I moved rapidly to revive the United States economy — slashing a record number of job-killing regulations, enacting historic and record-setting tax cuts, and fighting for fair and reciprocal trade agreements.
>
> […]Since my election, we have created 7 million new jobs — 5 million more than Government experts projected during the previous administration.
>
> […]The unemployment rates for African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Asian-Americans have reached the lowest levels in history. African-American youth unemployment has reached an all-time low.
>
> African-American poverty has declined to the lowest rate ever recorded.
>
> The unemployment rate for women reached the lowest level in almost 70 years — and last year, women filled 72 percent of all new jobs added.
>
> The veterans' unemployment rate dropped to a record low.
>
> The unemployment rate for disabled Americans has reached an all-time low.
>
> Workers without a high school diploma have achieved the lowest unemployment rate recorded in United States history.
>
> A record number of young Americans are now employed.
>
> Under the last administration, more than 10 million people were added to the food stamp rolls. Under my Administration, 7 million Americans have come off of food stamps, and 10 million people have been lifted off of welfare.
>
> In 8 years under the last administration, over 300,000 working-age people dropped out of the workforce. In just 3 years of my Administration, 3.5 million

> working-age people have joined the workforce.
>
> Since my election, the net worth of the bottom half of wage-earners has increased by 47 percent — 3 times faster than the increase for the top 1 percent. After decades of flat and falling incomes, wages are rising fast — and, wonderfully, they are rising fastest for low-income workers, who have seen a 16 percent pay-increase since my election. This is a blue collar boom.
>
> Real median household income is now at the highest level ever recorded!
>
> Since my election, United States stock markets have soared 70 percent, adding more than $12 trillion to our Nation's wealth, transcending anything anyone believed was possible — this, as other countries are not doing well. Consumer confidence has reached amazing new heights.
>
> All of those millions of people with 401(k)s and pensions are doing far better than they have ever done before with increases of 60, 70, 80, 90, and even 100 percent.

Democrats sat on their hands for tax cuts for investments in poorer neighborhoods:

> Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona broke from her Democratic colleagues by giving a standing ovation for "opportunity zones" during President Trump's State of the Union address Tuesday. While the majority of Democrats sat as Trump commended Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., for his work on opportunity zones, Sinema stood and applauded her colleague.
>
> Opportunity zones were created in tandem with the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. They provide tax advantages for certain investments in lower income areas.
>
> "Jobs and investments are pouring into nine thousand previously neglected neighborhoods, thanks to opportunity zones. A plan spearheaded by Senator Tim Scott as part of our great Republican tax cuts," Trump said as Sinema stood to clap.

Trump's approval rating is now at 49%, the highest it's ever been. Higher than Obama's was at this time in his presidency, and Obama won re-election.

Why doesn’t God make his existence more obvious to people?

February 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

Have you ever heard someone say that if God existed, he would give us more evidence? This is called the “hiddenness of God” argument. It’s also known as the argument from “rational non-belief”.

Basically the argument is something like this:

1. God is all powerful
2. God is all loving
3. God wants all people to know about him
4. Some people don’t know about him
5. Therefore, there is no God.

In this argument, the atheist is saying that he’s looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that’s logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden when our eternal destination depends on our knowledge of his existence.

What reason could God have for remaining hidden?

Dr. Michael Murray, a brilliant professor of philosophy at Franklin & Marshall College, has found a reason for God to remain hidden.

His paper on divine hiddenness is here:

"Coercion and the Hiddenness of God", American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us. Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him. God places a higher value on people having the free will to respond to him, and if he shows too much of himself he takes away their free choice to respond to him, because once he is too overt about his existence, people will just feel obligated to belief in him in order to avoid being punished.

But believing in God just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants for us. If it is too obvious to us that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and behave morally out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out of interest *in him*, just like we might try to get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God's veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don't seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to reach out to us and draw us to him. But I do think that we are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist's argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. In order to derive a contradiction, God MUST NOT have any possible reason to remain hidden. If he has a reason for remaining hidden that is consistent with his goodness, then the argument will not go through.

When Murray offers a possible reason for God to remain hidden in order to allow people to freely respond to him, then the argument is defeated. God wants people to respond to him freely so that there is a genuine love relationship – not coercion by overt threat of damnation. To rescue the argument, the atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free choice of his creatures to reject him.

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007).

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion

- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment

February 7, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Reformed Baptist theologian Wayne Grudem speaks on the Bible and capital punishment.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?
- what did God say to Noah about CP?
- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?
- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?
- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?
- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?
- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the “whole life ethic” and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

The Bible is awesome because it gives us knowledge about God’s character. How are we supposed to act in a way that is pleasing to God if we don’t know what he thinks of the issues of the day? We won’t know how we are supposed to act unless we know who God is first. And that’s why when we read the Bible we should be looking to find out the truth about who God is.

How a small third world country became the top economy in Latin America

February 8, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

South America Map

So, I've been watching the Democrat debates, and I've noticed that all of their candidates are proposing economic policies that they say will improve the lives of Americans. But have the candidates ever been able to try out these policies, and proven that they work? One way to evaluate policies is to look at other countries that have tried them, to see if those policies are proven to work.

I've been reading a book called "Money, Greed and God" with my friend Carla, which talks about what does and does not work to alleviate poverty. The author basically outlined two approaches. In the first approach, the government 1) confiscates the wealth of the most productive workers, 2) nationalizes (takes control of) the businesses of the most successful entrepreneurs, 3) restricts trading between citizens and with other countries, with minimum wage, price controls and tariffs. In the second approach, the government does the opposite: 1) lowers taxes on the most productive workers, and 2) lets entrepreneurs compete to provide goods and services to consumers, and 3) lowers restrictions on internal trading and trading with other countries, e.g. – eliminating minimum wage, tariffs and price controls.

Let's take a look at two Latin American countries that went in opposite directions. Venezuela and Chile. Then we can finally find out which policies actually achieve results for the people.

Here is how Chile started out in 1973.

PROBLEM: Price controls and tariffs:

> Prices for the majority of basic goods were fixed by the government in 1973. Even though Chile was and still is a small economy, the level of protectionism was high. By the end of 1973, the nominal average tariff for imports was 105 percent, with a maximum of 750 percent. Non-tariff barriers also impeded the import of more than 3,000 out of 5,125 registered goods. Just as economic theory predicts, large queues in front of stores were usual in Santiago and other cities in Chile as a result of the scarcity caused by price controls.

PROBLEM: Government taking over private businesses:

> The decline in GDP during 1973 reflected a shrinking productive sector in which the main assets were gradually falling under government control or ownership through expropriations and other government interventions in the economy.

PROBLEM: Deficit spending and government printing money:

> The fiscal situation was chaotic. The deficit reached 55 percent of expenditures and 20 percent of GDP and was the main cause of inflation because the Central Bank was issuing money to finance the government deficit.

SOLUTION: lower or eliminate restrictions on trade:

> The most important economic reform in Chile was to open trade, primarily through a flat, low tariff on imports. Much of the credit for Chilean economic reforms in the following 30 years should be given to the decision to open our economy to the rest of the world. The strength of Chilean firms, productive sectors, and institutions grew up thanks to that fundamental change.

SOLUTION: let competing entrepreneurs in the private sector provide goods and services to consumers:

> A second fundamental reform was to allow the private sector to recover, adding dynamism to the economy. In fact, important sectors such as electricity generation and distribution and telecommunications were still managed by state companies. After we implemented a massive privatization plan that included more than 50,000 new direct shareholders and several million indirect (through pension funds) shareholders, these companies were managed by private entrepreneurs that carried out important expansion plans.

SOLUTION: let people take responsibility for their own lives instead of depending on government:

> The 1981 reform of the Chilean pension fund system deserves special mention. Under the leadership of Minister José Piñera, an individual capitalization account program was designed with specific contributions, administered by private

> institutions selected by the workers. The Chilean Administradoras de Fondos de Pension (Pension Fund Administrators or AFP) has been replicated in more than 20 countries, and more than 100 million workers in different parts of the world use these accounts to save for retirement.

SOLUTION: allow parents to choose the school that fits their needs from competing education providers, and push school administration down from the federal government to the municipal level, where it would be more responsive to voter's needs:

> In 1981, Chile introduced a universal educational voucher system for students in both its elementary and secondary schools. At the same time, the central government transferred the administration of public schools to municipal governments… The financial value of the voucher did not depend on family income.

RESULTS: And I was able to find a nice short, description of how all that worked out for them on the far-left Wikipedia, of all places:

> The economy of Chile is a high-income economy as ranked by the World Bank, and is considered one of South America's most stable and prosperous nations, leading Latin American nations in competitiveness, income per capita, globalization, economic freedom, and low perception of corruption.
>
> In 2006, Chile became the country with the highest nominal GDP per capita in Latin America. In May 2010 Chile became the first South American country to join the OECD. Tax revenues, all together 20.2% of GDP in 2013, were the second lowest among the 34 OECD countries, and the lowest in 2010. In 2017, only 0.7% of the population lived on less than US$1.90 a day.

According to the Heritage Foundation, Chile is ranked as the 18th freest economy in the world. The World Bank ranked Chile as the 50th highest GDP per capita for 2018, just below Hungary and above Poland.

Now, you can contrast those results with Venezuela. I have been blogging about Venezuela for years on this blog, and documenting how they raised taxes, banned guns, nationalized private sector companies, raised tariffs, and increased regulations. They are now ranked JUST ABOVE NORTH KOREA for economic freedom – #179 out of 180 countries measured. Basically, they did the opposite of everything that Chile did – transferring power away from parents, workers, business owners, churches and municipal governments to the powerful centralized federal government.

Wikipedia explains how Hugo Chavez took over in 1999 and enacted a communist revolution.

More:

> Since the Bolivarian Revolution half-dismantled its PDVSA oil giant corporation in 2002 by firing most of its 20,000-strong dissident professional human capital and imposed stringent currency controls in 2003 in an attempt to prevent capital

> flight, there has been a steady decline in oil production and exports. Further yet, price controls, expropriation of numerous farmlands and various industries, among other government authoritarian policies… have resulted in severe shortages in Venezuela and steep price rises of all common goods, including food, water, household products, spare parts, tools and medical supplies; forcing many manufacturers to either cut production or close down, with many ultimately abandoning the country as has been the case with several technological firms and most automobile makers.

They confiscated private property, took over private sector businesses, implemented tariffs and price controls, redistributed wealth via massive welfare programs, and pushed all decision-making out of families and municipal governments up to the federal government. By depriving the producers of their earnings, the country caused massive shortages of goods and services, to the point where people are fleeing the country, consuming zoo animals, and selling their bodies as prostitutes in order to get food and water.

Application

In the next election, we are not picking a tribe because of how they make us feel about ourselves. We are not choosing in order to see ourselves as "nice" and "not nice". We need to look at specific policies being proposed, and see what works and what doesn't work. The examples of Chile (rags-to-riches) and Venezuela (riches-to-rags) are helpful for voters who want to get RESULTS instead of FEELINGS.

I'll leave you with a list of links from previous posts so you can see how communism worked out for Venezuela.

Related posts

- Before socialists in Venezuela could run over protesters, they had to ban gun ownership
- Venezuela solves hunger by banning bread lines, and solves crime by banning self-defense
- And now slavery: Venezuela's socialist policies lead to forced labor camps
- Do young Americans know how well socialism is working in Venezuela?
- How well are Democrat Party economic policies working out in Venezuela?
- How well does socialism work in countries and cities that adopt it?
- How well are Democrat economic policies working in Venezuela and Argentina?
- Marco Rubio's speech exposing the horrors of socialism in Cuba and Venezuela
- Obama silent as Venezuelan government violently represses democratic opposition
- How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?
- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia's economy to grow? What causes Venezuela's economy to shrink?

- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama’s buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank

Wayne Grudem explains male leadership in marriage

February 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man and woman working on a computer upgrade

I'm not willing to take advice on this from most pastors, but Wayne Grudem is someone I respect because he does such a good job of applying the Bible to political issues. So he's practical.

Anyway, here is something he wrote that was shared by a newlywed couple I am friends with.

Excerpt:

> Someone might say, "Well, okay, fine. There's a leadership role for Adam, and I guess that means husbands should have a leadership role in their marriage of some sort. But how does it work? How does it work in practice?"
>
> In our own marriage, Margaret and I talk frequently and at length about many decisions. I can tell you that I wouldn't be here tonight unless Margaret and I had talked about this and asked the Lord about it, and she had given blessing to it, and said, "Yes, I think that's right." Sometimes we make large decisions such as buying a house or a car, and sometimes they are small decisions like where we should go for a walk together. I often defer to Margaret's wishes, and she often defers to mine because we love each other.
>
> In almost every case, each of us has some wisdom and insight that the other does not have. Usually, we reach agreement on the decisions that we make. Very seldom will I do something that she doesn't think is wise–I didn't say never. She prays; she trusts God; she loves God. She is sensitive to God's leading and direction, but in every decision, whether it large or small and whether we have reached agreement or not, the responsibility to make the decision still rests with me.

Now, I am not talking about every decision they make individually. Margaret controls a much larger portion of our budget than I do because all the things having to do with the household and food and clothing and house expenses and everything . . . she writes the checks and pays the bills. I take care of buying books and some things about the car. I have appointments during the day with students. She doesn't get involved in that. She has her own appointments. She has her own calendar. I don't get involved in trying to micromanage all of that. We have distinct areas of responsibility. I am not talking about those things. I don't get involved in those things unless she asks my counsel.

But in every decision that we make that affects us together or affects our family, the responsibility to make the decision rests with me. If there is genuine male headship, I believe there is a quiet acknowledgement that the focus of the decision making process is the husband, not the wife. Even though there will often be much discussion and there should be mutual respect and consideration of each other, ultimately the responsibility to make the decision rests with the husband. And so, in our marriage the responsibility to make the decision rests with me.

This is not because I am a wiser or more gifted leader. It is because I am the husband. God has given me that responsibility. It is very good. It brings peace and joy to our marriage, and both Margaret and I are thankful for it. Now, I need to add very quickly, men, this does not mean that a husband has the right to be a selfish leader.

Just about three years ago, maybe four years ago now, we started the decision making process. Margaret had been in an auto accident in Chicago. As part of the aftermath of that accident, she was experiencing some chronic pain that was aggravated by cold and humidity, and Chicago is cold in the winter and humid in the summer. Chicago was not a good place for that. Some friends said to us, "We have a second house in Mesa, Arizona, if you would ever like to go there and just use it as a vacation place, we would like you to do that."

So we did. We visited Arizona. Mesa is a suburb of Phoenix. Margaret felt better. It was hot, and it was dry. And so I said, "Wow, Margaret I would love to move here, but I am only trained to do one thing; I can teach at a seminary and that is it. There aren't any seminaries here." The next day Margaret was looking in the yellow pages–literally. She said, "Wayne, there's something here called Phoenix Seminary." One thing led to another and God was at work in that seminary, and it was starting to grow.

Then we went through a decision making process. When we were in the middle of that decision making process, on the very day that we were focusing on that, I came in my normal custom of reading through a section of scripture each day, I came to a Ephesians 5:28, "Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies."

> I thought if I would move to take a job in another city for the sake of my body, if I were experiencing the pain that Margaret had, and husbands should love their wives as their own bodies–then shouldn't I move? Shouldn't I be willing to move for Margaret's sake? That was really why we moved to Phoenix.

Anyway, Dina and I were talking the other night about what would happen if – hypothetically – we suddenly found ourselves stuck with a child and responsible for it's education. I said to Dina that I would have a meeting with her, and ask her to research all of the alternative forms of schooling, and look over the research on education and then come back with her recommendation about what would get us the most effectiveness for the least cost and risk. Dina said that she thought that was an excellent plan, but being the kind of person she is, she said that she would not wait to be asked to do this, but would instead pro-actively go and do the work and then present it to me to make the decision. A wife is a chief of staff, she does the research. She has to know all the politics. She has to do the face to face conversations. She has to make all the calculations. She has to be good at putting aside her feelings and being logical and analytical, in order to get results.

I think a lot of people worry that male headship means that husbands will micromanage like a tyrant, but that's just wrong. That's not at all what a man learns about how to lead others, in his workplace. A man looks for a wife with skills and experience to solve these sorts of problems for him while he is out working, and without needing a lot of guidance or monitoring from him. Micromanaging makes them both less efficient and more stressed. The more education and work history she has before she marries, the better she will be at solving problems on her own initiative. I always encourage young women to study hard things and to do hard jobs, but to stop working when young children appear (the first five years of the child's life are critical). Learning hard things and doing hard jobs makes them more prepared for the roles of wife and mother.

Similarly, a wife does not want to choose a poor leader for a husband. She wants to choose someone who makes good decisions, and follows a plan through to a result. She should be looking at his decision making, especially in education, work and finances, and deciding whether he can do the male roles in a marriage. She should be looking at his leadership style and communication ability. These things are well-defined, and she should be able to assess his ability by looking at his life to see if anyone follows his lead at work or outside of work on anything that matters. Does he reach the goals that he plans to reach? Is he realistic about risks and costs? She has to do an assessment of his leadership ability, because if she marries him, he will be leading her. Naturally, she will have to know something about leadership first, and know something about men, and what men expect to achieve with their marriages. What is his plan?

The easiest way for a man to avoid marrying a woman who resists his leadership is to not marry her. And the easiest way for a woman to avoid marrying a man who does not delegate tasks to her that she is better at is to not marry him. We are responsible for these decisions. As long as you don't follow your feelings and intuitions, you'll be fine.

Don’t marry someone unless you have observed them demonstrating their ability to do the marriage roles cheerfully and well.

Where does Pete Buttigieg stand on infanticide and religious liberty?

February 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrat presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg and his partner

I saw a short video from the Iowa caucuses recently, in which a female Democrat voted for Pete Buttigieg, then was shocked to learn that Pete is a gay man in a "marriage" relationship with another man. This woman knew enough about the Bible to accurately state that God's design for marriage is for one man and one woman. So she had concerns about what she had just done.

Here's the video:

This is why we should urge voters to not pick their political candidates based on looks. Maybe put down the romance novels and the unicorn mug, and turn off the "your best life now" sermon long enough to do a policy assessment on the candidates, before you vote?

Anyway, let's learn a bit about Pete Buttigieg, since he seems to be a favorite of Bible-believing Christian women, apparently.

Here's a story from Life News.

> Yesterday on "The View," Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg said that infanticide was not a thing. He claimed that nobody really seriously believes babies are killed and infanticides across United States.
>
> But figures from the Centers for Disease Control show hundreds of babies are born alive and left to die after they survive failed abortion attempts.
>
> The issue is serious enough that Congress has previously passed legislation requiring babies to receive medical care if they survive an abortion and Congress is currently considering legislation to hold doctors accountable for failing to

> provide that appropriate medical care.
>
> During questioning, Meghan McCain asked Buttigieg about comments from Virginia Governor Ralph Northam defending infanticide and whether he would support any limits on abortions up to birth — even opposing partial-birth abortions.
>
> “My point is that it shouldn’t be up to a government official to draw the line, it should be up to the woman who is confronted with the choice,” Buttigieg said defending abortions up to birth and infanticide.

I’m sure that the Christian Democrat lady would be surprised that Mayor Pete also supports infanticide. He looks so clean cut and handsome, and women can tell everything about a man’s character just by looking at him, am I right?

Next article is from Daily Wire:

> Buttigieg has unabashedly embraced House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s (D-CA) Equality Act legislation that would strike a massive blow to our nation’s religious institutions. Specifically, the Equality Act would create a federally protected status for gender identity, defined as the “gender-related identity, appearance, mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of an individual, regardless of the individual’s designated sex at birth.”
>
> Any faith-based establishment — including churches, schools, and hospitals — with theological beliefs in conflict with this definition would likely face expensive legal battles, lawsuits, and public scrutiny. Case in point: A Catholic hospital was sued last year by the ACLU because it would not perform a risky sex-change surgery on a 16-year-old girl.
>
> Unfortunately, the Equality Act would coerce health care and mental health professionals into providing dangerous gender-transition treatments for young children and adolescents, counter to their medical advice — and for many, against their religious beliefs.
>
> Just as alarming, Buttigieg has imposed litmus tests based on what he deems theologically acceptable. We witnessed this first-hand when the former South Bend, Indiana mayor attacked Second Lady Karen Pence for teaching at a private school that adheres to her Judeo-Christian belief about marriage. In response, Buttigieg ridiculed the Pences and likened their religious views to that of “Pharisees.”
>
> As a private institution, like thousands of such private schools that have long existed in our country, the school where Mrs. Pence teaches has the right to govern its school according to its own religious beliefs. Islamic schools, Buddhist schools, and Jewish schools are also free to do so under the United States Constitution.
>
> As an individual running for our nation’s highest office, Pete Buttigieg is signaling how a Buttigieg administration would handle religious liberty. And his signals

> should frighten many.

I posted this story with the video, because I've been polling Christian women to find out how they keep themselves informed about politics. Although they all are anxious to vote, there doesn't seem to be much work being done to read anything about the candidates, their achievements, their policies, etc. And it's not just reading about the candidates, it's reading about economics, foreign policy, etc. in general. It's almost like they have a tremendous confidence in their intuition, such that they can tell everything about a person just by looking at that person's appearance.

This reminds me of a girl I used to work with who was married to a libertarian. She came up to me one day with a set of photographs and asked me to guess which ones were serial killers. I thought it was stupid to do that, because "there's no art to find the mind's construction in the face" as Shakespeare says. Well, she told me proudly how she had gotten them all right, because of her amazing skill at knowing all about people from their appearance. I remember talking to her about her libertarian husband, and whether she knew what libertarians believed about social issues like marriage and abortion, etc. She had no concern at all about it. Later on, she left the company, and wrote to me about her divorce.

It's so strange to me that we are living in a world where character matters less than appearance. We all feel entitled to vote based on almost no real knowledge, just on our gut feelings. So you have Bible-believing people voting for candidates who disagree with the Bible from start to finish, who are in lifestyles that repudiate the words of Jesus about what marriage is, and who support legislation that would effectively end the practice of Christianity that is authentic to what the Bible teaches.

And then people tell me that I need to get married, and lower my standards because I'm "asking for too much". Wow. I don't think that women putting in a little work to find out what the candidates for PRESIDENT believe and have achieved is asking for too much.

Pro-life student Nathan Apodaca wins case against California State University

February 10, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

House Republican leader tweets about Nathan's case

I have some good news! Last week, a pro-life student who attends California State University San Marcos was able to sue for discrimination, and he won. The case has implications for the entire CSU system, and every university in America. What's more, the plaintiff in the case is a friend of the Wintery Knight blog! Let's take a look at the details of the case and the judge's decision.

Nathan told me that this story from The College Fix had the most details, and here it is:

> Six months after a federal judge ruled that California State University officials could be held personally liable for funding policies that disfavor pro-life students, the largest four-year university system in the country has agreed to revise policies across its 23 campuses.
>
> CSU's board of trustees and the student government at CSU-San Marcos entered into a settlement agreement with the campus chapter of Students for Life and its former president Nathan Apodaca.
>
> [...]The lawsuit challenged CSUSM funding policies that overwhelmingly favored two pro-choice campus organizations: the Gender Equity Center and LGBTQA Pride Center. They receive nearly $300,000 from Associated Students, Inc. each year with no strings attached.

Alliance Defending Freedom are the masters of defending religious liberty, and as they usually do, they made a video of their client explaining the facts of the case:

And here are the details of the decisions:

> CSU is paying $240,000 in legal fees to the students' lawyers at the Alliance Defending Freedom and $3,000 in damages to the club. The student government is giving Apodaca a $300 refund of his mandatory student fees, which he paid into a funding system that favored pro-choice viewpoints and disfavored his own pro-life views.

> […]Lorenz ordered CSUSM to revise the $500 application process to require "specific and detailed standards guiding decision making" on funding requests. They can no longer judge "the content of the speech" seeking funding by asking questions about its "purpose" and the "student benefit" of clubs' events.
>
> […]The student government will adopt viewpoint-neutral standards for the allocation of mandatory student fees to any registered student organization "that involves viewpoint expression." They must comply with the Supreme Court's 2000 ruling in a similar case, known as *Southworth*.
>
> The process must "not discriminate against any funding request based on the viewpoint to be expressed by the RSO or proposed event." Funding applications that are "denied or reduced" must be accompanied by "the reasons" for the decision and a "right of prompt appeal" to an official or administrator.
>
> All 23 campuses are getting a policy makeover as well. The agreement directs Chancellor White's office to issue a "policy directive" across the system that imposes viewpoint-neutral criteria and procedures on student association funding requests for "student speech events." It lays out five specific policies getting revisions.

This is the part that made me say "WOW!":

> In a major setback for the feminist and LGBTQ centers, the agreement bars them from funding via mandatory student fees, retroactive to July 1. The student government's Board of Directors and Campus Activity Board will also not use those fees "unless and until" the student government adopts viewpoint-neutral criteria.
>
> […]In a statement on the settlement, the [ADF] emphasized that the two CSUSM centers received "57 times more than" the 100-plus recognized student organizations combined.
>
> […]Lorenz had rejected the defendants' arguments that White and Haynes had a "reasonable belief" that forcing pro-life students to fund pro-choice speech, while denying them funding for their own speech, "was lawful." The judge said "the development and state of the law" on compelled speech made clear to both officials that the funding mechanisms they oversaw were unconstitutional.

Things were really bad before Nathan and the ADF got the win.

I know that after he finishes his undergraduate degree, Nathan has plans to apply to law school in the future, so this may not be the last you hear about him. If you want to hear more from him before he argues for the reversal of Roe v Wade at the Supreme Court in 2035, then you can check out his articles at Human Defense Initiative.

My job right now with Nathan is to collaborate with him about what books to read, and annoy him about not doing a degree in computer science. (This is my job with all the young adults I advise) We exchange book suggestions in order to develop our worldviews.

He also bullies me to watch movies in the theater like 1917 and to care about Star Wars, which I most certainly do not. I feel that if Nathan had one piece of advice to give my readers, he would say that you need to read books and watch movies about great people, which is what you can see on his Amazon wishlist. One of his favorite recent books was a book about Churchill, which he also bullied me into buying. It's enormous, I will never finish it. He also likes to make fun of the way youth pastors offer young Christians pizza and movies instead of apologetics and bioethics training.

I think it's important for old Christians to have a hand in what is going on in the minds of our Christian college students, and in their battles on campus. If you are looking for a good person to partner with, look up your local university's pro-life club or Ratio Christi club. (I'm told by Carla that Nathan not only started a pro-life campus group, but also was part of a Ratio Christi campus group). At the local university, you'll find lots of action going on that you can get involved with or financially support. Every older Christian should be in contact with a younger Christian who is making a difference. People think that older Christians need to care about the nonsense that young people are interested, like Tide pods and their weird music (I don't know what their names are). That's false. My job is to tell the young people about what I have learned about being a Christian. Not every young Christian will care about making a difference for the Kingdom of God, which is why you should focus on the ones who do.

Should Christian men consider single mothers for marriage?

February 11, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why do Christians object to warning men about high-risk relationships?
A while back, I explained my three concerns about attending church. One of them was that male pastors and church leaders have adopted the priorities of radical feminism, and have turned against men who want a traditional marriage in which the man leads and the wife supports. Well, I found something that really illustrates what I mean by that, so that everyone will understand it.

Above, you can see a tweet by Michael Foster, a pastor who hosts a podcast called "It's Good to be a Man". His web site states that his goal is: "Extending God's house & father-rule by helping men to establish their own houses in strength, workmanship & wisdom."

He explains in subsequent tweets that he is just urging men to ask questions to find out how the woman became a single mother.

Reactions to the tweet

Here are some reactions to the tweet:

- asking Foster where are his warnings about single dads
- calling Foster a misogynist
- insulting Foster's appearance
- using 1 counterexample to deny a mountain of evidence
- single moms who deliberately chose bad men, and then play the victim by accepting no responsibility for their actions
- claiming that Foster was expressing an irrational opinion
- accusing Foster of being a child abuser

The negative reactions are all anti-intellectual and childish, especially trying to refute statistics with "you hurt my feelings" or telling a single personal story as a

counterexample.

Here's a disclaimer. In this post, I am talking about single mothers by choice, and single mothers who initiated divorce. Widows are excluded.

The risks posed by single mother

Now, let's improve Foster's warning, by looking at some evidence – is a marriage to a single mother really more likely to result in a bad outcome?

First of all, women initiate 70% of divorces. If you meet a woman who divorced her husband, she either had a defect in her ability to evaluate and choose a man, or she had a defect in her ability to maintain a commitment to the man she chose. Either way, a woman who divorced her previous husband has red flags. There are two possibilities. She either chose a good man or she chose a bad man. If she chose a bad man, then it shows that she didn't choose a man with good moral character and spiritual leadership. That means that those things were low priorities for her when deciding who to get naked with. Alternatively, she married a good man, and failed to maintain the commitment. Then she has different problems: problems with male leadership, problems with responsibilities, problems with commitment, problems with contentment, etc. You need to ask questions to get to the bottom of what happened, and more importantly, what she has studied and done to change her worldview. Don't take her words for it, look at her actions.

Second, the number of premarital sex partners a woman has makes her a higher risk of divorce. The more sex partners, the more risk. The problem with women who engage in sex with men who don't commit to them is that they *necessarily* don't see a man's willingness and ability to commit as valuable when choosing a man. Women who have premarital sex with men who don't commit see OTHER THINGS as more valuable. They are rewarding the man for his height, his muscles, his tattoos, his piercings, his entertainment of her, etc. A good man should be very wary when a woman who gave her best youth, beauty and sexual interest to men like that now want to "settle" for a boring, unattractive provider who they see as having lower value than the men they gave sex to without requiring a commitment. What they really wanted was bad boys, and they threw sex at those bad boys without asking for commitment. With the man they perceive as low-level, they are insisting on commitment first, because they don't want this low-level man as badly as they wanted the bad boy. They are settling for less than they feel they deserve. This is where sex-withholding, feelings of unhappiness, and frivolous divorces come from. And by the way, hollering Jesus doesn't fix that risk any more than hollering Jesus fixes student loans accumulated for a useless non-STEM degree. Jesus-hollering isn't evidence that a woman has persuaded herself to change her view of which men are the most attractive. A woman's lack of respect for men who prepare for commitment and who keep their commitments is dangerous for marital stability. The hysterical reactions to a man's judging a woman for her past mistakes don't cancel the damage and risks caused by those mistakes. They simply tell the man that this woman is unrepentant, and therefore unteachable, and likely unsuitable for goal-oriented marriage. She is not qualified for the job of wife: self-sacrificial love for her husband, respect for her husband,

and supporting her husband in what he is trying to achieve for God.

Here's what the Bible says about sex outside of heterosexual marriage and about frivolous divorce. Read the critical replies to Foster's tweet. The critical responses show the *default* position of church-attending Christian women and pastors to the Bible in this culture. First, the critics don't accept the Bible as an authority over women's choices in any area of life. Second, the critics don't believe that women should bear any responsibility for their past actions. Nobody believes that women choosing bad men is the woman's fault in this society. So you should assume that single mothers don't take responsibility for their own failures. And that means that she will have taken no steps to repent of her mistake, and change her character so that she doesn't make the same mistake again. It's up to you to look at what she has been reading, listening to, watching, etc. and to check her actions in order to find out what she really thinks about what the Bible says. You can't marry a woman who responds to any mention of the moral law and moral obligations with denial of responsibility and insults. If she hasn't become an active crusader against women who choose bad men, and women who choose premarital sex, and women who choose divorce, then you can't really believe that there's been any real repentance. The risks to you are too high to take a chance on someone who is not certain. I've only ever met one single mother (Kerri) who blamed her own divorce on her own bad decisions.

The culture opposes male leadership

Foster's warning is intended to help men to make better decisions, so that their relationships will produce results for God. But his critics aren't interested in what men are trying to achieve for God. They are only concerned that women get what they want, regardles of their past actions. In their opinion, men exists solely to serve the needs of women. Women don't have to be good enough for marriage, men just have to give them what they want regardless of the woman's suitability for wife and mother roles. The role of men in any relationship is not to lead and achieve goals for God. Their role is to let women rule over them, disposing of their earnings as they see fit, for the benefit of the woman.

When women are young and pretty, they are entitled to hot bad boys to entertain them. When they are older, have tons of sexual experience, and children from different fathers, they are entitled to a husband to financially support them. But a husband with no power to lead the home, since their past choices of man showed they have no interest in following a man who has good character. And the churches, pastors, courts, schools, hospitals, etc. are all there to enforce this view of men as clowns / slaves.

This is what women are told about the role of men in every area of society. This society, including the Christian parents, Christian pastors, Christian culture, etc. do not produce women who prefer early marriage to men who are good at moral leadership and spiritual leadership. Therefore, men who are chaste, sober, have good educations, good private sector jobs, good savings, etc. need to be extremely careful. Look at the responses to Foster's tweet, and think: do these people care about providing you with a good wife? Or

is their concern all about how to insult you and shame you, until you are submissive to her needs?

Your marriage is your enterprise for serving God

My advice to men right now is to read over every single critical tweet in that thread that Foster started. Imagine that you are trying to get these women to do something in a marriage that is part of your plan to make the marriage serve God. You're trying to get her to watch a William Lane Craig debate. You're trying to get her to stop spending money on 50 Shades of Grey and Harry Potter. You're trying to get her to stop smoking and drinking. You're trying to get her to talk about the sermon instead of essential oils. You're trying to get her to read a Thomas Sowell book. You're trying to get her to not put the kids in day care or public schools.

You need to assume that her response to male leadership like this will be the exact same as the responses that Foster is getting to his tweet. And then after you have assumed it, then you need to keep your hands off that woman. Keep your distance, and ask her questions to find out what her real views are, and whether she is interested in growing into the kind of person who is safe for you to marry. Don't forget that chastity and sobriety are important during the evaluation process, so that you aren't influenced away from your leadership role. Don't listen to her words, look at her actions.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

February 12, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining the outline of the podcast.

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though

> it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

The Thoroughly Rational Conversion of Michael Minot

February 13, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

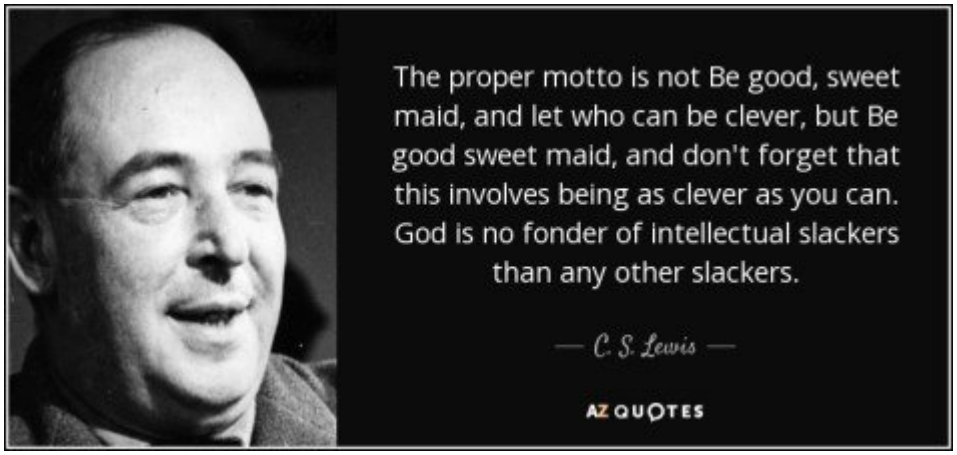

C.S. Lewis has some words to live by for you

One of the things I've noticed hanging around in church on and off the last 20 years or so is that it often seems to be the case the church leaders seem to value some people as leaders more than others. Specifically, it seems to me that church leaders prefer to put athletes and cheerleaders into leadership positions, and they tend to be skeptical of people who have intellectual conversion stories, and intellectual interests. I think I actually got the phrase "jocks and cheerleaders" from Dr. John Mark Reynolds when describing who churches tend to prefer, so I'm not just making this up.

But not everyone sees things that way. Of all the people I've met or read, I probably agree with Terrell Clemmons the most. And if I disagree with her, then I usually find out that she is right later on. Pretty much everything she writes about is not only relevant, but practical, which is amazing for a person who writes about topics related to Christian belief and practice. One of the things she likes to write about is the background stories of people who were intelligent and successful as non-Christians, who then went on to become Christians through a careful study of the evidence, *and then went on to make a difference through outward-focused enterprises.*

Let's start with this article from Salvo Magazine about a successful atheist lawyer named Michael Minot.

Terrell writes:

> Never in his 28 years did Mike Minot imagine he would entertain this unthinkable thought, yet lately of an evening he might easily be found pacing around his house like an awestruck research scientist muttering things like, "It just can't be! . . . *Can it?"*
>
> The seismic shift had started quite unexpectedly just a few months prior. He was three years out of law school, and life was great. After years of living on beans and weenies as a student, he had arrived on the scene of success. He had a growing law practice, money in his pocket, and a teeming social life. The world

> was his oyster.
>
> Then he had received an odd phone call. Normally confident and well-spoken, Jim, whom he'd met while studying for the Florida bar exam, spoke awkwardly, struggling uncharacteristically to get his message out. Finally he got to his point. "Sharon and I have been watching what's been going on in your life. And we decided we would give you a call and invite you to do something. We believe the Scriptures are very important. They're very important to our lives, and they're helpful to us. We know what you think about spiritual matters, but we want to challenge you to take some time at this point in your life and reexamine these things."
>
> To say Mike was taken aback would be an understatement. He was a perfectly contented atheist, and he had no interest in interrupting his prosperous life to look at anyone's answers to questions he wasn't even asking. But he did value the relationship he had with Jim, Sharon, and their two adorable kids. If he were to summarily dismiss this suggestion, what would that do to their friendship? It seemed he should at least put forth a cursory effort, if for no other reason than for the health of the relationship.

First thing to note is that the people who ask Michael to give Christianity a look are successful and intelligent themselves. Not only is Jim studying for the Florida bar exam (so that he has credibility to another lawyer), but Jim's wife has also given him more credibility by marrying him. Married couples are typically more "grown-up" than singles, and I'm saying that as a chaste single myself who has been successful in education, career and finances. Marriage requires a whole set of behaviors from people that singles don't have to perform. The point is, though, that Michael is being approached by people from the same professional and social background. He is not being approached by a missionary or a street preacher, but by someone who has been effective in their education, career and marriage.

This really does matter – Christians are often perceived (rightly) as over-emotional, irrational, impractical, and driven more by community than by truth-seeking. It's very important for Christians who want to produce a return that they not be living with their parents in their 20s, have gap-filled minimum-wage resumes, have $20,000 in student in outstanding student loans from an easy, unused non-STEM degree, and no achievements except zip-lining, skydiving, surfing, and fear-of-missing-out travel.

The journey starts with science:

> With no predetermined plan, he delved into both the Scriptures and science. The Scriptures felt intimidating, though, and he was more comfortable with science. Not two weeks in, he found something that totally blew his mind. Ironically, it was something that had been there all along: the solar system—and the mind-boggling precision by which it operates. He marveled at the elegant complexity of it. It appeared way too precise, statistically speaking, to be an accident.

> Suddenly, this was no longer a casual exercise. He *had* to find the natural explanation for the solar system. If he continued on his merry life without it, he would forever live plagued by lingering thoughts that he could be living a lie. Never did he want to go in for a lie, and intellectual honesty demanded that he keep searching.
>
> So he put on his miner's lighted helmet, so to speak, and went to work. But instead of locating the natural explanation for the solar system, he found himself turning up all manner of equally troublesome phenomena—the fine-tuning of the earth for supporting life, with its balance of nitrogen to oxygen ratios and plate tectonics; the information content of DNA; and the complexities of animal and human life, to name a few. The perplexities mounted, and the whole project snowballed. He would go looking for the explanation for one natural marvel, only to encounter two more crying out for explanation.

If I could communicate one thing to the church, it would be this: whether you agree with the old universe and old Earth timelines or not, everyone who attends church for a decade should be able to state the kalam cosmological argument, the fine-tuning argument, the intelligent design argument, the fossil record argument, and the habitability argument, to the degree where they are naming scientists, discoveries and specific books where the evidence for these arguments are laid out.

Unfortunately, thanks to the "leadership" of many prominent fideist pastors, many Christians have adopted an attitude of outright suspicion to science, preferring instead to pre-suppose the truth of the Bible by blind faith ("the burning of the bosom", as the Mormons say), and refusing to study anything outside the Bible that might establish the necessary prerequisites to taking the Bible seriously. Successful non-Christian professionals looking to evaluate Christianity, this blind-faith approach is rightly seen as anti-intellectualism.

More:

> Other complications did follow, though. He had trustingly believed teachers and authorities who had taught that everything could be explained naturalistically. What else, now, needed to be reexamined? This went beyond science and philosophy to sociology, psychology—*everything* had to be rethought according to this completely new paradigm. He would later liken it to being planted on a whole new planet.
>
> And his entire social life collapsed in a matter of weeks. But he joined a church, and it became his new social center as well as his spiritual lifeline. He volunteered to serve as a jail chaplain in the evenings, a post he filled to great satisfaction for fifteen years. He met his wife Nichole at church, and they went on to adopt five children. Life settled into a richly rewarding concert of family, jail ministry, and law. Nothing he'd ever envisioned back in his atheist days could match the prosperity of these blessings.

> At first glance, it may seem ironic that an atheist committed to seeing everything through the "lens of science" would come back around to see God through the lens of science. But the truth is, it wasn't science *per se* that had hidden his Creator from view. Rather, it was the lens of philosophical naturalism *imposed onto science*—both in education and throughout the broader culture—that had fostered and fueled Mike's unchallenged atheism.

Naturalism is a philosophy – a philosophical assumption. It's not science. The origin and design of the universe are science. DNA is science. Habitability constraints are science. The sudden origin of major body plans in the fossil record is science. There are no scientific arguments for atheism. There's just speculation driven by naturalistic philosophy.

In the end, Minot turns his life around 180 degrees, and puts his intellect and professional abilities to work for the gospel. You can read about all the ways he is making an impact in Terrell's article in Salvo Magazine. Always remember stories like these when you are making decisions about your own education and career. God is still working, still reaching out to people through science and history, appealing to their minds for a fair hearing, and then asking for their best efforts for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

How parents and churches can make better women than the Bachelorette Hannah Brown

February 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

My friend Carla sent me a video from a TV show called the Bachelorette, in which a woman named Hannah Brown explains why she thinks that having recreational premarital sex is compatible with Christianity. In this post, I wanted to explain to Christian parents and churches why serious Christian men do not consider women like Hannah Brown to be appropriate candidates for marriage.

First, if you haven't seen the clip, you can watch it here:

So I just wanted to go over what I think marriage is for, and then try to judge whether Hannah Brown's view of men, sex and marriage offers me any value. I think this will be useful for parents and churches, because I think a lot of Christian men see marriage the same way as I do.

So, when I think of marriage, I'm looking for a partner who can help me to achieve goals that are consistent with the character of God revealed in the ministry of his son Jesus. So, what did Jesus do? Jesus demonstrated the existence of God by showing people evidence (miracles). Jesus taught people about what moral choices they should make and how to treat others. Jesus taught people that marriage is for one man and one woman, and that children should not be prevented from knowing God. And Jesus taught that people who sin can be forgiven, but that they should "sin no more".

So, let's take a look at what marriage-minded Christian men are looking for, and then decide whether Hannah Brown is doing a good job of preparing herself for marriage.

I'd like to model a successful, fruitful marriage to non-Christians, e.g. college students, neighbors, co-workers

A lot of people these days aspire to be married with children, and I want my marriage to be an advertisement to them for how Christianity provides a moral framework for that. So, a marriage candidate should demonstrate that she is good at making and keeping commitments, and investing in other people's lives self-sacrificially, with a goal of making them grow in their knowledge and influence as Christians. She should also be good at tasks that are related to being a wife and mother, like cooking, cleaning, caring for children, managing money, and so on. She should be a virgin and demonstrate self-control when it comes to things like drinking alcohol, frivolous travel, and managing money. Regarding sex, men are aware of studies that show that the number of premarital sex partners that a woman has is related to her contentment in her future marriage. The more no-commitment hawt bad boys a woman has sex with before marriage, the less content she will be with the "loser" she has to "settle for" when she hits 30. Marriage-minded men understand that women who "settle" for them later on were *never* attracted to commitment skills. We don't want to deal with sex-withholding, porn usage, emotional affairs, adultery, and divorce.

I'd like to facilitate discussions with students and faculty about whether the claims of Christian worldview are true

I would like my wife to be familiar with how to discuss and defend the claims of Christianity using evidence. For example, God's existence, Jesus' resurrection, etc. I do not mean that she should share her feelings and experiences with non-Christians. I do not mean that she should give her opinions or quote Bible verses to non-Christians. I mean that she should be able to appeal to mainstream scientific and historical evidence when making her case for the core claims of the Christian worldview. Being familiar with the work of people like William Lane Craig, Lee Strobel, Sean McDowell, J. Warner Wallace, etc. is sufficient. She should also be able to defend against objections to the Christian worldview, e.g. – suffering, hiddenness, pluralism, postmodernism, etc. I'm really looking for evidence that she is aware of areas where the culture is challenging Christianity, e.g. – abortion, natural marriage, socialism, border security, environmental stewardship, etc. and that she is able to be persuasive against the secular left with reasons and evidence.

I'd like to raise many effective and influential children who promote the Christian worldview and conditions that allow the practice of Christianity to flourish to society as a whole

In order to have many children, the woman has to be serious about making herself ready or marriage early, and pursuing marriage-ready men early. She should not be spending her late teens and 20s using her finite supply of youth and beauty trying pursuing temporary relationships with men who have superficial qualities. It eats into the "honeymoon period" that she could be giving her future husband, and it reduces the time

available for making more children. Regular sex and emotional support are huge gifts that a woman gives to a man, and they should be reserved for a man who commits to love her, lead her, and provide for her and her children. Since she is busy in her 20s riding the carousel with not-her-husband men, she won't have any effect on her husband's early career, which means that her husband will have less money to support having more children later on. I'm also looking for evidence that she is investing in relationships with other people that causes them to be more competent and effective in their Christian lives. For example, she could be getting people to be better with money – leading them by example to study hard STEM subjects, get real jobs in the private sector, avoid student loans. Something that shows that she is able to navigate the real world successfully, and isn't just wasting her time chasing fun and thrills.

I'd like to have an influence on the laws and policies in my community so that behaving as a consistent Christian is not subject to interference from the secular left

I'd like her to demonstrate that she's going to keep the Christian worldview that she has in the face of pressures from the secular left culture. So, I'm looking for her to be aware of where Christian values are impacted by laws and policies. And I'm looking for her to have strong convictions herself and also to be persuasive to others in debates and discussions. It's very easy for women to tell men what they want to hear when it comes to issues like abortion, gay rights, definition of marriage, socialism, environmentalism, border security, national debt, etc. Opinions are easy. What's not easy is having conversations where arguments are made, and supported by factual evidence. I would definitely want to see her taking pro-marriage and pro-family views in her conversations, but also in her writings, and in her activism. A man needs support and understanding when he is engaged in providing for a family, being a spiritual and moral leader, and protecting his family from outside threats. Many of the laws and policies that young Christian women find attractive are incompatible with what a Christian man does as a father and husband.

Conclusion

So, I think it's pretty clear when you look at Hannah Brown that she has none of these things. But she is a perfect example of what I see being produced by Christian parents and Christian pastors today. She really is not exceptional in any way, she is the normal Christian woman. On the one hand, she hollers Jesus, reads the Bible, sings praise hymns, attends church, and knows just enough about Christianity to satisfy parents and pastors that she is serious about her faith (until she throws the mask off on the first day of college). But to the Christian men who evaluate her for marriage, she has nothing at all that we want in a wife and mother.

Can relationships succeed independently of the efforts of the people involved?

February 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

A few years ago, I blogged about the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage, which I think is the dominant view of marriage among young people today – even among Christians. This view of marriage basically says that there is a person in the world out there who will match up so perfectly with each one of us that we will have to expend no effort and perform no actions and take responsibility for nothing in order for the relationship to work. it will just work on its own!

I’ve decided to link to this recent article by Matt Walsh which is on that same topic.

He writes:

> The disease is the fanciful, unrealistic, fictionalized perceptions that both males and females harbor about marriage.
>
> For example, think of the glamorization of the “mysterious” and “damaged” guy from the “wrong side of the tracks.” Hollywood makes him seem alluring and sexy, but forgets to mention that most of the time, in the real world, that dude probably has herpes, a coke habit, and a criminal record.
>
> Still, that bit of propaganda is nothing compared to the underlying misconception that so many of us carry around consciously or subconsciously, because we’ve seen it on TV and in the movies, and read it in books a million times since childhood: namely, that there is just *one* person out there for us. Our soul mate. Our Mr. or Mrs. Right. The person we are “meant to be with.”

Matt thinks this view of relationships is not realistic:

> I didn't marry my wife because she's The One, *she's The One because I married her*. Until we were married, she was one, I was one, and we were both one of many. I didn't marry The One, I married *this* one, and the two of us *became* one. I didn't marry her because I was "meant to be with her," I married her because that was my choice, and it was her choice, and the Sacrament of marriage is that choice. I married her because I love her — I chose to love her — and I chose to live the rest of my life in service to her. We were not following a script, we chose to write our own, and it's a story that contains more love and happiness than any romantic fable ever conjured up by Hollywood.
>
> Indeed, marriage is a decision, not the inevitable result of unseen forces outside of our control. When we got married, the pastor asked us if we had "come here freely." If I had said, "well, not really, you see destiny drew us together," that would have brought the evening to an abrupt and unpleasant end. Marriage has to be a free choice or it is not a marriage. That's a beautiful thing, really.
>
> God gave us Free Will. It is His greatest gift to us because without it, nothing is possible. Love is not possible without Will. If we cannot choose to love, then we cannot love. God did not program us like robots to be compatible with only one other machine. He created us as individuals, endowed with the incredible, unprecedented power to choose. And with that choice, we are to go out and find a partner, and make that partner our soul mate.
>
> That's what we do. We *make* our spouses into our soul mates by marrying them. We don't simply recognize that they are soul mates and then just sort of symbolically consecrate that recognition through what would then be an effectively meaningless marriage sacrament. Instead, we find another unique, dynamic, wholly individualized human being, and we make the monumental, supernatural decision to bind ourselves to them for eternity.
>
> **It's a bold and risky move, no matter how you look at it. It's important to recognize this, not so that you can run away like a petrified little puppy and never tie the knot with anyone, but so that you can go into marriage knowing, at least to some extent, what you're really doing. This person wasn't made for you. It wasn't "designed" to be. There will be some parts of your relationship that are incongruous and conflicting. It won't all click together like a set of Legos, as you might expect if you think this coupling was fated in the stars.**
>
> **It's funny that people get divorced and often cite "irreconcilable differences." Well what did they think was going to happen? Did they think *every* difference would be reconcilable? Did they think every bit of contention between them could be perfectly and permanently solved?**

Finally, regarding his own marriage:

> There were literally millions of things that either of us could have done. An innumerable multitude of possible outcomes, but this was *our* outcome because we *chose* it. Not because we were destined or predetermined, not because it was "meant to happen," but because we chose it. That, to me, is much more romantic than getting pulled along by fate until the two of us inevitably collide and all that was written in our horoscopes passively comes to unavoidable fruition.
>
> **We are the protagonists of our love story, not the spectators.**

I see this problem everywhere, even with Christian women who have been raised as Disney princesses. I was just told by one last week that she will marry when she meets "the right man" – the man who will require her to do nothing. This magical relationship will require no communication, no working through disagreements, no problem solving, no compromise, no effort, no self-sacrifice of any kind. it will just "work", without any growing up by anyone. Two unemployed people with degrees in English can have a fine marriage, I suppose, traveling the world and skydiving every Tuesday.

I think that when problems arise between two people who are largely compatible, the right thing to do is to engage and solve the problems. Yes, work isn't required in pop culture notions of romance, but those things don't reflect the real world anyway. In the real world, actions to solve a problem count for more than words that avoid the problem. Engineering principles and self-sacrificial attitude are infinitely more useful in a relationship than all the pop culture descriptions of ideal men and ideal women and ideal relationships combined.

By the way, the best book on this problem is Dr. Laura's "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands", which clearly sets out how a woman's choices influence her husband's ability to perform well. The myth of the mind-reading "right man" is also debunked.

Donald Trump has done more than all of his rich critics to reduce carbon emissions

February 15, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

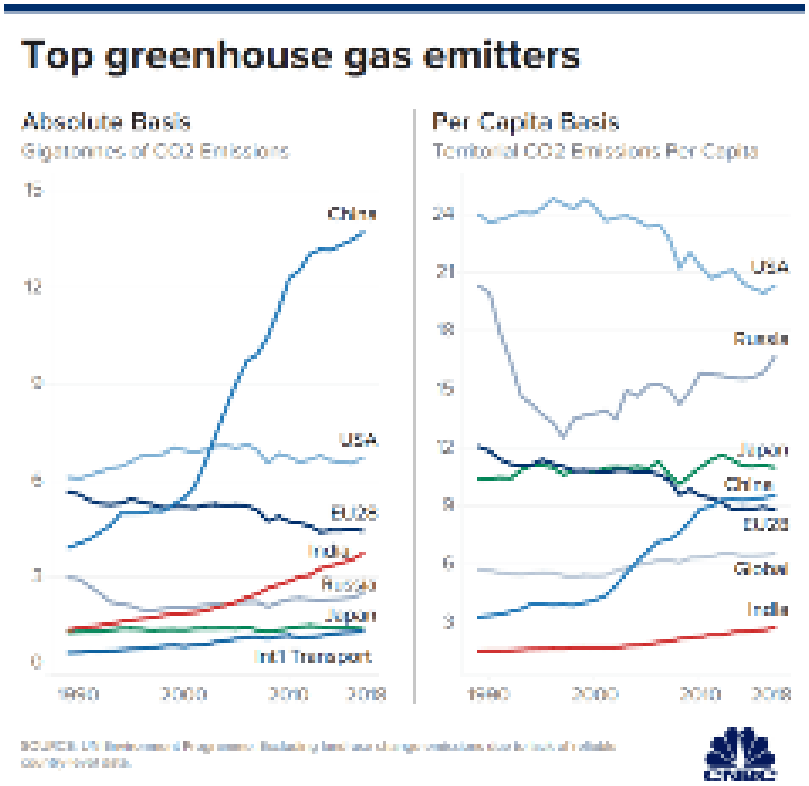

How much have countries cut carbon emissions?

I wanted to look at who has been doing the most to cut carbon emissions. Then we'll look at whether the secular left supports the technologies that achieved actual cuts in carbon emissions. Then we'll look at the technologies that the secular left supports, to see whether they achieve similar success. Then we'll draw a conclusion about the environmentalism of the secular left.

Let's start with the data on carbon emissions. As you can see from the graph above, the biggest offenders are China and India. These countries make a show about caring for the environment to shame America, but the truth is that they are the biggest polluters of all, and getting worse.

Daily Wire reports:

> The United States led the entire world in reducing CO2 emissions last year while also experiencing solid economic growth, according to a newly released report.
>
> "The United States saw the largest decline in energy-related CO_2 emissions in 2019 on a country basis – a fall of 140 Mt, or 2.9%, to 4.8 Gt," The International Energy Agency (IEA) reported on Tuesday. "US emissions are now down almost 1 Gt from their peak in the year 2000, the largest absolute decline by any country over that period."
>
> […]The IEA noted that 80% of the increase in CO2 emissions came from Asia and

> that China and India both contributed significantly to the increase.

So how was America able to do that? The answer is that they they adopted zero-emission technologies, specifically fracking and nuclear power:

> […][C]heap, natural gas, made available by fracking, has already made the U.S. the world leader in carbon emissions reduction. By allowing gas to displace coal as the leading fuel for domestic power generation, fracking has already done more to reduce emissions than the combined activity of all the environmental activists in human history. Renewables such as wind and solar, which still play only a minor role in generation, cannot operate without the flexible backup that gas provides for those times when the wind stops and the sun sets or goes behind a cloud.
>
> Natural gas will help reduce carbon emissions in the short run. But nuclear is the only long-term answer if you're worried about climate change.

It should be noted that the secular left opposes both fracking and nuclear power, and that's because they're either lying about their concern for the environment (possible) or they think that renewable energies like wind and solar can do the job. But can they?

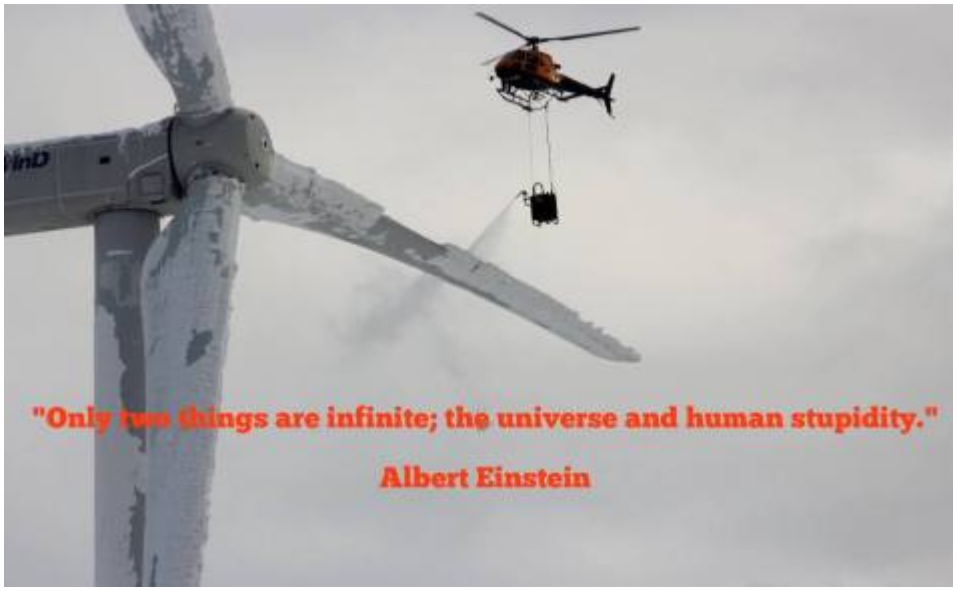

Environmentalists burning helicopter fuel to de-ice wind turbines one at a time

Far-left NPR explains:

> While most of a turbine can be recycled or find a second life on another wind farm, researchers estimate the U.S. will have more than 720,000 tons of blade material to dispose of over the next 20 years, a figure that doesn't include newer, taller higher-capacity versions.
>
> There aren't many options to recycle or trash turbine blades, and what options do exist are expensive, partly because the U.S. wind industry is so young. It's a waste problem that runs counter to what the industry is held up to be: a perfect solution for environmentalists looking to combat climate change.

It's difficult to transport the blades. There are few landfills big enough to accommodate

them. And no one has the expensive equipment to cut them down to smaller sizes. But wait! There are more problems.

My problems with wind and solar power are simple. They are extremely expensive, which raises the cost of electricity to consumers and businesses. They are extremely unreliable, and require constant maintenance and backup-support from traditional high-pollution sources. And most importantly, they mass murder birds, including protected birds, by the millions. That last reason along is enough to make me oppose them. I love birds!

Forbes magazine points out problems with the wind and solar power favored by the secular left:

> In reality, solar farms require hundreds of times more land, an order of magnitude more mining for materials, and create hundreds of times more waste, than do nuclear plants.
>
> And wind farms kill hundreds of thousands of threatened and endangered birds, may make the hoary bat go extinct, and kill more people than nuclear plants.

We can find out what happens when the secular-leftists get their way on energy policy by looking at France and Germany, where it's already been tried:

> Just contrast Germany and France. Germany has done much of what the Green New Deal calls for. By 2025 it will have spent $580 billion on renewables and related accoutrement, while shutting down its nuclear plants.
>
> All that Germany will have gotten for its "energy transition" is a 50% increase in electricity prices, flat emissions, and an electricity supply that is 10 times more carbon-intensive than France's.
>
> […]France spent $30 billion on renewables and saw the carbon intensity of its electricity supply, and electricity prices, rise.
>
> France and Germany and every other real world situation prove that nuclear power is the only way to significantly, deeply, and cheaply decarbonize energy supplies, and thus address climate change.
>
> The problem with nuclear is that it doesn't demand the radical re-making of society, like renewables do, and it doesn't require grand fantasies of humankind harmonizing with nature.
>
> Nor does nuclear provide cover for funnelling billions to progressive interest groups in the name of "community-controlled renewable energy, local organic agriculture, or transit systems."

The secular left opposes zero-emission technologies like fracking and nuclear, and there's a reason for that. Those technologies *reduce the cost of electricity*. Which means that people can use as much electricity as they like. But the secular left doesn't want people to have low-cost electricity. They can only *NATIONALIZE* the energy industry (i.e. – COMMUNISM) because people complain about the high costs of electricity. The secular left has already been pursuing this policy of raising the cost of education and healthcare

with government subsidies and regulations, in order to convince voters that the only solution to (artificially) inflated costs is for government to step in and take control. In countries like Canada, this is the exact model they adopted, (e.g. Ontario Hydro under Kathleen Wynne), in order to raise the prices of electricity. That is their real goal.

We do not want this, because the seizing of private property, redistribution of wealth, and nationalization of industry are *precisely the policies that lead countries like Venezuela and Cuba into long-term poverty*. The secular leftists don't care if the quality of your utilities, education and health care drop precipitously because it is run by the government. Their goal is for the elites to fly around in private jets with armed security, while the little people wait in bread lines for food, wait for health care for months, and are indoctrinated to love communism in college.

Four ways that the progress of experimental science conflicts with atheism

February 16, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

When people ask me whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism, I offer the following four basic pieces of scientific evidence that are more compatible with theism than atheism.

Here are the four pieces of evidence best explained by a Creator/Designer:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the biological information in the first replicator (origin of life)
4. the sudden origin of all of the different body plans in the fossil record (Cambrian explosion)

And I point to specific examples of recent discoveries that confirm those four arguments. Here are just a few of them:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (From an article from Caltech)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning to allow the existence of conscious, embodied life (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)
4. Evidence showing that Ediacaran fauna are not precursors to the Cambrian fossils, (from the journal Nature)

Atheists will typically reply to the recent scientific discoveries that overturned their speculations like this:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause
2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes
4. Maybe we will find a seamless chain of fossils that explain how the Cambrian explosion occurred slowly, over a long period time

Ever heard any of these responses?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the four responses of atheists to the experimental data.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
>
> †Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, USA
>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings

> have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.

> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities."
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. There is no evidence for a multiverse, but there is evidence for fine-tuning. TONS OF IT.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can't make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can't make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth's interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to

> obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into meaningful words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them.

4) The best candidate to explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian era fossils was the Ediacaran fauna, but those are now recognized as not being precursors to the Cambrian fossils.

Science Daily reports on a paper from the peer-reviewed journal Science:

> Evidence of the single-celled ancestors of animals, dating from the interval in Earth's history just before multicellular animals appeared, has been discovered in 570 million-year-old rocks from South China by researchers from the University of Bristol, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Paul Scherrer Institut and the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.
>
> […]This X-ray microscopy revealed that the fossils had features that multicellular embryos do not, and this led the researchers to the conclusion that the fossils were neither animals nor embryos but rather the reproductive spore bodies of single-celled ancestors of animals.
>
> Professor Philip Donoghue said: "We were very surprised by our results — we've been convinced for so long that these fossils represented the embryos of the earliest animals — much of what has been written about the fossils for the last ten years is flat wrong. Our colleagues are not going to like the result."
>
> Professor Stefan Bengtson said: "These fossils force us to rethink our ideas of how animals learned to make large bodies out of cells."

The trend is that there is no evolutionary explanation for the body plans that emerged in the Cambrian era. If you want to make the claim that "evolution did it", then you have to produce the data *today*. Not speculations about the future. The data we have today says no to naturalism. The only way to affirm naturalistic explanations for the evidence we have is *by faith*. But rational people know that we need to minimize our leaps of faith, and

go with the simplest and most reasonable explanation – an intelligence is the best explanation responsible for rapid generation of biological information.

Conclusion

I do think it's important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see way too much G. K. Chesterton, Francis Chan A. W. Tozer, and other untestable, ineffective jibber-jabber. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it's too hard. It's not too hard. Everyone can understand Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". That's more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works. You don't want to be anti-science and pro-speculation like atheists are. I recommend reading Uncommon Descent and Evolution News every day for a start.

UK leftists ban Christian evangelist Franklin Graham because he takes the Bible seriously

February 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Freedom of speech and freedom of religion are dead in the UK

My UK Christian friends are always tell me how weird it is that American Christians insist that government operate within Constitutional limits. Why not let government ban self-defense? Why not let government to run education and healthcare? Why not let government to control energy production and consumption? Why not let government open the borders for multiculturalism?

Here's an example of what happens in a country where Christians decide to abdicate law and policy to secular leftists.

The Daily Signal reports:

> Evangelist and missionary Franklin Graham's seven-city tour of the United Kingdom is now a trial, as all seven venues have dropped him.
>
> Graham's canceled dates likely are due to an "an outcry over his homophobic and Islamophobic comments," CNN reports.
>
> […]Graham has been outspoken about other cultural issues, including gay rights and radical Islam, both hot topics in the U.K., where Islam is the fastest growing religion. Graham has said gays should go to "conversion therapy" to change, and once called Islam "evil."
>
> Interestingly, although multiple venues canceled Graham this year, this isn't the first time the U.K. has had enough of the evangelist. In 2017, several members of Parliament moved to ban Graham from the U.K. for "hate speech" regarding gays and Muslims.
>
> At the time, a "petition against Graham being granted a visa" had gathered 4,600 signatures. Nina Parker, pastor of Liberty Church in Blackpool, who

> organized the petition, said Graham's presence would be "extremely destructive."
>
> Parker told The Guardian: "As a Christian and as a leader of a church that particularly welcomes LGBT people, I'm horrified that other local churches are inviting someone with this record of hate speech."
>
> Censorship of free speech, discourse, and individual autonomy in the United Kingdom has increased in the past several years.
>
> British officials have cracked down on internet freedom. Even though several groups have pushed back against the government's flagship internet regulation policy—which is so vague it covers nearly every kind of speech existent—it's been an uphill battle.
>
> In several dramatic cases, parents have lost their rights to their sick children as the U.K.'s court system usurped them and decided what care was best—typically, a removal of life support against the parents' wishes.
>
> Of course, any discourse offering a different perspective on LGBT groups or anything that might be seen as anti-transgender receives the most censorship—including being fired from one's job…

I've blogged before about how the police in the UK occupy themselves with monitoring the Internet to punish citizens who dissent from the UK's promotion of LGBT rights. If you disagree with LGBT rights, you're sure to get a visit from armed policemen. On the other hand, the police officers don't have any interest in investigating multiple sex-trafficking rings in multiple UK cities being run by immigrants from Middle Eastern countries. They don't care about the gang-raping of fatherless teen girls – the important thing is to not look Islamophobic. That's how they keep their jobs – they attack critics of the government's LGBT and open borders policies so the government can be re-elected. When they're not suppressing dissent from the government, they're blocking off parents from taking their child home from a government-run hospitals that decided that the child (e.g. – Alfie) is beyond medical treatment.

That's big government in the UK, and it's supported by many, many conservative Christian pastors, who think that the free and open practice of Christianity is somehow compatible with an overpowered secular left centralized government. So, the conservative Christians in the UK love to mock the gun rights and low tax rates of American Christians, even as they can't even safeguard their own freedom of speech and religious liberty. American Christians knew that big government and widespread dependency on welfare programs would destroy our religious liberty, so we fought it. They capitulated.

I've spoken to several prominent Christians in the UK, and even some who are deeply involved in apologetics and pro-life causes. I just want to be really clear. These people are so bad at Christian worldview, that they literally vote in the secular leftists who then turn around and enact government-funded abortion, LGBT fascism and sex-trafficking rings run by unskilled immigrants from the Middle East. Then they have the temerity to

COMPLAIN about the policies of the leaders they voted for.

Facebook censors interview with abortion survivor to help Democrats win 2020 election

February 18, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

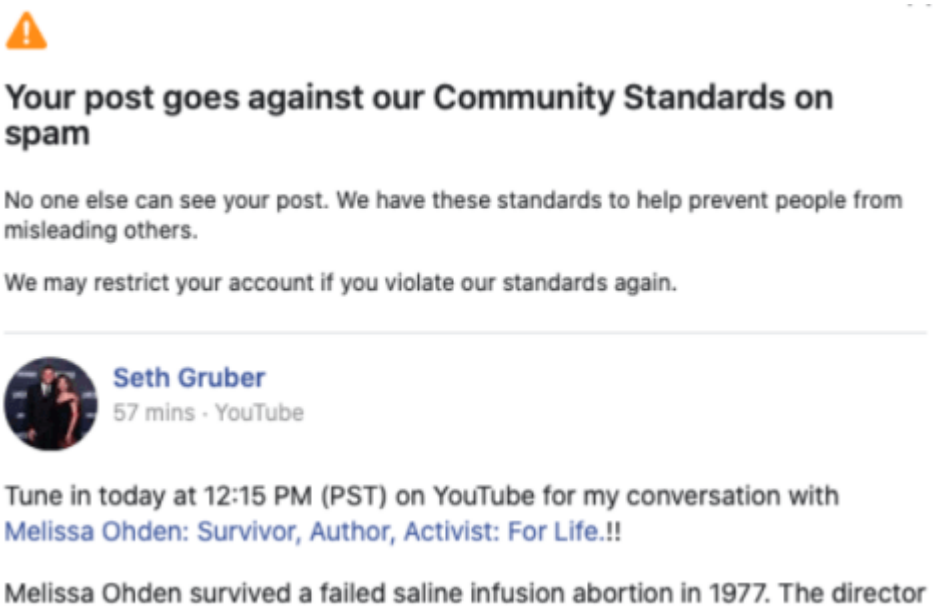

Facebook censoring pro-life content, because it's an election year!

On Monday, Facebook decided to censor a well-known pro-lifer who had an interview with a well-known abortion survivor. I have an idea why Facebook might be interested in censoring pro-lifers in an election year. It's because Silicon Valley / Seattle Big Tech has a preferred candidate, and he is very opposed to protecting the unborn from violence.

Here's the story from Live Action:

> In yet another apparent attempt to silence pro-lifers, Facebook has removed a post created by Seth Gruber of Life Training Insitute. Gruber had interviewed abortion survivor Melissa Ohden and was sharing information about the interview on his personal Facebook page when he was sent a warning message from the social media giant — and his post was removed.
>
> Facebook told Gruber that his Facebook post, seen below in two screenshots, went "against our community standards on spam."
>
> "We have these standards to help prevent people from misleading others," the notification stated. "We may restrict your account if you violate our standards again."

Now, this is not a fringe pro-life person. This person has actually testified before Congress. Here is the page from House of Representatives web site.

Censorship is not unusual for Facebook, especially during an election year:

> Facebook has a history of censoring pro-life groups and individuals, including Live Action and Live Action President Lila Rose. Even Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg called last year's censorship of Live Action by Facebook and its third-

> party *abortionist fact checkers* "clearly biased."

I blogged previously about how we know that Facebook steps up their censorship of Republicans during election years.

One reason why Facebook censors might be cracking down on pro-lifers is because their preferred candidate, Pete, is so strongly in favor of abortion. So let's look at some of Pete's views on abortion to see why his Facebook supporters might want to censor pro-lifers in order to influence the election.

LifeNews:

> Over the weekend, pro-abortion Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg created a nationwide controversy when he refused to welcome pro-life Democrats into the party. Now he's creating another controversy — by refusing to condemn infanticide.
>
> […]Last year, he failed to condemn legislation in two states, New York and Virginia, that legalized abortions up to birth, and even infanticide.

Different LifeNews:

> Pete Buttigieg wants to force American taxpayers to pay for the killing of unborn babies, not only in America but all across the world.
>
> The former South Bend, Indiana mayor and Democrat presidential candidate spoke about his plans during a private event with Planned Parenthood abortion activists Sunday in Nevada, according to the Washington Times.
>
> Buttigieg told the abortion activists that his plan for national health care would "support, reimburse and fund" abortions and family planning.
>
> […]Earlier, Buttigieg also said he would end the Mexico City policy, which prohibits U.S. international aid to groups that promote and/or provide abortions. When President Donald Trump enacted the Mexico City policy, he defunded two of the largest abortion chains in the world, Planned Parenthood and Marie Stopes International, of nearly $200 million American tax dollars.

Pete has a lot of billionaire supporters in Silicon Valley. Instead of Pete, I would much rather have this guy in the White House:

> Pro-life President Donald J. Trump and his Administration have established more pro-life policies than any other president in history.
>
> Ever.
>
> In recognition of President Trump's many pro-life achievements, on July 4, 2019, on the eve of its 49th annual convention, the National Right to Life Committee, the federation of state right-to-life affiliates and local chapters, endorsed pro-life President Donald Trump for his re-election.
>
> On that day, Carol Tobias, National Right to Life president, said

> “As our nation celebrates Independence Day, we are proud to endorse the only presidential candidate who stands for the unalienable right to life. From his first day in office, President Trump and his Administration have been dedicated to advancing policies that protect the fundamental right to life for the unborn, the elderly, and the medically dependent and disabled.”
>
> One of the President’s first acts in office was to restore the Mexico City Policy, which prevents tax funds from being given to organizations that perform abortions or lobby to change abortion laws of host countries. Later, the president expanded this policy to prevent $9 billion in foreign aid from being used to fund the global abortion industry.
>
> The Trump Administration also cut off funding to the United Nations Population Fund because of that agency’s involvement with China’s forced abortion program.
>
> On this day we celebrate fewer tax dollars going toward pro-abortion policies because of President Trump’s policies.
>
> President Trump pledged “to veto any legislation that weakens current pro-life federal policies and laws, or that encourages the destruction of innocent human life at any state.”
>
> President Trump is committed to signing pro-life legislation, including
>
> - The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act;
> - The Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act; and
> - The No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act.
>
> On this day we celebrate the lives that will be saved due to President Trump’s pro-life policies.

See the difference between the parties?

UK NHS government-run healthcare only available for people who agree with the government

February 19, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The National Health Service is government-run socialist health care

I've been warning people about the dangers of government healthcare for some time. In government-run health care, people pay into the system based on their earnings. But treatment is handed out based on the government's need to buy votes. In other words, you're not paying for care at all. You're forced to pay into a system where bureaucrats will decide later whether you get treated.

Here's the latest story from the UK, reported by the Daily Wire:

> The United Kingdom's National Health Service (NHS) announced Tuesday that, under new rules for the agency coming in April, medical care providers can refuse to give non-critical care to patients who are "racist," sexist," "homophobic," or are otherwise insulting and aggressive towards hospital staff.
>
> Right now, the NHS can refuse to treat anyone who are "aggressive" or "violent" out of concern for the well-being of health care workers, but the new rules, set to take effect in April of 2020, expand who the NHS can turn away — though it's not entirely clear how the NHS would know a possible patient was "racist," sexist," or "homophobic," or whether there are procedures in place to separate the truly mentally ill from the merely problematic.
>
> Sky News reports that much of the decision may be made by front-line hospital workers: "these protections will extend to any harassment, bullying or discrimination, including homophobic, sexist or racist remarks."

So, the key point about this is that the NHS workers can ALREADY refuse service to any

patient who is aggressive or violent. The new rules go beyond that, to cover patients who are racist, sexist or homophobic. And I think it's worth it to understand what counts as racist, sexist and homophobic in the UK to understand what that means. It just means having opinions about certain issues that the secular left in the UK disagree with.

Racism in the UK

For example, do you think that it's bad that low-skilled immigrants from Middle East countries are brought into your country, and then they go on to form grooming / sex-trafficking rings where fatherless teen girls are passed by middle-aged men to be gang-raped? If you think that, then in the UK, you're considered a racist. The police there refuse to investigate such crimes, because they are afraid of being labeled as "racist", and being fired from their cushy unionized jobs as ideological enforcers of secular left values. You can find a list of cities in the UK where police considered it "racist" to stop sex-trafficking of young girls, because the perpetrators were not white. So that's "racism" in the UK. If you don't approve of sex-trafficking by low-skilled refugees, then you aren't allowed to have the health care that you were forced to pay for with your taxes.

Homophobia in the UK

So, in the UK, there is an epidemic of knife crime and sex-trafficking going on, but the police aren't really concerned about it. Stabbings and rapes, who cares? The more important problem that occupies these unionized government workers with guns is the problem of offensive tweets. So, in the UK, if you tweet mild disagreement with the LGBT agenda (and I mean mild disagreement – nothing that would break any other laws about inciting violence) then you can expect armed policemen to come to your place of work to correct you about your homophobia. And if you complain about how totalitarian the gay agenda people have become, well then you'll be denied health care from the government healthcare system. You're good enough to pay into the secular left monopoly, but if you need healthcare from them later then you can just go die in a ditch for your wrongthink. And since you already paid once for healthcare through taxes, you're unlikely to have enough of your earnings to fly to America and pay for actual healthcare a second time. That's by design, by the way. That's a feature of single player health care.

Sexism in the UK

Did you know that in the UK, if you draw attention to the differences of men and women, that's considered sexist? Let's say that you are a taxpayer who is paying for police services provided by a government monopoly. The government monopoly on policing does not have any competitors who might provide you with better service for less money. So, they don't have to care about you. And what happens in the UK is that people with non-STEM degrees go into government and try to force their secular biases on everyone else by setting government policy. So, although you are paying taxes for policing, you are not entitled to quality policing. Instead, social engineers in the government lower the standards for jobs like police officer so that women can get those jobs. And if you

complain about these lowered fitness tests, because a woman police officer underperformed resulting in loss of property, injury or loss of life for you, then you're labeled "sexist". And you can be denied health care that you were forced to pay for through taxes.

Conclusion

It's important for people living in America to look at other countries where the voters have given up their liberties in order to depend on massive government welfare programs. If you like public daycare, public schools, public hospitals, public libraries, government-run policing and basically government-run anything, then just understand that there will come a time when you will not be allowed to express your religious and political convictions in public or online. You might be fined. You might be dragged in front of a human rights tribunal. You might be arrested. You might be jailed. You might be fired. You might be put under a gag order. Whatever the secular left compassion crowd decides is appropriate to deal with your offensive opinions. And you will be paying for secular left government workers to do this to you through your mandatory taxes. There is no opt out.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

February 20, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two bears fight it out, and may the best bear win!

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has ever done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates). If you've never seen Dr. Craig in a debate with a non-Christian, this one is probably the best introductory one out there. Dr. Craig is the foremost defender of Christian theism on the planet, and probably of all time.

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it! Normally, Dr. Craig debates at major universities in front of students and faculty.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies

- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.

- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

February 21, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!
This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

The MP3 file can be obtained from Apologetics 315.

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin

    - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
    - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
    - the site of Jesus' grave was known
    - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
    - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
    - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
    - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
    - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
    - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age

- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women –

Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the

witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling
- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I’ve read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig’s conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty

tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Will Russia be helping Trump the capitalist or Bernie the communist in 2020?

February 22, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Feel the Bern in 2020

The news media keeps telling me that Russia and Trump get along so well, but I don't see it in the policies.

The Daily Wire has more about Trump's record on Russia relations:

> Here are some of the following actions that Trump has taken against Russia:
>
> - Trump has repeatedly enacted tough sanctions against Russia and Russian oligarchs for a wide range of offense ranging from election interference to supporting destabilizing actions in Ukraine.
> - Trump expelled over 60 Russian diplomats from the U.S. after Russia engaged in an assassination attempt in the U.K.
> - Trump played a significant role in securing an extra $100 billion in funding for NATO, which serves to counter Russian aggression.
> - The Trump administration killed hundreds of Russian mercenaries in Syria.
> - Trump has aggressively tried to prevent Russia from expanding its influence in the energy sector in Europe.
> - Trump proposed buying Greenland last year in an apparent attempt to counter increasing Russian aggression and influence in the arctic.
> - Trump has repeatedly gone after Russia's top allies, including China, Iran, and North Korea.

With all that said, who do you think that the Russians will be supporting in 2020? Trump? Or will the support their good friend Comrade Bernie?

> Federal officials have notified socialist Bernie Sanders that Russia is trying to boost his presidential campaign in an effort to impact who becomes the Democrats' presidential nominee.
>
> The Washington Post reported that President Donald Trump and other top lawmakers on Capitol Hill have been informed about Russia's efforts to boost Sanders.
>
> Top officials "have repeatedly warned that Russia has ongoing plans to interfere in U.S. elections and foster divisions among Americans, part of a strategic goal to undermine U.S. standing in the world," The Post reported. "Some analysts believe that the Kremlin's goal is to cause the maximum disruption within the United States, and it throws the support of its hackers and trolls behind candidates based on that goal, not any particular affinity for the persons running."
>
> Sanders has a long history of being cozying up to Russia, including when he was the mayor of Burlington.

Looks like the secular left has gone back to being in bed with the Russians again. Just like during the Cold War.

What happens when we die? Is there a resurrection? Is there a Heaven and a Hell?

February 23, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

One of the questions that everyone should ask themselves is "what happens to me when I die?" Well, I'm an evangelical Protestant Christian, and I think that view of the world is correct according to logic and evidence. Well, I found an article on this that provides the philosophical theology perspective, from Dr. William Lane Craig. You can't do better than him.

He writes:

> The first and most fundamental truth that we must hold on to is that *the biblical hope of immortality is physical, bodily resurrection*. I repeat: The biblical hope for immortality is physical, bodily resurrection. The biblical hope is *not* that the soul will someday be separated from the body and fly off to heaven and be forever with God in heaven in this disembodied existence. That's actually a very Greek understanding of the afterlife, from the Greek philosophers like Plato, and it's very different from the Jewish-Hebrew way of thinking of the afterlife. For Jews and for the early Christians alike, the hope of immortality was not the immortality of the soul alone but rather the resurrection of the body. This physical body will be raised from the dead and transformed to immortal life.

He cites 1 Cor 15:20 and Phil 3:20-21 as support.

And do we get our resurrection bodies right away?

> Now that raises the next question: *When* do we receive our resurrection bodies?

> When do we get our resurrection body? Is it immediately upon death? When we die, do we immediately receive our resurrection body? Well, the answer to that is, no. That idea fails to take seriously the physical nature of the resurrection. The resurrection body is not some different body. It is *this* body transformed into a glorious, immortal, Spirit-filled, incorruptible form. So if we received our resurrection body immediately upon death, the graves of all the Christians would be empty! There would be no corpses left in the tombs because our resurrection bodies are the transformation of this earthly body. Therefore, the resurrection doesn't take place immediately upon death. Rather the Scriptures are fairly clear that this takes place at the second coming of Christ, when Christ returns to earth.

He cites 1 Cor 15:21-23, 51-52 for support, as well as 1 Thes 4:13-17.

And what about the time in between death and the second coming of Christ? After all, in Luke 23:39-43, Jesus tells the dying thief who believes in him that he'll be with Jesus in Paradise that very day:

39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence?

41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

43 Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Dr. Craig says:

> [T]he Bible indicates is that the soul does survive the death of the body. Human death does not mean extinction. Human death is simply the separation of the soul from the body. While the body dies biologically and decays away, the soul continues to exist and continues to live in a disembodied state. In between your death and your resurrection you will exist as a disembodied soul, a soul without a body, in a conscious state.

And he cites Phil 1:21-24, where it talks about how life after death, but before the resurrection, is an improvement, because he will be with Christ, which is "far better". Those who don't accept Jesus as Lord and Savior will also have a life after death, but apart from Christ. And they'll also have a resurrection, but not to eternal life with Christ:

> In John 5 there's a very interesting passage where Jesus speaks about the resurrection, and He says that there will be a resurrection, not only of the righteous dead, but even also of the unrighteous dead. John 5:28-29. Look at this saying by Jesus: "Do not marvel at this. For the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of

> condemnation." Jesus envisions that all people will be raised from the dead. Those who are believers, the righteous dead, will be raised to the resurrection of life; but the unrighteous dead, those who have rejected God's grace and His love, will be raised to the resurrection of condemnation.

Dr. Craig also talks about the story of Lazarus, where the rich man, who is not saved, is in Hades, which is the Greek word for the Hebrew word "Sheol", which you may recognize from the Psalms.

Dr. Craig writes:

> When people die, the righteous go to be with Christ, where they will await their resurrection from the dead. The damned go to Hades, where they are in a disembodied state where they await their resurrection to final judgment. Only then are people ushered in to their *final* state, which is heaven or hell.

I cannot wait until I get my resurrection body. I have a very good idea of what I'd like it to be, too. I think about the resurrection a lot, and really look forward to it. I had a difficult life in many ways. There are things that have not been resolved, like not being married, and being stuck as a virgin! And then there's the troubles I sometimes have at work, when atheists who are younger and more dedicated than me make me feel inadequate. I was a hard worker in my 20s and 30s, but now in my 40s, I just feel like I would rather be doing things I really care about, and it's sometimes hard to focus, especially when retirement is just around the corner – around age 50.

Sometimes, I find myself driving home in my beautiful city and state, and I just think, the most important things are not all this prosperity and freedom God blessed me with, but that vertical relationship with God. And I wish I was doing more to really show Jesus that he is Lord of my life. But my hope is that in the end, I will share in his vindication, being clothed in a righteousness that I did not earn myself.

Male professor forced to say fake pronouns by female judges and female dean

February 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Female judge (Clinton appointee) rules that man violate his conscience

U.S. District Judge Susan Dlott ruled that professor Nicholas Meriwether had use the preferred pronouns of students instead of the ones that match biological reality.

Here's an article from College Fix:

> In a three-page order last week that mostly recited the background of the professor's First Amendment lawsuit against the taxpayer-funded institution's compelled-speech policy, the jurist conclusorily alleged that "the manner by which he addressed" a transgender student was not protected speech.

He is being forced to used preferred pronouns, and he is banned from telling anyone that he is being forced:

> The Ohio university didn't just order Meriwether to address transgender student Alena Bruening (*left*), a biological male, as a woman, but banned the professor from even telling students that he was *being compelled* to use the student's preferred pronouns.

The female judge Susan Dlott took the advice of another female judge Karen Litkovitz, who put her own female feelings and intuitions above the law:

> Judge Dlott accepted a lengthy "report and recommendation" issued last fall by Magistrate Judge Karen Litkovitz, who determined his practice of addressing students was "pursuant to his official duties as a public employee," not as a

> citizen.
>
> Litkovitz had to explain away contrary rulings by her own federal appeals court, the 6th Circuit, to find that gender identity is not a “public concern” whose discussion is covered by the First Amendment in the classroom context.

The student allegedly threatened the professor, but the female dean Roberta Milliken did not think that this was anything to be concerned about, and in fact blamed the male professor for agitating the transgender student:

> Bruening allegedly threatened Meriwether, prompting him to ask for security personnel to be near his next class and to report the incident to the dean of students. Roberta Milliken, dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, blamed Meriwether for the incident, he said.

People sometimes ask me what I would do if I met a very good woman. Wouldn’t I marry her? And the answer to that is NO, not because of her, but because of the kind of world that’s been created by brainwashing millions of leftist women to hate men and despise good men who lead.

In my experience, most women don’t form their worldviews by reading non-fiction on their own, and then standing up for their beliefs in discussions. The women I meet mostly read fiction and romance novels. And they form their beliefs just by finding out what will make them feel good and be liked. Most women adapt to the people around them. And in college, that means a lot of atheism, drinking, promiscuity, left-wing activism, etc. And then these damaged leftist women are pushed by affirmative action into positions of power, where they are allowed to rule over men of conscience. These are the women who become teachers, professors, judges, administrators, politicians, etc.

All you have to do is take a look at what women do to men in the universities, the divorce courts, the human rights tribunals, etc. They love to disregard the law and impose their “compassion” on men who are trying to act according to their conscience. It gives them joy to seize the reins of a mans life and compel him to act against his conscience, and then to ban him from expressing what has been done to him, so that others will be warned.

The only rational solution to this change in society is avoid women in general, and rule out marriage entirely. It’s fine to be friends with women who do have a conservative Christian worldview and who are respectful of men. But you can’t get married and start a family in a world where the bitter promiscuous man-hating progressive women are in power. You have to hold on to your ability to walk away from anything that violates your conscience. One day, women who want to get married may start to actively shame the drunken promiscuity, atheism, and socialism of their female peers. At that point, maybe I’ll reconsider.

Canada’s single payer health care: pay up front, take a number and wait until you die

February 25, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Price of healthcare per Canadian household (Source: Fraser Institute)

I post a lot of research from Canada’s Fraser Institute, but they are not the only think tank that publishes research on the efficiency and costs of single payer health care in Canada. This time, I found a report from the Heritage Foundation, where they go over quality of care, taxes, out of pocket costs, coverage, rationing, waiting lists, staff shortages, substandard equipment, and outdated drugs.

Here’s the report from the Heritage Foundation. I’ll focus on the differences.

Canadians pay slightly less in out of pocket costs:

> The OECD calculates that Canadians spend 1.6 percent of GDP on out-of-pocket health spending, compared to 1.9 percent in the U.S.
>
> […]While these numbers are very close, they are actually getting closer. Since 1970, U.S. out-of-pocket spending as a percentage of total medical spending has been falling steadily, from 33 percent in 1970 to about 10 percent in 2017.19
>
> Meanwhile, Canadian out-of-pocket spending has been falling much slower, so that by 2016 it totaled 15 percent of total medical spending—a higher proportion than in the U.S.20
>
> **As a result, Statistics Canada warned in early 2020 that the percentage of Canadians experiencing large out-of-pocket burdens is growing, writing that “[b]etween 1998 and 2009…the percentage of households**

> **spending more than 10% of their total after-tax income on health care rose by 56%.”**

Canadians pay more in federal and state taxes:

> Federal taxation excluding social security contributions, then, comes to 28 percent of GDP in Canada, compared to just 19 percent in the U.S.—meaning 51 percent more.
>
> […]This excess taxation is largely a result of health spending, which has bloated provincial budgets to nearly three times the taxes of U.S. states.
>
> Provincial taxes have grown to nearly the same level as federal taxation. Meanwhile, provincial health costs have risen to fully 37 percent of provincial budgets in 2016—up from 33 percent in 1993 – —and range as high as 42 percent.
>
> Canada’s Fraser Institute has estimated this excess tax burden from public health costs at roughly $9,000 for a household of two adults with or without children or $750 per month in additional taxes.

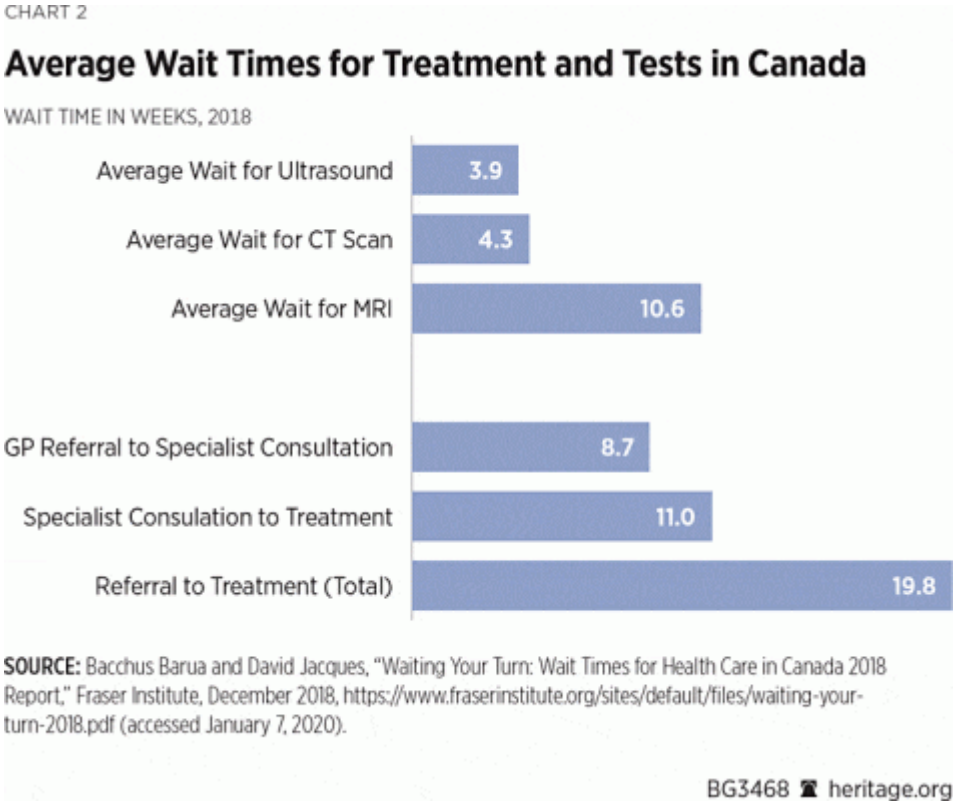

When I wanted an MRI I was scheduled the same week
Canadians wait far longer for treatment than Americans:

> Medical waiting times have become a national crisis in Canada, and continue to worsen. The average wait time for medically necessary treatment between referral from a general practitioner and a consultation with a specialist was 8.7 weeks in 2018, 136 percent longer than in 1993. Patients then have to wait again between seeing the specialist and the actual treatment, another 11 weeks on average, 97 percent longer than in 1993.

> From referral to treatment, then, it takes an average of 19.8 weeks (see Chart 2) to be treated, in addition to the original wait to see the family doctor in the first place—this for "medically necessary" treatment, not cosmetic surgery.
>
> In contrast, nearly 77 percent of Americans are treated within four weeks of referral, and only 6 percent of Americans report waiting more than two months to see a specialist.
>
> As for appointments, a 2017 survey of American physicians in the 15 largest U.S. cities found that it took just 24 days on average to schedule a new-patient physician appointment, including 11 days for an orthopedic surgeon and 21 days for a cardiologist.
>
> As a result of these long waits, by one recent estimate, at any given moment, over one million Canadians—3 percent of the entire population—are waiting for a medical treatment.
>
> These lists can average six months, and often much longer in rural areas, which tend to suffer from doctor shortages so severe that many do not even have a family doctor. Overall, 15 percent of Canadians did not have a regular health care provider in 2017.
>
> **The shortages ripple through the system; one doctor in Ontario called in a referral to the local hospital, only to be told there was a four-and-a-half year wait to see a neurologist.**

In Canada, people die or become inoperable on waiting lists:

> **A Montreal man was finally called for his long-delayed urgent surgery two months after he had died. One 16-year-old boy in British Columbia waited three years for an "urgent" surgery, during which time his condition deteriorated so much that he became a paraplegic.**

Canadians have to travel abroad to countries with functioning health care systems in order to be treated:

> These cases are, unfortunately, not isolated; a survey of specialists found that average wait times exceed what is deemed clinically "reasonable" for fully 72 percent of conditions in Canada. The situation continues to worsen every year: In 1994, the average gap between clinically reasonable delay and actual delay was only four days, and by 2018 had grown to 23 days.
>
> […]With one million waiting, many Canadians turn in desperation to U.S. health care—the very system some U.S. policymakers propose to transform. In 2017 alone, Canadians made 217,500 trips to other countries for health care, of which 52,500 were to the U.S., paying out of pocket to skip the waiting.

Outdated equipment, outdated drugs, staff shortages:

> While the average employer-sponsored private insurance plan in Canada covers

> between 10,000 and 12,000 drugs, most public plans in Canada only cover 4,000. Canada has 35 percent fewer acute care beds than the U.S., and only one-fourth as many magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) units per capita—indeed, it has fewer MRI units per capita than Turkey, Chile, or Latvia.
>
> […]Some common treatments are simply unavailable to Canadians. For new pharmaceuticals, for example, Canada's policy of forcing down prices so that American consumers essentially pay for Canada's research and development has led to years-long delays for Canadian patients.
>
> […]Cutting corners on facilities and using outdated drugs show up in Canadian mortality rates. Thirty-day in-hospital mortality rates in Canada are 20 percent higher than in the U.S. for heart attacks, and nearly three times the U.S. level for strokes. Cancer age-standardized mortality is 10 percent higher in Canada than in the U.S.—despite far healthier lifestyles.
>
> […]When it comes to personnel, Canada underspends on medical staff and doctors, ranking 29th out of 33 among high-income countries for doctors per 1,000 population, accounting for a large part of those wait times. Canada has half as many specialist physicians per capita as the U.S.
>
> […]With such shortages and waiting lists, Canadian emergency rooms are packed. So packed that Canadians sometimes just give up and go home. Of Canadian ER visitors who are seen, 29 percent report wait times of over four hours, three times the U.S. level.
>
> […]Canadian seniors are 65 percent more likely to have visited the emergency room (ER) four or more times in the past year than American seniors.
>
> Ultimately, nearly 5 percent of Canadian ER visitors end up leaving without ever being treated, giving up on a medical system that is perennially "free" but out of stock at the moment. In one study at two ERs in Alberta, 14 of the 498 walkaways were subsequently hospitalized, and one died within the week.

And keep in mind how things work in a single payer system. You pay up front through your taxes. The harder you work, the more you pay into the system. When you want treatment, you just get in line behind people who never paid one dime into the system – like all those low-skill refugees that Canada imports from Middle Eastern countries to build up the socialist voting bloc.

Members of another UK-based Middle Eastern men sex-trafficking ring sentenced

February 26, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UK police can't investigate sex-trafficking because it's racist

I've blogged before about many of the different sex-trafficking rings run by men of Middle Eastern origin in the UK. The UK is a socialist country where the government has been taken over by "compassion" as the core value. As a result, the leaders are anxious to expose their citizens to higher taxes and crime as they take in more and more low-skilled immigrants from the Middle East.

Sky News reports:

> Six men have each been jailed for up to 15 years over the rape of young girls in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.
>
> Usman Ali, 34, Gul Riaz, 43, Banaras Hussain, 39, Abdul Majid, 36, and two others who could not be named for legal purposes were jailed for a combined 55-and-a-half years on Wednesday.
>
> They were found guilty of a total of nine counts of rape and two counts of indecent assault of two girls in the Huddersfield area between 1995 and 2011.
>
> The victims… were aged 13 and 14 when the "insidious and persistent" abuse began…
>
> It was the sixth trial related to West Yorkshire Police's Operation Tendersea investigation – a probe into child grooming gangs in Huddersfield.
>
> A total of 34 men have been convicted in the investigation, with prison sentences now totalling 377-and-a-half years.

As you know, about a dozen similar gangs have been found in the UK. What's interesting

is that the same UK police force that investigates offensive speech on social media isn't interested in prosecuting older men who rape teenage girls and traffic them to other men. That's because the same political correctness / compassion that makes offensive free speech bad also makes sex-trafficking by Middle Eastern men good. It would be racism to charge these men for raping teens.

And there won't be any change in these priorities.

The far-left UK Independent reports:

> The government is refusing to release official research on the characteristics of grooming gangs, claiming it is not in the "public interest".
>
> Survivors accused ministers of making "empty promises", while a man who prosecuted abusers in Rochdale called for the Home Office to "show some courage and publish" its findings.
>
> It comes after The Independent revealed that almost 19,000 suspected child sexual exploitation victims were identified by local authorities in just one year, sparking renewed calls for prevention efforts.
>
> Sajid Javid promised the review as home secretary in July 2018, pledging that there would be "no no-go areas of inquiry".
>
> "I will not let cultural or political sensitivities get in the way of understanding the problem and doing something about it," he said at the time.
>
> "We know that in these recent high profile cases, where people convicted have been disproportionately from a Pakistani background.
>
> "I've instructed my officials to explore the particular contexts and characteristics of these types of gangs."
>
> But the government has made no further announcements on the review following Mr Javid's move to the Treasury last year.

Oh well. I guess 19,000 victims of child sexual exploitation is no big deal to the Labour Party politicians who arranged for the immigration of the men who raped them. But look on the bright side! At least these low-skilled immigrants vote overwhelmingly for socialism. So there's that.

Can a person be a committed Christian while ignoring apologetics?

February 27, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ratio Christi event at Ohio State University featuring Frank Turek

I would like to describe a situation that arises frequently that concerns me. The situation I describe below brings out a flaw I see in the way that rank-and-file Christians respond to criticisms of Christianity in the public square.

Here is the situation

Eve is busy programming away at her desk, rushing to check in her unit tests so she can spend her lunch hour reading the latest Stephenie Meyer novel, or check on the schedule for her local sports team, "the Vicariouses" (she has tickets for Thursday). Suddenly Eve hears Alice talking to Bob on the other side of her cubicle. She stops typing to listen to the following unencrypted conversation.

Alice: I was watching a documentary on the Discovery Channel last night that said that the universe has always existed, so there is no God!

Bob: I was watching a documentary on PBS last night showing simulations of how the first life started on Earth! God didn't do it!

Alice: I saw "Inherit the Spin" on the weekend! The only reason people oppose evolution is because of the Bible! Not because of science!

Bob: I'm going to see "The Va Dinci Code" this weekend! It says that the Gospels are unreliable and that Jesus didn't even die on the cross!

Alice: I just bought the latest Dichard Rawkins book "Christians Should Be Fed to Lions and the Bible Should Be Burned"!

Bob: I will read that as soon as I finish Histopher Chritchens' book "Why God is the Evilest, Stupidest Person in the World"!

Eve double-majored in business and computer science at the Indian Institute of Technology, and has an MBA from the London School of Economics. She has spent a ton of time, effort and money studying very difficult subjects for her job, and she even publishes research papers. She works full-time and runs her own business part-time, and teaches night classes for a well-known university. She earns about 200K per year. She lives in a huge house, drives an expensive car, and goes on vacation abroad to all the best vacation spots.

Eve thinks she is a Christian. She has attended church since childhood, her husband is a church elder and she sings in the church choir. She reads the Bible and prays every night, because it helps her to get sleepy before bed. She gives lots of money to the poor. She teaches Sunday school to very small children. She has even read all of the Narnia novels *five times*! She even has a calendar filled with nature scenes and itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny Bible verses posted on her office wall at work! Judging from all of these facts, you might expect Eve to get in on that conversation with Alice and Bob, and set them straight.

But she won't. Why not?

Why won't Eve stand?

I am wondering if anyone can explain to me why it is that most church Christians are not able or not willing to make a public defense when God's reputation is called into question. It seems to me that there are two bad effects that follow from Eve's unwillingness to stand up and invite Alice and Bob to lunch so that she can address their questions and concerns.

1. God's reputation is being trashed by Alice and Bob on the basis of lies they've swallowed from pop culture. These lies about God's existence and character could be easily corrected with a minimal amount of study, which Eve is capable of – she is a genius and has amazing entrepreneurial skills. If someone said similar lies about her husband or children, she *would* speak up, but she won't speak up for God.
2. Alice and Bob are bound for Hell unless someone cares enough to correct their mistaken beliefs, which, along with their sinfulness, is what is keeping them from a relationship with God that would go on in Heaven. If Eve's husband or children were mistakenly about to drink poison thinking it was Aspirin, then Eve *would* speak up. But to save her co-workers from Hell, she won't speak up.

Eve is capable of studying to defend the faith, because of her great success in other areas where so much time and effort were required to master difficult material. So why has she not applied herself to answering public challenges to her Christian faith from her professors, teachers, actors, the media, politicians, scientists, historians, etc.? She's heard these questions about God's existence and character all through high school and into university and then now in her career. Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says to

prepare a defense? Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says to acknowledge God before men? Doesn't she believe the Bible when it says that all authentic believers in Jesus will suffer a little for their faith?

It seems to me that if she did spend some time studying, and then made her defense to her co-workers, then two good things would follow:

1. Eve would be demonstrating her love for God and her friendship with God by protecting his reputation when it is called into question by unbelievers in public settings. That's what friends do – if Eve wanted to be God's friend, she would care that no one believed lies about him and told lies about him in public settings.
2. Eve would be demonstrating her love for her neighbor if she was able to correct some of these false beliefs, such as that the universe is eternal, or that a historical case cannot be made for the resurrection, or that evil is not compatible with theism. It's important for Alice and Bob to know that Christianity is not stupid.

So why is it that Eve is able to go to church for 20 years, sing in the choir, read the Bible, read the Narnia stories, pray on her knees, and yet still be unwilling to do the best thing for God and the best thing for her neighbor? If a Christian is smart enough to know how to get a degree and how to hold down a job, then that intelligence should also be used to defend God's reputation when it is called into question. I don't see how it is possible to claim that you love God, but then not apply your mind to defending him when you apply your mind to other things like education and work.

New study: 70% of households headed by immigrants are collecting welfare

February 28, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Net annual cost of illegal immigration

The Washington Times reports on the latest numbers from the Census Bureau.

Excerpt:

> The latest Census Bureau numbers find that more than seven of 10 households headed by immigrants in California, and nearly the same amount in Texas, are on the taxpayer dole.
>
> […]According to the latest numbers from 2014, fully 63 percent of non-citizens are living off at least one welfare program. That translates into 4.68 million households.
>
> […]"Concern over immigrant welfare use is justified, as households headed by non-citizens' use means means-tested welfare at high rates," said the Center for Immigration Studies, in its report on the numbers. "Non-citizens in the data include illegal immigrants, long-term temporary visitors like guest workers, and permanent residents who have not naturalized."
>
> What's most troublesome about the Census findings is the fact that the 63 percent of non-citizens on welfare actually grows to 70 percent for those who stay in-country 10 years or longer — meaning the entitlement mind only solidifies.

> Meaning non-citizens on welfare don't tend to get off welfare.

The reason I am posting about this study is because of the widespread perception on the left that all opposition to illegal immigration is just caused by racism. And similarly, support for border security has nothing to do with preventing crime and protecting our national security. It's all caused by racism too. Well, when you look at a study like this, you can clearly see that people who oppose illegal immigration and support border security have other things on their minds than racism.

Right now, we are nearly $23 trillion in debt. And it's climbing by over $1 trillion per year. We're already spending too much money. Interest on the debt is becoming a larger and larger part of our budget, leaving less money for real priorities like defense and infrastructure. Someone is going to have to pay for all these handouts that are driving us into debt. Young people people have the most to lose, because they have their whole professional lives ahead of them.

I just want to be clear about something. I am very much in favor of skilled immigration. I think that people who come here to WORK should be allowed to come here to WORK. While they are WORKING they should be ineligible for collecting any money from the government. They should not be able to vote or influence elections. They should not be able to bring any of their non-working relatives here. They should be deported if they commit a felony. They should be deported if they lose or quit their jobs. And if they are able to keep working, following the law, and staying off the dole, for a period of 10 years, then they should be allowed to apply for green cards. But our current system isn't oriented towards skilled immigrants. All the concern on the left AND on the right AND in the churches is about refugees and illegal immigrants.

Personally, I think we could be a LOT more accepting of skilled immigrants if we got rid of all the welfare programs. After all, if there is no welfare to be collected, then why would people even want to come here? The only reason they would come would be for the right reason – for liberty. And in order to stay, they would have to work and follow the law. That's who we want to bring in. If we *only* brought in law-abiding workers, then we could be a lot more *generous* about letting people of all races in.

And from a political point of view, we don't do well when we import a bunch of big government liberals from countries that don't accept American ideals, like individual liberty and limited government.

As far as I'm concerned, there should only be two paths to citizenship for immigrants: skilled labor and military service. And both of those for 10 years minimum. But that's not how the current system works. I just want everyone to understand that this is not an issue that has no effect on taxpayers. If we bring in unskilled immigrants and refugees, then we are going to have to pay for their schooling, their health care, and maybe even basics like food and spending money.

Matthew Vines and Michael Brown debate homosexuality and the Bible on Moody radio

February 29, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Details:

> Can you be gay and Christian? Matthew Vines says you can and he's created a viral video and best-selling book defending his view. This Saturday on Up for Debate, Vines joins host Julie Roys to debate author and leading evangelical apologist, Dr. Michael Brown. Is gay monogamy an option for Christians? Is it unloving to reject gay marriage? Listen and join the discussion this Saturday at 8 a.m. Central Time on Up for Debate!

Audio:

The audio of the Matthew Vines vs Michael Brown debate is streamed here on the Moody site.

Summary key: Julie Roys (JR), Matthew Vines (MV), Michael Brown (MB)

Summary:

Opening speeches:

- JR: Why should Christians be open to reinterpreting the Bible on homosexuality?
- MV: Consider the lives and testimonies of gay Christians. Here is my personal story.
- MV: According to the Bible, a person with same-sex attractions would have to embrace lifelong celibacy. I refuse to do that.
- MV: There are 6 passages in the Bible that are relevant to the goodness of homosexuality. All are negative.
- MV: None of these passages address gay relationships that are "long-term" and "faithful" that are based on "commitment" and "love".
- JR: You say that it is "damaging" for Christians to disagree with you views, is that true?
- MV: Yes. One of my friends declared his homosexuality and he did not feel safe to come home. He felt pain because Christians disagreed with him.
- MV: You cannot ask a person with same-sex attractions to be celibate, it causes too much harm to ask gays to abstain from sexual relationships.
- JR: Respond to Matthew.
- MB: The Bible only permits heterosexual sexuality and in every case condemns homosexual acts.
- MB: Matthew is taking his sexual preferences and activities as given, and reinterpreting the Bible to fit it.
- MB: Genesis talks about women being made to help men, and to fulfill God's commandment to procreate and fill the Earth.

- MB: The Bible speaks about the complementarity of the sexes when talking about how two become one in marriage.
- MB: I am very sensitive to the stories of people who are gay who experience discrimination as “gay Christians”.
- MB: You can feel sad for people who have two conflicting commitments, but that doesn’t mean we should redefine what the Bible says.
- JR: Stop talking, we have a break.

JR takes a caller for the next topic:

- Caller 1: I had same-sex attractions and I was able to change my sexuality.
- JR: Matthew, respond to that.
- MV: Alan Chambers of Exodus International says that 99.9% of people he worked with had not changed their gay orientation.
- MV: Lifelong celibacy is not acceptable to gays, so the Bible must be reinterpreted to suit gays.
- MB: Matthew thinks that God himself did not understand the concept of sexual orientation and inadvertently hurt gays because of his lack of knowledge.
- MB: There is a solution in the Bible for people who cannot be celibate, and that solution is heterosexual marriage
- MB: If a person is only attracted to pre-teen girls, do we then have to re-write the Bible to affirm that so they won’t be “harmed”?
- MB: Alan Chambers was speaking for his own group, and his statement does not account for the fact that thousands of people DO change.
- JR: What about the Jones/Yarhouse study that found that 38% of reparative therapy subjects were successful in changing or chastity?
- MV: (no response to the question)
- MV: (to Brown) do you accept that the Bible forces gays to live out lifelong celibacy

Another break, then Brown replies:

- MB: Yes. But change is possible.
- MV: Do you know of any Christian who acknowledged that this was the consequence of the Bible’s teaching for gays?
- MB: Paul’s explanation that the options for ALL Christians are 1) celibacy or 2) heterosexual marriage. For 2000 years.
- MV: Paul (in Romans 1) is talking about people who are not “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships.
- MV: Paul was not aware of “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships at the time he wrote his prohibitions in Romans 1.
- JR: How do you know that fixed sexual orientation is true? And that the Biblical authors would written different things if they knew?
- JR: Are there any references in the first century to “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships?

- MB: Yes, in my book I quote prominent historian N. T. Wright who documents that those relationships were known.
- MB: Matthew's view requires that God did not know about sexual orientation when ordaining the Bible's content.
- MB: Leviticus 18 is for all people, for all time. This was not just for the Jews, this was for everyone.
- MV: I am not saying that Paul was wrong because he was ignorant.
- MV: Paul was writing in a context where "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships were unknown.
- MV: NT Wright does not cite first century texts, he cites a problematic 4th century text.
- MV: Absence of 1st-century references to "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships means that God did not intend to prohibit them.
- MB: Whenever the Bible speaks about homosexuality, it is opposed to it – Old Testament and New Testament.

Another break, then the conclusion:

- JR: Respond to the Leviticus prohibition, which prohibits homosexuality for everyone, for all time.
- MV: It is a universal prohibition on male same-sex intercourse, but it does not apply to Christians.
- MV: For example, Leviticus prohibits sex during a woman's menstrual period. And Christians are not bound by that.
- MV: What is the reason for this prohibition of male-male sex in Leviticus? It's not affirm the complementarity of the sexual act.
- MV: The Bible prohibits male-male sex because it is written for a patriarchal culture.
- MV: In a patriarchal culture, women are viewed as inferior. That's why the Bible prohibits a man from taking the woman's role in sex.
- MB: The prohibition in Leviticus is a universal prohibition against male-male sex, applicable in all times and places.
- MB: Homosexual sex is a violation of the divine order.
- MB: We can see already the consequences of normalizing this: gay marriage, and supports for polygamy and polyamory.
- MV: So the earliest reference there is to a "long-term", "faithful" gay relationship is a 4th century text.
- MV: But that gay relationship is not like modern gay relationships.

I have a few comments about Vines' points below.

My comments:

Even heterosexuals who have not married are called upon to embrace lifelong celibacy. I am in my early 40s and am a virgin because I have not married. I wouldn't seek to reinrepret the Bible to allow premarital sex just because what I am doing is difficult. I

would rather just do what the Bible says than reinterpret it to suit me. And it's just as hard for me to be chaste as it would be for him to be. In short, it's a character issue. He takes his right to recreational sex as non-negotiable, and reinterprets the Bible to suit. I take the Bible as non-negotiable, and comply with it regardless of whether it seems to make me less happy. With respect to the purposes of God for me in this world, my happiness is expendable. If I don't find someone to marry, I'm going to be "afflicted" with the lifelong celibacy that Vines seems to think is torture, but let me tell you – God is happy with the contributions I am making for him, and if I have to be chaste through my whole life, I am 100% fine with that. I serve the King. And not the reverse.

Notice that he talks about "long-term" but not permanent relationships, and "faithful" but not exclusive. This is important because the statistics show that gay relationships (depending on whether it is female-female or male-male) are prone to instability and/or infidelity. I just blogged on that recently, with reference to the *published research* on the subject. Vines is talking about a situation that does not obtain in the real world – according to the data. Gay relationships do not normally value permanence and exclusivity in the way that opposite-sex marriage relationships do, especially where the couple regularly attends church. The divorce rate and infidelity rate for religious couples is *far below* the rates for gay couples, depending on the sexes involved. Vines is committed to the idea that marriage is about feelings, e.g. – "love", but that's not the public purpose of marriage. Marriage is not about love, it's about complementarity of the sexes and providing for the needs of children. We have published studies like this one showing that there are negative impacts to children who are raised by gay couples, which dovetails with studies showing that children need a mother and that children need a father. We should not normalize any relationship that exposes children to harm. We should prefer to inconvenience adults than to harm children.

Matthew Vines made an argument that Christians have to stop saying that homosexuality is wrong, because it makes gay people feel excluded. I wrote previously about the argument that gay activists use where they say "if you don't agree with me and celebrate me and affirm me, then I'll commit suicide". In that post, I quoted a prominent gay activist who made exactly that argument. I don't find the threats to self-destruction to be a convincing argument *for the truth* of the view that gay marriage being the same as heterosexual marriage. In fact, this is confirmed by a recent study which showed that features of gay relationships themselves, and not social disapproval, is to blame for high rates of suicide in the gay community.

Vines seems to want to argue that the context in which the Bible authors were writing did not allow them to address the problem of gays in "long-term", "faithful" relationships. Well, we have already seen that statistically speaking, those relationships are in the minority. One British study mentioned in the post I linked to above found that only 25% of gay couples were intact after 8 years. The number is 82% for heterosexual marriages, and that *doesn't* filter by couples who abstain from premarital sex and who attend church regularly. If you add those two criteria, the number is going to be well above 82% in my opinion. Studies show that premarital chastity and church attendance *vastly* improve the

stability and quality of marriages.

In addition, Vines is trying to argue that 1) the Bible authors were not aware of “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships and 2) their failure to explicitly disqualify these “long-term”, “stable” gay sexual relationships means that the Bible actually condones them. A friend of mine pointed out that this is a textbook case of the argument from silence, where someone asserts that because something is not explicitly condemned, then it must be OK. Carried through to its logical end, that would mean that things like identity theft are OK, because they are not mentioned explicitly. Brown asserted that there was a blanket prohibition on homosexual acts. He is arguing from what we know. Vines says that “long-term”, “faithful” homosexual relationships are not mentioned, and are therefore OK. He is arguing from what we don’t know. And he is trying to reverse the burden of proof so that he doesn’t have to show evidence for his view. Brown wouldn’t take the bait. The fact of the matter is that no one for the last 2000 years of church history have taken Vines’ view. Every single Christian before Vines, who were closer to Jesus’ teachings than Vines, understood the verses that Brown cited to be providing a blanket prohibition on homosexual sex acts. If Vines wants to claim that the Bible condones what he wants it to condone, he has to produce some positive evidence from the text or from church history or church fathers. He has *nothing* to support his case that could convince anyone that this is what Christians have believed, and ought to believe.

Finally, if you are looking for another debate, I blogged about a debate between Michael Brown and Eric Smaw. There’s a video and summaries of the opening speeches in that post.

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

March 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

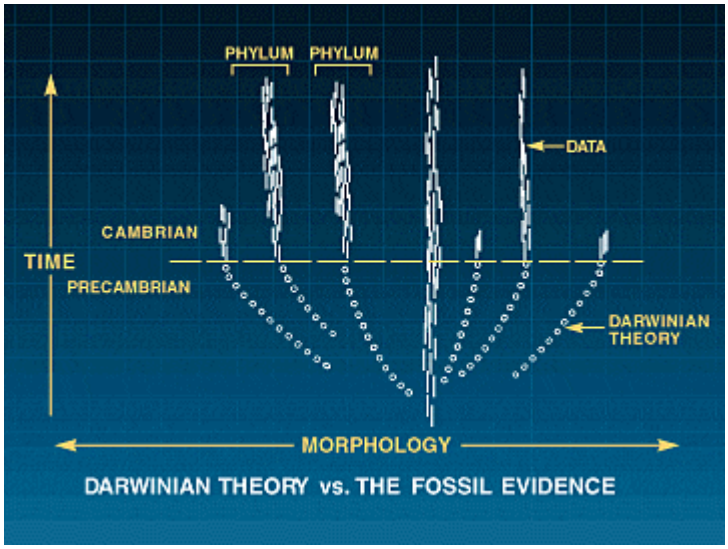

Cambrian Explosion

Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien "The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang" in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a

> unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and
> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

You can get a DVD of the lecture and other great lectures from Access Research Network. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

If you'd like to see Dr. Meyer defend his views in a debate with someone who reviewed

his book about the Cambrian explosion, you can find that in this previous post.

Further study

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

Are there any consequences to taxpayers who live in “Sanctuary Cities”

March 2, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rising Murder Rates in Big Cities

A sampling of cities where the number of murders so far this year is outpacing the same period last year.

	2014	2015	PERCENT CHANGE
Milwaukee	59	104	76 %
St. Louis	85	136	60
Baltimore	138	215	56
Washington	73	105	44
New Orleans	98	120	22
Chicago	244	294	20
Kansas City, Mo.	45	54	20
Dallas	71	83	17
New York	190	208	9
Philadelphia	165	171	4

Year-to-date time periods range from Aug. 11 to Aug. 31.

Source: City police departments

Crime rates in major cities, all run by Democrat mayors

I thought this story from the weekend was very interesting. Chicago is well known as a far left city. They have the toughest restrictions on legal firearm ownership and self-defense. They are extremely soft on criminals. And they are also a “sanctuary city”. That means that they refuse to cooperate with federal law enforcement when they are dealing with illegal immigrants with criminal convictions.

Here’s the story from the Daily Wire:

> Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot is on the defensive this weekend after Immigrations and Customs Enforcement announced that a convicted felon, now facing charges of sexually assaulting a toddler in a downtown Chicago McDonalds bathroom, was supposed to have been turned over to ICE and deported — and had been deported before.
>
> “ICE said in a news release Thursday [Christopher] Puente was placed into Chicago police custody in June of 2019 after he was arrested for theft,” according to a Chicago ABC affiliate. “According to ICE, Chicago police were expected to hold Puente until he could be taken into their custody, as Puente was expected to be deported.”
>
> Because Chicago is a so-called “Sanctuary City” and has lenient bail policies, Puente was released back into the community.
>
> Puente is now charged with raping a 3-year-old girl in the bathroom of Chicago’s landmark “Rock & Roll McDonalds,” a major tourist destination just north of the city’s downtown, and just west of its “Magnificent Mile” shopping district. Puente allegedly lured the girl away from her father, who was attending to the girl’s

> brother inside a bathroom stall. Puente, police say, dragged the girl into his stall, locked the door, molested and assaulted her. The girl's father, alerted by her screams, rescued her, but could not catch Puente, CPD says, who bolted from the bathroom and out the door of the McDonalds, into the street.
>
> […]Chicago's branch of ICE says "Puente had been deported to Mexico in 2014 over a prior burglary conviction, but tried to get back in five days later, claiming to be a citizen, and later skipped out on a hearing before an immigration judge. He was ordered deported again in 2017 in absentia," according to CBS Chicago.
>
> "Puente has been previously convicted of burglary, forgery, trespassing, domestic battery and related offenses and has a record dating back 20 years," CBS noted.

This sort of thing happens all the time in sanctuary cities. Here is one from earlier from New York City, another sanctuary city, run by another far-left Democrat mayor.

New York Post reports:

> Federal officials on Tuesday blamed Mayor de Blasio for a fatal sex attack on a 92-year-old Queens woman — saying his "sanctuary city" policy kept the accused killer from being held for deportation last year.
>
> "It was a deadly choice to release a man on an active ICE detainer back onto the streets after his first arrest included assault and weapon charges, and he now faces new charges, including murder," said Thomas Decker, New York field-office director of enforcement and removal operations for US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.
>
> "New York City's sanctuary policies continue to threaten the safety of all residents of the five boroughs as they repeatedly protect criminal aliens who show little regard for the laws of this nation."
>
> ICE said it lodged a detainer request with the NYPD for Reeaz Khan, an illegal immigrant from Guyana, on Nov. 27 — the same day he was busted for allegedly attacking his dad during a fight in their South Richmond Hill home.

Now I have a friend who calls himself a Christian but who votes Demcorat, and he thinks that Democrat policies on immigration are very compassionate and generous. Whenever I ask him about cases like this he says "illegal immigrants are no more violent than natural born Americans". That's a false statement, and I've blogged about the statistics on that before. But the more important point is this: none of the illegal immigrants should be here to commit these crimes. The crimes committed by people who are here legally cannot be prevented by kicking them out. They belong here. But the crimes committed by illegal immigrants *never have to happen in the first place, because they shouldn't even be here.* That's the important point that the compassion crowd always seems to forget.

Also, where is the compassion of the victims of these criminals from people on the left? Or do law-abiding taxpaying Americans count for less than criminal illegal aliens?

Canadian government cuts funding to hospital that refused to kill patients

March 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Price of healthcare per Canadian household (Source: Fraser Institute)

It's election time in the United States, and many of the Democrat candidate are putting forward government-run health care as an improvement to our current system. Candidates like Bernie Sanders are pointing to the "success" of health care in countries like Canada. I've blogged previously about single-payer health care in Canada, but this new story from last week even shocked me.

Catholic News Agency reported:

> A hospice in Canada has lost its funding and is being forced to close after refusing to offer and perform medically assisted suicides.
>
> The Irene Thomas Hospice in Delta, British Columbia, will lose $1.5 million in funding and will no longer be permitted to operate as a hospice as of February 25, 2021. Fraser Health Authority, one of the six public health care authorities in the province, announced on Tuesday that it would be ending its relationship with the hospice over its refusal to provide medically assisted deaths to its patients.
>
> Per Fraser Health's contract with the Delta Hospice Society, which administers the Irene Thomas Hospice, a one-year notice had to be provided before funding could be withdrawn without cause.
>
> "We have made every effort to support the board to come into compliance and they have been clear that they have no intention to," said British Columbia

> Health Minister Adrian Dix in a statement.

Government-run health care is very popular in Canada, even with many self-described Catholics. They probably couldn't foresee that handing all the money for health care to the government would cause them to have to choose between being fired from their jobs and killing innocent people. Fortunately, they chose to leave their jobs in order to not kill innocent people. I would expect that people in Nazi Germany or Communist USSR were faced with similar choices: kill others or starve.

Health care in Canada

So, it's important to understand how health care works in Canada. You pay into a system based on your ability to earn, and then when you need care, you get in line behind people who never paid. That's called "equality" and "fairness". You can't pay a doctor directly to get faster or better care, because in a single payer system, paying a doctor to get immediate or better treatment is *illegal*.

So while you're waiting in line, who decides whether you get treated? The secular leftists in government decide, because they decide what the government will pay for. You work and pay into the system. You pay the salaries of the government workers. And then they dole out health care as they see fit, according to *their* secular leftist worldviews.

If you need an abortion, that's free and taxpayer-funded. Drug needles? They're free. In vitro fertilization? You get two rounds for free. Sex-reassignment surgery? That's free too. But if you're old, then you might not get any treatment. After all, your days of voting are behind you. Many people die on waiting lists, especially poor people who can't fly to America for better care. That's Canadian health care.

People die on waiting lists in Canada

Here's an example, reported in the UK Daily Mail:

> A girl who died of leukemia was given a final send off after her friends signed her casket with loving messages on January 30.
>
> […]Laura might have experienced a few more milestones if a Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, hospital had been able to accommodate a bone marrow transplant for the young woman.
>
> Numerous donors were a match with Laura and ready to donate, but Hamilton's Juravinski Hospital didn't have enough beds in high-air-pressure rooms for the procedure.
>
> Hospital staff told her they had about 30 patients with potential donors, but the means to only do about five transplants a month.
>
> […]Dr. Ralph Meyer, Juravinski's vice-president of oncology and palliative care, told Ontario's TheStar.com there are plenty of others facing the same situation as Laura in Canada.

It just wasn’t important for the government of Canada to spend a lot of money buying one vote. It was much more cost-effective for them to spend a little bit of money on many voters who just needed birth control and abortions. There are a lot of votes to buy from people making reckless decisions with sex. But they don’t have the money for one expensive cancer patient. They let her die because they didn’t need her vote to get re-elected.

And keep in mind, her parents wouldn’t have been able to pay the doctors to do anything. They paid for all the health care they got through their taxes. And those taxes were used to pay for all the people who needed birth control, abortions, sex changes, IVF, etc. When it was time for the government to pay for their daughter, the government had no money left to save her. And her parents had no money left to take her to America, because they trusted the atheist elites in the government to provide their family with health care. That’s why they paid them up front with their taxpayer dollars.

Do illegal immigrants commit more crimes than law-abiding residents?

March 4, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

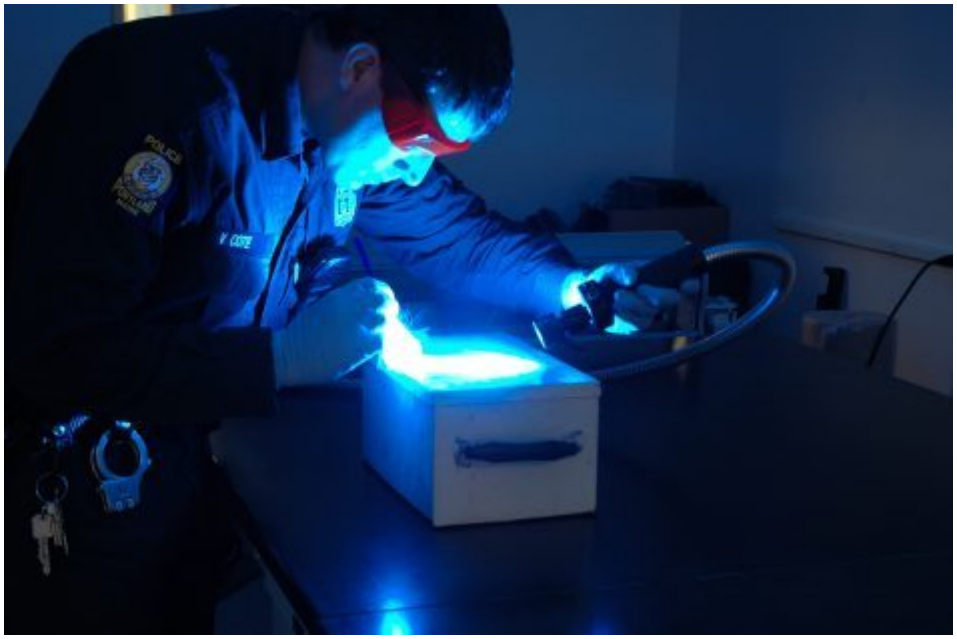

Policeman investigates crime scene for evidence

I've had people on the left tell me that illegal immigrants commit fewer crimes than law-abiding US residents, so when I came across this article from the Daily Signal, I knew I had to share it. They managed to get hold of a Department of Justice report featuring a comprehensive breakdown of all crimes committed. And they even go over local crimes rates for illegal immigrants.

Here's Hans Von Spakovsky writing for the Daily Signal:

> Opponents of federal efforts to enforce the immigration laws enacted by Congress repeatedly claim that illegal immigrants are "less likely" to commit crimes than U.S. citizens—and thus represent no threat to public safety.
>
> But that's not true when it comes to federal crimes.
>
> Noncitizens constitute only about 7% of the U.S. population. Yet the latest data from the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics reveals that noncitizens accounted for nearly two-thirds (64%) of all federal arrests in 2018. Just two decades earlier, only 37% of all federal arrests were noncitizens.
>
> These arrests aren't just for immigration crimes. Noncitizens accounted for 24% of all federal drug arrests, 25% of all federal property arrests, and 28% of all federal fraud arrests.
>
> In 2018, a quarter of all federal drug arrests took place in the five judicial districts along the U.S.-Mexico border. This reflects the ongoing activities of Mexican drug cartels. Last year, Mexican citizens accounted for 40% of all federal arrests.
>
> In fact, more Mexicans than U.S. citizens were arrested on charges of committing

> federal crimes in 2018.
>
> Migrants from Central American countries are also accounting for a larger share of federal arrests, going from a negligible 1% of such arrests in 1998 to 20% today.

Now, people on the left like to say that of course illegal immigrants commit more federal crimes, because their federal crimes mostly involve immigration violations. I don't know about you, but that list of arrests didn't sound like "mostly immigration violations" to me.

Anyway, we actually do have numbers for border states regarding local crimes committed. Here's an example from a very well-known border state:

> A recent report from the Texas Department of Public Safety revealed that 297,000 noncitizens had been "booked into local Texas jails between June 1, 2011 and July 31, 2019." So these are noncitizens who allegedly committed local crimes, not immigration violations.
>
> The report noted that a little more than two-thirds (202,000) of those booked in Texas jails were later confirmed as illegal immigrants by the federal government.
>
> According to the Texas report, over the course of their criminal careers those illegal immigrants were charged with committing 494,000 criminal offenses.
>
> Some of these cases are still being prosecuted, but the report states that there have already been over 225,000 convictions. Those convictions represent: 500 homicides; 23,954 assaults; 8,070 burglaries; 297 kidnappings; 14,178 thefts; 2,026 robberies; 3,122 sexual assaults; 3,840 sexual offenses; 3,158 weapon charges; and tens of thousands of drug and obstruction charges
>
> These statistics reveal the very real danger created by sanctuary policies. In nine self-declared sanctuary states and numerous sanctuary cities and counties, officials refuse to hand over criminals who are known to be in this country illegally after they have served their state or local sentences.

OK, that's not so good. And remember, none of those illegal aliens need to be here. We have methods for allowing immigrants to come here legally, and those methods also allow us to to keep out people who are dangerous to residents who pay taxes.

Here's an example from the Daily Caller of some recent crimes (all in August) that were committed in a Democrat-dominated sanctuary area:

> A sixth illegal immigrant was arrested in Montgomery County, Maryland, this month for sex crimes; this time, a Salvadoran national accused of molesting a 12-year-old girl and her younger brother.
>
> Nestor Lopez-Guzman, 21, was arrested by Montgomery County Police on Aug. 18. A friend of the 12-year-old victim told a school counselor that her friend had been molested by Lopez-Guzman, according to the police report. The victim then confirmed that the abuse had been occurring over the past six months.
>
> […]Five other illegal immigrants have been arrested in Montgomery County,

> Maryland, since July 25 on sex crime-related charges. On Aug. 14, for example, ICE issued a detainer against Salvadoran national Nelson Reyes-Medrano, who is accused of raping a 16-year-old girl at knifepoint. In another case in the last month, two illegal immigrants were charged with repeatedly raping an 11-year-old.

Now, if you ask Democrats what their plan is to protect law-abiding taxpayers from criminals like this, they'll say that their plan is to make law-abiding taxpayers pay for all the health care of illegal immigrants. No, really, that's literally their plan. As for the children being raped, their answer is "we don't care".

These sorts of crimes will stop when the victims of these crimes are allowed to sue the Democrat politicians who allow open borders and sanctuary cities.

Information Enigma: 21-minute video explains intelligent design

March 5, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

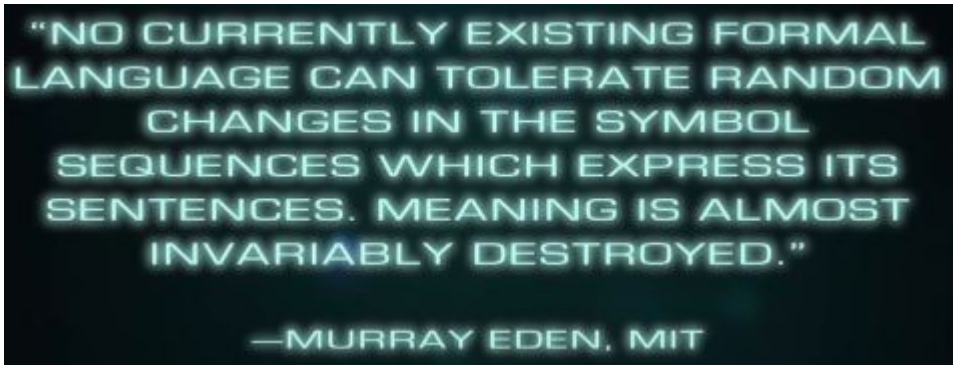

Can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
The video is here:

I have read and listened and watched a lot of material on intelligent design, but I have never seen so much value packed into such a short lecture. I really hope you'll watch this and that it's helpful to you.

Summary:

- the big question when discussing the origin of life: where did the information in living systems come from?
- Until 530 million years ago, the oceans were largely devoid of life
- In a 10 million year period, many new forms of animal life emerged
- New biological forms of life require new information
- the discovery of DNA shows that living systems work because cells have information that allows them to build the components of molecular machines: cell types, proteins, etc.
- can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
- normally, random mutations tend to degrade the functionality of information, e.g. – randomly changing symbols in an applications code does not usually introduce useful new functions, it usually renders what is there non-functional
- the majority of possible sequences will NOT have functions, so random mutations will more likely give you non-functional code, rather than functional code
- example: a bicycle lock with 4 numbers has many possible sequences for the 4 numbers, and only one of them has unlock functionality, the rest have no functionality
- if you have lots of time, then you might be able to guess the combination, but if the lock as has 10 billion numbers, and only one combination that unlocks, you can spend your whole life trying to unlock it and won't succeed
- how likely is it to arrive at a functional protein or gene by chance? Is it more like the 4-dial lock (can be done with lots of time) or the 10 billion dial lock (amount of time

required exceeds the time available)?
- the probability is LOW because there is only one sequence of numbers that has unlock function
- consider a short protein of 150 amino acids has 10 to the 195th power possible sequences
- if many of these sequences of amino acides had biological function, then it might be easier to get to one by random mutation and selection than it is with a lock that only unlocks for ONE sequence
- how many of the possible sequences have biological function?
- Thanks to research done by Douglas Axe, we now know that the number of functional amino acid sequences for even a short protein is incredibly small…
- Axe found that the odds of getting a functional sequence of amino acids that will fold and have biological function is 1 in 10 to the 77th power
- Is that number too improbable to reach by chance? well, there are 10 to 65th atoms in the entire Milky Way galaxy… so yes, this is a very improbable outcome
- can random genetic mutations search through all the sequences in order to find the one in 10 to the 77th power one that has biological function? It depends on how much guessers we have and how many guesses we get in the time available
- even with the entire 3.5 billion year history of life on Earth, only about 10 to the 40th organisms have ever lived, which far smaller fraction of the 10 to the 77th total sequences
- even with a very fast mutation rate, you would not be able to reach a functional protein even with all that time, and even with all those organisms

I was once having a discussion with a woman about the research that Axe did at the Cambridge University lab. He published four articles in the Journal of Molecular Biology. I held out one of the papers to her and showed her the numbers. She said over and over "I hate the Discovery Institute! I hate the Discovery Institute!" Well, yeah, but you can't make the Journal of Molecular Biology go away with hating the Discovery Institute. JMB is peer-reviewed, and this was experimental evidence – not a theory, not a hypothesis.

We have been blessed by the Creator and Designer of the universe in this time and place with *overwhelming evidence* – an abundance of riches. For those who have an open mind, this is what you've been waiting for to make your decision. For the naturalists who struggle so mightily to block out the progress of experimental science, they'll need to shout louder and shut their eyes tighter and push harder to block their ears. Maybe if they keep screaming "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" over and over to themselves, they will be able to ignore the real science a little longer.

Are gay relationships more stable than straight ones?

March 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

Let's look at this post from The Public Discourse and see if gay relationships are as stable, or even more stable, than straight ones.

Excerpt:

> The [NFSS] study found that the children who were raised by a gay or lesbian parent as little as 15 years ago were usually conceived within a heterosexual marriage, which then underwent divorce or separation, leaving the child with a single parent. That parent then had at least one same-sex romantic relationship, sometimes outside of the child's home, sometimes within it. To be more specific, among the respondents who said their mother had a same-sex romantic relationship, a minority, 23%, said they had spent at least three years living in the same household with both their mother and her romantic partner. Only 2 out of the 15,000 screened spent a span of 18 years with the same two mothers. Among those who said their father had had a same-sex relationship, 1.1% of children reported spending at least three years together with both men.
>
> This strongly suggests that the parents' same-sex relationships were often short-lived, a finding consistent with the broader research on elevated levels of instability among same-sex romantic partners. **For example, a recent 2012 study of same-sex couples in Great Britain finds that gay and lesbian cohabiting couples are more likely to separate than heterosexual couples.[3] A 2006 study of same sex marriages in Norway and Sweden**

> **found that "divorce risk levels are considerably higher in same-sex marriages"[4] such that Swedish lesbian couples are more than three times as likely to divorce as heterosexual couples, and Swedish gay couples are 1.35 times more likely to divorce (net of controls).** Timothy Biblarz and Judith Stacey, two of the most outspoken advocates for same-sex marriage in the U.S. academy, acknowledge that there is more instability among lesbian parents.[5]

This paper from the Family Research Council makes the same point:

> The 2003-2004 Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census surveyed the lifestyles of 7,862 homosexuals. Of those involved in a "current relationship," only 15 percent describe their current relationship as having lasted twelve years or longer, with five percent lasting more than twenty years.[4] While this "snapshot in time" is not an absolute predictor of the length of homosexual relationships, it does indicate that few homosexual relationships achieve the longevity common in marriages.
>
> In *The Sexual Organization of the City,* University of Chicago sociologist Edward Laumann argues that "typical gay city inhabitants spend most of their adult lives in 'transactional' relationships, or short-term commitments of less than six months."[5]
>
> A study of homosexual men in the Netherlands published in the journal *AIDS* found that the "duration of steady partnerships" was 1.5 years.[6]
>
> In his study of male homosexuality in *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, Pollak found that "few homosexual relationships last longer than two years, with many men reporting hundreds of lifetime partners."[7]
>
> In *Male and Female Homosexuality,* Saghir and Robins found that the average male homosexual live-in relationship lasts between two and three years.[8]

It's a Grindr lifestyle. And it's not a good environment for meeting the needs of children. (Example)

There is one study (Rosenfeld, 2014) that tries to argue against the conclusion of all these other studies, and the problems with it are discussed in this post.

The right way to think about gay marriage is to think about it as an extension of no-fault divorce. The same feminists and leftists who pushed for the legalization of no-fault divorce told us back then that the children would be fine, that children are resilient. No-fault divorce *was a change in the definition of marriage.* The leftists said that divorce would never become widespread, and that it would not harm children in any way. It was all a pack of lies. If the practices of the gay lifestyle become conflated with marriage, then marriage will come to denote relationships engaged in for "love" not children, such that unchastity, infidelity, increased domestic violence and frequent break-ups are incorporated back into the definition of marriage. Marriage is about permanence,

exclusivity and building an environment that can welcome children and supply for their needs. It’s not about government giving people respect for their romantic feelings. Those are volatile. What government ought to be rewarding is lifelong commitment.

Why are so many women with good careers being forced to freeze their eggs?

March 7, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this woman choosing a path that leads to marriage?

The New York Times says that more and more women are having to freeze their eggs because they can't find good men to marry. The NYT doesn't think that women are doing anything wrong. They blame the men for refusing to commit. According to feminism, women who value careers, abortion rights, no-fault divorce, big government, high taxes, etc. are doing everything right. But does it work?

I thought it might be a good idea to help Western women to make better decisions with men and marriage. Although setting out boundaries seems harsh and restrictive, it's actually protective and loving. If we want women to get to a stable marriage and children, (what they really need long term, after they lose their looks and youth), then we should be bold about leading them.

The first thing to point out is that the women celebrated by the New York Times are intentionally delaying marriage for their education and careers.

Another New York Times article explains:

> It could be that the new generation of millennial women is delaying having children even longer than the women who came before them, as prime childbearing years are also critical years for advancing in a career. A recent study shows that the marital pay gap that springs up after a first child is born typically does not close if the birth happens between age 25 and 35.

> Shannon Hettinger, a 32-year-old from Washington, D.C., said she definitely wanted children. She grew up in a large family in a small town in Pennsylvania and almost all her high school friends are married with children. But she moved to Washington, and spent her 20s deciding on a career. Now that she has one she loves — she works in residential real estate sales — she is not going to stop until she gets established. That means not having children for a while.
>
> "I just want to build my book of business and see where I can go from here," she said. "My whole focus is career growth. That's my No. 1 priority."
>
> "Once I achieve a certain level of success," she added, "then I'll start thinking about a family."
>
> Ivy Gray-Klein, 26, who lives in Philadelphia and works at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, said she was open to having children but cannot imagine doing so until she is 30 or 35. She wants to feel settled in her own life first. Now she has three roommates, is paying down her student loans and is working to build a little bit of savings.
>
> "I'm just really trying to get myself to a place that is solid," she said by phone. "Having a child right now would be so destabilizing. Children just seem like such an enormous financial undertaking."

Marriage is something that men are willing to do with women in their early 20s. They want a woman to commit and invest herself in his life early. They don't commit to a woman who has spent her 20s running up debts, traveling, being promiscuous, etc. The pattern of selfish behavior that women get into damages their ability to be good wives and mothers later. And men know that.

But in this post, I'm discuss something that I think is responsible for women not finding good men: and that's the fact that many women *are not looking for good men*. In fact, some women are very attracted to very bad men.

Here's the first editorial about women and domestic terrorist Dzhokar Tsarnaev, one of the Boston marathon bombers.

Excerpt:

> Mostly, though, they think Dzhokhar is cute. The Bambi eyes (looking right out of his Instagram-doctored photos at you!), the hipster facial stubble, the masses of wine-dark tousled hair — adorable! Impassioned believers have written "Dzhokhar is innocent" on their hands and plastered "Innocent until proven guilty!!!!" posters around their towns. An 18-year-old waitress interviewed by the New York Post vowed to have Dzhokhar's last tweet before the bombing tattooed onto her arm: "If you have the knowledge and the inspiration all that's left is to take action."
>
> […]But the real cause of the Jahar craze more likely lies in something more primal and less pretty in the female psyche. I'm betting that women, young and old, are drawn to Dzhokhar not because he is a good-looking late adolescent but

> because he is a good-looking accused killer. He's a classic "bad boy" of the sort to whom women are chronically attracted because they want to reform them, or minister to their wounds, or be the healing presence they've never had — but mostly because they find them sexy.

That article also noted:

> It's not surprising, then, that every homicide perp on death row who is reasonably attractive has groupies. Consider the handsome (and widely philandering) Scott Peterson, sentenced in 2005 for killing his wife and unborn son and throwing their remains into San Francisco Bay. The day he checked into San Quentin, he received three dozen phone calls from smitten women, including an 18-year-old who wanted to become the second Mrs. Peterson.

Some of the tweets and other fangirl comments about Tsarnaev were collected in this New York Post article.

Lots of Western women from the UK, France, Russia, etc. all picked up and moved to the Middle East to become ISIS jihadi brides.

Excerpt:

> Western women joining Islamic State are increasingly from comfortable backgrounds and often well educated with romantic notions of adventure often quickly dispelled by the harshness of life as a "Jihadi bride", according to a British research report.
>
> Some 550 women from Western countries have left their homelands to join Islamic State, which has captured swathes of Syria and Iraq, said the report by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation at King's College, London.
>
> […]It said female recruits were increasingly younger, some from comfortable backgrounds and often well-educated, and were playing "crucial" propaganda and recruitment roles.

That article is three years old, the numbers have more than doubled since then. The most common reasons cited for leaving are romance and adventure.

Psychology Today has some comments about why some women do this:

> In her post, "Women Who Love Serial Killers," PT blogger, Katherine Ramsland, offers some suggestions about why some women can be so attracted to, or hopelessly beguiled by, the most terrifying of human predators. At first, she provides explanations from the women themselves, women who actually married these dangerously unhinged criminals. Their reasons (somewhat elaborated here) include the assumptions that:
>
> - their love can transform the convict: from cunning and cruel, to caring,

> concerned, and compassionate.
>
> - there's a wounded child nested somewhere inside the killer that can be healed through a devoted nurturance that only they can provide.
> - they might share the killer's media spotlight, and so triumphantly emerge from their anonymity, and maybe in the process even land a book or movie deal (an aspiration about as cynical as it is narcissisticand self-serving).

And this is even more interesting:

> To simplify this work's findings for my present purpose, however, let me begin by emphasizing that Ogas and Gaddam find substantial evidence from Web searches, posts, and many 1,000s of romance novels that women demonstrate a strong erotic preference for dominant men. Or toward what's now commonly referred to as alpha males—in the authors' words, men who are "strong, confident, [and] swaggering [as in "cocky," and the pun is intended]." Unfortunately, what these descriptors often imply is behavior sufficiently bearish, self-centered, and insensitive as to often cross the line into a physical, mental, and emotional abuse that can be downright brutal.
>
> […]Moreover, in responding to the question as to whether some men, such as "serial killers, violent offenders, and rapists," might be too dominant for women to accept, Ogas and Gaddam note: "It turns out that killing people is an effective way to elicit the attention of many women: virtually every serial killer, including Ted Bundy, Charles Manson, and David Berkowitz, have received love letters from large numbers of female fans" (p. 98).

Women choose good-looking bad boys, because they think that they can change them:

> The fantasy that seems to be operating in such devotees, and that constitutes the plot of virtually all erotic/romantic novels written with women in mind, is that the "misogyny and jerkdom" they might have to battle with in such super-dominant males is only temporary. That it doesn't really represent the man's innermost reality. That his violence and lack of tender feelings is only the beginning of the story, and that their unsparing love, affection, and dedication can ultimately transform his character by helping him get in touch with his, well, "inner goo."

I blogged before about feminists going after pro-choice bad boys like William Clinton, Peter Strzok, Eliot Spitzer, Anthony Weiner, John Edwards, Harvey Weinstein, etc. These men support selfish policies like abortion and no-fault divorce. Women seem to not understand that men who support selfishness as policy might actually BE selfish in their own lives. Men who are able to commit and raise children are not pro-abortion and pro-divorce. Those are the men who women should be pursuing, and during their early-to-mid

20s.

Scott Klusendorf defends the pro-life view on the Unbelievable radio show

March 8, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of this debate

This is a re-post of a debate on abortion.

Here are the details:

> Justin hosts a discussion between Mara Clarke of the Abortion Support Network and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Instititute. Mara believes women should decide whether to terminate a pregnancy, but Scott says that all depends on whether we are dealing with a human life in the womb.

MP3 of this show

My snarky paraphrase of the debate (not exact):

- Speaker introductions
- Klusendorf: no justification for abortion is necessary if the unborn are not human
- Klusendorf: we need to address the issue "what is the unborn?" Are the unborn human?
- Klusendorf: SLED: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency
- Klusendorf: None of these things affect the value of a human being
- Klusendorf: Even if we don't KNOW whether the unborn is human
- Mara: I'm not going to debate when life begins
- Mara: Women know when life begins by feelings

- Mara: The moral decision is “whether I can take care of this child?”
- Brierley: When is an unborn being human?
- Mara: I refuse to debate that – the real question is whether women want their babies or not
- Mara: Forced pregnancy is not OK
- Brierley: Could your justification for abortion (not wanting to care for a child) work through all 9 months?
- Mara: Late term abortions are rare, so I don’t have to answer that question
- Mara: Abortion should be OK through all 9 months of pregnancy because women cannot be restricted
- Mara: Some women are poor, they need to be able to kill expensive babies at any time
- Klusendorf: although she says she won’t debate the unborn, she does take a position
- Klusendorf: she assumes the unborn is not human, because she says that insufficient funds is justification for abortion
- Klusendorf: no one argues that you can kill a two year old because they cost money, because she thinks they are human
- Klusendorf: she is begging the question by assuming the unborn are not human, but that is the issue we must resolve
- Klusendorf: I am pro-choice on many other things, e.g. women choosing their own husbands, religion, etc.
- Klusendorf: Some choices are wrong – Mara might be right, but she needs to make the case for the unborn not being human
- Brierley: What is your reason for thinking that an unborn child is different from a 2-year old?
- Mara: An unborn child is not the same as a 2-year old, in my personal opinion
- Mara: I am not a debater, so I don’t have to provide reasoning for my assertion, I just feel it
- Mara: Not everybody agrees with Scott, they don’t have to have a rational argument, they just need to feel differently
- Mara: From my experience, when a woman doesn’t want to be pregnant, then she should be able to not be pregnant
- Mara: Women shouldn’t be punished with a baby that she doesn’t want, even if she chooses to have recreational sex
- Brierley: What do you think of women who think the unborn is human and do it anyway?
- Klusendorf: It’s interesting that they never kill their toddlers for those reasons
- Klusendorf: I layed out scientific and philosophical reasons for the humanity of the unborn
- Klusendorf: Her response was “but some people disagree with you”
- Klusendorf: People disagreed about whether slavery was wrong, or whether women should be able to vote

- Klusendorf: that doesn't mean there is no right answer – the right answer depends on the arguments
- Klusendorf: if absence of agreement makes a view false, then it makes HER pro-choice view false as well
- Klusendorf: she did make an argument for the unborn child having no rights because of the location
- Klusendorf: she needs to explain to us why location matters – what about location confers value
- Mara: I'm not going to let Scott frame my debate for me!!!
- Mara: women get pregnant and they don't want their babies! should we put them in jail!!!!
- Klusendorf: I didn't just give my opinion, I had science and philosophy, the issue is "what is the unborn?"
- Mara: philosophical and scientific debates are unimportant, I am an expert in real women's lives
- Klusendorf: Which women? Women in the womb or only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Only those outside the womb
- Klusendorf: Only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Women living outside the womb have a right to kill women inside the womb – women have bodily autonomy
- Klusendorf: then does a pregnant woman with nausea have a right to take a drug for it that will harm her unborn child?
- Mara: Unborn children are only valuable if they are wanted, unborn children only deserve protection if they are wanted
- Mara: There are restrictions on abortion – you can't get an abortion through all nine months in the US
- Mara: There is a 24-week limit in the UK as well
- Klusendorf: There are no restrictions on abortion that conflict with "a woman's health" because Supreme Court said
- Mara: where are these late term abortion clinics?
- Klusendorf: (he names two)
- Mara: that's not enough!!! we need more! where is there one in Pennsylvania?
- Klusendorf: well, there used to be Gosnell's clinic in Pennsylvania, and you could even get an infanticide there….
- Brierley: What about Dawkins' view that it is moral to abort Down's Syndrome babies?
- Klusendorf: he is ignoring the scientific case and philosophical case for the pro-life
- Klusendorf: the pro-life view is a true basis for human equality

What I wanted Scott to ask was whether sex-selection abortions were OK with her. Since her reasoning is "if it's unwanted, it has no rights", then that would mean sex-selection abortions are just fine. That's what a UK abortion expert recently argued. And I also posted recently about how sex-selection abortions are not prosecuted in the UK. If you're

looking for a war on women, there it is.

The worst mistake you can make when defending the Christian worldview

March 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian

worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important

for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it. I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within

his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent’s weakness.

New study: same-sex attraction isn’t fixed

March 10, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Federalist reports on what researchers have found about the nature of same-sex attraction. Is it fixed? Or does it change over time? I think that gay activists would like everyone to believe that same-sex attraction is fixed, but to learn the truth, we should look at what the scientific research says.

Excerpt:

> There is not only no scientific evidence that sexual orientation is immutable, there is conclusive scientific evidence that most people who experience exclusive same-sex attraction end up developing an interest in the opposite sex over time.
>
> This is so well established by now that scholars are busy publishing methods to measure frequency of sexual orientation change in massive longitudinal studies of youth and young adults. (I.e., How many times in nine years can we expect a homosexual sexual orientation to change? Is the change associated with lifestyle habits? Who changes more frequently: males or females?)
>
> That basic fact was already settled science when Obergefell came before the Supreme Court. Half a dozen rigorous studies could be cited from the late 1990s and early 2000s, but the most noteworthy probably remains a Cornell-led study published in 2007.
>
> In this study, Dr. Rich Savin-Williams examined a representative sample of more than 12,000 American youth, following each from the age of 16 to 22. Rather than rely on an individual’s reconstruction of his or her past based on current identity, researchers met with subjects three times throughout the six-year period. Each time, they asked individuals (via a computer, to protect privacy)

> whether they had had a romantic attraction to a member of the opposite or same sex since their last interview.
>
> For instance, 17-year-old males were asked if, in the past year, they had had a romantic attraction to another male or female. About 1.5 percent reported only having a romantic attraction to other males. Five years later, when that 1.5 percent were asked about their romantic attractions since last interview, the overwhelming majority (70 percent) reported a 180-degree flip in their sexual orientation—they only had romantic feelings for women.
>
> Similarly, among females, about 40 percent switched from exclusive same-sex attraction to exclusive opposite-sex attraction. Most of the rest (45 percent of the total) reported they had feelings for both men and women. Only 1 percent of women who, at 17, reported a full year of exclusive same-sex attraction reported a similar experience in the five years that followed.

This research is in agreement with previous research on identical twin studies reported by the prestigious science journal Nature:

> When one identical twin is gay, there is about a 20% chance that the other will be as well. But because this rate is not 100%, it is thought that environmental factors play a role as well. One of the best characterized is the 'older brother effect': the chance of a man being gay increases by 33% for each older brother he has. The reason is not clear, although one hypothesis holds that the mother's immune system begins to react against male antigens and alter the fetus's development.

So, it turns out that homosexual behavior is a lot more related to free choices than it is to innate, fixed dispositions. That's what the science says. It's not what the politicians say. It's not what the Supreme Court says. It's not what Hollywood says. It's not what journalists say. But it is what science has found to be true about the universe. We are in control of our behaviors, and we have to choose things that are likely to work out in the long-term – not just what feels good to us in the moment.

Whenever I hear gay activists complaining that they have no choice but to give in to their "innate, fixed, biological" sexual attractions, I always think about how I've never been married and have had to deal with sexual attraction to the opposite sex. As a Christian, there is simply no Biblical support for sex outside of marriage. So, that means that I've had to just live with not being allowed to act on my desires. In fact, this is the normal Christian life. There was a time when people had more skepticism about their feelings and desires, and they knew that self-control was a good thing. But now it seems as if everyone is so desperate to be liked that we tell everyone yes to everything that they feel like doing. We now consider every moral viewpoint as equal to any other – all the better to do what makes us feel happy. The important goal is that we all feel good right now, and who cares about the damage that our selfishness will cause down the road? We can just act surprised when that happens and pretend that there is no such thing as cause

and effect. I can remember a time when Christians in particular had some suspicion about following your heart, because the heart was deceitful and selfish. I guess those days are over, and suddenly feelings are ruling over reason and self-control.

It's pretty clear that not everything that a person feels like doing is good for them. A lot of decisions that people make to feel good right now lead to outcomes where they or the people who are depending on them will be harmed. For example, lots of people feel like staying home from a school exam, or staying home from their jobs, or drinking alcohol all night, or taking drugs. We used to have more confidence about telling people that not everything they wanted was good for them, and to have more self-control, and to think of how their decisions would harm others. Today, society has drifted away from objective moral boundaries and self-control toward subjective feelings and moral relativism, we are all finding it more difficult to tell people that they should choose to adhere to moral standards. We always seem to be looking to big government to make our irresponsible, reckless choices to be happy in the moment "work out" somehow.

Today, when people make poor decisions that wreck their families, hurt their kids, damage their health, etc. we are more likely to tax the people who haven't been selfish and reckless in order to pay for government programs that "fix" the outcomes of the selfish, reckless people. In some countries, you can get free single mother welfare, free taxpayer-funded abortions, free sex-changes, free treatment for sexually-transmitted diseases, free rounds of IVF, and so on. Just do whatever you want and someone else who had more self-control than you did will pay for it for you. That's why we have a twenty-trillion dollar debt, which we never had during the time when we still had the courage to tell people not to do things that were risky, and would be expensive to fix when they blew up.

When did it become normal to think that cause and effect were so unpredictable that people shouldn't be blamed and held accountable for making bad decisions? When did it become normal to think that doing what feels good for ourselves should be rewarded with other people's money, through big government programs? When did it become normal to take people to court to force them to celebrate your self-centeredness, just because their disagreement with what you were doing made you feel bad?

Democrats punish whistleblowers who exposed organ harvesting by abortion providers

March 11, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Planned Parenthood senior executive: organ harvesting so she can get a Lamborghini

A while back, I posted about some whistleblowers who managed to get abortion providers on camera confessing that they performed abortions in a way to maximize profits from selling the body parts of the unborn children. Rather than punish the abortionists, California decided to go after the whistleblowers. Here is the latest on that story from The Federalist.

It says:

> An undercover reporter has been arraigned in California and charged with ten felonies for secretly recording conversations, and it's time to revisit how the judiciary and the law can stifle the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of the press.
>
> The accused, David Daleiden, used standard media undercover techniques to investigate and expose Planned Parenthood's sale of aborted fetus body parts.
>
> […]Daleiden faces a legal system that has unleashed both criminal and civil actions against him for a variety of supposed violations of law, including criminal trespass, fraud, and breach of contract, even federal civil racketeering. A jury in the civil trial awarded the plaintiffs more than $2.2 million in damages, enough to permanently silence Daleiden's small pro-life and nonprofit operation. We are appealing.

It was actually former Democrat presidential candidate Kamala Harris who disregarded the abortionists and went after the pro-life whistleblowers – even going so far as to raid their houses:

> The criminal case, the one more likely to chill undercover work, was the product of then-California Attorney General Kamala Harris. A judge threw out six of 15

> criminal charges against Daleiden and co-investigator Sandra Merritt but ruled that the other counts can go to a criminal trial. Thus, the arraignment. Never mind that Harris violated shield laws protecting reporters by raiding Daleiden's home and capturing previously unpublished raw journalism materials.

Note that Harris only pressed these charges and used these powers against the pro-lifers:

> How ironic, because about the time that Daleiden published his findings, animal rights activists were praised for documenting abuse in the poultry industry. Unlike in Daleiden's case, Harris launched probes of the poultry industry and didn't charge the reporters.
>
> That Harris received campaign donations from, and touted her support for, pro-choice groups suggests she was motivated by political bias. Same for the judge in the civil case, who was affiliated with an organization that had a joint venture with a Planned Parenthood affiliate whose successor is now one of the entities suing Daleiden.
>
> No one can be blamed for thinking that the legal actions were inspired and carried out by pro-choice organizations to punish and silence their opponents. What does it tell you that the Daleiden case may have been the first time that any journalist has been criminally charged with violating the California recording law in the many years it has been on the books?

Although Kamala Harris has bowed out of the 2020 Democrat primary, she has endorsed Joe Biden. And that's in part because Joe Biden has substantially the same views on abortion as she does. Not only does he have the same views, he has a very strong record of supporting abortion throughout all 9 months of pregnancy.

Life News explains:

> When it comes to abortion and appointing federal judges who have the power to determine the direction of abortion legislation, Biden made it clear he would not compromise as president.
>
> […]Biden went further. He said if the Supreme Court were to overturn Roe v. Wade, he would push for a national law allowing abortions up to birth.
>
> […]Biden… says he will support forcing Americans to fund abortions up to birth with our taxpayer dollars.
>
> […]Biden has a strong pro-abortion voting record that goes back for many years, and he supported President Barack Obama's leadership as the most pro-abortion president in U.S. history. What's more, pro-abortion movement leaders say they "trust" Biden to protect abortion on demand. As the vice president, he supported the administration's pro-abortion policies, including Obamacare, which forced religious employers to pay for drugs that may cause abortions.
>
> From 2001 to 2008, Biden's voting record on pro-life issues was close to zero, according to the National Right to Life Committee. In 2005, for example, he voted

> against the Mexico City Policy, which prohibits funding to overseas groups that promote and/or perform abortions. He also voted repeatedly to require that military service members' abortions be covered by taxpayer dollars.

If Joe Biden is elected president, I think we will see what California did to pro-lifers happening all over the country, in every state. Big government Democrats love to pass legislation at the federal level, and overrule state laws.

Fascism: Canadian court rules that child can change genders without parental consent

March 12, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In Canada, citizens pay taxes, but the government makes all the decisions
The Federalist reports:

> For the past 11 months, Robert Hoogland, a father in Surrey, British Columbia, has been forced to watch as his 14 year-old daughter was "destroyed and sterilized" by court-ordered testosterone injections. After losing his legal appeal to stop the process in January… is making a desperate attempt to bring his case into the courts of public opinion, even though it breaks a court order demanding his silence about the case.
>
> "I had a perfectly healthy child a year ago, and that perfectly healthy child has been altered and destroyed for absolutely no good reason," Rob said in an exclusive interview. "She can never go back to being a girl in the healthy body that she should have had… She won't be able to have children…"
>
> […][T]he courts judged his daughter competent to take testosterone without parental consent… [and] he was convicted of "family violence" by the BC Supreme Court for his "expressions of rejection of [his daughter's] gender identity." He was also placed under threat of immediate arrest if he was caught referring to his daughter as a girl again.
>
> […]Rob remains under a strict gag order forbidding him from speaking about his daughter's case in public and requiring that he "acknowledge and refer to [his daughter] as male" in private.

The Nazis didn't want the rest of the world finding out about their bullying of the parents, so they tried to cover up their fascism with publication bans and threats of immediate arrest and imprisonment.

How far would the secular leftist Nazis in Canada go to cover up their coercion of the father with armed police?

This far:

> […]Rob granted two video interviews to Canadian YouTube commentators about his case… [T]he commentators who granted them quickly found themselves under threats of litigation. Rob's first interview was immediately taken down. Rob's second interviewer… faced similar threats, but initially refused to take her video (not currently available in Canada) down.
>
> […]Justice Michael Tammen of the British Columbia Supreme Court ordered that Thompson's interview and various social media posts be taken down. When Thompson stalled, trying to keep a rapidly sharing copy of her interview available to Canadians on Bitchute, the police were sent to her house to demand she take the video down.
>
> Tammen also harshly reprimanded Rob for speaking about his case to the media, warning him that if he broke his silence again, he would likely be cited for contempt of court.

Canada is not a free country that respects human rights. It is a tyranny ruled by secular leftist fascists. Keep in mind that the Nazis who are doing this to the father are all taxpayer-funded. The father is paying all of their salaries through his mandatory taxes. And he doesn't get an opt-out. Just like the Jews in 1930s Germany, his only opt-out from tyranny is to leave the country… if he is able to legally immigrate somewhere else.

You can see the actual Nazis behind the attack on the father in the story, you can check out this story from Mass Resistance, where they have photos and names of all the intolerant, bigoted, hate-filled Nazis responsible for this miscarriage of justice. These people have this much power over individuals because Canadians voted for an enormous government to run their lives in education, healthcare, crime prevention, daycare, retirement, etc. The government runs everything, and the individuals are like children – with no space to make their own decisions and run their own lives.

Lest you think that this is just one rogue province, the Canadian legislature has actually introduced a bill (C-8) that allows the government to jail parents who refuse to approve their child's gender transition for up to 5 years:

> Under C-8, parents could spend up to five years in jail for trying to help their son accept himself as a boy, or for helping their daughter to accept herself as a girl. Bill C-8 also would impose prison terms up to five years for doctors, counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists and other paid professionals whose treatment for gender confusion departs from politically correct orthodoxy. Parents would be punished if they do anything other than encourage a confused child to "transition" to the opposite gender. Transitioning is an extreme form of intervention that includes taking puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and undergoing permanent surgical sterilization, including the removal of healthy

> organs such as breasts and testicles.

When government is running something, the taxpayers have no power. They have already paid for the services through taxes, and they are at the mercy of the secular leftist Nazis who run the system. If we don't defeat the Democrats in elections in America, we should expect the same sort of elimination of human rights under a fascist totalitarian state as we see right now in Canada. Canadian voters (including Canadian Christians) sold out their human rights for government-provided "free stuff" long ago.

We should look at the Canadian experiments with socialism. It seems pretty clear to me that when the secular left gets power, it's the end of liberty. It's the end of conscience. It's the end of human rights. And the same thing could happen here. If the Democrats win enough elections, you will not have a right to run your life as *you* see fit. You will pay secular leftist Nazis to run *your* life as *they* see fit.

And by the way, American public school teacher unions want the exact same rules in place as in this Canadian case, as the Daily Signal reports. Which is why you should support school choice.

One final point. In America, about 75% of young, unmarried women vote for more government control and less freedom when they vote for the Democrat party. Women go through high school and university, and they just adopt the secular left values of their teachers and professors, because it makes them feel good and look good. They don't think about how these big government policies are perceived by marriage-minded men, and about how it diminishes their opportunities to get married and have a family.

Women need to understand that good men do not get involved in marriage and child-bearing if all they are allowed to do is earn money to pay bureaucrats to rule their family. Men marry when they think that they will have the respect of their wife and children, and when they will be allowed to lead the home. And unfortunately, almost all women today *learn nothing* about *respect* for husbands *as leaders* and fathers *as providers*. And that includes what Christian women learn from their Christian parents, their Christian schools, and in their Christian churches. It's almost impossible to find anyone in the Christian culture brave enough to stand up to warn Christian women not to make decisions that will cause men to see the marriage enterprise as an unattractive value proposition.

It's a huge mistake for young, unmarried women to destroy male leadership by siphoning family money and discretionary power into the hands of secular leftist fascists. Good men will not marry or have children if secular leftists are ruling his marriage and his home. Get that straight. There is no use complaining about "where are all the good men?" and "why are men afraid of commitment?" when *your voting* is the root cause of the problem of men going on strike against marriage and family. Take responsibility and fix the problem. Or stop complaining.

Bible study: Esther as an example of bravery and God’s providence

March 13, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

I’ve been listening to this FREE two-volume series on the book of Esther featuring pastor Alistair Begg. A whole bunch of interesting things stuck out to me, so I’ll write about one of them today.

First, Esther is a Jewish woman whose father or mother died when she was young. She was adopted by Mordecai, another Jew. She was very beautiful, so she was picked to be part of the Persian King’s harem. In fact, she is so beautiful that the King chooses her to be the Queen.

Now there is an enemy of the Jews in the King’s court named Haman, and he manages to get the King to create an edict that says that all the Jews will be killed. Mordecai calls Esther to tell her that she has to stop the King from ordering this edict.

But Esther is out of favor with the King, and hasn’t been asked to come in to visit him for some time. To go in and see the King without being summoned is a capital offense. Unless the King gives permission, she would be killed for intruding on the King. But in the end, she agrees to speak up and say something.

It all gets resolved in Esther chapter 4.

Esther 4:1-17:

> 1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly.

> 2 He went as far as the king’s gate, for no one was to enter the king’s gate clothed in sackcloth.
>
> 3 In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.
>
> 4 Then Esther’s maidens and her eunuchs came and told her, and the queen writhed in great anguish. And she sent garments to clothe Mordecai that he might remove his sackcloth from him, but he did not accept them.
>
> 5 Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king’s eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her, and ordered himto go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.
>
> 6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king’s gate.
>
> 7 Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king’s treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.
>
> 8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people.
>
> 9 Hathach came back and related Mordecai’s words to Esther.
>
> 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him to reply to Mordecai:
>
> 11 “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.”
>
> 12 They related Esther’s words to Mordecai.
>
> 13 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”
>
> 15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai,
>
> 16 “Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.”
>
> 17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

What Mordecai is saying here is that God is sovereign over the events that are taking place, and that even if Esther makes a free decision to not intercede to save her people,

then God will do something else. Somehow, telling her that makes her agree to take the risk and go in to see the King. Even though it is illegal to go in to see the King, she is going to risk her life and do it. And the message there is that God made her beautiful, and placed her in the palace, for exactly this purpose. Her beauty has a purpose.

Before then, she may not have been the most morally pure Jew, nor the most faithful Jew, nor some great authority on theology or apologetics. She was probably keeping her faith pretty hidden. But in that one moment, she rises above being an orphan, above being a harem girl, and above being just a pretty face. God can use anyone – even a silly girl who spends all day in front of a mirror playing with cosmetics – to achieve his ends. She is not Daniel. But today she is getting the call, anyway. It's on her.

What is the lesson here? God can use *anybody.* It doesn't mean that you shouldn't be moral, study theology, and study apologetics, and keep your character clean so you have self-control. It means that any believer is just one step away from glory, no matter what they did in the past. That's how God rolls.

Further study

If you are interested in the story of Esther, then you should listen to the entire series by Alistair Begg.

- Volume 1 is here (download all in a zip file)
- Volume 2 is here (download all in a zip file)

The point I am making in this post is in this lecture.

Esther is about two themes: 1) how should a believer in God live in a society where believers are a minority? and 2) even when things look really out of control, God is in control, and is never more than one step away from saving his people.

I have a lot of Christian apologist friends who struggle to go to church, and struggle to read the Bible. The links above will take you to some great preaching on one of the most interesting books of the Bible. Go there, grab the MP3s, and listen to them with no distractions.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

March 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.

20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University

> physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

March 15, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

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20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

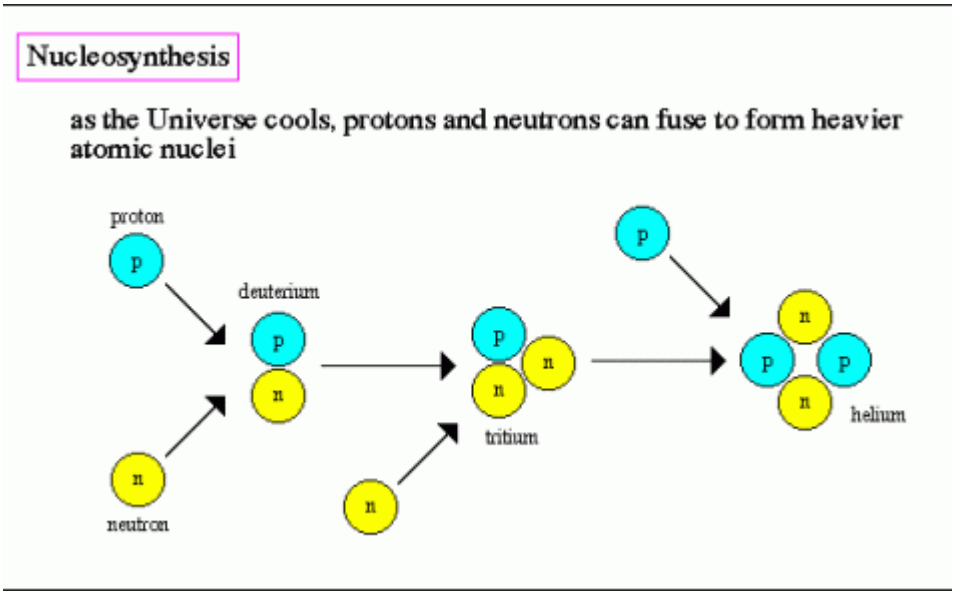

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major

> triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 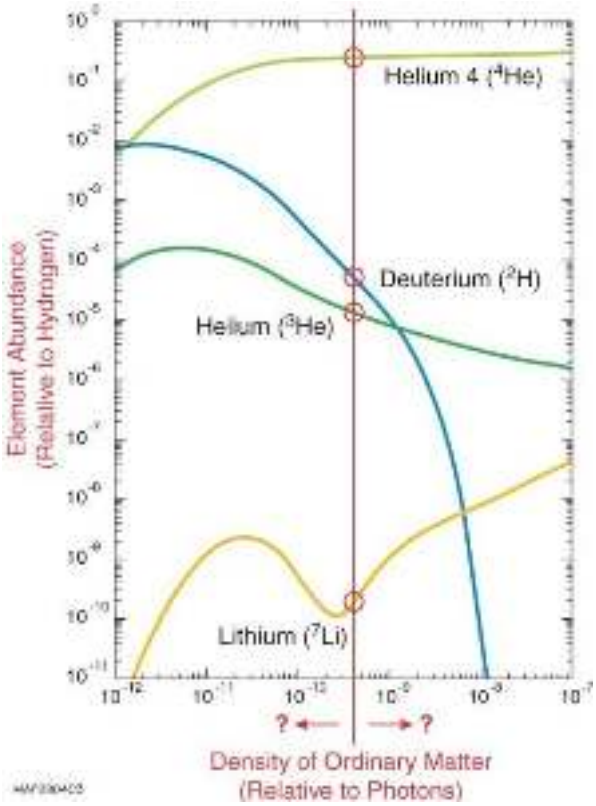
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-

> based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

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Is the vastness of the universe evidence against God’s existence?

March 16, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
Physicist Hugh Ross writes about it in Salvo Magazine.

First a quick blurb about Hugh Ross:

> Hugh Ross launched his career at age seven when he went to the library to find out why stars are hot. Physics and astronomy captured his curiosity and never let go. At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver’s Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or “quasars,” some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

Now back to the topic “Is the vastness of the universe incompatible with God’s existence?”

Here’s Ross’ introduction:

> Scientists seem more difficult to please than the golden-haired girl of fairy-tale fame. While Goldilocks troubled herself over the just-right porridge, chair, and bed, astronomers appear preoccupied with the size of the universe.
>
> In the days before telescopes, when an observer could count a few thousand stars in the night sky, many considered the universe too small and unimpressive

> to be the work of an almighty, all-knowing Creator. Only an infinite cosmos, they said, would befit an infinite deity. But then, others argued, an infinite cosmos might eliminate the need for a Creator.
>
> Thanks to the Hubble space telescope, scientists now see that the universe contains roughly 200 billion large- and medium-sized galaxies and about a hundred times as many dwarf galaxies. The stars in those galaxies add up to about fifty billion trillion, and they comprise a mere one percent of the mass of the observable universe.
>
> Because of the travel time of light, the universe humans can observe is really the universe of the past. What researchers know about the expansion and geometry of the universe informs us that the universe of today is at least several hundred times more enormous than the universe we can see. The universe is trillions of trillions of times larger and more spectacular than what the earliest astronomers presumed!
>
> And yet, this new knowledge of the vastness of the universe has led to new complaints. In his book, *God: The Failed Hypothesis,* Victor Stenger says, "If God created the universe as a special place for humanity, he seems to have wasted an awfully large amount of space." Stephen Hawking, in the best-selling science book of all time, *A Brief History of Time,* shares Stenger's view: "Our solar system certainly is a prerequisite for our existence. . . . But there does not seem to be any need for all these other galaxies." So now the universe is too big to befit the all-wise, all-powerful God of the Bible.

I like how he quotes an atheist physicist to get the challenge right. No sense in caricaturing the claim of your opponent.

I formalized Stenger's argument like this:

1. If all things in the universe are not done the way that Victor Stenger likes them, then there is no God.
2. All things in the universe were not done the way Victor Stenger likes them.
3. Therefore, there is no God.

I would deny premise 1, there, since there is no reason to believe that's it's true.

Anyway, let's see what Hugh Ross says:

> The hot big bang model (now firmly established by observations) tells us that at the moment of cosmic creation, the universe was infinitely or near-infinitely hot and compressed, and all the ordinary matter existed in the form of hydrogen. As the universe expanded, it cooled. The rate at which the universe expanded and cooled depended in large part on its mass—the greater the mass, the slower the expansion and cooling rate. The slower the expansion and cooling rate, the more time the universe would spend in the temperature range (13–150 million degrees Centigrade) at which nuclear fusion can occur.

> **Because of its mass, the universe spent about twenty seconds in the nuclear fusion temperature range when it was between three and four minutes old. As a result, 24.77 percent of the universe's hydrogen (by mass) fused into helium. Thus, when stars began to form—about 380,000 years later—they started off composed of about 75 percent hydrogen, 25 percent helium, and trace amounts of deuterium, lithium, and beryllium.**
>
> **In the nuclear furnaces of the stars themselves, more hydrogen fused into helium, and, in addition to the extra helium, all the rest of the elements that appear in the periodic table were synthesized (created). The capacity of stellar nuclear furnaces to produce an abundance of elements heavier than helium (all but two of the elements) depended critically on how much of the universe's initial hydrogen was fused into helium and heavier elements during the first several minutes after the cosmic creation event. How much fusion of the universe's primordial hydrogen actually occurred at this time depended, in turn, on the universe's mass or mass density.**
>
> If the universe's mass (or cosmic mass density) had been even the slightest bit less than a hundred times the fifty billion trillion stars occupying the observable universe, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes of its existence would have proceeded less efficiently. Thus, the cosmos would have been forever incapable of generating elements heavier than helium—elements such as carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, sodium, and potassium—all of which are essential for any conceivable kind of physical life.
>
> On the other hand, if the universe's mass had been even the slightest bit greater, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes after its beginning would have been too productive, and *all* the hydrogen in the universe eventually would have been fused (after just two generations of stars) into elements as heavy as iron or heavier. Again, all the most life-essential elements, including hydrogen itself, would have ceased to exist.

Basically, your body is made up of heavier elements, and if the universe was not as massive as it is (and as old as it is), then there would not be enough heavy elements to make you, or to make massive stars like our Sun which burn steady for long periods of time. We need the heavy elements and we need the steady source of heat.

Dr. Ross has another reason why God would use vast space and long periods of time, and if you want to read that, you can click here. I think that it's important for us all to get used to the idea that we all need to understand science apologetics. God put these evidences into the universe for us to discover and use.

UK parents accuse school of secretly brainwashing their child into transgenderism

March 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Where do young people get their positive view of LGBT issues?

Last week I blogged about a case from Canada where the teachers and administrators conspired with doctors to get a child onto the transgender track. Here is another case that was just reported on the weekend, this time from the UK. What was shocking to me was that this school is apparently a "free school" – the UK term for a private school.

Here's the story from the UK Daily Mail:

> A school has been accused of secretly allowing a 13-year-old girl to attend 'radicalising' mentoring sessions that convinced her that she was transgender.
>
> Ashleigh and Ged Barnett allege that until the one-to-one sessions began last September, their daughter appeared comfortable in her body and showed little interest in transgender issues.
>
> But they say she had changed completely by November, sporting a short haircut and talking about feeling that she was really a boy.
>
> **They were confused by the transformation until they met her headteacher to discuss another matter and learned that their daughter had been having weekly sessions with the head of the school's LGBT group.**
>
> […]'The teaching assistant also pointed her in the direction of a YouTube website of a trans activist, which featured a video where they showed off their mastectomy scars and told how well the operation had gone.'

> **The couple said they were furious when they found school staff had let the teenager attend the sessions 'behind our backs'.**
>
> **Mrs Barnett said: 'The school didn't think it was fit to tell us. We are her parents, but responsibility to care for our child has been taken away. The attitude is that it's the child's choice and it's got nothing to do with us.**

The teachers are very clear that although they are being paid to do a job by parents, they are not going to their job. They deserve to be paid by parents to do whatever they want. Not what parents want. In fact, the schools are in league with organizations on the radicl left, and the teachers and administrators are much more interested in getting the approval of these far-left groups than the parents who pay their salaries.

> Mrs Barnett also claimed that the teaching assistant encouraged their daughter to change in a boy's cubicle and that staff began using a male name for her.
>
> She alleges the teaching assistant had no formal counselling qualifications and only received training from local charity Eikon that provides 'LGBT+ awareness sessions' for schools.
>
> In recent email correspondence with the couple, headteacher Jane Davies said she believed their daughter should be left to use the changing facilities she preferred.
>
> 'We will continue to provide a safe environment for [your child], but it is not our place to alert you to how she feels,' she wrote.
>
> 'It is important that you understand that she is old enough to make her own decisions.'

This is not an unusual attitude for teachers to take about handling the children who are entrusted to them. There was a time in the past when teachers were more humble, and saw themselves as partners with parents. But that went out of fashion way back during the time of progressive President Woodrow Wilson.

He said this:

> The purpose of a university should be to make a son as unlike his father as possible. By the time a man has grown old enough to have a son in college he has specialized. The university should generalize the treatment of its undergraduates, should struggle to put them in touch with every force of life.

Instead of seeing their purpose a serving parents, they see themselves as masters of the child, and the parents just pay their salaries and feed and clothe the child. The worldview transfer is done by the teachers, because they are the keepers of all wisdom and morality.

Well, as always in these matters, it's good to look at the studies. So let's look at a recent one that should help parents to understand transgenderism.

Here's how the study was first reported by Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.

Peer pressure / The Internet:

> The pattern of clusters of teens in friend groups becoming transgender-identified, the group dynamics of these friend groups and the types of advice viewed online led her to the hypothesis that friends and online sources could spread certain beliefs.
>
> […."Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

This article at The Federalist had a few examples to illustrate the conclusion of the study. I'll pick two.

> The study includes other eye-opening information, such as case studies of several children's stories.

- "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends were taking group lessons together with a very popular coach. The coach came out as transgender, and, within one year, all four students announced they were also transgender."
- "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends are part of a larger friend group that spends much of their time talking about gender and sexuality. The three natal female friends all announced they were trans boys and chose similar masculine names. After spending time with these three friends, the 14-year-old natal female announced that she was also a trans boy."

I thought this quote from that article was interesting as well, given the culture's obsession with "bullying", which is a nebulous term that can mean actual bullying, or mere disagreement.

> The study also may indicate that school "anti-bullying" programs typically created by LGBT activist organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign may

> help accelerate children identifying as transgender by pushing peers and authority figures to profusely express their support.

Coming out as transgender means instant fame and popularity, because you're a victim, and everyone has to be nice to you… or else:

> "Great increase in popularity among the student body at large. Being trans is a gold star in the eyes of other teens," wrote one parent on the study response form. Another wrote, "not so much 'popularity' increasing as 'status' … also she became untouchable in terms of bullying in school as teachers who ignored homophobic bullying …are now all at pains to be hot on the heels of any trans bullying."

People on the left are always faking hate crimes against themselves or making false rape accusations. Being a victim gets them attention and makes people treat them nicely.

The response from LGBT activists to this study was to claim that it was full of errors, so it was pulled and submitted to rigorous review. You won't be surprised to find that the second review process found no major errors in the paper.

Wuhan virus: communist China destroyed samples, silenced doctors, and disappeared critics

March 18, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Wuhan Virus started in China

I'm not a big fan of National Review these days, but I wanted to link to this article because it quoted a bunch of pay-walled articles to make some good points about how we got the Wuhan virus. Not only is China to blame for the Wuhan virus, but they are actually trying to cover it up now, and shift the blame to the countries that they are damaging.

Here are the main points of the article:

- China destroyed samples and suppressed information about the Wuhan Virus since December 2019, leaving other nations in the dark and unprepared
- Chinese doctors who warned about patients with the Wuhan virus were silenced by the communist regime in China
- In January, Chinese authorities denied that the Wuhan virus could be spread between people, and allowed huge gatherings of people in Wuhan
- The President of China knew about the Wuhan virus for weeks but refused to tell anyone about it
- The communist China government let 5 million people leave Wuhan without screening them
- Critics of China's handling of the Wuhan virus – even rich businessmen – are disappearing

I love the article, because it links to articles behind paywalls from the UK Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, the New York Times, etc.

Here's the UK Times:

> Chinese laboratories identified a mystery virus as a highly infectious new pathogen by late December last year, but they were ordered to stop tests,

> destroy samples and suppress the news, a Chinese media outlet has revealed.
>
> A regional health official in Wuhan, centre of the outbreak, demanded the destruction of the lab samples that established the cause of unexplained viral pneumonia on January 1. China did not acknowledge there was human-to-human transmission until more than three weeks later.
>
> The detailed revelations by Caixin Global, a respected independent publication, provide the clearest evidence yet of the scale of the cover-up in the crucial early weeks when the opportunity was lost to control the outbreak.

And here's the Washington Post:

> > As word of a mysterious virus mounted, Li Wenliang shared suspicions in a private chat with his fellow medical school graduates.
> >
> > The doctor said that seven people seemed to have contracted SARS — the respiratory illness that spread from China to more than two dozen countries and left hundreds dead in the early 2000s. One patient was quarantined at his hospital in Wuhan, China, Li said. He urged people to be careful.
> >
> > Li and seven other doctors were quickly summoned by Chinese authorities for propagating "rumors" about SARS-like cases in the area — but their warnings were prescient. Soon, health officials worldwide would be scrambling to combat a novel virus with a striking genetic resemblance to SARS.

Here is something else I found on the Daily Wire – the response of the atheistic communist Chinese regime to being caught:

> The National Security Council blasted the Chinese Communist Party on Tuesday for expelling journalists from the country and spreading false information about the origin of the virus instead of focusing on stopping the virus, which originated in China.
>
> "The Chinese Communist Party's decision to expel journalists from China and Hong Kong is yet another step toward depriving the Chinese people and the world of access to true information about China," the NSC said in a statement. "The United States calls on China's leaders to refocus their efforts from expelling journalists and spreading disinformation to joining all nations in stopping the Wuhan coronavirus."
>
> The statement from the NSC comes after China announced it would expel American journalists working for The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Wall Street Journal.
>
> "It also demanded that those outlets, as well as the Voice of America and Time magazine, provide the Chinese government with detailed information about their

> operations," The New York Times reported. "The announcement went on to say that the American journalists now working in mainland China 'will not be allowed to continue working as journalists in the People's Republic of China, including its Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions.' The two territories are semiautonomous and in theory have greater press freedoms than the mainland."

Rather than admit responsibility, apologize and make restitution, they are responding by throwing out the journalists who criticize them. And you can bet those journalists would be murdered in secret if they were not American citizens. After all, the communist Chinese regime has been credibly accused of a massive organ harvesting operation – including harvesting the organs of living victims as they are being killed:

> Last week, the Independent Tribunal into Forced Organ Harvesting from Prisoners of Conscience in China issued its final report concluding that China engages in the systematic human-rights atrocity of killing political and other prisoners and harvesting their organs.
>
> […]The Judgment convincingly concludes that China is guilty as charged. According to the report, beginning at page 415, there are four methods by which China kills prisoners and harvests their organs.

1. Organ harvesting from prisoners incompletely executed by shooting;
2. Organ harvesting from prisoners after lethal injection;
3. Execution by organ explanation (killing by organ harvesting);
4. Organ harvesting under the pretext of brain death (taking organs from people not really dead).

The United States is not alone in suffering major economic and public safety consequences because of the decisions of the communist Chinese government. There is even talk of demanding reparations. We are already in a bear market, and there is likely to be a recession because of their suppression of the evidence. And I also think that there is a lesson there for our election in November – this is what people on the secular left *always* do when they fail to deliver on their promises. They deny responsibility and silence or destroy those who warned them. It's standard operating procedure for communists. Communism requires atheism. And without God, any immorality you can imagine is possible.

My conversation about morality with an atheist millennial man

March 19, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Congratulations! Your view of what's moral aligns exactly with your actions!

I spent some time talking to an atheist millennial recently. He considers himself a moral person, and he is very helpful to others. I asked him to define morality, and he said that morality was feeling good, and helping other people to feel good. I was trying to think of a way to punch a hole in his feelings-based utilitarianism. How could I show him that happy feelings are not a good basis for morality?

Now, you're probably thinking that abortion is the most obvious example of something that is morally wrong – it's just killing a baby because adults don't want to take responsibility for their foolish pursuit of pleasure. But atheists typically don't think of unborn children as people. They usually believe in naturalistic evolution, and they are committed to a view of reality where the universe is an accident, human beings are accidents, there are no objective human rights, and biological evolution progresses because the strong survive while the weak die. So you aren't going to be able to generate a moral standard that includes compassion for weak unborn children on that scenario. If the rule is "let's do what makes us happy", and the unborn child can't voice her opinion, then the selfish grown-ups win.

Instead, I decided to focus on fatherlessness. I asked him whether he thought that fatherlessness harmed children. Surprisingly, he said that it didn't, and that he had a relative who was doing a great job raising fatherless kids. I asked him if he had ever looked at the research on what father absence does to children. He hadn't. Then I asked

him if a system of sexual rules based on “me feeling good, and other people around me feeling good”, was likely to protect children. He went silent.

Well, that was the end of that conversation. And I think it was a nice window into how millennials – who are absolutely clueless about what research says about sex, dating, marriage and parenting – think about relationships. They’re making decisions based on their feelings, then acting surprised when their “common sense” decisions based on happiness “in the moment” blow up in their faces, and destroy the lives of their children, including their unborn children.

Unfortunately, young people are having children outside of a marriage commitment more and more.

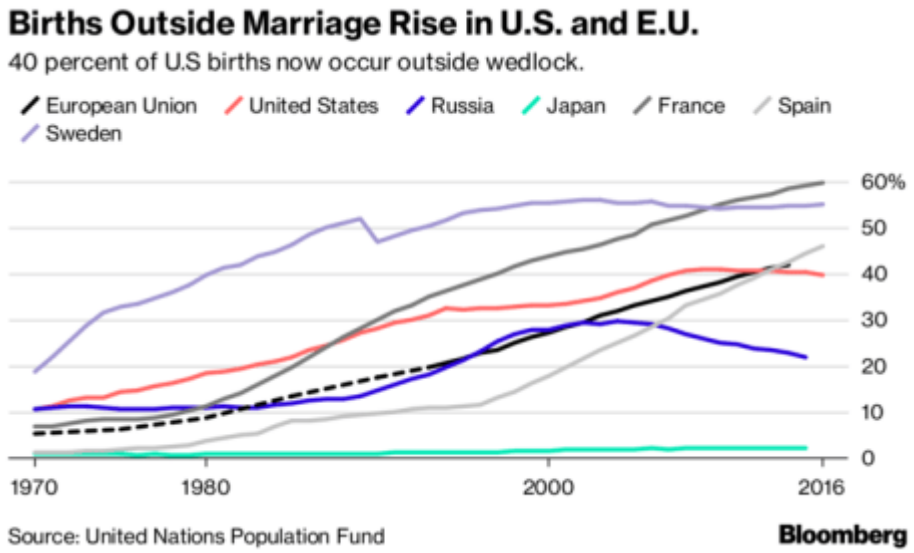

Out-of-wedlocks births rising as cohabitation replaces marriage
Far-left Bloomberg News reports:

Forty percent of all births in the U.S. now occur outside of wedlock, up from 10 percent in 1970, according to an annual report released on Wednesday by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the largest international provider of sexual and reproductive health services. That number is even higher in the European Union.

The EU has a higher rate of fatherless births because they have high taxes and big government to allow women to have children without having to commit to a husband:

> The EU likely sees more births out of wedlock because many member countries have welfare systems that support gender-balanced child care, said Michael Hermann, UNFPA’s senior adviser on economics and demography, in an interview. Public health care systems, paid paternal leave, early education programs and tax incentives give unwed parents support beyond what a partner can provide.

More welfare and more government services make it easier for women to pursue relationships with men who aren’t interested in marriage. Hot bad boys who give them all the tingles. Big government makes those boring, predictable marriage-ready men dispensable. Big government also makes it much harder for a man who does marry to

afford a stay-at-home mother for his kids, because he has to pay higher taxes for big government.

More:

> The data show such births in the U.S. and EU are predominantly to unmarried couples living together rather than to single mothers, the report says.
>
> […]Jones also noted that the rise in births outside of marriage is closely correlated to delays in childbearing. "Women are claiming their ground professionally," she said. "Delaying motherhood is a rational decision when you consider the impact it can have on your career, and that's contributing to this trend."
>
> [….]The traditional progression of Western life "has been reversed," said John Santelli, a professor in population, family health and pediatrics at Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health. "Cohabiting partners are having children before getting married. That's a long-term trend across developing nations."
>
> Regardless of marital status, more couples are choosing not to have kids at all. The U.S. fertility rate hit a historic 30-year low last year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hermann said the rise in births outside of wedlock has actually mitigated the decline in fertility, which "would be much steeper if women weren't having children outside marriage."

What's interesting about this anti-marriage article is that they have nothing to say about the research showing that cohabitation – and also marriages that occur after a period of cohabitation – are inferior to no-cohabitation marriages. People who are serious about self-control, and who are serious about committing through thick and thin, tend to have longer lasting marriages. But we don't prioritize chastity, fidelity and self-sacrificial commitment anymore, because that relationships that require self-denial make us unhappy.

The article concludes: "We can't go back to the '50s". Right. Because if feelings-based "morality" is assumed, then any choice between adult happiness and children's happiness will favor the adults. Today's young people carefully AVOID any evidence that contradicts their new "happiness-morality". They act surprised when their unstable relationships dissolve, leaving children separated from their fathers. Marriage requires that both partners have a system of morality that puts the commitment above happy feelings. People have to be accustomed to doing things that feel bad, just because they are good and moral things to do according to an objective standard of morality. The new atheist morality of happy feelings doesn't develop the character needed for commitment.

If you ask an atheist millennial, they think they are doing a great job of being "moral". They don't see the messes they are making for children as something that they are causing themselves, with their own foolish feelings-based decision-making. They think they know everything about relationships through their feelings. They think that they are exempt from the patterns of cause and effect in the peer-reviewed research.

J.P. Moreland asks: does truth matter when choosing a religion?

March 20, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

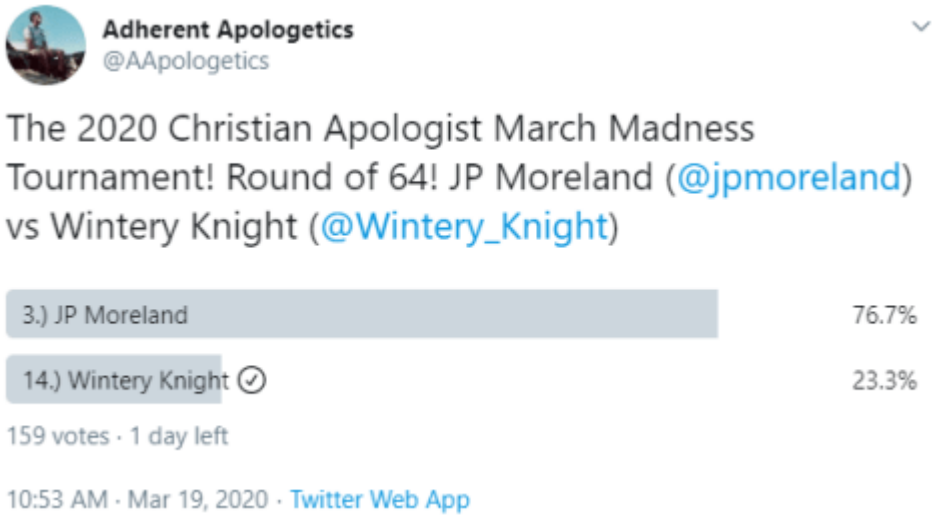

Please help me in the Christian Apologist March Madness Tournament
Since I'm facing off against J. P. Moreland in the Apologetics March Madness tournament (click here), I thought I'd re-post one of my favorite J. P. Moreland posts. I'm asking for your vote, although right now, he is leading 75-25 and it doesn't look good. The poll runs to the end of Friday.

This lecture contains Moreland's famous "Wonmug" illustration. If you don't know who Wonmug is, you can find out in this lecture.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- Is it intolerant to think that one religion is true?
- Is it more important to be loving and accepting of people regardless of worldview?
- How should Christians approach the question of religious pluralism?
- How does a person choose a religion anyway?
- Who is Wonmug, and would you like to be like Wonmug?
- Is it enough that a belief "works for you", or do you want to believe the truth?
- Can all the religions in the world be true?
- Is it wise to pick and choose what you like from all the different religions?
- Is it possible to investigate which religion is true? How?
- Which religions are testable for being true or false?
- How you can test Christianity historically (very brief)

I'm posting this, because I've noticed that there's an awful lot of cultural Christianity in red states. Basically, if you ask someone if they are a Christian, and they say yes, they don't usually mean that they think it's true and that they've investigated whether it's true. They usually just mean that they like it, or it makes them feel good, or that's how

they were raised, etc. My worry about this is that if Christianity isn't adopted because it's true, then no one is going to do any work or self-sacrifice for it. And I think that Christianity won't survive the challenges of the secular culture if parents and pastors don't understand that Christianity will require work, if it's going to be presented to people as TRUE in a persuasive way.

Why is truth important? People are willing to invest in projects self-sacrificially if they think that they are involved in something true. So, you might enroll in a chemistry program in college because you expect to come out with true beliefs about chemistry. You'll do the work and solve the problems because you think that chemistry is real. But if you think that chemistry is just made up nonsense with no use at all, you're probably not going to work at it and sacrifice for it. You'll probably just find something else to do with your life that's easier and more fun. That's why the truth question is really important.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig at Biola U: Does God Exist?

March 21, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students
Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang

– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws
– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection

– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus
– god wouldn't have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that's a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that's a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that's a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don't support life, that's a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that's a bad design

3. hitchens' burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can't prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig's scientific arguments don't go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don't prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don't prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn't be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig's evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can't use the progress of science
– it's too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god's existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn't forming his view based on evidence

– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don't believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you've got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God
– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH's evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH's argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn't need to be efficient

CH's argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH's argument that Craig's scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH's argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn't need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH's citation of Craig's book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true

– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH's rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH's rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH's argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed
– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them

– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that’s a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven’t even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn’t prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they’re growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn’t improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do
– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn’t need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that’s why people act morally
– it’s degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don’t know why, because i can’t ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don’t hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don’t believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don’t agree

WC moral argument: it’s not epistemology it’s the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing
– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history

– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it's just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that's not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Is the text of the Bible we have today different from the originals?

March 22, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

I thought it might be a good idea to write something about whether the Bible is generally reliable as a historical document. Lots of people like to nitpick about things that are difficult to verify, but the strange thing is that even skeptical historians accept many of the core narratives found in the Bible. Let's start with a Christian historian, then go to a non-Christian one.

First, let's introduce New Testament scholar Daniel B. Wallace:

> Daniel B. Wallace
> Senior Research Professor of New Testament Studies
>
> BA, Biola University, 1975; ThM, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; PhD, 1995.
>
> Dr. Wallace… is a member of the Society of New Testament Studies, the Institute for Biblical Research, the Society of Biblical Literature, the American Society of Papyrologists, and the Evangelical Theological Society (of which he was president in 2016). He has been a consultant for several Bible translations. He has written, edited, or contributed to more than three dozen books, and has published articles in New Testament Studies, Novum Testamentum, Biblica, Westminster Theological Journal, Bulletin of Biblical Review, the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, and several other peer-reviewed journals. His Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament is the standard intermediate Greek grammar and has been translated into more than a half-dozen languages.

Here is an article by Dr. Wallace that corrects misconceptions about the transmission and translation of the Testament.

He lists five in particular:

- *Myth 1: The Bible has been translated so many times we can't possibly get back to*

the original.
- *Myth 2: Words in red indicate the exact words spoken by Jesus of Nazareth.*
- *Myth 3: Heretics have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 4: Orthodox scribes have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 5: The deity of Christ was invented by emperor Constantine.*

Let's look at #4 in particular, where the argument is that the text of the New Testament is so riddled with errors that we can't get back to the original text.

It says:

> Myth 4: Orthodox scribes have severely corrupted the text.
>
> This is the opposite of myth #3. It finds its most scholarly affirmation in the writings of Dr. Bart Ehrman, chiefly The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture and Misquoting Jesus. Others have followed in his train, but they have gone far beyond what even he claims. For example, a very popular book among British Muslims (The History of the Qur'anic Text from Revelation to Compilation: a Comparative Study with the Old and New Testaments by M. M. Al-Azami) makes this claim:
>
> The Orthodox Church, being the sect which eventually established supremacy over all the others, stood in fervent opposition to various ideas ([a.k.a.] 'heresies') which were in circulation. These included Adoptionism (the notion that Jesus was not God, but a man); Docetism (the opposite view, that he was God and not man); and Separationism (that the divine and human elements of Jesus Christ were two separate beings). In each case this sect, the one that would rise to become the Orthodox Church, deliberately corrupted the Scriptures so as to reflect its own theological visions of Christ, while demolishing that of all rival sects."
>
> This is a gross misrepresentation of the facts. Even Ehrman admitted in the appendix to Misquoting Jesus, "Essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament." The extent to which, the reasons for which, and the nature of which the orthodox scribes corrupted the New Testament has been overblown. And the fact that such readings can be detected by comparison with the readings of other ancient manuscripts indicates that the fingerprints of the original text are still to be seen in the extant manuscripts.

Here is the full quote from the appendix of Misquoting Jesus:

> "Bruce Metzger is one of the great scholars of modern times, and I dedicated the book to him because he was both my inspiration for going into textual criticism and the person who trained me in the field. I have nothing but respect and admiration for him. And even though we may disagree on important religious questions – he is a firmly committed Christian and I am not – we are in complete agreement on a number of very important historical and textual questions. If he

> and I were put in a room and asked to hammer out a consensus statement on what we think the original text of the New Testament probably looked like, there would be very few points of disagreement – maybe one or two dozen places out of many thousands. The position I argue for in 'Misquoting Jesus' does not actually stand at odds with Prof. Metzger's position that the essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament."

Finally, I think that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls shows us that religious texts don't change as much as we think they do over time.

Look:

> The Dead Sea Scrolls play a crucial role in assessing the accurate preservation of the Old Testament. With its hundreds of manuscripts from every book except Esther, detailed comparisons can be made with more recent texts.
>
> The Old Testament that we use today is translated from what is called the Masoretic Text. The Masoretes were Jewish scholars who between A.D. 500 and 950 gave the Old Testament the form that we use today. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947, the oldest Hebrew text of the Old Testament was the Masoretic Aleppo Codex which dates to A.D. 935.{5}
>
> With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now had manuscripts that predated the Masoretic Text by about one thousand years. Scholars were anxious to see how the Dead Sea documents would match up with the Masoretic Text. If a significant amount of differences were found, we could conclude that our Old Testament Text had not been well preserved. Critics, along with religious groups such as Muslims and Mormons, often make the claim that the present day Old Testament has been corrupted and is not well preserved. According to these religious groups, this would explain the contradictions between the Old Testament and their religious teachings.
>
> After years of careful study, it has been concluded that the Dead Sea Scrolls give substantial confirmation that our Old Testament has been accurately preserved. The scrolls were found to be almost identical with the Masoretic text. Hebrew Scholar Millar Burrows writes, "It is a matter of wonder that through something like one thousand years the text underwent so little alteration. As I said in my first article on the scroll, 'Herein lies its chief importance, supporting the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition.'"{6}
>
> A significant comparison study was conducted with the Isaiah Scroll written around 100 B.C. that was found among the Dead Sea documents and the book of Isaiah found in the Masoretic text. After much research, scholars found that the two texts were practically identical. Most variants were minor spelling differences, and none affected the meaning of the text.
>
> One of the most respected Old Testament scholars, the late Gleason Archer,

> examined the two Isaiah scrolls found in Cave 1 and wrote, “Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”{7}
>
> **Despite the thousand year gap, scholars found the Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls to be nearly identical. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide valuable evidence that the Old Testament had been accurately and carefully preserved.**

I hope that this post will help those who think that we can’t get back to the text of the original New Testament documents.

What should we do about the Wuhan coronavirus?

March 23, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

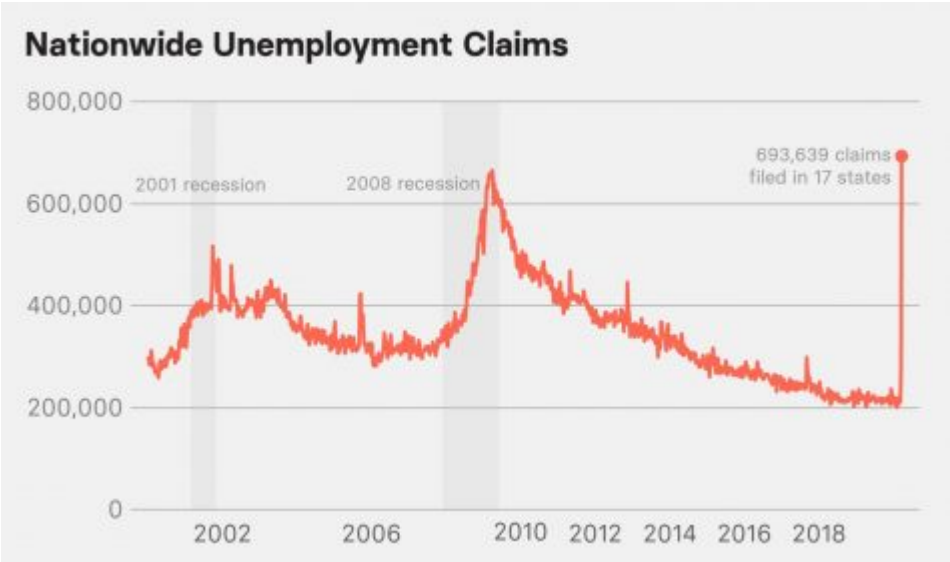

The economic cost of making workers stay home

I think by now most people have realized that there is an economic cost to shutting Americans of all ages into their homes. If people can't work, then businesses can't make money, and they have to furlough or lay off workers. We can't keep up this policy of making everyone stay home forever – it would lead to another Great Depression. Is there a way to get people back to work?

This article from The Federalist explains, and comes up with a different solution. The author argues that the Wuhan virus is most dangerous to the elderly, and people with pre-existing conditions. And therefore they should shelter in place securely, while the rest of us who are under age 50 keep the economy from sliding into a depression by going back to work as soon as possible.

It says:

> Richard Epstein at the Hoover Institution… points out that South Korean data, which is more complete than most other countries' data, shows huge disparities in risks between old and unhealthy and young and healthy. "Clearly, the impact on elderly and immunocompromised individuals is severe, with nearly 90% of total deaths coming from individuals 60 and over. But these data do not call for shutting down all public and private facilities given the extraordinarily low rates of death in the population under 50," Epstein writes.
>
> […]The costs Americans are being forced to bear may be more than is rational to impose. Already one-fifth of working Americans are being laid off and having work hours cut due to not even one week of suspensions.
>
> "[T]he massive curtailments of the U.S. economy can have as many health consequences as the virus itself—if millions lose income and jobs, become depressed in self-isolation, increase smoking, and drug and alcohol use, and

> postpone out of fear necessary buying and visits to doctors and hospitals for chronic and serious medical conditions unrelated to the virus," writes Victor Davis Hanson.
>
> What if the real scenario is one of these: 1) We plunge the nation into a depression that kills many businesses and addicts millions to welfare, in a nation that has already pledged more welfare than it can afford for at least the next three generations. Because of this depression, many people die due to poverty, lack of medical care, and despair. Millions more transform from workers to takers, causing a faster implosion of our already mathematically impossible welfare state.
>
> 2) The nation quarantines only at-risk populations and those with symptoms, like South Korea has, and ensures targeted and temporary taxpayer support to those groups, goes nuts cranking out ventilators and other crisis equipment such as temporary hospitals using emergency response crews, while the rest of us keep calm, wash our hands, take extreme care with the at-risk groups, and carry on.
>
> Why would the entire nation grind to a halt when the entire nation is not at a severe risk? I would rather have a flu I am 99.8 percent likely to survive than the nation plunged into chaos indefinitely because we pulled the plug on our economy during a stampede.
>
> At the very least, Congress should wait a week or two, while half the nation or more is home, to see how the infection rates look as millions of test kits go out. The worst-case scenario they are predicating their actions on may not be the one we're facing. Prudence suggests a measured, wait and see approach to policy until we have better information, not chucking trillions of my kids' dollars out the window "just in case."

Right now, I think we should expand testing so we understand the problem better, fast-track whatever drugs are known to work, expand hospital capacity, build more N95 masks, build more ventilators, and get people under 50 back to work. This is in addition to proper hand-washing, social distancing and working from home where possible.

The cost of a depression seems to me to be much higher than what is happening to South Korea right now. They have massive testing effort and they are only quarantining people who are at high risk or who show symptoms. That makes more sense to me than shutting the economy down, or pass massive spending bills with bailouts for businesses that should not be shut down more than a month.

102 Americans died Monday while Democrats blocked Wuhan virus relief

March 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

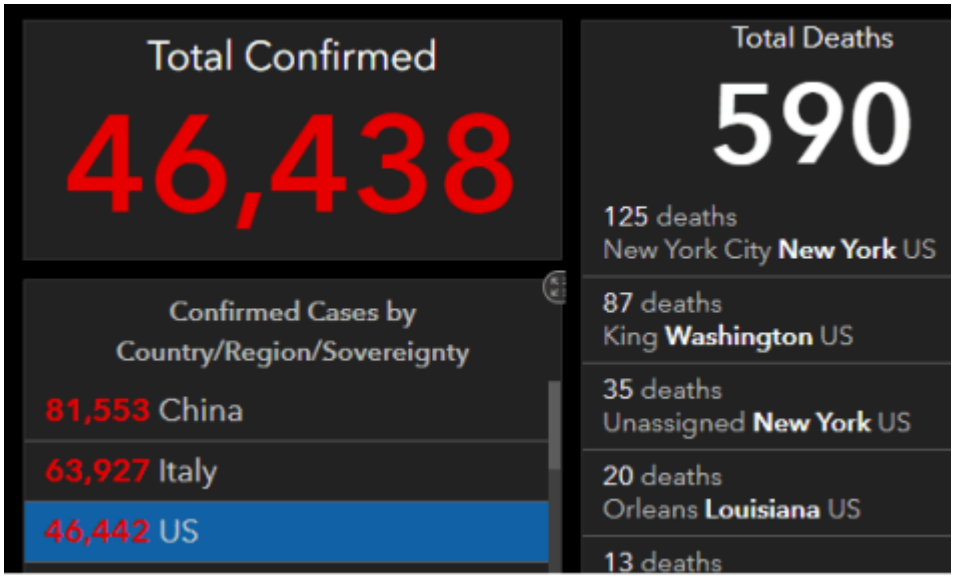

United States Wuhan virus infections and deaths

While Nancy Pelosi was away, Republicans and Democrats co-operated to produce a bipartisan bill to provide relief to suffering Americans. But Nancy Pelosi returned and threw the bill out and instead demanded the relief legislation must contain socialist policies unrelated to relief. Meanwhile, people in America are getting sick and dying, and workers are losing their jobs.

The Daily Wire reports:

> Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) unloaded on Senate Democrats on Monday for continuing to play partisan games in trying to reach an agreement for a massive stimulus bill to provide relief to American families and the economy.
>
> It had looked like the two sides were going to come to an agreement on Sunday to move the proposed $1.8 trillion stimulus bill along in the process until Democrat House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ruined talks.
>
> “It was one party — the Democratic Party saying to this chamber and the American people, ‘Hell no. We won’t even take this up and discuss it,’” Cruz said on the Senate floor. “At a time of crisis, at a time when people are dying, that’s wrong. That’s shameful.”
>
> He added, “When we awakened this morning following the Democrats’ obstruction, worldwide, there were 372,563 reported cases of the coronavirus. In the hours since then, just today, there have been an additional 23,352 cases reported today. While the Democrats are blocking the bill 23,000 new cases today.”
>
> “In the United States, when we started this morning, there were 35,224 cases

> this morning. Right now, as of the latest numbers, there are 41,708 cases in the United States today," Cruz continued. "That means we've had an additional 6,484 four cases today, while the Democrats are blockading."
>
> Cruz noted that Senate Democrats were not even in the chamber as he talked because they had all left.
>
> "They're not showing up for work," Cruz said. "They're not doing their job."
>
> "In the United States, as of this morning, there were 471 deaths reported due to coronavirus. As of right now it's 573," Cruz continued. "That means today 102 Americans died while the Democrats were blocking consideration of this bill."

I was watching Dan Crenshaw tweet out screenshots of the Democrat proposals yesterday. It was astonishing: they wanted to include all sorts of things that have nothing to do with protecting Americans from the threat of the virus, and the economic damage caused by people being forced to stay home.

Here's a list of their demands:

> 1. Corporate pay statistics by race and race statistics for all corporate boards at companies receiving assistance.
> 2. Bailing out all current debt of postal service
> 3. Required early voting
> 4. Required same day voter registration
> 5. 10k bailout for student loans
> 6. For companies accepting assistance, 1/3 of board members must be chosen by workers
> 7. Provisions on official time for union collective bargaining
> 8. Full offset of airline emissions by 2025
> 9. Greenhouse gas statistics for individual flights
> 10. Retirement plans for community newspaper employees
> 11. $15 minimum wage at companies receiving assistance
> 12. Permanent paid leave at companies receiving assistance

Those things have nothing to do with the coronavirus, or the declining stock market, or the mass unemployment caused by quarantining workers. Those things might be good, but they're not related to the immediate problem of helping Americans impacted by the virus.

By the way, I'm not sure that everything in the spending bill is great, or that we should be spending so much money. But I do know that conservatives like Tom Cotton, Dan Crenshaw, Ted Cruz, etc. have been pushing the bill, and they worked hard on negotiating it.

Facts vs feelings in the debate on gun control vs self-defense

March 25, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a splendid at the Daily Signal article that ought to be read by everyone who has an opinion about the conflict between gun confiscation vs self-defense.

Here are the 8 points made in the article, then I'll comment on my favorite one:

> 1. Violent crime is down and has been on the decline for decades.
> 2. The principal public safety concerns with respect to guns are suicides and illegally owned handguns, not mass shootings.
> 3. A small number of factors significantly increase the likelihood that a person will be a victim of a gun-related homicide.
> 4. Gun-related murders are carried out by a predictable pool of people.
> 5. Higher rates of gun ownership are not associated with higher rates of violent crime.
> 6. There is no clear relationship between strict gun control legislation and homicide or violent crime rates.
> 7. Legally owned firearms are used for lawful purposes much more often than they are used to commit crimes or suicide.
> 8. Concealed carry permit holders are not the problem, but they may be part of the solution.

Whenever we discuss gun violence, it's very important to exclude suicides using a gun from the overall rate of gun deaths. Once you do that, you will find that the rate of violent crime has been declining as more and more law-abiding Americans have gone through the process to purchase a firearm for self-defense.

Let's talk about the gun homicide rate and how the steady increase in firearm ownership has affected that. When you look at the graph below, keep in mind that two thirds of the homicide are *suicides committed with a firearm.*

Here is a graph:

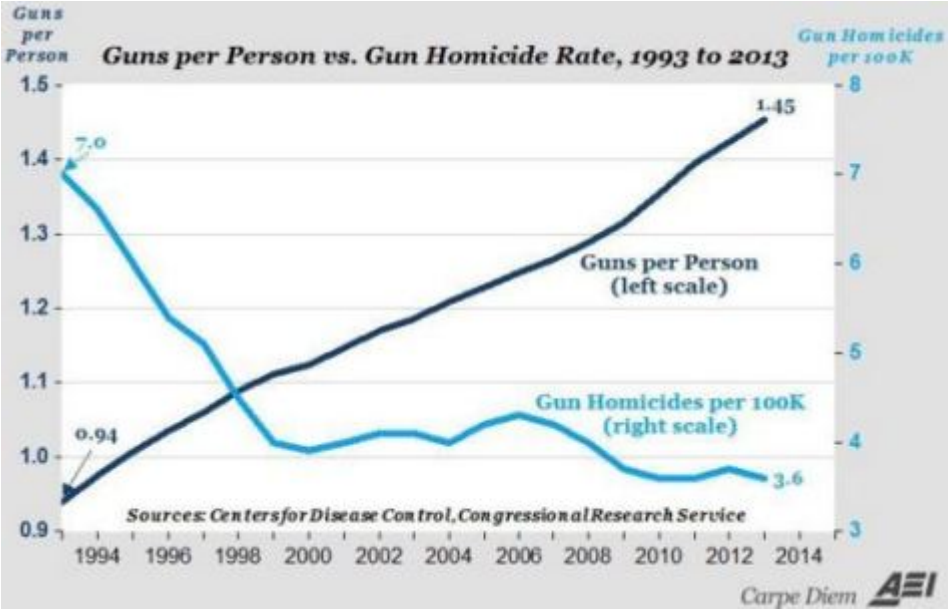

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

The question I want to address is this: why would someone want to own a gun in the first place?

Here are the points from the list of eight points that are relevant to that question:

> **Higher rates of gun ownership are not associated with higher rates of violent crime.**
>
> - Switzerland and Israel have much higher gun ownership rates than the United States but experience far fewer homicides and have much lower violent crime rates than many European nations with strict gun control laws.
> - Higher rates of concealed carry permit holders are even more strongly associated with reduction in violent crime than are “right-to-carry” states. The probable reason for this is that “right-to-carry” studies often include “open carry” states, which have not been shown to correlate with more people actually carrying or even owning firearms. Rates of concealed carry permit holders are better indicators of the number of people who actually possess and carry firearms within a given population.
>
> **There is no clear relationship between strict gun control legislation and homicide or violent crime rates.**
>
> - Homicide and firearm homicide rates in Great Britain spiked in the years immediately following the imposition of severe gun control measures, despite the fact that most developed countries continued to experience a downward trend in these rates. This is also pointed out by noted criminologist John Lott in his book “The War on Guns.”
> - Similarly, Ireland’s homicide rates spiked in the years immediately following the country’s 1972 gun confiscation legislation.
> - Australia’s National Firearms Act appears to have had little effect on suicide and homicide rates, which were falling before the law was enacted and

continued to decline at a statistically unremarkable rate compared to worldwide trends.
- According to research compiled by John Lott and highlighted in his book "The War on Guns," Australia's armed and unarmed robbery rates both increased markedly in the five years immediately following the National Firearms Act, despite the general downward trend experienced by other developed countries.
- Great Britain has some of the strictest gun control laws in the developed world, but the violent crime rate for homicide, rape, burglary, and aggravated assault is much higher than that in the U.S. Further, approximately 60 percent of burglaries in Great Britain occur while residents are home, compared to just 13 percent in the U.S., and British burglars admit to targeting occupied residences because they are more likely to find wallets and purses.
- It is difficult to compare homicide and firearm-related murder rates across international borders because countries use different methods to determine which deaths "count" for purposes of violent crime. For example, since 1967, Great Britain has excluded from its homicide counts any case that does not result in a conviction, that was the result of dangerous driving, or in which the person was determined to have acted in self-defense. All of these factors are counted as "homicides" in the United States.

Legally owned firearms are used for lawful purposes much more often than they are used to commit crimes or suicide.

- In 2013, President Barack Obama ordered the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to assess existing research on gun violence. The report, compiled by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council, found (among other things) that firearms are used defensively hundreds of thousands of times every year.
- According to the CDC, "self-defense can be an important crime deterrent." Recent CDC reports acknowledge that studies directly assessing the effect of actual defensive uses of guns have found "consistently lower injury rates among gun-using crime victims compared with victims who used other self-protective strategies."
- Semi-automatic rifles (such as the AR-15) are commonly used as self-defense weapons in the homes of law-abiding citizens because they are easier to control than handguns, are more versatile than handguns, and offer the advantage of up to 30 rounds of protection. Even Vox has published stories defending the use of the AR-15.
- AR-15s have been used to save lives on many occasions [list omitted by WK]

Concealed carry permit holders are not the problem, but they may be

> **part of the solution.**
>
> - Noted criminologist John Lott found that, as a group, concealed carry permit holders are some of the most law-abiding people in the United States. The rate at which they commit crimes generally and firearm crimes specifically is between one-sixth and one-tenth of that recorded for police officers, who are themselves committing crimes at a fraction of the rate of the general population.
> - Between 2007 and 2015, murder rates dropped 16 percent and violent crime rates dropped 18 percent, even though the percentage of adults with concealed carry permits rose by 190 percent.
> - Regression estimates show a significant association between increased permit ownership and a drop in murder and violent crime rates. Each percentage point increase in rates of permit-holding is associated with a roughly 2.5 percent drop in the murder rate.
> - Concealed carry permit holders are often “the good guy with a gun,” even though they rarely receive the attention of the national media. Concealed carry permit holders were credited with saving multiple lives [list omitted by WK]

So, I think that those points provide a very necessary balance for the “ban guns” crowd. Gun ownership is a vital part of a free citizen’s right to self-defense. People who want to discuss gun confiscation vs self-defense need to be aware of the way guns are really used by law-abiding people to protect themselves and their families.

Illustra Media videos on intelligent design are FREE to watch for 2 months

March 26, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Hummingbird in flight

Sometimes Christian contact me through the blog and ask for advice on how to get their apologetics skills up. I usually send them a copy of "Is God Just a Human Invention?" and a set of 3 DVDs from Illustra Media. Well, Illustra Media decided to make ALL their DVDs FREE for the next 2 months. The videos cover topics about intelligent design (biology and physics) and evolution.

Here's the blurb: (H/T Uncommon Descent)

> During this period of uncertainty and massive change in the normal cycle of our daily routines, the Illustra Media staff, board of directors, and our distributor (RPI) want to offer encouragement and hope through the films we have produced during the past 20 years.
>
> For the next 60 days, we will make streaming of our full length documentaries available free of charge. Click on any of the titles below to access the English versions. To stream international translations click here. You may bookmark this page for future reference. Please feel free to share it with your friends, family, and social media contacts throughout the world.

Here are the ones I've seen and recommend:

- ***UNLOCKING THE MYSTERY OF LIFE: The Scientific Case for Intelligent Design***
- ***THE PRIVILEGED PLANET: The Search for Purpose in the Universe***

- ***DARWIN'S DILEMMA: The Mystery of the Cambrian Fossil Record***
- ***METAMORPHOSIS*: *The Beauty and Design of Butterflies***
- ***FLIGHT: The Genius of Birds***
- ***LIVING WATERS: Intelligent Design in the Oceans of the Earth***

The first 3 are the ones that I send to Christian defenders in training. You can get them here from RPI. I've bought from him many times, and this is the best place to get them.

Unlocking the Mystery of Life is about design in the cell, biological information, irreducible complexity and molecular machines.

The Privileged Planet is about cosmic fine-tuning, habitability fine-tuning related to stars and planets, and discoverability.

Darwin's Dilemma is about the sudden origin of new information for different body plans in the Cambrian explosion.

The other three are about interesting features of birds, butterflies, dolphins and whales that are obviously designed.

Notice how there is a video about birds, but no videos about cats. That is because cats are not very interesting, whereas birds are not only very interesting but also morally good – especially parrots and hummingbirds. My parents have a parrot who adjusts all his behavior to fit in with the family's wishes, and he is even good when no one is around to watch him. They also have hummingbirds that come and hover around them to say hello, just because my parents put out feeders for them.

You can imagine in the past when early Christians would debate atheists, all their arguments were just holding up birds and saying "look at this obviously designed thing that speaks like a human, and it has such good moral character, too". You can't do that with evil cats, who probably *did* evolve from worms and slime by random mutations and natural selection. The early atheists probably just held up cats and argued that a morally good, all-powerful God would not create such awful things.

Anyway, here are some nice trailers for some of the videos that I like best:

Unlocking the Mystery of Life:

The Privileged Planet:

Darwin's Dilemma:

Dolphins are pretty good!

Hummingbirds are the best!

I saved the best for last. They're AWESOME!

New study: college students drink more before casual sex than relationship sex

March 27, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

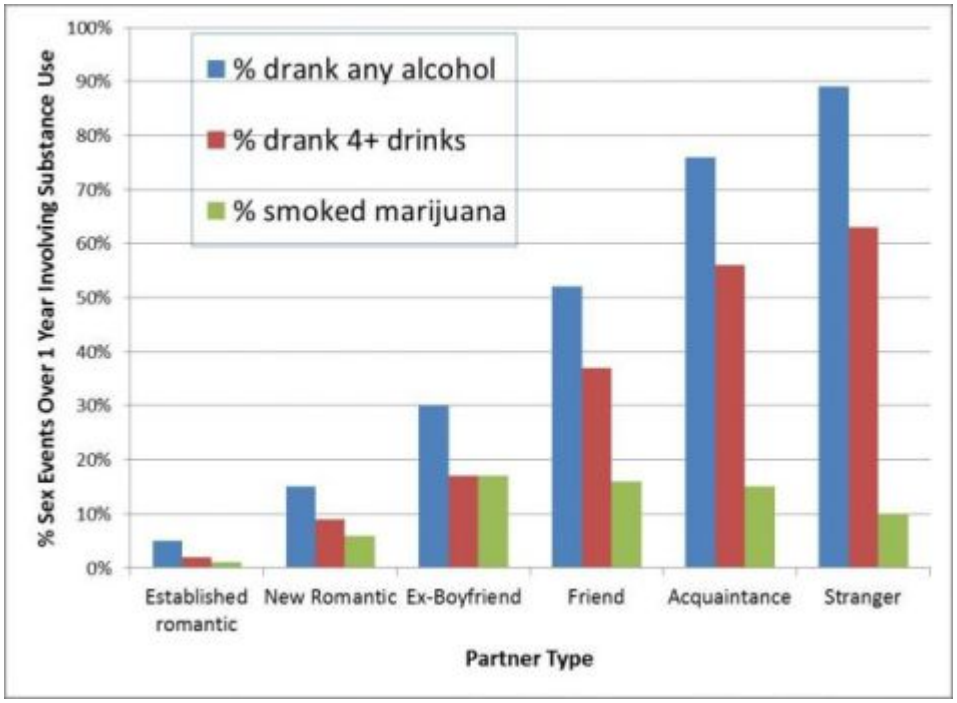

Sex events measured against intimacy level (for women only)

It turns out that college students use MORE alcohol and drugs when they have sex with strangers, and LESS alcohol and drugs when they have sex with people they are in a relationship with.

This study was reported by the far-left Psychology Today.

Excerpt:

> A recent study published in the *Journal of Sex Research* sheds some light on these questions. A research team headed by Jennifer Walsh analyzed alcohol use in almost 500 casual and 1400 romantic sexual intercourse events that happened to 300 college women on a monthly basis over a period of 12 months. Alcohol use was not very common during romantic sex: 20% of romantic encounters involved some drinking and only 5% involved heavy drinking (defined as four or more drinks). Hookups, on the other hand, were a different story: Women drank during 53% of their hookups, and drank *heavily* during 38% of all hookups.
>
> But not all hookups are created equal. There was an almost perfect linear relationship between drinking and partner closeness: The less known the partner, the more likely women drank before sex, and the more likely they drank a lot. Look at the graph I created based on their data. When the casual partner was an ex-boyfriend, for example, only 30% of hookups involved drinking and 17% heavy drinking. When the partner was a random stranger, however, 89% of hookups involved drinking and 63% involved four or more drinks!

The writer explains why this happens:

> Alcohol also provides **an excuse** to those who need one. In a world that encourages hooking up but also judges those (especially women) who engage in it too much, many seem to need it. You're a slut if you hook up with people *just because you want to*: Good girls don't actively want to hook up, and being sober means taking full responsibility for your actions. But if you can blame it on the alcohol, you're absolved of guilt. You can still be a good girl who just happened to make a mistake.

This study agrees with a study I blogged about before from the University of Virginia, which explained that college students drink before hook-ups in order to be able to explain to their friends why it wasn't their fault:

> A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."
>
> Other women observed that being drunk gives a woman license to act sexually interested in public in ways that would not be tolerated if she were sober. For instance, a University of Michigan student said, "Girls are actually allowed to be a lot more sexual when they are drunk…"
>
> A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."

Now, the first thing I thought of when I saw this article in Psychology Today was: "I wonder what criteria these college students are using in order to decide which strangers they have sex with". And then I realized. For perfect strangers, it would have to be something obvious, like physical appearance. A study found that it takes a woman 3 minutes to decide if she likes a man or not. Whatever assessment is being made in that 3 minutes surely isn't adequate for long-term plans for marriage, children and church attendance.

Don't judge me, it wasn't my fault

It reminds me of something I read a while back in a Theodore Dalrymple book. Theodore Dalrymple is the famous psychiatrist who writes books about culture in the UK. One of his books about the complete lack of personal responsibility among criminals is actually posted online.

In the chapter "Tough Love", he talks about the nurses he works with:

> All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same

signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.

This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.

Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.

This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.

Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.

At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how* they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

If Dalrymple's observations about female patients and nurses can be applied more broadly, then it explains why women initiate 70% of divorces. Women who don't want to be "forced" to be self-controlled and responsible with their choices will want an easy way to get out of it. According to Dalrymple's experience, it's not that women don't know that bad boys are lousy at marriage and fatherhood. They know it, but they choose to blind themselves to it, because it's just too much self-denial to have to be serious about making responsible choices with men and sex and marriage.

Right now, we are $20 trillion in debt, half of that thanks to Barack Obama's administration. I believe that the majority of this debt was accrued because people wanted to do what felt good to them in the moment, and then pass off the costs of their "unpredictable" mistakes onto their neighbors. The truth is that these costs will be paid by generations of young people not yet born. People shouldn't talk about how much they care about children, if their voting will force all the children of tomorrow into slavery.

One last piece of advice to men. My best friend Dina told me to always evaluate women based on their past choices, not based on the picture of themselves that they paint with words. Wise advice.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

March 28, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!
Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change

> his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

Does the Bible teach that all judging of other people is wrong?

March 29, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

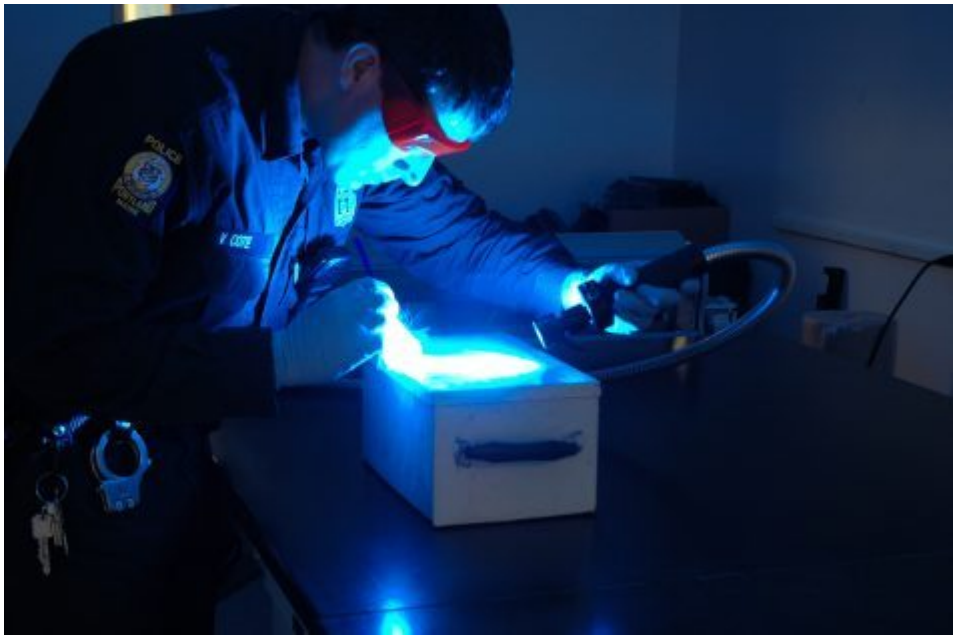

Policeman investigates crime scene for evidence

Today, most people seem to think that the most wonderful thing is to not judge anyone else. We're told that morality is like personal preference… you just choose what you like. There is no standard of morality that exists objectively, in the same way as mathematics or logic exists. And besides, even if there were, the only reason to judge someone else would be to hurt them. Right?

I found an interesting article about judging from Christian apologist Timothy Fox, on the Freethinking Ministries web site. He starts out right away with one very good reason for judging – judging allows people who have experience and demonstrated ability to help those who are making mistakes to get better.

Timothy writes:

> When you study to be an educator, you have to spend a certain number of hours as a student teacher, under the guidance of a veteran teacher. I remember my cooperating teacher telling me one of my strengths was that I took criticism well and was very open to it. I was shocked to hear this! I wanted to tell him he was crazy and that I hate criticism! But I was also well aware that he was the master and I was the apprentice and that it was his responsibility to help me to be the best teacher I could be. So I needed his criticism. (And I received a lot of it!) Whenever he gave me feedback, positive or negative, it wasn't intended to stroke my ego or hurt my feelings. It was so I can learn and improve, to keep doing the good and to change the bad.
>
> The same goes for many other things, such as sports. Athletes have coaches that

> train and guide. But what about normal, everyday life? That's when we want people to leave us alone. Don't tell me how to live. *Don't judge me.*

In my life, I've been able to have success at a few things. Education for sure – I have a BS and MS in computer science which has allowed me to earn a good living. Finances… well, I've made a lot of mistakes with investing, but I was able to succeed (eventually!) just by maxing out my 401K and Roth IRA contributions every year. And I'm just coming up on my 21st year of full time work. So when I give people advice, it's usually in those areas, or maybe in apologetics.

But that advice is not always well-received. Usually, the people I'm advising just find themselves some nice yes-men and yes-women who will agree with them that having fun "in the moment" won't close any doors down the road. It doesn't work, but that's how judging is received. Cut off the judge, and find yourself some yes-men and yes-women. And when your plan doesn't work, just say that it wasn't your fault.

People often cite a passage in the Bible about not making judgments, Matthew 7:1-6. But does it really say that?

> [1]"Do not judge so that you will not be judged.
>
> [2] For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.
>
> [3] Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?
>
> [4] Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?
>
> [5] You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
>
> [6] "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Here's what Timothy Fox had to say about those verses:

> Jesus' point is *not* not to judge (note the double negative). It's "Don't be a hypocrite!" Verse 5 commands us to clean up our own junk, *then* to help clean up your friends'. He's stating the obvious, that when you criticize people, they *will* turn around and criticize you back. So make sure your closet is clean first! And how do you know who the "dogs" and "pigs" are (v. 6)? Wouldn't you have to *judge* them?
>
> And then there is John 7:24: "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." Here Jesus is differentiating between proper and improper judgement. But he still commands to judge!
>
> The reason for many of Paul's letters is to correct some kind of nonsense going on in a church. In 1 Corinthians 5, he writes angrily that the church is not judging

> sin in their midst (and it's quite the sin – go read it!). In verse 12, he rhetorically asks "Are you not to judge those inside [the church]?" And in the following verse, he plainly states to remove the "wicked person" from their midst. Here Paul is criticizing the church for *not* judging when they should have, even to the extent of excommunicating an unrepentant church member.

He concludes:

> More often than not, the ones who cry "Don't judge me!" the loudest are the ones who need it the most, whether it's due to insecurity, pride, or flat-out rebellion. But let us not forget that Jesus was full of truth *and* grace. We desperately need both in our dealings with our brothers and sisters in Christ, when we give correction as well as when we receive it. It's never pleasant to hear some hard (but loving) truth, but remember the first half of Proverbs 27:6: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Do we like it? Of course not. But we need it. And more than that, the Bible commands it.

Obviously, it doesn't feel good to admit you're wrong, but if you want to achieve results, then the quickest way to do that is to listen to people who have already achieved results. The world isn't as "random" as many people want to believe. You get to make choices, and there are best practices. When you see someone failing to achieve their goals, it doesn't do them any good to tell them to follow their hearts and it's not their fault when they fail. The best thing to do is to show them what to do differently, and help them to do it.

Swiss pharma company pledges to donate 130 million doses of drug touted by Trump

March 30, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Data: Covid-19 testing in the United States

There's been a lot of good news last week, and I tweeted some of it. A lot of private sector companies are stepping up to manufacture the tools needed to defeat the Chinese Wuhan virus. They're making hand sanitizer, respirator masks, ventilators, and even prescription drugs for testing and treatment. One company really stood out to me, though, so let's read about them first.

Daily Wire reported:

> Novartis Chief Executive Vas Narasimhan said Sunday that the Trump-touted drudged hydroxychloroquine, often used to treat malaria, is our biggest hope in combating the China-originated coronavirus, or COVID-19.
>
> Narasimhan pledged to donate a stunning 130 million doses of hydroxychloroquine and will support studies of the drug as a treatment against COVID-19.
>
> Reuters reported:
>
> > Novartis Chief Executive Vas Narasimhan said his Sandoz generics unit's malaria, lupus and arthritis drug hydroxychloroquine is the company's biggest hope against the coronavirus, Swiss newspaper SonntagsZeitung reported on Sunday.
> >
> > Novartis has pledged to donate 130 million doses and is supporting clinical trials needed before the medicine, which U.S. President Donald Trump also has been promoting, can be approved for use against the coronavirus.

> “Pre-clinical studies in animals as well as the first data from clinical studies show that hydroxychloroquine kills the coronavirus,” Narasimhan told Swiss newspaper SonntagsZeitung. “We’re working with Swiss hospitals on possible treatment protocols for the clinical use of the drug, but it’s too early to say anything definitively.”
>
> According to Reuters, pharmaceutical companies Bayer and Teva “have also agreed to donate hydroxychloroquine or similar drugs, while Gilead Sciences is testing its experimental drug remdesivir against coronavirus.”
>
> As noted by The Daily Wire on Sunday, France officially sanctioned this weekend chloroquine for certain patients infected with COVID-19.
>
> “The French government has officially sanctioned prescriptions of chloroquine to treat certain coronavirus patients,” France 24 English reported Saturday.
>
> “This ensures continued treatment of patients who have been treated for several years for a chronic condition with this drug, but also allows a temporary authorization to allow certain patients with coronavirus to benefit from this therapeutic route,” said Jérôme Salomon, France’s director general of health.
>
> According to a report from Trustnodes, France’s move comes after infectious disease specialist Didier Raoult announced new clinical results… that show 78 out of 80 patients treated with chloroquine recovered within five days.

Trump is trying to get the FDA to move quickly through testing so that these drugs can be made widely available.

The Daily Wire reported on Sunday night that the FDA is doing everything they can to get these drugs available:

> On Sunday night, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an emergency use authorization for hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine, drugs often used to treat malaria and recently touted by President Donald Trump as a possible “game-changer” in the fight against the China-originated novel coronavirus, or COVID-19.
>
> The United States Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) announced in a statement on Sunday that the FDA will allow the drugs to be “donated to the Strategic National Stockpile to be distributed and prescribed by doctors to hospitalized teen and adult patients with COVID-19, as appropriate, when a clinical trial is not available or feasible,” a Politico report said.
>
> The statement noted that “Sandoz donated 30 million doses of hydroxychloroquine to the stockpile and Bayer donated 1 million doses of chloroquine.”
>
> Trump made it clear weeks ago that his administration would work to fast-track promising drugs like hydroxychloroquine with the FDA, all in an effort to combat COVID-19.

The drugs are already being tested in New York state:

> Democratic New York Governor Andrew Cuomo is on the same page as President Trump when it comes to the popular anti-malaria drugs, permitting trials of hydroxychloroquine, chloroquine, and azithromycin to commence in his state.
>
> "Let's see how it works," Trump said Sunday, with regard to the New York trials. "It may. It may not."

But wait! There's more good news.

I'm currently tracking 5 different drugs to see how they perform during tests, but here is a sixth one that I didn't even know about.

The New York Post reports:

> Two coronavirus patients in New York City are off ventilators and out of intensive care after they received an experimental drug to treat HIV and breast cancer.
>
> […]The drug, leronlimab, is delivered by injection twice in the abdomen, the Daily Mail reported.
>
> Of seven critically ill patients who received the drug in New York, two were removed from ventilators and two showed significant improvement.
>
> […]CytoDyn, the drug's manufacturer, could get FDA approval in six weeks if leronlimab continues to show promise. No drugs currently have FDA approval to treat the novel coronavirus.

Other private sector companies are developing faster methods to test for the Wuhan virus.

CNBC reports:

> Abbott on Friday announced it received approval for a test that is capable of delivering positive results of the coronavirus in as little as five minutes, and it will begin making those tests available to health care providers next week.
>
> The Food and Drug Administration issued emergency use authorization for the point-of-care test on Friday, the company said in a statement. The test can detect negative results in 13 minutes. The company said it plans to ramp up manufacturing so it can deliver 50,000 tests per day.

And finally, this from the Daily Wire:

> Scientists studying the coronavirus have some good news: as it is transmitted through the human population, it is not undergoing significant mutations, meaning it will not become more dangerous as it spreads, and once a vaccine is developed, it could be as effective as vaccines for measles or chickenpox are. Peter Thielen, a molecular geneticist at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory who is one of the scientists examining the virus, told The Washington Post,, "I would expect a vaccine for coronavirus would have a similar

> profile to those vaccines. It’s great news.”

So, the Trump administration is actually doing a pretty good job of cutting red tape to get people help faster. But a lot of the actual work is being down by private sector companies who are making donations and developing tests and drugs to solve the problem. Just keep that in mind when you here doom and gloom from fake news journalists and Democrat politicians.

Does archaeological evidence confirm names, dates and places in the Bible?

March 31, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

I spotted this post on Be Thinking by UK apologist Peter S. Williams. (H/T Eric Chabot at Think Apologetics)

So let me pick the ones I liked most for this post.

Here's a good one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Bethesda
>
> John 5:1-15 describes a pool in Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate, called Bethesda, surrounded by five covered colonnades. Until the 19th century, there was no evidence outside of John for the existence of this pool and John's unusual description *"caused bible scholars to doubt the reliability of John's account, but the pool was duly uncovered in the 1930s – with four colonnades around its edges and one across its middle."*[38] Ian Wilson reports: *"Exhaustive excavations by Israeli archaeologist Professor Joachim Jeremias have brought to light precisely such a building, still including two huge, deep-cut cisterns, in the environs of Jerusalem's Crusader Church of St Anne."*[39]

And this one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Siloam
>
> In the 400s AD, a church was built above a pool attached to Hezekiah's water tunnel to commemorate the healing of a blind man reported in John 9:1-7. Until recently, this was considered to be the Pool of Siloam from the time of Christ. However, during sewerage works in June 2004 engineers stumbled upon a 1stcentury ritual pool when they uncovered some ancient steps during pipe maintenance near the mouth of Hezekiah's tunnel. By the summer of 2005,

> archaeologists had revealed what was *"without doubt the missing pool of Siloam."*[40] Mark D. Roberts reports that: *"In the plaster of this pool were found coins that establish the date of the pool to the years before and after Jesus. There is little question that this is in fact the pool of Siloam, to which Jesus sent the blind man in John 9."*[41]

I just read this one because I am working my way through John. In case you haven't read John, you really should it's my favorite gospel.

Here's another one:

> ### Herod the Great
>
> We have a bronze coin minted by Herod the Great. On the obverse side (i.e. the bottom) is a tripod and ceremonial bowl with the inscription 'Herod king' and the year the coin was struck, 'year 3' (of Herod's reign), or 37 BC.
>
> In 1996 Israeli Professor of Archaeology Ehud Netzer discovered in Masada a piece of broken pottery with an inscription, called an ostracon. This piece had Herod's name on it and was part of an amphora used for transportation (probably wine), dated to c. 19 BC. The inscription is in Latin and reads, *"Herod the Great King of the Jews (or Judea)"*, the first such that mentions the full title of King Herod.
>
> Herodium is a man-made mountain in the Judean wilderness rising over 2,475 feet above sea level. In 23 BC Herod the Great built a palace fortress here on top of a natural hill. Seven stories of living rooms, storage areas, cisterns, a bathhouse, and a courtyard filled with bushes and flowering plants were constructed. The whole complex was surrounded and partly buried by a sloping fill of earth and gravel. Herod's tomb and sarcophagus were discovered at the base of Herodium by archaeologist Ehud Netzer in 2007.

And one more:

> ### The 'James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus' Ossuary
>
> James, the brother of Jesus, was martyred in AD 62. A mid-1st century AD chalk ossuary discovered in 2002 bears the inscription *"James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus"* ('Ya'akov bar Yosef akhui di Yeshua'). Historian Paul L. Maier states that*"there is strong (though not absolutely conclusive) evidence that, yes, the ossuary and its inscription are not only authentic, but that the inscribed names are the New Testament personalities."*[68] New Testament scholar Ben Witherington states that:*"If, as seems probable, the ossuary found in the vicinity of Jerusalem and dated to about AD 63 is indeed the burial box of James, the brother of Jesus, this inscription is the most important extra-biblical evidence of its kind."*[69] According to Hershel Shanks, editor in chief of the *Biblical Archaeological Review*: *"this box is [more] likely the ossuary of James, the*

> *brother of Jesus of Nazareth, than not. In my opinion … it is likely that this inscription* does *mention the James and Joseph and Jesus of the New Testament."*

And finally one short one:

> **Tiberius Caesar**
>
> The Denarius coin, 14-37 AD, is commonly referred to as the 'Tribute Penny' from the Bible. The coin shows a portrait of Tiberius Caesar. Craig L. Blomberg comments: *"Jesus' famous saying about giving to Caesar what was his and to God what* his *(Mark 12:17 and parallels) makes even more sense when one discovers that most of the Roman coins in use at the time had images of Caesar on them."*[48]

This is a good article to bookmark in case you are ever looking for a quick, searchable reference on archaeology and the Bible. There are many more examples in that post.

Now some people might be wondering why archaeology doesn't confirm *every detail* in the New Testament. And here's what J. Warner Wallace has to say about that:

> But what are we to say to those who argue the Biblical archeological record is incomplete? The answer is best delivered by another expert witness in the field, Dr. Edwin Yamauchi, historian and Professor Emeritus at Miami University. Yamauchi wrote a book entitled, *The Stones and the Scripture*, where he rightly noted that archaeological evidence is a matter of "fractions":
>
> *Only a fraction of the world's archaeological evidence still survives in the ground.*
>
> *Only a fraction of the possible archaeological sites have been discovered.*
>
> *Only a fraction have been excavated, and those only partially.*
>
> *Only a fraction of those partial excavations have been thoroughly examined and published.*
>
> *Only a fraction of what has been examined and published has anything to do with the claims of the Bible!*
>
> See the problem? In spite of these limits, we still have a robust collection of archaeological evidences confirming the narratives of the New Testament (both in the gospel accounts and in the Book of Acts). We shouldn't hesitate to use what we do know archaeologically in combination with other lines of evidence. Archaeology may not be able to tell us everything, but it can help us fill in the circumstantial case as we corroborate the gospel record.

I think you can form an opinion about the whole New Testament based on the record of confirmations. The verdict is in: the New Testament should be presumed trustworthy.

Unmarried 35-year-old woman reflects on her adventurous life of fun, travel and serial cohabitation

April 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

I found an interesting article featuring a 35-year-old woman who is alarmed that her approach to life has left her in debt and single, with a gap-filled resume of short-term jobs. I thought it might be useful for young women to read this, and consider whether making "rash" decisions and being "adventurous" works out.

She writes:

> I feel like a ghost. I'm a 35-year-old woman, and I have nothing to show for it. My 20s and early 30s have been a twisting crisscross of moves all over the West Coast, a couple of brief stints abroad, multiple jobs in a mediocre role with no real upward track. I was also the poster child for serial monogamy. My most hopeful and longest lasting relationship (three and a half years, whoopee) ended two years ago. We moved to a new town (my fourth new city), created a home together, and then nose-dived into a traumatic breakup that launched me to my fifth and current city and who-knows-what-number job.

Rash decisions, adventure, exploring…. and lots of debt:

> For all these years of quick changes and rash decisions, which I once rationalized as adventurous, exploratory, and living an "original life," I have nothing to show for it. I have no wealth, and I'm now saddled with enough debt from all of my moves, poor decisions, and lack of career drive that I may never be able to retire. I have no career milestones and don't care for my line of work all that much anyway, but now it's my lifeline, as I only have enough savings to buy a hotel

> room for two nights.

No STEM degree, which means she doesn't like to study hard things that can be tested against the real world for correctness:

> I used to consider myself creative — a good writer, poetic, passionate, curious. Now, after many years of demanding yet uninspiring jobs, multiple heartbreaks, move after move, financial woes, I'm quite frankly exhausted.

Surprised by aging and poor health:

> Also, within the past year I've had a breast-cancer scare and required surgery on my uterus due to a fertility issue. On top of that, I'm 35 and every gyno and women's-health website this side of the Mississippi is telling me my fertility is dropping faster than a piano falling out of the sky. Now I'm looking into freezing my eggs, adding to my never-ending financial burden, in hopes of possibly making something of this haunted house and having a family someday with a no-named man.

She's still trying to be the sexpot 25-year-old she used to be:

> I'm dating. I'm working out and working hard. Listening to music I enjoy and loving my cat. Calling my mom…. I'm drinking too much… And with men I date, I feel pressure to make something of the relationship too soon (move in, get married, "I have to have kids in a couple of years"; fun times!). **All the while still trying to be the sexpot 25-year-old I thought I was until what seemed like a moment ago.**

But her plan hasn't worked out:

> I used to think I was the one who had it all figured out. Adventurous life in the city! Traveling the world! Making memories! Now I feel incredibly hollow. And foolish. How can I make a future for myself that I can get excited about out of these wasted years? What reserves or identity can I draw from when I feel like I've accrued nothing up to this point with my life choices?

Well, I've known women like this, and I think we're going to see more and more women like this as the society becomes more secular and feminist. I want to say something about whether she is sincere about wanting to get married and have children, and what women should do to avoid ending up like her.

Do women today understand male nature and marriage?

This woman's demonstrated life plan is that she chose whatever made her feel good from age 18-35+, and now wants to enter into a marriage some time after age 35. And what does marriage mean to her? Has she prioritized entering the traditional roles of wife and mother? Don't listen to her words. Look at her actions. Her actions show that marriage and children were of NO importance to her. And her current approach to getting married

and having kids is the same as ever – work out in order to look hot, and try to coerce a man who signs up for recreational sex with no commitment into becoming a man who makes a life-long commitment to provide for her and her children (which is the opposite of what he signed up for). She wants marriage now for the same reason that she's wanted anything: for fun, thrills, adventure and to keep up with her girlfriends who are already married.

What kind of man should she have been pursuing from age 18 to 35, if she really wanted marriage and children? Well, the first thing to realize is that not all men want marriage. And the next thing to realize is that women who are serious about marriage need to focus ONLY on men who want to marry. All the men that the women quoted above wanted in her youth didn't want to marry. They wanted premarital recreational sex with her, and that was fine with her – she chose them, and disregarded the men who were interested in marriage.

A man who was interested in marrying her would have:

- ….told her no to sex before marriage (because the more sexual partners a woman has, the less happy she will be in marriage, and the more unstable her marriage will be).
- …led her to become better at being a wife and mother, by discouraging her thrill-seeking, traveling and wasteful spending, and instead encouraging her focus on a STEM education, career and getting debt-free.
- …led her to develop a Christian worldview in which she would understand the importance of marriage and children, and learn to sacrifice her own interests to love and care for others.

Was she interested in getting ready for marriage? No. She never chose those marriage-minded men. She didn't want to be a wife. The men she chose were chosen for fun, for thrills, and to show off their outward appearance to her girlfriends.

So, who are the men in this group of marriage-minded men? How do you recognize them? Marriage-minded men are interested in marriage because they want to *lead a home*. They will have invested a lot of time learning how to protect others, how to provide, and how to debate and lead on moral and spiritual issues. Marriage-minded men see the marriage enterprise as a way of advancing the causes that they care about most. Women who *really* want to get married will recognize those men, and pursue those men. And they'll do it early, so that they can invest in their husbands early and be young enough to have children.

What do ancient non-Christian sources tell us about the historical Jesus?

April 2, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

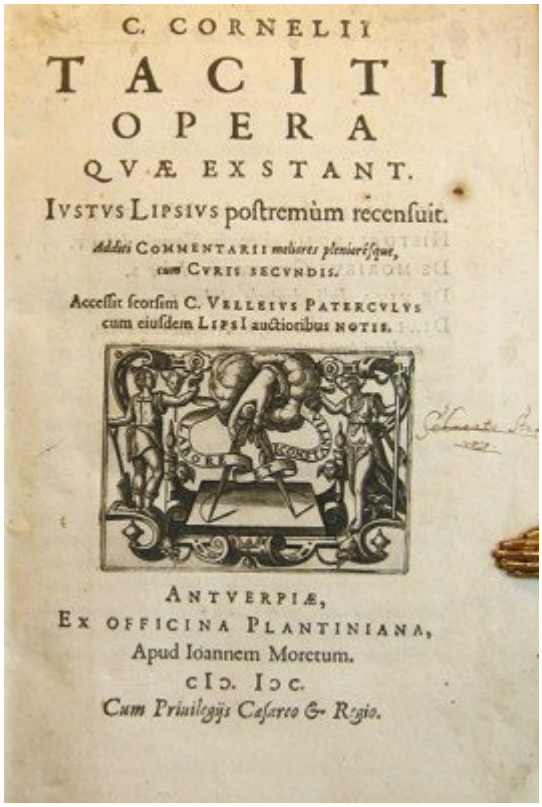
C. CORNELII
TACITI
OPERA
QVÆ EXSTANT.
IVSTVS LIPSIVS postremùm recensuit.
Addidi COMMENTARII meliores pleniorésque,
cum CVRIS SECVNDIS.
Accessit seorsim C. VELLEIVS PATERCVLVS
cum eiusdem LIPSI auctioribus NOTIS.
ANTVERPIÆ,
EX OFFICINA PLANTINIANA,
Apud Ioannem Moretum.
CIↃ. IↃC.
Cum Priuilegijs Cæsareo & Regio.

The Annals, by Roman historian Tacitus

This article from Biblical Archaeology covers all the non-Christian historical sources that discuss Jesus.

About the author:

> Lawrence Mykytiuk is associate professor of library science and the history librarian at Purdue University. He holds a Ph.D. in Hebrew and Semitic Studies and is the author of the book Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200–539 B.C.E. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004).

Here are the major sections:

- Roman historian Tacitus
- Jewish historian Josephus
- Greek satirist Lucian of Samosata
- Platonist philosopher Celsus
- Roman governor Pliny the Younger
- Roman historian Suetonius
- Roman prisoner Mara bar Serapion

And this useful excerpt captures the broad facts about Jesus that we get from just the

first two sources:

> We can learn quite a bit about Jesus from Tacitus and Josephus, two famous historians who were not Christian. Almost all the following statements about Jesus, which are asserted in the New Testament, are corroborated or confirmed by the relevant passages in Tacitus and Josephus. These independent historical sources—one a non-Christian Roman and the other Jewish—confirm what we are told in the Gospels:31
>
> 1. He existed as a man. The historian Josephus grew up in a priestly family in first-century Palestine and wrote only decades after Jesus' death. Jesus' known associates, such as Jesus' brother James, were his contemporaries. The historical and cultural context was second nature to Josephus. "If any Jewish writer were ever in a position to know about the non-existence of Jesus, it would have been Josephus. His implicit affirmation of the existence of Jesus has been, and still is, the most significant obstacle for those who argue that the extra-Biblical evidence is not probative on this point," Robert Van Voorst observes.32 And Tacitus was careful enough not to report real executions of nonexistent people.
>
> 2. His personal name was Jesus, as Josephus informs us.
>
> 3. He was called Christos in Greek, which is a translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, both of which mean "anointed" or "(the) anointed one," as Josephus states and Tacitus implies, unaware, by reporting, as Romans thought, that his name was Christus.
>
> 4. He had a brother named James (Jacob), as Josephus reports.
>
> 5. He won over both Jews and "Greeks" (i.e., Gentiles of Hellenistic culture), according to Josephus, although it is anachronistic to say that they were "many" at the end of his life. Large growth
> in the number of Jesus' actual followers came only after his death.
>
> 6. Jewish leaders of the day expressed unfavorable opinions about him, at least according to some versions of the Testimonium Flavianum.
>
> 7. Pilate rendered the decision that he should be executed, as both Tacitus and Josephus state.
>
> 8. His execution was specifically by crucifixion, according to Josephus.
>
> 9. He was executed during Pontius Pilate's governorship over Judea (26–36 C.E.), as Josephus implies and Tacitus states, adding that it was during Tiberius's reign.
>
> Some of Jesus' followers did not abandon their personal loyalty to him even after his crucifixion but submitted to his teaching. They believed that Jesus later appeared to them alive in accordance with prophecies, most likely those found in the Hebrew Bible. A well-attested link between Jesus and Christians is that Christ, as a term used to identify Jesus, became the basis of the term used to identify his followers: Christians. The Christian movement began in Judea, according to Tacitus. Josephus observes that it continued during the first century. Tacitus

> deplores the fact that during the second century it had spread as far as Rome.

I remember reading the 1996 book by Gary Habermas entitled "The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ". This book is a little before the time of most of you young Christian apologists, but back before the time of Lee Strobel and J. Warner Wallace, this is the stuff we all read. Anyway, in the book he makes a list of all that can be known about Jesus from external sources. And fortunately for you, you don't have to buy the book because you can read chapter 9 of it right on his web site.

From Tacitus he gets this:

> From this report we can learn several facts, both explicit and implicit, concerning Christ and the Christians who lived in Rome in the 60s A.D. Chronologically, we may ascertain the following information.
>
> (1) Christians were named for their founder, Christus (from the Latin), (2) who was put to death by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilatus (also Latin), (3) during the reign of emperor Tiberius (14 37 A.D.). (4) His death ended the "superstition" for a short time, (5) but it broke out again, (6) especially in Judaea, where the teaching had its origin.
>
> (7) His followers carried his doctrine to Rome. (8) When the great fire destroyed a large part of the city during the reign of Nero (54 68 A.D.), the emperor placed the blame on the Christians who lived in Rome. (9) Tacitus reports that this group was hated for their abominations. (10) These Christians were arrested after pleading guilty, (11) and many were convicted for "hatred for mankind." (12) They were mocked and (13) then tortured, including being "nailed to crosses" or burnt to death. (14) Because of these actions, the people had compassion on the Christians. (15) Tacitus therefore concluded that such punishments were not for the public good but were simply "to glut one man's cruelty."

And from Josephus he gets this:

> (1) Jesus was known as a wise and virtuous man, one recognized for his good conduct. (2) He had many disciples, both Jews and Gentiles. (3) Pilate condemned him to die, (4) with crucifixion explicitly being mentioned as the mode. (5) The disciples reported that Jesus had risen from the dead and (6) that he had appeared to them on the third day after his crucifixion. (7) Consequently, the disciples continued to proclaim his teachings. (8) Perhaps Jesus was the Messiah concerning whom the Old Testament prophets spoke and predicted wonders. We would add here two facts from Josephus' earlier quotation as well. (9) Jesus was the brother of James and (10) was called the messiah by some.

So when you are reading the New Testament, these facts are the framework that you read within. It's a good starting point when dealing with people who have never looked into who Jesus was and what he taught and what his followers believed about him, right from the start.

Book review of R.C. Sproul's "If there's a God, why are there atheists?"

April 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Brian Auten has a book review posted up at Apologetics 315.

The book is "If There's A God, Why Are There Atheists?", by theologian R.C. Sproul. R.C. Sproul is one of my favorite theologians. The book in question has a very, very special place in my heart, because I think that it is one of the major reasons why I was able to resist pernicious ideas like religious pluralism and postmodernism for so long. Once you put on the glasses of Romans 1 and see for the first time what man is really doing with respect to God, you can never see things the same again. I'll say more about this at the end, but let's see what Brian wrote first.

The review

So often, you hear atheists complaining about religion is nothing but wish-fulfillment or some sort of crutch for people who are frightened by a variety of things. They think that God is invented to solve several problems. 1) how does the world work?, 2) is there meaning to suffering and evil?, 3) why should I be moral?, and 4) what will happen to me and my loved ones when I die?. On the atheistic view, God is just a crutch that people cling to out of weakness and ignorance. But is this really the case?

Sproul starts the book by investigating three atheists who sought to explain religious belief as a result of psychological factors.

Brian writes:

Before tackling the psychology of atheism, Sproul spends a chapter on the psychology of theism, from the perspective of Freud's question "If there is no God, why is there religion?"11 What follows is an overview of various psychological explanations of theistic belief: Feuerbach's "religion is a dream of the human mind."12 Marx's belief that religion

is “due to the devious imagination of particular segment of mankind.”13 And Nietzche’s idea that “religion endures because weak men need it.”14 The author properly reiterates: “We must be careful to note that the above arguments can never be used as proof for the nonexistence of God. They can be useful for atheists who hear theists state that the only possible explanation for religion is the existence of God.”15 That being said, Sproul also reveals what these arguments presume:

> Their arguments already presupposed the nonexistence of God. They were not dealing with the question, Is there a God? They were dealing with the question, Since there is no God, why is there religion?16

Sproul points out the weaknesses of each of these approaches and says “there are just as many arguments showing that unbelief has its roots in the psychological needs of man.”

Wow, could that really be true? What are the real reasons why people reject God? Does the Bible have anything to say about what those reasons are?

Brian cites Sproul’s contention:

> The New Testament maintains that unbelief is generated not so much by intellectual causes as by moral and psychological ones. The problem is not that there is insufficient evidence to convince rational beings that there is a God, but that rational beings have a natural hostility to the being of God.
>
> […]Man’s desire is not that the omnipotent, personal Judeo-Christian God exist, but that He not exist.

In Romans 1:18-23, the apostle Paul explains what is really going on:

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

20 For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

On this blog, I regularly present many, many arguments for theism in general, and Christian theism in particular:

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Sproul explains why atheists cannot allow themselves to live according to the evidence that is presented to them:

> The cumulative effect of this knowledge that is clearly seen is to leave men 'without excuse.' Herein lies the basis of the universal guilt of man. No one can claim ignorance of the knowledge of God. No one can cite insufficient evidence for not believing in God. Though people are not persuaded by the evidence, this does not indicate an insufficiency in the evidence, but rather an insufficiency in man.
>
> […]The basic stages of man's reaction to God can be formulated by means of the categories of trauma, repression, and substitution.
>
> […]If God exists, man cannot be a law unto himself. If God exists, man's will-to-power is destined to run head-on into the will of God.

And this is the force that is animating atheists today. They don't want to be accountable to God in a relationship, no matter what the evidence is. They have to deny it, so that they can be free to get the benefits of a universe designed for them, without having to give any recognition or acknowledgement back. If they have to lie to themselves to deny the evidence, they will do it. Anything to insulate themselves from the Creator and Designer who reveals himself in Jesus Christ.

The rest of the book review, and the book, deals with explaining in detail how atheists respond to an all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator/Designer. I encourage you to click through and read the whole book review. You can read the review, and the book, and then investigate for yourself whether atheists really are like that.

My survey of atheists

By the way, did you all see my survey of atheists that I did a while back? It's relevant because one of the questions I asked to my volunteers was "How you begin to follow Christ if it suddenly became clear to you that Christianity was objectively true?". I got some very strange responses that dovetail nicely with Sproul's book.

Here are a few of the responses:

- I would not follow. My own goals are all that I have, and all that I would continue to have in that unlikely situation. I would not yield my autonomy to anyone no matter what their authority to command me.
- I would not follow, because God doesn't want humans to act any particular way, and he doesn't care what we do.
- I would not follow. Head is spinning. Would go to physician to find out if hallucinating.
- I hope I would be courageous enough to dedicate my life to rebellion against God.
- I would not have to change anything unless forced to and all that would change is my actions not my values. I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran.
- He would have to convince me that what he wants for me is what I want for me.

This is all part of my series discussing whether morality is rationally grounded by atheism.

Well Spent Journey did a similar survey of atheists, inspired by mine, and got this result on the relevant question:

> ***12. How would you begin to follow Jesus if it became clear to you that Christianity was true?***
>
> *– Would follow (5)*
> *– Wouldn't follow (6)*
> *– Might follow the teachings of Jesus, but that isn't Christianity (2)*
> *– It would depend on how this truth was revealed (3)*
> *– Christianity can't be true (3)*
> *– No answer given (4)*
>
> **…What would be the hardest adjustment you would have to make to live a faithful, public Christian life?**
>
> *– Adjusting wouldn't be that difficult; would eagerly welcome knowing that Christianity was true (2)*
> *– Praying, since it seems weird, creepy, and strange*
> *– Trying to figure out how the Bible became so corrupted*
> *– Trying to convince myself that the God of the Bible is deserving of worship (2)*
> *– Don't think it would be possible to adjust*
> *– No clear response, or not applicable (16)*

Yes, they really think like that! Just *ask an atheist questions* and you'll see how "objective" they really are. Atheism is entirely psychological. It's adopted in order to feel sufficient and to operate with autonomy, with the goal of self-centered pleasure-seeking above all. Evidence has nothing to do with it.

What are undesigned coincidences, and how are they used in apologetics?

April 4, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Air Force TACPs confirm target locations with their map

When you're reading the Bible, you may find passages in one book that are mysterious on their own, but then they make sense if you add missing details from a parallel account from a different source inside or even outside the Bible. I think these "undesigned coincidences" are helpful for answering the question of that skeptics often ask: "is the Bible history or myth?" Let's see some examples.

So, there are two kinds of undersigned coincidences. In the "internal" kind, the clearing up is done by another source in the same book. In the external kind, the clearing up is done by a source outside the same book.

Here's an article from Apologetics UK with some internal examples:

> In John 6:1-7, we are told:
>
> Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Festival was near.When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

> Now, Philip is a fairly minor character in the New Testament. And one might, naturally, be inclined to wonder why Jesus hasn't turned to someone a little higher in the pecking order (such as Peter or John). A partial clue is provided in John 1:44: "Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida." Likewise, John 12:21 refers to "Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee"
>
> And what is so significant about Philip being from the town of Bethsaida? We don't learn this until we read the parallel account in Luke's gospel (9:10-17). At the opening of the account (verses 10-11) we are told, "When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing."
>
> And so, we are informed by Luke that the event was actually taking place in Bethsaida — the town from which Philip was from! Jesus thus turns to Philip, whom, he believed, would be familiar with the area. Notice too that Luke does not tell us that Jesus turned to Philip.
>
> But it gets even more interesting still. In Matthew 11, Jesus denounces the unrepentant cities, saying, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." The reader is left wondering what miracles were performed in these cities. We are not told in Matthew's gospel. It is only in light of Luke's account of the feeding of the five thousand (chapter 9), in which we are told of the event's occurrence in Bethsaida, that this statement begins to make sense!

This one is pretty clever:

> In Matthew 2 6:67-68, we read, "Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"" This raises the natural question, why are they asking "Who hit you?" It is not until we read the parallel account in Luke's gospel (22:64) that we learn that they had blindfolded him, thereby making sense of their taunts "Who hit you?"

Another one:

> In Luke 23:1-4, w e read,
> Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king."
>
> So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"
>
> "You have said so," Jesus replied.

> Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”
> On the surface, this seems to be a rather strange declaration to make. Jesus has just declared Himself to be a King, and has been charged with subverting the nation and opposing paying taxes to Caesar. Why has Pilate found no basis for a charge against him?
>
> The answer lies in the parallel account in John’s gospel (18:33-38):
>
> Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”
>
> “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”
> “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”
>
> Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”
>
> “You are a king, then!” said Pilate.
>
> Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”
>
> “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.
>
> It is only when you read John’s account that you learn that Jesus had told Pilate that “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

And the same article has some external undesigned coincidences:

> In Matthew 2:22, we are told:
>
> But when [Joseph] heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being waned by God in an dream, he left for the regions of Galilee…
>
> Josephus’ Antiquities 17.3.1 tells us that the domain of Herod the Great was divided among his sons, with Archelaus having authority in Judea but not in Galilee, which was governed by his younger brother, Herod Antipas.
>
> We also know that Archelaus had acquired quite a bloody reputation (e.g. Antiquities 17.13.1-2 and 17.9.3). The latter of these references describes how Archelaus slaughtered 3,000 Jews at Passover. Thus, Joseph decides not to return to Judea and, instead, goes further north to the regions of Galilee, governed by Herod Antipas.

And another one:

> In Matthew 2:22, Archeleaus is reigning as king in Judea; in Matthew 27:2, Pilate is governor of Judea; in Acts 12:1, Herod is king of Judea; and in Acts 23:33, Felix is governor of Judea. This becomes extremely confusing.
>
> But here's the thing: Josephus attests to the accuracy of every one of these titles. Herod the Great was made King of Judea by Mark Anthony. Archelaus was deposed in the year 6 A.D., after only a ten-year reign, and a series of procurators ruled over Judea (of whom Pilate was fifth). The Herod of Acts 12 is Agrippa I. He was made king by Claudius Caesar. After his death, Judea was, once again, placed under the government of procurators (one of them being Felix).

And another one:

> When Luke tells us of the riot in Ephesus, he reports that the city clerk tells the crowd that "There are proconsuls". A proconsul is a Roman authority to whom a complaint may be taken. Normally, there was only one proconsul. Just at that particular time, however, there seems to have been two as a result of the assassination of Silanus (the previous proconsul) by poisoning in the Fall of AD 54, by the two imperial stewards at the urging of Nero's mother. This event is independently documented by Tacitus in his Annals (13.1). Indeed, Luke's accuracy has allowed historians to date the event which Luke narrates with incredible precision since we know when Silanus was poisoned.

If you think that these are clever, then share this post, and encourage your non-Christian friends and family to consider one of the many reasons why so many scholars have considered the New Testament books to be so reliable.

I wish that Christian parents and pastors were more thoughtful about how they present the Bible to young people. Instead of just saying "the Bible says" and praising blind faith acceptance of the Bible, why don't we think a little harder, and look for some confirmation of the Bible from historical methods like undesigned coincidences, and from non-Biblical authors, and from archaeology, etc.? Surely adding more evidence for taking the Bible seriously is the right approach, if the goal is to be persuasive? It's not like we're see good results from the current "blind faith" approach to raising Christian children, right?

Paul Helm debates William Lane Craig on Calvinism and Reformed theology

April 5, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

I listened to this excellent discussion between Dr. William Lane Craig and Oxford University Calvinist philosopher Dr. Paul Helm. I think this is a useful discussion in general because atheists often bring up problems with Calvinism as objections to Christianity in general, such as:

- If God knows the future, then I don't have free will
- If God controls everything, then I am not responsible for my sinning
- If God has to override my free will to be saved, then I am not responsible for being damned if God doesn't choose me

Details:

> If God ordains the future, can humans have free will? Are people predestined for salvation? And what does the Bible say on the matter? William Lane Craig is a Christian philosopher and leading proponent of Molinism, a view of divine sovereignty that seeks to reconcile God's fore-ordination with human free will. Paul Helm is a leading Calvin Scholar. He defends the view that God predestines the future, limiting human freedom.

MP3 of this show

Or listen on YouTube:

I was surprised because my Calvinist friend Dina thought that Dr. Helm won this debate, but I thought that Dr. Craig won. So without further ado, here is the snark-free summary of the discussion. I also sent the summary to Dina to make sure that it was reasonably fair and accurate. She said it was biased, but she was predestined to say that.

Summary:

JB: Has Lewis had any impact on your apologetics?

Craig: Not as a scholar, but more as a model of a scholar who leaves a legacy through his published work

JB: How did you become interested in Calvinism?

Helm: Starting from childhood, and lately writing more on Calvinism from a philosophical point of view

JB: How do you view God's sovereignty?

Helm: Strong view of divine sovereignty, God is sovereign over all events, but that doesn't mean that they are determined by him

JB: What is Calvin's legacy?

Helm: He amplified an existing concept of predestination, and wrote on many other topics

JB: What is Molinism?

Craig: Molina affirms divine sovereignty as Paul Helm does, but he also affirms libertarian free will

Craig: Every event that occurs happens by God's will or by God's permission

JB: What about open theism?

Craig: Paul and I both oppose open theism

JB: How does Molinism reconcile human free will and divine sovereignty

Craig: God has knowledge of what would happen under any set of circumstances

Craig: God has knowledge of everything that COULD happen, and he has knowledge of everything that WILL happen

Craig: God knows what each person freely choose to do in any set of circumstances and he can place people in times and places where he is able to achieve his ends without violating creaturely freedom and creaturely responsibility

JB: How does this apply to the issue of salvation?

Craig: The circumstances in which God puts a person includes God leading people to him and he foreknows who will respond to his leading

Craig: God has ordered the world in such a way that he foreknows the exact people who will free respond to his leading if he puts them in certain circumstances

JB: Does God want to save the maximum of people?

Craig: My own view is that God does order the world in such a way that the maximum number of people will respond to God's drawing them to himself

JB: Is the Molinist view gaining ground?

Craig: Yes, Calvinists and open theists are both moving towards it, and Molinism is the dominant view among philosophical theologians

JB: Why has Molinism not convinced you?

Helm: It’s an unnecessary theory, God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge covers what middle knowledge covers

Helm: Calvinism has a stronger view of sin, such that God has to act unilaterally and irrestibly to save them

JB: Are creatures free on your view?

Helm: My view of free will is weaker than Craig’s view of free will

Craig: For the Calvinist, grace is irresistible, but for the Molinist, grace is effective when it is met with a response from the creature

Craig: The Bible affirms the strong view of free will, when it says that in certain circumstances people can freely choose to do other than they do

Helm: But if a person is in circumstances X and they are free, then why don’t they choose something that isn’t what God can foresee

Craig: In identical circumstances, a person has the freedom to choose, and God doesn’t determine what they choose, he just foreknows what they choose

Helm: How can God foreknow what people will freely do if people have this strong view of freedom that allows them to do anything? God would not know what people can freely do if they really are free

Craig: God has knowledge of what his creatures would freely do in any set of circumstances, he has knowledge of subjunctive statements

Craig: The Scripture is filled with statements that show that God has this knowledge of what people would do in other circumstances (e.g. – 2 Cor 2:8)

Helm: I am not denying that the Bible is full of subjunctive statements, but if humans have real libertarian free will, then God cannot know what they will do

Craig: I think God does preordain everything, Molinism has a strong sense of divine sovereignty BUT the foreordaining is done with the knowledge of what humans would do in any circumstances, so that what God ordains achieves his ends, but without violating creaturely free will

Craig: I take at face value the passages of the Bible where it says that God wants all persons to be saved

Craig: When the Bible says that God wants ALL persons to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), the Bible means that God wants ALL persons to be saved

Craig: So either universalism is true OR there is something that stops all from being saved outside of God

Craig: the something that prevents all from being saved is creaturely free will

Helm: Most people don’t have the opportunity to hear the gospel, so God doesn’t want all to be saved

Helm: People can still be responsible for what God “fore-ordains”

JB: Can a person really be responsible for wickedness if they didn’t freely choose it?

Helm: Even though God is the only one who can act unilaterally to make save people, the people who act wickedly are still responsible

Craig: Molinism provides an answer to the problem of why not all people have heard the gospel, because by using middle knowledge he is able to know who would respond to the gospel if they heard it and he places those people in the times and places where they will hear it

Craig: That solution means that NO ONE is lost because they have not heard the gospel

Craig: There is Biblical support for (Acts 17:27) God choosing the times and places where people will live SO THAT they will be led by him and be able to respond to his leading

JB: Is God the author of sin, on Calvinism?

Craig: If Calvinists define providence to mean causal determinism, then he is the cause of every effect including human actions, and he is the one who causes people to sin

Craig: This view (determinism) impugns the character of God

Helm: I don't think that sovereignty requires determinism

Helm: God has mysterious resources – which I cannot specify – that reconcile his sovereignty with human responsibility for wickedness

JB: But if God is the cause of people doing wrong things, then how can they be responsible for it?

Helm: Well, humans do cause their own actions

Craig: Helm is right to say that God has resources to reconcile God's sovereignty with free will and human responsibility, and that resource is not an unknown mystery, it's middle knowledge

Craig: I can affirm everything in the Westminster Confession except for the one clause where they expressly repudiate middle knowledge as the mechanism for reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

Helm: Well, Calvinists have a strong view of sin so that humans cannot respond to God's leading

Craig: Yes, and that's why humans need prevenient grace in order to respond to him

Craig: God has to take the initiative and draw people to himself or they cannot be saved, but that grace is resistible, and that's what the Bible teaches (Acts 7:51), so humans are still responsible if they resist God

Helm: My view of grace is that it is monergistic and irrestible, it is a unilateral action on the part of God, like pulling someone out of an icy pond which they can't get out of

JB: If humans freely choose to respond to God's drawing and leading, does that diminish grace?

Helm: Many are called but few are chosen

Craig: Molinism does not require synergism – which is the idea that humans are partly responsible for their salvation

Craig: In Eph 2:8, Scripture is clear that faith opposite to works, and responding to God's drawing is not meritorious

JB: So receiving a gift is not meritorious?

Craig: It's the passive acceptance of what someone else has done for you

Helm: But doesn't this mean that you can lose your salvation, because you can accept and resist the gift of salvation?

Craig: That's a separate question that Christians can differ on, but if the Holy Spirit indwells a person and seals them, then that would argue for the view that salvation cannot be revoked

JB: Doesn't Romans 8 teach Calvinism pretty clearly?

Helm: This is called the "golden chain", and it does support Calvinism

Craig: Actually, this text is no problem for Molinists because the first link in the chain is foreknowledge, which, if it incorporates middle knowledge, is no problem for Molinists

Craig: What God is electing in Romans 8 is a specific group of people that he knows in advance of creating the universe will freely respond to his drawing them to him

Craig: In Acts 4:27-28, it is talking about God's foreknowledge, which involves and incorporates knowledge of what any individual would freely choose if placed in those circumstances

JB: If God actualizes a set plan with set circumstances for everyone, isn't that very similar to Calvinism?

Craig: Yes! It's a strong statement of divine sovereignty

Helm: Foreknowledge doesn't mean that God knows what people would do, it's just refering to God "knowing his own mind" about what he wants to do

JB: How do you respond to the fairness of God unilaterally and specifically choosing some people for salvation and choosing other people for damnation (because he refuses to act unilaterally for them)?

Helm: God ordinarily bypasses other people in the Bible, like when he chooses the Jews as his chosen people

Craig: The problem with that is that the Bible clearly teaches that God has a genuine will that all will be saved and he makes a genuine offer of salvation to all people

Craig: Also, just being a Jew and a member of the chosen people doesn't mean you were saved, because some Jews rebelled against God

Craig: And there were also people outside of the Jewish people who were righteous and in a relationship with God, like Job

Helm: "the fabric of our faith" depends on God's choice and his not-choice, it is fundamental to the Bible and to God's character, and choosing them "effectively" (irrestibly and unilaterally)

Helm: The idea of God considering "possible worlds", some of which are feasible and not

feasible, with conflicts between the wills of free creatures in different circumstances, and then actualizing one world that achieve these ends is very messy

Craig: Some worlds may not feasible for God to create, for example a world in which everyone is saved – it is logically possible, but may not be feasible

Craig: God will not exercise any divine coercion to force people to go to Heaven against their own will

Helm: If God chooses a world because it is feasible, then he doesn't love me directly, he is choosing a world, not individuals

Craig: Well, when God actualizes a world, he specifically knows which individuals will be saved within that world, but without disrespecting free will

Craig: The world isn't primary, the individuals are primary

Helm: I think that middle knowledge can he included in God's natural knowledge and free knowledge

Craig: The knowledge of what people would do in different circumstances is based on the freedom of the individuals

JB: Make your conclusions!

Craig: Molinism is a Biblical model for reconciling divine sovereignty with human freedom

Helm: It is intellectually mystifying to introduce this strong view of human freedom and it is not Biblical

Is asking “Am I going to Hell?” a good rebuttal to scientific arguments for theism?

April 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

I want to use this woman’s story to show how sensible atheists reach a belief in God.

Excerpt:

> I don’t know when I first became a skeptic. It must have been around age 4, when my mother found me arguing with another child at a birthday party: “But how do you know what the Bible says is true?” By age 11, my atheism was so widely known in my middle school that a Christian boy threatened to come to my house and “shoot all the atheists.” My Christian friends in high school avoided talking to me about religion because they anticipated that I would tear down their poorly constructed arguments. And I did.
>
> As I set off in 2008 to begin my freshman year studying government at Harvard (whose motto is *Veritas*, “Truth”), I could never have expected the change that awaited me.
>
> It was a brisk November when I met John Joseph Porter. Our conversations initially revolved around conservative politics, but soon gravitated toward religion. He wrote an essay for the *Ichthus*, Harvard’s Christian journal, defending God’s existence. I critiqued it. On campus, we’d argue into the wee hours; when apart, we’d take our arguments to e-mail. Never before had I met a Christian who could respond to my most basic philosophical questions: How does one understand the Bible’s contradictions? Could an omnipotent God make a stone he could not lift? What about the Euthyphro dilemma: Is something good because God declared it so, or does God merely identify the good? To someone like me, with no Christian background, resorting to an answer like “It takes faith” could

> only be intellectual cowardice. Joseph didn't do that.
>
> And he did something else: He prodded me on how inconsistent I was as an atheist who nonetheless believed in right and wrong as objective, universal categories. Defenseless, I decided to take a seminar on meta-ethics. After all, atheists had been developing ethical systems for 200-some years. In what I now see as providential, my atheist professor assigned a paper by C. S. Lewis that resolved the Euthyphro dilemma, declaring, "God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God."
>
> Joseph also pushed me on the origins of the universe. I had always believed in the Big Bang. But I was blissfully unaware that the man who first proposed it, Georges Lemaître, was a Catholic priest. And I'd happily ignored the rabbit trail of a problem of what *caused* the Big Bang, and what *caused* that cause, and so on.
>
> By Valentine's Day, I began to believe in God. There was no intellectual shame in being a deist, after all, as I joined the respectable ranks of Thomas Jefferson and other Founding Fathers.
>
> I wouldn't stay a deist for long. A Catholic friend gave me J. Budziszewski's book Ask Me Anything, which included the Christian teaching that "love is a commitment of the will to the true good of the other person." This theme—of love as sacrifice for true good—struck me. The Cross no longer seemed a grotesque symbol of divine sadism, but a remarkable act of love. And Christianity began to look less strangely mythical and more cosmically beautiful.

So, I want to point out the progression of her beliefs from atheist to deist to Christian. First, she listened to the scientific arguments for God's existence, which took her to deism, which is a variety of theism where God just creates the universe and then doesn't interfere with it after. Those arguments, the Big Bang and the cosmic fine-tuning, were enough for her to falsify atheism and prove some sort of theism. After that, she remained open to the evidence for Christian theism, and finally got there after looking at other evidence.

But this makes me think of how some of the atheists that I talk to do the exact opposite of what she did. I start off by explaining to them scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer. I explain the mainstream discoveries that confirm an origin of the universe (e.g. – light element abundance predictions and observations), and I cite specific examples of fine-tuning, (e.g. – the gravitational constant). I explain protein sequencing and folding, and calculate the probabilities of getting a protein by chance. I explain the sudden origin of the phyla in the Cambrian explosion, and show why naturalistic explanations fail. I talk about the fine-tuning needed to get galaxies, solar systems and planets to support life. But many of these atheists don't become deists like the honest atheist in the story. Why not?

Well, the reason why not is because they interrupt the stream of scientific evidence coming out of my mouth and they start to ask me questions that have nothing to do with what we can know through science. See, evangelism is like building a house. You have to

start with the foundation, the walls, the plumbing, the electricity, etc., but you can't know all the specific details about furniture and decorations at the beginning. But militant atheists don't care that you are able to establish the foundations of Christian theism – they want to jump right to the very fine-grained details, and use that to justify not not building anything at all. Just as you are proving all the main planks of a theistic worldview with science, they start asking "am I going to Hell?" and telling you "God is immoral for killing Canaanite children", etc. They want to stop the construction of the house by demanding that you build everything at once. But, it is much easier to accept miracles like the virgin birth if you have a God who created the universe first. The foundation comes first, it makes the later stuff easier to do.

So rather than adjust their worldview to the strong scientific evidence, and then leave the puzzling about Hell and Old Testament history for later, they want to refute the good scientific arguments with "Am I going to Hell?". How does complaining about Hell and unanswered prayer a response to *scientific evidence*? It's not! But I think that this does explain why atheists remain atheists in the face of all the scientific evidence against naturalism. They insulate their worldview from the progress of science by focusing on their emotional disappointment that they are not God and that God isn't doing what they want him to do. That's the real issue. Authority and autonomy. In my experience, they are usually not accountable to science, although there are, thank God, exceptions to that rule.

So much good news in the battle against the Chinese Wuhan virus

April 7, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Our best bet right now for slowing and stopping the pandemic

I keep having tabs open in my browser with all sorts of good news stories, so I decided to just dump some of them in this one post so I can finally close the browser tabs.

April 4th: Doctors Rate Hydroxychloroquine 'Most Effective' Coronavirus Treatment:

> An international poll of more than 6,000 doctors finds that the antimalarial drug hydroxychloroquine has been deemed the most highly rated treatment for the novel coronavirus.
>
> The survey, conducted by Sermo, a global health care polling company, asked 6,227 physicians in 30 countries to find out what is the most effective against SARS-CoV-2. The poll finds that 37% of those treating patients suffering from the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 rated hydroxychloroquine as the "most effective therapy" out of a list of 15 choices.
>
> On Monday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration gave chloroquine and its derivative, hydroxychloroquine, emergency-use authorization, although many physicians were already using the drug.
>
> Azithromycin, known by the brand name Zithromax or Z-Pak, came in as the second-most effective therapy at 32%, followed by "nothing."

The study I looked at from Science Direct said that the best results are obtained by using a combination of hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin, which is (I think) what Trump had recommended earlier. In fact here's an example story about a doctor who is using the combination of the two drugs:

April 2nd: Dr. On Malaria Drug: 'Absolute Game Changer,' 'Beginning Of The End Of The Pandemic':

> An infectious disease doctor told Fox News on Wednesday night that using hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin to treat patients that have the coronavirus was an "absolute game changer" and that it was "the beginning of the end of the pandemic."

The model used by the White House to calculate infection and death rates is being revised downward – twice.

April 6th: Influential Coronavirus Tracking Model Shows Steep Decline In Death, Bed Shortage Projections:

> An influential prediction model, referenced routinely by White House coronavirus task for leader Dr. Deborah Birx, has been updated to reflect a major change in death and bed shortage projections, according to the Associated Press.
>
> The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation University of Washington's School of Medicine now says they're COVID-19 projection model shows a sharp decline in anticipated deaths, anticipated bed shortages, and even anticipated infections — a change made as new data about the virus' real-world spread becomes available and analysts are able to monitor epicenters, like New York City, in real time.

April 6th: White House Coronavirus Model Gets Another Update, Downgrading Estimated Deaths:

> A model heavily relied upon by the White House task force responding to the China-originated novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, has again been updated.
>
> On Sunday night, a model from the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington dropped its estimated death projection for the first wave of the pandemic to 81,766 deaths, down from 93,531.
>
> "The 11,765 fewer deaths would mark a 14% decrease for the model's target projection, and a 30% decrease for the worst-case scenario," The Daily Caller noted Monday.

Some countries are starting to scale back their quarantining and social distancing:

April 6th: First European Country Announces Multi-Step Plan To Ease Coronavirus Lockdown:

> On Monday, Austria became the first European country to announce its plan to begin easing "lockdown" measures amid signs that it has made it through the worst stages of the initial wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Other European countries are reportedly beginning to look with hope toward taking similar steps.
>
> Austria has experienced "three consecutive days in which the number of coronavirus recoveries have exceeded the number of new cases," The Washington Post explains. "On Monday, Austrian authorities reported 241 new infections over previous 24 hours, but 465 recoveries."

Things are going so well, that even the Democrats have taken notice.

April 6th: Thousands Of N.Y. COVID Patients Being Treated With Anti-Malarial Drug Hydroxychloroquine:

> As many as 4,000 people in New York are currently being treated with hydroxychloroquine, the New York Post reports:
>
> A state Health Department official said the [Department of Health] has shipped doses of hydroxychloroquine to 56 hospitals across New York, distributing enough "to treat 4,000 patients to date." Patients have received doses as part of four- or 10-day regimens, officials said. The University of Albany's School of Public Health is observing the drug's impact on the patients, and its preliminary study could come back in weeks instead of the usual months, officials said.
>
> Cuomo has been criticized for prohibiting pharmacists from dispensing hydroxychloroquine outside a hospital.

April 6th: Cuomo: New York Coronavirus Deaths Have Been 'Effectively Flat' For Two Days:

> New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) said Monday that the number of daily coronavirus deaths in his state has been "effectively flat for two days," which he said may signal the pandemic is beginning to wane.
>
> New York had 599 new deaths, up from 594 on Sunday but down from 630 on Saturday.
>
> "While none of this is good news, the possible flattening of the curve is better than the increases that we have seen," Cuomo said.
>
> The governor also said the number of hospitalizations and intensive care admissions have also hit their lowest points in more than two weeks.

April 6th: Michigan Democrat With Coronavirus Credits Trump With Saving Her Life: 'I Do Thank Him For That':

> A Michigan state Democratic lawmaker who was suffering from the coronavirus credited President Donald Trump with saving her life, saying on Monday that his constant touting of hydroxychloroquine is what led her to ask her doctor for the malaria drug.
>
> Rep. Karen Whitsett (Detroit) "said she started taking hydroxychloroquine on March 31, prescribed by her doctor, after both she and her husband sought treatment for a range of symptoms on March 18," The Detroit Free Press reported. "'It was less than two hours' before she started to feel relief, said Whitsett, who had experienced shortness of breath, swollen lymph nodes, and what felt like a sinus infection."

April 4th: Biden Endorses Trump's China Travel Restrictions — Two Months Late:

> [O]n Jan. 31, the president declared coronavirus a U.S. public health emergency and issued a travel ban between the United States and China. Campaigning in Iowa that day, Biden criticized Trump's China travel ban, saying, "This is no time for Donald Trump's record of hysteria and xenophobia."
>
> On Feb. 1, Biden again criticized Trump for the move.
>
> […]Presumed Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden now backs restrictions on travel from China — two months after President Donald Trump put them into place to stem the spread of the coronavirus, which originated in Wuhan, China.

It took a few months, but the Democrats and their mainstream media allies are starting to credit Trump for taking the Wuhan virus seriously early on.

And of course the stock market was up 7.5% on Monday. I hope you bought the dip in March. I was out of the market since last summer when the markets crossed over the 52-week highs. I just got back in last month. So far, I'm up 10% in my portfolio, and my nerves are steady. It's a risk I'm willing to take because the reward is worth it.

Two kinds of people who have tried to shame me away from Christianity

April 8, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

In my last job, I had two interesting encounters, first with a secular Jewish leftist man and second with a New Age prosperity gospel feminist Christian woman.

So let's talk about the two people.

The man who thinks that conservative Christians are stupid

The first kind of person who tried to shame me for being a Christian is the person who thinks that Christianity is stupid. This kind of person invokes things that he hears in secular leftist pop culture as if it is common knowledge that theism generally, and Christianity in particular, is false. He's watched a documentary on the Discovery channel which said that the eternally oscillating cosmology was true. Or maybe he watched a documentary on the History Channel that said that Jesus never presented himself as God stepping into history. He presents these things that he reads in the New York Times, or sees on MSNBC or hears on NPR with the authority tone that Ben Carson might take when explaining modern medicine to a witch doctor.

Here is how things usually go with him:

- Me: here are two arguments against naturalistic evolution, the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion.
- Him: but you don't believe in a young-Earth do you? I mean, you believe in evolution don't you?
- Me: let's talk about how proteins and DNA is sequenced, and the sudden origin of Cambrian body plans
- Him: (shouting) Do you believe in evolution? Do you believe in evolution?

And this:

- Me: there hasn't been any global warming for 18 years, and temperatures were warmer in the Medieval Warming Period
- Him: but you don't deny climate change, do you? everyone on NPR agrees that climate change is real
- Me: let's talk about the last 18 years of no warming, and the temperatures during the Medieval Warming Period
- Him: (shouting) Do you believe in climate change? Do you believe in climate change?

He asks these questions so he can either label me as a nut, without having to weigh the evidence I'm presenting, or have me agree with him, without having to weigh the evidence I'm presenting. It's all about ignoring the evidence, so he can get back to his busy, busy practical life – and get back to feeling smug about being smarter than others. I think a lot of men are like this – they don't want to waste their valuable time studying, they just want to jump to the right conclusion, then get back to doing whatever they want – like running marathons, or driving their kids to hockey practice, etc.

So how do you respond to a man who gets his entire worldview from the culture, but never deals with peer-reviewed evidence? Well, I think you just defeat his arguments with evidence and then present your own (peer-reviewed) evidence, and then leave it at that. If the person just wants to jump to the conclusion that all the "smart" people hold to, without doing any of the work, then you can't win. There are atheists out there who believe in the eternal oscillating universe they saw Carl Sagan talking about in their elementary school. You might try to argue for an origin of the universe by citing new evidence like the CMB and light element abundances. But sometimes, they won't care. Carl Sagan said it 50 years ago, and that settles it. It doesn't matter that the new evidence overturns the old theories, they don't care.

Do you think that Christianity will make non-Christians like you?

Consider 2 Tim 4:1-5:

1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:

[2] preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

[3] For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,

[4] and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

[5] As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

And 1 Peter 3:15-16:

[15] but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a

defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

[16] having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

If you have orthodox theological beliefs in this day and age then you are going to be shamed, humiliated and reviled by people. And it's not just having an orthodox view of who Jesus is that annoys them (e.g. – deity, exclusivity of salvation, morality, etc.). No, their disapproval spreads on into politics, especially abortion and gay marriage – basically any kind of rules around sexuality. That's what's really bugging these people, I think.

The woman who thinks Christianity is life-enhancement

This one is especially difficult when you are a young man, because we naturally look to women for approval and respect. You find yourself sitting in church or youth group, hoping for the approval and respect from the Christian women for your sound theology and effective apologetics. Little do you know that many Christian women understand Christianity as life-enhancement, designed to produce happy feelings. God is their cosmic butler whose main responsibility is to meet their needs and make their plans work out. Although you might be keen on sound theology and good apologetics arguments, she doesn't think that's important.

So how to deal with this unmet need for approval and respect from women in the church?

First thing, be careful that you don't attend a church where the pastor in preaching and picking hymns that give you the idea that God is your cosmic butler. Second, read the Bible very carefully, and understand that with respect to God's purposes for you in this world, your happiness is expendable. You cannot be looking to attractive Christian women that you happen to meet in church to support you, as many of them have long-since sold out to the culture. They are not interested in learning *evidential* apologetics to defend God's reputation, or in defending the unborn, or in defending natural marriage, or in defending the free enterprise system that supports family autonomy from the state, etc. Those things are hard and unpopular, especially for those women who were raised to think that Christianity is about life enhancement and peer-approval.

Here's 1 Cor 4:1-5 to make the point:

1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

[2] Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

[3] But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

[4] For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

[5] Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

And 2 Tim 2:4:

[4] No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

Or, since I like Ronald Speirs from Band of Brothers so much:

This is the situation in which we find ourselves, so get used to it. And believe me, I have to deal with this, too. So I have all the sympathy in the world for you. Resign yourself to the fact that no one is going to approve of you for being faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ; not secular men, not Christian women. There is no cavalry coming to rescue you.

New study: intact heterosexual married home still critical for children's academic success

April 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sometimes, when you're discussing reality with progressives, it helps to have a study. Because although you might think that conservatism is common sense, they think that their feelings are common sense. So you will have to give them evidence, and then call them stupid, until they either accept your evidence or run away screaming back to the New York Times building.

Anyway, here's the research from the Institute for Family Studies:

> Beginning with the 1966 Coleman Report, a long line of studies have found that students from intact, married families do better in school than those from disrupted or unmarried families.[5] My own analysis of data from a longitudinal study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (the ECLS-K) demonstrated the impact that family transitions, such as parental divorce and remarriage, have on students' task persistence and eagerness to learn, emotional distress, and misbehavior resulting in school disciplinary actions such as suspension.[6] IFS studies of trends in Arizona, Florida, and Ohio indicate that school districts tend to be more successful and safer when more of their families are headed by married parents.[7]

And there's a graph to go with it. Actually, several, but I just chose this one.

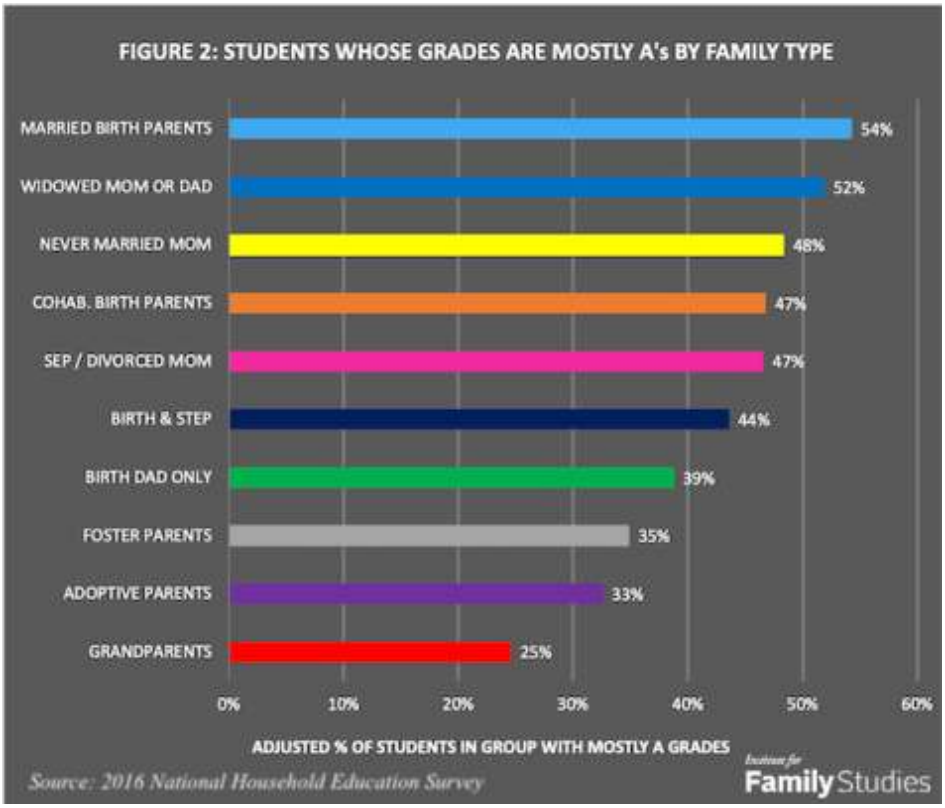

Why can't non-STEM sociologists use apostrophes properly? It's As not A's

And here's the conclusion:

> The analyses showed that schoolchildren who live with both married parents do better on each of the three educational progress indicators. Children from married-couple families did better even after controlling for socioeconomic and demographic correlates of family structure.

They've also got graphs for student misbehavior by family type, and student disciplined by family type. Naturally, the traditionally family far outperforms the alternatives.

Now the first thing that a progressive will tell you is that adding more money from government social programs will solve the problem, so we just need to have more communism, and give the children to strangers at earlier ages. But the study corrects for socioeconomic factors. And demographic factors, too. So that deflection isn't going to work.

In previous posts on this blog, I have cited many other studies that show the unique importance of biological mothers and fathers to children's development. Normally, progressives snatch the blog post out of my hands, tear it into little pieces, throw the little pieces into the air, and then stomp on them. While screaming "hate speech" continuously throughout. But I don't really know of any other way to argue than to cite evidence. So we're stuck, I guess. We're stuck until we outlaw non-STEM degrees so that the only way to graduate college is by learning something useful like nursing or computer science. Then this crazy crying of "racism" and "sexism" and "homophobia" etc. at every piece of evidence will stop.

Yes, Karen, the rules of relationships really do apply to you. And speaking to the manager is not going to get you a "get out of the consequences of my reckless choices free" card. In point of fact, there is no such thing as a get out of the consequences of my reckless choices free card. You will just have to learn to make better decisions about who to have relationships with, and when to have sex with them. That is, if you care about your future children. My recommendation? Don't choose tall hawt atheist bad boys with tattoos, piercings, violent tempers, and criminal records. Do choose men with STEM degrees who don't drink, but who do read their Bibles and go to church. Things aren't really complicated, as long as you make decisions with your brain instead of your intuitions.

William Lane Craig explains the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement

April 10, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Probably one of the most common questions that you hear from people who don't fully understand Christianity is this question: "why did Jesus have to die?". The answer that most Christians seem to hold to is that 1) humans are rebelling against God, 2) Humans deserve punishment for their rebellion, 3) Humans cannot escape the punishment for their rebellion on their own, 4) Jesus was punished in the place of the rebellious humans, 5) Those who accept this sacrifice are forgiven for their rebelling.

Are humans rebellious?

Some people think that humans are not really rebellious at all, but it's actually easy to see. You can see it just by looking at how people spend their time. Some of us have no time for God at all, and instead try to fill our lives with material possessions and experiences in order to have happy feelings. Some of us embrace just the parts of God that make us feel happy, like church and singing and feelings of comfort, while avoiding the hard parts of that vertical relationship; reading, thinking and disagreeing with people who don't believe the truth about God. And so on.

This condition of being in rebellion is universal, and all of us are guilty of breaking the law at some point. All of us deserve to be separated from God's goodness and love. Even if we wanted to stop rebelling, we would not be able to make up for the times where we do rebel by being good at other times, any more than we could get out of a speeding ticket by appealing to the times when we drove at the speed limit, (something that I never do, in any case).

This is not to say that all sinners are punished equally – the degree of punishment is proportional to the sins a person commits. However, the standard is perfection. And

worse than that, the most important moral obligation is a *vertical* moral obligation. You can't satisfy the demands of the moral law just by making your neighbor happy, while treating God like a pariah. The first commandment is to love God, the second is to love your neighbor. Even loving your neighbor requires you to tell your neighbor the truth – not just to make them feel good. The *vertical* relationship is more important than the *horizontal* one, and we've all screwed up the vertical relationship. We all don't want God to be there, telling us what's best for us, interfering with our fun. We don't want to relate to a loving God if it means having to care what he thinks about anything that we are doing.

Who is going to pay for our rebellion?

The Christian answer to the problem of our rebellion is that Jesus takes the punishment we deserve in our place.

However, I've noticed that on some atheist blogs, they don't like the idea that someone else can take our punishment for us to exonerate us for crimes that we've committed. So I'll quote from this post by the great William Lane Craig, to respond to that objection.

Excerpt:

> The central problem of the Penal Theory is, as you point out, understanding how punishing a person other than the perpetrator of the wrong can meet the demands of justice. Indeed, we might even say that it would be wrong to punish some innocent person for the crimes I commit!
>
> It seems to me, however, that in other aspects of human life we do recognize this practice. I remember once sharing the Gospel with a businessman. When I explained that Christ had died to pay the penalty for our sins, he responded, "Oh, yes, that's imputation." I was stunned, as I never expected this theological concept to be familiar to this non-Christian businessman. When I asked him how he came to be familiar with this idea, he replied, "Oh, we use imputation all the time in the insurance business." He explained to me that certain sorts of insurance policy are written so that, for example, if someone else drives my car and gets in an accident, the responsibility is imputed to me rather than to the driver. Even though the driver behaved recklessly, I am the one held liable; it is just as if I had done it.
>
> Now this is parallel to substitutionary atonement. Normally I would be liable for the misdeeds I have done. But through my faith in Christ, I am, as it were, covered by his divine insurance policy, whereby he assumes the liability for my actions. My sin is imputed to him, and he pays its penalty. The demands of justice are fulfilled, just as they are in mundane affairs in which someone pays the penalty for something imputed to him. This is as literal a transaction as those that transpire regularly in the insurance industry.

So, it turns out that the doctrine of substitionary atonement is not as mysterious or as objectionable as everyone seems to think it is.

New study: As Christianity declines, so do stable relationships and marriage

April 11, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man and woman working on a computer upgrade together

Mark Regnerus is a sociologist at the University of Texas, Austin. He publishes a lot of his books with Oxford University Press. So, his research methods are generally seen as reliable. I noticed that he had done a survey of views on religion, sexuality and marriage in 2018, and he published a popular level article about it earlier this week. I think it's worth taking a look at his findings.

He writes:

> Let me offer a word about the survey. I call it the *American Political and Social Behavior* survey, which interviewed 5,285 Americans in November 2018, just days after the midterm election. The data collection was conducted by Ipsos… a research firm with a very strong record of generating high-quality data for academic projects.

Here are his findings:

Characteristics of the Unreligious in 2018 and 2015, compared with Catholics and Evangelicals (in 2018)

	Unreligious in 2018	Unreligious in 2015	Catholics in 2018	Evangelicals in 2018
Percentage of the population	20.3%	14.6%	23.8%	9.5%
Average age	37.8	37.7	41.3	42.0
Female	40%	40%	53%	49%
Married	49%	48%	58%	67%
Married (among 20-29-year-olds only)	22%	20%	19%	37%
Cohabiting	13%	13%	9%	3%
Cohabiting (among 20-29-year-olds only)	23%	17%	18%	9%
Ever been divorced	16%	15%	17%	21%
Average number of biological children	1.0	0.8	1.5	1.8
Intact family of origin	62%	61%	69%	68%
Loving atmosphere in family of origin (% agrees)	67%	59%	75%	77%
Ever cheat on current spouse or partner?	14%	12%	13%	9%
Self-identifies as 100% Heterosexual (women)	66%	71%	92%	96%
Self-identifies as 100% Heterosexual (men)	83%	84%	90%	95%
Self-identifies as 100% Homosexual (women)	2%	2%	0.4%	0%
Self-identifies as 100% Homosexual (men)	6%	7%	4%	1%
Average freq of sex in past 2 weeks (among married)	2.0	2.2	2.5	2.5
Marriage is outdated (% agrees)	24%	20%	10%	2%
Cohabitation is okay (% agrees)	78%	70%	55%	19%
No-strings-attached sex is okay (% agrees)	80%	71%	43%	14%
Sometimes extramarital sex can be okay (% agrees)	24%	18%	10%	3%
Polyamorous relationships are okay (% agrees)	58%	43%	19%	6%
Supports abortion rights	80%	76%	39%	14%
Teen hormonal/surgical transition okay (% agrees)	47%	---	26%	4%

Source: *American Political and Social Behavior* survey, Americans age 20-60.

Views of unreligious, Catholic and evangelical Americans (click to expand)

This is interesting:

> Even when I limit the group to respondents below age thirty—which is just north of the median age at marriage in the United States—it is notable that 22 percent of the unreligious are married and 23 percent are currently cohabiting, not radically different from the 19 and 18 percent of Catholics that are married and cohabiting, respectively. For comparison, 37 and 9 percent of younger evangelicals are married and cohabiting, respectively. The cohabiting habits of the unreligious, however, have shifted—note the uptick in cohabitation—six percentage points in just under four years. That amounts to a 35 percent increase. **Since it's unlikely that the unreligious have recently changed their minds about the morality or pragmatics of living together, my bet is in the other direction: cohabiting leads many to no longer identify as religious at all.**

Got that part in bold? Their attitudes are changing because of their sexual behaviors. So, if you want to reverse the decline of Christianity, we're going to need to come up with some arguments and evidence to counter the sexual revolution. And on this blog, we've done that many times, looking at studies showing the future instability of marriages that occur after cohabitation. I've never heard a church preach on that, though. And it's not something that even many Christian apologists focus on. Most Christian apologists, particularly the women, tend to focus on soft arguments,. They stay away from arguments about morality, because it's divisive and abrasive to their desired audience. However, if the goal is persuading people that Christianity is a viable worldview, then we need to focus more on sexuality.

More Regnerus:

> [O]n each of seven attitude measures I examined, the unreligious are notably more permissive than even the spiritual-but-not-religious (not shown). Nearly 80 percent of unreligious Americans agree (or strongly agree) that cohabitation is okay, no-strings-attached sex is okay, and abortion should be a legal right. This is all unsurprising. But even some of the more radically "progressive" attitudes demonstrate strong support among the unreligious: 24 percent agree that it is "sometimes permissible for a married person to have sex with someone other than his/her spouse." (I thought perhaps women would differ from men here, but they didn't—or at least not by much.) Although few Americans are actually in polyamorous living arrangements, the unreligious would support them should someone choose such an arrangement; 58 percent of them agreed that "it is okay for three or more consenting adults to live together in a sexual/romantic relationship," a percentage that is far more supportive than Catholics or evangelicals. Among the latter, only 6 percent thinks polyamory could be okay.
>
> A more interesting theme, however, is the surge in support for such alternatives. On each statement, note the rise in agreement that has occurred in just under four years. Polyamory tops the list—a 35-percent leap in the share of unreligious who now endorse polyamorous arrangements (from 43 to 58 percent). Even support for extramarital affairs grew by one-third (from 18 to 24 percent). The unreligious aren't alone here. Catholics, too, have witnessed liberalization in attitudes. Evangelical numbers display a more modest uptick, and from lower starting points.

The non-religious people in my office who were raised Christian like to tell me that the existence of the Christian God isn't important to them, because they can achieve marriage via cohabitation, and behave like good people without the need for any sort of framework to rationally ground it. They think that you can just pull out God, and the marriage will stay the same. They expect the people they start relationships with to act on Christian morality, even if the worldview was rejected as superstitious nonsense. But as you can see from the data, removing God has an enormous effect on the person's ability to be stable and faithful. The truth is that when you take out the vertical relationships with God, then the blueprint for the relationship becomes completely different. Relationships used to be seen as an enterprise where each person's primary commitment was to lead and protect their spouse before delivering them to God with faith intact. Now, relationships are contingent on continuous happiness.

More Regnerus:

> Only 66 percent of unreligious women say they are "100% Despite the permissive reputation of the unreligious, their actual *marital* sexual frequency is lower than that of Catholic and evangelical couples—at two instances in the past two weeks. As has been documented extensively in the past few years, the frequency of sex among American couples—whether cohabiting or married—has

> been declining at statistically significant rates. This pattern has not spared the godless.

I think this is interesting. I believe that men are facing an epidemic of sex-withholding from their wives, and I have an idea why that is. Today, women most commonly use sex to “jump start” a relationship with men who they perceive as “high value”, but who refuse to commit to them. This behavior is not focused on men who have commitment abilities, e.g. – provider, moral leader, spiritual leader, accurate worldview rooted in logic and evidence. Instead, most women use sex to get men who have the appearance of high value, e.g. – tall, tattoos, piercings, violent tendencies, exciting, fun, etc. Having established that pattern over and over with no-commitment bad boys, they marry someone who they see as beneath them, and then withhold sex. Commitment isn’t worthy of sex. It’s the man’s appearance and entertainment value that makes him worthy of sex. The comparison of this low-quality man to previous partners makes women more likely to initiate divorce for “unhappiness” later on.

Why do so many atheist historians think that 1 Corinthians 15 is reliable history?

April 12, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

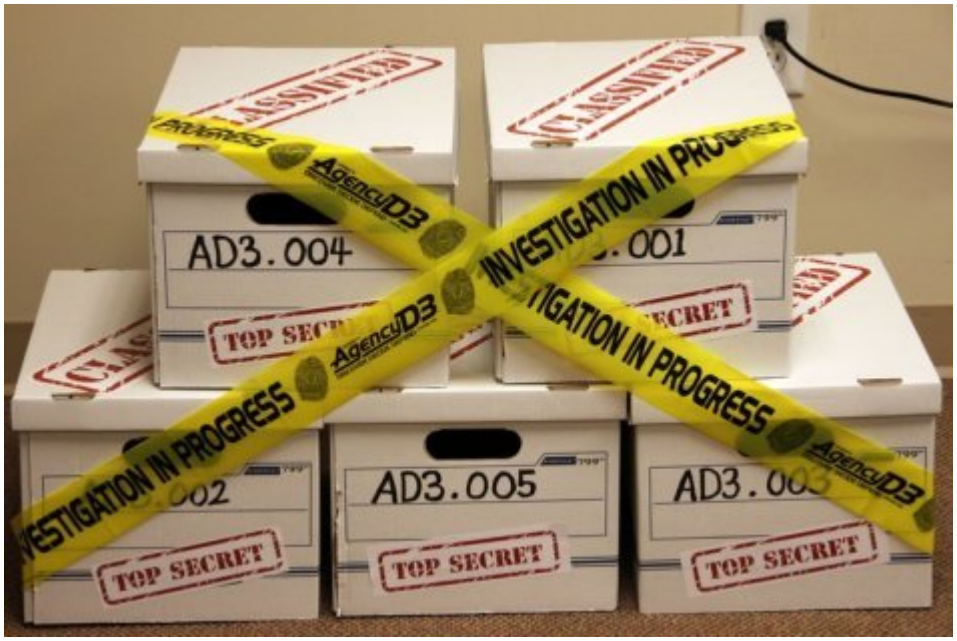

Investigation in progress

Which passage of the Bible is the favorite of Christians who like to defend the Christian worldview? I don't mean which one is most inspirational… I mean "which one is the most useful for winning arguments?" Well, when it comes to the historical Jesus, the most important passage has to be 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

The tradition in 1 Corinthians 15 is an early creed that was received from the eyewitnesses Peter and John when Paul visited them several times in Jerusalem, as documented in Galatians 1 and 2, where Paul meets the eyewitnesses. And of course, Paul records his own eyewitness experience, documented in 1 Cor 15:8.

So, is this passage accepted as historically reliable by all ancient historians? Or only by the Bible-believing ones?

Here's something posted by Dr. William Lane Craig about the 1 Corinthians 15 passage:

> The evidence that Paul is not writing in his own hand in I Cor. 15.3-5 is so powerful that all New Testament scholars recognize that Paul is here passing on a prior tradition. In addition to the fact that Paul explicitly says as much, the passage is replete with non-Pauline characteristics, including, in order of appearance: (i) the phrase "for our sins" using the genitive case and plural noun is unusual for Paul; (ii) the phrase "according to the Scriptures" is unparalleled in Paul, who introduces Scriptural citations by "as it is written"; (iii) the perfect passive verb "has been raised" appears only in this chapter and in a pre-Pauline confessional formula in II Tim. 2.8; (iv) the phrase "on the third day" with its ordinal number following the noun in Greek is non-Pauline; (v) the word

> “appeared” is found only here and in the confessional formula in I Tim. 3.16; and (vi) “the Twelve” is not Paul’s nomenclature, for he always speaks of the twelve disciples as “the apostles.”
>
> Now the visit during which Paul may have received this tradition is the visit you mention three years after his conversion on the road to Damascus (Gal. 1.18). This puts the tradition back to within the first five years after Jesus’ death in AD 30. So there’s not even an apparent inconsistency with Paul’s appropriating the language of the formula to encapsulate the Gospel he was already preaching during those first three years in Damascus.

Ancient historian Gary Habermas loves to read non-Christian scholars… and then he writes about what THEY think about Jesus in peer-reviewed articles, published in academic journals. Let’s look at this one: *Dialog: A Journal of Theology, Vol. 45; No. 3 (Fall, 2006), pp. 288-297; published by Blackwell Publishing, UK.*

He writes:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: “However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul’s.”[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul’s own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: “It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition.”[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]

This is important:

> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the

> brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

He's an eyewitness (verse 8), and he met with the other eyewitnesses, James and Peter. 1 Corinthians is early. Galatians is early. The creed is extremely early – right after the events occurred. There was no time for legends to develop.

And atheistic / critical historians agree, the creed is reliable:

> Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]
>
> Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]
>
> Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.
>
> (3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]
>
> These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially

> given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.
>
> (4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

Now, some of the people he lists are really biased against the supernatural, and they really hate the idea that the claims of Christianity exclude other religions. And yet they don't deny the historical reliability of 1 Corinthians 15, or that it is based on eyewitness testimony.

That's why when you watch debates about the historical Jesus, you see skeptical historians like Bart Ehrman, Gerd Ludemann, James Crossley, Michael Goulder, etc. accepting that the disciples thought they saw Jesus after his death. They're not just being nice to Dr. Craig when they give him that. They are forced to accept it, because it passes the historical tests. Every Christian ought to be aware of which passages of the New Testament are seen by the broad spectrum of ancient historians as "historical", regardless of their various biases. You can believe everything in the Bible. But when you debate non-Christians, you have to use the historical core of Christianity which successfully passes historical analysis.

You can see the creed used as evidence in the debate between James Crossley and William Lane Craig.

Bombshell: FBI knew that Steele dossier contained Russian disinformation

April 13, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama and his corrupt ally in the FBI

Previously, I blogged about how the Steele dossier that was used to get permission to spy on the Trump campaign was paid for by Democrats. The latest news is that the Steele dossier contained Russian disinformation. So, instead of Trump colluding with Russians, it was actually the Democrats colluding with Russians to get a fake dossier to allow spying on the Trump campaign.

Here's the latest from the Daily Caller:

> At some point in 2017, the precise month is not clear, the FBI obtained evidence that Russian operatives fed disinformation to former British spy Christopher Steele.
>
> That stunning revelation came on Friday, and not through a leak, as did so many of the anti-Trump and pro-Steele stories that have come out since the dossier was published in January 2017.
>
> Instead, the disclosure was the product of an intense GOP-led fact-finding campaign to force U.S. intelligence officials to declassify information that the FBI had on Steele and his notorious dossier.
>
> Sens. Chuck Grassley and Ron Johnson, the two Republicans who jogged loose the new information, noted the disparity in the type of information that has leaked out of the Trump-Russia investigation in the three-plus years since it began.
>
> "For years, the public was fed a healthy diet of leaks, innuendo and false information to imply that President Trump and his campaign were part of a Russian conspiracy to spread disinformation," they said in a statement upon the release of three footnotes from the Justice Department inspector general's (IG)

> report on the FBI's surveillance of the Trump campaign.
>
> The previously-classified footnotes said that an organization not identified in the IG report provided the FBI evidence that Russian operatives fed disinformation that wound up in the dossier.
>
> The disclosure is another stunning blow to the reputation of the FBI, which made Steele's dossier a "central and essential" component of its surveillance warrants against Carter Page.

Actually, the Steele dossier was the ONLY source for the FISA warrant that allowed the Obama administration to spy on the Trump campaign.

Now I want to review who paid for the Steele dossier that contained Russian disinformation.

The far-left Washington Post explains:

> The Hillary Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee helped fund research that resulted in a now-famous dossier containing allegations about President Trump's connections to Russia and possible coordination between his campaign and the Kremlin, people familiar with the matter said.
>
> Marc E. Elias, a lawyer representing the Clinton campaign and the DNC, retained Fusion GPS, a Washington firm, to conduct the research.
>
> After that, Fusion GPS hired dossier author Christopher Steele, a former British intelligence officer with ties to the FBI and the U.S. intelligence community, according to those people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.
>
> Elias and his law firm, Perkins Coie, retained the company in April 2016 on behalf of the Clinton campaign and the DNC. Before that agreement, Fusion GPS's research into Trump was funded by an unknown Republican client during the GOP primary.
>
> The Clinton campaign and the DNC, through the law firm, continued to fund Fusion GPS's research through the end of October 2016, days before Election Day.

The FBI and DOJ didn't tell the FISA court about who was funding the Steele dossier when they applied for the warrant. Because if they had, they would have been denied the warrant. No FISA court would approve surveillance of the Republican party if the sole basis for the warrant was uncorroborated opposition research funded by the Democrat party. In order to get the FISA warrant, the request had to be written in such a way that the funding of the Steele dossier was not revealed, and Steele was not declared to be the source of the news articles used as corroborating evidence.

CNN and MSNBC cut off Democrat governors praising Trump's handling of virus crisis

April 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you see Trump's briefing on Monday night about the Wuhan virus? He was able to show a timeline of his responses to the virus, as well as clips of various Democrat governors praising his handling of the crisis. He also had tons of good news to report, and re-affirmed his intention to re-open the country at the beginning of May. But CNN and MSNBC were not pleased.

Here's the 4-minute video that Trump showed that got him into trouble with the Democrat journalists:

The Daily Wire explains:

> President Donald Trump played a video during the White House Coronavirus Press Briefing on Monday that showed the media's initial response to the coronavirus outbreak and highlighted his response to the outbreak and showed Democratic governors around the country praising the Trump administration for the work they did.
>
> […]The video highlighted the following comments from governors across the country. Here are a few of the examples included in the video:
>
> - New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (D): "His team is on it. They've been responsive late at night, early in the morning and they've thus far been doing everything they can do and I want to say thank you and I want to say that I appreciate it.
> - California Governor Gavin Newsom (D): "He returns calls. He reaches out, he's been proactive. We could that Mercy ship down here in Los Angeles, that was directly because he sent it down here. 2,000 medical units came to the state of California, these FMS, these field medical stations, and that's been very, very helpful.
> - Florida Governor Ron DeSantis (R): "The president has been outstanding through all this, the vice president has been outstanding, members of the Coronavirus Task Force, very responsive."
> - New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy (D): "We had asked if we could have, if New Jersey could access to a piece of the beds that are on the USNS Comfort and the president came back, called me, assured me a few minutes before I walked in here to say that they would grant that to New Jersey. So that's big step for us in addition to all the other capacity. I thank the president and vice president who were on the call."
>
> CNN cut away from the press conference shortly after the video started playing

> and MSNBC followed suit several moments later.

And here's what CNN had on before cutting away, when Trump was explaining all the things that everyone (nurses, doctors, Army Corps of Engineers, etc.) were doing to solve the actual problem:

You won't be able to get an accurate view of the world if you watch CNN and MSNBC. They can't tell you anything that makes Trump look competent. They can only tell you things that make Trump look incompetent. And they'll even lie, in order to do the latter.

I noticed that the mainstream media is bashing Trump for not taking the virus seriously, but the fact is that he took action to ban incoming flights from China at the end of January. Dr. Fauci didn't even think there was a problem as late as the end of Fenbruary – which is not an insult at all, because that's how things looked based on what we knew at that time.

The Daily Wire explains:

> Even Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, who has served under three Republican and three Democrat presidents, apparently did not realize the threat of coronavirus as he said on February 29 that the virus did not pose a significant threat to Americans.
>
> Fauci was asked on NBC News, "Dr. Fauci, it's Saturday morning in America. People are waking up right now with real concerns about this; they want to go to malls and movies, maybe the gym as well. Should we be changing our habits, and if so, how?"
>
> Fauci responded, "No. Right now, at this moment, there is no need to change anything that you're doing on a day-by-day basis. Right now the risk is still low,

> but this could change; I've said that many times, even on this program. You've gotta watch out because although the risk is low now, you don't need to change anything that you're doing. When you start to see community spread, this could change and force you to become much more attentive to doing things that would protect you from spread."

Far-left "journalists" are trying to make it look like Trump doesn't listen to Dr. Fauci or the other scientific experts, but Dr. Fauci says that's not true:

I think it's important for everyone to understand that the mainstream media is in league with the Democrat party, and they are constantly lying and distorting the truth in order to get their boy Joe Biden into the White House in November. (And they don't care that he's been credibly accused of sexual assault, any more than they care about the credible allegations of rape against their boy Bill Clinton).

It's almost time for the campaign to start. Get yourself lawn sign, make a donation, volunteer your time, share stories on social media, etc. Whatever it takes to stop these secular leftist fascists.

NY Times deletes tweet about sexual assault after Biden campaign complains

April 15, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The New York Times
@nytimes

No other allegation about sexual assault surfaced in the course of our reporting, nor did any former Biden staff corroborate Reade's allegation. We found no pattern of sexual misconduct by Biden, beyond hugs, kisses and touching that women previously said made them uncomfortable

5:39 AM · Apr 12, 2020 · Twitter Web App

497 Retweets **1K** Likes

I wanted to get the facts on the woman who has accused Democrat presidential candidate Joe Biden of sexual assault. I have a rule such that I don't believe women who make accusations without involving the police. But this accuser has involved the police, and she also has many, many witnesses. After we get the facts, we'll see how Democrats in news media are protecting their boy Biden.

This article from Current Affairs had a pretty good description of what we know about the accuser:

> And I remember he just had me up against the wall and the wall was cold. It happened all at once. The gym bag, I don't know where it went. I handed it to him. It was gone and then his hands were on me and underneath my clothes. And then he went down my skirt, but then up inside it and he penetrated me with his fingers. And he was kissing me at the same time and he was saying something to me. He said several things, I can't remember everything he said. I remember a couple of things. I remember him saying first before, like as he was doing it, "do you want to go somewhere else?" And then him saying to me when I pulled away, when he got finished doing what he was doing and I pulled back and he said, "come on man, I heard you liked me." And it's that phrase [that] stayed with me because I kept thinking what I might've said [to make him think that]. And I can't remember exactly, if he said "I *thought,"* or "I *heard*," but it's like he implied I had done this.

A different Current Affairs article reports that groups that help women who allege sexual assault won't help Reade.

> According to a report by the Intercept, in January of this year Reade approached Time's Up, a project of the National Women's Law Center designed to provide legal and public relations assistance to sexually abused women. Time's Up declined to help Reade… Notably, the PR firm that Time's Up uses to help publicize women's stories, SKDKnickerbocker, is run by Anita Dunne, a senior adviser to Joe Biden.

The article notes that "believe all women" writers from Salon and Jezebel don't believe this woman. I'm surprised they didn't slut-shame her or mansplain to her that rape is OK for Democrats.

If you only watch CNN or MSNBC to get news, then you still haven't even heard about the story.

Fox News explains:

> For 18 days… Reade's claim was not covered by the biggest media outlets… CNN, MSNBC and the three broadcast networks did not offer any on-air coverage or articles on their websites about the alleged assault. The New York Times and The Washington Post, two papers that dedicated extensive reporting to sex assault allegations made against Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh in 2018, were also mum on the matter.
>
> In addition, in seven televised interviews Biden has done since Reade came forward with her allegation, he was never asked about it. This includes three interviews on MSNBC, two appearances on CNN and appearances on the Sunday morning news shows on ABC and NBC. Prominent anchors like Anderson Cooper, Chuck Todd and George Stephanopoulos never questioned the presumptive Democratic nominee, instead focusing on the pandemic and President Trump's handling of the crisis.

The New York Times wrote a report about the accusation but they had to remove anything damaging to Biden from their report.

Fox News reports:

> The Times raised eyebrows on Sunday after it deleted a tweet and tweaked its report about the 1993 accusation made by former Biden staffer Tara Reade, which originally read, "No other allegation about sexual assault surfaced in the course of reporting, nor did any former Biden staff members corroborate any details of Ms. Reade's allegation. The Times found no pattern of sexual misconduct by Mr. Biden, beyond the hugs, kisses and touching that women previously said made them uncomfortable."
>
> No correction or editor's note was made in the report…

Why was the report modified to cover for Biden?

> On Monday, Times media columnist Ben Smith sat down with his boss to discuss the report and pressed him on several criticisms of the report, including the edit.
>
> "I want to ask about some edits that were made after publication, the deletion of the second half of the sentence… Why did you do that?" Smith asked.
>
> "…I think that the campaign thought that the phrasing… made it look like there were other instances in which he had been accused of sexual misconduct…" Baquet responded.

I can imagine that if the mainstream media "journalists" were present during the Biden sexual assault, they would have cheered him on. "Hold her down and force yourself into her body! We'll lie about it later to cover for you, don't worry! She's just a stupid, weak female employee!"

Now, if you ask the journalists who write the newspapers and talk on TV, they will all say "we shouldn't believe her because she's accusing a Democrat" or "you have to let Democrat men rape because we don't want to lose abortion and gay marriage". Remember, this is the party that voted for Bill Clinton. Harvey Weinstein was celebrated by Democrat politicians for his many, many donations to the Democrat party. Jeffrey Epstein gave huge donations to Democrat candidates, and Democrat politicians loved him too. They don't have a problem with rape, when it's their guy doing the raping.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about spending, saving and charity

April 16, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

A practical lecture on money – spending, saving, charitable giving – from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

I like the way that Wayne Grudem navigates the Bible finding the passages that tell you who God is, so that you can make better decisions by analyzing alternatives and choosing the one that gives your Boss a maximum return on investment. He's very practical.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Spending:

- Christianity does not teach asceticism (= don't enjoy anything in this world), Paul condemns it in 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- When you buy nice things, even if it is a little more expensive, it's an opportunity to be thankful for nice things that God has provided
- Even being rich is OK, but don't let it make you haughty and arrogant, and don't set your hopes on your money (see 1 Tim 6:17)
- It is important for you to earn money, and you are supposed to use it to support yourself and be independent
- It is possible to overspend and live recklessly (Luke 15:13) and it's also possible to overspend and live too luxuriously
- *Increasing your income through career progression is wise*, because it allows you to give away more and save more

- God gives us freedom to decide how much we spend, how much we give away, and how much we save
- every choice a Christian makes with money will give him or her more or less reward in his or her afterlife
- Do not spend more than you have – you should make every effort to get out of debt as quickly as possible

Saving:

- Saving money is wise so you can help yourself and others, and have money in your old age when you will not be working
- If you do not save your own money, you end up being dependent on others (e.g. – family or taxpayers)
- Not saving money for the future is a way of "putting God to the test" (Matt 4:7)
- You are to "be dependent on no one", to the extent that you can (1 Thes 4:12)
- We don't know the future, that's why we should prepare for an emergency, and buy insurance to guard (James 4:13-17)
- It's right for us to learn how to save to be able to buy bigger assets, like a car or a college education
- Saving and investing in stocks and bonds lets people in business start and grow companies, creating jobs and new products
- *Don't over-save, trusting too much in money more than you trust in God* (Ps 62.10; Matt 6:19,24; Luke 12:15-21)

Giving:

- it is required for the people of God to give something out of what they earn, but no percentage is specified (Deut 26:12-13)
- you do not give money to become right with God, you can't earn your salvation
- *a Christian gives to show God that you trust him to take care of you, and to experience trusting him through your giving*
- the quality of your resurrection life with God is affected by giving you do for the Kingdom (Phil 4, Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:18-19)
- when you get involved in the lives of others and give to them, you have the joy of experiencing caring for others (Acts 20:35)
- it's possible to give too little, but it's also possible to give too much – be careful about pride creeping in as well

The first part of this lecture made me think of my treat for the week, which is to get a double chicken burrito bowl after my weight lifting. It is very easy to say grace when you are hovering over a double chicken burrito bowl. It is good to have nice things especially when it makes you thankful for what you have.

I was so happy listening to this talk because he was condemning bad stewardship, which I see in a lot of young people these days. I was happy until he got to the part about

trusting in your savings for your security, and then I thought – that's what I do wrong! I save a lot but it's not just for emergencies and to share with others, like he was saying – I want a sense of security. This was more of a temptation in my 20s than it is now in my 30s, though.

Charity should hurt

I can remember being in my first full-time job as a newly hired junior programmer when the 2001 recession struck. I would cry while signing checks to support William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith ministry, because I was so scared. I had no family or friends where I lived to help me if anything went wrong, and that's been the story of my working life. If anything goes wrong, there is no backup. But it's that experience of crying when I gave that allows me to say today "that's when I became the man I am, that's what a man does when he is a follower of Jesus". If you are not doing the actions of charity, then you will not having the experience of trusting God and letting him lead you. There is more to the Christian life than just saying the right things – you have to do the right things.

Don't follow your heart

If you're scared about giving when you are young, then do what I did in my 20s: work 70-hour weeks, get promoted often, and save everything you earn. I volunteered every Saturday for 9 months in order to get my first white-collar part-time job when I was still in high-school. The faster you increase your savings, the easier it's going to be to take a *genuine interest* in caring for the people around you. Read Phil 1 (fellowship), Phil 2 (concern for others), and Phil 4 (charity). Turn off your emotions and desires when it comes to choosing what to study and what work to do, and put Philippians into practice. Your freedom to give is very much tied to the quality of your decisions of what to study, where to work, how much you spend on entertainment, and so on. That's why you need to turn off your feelings and desires and do what works, even it it's not fun, and even if it involves responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

New study: the majority (69%) of divorces are initiated by women

April 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this "I'll do what I want" attitude compatible with life-long married love?
This new report from Live Science gives us some numbers about who initiates divorces most frequently.

It says:

> Women are more likely than men to initiate divorce in the United States, but they are no more likely than men to initiate breakups in a dating relationship, a new study finds.
>
> "The breakups of nonmarital heterosexual relationships in the U.S. are quite gender-neutral and fairly egalitarian," study author Michael Rosenfeld, an associate professor of sociology at Stanford University, said in a statement. "This was a surprise because the only prior research that had been done on who wanted the breakup was research on marital divorces."
>
> Previous research had found that women are more likely to initiate divorce, at least in the United States, Europe and Australia. In the new study, Rosenfeld compared divorces to nonmarital breakups, in an effort to understand the driving forces behind each type of breakup.
>
> To investigate, he looked at data from the 2009 to 2015 waves of How Couples Meet and Stay Together, a nationally representative survey spearheaded by Rosenfeld and his colleagues. The new study includes 2,262 adults, ages 19 to 64, who reported having opposite-sex partners in 2009. By 2015, 371 of the participants had broken up or gotten divorced.

> Women initiated 69 percent of the 92 divorces, Rosenfeld found. But there was no statistically significant difference between women and men when it came to nonmarital breakups, regardless of whether they were living together, he said.

The Ruth Institute reports on a few studies:

> Female unions seem to have the highest divorce rates, followed by male unions, followed by opposite sex unions.
>
> "For Sweden, the divorce risk for partnerships of men is 50% higher than the risk for heterosexual marriages, and that **the divorce risk for female partnerships is nearly double that for men."**
>
> "For Norway, **divorce risks are 77% higher in lesbian partnerships than in those of gay men."** (The Norwegian data did not include a comparison with opposite sex couples.)
>
> In California, the data is collected a little differently. The study looks at couples who describe themselves as partners, whether same sex or opposite sex. The study asks the question, how likely is it that these couples live in the same household five years later. **Male couples were only 30% as likely, while female couples were less that 25% as likely, as heterosexual married couples, to be residing in the same household for five years.**

It really seems as if there is something about women in particular that causes them to be unable to keep to commitments *in their actions*, despite what they might say *with their words*.

So I am seeing a couple of problems in young, unmarried women that might explain this.

Feminism is bad

First, there is the feminism. Feminism was the driving force behind no-fault divorce. Today, young unmarried women are being taught to view marriage as stifling to their freedom. So if they do get married, they are often resolved that marriage should not affect their freedom in any way. That is just not the way marriage works, though – both spouses need to be equally ready to have their freedom infringed upon by things that HAVE TO GET DONE. Lots of things that have to get done will not be fun, thrilling or amusing – and that's why it's good to be prepared to do them before you marry.

My friend Dina says that she only knows one happily married couple from among her friends. The most frequent case she sees is wife is working in order to pay for big house, two cars, etc. and wife is denying husband sex, which makes him disengage from the marriage. A working wife tends to not be as responsive to the needs of husband and kids as a non-working wife, probably in part due to work stress. There is an epidemic of sex-withholding by women, and it causes men to disengage from marriage because they feel unloved. Although women tend to rebel against the idea that the man's bad behavior is their fault, and that there is a "contractual" nature to marriage, that is how marriage works. You cannot stay married, women, by just doing whatever you feel like, and NOT

doing whatever you DON’T feel like. Men will disengage when their needs are not supplied, and that’s no fault of theirs. It’s your fault. Denying relationship obligations causes men to underperform.

Feminism is often linked closely to “independence”. There is a lot of confusion over what the word independence means among young, unmarried women. A man uses that word to mean “lack of financial dependence on parents, the state, etc. because of good decisions in education, career and finances”. But a woman means “not having to care about the needs of a man and the leadership of a man, or the needs of children while still getting what I want from men and children”. That attitude is not compatible with life-long married love.

Emotions are bad

Second, emotions. In my experience, young, unmarried women are less likely to have reasoned out their own life plan in a practical step-by-step manner. Instead, they tend to do whatever makes them feel good moment-by-moment without any realistic plan. One Christian woman was recently telling me how attracted she was to an atheist moral relativist who had been promiscuous from the age of 15. She explained that her emotions were kindled by his GQ looks, 6-pack abs, mysterious European accent, seductive manner and witty conversations. Although she is apparently a Christian, she doesn’t take Christianity seriously in her decisions about relationships and marriage.

Peer-approval and culture play a large part in determining what women think is attractive in a man, as well as their life goals, and women are driven by these cultural standards more than men who focus on honoring their commitments *regardless* of their emotions. In my experience, women struggle to make their day-to-day actions match their socially-acceptable goal of getting married “some day”. Marriage is for “some day” for today’s busy women, but fun and thrills is for today. “Live in the moment”, they often tell me. If you try to talk to them about roles and responsibilities in a marriage, they will withdraw and rebel. But marriage is about each spouse doing his or her job, and feeling content about what the couple is building together. You can’t make life-long married love from emotional craziness and pursuing fun and thrills with seductive promiscuous moral relativist atheists.

How to pick a woman who won’t divorce you

Young men, I advise you to choose wives who have had to do things that they did not feel like doing. That can involve things like getting a STEM degree, getting a job in STEM, moving out of her parents’ house, getting a “boring” job that helps her pay off her debts, keeping commitments when she doesn’t feel like it, and caring for other people and even animals.

Basically, the more the woman has ground down any narcissism and hedonism she may have, by having to do nasty calculus and horrid lab work, the better. The more accustomed she is to constraints, responsibilities, expectations and obligations, the less likely it is that she’ll divorce you for unhappiness. And all of this goes for men, as well. STEM degree, STEM job, save money, serve others, give to charity.

Marriage is not the time for people to be carried away by their emotions. It’s an enterprise, and it works when both people are rational, practical, hard-working and self-controlled.

The Wintery Knight’s favorite Bible verses

April 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Dina asked me to post my favorite Bible verses, so here are 8 of my favorites.

Psalm 27:14:

> [11] Teach me Your way, O Lord,
> And lead me in a level path
> Because of my foes.
>
> [12] Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries,
> For false witnesses have risen against me,
> And such as breathe out violence.
>
> [13] *I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord
> In the land of the living.
>
> **[14] Wait for the Lord;**
> **Be strong and let your heart take courage;**
> **Yes, wait for the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**
>
> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.
>
> [5] Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men's* hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

Matthew 5:13:

> 10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
>
> 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
>
> **13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**
>
> 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
>
> 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

2 Timothy 2:4:

> 1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
>
> [2] The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
>
> [3] Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[4] No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.**
>
> [5] Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

Daniel 3:18:

> [13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.
>
> [14] Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?
>
> [15] Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will

> immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?”
>
> [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.
>
> [17] If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire;and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
>
> **[18] But *even* if *He does* not,let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”**

Esther 4:14:

> [10] Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai:
>
> [11] “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.”
>
> [12] They related Esther’s words to Mordecai.
>
> [13] Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> **[14] For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”**

Philippians 1:9:

> [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> [4] always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> [5] in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> [6] *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> [7] For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
>
> [8] For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> [10] so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

> [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Numbers 13:30:

> [25] When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,
>
> [26] they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.
>
> [27] Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.
>
> [28] Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.
>
> [29] Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."
>
> **[30] Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it."**

If you have a favorite Bible verse or two, post them in the comments.

William Lane Craig debates atheist Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?

April 18, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here is the video from the third debate from Dr. William Lane Craig's speaking tour in Australia.

Format:

- William Lane Craig (15 min)
- Lawrence Krauss (15 min, but was actually 21:40)
- Moderated discussion
- Question and answer

Dr. Graham Oppy, the moderator, is a well-known atheist philosopher. He let Dr. Krauss speak for 21 minutes and 40 seconds, which is why my summary of Krauss is so long.

The video:

Summary

After careful consideration, I decided not to be snarky at all in this summary. What you read below is what happened. There may be some small mistakes, but I will fix those if people tell me about them. I also included some quotes and timestamps for the more striking things that Dr. Krauss said.

The debate itself starts at 4:50 with Dr. Craig's opening speech. He does use slides to show the structure of his arguments.

Dr. Craig's opening speech. (4:50)

1. The kalam cosmological argument:
    - God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe
    - The Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem supports the absolute beginning of the universe
    - Even if our universe is part of a multiverse, the multiverse itself would have to have an absolute beginning
    - Speculative cosmologies try to challenge the Big Bang theory, but none of them – even if true – can establish that the past is eternal
    - Only two types of things could explain the origin of spece, time, matter and energy – either abstract objects or minds
    - Abstract objects do not cause effects, but minds do cause effects (we do it ourselves)
    - A mind is the best explanation for the origin of the universe
2. The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
    - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
    - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
    - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
    - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see
3. The cosmic fine-tuning for the existence of intelligent life
    - There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) cosmological constants and 2) quantities
    - These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life
    - There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design
    - Law is rejected because they are put in at the beginning or matter – they don't emerge from matter
    - Chance must be rejected, because they odds are just too long unless you appeal to a world-ensemble
    - We do not observe what the world ensemble hypothesis predicts that we should observe
    - Design is the best explanation for finely-tuned constants and quantities
4. The existence of objective moral values and duties
    - Our experience of morality (values and duties) is that it is objectively real and incumbent on us
    - When someone goes into a classroom and shoots at innocent children, that is objectively wrong
    - On naturalism, moral values and moral duties do not exist – they are conventional and variable by time and place
    - The best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties is that God exists

5. The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus
    - There are three widely-accepted facts that are best explained by the resurrection hypothesis
    - 1) the empty tomb, 2) the post-mortem appearances, 3) the early church's belief in the resurrection
    - Naturalistic attempts to explain these 3 boilerplate facts fail
    - The best explanation of the 3 minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead
6. The immediate experience of God
    - Belief in God is a "properly basic" belief – rational even without arguments because of experience of God

Dr. Krauss' opening speech. (21:12)

Slides: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

1. Religious pluralism I
    - There have been lots of different gods created by people through history
    - We've gotten rid of all of them by understanding how the universe works by doing science
    - Religion is just stories, and the stories are inconsistent with how the universe works
2. Progress of naturalistic science I
    - Newtonian physics refutes the idea that angels push planets around
    - Darwinian evolution refutes design arguments, including the one that Dr. Craig presented (24:10)
    - Biochemistry hasn't explained how life originated, but we will have the solution soon
    - Physics shows us that matter can be created and destroyed without need a God
    - Physics shows us that universes can be created and destroyed "no problem"
3. Religious pluralism II
    - Since we have been able to disprove all the gods we've invented, why hang on to the last one
    - It's unlikely that the God that Dr. Craig presented exists, because we disproved all the others he didn't present
4. Hiddenness of God
    - There is a complete lack of evidence for the other 999 gods, so how likely is it that the God Dr. Craig presented exists
5. Religious pluralism III
    - There are inconsistencies between various religions, so therefore there can be no religion that is right
6. Progress of naturalistic science II
    - Peasants had a very low level of knowledge about the world and they believed

in God
    - But our level of knowledge has increased over time, so we shouldn't believe in God now
    - Peasants thought that the Earth orbited the Sun, but this is now known to be false
    - The Scriptures said that the Earth orbited the Sun, but now we know that's false from science
7. Christianity plagiarizes from other religions I
    - There is nothing new or special about Jesus
    - He's just as unpleasant as all the other gods
    - Everything particular to Jesus occurs in other religions
8. Catholics are inconsistent about what they believe
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in transubstantiation
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in the virgin birth
9. The resurrection is copied from many other religions
    - Dionysus, Osiris, etc.
10. There is no evidence for the resurrection
    - The stories about Jesus were written "decades or hundreds of years after the fact"
    - The stories are inconsistent with each other
    - Dr. Craig tells me that historical Jesus scholars all accept that the resurrection happened
    - That's like saying that all alien abductions experts agree that alien abductions happened
    - It's unreasonable to think that the resurrection happened because no one saw it happen
    - I accept that people reported on appearances, but hallucination theory can explain that
11. The timeline for the creation and incarnation are all wrong
    - The creation, planet formation, hominids, incarnation, etc. all take place in the wrong times
    - If God knew what he was doing, he would done everything at better times to be more efficient
12. David Hume's argument against miracles is sound
    - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – nothing wrong with this argument
    - Miracles are really just coincidences
    - Catholic apparitions at Lourdes disprove the historical argument that Dr. Craig made for the resurrection
13. God is petty and jealous
    - God shouldn't demand that we trust him, esteem him and consider his character when we make decisions
    - The atoning death of Jesus for the sins of the world also makes no sense

14. Belief is based on geography
    - What you believe is clearly correlated with where you are born
    - There is even an Islamic clone of Dr. Craig who “uses the exact same arguments” that he does to prove Islam
    - Belief in God is decreasing in the Internet-accessible world
15. Science can develop morals without God
    - Reason is able to guide our actions to be moral
    - Morality evolves over time, so there is no objective morality
    - Catholicism teaches things that are immoral
    - Some things are prohibited by biological revulsion, such as incest
    - But if a brother and sister have sex using condoms “is that morally wrong? I can’t say it is frankly” (37:24)
16. Dr. Craig is irrational
    - “I came here convinced based on my past interactions and his writing that Dr. Craig was a dishonest Charlatan”
    - “Any argument that validates God is reasonable to him”
    - “And any argument against it is not only unreasonable but wrong and worth distorting”
    - “Because it must be wrong – he’s decided the answer in advance”
17. Dr. Craig is immoral
    - Dr. Craig thinks it is OK for God to command that Canaanite children are killed
    - “So in fact if they were Canaanite children in that schoolroom that he talked about then it would be OK”
    - It’s not reasonable to justify genocide in that way, but Dr. Craig is willing to go to those lengths
18. The cause of the origin of the space time universe need not be God
    - Dr. Craig says that if there is an explanation for the origin or space, time, matter and energy it must be God
    - But it could just as easily be turtles or Zeus
19. Dr. Craig misrepresents the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem
    - Alexander Vilenkin wrote me an e-mail that says that the theorem doesn’t work in all cases
    - “Dr. Craig is so convinced that these arguments must be true that he won’t listen to the fact that they’re not”
20. Darwinian evolution explains the fine-tuning
    - “Life was fine tuned – we got rid of it with Darwin”
    - Mutation and natural selection explain the cosmic fine-tuning argument that Dr. Craig presented
21. Suboptimal design disproves the fine-tuning argument
    - “We get back aches” therefore “This argument that [the universe] is fine-tuned for life is nonsense”
22. William Lane Craig can be proven to exhibit homosexual behavior using logical arguments

    - Look, you can construct arguments that are clearly wrong
    - Premise 1: “All mammals exhibit homosexual behavior”
    - Premise 2: “William Lane Craig is a mammal”
    - Seems to be saying that logical arguments can prove false things “it’s nonsense”
23. Dr. Craig distorted a podcast that some group made on pain receptors
    - Dr. Craig’s faith is so strong that it causes him to distort what this group said

Discussion: (44:35)

I will not be summarizing everything that was said, just a few main points.

The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can’t even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don’t work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don’t have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) “All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON’T KNOW!!!!!!!” (raising his voice)
- Craig: I’m not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has

been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"
- Craig: "I wonder what you deleted from the original letter"
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "I just told you!"
- Craig: "Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) 'You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.'
- Craig: "That's Vilenkin."
- Krauss: "In this paper, that's absolutely right"
- Krauss: But it's ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it's unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: "Isn't it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?"
- Krauss: "No"
- Craig: "Well, can you give us one then"
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) "In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong"
- Krauss: "You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it's hard"
- Craig: "Right"

I noticed that a huge number of atheist web sites are taking the Vilenkin quote that Krauss used out of context, like this one and this one. There are probably a lot more of them like that, which I think is interesting. That's why we have these debates, I guess. To set the record straight about who accuses people of being dishonest, and who is actually dishonest.

Fine-tuning:

- Krauss tried to argue that he had explained the fine-tuning with the Higgs particle, but Dr. Craig said that only applied to the cosmological constant, not all the other examples of fine-tuning. Krauss said that it wasn't impressive that this universe permitted life and that "It would have been much more surprising if we evolved in a universe in which we couldn't live". Krauss argued the fine-tuning was only for "Life

like us". But Dr. Craig explained that the fine-tuning is what allows us to have the basics of any kind of life, like slow-burning stars, chemical diversity, etc. – things that are required for basic minimal life functions in any living system. Craig said that he was working with the current physical laws of this universe (F = ma, etc.) and that he was looking at what changed if we changed those even slightly. Krauss tried to say that if he changed things like the mass of particles then the strength of forces would change. (But the forces aren't laws!) Krauss argued that the cosmological constant would be even better for life if it was zero, and Craig said that the life permitting range did include zero, but that the range of life-permitting values was narrow.

Jesus' existence:

- Craig reponded to the mystery religions charge, the charge that the evidence for the minimal facts is too late/too weak, the charge that grief visions explained the evidence better, and Hume's argument against miracles. Craig brought up the early creed from 1 Cor 15:3-7 and explained to Krauss that it was 5 years after the events, and that Jewish standards of oral transmission were strong enough to ensure that the creed was reliable, and most of the eyewitnesses would still have been alive.

Audience Q and A: (1:21:09)

The first topic is the grounding of morality. Krauss agrees that there is no objective morality and no objective moral oughts. He also said that that standards of behavior are arbitrary, and that they change over time and they are adopted for promoting social order. Dr. Craig pressed the point that science itself would collapse without ethical values. It assumes them, but cannot ground them.

The next topic was free will. Krauss is a determinist. Craig asked him how he could reconcile moral responsibility with determinism.

The next topic was the effectiveness of mathematics. Krauss didn't have an explanation for it and didn't think it needed one. Then they got into whether the Genesis has been verified by science and whether it is meant to be taken literally.

The next topic was whether philosophy makes any progress. Craig gave the example of verificationism being rejected as too narrow, and self-refuting. Krauss: "I'm going to come to the defense of philosophy for the first time". Craig: "That's amazing!" Krauss said that science provides new knowledge. Craig said there were some things that could be known apart from science.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

April 19, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)

- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Harvard law professor publishes essay suggesting "presumptive ban" on homeschooling

April 20, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A Harvard University law professor decided to write an essay attacking homeschooling. She also suggested that homeschooling be banned by government. She has three concerns. First, that homeschool students underperform public school students,second that homeschooled students will be abused by their parents, and third that homeschool students will remain religious unless they are indoctrinated in government-run public schools.

Here's an article about her essay in Daily Wire:

> Prof. Elizabeth Bartholet is leading the charge against those who actively resist public schools and she believes that the generation currently being homeschooled is an eventual, if not active, breeding ground for racism, sexism, and isolationism.
>
> "Many homeschool precisely because they want to isolate their children from ideas and values central to public education and to our democracy. Many promote racial segregation and female subservience. Many question science. Many are determined to keep their children from exposure to views that might enable autonomous choice about their future lives," she claims.
>
> In the essay for Harvard Magazine, Bartholet goes one step further, arguing not just that homeschooling is, itself, problematic, but that it should be snuffed out as a practice by the heavy hand of American government.
>
> "Homeschooling, she says, not only violates children's right to a 'meaningful education' and their right to be protected from potential child abuse, but may keep them from contributing positively to a democratic society," the article's author reports.
>
> "We have an essentially unregulated regime in the area of homeschooling," Bartholet claims in the piece. Although every state has basic educational standards (that most homeschooling families not only meet but exceed), she believes that "if you look at the legal regime governing homeschooling, there are very few requirements that parents do anything."
>
> And her assumption, of course, is not that homeschoolers represent a wide swath of American families, but are, instead, largely uneducated themselves and looking to keep their children in the dark: "That means, effectively, that people can homeschool who've never gone to school themselves, who don't read or write themselves."
>
> Worse still, Bartholet seems to argue, it's possible these homeschoolers are…*religious*.

> "[S]urveys of homeschoolers show that a majority of such families (by some estimates, up to 90 percent) are driven by conservative Christian beliefs, and seek to remove their children from mainstream culture," Harvard Magazine warns. "Bartholet notes that some of these parents are 'extreme religious ideologues' who question science and promote female subservience and white supremacy."
>
> No doubt Bartholet believes that all religious ideologies are somewhat suspect.
>
> Public schools, which can be breeding grounds of inefficiency, and often struggle to educate children on an individual level, Bartholet says, are places of miracles. Children who attend public school "grow up exposed to community values, social values, democratic values, ideas about nondiscrimination and tolerance of other people's viewpoints."

For the first issue, about homeschoolers underperforming, the only valid test of this is standardized tests. How do homeschooled students perform on standardized tests compared to public school students?

> The SAT 2014 test scores of college-bound homeschool students were higher than the national average of all college-bound seniors that same year. Some 13,549 homeschool seniors had the following mean scores: 567 in critical reading, 521 in mathematics, and 535 in writing (College Board, 2014a). The mean SAT scores for all college-bound seniors in 2014 were 497 in critical reading, 513 in mathematics, and 487 in writing (College Board, 2014b). The homeschool students' SAT scores were 0.61 standard deviation higher in reading, 0.26 standard deviation higher in mathematics, and 0.42 standard deviation higher in writing than those of all college-bound seniors taking the SAT, and these are notably large differences.
>
> […]This point-in-time description of SAT scores simply shows that the test scores of homeschool students are higher than the national average for all students. No careful analysis has been done of these scores to determine whether certain background variables might statistically explain the differences in scores. These relatively high SAT scores of home-educated students are consistent with their high SAT scores in preceding research and with research findings on the overall success of college students who were home educated (Gloeckner & Jones, 2013; Murphy, 2012; Ray & Eagleson, 2008).

Her second concern is about child abuse. What would have been useful herewould be for her to cite a study comparing rates of child abuse in homeschools versus public schools. She didn't do that. But Matt Walsh had something in this Daily Wire article:

> A study commissioned by the Department of Education found that a full 10 percent of children in public school are victims of sexual misconduct by teachers and staff. And that's to say nothing of the many thousands of children who have been sexually abused at school by other students. Comparing this to the rate of

> child abuse at home — and even comparing sexual abuse at school to sexual abuse and every other kind of abuse at home — it seems apparent that a child is more likely to suffer abuse at school than at home. So, yes, an abused child who is homeschooled will not be rescued from his situation by a vigilant teacher. That is a tragedy. But there are many more children who are not abused at home and then are abused at school, which means that schools more often play the role of abuser than protector.
>
> On top of all of this, public school also offers bullying, suicide, drug abuse, alcoholism, social ostracization, and peer pressure.

Her third concern is accurate – homeschooled students do retain their Christian faith more than students who are indoctrinated by secular leftist unionized teachers in government-run public schools. But when you think about how public school teachers only get raises if they graduate enough students who want to vote for the Big Government political party, that's not surprising. Parents see education as a way for their kids to learn useful skills in order to find high-paying work. The fact that most homeschooled children aren't godless moral relativists isn't a defect in homeschooling.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez celebrates thousands of Americans losing their jobs

April 21, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

AOC: cheap oil makes expensive green energy viable

I don't think anyone doubts that the future of any political party lies in the young leaders. The Republicans have Dan Crenshaw. And the Democrats have Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. AOC grew up with a silver spoon in her mouth, and attended the prestigious Boston University. After graduating, she worked as a bartender / waitress. But she has opinions about running U.S. economic policy.

Daily Wire reports:

> Socialist Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) cheered the news that oil futures plunged below zero on Monday as demand due to the coronavirus pandemic continued to plummet.
>
> Ocasio-Cortez tweeted: "You absolutely love to see it. This along with record low interest rates means it's the right time for a worker-led, mass investment in green infrastructure to save our planet. *cough*
>
> Ocasio-Cortez wrote her statement while promoting a tweet that stated: "Oil prices now at 'negative values,' meaning oil producers have to pay people to take it off their hands and store it because when demand plunges (like now), that is less expensive for them than building more storage and/or shutting wells down."

So, I have two thoughts about this.

First thought is that the reason that energy companies don't invest in green energy is

because wind and solar power are far more expensive than conventional sources of power like coal, natural gas and nuclear. That is not even considering the inconsistency of wind and solar, or the murderous effects on wildlife, especially birds. If conventional sources of energy like crude oil are priced LOW, then that makes them an even better deal than green energy. The only way green energy would be viable is if the price of conventional sources were HIGH. This woman has a degree in "economics" from Boston University. I think you can see why she was working as a bartender / waitress for her entire career after graduating.

Second thought is that the Democrats need the economy to go into a recession so they can win in November. Trump's policies led to amazing economic growth. We're struggling right now because of the Wuhan virus, but the economy is set for a strong (STRONG!) recovery in the second half of the year. The only hope that the Democrats have is to destroy the economy. And that's why their allies in the news media are trying to trumpet any bad news they can find in order to keep the economy shut down long enough that we really do go into a recession.

Now, you might think that AOC isn't all bad, and that she is supporting efforts to provide relief to small businesses impacted by the government's stay-at-home orders. But you'd be wrong.

Fox News explains:

> Meanwhile, negotiators from the House, Senate and White House are close to finalizing an accord on the so-called "phase 3.5" response to the coronavirus pandemic and hope to have an agreement late Monday or Tuesday, Fox News is told.
>
> The response will include $310 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which offers grants to small businesses struggling to make payroll, sources tell Fox News. The $350 billion fund depleted last Thursday.
>
> A separate provision worth $60 billion (including $50 billion in loans and $10 billion in grants) would be allocated to economic disaster loans. Also included: $75 billion for hospitals and $25 billion for coronavirus testing. The total of the package would be north of $470 billion.
>
> **Ocasio-Cortez has said she'll oppose the plan in its current form because it doesn't do enough for illegal immigrants, among others. It's wrong for Congress to pass an incomplete package and then "peace out" for several weeks, she remarked.**

It doesn't do enough for illegal immigrants, so she can't support it. I hope you are learning something about Democrats, because this is where the party is going in the future.

Correcting four myths about the history of the Crusades

April 22, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Crusader

Here is an interesting article from Intercollegiate Studies Institute.

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

If you asked me what are the two best books on the Crusades, I would answer God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades by Baylor professor Rodney Stark and The Concise History of the Crusades by Professor Thomas F. Madden. If you get this question a lot from atheists, then I recommend you pick these up. Anything by Rodney Stark is useful for Christians, in fact.

How to respond to an atheist who complains about slavery in the Bible

April 23, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I often hear atheists going on and on about how the Bible has this evil and that evil. Their favorite one seems to be slavery. Here are three things I say to atheists when they push this objection.

The Bible and slavery

First, you should explain to them what the Bible actually says about slavery. And then tell them about the person responsible for stopping slavery in the UK: a devout evangelical named William Wilberforce.

Here's an article that works.

Excerpt:

> We should compare Hebrew debt-servanthood (many translations render this "slavery") more fairly to apprentice-like positions to pay off debts — much like the indentured servitude during America's founding when people worked for approximately 7 years to pay off the debt for their passage to the New World. Then they became free.
>
> In most cases, servanthood was more like a live-in*employee*, temporarily embedded within the employer's household. Even today, teams trade sports players to another team that has an owner, and these players belong to a franchise. This language hardly suggests slavery, but rather a formal contractual agreement to be fulfilled — like in the Old Testament.3

Second, inform them that moral values are not rationally grounded on atheism. In an

accidental universe, there is no way we ought to be. There is no design for humans that we have to comply with. There are no objective human rights, like the right to liberty (that would block slavery) or the right to life (that would block abortion). Although you may find that most atheists act nicely, the ones who really understand what atheism means and live it out consistently are not so nice.

Atheism and moral judgments

Second, inform them that moral values are not rationally grounded on atheism. In an accidental universe, there is no way we ought to be. There is no design for humans that we have to comply with. There are no objective human rights, like the right to liberty (that would block slavery) or the right to life (that would block abortion). Although you may find that most atheists act nicely, the ones who really understand what atheism means and live it out consistently are not so nice.

Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

When people like Dawkins talk about morality, you have to understand that they are pretending. To them, morality is just about personal preferences and cultural conventions. They just think that questions of right and wrong are *arbitrary*. Things that are wrong in one time and place are right in another. Every view is as right as any other, depending on the time and place. That's atheist morality.

What's worse than slavery? Abortion!

Third, you should ask the atheist what he has done to oppose abortion. Abortion is worse than slavery, so if they are sincere in thinking that slavery is wrong, then they ought to think that abortion is wrong even more. So ask them what they've done to oppose the practice of abortion. That will tell you how sincere they are about slavery.

Here's Richard Dawkins explaining what he's done to stop abortion:

That's right. The head atheist supports killing born children.

What do Democrats like Joe Biden think about the moral teachings of Jesus in the Bible?

April 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Enraged Democrat Joe Biden howls out his hatred for Bible-believing Christians

Joe Biden gave a speech to the largest gay rights organization in the United States, the HRC. The co-founder of the HRC, Terry Bean, was recently charged with sexual abusing a 15-year-old boy. Do you disagree with what Terry Bean is charged with? If so, then I think it's important to know how far Joe Biden would go to punish you for your refusal to approve and celebrate Terry Bean.

Here's the report on the speech from PJ Media:

> Biden announced at an event in Ohio on Saturday that his number one priority, if elected, will be to enshrine LGBTQ rights into federal law via the Equality Act, a contentious, Orwellian effort by left-wing bullies to silence Christians who believe biblical teachings on marriage and reject the view that boys can be girls and girls can be boys.
>
> During a half-hour speech at the Hum4n R1ghts C4mp4ign's annual gala in Columbus, Ohio, Biden said, "It's wrong and it is immoral what [the Trump administration] is doing," citing efforts to bar transgender troops from the U.S. military and protect medical providers from being forced to violate their consciences.
>
> […]During his speech Biden portrayed LGBTQ individuals as victims, ignoring the fact that it is people of faith who have been the big losers in this war of ideas. Bakery owners are being sued out of existence, medical professionals are being pressured to embrace transgender ideology, and major corporations are pulling their business out of states that seek to protect religious freedom —

> which, by the way, is what made Mike Pence Public Enemy #1 in the eyes of the cultural revolutionaries.
>
> […]"The current vice president uses religious freedom as an excuse to license discrimination across broadly [sic] areas and denying LGBTQ Americans their basic rights. It is wrong and it is immoral what they are doing," he declared.
>
> "Just look at how much damage has been done in the past two weeks," Biden said. […]The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced plans to allow homeless shelters to turn away transgender people. This is beyond the scope of anything remotely what we've seen before."

To be clear, when he's talking about homeless shelters, he's talking about putting biological males in with women who are victims of sexual abuse. But if the HRC pays the piper, then the HRC calls the tune. They're certainly calling the tune for many of our largest corporations.

When Joe Biden talks about people's "beliefs", he means the beliefs of Bible-believing Christians that might cause them to disagree with gay activists like Terry Bean. He's talking about their right to refuse to participate in, subsidize or celebrate LGBT initiatives, such as same-sex marriage, sex-change surgeries, HRT drug treatments for children, etc. He's talking about forcing parents to step aside while doctors and educators give hormone blockers to their children. Drugs that can have permanent effects. He basically wants to give gay activists like Terry Bean a veto over the Bible, the church, Christian organizations and Christian parents. A veto backed by the full force of the government.

By the way, the Terry Bean story wasn't the first time that prominent Democrats have been involved in sex with underage boys. I'll give just one more example. The Democrat mayor of Seattle – a champion of same-sex marriage in the state of Washington – was also charged, and resigned.

Now, the teaching of the Bible is pretty clear. No sex outside of marriage, and marriage defined as between one woman and one man. The definition of marriage is straight out of the mouth of Jesus. If you deny that, then you don't accept Jesus as anything other than a normal man. Now, it's a free country. Non-Christians should be able to vote how they please, and act how they please. But we need to be clear that no Democrat politician accepts the Bible as an authority on moral issues, and that no Democrat politician thinks that Jesus is other than a normal man. No Democrat politician thinks that Jesus knew what he was talking about when he spoke authoritatively about chastity and marriage. Democrat politicians like Joe Biden think Terry Bean knows more these moral issues than Jesus, and that's why Joe Biden is speaking at the HRC rather than speaking at a Bible-believing organization like Liberty University or the Family Research Council or the Alliance Defending Freedom.

To be clear, I have no problem with people on the other side, like Dave Rubin, who disagree with me on moral issues. Dave lives his life in a way that would not be permissible for a Bible-believing Christian. But Dave accepts and defends my right to disagree with him on moral issues. That is not what we have with Democrat politicians

like Joe Biden, who want to use the power of the state to suppress basic human rights, like free speech, freedom of association, parental authority, etc. I don’t want to force other people to act as if they believed what I believe. But I don’t think Bible-believing Christians should vote for someone who wants to use the power of government to force me to act as if I believed what they believe.

William Lane Craig on the unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

April 25, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

You might remember that Dr. Craig used a new argument in his debate with Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia.

My notes on the debate record it thus:

> The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
>
> - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
> - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
> - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
> - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see

And now Dr. Craig has expanded on it in the Q&A section of his Reasonable Faith web site.

The question:

> Dear Dr Craig
>
> Firstly can I thank you for all your work. My faith in Christ has been enormously strengthened through studying your work in apologetics in particular and I have grown in confidence in my Christian witness.

> My question relates to numbers and mathematics as a whole. On the Defenders podcast you state that as God is the only self-existent, necessary being, numbers and mathematical objects, whilst being useful, don't actually exist as these too would exist necessarily and independently of God. If this is the case, how can it be that mathematics is so easily applied to the natural world? Surely if mathematics only existed in our minds, we would expect to see no correlation between it and how the physical world actually is?
>
> Michael
>
> United Kingdom

Excerpt from the answer:

> As philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng points out, for the non-theistic realist, the fact that physical reality behaves in line with the dictates of acausal mathematical entities existing beyond space and time is "a happy coincidence" (*Mathematics and Reality* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 239). Think about it: If, *per impossibile*, all the abstract objects in the mathematical realm were to disappear overnight, there would be no effect on the physical world. This is simply to reiterate that abstract objects are causally inert. The idea that realism somehow accounts for the applicability of mathematics "is actually very counterintuitive," muses Mark Balaguer, a philosopher of mathematics. "The idea here is that in order to believe that the physical world has the nature that empirical science assigns to it, I have to believe that there are causally inert mathematical objects, existing outside of spacetime," an idea which is inherently implausible (*Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 136).
>
> By contrast, the theistic realist can argue that God has fashioned the world on the structure of the mathematical objects. This is essentially what Plato believed. The world has mathematical structure as a result.

This argument was also made by mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley in a lecture he gave on scientific evidence for an intelligent designer. You can read an essay that covers some of the material in that lecture at Leadership University.

Excerpt:

> The physical universe is surprising in the simple mathematical form it assumes. All the basic laws of physics and fundamental relationships can be described on one side of one sheet of paper because they are so few in number and so simple in form (see table 1.1).
>
> […]It has been widely recognized for some time that nature assumes a form that is elegantly described by a relatively small number of simple, mathematical relationships, as previously noted in table 1.1. None of the various proposals presented later in this chapter to explain the complexity of the universe address

> this issue. Albert Einstein in a letter to a friend expressed his amazement that the universe takes such a form (Einstein 1956), saying:
>
> You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world to the degree that we may speak of such comprehensibility as a miracle or an eternal mystery. Well, a priori one should expect a chaotic world which cannot be in any way grasped through thought. . . . The kind of order created, for example, by Newton's theory of gravity is of quite a different kind. Even if the axioms of the theory are posited by a human being, the success of such an enterprise presupposes an order in the objective world of a high degree which one has no a priori right to expect. That is the "miracle" which grows increasingly persuasive with the increasing development of knowledge.
>
> Alexander Polykov (1986), one of the top physicists in Russia, commenting on the mathematical character of the universe, said: "We know that nature is described by the best of all possible mathematics because God created it." Paul Davies, an astrophysicist from England, says, "The equations of physics have in them incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe" (Davies 1984). Successful development of a unified field theory in the future would only add to this remarkable situation, further reducing the number of equations required to describe nature, indicating even further unity and integration in the natural phenomena than have been observed to date.

The whole paper that started this off is called "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics", and it is a must read for advanced Christian defenders. You can read the whole thing here.

Robert Gagnon debates gay activist Jayne Ozanne on Bible vs homosexuality

April 26, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I am tempted to say that this is the best podcast I have ever heard on the Unbelievable show. Do anything you have to do in order to listen to this podcast.

Details:

> Prof Robert Gagnon has become a well-known voice advocating the traditional biblical view on sexuality. In a highly charged show he debates the scriptural issues on sexuality with Jayne Ozanne, the director of Accepting Evangelicals who came out as gay earlier this year.

The MP3 file is here.

If you can only listen for 15 minutes, then start at 49 minutes in and listen from there.

The following summary is rated MUP for made-up paraphrase. Reader discretion is advised.

Summary:

Intro:

- Speaker introductions
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree that the Bible doesn't support it
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree Jesus taught male-female marriage
- Ozanne: I went to the hospital because I was sick from trying to suppress my gay desires
- Ozanne: Doctors told me that I would die if I didn't act on my gay desires
- Ozanne: I decided to reinterpret the Bible to fit with my gay desires

- Ozanne: According to my new interpretation, Jesus actually supports my gay desires

Segment 1: Genesis

- Ozanne: In Genesis the Bible says that Adam needs a woman to complete him
- Ozanne: I reinterpret this to mean that Adam needed a “complementarian human being”
- Ozanne: Genesis doesn’t say whether Eve was complemented by Adam in that chapter
- Ozanne: It’s not critical that men are complemented by women, a man could complement a man
- Ozanne: Genesis 2 doesn’t talk about children, it’s all about adult needs from a relationship
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 has never been interpreted that way in all of history
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language specifically implies a human being who is opposite/different
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language translates to complement or counterpart
- Gagnon: Genesis as a whole teaches that the sexuality is for male and female natures
- Gagnon: The extraction of something from the man that is given to the woman is complementarian
- Ozanne: I think that people can be complementary outside of male-female Genesis language
- Ozanne: I don’t want to discuss specific words and texts and Greek meanings
- Gagnon: the text has always been read and interpreted to support male/female complementarity
- Gagnon: the male-female nature argument is made because the two natures are complementary
- Ozanne: the text was interpreted by patriarchal males who treated women like property, it’s biased
- Ozanne: what is important to me is how Christ interprets Genesis (?? how does she know that?)
- Ozanne: I am passionate about my interpretation of Scripture which supports my gay desires
- Gagnon: just because a person is passionate about their interpretation it doesn’t make it right
- Gagnon: I am not arguing for the male-female view based on passion, but on scholarship, evidence and history
- Ozanne: both sides are equally passionate about their interpretations (?? so both are equally warranted?)
- Ozanne: the real question is why God “allowed” two different interpretations of Scripture

Segment 2: Is homosexuality a sin?

- Gagnon: Jesus affirmed traditional sexual morality, which forbids homosexuality
- Gagnon: Jesus teaches that marriage is male-female, and limited to two people
- Gagnon: No one in history has interpreted the Bible to say that homosexuality was not immoral
- Ozanne: Jesus came to bring life, and that means he supports homosexuality
- Ozanne: I was dying, and embracing my gay desires allowed me to live, so Jesus approves of me
- Ozanne: God says "I am who I am" and that means he approves of me doing whatever I want
- Ozanne: There is an imperative to be who I am, and that means embracing my gay desires
- Gagnon: Jesus argued that the twoness of the sexual bond is based on the twoness of the sexes
- Gagnon: Jesus did not come to gratify people's innate desires, he called people to repent of sin
- Gagnon: Jesus did reach out to sinners but he never condoned the sins they committed
- Gagnon: Jesus' outreach to tax collectors collecting too much and sexual sinners is the same: STOP SINNING
- Ozanne: I don't think that Romans 1 is talking about homosexuality
- Ozanne: I think it's talking about sexual addiction, not loving, committed gay relationships
- Ozanne: Paul was condemning pederasty in Romans 1, not loving, long-term, consensual sexual relationships between gay adults
- Gagnon: nothing in the passage limits the condemnation to pederasty
- Gagnon: the passage was never interpreted to be limited to pederasty in history
- Gagnon: rabbis and church fathers knew about committed two-adult same-sex relationships, and said they were wrong
- Gagnon: the argument for marriage is based on the broad two-nature argument, with no exceptions
- Gagnon: the condemnation is not limited to exploitative / coercive / lustful / uncommitted relationships
- Gagnon: even pro-gay scholars agree the passage cannot be interpreted Ozanne's way (he names two)

Segment 3: The showdown (49:00)

- Ozanne: I don't care how many pages people have written on this
- Ozanne: God says that "the wisdom of the wise I will frustrate" so you can't use scholars, even pro-gay scholars, to argue against my passionate interpretation
- Ozanne: I am not interested in the text or history or scholarship or even pro-gay

scholars who agree with you
- Ozanne: what decides the issue for me is my mystical feelings about God's love which makes my sexual desires moral
- Ozanne: you are certain that this is wrong, but your view does not "give life" to people
- Ozanne: your scholarship and historical analysis is "a message of death" that causes teenagers to commit suicide (= you are evil and a meany, Robert)
- Ozanne: "I pray for you and your soul" (= opposing me will land you in Hell) and "I hope that listeners will listen with their hearts" (?? instead of their minds?)
- Ozanne: you can prove anything you want with research, even two mutually exclusive conclusions, so you shouldn't rely on scholarship and research since it could be used to prove my view as well
- Ozanne: instead of relying on research, you should rely on your heart and your feelings about God's love to decide what the Bible teaches about sexual morality
- Gagnon: you are distorting the gospel in order to make your case
- Gagnon: attacking my "certainty" is an ad hominem attack to cover your dismissmal of the scholarship and history
- Gagnon: you distort the gospel to make it seem like Christ just wants us to get what we want, when we want it, with who we want it with
- Gagnon: Christ calls us to take up our cross, to lose our lives and to deny ourselves
- Gagnon: you have a notion of what "fullness of life" is, but it's not reflective of the gospel
- Gagnon: Paul's life was much more troubling than yours, mine or anyone else around here
- Gagnon: Paul was beaten, whipped, stoned, poorly sheltered, poorly clothed, poorly fed, shipwrecked, and anxious for his churches
- Gagnon: on your view, he should have been miserable and angry with God all the time
- Gagnon: but instead Paul was constantly thankful and rejoicing to be able to suffer with Jesus and look forward to the resurrection
- Gagnon: I have suffered too, but the suffering we go through never provides us with a license to violate the commandments of God
- Ozanne: "the ultimate thing is what people feel God has called them to"
- Ozanne: My goal right now is to tell young people that homosexuality is fine so they don't commit suicide
- Ozanne: the view that homosexuality is wrong is "evil and misguided"
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm in the gay community are intrinsic to homosexual unions, not caused by external disapproval of homosexuality

Segment 4: Concluding statements

- Gagnon: gay male relationships on average have more sex partners and more STDs
- Gagnon: female relationships on average have shorter-length relationships and

more mental issues
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm are because there is no complementarity / balance in the relationships
- Gagnon: everyone has some disappointment or suffering in their lives that hurts them, and that they are tempted to break the rules to fix, but we should not break the rules in order to be happy
- Ozanne: both sides are passionate, so no one can be right, and evidence proves nothing
- Ozanne: only feelings about “what God is doing” can allow us to decide what counts as sin or not
- Ozanne: the main thing that is at stake here is to make people like us, not to decide what the Bible says about sin
- Ozanne: my message to people is to do whatever you want, and ignore mean people who don’t affirm you
- Ozanne: we should be more opposed to mean people who make non-Christians feel unloved than about doing what the Bible says

Democrat feminists excited to vote for accused rapist in November

April 27, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you know that the Democrat presidential nominee Joe Biden has been credibly accused of sexual assault? If you get your news from the progressive mainstream media, then you've probably never heard about it. In fact, Big Technology companies are actively pulling down any evidence of the accuser or her accusation. So, I thought it might be a good idea to get the basic facts about it.

Daily Wire explains:

> Tara Reade, the woman accusing former Vice President Joe Biden of sexual assault, told Fox News Sunday that she's "disappointed" in the media — and especially CNN anchor Anderson Cooper — for avoiding asking Biden about her allegations in at least two interviews, calling anchors' behavior "shocking" and partisan.
>
> Reade made her claims more than a month ago, on a podcast with progressive political commentator Katie Halper. She says Biden sexually assaulted her back in the mid-1990s, when she worked as an aide in his Senate office, and alleges that she was fired when she considered going to authorities to report Biden's behavior.
>
> Since Reade first went public with her story, "Biden has done nearly a dozen TV interviews with news anchors including NBC News' Chuck Todd, ABC News' George Stephanopoulos, and twice with Cooper," Fox News reports, and all of them "failed to ask Biden about [Reade's] public claim."

Now, the reason I take this accusation more seriously than the one against Brett Kavanaugh is that this accuser actually went to the police. Her accusation is on record with the police, which exposes her to punishments if she is making a false charge. But more than that, she has witnesses, and then there is the video of her mother calling into Larry King Live around the time of the assault.

Daily Wire notes:

> Anchors may not be able to ignore Reade's claims much longer, however. On Saturday, it emerged that Reade's mother called into "Larry King Live" back in the late 1990s to ask the host and his panel how her daughter should handle a claim of "sexual harassment" against a high ranking Washington official.

Here is the video:

Fox News notes that Google has removed the video from Google Play:

> [T]he Aug. 10 broadcast, which is listed as "Episode 154" is followed by the Aug. 12 broadcast, which is listed as "Episode 155," suggesting that episode and the

> ones that follow could be incorrectly listed and off by a number.
>
> Fox News has verified the Aug. 11 episode is not listed on the streaming service. It is unclear when it was removed from the catalog.
>
> Neither CNN nor Google immediately responded to Fox News' requests for comment. Fox News also reached out to the representation of Larry King and have not heard a response.

Here's the screenshot:

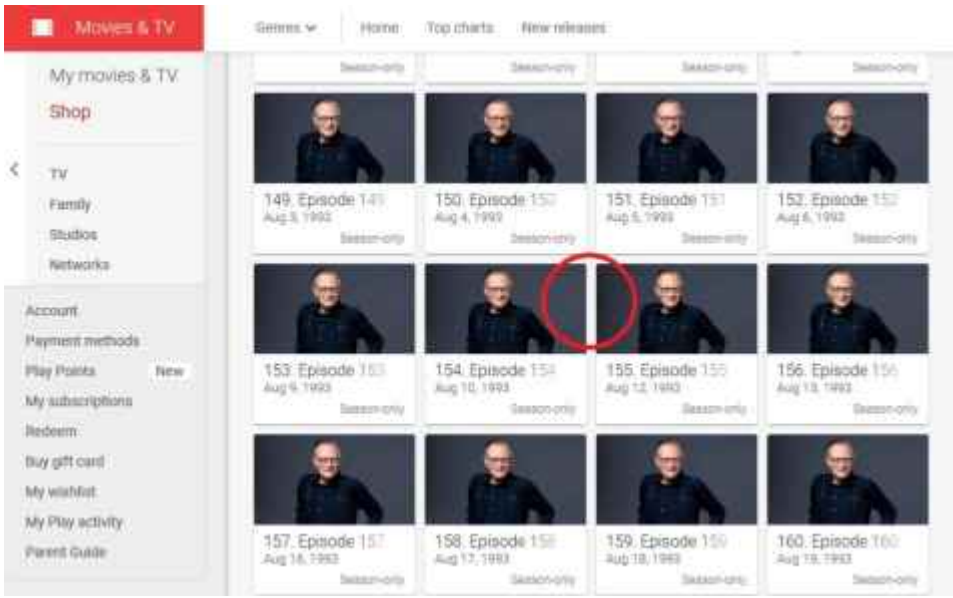

Google pulls audio that makes Democrat presidential candidate look bad

Daily Wire notes that the progressive news media is going all out for their boy:

> Three women believed to be among the frontrunners for former Vice President Joe Biden's running mate on the 2020 Democratic presidential ticket appeared on Sunday morning news programs, but not a single woman was asked about sexual assault allegations leveled against Biden by a former staffer.
>
> In fact, not a single one of the Sunday news programs that aired on April 26th discussed the allegations despite revelations from CNN Saturday evening that indicated the woman's mother called in to "Larry King Live" in the late 1990s to ask the host's panelists how her daughter should go about reporting sexual harassment by a male Senator.

Nancy Pelosi, Amy Klobuchar, Gretchen Whittmer and Stacy Abrams were all on news media shows, but they were all NOT asked whether this woman Tara Reade should be believed.

Fox News is letting her speak though:

> Reade's story first resurfaced in an article in The Intercept on March 24. Halper then interviewed Reade, who said that in 1993, a more senior member of Biden's staff asked her to bring the then-senator his gym bag near the U.S. Capitol building, which led to the encounter in question.
>
> "He greeted me, he remembered my name, and then we were alone. It was the

> strangest thing," Reade told Halper. "There was no like, exchange really. He just had me up against the wall."
>
> […]She continued: "His hands were on me and underneath my clothes, and he went down my skirt and then up inside it and he penetrated me with his fingers and he was kissing me at the same time and he was saying some things to me."
>
> Reade claimed Biden first asked if she wanted "to go somewhere else."
>
> "I pulled away, he got finished doing what he was doing," Reade said. "He said: 'Come on, man. I heard you liked me.'"
>
> Reade said she tried to share her story last year, but nobody listened to her.

Fox News also posted a helpful comparison of how the news media handled the baseless accusations against SCOTUS nominee Brett Kavanaugh, compared to the evidence-backed, reported-to-police accusations of Tara Reade.

So what would Democrat feminists say to this credible accusation? Well, right now, we don't know. We have to wait until November to see how Democrats vote. If they vote for Biden, then we will be able to understand how sincere they are about opposing rape, especially workplace rape of a female employee by a male in a higher position. They were fine with it when it was Bill Clinton being accused of rape, so I wonder if anything has changed?

Why did Democrats send Wuhan Coronavirus patients to nursing homes?

April 28, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

17,515 deaths New York City **New York** US	944 deaths Los Angeles **California** US	484 deaths Philadelphia **Pennsylvania** US
1,622 deaths Wayne **Michigan** US	727 deaths Fairfield **Connecticut** US	481 deaths Rockland **New York** US
1,620 deaths Nassau **New York** US	700 deaths Middlesex **Massachusetts** US	456 deaths New Haven **Connecticut** US
1,347 deaths Cook **Illinois** US	673 deaths Hudson **New Jersey** US	455 deaths Middlesex **New Jersey** US
1,102 deaths Suffolk **New York** US	631 deaths Oakland **Michigan** US	448 deaths Suffolk **Massachusetts** US
1,028 deaths Essex **New Jersey** US	612 deaths Hartford **Connecticut** US	438 deaths Passaic **New Jersey** US
962 deaths Westchester **New York** US	583 deaths Union **New Jersey** US	429 deaths Norfolk **Massachusetts** US
960 deaths Bergen **New Jersey** US	527 deaths Macomb **Michigan** US	416 deaths King **Washington** US

The worst-hit areas are all urban counties in Democrat states

Democrats sure have been enjoying their new powers to control the choices and freedoms of individuals during this Chinese virus pandemic. And it turns out that they've been making it worse with some very poor – or deliberately evil – decision-making.

Here's the story from the New York Post:

> Of all the missteps in the early days of the coronavirus crisis, New York state's Health Department may have committed the worst: ordering nursing homes to accept residents who tested positive for COVID-19.
>
> Instead of quarantining the folks most vulnerable to the disease, the state encouraged its spread: 85 percent of the state's confirmed deaths from the bug are people over 60, with nearly a quarter of all corona fatalities coming in nursing or adult-care facilities — and at least 2,210 such deaths tallied in the city.
>
> And when asked why these residents and workers weren't better protected, Gov. Andrew Cuomo answered Wednesday, it "wasn't our job."
>
> […][T]he state has allowed casualties to mount, with some homes even having to leave the dead in their rooms for lack of a place to store them.
>
> […]Mayor Bill de Blasio, meanwhile, has been sending coronavirus patients to the city's public nursing home on Roosevelt Island — where staff and local officials say the virus is spreading to its vulnerable, high-risk residents. Many are wheelchair-bound and/or chronically ill. Wrong place to be in tune with the governor, Mr. Mayor.

I was having a conversation with a millennial evangelical Christian recently who thought that people cities were smart, and that rural people won't take the virus seriously. I asked

him how well things were going for New York City. He didn’t have an answer to that. (He hasn’t read a book in years, and just gets his opinions from TV and movies).

He’s all in favor of a continued shutdown, but I happen to know that his employer is in dire straits financially. He hasn’t put two and two together yet to see how the shutdown (and the trillions of dollars of spending to prop up businesses and workers) is affecting him. The TV says the shutdown needs to continue, and he believes it.

Multiple credible witnesses corroborate rape charge against Joe Biden

April 29, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

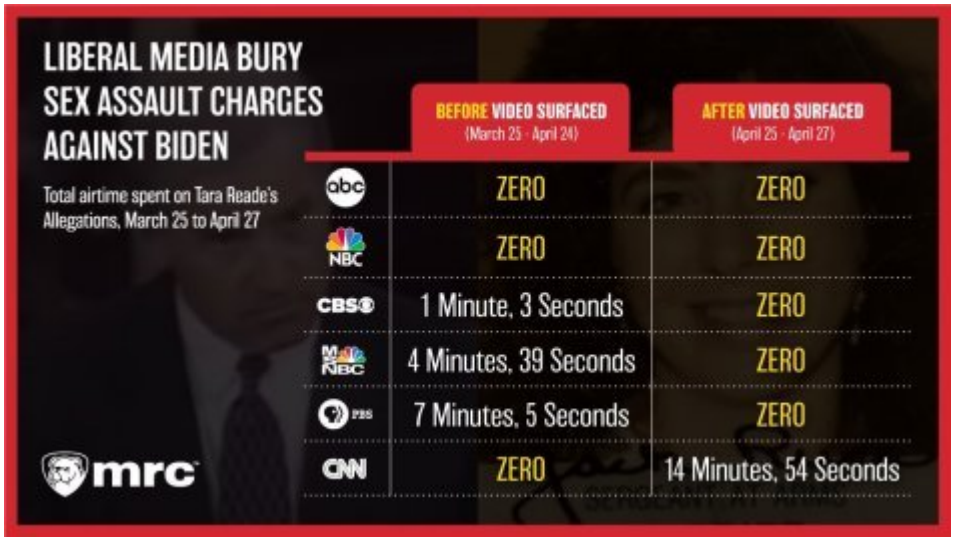

Democrats in the news media are covering up the Biden scandal

In this post, I want to report on the criminal charge filed by Tara Reade with the police against Joe Biden. And list out all the witnesses we have to corroborate her testimony so far. Then we'll review the mainstream news media's response to the scandal. Then we'll see why Joe Biden (of all people) should have no right to legal counsel, due process, or any other basic rights as defendant.

First, a criminal complaint has been filed, according to far-left Newsweek:

> Tara Reade filed a criminal complaint with the Washington Metropolitan Police Department of accusing the 2020 Democratic nomination of pushing her against the wall in a Senate corridor and penetrating her with his fingers, according to Business Insider.

This is important, because she can be held criminally responsible for making a false charge. This is not a frivolous woman making a frivolous charge to smear someone she doesn't know. She worked for him, and she filed a criminal complaint against him.

In addition, she actually told people about the alleged sexual assault at the time it was committed.

The far-left Business Insider reports:

> In March, when a former aide to Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden accused the candidate of sexually assaulting her in 1993, two people came forward to say that the woman, Tara Reade, had told them of the incident shortly after it allegedly occurred — her brother, Collin Moulton, and a friend who asked to remain anonymous for fear of retribution.
>
> Now two more sources have come forward to corroborate certain details about

> Reade's claims. One of them — a former neighbor of Reade's — has told Insider for the first time, on the record, that Reade disclosed details about the alleged assault to her in the mid-1990s.
>
> "This happened, and I know it did because I remember talking about it," Lynda LaCasse, who lived next door to Reade in the mid-'90s, told Insider.
>
> The other source, Lorraine Sanchez, who worked with Reade in the office of a California state senator in the mid-'90s, told Insider that she recalls Reade complaining at the time that her former boss in Washington, DC, had sexually harassed her, and that she had been fired after raising concerns.

Now, you might remember that we had a Senate trial and a media circus that lasted for months and months for SCOTUS nominee Brett Kavanaugh. But Christine Blasey Ford never made a criminal charge against Kavanaugh, nor did she have any witnesses to corroborate her story. So we have to take Reade's charge seriously – this time, there's an actual case.

But Biden's allies in the media don't want Biden or his endorsers to reply to the charges, and they don't want to investigate or report on the charges.

The Washington Free Beacon notes:

> In the two weeks after Dr. Christine Blasey Ford came forward with her accusation against then-Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, CNN published more than 400 items on its website related to the allegations. By contrast, it didn't publish a single item on the sexual assault accusation against Biden until April 17, more than three weeks after Reade recounted her story in a podcast interview.
>
> Since Reade's allegation was made public, Biden has been interviewed multiple times on major media networks, including twice by CNN's Anderson Cooper. For some reason, the former vice president has yet to be asked about the accusation. Thus far, his only public response has been to deny the allegations via a statement from a campaign official.

I want to see a Senate trial that starts tomorrow and lasts until election day so we can find out what Joe Biden really did to Tara Reade. Only Republican senators should be allowed to call witnesses. The defendant should not be allowed legal counsel or the right to call witnesses, or see the charges, or see the evidence against him – as happens on college campuses when male students are accused by women. And every day that the news media don't report on the trial, I will know that they think that women must be presumed to be lying when they report sexual assault at work.

This is interesting, from The Post Millennial:

> Since 2011, hundreds of students accused of sexual misconduct have filed lawsuits against their universities alleging they were denied due process by campus disciplinary panels.

> Thanks to the Obama administration's interpretation of Title IX, a law that requires colleges to prevent sexual discrimination, harassment and assault, a student's right to fair process has not only been significantly impaired, but in some cases, eliminated entirely. Many universities still use the Obama-era guidance to this day.
>
> In reality, this world of unfair and false accusations that has forced hundreds of young men to sue their universities, was orchestrated and executed by none other than Joe Biden—a man who now finds himself ensnared in the same environment he helped create.

I know that a lot of Democrat women believe that sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape are common in the workplace. So it will be interesting to see how they vote in November. Many of these women will have experienced something like what Tara Reade says she experienced. Will those women come forward and vote for Joe Biden anyway? If so, what will that tell you about their allegiance to "feminism"?

Study: couples that delay sexual activity experience higher quality relationships

April 30, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Relationship stability, quality, communication, satisfaction
From Family Studies, news about TWO new studies.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> [T]wo recently published studies call into question the validity of testing sexual chemistry early in dating.
>
> My colleagues and I published the first study a few years ago in the American Psychological Association's *Journal of Family Psychology*. This study involved a national sample of 2,035 married individuals who participated in the popular online couple assessment survey called "RELATE." **We found that the longer a dating couple waits to have sex, the better their relationship is after marriage. In fact, couples who wait until marriage to have sex report higher relationship satisfaction (20% higher), better communication patterns (12% better), less consideration of divorce (22% lower), and better sexual quality (15% better) than those who started having sex early in their dating (see Figure 2). For couples in between—those that became sexually involved later in their dating, but prior to marriage—the benefits were about half as strong.**
>
> […]These patterns were statistically significant even when controlling for a variety of other variables such as respondents' number of prior sexual partners, education levels, religiosity, and relationship length.
>
> **The second study, by Sharon Sassler and her colleagues at Cornell University, also found that rapid sexual involvement has adverse long-term implications for relationship quality.** Using data from the Marital and Relationship Survey, which provides information on nearly 600 low- to moderate-income couples living with minor children, their study examined the tempo of sexual intimacy and subsequent relationship quality in a sample of married and

> cohabiting men and women. Their analyses also suggest that delaying sexual involvement is associated with higher relationship quality across several dimensions.
>
> They discovered that the negative association between sexual timing and relationship quality is largely driven by a link between early sex and cohabitation. Specifically, sexual involvement early in a romantic relationship is associated with an increased likelihood of moving more quickly into living together, which in turn is associated with lower relationship quality. This finding supports Norval Glenn's hypothesis that sexual involvement may lead to unhealthy emotional entanglements that make ending a bad relationship difficult. As Sassler and her colleagues concluded, "Adequate time is required for romantic relationships to develop in a healthy way. In contrast, relationships that move too quickly, without adequate discussion of the goals and long-term desires of each partner, may be insufficiently committed and therefore result in relationship distress, especially if one partner is more committed than the other" (p. 710).

The rest of the post talks about two reasons why this works: improved partner selection and prioritizing communication and commitment. Improved partner selection occurs because you haven't committed too much too soon (sexually) and you have time to let things play out to see if you really fit with the other person. And if you take sex off the table, then you have to use other means in order to build emotional intimacy – communication, service, support, etc.

That's two studies, and there's a third. Dina sent me this article from the UK Daily Mail about a new study showing the importance of chastity for relationship quality and stability.

Excerpt:

> New couples who jump into bed together on the first date do not last as long in relationships as those who wait a new study has revealed.
>
> Using a sample of almost 11,000 unmarried people, Brigham Young University discovered a direct correlation between the length and strength of a partnership and the amount of time they took to have first have sex.
>
> **The study showed that those who waited to initiate sexual intimacy were found to have longer and more positive outcomes in their relationships while those who couldn't help themselves reported that their dalliances struggled to last more than two years.**
>
> 'Results suggested that waiting to initiate sexual intimacy in unmarried relationships was generally associated with positive outcomes,' said the report authored published by the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health.
>
> 'This effect was strongly moderated by relationship length, with individuals who reported early sexual initiation reporting increasingly lower outcomes in

> relationships of longer than two years.'
>
> The study examined four sexual-timing patterns: Having sex prior to dating, initiating sex on the first date or shortly after, having sex after a few weeks of dating, and sexual abstinence.
>
> Each one of these fields yielded different results in relationship satisfaction, stability and communication in dating situations.

Here's another recent study that shows that if a woman has more than her husband as a premarital sex partner, her risk of divorce increases.

His findings:

> Using nationally representative data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, I estimate the association between intimate premarital relationships (premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) and subsequent marital dissolution. I extend previous research by considering relationship histories pertaining to both premarital sex and premarital cohabitation. I find that premarital sex or premarital cohabitation that is limited to a woman's husband is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption.**However, women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship have an increased risk of marital dissolution.**

Here's another study that makes it even more clear.

Findings:

> Data from the 1988 US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) were utilized to assess the impact of premarital sexual activity on subsequent marital stability. **Among white NSFG subjects first married in 1965-85, virgin brides were significantly less to have become separated or divorced (25%) than women who had not been virgins at marriage (35%).**
>
> **[…]The lower risk of divorce on the part of white women with no premarital sexual experience persisted even after numerous intervening and background variables were controlled.**

If you're going to talk to a young person about sex, it's a good idea to use these studies to explain what you lose by having sex too early in the relationship. Although they may respond with anecdotes to refute studies, studies are important because they represent LOTS of data points, not just one or two cherry-picked cases. My view on all this is the Bible's view – no sex before marriage. But when talking to people about this issue, I find it useful to have evidence ready in order to be convincing in every way possible.

Previously, I blogged on studies that showed that the number of premarital sex partners increases unhappiness in the marriage, which raises the risk of divorce. Read and be wise about sexuality!

Should Christians be motivated by the fear of missing out (FOMO)?

May 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

My best friend Dina and I recently spent some time talking over some articles that we found on the culture. We specifically talked about what is motivating young people, so I wanted to write something about that.

FOMO: Fear Of Missing Out

Here's a leftist New York Times article explaining where FOMO comes from:

> It's known as FOMO, or "fear of missing out," and refers to the blend of anxiety, inadequacy and irritation that can flare up while skimming social media like Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare and Instagram. Billions of Twitter messages, status updates and photographs provide thrilling glimpses of the daily lives and activities of friends, "frenemies," co-workers and peers.
>
> […]When we scroll through pictures and status updates, the worry that tugs at the corners of our minds is set off by the fear of regret, according to Dan Ariely, author of "Predictably Irrational" and a professor of psychology and behavioral economics at Duke University. He says we become afraid that we've made the wrong decision about how to spend our time.
>
> […]A friend who works in advertising told me that she felt fine about her life — until she opened Facebook. "Then I'm thinking, 'I am 28, with three roommates, and oh, it looks like you have a precious baby and a mortgage,' " she said. "And then I wanna die."

It’s like they want to run a race to do fun and exotic things with their peers, and not finish last.

Anyway, I want to begin this post with examples of FOMO behavior I have personally encountered.

FOMO Travel

Dina and I read and discussed this article by Alain de Botton in *The European* – notice the emphasis on travel and having fun, sophisticated experiences:

> We’re continually being bombarded with suggestions about what we might do (go jet skiing, study in Colorado, visit the Maldives or see the Pyramids). We’re always hearing of the amazing things friends have done or are going to do: ‘there was this great bar we all went to …’; ‘she’s getting married in a little country church, then we’re having a picnic…’; ‘the sun was glinting on Sydney Harbour…’ There are endless hints of the allure of life in other places: an article about family-friendly restaurants in Brooklyn, a crime novel set in Trieste, the departure board at the airport with its list of places only a plane trip away: Moscow, Bangkok, Addis Ababa… The modern world makes sure we know at all times just how much we’re missing. It is a culture in which intense and painful doses of FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) are almost inevitable.

What’s interesting is this – how does FOMO travel affect young, unmarried Christians?

Travel through missions work seems to be the FOMO activity of choice for at least a few young, unmarried Christians. One of my best friends who is married to another of my best friends told me about her missions trip to a European country. I asked her why she did it, since it meant lost savings, lost earnings, lost work experience, etc. (She gave up a year of earnings, and she had a great job in engineering). Her answer was that she did it for the adventure. I have a hard time hearing Jesus say that he was going to do something because he was bored and wanted an adventure. Especially when it’s $30,000 in costs, $60,000 of lost income, and lost work experience – per year. This was before the time of the Internet, though, when missionary work actually made sense. I just don’t think it’s worth spending that kind of money for the impact you make. The people I know who went on missionary trips just wanted to feel spiritual, look spiritual, and have a fun “life experience” vacation. One missionary told me that she was desperate to get away from her boring mid-Western roots.

If you really want to share Christ effectively with people in other countries, then you can start a blog and pay the tiny costs for it out of your earnings from your day job – that’s what I do. I get more people from Europe reading my blog than I could contact in a year of missionary work. I Skype with the people who are interested in Christianity from these countries (Scotland, Northern Ireland, England, Canada, etc.), as well. Meanwhile, I keep working my not-exciting job, so my savings increase, and my resume remains gap-less. This is good stewardship of finances, and self-denial prepares your character for the hard work of marriage and parenting. The Bible says that those who do not work should not

eat. And Paul says that he built tents so that no one could accuse him of taking on missionary work for financial gain.

You can tell whether a person is sincere in their missionary intentions by looking at how responsible they've been in their decision-making. If a person has gone into debt paying for fun, thrilling activities like skydiving, ziplining, surfing, etc., then it's FOMO travel. We must look past the spiritual smokescreen, and tell young people to grow up.

After all, if defending God's honor was the missionary's main goal, then the real battlefield would be the university.

Bill Craig puts it best:

> **William Lane Craig** (Famed Christian apologist and philosopher): "It is at the university that [our most influential people] will formulate or, more likely, simply absorb the worldview that will shape their lives. And since these are the opinion-makers and leaders who shape our culture, the worldview that they imbibe at the university will be the one that shapes our culture. If we change the university, we change our culture… If the Christian worldview can be restored to a place of prominence and respect at the university, it will have a leavening effect throughout society."[3]

If serving God is your goal, look to the university

There is already a perfectly fine university right next door – no need to fly to Europe to find one! Remember, the university that took your faith away, or maybe the faith of someone you cared about? Yeah, *it's still sitting there in your home town!* And it's still ruining the lives of thousands of young people, by peer-pressuring them into secular, liberal views – *and behaviors*. It seems to me that it's better stewardship to stay here and work, then give money to groups like Reasonable Faith. And you can start a blog, teach in church and invite scholars to the local university, too. That costs almost nothing, and it produces better results.

What about Jesus?

Sometimes, it's a good idea to look beyond the words of the Bible and reflect on the overall message of it at a higher level. When I look in the Bible, I see that Jesus went through a lot of suffering in obedience to God in order to secure the salvation of people who did not even like him. And it's from this sacrifice on our behalf that his claim on our obedience comes. There are things that I don't like to do that I do anyway because they work to serve God. Jesus life's ambition was not to do things that were easy, or that made him happy. Experienced Christians do things that are not fun, because these things are right and *because they solve the real problem*.

Five reasons why Christians ought to care about economics

May 2, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Does God expect us to make plans and achieve goals?
This is from the Acton Institute blog.

The five:

1. The Bible Deals with Economic Issues
2. Economics Helps Us Understand the Public Square
3. It Expands Our Model of Discipleship
4. It Enhances Our Theology of Work
5. It Illuminates the Theological Implications of Politics

I want to choose just one of these, but I have to choose two, because they rock my socks off:

2. Economics Helps Us Understand the Public Square

> Second, an understanding of economics and especially of political economy can help us understand what is going on in the world around us. The general election…is impossible to follow without some understanding of the implications of Obamacare and its impact on Medicare, the federal deficit, and the long-term effects of continued deficit spending. The posturing on the part of Republicans and Democrats sometimes seems like little more than rhetoric, but the one who understands what is really at stake can help lead people to a better understanding of their responsibility in the public square.

3. It Expands Our Model of Discipleship

> Third, an understanding of economics can help us pastor our people more effectively by pointing to the need for a more comprehensive model of Christian discipleship. Many people in our churches just don't grasp that wealth is produced through work, how that in itself is a blessing to others, and then what God calls them to do with their wealth, even if they have very little of it. Taking a money management course is important to becoming a mature steward, but what most need more than that is a framework for understanding how politics, economics, and citizenship responsibilities fit into a broader discipleship model of life stewardship. In other words, they need an introduction to biblical oikonomia ("the law of the house"). And this applies to pastors and seminary professors every bit as much as it does to members of the congregation. A good place to start is by imparting some understanding of supply and demand, of fruitfulness and pay, and of how investments work (just to give a small sampling), because this will help God's people to grasp better the role they play every day in the broad sweep of God's mission in the world.

And now a comment from me about 2 and 3:

I wasn't raised in the church and I don't think of God the way that church people do. I think of God as my boss. I don't expect God to micromanage according to some mysterious plan that I can only sense through my emotions. What he does is communicate his character and his goals in the Bible, and then he leaves it up to me to decide how to *steward my resources* in order to *produce a return on his investment.* That's why economics, business and investing are all important to me. If I can understand how the world works, then I know how to make decisions that will help me to achieve good results, like mentoring people and supporting Christian scholars. It's just like fixing a car or building a house. The more you know about how things work, the better it is. Feelings and intuitions have no place in decision-making, it's knowledge all the way.

Here's Matthew 25:14-30.

Look:

[14] "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

[15] To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

[16] He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.

[17] So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.

[18] But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

[19] Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

[20] And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’

[21] His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

[22] And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’

[23] His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

[24] He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,

[25] so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’

[26] But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?

[27] Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.

[28] So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.

[29] For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

[30] And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

He’s the boss, and we are here to freely decide what we are going to do about it. If you want to do a good job, then it makes sense to do what everyone else does – learn how things work so that you can make good decisions. If I could give one other piece of advice, it would be to not put mysticism and feelings on the same level as reason and evidence. It doesn’t work in the normal workday world, and it doesn’t work when you are planning out the overall course of your life, either. Cautious works. Cautious gets results.

Why I admire people in the armed forces more than famous entertainers

May 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've noticed that many Christians can tell me a lot about famous entertainers. It doesn't matter if it's singers, musicians, actors, athletes, etc., they seem to know details of their biographies, achievements, etc. And it doesn't really matter if those people are Christians, or whether they have performed actions consistent with a Christian worldview in their private lives.

Anyway, speaking for myself, I mostly admire two kinds of people. The first kind is the kind I blog about here all the time: Christian scholars engage non-Christians intellectually using logic and evidence. The second kind, as you can tell from my reading list, is people who distinguish themselves in conflict with those who oppose the principles and policies that allow me to live out my Christian life. And I am especially interested when people who are fighting evil (imperialists, Nazis, socialists, communists, leftists, etc.) exhibit Christ-like character in risking their lives to save others, or in giving their lives to save others.

Lt. Walt Chewning charges unto burning F-6F Hellcat to save trapped pilot

I have a war story to tell you that happened on November 10th, 1943.

> Lieutenant (later Lieutenant Commander) Walter Lewis Chewning of Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, steps on the burning fuel tank of an F6F-3 Hellcat flown by Ensign (later Lieutenant) Byron Milton Johnson of Potter, Nebraska to effect a successful rescue of the pilot on November 10, 1943. Johnson had flown out to USS Enterprise from Barbers Point, Hawaii, enroute to Makin Atoll in the Gilberts to support the United States Army invasion, which occurred on November 20, 1943.

> The afternoon of November 10, Johnson took off in F6F Hellcat Number 30 for a routine training exercise. He immediately developed engine trouble and requested an emergency landing. He was waved off three times as he struggled to maintain control, but his tail hook caught the third arresting gear wire, and Johnson's Hellcat was slammed into the deck, coming to rest in the port catwalk. The plane came to rest on its external belly fuel tank, which started to leak. As the engine vibrated horribly as the propeller bent itself on the deck, sparks ignited the fuel. The hard landing had jammed Johnson's canopy closed, shearing the retaining pin; he could not exit the plane. Chewning, who had joined the ship October 2, 1943 as Enterprise new catapult officer, scrambled out of the catwalk and came through the smoke. Stepping on the burning belly tank, he forced open the canopy and pulled Johnson to safety.

He received the two highest non-combat medals available:

> Chewning was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his actions.

He was a well-educated and accomplished person before joining the Navy:

> Chewning played soccer and Lacrosse at Cornell while studying Mechanical Engineering, breaking his rib and left ankle in one game. He graduated in 1936 and studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before joining the Navy in January 1941. He was the assistant to the Chief Engineer at the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania before joining USS Enterprise. He served as Enterprise's catapult officer until December 1944, when he transferred to Dutch Harbor Naval Air Station in Alaska as ordinance officer. Chewning served in the Navy until December 1949; he also was awarded the Bronze Star. After the war he assisted research and development for various aeronautical companies, the United States Air Force, and the fledgling National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Motion picture film of the crash, taken from Enterprise's bridge, was shown as part of the television program "Victory at Sea" on January 25, 1953. Chewning and Johnson gave interviews to several newspapers about the accident after the program aired.

You can see a video clip of the rescue here, from 5:35 to 6:00. I found a colorized version of the picture above here:

Lt. Walt Chewning charges unto burning F-6F Hellcat to save trapped pilot
This image was colourized from the original by Paul Reynolds.

What I thought was interesting about Chewning was how he had everything going for him in terms of his education and career, but he chose to join the Navy anyway, in order to defend his country from Japanese imperialism. Those who understand how the Japanese treated prisoners and conquered peoples will know which side of that conflict was good, and which side was evil. Chewning wasn't some sort of loser who took risks for fun and thrills. It had to be a risk where the prize was worth the risk. And he had the humility to consider others better than himself, so that their life was worth the risking of his own. Many people on the secular left who like to talk about how generous, compassionate and virtuous they are are unable to make moral judgments against evils like Japanese imperialism – much less take self-sacrificial action against them.

I just think that it's important for young Christians to have the right kind of heroes. The heroes who are promoted to young Christians by the cultural elites are not usually the right role models. And there is a reason for that. The secular leftists don't want young Christians to be emulating people who excel according to the standards of the Christian worldview. We are in a religion where self-sacrificial love is the centerpiece. Taking trouble on yourself for someone else. Doing your job, when it goes against your own self-interest. Let's not allow a bunch of godless socialist celebrities to pick and choose who we hold in high regard.

Two new studies reduce the severity of the Wuhan Coronavirus

May 4, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a closer look at an interesting problem

I found two new studies that reduce the threat of the Chinese Covid-19 virus. The first one was reported by Sky News, and it's about a study that says that coronavirus patients cannot contract the disease after they've had it once already. And the second study was reported by the Sydney Morning Herald, and it says that the virus cannot be transmitted from children to adults.

Sky News first:

> A number of reported cases of coronavirus patients relapsing after overcoming the disease were actually due to testing failures, South Korean scientists say.
>
> Researchers at the South Korean centre for disease control and prevention (CDC) now say it is impossible for the COVID-19 virus to reactivate in human bodies.
>
> There have been more than 10,000 confirmed coronavirus cases in South Korea, with 245 deaths – a 2.3% fatality rate, which is lower than the 3.4% average as stated by the World Health Organisation.
>
> A total of 277 patients in the country were believed to have fallen ill for a second time, as had patients in China and Japan.
>
> This prompted concerns that the virus could be mutating so quickly that people were not necessarily immune to catching it again.
>
> However, genetic analyses of the virus have not found any substantial changes which would effectively disguise it from the immune system.

So, this study is good news for people who have had the virus, but I still worry that people

who have had it might be able to infect other people unless they are completely cured.

Then Sydney Morning Herald:

> No child has been found to have passed coronavirus to an adult, a review of the evidence in partnership with the Royal College of Paediatrics has found.
>
> Major studies into the impact of COVID-19 on young children suggest they "do not play a significant role" in spreading the virus and are less likely to become infected than adults.
>
> While experts insist that more evidence is needed, they note there has not been a single case of a child under 10 transmitting the virus, even in contact tracing carried out by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
>
> Public health officials in Switzerland have announced that under-10s can hug their grandparents again because they pose them no risk.
>
> Now a review in partnership with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) has found the evidence "consistently demonstrates reduced infection and infectivity of children in the transmission chain".
>
> Led by Dr Alasdair Munro, a clinical research fellow in paediatric infectious diseases, the research concluded: "COVID-19 appears to affect children less often, and with less severity, including frequent asymptomatic or subclinical infection. There is evidence of critical illness, but it is rare.
>
> "The role of children in transmission is unclear, but it seems likely they do not play a significant role."

This study just seems like all good news to me. It means that we can be more confident than we were before about re-opening schools.

Anyway, check out the articles and see what you think.

I'm an investor, and I mostly think that the virus is not an issue right now. My biggest concern right now is that we are doing damage to the economy by staying in lockdown. Damage that will really hurt us in the long run because of inflation and massive debt.

New study: newly identified antibody neutralizes both SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2 viruses

May 5, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a closer look at an interesting problem

The new research was published in Nature Communications, a prestigious peer-reviewed journal (link here). The research was reported by News Medical Life Sciences. According to the report, the new discovery is "an initial step towards developing a fully human antibody to treat or prevent the respiratory disease COVID-19 caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2."

Report here:

> Researchers at Utrecht University, Erasmus Medical Center and Harbour BioMed (HBM) today reported that they have identified a fully human monoclonal antibody that prevents the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus from infecting cultured cells.
>
> The discovery, published online today in *Nature Communications*, is an initial step towards developing a fully human antibody to treat or prevent the respiratory disease COVID-19 caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.

Dr. Berend-Jan Bosch of Utrecht University is the Research Leader and Study Co-Lead Author.

> […]Dr. Bosch noted that the antibody binds to a domain that is conserved in both SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2, explaining its ability to neutralize both viruses.
>
> "This cross-neutralizing feature of the antibody is very interesting and suggests it may have potential in mitigation of diseases caused by future-emerging related coronaviruses."

> “This discovery provides a strong foundation for additional research to characterize this antibody and begin development as a potential COVID-19 treatment,” said Frank Grosveld, PhD. co-lead author on the study, Academy Professor of Cell Biology, Erasmus Medical Center, Rotterdam and Founding Chief Scientific Officer at Harbour BioMed.
>
> “The antibody used in this work is ‘fully human,’ allowing development to proceed more rapidly and reducing the potential for immune-related side effects.” Conventional therapeutic antibodies are first developed in other species and then must undergo additional work to ‘humanize’ them.

What will be interesting is to see how Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc. handle this emerging research. I’ve heard that YouTube is suppressing and censoring research that disagrees with the Democrat lockdown narrative. This is because the lockdown is the only chance their candidate Joe Biden has to win in November.

We’ve seen that Democrat feminists are willing to look the other way to excuse rape when their candidate is accused of rape. But will they look the other way from peer-reviewed research in order to extend the economic devastation that is their only chance to win? And will they censor people who publicize actual published research in order to keep people in fear?

Share the post if you think it’s important.

William Lane Craig's secret weapon is his amazing wife Jan

May 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: "Godspeed" by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

I'm re-posting this classic post because it was mentioned in the latest episode of the Reasonable Faith podcast.

I want to draw your attention to a talk on "Vision in Life" given by Dr. William Lane Craig. Dr. Craig is the ablest defender of the Christian faith operating today. He has done formal academic debates with all of the best known atheists on major university campuses in front of *thousands* of university students.

It turns out that he owes a lot of his success to his amazing wife Jan.

The MP3 file is here. (32 minutes)

This talk was Dr. Craig's chapel address to Biola University students.

About 11 minutes into the talk, Bill describes what happened after he finished his Bachelor's degree at Wheaton:

> And so I joined the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for 2 years, and was assigned to Northern Illinois University. And that was where I met my wife Jan. She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota where she had come to faith in Christ. And she had a similar vision for her life of evangelism and discipleship.
>
> And as we worked at NIU together, she with gals and I with the guys, leading

> students to Christ and discipling them to walk with the Lord, we fell in love. And we decided that we would be more effective if we joined forces and became a team.

So their reason for getting together was because they thought that they would be more effective in evangelism and discipleship if they worked as a team.

It is at this point in the talk where Bill begins to explain just how Jan molded him into the lean, mean debating machine that travels the world striking terror into the hearts of atheists.

Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

In an article on his web site, he talks about how Jan encouraged him to do his first Ph.D:

> As graduation from Trinity neared, Jan and I were sitting one evening at the supper table in our little campus apartment, talking about what to do after graduation. Neither of us had any clear leading or inclination of what we should do next.
>
> So Jan said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really like to do next?"
>
> I replied, "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to England and do a doctorate under John Hick."
>
> "Who's he?" she asked.
>
> "Oh, he's this famous British philosopher who's written extensively on arguments for the existence of God," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a cosmological argument for God's existence."
>
> But it hardly seemed a realistic idea.
>
> The next evening at supper Jan handed me a slip of paper with John Hick's

> address on it. “I went to the library today and found out that he’s at the University of Birmingham in England,” she said. “Why don’t you write him a letter and ask him if you can do a doctoral thesis under him on the cosmological argument?”
>
> What a woman! So I did, and to our amazement and delight Professor Hick wrote back saying he’d be very pleased to supervise my doctoral work on that subject. So it was an open door!

And in the same article, he explains how Jan encouraged him to get his second Ph.D:

> As Jan and I neared the completion of my doctoral studies in Birmingham, our future path was again unclear to us. I had sent out a number of applications for teaching positions in philosophy at American universities but had received no bites. We didn’t know what to do.
>
> I remember it like yesterday. We were sitting at the supper table in our little house outside Birmingham, and Jan suddenly said to me, “Well, if money were no object, what would you really *like* to do next?”
>
> I laughed because I remembered how the Lord had used her question to guide us in the past. I had no trouble answering the question. “If money were no object, what I’d really like to do is go to Germany and study under Wolfhart Pannenberg.”
>
> “Who’s he?”
>
> “Oh, he’s this famous German theologian who’s defended the resurrection of Christ historically,” I explained. “If I could study with him, I could develop a historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus.”
>
> Our conversation drifted to other subjects, but Jan later told me that my remark had just lit a fire under her. The next day while I was at the university, she slipped away to the library and began to research grants-in-aid for study at German universities. Most of the leads proved to be defunct or otherwise inapplicable to our situation. But there were two grants she found that were possibilities. You can imagine how surprised I was when she sprung them on me!

Both of these Ph.D experiences are also described in the talk. And the talk concludes as follows:

> **I am so thankful to be married to a woman who is tremendously resourceful, tremendously talented and energetic, who could have pursued an independent career in any number of areas, but instead, she has chose to wed her aspirations to mine, and to make it her goal to make me the most effective person I can be, for Christ. And she has been like my right arm in ministry over these many years. And it is a tremendous privilege to be a team with a person like that.**
>
> **And you young men, I would encourage you, if you marry, to find a gal**

> **who shares your vision, not some independent vision, but who is interested in aligning herself with you, and pursuing together a common vision and goal that will draw you [together], so that you will avoid the growing separateness that so often creeps into marriages.**

And now you know the rest of Bill's story. *The person you marry will have an enormous influence on the impact you will have for Christ and his Kingdom.* It is up to you to decide whether that influence is going to be positive or negative, by deciding if you will marry, and if you do marry, by deciding whom you will marry.

You may also be interested in this talk given by William Lane Craig, entitled "Healthy Relationships" (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008) (audio here) In that talk, he offers advice to Christians who want to have a marriage that is consistent with their Christian faith.

More and more women are asking why they can't find a good man to marry

May 7, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

In the last few months, I've met 5 different Christian women in their 30s who all asked me the same question: where are all the good men who want to marry me?

Christian men's rights blogger Dalrock had two different posts where he described the answer to this question.

Here is the first post from Dalrock that concisely illustrates the problem:

> As I wrote in A very long season, feminists don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husbands than absolutely necessary. As if to prove this very point, 30 year old Mona Chalabi writes in the NY Times* I Want My 2.3 Bonus Years:
>
> If I could prolong my time as a young adult by, say, 2.3 years, here is a list of things I would like to do:
>
> • Go to more parties. Preferably wild parties that I can think about, years later, at mild parties.
>
> […]• Have more romantic partners.
>
> […]• Get a bit higher up the career ladder a bit earlier on. That would probably boost my earnings, giving me more financial security. I could use that money to go to more parties, get a membership to a fancy gym and maybe even meet a romantic partner on the ab machines.
>
> To drive the message home, the image at the top of the article is a cartoon of a

> resentful Chalabi giving her future husband the side eye for her lost years of sampling penises!

Surely, this must be an isolated case just for New York Times feminists, right? It's not widespread, is it?

Second post from Dalrock:

> Margaret Wente at the Globe and Mail* asks where all the good men have gone. Wente comes to the conclusion that women need a sex cartel:
>
> …it's up to us to make the rules. "Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" my father used to say. It drove me crazy when he said that. Now, it's dawned on me that he was right.
>
> Since the women's cartel collapsed, women's bargaining power has seriously eroded. That's why so many single women hate Tinder, which has further commodified sex for the benefit of men. Women are just another consumer good in the shop window.
>
> The apex fallacy aside, Wente is partially right. Women (as a group) have signaled to men that what they really want are exciting sexy badboys, not boring loyal dudes. **It isn't that women no longer want to marry beta providers, they just don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husband than absolutely necessary.**
>
> As a result, some up and coming boring loyal dudes aren't knocking themselves out in their twenties while they wait for their future wife to tire of having sex with other men.

If you wonder why men are no longer performing in school, and exchanging careers for video games, the answer is simple. Men have realized that young women today, under the influence of feminism, are not interested in traditional husbands during their late teens and 20s. During these years, women are interested in travel, fun, drinking, hook-ups and cohabitation with amoral atheists. This is what I have personally observed. In the minds of young women, the highest value men are good-looking men who have no religion, and make no moral judgments, and are left of center politically – especially on abortion.

There are actually many other men who don't meet this standard – marriage-minded men – who want to get married young and have children. But when these men see what young women really want, they just give up on school and work, since doing the traditional male roles has no value to young women. Many good men even give up on morality and Christianity, because they want a relationship with a woman so badly. They know that women don't want marriage-minded men when women are youngest and prettiest.

More from second post:

> What Wente doesn't understand is that timing is everything. From an economic point of view, women are dividing up sexual access that traditionally would have

> been reserved only for their husband into two blocks. The first block contains their most attractive and fertile years, and it is dedicated to no strings sex with exciting badboys. Then, once women reach what Rollo calls the epiphany phase, they want to bargain sexual access in their remaining (older and less fertile) years for maximum beta bucks.
>
> The problem with this strategy is (generally speaking) not that the previously overlooked beta men will refuse to marry the suddenly reformed party girls. The problem is that young men now look at the men 3-5 (and even 5-10) years older than them and don't see an indication that signaling provider status will make them attractive to women. They also see a society that holds married fathers in contempt**. Most of these men are still working hard in their late teens and twenties to prepare to signal provider status in their 30s. But a growing minority of young men are no longer doing so. These men are instead working like women. Once the reformed party girls are ready to find Mr. Beta Bucks, there is a shortage of 30 something men who fit the bill. Even worse, no amount of complaining or shaming will cause the missing beta providers to go back in time and spend the prior decade preparing for this moment.

I'm one of the last men who followed the marriage-preparedness script for traditional men who wanted to marry and have four children and have a stay-at-home homeschooling mom to raise them from birth to graduate school. I find myself now in my mid-40s, with a 6-figure income and a 7-figure net worth. I never used my success to play the field with hot bad girls. I wanted to keep my sexual past completely clean for my eventual wife. However, what I observed in my late teens and 20s and even early 30s was a complete lack of interest in marriage ability, from non-Christian women and Christian women alike. Christian women aren't learning to value early marriage from their married parents or their evangelical churches. None of the traditional husband skills are valued by young women, i.e. – chastity, gapless resume, alcohol abstinence, undergraduate and graduate STEM degrees, experience nurturing and mentoring others, stewardship of earned income.

I recently caused an uproar on my Facebook page by saying that even if the perfect woman showed up right now to marry me, I would not pursue her because the critical time where the woman could have applied maximum youth, beauty and fertility as a wife to make an impact on my education, early career, health, and finances has passed. A younger woman develops value to her husband precisely by applying herself to him and to her family in these critical early years. Men who have experienced this self-sacrificial love and support are loyal to their wives even after their wives lose their youth and beauty. Why? Because the men know that they are much better than they could have been, having enjoyed that early investment of value made by their young wives.

Young women very supportive of premarital sex

As Christian writer Matt Walsh notes in a recent article at the Daily Wire, this "follow your heart" focus on happiness in women is lethal to marital stability, and men know it.

Excerpt:

> There was an article in *Cosmo* this week with a title that summarizes all that's wrong with *Cosmo* and modern society as a whole: "I eloped at 25, divorced at 26, and dated my way across Europe all summer." Of course, by "dated my way across Europe" she means that she slept with half the continent.
>
> The author, Elise, says she "started fighting" with her husband and within a few months they both decided that their differences were irreconcilable. Despite counseling, she says, "neither of us was happy." So, exhausted from 12 whole months of marriage, Elise embarked on a voyage of self-discovery and STD cultivation. She met random dudes in half a dozen countries and had sex with them, learning quite a lot as she went, though she can't really explain what exactly she learned or why sex was a necessary component in learning it. Finally, she came home and started dating some other guy. The end.
>
> Well, not really the end. 20 years from now I'm sure we'll get the follow up article: "I'm alone and miserable and it's everyone's fault but mine." **After all, you may be able to fill the emptiness in your soul with frivolous sex when you're young and physically desirable, but that phase is fleeting. People who don't want to "waste" their beauty and youth on a spouse, so they waste it instead on strangers who don't love them or even care what happens to them tomorrow, will be shocked when a tomorrow comes where even strangers aren't interested anymore. This is where the single-minded, utterly selfish pursuit of "happiness" at all costs inevitably leads: to rejection, despair, and a quiet, unnoticed death on a lonely hospital bed.**
>
> As Elise helpfully demonstrated, "do what makes you happy" is poison in a marriage. Many a vow has been broken because one or both partners decide to

> chase “happiness” instead of commitment, fidelity, and love. “I deserve to be happy,” reports the legion of serial divorcees, as they drift on to the next spouse, and the next, and the next, and the next, looking for the one — *the* one, finally — who might cure the misery they’ve inflicted on themselves. Increasingly unhappy, yet increasingly convinced that they deserve to be.

And this follow your heart to happiness situation is alive and well in the church today. Marriage-minded Christian men who have prepared for husband roles are surprised to find that there is often little or no difference between Elise and the Christian women the church produces. Christian men who desire to invest in a marriage that is stable, productive and influential have nowhere to turn for a wife who is able and willing to help. In my experience, the problem with happiness-focused women who delay marriage is never discussed in churches from the pulpit. The “good men to marry” that today’s 30-something women are looking for were plentiful back when those same women were in their early-to-mid 20s.

The production of carbon from lighter elements is fine-tuned to an amazing degree

May 8, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

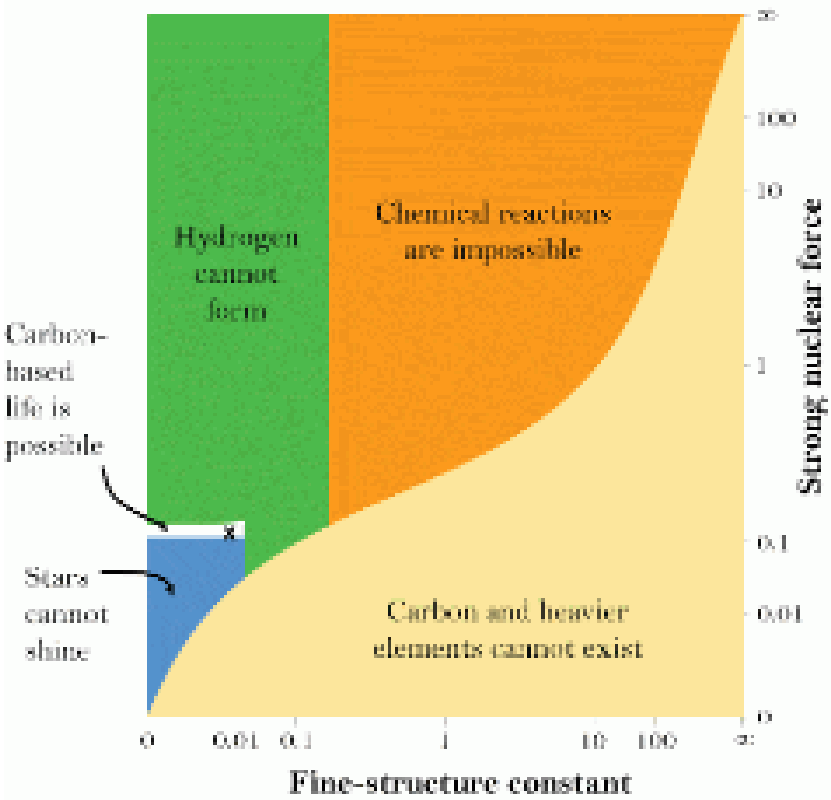

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant

If there is one thing that science fiction is good for, it's for popularizing the phrase "carbon-based life". Everyone has heard that carbon is essential for life. But do you know why carbon is so important? And did you know that the reaction that produced the carbon in our universe is actually fine-tuned, and therefore evidence for a Creator and Designer of the universe?

Hugh Ross has a new article up in Salvo magazine, which I found thanks to a post at Uncommon Descent.

Now he starts off with a discussion of how the mass density of the universe needed to be fine-tuned in order to produce elements heavier than hydrogen from the (only) hydrogen that was present at the creation event. I've talked about that reaction previously, but I won't repeat that here. Nucleosynthesis is one of the most important chemical reactions in science, and something every Christian should know and understand well enough to explain it.

You can't make complex embodied intelligent creatures such as ourselves out of only hydrogen and helium, but you can't make a life permitting universe without some hydrogen and helium. For one thing, you can't have liquid water without some hydrogen.

But the element carbon is the center hub of all of the molecules inside of us that allow for the storage and processing of information necessary for life. And it turns out that the

reaction that creates carbon from elements lighter than carbon is fine-tuned to an amazing degree.

Excerpt:

> But cosmic mass density is not the only thing that must have been exquisitely fine-tuned for the universe to contain any carbon. The nuclear resonance (or energy) levels for helium, beryllium, carbon, and oxygen also had to be exquisitely fine-tuned for carbon to exist. Here's how that happens.
>
> Stars fuse carbon and oxygen from helium through a series of reactions known as the triple-alpha process, in which three helium nuclei are combined to make one carbon nucleus. In the first step in this process, two helium nuclei (with 2 protons each) fuse together to make beryllium (which has 4 protons). Next, a helium nucleus fuses with a beryllium nucleus to make carbon (which has 6 protons). Then, some carbon nuclei fuse with helium nuclei to make oxygen (which has 8 protons).
>
> The only reason that the triple-alpha process produces any carbon or oxygen at all is because in the first step, the ground state energy level (i.e., the state of an atom when all of its electrons are at their lowest energy levels) of the beryllium-8 nucleus (containing 4 protons and 4 neutrons) almost exactly equals the ground state energy level of two helium-4 nuclei (2 protons and 2 neutrons each). In the second step, the ground state energy level of a beryllium-8 nucleus plus a helium-4 nucleus almost exactly equals the energy level of an excited state of a carbon-12 nucleus (6 protons and 6 neutrons). In the third step, the ground state energy level of a carbon-12 nucleus at 7.65 million electron volts is just slightly larger than the ground state energy level of an oxygen-16 nucleus (8 protons and 8 neutrons) at 7.12 million electron volts.[1]
>
> If it were not for the near equivalences or resonances of the nuclear energy levels of two helium nuclei relative to a beryllium nucleus, and of a beryllium nucleus plus a helium nucleus relative to a carbon nucleus, the universe would contain very little or no carbon and very little or no elements heavier than carbon. Life would be impossible.
>
> Furthermore, unless the difference in the nuclear energy levels between a carbon nucleus and an oxygen nucleus were precisely 0.53 million electron volts, the universe would contain either a lot of carbon and no oxygen or a lot of oxygen and no carbon. Either way, physical life would be impossible in the universe.
>
> In the early 1950s, astronomer Fred Hoyle and physicist Willy Fowler were the first to understand how critical the relative nuclear energy levels of helium, beryllium, carbon, and oxygen were for making life possible in the universe. Commenting on the highly fine-tuned nature of these nuclear energy levels, Hoyle wrote in an article he published in *Engineering & Science*,
>
> A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has

> monkeyed with the physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion beyond question.[2]

The article continues to explain that there is an additional problem of carbon fine-tuning related to habitability.

The carbon formation problem is one of the best examples of fine-tuning, and as you can see, it’s even admitted by atheists. It’s not the easiest one to explain (because resonance levels are not familiar in every day life), but it’s worth knowing about all three of the fine-tuning topics in the post.

Keep in mind that the more science has made progress, the more fine-tuning problems we have discovered. The trend is very bad if you are a naturalist. But very good if you are a theist. Evidence matters, and scientific evidence is the best kind of evidence.

Jeff Hester debates William Lane Craig on the topic “Is Belief in God Rational in a Scientific Age?”

May 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an accurate protrayal of what went down in this debate

I was very excited to see a recent debate by Christian philosopher William Lane Craig against atheist astronomer Jeff Hester. When I summarize a debate, I do a fair, objective summary if the atheist is intelligent and informed, as with Peter Millican, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong or Austin Dacey. But the following summary is rated VS for Very Snarky, and you’ll soon see why.

The debate itself starts at 29 minutes:

The audio is very poor.

Dr. Craig’s opening speech

Dr. Craig went first, and he presented 4 arguments, as well as the ontological argument which I won’t summarize or discuss. He later added another argument for theism from the existence of the universe that does not require an origin of the universe.

A1. Counter-examples

Theists who are elite scientists cannot be “irrational”, for example: Allan Sandage, Gustav Tammann, George Ellis, Don Page, Christopher Isham

A2. Kalam cosmological argument

1. Whatever begins to exist requires a cause.

2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe requires a cause.

A3. Fine-tuning of the universe to permit complex intelligent life

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is due either to physical necessity, chance or design.
2. It is not due to physical necessity or chance.
3. Therefore it is due to design.

A4. Moral argument

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.
2. Objective moral values and duties do exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Dr. Hester's opening speech

Dr. Hester went second and presented two arguments which both committed the genetic fallacy, a logical fallacy that makes the arguments have no force.

Hester starts his opening speech by asserting that Albert Einstein was irrational, because he denied quantum mechanics.

Hester explains that he became an atheist at 15. This would have been before the evidence for the origin of the universe became widespread, before we had very many examples of fine-tuning, before the discovery that the origin of life problem is a problem of the origin of complex, specifed information, etc. What kind of reasons can a 15-year-old child have for becoming an atheist? It's hard to say, but I would suspect that they were psychological. Children often desire autonomy from moral authorities. They want to be free to pursue pleasure. They don't want to be thought of as superstitious and morally straight by their non-religious peers.

Later on in the debate, Hester volunteers that he hated his father because his father professed to be a Christian, but he was focused on his career and making money. In the absence of any arguments for atheism, it's reasonable to speculate that Hester became an atheist for psychological reasons. And as we'll see, just like the typical 15-year-old child, he has no rational basis for atheism. What's astonishing is how he continues to hold to the atheism of his teens when it has been falsified over and over by scientific discoveries in the years since.

Dr. Craig's deductive arguments do have premises that reach a conclusion through the laws of logic. On the contrary, he just asserts that God exists as his conclusion, and then says that this assertion is the best explanation of a gap in our scientific knowledge. Some of the gaps in our scientific knowledge he uses in his arguments are: 1) he doesn't understand why the Sun moves through the sky, so God exists, 2) he doesn't understand why the wind blows, so God exists.

What counts as "rational" are things that have not been disproved. The progress of science has shown that the universe did not need a casuse in order to begin to exist, and

also there is no cosmic fine-tuning.

A1. The success of evolution in the software industry proves that there is no God

All hardware and software is developed using genetic algorithms that exactly match Darwinian processes. All the major computer companies like Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Apple, etc. are just generating products using mutation and selection to evolve products over long periods of time. If you look over a typical software engineering degree, it's all about Darwinian evolution, and nothing about design patterns, object-oriented design, etc.

This widespread use of evolution in the software industry undermines all of the arguments for God's existence. Evolution caused the origin of the universe. Evolution explains why the universe is fine-tuned for life. Evolution, which requires replication already be in place in order to work, explains the origin of the first self-replicating organism.

A2. Theist's view of the world is just a result of peer pressure from their tribes

All of Dr. Craig's logical arguments supported by scientific evidence don't matter, because he got them from a primitive tribe of Christians that existed 2000 years ago. Everyone gets their view of origins, morality, meaning in life, death, etc. from their tribes. Except me, I'm getting my beliefs from reason and evidence because I'm a smart atheist. I don't have an atheist tribe in the university that would sanction me if I disagreed with nonsense like homosexuality is 100% genetic, transgenderism, man-made catastrophic global warming, fully naturalistic evolution, aliens seeded the Earth with life, infanticide is moral, socialism works, overpopulation will cause mass starvation, nuclear winter, etc. Also, my argument isn't the genetic fallacy at all, because smart atheists don't commit elementary logical fallacies that even a first-year philosophy student would know.

A3. Our brains evolved so our rational faculties are unreliable, so God does not exist

The logical reasoning that Dr. Craig uses to argue for theism are all nonsense, because human minds just have an illusion of consciousness, an illusion of rationality, and an illusion of free will. Everything Dr. Craig says is just deluded nonsense caused by chemicals in his brain. He has cognitive biases the undermine all his logical arguments and scientific evidence. He just invented an imaginary friend with super powers. Except me, I'm a smart atheist, so I actually have real consciousness, real reasoning powers, and no cognitive biases. Also, my argument isn't the genetic fallacy at all, because my arguments would not get an F in a first-year philosophy course.

Discussion

I'm not going to summarize everything in the discussion, or the question and answer time. I'm just going to list out some of the more interesting points.

Dr. Craig asks him how it is that he has managed to escape these biases from tribalism, projection, etc. He talks about how brave and noble atheist rebels are. The moderator

asks him the same question. He repeats how brave and noble atheist rebels are.

Dr. Hester is asked whether he affirms a causeless beginning of the universe or an eternal universe. He replies he states that the universe came into being without a cause, because causality doesn't apply to the beignning of the universe. He also asserts with explanation that Borde, Guth and Vilenkin have undermined the kalam cosmological argument, mentioning a web site.

Dr. Craig replied to this phantom argument after the debate on Facebook:

> Speaking of which, although I haven't had time to consult the website mentioned by Dr. Hester concerning Guth and Vilenkin on the kalam cosmological argument, I know the work of these two gentlemen well enough to predict what one will find there. Since neither one is yet a theist (so much, by the way, for the dreaded confirmation bias!), they have to reject at least one of the premises of the kalam cosmological argument.
>
> Guth wants to deny premiss (2) The universe began to exist–for which Vilenkin has rebuked him. Guth would avoid the implications of their theorem by holding our hope for the Carroll-Chen model, which denies the single condition of the BGV theorem. This gambit is, however, unsuccessful, since the Carroll-Chen model does so only by positing a reversal of the arrow of time at some point in the finite past. This is not only highly non-physical, but fails to avert the universe's beginning, since that time-reversed, mirror universe is no sense in our past. The model really postulates two different universes with a common beginning.
>
> So Vilenkin is forced to deny premiss (1) Whatever begins to exists has a cause. He says that if the positive energy associated with matter exactly counterbalances the negative energy associated with gravity, then the net sum of the energy is zero, and so the conservation of energy is not violated if the universe pops into being from nothing! But this is like saying that if your assets exactly balance your debts, then your net worth is zero, and so there does not need to be a cause of your financial situation! As Christopher Isham points out, there still needs to be "ontic seeding" in order to create the positive and negative energy in the first place, even if on balance their sum is zero.

Dr. Hester is asked how he explains the evidence for fine-tuning. He literally says that "Life is fine-tuned for the Universe", i.e. – that evolution will create living beings regardless of the laws of physics, constants, etc. For example, he thinks that in a universe with a weaker stong force, which would have only hyrogen atoms, evolution would still evolve life. And in a universe that recollapses in a hot fireball, and never forms stars or planets, evolution would produce life. Physicist Luke Barnes, who was commenting on the YouTube chat for the video, said this:

> "Life is fine-tuned for the Universe" – complete ignorance of the field. Read a book.

Hester tries to cite Jeremy England to try to argue for life appearing regardless of what

the laws of physics are. Barnes comments:

> Jeremy England's work supports no such claim.

Hester appealed to the multiverse, which faces numerous theoretical and observational difficulties. For example, the multiverse models have to have some mechanism to spawn different universes, but these mechanisms themselves require fine-tuning, as Robin Collins argues. And the multiverse is falsified observationally by the Boltzmann brains problem. It was so ironic that Hester claimed to be so committed to testing theories. The mutliverse theory cannot be tested experimentally, and must be accepted on faith.

Dr. Hester is asked how he grounds morality on atheism. He says there are no objective moral values and duties. He instead lists off a bunch of Christian beliefs which he thinks are objectively wrong. Even his statements about these moral issues are misinformed. For example, he asserts that homosexuality is causally determined by biology, but this is contradicted by identical twin studies that have a rate of 20-40% where both twins are gay.

Dr. Hester is asked about free will, which is required in order to make moral choices. He denies the existence of free will, which undermines his earlier statements about morality. Morality is only possible if humans can make free choices to act in accordance with a moral standard. So, he claims that Christians are immoral, then he claims that they have no freedom to act other than they do.

Dr. Hester also volunteered that his father believed in the prosperity gospel, and tithed in order to be rewarded with money by God. Dr. Craig immediately says "no wonder you're in rebellion against Christianity". Indeed.

Dr. Hester is asked about his view that human beings are unable to unable to perceive the world objectively. How is he able to perceive the world objectively, when all of the rest of us are unable to? His response is that he is just smarter than everyone else because his ideas have never been falsified by testing.

Scoring the debate

Dr. Craig's 5 arguments went unrefuted. Hester's argument about genetic algorithms was ludicrous to anyone who understands software engineering. His arguments about tribalism and unreliable mental faculties were self-refuting, and committed the genetic fallcy. At several points, Hester denied mainstream science in favor of untested and untestable speculations. It was the worst defeat of atheism I have ever witnessed. He was uninformed and arrogant. He didn't know what he was talking about, and he tried to resort to speculative, mystical bullshit to cover up his failure to meet Dr. Craig's challenge.

Hospitals built for Wuhan Coronavirus patients are being dismantled

May 10, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

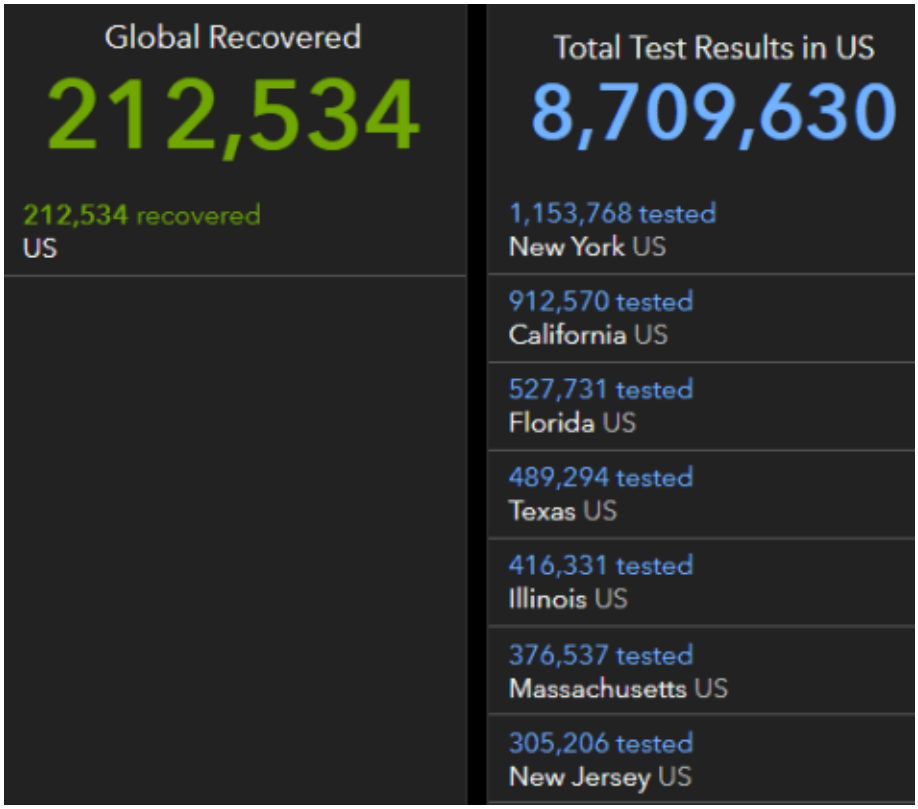

It was probably a good idea for the U.S. government to construct massive hospitals to deal with all the expected Coronavirus patients. But now, these hospitals are being dismantled, and almost all of them never saw a single Wuhan Coronavirus patient. This story was reported by far-left National Public Radio, which is about as far left as you can go, except for North Korea.

NPR reports:

> As hospitals were overrun by coronavirus patients in other parts of the world, the Army Corps of Engineers mobilized in the U.S., hiring private contractors to build emergency field hospitals around the country.
>
> The endeavor cost more than $660 million, according to an NPR analysis of federal spending records.
>
> But nearly four months into the pandemic, most of these facilities haven't treated a single patient.
>
> The Army Corps of Engineers has contracted with private companies to turn convention centers and other sites into emergency field hospitals. Federal spending totaled more than $660 million. Most of these facilities haven't treated a single COVID-19 patient. Some haven't opened. Others have closed but could reopen if there's a resurgence in cases. This data on some of the biggest projects

> is current as of Monday.

Things are also going well for states that have re-opened early.

Florida has an excellent governor and it looks like he did the best job of balancing the need to lock down with the need for a quick re-opening to save his state's economy.

The far-left Miami Herald reports:

> Restaurants are seating patrons for the first time in weeks. Shops are cautiously welcoming back customers. And state parks are opening their gates.
>
> As Florida looks to rebound from the crisis wrought by the novel coronavirus, so, too, does Gov. Ron DeSantis.
>
> Florida's Republican governor is slowly opening the state, a month after he shut it down amid national criticism for his response to the novel coronavirus outbreak that has so far killed at least 1,399 people in Florida and infected more than 36,000.
>
> The move — at a date when early models incorrectly predicted Florida would experience a peak in infections — isn't without risk. Florida continues to see sickness and death, particularly in hard-hit South Florida. But after avoiding worst-case predictions in March and April, DeSantis has, in May, positioned himself as a conservative coronavirus success story.
>
> "DeSantis right now has been able to thread that needle between overreacting and following the facts," said Rob Schmidt, a Republican Miami-based pollster with the firm McLaughlin & Associates.

And Georgia also re-opened early, but their Republican governor seems to have timed it right as well.

Far-left U.S. News and World Report has the story:

> THE number of Georgia patients hospitalized due to the coronavirus has fallen to its lowest total in weeks, Gov. Brian Kemp said Saturday as the state's death toll from COVID-19 reached at least 1,400.
>
> Kemp tweeted Saturday morning that 1,203 patients were currently hospitalized, the lowest number since the state started reporting the figure on April 8.
>
> He also noted that Saturday's total of 897 ventilators in use across the state was the lowest number since early April.
>
> "We will win this fight together!" the Republican governor tweeted.

Those states that re-open early will have much better economic growth than Democrat-run states like Michigan, New York, etc. that remain in lockdown mode. I sure hope that the blue states don't come begging for money from red states after they kill their own economies. I'm in a red state, we're open, and I don't want my money being used for socialists who make decisions with their feelings rather than with facts.

If white Americans are racist, how come Asians do so well in America?

May 11, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

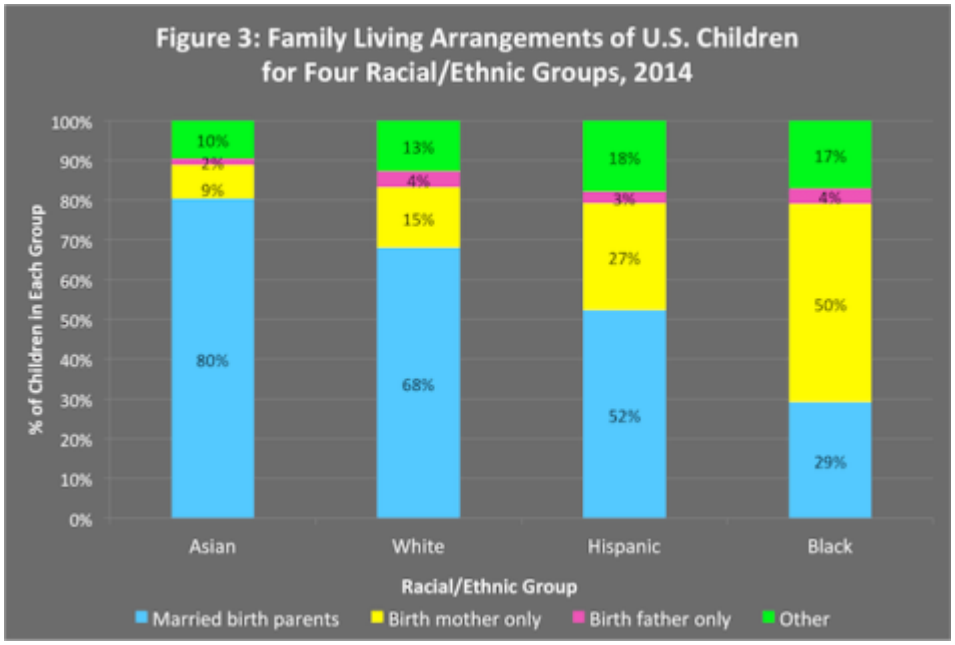

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

This article is written by the far-left radical Nicholas Kristof, writing in the radically-leftist New York Times. (A former newspaper)

Excerpt:

> THIS is an awkward question, but here goes: Why are Asian-Americans so successful in America?
>
> It's no secret that Asian-Americans are disproportionately stars in American schools, and even in American society as a whole. Census data show that Americans of Asian heritage earn more than other groups, including whites. Asian-Americans also have higher educational attainment than any other group.
>
> […]Does the success of Asian-Americans suggest that the age of discrimination is behind us?

> A new scholarly book, "The Asian American Achievement Paradox," by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, notes that Asian-American immigrants in recent decades have started with one advantage: They are highly educated, more so even than the average American. These immigrants are disproportionately doctors, research scientists and other highly educated professionals.
>
> It's not surprising that the children of Asian-American doctors would flourish in the United States. But Lee and Zhou note that kids of working-class Asian-Americans often also thrive, showing remarkable upward mobility.

Part of the problem is that non-Asian Americans take a passive view of life, believing that

high grades come to those who are naturally smart – not to those who work harder:

> There's also evidence that Americans believe that A's go to smart kids, while Asians are more likely to think that they go to hard workers… Asian-American kids are allowed no excuse for getting B's — or even an A-. The joke is that an A- is an "Asian F."

And, as the image I posted above shows, Asian girls are given boundaries on their sexuality, causing them to choose men who will be good husbands and fathers, and making those men marry before being given sex – factors proven to improve marital stability:

> Strong two-parent families are a factor, too. Divorce rates are much lower for many Asian-American communities than for Americans as a whole, and there's evidence that two-parent households are less likely to sink into poverty and also have better outcomes for boys in particular.

So, let's be real – if white racial discrimination held non-white groups back, then Asians would be in the same situation as blacks and hispanics. But Asians are not being held back, because of their strong marriage culture and focus on hard work. Whites don't hold anyone back. This is just a myth that Democrats use to make blacks (and hispanics) think that they need government to save them from the bogeyman. Asians don't need saving, and neither should any other non-white groups.

We can start by shaming women of all races who choose to have sex with men who are not ready for marriage. There are lots of men out there who are willing to marry, and that should be what women are looking for most if all in a man. That change alone will probably erase most of the achievement gap between different racial groups. Does anyone have the courage to tell young women (of all races) to be more responsible with their sexual decisions? The out-of-wedlock birth rate for blacks is over 70%. This causes massive poverty and crime in the black community. Does anyone have the courage to tell blacks that they are doing this to themselves?

Barack Obama used the FBI as a Democrat weapon against the Trump administration

May 12, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Barack Obama and his corrupt ally in the FBI

Another Obama administration scandal came out last week. We already knew that the Obama administration used the IRS to suppress Americans they disagreed with. The Clinton campaign and the DNC helped fund the Russia dossier, that was used to get permission to spy on Trump's campaign. The latest scandal goes right back to the White House and Barack Obama himself.

The New York Post reports:

> It's now clear the Obama-Comey FBI and Justice Department never had anything more substantial than the laughable fiction of the Steele dossier to justify the "counterintelligence" investigation of the Trump campaign. Yet incessant leaks from that supposedly confidential probe wound up consuming the Trump administration's first months in office — followed by the Bob Mueller-led special-counsel investigation that proved nearly the "total witch hunt" that President Trump dubbed it.
>
> Information released as the Justice Department dropped its charges against Gen. Mike Flynn shows that President Barack Obama, in his final days in office, played a key role in fanning the flames of phony scandal. Fully briefed on the "Crossfire Hurricane" investigation, he knew the FBI had come up with nothing despite months of work starting in July 2016.
>
> Yet on Jan. 5, 2017, Obama told top officials who'd be staying on in the new administration to keep the crucial facts from Team Trump.
>
> It happened at an Oval Office meeting with Vice President Joe Biden, intel chiefs John Brennan and Jim Clapper and National Security Adviser Susan Rice, as well as FBI Director Jim Comey and Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates.

The Obama administration leaked all sorts of unproven allegations to their lapdogs in the liberal media, all designed to destroy the credibility of the Trump administration:

> [T]he Obama administration went on a full-scale leak offensive — handing The Washington Post, New York Times and others a nonstop torrent of "anonymous" allegations of Trumpite ties to Moscow. It suggested that the investigations were finding a ton of treasonous dirt on Team Trump — when in fact the investigators had come up dry.
>
> Sadly, Comey's FBI played along — sandbagging Flynn with the "friendly" interview that later became the pretext for the bogus charges dropped last week, as well as triggering the White House chaos that led to his ouster. This, when the FBI had already gone over the general with a fine-tooth comb, and concluded that, no, he'd done nothing like collude with the Russians.
>
> Meanwhile, Comey himself gave Trump an intentionally misleading briefing on the Steele dossier. That was followed by leaks that suggested the dossier was the tip of an iceberg, rather than a pack of innuendo that hadn't at all checked out under FBI scrutiny.

Fortunately, people are starting to realize that the mainstream news media is working for the Democrats and lying to the American people all the time.

Here's an example of left-wing media bias from last week from the far-left CBS News:

> Top government officials slammed CBS News' "60 Minutes" after co-host Scott Pelley ran a segment on Sunday night that contained false and misleading claims on certain aspects of the Trump administration's response to the coronavirus pandemic, which originated in Wuhan, China.

And also from last week, another example of left-wing media bias from the far-left NBC News:

> NBC News' "Meet The Press" admitted late on Sunday that their segment earlier in the day on remarks made by Attorney General William Barr last week was false after host Chuck Todd was called out publicly by a spokesperson for the Department of Justice.

It's not so bad that the news media is almost entirely composed of Democrat activists. The problem is that they lie and lie and lie all the time. They can't stop themselves from lying to their viewers.

If you're watching news on television and it's not Fox News, you're being lied to. Period. Some people like to listen to lies, because it makes them feel that they are smart, and other Americans are stupid. Don't be one of these self-deceiving people.

Woman explains what she was told about having children when she was young

May 13, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

This article is by Ellie Bufkin, writing for the The Federalist. I always had a suspicion that women were being told not to marry too early, and not to have kids too early, but to instead enjoy their freedom. (With all that that entails) In some cases, it was their own mothers telling them this. Here is the story of one woman who was told to follow her dreams – as long as they didn't involve marriage and children.

Excerpt:

> Since I was young, I've heard a non-stop stream of encouragement for me, as a "modern woman," to take charge of my own life, live independently, and chase my dreams. This seems like the obvious advice we should give children, except that many people spent so much time chasing their dreams and creating their bespoke lives that they forgot to have children.
>
> While growing up in the suburbs, my post-scholastic dream did not consist of finding a partner and having babies. I wanted to see the world, experience many cultures, and live without having to worry about caring for anyone else. I ended up in a fast-paced career with a propensity for hard partying, late hours, and a taste for travel and luxury.
>
> As years ticked by, I assumed my perfect life would simply fall into place when I was ready, my career would steadily improve, and I would be swept off my feet by a perfect man. I had many friends with the exact same expectations for their lives, and today, we are pretty much all still single and childless.
>
> We set our expectations so high that we never achieved them. We dated people with the same hope for impossibly perfect lives and moved from city to city,

> hoping we could achieve a greatness that was not to be.
>
> […]Liberal feminists widely consider it to be morally wrong to have children in your twenties, or to have more than two children, or to continue any unplanned pregnancy. As a species, shouldn't we want to reproduce? If we continue to reinforce the idea that having kids is a taboo choice, how long will it be before there are no children?
>
> Many of the women I went to primary and high school with never left our little hometown, and now have their own children in the exact suburb I couldn't wait to get away from. In my twenties, I pitied them. How could they be so uncurious as to never leave home? Weren't we all raised to believe that women had choices now?

The next thing I want to do is to give you some facts about infertility, and whether women have accurate beliefs about infertility.

Dina sent me this UK Daily Mail article a while back, but I held onto it until I could find something to pair it with.

It says:

> One of Britain's top NHS fertility specialists last night issued a stark warning to women: Start trying for a baby before you're 30 – or risk never having children.
>
> In a strongly worded letter to Education Secretary Nicky Morgan, consultant gynaecologist Professor Geeta Nargund has also demanded that teenagers are taught about the dangers of delaying parenthood, because of the spiralling cost to the taxpayer of IVF for women in their late 30s and 40s.
>
> […]Prof Nargund said last night: 'Ideally, if a woman is ready for a child, she should start trying by the time she is 30. She should consider having a child early because as a woman gets older, her fertility declines sharply.'
>
> If a woman started trying early enough, doctors would still have time to diagnose problems and take action before it was too late, she said.
>
> Her comments were endorsed by Professor Allan Pacey, outgoing chair of the British Fertility Society.
>
> **'You need to be trying by 30 because if there is a problem and you need surgery, hormones or IVF, then you've got five years to sort it out,' he said. 'If a woman starts trying at 35, doctors have got to sort it out when she is already on a slippery fertility slope'.**

My friend Drew found a study reported on by ABC News, that explained why the age of 30 is so important.

Excerpt:

> By the time a woman hits 30, nearly all of her ovarian eggs are gone for good, according a new study that says women who put off childbearing for too long

> could have difficulty ever conceiving.
>
> The study published by the University of St. Andrews and Edinburgh University in Scotland found that women have lost 90 percent of their eggs by the time they are 30 years old, and only have about 3 percent remaining by the time they are 40.

Now, do most women know what the experts say about infertility?

Consider this article from Aeon magazine.

It says:

> Many studies show that women are not only woefully ignorant when it comes to fertility, conception and the efficacy of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) – but they overestimate their knowledge about the subject. **For instance, a 2011 study in *Fertility and Sterility* surveyed 3,345 childless women in Canada between the ages of 20 and 50; despite the fact that the women initially assessed their own fertility knowledge as high, the researchers found only half of them answered six of the 16 questions correctly.** 72.9 per cent of women thought that: 'For women over 30, overall health and fitness level is a better indicator of fertility than age.' (False.) And 90.9 per cent felt that: 'Prior to menopause, assisted reproductive technologies (such as IVF) can help most women to have a baby using their own eggs.' (Also false.) Many falsely believed that by *not* smoking and *not* being obese they could improve their fertility, rather than the fact that those factors simply negatively affect fertility.
>
> […]**According to a 2011 study in *Human Reproduction*, which surveyed 410 undergraduate students, most overestimated a women's chances of spontaneous pregnancy in all age groups, but particularly after receiving IVF beyond age 40.** Only 11 per cent of the students knew that genetic motherhood is unlikely to be achieved from the mid-40s onward, unless using oocytes or egg cells frozen in advance. 'This can be explained by technological "hype" and favourable media coverage of very late pregnancies,' the authors concluded.

So, I guess now I'll issue my advice to women in their 20s on how to avoid being single and childless at 35.

Money gives men confidence to pull the trigger on marriage, so you should focus your efforts on men with a solid balance sheet and a gap-less resume. Beware of men who paint a rosy picture of their finances in the future that makes you feel good, but who have not demonstrated their ability to earn or save. It's much better to focus your time on a man who can marry you *right now*. The best way to tell if a man is capable of marriage is not by listening to confident words, it's by looking to see how he has prepared to perform his roles, one of which is *provider*.

Be debt free. Study STEM in school, update your resume, and get a job that pays well. Jobs are not meant to be fun or fulfilling. You need to be preparing financially for

marriage, and that means a normal 8-4:30 job in an office with 3% annual raises and 401K matching. The more you save to help your man with the down payment on your house, the better. Pursuing fun and spending money on frivolous things like travel makes you addicted to fun, which is unsuitable for the hard work and responsibilities in marriage. Working a hard job is a good way to break down your selfishness, and prepare you to take your obligations to others seriously. *Don't* live in the moment, *do* sacrifice for the future. Believe me: a woman's debt is a *serious* damper on a man's willingness to marry her.

If you went to college, chances are that you absorbed a lot of feminism. Feminism emphasizes being free of constraints, feeling happy, having fun, career over family, and independence from the needs of men and children. And most of all, it teaches mistrust and disrespect of male leadership. Not every man can be trusted and respected as a leader, and that's why it's on you to choose a man who can be trusted and respected as a leader. Most married women will tell you that leadership in moral and spiritual areas is the most difficult and valuable quality to get in a man. Get yourself a marriage mentor, ask for book recommendations that will educate you about the challenges and rewards of marriage. A good marriage mentor will explain to you why marriage is a better plan than the feminist plan, and will emphasize self-denial, self-sacrifice, self-control and serving others. It's only by getting specific about marriage and parenting that your heart will change to want to work on marriage rather than work on the things that the feminist culture prefers. I recommend Dr. Laura's book on husbands, and lectures by Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse.

This talk of infertility made me think of a woman I know who just turned 30. She spent most of her 20s in relationships with huge, tall burly men. Race car drivers, etc. She liked to travel, especially to the beach. She liked ride around with in boats with buff guys. Now, at 30, she is very jaded about men and struggling to even get a date. In my experience, men are most open to marrying a woman who is young, athletic, and doesn't have baggage from fun-seeking with hot bad boys. Sexual baggage usually builds impatience, mistrust, disrespect and controlling behavior in a woman. Men prefer to marry virgins who are calm, stable and not addicted to alcohol or drugs. The time to focus on serious marriage-minded providers and leaders is when you have what men need from a woman for a marriage.

CNN’s new election poll shows Trump leading Rapey Joe Biden in 15 battleground states

May 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

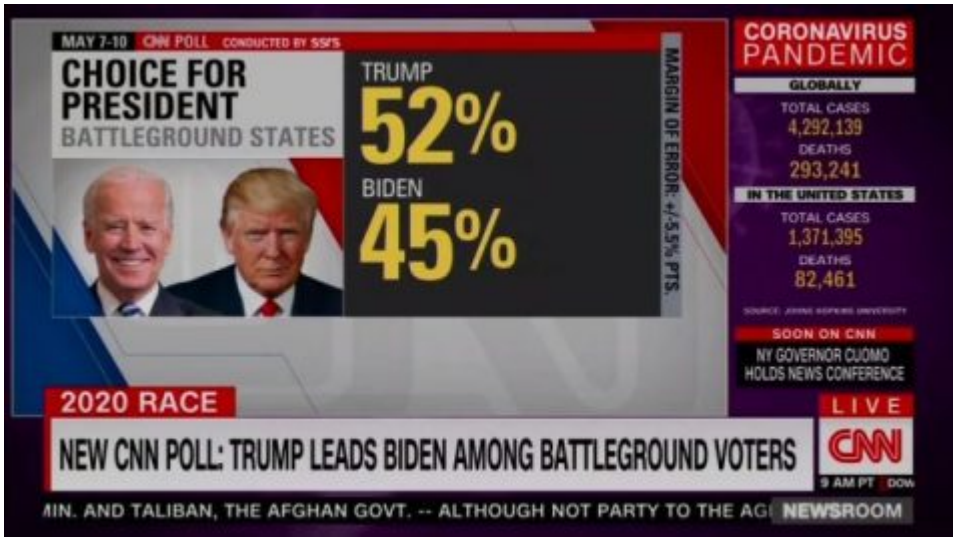

Trump leads accused rapist Joe Biden in 15 battleground states

Well, well, well, look at the election polls in battleground states. It turns out that YOUNG PEOPLE of all people are starting to realize that what the Democrats are planning for them – permanent lockdown and economic decline – isn’t very good for them. And the funny part is, the bad news is being reported by radically leftist CNN. It’s their own poll that’s showing Trump’s rise in popularity.

Daily Wire reports:

> Much to CNN’s chagrin, their own new poll shows President Trump leading former Vice President Joe Biden in 15 battleground states, 52%-45%. Those states include Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin. Seven of those states voted for Trump in 2016: Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Eight voted for Clinton: Colorado, Maine, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Virginia.
>
> CNN noted an important recent shift: “The results suggest that younger voters in the battleground states are tilted in favor of Trump, a stark change from the last CNN poll in which battleground voters were analyzed in March, even as other demographic groups shifted to a smaller degree.”
>
> […]The poll found 95% of Republicans backed Trump while 95% of Democrats backed Biden. One salient and significant difference between the candidates; 50% of Independents favored Trump while 46% backed Biden. Reuters reported last August, “Voters declaring themselves as independent of a major political party rose nationally by 6 percentage points to 28 percent of the U.S. electorate between 2000 and last year’s congressional midterm contest in states with party

> registration, analyst Rhodes Cook wrote in Sabato's Crystal Ball political newsletter at the University of Virginia Center for Politics … Republicans won the independent vote by 7 percentage points in 2016."
>
> Biden's 51%-46% edge nationwide in the CNN poll came from the fact that there are simply more voters identifying as Democrats.

Two points I want to make about this news.

First of all, my wise Scottish advisor Dina says that all the news about Trump that she sees in the UK is all negative. She is always asking me what the real situation is with Trump. It's true that MOST people in the United States support Biden. But that's not how we decide elections. The election is actually decided by who wins the electoral college votes of individual states. So it's the polls in toss-up states are the ones that really predict who will win.

Democrats tend to pack themselves into deep blue states, because they can't stand to have their own ideas subjected to critical scrutiny. They don't want to confront disagreement, because their emotion-based worldviews are fragile. They want safe spaces. So, a lot of Democrat votes are wasted in these deep blue states. Democrats don't get any more electoral votes from winning a blue state by 30% versus winning it by 2%. They just waste Democrat votes. Trump just has to win the majority of the battleground states in order to win the election.

Second, you should be thinking now about what you're going to do to influence the election in November. Whether you put out a yard sign, or register to go door-to-door, or work the phones to get out the vote, we should all be planning to do something now. I'm planning to do the yard sign. If you have money, political donations to conservative candidates in tight races help a lot. And if you don't have money, but still want to do something, then by all means, SHARE NEWS ARTICLES on your social media pages. It's time to start persuading people now. Don't want till election day to start making a difference.

IF IT'S NOT CLOSE, THEY CAN'T CHEAT. We need to take action in order to make sure that it's not close. Talking doesn't do anything, we all need to have a plan to do something effective, that gets us to the result we want in November.

Tad Hopp accumulated $100,000 of college debt, now he wants a taxpayer bailout

May 15, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

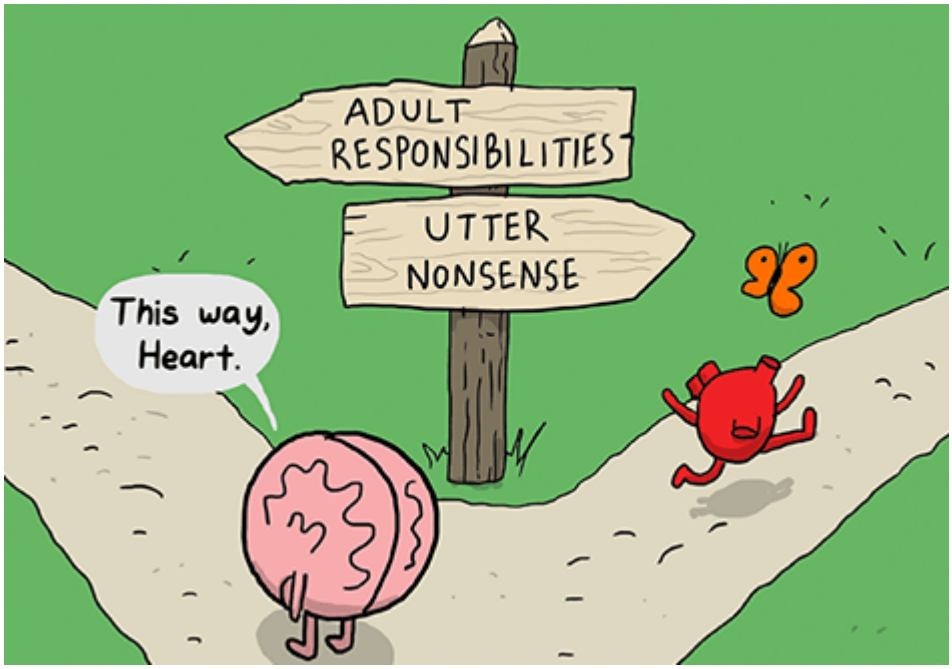

Brain vs Heart, from: theawkwardyeti.com

Here's an interesting editorial from a "Christian" left blog. (H/T Acton Institute)

The author, Tad Hopp is graduating a PCUSA seminary – an extremely liberal, left-wing denomination.

He writes:

> I graduated college in 2007.
>
> […] I majored in English, not exactly what most people consider a 'marketable' or 'practical' degree…
>
> […]I went to a somewhat expensive private school…
>
> […]I did what many students in their last year of high school do: I went to the school where I felt I was being called…
>
> […]I do not regret my four years at my undergraduate institution one bit.
>
> [….]When I graduated college, I owed nearly $50,000 in student loan debt and was unemployed for almost six months before I finally found a low-paying office job.
>
> […]"Can't find a job? Well, you should have majored in something more 'practical', like economics or business or medicine." Yeah, that *would* be great…if those were the subjects where my skills and passions lie. They're not.
>
> […]I felt called to go to seminary.
>
> […]I will graduate seminary with close to six figures worth of student loan debt.

Let’s take stock of what he’s said so far:

- he studied English, a language that he already spoke, which has one of the lowest employment rates
- he was warned by people who knew something about earning and saving money not to study English
- he went to a school he couldn’t afford to go to, and he graduated with $50,000 in debt
- he went to seminary, another subject that doesn’t pay, and added another $50,000 or so of debt
- he says that he doesn’t have to study subjects that lead to a career because he isn’t “passionate” about them
- he “followed his heart” by going to the school that he had mystical, emotional, intuitions about = “calling”

My advice to Tad at this point would be for him to take the Bible seriously when it says this:

2 Thessalonians 3:10:

> 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

And 1 Timothy 5:8:

> 8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

The Bible is giving us the goal of working. So what should we do to be able to reach that goal? Why should anyone hire us? What is working really about? It’s those kinds of questions that should guide what we study in school, and what jobs we pursue.

We know what careers have the highest starting salaries and mid-career salaries:

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image) (Source)

Why do some people get paid more than others? The answer is supply and demand. Prices are a way of determining what is most valued by your fellow man. Business owners pay more to people who offer their customers more value. If you really want to serve your neighbor, you have to learn something they really want, but can't easily obtain. And then you will be paid more. You can't do what makes you happy. You have to do what makes customers happy. That's how the free market works – you make money when you provide something of value to others. You make money when you serve others. This is something that is very hard for self-centered, feelings-driven young progressives to grasp. But it's something older Americans all know.

More Tad:

> Is the PCUSA doing anything to address this crisis?
>
> […]What has our government done to address this issue?
>
> […]I, like so many in my generation, voted for Obama…
>
> […]It seems to me that we've bought into the lie that student loan debt is brought on by the individual person…
>
> […]You know what I think might stimulate the economy? Automatically cancelling every single outstanding student loan!

He insists that the results of his own choices aren't his fault. But didn't he make the choices about what to study? Didn't he make the choice to follow his heart? Didn't he disregard the advice of people who urged him to be practical? Who is to blame, if not he, himself?

Tad needs to push away all his friends who told him to "follow his heart" and stick close by his friends who told him to focus on providing value to others. Don't look for advice

from dreamers, look for advice from doers. Dreamers talk. But doers have *demonstrated* the ability to create plans that work to achieve *results*.

By the way, some of you might be wondering how serious this person was about his Christianity. Well, in another post, he comes out as gay. So clearly the Bible is being interpreted in a way where feelings are overturning the plain meanings of words. People who read the Bible closely never come away with the message that they should follow their hearts.

Christian woman finds a way to discuss her faith with non-Christians

May 16, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting article where a Christian woman explains how she used to share her testimony with non-Christians. But that wasn't working. So she decided to try something different.

She writes:

> I'll never forget the first time I shared my personal testimony with a non-Christian.
>
> When the opportunity arose and I shared my story with an unbelieving friend, she replied, "That's so cool. I'm so happy you found something that works for you."
>
> *For me?*
>
> "It's not about what works *for me*," I said, trying to hide my discouragement. "It's about what's true for everyone."
>
> "That doesn't make sense," she responded. "That's *your experience*, not mine. I had a similar revelation when I realized I could leave the church, and I've become a better person for *my* decision. Just as you were freed from your heaviest burdens by finding God, I was freed from mine by leaving God behind."
>
> I was devastated but I chalked it up to my friend's hardheartedness. I decided to shake the dust off my feet and look forward to the next opportunity.
>
> But time after time of sharing my testimony resulted in similar responses. People expressed enthusiasm that I was happy, that Christianity worked for me, and that I had "found my niche." Yet no one considered my experience as anything more than just that—my own personal experience.

> […]I had been taught that sharing what God had done in my life was the ideal way to witness to non-Christians. A personal testimony was interesting yet non-confrontational, compelling but inoffensive. And yet, despite having shared my testimony with dozens of unbelievers, not a single person felt challenged to consider the truth claims of Christianity.

She noticed that her approach wasn't actually in the Bible. There was a different approach being demonstrated by Jesus, and later by his disciples.

She writes:

> When Jesus called his first disciples, he taught truth and provided evidence (miracles) to support his claims, then he asked people to follow him (Luke 5:1–11). In fact, this was his method whenever he went into new regions (see Luke 4:14–44; John 4:7–26). People decided to follow Jesus not on blind faith or a subjective feeling, but based on the evidence they had seen and heard.[i]
>
> Jesus also used evidence to assuage the doubts of even those who had been with him a long time. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin, who leapt in the womb during Mary's visit (Luke 1:39–45), baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, heard God's voice from heaven, and saw the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus in bodily form like a dove (Luke 3:21–22). Yet when John experienced unexpected suffering, he began to doubt.
>
> Jesus didn't respond as many do today, by insisting that John "just believe" or "have faith" or "prayer harder." Rather, he responded with more evidence, saying, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." (Matt. 11:2–6).
>
> […]At Pentecost, the apostle Peter offered signs and wonders, fulfilled prophecy, and relayed eyewitness testimony to persuade people from all over the Roman Empire that the most reasonable explanation for what they were seeing was not morning drunkenness, but a risen Messiah (Acts 2:1–41).
>
> On his missionary journeys, the apostle Paul reasoned with the Jews from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that Jesus was the Messiah who needed to suffer and rise from the dead (Acts 17:1–3, 17). And he reasoned with the Gentiles from outside the Scriptures, making a case with their own accepted beliefs to convince them (Acts 17:17–34).
>
> In fact, in describing his mission, Paul told the Philippians, "I am put here for the defense of the gospel" (1:7, 16). This word translated defense is the same word from which we get our English word "apologetics," meaning to make reasoned arguments or to provide evidence as justification. Using this same word, Peter commanded believers to "always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you"(1 Pet. 3:15).

So, she decided to dump the testimony approach, and try the Biblical approach. But she had to change it a little bit, since she couldn't perform miracles herself:

> We are not eyewitnesses to Jesus's life and resurrection, but we have the accounts of those who were. We don't typically see miracles, but we have millennia of biblical scholarship and archaeology that provide reasons to believe the accounts are trustworthy. We don't often hear God speaking audibly or see him parting seas, but we have significant scientific evidence that shows the universe had a beginning, and millennia of observation to confirm the scientific principle that everything that begins to exist has a cause.

I think a lot of Christians never move on from approach she described that wasn't getting results. And there's a reason for that – studying evidence is hard work. But I can tell you from my experience as a software engineer, there is no better way to convince other people to adopt your view than to show them working code that produces results. If they have a prototype, they will adopt your design. Similarly with Christianity. If you have evidence, then you will be persuasive.

When talking about spiritual things with non-Christians, always remember the joke about the two men walking in the woods who meet a bear. One man starts to put on his running shoes. The other man says "what are you doing? you can't outrun a bear!" And the first man says "I don't have to. I only have to outrun you". It's the same with apologetics. You don't have to be William Lane Craig to talk about your faith to non-Christians. You just have to know more than your non-Christian opponent knows about evidence.

The way things are going these days with the public schools and the mainstream news media, this is actually pretty easy to do. One or two introductory books on the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning for intelligent life, the origin of biological information, the origin of body plans, the historical reliability of the New Testament, the minimal facts case for the resurrection, etc. will do the job. You might need another one on philosophical challenges like evil, suffering, divine hiddenness, etc. But we're talking no more than 5 books, and you'll be effective in the vast majority of your conversations. If you can only get one book, I like Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow's "Is God Just a Human Invention?" best.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

May 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
This is one of my favorite lectures.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips.

Here is a clip:

The full video can be watched on Vimeo:

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range

in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

It's a good lecture explaining a couple of basic arguments for a cosmic Creator and Designer. If you add the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion (Stephen C. Meyer's arguments), then you will be solid on the basic scientific arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Nevada Democrat Congressman admits sex scandal with former intern

May 18, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's another pro-abortion Democrat / hot underage intern scandal

Should you marry a Democrat? Steven Horsford's wife did. She thought that a man who supports abortion and gay marriage would make a fine husband. Well, there are certain minimum behaviors that any husband should exhibit, two of them being self-control and integrity. His wife thought that she didn't need to evaluate his religion or morality before marrying him. She was wrong.

The Washington Times has the story:

> Democratic Congressman Steven Horsford of Nevada on Saturday acknowledged he had an extramarital affair with a woman who said the on-and-off relationship began in 2009 before ending last September.
>
> Horsford, 47, in a statement released to The Associated Press responded to a report by the Las Vegas Review-Journal that he had an affair with Gabriela Linder, who previously had shared her story on podcasts and Twitter posts through a pseudonym before she was interviewed Friday by the newspaper.
>
> […]Horsford's House bio says he and his wife have three children.
>
> A spokeswoman for Horsford indicated he does not plan to resign, as at least one Republican opponent suggested.
>
> […]Linder told the the Review-Journal she was 21 and an intern for then-Sen. Harry Reid in his Las Vegas office when she met Horsford, then majority leader of the Nevada Senate.

Apparently, this Democrat man campaigned on being a "family man" and a "man of God". I'm struggling to see how you square that with having a 0% conservative rating from the Heritage Foundation, and having an affair with an intern much younger than you. But that's not surprising given how Democrat men act these days. If you're willing to

abort unborn children, then you're willing to do anything morally wrong. Why would any woman marry a man like this? Morality is important for a successful marriage. You can't just marry a psychopath and then expect things to work out somehow.

Daily Wire notes:

> Horsford ran for Congress in 2018 after Democrat Rep. Ruben Kihuen (NV) did not run for re-election after facing sexual harassment allegations during the height of the #MeToo movement.
>
> The House Ethics Committee later concluded that Kihuen violated the House's code of conduct, writing in a report: "Kihuen made persistent and unwanted advances towards women who were required to interact with him as part of their professional responsibilities."
>
> Horsford's sex scandal comes after Democrat Rep. Katie Hill (CA) resigned last year due to a sex scandal, and the Republican Party flipped her seat this year, the first time the party flipped a seat in California in over 20 years, when former Navy fighter pilot Mike Garcia won last week.
>
> Several other House Democrats have faced allegations of sex scandals or investigations into possible sex scandals during the current congressional term, including Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN), Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-FL), and Delegate Michael F. Q. San Nicolas of Guam (non-voting member).

Don't forget about other Democrats like Bill Clinton, Anthony Weiner, Eliot Spitzer, Eric Schneiderman, Ed Murray, Katie Hill, etc. It seems like they are always involved in sex scandals. And in fact you can even see wealthy Democrat mega-donors like Jeffrey Epstein and Terry Bean getting charged with having sex with underage people all the time. (Terry Bean is the co-founder of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest gay rights group in the nation).

Now I have a question for you. What is it that young Democrat women are hoping to achieve by supporting the party of sexual deviance? Do they think that this will lead them to a faithful man, a stable marriage, well-behaved children and a peaceful home? If so, then maybe we ought to be having talks with young women about what sort of worldview rationally grounds self-sacrificial love, commitment, and objective moral obligations. It sure isn't the secular leftist nihilistic worldview of the Democrat party. If they want a Mike Pence marriage, then why not tell them to evaluate men for the Mike Pence Christian worldview?

There is a plan for a Republican to take the seat back, though:

> Five lesser known candidates have filed to challenge Horsford in the 2020 Democratic primary while eight Republicans and a Libertarian filed to run for their nominations. The Republicans include former Nevada Assemblyman Jim Marchant, Nye County Commissioner Leo Blundo and Lisa Song Sutton, a business owner and former Miss Nevada.

> Sutton on Saturday called for Horsford to resign from Congress and for the House Ethics Committee to investigate his conduct.
>
> Sutton noted that then-Rep. Ruben Kihuen, a one-term Democrat, did not run for reelection in the 4th District in 2018 following allegations of sexual harassment.
>
> “This seat has been plagued by distractions and scandals by men who cannot stay focused on their responsibilities because they are too busy chasing women,” Sutton said. “Horsford is not fit to lead us. His family will be in my prayers.”

As a bonus, I noticed that Sutton is the daughter of a Korean mother who immigrated legally to the United States. That’s exactly the kind of candidate we need to deflect the ridiculous accusations of racism and sexism from the secular left.

Bible study: Was the resurrection body of Jesus spiritual or physical?

May 19, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

So, everyone from left to right accepts the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 being dated to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, even atheists like Crossley, Ludemann and Crossan. The thing is, some people are not sure that the appearances of Jesus to individuals, groups, and skeptics really were physical appearances. They say "well, Paul's appearance was non-physical, so the other ones must have been, too".

Let's take a look.

Here's a paragraph from my friend Eric Chabot, from his blog Think Apologetics. He explains why Paul's use of the word "resurrection" to describe what the other witnesses saw means *bodily* resurrection.

He writes:

> If Paul did have a vision then the term "vision" is vague and must be defined. As Licona points out, visions are either objective (i.e., something that is seen without the use of our natural senses) or subjective (i.e., a product of our minds). The real problem is with the vision hypothesis is that it doesn't explain Paul's use of resurrection to explain what had happened to Jesus. The two words are used for resurrection in the New Testament "anastasis" (rising up) and "egersis" (waking up), both imply a physical body**.** Furthermore, the use of the word "opethe" (the Greek word for appeared) shows the Gospel writers did believe that Jesus appeared physically. "There you will see (opethe) him" (Matt. 28:7); "The Lord has risen and has appeared (opethe) to Simon" (Luke 24:24).

> When they used “opethe” here, it means that He appeared physically to them.

> So when Paul gives his list of appearances in 1 Cor. 15, the issues becomes whether the appearance to him is the same as it was to the disciples. There is no doubt the post resurrection body of Jesus (after the ascension) had to be somewhat different than the body the disciples saw. Also, whenever the New Testament mentions the word body, in the context of referring to an individual human being, the Greek word “soma” always refers to a literal, physical body.Greek specialist Robert Gundry says “the consistent and exclusive use of soma for the physical body in anthropological contexts resists dematerialization of the resurrection, whether by idealism or by existentialism.” [9] Furthermore, in N.T. Wright’s The Resurrection of the Son of God shows that the Greek word for resurrection which is “anastasis” was used by ancient Jews, pagans, and Christians as bodily in nature.

Now, I think my view on this, and I’m not sure if Eric would correct me, is that Paul got an objective but non-physical vision of Jesus. There was something there that everyone else could see and hear, in my view. But in my view Paul’s “veridical” vision was post-ascension, and so non-physical. Paul uses the word resurrection to describe what the other eyewitnesses saw (and he met them at least twice, according to Gal 1 and Gal 2), and that means physical resurrected body.

Eric Chabot writes this in another place:

> **Acts 9- Paul’s Damascus Road Experience**
>
> Here we see whatever happened, this was after the ascension. Hence, to say Paul saw the exact same Jesus before he ascended is hard to infer from the text. There simply isn’t enough information here. The Bible says, “they heard” the same voice Paul did ” (Acts 9: 7). But they “did not see anyone ” (Acts 9: 7). Notice Paul was physically blinded by the brightness of the light. One way or the other, the experience involved something that was external to Paul. It wasn’t something that was the same thing as a vision that Paul talks about in 2 Cor. 12:1. Furthermore, the phrase “he let himself be seen’” (ōphthē , aorist passive,), is the word Paul uses in 1 Cor. 15:7 to describe of his own resurrection appearance as the other ones in the creed. As Paul Barnett says:
>
> “It is sometimes claimed that the word appeared (ōphthē) means a mystical seeing, as of a vision, and that since this was what Paul “saw” it was what the other apostles “saw.” In other words, after death, Jesus was taken directly to heaven whence he “appeared” to various people, mystically, as it were. This however, is not all the meaning of Paul’s words. First, the word ōphthē, “appeared” is not limited to visionary seeing it is also used for physical seeing. Moreover, the verb raise used in the phrase ‘raised on the third day” is used elsewhere in combination with the words “from the dead” which literally means “from among the corpses.” Thus raised preceding appeared gives the latter a

> physical not a mystical meaning. Christ, as “raised from the dead” ….appeared.” Furthermore, when Paul asks “ Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?”(1 Cor. 9: 1), he is using the ordinary word horan, “to see” for physical sight. If “seeing” the Lord “raised from the dead” qualified others to be apostles, then Paul is, indeed, an apostle. It was no mere subjective vision that arrested Paul en route to Damascus. (8) .
>
> In the end, word studies can’t entirely resolve this issue. We need to remember the etymological fallacy as well. We would have to look at all the texts that speak of resurrection (including the entire 1 Cor. 15 chapter in their entire context as well as the anthropology of the New Testament. We also need to study the resurrection in light of the Second Temple Jewish period. See our reading list here for some resources that may help.

But conservative ancient historian Gary Habermas seems to think that Paul got the physical body as well.

He says:

> Now, I said before in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul could have chosen to only use the word *pneuma*. He doesn’t. He does say “spiritual,” but he’s got an adjective there. He also says, *soma*, “body.” What did Paul mean?

> Philippians Chapter 3. It’s a short chapter. There are 21 verses, but Paul says three things in one chapter that indicate he’s talking about a physical resurrection. In the opening verses he says, “I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews” and “as touching the law,” he says, “I was a Pharisee.” Now, it’s very well known that the Pharisee believed in a bodily resurrection. In fact, according to Acts 23, as Paul was being taken captive by the Romans to prevent his being killed, he shouted out to the group of people and said, “Why are you taking me? Because I believe in the resurrection of the dead?” He meant a literal resurrection.
>
> When the Pharisees heard that, they said there’s nothing wrong with this guy. But the Sadducees [who didn’t believe in the Resurrection] didn’t like it. So as a Pharisee, he’s agreeing with the Pharisees.
>
> So, the first evidence is from Philippians 3. As a Pharisee, Paul believes in a physical resurrection.
>
> Secondly, in verse 11 he says, “That I may attain the resurrection of the

> dead." Now, the normal Greek word for resurrection is *anastasis,* but in this passage, Philippians 3:11, he puts a prefix on there, ***ek*** *anastasis.* ***Ek****anastasis*, according to all Greek scholars that I know of, is translated in this passage: "The out resurrection from among the dead." Paul said, "I want to attain the out resurrection."
>
> Now, to a Jew, "out resurrection" means "what goes down is what comes up." You come out from death. And then just a few verses later, Philippians 3:20,21, he said, "From Heaven, we look for Jesus who will change our vile *soma* (body) to be like unto His glorious *soma* (or body)," when he should have said *pneuma*, according to this other view.
>
> So he's a Pharisee who believes in a physical resurrection. ***Ek*** *anastasis*—"resurrection from out among the dead ones."
>
> Thirdly, Paul says, "He Jesus will change ***my body*** to be like ***His body***."

> So right there in Philippians 3 alone, I think the picture of Jesus being some wispy spirit that appeared to him on the road to Damascus doesn't fit Paul's own data.

Yes, that's why Philippians is my favorite book. You can get so much useful theology out of it. Something about the resurrection in Phil 3, something about Jesus' divinity in Phil 2, and loads of practical advice on stewardship, charity, fellowship, endurance and practical love for others throughout. Some of it takes a little digging, but that's what commentaries are for, am I right? But I digress.

If you want to read something a little more challenging, I found a paper from the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) from their journal, where it talks more about soma and anastasis. If you want a bit of a challenge, download the PDF and read it. It's by Kirk R. MacGregor and the title is "1 Corinthians 15:3B–6A, 7 And The Bodily Resurrection Of Jesus".

New study: 1 in 8 divorces is caused by student loan debt

May 21, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to make plans in advance and calculate everything out before I try to do anything. This is the curse of being a software engineer. We're taught to take a test-first approach to design. So, when I think about marriage, I naturally think about what tests marriage is supposed to pass, and work backwards from there to requirements for each of the spouses.

Here's some research from CNBC that might help young people to avoid a divorce, if they respect the research in their choices.

Excerpt:

> When it comes to student loan debt, "for richer, for poorer" doesn't quite cut it.
>
> In general, finances are the leading cause of stress in a relationship, according to a study by SunTrust Bank, but student debt takes a particularly hard toll on a marriage.
>
> More than a third of borrowers said college loans and other money factors contributed to their divorce, according to a recent report from Student Loan Hero, a website for managing education debt.
>
> In fact, 13 percent of divorcees blame student loans specifically for ending their relationship, the report found. Student Loan Hero surveyed more than 800 divorced adults in June.

Here is a link to the full study from Student Loan Hero.

I think in general, you can't just do whatever you want before marrying and jump into it unprepared. Marriage involves specific requirements in order to work, such as being faithful to your spouse, and buying things that you need for the marriage enterprise, like a home, and baby stuff. It doesn't make any sense to say "I want to get married" and then not prepare for marriage by being careful about preparing for the behaviors marriage that requires of you. Being debt-free is one of those behaviors that marriage requires of you.

So how can we be debt-free, so that the marriage will be stable? Well, one way to be debt-free is to find a way to learn skills that will allow you to get a job without going to college, like being a self-taught software engineer. One of my friends actually did that, and now he's with a very good software company as a remote worker. But if you're going to go to college, you can avoid debt by studying something that will get you a high-paying job when you graduate.

This 2017 article from Harvard Business Review is interesting.

It says:

> Examining 46,934 resumes shared on Glassdoor by people who graduated between 2010 and 2017, the researchers looked at each person's college major and their post-college jobs in the five years after graduation. They then estimated the median pay for each of those jobs (also using Glassdoor data) for employees with five years of experience or less. Their key finding: "Many college majors that lead to high-paying roles in tech and engineering are male dominated, while majors that lead to lower-paying roles in social sciences and liberal arts tend to be female dominated, placing men in higher-paying career pathways, on average."

Here's the plot, and you can click it to expand it:

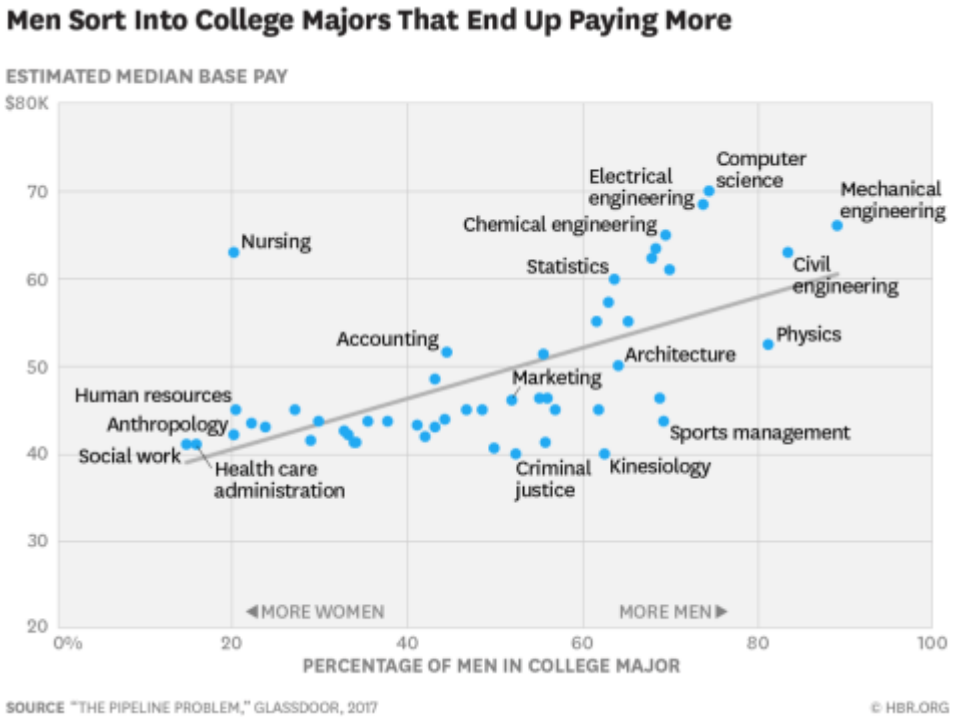

Median salaries by major, broken out by gender – don't study things at the bottom!

As you can see from the graph, it's especially important to share the message about choosing a major, salaries and student loan debt with WOMEN, because as the graph shows, they tend to choose the wrong majors, if the goal is to pay off student loans and avoid divorce. Everyone who wants marriage to go smoothly needs to choose majors that are near the top of the graph, like nursing, chemical engineering, computer science, or mechanical engineering. It doesn't make sense to go to college if you aren't going to graduate in one of these high-paying fields.

As you might expect from the graph, women hold the majority of student loan debt, according to the Boston Globe, and that's because women tend to choose majors that don't result in good-paying jobs. And we already saw how this becomes a risk factor for divorce.

Student loans delay marriage and children

Another interesting piece of data, reported by The Consumerist, is that people with student loans tend to delay marriage, which means the couple has fewer children:

> As consumers navigate life's financial journey, they are faced with major financial milestones, like buying a home. But student loans are also delaying consumers from reaching these goals.
>
> Survey respondents report delaying homeownership (23 percent), buying or leasing a car (23 percent), having children (10 percent) and getting married (9 percent) because of their student loan burdens.

So, it's not just that there is an increased risk of divorce from student loans, but there's also fewer children, which means a diminished legacy. I can't speak for how others would see this, but for myself, I want to pass on my beliefs to as many effective, influential Christian children as I can.

Anyway, I feel obligated to post a relevant Dave Ramsey video, just to remind everyone that stewardship of money is a Christian virtue, and that being forgiven by Jesus for your sins doesn't automatically make you good with money. It takes planning and stewardship.

This one from 2014: (H/T Robb)

When I was in high school, I was far more interested in becoming an English teacher than I was in becoming a software engineer. It was my Dad who overruled my choice of college major when I was still in high school. He had me take a first-year English course at a local university. When I saw how politicized and useless it was (they were studying all sorts of politically correct postmodern relativist stuff, instead of the Great Works, and they weren't trying to learn any wisdom from any of it), I chose computer science. I did what was likely to avoid divorce, and likely to support having many children.

Why don’t men today talk to women about commitment and marriage?

May 22, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

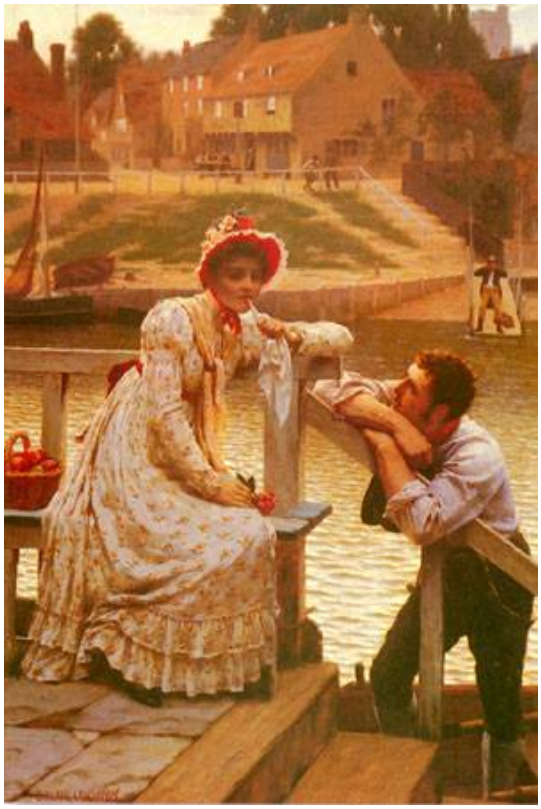

Painting: “Courtship”, by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

I saw this essay from a young woman named Jordana Narin who is explaining how she feels about not being able to talk seriously to a man she had sex with. She is a radical feminist and has a non-STEM degree in creative writing.

The essay was published in the radically leftist New York Times.

First kiss:

> I met [a guy] at summer camp in the Poconos at 14, playing pickup basketball by day and talking in the mess hall late into the night. Back home we lived only 30 minutes apart, but I didn’t see him again until 11th grade, when we ran into each other at a Halloween party in a Lower Manhattan warehouse.
>
> […]Under the muted flashes of a strobe light, we shared our first kiss.

No communication:

> We stayed in touch for the rest of high school, mostly by text message.

> […]Every time his name popped up on my phone, my heart raced.
>
> Still, we were never more than semiaffiliated, two people who spoke and loved to speak and kissed and loved to kiss and connected and were scared of connecting.

Where is this relationship going? This boy has no job and no savings and no proven record of steady work – and therefore he *cannot marry anyone.* Why is she even talking to a man who cannot afford to marry her – who has no proven record as a provider?

More:

> Two years after our first kiss, we were exchanging "I've missed you" messages again. It was a brisk Friday evening in our first semesters of college when I stepped off a train and into his comfortable arms.
>
> He had texted weeks earlier on Halloween (technically our anniversary) to ask if I would visit. We had not talked since summer, and I was trying to forget him. We had graduated from high school into the same inexpressive void we first entered in costume, where an "I've missed you" was as emotive as one got.

Long gaps in between text messages – they have nothing to talk about, and there is no goal. Nevertheless, they are away from their parents, and so she had sex with him, losing her virginity to a man she was not married to.

And then:

> Naïvely, I had expected to gain clarity, to finally admit my feelings and ask if he felt the same. But I couldn't confess, couldn't probe. Periodically I opened my mouth to ask: "What are we doing? Who am I to you?" He stopped me with a smile, a wink or a handhold, gestures that persuaded me to shut my mouth or risk jeopardizing what we already had.
>
> On the Saturday-night train back to Manhattan, I cried. Back in my dorm room, buried under the covers so my roommates wouldn't hear, I fell asleep with a wet pillow and puffy eyes.
>
> The next morning I awoke to a string of texts from him: "You get back OK?" "Let's do it again soon :)"

So my question for you is this: should a woman who has recreational sex with a man she barely knows expect to have real relationships, including a marriage relationship?

There's an interview that goes with it on the radically leftist NPR web site, but I saved a copy of the MP3 file here in case it disappears.

Rod Dreher comments on the interview:

> I wouldn't have understood the full scope of what this young woman is saying in her essay without the interview, which is short. In the segment, Narin says that men and women in her generation don't have actual romantic relationships anymore. It's all casual, non-committal sex. "
>
> [..]She tells the interviewer that there's lots of making out and sex, but nobody wants to be emotionally vulnerable to anybody else.
>
> […]**"Everyone in college uses Tinder," she said, referring to the wildly popular dating and hook-up app. "You can literally swipe right and find**

> **someone just to hang out for the night. There's no commitments required, and I think that makes committing to someone even harder, because it's so normal, and so expected even, to not want to commit."**
>
> "**In a different time, my grandparents, my great grandparents, they might have thought they were missing out on casual sex**," she says. "But since my generation has been saddled down with that, we kind of look to the past and say well, wasn't that nice. I think both are optimal. **I'm a huge feminist, and I think women should be able to do whatever they want to do. If a woman wants to have tons of casual sex, she totally should.** But I think that there should be the option. And they shouldn't be gendered, women and men. But there should be the option of being in a relationship."

Right. Young women like her who have swallowed radical feminism hook, line and sinker don't want to "miss out" on casual sex right now, but they want to get married "some day" – after they have a lot of fun traveling and doing exciting, fun things. Today, they want to choose to have sex with hot guys, but tomorrow they want the "option" of a man committing to them, even though they have a repeated pattern of putting recreational sex above commitment in their own lives. Basically, they don't want to pick a man *now* who can actually do marriage. Right now, they want to pick a man who has no interest in marriage. Later, they want a man to pursue them for marriage.

Consider this story from the Ottawa Sun about a woman who didn't want to say no to sex right now, but wanted to get married "some day":

> A New York woman is facing charges after police say she lied about being raped by two football players at a party to get sympathy from a prospective love interest.
>
> Nikki Yovino, 18, has been charged with falsely reporting an incident and tampering with or fabricating physical evidence.
>
> Last October Yovino reported that she had been sexually assaulted in a bathroom by two Sacred Heart University football players at an off-campus party.
>
> The men, however, said it had been consensual.
>
> Capt. Brian Fitzgerald tells WABC-TV another student informed authorities of explicit text messages between the three. He says one man also recorded some of the incident on his cellphone.
>
> "She admitted that she made up the allegation of sexual assault against (the football players) because it was the first thing that came to mind and she didn't want to lose (another male student) as a friend and potential boyfriend. She stated that she believed when (the other male student) heard the allegation it would make him angry and sympathetic to her," said an affidavit, according to the New York Post.

Two. Football. Players. ***At the same time.***

Nowhere in society is there any man who tells women like this that they should not pursue pleasure right now if they want marriage some day. No father. No pastor. No one has the courage to tell young women that following their emotions leads them to abortion, single motherhood, divorce, infertility and missing marriage completely.

Do women prepare themselves for the self-sacrifice and self-control required in marriage?

Here's what many women think of marriage:

Look at the lyrics:

> You got that 9 to 5
> But, baby, so do I
> So don't be thinking I'll be home and baking apple pies
> I never learned to cook
>
> After every fight
> Just apologize
> And maybe then I'll let you try and rock my body right
> Even if I was wrong
> You know I'm never wrong
>
> And know we'll never see your family more than mine
>
> Even when I'm acting crazy
> Tell me everything's alright

Women today expect to be pursuing their own interests before, during and after marriage. They don't want the constraints of relationships with a husband or children. I think this will work to get attention from certain men for a while, but when she loses her youth and beauty, it will dry up pretty quickly. Who is there telling women that they need to pick a marriage-minded man and focus on marriage earlier, rather than later?

Will anyone talk about marriage to these women?

Most men are not interested in committing to, or discussing commitment with, women who put pleasure above self-control. Most non-Christian men will have sex with a hedonistic women, but they are too smart to ever commit to them. Why would a man commit to a narcissist? If a man's role is just to please the "huge feminist", then there is no reason to commit to her and be the slave of her selfish impulses for the rest of his life. Radical feminists believe that relationships are about their plans and their needs. They are not interested in responsibilities, expectations or obligations to men or to children. Most men, even secular men, understand that they must not marry a woman who rejects moral obligations for fun. Especially with the looming threat of no-fault divorce.

Nanotechnology expert Dr. James Tour assesses origin of life research

May 23, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

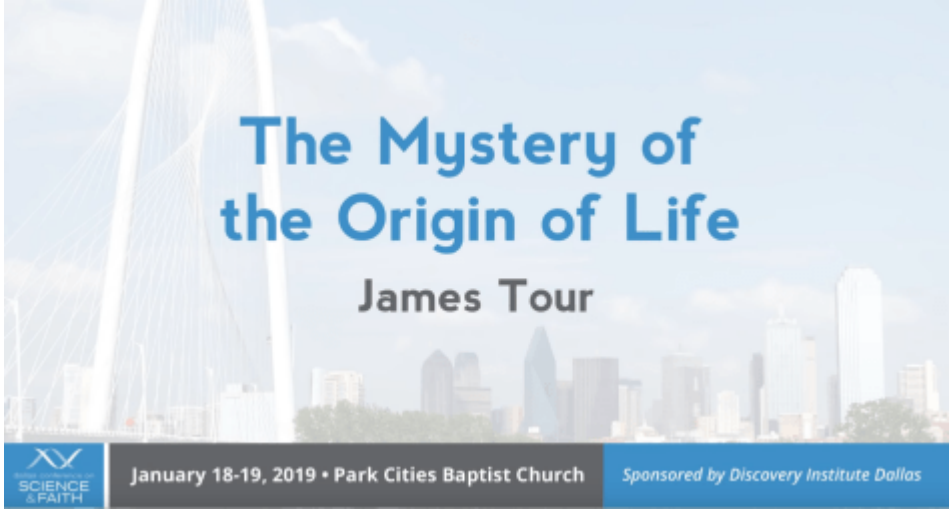

What is involved in creating life from non-life?

Recently, I watched lectures from a recent Science and Faith Conference that occurred at Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. I sent the lectures to my STEM women advisors to get their opinions. It was unanimous that Tour's talk on origin of life research was the best. So let's see his bio, then we'll take a look at his lecture.

Dr. James Tour:

> James M. Tour, a synthetic organic chemist, received his Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Syracuse University, his Ph.D. in synthetic organic and organometallic chemistry from Purdue University, and postdoctoral training in synthetic organic chemistry at the University of Wisconsin and Stanford University.
>
> After spending 11 years on the faculty of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of South Carolina, he joined the Center for Nanoscale Science and Technology at Rice University in 1999 where he is presently the T. T. and W. F. Chao Professor of Chemistry, Professor of Computer Science, and Professor of Materials Science and NanoEngineering.
>
> Tour's scientific research areas include nanoelectronics, graphene electronics, silicon oxide electronics, carbon nanovectors for medical applications, green carbon research for enhanced oil recovery and environmentally friendly oil and gas extraction, graphene photovoltaics, carbon supercapacitors, lithium ion batteries, CO2 capture, water splitting to H2 and O2, water purification, carbon nanotube and graphene synthetic modifications, graphene oxide, carbon composites, hydrogen storage on nanoengineered carbon scaffolds, and synthesis of single-molecule nanomachines which includes molecular motors and nanocars.

> […]Tour has over 650 research publications and over 120 patents.

As he explains in the lecture, his research has frequently been used in the private sector to solve real world problems.

His lecture:

Evolution News had a short blurb of the lecture:

> Rice University chemist James Tour almost defies description in a video now up of his amazing presentation at Discovery Institute's 2019 Dallas Conference on Science and Faith.
>
> At one point he asks for a show of hands of fellow synthetic chemists in the (large) audience. It turns out there are a couple and he demands that they stand up and call him a liar if anything he says isn't true. His message is an alternatively scathing and hilarious indictment of claims from the origin-of-life studies community. Dr. Tour's work in nanotechnology, an ulta-ultra-painstaking field, provides the backdrop for his demonstration that origins scientists don't have the slightest idea how the first life was somehow naturally synthesized by blind, mindless forces.
>
> The field hasn't advanced an inch in 60-plus years. "Everyone's clueless on this but no one wants to admit it." Great scientists writing in the highest profile science journals are "lying to you" when they assert otherwise. "Show me the chemistry" of abiogenesis, he says. "It's not there."
>
> Jim Tour is without parallel. Truly, I'd love to hear from our materialist critics how they would answer any of this.

At the conference, Tour's lecture was accompanied by other great lectures on the origin of the universe and also the Cambrian explosion by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. Jay Richards spoke on fine-tuning and habitability. You can find the links to those lectures on the Discovery Institute YouTube channel.

What we liked about the lecture by Dr. James Tour was that he did not dumb down the content for a church audience. I was sending screen captures of his slides and short video clips to my best friend Dina while I watched it. I was very excited to see someone so accomplished in his research and entrepreneurship being honest with the laypeople in the church. And I loved the church for letting him speak like a scientist. I didn't understand everything he was saying about the science, but I always understood the point he was trying to make.

Let this lecture encourage to raise your children to focus on science, math, engineering and technology, because you can clearly see the value that we have in Dr. James Tour. We need hundreds more scientists who go to the best schools and make a difference.

I really hope that some of the younger Christians will understand the importance of making scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer more widely known. Learn the areas of science where God's existence can be detected, and put the time in learning how

to make those arguments.

Famous pick-up artist Roosh V urges men not to act like clowns for casual sex

May 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

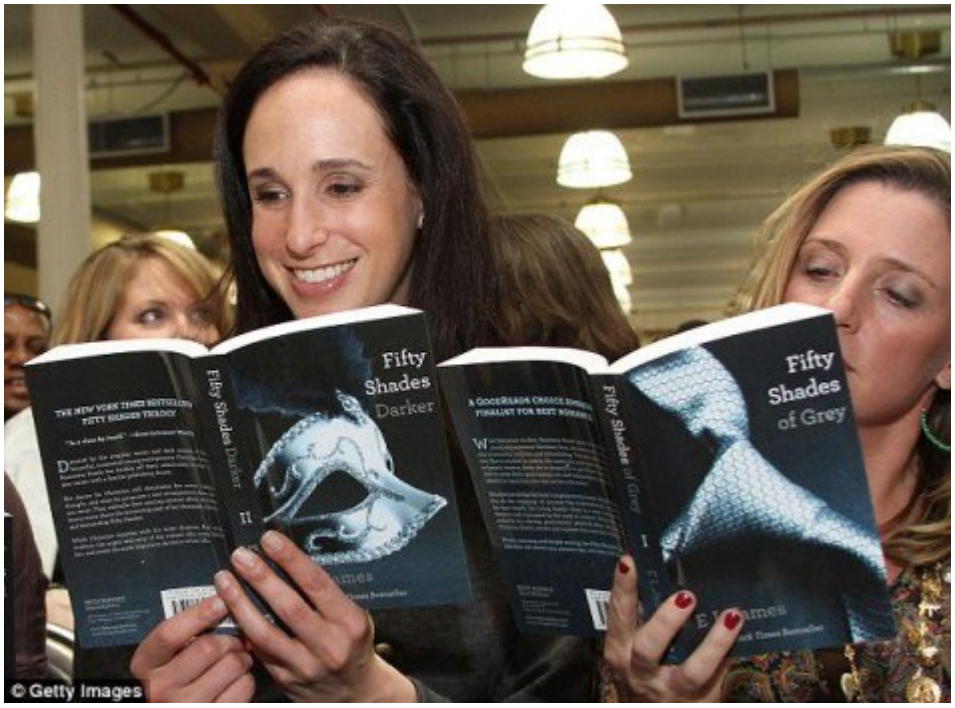

Fifty Shades was popular with women, including "Christian" women – why?

Is it meaningful and rewarding for men to spend their time and money pursuing casual sex? I would expect that men who tried and failed to obtain casual sex to say that it's a waste of time and money. But what about a man who was so successful at obtaining casual sex that he wrote bestselling books about it? Did he find his achievements meaningful in the end?

Roosh V is a well-known pick-up artist who is a master at seducing women. He's traveled all over the world and seduced many women from many countries.

In a post from April 2019, he reaches a startling conclusion about his success:

> I began pursuing women for mostly sexual reasons in 2001. I must've logged tens of thousands of hours into the task. I've been also traveling or living abroad near continuously since 2007. I've spent *a lot* of time trying to fornicate, fornicating, traveling to more effectively fornicate, and writing over a million words about fornication. What did I learn from all that? It's an experience that gets more dull with repetition, like any other experience. However, it also leaves you with a massive hangover where you find yourself at a loss. What was the point of all that? Is there anything I've truly gained? What lasting glory have I achieved? If I wasn't a writer, I would have nothing to "show" for my efforts besides memories that are as likely to make me cringe as give me happiness.
>
> If society were healthy, and if women were more traditional, most of my time would have been spent writing different kinds of books, maybe concerning

> religion or history. I would have a family, and spend much of my time nurturing the love between them without degenerate interference from the government or cultural elites. […]While there is nothing in life that is solid, my family and community would give me a stronger feeling of continuity. Tomorrow, things that are likely to be here would still be there, compared to the easy-come-easy-go modern lifestyle **where putting your penis inside a girl is not even close to a guarantee you'll see her again**, and where any job you have, or apartment you live in, is as transitory as the next bus that rolls down the street.
>
> […]**As I approach 40 years of age, I see most of my hedonistic and travel pursuits as expensive life lessons than a source of meaning. My nature, and I believe the nature of most masculine men I meet, is one of creation, strength, and provision for family, things we're increasingly not allowed to do, or allowed to do only at impossible cost.**

Indeed. Speaking for myself, one of the main reasons that I've avoided casual sex (or premarital sex of any kind) is because from earliest days, I could not stomach the idea of a woman that I had sex with walking away. So, my education, career and finance decisions were oriented to winning the heart of *one* woman who would commit to me for life, so that we could built something nice for the Lord together.

In another post, from March 2014, Roosh explains why casual sex didn't provide him with validation:

> There is definitely not a single woman alive in the Western world who *needs* a man. While in the past a woman had to put forth effort to obtain a husband who would help her survive, today she is protected by a welfare state that ensures she will never go hungry or spend one night on the street.
>
> […]From a young age, girls are brainwashed to believe that they don't need men and that the key to their happiness is self-empowerment by sleeping around and becoming a corporate wage slave. It's hard to dispute the notion that a woman who believes she doesn't need a man won't make as good of a relationship partner as one who does. She will treat you as a distraction to her more important job, girls' nights out, and social networking validation happy time. Men have become an utterly replaceable and expendable commodity in a girl's life. Her interest in a man is not unlike her interest in a new television show or Apple product, and your only hope is to have sex with her as many times as possible until her attraction diminishes and she moves on to the next guy in line.
>
> Women don't seek out comfort or stability in men anymore—they seek entertainment. They seek distraction. They seek hedonistic pleasure. […]Once the entertainment or novelty you provide her declines—and it inevitably will—she moves on to something or someone else. In essence, the only way you can keep a girl is if you adopt the mentality of a soap opera writer, adding a cliffhanger to the end of each episode that keeps a woman interested when being a good man

> no longer does.
>
> When I look at myself in the mirror, I don't see a man who has improved himself over the years to be the best that his genes allow—I see a glittery skirt that a girl encounters in the mall. Is the skirt too expensive or is it on sale? Is there only one left of her size or is the rack full of them? Does she already have something similar or is it totally novel? Does her friends think it's cute or just alright? After trying it on, does it flatter her body or make her look fat? Either she makes the impulsive decision to buy the skirt or not, because odds are she won't come back for it. There are so many stores with so many skirts that she will soon forget it, forever. We are like glittery pieces of fashion to women—items that she truly doesn't need. Not only has she already collected so many of them, but she can easily obtain more within walking distance from where she lives. She can even browse online from home while in her pajamas through a nearly unlimited selection.
>
> **We are not men in the traditional sense—we are clowns.**

Well, I'm a virgin who never spent money or time pursuing casual sex, and precisely because I refuse to be any woman's clown. It's very easy for a man to not be a woman's clown. All he has to do is choose a woman who will let him lead her, instead of a woman who wants him to entertain her. Women use the offer of premarital sex in order to get men to stop trying to lead them. Men who don't mind acting like clowns in order to get sex will take this bargain. Men who expect women to rise up to the roles of wife and mother will reject the bargain. A Christian man's goal is to lead a woman away from her self-centeredness, feelings, desires and need for peer-approval, so that she can perform the roles of wife and mother.

How to avoid becoming a clown for casual sex

So, let me give some advice for men about how to get into relationships where they can lead a woman upward, and avoid becoming her clown. It begins and ends with the woman you choose, because some women will let you lead, while others will not.

Research (here, here) shows that women who are virgins are more likely to be content in their marriages, and therefore less likely to financially ruin you with a frivolous divorce. Therefore, women who are virgins are to be preferred. Women who abstain from alcohol, drugs and tattoos should be preferred. Women who have a conservative father who they have respected should be preferred. Women who have STEM degrees should be preferred. Women who are debt-free should be preferred. Women who have challenging STEM careers in the private sector should be preferred. Women who don't want to outsource the education of their children to daycare, public schools, etc. should be preferred. Women who want three or more children should be preferred. Women who think that a man's earnings should not be taxed to pay for husband-substitute social programs should be preferred. Women who have demonstrated public opposition to no-fault divorce, premarital sex, abortion and same-sex marriage should be preferred.

Women who blame and shame other women for choosing hot bad boys should be preferred. Women who can demonstrate knowledge of intermediate-level science apologetics (e.g. Stephen C. Meyer, Michael Behe, Hugh Ross, etc.) should be preferred. (Philosophical and historical apologetics are useful, but are not forceful enough in a debate). Women who avoid fun and thrills (beaches, FOMO travel, reading fiction, thrill-seeking, etc.) should be preferred. Women who serve others (elderly, disabled, etc.) should be preferred.

Basically, you're looking for someone who is comfortable with responsibilities, expectations and obligations. You're looking for someone who respects your demonstrated ability in areas like education, career and finance. (You have led other people to do well in education, career, finances, ministry, etc. right?) You're looking for someone who lets her logical reasoning override her feelings and intuitions when she makes decisions.

The retreat from male leadership

It used to be the case that you could count on pastors to warn Christian men about wasting their time and money on women who wanted them to be clowns instead of leaders. Even the progressive fideist John Piper wrote against women rebelling against male leadership way back in 1983. Men used to be wary of this desire of women to usurp the leadership role from men. But today, it seems like men are anxious to dance to a woman's tune – reducing themselves to spineless commodities, like a pair of shoes or a handbag. But men were not designed to be women's accessories, men were designed to lead. When you tell a woman no to premarital sex, there is the possibility of leading her out of the pig sty of feminism and socialism. But if you say yes to her, you become her clown. If you waste all your 20s and 30s clowning for casual sex, you will have no meaningful legacy. To any man who works for the Lord, this is unacceptable. Christian men, you were bought at a price, and you are expected to produce a return.

Therefore, focus your attention on an early marriage to a good woman, and avoid the hot bad girls who just want to pump and dump you for their own pointless entertainment. If you can't find a decent wife, then it's better to remain a virgin and put points on the board some other way.

Hero awarded Medal of Honor for rescuing wounded soldiers while under fire

May 25, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Air cavalry helicopters in the Vietnam War

I've finally read enough about World War 2 and the Korean War to move on to the Vietnam war. In this war, America is fighting communists from North Vietnam who are invading the democracy of South Vietnam to make their country communist. While reading several books, I found a story about American soldiers who risked their lives for others while under fire from the enemy.

The story I found was in the book "Legend: The Incredible Story of Green Beret Sergeant Roy Benavidez's Heroic Mission to Rescue a Special Forces Team Caught Behind Enemy Lines".

An American Special Forces team of 12 people – 3 Americans, and 9 Motagnard natives – was discovered by North Vietnamese communists behind enemy lines in Cambodia. After a short firefight, they called for extraction. They were quickly surrounded by about 1000 enemy soldiers. It was extremely difficult for the helicopters to extract them. Some the Special Forces men and helicopter crews were wounded or killed during the extraction attempt.

I wanted to mention especially two of the men who were killed from the Special Operations team:

> - SFC Leroy N. Wright, Newark, NJ (Dist Svc Cross)
> - SSG Lloyd F. Mousseau, Cudahy, CA (Dist Svc Cross)

Here's some more detail about Leroy Wright, the team leader:

> Leroy Wright was the leader of a 12 man special operations recon team inserted secretly by helicopter into Northern Cambodia about 60 miles NW of Saigon. His mission was to capture an NVA truck and return with the truck to Vietnam with a load of Russian supplies to prove give physical proof that the Viet Cong were being supplied through Cambodia.
>
> Unfortunately Wright's team was landed in the midst of a large force of hundreds of NVA regulars deployed in depth around their landing zone. They were compromised when their hiding place was discovered by two NVA soldiers. Lloyd Mousseau, assistant team leader killed these men sliently but a shot was fired by one of them alerting the other NVA in the vicinity.
>
> Wright requested permission for extraction but was ordered to continue the mission by his superiors in Vietnam. He followed his orders and moved towards his objective, but soon encountered a patrol of about 12 NVA. In a brief but noisy fight his team wiped out the NVA partrol without any casualties to the team. He then immediately called for emergency extraction and rushed the team to the planned pickup zone.
>
> At the pickup zone Wright encountered numerous NVA troops and became locked in a fire fight which killed or wounded all of his men. The emergency extraction force, a flight of four UH1C gunships, call sign Maddogs, and four UH1H slicks, call sign Greyhounds, soon approached the pickup zone but it was driven away by intense and accurate enemy fire that killed one crew member, Michael Craig, and wounded others.
>
> On the ground Wright moved about his beleagured team encouraging them and repositioning them to defend the extraction landing zone. While redeploying one group of his men he was hit by enemy fire and lost the use of his legs. Then two enemy grenades fell between him and his teammates, endangering them all. Wright threw one back at the enemy but only had time to roll his body onto the second grenade before it exploded lifting him into the air. Wright survived this explosion and fought on for a time firing his weapon until he was killed by a shot in his head.

I also wanted to mention the pilot from second Huey helicopter that was shot down:

> - WO Larry S. McKibben, Houston, TX, pilot (Dist Svc Cross)

Here are some more details about McKibben:

> Warrant Officer McKibben distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 2 May 1968 as aircraft commander of a helicopter supporting ground operations near Loc Ninh. A small reconnaissance team was pursued by a numerically superior enemy force, and Mister McKibben immediately extracted it. A larger team, replacing the first, was quickly surrounded by two companies of North Vietnamese Army troops and he volunteered to attempt a second

> extraction mission.
>
> At the landing zone a supporting gunship was shot down by the murderous enemy fire. Despite extreme hazard to his safety, Mister McKibben braved the savage fusillade to land and successfully rescue the downed crew. After refueling, he returned to the area and prepared to rescue the ground force. Although he was informed that two helicopters had sustained casualties to their crews attempting pickups during his absence, he fearlessly maneuvered through a hail of fire, reached the landing zone and began loading troops. The enemy force concentrated their full firepower on his craft, but he refused to take off until all survivors were on board. As he prepared to fly out of the landing zone, he was instantly killed by an enemy bullet passing through the cockpit.

Please take a moment to remember the men who died that day, fighting communism in Vietnam so that we could enjoy our freedom from tyranny. We will remember them.

But I do have a positive story. A Green Beret Special Forces soldier who heard the request for help from the Special Forces team was awarded the Medal of Honor for helping to extract the wounded while under fire himself. His name was Roy Benavidez.

Here is his Medal of Honor citation:

> Master Sergeant (then Staff Sergeant) Roy P. BENAVIDEZ United States Army, distinguished himself by a series of daring and extremely valorous actions on 2 May 1968 while assigned to Detachment B56, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Republic of Vietnam.
>
> On the morning of 2 May 1968, a 12-man Special Forces Reconnaissance Team was inserted by helicopters of the 240th Assault Helicopter Company in a dense jungle area west of Loc Ninh, Vietnam to gather intelligence information about the confirmed large-scale enemy activity. This area was controlled and routinely patrolled by the North Vietnamese Army. After a short period of time on the ground, the team met heavy enemy resistance, and requested emergency extraction. Three helicopters attempted extraction but were unable to land due to intense enemy small arms and anti-aircraft fire.
>
> Sergeant BENAVIDEZ was at the Forward Operating Base in Loc Ninh monitoring the operation by radio when these helicopters, of the 240th Assault Helicopter Company, returned to off-load wounded crew members and to assess aircraft damage. Sergeant BENAVIDEZ voluntarily boarded a returning aircraft to assist in another extraction attempt. Realizing that all the team members were either dead or wounded and unable to move to the pickup zone, he directed the aircraft to a nearby clearing where he jumped from the hovering helicopter, and ran approximately 75 meters under withering small arms fire to the crippled team.
>
> Prior to reaching the team’s position he was wounded in his right leg, face, and head. Despite these painful injuries, he took charge, repositioning the team members and directing their fire to facilitate the landing of an extraction aircraft,

and the loading of wounded and dead team members. He then threw smoke canisters to direct the aircraft to the team's position. Despite his severe wounds and under intense enemy fire, he carried and dragged half of the wounded team members to the awaiting aircraft. He then provided protective fire by running alongside the aircraft as it moved to pick up the remaining team members. As the enemy's fire intensified, he hurried to recover the body and classified documents on the dead team leader.

When he reached the leader's body, Sergeant BENAVIDEZ was severely wounded by small arms fire in the abdomen and grenade fragments in his back. At nearly the same moment, the aircraft pilot was mortally wounded, and his helicopter crashed. Although in extremely critical condition due to his multiple wounds, Sergeant BENAVIDEZ secured the classified documents and made his way back to the wreckage, where he aided the wounded out of the overturned aircraft, and gathered the stunned survivors into a defensive perimeter. Under increasing enemy automatic weapons and grenade fire, he moved around the perimeter distributing water and ammunition to his weary men, reinstilling in them a will to live and fight. Facing a buildup of enemy opposition with a beleaguered team, Sergeant BENAVIDEZ mustered his strength, began calling in tactical air strikes and directed the fire from supporting gunships to suppress the enemy's fire and so permit another extraction attempt.

He was wounded again in his thigh by small arms fire while administering first aid to a wounded team member just before another extraction helicopter was able to land. His indomitable spirit kept him going as he began to ferry his comrades to the craft. On his second trip with the wounded, he was clubbed from behind by an enemy soldier. In the ensuing hand-to-hand combat, he sustained additional wounds to his head and arms before killing his adversary. He then continued under devastating fire to carry the wounded to the helicopter. Upon reaching the aircraft, he spotted and killed two enemy soldiers who were rushing the craft from an angle that prevented the aircraft door gunner from firing upon them. With little strength remaining, he made one last trip to the perimeter to ensure that all classified material had been collected or destroyed, and to bring in the remaining wounded.

Only then, in extremely serious condition from numerous wounds and loss of blood, did he allow himself to be pulled into the extraction aircraft. Sergeant BENAVIDEZ' gallant choice to join voluntarily his comrades who were in critical straits, to expose himself constantly to withering enemy fire, and his refusal to be stopped despite numerous severe wounds, saved the lives of at least eight men. His fearless personal leadership, tenacious devotion to duty, and extremely valorous actions in the face of overwhelming odds were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect the utmost credit on him and the United States Army.

If you’re looking for a good book on helicopter operations in the Vietnam war, I’ve just finished “To the Limit: An Air Cav Huey Pilot in Vietnam” and really enjoyed it. Regarding special operations in the Vietnam war, I just finished “Uncommon Valor: The Recon Company that Earned Five Medals of Honor and Included America’s Most Decorated Green Beret” which was almost as good.

Democrat-appointed 9th Circuit CA judges rule in favor of ban on churches

May 26, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Can you count on Obama-appointed judges to protect your human rights?

Although Trump has said that churches are essential, and so they are allowed to open, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that the Bill of Rights is null and void in states run by Democrat governors.

Daily Wire reports:

> A California church has appealed to the Supreme Court for relief from Gov. Gavin Newsom's lockdown order.
>
> South Bay United Pentecostal Church and Bishop Arthur Hodges appealed a lawsuit against Newsom to the High Court on Sunday after a panel on the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals shot down the church's request, according to Politico.
>
> The 9th Circuit ruled 2-1 against the church on Friday, with the majority arguing that the pandemic emergency warranted that the courts step back from determining whether the civil rights of certain groups were being violated by Newsom's lockdown order.

Yes, who cares about civil rights when a Democrat atheist is in charge?

Trump's Department of Justice is on the case:

> The court's decision came down the same day the Trump administration told governors to deem churches and other houses of worship essential. While President Trump does not have the authority to deem religious services essential across the U.S., his Justice Department can back lawsuits brought by religious

> institutions against states' lockdown orders.
>
> On Tuesday, the DOJ sent a letter to Newsom warning that his lockdown order and strategy for reopening discriminated against houses of worship. DOJ assistant attorney general Eric Dreiband said that Newsom's lockdown arbitrarily allows some businesses to stay open "regardless of whether the product they are selling and shipping are life-preserving products or not." Dreiband also pointed out that while a variety of stores and offices are allowed to open in Phase 2 of Newsom's reopening plan, religious services are banned until Phase 3.

Just to be clear, the two judges who wrote the majority are (of course) appointees of two atheist Democrats presidents:

> The ruling came from Judges Jacqueline Nguyen and Barry Silverman, Nguyen is an Obama appointee and Silverman, a Clinton appointee. The 9th Circuit has a longstanding terrible reputation, but this is a new low.
>
> […]The Democrat judges did not address the fact that Newsom is discriminating against religious observance. Trump's appointee did:
>
> Collins noted that the orders allow many workplaces to open, but ban religious gatherings even when they could meet the social distancing standards imposed on other activities that are now permitted.
>
> "By explicitly and categorically assigning all in-person 'religious services' to a future Phase 3 — without any express regard to the number of attendees, the size of the space, or the safety protocols followed in such services — the State's Reopening Plan undeniably 'discriminate[s] on its face' against 'religious conduct,'" the judge said.

Atheist dogma is that the universe is an accident, and human beings evolved through an accidental process of random mutations and natural selection. There are no human rights in the atheist worldview, because there is no Creator there to rationally ground those rights. So *of course* atheists will disregard those rights when they get into power. This is why Christians need to be involved in elections. Your freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of religion, etc. DO NOT EXIST in the worldview of secular leftists. And that's how they are going to rule when they get into power.

Why did the lead vocalist of a Christian rock band abandon belief in God?

May 27, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Carla told me about this celebrity singer who decided to leave Christianity. Since we've had a few high profile departures, I thought it might be worth giving my very controversial view on Christian musicians, artists, athletes and celebrities. I've always been suspicious of celebrities claiming to be Christians and there's a very simple reason why.

Anyway, here is the story from Christian Post.

It says:

> Jon Steingard, the Canadian Christian rock band Hawk Nelson's lead vocalist, has declared on social media that "I no longer believe in God," explaining "it didn't happen overnight."
>
> […]"After growing up in a Christian home, being a pastor's kid, playing and singing in a Christian band, and having the word 'Christian' in front of most of the things in my life — I am now finding that I no longer believe in God."

He has three objections, the first being the problem of evil, the second being Old Testament violence, and finally the doctrine of the atonement:

> "If God is all loving, and all powerful, why is there evil in the world? Can he not do anything about it? Does he choose not to?"
>
> […]"Why does he (God) say not to kill, but then instruct Israel to turn around and kill men women and children to take the promised land?" and "Why does Jesus have to die for our sins (more killing again)?"

> […]I am not looking for a debate at all — just a chance to share my story in the hopes some good can come from it.

He mentions having his "heart changed", and that's how most people these days approach religion. Whether they accept it or not depends on their feelings, experiences, and peer approval. Their Christian worldview isn't compelled by logic and evidence. They have a non-STEM approach to religion. If they like it, they keep it. And this is why so many people who are raised in the church give it up in high school and college. They feel that Christianity isn't truth in the same way as math, science, engineering or history. Christianity, they are taught, is about their family, their feelings, their community. If it feels good, and helps them fit in, they keep it. But when they get to high school or college, they find things to do that are more fun, feel better, make them look smarter, and make their new friends like them more.

Regarding his three objections. For the problem of evil, William Lane Craig answers that in "Hard Questions, Real Answers", or more technically in "Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview". For the Old Testament challenge, Paul Copan answers that in "Is God a Moral Monster?" The third objection is just philosophical theology. William Lane Craig has written on the logic of the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement, for example, and found parallels in the insurance business. These topics are debated in formal academic debates, but Mr. Lead Vocalist probably won't find the answers by watching TV and asking his artist friends.

By the way, the Christian Post article notes that he was objecting to the moral demands of the Christian life prior his atheism:

> In 2015, talking about the song "Live Like You're Loved" from Hawk Nelson's album Diamonds, Steingard told The Christian Post that it was "inspired by growing up and learning the dos and don'ts of Christianity and how to be a good Christian."
>
> […]"I just had an epiphany … all this running around and trying to do everything exactly right, these are not the things that bring us closer to God. Our relationship with God is already secured with what was done on the cross. What if we went into life with confidence of knowing we are already loved?"
>
> Lyrics to "Live Like You're Loved" include: "So go ahead and live like you're loved, it's OK to act like you've been set free / His love has made you more than enough so go ahead and be who he made you to be / And live like you're loved."

He had an epiphany. Doing what the Bible teaches isn't how you love God. No, no. You just follow your heart, and God will love you for that. That's so convenient and very popular in the feminized church today. But it's also exactly the opposite of what the Bible teaches:

1 John 5:1-3:

> 1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the

> Father loves the child born of Him.
>
> 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.
>
> 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

I don't know his personal life, but I know a lot of Christians who went nuts in college drinking and having sex, and then subsequently found "reasons" for thinking Christianity was false.

I meet so many Christians whose entire reading life consists of reading fiction, romance novels and popular female preachers. Instead of learning how to engage against challenges to the faith like socialism, feminism, atheism, etc. we're more focused on entertaining ourselves, and trying to be liked. Not only is this narcissistic, it also doesn't result in a stable and influential Christian life.

Most of the adult Christians I know today slipped into the wild life of atheism as soon as they left home. They came back to the faith later, but they're still politically liberal and they have a non-cognitive understanding of Christianity. They may have returned to the faith and church, but it's still all about their feelings, experiences and peer approval. They aren't working for God, they're making God work for them.

This is the exact opposite of my experience of Christianity. I wasn't raised in a Christian home. I wasn't raised in a church. I don't sing songs. I don't have fun. I am not trying to be popular. I don't drink. I'm a virgin. I have multiple STEM degrees. I work in a STEM field. I read evidential apologetics. I engage in debates with non-Christians. I'm a non-white immigrant. My view of Christianity is masculine, not feminine. It's effective, not emotional.

Christian scholars are more important than "Christian" entertainers

I don't think that Christians should waste their time on Christian entertainers and celebrity preachers. And I'm going to lump in pastors and preachers who focus on feelings and experiences into that group. If you're going to pick someone to look up to as a Christian, then choose people who have put in the time to study the truth claims of the Christian worldview enough to defend them to other scholars, using arguments and evidence.

I admire people like William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer, Michael Licona who actually debate non-Christians on university campuses and other public forums. In contrast, an entertainer isn't usually qualified to defend truth claims in public settings. Defending Christian truth claims is a low priority for most Christian entertainers and celebrities. Don't be like them.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang cosmology

- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

William Lane Craig explains how Christianity explains evil and suffering

May 28, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A long journey through the night

A lot of people in the West complain too much about any little suffering they have to experience. But sometimes, when a very harsh suffering is felt by someone who has tried to follow Jesus, an explanation is necessary. I found something very good on the Reasonable Faith web site, written by Dr. William Lane Craig.

He makes the following points:

1. *We are not in a good position to assess the probability of whether God has morally sufficient reasons for the evils that occur.*
2. *The Christian faith entails doctrines that increase the probability of the co-existence of God and evil.*
3. *Relative to the full scope of the evidence, God's existence is probable.*

I've written before about point #1, in which Dr. Craig's describes the limitations of human knowledge that make it hard for us to know for certain that a specific evil or suffering does not have a good reason for God to allow it. And I've written about #3, in which Dr. Craig makes some arguments for God's existence. But #2 might be new to some of you, so let's look at that.

He makes four sub points in section 2 about Christian doctrines that make the existence of evil and suffering more reasonable.

- 2. a)*The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.*
- 2. b) *Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and His purpose.*

- 2. c) *The knowledge of God spills over into eternal life.*
- 2. d) *The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.*

My favorite one is 2. a), so let's look at that one. He says:

> 2. a. *The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.* One reason that the problem of evil seems so puzzling is that we tend to think that if God exists, then His goal for human life is happiness in this world. God's role is to provide comfortable environment for His human pets. But on the Christian view this is false. We are not God's pets, and man's end is not happiness in this world, but the knowledge of God, which will ultimately bring true and everlasting human fulfillment. Many evils occur in life which maybe utterly pointless with respect to the goal of producing human happiness in this world, but they may not be unjustified with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Innocent human suffering provides an occasion for deeper dependency and trust in God, either on the part of the sufferer or those around him. Of course, whether God's purpose is achieved through our suffering will depend on our response. Do we respond with anger and bitterness toward God, or do we turn to Him in faith for strength to endure?

You know, I always get confused when I see Christians trying to follow the script of the world and trying to make themselves feel good with consumer purchases, travel, fun experiences, showing off to others, etc. When I read the story of Jesus, it's pretty clear that the normal Christian life, if the person is following Jesus at all, is about suffering the disapproval and opposition of non-Christians while you remain faithful and obedient to God. Today, there's probably no better example of this than defending unborn children from adult selfishness. Although, defending born children from selfish adults who seek to deprive children of their biological mother and father is pretty bad, too. Nobody is going to like you for restricting their fun (i.e. – abortion, divorce, adultery, homosexuality, etc.), but being willing to take the heat from non-Christians for the sake of promoting what God thinks is right is true Christianity. It's what Jesus would do.

Anyway, the one I've been thinking about more lately is 2. d), where Dr. Craig writes this:

> *2. d) The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.* To know God, the source of infinite goodness and love, is an incomparable good, the fulfillment of human existence. The sufferings of this life cannot even be compared to it. Thus, the person who knows God, no matter what he suffers, no matter how awful his pain, can still say, "God is good to me," simply by virtue of the fact that he knows God, an incomparable good.

I sometimes feel pretty stressed out about Americans who were born in conservative states, raised by two married Christian parents, attended Christian schools and youth groups, and then abandoned their faith for atheism as soon as they hit college. It really bothers me how people who had all these advantages turned their backs on God, and they're ungrateful for all their blessings. They show no curiosity about God – they don't

want to know him. But when you read the gospels to see what Jesus has to say about these sorts of people, it’s very comforting. He really sees the problem, and he is on the side of the little guy who has to struggle to be faithful and obedient to God. The Bible has nothing to say to people who are able to feel happy and successful apart from God. It speaks to people who are struggling to follow God. Even when things are difficult, Jesus speaks to the problem of being an alien and a stranger in a world that turns its back on him.

What if you only had four minutes to defend Israel's attack on the Canaanites?

May 29, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

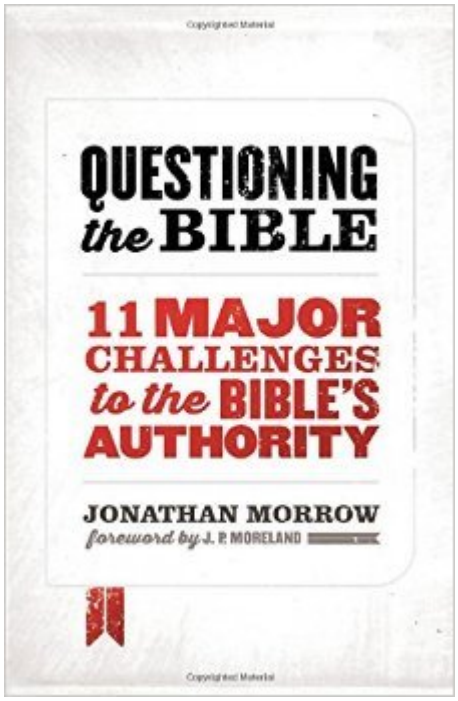

"Questioning the Bible" by Jonathan Morrow

Jonathan Morrow is giving you just four minutes to respond to a well-known challenge to belief in the Christian God.

Can you handle it?

If not, here is a podcast to help you get ready.

Description:

> ***Is the God of the Old Testament violent and bloodthirsty? Did God really command genocide? Why did Israel attack the Canaanites?*** These are just a few of the tough questions I tackle in this episode of the think Christianly podcast. Learn how to respond to one of the most challenging and emotional objections to Christianity in under 10 minutes.

Summary:

- quotes Richard Dawkins to set up the objection
- response: does God have the authority to give and take life?
- response: after the Fall, things in the world are not the way they are supposed to be
- response: Old Testament commands for the Jews to judge other nations are specific to them in that time
- response: "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing" are not accurate descriptions of the attack on Canaan
- response: the attack on the Cannanites takes place in the context of redeeming the

whole world

Here is the Christian Post article he was interviewed for, where he had to answer:

> Jonathan Morrow, author of *Questioning the Bible: 11 Major Challenges to the Bible's Authority*, says readers are often perplexed by Old Testament scripture because "sometimes we just picture a God where anger and love can't co-exist." Yet he explains, "We all have seen people who have been taken advantage of and that makes us angry [because] we love them. So those emotions can co-exist."
>
> […]Along that same line, Morrow clarifies that God's instructions to the Israelite army in Deuteronomy 20 to destroy the people occupying the land of Canaan is "about judgment, not genocide."
>
> "The Bible teaches clearly that all people are sinful and in rebellion, kind of living in open rebellion against God, and God is just to judge anyone," says Morrow. "But in this particular case with the Canaanites, there's several things going on there, but one of those things was the wickedness of the people which was well documented – child sacrifices to Moloch and others, and bestiality and a lot wickedness."
>
> He says this judgment was necessary because "Israel's national survival was crucial so that the Messiah – we would know Jesus as the Messiah – and God's saving purposes of redemption to the world could one day be born because if the Messiah was supposed to come through the lineage of Israel and Israel co-mingled with this wicked people and was ultimately destroyed, that promise of hope and blessing to the whole world could not have been realized."
>
> […]Morrow recognizes that Old Testament questions are particularly challenging. "We live in a sound bite culture and so this is one of those questions where it kind of gets thrown out for people, why does God command genocide, and that's really easy to say and then it takes some time to respond to because there's some context."
>
> Morrow says his sound bite answer is: "These passages are about judgment; they're not about genocide."
>
> However, he encourages believers to find out the asker's real interest in this question. "I would ask them, you know, it sounds like this is a pretty emotional question for you, why is that. Let them talk about it some so you can better understand because that's the goal. We're not just trying to win an argument; we're trying to understand and help people."
>
> It the asker is after truth, Morrow advises Christians to "ask them … are you interested in kind of walking through and getting kind of messy about looking at the evidence for this because I'd love to share that with you, and sometimes they'll go, 'yeah, that'll be great.'"
>
> Other times, Morrow says, the asker is simply looking for "space and distance

> from God and this question allows them to put space between them and God."

By the way, Morrow and McDowell's basic apologetics book – "Is God Just a Human Invention?" – is my first pick when mentoring new people in apologetics.

UPDATE: J.W. Wartick has reviewed the 11 Questions book on his blog.

Walt Russell explains how to read the Bible effectively

May 31, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Dr. Walt Russell's book on the subject of interpreting the Bible is called "Playing With Fire: How the Bible Ignites Change in Your Soul". I like that book, but I found four articles that summarize the main points of the book so people can understand how to read the Bible at a high livel.

Here is part one which talks about how postmodern relativism is at odds with discovering the original intent of an author.

Excerpt:

> Twenty-four year-old "Janet" (not her real name) was angry at my emphasis on seeking to discover authors' intentions when we read their texts. She was an evangelical Christian and a second grade teacher in a public school. She prided herself in helping her 20 students learn to love literature. She would read them a story as they gathered around her, and then ask each child, "What does the story mean to you?" She prodded them to come up with their own unique meanings. With such strong encouragement, the class of 20 would eventually have 20 different meanings for the one story. Janet sensed that I was a naysayer about such "love of literature." Pouring a little emotional gasoline on the fire, I said, "Janet, you're certainly doing your part to insure that these 7 year-olds will never recover from a radically relativistic view of meaning!" Now I had her full attention.

Here is part two which talks about the importance of knowing the genre of a text before

you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" — the newspaper headline virtually screams out at you. The thought of something being slain is repulsive. You're gripped by a mental image of southern India's Bengal tiger. You imagine its beautiful face, its stripes and piercing eyes. Then your image is shattered by the sudden blast of a high-powered rifle. You see the exquisite creature writhe in pain, fall gracelessly in its tracks and die. Having read no further than the headline, you feel sick, as if you've witnessed something tragic.
>
> But *should* you feel this way? The slaughter of an endangered species — especially one as magnificent as the Bengal tiger — is horrifying, no doubt. But suppose you failed to notice that the headline "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" appeared in the *sports page* of the morning paper. Clearly enough, it now refers to different Indians, different Tigers and a different manner of slaying than you originally thought. And is it really that tragic that the Cleveland Indians badly beat the Detroit Tigers in a major league baseball game last night? Not unless you're a long-suffering Detroit Tigers' baseball fan. But how do you now know that the headline is about baseball and not tiger-slaying in India? You look at the words "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS" and you know exactly what each word means. When you combine these words, how can they not mean exactly what you first thought they did — that *Indians slay tigers*? Answer: because their meanings are communicated (as the meanings of *all* words are) through *genres*!

Here is part three which talks about the importance of reading the context of a verse before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "Never Read a Bible Verse!" That's the title of a little booklet my friend and Christian radio personality, Gregory Koukl, has written to help people read the Bible well. What great advice. "That's right, never read a Bible verse. Instead, always read a paragraph — at least." But the current is flowing the other way in our popular sound-bite culture. Not to be left out (or left behind!), the Church has its own version of sound-bite culture: *verse-bite culture*. In verse-bite culture we take a sentence or sentence-fragment from a biblical paragraph, memorize it out of context, write it on a little card, put it on a billboard, a plaque, a rock, etc. Somehow we think that just because this little chunk of Scripture has a verse number in front of it, it was meant to be a free-standing unit of thought. Nothing could be further from the truth.
>
> Apart from the fact that chapter and verse divisions weren't added to the New Testament text until 1560 — long after the New Testament's inspired authorship — there is a more important reason for never reading just a Bible verse, and instead reading at least the paragraph that contains it.

Here is part four which talks about the importance of applying the words of the Bible to your life.

One verse that is often misinterpreted is missing from the articles, but present in the STR lecture. It's Philippians 1:6 that says "6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus". Russell says in the lecture that this promise is specifically intended for the church in Philippi, to whom Paul is writing, not necessarily to all Christians. He is giving them a promise just after directly referring to their good work in supporting him in his ministry. Some verses are just not meant for us, and the context reveals it.

Study: relationship problems, not family rejection, leading cause of higher gay suicides

June 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Life Site News reports.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> While many assume that family rejection is the leading cause of depression among LBGTI individuals, a new study has found that in fact the problem appears to stem predominantly from the higher incidence of relationship problems among homosexuals.
>
> Dr. Delaney Skerrett led a team of researchers from the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP) in studying suicides in Queensland. He found that a leading cause of suicide among "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex" (LGBTI) people is stress from their romantic partners.
>
> "We tend to assume that the psychological distress LGBTI people are often going through is due to family rejection. But it seems that's not so much the case. The conflict seems to be largely related to relationship problems, with partners," Dr. Skerrett said.
>
> In fact, he said, "The numbers are telling us there's a general acceptance at the family level," something he said is "great" and "really heartening!"
>
> Instead, the study, which was published on April 2 in *Asia Pacific Psychiatry*, found that "LGBT individuals experienced relationship problems more often" than heterosexuals, "with relationship conflict also being more frequent than in non-LGBT cases."

> That confirms previous studies finding that homosexuals also face higher rates of intimate partner violence than heterosexuals. A 2007 study in the *Journal of Urban Health*, which is published by the New York Academy of Medicine, found that 32 percent of homosexuals have been abused by at least one partner during their lifetime.
>
> The researchers with AISRAP also found that a higher percentage of homosexuals took their lives [out] of despondency, rather than other psychological illnesses. While one-eighth of all Queensland suicide victims had been diagnosed with a psychosis that impaired their judgment, Skerrett reports "there were no such diagnoses among LGBT individuals." The conclusion adds to the consensus that depression disproportionately besets active homosexuals.

Previously, I blogged about a gay activist who thought that disagreement with gay rights caused gays to commit suicide. I wonder what he would do with a study like this? I also blogged previously about the "epidemic" of domestic violence among gays, and the article I linked to for that was from the left-leaning Atlantic Monthly.

But there's more to say – let's look at an individual case now, which will put some meat on the bones of the studies.

Here's an article from the liberal New York Times.

Here's the set up:

> BOB BERGERON was so relentlessly cheery that people sometimes found it off-putting. If you ran into him at the David Barton Gym on West 23rd Street, where he worked out nearly ever morning at 7, and you complained about the rain, he would smile and say you'd be better off focusing on a problem you could fix.
>
> That's how Mr. Bergeron was as a therapist as well, always upbeat, somewhat less focused on getting to the root of his clients' feelings than altering behavior patterns that were detrimental to them: therapy from the outside-in.
>
> Over the last decade, he built a thriving private practice, treating well-to-do gay men for everything from anxiety to coping with H.I.V. Mr. Bergeron had also begun work as a motivational speaker, giving talks at gay and lesbian centers in Los Angeles and Chicago. In February, Magnus Books, a publisher specializing in gay literature, was scheduled to print a self-help guide he had written, "The Right Side of Forty: The Complete Guide to Happiness for Gay Men at Midlife and Beyond."
>
> It was a topic he knew something about. Having come out as gay in the mid-1980s, Mr. Bergeron, 49, had witnessed the worst years of the AIDS epidemic and emerged on the other side. He had also seen how few public examples there were of gay men growing older gracefully.
>
> He resolved to rewrite the script, and provide a toolbox for better living.
>
> "I've got a concise picture of what being over 40 is about and it's a great perspective filled with happiness, feeling sexy, possessing comfort relating to

> other men and taking good care of ourselves," Mr. Bergeron said on his Web site. "This picture will get you results that flourish long-term."
>
> But right around New Year's Eve, something went horribly wrong. On Jan. 5, Mr. Bergeron was found dead in his apartment, the result of a suicide that has left his family, his friends and his clients shocked and heartbroken as they attempt to figure out how he could have been so helpful to others and so unable to find help himself.

Look:

> To his friends, Mr. Bergeron maintained a positive tone. He went on vacation, dated some, visited museums.
>
> Still, he privately expressed misgivings about what the future held. Olivier Van Doorne, a patient of Mr. Bergeron and the creative director of SelectNY, a fashion advertising firm, recalled Mr. Bergeron telling him that every gay man peaks at one point in his life.
>
> "He said a number of times: 'I peaked when I was 30 or 35. I was super-successful, everyone looked at me, and I felt extremely cool in my sexuality.' "
>
> Mr. Siegel, the therapist who supervised Mr. Bergeron in the early days of his career, said: "Bob was a very beautiful younger man, and we talked a lot about how that shapes and creates a life. The thesis of his book is based very much on his own personal experience with that. And the book also emphasized what to do when you're not attractive or you no longer have the appeal you once had. The idea was to transcend that and expand your sexual possibilities."

And:

> With the book about to be printed, Mr. Bergeron became convinced that he'd written too much about the shame and isolation involved with hooking up online; that people weren't even really doing that anymore, now that phone apps like Grindr and Scruff had come along.
>
> His book, he felt, had become antiquated before it even came out.
>
> […]Though some of his friends, Mr. Rappaport among them, wondered whether drugs were involved, leading to a crash Mr. Bergeron did not anticipate, the suicide seemed to have been carried out with methodical precision. On an island in the kitchen, Mr. Bergeron had meticulously laid out his papers. There was a pile of folders with detailed instructions on top about whom to call regarding his finances and his mortgage. Across from that he placed the title page of his book, on which he also wrote his suicide note. In it he told Mr. Sackheim and Mr. Rappaport that he loved them and his family, but that he was "done."
>
> As his father remembered it, Mr. Bergeron also wrote, "It's a lie based on bad information."
>
> An arrow pointed up to the name of the book.

> The inference was clear. As Mr. Bergeron saw it at the end of his life, the only right side of 40 was the side that came before it.

I think that the problem is that in the gay lifestyle, you have a typically male emphasis on physical appearance, sex and pleasure. There is none of the moderating influence of women, which tends to push men into commitments, responsibility and stability. Stuff that provides fulfillment and meaning and purpose after you lose your youth and appearance.

If you really love a person, then you don't tell them that the dangerous thing they want to do is not dangerous. That's not love. It's easier for you to approve of them and be liked by everyone, but it's not love.

Domestic violence rates are higher for homosexual couples than for heterosexual couples

June 2, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

Since June is Pride Month, I thought it might be a good idea to take a look at some data to decide what we should be telling young people about homosexuality. Although people on the secular left are very easily offended by any sort of disapproval these days, the safest approach is still to present the scientific facts – maybe from behind an alias (just for safety).

From the left-leaning Atlantic Monthly.

Excerpt:

> Data on the rates of same-sex partner abuse have only become available in recent years. Even today, many of the statistics and materials on domestic violence put out by organizations like the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Justice still focus exclusively on heterosexual relationships, and specifically heterosexual women. While the CDC does provide some resources on its website for the LGBT population, the vast majority of the information is targeted at women. Materials provided by the CDC for violence prevention and survivor empowerment prominently feature women in their statistics and photographs.
>
> In 2013, the CDC released the results of a 2010 study on victimization by sexual orientation, and admitted that "little is known about the national prevalence of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking among lesbian, gay, and bisexual women and men in the United States." The report found that bisexual

> women had an overwhelming prevalence of violent partners in their lives: 75 percent had been with a violent partner, as opposed to 46 percent of lesbian women and 43 percent of straight women. For bisexual men, that number was 47 percent. For gay men, it was 40 percent, and 21 percent for straight men.
>
> The most recent statistics available on same-sex intimate partner violence from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, which focuses on LGBT relationships, reported 21 incidents of intimate partner homicides in the LGBT community, the highest ever. Nearly half of them were gay men and, for the second year in a row, the majority of survivors were people of color—62 percent.
>
> In 2012, NCAVP programs around the country received 2,679 reports of intimate partner violence, a decrease of around 32 percent from 2011. However the report noted that many of the NCAVP's member organizations were operating at decreased capacity due to limiting the number of cases they were able to take. The report said that excluding data from organizations, there was actually a 29 percent increase in reports of violence from 2011 to 2012.

That article comes from a source with a very clear pro-gay-agenda bias, so let's take a look at an article from the Family Research Council to balance it out. They rely on mainstream data sources as well, like the CDC, the DOJ, the US Census, etc.

Excerpt:

> A study in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence examined conflict and violence in lesbian relationships. The researchers found that 90 percent of the lesbians surveyed had been recipients of one or more acts of verbal aggression from their intimate partners during the year prior to this study, with 31 percent reporting one or more incidents of physical abuse.[69]
>
> In a survey of 1,099 lesbians, the Journal of Social Service Research found that "slightly more than half of the [lesbians] reported that they had been abused by a female lover/partner. The most frequently indicated forms of abuse were verbal/emotional/psychological abuse and combined physical-psychological abuse."[70]
>
> In their book Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them: Battered Gay Men and Domestic Violence,D. Island and P. Letellier report that "the incidence of domestic violence among gay men is nearly double that in the heterosexual population."[71]
>
> […]Homosexual and lesbian relationships are far more violent than are traditional married households:
>
> The Bureau of Justice Statistics (U.S. Department of Justice) reports that married women in traditional families experience the lowest rate of violence compared with women in other types of relationships.[72]
>
> A report by the Medical Institute for Sexual Health concurred,
>
> It should be noted that most studies of family violence do not differentiate

> between married and unmarried partner status. Studies that do make these distinctions have found that marriage relationships tend to have the least intimate partner violence when compared to cohabiting or dating relationships.[73]

In lesbian relationships, the rate of domestic violence is extremely high, from 17% to 45%, depending on the study. I do think that men exert a calming influence on women's emotions, helping them to channel their feelings into words and reasoned arguments. That short-circuits the tendency toward violent outbursts. That's why I urge men, if they must marry, to practice disagreeing and debating with women before the marriage is actualized. You need to find out what this other person does in a conflict situation before you commit to her for life.

Is homosexual behavior consistent with the Bible's teachings?

June 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from Christian writer Terrell Clemmons about efforts by gay activists to redefine Christianity so that it is consistent with homosexual behavior. This particular post is focused on Matthew Vines.

She writes:

> In March 2012, two years after having set out to confront homophobia in the church, Matthew presented the results of his "thousands of hours of research" in an hour-long talk titled "The Gay Debate." The upshot of it was this: "The Bible does not condemn loving gay relationships. It never addresses the issues of same-sex orientation or loving same-sex relationships, and the few verses that some cite to support homophobia have nothing to do with LGBT people." The video went viral (more than three quarter million views to date) and Matthew has been disseminating the content of it ever since.
>
> In 2013, he launched "The Reformation Project," "a Bible-based, non-profit organization … to train, connect, and empower gay Christians and their allies to reform church teaching on homosexuality from the ground up." At the inaugural conference, paid for by a $104,000 crowd-funding campaign, fifty LGBT advocates, all professing Christians, gathered for four days in suburban Kansas City for teaching and training, At twenty-three years of age, Matthew Vines was already becoming a formidable cause célèbre.

Terrell summarizes the case he makes, and here is the part I am interested in:

Reason #1: *Non-affirming views inflict pain on LGBT people*. This argument is undoubtedly the most persuasive *emotionally*, but Matthew has produced a Scriptural case for it. Jesus, in his well-known Sermon on the Mount, warned his listeners against false prophets, likening them to wolves in sheep's clothing. Then switching metaphors he asked, "Do people pick grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?" The obvious answer is no, and Jesus's point was, you can recognize a good or bad tree – and a true or false prophet – by its good or bad fruit. From this, Matthew concludes that, since non-affirming beliefs on the part of *some* Christians cause the bad fruit of emotional pain for*other* Christians, the non-affirming stance must not be good.

Terrell's response to this is spot on, and I recommend you read her post to get the full response.

She writes:

> Matthew Vines in particular, and LGBTs in general, appear to be drivingly fixated on changing other people's moral outlook. But *why*? Why are they distressed over the shrinking subset of Christianity that holds to the traditional ethic of sex?

> Note that Matthew found an affirming church in his hometown, as can most any LGBT-identifying Christian. Affirming churches abound. Gaychurch.org lists forty-four affirming denominations – *denominations*, not just individual churches – in North America and will help you find a congregation in your area. Why, then, given all these choices for church accommodation, are Matthew and the Reformers specifically targeting churches whose teachings differ from their own?
>
> One gets the sense that LGBTs *really*, *really need* other people to affirm their sexual behavior. Certainly it's human to *want* the approval of others, but this goes beyond an emotionally healthy desire for relational comity. Recall Matthew's plea that non-affirming views on the part of *some* Christians cause emotional pain for *others*. He, and all like-minded LGBTs, are holding *other people* responsible for their emotional pain. This is the very essence of *codependency*.
>
> The term came out of Alcoholics Anonymous. It originally referred to spouses of alcoholics who enabled the alcoholism to continue unchallenged, but it has since been broadened to encompass several forms of dysfunctional relationships involving pathological behaviors, low self-esteem, and poor emotional boundaries. Codependents "believe their happiness depends upon another person," says Darlene Lancer, an attorney, family therapist, and author of *Codependency for Dummies*. "In a codependent relationship, *both* individuals are codependent," says clinical psychologist Seth Meyers. "They try to control their partner and they aren't comfortable on their own."
>
> Which leads to an even more troubling aspect of this Vinesian "Reformation." Not only are LGBT Reformers *not* content to find an affirming church for themselves and peacefully coexist with everyone else, *everyone else must change* in order to be correct in their Christian expression.
>
> This is the classic progression of codependency, and efforts to change everyone else become increasingly coercive. We *must* affirm same-sex orientation, Matthew says. If we don't, we are "tarnishing the image of God [in gay Christians]. Instead of making gay Christians more like God … embracing a non-affirming position makes them less like God." "[W]hen we reject the desires of gay Christians to express their sexuality within a lifelong covenant, we separate them from our covenantal God."
>
> Do you hear what he's saying? LGBTs' relationships with God are dependent on Christians approving their sexual proclivities. But he's *still* not finished. "In the final analysis, then, it is not gay Christians who are sinning against God by entering into monogamous, loving relationships. It is *we* who are sinning against them by rejecting their intimate relationships." In other words, non-affirming beliefs stand between LGBTs and God. Thus sayeth Matthew Vines.

The rest of her article deals with Vines' attempt to twist Scripture to validate sexual behavior that is not permissible in Christianity.

Vines seems to want a lot of people to agree that the Bible somehow doesn't forbid this sexual behavior so that the people who are doing it won't feel bad about doing it. If he can just silence those who disagree and get a majority of people to agree, then the people who are doing these things will feel better.

Matthew Vines is annoyed that Bible-believing Christians expect homosexuals to work through their same-sex attractions, abstain from premarital sex, and then either remain chaste like me, or marry one person of the opposite sex and then confine his/her sexual behavior to his/her marriage. But how is that different than what is asked of me? I am single, and have opposite sex-attractions, but I am also expected to abstain from sex outside of marriage. I have two choices: either remain chaste or marry one woman for life, and confine my sexual behavior to that marriage. I'm not married, so I've chosen to remain chaste. **If I have to exercise a little self-control to show God that what he wants from me is important to me, then I am willing to do that.** I'm really at a loss to understand why so many people take sexual gratification as a given, rather than as an opportunity for self-denial and self-control. I am especially puzzled by sinful people demanding that other celebrate their sin – and using the power of the government now to compel others to celebrate their sin. Christianity is a religion where the founder prioritized self-sacrificial obedience above pleasure and fulfillment. You really have to wonder about people who miss that core element of Christianity.

My service to God is not conditional on me getting my needs met. And my needs and desires are no less strong than the needs of people who engage in sex outside the boundaries of Christian teaching. We just make different decisions about what/who comes first. For me, Jesus is first, because I have sympathy with Jesus for loving me enough to die in my place, for my sins. I am obligated to Jesus, and that means that my responsibility to meet expectations in our relationship comes above my desire to be happy and fulfilled. For Matthew, the sexual desires come first, and Scripture has to be reinterpreted in light of a desire to be happy. I just don't see anything in the New Testament that leads me to believe that we should expect God to fulfill our desires. The message of Jesus is about self-denial, self-control and putting God the Father first – even when it results in suffering. I take that seriously. That willingness to be second and let Jesus lead me is what makes me an authentic Christian.

There is a good debate featuring Robert Gagnon and a gay activist in this post, so you can hear both sides.

What can Christians learn from the bravest naval aviator at the Battle of Midway?

June 4, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been reading lots of books about the World War II battles in the Pacific theater lately, and I wanted to write a post about one of the heroes I found who was the most compelling to me. You may have seen him in the old 1976 Midway movie or the new 2019 Midway movie. But neither movie tells the full story. The man I am talking about is Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.

John Waldron was the leader of the torpedo bomber squadron on the Hornet. This squadron was composed of outdated and slow Devastator torpedo bombers, armed with the Mark 13 Mod 1 torpedoes, which malfunctioned about 90% of the time.

I found an article on the Federalist that tells the story of John Waldron:

> Now there are countless men and woman who deserve to be singled out for their valor, but with the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Midway just around the corner, I thought it would be appropriate to call your attention to one of the bravest men who ever lived. A man who, knowing he was facing certain death, led the first attack against the Japanese aircraft carriers and played a direct role in what would be a decisive victory for the United States, and a defeat from which Japan would never recover. That man was Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.
>
> Now for those who don't know, the Battle of Midway was the turning point in the Pacific theater. The Japanese had an elaborate plan that involved attacking the U.S. base on Midway Island in order to lure the Americans into a battle which the Japanese High command felt their experience and tactics would overwhelm and annihilate the American fleet. With no significant U.S. naval presence, Hawaii and the entire West Coast would be at risk of invasion. But the Americans broke the Japanese code and set a trap of their own – hoping to destroy their enemy's carriers and thereby establish U.S. dominance in the Pacific. And that was exactly what happened : The U.S. fleet surprised the Japanese, sank their four carriers, and took the first real step to winning the Second World War.
>
> John Waldron was 42 years old when the *USS Hornet* steamed towards Midway on June 1st, 1942. Born and raised on a reservation in South Dakota, he had never seen the ocean until he attended the Naval Academy. It wasn't long after he graduated that he moved into naval aviation. He had been assigned to be the squadron leader of the *Hornet's* torpedo bombers in late 1941 and had been drilling his men tirelessly ever since. Waldron had the reputation of a tough as nails, no-nonsense commander. Not surprising, since Waldron was a direct descendant of the warriors from the Oglala Lakota tribe – part of the Great Sioux Nation. The tough skin he developed came from decades of derision from his peers over his meager beginnings, and from the racism directed at his Native

> American heritage. Waldron didn't care what anyone thought of him – all he wanted to do was fight for his country. He was a natural leader and his men would follow him into the gates of Hell, which, as fate would have it, is exactly what they would do in the upcoming battle.
>
> On the morning of June 4th, the Americans were ready to spring their trap, but in the preflight briefing aboard the *Hornet* there was a problem. Stanhope Ring, who was in command of the carrier's air group, directed his pilots to head northwest of the last reported position of the Japanese fleet. Waldron disagreed with this decision, feeling that they should head in the exact direction of that last sighting. He wasn't shy about expressing this opinion, much the displeasure of Ring. Waldron continued to lobby his superior officer several times after the briefing ended, but to no avail.

The Federalist article doesn't talk much about Stanhope Ring, but the book I just finished called "The Battle of Midway" by Craig L. Symonds did. Ring was a very tall, good-looking, and white officer who had breezed up the chain of command thanks to his good looks and confident manner. He loved to show off for cameras, and pull rank on subordinates. He was too proud to admit that Waldron was right in front of the other pilots.

More:

> The air strike force took off from the deck of the *Hornet* – fighters, dive bombers, and the 15 planes in Waldron's torpedo squadron. This force would be joined in the air by similar strike forces from the other U.S. carriers – the *Yorktown* and the *Enterprise*. Shortly after the Hornet's air group was airborne, Waldron couldn't contain his anger anymore. He broke radio silence to tell Ring that they were headed in the wrong direction. He repeated that comment and Ring issued a terse reply that he was in charge of this group and to stay the hell off the radio. Waldron waited a couple of minutes before replying "The hell with you" and peeled his squadron off and headed due west, where he felt the Japanese fleet was.
>
> Less than an hour later, Waldron was proved right. He had led his squadron on a direct line to the enemy. Waldron broke radio silence again to signal to Ring that he had found the fleet, but Ring and the rest of the *Hornet's* planes were too far away to hear. So now, Waldron was faced with a brutal decision. If he went in to attack, he would do so without any fighter protection, and they'd be totally at the mercy of the Japanese fighters. To make matters worse, the U.S. planes (Douglas Devastators) were hopelessly outdated aircraft – their top speed was about a third of what the Japanese fighters could do. They had hoped to get the newer Grumman Avengers, but the *Hornet* had left Pearl Harbor before they had arrived from the mainland. All of this meant that Waldron and Torpedo 8 were looking at a suicidal attack run. […]Waldron got on the radio again and told his men "We will go in. We won't turn back. Former strategy cannot be used. We will attack. Good luck!"

> And with that, the planes of Torpedo 8 closed up their formation and bore down on the Japanese fleet, some seven miles distant.
>
> The Japanese fighters quickly pounced on the Americans, who were going in low and slow – the only way torpedo bombers can attack. One by one the planes from Torpedo 8 were shot down. […]Every single plane in Torpedo 8 was destroyed and not one torpedo hit a Japanese ship.

Not only were the torpedo bombers of John Waldron's VT-8 (Hornet) shot down, but two more waves led by Eugene Lindsey VT-6 (Enterprise) and Edward Massey VT-3 (Yorktown) were also repulsed without a hit.

More:

> History might have viewed Waldron's attack as more insane than brave, and utterly pointless….except for what happened next. Shortly after his failed attack, the torpedo squadron from the *Enterprise* attacked the fleet – and right after that the torpedo squadron from the *Yorktown*. Both of those squadrons had devastating casualties as well (10 of 14 planes lost and 10 of 12 respectively) without inflicting any damage on any Japanese ship. But these three attacks in succession drew the Japanese fighter cover down so low, that it left their carriers exposed to dive bomber attacks. It also burned up a lot of fuel for the fighters, who now needed to land before they could continue their defense of the fleet. The attacks also forced the Japanese carriers into defensive maneuvers, so they were unable to land any planes or launch any for a strike on the American carriers.

In addition to using up their fuel and coming down to low altitude, the Japanese CAP (combat air patrol) fighters also used up most of their dangerous 20 mm ammunition. They mostly had much weaker 7.7 mm ammunition remaining when the dive bombers from the Enterprise and Yorktown arrived.

More:

> As the Japanese were trying to compose themselves after the three fierce but harmless attacks, the American dive bombers from the *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* arrived and quickly struck. Within minutes, three of the Japanese carriers were in flames – the heart of the Imperial Navy had been gutted.
>
> […]The other planes from the Hornet never found the Japanese ships. Ring kept his planes flying in that northwesterly direction until they were too low on fuel to keep going. They returned to the *Hornet* with their full payload of bombs.
>
> […]Now, there were a lot of heroes that day – some who lived and some who died, but the valor that John Waldron displayed in defying orders he knew were wrong and then attacking the enemy when he knew it meant certain death, place him on a special level. His actions directly helped the Americans win this crucial battle, which turned the tide of the war in the favor of the United States. He got

> the Navy Cross for his actions that day, but it seems astonishing to me that he wasn't awarded the Medal of Honor – he is definitely worthy of it.

You can learn more about the Battle of Midway in this helpful video:

So, here is what I wanted to say about this.

John Waldron was not properly equipped by his organization to make a difference at Midway. His planes were too old and slow, his torpedoes almost never worked. His leader was an arrogant, incompetent coward who prevented him from leading others to find and attack the actual targets. The only way he could do something to his enemy was to disobey orders and go off on his own. If he had lived, he probably would have been court-martialed for insubordination. After Waldron was shot down, every single one of the men in his squadron continued their attack until they too were all shot down. Everyone watching must have thought "what a waste of effort". It was only later that it became evident to all that what he did was necessary for the second wave to succeed.

This plaque at the United States Naval Academy Club honors the three commanders of the torpedo bomber squadrons:

[image]
Plaque honoring the Midway torpedo bomber squadron commanders
According to the Family Research Council, the plaque reads:

> The torpedo attacks of Waldron, Lindsey, and Massey had followed hard upon each other by luck. What was not luck, but the soul of the United States in action, was the willingness of the torpedo plane squadrons to go in against hopeless odds. This was the extra ounce of martial weight that in a few decisive minutes tipped the balance of history.

When I read this story, it immediately occurred to me that this is the problem that serious Christians are facing today. Parents and pastors are not equipping young people to actually make a difference. Instead of finding and fighting the real targets: atheism, radical feminism, communism, etc., all our forces have been sent on wild goose chases, so that now "Christians" are actually trying to promote the priorities of the secular left, e.g. – global warming, wealth redistribution, affirming sexual immorality, open borders, critical race theory, etc.

The few of us who actually know how to do our jobs are poorly equipped. We are prevented from leading by organizations that are focused on feelings rather than results. We can only hope that our decision to attack against hopeless odds somehow paves the way for a second wave to succeed. It has happened before, and that's why we should be brave and continue to engage our opponents using tools that work (philosophy of religion, evidential apologetics, scientific research, historical evidence, chastity, sobriety, self-control, good stewardship of our educations, careers and finances, effective charitable giving, self-sacrificial love, etc.).

The link between single mother welfare, fatherlessness, poverty and crime

June 5, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Government pays people welfare not to get married before having kids

What is the root cause of criminal behavior? This article by sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, who points out the link between fatherlessness and crime.

The article appears in National Review, now available on the AEI web site.

Wilcox writes:

> From Adam Lanza, who killed 26 children and adults a year ago at Sandy Hook School in Newtown, Conn., to Karl Pierson, who shot a teenage girl and killed himself this past Friday at Arapahoe High in Centennial, Colo., one common and largely unremarked thread tying together most of the school shooters that have struck the nation in the last year is that they came from homes marked by divorce or an absent father. From shootings at MIT (i.e., theTsarnaev brothers) to the University of Central Florida to the Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy in Decatur, Ga., nearly every shooting over the last year in Wikipedia's "list of U.S. school attacks" involved a young man whose parents divorced or never married in the first place.
>
> […]The social scientific evidence about the connection between violence and broken homes could not be clearer. My own research suggests that boys living in single mother homes are almost twice as likely to end up delinquent compared to boys who enjoy good relationships with their father. Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson has written that "Family structure is one of the strongest, if not the strongest, predictor of variations in urban violence across cities in the United

> States." His views are echoed by the eminent criminologists Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi, who have written that "such family measures as the percentage of the population divorced, the percentage of households headed by women, and the percentage of unattached individuals in the community are among the most powerful predictors of crime rates."
>
> Why is fatherlessness such a big deal for our boys (almost all of these incidents involve boys)? Putting the argument positively, sociologist David Popenoe notes that "fathers are important to their sons as role models. They are important for maintaining authority and discipline. And they are important in helping their sons to develop both self-control and feelings of empathy toward others, character traits that are found to be lacking in violent youth." Boys, then, who did not grow up with an engaged, attentive, and firm father are more vulnerable to getting swept up in the Sturm und Drang of adolescence and young adulthood, and in the worst possible way.

So where do fatherless children come from? It turns out that government programs incentivize women to make them.

Dr. Michael Tanner of the libertarian Cato Institute explains how welfare causes fatherlessness in his testimony to Congress:

> Welfare contributes to crime in several ways. First, children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. According to one study, children raised in single-parent families are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior.(3) Moreover, O'Neill found that, holding other variables constant, black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as black children from a family where the father is present. Nearly 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 percent of prison inmates.(4) Research indicates a direct correlation between crime rates and the number of single-parent families in a neighborhood.(5)
>
> As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her seminal article for The Atlantic Monthly:
>
> The relationship [between single-parent families and crime] is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family break up as the most important source of rising rates of crime.(6)
>
> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these

> studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on family structure concluded that "providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women."(9)

The secular left in this country believes that fathers need to be separated away from their children, and that's why they support welfare programs that redirect money from husbands in intact families to single mothers. They believe that fathers are harmful because they set boundaries on children, and judge them and punish them when they act immorally. To the secular left, boundaries, judgments and punishments on children are bad, and must be stopped. So how can the secular left discourage men from marrying and teaching their own children morality? Well, they can tax married men, and they can give the money to single mothers.

Not only is crime caused by fatherlessness, but poverty is. as well.

Here is Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to explain:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:

> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

People on the left claim that poverty causes crime, but they don’t look for the root cause of poverty. The root cause of poverty is the decline of marriage, which produces fatherless children.

Meet four heroes of the D-Day invasion of Normandy on June 6th, 1944

June 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

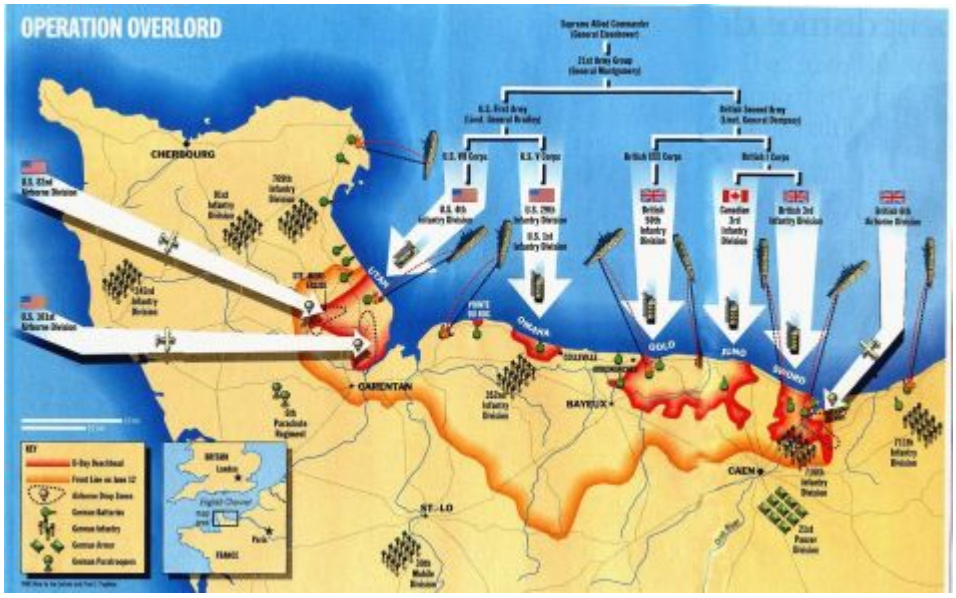

Map of D-Day landings (click for larger image) (courtesy of Time magazine)

I thought it might be a good idea to write up something about D-Day in order to help people understand some of our military history, and to put the spotlight on some real heroes. I don't regard artists, athletes, dancers, singers, actors, or other celebrities as heroes. It really alarms me that so many people know more about these fake heroes than they do about real ones.

Weakness emboldens aggressors

For one thing, many people don't understand how British and American libertarian isolationism made World War 2 into a much bigger mess than it needed to be. As historian Victor Davis Hanson explains in the lecture I linked below, the Allied nations were much stronger and better equipped than the Axis nations before the war started. The Axis nations developed better weapons after the war started. But Germany and Japan didn't think that the Allied nations would do anything if they were aggressive. We know this from their writings and correspondence. They thought that British and Americans were just too scared of war to stop them.

Germany and Japan tested their hypothesis out by re-arming and annexing territory from their neighbors. Britain and America were led by libertarian isolationists, so they didn't fight back. The aggressors correctly understood that libertarian isolationists didn't have the will to oppose them, even if they were weaker than the Allies. But the more they re-armed and annexed territory, the stronger they became. The Allied nations waited too long to confront them. And that's why World War 2 was much harder to win than it needed to be.

Here's a very good lecture about the causes of World War 2 by an actual military

historian, Victor Davis Hanson:

So, that's the first point I wanted to make: libertarian isolationism causes wars. Although libertarians claim to oppose war, they actually cause war, due to their weakness in the face of evil. So who stops wars? People who favor a strong defense, and show a willingness to fight back against aggression are the ones who REALLY oppose wars. This is called "peace through strength", and you can see it in action in the Cold War, where Ronald Reagan defeated the Soviet Union by making their aggression costly.

Heroes of D-Day

My second concern was to promote the real heroes of D-Day, over the fictional heroes of movies, fiction, music, dancing, sports, and other entertainment nonsense.

Here are the four heroes I chose:

- Major John Howard
- Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort
- Brigadier General Norman Cota
- Major Richard Winters

Let's take a look at each of them.

John Howard

Major John Howard led elements of the British 6th Airborne Division to take two vital bridges southeast of Sword beach. He did this in order to prevent German socialist counterattacks coming from the east. After they took the bridges, they had to repulse German tanks with nothing more than their useless PIAT (Projector Infantry Anti-Tank) grenade launchers. The PIAT was nothing more than a grenade launcher powered by a coiled spring. It was very inaccurate, and only effective to 50 yards. But that's all the British paratroops had to stop tanks, and they made it work. You can read about him in this book by Stephen E. Ambrose, entitled: "Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944". This New York Times article tells the story in brief. He also is played by Richard Todd in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Benjamin Vandervoort

Lt. Col. Ben Vandervoort served with the 82nd Airborne Division. I read about how he lead an infantry attack against German Tiger tanks (!) and infantry in Stephen E. Ambrose's book "Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany". Ben Vandervoort broke his ankle during the D-Day landing, but he insisted that the medic just "lace it up tight" so that he could supervise the attacking and holding of Ste. Mere Eglise, southwest of Utah beach, against a vastly superior enemy force. This article tells about how he defended against elite German SS infantry and heavy Tiger tanks at Trois-Ponts, during the Battle of the Bulge. He was outgunned and outnumbered 20 to 1, and had just a few lightly-armed soldiers, two weak 57mm anti-tank guns and some bazookas. He is portrayed by John Wayne in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Norman Cota

Brig. General Norman Cota is my favorite person in World War 2. At 51 years old, he nevertheless landed at D-Day, and rallied terrified Army Rangers to follow him up the bluff, by telling them that Rangers ought to lead the way. “Rangers Lead The Way” later became the motto of the Army Rangers. He always led from the front, demonstrating how to attack a German machine gun position in a farmhouse to a group of American soldiers who were pinned down. He actually grabbed a bunch of grenades and led the assault team against a heavy machine gun! You can read about him in this short article and in Stephen E. Ambrose’s “D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II“. He is portrayed by Robert Mitchum in the famous movie “The Longest Day“.

Richard Winters

Major Richard Winters served in the 101st Airborne Division. Winters led an assault against a superior force of heavy machine guns and 105mm field guns. His tactics were so brilliant that they are still studied at West Point today. You can see Richard Winters and Carwood Lipton in the HBO “Band of Brothers” series, or read this book by Stephen E. Ambrose entitled “Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne, from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest“, which is the basis for that series.

I hope this convinces you that military heroes are far more important than the “heroes” of fiction and entertainment. It’s alarming to me that people invest more and have more respect for characters in Hollywood science fiction movies, and other such make-believe nonsense. We need to be rooted in reality. In reality, men who fight and die fighting evil to protect your freedoms are the real heroes. People who take military history seriously are able to give respect and gratitude where it is due – a very important part of being a mature, moral human being.

New study: white police officers not more likely to shoot black suspects

June 7, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

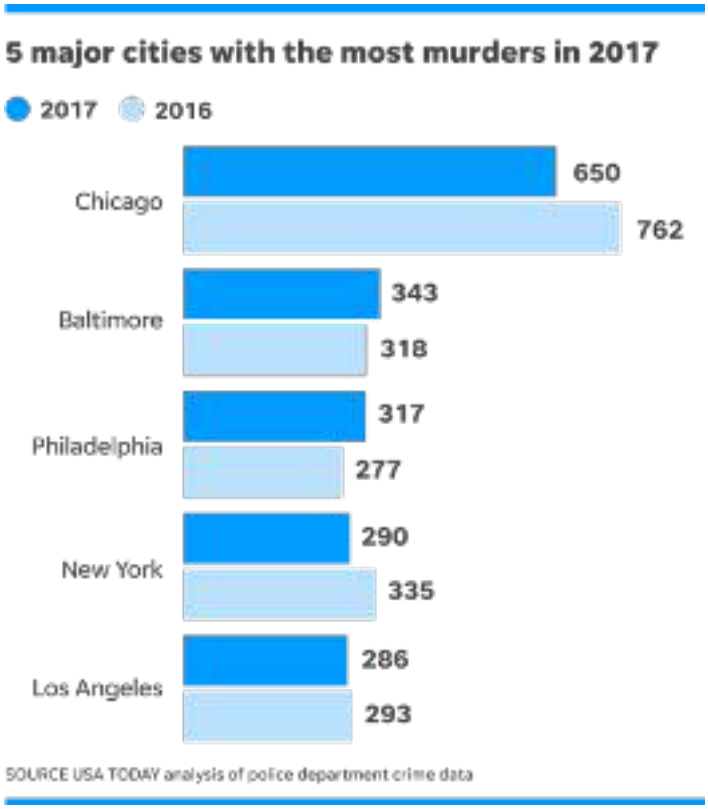

Murder rates in major U.S. cities – all run by Democrats

Whenever people disagree about controversial things, the best way to proceed is to look at what the evidence says. In this case, we've got a new PNAS study authored by professors at several different universities which concludes that white officers are not more likely to shoot black civilians than black or Hispanic police officers.

Heather McDonald writes about it in the centrist National Review:

> A new study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* demolishes the Democratic narrative regarding race and police shootings, which holds that white officers are engaged in an epidemic of racially biased shootings of black men. It turns out that white officers are no more likely than black or Hispanic officers to shoot black civilians. It is a racial group's rate of violent crime that determines police shootings, not the race of the officer. The more frequently officers encounter violent suspects from any given racial group, the greater the chance that members of that racial group will be shot by a police officer. In fact, if there is a bias in police shootings after crime rates are taken into account, it is against white civilians, the study found.
>
> The authors, faculty at Michigan State University and the University of Maryland at College Park, created a database of 917 officer-involved fatal shootings in 2015 from more than 650 police departments. Fifty-five percent of the victims

> were white, 27 percent were black, and 19 percent were Hispanic. Between 90 and 95 percent of the civilians shot by officers in 2015 were attacking police or other citizens; 90 percent were armed with a weapon. So-called threat-misperception shootings, in which an officer shoots an unarmed civilian after mistaking a cellphone, say, for a gun, were rare.

This study builds on previous work, which also showed that white police officers were not more biased than other officers to shoot black civilians.

McDonald notes that progressive policy of hiring more minority police officers won't reduce the rates of shootings of minority civilians, since all races fire their weapons at minority civilians at roughly the same rate.

The real problem with outrage at white police officers is that it doesn't address the problem of black-on-black crime, which is a FAR greater threat to black victims of crime.

A recent editorial by George Mason University professor of economics Walter Williams explains:

> Each year, roughly 7,000 blacks are murdered. Ninety-four percent of the time, the murderer is another black person.
>
> According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1976 and 2011, there were 279,384 black murder victims. Using the 94-percent figure means that 262,621 were murdered by other blacks.
>
> Though blacks are 13 percent of the nation's population, they account for more than 50 percent of homicide victims. Nationally, the black homicide victimization rate is six times that of whites, and in some cities, it's 22 times that of whites.
>
> Coupled with being most of the nation's homicide victims, blacks are most of the victims of violent personal crimes, such as assault and robbery.
>
> […]It's a tragic commentary to be able to say that young black males have a greater chance of reaching maturity on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan than on the streets of Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Oakland, Newark and other cities.

And all those cities are run by Democrats. And they have been run by Democrats for decades. Democrat policies don't work to solve the problem how making cities safer for blacks.

The real root cause behind crime is, of course, fatherlessness, as this interview about fatherless boys in the Daily Signal with Warren Farrell makes clear:

> They're far more likely to be the mass shooters. About 90% of the mass shooters that I studied since Columbine have been boys brought up in homes that have minimal or no father involvement or products of divorce or so on. And so that really shocked me to see that common denominator.
>
> I then looked beyond that and went to ISIS recruits. There was a big study of ISIS recruits that found that the common denominator among ISIS recruits was dad

> deprivation, but not only among the boys, but also the female ISIS recruits as well, which, of course, are in much smaller numbers.
>
> Then I started looking at prisoners and the prison population. We all know that 93% of the prisoners are male, but what very few people know is that about 90% of those 93% are dad-deprived boys.

Kay Cole James, the president of the Heritage Foundation (my favorite think tank), wrote about some of her ideas on how to solve the problem for Fox News.

She writes:

> First, we must ensure that we're encouraging families to stay together and that fathers and mothers raise their children together. Decades of studies have shown that children raised in single-parent homes are statistically more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, exhibit poor social behaviors, and commit violent crimes. They're also more likely to drop out of school, which often leaves them struggling to find good-paying jobs as adults.
>
> We could go a long way toward strengthening inner-city families by changing the system of government assistance that routinely weakens them.
>
> A child of welfare, I can tell you that an overreliance on government assistance has deprived millions of children of the love and security they would have gotten from a family with two parents.

In the rest of the article, she explains how she was able to put that into practice, and what results she obtained by doing it.

Welfare "frees" women to try to start relationships with men who demonstrate no ability or willingness to commit. She doesn't have to care about whether he is chaste, sober, drug-free, loyal, educated, a hard worker, etc. because the government is taking over the role of provider. The side effect of this is the high inner-city crime rates that we observe in cities that reward women for making fatherless children with men they never vetted for commitment ability.

Economist asks whether policies of white liberals will protect blacks from crime

June 8, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Walter Williams

Famous black economist Thomas Sowell helped me to form my views on economics in so many areas. But there's another black economist who is very famous. My Dad sent me an article by Walter Williams where he looks at crime statistics and race. This is something that affects my family, because we aren't white. When it comes to crime, which policies work to protect us?

Here is the column, which was published on Daily Wire:

> Let's… turn to a recent article by Heather Mac Donald, who is a senior fellow at the New York-based Manhattan Institute. She is a contributing editor of City Journal, and a New York Times bestselling author. Her most recent article, "A Platform of Urban Decline," which appeared in Manhattan Institute's publication Eye On The News, addresses race and crime. She reveals government statistics you've never read before.
>
> According to leftist rhetoric, whites pose a severe, if not mortal, threat to blacks. Mac Donald says that may have once been true, but it is no longer so today. To make her case, she uses the latest Bureau of Justice Statistics 2018 survey of criminal victimization. Mac Donald writes: "According to the study, there were 593,598 interracial violent victimizations (excluding homicide) between blacks and whites last year, including white-on-black and black-on-white attacks. Blacks committed 537,204 of those interracial felonies, or 90 percent, and whites committed 56,394 of them, or less than 10 percent. That ratio is becoming more skewed, despite the Democratic claim of Trump-inspired white violence. In 2012-13, blacks committed 85 percent of all interracial victimizations between blacks and whites; whites committed 15 percent. From 2015 to 2018, the total number of white victims and the incidence of white victimization have grown as

> well."
>
> There are other stark figures not talked about often. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting for 2018, of the homicide victims for whom race was known, 53.3% were black, 43.8% were white and 2.8% were of other races. In cases where the race of the offender was known, 54.9% were black, 42.4% were white, and 2.7% were of other races.

So, what are the policies proposed to protect blacks from being the victims of crime? Well, there are three.

1. white liberals want to encourage black women to raise fatherless children by normalizing sex before marriage, and paying black women to have children outside of marriage.
2. white liberals want to confiscate the weapons that law-abiding blacks use to defend themselves from criminals.
3. white liberals want to deny blacks school choice, trapping them into failing schools so that they can't get out of dangerous neighborhoods by rising in education, career and finance.

In another column from Townhall, Williams quotes Malcolm X, who had a low opinion of these policies:

> Malcolm X said: "The worst enemy that the Negro have is this white man that runs around here drooling at the mouth professing to love Negros and calling himself a liberal, and it is following these white liberals that has perpetuated problems that Negros have. If the Negro wasn't taken, tricked or deceived by the white liberal, then Negros would get together and solve our own problems. I only cite these things to show you that in America, the history of the white liberal has been nothing but a series of trickery designed to make Negros think that the white liberal was going to solve our problems. Our problems will never be solved by the white man."

I think that blacks will do much better than they are now when they stop listening to the "compassion" of white liberals, and start looking at how they do living and working in a time of Republican policies. We have record low black unemployment now. It's a curious sort of racism that believes in blacks to forge their own destinies, earning and choosing their way to success.

But some problems are not fixable with policies.

Williams notes:

> The most devastating problems that black people face today have absolutely nothing to do with our history of slavery and discrimination. Chief among them is the breakdown of the black family, wherein 75 percent of blacks are born to single, often young, mothers. In some cities and neighborhoods, the percentage

> of out-of-wedlock births is over 80. Actually, “breakdown” is the wrong term; the black family doesn’t form in the first place. This is entirely new among blacks.
>
> According to the 1938 Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, that year only 11 percent of black children were born to unwed mothers. As late as 1950, female-headed households constituted only 18 percent of the black population. Today it’s close to 70 percent. In much earlier times, during the late 1800s, there were only slight differences between the black family structure and those of other ethnic groups. In New York City in 1925, 85 percent of kin-related black households were two-parent households. Welfare has encouraged young women to have children out of wedlock. The social stigma once associated with unwed pregnancy is all but gone.

You can’t blame “the legacy of slavery” for the breakdown of the black family, because the black family was working great long after slavery was abolished.

So let me say something about myself and my marriage plan.

Because of my skin color, it would be natural for me to look to start a family with a black woman. According to marriage statistics, marriages where both spouses are the same color tend to succeed. But because of my Christian faith, I have to be a virgin myself, and I have to look for a virgin as a bride. But this standard is dead in the black community. Recreational sex with hot bad boys the rule, instead of choosing men who commit before sex. According to research, abstaining from sex before marriage is the best way to ensure that any children that are conceived in the marriage will grow up in a stable relationship with a father (me) in the home.

Unfortunately, white liberals don’t support me in these behaviors and plans. And black women agree with white liberals. They vote overwhelmingly for anti-marriage policies like promoting recreational sex in the schools, abortion, single mother welfare, no-fault divorce, redefining marriage to remove the requirement for complementary genders, etc.

According to exit polls, 98% of black women vote Democrat. They don’t do this by flipping a coin – they believe in Democrat policies. No marriage-minded man is going to be interested in entering a lifelong commitment with someone who supports anti-marriage policies.

Minneapolis “begins the process of ending” their police department

June 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats want to refund the police and release criminals

I think that one of the best things we can do to make sure that Trump wins in November is to paint the Democrats as too extreme to win the vote of moderates. One way to do that is to publicize the weirdest things that they do so that everyone sees them. Well, “ending” your police department is a very weird thing.

Here’s the article from the radically leftist Minneapolis Star-Tribune:

> In their boldest statement since George Floyd’s killing, nine Minneapolis City Council members told a crowd Sunday that they will “begin the process of ending the Minneapolis Police Department.”
>
> “We recognize that we don’t have all the answers about what a police-free future looks like, but our community does,” they said, reading off a prepared statement.
>
> […]“Decades of police reform efforts have proved that the Minneapolis Police Department cannot be reformed and will never be accountable for its actions,” they said. “We are here today to begin the process of ending the Minneapolis Police Department and creating a new, transformative model for cultivating safety in Minneapolis.”

And it’s not just dark blue Minneapolis that is ending their police force. Other Democrat mayors are getting in on it:

> The effort to defund police departments has gained some momentum. Last week, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said the city would look to cut $100 million to $150 million from its nearly $2 billion annual police budget to redirect to black communities. Mayor Bill de Blasio pledged for the first time to cut New York City’s

> police funding following 10 nights of mass protests against police violence and mounting demands that he overhaul a department whose tactics have caused widespread consternation.

It's not JUST that the Democrats are trying to do away with police. That's only half of their plan to eliminate crime. The other half of their plan is to *release convicted criminals*. Don't believe me? Then read this and weep:

> New York City released over 2,650 criminals from prison to protect them from the pandemic. But they didn't stay home or wash their hands. They went back to their old jobs and 100 of them accounted for 190 arrests for crimes like burglary and robbery. A rapist was released and he went back to raping.
>
> One of the freed criminals was responsible for 18 burglaries at closed eateries. And when he was arrested, the end of bail meant that he was set loose. This looting was going on long before the riots.
>
> Now as the rioters and looters rule the streets of Manhattan, when the police manage to arrest them, they have to quickly let them go.
>
> "When it comes to a burglary, a commercial store, which is looting, they're back out," Chief Terrence Monahan said. "Because of bail reform, you're back out on the street the next day. You cannot be held on any sort of bail."
>
> Of the 650 thugs arrested, almost all will be released back on the street to riot and loot again.
>
> Los Angeles County released about 5,000 criminals accounting for around a third of imprisoned criminals. And with no bail, arrested criminals were set loose and then arrested again. In the first 30 days of the experiment, 213 criminals were rearrested again after being put back on the street.
>
> Sacramento County's jail population fell 30%, Orange County's prison numbers dropped by 45%, Detroit's jail population dropped by 40%, Philadelphia's by 17%, and Denver's by 41%. Massachusetts freed 1,000 criminals while Illinois freed around 4,000. Dallas released 1,000 criminals and Hennepin County, the home of the riots that went on to sweep major cities, reduced its prison population by 44%.

These are all jurisdictions dominated by Democrats.

I think these two policies (end police, release criminals) are wonderful news for the Trump re-election effort, and we should by all means make it known where Democrats stand on law and order issues. We already know about their foreign policy views (appease and retreat), and we should make sure that everyone knows about their views on public safety. Who do Democrats think are more important? Criminals? Or law-abiding taxpayers?

The question answers itself. In Chicago, a city *dominated* by far-left Democrats, they have all the anti-police, anti-gun, anti-self-defense policies and regulations any criminal could

hop for.

And this is what they get:

> Bloody Chicago recorded 18 murders on May 31, making it the city's deadliest day in 60 years.
>
> The dubious milestone was reached on a day Chicago was roiled by another round of protests and looting following the Memorial Day death of George Floyd in police custody in Minneapolis.
>
> The 18 deaths tallied by the University of Chicago Crime Lab made May 31, 2020 the single-most violent day in six decades, the Chicago Sun-Times reported Monday. The Crime Lab numbers go back only to 1961.
>
> On May 29 and May 30, there were seven murders. In a city with an international reputation for crime, the 25 murders on those three days made for the most violent weekend in Chicago's modern history, according to the paper.

With Democrats, the important thing is that people *feel good* and *look good to others*. It's not important to them whether their policies actually work. Because, if their policies don't work, (and they never work), then they can always blame racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, Christianity, or capitalism.

Right now, the Democrats are running Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, Baltimore, Washington D.C., Minneapolis, etc. And you can see how seriously they are taking the responsibility to protect the public from criminals. So, we actually know what will happen if we put Democrats into the House, Senate and Oval Office.

When people ask you why you're a Republican, make sure you explain to them what Democrats believe about ending the police and releasing convicted criminals. And don't forget to add the part about opening the borders for illegal immigrants, criminals and terrorists. This is an important election, and people ought to know.

Guest post: Christians Should Oppose Black Lives Matter

June 10, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The following is a guest post by a friend of mine who is also a software engineer, but a different one than last time.

The Problems with Black Lives Matter

All over Facebook I've seen naïve Christians posting Black Lives Matter (BLM) material, hashtags, and even donation links. According to their official statements BLM aims to:

1. "Disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure"
2. Foster a "queer-affirming network" and "freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking," instead of helping people escape LGBT lifestyles and live as God intended.
3. "A national defunding of police," BLM is a member of M4BL which also calls for abolishing prisons.
4. BLM parent group M4BL is pro-abortion: "we demand reproductive justice that gives us autonomy over our bodies and our identities."
5. BLM parent group M4BL is anti-capitalist. The alternative to capitalism is removing the freedom to buy and sell and putting the government in charge of resources. When government power is absolute, all checks and balances against evil disappear and atrocities become inevitable. I know of 100 million people who didn't have a good time in anti-capitalist countries, especially minorities.
6. BLM finds racism in everything with no concept of forgiveness. While masking the much larger and real causes of black inequality in the US. More on that below.

These goals don't seem very Christian.

Some Christians say they only support the slogan "black lives matter" but not the organization. They're probably friends with people who call themselves "National

Socialists” and enjoy re-explaining to everyone they meet how it’s not actually the German kind. To each their own. Yet better slogans could be used to support black people.

Avoid the slackidasical “all lives matter” retort. That distracts from the real issues:

Black Inequality

Black inequality in the US is real. But BLM promotes a false narrative, blaming it entirely on modern systemic racism. If that’s true, why are blacks 3 times more likely to receive government assistance than whites? Why are police are about twice as likely to use lethal force against *whites* under arrest than blacks (although more likely to use non-lethal force against blacks)?

Before getting to the real reasons let’s first dig into that last source. It comes from the left-leaning Center for Policing Equity. The wording in their report focuses on specific localities where the police are harsher on blacks. But the overall data tells a different story. In tables 6 and 7 on page 20, police are 1.73 times more likely to use lethal force against whites under arrest than blacks, and 2.41 times more likely to use lethal force against whites under arrest for violent offences. Black Lives Matter and the left-leaning media would never tell you this.

Don’t police just arrest blacks way more than whites? Yes, absolutely. You can even find stats showing unarmed blacks are 5 times more likely to be killed by police than unarmed whites, a product of being arrested much more frequently. But unfortunately (trigger warning) it’s because in the US, blacks commit significantly more crime:

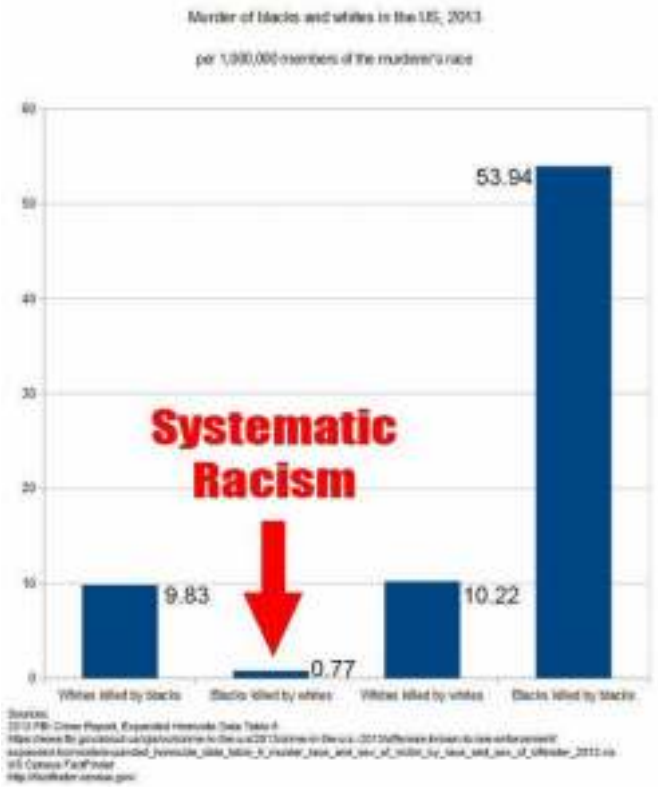

I looked up the FBI data this meme links to, converted it to rates per million and got the

same result. Non-lethal crimes have a similar proportion by race.

What are the Real Causes of Black Inequality?

Perhaps the court systems are racist and blacks are convicted of murder more often? One could speculate so, but murders involve more investigation than most crimes, and you'd have to argue the system is so biased it only makes it appear as if blacks are 12.8 times more likely to kill whites than whites kill blacks. Quite a stretch.

Use careful grace in sharing these stats, as they're easily abused by the small number of people wishing to paint blacks as an unredeemable, inferior race. Instead consider the better explanations for black inequality:

1. 2.7 times more black children (65%) grow up in single parent homes than white children (24%). 17% of blacks were born out of wedlock in 1940 but that number is >70% today. Other races also increased but not nearly as much. We know broken families are strongly correlated with poverty, poor education, crime, and many other ills.
2. As noted, blacks are three times more likely to receive government assistance than whites, a number that's changed very little in 40 years. If welfare programs lifted people out of poverty, by now shouldn't we see more than a slight decrease in blacks on welfare? Rather I suspect welfare increases rates of fatherlessness: women don't need a man when the government pays the bills.
3. Universities, employers, the government, and the media use "soft racism," giving special treatment to blacks, sometimes causing an unhealthy and unnecessary inferiority complex.
4. Due to this persecution narrative, and fear of being called racist, poor behavior among blacks isn't called out, worsening the broken family cycle. Even being used as an excuse for the poor behavior of the recent rioters. Black CNN journalist Don Lemon received a "firestorm of criticism" for pointing to out-of-wedlock births as a problem among blacks.

I'm curious. Will you argue that fatherlessness leads to negative outcomes among whites, but a 2.7x greater rate among blacks doesn't significantly increase their negative outcomes? Really?

Perhaps it's even possible that police target blacks more frequently because these issues actually do lead them to commit more crimes, causing some police to subconsciously be more suspect of blacks? I don't know if that's true, but if so who is at fault?

Is Racism Still a Major Issue?

Before continuing please read this piece by conservative commenter David French (white), who adopted his black daughter from Ethiopia. He describes how through many

incidents it made him realize racism is still alive and well in America.

Meanwhile, the black economist Thomas Sowell offers a contrary view:

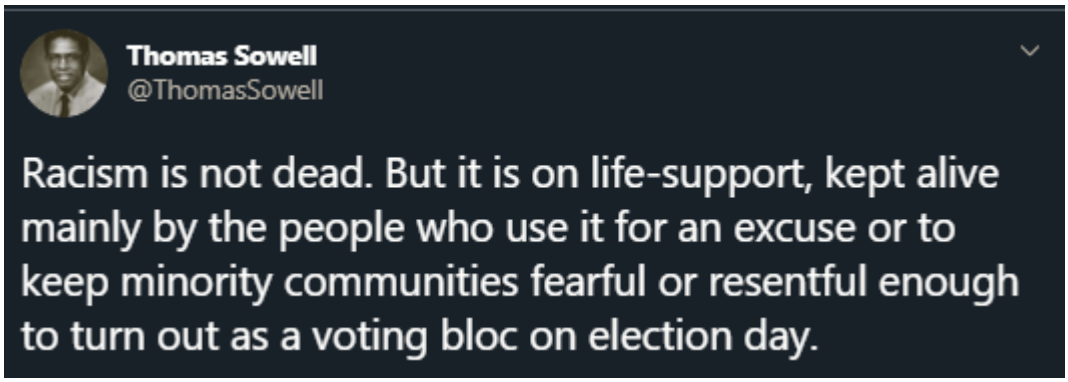

Who's right? David French says he used to think there were almost no racists. I'm still in that place. I don't know anyone who is racist other than one or two people I met on strange corners of the internet. After adopting his daughter French discovered that yes, of course racism still exists, outlining several real incidents of bias against her. For example his daughter's friend said, "My dad says it's dangerous to go black people's neighborhoods." Alt-right trolls even made a cruel meme of his young daughter in a gas chamber.

Such memes are of course reprehensible. But French uses the wrong benchmark. The real question is not if racism exists, but if blacks face greater external hardship than other groups? People who are too smart, dumb, fat, thin, short, tall, attractive, ugly, rich, poor, Christian, or amoral. Or any other category. Almost everyone belongs to at least one. French doesn't address that question.

Compared to Christian Persecution in the US (Yes, Really)

I can't answer for most of those groups. But I am a Christian. I'm very glad to live in the US with its many Christian freedoms. I don't even feel comfortable talking about Christian "persecution" in the US because other parts of the world have it so much worse. Yet there are still examples of anti-Christian discrimination here:

1. I know a Christian friend who was kicked out of her PhD biology program for being a creationist. An intelligent, articulate, and polite one at that. I used to think people like her must've just been belligerent, but I hear similar stories from nearly every creationist or intelligent design proponent I speak to. Many keep their beliefs hidden. Books and documentaries are filled with such stories. Well known professor and textbook author Larry Moran has even called for universities to flunk by default any students who believe in intelligent design: "Flunk the IDiots." Forbes later wrote a glowing bio of Moran for his stance. Imagine the outrage if Moran called to flunk all black students!
2. In 2016, hapless Chinese scientists published a paper in the journal PLOS One, stating that the human hand shows "proper design by the Creator." The remark was in passing and the rest of their paper had nothing to do with the evolution or design. As soon as this was realized, I watched as the backlash unfolded in the comments

section. Five editors of PLOS One requested the whole article to be retracted (rather than the wording removed), two of those editors said they'd resign if it wasn't retracted. Two others said the editor who approved the paper should be fired. And five scientists commented, saying they'd boycott PLOS One. Then the paper was retracted. Even though the Chinese researches explained they only meant to say "mother nature," and English wasn't their first language. No other issue with their research was found. That backlash was only for a translation issue. Imagine if they'd been Christians who actually believed God designed life.
3. Practicing Christians are no longer allowed to hold certain jobs in the United States. A county clerk like Kim Davis cannot in good conscious abet two people into a lifelong commitment to live in sin, yet was jailed for refusing. California once banned all judges who volunteered with the Boy Scouts because the group previously required heterosexual scout leaders.
4. Many friends often tell me they can't publicly speak out against homosexual behavior in fear of losing their jobs. I doubt their employers have issue with vegetarians saying meat is murder.
5. And of course secularists make memes, sometimes violent, mocking Christians all the time. So what.

Imagine if I took the crime stats above and marched around with signs about "white genocide" or "systemic racism" because blacks are more likely to get welfare or whites more likely to be shot while under arrest. That'd make me a complete narcissistic jerk. Or worse if I used it to justify arson, looting, and violence. Yet I'd still be more correct than Black Lives Matter because at least the data supports me.

I don't think there's anything special about hardships faced by US Christians. You could make a similarly troublesome list for hardships of unattractive and overweight people, probably worse. I'm not planning any protests for them or for US anti-Christian discrimination. That's too minor compared to many greater injustices in the world. And please don't take this and claim I've said racism no longer exists. The experiences of David French's daughter are bad things that need to stop. But unlike in decades past, I'm not convinced it's currently any worse than hardships faced by any number of other classes of people for a wide variety of reasons.

The Media Amplifies Racism for Profit

A couple weeks ago I posted to Facebook about Israel planning to ban their only Christian news station for proselytizing. Two friends commented that it was a great idea, because Christians indoctrinate people. I get similar comments often. Oh woe is me! But imagine if they'd instead called for banning black history? Call CNN! We found another Amy Cooper!

Although sometimes doing well, George Floyd had a long and sometimes violent criminal record. Nobody thinks he deserved to die. I'm glad the officers involved are being investigated. But put his case in perspective. People do awful things for many reasons. In

the United States each year we have:

- 600,000+ abortions
- 250,000 deaths from negligent medical errors
- 15,000 murders
- 1,500 dead from child abuse.
- 1,000 suspects killed by police (with 90 to 95% attacking police or another person). Among a total police force of more than 800,000.
- 85 police officers killed.

Despite all that, the deceptive media amplifies any incident with a white perpetrator and black victim. Everyone knows about George Floyd, but few have heard of Tony Timpa (white), who in 2016 also begged for his life as police suffocated and made fun of him. The media gets away with this bias because almost everyone actually does hate racism, leading to collective outrage. So much that it brings riots, looting, and buildings on fire. Plus news media profit from increased news viewership of these riots. While the media ignores many greater injustices in the previous list.

The leftist media then uses Black Lives Matter as a front to push ridiculous leftist policies like defunding the police. Oh you're against BLM? Racist.

Black inequality in America is real. If you love people of all races as Christ commands, then you should want to solve this problem. That can only be done if we tackle the real causes, and not the left-leaning media's exaggerated racism narrative that masks them.

38-year-old single mother of seven, pregnant with twins, demands better government housing

June 11, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

38-year-old single mother with 7 kids, 2 more on the way

I saw this article about an unmarried woman, pregnant with twins, who already has 7 children from a variety of men. She is currently living in a 4-bedroom house paid for by taxpayers. She is angry because the government isn't giving her enough money to pay for her lifestyle choices.

This article comes from the UK Daily Mail:

> A 38-year-old mother-of-seven who is pregnant with twins is begging to be rehoused from her 'hellish' four-bedroom council flat which she says isn't good enough for her.
>
> […]The single mother said: 'My relationship with some of my children is at breaking point, we can't keep living like this.
>
> […]'I just want to get out of this hell. I'd rather live anywhere else, as long as it is not in here. It has been really tough.
>
> 'I'm feeling down every night and sometimes you just feel like giving up. But I just have to keep going for the sake of the kids.'

She can fix everything that's gone wrong with a little more taxpayer money. That will make it unnecessary for her to choose men who commit before sex, and let her have the freedom to choose the "best" men for relationships.

More:

> After spending a month in various hotels, West Lothian Council found them the flat in Bathgate and they moved in on September 20.

> But after moving into her new Bathgate property, Ms Burns complained that the flat did not come with a television…

She wasn't even provided with a taxpayer-funded telly! How else to people get televisions except from welfare programs?

Anyway, how did this happen? Well, it happens because young women today are increasingly choosing men who are not willing to marry first, and using premarital sex and cohabitation to try to land them. Something that the previous generation of married women from 50 years ago would never have done.

The Daily Caller explains:

> Unmarried couples are having roughly 40 percent of all births in the U.S., marking a trend that may be detrimental to the upbringing of those children.
>
> For the first time in U.S. history, out-of-wedlock births in America are largely a result of cohabitation, according to the United Nations Population Fund 2018 State of World report released Wednesday. Single mothers had nearly 90 percent of out-of-wedlock births in 1968, but that number decreased to 53 percent in 2017, according to the Pew Research Center.
>
> "Compared to children of married parents, those with cohabiting parents are more likely to experience the breakup of their families, be exposed to 'complex' family forms, live in poverty, suffer abuse, and have negative psychological and educational outcomes," according to the Institute for Family Studies (IFS).
>
> […]Children with single parents have the highest rates of poverty followed by children living with unmarried, cohabiting parents, the IFS reported.
>
> Between 2006 and 2010, 23 percent of births to married women were unintended while 51 percent of births to unmarried cohabiting women were unintended. That number rose to 67 percent for unmarried women not cohabiting.
>
> **Two-thirds of cohabiting parents split up before their child reaches age 12, while only a quarter of married parents divorce, according to an April 2017 Brookings Institution report.**

The problem of fatherless children is getting worse. And taxpayers will be on the hook to pay for it – that's what the story of the 38-year-old woman shows. Productive people have to pay when women are not persuaded to make better decisions about which men to have relationships with, and when to have sex.

My experience

I know three young women who are cohabitating right now. I have had a few conversations with them about what they are studying, what jobs they want to get, and what their plans for the future are.

All three of these women have never married, and are in their early 20s and attractive. Two of them have children. The live-in boyfriends are getting sex without having to

commit first. The boyfriends (judging from photos) seem to have been chosen purely for looks. Tall, muscles, beards, tattoos, piercings, etc. Obviously, none of them is a Christian. And none of the men has a STEM degree, a career or savings -they're too young to have those things to prove their ability to provide. But they're still co-habitating, and get all the benefits of a wife without having to have proven themselves capable of the responsibilities, expectations and obligations of a husband. I do not like these men. I do not think women should choose them.

Each of these women is spending the young and attractive period of her life in unstable relationships with men who think of sex as recreational, rather than something that is saved for inside the marriage covenant. If their past relationships fail, they will have a much harder time finding a good man. They will have sexual baggage. They will probably have children from another man. They will have bitterness and mistrust towards men in general. They will be less likely to give generously to a future husband. This is not what marriage-minded men are looking for.

Two black economists explain how to end poverty in America

June 12, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Economist Walter Williams

Walter Wiliams is one of my two favorite economists, the other being Thomas Sowell.

Here is his article on wealth and poverty on Creators written by Dr. Williams.

First, real poverty is not common in America:

> There is no material poverty in the U.S. Here are a few facts about people whom the Census Bureau labels as poor. Dr. Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield, in their study "Understanding Poverty in the United States: Surprising Facts About America's Poor", report that 80 percent of poor households have air conditioning; nearly three-quarters have a car or truck, and 31 percent have two or more. Two-thirds have cable or satellite TV. Half have one or more computers. Forty-two percent own their homes. Poor Americans have more living space than the typical non-poor person in Sweden, France or the U.K. What we have in our nation are dependency and poverty of the spirit, with people making unwise choices and leading pathological lives aided and abetted by the welfare state.

Second, the "poverty" is not caused by racism, but by poor choices:

> The Census Bureau pegs the poverty rate among blacks at 35 percent and among whites at 13 percent. The illegitimacy rate among blacks is 72 percent, and among whites it's 30 percent. A statistic that one doesn't hear much about is that the poverty rate among black married families has been in the single digits for more than two decades, currently at 8 percent. For married white families, it's 5 percent. Now the politically incorrect questions: Whose fault is it to have children without the benefit of marriage and risk a life of dependency? Do people have free will, or are they governed by instincts?
>
> There may be some pinhead sociologists who blame the weak black family

> structure on racial discrimination. But why was the black illegitimacy rate only 14 percent in 1940, and why, as Dr. Thomas Sowell reports, do we find that census data "going back a hundred years, when blacks were just one generation out of slavery … showed that a slightly higher percentage of black adults had married than white adults. This fact remained true in every census from 1890 to 1940"? Is anyone willing to advance the argument that the reason the illegitimacy rate among blacks was lower and marriage rates higher in earlier periods was there was less racial discrimination and greater opportunity?

Third, avoiding poverty is the result of good choices:

> No one can blame a person if he starts out in life poor, because how one starts out is not his fault.
>
> If he stays poor, he is to blame because it is his fault. Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior. It turns out that a married couple, each earning the minimum wage, would earn an annual combined income of $30,000. The Census Bureau poverty line for a family of two is $15,500, and for a family of four, it's $23,000. By the way, no adult who starts out earning the minimum wage does so for very long.

Fourth, what stops people from making good choices is big government:

> Since President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty, the nation has spent about $18 trillion at the federal, state and local levels of government on programs justified by the "need" to deal with some aspect of poverty. In a column of mine in 1995, I pointed out that at that time, the nation had spent $5.4 trillion on the War on Poverty, and with that princely sum, "you could purchase every U.S. factory, all manufacturing equipment, and every office building. With what's left over, one could buy every airline, trucking company and our commercial maritime fleet. If you're still in the shopping mood, you could also buy every television, radio and power company, plus every retail and wholesale store in the entire nation". Today's total of $18 trillion spent on poverty means you could purchase everything produced in our country each year and then some.

Regarding those last two points, here is Thomas Sowell:

Economist Thomas Sowell blames welfare for killing the black family

To illustrate this point, here's a graph with some helpful data taken from the U. S. Census.

[image]

Black women were more likely to be married before welfare programs

In fact, there is a whole video featuring Thomas Sowell to go with this graph:

And an article to go with it:

> If we wanted to be serious about evidence, we might compare where blacks stood a hundred years after the end of slavery with where they stood after 30 years of the liberal welfare state. In other words, we could compare hard evidence on "the legacy of slavery" with hard evidence on the legacy of liberals.
>
> Despite the grand myth that black economic progress began or accelerated with the passage of the civil rights laws and "war on poverty" programs of the 1960s, the cold fact is that the poverty rate among blacks fell from 87 percent in 1940 to 47 percent by 1960. This was before any of those programs began.
>
> Over the next 20 years, the poverty rate among blacks fell another 18 percentage points, compared to the 40-point drop in the previous 20 years. This was the continuation of a previous economic trend, at a slower rate of progress, not the economic grand deliverance proclaimed by liberals and self-serving black "leaders."
>
> Ending the Jim Crow laws was a landmark achievement. But, despite the great proliferation of black political and other "leaders" that resulted from the laws and policies of the 1960s, nothing comparable happened economically. And there were serious retrogressions socially.
>
> Nearly a hundred years of the supposed "legacy of slavery" found most black children being raised in two-parent families in 1960. But thirty years after the liberal welfare state found the great majority of black children being raised by a single parent.

The rest of the article points out how even crime rates among blacks were caused by the

implementation of soft law enforcement policies by progressives. Just look at the big cities if you want to know what it is like for blacks to be ruled by Democrats. It sucks!

If everybody started to read more Thomas Sowell books, we would be much better off as a country! Only good things happen when people stop watching TV and listening to music and watching movies, and instead settle down in a chair with a Thomas Sowell book. I recommended a bunch of them in a previous post.

Robin Collins and atheist Peter Millican discuss the fine-tuning of the universe for life

June 13, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

You might remember Peter Millican from the debate he had with William Lane Craig. I ranked that debate as one of the 3 best I have ever seen, along with the first Craig vs Dacey debate and the second Craig vs Sinnott-Armstrong debate.

Details:

> Science has revealed that the fundamental constants and forces of the cosmos appear to be exquisitely fine-tuned to allow a universe in which life can develop. Is God the best explanation of the incredibly improbable odds of the universe we live in being a life-permitting one?
>
> Robin Collins is a Christian philosopher and a leading advocate of the argument for God from cosmic design. Peter Millican is an atheist philosopher at Oxford University. They debate the issues.
>
> From 'Unbelievable?' on 'Premier Christian Radio', Saturday 19th March 2016.

The debate:

As usual when the atheist is an expert, there is no snark or paraphrasing in the summary.

Summary

Brierley: What is the fine-tuning argument?

Collins: the fine-tuning is structure of the universe is extremely precisely set to allow the existing of conscious, embodied agents who are capable of moral behavior. There are 3 kinds of fine-tuning: 1) the laws of nature (mathematical formulas), 2) the constants of

physics (numbers that are plugged into the equations), 3) the initial conditions of the universe. The fine-tuning exists not just because there are lots of possibilities, but there is something special about the actual state of affairs that we see. Every set of laws, parameters and initial conditions is equally improbable, but the vast majority of permutations do not permit life. The possible explanations: theism or the multiverse.

Brierley: How improbable are the numbers?

Collins: Once case is the cosmological constant (dark energy density), with is 1 part in (10 raised to 120th power). If larger, the universe expands too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form after the Big Bang. If smaller, the universe collapses in on itself before life could form. Another case is the initial distribution of mass energy to give us the low entropy we have that is necessary for life. The fine-tuning there is 1 part in (10 raised to the 10th power raised to the 123rd power).

Brierley: What do you think of the argument?

Millican: The argument is worth taking very seriously. I am a fan of the argument. The other arguments for God's existence such as the ontological and cosmological arguments are very weak. But the fine-tuning argument has the right structure to deliver the conclusion that theists want. And it is different from the traditional design argument tended to focus on biological nature, which is not a strong argument. But the fine-tuning argument is strong because it precedes any sort of biological evolution. Although the design is present at the beginning of the universe, it is not visible until much later. The argument points to at least deism, and possibly theism. The argument is not based on ignorance, it is rooted in "the latest results from the frontiers of science" (his phrase).

Brierley: Is this the best argument from natural theology?

Collins: The cosmological argument makes theism viable intuitively, but there are some things that are puzzling, like the concept of the necessary being. But the fine-tuning argument is decisive.

Brierley: What's are some objections to the fine-tuning argument?

Millican: The argument is based on recent physics, so we should be cautious because we **maybe** we will discover a natural explanation.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: The cosmological constant has been around since 1980. But the direction that physics is moving in is that there are more constants and quantities being discovered that need to be fine-tuned, not less. Even if you had a grand unified theory, that would have to be have the fine-tuning pushed into it.

(BREAK)

Millican: Since we have no experience of other laws and values from other universes, **we don't know** whether these values can be other than they are. Psychologically, humans are prone to seeing purpose and patterns where there is none, so **maybe** that's happening here.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: It is possible to determine probabilities on a single universe case, for example using multiple ways of calculating Avogadro's number all converging on the same number makes it more probable.

Millican: Yes, I willing to accept that these constants can take on other values, ("principle of indifference"). But **maybe** this principle be applied if the improbability were pushed up into the theory?

Collins: Even if you had a grand theory, selecting the grand theory from others would retain the improbability.

Brierley: What about the multiverse?

Millican: **What if** there are many, many different universes, and we happen to be in the one that is finely-tuned, then we should not be surprised to observe fine-tuning. **Maybe** a multiverse theory will be discovered in the future that would allow us to have these many universes with randomized constants and quantities. "I do think that it is a little bit of a promissary note". I don't think physics is pointing to this right now.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: I agree it's a promissary note. This is the strongest objection to the fine-tuning argument. But there are objections to the multiverse: 1) the fine-tuning is kicked back up to the multiverse generator has to be set just right to produce universes with different constants, 2) the multiverse is more likely to produce a small universe with Boltzmann brains that pop into existence and then out again, rather than a universe that contains conscious, embodied intelligent agents. I am working on a third response now that would show that the same constants that allow complex, embodied life ALSO allow the universe to be discoverable. This would negate the observer-selection effect required by the multiverse objection.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Millican: I don't see why the multiverse generator has to be fine-tuned, since **we don't know** what the multiverse generator is. I'm not impressed by the Boltzmann brains, but won't discuss. We should be cautious about inferring design because **maybe** this is a case where we are seeing purpose and design where there is none.

Brierley: Can you negate the discoverability of the universe by saying that it might be psychological?

Collins: These things are not psychological. The selected value for the cosmic microwave background radiation is fine-tuned for life and for discoverability. It's not merely a discoverability selection effect, it's optimal for discoverability. If baryon-photon value were much smaller, we would have known that it was not optimal. So that judgment cannot be explained by

Millican: That's a very interesting new twist.

Brierley: Give us your best objection.

Millican: I have two. 1) Even if you admit to the fine-tuning, this doesn't show a being who is omnipotent and omnisicient. What the fine-tuning shows is that the designer is doing

the best it can given the constraints from nature. **If I were God,** I would not have made the universe so big, and I wouldn't have made it last 14 billion years, just to make one small area that supports life. An all-powerful God would have made the universe much smaller, and much younger. 2) The fine-tuning allows life to exist in other solar systems in other galaxies. What does this alien life elsewhere mean for traditional Christian theology? The existence of other alien civilizations argues against the truth of any one religion.

Brierley: Respond to those.

Collins: First objection: with a finite Creator, you run into the problem of having to push the design of that creature up one level, so you don't really solve the fine-tuning problem. An unlimited being (non-material, not composed of parts) does not require fine-tuning. The fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than atheism. Second objection: I actually do think that it is likely that are other universes, and life in other galaxies and stars, and the doctrine of the Incarnation is easily adaptable to that, because God can take on multiple natures to appear to different alien civilizations.

Other resources (from WK)

If you liked this discussion, be sure and check out a full length lecture by Robin Collins on the fine-tuning, and a shorter lecture on his very latest work. And also this the Common Sense Atheism podcast, featuring cosmologist Luke Barnes, who answers about a dozen objections to the fine-tuning argument.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools

June 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

This is a must-listen lecture from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Note: public schools = government-run schools.

Topics:

- Does God care whether we people marry and have children?
- Does God care whether Christian parents raise their children to know him?
- Should government promote bearing children?
- What are some effects of declining birth rates in other countries?
- What are the economic effects of declining birth rates?
- Who has the right to decide how children are trained: government or parents?
- What does the Bible say about parents having to raise children to know him?
- Does the government have the responsibility for training children?
- What do educational bureaucrats think of parents training children?
- What do school boards think of parents training children?
- Should school boards be elected by local, state or federal government?
- Should Christians be opposed to government-run education? (public schools)
- How should schools be viewed by parents? As a replacement or as a helper?
- How are schools viewed by those on the left and in communist countries?
- How can you measure how supporting a government is of parental rights?
- How is parental authority viewed in left-wing EU countries like Germany?
- How is parental authority respected in the United States?

- Should parents have a choice of where their children go to school?
- What is a voucher program? How is it related to parental autonomy?
- How does competition (school choice) in education serve parental needs?
- Why do public school teachers, unions and educrats oppose competitition?
- How well do public schools do in educating children to achieve?
- Does the government-run monopoly of public schools produce results?
- Does paying more and more money to public schools make them perform?
- How do teacher unions feel about having to compete in a voucher system?
- Does the public school monopoly penalize the poorest students?
- Does the public school monopoly penalize children of certain races?
- Does the public school monopoly cause racial prejudice?
- What else should parents demand on education policy?
- Is it good for parents when schools refuse to fire underperforming teachers?

This podcast is just amazing! This is what we need to be teaching in church. Church should be the place where you go to learn and reflect about how to tailor your life plan based on what the Bible says. And I think that this whole notion of free market – of choice and competition benefiting the consumer (parents) – applies to everything that government does, especially education and health care. The genius of America is that our Founding Fathers engineered a system that reflected all of this knowledge of economics, which then made it much easier for individuals and families to enjoy liberty and a higher quality of life. If we want to keep the benefits, we have to remember why these decisions were made at the founding of our nation.

Black UC Berkeley professor writes the best essay on Black Lives Matter ever

June 15, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My software engineering friend who wrote the last guest post sent me this essay. He said it was better than his (which was enormously popular) and better than my multiple posts on fatherlessness, crime, police, etc. He said it was gold from start to finish. I have to agree. And the most amazing thing about it is – the author of this essay is BLACK himself.

The essay was published anonymously, because otherwise, this professor would lose his job. There is no diversity of opinions in American academia. You're for communism, or you're out.

It says:

> If we claim that the criminal justice system is white-supremacist, why is it that Asian Americans, Indian Americans, and Nigerian Americans are incarcerated at vastly lower rates than white Americans? This is a funny sort of white supremacy. Even Jewish Americans are incarcerated less than gentile whites. I think it's fair to say that your average white supremacist disapproves of Jews. And yet, these alleged white supremacists incarcerate gentiles at vastly higher rates than Jews.

And:

> The vast majority of violence visited on the black community is committed by black people. There are virtually no marches for these invisible victims, no public silences, no heartfelt letters from the UC regents, deans, and departmental heads. The message is clear: Black lives only matter when whites take them. Black violence is expected and insoluble, while white violence requires explanation and demands solution.
>
> Please look into your hearts and see how monstrously bigoted this formulation truly is. No discussion is permitted for non-black victims of black violence, who proportionally outnumber black victims of non-black violence. This is especially

> bitter in the Bay Area, where Asian victimization by black assailants has reached epidemic proportions, to the point that the SF police chief has advised Asians to stop hanging good-luck charms on their doors, as this attracts the attention of (overwhelmingly black) home invaders.

And:

> The claim that black interracial violence is the product of redlining, slavery, and other injustices is a largely historical claim. It is for historians, therefore, to explain why Japanese internment or the massacre of European Jewry hasn't led to equivalent rates of dysfunction and low SES performance among Japanese and Jewish Americans respectively. Arab Americans have been viciously demonized since 9/11, as have Chinese Americans more recently. However, both groups outperform white Americans on nearly all SES indices – as do Nigerian Americans, who incidentally have black skin.

Regarding the Democrat party's "solutions":

> Most troublingly, our department appears to have been entirely captured by the interests of the Democratic National Convention, and the Democratic Party more broadly. To explain what I mean, consider what happens if you choose to donate to Black Lives Matter, an organization UCB History has explicitly promoted in its recent mailers. All donations to the official BLM website are immediately redirected to ActBlue Charities, an organization primarily concerned with bankrolling election campaigns for Democrat candidates. Donating to BLM today is to indirectly donate to Joe Biden's 2020 campaign. This is grotesque given the fact that the American cities with the worst rates of black-on-black violence and police-on-black violence are overwhelmingly Democrat-run. Minneapolis itself has been entirely in the hands of Democrats for over five decades; the 'systemic racism' there was built by successive Democrat administrations.
>
> The patronizing and condescending attitudes of Democrat leaders towards the black community, exemplified by nearly every Biden statement on the black race, all but guarantee a perpetual state of misery, resentment, poverty, and the attendant grievance politics which are simultaneously annihilating American political discourse and black lives. And yet, donating to BLM is bankrolling the election campaigns of men like Mayor Frey, who saw their cities devolve into violence. This is a grotesque capture of a good-faith movement for necessary police reform, and of our department, by a political party. Even worse, there are virtually no avenues for dissent in academic circles. I refuse to serve the Party, and so should you.

Corporate slactivism:

> The total alliance of major corporations involved in human exploitation with BLM should be a warning flag to us, and yet this damning evidence goes unnoticed,

> purposefully ignored, or perversely celebrated. We are the useful idiots of the wealthiest classes, carrying water for Jeff Bezos and other actual, real, modern-day slavers. Starbucks, an organisation using literal black slaves in its coffee plantation suppliers, is in favor of BLM. Sony, an organisation using cobalt mined by yet more literal black slaves, many of whom are children, is in favor of BLM.

The sainting of George Floyd:

> As a final point, our university and department has made multiple statements celebrating and eulogizing George Floyd. Floyd was a multiple felon who once held a pregnant black woman at gunpoint. He broke into her home with a gang of men and pointed a gun at her pregnant stomach. He terrorized the women in his community. He sired and abandoned multiple children, playing no part in their support or upbringing, failing one of the most basic tests of decency for a human being. He was a drug-addict and sometime drug-dealer, a swindler who preyed upon his honest and hard-working neighbors. And yet, the regents of UC and the historians of the UCB History department are celebrating this violent criminal, elevating his name to virtual sainthood. A man who hurt women. A man who hurt black women. With the full collaboration of the UCB history department, corporate America, most mainstream media outlets, and some of the wealthiest and most privileged opinion-shaping elites of the USA, he has become a culture hero, buried in a golden casket, his (recognized) family showered with gifts and praise.
>
> Americans are being socially pressured into kneeling for this violent, abusive misogynist. A generation of black men are being coerced into identifying with George Floyd, the absolute worst specimen of our race and species.

This part describes what my reaction has been to the mainstream approach to the experience of blacks in America:

> It shouldn’t affect the strength of my argument above, but for the record, I write as a person of color. My family have been personally victimized by men like Floyd. We are aware of the condescending depredations of the Democrat party against our race. The humiliating assumption that we are too stupid to do STEM, that we need special help and lower requirements to get ahead in life, is richly familiar to us. I sometimes wonder if it wouldn’t be easier to deal with open fascists, who at least would be straightforward in calling me a subhuman, and who are unlikely to share my race.
>
> The ever-present soft bigotry of low expectations and the permanent claim that the solutions to the plight of my people rest exclusively on the goodwill of whites rather than on our own hard work is psychologically devastating. No other group in America is systematically demoralized in this way by its alleged allies. A whole generation of black children are being taught that only by begging and weeping and screaming will they get handouts from guilt-ridden whites.

Please read the whole thing and share it! I wish that the mainstream news featured the viewpoints of more black conservatives like this!

Supreme Court votes 6-3 to outlaw Christian for-profit organizations

June 16, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I was hoping that we could hold off the Equality Act until at least 2021, if Biden won the election. I did not expect that we would get a light version of the Equality Act in 2020 from the Supreme Court. (Although I did something anyway last year to anticipate it). Anyway, let's get a reaction from the scholars at the pro-marriage Daily Signal, and then see Alito's dissent.

Excerpt:

> In what dissenting Justice Samuel Alito called one of the most "brazen abuse[s]" of the Supreme Court's authority, a six-member majority of the court led by Justice Neil Gorsuch has rewritten Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include sexual orientation and gender identity in the definition of "sex."
>
> Why bother trying to pass the proposed Equality Act when you can get the justices to make law for you?
>
> Title VII prohibits an employer from failing or refusing "to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual … because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin."
>
> Gorsuch—joined by the four liberal justices, along with Chief Justice John Roberts—decided that employment decisions that take any account of an employee's sexual orientation or gender identity necessarily entail discrimination based on sex in violation of Title VII.

I care about what this will do to me as an employee of a for-profit company. I can foresee myself having to work for an aggressive LGBT boss or co-worker, and being forced to

affirm their lifestyle choices, even as they were allowed to disagree with mine.

Things would be different if I worked for a religious non-profit though, according to Christian News:

> The Supreme Court, however, did express that it is "deeply concerned with preserving the promise of the free exercise of religion enshrined in our Constitution" and pointed to a congressional exception in the law for "religious organizations."
>
> It is not clear if those organizations include for-profit businesses or if the protections only extend to churches and non-profit charitable and educational groups.

However, Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. suggested in his dissent that: "The scope of these provisions is disputed, and as interpreted by some lower courts, they provide only narrow protection". So even if I had cleverly moved to a non-profit in anticipation of this decision, it would only be a temporary bit of safety before the LGBT fascists take over everything, and squash all dissent from the top down.

Part of me wonders how long it will take LGBT people to understands that their success in the area of sexual autonomy, (at the expensive of our religious liberty), hasn't really obtained the satisfaction that they believed it would. Even if they manage to force all dissenters to publicly celebrate their rebellion against chastity, marriage and self-sacrificial love for children.

I think people who choose to stray away from chastity, natural marriage and self-sacrificial love for their children THINK that they will somehow end up happy in their old age. But there is no winning end game for sexual radicals. Once you lose your appearance through old age, you're done. And trying to make a relationship last between self-centered people doesn't work in the long run. There is no path to a stable commitment that goes through secular leftist self-centeredness.

Women's sports is now effectively over, because transgender women (biological men) will dominate.

An ADF person wrote about that in Christian Post:

> In February, three high school women athletes sued the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference after they were forced to compete against biological males in track. The two male athletes, who identify as girls, swept 15 Connecticut state titles that were previously held by nine different women. Because of the presence of male athletes, women have lost out on the opportunity to compete and win, as well as the potential scholarship opportunities that come from competing in front of college scouts.
>
> It should not be surprising that biological males outrun females on the racetrack. After all, men have more muscle mass, greater bone density, and lung capacity. But when "sex" is redefined, the law's recognition of this is important distinction

> may be lost.
>
> Unfortunately, the Supreme Court took a step to redefine “sex,” further jeopardizing legal protections for women and girls and failing to uphold the law as Congress wrote it.

It’s always interesting to see what happens to progressives who lose their privileges (e.g. – athletic scholarships to prestigious universities) because their own progressive convictions get enacted into law. When liberal women say “male-female distinctions are social constructs” it sounds so good to them – until they see what it really means. But now that SCOTUS has ruled, there is no going back. Any man who identifies as a woman will be able to grab up any benefit that was reserved for women, and also invade their spaces.

In cases like this, where the consequences (end of women’s sports), are so far removed from the cause (radical feminism which denies male-female distinctives), it may be hard for young feminists to even understand how their own worldview is what’s taking away their benefits and entitlements. It’s such a terrible thing when people get what they want, and it destroys them. But this happens a lot to people who deny God…. just look at all the aging, man-hating women who can’t find husbands. They won the Sexual Revolution, and they thought that post-feminism men would want the devalued version of marriage (no-fault, egalitarian, two working spouses, daycare, public schools, etc.) that they inherited as much as we liked the pre-feminism marriage of the 1950s. How foolish.

How to avoid choosing a charming, deceitful narcissist for a spouse

June 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Here's some helpful advice for women about choosing a man
For fun, I've decided to publish the 2000-word first draft that I normally send to my 6 female editors, because sometimes it's fun to let people know what I *really* think about things before my editors force me to make it more palatable.

We got a comment a while back that I thought was worth a response.

Let's start with the comment:

> My husband was a Narcissist. He slept all over the county and never worked a day in this marriage. Plus, He couldn't decide if he was straight or gay. After my son finally left home I filed for divorce. I wish I did it sooner. Now he claims to be born again and wants to stay together. When is enough, enough?

We don't know if this woman was a Christian, was chaste, and whether the man she chose was Christian or was chaste. All we know is that the man she chose was attractive enough to easily find other women who would have sex with him despite the fact that he was married. Whatever he has, it's something that causes women who are not married to him to have sex with him. That's who the divorced woman chose to marry. His "charm" wasn't from his moral character or his deep knowledge of Christian theology and apologetics.

My first response to this was to put the responsibility on the person who had chosen the bad husband. After all, I reasoned, everyone who takes a massive step like marriage is obligated to investigate who it is they are marrying.

But when I said that, I got some responses from women that said that she wasn't responsible for her poor choice of man, and that she was an innocent victim of his magical charming powers.

Here's Lee:

> A lot of time people don't show their worst qualities until the relationship is firmly in place, and it starts coming out slowly. It's not always as clear cut as a woman stupidly choosing an unsuitable husband who acted unsuitable from the get-go. I mean yeah, sometimes it's obvious early on and the woman is just stupid/blind/broken/other. But we should be careful to not assume, and careful to not make harsh judgments from our ignorance.

If dangers like infidelity are not "obvious" then it's not the woman's fault that she didn't detect it. Apparently there is no way for the woman to detect it if it's not obvious, so she's not responsible.

And Mary:

> Narcissists are skilled at charming and persuading people that they're really great. And they're skilled at convincing others that their misgivings are irrational fears. Unfortunately,there are a lot of people like that. Not saying that people (men AND women, btw!) don't just sometimes choose stupidly, for bad reasons like "hotness" and excitement. But narcissists are a whole other kettle of fish. They can come out with a completely different personality once they've snagged their prey.

If a bad person is "skilled at charming", then their victim has no way of evaluating them accurately. Basically, deciding who to marry is just an activity where you talk, and decide how you feel about that person's talk. If the person is charming, then they make you feel good, and it's rational to marry them. A lot of women express this as "I want a man who is confident". It's never been explained to me how "confidence" is any evidence that the man has an ability and a past pattern of self-control and fidelity.

And Sara:

> Probably because narcissists can be very charming at first and easily win people over.
>
> […] What I was trying to say and the article pointed out is the power of narcissists is they can put people, especially women, under a spell of sorts. They are just so slick and charming that common sense goes right out the window. They don't think to verify all these things that seem obvious because they are so captivated.

All that's necessary to detect a charming narcissist is "common sense". His suitability to do husband and father roles should be "obvious" from what he says and how he makes her feel.

So, let's take a look at some tips for avoiding these charming narcissists who can convince you to marry them just with their words and the feelings they cause.

How to avoid marrying a charming narcissist who cheats on you

Here is some advice on how to avoid marrying a charming narcissist.

1. Evaluate a person based on objective evidence instead of how they make you feel with their words

There are a lot of lies coming out of the artists, actors, celebrities, etc. in this secular leftist culture that basically say that marriage is all about you and your feelings. If you prepared for marriage by watching movies made by pedophiles in Hollywood, and listening to music made by promiscuous musicians, and reading self-help fiction written by divorced spinsters, then you are not ready to detect a charming narcissist. Marriage is a practical enterprise, with distinct roles for husbands and wives that must be performed regardless of how either spouse feels. You need to understand and evaluate what

behaviors are expected of husbands and wives in a marriage, and then look for *evidence* that the person you want to marry can perform those behaviors.

For example, if the behavior is fidelity, then the person should be able to demonstrate chastity and self-control during the courtship, and produce references from past girlfriends / boyfriends, and have written about chastity and self-control using research sources to explain the connection between premarital sex and marital instability. If you're choosing with your feelings, and you haven't done an analysis of marriage roles, and partner abilities, you're headed for a disaster.

Just so you know, when I said this to some of the pro-irresponsibility, non-judgemental women I know, their response was to laugh in my face at the idea of asking someone's previous partners about whether they were chaste and self-controlled. And this is why people are taken by surprise by the charming talk of narcissists. Feelings-oriented people today laugh at the idea of doing any evaluation, preferring to rely on their feelings. A lot of the failure to choose wisely is just down to people not understanding how the world works, then trying to manufacture a psycho-babble rationalization of why they screwed up.

When you're hiring someone, you do a job interview, you test their skills, you contact their references, you do a drug test, a credit check, a criminal record check. And you have other skilled people sit in on the interviews and tests, in order to make sure that the person can really do the job they are being interviewed for. The marriage evaluation should include everything that the job interview includes *as a minimum.* Marriage is at least as complicated as choosing to hire someone for a job. If you aren't doing the bare minimum of evaluating their education, career and finances, then you are setting yourself up for failure.

2. Learn what it takes to make morality rational, and then determine if your candidate is capable of being moral

Because marriage deals so much with moral obligations, it's incumbent on you to read extensively on moral issues. *You yourself* should have developed worldview (through study and debate) that rationally grounds the minimum requirements for moral values and duties: 1) free will, 2) consciousness, 3) objective moral values, 4) objective moral duties, 5) a divine judge, 6) life after death. Why? Because doing the right thing isn't something that you always feel like doing. When doing the right thing goes against your feelings, you will need to have a *reason* to act against your own self-interest. And that reason is going to be because the world is the sort of place where morality is real, and independent of your feelings, where you are a free moral agent, and where is a divine judge and an afterlife.

At the center of the ability to rationally ground morality is the ability to know God is real rationally, and to defend his existence using objective evidence and logical arguments. If you don't know whether God exists based on logic and evidence, how will you evaluate whether someone else knows it? If you can't rationally ground doing the right thing when it goes against your interest, then you won't be able to know how to ask questions and

investigate in order to decide whether someone else is moral or not. Marrying someone who doesn't believe in a moral lawgiver and a moral judge after death is as prudent to going into a city dump eating all your meals from what you find there.

In the specific case of fidelity, it's important to remember that some people have goals and an understanding about how poor choices right now will make those goals more difficult to obtain. It's easy to say that you want your spouse to be faithful. But what's really needed is to measure what they are really trying to achieve in life, and whether they understand how infidelity would affect those plans. If you can't see from their past decisions that they KNOW that 1) marriage and family are important enough to sacrifice for and 2) that they understand and apply the research that shows what decisions helps to make a marriage last (e.g. – no premarital sex), then, they don't really have the goals and the information that you want in a marriage partner.

Why don’t men go to church anymore? The decline of male church attendance

June 18, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Church sucks, that’s why men are bored there

I most recently spent half a year at a PCA church, and then another half a year at a Southern Baptist church. I attended Sunday services as well as Wednesday night Bible study. I am now looking for a new church. For now, I just look around for a sermon I like and listen to that. In this post, I’ll explain why I think men don’t like church.

There are three areas where churches fail to attract men:

1. Apologetics
2. Feminism, sex and marriage
3. Policy and current events

Apologetics

The PCA church discouraged me from becoming a member of the church because they said that conversion to Christianity due to reason and evidence was contrary to their teachings, and a “red flag”. Their words. I didn’t try to fight them on it, because they are Reformed Presbyterian, and this is their actual view. Their approach to apologetics was “pre-suppositional”, which is to say, they try to convince people to become Christians by asking them to assume that the Bible is infallible, without any argumentation or evidence. Naturally, this doesn’t work, so they aren’t trained to answer any serious questions from non-Christians. (1 Pet 3:15-16)

The Reformed Baptist SBC church is led by people like Russell Moore and Al Mohler, who take the “magic words” approach to evangelism. I.e. – they think that people become Christians just by speaking Bible verses out of context to them. So, when the atheist asks

“do you have any evidence for God’s existence?” or “do you have any evidence for Jesus’ resurrection?”, their response is to quote Bible verses to the atheist, which have nothing to do with those topics. Christianity has lost so much influence in the culture under their approach, which is not even Biblical. (Mat 12:38–41)

These approaches to evangelism are not used in any other area of human endeavor. No one replies to questions about auto mechanics, or software engineering, or gardening, or cooking, by spouting Bible verses. In literally every other area of human endeavor, the laws of logic and supporting evidence are seen as assets when making claims to know something about the world to someone who disagrees with you.

Feminism, Sex and Marriage

First wave feminism simply asked for women to be given the same liberty and opportunity as men. That was good. But later versions of destroyed all distinctions between men and women. By destroying femininity, feminism directed women away from the traditional life plan of marriage, children and home-making.

Feminism changed how women voted. Today, about 75% of young, unmarried women vote for policies like taxpayer-funded birth control, taxpayer-funded abortion, no-fault divorce, affirmative action for women in schools and in the workplace, taxpayer-funded daycare, public schools, single-mother welfare, social security, etc. These policies and programs raised tax rates, and grew government, making it easier for women to have children without having to choose a marriage-ready man she wasn’t attracted to. Instead, she could choose men she was attracted to, and just use government programs as a substitute provider if it didn’t “work out”. Thanks to feminism, we have a 42% out-of-wedlock birth rate, and it’s rising. Few female college graduates are debt-free. About 5% of women emerge from college as virgins.

Under feminism, the traditional male roles and virtues were deemed “sexist”. Women were shamed for choosing early marriage, large families, and stable men who were good at being husbands and fathers. Instead, women today chose men based on appearance. They spend their 20s and early 30s giving men who will not commit to them premarital sex. The men who are getting sex thrown at them have no interest in Judeo-Christian values, chastity, fidelity, commitment or raising children. Women mistake the men’s willingness to have sex and cohabitate as signs that they are close to marriage. But in fact, chasing the hot bad boys just eats up the chastity, youth and beauty that could have made them interesting to the marriage-minded men they scorned. Later on, they realize that they’ve wasted their 20s on bad boys, but by then they are not attractive for marriage.

What has the response been to feminism from pastors and churches? They accept the anti-male, anti-marriage policies, that came out of feminism. They accept the promiscuity, and the marriage-delaying that came from feminism. Today, pastors just try to bully the men who were passed over to marry the women who had previously rejected them, despite the higher risk of divorce caused by the women’s past behavior.

Policy and current events

Most pastors are anti-intellectual, and they believe that this is a virtue, since they are focused narrowly on what the Bible explicitly says. Because of this, they aren't able to understand which laws and policies allow Christianity and Christian families to flourish. I agree that what the Bible speaks about is of the highest importance. But we need to understand how to achieve the goals that the Bible states, as well as how to counter the forces that threaten the achievement of those goals.

For example, Christianity thrives when marriage thrives. Christianity is passed on from parents to children. Anything that threatens marriage, or interferes with parental authority, weakens the influence of Christianity. So, policies like higher taxes, no-fault divorce, SOGI laws, all harm the Christian family, while policies like lower taxes, protections for Christian businesses, protection for Christian schools (statements of faith, moral codes), etc. are all good for Christian families. But most pastors never talk about policies or laws, because they don't think about how to defend the Christian worldview, how to educate Christian children, how to promote marriage, how promote Christian moral values in the public square. Even protecting the right to life of unborn children is ignored.

As the churches lose relevance, it becomes tempting for pastors to accept what the secular left promotes as good and true and beautiful. The big one is pastors pushing for redistribution of wealth by the secular government as a solution to "poverty", even though the Bible only sanctions voluntary charity. This diminishes the cultural relevance of the church and elevates the secular government. SBC leaders like Russell Moore champion amnesty for refugees and unskilled illegal immigrants, not realizing how it will harm Christian institutions and values down the road to import large numbers of people who will eventually vote for policies like higher taxes, bigger government, etc.

How to apologize effectively: responsibility, restitution, repentance

June 19, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I guess everyone already knows about Gary Chapman and his 5 Love Languages. But have you heard of his 5 Love Languages of apologies?

I want to focus on two of them that I think are important, because I don't want people to think that just saying "I'm sorry" is good enough.

Here they are (straight out of his book):

Apology Language #3: Making Restitution

In the public arena, our emphasis upon restitution is based upon our sense of justice. The one who commits the crime should pay for the wrongdoing. In contrast, in the private sphere of family and other close relationships, our desire for restitution is almost always based upon our need for love. After being hurt deeply, we need the reassurance that the person who hurt us still loves us.

"How could they love me and do that?" is the question that lingers in our minds. The words "I'm sorry; I was wrong" may not be enough.

For some people, restitution is their primary apology language. For them the statement, "It is not right for me to have treated you that way," must be followed with "What can I do to show you that I still care about you?" Without this effort at restitution, this person will question the sincerity of the apology. They will continue to feel unloved even though you may have said, "I am sorry; I was wrong." They wait for the reassurance that you genuinely love them.

The question, then, is how do we make restitution in the most effective way? Since the

heart of restitution is reassuring the spouse or family member that you genuinely love him or her, it is essential to express restitution in the love language of the other person.

[…]If restitution is the primary apology language of an individual, then this becomes the most important part of the apology. “I’m sorry; I was wrong” will never be taken as sincere if these words are not accompanied by a sincere effort at restitution. They wait for the assurance that you still genuinely love them. Without your effort to make amends, the apology will not have the desired results of forgiveness.

Apology Language #4: Genuinely Repenting

The word repentance means “to turn around” or “to change one’s mind.” In the context of an apology, it means that an individual realizes that his or her present behavior is destructive. The person regrets the pain he or she is causing the other person, and he chooses to change his behavior.

Without genuine repentance, the other languages of apology may fall on deaf ears. What people who’ve been hurt want to know is, “Do you intend to change, or will this happen again next week?”

How then do we speak the language of repentance?

> - **It begins with an expression of intent to change.** When we share our intention to change with the person we have offended, we are communicating to them what is going on inside of us. They get a glimpse of our heart—and this often is the language that convinces them we mean what we say.
> - **The second step down the road of repentance is developing a plan for implementing change.**Often apologies fail to be successful in restoring the relationship because there is no plan for making positive change.
> - **The third step down the road of repentance is implementing the plan.** Following through with the plan gives evidence to the offended party that your apology was sincere.

Most people do not expect perfection after an apology, but they do expect to see effort.

Thus, expressing your desire to change and coming up with a plan is an extremely important part of an apology to this person. Inviting the offended person to help you come up with a plan for change is perhaps the best way to effectively show repentance.

Here are some practical tips that I recommend to someone who has done something morally wrong and who wants to apologize.

To fix the problem you need more than talk

To me, the only thing that needs an apology is breaking a moral rule – you can’t beat someone up for just making a mistake. Whenever someone breaks a moral rule with me, like disrespecting me or being selfish, then I pick out a book for them to read and ask them to read it and then write something about how what they learned in the book

applies to what they did to me. I don’t pick very long books! But I do this for a very important reason.

The very important reason is that I don’t trust people who just agree with me. I don’t trust people’s words. If someone is really sorry about something, then I want them to read something that describes the moral rule that they broke, and to be willing to listen to the feelings of the person they harmed by breaking that rule. That goes a long way in my mind.

Are feminists right to think that gender-neutral marriage makes women happier?

June 20, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

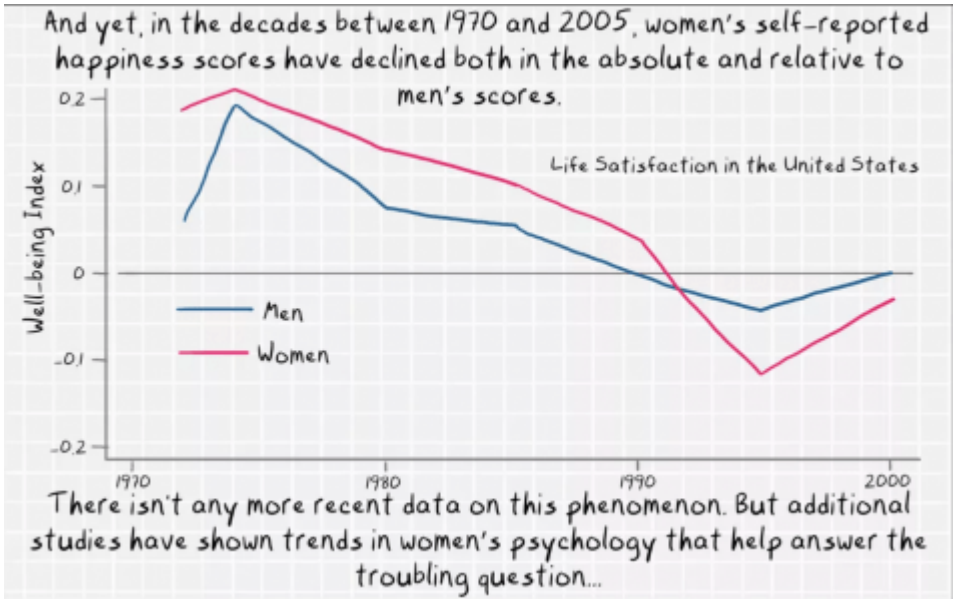

Male and female happiness throughout America's adoption of radical feminism

I was reading this article by a feminist fiction writer on Vox, where she explains that although feminists have gotten what they wanted (careers, contraceptives, promiscuity, abortion, no-fault-divorce, daycare, etc. it hasn't made them happier. So, what does this feminist fiction writer think would make feminists happier?

She gives two reasons why women women are still unhappy after feminism has been adopted by our society:

- men don't do enough housework
- women are not as successful as men because they are discriminated against, the so-called "glass ceiling"

I think those complaints are pretty popular among feminists. Let's take a look at some studies to see if her opinions are supported by peer-reviewed studies.

First study:

> COUPLES who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a study has found.

> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled *Equality in the Home*, said.

Second study:

> Researchers at the University of Illinois examined data on nearly 1,500 men and 1,800 women, aged between 52 and 60. Their well-being was evaluated through surveys.
>
> The researchers first found that men's well-being decreased once they had exited the workforce to become home-makers.
>
> Meanwhile, the inverse was not so for women: Women's psychological well-being was not affected by leaving their jobs to become stay-at-home mothers.

Third study:

> A study called "Egalitarianism, Housework and Sexual Frequency in Marriage," which appeared in The American Sociological Review last year, surprised many, precisely because it went against the logical assumption that as marriages improve by becoming more equal, the sex in these marriages will improve, too. Instead, it found that when men did certain kinds of chores around the house, couples had less sex. Specifically, if men did all of what the researchers characterized as feminine chores like folding laundry, cooking or vacuuming — the kinds of things many women say they want their husbands to do — then couples had sex 1.5 fewer times per month than those with husbands who did what were considered masculine chores, like taking out the trash or fixing the car. It wasn't just the frequency that was affected, either — at least for the wives. The more traditional the division of labor, meaning the greater the husband's share of masculine chores compared with feminine ones, the greater his wife's reported sexual satisfaction.

Regarding the pay gap, that is entirely caused by women's own choices. E.g. – the choice to study creative writing instead of petroleum engineering, the choice to work 35 hour weeks instead of 70 hour weeks, etc.

Fourth study: (summarized by AEI economist)

> When the [Bureau of Labor Statistics] reports that women working full-time in 2018 earned 81.4% of what men earned working full-time, that is very much different from saying that women earned 81.4% of what men earned for doing exactly the same work while working the exact same number of hours in the same occupation, with exactly the same educational background and exactly the same years of continuous, uninterrupted work experience, and with exactly the same marital and family (e.g., number of children) status. As shown above, once we start controlling individually for the many relevant factors that affect earnings, e.g., hours worked, age, marital status, and having children, most of the raw earnings differential disappears.

Fifth study:

> This study leads to the unambiguous conclusion that the differences in the compensation of men and women are the result of a multitude of factors and

> that the raw wage gap should not be used as the basis to justify corrective action. Indeed, there may be nothing to correct. The differences in raw wages may be almost entirely the result of the individual choices being made by both male and female workers.

I think that women are entitled to make their own decisions, but they aren't allowed to force the rest of us to subsidize their failures and celebrate their destructive outcomes.

I could go on, but I think enough has been said to show that research is very much at odds with feminist rhetoric. They *feel* they know what will make them happy and we gave them everything they asked for. They eliminated shaming of promiscuity with sex education. They get preferential treatment in the schools in a female-dominated education system.They are hired because of affirmative action quotas. They get expensive daycare, government schools, welfare and other programs. Taxes are raised to equalize outcomes for divorced women who choose men for feelings, and then nuke their own marriage enterprise. We have been on a long experiment of giving feminists everything they *felt* they wanted, at the expense of men's rights and children's rights, and it hasn't even produced the results that feminists *felt* it would.

The social costs of feelings-based decision-making

Let's look at two examples of policies that feminists asked for in the past, which didn't work out the way they wanted.

I can understand why feminists would introduce sex education. They *felt* that "if everyone is having sex, then I won't be the only one chasing attention from hot no-commitment bad boys by giving them recreational sex before marriage". They wanted to eliminate the standards of chastity and marriage-focused dating and normalize fun-focused drunken promiscuity. And they got that. But since they didn't consult any research and evidence about how that would affect their future marriage stability and marriage happiness, they are even more unhappy than before.

How about no-fault divorce? No-fault divorce was brought in by a coalition of feminists, Marxists and trial lawyers. The Marxists want to destroy the family in order to increase dependence on the state. The trial lawyers wanted to make money. And the feminists thought that the standard approach to courting and marriage was just too much work. They didn't want to be chaste. They didn't want to be sober. They didn't want to evaluate a man for traditional husband and father roles. The no-fault divorce laws gave them an escape from the messes caused by *their own feelings-driven choices*. But divorce just makes makes men and women much poorer, and passes the costs of supporting single mothers onto taxpayers.

And the costs of the failures of feminism are passed onto taxpayers.

Consider this study:

> This paper examines the growth of government during this century as a result of giving women the right to vote. Using cross-sectional time-series data for

> 1870–1940, we examine state government expenditures and revenue as well as voting by U.S. House and Senate state delegations and the passage of a wide range of different state laws. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue and more liberal voting patterns for federal representatives, and these effects continued growing over time as more women took advantage of the franchise. Contrary to many recent suggestions, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s, and it helps explain why American government started growing when it did.

We are already $22 trillion in debt, partly because of feminism's replacement of husbands and families with higher taxes and big government. Every time we transfer money from tax-paying men to feminists to fix their mistakes, it leaves less money in the hands of the men who actually want to get married. The declining value of marriage after feminism for men explains why marriage is being delayed, and why marriage rates are plunging.

The Christian view of marriage

In other places, I have written about the evidence for a Christian worldview:

- The cosmological argument and the Big Bang cosmology
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

If Christianity is true, then we have inherited a design for marriage and family which includes male and female roles.

Here is what Jesus says about marriage and divorce in Matthew 19:4:

> [4] "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' [5] and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? [6] So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

Jesus does not approve of no-fault divorce.

And here's what Jesus said about premarital sex ("fornication") in Mark 7:20-23:

> [20] He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. [21] For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, [22] adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. [23] All these evils come from inside and defile a person.

Jesus does not approve of premarital sex.

Christians should not show even a hint of sexual immorality, (premarital sex and no-fault divorce), nor should they partner with those who approve of sexual immorality and no-fault divorce, according to Ephesians 5:

> [3] **But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality**, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. [4] Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. [5] For of this you can be sure: No immoral, **impure** or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.[a] [6] Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. [7] **Therefore do not be partners with them.**

Christians should not partner with feminists.

And this is one of the most famous passages on male and female roles in the Bible, also from Ephesians 5:

> [22] **Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. [24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.**
>
> [25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her [26] to make her holy, cleansing[b] her by the washing with water through the word, [27] and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. [28] In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— [30] for we are members of his body. [31] "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." [32] This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. [33] However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, **and the wife must respect her husband.**

Christians do not approve of egalitarian marriage which erases sex differences in husband and wife roles.

Most women in the church, and most of their “conservative” pastors, don’t believe that Jesus is an authority about chastity, marriage and male headship. They agree with feminists about premarital sex and no-fault divorce and egalitarian marriage. But the feminist design for women isn’t working out for women – that’s undeniable. Should we really be surprised that feminist’s feelings were not better for women than the Creator’s own design?

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about self-defense

June 21, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Reformed Baptist theologian Wayne Grudem speaks on the Bible and the right of self-defense.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Topics:

- what about turning the other cheek? doesn't that undermine self-defense?

- what does Jesus say about the right to self-defense in the New Testament
- did Jesus' disciples carry swords for protection during his ministry?
- why did Jesus tell his disciples to sell their cloaks and buy swords?
- what about Jesus stopping Peter from using force during Jesus' arrest?
- shouldn't we rely on police instead of our own personal weapons?
- what about brandishing a handgun vs actually trying to shoot someone?
- what are violent crime rates in pro-gun USA and in the anti-gun UK?
- does outlawing guns cause violent crime to increase or decrease?
- do academic studies show that gun control decreases crime?
- do academic studies show that concealed carry laws decreases crime?
- what do academic studies show about defensive handgun usage?
- do many children die from guns in the home compared to other causes?
- doesn't the US Constitution limit the usage of guns to the army and police?
- what did the Founding Fathers believe about lawful ownership of firearms?
- What should be the goal of someone who uses a weapon in self-defense?

This is a good example of applying the Bible to real life. We need more of that!

Republicans block Equality Act bill that makes Christian moral values a crime

June 22, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

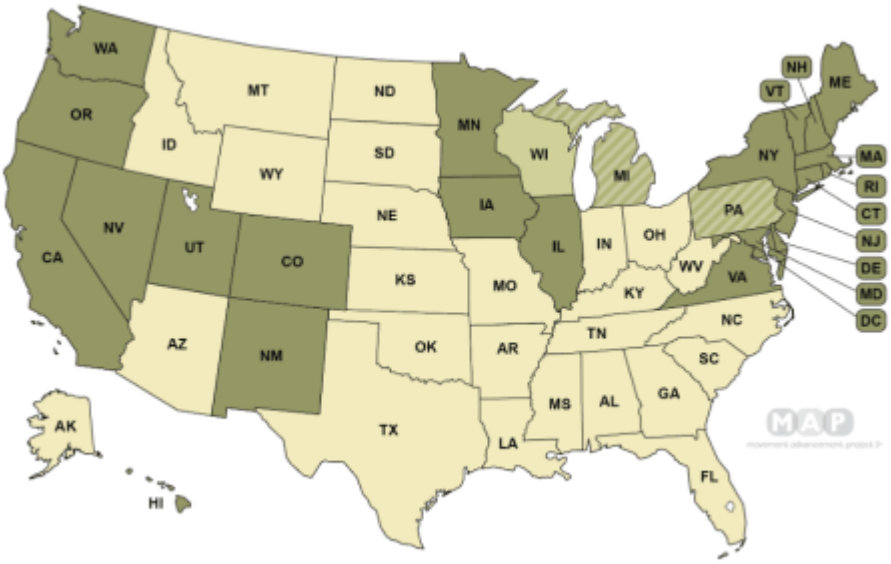

22 states put sexual orientation and gender identity above the Bible

Regular readers will be familiar with the cases where gay activists went after bed and breakfasts, wedding venues, photographers, florists, bakers, etc. who refused to participate in celebrations of same-sex marriage. Christians oppose same-sex marriage, because the leader of the religion defined marriage as being between one man and one woman. However, religious liberty wasn't a defense in these cases, because these states had passed "SOGI laws", which made it illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Equality Act is a federal bill advanced by Democrats that forces all the states without SOGI laws to allow gay activists to weaponize government against Christians, forcing them to participate in non-Christian celebrations of gay activism.

Here's the story from CBN about what happened to the Equality Act in the Senate:

> Senate Democrats were emboldened by Monday's Supreme Court decision protecting LGBTQ rights in the workplace, so they pushed for a controversial bill that would elevate those rights above religious freedom.
>
> Every Senate Democrat, joined by two independents and Republican Susan Collins of Maine, called for a vote on the so-called Equality Act.
>
> The bill passed the House of Representatives last year. It would extend protections for LGBTQ individuals, superseding the rights of religious groups.
>
> One result would be forcing faith-based adoption agencies to place kids with same-sex couples, even when other adoption agencies are available.
>
> Sen. James Lankford (R-OK) joined with Republicans Joshua Hawley (MO) and

> Mike Lee (UT) in blocking the vote.
>
> "The Equality Act says that if you're a faith-based adoption agency that only places children in a home where there's a mom and dad there, then you either have to change your faith or close," Lankford said.
>
> "The Equality Act says to that institution, 'I would rather have fewer adoption agencies in America than have you open'," Lankford continued. "That's not protecting the rights of all Americans."
>
> Critics of the Equality Act say it would also weaken the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, a bipartisan 1994 law that protects religious liberty.
>
> Sen. Hawley argued that the Equality Act can't be approved because it "guts" the Religious Freedom Restoration Act on the heels of a stunning Supreme Court ruling that rewrote the definition of sex with "nearly nothing to say about religious liberty or religious believers in this country."

The Federalist described some effects of the Equality Act bill:

> On the surface, the "Equality" Act is supposed to protect LGBT folks from discrimination by adding the categories of sexual orientation and gender identity to all federal civil rights laws, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It would make claims of discrimination related to these characteristics legally actionable in the way racism is, and applying to virtually every area of life: the workplace, education, banking, jury service, federal funding, housing, medicine and psychiatry, and all public facilities.
>
> It is a power grab in the guise of anti-discrimination. A bait-and-switch. It's another attempt by a ruling micro-clique to exert mega-control over everyone else's lives, including those it purports to protect. It allows the Mass State to maximize bureaucracy and social engineering, especially by its huge regulation of speech and expression. It erodes individual rights while claiming to uphold them.
>
> Sane people of goodwill have a host of good reasons to object to the so-called Equality Act. And many of those reasons have been written up, including the de-sexing of toilets and showers, the compelled speech inherent in pronoun protocols and severe punishment for "misgendering," the promised harassment of business owners, the invasion of girls' and women's sports by biological men who force on them an unequal playing field, the utter contempt for individual conscience, and more.
>
> The net result of this act would be a huge inequality of power accrued to the state and drained from the individual.

Other areas that would be affected: tax exempt status for churches, private college admissions, scholarships and curricula, moral standards in Christian organizations, forced transgender treatments at hospitals and health clinics, foster and adoption agencies

could not prefer naturally married couples.

The author of that article lists five specific effects of the law:

1. It Undermines Everyone's First Amendment Rights
2. The Ambiguities in the Bill Threaten the Rule of Law
3. Nudge Toward a Chinese-style Social Credit System
4. Redefining Humanity By Outlawing Sex Distinctions
5. It Enshrines Socially Destructive Identity Politics

Let's see what the article says about #2:

> The first thing that should hit any reader of the so-called Equality Act is the ambiguity of its language, especially with the bill's outright emphasis throughout on "perceptions."
>
> […]Consider how much the "Equality" Act would rely on bureaucratic and court actors to divine the "perception" of the perpetrator or victim of so-called discrimination: it would have to calculate your intent, read your mind, check out your body language, pick you apart for any suggestion of malice. For example, it repeatedly refers to sexual orientation and gender identity as "actual or perceived." Many times throughout, the text notes that discrimination (or identity?) involves "perception or belief even if inaccurate" (emphasis mine).
>
> This dependence on perception or belief about a person's self-identity did not exist before. The language of this proposed law is more fluid than gender fluidity on steroids, and it's wild stuff to push, especially at the federal level. It invites no end of accusations and lawfare that bodes ill for society and promises much human wreckage. The only people "empowered" by such a scam are those on the upper levels of this newly devised food chain who can call the shots.

Here's more about #3 for those who didn't know about the China social credit system:

> If passed, we shouldn't be surprised if it eventually produces a social credit system not unlike what is happening in China, whereby your livelihood, education, career, mobility, and access to goods and services is based on a literal "score" of your compliance with government policy. To paraphrase Sir Richard Scruton's excellent observation of how that works in China, I'd say that the so-called Equality Act would help create robots out of Americans, with the state programming what they can say and do.
>
> As more people self-censor because of the risk of losing their livelihoods and social status, they simply become more prone to robotic compliance and conformity with limits on their speech. This is fast becoming the case in China, where citizens feel the need to build up their "social credit" to be allowed access to jobs, education, housing, and who knows what other goods and services. The so-called Equality Act's restrictions on First Amendment freedoms would be a big

> step in that direction.

A social credit system that scores you for conformity would be a logical effect of the intent of the Equality Act: to punish free expression in just about every sphere of life, including the workplace, at school, in the public square, and in all public facilities, and any place that might be connected with federal funding. (By the way, Scruton was punished—stripped of his chairmanship of an architectural commission in Britain—simply for explaining what the social credit system does to people in China. That should be another lesson for us here.)

Now, I know some Christians will say “why does that matter to me, I already agree with sex outside of marriage and I agree that marriage is just when any number of people of any sex cohabitate and have sex”. Right, this is only a problem who think that the Bible is an authority, and that Jesus knows more about morality than LGBT activists and Democrat politicians.

Right now, I live in a state with no SOGI law, and I write about studies, etc. that are critical of the gay agenda from behind an alias. The second that this Equality Act becomes law, I would instantly have to delete this blog, my Facebook page, and my Twitter in case “discrimination” was “perceived” by an LGBT activist based on my previous writings, and they decided to investigate. It would be like writing articles critical of Nazism prior to the ascent of Hitler. It’s fine to do it when Hitler’s not yet in power, but once he’s in power, you shut it down and get out.

Why did Dan Barker leave Christianity for atheism?

June 23, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Unbelievable's radio show featured a discussion with former Christian Dan Barker, the founder and co-President of the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

I thought that I would make some general comments about why I think that many people leave the Christian faith, and what you should be careful of in order to avoid following in Dan Barker's footsteps, specifically.

Basically, there are four major reasons why people leave Christianity.

1. They want to do something immoral with impunity. This type of person wants to do something immoral that is forbidden by Christianity, like pre-marital sex or getting drunk in clubs with friends. They dump Christianity in order to have freedom to seek happiness in this life.
2. They want to make decisions based on their emotions, rather than wisdom. This type of person thinks that God's job is to save them when they act irresponsibly. When God disappoints them by not make their recklessness "work out", they leave the faith.
3. They want to be loved by people, not by God. This type of person thinks that Christianity is a tool that they can use to become popular. When they first try to articulate the gospel in public, they find that people don't like them as much, and they feel bad about offending people with exclusive truth claims that they cannot back up using logic and evidence. So, they water down Christianity to get along with non-Christians. Finally, they jettison Christianity completely. This happens to a lot of young Christians the moment they hit college / university.
4. They don't want to learn to defend their faith. This type of person is asked questions

by skeptics that they cannot answer. Usually this happens when people go to university after growing up in the shelter of the Church. The questions and peer pressure make them feel stupid. Rather than investigate Christianity to see if it's true, they drop it, so they can be thought of as part of the "smart" crowd.

Now listen to the discussion and see if you can identify some of these factors from Barker's own carefully-prepared words. He is trying very hard to make himself look honest and moderate, because he wants Christians to be sympathetic with his story and his motives for leaving Christianity. But I think that there is enough in his statements to construct a different hypothesis of why he left Christianity.

I've grouped the data by risk factor. Some of this is my interpretation of his real motivations, based on my experience dealing with former-Christians.

Non-rational, emotional approach to Christianity

- he was raised in a devout Christian family where he probably wouldn't have faced skeptical questions
- he converted to Christianity at age 15 as a result of a religious experience, not a serious investigation
- his idea of God was probably idealized and uninformed, e.g. – a loving God who wants us to be happy
- he wandered around from church to church preaching, with no fixed address or source of income
- he earned money by collecting "love offerings" from churches where he performed his music
- he wrote Christian songs and Christian musicals, but nothing substantive on apologetics and theology
- he worked in three churches known for being anti-intellectual and fundamentalist
- there's no evidence that of any deep study of philosophy, science and history during this time

Desire to gain acceptance from non-Christians

- he began to notice that some people were uncomfortable with sin and Hell
- he began to avoid preaching about sin and Hell in order to make these people comfortable
- he watered-down the gospel to focus on helping people to be happy in this life
- his manic approach to Christian ministry was challenged by the "real life" needs of his growing family
- he met liberal pastors while performing his music in their churches
- he found it difficult to disagree with them because they seemed to be "good" people
- he watered down his message further in order to appeal to people across the theological spectrum

Ignorance of Christian apologetics

- he began to think that if there are many different views of religion, then no view can be correct
- he was not intellectually capable of using logic and evidence to test these competing claims to see which was true
- he decided to instead re-interpret Christian truth claims as non-rational opinions, so they could all be "valid"
- he became a theological liberal, abandoning theism for an impersonal "ground of being"
- he embraced religious pluralism, the view that all religions are non-rational and make no testable truth claims
- he began to see God as a "metaphor" whose purpose is to make people have a sense of meaning and purpose
- he jettisoned God completely and focused more on helping people find meaning and morality apart from God
- seems to think that religion is about having a "great life", and felt that you can have a "great life" without religion
- seems to think that religion is about being "good", and felt that you can be "good" without religion
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them what to do instead of letting them do anything they want
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them what is true, instead of letting them believe whatever they want
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them that God will hold them accountable for their beliefs and actions

So what do I think happened?

Barker was generating an income from donations from churches where he entertained them. Gradually, his family grew to the point where conservative churches were not enough to support him. He had to change his message to appeal to liberal churches in order to cast a wider net.

He seems to have thought that Christianity is about having his needs met and being liked by others. I think he wanted to feel good and to make people feel good with his preaching and singing. But Christianity is not a feel-good religion. It's not a tool to make people like you. He seems to have become aware that the exclusive claims of Christianity made other people feel offended, so he cut them out. Christian apologists learn how to provide evidence for claims that non-Christians find offensive or hard to believe, but Dan hadn't studied philosophy, science or history so he couldn't defend it. It's hard to speak unpopular truths when you have nothing to back it up except your music composing. Eventually, Dan just quit making the truth claims entirely.

I also think money was a factor. It seems to me that it would have hurt his career and

reduced his invitations from liberal churches if he had kept up teaching biblical Christianity. In order to appeal to a wider audience, (like many Christian singers do – e.g. – Amy Grant, Jars of Clay, etc.), he would have felt pressured to water down the unpleasant parts of his preaching and singing. Lacking apologetics skill, he instead abandoned his message. He needed to account for his family's needs and "real life", and exclusive truth claims and Hell-talk would have reduced his ability to do that. It seems to me that he should have scaled back his extreme schedule of preaching and singing, and instead gotten a steady job so that he could afford "real life" and a family without being pressured into altering his message. The Christian life requires a certain amount of wisdom that Dan did not have.

Life isn't a fairy tale. God isn't there to reward risky behavior. We need to be more shrewd about financial matters so that we have the ability to *not care* about what people think of us. Look at this blog. I work all day as a senior software engineer with two degrees in computer science, so that I don't have to rely on donations. Additionally, I save most of what I make in case a tragedy strikes. Since I am financially secure, I can say what I think, and disregard anyone who wants me to change my message because they are offended. Becoming a Christian isn't a license to behave irrationally and immaturely with money. For some people, (like William Lane Craig), stepping out in faith works. But if it doesn't work, it's better to retreat and re-trench, rather than to compromise your message for money.

I actually met someone like Dan Barker recently. She grew up in an anti-intellectual hippy Christian home. Her mother came from a good family, and decided on a whim to marry a non-Christian. Like Barker, the family exalted feelings and irrational expectations of miracles from God for "fearless" acts. She got herself into trouble with alcohol and promiscuity in her 20s, by making emotional decisions and mixing with the wrong crowd. Her way of fixing this was to fly off on a one-year missions trip, wrecking her resume and finances. Now, she is in her late 30s, unmarried, and literally blaming *Jesus* for putting too many demands on her that she doesn't have time for, e.g – morning quiet time. This causes her to feel guilty, and make her want to reject Christianity. She had no intellectual conception of basic core doctrines like God's existence or Jesus' resurrection, which might have acted as a bulwark against her emotions. When I explained to her how I had structured my education and career so that I could have an influence without testing God, she seemed bored and said that I was too "fearful".

This is apparently widespread, especially among anti-intellectual denominations. Another ex-Pentecostal atheist woman I heard about from people who knew her when she was young decided to drop out of college to travel around North America doing pro-life work. When she found herself penniless, unmarried and without children in her mid-30s, she decided to have a baby out of wedlock. The government will pay for it, she said. Rather than trying to justify this decision as a Christian, she blamed God for not making her madness "work out". She is now an atheist, because God did not reward her decision to live fearlessly for him with a husband and children. It was all God's fault. There is a whole subculture within Christianity, where the pursuit of fun and thrills can be masked with

pious language, and all talk of prudence and restraint is seen as cowardice and lack of faith.

The Christian life requires a certain level of intelligence, a certain level of practical wisdom, and a certain level of self-control and discipline. Make sure that you don’t walk away from God because of your own bad choices.

Facebook censors admit that they suppress Republican content to help Democrat Party

June 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Facebook content moderator explains that Republican content is "terrorism"

Project Veritas meets with members of the secular left and get them to talk on camera about how they discriminate against conservatives in order to help Democrats win elections. In this post, we'll look at their latest sting of Facebook, and review some of Facebook's censorship of Christians (e.g. – Seth Gruber, Franklin Graham) and conservatives (e.g. – Live Action, PragerU).

Life News reported on the new Project Veritas video:

> The Civic Harassment Queue was a list of all the posts that had been flagged for violations of the Community Guidelines. McElroy said, "So, for 75 to 80 percent of the posts to be targeting Republicans and conservatives, you can say it was a bot. But somebody had to design that algorithm. So really, somebody at Facebook."
>
> […]An unnamed moderator said that it's "common sense" to delete posts that have #MAGA in them.
>
> One journalist asked, "If you see a conservative post you just get rid of it, right?" The unnamed moderator responded, saying, "Yes! I don't give no f*cks, I'll delete it."

Another content moderator said:

> "Facebook shadowbans. Facebook is notorious for it, they say they don't but, it's clear that people's content don't come because it's been de-filtered off the queue."
>
> Someone asked on camera, "How many of you are like, take your own stance and say we're just deleting whatever, all the Trump posts?" An unnamed

> moderator said, “There are probably like 16 of us.”
>
> A service delivery manager was reportedly caught on camera saying, “Gotta get the Cheeto (Trump) out of office.”
>
> […]He took screenshots of a memo saying that a poster which showed President Donald Trump’s head being cut off would not be flagged as hate speech. A meme that showed a cartoon of Elmer Fudd shooting at former Democratic presidential candidate Beto O’Rourke was allegedly flagged as hate speech.
>
> In another screenshot, one memo read, “CNN host Don Lemon recently said ‘white men are the biggest terror threat in this country.’ This is implying that white men are terrorists and so would typically violate (HS Tier 1-2 1:6 dehumanizing speech). As this is a newsworthy event, FB’s content policy team is allowing a exception for this content on the platform.”

The video from Project Veritas features about a dozen content moderators (censors) from Facebook, admitting that they deliberately censor Republican content. My favorite is the woman who says that anything pro-Trump is “terrorism”.

Here’s the full video released by Project Veritas, which features conversations with a dozen Facebook content moderators.

Previously, I’ve blogged about other cases of Facebook censoring Christians and conservatives.

Live Action reported:

> In yet another apparent attempt to silence pro-lifers, Facebook has removed a post created by Seth Gruber of Life Training Insitute. Gruber had interviewed abortion survivor Melissa Ohden and was sharing information about the interview on his personal Facebook page when he was sent a warning message from the social media giant — and his post was removed.

Fox News reports on another case of Facebook censoring conservatives:

> Four Republican senators blasted Facebook for ‘censorship’ over the tech giant’s recent fact check of pro-life organization Live Action.
>
> In a letter today to CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Senators Josh Hawley of Missouri, Ted Cruz of Texas, Kevin Cramer of North Dakota and Mike Braun of Indiana condemn the company’s “pattern of censorship” and demand that it issue a correction, remove any restrictions placed on Live Action and its founder Lila Rose, as well as submit to a “meaningful” external audit.

The Washington Times reports:

> The Rev. Franklin Graham was kicked off Facebook for defending North Carolina’s “bathroom bill,” which the social-media giant’s review team decided was hate speech.
>
> Facebook acknowledged over the weekend it had banned the prominent

> evangelist over transgender issues… But Mr. Graham was having none of it Sunday, calling the move "a personal attack towards me" and an example of the censorship that Silicon Valley has in store for Christians and/or conservatives.

And this one from the Daily Caller:

> Facebook is censoring PragerU videos for violating its speech codes that prohibit so-called "hate speech" and shadow banning its posts, PragerU wrote on Twitter Friday.
>
> "We're being heavily censored on @Facebook. Our last 9 posts are reaching 0 of our 3 million followers. At least two videos were deleted last night for 'hate speech' including our recent video with @ConservativeMillen," PragerU tweeted.

And then there is the previous Project Veritas sting of Facebook, where it emerged that official company documents said that efforts to censor Republicans was important to do, especially *in an election year*. That makes it clear that Facebook's intention is to get the Democrat Party elected.

The previous investigation found this:

> Project Veritas has obtained and published documents and presentation materials from a former Facebook insider. This information describes how Facebook engineers plan and go about policing political speech. Screenshots from a Facebook workstation show the specific technical actions taken against political figures, as well as "[e]xisting strategies" taken to combat political speech.
>
> […]According to the insider, the documents revealed a routine suppression of the distribution of conservative Facebook pages. The technical action she repeatedly saw, and for which Project Veritas was provided documentation, was labeled ActionDeboostLiveDistribution.
>
> Said the insider, "I would see [this term] appear on several different conservative pages. I first noticed it with an account that I can't remember, but I remember once I started looking at it, I also saw it on Mike Cernovich's page, saw it on Steven Crowder's page, as well as the Daily Caller's page."
>
> […]The insider says that unlike many actions that Facebook content moderators can take against pages, the "deboost" action, which appears to occur algorithmically, does not notify the page's owner.
>
> […]Upon further review, the insider says she did not notice the tag on any left-wing pages.

Everything that hurts the Democrats is "terrorism" and has to be "de-boosted", especially "in an election year".

It's easy for Big Tech executives to go to Washington and lie about whether their companies are censoring or not, but the evidence speaks for itself. We should be

investigating them right now, while we still have the Senate and time before the election. Wake up Republicans! Investigate them and hold them accountable.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

June 25, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference

between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.

But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.

There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that “There is no God” is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that “There is a God.” Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God’s existence. He confesses that he doesn’t know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term “atheist,” you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with “non-theist.” So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word ‘atheist’ has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix ‘a-’ being read in this same way in ‘atheist’ as it customarily is in . . . words as ‘amoral’ . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. “The Presumption of Atheism,” by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word “atheist” trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our

> **cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.**
>
> **One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.**
>
> So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, "So is there a God or not?"

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these "subjective atheists"?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says "I lack a belief in the gravitational force!". When you engage in serious discussions with people about God's existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don't care about a person's psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over "I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God"? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: "I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!" What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: "Wintery Knight won't listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!". I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that's why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don't *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I'm not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Related posts

- Is giving to charity more rational for religious people or atheists?
- An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview
- Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?
- Did Jesus exist? Agnostic historian Bart Ehrman debates Infidel Guy
- Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?
- Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong? Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral?
- Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?
- William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech
- Can atheists be moral? Sean McDowell and James Corbett debate
- If militant atheists could form a country, what would it look like?
- Chad Meister: can atheists make sense of morality?

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

June 26, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they

take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.” And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What’s harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I’ll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, “In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home.” And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase “In order that you may know”. Same message, right?

3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don’t know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It’s really great. Acts 2:36. I’ve been a Christian 20 years and I didn’t see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can’t exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” There it is again. “Know for certain.”

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition “Christ rose from the grave,” for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, “I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave.”

3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be

> transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Are men allowed to have preferences about which women are best for marriage?

June 27, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

So, in a previous post, I explained why men have to be careful about choosing a wife. Men have plans and they need a woman with the right skills to achieve it. Even if a woman genuinely repents her past, she may not have developed the skills for a godly man's marriage plan. For example, her 50K of student loans makes it harder to afford a stay-at-home homeschooling mother.

But many Christian women feel that there is no such thing as a Christian woman who is a bad candidate for marriage. It doesn't matter what a Christian woman did in the past. A man should never evaluate her skills for the roles of wife and mother. After all, if God forgives a Christian woman for running up student loan debt for a useless women's studies degree, or for getting drunk and sleeping around with hawt bad boys in college, then no Christian man should hold her past decisions against her when choosing a wife. Men are *obligated t*o disregard the past anti-marriage decisions made by women. To do anything else is to deny the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So many Christian women say.

What would happen if the shoe were on the other foot? What if it were the MAN who had been selfish, lazy and irresponsible? What if the MAN had made choices that seriously harmed his ability to perform male marriage roles like protecting and providing for his wife and children? Would marriage-ready women be *obligated* to marry this man as much as a man who had remained chaste, got a good education, built up a gapless resume, saved enough for a downpayment on a house, and taught apologetics in his home church? Is she allowed to prefer a man who has made good decisions to prepare for his marriage roles over a man who has made horrible decisions, but just hollers "grace" when anyone questions his ability to be a husband and father?

This MUST-READ article from The Federalist asks and answers that question.

Do you agree with the author?

> I think it's time for a conversation about another elephant in the room: this idea that women prefer physically fit men with good jobs and no criminal record. It's incredibly sexist and matriarchal to insist that women have a natural preference for men who have invested time and energy into stewarding their bodies, have shown the capability of earning a living and supporting a family, and have not gone to jail for attempting to grow 452 marijuana plants in their mother's basement.
>
> I know more than a few men who spent their twenties languishing in their parents' homes, subsisting on Cheetos and Mountain Dew, playing Xbox, watching pornography, and smoking controlled substances. If one of these men turns his life around, accepts Jesus, and starts fresh, young women have no right to overlook him as a potential mate just because he is 280 pounds, has almost no marketable skills at 30 years old, and cannot vote, serve on a jury, or own a firearm. He is created in the image of God, and accepted by Jesus! Any women who would overlook every other noble quality he possesses for basic financial security and a clean background check (not to mention browsing history) isn't a woman he should want.
>
> Men like this have often long since repented of their listless and slothful ways. If the lingering consequences of their pasts didn't stop Christ from living and dying for them, then it shouldn't stop a Christian woman from loving them, either. Period.

The Federalist article makes it clear that a man's poor choices about his education, job, obedience to the law, and physical fitness CLEARLY compromise his ability to perform his male duties to protect and provide. What about moral and spiritual leading? Well if he didn't spent his teens and 20s studying apologetics, moral issues, etc. then he isn't going to compare favorably to a man who teaches apologetics in his church, debates atheists, and writes blog posts for the Life Training Institute.

My friend Lee is a superb stay-at-home wife and mother. She says that we shouldn't accept "Jesus forgives me" as an immediate reversal of past harmful choices:

> I would note that there is a difference between just being forgiven of sin and actually repenting of it. Repenting is a turning away from and will manifest in changes; paying down debts, becoming chaste, becoming otherwise responsible and wise. Someone's past doesn't have to define their future. But that will manifest in observable and measurable changes.

She's right.

I knew a Christian woman who had 25,000 worth of student loan debt when she was 29. She wasn't using her degree, she was just working as a waitress. I found her a job as an IT project manager in an FT100 company, so she could pay off her loans. She declined, because "being a waitress is the easiest job I've ever had". She hasn't worked full-time as

a professional since January 2013. She'll say "Jesus forgives me!" and "I hate my student loans!", but the loans are even larger now, and the wasteful spending on fun and thrills hasn't stopped. Hollering "grace" and saying you hate debt doesn't make you a good steward – and you'll *need to be a good steward* if you are in a marriage. She's not ready to manage the finances of a household. If she had taken the job, and paid off the loans, then she would have overcome the mistake, and become marriage-ready.

So what's really behind the hysteria against men evaluating women for marriage?

Deti nails the real root problem:

> Not one person – NOT ONE PERSON – said that nonvirgins with tattoos and debt are bad people; that they are irredeemable, that they're bad Christians; that they cannot be Christians; that they're unsalvageable; that they're ugly; or that they couldn't and shouldn't marry. That is NOT what was said.
>
> All that was said was that men prefer tattooless, debtfree virgins for marriage. That's all.
>
> […]The bible… teaches repentance is the way to salvation. But repentance does not mean you no longer bear the scars of your past sins in body and mind. You do. Oh yes you do. The effects can be minimized, even overcome. But they're still there.
>
> And more to the point, what's really being complained about here is a Christian woman acknowledging that men have preferences and that men are entitled to have preferences. If women want men, then they have to satisfy those preferences or lower their standards until they find men whose preferences they can satisfy.
>
> This can't be overemphasized – it's the idea that men have preferences. Its' the idea that there's a man that's one-half of that relationship, and there are things HE wants, and HE needs, and HE desires. Why does it matter what HE wants? Why do we care about him?
>
> Men don't want to marry high N women. Men don't want to take on debt and they don't prefer markedup tatted up women who look and act like men.
>
> What this gets down to is women objecting to men having standards. Because that leads to men judging women. And that leads to men evaluating women. And that leads to men rejecting some women and accepting others. And women hate judgment and rejection, especially when it's "less than" men who are doing the judging and rejecting.

N refers to the number of sexual partners a person has had.

The reason we discuss best practices for marriage-minded women is so that young women, especially young women who lack a father in the home, can get some kind of guidance about how to resist the culture's lies about men, sex and marriage. Such a woman has NOWHERE TO GO in this culture in order to learn how to relate to men, and how to marry to a man who will love her faithfully and forever. That's not fair! We have to

help her!

What Christian men are doing by promoting chastity, sobriety, good stewardship and self-control to these young women is *protecting them from a culture that lies to them*. The well-meaning Christian women who think that talking about moral boundaries and wisdom will hurt the feelings of women who have made mistakes are actually making it harder for young women who have no guidance at all. The most vulnerable ones are the ones who need to hear that chastity is wise. Doing a STEM degree is wise. Getting out of debt by spending less is wise. Not seeking attention with graffiti on your body is wise. That's what unmarried women need to hear.

It's amazing to me that so many Christians do not understand the protective value of recommending Biblical morality and Biblical wisdom to young women. They would rather sacrifice these young women to the secular culture than allow older women to feel bad about their past decisions. So many Christians seem to be more concerned about *their own feelings* than about *promoting and defending what the Bible teaches* to young people who really need help.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about war

June 28, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot
A two-part sermon from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

The part 1 MP3 file is here.

The part 2 MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Part 1 topics: (just war and conduct of war)

- the commandment to not kill does not apply to killing enemy soldiers in war
- government is authorized to prevent foreign countries from harming citizens the same way it prevents criminals from harming citizens
- there are examples in the Bible of using military force to stop an aggressive nation, e.g. – David vs Goliath
- principles of a just war, and relevant Bible passages, e.g. – just cause, only as a last resort
- Moral principles for the conduct of a just war, e.g. – proportionality, combatants vs non-combatants
- Can a Christian serve in a just war in good conscience?
- What should a Christian do if called upon to fight in an unjust war?

Part 2 topics: (responses to pacificism)

- what are the arguments in favor of pacifism?
- government can do some things that individuals cannot do, e.g. – taxing vs stealing, punishing criminals vs revenge
- it's wrong for individuals to use force to advance the gospel, but not wrong for

government to use force to restrain evil
- Jesus loves everyone, but even he will come in judgment one day and use force to punish evil
- what about nuclear weapons, nuclear arsenals for deterrence, and defenses to long-range nuclear missiles?
- missile defense systems work, e.g – Iron Dome in Israel stopped about 85% of incoming missiles
- building defenses does not embolden the enemy to attack us, it deters the enemy from attacking us
- “turn the other cheek” means don’t return an insult, but you can defend yourself from physical threats

My favorite part of this two-part series was the midpoint of part 2, when a lady asked him a question about what is behind pacificism. Dr. Grudem runs through all the places in society where the secular left is opposed to authorities judging and punishing bad behavior with force. There are so many examples of this: parents disciplining rebellious children, teachers disciplining misbehaving kids, police catching criminals (lots of that lately!), courts putting criminals in jail for long periods of time, giving murderers the death penalty, using waterboarding on terrorists, and of course pacifism in the face of aggression, e.g. – Iran vs Israel, Russia vs Ukraine. Then another lady asked him why the same people who are so concerned about going easy on violent criminals and aggressive nations are so intent on being able to kill defenseless innocent children in the womb. Good question.

Feminist single mother confused when daughter seeks male attention with sexy photos

June 29, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Captain Capitalism shared this story about a single mother in radically-leftist French Canada. And she raised her fatherless daughter with all sorts of feminist propaganda, especially rejecting traditional femininity. But what happens when her fatherless girl has to choose between feminist theory and her need to get approval from men?

The story is from the CBC:

> Last summer, I stumbled onto my teenage daughter's social media account. What I found confirmed my worst fear: I had failed to raise a feminist.
>
> There, among the pouty-faced selfies, was a photo of her posing, Sports Illustrated-style, on a jet ski in her bikini, brandishing her middle finger at the camera with a smirk on her face.
>
> […]All her life, I've tried to model feminism: taking her on marches for women's rights, reading to her from books like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's We Should all be Feminists and surrounding her with a community of strong, independent female friends.
>
> I realize now that the wisdom of my mother's "Women's Lib" generation doesn't cover the challenges of raising a feminist daughter in the 21st century.
>
> […]We want our girls to grow up brave, confident and assertive.

On this blog, I've written many times about the harm that feminism does to women. Basically, in the old days, women could be honest about what they really wanted. They wanted a husband to care for them, give them economic security, and they wanted to

raise children and keep a home. They might get a degree and work while looking for a husband, but they really wanted a stable marriage, and to be needed by their husband and children most of all.

But feminism taught young women that traditional goals were “sexist” and therefore to be avoided. Instead of marrying early and having children, women were taught to delay marriage for their careers. Instead of learning how to objectively evaluate a man for his ability as a provider, protector, moral leader and spiritual leader, women were taught to prefer men who gave them entertainment and excitement in the moment.

Well, this single mother obviously has feelings about how to achieve the goal of having a daughter who is brave confident and assertive. But what does the objective research say about how to achieve that goal?

Here’s an article from the pro-feminist Institute for Family Studies:

> Today’s fathers also seem to be having a greater impact on their daughters’ academic and career choices than fathers in previous generations. For example, women who were born in the 1970s are three times more likely than those born at the beginning of the twentieth century to work in the same field as their fathers—a finding that researchers have attributed not just to society’s changing gender roles but also to daughters receiving more mentoring from their fathers.
>
> Another question on many people’s minds is: how does a father influence his daughter’s romantic life—who she dates, when she starts having sex, and the quality of her relationships with men? Not surprisingly, a girl who has a secure, supportive, communicative relationship with her father is less likely to get pregnant as a teenager and less likely to become sexually active in her early teens. This, in turn, leads to waiting longer to get married and to have children—largely because she is focused on achieving her educational goals first.
>
> The well-fathered daughter is also the most likely to have relationships with men that are emotionally intimate and fulfilling. During the college years, these daughters are more likely than poorly-fathered women to turn to their boyfriends for emotional comfort and support and they are less likely to be “talked into” having sex. As a consequence of having made wiser decisions in regard to sex and dating, these daughters generally have more satisfying, more long-lasting marriages. What is surprising is not that fathers have such an impact on their daughters’ relationships with men, but that they generally have more impact than mothers do.
>
> Their better relationships with men may also be related to the fact that well-fathered daughters are less likely to become clinically depressed or to develop eating disorders. They are also less dissatisfied with their appearance and their body weight. As a consequence of having better emotional and mental health, these young women are more apt to have the kinds of skills and attitudes that lead to more fulfilling relationships with men.
>
> An emerging body of research suggests one more way that dads may shape their

> daughters' mental health and relationships in adulthood: scholars have found an intriguing link between the way daughters deal with stress as adults and the kind of relationships they had with their dads during childhood. For example, undergraduate women who did not have good relationships with their fathers had lower than normal cortisol levels. And people with low cortisol levels tend to be overly sensitive and overly reactive when confronted with stress. Indeed, the low cortisol daughters were more likely than the higher cortisol daughters (who had the better relationships with their dads) to describe their relationships with men in stressful terms of rejection, unpredictability or coercion.

If the single mother in our story really wanted her daughter to be brave, confident and assertive, then she should have 1) made herself into the kind of person that a commitment-minded man is attracted to, and 2) evaluated men for their commitment-ability and then chosen one to have babies with based on their ability to commit. For example, if she had chosen a Christian man who took the Bible seriously on morality and spirituality, then that man would have stuck around, modeled how to love his wife, and taken an interest in his children. Someone who is able to make commitments and keep his word. And according to the research, that (traditional, "sexist") approach would have done a lot more to reach the goal of having a brave, confident and assertive daughter. The feminist approach to raising children is exactly what DOESN'T work.

The problem with the single mother feminist is that her feminist worldview is based on her feelings instead of on research. She probably had bad experiences with the hot bad boys she freely chose, and then drew the wrong conclusions from those experiences. E.g. – "I gave my body to a hot bad boy to make him like me, and he dumped me. I felt weak, but it wasn't my fault for choosing him. It was his fault for not changing into a good man after I gave him premarital sex. Now I'm going to stop being a weak girl, and drink like a man, have sex like a man, and have a career like a man, and this will work to raise a strong daughter. Welfare, daycare and public schools are all I need!"

The priceless gift that mothers give their daughters when they marry a good man is the gift of teaching them how to make a man like them without appealing to them with exposed skin and commitment-free sex. When a man is present in the home, and is treated with respect by his wife, the daughters learn which male behaviors are best for marriage, and how to encourage and support good men who demonstrate those behaviors. Daughters who have fathers don't feel the need to seek male attention with skin and sex, the way that many fatherless girls do. They get attention from their fathers for having good character, for developing useful skills and for caring for other people around them. They are attracted to men who give them attention for their character and achievements, just like their fathers did.

Both of Trump’s Supreme Court picks declare Louisiana pro-life law Constitutional

June 30, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’m Scheming Unborn Baby, and I don’t approve this decision

This post is just a round-up of some interesting points about the disappointing SCOTUS decision from Monday.

Life News reported:

> Though pro-lifers mourned another loss at the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday in the fight to protect unborn babies and mothers, many found hope in the fact that both of President Donald Trump’s nominees rejected the majority opinion.
>
> Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh dissented in June Medical Services v. Russo. The case involved a Louisiana law that requires abortionists to have hospital admitting privileges so that they can treat patients with potentially life-threatening complications.
>
> On Monday, the four liberal justices and Chief Justice John Roberts decided that the law imposes an “undue burden” on women’s right to abortion. Roberts’ ruling was a huge disappointment for pro-life advocates. Many believed Roberts, a nominee of Republican President George W. Bush, would at least agree to uphold the modest abortion regulation for the sake of women’s health and safety, but he did not.
>
> But pro-life leaders were happy with how Trump’s two choices ruled in the

> matter.
>
> “We are pleased that the two Justices appointed by President Trump voted to protect women and to uphold the Louisiana pro-life law,” said James Bopp, general counsel for National Right to Life.
>
> Gorsuch wrote a strong, critical dissent of the majority opinion, slamming the justices for ignoring “an array of rules” that keep the judiciary branch in check.
>
> The rules make “sure that we are in the business of saying what the law is, not what we wish it to be,” Gorsuch wrote in his dissent. “Today’s decision doesn’t just overlook one of these rules. It overlooks one after another.”
>
> At length, he listed Louisiana’s concerns for women’s health, including dozens of health and safety violations at abortion facilities, botched abortions, and new evidence suggesting abortion facilities may not have reported the rape of a young girl to authorities.
>
> “At least one Louisiana abortion provider’s loss of admitting privileges following a patient’s death alerted the state licensing board to questions about his competence, and ultimately resulted in restrictions on his practice,” he wrote.
>
> Gorsuch said Louisiana lawmakers had good reasons to pass the admitting privileges law. He said they heard testimony from women and emergency room physicians about abortion practitioners’ record of abandoning their patients.

My favorite justice Clarence Thomas added:

> In dissent, Justice Clarence Thomas wrote, “Today a majority of the Court perpetuates its ill-founded abortion jurisprudence by enjoining a perfectly legitimate state law and doing so without jurisdiction.”
>
> “Our abortion precedents are grievously wrong and should be overruled,” he added, saying that the high court has “neither jurisdiction nor constitutional authority to declare Louisiana’s duly enacted law unconstitutional.”
>
> Thomas’ dissent makes it clear that the abortion activists who brought the lawsuit didn’t even have standing to bring it, since petitioners who file lawsuits are supposed to bring such suits on their own behalf concerning their own abrogated rights or grievances, not on behalf of others.
>
> Thomas made that problem clear: “As is often the case with legal challenges to abortion regulations, this suit was brought by abortionists and abortion clinics. Their sole claim before this Court is that Louisiana’s law violates the purported substantive due process right of a woman to abort her unborn child. But they concede that this right does not belong to them, and they seek to vindicate no private rights of their own. Under a proper understanding of Article III, these plaintiffs lack standing to invoke our jurisdiction.”

Both of Obama’s picks (Kagan and Sotomayor) voted in favor of the abortion clinics, saying that states cannot legislate common sense safety rules for abortion providers.

And here was Trump's reaction, reported by Life News:

> On behalf of President Donald Trump, the White House issued a statement slamming the ruling and saying it "devalued the lives of unborn children."
>
> "In an unfortunate ruling today, the Supreme Court devalued both the health of mothers and the lives of unborn children by gutting Louisiana's policy that required all abortion procedures be performed by individuals with admitting privileges at a nearby hospital," the White House said. "States have legitimate interests in regulating any medical procedure—including abortions—to protect patient safety. Instead of valuing fundamental democratic principles, unelected Justices have intruded on the sovereign prerogatives of State governments by imposing their own policy preference in favor of abortion to override legitimate abortion safety regulations."

The two oldest judges on the Supreme Court (Ruth Bader-Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer) are almost certain to be replaced in the next federal election. It will be interesting to see what pro-lifers do in order to get Trump re-elected. So far, his picks have been solid on the abortion issue. But not everyone who claims to be pro-life is practical about getting pro-life outcomes. A lot of pro-lifers are cynical and conspiracy-minded, so that they find ways to think themselves righteous without getting involved and being effective.

Make sure you have a plan to replace Bader-Ginsburg and Breyer by getting Trump re-elected in November 2020.

Canada’s single payer health care: pay up front, take a number and wait until you die

July 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Price of healthcare per Canadian household (Source: Fraser Institute)

I post a lot of research from Canada’s Fraser Institute, but they are not the only think tank that publishes research on the efficiency and costs of single payer health care in Canada. This time, I found a report from the Heritage Foundation, where they go over quality of care, taxes, out of pocket costs, coverage, rationing, waiting lists, staff shortages, substandard equipment, and outdated drugs.

Here’s the report from the Heritage Foundation. I’ll focus on the differences.

Canadians pay slightly less in out of pocket costs:

> The OECD calculates that Canadians spend 1.6 percent of GDP on out-of-pocket health spending, compared to 1.9 percent in the U.S.
>
> […]While these numbers are very close, they are actually getting closer. Since 1970, U.S. out-of-pocket spending as a percentage of total medical spending has been falling steadily, from 33 percent in 1970 to about 10 percent in 2017.19
>
> Meanwhile, Canadian out-of-pocket spending has been falling much slower, so that by 2016 it totaled 15 percent of total medical spending—a higher proportion than in the U.S.20
>
> **As a result, Statistics Canada warned in early 2020 that the percentage of Canadians experiencing large out-of-pocket burdens is growing, writing that “[b]etween 1998 and 2009…the percentage of households**

> **spending more than 10% of their total after-tax income on health care rose by 56%.”**

Canadians pay more in federal and state taxes:

> Federal taxation excluding social security contributions, then, comes to 28 percent of GDP in Canada, compared to just 19 percent in the U.S.—meaning 51 percent more.
>
> […]This excess taxation is largely a result of health spending, which has bloated provincial budgets to nearly three times the taxes of U.S. states.
>
> Provincial taxes have grown to nearly the same level as federal taxation. Meanwhile, provincial health costs have risen to fully 37 percent of provincial budgets in 2016—up from 33 percent in 1993 – —and range as high as 42 percent.
>
> Canada’s Fraser Institute has estimated this excess tax burden from public health costs at roughly $9,000 for a household of two adults with or without children or $750 per month in additional taxes.

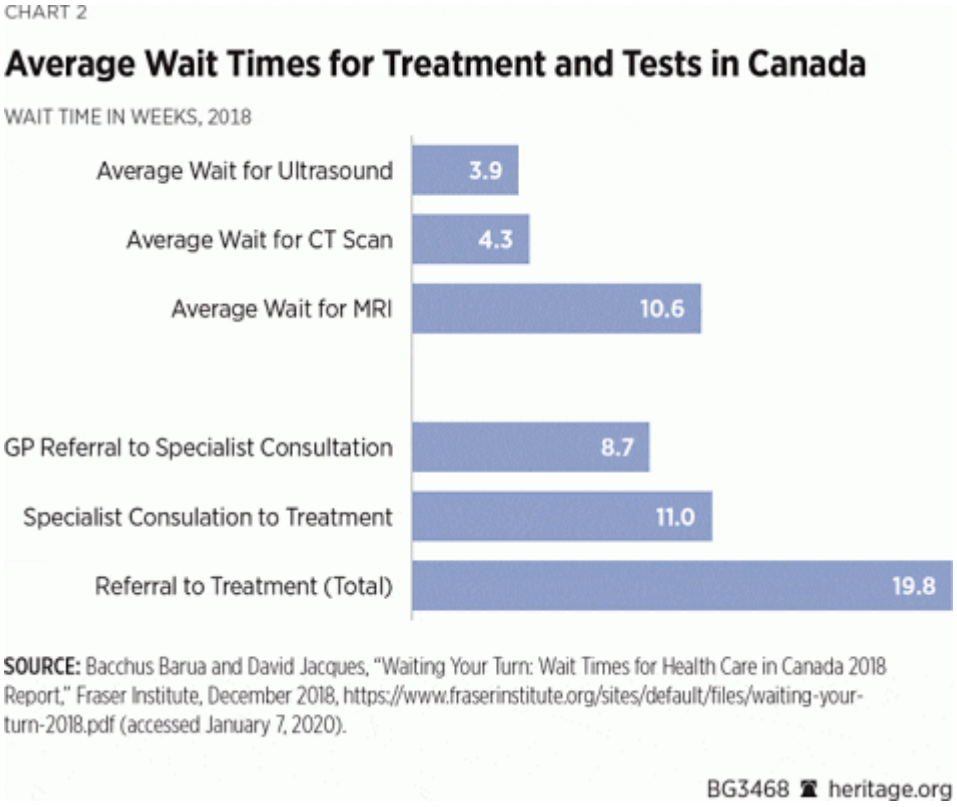

When I wanted an MRI I was scheduled the same week
Canadians wait far longer for treatment than Americans:

> Medical waiting times have become a national crisis in Canada, and continue to worsen. The average wait time for medically necessary treatment between referral from a general practitioner and a consultation with a specialist was 8.7 weeks in 2018, 136 percent longer than in 1993. Patients then have to wait again between seeing the specialist and the actual treatment, another 11 weeks on average, 97 percent longer than in 1993.

> From referral to treatment, then, it takes an average of 19.8 weeks (see Chart 2) to be treated, in addition to the original wait to see the family doctor in the first place—this for "medically necessary" treatment, not cosmetic surgery.
>
> In contrast, nearly 77 percent of Americans are treated within four weeks of referral, and only 6 percent of Americans report waiting more than two months to see a specialist.
>
> As for appointments, a 2017 survey of American physicians in the 15 largest U.S. cities found that it took just 24 days on average to schedule a new-patient physician appointment, including 11 days for an orthopedic surgeon and 21 days for a cardiologist.
>
> As a result of these long waits, by one recent estimate, at any given moment, over one million Canadians—3 percent of the entire population—are waiting for a medical treatment.
>
> These lists can average six months, and often much longer in rural areas, which tend to suffer from doctor shortages so severe that many do not even have a family doctor. Overall, 15 percent of Canadians did not have a regular health care provider in 2017.
>
> **The shortages ripple through the system; one doctor in Ontario called in a referral to the local hospital, only to be told there was a four-and-a-half year wait to see a neurologist.**

In Canada, people die or become inoperable on waiting lists:

> **A Montreal man was finally called for his long-delayed urgent surgery two months after he had died. One 16-year-old boy in British Columbia waited three years for an "urgent" surgery, during which time his condition deteriorated so much that he became a paraplegic.**

Canadians have to travel abroad to countries with functioning health care systems in order to be treated:

> These cases are, unfortunately, not isolated; a survey of specialists found that average wait times exceed what is deemed clinically "reasonable" for fully 72 percent of conditions in Canada. The situation continues to worsen every year: In 1994, the average gap between clinically reasonable delay and actual delay was only four days, and by 2018 had grown to 23 days.
>
> […]With one million waiting, many Canadians turn in desperation to U.S. health care—the very system some U.S. policymakers propose to transform. In 2017 alone, Canadians made 217,500 trips to other countries for health care, of which 52,500 were to the U.S., paying out of pocket to skip the waiting.

Outdated equipment, outdated drugs, staff shortages:

> While the average employer-sponsored private insurance plan in Canada covers

> between 10,000 and 12,000 drugs, most public plans in Canada only cover 4,000. Canada has 35 percent fewer acute care beds than the U.S., and only one-fourth as many magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) units per capita—indeed, it has fewer MRI units per capita than Turkey, Chile, or Latvia.
>
> […]Some common treatments are simply unavailable to Canadians. For new pharmaceuticals, for example, Canada's policy of forcing down prices so that American consumers essentially pay for Canada's research and development has led to years-long delays for Canadian patients.
>
> […]Cutting corners on facilities and using outdated drugs show up in Canadian mortality rates. Thirty-day in-hospital mortality rates in Canada are 20 percent higher than in the U.S. for heart attacks, and nearly three times the U.S. level for strokes. Cancer age-standardized mortality is 10 percent higher in Canada than in the U.S.—despite far healthier lifestyles.
>
> […]When it comes to personnel, Canada underspends on medical staff and doctors, ranking 29th out of 33 among high-income countries for doctors per 1,000 population, accounting for a large part of those wait times. Canada has half as many specialist physicians per capita as the U.S.
>
> […]With such shortages and waiting lists, Canadian emergency rooms are packed. So packed that Canadians sometimes just give up and go home. Of Canadian ER visitors who are seen, 29 percent report wait times of over four hours, three times the U.S. level.
>
> […]Canadian seniors are 65 percent more likely to have visited the emergency room (ER) four or more times in the past year than American seniors.
>
> Ultimately, nearly 5 percent of Canadian ER visitors end up leaving without ever being treated, giving up on a medical system that is perennially "free" but out of stock at the moment. In one study at two ERs in Alberta, 14 of the 498 walkaways were subsequently hospitalized, and one died within the week.

And keep in mind how things work in a single payer system. You pay up front through your taxes. The harder you work, the more you pay into the system. When you want treatment, you just get in line behind people who never paid one dime into the system – like all those low-skill refugees that Canada imports from Middle Eastern countries to build up the socialist voting bloc.

Does the “legacy of slavery” explain black women’s 72% out-of-wedlock birth rate?

July 2, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

James White asks: does the Bible apply to black women?

I don’t like Calvinist theologian James White very much, but at least he’s willing to defend the moral teachings of the Bible against the woke identity politics that is taking over Christian churches. A few months ago he tweeted something very controversial (see above), and got into a lot of hot water with fake Christians. In this post, I’ll explain why he is right.

So, as you can see above, James is concerned that black women are having so many abortions, and he thinks that the solution to this is to encourage black women to take the Bible’s advice on sexual morality. Shocking, I know.

If you read the replies to his tweet on Twitter, you’ll see millions and millions of comments calling him a racist, and telling him that slavery is to blame for EVERYTHING that black women do wrong. Basically, the James haters say that black women can do anything they want, and should never be told that it’s wrong according to the Bible, because their bad choices are all the fault of slavery. So the Bible doesn’t even apply to them, or something.

Here is an example from a radical feminist progressive named Karen Swallow Prior:

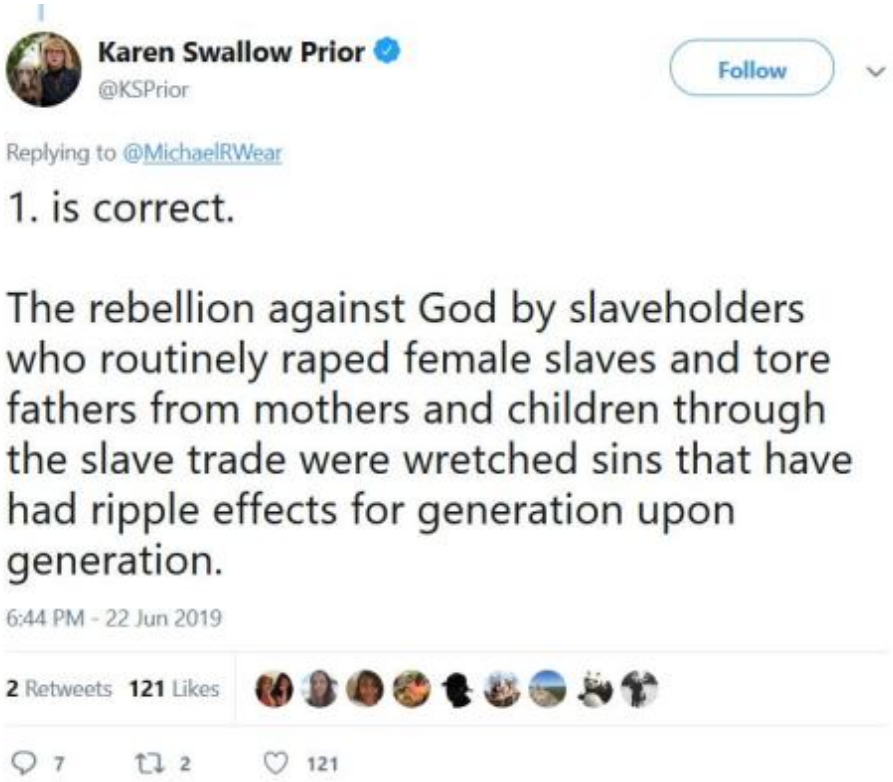

Karen Swallow Prior says that unlike whites, blacks have no moral agency

According to the fake Christians, it's not that black women make poor choices with sex, it's that the ghosts of white slavers who raped their great-great-great grandmothers reach through time with magic and force them to have sex with hunky bad boys who won't commit to them before sex. It's not rap music calling black women hoes! It's the ghosts of slavery past. And even if this ghost theory isn't true, we shouldn't tell black women not to sin, because… it would hurt their feelings. After all, the Bible isn't a book that's designed to set boundaries to prevent self-destructive behaviors. It encourages us to listen to our hearts, be reckless, and sin as much as we can.

So when did black community problems with sex and abortion start? Did it start with slavery times? Actually, blacks were doing GREAT at marriage and sexual matters just 50 years ago.

This reply to James White explained:

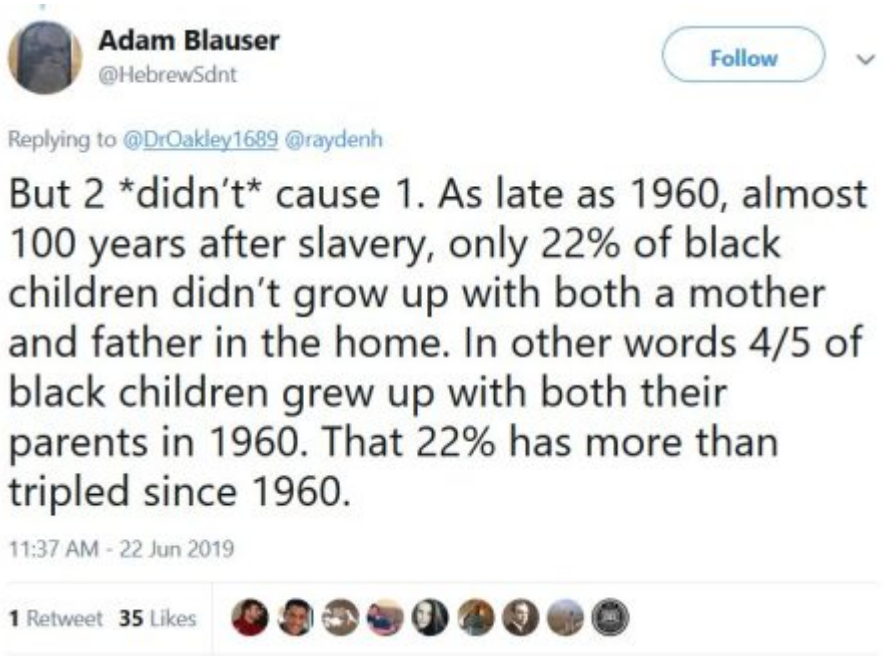

Blacks married at rates comparable to whites before welfare
That's true. Black children weren't fatherless, so they weren't having early sex outside of marriage, and so they weren't getting abortions.

As the header graphic shows, black women were just as likely to be married as white women in the 1960s, FAR AFTER the days of slavery.

The reason that the graph is going upward is because daughters raised in fatherless homes tend to engage in sexual activity at younger ages, because they are seeking approval from a man which their (single) mother cannot give them. It's a tragic downwards spiral, and it affects all races. The only way to stop it is to tell women to choose marriage-minded men (not hot bad boys) and marry before having sex, like the Bible says. But woke fake Christians think the Bible is too mean, and better to allow sin by saying that sin is inevitable because slavery ghosts or something.

What's neat is that black men who take Christianity seriously are totally on board with the facts:

Black man here. Can confirm that the Bible applies to black women.
On this blog, I don't talk about my ethnicity myself, for confidentiality reasons, but I have said that my skin is darker than Barack Obama. I'm not white or Asian. And the reason that I don't fall into this trap of causing babies to be born out of wedlock is because I think that when the Bible says that sex outside of marriage is a sin, that this is true. I

don’t make excuses or shift blame. It’s incumbent on me to obey, since I claim to be a follower of Jesus.I’m not interested in identity politics. I’m not interested in racial divisions. I’m not interested in blame-shifting. The rules are the rules. And my following of the rules caused me to not cause abortions, according to Christian specifications. Period.

When it comes to sex outside of marriage, the answer of every Bible believing Christian is simple: I’m against it. That is the correct answer, and anything more or less than this answer is demonic. If you are a Christian, sex outside of marriage is always morally wrong. And if you try to justify it, or blame someone else, in order to excuse it, then you’re not a Christian at all. If you try to make excuses for why someone did it, you’re not a Christian. Whether you have had it and been forgiven, or never had it, the answer is always the same: it’s morally wrong. Don’t do it. Never do it.

What I am seeing from people who are critical of James White’s tweet is that they are basically trying to attack those who make moral judgments based on what the Bible says. They want to make room for sinners to sin. The root of abortion sin is sexual sin. Real Christians discourage sexual sin, and therefore protect unborn children. Fake Christians want to be liked by appearing compassionate, so they make excuses for sexual sin. If you take the Bible seriously on morality, you won’t be liked. Those who try to excuse sin do so because their need to be liked is more important than their need to promote what the Bible teaches.

Some fake Christians will say “oh, but I do think the Bible is right about sex and marriage, but we have to care about slavery reparations and global warming and refugees and illegal immigrants and trasnsgender rights, too”. Baloney. An authentic Christian is concerned about the things that the Bible teaches are “major” things. Drunkenness is a major thing. Sexual immorality is a major thing. Divorce is a major thing. Homosexuality is a major thing. If you meet a Christian who treats those issues as minor issues, and instead majors in what the secular left tells them are major issues, then you’re talking to a fake Christian.

Christianity isn’t a brain-dead faith. You get your priorities from the Bible, and you argue those priorities using facts. The facts about marriage rates are clear and they show that the problems in the black community aren’t caused by slavery. They’re caused by single mother welfare programs. Those welfare programs taught women of all races that they didn’t have to listen to their fathers when choosing men. Those welfare programs taught women that feelings were a better guide in relationships than the Bible. Those welfare programs taught women that their eyes were a better judge of character than performance of traditional marriage roles. Those welfare programs taught women that recreational sex was a way to get a man to commit and stop being a bad boy. We need to go back to the root cause of the problem. The root cause of the problem was making excuses for disobedience to the Bible, and transferring money from married homes to out-of-control women. Of all races.

Harvard psychology graduate fired for threatening to stab people she disagrees with

July 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Harvard University grad Claira Janover wants to stab you for disagreeing with her

My wise advisor Dina sent me this news story about a privileged young woman who graduated Harvard University and got a job at the prestigious accounting firm Deloitte. She recorded herself threatening to stab people who disagreed with her Democrat convictions. Deloitte fired her. Now she's complaining that she is the real victim.

Here's the story in the New York Post:

> Claira Janover, who graduated in May with a degree in government and psychology, went viral after posting a short clip in which she attacked anyone with "the nerve, the sheer entitled caucasity to say 'all lives matter.'"
>
> "I'ma stab you," the Connecticut native said, zooming in close on her face.
>
> "I'ma stab you, and while you're struggling and bleeding out, I'ma show you my paper cut and say, 'My cut matters too,'" she added.

And in another New York Post article:

> In her new videos, she blamed supporters of President Trump for going after her job.
>
> "Trump supporters took my job away from me," she said in another new video posted Wednesday.
>
> […]"Now my future's entirely compromised because Trump supporters have decided to come for my life."

Yeah, getting fired for being a psychopath definitely is the same thing as Trump supporters coming for your life.

Here are the videos:

https://twitter.com/i/status/1278604728042172416

She's trying to make herself into a victim now. I think it would help if she could Jussie Smollett or Bubba Wallace up some fake threats and hate crimes against herself. That's what the universities teach young people – always be a victim, so that you can demand sympathy when you get caught being a fascist.

Keep in mind that the standard operating procedure for secular leftists Nazis nowadays is to dox you, vandalize your property, threaten your life, get you fired from your job. But when a young, entitled leftist gets fired, it's the end of the world. These things aren't supposed to happen to them. Christians and conservatives have been putting up with hate speech and violence from secular left terrorists for years, and no one batted an eye. No matter how gentle and respectful we are when putting forward our views, we know that some unhinged secular leftist is just waiting with a knife to stab us or get us fired.

By the way, I checked her Twitter account, and she hasn't been suspended. Because making threats against conservatives doesn't violate the Twitter terms of service. It only applies one way.

For Independence Day, let’s learn about George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

July 4, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Washington crosses the Delaware river before the Battle of Trenton

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position

> untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington's line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington's retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington's army at White Plains, New York, British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians

believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
>
> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for

> the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
>
> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called

> the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.
>
> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
>
> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
>
> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech

July 5, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Making sense of the meaning of atheism

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video. The essay is for Christians already familiar with basic apologetics.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Here's a quick couple of quotes from the essay for those who cannot watch:

> If there is no God, then any ground for regarding the herd morality evolved by homo sapiens as objectively true seems to have been removed. After all, what is so special about human beings? They are just accidental by-products of nature which have evolved relatively recently on an infinitesimal speck of dust lost somewhere in a hostile and mindless universe and which are doomed to perish individually and collectively in a relatively short time. Some action, say, incest, may not be biologically or socially advantageous and so in the course of human evolution has become taboo; but there is on the atheistic view nothing really wrong about committing incest. If, as Kurtz states, "The moral principles that govern our behavior are rooted in habit and custom, feeling and fashion,"[5] then the non-conformist who chooses to flout the herd morality is doing nothing more serious than acting unfashionably.
>
> The objective worthlessness of human beings on a naturalistic world view is

> underscored by two implications of that world view: materialism and determinism. Naturalists are typically materialists or physicalists, who regard man as a purely animal organism. But if man has no immaterial aspect to his being (call it soul or mind or what have you), then he is not qualitatively different from other animal species. For him to regard human morality as objective is to fall into the trap of specie-ism. On a materialistic anthropology there is no reason to think that human beings are objectively more valuable than rats. Secondly, if there is no mind distinct from the brain, then everything we think and do is determined by the input of our five senses and our genetic make-up. There is no personal agent who freely decides to do something. But without freedom, none of our choices is morally significant. They are like the jerks of a puppet's limbs, controlled by the strings of sensory input and physical constitution. And what moral value does a puppet or its movements have?
>
> […]Moreover, if atheism is true, there is no moral accountability for one's actions. Even if there were objective moral values and duties under naturalism, they are irrelevant because there is no moral accountability. If life ends at the grave, it makes no difference whether one lives as a Stalin or as a saint. As the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky rightly said: "If there is no immortality, then all things are permitted."

If you want a much shorter, slicker version of this argument to share, Reasonable Faith has produced this nice 5-minute video that you can tweet or share on your Facebook page or whatever:

The moral argument is the easiest argument in the world to discuss with non-Christians, as everyone has to have an answer to questions like "what makes humans valuable?" and "why should I do the right thing when it goes against my self-interest?" and "will evildoers who escape justice in this life be punished when they die?" and "do humans have free will to make moral choices?" These are interesting questions, and people can just give their opinion and then think about it as they discuss it.

You can read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor. I found this debate very helpful for answering the question that everyone should be able to answer: "why should I be moral?"

Frank Turek lectures on the case against same-sex marriage

July 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker Frank Turek:

> Dr. Frank Turek is a dynamic speaker and award-winning author or coauthor of four books: Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to make their Case, I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, Correct, Not Politically Correct and Legislating Morality. As the President of CrossExamined.org, Frank presents powerful and entertaining evidence for Christianity at churches, high schools and at secular college campuses that often begin hostile to his message. He has also debated several prominent atheists including Christopher Hitchens and David Silverman, president of American Atheists.
>
> Frank hosts an hour-long TV program each week called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist that is broadcast Wednesday nights on DirecTV Channel 378 (the NRB Network). His radio program called CrossExamined with Frank Turek airs on 122 stations every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. eastern and is available continuously on the free CrossExamined App.
>
> A former aviator in the US Navy, Frank has a master's degree from the George Washington University and a doctorate from Southern Evangelical Seminary. He and his wife, Stephanie, are blessed with three grown sons.

Frank Turek is one of my favorite speakers, and I admire him for being willing to take a public stand on controversial issues like gay marriage. He's actually had to pay a price for that in his professional life, and I blogged about that before.

Here's the lecture on gay marriage, featuring Christian apologist Frank Turek.

Outline:

Outline of Frank Turek's lecture on same sex marriage
Introduction:

- how to present your case against marriage safely
- Christians are required to go beyond tolerance
- loving another person can mean opposing the person when they want to do something wrong, even if they hate you
- what did Jesus say about marriage? (see Matt 19:4-6)
- what did Jesus say about sexual morality? (Matt 15, Matt 19)

Summary:

- the same-sex marriage debate is about whether to compel people who disagree with the gay lifestyle to validate and normalize it
- P1: the government has an interest in marriage because it perpetuates and stabilizes society – this is the purpose of marriage
- P2-4: government can take 3 kinds of stances towards behaviors: promote, permit or prohibit
- government promotes behaviors when it has an interest in them
- same-sex relationships should be permitted, but not promoted
- Q1: if same-sex marriage had serious negative consequences, would you reconsider their position?
- Q2: are heterosexual relationships the same as homosexual relationships?
- Q3: what would society be like if everyone married according to the natural marriage definition: one woman, one man, for life?
- Q4: what would society be like if everyone married according to the same-sex marriage definition: man/man and woman/woman?
- Should Christians care about law and politics? or should they just preach the gospel?
- They should care because people often get their cues about what is moral and

immoral based on what is legal and illegal
- Many of the social problems we see today can be traced back to problems with marriage and family
- Children do much better when they have a relationship with their mother and their father
- Same-sex marriage necessarily destroys the relationship between a child and its mother or its father
- When a country embraces same-sex marriage, it reinforces the idea that marriage is not about making and raising children
- same-sex marriage shifts the focus away from the needs of the children to the feelings of desires of the selfish adults
- does homosexuality impose any health and mental health risks?
- what has the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage been in Massachusetts to individuals, schools, businesses and charities?
- how same-sex marriage poses a threat to religious liberty
- how should you respond to the view that homosexuality is genetic?

And at the very end, he shows this short video, which is only 5 minutes and explains the logic of opposing the redefinition of marriage:

My biggest concern is religious liberty, and we are seeing how same-sex marriage has proven to be incompatible with religious liberty. But I also care about children… I want them to have mothers and fathers who put their needs first. Marriage is about a commitment – it is the subjugation of feelings and desires to responsibilities and obligations. It is a promise. A promise to commit to love your spouse and children regardless of feelings and desires. It requires more self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice. Not less.

Everyone is talking about President Trump's Mount Rushmore speech, so here it is

July 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Video of the speech:

And full transcript of the speech.

Excerpt:

> Our nation is witnessing a merciless campaign to wipe out our history, defame our heroes, erase our values, and indoctrinate our children.
>
> Angry mobs are trying to tear down statues of our Founders, deface our most sacred memorials, and unleash a wave of violent crime in our cities. Many of these people have no idea why they are doing this, but some know exactly what they are doing. They think the American people are weak and soft and submissive. But no, the American people are strong and proud, and they will not allow our country, and all of its values, history, and culture, to be taken from them.
>
> One of their political weapons is "Cancel Culture" — driving people from their jobs, shaming dissenters, and demanding total submission from anyone who disagrees. This is the very definition of totalitarianism, and it is completely alien to our culture and our values, and it has absolutely no place in the United States of America. This attack on our liberty, our magnificent liberty, must be stopped, and it will be stopped very quickly. We will expose this dangerous movement, protect our nation's children, end this radical assault, and preserve our beloved American way of life.
>
> In our schools, our newsrooms, even our corporate boardrooms, there is a new far-left fascism that demands absolute allegiance. If you do not speak its language, perform its rituals, recite its mantras, and follow its commandments, then you will be censored, banished, blacklisted, persecuted, and punished. It's not going to happen to us.
>
> Make no mistake: this left-wing cultural revolution is designed to overthrow the American Revolution. In so doing, they would destroy the very civilization that rescued billions from poverty, disease, violence, and hunger, and that lifted humanity to new heights of achievement, discovery, and progress.
>
> To make this possible, they are determined to tear down every statue, symbol, and memory of our national heritage.

And:

> We will state the truth in full, without apology: We declare that the United States of America is the most just and exceptional nation ever to exist on Earth.

> We are proud of the fact — that our country was founded on Judeo-Christian principles, and we understand — that these values have dramatically advanced the cause of peace and justice throughout the world.
>
> We know that the American family is the bedrock of American life.
>
> We recognize the solemn right and moral duty of every nation to secure its borders. And we are building the wall.
>
> We remember that governments exist to protect the safety and happiness of their own people. A nation must care for its own citizens first. We must take care of America first. It's time.
>
> We believe in equal opportunity, equal justice, and equal treatment for citizens of every race, background, religion, and creed. Every child, of every color — born and unborn — is made in the holy image of God.
>
> We want free and open debate, not speech codes and cancel culture.
>
> We embrace tolerance, not prejudice.
>
> We support the courageous men and women of law enforcement. We will never abolish our police or our great Second Amendment, which gives us the right to keep and bear arms.
>
> We believe that our children should be taught to love their country, honor our history, and respect our great American flag.
>
> We stand tall, we stand proud, and we only kneel to Almighty God.
>
> This is who we are. This is what we believe. And these are the values that will guide us as we strive to build an even better and greater future.

Reactions:

- Trump's Independence Day Speech Was Not 'Dark' Or 'Divisive,' It Was American
- President Delivers Patriotic Speech Sending Trump Deranged Media Into Rage

Children dying in droves in cities that have been run by Democrats for decades

July 7, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Only 15 unarmed black men were shot and killed by police in the past year. The BLM push for Marxism as a fix for "police brutality" is based on these 15 deaths. But what about the hundreds and thousands of black deaths at the hands of black criminals? BLM, their mainstream media allies are silent about that, because they know Democrats run those cities.

Daily Wire explains:

> At least half a dozen children were shot and killed over the holiday weekend as high levels of violence ravaged some of the United States' largest cities.
>
> The children's ages ranged from 6 to 14 as they fell victim to violence in cities from Washington, D.C., to San Francisco, according to the list compiled by CNN. In some cases, the tragedies added to already surging levels of violence from last year to this year.
>
> In Washington, D.C., 11-year-old Davon McNeal was preparing to leave a Fourth of July cookout with his mother when shooting broke out somewhere nearby. A bullet struck the youth football player in the head, killing him, according to The Washington Post.
>
> […]Just under 90 people have been killed in Washington, D.C., this year, a roughly 17% increase over last year. 2019 ended with the most people killed in the city in a decade.

The victim was black.

More:

> In Atlanta, 8-year-old Secoriea Turner was killed when a group of armed individuals fired at the vehicle she was riding in near the burned-out shell of a Wendy's restaurant where Rayshard Brooks was killed last month.
>
> […]More than 30 people were killed on Saturday and Sunday in the city, continuing a wave of violence that has ravaged Atlanta since protests over the death of George Floyd began. The violence intensified after Brooks' death.

The victim was black.

More:

> In Chicago, 7-year-old Natalia Wallace and a 14-year-old boy whose name has not yet been released were victims in two separate shootings over the weekend. Both children were killed while celebrating the July 4th holiday with friends and family, according to ABC News.

> […]The number of homicides in Chicago has jumped by about 34%. This June, there were 329 homicides, up year over year from 246 in 2019.

The victims were black.

All of these cities are run by Democrat party mayors, and Democrat party city councils. They have been for decades. Many of the majors and city council members are black. But in all that time, nothing was done by these Democrats to fix crime. These Democrat politicians are extremely permissive of crime and criminals, and they don't dare take on the root cause of the crime problem: fatherlessness.

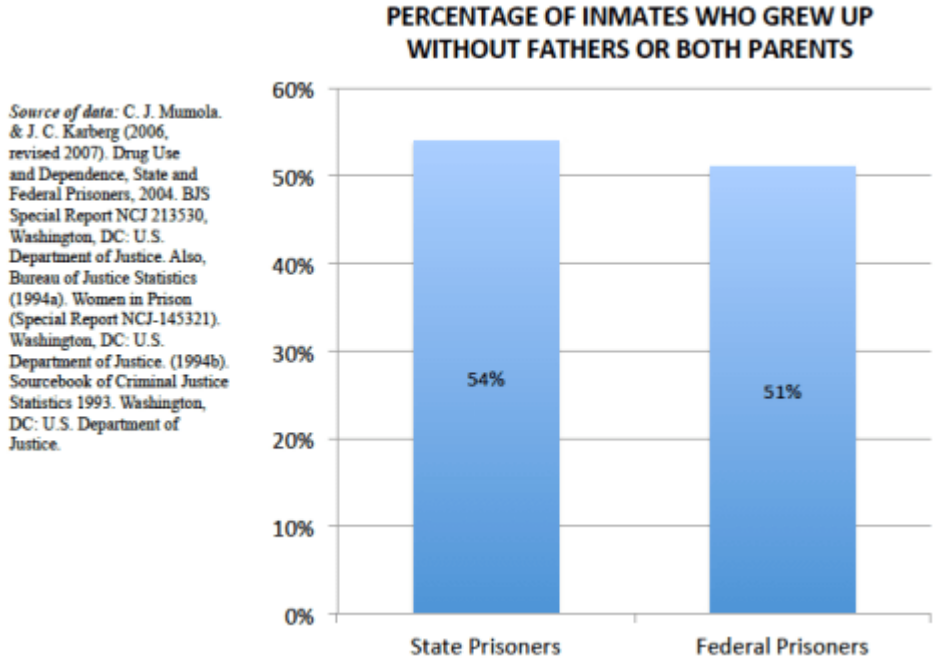

Fatherlessness and crime
Here is how BLM responds to the problem of fatherlessness:

> We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and "villages" that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable.

The more people get married and stay married, the less supportive they are of communist government. They don't want government confiscating and redistributing their earnings – they want their earnings to stay in the family. BLM isn't in favor of that. And that's why they are strangely silent about the crime wave caused by children raised in fatherless homes. They don't want to fix the root cause of crime, because that would destroy support for their real goal: communism.

The psychological motivation of those who embrace postmodernism

July 8, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

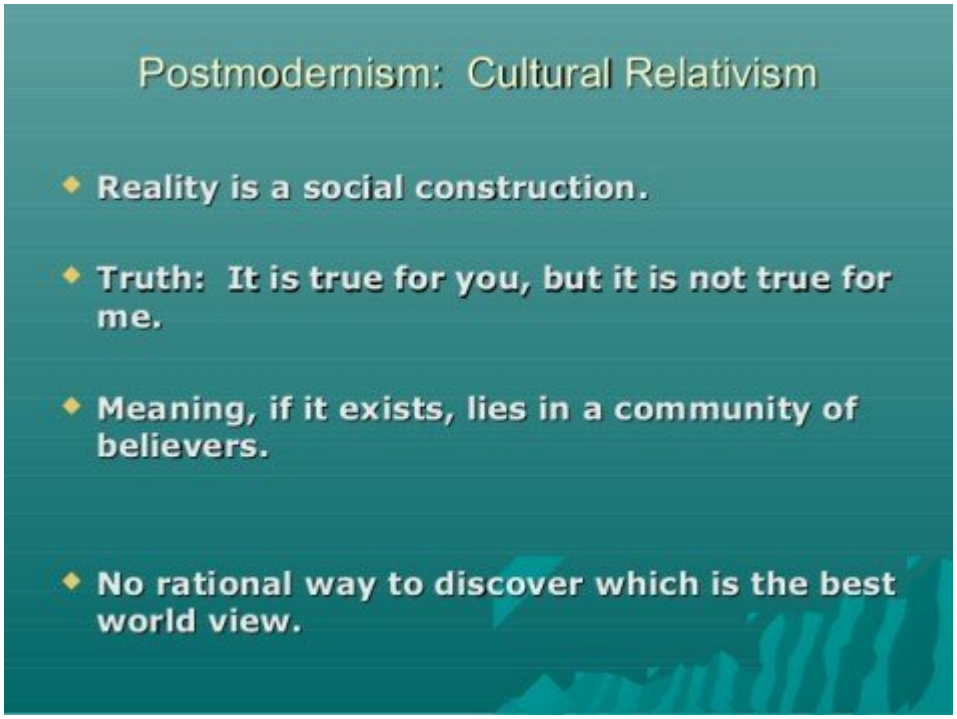

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian? Not for long

Famous analytical philosopher John Searle has written a book "Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World", explaining what's factually wrong with postmodernism. In the introduction, he explains what postmodernism is, and what motivates people to accept postmodernism.

He writes:

> […][W]hen we act or think or talk in the following sorts of ways we take a lot for granted: when we hammer a nail, or order a takeout meal from a restaurant, or conduct a lab experiment, or wonder where to go on vacation, we take the following for granted: there exists a real world that is totally independent of human beings and of what they think or say about it, and statements about objects and states of affairs in that world are true or false depending on whether things in the world really are the way we say they are. So, for example, if in pondering my vacation plans I wonder whether Greece is hotter in the summer than Italy, I simply take it for granted that there exists a real world containing places like Greece and Italy and that they have various temperatures. **Furthermore, if I read in a travel book that the average summer temperature in Greece is hotter than in Italy, I know that what the book says will be true if and only if it really is hotter on average in the summer in Greece than in Italy. This is because I take it for granted that such statements are true only if there is something independent of the**

> **statement in virtue of which, or because of which, it is true.**
>
> […]These two Background presuppositions have long histories and various famous names. The first, that there is a real world existing independently of us, I like to call "external realism." "Realism," because it asserts the existence of the real world, and "external" to distinguish it from other sorts of realism-for example, realism about mathematical objects (mathematical realism) or realism about ethical facts (ethical realism). The second view, that a statement is true if things in the world are the way the statement says they are, and false otherwise, is called "the correspondence theory of truth." This theory comes in a lot of different versions, but the basic idea is that statements are true if they correspond to, or describe, or fit, how things really are in the world, and false if they do not.

The "correspondence theory of truth" is the view of truth assumed in books of the Bible whose genre is such that that they were intended by the authors to be taken *literally*, (with allowances for symbolism, figures of speech, metaphors, hyperbole, etc.).

But what about the postmodernists, who seek to deny the objectivity of external reality?

More Searle:

> Thinkers who wish to deny the correspondence theory of truth or the referential theory of thought and language typically find it embarrassing to have to concede external realism. Often they would rather not talk about it at all, or they have some more or less subtle reason for rejecting it. In fact, very few thinkers come right out and say that there is no such thing as a real world existing absolutely, objectively, and totally independently of us. Some do. Some come right out and say that the so-called real world is a "social construct."

What is behind the denial of objective reality, and statements about external reality that are warranted by evidence?

> It is not easy to get a fix on what drives contemporary antirealism, but if we had to pick out a thread that runs through the wide variety of arguments, it would be what is sometimes called "perspectivism." Perspectivism is the idea that our knowledge of reality is never "unmediated," that it is always mediated by a point of view, by a particular set of predilections, or, worse yet by sinister political motives, such as an allegiance to a political group or ideology. And because we can never have unmediated knowledge of the world, then perhaps there is no real world, or perhaps it is useless to even talk about it, or perhaps it is not even interesting.

Searle is going to refute anti-realism in the rest of the book, but here is his guess at what is motivating the anti-realists:

> > **I have to confess, however, that I think there is a much deeper**

> > **reason for the persistent appeal of all forms of antirealism, and this has become obvious in the twentieth century: it satisfies a basic urge to power. It just seems too disgusting, somehow, that we should have to be at the mercy of the "real world." It seems too awful that our representations should have to be answerable to anything but us. This is why people who hold contemporary versions of antirealism and reject the correspondence theory of truth typically sneer at the opposing view.**
>
> […]I don't think it is the argument that is actually driving the impulse to deny realism. I think that as a matter of contemporary cultural and intellectual history, the attacks on realism are not driven by arguments, because the arguments are more or less obviously feeble, for reasons I will explain in detail in a moment. **Rather, as I suggested earlier, the motivation for denying realism is a kind of will to power, and it manifests itself in a number of ways. In universities, most notably in various humanities disciplines, it is assumed that, if there is no real world, then science is on the same footing as the humanities. They both deal with social constructs, not with independent realities. From this assumption, forms of postmodernism, deconstruction, and so on, are easily developed, having been completely turned loose from the tiresome moorings and constraints of having to confront the real world. If the real world is just an invention-a social construct designed to oppress the marginalized elements of society-then let's get rid of the real world and construct the world we want. That, I think, is the real driving psychological force behind antirealism at the end of the twentieth century.**

Now, I'll go one step further than Searle.

People, from the Fall, have had the desire to step into the place of God. It's true that we creatures exist in a universe created and designed by God. But, there is a way to work around the fact that God made the universe and the laws that the universe runs on, including logic, mathematics and natural laws. And that way is to *deny logic, mathematics and natural laws.* Postmodernists simply deny that there is any way to construct rational arguments and support the premises with evidence from the real world. That way, they imagine, they are free to escape a God-designed world, including a God-designed specification for how they ought to live. The postmoderns deny *the reliable methods of knowing about the God-created reality because logic and evidence can be used to point to God's existence, God's character, and God's actions in history.*

And that's why there is this effort to make reality "optional" and perspectival. Everyone can be their own God, and escape any accountability to the real God – the God who is easily discovered through the use of logic and evidence. I believe that this is also behind the rise of atheists, who feign allegiance to logic and science, but then express "skepticism" about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, objective

morality, the minimal facts concerning the historical Jesus, and other undeniables.

Authors of study showing no police bias against blacks want their study retracted

July 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you're looking for truth, you won't find it at the university
The Wall Street Journal reports:

> The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences is a peer-reviewed journal that claims to publish "only the highest quality scientific research." Now, the authors of a 2019 PNAS article are disowning their research simply because I cited it.
>
> Psychologists Joseph Cesario of Michigan State and David Johnson of the University of Maryland analyzed 917 fatal police shootings of civilians from 2015 to test whether the race of the officer or the civilian predicted fatal police shootings. Neither did. Once "race specific rates of violent crime" are taken into account, the authors found, there are no disparities among those fatally shot by the police. These findings accord with decades of research showing that civilian behavior is the greatest influence on police behavior.
>
> In September 2019, I cited the article's finding in congressional testimony. I also referred to it in a City Journal article, in which I noted that two Princeton political scientists, Dean Knox and Jonathan Mummolo, had challenged the study design. Messrs. Cesario and Johnson stood by their findings. Even under the study design proposed by Messrs. Knox and Mummolo, they wrote, there is again "no significant evidence of anti-black disparity in the likelihood of being fatally shot by the police."
>
> My June 3 Journal op-ed quoted the PNAS article's conclusion verbatim. It set off a firestorm at Michigan State. The university's Graduate Employees Union pressured the MSU press office to apologize for the "harm it caused" by

> mentioning my article in a newsletter. The union targeted physicist Steve Hsu, who had approved funding for Mr. Cesario's research. MSU sacked Mr. Hsu from his administrative position. PNAS editorialized that Messrs. Cesario and Johnson had "poorly framed" their article—the one that got through the journal's three levels of editorial and peer review.
>
> Mr. Cesario told this page that Mr. Hsu's dismissal could narrow the "kinds of topics people can talk about, or what kinds of conclusions people can come to." Now he and Mr. Johnson have themselves jeopardized the possibility of politically neutral scholarship. On Monday they retracted their paper. They say they stand behind its conclusion and statistical approach but complain about its "misuse," specifically mentioning my op-eds.
>
> The authors don't say how I misused their work.

College Fix notes that Michigan State University has even deleted a press release they had put out about the study, in which they praised it. The press release said:

> Reports of racially motivated, fatal shootings by police officers have garnered extensive public attention and sparked activism across the nation. New research from Michigan State University and University of Maryland reveals findings that flip many of these reports on their heads – white police officers are not more likely to have shot minority citizens than non-white officers.
>
> "Until now, there's never been a systematic, nationwide study to determine the characteristics of police involved in fatal officer-involved shootings," said Joseph Cesario, co-author and professor of psychology at MSU. "There are so many examples of people saying that when black citizens are shot by police, it's white officers shooting them. In fact, our findings show no support that black citizens are more likely to be shot by white officers."

In addition to trying to retract the study, and deleting the press release, we also have people losing their jobs.

College Fix notes:

> Michigan State University leaders have successfully pressured Stephen Hsu to resign from his position as vice president of research and innovation after the Graduate Employees Union launched a campaign to oust him from his role.

As VP of research, he allocated money to partially fund the study. And the woke-scolds at MSU didn't like that, so they got him to resign. There was no problem found with the research or the funding, they just didn't like the conclusion.

If you're going to go to university, be careful what you study. If you're going to get a job, be careful what job you get and where you work. You need to be thinking about what sorts of programs and workplaces harbor these far-left psychopaths.

Podcast: Was Jesus a socialist? Does Christianity teach socialism?

July 10, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's take a deep dive into the Bible

I noticed that Christianity Today, which has turned hard left in recent years, is now openly endorsing socialism. So, I thought it might be a good idea to listen to this new episode of the Think Biblically podcast, which deals with the issue of Christianity and socialism. The hosts actually brought an economist on to define socialism, then they analyze the teachings of Jesus.

Here's the description: (H/T Nathan)

> It has not been uncommon for advocates of virtually every economic system to invoke Jesus in support of their views, though some of the most ardent advocates for both capitalism and socialism did not have any particular religious views themselves (Rand, Marx). Over the years, some of the more recent advocates of socialist type economic arrangements have appealed to Jesus and the gospels in support of such systems. Economist Lawrence Reed helps us sort out the application of the teaching of Jesus to economics and its relevance for economic life today. Join us for this provocative conversation as he tackles the question of Jesus and socialism.
>
> Show notes, including a full transcript, are available at: biola.edu/thinkbiblically

Topics:

- who plans the economy in socialism?
- who should own the means of production in socialism?

- how should wealth be distributed in socialism?
- what tools does socialism use to provide people with health care, employment, security, etc.
- which countries have adopted socialism? North Korea? Cuba? Venezuela? How about the Scandinavian countries?
- what in the New Testament has caused people to think that Jesus was a socialist?
- did Jesus ever advocate for concentrating power in the government in order to meet the material needs of people?
- did Jesus ever advocate for voluntary charity in order to meet the material needs of people?
- in our experience, is government seen to be more compassionate or less compassionate than individual people?
- does voluntary charity have any advantages over forced redistribution by a powerful central government?
- what about the example of common possessions among the earliest Christians?
- what is the Bible's view of wealth? is it always bad to be wealthy, or does it matter how you obtained it and how you use it?
- what does the parable of the talents tell us about socialism vs capitalism?
- what does the parable of the good Samaritan tell us about socialism vs capitalism?
- what does the parable of the three different shifts of workers tell us about socialism vs capitalism?
- what about socialist policies and higher tax rates in countries like Canada and Scandinavian countries?

I have to be honest. I think that some of the economics reasoning about the parables was a stretch, because those parables are talking mainly about other topics, not economics. But it's true that the parables aren't friendly to socialism even if they are interpreted as being about economics.

Should black conservatives be allowed to form their own beliefs?

July 11, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

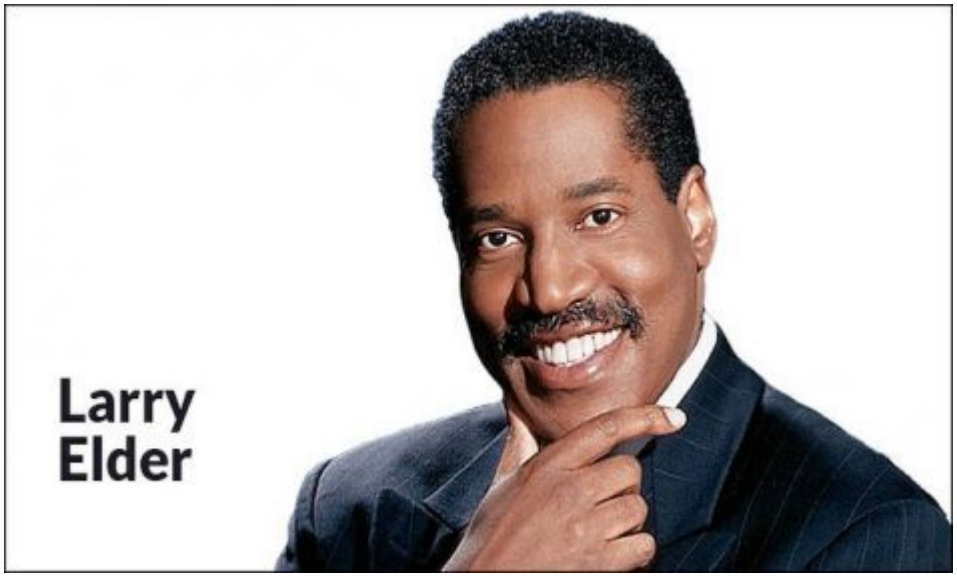

Are black conservatives allowed to form their own views in America?
My friend Wes sent me an hour-long video, featuring famous black conservative Larry Elder.

Outline:

> 1:23 New "Uncle Tom" documentary
>
> 10:53 Stats don't show systemic police racism
>
> 14:30 Why police body cams are a good idea
>
> 28:12 The rise of "revenge culture"
>
> 38:39 Affirmative action is condescending?
>
> 44:03 Issues in the Black Lives Matter movement
>
> Are police actually using deadly force disproportionately against black people? And how does the focus on police overshadow other monumental problems facing black America today? Why is believing that, black lives matter, not the same as supporting the Black Lives Matter organization? And, why are black conservatives often excluded from mainstream public awareness and discourse? In this episode, we sit down again with radio talk show personality and bestselling author Larry Elder, who hosts The Larry Elder Show for The Epoch Times. He is the executive producer of the new documentary "Uncle Tom."

Here's the video:

For those who cannot watch, I found you a good Larry Elder column about race and policing.

It says:

> A new study on racial disparities in police conduct found that differences in offending by suspects, not racism, explains officers' responses.
>
> In the study "Is There Evidence of Racial Disparity in Police Use of Deadly Force?" professors from Michigan State and Arizona State universities analyzed officer-involved fatal shootings in 2015 and 2016. The report's abstract says: "We benchmark two years of fatal shooting data on 2016 crime rate estimates. When adjusting for crime, we find no systematic evidence of anti-black disparities in fatal shootings, fatal shootings of unarmed citizens, or fatal shootings involving misidentification of harmless objects… Exposure to police given crime rate differences likely accounts for the higher per capita rate of fatal police shootings for blacks, at least when analyzing all shootings. For unarmed shootings or misidentification shootings, data are too uncertain to be conclusive."
>
> Two recent studies found cops more reluctant to use deadly force against blacks, including one by a black Harvard economist. Professor Roland G. Fryer Jr. concluded: "On the most extreme use of force — officer-involved shootings — we find no racial differences in either the raw data or when contextual factors are taken into account."
>
> But aren't blacks routinely "racially profiled" by cops? Not according to the Police-Public Contact Survey. Produced every three years by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics, the survey asks more than 60,000 people about their interactions with the police. It asks respondents' to provide age, race and gender. It asks them whether they had any contact with the police in the last year; what was the experience like; how were your treated; was there a use of force and so on. Turns out, according to a September 2017 National Review article, black men and white men are about equally likely to have a contact with a cop in a given year. As to multiple contacts, defined as three or more with the police in a given year, 1.5 percent of blacks vs. 1.2 percent of whites fall in that category. Not much difference.
>
> There's also the National Crime Victimization Survey, which questions victims of crimes, whether or not the criminal was captured, as to the race and ethnicity of the suspect. It turns out that the race of the arrested matches the percentage given by victims. So unless victims are lying about the race of their assailant, unconcerned about whether he gets caught, blacks are not being "overarrested."
>
> […]In 2012 in the city of Rialto, California, population approximately 100,000, cops were randomly assigned body cameras based on their shifts. Over the next year, use-of-force incidents on the shifts that had cameras were half the rate of those without cameras. But something rather extraordinary also happened. Complaints against all Rialto police officers with were down almost 90 percent from the prior year.
>
> It turns out when civilians knew they were being recorded, they — not the cops — behaved better and stop making false accusations. The use of force by cops

> also declined, but, again, not because the police changed their conduct. No, the cops continued performing as they'd been trained. Civilians, aware that they were being taped, were less confrontational and were more likely to cooperate and follow instructions. As a result, cops needed to use force less frequently.

I have never read a Larry Elder book, because I like audio books, and his books are almost never made into audio books. If you've read one, leave me a comment so I know which ones are good.

William Lane Craig explains the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement

July 12, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Probably one of the most common questions that you hear from people who don't fully understand Christianity is this question: "why did Jesus have to die?". The answer that most Christians seem to hold to is that 1) humans are rebelling against God, 2) Humans deserve punishment for their rebellion, 3) Humans cannot escape the punishment for their rebellion on their own, 4) Jesus was punished in the place of the rebellious humans, 5) Those who accept this sacrifice are forgiven for their rebelling.

Are humans rebellious?

Some people think that humans are not really rebellious at all, but it's actually easy to see. You can see it just by looking at how people spend their time. Some of us have no time for God at all, and instead try to fill our lives with material possessions and experiences in order to have happy feelings. Some of us embrace just the parts of God that make us feel happy, like church and singing and feelings of comfort, while avoiding the hard parts of that vertical relationship; reading, thinking and disagreeing with people who don't believe the truth about God. And so on.

This condition of being in rebellion is universal, and all of us are guilty of breaking the law at some point. All of us deserve to be separated from God's goodness and love. Even if we wanted to stop rebelling, we would not be able to make up for the times where we do rebel by being good at other times, any more than we could get out of a speeding ticket by appealing to the times when we drove at the speed limit, (something that I never do, in any case).

This is not to say that all sinners are punished equally – the degree of punishment is proportional to the sins a person commits. However, the standard is perfection. And

worse than that, the most important moral obligation is a *vertical* moral obligation. You can't satisfy the demands of the moral law just by making your neighbor happy, while treating God like a pariah. The first commandment is to love God, the second is to love your neighbor. Even loving your neighbor requires you to tell your neighbor the truth – not just to make them feel good. The *vertical* relationship is more important than the *horizontal* one, and we've all screwed up the vertical relationship. We all don't want God to be there, telling us what's best for us, interfering with our fun. We don't want to relate to a loving God if it means having to care what he thinks about anything that we are doing.

Who is going to pay for our rebellion?

The Christian answer to the problem of our rebellion is that Jesus takes the punishment we deserve in our place.

However, I've noticed that on some atheist blogs, they don't like the idea that someone else can take our punishment for us to exonerate us for crimes that we've committed. So I'll quote from this post by the great William Lane Craig, to respond to that objection.

Excerpt:

> The central problem of the Penal Theory is, as you point out, understanding how punishing a person other than the perpetrator of the wrong can meet the demands of justice. Indeed, we might even say that it would be wrong to punish some innocent person for the crimes I commit!
>
> It seems to me, however, that in other aspects of human life we do recognize this practice. I remember once sharing the Gospel with a businessman. When I explained that Christ had died to pay the penalty for our sins, he responded, "Oh, yes, that's imputation." I was stunned, as I never expected this theological concept to be familiar to this non-Christian businessman. When I asked him how he came to be familiar with this idea, he replied, "Oh, we use imputation all the time in the insurance business." He explained to me that certain sorts of insurance policy are written so that, for example, if someone else drives my car and gets in an accident, the responsibility is imputed to me rather than to the driver. Even though the driver behaved recklessly, I am the one held liable; it is just as if I had done it.
>
> Now this is parallel to substitutionary atonement. Normally I would be liable for the misdeeds I have done. But through my faith in Christ, I am, as it were, covered by his divine insurance policy, whereby he assumes the liability for my actions. My sin is imputed to him, and he pays its penalty. The demands of justice are fulfilled, just as they are in mundane affairs in which someone pays the penalty for something imputed to him. This is as literal a transaction as those that transpire regularly in the insurance industry.

So, it turns out that the doctrine of substitionary atonement is not as mysterious or as objectionable as everyone seems to think it is.

Minnesota wouldn’t stop BLM rioters, now they want a bailout from taxpayers

July 13, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Minneapolis gave the rioters space to riot

A central conservative tenet is that you have to be tough with aggressors in order to deter them from attacking you. You don’t always have to fight them, but you have to be well-armed. And you have to make the other side believe that if they attack you, it will be costly. Democrats don’t believe in deterring aggression with strength. Their policy towards evil is appeasement.

You can see how this played out in Minnesota, where the Democrat governor of the state, and the Democrat mayor of the Minneapolis, decided to tell police to stand down. This allowed the rioters to engage in violence, vandalism and arson against the law-abiding taxpayers of the state.

Well, now that it’s over, the Democrat appeasers are looking for someone to pay for the damages. They want the taxpayers in other states to pay. You know, the other states where the police actually did enforce the law.

The Washington Examiner reported on the response of the federal government:

> President Trump has denied a request from Minnesota’s governor for money to rebuild parts of Minneapolis that were destroyed during the riots following the death of George Floyd.
>
> […]Walz, a Democrat, requested that Trump declare Minnesota a “major disaster” zone in a request to the Federal Emergency Management Agency on July 2 after more than 1,500 buildings were damaged by looting and rioting in the wake of Floyd’s death, totaling over $500 million in damages.
>
> At least one Republican in the state had lobbied the Trump administration to

> reject the request, arguing that the state's response to the unrest should be thoroughly reviewed.
>
> "If the federal government is expected to assist in the clean-up of these unfortunate weeks, it has an obligation to every American — prior to the release of funding — to fully understand the events which allowed for this level of destruction to occur and ensure it never happens again," Rep. Tom Emmer wrote to the Trump administration in a letter.

Just remember that as soon as the Democrats get a Democrat president, taxpayer money will be redistributed from the responsible red states, to the irresponsible blue states. This is what Democrats love – to provide equal outcomes for both moral and immoral people through redistribution of wealth from moral people to immoral people.

Why do some Christians say “all sins are equally bad” and “everyone is equally guilty”?

July 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young women very supportive of premarital sex

We were having a discussion about whether the Bible teaches that sex before marriage is morally wrong, and someone said “impure thoughts counts as adultery… there isn’t a virgin among us”.

Regarding her point that lust is equal to adultery, and so no one is really a virgin, here’s Ligonier Ministries:

> In demonstrating that the seventh commandment was given also to prohibit lust, Jesus is not somehow saying that an unconsummated lustful intent is sinful to the same degree as an actual extramarital affair (though both sins merit punishment). The latter is a more blatant violation of the statute against adultery, and it has greater consequences in the form of divorce and the loss of one’s reputation as a trustworthy person.

Any serious student of the Bible is aware of Jesus’ tendency to exaggerate / use hyperbole.

Also, 1 Corinthians 7 says that wives are not supposed to make a habit of denying their husbands sex. Sex withholding is more of an epidemic today than pornography, and it should also be on the adultery spectrum. It isn’t as bad as adultery, but it definitely breaks the marital covenant.

So why would someone say that lust is the same as adultery, and that there is no such thing as a virgin?

Dr. Michael Krueger recently blogged about this “all sins are equal” view.

Krueger says this:

> First, to say all sins are the same is to confuse the *effect* of sin with the *heinousness* of sin. While all sins are equal in their effect (they separate us from God), they are not all equally heinous.
>
> Second, the Bible differentiates between sins. Some sins are more severe in terms of impact (1 Cor 6:18), in terms of culpability (Rom 1:21-32), and in terms of the judgment warranted (2 Pet 2:17; Mark 9:42; James 3:1).

Krueger explains the motivation behind the slogans:

> [S]ome Christians… use this phrase as way to "flatten out" all sins so that they are not distinguishable from each other. Or, to put it another way, this phrase is used to portray all human beings as precisely the same. If all sins are equal, and all people sin, then no one is more holy than anyone else.
>
> In a world fascinated with "equality," this usage of the phrase is particularly attractive to folks. It allows everyone to be lumped together into a single undifferentiated mass.
>
> Such a move is also useful as a way to prevent particular behaviors from being condemned. If all sins are equal, and everyone is a sinner, then you are not allowed to highlight any particular sin (or sinner).
>
> Needless to say, this usage of the phrase has featured largely in the recent cultural debates over issues like homosexuality. Yes, homosexuality is a sin, some Christians reluctantly concede. But, they argue, all sins are equal in God's sight and therefore it is no different than anything else. Therefore, Christians ought to stop talking about homosexuality unless they are also willing to talk about impatience, anger, gluttony, and so on.

Krueger also posted this fascinating follow up post, where he looks at how the phrase is being used by people on Twitter.

Look at these tweets:

- > All sins are equal. People tend to forget that. There is no bigger or smaller sin. Being gay and lying, very equal.
- > all sins are equal in God's eyes. whatever you're doing, is no better than what someone else is doing.
- > If you have sex before marriage please don't come on social media preaching about the wrongs of homosexuality. All sins are equal
- > Need people to realize that all sins are equal… don't try to look down on me or question my faith just cuz you sin differently than I do.
- > Don't understand why you're so quick to judge me, when all sins are equal.

> So much for family..

- if you think being gay is a sin, let me ask you something, have you not done anything wrong in your life? all sins are equal. we're sinners
- Nope no difference at all. All sins are equal no matter what you're running for. The bible says do not judge lest ye be judged
- A huge problem I have with religion is the notion that all sins are equal. Like pre-martial sex and murder are the same amount t of bad.
- people do bad things because they believe that all sins are equal and ~god~ loves y'all equally so he's going to forgive you naman ha ha ha
- It a sin to condemn another sinner and their actions. All sins are equal. So what makes you better than the person you're condemning?
- I think so b/c having sex before marriage doesn't make you less of a women then if you waited until marriage.. all sins are equal soo
- friendly reminder, all sins are equal in gods eyes so you're not better than I am in any way. please worry about your own sins before mine.
- People don't like when I suggest abortion as an option. This is a free country and all sins are equal so mind your business!!!
- What I do is no worse than wat you do… all sins are equal no matter what it is… a sin is a sin
- to god all sins are equal so you have no right to compare your sins to someone else's bc in the end it doesn't matter

The first thing that I noticed is that premarital sex and homosexuality are the most popular sins. I would think that divorce and abortion would be up there in the rankings, as well.

People want to be free to follow their hearts when seeking pleasure, then quote the Bible (badly) afterwards, to attack anyone who says that anything they've done is morally wrong. They would rather escape the judgment of their peers than admit fault and try to fix the mistake, and do better next time. And they would rather tell people who are hurting themselves by breaking the rules that there are no rules. It makes them feel good to "not judge" – they feel as if they are being kind. Their compassion looks good to non-Christians. And they're promoting moral relativism which, when it becomes widespread, prevents anyone from judging them.

It's so bad now, that the people who *have* morals and who *make* moral judgments are

seen as the real bad people. The immoral people are on the offense, and even trying to ban people from being able to disagree with them.

What is the fine-tuning argument for God's existence, and does the multiverse counter it?

July 15, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

One of the best arguments for the existence of a Creator and Designer of the universe is the cosmic fine-tuning argument. The argument argues that individual constants and quantities in nature cannot be much smaller or larger than they are, because it would remove the ability of the universe to support life of any kind. Dr. Michael Strauss, an experimental physicist, explains some examples of the fine-tuning in a recent post on his blog.

He writes:

> I liken the finely-tuned universe to a panel that controls the parameters of the universe with about 100 knobs that can be set to certain values. If you turn any knob just a little to the right or to the left the result is either a universe that is inhospitable to life or no universe at all.
>
> Consider the knob that controls the strength of the strong nuclear force that holds quarks inside the neutrons and protons and binds the nucleus of the atom together. If the strength were increased by 2%, the element hydrogen would be either non-existent or very rare. Without hydrogen there would be no water (H_2O) or stars that burn hydrogen as their nuclear fuel like our sun. Without hydrogen there would be no life. If the strength of the strong nuclear force were decreased by about 5%, then hydrogen would be the only element in the universe. That would simplify the periodic table and make Chemistry class very easy, but it would render life impossible.
>
> All known life in this universe is based on the element carbon, which is formed in

> the final stages of a star's life. The carbon you and I are made of is the result of the nuclear processes that occurred as previous stars ended their lives. One nice recent study showed that if the mass of the quarks that make up neutrons and protons were changed by just a few percent, then the process that makes carbon as stars die would be altered in such a way that there would not be sufficient carbon in the universe for life. The masses of the lightest sub-atomic quarks are the precise value that is required for carbon to form and for life to exist.

Regarding the multiverse, let me just quote from MIT physicist Alan Lightman, writing in Harper's magazine about the multiverse:

> The… conjecture that there are many other worlds… [T]here is no way they can prove this conjecture. That same uncertainty disturbs many physicists who are adjusting to the idea of the multiverse. Not only must we accept that basic properties of our universe are accidental and uncalculable. In addition, we must believe in the existence of many other universes. But we have no conceivable way of observing these other universes and cannot prove their existence. Thus, to explain what we see in the world and in our mental deductions, we must believe in what we cannot prove.
>
> Sound familiar? Theologians are accustomed to taking some beliefs on faith. Scientists are not. All we can do is hope that the same theories that predict the multiverse also produce many other predictions that we can test here in our own universe. But the other universes themselves will almost certainly remain a conjecture.

The multiverse is not pure nonsense, it is theoretically possible.But even if there were a multiverse, the generator that makes the universes itself would require fine-tuning, so the multiverse doesn't get rid of the problem. And, as Lightman indicates, we have no independent experimental evidence for the existence of the multiverse in any case. Atheists just have to take it on faith, and hope that their speculations will be proved right. Meanwhile, the fine-tuning is just as easily explained by postulating God, and we have independent evidence for God's existence, like the the origin of biological information, the sudden appearance of animal body plans, the argument from consciousness, and so on. Even if the naturalists could explain the fine-tuning, they would still have a lot of explaining to do. Theism (intelligent causation) is the simplest explanation for all of the things we learn from the progress of science.

It's very important to understand that if these values were any different, then it's not like we would bridges on our foreheads, or have green skin, or have pointy ears, etc. That's what science fiction teaches you. And many atheists form their view of science by watching science fiction entertainment. But the truth is that the consequences of changing these values are much more consequential: no stars, no planets, no hydrogen, no heavy elements, the universe re-collapses into a hot fireball. You're not going to have complex, embodied intelligent agents running around making moral decisions and

relating to God in a world like that.

Questions like the existence of God should be NOT decided by feelings and faith and superstitious nonsense. They ought to be decided by evidence. Specifically, scientific evidence. Everyone has to account for this scientific evidence for fine-tuning within their worldview, and they have to account for it in a way that is responsible and rational. Punting to the multiverse, without any evidence for it, is neither rational nor responsible. Holding out hope that the evidence we have now will all go away is neither rational nor responsible.

By the way, if you are looking for a good book on the cosmic fine-tuning, especially for evangelism and debating with atheists, you really need to get a copy of "A Fortunate Universe". Although it is from one of the most prestigious academic presses, it is pretty funny to read, and the main points are made clearly, even if you don't understand the science. Two astrophysicists wrote it – one who believes that God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning, and one who doesn't. I really think that Christians need to get used to the idea that evangelism can be pretty easy, so long as you are arguing from peer-reviewed facts. When you get a good book on evidence for God that is not in dispute, then you are invincible. Everybody ought to believe in God in a universe with this much overt scientific evidence spilling out everywhere. Whether this Creator and Designer is the God of the Bible, who visited us as Jesus of Nazareth, takes more work to establish. Working through the emotional objections people have to God, and coaching them to take on the difficulties of living out a authentic Christian life (very unpopular!), is even harder.

Atheist Jerry Coyne explains why morality is impossible for atheists

July 16, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson about to do philosophy

Let's review what you need in your worldview in order to have a rationally grounded system of morality.

You need 5 things:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you

just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Theism rationally grounds all 5 of these. Atheism cannot ground *any of them.*

Let's take a look at #4: free will and see how atheism deals with that.

Atheism and free will?

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will. (Note: link is dead)

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality.

Here are some more atheists to explain how atheists view morality.

William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud

> and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

When village atheists talk about how they can be moral without God, it's important to ask them to justify the minimum requirements for rational morality. Atheists may act inconsistently with their worldview, believing in free will, expecting praise and blame for complying with the arbitrary standards of their peer group, etc. But there is nothing more to morality on atheism that imitating the herd – at least when the herd is around to watch them. And when the herd loses its Judeo-Christian foundation – watch out. That's when the real atheism comes out – the atheism that we've seen before in countries that turned their backs on God, and the moral law. When God disappears from a society, anything is permissible.

Can a man marry a woman who thinks that all male leadership is “sexist”?

July 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These days, many people of both sexes graduate college with a lot of student loan debt and no marketable skills at all. What do they learn? Well, they don’t learn anything, but they are brainwashed to believe in secular leftist dogma. And they’re also brainwashed to dismiss all opposition to secular leftist dogma by labeling it as “sexist”, “racist”, “homophobic”, “xenophobic”, etc.

I wrote previously about how men don’t like to marry non-virgins. I argued that women with a lot of sexual experience have proven that they prefer men who have “no-commitment” abilities. And those women also avoid men who have commitment abilities. I argued that if a man marries a woman with a lot of experience of giving no-commitment men sex, then she probably wouldn’t respect and admire his marriage-oriented skills enough to let him lead the home.

I believe that the brainwashing that women get when they do non-STEM degrees in liberal arts programs in college is the cause of their resistance to the leadership of marriage-minded men.

How does a marriage happen? Basically, a marriage-minded man prepares himself for marriage by denying himself “fun” in order to position himself to be a husband and father. He studies hard STEM subjects in order to get good jobs. His resume is gap-free. He started working early, and didn’t take summers off. He saves his money. He understands beliefs that are incompatible with marriage, such as pro-abortion, pro-divorce, etc. and he is able to argue against them. When he meets a woman, he presents his preparations to her, and tries to get her to focus on behaviors that will put her on a path to becoming a wife and mother. If she follows his lead, then she becomes safe for him to marry. He is able to see how she listens to his marriage plan, and adjusts her behavior in order to help him to execute the plan.

So what does this leadership look like? Well, in my case, I’ve tried to get women to switch from non-STEM to STEM degrees. To quit easy jobs like waitress and teacher and get hard jobs like IT Project Manager or Software Engineer. To stop wasting money on thrill-seeking and instead pay off loans, then invest. To stop watching TV and movies, and start reading good non-fiction books about marriage, parenting, apologetics, economics, etc. And to inform themselves about marriage related topics, e.g. – divorce, infertility, child development, homeschooling, daycare, school choice. Basically, getting them to drop childish anti-marriage and anti-family behaviors, and take up mature pro-marriage and pro-family behaviors, so that they become useful partners for a marriage enterprise.

But what about non-STEM college programs? What does college teach young women about this marriage-focused leadership from marriage-minded men? It depends on what she studies. If she does a STEM degree, she’ll have been forced to be accountable to

reality in her assignments and exams. She'll get a decent job and pay off student loans, allowing her husband to quickly buy her a house and give her children to raise while she's still young. But, if she does a non-STEM degree, then not only will she probably have student loan debt and a useless degree and low-pay jobs, but she'll also have been brainwashed with all sorts of anti-marriage and anti-family beliefs and behaviors. That's because non-STEM programs are nothing more than brainwashing in secular leftist dogma. And I have an example of how this works in real life.

Everything too hard for her to learn or do is "sexist"

In the example below, a male expert on climate science corrects a female journalist about climate science. She dismisses his correction (not shown) as sexism.

Feminist journalist shames science expert as "sexist"
Here is the biography of the male PhD in meteorology:

Ryan Maue is a research meteorologist. He has developed and maintained a popular weather maps and climate data service based on the world's best numerical weather prediction systems. During his graduate studies at Florida State University, he researched extratropical and tropical cyclones, utilizing mesoscale models and large reanalysis datasets, and published multiple peer-reviewed articles. After his PhD in 2010, Maue was awarded a National Research Council postdoctoral associateship at the Naval Research Lab in Monterey, California where he focused on global weather prediction and verification.

And here is the biography of the female journalist with the BA in journalism:

She has a BA in journalism, and knows literally nothing about climate science, and has achieved literally nothing of value in the field of climate science that anyone would be willing to pay her for.

Crying "sexist" is literally everything that her degree in journalism taught her to do. She

has one skill: how to dismiss expertise in reality-based practical disciplines as “sexist”, and therefore inferior to her feelings and intuitions.

Should marriage-minded men marry feminists?

So let’s ask and answer one simple question: should a marriage-minded man marry a woman who dismisses leadership from qualified men as “sexist”?

Let’s review the red flags of secular leftist feminist women:

- she’s pro-abortion, so she thinks murdering an innocent child is how selfish adults escape the consequences of their own reckless actions
- she’s pro-divorce, and will not hesitate for a second to break a commitment that makes her unhappy
- she’s an atheist, so she can’t rationally ground the basic requirements of morality: free will, objective moral laws, etc. and therefore cannot be relied on to behave morally against her own self-interest
- she’s a socialist, so she views money earned by the husband as the property of the secular left government
- she’s a feminist, so she believes sex is recreational, and need not be reserved for a husband and wife in a covenant marriage, and she thinks that newborns should be tossed into daycare then public schools
- she believes in same-sex marriage, so she thinks that children can be deprived of a relationship with their biological mother and/or father, for the benefit of selfish adults
- etc.

Does this sound like she’s ready for a husband and children?

But more than the worldview issues are the practical issues. A woman with a non-STEM degree didn’t want to study subjects that are accountable to reality. She didn’t want to be a pharmacist, a nurse or a software engineer – those jobs would require her to produce work that corresponds to reality, and has value in the real world. People like her who graduate with non-STEM degrees don’t understand anything about how the world really works. People like her aren’t equipped to earn money in a free market by satisfying customers. They don’t understand basic economics, so they’re socialists. They can’t be reasoned with, because their views are determined by what makes them feel good, look good to peers, and what gives them maximum autonomy to pursue pleasure with minimum accountability. When secular leftists feminists crash and burn at self-sufficiency, they blame everyone else instead of themselves. All of these character traits make them really difficult to get along with in a marriage.

Can women like this be fixed up for marriage and motherhood? Well, that would require them to be open to marriage-minded men who would be able to lead them towards marriage and motherhood behaviors. But how did Emily respond to leadership from a male with real-world demonstrated ability in a practical area? She called his attempt to

lead her “sexist”. And that is the standard response of secular leftist feminist women to male leadership. If you tell them to study computer science, you’re “sexist”. If you tell them to stop wasting money, you’re “sexist”. If you tell them to stop getting drunk, you’re “sexist”. If you tell them to read a book on economics, you’re “sexist”. If you tell them to watch a William Lane Craig debate, you’re “sexist”. If you tell them to eat healthy and lift weights, you’re “sexist”. If you tell them to get a challenging job, you’re “sexist”. If you tell them to stop having recreational sex with bad boys, you’re “sexist”. Every attempt to focus a secular leftist feminist woman on preparing for marriage and motherhood is called “sexist”.

If women would only listen to what men ask of them as future wives and future mothers, and build themselves up for wife and mother roles, then women would never struggle to find husbands. No man in his right mind can risk marriage to a secular leftist feminist. There is no “secular leftist feminist” path to marriage. No amount of immodesty and premarital sex from a secular leftist feminist is enough to trick a man into *marrying* her. That might work on some men to get sex, but it’s not going to work to get her to marriage and children.

Are teacher unions conservative or liberal? Should Christians support unions?

July 18, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Catholic teachers march in favor of unrestricted taxpayer-funded abortion

I saw about how a couple of teacher unions are responding to the current pandemic. Did you know that teacher unions lobby in favor of abortion and gay rights? I also wanted to look at the political contributions, so we can figure out whether we should be in favor of teacher unions, or opposed to them.

Here's a story about the unions from Daily Wire:

> A teachers' union in North Carolina is demanding sweeping benefits for illegal immigrants to lower COVID-19 cases and reopen schools.
>
> In a recent statement denouncing the school district's reopening plan, the Durham Association of Educators (DAE) called for universal healthcare, as well as guaranteed income regardless of a person's immigration status.

Los Angeles:

> Earlier this week, the United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) — a 35,000-member union in the Los Angeles Unified School District — stipulated that the district cannot reopen until charter schools are closed, the local police are defunded, the wealthy are taxed more, there is "Medicare-for-All," and the district is bailed out by the federal government.

New Jersey:

> In New Jersey, the state teachers' union listed among their "acceptable standards for a return to in-person instruction" both weekly COVID-19 tests for all students and mandatory door-to-door mask wearing. "Consequences for refusal to wear the required mask shall be clearly delineated in board policy and in the

> student/parent handbook, and shall include consequences up to and including suspension," the union said.

That's very interesting, and it's not just secular school teachers who are far-left. Catholic school teachers regularly march in favor of abortion and gay rights. Apparently, being Catholic now means agreeing with atheists on every policy, and then just slapping the word Catholic on top of it.

Catholic teachers march in favor of gay rights and perverted sex education

You might wonder what teacher unions do with all the money they get by lobbying the government and organizing strikes. Well, some of the money goes to abortion providers:

> The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA) are among a handful of Unions that have donated to Planned Parenthood in the United States. For example, in 2012, the New York City chapter of AFT gave $125,000 to the abortion company. Then, in the wake of the organization's scandal regarding selling aborted babies' body parts, the New York City branch of AFT said they still support Planned Parenthood and urged "all members to support Planned Parenthood as members and contributors."
>
> The Washington Free Beacon reports that over the last five years Planned Parenthood has also received money from the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, United Autoworkers Union, Service Employees International Union, and the United Food and Commercial Union.

And some of that money goes to the Democrat party directly:

POLITICAL SPENDING

FEDERAL ELECTION DONATIONS, BY PARTY

DONATIONS TO DEMOCRATS

$45,898,518 (98%)

DONATIONS TO REPUBLICANS

$682,057 (1%)

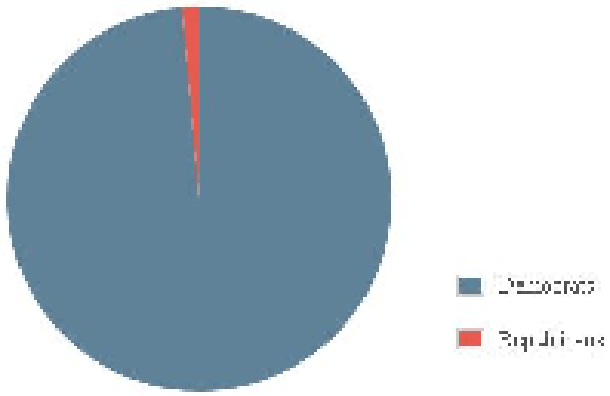

Political contributions by the American Federation of Teachers union

I think there's enough here that people will understand that teacher unions – and pretty much every other kind of union – is not conservative.

Remember, unlike workers in the private sector, unionized workers DO NOT earn their money by exchanging products and services in voluntary trades. They DO NOT compete with other vendors to give the consumer lower prices and higher quality. Unions exist to protect their workers from performing poorly for customers. And they get raises only when they influence government to give them more money. They have no connection to pleasing customers whatsoever. And in fact they are threatened when customers are able to spend their own money on options that suit their needs, e.g. – homeschooling, private schools, charter schools.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

July 19, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here is Dr. William Lane Craig giving a long-form argument for the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus, and taking questions from the audience.

The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the

Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early dating
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthewand whether it is intended to be historical or apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza

Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is “The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus” and the best comprehensive book is “The Resurrection of Jesus“.

If Biden wins in November, don’t expect him to confront China’s totalitarianism

July 20, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

China has 1 million Uighurs in Chinese in concentration camps, although they deny it

As a Christian, I’m obligated to stand up for chastity, sobriety, right to life, and natural marriage. But there are other things happen in the world that also catch my attention. For instance, I’ve noticed that socialist China is basically a totalitarian nation, with concentration camps similar to those of Nazi Germany or communist USSR. And Joe Biden has connections to them.

This story is from the far-left Foreign Policy:

> Two recent disturbing events may finally awaken the world to the scale and horror of the atrocities being committed against the Uighurs, a mostly secular Muslim ethnic minority, in Xinjiang, China. One is an authoritative report documenting the systematic sterilization of Uighur women. The other was the seizure by U.S. Customs and Border Protection of 13 tons of products made from human hair suspected of being forcibly removed from Uighurs imprisoned in concentration camps. Both events evoke chilling parallels to past atrocities elsewhere, forced sterilization of minorities, disabled, and Indigenous people, and the image of the glass display of mountains of hair preserved at Auschwitz.
>
> […]Over a million Turkic Uighurs are detained in concentration camps, prisons, and forced labor factories in China. Detainees are subject to military-style discipline, thought transformation, and forced confessions. They are abused, tortured, raped, and even killed. Survivors report being subjected to electrocution, waterboarding, repeated beatings, stress positions, and injections of unknown substances. These mass detention camps are designed to cause serious physical, psychological harm and mentally break the Uighur people. The repeated government orders to “break their lineage, break their roots, break their connections, and break their origins”; “round up everyone who should be

> rounded up"; and systematically prevent Uighur births demonstrate a clear intent to eradicate the Uighur people as a whole.

Here is drone footage of the Chinese Muslims being sent to concentration camps by train:

These camps are run by Chinese communists. They are secular. They are leftist. The Democrats are in charge in China.

And in fact, the Democrats here in America are not terribly concerned by any of this socialism in China. And that's because the son of the Democrat presidential candidate has links to the CCP.

Fox News explains:

> For almost six years, the firm connected to Hunter Biden in China has moved more than $2.5 billion into various automotive, technology, energy, and mining endeavors.
>
> […]Biden served as one of nine directors of the private equity firm Bohai Harvest RST – better known as BHR Partners – which is 80 percent mandated by shareholders in the Chinese government, according to the Wall Street Journal.
>
> […]The firm was registered less than two weeks after Biden flew with his then-vice president father on Air Force Two for official business in China in December 2013…
>
> […]In the closing days of that December, China's central bank, the Bank of China in conjunction with Rosemount Seneca – the firm Biden founded in 2009 with John Kerry's stepson Christopher Heinz and family friend Devon Archer – set up the $1 billion investment joint venture called Bohai Harvest RST.
>
> […]"The Bank of China is a major Chinese state-run bank, overseen by the powerful China Investment Corporation," Isaac Stone Fish, a senior fellow at the Asia Society's Center on U.S.-China Relations, told Fox News. "While it often makes decisions based on economic considerations, it exists to serve the interests of the Chinese Communist Party."

So, it seems to me that if Biden is elected President, it's unlikely that anything wil be done about China's concentration camps. He's just too close to the Chinese goverment and the Chinese Communist Party.

On the other hand, China doesn't like the Republicans very much, because they're actually trying to do something about the concentration camps:

> China announced Monday it is issuing sanctions against U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and three other U.S. officials for "interfering in China's internal affairs," a move that drew a dismissive reply from Cruz.
>
> The announcement came days after the United States issued sanctions against three Chinese officials for Beijing's human rights abuses against ethnic minority groups in the Xinjiang region.

If Trump wins in November, then expect to see the United States continue to take action against China. They've already been doing it over the past 3.5 years.

FBI notes reveal doubts about Steele dossier promoted by news media leftists

July 21, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Left to right: Comey, Lynch, Clinton, McCabe

The mainstream media is being silent about revelations that the FBI had major doubts about the Steele dossier. So, let's take a look at the newly-released FBI notes.

Here's the latest from the Wall Street Journal:

> A Senate committee released newly declassified documents that showed the Federal Bureau of Investigation was wary in early 2017 of a dossier compiled by ex-British spy Christopher Steele that helped stir a narrative, later debunked, that the Trump campaign had close ties to Russian intelligence.
>
> The documents released Friday by the Senate Judiciary Committee included FBI notes from three days of interviews with a primary source of Mr. Steele who cast doubt on some of the dossier's contents. FBI notes from the interview in early 2017 indicated that Mr. Steele's source had told him information about Mr. Trump's alleged sexual escapades was "rumor and speculation" that he was unable to confirm.
>
> Also released were notes of a former high-level FBI agent, Peter Strzok, who wrote that Mr. Steele himself "may not be in a position to judge the reliability of his subsource network.''
>
> Reacting to a New York Times report in February 2017 that said the Trump campaign and people around the candidate had repeated contacts with Russian intelligence officials, Mr. Strzok wrote in the margins of a printed copy of the article that "we are unaware of any Trump advisors engaging in conversations with Russian intelligence officials."

Actually, Strozk wrote a lot more than that.

I found more FBI notes here:

> Document number two, also withheld from public view until now, takes apart a

New York Times article written by Michael Schmidt, Mark Mazzetti, and Matt Apuzzo.

Comments made by then-FBI agent Peter Strzok undercut a litany of claims made in the Times article, which was entitled: “Trump Campaign Aides Had Repeated Contact With Russian Intelligence.”

Claim in NYT article: “Phone records and intercepted calls show that members of Donald J. Trump’s presidential campaign and other Trump associates had repeated contacts with senior Russian intelligence officials in the year before the election, according to four current and former American officials.”

Note by Strzok: “This statement is misleading and inaccurate as written. We have not seen evidence of any individuals in contact with Russians (both Governmental and non-Governmental)” and “There is no known intel affiliation, and little if any [government of Russia] affiliation[.] FBI investigation has shown past contact between [Trump campaign volunteer Carter] Page and the SVR [Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation], but not during his association with the Trump campaign.”

Claim in NYT article: “… one of the advisers picked up on the [intercepted] calls was Paul Manafort, who was Mr. Trump’s campaign chairman for several months …”

Note by Strzok: “We are unaware of any calls with any Russian government official in which Manafort was a party.”

Claim in NYT article: “The FBI has obtained banking and travel records …”

Note by Strzok: “We do not yet have detailed banking records.”

Claim in NYT article: “Officials would not disclose many details, including what was discussed on the calls, and how many of Trump’s advisers were talking to the Russians.”

Note by Strzok: “Again, we are unaware of ANY Trump advisers engaging in conversations with Russian intel officials” and “Our coverage has not revealed contact between Russian intelligence officers and the Trump team.”

Claim in NYT article: “The FBI asked the NSA to collect as much information as possible about the Russian operatives on the phone calls …”

Note by Strzok: “If they did we are not aware of those communications.”

Claim in NYT article: “The FBI has closely examined at least four other people close to Mr. Trump … Carter Page … Roger Stone… and Mr. Flynn.”

Note by Strzok: “We have not investigated Roger Stone.”

Claim by NYT: “Senior FBI officials believe … Christopher Steele … has a credible track record.”

Note by Strzok: “Recent interviews and investigation, however, reveal Steele may not be in a position to judge the reliability of subsource network.”

> Claim by NYT: “The FBI’s investigation into Mr. Manafort began last spring [2016].”
>
> Note by Strzok: “This is inaccurate … our investigation of Manafort was opened in August 2016.”
>
> Claim by NYT: “The bureau did not have enough evidence to obtain a warrant for a wiretap of Mr. Manafort’s communications, but it had the NSA closely scrutinize the communications of Ukrainian officials he had met.”
>
> Note by Strzok: “This is inaccurate …”

Basically, everything the New York Times wrote was judged by Peter Strozk – the anti-Trump FBI adulterer – as inaccurate. Keep that in mind the next time you read something in the New York Times. It’s just fake news, from front to back, top to bottom. Every day. People read it for feelings – not for an accurate view of the world.

There is a nice re-cap of left-wing news sources trumpeting the Steel dossier as genuine in this Twitter thread. Make note of the names, and don’t trust these news sources in the future. CNN, MSNBC, Brian Stelter, Rachel Maddow, New York Magazine, Jonathan Chait, Catherine Rempell, Katy Tur, Mother Jones, David Corn, Newsweek, Slate, Rick Wilson, Joy Reid, Jennifer Rubin, Max Boot, Charles Blow, Seth Abramson, Matthew Dowd, Kurt Eichenwald, The Daily Beast, The New Yorker, etc.

The Federalist had some details about the source for the Steele dossier.

> The Primary Subsource was in reality Steele’s sole source, a longtime Russian-speaking contractor for the former British spy’s company, Orbis Business Intelligence. In turn, the Primary Subsource had a group of friends in Russia. All of their names remain redacted. From the FBI interviews, it becomes clear that the Primary Subsource and his friends peddled warmed-over rumors and laughable gossip that Steele dressed up as formal intelligence memos.

On Twitter, I found a thread that presented a case that the source of the dossier was a PRESS SECRETARY. Not an intelligence agent. Not a “veteran spy”. A PRESS SECRETARY. I guess we’ll find out if this is correct soon.

If we seriously want men to marry and become fathers, let's repeal no-fault divorce

July 22, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw a very good article at the Heritage Foundation web site about the importance of fathers for children. The author Virginia Allen listed out some of the benefits that fathers provide to children:

> Studies have found that children raised without a father are:
>
> - At a higher risk of having behavioral problems.
> - Four times more likely to live in poverty.
> - More likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime.
> - Twice as likely to never graduate high school.
> - At a seven times higher risk of teen pregnancy.
> - More vulnerable to abuse and neglect.
> - More likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.
> - Twice as likely to be obese.
>
> From education to personal health to career success, children who lack a father find themselves at a disadvantage to their peers raised in a two-parent household.

I was looking for a good analysis of why there's been a decline of marriage and fatherhood, and I found an article by Joe Carter on far-left The Gospel Coalition, of all places. By looking at marriage rates and historical events that changed the marriage rate, he was able to identify the cause of the decline of marriage – and fatherhood.

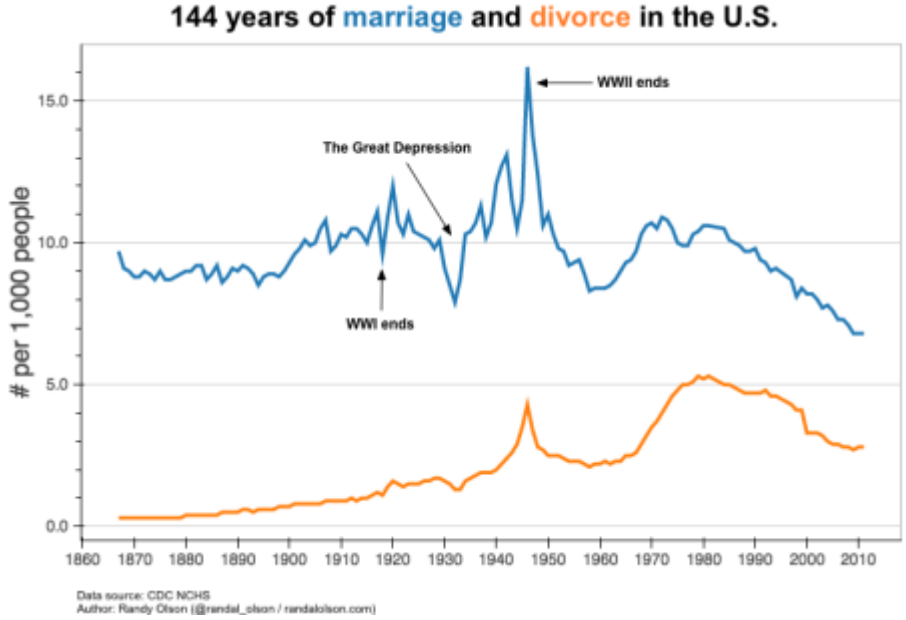

Marriage and divorce rates per capita

I'll spare you the statistical analysis, which is excellent, and give you the conclusion –

although you can guess it from the graph above:

> Now that we've explored the data, what year should we use as the marker for the beginning of the decline of marriage in the United States? I would argue for 1985, the last year that the marriage rate topped 10 percent.
>
> […]What changed in 1985 that could have led to the decline in marriage? There are likely numerous factors—which we'll examine in future articles—but one stands out in particular: By 1985, all states (except for New York) had enacted no-fault divorce legislation.

The most helpful book I know of about no-fault divorce is "Taken Into Custody", by Dr. Stephen Baskerville. He wrote a column for Crisis magazine that summarizes some of his ideas.

Excerpt:

> Feminists were drafting no-fault divorce laws in the 1940s, which the National Association of Women Lawyers now describes as "the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken."
>
> The result effectively abolished marriage as a legal contract. Today it is not possible to form a binding agreement to create a family.
>
> The new laws did not stop at removing the requirement of citing grounds for a divorce, to allow divorce by mutual consent, as deceptively advertised at the time. Instead they created unilateral and involuntary divorce, so that one spouse may dissolve a marriage without any agreement or fault by the other.

Here's what divorce does to the spouse who is the victim of the unilateral "no-fault" divorce:

> Though marriage is a civil matter, the logic quickly extended into the criminal, including a presumption of guilt against the involuntarily divorced spouse ("defendant"). Yet formal due process protections of criminal proceedings did not apply, so forcibly divorced spouses became quasi-criminals not for recognized criminal acts but for failing or refusing to cooperate with the divorce by continuing to claim the protections and prerogatives of family life: living in the common home, possessing the common property, or—most vexing of all—parenting the common children.
>
> Following from this are the horrendous civil liberties violations and flagrant invasions of family and individual privacy that are now routine in family courts. A personalized criminal code is legislated by the judge around the forcibly divorced spouse, controlling their association with their children, movements, and finances. Unauthorized contact with their children can be punished with arrest. Involuntarily divorced parents are arrested for running into their children in public, making unauthorized telephone calls, and sending unauthorized birthday cards.

In my conversations with men, no-fault divorce laws, and anti-male divorce courts are the main reasons given for why they do not pursue marriage and fatherhood. Men do not want to be coerced in a marriage with the threat of divorce by an unhappy wife. Men do not want to be subject to the government in so many areas of their lives if the wife does carry out the threat. They especially don't want to be separated from their children. One my secular male friends told me that he would not marry unless the woman had evidence in her past of hating radical feminism and no-fault divorce. This was the main criteria. He actually was able to find a woman who was a men's rights activist who hated divorce. But that was the only way he would marry.

Statistically speaking, the wife is more likely to initiate divorce than the husband. Women initiate 70% of divorces, the majority of those just because she is "unhappy". I think this is because women get into marriage based on their feelings, and they think that it is the husband's job to make them feel good. They see their happiness as the primary goal of the marriage, and see a marriage that does not make them happy as a marriage that needs to be ended.

Are we going to repeal no-fault divorce, then?

No-fault divorce was seen as a boon to women who had married the wrong men by following their hearts. It's an interesting question to ask whether women really would want no-fault repealed. It would mean that they would have to get serious about who they marry, instead of just getting into marriage based on feelings. They would have to evaluate men according to expectations of what a man does in a marriage, instead of on feelings. They would have to think about what men want out of a marriage, and prepare themselves to provide for his needs. They would have to say no to their feelings, when choosing a man, and in keeping a man after the wedding.

If women aren't willing to demand the repeal of no-fault divorce laws and get serious about men and marriage, then what's the point of complaining that men don't want to marry and become fathers? If you're not willing to fix the root cause of the problem, then don't complain about the problem.

Why you should read “Up From Slavery” by Booker T. Washington

July 23, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

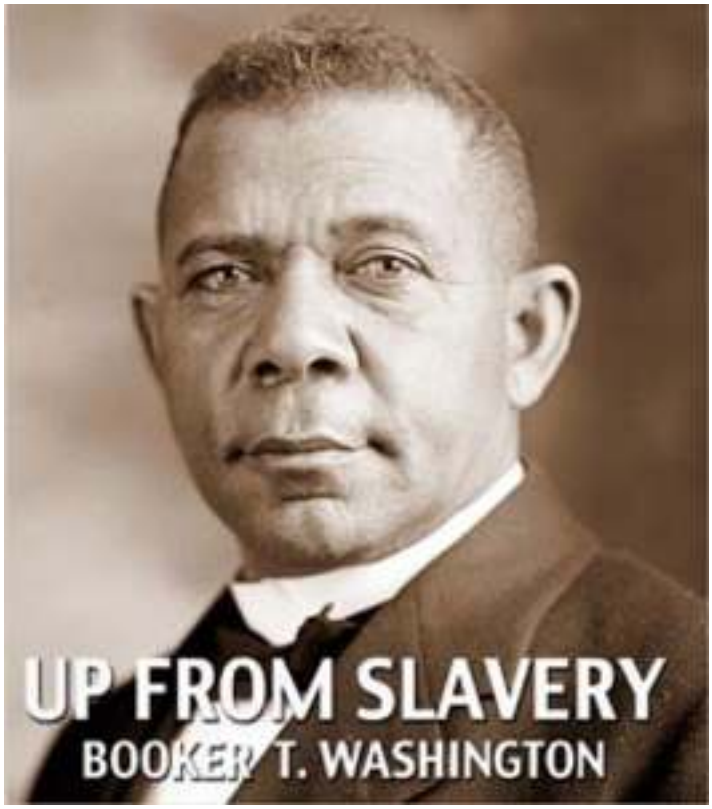

What’s the best way to get up from slavery?

Lately, my friends have been very excited that I’m a non-white conservative. They want me to answer the grievances of BLM people, and explain from my own experiences what Christianity and conservative policies have to say about making the lives of non-whites better. My friend Wes recommended “Up From Slavery” by Booker T. Washington to help me focus my thoughts.

Here’s a summary of the book:

> ### Dignity through Labor
>
> Over the course of *Up From Slavery,* Washington develops the idea and ideal of dignity through labor. For Washington, the gravest aspect of the institution of slavery is the denigration of labor for both blacks and whites. Because the enslaved had no personal investment or return on their labor, they did not complete their work with an attitude toward improvement. Likewise, whites, largely deprived of meaningful labor, were robbed of the ability to achieve self-sufficiency. In both races, this produced personalities and characters that seek to escape labor. Washington emphasizes labor as the only way to make oneself useful in an interdependent, modern society. Throughout the whole of *Up From Slavery*, Washington searches for and obtains work. Further, once he obtains it,

Washington completes all labor to best of his ability, no matter how lowly the task. At the Tuskegee Institute, Washington makes this idea and ideal a foundational ethos. All students who study at the Tuskegee Institute must learn a trade or industry alongside their more traditional academic pursuits. In addition, many of the buildings, most of the furniture, the wagons, and the materials used at the school are produced by students. This level of practical skill and diligence also acts as the foundation of Washington's theory and program for racial uplift.

Selflessness, Desire to Be Useful to One's Community

The people that Washington most admires and models himself after are those he labels selfless. Washington defines this as the willingness to work on the behalf of others. For Washington, this is not only about duty or labor, but also about the willingness to do one's best for the benefit of the collective good. Washington believes that racial prejudice can be overcome if black people make themselves indispensable to their communities and their nation. The brick-making episode provides an example. Though the brick-making enterprise at Tuskegee felled three kilns before successfully producing bricks, the venture eventually proved successful and the school began to sell its bricks on the open market. Washington describes how whites who were unsympathetic or apathetic to the education of blacks and the overall project of the Tuskegee Institute were willing to purchase Tuskegee bricks due to their quality and convenience. Washington suggests that if black race can find their niche in society by fulfilling a need, then they can co-exist peacefully and productively with whites.

Impracticality of Political Agitation

Throughout *Up From Slavery*, Washington defends his ideas about racial advancement and uplift by subtly undermining the proposals of his critics. Though Washington does not explicitly state his objection to the strategies of specific thinkers like W.E.B. Dubois or even his predecessor, Frederick Douglass, he nevertheless highlights the wastefulness of political agitation for equal rights at every chance he gets. To do this, Washington shows that political agitation results in worse relations and outcomes than those that existed before. For example, when he goes home to Malden after his second year at the Hampton Institute, Washington finds that both the salt-furnace and the coal-mine are not in operation due to worker's strikes. In Chapter IV, Washington describes how strikers usually spent all their savings during the strikes and returned to work in debt, but at the same wages. He raises the impracticality of political agitation again after his controversial Atlanta Exposition speech. After the success of his speech, he hypothetically asks if a black man would have been invited to give a speech had people agitated to put a black person on the program. He answers in the negative, saying that such opportunities can only arise through merit.

And here's a summary of his most famous speech:

> On September 18, 1895, Booker T. Washington was selected to give a speech that would open the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia. The speech, which is often referred to as the "Atlanta Compromise," was the first speech given by an African American to a racially-mixed audience in the South. In it, Washington suggested that African Americans should not agitate for political and social equality, but should instead work hard, earn respect and acquire vocational training in order to participate in the economic development of the South. By doing so, eventually, he stated, African Americans would gain the respect of white society and be granted the rights of full citizenship.

There's a free full audio version of the book, and the full text is online. I recommend this book to people of all races, because as the sexual anarchy brought on by feminism becomes widespread, the majority of the children of tomorrow will face the same kinds of challenges.

I see Washington's ideas as consistent with a Christian worldview, where we don't expect to be treated fairly. We expect sinful people to treat us badly. What Christianity says is to be patient, and focus on your relationship with God and loving your neighbor. And one way to love your neighbor is to sell them something valuable that you made through your labor. Another way is to work and save, and give to charity.

Government solutions to problems like racism and poverty aren't a top priority for Christians. Most of all, we need the freedom to be good, and to do good. That's priority one. You may not make your life better by being moral and diligent, but it's rare that doing so causes you to harm yourself. It's very important that you not harm yourself.

So, this dovetails nicely with my own story. My married non-white parents were not smart enough or willing enough to monitor my education, but they were clear that they wanted me to do well in order to find good-paying work. So I completed my BS and MS in a STEM field, and went to work right away, and I've been at it continuously for 20 years now. I save most of what I earn for charity and early retirement.

I've never experienced any of the racism or police brutality that American blacks complain about. And that's because I follow what Washington is teaching. I dress in a clean way that doesn't communicate danger to others. I'm careful to spend my time reading apologetics, economics and military history. I don't listen to popular music or watch popular TV or movies. I don't hang out with people who blame other people for their lack of success.

I got my first job by volunteering to do it for free on Saturdays for 7 months. My first full-time job salary after college was $50,000. Then I got a raise of $6,000 and then a raise of $9,000. I used to work 70 hour weeks in my 20s. I graduated college with $9,000 dollars in the black, and my net worth is now about $1.25 million. By the way, the secret to becoming wealthy is to not spend money on showing off. You can be very generous to your friends and still get rich. Just never buy anything that is designed to communicate

“status” to anyone. And never spend money on alcohol or chasing sex outside of marriage.

At no time did I accept that the problems defined by the secular left were my real problems. And at no time did I accept their “solutions” as real solutions to anything. As black economist Thomas Sowell writes, the “solutions” of the left are not effective at helping people like me. The “solutions” of the left are designed to make leftists feel better, and look more virtuous to others. You are much better off reading the Bible, Christian apologetics, free market economics, American military history, etc., and then respecting what you learn from that in your decision-making. I think that reading the right stuff is even more important than having good parents or attending church.

The importance of having a narrative when confronting the assumption of naturalism

July 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Apologetics and the progress of science

How do you present theism as a rational belief to a person who thinks that the progress of science has removed the need for God?

Canadian science writer Denyse O'Leary writes about the history of cosmology at Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> What help has materialism been in understanding the universe's beginnings?
>
> Many in cosmology have never made any secret of their dislike of the Big Bang, the generally accepted start to our universe first suggested by Belgian priest Georges Lemaître (1894-1966).
>
> On the face of it, that is odd. The theory accounts well enough for the evidence. Nothing ever completely accounts for all the evidence, of course, because evidence is always changing a bit. But the Big Bang has enabled accurate prediction.
>
> In which case, its hostile reception might surprise you. British astronomer Fred Hoyle (1915-2001) gave the theory its name in one of his papers — as a joke. Another noted astronomer, Arthur Eddington (1882-1944), exclaimed in 1933, "I feel almost an indignation that anyone should believe in it — except myself." Why? Because "The beginning seems to present insuperable difficulties unless we agree to look on it as frankly supernatural."
>
> One team of astrophysicists (1973) opined that it "involves a certain metaphysical aspect which may be either appealing or revolting." Robert Jastrow (1925-2008), head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, initially remarked, "On both scientific and philosophical grounds, the concept of an eternal Universe seems more acceptable than the concept of a transient Universe that springs into being suddenly, and then fades slowly into darkness."

> And Templeton Prize winner (2011) Martin Rees recalls his mentor Dennis Sciama's dogged commitment to an eternal universe, no-Big Bang model:

> For him, as for its inventors, it had a deep philosophical appeal — the universe existed, from everlasting to everlasting, in a uniquely self-consistent state. When conflicting evidence emerged, Sciama therefore sought a loophole (even an unlikely seeming one) rather as a defense lawyer clutches at any argument to rebut the prosecution case.

> Evidence forced theorists to abandon their preferred eternal-universe model. From the mid 1940s, Hoyle attempted to disprove the theory he named. Until 1964, when his preferred theory, the Steady State, lost an evidence test.

Here is a quick summary of some of the experimental evidence that emerged in the last few decades that caused naturalists to abandon the eternal universe that they loved so much when they were younger.

The importance of having a narrative

Now I want to make a very, very important point about Christianity and the progress of science. And that point is that it is very important that Christians present the evidence in exactly the way that Denyse presented it in that article – in its historical context, featuring the conflict between naturalists and the experimental evidence.

All Christians should be familiar with the following basic pieces of evidence which fit the war between science and naturalism narrative:

1. The origin of the universe
2. The cosmic fine-tuning
3. The origin of life (biological information)
4. The sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla
5. The habitability/observability correlation

When you talk about these evidences as a Christian theist to non-Christians, you have to have cultivated a genuine interest in reconciling your beliefs with science. You have to accept that there are two books that reveal God's character and attributes. The book of nature, and the book of Scripture. And you need to be flexible about getting these two books to fit together. The book of nature gives us natural theology (see Romans 1). It tells us that God is Creator and Designer. The book of Scripture tells us that God stepped into history as a man to save us by taking the punishment for our headlong rush away from God, which the Bible calls sin. Science is one way that humans can recover some of basic knowledge about God. Knowledge that is only possible because God created and designed the universe (and us) in such a way that we are capable of making discoveries, and that the universe is capable of being explored and understood.

It's very important to present these five basic evidences to non-Christians in the historical context. And here is the story you must tell: "In the beginning, there was the naturalism, and the naturalism tried to argue from ignorance that God was not Creator and God was

not Designer. And then came the science, and now people have to give up their naturalism in order to not be crazy and irrational". That's the narrative you use when talking to non-Christians about science.

In the beginning was the naturalism:

1. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the universe was eternal
2. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that a life-permitting universe was as likely as a life-prohibiting universe
3. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the cell was a simple blob of jello that could spontaneously emerge in some warm pond
4. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla would be explained by subsequent fossil discoveries
5. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that there was nothing special about our galaxy, solar system, planet or moon

But then science progressed by doing experiments and making observations:

1. Scientists discovered redshift and the cosmic microwave background radiation (evidence for a cosmic beginning) and more!
2. Scientists discovered the fine-tuning of gravity and of the cosmological constant and more!
3. Scientists discovered protein sequencing and exposed the myth of "junk DNA" and more!
4. Scientists discovered an even shorter Cambrian explosion period and the absence of precursor fossils and more!
5. Scientists discovered galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones and more!

And now rational people – people who want to have true beliefs about reality – need to abandon a false religion (naturalism).

Now naturally, science is in a state of flux and things change. But you have to look at the trend of discoveries, and those trends are clearly going against naturalism, and in favor of Christian theism. No one is arguing for a deductive proof here, we are simply looking at the evidence we have *today* and proportioning our belief to the concrete evidence we have *today*. People who are guided by reason should not seek to construct a worldview by leveraging speculations about future discoveries and mere possibilities. We should instead believe what is more probable than not. That's what a *rational* seeker of truth ought to do. Proportion belief to probabilities based on current, concrete knowledge.

Atheism, as a worldview, is not rooted in an honest assessment about what science tells us about reality. Atheism is rooted in a religion: naturalism. And the troubling thing we learn from looking at the history of science is that this religion of naturalism is insulated from correction from the progress of science. Nothing that science reveals about nature seems to be able to put a dent in the religion of naturalism, at least for most atheists.

It falls to us Christian theists, then, to hold them accountable for their abuse and misrepresentation of science. And that means telling the story of the progress of science accurately, and accurately calling out the religion of naturalism for what it is – *a religion rooted in blind faith and ignorance that has been repeatedly and convincingly falsified by the progress of science in the modern era*.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

July 25, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire (Craig) and German Me 109 (Rosenberg) in a dogfight
Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.

4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates
- You didn't need to come out on this cold night
- Craig's arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn't listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don't require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that "every effect requires a cause"
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can't see

- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn’t have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It’s too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It’s self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That’s why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg’s own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism
6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity (“I”) is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg’s responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it’s not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It’s that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the

majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said. Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the

fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Making monergism make sense: reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

July 26, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

This article at Free Thinking Ministries was written by my friend Tim Stratton. In it, presents a view of God's sovereignty over salvation without falling into the error of double-predestination.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Many reformed folks *(freely?)* choose to reject Molinism because they contend that this theological view "smells of synergism." What is this stench that reportedly makes John Calvin turn over in his grave? Simply put, synergism is the view that man plays at least a small part in his own salvation process. Monergism, on the other hand, is the view that God is the author of salvation from beginning to end.
>
> Since Molinism affirms that man is free to choose to reject God's saving grace or not, many Calvinists jump to the conclusion and assume that Molinism must be synergistic. This does not necessarily follow.[1] Consider one possible model:
>
> 1- God, by nature, is a volitional unmoved mover who is free to choose between options in accord with His nature. (This is supported via the *Kalam* and the *Argument from Time*).
>
> 2- By God's grace, humans are created in the "image of God." By nature, then, we are free to choose between options in accord with our nature. (This is supported via the *Freethinking Argument*).
>
> 3- Adam & Eve freely chose to disobey God and this sin completely separates

> humanity from God. This is what it means to have a "totally depraved sin nature." (Every aspect of man is separated from God).
>
> 4- In this state of depraved separation from God (sin nature), humans do not even know God exists if merely left to our own devices.
>
> 5- If humans do not even know God exists, then, left to our own devices and **apart from God's grace**, it would be impossible to choose to love and follow God (thus, Pelagianism is impossible on this view).
>
> 6- God, in His love for all people, provides amazing prevenient grace to all people (Romans 1:20), writing the law on the human heart (Romans 2:15), conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-9), and draws all men (John 12:32). This is commonly referred to as "common grace."
>
> 7- Therefore, by God's grace, human nature has changed from a "totally separated from God nature" to a nature that has now experienced enough divine revelation (influences) allowing all mankind to start making some free and volitional choices in accord with our new nature; namely, to choose to resist God's grace and revelation, or not.[2] Mankind is without excuse because we do not have to resist what God has made clear (Romans 1:18-20).[3]
>
> *[Note: According to Calvinist, Matt Slick (albeit inadvertently), Mark 4:10-12 implies that if an unregenerate person gets access to clear and accurate information, then they possess the ability to become Christians!]*
>
> 8- If one does not reject or continually resist the grace and revelation God provides them, then God will continually provide more and more until the person reaches the point of "no return" and will become saved.
>
> Thus, God does *ALL* the work in salvation from beginning to end on this Molinistic model; all the human can do is freely resist God's grace and revelation, but he or she does not have to! The human does nothing to gain salvation apart from God's grace on this Monergistic Model of Molinism.

I think that Stratton's formulation above does indeed keep God as the sole initiator of salvation. And that's good. But it also makes sure that human who resist God's leading are responsible for their choice to resist God, and that's good. We want salvation to be 100% by faith alone in Christ alone. But we don't want God to be the cause of people not being saved. On Stratton's view, God wants everyone to be saved. If anyone is saved, it's because God did ALL THE WORK to lead them and secure their salvation with the death of Jesus on the cross. But, on Stratton's view, humans do get a choice – the choice to trust God or not. And so, if a person is not saved, then it's their fault – not God's. This works.

Read his whole post, and see what you think about it.

The most important thing Christian parents need to focus on with their children

July 27, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

I know what you're thinking – I'm going to say apologetics. But I was actually having a talk with a young women who found the arguments for God convincing, but wasn't sure whether she was ready for a personal relationship with the God of the Bible. It got me thinking about my past and what it was about the God of the Bible that caused me to make a commitment.

If I had to say what it is that cause me to take Christianity seriously, including accepting Jesus as my Leader (more than just as my Savior), it would be the conviction that God was lining things up in my life to show himself to me. This was particularly welcome because I could see that I had not been blessed with the best situation in life to start out with.

Sean McDowell has a recent post about it, and since he is an expert in apologetics, I'm inclined to agree with him.

He writes:

> In his book *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis makes a distinction between "Gift-love" and "Need-love." As for Gift-love, he gives the example of a father who works and plans for the future well being of his family, even though he will die without seeing them benefit. As for Need-love, Lewis gives the example of a lonely and frightened child who comes to its mother's arms for comfort and protection. Such love is neither selfish nor improper, because children are intended to have nurturing mothers, and mothers are intended to care for their kids.
>
> According to Lewis, God's love for mankind is entirely Gift-love: "The Father gives all He is and has to the Son. The Son gives Himself back to the Father, and gives

> Himself to the world, and for the world to the Father, and thus gives the world (in Himself) back to the Father too." God does not *need* our love or worship. Rather, He freely loves us as an extension of His grace.
>
> But our love for God is different. While we *may* be able to offer God Gift-love, our love is primarily need based. Lewis explains: "But man's love for God, from the very nature of the case, must always be very largely, and must often be entirely, a Need-love." We desperately need God in both this world and the next.
>
> And then Lewis makes an additional (and helpful) distinction—while our objective need for God will never change, our *awareness* of that need can. And if our awareness of the need for God fades, then so may our faith. Thus, Lewis says:
>
> *There seems no reason for describing as hypocritical the short-lived piety of those whose religion fades away once they have emerged from "danger, necessity or tribulation." Why should they not have been sincere? They were desperate and howled for help. Who wouldn't?*
>
> In other words, if someone believes in God because of an immediate need for safety or comfort, then as soon as the danger or pain ends, so may the faith. How does this relate to students? Think about it. If a young person believes in God for social or relational needs in the family, church, or school, then when those needs fade, so will his or her faith. If belief in God fulfills some external need, then as soon as that need fades, or another venue provides satisfaction of that need, the student will likely abandon his or her faith (or minimally, have a *marginalized* faith).

The whole post is worth reading, because no less than Sean McDowell himself had a moment like this where he realized his own sinfulness and had to rely on Jesus for his forgiveness.

Judging from his tweets, I know that Sean is obsessed with super-heroes like Spider-Man, and so he would not be comparing himself to his peers in terms of righteousness. That sort of distance between you and Spider-Man can be really grating for boys. Inside, we feel like we are meant to be super-heroes. Many young men go into apologetics because they see it as a super-power. The problem of not measuring up is very strong for us, because we see the demands of Christianity as much greater than mere church attendance. I imagine that as Sean engaged with people using his apologetics super-power, he probably realized how difficult it was to know *everything* and give an answer to *everyone.* That's above and beyond the standard shortcomings or pride, anger, hatred, and so on that are inside of every person.

We are not super-heroes but we need to have super-human righteousness (that is, perfect righteousness) in order to stand before our Creator and Designer. The only solution is to rely on the imputed righteousness of Jesus for our super-hero status. It is a good and healthy thing to take on Jesus as King, and to imitate him. But when we fail, we must also rely on him as Savior. And thank God the Father for that provision of salvation. And indeed, I myself think of Jesus as Savior in the moments where I am conscious of my

own sin. But I need to think about him more than that, and I'll explain how next.

In my case, I wanted to be a super hero growing up, but I knew I wasn't coming from a family or a background that made super-heroes. I was saved in a non-Christian home where, thanks to my hands-off "parents", I was on a very dark path to failure. In fact, I can see where I would have ended up by just looking at where my older brother is now. That disaster is what my parents, my schools, my culture, etc. produced in him, and it would have been me except for God stepping in to make himself known. I get excited about God as initiator and architect of salvation (not without my free will to trust). When God architects a divine appointment for me to use my prepared abilities in his defense or in mentoring little ones, I praise God as author of salvation. But I forget that Christ is the one who allows me to be clean enough to participate in this plan.

My ambition from small was to be a super-hero, and this later turned into great respect for people in the military, especially those who are awarded the Medal of Honor, like Michael Murphy. I want God to give me the Medal of Honor, too. But sin ruins my ambition every day. When I am called out to serve and am found faithful and competent, I need to remember that what makes me fit for service is Christ's sacrifice on the cross. His shed blood is the cape that I put on when it is my turn to come off the bench and be who I was designed to be. It is very important to me that the God I serve is the kind of God who won't turn away from me when I fall short.

How should parents respond to teachers pressuring children to transition?

July 28, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Catholic teachers march in favor of gay rights and perverted sex education

My plan for marriage was to have 4 children with my wife, then homeschool them right through to doctoral degrees. But one thing I knew for sure, I was never going to put my kids into public schools. My impression of public school teachers is that they are the source of moral relativism and cultural relativism. They break down morality and patriotism in children and call it compassion.

Abigal Shrier has noticed that the teachers in public schools are pushing transgenderism pretty hard, because they don't want anyone making judgments about what is right or wrong, wise or foolish.

The far-left UK Daily Mail reported:

> 'I often get parents telling me they're not able to take binders (a cloth which flattens breasts by the use of constrictive materials) away from their children, and I say to them, "Would you give your children cigarettes?".
>
> 'Because we know binders are really harmful, they can deform breast tissue, cause rib cracking and shortness of breath. They're quite dangerous for your 14-year-old to be going around with.'
>
> Sharing her experience of parents' concerns, she said: 'Parents often say to me "I don't want to be seen as a transphobe", and it's very clear to me that sometimes these parents feel like they can't speak the truth or go against their own children's wishes.
>
> […]'I've never seen parents so beaten down and undermined. They send them to school in good faith and now schools are helping them fill out forms with new names as different sexes and hide it from their parents. They turn their kids

> against their parents.
>
> ‘Medicine has become so politicised that parents can’t even rely on honesty from medical professionals even when it comes to transition.’

You might remember that I blogged about a particularly scary case of this from socialist Canada, which doesn’t respect parents’ rights at all. There, the teachers, administrators, counsellors, doctors, layers and judges, all conspired to transition a child from female to male against the parents’ wishes. If you haven’t read that post from March of this year, you should definitely go read it, to find out where our own public schools are trying to go with students.

Anyway, in another article from The College Fix I found an excerpt of her new book, where she offers advice to parents. She talks about not giving them smartphones, not abdicating the leadership role, monitoring the schools for gender ideology, keeping family business private, being open to pulling the children out of their communities, etc.

And there is some pushback against the transgender agenda being promoted by teachers. Some people are regretting their transitions, and blaming the adults who affirmed them on their way to self-harm.

Here’s an article from Sky News:

> A woman who was treated with hormone blockers to reassign her gender as a teenager is taking the NHS to court, saying she “should have been told to wait”.
>
> Keira Bell said the care she received for gender dysphoria, a condition where a person experiences distress due to a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity, steered her towards medical treatment.
>
> Ms Bell, who used to identify as a boy, was 15 when she went to the Tavistock Centre in London. She said after “roughly three sessions” she started receiving hormone blockers.
>
> Eight years later, and after undergoing surgery, Ms Bell is de-transitioning to return to a woman.
>
> […]She said: “I am angry about the whole situation because of how things have turned out for me based on the medical pathway that I was put on, but I’m now just trying to focus on changing the system for the better and making it better for minors and children.
>
> “I should have been told to wait and not affirmed in my gender identity I was claiming to have and given intensive therapy basically to make sure that I was on the right track for things and investigate the feelings I was having to figure out how I got to that stage.”
>
> Ms Bell said she felt “trapped and alone”, and the Tavistock Centre should have taken into account the “confusion” teenagers experience before offering her treatment.

What I’d like to see is conservative lawmakers craft legislation to allow victims like this to

charge the teachers, administrators, doctors, lawyers and judges with criminal negligence. Because I really feel that it is criminal to lie to young people so that you will feel good, and people will like you. That’s all that this focus on feelings and compassion is. The secular leftist adults aren’t capable of moral reasoning. They don’t want to do good for the children, they want to feel good and be popular, even if it harms the children’s long-term well-being and happiness. The adults should be punished.

Radical feminists explain how feminism prepared them for dating and marriage

July 29, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These women are very angry, is that why men avoid them?

So, quick review. Radical feminism is the view that there are no differences whatsoever between men and women. And the reason why men do better at work is not due to a stronger desire to provide, it's just caused by sexism in the workplace. Feminists don't focus on marriage or choose men for marriage ability – that's "sexist". So, why don't men want to date or marry feminists?

I like to read a web site called "Bolde" to find out what feminists are thinking. They have good articles, and even if I disagree with the authors, I do feel sorry for them.

Here's an article called "I'm All For Feminism, But It's Kinda Making It Harder To Date" that says:

> It doesn't take much for me to overanalyze a guy's intentions nowadays. I used to see a guy opening a door for me as nice and polite, but lately, gestures like this have been making me angry. I know the guys offering these acts of chivalry have no intention to make me feel small or lesser than, but now that my eyes have been opened to feminist theory, it's all I'm able to think about.
>
> […]When I'm out with a guy and he says one thing that's even REMOTELY offensive towards women, I find it really hard to recover. I instantly write guys off if they aren't "woke" to the current social mindset towards gender politics and can't let it go. Let's just say I've gone on A LOT of first dates that never go anywhere.
>
> […]All it takes is one quick scroll down my newsfeed and I have enough feminist rants to last me several winters. I think I've almost trained my brain to assume

> ALL men are here to try to put me down and dominate me when that's far from the truth. I've made it kind of an automatic reflex at this point, though.

She actually says in her article that she's been "brainwashed". And that's basically the case. Before feminism, women used to evaluate men for traditional male roles: protector, provider, moral and spiritual leader. They looked for evidence of moral convictions, mentoring, charity, kindness, etc. After feminism, women are more likely to get the tingles for a guy who is tall, pierced and tattooed. To look for husband qualities in a man is "sexist". Early marriage is "boring". Having lots of children is "wasting your education".

It's pretty clear from reading her article that she would not be a good partner. Men are looking for a woman who will listen to their life plan, and give up the pursuit of fun, thrills and travel in order to help them achieve it. Although it should be obvious, we aren't going to commit to a woman who is seeking to grab the reins from us, and tear us down. Men tend to be more focused than women on reason and practicality. That's good, but it's a very cold existence. We want a woman to be caring and helpful, not a snarky competitor.

Here's another one from Bolde entitled: "I Say I Want A Good Man But The Idea Of Dating A Mature Guy Scares Me":

> I've dated very few men in my life and a whole lot of boys.
>
> […]I think that I have a need to feel like I'm in charge of romantic situations. It dates back to my childhood issues, I guess. I want to keep the upper hand.
>
> […] I'm very honest, yes, but I'm emotionally closed-off. There is a definite distinction between the two. There are certain places that I simply don't (or can't) go with most people. When I'm confronted with a man who is open with his feelings, it freaks me out.
>
> […][M]ost of the men I've met who are emotionally developed also have the rest of their act together, and it makes me feel like maybe I don't.
>
> […]I get paranoid because I hate being at a disadvantage.
>
> […]I'm not that different from the rest of my generation in some ways. I'm used to the ease of being single, and while ideally I'd like a deep and loving adult relationship, I also know that it takes time and energy that I'm not sure I'm willing to give up.
>
> […]I'm always falling for men who are unavailable in some way or another. I hate that I'm like this and I know that I operate this way because it feels safer than engaging in risky vulnerability with someone who truly wants to be with me.
>
> […]I've not had many mature relationships in my life. I've been in love and I've had serious boyfriends, but there was often an element of childishness to our interactions. We never really discussed our futures together or acted… adult. Now I feel like I don't even know how to begin.

I've had experiences with women like this who smashed themselves up on the rocks of bad boys over and over. I think she really explains why it is that so many women are

attracted to younger bad boys who don’t want to commit. The truth is that women are scared of commitment. They don’t want to give up their free and easy single lives in order to have to put effort into making a relationship work. They want husbands and homes, but without expectations, responsibilities, or obligations. And the better a man is at manly traits like protecting, providing, and leading on moral and spiritual issues, the less they like him. It’s even worse if he has a good STEM education, a good resume, and a good balance sheet. They deliberately bypass commitment-ready men because they don’t want to be led – even by a good leader.

By the way, in my experience, what she describes above is the natural outworking of being promiscuous with hot bad boys. Women who do that lose trust for men, and they lose their confidence dealing with good men who want to marry them. And naturally all that sex with attractive men makes the woman less content with the one she has to “settle” for – since she didn’t respect men who were good at commitment in the first place. Promiscuity trains people to pre-emptively nuke relationships rather than invest effort into making them work.

Is there evidence of systemic racism in the United States?

July 30, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ANNOUNCEMENT: I'm going to be on the Free Thinking Ministries podcast today at 2 PM Pacific, 5 PM Eastern, with host Tim Stratton. Join us, and we will discuss Black Lives Matter, Christianity and more. And I'll explain my plan to achieve the American Dream as a person of color and legal immigrant to America. Live stream link here.

Systemic racism is the idea that people can't lift themselves out of poverty by making good decisions, because powerful groups in society that hold the poor down, regardless of their decisions. Do you think that America is a place where no matter what choices you make, you'll never be able to be more properous? That's what the leaders of Black Lives Matter think.

Here's what Nikole Hannah-Jones, creator of the 1619 Project, says in the New York Times (a former newspaper):

> To summarize, none of the actions we are told black people must take if they want to "lift themselves" out of poverty and gain financial stability — not marrying, not getting educated, not saving more, not owning a home — can mitigate 400 years of racialized plundering.

Got that? It doesn't matter what individual choices a non-white person takes in America, they're going to be poor. The "systemic racism" of the powerful whites will always keep them down. Single motherhood doesn't make people poor, and marriage doesn't make people wealthier. Dropping out of high school doesn't make you poor, and getting a Masters degree in computer science won't make you wealthier.

But let's take a look at the data from the 2018 Census, and see the evidence.

Median US Household Income by Selected Ethnic Groups, 2018		
Indian	Americans	$119,858
Taiwanese	Americans	$95,736
Lebanese	Americans	$82,353
Turkish	Americans	$81,656
Chinese	Americans	$81,487
Iranian	Americans	$80,291
Japanese	Americans	$80,036
Pakistani	Americans	$77,315
Ukrainian	Americans	$77,083
Filipino	Americans	$75,279
Indonesian	Americans	$74,497
Syrian	Americans	$72,675
Korean	Americans	$72,074
Ghanaian	Americans	$69,343
Nigerian	Americans	$68,658
Guyanese	Americans	$68,393
White	**Americans**	**$67,937**

Source: US Census Bureau

White people are doing a bad job of keeping non-whites down

Well, it looks like at least SOME people of color are able to do well in America despite all the "systemic racism" that keeps non-whites down. And do you know what those non-white groups at the top have in common? They've made good decisions, they've worked hard, they haven't blamed other people when they fail, and they've saved their money instead of spending it on shiny junk.

Let's look at some decisions that the non-whites who are prosperous have made, that those further down have not.

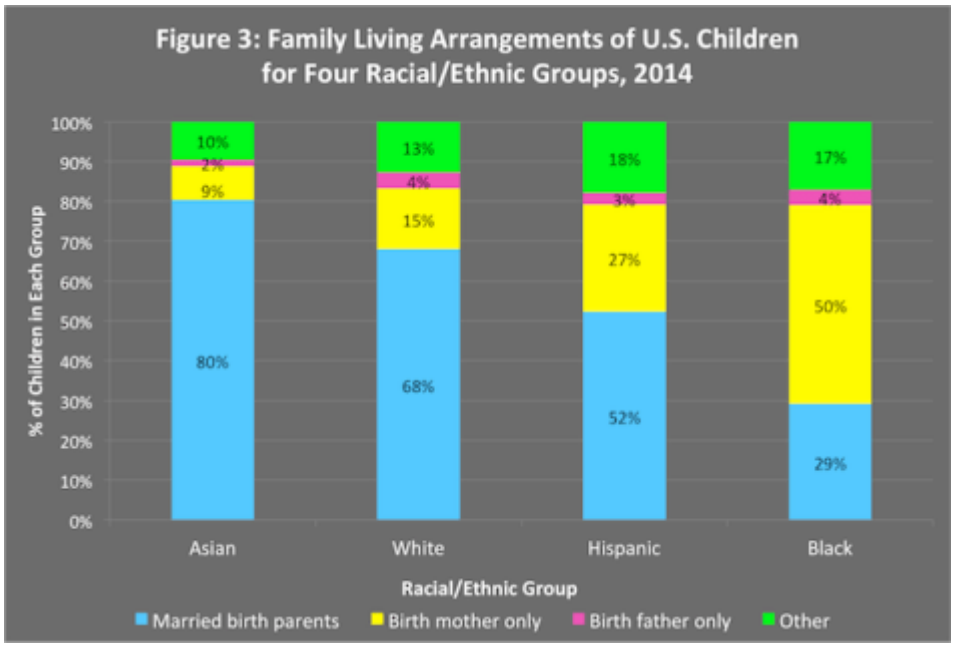

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

Education and marriage

This article is written by the far-left radical Nicholas Kristof, writing in the radically-leftist

New York Times (a former newspaper).

Excerpt:

> A new scholarly book, "The Asian American Achievement Paradox," by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, notes that Asian-American immigrants in recent decades have started with one advantage: They are highly educated, more so even than the average American. These immigrants are disproportionately doctors, research scientists and other highly educated professionals.

> It's not surprising that the children of Asian-American doctors would flourish in the United States. But Lee and Zhou note that kids of working-class Asian-Americans often also thrive, showing remarkable upward mobility.
>
> […]There's also evidence that Americans believe that A's go to smart kids, while Asians are more likely to think that they go to hard workers… Asian-American kids are allowed no excuse for getting B's — or even an A-. The joke is that an A- is an "Asian F."

One reason Asians students do so well is because their parents are usually married:

> > Strong two-parent families are a factor, too. Divorce rates are much lower for many Asian-American communities than for Americans as a whole, and there's evidence that two-parent households are less likely to sink into poverty and also have better outcomes for boys in particular.

American blacks have a 73% out-of-wedlock birth rate. A huge difference compared to Asians.

So, when Nikole Hannah-Jones tells you that education and marriage don't matter, she's just wrong.

Compound interest

Education and marriage are important, but so is saving your money. The wealthiest people in America are typically the ones who are experts at saving money early, and investing it. They know about the law of compound interest. If you invest money early and leave it alone, then it will grow into a fortune by the time you are read to stop working.

This graph explains compound interest:

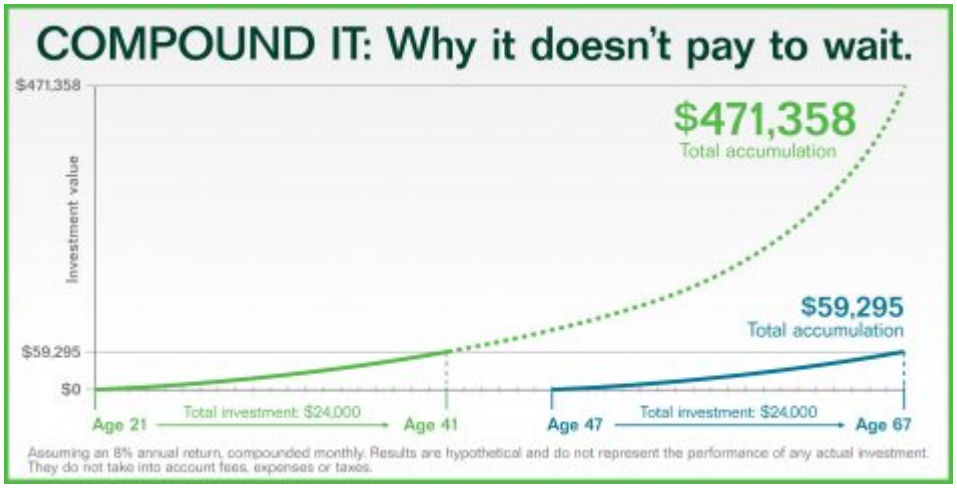

Investing $24,000 from age 21 to 41 vs investing $24000 from age 47 to 67

What does Nikole Hannah-Jones say when she looks at that graph? She doesn't think that saving money makes a difference to having more or less wealth. She thinks skin color determines whether saving money makes you wealthy or not. The graph clearly shows what we should be recommending to young people of color. They need to stop spending money and start saving it, and the earlier the better. It doesn't matter what your skin color is, saving money early JUST WORKS.

Similarly, when she says that home ownership doesn't make you more wealthy, this is just terrible advice. It's always better to pay down your own mortgage (at least when interest rates are low like they are now) than to pay someone else rent. You have to live somewhere, and paying for your own home is better because it costs about the same as rent, and then you get to keep the home when you're done paying for it.

Communism

Nikole Hannah-Jones does have a "solution" to disparities in wealth. Her solution is communism. She wants to transfer money from those who earn, to those who don't. But we already have tried that in the 21st century and it resulted in the deaths of over 100 million people. That's not my opinion, that's all documented in a book published by Harvard University Press.

You don't even have to read the book to know the truth – just look at countries that score low on the Index of Economic Freedom, and compare their GDP per capita to countries that score high on the Index of Economic Freedom. The more communist a nation goes, the less wealth there is for the citizens. That's why people in Venezuela are eating zoo animals and selling their bodies in prostitution in order to get food to eat and water to drink. Nikole Hannah-Jones wants to reduce economic freedom, but we know by looking at other countries that this reduces per-capita GDP over time.

There's a lot more than could be said here, but the point is that we need to be telling American blacks to make decisions that match the decisions of other successful non-white communities in America. We need to start teaching young people basic economics so they don't fall prey to charlatans.

Three reasons why Christians should read military history

July 31, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Roger Trimble, standing second from the left, in front of his B-24 Liberator

I recently finished a book called "Beyond The Call: The True Story of One World War II Pilot's Covert Mission to Rescue POWs on the Eastern Front". It's about a World War 2 heavy bomber pilot who completes 35 missions, and then goes into the Soviet Union (our allies, at the time) to rescue American POWs who were starving or being kidnapped or murdered by the Soviet secret police.

I found a very good article about it from Stripes, to just quickly introduce the story:

> Later, after making contact with POWs roaming the Polish countryside, [Capt. Robert Trimble] fully embraced his mission. He saw the desperate plight of those who had been liberated from Third Reich prison camps. Many were sick, emaciated, often clothed in rags and left to fend for themselves during a brutally harsh winter.
>
> Trimble risked his life numerous times over six weeks, helping to rescue hundreds of POWs. He came to the aid of others, too. In one daring rescue, nearly foiled by Russian agents who had become suspicious of his activities, Trimble helped 400 French women make it out of Poland and back to France.

Although he was being constantly trailed by Russian spies and informers, he would evade them, and bring food and money to the POWs, then put them on a train to Odessa, Ukraine, where they could get onto a ship going home.

Why I read military history

It is hard to develop virtues just by wishing and hoping. Something has to go into your mind that causes you to think differently, and feel differently. Everything that you watch on TV, hear on the radio, or see in the movie theater, is made by secular leftists. They aren't trying to build your moral character. They're goal is to break down your resistance to their unBiblical worldview and moral values. Instead of giving people who hate Jesus your money, just so you can be entertained, why not try to put something in front of your eyes that will make you better?

Look at this famous passage from the Bible.

Romans 12:1-2:

1Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

And also this from Philippians, my favorite book of the Bible.

Philippians 4:8:

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

So you can see that when I am reading, my goal is to work on my character. I want to have feelings about things that are appropriate for a Christian man.

So why military history? Here are three reasons why I read these military history books.

Humility

First, **humility**. Humility used to be one of my biggest challenges. So I thought to myself "instead of seeing yourself as some heroic figure, why don't you read about some real heroes… people who willingly gave their lives for their friends, like the Bible urges, and like Jesus did by example".

Remember this from John 15:13?

13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

Military history is filled with stories of courage, bravery, self-sacrifice, endurance, unselfishness, and many other virtues. When you read about people who are better than you, doing more important things than what you're doing, it really helps you to be humble.

The best thing for humility is reading Medal of Honor citations. You can find a bunch of them online here. And if you want a book to read, try these books about Medal of Honor recipients:

- Heroes of World War II

- Korean War Heroes
- Vietnam Medal of Honor Heroes

Endurance

Second, **endurance**. I sometimes feel badly about not having found someone to marry and not having lots of children. I wanted a good marriage to be a model for others, and also to have an influence in the next generation through my children. However, whenever I read military history, I see a lot of young men dying in battle. And I think, they too won't know what sex is like. And, they too won't know what marriage is like. And, they too won't know what having children is like. But it's not just the ones who die, it's the hardships they have to go through, as well. Cold, hunger, imprisonment, pain, loss of their friends, etc.

I remember reading about one of my favorite battles – probably the most famous battle of the Korean War, which is our most moral war. It's about Fox Company of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Regiment, 1st Marine Division. They had to hold a hill beside a vital road against overwhelming numbers of Chinese soldiers during the freezing cold North Korean winter. I remember reading about how one soldier got up to go to the bathroom, and was nearly shot by a sniper. He fell over on his own poop, which had already frozen by the time it hit the ground. For months after, I would always think about this whenever I went into a bathroom. We have pre-warmed water in our bathrooms at work, along with soap, lysol spray, febreeze, contact lense cleaner, hand sanitizer, and other things. Just understanding what other people have to go through in war helps me to be more patient with the little tiny setbacks that I experience. I used to get very anxious when anything went wrong, because of I was raised by strict immigrant parents. That anxiety seemed to last a long time, but since I started to read military history, I've been much more patient. I know that things could be worse.

Thankfulness

The third thing that I've experienced is **thankfulness**. Not just for all the things that I have because of what our armed forces have done, e.g. – basic human rights, prosperity, liberty, security, etc. But also specifically about those who gave their lives so that I could live free in a free country, and practice my Christian faith without fear.

Here are two of my favorite Medal of Honor stories from World War 2, in the Battle of Pearl Harbor:

Congressional Medal of Honor
Awarded Posthumously
PETER TOMICH

Rank and organization: Chief Watertender, U.S. Navy.
Place and date: Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.
Born: 3 June 1893, Prolog, Austria.

Although realizing that the ship was capsizing as a result of enemy bombing and torpedoing, Tomich remained at his post in the engineering plant of the U.S.S. Utah, until

he saw that all boilers were secured and all fireroom personnel had left their stations, and by so doing lost his own life.

And:

Congressional Medal of Honor
Awarded Posthumously
JAMES RICHARD WARD

Rank and organization: Seaman First Class, U.S. Navy.
Place and date: Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.
Born: 10 September 1921, Springfield, Ohio.

When it was seen that the U.S.S. Oklahoma was going to capsize and the order was given to abandon ship, Ward remained in a turret holding a flashlight so the remainder of the turret crew could see to escape, thereby sacrificing his own life.

I do think that it's important for Christians to read these kinds of stories in order to feed their own awareness of what it must have been like for Jesus to give his life *voluntarily* for us.

There is no shortcut to gratitude. You have to constantly reflect on the sacrifices made by others for you, if you are to have any concrete reason for feeling grateful. The more you read about examples of people giving their lives for others, the more you'll appreciate what Jesus did for you. It will make you grateful.

There is a very annoying idea out there in the culture that says that people just do whatever is easy and fun for themselves, and since everyone else is always doing what makes them feel good, then there is no need to be thankful for anything. It's comforting for people to delude themselves with that belief, but it's false.

My reading list

You can check out the "What I am Reading" section of the blogto see which military history books I've been reading.

Astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on intelligent design and habitability

August 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Here is a lecture that talks about intelligent design and eclipses. There are 5 video clips that make up the full lecture.

The playlist for all 5 clips is here.

About the speaker

> Guillermo Gonzalez is an Associate Professor of Physics at Grove City College. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington and has received fellowships, grants and awards from such institutions as NASA, the University of Washington, the Templeton Foundation, Sigma Xi (scientific research society) and the National Science Foundation.

Learn more about the speaker here.

The lecture

Here's part 1 of 5:

And the rest are here:

- Part 2 of 5
- Part 3 of 5
- Part 4 of 5
- Part 5 of 5

Total time: 43 minutes.

Topics:

- What is the Copernican Principle?
- Is the Earth's suitability for hosting life rare in the universe?
- Does the Earth have to be the center of the universe to be special?
- How similar to the Earth does a planet have to be to support life?
- What is the definition of life?
- What are the three minimal requirements for life of any kind?
- Requirement 1: A molecule that can store information (carbon)
- Requirement 2: A medium in which chemicals can interact (liquid water)
- Requirement 3: A diverse set of chemical elements
- What is the best environment for life to exist?
- Our place in the solar system: the circumstellar habitable zone
- Our place in the galaxy: the galactic habitable zones
- Our time in the universe's history: the cosmic habitable age
- Other habitability requirements (e.g. – metal-rich star, massive moon, etc.)
- The orchestration needed to create a habitable planet
- How different factors depend on one another through time
- How tweaking one factor can adversely affect other factors
- How many possible places are there in the universe where life could emerge?
- Given these probabilistic resources, should we expect that there is life elsewhere?
- How to calculate probabilities using the "Product Rule"
- Can we infer that there is a Designer just because life is rare? Or do we need more?

The corelation between habitability and measurability.

- Are the habitable places in the universe also the best places to do science?
- Do the factors that make Earth habitable also make it good for doing science?
- Some places and times in the history of the universe are more habitable than others
- Those exact places and times also allow us to make scientific discoveries
- Observing solar eclipses and structure of our star, the Sun
- Observing stars and galaxies
- Observing the cosmic microwave background radiation
- Observing the acceleration of the universe caused by dark matter and energy
- Observing the abundances of light elements like helium of hydrogen
- These observations support the big bang and fine-tuning arguments for God's existence
- It is exactly like placing observatories on the tops of mountains
- There are observers existing in the best places to observe things
- This is EXACTLY how the universe has been *designed for making scientific discoveries*

This lecture was delivered by Guillermo Gonzalez in 2007 at the University of California at

Davis. If you like this lecture, but maybe want something a bit more user friendly, check out “The Privileged Planet” DVD, or watch it online here (first 60 minutes of that video).

Bible study: a good sermon on grace, shepherds and sheep

August 2, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A good shepherd rescuing a lost sheep, who had no hope

My friend Wessel sent me this sermon a few days ago because I was looking for a good sermon on grace. Some of my friends pitched in with sermons, but this one from a South African church was BY FAR the best. I've listened to it 3 times already. The speaker sounds exactly like one of best friends from university, Andrew, who is from South Africa.

Here is the MP3 file. (7 megabytes, 30 minutes)

The text of the sermon is Genesis 48:1-20:

> [1] Some time later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him.
>
> [2] When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed.
>
> [3] Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me
>
> [4] and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.'
>
> [5] "Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine.
>
> [6] Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit

they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers.

[7] As I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath” (that is, Bethlehem).

[8] When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, “Who are these?”

[9] “They are the sons God has given me here,” Joseph said to his father.

Then Israel said, “Bring them to me so I may bless them.”

[10] Now Israel’s eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them.

[11] Israel said to Joseph, “I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too.”

[12] Then Joseph removed them from Israel’s knees and bowed down with his face to the ground.

[13] And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel’s left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel’s right hand, and brought them close to him.

[14] But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim’s head, though he was the younger,and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh’s head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.

[15] Then he blessed Joseph and said,

“May the God before whom my fathers
  Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully,
the God who has been my shepherd
  all my life to this day,

[16] the Angel who has delivered me from all harm
  —may he bless these boys.
May they be called by my name
  and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac,
and may they increase greatly
  on the earth.”

[17] When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim’s head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father’s hand to move it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head.

[18] Joseph said to him, “No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head.”

[19] But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations.”

> [20] He blessed them that day and said,
>
> "In your[c] name will Israel pronounce this blessing:
> 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'"
>
> So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

So, in this story, God continues his tradition of choosing the lowly people in the world instead of the people who are seen as "better". God does this in many cases, because he has a big heart for people who are born in a bad position. Normally in the world, people always choose what they think is best for them. They choose the prettiest girl. They choose the most tallest man. Those who need a little extra help or care are passed over. God sometimes does the complete opposite of this. Instead of choosing the obvious "best person", he chooses a much lower person, and he lifts them up to do great things.

Consider 1 Corinthians 1:26-31:

> [26] Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called.Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.
>
> [27] But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.
>
> [28] God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,
>
> [29] so that no one may boast before him.
>
> [30] It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.
>
> [31] Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

The speaker in the sermon explains the idea of grace by talking about sheep and shepherds. He explains that unlike clever homing pigeons, sheep are prone to wandering off and they aren't able to find their way home. Sometimes, they get lost, and sometimes they even wander into danger. A bad shepherd would just say that he only wanted to have the best sheep – the smartest ones or the richest ones or the best looking ones or the most popular ones. But a good shepherd is sorry for the sheep that needs the most help, and is the most lost, and in the most danger. God is like a good shepherd. God sends his Son to die to atone for the sins of the bad sheep in this world, even when they didn't deserve it. (John 3:16-17) That's grace. But he also arranges the world in a way that bad sheep have an opportunity to reach out and find him. (Acts 17:24-27) That's grace, too.

In my own life, I have often found myself being excluded or discounted by people, usually because of my skin color or because of my early childhood poverty or because I just struggle to understand what I'm expected to say and to do. But a funny thing often happens. Right when I am feeling the worst about being excluded, God comes along and gives me something special to do, that makes me forget about being excluded. And that's

been my experience of grace, ever since I was little and even to this day. The honor of being allowed to participate in God's plan makes me forget what it feels like to be excluded. The very best things I've achieved in my life are the times where God showed me someone who started out life in a terrible situation (usually because of the selfish decisions of their irresponsible parents) and then I participated in God's plan to lead them out of the mess they started out from.

I think one of the biggest reasons why some Christians stick with Christianity through thick and thin is that they have this experience of grace. This experience of grace means that no matter what, that sheep is going to loyal to that shepherd who chose him when he was at his lowest and most vulnerable. The first part of the choosing is obviously Jesus dying on the cross to atone for your rebellion. But after that, God carefully reveals himself to the sheep. And then there is the guidance that helps the sheep to avoid destroying himself with sin. If the sheep makes mistakes, the good shepherd has already laid down his life to pay for them. This is a lot of effort being put into this rescue operation. It's difficult for people who have never experienced grace to realize how real and life-transforming it is. For those who have not experienced it, I really recommend that you pray to God, in the name of Jesus, and ask him to give you grace.

There are still things in my life where God has decided that he is not going to fix it. And, strangely enough, that doesn't make me disloyal to him at all. Why not? Well, you have to read the Bible and understand that Jesus was not spared from suffering or death in his loyal obedience to God. He wasn't given everything he wanted to feel happy all the time. When you understand that this is the character of your shepherd, then it's much easier for you to put up with the things you lack, too.

Google purges conservative sites from its search results to help the Democrat party

August 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Google's new motto

So, in 2016 Trump won the presidential election. At that time, I got about 1000 referrals per day from the Google search engine. Now I get less than 100 per day. Although my posts show on the first page of results on Duck Duck Go, Google has deleted my posts or buried them way down in the search results. But I'm not the only victim of their pro-Democrat-party bias.

Here's the latest from Breitbart:

> A few days after the 2016 election, at an internal meeting later leaked to Breitbart News, top Google executives, including Sundar Pichai, Sergey Brin, and Kent Walker, lamented President Trump's victory, comparing Trump voters to "extremists" and discussing their desire to make Trump's election and the populist movement a "blip" in history.
>
> True to their word, four years later, Google is deliberately working to interfere with the reelection of Trump in 2020.
>
> There are several ways in which Google is interfering in the 2020 election, but this article will focus primarily on one of them: political search bias.
>
> […]New data shows that Google has suppressed Breitbart's search visibility by 99.7 percent since 2016.
>
> On April 4, 2016, Breitbart ranked in the top ten search positions (i.e., on the first page of Google search results) for 355 key search terms; but now, as of July 20, 2020, Breitbart ranks in the top ten search positions for only one search term. And, on April 4, 2016, Breitbart ranked in the top 100 search positions for 16,820 key search terms; but now, as of July 20, 2020, Breitbart ranks in the top 100 search positions for only 55 search terms.
>
> Moreover, organic Google search traffic to Breitbart (measured by unique

> visitors) is down 63 percent when comparing the first half of 2016 with the first half of 2020.

They're down 99.7%, and I'm down 90%. I suspect it's the same for most other conservative web sites. Rather than admit that they are suppressing conservative sites, Google's CEO decided to lie to Congress about it.

The Federalist reports:

> Google CEO Sundar Pichai brushed off questions Wednesday before the House Judiciary subcommittee on antitrust related to the tech giant's apparent blacklisting of conservative groups last week when about a dozen major websites were temporarily de-platformed.
>
> […]The websites targeted in last week's blacklisting, according to NewsBusters which itself was temporarily de-platformed last week, included the Washington Free Beacon, The Blaze, Townhall, The Daily Wire, PragerU, LifeNews, Project Veritas, Judicial Watch, The Resurgent, Breitbart, the Media Research Center, and CNSNews among others.
>
> Chuck Ross, a journalist with the Daily Caller News Foundation, observed that his employer's website was also included in the blackout when searches for stories related to Stefan Halper, an FBI informant who spied on the Trump campaign in Crossfire Hurricane was unmasked by his reporting came up blank.

> An experiment on whether Google is blocking search results for conservative sites. Randomly picked Stefan Halper as a search term. NYT and WaPo have 96 returns combined. No results on @DailyCaller, though we've probably published his name 100 times.
>
> — Chuck Ross (@ChuckRossDC) July 21, 2020

> NewsBusters reported that the websites impacted by the Google blackout were still organically available on Bing, Yahoo, and DuckDuckGo.
>
> Steube's questioning and the recent episodes of censorship come just one month after Google threatened to demonetize The Federalist following a report from NBC's "Verification Unit" compiled in collusion with a foreign left-wing think tank. While NBC first reported Google de-platformed The Federalist for its coverage of the riots sweeping American cities, the company released a statement that it was merely threatening the conservative website to take action for content in its comment section, not its published commentary.

Frankly, I blame Trump and the Republicans. When we had the House, Senate and presidency, we should have used the government to wipe out Big Tech – break them all up into small cap companies. Investigate every single senior-level employee, right up to the CEO. Jail the ones who are found guilty, and seize their assets.

Conservatives have a bad habit of trying to get along with their enemies, instead of holding them accountable. They would do the same to us, so we should be serious when

we have power. Abolish teacher unions. Put a massive tax on trial lawyers, Hollywood, entertainers, athletes, and the mainstream media. Defund NPR and PBS. End all unconstitutional government departments. Cut off all subsidies for higher education. And so on.

We had our chance, and we blew it.

In the meantime, please use DuckDuckGo.

Violent crime surges in large cities as Democrat leaders defund police

August 4, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How do Democrats respond to riots, vandalism and arson?

We can already see how Democrats respond to criminals by looking at what is happening now in major Democrat-run cities. Criminals are defacing monuments, vandalizing businesses and assaulting law-abiding citizens. The response of the Demoncrats in power has been to order the police to stand down – then cut the police budget in order to fund social workers.

Here's a report from The Daily Wire:

> Homicide rates are hitting decades-long highs in many of the largest cities across the United States as local officials struggle with the fallout of a pandemic and massive anti-police protests.
>
> Homicide rates have increased by double-digits in 36 of the 50 biggest U.S. cities, according to The Wall Street Journal. The spike in killings comes as other forms of violent crime, such as robberies and rapes, are appearing to decrease.
>
> […]Chicago police say gang violence lead to at least 15 people injured during a July 21 shootout at the funeral for a young man and gang member. At least 60 shell casings were recovered from the scene after a group of men opened fire on people gathered for the funeral and some in the crowd fired back.
>
> Aside from the pandemic, a wave of protests against police brutality has driven a secondary wave of anti-police sentiment as activists push local officials to defund and abolish police departments.

It's much easier for Democrats to do their rioting and looting and arson if there are no

police to stop them.

The police do have some advice for the taxpayers who pay the Democrat leaders to protect them from criminals:

> Minneapolis Police informed residents of the city's embattled 3rd Precinct to prepare for the giving up of their personal belongings to potential robbers and advised them to do as criminals say for their own safety.
>
> According to a July 28 email provided to Alpha News MN that was also forwarded to The Daily Wire, the Minneapolis Police Department offered "prevention tips" to residents hoping to avoid being a victim of the skyrocketing cases of robbery and carjacking that have plagued the city since George Floyd's death in May.
>
> "Robberies and Carjacking's [sic] have increased in our Precinct," the email begins. "Cell phones, purses, and vehicles are being targeted. Some victims have been maced, dragged, assaulted, and some threatened with a gun. Most of these crimes have occurred north of 42nd St. E. 100 Robberies and 20 Carjackings have been reported to 3rd Precinct Police in July alone. Downtown and Southwest Minneapolis have seen an increase as well. We want those who live and work here to be safe!"

The e-mail tells residents of the Democrat stronghold to: "Be prepared to give up your cell phone and purse/wallet." And when confronted by criminals, to "do as they say." Not surprising, since the police were previously ordered to vacate a precinct, so that the rioters could set it on fire.

If Joe Biden wins in November, he'll confiscate your firearms and tell you to do as the criminals say, and hand over your property to them. Let them rape you. Let them kill you. Let them kill your family. And he'll be protected by armed security. Paid for by you.

How a small, poor country became the top economy in Latin America

August 5, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

South America Map

One way to learn about whether specific economic policies work or not is to look at different countries that have tried them. Believe it or not, patterns do emerge about what works and what doesn't work, as you look across different times and places. I've been reading a book called "Money, Greed and God" with my friend Carla, which talks about what has worked to reduce poverty.

The author basically outlined two approaches. In the first approach, the government 1) confiscates the wealth of the most productive workers, 2) nationalizes (takes control of) the businesses of the most successful entrepreneurs, 3) restricts trading between citizens and with other countries, with minimum wage, price controls and tariffs. In the second approach, the government does the opposite: 1) lowers taxes on the most productive workers, and 2) lets entrepreneurs compete to provide goods and services to consumers, and 3) lowers restrictions on internal trading and trading with other countries, e.g. – eliminating minimum wage, tariffs and price controls.

Let's take a look at two Latin American countries that went in opposite directions. Venezuela and Chile. Then we can finally find out which policies actually achieve results for the people.

Here is how Chile started out in 1973.

PROBLEM: Price controls and tariffs:

> Prices for the majority of basic goods were fixed by the government in 1973. Even though Chile was and still is a small economy, the level of protectionism was high. By the end of 1973, the nominal average tariff for imports was 105 percent, with a maximum of 750 percent. Non-tariff barriers also impeded the import of more than 3,000 out of 5,125 registered goods. Just as economic theory predicts, large queues in front of stores were usual in Santiago and other cities in Chile as a result of the scarcity caused by price controls.

PROBLEM: Government taking over private businesses:

> The decline in GDP during 1973 reflected a shrinking productive sector in which the main assets were gradually falling under government control or ownership through expropriations and other government interventions in the economy.

PROBLEM: Deficit spending and government printing money:

> The fiscal situation was chaotic. The deficit reached 55 percent of expenditures and 20 percent of GDP and was the main cause of inflation because the Central Bank was issuing money to finance the government deficit.

SOLUTION: lower or eliminate restrictions on trade:

> The most important economic reform in Chile was to open trade, primarily through a flat, low tariff on imports. Much of the credit for Chilean economic reforms in the following 30 years should be given to the decision to open our economy to the rest of the world. The strength of Chilean firms, productive sectors, and institutions grew up thanks to that fundamental change.

SOLUTION: let competing entrepreneurs in the private sector provide goods and services to consumers:

> A second fundamental reform was to allow the private sector to recover, adding dynamism to the economy. In fact, important sectors such as electricity generation and distribution and telecommunications were still managed by state companies. After we implemented a massive privatization plan that included more than 50,000 new direct shareholders and several million indirect (through pension funds) shareholders, these companies were managed by private entrepreneurs that carried out important expansion plans.

SOLUTION: let people take responsibility for their own lives instead of depending on government:

> The 1981 reform of the Chilean pension fund system deserves special mention. Under the leadership of Minister José Piñera, an individual capitalization account program was designed with specific contributions, administered by private institutions selected by the workers. The Chilean Administradoras de Fondos de Pension (Pension Fund Administrators or AFP) has been replicated in more than

> 20 countries, and more than 100 million workers in different parts of the world use these accounts to save for retirement.

SOLUTION: allow parents to choose the school that fits their needs from competing education providers, and push school administration down from the federal government to the municipal level, where it would be more responsive to voter's needs:

> In 1981, Chile introduced a universal educational voucher system for students in both its elementary and secondary schools. At the same time, the central government transferred the administration of public schools to municipal governments… The financial value of the voucher did not depend on family income.

RESULTS: And I was able to find a nice short, description of how all that worked out for them on the far-left Wikipedia, of all places:

> The economy of Chile is a high-income economy as ranked by the World Bank, and is considered one of South America's most stable and prosperous nations, leading Latin American nations in competitiveness, income per capita, globalization, economic freedom, and low perception of corruption.
>
> In 2006, Chile became the country with the highest nominal GDP per capita in Latin America. In May 2010 Chile became the first South American country to join the OECD. Tax revenues, all together 20.2% of GDP in 2013, were the second lowest among the 34 OECD countries, and the lowest in 2010. In 2017, only 0.7% of the population lived on less than US$1.90 a day.

According to the Heritage Foundation, Chile is ranked as the 18th freest economy in the world. The World Bank ranked Chile as the 50th highest GDP per capita for 2018, just below Hungary and above Poland.

Now, you can contrast those results with Venezuela. I have been blogging about Venezuela for years on this blog, and documenting how they raised taxes, banned guns, nationalized private sector companies, raised tariffs, and increased regulations. They are now ranked JUST ABOVE NORTH KOREA for economic freedom – #179 out of 180 countries measured. Basically, they did the opposite of everything that Chile did – transferring power away from parents, workers, business owners, churches and municipal governments to the powerful centralized federal government.

Wikipedia explains how Hugo Chavez took over in 1999 and enacted a communist revolution.

More:

> Since the Bolivarian Revolution half-dismantled its PDVSA oil giant corporation in 2002 by firing most of its 20,000-strong dissident professional human capital and imposed stringent currency controls in 2003 in an attempt to prevent capital flight, there has been a steady decline in oil production and exports. Further yet, price controls, expropriation of numerous farmlands and various industries,

> among other government authoritarian policies… have resulted in severe shortages in Venezuela and steep price rises of all common goods, including food, water, household products, spare parts, tools and medical supplies; forcing many manufacturers to either cut production or close down, with many ultimately abandoning the country as has been the case with several technological firms and most automobile makers.

They confiscated private property, took over private sector businesses, implemented tariffs and price controls, redistributed wealth via massive welfare programs, and pushed all decision-making out of families and municipal governments up to the federal government. By depriving the producers of their earnings, the country caused massive shortages of goods and services, to the point where people are fleeing the country, consuming zoo animals, and selling their bodies as prostitutes in order to get food and water.

Application

In the next election, we are not picking a tribe because of how they make us feel about ourselves. We are not choosing in order to see ourselves as "nice" and "not nice". We need to look at specific policies being proposed, and see what works and what doesn't work. The examples of Chile (rags-to-riches) and Venezuela (riches-to-rags) are helpful for voters who want to get RESULTS instead of FEELINGS.

I'll leave you with a list of links from previous posts so you can see how communism worked out for Venezuela.

Related posts

- Before socialists in Venezuela could run over protesters, they had to ban gun ownership
- Venezuela solves hunger by banning bread lines, and solves crime by banning self-defense
- And now slavery: Venezuela's socialist policies lead to forced labor camps
- Do young Americans know how well socialism is working in Venezuela?
- How well are Democrat Party economic policies working out in Venezuela?
- How well does socialism work in countries and cities that adopt it?
- How well are Democrat economic policies working in Venezuela and Argentina?
- Marco Rubio's speech exposing the horrors of socialism in Cuba and Venezuela
- Obama silent as Venezuelan government violently represses democratic opposition
- How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?
- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia's economy to grow? What causes Venezuela's economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama's buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company

- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank

Men on strike: the social changes that caused men to opt out of marriage

August 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

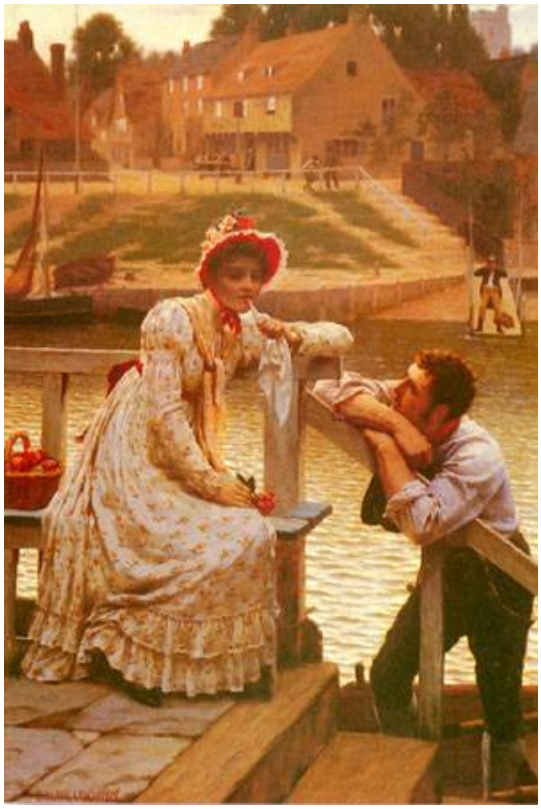

Painting: "Courtship", by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

I read and enjoyed Dr. Helen Smith's book "Men on Strike" a few years back. The book explains a few of the developments that have led to men underperforming in school and in the workplace, and opting out of marriage and fatherhood.

Dr. Helen comes to this problem as a secular libertarian, not as a Christian conservative.

A review of Dr. Helen's book appeared in Salvo magazine. The review is written by Terrell Clemmons, who has the best Christian worldview of any woman I know – I frequently rely on her advice.

Terrell writes:

> While the feminist movement may originally have been about equal respect for both sexes, what it has morphed into, she argues, is female privilege. From rape laws that empower women but not the men they may falsely accuse, to divorce laws tilted in favor of the wife, to the feminization of the U.S. education system, men have become the sex under the gun, while women enjoy the status of a protected class.
>
> But unlike their mothers or grandmothers, men today are not taking to the streets burning their undergarments and shrieking demands (thank God). They're doing just the opposite, which is far worse. They're going on strike. The strike

> zones are manifold:
>
> **Higher Education.**In addition to the enrollment imbalance, which is approaching a 60/40 ratio of women to men, college has become, in the words of one professor, “a hostile working environment [in which] males increasingly feel emasculated.” Smith quotes a student named John, who had this to say about his college experience: “I had already been cautious around women, having grown up with Tawana Brawley in my backyard and daily stories of sexual harassment; I played it safe and passive every time. But it doesn’t matter. The only way not to lose is to not play. So I’m out.”
>
> **Work,**including community involvement. With higher female graduation rates and salaries, men today are falling behind their fathers economically and professionally. Consequently, their efforts to prove themselves worthy mates through hard work and higher earnings don’t win female attention the way they used to. Discouraged, too many retreat to a man cave, and inertia sets in from there.
>
> **Marriage.**Marriage rates are down, and honest men opting out will tell you why. Smith cites a Rutgers University study of single heterosexual men which turned up the top reasons they hadn’t married. They can get sex and the companionship of cohabitation without marriage more easily than in times past, and they don’t want to open themselves up to the risk of divorce and financial loss. It really isn’t that complicated a decision. In fact, it’s often not an actual decision at all. It just happens.

The simplest explanation for the difficulties that boys face in an education system that is dominated by women (teachers and administrators) is discrimination. And in the workplace, the government requires employers to report on male and female head counts, and promote women who are not qualified. I have seen receptionists with tattoos and no college degrees promoted to six-figure manager jobs in companies where I worked.

There is one more which to me was the most surprising one in the book – paternity fraud, and the laws that support paternity fraud:

> Take the following cases of nonconsensual insemination: Nathaniel from California, age 15, had sex with 34-year-old Ricci, which, due to his age, was legally considered nonconsensual. Emile from Louisiana was visiting his parents in the hospital when a nurse offered him oral sex, *if* he wore a condom, which she conveniently offered to dispose of for him afterward. S. F. from Alabama passed out drunk at the home of a female friend and awoke undressed the following morning. In all three cases, including the one involving the minor, a woman got sperm and, nine months later, a child, and the man got ordered by a court of law to pay support for eighteen years.
>
> Less devious, but similarly amiss, are those cases in which a man, having been

> betrayed by his wife or girlfriend, was nevertheless held financially responsible for a child genetically proven to be another man's offspring. While not as sensational as sperm-jacking, it is another form of paternity extortion.

In each of those cases, the man was found liable to pay child support – including the case of the 15-year-old boy, who was forced to pay child support to his statutory rapist when he turned 18. This is how the court system works, and more and more men are understanding the risks.

I often encounter "pro-marriage" people while gathering stories for the blog. These pro-marriage people come in two varieties.

On the one end of the spectrum are people like Terrell Clemmons and Jennifer Roback Morse, who understand marriage, but who also understand the social changes that have made marriage unattractive for men. Both Clemmons and Morse have a background in STEM fields, so they are able to understand incentives and tradeoffs. They understand that society has to rollback the changes to education, divorce laws, etc. if they expect men to be interested in marriage again. They understand that men are not just accessories of women, but instead have their own desires, feelings and reasons for marrying.

On the other end of the spectrum are feminist men, who are not able to understand the changing incentives that face men in a world that has evolved under the influence of radical feminism. It is just simpler (less thinking) for these men to accept the radical feminism as a given, and then urge men to "man up". I think a much better idea would be for the "man up" crowd to realize how marriage has changed, and how the schools and the workplace have changed, then make all of these things more attractive to men. It doesn't do any good to try to "dare" men into jumping off a cliff. Men aren't stupid, and they do what is in their own best interests. If the man-up crowd wants younger men to marry, then they need to change the incentives offered to men. And that means changing women first.

New study: sex-reassignment surgery does not bring mental health benefits

August 7, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

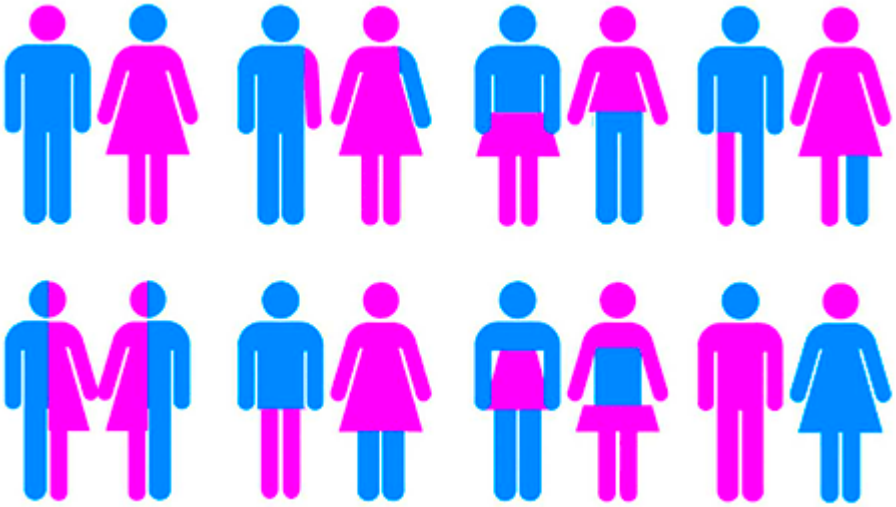

Thinking about transgenderism

If you look at the actual science of sex re-assignment surgery, it doesn't make a good case that these procedures actually deliver results.

Here's the latest from Daily Signal:

> The world's largest dataset on patients who have undergone sex-reassignment procedures reveals that these procedures do not bring mental health benefits. But that's not what the authors originally claimed. Or what the media touted.
>
> In October 2019, the American Journal of Psychiatry published a paper titled, "Reduction in Mental Health Treatment Utilization Among Transgender Individuals After Gender-Affirming Surgeries: A Total Population Study." As the title suggests, the paper claimed that after having had sex-reassignment surgeries, a patient was less likely to need mental health treatment.
>
> Well, over the weekend, the editors of the journal and the authors of the paper issued a correction. In the words of the authors, "the results demonstrated no advantage of surgery in relation to subsequent mood or anxiety disorder-related health care."
>
> But it's actually worse than that. The original results already demonstrated no benefits to hormonal transition. That part didn't need a correction.
>
> So, the bottom line: The largest dataset on sex-reassignment procedures—both hormonal and surgical—reveals that such procedures do not bring the promised mental health benefits.
>
> In fact, in their correction to the original study, the authors point out that on one score—treatment for anxiety disorders—patients who had sex-reassignment surgeries did worse than those who did not:

> individuals diagnosed with gender incongruence who had received gender-affirming surgery were more likely to be treated for anxiety disorders compared with individuals diagnosed with gender incongruence who had not received gender-affirming surgery.
>
> You would think patients suffering from gender dysphoria would want to know that.

Previously, I had blogged about another study that found that the choice to go transgender was enormously susceptible to peer pressure and teacher pressure.

Here's how the study was first reported by Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.

Peer pressure / The Internet:

> The pattern of clusters of teens in friend groups becoming transgender-identified, the group dynamics of these friend groups and the types of advice viewed online led her to the hypothesis that friends and online sources could spread certain beliefs.
>
> [….]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

"Friends and online sources could spread certain beliefs".

Mental disorders / traumatic events:

> Additionally, 62 percent of parents reported their teen or young adult had one or more diagnoses of a psychiatric disorder or neurodevelopmental disability before the onset of gender dysphoria. Forty-eight percent reported that their child had experienced a traumatic or stressful event prior to the onset of their gender dysphoria, including being bullied, sexually assaulted or having their parents get divorced.

"experienced a traumatic or stressful event prior to the onset of their gender dysphoria" such as "having their parents get divorced".

When you read studies like this, it almost makes you think that we shouldn't be rushing children into sex-reassignment surgery, doesn't it? But then what would the adults who are desperate to feel good about themselves do to feel good about themselves? It makes

them feel good to let children do whatever they want. And it feels so bad to tell children no when they want something. The important thing for these selfish adults is to let the children do what they want right now. That’s called “compassion”.

Suzanne Venker interviews Dr. Stephen Baskerville about divorce and its beneficiaries

August 8, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

I am just LOVING the Suzanne Venker podcast. You should subscribe if you like discussions with experts about marriage, divorce, feminism, sex and relationships. Recent guests: Christina Hoff Sommers, Rollo Tomassi, Janice Fiamengo, Denise McAllister, Katy Faust, Helen Smith, Joy Pullmann, Heather Mac Donald, Mona Charen, Dr. Laura, Dennis Prager, Allison Armstrong, etc.

You can listen to the episode here.

And it came with a free summary:

> Children of divorce are in desperate need of a relationship with both their parents. Sadly, far too many are reduced to having a relationship with only one parent: the mother.
>
> Citing a principle called the "best interest of the child," family courts award sole or primary custody of most children of divorced parents to mothers, thereby reducing fathers to occasional visitation and zero authority.
>
> The silence on this issue is deafening, and this silence comes just as much from the right as it does from the left. It even comes from churches.
>
> Making matters worse is that divorce is no longer fault-based. Unilateral divorce is now the law of the land, and three-fourths of divorces are initiated by wives. Women don't have to allege any fault by the husband, and he has no right to oppose the divorce.
>
> To address this monstrous social travesty, I could think of no one better than Stephen Baskerville, former Professor of Government at Patrick Henry College.

Stephen is widely recognized as a leading authority on fatherhood, family policy, and sexual politics. He holds a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and writes on political ideologies with an emphasis on religion, family policy, and sexuality. His books include The New Politics of Sex and Taken Into Custody: The War against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family.

Stephen serves on advisory boards to the Ruth Institute, the Men's Health Network and other organizations. His website is http://www.stephenbaskerville.com.

IN THIS EPISODE:

5:00-8:00 How Stephen began writing on the "divorce industry," the political dynamics involved and about no-fault divorce: why it disproportionately affects fathers.

8:00 How women are encouraged to get divorced and take the children, make false accusations against fathers etc.

10:24 How men are less likely to use children as weapons against the other spouse

10:45 The Myth of the Deadbeat Dad

14:00 What is no-fault divorce and why is it wrong, why is it a system of "chaos" and why we need to "enforce the constitution" when it comes to divorce

11:40 – 16:00 How the Bill of Rights is violated in many divorce cases and how basic constitutional rights are being violated.

17:00 How political correctness keeps ups from being able to address it and solve the problems with no-fault divorce and how both the left and right wing media both ignore it

19:00 How even Ronald Reagan admits he was deceived when he signed the first No Fault divorce legislation into action in CA. How there was also no public debate or discussion at the time it was enacted and throughout the years until now

19:45 How these laws have affected the social structure, including crime, fatherlessness in homes, etc.

20:49-22:50 What does Stephen tell and recommend for fathers as recourse for these issues?

24:35-30:30 Why the effects of the sexual revolution have led to the the West to brink of social and economic ruin (this includes sexual chaos, domestic violence, sexual harassment, etc.)

30:45 – Why feminism has not created a "utopia" for a women

33:00 – Stephen discusses single parent homes and the breakdown of the family

36:20 How the church not being involved in marriage has created a vacuum for the lawyers, social workers, judges and therapists to step in

> 37:45 Stephen talks about the idea of being “offended” and why men are responsible for stepping up and being leaders

For a virgin who has not and probably never will marry, I have had a lifelong interest in how to date and marry the right way – in order to get results and leave a legacy. So I know all these speakers, and have books my many of them (Dr. Laura, Janice Fiamengo, Helen Smith, Dr. Laura, Christina Hoff Sommers, Stephen Baskerville, etc.) in my house. I’m fascinated by these issues and know very much about what does and does not work in a marriage.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

August 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude others

- It’s meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can’t say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms

and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Four reasons why you should vote Democrat in November 2020

August 10, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What would the Democrats do if they won in November?

I found four interesting news stories last night that have really shown some of the wonderful benefits that you'll get from voting Democrat in November 2020. First, the FBI won't try to overthrow elections. Law enforcement won't early-release convicted criminals. Women athletes will be able to play sports. Rioters and looters will be much more civil. It will be awesome!

Let's start with this article from Just The News about the wonderful non-partisan FBI:

> The Senate Judiciary Committee on Sunday released a document it says shows the FBI misled senators on the Intelligence Committee during the Russia probe by falsely suggesting Christopher Steele's dossier was backed up by one of his key sources.
>
> "Somebody needs to go to jail for this," Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., the panel's chairman, told the Fox News program Sunday Futures with Maria Bartiromo. "This is a second lie. This is a second crime. They lied to the FISA court. They got rebuked, the FBI did, in 2019 by the FISA court, putting in doubt all FISA applications.
>
> "A year before, they're lying to the Senate Intel Committee. It's just amazing the compounding of the lies," Graham added.
>
> The document in question contains the draft talking points the FBI used to brief

> the Senate Intelligence Committee in February 2018, including an assessment that the primary sub-source of the information contained in the Steele dossier had backed up the former MI-6 agent's reporting.
>
> The primary sub-source "did not cite any significant concerns with the way his reporting was characterized in the dossier to the extent he could identify it," the FBI memo claimed. "…At minimum, our discussions with [the Primary Sub-source] confirm that the dossier was not fabricated by Steele."
>
> […]In fact, by the time the FBI provided senators the briefing, agents had already interviewed Steele's primary sub-source who disavowed much of what was attributed to him in the dossier as in "jest" or containing uncorroborated allegations.
>
> Agents also had been warned by the CIA that Steele's memos contained disinformation fed to him by Russian intelligence services, and had created a spreadsheet showing most of the claims in the dossier were either debunked, unable to be corroborated or Internet rumor.
>
> Graham said the document is so misleading he is demanding FBI Director Chris Wray identify the names of those involved in the briefing. "They misled the hell out of them," he said.

Fair and balanced. You can count on people like Eric Holder, Loretta Lynch, James Comey, and Andrew McCabe to enforce the law fairly, and not to try to overturn the results of an election they lost using the FBI as a weapon against their political opponents. Because that never happened under Obama when he used the IRS to attack conservative groups in an election year.

And look at this example of Democrats being tough on crime:

> Ibrahim Bouaichi, the Maryland man suspected of murdering Karla Elizabeth Dominguez Gonzalez in the West End last week, was released from jail on bond earlier this year while awaiting trial on charges that he attacked and raped her last fall, according to court records.
>
> Gonzalez was shot and killed on July 29 at around 6 a.m. outside her home on S. Greenmount Drive in the West End. Soon after her death, Alexandria Police identified Bouaichi as a suspect and said that he was armed and dangerous.

Law enforcement is a big priority for Maryland Democrats, and they'll always choose to protect the people who pay their salaries from criminals.

Democrats are so pro-woman, that they are willing to protect women athletes:

> Outsports, an LGBTQ website affiliated with Vox just doxxed the names of over-300 collegiate and professional athletes that signed a letter vouching for biological women in sports. The letter was sent to the National College Athletic Association Board of Governors last week and lauded Idaho's "Fairness in Women's Sports Act," which supports women in sports.

Doxing people is awesome, and definitely not creepy and fascistic. And those Democrat feminists were right to do it. If you can't win an argument, then definitely resort to fascism, vandalism, violence, and death threats. Democrats don't have any mental illnesses, you know. They're totally sane.

Expect rioters and looters to be more civil under a Biden administration. Portland, Oregon is dominated from top to bottom by Democrats, and look at how moral people are there:

> Amid the rioting and vandalism at the precinct, KOIN-TV reported that officers were hit with projectiles that included glass bottles and rocks — and cops said one officer was severely injured after taking a large rock to the shoulder.
>
> In the middle of all that, the station said an elderly woman who said she lives in the neighborhood pleaded with the group to stop the vandalism and stood in the way of those who were splashing paint on the plywood outside the building.
>
> But they splashed paint on her too, KOIN noted.
>
> Rather than realizing how far out of hand they've gotten, the violent left-wingers started yelling at the elderly woman: "This isn't your world anymore!"

Yeah, way to stick it to the man, brave Democrats. Speak truth to power! I think everyone on the right needs to give the Democrats a chance. They have an excellent record to run on.

Is Joe Biden a Roman Catholic? Where does he stand on abortion and religious liberty?

August 11, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Major pro-abortion group endorses Joe Biden for President
What does Joe Biden think about Roman Catholics? He might like you to believe that he's a great friend of Catholics, so he can get their votes. But he's very strongly in favor of abortion and infanticide. And he's also opposed to religious liberty for Roman Catholics. How do I know? Because he said so himself.

Here's the story from The Federalist:

> Biden's record is one of attacking nuns, not defending them. Last month, he pledged to overturn a Supreme Court decision that affirmed a group of nuns' right to deny contraceptive coverage based on their sincerely-held religious beliefs. The Little Sisters of the Poor are a Catholic order that has existed since 1839 and serves impovrished elderly in over 30 countries, including the United States. In 2013, the Little Sisters sued the Obama-Biden administration's Health and Human Services, seeking a religious exemption to providing contraceptives and abortifacients that went against their beliefs. After three years of litigation, the Supreme Court ruled in the Little Sisters' favor in 2016.
>
> When the Trump administration issued a new rule that expanded religious exemptions to include the Little Sisters, the state of Pennsylvania interfered, suing the administration to take protections away from the nuns. That case also made it to the Supreme Court, which again decided in favor of the Little Sisters in July 2020.
>
> But the day the Supreme Court issued its ruling, Biden promised to take away the nuns' hard-fought exemption if elected president.
>
> "I am disappointed in today's U.S. Supreme Court decision," Biden said in response. "If I am elected I will restore the Obama-Biden policy."

So, not good on religious liberty, especially for Roman Catholics.

And here's an interesting article from Life News, about Biden's support for abortion. Is he a moderate?

> NARAL, the pro-abortion political and lobbying organization, yesterday announced its endorsement of pro-abortion former vice president Joe Biden, the presumptive Democrat nominee, for president.

If elected, Biden has promised to:

> - enshrine Roe v. Wade in federal law;

> - appoint justices who will uphold abortion on demand;
> - reverse the Trump Administration's pro-life policies;
> - reverse President Trump's Title X rule that prevents pro-abortion groups from promoting or referring for abortions;
> - promote abortion around the world by reversing the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance program which prevents federal taxpayer dollars from being used by abortion groups to perform or promote abortion overseas;
> - abolish the Hyde Amendment which prevents federal tax dollars from being used to pay for abortions except in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother.

Joe Biden isn't a Roman Catholic. Like all other Democrats, he's an atheist. He doesn't think that the Bible is an authority on truth or morality. I know, because I looked at his actions. His actions declare that he's a pro-abortion, anti-Christian bigot.

Three things you should know about the moral character of Kamala Harris

August 12, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
She was 29 years old and had sex with a 60 year old for her career
VP candidate Kamala Harris was able to get picked for cushy high-paying jobs by having an affair with a married man. She used the resources of the state to persecute pro-lifers simply because she disagreed with their pro-life views. And she thinks that Joe Biden sexually assaulted women, but that's no big deal.

Let's start with having affairs for career advancement. The Washington Free Beacon reports:

> Former San Francisco mayor Willie Brown broke his silence on his relationship with Democratic senator Kamala Harris on Saturday, admitting in his weekly column that he used his powerful post to boost her young career when they dated.
>
> Brown… was openly in an extramarital relationship with Harris when he was speaker of the California State Assembly and running for mayor…
>
> […]Brown goes on to address the fact that he appointed Harris, who was just a few years out of law school and working at the Alameda County district attorney's office, to two well-paid posts on California state commissions and later helped her in her first election.

This isn't a problem for Democrats, because they don't believe in chastity, fidelity, or marriage. Whenever I see people voting for someone like Kamala Harris, I try to imagine what their personal life must be like. Democrat voters aren't Christians. They don't believe the Bible. They don't believe in chastity. They think infanticide is no big deal. And they have an extremely high rate of out-of-wedlock births, together with an extremely low marriage rate. So, these are not people who are successful at marriage and family. These are not people who do fidelity, honor and lifelong married love well.

Second, what about using the power of the state to attack people who you disagree with? Kamala Harris is an expert in fascism and the persecution of moral reformers.

Life News reported this in April 2019:

> David Daleiden and the Center for Medical Progress filed a lawsuit Wednesday against some of California's most powerful politicians for prosecuting him for exposing Planned Parenthood's aborted baby body parts harvesting practices.
>
> The lawsuit accuses U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris, state Attorney General Xavier Becerra, Planned Parenthood and others of conspiracy to violate First and Fourteenth Amendment civil rights.

> "The California Attorney General first admitted that they are enforcing the video recording law solely based on how they feel about the message being published, and then further admitted they are not even trying to follow the text of the law as written," Daleiden said.
>
> The lawsuit says Harris, the former attorney general, and Becerra used state video-recording laws as a "political weapon" to silence speech that they disagree with.
>
> […]Becerra and Harris both are pro-abortion Democrats who have received campaign donations from Planned Parenthood.
>
> Documents reveal that Harris, while running for U.S. Senate in 2016, had a secret, in-person meeting with Planned Parenthood leaders to discuss the investigation; two weeks later, the California Department of Justice raided Daleiden's home.
>
> According to the lawsuit, Daleiden "seeks justice for a brazen, unprecedented, and ongoing conspiracy to selectively use California's video recording laws as a political weapon to silence disfavored speech."

Again, this isn't going to be a problem for Democrat voters who think that murdering children who dare to get in the way of their recklss pursuit of sexual pleasure is perfectly fine. And that's every single Democrat politician, and every single Democrat voter. Their god is sex. They sacrifice their innocent children to their god.

Third, Kamala Harris thinks that the multiple accusations of rape and sexual assault against Biden are credible, but these things are not really important parts of a man's character.

The Hill reports:

> Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) said Tuesday that she believes women who say they felt uncomfortable after receiving unwanted touching from former Vice President Joe Biden.
>
> "I believe them and I respect them being able to tell their story and having the courage to do it," Harris said at a presidential campaign event in Nevada.

But now she's Biden's VP. Because women being sexually assaulted or even raped by their bosses in the workplace is no big deal for Kamala Harris. In fact, that's how women get ahead, right?

This woman has no moral character. She's an exemplary Democrat, and Democrat voters will support her as Vice President, and eventually as President.

Will you be allowed to pursue a Christian life plan in a Biden/Harris presidency?

August 13, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Enraged Joe Biden howls out his hatred for Bible-believing Christians

One thing for certain. If Biden/Harris wins in November, I'll be marking this blog as private before the end of the year, and that will be it for me writing on moral issues or supporting Christian exclusivism. We don't have to look too far to see why that will be the prudent course of action.

Let's start with this article from the Washington Examiner, about Kamala Harris – who will almost CERTAINLY be president at some point during Biden's first term.

It says:

> Unlike some Democrats, Kamala Harris, Joe Biden's choice for running mate, isn't neutral about religious liberty or pro-life issues: Her record shows she has aggressively opposed them both out of principle and for political gain. Religious liberty is hardly a lone conservative concept or a topic where only the political Right retains authority (it's guaranteed by the Constitution). A look through Harris's record as California's attorney general and as a senator shows how she might govern on these issues alongside Biden, and it's disturbing.
>
> […]Harris seems to disdain people of faith actively, and her record shows this too. When Hobby Lobby approached the Supreme Court asking for an exemption to Obamacare's contraceptive mandate, Harris was already the attorney general of California. In 2014, she filed an amicus brief, telling the Supreme Court not to give Hobby Lobby a religious exemption. "Rights to the free exercise of religious beliefs, whether created by statute or by the Constitution, likewise protect the development and expression of an 'inner sanctum' of personal religious faith,"

> she wrote. “Free-exercise rights have thus also been understood as personal, relating only to individual believers and to a limited class of associations comprising or representing them.”
>
> Worse, her logic was flawed. Like many who opposed the exemption, she claimed it would prevent women from getting comprehensive healthcare, which is absurd. Thankfully, the Supreme Court disagreed, and Hobby Lobby won that case in what is now a landmark ruling for religious liberty.

Regarding Joe Biden, there’s this post from PJ Media, about his address to the largest LGBT organization in America:

> Biden announced at an event in Ohio on Saturday that his number one priority, if elected, will be to enshrine LGBTQ rights into federal law via the Equality Act, a contentious, Orwellian effort by left-wing bullies to silence Christians who believe biblical teachings on marriage and reject the view that boys can be girls and girls can be boys.
>
> During a half-hour speech at the Hum4n R1ghts C4mp4ign’s annual gala in Columbus, Ohio, Biden said, “It’s wrong and it is immoral what [the Trump administration] is doing,” citing efforts to bar transgender troops from the U.S. military and protect medical providers from being forced to violate their consciences.
>
> […]During his speech Biden portrayed LGBTQ individuals as victims, ignoring the fact that it is people of faith who have been the big losers in this war of ideas. Bakery owners are being sued out of existence, medical professionals are being pressured to embrace transgender ideology, and major corporations are pulling their business out of states that seek to protect religious freedom — which, by the way, is what made Mike Pence Public Enemy #1 in the eyes of the cultural revolutionaries.
>
> […]”The current vice president uses religious freedom as an excuse to license discrimination across broadly [sic] areas and denying LGBTQ Americans their basic rights. It is wrong and it is immoral what they are doing,” he declared.
>
> “Just look at how much damage has been done in the past two weeks,” Biden said. […]The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced plans to allow homeless shelters to turn away transgender people. This is beyond the scope of anything remotely what we’ve seen before.”

He was not luke warm. He is enthusiastic about using government to crush all who dissent against sexual purity and natural marriage. And that’s not surprising when you look at the rape accusations against him, and the sexual immorality of his son Hunter Biden.

We’ve had Trump/Pence for 4 years, and religious liberty hasn’t been harmed. Religious liberty is important to me. I need to be able to earn a living as a Christian, and spend my money on a Christian life plan. I can’t allow myself to be forced into a choice between

complying with secular leftist tyranny and starving because I’m not allowed to work.

So, I won’t be voting for a Biden/Harris ticket in November. For people who care about *policy,* the only rational option is four more years of Trump/Pence.

Prominent Never-Trumper explains why he is voting for Trump/Pence in November

August 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Donald Trump to speak at March for Life 2020

Around this time, the media loves to trumpet stories about prominent "Republicans" who have become disenchanted with the Republican nominee for president. But I think that Trump has done more than enough to ensure that exactly the opposite happens. Not only will he be seeing a lot of votes from former Never-Trumpers, he'll be seeing a lot more votes from American-born blacks.

Let's start with this column written by prominent pro-life debater Marc Newman.

He writes:

> In 2016 I couldn't vote for Donald Trump. I wrote about it. When people asked me about Trump vs. Clinton I responded, "You can't trust either one of them." When Trump claimed a pro-life platform, I didn't believe he'd follow through.
>
> […]Forced now to reconsider, my conclusion is that Trump has been the most pro-life president in my lifetime – including Ronald Reagan, who said many of the right things but accomplished relatively little. In virtually every area – both in word and deed – Trump has delivered for his pro-life constituents and, by extension, to innumerable innocent human beings in the womb who otherwise would have died. Trump's policy position has been to oppose legislation that attempts to advance abortion. Vice-President Mike Pence recently visited a pregnancy help clinic and, in 2019, addressed the March for Life. In 2020, Trump

> became the first president in U.S. history to address the March for Life – not via video, but in person. Trump's administration stood against the United Nation's move to promote abortion.
>
> Though Trump did not completely defund Planned Parenthood, he allowed states to remove $60 million in Title X funding and Planned Parenthood's access to Medicaid money. While this figure represents only about 10% of the annual federal funding for the world's most notorious member of the abortion industry, given the chance, I believe Trump would entirely defund Planned Parenthood. He simply needs a Republican House and enough brave Republican senators to forward the bill to his desk.

Previously, I blogged about how Susan B. Anthony List – a powerful pro-life advocacy group – had made a list of Trump's pro-life actions. I can't quote it here, it's too long!

This one was my favorite, though:

> In May 2019, the Trump administration finalized new regulations to strengthen enforcement of federal laws protecting the conscience rights of health care workers who do not want to participate in abortion. The regulations clarify what recourse is available to victims of discrimination under the law and what penalties the HHS Office of Civil Rights may enforce for violations. Additionally, in January 2018, the Department of Health & Human Services announced the creation of the Conscience and Religious Freedom Division within the Office for Civil Rights. This new office works to protect health care professionals who do not want to participate in abortion. In May, 2019, HHS issued a proposed rule amending Obama-era regulations, clarifying that Section 1557 shall not force a recipient of federal funding to provide or pay for an abortion. It shall also be consistent with the First Amendment and with pro-life provisions, conscience provisions and religious liberty protections in current law.

I can't stand secular leftist fascists coercing people of conscience.

That's not the only reason to vote for Trump/Pence in November, though. My favorite theologian Dr. Wayne Grudem had an article at Townhall, where he was explaining how he was going to vote for Trump/Pence in November, strictly on policy achievements.

He writes:

> A few months ago, while the impeachment trial was going on, a younger faculty colleague asked me at lunch, "What would Trump have to do to make you stop supporting him?" My response was something like this: "I would stop supporting him if he began to favor higher taxes, more government regulation, a weaker military, open borders, judges who believed in a "living Constitution," extended abortion rights, restrictions on freedom of religion, hostility toward Israel…" I didn't finish the list because he said, "Okay, the question for you is policies. I get it."

> […]The question now facing the nation is not, “Does Donald Trump have an exemplary moral character?” or, “Does Donald Trump have flaws?” or even, “Do I like Donald Trump?” The question is, “Which of two package deals is better for the nation?”
>
> (a) Donald Trump and Republican policies or
>
> (b) Joe Biden and Democratic policies?
>
> There are no other choices. The nation will either have the option (a) or option (b) as a whole package for at least the next four years, and probably longer. If I withhold support from Trump, that makes it easier for Biden to win, and thereby for Democratic policies to bring (in my opinion) great destructiveness to the nation (more specifics below.)

Yeah, and the issue for any thinking human being is the policies – specifically, the policies of the only two live options for President fo the United States. Are Trump/Pence policies good for Christians and conservatives to achieve their goals? And do they promote the public good, and protect the rights of minorities from the tyranny of the majority?

Americans are being distracted by the mainstream news media to focus on *whether they like* Trump/Pence more than Biden/Harris. Many Americans rely on TV for their news, and they aren’t looking at policies or achievements or demonstrated abilities. This is especially true of voters who rely more on impressions, appearances, spritual mysticism and emotions – low-information voters. But elections are not popularity contests. America is the guardian of freedom for the whole world – we can’t afford to elect someone who pushes bad policies that don’t achieve results.

I don’t see how anyone could deny that the policies of Trump/Pence have been good, and that the policies of Biden/Harris would be disastrous for conservatives, Christians and America.

The authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke knew eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus

August 15, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Were the authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke connected to eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus? Well, it turns out that there are good reasons to think that Mark was linked to the eyewitness Peter, and Luke was linked to Paul, who had a post-mortem appearance of Jesus in 1 Cor 15:8, and who met with Peter and James in Galatians 1 and again in Galatians 2.

There is a list of evidence for Peter's influence on Mark on the Cold Case Christianity blog.

Here's my favorite one from the list:

> **Peter's Embarrassments Have Been Omitted**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter's special input and influence,including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It's important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It's not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter's standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters 'indiscretions' in their own accounts. See *Cold-Case Christianity* for a more detailed explanation).

It makes me laugh to imagine Peter looking over Mark's shoulder and saying "no, don't

put that in it" and "no, don't tell them I did that". Funny! But also very good evidence. The rest of Wallace's list makes it even more clear.

And what about the gospel of Luke? Well, did you know that the author of Luke's gospel knew Paul? If you read it carefully, you'll see that Luke switches from describing history from an "I" perspective to describing things from a "we" perspective in the book of Acts (which he also wrote). Who is the "we" he is talking about?

Here's famous Christian scholar William Lane Craig to explain:

> Now who was this author we call Luke? He was clearly not an eyewitness to Jesus's life. But we discover an important fact about him from the book of Acts. Beginning in the sixteenth chapter of Acts, when Paul reaches Troas in modern-day Turkey, the author suddenly starts using the first-person plural: "we set sail from Troas to Samothrace," "we remained in Philippi some days," "as we were going to the place of prayer," *etc.* The most obvious explanation is that the author had joined Paul on his evangelistic tour of the Mediterranean cities. In chapter 21 he accompanies Paul back to Palestine and finally to Jerusalem. What this means is that the author of Luke-Acts was in fact in first hand contact with the eyewitnesses of Jesus's life and ministry in Jerusalem.
>
> […]There is no avoiding the conclusion that Luke-Acts was written by a traveling companion of Paul who had the opportunity to interview eyewitnesses to Jesus's life while in Jerusalem. Who were some of these eyewitnesses? Perhaps we can get some clue by subtracting from the Gospel of Luke everything found in the other gospels and seeing what is peculiar to Luke. What you discover is that many of Luke's peculiar narratives are connected to women who followed Jesus: people like Joanna and Susanna, and significantly, Mary, Jesus's mother.
>
> Was the author reliable in getting the facts straight? The book of Acts enables us to answer that question decisively. The book of Acts overlaps significantly with secular history of the ancient world, and the historical accuracy of Acts is indisputable.
>
> This has recently been demonstrated anew by Colin Hemer, a classical scholar who turned to New Testament studies, in his book *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History.* [5] Hemer goes through the book of Acts with a fine-toothed comb, pulling out a wealth of historical knowledge, ranging from what would have been common knowledge down to details which only a local person would know. Again and again Luke's accuracy is demonstrated: from the sailings of the Alexandrian corn fleet to the coastal terrain of the Mediterranean islands to the peculiar titles of local officials, Luke gets it right.

I know a lot of people (like my Dad) read the Bible devotionally, looking for feelings or trying to "get right with God" so they get blessings. But I think it's helpful to look at things from an evidential point of view – how am I going to make a case for this? When you look at things from that perspective, the Bible gets a whole lot more interesting. And

you can talk about it with non-Christians when you know about these interesting details.

A lesson about men for marriage-minded women from the movie “High Noon”

August 16, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marine prays with his wife on their wedding day

One of my favorite movies for explaining the differences between men and women is “High Noon” (1952).

Here’s the summary from IMDB:

> Former marshal Will Kane (Gary Cooper) is preparing to leave the small town of Hadleyville, New Mexico, with his new bride, Amy (Grace Kelly), when he learns that local criminal Frank Miller has been set free and is coming to seek revenge on the marshal who turned him in. When he starts recruiting deputies to fight Miller, Kane is discouraged to find that the people of Hadleyville turn cowardly when the time comes for a showdown, and he must face Miller and his cronies alone.

The main theme of the film concerns Amy’s decision to break her wedding vows the very day that she makes them. She tells her new husband that he must bow to her will, and give up his male role as protector. When he explains his reasons for standing his ground to her practically (Miller will hunt them down) and morally (he has a duty protect the town), she dismisses both. She tells him that if he doesn’t run away from Miller and his gang with her, that she will get on the train and leave town by herself.

The intro of film shows the member’s of Miller’s gang assembling, and the words of the song explain the central conflict between husband and wife:

Here's the part of the lyrics we care about:

The noonday train will bring Frank Miller.
If I'm a man I must be brave
And I must face that deadly killer
Or lie a coward, a craven coward,
Or lie a coward in my grave.

O to be torn 'twixt love and duty!
S'posin' I lose my fair-haired beauty!
Look at that big hand move along
Nearin' high noon.

He made a vow while in State's Prison,
Vow'd it would be my life or his'n
I'm not afraid of death, but O,
What will I do if you leave me?

Do not forsake me O my darlin'
You made that promise when we wed.
Do not forsake me O my darlin'
Although you're grievin', I can't be leavin'
Until I shoot Frank Miller dead.

What's interesting is that his new wife Amy apparently does not understand the meaning of wedding vows or the natural roles of good men as protectors of the weak, and fighters against evil. Although she vowed to stick by him and help him, the minute anything threatening appears that makes her feel unhappy, she abandons her vows and abandons her man. Let's break down her mistakes now, using actual conversations from the movie.

First, she doesn't understand or respect the man she married *as a man*:

> **Kane**: *[while riding out of town]* It's no good. I've got to go back, Amy.
>
> **Amy**: Why?
>
> **Kane**: This is crazy. I haven't even got any guns.
>
> **Amy**: Then let's go on. Hurry.
>
> **Kane**: No, that's what I've been thinkin'. They're making me run. I've never run from anybody before.
>
> **Amy**: I don't understand any of this.
>
> **Kane**: *[after looking at his vest watch]* Well, I haven't got time to tell ya.
>
> **Amy**: Then don't go back, Will.
>
> **Kane**: I've got to. That's the whole thing. *[He turns the buggy around and rides back into town]*

Her feelings and her desires for the world to be a happy place for her are so strong that they cloud her judgment.

Second, she doesn't understand the threat posed by evil men:

More:

> **Kane:** I sent a man up five years ago for murder. He was supposed to hang. But up North, they commuted it to life and now he's free. I don't know how. Anyway, it looks like he's coming back.
>
> **Amy:** I still don't understand.
>
> **Kane:** He was always wild and kind of crazy. He'll probably make trouble.
>
> **Amy:** But that's no concern of yours, not anymore.
>
> **Kane:** I'm the one who sent him up.
>
> **Amy:** Well, that was part of your job. That's finished now. They've got a new marshal.
>
> **Kane:** He won't be here until tomorrow. Seems to me I've got to stay. Anyway, I'm the same man with or without this. [He pins his badge on his vest]
>
> **Amy:** Oh, that isn't so.
>
> **Kane:** I expect he'll come lookin' for me. Three of his old bunch are waiting at the depot.
>
> **Amy:** That's exactly why we ought to go.
>
> **Kane:** They'll just come after us, four of 'em, and we'd be all alone on the prairie.
>
> **Amy:** We've got an hour.
>
> **Kane:** What's an hour?…What's a hundred miles? We'd never be able to keep that store, Amy. They'd come after us and we'd have to run again, as long as we live.
>
> **Amy:** No we wouldn't, not if they didn't know where to find us. Oh Will! Will, I'm begging you, please let's go.
>
> **Kane:** I can't.
>
> **Amy:** Don't try to be a hero. You don't have to be a hero, not for me.
>
> **Kane:** I'm not trying to be a hero. If you think I like this, you're crazy.

Instead of recognizing how her feelings are deceiving her about the threat and trusting her husband, she tries to force him to accept her mistaken view of reality by threatening to abandon him.

One of Kane's ex-girlfriends has a talk with Amy, which helps her to understand who Kane is, and what is expected of her:

> **Amy**: That man downstairs, the clerk, he said things about you and Will. I've been trying to understand why he wouldn't go with me, and now all I can think of is that it's got to be because of you…Let him go, he still has a chance. Let him go.
>
> **Helen**: He isn't staying for me. I haven't spoken to him for a year – until today. I

> am leaving on the same train you are…What kind of woman are you? How can you leave him like this? Does the sound of guns frighten you that much?
>
> **Amy**: I've heard guns. My father and my brother were killed by guns. They were on the right side but that didn't help them any when the shooting started. My brother was nineteen. I watched him die. That's when I became a Quaker. I don't care who's right or who's wrong. There's got to be some better way for people to live. Will knows how I feel about it.
>
> **Helen**: I hate this town. I always hated it – to be a Mexican woman in a town like this.
>
> **Amy**: I understand.
>
> **Helen**: You do? That's good. I don't understand you. No matter what you say. If Kane was my man, I'd never leave him like this. I'd get a gun. I'd fight.
>
> **Amy**: Why don't you?
>
> **Helen**: He is not my man. He's yours.

Helen understands the need for a wife to stand by her man. But Amy's response to evil is to shut her eyes and focus on feeling good and being happy. Notice that her "better way" is unspecified – it's just a feeling she has that pacificism and no-violence will somehow "work" to stop evil. But in reality, pacifism is not a "better way" of dealing with evil – it does not work. Her pacifist response not only does not make evil go away, it actually encourages more evil. Weakness emboldens evildoers, and laying down your arms provokes them to do more evil. Will Kane knows this, but she won't listen to him.

You can watch the final gunfight here, as well as Amy's final decision:

So, this is why I really recommend this movie as a discussion-starter when you like a girl and are thinking of marrying her. It clarifies the essential problem with many young women today not being ready for marriage. To be fair, most women come around to respect their husbands and his different roles after they get married. However, the risk of divorce is so dangerous that it makes sense to bring it up for discussion before the marriage happens. Marriage is supposed to be an engine to serve God, and the success of that enterprise cannot be left to chance. You can't just rely on the fact that she says the words of the vow, you have to check to see if she has a habit of keeping her promises when it goes against her own self-interest.

Ask yourself: Who are you, as a man? And does your woman accept that you have obligations to stand up to evil and do good ? Will she support you in your battle against evil, or will the marriage just be about her feelings and desires? I would especially beware of women who think that God is speaking to them through their feelings and desires. Look at her friends: are they practical and successful? Or are they irresponsible, unaccountable and reckless? Look at her father: does he have a plan for her, and does he lead her to be practical, frugal and hard-working? If you are not going to get an ally and a supporter in a wife, then you will not be able to serve God well, as a married man. Think about it.

Democrat legislator wants to decriminalize gay sex between young adults and minors in some cases

August 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Enraged Joe Biden howls out his hatred for Bible-believing Christians

I try to blog about stories where powerful gay rights activists are arrested, charged, convicted or jailed for sex with underage boys. It seems to happen a lot. But what I never expected to see is the gay activists openly lobbying to normalize underage sex with boys. But I guess that's where the Democrat party is going, and a significant number of American voters are going there with them.

Here's the story from Daily Wire:

> A California state senator is seeking to salvage a bill that could decriminalize gay sex between young adults and minors in some cases, arguing that present state laws governing the sex offender registry unfairly discriminate against the LGBTQ community.
>
> According to The San Francisco Chronicle, California state Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) is using the last few weeks of the legislative session to mobilize support for SB145, a bill he introduced last year that stalled in a key committee. The legislation would allow "judges discretion over sex-offender registration in all cases involving voluntary intercourse between teenagers ages 14 to 17, who cannot legally consent, and adults who are less than 10 years older."

This same Democrat party legislator co-sponsored a 2017 bill that made knowingly exposing a partner to HIV no longer a felony. That's a big priority for Democrats, along with infanticide. These are the big moral issues that they want to see addressed.

I think it's fine for this guy to have his view and try to push it into law. It's a free country. I disagree with him that this is a good law. I also think that voters ought to understand

what the Democrat party stands for, and vote accordingly.

Joe Biden

In the photo above, you can see Joe Biden speaking at an organization called the “Hum4n R1ghts Campa1gn”. The HRC have the support of prominent Democrats, like Hillary Clinton, and Barack Obama, and Joe Biden, who have spoken at their events. But did you know about the co-founder of this organization?

Fox News reported in 2019 about the co-founder of the HRC:

> Prominent Democrat donor T3rry B3an was indicted earlier this month on two counts of sodomy and one count of sex abuse for allegedly having sex with a teenage boy.
>
> B3an was arraigned Thursday on the charges, TV station KGW8 reported. He pleaded not guilty and was taken into custody at Lane County jail in Oregon. He was released Thursday and told KGW8 he was “innocent.”
>
> The indictment was filed on Jan. 4 but made public following the arraignment.
>
> B3an, a gay rights activist who donated almost $70,000 of his own money to former President Barack Obama’s campaign, was charged with sexual abuse in 2014 but the case was dismissed after the alleged victim did not testify. Prosecutors refiled the charges after this, court records stated, according to The Oregonian. The “alleged victim is not named in the new indictment” but the dates are similar to the previous charges, KGW8 noted.
>
> B3an, a real estate developer, and his former boyfriend, Kiah Lawson, allegedly had sex with a 15-year-old boy in a Eugene, Oregon, hotel in September 2013. They allegedly used the app Grindr to arrange the sexual encounter. Lawson was also charged but his case was dismissed.

The Hum4n R1ghts Campa1gn has a lot of corporate partners, who agree with the vision of Terry B3an and his organization. They don’t see anything wrong with the mission of the HRC.

Anyway, this isn’t the first time that something like this has happened.

The far-left New York Times reported on a recent case:

> The mayor of Seattle, Ed Murr4y, said on Tuesday that he would resign after announcing in May that he would not seek a second term. Several men have come forward to accuse Mr. Murr4y of sexually abusing them decades ago, when they were underage.
>
> The announcement came just hours after The Seattle Times published a story with an account by a fifth man, Mr. Murr4y’s cousin, who said Mr. Murr4y had abused him in the 1970s.
>
> [..]Mr. Murr4y, 62, a Democrat, is the city’s first openly gay mayor, and had served in the State Legislature for many years before being elected in 2013.

> […]**The liberal Mr. Murr4y is generally considered a father of Washington's same-sex marriage law, which he pressed in the State Legislature for years.**

In a previous blog post, I listed SIX more cases like this:

- a university professor at USC
- a member of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission
- two men who adopted nine children
- two men who adopted a boy
- an activist who ran an organization for boys
- two men who adopted a boy from Russia

The mainstream news media never seems to have much to say about these cases. I wonder why.

Why would a woman want to participate in the hook-up culture?

August 18, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

Note: in this article, when I refer to women, I mean young, unmarried women who have been influenced by feminism. I do not mean all women, and especially not married women.

My good friend Tom sent me this article from the ultra left-wing Vanity Fair. Tom is a veteran of the brutal New York City dating scene.

The article is contains sex and bad language. Reader discretion is advised.

Excerpt:

> It's a balmy night in Manhattan's financial district, and at a sports bar called Stout, everyone is Tindering. The tables are filled with young women and men who've been chasing money and deals on Wall Street all day, and now they're out looking for hookups. Everyone is drinking, peering into their screens and swiping on the faces of strangers they may have sex with later that evening.

Tinder is a hook-up app that people use to find people to have sex with, based solely on their photograph.

The article says this:

> "Romance is completely dead, and it's the girls' fault," says Alex, 25, a New Yorker who works in the film industry. "They act like all they want is to have sex with you and then they yell at you for not wanting to have a relationship. How are you gonna feel romantic about a girl like that? Oh, and by the way? I met you on

> *Tinder.*"
>
> "Women do exactly the same things guys do," said Matt, 26, who works in a New York art gallery. "I've had girls sleep with me off OkCupid and then just ghost me"—that is, disappear, in a digital sense, not returning texts. "They play the game the exact same way. They have a bunch of people going at the same time—they're fielding their options. They're always looking for somebody better, who has a better job or more money." A few young women admitted to me that they use dating apps as a way to get free meals. "I call it Tinder food stamps," one said.
>
> Even the emphasis on looks inherent in a dating game based on swiping on photos is something men complain women are just as guilty of buying into. "They say in their profiles, 'No shirtless pictures,' but that's bulls**t," says Nick, the same as above. "The day I switched to a shirtless picture with my tattoos, immediately, within a few minutes, I had, like, 15 matches."
>
> And if women aren't interested in being treated as sexual objects, why do they self-objectify in their profile pictures? some men ask. "There's a lot of girls who are just like, Check me out, I'm hot, I'm wearing a bikini," says Jason…
>
> Men talk about the nudes they receive from women. They show off the nudes. "T*t pics and booty pics," said Austin, 22, a college student in Indiana. "My phone is full of 'em."

Although the article, and the women who are interviewed, try to pass themselves off as victims, it's very clear that they are full participants in this hook-up culture. It's "fun" for them to be free and independent – no responsibilities, expectations or obligations from a relationship. They want fun right now, without the leadership of a husband, or the demands of small children.

Feminist writer Hanna Rosin says that this hook-up culture is great:

> Some, like *Atlantic* writer Hanna Rosin, see hookup culture as a boon: "The hookup culture is … bound up with everything that's fabulous about being a young woman in 2012—the freedom, the confidence."

The Vanity Fair author comments:

> "Short-term mating strategies" seem to work for plenty of women too; some don't want to be in committed relationships, either, particularly those in their 20s who are focusing on their education and launching careers.

Previously, I quoted a feminist professor writing in the New York Times. She also thought that it was great that women were hooking up with hot guys for fun, but staying focused on their educations and careers.

Here's Amanda to explain it:

> "There is no dating. There's no relationships," says Amanda… "They're rare. You

> can have a fling that could last like seven, eight months and you could never actually call someone your 'boyfriend.' [Hooking up] is a lot easier. No one gets hurt—well, not on the surface."

Who doesn't want to have sex? Well, me for one. At least, not till I'm married.

Amanda later explains that she doesn't want to care, because caring would mean that she "somehow missed the whole memo about third-wave feminism". She has to be independent – able to dismiss responsibilities, expectations and obligations in order to pursue happiness with education, career, travel and promiscuity.

I know Christian women who think they are fundamentalists who have this exact same attitude. They think that relationships are somehow compatible with doing whatever they want to do – that doing whatever makes them happy each and every moment will somehow turn into life-long married love.

Why don't women reject the men who use them like kleenexes? Why is the man's appearance so much more important than his suitability for the marriage roles of husband and father? Well, feminism tells women that gender distinctions are "sexist", that chivalry is "sexist", that chastity is "repressive" because it blocks having recreational sex, that marriage is boring and must be delayed, and that having lots of sexual experience makes you more attractive. They measure men by how the man makes them *feel* and whether he will be impressive *physically* to their peers. They aren't looking for a man who can perform tradional male roles like protector or provider or moral and spiritual leader – because male leadership is "sexist".

As always, should you, as a young Christian man of some means, desire to get married, then I recommend using my checklist to validate your candidate. I know a lot of women who married without any intention of being a wife and mother. Sometimes, they marry just because their friends are all getting married. If you as a man do not check this woman's reasons for marrying, you may find yourself legally bound to someone who "settled" for you. And who has no intention of respecting you or educating your children.

Governor Cuomo opposes investigation of nursing home deaths in New York

August 19, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

US COVID-19 deaths

State	Deaths	Deaths/ 1M pop.
New Jersey	15,966	1,797.5
New York	**32,857**	**1,689.0**
Massachusetts	8,751	1,259.2
Connecticut	4,444	1,246.5
Rhode Island	1,018	961.0
Louisiana	4,314	928.0
District of Columbia	593	840.2
Michigan	6,533	654.2
Mississippi	1,944	653.2
Illinois	7,866	620.7
Delaware	591	606.9
Maryland	3,612	597.5

Governor Andrew Cuomo is the least competent at handling COVID

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo likes to talk about how COVID deaths are all Trump's fault, but his state has one of the worst per-capita death rates. And that's largely a result of his own decision-making. He decided to send "recovered" COVID patients back into nursing homes, which resulted in thousands of additional deaths. So, is he taking responsibility? Does he want an investigation?

Here's the story from Daily Caller:

> New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo dismissed suggestions Monday that local officials are undercounting coronavirus deaths at nursing homes while a several reports indicate the state inaccurately measured how the virus affected long-term care facilities.
>
> New York will not conduct an investigation into nursing home deaths during the pandemic, Cuomo said during a press conference Monday. His insistence that there is no controversy comes after media reports show the state only counts people who died on nursing home property and not those who died after being transferred to hospitals.
>
> […]The virus has hit New York and New Jersey particularly hard. More than 32,000 people have died in New York from coronavirus, while New Jersey has a death toll of 15,785, data show. More than 6,000 of the fatalities in New York

> reportedly came from nursing homes, the New York Times media reported.
>
> New York began omitting an unknown number of coronavirus deaths in May regarding how many people are dying in nursing homes, the Daily Caller News Foundation reported in May. The New York State Department of Health acknowledged the discrepancy in a statement to the DCNF that month.
>
> Cuomo faced criticism in May for ordering long term facilities to accept patients from hospitals who tested positive for the virus. He rescinded the March 25 order in May after experts argued the move led to higher levels of death among nursing home residents, The Wall Street Journal reported.

This is the person lecturing Donald Trump on "mishandling" of the Wuhan Coronavirus. He's literally the worst person at protecting his people, but he loves to point fingers at people who are not even in charge of a state.

Now, I know that Cuomo has no problem with infanticiding innocent babies after they are born. So if he has no problem murdering innocent people, then why think he has a problem murdering less innocent people? He doesn't care. He'll do anything to make Trump look bad in an election year. Besides, killing off the elderly reduces the "overpopulation" that Democrats are always so scared of. And it makes room in the hospitals for people who want abortions.

This article from the New York Post notes that Cuomo made other mistakes that raised the death count in his state:

> Cuomo is praised even after he and the department of health spent years stripping New York City's outer boroughs of sufficient hospital beds and equipment. There are five hospital beds for every 1,000 residents in Manhattan, but only 1.8 beds for every 1,000 Queens and Brooklyn residents. The result? When the pandemic struck, those hospitals were overwhelmed fast. The death rate for COVID-19 patients at Mount Sinai hospital in Manhattan was 17%. At Coney Island Hospital, 41% of COVID-19 patients didn't make it.

Democrats have a lot to say about how terrible Republicans are at dealing with the virus. But red states did a lot better than blue states. The people who are responsible for protecting the public are the governors. New York and New Jersey have Democrat governors. Other poor-performing states – Connecticut, Rhode Island, Lousiana, Michigan, Illinois and Delaware – also have Democrat governors.

What happens in places that adopt Green New Deal Democrat energy policies?

August 20, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

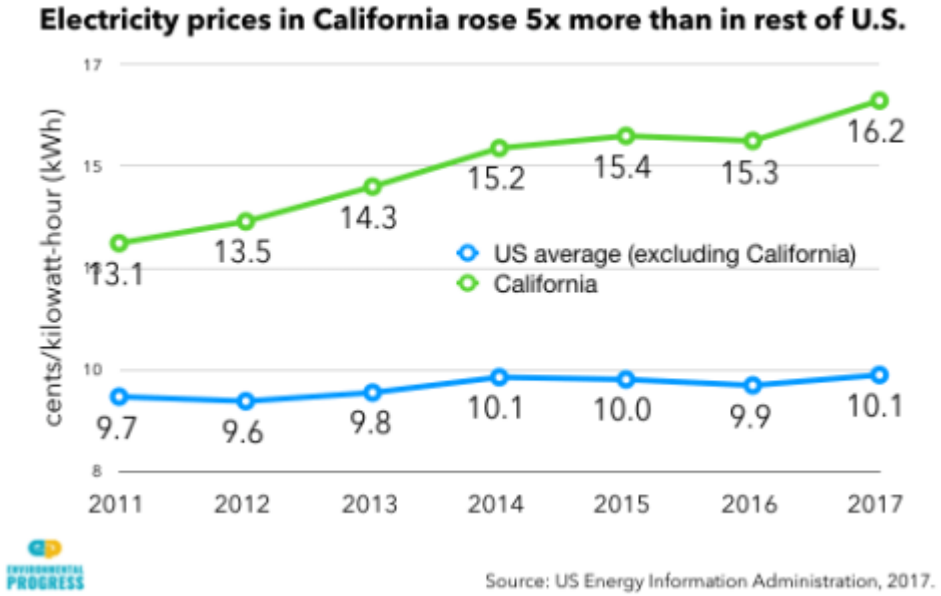

What green energy policies did to electricity costs in California

The secular leftist approach to politics is to suggest policies that make them feel good and look good to others. It doesn't matter if the policies work for people. Conservatives believe in looking at what has worked in other times and places, and doing what works. After all, a wise man learns from successes and failures of other people. We can't try everything ourselves, we should just do what works.

Let's start with California. California has long been at the forefront of converting their energy production to "green" sources.

Here's an article from Forbes that talks about their results:

> At the Democratic National Convention this week, presidential and vice-presidential candidates Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will make the case for spending $2 trillion, or $500 billion per year, to transition the U.S. away from fossil fuels toward renewables like solar and wind.
>
> […]California's big bet on renewables, and shunning of natural gas and nuclear, is directly responsible for the state's blackouts and high electricity prices.
>
> "We will be forced today to ask utilities to cut off power to millions today, and tomorrow, and beyond," said Stephen Berberich, the President and CEO of California's Independent System Operator, CAISO, on a Monday morning conference call. "Demand will greatly exceed supply."
>
> The immediate cause of California's blackouts is a mismatch between electricity supply and demand.
>
> […]The underlying reason blackouts are occurring is because California lacks

> reliable, in-state supply. And the reason for that is California has been closing both natural gas and nuclear power plants.
>
> […]Despite these capacity shortfalls, the state is moving ahead with plans to remove 2,200-MW of reliable electricity from the grid. That's the amount of power produced by Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant, which will be closed in stages in 2024 and 2025.

So, Green New Deal works great… if your goal is to feel good about yourself, and make emotion-driven people like you. But it isn't very good at generating an abundance of low-cost electricity to power businesses. And it isn't very good for poor people, who prefer to pay less for their electricity.

Well, how about Germany? They closed down their nuclear power plants in favor of wind and solar. It didn't work.

Daily Caller explains:

> Germany's power grid almost collapsed in January due to poor performance from wind turbines and solar panels, according to data from a major trade union.
>
> Wind and solar power plants under-performed in January, 2017, because of cloudy weather with little or no wind, setting the stage for massive blackouts.
>
> […]Green energy approaches failed to meet Germany's stated energy goals, even after spending over $1.1 trillion. The country's "Energiewende" plan to boost wind and solar production to fight global warming hasn't significantly reduced carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and may have actually caused them to go up.
>
> […]Due to the inherent unreliable performance of wind power and political opposition to nuclear power plants, Germany has been forced to return to coal to generate electricity. Coal now provides 44 percent of Germany's power, This shift caused Germany's carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions to actually rise by 28 million tons each year following the policy shift.
>
> All of Germany's subsidies and support for green energy have sharply increased power prices, with the average German paying 39 cents per kilowatt-hour for electricity. The average American only spends 10.4 cents per kilowatt-hour by comparison.

So, you get less electricity produced, more emissions, and elctricity prices go up. Just like in California.

Well, third try is the charm. How about Canada? They've gone Green New Deal for more than a decade. How is that working for them?

The National Post reported this in 2016:

> Back in 2010, deep green environmentalist Rick Smith, then head of Environmental Defence Canada, hailed Ontario's Green Energy and Green Economy Act regime as a cost-free operation that would catapult the province

> into the big leagues of renewable energy. Through fat subsidies and high prices offered to wind, solar and other renewable industry players, jobs and growth would boom and Ontario would be free of its dirty coal plants. It was the End of Coal, the government said. The birth of a renewable miracle.

Now, Canadians are paying more:

> The doubling of electricity prices since 2005 is big politically, but it is just the top-line item on a long list of problems, misconceptions and outright fabrications that lurk within the Liberal government's decade-long pursuit of radical greenism.

Because they didn't listened to engineers… they listened to their hearts:

> Ontario's Society of Professional Engineers has issued more than half a dozen critical reports on the Liberals' tendency to let green talk and politics override sound policy. Instead of following the expert advice of engineers and people who understand the intricacies of electricity production and distribution, the government took to issuing directives right out the Premier's office.

Now, I know some people on the secular left are going to disagree with these facts. But they don't have facts to counter these facts. There isn't a single country that has gone Green New Deal that has lower electricity prices and a net increase in jobs.

We have to do what works. What works is more natural gas (fracking) and more nuclear power.

Is Christianity false or is it just mean and judgmental?

August 21, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you noticed lately that there is a decided lack of atheists who argue against Christianity on factual grounds? Instead of constructing arguments against Christian theism, what I am seeing more and more of is that people try to say that Christianity makes some group feel bad, and therefore Christianity is not worthy of pursuit and engagement.

Here's how it works. You have a person who has some sinful habit or other that they don't want to give up, and they notice that people are judging them and saying that what they are doing is wrong. And they feel bad. And they decide to attack Christianity to make the Christians stop judging them. So how do they do it? Do they argue that the concept of God is logically incoherent? No… Do they argue that some instances of evil and suffering are gratuitous? No… Do they argue that the universe is eternal so that it had no Creator? No…

What do they do?

What they do is pick on some statement by a conservative Christian that makes them feel bad, and then claim that they are victims of meanness. And apparently, making someone feel bad is some sort of disproof of Christian theism. Why is that? It's because we have decided as a culture that the purpose of religion is to make people feel good about themselves and to be "nice" to other people. And by "nice", we mean not making other people feel bad about the sinfulness of their behavior. So people are making Christianity irrelevant just by *assuming* that the purpose of life is happiness, and that any religion that makes people unhappy can be dismissed.

Before, people thought about Christianity as something that you investigated, and that was either true or false. People understood that Christianity made claims about the external world that were either true or false. For example, Christianity claims that the universe had a beginning in the finite past. And the people who disagreed with Christianity would try to produce arguments and evidence that the universe was eternal, as with the steady-state theory or the oscillating model of the universe. And people were willing to change their behavior to match what was true, even when it made them feel less happy. But not any more.

Religion today is not about truth

I think somehow, as a society, we have internalized the following beliefs:

- God wants me to have happy feelings
- the purpose of religion is to give me happy feelings
- God's moral will for me is that I be "nice" to others
- being nice to others means accepting whatever they want to do as "good"

- accepting whatever anyone does makes them like me
- when people like me, I feel happy, which is what God wants
- there is no need for me to study God's existence
- God exists when I want to be comforted, and doesn't exist when I want to sin
- there is no need for me to study God's character
- God's character is pretty much like my character, whatever I want is fine with God
- there are no moral rules or obligations from God that apply to me
- religions are all the same, I choose the one that makes me feel happy

So you can see that someone who believes things like this can claim to be a Christian, but would actually attack real Christians who hold to the old view of exclusive factual claims and moral judgments. The real Christians are people who have studied these questions, who know that God exists, and what he is like, and accept the Bible's moral teachings as authoritative. So you could have a famous pastor who defends the Bible's prohibition on sex before marriage, and have someone *feel bad about being judged*, and then a bunch of these "the purpose of life is happiness" people will appear and chastise that pastor for making people feel bad. And many of them will claim to be Christians, and attend church, too.

Now notice that this mob of happy-feelings people are not going argue against the pastor using the Bible, because the Bible is pretty clearly against fornication. What they'll do instead is they'll pick out some piece of the Bible that seems unfair, like the slaughter of some group of child-sacrificing pagans, and they'll rail against that Bible passage in order to discredit the Bible's authority on moral questions. And then the good conservative pastor is made to feel bad because he has broken those unwritten laws – he made someone feel bad using this evil book.

No factual claims about God's existence were made. No historical arguments were made. No evidence was presented. The mere fact that the Bible is mean to talk about killing the poor Canaanites is used to prove that the Bible has no moral authority at all, on any issue. "It's mean" entails that *it's false*. And you can have people who read the Bible for devotions, who sing in church, and who lead worship, who think that the Bible is false because it's mean, and it's mean because it can be used to judge people and make them feel bad.

An example

Now consider single motherhood, as in this case.

Excerpt:

> She tells her children to do as she says and not as she does.
>
> But the words of mother of 14 Joanne Watson – who receives more than £2,000 a month in state handouts – have fallen on deaf ears.
>
> Her 15-year-old daughter Mariah is pregnant, the father has 'left the scene', and the youngster is about to start living off benefits.
>
> Mrs Watson, 40, is raising her giant brood alone after parting from her husband

> John, 46, three years ago, and breaking up with subsequent partner Craig le Sauvage, 35, last year.
>
> Despite this, she has still managed to squirrel away enough cash for a £1,600 breast enhancement and a sunbed. She claims she has always encouraged her daughters to use contraception – but, inevitably, it seems they would rather follow the family tradition.
>
> Mariah's pregnancy comes after Mrs Watson's oldest daughter Natasha, 22, got pregnant with her son Branford, now six, when she was 16. Her second eldest daughter Shanice, 19, also got pregnant at 16 with her 22-month-old son Marley.
>
> Mariah says she has no concerns about becoming a teenage mother, as it seems the most natural thing in the world. Initially, she and her child will be supported by the taxpayer.
>
> She is expected to move into a housing complex for single mothers and will receive supplementary benefit and child allowance for her baby.
>
> The youngster, who is due to have a boy, said: 'I'm not nervous. I've been around babies my whole life so I know what to expect and that I can handle it. The father isn't involved and I don't want him to be either. I'm really excited and think I will be a great mum.'

Now there are two responses to this from people who profess to be Christians. The first response, my response, is to make a general argument against having sex before marriage, using the latest statistics to show the harm that fatherlessness causes to children, and more evidence besides. My response is not to pick on any one person, but to set moral boundaries, to make moral judgments against the selfishness of parents, and to not celebrate and subsidize anything that will harm innocent children. I don't want to make anyone person feel bad, I just want to say what the evidence is. However, even a general argument using evidence does make some people feel bad, so I am judged as "mean" for giving my opinion and backing it up with evidence.

But there is another response. This response comes from someone who professes to be a Christian, but they are actually a "God wants me to be happy and to be nice to people so they will like me and then we'll all be happy" person. They would never dream of judging anyone for anything they do. And they are very angry with me for getting my moral rules out of that horrible Bible, and for using facts and evidence to make people feel bad. They believe in *compassion*, which is the idea that says that the moral boundaries of the Bible are false, and that we have to celebrate and subsidize any and every variation on the traditional family, regardless of the harm caused, so that the selfish adults don't feel bad about their destructive choices.

And what do we make of a person who feels that saying "it's wrong" is mean, because it makes a guilty person feel bad? Well, here is the truth. A person who argues against the Bible based on the happy-feelings model is no friend of God, and no friend of the victims of selfish actions. They may think that they are being a good person by affirming people

who make bad decisions, but really it just encourages people to get into trouble.

What Americans don’t know about Canada’s single-payer health care system

August 22, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Price of healthcare per Canadian household (Source: Fraser Institute)

I post a lot of research from Canada’s Fraser Institute, but they are not the only think tank that publishes research on the efficiency and costs of single payer health care in Canada. This time, I found a report from the Heritage Foundation, where they go over quality of care, taxes, out of pocket costs, coverage, rationing, waiting lists, staff shortages, substandard equipment, and outdated drugs.

Here’s the report from the Heritage Foundation. I’ll focus on the differences.

Canadians pay slightly less in out of pocket costs:

> The OECD calculates that Canadians spend 1.6 percent of GDP on out-of-pocket health spending, compared to 1.9 percent in the U.S.
>
> […]While these numbers are very close, they are actually getting closer. Since 1970, U.S. out-of-pocket spending as a percentage of total medical spending has been falling steadily, from 33 percent in 1970 to about 10 percent in 2017.19
>
> Meanwhile, Canadian out-of-pocket spending has been falling much slower, so that by 2016 it totaled 15 percent of total medical spending—a higher proportion than in the U.S.20
>
> **As a result, Statistics Canada warned in early 2020 that the percentage of Canadians experiencing large out-of-pocket burdens is growing, writing that “[b]etween 1998 and 2009…the percentage of households**

> **spending more than 10% of their total after-tax income on health care rose by 56%."**

Canadians pay more in federal and state taxes:

> Federal taxation excluding social security contributions, then, comes to 28 percent of GDP in Canada, compared to just 19 percent in the U.S.—meaning 51 percent more.
>
> […]This excess taxation is largely a result of health spending, which has bloated provincial budgets to nearly three times the taxes of U.S. states.
>
> Provincial taxes have grown to nearly the same level as federal taxation. Meanwhile, provincial health costs have risen to fully 37 percent of provincial budgets in 2016—up from 33 percent in 1993 – —and range as high as 42 percent.
>
> Canada's Fraser Institute has estimated this excess tax burden from public health costs at roughly $9,000 for a household of two adults with or without children or $750 per month in additional taxes.

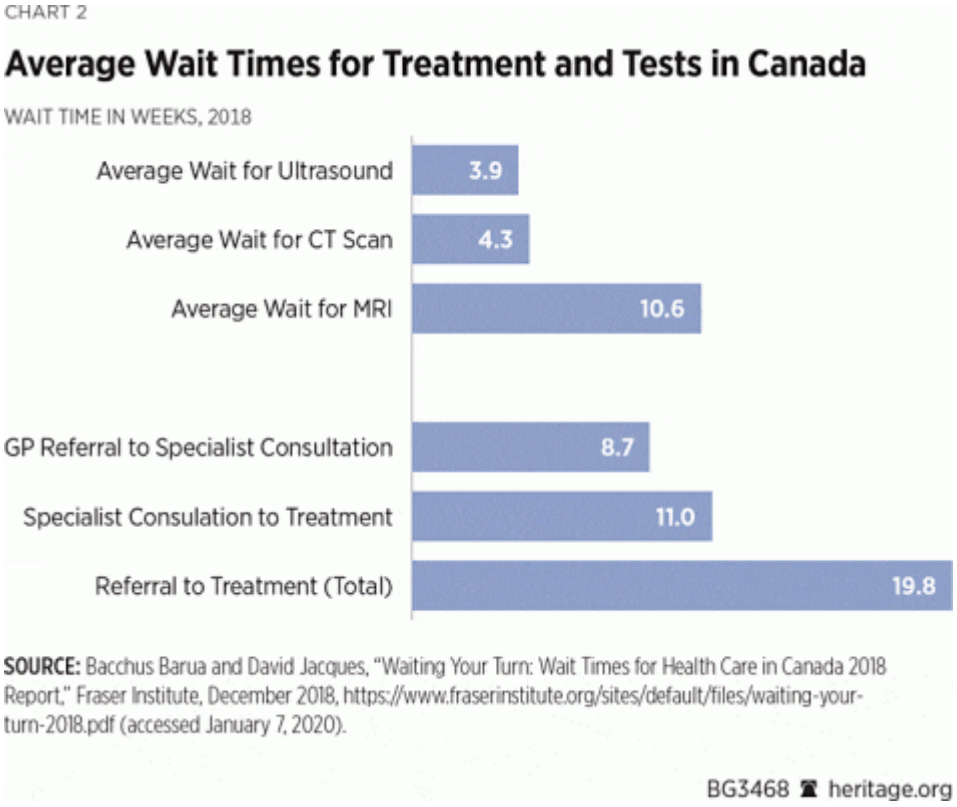

When I wanted an MRI I was scheduled the same week
Canadians wait far longer for treatment than Americans:

> Medical waiting times have become a national crisis in Canada, and continue to worsen. The average wait time for medically necessary treatment between referral from a general practitioner and a consultation with a specialist was 8.7 weeks in 2018, 136 percent longer than in 1993. Patients then have to wait again between seeing the specialist and the actual treatment, another 11 weeks on average, 97 percent longer than in 1993.

> From referral to treatment, then, it takes an average of 19.8 weeks (see Chart 2) to be treated, in addition to the original wait to see the family doctor in the first place—this for "medically necessary" treatment, not cosmetic surgery.
>
> In contrast, nearly 77 percent of Americans are treated within four weeks of referral, and only 6 percent of Americans report waiting more than two months to see a specialist.
>
> As for appointments, a 2017 survey of American physicians in the 15 largest U.S. cities found that it took just 24 days on average to schedule a new-patient physician appointment, including 11 days for an orthopedic surgeon and 21 days for a cardiologist.
>
> As a result of these long waits, by one recent estimate, at any given moment, over one million Canadians—3 percent of the entire population—are waiting for a medical treatment.
>
> These lists can average six months, and often much longer in rural areas, which tend to suffer from doctor shortages so severe that many do not even have a family doctor. Overall, 15 percent of Canadians did not have a regular health care provider in 2017.
>
> **The shortages ripple through the system; one doctor in Ontario called in a referral to the local hospital, only to be told there was a four-and-a-half year wait to see a neurologist.**

In Canada, people die or become inoperable on waiting lists:

> **A Montreal man was finally called for his long-delayed urgent surgery two months after he had died. One 16-year-old boy in British Columbia waited three years for an "urgent" surgery, during which time his condition deteriorated so much that he became a paraplegic.**

Canadians have to travel abroad to countries with functioning health care systems in order to be treated:

> These cases are, unfortunately, not isolated; a survey of specialists found that average wait times exceed what is deemed clinically "reasonable" for fully 72 percent of conditions in Canada. The situation continues to worsen every year: In 1994, the average gap between clinically reasonable delay and actual delay was only four days, and by 2018 had grown to 23 days.
>
> […]With one million waiting, many Canadians turn in desperation to U.S. health care—the very system some U.S. policymakers propose to transform. In 2017 alone, Canadians made 217,500 trips to other countries for health care, of which 52,500 were to the U.S., paying out of pocket to skip the waiting.

Outdated equipment, outdated drugs, staff shortages:

> While the average employer-sponsored private insurance plan in Canada covers

> between 10,000 and 12,000 drugs, most public plans in Canada only cover 4,000. Canada has 35 percent fewer acute care beds than the U.S., and only one-fourth as many magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) units per capita—indeed, it has fewer MRI units per capita than Turkey, Chile, or Latvia.
>
> […]Some common treatments are simply unavailable to Canadians. For new pharmaceuticals, for example, Canada's policy of forcing down prices so that American consumers essentially pay for Canada's research and development has led to years-long delays for Canadian patients.
>
> […]Cutting corners on facilities and using outdated drugs show up in Canadian mortality rates. Thirty-day in-hospital mortality rates in Canada are 20 percent higher than in the U.S. for heart attacks, and nearly three times the U.S. level for strokes. Cancer age-standardized mortality is 10 percent higher in Canada than in the U.S.—despite far healthier lifestyles.
>
> […]When it comes to personnel, Canada underspends on medical staff and doctors, ranking 29th out of 33 among high-income countries for doctors per 1,000 population, accounting for a large part of those wait times. Canada has half as many specialist physicians per capita as the U.S.
>
> […]With such shortages and waiting lists, Canadian emergency rooms are packed. So packed that Canadians sometimes just give up and go home. Of Canadian ER visitors who are seen, 29 percent report wait times of over four hours, three times the U.S. level.
>
> […]Canadian seniors are 65 percent more likely to have visited the emergency room (ER) four or more times in the past year than American seniors.
>
> Ultimately, nearly 5 percent of Canadian ER visitors end up leaving without ever being treated, giving up on a medical system that is perennially "free" but out of stock at the moment. In one study at two ERs in Alberta, 14 of the 498 walkaways were subsequently hospitalized, and one died within the week.

And keep in mind how things work in a single payer system. You pay up front through your taxes. The harder you work, the more you pay into the system. When you want treatment, you just get in line behind people who never paid one dime into the system – like all those low-skill refugees that Canada imports from Middle Eastern countries to build up the socialist voting bloc.

What should Christians bring up when discussing truth with Muslims?

August 23, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

I have some experience dicussing Islam because my mother's side of the family is all Muslim. My go-to argument has always been to confront them about the Qur'an's claim that Jesus did not die of crucifixion. But I noticed a different argument from Laura Powell, who knows far more about this topic than I do. Do you think her approach is the best one?

She writes about it over at Gospel-Centered Discipleship:

> The crux of the argument is this: The Qur'an affirms the inspiration, authority, and preservation of the New Testament Gospels;[2] yet the Qur'an also contradicts the Gospels on major theological and historical points. Therefore, the Qur'an cannot be reliable.
>
> According to the Qur'an, the Gospel is the trustworthy, reliable revelation of God given as a guidance for mankind (Qur'an 3:3-4). These Scriptures from God were available and trustworthy when the Qur'an was revealed in the 7th century A.D., and those who had access to them were repeatedly told to obey them, judge by them, submit to their teaching, and stand fast upon them. In other words, according to the Qur'an, the Gospels are the inspired and authoritative words of God.
>
> Qur'an 5:47 says, "And let the People of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed—then it is those who are the defiantly disobedient."
>
> Furthermore, Qur'an 5:68 states, "Say, 'O People of the Scripture, you are [standing] on nothing until you uphold [the law of] the Torah, the Gospel, and

> what has been revealed to you from your Lord'" (see also 6:114; 3:3-4).

What I like about her argument is that she's just taking the words of the Qur'an seriously, and asking the Muslims who claim to believe it what's going on here. Why say that the gospels are unreliable today, when the Qur'an said that the gospels were reliable, yesterday.

My argument about the death of Jesus requires us to ask Muslims "where is the non-Muslim historian who thinks that Jesus did not die?" There isn't one.

But my argument requires that the Muslim know something about historical scholarship, to know what non-Muslim historians think.Laura's argument has wider appeal, because it doesn't require that the Muslim have *any* knowledge about history – only knowledge about what their own holy book says.

She concludes with this:

> What we see here is that the Qur'an teaches the inspiration, authority, and preservation of the Gospels. The Qur'an was intended as an Arabic version of the message of truth found in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, but this presents a huge problem for Muslims because the Qur'an contradicts the Christian Scriptures on essential doctrines. Most notably, the Qur'an teaches that Jesus was not God incarnate, he did not die on a cross, and he was not raised from the dead (Qur'an 4:157; 5:116).
>
> Here's the dilemma for Muslims: If the Gospels *are not* trustworthy, then the Qur'an is false because it teaches that the Gospels are the inspired, perfectly preserved, authoritative words of God. But if the Gospels *are* trustworthy, then the Qur'an is false because it teaches contradictory, mutually exclusive facts about key issues. Either way, the Qur'an is false.
>
> This, of course, is a huge problem for Muslims. The validity of Islam rests upon the reliability of the Qur'an, just as Christianity rests upon the truth of the divinity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. If the Qur'an is unreliable, then Islam is a false religion.

I like that she's comfortable having disagreements with people. That's not very common in the church today, in my experience.

By the way, this is the same Laura who wrote that really good article about how she found a better way to discuss her Christian worldview when she moved on from sharing her testimony. I blogged about it here.

Will spending more money on education improve the test scores of students?

August 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I want a raise, I work harder, but teachers have a different approach

One of my friends has been having a debate with one of his former teachers about whether spending more money on government-run education improves tests scores. He tried posting some evidence, but she just dismissed that by claiming:

1. If we hadn't spent more money, then the student test scores would have gone down instead of staying the same.
2. Most of the money that government spends on education goes to vouchers and private schools, not public schools
3. Economists at prestigious think tanks like that Cato Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and the American Enterprise Institute cannot be trusted to accurately cite the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics because of the Koch Brothers
4. You can't compare the test scores of American students with the test scores of Asian students who outperform them, (for less government spending), because math is different in Asia compared to America

Let's look at some data and see if her arguments are correct.

Does more spending mean higher student performance?

National Review reported on data collected in the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which spans all 50 states.

Look:

> Comparing educational achievement with per-pupil spending among states also calls into question the value of increasing expenditures. While high-spending

> Massachusetts had the nation's highest proficiency scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, low-spending Idaho did very well, too. South Dakota ranks 42nd in per-pupil expenditures but eighth in math performance and ninth in reading. The District of Columbia, meanwhile, with the nation's highest per-pupil expenditures ($15,511 in 2007), scores dead last in achievement.

The student test scores are dead last, but National Review notes that "according to the National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, D.C. was spending an average of $27,460 per pupil in 2014, the most recent year for which data are available." They are spending the most per-pupil, but their test scores are dead last.

CBS News reported on another recent study confirming this:

> Decades of increased taxpayer spending per student in U.S. public schools has not improved student or school outcomes from that education, and a new study finds that throwing money at the system is simply not tied to academic improvements.
>
> The study from the CATO Institute shows that American student performance has remained poor, and has actually declined in mathematics and verbal skills, despite per-student spending tripling nationwide over the same 40-year period.
>
> "The takeaway from this study is that what we've done over the past 40 years hasn't worked," Andrew Coulson, director of the Center For Educational Freedom at the CATO Institute, told Watchdog.org. "The average performance change nationwide has declined 3 percent in mathematical and verbal skills. Moreover, there's been no relationship, effectively, between spending and academic outcomes."
>
> The study, "State Education Trends: Academic Performance and Spending over the Past 40 Years," analyzed how billions of increased taxpayer dollars, combined with the number of school employees nearly doubling since 1970, to produce stagnant or declining academic results.
>
> "The performance of 17-year-olds has been essentially stagnant across all subjects despite a near tripling of the inflation-adjusted cost of putting a child through the K-12 system," writes Coulson.

Where did the numbers come from? The Koch Brothers? No:

> Data from the U.S. Department of Education incorporating public school costs, number of employees, student enrollment and SAT scores was analyzed to explore the disparity between increased spending and decreasing or stagnant academic results.

Well, at least government-run monopoly schools outperform private private schools, right? No:

> […][P]rivate schools, where students excel over public school peers, …manage to

> operate at budgets about 34 percent lower than taxpayer-funded schools, US Finance Post reports.
>
> Public schools spend, on average, $11,000 per student, per year.
>
> Coulson noted an Arizona study he conducted which showed that the average per-pupil spending at private schools was only about 66 percent of the cost of public schools.

A more recent state-specific study from 2016 found that this is still the case.

This problem gets even worse when you look at test scores from other countries, where even less is spent on education.

As the Washington Post reported at the end of 2016:

> When it comes to math, U.S. high school students are falling further behind their international counterparts, according to results released Tuesday of an ongoing study that compares academic achievement in 73 countries. And the news is not much better in reading and science literacy, where U.S. high schoolers have not gained any ground and continue to trail students in a slew of developed countries around the globe.
>
> In the latest Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) measuring math literacy in 2015, U.S. students ranked 40th in the world. The U.S. average math score of 470 represents the second decline in the past two assessments — down from 482 in 2012 and 488 in 2009. The U.S. score in 2015 was 23 points lower than the average of all of the nations taking part in the survey.

More money is being spent, but the scores are DECREASING.

Now, why is it that increased government spending in the public school monopoly doesn't improve student performance? Well, one reason is that very little of the money makes it to the classroom.

Where does all the money go?

Let's look at four places where the money spent on the government-run public school monopoly ends up.

Administration

First, a lot of it gets paid to administrations who implement politically correct programs designed to turn the impressionable young people into little secular socialists.

Here's a helpful chart from the American Enterprise Institute:

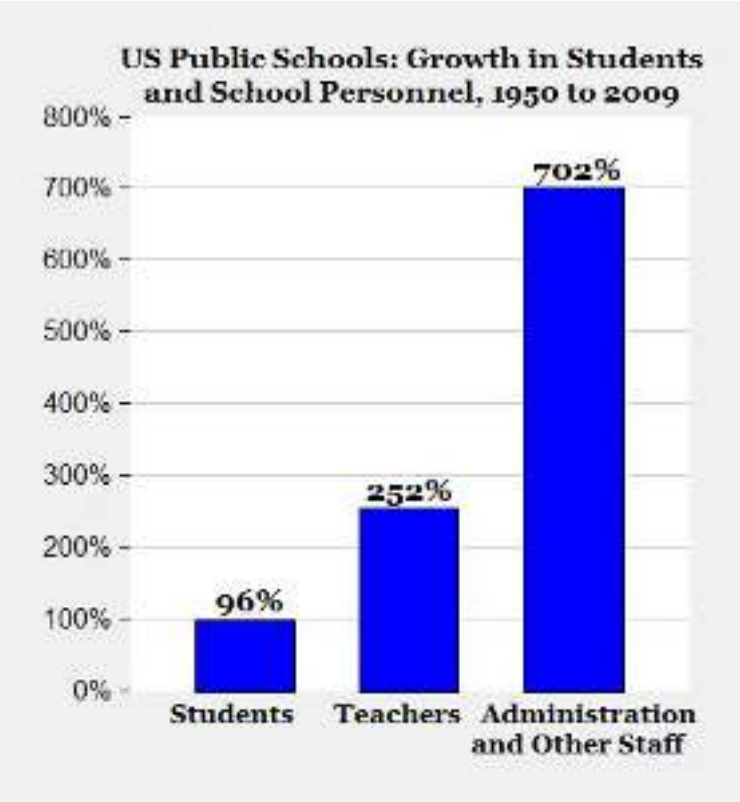

Where does taxpayer money spent on the public school monopoly go?
I guess if a school wants to make things like Planned Parenthood sex education and LGBT indoctrination into priorities, then they would need more administrators.

Pensions

Second, education employees get enormous pensions, which are paid by taxpayers and negotiated by their unions. You would never see pensions this large in the private sector.

This is from the leftist Brookings Institute, from 2014:

> This figure shows we now spend nearly $1,100 per student on retirement benefits. The average public school student teacher ratio is 16 to 1. So we are spending about $17,000 per year per teacher in pension contributions.
>
> […]The National Council on Teacher Quality writes,
>
> In 2014 teacher pension systems had a total of a half trillion dollars in unfunded liabilities—a debt load that climbed more than $100 billion in just the last two years. Across the states, an average of 70 cents of every dollar contributed to state teacher pension systems goes toward paying off the ever-increasing pension debt, not to future teacher benefits (p. iii).
>
> While we are spending a huge amount to fund teacher pensions, most of that spending doesn't go to attracting the best teachers. It's paying off past debts.

We can't hire good teachers, because all the education spending of today is paying for the gold-plated pensions of yesterday.

That was 2014. The numbers are even worse today. Teachers contribute very, very little to their pensions, but the benefits are enormous compared to what the private sector taxpayers get in Social Security. (Which is going to be bankrupt by 2034, as reported by

the far-left PBS)

Teacher training

Third, a lot of it is spent on teacher training, because apparently teaching multiplication, Shakespeare or geography changes every year, so the teachers need tens of thousands of dollars in annual training.

The Washington Post reports on a recent study:

> A new study of 10,000 teachers found that professional development — the teacher workshops and training that cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year — is largely a waste.
>
> The study released Tuesday by TNTP, a nonprofit organization, found no evidence that any particular approach or amount of professional development consistently helps teachers improve in the classroom.
>
> […]The school districts that participated in the study spent an average of $18,000 per teacher annually on professional development. Based on that figure, TNTP estimates that the 50 largest school districts spend an estimated $8 billion on teacher development annually. That is far larger than previous estimates.
>
> And teachers spend a good deal of time in training, the study found. The 10,000 teachers surveyed were in training an average of 19 school days a year, or almost 10 percent of a typical school year, according to TNTP.

Maybe if more of the money spent on education were spent directly on hiring teachers, then we would see an improvement. Unfortunately, a lot of the money meant for teachers goes to the teacher unions. How do they spend that money?

Political Contributions

Finally, this is from OpenSecrets.org, concerning political contributions made in the most recent election cycle:

Rank	Organization	Total Contributions	To Dems & Liberals	To Repubs & Conserve	Pct to Dems & Liberals
1	Fahr LLC	$90,585,670	$90,585,570	$0	100.0%
2	Renaissance Technologies	$59,130,938	$33,414,308	$25,250,600	56.9%
3	Las Vegas Sands	$44,362,186	$51,436	$44,333,430	0.1%
4	Paloma Partners	$41,961,900	$41,958,600	$3,300	100.0%
5	Service Employees International Union	$39,389,570	$39,387,460	$2,100	100.0%
6	Adelson Drug Clinic	$38,847,300	$40,000	$38,830,000	0.1%
7	Newsweb Corp	$38,802,040	$38,796,640	$0	100.0%
8	NextGen Climate Action	$35,459,288	$35,459,288	$0	100.0%
9	American Federation of Teachers	$33,599,606	$33,580,580	$10,700	100.0%
10	Priorities USA/Priorities USA Action	$33,470,302	$33,470,302	$0	100.0%
11	National Education Assn	$29,774,140	$29,426,584	$347,306	98.8%
12	Laborers Union	$29,086,698	$28,386,961	$474,925	96.4%
13	Soros Fund Management	$28,708,898	$27,561,598	$679,700	97.6%

Top Political Contributors in 2016 election cycle

The two largest teacher unions came in at #9 and #11. Most of their donations go to Democrat Party. Democrats believe (against the evidence) that spending more money in the government-run public school monopoly will improve student performance on tests.

So, what's the solution?

The solution is that we abolish the federal Department of Education, which has done nothing to improve the quality of education for students. We need to push the education of children back down to the state and local levels. We need to empower parents to choose the schools that work best for their children by giving parents vouchers. We need to increase tax-free education savings accounts to help parents with school expenses. We should also give free college tuition to homeschooled students who are admitted to STEM programs at any college or university. We can take the money from the pensions of the union administrators, after we abolish ever single public sector teacher union in the country, and seize all their assets and pensions. If that's not enough money, then we can seize all the pensions of Department of Education employees – a just punishment for their failure to produce results while still taking taxpayer money.

Finally, we should allow people who already have private sector experience doing things like STEM to become teachers. Let's face it: the departments that grant Education degrees have the lowest entrance requirements, and produce the least competent adults. People with years of private sector work experience teach better than people with Education degrees. Let's open up teaching to people who have experience in the private sector doing software engineering, statistics, nursing, etc. and then we'll have qualified teachers.

Senator Tim Scott at RNC Convention: “our family went from cotton to Congress in one generation”

August 25, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Republican Senator Tim Scott (South Carolina)

A few weeks ago, I did a podcast on Tim Stratton’s show where I explained some of the reasons why America has been a good place for me as a non-white conservative. I also explained some of the decisions I made in order to succeed. Democrats don’t emphasize the goodness of America, or the importance of making good decisions in order to succeed. But Republicans do.

Just The News reports on the speech by Senator Tim Scott, a black Republican from the state of South Carolina:

> “Our side is working on policy, while Joe Biden’s radical Democrats are trying to permanently transform what it means to be an American,” Scott said. “If we let them, they will turn our country into a socialist utopia, and history taught us that path only leads to pain and misery,” said Scott, “We must focus on the promise of the American journey.”
>
> “We don’t give into cancel-culture, or the radical – and factually baseless – belief that things are worse today than in the 1860s or the 1960s,” he continued.
>
> Scott spoke about how an early mentor in his life taught him valuable lessons about how, with hard work, he could improve not just his own standing in the world, but his community’s.
>
> “He planted the seeds of what would become Opportunity Zones,” he said.
>
> He called the American education system “magic,” for the opportunities it presents to all children, and reaffirmed his and the president’s support for school choice, “to make sure every child, in every neighborhood has a quality education.”
>
> He spoke about how being the owner of a successful small business taught him

> to value a tax code that encourages growth. And he spoke about winning his first congressional primary against the son of Strom Thurmond, famed senator of South Carolina and notorious segregationist.
>
> "Because of the evolution of the heart, in an overwhelmingly white district, the voters judged me on the content of my character, not the color of my skin," Scott said.
>
> […]Throughout his speech, Scott stressed the progress that America has made and will continue to make. He said that despite living in "a world that only wants to you believe in the bad news, the truth is, our nation's arc always bends back towards fairness."
>
> The senator closed by reaffirming his belief in the hope that America represents for its citizens, and represented for him personally.
>
> "Our family went from Cotton to Congress in one lifetime. And that's why I believe the next American century can be better than the last," Scott said.

The full speech is here:

There were some other interesting events during the first night of the GOP Convention. The Federalist reported on one speech that was considered very moving, and might have been the best speech of the night:

> Maximo Alvarez, a successful American businessman who fled the communist regime of Cuba's Fidel Castro, offered a powerful testimony Monday in support of President Donald Trump. Alvarez warned Americans of the alternative presented by the Democrats nomination of the most progressive ticket in recent memory.
>
> "I'm speaking to you today because I've seen people like this before," Alvarez told the convention. "I've seen movements like this before. I've seen ideas like this before and I'm here to tell you, we cannot let them take over our country."
>
> Throughout the seven-minute speech delivered on the first night of the Republican National Convention, Alvarez shared his family's story fleeing the oppressive regime just 100 miles off Florida's coast.
>
> "I've heard the promises of Fidel Castro, and I cannot forget those who grew up around me, who looked like me, who suffered, and starved, and died because they believed those empty promises. They swallowed the communist poison pill," he said.
>
> "By the grace of God, I lived the American dream, the greatest blessing I ever had," said Alvarez, who now serves as the president of Sunshine Gasoline Distributors. "My dad, who only had a 6th grade education told me, 'Don't leave this place. You will never be as lucky as me … There is no place to hide.'"

The video is here:

I hope that as the election nears, that you have a plan to do something to encourage

people to vote Republican. We can’t afford to lose this election because we didn’t think it was our job to do something. At the very least, you should be sharing articles by e-mail and on social media. But it’s a good idea to contact your local GOP office and find out what you can do to help. Lawn signs, bumper stickers, donations, etc. are all positive steps to winning the election. If we stand by now, and the Democrats win, things will get a lot worse for us.

Nick Sandmann delivered the best RNC Convention speech on Tuesday night

August 26, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNN leftists aren't too happy to see his smirky face again

Do you remember Nick Sandmann? He is the pro-life high school student who was the victim of a dishonest smear campaign by leftists in the mainstream news media. He was able to win two cases against far-left extremist CNN and far-left extremist Washington Post. Other cases are still in progress. But he managed to get back on CNN cameras Tuesday night to tell his side of his story.

Daily Wire reported on his speech and on CNN's response.

Here's an excerpt:

> My life changed forever in that one moment. The full war machine of the mainstream media revved up into attack mode. They did so without ever researching the full video of the incident; without ever investigating Mr. Philips' motives; or without ever asking me for my side of the story. And do you know why? Because the truth wasn't important. Advancing their anti-Christian, anti-Conservative, anti-Donald Trump narrative was all that mattered. And if advancing their narrative ruined the reputation and future of a teenager from Covington, Kentucky…so be it. That will teach him not to wear a MAGA hat!"
>
> I learned that what was happening to me had a name. It was called being cancelled. As in annulled. As in revoked. As in made void. Cancelled is what's happening to people around this country who refuse to be silenced by the far left.

> Many are being fired, humiliated or even threatened. Often, the media is a willing participant."
>
> But I wouldn't be cancelled. I fought back hard to expose the media for what they did to me and won a personal victory. While much more must be done, I look forward to the day that the media returns to providing balanced, responsible and accountable news coverage. In November, I believe this country must unite around a President who calls the media out and refuses to allow them to create a narrative instead of reporting the facts."

And CNN's response:

> Lockhart tweeted, "I'm watching tonight because it's important. But I don't have to watch this snot nose entitled kid from Kentucky."

Yeah, but they're paying that kid to wear a MAGA hat on their network. Because he whipped their asses!

His speech is pretty short – only 4.5 minutes:

That was my favorite speech of the ones I saw. Rand Paul was pretty good. Mike Pompeo was pretty good. Some people really like Melania Trump's speech, as well.

But for me, the runner-up was this short speech by Kentucky's black Republican attorney General Daniel.

Daily Wire had an excerpt:

> "My values were shaped by my faith and by my parents. I worked at their small coffee shop meeting people from all walks of life, and I realized something: no matter who we are, everyone needs a cup of coffee. That lesson stuck with me because despite our differences, we all want the same things: for our children to have more opportunities than we did, to feel the dignity of work, and to believe that if you play by the rules, you can make a good life for yourself and your family," Cameron said.
>
> […]"So the question is, will we chose the path that gives us the best chance to meet those universal desires? Or will we go backward to a time where people were treated like political commodities who can't be trusted to think for themselves. I think often about my ancestors who struggled for freedom, and as I think of those giants and their broad shoulders, I also think about Joe Biden, who says, 'If you aren't voting for me, you ain't black;' who argued that Republicans would put us back in chains; who says there is no diversity of thought in the black community." Cameron said.
>
> "Mr. Vice President, look at me. I am black. We are not all the same, sir. I am not in chains. My mind is my own and you can't tell me how to vote because of the color of my skin," Cameron said, addressing Biden. "Joe Biden is a backwards thinker in a world that is craving forward-looking leadership. There is not wisdom in his record or plan, just a trail of discredited ideas and offensive statements. Joe

> Biden would destroy jobs, raise our taxes, and throw away the lives of countless unborn children."
>
> The attorney general said that Biden is "captive to the radical left" that believes "skin color must dictate your politics."

I love that line: "Mr. Vice President, look at me. I am black. We are not all the same, sir. I am not in chains. My mind is my own and you can't tell me how to vote because of the color of my skin". I would really like to live in a world where the typical low-information Democrat voter understood what black conservatives stand for.

Here's the video:

I noticed that a new poll of college students found that 20% of black men enrolled in 4-year degrees preferred Donald Trump to Joe Biden.

I'm looking forward to the Wednesday night speakers. This is the time where people are learning about the differences between the parties. And I'll be keeping an eye out to bring you the speeches that capture the essence of the Republican party. You won't hear this in the public school classroom or from the mainstream news media.

Fact-checking the fact-checkers: is Politifact reliable or biased?

August 27, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Politifact is a web site run by some left-wing journalists at the Tampa Bay Times. As you might expect from academic studies of media bias, their content might as well be written by the Democrat Party. But it's not enough to just declare Politifact a Democrat propaganda operation – I need to actually give you details and examples. And so I will, in the rest of this post.

Let's start with two recent examples, then I'll show you the worst example of media bias I have ever seen from Politifact.

Missouri Senate Race

Here's one analysis from the Daily Wire:

> On Tuesday, Politifact, which purports to be a neutral fact-checking website but in fact leans heavily to the left, got caught protecting a member of the Democratic Party: Democratic Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill.
>
> Politifact took issue with the ad from The Senate Leadership Fund, a pro-Republican super PAC, that claimed that McCaskill said "normal people" could afford private planes.
>
> […]After they were corrected, Politifact acknowledged the mistake, writing,
>
> Initially, we published this fact-check with a rating of False, because based on the video available, it did not appear that McCaskill was talking about private planes. After publication, we received more complete video of the question-and-answer session between McCaskill and a constituent that showed she was in fact responding to a question about private planes, as well as a report describing the meeting. We re-assessed the evidence, archived the original version here, and published the version you see here with a new rating of Half True. We apologize for the error.

Daily wire also linked to some more failed Politifact "fact checks": here, here, and here.

Arizona Senate Race

Politifact also screwed up their fact-check for the Arizona Senate race.

The Daily Caller explains:

> PolitiFact incorrectly labeled it "mostly false" that Democratic Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema "protested troops in a pink tutu" during its live fact-check of the Arizona Senate debate Monday night.
>
> It's an established fact that Sinema, a former Green Party activist who co-founded an anti-war group, wore a pink tutu at one of the multiple anti-war

> protests she attended in 2003.
>
> "While we were in harm's way, she was protesting our troops in a pink tutu," Republican candidate Martha McSally, a former Air Force fighter pilot, said during Monday night's debate.

Here's their Politifact's evaluation of McSally's claim:

Who are you going to believe? Politifact, or your own eyes?
And here's the photo of Kyrsten Sinema, protesting the troops, in a pink tutu:

Anti-war Democrat Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema in a pink tutu
The Daily Caller notes:

> A 2003 Arizona State University news article at the time described Sinema

> wearing "something resembling a pink tutu" at one of the protests.
>
> […]Sinema openly associated with fringe elements of the far-left during her anti-war activism.
>
> She promoted an appearance by Lynne Stewart, a lawyer who was convicted of aiding an Islamic terrorist organization, in 2003.
>
> Sinema also reportedly partnered with anarchists and witches in her anti-war activism and said she did "not care" if Americans wanted to join the Taliban.

Colonel Martha McSally, as I've blogged about before, is a former U.S. Air Force A-10 fighter pilot, and squadron commander. She logged a lot of hours leading actual combat missions against America's enemies – the sorts of people who sell and rape Yazidi girls. She fought them.

And now for the big one: Politifact's fact-checking of Obamacare.

Obama's claims about Obamacare

Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine, wrote about Politifact's assessment of Obama's promise to Americans about keeping their health plans after Obamacare.

In 2008, before the presidential election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about Obamacare "True":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site's "Truth-O-Meter" to evaluate this claim: "Under Barack Obama's health care proposal, 'if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.'"

And she concluded:

> […]…people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama's plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his statement True."

Roy notes:

> PolitiFact's pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 campaign.

Here's the screen capture from 2008:

The Truth-O-Meter Says:

Under Barack Obama's health care proposal, "if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it."

Barack Obama on Tuesday, October 7th, 2008 in a debate in Nashville, Tenn.

Obama's plan expands existing system

Barack Obama defended his health care plan during a debate in Nashville, Tenn., on Oct. 7, 2008. His opponents have attacked his plan as "government-run" health care.

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"No. 1, let me just repeat, if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it," Obama said. "All I'm going to do is help you to lower the premiums on it. You'll still have choice of doctor."

Obama is accurately describing his health care plan here. He advocates a program that seeks to build on the current system, rather than dismantling it and starting over.

Politifact says that everyone who likes their health care plan can keep it

Before the election, it's true! And Obama got re-elected, because people believed that. But what happened after the election?

In 2013, after the 2012 election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about Obamacare "Pants On Fire":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama's infamous promise—that "if you like your health care plan, you can keep it"—its 2013 "Lie of the Year."
>
> […][N]one of the key facts that made that promise "impossible" in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President's plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan

Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."

Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."

Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact said one thing before the election, and the opposite afterwards

So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, but it's election time so they don't say that. It's not like the critical assessments of Obamacare from health policy experts were not out there between 2007-2012. I know, because I blogged on every study and report on the predicted effects

of the law that I could find. But the intellectually lazy journalism-major clowns at Politifact couldn’t be bothered to read those studies and reports.

Two reasons why Christians and conservatives should not donate to United Way

August 28, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, it's that time of year again, when corporations bully their employees into donating to the United Way. I thought it might be a good idea to urge all Bible-believing Christians to avoid donating to the United Way. *Please share this post if you agree with it!*

Let's start with abortion. The United Way gives TONS of money to fund abortion providers.

In 2008, United Way affiliates send $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood:

> The national United Way does fund Planned Parenthood; their website states:
>
> United Way funded programs through Planned Parenthood include community health maintenance, e.g. communicable disease prevention; medical care service; family planning; health education; public awareness services; and family preservation and strengthening services, e.g. counseling and family life education.
>
> Nationally in 2008, local United Ways distributed an estimated $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood agencies.
>
> Any finances being donated to Planned Parenthood (even if not specifically for abortion services) will free up more of their money to be used toward abortion services.

In 2015, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Last year, on the heels of shocking videos showing the Planned Parenthood abortion business selling the body parts of aborted babies, a new expose' from a group that monitors corporations that finance the abortion giant reveals the United Way is a major donor. That expose found United Way agencies giving $2 million to the abortion giant.
>
> A new expose' released this week shows that figure has increased to $3 million.

In 2016, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Analysis of the most recent IRS Form 990 filings and other documentation found 62 United Way affiliates sent $2,756,799 to Planned Parenthood abortion organizations in tax year 2016. 2ndVote's latest findings indicate an increase of $168,806 from the $2,590,994 United Way funneled to Planned Parenthood in 2015.

We're living in a time when abortion rights involves such issues as sex-selection abortions, race-selection abortions, covering up statutory rapists, Democrat support for infanticide, attacking Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, selling the body parts of

unborn babies, etc. I don't think we can count on United Way to come down on the right side of these issues. We're already being forced to fund abortions with our tax dollars, thanks to Democrats. I don't think we should give any more money to abortion providers and their secular leftist allies.

That's abortion. What about gay rights? We've seen a lot of pressure on traditional values coming from the secular left lately. They redefined marriage AGAIN to deprive children of their biological mothers or fathers. They're pushing for the Equality Act, which would have huge religious liberty repercussions for Christians.

Texas attorney Maria Martinez explains on the American Thinker:

> The Equality Act is more draconian that any state or city conversion therapy ban to date because it takes away the traditional constitutional exemption for religious freedom. The act specifically states that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) may not be invoked as a defense, marking the *first time in history that Congress has limited the reach of RFRA*. This means that it could become illegal for Christian pastors, churches, schools, and ministries to communicate a message that sexual orientation or gender identity can change. The Equality Act is unprecedented in its overreach, impacting even adults who are *willingly seeking counseling*.
>
> By contrast, therapy of any kind that pushes a person *toward* same-sex attraction or gender transition is not impacted by the law at all.
>
> Banning counseling isn't the only thing the Equality Act will do:

- Parents could lose custody of their children if they decline to assist in their gender transition. Parents in Ohio recently lost custody of their female child because they would not give her testosterone supplements to help her "transition" to look like a male.
- Doctors and hospitals could be subject to lawsuits for refusing to perform so-called "sex change" surgeries. In California and New Jersey, Catholic hospitals are already being sued for discrimination for refusing to perform these surgeries.
- Battered women's shelters could be required to admit members of the opposite sex. In Anchorage, Alaska, a male who was refused access to a shelter for abused and trafficked women sued the shelter for "gender identity discrimination."
- Faith-based adoption and foster care agencies that believe that children do best with both a mother and a father could be forced to shut down. This has already occurred in at least six states in this country.

I wonder what United Way thinks about attacks on Bible-believing Christians by LGBT activists? All I could find on the Facebook page of the national organization was this:

Where does United Way stands on gay rights vs religious liberty?
I don't find that very encouraging, do you? And this is not the only pro-LGBT image I found on United Way Facebook pages. By the way, I saved a copy of their Facebook page, in case it disappears.

As a Bible-believing Christian, maybe I would be better off giving money to an organization that protects religious liberty, like Alliance Defending Freedom. I understand that many people who call themselves Christians think that the United Way's positions are compatible with the Bible. But not everyone who calls herself a Christian actually takes the Bible seriously. Especially when it interferes with their career advancement and peer approval. This is especially true of people who work in Human Resources.

Please, don't give money to the United Way

You don't HAVE to give money to the United Way, just because the godless progressives in your office try to bully you into it. Instead, why not send the money to the Life Training Institute, or Ratio Christi, or Alliance Defending Freedom? These are groups do operate on Bible-based principles. I do think that Christians need to be careful about who they donate their money to. It doesn't make sense for Christians to get up and go to work and earn money, and then give it away to anti-Christian groups who want Christianity to disappear from American life. Paul talks about how God rewards those who give gifts to partner for the gospel in Philippians. Make sure that you are not wasting your money on anything less.

Study: children of naturally married couples outperform children of same-sex couples

August 29, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

Whenever I debate a controversial issue, I like to go straight to the studies in order to let the evidence speak for itself. Although it's difficult to convince someone on the opposite side to change their mind, usually people in the middle will side with the person who has evidence, instead of the person who is crying the loudest and telling anecdotal stories that may or may even not be true.

The Public Discourse reports on a study out of Canada.

Excerpt:

> A new academic study based on the Canadian census suggests that a married mom and dad matter for children. Children of same-sex coupled households do not fare as well.
>
> There is a new and significant piece of evidence in the social science debate about gay parenting and the unique contributions that mothers and fathers make to their children's flourishing. A study published last week in the journal *Review of the Economics of the Household*—analyzing data from a very large, population-based sample—reveals that the children of gay and lesbian couples are only about 65 percent as likely to have graduated from high school as the children of married, opposite-sex couples. And gender matters, too: girls are more apt to struggle than boys, with daughters of gay parents displaying dramatically low graduation rates.
>
> Unlike US-based studies, this one evaluates a 20 percent sample of the Canadian census, where same-sex couples have had access to all taxation and government benefits since 1997 and to marriage since 2005.

> While in the US Census same-sex households have to be guessed at based on the gender and number of self-reported heads-of-household, young adults in the Canadian census were asked, “Are you the child of a male or female same-sex married or common law couple?” While study author and economist Douglas Allen noted that very many children in Canada who live with a gay or lesbian parent are actually living with a single mother—a finding consonant with that detected in the 2012 New Family Structures Study—he was able to isolate and analyze hundreds of children living with a gay or lesbian *couple* (either married or in a “common law” relationship akin to cohabitation).
>
> So the study is able to compare—side by side—the young-adult children of same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples, as well as children growing up in single-parent homes and other types of households. Three key findings stood out to Allen:
>
> children of married opposite-sex families have a high graduation rate compared to the others; children of lesbian families have a very low graduation rate compared to the others; and the other four types [common law, gay, single mother, single father] are similar to each other and lie in between the married/lesbian extremes.
>
> Employing regression models and series of control variables, Allen concludes that the substandard performance *cannot* be attributed to lower school attendance or the more modest education of gay or lesbian parents. Indeed, same-sex parents were characterized by higher levels of education, and their children were more likely to be enrolled in school than even those of married, opposite-sex couples. And yet their children are notably more likely to lag in finishing their own schooling.
>
> […]The truly unique aspect of Allen’s study, however, may be its ability to distinguish gender-specific effects of same-sex households on children. He writes:
>
> the particular gender mix of a same-sex household has a dramatic difference in the association with child graduation. Consider the case of girls. . . . Regardless of the controls and whether or not girls are currently living in a gay or lesbian household, the odds of graduating from high school are considerably lower than any other household type. Indeed, girls living in gay households are only 15 percent as likely to graduate compared to girls from opposite sex married homes.
>
> Thus although the children of same-sex couples fare worse overall, the disparity is unequally shared, but is instead based on the combination of the gender of child and gender of parents. Boys fare better—that is, they’re more likely to have finished high school—in gay households than in lesbian households. For girls, the opposite is true. Thus the study undermines not only claims about “no differences” but also assertions that moms and dads are interchangeable. *They’re not*.

With a little digging, I found the abstract of the study:

> Almost all studies of same-sex parenting have concluded there is "no difference" in a range of outcome measures for children who live in a household with same-sex parents compared to children living with married opposite-sex parents. Recently, some work based on the US census has suggested otherwise, but those studies have considerable drawbacks. Here, a 20% sample of the 2006 Canada census is used to identify self-reported children living with same-sex parents, and to examine the association of household type with children's high school graduation rates. This large random sample allows for control of parental marital status, distinguishes between gay and lesbian families, and is large enough to evaluate differences in gender between parents and children. Children living with gay and lesbian families in 2006 were about 65 % as likely to graduate compared to children living in opposite sex marriage families. Daughters of same-sex parents do considerably worse than sons.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington. A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more shorter times). That's not good for children either. Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships have much higher rates of domestic violence. That's not good for children either. So we have three reasons to think that normalizing gay relationships as "marriage" would not be good for children.

The reason I am posting this is because I want people to understand why social conservatives like me propose these laws defining and promoting marriage. We do favor natural marriage for the same reason that we oppose no-fault divorce, and for the same reason why we oppose welfare for single mothers (it encourages single motherhood). We don't want to encourage people to deprive children of their mother or their father. We look at the research, and we decide that children need their mother and father. Given the choice between the needs of the child and restraining the freedom of the adults, we prefer the child's need for her mother and father. It's not just arbitrary rules, there is a reason behind the rules.

But children are not commodities. They have certain needs right out of the box. Adults should NOT be thinking about how to duct-tape a child onto any old relationship that doesn't offer the same safety and stability that opposite sex marriage offers. We should be passing laws to strengthen marriage in order to protect children, not to weaken it. Libertarians don't want to do that, because they want adults to be free to do as they please, at the expense of children. Libertarians think that the adults should be able to negotiate private contracts and have no obligations to any children who are present, or who may be present later.

Related posts

- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage

- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

To be a Bible-believing Christian, you have to be comfortable working alone

August 30, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

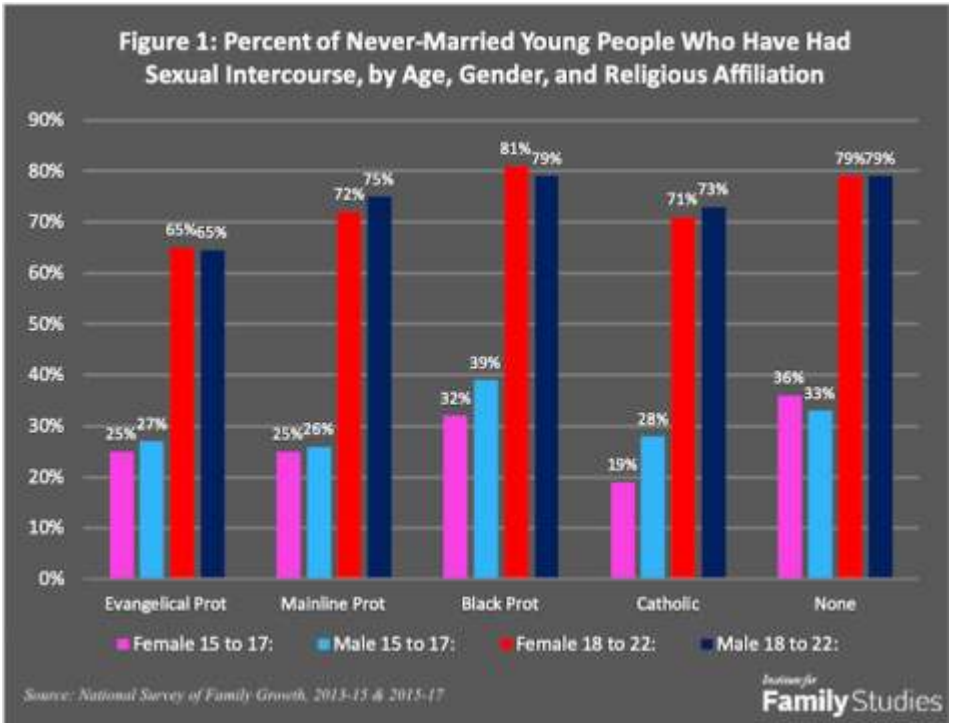

I see chastity in the Bible, but I don't see Black Lives Matter Marxism in the Bible

So, when I read the Bible there are things that stand out to be as being of first importance. The priorities are about personal moral character. The overall theme seems to be to deny your personal desires and ambitions and gain control of yourself so that you can devote yourself to following Jesus. The Bible isn't teaching that we need to implement Marxism as a solution to "inequalities".

The Bible emphasizes things like controlling your temper, being patient when you must suffer for being a Christian, forgiving others who are penitent about treating you badly, giving to charity, being sober and chaste, either staying unmarried or marrying an opposite sex partner for life, not envying, not stealing, building other people up in the knowledge of God, renewing your mind. There's no emphasis on disparities or social justice. Everything is about individual choices. Every person is responsible for themselves.

Now, when I go to Twitter and Facebook, I see people who occupy positions of power in Christianity who don't talk about any of those things. They don't practice those things themselves as of first importance. They don't read books about how to practically pursue those things, e.g. – books about evidence countering premarital sex, divorce or same-sex marriage. They don't talk about those things, they aren't informed enough to be convincing about those things, they don't promote those things to non-Christians using evidence.

Let's take an example: chastity and natural marriage between one man and one woman

for life. When you look at the social media of prominent Christians, Christian professors, Christian apologists, Christian celebrities, etc., you aren't going to see them linking to studies about the premarital sex, hooking up, cohabitation, polyamory, no-fault divorce. Instead, they're going to be talking about what makes them look virtuous to others. You know – recycling, essential oils, illegal immigration, refugees, girl wash your face, wear a COVID mask, black lives matter, yoga, dog and cat parenting, I support public school teachers, etc. The sum total of their Christian distinctiveness is that they've got essential oils and rainbow unicorn mugs in their office that say "just believe".

There isn't a single point where their personal morality or public engagement is centered around what the Bible teaches explicitly. The leaders have left the Bible behind for life enhancement and virtue signaling, as required by their new Lords and Saviors in the secular left mainstream news media. And this is not surprising at all when you look at the most popular books in Christian Women's section of book stores. It's all Rachel Hollis, Beth Moore, Joyce Meyer, Jen Hatmaker, Lauren Akins, Priscilla Shirer. The goal is to for the individual to feel good, get social approval and achieve their heart's desires. Nothing there about promoting what the Bible teaches using reason and evidence to non-Christians. Whatever these people understand Christianity to be, it's not something that requires that they read non-fiction, behave morally and persuade others with evidence. They're narcissists, not salt or light.

So what about feminism and the Sexual Revolution? The response of Christian leaders to the new ways of meeting, dating, marrying proposed by radical feminists is enthusiastic celebration. And if delaying marriage for careers and promiscuity result in more abortions and divorces and single motherhood, then don't blame the choices of women, just blame secular men for not turning into Christians after being given premarital sex. (This is the majority view among conservative pastors – let women have sex with atheists, then blame atheists for not converting into faithful, devoted husbands). It's just too hard to read actual studies on sex, dating and marriage, and then take a stand against women who have accepted feminism for emotional reasons: "it's just easier to get along with my teachers and peers if I'm sexually active with no-commitment bad boys".

The response to the challenges of atheism is to quote Bible words and expect magical conversions due to burning of the bosom. There is no difference between the evangelistic views of Al Mohler and Russell Moore and Mormon leaders. Both camps are firm believers in magic words evangelism, i.e. – fideism. You have to pre-suppose the Bible is true because of a burning sensation when you read it. Since this approach doesn't work when used on non-Christians, you get this retreat from proclaiming the truth of Christianity to non-Christians. They've been doing the same thing over and over for decades, and now they've just stopped presenting Christianity as true entirely. Now, they to focus on "wear a mask" and "defund the police" instead, so they can continue to achieve their real goal – communicating their virtue to others.

Regarding Marxism, they keep swallowing every cause trotted out by the left to achieve the left's end goal of a Marxist utopia. Whether it's global warming, importing big-government supporting refugees and illegal immigrants, black lives matter Marxism, the

housing bubble bailouts, the new trillion student loan bubble, or defund the police, Christian leaders just keep rushing around like lemmings to support any cause that the secular left tells them is good. The Bible does not give them their priorities and definition of good and evil. Instead, they now look to the talking heads on CNN and MSNBC to tell them what they must promote in order to signal their virtue to others. Their religious hobby was always about signaling their virtue to others. When sobriety and chastity got hard, they switched to wear a mask and defund the police.

How should a Bible believing Christian respond to these changes in the priorities of Christian seminary professors, leaders, and woke pastors? Well, I don't see how you can go to church any more. It's a waste of time except in rare cases (Wayne Grudem, Voddie Baucham, etc.). I do think that group Bible study, mentoring, and joint activity against feminism, socialism and atheism are still valuable. Definitely reading books together. (Laura and I are reading the new science apologetics book from the Discovery Institute chapter by chapter, and I'm also working through Money, Greed and God with Carla). The church and Christian leaders have nothing useful to say about any of the real problems we are facing. None of their leaders are reading anything that would inform them and strengthen their convictions in the areas that the Bible considers to be central.

So, I guess my conclusion would be this. If you are approaching Christianity like "Jesus was a refugee" and "black lives matter" woke pastors, and thinking that the church / seminary hierarchy is a great place to communicate your personal virtuousness to a large group of people, then keep doing that. But if you're just interested in championing the viewpoints that the Bible considers of central importance, then get yourself some books about the evidence related to feminism, socialism and atheism and read them. Get yourself an alias and a blog. Write what you learn about. Mentor others one-on-one so they learn how to defend the Bible's teachings as well. Get involved in politics for the Republican party, which at least has some policies that overlap with our concerns about abortion, religious liberty, self-defense against criminals, etc.

We're past the point of relying on woke pastors and Christian leaders to know anything about how to defend the Bible. They're just pissing away the religious liberty that was built by previous generations for their own selfish purposes. Don't rely on them.

Why do progressives make heroes out of criminals, and call the police villains?

August 31, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How do Democrats respond to riots, vandalism and arson?

OK so in this post, I'll summarize the facts concerning the latest shooting of an "unarmed black man" by the police in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Then I have a lecture given by David Sayet at the Heritage Foundation to explain why secular leftists and Never-Trumpers are so anxious to side with convicted criminals against the police, and the law-abiding people the police protect.

This is from Julie Kelly over at American Greatness:

> According to news reports, Kenosha police were responding to a 911 call related to an existing warrant on Jacob Blake for felony sexual assault, trespassing, and domestic abuse before Blake was shot on August 23.
>
> […]Blake allegedly broke into the bedroom of the victim, an ex-girlfriend, in the early morning of May 3 and sexually assaulted her while one of her children slept beside her. The victim told police that Blake attacks her "around twice a year when he drinks heavily," the New York Post reported August 28. A 911 call from that same residence triggered Blake's encounter with police, which sparked looting and rioting in Kenosha, a city located on the border of Illinois and Wisconsin, that spread to other cities across the county.
>
> Police also confirmed that Blake had a knife in his possession; video taken during the incident supports that claim. Blake resisted arrest and ignored officers' commands before he was shot in the back. He remains in stable condition at a Milwaukee hospital.

Some reactions of prominent Democrats:

> Political leaders, celebrities, and athletes have rallied to Blake's defense. In a video message taped at his home, Joe Biden said Blake's shooting was another example of "systemic racism" and fretted about what Blake's children watched unfold.
>
> […]Biden's running mate spoke with Blake's family this week. Sen. Kamala Harris said she did not think the shooting was justified.
>
> […]LeBron James is outraged at the Blake incident; he has referred to the serial sexual abuser as a "gentleman" and encouraged his fellow NBA players to boycott the playoffs in Blake's honor.
>
> […]NFL quarterback Drew Brees taped Blake's name on his helmet.
>
> Blake's father and other family members spoke at Friday's March on Washington in honor of the 57th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have a Dream" speech.

Hope you're not watching sports any more. At least don't pay anything for it. These are not good people.

Anyway, it seems like the expectation on police is that they allow criminals to commit crimes against blacks, just in the case that the criminals are also black themselves. Because apparently black lives don't matter if the criminal threatening those lives is also black. Only the lives of black criminals matter. We can't ask people of every race to behave morally. That's racist. We have to allow some criminals of certain races to break the law and not be punished.

Anyway, I thing it's a good time to re-post this old lecture featuring Jewish comedian Evan Sayet, who walked away from the left. He has an inside view of what is going on in the heads of the Democrats who march on behalf of criminals like George Floyd, Jacob Blake, etc.

Video:

The part I want you to see (full transcript):

> The Modern Liberal will invariably side with evil over good, wrong over right, and the behaviors that lead to failure over those that lead to success.
>
> […]What I discovered is that the Modern Liberal looks back on 50,000 years, 100,000 years of human civilization, and knows only one thing for sure: that none of the ideas that mankind has come up with–none of the religions, none of the philosophies, none of the ideologies, none of the forms of government–have succeeded in creating a world devoid of war, poverty, crime, and injustice. So they're convinced that since all of these ideas of man have proved to be wrong, the real cause of war, poverty, crime, and injustice must be found–can only be found–in the attempt to be right.
>
> If nobody ever thought they were right, what would we disagree about? If we didn't disagree, surely we wouldn't fight. If we didn't fight, of course we wouldn't

> go to war. Without war, there would be no poverty; without poverty, there would be no crime; without crime, there would be no injustice. It's a utopian vision, and all that's required to usher in this utopia is the rejection of all fact, reason, evidence, logic, truth, morality, and decency–all the tools that you and I use in our attempts to be better people, to make the world more right by trying to be right, by siding with right, by recognizing what is right and moving toward it.
>
> […]What you have is people who think that the best way to eliminate rational thought, the best way to eliminate the attempt to be right, is to work always to prove that right isn't right and to prove that wrong isn't wrong.
>
> […]What happens is, they are indoctrinated into what I call a "cult of indiscriminateness." The way the elite does this is by teaching our children, starting with the very young, that rational and moral thought is an act of bigotry… the only way to eliminate bigotry is to eliminate rational thought.
>
> There's a brilliant book out there called The Closing of the American Mind by Professor Allan Bloom. Professor Bloom was trying to figure out in the 1980s why his students were suddenly so stupid, and what he came to was the realization, the recognition, that they'd been raised to believe that indiscriminateness is a moral imperative because its opposite is the evil of having discriminated.
>
> […]Since nothing can deemed good, nothing can be deemed evil. That which society does recognize as good must be the beneficiary of some sort of prejudice. That which society recognizes as evil must be the victim of that prejudice. So, again, the mindless foot soldier will invariably side with whatever policy, mindlessly accept whatever policy seeks to tear down what is good… and elevate what is evil until everything meets in the middle and there is nothing left to fight about.

There's a 10-year-anniversary redo of it here:

The first lecture was the most popular lecture ever given at Heritage Foundation, my favorite think tank. And it changed my life. The second lecture was even meaner, and had some up to date material.

Every single left-wing extremist rioting and looting in Democrat-run cities is a Biden supporter

September 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you're trying to help the rioters escape justice, then you're pro-rioting

I watched Donald Trump's speech on last night, and I learned that Joe Biden is now trying to issue a vague disagreement with the arson, looting, vandalism, violence, domestic terrorism and murder being committed by BLM and Antifa. Is there any reason to think that Joe Biden and his VP-pick Kamala Harris oppose rioting, arson and violence? Let's look at their actions and see.

So, as you can see from the image above, Kamala Harris supports something called the "Minnesota Freedom Fund". They bail out people who are caught rioting, looting, setting fires, and murdering innocent people.

Here's an interesting story from Fox 9 Minnesota local news:

> Among those bailed out by the Minnesota Freedom Fund (MFF) is a suspect who shot at police, a woman accused of killing a friend, and a twice convicted sex offender, according to court records reviewed by the FOX 9 Investigators.
>
> According to attempted murder charges, Jaleel Stallings shot at members of a SWAT Team during the riots in May. Police recovered a modified pistol that looks like an AK-47. MFF paid $75,000 in cash to get Stallings out of jail.
>
> Darnika Floyd is charged with second degree murder, for stabbing a friend to death. MFF paid $100,000 cash for her release.

> Christopher Boswell, a twice convicted rapist, is currently charged with kidnapping, assault, and sexual assault in two separate cases. MFF paid $350,00 [sic] in cash for his release.

If any of this surprises you, just remember that Biden / Harris are for abortion through all 9 months of pregnancy. Biden wants to reverse the Hyde amendment to force pro-lifers to fun abortions. Harris attacks people who expose organ trafficking from aborted babies. There's extremists who see violence as normal and natural.

Here's another one of the Democrat domestic terrorists that will be voting for Biden / Harris in November:

> Michael Forest Reinoehl, the suspect in a fatal shooting during another violent and chaotic night in Portland Saturday, is reportedly "100% antifa" and previously accused of bringing a loaded gun to a protest held in early July.
>
> Reinoehl is the prime suspect in a homicide investigation into the death of Aaron Danielson, "a supporter of the conservative group Patriot Prayer."
>
> Reinoehl was identified "by a distinctive tattoo on his neck of a 'black power' fist and by a family member who had seen videos of the shooting.
>
> An Instagram post on June 16 outlined Reinoehl's feelings about Antifa, police brutality, and protesting with phrases like "it will be a war and like all wars there will be casualties." Hashtags at the bottom of the post and other posts on his feed indicate his support for Black Lives Matter and "f*** the police."

Do you think that people like this will be prosecuted in a Biden / Harris administration? Just look at how Kamala Harris handled Planned Parenthood in her own state – by persecuting the whistleblowers who exposed organ harvesting and trafficking, rather than the actual organ traffickers themselves.

It's not just Biden / Harris who support the Brown Shirt mob, it's left-wing new outlets like Huffington Post and NPR – this is where rank-and-file Democrats get their ideas about what a proper Brown Shirt should do in order to get their fascist "elected".

The Federalist reports:

> Vicky Osterweil's new book, "In Defense of Looting," "makes the case that looting isn't a betrayal of protests for Black lives, but a vital aspect of the movement," writes Claire Fallon in the Huffington Post. Fallon approvingly connected Osterweil's defense of looting directly to rioting in Wisconsin last week that led to two dead and millions of dollars in damages against innocent bystanders who saw their life's work go up in smoke.
>
> National Public Radio also decided to feature Osterweil Thursday on its podcast "Code Switch," for which the tag line is "Race. In your face," under the banner "America reckons with racial injustice." The interview openly makes the case that the existence of racial injustice in history justifies violent crime.
>
> […]Osterweil is a transgender male who calls himself a "writer, editor, and

> agitator." His Twitter handle is Vicky_ACAB. ACAB means "all cops are b-stards." The acronym has been spray-painted on buildings in Kenosha and numerous other riot-torn American cities this summer in the name of Black Lives Matter.
>
> […]Osterweil "argues that looting is a powerful tool to bring about real, lasting change in society," Escobar writes. "The rioters who smash windows and take items from stores, she says, are engaging in a powerful tactic that questions the justice of 'law and order,' and the distribution of property and wealth in an unequal society."

See, rioting and looting are just socialism, and the secular leftists are all for socialism. This isn't an abberation, this is the Democrat party platform. If they get elected, we'll see more of this, and there won't be any resistance, since they want to confiscate the weapons of law-abiding people, de-fund the police, and charge anyone who defends themselves from their Brown Shirt mob with murder. We are seeing this right now.

I know that most people reading will look at the their grandmothers who are Democrats and think "that doesn't look like a national socialist in 1930s Germany trying to impose fascism". But this is a new Democrat party that openly embraces racism, socialism, and fascism. It's so bad, that even traditional Democrat voting blocs are moving away from it.

See for yourself:

> The new Hill-HarrisX survey of registered Black voters between Aug. 22-25 — which included the first two days of the Republican National Convention (RNC) convention — found nearly one on four said they approve of the job Trump is doing as president. The other 76% percent disapprove.
>
> That's up 9 points — or 60% — from the previous survey conducted Aug. 8-11 in which the president got 15%.
>
> The new survey found support among Hispanic voters also rose by 2% from the last poll to 32%.

And also this:

> "In June approval of protests was widespread, with 61 percent approving of the protests and 36 percent disapproving," the poll found. "Approval declined in August with 48 percent approving and 48 percent disapproving."
>
> The biggest change was among suburbanites who were, it seems, largely unaware of protests (and ensuing riots) when they were affecting major urban areas but began to pay attention when Kenosha, a more suburban, more residential area of Wisconsin, started seeing major damage.

The only way we're going to prevent left-wing fascism in our country is by exposing the actions of the Democrats. If the election is decided on what they say, we lose. If the election is decided on what they've done, we win. Make sure everyone around you knows what they've done.

Four reasons to think that atheism is inconsistent with scientific progress

September 2, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

When people ask me whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism, I offer the following four basic pieces of scientific evidence that are more compatible with theism than atheism:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the biological information in the first replicator (origin of life)
4. the sudden origin of all of the different body plans in the fossil record (Cambrian explosion)

And I point to specific examples of recent discoveries that confirm those four arguments. Here are just a few of them:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (from Physics Forums)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning to allow the existence of conscious, embodied life (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)
4. Evidence showing that Ediacaran fauna are not precursors to the Cambrian fossils, (from the journal Nature)

Atheists will typically reply to the recent scientific discoveries that overturned their

speculations like this:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause
2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes
4. Maybe we will find a seamless chain of fossils that explain how the Cambrian explosion occurred slowly, over a long period time

Ever heard any of these responses?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the four responses of atheists to the experimental data.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
>
> †Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, USA
>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science

> magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.
>
> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the

> University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities."
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. There is no evidence for a multiverse, but there is evidence for fine-tuning. TONS OF IT.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can't make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can't make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth's interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional

> folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into meaningful words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them.

4) The best candidate to explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian era fossils was the Ediacaran fauna, but those are now recognized as not being precursors to the Cambrian fossils.

Science Daily reports on a paper from the peer-reviewed journal Science:

> Evidence of the single-celled ancestors of animals, dating from the interval in Earth's history just before multicellular animals appeared, has been discovered in 570 million-year-old rocks from South China by researchers from the University of Bristol, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Paul Scherrer Institut and the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.
>
> […]This X-ray microscopy revealed that the fossils had features that multicellular embryos do not, and this led the researchers to the conclusion that the fossils were neither animals nor embryos but rather the reproductive spore bodies of single-celled ancestors of animals.
>
> Professor Philip Donoghue said: "We were very surprised by our results — we've been convinced for so long that these fossils represented the embryos of the earliest animals — much of what has been written about the fossils for the last ten years is flat wrong. Our colleagues are not going to like the result."
>
> Professor Stefan Bengtson said: "These fossils force us to rethink our ideas of how animals learned to make large bodies out of cells."

The trend is that there is no evolutionary explanation for the body plans that emerged in the Cambrian era. If you want to make the claim that "evolution did it", then you have to produce the data *today*. Not speculations about the future. The data we have today says no to naturalism. The only way to affirm naturalistic explanations for the evidence we have is *by faith*. But rational people know that we need to minimize our leaps of faith, and go with the simplest and most reasonable explanation – an intelligence is the best

explanation responsible for rapid generation of biological information.

Conclusion

I do think it's important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see way too much G. K. Chesterton, Francis Chan A. W. Tozer, and other untestable, ineffective jibber-jabber. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it's too hard. It's not too hard. Everyone can understand Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". That's more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works. You don't want to be anti-science and pro-speculation like atheists are. I recommend reading Uncommon Descent and Evolution News every day for a start.

19 out of 20 of the most violent cities in America are run by far-left Democrats

September 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rep. Jim Jordan
@Jim_Jordan

The last time voters elected a Republican mayor:

Seattle - 1964
Minneapolis - 1957
Portland - 1952
Chicago - 1927
Washington, D.C. - NEVER

But Democrats want to blame President Trump for crime in these cities?

6:50 PM · Aug 31, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

24.5K Retweets **1.3K** Quote Tweets **55.2K** Likes

The most violent cities have been run by far-left Democrats for decades
Trump has been talking A LOT about how the riots, looting and arson we are seeing are all being committed by far-left Democrats. But he also mentioned that it's no accident that this is all happening in cities that have been run by Democrats for decades. When Trump offers to send in more law enforcement, the far-left Democrat mayors and governors turn him down, because they want to appease them.

So first of all, here are the facts from the far-left Washington Post, which is is committed to helping the Democrat party to win in every election:

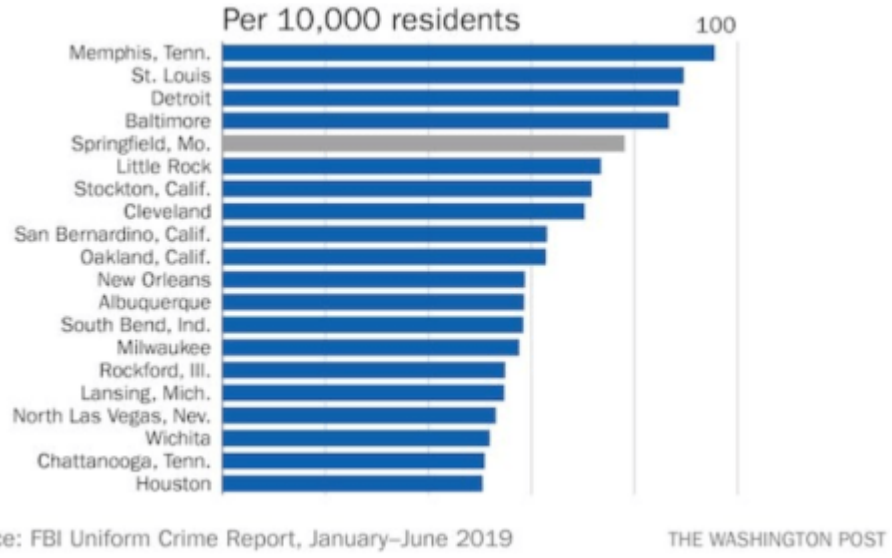

FBI crime statistics for the most recent year available
The 19 cities in blue are Democrat-run. The only one that isn't blue is gray – Independent-run. There are no high-crime cities that are run by Republicans. And the Democrat-run cities have mostly been Democrat-run for decades.

Now, the far-left Washington Post fact-checked Trump to say that the numbers above do not prove that "most" of the high-crime cities are run by Democrats, because 19 out of 20 is not "most" to a journalism major who writes lies for a living. But you be the judge yourself.

The Federalist confirms that this is not getting any better:

> Since June, shootings and murders have surged across many of the country's major cities. Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, Nashville, Chicago, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and New Orleans have all seen murders jump over 20 percent this year. The violence is heavily concentrated in the last few months, ever since protests have led to nationwide pressure on politicians to "defund" and "reimagine" policing.
>
> Just as concerning is that these stats do not include data from the end of June and July. Data from New York and Chicago, recent data from which we do have, tells that the last few weeks have seen by far the worst of the violence. Murders and shootings in the Windy City are up about 80 percent, and New York has averaged at a 209 percent over these last weeks compared to the same times last year. It's likely these disturbing numbers for the cities above only captures a fragment of the lives lost during unrest in which many protesters chant "Black Lives Matter."

Many Democrat cities took advantage of the COVID-19 crisis to empty their prisons of violent criminals. They were delighted to do that, since they hate the idea of being judged or held accountable themselves. It's part of their childish nature to oppose punishment.

So, why is crime more prevalent in Democrat-run cities? The answer is that Democrats prefer to side with criminals. When a criminal is shot by the police while resisting arrest and reaching for a weapon, the response of Democrats is to attack the police, charge them with crimes, and defund (abolish) the police force *entirely*. They think that eliminating the police will reduce violent crime. And that's why they have soaring crime rates in those Democrat-run cities.

The American Thinker explains:

> Liberal cities are governed by the guiding tenets of softness, misplaced "compassion," and individual unaccountability. Examples include:
>
> - Hands-off policing style (NYC has long since abandoned the highly successful stop-and-frisk practices of the Giuliani years that led to low street crime).
> - Sanctuary cities, which give rise to higher incidents of crime, poverty,

> unemployment, and the wasting of taxpayer-funded public resources because of the undocumented population's draining effect on the community.
> - The inexplicable decision of cities like Boston to no longer prosecute crimes such as shoplifting and breaking and entering, leading to urban stores not being able to remain open and be profitable (thus denying the community of a valuable resource).
> - Widespread locally approved abuse of the SNAP/EBT program, allowing its acceptance for alcohol and other nonessential items.
> - Explicit sanctioning of sleeping on the street or other common public areas and unrestricted public loitering.
>
> Liberal policies have worked almost perfectly to degrade the quality of inner-city life for their residents to the point of abject unacceptability. Instead of raising the standard of living for all the city's inhabitants, excessive giveaways (too often offered without requiring adequate, verifiable proof-of-need) and lax or missing enforcement of local laws and edicts have the opposite effect — such governmental practice only teaches people that they are forever unaccountable as regards the purported norms of society and that they will be given their daily sustenance for free, without putting forth any commensurate effort on their part. In short, overindulgence by local city governments denies the notion of ownership over their own lives to the lower strata of society. That notion of self-ownership over the control and ultimate destiny of one's life is absolutely critical to a well-functioning society. Without that sense of personal responsibility, there is no civilized order.

Everyone who has looked at the problem knows that crime is caused by women who have sex with men who don't commit to them in marriage. Almost 100% of the men in prison are fatherless, and that's the result of the decisions of their mothers, or their mother's mother, or their mother's mother's mother. Single motherhood is a problem with overindulging women and over-blaming men.And the Democrats participate in this by catering to the recklessness and irresponsibility of single mothers. It's the same for all races – the common denominator to crime is single motherhood by choice.

Paying single mothers welfare money to have children out of wedlock (a Democrat priority) only makes things worse. And these are real children we're talking about here, real children who have a right to grow up in a stable home with their biological parents. Democrat policy is not just abuse of the unborn – it's also abuse of born children at the hands of their selfish, irresponsible mothers.

Interestingly, Democrat lawmakers were given an opportunity to solve what they say is the problem: the police being too rough on criminals. But when a bipartisan bill came up for a vote, they voted it down. They don't want a solution, they want their base angry so they vote against Trump. They've had the reins of these cities for decades, and they haven't solved the problem because they don't want to solve the problem. White

supremacists couldn’t do a better job of keeping black people down if they tried.

Donald Trump has done more than all of his rich critics to reduce carbon emissions

September 4, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

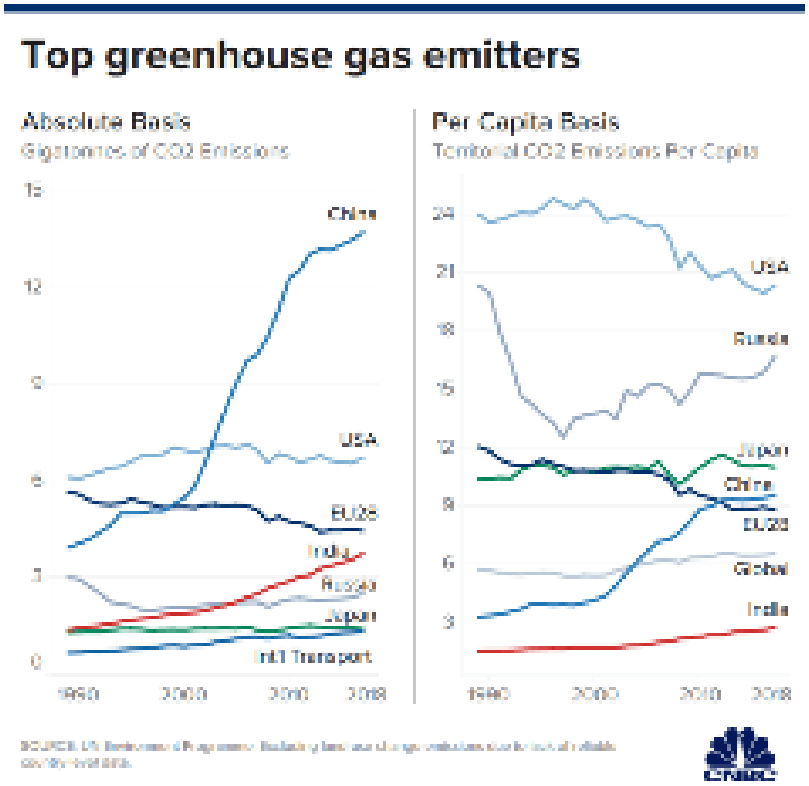

How much have countries cut carbon emissions?

I wanted to look at who has been doing the most to cut carbon emissions. Then we'll look at whether the secular left supports the technologies that achieved actual cuts in carbon emissions. Then we'll look at the technologies that the secular left supports, to see whether they achieve similar success. Then we'll draw a conclusion about the environmentalism of the secular left.

Let's start with the data on carbon emissions. As you can see from the graph above, the biggest offenders are China and India. These countries make a show about caring for the environment to shame America, but the truth is that they are the biggest polluters of all, and getting worse.

Daily Wire reports:

> The United States led the entire world in reducing CO2 emissions last year while also experiencing solid economic growth, according to a newly released report.
>
> "The United States saw the largest decline in energy-related CO_2 emissions in 2019 on a country basis – a fall of 140 Mt, or 2.9%, to 4.8 Gt," The International Energy Agency (IEA) reported on Tuesday. "US emissions are now down almost 1 Gt from their peak in the year 2000, the largest absolute decline by any country over that period."
>
> […]The IEA noted that 80% of the increase in CO2 emissions came from Asia and

> that China and India both contributed significantly to the increase.

So how was America able to do that? The answer is that they they adopted zero-emission technologies, specifically fracking and nuclear power:

> […][C]heap, natural gas, made available by fracking, has already made the U.S. the world leader in carbon emissions reduction. By allowing gas to displace coal as the leading fuel for domestic power generation, fracking has already done more to reduce emissions than the combined activity of all the environmental activists in human history. Renewables such as wind and solar, which still play only a minor role in generation, cannot operate without the flexible backup that gas provides for those times when the wind stops and the sun sets or goes behind a cloud.
>
> Natural gas will help reduce carbon emissions in the short run. But nuclear is the only long-term answer if you're worried about climate change.

It should be noted that the secular left opposes both fracking and nuclear power, and that's because they're either lying about their concern for the environment (possible) or they think that renewable energies like wind and solar can do the job. But can they?

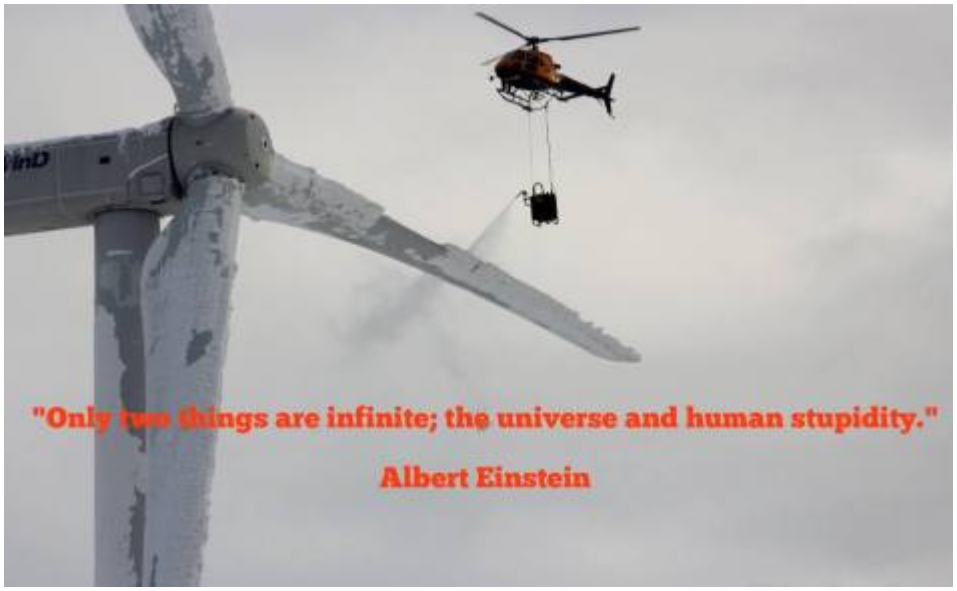

Environmentalists burning helicopter fuel to de-ice wind turbines one at a time

Far-left NPR explains:

> While most of a turbine can be recycled or find a second life on another wind farm, researchers estimate the U.S. will have more than 720,000 tons of blade material to dispose of over the next 20 years, a figure that doesn't include newer, taller higher-capacity versions.
>
> There aren't many options to recycle or trash turbine blades, and what options do exist are expensive, partly because the U.S. wind industry is so young. It's a waste problem that runs counter to what the industry is held up to be: a perfect solution for environmentalists looking to combat climate change.

It's difficult to transport the blades. There are few landfills big enough to accommodate

them. And no one has the expensive equipment to cut them down to smaller sizes. But wait! There are more problems.

My problems with wind and solar power are simple. They are extremely expensive, which raises the cost of electricity to consumers and businesses. They are extremely unreliable, and require constant maintenance and backup-support from traditional high-pollution sources. And most importantly, they mass murder birds, including protected birds, by the millions. That last reason along is enough to make me oppose them. I love birds!

Forbes magazine points out problems with the wind and solar power favored by the secular left:

> In reality, solar farms require hundreds of times more land, an order of magnitude more mining for materials, and create hundreds of times more waste, than do nuclear plants.
>
> And wind farms kill hundreds of thousands of threatened and endangered birds, may make the hoary bat go extinct, and kill more people than nuclear plants.

We can find out what happens when the secular-leftists get their way on energy policy by looking at France and Germany, where it's already been tried:

> Just contrast Germany and France. Germany has done much of what the Green New Deal calls for. By 2025 it will have spent $580 billion on renewables and related accoutrement, while shutting down its nuclear plants.
>
> All that Germany will have gotten for its "energy transition" is a 50% increase in electricity prices, flat emissions, and an electricity supply that is 10 times more carbon-intensive than France's.
>
> […]France spent $30 billion on renewables and saw the carbon intensity of its electricity supply, and electricity prices, rise.
>
> France and Germany and every other real world situation prove that nuclear power is the only way to significantly, deeply, and cheaply decarbonize energy supplies, and thus address climate change.
>
> The problem with nuclear is that it doesn't demand the radical re-making of society, like renewables do, and it doesn't require grand fantasies of humankind harmonizing with nature.
>
> Nor does nuclear provide cover for funnelling billions to progressive interest groups in the name of "community-controlled renewable energy, local organic agriculture, or transit systems."

The secular left opposes zero-emission technologies like fracking and nuclear, and there's a reason for that. Those technologies *reduce the cost of electricity*. Which means that people can use as much electricity as they like. But the secular left doesn't want people to have low-cost electricity. They can only *NATIONALIZE* the energy industry (i.e. – COMMUNISM) because people complain about the high costs of electricity. The secular left has already been pursuing this policy of raising the cost of education and healthcare

with government subsidies and regulations, in order to convince voters that the only solution to (artificially) inflated costs is for government to step in and take control. In countries like Canada, this is the exact model they adopted, (e.g. Ontario Hydro under Kathleen Wynne), in order to raise the prices of electricity. That is their real goal.

We do not want this, because the seizing of private property, redistribution of wealth, and nationalization of industry are *precisely the policies that lead countries like Venezuela and Cuba into long-term poverty*. The secular leftists don't care if the quality of your utilities, education and health care drop precipitously because it is run by the government. Their goal is for the elites to fly around in private jets with armed security, while the little people wait in bread lines for food, wait for health care for months, and are indoctrinated to love communism in college.

Feminist explains how she chose to drink alcohol before recreational sex

September 5, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

College students puking in toilet

Guess where I'm linking today? To a radical feminist web site named Jezebel, to an article written by a radical feminist who writes for the radically leftist Slate.

No, I'm not crazy. Just read it:

> Much of the conversation around alcohol and sex has focused on assault—the line at which intoxication becomes incapacitation, for instance—**but what we fail to mention is how haunted people can be by the sex they actually, technically consented to.**
>
> […]I wonder what my sex life would even look like if alcohol hadn't been there. Alcohol gave me comfort in my own body, and it allowed me to turn my erotic curiosity and hunger for experience into an action plan. I was tired of being the stuttering girl sucking in her stomach after the lights went out. I wanted to be the woman who roamed wild and free.
>
> Alcohol also helped me cut the girlish strings on my heart, an action my college years demanded. Three months into my freshman year, I split a six pack with a dashing sophomore, and we wound up partially clothed on his bed, my bare legs wrapped around his waist, my hands around his neck. I pulled back slightly and asked him the question, the naive question of a girl who does not yet understand her fate: "What does this mean?"

> He looked past me, into his studio apartment, and then back into my eyes. “It means that I’m a 19-year-old boy, and we’re having fun.”

What is interesting is that she didn’t see this man’s using her for fun after getting her drunk as any disqualification for a serious relationship. On the contrary, she believes that a serious relationship built on self-sacrificial love and commitment that lasts through difficulties can be found in a man who uses her for fun sex:

> I’m not saying I didn’t enjoy that night with the dashing sophomore. I’m saying the fun part for me might have been turning our physical intimacy into a sustained attachment.

Amazing. She wasn’t looking for men with good educations, good jobs, lots of savings, who were sober and chaste – they would have made her unhappy with their bossy leading, and strict plans about courting and marriage. She thought that she could get to live-long married love by choosing what was free, easy and fun in the moment.

She is 35 now, and still single. I’m sure if you ask her, she would like to be married “some day”, but who would say that her past decisions were good preparation for the challenges of marriage? Marriage is about self-sacrificial love, and endurance. To prepare for marriage, you practice self-denial and self-control. You learn how to accept expectations, obligations and responsibilities. You grow up.

Anyway, back to the article. She *choose the alcohol* herself, and she did it for a very specific reason:

> I wanted to have fun, too. *And alcohol evened the score***.** I cared less about everything when I was drinking: What you thought of me, what I looked like in this dress, whether that taco was warm or cold when I stuffed it in my mouth. I don’t want to make it sound like I drank *in order to* have sex. I drank for a million reasons.
>
> […]Booze downshifted my intense body consciousness, and it revved up my bravado. Sex was scary—but alcohol made me feel safe.

She drank in order to have sex. Got it? *She chose to get drunk in order to feel safe about having sex.* Many young women think that recreational sex with hot guys is a pathway to marriage. They drink in order to make progress towards the marriage they want – the marriage to the man who is fun. Not the man who is serious. They don’t want the serious man who makes plans for marriage, and expects the woman to sober up, behave responsibly and honor obligations.

Why are millenials acting like children into adulthood?

This reminds me of the Institute for American Values study. Despite their name, it is not a conservative organization

Look at this citation from p. 15:

> A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up.
>
> **A Yale University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up."**
>
> **A New York University student observed, "[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking."**
>
> **A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."**
>
> **[…]A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."**

I hope that many of the men out there who refuse to hold women accountable for their own desires start to understand that not everything a woman wants is good, and not every plan a woman makes will work. Sometimes, you need to calmly and constructively challenge them about their priorities, plans and actions. It's for their own good.

Trump ends taxpayer-funded indoctrination in anti-American critical race theory in federal agencies

September 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Her poor choices were caused by your racism, so you must pay her reparations

Good news, everyone! I think most people who are following the election closely know that there is almost no overlap between the Republican party and the Democrat party. It's common sense that we not use taxpayer money to spread hatred and division. The Democrats have been using taxpayer money to do that in federal agencies. But Trump has put an end to it.

Here's the story from Daily Wire:

> The Trump administration announced late on Friday that it was cracking down on "critical race theory," a far-left anti-American ideology that promotes racial division, from being taught in federal agencies and paid for by federal money.
>
> The memo released by Russell Vought, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, called critical race theory "divisive" and "anti-American propaganda," adding that the far-left ideology falsely promotes the notion that "there is racism embedded in the belief that America is the land of opportunity or the belief that the most qualified person should receive a job."
>
> The memo states:
>
> These types of "trainings" not only run counter to the fundamental beliefs for which our Nation has stood since its inception, but they also engender division and resentment within the Federal workforce. We can be proud that as an employer, the Federal government has employees of all races, ethnicities, and religions. We can be proud that Americans from all over the country seek to join our workforce and dedicate themselves to public service. We can be proud of our continued efforts to welcome all individuals who seek to serve their fellow Americans as Federal employees. However, we cannot accept our employees

> receiving training that seeks to undercut our core values as Americans and drive division within our workforce.
>
> "The President has directed me to ensure that Federal agencies cease and desist from using taxpayer dollars to fund these divisive, un-American propaganda training sessions," Vought wrote.

Now, I don't know about you, but my impression of the Republican party is that they were mostly fine with letting the Democrats warp the culture towards anarchy. Not just passively with Hollywood , Big Tech and professional sports, but actively, by subsidizing the universities, public schools, and public sector unions with taxpayer dollars. So this move comes as a big surprise to me. I would expect this from Jim Jordan or Mark Meadows, but not Donald Trump.

Critical Race Theory is nothing more than an attempt to remove responsibility from certain underperforming groups for the low results that are caused by their own poor decision-making. Not just their poor decision making with education, career, finances, but also with premarital sex, drugs, marriage and children.

Median US Household Income by Selected Ethnic Groups, 2018		
Indian	Americans	$119,858
Taiwanese	Americans	$95,736
Lebanese	Americans	$82,353
Turkish	Americans	$81,656
Chinese	Americans	$81,487
Iranian	Americans	$80,291
Japanese	Americans	$80,036
Pakistani	Americans	$77,315
Ukrainian	Americans	$77,083
Filipino	Americans	$75,279
Indonesian	Americans	$74,497
Syrian	Americans	$72,675
Korean	Americans	$72,074
Ghanaian	Americans	$69,343
Nigerian	Americans	$68,658
Guyanese	Americans	$68,393
White	**Americans**	**$67,937**

Source: US Census Bureau

White people are doing a bad job of keeping non-whites down

We should be telling everyone, regardless of race, to act like East Indians and Asians and Africans in order to have success. Date like East Indians and Asians and Africans, Marry like East Indians and Asians and Africans. Educate yourself like East Indians and Asians and Africans. Work like East Indians and Asians and Africans. Follow the law and don't antagonize the police. This is not "acting white". This is taking responsibility to make good decisions and be disciplined. We need to teach people of all races to work backwards from the results that other non-white races are achieving, to the decision-making that produces those results. Critical race theory is teaching people the wrong

message – don’t make good decisions, cry racism when you fail to achieve good results. Awful.

In America, your success is largely determined by your decision-making, not by how other people treat you. We have non-white populations who are able to achieve far above whites, because they work harder, study harder, obey the law better, marry earlier, etc. than white people do, on average. The problem of failure to succeed cannot be caused by skin color when so many non-white groups are achieving far above native-born whites.

There is no path to stability and success that involves making decisions like the woman in the photo above. If a woman watches TV all the time, doesn’t study in school, is overweight and makes babies with bad boys in order to go on welfare, then the solution to her problems won’t be found in critical race theory. She’ll have to start to control herself and make better decisions if she wants different results.

Instead of having taxpayer funded indoctrination to blame others for poor decision-making, we should remove all taxpayer-funding for failure, including student loans for non-STEM degrees and single mother welfare, and just pay people who try hard in school, who marry, and who have children after they are married. We should penalize people for divorce and drug use. We are getting failure in this country because we make excuses for people who make poor decisions. It’s nice to see Trump at least stopping the flow of money from successful workers who pay taxes to irresponsible, reckless losers who think that teaching racism is a real job.

Three cheers for the Janus SCOTUS decision and right-to-work laws in 27 states

September 7, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Top Contributors, 2019-2020

Contributor	Amount
Carpenters & Joiners Union	$19,308,421
National Education Assn	$12,913,109
American Federation of Teachers	$12,539,835
American Federation of State/Cnty/Munic Employees	$10,255,600
Laborers Union	$5,814,059
National Nurses United	$5,401,658
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	$5,117,174
Operating Engineers Union	$4,518,967
Communications Workers of America	$4,138,074
United Steelworkers	$3,659,007
Service Employees International Union	$3,013,270

Contributions to:
Democrats ■ Liberal Groups ■ Republicans ■ Conservative Groups ■

Contributions from unions are mostly given to Democrats and leftists

Some people think of unions as a force for good. Perhaps they were in the past, but a little reading of economics shows how they actually produce very bad results for workers. In addition to that, unions are actively trying to influence the outcome of elections in 2020, using the money collected from their members. Fortunately, there have been two great developments recently that limit their power.

Here's a recent story from Just the News:

> Leaders of several public and private sector unions are threatening to organize walkouts this fall for teachers, truck drivers and service workers in an effort to protest police killings.
>
> "The status quo — of police killing Black people, of armed white nationalists killing demonstrators, of millions sick and increasingly desperate — is clearly unjust, and it cannot continue," said a statement issued over the weekend by various arms of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Service Employees International Union, and National Education Association.
>
> […]The union leaders also called for defunding police departments and universal health care.

You can see their progressive convictions coming out in how they distribute the money they collect from their members.

The Washington Examiner reports:

> Organized labor has given more than $1.3 billion to Democratic Party organizations and liberal nonprofit and activist groups since 2010, while 1 percent went to conservative groups or causes, according to a survey of federal data.
>
> The giving is starkly different from the beliefs of most rank-and-file union members, many of whom lean Republican.

Having said all of that, there were two pieces of good news about labor unions that I think we should celebrate during Labor Day.

First of all, there was a very good decision to allow teachers to opt out of having to pay union dues in all 50 states. Second, a large number of states have enacted right-to-work laws, which allow employees in union-dominated jobs to be able to work without being forced to join a union.

This article explains both:

> While every public sector employee across the country now enjoys right to work protections under the First Amendment as a result of the 2018 National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation-won Janus v. AFSCME Supreme Court decision, private sector workers in the 23 states that have yet to pass a right to work law can lose their job for refusing to tender dues or fees to a union.
>
> Right to work protects each worker's freedom of choice, but the advantages of right to work hardly stop there. Enshrining workplace freedom also brings significant economic benefits to the 27 states that have passed right to work laws.
>
> Between 2009 and 2019, right to work states saw the total number of people employed grow by 16.9%. That's nearly double the 9.6% gain in non-right to work states, according to an analysis of federal government statistics compiled by the National Institute for Labor Relations Research, or NILRR.
>
> The study also found that, after adjusting for the cost of living, the mean after-tax household income in right to work states was about $4,300 higher than for households in forced-unionism states in 2018, the most recent year for which household income data is available.
>
> The connection between right to work laws and better economic performance is not a surprise. Business experts consistently rank the presence of right to work laws as one of the most important factors companies consider when deciding where to expand or relocate their plants and facilities, where they will create new jobs and new opportunities.
>
> Take the manufacturing sector, for example. The NILRR analysis revealed that

> employment in the manufacturing sector increased by 10% in right to work states from 2009 to 2019, over three times the 2.9% gain forced-unionism states saw over that same period.
>
> Right to work laws clearly make economic sense, but protecting employee freedom has always been their central feature.

I really liked the Janus decision and right-to-work laws, because I don't think that conservative workers should be forced to join a union in order to earn a living. The unions should not get access to worker money for free – unions should have to earn their worker's money by providing value. And the worker should decide whether there is value there, or not.

You can see a full breakdown of union contributions by political affiliation for 2019-2020 here at Open Secrets.

Trump will cut funding of schools that teach 1619 Project fantasy as history

September 8, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The results of her decisions are your fault, so pay her reparations

American schools often teach secular leftist fantasy to young children, in order to undermine their parents' values. You may remember when teachers presented the oscillating model of the universe to children through atheist Carl Sagan, to get around the need for a Creator. The model was later disproved theoretically and experimentally. Now the schools are trying again with the 1619 Project.

The 1619 Project is a fantasy work, authored by Nicole Hannah-Jones, a person with no training or demonstrated ability in any discipline connected to the real world.

Who says so? The author says so, in this tweet, reported by Red State:

> I've always said that the 1619 Project is not a history. It is a work of journalism that explicitly seeks to challenge the national narrative and, therefore, the national memory. The project has always been as much about the present as it is the past.
>
> — Ida Bae Wells (@nhannahjones) July 27, 2020

This article from the centrist National Review lists some of most fantastical parts of her work.

Here's an excerpt:

> The most dramatic and controversial assertion in Hannah-Jones's essay was that, in 1776, "one of the primary reasons the colonists decided to declare their independence from Britain was because they wanted to protect the institution of slavery." Her essay cited nothing to support this, nor did it show even the slightest awareness of how radical a claim this is. She continued:
>
> By 1776, Britain had grown deeply conflicted over its role in the barbaric

> institution that had reshaped the Western Hemisphere. In London, there were growing calls to abolish the slave trade. This would have upended the economy of the colonies, in both the North and the South . . . we may never have revolted against Britain if some of the founders had not . . . believed that independence was required in order to ensure that slavery would continue.

So, she's claiming that the Britain ended slavery at some point prior to 1776, and that this ending of slavery applied to the colonies in America, and that the American Revolution was a response to this ending of slavery being pushed to the colonies. Is that true?

> The first real strike against slavery was the 1772 Somerset judicial decision in Britain, which declared that slavery was alien to the English common law and thus could not exist within Britain without a positive act of Parliament. As Princeton University history professor Sean Wilentz has noted, however, the reaction to the Somerset case, which did not apply to British colonies, was relatively muted even in the southern colonies; it provoked nothing even vaguely resembling the furious responses to the Tea Act the following year.

Early anti-slavery movements before 1776 had no effect on the "British colonies", e.g. – America. But more importantly there was no UK ban on slavery until way after the American Revolution:

> Organized, popular movements against slavery, and laws restricting or abolishing slavery and the slave trade, were considerably more advanced in the American colonies in the 1770s than in Britain, where Parliament would not ban slavery in Jamaica and other British colonies until 1833, after many years of failures by William Wilberforce and other anti-slavery leaders. The world's first organized anti-slavery society was formed in Pennsylvania in 1774, and the first legal ban on slavery anywhere in the world was in Vermont in 1777. Five of the original 13 states followed suit either during or immediately after the Revolution, passing bans on slavery between 1780 and 1784. The first federal ban on slavery, in the Northwest Territory, was drafted in 1784 by Thomas Jefferson and passed by the Confederation Congress in 1787. Its language would later be adopted directly into the 13th Amendment.

If slavery was not banned in the UK and pushed on the colonies prior to the Revolution, then the Revolution *cannot* have been a reaction to slavery being made illegal. In fact, America was far ahead of the UK at banning slavery. And far, far ahead of the rest of the world.

I just want to emphasize this – this is the problem with so many on the secular left:

> […]Hannah-Jones openly scoffs that there is "no such thing" as objective history…

This is the person the secular left believes and celebrates. A writer of anti-American

fantasy. A liar.

Should we teach BLM rioter fantasies in our schools?

Well, I'm not very impressed with her work, and fortunately for us we have a Republican president who won't bender over backwards to appease shoddy scholarship.

Fox News reports:

> President Trump said Sunday that the Department of Education is examining the use of the New York Times Magazine's 1619 Project in schools, and warned that institutions that teach this alternative narrative of American history could lose federal funding.
>
> The project is based on the premise that American history began in 1619 — cited as the date African slaves arrived in Virginia — and that everything following this should be viewed through that lens.
>
> […]Trump responded to a tweet stating that California would be using it.
>
> "Department of Education is looking at this," Trump said. "If so, they will not be funded!"
>
> Trump's tweet echoes the sentiment of a bill Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., introduced in July. That bill proposed denying funds to any school that uses the 1619 Project in its curriculum. At the time, schools in areas including Chicago and Washington, D.C., had already amended their history curricula to reflect the project's messages.

This will be the policy for the next 2 months. If Biden wins, that will almost certainly be changed. How would you like to see Nikole Hannah-Jones as Secretary of Education?

What's really going on here?

Although Hannah-Jones' work is filled with errors, it's very appealing to the secular left. It tells them things that they want to hear. Specifically, it makes them feel superior to others, and it excuses their own poor decision-making by shifting the blame to other people. The 1619 Project is similar to Hitler's Mein Kampf, in that it affirms poorly-educated underachievers who blame their own failures on people of a different race. This is a very attractive message to socialists on the secular left, as it was in 1930s Germany. We should be careful about allowing racist rhetoric into our public schools to influence our children. It's bad for them, and it's bad for our nation.

Chris Sinkinson debates John Hick on religious pluralism and salvation

September 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

Looks like Justin Brierley on the Unbelievable radio show found a pastor with a Ph.D in philosophy, and he can really whip some ass. And that's a good thing, because he is taking on one of the two leading proponents of religious pluralism, in my opinion, (the other being Paul Knitter).

The players:

> John Hick is a noted philosopher and theologian who is a proponent of a pluralist view of religion – that there is one light (God) but many lampshades (religious expressions).
>
> Chris Sinkinson is a pastor and Bible tutor who has critiqued Hick's work. He says that pluralism empties Christianity of any content and in its own way disrespects other religions more than his own exclusivist stance.

The MP3 file is here. (Note: This link works)

Justin does a great job as moderator of this debate. He said what I was thinking of saying a number of times during the debate.

Anyway, here is my snarky summary. I creatively paraphrase some of the things that Hick says to make it more clear. And funny.

—-

Hick:
– had an experience looking at the buildings of other religions
– other religions have buildings, so all religions are equal
– I spent some time in the East, and met nice Eastern people
– since Eastern people are nice that means all religions are equal

Justin:
– isn’t Jesus’ claim to be the exclusive path to salvation offensive?

Sinkinson:
– all religions that are exclusive and have to deal with religious pluralism
– even John Hick writes polemically in favor of his own view
– even John Hick thinks that religions that are exclusive are false

Justin:
– what about the blind man and the elephant?
– the story seems to say that other people have a partial grasp?
– but the story-teller himself has the privileged view
– so isn’t the religious pluralist just as arrogant as exclusivists?

Hick:
– well, it’s not arrogant to claim to have the right answer
– Jesus never made the claim to be God incarnate
– Jesus never made the claim to be the exclusive path to God
– historians don’t think that John’s gospel is reliable because it is late
– the proclamation of exclusivity was added by evangelists much later

Sinkinson:
– the historians who doubt the high Christology are radical skeptics
– the mainstream of historical scholarship accepts a high Christology
– the EARLIEST history about Jesus has the highest Christology

Hick:
– the moderate scholars do think Jesus was divine but that he didn’t think he was divine
– the phrase “Son of God” was used to describe any remarkable person
– only later did the early church turn the generic term into “God the Son”

Sinkinson:
– there is reflection on Jesus’ identity and developments, but not invention
– Jesus and his followers were in trouble precisely for linking him to deity
– why else would Jesus get into trouble and get crucified?

Hick:
– the Romans crucified him because people were saying he was the Messiah
– but the Messiah was not identified as being divine, but political
– and that’s why the Romans crucified him

Justin:
– do you (Sinkinson) think that people in other religions can be saved?

Sinkinson:
– the traditional view is exclusivism
– the other world religions are logically contradictory with Christianity
– you have to respect their differences – they are not the same as Christianity
– exclusivists allow that people can be saved by responding to natural theology
– and there are also other cases where non-Christians are saved, like old testament saints

and babies who die in infancy

Hick:
– but people’s religions are based on where they are born
– so it’s not fair for God to expect people to be saved in one religion only

Sinkinson:
– the plurality of religions grouped by location doesn’t make christianity false
– that would be the genetic fallacy – rejecting an idea because of its origin
– the real question to consider is whether it is true
– and even the objection assumes that God is a God of love, who should be fair
– but how do you know that God is loving? that is an exclusive view
– how can the “blob” ultimate of religious pluralism be “loving” and “fair”

Hick:
– the ultimate reality is loving or not loving depending on each person’s religion

Sinkinson:
– but some religions and theistic and some are atheistic
– how can those God exist and not exist?

Hick:
– God is beyond everyone’s understanding, except mine
– God is beyond all definitions, except mine
– God is beyond all human understanding, except mine
– i’m not contradicting myself, it’s a mystery! a mystery!
– as long as you don’t look to closely, they’re all the same!
– allow me to tell you about God, which no one can do but me

Justin:
– doesn’t your religious pluralism mean that Christianity is false?

Hick:
– well, Christianity can’t be true, because it disagrees with other religions
– Christianity can’t falsify other religions, that would be mean to them
– other religions are just as “profound” as Christianity – and that’s what matters – not whether a religion makes true claims
– some religions are older than Christianity, that means they can’t be disagreed with
– we can’t let Christianity be true, because then some people will feel bad
– if people feel bad, then they don’t like me and then I feel bad
– if there’s one thing I know about the unknowable ultimate reality, it’s that it wants me to be liked by lots of people

Sinkinson:
– your view seems to be agnosticism – that nothing can be known about the “ultimate real”
– if we can’t express in words what God is like, then why are you saying what God is like?

Hick:

– the indescribable ultimate is described (falsely, but interestingly) by various tradition

Sinkinson:
– does the “ultimate real” exist?

Hick:
– no

Justin:
– are all the exclusive religions wrong, and only you are right?

Hick:
– all propositions about God in all the religions are false
– the experience of being deluded and having feelings about your delusions is “valid” in all religions
– all religions are equally good ways to believe false things and to have feelings about your false beliefs
– only my propositions about God are true
– everyone who disagrees with me is wrong

Sinkinson:
– so all the propositions of all the religions are wrong
– but all the experiences and feelings are “right”

Hick:
– yes
– all propositions about God are humanly constructed, and so false
– except mine – mine are true!

Sinkinson:
– so everything distinctive about Christianity are literally false?

Hick:
– yes, Christian doctrines are all false
– because if they were true, other religions would be false, and they would feel bad
– and we can’t have that, because everyone has to like me
– only things that don’t offend people in other religions can be true

Sinkinson:
– so do we have to then treat all religions as non-propositional?

Hick:
– well just don’t ask people about the content of their beliefs
– just treat their religion as non-cognitive rituals, feelings and experiences
– don’t inquire too deeply into it, because all religions are all nonsense
– i’m very respectful and tolerant of different religions!

Sinkinson:
– but Muslims, for example, think their religion is making truth claims

Hick:
– but there can be tolerance as long as you treat religions as non-propositional nonsense

Sinkinson:
– um, I have a higher respect for religions than you do
– I actually consider that the claims of other religions could be true
– I think that other religions make truth claims and not nonsense claims

Hick:
– well they are all useful because they are all false
– I don't emphasize beliefs, I emphasize living, experiences and feelings
– as long as everyone accepts my view and rejects their religion, we'll all be tolerant

Justin:
– erm, isn't that an exclusive claim?
– you're trying to say that your view of what religion is is right, and everyone else is wrong

Hick:
– I'm not arrogant, I just think that all the religions of the worlds are false
– only my statements about religion are true – everyone else is wrong
– I'm tolerant, and Christians are arrogant

Justin:
– but you think Sinkinson's view is wrong
– why should we accept your view and deny his view?

Hick:
– His view of salvation is false, and mine is true

Sinkinson:
– you use words with set meanings, but you mean completely different things
– when I say salvation, I mean deliverance from sins through Jesus

Hick:
– I get to decide what salvation means for everyone, you intolerant bigot

Sinkinson:
– but that word has a specific meaning that has held true in all of Christian history
– but what you mean by salvation is people having subjective delusions that are not true

Hick:
– I don't like using the word salvation

Sinkinson:
– but you just used it!
– and you think that it is present in different world religions, but it isn't

Hick:
– God is unknowable and indescribable
– God isn't a wrathful God though
– and the Christian description of God is false
– Evangelical Christians are mean
– I had experiences with people of other faiths

– and these experiences taught me that religions that think that the universe is eternal are true
– as long as you reduce religion to behaviors and not truth, then religions are all good at producing behaviors
– if you just treat all religions as clothing fashion and food customs, they are all valid
– the main point of religion is for people to agree on cultural conventions and stick to them
– never mind the propositional statements of religions… who cares about truth? not me!
– but Christianity is definitely false

Sinkinson:
– the Judeo-Christian God is different – he reveals himself to humans
– he is distinct from the other religions
– he is personal, and is loving but also angry at sin

Hick:
– But God isn't a person, and he isn't a non-person
– I can't say what he is – I'll offend someone if I say anything at all!
– except Christians – I can offend them because they are arrogant bigots
– I'm also very spiritual – I meditate on my breathing

Sinkinson:
– you can't assess a religion by the experiences that people have
– people who have weird experiences do all kinds of evil things
– so the real question has to be about truth – is the New Testament reliable?, etc.

Leaked tape shows how CNN coaches guests to benefit the Democrat party

September 10, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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[image]
Why do people think that CNN are biased leftist clowns?
One of the main things I'm trying to do with this blog is counter the lies that the mainstream media spreads. In this post, I wanted to share some leaked audio from yesterday showing how CNN coaches its guest into order to put on a show for their viewers that will persuade those viewers to vote Democrat. After that, I'll go over peer-reviewed studies about left-wing bias in the media.

Here's the new story from Daily Wire:

> Fox News host Tucker Carlson released a bombshell tape on Wednesday night that showed CNN host Chris Cuomo coaching then-Trump attorney Michael Cohen on how to answer questions during interviews on CNN.
>
> "Zucker and Cuomo … are frauds, just like the channel they work for," Carlson began. "Despite its name, CNN is not a cable news network, it is a slickly produced propaganda loop. Every topic CNN covers has been chosen for its political effect. Every word its anchors speak has been curated to manipulate you. Nothing winds up on CNN by accident."
>
> "The whole thing is a scripted drama written for the benefit of the Democratic Party," Carlson continued. "That's not an overstatement; tonight we have proof. This is a conversation that took place in 2018 between CNN anchor Chris Cuomo and his friend, the disgraced felon lawyer Michael Cohen. The two spoke in person. Cohen wanted Cuomo to prepare him for an interview he'd been asked to do on CNN. As Michael Cohen put it, he wanted 'Guidance, as a friend more than anything.'"
>
> […]"I think the way this conversation goes is almost exactly the way we're having it right now, which is where I say, 'this looks shady' and you say, 'it looks shady to you because you're coming in with a specific intention,'" Carlson read from the script of what Cuomo told Cohen. "Again, Cuomo advised Cohen to attack the anchor."
>
> "Chris Cuomo began acting out both sides of the exchange—he acted out the news anchor's question and then he acted Cohen's scripted response to that question," Carlson continued. "The conversation devolved into a kind of one-man play with Chris Cuomo as the performer and Michael Cohen as the audience."

Let's learn about media bias using these peer-reviewed studies.

Here's a UCLA study on media bias.

Excerpt:

> Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.
>
> Only Fox News' "Special Report With Brit Hume" and The Washington Times scored right of the average U.S. voter.

From the Washington Examiner, a study of the political contributions made by the mainstream media.

Excerpt:

> Senior executives, on-air personalities, producers, reporters, editors, writers and other self-identifying employees of ABC, CBS and NBC contributed more than $1 million to Democratic candidates and campaign committees in 2008, according to an analysis by *The Examiner* of data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The Democratic total of $1,020,816 was given by 1,160 employees of the three major broadcast television networks, with an average contribution of $880.
>
> By contrast, only 193 of the employees contributed to Republican candidates and campaign committees, for a total of $142,863. The average Republican contribution was $744.

And more from a study done by the radically leftist MSNBC.

Excerpt:

> MSNBC.com identified 143 journalists who made political contributions from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign, according to the public records of the Federal Election Commission. Most of the newsroom checkbooks leaned to the left: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes. Only 16 gave to Republicans. Two gave to both parties.

Those are the facts.

So what?

The problem with biased reporting is that it creates a large block of low-information Democrat voters who vote on the basis of their feelings about the personality of the people running for election. They don't know a thing about policies or demonstrated achievements. They're voting based on how the media has trained them to feel about the personalities of the people running. They're not hiring someone to do a job. They're picking someone in order to feel good and signal their virtue to others.

Here is a funny exchange that my friend Laura had with a black friend:

Her: So you're voting for Biden?
Him: Definitely

Her: What do you like about Biden?
Him: He was with Obama
Her: So?
Him: Obama's black
Her: What is one policy issue you agree with Biden on?
Him: I don't know. What's one policy issue you agree with Trump on?
Her: Deregulating bureaucratic red tape causing the lowest unemployment rate among black Americans ever recorded.
Him: I didn't know about that.
Her: This country is screwed

Mr. Low-information voter doesn't know about numbers, like unemployment rates. Or about Trump being the most pro-life president ever according to pro-life groups. He doesn't know a thing about fiscal policy, social policy, foreign policy, judges, etc. He doesn't read books. He watches the news. Maybe he watches the Comedy Channel for news. But he's going to vote anyway.

Just keep that in mind when you are watching the mainstream media news shows. A very good site to bookmark and read is Newsbusters, which documents mainstream media bias daily.

Remembering 9/11 and the Democrat weakness on foreign policy that caused it

September 11, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The 9/11 terrorist attacks resulted from weak Democrat foreign policy

One of my libertarian friends was objecting to the 9/11 memorial being conducted today. So I decided to re-post a VERY old post I wrote in February 2009 when I was just starting out blogging. In it, I explain why I became so conservative on foreign policy after 9/11. Watching the response of the secular left and libertarians to the attack (blame America and praise terrorists) turned me into a hawk.

—-

The Wall

Democrats have a reputation for not taking defense and counter-terrorism seriously. According to this post over at the American Thinker, the 9/11 tragedy was mostly due to a failure in intelligence caused by a "wall" between different intelligence-gathering organizations.

> Gorelick, an appointee of Bill Clinton, is the one who constructed the wall of separation that kept the CIA and the FBI from comparing notes and therefore invading the privacy of nice young men like, say, Muhammed Atta and Zacarius Moussaoui. While countless problems were uncovered in our intelligence operations in the wake of 9-11, no single factor comes close to in importance to Jamie Gorelick's wall.
>
> In fact, it was Gorelick's wall, perhaps more than any other single factor, that induces some people to blame Clinton himself for 9-11 since he appointed her and she acted consistent with his philosophy of "crime fighting." She put the wall into place as Deputy Attorney General in 1995.

Now let's see how a Republican president responded to a terrorist attack.

George W. Bush

George W. Bush's bold action abroad gave us 7 years free from terrorist attacks on American assets. If there is one thing that deters future attacks, it is military invasions of countries that support and/or harbor terrorists. They understand military force. For Bush, one terrorist attack was enough to get us to respond with force.

As a result of the Bush doctrine of invading states suspected of developing and/or proliferating WMDs, Libya discontinued its weapons program and invited inspectors to come in and cart away all of its research equipment. That was the Bush doctrine – which Libya believed only because they saw that we were willing to back up our demands with force. We can have peace if our enemies believe that we have the will to go to war, and that our enemies fear that they will lose that contest.

Bill Clinton

Contrast George W. Bush's immediate response to terrorism with Democrat Bill Clinton. According to Byron York, we had *four* terrorist attacks during Clinton's presidency.

> So Clinton talked tough. But he did not *act* tough. Indeed, a review of his years in office shows that each time the president was confronted with a major terrorist attack — the February 26, 1993, bombing of the World Trade Center, the Khobar Towers attack, the August 7, 1998, bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the October 12, 2000, attack on the USS *Cole* — Clinton was preoccupied with his own political fortunes to an extent that precluded his giving serious and sustained attention to fighting terrorism.

How did Clinton respond to these four attacks? According to this interview with Richard Miniter, President Clinton was much less aggressive than Bush was, during his two terms. Bush's administration did not fear public opinion, but Clinton's administration did. Miniter lists *sixteen* of the Clinton administration's failures to treat terrorism as a serious threat. Below, I cite my favorites. *Read the whole list!*

> **Lopez:** In sum, how many times did Bill Clinton lose bin Laden?
>
> **Miniter:** Here's a rundown. The Clinton administration:
>
> […]4. Did not militarily react to the al Qaeda bombing in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
>
> […]7. Objected to Northern Alliance efforts to assassinate bin Laden in Afghanistan.
>
> 8. Decided against using special forces to take down bin Laden in Afghanistan.
>
> […]11. Clumsily tipped off Pakistani officials sympathetic to bin Laden before a planned missile strike against bin Laden on August 20, 1998. Bin Laden left the camp with only minutes to spare.
>
> 12-14. Three times, Clinton hesitated or deferred in ordering missile strikes against bin Laden in 1999 and 2000.

> 15. When they finally launched and armed the Predator spy drone plane, which captured amazing live video images of bin Laden, the Clinton administration no longer had military assets in place to strike the archterrorist.
>
> 16. Did not order a retaliatory strike on bin Laden for the murderous attack on the USS *Cole*.

When you look at the facts, we begin to understand *why* Democrats perform so poorly on national security issues.

Peace Through Strength

Republicans, on the other hand, believe in peace through strength.

> In foreign policy, Reagan sought to achieve "peace through strength." During his two terms he increased defense spending 35 percent, but sought to improve relations with the Soviet Union. In dramatic meetings with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, he negotiated a treaty that would eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles. Reagan declared war against international terrorism, sending American bombers against Libya after evidence came out that Libya was involved in an attack on American soldiers in a West Berlin nightclub.

I've been reading a lot about the run up to World War 2 lately. And what I discovered was that leading figures in the governments of both the Germany and Japan (in their correspondence) believed that no one in the West would stop them for being aggressive. So, in the 1930s, both Germany and Japan took aggressive actions against their neighbors. For example, Germany and Japan both seized territory from their peaceful neighbors. We got into a world war because we didn't deter these early aggressive actions. That's why we had to fight against a much stronger enemy in a world war – we gave them time to build up while we did nothing to prepare.

The differences between the two political parties could not be more clear. Weakness provokes war. Wars start when our enemies believe that they can strike us with impunity. Military strength, and the will to use it, deter aggression.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

September 12, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.

20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University

> physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
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- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
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How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

September 13, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

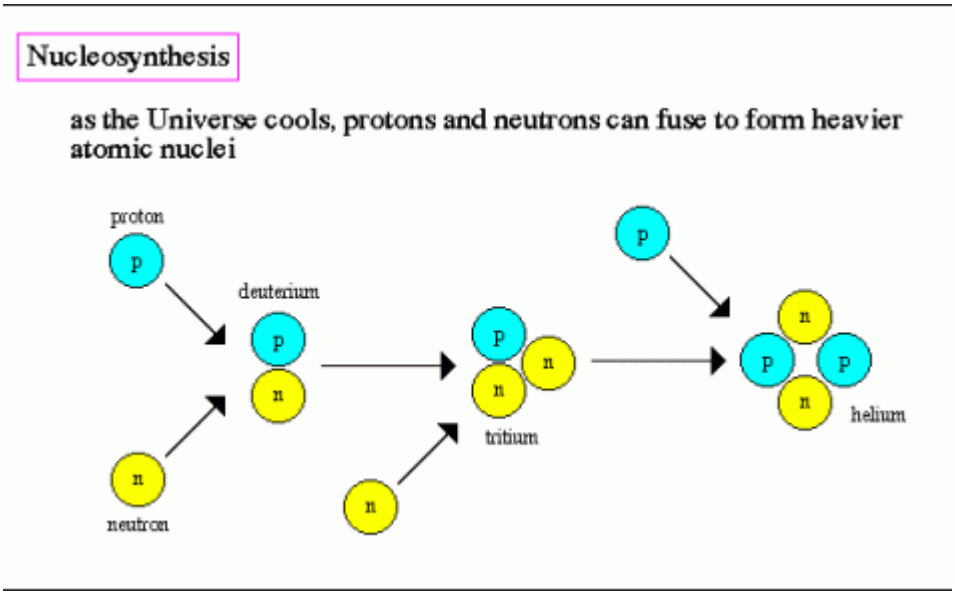

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major

> triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 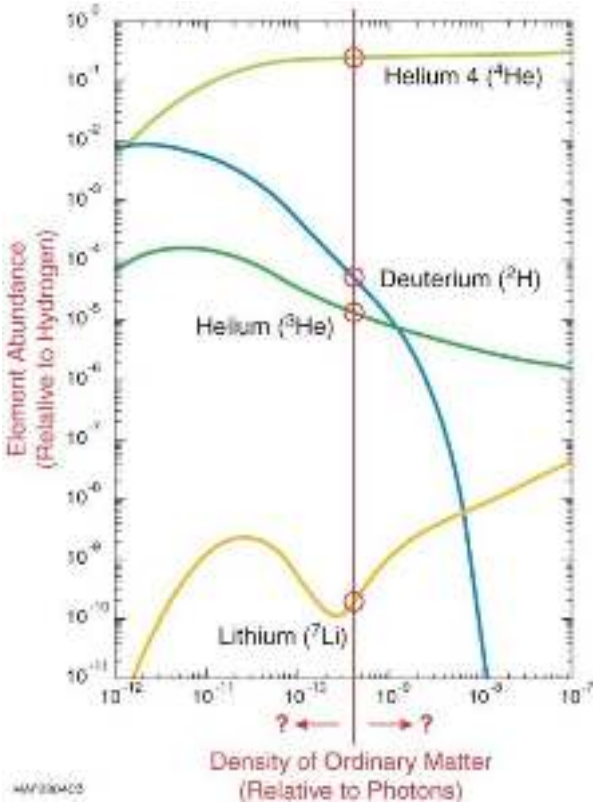
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-

> based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

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Whose job is it to teach young, unmarried women not to delay marriage?

September 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A group of feminists protesting people they disagree with

I found a very interesting post on a blog called Oz Conservative, which is run by an Australian traditional conservative. In the post, he looks at two women who wasted their 20s on fun and thrills. Both of them are childless and unmarried. And they are complaining that they should be married with children. How did it happen?

Excerpt:

> Rachael spent her youth going out with the bad boy type:
>
> > relationships have never been my strong point. Historically, I've picked good-looking villains and addictive personalities.
> >
> > I've had a ball and many passionate experiences, but nothing functional enough to constitute a long-term future and never anyone 'normal' enough to bring home to meet the parents.
>
> Although she puts a positive spin on being single, she admits:
>
> > I'm realistic. I've probably missed the boat as far as children are concerned, and that is a shame…
> >
> > […]Yes, the life I have today is not quite the one I envisaged 20 years ago as a young woman. I foresaw a satisfying career along with 2.4 children and a handsome husband.
>
> Then there is Bibi, now 44. She tells her story this way:
>
> > I am staring down the barrel of a lonely future without a man, let alone children.
> >
> > And how do I find myself in this perilous position? One reason is

> > undoubtedly that men like young women. Yes, I was young once and all that. In my 20s and 30s I wasn't exactly a supermodel, but I was constantly surrounded by men. The trouble is I wasn't necessarily looking to settle down back then…
> >
> > Now that I am, there are very few available men out there and the ones there are would be more interested in my teenage nieces than in me…
>
> […]Bibi has a lot of friends in exactly the same boat:
>
> > In my close circle of friends, there are eight of us who are single and childless. This is a generational phenomenon – we are all aged between 37 and 45.
> >
> > When our mothers were that age, such numbers would be unimaginable.
>
> Like many women writing this kind of literature, when she looks back she recognises the negative influence of feminism on her generation of women:
>
> > I think the feminist teachings of the Sixties and Seventies seeped into our brains. My mum couldn't be called a feminist, but I, too, grew up thinking we could be anything we wanted to be and have a fulfilling career, life and relationship…
>
> […]What she is trying to say here is that feminism pushed marriage and motherhood down the list of priorities ("there was more to contend with beforehand"). She admits that she was led into the magical kind of thinking I described earlier in which there is nothing in reality to limit having things as you want them to be ("we didn't realise that men wouldn't be interested … my generation was spoilt – unrealistic, even").

The comments to the post are very interesting.

I was thinking about whose job it was to warn young Christian women about these bad choices, and I remembered a passage from the Bible.

Titus 2:3-5 explains:

> [3] Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.
>
> [4] Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children,
>
> [5] to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

The problem is that many older Christian women made a lot of mistakes in their youth, especially with alcohol and premarital sex. And for most of them, it's more important that they not feel guilty about it, than that they warn younger women not to make the same mistakes. So, instead of admitting guilt and setting boundaries, they often tell young women that it doesn't matter what you do in your 20s because God, the cosmic butler,

will make everything work out in the end.

We just had a situation where one woman who had a successful marriage tried to give younger women some very basic advice about how to be attractive to marriage-minded men. And what happened was that she was attacked by pretty much everyone. The reaction seemed to be strongest from Christian women, however, who insisted that God's grace meant that Christian women didn't have to care what the Bible taught about morality and wisdom. The important thing was that they follow their desires in the moment, because to exercise self-control would be "horrible" and would "send the wrong message". Telling a woman not to do what she feels like is worse than murder, because women must always do what feels good. Who cares about the words of the Bible, when a woman has feelings that are a direct line to God's mysterious will for her happiness?

One of the commenters on this blog put it this way:

> I've been observing this phenomenon among so-called "Christians" for well over a decade. Concepts like "tolerance" and not being "judgmental" took hold in our culture and many Christians absorbed the mindset completely. If you point out that what someone is doing is sinful or might potentially lead to sinful behavior, they act defensive or turn the tables on you and say "well, you're not perfect either!" Some even say that they do certain things for the express purpose of not being "legalistic," because clearly, legalism is far worse than compromising one's witness. Jesus has become a postmodern hippie whose primary message is "let's all be cool to each other." The only sins left are transgressions against the belief that everyone is equal and worthy of acceptance.
>
> In reading the responses to Lori Alexander's article, my greatest takeaway is that people are rationalization machines. If they've made mistakes, they won't humbly acknowledge them and use the wisdom of their experience to guide others in the right direction. Instead, they'll try to find a way to argue that their mistakes weren't mistakes at all, and that the real sinner is the person who's judging them for what they did. It's a deceitful, selfish game, and anyone who plays it is an enemy of the Gospel. Their argument essentially boils down to "every woman, regardless of whatever bad decisions she's made in life, is entitled to a loving husband who'll provide for her." Same way everyone's entitled to free health care, regardless of whether sufficient medical resources exist, I suppose. It doesn't work that way, ladies.
>
> And they use this feminist scare word "shaming." How dare you "shame" me? I would go so far as to say that shaming is a good thing, because it incentivizes proper behavior. Men have good reasons for wanting their wives to be virgins, and if you remove the stigma against premarital sex, a lot of women are going to take Biblical teaching on the subject less seriously. If Christian men as a whole agreed that they would only marry virgins, I guarantee you that a lot of women would think twice about what kind of men they associated with. If you feel "shamed," it's probably a sign that you haven't truly repented of your sins. Sin

> separates us from God, and if you see your sins for what they are, you should have no problem condemning the sins that you yourself have committed and discouraging them in others.
>
> I'm sorry for this long-winded ramble, but it disgusts me how much politically correct rot has infested the churches, and this entire incident just confirms that Paul was correct to forbid women teaching. When everyone is afraid of upsetting women, we get false teachers popping up everywhere spreading a destructive message with nothing but rhetoric behind it. The end result? Fewer marriages, fewer children, fewer people taking Christian teachings seriously, and more people being miserable and lonely. Once you start ceding ground to liberalism, the whole thing eventually unravels. Lots of good Christian men and women can't find a spouse anymore, because their society has lied to them and they don't realize it until it's too late. Did their churches stand against the world? Did their churches provide them the guidance they needed? Or were their churches too afraid to be seen as "out of touch," and did they prioritize numbers over holiness and correct teaching? If we are sincere believers, it should be obvious which is more important.

Many of the women who chose to delay marriage for fun and thrills with the bad boys grew up in married Christian homes. Parents and pastors have, for one reason or another, decided that it is too unpleasant to warn young Christian women that their behavior may involve some costs in the long term. They don't want to make them feel bad, and women's feelings are so very much more important than what the Bible says, or even what peer-reviewed research on marriage best practices says. Even theologically conservative pastors just don't have the courage to address the influence that feminism has had on the goal-setting and decision-making of young, unmarried women. It's much easier to blame men when the woman's fun and thrills plan doesn't work out.

Yale University computer science professor takes a look at protein formation probabilities

September 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

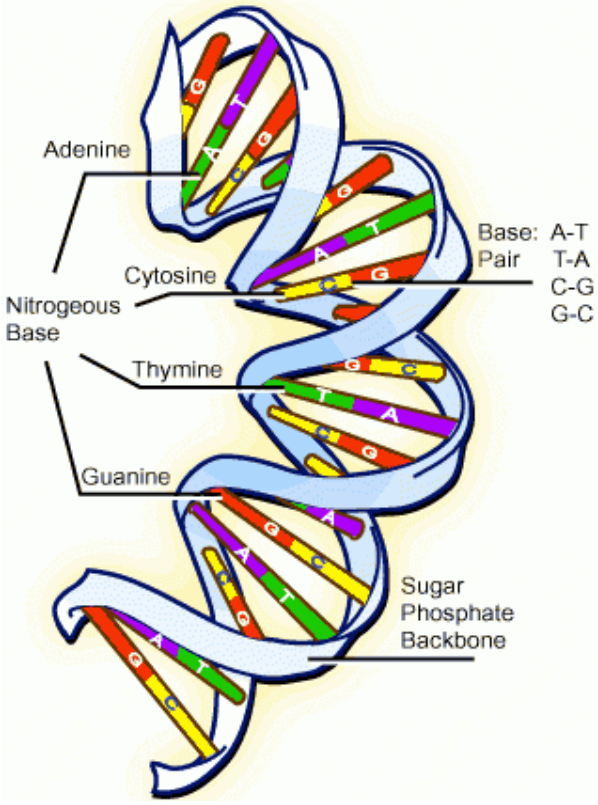

How did life begin?

When I was in graduate school, we studied a book called "Mirror Worlds", authored by famous computer science professor David Gelernter at Yale University. This week, I noticed that Dr. Gelernter had written an article in the prestigious Claremont Review of Books. In his article, he applies his knowledge of computer science to the problem of the origin of life.

Evolution, if it is going to work at all, has to explain the problem of how the basic building blocks of life – proteins – can emerge from non-living matter. It turns out that the problem of the origin of life is essentially a problem of information – of code. If the components of proteins are ordered properly, then the sequence folds up into a protein that has biological function. If the sequence is not good, then just like computer code, it won't run.

Here's Dr. Gelernter to explain:

> How to make proteins is our first question. Proteins are chains: linear sequences of atom-groups, each bonded to the next. A protein molecule is based on a chain of amino acids; 150 elements is a "modest-sized" chain; the average is 250. Each link is chosen, ordinarily, from one of 20 amino acids. A chain of amino acids is a polypeptide—"peptide" being the type of chemical bond that joins one amino acid to the next. But this chain is only the starting point: chemical forces among the links make parts of the chain twist themselves into helices; others straighten

> out, and then, sometimes, jackknife repeatedly, like a carpenter's rule, into flat sheets. Then the whole assemblage folds itself up like a complex sheet of origami paper. And the actual 3-D *shape* of the resulting molecule is (as I have said) important.
>
> Imagine a 150-element protein as a chain of 150 beads, each bead chosen from 20 varieties. But: only certain chains will work. Only certain bead combinations will form themselves into stable, useful, *well-shaped* proteins.
>
> So how hard *is* it to build a useful, well-shaped protein? Can you throw a bunch of amino acids together and assume that you will get something good? Or must you choose each element of the chain with painstaking care? It happens to be *very* hard to choose the right beads.

Gelernter decides to spot the Darwinist a random sequence of 150 elements. Now the task the Darwinist is to use random mutation to arrive at a sequence of 150 links that has biological function.

> [W]hat are the chances that a random 150-link sequence will create such a protein? Nonsense sequences are essentially random. Mutations are random. Make random changes to a random sequence and you get another random sequence. So, close your eyes, make 150 random choices from your 20 bead boxes and string up your beads in the order in which you chose them. What are the odds that you will come up with a useful new protein?
>
> […]The total count of *possible* 150-link chains, where each link is chosen separately from 20 amino acids, is 20^{150}. In other words, *many*. 20^{150} roughly equals 10^{195}, and there are only 10^{80} atoms in the universe.
>
> What proportion of these many polypeptides are useful proteins? Douglas Axe did a series of experiments to estimate how many 150-long chains are capable of stable folds—of reaching the final step in the protein-creation process (the folding) and of holding their shapes long enough to be useful. (Axe is a distinguished biologist with five-star breeding: he was a graduate student at Caltech, then joined the Centre for Protein Engineering at Cambridge. The biologists whose work Meyer discusses are mainly first-rate Establishment scientists.) He estimated that, of all 150-link amino acid sequences, 1 in 10^{74} will be capable of folding into a stable protein. To say that your chances are 1 in 10^{74} is no different, in practice, from saying that they are zero. It's not surprising that your chances of hitting a stable protein that performs some useful *function*, and might therefore play a part in evolution, are even smaller. Axe puts them at 1 in 10^{77}.
>
> In other words: immense is so big, and tiny is so small, that neo-Darwinian evolution is—*so far*—a dead loss. Try to mutate your way from 150 links of gibberish to a working, useful protein and you are guaranteed to fail. Try it with ten mutations, a thousand, a million—you fail. The odds bury you. It can't be

> done.

Keep in mind that you need many, many proteins in order to have even a simple living cell. (And that's not even considering the problem of organizing the proteins into a system).

So, if you're a naturalist, then your only resources to explain the origin of life are chance and mutation. As Dr. Gelernter shows, naturalistic explanations won't work to solve even part of the problem. Not even with a long period of time. Not even if you use the entire universe as one big primordial soup, and keep trying sequences for the history of the universe. It just isn't possible to arrive at sequences that have biological function in the time available, using the resources available. The only viable explanation is that there is a computer scientist who wrote the code without using trial and error. Something that ordinary software engineers like myself and Dr. Gelernter do all the time. We know what kind of cause is adequate to explain functioning code.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

September 15, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

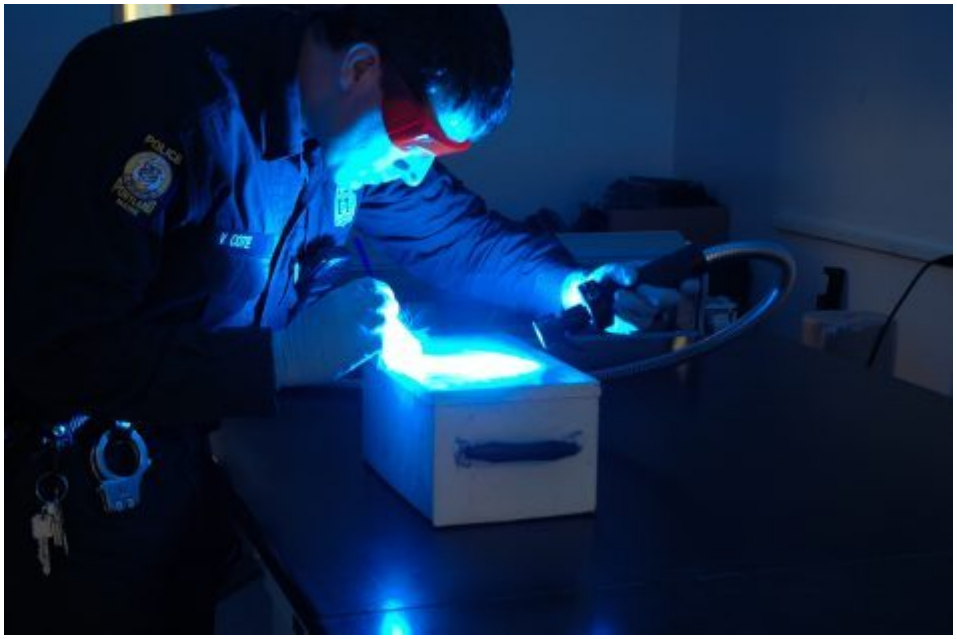

Policeman investigates crime scene for evidence

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus in a debate by saying that the resurrection is the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. Minimal facts are the parts of the New Testament that meet a set of strict historical criteria. These are the facts that skeptical historians agree with, totally apart from any religious beliefs.

So what are the criteria that skeptical historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a

saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called “Indications of Authenticity” or “Signs of Credibility.”

In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus’ life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.

What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:

(1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.

(2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.

(3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.

(4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.

(5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.

(6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.

For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, “The ‘Criteria’ for Authenticity,” in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.

Notice that these “criteria” do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus’ life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same “criteria” are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur’an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the “criteria” do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels’ every claim attributed to Jesus

> in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book. You want to look at it as a historical book, and use historical criteria to get to some facts that critical historians would accept. From that, it's possible to make a case for the resurrection, which is the guarantee that the words of Jesus are authoritative. Including the words of Jesus where he describes the Bible as a whole as God's revelation of Himself to his creatures.

Here is the approach I use when talking to non-Christian co-workers:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria

4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection
8. Don't let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And remember that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. That passages is universally accepted as early, eyewitness testimony from Paul, and represents the core of early Christian beliefs about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Everyone who takes evidence seriously has to account for that early creed, which passes the historical tests I outlined above.

The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I've read is the one by Robert H. Stein in "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It's a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion "God raised Jesus from the dead". That whole book is really very, very good.

Baby elephant in China cries for 5 hours after being stomped by his mom

September 16, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

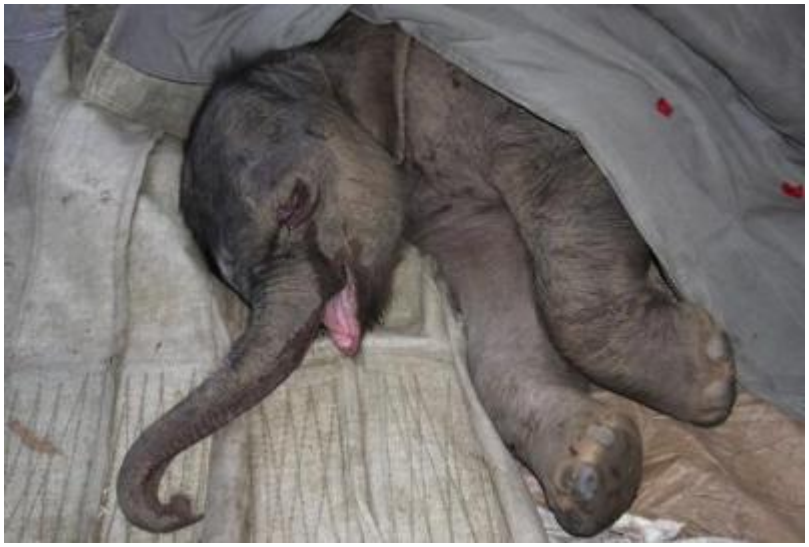

Baby elephant cries after being attacked by his own mother
From the New York Daily News. (Printable version linked)

Excerpt:

> Little Zhuangzhuang, a newborn elephant at a wildlife refuge in China, was inconsolable after his mother rejected him and then tried to stomp him to death.
>
> Tears streamed down his gray trunk for five hours as zookeepers struggled to comfort the baby elephant.
>
> They initially thought it was an accident when the mom stepped on him after giving birth, according to the Central European News agency.
>
> Employees removed him, cleaned him up and treated his injuries, then reunited the baby with his momma.
>
> But she was having none of it, and began stomping him again.
>
> So the game keepers stepped in once more and permanently separated the two.
>
> “We don’t know why the mother turned on her calf but we couldn’t take a chance,” an employee told CEN.
>
> “The calf was very upset and he was crying for five hours before he could be consoled,” he said.
>
> “He couldn’t bear to be parted from his mother and it was his mother who was trying to kill him.”
>
> The petite pachyderm, born in August, is now doing well. The zookeeper who rescued him from his violent mother adopted him and helped him thrive at the Shendiaoshan wild animal reserve in Rong-cheng, China.

I found another photo of the baby elephant here:

A baby elephant's birthday is supposed to be happy

So, in this post, I wanted to take about the duty that parents have to their children.

I guess a lot of my views on ethics are rooted in the obvious needs that children have. When I look at an unborn baby, I can tell what it needs. So, I am careful not to cause a pregnancy before I can supply its needs. The needs of the little unborn creature are driving these moral boundaries on me. And the same with born children. I oppose gay marriage because when I look at little children, I want them to have a stable environment to grow up in with a mother and father who are biologically related to them (in the best case). I permit lots of arrangements, but I promote one arrangement over the others because that's what's best for children. Anyone can look at unborn and born children and see that, just like anyone can look at a crying baby elephant and understand – "I have to govern my behavior so that I don't hurt you". If that means cutting off the premarital sex and making decisions that are likely to produce a stable marriage, then that's what we should do.

Children cry too, you know. They cry when we hurt them. They cry when we make bad decisions and when we don't provide them with what they need. Children need mothers and fathers who care about them. Making a safe environment for a child isn't an accident. It isn't random and unpredictable. We have to control our desires before we have children, so that we provide children with what they need. It would be nice if men and women were more thoughtful and unselfish about *children* and *marriage* before they started in with sex.

Senate committee authorizes subpoenas for Obama officials involved in Trump campaign surveillance

September 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Left to right: Comey, Lynch, Clinton, McCabe

Have you ever wondered which members of the Obama administration were involved in spying on the Trump campaign? Would you like to hear from former CIA Director John Brennan, former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, former FBI Director James Comey? The Senate does. They've issued subpoenas for these people, and many more.

Fox News has the story:

> The Senate Homeland Security Committee on Wednesday voted to authorize subpoenas for former CIA Director John Brennan, former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, former FBI Director James Comey, and other Obama administration officials as part of its broad review into the origins of the Russia investigation.
>
> […]The committee also authorized subpoenas for Sidney Blumenthal, former Obama chief of staff Denis McDonough, former FBI counsel Lisa Page, former FBI agent Joe Pientka, former ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power, former FBI director of counterintelligence Bill Priestap, former White House national security adviser Susan Rice, former FBI agent Peter Strzok, former FBI lawyer Kevin Clinesmith – who pleaded guilty to making a false statement in the first criminal case arising from U.S. Attorney John Durham's review of the investigation into links between Russia and the 2016 Trump campaign – among others.
>
> The committee further authorized subpoenas for "the production of all records" related to the FBI's original Russia investigation and the Department of Justice Inspector General's probe, as well as the process of "unmasking" for James Baker, former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, DOJ official Bruce Ohr, FBI case agent Steven Somma, former U.S. Ambassador to Russia John Teftt, former

> deputy assistant attorney general Tashina Gauhar; and Stefan Halper.

Do you remember the details of the FBI-media collaboration on the Trump-Russia collusion story? I have a summary of it for you, below.

The Trump-Russia collusion story that was trumpted by the progressive media for the last two years was a joint effort between the Hillary Clinton campaign and high-ranking members of the FBI during the Obama administration.

The goal was to get the government to spy on the Trump campaign, in order neutralize his administration, if he won the 2016 election.

Here's the left-leaning The Hill, reporting on an important finding from October 2018:

> Congressional investigators have confirmed that a top FBI official met with Democratic Party lawyers to talk about allegations of Donald Trump-Russia collusion weeks before the 2016 election, and before the bureau secured a search warrant targeting Trump's campaign.
>
> Former FBI general counsel James Baker met during the 2016 season with at least one attorney from Perkins Coie, the Democratic National Committee's private law firm.
>
> That's the firm used by the DNC and Hillary Clinton's campaign to secretly pay research firm Fusion GPS and Christopher Steele, a former British intelligence operative, to compile a dossier of uncorroborated raw intelligence alleging Trump and Moscow were colluding to hijack the presidential election.

The article notes that Perkins Coie is the "Democratic National Committee's private law firm".

The Federalist reports that the Obama presidential election campaign also paid $972,000 to Perkins Coie in 2016 alone:

> Former president Barack Obama's official campaign organization has directed nearly a million dollars to the same law firm that funneled money to Fusion GPS, the firm behind the infamous Steele dossier. Since April of 2016, Obama For America (OFA) has paid over $972,000 to Perkins Coie, records filed with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) show.
>
> […]Federal records show that Hillary Clinton's official campaign organization, Hillary For America, paid just under $5.1 million to Perkins Coie in 2016. The DNC paid nearly $5.4 million to the law firm in 2016.
>
> […]The Washington Post reported last week that Perkins Coie, an international law firm, was directed by both the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and Hillary Clinton's campaign to retain Fusion GPS in April of 2016 to dig up dirt on then-candidate Donald Trump. Fusion GPS then hired Christopher Steele, a former British spy, to compile a dossier of allegations that Trump and his campaign actively colluded with the Russian government during the 2016 election. Though many of the claims in the dossier have been directly refuted,

> none of the dossier's allegations of collusion have been independently verified. Lawyers for Steele admitted in court filings last April that his work was not verified and was never meant to be made public.

In addition, Fox News reports that the FBI paid Christopher Steele ELEVEN TIMES in 2016. So this dossier was funded by Democrats from many different groups. They probably thought that no one would ever find out who was behind it.

But why would the FBI and the FISA court accept the Democrat-funded dossier as a basis to spy on the Democrat's main political rival? Answer: there were Democrats in the FBI who covered up the source of funding for the Steele dossier, as well as the anti-Trump bias of the dossier's author.

The Washington Examiner reported on the released text messages from highly-placed anti-Trump Democrat Lisa Page within the FBI in March 2019:

> The text messages, between then-Deputy Director of the FBI Andrew McCabe, who was later fired, and former FBI attorney Lisa Page — who was having an affair with FBI agent Peter Strzok — were obtained by Fox News.
>
> […]Then-Director of the FBI James Comey ultimately signed off on the application to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court for approval to surveil Carter Page. It was dated nine days after the Page-McCabe texts: Oct. 21 2016.
>
> The specific funding of Steele's dossier was never mentioned to the FISA court, either during that first application or during three subsequent FISA renewals. Steele's anti-Trump fervor and determination to provide his dossier to the media and members of the U.S. government later became well known.

The reason why the mainstream media reported on a #FakeNews story for two years was because they wanted to sway voters away from Trump in the 2018 elections. And it worked.

Facebook and Google removing content that harms Democrat party

September 18, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Facebook, Google, Youtube, Twitter purging conservative speech

There were a few interesting stories about Big Technology companies censoring content critical of the Democrat party. The first one involves Facebook censoring two anti-Biden ads. The second one involves Google / Youtube censoring a video featuring a Stanford University medical doctor. The third one involves Twitter censoring a Chinese scientist. Let's take a look at the stories.

Here's the first story from Daily Wire:

> The ad launched on Aug. 4 before getting slapped with a "mostly false" rating by PolitiFact and subsequently blocked by Facebook the next month. The ad directly quotes Biden declaring, "If you elect me, your taxes are going to be raised, not cut," and warns that his plan will raise taxes "on all income groups."
>
> […]PolitiFact specifically cites a "Biden campaign official" as supposed evidence of the Democrat's intent (emphasis added):
>
>> The full exchange shows that Biden was saying his plan would raise taxes for people who, in his words, "benefited from" the GOP's Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. **A Biden campaign official said his point was that the wealthy — not all Americans — would not benefit from his plan.**
>>
>> The ad's portrayal of the exchange leaves a different impression.

And another ad predicted that allowing biological men to compete in women's sports would end women's sports. Politifact admits that they can't fact-check a prediction, but they censored the ad anyway:

> America First is not the only conservative organization censored by the platform.

> In another recent case, Facebook censored an ad by the conservative American Principles Project that stated that the Democrat-backed Equality Act allowing transgender athletes will "destroy girls sports" because the ad was "missing context and could mislead people." The censorship was imposed despite PolitiFact openly admitting in its review of the ad that the claim is "a prediction we can't fact-check."

Meanwhile, YouTube (which is owned by Google), censored a Hoover Institute discussion about COVID that featured an actually medical doctor from Stanford University.

The Federalist reports:

> YouTube, which is owned by Google, removed a video of an interview with [Dr. Scott] Atlas conducted in June originally posted by the Hoover Institution where he serves as a senior fellow. In it, Atlas, a prominent neuroradiologist and professor at Stanford University Medical Center as well as a commentator on public health issues, spoke of his belief that the pandemic lockdowns might have done more harm than good. Since then, his opinions have become of greater interest due to his appointment in August as a presidential advisor and a member of the White House coronavirus task force.
>
> That fact alone ought to make it vital that the public should be able to hear his opinions about the pandemic. YouTube, however, removed the interview from its video streaming service this past weekend for allegedly violating its terms of service.

I have seen my Google search engine traffic from Google drop 90% since Trump won the election in 2016. My current incoming search engine traffic from DuckDuckGo is half of my current Google traffic. And I'm not the only conservative site that's being censored. Google is in the pocket of the Democrat party.

Meanwhile, Twitter is censoring scientists who make the Chinese Communist Party look bad.

The New York Post reports:

> Twitter has suspended the account of a Chinese virologist who has claimed that COVID-19 was manufactured in a laboratory.
>
> Dr. Li-Meng Yan, a former researcher at the Hong Kong School of Public Health, went dark on the platform after she accused China of covering up evidence that the deadly virus came from a lab in Wuhan.
>
> "They don't want the people to know this truth. Also, that's why I got suspended, I got suppression [and] I am the target that China Communist Part wants to [sic] disappear," she told Fox News host Tucker Carlson on Tuesday.
>
> Carlson responded, "I'm giving you the benefit of the doubt so I'm going to assume you're not an anti-Chinese racist so it's not clear why Twitter would shut you down or why you're being ignored by the rest of the US media."

> Twitter declined to comment to The Post on Wednesday.

If I were in charge, I would just break up all of these big technology companies into tiny little pieces. They’re too big, and they’re dangerous to our liberties.

Who will Trump nominate for SCOTUS, and can he get it done by election day?

September 19, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's going to be Ted Cruz, because that's who Republican voters want

So, there's a vacancy on the Supreme Court, and since we don't have a wuss in the Oval office, we're going to get a nominee and a vote on that nominee in the Senate. The process of nominating someone to the Supreme Court requires the president to nominate, and the Senate to advise and consent. The Republicans control both the White House and the Senate, and there is time to get it done.

The Federalist explains that short-time nominations have happened before:

> Three Supreme Court Justices, including Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who passed away on Friday due to complications of metastatic pancreatic cancer, were confirmed by the Senate within 45 days of their formal nomination date.
>
> According to Senate records, Justices Ginsburg, John Paul Stevens, and Sandra Day O'Connor were all confirmed in a short period of time. Stevens's confirmation in 1975 took 19 days, O'Connor's confirmation in 1981 took 33 days, and Ginsburg's confirmation in 1993 took 42 days.
>
> […]Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced Trump's nomination would receive a vote on the floor, adding the Senate will keep their promise to "support [Trump's] agenda "particularly his outstanding appointments to the federal judiciary."
>
> "President Trump's nominee will receive a vote on the floor of the United States

> Senate," he stated.

I love this news story, because if there is anything that can get the conservative base out, it's a conservative Supreme Court nominee. We care about judges, and now everyone is going to be reminded why we elected Trump in the first place. It's hard to get a perfect nominee through the Senate when we have a few moderate senators who won't support a social conservative. We need 50 votes for a real social conservative, and we don't have that. There are at least 3 moderates: Lisa Murkowski, and Susan Collins, and Mitt Romney. Murkowski and Collins have already come out and said they don't want to vote on a judge until after the election. Still, we might be able to get someone right of center in there who would give us most of what we want, and get him or her through with a few votes from moderate Democrats.

Now watch this 2 minute video:

Here's a summary for those who can't watch:

> Trump brought up Cruz in the context of speaking about Cruz's last Senate victory. "I helped a lot too. I was with Ted all the way, and I think Ted appreciated it. Even said I'm putting Ted Cruz as one of the people for the Supreme Court," Trump said. He continued:
>
> You know why I did it, because I wanted to make sure I had somebody on the list of about 45 unbelievable people, the smartest, the best, the absolute crème de la crème, the best minds in the country, conservative, they believe in the Constitution. Little things like that. But I said I have to add somebody that we're going to make sure we could get approved. The only one I could think of was Ted, because He's going to get 50 Republican votes and 50 Democratic votes. They'll do anything to get him out of the Senate. But I joke when I say that to Ted, and I say that all the time, Ted's only one I know that will get 100 votes in the Senate.
>
> Trump added of Cruz: "He's a great guy; he's a brilliant guy."

I think it would be a smart move for Trump to drive turnout by having a fight over someone the base really wants – like Ted Cruz. Not only is Ted Cruz brilliant and conservative, but his replacement in the Senate would be picked by Greg Abbott, the conservative governor of Texas.

Ted Cruz is Hispanic, and that is a very useful thing to put in the news 45 days out from an election. It reminds Hispanic voters that Hispanics *can be* conservative, and fit into the Republican party. We need to counter the narrative that the Democrats spread about racism from the right. It's ironic, because people like Ted Cruz and Thomas Sowell are our best conservatives.

The surprising pro-masculinity message in the “Far From the Madding Crowd” film

September 20, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Man helping a woman with proper handgun marksmanship

So, I have about a half-dozen older and/or experienced Christian women who advise me and assist me in various ways. The wisest and most experienced is calm and thoughtful Dina. She has a very stressful job dealing with demanding women, and what she admires most in men is “masculinity”, which she defines as a man’s ability to tell a woman what is right and wrong, what God expects from her, what she should be doing with her life, and guiding her and providing for her through the steps to get there.

What makes Dina angry is when a man makes a fool of himself for youth and beauty, abdicating his role as moral and spiritual leader because of attraction / lust. According to Dina, men who have self-control think about what a woman should do that is morally right, with the goal of her producing a return for God. Men who are swayed by youth and beauty are willing to give up that leadership role in exchange for attention and/or sex.

So, with that said, Dina asked me to watch a recently-made movie called “Far From the Madding Crowd“, based on a novel by Thomas Hardy. I immediately said “no” because I know about Thomas Hardy from Tess of the D’Urbervilles, where he presents Tess as the helpless victim of Providence. I really hate that view of women, where they can do reckless, selfish things and then blame everyone but themselves for the destructive consequences of their own free-will decisions. But Dina said “wasn’t I right about the debate between David Robertson and Matt Dillahunty?” I said yes, and watched the movie. And of course, she was right, as she almost always is. This movie is a punch in the face to the radical feminism that seems to have infected so many young women, even in the church.

Here is a review of the movie by Rebekah, posted at her blog. Unfotunately, the post has

been deleted, but here is an excerpt.

Rebekah writes:

> What does this 19th century tale offer to modern audiences? This latest rendering emphasizes something actually surprising and unexpected given that it is made in our age of radical feminism. It is Gabriel Oak's character that shines the most, not the proto-feminist Bathsheba. […]In Bathsheba and Gabriel we see how men and women support one another in such a way as to ensure a flourishing in any role that fate might thrust on them.
>
> […]The relationship between Gabriel and Bathsheba, though unequal in earthly terms of authority and wealth, is one of mutual dependence. We see Oak taking on a role of both counselor and conscience with Bathsheba – roles that in her striving towards independence she struggles to admit her need for. She is not unlike the modern feminist in this regard, nor is she unlike all of us in our relationship with the Lord. Her struggle is best seen in the various times she repels Gabriel only to find herself in desperate situations in which only he can help. The filmmakers' clever use of a recurring theme of Bathsheba galloping after Gabriel on a horse when he is needed is particularly moving (and surprising) here. In the end, the film resists the urge to pander to our more extreme modern views on what women require to thrive.
>
> **Gabriel Oak also seems to be an embodiment of the biblical virtue of selflessness. We see in his actions towards Bathsheba the Philippians admonition to refrain from "being motivated by selfish ambition or vanity," but rather "in humility, be moved to treat one another as more important than yourself."** Indeed, vanity itself can be seen as a fateful character flaw of every major character apart from Gabriel. He alone is able to move past rejection and carry on. In fact, he is required to go so far as to be under the authority of the very woman who rejected his offer of marriage and, despite his continuing affections for her, witness her being courted and then married by another far less worthy man, Frank Troy. No other major character is able to accomplish this challenge to their pride. Though Bathsheba does eventually overcome the rejection of her husband, she only does so after tremendous tragedy and with the selfless and steady support of Gabriel.
>
> Gabriel respects her independence, but, like a good shepherd, stays close by to protect and guide her. Though he cannot protect her from her free-will choices, he does warn her. He then remains faithful to her in the midst of the trouble she brings upon herself. In this, he is not unlike our God, for he allows her to stray, all the while letting her know of a better course when asked. And, she does ask.
>
> In an important scene at a party, where Bathsheba must decide whether or not to marry a particularly obsessive suitor, when she asks, "Tell me what to do, Gabriel," he simply tells her to "Do what is right." Is that not like our Lord? Gentle shepherd, indeed, for our wild, independent hearts. In this, I see Gabriel

> as most suitable for the role as the husband written of in the epistle to the Ephesians. He loves Bathsheba "just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her…"

Men and women both struggle with self-centeredness, but men usually work themselves out of it by studying hard things in school, and doing hard work that pays. Men have a natural desire to provide for others, and it is actually a duty laid out for them in the Bible. As a result of studying and working at things they don't like, men typically are better at resisting their feelings and desires. In fact, if you ever want to make a woman less self-centered and emotional, leading her to study STEM and work a demanding job is a good plan. Dina has multiple STEM degrees, and a very difficult, challenging work history.

I would be suspicious of men who don't prioritize providing, (as in 1 Tim 5:8), because working and saving gives a man practical experience at self-denial. When a man gets accustomed to working to share with others, it helps helps him to lead a woman to do the same: deny her feelings and desires, and make prudent decisions that will allow her to love and serve others – including God – in a sustainable way. Over the long-term, this practice of effective, self-sacrificial love will be worth more to the woman than the short-term pursuit of fun and thrills. To provide for a woman means to look into her future, and make a decision today to set aside something that will help her to deal with what the future has in store for her.

Dina's advice to young women

I asked Dina to take a look at the draft of this post before I hit "Schedule" and Dina said:

> What I would advise to all young women is not to expect a Gabriel Oak to be waiting for you at the end of your reckless years of hooking up, partying and wasting your youth on fun and men who have no desire to lead you to God or guide you to goodness. Don't expect the hot stud that your friends approve of to turn into someone with the character of Oak with the magic powers of your premarital sex life. **Find a man who doesn't give in to your every whim, because if he does, you will only resent him for it, and blame him, for being what you thought you wanted him to be.** Find a man who leads, one who demonstrates self control, self denial, who can provide and protect. And most importantly, respect him for doing it.

Emphasis mine.

Sound advice from the Dina, young ladies. By the way, Dina's favorite drama is the BBC production of "North and South" from 2004. I also give it a 10/10.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment

September 20, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Reformed Baptist theologian Wayne Grudem speaks on the Bible and capital punishment.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?
- what did God say to Noah about CP?
- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?
- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?
- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?
- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?
- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the “whole life ethic” and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

The Bible is awesome because it gives us knowledge about God’s character. How are we supposed to act in a way that is pleasing to God if we don’t know what he thinks of the issues of the day? We won’t know how we are supposed to act unless we know who God is first. And that’s why when we read the Bible we should be looking to find out the truth about who God is.

Federal government sues pro-LGBT Kroger for persecuting Christian employees

September 21, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kroger promotes LGBT tyranny over religious liberty

I thought this story about how the federal government is suing Kroger, a far-left grocery store chain, was interesting. You would never see a story like this happening in a Democrat administration. But in a Republican administration, religious liberty is still more important than the feelings of "being offended" of people on the left. Let's see the story, then I'll tell a personal story about this topic.

Here's Christian Post reporting:

> A major supermarket chain is facing a lawsuit after firing two employees over their refusal to wear a rainbow emblem that violates their religious beliefs as part of their work uniform.
>
> The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed a lawsuit against the Kroger Company Monday in response to action taken by Kroger Store No. 625 in Conway, Arkansas, against two employees. The employees were terminated after they refused to abide by the new dress code, which required them to wear an apron depicting a rainbow-colored heart emblem.
>
> The women contended that wearing the apron would amount to an endorsement of the LGBTQ movement, which contradicts their religious beliefs. According to the EEOC, "one woman offered to wear the apron with the emblem covered and the other offered to wear a different apron without the emblem, but the company made no attempt to accommodate their requests."
>
> The EEOC alleged that when the women continued to refuse to wear the apron with the emblem visible, "Kroger retaliated against them by disciplining and ultimately discharging them."
>
> Kroger's actions violated Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, argued the EEOC,

> which is working to secure "monetary relief in the form of back pay and compensatory damages" for the two women "as well as an injunction against future discrimination."

More details about the two brave Christian women:

> According to the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, one of the women, Brenda Lawson, worked in the deli department at the store from 2011 until her termination on June 1, 2019. The other woman, Trudy Rickerd, worked as a cashier and file maintenance clerk from 2006 until her termination on May 29, 2019.
>
> The complaint cited a letter written by Rickerd explaining her objection to wearing the apron. "I have a sincerely held religious belief that I cannot wear a symbol that promotes or endorses something that is in violation of my religious faith … I am happy to buy another apron to ensure there is no financial hardship on Kroger," she said.

In case you didn't know, Kroger has a reputation for putting LGBT rights above free speech and religious liberty:

> Kroger has launched a 2020 Pride campaign company-wide, which includes its 3514 grocery stores across 42 states. The chain is the second-largest retailer after Walmart.
>
> "At The Kroger Co., we embrace diversity and inclusion as core values, and we ingrain these in everything we do," according to the company website. The site also notes that Kroger recently received a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign's 2020 Corporate Equality Index in recognition of its commitment to LGBTQ-plus inclusion and equality.
>
> Kroger also says:
>
> "We're one of the few retailers willing to openly advocate for and make real change toward LGBTQ-plus diversity and inclusion, and we're proud to offer:
> —Same-sex partner benefits and transgender-inclusive healthcare.
>
> —An Associate Resource Group that provides an uplifting community for LGBTQ-plus associates and allies.
>
> —Strong alliances with LGBTQ-plus suppliers through our partnership with the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.
>
> The suit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas, Central Division, and seeks monetary relief in the form of back pay and compensatory damages, as well as an injunction against future discrimination.

The article continues by describing some of the programs that Kroger champions that would make any Bible-believing Christian uncomfortable. But Christians don't matter to Kroger.

Anyway, I wanted to tell a story about this. I spent about 10 years of my IT career in a

large IT company. I was regularly pressured by non-Christians to accept and celebrate LGBT values. Pro-LGBT propaganda was hung all over the building. Diversity and inclusion concerns were made part of the performance evaluation process. And so on.

After the Florida gay nightclub bombing, I remember my manager bringing me a rainbow colored ribbon and telling me to put it on. I told her that I would take it and wear it later. But these ribbons were being dispensed company-wide as a formal effort to promote LGBT values. I have no doubt that my refusal to wear the ribbon was noted and may have affected my performance review and promotion decision.

Which political party stands up to evil at home and abroad?

September 22, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let him who desires peace prepare for war

Lately, I'm being asked to make a positive case for why anyone should vote Republican. Many Christians think that they can take the easy way out and just prove that Republicans do better than Democrats on social issues like marriage and abortion. But that's lazy. A better strategy is to take a kitchen sink approach by arguing that Republicans are also better on fiscal policy and foreign policy.

Today, let's look at three stories that clearly show that Republicans correctly identify evil and take effective steps to deter it – at home and abroad.

Let's start with an international story, where Trump is confronting the autocratic Iranian regime, which is seeking nuclear weapons to menace peaceful countries in the region.

The Washington Free Beacon reports:

> The Trump administration on Monday announced an unprecedented set of new sanctions on Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile sectors.
>
> Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was joined at the State Department by top Trump administration officials as they announced the new measures, which target Iran's proliferation of nuclear materials used to feed its atomic weapons program. The sanctions also seek to restrain Iran's contested ballistic missile program, which has progressed in tandem with its nuclear program as the country seeks to construct a weapon capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.
>
> The most far-reaching sanctions will target Iran's Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics agency, as well as its leaders, for exporting arms to Venezuelan dictator Nicolas Maduro, who also was targeted by the new sanctions. The measures are aimed at stopping Iran from exporting arms across the globe, including to regional hotspots such as Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq.

> The new sanctions are being issued under a fresh executive order announced Monday by the White House enabling the United States to sanction Iranian government actors and those globally who have been identified as aiding Iran's nuclear and missile programs. The move comes a month after the United States invoked a procedural mechanism at the United Nations that ordered the "snapback" of all global sanctions on Iran. Snapback took effect on Saturday. The unprecedented move was met with anger by European powers and Tehran's allies, raising questions about whether the world will uphold the sanctions. Pompeo and senior Trump administration officials warned that they will not hesitate to sanction any country caught working with Iran.
>
> "Now that virtually all U.N. sanctions have been reimposed on Iran, stakeholders worldwide are warned that the United States will aggressively use U.S. sanctions authorities to impose consequences for failures to comply with the snapped-back U.N. measures on Iran and ensure that Iran does not reap the benefits of U.N.-prohibited activity," the State Department said in announcing the new action.

Let's move down to the federal level, with a story from The Federalist:

> The Department of Justice labeled New York City, Portland, and Seattle as cities "permitting violence and destruction of property," in a statement Monday.
>
> Attorney General William Barr said state and local leaders in these cities are endangering citizens, including peaceful protestors.
>
> "We cannot allow federal tax dollars to be wasted when the safety of the citizenry hangs in the balance. It is my hope that the cities identified by the Department of Justice today will reverse course and become serious about performing the basic function of government and start protecting their own citizens," he said.
>
> Citing various failures by each city such as rising gun violence, police budget cuts, lack of prosecution for those arrested and charged with "protest-related charges," lack of protection against property destruction and vandalism, rejection of federal law enforcement, and allowing anarchists to take over certain geographical areas such as CHOP, the DOJ noted that these cities all failed to handle the rapidly increasing violence that occurred in their areas in response to the death of George Floyd in May.

The article notes that this action follows on an order from Trump to not waste federal tax dollars on cities that neglect to protect their citizens from criminals.

Meanwhile, at the state level, there was this story from Florida, repported by Daily Wire:

> Florida Governor Ron DeSantis announced new legislation Monday that would create additional felonies to punish protesters who turn violent and would create severe penalties for cities that elect to defund or disband their police departments.

> Local Miami news reports that “violent protesters and looters would face new felonies” under the legislation, particularly if they damage property as part of their demonstrations, engage in “disorderly” conduct,” or assault a law enforcement officer.
>
> If caught and convicted, violent protesters could lose their access to state-based welfare programs, DeSantis said.
>
> DeSantis says, though, that the new legislation is designed to prevent the type of violence, anarchy, and destruction Americans have witnessed in places like Portland, Oregon, where unrest has raged unabated for more than 100 days. The legislation also covers activities like harassing people dining at restaurants and tearing down monuments.
>
> […]To reinforce the idea that the new laws were designed to provide law enforcement with more tools to control destructive demonstrations, the package includes proposed penalities for municipalities who elect to “defund the police” or disband their local police departments.
>
> “The proposed package would also strip municipalities of state money if they defund law enforcement,” local Miami news reported.

I think it’s important for people to understand that good and evil do exist. We can’t fix everything in the world, but we can certainly deter future aggressive acts by standing up to terrorists and criminals at home and abroad. If you agree, then you vote Republican.

How can the four gospels be independent sources?

September 23, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

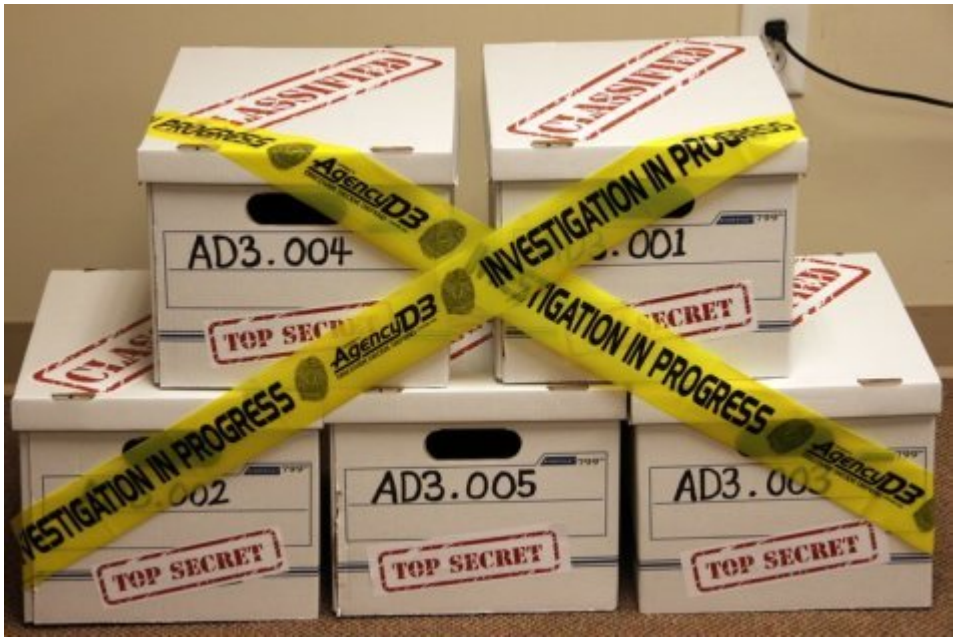

Investigation in progress

Previously, I blogged about the historical criteria that historians use to evaluate documents. One of the criteria is "multiple independent sources". If a story is reported in multiple independent sources, then historians are more likely to evaluate it as historically accurate. But how about the four gospels? Are they independent sources? The answer might not be what you expect.

Here's how the question was put to Dr. Craig:

> The latest video, "Did Jesus Rise From the Dead," is especially compelling, but I had a question about it. In the part one video, you cite as evidence, the Gospels plus Acts and First Corinthians and you refer to them as "independent" and "unconnected" sources. But this isn't exactly true, is it? After all, two of these books were written by the same author, Luke, and so Luke and Acts are connected by authorship. Furthermore, isn't it true that much information relayed in Matthew and Luke were taken from Mark? This two facts would make it untrue to call the Gospels "independent" and "unconnected" would they not?

Here's the video he's talking about:

Dr. Craig answers the question in a recent question of the week. I think this answer is important for those who aren't aware of how the gospels are organized.

He writes:

> The objection is based on a simple misunderstanding. It assumes that the sources I'm referring to are the books of the New Testament. But that's not what I'm talking about.
>
> New Testament critics have identified a number of sources behind the New

> Testament, sources on which the New Testament authors drew. For example, Matthew and Luke drew not only upon Mark as a source but also upon a source which scholars designate "Q," which appears to have been a source containing Jesus' sayings or teachings. Thus, if you could show that a saying in Matthew or Luke appears in both Mark and Q, that would count as multiple, independent attestation.

What does this mean? It means that although there is overlap between Matthew and Luke, called "Q", there are actually three independent sources there: Matthew's source, called M. Luke's source, called L. And the material common to Matthew and Luke, which therefore PRE-DATES Matthew and Luke, called Q.

Dr. Craig lists out several independent sources in his full reply:

1. the pre-Markan Passion story used by Mark
2. the rest of the gospel of Mark has a source
3. Matthew's source (M)
4. Luke's source (L)
5. John's gospel which is very different from Mark, Luke and Matthew
6. the sermons in Acts have a source
7. the early creed found in Paul's 1 Corinthians 15

So if you are trying to lay out something from the New Testament, and you can find it in two of these sources, and at least one of them is very early, you're in pretty good shape.

Although the questioner and the other critics might question the "minimal facts" that pass the historical tests, many of these facts are not questioned by even atheistic scholars.

Here's a useful tip for non-professionals who want to disagree with Dr. Craig. Dr. Craig publishes his arguments in academic presses like Oxford University Press, not to mention scholarly peer-reviewed journals. He's also debated his ideas against famous atheist historians like Gerd Ludemann, Marcus Borg, James Crossley, Bart Ehrman, etc. So it's probably a good idea for people who want to disagree with him to first read some academic literature, or at least ask a professional. Before you post your YouTube video. You could even just ask a professional atheist historian. They will tell you what's wrong with an argument like your "the sources are not independent" argument. Just check yourself before you post something in public. A lot of people who are still puzzling out these questions will look at a mistake like this, and immediately dismiss atheism as a sloppy, anti-intellectual worldview.

You can watch more of Dr. Craig's videos in his playlist, here. These are especially useful for people who want to get the overall scope of the battlefield before deciding where to focus in study. Everybody should know about all of these arguments regardless of where you choose to specialize.

Hunter Biden: sex-trafficked prostitutes, Ukraine bribes, Russia payments, China deals

September 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did Joe Biden collect foreign cash through his son Hunter Biden?

I've been asking some of my Democrat friends about why they would vote for Joe Biden. And their answer is that he has excellent moral character. So, imagine my surprise when I read about this new report on Joe Biden's son Hunter. Have you ever heard the expression "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree"? Well, we're about to find out something about the tree from a rotten apple.

The Federalist had 3 posts about the report.

Here's the post about sex-trafficking:

> An earthshattering report released by Senate investigators Wednesday outlining the Biden family's long list of conflicts of interest at the upper echelons of government unearthed new allegations of former Vice President Joe Biden's son making multiple payments to Eastern European prostitutes.
>
> According to the joint report out by the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee with the Senate Treasury Committee, Hunter Biden made a number of payments to foreign nationals with "questionable backgrounds" consistent with "organized prostitution and/or human trafficking."
>
> Records on file with the committee, the report says, "confirm that Hunter Biden sent thousands of dollars to individuals who have either: 1) been involved in transactions consistent with possible human trafficking; 2) an association with the adult entertainment industry; or 3) potential association with prostitution."
>
> The report continued, detailing that some transactions were Russian- and Ukrainian-linked to what "appears to be an Eastern European prostitution or human trafficking ring."

This is not hard to believe, given what we know about Hunter Biden's sexual misbehavior:

> In November last year, Page Six reported that an Arkansas woman who successfully sued the former vice president's son for monthly child support was a stripper at a club Hunter Biden frequented. Hunter Biden, according to the paper, was a regular guest at the Mpire Club in Washington D.C.'s Dupont Circle, where Lunden Alexis Roberts, the mother of Biden's baby, went by the name "Dallas" on stage.

Here's the post about China:

> According to the joint report from the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee with the Senate Treasury Committee, Hunter Biden, along with business partner Devon Archer, "engaged in numerous financial transactions with Chinese nationals who had deep connections to the Communist Chinese government."
>
> These connections, investigators wrote, include Ye Jianming, the founder of CEFC China Energy Co. Ltd (CEFC), and his associate, Gongwen Dong, who reportedly carried out transactions for Jianming's companies. Ye, the report noted, who formerly held positions with the People's Liberation Army, also possessed financial connections to former Vice President Joe Biden's brother, James Biden.
>
> For years, according to the Senate report, Hunter Biden leveraged his vast network of connections to ultimately create the investment firm Bohai Harvest RST (Shanghai) Equity Investment Fund Management Co. (BHR), which prioritized investing Chinese capital in overseas projects. The financial group received its approval for a Chinese business license after a series of meetings arranged by Hunter Biden on a government 2013 government trip to China with his vice president father, both flying aboard Air Force Two.
>
> The firm, according to the Wall Street Journal, "is controlled and funded primarily by large Chinese government-owned shareholders" and channeled at least $2.5 billion into automotive, energy, mining, and technology deals on behalf of these investors.
>
> "BHR's extensive connections to Chinese government intertwined its existence with the decision-making of Communist party leaders," wrote investigators in the Senate report, highlighting the presence of a consortium that includes the China Development Bank tied to Ye, which controls 30 percent of BHR as an example. Once Ye fell from Chinese President Xi Jinping's good graces, the Chinese bank pulled lines of credit from Ye's CEFC.

Here's the post about Ukraine:

> Among the key findings in the report are substantial allegations that Mykola Zlochevsky, the owner of the Ukrainian energy company Burisma, from which Hunter Biden raked in upwards of $50,000 a month for serving the board, paid a

> $7 million bribe to the Ukrainian prosecutor general's office to close an investigation seven months following Hunter Biden's addition to its leadership.

I thought this was interesting – how did the Democrat lawmakers respond to the Senate investigation:

> The Senate's report marks the first phase of revelations to emerge from the probe launched in 2017, long before Joe Biden jumped into the crowded presidential race in the spring of 2019.
>
> In a desperate bid to shut down the investigation out of concern that its findings could harm their attempt at the White House in November, Democrats, true to form, repeatedly attacked the ongoing probe as an instrument of Russian interference in the upcoming U.S. election, accusing Republican senators of being Kremlin agents.

Finally, a post on Daily Wire had another interesting detail:

> Hunter Biden received a $3.5 million wire transfer from Elena Baturina, the wife of the former mayor of Moscow.

I think this is real Russia collusion, with real evidence from the Senate this time.

The report was entirely ignored by the mainstream media when it was released Wednesday. So I hope you aren't relying on them for news. A lot of people are going to be very surprised when Donald Trump brings up this material during the debates – assuming that Joe Biden even shows up.

Judge: man must pay support to girlfriend despite living in separate homes

September 25, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

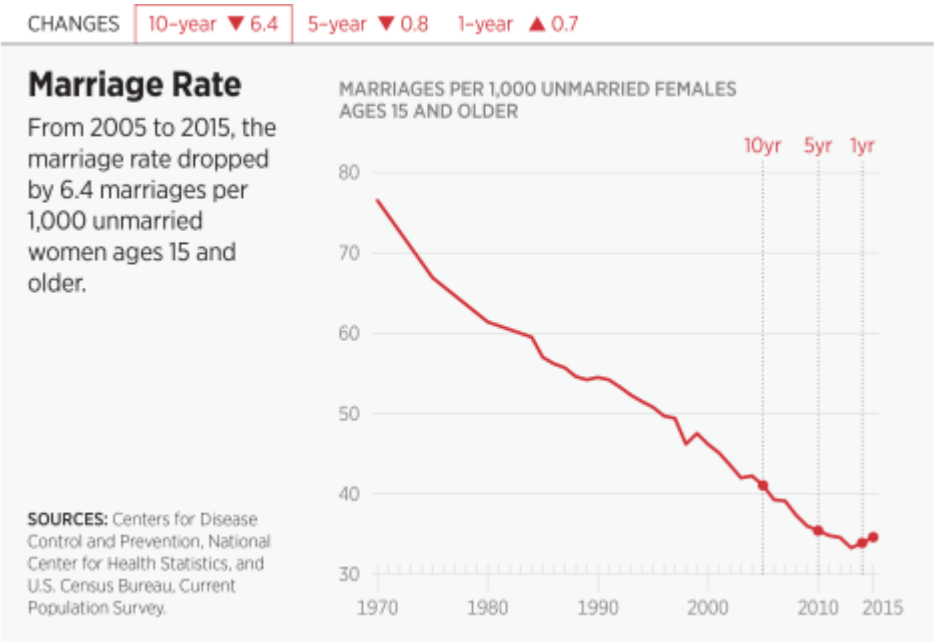

A friend of mine was asking me last night whether I had any regrets about never marrying, especially since I had such awesome Christian female friends like her. I thought about it, and I thought that maybe it is better to not have married, especially when I read stories about how family courts trample over the rights of men to favor women, regardless of what the law says.

The story is from one of Canada's national newspapers, the National Post:

> A wealthy businessman will have to pay more than $50,000 a month in spousal support for 10 years to a woman with whom he had a long-term romantic relationship even though they kept separate homes and had no children together, Ontario's top court has ruled.
>
> Under Ontario law, an unmarried couple are considered common-law spouses if they have cohabited — lived together in a conjugal relationship — continuously for at least three years. But that doesn't necessarily mean living in the same home, the court found.
>
> […]When their 14-year relationship finally broke down in May 2015, Climans asked the courts to recognize her as Latner's spouse and order him to pay her support. He argued she had been a travel companion and girlfriend, nothing more. As such, he said, they were never legally spouses and he owed no support. An eight-day trial ensued.
>
> In her decision in February 2019, Superior Court Justice Sharon Shore sided with Climans. She ruled they were in fact long-time spouses, finding that despite their separate home, they lived under one roof at Latner's cottage for part of the

> summer, and during winter vacations in Florida. Shore ordered him to pay her $53,077 monthly indefinitely.

The judge ordered him to pay her $53,077 per moth, indefinitely. Elsewhere in the article, we learn that he had asked her to sign a pre-nuptial agreement many times, and each time she refused. (Those are not even enforced fairly by the way) She wanted his money, and the judge made sure she got it. Because the law doesn't matter in a family court.

So, what I wanted to point out about this is the fact that a female judge decided to bend the law in order to favor a woman. And this sort of thing happens A LOT in Canada – where their female judges are notorious for progressive judicial activism, e.g. Beverley Mclachlin, Bertha Wilson, Claire L'Heureux-Dubé, etc. Ontario family courts are notoriously anti-male, and men know this.

But it's not just Ontario. I have two Christian friends who married their Christian wives as virgins, and then their wives divorced them. I heard what happened to them in divorce court. Again, female lawyers and female judges disregarded the law in order to punish the man and favor the woman. And I think most men growing up today have a father or a brother or an uncle or someone who has been a victim of this.

When I talk to women about this, they all say things like this to me: "oh, you worry too much" or "you read too many books about divorce" or especially "when you meet the right girl, you'll fall in love, and all this concern about atheistic feminist judges in the courts won't stop you". That last one is the most popular. And it's always made me think that if this is how women see commitment – feelings-based – it's no wonder that women initiate 70% of divorces.

I always thought it was a curse that I grew up poor and could not afford to show off my wealth in order to attract attention from women. Now I see that God actually gave me a great blessing. In order for a man to get married, it takes a lot more than finding the right girl. He needs to live in the right culture – a culture that tries to equip women to be content in committed relationships and treat men fairly.

I don't think even women who claim to be pro-male and/or pro-marriage know or care how stories like this affect men. I'm very wealthy. I certainly do look at what is likely to happen if a woman goes to the courts expecting me to give her money. In fact, whenever I post stories on my wall about how the judges legislate from the bench to transfer money from men to women, there's just silence or sometimes deflection by attacking men (except for my friend Dina who agrees with me). No one dares to speak up for men, it's just expected that we be robbed by the government in order to make women happy. Because "marriage is for women".

And as long as the message keeps being sent by judicial activists in the family courts, men will keep adjusting how they treat women. Women appear very unsafe to us, and nothing that's going on in the courts is changing the trend towards avoidance. Men are very good at calculating risks vs rewards.

Dr. Walter Bradley lectures on scientific evidence for the creation and design of the universe

September 26, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walter L. Bradley

This lecture is special to me, because I bought a VHS tape of it from Access Research Network just after I started working full-time, and watched it a million times. A lot of people come to their convictions about God's existence because of parents or church or intuitions, but for me it's all about the scientific evidence. This lecture changed my life. I wish more people taught their children about this evidence! This lecture was delivered at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Bradley received his B.S. in Engineering Science and his Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Texas in Austin.
>
> Dr. Bradley taught for eight years at the Colorado School of Mines before assuming a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1976.
>
> During his 24 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Bradley served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and as Director of the Polymer Technology Center, and received five College of Engineering Research Awards. He has received over $4,500,000 in research grants and has published over 140 technical articles and book chapters. He has also co-authored "The Mystery Of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Materials and of the American Scientific Affiliation and serves as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.
>
> He currently serves as Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University.

The lecture: (63 minutes lecture, 25 minutes audience Q&A)

Summary slide:

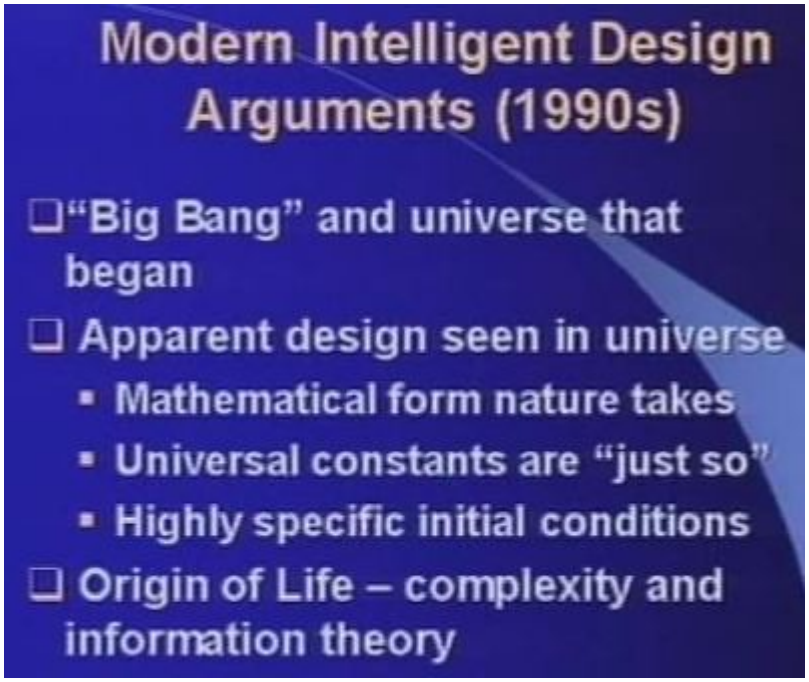

This slide summarizes the content of the lecture

Introduction:

- At the beginning of the 20th century, people believed that the progress of science was pointing away from an intelligent Creator and Designer, and towards naturalism
- A stream of new discoveries has shifted the support of science towards theism, and away from naturalism
- Richard Dawkins, an atheist, says that nature only has the appearance of design, but that if you look closer, naturalistic mechanisms can account for the appearance of design
- When deciding between design and apparent design ("designoid"), it matters whether you think there is an intelligence there to do the designing

Evidence #1: The Big Bang:

- an eternal "steady state" universe is more compatible with naturalism, but a created universe is more compatible with a Creator
- In 1929, Hubble used telescopes to observe that the light from distant galaxies was *redshifted.* The further away galaxies were, the faster they were moving away. Therefore, space is expanding in all directions, suggesting an explosive origin of the universe
- In 1965, the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation matched a prediction of the Big Bang cosmology, and of the creation event
- In 1992, the COBE space telescope allowed us to test four specific predictions of the Big Bang model, especially the predictions for light element abundances (hydrogen and helium), which matched the predictions of the creation model

Evidence #2: Simple mathematical structure of the physical laws

- the simple mathematical structure of natural laws allows us to understand these laws, make discoveries, and engineer solutions to problems
- early scientists saw the mathematical structure of the universe to mean that nature was designed by an intelligent to be understood
- the fundamental equations of the laws of the universe can be easily written on one side of one sheet of paper
- Eugene Wigner's famous paper, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Physical Sciences" makes the point that this simple structure is an unexpected gift that allows is to do science

Evidence #3: fine-tuning of the physical constants and quantities

- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stars that provide energy within specific ranges for long periods of time
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need planets with stable orbits that will not suffer from extreme temperature swings as it varies in distance from its star
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stable atomic structure
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need to have chemical diversity and correct relative abundances of each element
- organic life has minimum requirements: process energy, store information, replicate, and you can't fulfill those functions if there is only one element, e.g. – hydrogen
- the energy level from the photons from the sun have to match the energy levels of the different elements in order to drive the chemical bonding needed for life
- These requirements for life of any imaginable type depend on the values of the constants and quantities. The constants and quantities cannot vary much from what they are, or the universe will lose the characteristics (above) that allow it to support complex life of any imaginable time
- For example, ratio of strong force to electromagnetic force:
  – if 2% larger, then no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no compounds containing hydrogen, e.g. – water
  – if 5% smaller, no stable stars, heavy hydrogen would be unstable, few elements other than hydrogen

Evidence #4: initial conditions for habitability

- Universe: expansion rate of the universe must be fast enough to avoid a re-collapse, but slow enough to allow matter to clump together and form stars and planets for complex life to live on
- Planet: right distance from the star to get the right climate
- Planet: right mass to retain the right atmosphere

Evidence #5: origin of life and information theory

- It’s possible to explain every process in an automobile engine using plain old naturalistic mechanisms – no supernatural explanation is necessary to understand the processes
- But the existence of engine itself: engineering all the parts has to be explained by the work of an intelligence
- Similarly, we can understand how living systems work, but the existence of the living systems requires an intelligence
- Even the simplest living system has to perform minimal function: capture energy, store information and replicate
- Living systems are composed of objects like proteins that are composed of sequences of components complex such that the order of the components gives the overall structure function
- Developing the components for a simple living cell is very improbable – even given the large number of galaxies, stars and planets in the universe, it is unlikely that complex, embodied life would exist *anywhere* in the universe

Evidence #6: more initial conditions for habitability

- Location within the galaxy: you need to be away from the center of the galaxy, because the explosions from dying stars, and excessive radiation will kill life
- Location within the galaxy: you need to be close enough to the center in order catch the heavy elements you need for life from the explosions of other stars
- Location within the galaxy: the best location is between two arms of a spiral galaxy, where you can get the heavy elements you need from dying stars, but without being hit with explosions and harmful radiation
- Star mass: determines rate at which the sun burns, determines the energy level of photons that are used to drive chemical bonding reactions, determines the length of time the star will be stable
- Star mass: star mass must be the correct value in order to allow liquid water on the planet’s surface, while still preserving stable orbit

I wish there was more curiosity about science in churches, and young Christians understood *how critical science is* for grounding the rationality of the Christian worldview. We need to be training up more scientists who think about the big questions, like Dr. Walter Bradley.

A new series of posts about the adventures of an effective Christian woman

September 27, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you want to have conversations about Christianity, then prepare

I try to encourage my Christian friends to study topics related to the Christian worldview, and to make connections between the Christian worldview and topics like economics, science, politics, etc. I want them to have deep conversations with non-Christians. Well, I just noticed that Laura, who writes at An Affair With Reason, started a series of posts about her experiences having these conversations.

She has two posts so far. In the first, she provides an introduction to the series:

> By the grace of God, an ordinary day for me includes at least one significant spiritual conversation. The conversations are spontaneous, and the people I talk to are those I come across in the mundane activities of life: construction workers I see while walking my dog, neighbors out mowing their lawn, CrossFit coaches and athletes, my husband's coworkers, the pest control man, the UPS man, the woman at the grocery store, and the customer service representative who took my call.
>
> […]Because spiritual conversations are so fun for me, I enjoy sharing them with others. People ask me often, "How did you get into that conversation?" and "How does this happen to you nearly every single day?"
>
> In one sense these conversations do "happen to me" in that I don't plan them, but it would be far more accurate to say that I create these conversations by living my life in a way that causes me to always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks me for a reason for the hope that is in me, and then paying attention for opportunities to get a foot in the door. Hence, many people have

> suggested that I publicly share what I'm doing with others so that they may benefit from practical, real life examples of conversations that they may seek to emulate in their own lives.

I'm so delighted with this, because I am always urging my Christian friends to read more, listen to more podcasts, and watch more debates, so that they are equipped to have these sorts of adventures.

Laura posted the first conversation in the series, with her previous pastor:

> For two years I had tried to persuade my pastor to allow me to teach a small group or conference on apologetics. I set up appointments so he and his staff could get to know me. I shared my background and experiences, gave them opportunities to ask me questions, and even offered references from other churches where I had taught. I offered to show videos and facilitate discussions on the teachings of well-known apologists like Greg Koukl, Frank Turek, and J. Warner Wallace so the church leadership wouldn't need to worry about platforming a heretic, and I shared my blog so they could see my work for themselves. Several months later, the entire church leadership admitted they had not read my blog and probably never would.
>
> Over the next couple of years I continued to offer to introduce apologetics to our congregation through any format deemed appropriate, but nothing came of it. Eventually, my husband was relocated and our pastor, along with a dozen others, helped us load our moving truck in exchange for pizza, soda, and one last evening of fellowship.
>
> During our conversation, as we were sitting on the empty floor, eating pizza on paper plates and drinking soda from plastic cups, my pastor mentioned that he frequently visited a certain coffee shop in the area that was very unfriendly to Christianity. The owners even had a sign on the wall that said, "No crazy talk", which they had made clear included talk of Jesus, miracles, and the gospel. I commented that it seemed like the ideal place to share truth with people who needed to hear it, and I asked if that had been his experience.
>
> "How do you even begin to discuss those things in an environment where the gospel isn't welcome," he replied.
>
> "Personally, I would go with the Cosmological Argument, but you could always share the Teleological Argument. If you're talking to college students, though, I'd definitely look for opportunities to share the Moral Argument. Young people seem to relate most to that line of reasoning," I said.
>
> "Sorry, what did you say," he asked, as if I had just begun speaking in tongues in front of his Presbyterian congregation.
>
> "The Cosmological Argument," I repeated.
>
> Blank stare.

> “And the Teleological Argument”
>
> “Teleo-what,” he asked quizzically.
>
> “It means having a purpose or a design,” I explained.
>
> “So how would you go about sharing these arguments with non-Christians,” he asked.
>
> It was getting late and we were all exhausted, but this was important. This is what I had wanted to share for two straight years. I looked at my watch and told them I needed four minutes per argument in order to explain adequately. I was given the green light, and for the next twelve minutes I summarized for my pastor and about ten others what I had not been able to share with the congregation.

So she doesn’t really spend much time describing the conversation, because that’s not what this series is about. You can ask her for book recommendations if you want to handle it like she did. But the rest of the post explains why she prepared to have this conversation, and what pastors can do to equip people in the church to have these conversations.

This is not the first time I’ve linked to her, I also did here for her post about apologetics and here for her post about talking to Muslims. What I like about her is that she has a mature view of the Christian life that I really respect. When I read her writing, I can tell that she is not involved in Christianity to feel good or to be liked. She has a goal in mind, and she has done hard things to be prepared to reach it.

I have also tried to get apologetics into the church. I normally try to bring in the Focus on the Family True U DVDs, which feature Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. Without success. In my experience, pastors tend to not really understand challenges to Christianity, or they don’t know how to respond to them, or they just don’t want people in the church to get upset by having to do work. Read the rest of Laura’s post to get her solution to the problem.

Bombshell: The FBI's Trump-Russia probe relied on a suspected Russian agent

September 28, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Left to right: Comey, Lynch, Clinton, McCabe

The source for today's bombshell story is none other than the highly-respected, but left-leaning, Wall Street Journal. According to a story that was published last Friday evening, the main source for the Steele dossier – which was obtained by a Democrat PR firm, and paid for by a Democrat law firm – was a Russian agent. The FBI said that this man was "a threat to national security".

The Wall Street Journal reports:

> Senate Judiciary Chairman Lindsey Graham on Thursday released newly declassified FBI documents that contain this stunner: The bureau relied on a suspected Russian agent for the information it used to obtain a secret surveillance warrant against former Trump adviser Carter Page.
>
> […]Department of Justice Inspector General Michael Horowitz last year revealed that former spook Christopher Steele relied on one primary "subsource" for most of his accusations against the Trump campaign. This subsource was later identified as Ukrainian-born Igor Danchenko, who worked as a research analyst from 2005 to 2010 at the Brookings Institution in Washington. The latest disclosures show that Mr. Danchenko was the subject of an FBI counterintelligence investigation from 2009 to 2011, based on concerns he was a Russian agent and "a threat to national security."
>
> According to the documents, Mr. Danchenko attempted to recruit two individuals connected to "an influential foreign policy advisor in the Obama administration." He said that if they "did get a job in the government and had access to classified information," he had a way for them "to make a little extra money."
>
> Further FBI investigation found Mr. Danchenko was an associate of two other "FBI counterintelligence subjects." He also had contact with "the Russian Embassy and known Russian intelligence officers," and the FBI went so far as to apply for a

> warrant to surveil Mr. Danchenko. The investigation ended because he left the country in September 2010, though the FBI said "consideration would be given to re-opening the investigation" if he returned.

This is the important part:

> The FBI identified Mr. Danchenko as Mr. Steele's source in December 2016, when senior bureau officials also became aware of the prior FBI investigation. The FBI's realization that it was being fed potential Russian disinformation should have put an immediate halt to the Page probe, if not the entire collusion investigation.
>
> Instead and incredibly, the FBI failed to disclose this information to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court in all three of its subsequent renewal applications against Mr. Page. U.S. Attorney John Durham first brought the Danchenko information to Attorney General Bill Barr's attention and said its public release would not interfere with his investigation.

There was also a related story about how the FBI agents on the case were so concerned about being sued, that they actually got insurance policies.

The same WSJ article explains:

> In related news Thursday, the Justice Department disclosed more FBI text messages and notes in the tainted Michael Flynn case. These also reflect horribly on the James Comey-era FBI. Agents (names redacted) express dismay and disdain in the messages for the broader collusion investigation (code-named Crossfire Hurricane) and for the probe of Mr. Flynn.
>
> In October 2016 internal messages, agents refer to the "Crossfire Road Show" and one says: "I'm tell [sic] man, if this thing ever gets FOIA'd, there are going to be some tough questions asked." Another responds that the problem is "a scope way outside the boundaries of logic," to which an agent says one team member is engaged in "rabbit holes and conspiracy theories."
>
> Agents questioned the use of national security letters (subpoenas that don't require judicial permission) to get Mr. Flynn's financial records. One series of messages is from Jan. 5, 2017, the same day Mr. Comey briefed Barack Obama, Joe Biden and Susan Rice on the Flynn/Trump investigations.
>
> "[W]hat's the word on how [Obama's] briefing went?" asks one agent. "Don't know, but people here are scrambling for info to support certain things and it's a mad house." A few days later, an FBI employee reports that they "all went and purchased professional liability insurance" over concerns about DOJ/FBI leaks and that "the new AG might have some questions."

Do you remember the details of the FBI-media collaboration on the Trump-Russia collusion story? I have a summary of it for you, below.

The Trump-Russia collusion story that was trumpeted by the progressive media was a joint effort between the Hillary Clinton campaign and high-ranking members of the FBI

during the Obama administration.

The goal was to get the government to spy on the Trump campaign, in order neutralize his administration, if he won the 2016 election.

Here's the left-leaning The Hill, reporting on an important finding from October 2018:

> Congressional investigators have confirmed that a top FBI official met with Democratic Party lawyers to talk about allegations of Donald Trump-Russia collusion weeks before the 2016 election, and before the bureau secured a search warrant targeting Trump's campaign.
>
> Former FBI general counsel James Baker met during the 2016 season with at least one attorney from Perkins Coie, the Democratic National Committee's private law firm.
>
> That's the firm used by the DNC and Hillary Clinton's campaign to secretly pay research firm Fusion GPS and Christopher Steele, a former British intelligence operative, to compile a dossier of uncorroborated raw intelligence alleging Trump and Moscow were colluding to hijack the presidential election.

The article notes that Perkins Coie is the "Democratic National Committee's private law firm".

> The Washington Post reported last week that Perkins Coie, an international law firm, was directed by both the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and Hillary Clinton's campaign to retain Fusion GPS in April of 2016 to dig up dirt on then-candidate Donald Trump. Fusion GPS then hired Christopher Steele, a former British spy, to compile a dossier of allegations that Trump and his campaign actively colluded with the Russian government during the 2016 election. Though many of the claims in the dossier have been directly refuted, none of the dossier's allegations of collusion have been independently verified. Lawyers for Steele admitted in court filings last April that his work was not verified and was never meant to be made public.

In addition, Fox News reports that the FBI paid Christopher Steele ELEVEN TIMES in 2016.

But why would the FBI and the FISA court accept the Democrat-funded dossier as a basis to spy on the Democrat's main political rival? Answer: there were Democrats in the FBI who covered up the source of funding for the Steele dossier, as well as the anti-Trump bias of the dossier's author.

The Washington Examiner reported on the released text messages from highly-placed anti-Trump Democrat Lisa Page within the FBI in March 2019:

> The text messages, between then-Deputy Director of the FBI Andrew McCabe, who was later fired, and former FBI attorney Lisa Page — who was having an affair with FBI agent Peter Strzok — were obtained by Fox News.
>
> […]Then-Director of the FBI James Comey ultimately signed off on the application

> to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court for approval to surveil Carter Page. It was dated nine days after the Page-McCabe texts: Oct. 21 2016.
>
> The specific funding of Steele's dossier was never mentioned to the FISA court, either during that first application or during three subsequent FISA renewals. Steele's anti-Trump fervor and determination to provide his dossier to the media and members of the U.S. government later became well known.

Do you remember any of the news media shows telling us any of this during their trumpeting of Trump-Russia conspiracies? I don't.

What the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett communicates to secular left feminists

September 29, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Amy Coney Barrett, her husband and her 7 children in the Oval Office

Here's an article from The Federalist by my favorite Federalist writer, Joy Pullmann, where she lists 9 feminist lies that were smashed by the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett:

- Women Need Abortion to Succeed
- Children Make You Unhappy
- Women Must Repress Their Fertility to Succeed
- Religious People and Conservatives Are Anti-Sex
- Women Don't Need Men
- Christianity Oppresses Women
- Conservatives Hate Women
- Women Should Prioritize Career Over Family
- Women Are Oppressed

The article is excellent. I will just focus on the one part that I thought was the most interesting:

> Marriage is the epitome of the cooperation of the sexes, yet the left treats it as unnecessary at best and harmful at worst. The Black Lives Matter organization, for example, which has been supported by millions in donations and thousands of endorsements from CEOs and Democrat politicians, in its policy platform openly attacked "heteronormative" "nuclear families."
>
> Gloria Steinem, the apostle of feminism, popularized the phrase "A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle." Leftism and feminism pit the sexes against

> each other, while conservatism and Christianity recognize that the sexes are interdependent. This recognition brings humankind joy instead of hatred.
>
> Fathers are crucial to the happiness and well-being of every child, a need that only intensifies with the addition of each child. Barrett's husband Jesse is a full partner in their marriage with his own significant career. Barrett recognized her husband's major contributions to their family and her happiness in her nomination acceptance speech Saturday night.
>
> I couldn't manage this very full life without the unwavering support of my husband Jesse. At the start of our marriage, I imagined that we would run our household as partners. As it has turned out, Jesse does far more than his share of the work. To my chagrin, I learned at dinner recently that my children consider him to be the better cook. For 21 years, Jesse has asked me every single morning what he can do for me that day. And though I almost always say 'Nothing,' he still finds ways to take things off my plate. And that's not because he has a lot of free time—he has a busy law practice. It's because he has a superb and generous husband, and I am very fortunate.
>
> Given her description, I think it's accurate to guess Barrett and her husband's interdependence is a source of strength and joy to them both, as well as to their children and community. They have undoubtedly achieved much more together than they could have separately, as many highly successful women will also tell you of their marriages. Our husbands are our sometimes-secret weapon.

Feminists don't like any of Joy's 9 points, though.

Feminism is what a woman believes after she has smashed herself up by having sex with bad boys. Bad boy failures makes her think that all men are unreliable. She likes abortion because it allows her to chase the bad boys she is attracted to. When she learns how bad boys are unreliable, she intentionally delays marriage to focus on her career and pay off all her student loans. But, if a woman avoids bad boys, and instead chooses a good husband who supports her, she can have 5 kids and adopt 2 more and not have all that bitterness. With a good husband, and a network of supportive relatives, she can even get on the Supreme Court.

I prefer that young women study for a STEM degree, and try to avoid student loans with community college, scholarships, living at home, summer jobs, etc. I recommend they work until their first child arrives. After that, they should stay home with the children, at least for the first 3 years of each child's life. And obviously, having more children leads to a bigger legacy than fewer children. I'm also a strong supporter of homeschooling. I don't have much confidence in Christian schools, private schools and especially public schools.

However, in the special case of women like Amy Coney Barrett, who can make a huge difference in the world for the good of conservatives and Christians, then it may be possible, with an excellent husband and many willing relatives, to have a safety net for the children that allows her to do something that will protect us all from the secular left. This is not the ordinary case, of course. This is 1% of the 1% of the 1%. There is no doubt

that her children will suffer from her decision to have a career. But if she makes a Supreme Court decision that protects the unborn, or safeguards self-defense rights, or preserves religious liberty, it will be worth it. I don’t think this is the ordinary case. I don’t support mothers of young children having ordinary careers just to make money, because usually the young children have to be placed with strangers.

My goal for my wife was that she be a stay at home wife and mother, at least while we have any children under 3, and preferably under 5. I wouldn’t have liked to have a wife who served on the Supreme Court. I wouldn’t want to share my wife with co-workers, because of the way I was raised. But I can understand why it is a good thing for me (and for conservatives and Christians) that she is the nominee.

Don’t dismiss best practices for Christian living as “legalism” and “denying grace”

September 30, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

On Sunday, I listened to a very interesting discussion between Sean McDowell and Jessica van der Wyngaard on Justin Brierley’s Unbelievable show. The topic was on the pros and cons of purity culture. I didn’t know a thing about “purity culture”, and had never read any books about it. I didn’t really disagree with anyone on the podcast, but I did want to say something about it in a blog post.

Description:

> 20 years ago Joshua Harris was the poster boy of the evangelical ‘purity movement’ having authored the bestselling book ‘I Kissed Dating Goodbye’. Today, Harris regrets writing the book, and has also recently changed his mind about Christianity.
>
> Justin is joined by Jessica van der Wyngaard, director of the documentary film ‘I Survived I Kissed Dating Goodbye’, and Christian apologist Sean McDowell, to discuss purity culture, singleness and the Joshua Harris story.

The MP3 file is here.

First, here’s a brief summary of what everyone said on the podcast:

- JW: the book urged people to give up dating in favor of courting and suggested other rules that would guarantee a successful marriage to your soul-mate
- JW: some of the rules proposed by the book were not Biblical
- JW: I’m not a virgin and I’m in early-30s, but I accept that we should teach what the Bible says about abstinence
- SM: purity culture is the idea that if you remain sexually pure, God will give you a

spouse and bless you in the future
- SM: purity culture is the idea that if you have premarital sex, you will be tainted forever
- SM: I'm afraid that those reacting against purity culture will build a sexual ethic solely based on their shame, their hurt, their concern about legalism, and this will not help the next generation
- SM: let's have a balanced Biblical approach to sexuality instead
- SM: there is scientific data to back up the Bible's teaching that marriages work better when sex occurs only within a marriage
- SM: it's a mistake to define your spiritual standing based on whether you are a virgin or not
- SM: following the Bible's rules for sexuality is an important part of discipleship
- SM: the Bible is replete with examples of people restoring their standing before God through forgiveness and redemption

Right now, we are living in a secular culture where people are hooking up, having premarital sex, living together, and breaking up far more often than in the past. There is this pattern of choosing partners based on secular criteria: outward appearance and ability to entertain. And this approach to dating – choosing people for the wrong reasons, and trying to force a commitment using premarital sex – is now common practice, even among Christians.

I think people should have a plan to counter this trend that's realistic and guided by studies and evidence. For example, studies show that people who have no sexual partners before marriage are more likely to still be married 10 years later. Studies show that cohabitation negatively impacts the stability of a future marriage. It's difficult to accept that this is the way the world is, but if a stable marriage is a goal for you, then you should care about the best practices for having a stable marriage.

Take a different example. Suppose you have a lot of shame and bad feelings over having run up $90,000 of student loans. Now your retirement will be much more difficult. The answer to these feelings of shame is not to say that you can invoke "grace" and that will make everything OK. It won't. It might help you to make better decisions going forward, but that debt is going to affect your future spouse, your future marriage and your future children.

There are real costs to these behaviors for your future, and being forgiven through Jesus' atonement isn't going to instantly make the effects of those choices disappear. It's good to warn young people about these costs. It's also good to help people who have made mistakes undo the damage by investing in them. I don't want us to throw out evidence-based best practices as "legalism", because they help us to reach the discipleship goals specified for us in the Bible.

The goals of the Bible (e.g. – not aborting, not divorcing) are good goals. If we find out from science that premarital promiscuity or cohabitation reduce our odds of achieving that goal, then it's a mistake to dismiss that evidence because it make us feel bad about

our past. It’s not legalism to investigate evidence and consult wise advisors in order to choose how best to achieve goals like marriage. That’s actually being wise. Making good decisions doesn’t give you the right to be proud and compare yourself to others, but it is good to make good decisions for yourself, and to share your reasoning with those who ask you.

I agree with the speakers that purity culture is wrong to promise people a happy marriage if they only keep their virginity. That’s just the prosperity gospel, and it really is not a Biblical view of the Christian life.

People who choose to have premarital sex haven’t separated themselves from marriage. But studies indicate that they have damaged the stability of their future marriage *if they do nothing to counteract the effects of their choices.* And I think there is more to counteracting these bad effects than just stating to your partner “Jesus forgives me, so you can’t judge me”. The focus of the “no-rules because I feel ashamed” crowd doesn’t seem to be on taking the damage seriously and fixing it. Their focus seems to be on not being judged.

I don’t think that a cursory response (“don’t judge me!”) is adequate to undo the damage from premarital sex. But if a person is willing to be honest about their past, and put in the work to understand the effects of premarital sex on their future marriage, renew their minds, and re-establishing their bonding ability, then they should be able to *fully* counteract the damage. I have met people who have done this, and you can see in their choices and lifestyle that there’s been a complete turning against their former use of sex for fun and attention and self-esteem. It’s not “idolizing virginity and idolizing marriage” to look at the data, and make choices that are likely to lead to a stable marriage.

How reliable are Politifact fact checks? A review of past rulings

October 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

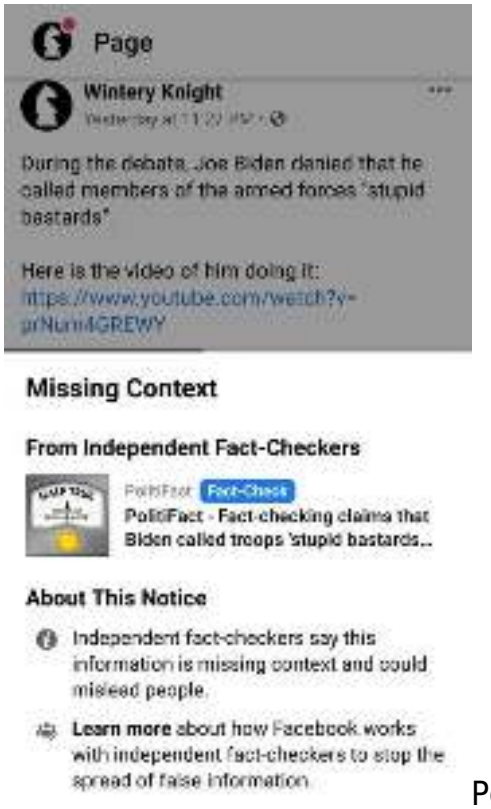

Politifact is a web site run by some left-wing journalists at the Tampa Bay Times. As you might expect from academic studies of media bias, their content might as well be written by the Democrat Party. But it's not enough to just declare Politifact a Democrat propaganda operation – I need to actually give you details and examples. And so I will, in the rest of this post.

Let's start with two recent examples, then I'll show you the worst example of media bias I have ever seen from Politifact.

Missouri Senate Race

Here's one analysis from the Daily Wire:

> On Tuesday, Politifact, which purports to be a neutral fact-checking website but in fact leans heavily to the left, got caught protecting a member of the Democratic Party: Democratic Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill.
>
> Politifact took issue with the ad from The Senate Leadership Fund, a pro-Republican super PAC, that claimed that McCaskill said "normal people" could afford private planes.
>
> […]After they were corrected, Politifact acknowledged the mistake, writing,
>
> Initially, we published this fact-check with a rating of False, because based on the video available, it did not appear that McCaskill was talking about private planes. After publication, we received more complete video of the question-and-answer

> session between McCaskill and a constituent that showed she was in fact responding to a question about private planes, as well as a report describing the meeting. We re-assessed the evidence, archived the original version here, and published the version you see here with a new rating of Half True. We apologize for the error.

Daily wire also linked to some more failed Politifact "fact checks": here, here, and here.

Arizona Senate Race

Politifact also screwed up their fact-check for the Arizona Senate race.

The Daily Caller explains:

> PolitiFact incorrectly labeled it "mostly false" that Democratic Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema "protested troops in a pink tutu" during its live fact-check of the Arizona Senate debate Monday night.
>
> It's an established fact that Sinema, a former Green Party activist who co-founded an anti-war group, wore a pink tutu at one of the multiple anti-war protests she attended in 2003.
>
> "While we were in harm's way, she was protesting our troops in a pink tutu," Republican candidate Martha McSally, a former Air Force fighter pilot, said during Monday night's debate.

Here's their Politifact's evaluation of McSally's claim:

Who are you going to believe? Politifact, or your own eyes?

And here's the photo of Kyrsten Sinema, protesting the troops, in a pink tutu:

Anti-war Democrat Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema in a pink tutu
The Daily Caller notes:

> A 2003 Arizona State University news article at the time described Sinema wearing "something resembling a pink tutu" at one of the protests.
>
> […]Sinema openly associated with fringe elements of the far-left during her anti-war activism.
>
> She promoted an appearance by Lynne Stewart, a lawyer who was convicted of aiding an Islamic terrorist organization, in 2003.
>
> Sinema also reportedly partnered with anarchists and witches in her anti-war activism and said she did "not care" if Americans wanted to join the Taliban.

Colonel Martha McSally, as I've blogged about before, is a former U.S. Air Force A-10 fighter pilot, and squadron commander. She logged a lot of hours leading actual combat missions against America's enemies – the sorts of people who sell and rape Yazidi girls. She fought them.

And now for the big one: Politifact's fact-checking of Obamacare.

Obama's claims about Obamacare

Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine, wrote about Politifact's assessment of Obama's promise to Americans about keeping their health plans after Obamacare.

In 2008, before the presidential election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about Obamacare "True":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site's "Truth-O-Meter" to evaluate this claim: "Under Barack Obama's health care proposal, 'if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.'"

And she concluded:

> […]…people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama's plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his statement True."

Roy notes:

> PolitiFact's pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 campaign.

Here's the screen capture from 2008:

Politifact says that everyone who likes their health care plan can keep it
Before the election, it's true! And Obama got re-elected, because people believed that.
But what happened after the election?

In 2013, after the 2012 election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about Obamacare "Pants On Fire":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama's infamous promise—that "if you like your health care plan, you can keep it"—its 2013 "Lie of the Year."
>
> […][N]one of the key facts that made that promise "impossible" in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President's plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan
Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."

Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."

Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact said one thing before the election, and the opposite afterwards

So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, but it's election time so they don't say that. It's not like the critical assessments of Obamacare from health policy experts were not out there between 2007-2012. I know, because I blogged on every study and report on the predicted effects of the law that I could find. But the intellectually lazy journalism-major clowns at Politifact couldn't be bothered to read those studies and reports.

Thinking practically about the gospel with an illustration from a war movie

October 2, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The city of Mogadishu, in Somalia, Africa

I decided to re-post one of my favorite posts for Memorial Day.

First, let's get an overview that helps us understand the context and goals of the mission we are going to discuss.

The scene is set in Somalia, Africa, in 1992. There a civil war between two warlords: Ali Mahdi and Mohammed Farah Aidid. The war has destroyed agricultural operations, and the people are starving. The United Nations are trying to help, but Aidid hijacks the food from UN aircraft so that he can use the food to gain control of the people. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis are dying of starvation. The UN requests American military forces to secure the air-dropped supplies so they can be distributed to the starving people.

In December 1992, President George H.W. Bush answers the call, sending 25,000 troops to Somalia to protect the food from the Somali warlords. However, in 1993, Bill Clinton is elected. He orders that the number of U.S. troops be reduced to 12,000. Following an attack by Aidid on Pakistani peace-keepers, the U.N. issues a resolution to capture those responsible. The U.S. armed forces have the arms and training to battle evil, so they get the call to capture Aidid and his lieutenants.

In late August 1993, Task Force Ranger is deployed to Mogadishu to capture Aidid and his lieutenants at the Olympic Hotel. The U.S. force consists of 440 troops from the Army Rangers and Army Delta Force special forces, commanded by General William Garrison. Garrison requested light armored units (Bradley Infantry Fighting vehicles) that would offer more protection than the unarmored HMMWV Humvees. Garrison was denied the light armor by the Clinton administration. Garrison requested heavier air support (AC-130 Spectre gunships) that would offer better fire support than the UH-60 Blackhawk miniguns. Garrison was denied the air support by the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration did not want the American forces to appear too heavily armed for the peace-keeping role.

The actual mission turned out to be much harder than it needed to be, because of the resources denied by the Clinton administration. Although the Aidid lieutenants were captured, Aidid himself escaped. Eighty-four American soldiers were wounded. Eighteen American soldiers were killed, and their bodies were dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. This was shown over and over by the media, and it undermined American resolve to help the Somali people. As a result, Clinton had the excuse he needed to retreat the American military.

(Source: Nova Online)

Two heroes lost their lives

Today, I want to talk about two of the men who lost their lives in Operation Gothic Serpent. They are Master Sergeant Gary I. Gordon and Sergeant First Class Randall D. Shughart – a Delta Force sniper team.

Here is a clip from the movie Blackhawk Down, which shows what happened to them:

The pilot of the downed Blackhawk was protected by the two men who volunteered to go in after him. They requested that they be inserted at the crash site, even though they knew that reinforcements were likely not going to be there in time to save them. They made the request to go and help the pilot *three times* before being allowed to go in. Their first two requests were denied by their commanding officer, because the odds against their survival were so overwhelming. The rescued pilot was later released by his captors, and the two heroes were awarded the Medal of Honor for their brave actions.

A Congressional Medal of Honor

Here is a description of the requirements to be awarded a Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through **conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of**

> **duty**:
>
> - While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States;
> - While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
> - While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

You can read the official details of their actions.

The point of this post

It is important for Christians to be familiar with real-world examples of people giving their lives in order to save the lives of others. When we see real-world examples of self-sacrifice, it helps us to understand what Jesus really achieved for us, and what he must have felt making that hard choice to volunteer to go in and rescue us. In general, my philosophy when it comes to the Bible is to make every effort to connect what the Bible says to the real world. We must not push Christianity into some far-off world of piety and feelings. We must make connections to real evidence and real life, so that what the Bible says becomes practical, and so that we have a deep friendship with and sympathy for God revealed in Jesus Christ. In real life, being willing to give your life to save someone else is hard. Understanding how that really happens will help us to value what Jesus has done for us.

Bible verses

I saw this verse on the ground outside the Airborne & Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, NC, where I went for my summer vacation in 2015.

Isaiah 6:8:

> [8] Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
>
> And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Here is the picture I took (yes, that is my running shoe):

"Here am I, send me" Isaiah 6:8

When confronted with an opportunity to imitate Christ in his self-sacrifice, we should think less about ourselves and our own desires, and take the opportunity to serve others effectively. We do not do what makes us happy, and we do not pursue fun and thrills. We do what heals, we do what helps others. We do not push away our responsibility to imitate Christ by caring for those in danger. Christianity is not just about "not doing bad things". It's the good things you do because of your relationship with Jesus that show your real allegiance, and give you the experience of being a Christian in deed.

And here is another good verse:

John 15:13:

> [13] Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

If you get a chance to watch the movie Blackhawk Down, then do so. I highly recommend it. You can also read the book that the movie is based on.

I love the Medal of Honor books by Edward F. Murphy. He writes about all the people who have been awarded the Medal of honor in different wars: World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

If you check my reading list, you'll find that I usually read two military books for every one book on another subject.

What’s in an apologetics book?

October 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

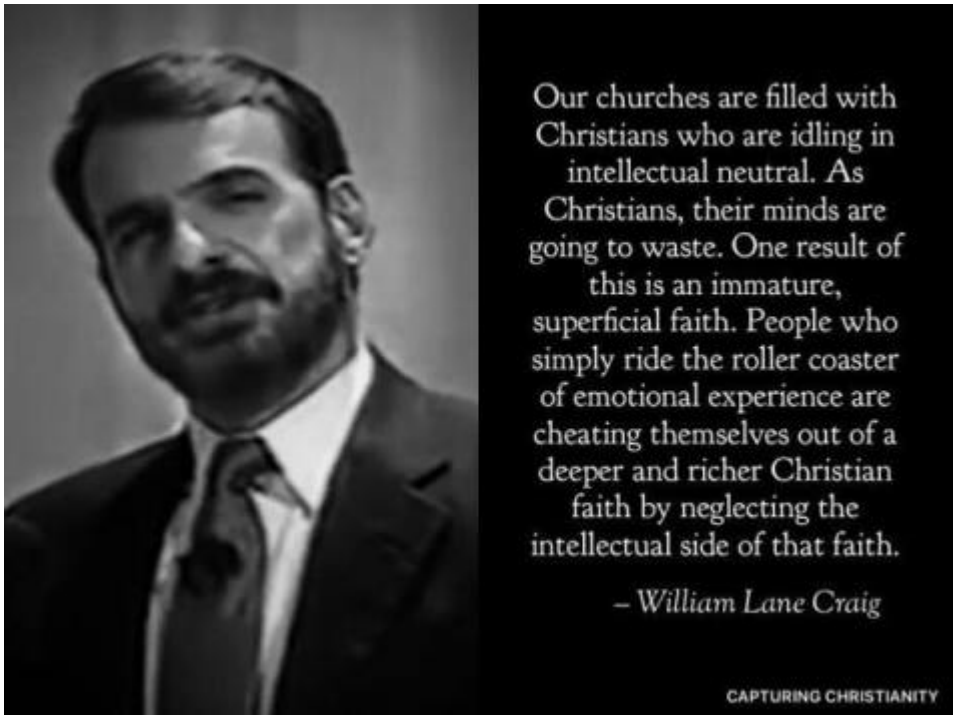

Dr. W. L. Craig: churches don’t prepare Christians to answer skeptics

Let’s look at the table of contents of my favorite introduction to Christian apologetics, which is “Is God Just a Human Invention?” written by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow.

In that book, you will find 18 topics.

1. Is Faith Irrational? (Commentary by: Gregory Koukl)
2. Are Science and Christianity at Odds? (Commentary by: John Warwick Montgomery)
3. Are Miracles Possible? (Commentary by: Gary R. Habermas)
4. Is Darwinian Evolution the Only Game in Town? (Commentary by: William A. Dembski)
5. How Did the Universe Begin? (Commentary by: R. Douglas Geivett)
6. How Did Life Begin? (Commentary by: Fazale R. Rana)
7. Why Is the Universe Just Right for Life? (Commentary by: Jay W. Richards)
8. Has Science Shown There Is No Soul? (Commentary by: Dale Fincher and Jonalyn Fincher)
9. Is God Just a Human Invention? (Commentary by: Garry DeWeese)
10. Is Religion Dangerous? (Commentary by: Douglas Groothuis)
11. Does God Intend for Us to Keep Slaves? (Commentary by: Paul Copan)
12. Is Hell a Divine Torture Chamber? (Commentary by: Frank Turek)
13. Is God a Genocidal Bully? (Commentary by: Clay Jones)
14. Is Christianity the Cause of Dangerous Sexual Repression? (Commentary by: Kerby Anderson)

15. Can People Be Good Without God? (Commentary by: Mark D. Linville)
16. Is Evil Only a Problem for Christians? (Commentary by: Randy Alcorn)
17. What Good Is Christianity? (Commentary by: Glenn S. Sunshine)
18. Why Jesus Instead of the Flying Spaghetti Monster? (Commentary by: Darrell L. Bock)

Prominent atheist scholars are quoted in each chapter to introduce the challenges, and then scholarly arguments and evidence are presented to defend the Christian worldview. The language is simple enough, but the material is solid enough to use in a real debate. I would say that introductory books like this one are more than enough to equip you for everyone who will challenge you.

Why are these 18 topics important? Because these are the questions that atheists ask. These are the questions that cause Christians to leave the faith. These are the questions that your children will face in high school and college, which might cause them to leave the faith.

Let's start with chapter one. One of the most prominent arguments by atheists is that faith is irrational. This chapter allows you to define faith using the Bible's definition of faith, which relies on logic and evidence.

Atheists also say that Christianity is at war with science. In chapter 2, they discuss the history of science and how Christianity provided the framework that allowed scientific method to take root and flourish.

Atheists like to claim that miracles are impossible. Chapter 3 defends the view that God, if he exists, is capable of interacting with his created world.

Atheists love to put forward Darwinism as means to deny that God is the designer of life. Chapter 4 explains the concept of intelligent design, and why intelligent design is a better explanation for the history of life.

Atheists love to talk about how the universe has always existed, and there's no need for a Creator. Chapter 5 contains a philosophical argument that is supported by mainstream science to argue that the universe had a beginning, just like the Bible says.

Atheists love to argue that life can emerge from non-life, and the process is simple. Chapter 6 is written by a biochemist, and it takes a look at the real complexity of the simplest living cell.

Atheists like to argue that the universe itself is just an accident, and there is no need for a Designer. Chapter 7 introduces the scientific evidence for fine-tuning and habitability.

Atheists like to say that there is no soul and no afterlife. Chapter 8 gives some arguments for the existence of the soul.

Atheists like to argue that Christians invent God because God makes them feel good. But chapter 9 explains that having an all-powerful God who can hold humans accountable is the last thing any human would want to invent.

Atheists like to talk about how religion, with it's habit of teaching to believe in things that can't be tested, causes religious people to do a lot of harm. Chapter 10 takes a look at

the real record of Christianity as a force for good in the world.

Atheists like to talk about slavery in the Bible. Chapter 11 talks about what the Bible really says, and provides some rational responses to the accusation.

Atheists like to talk about eternal punishment in Hell isn't a just punishment for just getting a few questions wrong on a theology exam. Chapter 12 provides an explanation and defense of the concept of Hell.

Atheists love to talk about how God commanded the Israelites to attack their enemies in the Bible. Chapter 13 explains who their enemies really were, and what was really happening in those wars.

Atheists feel that unrestricted sexual activity is very healthy and normal, and that the Biblical prohibitions outside of male-female marriage are repressive and unhealthy. Chapter 14 explains why God has these rules in place, and supports his rules with evidence.

Atheists love to assert that they don't need God, because they can behave morally on their own. Chapter 15 explains how to answer this claim by talking about how well atheism grounds objective moral values, objective moral duties, free will and moral accountability: the minimum requirements for objective morality.

Atheists think that the mere existence of natural disasters and human immorality are incompatible with the God of the Bible. Chapter 16 explains why this argument doesn't work, and why even the concept of evil requires God to exist.

I have an atheist friend in my office who can't defeat my scientific arguments for the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning and the origin of life. But still, he says to me, even if God exists, why would that matter to my life? Chapter 17 explains what difference Christianity makes in a person's life.

Atheists think that the life of Jesus has no relevance to their life, and that he has nothing to offer them anyway. Chapter 18 explains the uniqueness of Jesus and explains why his resurrection is relevant to our lives today.

It's important to understand that this book is not on the level of A. W. Tozer, G.K. Chesterton, Francis Chan, John Piper, etc. Those authors write for a Christian audience and therefore they do not equip you to answer realistic challenges from non-Christians. But the apologetics book we looked at actually equips you to answer challenges from non-Christians using logical arguments and evidence from mainstream history and science. You can use the material in that book in discussions outside the confines of your home and your church.

Matthew Vines and Michael Brown debate homosexuality and the Bible on Moody radio

October 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Details:

> Can you be gay and Christian? Matthew Vines says you can and he's created a viral video and best-selling book defending his view. This Saturday on Up for Debate, Vines joins host Julie Roys to debate author and leading evangelical apologist, Dr. Michael Brown. Is gay monogamy an option for Christians? Is it unloving to reject gay marriage? Listen and join the discussion this Saturday at 8 a.m. Central Time on Up for Debate!

Audio:

The audio of the Matthew Vines vs Michael Brown debate is streamed here on the Moody site.

Summary key: Julie Roys (JR), Matthew Vines (MV), Michael Brown (MB)

Summary:

Opening speeches:

- JR: Why should Christians be open to reinterpreting the Bible on homosexuality?
- MV: Consider the lives and testimonies of gay Christians. Here is my personal story.
- MV: According to the Bible, a person with same-sex attractions would have to embrace lifelong celibacy. I refuse to do that.
- MV: There are 6 passages in the Bible that are relevant to the goodness of homosexuality. All are negative.
- MV: None of these passages address gay relationships that are "long-term" and "faithful" that are based on "commitment" and "love".
- JR: You say that it is "damaging" for Christians to disagree with you views, is that true?
- MV: Yes. One of my friends declared his homosexuality and he did not feel safe to come home. He felt pain because Christians disagreed with him.
- MV: You cannot ask a person with same-sex attractions to be celibate, it causes too much harm to ask gays to abstain from sexual relationships.
- JR: Respond to Matthew.
- MB: The Bible only permits heterosexual sexuality and in every case condemns homosexual acts.
- MB: Matthew is taking his sexual preferences and activities as given, and reinterpreting the Bible to fit it.
- MB: Genesis talks about women being made to help men, and to fulfill God's commandment to procreate and fill the Earth.

- MB: The Bible speaks about the complementarity of the sexes when talking about how two become one in marriage.
- MB: I am very sensitive to the stories of people who are gay who experience discrimination as “gay Christians”.
- MB: You can feel sad for people who have two conflicting commitments, but that doesn’t mean we should redefine what the Bible says.
- JR: Stop talking, we have a break.

JR takes a caller for the next topic:

- Caller 1: I had same-sex attractions and I was able to change my sexuality.
- JR: Matthew, respond to that.
- MV: Alan Chambers of Exodus International says that 99.9% of people he worked with had not changed their gay orientation.
- MV: Lifelong celibacy is not acceptable to gays, so the Bible must be reinterpreted to suit gays.
- MB: Matthew thinks that God himself did not understand the concept of sexual orientation and inadvertently hurt gays because of his lack of knowledge.
- MB: There is a solution in the Bible for people who cannot be celibate, and that solution is heterosexual marriage
- MB: If a person is only attracted to pre-teen girls, do we then have to re-write the Bible to affirm that so they won’t be “harmed”?
- MB: Alan Chambers was speaking for his own group, and his statement does not account for the fact that thousands of people DO change.
- JR: What about the Jones/Yarhouse study that found that 38% of reparative therapy subjects were successful in changing or chastity?
- MV: (no response to the question)
- MV: (to Brown) do you accept that the Bible forces gays to live out lifelong celibacy

Another break, then Brown replies:

- MB: Yes. But change is possible.
- MV: Do you know of any Christian who acknowledged that this was the consequence of the Bible’s teaching for gays?
- MB: Paul’s explanation that the options for ALL Christians are 1) celibacy or 2) heterosexual marriage. For 2000 years.
- MV: Paul (in Romans 1) is talking about people who are not “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships.
- MV: Paul was not aware of “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships at the time he wrote his prohibitions in Romans 1.
- JR: How do you know that fixed sexual orientation is true? And that the Biblical authors would written different things if they knew?
- JR: Are there any references in the first century to “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships?

- MB: Yes, in my book I quote prominent historian N. T. Wright who documents that those relationships were known.
- MB: Matthew's view requires that God did not know about sexual orientation when ordaining the Bible's content.
- MB: Leviticus 18 is for all people, for all time. This was not just for the Jews, this was for everyone.
- MV: I am not saying that Paul was wrong because he was ignorant.
- MV: Paul was writing in a context where "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships were unknown.
- MV: NT Wright does not cite first century texts, he cites a problematic 4th century text.
- MV: Absence of 1st-century references to "long-term", "faithful" gay relationships means that God did not intend to prohibit them.
- MB: Whenever the Bible speaks about homosexuality, it is opposed to it – Old Testament and New Testament.

Another break, then the conclusion:

- JR: Respond to the Leviticus prohibition, which prohibits homosexuality for everyone, for all time.
- MV: It is a universal prohibition on male same-sex intercourse, but it does not apply to Christians.
- MV: For example, Leviticus prohibits sex during a woman's menstrual period. And Christians are not bound by that.
- MV: What is the reason for this prohibition of male-male sex in Leviticus? It's not affirm the complementarity of the sexual act.
- MV: The Bible prohibits male-male sex because it is written for a patriarchal culture.
- MV: In a patriarchal culture, women are viewed as inferior. That's why the Bible prohibits a man from taking the woman's role in sex.
- MB: The prohibition in Leviticus is a universal prohibition against male-male sex, applicable in all times and places.
- MB: Homosexual sex is a violation of the divine order.
- MB: We can see already the consequences of normalizing this: gay marriage, and supports for polygamy and polyamory.
- MV: So the earliest reference there is to a "long-term", "faithful" gay relationship is a 4th century text.
- MV: But that gay relationship is not like modern gay relationships.

I have a few comments about Vines' points below.

My comments:

Even heterosexuals who have not married are called upon to embrace lifelong celibacy. I am in my early 40s and am a virgin because I have not married. I wouldn't seek to reinrepret the Bible to allow premarital sex just because what I am doing is difficult. I

would rather just do what the Bible says than reinterpret it to suit me. And it's just as hard for me to be chaste as it would be for him to be. In short, it's a character issue. He takes his right to recreational sex as non-negotiable, and reinterprets the Bible to suit. I take the Bible as non-negotiable, and comply with it regardless of whether it seems to make me less happy. With respect to the purposes of God for me in this world, my happiness is expendable. If I don't find someone to marry, I'm going to be "afflicted" with the lifelong celibacy that Vines seems to think is torture, but let me tell you – God is happy with the contributions I am making for him, and if I have to be chaste through my whole life, I am 100% fine with that. I serve the King. And not the reverse.

Notice that he talks about "long-term" but not permanent relationships, and "faithful" but not exclusive. This is important because the statistics show that gay relationships (depending on whether it is female-female or male-male) are prone to instability and/or infidelity. I just blogged on that recently, with reference to the *published research* on the subject. Vines is talking about a situation that does not obtain in the real world – according to the data. Gay relationships do not normally value permanence and exclusivity in the way that opposite-sex marriage relationships do, especially where the couple regularly attends church. The divorce rate and infidelity rate for religious couples is *far below* the rates for gay couples, depending on the sexes involved. Vines is committed to the idea that marriage is about feelings, e.g. – "love", but that's not the public purpose of marriage. Marriage is not about love, it's about complementarity of the sexes and providing for the needs of children. We have published studies like this one showing that there are negative impacts to children who are raised by gay couples, which dovetails with studies showing that children need a mother and that children need a father. We should not normalize any relationship that exposes children to harm. We should prefer to inconvenience adults than to harm children.

Matthew Vines made an argument that Christians have to stop saying that homosexuality is wrong, because it makes gay people feel excluded. I wrote previously about the argument that gay activists use where they say "if you don't agree with me and celebrate me and affirm me, then I'll commit suicide". In that post, I quoted a prominent gay activist who made exactly that argument. I don't find the threats to self-destruction to be a convincing argument *for the truth* of the view that gay marriage being the same as heterosexual marriage. In fact, this is confirmed by a recent study which showed that features of gay relationships themselves, and not social disapproval, is to blame for high rates of suicide in the gay community.

Vines seems to want to argue that the context in which the Bible authors were writing did not allow them to address the problem of gays in "long-term", "faithful" relationships. Well, we have already seen that statistically speaking, those relationships are in the minority. One British study mentioned in the post I linked to above found that only 25% of gay couples were intact after 8 years. The number is 82% for heterosexual marriages, and that *doesn't* filter by couples who abstain from premarital sex and who attend church regularly. If you add those two criteria, the number is going to be well above 82% in my opinion. Studies show that premarital chastity and church attendance *vastly* improve the

stability and quality of marriages.

In addition, Vines is trying to argue that 1) the Bible authors were not aware of “long-term”, “faithful” gay relationships and 2) their failure to explicitly disqualify these “long-term”, “stable” gay sexual relationships means that the Bible actually condones them. A friend of mine pointed out that this is a textbook case of the argument from silence, where someone asserts that because something is not explicitly condemned, then it must be OK. Carried through to its logical end, that would mean that things like identity theft are OK, because they are not mentioned explicitly. Brown asserted that there was a blanket prohibition on homosexual acts. He is arguing from what we know. Vines says that “long-term”, “faithful” homosexual relationships are not mentioned, and are therefore OK. He is arguing from what we don’t know. And he is trying to reverse the burden of proof so that he doesn’t have to show evidence for his view. Brown wouldn’t take the bait. The fact of the matter is that no one for the last 2000 years of church history have taken Vines’ view. Every single Christian before Vines, who were closer to Jesus’ teachings than Vines, understood the verses that Brown cited to be providing a blanket prohibition on homosexual sex acts. If Vines wants to claim that the Bible condones what he wants it to condone, he has to produce some positive evidence from the text or from church history or church fathers. He has *nothing* to support his case that could convince anyone that this is what Christians have believed, and ought to believe.

Finally, if you are looking for another debate, I blogged about a debate between Michael Brown and Eric Smaw. There’s a video and summaries of the opening speeches in that post.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

October 4, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!
This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
    - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
    - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
    - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
    - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right

    - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
    - the site of Jesus' grave was known
    - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
    - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
    - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
    - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
    - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
    - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women
    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age

- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women –

Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the

witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling
- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty

tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

White supremacist Charlottesville organizer endorses Biden, Democrats

October 5, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Major pro-abortion group endorses Joe Biden for President
I spoke to some white Democrats in my office, and they were telling me what a racist Trump is. I asked which Trump policy harms blacks the most. They couldn't think of one. I suggested the record low unemployment rate for blacks. They said not that one. I wonder what they would think about this news story about the most famous white supremacist Nazi racist in America.

The Federalist reports:

> Richard Spencer, neo-Nazi, white supremacist, and organizer of the infamous 2017 Charlottesville riots, announced yesterday on Twitter that he will be voting for Joe Biden in the upcoming 2020 election.
>
> A Twitter user asked Spencer if he will be voting for Biden or sitting out the election, given his belief that "Biden/Kamala will be tougher on crime/BLM than Trump." Spencer responded, "I plan to vote for Biden and a straight democratic ticket. It's not based on 'accelerationism' or anything like that; the liberals are clearly more competent people."
>
> […]During his keynote speech in Charlottesville, Spencer explained how abortion advances white nationalist goals, stating, "The people who are having abortions are generally very often black or Hispanic or from very poor circumstances."
>
> It's true that the vast majority of Planned Parenthood clinics, the leading abortion provider in the U.S., are in minority neighborhoods. According to the CDC's Abortion Surveillance report, black women make up 34 percent of all abortions in the United States, though they are only approximately 12 percent of the U.S. female population. The Charlotte Lozier Institute in New York City reported that black women in New York City have more abortions than live births. This is not too surprising considering the Planned Parenthood's original goal of targeting the offspring of the poor, of minorities, and babies who are physically or mentally challenged.
>
> The Biden/ Harris ticket has been named by the Susan B. Anthony List the "most pro-abortion ticket" in U.S. history. Sen. Kamala Harris is a pro-abortion extremist who supports late-term abortion. Alternatively, Trump has maintained firmly pro-life policies during his presidency and is actually the first sitting president in U.S. history to speak at the annual "March for Life" in Washington, D.C.
>
> Since he kicked off his presidential campaign, Biden has made various racist comments. His own running mate even accused Biden of supporting racist

> policies when she viciously attacked him on the debate stage in prime time.
>
> When pressed by Errol Barnett of CBS News on whether he'd taken a cognitive test, Biden fired back saying that the question was akin to asking the black reporter if he would take a drug test to see if "you're taking cocaine or not" and if he was a "junkie."
>
> In an interview with National Public Radio's Lulu Garcia-Navarro, Biden claimed that Latinos were more intellectually diverse than black people. "Unlike the African American community with notable exceptions," said Biden. "the Latino community is an incredibly diverse community with incredibly different attitudes about different things," he told the Latina reporter.
>
> Last year, Joe Biden told the Asian & Latino Coalition in Des Moines, Iowa, that "poor kids are just as bright and just as talented as white kids."
>
> In an interview with The Breakfast Club Biden said "If you have a problem figuring out whether you're voting for me or Trump, then you ain't black."

It seems to me that Trump has done enough to earn the votes of black Americans by giving them the lowest unemployment rate in 50 years, pushing through criminal justice reforms, and funding Opportunity Zone investments in various poor communities.

New study: Angus Reid Institute analyzes Canada's single payer healthcare system

October 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The cost of healthcare for average Canadian households

I found two interesting studies from Canada's Angus Reid Institute describing single payer health care in Canada. I'm very interested in find out what things are like in countries that have true government-run health care. A typical Canadian family pays $13,000+ per year per household for healthcare, or about $585,000 over their working lives. What are they getting for all that money?

Here is the first Angus Reid article:

> The study finds more than 2 million Canadians aged 55 and older face significant barriers when accessing the health care system in their province, such as being unable to find a family doctor or experiencing lengthy wait-times for surgery, diagnostic tests, or specialist visits.
>
> Moreover, most Canadians in this age group have at least some difficulty getting the care they want or need in a timely manner.
>
> The study focuses on the health care experiences of older Canadians, as well as their assessments of the quality of care they receive.

According to the article, 31% of respondents (aged 55 and older) rated access to the government's healthcare system as "easy". 48% had "moderate" problems with access, and 21% had "major" problems with access.

Remember: in the Canadian system, you pay your money up front in taxes, and then they

decide how much healthcare you will get *later* – and how soon you will get it. If you worked from ages 20 to age 65, then your household will have paid 45 x $13,000 = $585,000 into the system, in order to get "moderate" problems with accessing healthcare after you're aged 55.

And the Canadian system DOES NOT cover prescription drugs.

The second Angus Reid article explains:

> This second part of the study finds one-in-six Canadians (17%) in the 55-plus age group – a figure that represents upwards of 1.8 million people – say that they or someone else in their household have taken prescription drugs in a way other than prescribed because of cost.
>
> One-in-ten (10%) have decided to simply not fill a prescription because it was too expensive, and a similar number (9%) have decided not to renew one for the same reason. One-in-eight (12%) have taken steps to stretch their prescriptions, such as cutting pills or skipping doses.
>
> Some 17 per cent of Canadians 55 and older have done at least one of these things, and that proportion rises among those who have greater difficulty accessing other aspects of the health care system.

In a previous blog post, I reported on how Canadians have to wait in order to see their GP doctor. If that doctor refers them to a specialist, then they have to wait to see the specialist. And if that specialist schedules surgery, then they have to wait for their surgery appointment. The delays can easily go from weeks to months and even years. The MEDIAN delay from GP referral to treatment is 19.5 weeks.

But remember – they paid into the system FIRST. The decisions about when and if they will be treated are made later, by experts in the government. This is what it means for a government monopoly to run health care. There are no free exchanges of money for service in a competitive free market. Costs are controlled by delaying and withholding treatment. And no one knows this better than elderly Canadians themselves. But by the time they realize how badly they've been swindled, it's too late to get their money back out. You can't pull your tax money out of government if you are disappointed with the service you receive. There are no refunds. There are no returns.

Should Americans vote for the Democrat Green New Deal in November?

October 7, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should you support the Democrats' Green New Deal?

Why did so many people vote for communist regimes in the last hundred years? Communist leaders – who had no demonstrated achievements in economic policy – simply promised voters all sorts of free stuff, e.g. – a guaranteed job, free health care, paid retirement, etc. When the expected benefits didn't appear, the communist leaders blamed others for their failures, and naturally, those others had to die.

Think that couldn't happen here? Well, a lot of leading Democrats sure sound like communist leaders. Promising to confiscate legally-owned firearms. Promising to abolish private health insurance. Promising to nationalize private retirement accounts. And promising to replace our current energy industry with a new government-controlled green energy industry.

Let's look at that last one: the new government-controlled energy industry.

The Federalist reports on the Green New Deal plan.

> A number of Democratic Party presidential hopefuls — including Cory Booker, Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, Kirsten Gillibrand, Julián Castro, and Beto O'Rourke, for starters — have already endorsed or expressed support for the "Green New Deal" (GND). Today, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Edward J. Markey dropped details about her plan.
>
> […]While some of the specifics need to be ironed out, the plan's authors assure that this "massive transformation of our society" needs some "clear goals and a timeline." The timeline is ten years. Here are some of the goals:

> - **Ban affordable energy.** GND calls for the elimination of all fossil fuel energy production, the lifeblood of American industry and life, which

includes not only all oil but also natural gas — one of the cheapest sources of American energy, and one of the reasons the United States has been able to lead the world in carbon-emissions reduction.

- **Eliminate nuclear energy.** The GND also calls for eliminating all nuclear power, one of the only productive and somewhat affordable "clean" energy sources available to us, in 11 years. This move would purge around 20 percent of American energy production so you can rely on intermittent wind for your energy needs.

- **Eliminate 99 percent of cars.** The authors state that the GND would like to replace every "combustion-engine vehicle" — trucks, airplanes, boats, and 99 percent of cars — within ten years. Charging stations for electric vehicles will be built "everywhere," though how power plants will provide the energy needed to charge them is a mystery.

- **Gut and rebuild every building in America.** Markey and Cortez want to "retrofit every building in America" with "state of the art energy efficiency." I repeat, "every building in America." That includes every home, factory, and apartment building, which will all need, for starters, to have their entire working heating and cooling systems ripped out and replaced with…well, with whatever technology Democrats are going invent in their committee hearings, I guess.

- **Eliminate air travel.** GND calls for building out "highspeed rail at a scale where air travel stops becoming necessary."

- **A government-guaranteed job.** The bill promises the United States government will provide every single American with a job that includes a "family-sustaining wage, family and medical leave, vacations, and a pension." You can imagine that those left in the private sector would be funding these through some unspecified "massive" taxation.

- **Free education for life.** GND promises free college or trade schools for every American.

- **A salubrious diet.** The GND promises the government will provide "healthy food" to every American.

- **A house.** The GND promises that the government will provide, "safe, affordable, adequate housing" for every American citizen.

- **Free money.** The GND aims to provide, and I am not making this up, "economic security" for all who are "unable or unwilling" to work.

> - **Ban meat.** Ocasio-Cortez admits that we can't get zero emissions in 10 years "because we aren't sure that we'll be able to fully get rid of farting cows and airplanes that fast." The only way to get rid of farting cows is to get rid of beef.

Have any of these ideas been tried in any states? Trains seem to run over budget when they are built, and they fail to turn a profit afterwards. But most of these have not been tried anywhere, so how are we supposed to know how much they will cost to implement, and whether they will actually work?

The cost of the Green New Deal has been figured at $49 trillion over the first 10 years. (And that's in addition to the government takeover of healthcare "Medicare for All", which costs $32 trillion over 10 years).

Can the money come from "the rich"?

Just one problem with that:

> The plan itself seems to insinuate that billionaires can pay for the whole thing. Of course, best case scenario, it is estimated that instituting a top marginal tax rate of 70 percent would raise a little more than $700 billion over that decade.

If the money for the Green New Deal can't come from the wealthiest 1%, then where will it come from? It will come from your company. It will come from your boss. It will come from you.

Did Hillary Clinton push Trump-Russia hoax to distract from her e-mail server scandal?

October 8, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Left to right: Comey, Lynch, Clinton, McCabe

You'll remember that the hoax was pushed by the Democrats, their allies in the mainstream media, and the so-called "fact-checkers" for 2.5 years, until an investigation found that there was no corruption, and no collusion. Well, a new declassified document released by the Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe sheds so light on who was behind the hoax, and why that person pushed it.

Fox News reports:

> **EXCLUSIVE:** Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe on Tuesday declassified documents that revealed former CIA Director John Brennan briefed former President Obama on Hillary Clinton's purported "plan" to tie then-candidate Donald Trump to Russia as "a means of distracting the public from her use of a private email server" ahead of the 2016 presidential election, Fox News has learned.
>
> Ratcliffe declassified Brennan's handwritten notes – which were taken after he briefed Obama on the intelligence the CIA received – and a CIA memo, which revealed that officials referred the matter to the FBI for potential investigative action.
>
> […]The declassification comes after Ratcliffe, last week, shared newly-declassified information with the Senate Judiciary Committee which revealed that in September 2016, U.S. intelligence officials forwarded an investigative referral on Hillary Clinton purportedly approving "a plan concerning U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump and Russian hackers hampering U.S. elections" in order to distract the public from her email scandal.
>
> That referral was sent to Comey and then-Deputy Assistant Director of Counterintelligence Peter Strzok.

I always include a summary of the key facts of the Trump-Russia collusion hoax in my posts, and fortunately, the Fox News article had one:

> Meanwhile, last week, during a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Comey was asked whether he received an investigative referral on Clinton from 2016, but he said it didn't "ring any bells."
>
> "You don't remember getting an investigatory lead from the intelligence community? Sept. 7, 2016, U.S. intelligence officials forwarded an investigative referral to James Comey and Strzok regarding Clinton's approval of a plan [about] Trump…as a means of distraction?" Graham asked Comey.
>
> "That doesn't ring any bells with me," Comey said.
>
> "That's a pretty stunning thing that it doesn't ring a bell," Graham fired back. "You get this inquiry from the intelligence community to look at the Clinton campaign trying to create a distraction, accusing Trump of being a Russian agent or a Russian stooge."
>
> Graham questioned "how far-fetched is that," citing the fact that Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee, through law firm Perkins Coie, hired Fusion GPS and ex-British intelligence officer Christopher Steele to author and compile information for the controversial and unverified anti-Trump dossier.
>
> The Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee, through law firm Perkins Coie, hired Fusion GPS and ex-British intelligence officer Christopher Steele to author and compile information for the controversial and unverified anti-Trump dossier.
>
> The dossier contains claims about alleged ties between Donald Trump and Russia that served as the basis for Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) warrants obtained against former Trump campaign aide Carter Page.

So, if this report is true, Hillary Clinton is the source for the Trump-Russia collusion hoax, and Obama knew about it all along. It went right to the top, just like the IRS persecution of conservative organizations in Obama's re-election year. Another story the mainstream media news ignored.

I remember how the mainstream news media, the Democrat party politicians, and the so-called "fact-checkers" all pushed the Trump-Russia collusion narrative. I don't find Comey's failure to remember very convincing.

My conversation about morality with an atheist millennial man

October 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you define morality as "whatever I want to do" then you'll always be "moral"

I spent some time talking to an atheist millennial recently. He considers himself a moral person, and he is very helpful to others. I asked him to define morality, and he said that morality was feeling good, and helping other people to feel good. I was trying to think of a way to punch a hole in his feelings-based utilitarianism. How could I show him that happy feelings are not a good basis for morality?

Now, you're probably thinking that abortion is the most obvious example of something that is morally wrong – it's just killing a baby because adults don't want to take responsibility for their foolish pursuit of pleasure. But atheists typically don't think of unborn children as people. They usually believe in naturalistic evolution, and they are committed to a view of reality where the universe is an accident, human beings are accidents, there are no objective human rights, and biological evolution progresses because the strong survive while the weak die. So you aren't going to be able to generate a moral standard that includes compassion for weak unborn children on that scenario. If the rule is "let's do what makes us happy", and the unborn child can't voice her opinion, then the selfish grown-ups win.

Instead, I decided to focus on fatherlessness. I asked him whether he thought that fatherlessness harmed children. Surprisingly, he said that it didn't, and that he had a relative who was doing a great job raising fatherless kids. I asked him if he had ever looked at the research on what father absence does to children. He hadn't. Then I asked

him if a system of sexual rules based on “me feeling good, and other people around me feeling good”, was likely to protect children. He went silent.

Well, that was the end of that conversation. And I think it was a nice window into how millennials – who are absolutely clueless about what research says about sex, dating, marriage and parenting – think about relationships. They’re making decisions based on their feelings, then acting surprised when their “common sense” decisions based on happiness “in the moment” blow up in their faces, and destroy the lives of their children, including their unborn children.

Unfortunately, young people are having children outside of a marriage commitment more and more.

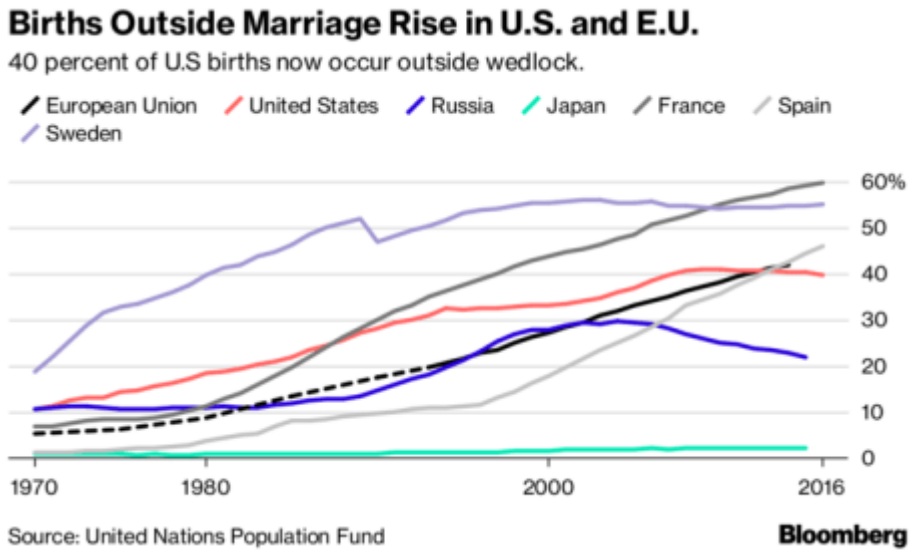

Out-of-wedlocks births rising as cohabitation replaces marriage

Far-left Bloomberg News reports:

Forty percent of all births in the U.S. now occur outside of wedlock, up from 10 percent in 1970, according to an annual report released on Wednesday by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the largest international provider of sexual and reproductive health services. That number is even higher in the European Union.

The EU has a higher rate of fatherless births because they have high taxes and big government to allow women to have children without having to commit to a husband:

> The EU likely sees more births out of wedlock because many member countries have welfare systems that support gender-balanced child care, said Michael Hermann, UNFPA’s senior adviser on economics and demography, in an interview. Public health care systems, paid paternal leave, early education programs and tax incentives give unwed parents support beyond what a partner can provide.

More welfare and more government services make it easier for women to pursue relationships with men who aren’t interested in marriage. Hot bad boys who give them all the tingles. Big government makes those boring, predictable marriage-ready men dispensable. Big government also makes it much harder for a man who does marry to

afford a stay-at-home mother for his kids, because he has to pay higher taxes for big government.

More:

> The data show such births in the U.S. and EU are predominantly to unmarried couples living together rather than to single mothers, the report says.
>
> […]Jones also noted that the rise in births outside of marriage is closely correlated to delays in childbearing. "Women are claiming their ground professionally," she said. "Delaying motherhood is a rational decision when you consider the impact it can have on your career, and that's contributing to this trend."
>
> [….]The traditional progression of Western life "has been reversed," said John Santelli, a professor in population, family health and pediatrics at Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health. "Cohabiting partners are having children before getting married. That's a long-term trend across developing nations."
>
> Regardless of marital status, more couples are choosing not to have kids at all. The U.S. fertility rate hit a historic 30-year low last year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hermann said the rise in births outside of wedlock has actually mitigated the decline in fertility, which "would be much steeper if women weren't having children outside marriage."

What's interesting about this anti-marriage article is that they have nothing to say about the research showing that cohabitation – and also marriages that occur after a period of cohabitation – are inferior to no-cohabitation marriages. People who are serious about self-control, and who are serious about committing through thick and thin, tend to have longer lasting marriages. But we don't prioritize chastity, fidelity and self-sacrificial commitment anymore, because that relationships that require self-denial make us unhappy.

The article concludes: "We can't go back to the '50s". Right. Because if feelings-based "morality" is assumed, then any choice between adult happiness and children's happiness will favor the adults. Today's young people carefully AVOID any evidence that contradicts their new "happiness-morality". They act surprised when their unstable relationships dissolve, leaving children separated from their fathers. Marriage requires that both partners have a system of morality that puts the commitment above happy feelings. People have to be accustomed to doing things that feel bad, just because they are good and moral things to do according to an objective standard of morality. The new atheist morality of happy feelings doesn't develop the character needed for commitment.

If you ask an atheist millennial, they think they are doing a great job of being "moral". They don't see the messes they are making for children as something that they are causing themselves, with their own foolish feelings-based decision-making. They think they know everything about relationships through their feelings. They think that they are exempt from the patterns of cause and effect in the peer-reviewed research.

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

October 10, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here's a debate with a well-qualified atheist and Dr. Craig.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any

errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It's not

just that the settings are unlikely, it's that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a "herd morality" that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved "herd morality". However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are

true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It’s possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It’s also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is “Does God Exist?”. If Dr. Millican answers “no” then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God’s existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don’t see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the

need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to

nothing.

We don’t have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can’t be an abstract object because they don’t cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we’ve never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have “algorithmic properties” as well as physical properties, it doesn’t mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that’s not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God’s goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God’s goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can’t translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can’t be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can’t be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don’t permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Wayne Grudem debates Richard Glover on the Bible, poverty and foreign aid

October 11, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

A great episode of the Unbelievable podcast. This is a great debate. I really enjoyed it. All three speakers were excellent putting forward their points. It's nice to hear an American voice, a British voice and an Australian voice debating an important issue. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Details:

> Wayne Grudem is a theologian known for his conservative approach to both doctrine and economics. His new book "The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution" (co-authored with economist Barry Asmus) makes the case that pouring aid into developing countries is a failed strategy. Grudem debates whether the Bible supports free market, capitalist economics with Australian economist and theologian Richard Glover who wrote a critique of the book for the Australian Bible Society.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

Grudem:

- The Bible speaks to all of life, including economics, stewardship, government
- The study of economics helps us to understand how to take care of the poor
- My job is to apply the teachings of the Bible to all of life

Brierley:

- What’s your thesis in the book?

Grudem:

- A good system is one where the poor have the opportunity to earn and save from their labor
- Book is a response to a Kenyan couple Grudem met at a London conference on business and Christianity
- Book is not concerned with how individuals and groups can do charity to help the poor
- Our church already does that and we support individuals and groups doing charity
- The book is concerned with how should nations be transformed in order to grow economically
- What should the laws, policies and cultural beliefs of a nation be in order for it to not be poor?
- The book lists factors that have moved nations from poverty to prosperity in different times and places
- The thesis of the book is this: government should set their people free to be able to produce more
- We advocate freedom in economics: freedom to work, freedom to save, freedom to start businesses
- We believe that this free enterprise view is consistent with the Bible in a number of places
- E.g. – private property is good for prosperity (thou shall not steal) but forbidden by communism

Brierley:

- What about the church sharing in communities in Acts 2 and Acts 4?

Grudem:

- That is not redistribution of wealth among individuals and businesses by a secular government
- Those passages showed that there was voluntary sharing among Christians, which is not communism

Brierley:

- What’s wrong with Grudem’s book?

Glover:

- The book emphasizes the Bible and the goal is to help the poor in poor countries
- Criticism 1: the book doesn’t engage with non-free-market perspectives on economics

- Criticism 2: the book doesn't survey all that the Bible says about economics

Brierly:

- For 1) what is one of the views that is not considered?

Glover:

- Jeffrey Sachs says that nations need a leg up before they can grow economically
- Ha-Joon Chang says that free enterprise was not how the wealthy nations became wealthy

Grudem:

- We do engage with other points of view, especially Jeffrey Sachs in the book
- The trouble with leftist views on economic development is that it does not work in practice
- NO COUNTRY has even been lifted out of poverty by foreign aid
- He says we don't cite enough from the wisdom literature: we have 64 citations in the index
- He says we don't cite enough from the gospels: we have 42 citations in the index
- He says we don't cite enough from the epistles: we cite 22 of 27 epistles in the index
- Some economists won't criticize cultural and moral values that hurt prosperity
- As Christians, we think that moral and cultural values are part of the problem that needs solving

Brierley:

- What about foreign aid?

Grudem:

- Foreign aid doesn't help: a lot of the money goes into government and rulers can be corrupt
- Instead of encouraging people to start businesses, it tells people to go into government to get aid money
- Economists (lists 3) are saying that foreign aid entrenches corrupt government in power, does no good

Brierley:

- If it's not working, should we keep doing it?

Glover:

- When there is an immediate need, we should do it, even if it is not a long-term

solution: we need both

Brierley:

- Should we stop foreign aid completely?

Grudem:

- Voluntary charitable giving from individuals and churches to help poor countries is good
- Me and my co-author are both active on our church board that helps poor countries with urgent needs
- Food and doctors are urgent needs, and we should help, but it doesn't lift countries out of poverty
- We need a long-term solution that helps poor countries produce their own food and doctors
- We are criticizing 1) government to government aid and 2) IMF/World bank to government aid
- We have had pushback because 500,000 people make a living from this foreign aid industry
- No country has ever been lifted out of poverty into sustainable prosperity
- That's the definition of insanity: continuing to do the same thing that has never worked

Brierley:

- Does the Bible support free enterprise as a way of creating sustainable prosperity?

Glover:

- When I said the Bible was absent from his book, absent was a bad choice of words
- But the hundreds of references he listed were not dealth with *in depth*
- In the Scriptures, God is the one who provides (e.g. – in Ephesians, Sermon on the Mount)
- The Bible is less focused on his people making money, and more focus on sharing basics, like food
- Secular governments should just take it from people who have food and give it to hungry people
- In 2 Cor 8-9, Paul talks about voluntary sharing so everyone will be equal

Brierley:

- Does 2 Cor 8-9 undermine the free enterprise system you champion in the book?

Grudem:

- The sharing in the Bible solves cases of urgent need, it does not lift countries from poverty to sustainable prosperity
- Some older translations say “equality” in 2 Cor 8:13-14, but newer translations (e.g. – ESV) say “fairness”
- The Greek word is translated as “fairly” the only other place it appears in the NT (Col 4:1), in every translation
- God uses the means of human work and productivity to provide (daily bread is baked, doesn’t just fall from Heaven)
- In general, there’s no provision in Scripture for a person to be dependent on donations for their entire lives
- God promises Israel fields and mountains to tend and mine, but prosperity is from work, not depending on others

Brierley:

- Does the Bible support this focus on work?

Grudem:

- Working is highly praised in Scripture, (lists Bible passages that favor work over dependency)
- Countries that were exposed to this notion of work and productivity have been more prosperous

Glover:

- Jeffrey Sachs and other development economists don’t say you can be prosperous through dependence
- They say that it is a necessary part of leading to nations out of poverty into poverty

Grudem:

- It’s never worked. What nation has become prosperous through foreign aid?

Glover:

- There are lots of nations, especially in Africa, where foreign aid has helped lift them out of poverty

Grudem:

- Name one country in Africa where foreign aud has lifted them out of poverty into sustainable prosperity

Glover:

- I can’t think of one right now.

Grudem:

- Our book contains a map of Africa and we looked at every nation's per capita income
- No nation has been able to rise out of poverty through dependence on foreign aid
- The only close one is Botswana, but they have abundant freedoms, Christian morals, less corrupt government
- So Botswana is the best case and they became prosperous through becoming productive, not foreign aid

Brierley:

- Is he right to say that charity is a short-term solution, but that it's not good long-term for prosperity?

Glover:

- Yes, and work is a very important focus in the Scriptures as he says.
- But since the Fall work has been much harder, and may not have the outcomes that we would like

Grudem:

- I also believe in emergency aid for when catastrophies happen, like floods and famines
- But dependence on foreign aid enriches corrupt rulers and does not create the productivity that leads to sustained prosperity

Brierley:

- Can foreign aid be used to give poor nations a leg up on becoming prosperous?

Grudem:

- Dambisa Moyo, Oxford-educated economist from Zambia, says stop the aid, it's doing more harm than good
- Jeffrey Sachs' view is that foreign aid hasn't worked yet, but just keep trying a bit more
- What works: limited government, rule of law, fair courts, documented property rights, low taxes, stable currency
- People are creative and want to work, we just have to get government out of the way and let people work, earn and save

Brierley:

- Is this free enterprise system supported by the Bible?

Glover:

- The wealthy nations of the world did not become wealthy through productive work and free enterprise policies
- Ha-Joon Chang: free enterprise policies have never brought a country from poverty to wealth
- E.g. – wealth is created through tariffs (not by innovating and by economic freedom?)

Grudem:

- I've read Ha-Joon Chang's book, and his examples are very selective and limited
- Index of Economic Freedom: the freest countries are the most prosperous, the least free countries are the most poor
- When you look at macro data, instead of very selective examples, the free enterprise system is best for prosperity

Glover:

- The book doesn't do enough to engage with leftist economists (he doesn't say which ones)
- Just because nations who are free are rich, doesn't mean freedom causes productivity
- There are parts of the Bible that doesn't support the free enterprise system (he names none)

Grudem:

- The Bible is focused on work not dependency, and charity not government redistribution
- The best way to help the poor in other countries is by encouraging work and productivity

Five ways America will change if Democrats pack the Supreme Court with leftists

October 12, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Major pro-abortion group endorses Joe Biden for President
I have met many young people who are voting Democrat because it makes them feel good about themselves, and look good to others. They don't really understand what the issues are. They can't name any Trump or Biden policies. They just know that the TV told them that Orange Man Bad, and that's good enough for them. But let's see what will happen in November if Joe Biden wins the presidency.

This article from The Federalist explains:

> Should the Democrats choose to expand the court by at least four members to provide for a 7-6 majority assuming Judge Amy Coney Barrett is confirmed, it is important for Americans to understand how this drastic maneuver will change their lives and their country.

And here's the list:

- 1. Gun Rights
- 2. Free Speech
- 3. Abortion
- 4. Religious Liberty
- 5. Election Laws

I wanted to drill deeper on these two:

> 3. Abortion
>
> There are a whole host of issues surrounding abortion that a new progressive majority would impact, from parental notification laws, to limits on how late in pregnancy abortion could be performed, to a state's ability to regulate the abortion industry. The progressive reading of Roe v. Wade is almost limitless in its scope and perhaps the only question mark would regard the ability to kill babies even after they are outside of the mother. Beyond that, it is very likely that almost any state restrictions would be shot down.
>
> 4. Religious Liberty
>
> Several religious liberty cases such as Hobby Lobby and Little Sisters of the Poor have been closely decided of late. It is safe to assume these decisions would be reversed. Practicing Christians and members of other faiths would face far greater restriction in living their faith in their public life. Our understanding of how we may practice our religions would undergo a major change, abandoning

> the American tradition of public faith, and limiting religious expression to the church and the home.

If you look at Biden and Harris records on religious liberty, you'll understand that their goal is to eliminate Bible-believing Christianity from the public sphere.

According to this The Federalist article, Kamala Harris opposed a judicial nominee for being Catholic:

> In 2019, Harris suggested that Brian Buescher, a nominee for a district court seat, was unfit for service because of his membership in the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal organization. As part of his Senate confirmation, she asked Buescher whether he knew that the Knights "opposed a woman's right to choose" and "opposed marriage equality."
>
> Of course, the Catholic Church, like many other religious groups, opposes same-sex marriage and abortion. To treat membership in a Catholic organization as potentially disqualifying, precisely because that organization upholds Catholic beliefs, amounts to a religious test for public office.
>
> If Catholics are faithful to Christian teaching, especially on abortion and sexuality, Harris believes they have no place in our politics. "Russia was able to influence our election," she wrote in 2019, "because they figured out that racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and transphobia are America's Achilles heel. These issues aren't only civil rights — they're also a matter of national security. We have to deal with that."
>
> With these words, Harris lumped believing Catholics in with antisemites. If you believe marriage is between a man and woman, if you think boys should not be allowed to compete in girls' sports, Harris thinks you might be a tool of our nation's enemies.
>
> Catholics should take Harris at her word. She has a history of bringing criminal charges against her political enemies. As attorney general of California, she prosecuted David Daleiden, a young Catholic investigative journalist who had exposed certain dark practices of Planned Parenthood, such as the selling of baby body parts. As part of the prosecution, Harris raided Daleiden's home, an unnecessary act designed to punish and intimidate. Daleiden said he relied on "the church, the faith of the church, the ancient ritual of the church" during his ordeal.

Also:

> Harris enjoys a 100 percent approval rating from NARAL Pro-Choice America, and received more than $80,000 in donations from abortion providers. Little wonder, then, that she spent her time as attorney general of California launching spurious prosecutions against pro-life activists.

Harris isn't the only one who hates religious people, the man at the top of the Democrat

ticket does too.

The Federalist explains:

> During her brief career in the Senate, Harris co-sponsored the absurdly named "Equality Act," which would force all hospitals and all physicians to perform sex-changes and cross-sex hormone injections. She followed this up by introducing the even more absurdly named "Do No Harm Act," which would strip legal protections for conscientious objectors to these practices.
>
> Biden has fallen into line. His website now vows to make enacting the Equality Act a "top legislative priority" for the first 100 days of his administration
>
> The double-whammy of the "Equality Act" combined with the "Do No Harm Act" would not only destroy religious protections for hospitals but religious protections for faithful Catholic organizations and individuals across the board. Catholic business-owners could see their businesses shut down for refusing to facilitate same-sex weddings or having separate facilities for biological males and biological females.
>
> Schools would be forced to do the same, including allowing biological boys who identify as transgender to change in the girls' locker rooms, use the girls' bathrooms, and, in sports, compete on teams alongside girls. Similar laws in five different states have already forced Catholic Charities's adoption and foster services to close their doors.

It will be a real shame if people vote for Biden/Harris thinking that they will be able to take the Bible seriously in their public lives. That will all end soon after they are elected.

Is the text of the Bible we have today different from the originals?

October 13, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

I thought it might be a good idea to write something about whether the Bible is generally reliable as a historical document. Lots of people like to nitpick about things that are difficult to verify, but the strange thing is that even skeptical historians accept many of the core narratives found in the Bible. Let's start with a Christian historian, then go to a non-Christian one.

First, let's introduce New Testament scholar Daniel B. Wallace:

> Daniel B. Wallace
> Senior Research Professor of New Testament Studies
>
> BA, Biola University, 1975; ThM, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; PhD, 1995.
>
> Dr. Wallace… is a member of the Society of New Testament Studies, the Institute for Biblical Research, the Society of Biblical Literature, the American Society of Papyrologists, and the Evangelical Theological Society (of which he was president in 2016). He has been a consultant for several Bible translations. He has written, edited, or contributed to more than three dozen books, and has published articles in New Testament Studies, Novum Testamentum, Biblica, Westminster Theological Journal, Bulletin of Biblical Review, the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, and several other peer-reviewed journals. His Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament is the standard intermediate Greek grammar and has been translated into more than a half-dozen languages.

Here is an article by Dr. Wallace that corrects misconceptions about the transmission and translation of the Testament.

He lists five in particular:

- *Myth 1: The Bible has been translated so many times we can't possibly get back to*

the original.
- *Myth 2: Words in red indicate the exact words spoken by Jesus of Nazareth.*
- *Myth 3: Heretics have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 4: Orthodox scribes have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 5: The deity of Christ was invented by emperor Constantine.*

Let's look at #4 in particular, where the argument is that the text of the New Testament is so riddled with errors that we can't get back to the original text.

It says:

> Myth 4: Orthodox scribes have severely corrupted the text.
>
> This is the opposite of myth #3. It finds its most scholarly affirmation in the writings of Dr. Bart Ehrman, chiefly The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture and Misquoting Jesus. Others have followed in his train, but they have gone far beyond what even he claims. For example, a very popular book among British Muslims (The History of the Qur'anic Text from Revelation to Compilation: a Comparative Study with the Old and New Testaments by M. M. Al-Azami) makes this claim:
>
> The Orthodox Church, being the sect which eventually established supremacy over all the others, stood in fervent opposition to various ideas ([a.k.a.] 'heresies') which were in circulation. These included Adoptionism (the notion that Jesus was not God, but a man); Docetism (the opposite view, that he was God and not man); and Separationism (that the divine and human elements of Jesus Christ were two separate beings). In each case this sect, the one that would rise to become the Orthodox Church, deliberately corrupted the Scriptures so as to reflect its own theological visions of Christ, while demolishing that of all rival sects."
>
> This is a gross misrepresentation of the facts. Even Ehrman admitted in the appendix to Misquoting Jesus, "Essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament." The extent to which, the reasons for which, and the nature of which the orthodox scribes corrupted the New Testament has been overblown. And the fact that such readings can be detected by comparison with the readings of other ancient manuscripts indicates that the fingerprints of the original text are still to be seen in the extant manuscripts.

Here is the full quote from the appendix of Misquoting Jesus:

> "Bruce Metzger is one of the great scholars of modern times, and I dedicated the book to him because he was both my inspiration for going into textual criticism and the person who trained me in the field. I have nothing but respect and admiration for him. And even though we may disagree on important religious questions – he is a firmly committed Christian and I am not – we are in complete agreement on a number of very important historical and textual questions. If he

> and I were put in a room and asked to hammer out a consensus statement on what we think the original text of the New Testament probably looked like, there would be very few points of disagreement – maybe one or two dozen places out of many thousands. The position I argue for in 'Misquoting Jesus' does not actually stand at odds with Prof. Metzger's position that the essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament."

Finally, I think that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls shows us that religious texts don't change as much as we think they do over time.

Look:

> The Dead Sea Scrolls play a crucial role in assessing the accurate preservation of the Old Testament. With its hundreds of manuscripts from every book except Esther, detailed comparisons can be made with more recent texts.
>
> The Old Testament that we use today is translated from what is called the Masoretic Text. The Masoretes were Jewish scholars who between A.D. 500 and 950 gave the Old Testament the form that we use today. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947, the oldest Hebrew text of the Old Testament was the Masoretic Aleppo Codex which dates to A.D. 935.{5}
>
> With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now had manuscripts that predated the Masoretic Text by about one thousand years. Scholars were anxious to see how the Dead Sea documents would match up with the Masoretic Text. If a significant amount of differences were found, we could conclude that our Old Testament Text had not been well preserved. Critics, along with religious groups such as Muslims and Mormons, often make the claim that the present day Old Testament has been corrupted and is not well preserved. According to these religious groups, this would explain the contradictions between the Old Testament and their religious teachings.
>
> After years of careful study, it has been concluded that the Dead Sea Scrolls give substantial confirmation that our Old Testament has been accurately preserved. The scrolls were found to be almost identical with the Masoretic text. Hebrew Scholar Millar Burrows writes, "It is a matter of wonder that through something like one thousand years the text underwent so little alteration. As I said in my first article on the scroll, 'Herein lies its chief importance, supporting the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition.'"{6}
>
> A significant comparison study was conducted with the Isaiah Scroll written around 100 B.C. that was found among the Dead Sea documents and the book of Isaiah found in the Masoretic text. After much research, scholars found that the two texts were practically identical. Most variants were minor spelling differences, and none affected the meaning of the text.
>
> One of the most respected Old Testament scholars, the late Gleason Archer,

> examined the two Isaiah scrolls found in Cave 1 and wrote, “Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”{7}
>
> **Despite the thousand year gap, scholars found the Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls to be nearly identical. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide valuable evidence that the Old Testament had been accurately and carefully preserved.**

I hope that this post will help those who think that we can’t get back to the text of the original New Testament documents.

If unborn babies don’t have consciousness or don’t feel pain, may we kill them?

October 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about pro-life apologetics

Was having a conversation by e-mail yesterday with a pro-abortion atheist, and he gave two reasons why he supported abortion in the first and second trimester. First, he said that unborn babies can’t feel pain, so it’s OK to kill them. Second, he said that unborn babies don’t have consciousness, so it’s OK to kill them. I thought it might be useful to link to something that answers both of these objections.

Frank Beckwith is the author of “Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice“, which was published by Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote four easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal. Part IV is the one that has the response to the two questions raised by my atheist friend.

Part I. The Appeal to Pity

Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem

Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?

Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Excerpt:

> Some ethicists argue that the unborn becomes fully human sometime after brain development has begun, when it becomes sentient: capable of experiencing

sensations such as pain. The reason for choosing sentience as the criterion is that a being that cannot experience anything (i.e., a presentient unborn entity) cannot be harmed. Of course, if this position is correct, then the unborn becomes fully human probably during the second trimester and at least by the third trimester. Therefore, one does not violate anyone's rights when one aborts a nonsentient unborn entity. [13]

There are several problems with this argument. First, it confuses harm with hurt and the experience of harm with the reality of harm. [14] One can be harmed without experiencing the hurt that sometimes follows from that harm, and which we often mistake for the harm itself. For example, a temporarily comatose person who is suffocated to death "experiences no harm," but he is nevertheless harmed. Hence, one does not have to experience harm, which is sometimes manifested in hurt, in order to be truly harmed.

Second, if sentience is the criterion of full humanness, then the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping would all have to be declared nonpersons. Like the presentient unborn, these individuals are all at the moment nonsentient though they have the natural inherent capacity to be sentient. Yet to countenance their executions would be morally reprehensible. Therefore, one cannot countenance the execution of some unborn entities simply because they are not currently sentient.

Someone may reply that while these objections make important points, there is a problem of false analogy in the second objection: the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping once functioned as sentient beings, though they are now in a temporary state of nonsentience. The presentient unborn, on the other hand, were never sentient. Hence, one is fully human if one was sentient "in the past" and will probably become sentient again in the future, but this cannot be said of the presentient unborn.

There are at least three problems with this response. First, to claim that a person can be sentient, become nonsentient, and then return to sentience is to assume there is some underlying personal unity to this individual that enables us to say that the person who has returned to sentience is the same person who was sentient prior to becoming nonsentient. But this would mean that sentience is not a necessary condition for personhood. (Neither is it a sufficient condition, for that matter, since nonhuman animals are sentient.) Consequently, it does not make sense to say that a person comes into existence when sentience arises, but it does make sense to say that a fully human entity is a person who has the natural inherent capacity to give rise to sentience. A presentient unborn human entity does have this capacity. Therefore, an ordinary unborn human entity is a person, and hence, fully human.

Second, Ray points out that this attempt to exclude many of the unborn from the class of the fully human is "ad hoc and counterintuitive." He asks us to "consider

> the treatment of comatose patients. We would not discriminate against one merely for rarely or never having been sentient in the past while another otherwise comparable patient had been sentient….In such cases, potential counts for everything." [15]
>
> Third, why should sentience "in the past" be the decisive factor in deciding whether an entity is fully human when the presentient human being "is one with a natural, inherent capacity for performing personal acts?" [16] Since we have already seen that one does not have to experience harm in order to be harmed, it seems more consistent with our moral sensibilities to assert that what makes it wrong to kill the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, the momentarily unconscious, and the presentient unborn is that they all possess the natural inherent capacity to perform personal acts. And what makes it morally right to kill plants and to pull the plug on the respirator-dependent brain dead, who were sentient "in the past," is that their deaths cannot deprive them of their natural inherent capacity to function as persons, since they do not possess such a capacity.

These four essays are a very good introduction to common responses to pro-abortion arguments. I recommend that people get familiar with this, as once you look into it, you will see that the abortion issue can be debated with as much confidence as William Lane Craig defends Christian theism. You will have the same access to scientific evidence and rational arguments on this topic, and so you will have the upper hand. And that's fun.

The best introductory book on the abortion / right to life issue is "The Case for Life" by pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf. The best comprehensive book is a tie between "The Ethics of Abortion" by Christopher Kaczor, and Frank Beckwith's "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice".

Potential violation of election law: Facebook and Twitter censor Biden scandal

October 15, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Facebook communications manager works for Democrat politicians and PACs

There was a very exciting story that emerged on Wednesday about the Democrat candidate for President. The story exposed an email that directly falsified something that the Democrat candidate for President said during a debate. Facebook decided to reduce distribution of the story, before they even did a fact check on it. Later on Twitter also blocked the story, because it's

The Federalist reported:

> On Wednesday, the New York Post published a bombshell report indicating that Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden repeatedly lied about never discussing his son Hunter Biden's potentially criminal overseas business venture with him "or with anyone else" while Joe Biden was vice president.
>
> Emails obtained by the Post, however, show correspondence between Ukrainian advisor Vadym Pozharskyi and Hunter proving that Hunter actually introduced Joe Biden to Pozharskyi.
>
> "Thank you for inviting me to DC and giving me an opportunity to meet your father and spent [sic] some time together," Pozharskyi wrote. At the time, Hunter Biden was raking in upwards of $50,000 a month in excess compensation for serving on the board of Burisma while his father served as the "public face" of White House policy towards Ukraine.

> Less than a year later, as the Obama administration's point person on Ukraine, Joe Biden pressured for the firing of the Ukrainian prosecutor investigating Hunter Biden's firm.

The progressive mainstream news media ignored the story:

> After legacy media completely ignored the major revelations in the Post story, with the New York Times, Washington Post, and CNN refusing to commit a single story to the bombshell report, Facebook and Twitter escalated the election interference by censoring the article.

And Facebook censored the story:

> "While I will intentionally not link to the New York Post, I want be clear that this story is eligible to be fact checked by Facebook's third-party fact checking partners," wrote Facebook spokesperson and former Democratic staffer Andy Stone. "In the meantime, we are reducing its distribution on our platform."

The Republicans are trying to make sure everyone can read it:

> In response to big tech's censorship Wednesday, House Judiciary Republicans re-published the New York Post's piece on their website.
>
> "We know Google tried to help Hillary Clinton win in 2016. And now Facebook and Twitter are trying to help Joe Biden win in 2020," committee ranking member Jordan told The Federalist.

But that's not all! Twitter also got in on the censoring of stories critical of the Democrat candidate for President.

The Federalist explains:

> Twitter suspended the New York Post's account on Wednesday following its publication of a bombshell story indicating Hunter Biden monetized foreign companies' access to his father, Joe Biden, while the latter was vice president. The emails come from a laptop left at a repair shop that appears to have belonged to Hunter Biden and is under FBI and Senate review.
>
> Users are then directed to a page that claims the link is "potentially spammy or unsafe."
>
> The suspension comes after Twitter began blocking users from sharing or sending the article link on their platform. When unverified and verified users attempted to share the link, they were met with a message stating the link "has been identified by Twitter or our partners as being potentially harmful" and were directed to a page claiming the link could be "spammy or safe."

You can read the entire story they didn't want you to see on the Senate Judiciary Committee's web site. Or you can read it in this Twitter thread.

Please share this post on social media, although you might get into trouble with the Big

Tech fascists. Everything that makes the Democrats look bad is “false news” or “misleading” or “missing context”.

Does archaeological evidence confirm names, dates and places in the Bible?

October 16, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

I spotted this post on Be Thinking by UK apologist Peter S. Williams. (H/T Eric Chabot at Think Apologetics)

So let me pick the ones I liked most for this post.

Here's a good one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Bethesda
>
> John 5:1-15 describes a pool in Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate, called Bethesda, surrounded by five covered colonnades. Until the 19th century, there was no evidence outside of John for the existence of this pool and John's unusual description *"caused bible scholars to doubt the reliability of John's account, but the pool was duly uncovered in the 1930s – with four colonnades around its edges and one across its middle."*[38] Ian Wilson reports: *"Exhaustive excavations by Israeli archaeologist Professor Joachim Jeremias have brought to light precisely such a building, still including two huge, deep-cut cisterns, in the environs of Jerusalem's Crusader Church of St Anne."*[39]

And this one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Siloam
>
> In the 400s AD, a church was built above a pool attached to Hezekiah's water tunnel to commemorate the healing of a blind man reported in John 9:1-7. Until recently, this was considered to be the Pool of Siloam from the time of Christ. However, during sewerage works in June 2004 engineers stumbled upon a 1stcentury ritual pool when they uncovered some ancient steps during pipe maintenance near the mouth of Hezekiah's tunnel. By the summer of 2005,

> archaeologists had revealed what was *"without doubt the missing pool of Siloam."*[40] Mark D. Roberts reports that: *"In the plaster of this pool were found coins that establish the date of the pool to the years before and after Jesus. There is little question that this is in fact the pool of Siloam, to which Jesus sent the blind man in John 9."*[41]

I just read this one because I am working my way through John. In case you haven't read John, you really should it's my favorite gospel.

Here's another one:

> ### Herod the Great
>
> We have a bronze coin minted by Herod the Great. On the obverse side (i.e. the bottom) is a tripod and ceremonial bowl with the inscription 'Herod king' and the year the coin was struck, 'year 3' (of Herod's reign), or 37 BC.
>
> In 1996 Israeli Professor of Archaeology Ehud Netzer discovered in Masada a piece of broken pottery with an inscription, called an ostracon. This piece had Herod's name on it and was part of an amphora used for transportation (probably wine), dated to c. 19 BC. The inscription is in Latin and reads, *"Herod the Great King of the Jews (or Judea)"*, the first such that mentions the full title of King Herod.
>
> Herodium is a man-made mountain in the Judean wilderness rising over 2,475 feet above sea level. In 23 BC Herod the Great built a palace fortress here on top of a natural hill. Seven stories of living rooms, storage areas, cisterns, a bathhouse, and a courtyard filled with bushes and flowering plants were constructed. The whole complex was surrounded and partly buried by a sloping fill of earth and gravel. Herod's tomb and sarcophagus were discovered at the base of Herodium by archaeologist Ehud Netzer in 2007.

And one more:

> ### The 'James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus' Ossuary
>
> James, the brother of Jesus, was martyred in AD 62. A mid-1st century AD chalk ossuary discovered in 2002 bears the inscription *"James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus"* ('Ya'akov bar Yosef akhui di Yeshua'). Historian Paul L. Maier states that*"there is strong (though not absolutely conclusive) evidence that, yes, the ossuary and its inscription are not only authentic, but that the inscribed names are the New Testament personalities."*[68] New Testament scholar Ben Witherington states that:*"If, as seems probable, the ossuary found in the vicinity of Jerusalem and dated to about AD 63 is indeed the burial box of James, the brother of Jesus, this inscription is the most important extra-biblical evidence of its kind."*[69] According to Hershel Shanks, editor in chief of the *Biblical Archaeological Review*: *"this box is [more] likely the ossuary of James, the*

> *brother of Jesus of Nazareth, than not. In my opinion … it is likely that this inscription* does *mention the James and Joseph and Jesus of the New Testament."*

And finally one short one:

> **Tiberius Caesar**
>
> The Denarius coin, 14-37 AD, is commonly referred to as the 'Tribute Penny' from the Bible. The coin shows a portrait of Tiberius Caesar. Craig L. Blomberg comments: *"Jesus' famous saying about giving to Caesar what was his and to God what* his *(Mark 12:17 and parallels) makes even more sense when one discovers that most of the Roman coins in use at the time had images of Caesar on them."*[48]

This is a good article to bookmark in case you are ever looking for a quick, searchable reference on archaeology and the Bible. There are many more examples in that post.

Now some people might be wondering why archaeology doesn't confirm *every detail* in the New Testament. And here's what J. Warner Wallace has to say about that:

> But what are we to say to those who argue the Biblical archeological record is incomplete? The answer is best delivered by another expert witness in the field, Dr. Edwin Yamauchi, historian and Professor Emeritus at Miami University. Yamauchi wrote a book entitled, *The Stones and the Scripture*, where he rightly noted that archaeological evidence is a matter of "fractions":
>
> *Only a fraction of the world's archaeological evidence still survives in the ground.*
>
> *Only a fraction of the possible archaeological sites have been discovered.*
>
> *Only a fraction have been excavated, and those only partially.*
>
> *Only a fraction of those partial excavations have been thoroughly examined and published.*
>
> *Only a fraction of what has been examined and published has anything to do with the claims of the Bible!*
>
> See the problem? In spite of these limits, we still have a robust collection of archaeological evidences confirming the narratives of the New Testament (both in the gospel accounts and in the Book of Acts). We shouldn't hesitate to use what we do know archaeologically in combination with other lines of evidence. Archaeology may not be able to tell us everything, but it can help us fill in the circumstantial case as we corroborate the gospel record.

I think you can form an opinion about the whole New Testament based on the record of confirmations. The verdict is in: the New Testament should be presumed trustworthy.

The rights of parents of children with gender dysphoria during a Biden presidency

October 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Enraged Joe Biden howls out his hatred for Bible-believing Christians

This week, Democrat candidate for president Joe Biden answered questions from Democrat supporters at a town hall run by a sympathetic Democrat. There was an interesting question from a Democrat mother about transgenderism. Biden was asked what his opinion was of childred aged 8 being able to transition from their birth sex to a different sex. His answer will shock you.

The Daily Wire reports:

> Answering a question at the ABC News-hosted townhall on Thursday night, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden stated that an eight-year-old child should be able to decide that they are transgender.
>
> […]After telling a story about his father, Biden answered, "The idea that an 8-year-old child or a 10-year-old child decides, 'I decided I want to be transgender. That's what I think I'd like to be. It'd make my life a lot easier.' There should be zero discrimination."

Watch:

The majority of children outgrow gender identity issues by the time they hit puberty, but that's not a popular scientific fact to raise with Democrat voters. So, Biden told them what they wanted to hear.

It's important to understand that the wishes of parents who DO NOT WANT their child to receive drugs or sex-change surgery will not be respected by a government that is beholden to LGBT activists.

Let's look at an example from a country that pushes transgender ideology from their government-run classrooms, government-run hospitals and government-run courtrooms.

The Federalist reports:

> For the past 11 months, Robert Hoogland, a father in Surrey, British Columbia, has been forced to watch as his 14 year-old daughter was "destroyed and sterilized" by court-ordered testosterone injections. After losing his legal appeal to stop the process in January… is making a desperate attempt to bring his case into the courts of public opinion, even though it breaks a court order demanding his silence about the case.
>
> "I had a perfectly healthy child a year ago, and that perfectly healthy child has been altered and destroyed for absolutely no good reason," Rob said in an exclusive interview. "She can never go back to being a girl in the healthy body that she should have had… She won't be able to have children…"
>
> […][T]he courts judged his daughter competent to take testosterone without parental consent… [and] he was convicted of "family violence" by the BC Supreme Court for his "expressions of rejection of [his daughter's] gender identity." He was also placed under threat of immediate arrest if he was caught referring to his daughter as a girl again.
>
> […]Rob remains under a strict gag order forbidding him from speaking about his daughter's case in public and requiring that he "acknowledge and refer to [his daughter] as male" in private.

The Canadian "Democrats" didn't want anyone to know what they were doing to this father, so they took action to silence him:

> […]Rob granted two video interviews to Canadian YouTube commentators about his case… [T]he commentators who granted them quickly found themselves under threats of litigation. Rob's first interview was immediately taken down. Rob's second interviewer… faced similar threats, but initially refused to take her video (not currently available in Canada) down.
>
> […]Justice Michael Tammen of the British Columbia Supreme Court ordered that Thompson's interview and various social media posts be taken down. When Thompson stalled, trying to keep a rapidly sharing copy of her interview available to Canadians on Bitchute, the police were sent to her house to demand she take the video down.
>
> Tammen also harshly reprimanded Rob for speaking about his case to the media, warning him that if he broke his silence again, he would likely be cited for contempt of court.

You can check out this story from Mass Resistance, where they have photos and names of all the people who attacked the father's right to parent his child.

And by the way, American public school teacher unions want the exact same rules in

place as in this Canadian case, as the Daily Signal reports. Which is why you should support school choice.

Lest you think that this is just one rogue province, the Canadian legislature has actually introduced a bill (C-8) that allows the government to jail parents who refuse to approve their child's gender transition for up to 5 years:

> Under C-8, parents could spend up to five years in jail for trying to help their son accept himself as a boy, or for helping their daughter to accept herself as a girl. Bill C-8 also would impose prison terms up to five years for doctors, counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists and other paid professionals whose treatment for gender confusion departs from politically correct orthodoxy. Parents would be punished if they do anything other than encourage a confused child to "transition" to the opposite gender. Transitioning is an extreme form of intervention that includes taking puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and undergoing permanent surgical sterilization, including the removal of healthy organs such as breasts and testicles.

The Democrats have already passed a bill in the House called the "Equality Act", and you can read about what it does here at the Daily Signal. If the Democrats win the Senate and White House, this will become law.

Correcting four myths about the history of the Crusades

October 18, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Crusader

Here is an interesting article from Intercollegiate Studies Institute.

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

If you asked me what are the two best books on the Crusades, I would answer God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades by Baylor professor Rodney Stark and The Concise History of the Crusades by Professor Thomas F. Madden. If you get this question a lot from atheists, then I recommend you pick these up. Anything by Rodney Stark is useful for Christians, in fact.

NEW Hunter Biden e-mails reveal deal with Chinese investors and Communist Party officials

October 19, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Where did all this money come from?

This story is separate from the story from last week about Hunter Biden and Ukraine. Last week's story was about Hunter's dealings with a Ukraine energy company. Today's story is about Chinese investors and members of the Chinese Communist Party. The story, reported by Breitbart, emerged because a former associate of Hunter Biden provided access to his e-mail account.

Breitbart reports:

> Newly obtained emails from a Hunter Biden business partner lay out in detail how the Vice President's son and his colleagues used their access to the Obama-Biden administration to arrange private meetings for potential foreign clients and investors at the highest levels in the White House. These never-before-revealed emails outline how a delegation of Chinese investors and Communist Party officials managed to secure a private, off-the-books meeting with then-Vice President Joe Biden.
>
> In a 2011 email, Hunter Biden's business associates also discussed developing relations with what one called "China Inc." as part of a "new push on soft diplomacy for the Chinese." These emails are completely unconnected to the Hunter Biden emails being released by the *New York Post.*
>
> […]The emails offer a unique window into just how the Biden universe conducted business during the Obama-Biden Administration. These associates sought to trade on Hunter Biden's relationship with, and access to, his father and the Obama-Biden White House in order to generate business.

The White House access confirms that a collection of Chinese businessmen and Communist Party officials were given access to the White House.

In addition to that story, there is a new story from the New York Post about another report that could lead to another potential scandal for Hunter Biden. This time it's Kazakhstan.

New York Post reports:

> Hunter Biden is facing fresh questions over business dealing in yet another nation — Kazakhstan.
>
> Between 2012 and 2014 — when his father Joe Biden served as Vice President — Hunter Biden worked as a go-between to Kenes Rakishev, a Kazakh oligarch with close ties to the country's longtime kleptocratic leader Nursultan Nazarbayev, The Daily Mail reported.
>
> The British tabloid said they obtained emails from "anti-corruption campaigners" in Kazakhstan showing Hunter making contact with Rakishev and attempting to facilitate investment for his cash in New York, Washington DC and a Nevada mining company.
>
> Through his connections, emails show Hunter Biden successfully engineered a $1 million investment from Rakishev to filmmaker Alexandra Forbes Kerry — the daughter of ex-Sen. and former Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry, the report said.

These countries seem weird, but the amount of money involved is big money.

It should be a really interesting week, because conservative journalists have been given access to 26,000 MORE e-mails from the account of Hunter Biden's former associate Bevan Cooney. I'm excited. We needed to get some real reporting on Joe Biden, since the mainstream news media isn't willing to do the job.

New study: Biden's tax hikes hit 80% of Americans, $6,500 less median household income

October 20, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These people are all voting for Joe Biden – are you?

This study actually appeared in the Wall Street Journal, but since they have a paywall, I am linking to The Federalist instead. This new study comes from the Hoover Institute at Stanford University. The Biden campaign is claiming that middle-class households won't feel any effects from these tax increases. But the study is clear. Not only will 80% of Americans pay more, but many jobs will also be lost.

The Federalist reports on the study, which has some very prestigious authors:

> A new study shows that Democratic Presidential Nominee Joe Biden's proposed economic plan would significantly hurt the long-term American economy if implemented.
>
> While many mainstream media outlets claim Biden's plan will target the wealthy and save the middle-class money, the 50-page study released by the Hoover Institution shows different results.
>
> "Economists have paid too little attention to the economic effects of the Biden plan," said Casey B. Mulligan, professor of economics at the University of Chicago. "Our report, which focuses on taxation, health insurance, regulation, and energy policy, suggests that these effects are potentially very large indeed."
>
> The study conducted by a group of financial and economic experts including Mulligan, former Chief Economist of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, and Kevin Hassett, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers since 2017, demonstrates how Biden's plan will hurt everyone.

This is the bottom line: higher unemployment, lower household income for the average

household:

> "We conclude that, in the long run, Vice President Biden's full agenda reduces full-time equivalent employment per person by about 3 percent, the capital stock per person by about 15 percent, real GDP per capita by more than 8 percent, and real consumption per household by about 7 percent," the report stated.
>
> If Biden's proposed changes are implemented, the economists warn that, according to the Congressional Budget Office's projections, 2030 may yield "4.9 million fewer employed individuals, $2.6 trillion less GDP, and $1.5 trillion less consumption in that year alone." The economists also note that the median household income in 2030 would fall by $6,500 despite Biden's promises to prioritize the middle class.

You're not going to be immune to this, even if you're poor:

> While Biden and his VP Nominee Kamala Harris previously promised that they will not "raise taxes on anyone who makes less than $400,000," they have also promised to repeal the tax cuts made by President Trump, which gave 80.4 percent of all taxpayers a cut and 91 percent of the middle quintile a cut.

I don't like numbers like this. It's not just that I have to work the same amount for less take-home pay, which reduces my freedom. It's also that the pressure on "the rich", i.e. – MY EMPLOYER, causes companies to ship jobs overseas where labor costs are lower. Did you know that higher taxes causes outsourcing of jobs? The more that business owners have to pay, the more likely they are to pick up and move somewhere else – taking their jobs with them.

I don't like this. It's hard enough for me to make a living without the government taking more of what I earn. I'll have to work longer in order to make up the difference – assuming I can even keep my job.

Abortion debate: a secular case against legalized abortion

October 21, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Unborn baby scheming about being only two months old

Note: this post has a twin! Its companion post on a secular case against gay marriage is here.

Now, you may think that the view that the unborn deserve protection during pregnancy is something that you either take on faith or not. But I want to explain how you can make a case for the right to life of the unborn, just by using reason and evidence.

To defend the pro-life position, I think you need to sustain 3 arguments:

1. The unborn is a living being with human DNA, and is therefore human.
2. There is no morally-relevant difference between an unborn baby, and one already born.
3. None of the justifications given for terminating an unborn baby are morally adequate.

Now, the pro-abortion debater may object to point 1, perhaps by claiming that the unborn baby is either not living, or not human, or not distinct from the mother.

Defending point 1: Well, it is pretty obvious that the unborn child is not inanimate matter. It is definitely living and growing through all 9 months of pregnancy. (Click here for a video that shows what a baby looks like through all 9 months of pregnancy). Since it has human DNA, that makes it a human. And its DNA is different from either its mother or

father, so it clearly not just a tissue growth of the father or the mother. More on this point at Christian Cadre, here. An unborn child cannot be the woman's own body, because then the woman would have four arms, four legs, two heads, four eyes and two different DNA signatures. When you have two different human DNA signatures, you have two different humans.

Secondly, the pro-abortion debater may try to identify a characteristic of the unborn that is not yet present or developed while it is still in the womb, and then argue that because the unborn does not have that characteristic, it does not deserve the protection of the law.

Defending point 2: You need to show that the unborn are not different from the already-born in any meaningful way. The main differences between them are: *size, level of development, environment* and *degree of dependence*. Once these characteristics are identified, you can explain that none of these differences provide moral justification for terminating a life. For example, babies inside and outside the womb have the same value, because location does not change a human's intrinsic value.

Additionally, the pro-abortion debater may try to identify a characteristic of the already-born that is not yet present or developed in the unborn, and then argue that because the unborn does not have that characteristic, that it does not deserve protection, (e.g. – sentience). Most of the these objections that you may encounter are refuted in this essay by Francis Beckwith. Usually these objections fall apart because they assume the thing they are trying to prove, namely, that the unborn deserves less protection than the already born.

Finally, the pro-abortion debater may conceded your points 1 and 2, and admit that the unborn is fully human. But they may then try to provide a moral justification for terminating the life of the unborn, regardless.

Defending point 3: I fully grant that it is sometimes justifiable to terminate an innocent human life, if there is a moral justification. Is there such a justification for abortion? One of the best known attempts to justify abortion is Judith Jarvis Thomson's "violinist" argument. This argument is summarized by Paul Manata, one of the experts over at Triablogue:

> Briefly, this argument goes like this: Say a world-famous violinist developed a fatal kidney ailment and the Society of Music Lovers found that only you had the right blood-type to help. So, they therefore have you kidnapped and then attach you to the violinist's circulatory system so that your kidneys can be used to extract the poison from his. To unplug yourself from the violinist would be to kill him; therefore, pro-lifers would say a person has to stay attached against her will to the violinist for 9 months. Thompson says that it would be morally virtuous to stay plugged-in. But she asks, "Do you have to?" She appeals to our intuitions and answers, "No."

Manata then goes on to defeat Thomson's proposal here, with a short, memorable

illustration, which I highly recommend that you check out. More info on how to respond to similar arguments is here.

Here is the best book for beginners on the pro-life view.

For those looking for advanced resources, Francis Beckwith, a professor at Baylor University, published the book Defending Life, with Cambridge University Press, 2007.

What do Democrats like Joe Biden think about the moral teachings of Jesus in the Bible?

October 22, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Enraged Democrat Joe Biden howls out his hatred for Bible-believing Christians

Joe Biden gave a speech to the largest gay rights organization in the United States, the HRC. The co-founder of the HRC, Terry Bean, was recently charged with sexual abusing a 15-year-old boy. Do you disagree with what Terry Bean is charged with? If so, then I think it's important to know how far Joe Biden would go to punish you for your refusal to approve and celebrate Terry Bean.

Here's the report on the speech from PJ Media:

> Biden announced at an event in Ohio on Saturday that his number one priority, if elected, will be to enshrine LGBTQ rights into federal law via the Equality Act, a contentious, Orwellian effort by left-wing bullies to silence Christians who believe biblical teachings on marriage and reject the view that boys can be girls and girls can be boys.
>
> During a half-hour speech at the Hum4n R1ghts C4mp4ign's annual gala in Columbus, Ohio, Biden said, "It's wrong and it is immoral what [the Trump administration] is doing," citing efforts to bar transgender troops from the U.S. military and protect medical providers from being forced to violate their consciences.
>
> […]During his speech Biden portrayed LGBTQ individuals as victims, ignoring the fact that it is people of faith who have been the big losers in this war of ideas. Bakery owners are being sued out of existence, medical professionals are being pressured to embrace transgender ideology, and major corporations are pulling their business out of states that seek to protect religious freedom —

> which, by the way, is what made Mike Pence Public Enemy #1 in the eyes of the cultural revolutionaries.
>
> […]"The current vice president uses religious freedom as an excuse to license discrimination across broadly [sic] areas and denying LGBTQ Americans their basic rights. It is wrong and it is immoral what they are doing," he declared.
>
> "Just look at how much damage has been done in the past two weeks," Biden said. […]The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced plans to allow homeless shelters to turn away transgender people. This is beyond the scope of anything remotely what we've seen before."

To be clear, when he's talking about homeless shelters, he's talking about putting biological males in with women who are victims of sexual abuse. But if the HRC pays the piper, then the HRC calls the tune. They're certainly calling the tune for many of our largest corporations.

When Joe Biden talks about people's "beliefs", he means the beliefs of Bible-believing Christians that might cause them to disagree with gay activists like Terry Bean. He's talking about their right to refuse to participate in, subsidize or celebrate LGBT initiatives, such as same-sex marriage, sex-change surgeries, HRT drug treatments for children, etc. He's talking about forcing parents to step aside while doctors and educators give hormone blockers to their children. Drugs that can have permanent effects. He basically wants to give gay activists like Terry Bean a veto over the Bible, the church, Christian organizations and Christian parents. A veto backed by the full force of the government.

By the way, the Terry Bean story wasn't the first time that prominent Democrats have been involved in sex with underage boys. I'll give just one more example. The Democrat mayor of Seattle – a champion of same-sex marriage in the state of Washington – was also charged, and resigned.

Now, the teaching of the Bible is pretty clear. No sex outside of marriage, and marriage defined as between one woman and one man. The definition of marriage is straight out of the mouth of Jesus. If you deny that, then you don't accept Jesus as anything other than a normal man. Now, it's a free country. Non-Christians should be able to vote how they please, and act how they please. But we need to be clear that no Democrat politician accepts the Bible as an authority on moral issues, and that no Democrat politician thinks that Jesus is other than a normal man. No Democrat politician thinks that Jesus knew what he was talking about when he spoke authoritatively about chastity and marriage. Democrat politicians like Joe Biden think Terry Bean knows more these moral issues than Jesus, and that's why Joe Biden is speaking at the HRC rather than speaking at a Bible-believing organization like Liberty University or the Family Research Council or the Alliance Defending Freedom.

To be clear, I have no problem with people on the other side, like Dave Rubin, who disagree with me on moral issues. Dave lives his life in a way that would not be permissible for a Bible-believing Christian. But Dave accepts and defends my right to disagree with him on moral issues. That is not what we have with Democrat politicians

like Joe Biden, who want to use the power of the state to suppress basic human rights, like free speech, freedom of association, parental authority, etc. I don’t want to force other people to act as if they believed what I believe. But I don’t think Bible-believing Christians should vote for someone who wants to use the power of government to force me to act as if I believed what they believe.

Joe Biden claims that he and his son Hunter aren't corrupt – is he lying?

October 23, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is Joe Biden "The Manchurian Candidate" for president?

There was a neat story that broke late on Thursday night by Kimberly Strassel, writing for the Wall Street Journal. It's covers additional information about the Hunter Biden – China scandal. The latest story is that an investor involved in the deal between the Biden family and EFC China Energy, a Shanghai-based conglomerate, has decided to come forward and speak out.

The article says:

> [A] former business partner of Hunter Biden's has come forward to provide the ugly details of the "family brand." Tony Bobulinski, a Navy veteran and institutional investor, has provided the Journal emails and text messages associated with his time as CEO of Sinohawk Holdings, a venture between the Bidens and CEFC China Energy, a Shanghai-based conglomerate. That correspondence corroborates and expands on emails recently published by the New York Post, which says they come from a Hunter laptop.

> In a statement, Mr. Bobulinski said he went public because he wants to clear his name, which was contained in those published emails, and because accusations that the information is fake or "Russian disinformation" are "offensive." He attests that all the correspondence he provided is genuine, including documents that suggest Hunter was cashing in on the Biden name and that Joe Biden was involved.

There are indicators that Joe Biden was not only invovled, but stood to gain financially from the deail:

> Hunter, in his own angry texts, makes clear that his contribution is his name. He rails at Mr. Bobulinski that the CEFC heads are "coming to be MY partner to be partners with the Bidens." He reminds him "that in this instance only one player holds the trump card and that's me. May not be fair but it's the reality because I'm the only one putting an entire family legacy on the line." Mr. Gilliar privately tells Mr. Bobulinski to show flexibility, since "I know why [CEFC Chairman Ye Jianming] wants the deal and what makes it enormous, It's the family name."
>
> CEFC was closely entwined with the Chinese government and military until it went bankrupt, following U.S. charges of money laundering. There is no question CEFC was buying Hunter for influence.
>
> Joe Biden claims he has never discussed his son's business. Yet a May 2017 "expectations" document shows Hunter receiving 20% of the equity in the venture and holding another 10% for "the big guy"—who Mr. Bobulinski attests is Joe Biden.
>
> In one text, Hunter says that "my Chairman gave an emphatic NO" to a version of the deal. Mr. Walker, Hunter's partner, explains in a text to Mr. Bobulinski that when Hunter "said his chairman he was talking about his dad."
>
> Mr. Bobulinski's texts show he even met with Joe Biden. Mr. Gilliar reminds him in May 2017: "Don't mention Joe being involved, it's only when u are face to face, I know u know that but they are paranoid." Mr. Biden had left office by then, though CEFC was always a suspicious company with ties to a rival government. It would have a been risky for any public figure to deal with it, much less a potential presidential candidate.

WSJ using paywalls their articles after a few hours, so you can read the full text of the article here.

In the Thursday night debate, Joe Biden said that the e-mails and the laptop were "Russian disinformation". Unfortunately for him, he couldn't point to the names of anyone. On the other hand, there are specific people who contradict what he said, specifically, the Director of National Intelligence.

The Daily Wire reported:

> John Ratcliffe, Director of National Intelligence, told Fox Business on Monday morning that Hunter Biden's laptop was not part of a Russian disinformation campaign despite the media's attempts to claim otherwise.
>
> Fox Business host Maria Bartiromo pressed Ratcliffe about claims from House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, who made repeated false claims during the Russia investigation, that the news surrounding the laptop was Russian disinformation.

> “Is this Russian disinformation, director?” Bartiromo asked.
>
> Ratcliffe responded, “So, Maria it’s funny that some of the people that complained the most about intelligence being politicized are the ones politicizing intelligence and unfortunately in this case, it is Adam Schiff, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, who as you pointed out on Friday said that the intelligence community believes that Hunter Biden’s laptop and e-mails on it are part of some Russian disinformation campaign.”
>
> “Let me be clear, the intelligence community doesn’t believe that because there is no intelligence that supports that and we shared no intelligence with chairman Schiff or any other member of Congress that Hunter Biden’s laptop is part of some Russian disinformation campaign,” he continued. “It’s simply not true.”

So it’s pretty clear that Biden lied about the laptop and the emails that implicate Hunter Biden in a scheme to purchase access and possibly influence with foreign dollars. Hunter was cashing in on his father’s position, and the evidence suggests that Joe Biden was at least aware of what was going on, and might even have been getting a cut of this foreign money.

By the way, the image is from one of my favorite anti-communist movies: “The Manchurian Candidate”, 1962. Do NOT see the re-make. If you haven’t seen it, I highly recommend it.

Fact-checkers silent as their hero Joe Biden repeats Politifact's LIE OF THE YEAR

October 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Where did all this money come from?

Big Tech social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, etc. all would like you to believe that they are very interested in honesty and integrity. But what's the truth? During the Thursday night debate, Joe Biden claimed that not a single person lost their health insurance after Obamacare. The claim was labeled the Lie of the Year in 2013. Yet the fact-checkers are silent now.

First, here is the clip of Biden claiming that no one lost their health insurance as a result of Obamacare:

Here are the facts as reported by Just The News:

> Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden said during Thursday night's debate that nobody lost their health insurance plans when Obamacare was fully implemented, but millions of individuals had their insurance policies cancelled at the time.
>
> A RAND Corporation study estimated that 5.9 million people lost their insurance plans due to Obamacare's rules and regulations.
>
> Obamacare is the 2010 health care law crafted by former President Obama, for whom Biden served as vice president for both of his terms.
>
> Obama was heavily criticized at the time for telling Americans that if "you like your plan, you can keep your plan," which turned out not to be the case.
>
> Politifact rated Obama's promise the "lie of the year" in 2013.

Biden said this during the debate:

> "Not one single person with private insurance would lose their insurance under my plan, nor did they under Obamacare. They did not lose their insurance unless

> they chose they wanted to go to something else," he said.

Although Politifact rated the claim "Lie of the year" in 2013 – AFTER OBAMA'S RE-ELECTION WAS FINISHED – they actually rated the exact same claim "True" before the election. They did this so to trick people into voting for the re-election of the Democrat candidate.

Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine, wrote about Politifact's assessment of Obama's promise to Americans about keeping their health plans after Obamacare.

In 2008, before the presidential election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about Obamacare "True":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site's "Truth-O-Meter" to evaluate this claim: "Under Barack Obama's health care proposal, 'if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.'"

And she concluded:

> […]…people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama's plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his statement True."

Roy notes:

> PolitiFact's pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 campaign.

Here's the screen capture from 2008:

Politifact says that everyone who likes their health care plan can keep it
Before the election, it's true! And Obama got re-elected, because people believed that.
But what happened after the election?

In 2013, after the 2012 election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about

Obamacare "Pants On Fire":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama's infamous promise—that "if you like your health care plan, you can keep it"—its 2013 "Lie of the Year."
>
> […][N]one of the key facts that made that promise "impossible" in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President's plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan
Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."
Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."
Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact said one thing before the election, and the opposite afterwards
So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, but it's election time so they can't say that. This is what "fact-checking" by far-left progressive "journalists" amounts to. They're liars.

Does Joe Biden oppose fracking? Will he shut down the oil and gas industries?

October 25, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

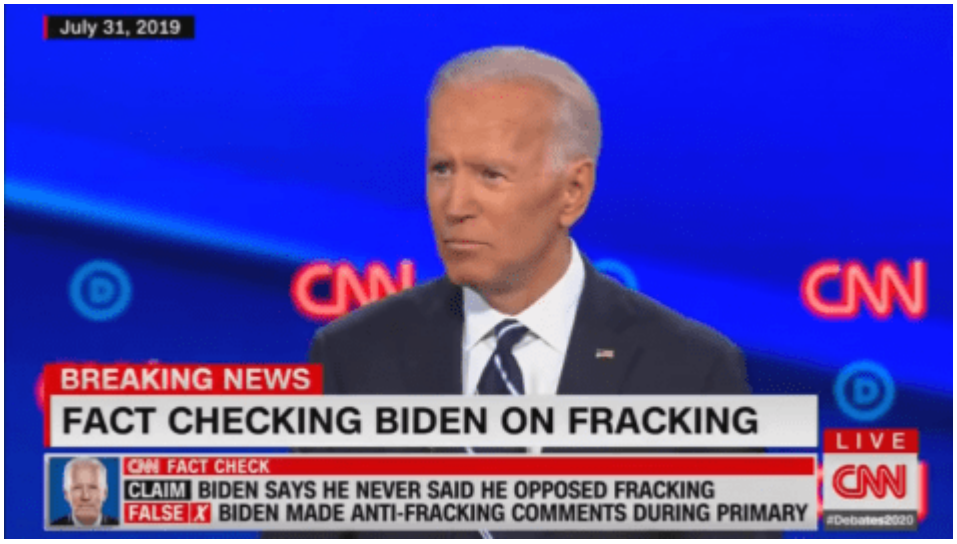

Far-left CNN fact-checks Joe Biden on fracking

A very interesting thing happened after the debate on Thursday. Far-left CNN decided to fact-check Trump's claim that Biden said on video that he wanted to ban fracking. Far-left CNN ruled Trump's statement "correct". During the debate, Biden also admitted that he wanted to eliminate all fossil fuel usage, including cars that use gas. Let's take a look at Biden's exact words.

Here's the CNN fact check:

The Federalist reports:

> Despite Biden and his vice-presidential nominee Kamala Harris's insistence that Biden never said he opposed fracking, Biden has repeatedly condemned fracking and the fossil fuels industry.
>
> "We would work it out. We would make sure it's eliminated," Biden said about coal and fracking from the Democratic presidential debate stage just a few months ago.
>
> "We are going to get rid of fossil fuels," he also promised from the podium at a New Hampshire rally.
>
> Harris, a proud co-sponsor of the Green New Deal, which would ban fracking, has also been vocal about her position.

Regarding shutting down the oil and gas industries, The Federalist reports:

> Democratic Presidential Nominee Joe Biden admitted during Thursday night's final presidential debate that he going to end the oil industry if elected president.
>
> "Would you close down the oil industry?" President Donald Trump pressed just

> before their closing statements.
>
> "I would transition from the oil industry, yes," Biden replied.
>
> When asked by debate moderator Kristen Welker to clarify his statement, Biden claimed that he wants to shut down the oil industry because it "pollutes significantly" and needs to be "replaced by renewable energy over time."

There are many problems with renewable energies, and you can find out all about them by looking at places that have tried to switch over to those energy sources.

Switching to Renewable Energy

Let's start with California. California has long been at the forefront of converting their energy production to "green" sources.

Here's an article from Forbes that talks about their results:

> At the Democratic National Convention this week, presidential and vice-presidential candidates Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will make the case for spending $2 trillion, or $500 billion per year, to transition the U.S. away from fossil fuels toward renewables like solar and wind.
>
> […]California's big bet on renewables, and shunning of natural gas and nuclear, is directly responsible for the state's blackouts and high electricity prices.
>
> "We will be forced today to ask utilities to cut off power to millions today, and tomorrow, and beyond," said Stephen Berberich, the President and CEO of California's Independent System Operator, CAISO, on a Monday morning conference call. "Demand will greatly exceed supply."
>
> The immediate cause of California's blackouts is a mismatch between electricity supply and demand.
>
> […]The underlying reason blackouts are occurring is because California lacks reliable, in-state supply. And the reason for that is California has been closing both natural gas and nuclear power plants.
>
> […]Despite these capacity shortfalls, the state is moving ahead with plans to remove 2,200-MW of reliable electricity from the grid. That's the amount of power produced by Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant, which will be closed in stages in 2024 and 2025.

So, Green New Deal works great… if your goal is to feel good about yourself, and make emotion-driven people like you. But it isn't very good at generating an abundance of low-cost electricity to power businesses. And it isn't very good for poor people, who prefer to pay less for their electricity.

Well, how about Germany? They closed down their nuclear power plants in favor of wind and solar. It didn't work.

Daily Caller explains:

> Germany's power grid almost collapsed in January due to poor performance from wind turbines and solar panels, according to data from a major trade union.
>
> Wind and solar power plants under-performed in January, 2017, because of cloudy weather with little or no wind, setting the stage for massive blackouts.
>
> […]Green energy approaches failed to meet Germany's stated energy goals, even after spending over $1.1 trillion. The country's "Energiewende" plan to boost wind and solar production to fight global warming hasn't significantly reduced carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and may have actually caused them to go up.
>
> […]Due to the inherent unreliable performance of wind power and political opposition to nuclear power plants, Germany has been forced to return to coal to generate electricity. Coal now provides 44 percent of Germany's power, This shift caused Germany's carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions to actually rise by 28 million tons each year following the policy shift.
>
> All of Germany's subsidies and support for green energy have sharply increased power prices, with the average German paying 39 cents per kilowatt-hour for electricity. The average American only spends 10.4 cents per kilowatt-hour by comparison.

So, you get less electricity produced, more emissions, and elctricity prices go up. Just like in California.

Well, third try is the charm. How about Canada? They've gone Green New Deal for more than a decade. How is that working for them?

The National Post reported this in 2016:

> Back in 2010, deep green environmentalist Rick Smith, then head of Environmental Defence Canada, hailed Ontario's Green Energy and Green Economy Act regime as a cost-free operation that would catapult the province into the big leagues of renewable energy. Through fat subsidies and high prices offered to wind, solar and other renewable industry players, jobs and growth would boom and Ontario would be free of its dirty coal plants. It was the End of Coal, the government said. The birth of a renewable miracle.

Now, Canadians are paying more:

> The doubling of electricity prices since 2005 is big politically, but it is just the top-line item on a long list of problems, misconceptions and outright fabrications that lurk within the Liberal government's decade-long pursuit of radical greenism.

Because they didn't listened to engineers… they listened to their hearts:

> Ontario's Society of Professional Engineers has issued more than half a dozen critical reports on the Liberals' tendency to let green talk and politics override sound policy. Instead of following the expert advice of engineers and people who

> understand the intricacies of electricity production and distribution, the government took to issuing directives right out the Premier's office.

Now, I know some people on the secular left are going to disagree with these facts. But they don't have facts to counter these facts. There isn't a single country that has gone Green New Deal that has lower electricity prices and a net increase in jobs.

We have to do what works. What works is more natural gas (fracking) and more nuclear power.

Who has the better record on foreign policy? Donald Trump or Joe Biden?

October 26, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

Christians often like to try to make elections about a single issue, typically abortion. I'm pro-life, and opposing abortion is important to me. However, my goal is to get the election result I want in the real world, not just to be right in my own mind. So, I think conservatives should be able to discuss many different issues, like economics, energy, job creation, health care, education, etc. persuasively.

One issue you can use to convince people to vote Republican is *foreign policy.* Has Trump got a good record on foreign policy? Is it better or worse than Joe Biden's record? Let's take a look.

It's always a good thing when a leader is able to make peace between warring countries. Trump is actually really good at this.

The Federalist explains:

> Sudan will be removed from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list and will begin a partnership with the United States and Israel, President Donald Trump announced on Friday.
>
> […]The agreement comes just weeks after Trump secured two other historic peace deals in the Middle East through the signing of The Abraham Accords with Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, which established full diplomatic relations of the countries with Israel. These deals facilitated by the Trump Administration are meant to bring "stability, security, and prosperity" in the region.
>
> […]Trump granted Sudan's removal from the terrorism list after the nation paid "$335 million to compensate American victims of past terror attacks and their families."

In addition to those deals, Trump's diplomatic team just brokered a deal to get Armenia

and Azerbaijan to stop shooting at each other.

The Wall Street Journal explains:

> Armenia and Azerbaijan, which have spent nearly a month engaged in a violent conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, have agreed to a humanitarian cease-fire, the U.S. and the two Caucasus neighbors said Sunday afternoon.
>
> The cease-fire, based on commitments made in Moscow earlier this month, will take effect at 8 a.m. local time on Monday, according to the joint announcement.
>
> […]Sunday's announcement follows a series of meetings in Washington aimed at preventing the long-simmering conflict between the two former Soviet republics from expanding to the wider region.

Trump didn't start any new wars in his first 4-year term, and kept his promises about bringing troops home. That's a lot better than Joe Biden, who was VP during THREE failed US interventions in Egypt, Libya and Syria. And the Obama-Biden administration pulled us out of Iraq, which caused the rise of the Islamic State caliphate. Trump actually had to clean up the ISIS mess, and he did: reducing them from a massive area of influence to a tiny area of influence.

Trump also likes to deter Iran, the number one sponsor of terrorism in the world. He pulled out of the Iran deal, which Biden championed. That deal gave Iran pallets of cash, and allowed them to work on developing nuclear weapons. In contrast, Trump has been very tough with Iran.

The Washington Examiner explains:

> Qassem Soleimani, the Iranian military general who was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Iraq on Thursday, was responsible for the deaths of over 600 U.S. soldiers in Iraq.
>
> "General Soleimani and his Quds Force were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American and coalition service members and the wounding of thousands more," the Pentagon said. "He had orchestrated attacks on coalition bases in Iraq over the last several months — including the attack on December 27th — culminating in the death and wounding of additional American and Iraqi personnel. General Soleimani also approved the attacks on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad that took place this week."
>
> The Department of Defense added that the strike against Maj. Gen. Qassim Soleimani, the leader of the Quds Force, the extraterritorial wing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, "was aimed at deterring future Iranian attack plans."

And just this past week, Trump continued to sanction Al Qaeda leaders.

Sky News reports:

> The man believed to be al Qaeda's second-in-command has been killed, Afghan security forces have said.

> Abu Muhsin al-Masri was on the FBI's most wanted list and was charged with conspiracy to kill US nationals.
>
> […][Al-Masri] had also been charged in America with providing material support and resources to a foreign terrorist organisation.

Very good, and much better than Joe Biden, who seems to be always wrong on foreign policy.

The Washington Examiner again:

> In his 2014 memoir, Duty, former Defense Secretary Robert Gates famously shared his view that Biden, then the vice president and previously chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had been wrong about "nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue over the past four decades."
>
> […]Early on Jan. 7, Biden was savaging Trump as "dangerously incompetent" for the strike that had killed Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps terrorist leader Gen. Qassem Soleimani a few days earlier. Biden claimed that Trump was close to starting an "endless war in the Middle East" and that "this outcome of strategic setbacks, heightened threats, chants of 'Death to America' once more echoing across the Middle East, [and] Iran and its allies vowing revenge — this was avoidable."

None of Biden's predictions ever materialized, because he knows less about foreign policy than my keyboard.

Biden is terrible on Osama Bin Laden and the Cold War:

> This is the man who once tried to dissuade Obama from his operation against terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden; who supported the Iraq War and said in 2003, "I voted to go into Iraq, and I'd vote to do it again"; and who vocally opposed President Ronald Reagan's military buildup and the Strategic Defense Initiative, which helped bring down the Soviet Union.

The Obama/Biden administration created ISIS by retreating from Iraq:

> Biden claimed he had atoned for his Iraq War vote by spearheading Obama's 2011-2012 withdrawal from Iraq. But that withdrawal was a disaster, and it led to the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS).

Joe Biden was also part of the administration that traded FIVE top Taliban commanders for Private Bowe Bergdahl. Bergdahl put his fellow soldiers in danger when they had to go searching for him, after he deserted his post. And then there was the Benghazi scandal, when the Obama-Biden administration abandoned their people when they came under attack by terrorists. Then they blamed the attack on a YouTube video.

We shouldn't put someone with a bad record on foreign policy – Biden – into the White House, when we can have someone with a good record on foreign policy instead: Trump.

What are the positions of Joe Biden and Donald Trump on abortion?

October 27, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Major pro-abortion group endorses Joe Biden for President
Time for another comparison of Biden and Trump policies, this time on abortion. I guess everyone knows that Joe Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris are both for abortion through all 9 months of pregnancy. That's been their settled position for some time. Trump on the other hand has a different position. And you can tell what his position is by looking at his pro-life record.

First, here's Biden on abortion, reported by Life News:

> The evidence is strong that Democrat presidential team Joe Biden and Kamala Harris support killing unborn babies in abortions up to birth.
>
> […]They want to force taxpayers to fund abortions, codify *Roe v. Wade* into federal law and reinstate rules that force nuns and other religious employers to fund birth control that may cause abortions in their employee health plans.
>
> […]Biden and Harris also have sponsored legislation to expand late-term abortions, including the "Women's Health Protection Act." Nicknamed the "Abortion Without Limits Until Birth Act" by pro-life groups, the bill would have invalidated nearly all state and federal abortion regulations, including waiting periods, informed consent requirements, bans on late-term abortions and sex-selection abortions and more.
>
> Harris also voted against a bill to prohibit abortions after 20 weeks and another to protect newborns who survive abortions from infanticide.
>
> Their party supports abortions without limits and taxpayer-funded abortions, too. The party platform calls for "reproductive health, rights, and justice … including safe and legal abortion" and opposes "federal and state laws that create barriers to reproductive health and rights."

Second, let's look at Trump's record, from an article posted by the Susan B. Anthony List – the pro-life group that is most concerned with law, policy and judicial appointments:

> **Appointed Pro-Life Judges**
>
> In April, 2017, Judge Neil Gorsuch was successfully confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. And in October, 2018, Judge Brett Kavanaugh was successfully confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. To date, 157 of President Trump's judicial nominees have been confirmed, including two Supreme Court justices, forty-three U.S. Courts of Appeals judges, and one hundred thirteen District Court judges.

Permitted States to Defund Planned Parenthood of Title X Funds

In April 2017, Congress sent a bill to President Trump's desk that permits states to defund Planned Parenthood of Title X family planning funds passed in Congress. President Trump signed the bill which reverses an Obama-era rule that disbarred states from doing so. Because this was passed using the Congressional Review Act, future Administrations cannot enact a similar rule to Obama's.

Stopped Tax Dollars Funding Abortion Overseas

President Trump not only reinstated the Mexico City Policy, but expanded it to the new Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance program. This new policy ensures that our tax dollars are protected from funding the abortion industry overseas across ALL global health spending, not just family planning dollars. The Bush-era Mexico City Policy protected roughly $500 million in spending – the new Trump policy protects over $8.8 billion overseas aid from funding abortion.

Defunded the Pro-Abortion UNFPA

The UNFPA has long been complicit in China's oppressive population control activities, including birth limitation policies and forced abortions. President Trump's State Department cut U.S. Taxpayer funding to the UNFPA.

Required Health Insurance Companies to Disclose if Plans Cover Abortion

The Trump Administration Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) issued a rule requiring that insurers specify in each plan Summary of Benefits whether the plan covers abortion.

Settlements & New Rule Regarding HHS Mandate

The Departments of HHS, Treasury, and Labor issued two interim final rules, which means they took effect immediately, while allowing a comment period, that provide permanent, enforceable relief from the previous HHS mandate for both religious objectors, such as Little Sisters of the Poor, and moral objectors, such as Susan B. Anthony List. The new rule also exempts private employers and educational institutions that have sincerely held religious beliefs or moral objections against providing contraceptives or abortifacient drugs.

New Office for Conscience Protection at HHS

In May 2019, the Trump administration finalized new regulations to strengthen enforcement of federal laws protecting the conscience rights of health care workers who do not want to participate in abortion. The regulations clarify what recourse is available to victims of discrimination under the law and what penalties the HHS Office of Civil Rights may enforce for violations. Additionally, in January 2018, the Department of Health & Human Services announced the creation of the Conscience and Religious Freedom Division within the Office for Civil Rights. This new office works to protect health care professionals who do not want to participate in abortion. In May, 2019, HHS issued a proposed rule

> amending Obama-era regulations, clarifying that Section 1557 shall not force a recipient of federal funding to provide or pay for an abortion. It shall also be consistent with the First Amendment and with pro-life provisions, conscience provisions and religious liberty protections in current law.
>
> **Allowed States to Defund Planned Parenthood of Medicaid Funds**
>
> The Obama administration attempted to prevent states from defunding Planned Parenthood of Medicaid dollars, issuing guidance claiming this may be a violation of federal law. In January 2018, the Trump administration rescinded this guidance, allowing states to defund Planned Parenthood of Medicaid dollars as they see fit.
>
> **Cut Planned Parenthood's Tax Funding by up to $60 Million**
>
> In February, 2019, the Trump administration finalized the Protect Life Rule to redirect Title X family planning program funds away from the abortion industry. The rule advances President Trump's promise to stop taxpayer funding of abortion businesses like Planned Parenthood, who will no longer receive Title X funding if they choose not to comply.
>
> **Canceled Huge Contract for Taxpayer-Funded Experimentation with Body Parts of Aborted Babies**
>
> In June, 2019, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced they would not renew a major contract with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) to fund research using the body parts of aborted babies. (learn more)

My favorite was the conscience protections! I really hate the idea of being forced by secular leftists to violate my conscience.

I think it's very important for pro-life voters of all parties to understand that Trump has taken action on pro-life concerns. He listened to pro-life leaders, and did far more than other Republican presidents who were pro-life in name only. Americans often have this annoying habit of forming their opinions based on what they feel and what they hear in the culture. But we need to be informed voters. Let's look at the facts and decide based on actions.

Whistleblower Tony Bobulinski: Joe Biden knew about Hunter Biden's China deal

October 28, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

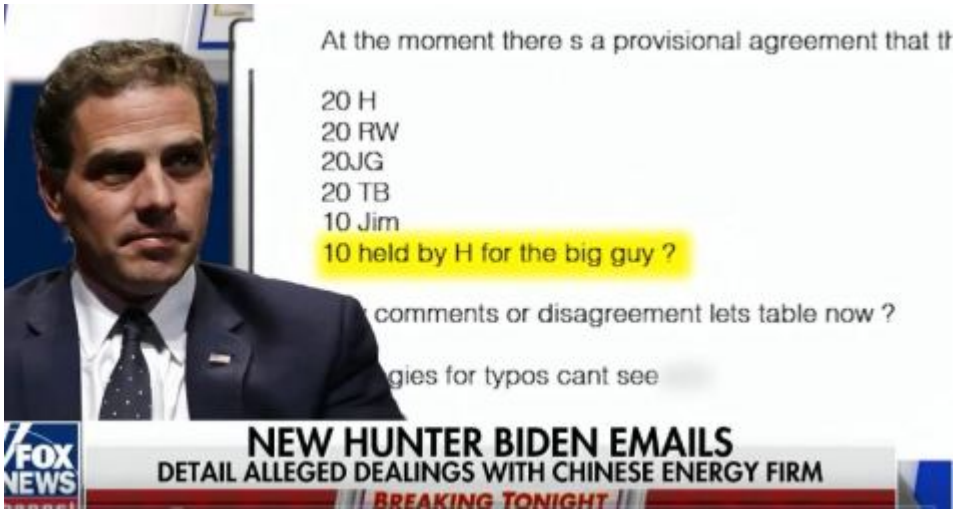

10 held by H for the Big Guy

The mainstream news media, Big Technology and the so-called "fact checkers" have been interfering with the election by covering up the truth about Hunter Biden's deals with foreign countries. But on Tuesday night, journalist Tucker Carlson of Fox News, who has the top cable-news show, invited the Biden whistleblower onto his show for an unprecedented ONE HOUR tell-all interview.

You can watch the interview and read the transcript here.

Here's the story from a variety of sources.

The Federalist:

> Tony Bobulinski, a former Naval officer and ex-Biden family business associate who provided documentation and testimony that the Biden family was deeply involved in foreign business dealings with China, said that former Vice President Joe Biden is lying about his knowledge of his son's business deals.
>
> "This is a company with direct connections to the communist government of China," said Fox News' Tucker Carlson during an interview with Bobulinski Tuesday. "So the former vice president has said he had no knowledge whatsoever of his son's business dealings and was not involved in them at all? But this sounds like direct involvement."
>
> "That's a blatant lie when he states that," Bobulinski said. "It's a blatant lie."
>
> […]Bobulinski confirmed last week in a public statement emailed to The Federalist and other outlets the incriminating claims published by the New York Post. He also corroborated a Senate report published in September on the Biden family's potentially criminal business activity.
>
> "Hunter Biden called his dad 'the Big Guy' or 'my Chairman,' and frequently

> referenced asking him for his sign-off or advice on various potential deals that we were discussing," wrote Bobulinski, substantiating that the identity of "the Big Guy' in a May 17, 2017, email published in the New York Post is a reference to holding 10 percent for Joe Biden.
>
> It was in this email that a Chinese businessman with deep ties to the Chinese Communist Party offered Hunter Biden $3 million a year for "introductions alone."

Daily Wire noted that China's knowledge of the history between CEFC and the Biden family could expose Joe to foreign influence, which could greatly impact the security and prosperity of Americans. Joe Biden's greed provided the Chinese Communists with information that could later be used to pressure him if he became elected president.

> "What are the implications of this going forward?" Carlson asked. "If Joe Biden is elected president, which could very well happen, how does this constrain his ability to deal with China?"
>
> […]"So, I think Joe Biden and the Biden family are compromised," Bobulinski responded. "Obviously, I'd reference that I held a Q clearance, you're briefed on compromise and who you're able to talk with and deal and do business with."
>
> "And I just don't see, given the history here and the facts, how Joe can't be influenced in some manner based on the history that they have here with CEFC and stuff like that," Bobulinski continued. "So as a citizen and an American taxpayer, I'm very, very concerned."

When the Biden family became aware that Tony Bobulinski intended to go public on the story, he was pressured to keep quiet.

Daily Wire:

> "The Biden family knew that you were going public with this," Fox News host Tucker Carlson said. "And you spoke to Rob Walker about it – again, the self-described Biden family representative – and Biden family, meaning Joe Biden as well – what was his response when you let him know that you were going public with this?"
>
> "Trying to coach me," Bobulinksi responded. "Trying to sort of say, hey, we don't want to do that, we don't want press trucks out in front of our house. I'm going to have to move; I could lose my job, and all of that – you know, I'm not trying to cause harm to anyone in this situation let alone Rob Walker and his family, James Gilliar and his family."
>
> "But basically, Rob's position was, if you go on record with all these facts, you'll bury all of us," Bobulinksi continued.

So, now we know for certain.

In the past week, Facebook and Twitter censored stories about Hunter Biden's business

deals, because they want Joe Biden to win the election. They employed “fact checks” from biased left-wing journalists to punish anyone who tried to tell the truth about the story. I was personally punished with multiple page quality violations, which resulted in “reduced distribution”, i.e. – they censored me (and others) to prevent criticism of Joe Biden.

Remember to vote on November 3rd.

Tucker Carlson plays (alleged) audio recording of Biden China deal

October 29, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

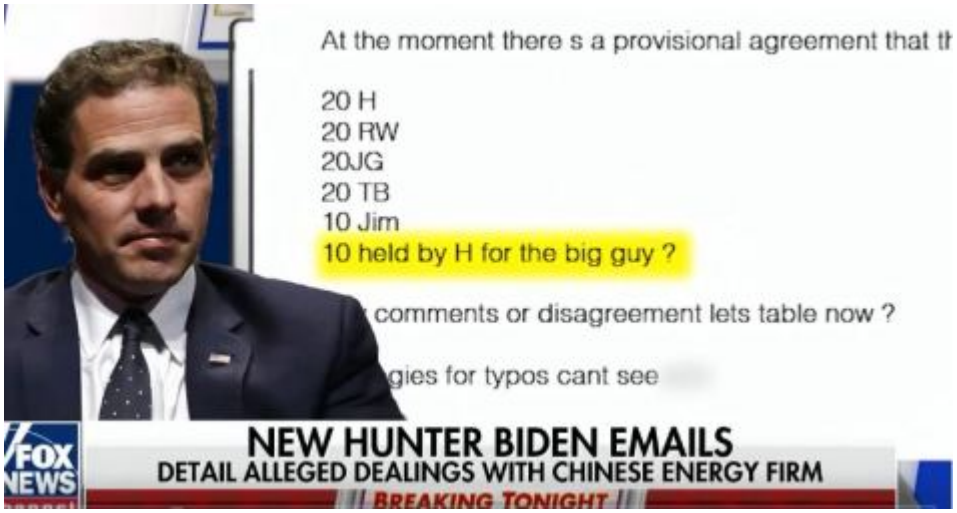

H is Hunter Biden, RW is Rob Walker, JG is James Gilliar

Tucker Carlson played more (alleged) audio of parties to the Biden-China deal on Wednesday night. The new audio documents how scared the parties were that their scheme would be discovered. Later on in the post, I'll show how Hunter himself wanted to avoid suspicion by not registering as a foreign agent. And we'll also see what law enforcement thinks of the Biden scandals.

First Daily Wire:

> Fox News host Tucker Carlson released new purported audio recordings from alleged Biden family business partners fretting about the possibility that the Hunter Biden laptop-email controversy would get into the media and that, if someone verified it, it would blow up "big time."
>
> "You're are about to hear Rob Walker and James Gilliar, those are two of the Biden family's business partners, on a call with Tony Bobulinski," Carlson said. "They're discussing how very worried they are that this story, the one we're talking about now, would emerge into the press, that it would become public. And they wanted to figure out how to handle the fallout from that. This audio is very new."
>
> Carlson played the following alleged audio files:
>
> Rob Walker: I just think that if somebody comes out now and verifies the story, it blows up big time. That's all.
>
> James Gilliar: We've got this situation now where it's escalating again because somebody, allegedly one of us three, has qualified the story, and already it's back on the front pages.
>
> "Also on that call, Tony Bobulinski pleaded with his partners to just tell the truth," Carlson continued. "Just go ahead and tell the truth. Same thing he said during

> our interview last night. Instead of lying, Rob Walker and James Gilliar can come out and admit what happened—Hunter Biden was selling access to his father. Everyone knows that; why deny it?"

So, where are we at in verifying all of these documents right now? The U.S. Senate is currently investigating, and the FBI has possession of the Hunter Biden laptop.

The Daily Caller reports:

> The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has been successful in verifying all materials reviewed so far from Hunter Biden's ex-business partner Tony Bobulinski, the Daily Caller has learned.
>
> Committee Chairman Sen. Ron Johnson will not call Bobulinski to testify before the November 3 elections, as the committee is working to review all the information provided to the committee by Bobulinski. The information has to be verified, as it is subject to the same false information to Congress laws that verbal or written testimony does. However, a Johnson spokesperson told the Caller that all the material provided by Bobulinski that has been reviewed so far has turned out to be legitimate. The committee has "also" not come across any "signs" or evidence to suggest the content is false, the spokesperson added.
>
> Bobulinski, who said Tuesday he believes "Joe Biden and the Biden family are compromised" in an interview with Fox News host Tucker Carlson, has turned over evidence to the FBI alleging he met twice in the past with the former vice president in regards to business with his son Hunter. The Biden family has not yet disputed this information.

I blogged about the first interview of Tony Bobulinski (TB, in the e-mail snapshot above this post) yesterday. If you didn't see the full show he did with Tucker, the video is linked in my post from yesterday.

The next step in the verification process is for Bobuliniski to come before the Senate Homeland Security Committee to answer questions. Then we will really get to the bottom of things. I'm hoping this happens before election day. I know the mainstream media and Big Technology aren't going to publicize the evidence, but I intend to.

Anyway, another Senate committee is investigating Hunter Biden for failure to declare his activities with foreigners.

Real Clear Investigations explains:

> The Foreign Agents Registration Act requires anyone who is lobbying the government or doing public relations work in the U.S. on behalf of a foreigner to register his or her precise activities — as well as compensation — in a public filing with Justice, which ensures Americans are given notice of any actions by foreigners to influence public opinion, policies or elected officials.
>
> […]The Senate Finance Committee, which is chaired by Sen. Chuck Grassley, an Iowa Republican, is actively investigating Hunter Biden's possible non-compliance

> with the FARA statute, according to a spokesman.
>
> “Chairman Grassley is continuing to review developments surrounding Hunter Biden’s foreign-influence arrangements to determine whether any potential violation occurred,” Grassley spokesman Taylor Foy said, adding that staff investigators are combing through the trove of emails found on Hunter’s laptop.
>
> Asked if they are preparing to refer the matter to Justice for criminal investigation, Foy said, “We haven’t reached that point at the moment, but we are actively looking at the material with FARA in mind.”

I find it interesting that the Obama administration used FARA to attack Republicans, but it was never used against any Democrats:

> “Starting in 2016, the previous administration used FARA and the criminal justice system as tools to attack and eliminate the opposition,” said FBI veteran Michael Biasello. “If Biden gets in, the same elements will be back in charge and make sure those tools won’t be turned on themselves.”

One more reason to vote for Trump-Pence on Tuesday.

Forensic analysis: Burisma executive's email to Hunter Biden is 100% authentic

October 30, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did Joe Biden collect foreign cash through his son Hunter Biden?

Ladies and gentlemen, we now have the smoking gun. Although Twitter and Facebook and all of the mainstrean news media tried to run interference on behalf of the Biden campaign, the truth is out. What you heard from the mainstream news media, and big technology companies, is that the laptop and the e-mails were part of a "Russian disinformation" campaign. Now we know they lied.

Here is the report from Daily Caller:

> An email Hunter Biden received in April 2015 from a Burisma executive discussing an introduction to then-Vice President Joe Biden, which lies at the heart of a New York Post investigation, is unquestionably authentic, a cybersecurity expert told the Daily Caller News Foundation on Thursday.
>
> The DCNF obtained a full copy of Hunter Biden's alleged laptop from former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani on Wednesday. The DCNF provided Robert Graham, the founder of the cybersecurity firm Errata Security, with a copy of the email and its metadata for forensic analysis.
>
> Graham, who has been cited as a cybersecurity expert in The Washington Post, the Associated Press, Wired, Engadget and other news and technology outlets, told the DCNF that he used a cryptographic signature found in the email's metadata to validate that Vadym Pozharsky, an advisor to Burisma's board of directors, emailed Hunter Biden on April 17, 2015.

What does the e-mail say? That Hunter introduced his father to the Ukraine businessmen who paid him ridiculous amounts of money. So Joe knew.

> In the email, Pozharsky thanked Hunter Biden for "inviting me to DC and giving

> an opportunity to meet your father and spent [sic] some time together."
>
> The New York Post first reported the email in October, describing it as a "smoking-gun" showing that Hunter Biden had introduced his father to the Burisma executive in 2015.

And a little bit later, Joe Biden used his political power to pressure the Ukraine government to stop investigating the people who were paying his son $50,000 a month.

> The email was sent less than a year before Joe Biden pressured former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to fire a prosecutor who was reportedly investigating the gas company in return for a $1 billion loan guarantee.

So, it turns out that this has been a legitimate scandal all along, raising questions about whether Joe Biden sold access and/or influence to foreign countries for cash. At the very least, we know that Joe Biden lied again and again about his knowledge of his son's business deals.

When you are watching the mainstream news media, please keep in mind that they have no interest in telling you the truth. And when you are using social media, keep in mind that they are actively suppressing content that could hurt their preferrred presidential candidate. It's called election interference.

Joe Biden promises to confiscate all multi-round magazines, disarm church-goers

October 31, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

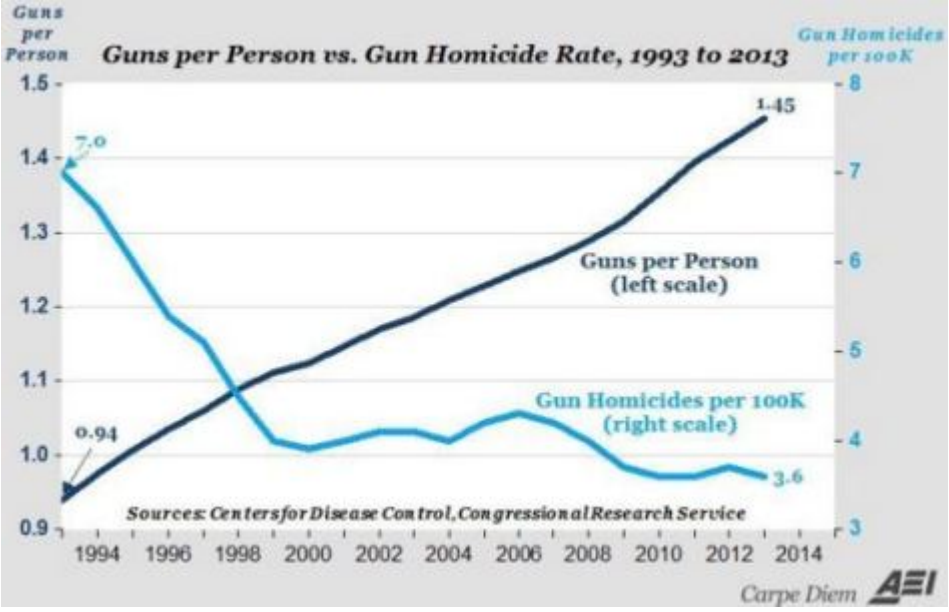

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

This is a repeat post, I just want to remind everyone where Biden stands on legal firearm ownership from his past comments.

In the wake of mass shootings by people who don't obey the law, Democrat presidential candidates are vowing to confiscate ALL semi-automatic pistols and rifles, as well as ban magazines with more than one bullet. They believe that by taking weapons from law-abiding Americans, they will be able to stop violence committed by those who don't care about laws. Will that work?

First, let's get the news from the Daily Wire:

> Democrat presidential candidate Joe Biden went far to the left on the issue of guns on Monday, telling reporters that he wants to ban magazines that hold "multiple bullets" — which means all magazines.
>
> Biden, who made the remarks while talking to the press during a campaign stop in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, said there should be "no compromise" on guns as he also voiced his anger at the state of Texas for allowing people to carry firearms in places of worship to defend themselves from those who seek to harm others.
>
> "And we're talking about loosening access, to have guns, to be able to take them into places of worship, I mean, it is absolutely irrational. It's totally irrational," Biden said. "The idea that we don't have elimination of assault-type weapons, magazines that can hold multiple bullets in them, it's absolutely mindless."
>
> "It's no violation of the Second Amendment," Biden falsely claimed.
>
> Biden's extreme gun control push, if ever enacted, would effectively ban the

> overwhelming majority of handguns, all semi-automatic shotguns and rifles, and many hunting rifles which use magazines.

We've actually had a number of mass shootings where left-wing atheists attacked Christians during worship. I guess Joe Biden has an alternative plan for protecting Christians from far-left atheist Democrats. Maybe he plans to show up at the mass shootings in churches, and have a talk with the shooters about following gun laws.

Not to be outdone, here's another candidate promising to ban all semi-automatic weapons, pistols AND rifles.

The Daily Wire reports:

> Far-left Democratic presidential candidate Robert Francis O'Rourke announced over the weekend that if he is elected president, he intends to confiscate tens of millions of semi-automatic firearms from law-abiding Americans.
>
> O'Rourke made the remarks while campaigning in Charlottesville, Virginia, on Saturday when he was asked by a reporter how he plans to address peoples' fears that the government is going to come and take many of their semi-automatic firearms.
>
> O'Rourke responded: "I want to be really clear, that's exactly what we are going to do. Americans who own [the technically undefinable sub-class of semi-automatic firearms referred to as "assault weapons"] will have to sell them to the government."

It's amazing to me that there is so much evidence that gun violence is caused by fatherlessness, but Democrats don't want to do anything about it. If we stopped giving women welfare money for having babies before they are married, gun violence would dry up in a second. We've always had access to guns in this country, but it was wasn't a problem when every child had a mother and father.

If strict laws were effective, then why do we see such high rates of gun violence precisely in Democrat-run areas where law-abiding people are prohibited from owning weapons to defend themselves from criminals? Mass shootings get a lot of press, but the truth is that more people died in Chicago last week in ordinary crimes than died in the most recent mass shooting in Odessa, TX.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above,compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

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- What do Democrats like Joe Biden think about the moral teachings of Jesus in the Bible?
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- The rights of parents of children with gender dysphoria during a Biden presidency

What adjustments should Christians expect during a Biden / Harris administration?

November 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Enraged Joe Biden howls out his hatred for Bible-believing Christians

One of my male co-workers who is a Christian voted for Biden – Harris on Monday. He was laughing at the notion that Kamala Harris was the most progressive senator in the senate. (His sources of information are Reddit and Star Wars movies) I got into the team chat and mentioned that GovTrack was the source for that, but other groups (e.g. – Heritage) had rated her most liberal, too.

So, I thought I would write a post that explains to Christians what they can expect in a Biden-Harris administration. I found an amazing article on Christian Post written by a woman who did a ton of research on it.

Biden-Harris intends to eliminate all state-level limits on abortion:

> Biden has promised, within his first 100 days, legislative and executive actions that will not only target *all* state restrictions on abortion, but also decimate religious charities at home and abroad.
>
> First, Biden commits that **"his Justice Department will do everything in its power to stop the rash of state laws that so blatantly violate the constitutional right to an abortion, such as so-called TRAP laws, parental notification requirements, mandatory waiting periods, and ultrasound requirements."**
>
> Biden chose in Kamala Harris a champion of abortion so extreme she supports aborting viable unborn infants up until birth, which the great majority of Americans do not. She even voted against requiring medical care for live babies born in botched abortions.

So, I'm expecting that a Biden-Harris administration overturns every ultrasound and waiting period law in all 50 states.

Biden-Harris is likely to eliminate all faith-based charitable organizations that accept the Bible's teaching on LGBT issues.

She writes:

> Tucked in the weeds of his platform is the statement that "many government-funded foster care and adoption agencies still discriminate against LGBTQ+ families." This is followed by the promise to reverse the ***"broad religious exemptions* to existing nondiscrimination laws and policies across federal agencies."**
>
> This is wonk-speak for "if you have views and policies consistent with a biblical or religious understanding of marriage, sexuality and gender, Biden's administration will shut you down." The ability of agencies to deliver care is impacted in myriad ways by government regulation, funding and taxation. Thousands of children and families have already been harmed nationwide by politicians who have used these means to put ideology before compassion, ***solely because*** they disagreed with a provider's religious views.
>
> […]An estimated 8,000 faith-affirming agencies will be affected by this case. Unconscionable numbers of families, children and expectant mothers will be denied homes, adoption, and critical life-giving care if Biden's agenda passes, cementing into law this intolerance toward religious providers.

Do you remember how in certain Democrat-run states, Christian business owners have been persecuted for refusing to affirm atheist views on LGBT issues? That happens because those states have SOGI laws. SOGI laws make it illegal for Christians to take the Bible seriously as an authority on LGBT issues. I've already blogged about the Equality Act, but this will be a top priority of the Biden-Harris administration. Basically, if makes every state a SOGI state.

Here's more from the article:

> Biden promises to **"make enactment of the Equality Act during his first 100 days as President a top legislative priority."** This misnamed Act renders punishable by law ***"discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity…in a wide variety of areas… public accommodations and facilities, education, federal funding, employment, housing*…** ***to include places or establishments that provide (1) exhibitions, recreation, exercise, amusement, gatherings, or displays; (2) goods, services, or programs; and (3) transportation services."*** Religious organizations nationwide — under religious freedom protections — provide *all* these services to poor communities nationwide. But not if Biden prevails. He promises to destroy those protections: "***[t]he bill prohibits the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 from providing a claim,***

> ***defense, or basis for challenging such protections."[iii]***
>
> The 25-page "Biden Plan to Advance LGBTQ+ Equality in America and Around the World" is masterfully comprehensive. It includes:
>
> - **bans on counseling minors**
> - **reinterpretation of Title IX** to erase both athletic opportunities and privacy protections for women and girls in locker rooms and restrooms
> - **forcing medical insurers and providers to carry out gender transition** therapies (including surgery)
> - using federal funds for gender transition therapies
> - **forcing homeless shelters, prisons and schools to allow access by opposite sex transgender individuals** to women's housing and restroom facilities.

> Indeed, once the Act is signed, ***"Biden will also direct his Cabinet to ensure immediate and full enforcement of the Equality Act across all federal departments and agencies."*** The word **"enforce"** occurs **four** times in this introductory section alone, promising a dictatorial sweep of all personnel, agencies and programs in the name of eradicating "discrimination."

If you think that Democrats will show any respect for the consciences of Christians, you're mistaken. You only have to look at how the government went after Hobby Lobby and Little Sisters of the Poor to force them to cover abortion-causing contraceptives. They have no respect for Bible-believing Christians. On the contrary, they have a sick and perverse delight in forcing Christians to choose between believing the Bible and having a job, so they don't starve.

Also, your taxpayer dollars will be used to push for abortion and LGBT activism all over the world:

> Biden's Agenda extends around the globe, to be proclaimed his inaugural week in a "Presidential Memorandum prioritizing his administration's support for LGBTQ+ human rights and development worldwide" followed by:
>
> - **Immediate appointments of "senior leaders across the government**," including at the National Security Council, US Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of State, and in the judiciary
> - "[P]ublic information campaigns" overseas
> - **Prioritizing US foreign assistance to empower LGBTQ+ organizations and activists**

> - **Ensuring "development assistance will be screened and evaluated" accordingly**
>
> This campaign will be waged with **"the full range of our diplomatic tools and foreign assistance," up to and including sanctions on non-compliant countries**.
>
> What happens when this far-reaching ideological assault encounters desperate needs for humanitarian assistance in countries with traditional or religious frameworks? With governments deemed to "foster a climate of intolerance" or engage in violations of LGBTQ+ rights, **"the Biden Administration will aggressively use pressure tactics, as appropriate, including sanctions."**

So, if I had the freedom to speak to my young Christian co-worker about what he had just voted for, this is what I would have said. Alas, I did not feel free to say this to him, because young people are intolerant and crazy when you disagree with them. The election is Tuesday, November 3rd. Please make your voice heard.

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Wayne Grudem responds to Christians who think arrogance is worse than infanticide

November 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump, Pence and Pompeo champion religious freedom at the United Nations

Laura send me this amazing article from the Christian Post, written by famous evangelical theologian Dr. Wayne Grudem. He was responding to a blue state pastor named John Piper. Piper has made a name for himself by emphasizing emotions, piety and "Christian hedonism". Let's take a look at what Wayne Grudem had to say about Christians who support Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

Here's the intro:

> [John Piper] and I have reached different conclusions about this year's presidential election. His October 22 article, "Policies, Persons, and Paths to Ruin," explained why he thought it would be wrong for him to support either candidate in this election.

Here is Grudem's summary of Piper's argument:

> 1. The personal sins of a leader can be as harmful to persons and to nations as morally evil laws.
>
> 2. Christians communicate a falsehood when we act as if policies and laws are more precious than being a certain kind of person.
>
> 3. The horrible sin of pride leads people to other sins, including defending abortion, and therefore voting for a clearly boastful candidate might also be indirectly supporting abortion.
>
> 4. Voting for either candidate would compromise a person's Christian witness

I have a friend in my office, Scott, who has exactly these views. He is pro-life and pro-

family, but he thinks voting for Trump's policies would be wrong, because of Trump's past moral failings.

Here's part of his response to point 1:

> Americans are perfectly free to say, "Trump's boastfulness offends me and I don't want to act that way myself." But if laws are passed (and upheld by the courts) that enforce the LGBT agenda, no creative professional like a cake decorator (or photographer or florist) will be free to say, "I believe same-sex marriage is morally wrong, and I won't use my artistic talent to decorate a cake celebrating same-sex marriage." No high school girl will be free to say, "I won't undress and change clothes for my gym class because there are boys in the locker room who claim to be girls." No Christian adoption agency will be free to say, "We will not place children with same-sex couples."
>
> And if Democrats gain control of our government and the Supreme Court, and enact their desired policies, no Christian taxpayer will be free to say, "I refuse to pay that portion of my taxes that the government is using to pay for abortions." No business owner will be free to say, "I will not buy medical insurance for my employees that pays for abortions and sex-change surgeries." There will be only two choices: violate your conscience or else be driven to bankruptcy or go to jail.

Trump's first four years not a parade of immoral actions:

> [A]fter his nearly four years in office, I would add that he has shown remarkable courage of his convictions, faithfulness to his campaign promises, steadfastness of purpose in spite of an astoundingly hostile press, incredible energy in the performance of his job, dignity and even eloquence in many formal speeches and ceremonies at home and abroad, respect and appreciation for his wife Melania and his sons and daughters, and a wide-ranging understanding of the hundreds of different issues that every president faces. In contrast to his past life, during his term in office there is not been even a hint of any sexual impropriety. He is sometimes boastful but on a number of occasions I have seen him publicly give credit to many other people for things that have been accomplished. And I think he has shown mature and wise judgment in a variety of situations that he has faced as president.

Biden's character not exemplary:

> It is easy to compare President Trump with a hypothetical "perfect" president and to conclude that he falls short, but that is not our choice. If Trump is not reelected, we will have President Biden, with an entirely different set of character flaws. The multiple allegations that Vice President Biden used his government office and influence to enrich members of his own family with millions of dollars from China, Russia, and Ukraine should be of deep concern, because using government power to enrich one's own family is the consistent characteristic of

> corrupt leaders in many countries of the world.

Conservative Christians occupy prominent positions in Trump's Cabinet, and they make many decisions that affect voters:

> Donald Trump is not the only person we are voting for. It is remarkable that the Trump administration has elevated so many self-professing evangelical Christians – far more than any in my lifetime – into positions of high influence in our government. They also provide role models for Americans. To vote for Trump as president is also to vote for Mike Pence as vice president, Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State, Ben Carson as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education, Russell Vought as director of the Office of Management and Budget, and numerous others. In addition, Trump has appointed numerous deeply committed Roman Catholics to various positions, the most recent being Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court. The character of these leaders is also a role model for the nation.

We will look at responses to the points 2-4 in another post.

For my part, I think that if Trump's character was going to be a major factor, it would all have come out in his first term. Instead, we've seen him act in a way that is friendly to evangelical Christians. I don't expect him to write systematic theology or do philosophical apologetics or discover a new example of cosmic fine-tuning. He doesn't have to be a Christian in order to push for laws and policies that allow me to run my Christian life-plan. I need to be able to earn money without compromising my values, and spend it on the Christian causes I care about. I need to be protected from people like Antifa and gay rights extremists, who don't seem to be at all concerned about moving from angry words to property damage to actual violence against those who disagree with them.

By the way, if you want a good review of Trump's achievements in different areas: economy, job creation, immigration, foreign policy, national security, defense, deregulation, agriculture, law and justice, energy and environment, transparency and accountability, health care, social programs, infrastructure and technology, education and veterans, you can find all that right here.

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Wayne Grudem responds to Christians who think law and policy are less important than piety

November 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump and his evangelicals: VP Mike Pence (L) and Sec. of State Mike Pompeo (R)

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>
> 4. Voting for either candidate would compromise a person's Christian witness

I covered point 1 in a previous post. Below, we'll cover points 2-4.

Here's part of his response to point 2:

> A presidential election is not deciding what is most important in all of life, which is certainly our relationship with Christ. Paul writes, “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. (Phil. 3:8). A presidential election is simply choosing the leaders of our government. In such a situation, the primary purpose is to decide what kind of government we will have, and in that situation policies and laws are not the only consideration, but they are the most important consideration.

Here’s part of his response to point 3:

> I do not think that “arrogance and boasting” are the primary motivations that lead people to support abortion rights. I think rather the primary motive is rebellion against God’s commands that forbid sex outside of marriage between a man and woman. The motive is a desire for sexual freedom without the responsibility of raising children. As for doctors who perform abortions, I think the primary motivation is greed.
>
> Piper refers to James 4:1-2 to show that support for his statement that “child-killing” comes from “self-absorbed arrogance and boasting.” But these verses specifically speak about coveting, not boasting, that leads to murder: “You desire and do not have, so you murder” (James 4:2).

Here’s part of his response to point 4:

> [I]f all evangelical Christians followed Piper’s example and decided to write in someone else’s name instead of voting for either Trump or Biden. The result would be an overwhelming landslide victory for Biden, because the largest single bloc of Trump supporters is evangelical Christians. In 2016, 80% of white evangelicals voted for Trump, while 16% voted for Clinton and 4% didn’t vote for president or voted for some other candidate. If that 4% of “vote for neither one” evangelical voters had been 5% or 6%, Hillary Clinton would have been president.
>
> So, if Trump loses the evangelical bloc, Biden wins. In fact, if *a significant number* of Christians decide not to vote for either Trump or Biden, the result will not be some ideal third-party president. It will be a Biden presidency which (in my opinion) will bring great harm to the nation.

This is really important. If you are going to share Grudem’s post on social media, cut and paste this above your link – this is the most important part:

> I differ with my friend John Piper about the results of a second term for President Trump. In Trump second term, I look forward to the appointment of more originalist judges (who will interpret the laws and not make new laws on their own), further legal restrictions on abortion, greater protections for religious freedom and freedom of conscience, lower taxes, fewer government regulations, a rapidly growing economy, low unemployment rates (especially significant for

> ethnic minorities), increased prosperity for people at every income level, additional history-making agreements between Israel and additional Arab nations, a clearheaded recognition of the economic, military, and information threat from China, a high value placed on human freedom and on personal accountability for committing crimes, increasing numbers of children eligible for taxpayer-supported school choice, a secure border followed by a comprehensive reform of our immigration system, and an increase in police presence in high crime neighborhoods, with a resulting decrease in crime.

That seems to me to be likely, given Trump's first term actions.

More:

> On the other hand, if evangelicals stay away from voting for either Biden or Trump, then then under a Biden presidency I would expect the appointment of hundreds of judges who take the law in their own hands and even consider themselves to be above the original meaning of the Constitution, laws that allow abortion up to the moment of birth and even after, the use of tax money to pay for abortions and gender reassignment surgery, the crippling of our economy with ever-increasing government control and ever-increasing taxes, increased unemployment, a weaker military unable to counter the increasing aggressiveness of China in the world's oceans, a Jimmy Carter-like foreign policy of appeasement, abandoning Israel to fend for itself in the Middle East, adding additional seats to make a liberal majority on the Supreme Court, draconian laws that compel artistic professionals to affirm the validity of same-sex marriage even when contrary to their consciences, a reinstatement of the Obama-era guidelines that required schools to allow biological males to use girls bathrooms, locker rooms and showers and to allow them to compete in women's sports, a massive increase in energy costs, ever-increasing restrictions on police forces, leading to an increase in crime, and the proliferation of violence and intimidation to nullify freedom of speech (in practice) for those who disagree with the liberal political agenda, open borders, sanctuary cities, and a complete federal takeover of our healthcare system.

I definitely think that Wayne Grudem's article showed a greater knowledge of what's going on in the real world than John Piper's article. We ought to be concerned about what our lives will really be like under the laws and policies of the next president. It doesn't matter how voting makes us feel, or how voting makes us look to others.

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Trump makes his case to black voters in opinion-editorial that appeared EVERYWHERE

November 2, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump had 4 years to build a record of achievements for blacks

In this post, I want to hit the high points of the case for Trump as president for black voters. Black voters are incredibly important in this election, because we've lost a lot of white voters who are focused on abortion, gay marriage, illegal immigration, etc. Things that Trump can't compete on. So let's see some of the reasons why a black voter might pull the lever for Donald Trump.

I found Trump's final address to black voters posted on the Dallas Weekly web site. I thought some of his points were interesting. Clearly, he thinks that he has done some things that out to get thoughtful blacks to give him another look.

> As your President, I've done more for the Black community than Democrats like Joe Biden have done in 47 years, and we are going to do so much more. As part of our efforts, we've unveiled my second term agenda called the "Platinum Plan" for Black Economic Empowerment, to ensure even more Black Americans have the opportunity to succeed over the next four years.
>
> The plan is built around the pillars of opportunity, security, prosperity and fairness. I've committed to adding 3 million new jobs for the Black community, creating 500,000 new Black-owned businesses and increasing access to capital in Black communities by almost $500 Billion to create an era of new prosperity and to finally close the wealth gap.
>
> We are increasing access to capital and economic empowerment for the Black community as a way to build Black generational wealth.
>
> […]The unemployment and poverty rates for Black Americans hit record lows just

before we were attacked by the China Virus. Wages are now growing faster than they have in over a decade, especially for blue-collar workers.

My Administration is fighting to stop illegal immigration, which hurts Black communities, protect school choice, giving parents more options to access better schools for their children, create new and high-paying jobs, and increase investment in low-income areas — these initiatives create unprecedented opportunities for long-forgotten communities across the country.

I was also honored to work with U.S. Senator Tim Scott to create the Opportunity Zones program established through the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which has already attracted $75 billion in new private investments and created 500,000 new jobs in struggling, underserved communities.

When it comes to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), it was my honor to be the first sitting President to invite all HBCU leaders to the White House, address the HBCU Week Conference and permanently fund these important schools through the FUTURE Act.

I am proud that we also passed landmark criminal justice reform to undo the damage of mass incarceration. This is helping people, who in many cases have served harsh sentences for non-violent crimes, to have a second chance at their American Dream. This is widely viewed as one of the greatest bipartisan victories in a long time, and a testament to what we can achieve together.

When there was increased violence and deaths in Democrat-controlled cities, we started Operation Legend, after young LeGend Taliferro and we are seeing results. When lawless criminals kept looting, burning and destroying Black businesses and communities, I said we needed peace, law and order in these same cities to keep communities, and families safe.

In Black communities across the nation, there’s been a reckoning to the reality that the Democrats have failed them for generations. D.C. Democrats are happy to leave urban communities mired with failing schools, no jobs and lost hope while wasting time and taxpayer money on baseless and partisan politics.

The truth is this: Democrats despise my America First agenda because it broke up their taxpayer-funded gravy train that enriched their friends and families, shipped jobs overseas, supported illegal immigrants and continued endless wars while leaving Black American families high and dry.

I will continue to work with any and all Americans who want to Make America Great Again by bringing back American jobs, improving our schools, building safer and more prosperous communities and reuniting families through meaningful justice reforms.

When I promised to stand for the forgotten men and women of this country—whether they live in Chicago or Charlotte, Detroit or Dubuque, or if they are black or white—I meant it. And that’s exactly what I’ve done.

In 2016, Trump got 8% of the black vote and 28% of the Hispanic vote. He needs to double those numbers in 2020, in order to guarantee a win over Biden.

The far-left The Hill reported on the polls:

> Rasmussen's most recent "National Daily Black Likely Voter" poll, which closed on Oct. 29, showed 31 percent of likely Black voters opting for Trump/Pence.
>
> […]And it's not just Black men, NPR reports, "Many Latino men are supporting President Trump this election." The story cites a recent New York Times/Siena College poll that shows that while Biden has a big lead among Hispanic women, he leads Trump by only eight points among Hispanic men.

I think this is interesting, because many white conservatives, including my neighbors and co-workers, look at my skin and think that they know how I will vote. They also think that I'm liberal about abortion, gay rights, gay marriage, religious liberty, divorce, etc. I don't want them to think they know me because of my skin color.

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Which presidential candidate will help minorites get a better education in better schools?

November 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the major issues affecting blacks and Hispanics in America is the issue of poor-performing public schools. Because the administrators and teachers are unionized, they are immune to criticism, discipline or termination for poor performance. And many of the administrators and teachers have no real-world experience at earning money in the private sector. Who will fix it?

Here's Daily Wire reporting on Trump in his own words:

> On Thursday, President Trump redeclared his commitment to enacting school choice, a conservative pitch most popular in the black American community, many of whom have grown weary of sending their children to government-funded public schools.
>
> Speaking at the "Transition to Greatness" roundtable, the president called upon Congress to enact school choice now, hailing it as the great "civil rights issue of our time."
>
> "We are renewing our call on Congress to finally enact school choice now, school choice is a big deal, because access to education is the civil rights issue our time," the president said. "I've heard that for the last, I would say year, it really is, it's the civil rights issue of our time."
>
> President Trump elaborated on the benefits of school choice by forcing underperforming schools to better improve their methods.
>
> "When you can have children go to a school where their parents want them to go, and it creates competition, and other schools fight harder, because all of a sudden they say, 'Wow, we're losing it, we have to fight hard,'" the president said. "It gets better in so many different ways, but there are groups of people against that. You have unions against it, you have others against it, and they're not against it for the right reasons, they were against it for a lot of the wrong reasons."

So basically, Trump wants schools to work more like companies in the private sector that are accountable to customers. When private sector companies compete, you get Amazon, Apple, Dell, Samsung, LG, etc. Competition gives you more choice, so you can find better quality for less money. Public schools don't work like that, and children suffer as a result.

And note:

> President Trump's push for school choice at this turbulent moment in history is not coincidental, being that black American voters routinely have expressed support for it alongside criminal justice reform, which the president helped to

> enact with the First Step Act.

The Washington Times reports on more differences:

> President Trump is pushing schools to reopen amid the COVID-19 pandemic, saying parents want it, the children can handle it and the economy needs it.
>
> Democratic presidential nominee Joseph R. Biden says the teachers don't want it, the children can spread the coronavirus and the country can't stomach another surge of COVID-19 cases he fears would result.
>
> […]Beyond school choice, Mr. Trump and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos have rescinded Obama administration rules on school discipline, racial disparities and gender identity, and have given states more flexibility in meeting federal mandates.

And here's Biden:

> Mr. Biden counters Mr. Trump's parent-centered approach to education with a teacher-centered platform, promising the money will flow to public education instead.
>
> Mr. Biden counters Mr. Trump's parent-centered approach to education with a teacher-centered platform, promising the money will flow to public education instead.
>
> He wants to triple federal spending on schools with significant low-income populations and require that much of that cover higher salaries for teachers. He also would increase the availability of student loan forgiveness for graduates who go on to work in education.
>
> Mr. Biden's campaign says he will hire up to 60,000 more psychologists for schools to help with what he warned is a mental health crisis.
>
> His unity platform, reached with former opponent Sen. Bernard Sanders of Vermont, opposes vouchers that support private schools and takes a dim view of public charter schools.
>
> The Biden-Sanders plan would impose bureaucratic standards for diversity and discipline on charter schools, cut off money for those deemed underperforming and impose an outright ban on federal money for for-profit charter schools.

I don't see the profit motive as a problem, as it is profits that causes people in the private sector to produce quality goods and services for their customers – or risk losing those customers to competitors who do a better job of pleasing customers.

You can see from this chart how well throwing money into a unionized monopoly has worked over time:

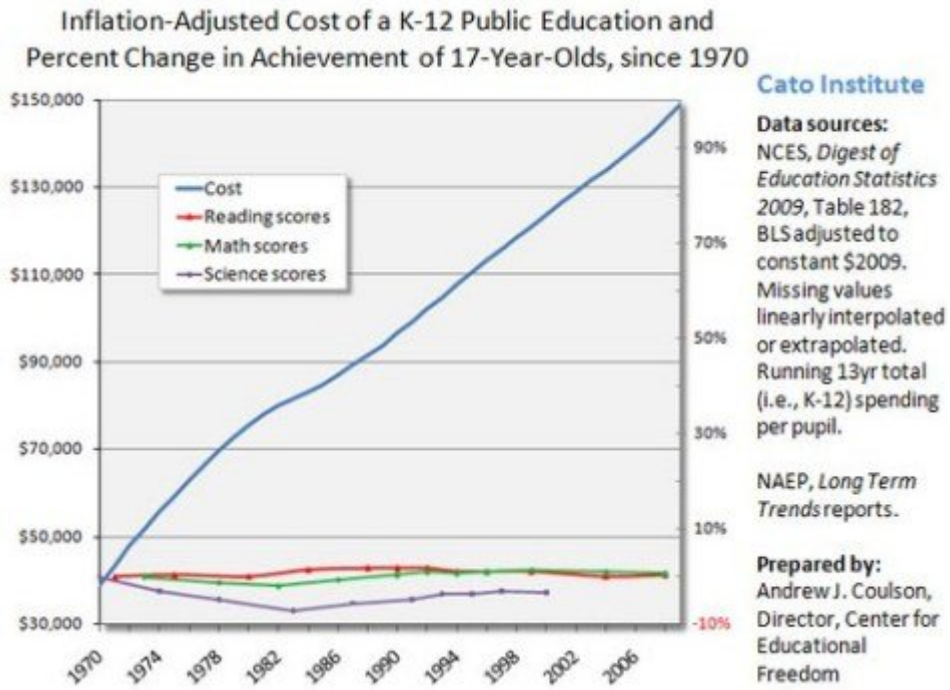

Cato Institute graphs education spending against test scores

In public schools, administrators and teachers are not paid more or less based on pleasing their customers (parents) by achieving results (student performance).

Reason.com is a libertarian web site, interviewed Education Secretary Betsy Devos. I liked this:

> **You are someone who has advocated for more choice, more local decision making, in education. But then you were thrust into the role of national education official. It had to be tempting to use that position to really push local governments to implement more of the ideas that you have. But your idea is that there shouldn't be some person in charge of telling everyone what to do. Do you ever feel this tension?**
>
> I do. The previous administration went exactly the opposite direction and overreached in multiple areas. Much of what I've had to do is come back and undo a lot of that. But at the same time, there are plenty of folks who've been critical of my not implementing all kinds of conservative policies that, in my view, would be desirable for students and their families. But I think my [approach] here has been one of restraint, and that I believe is ultimately a big accomplishment.
>
> I view this department as one that probably never should have been stood up. I think there are ample arguments for it having gotten more in the way of students and their futures than actually being any kind of value-add.
>
> **Should the Department of Education be abolished—or gradually abolished, perhaps?**
>
> I would not be at all unhappy to work myself out of a job. I think that states and local communities and, most importantly, the family has to be the epicenter of these decisions. The 40 years since this department has existed, there's been over a trillion dollars spent to close the achievement gaps. They haven't closed

> one little bit. They've only opened in multiple areas. So why would we continue to advocate for doing more of the same thing and expect something different?

Do you like having Betsy Devos in charge of education policy? I do. For me this is just another reason to support Trump for President.

Related posts

- Trump makes his case to black voters in opinion-editorial that appeared EVERYWHERE
- Wayne Grudem responds to Christians who think law and policy are less important than piety
- Wayne Grudem responds to Christians who think arrogance is worse than infanticide
- What adjustments should Christians expect during a Biden / Harris administration?
- Joe Biden promises to confiscate all multi-round magazines, disarm church-goers
- Forensic analysis: Burisma executive's email to Hunter Biden is 100% authentic
- Tucker Carlson plays (alleged) audio recording of Biden China deal
- Whistleblower Tony Bobulinski: Joe Biden knew about Hunter Biden's China deal
- What are the positions of Joe Biden and Donald Trump on abortion?
- Who has the better record on foreign policy? Donald Trump or Joe Biden?
- Does Joe Biden oppose fracking? Will he shut down the oil and gas industries?
- Fact-checkers silent as their hero Joe Biden repeats Politifact's LIE OF THE YEAR
- Joe Biden claims that he and his son Hunter aren't corrupt – is he lying?
- What do Democrats like Joe Biden think about the moral teachings of Jesus in the Bible?
- New study: Biden's tax hikes hit 80% of Americans, $6,500 less median household income
- NEW Hunter Biden e-mails reveal deal with Chinese investors and Communist Party officials
- The rights of parents of children with gender dysphoria during a Biden presidency

Here’s what is happening in Democrat-run states where Trump was leading last night

November 4, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

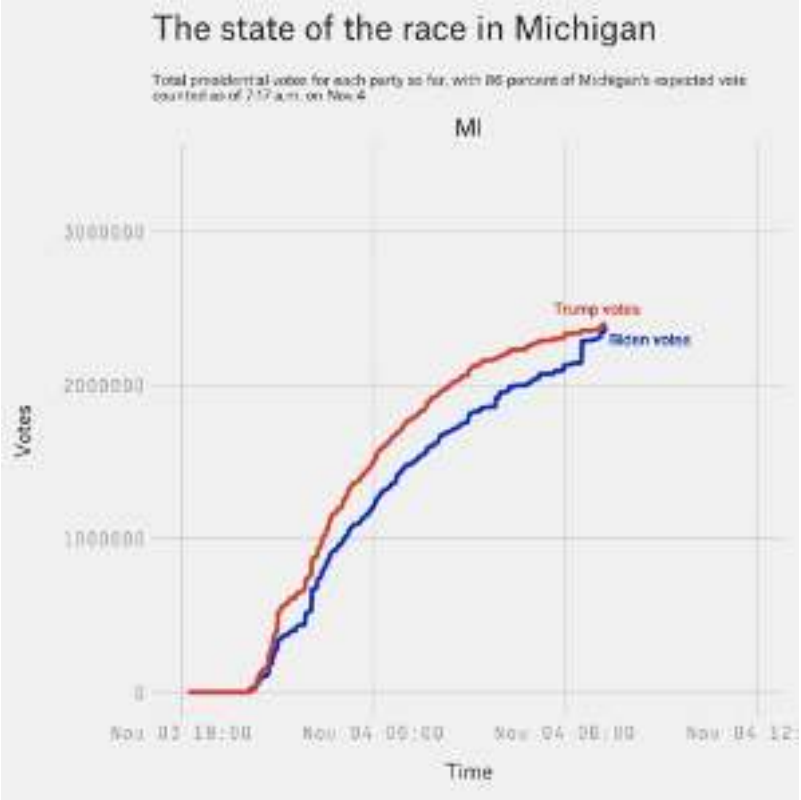

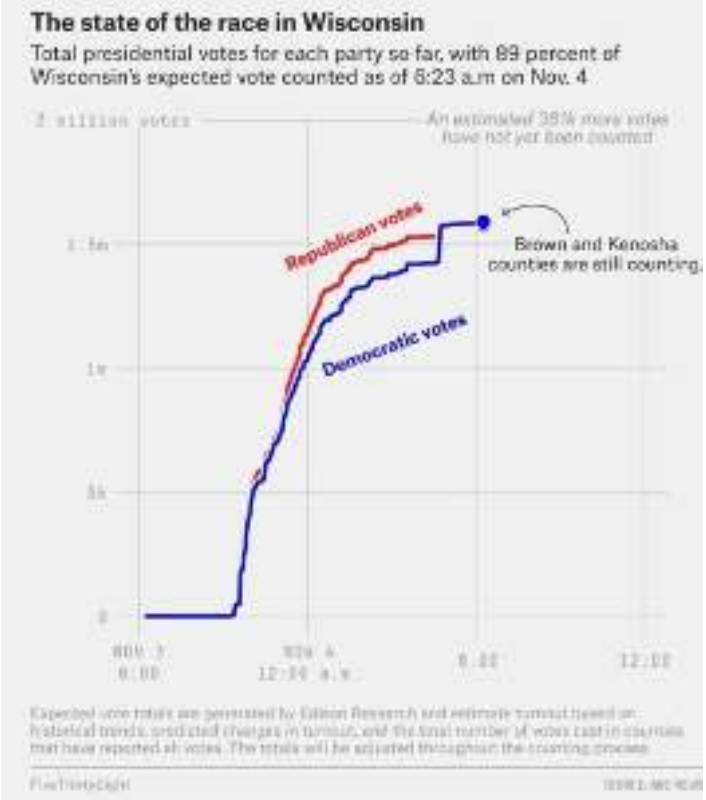

Source: Five Thirty Eight, ABC News

Trump campaign starts legal battle with Democrat-run states

November 5, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

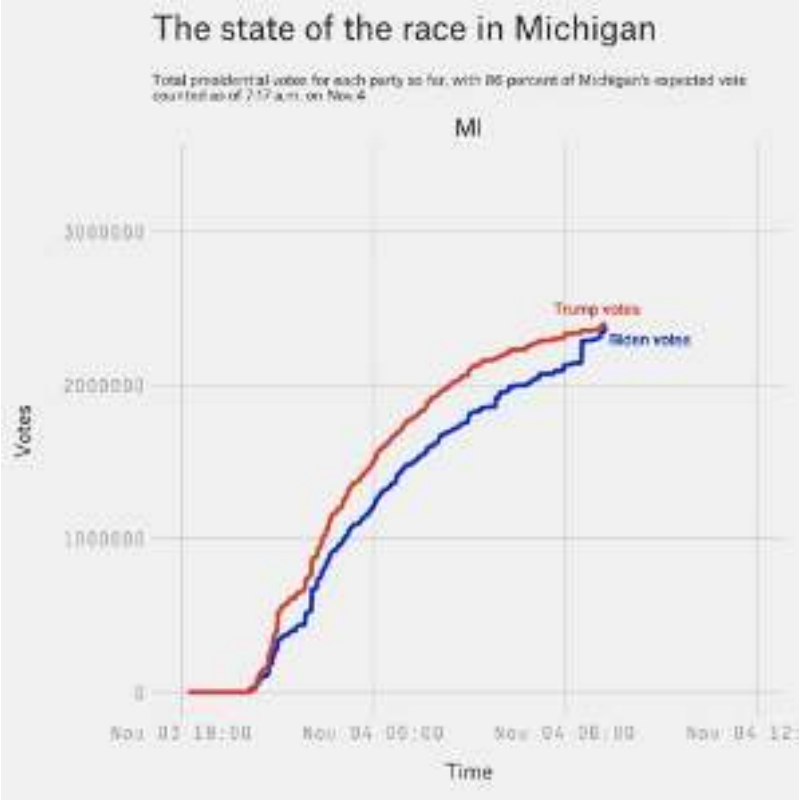

The Federalist:

> As of this writing, it appears that Democratic Party machines in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania are trying to steal the election.
>
> As reporters and commentators went to bed early Tuesday morning, all three states were too close to call, but President Trump led former Vice President Joe Biden by comfortable margins—far beyond what had been predicted in the polls. None of the networks called these states because enough mail-in ballots remained uncounted that it could swing either way, but Trump's position looked good.
>
> Then, something strange happened in the dead of the night. In both Michigan and Wisconsin, vote dumps early Wednesday morning showed 100 percent of the votes going for Biden and zero percent—that's zero, so not even one vote—for Trump.
>
> In Michigan, Biden somehow got 138,339 votes and Trump got none, zero, in an overnight vote-dump.
>
> When my Federalist colleague Sean Davis noted this, Twitter was quick to censor his tweet, even though all he had done was compare two sets of vote totals on the New York Times website. And he wasn't the only one who noticed—although

> on Wednesday it appeared that anyone who noted the Biden vote dump in Michigan was getting censored by Twitter.
>
> […]Then another mysterious all-Biden vote dump happened in Wisconsin. Biden miraculously overcame a 4.1-point Trump lead in the middle of the night thanks to vote dumps in which he got—you guessed it—100 percent of the votes and Trump got zero.
>
> […]Then another mysterious all-Biden vote dump happened in Wisconsin. Biden miraculously overcame a 4.1-point Trump lead in the middle of the night thanks to vote dumps in which he got—you guessed it—100 percent of the votes and Trump got zero.

I noticed that the Michigan Secretary of State is a former employee of the Southern Povery Law Center, a far-left hate-group that's been plagued with sexual scandals.

Just The News:

> President Trump's campaign on Wednesday began assembling an all-star legal team to file challenges to election regularities in several battleground states, starting with a Court of Claims lawsuit in Michigan.
>
> Among the lawyers the president is activating include his private attorney Jay Sekulow, who will help campaign lawyers with matters before the Supreme Court as well as former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani and former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, officials said.
>
> Sidney Powell, the lawyer for former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn, may also be called upon, officials said.
>
> The legal team's first stop was Michigan, where the campaign filed an action in the Court of Claims seeking to halt vote counting until irregularities are addressed, campaign manager Bill Stepien announced.
>
> "As votes in Michigan continue to be counted, the presidential race in the state remains extremely tight as we always knew it would be. President Trump's campaign has not been provided with meaningful access to numerous counting locations to observe the opening of ballots and the counting process, as guaranteed by Michigan law," Stepien said. "We have filed suit today in the Michigan Court of Claims to halt counting until meaningful access has been granted. We also demand to review those ballots which were opened and counted while we did not have meaningful access. President Trump is committed to ensuring that all legal votes are counted in Michigan and everywhere else."
>
> A separate team led by Giuliani was heading to Pennsylvania, where the campaign had concerns about counting in Philadelphia.

Chin up, buttercups. It's not over.

Project Veritas documenting Democrats committing voter fraud in multiple states

November 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fact checkers suppressing evidence of voter fraud
Three videos from the Project Veritas document voter fraud.

Michigan:

Nevada:

Pennsylvania:

Meanwhile, on Facebook, partisan Democrat “fact checkers” are marking evidence of voter fraud as “missing context”. You can’t post evidence of voter fraud committed by Democrats unless you have more context explaining that it’s OK for Democrats to commit voter fraud. This is called “fact-checking” by “non-partisan” journalists.

Christian woman finds a way to discuss her faith with non-Christians

November 8, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting article where a Christian woman explains how she used to share her testimony with non-Christians. But that wasn't working. So she decided to try something different.

She writes:

> I'll never forget the first time I shared my personal testimony with a non-Christian.
>
> When the opportunity arose and I shared my story with an unbelieving friend, she replied, "That's so cool. I'm so happy you found something that works for you."
>
> *For me?*
>
> "It's not about what works *for me*," I said, trying to hide my discouragement. "It's about what's true for everyone."
>
> "That doesn't make sense," she responded. "That's *your experience*, not mine. I had a similar revelation when I realized I could leave the church, and I've become a better person for *my* decision. Just as you were freed from your heaviest burdens by finding God, I was freed from mine by leaving God behind."
>
> I was devastated but I chalked it up to my friend's hardheartedness. I decided to shake the dust off my feet and look forward to the next opportunity.
>
> But time after time of sharing my testimony resulted in similar responses. People expressed enthusiasm that I was happy, that Christianity worked for me, and that I had "found my niche." Yet no one considered my experience as anything more than just that—my own personal experience.

> […]I had been taught that sharing what God had done in my life was the ideal way to witness to non-Christians. A personal testimony was interesting yet non-confrontational, compelling but inoffensive. And yet, despite having shared my testimony with dozens of unbelievers, not a single person felt challenged to consider the truth claims of Christianity.

She noticed that her approach wasn't actually in the Bible. There was a different approach being demonstrated by Jesus, and later by his disciples.

She writes:

> When Jesus called his first disciples, he taught truth and provided evidence (miracles) to support his claims, then he asked people to follow him (Luke 5:1–11). In fact, this was his method whenever he went into new regions (see Luke 4:14–44; John 4:7–26). People decided to follow Jesus not on blind faith or a subjective feeling, but based on the evidence they had seen and heard.[i]
>
> Jesus also used evidence to assuage the doubts of even those who had been with him a long time. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin, who leapt in the womb during Mary's visit (Luke 1:39–45), baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, heard God's voice from heaven, and saw the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus in bodily form like a dove (Luke 3:21–22). Yet when John experienced unexpected suffering, he began to doubt.
>
> Jesus didn't respond as many do today, by insisting that John "just believe" or "have faith" or "prayer harder." Rather, he responded with more evidence, saying, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." (Matt. 11:2–6).
>
> […]At Pentecost, the apostle Peter offered signs and wonders, fulfilled prophecy, and relayed eyewitness testimony to persuade people from all over the Roman Empire that the most reasonable explanation for what they were seeing was not morning drunkenness, but a risen Messiah (Acts 2:1–41).
>
> On his missionary journeys, the apostle Paul reasoned with the Jews from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that Jesus was the Messiah who needed to suffer and rise from the dead (Acts 17:1–3, 17). And he reasoned with the Gentiles from outside the Scriptures, making a case with their own accepted beliefs to convince them (Acts 17:17–34).
>
> In fact, in describing his mission, Paul told the Philippians, "I am put here for the defense of the gospel" (1:7, 16). This word translated defense is the same word from which we get our English word "apologetics," meaning to make reasoned arguments or to provide evidence as justification. Using this same word, Peter commanded believers to "always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you"(1 Pet. 3:15).

So, she decided to dump the testimony approach, and try the Biblical approach. But she had to change it a little bit, since she couldn't perform miracles herself:

> We are not eyewitnesses to Jesus's life and resurrection, but we have the accounts of those who were. We don't typically see miracles, but we have millennia of biblical scholarship and archaeology that provide reasons to believe the accounts are trustworthy. We don't often hear God speaking audibly or see him parting seas, but we have significant scientific evidence that shows the universe had a beginning, and millennia of observation to confirm the scientific principle that everything that begins to exist has a cause.

I think a lot of Christians never move on from approach she described that wasn't getting results. And there's a reason for that – studying evidence is hard work. But I can tell you from my experience as a software engineer, there is no better way to convince other people to adopt your view than to show them working code that produces results. If they have a prototype, they will adopt your design. Similarly with Christianity. If you have evidence, then you will be persuasive.

When talking about spiritual things with non-Christians, always remember the joke about the two men walking in the woods who meet a bear. One man starts to put on his running shoes. The other man says "what are you doing? you can't outrun a bear!" And the first man says "I don't have to. I only have to outrun you". It's the same with apologetics. You don't have to be William Lane Craig to talk about your faith to non-Christians. You just have to know more than your non-Christian opponent knows about evidence.

The way things are going these days with the public schools and the mainstream news media, this is actually pretty easy to do. One or two introductory books on the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning for intelligent life, the origin of biological information, the origin of body plans, the historical reliability of the New Testament, the minimal facts case for the resurrection, etc. will do the job. You might need another one on philosophical challenges like evil, suffering, divine hiddenness, etc. But we're talking no more than 5 books, and you'll be effective in the vast majority of your conversations. If you can only get one book, I like Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow's "Is God Just a Human Invention?" best.

Some specific instances of alleged voter fraud that need to be investigated

November 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Facebook fact checkers anxious to crown Joe Biden president

Facebook and Twitter are urging me to accept a Joe Biden / Kamala Harris socialist presidency, and nevermind all the reports of voter fraud. After all, they say, I shouldn't be like the Democrats of the last 4 years, refusing to accept the results of an election and resorting to fraudulent Democrat-funded conspiracy theories to malign President Trump.

Here's the latest from The Federalist:

> Earlier this week, Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson denounced the lawsuit filed by President Trump's campaign as "frivolous," designed to spread "misinformation" and "sow seeds of doubt among our voters about the integrity of our elections process."
>
> The lawsuit alleges that Republican election observers, known as "poll challengers," had been denied access to counting stations to observe the opening of absentee ballots, as required under state law.
>
> When I was in the room it was very clear that we were outnumbered, I would say three to one," Nesbitt said. Republican and Democrat poll challengers have different types of credentials, making it easy to tell how many Democratic challengers there were compared to Republican. Nesbitt estimates there were about 1,200 people in the hall but only about fifty or sixty GOP poll challengers—not enough to cover all of the tables where ballots were being counted.
>
> Even so, when these Republican poll challengers came into the hall, the ballot-

counting stopped. “It wasn’t too long after I got into the room that it became very apparent that there was no rush to be counting anything,” Nesbitt said. “For about four hours, over ninety percent of the counting boards had no activity.”

Asked why they stopped, Nesbitt replied, “I believe that they were trying to wait for us to leave, because we had an influx of volunteers who came into the room following the union members.”

The waiting seemed to work—if only because city election workers would not allow credentialed Republican poll challengers back into the hall if they left for any reason. “Once we left we were not allowed to return. So if you left for a water break or to go get a meal you were not allowed, Republicans were not allowed to be replaced.”

Not only did the city election workers refuse to replace GOP observers who left, they also began expelling them on trumped-up infractions. “The first person I became aware of that was removed, was an attorney who was observing and he adjusted his face mask,” Nesbitt said. “And the election workers cited that as grounds for removal.”

That wasn’t all. When election workers expelled a Republican poll challenger, the ballot counters erupted in cheers. “That was the first one that I had heard very large cheers for,” Nesbitt said. “I’ll admit, at first I had no idea what was going on. I didn’t know why the election workers would be so boisterous over something. But he was escorted out by the police.”

Other GOP observers were kicked out for doing their job and challenging ballots, which election workers claimed was “hindering the process,” according to Nesbitt. She went on:

So what many poll challengers were actually seeing was that when the ballots were scanned and it did not match a voter in the electronic poll book, and it did not match a voter in the supplemental paper poll book, which was provided due to Michigan’s law that allows for same-day registration, they were still allowing those ballots to go through and be counted. And that is when the GOP poll challengers were issuing those challenges. So they were either being ignored or kicked out when they were doing that.

The ballot-counters were also not allowing Republican poll challengers to observe the ballot supplication process. If an absentee ballot can’t be read by the machine for whatever reason, the counters get out a blank ballot and fill it out with the information from the damaged ballot. This is supposed to be observed by poll challengers from both parties to make sure the counters aren’t changing anything from the original ballot.

But whenever Republican observers were present, said Nesbitt, “They would position their bodies in the way, and other election, workers at that counting board would position their bodies in the way, to prohibit us from being able to witness what was happening. Some would complain. And, you know, require the

> pole challenger to move farther away, you know, move six feet away because of COVID. It was very clear that they did not want us to see what was happening."
>
> If a GOP observer raised a concern about this, they were kicked out.
>
> During this time, explained Nesbitt, it wasn't entirely clear who was in charge or who was calling the shots. "It was very hard to see the hierarchy in the room."
>
> As Republican poll challengers kept getting kicked out for trying to do their jobs, Nesbitt took out her phone to record it. She sent a short video clip to her husband, state Sen. Aric Nesbitt, who posted it on Twitter.

> My wife just sent this video of Detroit election workers cheering every time a @migop attorney is removed from the TCF Center, where absentee ballot counting is happening. She says they do this every time they eject a GOP poll watcher & that Dem watchers outnumber GOP 3:1. pic.twitter.com/Sx1aHCoChY
>
> — Aric Nesbitt (@aricnesbitt) November 4, 2020

> Nesbitt says she never saw a Democratic poll challenger be removed the entire time she was there, only Republicans, even though Democrats were doing the same kinds of things—leaving to get food or water, adjusting their masks, observing the process and challenging ballots. Some of the Democratic poll challengers, adds Nesbitt, were wearing Joe Biden campaign shirts and "Medicare for All" masks
>
> Every time the Republican poll challengers tried to meet up to discuss what was going on, they were harassed by the city workers, the ballot-counters, and the Democratic poll challengers, "because of social distancing."
>
> "It was very clear that they were targeting us and finding any reason to get us removed."
>
> Nesbitt finally decided to leave after ballot-counters flatly refused to process military ballots in her presence. There were approximately 5,000 military ballots that all had to be transposed onto a blank form because the vice president had been omitted from them, Nesbitt explained. "When they started to distribute those ballots I was at a table to observe, and they would not begin the processing while I was standing there, despite all of the workers being at the table."
>
> "I'll admit I felt very defeated and like our efforts were almost futile. At that point, that is when I decided to leave."

The Michigan Secretary of State is a former board member of the Southern Poverty Law Center, an anti-Christian hate group that was linked to domestic terrorism. It has been recently involved in sexual harassment scandals.

This isn't the only problem with Democrat voter fraud. There's one in Nevada, where dead people voted:

> On Oct. 9 this year, Fred Stokes Jr. was mailed a ballot in Clark County, Nevada, for the upcoming presidential election just less than 30 days away. Three weeks

> later, the county confirmed the ballot's receipt on Halloween and marked it off as "completed." There remained only one problem with Stokes' absentee ballot counted on the fall holiday: Fred Stokes Jr. had been dead for three years.
>
> According to the gravestone shown below, Stokes died at the age of 92 in June 2017.

Apparently, this one one example of hundreds of dead people voting.

In Pennsylvania, there was more voter fraud:

> A Pennsylvania mailman has said in a sworn affidavit that he was ordered by supervisors to collect and submit late ballots, which he said supervisors then backdated so that they appeared to have been mailed in time.

More Nevada:

> A whistleblower claims to have seen a Biden-Harris van bringing ballots to a counting center in Nevada, according to the Trump campaign.
>
> The whistleblower said he went for a walk on his lunch break around the counting center and spotted a Biden-Harris van unloading boxes of ballots, said conservative activist Matt Schlapp at a press conference organized by the Trump campaign in Las Vegas.
>
> "These people who were involved in this activity then decided to create a human shield around what they were doing in the van," said Mr. Schlapp, who is chairman of the American Conservative Union.
>
> The ballots were filled out and the envelopes were resealed, he said.

Wisconsin:

> County and municipal clerks and poll workers across Wisconsin may have unlawfully altered witness statements on thousands of mail-in ballots across the state, "The Dan O'Donnell Show" has learned.
>
> Wisconsin Statute 6.86 provides that an absentee ballot must be signed by a witness, who is also required to list his or her address. If a witness address is not listed, then the ballot is considered invalid and must be returned to the voter to have the witness correct.
>
> Instead, multiple sources tell "The Dan O'Donnell Show," municipal clerks and vote counters across the state simply filled out witness signatures themselves. Acting on false and unlawful advice from the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC), these clerks may have inadvertently invalidated thousands of absentee votes.

More Pennsylvania:

> A Pennsylvania poll watcher says the ability of overseers to supervise ballot-counting in Pittsburgh on Election Day was hamstrung by a setup in which

> observers were set too far away from ballots to make any meaningful observation of the process.
>
> David Shestokas, a Chicago-based lawyer who joined several dozen other lawyers and Allegheny County residents to poll-watch in Pittsburgh on Tuesday, told Just the News that ballot monitors "had no input and no ability to watch anything."
>
> […]"We literally had no input and no ability to watch anything," he said. "As far as I'm concerned, each and every one of those ballots was opened illegally."

Facebook has been dutifully marking all these news stories and videos alleging voter fraud as "false news", in order to help their Demcorat allies. But I am linking to them here because I think they are interesting. People should know why Trump is taking the Democrats to court.

Why I admire people in the armed forces more than famous entertainers

November 10, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've noticed that many Christians can tell me a lot about famous entertainers. It doesn't matter if it's singers, musicians, actors, athletes, etc., they seem to know details of their biographies, achievements, etc. And it doesn't really matter if those people are Christians, or whether they have performed actions consistent with a Christian worldview in their private lives.

Anyway, speaking for myself, I mostly admire two kinds of people. The first kind is the kind I blog about here all the time: Christian scholars engage non-Christians intellectually using logic and evidence. The second kind, as you can tell from my reading list, is people who distinguish themselves in conflict with those who oppose the principles and policies that allow me to live out my Christian life. And I am especially interested when people who are fighting evil (imperialists, Nazis, socialists, communists, leftists, etc.) exhibit Christ-like character in risking their lives to save others, or in giving their lives to save others.

Lt. Walt Chewning charges unto burning F-6F Hellcat to save trapped pilot

I have a war story to tell you that happened on November 10th, 1943.

> Lieutenant (later Lieutenant Commander) Walter Lewis Chewning of Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, steps on the burning fuel tank of an F6F-3 Hellcat flown by Ensign (later Lieutenant) Byron Milton Johnson of Potter, Nebraska to effect a successful rescue of the pilot on November 10, 1943. Johnson had flown out to USS Enterprise from Barbers Point, Hawaii, enroute to Makin Atoll in the Gilberts to support the United States Army invasion, which occurred on November 20, 1943.

> The afternoon of November 10, Johnson took off in F6F Hellcat Number 30 for a routine training exercise. He immediately developed engine trouble and requested an emergency landing. He was waved off three times as he struggled to maintain control, but his tail hook caught the third arresting gear wire, and Johnson's Hellcat was slammed into the deck, coming to rest in the port catwalk. The plane came to rest on its external belly fuel tank, which started to leak. As the engine vibrated horribly as the propeller bent itself on the deck, sparks ignited the fuel. The hard landing had jammed Johnson's canopy closed, shearing the retaining pin; he could not exit the plane. Chewning, who had joined the ship October 2, 1943 as Enterprise new catapult officer, scrambled out of the catwalk and came through the smoke. Stepping on the burning belly tank, he forced open the canopy and pulled Johnson to safety.

He received the two highest non-combat medals available:

> Chewning was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his actions.

He was a well-educated and accomplished person before joining the Navy:

> Chewning played soccer and Lacrosse at Cornell while studying Mechanical Engineering, breaking his rib and left ankle in one game. He graduated in 1936 and studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before joining the Navy in January 1941. He was the assistant to the Chief Engineer at the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania before joining USS Enterprise. He served as Enterprise's catapult officer until December 1944, when he transferred to Dutch Harbor Naval Air Station in Alaska as ordinance officer. Chewning served in the Navy until December 1949; he also was awarded the Bronze Star. After the war he assisted research and development for various aeronautical companies, the United States Air Force, and the fledgling National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Motion picture film of the crash, taken from Enterprise's bridge, was shown as part of the television program "Victory at Sea" on January 25, 1953. Chewning and Johnson gave interviews to several newspapers about the accident after the program aired.

You can see a video clip of the rescue here, from 5:35 to 6:00. I found a colorized version of the picture above here:

Lt. Walt Chewning charges unto burning F-6F Hellcat to save trapped pilot
This image was colourized from the original by Paul Reynolds.

What I thought was interesting about Chewning was how he had everything going for him in terms of his education and career, but he chose to join the Navy anyway, in order to defend his country from Japanese imperialism. Those who understand how the Japanese treated prisoners and conquered peoples will know which side of that conflict was good, and which side was evil. Chewning wasn't some sort of loser who took risks for fun and thrills. It had to be a risk where the prize was worth the risk. And he had the humility to consider others better than himself, so that their life was worth the risking of his own. Many people on the secular left who like to talk about how generous, compassionate and virtuous they are are unable to make moral judgments against evils like Japanese imperialism – much less take self-sacrificial action against them.

I just think that it's important for young Christians to have the right kind of heroes. The heroes who are promoted to young Christians by the cultural elites are not usually the right role models. And there is a reason for that. The secular leftists don't want young Christians to be emulating people who excel according to the standards of the Christian worldview. We are in a religion where self-sacrificial love is the centerpiece. Taking trouble on yourself for someone else. Doing your job, when it goes against your own self-interest. Let's not allow a bunch of godless socialist celebrities to pick and choose who we hold in high regard.

What are we learning about vote counting from monitors and whistleblowers

November 11, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

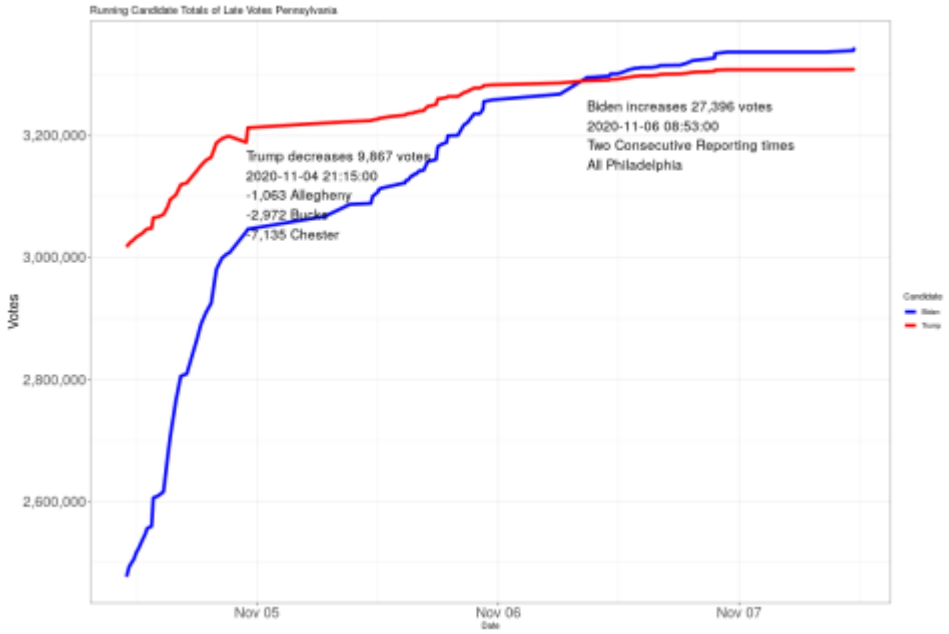

Running totals of late votes in Pennsylvania
Let's take a look at the latest stories.

Here's a new statistical analysis from William Briggs, writing for The Stream:

> There's a lot of chatter online about statistical oddities in several states, and I've been asked to analyze the votes in Pennsylvania. That work is ongoing, and at the moment, I'm working with limited data. Still, I think there are clear signs that something untoward happened in the Keystone State. Here are a couple of telling examples.
>
> I've gotten official county-level timed voting data that started at 11:00 on November 4, the day after the election, to 11:29 on November 7, which is Saturday. So, these are all late vote counts. They start, county by county, where the vote left off on election night.
>
> [Above] is a picture of the running totals by the time the votes were added, summed across all counties, during those time periods. They do not start at 0, but where things were after election night.
>
> The early gains for Biden are mainly from Philadelphia, Allegheny, Montgomery, Chester and Berks counties. A simple plot (click to see: it's large) shows the size of vote additions for both candidates, when new vote totals (greater than 0) were added by county (and not all counties added votes after election day).
>
> All goes well for Trump until election night, November 4, at 9:15 pm, when he loses just under 10,000 votes. Curiously, this loss is from three different counties simultaneously: -1,063 in Allegheny; -2,972 in Bucks; -7,135 in Chester. Biden

> never lost any votes (at least, not in this late voting).
>
> This does not mean the decreases happened at that moment. Rather, that's when they were recorded in the official data.
>
> Biden's next curiosity was the big increase of 27,396 votes on Nov. 6 at 8:53:00 over one consecutive reporting period. This bump is just like the blue-red F-memes you have seen: this only seems more spread out because of the finer time scale used.
>
> These two curiosities account for a 37,263 vote swing for Biden. Biden's total, as of the end of this data, was 3,344,528, and Trump's 3,310,326. Biden therefore "won," in this dataset anyway, by 34,202 votes.
>
> So, three separate counties removed about 10,000 votes from Trump on Wednesday evening. And then late Friday, about 27,000 votes were added for Biden.
>
> This happened after it was clear that this is what Biden would need to push ahead. This needs to be answered.

Detroit poll monitor barred from observing counting:

> An affidavit from a Republican poll challenger in Detroit, Michigan confirms there may be voter fraud in the state.
>
> Former Michigan Assistant Attorney General Zachary Larsen testified that at the convention center in downtown Detroit, election officials appeared to be processing a "majority" of mail-in ballots from ineligible voters that were not listed in the poll book of eligible voters, nor Larsen's scanned list. Larsen confirmed in the affidavit that he had heard similar reports from other concerned poll challengers as well.
>
> Read this sworn affidavit from GOP poll challenger, and former Assistant AG for Michigan, Zachary Larsen, on the alleged fraud he observed in Detroit. This is Third World stuff, and every American should be outraged if these allegations are true https://t.co/63nLXJxAZF pic.twitter.com/9WbamMw4Yc
>
> — Benjamin Weingarten (@bhweingarten) November 9, 2020
>
> When Larsen tried to shift positions to get a better visual on the poll book on the computer screen and the mail-in envelopes to confirm his suspicions, he was "loudly and aggressively" scolded for not social distancing by standing at least six feet away from the election official.
>
> Larsen protested the election official's reprimands saying that he couldn't see to verify the eligibility of the voters' ballots which were being counted, but the worker told him he had to stand with the computer screen out of his view.
>
> Despite being allowed to observe from an "equivalent distance from poll books" on Election Day in other precincts such as both Lansing and East Lansing, Larsen was asked to leave the premises after the official summoned their supervisor

> who demanded he stand six feet away.
>
> The documents also notes that, despite their insistence about social distancing, the supervisor was sitting approximately three feet away from the other officials, thus breaking their own social distancing rule.
>
> Larsen left to fill out a challenge and talk with an another attorney. Shortly after he left, the document states that no new poll challengers were allowed in the counting room and he was also prohibited from re-entering.
>
> “Election officials never allowed Mr. Larsen to re-enter the counting room to fulfill his duties as a poll challenger after he had discovered the fraud which was taking place,” the affidavit said.

Whistleblower complaint ignored in Nevada:

> A second sworn affidavit from a whistleblower who was an election worker in Clark County, Nevada, claims mail-in ballots were improperly filled out in a Biden-Harris van outside a polling place.
>
> […]The whistleblower, who worked as a poll worker from Oct. 17-30, complained about a Biden-Harris bus or van that was often stationed outside the polling place that would often have “speakers, dancers, music and other festivities going on” and whose organizers had to be told “several times a day” to “stay 100 feet from the polling location.” He also said that voters without proper identification were permitted to cast provisional ballots.
>
> The biggest shock claim, though, dealt with improperly filled out ballots in the van belonging to supporters of presumptive President-elect Joe Biden, whom he saw while on a lunch break walk on Oct. 28 or 29.
>
> “I personally witnessed two people handing multiple unopened mail in ballot envelopes to two other people who then opened and filled out the ballots against the side of the Biden/Harris van,” the affidavit said. “The same two people who marked the ballots then put the marked ballots in official pink and white envelopes. These people were not poll workers.”
>
> The affidavit continued: “By my final walking lap, there were 5 or 6 additional people who formed a human wall, which moved as I walked by, apparently in an attempt to block my view of the four people who were opening envelopes, marking ballots, and placing those ballots in the pink and white return envelopes.”
>
> The whistleblower recalled reporting the incident to a supervisor, who then called the Clark County Elections Office, to no avail.

Thats the latest. I am expecting lawsuits. Many lawsuits.

Eyewitnesses to voting irregularities have signed sworn affidavits

November 12, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Twitter doesn't like people sharing sworn affidavits

The following post is written by a friend, who is also a software engineer. I have linked to his sources at the bottom of the post.

Here's my attempt at piecing together evidence for fraud in the 2020 presidential election. Misinformation is everywhere and it's possible I have something wrong, so feel free to add, remove, or correct:

1. Voting software added votes for Biden: Antrim county, MI said their Dominion voting machines gave Biden a 29 point lead over Trump (6000 votes), even though Trump beat Hillary by 30 points there in 2016. Manual counting revealed the machines erroneously gave extra votes to Biden. [1,2] The error was blamed on a missing software update.[3] 47 other counties in Michigan also use Dominion voting machines.[4] In Oakland County, MI, separate voting software glitched 1200 votes from a republican county commissioner to his democrat challenger.[5]

2. Poll watchers denied access: Chair of the Federal Election Commission (nominated by Trump in Sep 2017, voted in by senate) says voter fraud is happening, poll watchers are not being allowed to watch.[7] Others testify of being denied access.[8,9]

3. USPS changed postmarks: Project Veritas interviewed USPS workers from Michigan[10] and Pennsylvania[11] who said the offices were illegally changing dates on ballots to allow late votes, even those postmarked on Nov 5th and 6th. Both post office supervisors

hung up the phone after they were asked about it. This skews the election because Biden's supporters are more likely to vote by mail. USPS told Veritas they're now investigating.[12]

4. Non-citizen votes: Historically about 16% of non-citizens illegally register to vote, and about 82% of the time they vote Democrat. Those numbers alone are far more than enough to swing the election from Trump to Biden in swing states.[13] In 2013, Obama prevented states from requiring registrants to provide proof of citizenship.

5. The ratio of mail-in ballots favoring Trump vs Biden for any state should remain about the same over time as they come in, because they're shuffled when in the mail. Or perhaps drift gradually from democrat to republican because republicans live further from cities. But in key swing states we see the opposite, with them either gradually or drastically jumping toward democrat as votes were counted late on election night.[14]

6. In Detroit, Poll challenger Andrew Sitto reports that "tens of thousands" of ballots arrived at 4:30am, with all he observed going to Biden. Poll challenger Daniel Gustafson confirms, adding that the ballots arrived in large, unsecured bins, with no label indicating their source of origin. At the same site, Republican poll challenger Robert Cushman reported poll workers adding votes from unregistered voters, registering them all with a Jan 1, 1900 birthday. Each of these witnesses signed sworn affidavits.[15]

7. I don't think there's anywhere that has more votes than what there are people registered to vote.

8. The middle of the night jump in Biden votes in Michigan happened because Shiawassee, MI adding an extra zero to Biden's count. That's since been fixed.[16]

9. The Wisconsin middle of the night Biden jump is said to have been from Milwaukee absentee ballots arriving all at once.[17] Milwaukee is very liberal and democrats are more likely to vote by absentee, plausibly explaining the high ratio of blue ballots? If not for some of this other evidence?

10. Trump Campaign has filed a lawsuit claiming 10s of thousands of votes in Nevada were from people who didn't live there.[18] A sworn affidavit from a witness in Nevada says, "5 or 6 additional people who formed a human wall, which moved as I walked by, apparently in an attempt to block my view of the four people who were opening envelopes, marking ballots, and placing those ballots in the pink and white return envelopes" A poll worker in Nevada was told to process ballots even when the signatures didn't match the names.[6]

Twitter and FB are censoring much of the content questioning the election results, whether legit or not. Even Trump's tweets. It's scary to see them take that power over the president.

Biden's gaffe from two weeks ago about creating "the most extensive and inclusive voter fraud organization in history" seems almost prophetic.[19]

[Sources]

By the way, I noticed that trying to tweet the sworn affidavits being referenced is being blocked by Twitter. They don't want people to hear these statements, because they're in the tank for Biden.

What books would you suggest to build up a young man who doesn't like to read?

November 13, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I link to Laura's blog "An Affair With Reason" a lot, because she is very bold about her Christian convictions and uses reason and evidence when defending her views. She has started a new series where she talks about the conversations she has, where she is able to bring up Christian topics. This time, she had a conversation with a 13-year-old boy about his lack of interest in books.

She writes:

> It was 9:15am and we were about to begin another grueling CrossFit workout. Nolan, a homeschooled eighth-grader and the youngest member of our morning workout crew, was moaning at the prospect of exerting so much energy on so little sleep.
>
> "I was up so late! I just don't know if I can do this," he agonized.
>
> I replied jokingly, "Were you up late doing some extra reading just for the sake of becoming a more excellent and informed person?"
>
> He smiled. "I hate reading! Reading is the worst. I don't think I've read a book since sixth grade."
>
> Knowing the critical impact that great books can make in a person's life, I pushed back a little. "Well maybe you just haven't found the right books yet."
>
> He replied, "Why do I have to read, anyway?"
>
> And with this question I saw a teachable moment. After all, he needs to know the answer to that if he is to make the most of the knowledge and wisdom that are available to him through great books. Many activities compete for the attention of young people. If they don't understand why something like reading is important, they aren't likely to prioritize it, and when they are forced to read, they may look for shortcuts and complete their assignments with mediocrity rather than gaining the full benefits available to them. Without understanding the purpose or benefits of reading, they are likely to discontinue as soon as they no longer feel the threats of a teacher, parents, or a bad grade hanging over them.
>
> "Well," I said, "there's the fact that reading great books can shape your values and priorities so that you're better equipped to make good decisions that lead to thriving for you and those around you. Reading the right books will make you a better man, a better leader, a better husband, and a better citizen. You aren't going to learn those things from the culture. Today's movies, music, and tv shows will weaken you until you have nothing of value to offer a woman or a neighbor or your community. Our modern forms of entertainment are written with an agenda to spread values that are contrary to God's values and contrary

> to the way He created reality. If you succumb to that garbage, you may be popular with your peers, but you won't be successful in any sort of meaningful or ultimate way. You have to counter the constant lies with truth and goodness.
>
> "Plus," I added, "great books not only educate and inform; they also inspire and motivate us toward worthy goals. They point us toward all that is good, excellent, noble and praiseworthy." (I had just read Philippians chapter 4 a few days earlier.)
>
> "Daaang," he said, in his yet-unrefined 13-year-old vocabulary. "Fine. What should I read?"

She goes on from there to explain why she is going to take up the task of recommending books to Nolan, and why it's important to do so in the current culture. If you're a man, and you're feeling undervalued in this society, you'll be very encouraged by what she had to say. She started out by looking ahead to what Nolan could grow into. Then she talks about how men are being treated today in a society that doesn't value them. She talks about the kind of man she'd like Nolan to be. She's very optimistic about the difference that Christianity would make to Nolan's character and effectiveness.

What would I recommend to Nolan?

Lately, one my female friends has been investigating where I get my character traits from. It turns out that lots comes from the Bible. I was just reading Ephesians 4 for my Bible study, and I noticed how in verse 28 it talks about making sure that you work in order to have something to share. I made that same point in the podcast that I did on BLM with Tim Stratton of Free Thinking Ministries. I got my view of education and career from Ephesians 4. Many of my character traits and views came from reading the Bible at the right time in my life. So I recommend that boys read the Bible, and put it into practice. Start with Phillipians.

My female friend also found out that a lot of my views go back to classical literature and classical movies. When I was young, I was very disappointed with my parents. They seemed to have no plan for me. They made demands, but just to get good grades and to make money. They didn't have any character goals for me. And most importantly, they didn't lift a finger from day to day to help me to achieve anything – success, character, wisdom, etc. So I had to parent myself. And I did that by reading classical books and watching classical movies. I listed a bunch of them in my About WK page. For example, I taught myself to look past a woman's looks to her character by reading "Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens.

I was influenced by classical literature, military biography, military history, military strategy, and evidential apologetics. So, here are my recommendations for a 13-year-old boy would be: "The Hobbit", "Rifleman Dodd", "The Screwtape Letters", "Mere Christianity", "The Problem of Pain", "A Man for All Seasons". I also noticed that people love this new book "Great Battles for Boys: WW2 Europe" – there's a whole series of them. I also like classic TV shoes like "The Rifleman", "Gunsmoke" and "Rawhide".

Laura’s series on conversations

This is not the first time I’ve linked to Laura’s blog. I also did here for her post about apologetics and here for her post about talking to Muslims and here where she introduced her new series on conversations. What I like about her is that she has a mature view of the Christian life that I really respect. When I read her writing, I can tell that she is not involved in Christianity to feel good or to be liked. Her approach to being persuasive relies on reason and evidence.

William Lane Craig's secret weapon is his amazing wife Jan

November 15, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: "Godspeed" by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

I'm re-posting this classic post because it was mentioned in a recent episode of the Reasonable Faith podcast.

I want to draw your attention to a talk on "Vision in Life" given by Dr. William Lane Craig. Dr. Craig is the ablest defender of the Christian faith operating today. He has done formal academic debates with all of the best known atheists on major university campuses in front of *thousands* of university students.

It turns out that he owes a lot of his success to his amazing wife Jan.

The MP3 file is here. (32 minutes)

This talk was Dr. Craig's chapel address to Biola University students.

About 11 minutes into the talk, Bill describes what happened after he finished his Bachelor's degree at Wheaton:

> And so I joined the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for 2 years, and was assigned to Northern Illinois University. And that was where I met my wife Jan. She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota where she had come to faith in Christ. And she had a similar vision for her life of evangelism and discipleship.
>
> And as we worked at NIU together, she with gals and I with the guys, leading

> students to Christ and discipling them to walk with the Lord, we fell in love. And we decided that we would be more effective if we joined forces and became a team.

So their reason for getting together was because they thought that they would be more effective in evangelism and discipleship if they worked as a team.

It is at this point in the talk where Bill begins to explain just how Jan molded him into the lean, mean debating machine that travels the world striking terror into the hearts of atheists.

Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

In an article on his web site, he talks about how Jan encouraged him to do his first Ph.D:

> As graduation from Trinity neared, Jan and I were sitting one evening at the supper table in our little campus apartment, talking about what to do after graduation. Neither of us had any clear leading or inclination of what we should do next.
>
> So Jan said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really like to do next?"
>
> I replied, "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to England and do a doctorate under John Hick."
>
> "Who's he?" she asked.
>
> "Oh, he's this famous British philosopher who's written extensively on arguments for the existence of God," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a cosmological argument for God's existence."
>
> But it hardly seemed a realistic idea.
>
> The next evening at supper Jan handed me a slip of paper with John Hick's

> address on it. “I went to the library today and found out that he’s at the University of Birmingham in England,” she said. “Why don’t you write him a letter and ask him if you can do a doctoral thesis under him on the cosmological argument?”
>
> What a woman! So I did, and to our amazement and delight Professor Hick wrote back saying he’d be very pleased to supervise my doctoral work on that subject. So it was an open door!

And in the same article, he explains how Jan encouraged him to get his second Ph.D:

> As Jan and I neared the completion of my doctoral studies in Birmingham, our future path was again unclear to us. I had sent out a number of applications for teaching positions in philosophy at American universities but had received no bites. We didn’t know what to do.
>
> I remember it like yesterday. We were sitting at the supper table in our little house outside Birmingham, and Jan suddenly said to me, “Well, if money were no object, what would you really *like* to do next?”
>
> I laughed because I remembered how the Lord had used her question to guide us in the past. I had no trouble answering the question. “If money were no object, what I’d really like to do is go to Germany and study under Wolfhart Pannenberg.”
>
> “Who’s he?”
>
> “Oh, he’s this famous German theologian who’s defended the resurrection of Christ historically,” I explained. “If I could study with him, I could develop a historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus.”
>
> Our conversation drifted to other subjects, but Jan later told me that my remark had just lit a fire under her. The next day while I was at the university, she slipped away to the library and began to research grants-in-aid for study at German universities. Most of the leads proved to be defunct or otherwise inapplicable to our situation. But there were two grants she found that were possibilities. You can imagine how surprised I was when she sprung them on me!

Both of these Ph.D experiences are also described in the talk. And the talk concludes as follows:

> **I am so thankful to be married to a woman who is tremendously resourceful, tremendously talented and energetic, who could have pursued an independent career in any number of areas, but instead, she has chose to wed her aspirations to mine, and to make it her goal to make me the most effective person I can be, for Christ. And she has been like my right arm in ministry over these many years. And it is a tremendous privilege to be a team with a person like that.**
>
> **And you young men, I would encourage you, if you marry, to find a gal**

> **who shares your vision, not some independent vision, but who is interested in aligning herself with you, and pursuing together a common vision and goal that will draw you [together], so that you will avoid the growing separateness that so often creeps into marriages.**

And now you know the rest of Bill's story. *The person you marry will have an enormous influence on the impact you will have for Christ and his Kingdom.* It is up to you to decide whether that influence is going to be positive or negative, by deciding if you will marry, and if you do marry, by deciding whom you will marry.

You may also be interested in this talk given by William Lane Craig, entitled "Healthy Relationships" (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008) (audio here) In that talk, he offers advice to Christians who want to have a marriage that is consistent with their Christian faith.

Target bans book critical of transgenderism after LGBT activists complain

November 16, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From The Federalist:

> An official Target company Twitter account announced Thursday they had removed author Abigail Shrier's book, "Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters" from the retailer's "assortment" after an unverified Twitter user complained the book questions transgender ideology, especially the concept of irreversible hormonal and surgical experimentation on minors.
>
> "I think the trans community deserves a response from @AskTarget @Target as to why they are selling this book about the 'transgender epidemic sweeping the country.' Trigger warning: Transphobia," wrote the user.
>
> Shrier's book is not about sexual orientation or transgender adults. It examines the growing social phenomenon of transgender identification among teen girls and how underage medical "transitions" can be a form of self-harm.
>
> "Girls who might have encouraged each other in bulimia, anorexia or cutting are today deciding they have 'gender dysphoria,' pushing for hormones and surgeries—and easily obtaining them," writes Shrier.
>
> Target is not the first corporate entity to censor Shirer's book. When the book was released in June, Amazon barred Shrier's publisher from running ads for the book because it contained copy and content that "infers or claims to diagnose, treat, or question sexual orientation."

Washington State votes to force sex education on kids as young as 5

November 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Major pro-abortion group endorses Joe Biden for President
From Life News:

> A Planned Parenthood-backed law requiring sex education to be taught starting in kindergarten in Washington state passed again in a ballot referendum Tuesday.
>
> The Christian Post reports the law passed the state legislature earlier this year, but concerned parents with Parents for Safe Schools gathered enough support to make the law a referendum on the ballot.
>
> However, the law will stand after 59 percent of voters approved it Tuesday, according to the report.
>
> The legislation, Senate Bill 5395, requires public schools to teach specific sex education materials to students in kindergarten through 12th grade. That includes children as young as 5.
>
> […]Among its worst teaching points, Planned Parenthood tells children that promiscuity is ok. "There's nothing bad or unhealthy about having a big number of sexual partners," it tells students on its Tumbler page. Planned Parenthood's booklet for HIV-positive youth, "Healthy, Happy and Hot," tells young people that it is their "human right" to not tell their sexual partner that they have HIV.

This article had more about the content of the program:

> Pro-family advocates have sounded the alarm by highlighting the graphic lessons of sex ed curricula that meet the bill's standards. A sex ed curriculum by the pro-abortion, pro-LGBT group Advocates for Youth meets the bill's standards and is already used in some Washington schools. Called 3R, it heavily promotes gender theory, promiscuity, condoms and contraception, and abortion, as well as what is listed at the beginning of this article.
>
> The 3R curriculum also directs teachers to have 14-year-old students role-play negotiating for sex.
>
> […]"Some of the approved curriculum is so graphic legislators couldn't quote it in proceedings without getting 'gaveled' or silenced," [children's rights activist Katy] Faust said. "Capital television had to run a mature content warning when airing debate coverage, the equivalent of a rated R movie […] Of course it's heavily lobbied by Planned Parenthood, who has a vested interest in prematurely sexualizing their prospective clients/cash cows. This is not education. This is

> propaganda, ideology, and grooming.”

Biden wants to reverse Trump's pro-life executive orders, force taxpayers to fund abortion

November 18, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Major pro-abortion group endorses Joe Biden for President
Life News reports:

> Americans can expect to be forced to send hundreds of millions of tax dollars to pro-abortion groups if Joe Biden is confirmed to be the winner of the White House.
>
> Biden, a pro-abortion Democrat, promised to reverse President Donald Trump's progress for life when he takes office, including ending the Mexico City Policy and restoring Title X funds to Planned Parenthood.
>
> These two executive orders alone defunded Planned Parenthood and the British-based abortion chain Marie Stopes International of more than $200 million U.S. tax dollars.
>
> But they are just a few of the targets of a pro-abortion Biden administration, and abortion advocacy groups already are pressuring him to do more.
>
> Jacqueline Ayers, vice president of government relations and public policy for Planned Parenthood Action Fund, told The Hill that they hope Biden will restore funding to her abortion chain on his first day in office.
>
> "We think many of these issues actually could be addressed day one, in an executive order that explicitly talks about the new administration's commitment to sexual reproductive health care," Ayers said.
>
> Among other priorities, Christianity Daily reports Biden also is expected to repeal a Trump executive order that granted relief to charities like the Little Sisters of the Poor. Biden would once again force them to follow the Affordable Care Act contraception mandate, which includes drugs that may cause abortions.
>
> Jessica Marcella, of the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health, also urged Biden to act quickly to restore Title X funds to pro-abortion medical groups. If he does not, she said some facilities may close.
>
> "It is essential a Biden administration act as expeditiously as possible, on day 1 or within 100 days, to get money flowing back to providers, particularly to jurisdictions that don't have Title X services right now," she told The Hill. "Even right now, there are health centers on the brink of closing, just trying to hold on for a reversal of fortune and restoration of Title X's integrity as a program they can participate in."
>
> In 2019, Trump enacted the Title X "Protect Life" rule to ensure that the program does not indirectly fund abortions. Title X provides family planning and other

> health services for low-income individuals. Planned Parenthood could have complied with the rule by stopping abortions or completely separating its abortion business from its actual health services, but it refused. Instead, it prioritized abortions over women's health and it was defunded of about $60 million.

William Lane Craig: Christians are idling in intellectual neutral

November 19, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video is 40 minutes long.

The full transcript is available here on the Reasonable Faith web site. (H/T Think Apologetics)

Excerpt:

> No one has issued a more forceful challenge to Christians to become intellectually engaged than did Charles Malik, former Lebanese ambassador to the United States, in his address at the dedication of the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois. Malik emphasized that as Christians we face two tasks in our evangelism: saving the soul and saving the mind, that is to say, not only converting people spiritually, but converting them intellectually as well. And the Church is lagging dangerously behind with regard to this second task. Our churches are filled with people who are spiritually born again, but who still think like non-Christians. Mark his words well:
>
> I must be frank with you: the greatest danger confronting American evangelical Christianity is the danger of anti-intellectualism. The mind in its greatest and deepest reaches is not cared for enough. But intellectual nurture cannot take place apart from profound immersion for a period of years in the history of thought and the spirit. People who are in a hurry to get out of the university and start earning money or serving the church or preaching the gospel have no idea of the infinite value of spending years of leisure conversing with the greatest minds and souls of the past, ripening and sharpening and enlarging their powers of thinking. The result is that the arena of creative thinking is vacated and abdicated to the enemy.
>
> Malik went on to say:
>
> It will take a different spirit altogether to overcome this great danger of anti-intellectualism. For example, I say this different spirit, so far as philosophy alone—the most important domain for thought and intellect—is concerned, must see the tremendous value of spending an entire year doing nothing but poring intensely over the *Republic* or the *Sophist* of Plato, or two years over the *Metaphysics* or the *Ethics* of Aristotle, or three years over the *City of God* of Augustine. But if a start is made now on a crash program in this and other domains, it will take at least a century to catch up with the Harvards and Tübingens and the Sorbonnes—and by then where will these universities be?
>
> What Malik clearly saw is the strategic position occupied by the university in shaping Western thought and culture. Indeed, the single most important

> institution shaping Western society is the university. It is at the university that our future political leaders, our journalists, our lawyers, our teachers, our scientists, our business executives, our artists, will be trained. It is at the university that they will formulate or, more likely, simply absorb the worldview that will shape their lives. And since these are the opinion-makers and leaders who shape our culture, the worldview that they imbibe at the university will be the one that shapes our culture.

And:

> The great Princeton theologian J. Gresham Machen warned on the eve of the Fundamentalist Controversy that if the Church loses the intellectual battle in one generation, then evangelism would become immeasurably more difficult in the next:
>
> False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. Under such circumstances, what God desires us to do is to destroy the obstacle at its root.
>
> The root of the obstacle is to be found in the university, and it is there that it must be attacked. Unfortunately, Machen's warning went unheeded, and biblical Christianity retreated into the intellectual closets of Fundamentalism, from which it has only recently begun to re-emerge. The war is not yet lost, and it is one which we must not lose: souls of men and women hang in the balance.

This lecture is an excellent opportunity for us all to ask ourselves: what are we doing to influence the university? Do you have a plan?

Many of the strongest people who are now opposed to Christianity raised in two-parent Christian homes, and went to church for a decade before going off to the university. I'm thinking especially of people like Tim Gill, in Colorado. At university (and even increasingly in high school) they turned away from Christianity. All their peers and the adults could not answer their questions. As adults, they were able to get money, power and influence. Many of them are using it against Christ and his kingdom – kicking away the ladder that they climbed to success on. Why is this? Unfortunately, many of us are not willing to do what works – pick up the Lee Strobel books and read them. Especially "The Case for a Creator".

When Facebook fact-checkers conflict with peer-reviewed studies, who is right?

November 20, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What should we learn from this?
The Federalist:

> A high-quality, large-scale D4n1sh study finds no evidence that wearing a face m4sk significantly minimizes people's risk of contracting C0VID-19. The randomized-control trial found no statistically significant difference in coron4v1rus infection rates between m4sk-wearers and non-m4sk-wearers. In fact, according to the data, m4sk usage may actually increase the likelihood of infection.
>
> "The recommendation to wear surgical m4sks to supplement other public health measures did not reduce the infection rate among wearers by more than 50% in a community with modest infection rates, some degree of social distancing, and uncommon general m4sk use," the authors summarized their results.
>
> While m4sk-wearing has been advertised by health officials all around the world, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Dr. Anthony F4uci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, to prevent the spread of the coron4v1rus, the Danish researchers found that there was no statistically significant difference between wearing a m4sk or not in preventing people from contracting C0VID-19.
>
> "In the third post hoc analysis, which investigated constellations of patient characteristics, we did not find a subgroup where face m4sks were effective at conventional levels of statistical significance," researchers found.
>
> The randomized-control trial, which is considered the "gold-standard" design for scientific research, had a large sample size of more than 6,000 people. Most studies conducted on various kinds of face m4sks against various coron4v1ruses are neither randomized, controlled trials nor conducted regarding the specific

> virus currently affecting the world.
>
> This clinical trial was conducted from April through June in Denmark, a largely unm4sked area with government recommendations only to social distance and wash hands frequently as the country began to reopen in May. Roughly half of the 6,024 participants, 4,862 of whom completed the study, were randomly assigned to wear surgical m4sks “outside the home among other persons together” while the other half continued to operate in public without a m4sk.

Note: this study doesn’t not prove that masks don’t protect OTHERS from people who have the virus. That was not the topic of this study. And that would also be hard to measure in any case.

Gay activists tell Biden to strip accreditation from Bible-believing schools

November 22, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Southern Baptist progressive Russell Moore and his idol Barack Obama

Christian Post:

> One of the leading national LGBT activist organizations is urging presumptive President-elect Joe Biden and his administration to advance policies that would strip Christian colleges that uphold rules and stances that oppose homosexuality of their accreditation.
>
> The request was part of the Human Rights Campaign's "Blueprint for Positive Change," a recent document which offers 85 policy and legislative recommendations for a potential Biden administration. The document comes as Biden pledged throughout his 2020 campaign to advance "LGBT equality" in the U.S. and around the world.
>
> One of the recommendations proposes the elimination of nondiscrimination exemptions for religious colleges if the institutions support biblical definitions of marriage or fail to offer "scientific curriculum requirements."
>
> […]The document's list also includes making refusal to hire people because of their LGBT identity illegal, adding a nonbinary option to passports, allowing transgender individuals to serve in the military and forcing faith-based charities to hire LGBT individuals even when it violates their conscience.

I saw a lot of anti-Trump tweets and statements from Southern Baptist leaders and celebrity preachers during Trump's presidency. They will be happy with Joe Biden as president. They are looking forward to the changes Joe Biden will make. When ethics and religious liberty conflict with the Democrat Party, the Southern Baptist leaders always side with the Democrats.

Tens of thousands of mai1-in ba11ots were returned before being mailed out

November 23, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Facebook fact checkers anxious to crown Joe Biden president

Epoch Times:

> More than 20,000 ab5entee ba11ots in Pennsy1vania have impossible return dates and another more than 80,000 have return dates that raise questions, according to a researcher's analysis of the state's vot3r database.
>
> Over 51,000 ba11ots were marked as returned just a day after they were sent out—an extraordinary speed, given U.S. Postal Service (USPS) delivery times, while nearly 35,000 were returned on the same day they were mailed out. Another more than 23,000 have a return date earlier than the sent date. More than 9,000 have no sent date.
>
> The state's vot3r records are being scrutinized as President Donald Trump is challenging the results of the presidential e1ection in Pennsy1vania and other states where his opponent, former Vice President Joe Bid3n, holds a tight lead. The Trump campaign is alleging that invalid ba11ots have been counted for Democrat5 and valid ba11ots for Repub1icans were thrown away.
>
> The analysis of the publicly available data was conducted by a data researcher who submitted it first to the Chinese-language edition of The Epoch Times. The researcher, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said he consulted about the matter with several USPS field engineers, who said the return dates shown in the database are "impossible."
>
> The dataset made public by Pennsy1vania's secretary of state was last updated

> on Nov. 10, and “describes a current state of mail ba11ot requests for the 2020 General e1ection.” The data includes the mailed-out and return dates.
>
> In Pennsy1vania, vot3rs must request a ba11ot, which is sent to them via USPS. The vot3r then fills out the document and sends it back via mail or returns it in person. The process usually takes several days or even weeks, depending on the speed of delivery and response by the vot3r.
>
> This year, Pennsy1vania also allowed vot3rs to “request, receive, mark and cast your mail-in or ab5entee ba11ot all in one visit to your county e1ection office or other designated location.” That may explain the ba11ots with no sent date—they may have been received and cast in person.
>
> While it could also explain the ba11ots with the same sent and returned date, that appears to clash with the description of the database, which says the sent date is “the date the county confirmed the application to queue a ba11ot label to mail the ba11ot materials to the vot3r.”

Is this man unattractive because he lacks confidence, or something else?

November 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

I found this post in Reddit's "dating over thirty" forum. The author admits that she's had trouble choosing bad boys in the past. However, her new boyfriend – not a bad boy – has other problems.

She writes:

> Hi Dating Over Thirty,
>
> I have a conundrum. I have met someone great. We have been on 6 wonderful dates over two weeks. Even if he's not my "usual type" I've been open to trying something new and seeing where this goes (shout out to my therapist). My usual type is masculine bad boys, and obviously that hasn't worked out well for me – usually their emotional immaturity or ego makes relationship impossible and leaves me emotionally shattered.
>
> This time, I've met a handsome, extremely kind man, who is driven in his career, and really likes me. I really enjoy spending time with him too, we can talk for hours, and there is chemistry (though not the 'fire' that I'm usually used to… more of a slow burn, but it's definitely there).
>
> When we first kissed and when we first started dating I was wondering if he wasn't super attracted to me… he seemed hesitant or holding back on our first kiss. Our kisses have improved greatly but I can't shake the feeling that he lacks a bit of confidence. I don't feel confident that he would… be assertive in a situation requiring it or stand up for me it I needed it (dumb example I know).

> Sometimes I wonder if his gentleness is actually meekness, and one thing I desire from a partner is a feeling of protection.
>
> I feel like a total a**hole because I'm used to dating… a**holes, mistaking masculinity and assertiveness for confidence. My dad is kind of that way, and I've seen how it's been difficult in my parents marriage. I've fallen into traps of dating assertive people who are not actually confident but overcompensate for their insecurities by being d*cks. So I feel caught – knowing that this hasn't worked for me in the past, but feeling like something is missing here.
>
> I want to keep dating him to explore what's there, and because I genuinely like him. I feel safe and cared around him, and we have a lot in common. He is 100% husband material. He's already starting to ask me to meet his friends but I feel like I need to get to know him more and clear this one doubt. I know I have my own fears of intimacy and commitment too that factor in here.
>
> Help lol?
>
> Sincerely, a**hole lover
>
> TLDR, Perfect man I'm dating lacks confidence, maybe. Not sure if this something that can be resolved or if I should move on?

She seems to be concerned that this man is lacking confidence, because he is not a bad boy. What's a bad boy? A bad boy is a man who has certain physical features and mannerisms which are attractive to women, but he won't commit to marry any woman. And many women mistake the presence of these features and mannerisms as being signs of "masculinity".

Here's a study about it from Evolutionary Psychological Science, reported by PsyPost:

> Men with psychopathic traits tend to create favorable impressions on women, according to a new study published in Evolutionary Psychological Science. The findings indicate that psychopathy may include features that make men appear as more attractive romantic partners despite having a reduced interest in committed relationships.
>
> "Psychopathy as a way of describing some people — mostly men — who have specific personality and behavioral tendencies has led to some enigmatic and quite frankly alarming findings from prisons, many of which had sexual and romantic consequences," said study author Kristopher Brazil (@brazkris), a PhD candidate at Brock University.
>
> "For instance, clinicians and psychologists working in prison settings have long known that inmates with more psychopathic features tenaciously try (i.e., are preoccupied with sex) and often succeed (i.e., must offer some attractive qualities, even if faked) at seducing prison staff, including clinical staff supposedly equipped with the tools to not be subverted by manipulation and charm that psychopathic men deploy."
>
> "Yet these individuals were some of the most violent and disruptive individuals in

> the institutions they were housed. The enigma of presenting such a positive image of themselves successfully despite their negative effect on others is what strongly influenced our ideas for this study," Brazil told PsyPost.
>
> […]Brazil and his colleagues found that psychopathy was positively related to both men's social intelligence and favorable attitudes towards casual sex. They also found that women's ratings tended to be more favorable to men with more psychopathic traits — even after controlling for physical attractiveness ratings.
>
> "Psychopathic men have a personality style that makes them appear attractive to women in dating encounters. This may be because they are extra confident or feel at ease or know exactly what to say to get the attention of women," Brazil told PsyPost.

In the past, women evaluated men for marriage, because they grew up in homes with fathers and mothers. They watched their fathers love their mothers, and hold them accountable for acting selfishly. They saw their fathers acting like husbands, and they chose men who would make good husbands.

Today, thanks to feminism, any focusing on marriage and preferring men suited for marriage is seen as sexist. What's left? What's left is chasing the bad boys. The psychopaths. And if it doesn't work out, well – that's what big government is for.

Poll: 17% of Biden voters in swing states would change their vote, if educated

November 25, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These people are voted for Joe Biden – did you?

The Federalist:

> A new report from the Media Research Center shows that the media's lack of coverage and big tech's suppression of certain issues and scandals surrounding Democratic Presidential Nominee Joe Biden could have cost President Donald Trump the election.
>
> The survey results report that 17 percent of Biden voters would not have voted for the Biden-Harris presidential ticket if they had known about at least one of the eight news stories that were suppressed by big tech and mainstream media outlets.
>
> […]The survey, conducted online by The Polling Company with a +/- 2.34 percent margin of error at a 95 percent confidence interval, asked 1,750 Biden voters living in seven swing states (Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin) if they were aware of certain issues surrounding Biden, his family, and some of the Trump administration's successes.

Topics:

> Some of these topics include former Biden staffer Tara Reade and her sexual assault allegations against Biden, the Hunter Biden scandal, VP Nominee Kamala Harris's extreme liberal voting record in the Senate, the U.S.'s economic jump in the third quarter, millions of jobs added, America's energy independence, Operation Warp Speed successes, and Trump's facilitation of multiple peace deals in the Middle East.

> […]Over a quarter of Biden voters said they didn’t know Sen. Harris had the most liberal voting record in the Senate in 2019, and nearly half of all Biden voters polled, 49 percent, said they were unaware of the U.S.’s remarkable economic recovery in the third quarter, doubling the previous record.

I blogged about most of those things here, but people were depending on the far left news media and Big Tech to keep them informed.

Leftist Supreme Court Justices oppose religious liberty for Jews and Christians

November 27, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Supreme Court of the United States

The Federalist:

> In a 5-4 ruling late Wednesday night, the U.S Supreme Court barred the state of New York from imposing strict attendance limits on religious services, in a major win for religious freedom.
>
> Orthodox Jewish group Agudath Israel of America and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn sued New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo for discriminatory targeting of religious groups with COVID restrictions, as houses of worship were being held to far more stringent standards than neighboring businesses.
>
> At the time of the lawsuits filing, both the Agudath Israel of America and Diocese of Brooklyn fell into red or orange zones, which under state law allowed only 10 or 25 people into a house of worship at any time, regardless of the building's typical capacity. At the same time, stores and business deemed essential were given far laxer standards, some even lacking any limits on their capacity.
>
> Newly minted Justice Amy Coney Barrett joined Justices Samuel Alito, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Clarence Thomas in support of the aggrieved religious groups, while Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Stephen Breyer, Elena Kagan, Sonia Sotomayor dissented.

Notice that all 3 of Trump's nominees voted for religious liberty. And yet Trump was opposed by many "conservative" Christians in the last election. One of the biggest reasons given by real Christians for supporting Trump was to get good judges. And we did.

Fakebook introduces new algorithm to promote far-left news sources

November 28, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fakebook, Google, Youtube, Twitter purging conservative speech (Source: The Stream)

The Federalist:

> Fakebook purposefully throttled specific news outlets after the election, limiting the distribution of posts from certain pages and accounts under the guise of combating "false and misleading claims" about election results and fraud. The New York Times reported the censorship increase Tuesday.
>
> The New York Times reported the big tech company relies on a "secret internal ranking system" called news ecosystem quality scores (N.E.Q.) to determine which journalism the company will allow to circulate on the platform. Fakebook CEO Mark Yuckerberg reportedly expanded the N.E.Q.'s algorithm presence following the election to "make sure authoritative news appeared more prominently."
>
> Sources such as CNN, The New York Times, NPR, and others benefitted from Yuckerberg's changes, receiving more traffic and distribution on the site while others lost page views and reach. Fakebook's chief product officer Chris Cox bragged about the company's decisions and reportedly said he was "proud of how the company had applied labels to election-related misinformation, pointing users to authoritative information about the results."

Republicans did extremely well in House of Representatives and state legislatures

November 29, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s not over till the Supreme Court lady rules

Some good news from The Federalist.

> In all the excitement among objective journalists for Joe Biden’s declared victory, reporters are missing how extraordinary the Democrat’s performance was in the 2020 election. It’s not just that the former vice president is on track to become the oldest president in American history, it’s what he managed to accomplish at the polls this year.
>
> Candidate Joe Biden was so effective at animating voters in 2020 that he received a record number of votes, more than 15 million more than Barack Obama received in his re-election of 2012. Amazingly, he managed to secure victory while also losing in almost every bellwether county across the country. No presidential candidate has been capable of such electoral jujitsu until now.
>
> While Biden underperformed Hillary Clinton’s 2016 totals in every urban county in the United States, he outperformed her in the metropolitan areas of Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. Even more surprising, the former VP put up a record haul of votes, despite Democrats’ general failures in local House and state legislative seats across the nation.
>
> He accomplished all this after receiving a record low share of the primary vote compared to his Republican opponent heading into the general election. Clearly,

> these are tremendous and unexpected achievements that would normally receive sophisticated analysis from the journalist class but have somehow gone mostly unmentioned during the celebrations at news studios in New York City and Washington, D.C.
>
> The massive national political realignment now taking place may be one source of these surprising upsets. Yet still, to have pulled so many rabbits out of his hat like this, nobody can deny that Biden is a first-rate campaigner and politician, the likes of which America has never before seen. Let's break down just how unique his political voodoo has been in 2020.

I sense that he is being sarcastic.

More:

> Biden is on his way to winning the White House after having lost almost every historic bellwether county across the country. The Wall Street Journal and The Epoch Times independently analyzed the results of 19 counties around the United States that have nearly perfect presidential voting records over the last 40 years. President Trump won every single bellwether county, except Clallam County in Washington.
>
> Whereas the former VP picked up Clallam by about three points, President Trump's margin of victory in the other 18 counties averaged over 16 points. In a larger list of 58 bellwether counties that have correctly picked the president since 2000, Trump won 51 of them by an average of 15 points, while the other seven went to Biden by around four points. Bellwether counties overwhelmingly chose President Trump, but Biden found a path to victory anyway.

And more:

> In 2020, The Cook Political Report and The New York Times rated 27 House seats as toss-ups going into Election Day. Right now, Republicans appear to have won all 27. Democrats failed to flip a single state house chamber, while Republicans flipped both the House and Senate in New Hampshire and expanded their dominance of state legislatures across the country.

Facebook “fact-checker” Politifact forced to retract “false” rating against Candace Owens

November 30, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Why do people think that CNN are biased leftist clowns?
I think that it’s safe to assume that every single “fact check” written by Facebook partners is false news, written by partisan Democrat journalists. Enough of them are false that this should be the starting assumption. This time, Politifact got caught giving a false rating of a conservative, and had to retract it.

Daily Wire:

> Conservative author and commentator Candace Owens challenged left-leaning fact-checking site PolitiFact, a partner with Facebook, over a “false” rating — and won.
>
> Not only did PolitiFact remove their “false” rating and retract an article on why Owens’ video was allegedly false, but the site offered an added “correction” admitting their fault.
>
> Owens’ video, which was posted on Nov. 12, offered commentary on the 2020 presidential election, and was captioned, “Joe Biden is literally and legally not the President-elect. So why is the media pretending he is?”
>
> The video was hit with a “false” rating, and, as noted by Owens, theoretically, every single person who shared the post was alerted by Facebook that they had shared “false” content.
>
> “Weeks ago, [Facebook] censored a post of mine which truthfully stated that [Joe Biden] is NOT the President-elect. So I got lawyers involved,” she said Saturday via Twitter. “Conclusion? [PolitiFact] uncensored the post & admitted that they LIED by rating my post false. The fact-checkers are lying for Democrats.”
>
> “At 8 Months pregnant, I unfortunately cannot fight on the ground alongside patriots like I am used to, but I am taking every measure to fight these communists in the court room,” Owens said in a follow-up post. “It is my goal to expose these lying ‘fact-checkers’ one by one. [Joe Biden] is NOT the President-elect.”
>
> The BLEXIT founder told The Daily Wire on Saturday that she reached out to PolitiFact on Nov. 20 with legal representation and immediately heard back, with PolitiFact admitting their error.
>
> Owens said she was not further briefed on the supposed “error” and that she felt the retraction wasn’t enough; she wanted PolitiFact to admit publicly that they falsely fact-checked her.
>
> “I wanted to show that these fact-checkers just lie, and they usually go

> unchecked because most people don't have the money, don't have the time, and don't have the platform to go after them — and I have all three," she said.
>
> With pressure from Owens' legal representation, PolitiFact issued the correction, which she shared with the public on Saturday. That was a win. And another "major win," she said, was PolitiFact essentially admitting "that Joe Biden is not the President-elect."
>
> Owens, who's currently suing fact-checkers from USAToday and Lead Stories, explained to The Daily Wire that she knew she had to reach out with legal representation if she wanted to get results with this latest false fact-check. She said that in her experience, when she's tried to appeal fact-checks through the system, she's been stonewalled.
>
> "These people are sitting back thinking they're the gods of tech; opinion-checkers, they're censorship lords," the conservative said.

I wrote about Politifact's record of "fact-checking" here.

I'd like to see these fake-news "fact-checkers" sued until they have nothing to eat but grass and leaves. They're lying secular left fascist scum. We should go after them for the good of free speech and the Republic. They don't belong in America, they'd fit in better in North Korea. They are anti-American and anti-human-rights.

Starbucks barista alleges she was fired for not wearing company “Pride” t-shirt

December 1, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Daily Caller:

> A former Starbucks barista alleged that she was fired for her unwillingness to wear a company “Pride” t-shirt for religious reasons, according to a federal lawsuit.
>
> Betsy Fresse was allegedly fired from the Glen Ridge, New Jersey Starbucks in August 2019 after she had inquired about “Pride” shirts that were in the store manager’s office in June 2019, according to the lawsuit filed on Nov. 19. The lawsuit noted that Fresse is a practicing Christian who believes marriage is between a man and woman and didn’t want to wear a shirt that violated those religious convictions.
>
> “The law mandates that every person be free from discrimination based on their sincerely held religious beliefs including in the workplace,” Fresse’s lawyer, Demetrios K. Stratis, told The Daily Caller News Foundation in a statement. “Here, Starbucks failed to comply with the law, and terminated my client because she would not betray her faith, a faith which defines who she is as a person.”
>
> “That is actionable and wrong and Starbucks must be held accountable,” he continued.
>
> After Fresse inquired about the shirts and before she was terminated, she received a call from Starbucks’s Ethics and Compliance Helpline, according to the lawsuit. The company representative specifically asked Fresse why she didn’t want to wear the “Pride” shirt.
>
> She explained that it was because her “religious beliefs prevented her from doing so,” the lawsuit stated.

> On Aug. 22, 2019, she received a notice of separation informing her that she had been fired. The notice explained that she was fired for “acting in violation of Starbuck’s Core Values.”
>
> […]The lawsuit also said that Fresse “holds no enmity toward individuals who ascribe to the LGBTQ lifestyle and/or make up the LGBTQ community.”

A friend of mine who works for a Christian company gave me a $25 gift card from Starbucks last year. I never used it. I simply won’t do business with this company. They’re secular left fascists, and they don’t respect American values like free speech and religious liberty. I take stewardship of my money very seriously.

Jay Richards: eight common myths about wealth, poverty and the free market

December 3, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Have you read Jay Richards' book "Money, Greed and God?" Because if you haven't, he's written a series of articles that summarize the main points of the book.

The index post is here.

Here are the posts in the series:

- Part 1: The Eight Most Common Myths about Wealth, Poverty, and Free Enterprise
- Part 2: Can't We Build A Just Society?
- Part 3: The Piety Myth
- Part 4: The Myth of the Zero Sum Game
- Part 5: Is Wealth Created or Transferred?
- Part 6: Is Free Enterprise Based on Greed?
- Part 7: Hasn't Christianity Always Opposed Free Enterprise?
- Part 8: Does Free Enterprise Lead to An Ugly Consumerist Culture?
- Part 9: Will We Use Up All Our Resources?
- Part 10: Are Markets An Example of Providence?

Parts 4 and 5 are my favorites. It's so hard to choose one to excerpt, but I must. I will choose… Part 4.

Here's the problem:

> **Myth #3: The Zero Sum Game Myth – believing that trade requires a winner and a loser.**
>
> One reason people believe this myth is because they misunderstand how

> economic value is determined. Economic thinkers with views as diverse as Adam Smith and Karl Marx believed economic value was determined by the labor theory of value. This theory stipulates that the cost to produce an object determines its economic value.
>
> According to this theory, if you build a house that costs you $500,000 to build, that house is worth $500,000. But what if no one can or wants to buy the house? Then what is it worth?
>
> Medieval church scholars put forth a very different theory, one derived from human nature: economic value is in the eye of the beholder. The economic value of an object is determined by how much someone is willing to give up to get that object. This is the subjective theory of value.

And here's an example of how to avoid the problem:

> How you determine economic value affects whether you view free enterprise as a zero-sum game, or a win-win game in which both participants benefit.
>
> Let's return to the example of the $500,000 house. As the developer of the house, you hire workers to build the house. You then sell it for more than $500,000. According to the labor theory of value, you have taken more than the good is actually worth. You've exploited the buyer and your workers by taking this surplus value. You win, they lose.
>
> Yet this situation looks different according to the subjective theory of value. Here, everybody wins. You market and sell the house for more than it cost to produce, but not more than customers will freely pay. The buyer is not forced to pay a cost he doesn't agree to. You are rewarded for your entrepreneurial effort. Your workers benefit, because you paid them the wages they agreed to when you hired them.
>
> This illustration brings up a couple important points about free enterprise that are often overlooked:
>
> **1. Free exchange is a win-win game**.
>
> In win-win games, some players may end up better off than others, but everyone ends up better off than they were at the beginning. As the developer, you might make more than your workers. Yet the workers determined they would be better off by freely exchanging their labor for wages, than if they didn't have the job at all.
>
> A free market doesn't guarantee that everyone wins in every competition. Rather, it allows many more win-win encounters than any other alternative.
>
> **2. The game is win-win because of rules set-up beforehand.**
>
> A free market is *not* a free-for-all in which everybody can do what they want. Any exchange must be free on both sides. Rule of law, contracts, and property rights are needed to ensure exchanges are conducted rightly. As the developer of the

> house, you'd be held accountable if you broke your contract and failed to pay workers what you promised.
>
> An exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game.

On this view, what you really need to fear as a consumer is government intervention that restricts your choices in the marketplace, or makes some choices more expensive than they need to be (tariffs).

If you care about poverty, it's often tempting to think that it can only be solved one way – by transferring wealth from the rich to the poor. But that is a very mistaken view, as any economist will tell you. The right way to create prosperity is by creating laws and policies that unleash individual creativity. Letting individuals create innovative products and services, letting them keep what they earn, making sure that the law doesn't punish entrepreneurs – that incentivizes wealth creation. Fixing poverty does not mean transferring wealth, it means giving people more freedom to create wealth on their own. Free trade between nations is an important way that we encourage people to create better products and services that what they have available in their own countries.

Economists agree on the benefits of free trade

Who could possibly disagree with free trade? Well, many people on the left do. But economists across the spectrum of ideology (university and private sector and public sector) agree on the benefits of free trade.

Harvard economist Greg Mankiw explains what most professional economists agree on.

Excerpt:

> Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:
>
> 1. **A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)**
> 2. **Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)**
> 3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
> 4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
> 5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
> 6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
> 7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
> 8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
> 9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become

> unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
> 10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
> 11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
> 12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
> 13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a "negative income tax." (79%)
> 14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

Socialist economic policies don't work because they are making policies that are based on economic myths. We know that these myths are myths because of economics is a mathematical science, and because we have tried good and bad policies in different times and places. We have calculations and we have experience to know what works and what doesn't work. If you want to help the poor, you have to respect what economists know about how wealth is created. The solution is not to "spread the wealth around", it's to encourage people to create more wealth by inventing things that people freely choose to buy.

If you made it this far, I have a fabulous parody video about the perils of tariffs and the benefits of free trade, made by Remy. He's a libertarian, but that just means we don't listen to him about foreign policy and morality. Only fiscal policy.

New Census Bureau data: U.S. marriage rate reaches all time low

December 4, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

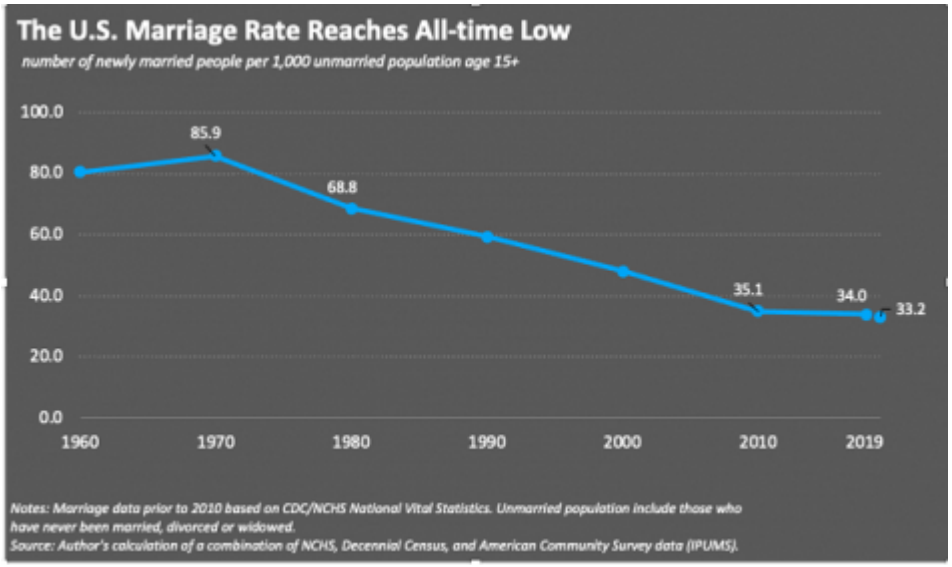

Marriage rates in the United States over time

This is the latest data from the American Community Survey data from the Census Bureau.

Over the last few decades, feminists thought that they could redefine many of the core aspects of marriage, and that men would still continue to marry. But the truth is that marriage used to be a pretty fair deal for men, now it just isn't under the new rules.

Marriage used to mean:

> - Being the legally and socially recognized head of the household.
> - An expectation of regular sex.
> - Legal rights to children.
> - Lifetime commitment.
> - That you are guaranteed a chaste bride on your wedding night.

Feminism has destroyed all of these facets of marriage. Feminists want marriage to be all about them, and their needs. And they don't want marriage to put any responsibilities, expectations or obligations on them.

I am pro-marriage, but for me pro-marriage means *rolling back* the feminist redefinitions of marriage. That's the only way to get men to be interested in marriage. Today, men are responding to the anti-marriage incentives created by feminists. Feminists offered men free sex without commitment, and they made marriage into a dangerous legal deathtrap. Men aren't going to take risks like that. Especially when they have lost the authority to lead the home, and the other benefits of marriage for men. It's a lot of risk, without any of the benefits. It's a bad deal.

But it’s not just the legal risks, it’s the fact that men can’t afford marriage in a socialist country. Socialism requires higher taxes, and that leaves men with too little to take on the husband and father roles.

When you look at marriage rates in Canada and Europe, you understand that men are even LESS likely to choose marriage when they have to pay over 50% of what they earn in taxes. And so the marriage rate is declining. I think young, unmarried women are excited by the idea of raising taxes in order to get free stuff from government. That makes it unnecessary to marry at all, so they are free to play the field and obey no man. But there comes a point where taxes are so high that men simply can’t affort to take on a wife and multiple children. We are at that point now, and I expect it to spread up to the higher income brackets so that the marriage rate declines even further.

One final reason for men not marrying is because men don’t like secular leftist women. Young people are sliding to the left, and those values and beliefs are UNATTRACTIVE to marriage-minded men. Just because a secular leftist woman is able to get attention and sex from men, it doesn’t mean that she is able to get a lifelong commitment to love her, protect her, provide for her, and so on. No one likes secualr leftist women, and no one wants to marry them.

(Image source)

Video, audio and summary of intelligent design discussion, with Ben Shapiro and Stephen C. Meyer

December 6, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephen C. Meyer and Ben Shapiro discuss evolution and intelligent design
(Re-posting this for those who missed it the first time around)

This is a must-see / must-hear conversation. Famous conservative Ben Shapiro discusses evolution and intelligent design with Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, author of "Signature in the Cell" (origin of life) and "Darwin's Doubt" (fossil record). These are the two best books on intelligent design. Their conversation covers the most important issues in the origins debate.

So to start, here's the full video:

Someone actually put out an outline on Youtube, with a time-based index, so I'll just steal that as a base, and add to it:

- 1:34 What is your scientific background? Science undergraduate degree, professional geologist, later did a PhD in philosophy of science from Cambridge University.
- 2:39 What is the difference between intelligent design and creationism? Creationism starts from the Bible and posits a shorter history of the universe. ID starts from the data of the natural world and is neutral about the age of the Earth / universe. Meyer accepts the old-Earth.
- 3:36 How is Intelligent Design a scientific theory? The discovery of DNA reveals that code is central to living systems. Intelligent design uses the method of "inference to the best explanation" in order to argue that the best explanation for the code is an intelligent agent.
- 6:10 What evidence would have to arise to make Intelligent Design Falsifiable? If a naturalistic mechanism was discovered that could produce biological information using the probabilistic resources of the universe, and the time available, then intelligent design would be falsified.

- 7:26 Is religion separate from science or intertwined within it? There are three views: science is totally separate from religion, science is in total conflict with religion, science and religion agree on some issues, e.g. – the origin of the universe and Genesis 1:1. There are areas where science and religion overlap.
- 9:55 Why are the most prominent Darwinians also militant atheists? Evolution is a theory that tries to explain nature using naturalistic mechanisms, so it is compatible with atheism.
- 10:45 What does the theory of evolution say? The term evolution has multiple meanings, and should be defined before discussions. It can refer to change over time. It can refer to animals changing slightly to adapt to enviromental changes. It can refer to the idea that all animals evolved from simpler life forms, and that there is a tree of life showing how different types of organisms share common ancestors. And it can refer to the idea that purely undirected processes can explain the history of life using purely materialistic forces. It's that final view that intelligent design challenges.
- 13:15 Where is the discontinuity in naturalistic processes in the development of life? The first discontinuity is the origin of simple life from non-living components. The second discontinuity is the sudden appearance of different body plans in a very narrow window of time in the Cambrian era.
- 15:42 Why does information theory suggest that code requires some sort of designer? DNA is a true information-bearing system identical to the software in computers, e.g. – operating system, applications.
- 19:45 Can information be created by random mutation, and favorable mutations preserved by natural selection? Just as in software code, instructions must be added in order to develop new functionality. Random additions of characters will almost always degrade biological function. The number of possible sequences that do nothing useful is vastly higher than the number of sequences that perform biological functions. Doug Axe did research on this at Cambridge University, and he found that the number of functional sequences of amino acids is 1 in 10 to the 77th power. Given the probabilistic resources (replicating organisms)and the time available, it is extremely unlikely to find sequences that have functional information by chance.
- 25:05 What about Stephen Jay Gould's model of punctuated equilibrium – doesn't it explain the sudden jumps in information? Gould's mechanism is accurate according to the fossil record, which shows a lot of jumps. But he did not have a naturalistic explanation for sudden jumps in biological function. Darwinian mechanisms work slowly and would (in theory) produce different body plans gradually. But this is not what the fossil record shows.
- 27:22 What is the mechanism for injecting information in the theory of intelligent design? The information comes in from an intelligence when new major body plans appear, and minor variations within types could be explained by evolution.
- 29:25 Does the Miller-Urey experiment provide a naturalistic explanation for the building blocks necessary for the origin of life? The MU experiment only produced a few types of amino acids, it doesn't say anything about how to sequence the amino

acids in order to form protein folds that can perform biological functions. The MU experiment also pre-supposes conditions on the early Earth (reducing gases) that do not match what was there (oxidyzing or neutral gases).

- 32:00 Is the RNA world hypothesis is a good explanation for the origin of life? Evolution requires that replication already be in place, because evolution assumes that mutations appear during the replication. The RNA world hypothesis suggests that sequences contain information, but also catalyze origin of life chemistry. The problem with RNA world is that it starts with self-replicating systems. And those replicating systems require the scientist to inject information into the system to get even the simplest replication started.
- 34:56 How do scientists respond to the critiques of Darwinism proposed by intelligent design advocates? By and large, they accept them. They think that mutation and selection works once living systems are in place, but they realize it has no explanation for the origin of life or the sudden origin of body plans. (Tells about the conference of the Royal Society, where problems with Darwinian mechanisms were discussed, and the 2003 MIT Press book by Muller and Newman).
- 37:16 Why do people hold to Darwinian evolution in the face of these problems? Many scientists presuppose methodological naturalism, which requires that any explanation for the origin of life and the origin of major body plans involve materialist explanations only. No intelligent agents are allowed. The problems occur when assumption of naturalism causes scientists to propose incorrect explanations for what we observe in nature. It's also not clear how naturalistic mechanisms could produce organisms who are capable of reason and free will.
- 40:43 Does naturalistic evolution have an answer for conscious minds, reasoning, free will? No, consider the work of atheist scholar Thomas Nagel, who argues in his book "Mind and Cosmos" (Oxford University Press 2012) that the existence of mind is a disproof of the neo-Darwinian explanation for life. Darwinism stops us from accepting the reality of minds.
- 42:06 So do naturalistic evolutionists have to explain away the mind as an illusion? First, we humans have immediate experience of consciousness, reason and free will. Second, our whole legal system is based on the idea free will, because you can't hold someone guilty unless they chose to do something they knew was wrong. Third, we have an epidemic of suicide among young people. This is caused by a crisis of meaning. Intelligent design opens up the possibility of their being a mind behind the universe, who we could have a relationships with.
- 44:53 Why aren't schools allowed to be honest about the problems with neo-Darwinian evolution? The intellignt design view is to that teachers should be allowed to teach all the vidence for Darwinian evolution, and also discuss some of the problems with the theory. Students learning science should not be told that everything is solved. Students learn science better when they are presented with peer-reviewed evidence for and against a theory, rather than being indoctrinated.
- 47:37 Is intelligent design theory connected to God? Intelligent design infers from the information content in nature that a mind with capabilities like ours injected

information into living systems. Intelligent design is agnostic about the designer, because in principle, embodied or unembodied agents could inject information into living systems. Intelligent design is friendly to theism, because theists will immediately identify the mind as God. Furthermore, the fine-tuning in the initial conditions of the universe is another intelligent design argument. In that case, since the design occurs at the beginning of the universe, the intelligent agent acting prior to the creation of the universe would have to be supernatural, i.e. – God.

- 50:53 Can naturalists say that the imposition of "function" on a sequence is arbitrary, in the same way that the English language is arbitrary? This won't work, because *biological function* is not arbitrary in the same way as language. Biological function is not arbitrary, because sequences can be tested for function *objectively* by observing whether sequences can perform functions necessary for life, e.g. – replication.
- 52:43 Doesn't the multiverse explain away the improbabilities of the fine-tuning, the origin of life, and the development of life? No, because all models of the multiverse require fine-tuning in the mechanism that generates the different universes.
- 55:42 What about cosmological models that eliminate the beginning of the universe? The standard Big Bang model and the inflationary model both posit a beginning of the universe. There is also the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theory which proves that any universe that is expanding requires a beginning. The only chance for naturalists is quantum cosmologies, but this doesn't work because 1) it requires an abstract reality of mathematics to actualize the physical universe, but this presupposes a mind. 2) The model requires an earlier input of information, which can only have come from a mind.

If you listen to this lecture, or watch the video, and you enjoyed it, then please share. If you have questions, I can try to answer them for you – just leave your question in the comments, or shoot me an e-mail, or message me from the blog's Facebook page, or direct message me on Twitter. I've invested a lot of time in this, and have been studying intelligent design since the late 1990s.

Young woman regrets that older people in her life were dishonest with her

December 7, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have older women succeeded at teaching younger women about love and marriage? I once dated a woman who had messed up her education, career and finances by following her heart. She confided in me that she had a hatred of "responsibilities, expectations and obligations". She wanted to be guided by her feelings, moment by moment. Whenever she failed, she would blame others, or claim that the world was just too unpredictable to make good decisions.

She failed, and was unhappy, wishing that grown ups in her life had told her the truth about her bad decisions. And she's not alone.

Look at this article posted on the UC Berkeley website:

> A recent group of studies has found that women's happiness levels have been dropping steadily over the last few decades, to the point that women now report lower happiness levels than men, a role reversal from the 1970s. Given social improvements in women's lives over the intervening decades—increased work opportunities, higher salaries, and more reproductive choice, to name a few—these results have surprised more than a few commentators, with everyone from Barbara Ehrenreich to Rush Limbaugh trying to make sense of them.
>
> That hasn't been an easy task, even for the economists whose study, "The Paradox of Declining Women's Happiness," helped uncover this trend. Those economists, Justin Wolfers and Betsey Stevenson, both at the University of

> Pennsylvania, analyzed data from several large-scale surveys that have tracked the general well-being of Americans and Europeans from as far back as 1972. They found that women's happiness levels had dropped over time in each survey. To understand why, Wolfers and Stevenson looked at factors which in past research had been linked to unhappiness in women, such as marital status, income, educational level, and number of children. But none of these could account for the shift.

In addition to "increased work opportunities, higher salaries, and more reproductive choice", women have also "benefited" from preferences in education, in education funding, in the workplace, and especially in the courts. They get favorable treatment in the criminal courts as well as in the divorce courts. They have been given everything they asked for that they *felt* would make them happier, and *all* of it (once obtained) has worked to make them less happy. The biggest part of their unhappiness problem is how their learned selfishness makes them incapable of – and undeserving of – commitment. The declining marriage rate is made worse by disincentives created for men to marry and have children when they are given sex for free, are heavily taxed, regulated by government bullies, and risk being financially raped by divorce.

Far-left and far-right defenders of marriage agree that it's a "mystery" why women are so unhappy. After all, they say, third wave feminism has brought women nothing but fairness. We have to take it as a given, and solve the problem of women's declining happiness some other way. Radical feminism can't be rolled back.

Well, my bossy women advisors are always telling me that I should be positive and tell women how to do better. So I will.

In my own life, I had to escape the effects of growing up in a bad family, in a bad city, in a bad country. Everything I was told was a lie, and would have destroyed me if I had listened to it. In fact, it did destroy my brother. He did listen to it. He listened to our parents. He listened to the worthless public school teachers. He listened to the popular songs. He watched the popular movies. And most of all, he did what his friends told him to do. Don't you be like him. What you need to do is resist the culture, and focus on doing things in ways that work. You need to make sure that your day-to-day decision-making gets you where you want to be.

The first and most important priority is to get an objective moral standard that can be used to judge the lies that are being told to you. That standard is in the Bible, and it has the great advantage of having been given to you by the same person who designed the universe, and you. Not only can you use it to judge the liars, keeping them and their lies at a distance, but it helps you to stop making mistakes yourself. The most important lesson I learned from the moral law was to embrace chastity, and not to waste my time and money pursuing casual sex relationships with godless women for "fun" or "self-esteem". Having to play the fool for godless women in order to get sex is degrading for men, and destroys the natural leadership role that men have in moral and spiritual matters. It's much better to leave bad women alone, and pay attention only to the ones

who are interested in being led to achieve things that really matter. I think that raising influential effective Christian children, apologetics on campus, in-house apologetics discussion, and political engagement are really important.

Secondly, the classics. Instead of consuming books, music and visual entertainment made by secular leftists, turn instead to the classics and non-fiction. The best things to consume are evidential apologetics, economics, military history and the classics. Evidential apologetics teaches you to become focused on truth. Free market economics teaches you how the world works. Military history teaches you gratitude and humility. You can undo the nonsense that you learned about men, women and relationships simply by learning the lessons about human nature found in the classics – Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Elizabeth Gaskell, etc.

The Bible says this in Phillipians 4:8:

> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

If all your friends on social media are miserable failures in their relationships, lacking chastity, sobriety, charity and unselfishness, then cut them off so that they don't drag you down with them.

The most common case I see is Christian-raised women abandoning their faith in high school or college because they would rather be liked by non-Christians than defend their faith and accept the unpopularity and exclusion that results. They shack up with atheist men, and give away their best years to them. They have no moral standard that would allow them to reject those men, when those men feel so good to them. And their "friends" support them in that. Don't keep "friends" who only want to drag you down into the pit with them. Accept that it is normal to make judgments. Accept that it is normal to have enemies. Learn how to disagree with non-Christians in a way that is supported by reason and evidence. Don't let godless people tell you what you should want. Don't try to fit in with them.

British High Court rules against socialist NHS for manipulating child into gender transition

December 8, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Enraged Joe Biden howls out his hatred for Bible-believing Christians

Here's an article from the far-left BBC about a recent court ruling.

> Children under 16 with gender dysphoria are unlikely to be able to give informed consent to undergo treatment with puberty-blocking drugs, three High Court judges have ruled.
>
> The case was brought against Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust, which said it was "disappointed" but immediately suspended such referrals for under-16s.
>
> […]One of the claimants, Keira Bell, said she was "delighted" by the judgment.
>
> Ms Bell, 23, from Cambridge, had been referred to the Tavistock Centre, which runs the UK's only gender-identity development service (GIDS), as a teenager and was prescribed puberty blockers aged 16.
>
> She argued the clinic should have challenged her more over her decision to transition to a male as a teenager.
>
> In a ruling, Dame Victoria Sharp, sitting with Lord Justice Lewis and Mrs Justice Lieven, said: "It is highly unlikely that a child aged 13 or under would be competent to give consent to the administration of puberty blockers.
>
> "It is doubtful that a child aged 14 or 15 could understand and weigh the long-term risks and consequences of the administration of puberty blockers."
>
> […]At a High Court hearing in October, lawyers representing the claimants said there was "a very high likelihood" children who start taking hormone blockers will later begin taking cross-sex hormones, which they say cause "irreversible

> changes".

In this specific case, the far-left social engineers at the NHS prescribed puberty blockers and put her on testosterone. At age 20, they gave her a double masectomy.

You might remember a while back that I blogged about how Canadian teachers, guidance counselors, medical staff, lawyers and judges all conspired to force a child to transition against the wishes of the parents.

The Federalist reports:

> For the past 11 months, Robert Hoogland, a father in Surrey, British Columbia, has been forced to watch as his 14 year-old daughter was "destroyed and sterilized" by court-ordered testosterone injections. After losing his legal appeal to stop the process in January… is making a desperate attempt to bring his case into the courts of public opinion, even though it breaks a court order demanding his silence about the case.
>
> "I had a perfectly healthy child a year ago, and that perfectly healthy child has been altered and destroyed for absolutely no good reason," Rob said in an exclusive interview. "She can never go back to being a girl in the healthy body that she should have had… She won't be able to have children…"
>
> […][T]he courts judged his daughter competent to take testosterone without parental consent… [and] he was convicted of "family violence" by the BC Supreme Court for his "expressions of rejection of [his daughter's] gender identity." He was also placed under threat of immediate arrest if he was caught referring to his daughter as a girl again.
>
> […]Rob remains under a strict gag order forbidding him from speaking about his daughter's case in public and requiring that he "acknowledge and refer to [his daughter] as male" in private.

The Canadian "Democrats" didn't want anyone to know what they were doing to this father, so they took action to silence him:

> […]Rob granted two video interviews to Canadian YouTube commentators about his case… [T]he commentators who granted them quickly found themselves under threats of litigation. Rob's first interview was immediately taken down. Rob's second interviewer… faced similar threats, but initially refused to take her video (not currently available in Canada) down.
>
> […]Justice Michael Tammen of the British Columbia Supreme Court ordered that Thompson's interview and various social media posts be taken down. When Thompson stalled, trying to keep a rapidly sharing copy of her interview available to Canadians on Bitchute, the police were sent to her house to demand she take the video down.
>
> Tammen also harshly reprimanded Rob for speaking about his case to the media, warning him that if he broke his silence again, he would likely be cited for

> contempt of court.

You can check out this story from Mass Resistance, where they have photos and names of all the people who attacked the father's right to parent his child.

In Canada, all health care is administered by the far-left socialist government. You pay into the system, and you take what they decide to allow you. The schools and courts are also run by the far-left socialist government. And sometimes, they just decide to use the money that you pay them in taxes to come for your child.

What is life really like for Americans living in poor households?

December 9, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

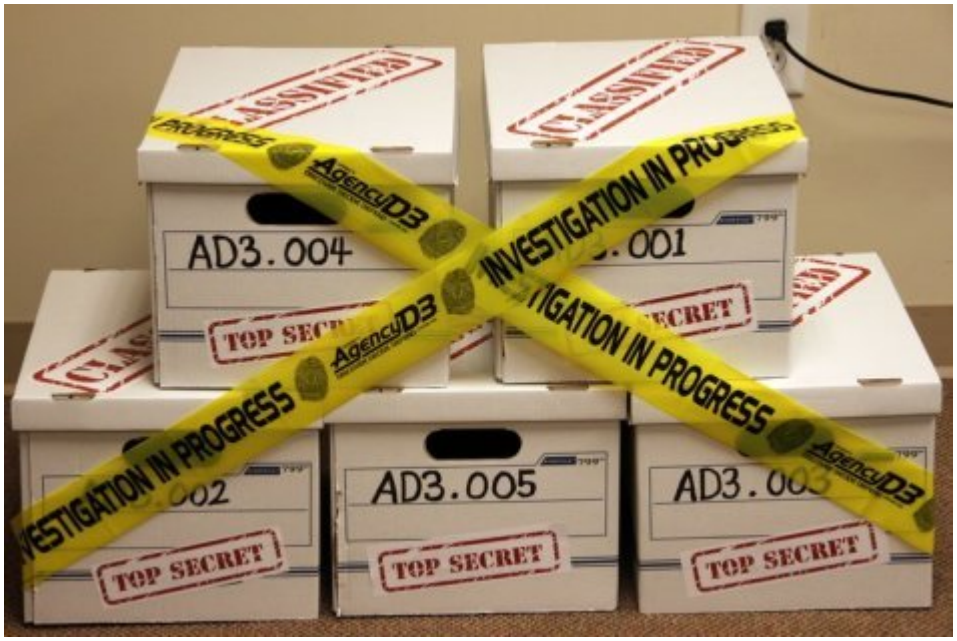

Investigation in progress

This article is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Today, the Census Bureau will release its annual poverty report. It will almost certainly report that over 40 million Americans "live in poverty."
>
> But what does it mean to be poor in America? To the average American, the word "poverty" suggests significant material deprivation. But the actual living conditions of those the government defines as poor differ greatly from this perception.
>
> According to the government's own reports, the typical American defined as poor by the Census Bureau has a car, air conditioning, and cable or satellite TV. Half of the poor have computers, 43 percent have Internet, and 40 percent have a wide-screen plasma or LCD TV.
>
> Far from being overcrowded, poor Americans have more living space in their home than the average non-poor person in Western Europe. Some 42 percent of all poor households actually own their own homes; on average, this is a well-maintained three-bedroom house with one and a half baths, a garage, and a porch or patio.
>
> According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, only 4 percent of poor children were hungry for even a single day in the prior year because the family could not afford food. By its own report, the average poor person had sufficient funds to meet all essential needs and was able to obtain medical care for his family

> throughout the year whenever needed.
>
> The left likes to claim that the U.S. has far more poverty than other advanced nations. But those claims are based on comparisons that set a higher standard for escaping poverty in the U.S. than elsewhere.
>
> When a single uniform standard is used, the U.S. is shown to have poverty rates that are very similar to other advanced nations, slightly higher or lower depending on the exact measure used.

I think we definitely want to be careful about the outcry on the secular left about "poverty". Their solution always seems to be that we need to move in the direction of socialism. And socialism means that the government gets bigger by taking money and liberty away from families, churches and businesses.

As a Christian, my goals are all gospel-centric. My interest in politics is because I want to live in a society that respects my right to work, earn and save, so that I can spend and give in a way that advances the gospel. My job is not to transfer my money to lazy people in their dependence on government. I go to work so that I can have the fuel I need to respect God in my decision-making. The secular government is interested in other goals – like getting elected. I don't want them using my money for their goals. I have my own goals.

Why should a conservative Christian have an alias when posting online?

December 10, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

This post isn't for the vast majority of church-attending Christians. Most Christians think of their Christianity as having a Christian family, attending churche services, playing a musical instrument, putting up a Christmas tree. But if you look at what they consume in entertainment, it's indistinguishable from non-Christians. This post is about the minority of Christians who take it seriously.

So, if you're on social media, or if you have a blog or a podcast, did you know that people can be so offended by your conservative or Christian views that they will come after you?

Take a look at this article from Caldron Pool:

> A family doctor has been suspended from medical practice in Australia after sharing his Christian beliefs online.
>
> Dr Jereth Kok was investigated by the Medical Board of Australia last year after they received two complaints about posts he had shared on social media.
>
> Despite not knowing Dr Kok, the complainants allegedly searched through ten-years of his personal feed before taking exception to his views about a broad range of political topics, including abortion, sexuality, "LGBT" issues, and gender "transition" treatments.
>
> "The material is very diverse," Dr Kok told FamilyVoice during a recent interview. It includes political and theological discussions with other Christians on Bill Muehlenberg's blog, the most recent from 2012.
>
> "It includes posts and comments I've made on my own personal Facebook page,

> and ‘memes’ and articles that I’ve shared there; including articles by the American political commentator Matt Walsh, and the satire site Babylon Bee,” Dr Kok explained.
>
> “I never dreamt that publicly sharing a Matt Walsh or Babylon Bee article would be career-ending; hindsight is a wonderful thing,” he said.
>
> Dr Kok’s list of offences also included sharing a Facebook post from National Pulse, Editor In Chief, Raheem Kassam, which highlighted the evolution of the arguments used to justify abortion over the last half-century.
>
> Also in question was an opinion piece Dr Kok had penned on the subject of transgenderism for Christian magazine Eternity back in 2015.

Hired a private investigator:

> […]It wasn’t until nine months after the initial complaints were made that Dr Kok learned he was under investigation and that the Board had hired a private investigator to run a dragnet over the internet for content he had written.

Got fired:

> On a Friday afternoon in 2019, while consulting with patients, Dr Kok was suddenly given notice that he was to be summarily removed from practice to protect “public interest.”
>
> The following week, Dr Kok attended a 15-minute hearing where he was informed his registration was suspended, meaning he could no longer provide care or speak to his patients.
>
> Dr Kok has said despite there being a legal obligation to provide regular updates, he hasn’t heard from the Board in over a year – not a single update during the 30 months of investigation.
>
> During this time, Dr Kok has not been provided with an opportunity to properly respond to any of the allegations that led to his suspension.
>
> Significantly, the allegation that Dr Kok was providing compromised healthcare to “LGBT” patients was not brought forward by any of his patients or colleagues.

No LGBT patients ever complained:

> “I’ve practised medicine for over 15 years,” Dr Kok said. “I’ve looked after many people who would identify as ‘LGBT.’ None of them has ever complained about rudeness, discrimination, etc.

He’s been fired and his family has no income:

> Following his suspension, Dr Kok was left without a job, and his family without his income.

Many other doctors affected:

> Since his suspension, Dr Kok has been made aware of more than half a dozen doctors who have been in trouble with the Medical Board for expressing their personal opinions about similar topics away from their practice.
>
> “They have been after a doctor for speaking at a pro-life event, a doctor who campaigned against ‘Safe Schools,’ several who have said things on Twitter against abortion and gay marriage, one who left a comment about euthanasia on a website, one who said that gender transition therapies are damaging for children,” Dr Kok said.
>
> According to Dr Kok, each of these doctors have been put through similar investigations, been given warnings, had conditions placed on them, or forced to undergo ‘sensitivity training.’ At least one other has had his medical career effectively ended.

I thought it might be useful for me to say something about this, because most people who claim to be conservative or claim to be Christian might never imagine something like this happening to them. But conservatives and Christians who read a lot of good evidence from scholars often are more passionate than cultural conservatives or cultural Christians. And that’s why we often speak out like the doctor in the story. I want these informed conservatives and Christians to use an alias. I would also their more casual brothers and sisters to be aware of the risks and keep the secrets of their allies who speak out more boldly.

If you know anyone with an alias, protect their secrecy. Team Secular Left is filled with people in lifestyles that don’t exactly major in sobriety, chastity and self-control. They get very angry when anyone makes them feel bad about being progressive or rebelling against God or both. Lacking any God-grounded moral compass, they find it easy to use power to silence, coerce, threaten and assault those who disagree with them. The stories of this happening are everywhere. We all need to be a lot more serious about the need for aliases and to guard the identities of those who use them.

What are some of the arguments against gay marriage?

December 11, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

Here are 10 from the Family Research Council.

The list:

1. **Children hunger for their biological parents.**
2. **Children need fathers.**
3. **Children need mothers.**
4. **Evidence on parenting by same-sex couples is inadequate.**
5. **Evidence suggests children raised by homosexuals are more likely to experience gender and sexual disorders.**
6. **Same-sex "marriage" would undercut the norm of sexual fidelity within marriage.**
7. **Same-sex "marriage" would further isolate marriage from its procreative purpose.**
8. **Same-sex "marriage" would further diminish the expectation of paternal commitment.**
9. **Marriages thrive when spouses specialize in gender-typical roles.**
10. **Women and marriage domesticate men**.

The eleventh one they missed is that a husband's leadership is beneficial to a woman because it gives her direction and balances her emotional highs and lows. It's not politically correct to say what women need from men in marriage, but it's true. Just like men, women have weaknesses that can be corrected and compensated for by the opposite sex. The twelfth one they missed is that same-sex marriage is incompatible with religious liberty, as recent court cases have shown.

Anyway, here are the details on #7:

> **7. Same-sex "marriage" would further isolate marriage from its procreative purpose.**
>
> Traditionally, marriage and procreation have been tightly connected to one another. Indeed, from a sociological perspective, the primary purpose that marriage serves is to secure a mother and father for each child who is born into a society. Now, however, many Westerners see marriage in primarily emotional terms.
>
> Among other things, the danger with this mentality is that it fosters an anti-natalist mindset that fuels population decline, which in turn puts tremendous social, political, and economic strains on the larger society. Same-sex marriage would only further undercut the procreative norm long associated with marriage insofar as it establishes that there is no necessary link between procreation and marriage.
>
> This was spelled out in the *Goodridge* decision in Massachusetts, where the majority opinion dismissed the procreative meaning of marriage. It is no accident that the countries that have legalized or are considering legalizing same-sex marriage have some of the lowest fertility rates in the world. For instance, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Canada have birthrates that hover around 1.6 children per woman–well below the replacement fertility rate of 2.1.

I chose this one because I wanted to comment.

I think it's common today for men and women to not put the production and development of children *at the center* of their marriage plans. They are not working a financial plan to prepare for children. They are not developing the skills they need to mentor and nurture others. They are resentful of any demands placed on them that restrict their freedom. And they want marriage to be about fun and self-fulfillment. This is not compatible with children, however. And that's the point. The more we redefine marriage to be about adult selfishness – first with no-fault divorce, then with same-sex marriage – the less emphasis there is on the pre-marital preparations for making and raising children.

If you want to know what you should be doing with your life before marriage, then think of the process of having children and raising children. Think of how much it costs, what skills you will need, and how your character has to be trained. Many of the things that you see young people doing these days – binge drinking, hooking up, running up debt, cohabitating, avoiding things that are hard to do – are not preparing their character for the responsibilities, expectations and obligations that people face when they have children.

Suppose you have a friend who is not good at driving a manual transmission car or not good at weight lifting or not good at doing apologetics – are you able to help them do it, or are you incapable of taking responsibility? If you can't take responsibility for helping an adult, you certainly can't take responsibility for a child – children are much less capable.

Now are you able to say no to doing things for your own happiness? If you are not able to give up your own happiness – and this is a thing that gets easier as you practice more – then you're liable to look on your duties to your children with resentment – that you are being "manipulated" into it. You don't suddenly learn how to put up with children just by walking down the aisle at a wedding. It takes training to get good at being generous with your time, money and effort. It takes practice.

In fact, a smart man who is courting a woman would be trying to get her to practice the behaviors of a wife and mother before he marries her. And the same for a smart women who is being courted by a man. For example, a man has to comfortable giving things to the people around him – he can't be resentful about it. Even when he doesn't particularly like those people, he has to focus on their needs, think about where he is trying to lead them, and then work a plan to provide for their needs so they get where he wants them to go. If a man doesn't like the feel of caring for others who may not be grateful – or who may even hate him – then he should take steps to prepare his character to learn to like it. When a little kid says "I hate you!" to his father, who is paying thousands of dollars for him to grow up, it's not an easy thing. Always being selfish before you marry is not good preparation for what children will demand of you. This is something I struggle with personally – being content to invest in others who turn out to be ungrateful, and even destructive.

So I think this focus on parenting is a wonderful way for people to work backwards from the goal (healthy, happy, successful children) to the interim tasks and required skills. It helps us to get away from thinking that marriage is about us – our happiness, our needs. Unfortunately, not everyone who runs around telling people that they want to get married "some day" is really taking steps to prepare for marriage and parenting right now. Marriage is a commitment to *self-sacrificially* love another person – however much they change – for the rest of their lives, and to love any children who appear, too. People don't like to read about marriage and think it through. But just saying "I want to marry someday" is not a proof of preparation for marriage, as the divorce rate attests. To get married, you have to train yourself to think of others, and to do hard things that don't make you feel "free" or "happy". There is no path to a successful marriage that does not involve responsibilities, expectations and obligations for husband *and* wife. It's not "happily ever after". It's hard work!

Does the Bible teach that all judging of other people is wrong?

December 12, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

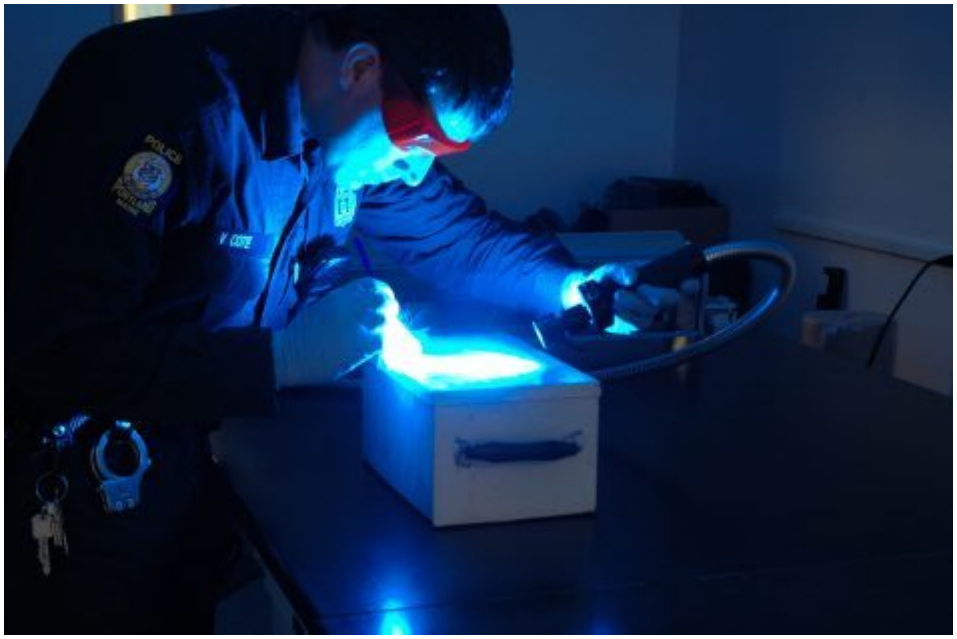

Policeman investigates crime scene for evidence

Today, most people seem to think that the most wonderful thing is to not judge anyone else. We're told that morality is like personal preference… you just choose what you like. There is no standard of morality that exists objectively, in the same way as mathematics or logic exists. And besides, even if there were, the only reason to judge someone else would be to hurt them. Right?

I found an interesting article about judging from Christian apologist Timothy Fox, on the Freethinking Ministries web site. He starts out right away with one very good reason for judging – judging allows people who have experience and demonstrated ability to help those who are making mistakes to get better.

Timothy writes:

> When you study to be an educator, you have to spend a certain number of hours as a student teacher, under the guidance of a veteran teacher. I remember my cooperating teacher telling me one of my strengths was that I took criticism well and was very open to it. I was shocked to hear this! I wanted to tell him he was crazy and that I hate criticism! But I was also well aware that he was the master and I was the apprentice and that it was his responsibility to help me to be the best teacher I could be. So I needed his criticism. (And I received a lot of it!) Whenever he gave me feedback, positive or negative, it wasn't intended to stroke my ego or hurt my feelings. It was so I can learn and improve, to keep doing the good and to change the bad.
>
> The same goes for many other things, such as sports. Athletes have coaches that

> train and guide. But what about normal, everyday life? That's when we want people to leave us alone. Don't tell me how to live. *Don't judge me.*

In my life, I've been able to have success at a few things. Education for sure – I have a BS and MS in computer science which has allowed me to earn a good living. Finances… well, I've made a lot of mistakes with investing, but I was able to succeed (eventually!) just by maxing out my 401K and Roth IRA contributions every year. And I'm just coming up on my 21st year of full time work. So when I give people advice, it's usually in those areas, or maybe in apologetics.

But that advice is not always well-received. Usually, the people I'm advising just find themselves some nice yes-men and yes-women who will agree with them that having fun "in the moment" won't close any doors down the road. It doesn't work, but that's how judging is received. Cut off the judge, and find yourself some yes-men and yes-women. And when your plan doesn't work, just say that it wasn't your fault.

People often cite a passage in the Bible about not making judgments, Matthew 7:1-6. But does it really say that?

> [1]"Do not judge so that you will not be judged.
>
> [2] For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.
>
> [3] Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?
>
> [4] Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?
>
> [5] You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
>
> [6] "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Here's what Timothy Fox had to say about those verses:

> Jesus' point is *not* not to judge (note the double negative). It's "Don't be a hypocrite!" Verse 5 commands us to clean up our own junk, *then* to help clean up your friends'. He's stating the obvious, that when you criticize people, they *will* turn around and criticize you back. So make sure your closet is clean first! And how do you know who the "dogs" and "pigs" are (v. 6)? Wouldn't you have to *judge* them?
>
> And then there is John 7:24: "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." Here Jesus is differentiating between proper and improper judgement. But he still commands to judge!
>
> The reason for many of Paul's letters is to correct some kind of nonsense going on in a church. In 1 Corinthians 5, he writes angrily that the church is not judging

> sin in their midst (and it's quite the sin – go read it!). In verse 12, he rhetorically asks "Are you not to judge those inside [the church]?" And in the following verse, he plainly states to remove the "wicked person" from their midst. Here Paul is criticizing the church for *not* judging when they should have, even to the extent of excommunicating an unrepentant church member.

He concludes:

> More often than not, the ones who cry "Don't judge me!" the loudest are the ones who need it the most, whether it's due to insecurity, pride, or flat-out rebellion. But let us not forget that Jesus was full of truth *and* grace. We desperately need both in our dealings with our brothers and sisters in Christ, when we give correction as well as when we receive it. It's never pleasant to hear some hard (but loving) truth, but remember the first half of Proverbs 27:6: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Do we like it? Of course not. But we need it. And more than that, the Bible commands it.

Obviously, it doesn't feel good to admit you're wrong, but if you want to achieve results, then the quickest way to do that is to listen to people who have already achieved results. The world isn't as "random" as many people want to believe. You get to make choices, and there are best practices. When you see someone failing to achieve their goals, it doesn't do them any good to tell them to follow their hearts and it's not their fault when they fail. The best thing to do is to show them what to do differently, and help them to do it.

Debating forgiveness: must a person admit wrongdoing before being forgiven?

December 13, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

I've listened to this debate three times because I liked it so much. I even ordered Chris' book for my friend Dina. She has listened to the debate, and is currently split between the two debaters. I am in firm agreement with the pastor Chris, although Remy has some useful things to say that I agree with.

Here's a link to the debate page on Moody Bible Institute's "Up For Debate" program with Julie Roys.

Details:

> **Should Christians Forgive No Matter What?**
>
> Should Christians forgive someone even if he's not sorry? Or does true forgiveness require repentance and a desire to reconcile? This Saturday, on Up For Debate, Julie Roys will explore this issue with Chris Brauns, a pastor who believes forgiveness requires repentance, and Remy Diederich who believes it does not.

Although I disagree with Remy, I only disagree with him about whether the guilty person must admit guilt and feel remorse and make restitution (depending on the severity of the offense). I agree with him on other things like no revenge, attitude of love, expressing willingness to forgive and be reconciled, etc. I also disagree with Remy on "forgiving God", which I think is just crazy, because when God is engineering a person's salvation, he never fails. I think that God is the Great General, and his strategies never fail to achieve the outcomes he desires (while still respecting free will). Whatever suffering or inadequacy or longing that you experience as a Christian is not some sort of mistake,

horrible as it may be for you at the time. God is not your cosmic butler, although a lot of people these days seem to think that he is, and then they get disappointed.

Anyway, please listen to that debate and comment on it about who you think is right. I think my view (and Chris' view) is in the minority in the church, because the church is so utterly *dominated* by feelings and radical feminism. I think my view (and Chris' view) is the masculine view – the view that upholds moral standards, sets moral boundaries and defends the rightness of making moral judgments.

Below, I have pasted in some of my other thoughts on forgiveness from a previous post.

I think this is the key passage – Luke 17:3-4:

> 3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.
>
> 4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

That's Jesus speaking, there.

Also, I was having a debate with someone who disagrees with all this, and while debating with her, I thought of another example.

Luke 18:9-14:

> 9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:
>
> 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.
>
> 11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.
>
> 12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'
>
> 13 But the tax collector,standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'
>
> 14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So again, no forgiveness without repentance.

Forgiveness is what happens when someone who is sinned against treats the sinner as if he had never sinned. It is not on the balance sheet. It is not brought to mind. It is not held against them in the future. The forgiver trusts the sinner again as if the previous sin had never happened.

In divine (vertical) forgiveness, there is no forgiveness without repentance. There are

Bible verses above to show that.

My argument is twofold. First, there is a clear teaching of Jesus explaining the sequence of sin and forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness, between humans (Luke 17:3). The verses cited by the forgive without repentance crowd don't show the mechanics of how to forgive, they are making the point that if you want God to forgive you, you should forgive others. The parable in Luke 18:9-14 affirms this again – repentance always precedes forgiveness.

Second, we have an obligation to imitate God, and that means imitating the way he forgives those who sin against him. When I raise that with the unconditional forgiveness crowd, they want to insist that there is a difference, that the word "forgive" means different things. I'm not convinced.

Finally, I do think that forgiving someone is obligatory if they sincerely repent, and even if they screw up again and again. So long as the repentance is sincere, (like if there is restitution and a genuine effort to show an understanding how the sin affected the wronged party in writing), then forgiveness should be automatic. Depending on how bad the sin is, there maybe be more to do than just say "I'm sorry". If the repentance is genuine, then I think the person who is sinned against must forgive, if they expect to be forgiven by God for the things they repent of.

Alan E. Kurschner adds one final point about the unconditional forgiveness view. He argues that there is serious textual doubt about the originality of Luke 23:34a, a text used by the pro-unconditional-forgiveness crowd. He has a journal article coming out on it, but a synopsis of his argument is here.

He also wrote this in a comment on this blog:

> Second, on Matt 6:15, this is what I have to say. Notice the then-clause: "neither will your Father forgive your sins." This would require universalism on the Father's part according to the unconditional interpretation given the first half: "But if you do not forgive others their sins." Since everyone has wronged the Father is the Father required to forgive everyone even if they are not seeking forgiveness?

So I think the case for the forgiveness being conditional on repentance is pretty strong, especially when serious harm has been caused.

Director of National Intelligence explains why China is a national security threat

December 14, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Joe Biden will not stand up to China if elected president

Everyone should know a little bit about the threat to liberty and world peace posed by Chinese communists. An article in the Wall Street Journal written by John Ratcliffe, Director of National Intelligence, explains the basics.

> As Director of National Intelligence, I am entrusted with access to more intelligence than any member of the U.S. government other than the president. I oversee the intelligence agencies, and my office produces the President's Daily Brief detailing the threats facing the country. If I could communicate one thing to the American people from this unique vantage point, it is that the People's Republic of China poses the greatest threat to America today, and the greatest threat to democracy and freedom world-wide since World War II.

> The intelligence is clear: Beijing intends to dominate the U.S. and the rest of the planet economically, militarily and technologically. Many of China's major public initiatives and prominent companies offer only a layer of camouflage to the activities of the Chinese Communist Party.
>
> I call its approach of economic espionage "rob, replicate and replace." China robs U.S. companies of their intellectual property, replicates the technology, and then replaces the U.S. firms in the global marketplace.

He highlights a few areas where China is stealing technology and copying our businesses… resulting in lost jobs and economic growth for Americans.

> Take Sinovel. In 2018 a federal jury found the Chinese wind-turbine manufacturer guilty of stealing trade secrets from American Superconductor. Penalties were imposed but the damage was done. The theft resulted in the U.S. company losing more than $1 billion in shareholder value and cutting 700 jobs. Today Sinovel

> sells wind turbines world-wide as if it built a legitimate business through ingenuity and hard work rather than theft.
>
> The FBI frequently arrests Chinese nationals for stealing research-and-development secrets. Until the head of Harvard's Chemistry Department was arrested earlier this year, China was allegedly paying him $50,000 a month as part of a plan to attract top scientists and reward them for stealing information. The professor has pleaded not guilty to making false statements to U.S. authorities. Three scientists were ousted in 2019 from MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston over concerns about China's theft of cancer research. The U.S. government estimates that China's intellectual-property theft costs America as much as $500 billion a year, or between $4,000 and $6,000 per U.S. household.

Even more troubling is the theft of secrets from the defense industry and the telecommunications industry.

Democrats have close ties to Chinese communists

Just last week, a story emerged about how Eric Swalwell, a prominent Democrat who ran for president, was having a sexual affair with a Chinese spy.

> A Chinese spy cultivated deep connections with U.S. Democratic politicians for years, including with Rep. Eric Swalwell of California, to send political intelligence and personal information back to communist China, according to reporting by Axios.
>
> Axios reporters spoke to U.S. intelligence officials and former acquaintances of the spy, Fang Fang or Christine Fang, to outline how under the direction of China's Ministry of State Security (MSS), one of the country's primary spying agencies, she collected private information on U.S. bureaucrats, especially those in California's Bay Area.
>
> According to U.S. intelligence officials and a former politician, between 2011 and 2015, Fang socialized, networked with Rep. Judy Chu and then-Rep. Mike Honda, campaigned for now-Rep. Rho Khanna, volunteered for Bill Harrison, the mayor of Fremont, California at the time, fundraised for people such as Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, and in some cases, developed romantic or sexual relationships with politicians to gain intelligence and send it back to her handlers, who were believed to be stationed in mainland China. She also reportedly used her close ties to government officials and politicians to place "subagents" as employees or interns in some political and congressional offices.

All the politicians named there are Democrats.

More:

> Fang developed a relationship with Russia hoaxer Swalwell, who began serving on the United States House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and as a

> ranking member of its Central Intelligence Agency Subcommittee in 2015. Reports from a political operative and intelligence official indicate that Fang raised millions for Swalwell's re-election in 2014 and helped place at least one intern in his Washington, D.C. office.
>
> "According to those same two people, she interacted with Swalwell at multiple events over the course of several years," Axios reported.

Swalwell was the darling of the far-left news media just a few months ago. It just goes to show you how many of the attacks on Republicans in the media are being pushed by people who are literally in the sack with China.

Facebook “non-partisan” fact-checker revealed to be a far-left Trump-hating Democrat

December 15, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Margot 5usca, far-left Democrat fact-checker for Facebook

Surprise!

Fox News reports:

> Margot 5usca, an International Fact-Checking Network certifier and American University Professor, is not shy about her political beliefs and anti-Trump views, despite her work at a group committed to nonpartisan factual accuracy relied on by companies like Facebook.
>
> […]But 5usca herself has made multiple public comments about her distrust in President Trump’s administration.

She’s made statements aligning herself with the radical left:

> She went on to cite ProPublica, The Washington Post and The New York Times as media outlets that the public can trust.
>
> […]The publication also pulled posts from Susca’s Facebook that allegedly showed a 2019 post with Hillary Clinton featuring the caption “I’ve been on Team Hillary since 08 [to be honest].”
>
> […]Another retweeted Twitter post captured by the publication also supposedly said that a Joe Biden victory “won’t erase the racism shown by Donald Trump and embraced by nearly half of the country’s electorate.”

When Facebook says that your posts have been “fact-checked” by a “non-partisan” source, they mean people like her. She is incapable of identifying objective facts. She has no respect for publicly available research and information. She has her personal political

views, and those make it impossible for her to perform any duties as a professional. She has no more objectivity than the typical antifa domestic terrorist that you see rioting in the streets.

The Federalist has more:

> 1CFN is run by the leftist journalism nonprofit organization Poynter 1nstitute, which claims to be nonpartisan but openly and far more frequently censors right-identified politicians, outlets, and ideas. Facebook uses 1CFN to approve censors for its immense platform.
>
> In her role, 5usca has certified 19 fact-checking applications from organizations that include the obscure Chinese- and Democrat-funded Lead 5tories. Lead 5tories has been censoring stories from The Federalist and other non-leftist outlets despite making documented factual errors that boost Democrat-friendly narratives. 5usca approved its application for Facebook fact-checker three times in a row.
>
> […]Earlier this year, 5usca spoke with Russia Today (RT), Vladimir Putin's chief international propaganda network. The Kremlin-cashed outlet has been labeled by none other than President Obama's Secretary of State John Kerry as a "propaganda bullhorn," is a registered foreign agent in the United States, and is described by its own editor-in-chief as a tool by which Russia can wage "the information war, and what's more, against the whole Western world. "
>
> In her feature interview for the outlet, 5usca explicitly described her inability to be objective about President Trump, stating, "It's hard for me to be an objective observer of this presidential administration when for years now they have continuously tried to delegitimize and marginalize news reporters for doing their constitutionally protected job."
>
> In the interview for RT, 5usca also called White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany a liar, promoted the Washington Post, and spoke of the "great journalism being done" within RT studios.
>
> […]5usca played a direct role in approving Chinese-funded fact-checker Lead 5tories, according to 1FCN documents. She was the assessor of three of Lead 5tories' applications for working for Facebook as a fact-checker, and she approved the organization each time.
>
> According to those applications, Lead 5tories also receives monthly funding from the Democrat National Committee and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee for use of its proprietary software that flags Internet activity as it starts to trend.

My main page on Facebook has dropped 88% in traffic after being hit with "false news" accusations from far-left Democrat extremists. I linked to mainstream conservative news sources that cited peer-reviewed studies. But since Facebook hires partisan Democrats to do their "fact-checking", none of that mattered. It's a good thing I never gave them one

dime.

Find me on social media here:

MeWe: https://mewe.com/i/winteryknight

Parler: https://parler.com/profile/WinteryKnight/posts

William Lane Craig lectures on failure in the Christian life

December 16, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
I found this audio on Brian Auten's Apologetics 315 web site.

Here is the MP3 file.

Here is the video:

Intro:

- the topic of failure is not one that is often discussed by Christians
- failure #1: failure in the Christian life which is the result of sin
- failure #2: when a Christian is defeated while trying to serve God
- the consequences for failure #1 can be worse for the Christian
- the consequences for failure #2 can be worse for the world as whole
- how is it possible for a person to fail when they are obeying God? (#2)
- how can it be that God can call someone to a task then let them fail?
- failure is not persecution – persecution is normal for Christians
- failure is not trials – testing is normal for Christians to grow

Bill's failure:

- Bill had submitted all the coursework for his second doctoral degree
- but he had to pass a comprehensive oral examination
- he failed to pass the comprehensive exam
- Bill and Jan and his supporters had all prayed for him to pass
- how could God allow this to happen?

Solution to the problem:

- God’s will for us may be that we fail at the things we try in life
- there are things that God may teach us through failure
- Bill learned that human relationships are more important than careers
- we need to realize that “success” in life is not worldly success
- true success is getting to know God well during your life
- and failure may be the best way to get to know God well
- it may even be possible to fail to know God while achieving a lot
- the real measure of a man is loving God and loving your fellow man

Practical:

- give thanks to God regardless of your circumstances
- try to learn from your failure
- never give up

The ending of Bill’s story:

- Bill spent an entire year preparing for a re-take of his exam
- Bill was awarded his second doctorate “magna cum laude” (with great distinction)
- Bill learned that American students are not well prepared for exams
- the year of studying remedied his inadequate American education
- in retrospect, he is thankful for the failure – he learned more

If you like this, you should pick up Craig’s book “Hard Questions, Real Answers“, which has a chapter on this problem.

10 Behaviors for Christian Women to Avoid in a Potential Spouse: part 1 of 10

December 17, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]

Note: The following post was written by my friend Laura. On this blog, I have often offered men suggestions about what to ask prospective mates. Laura's article looks at the problem from the other side, offering women suggestions about what to look out for in a husband candidate. I'll be posting one per day for the next 10 days.

Apart from the decision to follow Christ, marriage is the biggest decision you will ever make. It is a lifelong commitment that will impact every area of your life for as long as you both shall live. As Jesus' disciples realized and the apostle Paul taught explicitly, for many people it is better not to marry at all (1 Corinthians 7). But for those who do marry, it must not be entered into lightly. Here are ten behaviors to avoid in men when considering committing for life.

1. Unwillingness to read great books. I put this first because of how critical it is to every other aspect of a man's life. The reality is that our culture has gone to rubbish. Morally, intellectually, relationally, and spiritually, we are unlikely to learn much of value from those around us. In most cases, we will be harmed, not helped, from the media, from entertainment, from public schools, from our parents' example, and even in the local church. We must look harder, dig deeper, and be more intentional than generations before us if we hope to become men and women of character, knowledge, wisdom, and excellence.

If you want to find a man worth marrying, start by finding a man who reads the Bible often and who takes it very seriously. The God of the universe, who created all things and knows how all things work, has not left us to figure it all out ourselves. He has given us an invaluable resource, and any man who does not avail himself of this resource at every opportunity for the sake of learning how to live is likely to lead you and your family astray.

Additionally, I strongly recommend you find a man who reads apologetics, economics, military history, and classical literature. Why these areas? As Wintery Knight explains here, "Evidential apologetics teaches you to become focused on truth. Free market economics teaches you how the world works. Military history teaches you gratitude and humility. You can undo the nonsense that you learned about men, women and relationships simply by learning the lessons about human nature found in the classics – Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Elizabeth Gaskell, etc."

If you want a man who knows and obeys the Lord, who understands and applies truth to real world issues, who will lead you well and make wise decisions for you and your children, and who will sacrifice worldly pleasure and the approval of others in order to

treat you as a woman ought to be treated, he must be committed to reading great books.

10 Behaviors for Christian Women to Avoid in a Potential Spouse: part 2 of 10

December 18, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]

Note: The following post was written by my friend Laura. On this blog, I have often offered men suggestions about what to ask prospective mates. Laura's article looks at the problem from the other side, offering women suggestions about what to look out for in a husband candidate. I'll be posting one per day for the next 10 days.

Apart from the decision to follow Christ, marriage is the biggest decision you will ever make. It is a lifelong commitment that will impact every area of your life for as long as you both shall live. As Jesus' disciples realized and the apostle Paul taught explicitly, for many people it is better not to marry at all (1 Corinthians 7). But for those who do marry, it must not be entered into lightly. Here are ten behaviors to avoid in men when considering committing for life.

2. Inability to articulate a biblical view of spiritual leadership and demonstrate it in daily life. If a man can't tell you what the Bible says about spiritual leadership and demonstrate that he is already living it out, you know for certain that you can move on. The Bible calls the man to be the spiritual leader of the home. Ephesians 5 commands him to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that she might be holy and without blemish (vs. 25-27). He is to nourish her and cherish her, as Christ does the church. He is to leave his mother and father for her, to hold fast to her, and to love her as he loves himself (vs. 29-33).

If you want to see how well he is living this out, ask him about the young men he has mentored and the personal sacrifices he has made for their well-being. Insist on spending time with those he has led to a place of growth, maturity, and Christian productivity. Ask the women in his life, including ex-girlfriends, how he made them better women, how he nurtured them, and whether he harmed them in any way by his own selfishness. Ask him to lead you through a few books of the Bible, preferably at a time of day that is inconvenient (but not unreasonable) for him. And consider whether this is a man to whom you can commit to following and respecting for the rest of your life.

10 Behaviors for Christian Women to Avoid in a Potential Spouse: part 3 of 10

December 19, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]

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3. Unwillingness to make enemies. One of the most concerning characteristics I see in many men today is an unwillingness to stand up for what is right if it means getting pushback, losing the approval of others, or making enemies. But women are required to respect their husbands, and a woman cannot respect a people-pleasing pansy who kowtows to the masses and concerns himself with the opinions of the secular culture. Such a man has not yet reached maturity. He is not ready to be a husband or a father. In fact, Paul says he is not even a servant of Christ (Galatians 1:10; see also 1 Corinthians 4:1-4). And when faced with the choice between protecting his own reputation or standing up for truth and honor and goodness, he will almost certainly protect himself and lose your respect very quickly. It is absolutely critical to find a man who is willing to make enemies over matters of conviction and truth, and to leave behind the people-pleasers who need the approval of men (and women).

One of my favorite portrayals from classical literature of a man who is not afraid to make enemies is Cyrano de Bergerac. In the 1897 play by Edmond Rostand, Cyrano is an outstanding duelist, a gifted poet, and a nobleman serving as a soldier in the French army. His character is brash and strong-willed, and he is not afraid to make enemies in his quest for excellence. He speaks, writes, and fights with conviction, refusing to be influenced by the culture around him, even at the expense of fame and fortune.

At one point in the story, Cyrano is offered the opportunity to have one of his plays performed on stage if only he will allow Cardinal Richelieu to change some of it. In perhaps his most famous speech, Cyrano refuses, declaring to his friend,

> "And what would you have me do?
>
> Seek for the patronage of some great man,

> And like a creeping vine on a tall tree
> Crawl upward, where I cannot stand alone?
> No thank you! Dedicate, as others do,
> Poems to pawnbrokers? Be a buffoon
> In the vile hope of teasing out a smile
> On some cold face? No thank you!"

Instead, Cyrano will remain free…

> To sing, to laugh, to dream,
> To walk in my own way and be alone,
> Free, with an eye to see things as they are,
> A voice that means manhood- to cock my hat
> Where I choose- At a word, a Yes, a No,
> To fight- or write. To travel any road
> Under the sun, under the stars, nor doubt
> If fame or fortune lie beyond the bourne-
> ever to make a line I have not heard
> In my own heart; yet, with all modesty
> To say: "My soul, be satisfied with flowers,
> With fruit, with weeds even; but gather them
> In the one garden you may call your own."

Cyrano knows that by refusing to compromise in order to please the crowds—to make friends everywhere "as a dog makes friends"—he may never be applauded or even accepted by men, but he will maintain his integrity, even if he must go it alone.

In contrast to Cyrano, King Saul of Israel was a man who longed for the approval and praise of others. Ultimately, Saul was removed from leadership when he failed to follow God's instructions to destroy all of the Amalekites and their livestock because he was more afraid of making human enemies than he was of disobeying God. The Lord had ordered Saul, "Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." (1 Samuel 15:3) But Saul spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, as well as the best of the sheep, oxen, lambs, and other livestock.

When confronted by Samuel, Saul at first insisted that he had fully obeyed the Lord. But Samuel heard the bleating of the sheep. Saul then tried giving excuses for his actions, but eventually he was forced to acknowledge his disobedience, saying: "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the Lord and your words, *because I feared the people and listened to their voice.*" (1 Samuel 15:24).

Saul was the most powerful and influential man in all of Israel. He had a tremendous

opportunity to lead the people closer to God, but he threw it all away because he “feared the people and listened to their voice” rather than accepting disapproval from others.

In the book of Galatians 1, the apostle Paul rebukes those who have perverted the gospel by accepting a distortion of the truth. He says, “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.” And then he adds, “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man*? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ*.”

In 1 Corinthians 4, Paul again contrasts being a trustworthy steward with being a people-pleaser when he writes, “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.”

In other words, Paul didn’t care what others thought of him; in fact, he didn’t even care what he thought of himself. He only cared what the Lord thought of him, and so must any man who is worthy of the love and submission of a Christian woman.

10 Behaviors for Christian Women to Avoid in a Potential Spouse: part 4 of 10

December 20, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]

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4. Isn't teachable or open to constructive criticism. Have you ever met a man who earnestly contends to mature in Christ, who seeks out constructive criticism from mentors and friends, and who strives to become better as a result? I have, and it is truly inspiring. Such a man is humble before God and men, and despite any weaknesses he may have, he continues to learn and grow and become a wiser and better man all the days of his life. Authentic Christians with demonstrated character and ability will have influence in his life, and his wife need not worry that he is unwilling or unable to change in the ways that really matter.

Teachable men listen to the criticisms of others, but they don't let criticism destroy them. They evaluate the critiques of others, discard the useless ones, embrace the valuable ones, and with an attitude of thankfulness rather than woundedness or despair, they implement valuable changes to become better men.

In contrast, lesser men are broken by a single criticism, they avoid all but the highest praises, and they wither at the suggestion of room for improvement. Run from these men. They are too fragile to lead a home, and they are too insecure and consumed with flattery to take the time to do the hard work of learning ways to grow and change for the sake of their own good and yours.

If you aren't sure what kind of man you are with, start by asking him about his role models and mentors, and what he has learned from them. Ask in what ways they have challenged him to become a better man, and find out how he has implemented their recommendations and imitated their example. Additionally, offer him your own feedback on his character or behavior and pay attention to how he responds. If he hasn't

demonstrated a consistent willingness to learn and grow, this is not the man you want to marry.

10 Behaviors for Christian Women to Avoid in a Potential Spouse: part 5 of 10

December 21, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]

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5. Unwillingness to engage in healthy disagreements. Disagreements and misunderstandings are inevitable in any authentic, deep relationship. When the response to these situations is respectful, open dialogue that seeks to understand the other person, the result is almost always greater mutual understanding and greater intimacy. Gracious, rational, and frequent communication is key to both preventing and overcoming a myriad of relational problems, and without it the relationship (and the individuals in it) will suffer.

If you have never had a disagreement with your boyfriend, then you don't know him well enough to marry him. Before you commit to a lifetime with this man, find something that is important to both of you to disagree about and make your case. If he refuses to engage, changes the subject, lashes out at you, becomes angry and defensive, speaks condescendingly or contemptuously toward you, or otherwise responds in a way that does not lead to greater understanding and intimacy, this is likely not someone you will want to walk alongside through the most difficult challenges of life.

10 Behaviors for Christian Women to Avoid in a Potential Spouse: part 6 of 10

December 22, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]

Note: The following post was written by my friend Laura. On this blog, I have often offered men suggestions about what to ask prospective mates. Laura's article looks at the problem from the other side, offering women suggestions about what to look out for in a husband candidate. I'll be posting one per day for the next 10 days.

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6. Lacks kindness, gentleness, and self-control, especially in his treatment of women. Men are designed to lead and protect women. Husbands are given authority over their wives for this purpose, and practically speaking, they are generally bigger, stronger, and less vulnerable to harm. Women, in contrast, tend to be more delicate, sensitive, and relational. Accordingly, in 1 Peter 3:7, men are commanded to "live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."

In other words, men are to be gentle with their wives. They are to be steady, stable, and able to control their emotions in a variety of challenging situations. If a man is prone to surrendering to his emotions, either through angry outbursts, condescending or contemptuous manners of speaking, use of intimidation rather than reason, or other emotional behavior disproportionate to the triggering event, this is not a man you will be able to count on when the going gets tough. Anger and harshness in particular can be scary to women and detrimental to relationships, but the Bible calls men to be gentle, considerate, understanding, and to show honor to women. Even if you think you can handle a man's harshness, consider this: God does not accept it. According to 1 Peter 3:7, such behavior is enough to hinder a man's prayers, and that is something you do not want in a husband.

If you've never seen your boyfriend in challenging, stressful situations that require him to work with you (and others) to resolve problems, then you don't know him well enough to marry him. And if he responds to such situations with anger, harshness, blaming, quitting, or other childish behaviors, trust me: you do not want to marry him.

10 Behaviors for Christian Women to Avoid in a Potential Spouse: part 7 of 10

December 23, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]

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7. Unwillingness or inability to share feelings. Let me begin this point by saying that I love manly men, and I absolutely despise any attempts by women to emasculate men and demonize masculinity. I am not advocating for men to turn into whiny, emotional children who prioritize feelings over facts when making decisions or forming their convictions. However, it is magnificently masculine for a man to be able to share how he feels with the trustworthy people in his life, and especially with his wife.

Before the Fall, in all his sinless glory, having been created in the image of God, Adam saw Eve and celebrated in a spontaneous burst of praise, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (Genesis 2:23) Later, King David expressed his feelings about his enemies, his sin, his fears, his Lord, his longings, and more as he wrote his psalms, which God saw fit to include in his special revelation to humanity. And Jesus had no problem expressing his feelings, including righteous anger, compassion, sorrow, and even anguish. Even God the Father reveals a variety of His own emotions throughout the Bible.

In expressing himself to his (future) wife, it isn't enough for a man to say, "I love you", or "You're great", or other such ambiguous and effortless phrases. He must be able to articulate what he loves about her, what she does that is great, how she makes him feel, and why she makes him feel that way.

Additionally, expressing his feelings about his wife, while probably most important, isn't sufficient either. He needs to be able to say, for example, "I'm sad because I was humiliated at work today" or "It grieves me that 60 million unborn babies have been killed by their own mothers since 1973" or "I'm angry that people who have never read an economics book just voted for liberal policies that disincentivize hard work, ingenuity, marriage, fidelity, and prosperity, which have raised billions of people out of poverty over

the past 100 years.”

A man who articulates his feelings on a variety of matters is able to enlist the support and encouragement of his wife (and friends), but a man who cannot or will not express himself will not be able to maintain intimacy in his marriage over the course of a lifetime.

Fortunately, this is a skill which can be learned, but it must be learned *before* marriage. It is hard work, and involves a complete shift in priorities. Marriage-minded men must turn away from watching Netflix, spending excessive amounts of time playing games, and soaking in the messages of today’s culture. Instead, they must surround themselves with examples of masculine expressiveness and romance in response to the great actions of good women, whether through classical literature, Christian books on marriage, classical movies, or time spent with personal role models.

10 Behaviors for Christian Women to Avoid in a Potential Spouse: part 8 of 10

December 24, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]

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8. Poor handling of finances. A critical part of a man's responsibility is to provide for his family financially. If he doesn't have a useful, income-earning skill, he is not ready for marriage and children. But a man must not only earn money; he must steward it wisely. This requires wisdom to know what is important to God and what is not important. It requires knowing that everything belongs to God and has simply been entrusted to him for a time.

If he spends money frivolously or irresponsibly, he will not be able to use that money for important things like equipping his wife for effective ministry, preparing his children to be effective Christians by making sure they have a good education and great books to read, and equipping those he is mentoring to go out and make disciples. On the other hand, if he is stingy and cares more about his bank account than about equipping those around him for effective ministry, the same problems will abound. In either case, he will not have much to show for the resources with which he's been entrusted, and he may even pressure his wife to sacrifice ministry, put the kids in daycare, and let others raise them in order to have a second income.

Before you get married, ask your man who and what he gives money to and why. Ask him how he plans to equip you to carry out your ministry, including raising the children. Ask him what he believes is worth spending money on and what isn't. And observe the decisions he makes. If he prioritizes luxury items over ministry, or if he plans to deprive his family of all they need to thrive in life and ministry for the sake of putting his security in a huge savings account, he is probably not going to be someone you want to entrust as the head of your home.

10 Behaviors for Christian Women to Avoid in a Potential Spouse: part 9 of 10

December 25, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: The following post was written by my friend Laura. On this blog, I have often offered men suggestions about what to ask prospective mates. Laura's article looks at the problem from the other side, offering women suggestions about what to look out for in a husband candidate. I'll be posting one per day for the next 10 days.

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9. Lacks serious concern for others. If a man hasn't shown genuine love and concern for others—being willing to help them solve their problems, recover from their wounds, and overcome their hardships—he isn't going to show genuine love and concern for you once the honeymoon period is over. A man who loves others well listens to their story, empathizes with their struggles, identifies their needs, and takes action to help them in practical ways. He is not indifferent to the plight of others, but he takes seriously the tasks of helping others through mentoring, encouragement, provision, and protection.

It is not possible to live the Christian life without taking seriously the commands to love one another. In John 13:34-35 Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

People will be able to identify us as Jesus' disciples by our love for fellow Christians! Jesus

doesn’t say they will know us *primarily* by our love for the atheist, the poor, the feminist, the homosexual, or the Muslim. Although we are to show love to all people, many non-Christians care about those groups too. What distinguishes us as God’s children is our love for *one another*.

If your man is too busy with other things to love fellow Christians well by taking action to alleviate their suffering, making sure their needs are met and ensuring they know their value and worth as members of the family of God, then you do not want to marry him!

Ask him who he mentors. Ask him what actions he has taken to help other Christians. Ask him about his relationships with other Christians, and get to know those people too. Ask his friends what makes him a great friend, and ask even his enemies and ex-girlfriends to tell you what kind of a man he is. Do whatever it takes to get to know the best and worst about him, and remember that one day, when the lovey-dovey, he’s-so-hot period of your relationship has passed, his character will be what remains. If he was willing to sacrifice his own ease and comfort to love other Christians without personal gain before you married him, he will likely be willing to do the same for you for the long haul.

10 Behaviors for Christian Women to Avoid in a Potential Spouse: part 10 of 10

December 26, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]

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10. Unwillingness or inability to lay out a plan for your life and ministry together. A man ought to be able to communicate what he needs and desires from his wife, how he sees her fitting into his plans for life and ministry, and how he intends to equip her to achieve the important work that is before her. He must present a vision for her spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical well-being, and he must be willing and able to provide the necessary resources to make this vision a reality.

If a man hasn't thought about how his wife fits into his life and plans, he isn't ready for marriage. And if he has expectations of her, he must not only identify those expectations and communicate them, but he must also provide everything she needs in order to thrive in her role. Of course, there is freedom to tailor the plans to the women's strengths and passions, but it is not enough for a man to ask a woman to join him for a lifetime without communicating his plans to make her effective as well.

Without these conversations, a woman may find that she is dragged along into whatever next adventure excites her husband, without thought or care for what she needs or how she can contribute effectively. A prepared and thoughtful husband will not allow this to happen. He will commit to prioritizing her ministry with his time, money, and decisions rather than leaving her to create (and potentially recreate) her own life and ministry without any help from him.

Conclusion

Marriage is hard, and the only way to do it is to commit for life! The stupidest thing a person can do, apart from rejecting Christ, is to marry a bad spouse.

How do you know if your man will make a bad spouse? Avoid the behaviors above, and

wait for a man who reads great books often; demonstrates a biblical view of spiritual leadership; is willing to make enemies rather than compromise his convictions; responds humbly to constructive criticism; engages in healthy and productive disagreements; treats people with kindness, gentleness, and self-control; shares his feelings about matters of significance; stewards his finances well, without stinginess or frivolity; demonstrates genuine love and concern for other Christians; and communicates his long-term plan for life and ministry together with his wife. If you can’t find a man like this, I implore you, do not settle for a lesser man. A lifetime of regret is not worth it.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

December 27, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
This is one of my favorite lectures.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips.

Here is a clip:

The full video can be watched on Vimeo:

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range

in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

It's a good lecture explaining a couple of basic arguments for a cosmic Creator and Designer. If you add the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion (Stephen C. Meyer's arguments), then you will be solid on the basic scientific arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Nearly 100,000 small businesses have permanently closed due to COVID-19 restrictions

December 28, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

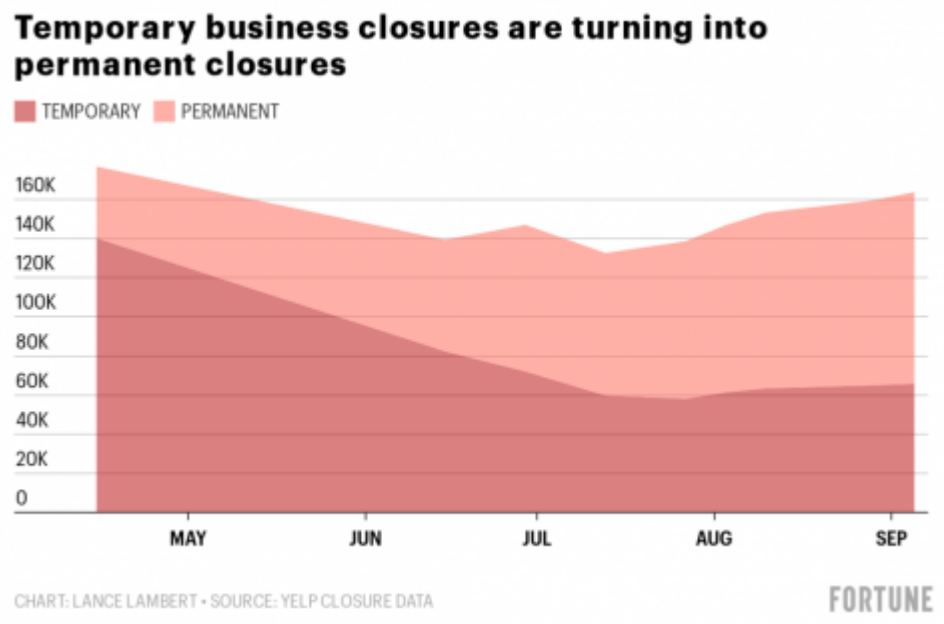

An important part of our American prosperity is our support for the creation and success of small businesses. That's because when consumers have choices, they can find the best quality for the lowest price. If there was only one vendor for a product or service, then there would be no competition. Without competition, sellers have no incentive to increase quality and lower prices.

So, here's what's happened to small businesses during the current Democrat-supported shutdown of the economy.

> Human Events:
>
> As we near a year of lockdowns and sheltering in place, the long-term effects of pandemic policy on the economy are becoming clearer. Almost every piece of legislation ostensibly designed to curb the spread of the coronavirus and protect workers has wreaked devastation on small businesses—while benefiting the largest corporations. Roughly 100,000 small businesses have permanently closed due to COVID-19, while big-box retailers, tech giants, and pharmaceutical manufacturers have seen record profits.
>
> America's small businesses currently face an attack on all fronts. First, there are the more visible policies (e.g., lockdowns, mask mandates, and social distancing requirements) that strongly discourage people from patronizing brick-and-mortar retailers and restaurants. These policies impact small businesses more than large chains and corporations.
>
> […]According to the Small Business Administration, the cost of compliance

> disproportionately impacts small businesses, who lack the funds and infrastructure of large corporations to adapt to new regulation.
>
> […]Lastly, there are ever-evolving COVID-19 employment regulations that disproportionately expose small businesses to lawsuits and the subsequent legal expenses and damages that may result. The conspicuous absence of liability protection also disadvantages small businesses, as the largest corporations can spare the capital required to fight lawsuits and painlessly pay out any damages.
>
> […]Despite the fact that these policies are explicitly harmful to small businesses, they can be justified on the basis of "public health" and thereby shielded from criticism. Practically unlimited regulation (that always seems to benefit the corporate elite) can be defended, because such policies are said to be designed to ensure the health and safety of the public. Opposition to these onerous restrictions can therefore be conveniently characterized as "anti-science," or worse, reckless and/or malicious endangerment of one's community. As a consequence, policies that explicitly disadvantage small businesses, such as the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), can be passed under the guise of public health and worker protection without raising any alarm bells.

Naturally, the closings are happening most in states that are run by Democrats.

NY Post:

> Nearly one-third of small businesses in New York and New Jersey remain closed since January amid the coronavirus pandemic, according to a watchdog.
>
> In the Empire State, 27.8 percent of small businesses have not reopened their doors, while Jersey has lost 31.2 percent as of Nov. 16, according to TrackTheRecovery.org, a Harvard-run database that keeps tabs on the economic impact of the virus.
>
> The figures are in line with estimates from the New Jersey Business & Industry Association, which says 28 percent of the Garden State's small businesses had shut up shop by the end of October, according to the Star Ledger newspaper.

Daily Caller:

> A new poll has revealed just how devastating the pandemic has been on minority-owned businesses – with 49% reporting that they are unable to cover their December rent.
>
> 35% of all small business owners could not make their rent in December, up 3% from November, according to the latest Alignable Rent Poll. However, 49% of minority-owned businesses reported they couldn't cover the costs, up 5% from 44% in November.
>
> Axios reported in June that between February-April, 3.3 million business owners shut their doors. However, among the 3.3 million, 1.1 million were black small business owners.

> Women-owned businesses also struggled to pay December rent, with 38% noting they didn't have the funds to cover December's rent, a number 3% higher than Novembers', according to the Alignable Rent Poll.
>
> The poll was based on answers from 9,204 small business owners polled between Nov. 11-Nov. 23.

Democrats like killing small businesses, because it's easier for government to control a few large corporations than many small ones. And they love when people who were once earning their own success have to give up on liberty and become dependent on the government. After all, he who pays the piper calls the tune.

How to respond to an atheist who complains about slavery in the Bible

December 29, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

I often hear atheists going on and on about how the Bible has this evil and that evil. Their favorite one seems to be slavery. Here are three things I say to atheists when they push this objection.

The Bible and slavery

First, you should explain to them what the Bible actually says about slavery. And then tell them about the person responsible for stopping slavery in the UK: a devout evangelical named William Wilberforce.

Here's an article that works.

Excerpt:

> We should compare Hebrew debt-servanthood (many translations render this "slavery") more fairly to apprentice-like positions to pay off debts — much like the indentured servitude during America's founding when people worked for approximately 7 years to pay off the debt for their passage to the New World. Then they became free.
>
> In most cases, servanthood was more like a live-in*employee*, temporarily embedded within the employer's household. Even today, teams trade sports players to another team that has an owner, and these players belong to a franchise. This language hardly suggests slavery, but rather a formal contractual agreement to be fulfilled — like in the Old Testament.3

Atheism and moral judgments

Second, inform them that moral values are not rationally grounded on atheism. In an accidental universe, there is no way we ought to be. There is no design for humans that we have to comply with. There are no objective human rights, like the right to liberty (that would block slavery) or the right to life (that would block abortion). Although you may find that most atheists act nicely, the ones who really understand what atheism means and live it out consistently are not so nice.

Famous atheist Richard Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

When atheists like Dawkins talk about morality, you have to understand that they are pretending. To them, morality is just about personal preferences and cultural conventions. They just think that questions of right and wrong are *arbitrary*. Things that are wrong in one time and place are right in another. Every view is as right as any other, depending on the time and place. That's atheist morality.

What's worse than slavery? Abortion!

Third, you should ask the atheist what he has done to oppose abortion. Abortion is worse than slavery, so if they are sincere in thinking that slavery is wrong, then they ought to think that abortion is wrong even more. So ask them what they've done to oppose the practice of abortion. That will tell you how sincere they are about slavery.

Here's atheist Richard Dawkins explaining what he's done to stop abortion:

That's right. The head atheist supports killing born children.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

December 30, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference

between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, "I believe that there is no gold on Mars" with my saying "I do not believe that there is gold on Mars." If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There's a difference between saying, "I do not believe (p)" and "I believe (not-p)." Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.

But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.

There's a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called "presumption of atheism." At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our

> **cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.**
>
> **One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.**
>
> So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, "So is there a God or not?"

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these "subjective atheists"?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says "I lack a belief in the gravitational force!". When you engage in serious discussions with people about God's existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don't care about a person's psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over "I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God"? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: "I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!" What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: "Wintery Knight won't listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!". I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that's why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don't *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I'm not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Related posts

- Is giving to charity more rational for religious people or atheists?
- An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview
- Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?
- Did Jesus exist? Agnostic historian Bart Ehrman debates Infidel Guy
- Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?
- Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong? Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral?
- Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?
- William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech
- Can atheists be moral? Sean McDowell and James Corbett debate
- If militant atheists could form a country, what would it look like?
- Chad Meister: can atheists make sense of morality?

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

December 31, 2020 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they

take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.” And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What’s harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I’ll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, “In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home.” And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase “In order that you may know”. Same message, right?

3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don’t know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It’s really great. Acts 2:36. I’ve been a Christian 20 years and I didn’t see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can’t exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” There it is again. “Know for certain.”

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition “Christ rose from the grave,” for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, “I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave.”

3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be

> transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Jay Richards: How to end poverty in 10 tough steps

January 1, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jay Richards: How to end poverty in 10 tough steps

Why are some nations more prosperous than others? Is it because the wealthier nations exploit the poorer ones, keeping them poor? Or are there certain policies, laws, and cultural beliefs that lead to prosperity? Dr. Jay Richards delivers a lecture for Impact 360, in which he identifies 10 different factors that lift nations out of poverty, and explains why they work.

Summary:

1. Establish and maintain the rule of law.
2. Focus the jurisdiction of government on maintaining the rule of law, and limit its jurisdiction over the economy and the institutions of civil society.
3. Implement a formal property system with consistent and accessible means for securing a clear title to property one owns.
4. Encourage economic freedom: Allow people to trade goods and services unencumbered by tariffs, subsidies, price controls, undue regulation, and restrictive immigration policies.
5. Encourage stable families and other important private institutions that mediate between the individual and the state.
6. Encourage belief in the truth that the universe is purposeful and makes sense.
7. Encourage the right cultural mores—orientation to the future and the belief that progress but not utopia is possible in this life; willingness to save and delay gratification; willingness to risk, to respect the rights and property of others, to be diligent, to be thrifty.
8. Instill a proper understanding of the nature of wealth and poverty—that wealth is created, that free trade is win-win, that risk is essential to enterprise, that trade-offs are unavoidable, that the success of others need not come at your expense, and that you can pursue legitimate self-interest and the common good at the same time.

9. Focus on your comparative advantage rather than protecting what used to be your competitive advantage.
10. Work hard.

Solving economic problems is just like solving any other problem. First, we read to learn what has been proven to work. Then, we do what works. I want to encourage Christians to move beyond good intentions to good results when voting for economic policies. Often, people on the left want to "fix" inequalities by doing what feels good to them, or what sounds good to them. Economics is about choosing policies that we know have worked in other times and places.

Let's talk more about #4 from Richards' list.

Economic freedom linked to prosperity

Consider the book "The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution" by famous conservative theologian Wayne Grudem.

You can even read an article about it from the left-wing Christian Post here:

> In a presentation of his new book at the Family Research Council, biblical theologian Wayne Grudem argued that poor countries can become rich only by producing their own prosperity, and that the free market is not only the economic answer, but in tune with the Bible's moral teachings.
>
> "Every nation that has escaped poverty has done so by producing its own prosperity," said Grudem, professor of theology and biblical studies at Phoenix Seminary in Arizona. Perhaps best known for his book Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, Grudem presented the key themes in his new book The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution. The very first of his 79 factors to help nations escape poverty in "a free market economy."
>
> […]Grudem argued that the wealth of a country is determined by its per-capita income – the average amount of money each citizen makes. The only way to increase this is to increase the production of goods and services, creating more wealth for everyone, he said.
>
> […]The professor pointed to 79 factors to help a country produce more goods and services, in three different key areas: the economic system, government, and cultural beliefs and values.
>
> For the economic system, Grudem mentioned the Index of Economic Freedom, a report put out by the Heritage Foundation to judge each country's openness to trade and wealth creation.

You can find the Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom right here. Take a look at the countries at the top… these countries also have a very high per capita income. Their citizens are earning a lot of money by selling what they produce to willing customers. The ones at the bottom are run by socialist governments. You wouldn't want to try to make a living in Venezuela or Cuba or North Korea. But these are the places that

American socialists admire and support. Does that tell you something about what they would do to you, if they got hold of the reins of government?

The Fraser Institute in Canada did a similar ranking of economic freedom (economic freedom = low taxes, low regulation, free trade), and they concluded:

> Countries in the top quartile (25 per cent) of economic freedom (such as the U.K., Japan and Ireland) had an average per-capita income of US$40,376 in 2016 compared to US$5,649 for the bottom quartile countries (such as Venezuela, Iran and Zimbabwe). And life expectancy is 79.5 years in the top quartile of countries compared to 64.4 years in the bottom quartile.

Economic freedom works best.

Should we expect to know what God’s reason is for allowing evil and suffering?

January 2, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Here is an article by Steven Cowan about the problems of evil and suffering.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude.

Now let’s find out what a noseeum is, and how it relates to the existence of evil and suffering:

> However, perhaps God’s existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God’s existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By “pointless evil,” Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe’s argument may be simply stated as follows:
>
> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that

> there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the "noseeum inference." Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a "noseeum" is something that you cannot see—it is a "no-see-um." And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I "no-see-um" a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

In that example, the planet is the noseeum. Just because you look really hard, you can't be confident that the planet is not there. And similarly with the problem of evil and suffering, looking really hard and finding no reason does not mean that there is no reason. It just means that you are not in a good position to see the reason. You don't know enough to to be sure that there is no reason, because of your limitations as a human being.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous. (You can get the PDF here)

According to the paper, human beings just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a noseeum. To know for sure that there is no reason, we would need to have more knowledge than we do.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

William Lane Craig debates Daniel Came: Does God exist?

January 3, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

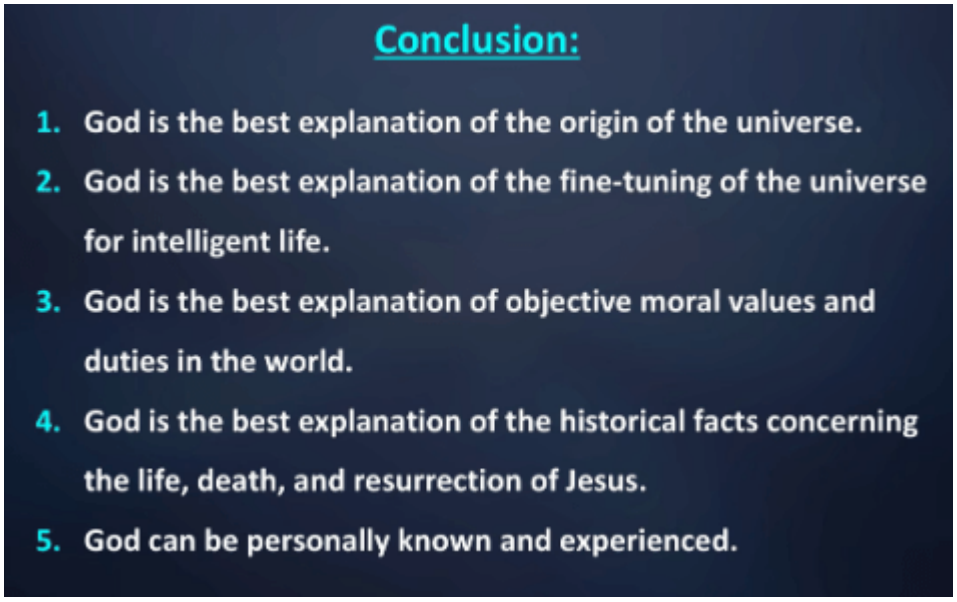

Dr. Craig's opening speech summary slide

The video of the debate was posted by ReasonableFaith.org – Dr. Craig's organization. This debate occurred in March 2017 at the University of Dublin, in Ireland.

The video: (91 minutes)

My non-snarky summary is below.

Dr. Craig's opening speech

Two claims:

1. There are good reasons to think that theism is true.
2. There are not comparably good reasons to think that atheism is true.

Five reasons for God's existence:

1. The beginning of the universe
– actual infinite past is mathematically impossible
– BGV theorem: any universe that is on balance expanding in its history (like ours) cannot be past eternal

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– slight changes to quantities and constants prevent a universe from supporting complex embodied life
– the multiverse response of atheists conflicts with observations, e.g. the Boltzmann Brains problem

3. Objective moral values
– God's existence is required to ground objective moral values and duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus

– there are good reasons to accept the most widely accepted facts about the historical Jesus (empty tomb, appearances, early widespread belief in the resurrection)
– the best explanation of these minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

5. Experience God directly
– in the absence of any defeaters to belief in God, a person can experience God directly

Dr. Daniel Came's opening speech

1. The hiddenness of God
– if God wants a personal relationship with us, and a relationship with God would be the greatest good for us
– God ought to reveal himself to us, but he does not reveal himself to many people, the "non-resistant non-believers"

2. The inductive problem of evil
– many evil events occur that are pointless – there is no morally sufficient reason why God would allow them to occur
– examples: animal suffering, children born with disease, tsunamis
– the theistic response to this is that humans are not in a position to know whether there are morally sufficient reasons, due to our limitations of knowing the consequences
– but this ripple effect defense has 4 possible outcomes, 3 of which don't do the job of justifying

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

1. The hiddenness of God
– God's goal is not to make his existence known, but to draw them into a love relationship
– it's speculative that overt displays of God's existence would draw people to him in a love relationship, they might resent his bullying
– atheist would have to prove that God could draw more people into a love relationship with him by revealing himself more overtly

2. The inductive problem of evil
– as humans, we are not in a position to know for certain that any apparently pointless evil really is pointless
– William Alston article: 6 limitations of human knowing make it impossible to judge that an evil is actually "pointless"
– Dr. Came says that there are 4 possibilities for the ripple effects, and since 3 are bad, it's likely that there are not morally sufficient reasons for a apparently pointless evil
– it is logically fallacious to assert probability conclusions without knowing the probabilities of those 4 options
– there is actually an argument from evil: since the problem of evil requires an objective standard of good and evil by which to measure, and God is the only possible ground of objective morality, then pressing the problem of evil actually requires the atheist to assume God, in order to ground this objective moral standard

Dr. Came's first rebuttal

3. Objective moral values

– there are naturalistic theories of moral realism where objective moral duties and objective moral values exist in a naturalistic universe
– I'm not saying that any of them are correct, but there are many theories about object morality in a naturalistic universe

There are naturalistic theories for all of the 5 arguments that Dr. Craig presented. It is Dr. Craig's responsibility to present those naturalistic theories and prove that they are not as good as his explanations. I'm not going to defend (or even name!) a single naturalistic theory for any of these 5 arguments by Dr. Craig.

Dr. Craig's explanations for the 5 evidences he gave can't be admitted, because we have to know how God did something *in naturalistic terms* before we can know that God did it supernaturally. Explanations are only valid if they are naturalistic.

1. The beginning of the universe
– naturalism explains how the universe expands after it came into being, so that explains how it came into being
– the God explanation, that God created the universe out of nothing, is not admissible, because it is not naturalistic
– how does God, as an unembodied mind interact with the physical world?
– the only agency that we know about is human agents, and we have bodies, so how could God perform actions without having a body?

The theistic hypothesis does not make any predictions, but naturalism makes lots of testable predictions. God could do anything, so he is not constrained and is therefore untestable. We can't infer God as an explanation in principle because we can't predict what is more probable if God exists than if he does not.

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the university was not set up to make embodied intelligence plausible, because the vast majority of the universe is hostile to life
– there are models of the multiverse that escape the Boltzmann Brains problem that Dr. Craig raised

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

Some of Dr. Craig's arguments are deductive (e.g. – the beginning of the universe, objective moral values), so that the conclusion follows from the premises if the premises are true. The resurrection passes the standard tests for historical explanations.

1. The beginning of the universe
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for an ultimate beginning of the universe

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for a design of the universe to support life
– he has to prove that intelligences has to be attached to bodies
– human beings are non-physical minds united to physical bodies
– naturalistic attempts to explain mental operations fail

– the arguments *prove* that unembodied minds exist
– the vast expanse of the universe is required in order to form the galaxies, stars and heavy elements needed for complex life
– why expect that the entire universe should be small, or that life would be everywhere?
– a non-fine-tuned world is more likely in the multiverse, and in a multiverse, we are more likely to have a Boltzmann brain world than a world with complex, embodied life
– Dr. Came has not advanced any naturalistic explanation for the fine-tuning

3. Objective moral values
– non-theistic ethical theories cannot account for the ontological foundations of objective moral values and duties
– atheistic theories of moral realism simply assume objective moral values out of thin air
– it is especially hard to find any basis for objective moral duties in the absence of God

Dr. Came's second rebuttal

5. Religious experience
– Dr. Craig should not bring up religious experience in a debate where arguments and evidence are central
– people who have dreams, hallucinations and psychotic delusions could appeal to religious experience
– religious experience is by no means universal, and it is possible to doubt it

3. Objective moral values
– there are lots of atheists who hold to objective moral values
– Dr. Craig has to explain how God grounds objective moral values and duties
– Dr. Craig has to explain why atheist moral realist theories don't work to ground objective moral values and duties

1. The beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig claims that something can't come from nothing, that's not an argument
– there are numerous models that don't require an absolute beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig cites the BGV theorem, but Guth (one of the authors) says that only the inflation has a beginning, not the whole universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion

1. The beginning of the universe
– on theism, there is an efficient cause, but no material cause, for the origin of the universe
– on atheism, there is neither an efficient cause nor a material cause, for the origin of the universe: that's worse!
– if he thinks that there are models of the universe that don't require a beginning, then let him name a viable eternal model of the universe
– he never refuted the mathematical argues against an infinite past

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– nothing to refute

3. Objective moral values

– God is a better ground for morality than humans, because he is ultimate, and not contingent and arbitrary
– God is a being who is worthy of worship, and therefore command his creatures with moral duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus
– nothing to refute

5. Religious experience
– only justified because there are no defeaters to it

1. The hiddenness of God
– atheist has to show that if God's existence were more obvious, that it would result in more people being drawn to him

2. The inductive problem of evil
– Dr. Came's argument was logically fallacious, and makes errors in probability theory

Dr. Came's conclusion

Sometimes, people can't prove something, but lack of evidence is a justification for doubting it, e.g. – werewolves.

If none of Craig's arguments work, then it follows that it is not rational to believe that God exists, and it is rational to believe that God does not exist.

Atheists shouldn't have a burden of proof for what they know, only theists have a burden of proof for what they know.

My thoughts

One quick point. If life were common everywhere then atheists would infer that God wasn't involved in it. Period. "Life is everywhere, so it's common, why do we need a designer?" they'd say. I agree with Dr. Came about denouncing religious experience in a formal debate. I don't like when Dr. Craig brings this up, but I see why he does it – he's an evangelist, and that's a good thing, too. I just worry about how it looks to atheists, although it's good for sincere seekers. I'm not the one on the stage, though, Dr. Craig is.

I think the point about more overt revealing by God would annoy people and make them turn away. Think of how gay people respond to the suggestion that there is anything wrong with them, with rage, vandalism, threats, coercion, attempts to get you to lose your job and business, and using government as a weapon to fine and imprison you. It's really obvious to me that more God does not mean more *love* of God. For those who don't want God, the hiddenness is respect for their choice to put pleasure above the search for truth. (I mean the gay activists – I have great sympathy for people who struggle with same-sex unwanted attractions because they were impacted by a failed bond with their parent of the same sex as they are).

Whenever I meet people like Dr. Came, I always urge them to keep investigating and pursuing truth, because they will find it if they are sincerely seeking after God. Some atheists do sincerely seek God, but I don't know any who haven't found him. I'm not sure if that's because those atheists who claim to be non-resistant and rational are in fact

resistant and non-rational, or what the real reason is. If you believe the Bible, *all* unbelief is non-rational and resistant (see Romans 1). Regarding the werewolves, we don't have any good arguments for werewolves, we do have good arguments for God. Dr. Came didn't refute the arguments that Craig raised, nor did his own arguments for atheism work. And there are many, many more arguments (origin of life, Cambrian explosion, habitability-discoverability, molecular machines) that Craig did not raise, too.

What will happen if the Democrats win the Senate on Tuesday

January 4, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On Tuesday, we're going to find out if the Democrats are able to gain control of the House, Senate and White House in 2021. If they win the two Georgia Senate seats on Tuesday, then they will pass the "Equality Act". This bill makes it illegal to speak words critical of sexual orientation and gender identity. It also makes it illegal for Christians or Christian-owned businesses (including churches) to disagree with the LGBT agenda.

The bill was passed in 2019 by House Democrats. If the Democrats take the Senate on Tuesday, it will pass there. Then it will presumably go to Joe Biden, who will sign it into law.

So what's in the law?

The Federalist described some effects of the Equality Act bill:

> On the surface, the "Equality" Act is supposed to protect LGBT folks from discrimination by adding the categories of sexual orientation and gender identity to all federal civil rights laws, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It would make claims of discrimination related to these characteristics legally actionable in the way racism is, and applying to virtually every area of life: the workplace, education, banking, jury service, federal funding, housing, medicine and psychiatry, and all public facilities.
>
> It is a power grab in the guise of anti-discrimination. A bait-and-switch. It's another attempt by a ruling micro-clique to exert mega-control over everyone else's lives, including those it purports to protect. It allows the Mass State to maximize bureaucracy and social engineering, especially by its huge regulation of speech and expression. It erodes individual rights while claiming to uphold

> them.
>
> Sane people of goodwill have a host of good reasons to object to the so-called Equality Act. And many of those reasons have been written up, including the de-sexing of toilets and showers, the compelled speech inherent in pronoun protocols and severe punishment for "misgendering," the promised harassment of business owners, the invasion of girls' and women's sports by biological men who force on them an unequal playing field, the utter contempt for individual conscience, and more.
>
> The net result of this act would be a huge inequality of power accrued to the state and drained from the individual.

Other areas that would be affected: tax exempt status for churches, private college admissions, scholarships and curricula, moral standards in Christian organizations, forced transgender treatments at hospitals and health clinics, foster and adoption agencies could not prefer naturally married couples.

The author of that article lists five specific effects of the law:

1. It Undermines Everyone's First Amendment Rights
2. The Ambiguities in the Bill Threaten the Rule of Law
3. Nudge Toward a Chinese-style Social Credit System
4. Redefining Humanity By Outlawing Sex Distinctions
5. It Enshrines Socially Destructive Identity Politics

Let's see what the article says about #2:

> The first thing that should hit any reader of the so-called Equality Act is the ambiguity of its language, especially with the bill's outright emphasis throughout on "perceptions."
>
> […]Consider how much the "Equality" Act would rely on bureaucratic and court actors to divine the "perception" of the perpetrator or victim of so-called discrimination: it would have to calculate your intent, read your mind, check out your body language, pick you apart for any suggestion of malice. For example, it repeatedly refers to sexual orientation and gender identity as "actual or perceived." Many times throughout, the text notes that discrimination (or identity?) involves "perception or belief even if inaccurate" (emphasis mine).
>
> This dependence on perception or belief about a person's self-identity did not exist before. The language of this proposed law is more fluid than gender fluidity on steroids, and it's wild stuff to push, especially at the federal level. It invites no end of accusations and lawfare that bodes ill for society and promises much human wreckage. The only people "empowered" by such a scam are those on the upper levels of this newly devised food chain who can call the shots.

Here's more about #3 for those who didn't know about the China social credit system:

> If passed, we shouldn't be surprised if it eventually produces a social credit system not unlike what is happening in China, whereby your livelihood, education, career, mobility, and access to goods and services is based on a literal "score" of your compliance with government policy. To paraphrase Sir Richard Scruton's excellent observation of how that works in China, I'd say that the so-called Equality Act would help create robots out of Americans, with the state programming what they can say and do.
>
> As more people self-censor because of the risk of losing their livelihoods and social status, they simply become more prone to robotic compliance and conformity with limits on their speech. This is fast becoming the case in China, where citizens feel the need to build up their "social credit" to be allowed access to jobs, education, housing, and who knows what other goods and services. The so-called Equality Act's restrictions on First Amendment freedoms would be a big step in that direction.

A social credit system that scores you for conformity would be a logical effect of the intent of the Equality Act: to punish free expression in just about every sphere of life, including the workplace, at school, in the public square, and in all public facilities, and any place that might be connected with federal funding. (By the way, Scruton was punished—stripped of his chairmanship of an architectural commission in Britain—simply for explaining what the social credit system does to people in China. That should be another lesson for us here.)

Now, I know some Christians will say "why does that matter to me, I already agree with sex outside of marriage and I agree that marriage is just when any number of people of any sex cohabitate and have sex". Right, this is only a problem who think that the Bible is an authority, and that Jesus knows more about morality than LGBT activists and Democrat politicians.

Right now, I live in a state with no SOGI law, and I write about studies, etc. that are critical of the gay agenda from behind an alias. The second that this Equality Act becomes law, I would instantly have to delete this blog, my Facebook page, and my Twitter in case "discrimination" was "perceived" by an LGBT activist based on my previous writings, and they decided to investigate. It would be like writing articles critical of Nazism prior to the ascent of Hitler. It's fine to do it when Hitler's not yet in power, but once he's in power, you shut it down and get out.

Why think that the Biden / Harris administration will impose fascism?

January 5, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

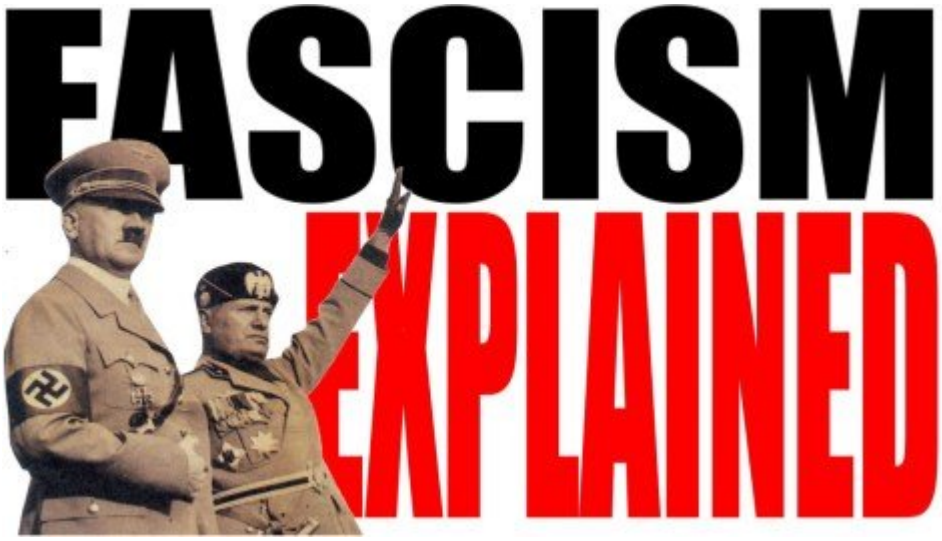

In order to predict the future, it's a good idea to look at the past. In this post, I want to try to review the some actions of Democrats, to see if they are for or against fascism.

First, consider the case of the IRS persecuting conservative groups during Obama's re-election campaign. The Obama administration didn't want conservatives influencing the election, so they just used government as a weapon against them:

> The True the Vote v. IRS lawsuit has finally come to a close with a stunning ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Reggie Walton ruling in favor of True the Vote; penalizing the IRS with maximum attorneys fees due to their unconstitutional discrimination against the group and their unethical behavior in the case.
>
> This decision marks the end of a nearly decade long battle that first began in 2010, when federal government agencies including the IRS, DOJ, FBI, ATF, OSHA weaponized against True the Vote and its founder, Catherine Engelbrecht. Under Obama Administration leadership, the agencies leveled a barrage of attacks, including twenty-three audits, investigations, and inquiries, against the group in an attempt to stop their work in election integrity.

The conservatives won their case, but only after the Obama administration went after many, many conservative organizations using government as a weapon against those they disagreed with.

What about the case of Democrats in Wisconsin using pre-dawn raids by armed policemen against conservatives who had committed no crimes and done nothing wrong?

> Cindy Archer, one of the lead architects of Wisconsin's Act 10 — also called the "Wisconsin Budget Repair Bill," it limited public-employee benefits and altered collective-bargaining rules for public-employee unions — was jolted awake by

> yelling, loud pounding at the door, and her dogs' frantic barking. The entire house — the windows and walls — was shaking.
>
> It was indeed a home invasion, but the people who were pouring in were Wisconsin law-enforcement officers. Armed, uniformed police swarmed into the house. Plainclothes investigators cornered her and her newly awakened family. Soon, state officials were seizing the family's personal property, including each person's computer and smartphone, filled with the most intimate family information.
>
> […]As if the home invasion, the appropriation of private property, and the verbal abuse weren't enough, next came ominous warnings.
>
> Don't call your lawyer.
>
> Don't tell anyone about this raid. Not even your mother, your father, or your closest friends.
>
> The entire neighborhood could see the police around their house, but they had to remain silent.

Using the police to silence people who disagree with Democrat policies? That's fascism.

What about when gay activists inside the IRS leaked all the donations made to a pro-marriage group to a leading gay rights organization, who made them public?

> Two years after activists for same-sex marriage obtained the confidential tax return and donor list of a national group opposed to redefining marriage, the Internal Revenue Service has admitted wrongdoing and agreed to settle the resulting lawsuit.
>
> The Daily Signal has learned that, under a consent judgment today, the IRS agreed to pay $50,000 in damages to the National Organization for Marriage as a result of the unlawful release of the confidential information to a gay rights group, the Human Rights Campaign, that is NOM's chief political rival.

Again, the case is won later, but the damage has already been done: Democrats used government as a weapon to silence those they disagree with. This is fascism. And Democrat voters are all fine with fascism – they keep voting for it.

How about when California Attorney General Kamala Harris used the government to persecute whistleblowers who had exposed trafficking in baby parts?

> "America's biggest abortion business was desperate and furious, so they turned to their biggest patron, California Attorney General Kamala Harris, for help," Daleiden said in the new video. "At Planned Parenthood's special request, Kamala Harris targeted me to punish and silence my message about the abortion industry and fetal trafficking."
>
> According to The Federalist, Daleiden revealed documents that show close communications between Harris and Planned Parenthood officials two weeks before the raid on Daleiden's home. In March 2016, Harris's office seized

> computers, video footage and video equipment from his apartment. Later, the attorney general's office filed felony charges against him.
>
> Here's more from the report:
>
> As The Federalist previously reported, two weeks prior to that raid, Harris personally met with six Planned Parenthood executives in March 2016, at the attorney general's Los Angeles office.
>
> An email outlining action items from the meeting shows that they discussed both Planned Parenthood's political agenda in the state of California and her investigation into Daleiden and the Center for Medical Progress. Two of the six executives in that meeting were used as witnesses in Harris's criminal investigation.
>
> The video also showed a California Department of Justice document that stated, "Planned Parenthood would like the computers used to produce the videos seized."

This isn't even to mention how gay rights activists were able to use the government to go after Christian business owners who refused to participate in same-sex weddings. Christian business owners were dragged into court because they believed what Jesus taught about marriage – that marriage is between a man and a woman.

Pro-life Christian businesses and charities were also forced to cover the medical costs for contraceptives that could cause abortions.

So why are secular leftists so interested in fascism? Well, they think we live in an accidental universe. There's no way that humans ought to be, because there is no Designer and no design. There's no free will, no human rights, no objective moral standard, no accountability when you die. So of course you're going to see these sorts of moral crimes from secular leftists. They have no rational grounding for moral values or moral duties.

Jim Wallis debates Jay Richards on Christianity and economics

January 6, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I have the video of a debate on the topic of what Christians should think about economics and economic policies. In addition to the video, I summarized the two opening speeches and the two rebuttals, for those who prefer to read rather than watch. We'll start with a short biography about each of the debaters.

The video recording:

The debaters

Jay Richards:

> Jay Richards, Ph.D., is a Senior Fellow of the Discovery Institute where he directs the Center on Wealth, Poverty and Morality, and is a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Faith, Work & Economics. Most recently he is the co-author with James Robison of the best-selling *Indivisible: Restoring Faith, Family, and Freedom Before It's Too Late".*
>
> In addition to writing many academic articles, books, and popular essays on a wide variety of subjects, he recently edited the new award winning anthology, *God & Evolution: Protestants, Catholics and Jews Explore Darwin's Challenge to Faith* . His previous book was *Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem* (HarperOne, May 2009), for which he received a Templeton Enterprise Award in 2010.
>
> […]In recent years, he has been a Contributing Editor of The American at the American Enterprise Institute, a Visiting Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, and a Research Fellow and Director of Acton Media at the Acton Institute. Richards has a B.A. with majors in Political Science and Religion, an M.Div. (Master of Divinity) and a Th.M. (Master of Theology), and a Ph.D. (with honors) in philosophy and theology from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Jim Wallis:

> Jim Wallis (born June 4, 1948) is a Christian writer and political activist. He is best known as the founder and editor of *Sojourners* magazine and as the founder of the Washington, D.C.-based Christian community of the same name. Wallis is well known for his advocacy on issues of peace and social justice. […]He works as a spiritual advisor to President Barack Obama.
>
> […]In 2010, Wallis admitted to accepting money for Sojourners from philanthropist George Soros after initially denying having done so. […]In 2011, Wallis acknowledged that Sojourners had received another $150,000.00 from Soros' Open Society Foundation.

Wallis just came out this month in favor of gay marriage. He is also a strong supporter of Barack Obama, who is radically pro-abortion. Some pro-lifers have argued that Barack Obama has the same views on abortion as Kermit Gosnell, because Obama voted twice to allow abortions on babies who were already born alive.

The format of the debate

- 20 minute opening speeches
- 10 minute rebuttals
- 10 minutes of discussion
- Q&A for the remainder

SUMMARY

I use italics below to denote my own observations.

Jim Wallis' opening speech:

My goal is to spark a national conversation on the "common good".

A story about my son who plays baseball.

The central goal of Christianity is to promote the "common good".

Quotes "Catholic social teaching" which values "human flourishing".

The "common good" is "human flourishing".

Is the purpose of Christianity is to make sure that everyone has enough material stuff or to preach the gospel?

When Christians go on mission trips, it's good that they focus on things like human trafficking.

Democrat John Lewis is the "conscience of the U.S. Congress".

John Lewis gets a 0% rating from the American Conservative Union in 2012.

John Lewis gets a 8% rating from the American Conservative Union in 2011.

John Lewis gets a 2.29% lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union.

Nothing is going well in Washington right now except comprehensive immigration reform.

Does he think that Christianity means giving 20-30 million illegal immigrants a path to citizenship, while skilled engineers cannot even get green cards, even though there is a shortage of them? Does he think that the other people in society who earn more than they receive from the government ought to be taxed more in order to provide more services and benefits to those who earn less than they take from the government?

Jay Richards' opening speech:

Two topics: 1) what is the common good? 2) what should Christians do to promote the common good?

Catholicism defines the "common good" as "Indeed, the common good embraces the sum of those conditions of the social life whereby men, families and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection."

We have natural ends that we are supposed to be achieving and some places, like South Korea, are better for allowing that to happen.

The common good is broader and prior to any sort of political specification.

It's not the political good or what the state is supposed to do.

It's not about the communal good, as in Soviet Russia, where the communal good was above individual and familial good.

The common good is the social conditions that promote the things that we humans have in common as individuals and members of family.

The common good takes account of who we are as individuals and in associations with other individuals, e.g. – families.

Christians don't have to be doing the same things to promote the common good, e.g. – pastors, entrepreneurs, etc.

The church, as the church, has as its primary goal making disciples of all nations.

But even in that capacity, the church should be interested in more than just conversions and saving souls.

We also have to care about God's created reality including things like physics, education, etc.

How should Christians promote the common good in politics?

Question: when is coercion warranted?

In Romans 13, Paul says that the state does have power to coerce to achieve certain ends, like justice.

Most Christians think that there are some things where the state can use coercion, for example, to prevent/punish murder.

It is OK for the police to use coercive force to maintain public order and the rule of law.

But we need to ask whether other things are legitimate areas for the state to use coercive force.

We should only give the state power to coerce when there is no other way to achieve a goal.

We need to leverage the science of economics in order to know how to achieve the common good.

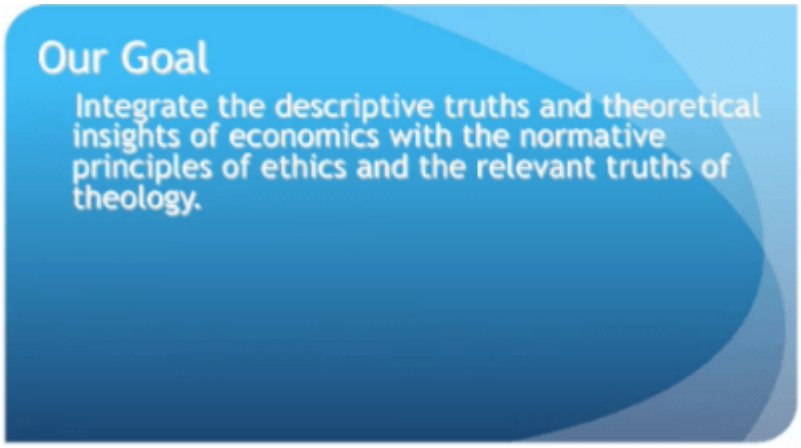

Jay Richards' main point in the debate

Henry Hazlitt: "The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups."

For example, what happens if we raise the federal minimum wage to $50. What happens next for all groups? That's what we need to ask in order to know which policies achieve the common good.

When it comes to economics a lot of things have been tried in other places and times.

We can know what works and doesn't work by studying what was tried before and in other places.

Many things are counter-intuitive – things that sound good don't work, things that sound bad do work.

Principle: "We are our brother's keeper". Christians have an obligation to care for their neighbors.

We all agree on the goal. But how do we do things that will achieve that goal?

We have to distinguish aspirations from principles and prudential judgment.

Principle: We should provide for the material needs of the poor.

Prudence: Seeing the world as it is, and acting accordingly.

Example policies: which minimum wage is best? None? $10? $20?

We decide based on seeing how different economic policies achieve the goal of helping the poor.

Jim Wallis' first rebuttal:

Jesus commanded us to "care for the poor and help to end poverty".

Actually, Jesus thought that acknowledging him and giving him sacrificial worship was more important than giving money to the poor, see Matthew 26:6-13:

[6] *While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper,*

[7] *a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.*

[8] *When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked.*

[9] "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

[10] Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

[11] The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me.

[12] When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.

[13] Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

It's not clear to me whether Jim Wallis thinks that preaching is more important than redistributing wealth to address material inequality.

I like what Jesus said in a TV series, even though it's not in the Bible when an actor playing Jesus said to "change the world".

Jesus never said to "change the world" in the Bible. Should we be concerned that he is quoting a TV actor playing Jesus instead of Jesus.

Here is a terrific story about Bill Bright.

I love Catholic social teaching.

Quote: "All are responsible for all".

I go to the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland every year. I spoke once at 7 AM on the 4th floor.

It's a funny place for a Christian to be if they care about the poor – rubbing shoulders with leftist elites. He must have named a dozen high-profile people that he spoke with during the debate, as if he could win the debate by some sort of argument from name-dropping. He mentioned the Davos thing several times!

The greatest beneficiary of government actions to deal with the economic crisis was Wall Street banks.

I'm going to tell you a story about what a Washington lawyer says to Jesus.

I've had conversations with business leaders where I tell them to integrate moral truths.

I talk about the Good Samaritan parable.

Quote: "Do you love your undocumented neighbor?"

Quote: "Do you love your Muslim neighbor?"

Jay Richards' first rebuttal:

Who is responsible for your own children? Who knows the most about them?

Parents should have more discretion over their children because they have more knowledge about their child and what's best for them.

The Good Samaritan doesn't show that government should confiscate wealth through taxation and redistribute it.

The Good Samaritan emphasizes voluntarily charity to help people who are not necessarily your immediate neighbor.

Some of the things we do should be for the good of other people in other countries.

But then we are back to leveraging economics to know what policies are good for those other people in other countries.

The principle of subsidiarity: if a problem can be addressed by a lower level of society (family) then we shouldn't make higher levels (government) address it.

The best place to take care of children is within the family.

Only if the family fails should wider and wider spheres get involved.

Although we want to think of the common good in a global sense, we don't want to lose sight of the fact

The financial crisis: we need to integrate moral truths, but also economic truths.

We don't want to assume policies based on intuitions, we want to check our intuitions using economic principles.

Why did we have a financial crisis in mortgages, but not in commodities futures or technology, etc.?

Greed is a contributing factor in all areas of business.

Something more was going on in the mortgage markets than just greed.

There were specific policies that caused the mortgage lending crisis.

The root cause of the problem were "affordable housing policies" that lowered lending restrictions on low income people.

The policy ended up degrading the underwriting standards on loans.

Government intruded into the market and undermined the normal ways of

People were getting massive loans with no income, no jobs, no assets and no down payment.

The federal government created a market for risk loans by guaranteeing

There was a government imposed quota on mortgage lenders such that 50% of their loans had to be given to high-risk borrowers.

That is what led to the financial crisis. Not the free market, but intrusions into the free market.

These policies were well-meaning and implemented by people from both parties. But they had bad effects.

Expect Biden / Harris to overturn all state-level restrictions on abortion

January 7, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Major pro-abortion group endorses Joe Biden for President
The Democrats already have legislation to remove all state-level restrictions on abortion. It stalled in the Senate because Republicans stopped it. But now that the Democrats are in charge of House, Senate and Presidency, it will probably get passed.

Fox News reported on it early in 2020:

> The House Energy and Commerce Committee met on Wednesday to discuss legislation that would override state regulations on abortion, a bill pro-life critics describe as unconstitutional overreach from Washington.
>
> "For the first time in 20 years, our committee is considering a proactive bill that would guarantee the constitutional right to abortion care; free from the interference of any politician, who has no place in making this very personal decision," Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., said of the Women's Health Protection Act.
>
> […]There are currently hundreds of state laws regulating abortions, varying from regulations on clinic standards to outright bans on the procedure, all part of what pro-choice advocates describe as an unprecedented attack on abortion access.
>
> […]The bill grants health care providers a "statutory right" to perform abortions and effectively voids a long list of regulations at the state level. These include requirements that doctors perform certain tests or procedures prior to an abortion. The bill also prohibits limitations on providing abortion services via telemedicine, an emerging form of access that pro-life leaders have criticized as dangerous.
>
> The bill's text includes a provision blocking abortion bans prior to fetal viability, and grants post-viability abortions in cases where a health care provider believes the continuation of the pregnancy "would pose a risk to the pregnant patient's life or health."

I have a friend who is a Never Trumper. He's not very informed about policy, he's just talks and talks about how much he doesn't like Trump. When I try to talk about Trump's pro-life policies, executive actions, and judicial nominations, he changes the subjects to his feelings. He really likes to talk about his feelings. I don't think there's a single Biden voter who could list specific policies implemented by Trump. Not on abortion. Not on any issue. They all just focused on how they felt about Trump. And those feelings were largely conditioned by the mainstream news media.

So, on Wednesday, he was busy talking about how much he hates Trump for fighting against election fraud. I asked him if he had spared any thoughts about what the

Democrats were about to do in terms of policy. He hadn't. He has no idea about their actual legislation. He wasn't discussing policy with anyone throughout the entire election cycle. He doesn't know enough about policy or legislation to have those conversations. He can talk a lot about Star Wars, sports and movies, though. He's very convincing on those topics. Very passionate. But nothing to say about abortion legislation. Nothing to convince people to vote pro-life.

What is more important in life? To talk to others about how pro-life you are? Or to get pro-life results? We had pro-life results when Trump was President. Now we're going to have pro-abortion results under Harris / Biden. My Never Trump friend is delighted that Trump is gone. He thinks that he's a "social conservative", too – a real pro-family, pro-life guy. That's what he likes to tell everyone.

Robert Gagnon debates gay activist Jayne Ozanne on Bible vs homosexuality

January 8, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I am tempted to say that this is the best podcast I have ever heard on the Unbelievable show. Do anything you have to do in order to listen to this podcast.

Details:

> Prof Robert Gagnon has become a well-known voice advocating the traditional biblical view on sexuality. In a highly charged show he debates the scriptural issues on sexuality with Jayne Ozanne, the director of Accepting Evangelicals who came out as gay earlier this year.

The MP3 file is here.

If you can only listen for 15 minutes, then start at 49 minutes in and listen from there.

The following summary is rated MUP for made-up paraphrase. Reader discretion is advised.

Summary:

Intro:

- Speaker introductions
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree that the Bible doesn't support it
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree Jesus taught male-female marriage
- Ozanne: I went to the hospital because I was sick from trying to suppress my gay desires
- Ozanne: Doctors told me that I would die if I didn't act on my gay desires
- Ozanne: I decided to reinterpret the Bible to fit with my gay desires

- Ozanne: According to my new interpretation, Jesus actually supports my gay desires

Segment 1: Genesis

- Ozanne: In Genesis the Bible says that Adam needs a woman to complete him
- Ozanne: I reinterpret this to mean that Adam needed a “complementarian human being”
- Ozanne: Genesis doesn’t say whether Eve was complemented by Adam in that chapter
- Ozanne: It’s not critical that men are complemented by women, a man could complement a man
- Ozanne: Genesis 2 doesn’t talk about children, it’s all about adult needs from a relationship
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 has never been interpreted that way in all of history
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language specifically implies a human being who is opposite/different
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language translates to complement or counterpart
- Gagnon: Genesis as a whole teaches that the sexuality is for male and female natures
- Gagnon: The extraction of something from the man that is given to the woman is complementarian
- Ozanne: I think that people can be complementary outside of male-female Genesis language
- Ozanne: I don’t want to discuss specific words and texts and Greek meanings
- Gagnon: the text has always been read and interpreted to support male/female complementarity
- Gagnon: the male-female nature argument is made because the two natures are complementary
- Ozanne: the text was interpreted by patriarchal males who treated women like property, it’s biased
- Ozanne: what is important to me is how Christ interprets Genesis (?? how does she know that?)
- Ozanne: I am passionate about my interpretation of Scripture which supports my gay desires
- Gagnon: just because a person is passionate about their interpretation it doesn’t make it right
- Gagnon: I am not arguing for the male-female view based on passion, but on scholarship, evidence and history
- Ozanne: both sides are equally passionate about their interpretations (?? so both are equally warranted?)
- Ozanne: the real question is why God “allowed” two different interpretations of Scripture

Segment 2: Is homosexuality a sin?

- Gagnon: Jesus affirmed traditional sexual morality, which forbids homosexuality
- Gagnon: Jesus teaches that marriage is male-female, and limited to two people
- Gagnon: No one in history has interpreted the Bible to say that homosexuality was not immoral
- Ozanne: Jesus came to bring life, and that means he supports homosexuality
- Ozanne: I was dying, and embracing my gay desires allowed me to live, so Jesus approves of me
- Ozanne: God says "I am who I am" and that means he approves of me doing whatever I want
- Ozanne: There is an imperative to be who I am, and that means embracing my gay desires
- Gagnon: Jesus argued that the twoness of the sexual bond is based on the twoness of the sexes
- Gagnon: Jesus did not come to gratify people's innate desires, he called people to repent of sin
- Gagnon: Jesus did reach out to sinners but he never condoned the sins they committed
- Gagnon: Jesus' outreach to tax collectors collecting too much and sexual sinners is the same: STOP SINNING
- Ozanne: I don't think that Romans 1 is talking about homosexuality
- Ozanne: I think it's talking about sexual addiction, not loving, committed gay relationships
- Ozanne: Paul was condemning pederasty in Romans 1, not loving, long-term, consensual sexual relationships between gay adults
- Gagnon: nothing in the passage limits the condemnation to pederasty
- Gagnon: the passage was never interpreted to be limited to pederasty in history
- Gagnon: rabbis and church fathers knew about committed two-adult same-sex relationships, and said they were wrong
- Gagnon: the argument for marriage is based on the broad two-nature argument, with no exceptions
- Gagnon: the condemnation is not limited to exploitative / coercive / lustful / uncommitted relationships
- Gagnon: even pro-gay scholars agree the passage cannot be interpreted Ozanne's way (he names two)

Segment 3: The showdown (49:00)

- Ozanne: I don't care how many pages people have written on this
- Ozanne: God says that "the wisdom of the wise I will frustrate" so you can't use scholars, even pro-gay scholars, to argue against my passionate interpretation
- Ozanne: I am not interested in the text or history or scholarship or even pro-gay

scholars who agree with you
- Ozanne: what decides the issue for me is my mystical feelings about God's love which makes my sexual desires moral
- Ozanne: you are certain that this is wrong, but your view does not "give life" to people
- Ozanne: your scholarship and historical analysis is "a message of death" that causes teenagers to commit suicide (= you are evil and a meany, Robert)
- Ozanne: "I pray for you and your soul" (= opposing me will land you in Hell) and "I hope that listeners will listen with their hearts" (?? instead of their minds?)
- Ozanne: you can prove anything you want with research, even two mutually exclusive conclusions, so you shouldn't rely on scholarship and research since it could be used to prove my view as well
- Ozanne: instead of relying on research, you should rely on your heart and your feelings about God's love to decide what the Bible teaches about sexual morality
- Gagnon: you are distorting the gospel in order to make your case
- Gagnon: attacking my "certainty" is an ad hominem attack to cover your dismissmal of the scholarship and history
- Gagnon: you distort the gospel to make it seem like Christ just wants us to get what we want, when we want it, with who we want it with
- Gagnon: Christ calls us to take up our cross, to lose our lives and to deny ourselves
- Gagnon: you have a notion of what "fullness of life" is, but it's not reflective of the gospel
- Gagnon: Paul's life was much more troubling than yours, mine or anyone else around here
- Gagnon: Paul was beaten, whipped, stoned, poorly sheltered, poorly clothed, poorly fed, shipwrecked, and anxious for his churches
- Gagnon: on your view, he should have been miserable and angry with God all the time
- Gagnon: but instead Paul was constantly thankful and rejoicing to be able to suffer with Jesus and look forward to the resurrection
- Gagnon: I have suffered too, but the suffering we go through never provides us with a license to violate the commandments of God
- Ozanne: "the ultimate thing is what people feel God has called them to"
- Ozanne: My goal right now is to tell young people that homosexuality is fine so they don't commit suicide
- Ozanne: the view that homosexuality is wrong is "evil and misguided"
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm in the gay community are intrinsic to homosexual unions, not caused by external disapproval of homosexuality

Segment 4: Concluding statements

- Gagnon: gay male relationships on average have more sex partners and more STDs
- Gagnon: female relationships on average have shorter-length relationships and

more mental issues
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm are because there is no complementarity / balance in the relationships
- Gagnon: everyone has some disappointment or suffering in their lives that hurts them, and that they are tempted to break the rules to fix, but we should not break the rules in order to be happy
- Ozanne: both sides are passionate, so no one can be right, and evidence proves nothing
- Ozanne: only feelings about “what God is doing” can allow us to decide what counts as sin or not
- Ozanne: the main thing that is at stake here is to make people like us, not to decide what the Bible says about sin
- Ozanne: my message to people is to do whatever you want, and ignore mean people who don’t affirm you
- Ozanne: we should be more opposed to mean people who make non-Christians feel unloved than about doing what the Bible says

Lori Alexander is right: serious Christian men prefer debt-free virgins without tattoos

January 9, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

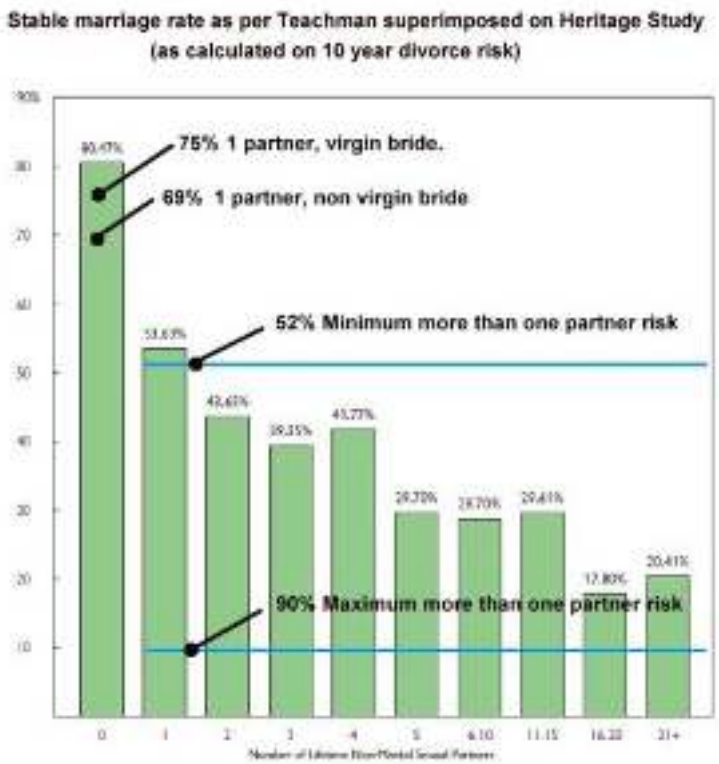

Marriage stability vs sexual partners,(Teachman et al. JAMF, August 2010)

Christian writer Lori Alexander recently wrote a blog post (H/T Lindsay) urging Christian women to do 3 things:

1. be a virgin before marriage
2. be debt-free before marriage
3. don't get any tattoos

She also urged women to be cautious about college, because it often gets them into debt. I disagree with her a little here. I always urge young women to earn a STEM degree in college, then work a few years to pay off their loans (if any) before marrying. This is because women, like men, need to have the experience of doing something hard that they don't "feel" like doing, in order to grow. STEM degrees teach young people that the world doesn't revolve around them, and that their feelings don't matter when trying to solve a problem in the real world. It's a very useful way for women and men to break themselves out of the desire for free and easy happiness that is so common in our time.

Lori's article drew enormous opposition from both secular and Christian sources. So far, the only people defending her are men's rights sites, like Dalrock (Christian) and Spawny (non-Christian). Every other "Christian" blog or news site that I read disagreed her article, and argued that premarital sex was no big deal, that having debt was no big deal, and

that having tattoos was no big deal.

Let's take a look at her three points, then I'll explain why her article is largely correct, and why she is correct about what she asserts about the criteria that godly men have for women.

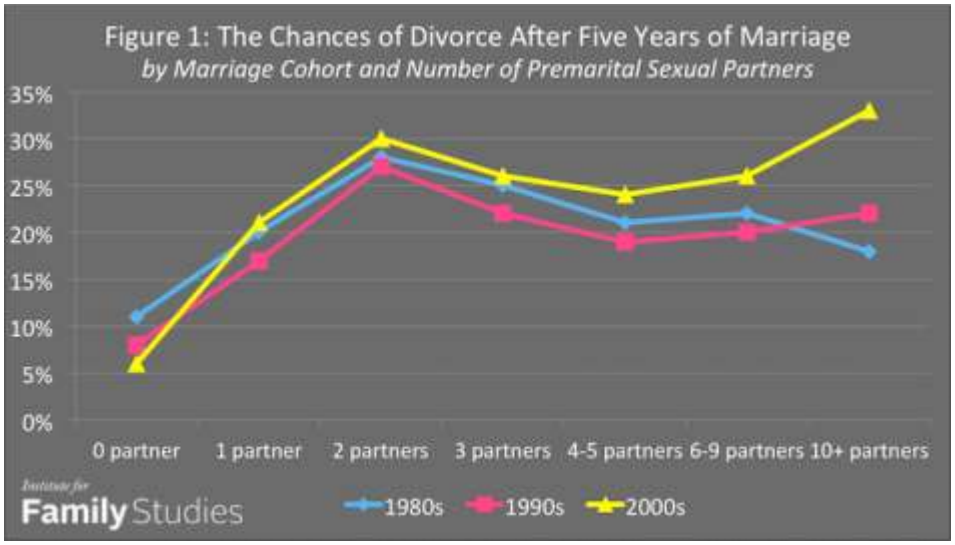

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

Virginity

Regarding her first point, virginity is commanded by the Bible, it's in line with peer-reviewed studies on marriage quality and stability. The reason that people find this difficult is that they want the freedom to give in to sexual desires without feeling shame. They want to believe that there is no permanent effect. It doesn't help that parents and pastors are terrified of telling young people, and young women in particular, that promiscuity harms marital stability. Right now, the culture is drowning in feminism. Feminism tells women that the traditional male roles of provider, protector, and spiritual leader are "sexist". The "best" men are good-looking pro-abortion bad boys. If a Christian woman is not able to think through the meaning of sex with respect to marriage enough to control herself, it seriously harms the stability of her future marriage.

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image)

Debt-free

Regarding her second point, almost everything a serious Christian man might plan to do for Christ with his marriage is impacted by finances. From education, to marriage timing, to number of children, to home ownership, early investment, to the success of children. to age of retirement. Less money means fewer choices, and less ability to counter challenges. Think of how important money for legal defense is to Christian-owned businesses who are being persecuted, for example. The reason that many people find the Bible's teaching on stewardship difficult is that they don't want to exercise self-control with money if they don't feel like it. They want to waste money seeking fun and thrills, and then act like their poverty could not be avoided. Being debt-free is an indicator of practical wisdom and self-control in a woman.

CHAPTER 9

Tattoos: Don't

This piece of advice may arrive a bit late for you, but I'd rather discomfit you than leave unsaid a reality check for younger friends.

Fads fade; tattoos don't. These permanent displays of youthful exuberance trigger at best mild amusement, but in some a serious concern about your maturity.

Whether or not you believe that concern to be fair, it is real. The tattoo you cover today will be an obstacle in some situations the rest of your life. Do you need it that much? Is it worth compromising your effectiveness?

This rule of tattoos is easily applied to many other areas of your style of living. Do you do anything to call attention to yourself or to make a statement? If so, is the attention worth it? Most such indulgences are self-defeating, whether it is idiosyncratic hair or clothes, a loud motorcycle, or—later in life—a palatial residence far beyond any ordinary need. The attention you are drawing to yourself is defeating your ambition by marking you as concerned with silly things.

Serious people do not seek attention except for serious purposes.

Chapter 9 of Hugh Hewitt's "In, But Not Of: A Guide to Christian Ambition"

Tattoos

Tattoos are a problem for serious Christian men for several reasons. First, they cost money and for no gain, and can even cause you losses in your career. Second, most people get them because of low self-esteem or vanity or to look rebellious or to look dangerous. None of these motivations should be acted upon by someone with a robust Christian worldview. The money could be better used on charity, or investments, etc. Women show what their priorities really are by how they spend their money and time. Show me a woman's bookshelf, and I'll tell you how seriously she has thought about what it means to be a Christian in all areas of life. Instead of showing me your tattoos to demonstrate your "spirituality", show me your apologetics books, to demonstrate your intellectual engagement. And tell me how you used that information to engage in conversations with educated non-Christians to answer their challenges to your faith. That way I'll know that you use your money to train do hard things in order to have an influence for Christ in serious, practical, effective ways. A woman who can defend her faith and discuss Christianity with non-Christians is demonstrating her ability to raise Christian children in a secular society.

A family praying and reading the Bible

The goal of marriage is to serve God

Today, young people have been taught to follow their hearts, and to deny that there is any authority or practical wisdom that should govern their decisions. They always imagine themselves to be exempt from moral rules, statistics, cause and effect, etc. They think they know better than everyone else – even though they do almost no research on their own. Every adviser who tells them to study computer science instead of creative writing is wrong. Their same-age friends know more about what causes divorces than peer-reviewed research papers. And money should be spent on skydiving and zip-lining, regardless of what financial experts like Dave Ramsey might say.

A woman who has made many mistakes cannot fix those mistakes with words. Rationalizations, evasions, and blame-shifting do not work to show that there has been real repentance. The man can only assess whether grace has caused any real re-prioritization of goals by evaluating her outward actions over a long period of time. Furthermore, if a woman who has made mistakes attacks those who correct her from Bible's teachings on chastity, stewardship, etc., then it's a sign that there is no real repentance.

Choosing a wife wisely doesn't mean that Christian men treat OTHER Christian women poorly. Christian men love all the Christian women. We care for them and support them. But when a man chooses a wife, he is choosing someone who will have more influence on his ability to serve God than anyone else. In my case, the goals for my marriage involve making a difference with apologetics in the church, having many children who will receive the educations and careers they need to have an influence, influencing government to promote Christian-friendly policies, charitable giving, mentoring young Christians, modeling a good marriage to others, and having a home that can serve to host discussions about issues that matter. These things are not free – they take careful planning and execution to achieve.

Lori's advice is intended for men who are serious about making their marriage produce a return for God. Men who are chaste themselves. Men who accept the Bible as an

authority. Men who earned STEM degrees, instead of easy nonsense degrees that don't lead to good careers. Men who earn 6-figure salaries, who buy houses for cash, and who are on track have a 7-figure net worth by age 50. Men who made good decisions cannot risk marrying someone who hasn't prepared for marriage. The wrong woman in the home could ruin the man's effort to produce a marriage that gives glory to God.

Not every man intends to achieve something for God with his marriage, but those who do need to choose a woman who has demonstrated ability at doing the job. For example, if the job requires marital fidelity, then chastity is a good indicator that the woman has the necessary self-control. If the job requires frugality, and practicality, then being debt-free, having a STEM degree, and having some private sector work experience are good indicators that she's qualified for the role. Nothing valuable in life is ever been achieved by being lazy, wild and irresponsible. Serious Christian men look for wives who have applied themselves to difficult tasks that they didn't feel like doing, who achieved success by remaining committed to the plan, in spite of their unhappy feelings and unmet desires.

We have a problem in the church such that we aren't serious about teaching young people to develop marriage-ready character and to make serious plans for marriage. We are teaching them to follow their hearts, and that their feelings and desires are clues about God's will for their happiness. We are teaching them to be uncomfortable with responsibilities, expectations and obligations to others. We are teaching them not to do their own research. We are teaching them not to make practical, wise plans. We are teaching them to ATTACK those who try to get them to be serious about doing what is likely to work. This approach is not working.

My own criteria for a wife are more demanding than Lori's. My advice there is only for serious Christian men who want their marriage to serve God.

Should Christian men consider single mothers for marriage?

January 10, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why do Christians object to warning men about high-risk relationships?
A while back, I explained my three concerns about attending church. One of them was that male pastors and church leaders have adopted the priorities of radical feminism, and have turned against men who want a traditional marriage in which the man leads and the wife supports. Well, I found something that really illustrates what I mean by that, so that everyone will understand it.

Above, you can see a tweet by Michael Foster, a pastor who hosts a podcast called "It's Good to be a Man". His web site states that his goal is: "Extending God's house & father-rule by helping men to establish their own houses in strength, workmanship & wisdom."

He explains in subsequent tweets that he is just urging men to ask questions to find out how the woman became a single mother.

Reactions to the tweet

Here are some reactions to the tweet:

- asking Foster where are his warnings about single dads
- calling Foster a misogynist
- insulting Foster's appearance
- using 1 counterexample to deny a mountain of evidence
- single moms who deliberately chose bad men, and then play the victim by accepting no responsibility for their actions
- claiming that Foster was expressing an irrational opinion
- accusing Foster of being a child abuser

The negative reactions are all anti-intellectual and childish, especially trying to refute statistics with "you hurt my feelings" or telling a single personal story as a

counterexample.

Here's a disclaimer. In this post, I am talking about single mothers by choice, and single mothers who initiated divorce. Widows are excluded.

The risks posed by single mother

Now, let's improve Foster's warning, by looking at some evidence – is a marriage to a single mother really more likely to result in a bad outcome?

First of all, women initiate 70% of divorces. If you meet a woman who divorced her husband, she either had a defect in her ability to evaluate and choose a man, or she had a defect in her ability to maintain a commitment to the man she chose. Either way, a woman who divorced her previous husband has red flags. There are two possibilities. She either chose a good man or she chose a bad man. If she chose a bad man, then it shows that she didn't choose a man with good moral character and spiritual leadership. That means that those things were low priorities for her when deciding who to get naked with. Alternatively, she married a good man, and failed to maintain the commitment. Then she has different problems: problems with male leadership, problems with responsibilities, problems with commitment, problems with contentment, etc. You need to ask questions to get to the bottom of what happened, and more importantly, what she has studied and done to change her worldview. Don't take her words for it, look at her actions.

Second, the number of premarital sex partners a woman has makes her a higher risk of divorce. The more sex partners, the more risk. The problem with women who engage in sex with men who don't commit to them is that they *necessarily* don't see a man's willingness and ability to commit as valuable when choosing a man. Women who have premarital sex with men who don't commit see OTHER THINGS as more valuable. They are rewarding the man for his height, his muscles, his tattoos, his piercings, his entertainment of her, etc. A good man should be very wary when a woman who gave her best youth, beauty and sexual interest to men like that now want to "settle" for a boring, unattractive provider who they see as having lower value than the men they gave sex to without requiring a commitment. What they really wanted was bad boys, and they threw sex at those bad boys without asking for commitment. With the man they perceive as low-level, they are insisting on commitment first, because they don't want this low-level man as badly as they wanted the bad boy. They are settling for less than they feel they deserve. This is where sex-withholding, feelings of unhappiness, and frivolous divorces come from. And by the way, hollering Jesus doesn't fix that risk any more than hollering Jesus fixes student loans accumulated for a useless non-STEM degree. Jesus-hollering isn't evidence that a woman has persuaded herself to change her view of which men are the most attractive. A woman's lack of respect for men who prepare for commitment and who keep their commitments is dangerous for marital stability. The hysterical reactions to a man's judging a woman for her past mistakes don't cancel the damage and risks caused by those mistakes. They simply tell the man that this woman is unrepentant, and therefore unteachable, and likely unsuitable for goal-oriented marriage. She is not qualified for the job of wife: self-sacrificial love for her husband, respect for her husband,

and supporting her husband in what he is trying to achieve for God.

Here's what the Bible says about sex outside of heterosexual marriage and about frivolous divorce. Read the critical replies to Foster's tweet. The critical responses show the *default* position of church-attending Christian women and pastors to the Bible in this culture. First, the critics don't accept the Bible as an authority over women's choices in any area of life. Second, the critics don't believe that women should bear any responsibility for their past actions. Nobody believes that women choosing bad men is the woman's fault in this society. So you should assume that single mothers don't take responsibility for their own failures. And that means that she will have taken no steps to repent of her mistake, and change her character so that she doesn't make the same mistake again. It's up to you to look at what she has been reading, listening to, watching, etc. and to check her actions in order to find out what she really thinks about what the Bible says. You can't marry a woman who responds to any mention of the moral law and moral obligations with denial of responsibility and insults. If she hasn't become an active crusader against women who choose bad men, and women who choose premarital sex, and women who choose divorce, then you can't really believe that there's been any real repentance. The risks to you are too high to take a chance on someone who is not certain. I've only ever met one single mother (Kerri) who blamed her own divorce on her own bad decisions.

The culture opposes male leadership

Foster's warning is intended to help men to make better decisions, so that their relationships will produce results for God. But his critics aren't interested in what men are trying to achieve for God. They are only concerned that women get what they want, regardles of their past actions. In their opinion, men exists solely to serve the needs of women. Women don't have to be good enough for marriage, men just have to give them what they want regardless of the woman's suitability for wife and mother roles. The role of men in any relationship is not to lead and achieve goals for God. Their role is to let women rule over them, disposing of their earnings as they see fit, for the benefit of the woman.

When women are young and pretty, they are entitled to hot bad boys to entertain them. When they are older, have tons of sexual experience, and children from different fathers, they are entitled to a husband to financially support them. But a husband with no power to lead the home, since their past choices of man showed they have no interest in following a man who has good character. And the churches, pastors, courts, schools, hospitals, etc. are all there to enforce this view of men as clowns / slaves.

This is what women are told about the role of men in every area of society. This society, including the Christian parents, Christian pastors, Christian culture, etc. do not produce women who prefer early marriage to men who are good at moral leadership and spiritual leadership. Therefore, men who are chaste, sober, have good educations, good private sector jobs, good savings, etc. need to be extremely careful. Look at the responses to Foster's tweet, and think: do these people care about providing you with a good wife? Or

is their concern all about how to insult you and shame you, until you are submissive to her needs?

Your marriage is your enterprise for serving God

My advice to men right now is to read over every single critical tweet in that thread that Foster started. Imagine that you are trying to get these women to do something in a marriage that is part of your plan to make the marriage serve God. You're trying to get her to watch a William Lane Craig debate. You're trying to get her to stop spending money on 50 Shades of Grey and Harry Potter. You're trying to get her to stop smoking and drinking. You're trying to get her to talk about the sermon instead of essential oils. You're trying to get her to read a Thomas Sowell book. You're trying to get her to not put the kids in day care or public schools.

You need to assume that her response to male leadership like this will be the exact same as the responses that Foster is getting to his tweet. And then after you have assumed it, then you need to keep your hands off that woman. Keep your distance, and ask her questions to find out what her real views are, and whether she is interested in growing into the kind of person who is safe for you to marry. Don't forget that chastity and sobriety are important during the evaluation process, so that you aren't influenced away from your leadership role. Don't listen to her words, look at her actions.

Big Tech purge of conservatives shows the danger of secular left worldview

January 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Free speech that offends the secular left is now "inciting violence"
The Federalist:

> What happened at the capitol was an embarrassment for our country. Now, the hypocritical outcries from Democrats, who proudly condoned left-wing Antifa and Black Lives Matter rioters as they terrorized American cities all summer, are ushering in a great reckoning.
>
> The Jan. 6 demonstrators, the vast majority of whom were peaceful, were there to protest legitimate claims of election irregularities and voter fraud. But Google-owned YouTube doesn't want you to know that. They announced Thursday that they will ban all videos about voter fraud in the 2020 election.
>
> The one free speech haven, Parler, Apple is keying up to ban from its app store and bar from iOS devices, claiming content on the website contributed to the capitol unrest. Google has already jumped the gun, banning Parler yesterday.

Amazon, the company that hosts Parler, has indicated that they would be banning Parler as well as of Sunday at midnight.

More:

> Anyone who has supported the president is in for it, as well. Rick Klein, the political director at ABC News, in a now-deleted tweet said that getting rid of

> Trump is “the easy part.” The more difficult task will be “cleansing the movement he commands.” Democrats have already created a “Trump Accountability Project,” an enemies list to ban, cancel, or fire anyone who staffed, donated to, endorsed, or supported President Trump and his administration.
>
> […]As the left’s arbiters of “truth,” big tech has been banning users they don’t agree with and suppressing stories like The New York Post’s blockbuster investigation into Hunter Biden‘s laptop and sketchy deals with foreign governments and companies with ties to the Communist Chinese government. With the help of their partisan “independent fact checkers,” big tech and the media made sure average Americans never knew about this before they went to the polls.

This is the part I want you guys to start thinking about:

> This disturbing reality we live in, where one political party now has the power to control the narrative in all aspects of our lives — school, work, social media, and government — might make us feel eerie echoes of living under Chinese Communist Party influence instead of in the United States of America.
>
> Perhaps what’s most troubling, and something that we might not have even considered in the chaos of the last few days, is the long-term impact this will have on American children. Generation Z or Zoomers, aged 13 to 21, may be one of the first generations that is more influenced by what they see and read on social media and the internet than what they hear at the dinner table from mom and dad.
>
> A Business Insider’s poll found that 59 percent of Zoomers listed social media as their top news source. While technology used to serve as a way to make information accessible, a way to have the world at your fingertips with just a quick search, it has become something much different. It is teaching the youngest and most impressionable among us that suppression is normal and personal censorship is an important survival mechanism.
>
> Children are being taught to watch what they say and think, lest they be labeled a racist, white supremacist, homophobe, or xenophobe. Indeed, making a pro-Trump TikTok video can get your college admission rescinded and subject you to intense personal harassment. A three-second insensitive or politically incorrect Snapchat video from 2016 can get you featured in a New York Times article and your college admission rescinded, and subject you to bitter bullying.
>
> For young people today, it’s becoming normal to see political leaders in our country deemed “dangerous” to be ousted from public platforms and ostracized from society. They watch their parents self-censor at work, fearful of backlash from employees or coworkers that could get them fired.
>
> Americans used to support the right of people to hold and express opinions others disagree with. Yet the newest generation believes feelings are more

> valuable than freedom. Study after study finds that younger people are more supportive of limiting speech than are older generations.
>
> A recent survey found that an overwhelming majority of students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison think the government should be able to punish "hate speech." Of course, "hate speech" is simply the left's ambiguous term for anything veering from the leftist orthodoxy on issues such as abortion, sex, race, and immigration.
>
> Silicon Valley oligarchs have an agenda. They aren't platforms, they are publishers, which should nullify the privileges they enjoy under Section 230. Will the Democrats who are now running our government do anything to stop big tech tyranny? Of course not.
>
> This problem is not going away. America's ethos of free speech and expression is going extinct at the hands of big tech and the leftists controlling media and government.

The people in Big Tech aren't any different from the communist leaders of the past. You should be very careful about going on social media under your own name and posting publicly. Use an alias, and restrict the visibility of your posts to your friends. You should only have a few friends, and no one who is on the secular left. Don't make yourself an easy target by posting your real name or any personal details that can be seen by the public or by a secular leftist. It's probably time to think about getting a VPN and changing your voter registration to independent. Be careful with your donations as well.

People on the secular left won't hesitate to use the power of the government to come after you for making them feel bad. They think that your different opinion is inciting violence. They think that hurting their feelings is inciting violence. You have to assume that this is everyone on the secular left. Everyone who votes Democrat. All the Christian "Never Trumpers" who *prefer abortion and same-sex marriage policies to pro-life and natural marriage policies*. They may not all be bad, but you have to assume they are, for your own safety. There is nothing in the secular left worldview that rationally grounds human rights or morality.

Will the secular left Democrats allow you to earn money if you disagree with them?

January 12, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you’re trying to help the rioters escape justice, you’re pro-rioting

I looked at a lot of different articles on Monday, and felt more and more sad about the direction that America is going. We should not be going forward with the inauguration until we find out why there were so many voting issues in certain states controlled by far-left Democrats.

I read a lot of articles about the 7-month-long campaign of violence, arson, and murder conducted by far left rioters, and I was going to write about how the media and Democrats encouraged that. But the article that really touched on what I was feeling was by Joy Pullman, writing for The Federalist:

> The purge wasn’t at all limited to Trump himself. It’s also pursuing his supporters. YouTube banned all videos discussing voter fraud. Reddit shut down its Donald Trump subreddit. On Jan. 8, Facebook shut down the Walkaway campaign that shared the stories of people who left the Democratic Party to vote for Trump, and banned every one of the group’s owners from using Facebook. The publisher of a forthcoming book by Sen. Josh Hawley cut ties with him over his support for proving to the American people that our elections are free and fair.
>
> ‘You’re not entitled your book contract,’ can quickly become ‘United doesn’t have to let you onto its planes’ ‘Marriott doesn’t have to let you stay at its hotels,’ or ‘Visa doesn’t have to let you use its cards.’

> And maybe that's the point.
>
> — Abigail Shrier (@AbigailShrier) January 8, 2021
>
> The National Association of Realtors "has revised its professional ethics code to ban 'hate speech and harassing speech' by its 1.4 million members," both on the job and off. To them, hate speech includes basic conservative ideas, not at all actually racist or otherwise indefensible words. "The sweeping prohibition applies to association members 24/7, covering all communication, private and professional, written and spoken, online and off. Punishment could top out at a maximum fine of $15,000 and expulsion from the organization."
>
> Police departments across the country have opened "probes" into whether any of their employees attended the Trump protest on Jan. 6. They're not at all alone. Employers have begun firing people who merely attended the rally of hundreds of thousands, out of which a minority broke the law.
> The label of an indie musician terminated their relationship because he posted that he had "peacefully" attended the Trump protest. A Wall Street Journal article documents the firing of a lawyer for an insurance company who posted on Instagram that he had attended "peacefully."
>
> […]The notorious Never Trump group The Lincoln Project is launching a pressure campaign to ensure more such firings to purge leftists' political opponents from all aspects of public and private life, in the name of "America."
>
> […]Well-funded groups like The Lincoln Project, Southern Poverty Law Center, and other leftist pressure campaigns are dedicated to earning money and status by destroying the lives of anyone who disagrees with their politics. It's excellent business. Schmidt has released tweets outlining many of his group's planned actions, a terrifying blueprint of the cultural revolution mindset ascendant among America's political left, who just seized control of every branch of the federal government…

This part was unnerving:

> Already this creepy lust for punishment has Reddit users revealing their plans to turn family members into the FBI for attending the Jan. 6 protest, regardless of whether these family members committed any crimes or merely, like the vast majority of attendees, walked peacefully in D.C. streets.

She has an example where someone was recognized at a rally, his employer was contacted, and he was publicly denounced and placed on leave of absence. How will he feed his family without a job? But that's the problem with the communist mob – they put their philosophy above the rights and lives of ordinary people who have a right to exercise their freedoms peacefully (which almost all of the people at the DC rally did). I would never take away the job of someone just because they disagreed with me.

I really recommend that you READ and SHARE the article, so that everyone will understand clearly what is happening. It's important for people to understand that people

on the secular left *are fascists* and they want to take away the ability of people to disagree with them by using power, e.g. – lawsuits, doxing, getting people fired.

And now, a personal reflection.

I'm concerned about how marriage-minded men will be impacted by the witch-hunting leftists. Men who marry and lead families don't do this because it is a good deal for men. Marriage is a terrible deal for men. But it's tolerable if men get to keep their own money, lead their families, educate their children in a way that respects God and good values, etc. When the government gets so big that men have to deal with leftists in the schools, government, hospitals, workplace, etc. *men just opt out of marriage*. Young, unmarried women may think that they can make a happy marriage with a pro-abortion, pro-LGBT secular leftist, but it's very unlikely. These are people who sacrifice children for adult selfishness, and that isn't a good qualification for marriage, which requires self-sacrificial love and self-control. There will be many victims to the rolling back of human rights and moral standards planned by the secular left.

Is there evidence of systemic racism in the United States?

January 13, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

ANNOUNCEMENT: I explained my answer to this question on an episode the Free Thinking Ministries podcast, with host Tim Stratton. We discussed Black Lives Matter, Christianity and more. And I explained my plan to achieve the American Dream as a person of color and legal immigrant to America. Live stream link here.

Systemic racism is the idea that people can't lift themselves out of poverty by making good decisions, because powerful groups in society that hold the poor down, regardless of their decisions. Do you think that America is a place where no matter what choices you make, you'll never be able to be more properous? That's what the leaders of Black Lives Matter think.

Here's what Nikole Hannah-Jones, creator of the 1619 Project, says in the New York Times (a former newspaper):

> To summarize, none of the actions we are told black people must take if they want to "lift themselves" out of poverty and gain financial stability — not marrying, not getting educated, not saving more, not owning a home — can mitigate 400 years of racialized plundering.

Got that? It doesn't matter what individual choices a non-white person takes in America, they're going to be poor. The "systemic racism" of the powerful whites will always keep them down. Single motherhood doesn't make people poor, and marriage doesn't make people wealthier. Dropping out of high school doesn't make you poor, and getting a Masters degree in computer science won't make you wealthier.

But let's take a look at the data from the 2018 Census, and see the evidence.

Median US Household Income by Selected Ethnic Groups, 2018		
Indian	Americans	$119,858
Taiwanese	Americans	$95,736
Lebanese	Americans	$82,353
Turkish	Americans	$81,656
Chinese	Americans	$81,487
Iranian	Americans	$80,291
Japanese	Americans	$80,036
Pakistani	Americans	$77,315
Ukrainian	Americans	$77,083
Filipino	Americans	$75,279
Indonesian	Americans	$74,497
Syrian	Americans	$72,675
Korean	Americans	$72,074
Ghanaian	Americans	$69,343
Nigerian	Americans	$68,658
Guyanese	Americans	$68,393
White	**Americans**	**$67,937**

Source: US Census Bureau

White people are doing a bad job of keeping non-whites down

Well, it looks like at least SOME people of color are able to do well in America despite all the "systemic racism" that keeps non-whites down. And do you know what those non-white groups at the top have in common? They've made good decisions, they've worked hard, they haven't blamed other people when they fail, and they've saved their money instead of spending it on shiny junk.

Let's look at some decisions that the non-whites who are prosperous have made, that those further down have not.

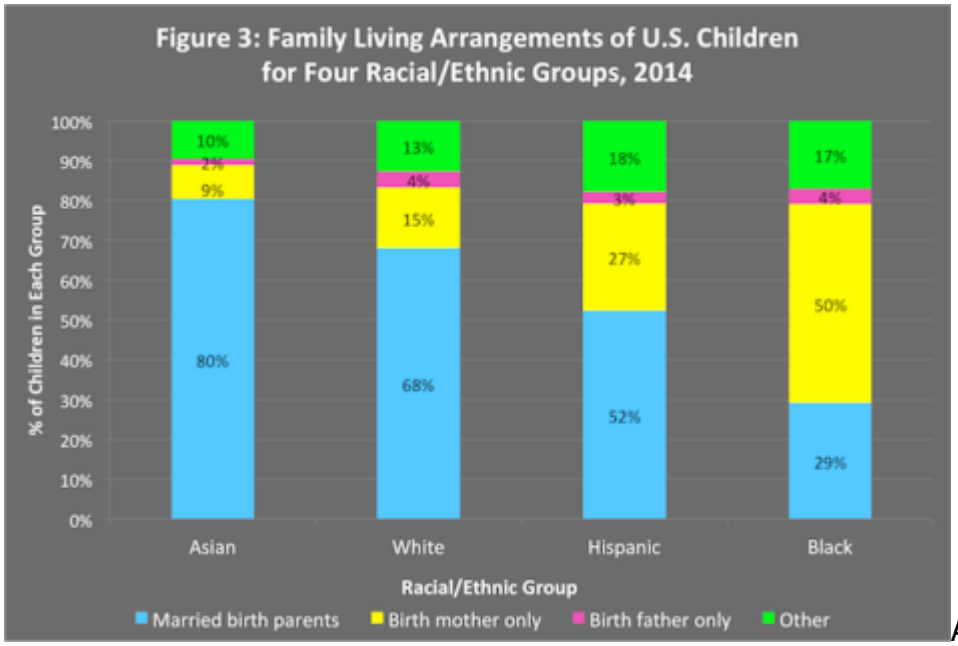

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

Education and marriage

This article is written by the far-left radical Nicholas Kristof, writing in the radically-leftist New York Times (a former newspaper).

Excerpt:

> A new scholarly book, "The Asian American Achievement Paradox," by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, notes that Asian-American immigrants in recent decades have started with one advantage: They are highly educated, more so even than the average American. These immigrants are disproportionately doctors, research scientists and other highly educated professionals.

> It's not surprising that the children of Asian-American doctors would flourish in the United States. But Lee and Zhou note that kids of working-class Asian-Americans often also thrive, showing remarkable upward mobility.
>
> […]There's also evidence that Americans believe that A's go to smart kids, while Asians are more likely to think that they go to hard workers… Asian-American kids are allowed no excuse for getting B's — or even an A-. The joke is that an A- is an "Asian F."

One reason Asians students do so well is because their parents are usually married:

> > Strong two-parent families are a factor, too. Divorce rates are much lower for many Asian-American communities than for Americans as a whole, and there's evidence that two-parent households are less likely to sink into poverty and also have better outcomes for boys in particular.

American blacks have a 73% out-of-wedlock birth rate. A huge difference compared to Asians.

So, when Nikole Hannah-Jones tells you that education and marriage don't matter, she's just wrong.

Compound interest

Education and marriage are important, but so is saving your money. The wealthiest people in America are typically the ones who are experts at saving money early, and investing it. They know about the law of compound interest. If you invest money early and leave it alone, then it will grow into a fortune by the time you are read to stop working.

This graph explains compound interest:

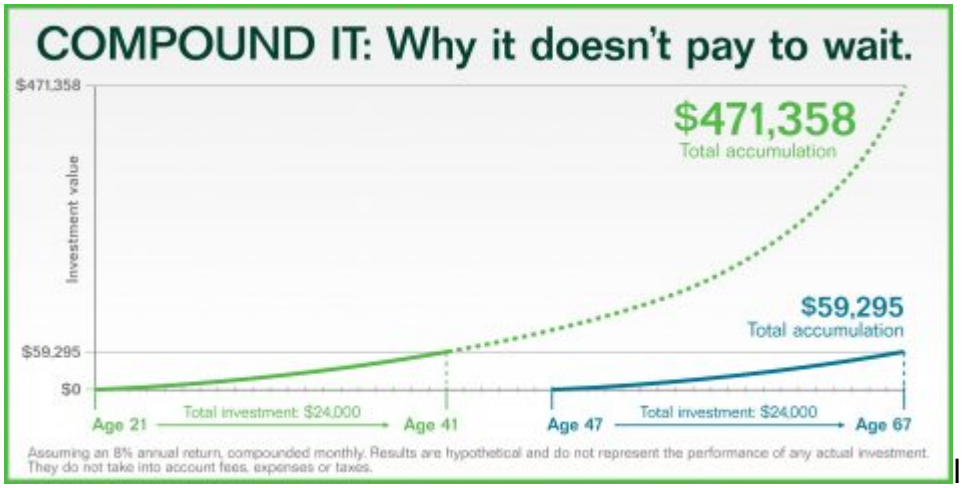

Investing $24,000 from age 21 to 41 vs investing $24000 from age 47 to 67

What does Nikole Hannah-Jones say when she looks at that graph? She doesn't think that saving money makes a difference to having more or less wealth. She thinks skin color determines whether saving money makes you wealthy or not. The graph clearly shows what we should be recommending to young people of color. They need to stop spending money and start saving it, and the earlier the better. It doesn't matter what your skin color is, saving money early JUST WORKS.

Similarly, when she says that home ownership doesn't make you more wealthy, this is just terrible advice. It's always better to pay down your own mortgage (at least when interest rates are low like they are now) than to pay someone else rent. You have to live somewhere, and paying for your own home is better because it costs about the same as rent, and then you get to keep the home when you're done paying for it.

Communism

Nikole Hannah-Jones does have a "solution" to disparities in wealth. Her solution is communism. She wants to transfer money from those who earn, to those who don't. But we already have tried that in the 20st century and it resulted in the deaths of over 100 million people. That's not my opinion, that's all documented in a book published by Harvard University Press.

You don't even have to read the book to know the truth – just look at countries that score low on the Index of Economic Freedom, and compare their GDP per capita to countries that score high on the Index of Economic Freedom. The more communist a nation goes, the less wealth there is for the citizens. That's why people in Venezuela are eating zoo animals and selling their bodies in prostitution in order to get food to eat and water to drink. Nikole Hannah-Jones wants to reduce economic freedom, but we know by looking at other countries that this reduces per-capita GDP over time.

There's a lot more than could be said here, but the point is that we need to be telling American blacks to make decisions that match the decisions of other successful non-white communities in America. We need to start teaching young people basic economics so they don't fall prey to charlatans.

What do ancient non-Christian sources tell us about the historical Jesus?

January 14, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

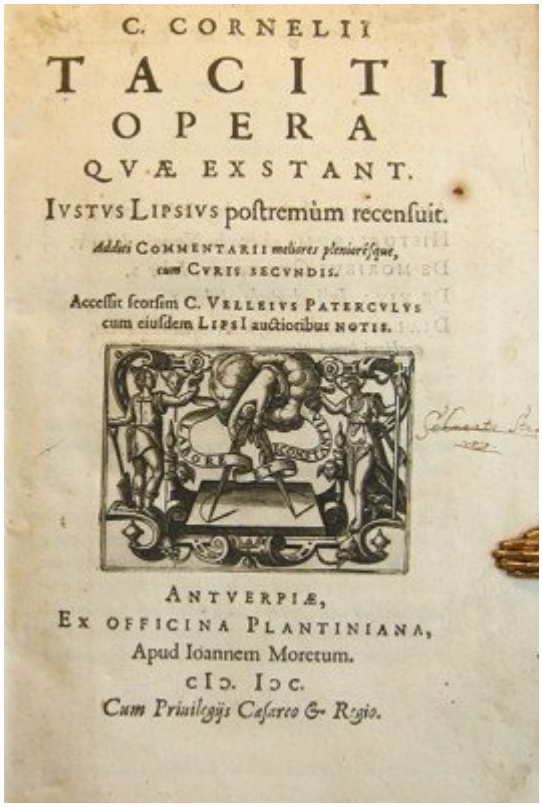
C. CORNELII
TACITI
OPERA
QVÆ EXSTANT.
IVSTVS LIPSIVS postremùm recensuit.
Addit COMMENTARII meliores pleniorésque, cum CVRIS SECVNDIS.
Accessit seorsim C. VELLEIVS PATERCVLVS cum eiusdem LIPSI auctioribus NOTIS.
ANTVERPIÆ,
EX OFFICINA PLANTINIANA,
Apud Ioannem Moretum.
CIↃ. IↃC.
Cum Priuilegijs Cæsareo & Regio.

The Annals, by Roman historian Tacitus

This article from Biblical Archaeology covers all the non-Christian historical sources that discuss Jesus.

About the author:

> Lawrence Mykytiuk is associate professor of library science and the history librarian at Purdue University. He holds a Ph.D. in Hebrew and Semitic Studies and is the author of the book Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200–539 B.C.E. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004).

Here are the major sections:

- Roman historian Tacitus
- Jewish historian Josephus
- Greek satirist Lucian of Samosata
- Platonist philosopher Celsus
- Roman governor Pliny the Younger
- Roman historian Suetonius
- Roman prisoner Mara bar Serapion

And this useful excerpt captures the broad facts about Jesus that we get from just the

first two sources:

> We can learn quite a bit about Jesus from Tacitus and Josephus, two famous historians who were not Christian. Almost all the following statements about Jesus, which are asserted in the New Testament, are corroborated or confirmed by the relevant passages in Tacitus and Josephus. These independent historical sources—one a non-Christian Roman and the other Jewish—confirm what we are told in the Gospels:31
>
> 1. He existed as a man. The historian Josephus grew up in a priestly family in first-century Palestine and wrote only decades after Jesus' death. Jesus' known associates, such as Jesus' brother James, were his contemporaries. The historical and cultural context was second nature to Josephus. "If any Jewish writer were ever in a position to know about the non-existence of Jesus, it would have been Josephus. His implicit affirmation of the existence of Jesus has been, and still is, the most significant obstacle for those who argue that the extra-Biblical evidence is not probative on this point," Robert Van Voorst observes.32 And Tacitus was careful enough not to report real executions of nonexistent people.
>
> 2. His personal name was Jesus, as Josephus informs us.
>
> 3. He was called Christos in Greek, which is a translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, both of which mean "anointed" or "(the) anointed one," as Josephus states and Tacitus implies, unaware, by reporting, as Romans thought, that his name was Christus.
>
> 4. He had a brother named James (Jacob), as Josephus reports.
>
> 5. He won over both Jews and "Greeks" (i.e., Gentiles of Hellenistic culture), according to Josephus, although it is anachronistic to say that they were "many" at the end of his life. Large growth
> in the number of Jesus' actual followers came only after his death.
>
> 6. Jewish leaders of the day expressed unfavorable opinions about him, at least according to some versions of the Testimonium Flavianum.
>
> 7. Pilate rendered the decision that he should be executed, as both Tacitus and Josephus state.
>
> 8. His execution was specifically by crucifixion, according to Josephus.
>
> 9. He was executed during Pontius Pilate's governorship over Judea (26–36 C.E.), as Josephus implies and Tacitus states, adding that it was during Tiberius's reign.
>
> Some of Jesus' followers did not abandon their personal loyalty to him even after his crucifixion but submitted to his teaching. They believed that Jesus later appeared to them alive in accordance with prophecies, most likely those found in the Hebrew Bible. A well-attested link between Jesus and Christians is that Christ, as a term used to identify Jesus, became the basis of the term used to identify his followers: Christians. The Christian movement began in Judea, according to Tacitus. Josephus observes that it continued during the first century. Tacitus

> deplores the fact that during the second century it had spread as far as Rome.

I remember reading the 1996 book by Gary Habermas entitled "The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ". This book is a little before the time of most of you young Christian apologists, but back before the time of Lee Strobel and J. Warner Wallace, this is the stuff we all read. Anyway, in the book he makes a list of all that can be known about Jesus from external sources. And fortunately for you, you don't have to buy the book because you can read chapter 9 of it right on his web site.

From Tacitus he gets this:

> From this report we can learn several facts, both explicit and implicit, concerning Christ and the Christians who lived in Rome in the 60s A.D. Chronologically, we may ascertain the following information.
>
> (1) Christians were named for their founder, Christus (from the Latin), (2) who was put to death by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilatus (also Latin), (3) during the reign of emperor Tiberius (14 37 A.D.). (4) His death ended the "superstition" for a short time, (5) but it broke out again, (6) especially in Judaea, where the teaching had its origin.
>
> (7) His followers carried his doctrine to Rome. (8) When the great fire destroyed a large part of the city during the reign of Nero (54 68 A.D.), the emperor placed the blame on the Christians who lived in Rome. (9) Tacitus reports that this group was hated for their abominations. (10) These Christians were arrested after pleading guilty, (11) and many were convicted for "hatred for mankind." (12) They were mocked and (13) then tortured, including being "nailed to crosses" or burnt to death. (14) Because of these actions, the people had compassion on the Christians. (15) Tacitus therefore concluded that such punishments were not for the public good but were simply "to glut one man's cruelty."

And from Josephus he gets this:

> (1) Jesus was known as a wise and virtuous man, one recognized for his good conduct. (2) He had many disciples, both Jews and Gentiles. (3) Pilate condemned him to die, (4) with crucifixion explicitly being mentioned as the mode. (5) The disciples reported that Jesus had risen from the dead and (6) that he had appeared to them on the third day after his crucifixion. (7) Consequently, the disciples continued to proclaim his teachings. (8) Perhaps Jesus was the Messiah concerning whom the Old Testament prophets spoke and predicted wonders. We would add here two facts from Josephus' earlier quotation as well. (9) Jesus was the brother of James and (10) was called the messiah by some.

So when you are reading the New Testament, these facts are the framework that you read within. It's a good starting point when dealing with people who have never looked into who Jesus was and what he taught and what his followers believed about him, right from the start.

Far-left activist charged after Washington, D.C. incitement of violence incident

January 15, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guess what? A far-left activist has been charged in connection with the recent rioting in Washington, D.C. No, no, it's not the CEO of Facebook or the CEO of Twitter or the CEO of Google or the CEO of Amazon. Those are not the far-left activists I am talking about this time.

Fox News reports:

> A left-wing activist who told Fox News last week that he'd followed a pro-Trump mob into the Capit0l in order to "document" the siege is now the subject of a criminal complaint in connection with his alleged participation, according to the Justice Department.
>
> J0hn Su11ivan can allegedly be heard egging on protesters in video he provided to the FBI, according to a federal criminal complaint. He has also shared the video to his YouTube and Twitter accounts under the pseudonym Jayd3n X.
>
> He was charged Thursday in federal court in Washington, D.C. after being arrested by the FBI. He remains in custody in Toeele County, in his home state of Utah, on a U.S. Marshals Service hold request.
>
> Inside the building, he told rioters that "We gotta get this s— burned," and "it's our house m————," according to an affidavit signed by FBI Special Agent Matthew Foulger.

> He faces federal charges of civil disorder, entering a restricted building and violent entry or disorderly conduct.
>
> […]Su11ivan, the founder of a Utah-based group called 1nsurgence USA… has denied ties to Ant1fa in recent interviews, his group 1nsurgence USA had advertised an event called "Kick These Fascists out of DC" on Wednesday around the same time as a pro-Trump rally near the National Mall that preceded the Capit0l chaos.

If you're wondering why I said "incitement of violence" in my title, it's because I think that "we gotta get this s— burned" is an incitement to violence.

National Pulse adds:

> Su11ivan, the founder of "an activist group formed after the killing of George Floyd in the summer of 2020" entitled 1nsurgence USA which "calls itself anti-fasc1st and protests police brutality," insisted he was only inside the U.S. Capit0l on January 6th to "record."

READ THE DESCRIPTION OF HIS GROUP. HE IS A LEFT-WINGER AND HIS GROUP IS A LEFT-WING GROUP.

Politifact, which is one of the fake-news "fact-checkers" employed by Big Tech, issued an entire fact-check, in which they claimed that this person isn't linked to Ant1fa at all:

> Su11ivan denies antifa affiliation
>
> Social media users have linked Su11ivan to ant1fa and Black Lives Matter because of his past protest history and social media activity. His Twitter accounts have frequently used #antifa, #blm, and other anti-Trump or anti-police hashtags, PolitiFact found. The cover photo for one of his accounts advertised a Jan. 6 1nsurgence USA event to "Kick These Fascists Out of DC."
>
> Su11ivan has also been filmed using incendiary language in the past. At a small August rally in Washington, D.C., he described the need to "rip" Trump out of office, according to Fox News. Photos highlighted on his personal website show him holding a firearm.
>
> But Su11ivan said he's not a part of the ant1fa coalition often blamed for violent events, noting that Trump supporters at the riot were shouting "f— ant1fa."

So if he says he's not linked to Ant1fa, then he's not linked to Ant1fa. That's called journalism. No need to check any evidence. That's real journalism with a journalism degree right there. That 200K in student loans was well worth the money, for the useful journalism skills you learn when you're spending 4 years being a drunken slut and getting indoctrinated with far-left propaganda till you can't reason your way out of a paper bag. But Big Tech has a use for you.

This fact check was used by Big Tech corporations like Facebook to suppress any criticism of far-left fascist groups. That's their goal. The journalists write their "fact check", they

label your actual facts “missing context” or “mostly false” and then every dissenting voice is banned from social media. I remember when they labeled a video of Joe Biden talking as “Missing Context” and reduced my page’s audience *for quoting Joe Biden in his own words talking continuously for over 2 minutes.* They just didn’t want people to see it, so they censored it. They censored me. They hate free speech. They’re totalitarians who suppress anything they disagree with.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

January 16, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two bears fight it out, and may the best bear win!

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has ever done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates). If you've never seen Dr. Craig in a debate with a non-Christian, this one is probably the best introductory one out there. Dr. Craig is the foremost defender of Christian theism on the planet, and probably of all time.

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it! Normally, Dr. Craig debates at major universities in front of students and faculty.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies

- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.

- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

Bible study: Was the resurrection body of Jesus spiritual or physical?

January 17, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

So, everyone from left to right accepts the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 being dated to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, even atheists like Crossley, Ludemann and Crossan. The thing is, some people are not sure that the appearances of Jesus to individuals, groups, and skeptics really were physical appearances. They say "well, Paul's appearance was non-physical, so the other ones must have been, too".

Let's take a look.

Here's a paragraph from my friend Eric Chabot, from his blog Think Apologetics. He explains why Paul's use of the word "resurrection" to describe what the other witnesses saw means *bodily* resurrection.

He writes:

> If Paul did have a vision then the term "vision" is vague and must be defined. As Licona points out, visions are either objective (i.e., something that is seen without the use of our natural senses) or subjective (i.e., a product of our minds). The real problem is with the vision hypothesis is that it doesn't explain Paul's use of resurrection to explain what had happened to Jesus. The two words are used for resurrection in the New Testament "anastasis" (rising up) and "egersis" (waking up), both imply a physical body**.** Furthermore, the use of the word "opethe" (the Greek word for appeared) shows the Gospel writers did believe that Jesus appeared physically. "There you will see (opethe) him" (Matt. 28:7); "The Lord has risen and has appeared (opethe) to Simon" (Luke 24:24).

> When they used “opethe” here, it means that He appeared physically to them.

> So when Paul gives his list of appearances in 1 Cor. 15, the issues becomes whether the appearance to him is the same as it was to the disciples. There is no doubt the post resurrection body of Jesus (after the ascension) had to be somewhat different than the body the disciples saw. Also, whenever the New Testament mentions the word body, in the context of referring to an individual human being, the Greek word “soma” always refers to a literal, physical body.Greek specialist Robert Gundry says “the consistent and exclusive use of soma for the physical body in anthropological contexts resists dematerialization of the resurrection, whether by idealism or by existentialism.” [9] Furthermore, in N.T. Wright’s The Resurrection of the Son of God shows that the Greek word for resurrection which is “anastasis” was used by ancient Jews, pagans, and Christians as bodily in nature.

Now, I think my view on this, and I’m not sure if Eric would correct me, is that Paul got an objective but non-physical vision of Jesus. There was something there that everyone else could see and hear, in my view. But in my view Paul’s “veridical” vision was post-ascension, and so non-physical. Paul uses the word resurrection to describe what the other eyewitnesses saw (and he met them at least twice, according to Gal 1 and Gal 2), and that means physical resurrected body.

Eric Chabot writes this in another place:

> **Acts 9- Paul’s Damascus Road Experience**
>
> Here we see whatever happened, this was after the ascension. Hence, to say Paul saw the exact same Jesus before he ascended is hard to infer from the text. There simply isn’t enough information here. The Bible says, “they heard” the same voice Paul did ” (Acts 9: 7). But they “did not see anyone ” (Acts 9: 7). Notice Paul was physically blinded by the brightness of the light. One way or the other, the experience involved something that was external to Paul. It wasn’t something that was the same thing as a vision that Paul talks about in 2 Cor. 12:1. Furthermore, the phrase “he let himself be seen’” (ōphthē , aorist passive,), is the word Paul uses in 1 Cor. 15:7 to describe of his own resurrection appearance as the other ones in the creed. As Paul Barnett says:
>
> “It is sometimes claimed that the word appeared (ōphthē) means a mystical seeing, as of a vision, and that since this was what Paul “saw” it was what the other apostles “saw.” In other words, after death, Jesus was taken directly to heaven whence he “appeared” to various people, mystically, as it were. This however, is not all the meaning of Paul’s words. First, the word ōphthē, “appeared” is not limited to visionary seeing it is also used for physical seeing. Moreover, the verb raise used in the phrase ‘raised on the third day” is used elsewhere in combination with the words “from the dead” which literally means “from among the corpses.” Thus raised preceding appeared gives the latter a

> physical not a mystical meaning. Christ, as “raised from the dead” ….appeared.” Furthermore, when Paul asks “ Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?”(1 Cor. 9: 1), he is using the ordinary word horan, “to see” for physical sight. If “seeing” the Lord “raised from the dead” qualified others to be apostles, then Paul is, indeed, an apostle. It was no mere subjective vision that arrested Paul en route to Damascus. (8) .
>
> In the end, word studies can’t entirely resolve this issue. We need to remember the etymological fallacy as well. We would have to look at all the texts that speak of resurrection (including the entire 1 Cor. 15 chapter in their entire context as well as the anthropology of the New Testament. We also need to study the resurrection in light of the Second Temple Jewish period. See our reading list here for some resources that may help.

But conservative ancient historian Gary Habermas seems to think that Paul got the physical body as well.

He says:

> Now, I said before in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul could have chosen to only use the word *pneuma*. He doesn’t. He does say “spiritual,” but he’s got an adjective there. He also says, *soma*, “body.” What did Paul mean?

> Philippians Chapter 3. It’s a short chapter. There are 21 verses, but Paul says three things in one chapter that indicate he’s talking about a physical resurrection. In the opening verses he says, “I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews” and “as touching the law,” he says, “I was a Pharisee.” Now, it’s very well known that the Pharisee believed in a bodily resurrection. In fact, according to Acts 23, as Paul was being taken captive by the Romans to prevent his being killed, he shouted out to the group of people and said, “Why are you taking me? Because I believe in the resurrection of the dead?” He meant a literal resurrection.
>
> When the Pharisees heard that, they said there’s nothing wrong with this guy. But the Sadducees [who didn’t believe in the Resurrection] didn’t like it. So as a Pharisee, he’s agreeing with the Pharisees.
>
> So, the first evidence is from Philippians 3. As a Pharisee, Paul believes in a physical resurrection.
>
> Secondly, in verse 11 he says, “That I may attain the resurrection of the

> dead." Now, the normal Greek word for resurrection is *anastasis,* but in this passage, Philippians 3:11, he puts a prefix on there, ***ek*** *anastasis.* ***Ek****anastasis*, according to all Greek scholars that I know of, is translated in this passage: "The out resurrection from among the dead." Paul said, "I want to attain the out resurrection."
>
> Now, to a Jew, "out resurrection" means "what goes down is what comes up." You come out from death. And then just a few verses later, Philippians 3:20,21, he said, "From Heaven, we look for Jesus who will change our vile *soma* (body) to be like unto His glorious *soma* (or body)," when he should have said *pneuma*, according to this other view.
>
> So he's a Pharisee who believes in a physical resurrection. ***Ek*** *anastasis*—"resurrection from out among the dead ones."
>
> Thirdly, Paul says, "He Jesus will change ***my body*** to be like ***His body***."

> So right there in Philippians 3 alone, I think the picture of Jesus being some wispy spirit that appeared to him on the road to Damascus doesn't fit Paul's own data.

Yes, that's why Philippians is my favorite book. You can get so much useful theology out of it. Something about the resurrection in Phil 3, something about Jesus' divinity in Phil 2, and loads of practical advice on stewardship, charity, fellowship, endurance and practical love for others throughout. Some of it takes a little digging, but that's what commentaries are for, am I right? But I digress.

If you want to read something a little more challenging, I found a paper from the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) from their journal, where it talks more about soma and anastasis. If you want a bit of a challenge, download the PDF and read it. It's by Kirk R. MacGregor and the title is "1 Corinthians 15:3B–6A, 7 And The Bodily Resurrection Of Jesus".

What’s the real evidence for 2020 Election Fraud?

January 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Many small and right leaning news sites talk about indisputable proof of election fraud, while the mainstream media (MSM) emphatically claim no widespread fraud. But the MSM uses strange tactics when discussing allegations of fraud. They often:

1. Point out errors made by Trump’s legal team, or make a big deal out of debunking unsubstantiated election fraud claims, but stay silent on many real issues.
2. Highlight the Department of Homeland Security’s CISA statement that “the November 3rd election was the most secure in American history.” Even though the voting machine companies accused of fraud (Dominion and Smartmatic) are members of CISA who issued that statement.
3. Insist recounting fraudulent ballots proves they’re legitimate.
4. Disprove accusations of election merely by having those accused of election fraud explain that they’re not guilty of election fraud. Case Closed.

Of course not every claim of fraud has merit. I’ve spent about 40 hours investigating, reading both sides, weighing evidence, and dividing truth from myth. What follows is the most substantial evidence I’ve found:

1. Counties swing toward Democrats after installing Dominion Voting Machines.

Dominion is the largest provider of voting machines in the US. About 40% of US citizens vote using Dominion machines.

Actuary and insurance fraud specialist Ben Turner looked at counties in 49 states, comparing 657 counties that had adopted Dominion voting machines versus 2,388 counties that had not, since 2008. Turner analyzed with a varying number of control factors–including race, urban/rural shifts, immigration, education, manufacturing dependency, creative-class population, voter preference, and others–up to 100 factors. The counties that installed Dominion machines consistently had 1 to 3% votes shift toward the Democratic presidential candidate versus those that didn’t. The Epoch Times and two statistical experts validated Turner’s data.

An unrelated study looked at all 3,006 counties in the US, comparing how Biden performed in actual votes versus polls prior to the election. They found that in counties with Dominion voting machines, Biden did better than expected 78% of the time. While in counties without Dominion voting machines, Biden performed better than expected only 46% of the time. On average, counties with Dominion voting machines improved Biden’s score above expectations by 5.6%. This trend was maintained even in the strongest Republican and Democrat-leaning counties.

2. Dominion Voting Machines are Designed to Change Votes

Following the 2020 election, Cybersecurity analyst Russel Ramsland visited Antrim County and Central Lake Township in Michigan and (with a judge's permission) examined Dominion voting machines. In a detailed report, he noted:

1. 68% of the votes in Antrim county could not be read by the voting machine. These votes were then adjudicated, a process where an unknown and unobserved administrator would manually enter the values of the votes. (Page 2) He found "all adjudication log entries for the 2020 election cycle are missing" even though there were "vote adjudication logs for prior years." This "violates state law and prevents a meaningful audit." (Page 3)
2. This high rate of adjudication was "a 2020 issue not seen in previous election cycles still stored on the server." (Page 3)
3. "All security logs for the day after the election, on election day, and prior to election day are gone." "Other server logs before November 4, 2020 are present; therefore, there is no reasonable explanation for the security logs to be missing." (Page 4)
4. In Central Lake Township, MI, the town clerk re-ran the ballots from a local election on Nov 5th, and then again on Nov 6th after a patch from Dominion was applied. "This resulted in greater than a 60% change in voting results, inexplicably impacting every single election contest in a township with less than 1500 voters." (Page 11)

Recall that about 40% of US citizens vote using Dominion machines.

Mainstream media and fact checking websites have not addressed these points and instead discredit Ramsland by pointing out that in one table from a 9 page affidavit, Ramsland mixed up counties and townships from MN and MI, along with their totals. Perhaps this could be explained because both states start with "Mi" and Ramsland is from Texas. As well as being under the clock, racing to compile evidence and file charges before votes are certified?

In 2017, Democrat senators Elizabeth Warren, Amy Klobuchar, and Ron Wyden issued a formal complaint in to Dominion about vote switching.

According to the Epoch Times, in October, UBS Securities LLC paid $400 million to Staple Street Capital Group LLC, which owns Dominion Voting Systems, and UBS Securities LLC has ties to the communist party in China. The transaction can be seen on sec.gov.

Director of national intelligence John Ratcliffe confirmed yesterday that China sought to influence the election, but did not go into detail. In a Dec 3 Op-Ed in the Wall Street Journal, Ratcliffe wrote: "The People's Republic of China poses the greatest threat to America today, and the greatest threat to democracy and freedom world-wide since World War II. The intelligence is clear: Beijing intends to dominate the U.S. and the rest of the planet economically, militarily and technologically. Many of China's major public initiatives and prominent companies offer only a layer of camouflage to the activities of the Chinese Communist Party.

3. Non Citizens Vote

A JustFacts analysis shows that historically about 16% of US non-citizens illegally register to vote, and about 82% of the time they vote Democrat. Those numbers alone are more than enough to swing the election from Trump to Biden in Arizona (51k) and Georgia (55k). Arizona and Georgia were prevented from verifying voter citizenship by the Obama administration rules.

This analysis was challenged by USA Today, but rebutted in a counter-response by JustFacts.

4. USPS Changed Ballot Dates

Project Veritas interviewed USPS workers from Michigan and Pennsylvania who said the offices were illegally changing dates on ballots to allow late votes, even those postmarked on Nov 5th and 6th. Both post office supervisors hung up the phone after they were asked about it. Claims circulated that USPS worker from PA retracted his statement, but he denies retracting anything, saying he was coerced into signing a retraction.

Changing the dates to count more mail in ballots skews the election because Biden's supporters are more likely to vote by mail. If this process was widespread, or only performed on absentee Ballots for Biden, it could've significantly altered presidential election tally.

5. Various Fraud in Georgia

Missing and Extra Absentee Ballots

Georgia records show 138,029 voters requested absentee ballots but never returned them. Matt Braynard was the strategic director of Trump's campaign in 2016. Braynard called these voters. Among those who responded, he found:

1. 33.29% said they actually DID return an absentee ballot, even though the state had no record of their vote.
2. 18.39% said they never even requested an absentee ballot.

The Leftist FactCheck.org criticized Braynard's methodology because only 0.4% responded to his survey, and because Braynard didn't account for late ballots, missing/mismatched signatures, or voided ballots. But it's hard to imagine how those factors could lead to more than a small percentage of error.

"Suitcases filled with Ballots"

In a widely shared video, security camera recordings show suspicious activity during

Georgia's vote recount in Atlanta's State Farm Arena. At about 8am on election day, a lady with blond braids puts large containers of ballots under a table. Those containers are undisturbed as vote counting proceeds throughout the day. Then poll observers go home at 10:30pm. Afterward, a few remaining workers pull out the same large boxes and for the next two hours, feeding the ballots into machines that can each process about 3000 ballots per hour.

The Associated Press and other news outlets claim this video is debunked because they were ballot containers and not suitcases, as some had claimed. And because Georgia election official Fulton County Elections Director Richard Barron told them "no observers were ever told to leave the facility." However:

1. Republican observers Mitchell Harrison and Michelle Branton signed sworn affidavits say they were told to go home by a lady with blond braids. Prior to that were kept at such a distance it was impossible to meaningfully observe, as can be seen in the video recording. Remember in the video it was the blond lady with braids who brought in the hidden vote containers.
2. ABC News likewise reported on election night that "the election department sent the State Farm Arena absentee ballot counters home at 10:30pm" And the Atlanta Journal Constitution: "They planned to stop scanning absentee ballots at 10:30pm and pick it up back in the morning."

The election officials lied about sending the observers home raises even more suspicion about the late night counting activity.

Unfolded mail in ballots with perfect bubbles all for Biden

19 witnesses signed sworn affidavits (See Exhibits A through U in document 6 here) describing suspicious activity during the Nov 14th recount of Georgia's Nov 3 ballots.

Among them was Susan Volyes, a vote recount observer in Fulton County, Georgia with 20 years experience handling ballots. In a sworn affidavit she describes:

1. Encountering a ballot box of 98 votes for Biden and only 2 for Trump, with paper of a different texture, pre-folded to fit into scanning machines, no markings of where it has come from, with bubbles "unusually uniform, perhaps even with a ballot-marking device."
2. The next day she and her team were given a box of only 60 ballots to check, while other teams were overwhelmed with boxes of over 3000 ballots. After asking to help with counting the other ballots, the officials were "adamant" she and her team go home.
3. Other teams were counting ballots individually, with no one verifying the results.
4. She and her team were asked to sign a paper saying they had received and verified the voting machines before the voting machines even arrived. Later when the machines arrived they were not sealed or locked, the serial numbers didn't match,

and the coded tags over the memory card were broken.

Maria Diedrich also observed the recount in Fulton County. She reported in a sworn affidavit:

1. "one counter seemed to be making piles of 9 (but counting them as 10)"
2. When "an elderly counter wrote down the number of ballots, she couldn't remember the number, the person with her said a different number, they finally agreed on a number" and then put "the number onto the official Audit Board Batch Sheet
3. Some of the Republican watchers were asked to go home after it was announced "there were too many party monitors."

This article from the Epoch Times outlines irregularities described in those and the other affidavits:

1. Additional witnesses seeing "hundreds of these ballots seemed impeccable, with no folds or creases." "No creases in the mail-in ballots giving the impression that they were never folded into an envelope and mailed." With "bubble selections were perfectly made (all within the circle), only observed sections in black ink, and all happened to be selections for Biden." And "thousands of ballots that just had the perfect bubble marked for Biden and no markings in the rest of the ballot," without corresponding envelopes.
2. Signatures not being verified.
3. Biden's name being called "over 500 times in a row." And "hundreds of ballots at a time were counted for Biden only."
4. "Many of the boxes of ballots had voted 100% for Biden and 0% for Trump." And "many ballots had markings for Biden only, and no markings on the rest of the ballot," while none of the Trump ballots were marked in the same fashion.
5. Military ballots did "not have one specific precinct code on them" but instead had "multiple precincts printed" so it was impossible to tell which precinct the voter was registered.
6. "Widespread fraud favoring candidate Biden only."

Republican recount observer Hale Soucie also reported seeing a worker counting Trump votes for Biden, who continued doing it even after he reported her and a supervisor talked to her.

In 2019, Georgia voting machines were touted as secure because they print "a hard copy of the ballot for voters to review before they cast it." However, less than a month before the election, "A federal judge… declined to order the state to abandon its touchscreen voting machines in favor of hand-marked paper ballots for the November election." Marilyn Marks, executive director of the Coalition for Good Governance, lamented the decision: "We are deeply disappointed that Georgia voters will be voting in this important election on unreliable touchscreen machines that produce results that cannot be audited."

Over 106,000 out of more than half a million ballots were adjudicated in Fulton County, which includes Atlanta. Adjudication in Georgia allows changing votes on a ballot without a log of what was changed.

6. Various Fraud in Michigan

Melissa Carone

Cybersecurity expert Melissa Carone's was a contractor for Dominion Voting Systems in Detroit who worked at Detroit's TCF Center on Election day. Her testimony before Michigan lawmakers was shared widely on social media.

"I observed numerous employees, city workers, running batches of ballots through the tabulators countless times, without discarding them first… Instead of discarding, they were just rescanning, rescanning, rescanning. Counting ballots nine to 10 times."

Carone describes talking to her manager about the problem: "He [Nick] said, 'Melissa I don't want to hear that we have a problem, we are here to assist with IT, we are not here to run their election.' And at that point, I was really frustrated and upset, I could tell what was going on. They were cheating. It was very, very apparent." A Republican poll challenger confirmed the legitimacy of Carone's statements.

Carone was asked why more people hadn't come forward: "My life has been destroyed because of this. I've lost family, I've lost friends, I've been threatened, my kids have been threatened, I've had to move, I've had to change my phone number, I've had to get rid of social media. Nobody wants to come forward. I can't even get an actual job any more, because Democrats like to ruin your lives."

Carone estimated about about 30,000 ballots were scanned multiple times. Biden is alleged to have beat Trump by only 12,670 votes in Georgia.

How did the leftist media discredit Carone? Business Insider pointed out Carone's fiancé once repeatedly used her phone to send sex tapes to his ex-wife. Super creepy, but does that affect Carone's testimony? Slate makes fun of her tone, claiming she and the others like her are cranks, only there to be part of something that matters. Saturday Night Live showed a skit satirizing her as a drunk.

Mail in ballots with serial numbers in order

In Detroit, Michigan, an election worker described mail in ballots arriving with their id's in order, but missing dates. She reports others becoming angry when she tried to report it:

"These are absentee ballots, mail in ballots. They cannot be in sequence. 2232 cannot have 2233 next to it, cause if they're mailed in they come in all different numbers… there was not even a date on those envelopes… Then I said what is the date on this one? Then they got really mad at me. They said 'you're not letting us do our job, you're disturbing us.'"

Other Testimonies from Michigan

In Detroit, Poll challenger Andrew Sitto reports that "tens of thousands" of ballots arrived at 4:30am, with all he observed going to Biden. Poll challenger Daniel Gustafson confirms, adding that the ballots arrived in large, unsecured bins, with no label indicating their source of origin. Republican poll challenger Robert Cushman says he saw poll workers adding votes from unregistered voters, registering them all with a Jan 1, 1900 birthday. All three men shared their testimony under sworn affidavit.

Poll worker Connie Johnson described three vehicles arrived in Detroit with 130 thousand ballots that literally 100% were for Biden. Afterward GOP ballot watchers were denied access.

Corresponding with these vote dumps, professor of political science Paul Kengor found that on "November 4 in Michigan at roughly 6:30am, 141,258 votes came in for Biden, and only 5,968 for Trump. In Wisconsin at 3:42am., also on November 4,143,379 votes came in for Biden and a puny 25,163 for Trump. On the same day in Georgia at 1:34am, 136,155 votes came in for Biden, and only 29,115 votes came in for Trump."

In this video (mirror), Antrim county poll workers are shown discussing seeing the same signatures on multiple ballots, and their supervisor angrily insisting they ignore it and move forward.

7. Various Fraud in Pennsylvania

As in Georgia, 2016 Trump campaign strategic director Matt Braynard also phoned absentee voters in Pennsylvania. Among the 1706 people who responded to his survey, Braynard found:

1. Among 1706 people that PA had marked as absentee voters, 556 had never requested absentee ballots.
2. Among 1137 who did request absentee ballots, 453 mailed their ballots back but PA did not count their ballots.

That means 33% of ballots received were not mailed. 40% of mail in ballots that were mailed were not counted. Duplicate names or other mismatches can't explain an error rate this high. In PA there were 3,087,524 mail in ballots requested and 2,629,672 returned. Extrapolating, that gives about 1 million votes from absentee ballots that no voters requested, and 1 million absentee ballots that weren't counted. OANN uses different methods to arrive at 1.5 million fraudulent votes in PA.

At a hearing in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on Nov 25, retired Colonel Phil Waldron testified to the PA Senate Majority Committee that a batch of ballots recorded 570,000 votes for Biden and only 3,200 votes for Trump. 99.4% of votes for Biden. You can see the video here, at 1:31:15. In that article for the American Spectator, political science prof Paul Kengor states, "this electoral bombshell has been completely ignored by the mainstream

press.” I couldn’t find any mainstream news sources mentioning it either.

Biden is alleged to have won PA by 81,660 votes.

Conclusion

This isn’t an exhaustive survey of fraud evidence in the 2020 presidential race. For example I didn’t even include affidavits from witnesses seeing fraud in Wisconsin or Nevada. Nor did I even go through the Navaro Report or many of the claims listed on HereIsTheEvidence.com.

But what I’ve seen is more than enough to convince me that Biden will not be a legitimately elected president when sworn in this Wednesday.

If anything here is incorrect, please comment below and I’ll fix it.

Expect the Biden administration to follow Canada in using Covid to persecute churches

January 19, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lots of pious "Christian" leaders were desperate to proclaim their virtue by talking incessantly about Trump's deplorable character during the last 4.5 years. "Look at me", they said, "I'm so moral – and isn't that the point of the Christian religion? To make me look moral to other people?" Their goal was to get more non-Christians to accept them. They didn't know or care about legislation or judges. They cared about their own happiness.

But more intelligent Christians understand that elections are always about laws, policies and judicial nominations. All that will now be decided by secular leftists for the forseeable future. We can look to Canada to see where our new secular left overlords will take us.

Press release from a Canadian church:

> January 8, 2021
>
> FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
>
> PASTORS, ELDERS, AND CHURCH CHARGED FOR WORSHIPING TOGETHER
>
> MAXIMUM TOTAL PENALTY IS $10.8 MILLION PLUS JAIL TIME IF CONVICTED
>
> This week two pastors of Trinity Bible Chapel received two charges each for violating the Reopening Ontario Act on January 3, 2021. An additional pastor, three additional elders, and the church itself received one charge each for violating the Reopening Ontario Act on the same date. Each personal charge carries a maximum fine of $100,000 and one year in jail, while the charge to the church as an institution carries a maximum fine of $10,000,000 if convicted.

Please note that the fine to the church poses no personal risk to individual members. This is all for gathering a congregation to worship Christ in obedience to Scripture. The elders and the church have retained legal counsel from the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (JCCF) who plan to represent us in court.

Our congregation gathered for worship from June 14, 2020 until December 24, 2020 with no reported outbreak of COVID-19 and with no interference from the authorities. The only difference is that the Province of Ontario entered its second lockdown on December 26, 2020.

This is the second week in a row that all elders have been charged. Last time members of the Waterloo Regional Police Service delivered our summonses to us at our homes, but this time they were delivered by regional by-law officers.

Being advised by the JCCF, we will not hold in-person gatherings in excess of 10 persons at Trinity Bible Chapel, commencing immediately, until the end of the current lockdown period on January 23. We plan to conduct drive-in services on the Lord's Day. We know that this decision is heartbreaking for the many people who have found hope during our church services and who are also already burdened with despair by the destructive measures of our government, but we believe it is in the best interest of the church for various reasons, which we might make clearer in due course. We are committed to regathering as a congregation in person as soon as possible.

As we walk through this storm, our eyes are joyfully fixed upon our Saviour who can end this trial with one small word. He is a kind and gentle Saviour, and we can trust Him. "I lift my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:1-2).

In order to demonstrate your commitment to gathering for worship, we ask that you attend our drive-in worship service this Sunday at 10:30 AM. We do ask that all who attend our drive-in service remain in their vehicles in accordance with provincial regulations. The Province of Ontario considers it unlawful and dangerous for you to exit your vehicles to speak with each other on the church property, but you are apparently free to exchange greetings amidst the crowds of shoppers at Walmart which is 3.6 kilometers from our lot.

Further internal communication will come to our congregation at a later time.

Report: Biden administration preparing for “widespread rollback” of abortion restrictions

January 20, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

[image]
Major pro-abortion group endorses Joe Biden for President
Daily Wire:

> The incoming Biden administration is reportedly preparing a “widespread rollback” of many pro-life policies inked during the Trump administration, according to NBC News.
>
> The initiative will likely restore Title X funding to Planned Parenthood, expand abortion providers’ ability to operate abroad using taxpayer funds, eliminate protections for religious employers who do not want to pay for employees’ contraceptives, and could even eliminate the Hyde Amendment, which protects American taxpayers from directly funding abortion, the outlet notes.
>
> Biden is expected to expand abortion rights dramatically within the first 100 days of his presidency.

Overturning Trump’s pro-life laws and policies:

> “Reproductive rights advocates expect Biden to quickly overturn Trump-era rules, like banning federal funds for foreign and national health organizations that promote and provide abortion and giving employers more freedom to deny free contraceptive coverage for their workers,” NBC reported Tuesday.
>
> At issue is the “Mexico City Policy” or, as abortion rights groups refer to it, the “global gag rule,” which prevents non-governmental and aid organizations that operate abroad from receiving grant money to fund abortion services. When President Donald Trump reinstituted the Mexico City Policy early in his term, he cut off a major source of funding for Planned Parenthood’s international arm.
>
> Also at issue is Title X, which, at one point, allowed Planned Parenthood to receive millions in government resources to provide family planning services to low-income populations. Trump updated Title X to cut off any organization providing abortion services alongside family planning, effectively eliminating Planned Parenthood from the program unless it stopped doing abortions. The organization chose, instead, to walk away from the program.
>
> Despite Supreme Court rulings siding with religious employers over Affordable Care Act authors who wanted to force groups like the Little Sisters of the Poor to provide contraceptives free of charge to their employees in direct conflict with their closely held religious beliefs, Biden has pledged to strengthen such mandates, leaving many Catholic and Christian groups in the line of fire.

> DISRN also reports that "Biden has promised to 'codify' abortion into federal law in an effort to prevent any potential Supreme Court overturn of Roe v. Wade and combat the increasing number of state policies that seek to protect the life of the unborn" and that "both Biden and Congressional Democrats have also discussed repealing the Hyde Amendment in 2021, which would allow taxpayer dollars to be directly used for aborting children."
>
> […]As The Daily Wire reported earlier this year, Biden also appointed former California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to head his Health and Human Services department, which is its own threat to the pro-life movement. Becerra tried to force pro-life pregnancy centers, which assist pregnant women without offering them the option to abort, to provide women with information on the abortion procedure and refer patients to abortion clinics. The Supreme Court struck down Becerra's order.

So, I was having conversations with some of my young evangelical friends who follow the likes of Russell Moore, Beth Moore, David French, and other prominent Never Trump conservatives. They did urge Christian voters to support the candidate who would prevent the Equality Act or the Reproductive Health Protection Act from becoming law. These are Democrat bills which passed the House and will likely become law under a Democrat Senate and a Biden presidency. The Never Trump Biden-supporters don't even know about these bills, or what's in them. How could they? They scoff at Parler as a "conservative echo chamber" and swallow anything CNN and NPR spoon-feed to them.

Many of these Never Trump conservatives loved to tell me how Kamala Harris was not really liberal, despite vote-rating organizations on both sides calling her *the most liberal senator.* And they assured me that if the Democrats won in November, none of their policies would ever become law. After all, the important thing is to prove one's own virtue to one's peers by wailing about Trump's tweets, or whatever "scandal" the news media has decided to focus on, instead of the CORE ISSUES THAT MATTER TO CHRISTIANS.

Now, my Never Trump friends often send me articles from pastors like Russell Moore, trying to respond to my concerns about POLICY with tirades about Trump's character. But I am not concerned about Trump's character – I am concerned about Biden overturning abortion restrictions. It is more important to me that we protect unborn children than that we allow ourselves to be led around by the progressive mainstream media about their priorities. We knew about this pro-abortion agenda, because we could see the legislation that the Democrats had already passed, as well as what Joe Biden was promising to do. There is no excuse for Never Trump conservatives who will now see what their votes for Biden achieved.

Biden’s first day agenda: who benefits?

January 21, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s not Americans.

Daily Wire reports:

> On Wednesday, NBC News reported on President Biden’s plans to “hit the ground running,” listing the plans Biden has announced for his first day in office, including:
>
> - *Rejoin Paris Agreement*
> - *Repeal Trump travel ban*
> - *Halt border wall construction*
> - *Mask mandate*
> - *Extend eviction freeze*
> - *Unveil immigration plan*
> - *Extend student loan pause*
> - *Revoke permit for Keystone XL pipeline*
>
> NBC News reported Wednesday that “Biden will sign more than a dozen executive actions Wednesday when he arrives at the White House after having been sworn in as the 46th president, including measures to rejoin the Paris Agreement on climate change, repeal Trump’s restrictions on travel from several Muslim-majority countries, stop construction of the Southern border wall and mandate wearing masks on federal property.”

As Dan Crenshaw notes, cutting off domestic oil helps Russia, because they will pick up the slack when we can’t sell our oil.

Fox Business:

> According to the Keystone XL website, the project, initially proposed more than a decade ago, would sustain about 11,000 U.S. jobs in 2021 – including 8,000 union jobs – and generate $1.6 billion in gross wages.
>
> It is unclear how the Biden administration plans to address the job losses, but his

> $2 trillion clean energy infrastructure plan, with its goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest, aims to "create millions of good-paying jobs that provide workers with the choice to join a union and bargain collectively with their employers," according to his website.
>
> The plan targets the creation of 1 million jobs within the auto industry; "millions" of jobs within the power sector; 1 million jobs in building construction; 250,000 jobs "plugging abandoned oil and natural gas wells" and more.

The Paris Agreement is disregarded from China and other mass polluters, it just hampers our economy in every way – raising our energy prices and destroying our economy. Trump had already led the world in cutting emissions without it.

New York Post:

> Joe Biden will rejoin the Paris climate agreement soon after being inaugurated as president of the United States. Climate change, according to Biden, is "an existential threat" to the nation, and to combat it, he proposes to spend $500 billion each year on climate policies — the equivalent of $1,500 per person.
>
> […]Rejoining the Paris agreement will solve very little at a high cost. By the UN's estimates, if all nations live up to all their promises, they will reduce global temperature by less than 0.09 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100.
>
> And Paris is costly, because it forces economies to use less or more expensive energy. Across many studies, the drag to the economies is estimated at between $1 trillion and $2 trillion in lost GDP every year after 2030.

Stopping the wall will let in low-skilled illegal immigrants, which passes on costs for emergency room health care, schools, crime, etc. on to the law-abiding tax-payers. It's a disaster. But that's what many low-information American voters chose.

And the economy will also suffer because he's going to put political correctness above prosperity.

Far-left Axios:

> Why it matters: Biden is charting an economic policy that's visibly to the left of Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. If he succeeds, it's going to show up not only in taxes and spending, but also in regulation.
>
> Who to watch: Biden is being pulled to the left on economic policy not only by the Democratic Party, but also by economic orthodoxy.
>
> Led by incoming Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, the economic policy team has signaled that it will be the first administration ever to construct economic policy around issues like race, gender equality and climate change, rather than around traditional indicators like gross domestic product or deficit ratios.

I hope you're ready for poverty and unemployment. But think how good the Democrats will feel about themselves.

Biden gives biological men access to women's sports, bathrooms and locker rooms

January 22, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Federalist:

> President Joe Biden issued an executive order on his first day in office, mandating that any schools that receive federal funding must function as if biological males who claim to be females are the same, and vice versa, or risk losing that funding. This pro-transgender policy extends to male athletes who claim their gender identity as a female should allow them to compete on women's teams, receive women's scholarships, and be admitted in women's locker rooms.
>
> […]During his campaign, Biden also vowed to use the Department of Education to investigate and address any violations of transgender students' civil rights, including removing federal school funding or risking legal action. His new executive order also mandates that every agency must act to ensure the enforcement of this new rule within 100 days of Jan. 20.

The Federalist:

> In sum, this executive order combined with Supreme Court precedent amounts to imposing a national sexual orientation and gender identity law on the entire country.
>
> […]Several years ago, a mother told me what her daughters did when transgender students were admitted to their bathrooms in their Las Vegas public high school. They stopped going to the bathroom and using the showers at school. I broke a story about a Florida public school where a coach told me middle-school boys ran out of the showers and locker room, some undressed, in

> alarm because they found a girl there next to them while they changed and showered. She was transgender, and the coach was threatened with losing his job if he refused to supervise her with the boys in the showers.
>
> Nobody warned the coach or parents of these boys this was going to happen to them. In fact, the Obama administration's guidance that Biden is reviving explicitly instructed schools not to tell parents. It violates the transgender students' rights to privacy, you see.
>
> Girls and boys like these, and those too young or unprepared to take action to defend their modesty and innocence, are now to be told to shut up and deny the fears other people have decided to inflict upon them in the name of "equality," "respect," and "dignity." In true Orwellian fashion, Biden proclaims he is seeking goodness while destroying it.
>
> […]These kinds of policies have been used to persecute religious believers, free speech advocates, medical practitioners, and all who affirm the reality that humankind comes in two varieties, and two only: male and female. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi led Democrats in making House rules that ban the use of terms such as "mother," "father," "sister," and "brother" in new federal laws. Will these kinds of speech bans also be applied to public schools, colleges, and other recipients of federal funds? What about cities and state governments? Hospitals?

> You'd better believe it. Federal money is everywhere, giving Biden's team, commissioned in the order with applying its principles to every area of federal influence possible, plenty of opportunities to harass nuns, other people who pray, little boys and girls in locker rooms, female high school and college athletes and scholarship aspirants — anyone anywhere who dares to live by the obvious reality that men and women are absolutely equal but we are not the same.

These are two of the five major policy changes from the Equality Act. I don't like that women are denied a path to sports. And I really don't like that women don't have bathrooms and locker rooms where they can feel safe. I wonder if the people who voted for Biden knew that this was coming on day one. I knew, but so many people are in an echo chamber of liberal news, including ignorant but otherwise very successful Christians who like to underestimate these threats.

New study: 70% of households headed by immigrants are collecting welfare

January 23, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Net annual cost of illegal immigration

The Washington Times reports on the latest numbers from the Census Bureau.

Excerpt:

> The latest Census Bureau numbers find that more than seven of 10 households headed by immigrants in California, and nearly the same amount in Texas, are on the taxpayer dole.
>
> […]According to the latest numbers from 2014, fully 63 percent of non-citizens are living off at least one welfare program. That translates into 4.68 million households.
>
> […]"Concern over immigrant welfare use is justified, as households headed by non-citizens' use means means-tested welfare at high rates," said the Center for Immigration Studies, in its report on the numbers. "Non-citizens in the data include illegal immigrants, long-term temporary visitors like guest workers, and permanent residents who have not naturalized."
>
> What's most troublesome about the Census findings is the fact that the 63 percent of non-citizens on welfare actually grows to 70 percent for those who stay in-country 10 years or longer — meaning the entitlement mind only solidifies.

> Meaning non-citizens on welfare don't tend to get off welfare.

The reason I am posting about this study is because of the widespread perception on the left that all opposition to illegal immigration is just caused by racism. And similarly, support for border security has nothing to do with preventing crime and protecting our national security. It's all caused by racism too. Well, when you look at a study like this, you can clearly see that people who oppose illegal immigration and support border security have other things on their minds than racism.

Right now, we are nearly $28 trillion in debt. And it's climbing by over $1 trillion per year. We're already spending too much money. Interest on the debt is becoming a larger and larger part of our budget, leaving less money for real priorities like defense and infrastructure. Someone is going to have to pay for all these handouts that are driving us into debt. Young people people have the most to lose, because they have their whole professional lives ahead of them.

I just want to be clear about something. I am very much in favor of skilled immigration. I think that people who come here to WORK should be allowed to come here to WORK. While they are WORKING they should be ineligible for collecting any money from the government. They should not be able to vote or influence elections. They should not be able to bring any of their non-working relatives here. They should be deported if they commit a felony. They should be deported if they lose or quit their jobs. And if they are able to keep working, following the law, and staying off the dole, for a period of 10 years, then they should be allowed to apply for green cards. But our current system isn't oriented towards skilled immigrants. All the concern on the left AND on the right AND in the churches is about refugees and illegal immigrants.

Personally, I think we could be a LOT more accepting of skilled immigrants if we got rid of all the welfare programs. After all, if there is no welfare to be collected, then why would people even want to come here? The only reason they would come would be for the right reason – for liberty. And in order to stay, they would have to work and follow the law. That's who we want to bring in. If we *only* brought in law-abiding workers, then we could be a lot more *generous* about letting people of all races in.

And from a political point of view, we don't do well when we import a bunch of big government liberals from countries that don't accept American ideals, like individual liberty and limited government.

As far as I'm concerned, there should only be two paths to citizenship for immigrants: skilled labor and military service. And both of those for 10 years minimum. But that's not how the current system works. I just want everyone to understand that this is not an issue that has no effect on taxpayers. If we bring in unskilled immigrants and refugees, then we are going to have to pay for their schooling, their health care, and maybe even basics like food and spending money.

Bible study: what difference does the resurrection of Jesus make?

January 24, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here's an article from Bible.org, written by famous New Testament manuscript expert Dan Wallace. (H/T Eric Chabot, Ratio Christi OSU)

There is a lot in this article, but I'll just snip out one that I think is interesting.

First, what does the Old Testament say about the doctrine of the resurrection in Judaism?

> The resurrection of the dead was not *plainly* revealed in the OT until very late in salvation history. It was not until the Jews were taken in captivity, in the sixth century BC, that this was clearly articulated. Daniel 12:1-2 is the principal text: it speaks of the resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous:
>
> At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (RSV)
>
> Why was it not *clearly* revealed till then? It was not revealed until there was a *felt* need for it. When the Jews had no present (because of the captivity) they had to look to the future. The revelation of the resurrection came at precisely the time when the people of God needed *hope* for the future.
>
> What is significant about this is how masterful are God's insights into human nature. In the NT era, one religious group in Palestine did not embrace the

> resurrection as a true doctrine: the Sadducees (cf. Mark 12:18)–that is why they were "sad, you see!" The Sadducees were in charge of the temple. They derived their income from the sacrifices. In a sense, they were the precursors to modern TV evangelists. They had it good! They were the rich aristocracy that ran the place.
>
> **Those who have it good in this life don't often long for the next. The Sadducees illustrate this. The resurrection is a truth especially precious to those who are poor and those who are hopeless. It is precious to those who long for heaven enough that earth holds no sway over them.**

This means something to me. I didn't grow up with parents who had any plan for me. I had to figure out what I was supposed to be doing with my life on my own, because they were both too busy doing their own things. This is true even to this day. After I became a Christian, there were many things that I wanted to achieve in this life. But for a variety of reasons, those most of those things never happened. I wanted to do great things for God, like getting married, having a family, getting a PhD and teaching computer science in a secular university. But things that I had intended to do for God just didn't happen the way I had hoped.

I often find myself thinking of Heaven, and having that eternal perspective on this life. One of the things that is the hardest to accept is that being a Christian makes many things I'd like to do a lot harder. It certainly didn't open any doors at school, or now, at work. I'm glad my salvation doesn't depend on achieving anything in particular. And I'm especially glad that my salvation doesn't depend on what anyone thinks of me. I find it almost impossible in this culture to get any respect by doing the things that I think are really important.

I think if a person were really successful at what they tried to do, then it would be really hard for them to give up living and go to be with Jesus. That's not a problem for me, though. If fact, if the resurrection were not true, then I wouldn't be able to say that my life was a very good life, measuring success the way people do.

The resurrection teaches correct apologetics methodology

Did you know that Jesus provided the resurrection as evidence for those who were skeptical of his claims to be God stepping into history?

Here's an article from Got Questions? on the "Sign of Jonah", which appears in the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

It says:

> The phrase "sign of Jonah" was used by Jesus as a typological metaphor for His future crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Jesus answered with this expression when asked by the Pharisees for miraculous proof the He was indeed the Messiah. The Pharisees remained unconvinced of Jesus' claims about Himself, despite His having just cured a demon-possessed man who was both blind and mute. Shortly after the Pharisees accused Jesus of driving out demons by the

> power of Satan, they said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.” He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here” (Matthew 12:38–41).
>
> To fully appreciate the answer that Jesus gave, we must go to the Old Testament book of Jonah. In its first chapter, we read that God commanded the prophet Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and warn its people that He was going to destroy it for its wickedness. Jonah disobediently ran from the Lord and headed for the city of Tarshish by boat. The Lord then sent a severe storm that caused the crew of the ship to fear for their lives. Jonah was soon thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish where he remained for “three days and three nights” (Jonah 1:15–17). After the three-day period, the Lord caused the great fish to vomit Jonah out onto dry land (Jonah 2:10).
>
> It is this three days that Jesus was referring to when He spoke of the sign of Jonah.

I often bring up the Sign of Jonah when I am dealing with Christians who don’t want to learn how to explain their faith to non-Christians persuasively. I’m glad that story is in there!

The resurrection is a very important part of the life of the Christian. I argued in this post that it makes a difference to your feelings about your own life, and it makes a difference to your case-making with non-Christians.

Big Tech pedophilia: Twitter sued for refusing to remove child porn

January 25, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

CNBC

TECH

Here's the final tally of where tech billionaires donated for the 2020 election

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Ari Levy
@LEVYNEWS

SHARE

KEY POINTS

- About 98% of political contributions from internet companies this cycle went to Democrats, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

Do you ever wonder what sort of person feels comfortable suppressing free speech of those they disagree with?

Here's a good story from the New York Post:

> Twitter refused to take down widely shared pornographic images and videos of a teenage sex trafficking victim because an investigation "didn't find a violation" of the company's "policies," a scathing lawsuit alleges.
>
> The federal suit, filed Wednesday by the victim and his mother in the Northern District of California, alleges Twitter made money off the clips, which showed a 13-year-old engaged in sex acts and are a form of child sexual abuse material, or child porn, the suit states.
>
> […]at some point in 2019, the videos surfaced on Twitter under two accounts that were known to share child sexual abuse material, court papers allege.
>
> Over the next month, the videos would be reported to Twitter at least three times — first on Dec. 25, 2019 — but the tech giant failed to do anything about it until a federal law enforcement officer got involved, the suit states.
>
> Doe became aware of the tweets in January 2020 because they'd been viewed widely by his classmates, which subjected him to "teasing, harassment, vicious bullying" and led him to become "suicidal," court records show.

> While Doe's parents contacted the school and made police reports, he filed a complaint with Twitter, saying there were two tweets depicting child pornography of himself and they needed to be removed because they were illegal, harmful and were in violation of the site's policies.
>
> A support agent followed up and asked for a copy of Doe's ID so they could prove it was him and after the teen complied, there was no response for a week, the family claims.
>
> Around the same time, Doe's mother filed two complaints to Twitter reporting the same material and for a week, she also received no response, the suit states.
>
> Finally on Jan. 28, Twitter replied to Doe and said they wouldn't be taking down the material, which had already racked up over 167,000 views and 2,223 retweets, the suit states.
>
> "Thanks for reaching out. We've reviewed the content, and didn't find a violation of our policies, so no action will be taken at this time," the response reads, according to the lawsuit.
>
> […]He even included his case number from a local law enforcement agency, but still the tech giant allegedly ignored him and refused to do anything about the illegal child sexual abuse material — as it continued to rack up more and more views.

Morality isn't free. There has to be some sort of rational grounding for it. Something that is sorely lacking about the secular leftists who dominate leadership positions at Big Tech corporations.

Democrat voters who endorsed Biden now being screwed by his policies

January 26, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's start with the radical feminists.

Here's a reaction from a far-left feminist web site to Biden's anti-women executive orders:

> One of the first acts of Joe Biden's presidency was to gut sex anti-discrimination laws and eliminate critical protections for women in the federal government.
>
> […]This executive order directs federal agencies to do two things. First, federal agencies are now required to interpret "sex" as also including "sexual orientation and gender identity" in their own internal regulations and workplace policies. Second, agencies are directed to perform a comprehensive assessment of all regulations under their purview, and create a plan with 100 days to "revise, suspend, or rescind such agency actions, or promulgate [propose] new agency actions" **that will impose this interpretation onto all American employers, institutions, and individuals, with no exceptions.**

This is the part that made me laugh out loud:

> **While we strongly support protections from discrimination based on sexual orientation**, the Biden administration has grossly expanded the application of the decision with far-reaching implications for women's rights in nearly every aspect of public life, including Title IX.

This isn't an expansion of the feminist denial of sex differences. It's exactly what they wanted all along. When feminists say that that males and females are *identical* and all

perception of sex differences is “discrimination”, then they shouldn’t be surprised when people take them seriously.

Meanwhile, labor unions – never hotbeds of economic literacy – are beginning to realize that the socialist agenda they endorsed isn’t going to result in prosperity. Who knew?

Here’s one plumber union endorsing Biden:

> Monday, August 17, 2020
>
> The United Association of Union Plumbers and Pipefitters (UA) today announced that the UA Political Engagement Committee (PEC) has concluded its endorsement process with a decision to endorse former Vice President Joe Biden for President.
>
> “We’re not going to sit on the sidelines at the UA. This endorsement is about putting UA members to work and fighting for fair wages and good benefits. Under a Biden Administration, that’s exactly what we’ll get,” **said Mark McManus, General President of the United Association.**

Fair wages and good benefits! That’s what they expected from a far-left Marxist funded by radical eco-fascists.

Surprise!

> Monday, January 18, 2021
>
> The United Association of Union Plumbers and Pipefitters (UA) issued the following statement today following the news that the Biden-Harris Administration plans to rescind the permit and effectively end construction on the Keystone XL pipeline:
>
> “The Biden Administration has now put thousands of union workers out of work. For the average American family, it means energy costs will go up and communities will no longer see the local investments that come with pipeline construction,” **said Mark McManus, General President of the United Association.**

Just to note, the Biden plan to kill the pipeline was announced *before* the union endorsed him. BEFORE.

If you are dealing with a leader of a labor union, the one thing you know *for certain* is that this person has zero understanding of basic economics or history – specifically, the historical outcomes of implementing socialist policies. Union leaders either have no idea how the world works, or they’re just corrupt. Or both.

Ordinary Americans will be hit, too

Biden is planning to raise the minimum wage to $15, which should result in one million Americans losing their jobs, since their employers won’t be able to pay them more to produce the same amount.

Americans for Tax Reform explains:

> A $15 minimum wage would lead to further job losses for Americans. In 2019, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that a nationwide $15 minimum wage would cost at least 1.3 million American jobs, and could cost as many as 3.7 million at the high end. Another study shows that a $15 minimum wage would disproportionately impact women and shut out young, low-skilled workers attempting to enter the workforce for the first time.
>
> The Biden plan also ends the tipped minimum wage, an absurd proposal considering 10,000 restaurants have closed their doors in the last three months alone. Imposing a 600 percent minimum wage increase on an already struggling industry in the middle a recession would only lead to more closures. If Biden is successful, one in three tipped workers would lose their job.

It was tried at the state level and it failed:

> A $15 minimum wage has repeatedly failed at the state level. When Seattle implemented a $15 minimum wage, thousands of jobs were lost, while other workers saw a reduction in hours worked. New York City's minimum wage increase forced 75 percent of restaurants to cut employee hours, and nearly 50 percent to eliminate jobs entirely.

This will be a hard life lesson for people who voted for this policy, then get affected by it.

Just so you know, the elimination of small businesses is a necessary step in the implementation of communism. The more the market is reduced to a few wealthy monopolies, the easier it is for government to step in and take control. The government's job is to promote small business, so that consumers benefit from choice and competition. But that's exactly the opposite of what communism requires.

Rediscovering Masculinity: Why Today's Men Need to Learn from Real Life Heroes (part 1 of 3)

January 27, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The following is a guest post (part 1 of 3) from Nathan Apodaca, who blogs at Merely Human Ministries and Human Defense Initiative. I previously blogged about his legal victory against California State University – San Marcos. In this post, he writes about the first two heroes in his list of four.

"I shall have made nothing, if I had not made mistakes."

-Winston S. Churchill, in a letter to his wife Clementine while serving in France during World War I

In his book *Letters to a Young Progressive: How to Avoid Wasting Your Life Protesting the Things You Don't Understand,* the well-known conservative professor Dr. Mike Adams had a chapter lamenting the crisis of courage he was witnessing among many young Christian men. While teaching at Summit Ministries in Colorado during the summer, he had noticed many young Christian men lacked the courage to stand by their convictions when pressed upon by the broader culture. Many young men would find excuses to not be bolder in their convictions. Some would cite (but largely misunderstanding) Bible passages such as Matthew 5:38-40, about turning the other cheek, in order to justify a lack of boldness.

Unfortunately, the problem has only grown over the past several years, and affects young women just as it does men. Many men have been left with an identity crisis of sorts, with growing attacks on "toxic masculinity" and a corresponding lack of discussion of what real masculinity looks like. Because of this, many men are left without an understanding of what it looks like to lead, to be courageous under pressure, to face criticism and all manner of vile pushback, and to engage critics with boldness as well as dignity.

One way to answer this problem is to simply examine the lives of men who made history and changed the world for the better. Sadly, thanks to the influence of secular worldviews such as postmodernism, Marxism, and progressivism, this is often met with a sneer. After all, the men who made history often made horrendous mistakes along the way. It's not all that unsurprising that statues honoring great men such as Washington, Lincoln, and others have been viciously attacked and desecrated in the past year. Our culture sneers at heroes, but ironically doesn't have a clue on how to produce better men and women today.

Reading biographies is one way I have personally tried to learn how to be a better man, regardless of what the culture says, and I believe there is great value in studying the lives of those who have made history. Examining the lives of great men should be done honestly, learning from both the triumphs of our historical heroes and from the mistakes

they have made. Blind hero worship is foolhardy, but so is an air of “chronological snobbery” and thinking we are better than people of the past because we don’t make the same mistakes they made, even while making our own, sometimes graver, mistakes.

Some people may vary in their choice of reading, but generally my selection of biographies to study will fall into three categories: saints, soldiers, and statesmen, and often a mixture of the three. Some were non-Christians, but still exemplify character virtues that deserve examination.

Here is a brief list of some men whose stories I have benefited from studying.

1. William Wilberforce (1759-1833)

There is a cultural cliche that is often uttered without much thought, one person cannot change the world. Wilberforce is a wonderful exception. Becoming a minister in the British parliament in his early 20s, and developing a close bond with other notable statesmen such as the Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger, Wilberforce came of age in British politics during a time of great social upheaval in Europe and abroad, in conjunction with both the American and French revolutions.

Battling a lifetime of health complications, Wilberforce also grappled with the moral and spiritual health of the British Empire, declaring “God has set before me two great objects: The abolition of the slave trade, and the reformation of (morals)”. After gaining invaluable spiritual counsel from older men such as the famed minister John Newton, Wilberforce decided to remain in politics after his conversion to Christianity, and to undertake the monumental challenge of leading the struggle to abolish the British slave trade. Confronting the horrors of the Atlantic Middle passage from Africa to the West Indies and sugar plantation slave trading, Wilberforce also faced setbacks in his own cause for years, due to societal moral apathy and opposition in the ranks of British politics and aristocracy as well as his own health problems. Still, he stayed the course, and was able to see his God-given mission through to the end, with the total abolition of slavery in the British Empire shortly before his death in 1833. His story is told in great books such as Kevin Belmonte’s *A Hero for Humanity,* Eric Metaxes’ *Amazing Grace,* as well as on screen in the 2007 movie of the same name.

2. John Newton (1725-1807)

Speaking of Amazing Grace, the story of John Newton is also one that is worth examining. Born on August 4th, 1725 in Wapping, England to a well-known sea captain, Newton as a young man would hardly have seemed like the sort of man to give spiritual advice to the statesman who would be responsible for leading the fight against the evils of the slave trade. Vulgar, proudly atheistic, and rebellious, Newton began a career in seafaring against his own volition. While on a visit with a young lady named Polly Catlett, whom Newton was deeply in love with, Newton was captured a British Navy press gang, and forced into service with the Royal Navy. This began a series of misadventures at sea that found him deserting his ship to be with Polly, being arrested, stripped of his military rank

and flogged, (a lenient sentence, as desertion from the Royal Navy in this period often carried with it the penalty of death). Later, he found himself working at a slave processing center on the African coastline. At one point, he became enslaved himself to a sadistic African princess. Along the way, as he experienced many near misses with death, Newton began to realize that maybe there was a God who had been looking out for him.

After escaping the African continent, Newton became a crewmember on a cargo ship bound for America, where he began reading *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas Kempis. Realizing his own woeful moral and spiritual state, he began reconsidering the truth claims of Christianity. During the same voyage, the ship was caught in a terrible storm and barely managed to limp back to Britain. Later, he married his beloved Ms. Catlett, and remained deeply in love with her throughout the course of her life.

Newton, now a follower of Christ, eventually became the captain of his own slave ship on the Middle Passage, where he began slowly waking up to the evils of slavery, as well as the inhumane environment many sailors lived in.

After a health problem ended his seafaring career, Newton became a minister, and formed several relationships that would ultimately have historical and moral significance in addition to the eternal. One of these relationships was with the hymn-writer and minister William Cowper, a man troubled by suicidal thoughts, depression, and mental illness. It is through this relationship that the most famous song in the world, “Amazing Grace”, was born. The hymn was for a New Years Day service, during a period when Newton was pastoring Cowper during a time of mental anguish. The song reflects Newton’s acknowledgement of his own spiritual state and the beauty of God’s forgiveness.

Another relationship of Newton’s that has already been mentioned is his relationship to a young William Wilberforce. Meeting Wilberforce when he was still a boy and living with his Aunt and Uncle, Newton left a deep impression on the future British statesman. When Wilberforce converted to Christianity and considered leaving politics to become a minister, Newton encouraged him to stay the course. Ultimately, this would have profound implications, as Newton assisted Wilberforce greatly in the anti-slavery cause, even testifying to Parliament himself about the evil and sadistic nature of the slave trade. In a moment of Providential irony that can only be explained by God’s common grace, the formerly bitter atheist and slave ship captain became a key component in the fight to liberate enslaved men, women and children. Newton maintained an awareness of his own need for Christ until the end of his life, famously remarking just before his death that “Though my memory is fading, I remember two things: I am a great sinner, and Christ is a great savior.”

Newton’s story is told in the phenomenal biography *From Disgrace to Amazing Grace* by Jonathan Aitken, and Newton is portrayed in the film *Amazing Grace* by the actor Charles Finney.

Rediscovering Masculinity: Why Today's Men Need to Learn from Real Life Heroes (part 2 of 3)

January 28, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The following is a guest post (part 2 of 3) from Nathan Apodaca, who blogs at Merely Human Ministries and Human Defense Initiative. I previously blogged about his legal victory against California State University – San Marcos. Today we cover the third hero of four who taught Nathan valuable lessons about masculinity.

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3. Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885)

Shifting from Britain to the United States, another figure who I have found great benefit in learning from would be Ulysses Grant. For many people, Grant is almost a forgotten figure, and many consider him a failure as a General who merely "got lucky" and a failure as a President. And yet, there is much more greatness to the man than many today have been led to believe.

Born on April 1822 in Point Pleasant, Ohio, with the unflattering name of Hiram Ulysses Grant, a timid and sometimes unthinking young Grant would earn the nickname "Useless Grant" from cruel farmboys in the town, and was considered unexceptional by his father. Later, as a young adult, he was enrolled in the West Point military academy in New York, where a clerical error gave him the middle initial "S", leading many of his classmates to call him "Sam Grant" or "Uncle Sam Grant". Grant's time at West Point was mediocre, but after graduation he was introduced to the sister of one of his classmates, Julia Dent, with whom he fell deeply in love.

After graduation, war erupted between the United States and Mexico. Deployed to Texas as an Army Quartermaster officer, (in charge of supplies), Grant showed incredible coolness and courage while under fire on the battlefront. It was also during this time that Grant fell in love with Mexico and the Mexican people. Disappointed in the treatment of Mexico by the United States, Grant would later become a friend to Mexico when one was sorely needed.

After the war, Grant was able to marry his beloved Julia, (much to the consternation of her slave-owning father, who despised Ulysses). However, Army life soon took Grant westward, where he was posted at Fort Humboldt, in the new state of California. Separated from Julia and their children, dealing with a painfully slow mail delivery system, and without much to do, Grant fell into a deep depression and began to drink heavily. After a drunken incident at the post, Grant resigned his Army commission to avoid being court-martialed. Returning to Missouri to be with his wife and children, Grant began nearly a decade of failed ventures and setbacks that ultimately reduced his family to poverty and humiliation. At one point, while selling firewood on the streets of St. Louis to help feed his family, he encountered a former Army colleague who asked him what he

was doing on the street. “I’m solving the problem of poverty”, Grant replied.

Grant’s integrity during this time is particularly noteworthy. After being given a slave by his father in law, Grant decided he must set the man free. Taking him to the city records office, Grant was told he could gain a great deal of money if he sold the slave; money that could have greatly helped his own financial misery. Instead, Grant refused to take advantage of another man, and purchased the man’s freedom.

The decade of the 1850s was particularly hard for the Grants, and by the start of the 1860s, Grant had been reduced to working in his father’s leather goods store in Gallena, Illinois, a job he hated.

However, 1861 brought with it the storm of the American Civil War. After the humiliating defeat of Federal troops at the First Battle of Bull Run by Confederate forces, the call was put out for volunteers to form a massive Army to bring the war to a swift end. Grant, knowing there would be great need of good officers, joined the volunteers and quickly gained rank as he trained the new recruits. However, this period was also full of setbacks, and more than once Grant considered quitting the Army to return home. Still, he stayed the course, and eventually reached the rank of Brigadier General.

In 1862, Grant made a name for himself. With the Civil War developing into two distinct theaters of conflict(an Eastern and a Western Theater) Grant found himself at the forefront of the war’s Western theater. Taking a large force and coordinating his operations with the assistance of the US Navy, Grant scored two significant victories at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in Tennessee, opening a path for follow-on troop movements into Confederate territory and earning the nickname “Unconditional Surrender” Grant. Not a bad turnaround for the man who was once called “useless” Grant as a boy.

Grant faced setbacks, however. Moving his troops south, and preparing to stage an offensive against the Confederate positions at Corinth, Mississippi, Grant was soon caught up in the largest battle ever fought in American history up to that point, the Battle of Shiloh. Finding his troops being pushed back up against their landing areas at Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee river, Grant looked like the latest in a series of failed Union Generals. With the war in the Eastern theater taking a turn for the worst with repeated defeats at the hands of Robert E. Lee and other Confederate Generals, things looked dim.

However, Grant was a man who knew how to be defeated.

Turning around and reorganizing his troops and supplementing his Army of the Tennessee with newly arrived reinforcements, Grant turned the tide of battle and pushed Confederate forces back to their original lines, causing a Confederate retreat further south.

Grant would go on to gain recognition for his campaign to capture the Confederate bastion at Vicksburg, Mississippi in 1863, which surrendered the same day that the Union won the battle of Gettysburg and thus helped turn the tide of the war. Grant caught the eye of President Lincoln, who was desperate for a general who would take the initiative on the battlefield and actually fight out battles with Lee’s Army of northern Virginia,

instead of retreating or showing timidity in the face of enemy opposition, as so many eastern theater generals had.

Becoming the General-in-Chief of the United States Army, Grant organized a series of actions that ultimately resulted in the defeat of the Confederate Armies. Still facing a multitude of setbacks during the closing acts of the war and his pursuit of Lee's Army, Grant was finally able to secure Lee's surrender at the little town of Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia in April of 1865, thus bringing the American Civil War to a close.

Grant's character is of particular interest here. On the battlefield, Grant showed incredible courage and coolness under fire. When artillery shells landed near his position, Grant showed remarkable coolness and refused to cave in to fear. When his subordinates would express anxiety over the movement's of Lee's forces, Grant snapped "Quit focusing on what Lee is going to do. Focus on what we are going to do." Grant showed initiative and a refusal to back down.

Lastly, Grant showed great magnanimity towards those he defeated. After Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Grant ensured Lee's troops were treated with dignity, by giving them food and medical care, and allowing them to return to their homes unmolested. When Grant's troops began to break out into celebration of the surrender, Grant ordered the celebrations to be silenced, and ordered that Lee's troops would be treated with respect and dignity as fellow soldiers and fellow Americans once again.

Grant's wartime leadership is remarkable, but he was far from done. Following the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, Grant found himself caught up in the political fiasco that was the Presidency of Andrew Johnson. With Johnson undoing much of the reconciliation that was so necessary to heal the divisions brought on by the Civil War, Grant stepped up to do what was right. He came to Robert E. Lee's defense when Johnson attempted to have him tried for treason, keeping good on his promise to Lee that former Confederates who had surrendered would be treated with magnanimity, and he stood up to Johnson on multiple occasions. With white supremacist terrorism exploding in the former Confederate states Grant stepped back into his role as a leader. Elected to the Presidency in 1868 and reelected in 1872, Grant brought much needed reconciliation and peace. Helping create the U.S. Department of Justice, Grant appointed attorneys who helped bring the rule of law to the South and break up the Ku Klux Klan, and fought for the rights of the recently freed black Americans by helping ensure the passage of the 15th Amendment. Grant also worked with Christian advocacy groups to secure protections for American Indians, and helped bring reconstruction to a close and promote healing.

Just before his death in 1885, Grant completed his personal memoirs with the assistance of Mark Twain, the sales of which helped Julia Grant financially after the family experience further setbacks upon leaving the White House.

Of Grant's legacy, the famous orator and abolitionist Frederick Douglass had this to say: "A man too broad for prejudice, too humane to despise the humblest, too great to be small at any point. In him the Negro found a protector, the Indian a friend, a vanquished

foe a brother, an imperiled nation a savior.”

Several biographies of Grant are worth checking out. Ron Chernow’s *Grant* is by far the best, followed by *Grant* by Jean Edward Smith, and *American Ulysses* by Ronald C. White.

Rediscovering Masculinity: Why Today's Men Need to Learn from Real Life Heroes (part 3 of 3)

January 29, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The following is a guest post (part 3 of 3) from Nathan Apodaca, who blogs at Merely Human Ministries and Human Defense Initiative. I previously blogged about his legal victory against California State University – San Marcos. Today we cover the fourth hero of four who taught Nathan valuable lessons about masculinity.

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4. Winston Spencer Churchill (1874-1965)

Last, but most certainly not the least, to make the list is Winston Churchill. Born on November 30th, 1874 to an American mother and British Statesman father at Blenheim Palace, Churchill grew up steeped in privilege. Similar to Grant's father, Lord Randolph Churchill believed that his son would never amount to much, and ridiculed both his academics as well as his early military career. Churchill spent his life living almost as if he wanted to find a way to make his father proud. He wound up far exceeding whatever expectations were set for him.

Spending his early career as a war correspondent in the 1890s, Churchill lived a lifetime of adventures and near misses with death, including becoming lost in the Egyptian desert as well as a daring escape from a South American prison after being captured in an ambush during the Boer War. Leaving the Army and having made a name for himself as a write as well as a speaker, Churchill entered politics. Possessing a stunning wit and confident manner, Churchill moved through the ranks of the British political machine. Unfortunately, his confident manner did not always serve him well, and he made multiple horrendous mistakes along the way as well as making statements that would ultimately come back to bite him.

In the early 1900s, Churchill began to see the signs of grave conflict building in Europe with the German Empire and other states. Accepting a position as First Lord of the Admiralty, (the equivalent of the American Secretary of the Navy), Churchill did much to prepare the British military for the coming World War. When war erupted in 1914, Churchill found himself in a key position to help influence the military and defense of the country. In 1915, Churchill believed he could help bring the war to a quick end by opening a second front in Turkey. This proved disastrous. The Gallipoli Campaign, so called because it primarily took place on the Gallipoli peninsula in the Dardanelles islands, proved to be a horrific disaster, with tens of thousands of British, Australian, and New Zealander soldiers killed, wounded or captured in a battlefront that had stagnated just as much as the campaigns on Europe's Western front. Churchill took most of the blame.

Leaving his position in charge of the Navy, Churchill returned to the Army in 1916 and was deployed to the Western Front of the war in France, where he faced numerous close

brushes with death, leading him to believe he was being prepared for a purpose later in life. He also acknowledged his own failings, writing to his wife Clementine “I shall have made nothing, if I had not made mistakes”.

Following the Armistice in 1918, Churchill returned to politics and his writing, becoming one of the greatest historians and biographers of the era. He helped jumpstart the Royal Air Force and is also credited as the father of the tank and helped pave the way for advances in tank and armored combat. He also continued to make mistakes in politics, finding himself very often on the wrong side of political conflicts, such as Indian Independence from Great Britian, Women’s Suffrage, economics, and supporting King Edward VIII up to his abdication of the throne and the subsequent coronation of King George VI. As Adolf Hitler and his Nazi cronies began to take power in Germany in the 1930s, Churchill loudly sounded the alarm.

Unfortunately, as biographer and historian Andrew Roberts points out, few in England at the time wanted to believe a new conflict with Germany was on the horizon. The devastation and bloodshed of the First World War was still fresh in many people’s minds. Churchill, however, looking back on his experience with fanatical militant groups in Sudan, Egypt, and South Africa, knew that the militant fanaticism of Nazi Germany would prove devastating if left unchecked. Churchill loudly, (and rightly), criticized those in the government and those in the Christian church who believed Hitler could be appeased and peace maintained by giving Hitler what he wanted.

He was soon proved right. With *Blitzkreig* unleashed across Europe and multiple countries soon dominated by the Nazis, Churchill stepped up to the plate to replace the disgraced former Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. It wouldn’t be easy. Very quickly France, Belgium and the “low countries” were defeated, and the British Expeditionary Force, an army of nearly 300,000 troops, barely escaped annihilation at Dunkirk. However, Churchill’s tenacity, hard-headedness, and stubborn refusal to quit were just what the world needed. As Andrew Roberts puts it,

> “When Churchill was finally made prime minister in May 1940, the British had lost the war-comprehensively, according to every metric-but there was a huge difference between losing a war and realizing that one has lost it…Winston Churchill’s primary duty in 1940 and 1941 was to prevent the British people from realizing they had lost the war, and nobody did it better, not least because he utterly refused to accept the logic of the situation himself.”

The war quickly took turns for the worst. With Britain the only opponent of Germany left in the fight at this point, Hitler began trying to bomb and starve the British people into submission. Churchill’s courageous leadership and example gave the British people what they needed to hold out in the face of disaster until the United States would enter the war in 1941. Even with disastrous outcomes on battlefronts in Africa, the Atlantic and Asia following up defeats in Europe, Churchill never wavered, and in his own words, the Allies eventually “outlived the menace of tyranny” and liberated Europe from Nazism in 1945. Because Churchill refused to give in during the darkest hour in western history, a feat

lesser men, (especially his modern critics and haters), would have quickly failed. Because Churchill's courage and leadership helped bring an end to evil not only in Nazi Germany, but later in Soviet Russia, Churchill is a man everyone can learn from, not only in his successes, but also in his (many) failures, which he himself often learned from.

Several books about Churchill are worth reading. *Churchill: Walking With Destiny* by Andrew Roberts is by far the very best, as well as *The Splendid and the Vile* by Erik Larson, and Andrew Roberts' other, shorter book, *Leadership in War.*

Conclusion

Stories of great men are often mocked today by people who are largely living worthless lives themselves. When statues of men like Grant and Churchill are vandalized by young men and women who could just have easily been supporters of slavery in the 1860s and Nazism in the 1930s, it is obvious there is a severe lack of character development in today's young people. Learning not only from the triumphs of past historical figures, but also from their failures, is one of the best and certainly one of the most important ways to grow and prepare ourselves for our own challenges we will face in life.

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalism at the University of St. Andrews

January 30, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Note: even if you have heard Dr. Craig's arguments before, I recommend jumping to the 48 minutes of Q&A time, which starts 72 minutes in.

About Dr. William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich, Germany in 1984.

Dr. Craig was in Scotland to lecture at a physics conference, but a local church organized this public lecture at the University of St. Andrews.

Here is the full lecture with Q&A: (2 hours)

Summary:

- Naturalism defined: the physical world (matter, space and time) is all that exists
- Dr. Craig will present 7 reasons why naturalism is false
- 1) the contingency argument
- 2) the kalam cosmological argument
- 3) the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life
- 4) the moral argument
- 5) the ontological argument
- 6) the resurrection of Jesus
- 7) religious experience

Dr. Craig does mention an 8th argument early in the Q&A – the argument from the non-physicality of mental states (substance dualism), which is an argument that I find convincing, because a materialist conception of mind is not compatible with rationality, consciousness and moral agency.

Questions and Answers

He gets a couple of questions on the moral argument early on – one of them tries to put forward an evolutionary explanation for "moral" behaviors. There's another question the definition of naturalism. There is a bonehead question about the non-existence of Jesus based on a Youtube movie he saw – which Craig responds to with agnostic historian Bart Ehrman's book on that topic. There's a question about God as the ground for morality – does morality come from his will or nature.

Then there is a question about the multiverse, which came up at the physics conference Dr. Craig attended the day before. There is a good question about the Big Bang theory and the initial singularity at time t=0. Another good question about transfinite arithmetic, cardinality and set theory. One questioner asks about the resurrection argument. The questioner asks if we can use the origin of the disciples belief as an argument when other religions have people who are willing to die for their claims. One of the questioners asks about whether the laws of nature break down at 10^-43 after the beginning of the universe. There is a question about the religious experience argument, and Craig has the opportunity to give his testimony.

I thought that the questions from the Scottish students and faculty were a lot more thoughtful and respectful than at American colleges and universities. Highly recommended.

Bible study: Esther as an example of bravery and God’s providence

January 31, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

I’ve been listening to this FREE two-volume series on the book of Esther featuring pastor Alistair Begg. A whole bunch of interesting things stuck out to me, so I’ll write about one of them today.

First, Esther is a Jewish woman whose father or mother died when she was young. She was adopted by Mordecai, another Jew. She was very beautiful, so she was picked to be part of the Persian King’s harem. In fact, she is so beautiful that the King chooses her to be the Queen.

Now there is an enemy of the Jews in the King’s court named Haman, and he manages to get the King to create an edict that says that all the Jews will be killed. Mordecai calls Esther to tell her that she has to stop the King from ordering this edict.

But Esther is out of favor with the King, and hasn’t been asked to come in to visit him for some time. To go in and see the King without being summoned is a capital offense. Unless the King gives permission, she would be killed for intruding on the King. But in the end, she agrees to speak up and say something.

It all gets resolved in Esther chapter 4.

Esther 4:1-17:

> 1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly.

> 2 He went as far as the king’s gate, for no one was to enter the king’s gate clothed in sackcloth.
>
> 3 In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.
>
> 4 Then Esther’s maidens and her eunuchs came and told her, and the queen writhed in great anguish. And she sent garments to clothe Mordecai that he might remove his sackcloth from him, but he did not accept them.
>
> 5 Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king’s eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her, and ordered himto go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.
>
> 6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king’s gate.
>
> 7 Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king’s treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.
>
> 8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people.
>
> 9 Hathach came back and related Mordecai’s words to Esther.
>
> 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him to reply to Mordecai:
>
> 11 “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.”
>
> 12 They related Esther’s words to Mordecai.
>
> 13 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”
>
> 15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai,
>
> 16 “Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.”
>
> 17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

What Mordecai is saying here is that God is sovereign over the events that are taking place, and that even if Esther makes a free decision to not intercede to save her people,

then God will do something else. Somehow, telling her that makes her agree to take the risk and go in to see the King. Even though it is illegal to go in to see the King, she is going to risk her life and do it. And the message there is that God made her beautiful, and placed her in the palace, for exactly this purpose. Her beauty has a purpose.

Before then, she may not have been the most morally pure Jew, nor the most faithful Jew, nor some great authority on theology or apologetics. She was probably keeping her faith pretty hidden. But in that one moment, she rises above being an orphan, above being a harem girl, and above being just a pretty face. God can use anyone – even a silly girl who spends all day in front of a mirror playing with cosmetics – to achieve his ends. She is not Daniel. But today she is getting the call, anyway. It's on her.

What is the lesson here? God can use *anybody.* It doesn't mean that you shouldn't be moral, study theology, and study apologetics, and keep your character clean so you have self-control. It means that any believer is just one step away from glory, no matter what they did in the past. That's how God rolls.

Further study

If you are interested in the story of Esther, then you should listen to the entire series by Alistair Begg.

- Volume 1 is here (download all in a zip file)
- Volume 2 is here (download all in a zip file)

The point I am making in this post is in this lecture.

Esther is about two themes: 1) how should a believer in God live in a society where believers are a minority? and 2) even when things look really out of control, God is in control, and is never more than one step away from saving his people.

I have a lot of Christian apologist friends who struggle to go to church, and struggle to read the Bible. The links above will take you to some great preaching on one of the most interesting books of the Bible. Go there, grab the MP3s, and listen to them with no distractions.

Facebook bans Christian professor for disagreeing with Biden's executive actions

February 1, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christian Post:

> A Christian university professor has been suspended from Facebook for voicing disagreement with President Joe Biden's executive order allowing trans-identifying individuals to serve in the U.S. military.
>
> Robert Gagnon, who teaches New Testament theology at Houston Baptist University and is a renowned scholar on the subject of sexuality, was locked out of his Facebook account for 24 hours on Tuesday after he posted a comment in defense of a friend who posted a satirical commentary about Biden's executive order.
>
> Facebook suspended Gagnon's account for what it deemed as "incitement" to violence.
>
> In his post, Gagnon said the executive order will endanger women, and noted that those who promote transgenderism are allowing males to invade women's athletics and shelters. He also likened transgender ideology to a "religious cult" and said it "is indeed a pseudo-science," in that it forces people to reject basic biology. That Facebook suspended his friend for similar comments proves the cult-like dimension, he said.
>
> Facebook subsequently sent Gagnon a notice, informing him that his words violated their "Community Standards on violence and incitement."
>
> "There was absolutely no incitement to violence on our part. We abhor violence done to any person," Gagnon told PJ Media on Tuesday. "This is just a thinly veiled and pathetic excuse for censorship of any critical views toward trans-tyranny over our consciences, religion, and reason."
>
> "Only one point of view is being allowed," he continued. "Trump was not the great danger to the Republic. Left-wing canceling is."

New study: trans women outperform biological women after year of hormone therapy

February 2, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From far-left NBC News:

> A new study suggests transgender women maintain an athletic advantage over their cisgender peers even after a year on hormone therapy.
>
> The results, published last month in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, could mean the current one-year waiting period for Olympic athletes who are transitioning is inadequate.
>
> "For the Olympic level, the elite level, I'd say probably two years is more realistic than one year," said the study's lead author, Dr. Timothy Roberts, a pediatrician and the director of the adolescent medicine training program at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri. "At one year, the tran5 women on average still have an advantage over the cis women," he said, referring to cisgender, or nontransgender, women.
>
> […]For the first two years after starting hormones, the tran5 women in their review were able to do 10 percent more pushups and 6 percent more situps than their cisgender female counterparts. After two years, Roberts told NBC News, "they were fairly equivalent to the cisgender women."
>
> Their running times declined as well, but two years on, tran5 women were still 12 percent faster on the 1.5 mile-run than their cisgender peers.

Very interesting to think about when you consider Biden's executive action allowing transgender women into biological women's sports.

But you can't say anything about it, because it you do, Big Tech will ban you.

> Attacks against free speech by big tech companies have quickly escalated into a full-blown censorship campaign as social media giants are now regularly targeting and silencing Christians and conservatives. Their latest target? Focus on the Family.
>
> The Christian organization has just been censored by Twitter. The platform locked the global ministry's "Daily Citizen" publication for allegedly violating their rules against posting "hateful" content.
>
> Focus on the Family CEO Jim Daly said this accusation is absolutely untrue.
>
> The Daily Citizen tweeted a quote on Jan. 19 from one of its articles acknowledging that the Biden administration appointed a transgender woman to serve as Assistant Secretary for Health at the Department of HHS.
>
> The tweet read: "Dr. Lev1ne is a transgender woman, that is, a man who believes

> he is a woman.”

It’s “inclusivity”. You can’t even explain what the terms mean any more, because feelings are more important than facts to the people in charge of permitting speech.

How to falsify a religion using scientific or historical evidence

February 3, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

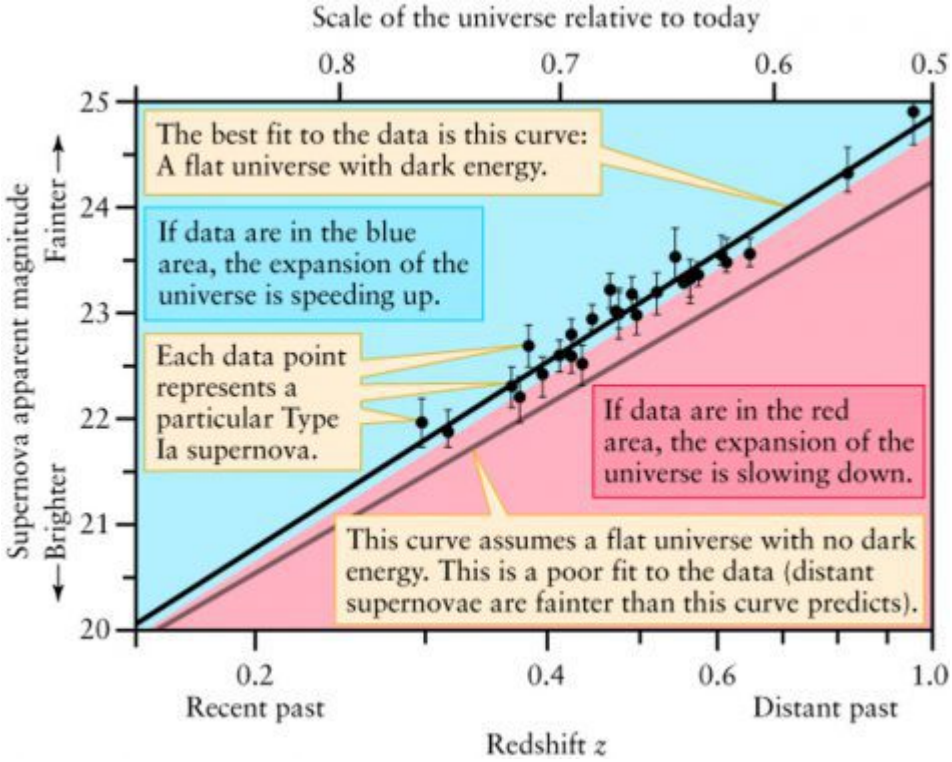

Will the universe expand forever, or will it collapse and bounce?
(Image source)

What I often see among atheists is this tendency to set up expectations of how God would have acted and then complain that he doesn't met those expectations. I don't think that this is a good way to argue against a religion, because it's subjective. God isn't obligated to comport with atheist expectations. A much better way of evaluating religions is to test the claims each makes against evidence.

So in this post, I wanted to show how a reasonable person can evaluate and reject different worldviews using evidence.

Falsifying a religion using science

Consider this argument:

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a

collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

Notice how the oscillating model is falsified by mathematics and experimental evidence. Remarkable, when you remember how the public schools would play Carl Sagan videos which promoted this no-Creator model of the universe.

The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with atheism, Buddhism, Mormonism, etc. because they also require an eternally existing universe.

Atheism in particular is incompatible with the universe "coming into being", because that would be a supernatural cause – a cause that created the natural world. According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.*

Falsifying a religion using history

Consider this argument:

1. To be a Muslim, you must believe that the Koran is without error.
2. The Koran claims that Jesus did not die on a cross. (Qur'an, 4: 157-158)
3. The crucifixion of Jesus is undisputed among non-Muslim historians, including atheist historians.
4. Therefore, it is not rational for me to become a Muslim.

I'm going to support the premise that Jesus was crucified by citing historians from all backgrounds.

Consider some quotes from the (mostly) non-Christian scholars below:

> "Jesus' death as a consequence of crucifixion is indisputable." Gert Lüdemann
>
> "That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be." J.D. Crossan
>
> "The passion of Jesus is part of history." Geza Vermes
>
> Jesus' death by crucifixion is "historically certain". Pinchas Lapide
>
> "The single most solid fact about Jesus' life is his death: he was executed by the Roman prefect Pilate, on or around Passover, in the manner Rome reserved particularly for political insurrectionists, namely, crucifixion." Paula Fredriksen
>
> "The support for the mode of his death, its agents, and perhaps its co-agents, is overwhelming: Jesus faced a trial before his death, was condemned, and was executed by crucifixion." L.T. Johnson

> “One of the most certain facts of history is that Jesus was crucified on orders of the Roman prefect of Judea, Ponitus Pilate.” Bart Ehrman

That’s 7 famous historians: 3 atheists, 3 Jews and 1 moderate Catholic. The atheists, Ludemann, Crossan and Ehrman, have all debated against the resurrection of Jesus with William Lane Craig. Johnson is the moderate Catholic, the rest are Jewish historians. The Koran was written in the 7th century. That is why no professional historian accepts the Koran as more authoritative than the many earlier Christian and non-Christian sources for the crucifixion story. Many of the sources for the crucifixion are dated to the 1st century. It’s not faith. It’s history.

I have seen debates with Muslim scholars, and I have never once heard them cite a non-Muslim historian to the effect that Jesus was not crucified. To my knowledge, there is no (non-Muslim) historian who denies the crucifixion of Jesus in his published work.

Can Christianity be falsified by science or history?

Yes. If you prove that the universe is eternal than would falsify the Bible’s claim that God created the universe out of nothing. That would be a scientific disproof. If you could find the body of Jesus still inside a tomb, that would falsify the Bible’s claim about a resurrection. That would be a historical disproof. The nice thing about Christianity is that we make lots of testable claims. When someone claims to be a Christian, it’s a good thing if they can show how they arrived at that conclusion. Being able to square God’s existence with science, and Jesus’ resurrection with history are two crucial steps to showing the reasonableness of Christianity.

Did Christians who voted for Joe Biden not foresee his anti-Christian policies?

February 4, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Great article from Dr. Michael Brown in The Stream.

Read the whole thing, here's some:

> [Trump-voting conservatives] agreed that Trump's character and personality could be negative and destructive. But we hoped that the good policy decisions he would make, decisions of massive, life and death proportions, would outweigh his character flaws.
>
> And so, when it came to fighting against the slaughter of the unborn, numbering more than 60 million to date in America since 1973, Trump was our clear choice over Hillary Clinton or Biden. Jesus cares about "the least of these," which most certainly includes the defenseless babies in the womb.
>
> When it came to preserving our religious liberties and our freedoms of conscience and speech, Trump was our clear, hands-down choice.

More:

> When it came to standing up to radical Islam or facing down tyrannical China, Trump was our definite preference.
>
> One of my colleagues in the Middle East recently told me how the bloodbath which took more than 650,000 lives during the Obama administration virtually stopped with Donald Trump.
>
> My friend recounted to me the horrific torture and abuse of women in his region at the hands of Islamic extremists, including their repeated gang rapes (and worse). In his mind, Trump was a champion who helped put a stop to such horrors.
>
> A Chinese émigré to Australia told me early last year he was terribly afraid of President Xi and saw Trump as a hero, especially as Trump stood with the Hong Kong protesters.
>
> Needless to say, the same Israelis who felt betrayed by the Obama administration were profoundly grateful to Trump for canceling the Iranian nuclear accords, knowing the real dangers of that terrible deal.

Foreign policy? What's that? Christian Democrats didn't see any foreign policy on NPR or PBS or CNN or MSNBC. They were in a leftist echo chamber. They had no awareness of reality outside their own lives.

More:

> Are you surprised that Biden signed into law a radical transgender bill that has

> even caused consternation among gay, feminist, and transgender leaders and individuals? Do you feel good about the fact that by voting for him, you have negatively impacted women and girls throughout the country, as well as strengthened Big Tech's crack down on our freedoms?
>
> Are you surprised that there is already great concern within Israel that Biden might derail the amazing peace progress made by the Trump administration? Were you unaware that he might well give back to terroristic Iran a potential path to nuclear armament?

I first wrote about the Equality Act – an LGBT bill deisgned to crush dissenters from the LGBT agenda – in 2015. I had been warning about it all along. But I have yet to meet a Biden voter who knew anything about it, even though it passed the Democrat House and only failed because Republicans held the Senate. No longer.

It seems to me that Christians wanting to find work, keep their earnings, and be public about their Christian convictions did a lot better living under Trump's laws, policies, judges, etc. That's what matters to me. I want to work without comprimising my values. I want to keep what I earn instead of handing it to people who aren't moving towards God. I want to invest in people and organizations who are working for God, not against him.

I'm not interested in making the lives of non-Christians happier or more prosperous. I don't think I should have give money or compelled speech to make irresponsible, immoral people feel better about their immorality or recklessness. I'm talking about people who turn their backs on God with things like LGBT lifestyles and having fatherless kids with hot bad boys.

I liked Trump's laws, policies, judges, etc. That worked best for my Christian life plan. I had more money and time for people who really wanted God. Now I have to be scared about my job, do with less money (higher taxes, inflation, regulation and growing national debt), and watch what I say and do for fear of offending reckless, immoral, irresponsible non-Christians. The sort of authentic Christian life I enjoyed has suddenly gotten a lot harder. And I don't like it. I don't like being taxed and controlled by non-Christians.

Is Snopes reliable? Is Snopes biased? Are Snopes fact-checks accurate?

February 5, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, there were some demonstrations at the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. Democrat representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a former bartender and waitress, told everyone that she had nearly died because the rioters broke into her office.

It was later discovered that she was never in the Capitol bulding.

Newsweek reported AOC's version of the events:

> Ocasio-Cortez said that rioters actually entered her office, forcing her to take refuge inside her bathroom after her legislative director Geraldo Bonilla-Chavez told her to "hide, hide, run and hide."
>
> "And so I run back into my office," Ocasio-Cortez said. "I slam my door. There's another kind of like back area to my office, and I open it, and there's a closet and a bathroom. And I jump into my bathroom."
>
> Ocasio-Cortez said [she] was hiding behind the door "and then I just start to hear these yells of, 'Where is she?'"
>
> As members of the mob banged against the door, Ocasio-Cortez believed "this was the moment where I thought everything was over."
>
> "And the weird thing about moments like these is that you lose all sense of time," Ocasio-Cortez continued. "In retrospect, maybe it was 4 seconds. Maybe it was 5 seconds, maybe it was 10 seconds. Maybe it was one second, I don't know. It felt like my brain was able to have so many thoughts."
>
> "In between the screams and the yells," Ocasio-Cortez added, "I mean, I thought I was going to die."

Daily Wire explains that Newsweek had to correct their story after it emerged that AOC's version was not true:

> Republican Rep. Nancy Mace (R-SC), whose office is two doors down from Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, noted that "insurrectionists" never made it to their hall when the U.S. Capitol building was breached on Jan. 6.
>
> […]Mace argued that Newsweek was misleading in how they categorized AOC's own account in an effort to "fan fictitious news flames."

Maps don't lie:

Newsweek issued a correction:

> After Rep. Mace criticized Newsweek's coverage, the outlet issued a correction to amend the description of Ocasio-Cortez's account as follows: "Ocasio-Cortez said that an individual actually entered her office, forcing her to take refuge inside her bathroom after her legislative director Geraldo Bonilla-Chavez told her to 'hide, hide, run and hide.'"
>
> Newsweek's correction note reads: "A previous version of this story stated that Ocasio-Cortez's office was entered by rioters. Ocasio-Cortez's office was actually entered by a Capitol police officer that did not identify himself. Newsweek regrets the error."

So that's the error, which was acknowledged by Newsweek. But what does Snopes think? Did they side with AOC's delusional conspiracy theory? Or did they side with reality, facts and evidence?

Well, they report that the claim that AOC wasn't even in the Capitol building as "Mostly False".

They wrote:

> **Claim**
>
> Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez exaggerated the danger she was in during the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot, in that she "wasn't even in the Capitol building" when the rioting occurred.
>
> **Rating**
>
> Mostly False

But their own fact-check acknowledges that the claim “she wasn’t even in the Capitol building” is TRUE:

> **What’s True**
>
> Ocasio-Cortez wasn’t in the main Capitol building where the House and Senate Chambers are located.

The more important point – the actual claim that people are making – is that the rioters never broke into AOC’s office. According to Newsweek, AOC says “rioters actually entered her office”. Newsweek’s correction says that the rioters never actually broke into her office. Conservatives are agreeing with Newsweek’s correction. Only Snopes seems to have a problem with the facts reported by Newsweek. They just can’t bring themselves to accept reality, that AOC lied in order to appear to be a victim.

Snopes’ “fact check” will be used by left-wing Big Tech companies to suppress the truth that was admitted by Newsweek in their correction to their original AOC-sourced story. People on the secular left are so desperate to appear to be victims, that it affects their sanity. It’s like a mental illness. And when they are called on it, they all circle the wagons and defend their conspiracy theories.

And this isn’t the first time that Snopes has failed.

Not the first time

In fact, the author of the Snopes article has been caught up in left-wing conspiracies before, and had to issue a retraction:

Why didn’t Snopes fire her after the first retraction? Well, my conclusion that Snopes is mostly a conspiracy website for secular leftists. Their writers mostly publish conspiracy theories, urban legends, myths, delusions, lies and other counterfactual nonsense on their web site. And the goal of their website is mostly just to give comfort to secular leftists who have failed at life, and are now living in a dream world where all their failures are caused by those conservative people who they look down on, who achieved more success in practical private sector jobs than they have with their many worthless debt-fueled non-STEM degrees.

So how would I rate Snopes as a fact-checker?

Rating: Mostly False.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about spending, saving and charity

February 6, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

A practical lecture on money – spending, saving, charitable giving – from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

I like the way that Wayne Grudem navigates the Bible finding the passages that tell you who God is, so that you can make better decisions by analyzing alternatives and choosing the one that gives your Boss a maximum return on investment. He's very practical.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Spending:

- Christianity does not teach asceticism (= don't enjoy anything in this world), Paul condemns it in 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- When you buy nice things, even if it is a little more expensive, it's an opportunity to be thankful for nice things that God has provided
- Even being rich is OK, but don't let it make you haughty and arrogant, and don't set your hopes on your money (see 1 Tim 6:17)
- It is important for you to earn money, and you are supposed to use it to support yourself and be independent
- It is possible to overspend and live recklessly (Luke 15:13) and it's also possible to overspend and live too luxuriously
- *Increasing your income through career progression is wise*, because it allows you to give away more and save more

- God gives us freedom to decide how much we spend, how much we give away, and how much we save
- every choice a Christian makes with money will give him or her more or less reward in his or her afterlife
- Do not spend more than you have – you should make every effort to get out of debt as quickly as possible

Saving:

- Saving money is wise so you can help yourself and others, and have money in your old age when you will not be working
- If you do not save your own money, you end up being dependent on others (e.g. – family or taxpayers)
- Not saving money for the future is a way of "putting God to the test" (Matt 4:7)
- You are to "be dependent on no one", to the extent that you can (1 Thes 4:12)
- We don't know the future, that's why we should prepare for an emergency, and buy insurance to guard (James 4:13-17)
- It's right for us to learn how to save to be able to buy bigger assets, like a car or a college education
- Saving and investing in stocks and bonds lets people in business start and grow companies, creating jobs and new products
- *Don't over-save, trusting too much in money more than you trust in God* (Ps 62.10; Matt 6:19,24; Luke 12:15-21)

Giving:

- it is required for the people of God to give something out of what they earn, but no percentage is specified (Deut 26:12-13)
- you do not give money to become right with God, you can't earn your salvation
- *a Christian gives to show God that you trust him to take care of you, and to experience trusting him through your giving*
- the quality of your resurrection life with God is affected by giving you do for the Kingdom (Phil 4, Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:18-19)
- when you get involved in the lives of others and give to them, you have the joy of experiencing caring for others (Acts 20:35)
- it's possible to give too little, but it's also possible to give too much – be careful about pride creeping in as well

The first part of this lecture made me think of my treat for the week, which is to get a double chicken burrito bowl after my weight lifting. It is very easy to say grace when you are hovering over a double chicken burrito bowl. It is good to have nice things especially when it makes you thankful for what you have.

I was so happy listening to this talk because he was condemning bad stewardship, which I see in a lot of young people these days. I was happy until he got to the part about

trusting in your savings for your security, and then I thought – that's what I do wrong! I save a lot but it's not just for emergencies and to share with others, like he was saying – I want a sense of security. This was more of a temptation in my 20s than it is now in my 30s, though.

Charity should hurt

I can remember being in my first full-time job as a newly hired junior programmer when the 2001 recession struck. I would cry while signing checks to support William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith ministry, because I was so scared. I had no family or friends where I lived to help me if anything went wrong, and that's been the story of my working life. If anything goes wrong, there is no backup. But it's that experience of crying when I gave that allows me to say today "that's when I became the man I am, that's what a man does when he is a follower of Jesus". If you are not doing the actions of charity, then you will not having the experience of trusting God and letting him lead you. There is more to the Christian life than just saying the right things – you have to do the right things.

Don't follow your heart

If you're scared about giving when you are young, then do what I did in my 20s: work 70-hour weeks, get promoted often, and save everything you earn. I volunteered every Saturday for 9 months in order to get my first white-collar part-time job when I was still in high-school. The faster you increase your savings, the easier it's going to be to take a *genuine interest* in caring for the people around you. Read Phil 1 (fellowship), Phil 2 (concern for others), and Phil 4 (charity). Turn off your emotions and desires when it comes to choosing what to study and what work to do, and put Philippians into practice. Your freedom to give is very much tied to the quality of your decisions of what to study, where to work, how much you spend on entertainment, and so on. That's why you need to turn off your feelings and desires and do what works, even it it's not fun, and even if it involves responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

The psychological motivation of those who embrace postmodernism

February 7, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

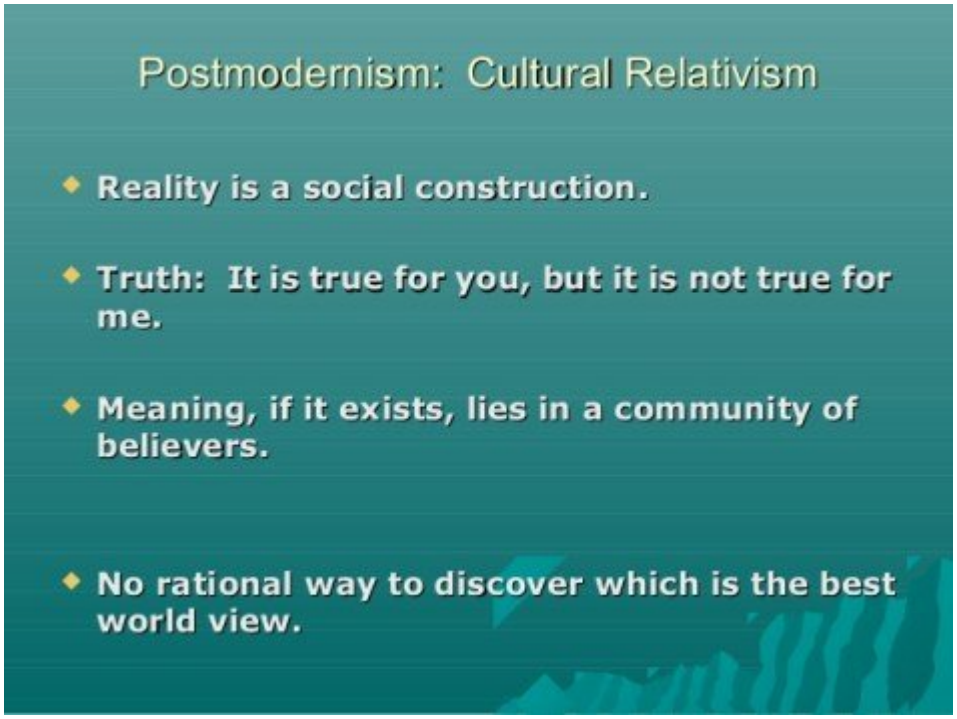

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian? Not for long

Famous analytical philosopher John Searle has written a book "Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World", explaining what's factually wrong with postmodernism. In the introduction, he explains what postmodernism is, and what motivates people to accept postmodernism.

He writes:

> […][W]hen we act or think or talk in the following sorts of ways we take a lot for granted: when we hammer a nail, or order a takeout meal from a restaurant, or conduct a lab experiment, or wonder where to go on vacation, we take the following for granted: there exists a real world that is totally independent of human beings and of what they think or say about it, and statements about objects and states of affairs in that world are true or false depending on whether things in the world really are the way we say they are. So, for example, if in pondering my vacation plans I wonder whether Greece is hotter in the summer than Italy, I simply take it for granted that there exists a real world containing places like Greece and Italy and that they have various temperatures. **Furthermore, if I read in a travel book that the average summer temperature in Greece is hotter than in Italy, I know that what the book says will be true if and only if it really is hotter on average in the summer in Greece than in Italy. This is because I take it for granted that such statements are true only if there is something independent of the**

> **statement in virtue of which, or because of which, it is true.**
>
> […]These two Background presuppositions have long histories and various famous names. The first, that there is a real world existing independently of us, I like to call "external realism." "Realism," because it asserts the existence of the real world, and "external" to distinguish it from other sorts of realism-for example, realism about mathematical objects (mathematical realism) or realism about ethical facts (ethical realism). The second view, that a statement is true if things in the world are the way the statement says they are, and false otherwise, is called "the correspondence theory of truth." This theory comes in a lot of different versions, but the basic idea is that statements are true if they correspond to, or describe, or fit, how things really are in the world, and false if they do not.

The "correspondence theory of truth" is the view of truth assumed in books of the Bible whose genre is such that that they were intended by the authors to be taken *literally*, (with allowances for symbolism, figures of speech, metaphors, hyperbole, etc.).

But what about the postmodernists, who seek to deny the objectivity of external reality?

More Searle:

> Thinkers who wish to deny the correspondence theory of truth or the referential theory of thought and language typically find it embarrassing to have to concede external realism. Often they would rather not talk about it at all, or they have some more or less subtle reason for rejecting it. In fact, very few thinkers come right out and say that there is no such thing as a real world existing absolutely, objectively, and totally independently of us. Some do. Some come right out and say that the so-called real world is a "social construct."

What is behind the denial of objective reality, and statements about external reality that are warranted by evidence?

> It is not easy to get a fix on what drives contemporary antirealism, but if we had to pick out a thread that runs through the wide variety of arguments, it would be what is sometimes called "perspectivism." Perspectivism is the idea that our knowledge of reality is never "unmediated," that it is always mediated by a point of view, by a particular set of predilections, or, worse yet by sinister political motives, such as an allegiance to a political group or ideology. And because we can never have unmediated knowledge of the world, then perhaps there is no real world, or perhaps it is useless to even talk about it, or perhaps it is not even interesting.

Searle is going to refute anti-realism in the rest of the book, but here is his guess at what is motivating the anti-realists:

> > **I have to confess, however, that I think there is a much deeper**

> > **reason for the persistent appeal of all forms of antirealism, and this has become obvious in the twentieth century: it satisfies a basic urge to power. It just seems too disgusting, somehow, that we should have to be at the mercy of the "real world." It seems too awful that our representations should have to be answerable to anything but us. This is why people who hold contemporary versions of antirealism and reject the correspondence theory of truth typically sneer at the opposing view.**
>
> […]I don't think it is the argument that is actually driving the impulse to deny realism. I think that as a matter of contemporary cultural and intellectual history, the attacks on realism are not driven by arguments, because the arguments are more or less obviously feeble, for reasons I will explain in detail in a moment. **Rather, as I suggested earlier, the motivation for denying realism is a kind of will to power, and it manifests itself in a number of ways. In universities, most notably in various humanities disciplines, it is assumed that, if there is no real world, then science is on the same footing as the humanities. They both deal with social constructs, not with independent realities. From this assumption, forms of postmodernism, deconstruction, and so on, are easily developed, having been completely turned loose from the tiresome moorings and constraints of having to confront the real world. If the real world is just an invention-a social construct designed to oppress the marginalized elements of society-then let's get rid of the real world and construct the world we want. That, I think, is the real driving psychological force behind antirealism at the end of the twentieth century.**

Now, I'll go one step further than Searle.

People, from the Fall, have had the desire to step into the place of God. It's true that we creatures exist in a universe created and designed by God. But, there is a way to work around the fact that God made the universe and the laws that the universe runs on, including logic, mathematics and natural laws. And that way is to *deny logic, mathematics and natural laws.* Postmodernists simply deny that there is any way to construct rational arguments and support the premises with evidence from the real world. That way, they imagine, they are free to escape a God-designed world, including a God-designed specification for how they ought to live. The postmoderns deny *the reliable methods of knowing about the God-created reality because logic and evidence can be used to point to God's existence, God's character, and God's actions in history.*

And that's why there is this effort to make reality "optional" and perspectival. Everyone can be their own God, and escape any accountability to the real God – the God who is easily discovered through the use of logic and evidence. I believe that this is also behind the rise of atheists, who feign allegiance to logic and science, but then express "skepticism" about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, objective

morality, the minimal facts concerning the historical Jesus, and other undeniables.

Crime rates up after Democrats sided with BLM and Antifa against police

February 8, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Daily Wire:

> The Wall Street Journal opinion writer and crime analyst Heather Mac Donald reports that, according to early numbers, it appears that the United States "saw the largest percentage increase in homicides" in its history, with murder rates rising an average of nearly 40% in 57 of the country's largest cities.

Democrat-run cities hardest hit:

> "The local murder increases in 2020 were startling: 95% in Milwaukee, 78% in Louisville, Ky., 74% in Seattle, 72% in Minneapolis, 62% in New Orleans, and 58% in Atlanta, according to data compiled by crime analyst Jeff Asher. Dozens of children, overwhelmingly black, were killed in drive-by shootings," Mac Donald writes on Tuesday. "They were slain in their beds, living rooms, and strollers. They were struck down at barbecues, in their yards, in malls, in their parents' cars, and at birthday parties. Fifty-five children were killed in Chicago in 2020, 17 in St. Louis, and 11 in Philadelphia. In South Los Angeles alone, 40 children were shot, some non-lethally, through September."
>
> The trend pans out across the country, according to a number of local stories published in the closing weeks of 2020. The St. Louis, Missouri, homicide rate spiked the highest it has in half a century, according to St. Louis Today. Chicago had its single deadliest day since the mid-1960s back in May. And even in Texas, where Republicans control most positions of authority in state government, saw a statewide hike in the murder rate, according to local outlets.

What could be the cause of this?

> Mac Donald suggests that while the correlation cannot be understated — particularly given that pandemic-related lockdowns appear to have driven the largest rise in poverty in 50 years — there's another trend that also correlates with the rise in crime: the rise of the "defund the police" movement, that while generally unsuccessful even in progressive cities like Seattle, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, had a dramatic effect on officer morale and cities' willingness to put more officers on the streets to handle issues, leaving many crime-prone neighborhoods further exposed.
>
> "Cops now face a poisonous environment. Since the summer, they have been shot in the head, firebombed, and assaulted with lethal projectiles. An officer providing first aid at a crime scene may be met with a hail of rocks and bottles. Resistance is now the norm. Officers believe they face a political and legal

> environment that is eager to sacrifice them in the name of racial justice," Mac Donald says. "As a result," she adds, "the calculus for engagement has changed."

Daily Wire reports on a "carjacking epidemic" in Chicago, which is one of the most Democrat-dominated cities in America.

> Chicago gas stations are staffing up, hiring an army of private security guards to protect customers amid a "carjacking epidemic" that has the city on track to see 2,000 carjackings this year.
>
> […]"Carjackings in Chicago rose about 135% to 1,415 in 2020 from 603 in 2019," the Tribune reported Sunday. "The 2020 tally was the highest figure recorded [in Chicago] since 2001 when Chicago logged only slightly more with 1,422 …"
>
> Police have been slow to respond. So far, the Chicago Police Department has made just 108 arrests (16% of cases, per Chicago's WGN News), and prosecutors have charged just 58 of those individuals with trespass to a vehicle.

Breitbart notes a carjacking problem in Philadelphia, too. Another city ruled from top to bottom by Democrats:

> January 2021 carjackings in Philadelphia were up more than more than triple the number during the same time in 2020.
>
> The Philadelphia Inquirer noted there were 59 carjackings in Philly during January 2021, while there were 18 in January 2020.
>
> Ironically, 2020 broke a record for carjackings, with a total of 404 for the year. Yet 2021 quickly got on pace to surpass the numbers seen last year.

The funny thing about the spike in crimes in these cities is that the Democrat rulers have send a clear message to the citizens. You are sheep. You are not allowed to be armed. You are not allowed to defend yourself. And the police won't defend you either, because we've intimidated them and defunded them. So enjoy being a victim of crime.

The funny thing is that people in these cities keep voting for Democrats. They must not be thinking very much.

New CBO report: Biden's minimum wage hike would cost 1.4 million jobs

February 9, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The first principle of being a competent human is to not destroy yourself with your own bad decisions.

Daily Wire reports:

> In a report released Monday, the Congressional Budget Office said that hiking the minimum wage to $15 might reduce poverty, but at the cost of 1.4 million jobs and by adding billions to the federal deficit.
>
> President Joe Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) have both pledged to back legislation raising the federal minimum wage to $15 — what both the president and the socialist Senator call a "living wage."
>
> […]The plan, CNN notes, would help some people, increasing "worker pay by $333 billion, giving a boost to some 17 million workers whose wages would otherwise be below $15, as well as many of the 10 million workers whose wages would otherwise be slightly above that level."

People will lose their jobs:

> The jump would "cut employment by 1.4 million workers and increase the federal deficit by $54 billion over a decade," the outlet notes. And while federal spending on things like supplemental food aid programs might decrease, "spending on Medicaid and unemployment benefits would increase because of higher enrollment by those who lose their jobs." Prices on goods and services would also rise, The Wall Street Journal adds.

Prices of goods and services would go up:

> "Higher wages would increase the cost of producing goods and services, and businesses would pass some of those increased costs on to consumers in the form of higher prices, resulting in reduced demand, the CBO said," per the WSJ. "From 2021 to 2031, the plan would increase payments to workers by a net $333 billion, after accounting for wage increases and job losses, the study found. That would allow low-income workers to spend more but would increase labor costs for businesses and raise prices, especially at restaurants. The loss of jobs would cause a modest negative overall impact on economic growth."

We've already seen tens of thousands of small businesses shut down as a result of Wuhan virus regulations. Raising the minimum wage would make many of more small businesses shut down. We don't even need studies to predict the future to prove this. We can look at what happened in the past, in cities that raised the minimum wage.

But does it work?

Here's an example of how this works in reality, from San Francisco, a Democrat-run city.

ABC News reports:

> San Francisco's minimum wage is currently $11.05 an hour. By July of 2018, the minimum wage in San Francisco will be $15 an hour. That increase is forcing Borderlands Bookstore to write its last chapter now.
>
> […]Borderlands was turning a small profit, about $3,000 last year. Then voters approved a hike in the minimum wage, a gradual rise from $10.75 up to $15 an hour.
>
> "And by 2018 we'll be losing about $25,000 a year," he said.
>
> It's an unexpected plot twist for loyal customers.
>
> **"You know, I voted for the measure as well, the minimum wage measure," customer Edward Vallecillo said. "It's not something that I thought would affect certain specific small businesses. I feel sad."**

Consider this story about Seattle, another Democrat-run city.

Excerpt:

> Restaurants Unlimited, a Seattle-based chain with restaurant locations in 47 US cities, announced on Sunday it was seeking Chapter 11 protection, citing "progressive" wage laws.
>
> The company, which has operated since the Lyndon Johnson Administration, said rising labor costs—part of a national trend of government-mandated minimum increases—were part of its decision.
>
> "Over the past three years, the company's profitability has been significantly impacted by progressive wage laws along the Pacific coast that have increased the minimum wage," Chief Restructuring Officer David Bagley said in court filings, The Seattle Times reports. "As a large employer in the Seattle metro market, for instance, the company was one of the first in the market to be forced to institute wage hikes."
>
> […]BLS data show that New York City experienced its sharpest decline in restaurant jobs since 9/11 following its passage of a $15 minimum wage law. In California, a local newspaper recently detailed how an entire business district virtually disappeared following the city's aggressive minimum wage push.

It sounds like such a good idea to give poor people a raise, but you have to ask about how this policy affects the job creator who PAYS the wages. Minimum wage laws produce bad results. We as a nation have to decide whether we are going to vote based on feelings and peer approval, or vote based on achieving good results.

Progressive magazine explains how leftist elites worked to “fortify” e1ection

February 10, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Joy Pullmann wrote something about the recently published Time magazine article, which explained how powerful elites joined together to “fortify” the e1ection so that B1den would win.

The Federalist:

> Corporate media has spent the last year arguing that Donald Trump’s claims about 2020 e1ection integrity amount to “seditious” consp1racy theories. While maintaining that narrative despite the cognitive dissonance, Time magazine’s Feb. 15 cover story pulls back the curtain on a “consp1racy” among a “well-funded cabal of powerful people” in an “an extraordinary shadow effort” that successfully pushed Trump from office.
>
> “In a way, Trump was right,” writes Time national political correspondent Mo11y Ba11. “There was a consp1racy unfolding behind the scenes.” She later describes this “consp1racy” as something that “sounds like a paranoid fever dream — a well-funded cabal of powerful people, ranging across industries and ideologies, working together behind the scenes to influence perceptions, change rules and laws, steer media coverage and control the flow of information.”
>
> […]The consp1racy’s “work touched every aspect of the e1ection,” Ba11 writes. “They got states to change voting systems and laws and helped secure hundreds of millions in public and private funding. They fended off v0ter-suppression 1awsuits, recruited armies of po11 workers and got millions of people to v0te by mail for the first time.”
>
> This, she and the “dozens” of consp1racists she interviewed claim, is evidence of their efforts to “protect the e1ection.”
>
> […]For example, mail-in ballots are known as an unreliable voting method, even without its potential assistance to criminal fraud such as ballot-stuffing, because they create margins of error well within the margin of actual v0tes in a close e1ection. That’s why labor unions, Jeff Bezos, and many foreign countries refuse to use them.
>
> **Therefore, in a mail-in e1ection such as 2020, in which half of the total v0tes and most of the B1den v0tes were mail-in, one can control the outcome simply by controlling the po11-watchers and v0te-counters.** Even if they are honest, their unconscious bias or the simple mayhem of unreadable handwriting and signatures creates the conditions for untrustworthy results.
>
> […]One of the core problems with the 2020 e1ection is that many states

> did not follow their voting laws, suspending them with the excuse of COVID (which the Centers for Disease Control said the day before the e1ection, after most v0tes were already cast, was not necessary). States were pressured or forced to do so, not by what Ba11 hilariously calls Trump's "henchmen," but by lawyered-up leftist pressure groups that strategically undermined e1ection protections with pre-emptive 1awsuits while courts rolled over for them.
>
> These leftist lawyers were unquestionably the aggressors in this situation, as Hans van Spakovsky and others have documented, filing as many as four times the number of 1awsuits Trump or Republicans filed. Their efforts caused the very "e1ection confusion" Ba11 claims her vaunted "consp1racy" was trying to avoid. What do you call people who do one thing while claiming to do the opposite? Idiots or liars. And I don't think these people are idiots.
>
> […]This "consp1racy" also rigged the e1ection by pre-emptively controlling the information v0ters were able to receive about the candidates. They did this by colluding with big tech companies to hide information that made Joe B1den look bad. Post-e1ection research found that just the consp1racy's successful information control on Hunter B1den's alleged corruption and its potential links to his father would have been enough to tip the e1ection.
>
> […]The Time article bears close and repeated reading. One last area of observation here concerns its discussion of the alliance between big business and big labor.
>
> […]Amid the big business-big labor discussion, Ba11's interviewees admit the leftist rioters who terrorized America throughout 2020 did so with the tacit permission of higher-ups, who can turn the riots on and off at will.

Information Enigma: 21-minute video explains intelligent design

February 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video is here:

I have read and listened and watched a lot of material on intelligent design, but I have never seen so much value packed into such a short lecture. I really hope you'll watch this and that it's helpful to you.

Summary:

- the big question when discussing the origin of life: where did the information in living systems come from?
- Until 530 million years ago, the oceans were largely devoid of life
- In a 10 million year period, many new forms of animal life emerged
- New biological forms of life require new information
- the discovery of DNA shows that living systems work because cells have information that allows them to build the components of molecular machines: cell types, proteins, etc.
- can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
- normally, random mutations tend to degrade the functionality of information, e.g. – randomly changing symbols in an applications code does not usually introduce useful new functions, it usually renders what is there non-functional
- the majority of possible sequences will NOT have functions, so random mutations will more likely give you non-functional code, rather than functional code
- example: a bicycle lock with 4 numbers has many possible sequences for the 4 numbers, and only one of them has unlock functionality, the rest have no functionality
- if you have lots of time, then you might be able to guess the combination, but if the lock as has 10 billion numbers, and only one combination that unlocks, you can spend your whole life trying to unlock it and won't succeed
- how likely is it to arrive at a functional protein or gene by chance? Is it more like the 4-dial lock (can be done with lots of time) or the 10 billion dial lock (amount of time required exceeds the time available)?
- the probability is LOW because there is only one sequence of numbers that has unlock function
- consider a short protein of 150 amino acids has 10 to the 195th power possible sequences
- if many of these sequences of amino acides had biological function, then it might be easier to get to one by random mutation and selection than it is with a lock that only unlocks for ONE sequence
- how many of the possible sequences have biological function?

- Thanks to research done by Douglas Axe, we now know that the number of functional amino acid sequences for even a short protein is incredibly small…
- Axe found that the odds of getting a functional sequence of amino acids that will fold and have biological function is 1 in 10 to the 77th power
- Is that number too improbable to reach by chance? well, there are 10 to 65th atoms in the entire Milky Way galaxy… so yes, this is a very improbable outcome
- can random genetic mutations search through all the sequences in order to find the one in 10 to the 77th power one that has biological function? It depends on how much guessers we have and how many guesses we get in the time available
- even with the entire 3.5 billion year history of life on Earth, only about 10 to the 40th organisms have ever lived, which far smaller fraction of the 10 to the 77th total sequences
- even with a very fast mutation rate, you would not be able to reach a functional protein even with all that time, and even with all those organisms

I was once having a discussion with a woman about the research that Axe did at the Cambridge University lab. He published four articles in the Journal of Molecular Biology. I held out one of the papers to her and showed her the numbers. She said over and over "I hate the Discovery Institute! I hate the Discovery Institute!" Well, yeah, but you can't make the Journal of Molecular Biology go away with hating the Discovery Institute. JMB is peer-reviewed, and this was experimental evidence – not a theory, not a hypothesis.

We have been blessed by the Creator and Designer of the universe in this time and place with *overwhelming evidence* – an abundance of riches. For those who have an open mind, this is what you've been waiting for to make your decision. For the naturalists who struggle so mightily to block out the progress of experimental science, they'll need to shout louder and shut their eyes tighter and push harder to block their ears. Maybe if they keep screaming "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" over and over to themselves, they will be able to ignore the real science a little longer.

What’s more important to woke Christians than opposing genocide?

February 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, by now you have probably heard about how D1sney fired actress Gina Caran0 for disagreeing with people who are intolerant of conservatives. It’s a serious concern. We’ve been seeing a huge increase in progressive insults, silencing, firing, vandalism, violence, attempting murder (e.g. – attack on Steve Sca1ise) and *actual* domestic terrorism by gay activists (e.g. – F1oyd Lee Corkins). Not to even mention 6LM and Ant1fa domestic terrorism going on for MONTHS AND MONTHS, supported by Democrat politicians.

So, this morning, I asked a Christian friend who is obsessed with Star Wars and supports Democrats what he thought of the canceling of Gina Caran0. He gave D1sney a pass and blamed her for being unwise with her words.

So what did Caran0 say to get herself fired by D1sney?

Newsbusters explains:

> It looks like woke Hollywood cancel culture has claimed another victim. Controversial The Mandalorian actress Gina Caran0 has been officially fired from the series according to a recent statement by Lucasfi1m.
>
> […]On February 10, Lucasfi1m put out word that Caran0 is “not currently employed by Lucasfi1m and there are no plans for her to be in the future.” The statement makes no secret as to the reason behind this decision by noting, “Nevertheless, her social media posts denigrating people based on their cultural and religious identities are abhorrent and unacceptable.” Shortly after this announcement, the agency UTA also announced that it would officially drop her as a client.
>
> This clearly follows the latest Twitter round of #FireGinaCaran0 after the actress shared an Instagram post on Wednesday likening current political discourse with Naz1 Germany that read:
>
> “J3ws were beaten in the streets, not by Naz1 soldiers but by their neighbors…even by children. Because history is edited, most people today don’t realize that to get to the point where Naz1 soldiers could easily round up thousands of J3ws, the government first made their own neighbors hate them simply for being J3ws. How is that any different from hating someone for their political views?”

Keep in mind that D1sney does business with Ch1na. A country that operates concentration camps for about 1 million U1ghur prisoners (ethnic minority). Inside the camps, you have things like forced labor, forced abortion, sexual assault, rape, and indoctrination in communism. They are replacing the U1ghur culture with Ch1nese Communist culture at gunpoint. None of this is a problem for D1sney, though. They do

business with Ch1na and thank Ch1na for their help.

Life News explains:

> The entire ordeal is hypocritical given D1sney's filming in communist Ch1na, home to decades of pro-abortion population control.
>
> At the end of Mulan, filmmakers thanked Ch1nese government agencies connected to massive human rights abuses, including forced abortions, in the Xinj1ang province.
>
> These agencies have been linked to a "mass genocide" against the minority U1ghur population. Experts estimate more than 1 million U1ghur Mus1ims have been imprisoned in concentration camps, and an unknown number of mothers have been forced to abort their unborn babies through all nine months of pregnancy.
>
> "D1sney, in other words, worked with regions where genocide is occurring, and thanked government departments that are helping to carry it out," Isaac Stone Fish wrote in a column at the Washington Post.
>
> D1sney's thanks included to the "publicity department of CPC Xinj1ang U1ghur Autonomy Region Committee," which is the Xinj1ang propaganda arm of the Ch1nese Communist Party, the Guardian reports. It also thanked the Public Security Bureau of Turpan, a city in the province where experts say more than a dozen concentration camps are located.
>
> Parts of "Mulan" also were filmed in Xinj1ang in 2018, "the same year Ch1na's 'strike hard' campaign in Xinj1ang ramped up with the construction" of the "re-education," or concentration, camps, according to the reports.

Now, given a conflict between Gina's tolerance of conservatives and Disney's doing business with GENOCIDAL MANIACS WHO RUN COMMUNIST CONCENTRATION CAMPS, you would expect that a "Christian" would side with the person who promotes tolerance. But you'd be wrong.

Regarding politics, you would think that Christians would vote for a president who supported religious liberty and the rights of unborn children. But you'd be wrong about that too. Many low-information Christians spend their time reading low-information charismatic teachers who focus more on life-enhancement than Biblical worldview. They are often more concerned with Trump's mean tweets than by Biden making deals with 1RAN and CH1NA – human rights violators.

Look:

- Women and Children Bear the Brunt of 1ran's Grim Public Executions
- State Department 'Deeply Disturbed' By Report Alleging Systemic Rape, Sexual Abuse, Torture For Muslim Women In Ch1nese Internment Camps
- Report: Ch1na Bans Media from Covering D1sney's Mulan After Concentration Camp Backlash

- State Department: 1ran Imprisoning, Torturing, Killing Religious Minorities
- D1sney CFO Christine McCarthy: ‘Mulan’ Concentration Camp Ties ‘Generated Issues’

And that’s the point I wanted to make. I am surrounded by low-information Christians who shovel their money at entertainers who oppose the Christian worldview. Authentic Christians should support free speech, freedom of religion and right to live. Even for Muslim minorities in Ch1na! Even for Mus1ims in 1ran! I disagree with Is1amic doctrines but they shouldn’t be treated like that. We should oppose forced abortion, rape, forced detainment, forced labor, communist indoctrination. We should study economics and support economic systems that lead to free speech, religious liberty and right to life.

Entertainment-obsessed Christians today are so focused on clown-level “Christianity” and charismatic leaders that they have no discernment about policy or stewardship. Faced with a conflict between their own entertainment and basic human rights, they choose their own entertainment EVERY SINGLE TIME. I am sick and tired of being told by Christian idiots with worldly success that my concern for apologetics, history, economics, policy, politics, etc. is a “hobby”. No, that’s what Bible-believing God-fearing Christians read about and care about.

If you know more about Star Wars than you know about politics and policy, may I suggest that you are not good at being a Christian. If you consider apologetics to be a “hobby” on the same level as knowing Star Wars lore, then may I suggest that you are not good at being a Christian. You may be very good at your education. You may be very good at your job. You may be very good at making money. You may be very good at marrying. You may be very good at making children (to be handed off to day care and public schools). BUT YOU ARE NOT GOOD AT CHRISTIANITY. And that’s more important than knowing Star Wars, NBA, NFL, Netflix, etc.

New York Democrats admit they covered up 15,000 deaths caused by their decisions

February 12, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember that during the first year of the Wuh4n Virus, the mainstream media loved to contrast the sensible, effective lockdown policies of New York Governor Cuom0 with the stupid, ineffective stay-open policies of Florida Governor DeSantis. DeSantis actually had much better numbers, but that didn't stop the media from praising their allies in the Dem0crat party.

Well, well, guess what the truth was?

New York Post reports:

> Gov. Andrew Cuom0's top aide privately apologized to Dem0cratic lawmakers for withholding the state's nursing home death toll from COV1D-19 — telling them "we froze" out of fear that the true numbers would "be used against us" by federal prosecutors, The Post has learned.
>
> The stunning admission of a coverup was made by secretary to the governor Melissa DeR0sa during a video conference call with state Dem0cratic leaders in which she said the Cuom0 administration had rebuffed a legislative request for the tally in August because "right around the same time, [then-President Donald Trump] turns this into a giant political football," according to an audio recording of the two-hour-plus meeting.
>
> "He starts tweeting that we killed everyone in nursing homes," DeR0sa said. "He starts going after [New Jersey Gov. Phil] Murphy, starts going after [California Gov. Gavin] News0m, starts going after [Michigan Gov.] Gretchen Wh1tmer."
>
> In addition to attacking Cuom0's fellow Dem0cratic governors, DeR0sa said, Trump "directs the Department of Justice to do an investigation into us."
>
> "And basically, we froze," she told the lawmakers on the call.
>
> "Because then we were in a position where we weren't sure if what we were going to give to the Department of Justice, or what we give to you guys, what we start saying, was going to be used against us while we weren't sure if there was going to be an investigation."

THIS WAS NOT AN APOLOGY TO THE VICTIMS OR THEIR FAMILIES:

> But instead of a mea culpa to the grieving family members of more than 13,000 dead seniors or the critics who say the Health Department spread COV1D-19 in the care facilities with a March 25 state Health Department directive that nursing homes admit infected patients, DeR0sa tried to make amends with the fellow Dem0crats for the political inconvenience it caused them.
>
> "So we do apologize," she said. "I do understand the position that you were put

> in. I know that it is not fair. It was not our intention to put you in that political position with the Republicans."

The Dem0crats were not concerned with the voters, they were concerned with those evil Republicans. The goal is not to govern well, the goal is to cover-up your mistakes so you stay in power.

Remember when Andrew Cuom0 said "Who cares?" when asked about the people his decisions had killed?

> In addition to stonewalling lawmakers on the total number of nursing home residents killed by COV1D-19, Cuom0's administration refused requests from the news media — including The Post — and fought a Freedom of Information lawsuit filed by the Empire Center on Public Policy.
>
> Instead, it only disclosed data on the numbers of residents who died in their nursing homes.
>
> But after state Attorney General Letitia James last month released a damning report that estimated the deaths of nursing home residents in hospitals would boost the grim tally by more than 50 percent, Health Commissioner Howard Zucker finally released figures showing the combined total was 12,743 as of Jan. 19.
>
> Just a day earlier, the DOH was only publicly acknowledging 8,711 deaths in nursing homes.
>
> In a Wednesday letter to lawmakers, Zucker said the total number of nursing home residents killed by COV1D-19 had increased to 13,297. That number jumps to 15,049 when assisted living/adult care facilities are factored in.
>
> The controversy generated by James' report led to an infamous news conference at which Cuom0 callously dismissed the matter of where nursing home fatalities actually took place.
>
> "Who cares [if they] died in the hospital, died in a nursing home? They died," he said.

There's some high-quality atheist morality right there for you. But this is what the people who live in New York wanted, when they elected someone with no demonstrated abilities and no achievements in the areas related to his job. He presented himself a certain way to voters, they found his appearance appealing. They voted for him because they saw elections as a popularity contest. A chance to feel good about themselves, and present themselves a certain way to their peers. This wasn't like buying a computer. You didn't need to look at specifications or read reviews. Just choose the one that made you feel good. They paid with their lives.

I expect the same from the decisions of those who voted for Biden / Harris. They don't see themselves as having to be faithful. They wanted power, and the threat to that power (Republicans) is the only reason why they are in office. If they are incompetent and make

mistakes, they won’t do the right thing. They’ll cover it up. Because their real job is staying in power, not serving you.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

February 13, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

February 14, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Craig’s famous minimal facts case for the resurrection has been posted at the Christian Apologetics Alliance. He presents 4 facts admitted by the majority of New Testament historians, and then he supplies multiple pieces of evidence for each fact.

Here are the four facts:

- FACT #1: *After his crucifixion, Jesus was buried in a tomb by Joseph of Arimathea.*
- FACT #2: *On the Sunday following the crucifixion, Jesus’ tomb was found empty by a group of his women followers.*
- FACT #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.*
- FACT #4: *The original disciples believed that Jesus was risen from the dead despite their having every predisposition to the contrary.*

Here’s the detail on fact #3, the post-mortem appearances.

> FACT #3: *On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.*
>
> This is a fact which is almost universally acknowledged among New Testament scholars, for the following reasons:
>
> 1. The list of eyewitnesses to Jesus’ resurrection appearances which is quoted by Paul in I Cor. 15. 5-7 guarantees that such appearances occurred. These included appearances to Peter (Cephas), the Twelve, the 500 brethren, and James.
>
> 2. The appearance traditions in the gospels provide multiple, independent attestation of these appearances. This is one of the most important marks of historicity. The appearance to Peter is independently attested by Luke, and the appearance to the Twelve by Luke and John. We also have independent witness to Galilean appearances in Mark, Matthew, and John, as well as to the women in Matthew and John.
>
> 3. Certain appearances have earmarks of historicity. For example, we have good evidence from the gospels that neither James nor any of Jesus’ younger brothers believed in him during his lifetime. There is no reason to think that the early church would generate fictitious stories concerning the unbelief of Jesus’ family had they been faithful followers all along. But it is indisputable that James and his brothers did become active Christian believers following Jesus’ death. James was considered an apostle and eventually rose to the position of leadership of the

> Jerusalem church. According to the first century Jewish historian Josephus, James was martyred for his faith in Christ in the late AD 60s. Now most of us have brothers. What would it take to convince you that your brother is the Lord, such that you would be ready to die for that belief? Can there be any doubt that this remarkable transformation in Jesus' younger brother took place because, in Paul's words, "then he appeared to James"?
>
> Even Gert Ludemann, the leading German critic of the resurrection, himself admits, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus' death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."3

Yes, Gerd Ludemann is actually an atheist new Testament historian, and he has even debated Dr. Craig on the resurrection – not once, but *twice*. That's the kind of evidence Dr. Craig uses in his case. Not just what your pastor will give you, but what atheists will give you. We need to learn to debate like that.

We spend so much on education, why are American children underperforming?

February 15, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's what public schools and unionized teachers do instead of teaching children mathematics.

Daily Caller:

> Oregon's Department of Education (ODE) is encouraging teachers to register for a training program that offers a toolkit to help educators "develop an anti-racist math practice."
>
> An ODE newsletter advertises a Feb. 21 "Pathway To Math Equity Micro-Course" designed for middle school teachers to use to help them in "dismantling racism in mathematics instruction."
>
> […]The toolkit offers teachers help in "deconstructing racism" in the classroom and "dismantling white supremacy in math classrooms by visibilizing the the toxic characteristics of white supremacy culture with respect to math."

Oh yes! Visibilizing!

> Some of the ways in which white supremacy shows up in classrooms, according to the toolkit, is when "the focus is on getting the 'right' answer."
>
> […]Instead, teachers should have students "come up with at least two answers that might solve this problem" and challenge standardized test questions by justifying why every other answer is incorrect.

Yes, we don't want children to do math and get right answers. Getting the right answers is "racist". I wonder why Asian countries are so much better than America at teaching their students to get right answers. Don't they know how racist that is?

Next, City Journal:

> A Philadelphia elementary school recently forced fifth-grade students to celebrate "black communism" and simulate a Black Power rally in honor of political radical Angela Davis.
>
> […]At the conclusion of the unit, the teacher led the ten- and eleven-year-old students into the school auditorium to "simulate" a Black Power rally to "free Angela Davis" from prison, where she had once been held while awaiting trial on charges of conspiracy, kidnapping, and murder. The students marched on the stage, holding signs that read "Black Power," "Jail Trump," "Free Angela," and "Black Power Matters." They chanted about Africa and ancestral power, then shouted "Free Angela! Free Angela!" as they stood at the front of the stage.
>
> The William D. Kelley School has long been one of the most troubled in the

> district. The school's student population is 94 percent black and 100 percent "economically disadvantaged." Academically, it is one of the worst-performing schools in Pennsylvania. By sixth grade, only 3 percent of students are proficient in math, and 9 percent are proficient in reading. By graduation, only 13 percent of Kelley students will have achieved basic literacy.
>
> […]Unfortunately, the programs at William Kelley are no aberration. In recent years, the entire Philadelphia public school system has embraced the philosophy of "antiracism." Last summer, the superintendent released an Antiracism Declaration promising to "[dismantle] systems of racial inequity" and circulated a memo recommending racially segregated training programs for white and black educators. The local teachers' union produced a video denouncing the United States as a "settler colony built on white supremacy and capitalism" that has created a "system that lifts up white people over everyone else." The solution, according to the union, is to overthrow the "racist structure of capitalism," provide "reparations for Black and Indigenous people," and "uproot white supremacy and plant the seeds for a new world."

They know that if they can indoctrinate your children to vote for socialism, then they'll get a raise from their allies in the Democrat party.

> After spending millions to support President Biden and other Democrats in the 2020 election cycle, teachers unions are finding Biden to be a reliable ally as they fight back against school districts and parents who want them to return to classrooms amid the coronavirus pandemic.
>
> Teachers unions have ramped up their political spending, increasing from $4.3 million in 2004 to $43.7 million in 2020, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> The teachers unions also lean heavily Democratic in their donations, including the Federation of American Teachers, which gave $2 million to pro-Biden super PAC Priorities USA Action. The Federation of American Teachers gave more than $14 million to liberal groups between 2019 and 2020. The National Education Association, another teachers union, gave more than $23 million to liberal groups during the same time period, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.
>
> Just 2% of teachers union donations in the 2020 cycle went to Republicans, the numbers show.

Teacher unions donate *millions of dollars* to Democrats and leftist political activists every election cycle.

Far-left New York Times issues correction of story used in impeachment

February 16, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox News reports:

> The New York Times has updated an initial report from last month claiming that Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick was killed due to blunt force truma from a fire extinguisher during the Jan. 6 riot.
>
> A new Feb. 12 update can be seen pinned to the top of the Jan. 8 article headlined, "Capitol Police Officer Dies From Injuries in Pro-Trump Rampage."
>
> "New information has emerged regarding the death of the Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick that questions the initial cause of his death provided by officials close to the Capitol Police," the affixation states.
>
> As the Washington Examiner notes, additional revisions based on new information surrounding the officer's death can be seen in another section of the article updated Sunday: "Law enforcement officials initially said Mr. Sicknick was struck with a fire extinguisher, but weeks later, police sources and investigators were at odds over whether he was hit. Medical experts have said he did not die of blunt force trauma, according to one law enforcement official."
>
> The Times originally characterized Sicknick's death differently.
>
> "Mr. Sicknick, 42, an officer for the Capitol Police, died on Thursday from brain injuries he sustained after Trump loyalists who overtook the complex struck him in the head with a fire extinguisher, according to two law enforcement officials," the Times initially wrote.
>
> On Thursday, a separate Times article rebuked the paper's original Jan. 8 report.
>
> "Investigators have found little evidence to back up the attack with the fire extinguisher as the cause of death, the official said. Instead, they increasingly suspect that a factor was Officer Sicknick being sprayed in the face by some sort of irritant, like mace or bear spray, the law enforcement official said," the piece asserted.
>
> Last week, House impeachment managers used the original Times article as evidence in their impeachment pre-trial memo.

Also interesting, this from The Federalist:

> "Officer Sicknick is a martyr for democracy," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Feb. 4, following Sicknick lying in honor at the Capitol Rotunda.
>
> Democrats cited the initial Times report in their pretrial memo that apparently falsely claimed "insurrectionists killed a Capitol police officer by striking him in

> the head with a fire extinguisher."
>
> President Joe Biden repeated the unverified claim Sicknick was killed by Capitol rioters in the first line of his statement about his predecessor's second acquittal.
>
> "It was nearly two weeks ago that Jill and I paid our respects to Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick, who laid in honor in the Rotunda after losing his life protecting the Capitol from a riotous, violent mob on January 6, 2021," Biden said.

How soon did the New York Times know that their "news" story needed to be corrected? Before they wrote it?

After Biden's attacks on oil and gas, gas prices are up 18% and headed higher

February 17, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From the Washington Examiner:

> By the time America gets back to work, and traffic jams, gas prices under the Biden administration could be heading back to $4 thanks to new climate regulations, the president's shutdown of energy mining on federal lands, and overseas production cuts.
>
> Industry experts believe that as the coronavirus vaccine becomes widely available, offices will start to fill up, as will gas stations.
>
> […]Since Election Day, gas and crude oil prices have jumped. In the United States, gas prices are up 18% and oil nearly 50%.
>
> […]Every department has been ordered to factor climate change into their moves. In addition, he suspended new drilling leases on federal lands, restricted U.S funds in worldwide carbon energy programs, eliminated "fossil fuel subsidies," stopped the Keystone XL oil pipeline construction, and slapped a moratorium on federal leases in Arctic Wildlife Refuge.
>
> OPEC and the Saudis have also cut production in hopes of raising prices to offset a year of losses.

Democrat views on energy development and global warming are simple. They think that low-emission, low-cost energy sources like natural gas (fracking) and nuclear are BAD. And they think that high-cost, animal killing energy sources like wind and solar are GOOD.

But does green energy work?

Here's USA Today:

Platte River Power Authority's call for customers to conserve energy on Sunday resulted from a perfect storm of energy supply issues as extreme cold created a regional shortage of natural gas; ice and frigid temperatures restricted power from wind turbines; and blankets of snow covered solar panels.

That's just one green energy state. They have colder weather. So what about a warmer state?

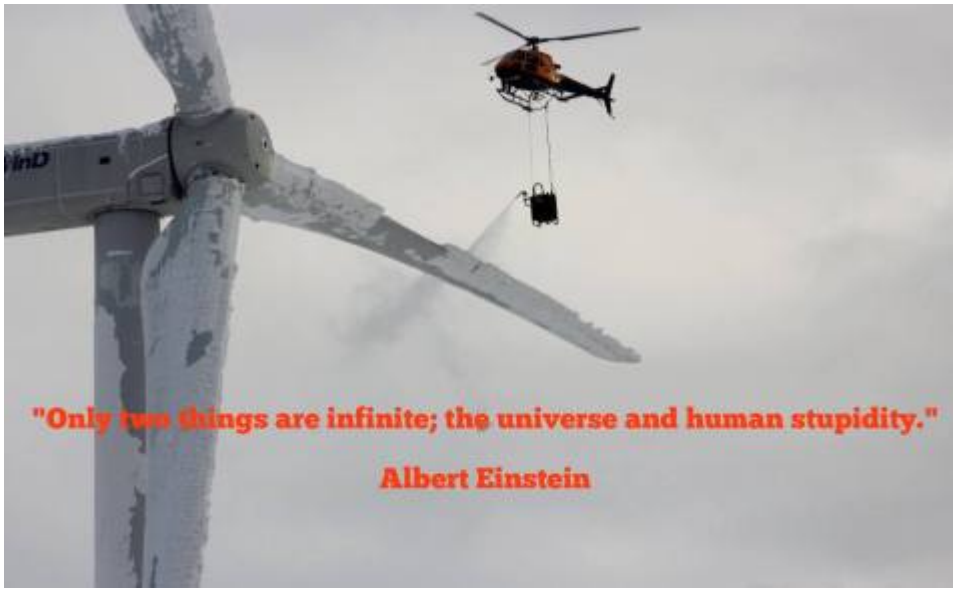

Environmentalists burning helicopter fuel to de-ice wind turbines one at a time

Fox News reports on a state that is heavily invested in green energy:

> About half of Texas' wind power generation capacity has been put on ice amid the state's historic winter storm, according to a report.
>
> The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) told the Austin American Statesman that roughly 12,000 megawatts of Texas' wind generation capacity had been hampered as of Sunday due to frozen wind turbines. However, they also noted that unfrozen wind turbines are spinning at a higher rate than expected, helping to offset the losses.
>
> ERCOT operates Texas' electric grid and manages the deregulated energy market for 75% of the state,
>
> "This is a unique winter storm that's more widespread with lots of moisture in West Texas, where there's a lot of times not a lot of moisture," ERCOT senior director of system operations Dan Woodfin told the outlet. "It's certainly more than what we would typically assume."
>
> It is estimated between 2.5 and 3.5 million people in Texas have been left without power amid the storm's frigid temperatures.

Democrats believe that big government is the solution to impending doom caused by human freedom and the free market. They believe this in spite of their past predictions being falsified for the last 50 years. They hate to talk about the Medieval Warming Period, when the Earth was much hotter than it is today. I tend to prefer beliefs that haven't been falsified by evidence over beliefs that make me feel good and look good to people who talk for a living.

Secular left Canada now jailing Christian pastors for holding church services

February 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from the Justice Center, a law firm:

> The Justice Centre is representing Grace Life Church (Grace Life), a large church near Edmonton, and its pastor James Coates. The congregants of Grace Life hold strongly to their religious beliefs regarding the necessity of gathering in-person to worship and to minister to each other through fellowship and corporate prayer and worship, exercising their Charter freedoms peacefully. Alberta Health Services (AHS) has ticketed Pastor Coates, taken Grace Life and Pastor Coates to court, and even attempted to completely shut the Church down.
>
> […]Restrictions imposed in November and December 2020 through the Orders of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw, demanded that churches gather at only 15% of building capacity and that all attendees mask and distance from each other.

Dr. Deena Hinshaw doesn't like people using their freedom in ways she disapproves of.

Surveillance by bureaucrats and armed police:

> AHS officials began in November to show up and inspect the Church weekly. Each Sunday morning—during the worship service—an AHS inspector, often accompanied by law enforcement, demanded entry to the building, went into the sanctuary, and recorded the number of people present and whether they were masked and distanced. This has occurred almost every Sunday for three months, with no regard to how disturbing the presence of an AHS inspector and law enforcement is to congregants of Grace Life.

Normal Christian activities are "illicit and bizarre", according to the secular left nanny state:

> On December 17, 2020, AHS inspector Janine Hanrahan issued an order against Grace Life church (the "December 17 AHS Order") and publicly posted the Order on the internet, intentionally exposing Grace Life to public contempt. Previously normal, healthy activities such as sitting together and learning, playing instruments and singing, and not covering one's face, are outlawed and described as if they are illicit and bizarre in the December 17 AHS Order and various AHS inspection reports.

Janine Hanrahan doesn't like people using their freedom in ways she disapproves of.

More:

> On January 21, 2021, AHS filed a court application to enforce through court order

> the December 17 AHS order, and to be given the power to throw Pastor Coates in jail if he continued to lead Grace Life in normal worship services.
>
> […]On January 29, AHS issued a Closure Order, purporting to entirely close down Grace Life and prevent any congregants of Grace Life from gathering for in-person worship services at the church building.
>
> […]On Sunday, February 7, after the morning worship service, two RCMP officers met with Pastor Coates and a few others in his office at the Church. The officers told Pastor Coates that he was under arrest and must agree to stop breaching the CMOH Orders.
>
> […]Grace Life again gathered for worship on Sunday, February 14 and again an AHS inspector entered the Church and reported the activities of the attendees. RCMP have notified Pastor Coates that they plan to arrest him again on Tuesday, February 16, and bring him before a Justice of the Peace, forcing the court to decide if Pastor Coates will be imprisoned.

Just in case you're wondering what the score is, in terms of sicknesses and deaths caused by this church compared to caused by government, government is "winning" 1-0:

> Grace Life is a church of nearly 400 congregants. Not one has been lost to Covid, but, sadly, a congregant was lost to the Alberta Government lockdown in the first week of February when he died prematurely because he couldn't get the cancer treatment he needed due to Government restrictions.

It's not often reported how much damage theses restrictions are doing. Not just in terms of missing health care, but depression, suicide, loneliness, and denying children their educations. Canadians continue to pay taxes to teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, judges, police, etc. but they are not getting their money's worth. There's an epidemic of VIOLENT CRIME in cities like Toronto. But all the police in Canada have time for is arresting pastors and shutting down churches.

This is why I support smaller government. When you pay money to these people, they aren't accountable to do anything for you. Why are Canadians paying government workers first, and taking whatever scraps of liberty they're allowed to have, after? Don't live under people like this. Move somewhere where they don't control you. And don't marry one of these hysterical, low-information fascists and put them in your house to monitor you.

By the way, in case you're wondering how the pastor is doing, his wife has posted an update: part 1 and part 2. The police will only release him if he stops pastoring his church. No one, including his own wife, is allowed to see him. Learn from Canada.

By the way, this isn't the first time that a pastor has been arrested for preaching in Canada. It happens a lot.

Dr. Walt Russell explains how to read the Bible effectively

February 19, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Walt Russell's book on the subject of interpreting the Bible is called "Playing With Fire: How the Bible Ignites Change in Your Soul". I like that book, but I found four articles that summarize the main points of the book so people can understand how to read the Bible at a high level.

Here is part one which talks about how postmodern relativism is at odds with discovering the original intent of an author.

Excerpt:

> Twenty-four year-old "Janet" (not her real name) was angry at my emphasis on seeking to discover authors' intentions when we read their texts. She was an evangelical Christian and a second grade teacher in a public school. She prided herself in helping her 20 students learn to love literature. She would read them a story as they gathered around her, and then ask each child, "What does the story mean to you?" She prodded them to come up with their own unique meanings. With such strong encouragement, the class of 20 would eventually have 20 different meanings for the one story. Janet sensed that I was a naysayer about such "love of literature." Pouring a little emotional gasoline on the fire, I said, "Janet, you're certainly doing your part to insure that these 7 year-olds will never recover from a radically relativistic view of meaning!" Now I had her full attention.

Here is part two which talks about the importance of knowing the genre of a text before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" — the newspaper headline virtually screams out at you. The thought of something being slain is repulsive. You're gripped by a mental image of southern India's Bengal tiger. You imagine its beautiful face, its stripes and piercing eyes. Then your image is shattered by the sudden blast of a high-powered rifle. You see the exquisite creature writhe in pain, fall gracelessly in its tracks and die. Having read no further than the headline, you feel sick, as if you've witnessed something tragic.
>
> But *should* you feel this way? The slaughter of an endangered species — especially one as magnificent as the Bengal tiger — is horrifying, no doubt. But suppose you failed to notice that the headline "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS!" appeared in the *sports page* of the morning paper. Clearly enough, it now refers to different Indians, different Tigers and a different manner of slaying than you originally thought. And is it really that tragic that the Cleveland Indians badly beat the

> Detroit Tigers in a major league baseball game last night? Not unless you're a long-suffering Detroit Tigers' baseball fan. But how do you now know that the headline is about baseball and not tiger-slaying in India? You look at the words "INDIANS SLAY TIGERS" and you know exactly what each word means. When you combine these words, how can they not mean exactly what you first thought they did — that *Indians slay tigers*? Answer: because their meanings are communicated (as the meanings of *all* words are) through *genres*!

Here is part three which talks about the importance of reading the context of a verse before you try to interpret it.

Excerpt:

> "Never Read a Bible Verse!" That's the title of a little booklet my friend and Christian radio personality, Gregory Koukl, has written to help people read the Bible well. What great advice. "That's right, never read a Bible verse. Instead, always read a paragraph — at least." But the current is flowing the other way in our popular sound-bite culture. Not to be left out (or left behind!), the Church has its own version of sound-bite culture: *verse-bite culture*. In verse-bite culture we take a sentence or sentence-fragment from a biblical paragraph, memorize it out of context, write it on a little card, put it on a billboard, a plaque, a rock, etc. Somehow we think that just because this little chunk of Scripture has a verse number in front of it, it was meant to be a free-standing unit of thought. Nothing could be further from the truth.
>
> Apart from the fact that chapter and verse divisions weren't added to the New Testament text until 1560 — long after the New Testament's inspired authorship — there is a more important reason for never reading just a Bible verse, and instead reading at least the paragraph that contains it.

Here is part four which talks about the importance of applying the words of the Bible to your life.

One verse that is often misinterpreted is missing from the articles, but present in the STR lecture. It's Philippians 1:6 that says "6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus". Russell says in the lecture that this promise is specifically intended for the church in Philippi, to whom Paul is writing, not necessarily to all Christians. He is giving them a promise just after directly referring to their good work in supporting him in his ministry. Some verses are just not meant for us, and the context reveals it.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig at Biola U: Does God Exist?

February 20, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students
Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang

– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws
– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection

– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus
– god wouldn't have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that's a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that's a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that's a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don't support life, that's a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that's a bad design

3. hitchens' burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can't prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig's scientific arguments don't go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don't prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don't prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn't be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig's evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can't use the progress of science
– it's too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god's existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn't forming his view based on evidence

– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don't believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you've got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God
– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH's evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH's argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn't need to be efficient

CH's argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH's argument that Craig's scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH's argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn't need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH's citation of Craig's book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true

– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH's rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH's rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH's argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed
– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them

– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that’s a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven’t even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn’t prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they’re growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn’t improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do
– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn’t need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that’s why people act morally
– it’s degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don’t know why, because i can’t ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don’t hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don’t believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don’t agree

WC moral argument: it’s not epistemology it’s the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing
– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history

– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it's just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that's not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

I wonder how Never Trump “Christians” feel about the re-introduction of the Equality Act

February 21, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve talked to a lot of Christians about the Equality Act. Most had no idea what the Equality Act even was. I’ve been writing about it since 2015. I’ve been reading legal experts and political analysts since then to find out what the consequences will be for Bible-believing Christians. Guess what? The Democrats just reintroduced the bill.

Here’s the latest about the bill from Christian Post:

> The reintroduction of the wide-reaching Equality Act, billed as a necessary measure to enshrine protections for the LGBT community into federal civil rights law, was announced Thursday, much to the chagrin of some conservatives and Christian groups.
>
> Sens. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., Cory Booker, D-N.J., and Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., announced the bill’s introduction in the United States Senate while Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I., announced the introduction of the bill in the House of Representatives. According to a press release from Merkley’s office, “the Senate bill will be formally introduced next week when the Senate floor re-opens for bill introductions.”

Biden said this when the bill was re-introduced:

> I applaud Congressman David Cicilline [D-RI] and the entire Congressional Equality Caucus for introducing the Equality Act in the House of Representatives yesterday, and I urge Congress to swiftly pass this historic legislation.

During the campaign, he promised to sign the bill into law, if it reached his desk. This is something that Beth Moore and Russell Moore never told you. They were too busy attacking Trump for his gruff attitude and mean tweets to focus on actual policy.

Here’s a reaction from the lead counsel at Alliance Defending Freedom:

> Kristen Waggoner, general counsel at the First Amendment law firm Alliance Defending Freedom, was one of many conservatives reacting unfavorably to the news of the bill’s re-emergence.
>
> […]“This proposed legislation punishes and marginalizes people who hold decent and honorable beliefs about marriage or dare to believe the scientific evidence regarding the physical differences between men and women. The Equality Act would deny female athletes fair competition in sports, ignore women’s unique health needs, and force vulnerable girls to share intimate spaces with men who identify as female,” Waggoner warned.

I trust a legal expert far more than I trust a charismatic Christian leader with no

knowledge or experience with actual policies.

If I had to pick one expert on the policy implications of the law, I'd pick Ryan T. Anderson, president of Ethics & Public Policy Center (EPPC) who said this:

> It sacrifices the equality, safety, and privacy of women, while privileging men who identify as women: If this bill becomes law, they'd have a civil right to spend the night in a battered women's shelter, disrobe in a women's locker room, and compete on a women's sports team—even children at K-12 public schools.
>
> Religious institutions fare no better. Religious schools, adoption agencies, and other charities would face federal sanction for operating according to basic biology and mainstream Biblical teaching on sex and marriage. Outrageously, this act exempts itself from the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

If the Equality Act passes, there isn't going to be any religious exemption or conscience exemption. Every institution that calls itself Christian – schools, churches, universities, corporations, charities, etc. – will be brought into compliance.

Will it become law? It passed in the House 236 to 173 in 2019. It stalled in the Republican-controlled Senate, and we had a Republican president in the White House. Now, thanks to the efforts of people like Beth Moore and Russell Moore, we have a Democrat Senate and a Democrat president. Still like your chances of keeping your religious liberty? The Democrats have everything now.

It's important for Bible-believing Christians to realize that popular charismatic "leaders" have no idea how specific policies will affect our morality and religious liberty. They look to Democrats to tell them what to believe. If you're looking for an accurate view of how laws and policies affect you, you'll have to read people like Kristen Waggoner and Ryan Anderson. Don't think you're going to find out how laws affect you by consuming popular entertainment from secular leftists.

Related posts

- What adjustments should Christians expect during a Biden / Harris administration?
- Republicans block Equality Act bill that makes Christian moral values a crime
- How would the Democrats' "Equality Act" affect Christians and conservatives?
- How same-sex marriage will be used as a weapon against religious conservatives
- Democrats' "Equality Act" will threaten religious liberty in all 50 states

Can a person believe in both God and Darwinian evolution?

February 22, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The term for a person who believes in fully naturalistic evolution but who also believes in God is "theistic evolutionist".

Terrell Clemmons takes a look at one organization of theistic evolutionists "Biologos", and makes a distinction between their public statements and the real implications of their public statements.

Here is the PR / spin definition of theistic evolution:

> Evolutionary creation is "the view that all life on earth came about by the God-ordained process of evolution with common descent. Evolution is a means by which God providentially achieves his purposes in creation." This view, also called *theistic evolution*, has been around since the late nineteenth century, and BioLogos promotes it today in a variety of religious and educational settings.

And here is the no-spin definition of theistic evolution:

> As Dr. Stephen Meyer explains it, the central issue dividing Bio-Logos writers from intelligent design theorists is BioLogos's commitment to methodological naturalism (MN), which is not a scientific theory or empirical finding, but an arbitrary rule excluding non-material causation from the outset. "Unfortunately," Meyer writes,
>
> methodological naturalism is a demanding doctrine. The rule does not say "try finding a materialistic cause but keep intelligent design in the mix of live possibilities, in light of what the evidence might show." Rather, MN tells you that you simply must posit a material or physical cause, whatever the evidence.
>
> **What this means, according to BioLogos's own epistemology, is that God is objectively undiscoverable and unknowable—a tenet that sits squarely at odds with Christian orthodoxy, which has for centuries held that God is clearly discernible in the natural world (e.g., Romans 1:20).** Obviously, this is theologically problematic, but Meyer also points out that theistic evolution faces problems from a scientific standpoint as well, as the technical literature among evolutionary biologists is moving *away* from the Darwinian mechanism.

Whenever I talk to theistic evolutionists, I try to stop them from talking about the Bible or their faith, because that's not what is interesting to me. I don't really care about their history as a religious person, or where they go to church, or who their pastor is. When I talk about origins and evolution, I only care about the science. What the ordinary process of scientific inquiry tells us about nature? Does nature have the capacity to create all of

the varieties of life without any intelligent agency playing a role? Or, are there parts of nature that are similar to computer programs, blog posts, and term papers, where the best explanation of the effect is an intelligent agent choosing how to arrange the parts to achieve functionality?

I don't accept molecules-to-man unguided evolution. This is not because I start with faith and let faith override the findings of science. It's because I think that if you look at specific areas of natural history, there is clear evidence of intelligent agency, such as in the origin of life, or the Cambrian explosion. These effects in nature are well-studied and well-understood, and they look much more like the code that a computer scientist (like me) writes than the simplistic "order" created by wind erosion or crystalline patterns or anything the blind forces of nature could produce. Blind forces are observed to make small changes – short or long finch beaks, fruit flies with 4 wings and no balancers, bacterial resistances.

What's also interesting is how often theistic evolutionists drop the theism but keep the evolution.

Consider this article about Stephen Matheson from Evolution News:

> Biologist Stephen Matheson is a longtime critic of the theory of intelligent design. His extensive attacks on Stephen Meyer's *Signature in the Cell*, for one, ranged from the substantive to the trivial and personal. The tone was frequently…abrasive, and we responded at the time. With Arthur Hunt, Dr. Matheson has debated Dr. Meyer in a forum at Biola University. Formerly a professor at an Evangelical Christian school, Calvin College, Matheson is still listed as a Blog Author at the theistic evolutionary website *BioLogos*, where it notes that he enjoys "explor[ing] issues of science and Christian faith."
>
> Well, his theistic evolutionary explorations have now terminated. As he reports on his personal blog page, where he took a hiatus of more than five years along with a break from his teaching, he is "happily" no longer a Christian.

OK. Now that's just one case, but what about Howard Van Till, also of Calvin College?

Salvo magazine takes a look at what he wrote in a recent book:

> In what follows I shall use the term "naturalism," when unqualified, to represent neither more nor less than *the rejection of supernaturalism.* Stated positively, naturalism is committed to the belief that all events that occur within this Universe are consistent with and adequately explained by the system of natural causes. This commitment necessarily entails the additional belief that the system of natural causes is fully adequate to account for all events that transpire. Focusing on the issue of the Universe's formational economy, we can say that naturalism—as here defined -entails the RFEP.

He now gives presentations for atheist groups entitled "From Calvinism to Freethought". Freethought is a euphemism for atheism.

Now, for the big three Western monotheistic religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. To deny supernaturalism IS to deny the robust theism present in the world's big three monotheistic religions. Van Till denies theism as commonly understood now. And again, this isn't because of the science. His heavy handed naturalistic assumption squashed out any kind of serious inquiry into areas like the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine tuning, the origin or life, the Cambrian explosion, biological convergence, so-called junk DNA, deleterious mutations, and so on. Places where you can see that naturalistic forces cannot do the creating that Van Till has faith that they can.

I don't accept any kind of macro-evolution – evolution of body plans or organ types. My problem with evolution is not Bible-based, it's science-based. If the science shows the need for intelligent causes, and I think it does, then I think that the naturalists need to adjust their assumptions and pre-suppositions to match the evidence. On the Internet have ball sorts of programs written in different computer languages. They are evidence for programmers. In nature, we have DNA and proteins and sudden origin of body plans, that's evidence for a programmer, too.

Amazon and Apple welcome you to an old-fashioned book-burning

February 23, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember in my recent post on the Equality Act, I recommended Ryan T. Anderson as an expert on the impact of LG8T laws and policies on Christians and other people who have moral convictions. Well, Amazon decided that any disagreement with their left-wing amorality needs to be silenced and punished. They pulled Anderson's book from their online store, with no reason given.

Reported by The Federalist:

> This past weekend, something ominous and cruel happened on Amazon.com—although it could have been foreseen given the recent ramped-up levels of censorship. With the removal of Ryan T. Anderson's 2018 book "When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment," Amazon openly signaled something to the American public and world.
>
> The digital book-burning has begun; take cover if you're not a raging leftist.
>
> Anderson's work approaches transgenderism and offers a scientific and practical perspective on the realities of human nature. On just about the three-year anniversary of its release, which makes this even more bewildering, the book was silently purged from the Amazon web store. Days before it came out in 2018, legacy institutions were out for blood.
>
> "It was attacked twice on the New York Times op-ed page. The Washington Post ran a hit piece on it that they then had to entirely rewrite to fix all their errors. It was obvious the critics hadn't read the book," Anderson told The Federalist. "People who have actually read my book discovered that it was a thoughtful and accessible presentation of the state of the scientific, medical, philosophical, and legal debates. Yes, it advances an argument from a certain viewpoint. No, it didn't get any facts wrong, and it didn't engage in any name-calling."
>
> Anderson's book was also removed briefly from the Apple Books app then re-added. It has been flagged by Twitter as "potentially sensitive content" as of Feb. 23.

His book on the policy impact of same-sex marriage "Truth Overruled" is my favorite book on the subject. The Harry-Sally book that Amazon banned had all sorts of endorsements from scholars:

> Amazon has yet to comment on its removal of Anderson's book, which has received acclaim by scholars at institutions like Princeton University, Harvard University, and Oxford University. It was hailed by John Finnis of Oxford as a "focused, informative, fair-minded, lucid and fact-based guide to just and

> reasonable policies.”

But the book didn’t pass muster with all the thousand-sexual-partner Grindr app users who make up the Big Tech elite. They decided it was bad. It doesn’t fit with San Francisco values, even if it was tightly argued and brimming with irrefutable evidence.

[image]

So, Amazon has been getting increasingly woke lately. Apple was always woke. They conspired, along with Google, to take down Parler. Was it because Parler doesn’t support the Democrat party platform? That was my impression. So I decided to curtail all my Amazon spending and found alternatives instead. I suggest that you do the same, as much as you’re able to. Even buying from left-wing small companies is safer than buying from Amazon. The small companies can’t hurt you.

By the way, if you want to buy Anderson’s book, you can get it on sale from Christian Book.

Two kinds of people who have tried to shame me away from Christianity

February 24, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In my last job, I had two interesting encounters, first with a secular Jewish leftist man and second with a New Age prosperity gospel feminist Christian woman.

So let's talk about the two people.

The man who thinks that conservative Christians are stupid

The first kind of person who tried to shame me for being a Christian is the person who thinks that Christianity is stupid. This kind of person invokes things that he hears in secular leftist pop culture as if it is common knowledge that theism generally, and Christianity in particular, is false. He's watched a documentary on the Discovery channel which said that the eternally oscillating cosmology was true. Or maybe he watched a documentary on the History Channel that said that Jesus never presented himself as God stepping into history. He presents these things that he reads in the New York Times, or sees on MSNBC or hears on NPR with the authority tone that Ben Carson might take when explaining modern medicine to a witch doctor.

Here is how things usually go with him:

- Me: here are two arguments against naturalistic evolution, the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion.
- Him: but you don't believe in a young-Earth do you? I mean, you believe in evolution don't you?
- Me: let's talk about how proteins and DNA is sequenced, and the sudden origin of Cambrian body plans
- Him: (shouting) Do you believe in evolution? Do you believe in evolution?

And this:

- Me: there hasn't been any global warming for 18 years, and temperatures were warmer in the Medieval Warming Period
- Him: but you don't deny climate change, do you? everyone on NPR agrees that climate change is real
- Me: let's talk about the last 18 years of no warming, and the temperatures during the Medieval Warming Period
- Him: (shouting) Do you believe in climate change? Do you believe in climate change?

He asks these questions so he can either label me as a nut, without having to weigh the evidence I'm presenting, or have me agree with him, without having to weigh the evidence I'm presenting. It's all about ignoring the evidence, so he can get back to his busy, busy practical life – and get back to feeling smug about being smarter than others. I

think a lot of men are like this – they don't want to waste their valuable time studying, they just want to jump to the right conclusion, then get back to doing whatever they want – like running marathons, or driving their kids to hockey practice, etc.

So how do you respond to a man who gets his entire worldview from the culture, but never deals with peer-reviewed evidence? Well, I think you just defeat his arguments with evidence and then present your own (peer-reviewed) evidence, and then leave it at that. If the person just wants to jump to the conclusion that all the "smart" people hold to, without doing any of the work, then you can't win. There are atheists out there who believe in the eternal oscillating universe they saw Carl Sagan talking about in their elementary school. You might try to argue for an origin of the universe by citing new evidence like the CMB and light element abundances. But sometimes, they won't care. Carl Sagan said it 50 years ago, and that settles it. It doesn't matter that the new evidence overturns the old theories, they don't care.

Do you think that Christianity will make non-Christians like you?

Consider 2 Tim 4:1-5:

1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:

[2] preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

[3] For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,

[4] and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

[5] As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

And 1 Peter 3:15-16:

[15] but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

[16] having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

If you have orthodox theological beliefs in this day and age then you are going to be shamed, humiliated and reviled by people. And it's not just having an orthodox view of who Jesus is that annoys them (e.g. – deity, exclusivity of salvation, morality, etc.). No, their disapproval spreads on into politics, especially abortion and gay marriage – basically any kind of rules around sexuality. That's what's really bugging these people, I think.

The woman who thinks Christianity is life-enhancement

This one is especially difficult when you are a young man, because we naturally look to women for approval and respect. You find yourself sitting in church or youth group, hoping for the approval and respect from the Christian women for your sound theology

and effective apologetics. Little do you know that many Christian women understand Christianity as life-enhancement, designed to produce happy feelings. God is their cosmic butler whose main responsibility is to meet their needs and make their plans work out. Although you might be keen on sound theology and good apologetics arguments, she doesn't think that's important.

So how to deal with this unmet need for approval and respect from women in the church?

First thing, be careful that you don't attend a church where the pastor in preaching and picking hymns that give you the idea that God is your cosmic butler. Second, read the Bible very carefully, and understand that with respect to God's purposes for you in this world, your happiness is expendable. You cannot be looking to attractive Christian women that you happen to meet in church to support you, as many of them have long-since sold out to the culture. They are not interested in learning *evidential* apologetics to defend God's reputation, or in defending the unborn, or in defending natural marriage, or in defending the free enterprise system that supports family autonomy from the state, etc. Those things are hard and unpopular, especially for those women who were raised to think that Christianity is about life enhancement and peer-approval.

Here's 1 Cor 4:1-5 to make the point:

1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

[2] Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

[3] But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

[4] For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

[5] Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

And 2 Tim 2:4:

[4] No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

Or, since I like Ronald Speirs from Band of Brothers so much:

This is the situation in which we find ourselves, so get used to it. And believe me, I have to deal with this, too. So I have all the sympathy in the world for you. Resign yourself to the fact that no one is going to approve of you for being faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ; not secular men, not Christian women. There is no cavalry coming to rescue you.

Bible study: How should Christians understand suffering? (1 Peter 1)

February 25, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought I would post my notes for my 1 Peter Bible study here. I'm studying 1 Peter with a female friend in the mornings. We're using Joel Green's "1 Peter" commentary which we got for free from Logos Bible Software.

We had a very good discussion today about how we started out our lives (even as Christians) with certain sad / missing things and how reading the Bible and having changed priorities and behaviors changed what we were hoping for, our priorities, our desires, and our contentment.

I just pasted in my full notes with the clips from Green's book, then below that, I have the pasted in her (better) notes. I wish you all could be in our Bible study, we are very practical.

My notes:

Author: Apostle Peter
Date: this letter was probably written before or during the Neronian persecution (AD 62-64)
Audience: probably a mixed group of Jews and Gentile believers who were scattered throughout the northern regions of Asia Minor
Genre: Didactic
Purpose: provide direction for believers under persecution; at times it also includes theological considerations which support the ethical exhortations.
Map: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_Peter_1#/media/File:Map_Anatolia_ancient_regions-en.svg
Commentary: "1 Peter" by Joel B. Green

Verses 6-7:

- Genuine faith doesn't mean that you will be free from "various trials" now.
- Talk about my experiences dealing with white male senior engineers and architects who are very successful in my IT workplace, married, with kids, who grew up in married Christian homes and lost their faith in college OR who profess Christianity but vote Democrat and know more about Star Wars / fantasy novels, etc. than Christian worldview and apologetics.
- The feeling of not being good enough at worldly success and not being able to convince non-Christians that spiritual things are more important, specifically, apologetics.
- Seeing how attractive, charismatic white Christians families are seen as the gold standard in church, even though they can't defend their worldview, and their

priorities, favored policies, and discussion topics are all from the secular left culture.
- My experience of "rejoicing" in the faith will not be about being happy or joyful. It's more likely to center around honor, as in Henry V's speech to his men (and reply to the Herald) in Act 4, Scene 3. (in modern English here)

Green: What Peter does not say is almost as important as what he affirms. First, he provides nowhere any hint that the affliction and misery of his audience is the consequence of their sin or God's judgment. Such categories simply have no place in his letter.

Green: First Peter is addressed to folks who do not belong, who eke out their lives on the periphery of acceptable society, whose deepest loyalties and inclinations do not line up very well with what matters most in the world in which they live.

Green: Divine choice and alien status are deeply rooted in God's purpose as this comes to expression in the Scriptures, so the dissonance of present life, chosen by God but held in contempt in society, is neither a surprise to God nor a contradiction of his plan. Peter will demonstrate that the way of Jesus Christ was the path of suffering and glory… that the model of Jesus Christ interprets and is interpreted by the Scriptures of Israel… and that this pattern is characteristic of those who follow in his footsteps…

Green: The issue is this: life-events do not come with self-contained and immediately obvious interpretations; rather, we conceptualize them in terms of imaginative structures that we take to be true, normal, and good. As a rule, the world-at-large casts a thick, dark cloud of despair over experiences of suffering, distress, trials, and alien status. Peter insists that such experiences on the part of his audience must be read according to a radically different pattern of thought—one that grows out of new birth.

Green: Inexorably linked in the consequent passion theology are the sufferings of Christ and his followers, who are thereby assured that their suffering will have a redemptive effect and will lead to glory and honor from God just as Jesus' suffering did. This is the interpretation of things inspired by the Spirit.

Verses 13-14:

- Hope in the future should cause us not to be conformed to our past passions.
- Being sober-minded means setting your hope on eternal life, instead of trying to fill worldly desires with experiences or possessions here and now. Sober like not trying to feel good now (artificially) using mind-altering substances.
- Emphasis is on new priorities and freely-chosen behaviors.
- Talk about how I saw marriage and children as the solution to my problems of bad parents and a contentious home when I was young.
- Talk about how prioritizing God's priorities and learning more about how the culture doesn't make marriage-ready women and doesn't value marriage means that I probably would have destroyed myself if I had got the marriage I desired.
- Talk about how take the priorities of God and acting according to the Bible (chastity, sobriety, stewardship, focus on loving others self-sacrificially) ends up putting you in

a safe, peaceful place – a paid off home, and retirement money.

- By focusing on God, your behaviors (chastity, sobriety, stewardship, loving others) have the effect of making you not destroy yourself with addictions, narcissism, etc. You end up in a pretty decent, peaceful place anyway, because you haven't self-destructed, e.g. – by marrying a non-Christian woman for looks and beauty who the culture turns into a secular leftist, and then watching helplessly when she goes into a career and puts your kids into public schools to be indoctrinated in secular leftism. I didn't get what I wanted, but I dodged a bullet, since that's how most young, unmarried women are today.

Green: The section as a whole, vv. 13–21, begins and ends with reference to "hope" (vv. 13, 21) and is centrally focused on "behavior, conduct, or way of life" (vv. 15, 17, 18). The accent on hope is carried over from the previous section (v. 3), but the emphasis on "way of life" is introduced for the first time, signaling early in the letter a pronounced interest in the nature of faithful life and ethical comportment in the world. Clearly, Peter anticipates that hope will be displayed in changed life.

Green: In the Greco-Roman world, "desire"… appears in moral discourse—already in Plato but more recently especially among the Stoics, in Hellenistic Jewish literature, and in Christian writings—with such generally negative connotations as "insatiable cravings" or "lust."15 As a generic vice almost universally condemned, "desire" marked "the former time of ignorance." In the present text, desires rooted in ignorance belong to the past, so should no longer shape or form… Peter's audience; in its place, imitation of God's holiness is expected. For Peter, "desire" and "holiness" appear as opposing forces each capable of drawing persons into its orbit, conforming human character and actions to its ways and so sculpting human life. Paul similarly wrote, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds" (Rom 12:2).

Her notes:

1. Who is the author of this letter? What do you know about him?

-The apostle Peter

-A disciple of Jesus

-One of the three of Jesus' inner circle

-Denied Christ at his crucifixion

-Spoke boldly at Pentecost in the face of mocking

-Was imprisoned for preaching the gospel

-Refused to stop preaching even if it meant death (Acts 5:29)

-Was martyred in Rome around 64 A.D.

2. Who is Peter writing to? What might their lives have been like as persecuted exiles?

-Christians of the Dispersion (Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and

Bithynia)

-Rejected by family and friends

-Difficulty finding work

-Scared for their lives

-Scared for their children's futures

3. What is one reason God allows trials in our lives now?

"*so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."* (v. 7)

-To test the genuineness of our faith

-To result in praise and glory when Christ returns

This is part of the normal Christian life, not as a result of their bad choices, but as a result of their decision to follow Christ. The things we care about as Christians will not be celebrated by this world.

It's not mentioned here, but the dispersion of Christians to new locations contributed to the spread of the gospel and resulted in many people being saved.

From other passages of Scripture:

-To make us more like Christ (Rom. 5:3-5)

-To equip us to show compassion to others (2 Cor. 1:3-5)

-To prepare for us glory (2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Peter 4:13)

-To draw others to Christ (Philippians 1:12; Col. 1:24-25; 2 Tim. 2:10)

I think there is a direct correlation between our suffering in this life and our happiness in the next life, such that we will actually be happier, more elated, more joyful, more grateful, in the next life because we experienced trials and suffering in this life.

- "For this light and momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison." (2 Corinthians 4:17)
- "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18)
- "But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed." (1 Peter 4:13)
- "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven…. (Matthew 5:3-12)

For example, have you ever lost something, freaked out that you couldn't find it, and then appreciated it far more after you found it than you ever had before you lost it? Similarly, I believe (based on Scripture verses) that we will experience greater pleasure in heaven and on the New Earth as a result of having been without comfort, pleasure, fulfillment, etc. for a time. If this is accurate, then we can genuinely thank God for allowing us to experience these trials for a time because by enduring them with trust in Christ, we are

investing in our future (eternal) happiness.

4. Our inheritance in Christ

a. How does Peter describe our inheritance in Christ?

-Imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you

b. What is a proper response to this inheritance that awaits us in the next life?

-Rejoicing, even in hard times (this should be evident to those around us)

-Hope in all circumstances (Explain *hope* in Bible of a confident and certain expectation for the future vs. *hope* in common usage as something we want which may or may not come to pass)

-Gratefulness for what is to come

-Self-sacrifice because this life is fleeting and the next is glorious

c. When you imagine life on the New Earth, what do you think about?

-Perfect health, energy, no sickness

-Perfect relationships with God and the saints

-Perfect beauty in nature

-No fear, anxiety, depression, disappointment

-Exploring the universe with perfect minds and bodies

-Exploring the oceans, the colorful fish and reefs, with no pollution or fear

5. In verse 13, Peter tells us to prepare our minds for action. Practically speaking, what can we do in our daily lives to make sure that our minds are prepared for action?

-Avoid corrupting influences like drugs, too much alcohol, pornography, entertainment that puts forth values that are in opposition to Christ and to our calling

-Spend time in the Word and in prayer daily, asking the Lord to conform us to his character and to prepare us for what is ahead

-Spend time meditating on the inheritance that awaits us

-Surround ourselves with like-minded Christians

-Read and watch films about Christians who have suffered for their faith in times past (Corrie Ten Boom, Sophie Scholl, Dietrick Bonhoeffer, etc.)

6. What trials have you faced for doing good in the past? What trials are you facing right now?

Past:

-Rejection and mocking for Christian faith at the UMC church

Present:

-Woke liberals who put pressure on me to conform to their values

Assignment: Spend some time thanking God for saving you from punishment and saving you for eternal glory. Ask him to use your trials to refine your faith and your character the

way fire refines gold, and to do it all for His glory.

7. Any other points or observations?

-1:2 references the Trinity: “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.”

-Suffering is the normal Christian life. It has been since the very beginning, and it will be until the very end. Ease and comfort for Christians is the strange anomaly. The prosperity gospel is heresy. We must expect suffering, prepare for suffering, and rejoice in suffering, but not seek out unnecessary suffering. We must suffer for doing good, not as criminals or fools. But our light and momentary afflictions are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed. Our hope is in the next life, and it will all be worth it.

House Democrats pass the Equality Act – here's what it means to Bible-believing Christians

February 26, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm just going to cut and paste some information for you from recent articles I found at Alliance Defending Freedom and The Federalist.

Here's an article from The Federalist to explain the bill.

Adoption agencies:

> Unhappy with the restrictions on eligibility that Catholic and other religious adoption agencies put on families looking to take children into their homes, the act seeks to nationalize Massachusetts, New York, and California's outright bans on religious adoption agencies' right to operate according to conscience. Never mind that there are any number of secular adoption agencies with no traditional marriage guidelines; shutting down the organizations that invented adoption, the bill states, will "increase the number of homes available to foster children."

Sex-specific businesses:

> Salons, too, will not be able to "discriminate" based on biology, opening the door in the United States for the Canadian nightmare where Jessic4 Y4niv — a man who identifies as a woman while still being attracted to women — sued to force female nail salon employees to wax his privates. You don't have to be a woman to understand the level of sexual assault implicit in an adult man demanding a woman handle his privates for money or risk the force of law.

Christian-owned organizations: (businesses, churches, schools)

> Remember Masterpiece Cakeshop's Jack Phillips? In 2017, after five years of fighting the Colorado baker won a Supreme Court battle establishing his right to abstain from services he opposed on religious grounds. Four years later, however, he is still embroiled in an unending stream of lawsuits and complaints brought by radical gay and transgender activists (and even a Satanist). The Equality Act would take the treatment Phillips has received over his views on marriage and gender, and nationalize it. Virtually no businessman would be exempt.

Christian charities:

> Nor will the Little Sisters of the Poor's hard-fought-if-fleeting legal victories be safe. According to the Equality Act, religious nurses, doctors, and hospitals unwilling to kill an unborn child or perform a potentially mentally destabilizing, deeply invasive, medically unsound sex-change surgery could be legally discriminating.

> While the Little Sisters were able to beat back their antagonists — who were led by President Joe Biden's nominee to head the Department of Health and Human Services, Xavier Becerra — using 1993's Religious Freedom Restoration Act, this last line of defense would be useless against the Equality Act.
>
> "The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993," the act reads, "shall not provide a claim concerning, or a defense to a claim under, a covered title, or provide a basis for challenging the application or enforcement of a covered title."

And of course religious schools will have to teach what the secular left believes. And religious organizations won't be able to hire people who actually believe in their religious mission.

Finally, I found this ADF article about *abortion* of all things:

> The "Equality Act" states that "pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition [which includes abortion] shall not receive less favorable treatment than other physical conditions." It also specifically eliminates conscience protections provided by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act for those who object to participating in abortions.
>
> Here's what that means:

1. The "Equality Act" could require doctors and hospitals to commit abortions—even if they have religious or moral objections.
2. The "Equality Act" offers no protections for employers who conscientiously object to covering abortion in their health care plans, leaving the door open for abortion advocates to argue that the Act requires them to provide abortion coverage.
3. The "Equality Act" could require the federal government and recipients of federal funding to cover abortion in their health care plans—all at the taxpayer's expense.

I've been paying a lot of attention to the bill since 2015, because I believe that this bill will basically end public Christianity in the United States. I don't see how you can be a champion of chastity or natural marriage if these views cannot be expressed. Your job will be threatened if you believe these things. Christian organizations will be threatened for believing these things. Christian businesses will be threatened if the owners believe these things. Remember, in Canada, a Christian law school was punished for requiring students to avoid sex outside of natural marriage. That was deemed "anti-g4y", and the law school lost its accreditation in several provinces.

The reason I follow this is because I know that a lot of Christians have a very different view of Christianity than I do. They don't want to defend Jesus' teachings on sexual morality and marriage. They want to show "love" to their non-Christian neighbors. And by

“love” they don’t mean a love that tells the truth. They mean a love that is acceptance of sin. Participation in sin. Celebration of sin. We’ve made a lot of Christians like that. They almost never know what the secular left has planned for them with laws like the Equality Act.

My job as a Bible-believing Christian is to tell you the truth and remind you that your job is not to show “love” (i.e. – agreement with) to non-Christians. Your job is to show love to Jesus, and share the truth to non-Christians in a loving way. Treat them with respect, but don’t agree with them. That’s not good for them, and your job is to *do good to them* – not to *agree with them.*

Please pray and take action:

Contact your U.S. senators and ask them to vote NO.

Related posts

- What adjustments should Christians expect during a Biden / Harris administration?
- Republicans block Equality Act bill that makes Christian moral values a crime
- How would the Democrats’ “Equality Act” affect Christians and conservatives?
- How same-sex marriage will be used as a weapon against religious conservatives
- Democrats’ “Equality Act” will threaten religious liberty in all 50 states

How should parents respond to teachers pressuring children to transition?

February 27, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Catholic teachers march in favor of gay rights and perverted sex education

My plan for marriage was to have 4 children with my wife, then homeschool them right through to doctoral degrees. But one thing I knew for sure, I was never going to put my kids into public schools. My impression of public school teachers is that they are the source of moral relativism and cultural relativism. They break down morality and patriotism in children and call it compassion.

Abigal Shrier has noticed that the teachers in public schools are pushing transgenderism pretty hard, because they don't want anyone making judgments about what is right or wrong, wise or foolish.

The far-left UK Daily Mail reported:

> 'I often get parents telling me they're not able to take binders (a cloth which flattens breasts by the use of constrictive materials) away from their children, and I say to them, "Would you give your children cigarettes?".
>
> 'Because we know binders are really harmful, they can deform breast tissue, cause rib cracking and shortness of breath. They're quite dangerous for your 14-year-old to be going around with.'
>
> Sharing her experience of parents' concerns, she said: 'Parents often say to me "I don't want to be seen as a transphobe", and it's very clear to me that sometimes these parents feel like they can't speak the truth or go against their own children's wishes.
>
> […]'I've never seen parents so beaten down and undermined. They send them to school in good faith and now schools are helping them fill out forms with new names as different sexes and hide it from their parents. They turn their kids

> against their parents.
>
> ‘Medicine has become so politicised that parents can’t even rely on honesty from medical professionals even when it comes to transition.’

You might remember that I blogged about a particularly scary case of this from socialist Canada, which doesn’t respect parents’ rights at all. There, the teachers, administrators, counsellors, doctors, layers and judges, all conspired to transition a child from female to male against the parents’ wishes. If you haven’t read that post from March of this year, you should definitely go read it, to find out where our own public schools are trying to go with students.

Anyway, in another article from The College Fix I found an excerpt of her new book, where she offers advice to parents. She talks about not giving them smartphones, not abdicating the leadership role, monitoring the schools for gender ideology, keeping family business private, being open to pulling the children out of their communities, etc.

And there is some pushback against the transgender agenda being promoted by teachers. Some people are regretting their transitions, and blaming the adults who affirmed them on their way to self-harm.

Here’s an article from Sky News:

> A woman who was treated with hormone blockers to reassign her gender as a teenager is taking the NHS to court, saying she “should have been told to wait”.
>
> Keira Bell said the care she received for gender dysphoria, a condition where a person experiences distress due to a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity, steered her towards medical treatment.
>
> Ms Bell, who used to identify as a boy, was 15 when she went to the Tavistock Centre in London. She said after “roughly three sessions” she started receiving hormone blockers.
>
> Eight years later, and after undergoing surgery, Ms Bell is de-transitioning to return to a woman.
>
> […]She said: “I am angry about the whole situation because of how things have turned out for me based on the medical pathway that I was put on, but I’m now just trying to focus on changing the system for the better and making it better for minors and children.
>
> “I should have been told to wait and not affirmed in my gender identity I was claiming to have and given intensive therapy basically to make sure that I was on the right track for things and investigate the feelings I was having to figure out how I got to that stage.”
>
> Ms Bell said she felt “trapped and alone”, and the Tavistock Centre should have taken into account the “confusion” teenagers experience before offering her treatment.

What I’d like to see is conservative lawmakers craft legislation to allow victims like this to

charge the teachers, administrators, doctors, lawyers and judges with criminal negligence. Because I really feel that it is criminal to lie to young people so that you will feel good, and people will like you. That’s all that this focus on feelings and compassion is. The secular leftist adults aren’t capable of moral reasoning. They don’t want to do good for the children, they want to feel good and be popular, even if it harms the children’s long-term well-being and happiness. The adults should be punished.

Where to get help if you have a selfish, absent or abusive mother or father

February 28, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Today, I want to say something this article about lambs in Scotland, written by Sheila Walsh in the The Stream.

She writes:

> I am very fond of sheep. I grew up on the west coast of Scotland with sheep all around me, field after field of white wool and incessant crying when things seemed a little off.
>
> […]Of all the lessons I have learned from these defenseless, gentle animals, the most profound is the most painful. Every now and then, a ewe will give birth to a lamb and immediately reject it. Sometimes the lamb is rejected because they are one of twins and the mother doesn't have enough milk or she is old and frankly quite tired of the whole business. They call those lambs, *bummer lambs*.
>
> Unless the shepherd intervenes, that lamb will die. So the shepherd will take that little lost one into his home and hand feed it from a bottle and keep it warm by the fire. He will wrap it up warm and hold it close enough to hear a heartbeat. When the lamb is strong the shepherd will place it back in the field with the rest of the flock.
>
> "Off you go now, you can do this, I'm right here."
>
> The most beautiful sight to see is when the shepherd approaches his flock in the morning and calls them out, "*Sheep, sheep, sheep*!"

> The first to run to him are the bummer lambs because they know his voice. It's not that they are more loved — it's just that they believe it.
>
> I am so grateful that Christ calls himself the Good Shepherd.
>
> "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice." (John 10:3-4 NLT)

My older brother and I grew up with a mother who was very much focused on her career and earning and saving money for her retirement. We were both stuck in daycare very early after being born, so that she could go back to work right away. (Me after 6 weeks) My older brother has shown the ill effects of our parents (especially our mother) not having any plan for us, especially morally and spiritually. He dropped out of college after failing his first year, never had a career. Although he has normal intelligence and mental health, he never could stick in any real job.

Although there were early warning signs when his grades started to drop in Grade 5, my parents never took responsibility to make a plan to solve it. Oh, they would yell and scream at him at report card time, but just for a day or two, and after that, nothing constructive. My brother decided that he could just ride out the flak my parents gave him on report card night, and keep going with his plan of having fun and being popular. My parents just forgot about it until the next report card day, because they did not want to be distracted from their careers, hobbies and retirement planning. When dispensing rewards, my brother was always given the same as me, despite our different levels of achievement. And my parents considered this equal dispensation of rewards regardless of performance to be a great virtue, and excellent parenting.

I had the exact same upbringing as my older brother. He actually did pretty well until Grade 5 just like me, but then our paths diverged. From Grade 5 on, his grades deterioriated. He got tired of having to study and he was more interested in the opinions of his peers and conforming to popular culture. In my case, from Grade 5 on, my grades were always high-90s. I remember taking the same classes as he did, in the same high school, with the same teachers. He got a 44 in data processing, I got a 96 with the same teacher and won the award for the entire grade. Every class I went to, the teachers would speak fondly of my older brother – he was a nice guy, very popular with his peers, good at sports. But not a very good student. How was it that I was winning awards when he had scored so poorly. Was I really his brother? How could we be so different?

The difference is that in Grade 5, he got a Gideon's New Testament and he read it and he didn't put it into practice, and in Grade 5, I got a Gideon's New Testament and I read it twice and I did put it into practice. That was the difference. I had the awareness of the moral law (i.e.- wisdom) that allowed me to judge my parents and judge my peers and judge my teachers and stand alone. When you cannot rely on anyone to lead you, be able to judge when others mistreat you is very important. That is what allows you to maintain appropriate boundaries and minimize the influence of friends and family who are teaching you self-destructive behaviors. Awareness of the moral law is what allows you to stop

trying to please people who do not want what is best for you. On the other hand, God is always willing to give you wisdom if you ask Him for it, and you can find out all about him because he has left plenty of evidence concerning his existence and character for you to find. It is in knowing God as he really is that you can find your sense of value, purpose and meaning. The God of the New Testament is the God of people who are lost and need a Savior.

For me, Christianity was a simple matter of being willing to go along with what was true, and not insisting on having fun or conforming to peer expectations. The essential characteristic of my faith, in contrast to my older brother's lack of faith, was this – I did not mind being different, so long as I never lost a debate about what was true. My obedience to Christ has never been conditional on things going my way, on being liked, or anything like that. The only thing that mattered was being factually correct. It never bothered me what other people were doing, or what other people expected me to do, so long as I was acting on what I knew to be true. And God helped me to find out what was true by motivating me to study, and leading me to him with good evidence, and good mentors. Thanks to Jesus' death on the cross, the mistakes I made early did not count against me, and they never will. Jesus' death on the cross gives me the imputed righteousness that I need to stand before God holy and blameless. This is what allows me to keep learning and keep trying no matter how much I fail on any given day.

How has this affected me? Well, this is the second thing I wanted to say about the bummer lamb analogy. Since I was a victim of this hands-off, me-first style of parenting, it's caused me to be extra sensitive about being a good spiritual leader to others in the same predicament. The people I mentor can see it in the way that I treat them . I treat them the opposite of the way that my older brother and I were treated. I care what people read. I care what courses they choose. I care what they eat. I care how they feel. I care about their finances. I care about their plans to serve God. I care about their romantic relationships. I care whether they get recognition for doing good. I care whether their life is going in the right direction. One person I mentored who once considered taking her own life wrote to me when she graduated from a STEM program, and she said this: "I wish you could have been here at my graduation. My parents only paid for this degree. You were the one who got me through it". We have never met in person, but she is going to continue to make a huge difference for Christ and His Kingdom going forward.

I think when you have been a bummer lamb, you are extra careful to make decisions that will enable you to be a good shepherd to other lambs. Being a good shepherd does not mean being pious, spiritual, mystical, etc. Being a good shepherd does not mean making the lambs feel good about making bad decisions. Being a good shepherd means understanding what God has done to lead you, and then reflecting that love back to others *in practical, self-sacrificial actions that solve actual real-world problems for other people who want to know and serve God*. If you are about to jump off a cliff, the last thing you need is someone with no wisdom or experience telling you that God is OK with you doing whatever feels good to you. What you need is someone practical and competent to give you good advice, however much that advice may make you feel bad, or block your

pursuit of fun.

One of my friends proof-read the draft of this post and told me that it made her think of 2 Cor 1:3-5:

> [3] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
>
> [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.
>
> [5] For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.“

Nothing else I do in life matters to me as much as taking care of the people I mentor, especially the ones who are lost and lacking guidance and care. I have good health, good education, good career, and great finances. But by far the most important thing I do is following the example of the Shepherd by caring for other lambs.

38-year old unmarried model explains what she means by “a decent man” (for marriage)

March 1, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve always been suspicious of women who make a living through their physical beauty. I see a few problems with modeling as a career. First, you don’t have to produce anything useful that requires understanding the real world, like a programmer or a nurse. Second, you focus a lot on your appearance, and that’s not healthy, since it all fades out by age 35 anyway. Women who get a lot of attention for free typically don’t know how to treat men, either. They don’t learn because they don’t have to learn.

With that in mind, here’s an article by an aging 38-year-old model that illustrates the problem: (H/T Better Bachelor)

> Earlier this month I opened the door to a bouquet of flowers.
>
> They were from yet another man who wants to date me. He’s 35, tall, dark and handsome.
>
> […]And this week, as the gifts roll in from admirers for Valentine’s Day — I have already received two…
>
> […]I am 38 and have been single for four years.

So, the first thing to point out about this is that it confirms what I was saying about pretty women. Look at the way she talks about how all these men are paying attention to her. Like it or not, her worldview is going to be conditioned by this attention she’s getting from men. She isn’t having to write code to get attention. Or set a fracture. Or do anything. She just gets it because she was born with good looks. And she doesn’t see that it is her job to 1) prepare her character for attracting a man who wants to commit, or 2) choose men who are interested in commitment. Her job is just to be pretty, and then tell everyone how much attention she’s getting from men. *Men who will not commit to her*. She is mistaking the attention for intent to marry. But men who pay attention to dumb, pretty women don’t intend to marry them. They just want to pump and dump them.

But she doesn’t see her failure to prepare herself for commitment and to prefer commitment-minded men as her problem. On the contrary – her singleness at 38 is *the fault of men being worthless*:

> And I hate to break it to any other single women in their late thirties, but all the decent men in our age bracket have been taken.
>
> […]While I work out every day, these men look a decade older.
>
> Beer bellies, bad manners, little respect for single women and minimal hygiene — I’ve seen it all on the apps.
>
> Over the past four years I’ve been on almost 500 dates trying to find Mr Right.
>
> And while I have become something of an expert on dating apps — last year I got

> a congratulations from Tinder for getting 25,000 likes for my profile — unfortunately, I am still looking for The One.
>
> My theory is all the good men were snapped up when they were young. All that's left is the dregs.

Now, she doesn't think that she is the dregs for being 38 and being completely unsuited to marriage. She thinks that men are the dregs – because they don't have an attractive height and appearance. That's what she's looking for – and that's *the only thing she's looking for*. She's had relationships with men, but they just LIVED WITH HER. They never committed, because she wasn't looking for a man who would commit, she was looking for a man with appearance, height, fitness and hygiene. Someone who looked as good as her. That commitment thing? That's easy. Nothing to be concerned about. No need to assess religion and morality in a man, which is the ground of commitment, when you get so much attention by looking hawt.

Doubt me? Read her own words – this is what she values in a man:

> During my 500 dates, the only guy I have seriously dated was my age and had the best hair and teeth in the world.
>
> He even had a "proper" job and took me out for fancy dinners. Alas, he wasn't ready to settle down — or something like that.
>
> Apart from that, there was the guy who looked like Superman on his dating profile but turned up with a long white Santa beard. His body had gone to pot and he was wearing unwashed clothes.
>
> Then there was the wealthy consultant who took me to his club where cocktails were thirty quid a pop. He was generous but knew the value of nothing. Plus, he continually scoffed salt and vinegar nuts on our date — the odour was revolting.
>
> […]Then there are the beer bellies. If a man has one, I know we'll have nothing in common as I'm active…

And so on. Everything is about appearance. She's looking for exactly what she is: a pretty face. And she has *no idea* that the willingness to commit is not related to external appearances. The important thing for her is the man's *appearance*. And that's why she has 5 billion dates and no commitment. Only a certain kind of man commits. It's going to be related to his personal character – religion, morality, etc. – more than it's related to what she can see with her eyes.

Which population group is most likely to reject heterosexual relationships?

March 2, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Federalist reports:

> A new Gallup poll published on Feb. 24 shows 1 in 6 Gen Z adults identify as LGBT. These results represent a remarkable jump from 2017, when 4.5 percent of Americans identified as LGBT, a number that has now risen to 5.6 percent just three years later.
>
> The increase is indeed dramatic, yet it doesn't fully tell the whole story. Why? While the population of Americans identifying as LGBT has risen steadily since 2012, last year the question was expanded from a simple "yes" or "no" to LGBT identity to include specific categories to choose from. Only one identity group showed a dramatic increase: **bisexual women**.
>
> […]One in ten high school students identify as LGBT. Of these, 75 percent are female, and 77 percent identify as bisexual. As detailed by the Washington Post, the Williams Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles has found that 35 percent of LGBT adults are bisexual women.
>
> Further, Hammack argues that his research shows **young women** are more likely to identify as "non-binary" or "gender-fluid."

I'm going to have something to say about this in a minute, but for now just note that it's young women who are the ones who are most likely to abandon natural marriage, traditional families and complementary sex roles.

More:

> As Abigail Shrier discussed in great detail with in-depth research in her book, "Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters," the power of social contagion and peer group identity is important to consider:
>
> Between 2016 and 2017, the number of gender surgeries for natal females in the US quadrupled; in the UK, the rates of gender dysphoria for teenage girls are up 4,400 percent over the previous decade.
>
> Indeed, as 16-year-old Jasper Swartz — who identifies as non-binary — expressed to the Washington Post, all of her friends are "queer in some way."

> Rather than reflecting the natural progression of openness to human variation in sexuality and gender identity, it seems to better reflect a pop culture fad to be included in the LGBT spectrum in any way possible. This seems especially true for younger people, who are inundated with LGBT education, culture, and positivity and, as Abigail discusses in her book, find meaning in being different, unique, and rebellious, along with their friends. As indicated by the Gallup

> survey, as people age, their identities become more stable and bisexuality drops significantly.
>
> […]For young women seeking identity and being part of a special or important group, all they have to do is cut their hair short, dress like a boy, and declare themselves non-binary or bisexual to gain instant victimhood status and self-validation. If it becomes too much and they still get the exciting thrill of being LGBT, they can always slip back into safer roles.

So, my suspicion is that young women are more vulnerable to this for two reasons. One, young women are more likely to determine their beliefs by deciding what makes them feel good. And two, young women are more likely to determine their beliefs by what makes them look good to their peer group. They're not reading non-fiction, and forming a worldview that's bound by logic and evidence. They like fiction. They like entertainment. They're not even embracing their values based on their future goals. Their long-term goals might be to marry and have security and family. But they're not taking steps towards that right now. Right now, they're just doing what feels good in the moment. They're adapting to their peers, and the culture at large, rather than thinking for themselves.

Young women like LGBT lifestyles more than they like natural marriage and family

In fact, there have been studies on how these ideas spread, and that's exactly what they found – young women are the ones who swallow this, and for reasons of feelings and peer approval. It's a social benefit to claim to be a minority sexual identity. Our culture has set it up so that you get prestige and sympathy for this. You get to play the victim, and everyone has to be nice to you. And you're so interesting! So sophisticated. To young women, it's an offer they can't refuse – so they don't.

If we seriously want men to marry and become fathers, let's repeal no-fault divorce

March 3, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw a very good article at the Heritage Foundation web site about the importance of fathers for children. The author Virginia Allen listed out some of the benefits that fathers provide to children:

> Studies have found that children raised without a father are:
>
> - At a higher risk of having behavioral problems.
> - Four times more likely to live in poverty.
> - More likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime.
> - Twice as likely to never graduate high school.
> - At a seven times higher risk of teen pregnancy.
> - More vulnerable to abuse and neglect.
> - More likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.
> - Twice as likely to be obese.
>
> From education to personal health to career success, children who lack a father find themselves at a disadvantage to their peers raised in a two-parent household.

I was looking for a good analysis of why there's been a decline of marriage and fatherhood, and I found an article by Joe Carter on far-left The Gospel Coalition, of all places. By looking at marriage rates and historical events that changed the marriage rate, he was able to identify the cause of the decline of marriage – and fatherhood.

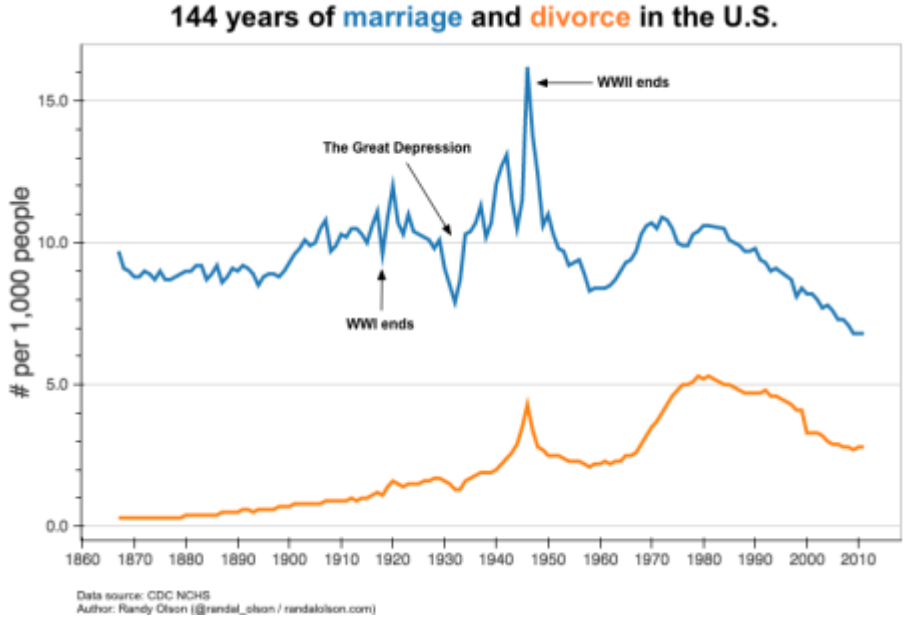

Marriage and divorce rates per capita

I'll spare you the statistical analysis, which is excellent, and give you the conclusion –

although you can guess it from the graph above:

> Now that we've explored the data, what year should we use as the marker for the beginning of the decline of marriage in the United States? I would argue for 1985, the last year that the marriage rate topped 10 percent.
>
> […]What changed in 1985 that could have led to the decline in marriage? There are likely numerous factors—which we'll examine in future articles—but one stands out in particular: By 1985, all states (except for New York) had enacted no-fault divorce legislation.

The most helpful book I know of about no-fault divorce is "Taken Into Custody", by Dr. Stephen Baskerville. He wrote a column for Crisis magazine that summarizes some of his ideas.

Excerpt:

> Feminists were drafting no-fault divorce laws in the 1940s, which the National Association of Women Lawyers now describes as "the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken."
>
> The result effectively abolished marriage as a legal contract. Today it is not possible to form a binding agreement to create a family.
>
> The new laws did not stop at removing the requirement of citing grounds for a divorce, to allow divorce by mutual consent, as deceptively advertised at the time. Instead they created unilateral and involuntary divorce, so that one spouse may dissolve a marriage without any agreement or fault by the other.

Here's what divorce does to the spouse who is the victim of the unilateral "no-fault" divorce:

> Though marriage is a civil matter, the logic quickly extended into the criminal, including a presumption of guilt against the involuntarily divorced spouse ("defendant"). Yet formal due process protections of criminal proceedings did not apply, so forcibly divorced spouses became quasi-criminals not for recognized criminal acts but for failing or refusing to cooperate with the divorce by continuing to claim the protections and prerogatives of family life: living in the common home, possessing the common property, or—most vexing of all—parenting the common children.
>
> Following from this are the horrendous civil liberties violations and flagrant invasions of family and individual privacy that are now routine in family courts. A personalized criminal code is legislated by the judge around the forcibly divorced spouse, controlling their association with their children, movements, and finances. Unauthorized contact with their children can be punished with arrest. Involuntarily divorced parents are arrested for running into their children in public, making unauthorized telephone calls, and sending unauthorized birthday cards.

In my conversations with men, no-fault divorce laws, and anti-male divorce courts are the main reasons given for why they do not pursue marriage and fatherhood. Men do not want to be coerced in a marriage with the threat of divorce by an unhappy wife. Men do not want to be subject to the government in so many areas of their lives if the wife does carry out the threat. They especially don't want to be separated from their children. One my secular male friends told me that he would not marry unless the woman had evidence in her past of hating radical feminism and no-fault divorce. This was the main criteria. He actually was able to find a woman who was a men's rights activist who hated divorce. But that was the only way he would marry.

Statistically speaking, the wife is more likely to initiate divorce than the husband. Women initiate 70% of divorces, the majority of those just because she is "unhappy". I think this is because women get into marriage based on their feelings, and they think that it is the husband's job to make them feel good. They see their happiness as the primary goal of the marriage, and see a marriage that does not make them happy as a marriage that needs to be ended.

Are we going to repeal no-fault divorce, then?

No-fault divorce was seen as a boon to women who had married the wrong men by following their hearts. It's an interesting question to ask whether women really would want no-fault repealed. It would mean that they would have to get serious about who they marry, instead of just getting into marriage based on feelings. They would have to evaluate men according to expectations of what a man does in a marriage, instead of on feelings. They would have to think about what men want out of a marriage, and prepare themselves to provide for his needs. They would have to say no to their feelings, when choosing a man, and in keeping a man after the wedding.

If women aren't willing to demand the repeal of no-fault divorce laws and get serious about men and marriage, then what's the point of complaining that men don't want to marry and become fathers? If you're not willing to fix the root cause of the problem, then don't complain about the problem.

Woman who sent her kid to Baltimore public schools shocked to find he is a failure

March 4, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Fox Baltimore:

> A shocking discovery out of a Baltimore City high school, where Project Baltimore has found hundreds of students are failing. It's a school where a student who passed three classes in four years, ranks near the top half of his class with a 0.13 grade point average.
>
> Tiffany France thought her son would receive his diploma this coming June. But after four years of high school, France just learned, her 17-year-old must start over. He's been moved back to ninth grade.
>
> "He's stressed and I am too. I told him I'm probably going to start crying. I don't know what to do for him," France told Project Baltimore. "Why would he do three more years in school? He didn't fail, the school failed him. The school failed at their job. They failed. They failed, that's the problem here. They failed. They failed. He didn't deserve that."
>
> […]As we dig deeper into her son's records, we can see in his first three years at Augusta Fells, he failed 22 classes and was late or absent 272 days. But in those three years, only one teacher requested a parent conference, which France says never happened. No one from the school told France her son was failing and not going to class.
>
> "I feel like they never gave my son an opportunity, like if there was an issue with him, not advancing or not progressing, that they should have contacted me first, three years ago," said France.

By the way, when I say that my older brother was destroyed by the public schools, this is what I'm talking about. He stayed home from school for an entire month with the "nanny" my parents hired, so that they could both go to work. And of course they had no idea, because my parents didn't give a darn about us or our educations. This is the way it is for many children, including me. I had parents who had no idea what I was doing in school, and the first time they found out what I had done all year was report card day. That's what you get when you trust the public schools. I understand that we were a poor, non-white immigrant family, so my parents had to both work, but that doesn't excuse blindly trusting unionized public school teachers to do a good job. Parents have to monitor kids.

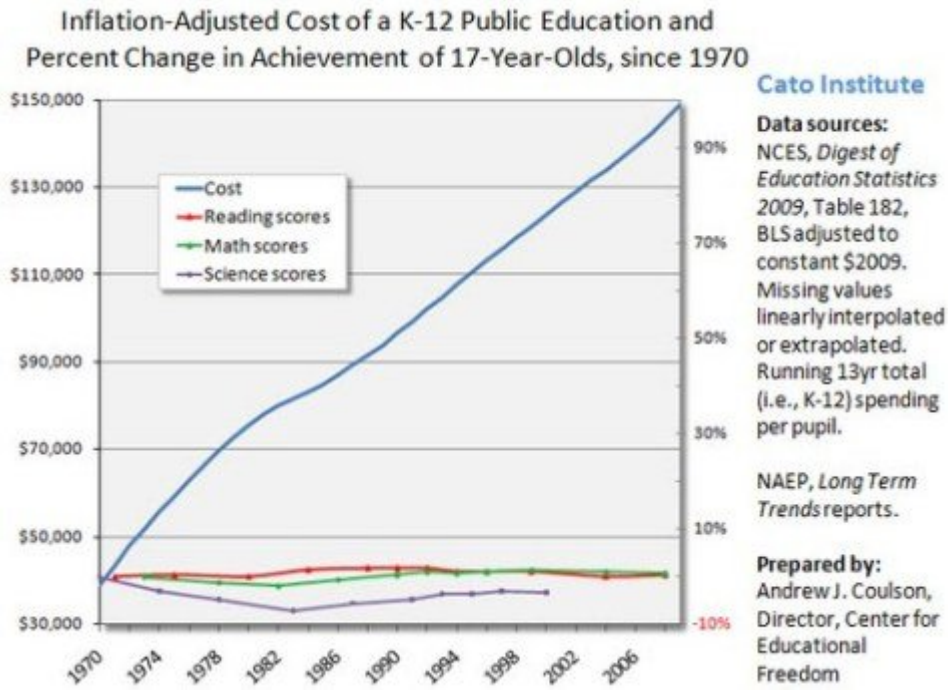

Cato Institute graphs education spending against test scores

Advice for mothers

So, I don't know much about this woman in the news story, but after reading her story, I have three pieces of advice for women in general that have nothing to do with her. And the younger women are when they get this advice, the better it will be for them.

This advice is specific to women who want their children to learn useful STEM skills, so that they can find a job that allows them to move out, get married, buy a home of their own, and retire.

- Advice #1: Get married before you have children
- Advice #2: Don't vote for Democrat politicians
- Advice #3: Don't live in Democrat-run cities

That's all. I'm pretty sure that if women followed these rules, then they wouldn't get caught in situations where they are living in Democrat-run hell-holes and entrusting their fatherless kids to unionized public school teachers. Just. Don't.

Democrat bill H.R. 0ne would undermine reliability and integrity of e1ections

March 5, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Heritage Foundation is my favorite think tank, and they have a summary of what the law would do:

The Issue

H.R. 0ne would federalize and micromanage the e1ection process administered by the states, imposing unnecessary, unwise, and unconstitutional mandates on the states and reversing the decentralization of the American e1ection process—which is essential to the protection of our liberty and freedom. It would implement nationwide the worst changes in e1ection rules that occurred during the 2020 e1ection and go even further in eroding and eliminating basic security protocols that states have in place. The bill would interfere with the ability of states and their citizens to determine the qualifications and eligibility of v0ters, to ensure the accuracy of v0ter reg1stration rolls, to secure the fairness and integrity of e1ections, to participate and speak freely in the political process, and to determine the district boundary lines for electing their representatives.

What H.R. 0ne Would Do

- **Seize the authority of states** to regulate v0ter reg1stration and the voting process by forcing states to implement **early voting**, **automatic v0ter reg1stration**, **same-day reg1stration**, **online v0ter reg1stration**, and **no-fault absentee bal1oting**.
- **Make it easier to commit fr4ud** and promote chaos at the pol1s through **same-day reg1stration**, as e1ection officials would have no time to verify the accuracy of v0ter reg1stration information and the eligibility of an individual to v0te and could not anticipate the number of bal1ots and precinct workers that would be needed at specific pol1ing locations.
- **Degrade the accuracy of reg1stration lists by requiring states to automatically register** all individuals (as opposed to "citizens") from state and federal databases, such as state Departments of Motor Vehicles, corrections and welfare offices, and federal agencies such as the Social Security Administration, the Department of Labor, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the Department of Health and Human Services. This would **register large numbers of ineligible v0ters**, including aliens, and cause multiple or duplicate reg1strations of the same individuals and put federal agencies in charge of determining a person's domicile for voting purposes (as well as that individual's taxing state).
- **Constitute a recipe for massive v0ter reg1stration fr4ud by hackers and cyber criminals through online v0ter reg1stration** that is not tied to an

existing state record, such as a driver's license. It would make it a criminal offense for a state official to reject a v0ter reg1stration application even when it is rejected "under color of law" because the official believes the individual is ineligible to v0te. It would also require states to allow 16-year-olds and 17-year-olds to register; when combined with a ban on v0ter ID and restrictions on the ability to challenge the eligibility of a v0ter, this would effectively ensure that underage individuals could v0te with impunity.

- **Require states to count bal1ots cast by v0ters outside of their assigned precincts**, overriding the precinct system used by almost all states that allows e1ection officials to monitor v0tes, staff pol1ing places, provide enough bal1ots, and prevent e1ection fr4ud.
- **Mandate no-fault absentee bal1ots, which are the tool of choice for v0te thieves. It would ban witness signature or notarization requirements** for absentee bal1ots; **force states to accept absentee bal1ots received up to 10 days after Election Day** as long as they are postmarked by Election Day; and **require states to allow v0te trafficking (v0te harvesting)** so that any third parties—including campaign staffers and political consultants—can pick up and deliver absentee bal1ots.
- **Prevent e1ection officials from checking the eligibility and qualifications of v0ters and removing ineligible v0ters**. This includes restrictions on using the U.S. Postal Service's national change-of-address system to verify the address of registered v0ters; participating in state programs that compare v0ter reg1stration lists to detect individuals registered in multiple states; or *ever* removing registrants due to a failure to v0te no matter how much time has elapsed. It also would substantially limit the public release of v0ter reg1stration information, **making it almost impossible** for nonpartisan organizations to **verify the accuracy of reg1stration rolls**, and prohibit states from using undeliverable e1ection mail as a basis for challenging a registrant's eligibility.
- **Ban state v0ter ID laws** by forcing states to allow individuals to v0te without an ID and merely signing a statement in which they claim they are who they say they are.
- **Expand regulation and government censorship of campaigns and political activity and speech**, **including online and policy-related speech**. H.R. 0ne would impose onerous legal and administrative compliance burdens and costs on candidates, citizens, civic groups, unions, corporations, and nonprofit organizations. Many of these provisions **violate the First Amendment**, **protect incumbents**, **and reduce the accountability of politicians** to the public; its onerous disclosure requirements for nonprofit organizations would subject their members and donors to **intimidation and harassment—**the modern equivalent of the type of disclosure requirements the U.S. Supreme Court in *NAACP v. Alabama* (1958) held violated associational rights protected by the Fourteenth Amendment.
- **Reduce the number of Federal Election Commission members** from six to

five, allowing the political party with three commission seats to control the commission and engage in **partisan enforcement activities**.

- **Require states to restore the ability of felons to v0te** the moment they are out of prison regardless of uncompleted parole, probation, or restitution requirements. Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment gives states the constitutional authority to decide when felons who committed crimes against their fellow citizens may v0te again. **Congress cannot override a constitutional amendment with a statute.**
- **Transfer the right to draw congressional districts** from state legislatures to "independent" commissions whose members are unaccountable to v0ters. H.R. 0ne would make it a violation of federal law to engage in "partisan" redistricting and **mandate the inclusion of alien population**, **both legal and illegal**, **in all redistricting**. This is an **anti-democratic**, **unconstitutional measure** that would take away the ability of the citizens of a state to make their own decisions about redistricting.
- **Authorize the Internal Revenue Service to engage in partisan activity.** H.R. 0ne would permit the IRS to investigate and consider the political and policy positions of nonprofit organizations before granting tax-exempt status, thus enabling IRS officials to target organizations engaging in First Amendment activity with disfavored views.
- **Limit access to federal courts for anyone challenging H.R. 1.** The bill would prohibit the filing of any lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of H.R. 0ne anywhere except in the District Court for the District of Columbia and would allow the court to order all plaintiffs and intervenors, regardless of their number (such as all 50 states), "to file joint papers or to be represented by a single attorney at oral argument," **severely limiting the legal representation and due process rights of challengers**.

I left out some of them, but there's enough there that should scare you. This is the kind of thing that happened in 1930s socialist Germany to make sure that the secular left could not be challenged.

Christian philosopher (Craig) vs atheist scientist (Atkins) debate: Does God Exist?

March 6, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a video of a debate from the Reasonable Faith speaking tour in the UK, between Christian philosopher Dr. William Lane Craig and atheist chemist Dr. Peter Atkins.

Here is the video:

This is a must-see debate. It was extremely fun to watch, and I have a snarky summary of the opening speeches below.

Details:

> On Wednesday 26th October 2011 William Lane Craig debated Peter Atkins on the topic: *Does God Exist?* This debate took place at the University of Manchester as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig. The debate was chaired by Christopher Whitehead, Head of Chemistry School at the University. Post-debate discussion was moderated by Peter S Williams, Philosopher in Residence at the Damaris Trust, UK.

Dr. William Lane Craig:

> **William Lane Craig** (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich in 1984.

Dr. Peter Atkins:

> **Peter William Atkins** (born 10 August 1940) is a British chemist and former Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Lincoln College. He is a prolific writer of popular chemistry textbooks, including *Physical Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemistry*, and *Molecular Quantum Mechanics*. Atkins is also the author of a number of science books for the general public,

> including *Atkins' Molecules* and *Galileo's Finger: The Ten Great Ideas of Science*.
>
> Atkins studied chemistry at the University of Leicester, obtaining a bachelor's degree in chemistry, and – in 1964 – a PhD for research into electron spin resonance spectroscopy, and other aspects of theoretical chemistry. Atkins then took a postdoctoral position at the UCLA as aHarkness Fellow of the Commonwealth fund. He returned to Oxford in 1965 as fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, and lecturer in physical chemistry (later, professor of physical chemistry).

I am happy when debates like this come out. I have friends who are Christians who doubt the importance of apologetics in evangelism, because they don't think that apologists can prove anything or win arguments. I have friends who are skeptical of using arguments that assume a 14-billion year old universe, because they think that the Big Bang is compatible with atheism (!). I have friends who think that philosophical arguments have no persuasive force. I have friends who think that nothing can be proven from history, beyond a reasonable doubt. I have co-workers who ask me whether anyone wins these debates. I think that this debate answers all of those questions.

This debate clearly shows why Christians should not shy away from studying science, philosophy and history. We will not discover anything that harms Christian theism by thinking logically and by looking at the evidence. To the contrary, it is the atheist who makes war on the progress of science, and who is forced to resist the clear experimental evidence, and to resort to baseless speculations and blind faith. If you want to see a good debate with an intelligent atheist, I recommend watching the debate between William Lane Craig and Peter Millican instead. But if you want to see a really, really overwhelming defeat for atheism, watch this debate. It is very clear at the end of this debate why Richard Dawkins refused to debate William Lane Craig at Oxford.

SUMMARY OF THE OPENING SPEECHES

I only had time to summarize the first two speeches. Keep in mind that Dr. Craig always shines in his rebuttals, and this debate is no different. So you'll want to watch those rebuttals. Dr. Atkins *literally* says in this debate in his first rebuttal "There was nothing here originally. There is nothing here now. But it is an interesting form of nothing which seems to be something." And the audience laughs nervously. This debate is like that. You will see a clear winner and clear loser in this debate. This fight is decided by knockout.

William Lane Craig opening speech:

1. the origin of the universe
2. the moral argument
3. the resurrection of Jesus

Peter Atkins opening speech:

1. Dr. Craig is stupid, lazy and evil:
– Dr. Craig's arguments are old: from the 11th century! Old arguments can't be true
– Dr. Craig is just asserting that "God did it" because he is lazy

– Dr. Craig feels pressured to agree with the theistic majority
– Dr. Craig needs a psychological crutch to comfort him
– Dr. Craig is fearful of death
– Dr. Craig is just wishing for an eternal life of bliss
– Dr. Craig is driven by his heart, and not by his head

2. Origin of the universe:
– Maybe the universe is eternal and has no beginning – we don't know
– Maybe mommy universes can give birth to daughter universes
– It is naive to think that a cause is needed to cause the creation of the universe from nothing
– Science is just about to show how it is possible that something appears out of nothing without cause
– Some scientists have already begun to speculate about about how something can come into being out of nothing
– Maybe nothing is not really nothing, but it is actually something
– It would be admitting defeat to say that God created the universe out of nothing

3. Fine-Tuning:
– It could be the case that the fundamental constants are not variable
– It could be the case that the fine-tuning of the cosmic constants is a happy accident
– It could be the case that there are billions of billions of unobservable universes that are not fine tuned
– It could be the case that the cosmic constants in these billions and billions of unobservable universes are all random so that some are fine-tuned
– Anyone who infers that an intelligence is the best explanation of a finely-tuned set of life-permitting cosmic constants is lazy

4. Purpose:
– Philosophers and theologians are stupid
– I don't think that there is purpose in the universe
– I think that the universe is more grand if there is no purpose, so there is no purpose

5. Miracles:
– I don't think that miracles happen
– The resurrection is a fabrication
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't exist
– It could be the case that Jesus wasn't really crucified
– It could be the case that Jesus didn't really die after being crucified
– It could be the case that the disciples stole his body
– It could be the case that the women went to the wrong hole in the ground
– the gospels are political propaganda written long after the events they are reporting on

6. Theodicy:
– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing humans to perform actions that result in suffering

– God has no morally sufficient reason for allowing nature to cause suffering

7. Morality:

– customs and conventions emerges arbitrarily in different times and places based on an awareness of the consequences of actions, as well as various anecdotes and experiences

– these customs and conventions are decided based on the goal for survival, in much the same way as politeness and manners emerge for decorum and to avoid offense

– it is childish to presume that there is an umpire God who decides moral values and duties

8. Religious believers are stupid, lazy and evil:

– the notion of God has arisen because people are stupid and want to be comforted

– there are no arguments or evidences for belief in God

– people who believe in God do not think, but instead take refuge in incomprehensible nonsense

William Lane Craig explains how Christianity explains evil and suffering

March 7, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A lot of people in the West complain too much about any little suffering they have to experience. But sometimes, when a very harsh suffering is felt by someone who has tried to follow Jesus, an explanation is necessary. I found something very good on the Reasonable Faith web site, written by Dr. William Lane Craig.

He makes the following points:

1. *We are not in a good position to assess the probability of whether God has morally sufficient reasons for the evils that occur.*
2. *The Christian faith entails doctrines that increase the probability of the co-existence of God and evil.*
3. *Relative to the full scope of the evidence, God's existence is probable.*

I've written before about point #1, in which Dr. Craig's describes the limitations of human knowledge that make it hard for us to know for certain that a specific evil or suffering does not have a good reason for God to allow it. And I've written about #3, in which Dr. Craig makes some arguments for God's existence. But #2 might be new to some of you, so let's look at that.

He makes four sub points in section 2 about Christian doctrines that make the existence of evil and suffering more reasonable.

- 2. a)*The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.*
- 2. b) *Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and His purpose.*
- 2. c) *The knowledge of God spills over into eternal life.*
- 2. d) *The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.*

My favorite one is 2. a), so let's look at that one. He says:

> 2. a. *The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.* One reason that the problem of evil seems so puzzling is that we tend to think that if God exists, then His goal for human life is happiness in this world. God's role is to provide comfortable environment for His human pets. But on the Christian view this is false. We are not God's pets, and man's end is not happiness in this world, but the knowledge of God, which will ultimately bring true and everlasting human fulfillment. Many evils occur in life which maybe utterly pointless with respect to the goal of producing human happiness in this world, but they may not be unjustified with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Innocent human suffering provides an occasion for deeper dependency and trust in God, either on the part of the sufferer or those around him. Of course, whether God's purpose is

> achieved through our suffering will depend on our response. Do we respond with anger and bitterness toward God, or do we turn to Him in faith for strength to endure?

You know, I always get confused when I see Christians trying to follow the script of the world and trying to make themselves feel good with consumer purchases, travel, fun experiences, showing off to others, etc. When I read the story of Jesus, it's pretty clear that the normal Christian life, if the person is following Jesus at all, is about suffering the disapproval and opposition of non-Christians while you remain faithful and obedient to God. Today, there's probably no better example of this than defending unborn children from adult selfishness. Although, defending born children from selfish adults who seek to deprive children of their biological mother and father is pretty bad, too. Nobody is going to like you for restricting their fun (i.e. – abortion, divorce, adultery, homosexuality, etc.), but being willing to take the heat from non-Christians for the sake of promoting what God thinks is right is true Christianity. It's what Jesus would do.

Anyway, the one I've been thinking about more lately is 2. d), where Dr. Craig writes this:

> *2. d) The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.* To know God, the source of infinite goodness and love, is an incomparable good, the fulfillment of human existence. The sufferings of this life cannot even be compared to it. Thus, the person who knows God, no matter what he suffers, no matter how awful his pain, can still say, "God is good to me," simply by virtue of the fact that he knows God, an incomparable good.

I sometimes feel pretty stressed out about Americans who were born in conservative states, raised by two married Christian parents, attended Christian schools and youth groups, and then abandoned their faith for atheism as soon as they hit college. It really bothers me how people who had all these advantages turned their backs on God, and they're ungrateful for all their blessings. They show no curiosity about God – they don't want to know him. But when you read the gospels to see what Jesus has to say about these sorts of people, it's very comforting. He really sees the problem, and he is on the side of the little guy who has to struggle to be faithful and obedient to God. The Bible has nothing to say to people who are able to feel happy and successful apart from God. It speaks to people who are struggling to follow God. Even when things are difficult, Jesus speaks to the problem of being an alien and a stranger in a world that turns its back on him.

Fakebook not only censoring The College Fix, but also the Wall Street Journal

March 8, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed earlier that Fakebook decided to slap a "false news" label on a cartoon published by The College Fix. This reduces their distribution and puts them at risk of being deleted. The College Fix promotes ideas that are critical of the Democrat Party, so Fakebook, which supports the Democrat party, had to step in and punish them for their bad speech and bad thoughts.

Story here:

> Fakebook today wrongly flagged a cartoon from *College Fix* cartoonist Pat Cross that lampooned recent cancellations of the works of Theodor Geise1, known as Dr. Seus5.
>
> "Independent fact-checkers say this information could mislead people," says a pop-up message (*right*) on the Fakebook post, first published yesterday morning.
>
> Underneath the post, a message takes the reader to a statement from a Fakebook fact-checker that fact checks claims about Dr. Seus5 being cancelled by Dr. Seus5 Enterprises.

But it's not just The College Fix, it's the Wall Street Journal. They're normally left of center, but they danced a little too far away from the Democrat party line, so they also needed to be punished:

> *The Wall Street Journal* recently faced a similar situation when it featured an op-ed by Johns Hopkins University's Dr. Marty Mak4ry. "We'll Have Herd Immunity by April" was flagged by Fakebook with the same label as *The Fix* cartoon.
>
> "Misleading Wall Street Journal opinion piece makes the unsubstantiated claim that the U.S. will have herd immunity by April 2021," the supposed fact-check by Health Feedback says. "Three scientists analysed the article and estimate its overall scientific credibility to be very low."
>
> But as the *WSJ* — rightly — points out, this isn't fact checking. It's "counter-opinion masquerading as fact checking."

> Dr. Mak4ry didn't present his opinion as a factual claim. He argued, based on studies and other evidence, that Americans would have enough immunity from vaccination and natural infection by early spring to sharply reduce the virus spread. He essentially made a projection, much like the epidemiologists at Imperial College and University of Washington do.
>
> But the progressive health clerisy don't like his projection because they worry it could lead to fewer virus restrictions. The horror! Health Feedback's fact checkers disagree with the evidence Dr. Mak4ry cites as well as how he

> interprets it. Fine. Scientists disagree all the time. Much of conventional health wisdom about red meat, sodium and cardiovascular risk is still fiercely debated.
>
> The same goes for Cov1d-19. There's still much we don't understand about the virus and its transmission and immunity. Yet Fakebook's fact-checkers "cherry-pick," to borrow their word, studies to support their own opinions, which they present as fact.
>
> The *WSJ* proceeds to meticulously rebut Fakebook's "fact checkers," and concludes: "Scientists often disagree over how to interpret evidence. Debate is how ideas are tested and arguments are refined. But Fakebook's fact checkers are presenting their opinions as fact and seeking to silence other scientists whose views challenge their own."

Conservative viewpoints being censored by partisan journalists and left-wing activists. It has a huge impact on our elections. The next time a Republican president gets into power, we should immediately take steps to shut down large social media companies that have sided with the Democrat party and used their power to stifle free speech and free thinking. One easy way to do it is to allow people who have been censored to file lawsuits against these companies, and pass laws that make it clear that the Big Tech companies are in the wrong. This is America, not Nazi Germany.

Is asking “Am I going to Hell?” a good rebuttal to scientific arguments for theism?

March 9, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I want to use this woman’s story to show how sensible atheists reach a belief in God.

Excerpt:

> I don’t know when I first became a skeptic. It must have been around age 4, when my mother found me arguing with another child at a birthday party: “But how do you know what the Bible says is true?” By age 11, my atheism was so widely known in my middle school that a Christian boy threatened to come to my house and “shoot all the atheists.” My Christian friends in high school avoided talking to me about religion because they anticipated that I would tear down their poorly constructed arguments. And I did.
>
> As I set off in 2008 to begin my freshman year studying government at Harvard (whose motto is *Veritas*, “Truth”), I could never have expected the change that awaited me.
>
> It was a brisk November when I met John Joseph Porter. Our conversations initially revolved around conservative politics, but soon gravitated toward religion. He wrote an essay for the *Ichthus*, Harvard’s Christian journal, defending God’s existence. I critiqued it. On campus, we’d argue into the wee hours; when apart, we’d take our arguments to e-mail. Never before had I met a Christian who could respond to my most basic philosophical questions: How does one understand the Bible’s contradictions? Could an omnipotent God make a stone he could not lift? What about the Euthyphro dilemma: Is something good because God declared it so, or does God merely identify the good? To someone like me, with no Christian background, resorting to an answer like “It takes faith” could only be intellectual cowardice. Joseph didn’t do that.
>
> And he did something else: He prodded me on how inconsistent I was as an atheist who nonetheless believed in right and wrong as objective, universal categories. Defenseless, I decided to take a seminar on meta-ethics. After all, atheists had been developing ethical systems for 200-some years. In what I now see as providential, my atheist professor assigned a paper by C. S. Lewis that resolved the Euthyphro dilemma, declaring, “God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God.”
>
> Joseph also pushed me on the origins of the universe. I had always believed in the Big Bang. But I was blissfully unaware that the man who first proposed it, Georges Lemaître, was a Catholic priest. And I’d happily ignored the rabbit trail of a problem of what *caused* the Big Bang, and what *caused* that cause, and so on.
>
> By Valentine’s Day, I began to believe in God. There was no intellectual shame in

> being a deist, after all, as I joined the respectable ranks of Thomas Jefferson and other Founding Fathers.
>
> I wouldn't stay a deist for long. A Catholic friend gave me J. Budziszewski's book Ask Me Anything, which included the Christian teaching that "love is a commitment of the will to the true good of the other person." This theme—of love as sacrifice for true good—struck me. The Cross no longer seemed a grotesque symbol of divine sadism, but a remarkable act of love. And Christianity began to look less strangely mythical and more cosmically beautiful.

So, I want to point out the progression of her beliefs from atheist to deist to Christian. First, she listened to the scientific arguments for God's existence, which took her to deism, which is a variety of theism where God just creates the universe and then doesn't interfere with it after. Those arguments, the Big Bang and the cosmic fine-tuning, were enough for her to falsify atheism and prove some sort of theism. After that, she remained open to the evidence for Christian theism, and finally got there after looking at other evidence.

But this makes me think of how some of the atheists that I talk to do the exact opposite of what she did. I start off by explaining to them scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer. I explain the mainstream discoveries that confirm an origin of the universe (e.g. – light element abundance predictions and observations), and I cite specific examples of fine-tuning, (e.g. – the gravitational constant). I explain protein sequencing and folding, and calculate the probabilities of getting a protein by chance. I explain the sudden origin of the phyla in the Cambrian explosion, and show why naturalistic explanations fail. I talk about the fine-tuning needed to get galaxies, solar systems and planets to support life. But many of these atheists don't become deists like the honest atheist in the story. Why not?

Well, the reason why not is because they interrupt the stream of scientific evidence coming out of my mouth and they start to ask me questions that have nothing to do with what we can know through science. See, evangelism is like building a house. You have to start with the foundation, the walls, the plumbing, the electricity, etc., but you can't know all the specific details about furniture and decorations at the beginning. But militant atheists don't care that you are able to establish the foundations of Christian theism – they want to jump right to the very fine-grained details, and use that to justify not not building anything at all. Just as you are proving all the main planks of a theistic worldview with science, they start asking "am I going to Hell?" and telling you "God is immoral for killing Canaanite children", etc. They want to stop the construction of the house by demanding that you build everything at once. But, it is much easier to accept miracles like the virgin birth if you have a God who created the universe first. The foundation comes first, it makes the later stuff easier to do.

So rather than adjust their worldview to the strong scientific evidence, and then leave the puzzling about Hell and Old Testament history for later, they want to refute the good scientific arguments with "Am I going to Hell?". How does complaining about Hell and

unanswered prayer a response to *scientific evidence*? It’s not! But I think that this does explain why atheists remain atheists in the face of all the scientific evidence against naturalism. They insulate their worldview from the progress of science by focusing on their emotional disappointment that they are not God and that God isn’t doing what they want him to do. That’s the real issue. Authority and autonomy. In my experience, they are usually not accountable to science, although there are, thank God, exceptions to that rule.

Book review of R.C. Sproul's "If there's a God, why are there atheists?"

March 10, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Brian Auten has a book review posted up at Apologetics 315.

The book is "If There's A God, Why Are There Atheists?", by theologian R.C. Sproul. R.C. Sproul is one of my favorite theologians. The book in question has a very, very special place in my heart, because I think that it is one of the major reasons why I was able to resist pernicious ideas like religious pluralism and postmodernism for so long. Once you put on the glasses of Romans 1 and see for the first time what man is really doing with respect to God, you can never see things the same again. I'll say more about this at the end, but let's see what Brian wrote first.

The review

So often, you hear atheists complaining about religion is nothing but wish-fulfillment or some sort of crutch for people who are frightened by a variety of things. They think that God is invented to solve several problems. 1) how does the world work?, 2) is there meaning to suffering and evil?, 3) why should I be moral?, and 4) what will happen to me and my loved ones when I die?. On the atheistic view, God is just a crutch that people cling to out of weakness and ignorance. But is this really the case?

Sproul starts the book by investigating three atheists who sought to explain religious belief as a result of psychological factors.

Brian writes:

Before tackling the psychology of atheism, Sproul spends a chapter on the psychology of theism, from the perspective of Freud's question "If there is no God, why is there religion?"11 What follows is an overview of various psychological explanations of theistic belief: Feuerbach's "religion is a dream of the human mind."12 Marx's belief that religion

is “due to the devious imagination of particular segment of mankind.”13 And Nietzche’s idea that “religion endures because weak men need it.”14 The author properly reiterates: “We must be careful to note that the above arguments can never be used as proof for the nonexistence of God. They can be useful for atheists who hear theists state that the only possible explanation for religion is the existence of God.”15 That being said, Sproul also reveals what these arguments presume:

> Their arguments already presupposed the nonexistence of God. They were not dealing with the question, Is there a God? They were dealing with the question, Since there is no God, why is there religion?16

Sproul points out the weaknesses of each of these approaches and says “there are just as many arguments showing that unbelief has its roots in the psychological needs of man.”

Wow, could that really be true? What are the real reasons why people reject God? Does the Bible have anything to say about what those reasons are?

Brian cites Sproul’s contention:

> The New Testament maintains that unbelief is generated not so much by intellectual causes as by moral and psychological ones. The problem is not that there is insufficient evidence to convince rational beings that there is a God, but that rational beings have a natural hostility to the being of God.
>
> […]Man’s desire is not that the omnipotent, personal Judeo-Christian God exist, but that He not exist.

In Romans 1:18-23, the apostle Paul explains what is really going on:

[18]The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

[19]since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

[20]For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

[21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[22]Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

[23]and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

On this blog, I regularly present many, many arguments for theism in general, and Christian theism in particular:

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Sproul explains why atheists cannot allow themselves to live according to the evidence that is presented to them:

> The cumulative effect of this knowledge that is clearly seen is to leave men 'without excuse.' Herein lies the basis of the universal guilt of man. No one can claim ignorance of the knowledge of God. No one can cite insufficient evidence for not believing in God. Though people are not persuaded by the evidence, this does not indicate an insufficiency in the evidence, but rather an insufficiency in man.
>
> […]The basic stages of man's reaction to God can be formulated by means of the categories of trauma, repression, and substitution.
>
> […]If God exists, man cannot be a law unto himself. If God exists, man's will-to-power is destined to run head-on into the will of God.

And this is the force that is animating atheists today. They don't want to be accountable to God in a relationship, no matter what the evidence is. They have to deny it, so that they can be free to get the benefits of a universe designed for them, without having to give any recognition or acknowledgement back. If they have to lie to themselves to deny the evidence, they will do it. Anything to insulate themselves from the Creator and Designer who reveals himself in Jesus Christ.

The rest of the book review, and the book, deals with explaining in detail how atheists respond to an all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator/Designer. I encourage you to click through and read the whole book review. You can read the review, and the book, and then investigate for yourself whether atheists really are like that.

My survey of atheists

By the way, did you all see my survey of atheists that I did a while back? It's relevant because one of the questions I asked to my volunteers was "How you begin to follow Christ if it suddenly became clear to you that Christianity was objectively true?". I got some very strange responses that dovetail nicely with Sproul's book.

Here are a few of the responses:

- I would not follow. My own goals are all that I have, and all that I would continue to have in that unlikely situation. I would not yield my autonomy to anyone no matter what their authority to command me.
- I would not follow, because God doesn't want humans to act any particular way, and he doesn't care what we do.
- I would not follow. Head is spinning. Would go to physician to find out if hallucinating.
- I hope I would be courageous enough to dedicate my life to rebellion against God.
- I would not have to change anything unless forced to and all that would change is my actions not my values. I would certainly balk at someone trying to force me to change my behavior as would you if you were at the mercy of a moral objectivist who felt that all moral goodness is codified in the Koran.
- He would have to convince me that what he wants for me is what I want for me.

This is all part of my series discussing whether morality is rationally grounded by atheism.

Well Spent Journey did a similar survey of atheists, inspired by mine, and got this result on the relevant question:

> ***12. How would you begin to follow Jesus if it became clear to you that Christianity was true?***
>
> *– Would follow (5)*
> *– Wouldn't follow (6)*
> *– Might follow the teachings of Jesus, but that isn't Christianity (2)*
> *– It would depend on how this truth was revealed (3)*
> *– Christianity can't be true (3)*
> *– No answer given (4)*
>
> **…What would be the hardest adjustment you would have to make to live a faithful, public Christian life?**
>
> *– Adjusting wouldn't be that difficult; would eagerly welcome knowing that Christianity was true (2)*
> *– Praying, since it seems weird, creepy, and strange*
> *– Trying to figure out how the Bible became so corrupted*
> *– Trying to convince myself that the God of the Bible is deserving of worship (2)*
> *– Don't think it would be possible to adjust*
> *– No clear response, or not applicable (16)*

Yes, they really think like that! Just *ask an atheist questions* and you'll see how "objective" they really are. Atheism is entirely psychological. It's adopted in order to feel sufficient and to operate with autonomy, with the goal of self-centered pleasure-seeking above all. Evidence has nothing to do with it.

You can learn a lot about Joe Biden's "character" from his far-left nominees

March 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Federalist:

> President Joe B1den's top pick to lead the Department of Justice's civil rights division peddled the Juss1e Smo11ett hoax on Twitter, criticizing anyone who questioned the black, gay actor's falsified hate crime in 2019.
>
> "Juss1e Smo11ett subjected to a racist and homophobic attack. 2 white men wearing ski masks attacked him, put a rope around his neck, and poured bleach on him and as they yelled slurs. Prayers to @Juss1eSmo11ett for a speedy recovery from this hate crime," Kr1sten Cl4rke tweeted shortly after the alleged incident.
>
> […]Days after her initial post, Cl4rke, who will oversee hate crime investigations if confirmed, took to Twitter again, alleging that the Chicago Police Department was "demonizing survivors" after they requested access to Smo11ett's cellphone and claiming that they shouldn't be "casting doubt" on the actor's claims that his assailants shouted racial slurs and beat him up while yelling pro-Trump slogans.

It was a hoax, but she believed it. Because she made the decision based on his appearance, not on the facts. And now she'll be in charge of deciding which hate crimes are hoaxes and which aren't. She'll be making those decisions based on appearances and not based on facts. That's why B1den chose her.

The Federalist:

> During her confirmation hearing Tuesday morning, President Joe B1den's Associate Attorney General nominee Van1ta Gupt4 insisted that she does not support "defunding the police," although statements she made last summer would indicate otherwise.

Her testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee in June 2020:

> ..she proposed a "shrinking [of] the footprint of the criminal legal system, including police, in black and brown people's lives," among other statements.
>
> "It means shifting our approach to public safety away from exclusive investments in criminalization and policing, toward investments in economic opportunity, education, health care, and other public benefits," Gupt4 said. "This paradigm not only furthers equity, but also constitutes effective policy: When we stop using criminal "justice" policy as social policy, we make communities safer and more prosperous."
>
> "Ultimately, it is becoming clear that Congress must redirect government dollars away from policing practices rooted in the criminal-legal system and the carceral

> state, and toward policy goals that reflect a vision of public safety that promotes community health and safety," Gupt4 also said in June.

I just want to be clear here. These nominees are exactly what Joe B1den wanted. The people who supported Joe B1den, including prominent evangelical leaders, wanted these people to be the nominees. Their words NOW don't matter. What matters are their actions before Election Day. No one cares about their evasions and excuses now.

And look, they get executive orders, too:

> Days after corporate media outlets said Joe B1den is "rolling back the culture war," the president continued his war on biological sex and due process on Monday with the introduction of two executive orders that seek to dismantle Trump-era protections in the name of "advancing gender equity and equality" and promoting it as "a matter of human rights, justice, and fairness."
>
> B1den's first order mandates the creation of a gender policy council, disguising issues such as promoting access to abortions and pushing gender- and race-driven agendas as a way to "advance gender equity and equality, with sensitivity to the experiences of those who suffer discrimination based on multiple factors, including membership in an underserved community."
>
> […]In addition to a commitment to fight "systemic bias and discrimination, including sexual harassment," the council also plans to address women in the workforce, economic disparities including wage gaps, and "the caregiving needs of American families," specifically examining "policies to advance equity for Black, indigenous and Latina women and girls of color."

Again – this is what the evangelical leaders who fussed about Trump tweets for 4 years wanted. They're not surprised by these executive orders – they agree with them. They voted for them, and they urged other Christians to vote for them, too.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

March 12, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus in a debate by saying that the resurrection is the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. Minimal facts are the parts of the New Testament that meet a set of strict historical criteria. These are the facts that skeptical historians agree with, totally apart from any religious beliefs.

So what are the criteria that skeptical historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."
>
> In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the

> probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> (1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
>
> (2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
>
> (3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
>
> (4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
>
> (5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
>
> (6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.
>
> Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in

> his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book. You want to look at it as a historical book, and use historical criteria to get to some facts that critical historians would accept. From that, it's possible to make a case for the resurrection, which is the guarantee that the words of Jesus are authoritative. Including the words of Jesus where he describes the Bible as a whole as God's revelation of Himself to his creatures.

Here is the approach I use when talking to non-Christian co-workers:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection
8. Don't let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And remember that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. That passages is universally accepted as early, eyewitness testimony from Paul, and represents the core of early Christian beliefs about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Everyone who takes evidence seriously has to

account for that early creed, which passes the historical tests I outlined above.

The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I've read is the one by Robert H. Stein in "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It's a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion "God raised Jesus from the dead". That whole book is really very, very good.

New study: there is no gay gene that causes homosexuality

March 13, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I heard one of the authors of this new study commenting on how he was a gay man, and the purpose of his research was to show a genetic basis for homosexuality, in order to make it equal to race. His goal was to make it impossible to disagree with homosexual behavior, because homosexual behavior would be seen as natural and normal. Let's see if his new study helps him out.

The blog of the peer-reviewed journal PLOS One reported on the new study, which was published in the prestigious journal Science.

Excerpt:

> The once-prevailing concept of a "gay gene" dictating sexual orientation has been put to rest in a powerhouse study published today in *Science*. The work brilliantly illustrates the very nature of science: evolving with the input of new data, especially the large-scale contributions of bioinformatics and crowd-sourcing.
>
> "We formed a large international consortium and collected data for more than 500,000 people, comparing DNA and self-reported sexual behavior. This is approximately 100 times bigger than any previous study on this topic," said lead author Andrea Ganna, of the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Finland and an instructor at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, opening a news conference earlier this week.
>
> […]The investigation estimates a genetic contribution to same-sex sexual behavior as under 1 percent, thanks to analysis of a trove of data from the UK Biobank and the consumer genetic testing company 23andme.

So, there you have it, there is no gay gene. But this is of course something we've known for decades, as all the previous studies had found the same thing.

The normal way that people do these studies is to analyze identical twins, and see how often both identical twins are gay.

> Eight major studies of identical twins in Australia, the U.S., and Scandinavia during the last two decades all arrive at the same conclusion: gays were not born that way.
>
> "At best genetics is a minor factor," says Dr. Neil Whitehead, PhD. Whitehead worked for the New Zealand government as a scientific researcher for 24 years, then spent four years working for the United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency. Most recently, he serves as a consultant to Japanese universities about the effects of radiation exposure. His PhD is in biochemistry and statistics.

> Identical twins have the same genes or DNA. They are nurtured in equal prenatal conditions. If homosexuality is caused by genetics or prenatal conditions and one twin is gay, the co-twin should also be gay.
>
> "Because they have identical DNA, it ought to be 100%," Dr. Whitehead notes. But the studies reveal something else. "If an identical twin has same-sex attraction the chances the co-twin has it are only about 11% for men and 14% for women."
>
> Because identical twins are always genetically identical, homosexuality cannot be genetically dictated. "No-one is born gay," he notes. "The predominant things that create homosexuality in one identical twin and not in the other have to be post-birth factors."
>
> Dr. Whitehead believes same-sex attraction (SSA) is caused by "non-shared factors," things happening to one twin but not the other, or a personal response to an event by one of the twins and not the other.

By the way, a previous study also found that transgender behavior was not genetic, but was clearly linked to environmental factors such as peer approval and social media.

Here is the report from Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.
>
> Littman surveyed more than 250 parents of children who suddenly developed gender dysphoria symptoms during or after puberty.
>
> […]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

A previous study also found that children are more likely to be gay if they are raised by gay adults. It was reported in AOL News.

Excerpt:

> Walter Schumm knows what he's about to do is unpopular: publish a study arguing that gay parents are more likely to raise gay children than straight parents. But the Kansas State University family studies professor has a detailed analysis that past almost aggressively ideological researchers never had.
>
> […]His study on sexual orientation, out next month, says that gay and lesbian parents are far more likely to have children who become gay. "I'm trying to prove

> that it’s not 100 percent genetic,” Schumm tells AOL News.
>
> His study is a meta-analysis of existing work. First, Schumm extrapolated data from 10 books on gay parenting… [and] skewed his data so that only self-identified gay and lesbian children would be labeled as such.
>
> […]Schumm concluded that children of lesbian parents identified themselves as gay 31 percent of the time; children of gay men had gay children 19 percent of the time, and children of a lesbian mother and gay father had at least one gay child 25 percent of the time.
>
> […]Finally, Schumm looked at the existing academic studies… In all there are 26 such studies. Schumm ran the numbers from them and concluded that, surprisingly, 20 percent of the kids of gay parents were gay themselves. When children only 17 or older were included in the analysis, 28 percent were gay.

It’s very important for people to understand that there is a trend in society to make every behavior traditionally seen as sinful into something caused by genetics. The twin goals of this effort are to insulate the behaviors from criticism, and to minimize evaluation of the effects of these behaviors on society as a whole. The genetic argument was used extensively to normalize same-sex marriage and transgenderism. I have seen the genetic argument used to defend other behaviors like pedophilia and incest. But the scientific research does nothing to support any of these arguments. What’s amazing is how a majority of people in the Unites have such false beliefs about the scientific research. They vastly overestimate the number of gay people, and also the influence of genetics.

Police investigate anti-LGBT hate crime: man asked Catholic school to not fly pride flag

March 14, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Story from The College Fix:

> A Canadian university instructor is under investigation by law enforcement for the "crime" of asking a Catho1ic school board not to recognize G4y Pride Month nor fly the rainbow flag at its schools.

He sent the request to the Toronto Catho1ic District School Board last Thursday. I've reported before on how the entire Canadian Catho1ic education system is pro-abortion and also opposed to chastity and natural marriage. This includes supporting LG8T lifestyles, and using the secular government as a weapon against anyone who supports Biblical views of sexuality and marriage. Yes, I mean the Catho1ic schools are doing this.

More:

> "Sending up g4y pride flags and recognizing g4y pride month are a sign that their message holds a place in our schools and that their message is not to be contradicted," Mai11et continued. "Flags are flown by those who hold control. Sending signals that support g4y pride messages is contrary to the teachings of the Church and have no place in our schools."
>
> The pro-LG8T YouTube channel D1gnity L1ghthouse posted Mai11et's comments to its page, and shortly thereafter people on social media went after him for his "hom0phobia." Eventually, the Toronto Police were contacted.

They quote Life Site News for this:

> The H4te Crime Unit is working with the divisional investigator to determine whether or not the comments made during the meeting would constitute hate propaganda charges," [Police Constable Jenifferj1t] Sidhu said.
>
> "This is currently an active investigation. The identity of the person who is alleged to have made comments has not been confirmed by TPS [Toronto Police Service], as [sic] this time," she added.

I'm sure that the constable in charge of the hate crime investigation has a taxpayer-funded degree, and her salary is paid by taxes. Some of the people who pay her taxes disagree with her on morality. And her response to that is to investigate them for hate crimes. And she is very happy to use the money they give her for that purpose. After all, Christianity is a mental disorder to be stamped out by the state. We should be happy to pay her to her to do that excellent work.

Catho1ic teachers marching in favor of g4y rights

The complainant's employer – a secular university – was also informed about his views.

I thought this was interesting from the LSN article – comments from politicians and school board leaders:

> Toronto City Councilor Kristyn Wong-T4m accused Mai11et on Twitter of calling for LG8T allies to be "killed."
>
> […]A number of TCDSB trustees also revealed on Twitter their disdain for Mai11et's presentation.
>
> "There are consequences for those who spread hatred & profess to be Catho1ic- you know who you are. Some feel holier than Pope and want to make us feel like lesser Catho1ics. I stand with Pope: God created us all in his image," Trustee Maria Rizz0, Ward 5, tweeted March 6.
>
> Rizz0 tweeted hours later that "No one should use bible as a weapon to advance their fundamentalist views to spread hatred at 2SLG8TQ+ students and smilies [sic]."
>
> Trustee Markus de Domenic0 also weighed in on Twitter on March 6, indirectly accusing Mai11et of "hate and bigotry."
>
> "I take hope knowing the vast majority of Catho1ics are loving, accepting people who believe in the teachings of Christ. We do not support hate and bigotry. We do not use the bible as a vile weapon against others. I stand with the Pope: God created us all in His image," he wrote.

I looked at some of these tweets, and also found this tweet from a Catho1ic school tweeting a picture of Ruth Bader-Ginsburg for International Women's Day. My view of Catho1icism was already pretty low, but seeing how many Catholic leaders don't accept the Bible isn't exactly helping. Remember, Joe Biden was able to pass himself off as Catho1ic to Catho1ic voters. Catholic voters didn't see any problem with his views on infanticide and LG8T totalitarianism.

I wonder if LG8T activists understand how they will be viewed when they respond to disagreement like this. It seems to me that they would be much better off if they tried to make someone like Dave Rubin their spokesman. But in my experience, they tend to see dissenters from their views in a more totalitarian way. They are only too happy to bring in government to stifle and subdue anyone who disagrees with them.

As a Christian, it would never occur to me to use police to force someone to accept my views on morality, e.g. – chastity. I would be uncomfortable overpowering someone, threatening them with unemployment or jail. But for the police in Toronto, this is totally normal. Bible-believing Christians are good enough to pay their salaries, but not good enough to have human rights.

We've seen this before in countries with socialism and atheism took over, and dissenters were not treated very well. But they are so steeped in their own dogmas, that they can't possible think about human rights or principles. They have to win. They have to stop anyone from disagreeing with them, or living in any way that they don't approve of.

How well are Democrats doing at controlling the southern border?

March 15, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the things that people liked the most about Trump is that he believed in border security. He didn't want Americans losing jobs to people who shouldn't be here. And he didn't want Americans paying thousands of dollars in welfare money to illegal immigrant households that use more in welfare than they pay in taxes.

With that in mind, I wonder how Joe Biden and his Democrat allies are doing. They were short on achievements when running for election. Blue states like California have MASSIVE problems caused by illegal immigration. The Democrats had no resume of achievements to run on. But, they won the election somehow, and now we should see if they are competent to govern.

Here's the situation:

> A "staggering number" of children being held at a Customs and Border Protection facility in Texas are facing "concerning" conditions as the population of unaccompanied minors held in border patrol custody has jumped nearly 700%.
>
> CBS News reports that lawyers, representing the migrant children, are lodging complaints about their treatment, after interviewing children who complained over overcrowding, of being left hungry, of going days without showering, and of "never" seeing the sun while being housed in the Texas detention centers.

I know that Biden rolled back a lot of the policies that Trump had put in to discourage illegal immigration. Biden got rid of the law that required foreigners to stay outside of the USA while awaiting hearings. Biden returned to the catch-and-release policy which allows illegals to enter the USA and just disappear. When you destroy law enforcement policies that deter illegal immigration, you encourage people to break the law. And then someone gets the bill for the higher spending on education and health care, and the higher crime rate. Biden doesn't have the same concern for taxpayer money that Trump had. It's not his money. What does he care? He has armed security.

More:

> "The Donna facility, which opened last month, has been operating over its pandemic-era capacity for weeks, CBP acknowledged in a recent filing in federal court. The facility was holding 854 children on February 21 and nearly 700 two days before, according to the court filing, which also noted that social distancing 'could not be observed at all times given the increasing numbers of individuals in custody,'" CBS reported Saturday.
>
> Currently, the facility is estimated to be at 700% capacity.
>
> Although the Biden administration as a whole has yet to call the situation a

> “crisis,” the White House announced on Sunday that it would call in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help minister to the child migrants in United States custody, per the BBC.

The Democrats don’t have any money of their own to spend on compassion. They’re being compassionate with YOUR money.

Maybe we should have worked harder to elect someone competent, rather than someone who just offered us good feelings and peer approval? Most of the people I know who voted for Joe Biden just “went with their gut”. They didn’t look at policy. But they’re going to have to pay for policy. They will, and their children will.

CNN news anchor Don Lemon says God doesn't judge people

March 16, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

He's an expert theologian and Bible scholar, and he has decided to educate us on what the Bible says and what it means.

Daily Caller reports:

> CNN anchor Don Lemon claimed Monday that God was "not about hindering people or even judging people."
>
> Lemon, who is engaged to his partner Tim, joined ABC's "The View" to talk about Pope Francis' statement directing the Catholic Church not to bless same-sex unions.
>
> […]"I think that the Catholic Church and many other churches really need to re-examine themselves and their teachings. That's not what God is about. God is not about hindering people or even judging people," Lemon claimed.
>
> […]Lemon went on to say that he often viewed religion as a barrier preventing people from really getting to know and understand each other.
>
> "I would say to the Pope and Vatican and all Christians or Catholics, or whomever, whatever religion you happen to belong to, go meet people. Try to understand people," Lemon added. "Do what the Bible Jesus actually said, if you believe in Jesus, and that is love your fellow man and judge not lest you be not judged."

This isn't the first time I've blogged about CNN's Don Lemon, or his amazing ability to interpret the Bible to Christians who don't know what it says.

Christian Post reports:

> CNN host Don Lemon has garnered criticism for claiming that Jesus Christ "was not perfect" while He was living on earth.
>
> "Jesus Christ — if you believe in, if that's who you believe in, Jesus Christ — admittedly was not perfect when he was here on this earth."

I really would like Christians to be more careful about where they get their news from. This time, it's obvious that Don Lemon doesn't know what he's talking about. Other times, it may not be. A lot of money goes into making people on CNN look attractive and sound authoritative. Don't be fooled by appearances. These people are stupid and ignorant about the things they speak about.

If you're wondering what to read, I read The Federalist, Daily Wire, Daily Signal and Daily Caller. I'd recommend that you stick with those web sites, and turn off the CNN Bible experts.

Washington Post corrects news story that attributed inaccurate quotes to Trump

March 17, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

They lied.

Story from Fox News:

> The Washington Post made a massive correction Monday to a January report about a phone call between then-President Donald Trump and a Georgia elections investigator, as the liberal paper admitted multiple quotes attributed to Trump based on an anonymous source were inaccurate.
>
> The corrected story was a hot topic on cable news and talk shows that helped spread the Post's flawed report and media watchdogs feel it points to larger problems with agenda-driven anonymous sources and liberal outlets that rush to "confirm" them.
>
> […]The Post initially reported Trump had told an official working in Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger's office to "find the fraud" in the state, which he lost narrowly to Joe Biden, and that she would be a "national hero" if she did.
>
> However, a newly emerged recording of the Dec. 23 call found he didn't use those words. Instead, Trump said she would be "praised" when the "right answer comes out" and encouraged her to closely examine mail-in ballots in heavily blue Fulton County.

The original headline was *"'Find the fraud': Trump pressured a Georgia elections investigator in a separate call legal experts say could amount to obstruction."* They changed the headline when they made the correction. Other news outlets spread the lies. The article was used in the oral arguments recent attempt to impeach Trump. People saw it on TV, and they believed it.

It happens often. The New York Times had to correct a story that claimed that Trump supporters bludgeoned a police officer to death with a fire extinguisher. That was later found to be false and retracted, but again, the damage was already done. The news media ran with the lie, and it was used in the impeachment. Again, people saw it on TV, and they believed it.

The news media likes to say that this was just an honest mistake, but the mistakes always go against conservatives. When you look at the political donations of people in the news media, it's almost entirely going to Democrats. They're using their power to lie to the public, so they get their candidates elected. And then the Big Tech social media companies rely on the liars to "fact check" the rest of us, and censor us for telling the truth.

Remember that the entire Trump-Russia collusion news story also relied on anonymous

sources. But in the end, it turned out that Democrats paid for the dossier that was used by the FBI to justify spying on Trump. I don't remember anyone in the news media facing consequences for running a fake story for months and months.

By the way, the Washington Post is owned by the CEO of Amazon. I'm already trying to reduce my dependence on Amazon. You might want to think about it. He's not a good person, and we shouldn't be making him rich.

What teachers think about parents' desire for kids to get jobs and earn money

March 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you ask parents why they send their children to school, you're likely to get the answer "so that they can learn useful skills, get jobs, and move out of my house". But teachers don't really see their goal as teaching children skills so that they can get jobs. They see their job as teaching children to vote for big government, so that they can get raises, vacation, conferences, benefits, pensions, etc. So, they focus on teaching children how to vote Democrat. And they do that by ignoring math, science, technology and engineering, and instead focusing on things that promote redistribution of wealth, and bigger government.

Here's an example from Daily Wire, in which we find out what teachers really think of parents – in their own words:

> A group of current and former teachers and others in L0ud0un County, Virginia compiled a lengthy list of parents suspected of disagreeing with school system actions, including its teaching of controversial racial concepts — with a stated purpose in part to "infiltrate," to use "hackers" to silence parents' communications, and to "expose these people publicly."
>
> Members of a 624-member private Facebook group called "Anti-Racist Parents of L0ud0un County" named parents and plotted fundraising and other offline work. Some used pseudonyms, but The Daily Wire has identified them as a who's who of the affluent jurisdiction outside D.C., including schools staff and elected officials.
>
> The sheriff's criminal investigations division is reviewing the matter — but the group's activities might be no surprise to top law enforcement because the county's prosecutor, narrowly elected with the help of $845,000 in cash from George Soros, appears to be a member of the Facebook group.

The article is long (2600 words), but awesome. I recommend taking the time to read it, so you can have an accurate view about what teachers are really like. But I have some samples below.

Silencing dissenting teachers:

> In recent years, L0ud0un's school system has flooded its curricula and policies with racial rhetoric, paying about $500,000 to one racial consulting company alone. It required all staff to undergo "Equity in the Center" training that promoted a sense of injustice and urgency.
>
> The school system proposed, then withdrew, a policy that would ban teachers from disagreeing with the schools' racial philosophies, even when not on school district property. In January 2020, the school board's Equity Committee voted

> unanimously to “Offer/Provide Equity in the Center-like training to parents.”

Doxing parents who wanted schools to teach children marketable skills, rather than Democrat socialist indoctrination.

Former teacher, Hilary Hu1tman-Lee wrote this in the private Facebook group:

> “Regarding the anti-CRT movement, we’d like to compile a document of all known actors and supporters. Please comment below with legal names of these individuals, area of residence and or school board Rep known, known accounts on social media, and any other info that you feel is relevant,” wrote Hu1tman-Lee, who at one point taught Latin at Potomac Falls High School and who is listed as doing business with the school district as an education consultant.

The fascists responded by naming all the people, listing out their contact information, addresses, EMPLOYERS and spouses.

Look at this:

> Andrea We1skopf, a teacher at River Bend & Seneca Ridge Middle School, named a father who has criticized critical race theory. The N44CP, which We1skopf (who is white) works closely with, previously sent an “URGENT” email to school officials alerting them that the man is married to a teacher. We “are hopeful she does not share the same ideologies as her husband. Please confirm receipt of this message,” it said, according to an email obtained by The Daily Wire.

The article describes the teachers in the Facebook group, and their derisive opinions of parents who speak out against secular leftist indoctrination. They’re not just talking about getting people fired, or shutting down their funding. They also talked about hacking web sites and violence.

Stop giving money to unionized teachers

Do you want to live in a world where taxpayer money is paid to secular left fascists? These people don’t have any marketable skills. They are often divorced, obese, single mothers, promiscuous, reckless, irresponsible, mentally ill, sexually deviant, etc. Even if they don’t behave like this themselves, they encourage self-destructiveness in others in the name of “tolerance”. They go into teaching to avoid having to please customers in a competitive market. They don’t want to interact with adults. They don’t want to feel pressure to perform a job well enough to keep it. They want security that’s divorced from accountability. They’re often just overgrown children, obsessed with the kinds of cliquish nonsense (feelings and peer approval) that occupied them when they were children themselves.

Top Contributors, 2019-2020

Contributor	Amount
Carpenters & Joiners Union	$19,308,421
National Education Assn	$12,913,109
American Federation of Teachers	$12,539,835
American Federation of State/Cnty/Munic Employees	$10,255,600
Laborers Union	$5,814,059
National Nurses United	$5,401,658
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	$5,117,174
Operating Engineers Union	$4,518,967
Communications Workers of America	$4,138,074
United Steelworkers	$3,659,007
Service Employees International Union	$3,013,270

Contributions to:

Democrats Liberal Groups Republicans Conservative Groups

Political contributions from unions are mostly given to secular left fascists

Teachers teach in order to get more money for themselves. They get more money by teaching children to vote for bigger government. They are not interested in teaching skills and getting kids jobs in the private sector. They are not interested in affirming the religion or morality of parents. They are not interested in teaching children to love their country. They want money. Stop giving them money.

LGBT fascism: father imprisoned for calling his biological child “daughter”

March 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a lot to say about this story, so I’ll be brief in re-capping the facts.

The back story from Post Millennial:

> H00g1and discovered that the school had been showing his daughter SOGI 123, the going sexual and gend3r identity education materials in British Columbia which amounts to tr4nsgend3r ideology “propaganda videos.” In the grade 7 yearbook, the child was referred to by a different name. The school counsellor changed the child’s name without telling her parents. The school “socially tr4nsitioned” the biologically female child on its own initiative, with the input of a gend3r ideologue psychologist, Dr. Wa11ace W0ng.
>
> When H00g1and accompanied his child to a consultation with W0ng, the psychologist advised the pubescent child to take testosterone. W0ng referred the child to the endocrinology unit at the local hospital. Meanwhile, H00g1and was looking for mental health solutions to help the child without drugs.
>
> On the child’s first visits to the hospital, a treatment plan was put into action. Both the child, and her mother—H00gland’s ex-wife—signed a consent form which explicitly stated that the “treatment” was experimental, meaning that the endocrinologists recommending the treatment didn’t know the long-term health impact.
>
> A gend3r identity activist lawyer, B4rb4r4 Find1ey, represented the child in court. Justice B0den decided that the child’s best interests lay in destroying her long-term health to make her body appear more like that of a male.
>
> H00gland, in contrast, thinks his daughter’s best interests lie in preserving his child’s health, in case his child ends up among the estimated 85 percent of children who desist in their belief that they are the opposite sex once puberty ends.

You can read more about W0ng here.

And here is the latest:

> [A] warrant was issued by a judge for the arrest of a father after calling his biological female child his “daughter,” and referring to her with the pronouns “she” and “her.” H00g1and was found to be in contempt of court.
>
> H00g1and is a father to a gend3r non-conforming biological female 14-year-old who identifies as tr4nsgend3r and prefers the use of male pronouns. H00g1and has repeatedly called this person his daughter, though the court has forbade it.
>
> On Tuesday… .He was the arrested and jailed. The warrant was issued by Judge

> T4mmen on March 4, 2021.
>
> H00g1and opposes his child's undergoing "gend3r affirmative" medical procedures, and has stated this opposition again and again, in the hope of saving his child from irreversible harm. The Canadian medical system, the legal system, and the child's mother press ahead with social and medical tr4nsition of the child.
>
> On December 14, 2020, H00g1and was compelled by Justice M4rz4ri's court to collude in the gend3r "tr4nsitioning" of his fourteen year old daughter and told not to call his biological female child his daughter. In response, H00g1and made a Charter challenge engaging his right to freedom of speech.

Unfortunately, there is no freedom of speech nor freedom of religion in Canada. They simply do not exist, because regardless of what is on paper, the taxpayer-funded judges and politicians who run Canada are secular left fascists – the same kind who have been at the head of Marxist governments in other times and places that resulted in so much suppression of liberty and human rights. When it comes to human rights, Canada has more in common with North Korea than it does with the United States of America.

Now my points.

First, about the man's wife. Women are generally inclined to generate their system of values by feelings and peer approval. Now that feminism has brainwashed the majority of women to distrust concepts that are more typically linked to men, like objective truth and objective morality, it's rare to find any women who formed their values by complying with the reality of God's existence and the objective moral law. They are instead reckless and hedonistic in their behavior, preferring to act first and then deny responsibility later. The whole movement for moral relativism and the subsequent non-judgmentalism is an attempt by feminist women to normalize bad behaviors by demanding "tolerance" and "compassion". My advice to men at this time is to NEVER marry. I don't think that most women today are good partners for protecting children from predators. There just isn't enough going on in society (churches, culture, anywhere) that is countering the pulling of women towards postmodern skepticism and moral relativism.

Second, even if you marry a good woman, one like my senior female advisors who I respect and love, you will have to live in a world run by feminist teachers, counselors, administrators, lawyers, judges, police officers, etc. Having a family exposes you to influence from woke pastors, woke parishioners, woke bureaucrats, woke corporations, woke co-workers, big government workers, etc. Your wife will want social connections, and society will become aware of your belief in God and adherence to the Bible. They will not let you lead your home. You're already losing money from taxes to pay for fascists who oppose liberty and human rights. Don't compound the problem by having a family that increases interactions with them. You might remember that I recently blogged about a Canadian man who was forced to pay $50,000 a month to a woman that he never married, had children with or even lived with. And another Canadian man who was taken to court for grounding his daughter, and a female judge ruled against him. Why diminish

your Christian influence and effectiveness by having your resources confiscated by secular left fascists?

Third, it's important to understand the evil consequences of feminist women's push for tolerance and compassion, i.e. – moral relativism and non-judgmentalism. I have blogged previously about the case of the two g4y dads, who adopted a child only to abuse him and to make child pornography videos. An Australian journalist who wrote a story lauding the two g4y dads and their parenting ability (before they were sentenced for their crimes) complained that she didn't know they were going to do that. But there are ALWAYS consequences, especially for children, from the feminist female push for moral relativism and non-judgmentalism. Just because those women cannot predict them, in their rush to virtue signal their tolerance and compassion, doesn't mean they are not responsible. If Robert H00gland's child regrets her tr4nsition or (God forbid) goes into a depression and commits suicide, then the people responsible will be the ones who seem so tolerant and compassionate today. By the way, there is a story from just this week about how a child court judge who championed "drag queen story hour" has been arrested for child pornography. Canada also had an education minister who championed the sexual exploitation of children in their education curriculum who was also arrested for child pornography. Why not just assume that EVERY secular leftist who talks about tolerance and compassion in public is privately involved in abusing children OR approves of it? How many times must children suffer before we see things as they really are?

Fourth and finally, it's important to understand that secular leftists who are involved in promoting evil tend to respond to disagreement with fascism. Canada currently has a publication ban on any stories about government overriding the rights of parents. They use ARMED POLICE and IMPRISONMENT to restrict speech that criticizes many of the priorities of the secular left, e.g. – abortion, infanticide, tr4nsgenderism, g4y rights, etc. They are not afraid to use coercive methods. I have blogged about people on the secular left using doxing, termination of employment, boycotts, vandalism, violence, and even DOMESTIC TERRORISM (in the case of the g4y activist who attacked the Family Research Council building with a GUN). These methods are either performed by OR approved by secular leftists. Don't expect them to respect your liberties and human rights, because there are no God-given liberties or human rights in a naturalistic / materialist universe. And in a naturalist / materialist universe, anything goes for a secular left fascist trying to feel good and get peer approval.

Also, in case anyone from Canada is reading this, I mean you no harm. Unlike you, I have no desire to stop people I disagree with from acting freely, according to their consciences. I want you to be able to work and earn money to survive and provide for your family. As a Christian, my job is to love you and answer your questions about Christianity so that you freely choose to bring your behaviors inline with what you determine to be true. I want you to be free to act like a secular leftist fascist, since you haven't CONVINCED YOURSELF to act any other way. We're not going to dox you, silence you, coerce you, or anything that would upset you. But I will use my speech to respectfully but firmly disagree with you. The history of Christianity is REPLETE with the worst kinds of sinners changing their

ways and becoming heroes of the faith – loved and respected by all Christians. Look at the apostle Paul – he was a billion times worse than you! Christians hope and pray that you might become curious about the rational arguments and evidence for Christianity and change your own minds at your own pace. It happens all the time. We want the truth-centered best for you, not the self-centered best.

Who will the Republicans nominate to run for president in 2024?

March 19, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There's only one answer: Florida governor Ron DeSantis.

And I will tell you why. Because he has real achievements, and by 2024, we will have finally learned to care about competence instead of charisma. Because we are going to have a LOUSY 4 years under Biden / Harris.

For one thing, All of this tolerance, compassion, permissiveness, etc. COSTS MONEY. We are already $28 trillion in debt, and Biden is simultaneously destroying our economy while trying to buy votes with taxpayer money. How destroying the economy? By attacking the energy sector, shutting down businesses with a pandemic panic, and talking about raising corporate tax rates from 21% to 28%.

We're going to need someone who has results, and that person is Ron DeSantis.

Here's an article from The Federalist:

> Republican Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis denounced critical race theory at a press conference Wednesday afternoon, vowing to "expressly exclude" it from the state's public schools.
>
> "Florida civics curriculum will incorporate foundational concepts with the best materials and it will expressly exclude unsanctioned narratives like critical race theory and other unsubstantiated theories," DeSantis said. "Teaching kids to hate their country and to hate each other is not worth one red cent of taxpayer money."
>
> "No matter if your family came on the Mayflower or you became a naturalized citizen, these principles belong to you," DeSantis said.
>
> DeSantis said Florida would receive $106 million in pandemic-associated federal dollars. A new proposal by DeSantis would provide an additional $3,000 to public educators who are credentialed to teach American civics. About $16.5 million of the pandemic funds would be allocated to training educators and principals in civics.
>
> In his speech, the governor laid out a plan to put $6.5 million toward public service advocacy programs between schools and the government, and $7 million for civics curricula that provide students with "foundational concepts."

DeSantis is making himself a resume to run on by his actions. If he has success, like he did with his method of handling the Wuhan virus, then he will win in 2024. We can't be electing people based on their words – we need to look for people who have actions. The best actions, are actions that solve problems. Critical race theory is nothing but racism, and it needs to get solved by someone with some strength to take it on, head on. No

governor is doing more than Florida's Ron DeSantis. People are flocking to Florida from all the failing Democrat-run states.

If you're not following DeSantis now, you can start reading Daily Wire, The Federalist, Daily Caller, Daily Signal, Breitbart, and other good conservative sites to find out. Did you know he banned sanctuary cities in his state? I love that!

Look at some of these mainstream headlines from the last week:

- Washington Times: Fla. Gov. DeSantis blames Biden for 'disastrous' border crisis: 'This is intentional,' 'ideological'
- Wall Street Journal: Ron DeSantis on the Pandemic Year: Don't Trust the Elites (he wrote this editorial)
- CBS News Miami: Gov. Ron DeSantis Says State Won't Be 'Doing Any Vaccine Passports'
- The Blaze: DeSantis slams Biden's idea of reinstating lockdowns as 'insane,' vows no more shutdowns in Florida

Or you can even read far-left Democrat sources like Politico. Their headline is "How Ron DeSantis won the pandemic".

Excerpt:

> [A]fter 12 months in which he was pilloried as a reckless executive driven more by ideology than science, dogged by images of crowded beaches and bars and derided as "DuhSantis," "DeathSantis" and "DeSatan," Florida has fared no worse, and in some ways better, than many other states — including its big-state peers.
>
> The most controversial policies DeSantis enacted — locking down later and opening up earlier, keeping nursing homes closed to visitation while insisting schools needed to be open to students, resisting intense pressure to issue a mask mandate — have ended up being, on balance, short of or even the opposite of ruinous.
>
> Prognosticators' grimmest predictions never came true — or haven't yet — and DeSantis, for now, is more politically ascendant than any governor in the country. In stark contrast to his most conspicuous counterparts — California's Gavin Newsom, who's facing a recall, and New York's Andrew Cuomo, who's confronting political extinction — the Yale-and Harvard-educated DeSantis' approval ratings are up from last year's low 40s and flirting with the mid-50s.
>
> And in spite of some traits that typically would constitute political kryptonite — he's as awkward as he is ambitious — there's mounting (albeit ultra-early) polling that suggests DeSantis might be (after Donald Trump) the favorite to be Republicans' nominee for president in 2024.
>
> "There's a sweet spot in there that most governors have searched for but few have found," said GOP pollster Whit Ayres, who's worked for DeSantis in the past.

> “He’s managed to figure out the sweet spot between good policy and good politics.”

Buckle up, because we’re going to win in 2024.

Luke Barnes on the fine-tuning of the strong force and fine structure constant

March 20, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By now, anyone who has had discussions about scientific evidence for the existence of God knows about the fine-tuning argument. In a nutshell, if the fundamental constants and quantities given in the Big Bang were even slightly other than they are, then the universe itself would not be hospitable for complex, embodied intelligent life.

Here is an article from The New Atlantis written by Australian cosmologist Luke Barnes.

Excerpt:

> Today, our deepest understanding of the laws of nature is summarized in a set of equations. Using these equations, we can make very precise calculations of the most elementary physical phenomena, calculations that are confirmed by experimental evidence. But to make these predictions, we have to plug in some numbers that cannot themselves be calculated but are derived from measurements of some of the most basic features of the physical universe. These numbers specify such crucial quantities as the masses of fundamental particles and the strengths of their mutual interactions. After extensive experiments under all manner of conditions, physicists have found that these numbers appear not to change in different times and places, so they are called the fundamental constants of nature.
>
> […]A universe that has just small tweaks in the fundamental constants might not have any of the chemical bonds that give us molecules, so say farewell to DNA, and also to rocks, water, and planets. Other tweaks could make the formation of stars or even atoms impossible. And with some values for the physical constants, the universe would have flickered out of existence in a fraction of a second. That the constants are all arranged in what is, mathematically speaking, the very improbable combination that makes our grand, complex, life-bearing universe possible is what physicists mean when they talk about the "fine-tuning" of the universe for life.

Let's look at an example – the strong force. Not only must the strong force be fine-tuned so we have both hydrogen and helium, but the ratio of the strong force must also be fine-tuned with the fine structure constant.

Barnes writes:

> The strong nuclear force, for example, is the glue that holds protons and neutrons together in the nuclei of atoms. If, in a hypothetical universe, it is too weak, then nuclei are not stable and the periodic table disappears again. If it is too strong, then the intense heat of the early universe could convert all hydrogen into helium — meaning that there could be no water, and that 99.97 percent of

> the 24 million carbon compounds we have discovered would be impossible, too. And, as the chart to the right shows, the forces, like the masses, must be in the right balance. If the electromagnetic force, which is responsible for the attraction and repulsion of charged particles, is too strong or too weak compared to the strong nuclear force, anything from stars to chemical compounds would be impossible.

Here's the chart he's referencing:

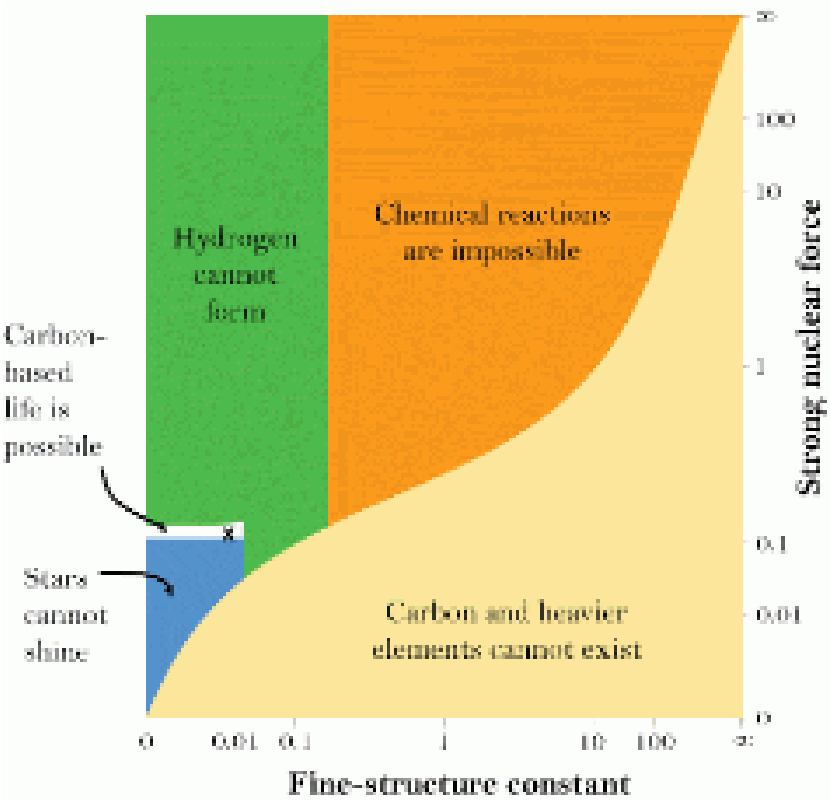

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant
As you can see from the chart, most of the values that the constants could take would make complex, embodied intelligent life impossible.

We need carbon (carbon-based life) because they form the basis of the components of life chemistry, e.g. proteins, sugars, etc. We need hydrogen for water. We need chemical reactions for obvious reasons. We need the light from the stars to support plant and animal life on the surface of a planet. And so on. In almost every case where you change the values of these constants and quantities and ratios from what they are, you will end up with a universe that does not support life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind under these laws of physics. And we don't have any alternative laws of physics in this universe.

By the way, just to show you how mainstream these examples of fine-tuning are, I thought I would link to a source that you're all going to be familiar with: The New Scientist.

The fine-tuning of the force of gravity

So here is an article from the New Scientist about a different constant that also has to be

fine-tuned for life: the force of gravity.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe‘s birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What’s more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Notice how the article also mentioned “the universe’s birth”, which is part of mainstream science.

When I’m writing to you about things like the origin of the universe, or the cosmic fine-tuning, I’m not talking to you about things that pastors found in the Bible. These discoveries are known and accepted by mainstream scientists. It’s amazing that people are constructing their worldviews without having to account for the birth of the universe and this cosmic fine-tuning. We all, as rational individuals, have to bound our view of the universe with the findings of science. Right now, those findings support the existence of a Creator and a Designer. So why am I seeing so many atheists who are just plain ignorant about these facts? Maybe we should tell them about this evidence. Maybe we should ask them why they don’t account for scientific evidence when forming their beliefs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason

- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Why did Dan Barker leave Christianity for atheism?

March 21, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

Unbelievable's radio show featured a discussion with former Christian Dan Barker, the founder and co-President of the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

The MP3 file is here. (60 minutes)

I thought that I would make some general comments about why I think that many people leave the Christian faith, and what you should be careful of in order to avoid following in Dan Barker's footsteps, specifically.

Basically, there are four major reasons why people leave Christianity.

1. They want to do something immoral with impunity. This type of person wants to do something immoral that is forbidden by Christianity, like pre-marital sex or getting drunk in clubs with friends. They dump Christianity in order to have freedom to seek happiness in this life.
2. They want to make decisions based on their emotions, rather than wisdom. This type of person thinks that God's job is to save them when they act irresponsibly. When God disappoints them by not make their recklessness "work out", they leave the faith.
3. They want to be loved by people, not by God. This type of person thinks that Christianity is a tool that they can use to become popular. When they first try to articulate the gospel in public, they find that people don't like them as much, and they feel bad about offending people with exclusive truth claims that they cannot back up using logic and evidence. So, they water down Christianity to get along with non-Christians. Finally, they jettison Christianity completely. This happens to a lot of young Christians the moment they hit college / university.
4. They don't want to learn to defend their faith. This type of person is asked questions

by skeptics that they cannot answer. Usually this happens when people go to university after growing up in the shelter of the Church. The questions and peer pressure make them feel stupid. Rather than investigate Christianity to see if it's true, they drop it, so they can be thought of as part of the "smart" crowd.

Now listen to the discussion and see if you can identify some of these factors from Barker's own carefully-prepared words. He is trying very hard to make himself look honest and moderate, because he wants Christians to be sympathetic with his story and his motives for leaving Christianity. But I think that there is enough in his statements to construct a different hypothesis of why he left Christianity.

I've grouped the data by risk factor. Some of this is my interpretation of his real motivations, based on my experience dealing with former-Christians.

Non-rational, emotional approach to Christianity

- he was raised in a devout Christian family where he probably wouldn't have faced skeptical questions
- he converted to Christianity at age 15 as a result of a religious experience, not a serious investigation
- his idea of God was probably idealized and uninformed, e.g. – a loving God who wants us to be happy
- he wandered around from church to church preaching, with no fixed address or source of income
- he earned money by collecting "love offerings" from churches where he performed his music
- he wrote Christian songs and Christian musicals, but nothing substantive on apologetics and theology
- he worked in three churches known for being anti-intellectual and fundamentalist
- there's no evidence that of any deep study of philosophy, science and history during this time

Desire to gain acceptance from non-Christians

- he began to notice that some people were uncomfortable with sin and Hell
- he began to avoid preaching about sin and Hell in order to make these people comfortable
- he watered-down the gospel to focus on helping people to be happy in this life
- his manic approach to Christian ministry was challenged by the "real life" needs of his growing family
- he met liberal pastors while performing his music in their churches
- he found it difficult to disagree with them because they seemed to be "good" people
- he watered down his message further in order to appeal to people across the theological spectrum

Ignorance of Christian apologetics

- he began to think that if there are many different views of religion, then no view can be correct
- he was not intellectually capable of using logic and evidence to test these competing claims to see which was true
- he decided to instead re-interpret Christian truth claims as non-rational opinions, so they could all be "valid"
- he became a theological liberal, abandoning theism for an impersonal "ground of being"
- he embraced religious pluralism, the view that all religions are non-rational and make no testable truth claims
- he began to see God as a "metaphor" whose purpose is to make people have a sense of meaning and purpose
- he jettisoned God completely and focused more on helping people find meaning and morality apart from God
- seems to think that religion is about having a "great life", and felt that you can have a "great life" without religion
- seems to think that religion is about being "good", and felt that you can be "good" without religion
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them what to do instead of letting them do anything they want
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them what is true, instead of letting them believe whatever they want
- religion makes people feel bad by telling them that God will hold them accountable for their beliefs and actions

So what do I think happened?

Barker was generating an income from donations from churches where he entertained them. Gradually, his family grew to the point where conservative churches were not enough to support him. He had to change his message to appeal to liberal churches in order to cast a wider net.

He seems to have thought that Christianity is about having his needs met and being liked by others. I think he wanted to feel good and to make people feel good with his preaching and singing. But Christianity is not a feel-good religion. It's not a tool to make people like you. He seems to have become aware that the exclusive claims of Christianity made other people feel offended, so he cut them out. Christian apologists learn how to provide evidence for claims that non-Christians find offensive or hard to believe, but Dan hadn't studied philosophy, science or history so he couldn't defend it. It's hard to speak unpopular truths when you have nothing to back it up except your music composing. Eventually, Dan just quit making the truth claims entirely.

I also think money was a factor. It seems to me that it would have hurt his career and

reduced his invitations from liberal churches if he had kept up teaching biblical Christianity. In order to appeal to a wider audience, (like many Christian singers do – e.g. – Amy Grant, Jars of Clay, etc.), he would have felt pressured to water down the unpleasant parts of his preaching and singing. Lacking apologetics skill, he instead abandoned his message. He needed to account for his family's needs and "real life", and exclusive truth claims and Hell-talk would have reduced his ability to do that. It seems to me that he should have scaled back his extreme schedule of preaching and singing, and instead gotten a steady job so that he could afford "real life" and a family without being pressured into altering his message. The Christian life requires a certain amount of wisdom that Dan did not have.

Life isn't a fairy tale. God isn't there to reward risky behavior. We need to be more shrewd about financial matters so that we have the ability to *not care* about what people think of us. Look at this blog. I work all day as a senior software engineer with two degrees in computer science, so that I don't have to rely on donations. Additionally, I save most of what I make in case a tragedy strikes. Since I am financially secure, I can say what I think, and disregard anyone who wants me to change my message because they are offended. Becoming a Christian isn't a license to behave irrationally and immaturely with money. For some people, (like William Lane Craig), stepping out in faith works. But if it doesn't work, it's better to retreat and re-trench, rather than to compromise your message for money.

I actually met someone like Dan Barker recently. She grew up in an anti-intellectual hippy Christian home. Her mother came from a good family, and decided on a whim to marry a non-Christian. Like Barker, the family exalted feelings and irrational expectations of miracles from God for "fearless" acts. She got herself into trouble with alcohol and promiscuity in her 20s, by making emotional decisions and mixing with the wrong crowd. Her way of fixing this was to fly off on a one-year missions trip, wrecking her resume and finances. Now, she is in her late 30s, unmarried, and literally blaming *Jesus* for putting too many demands on her that she doesn't have time for, e.g – morning quiet time. This causes her to feel guilty, and make her want to reject Christianity. She had no intellectual conception of basic core doctrines like God's existence or Jesus' resurrection, which might have acted as a bulwark against her emotions. When I explained to her how I had structured my education and career so that I could have an influence without testing God, she seemed bored and said that I was too "fearful".

This is apparently widespread, especially among anti-intellectual denominations. Another ex-Pentecostal atheist woman I heard about from people who knew her when she was young decided to drop out of college to travel around North America doing pro-life work. When she found herself penniless, unmarried and without children in her mid-30s, she decided to have a baby out of wedlock. The government will pay for it, she said. Rather than trying to justify this decision as a Christian, she blamed God for not making her madness "work out". She is now an atheist, because God did not reward her decision to live "fearlessly" for him with a husband and children. It was all God's fault. There is a whole subculture within Christianity, where the pursuit of fun and thrills can be masked

with pious language, and all talk of prudence and restraint is seen as cowardice and lack of faith.

The Christian life requires a certain level of intelligence, a certain level of practical wisdom, and a certain level of self-control and discipline. Make sure that you don’t walk away from God because of your own bad choices.

Is Politifact trustworthy? Is Politifact unbiased? A review of past rulings

March 22, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

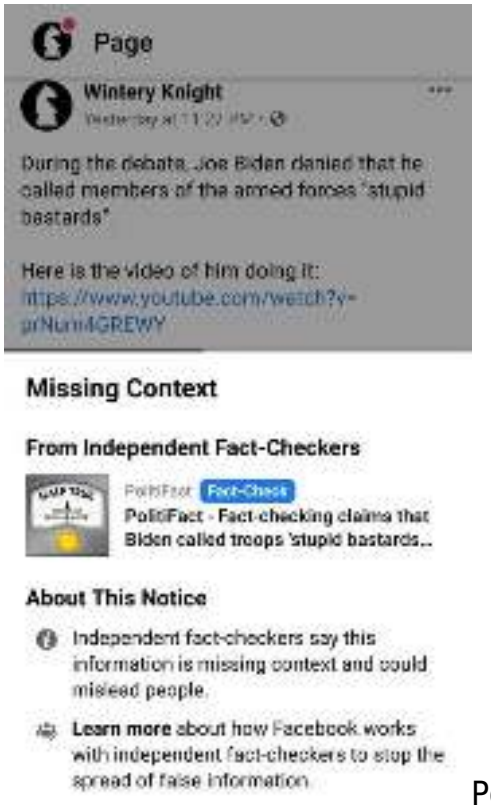

Politifact is a web site run by some left-wing journalists at the Tampa Bay Times. As you might expect from academic studies of media bias, their content might as well be written by the Democrat Party. But it's not enough to just declare Politifact a Democrat propaganda operation – I need to actually give you details and examples. And so I will, in the rest of this post.

Let's start with two recent examples, then I'll show you the worst example of media bias I have ever seen from Politifact.

Missouri Senate Race

Here's one analysis from the Daily Wire:

> On Tuesday, Politifact, which purports to be a neutral fact-checking website but in fact leans heavily to the left, got caught protecting a member of the Democratic Party: Democratic Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill.
>
> Politifact took issue with the ad from The Senate Leadership Fund, a pro-Republican super PAC, that claimed that McCaskill said "normal people" could afford private planes.
>
> […]After they were corrected, Politifact acknowledged the mistake, writing,
>
> Initially, we published this fact-check with a rating of False, because based on the video available, it did not appear that McCaskill was talking about private planes. After publication, we received more complete video of the question-and-answer

> session between McCaskill and a constituent that showed she was in fact responding to a question about private planes, as well as a report describing the meeting. We re-assessed the evidence, archived the original version here, and published the version you see here with a new rating of Half True. We apologize for the error.

Daily wire also linked to some more failed Politifact "fact checks": here, here, and here.

Arizona Senate Race

Politifact also screwed up their fact-check for the Arizona Senate race.

The Daily Caller explains:

> PolitiFact incorrectly labeled it "mostly false" that Democratic Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema "protested troops in a pink tutu" during its live fact-check of the Arizona Senate debate Monday night.
>
> It's an established fact that Sinema, a former Green Party activist who co-founded an anti-war group, wore a pink tutu at one of the multiple anti-war protests she attended in 2003.
>
> "While we were in harm's way, she was protesting our troops in a pink tutu," Republican candidate Martha McSally, a former Air Force fighter pilot, said during Monday night's debate.

Here's their Politifact's evaluation of McSally's claim:

Who are you going to believe? Politifact, or your own eyes?

And here's the photo of Kyrsten Sinema, protesting the troops, in a pink tutu:

Anti-war Democrat Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema in a pink tutu
The Daily Caller notes:

> A 2003 Arizona State University news article at the time described Sinema wearing "something resembling a pink tutu" at one of the protests.
>
> […]Sinema openly associated with fringe elements of the far-left during her anti-war activism.
>
> She promoted an appearance by Lynne Stewart, a lawyer who was convicted of aiding an Islamic terrorist organization, in 2003.
>
> Sinema also reportedly partnered with anarchists and witches in her anti-war activism and said she did "not care" if Americans wanted to join the Taliban.

Colonel Martha McSally, as I've blogged about before, is a former U.S. Air Force A-10 fighter pilot, and squadron commander. She logged a lot of hours leading actual combat missions against America's enemies – the sorts of people who sell and rape Yazidi girls. She fought them.

And now for the big one: Politifact's fact-checking of Obamacare.

Obama's claims about Obamacare

Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine, wrote about Politifact's assessment of Obama's promise to Americans about keeping their health plans after Obamacare.

In 2008, before the presidential election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about Obamacare "True":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site's "Truth-O-Meter" to evaluate this claim: "Under Barack Obama's health care proposal, 'if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.'"

And she concluded:

> […]…people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama's plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his statement True."

Roy notes:

> PolitiFact's pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 campaign.

Here's the screen capture from 2008:

Politifact says that everyone who likes their health care plan can keep it
Before the election, it's true! And Obama got re-elected, because people believed that.
But what happened after the election?

In 2013, after the 2012 election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about Obamacare "Pants On Fire":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama's infamous promise—that "if you like your health care plan, you can keep it"—its 2013 "Lie of the Year."
>
> […][N]one of the key facts that made that promise "impossible" in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President's plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan
Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."

Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."

Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact said one thing before the election, and the opposite afterwards

So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, but it's election time so they don't say that. It's not like the critical assessments of Obamacare from health policy experts were not out there between 2007-2012. I know, because I blogged on every study and report on the predicted effects of the law that I could find. But the intellectually lazy journalism-major clowns at Politifact couldn't be bothered to read those studies and reports.

Scotland passes controversial bill criminalizing “hate speech”, even at home

March 23, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The far-left The National reports:

> ONE of the most controversial pieces of legislation ever undertaken by the Holyrood Parliament has been approved by MSPs. The Scottish Parliament voted by 82 to 32 with four abstentions to pass the Hate Crime and Public Order Bill.
>
> […]Conservative spokesperson on justice Liam Kerr MSP said the bill went too far, arguing: “The bill contains no defence regarding private conversations in people’s own homes. The police could come to someone’s home, having received a report of their having stirred up hate around the dinner table, and could take witness statements from those present, which, presumably, could include their children.”

So, I follow a lot of bills like this in a variety of countries, and I don’t think I’ve ever seen one that went this far to discourage free expression. And I’ve seen some very bad bills. Basically, if you have a conversation in your home or in your own yard that someone is offended by, it’s a criminal offense. Armed police will come into your house, breaking in if necessary. They will interrogate everyone present, and they will take anything that might contain information about your “hateful” views to be used in evidence against you. Like the Conservative MSP said, they will even ask your children what you said if order to get you arrested and jailed.

Can you imagine trying to have a conversation with a non-Christian in your home about Christian views on abortion or sexuality in Scotland? You couldn’t. You couldn’t even have a conversation with your wife or your kids. You couldn’t discuss something you disagree with that you saw on television. Or that your children learned in the schools. You couldn’t do your job as a husband and father, in short. And you couldn’t even speak about these things in church (or at work) for fear of saying the wrong thing to the wrong person. How are you suppose to defend your faith, explain your Christian convictions, or lead your family? But you still have to pay taxes to the people who make these laws – and to the police who will arrest and imprison you. Then run your lives. You get the bill.

If you like legislation like this, keep voting for the Democrats. They’ll get it done for you. And if you focus on mean tweets (or whatever else the mainstream news media dangles in front of your face) instead of policy, then you’ll get laws like this, too. Politics matters. You have a worldview to put into practice, and laws like this Scottish law will make it impossible for you to achieve your goals.

Four reasons to think that atheism is inconsistent with scientific progress

March 24, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When people ask me whether the progress of science is more compatible with theism or atheism, I offer the following four basic pieces of scientific evidence that are more compatible with theism than atheism:

1. the kalam argument from the origin of the universe
2. the cosmic fine-tuning (habitability) argument
3. the biological information in the first replicator (origin of life)
4. the sudden origin of all of the different body plans in the fossil record (Cambrian explosion)

And I point to specific examples of recent discoveries that confirm those four arguments. Here are just a few of them:

1. An explanation of 3 of the 6 experimental evidences for the Big Bang cosmology (from Physics Forums)
2. Examples of cosmic fine-tuning to allow the existence of conscious, embodied life (From the New Scientist)
3. Evidence that functional protein sequences are beyond the reach of chance, (from Doug Axe's JMB article)
4. Evidence showing that Ediacaran fauna are not precursors to the Cambrian fossils, (from the journal Nature)

Atheists will typically reply to the recent scientific discoveries that overturned their speculations like this:

1. Maybe the Big Bang cosmology will be overturned by the Big Crunch/Bounce so that the universe is eternal and has no cause
2. Maybe there is a multiverse: an infinite number of unobservable, untestable universes which makes our finely-tuned one more probable
3. Maybe the origin of life could be the result of chance and natural processes
4. Maybe we will find a seamless chain of fossils that explain how the Cambrian explosion occurred slowly, over a long period time

Ever heard any of these responses?

Below I list some resources to help you to respond to the four responses of atheists to the experimental data.

1) The Big Crunch/Bounce has been disproved theoretically and experimentally.

Theoretically:

> Nature 302, 505 – 506 (07 April 1983); doi:10.1038/302505a0
>
> The impossibility of a bouncing universe
>
> ALAN H. GUTH* & MARC SHER†
>
> *Center for Theoretical Physics, Laboratory for Nuclear Science and Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
>
> †Department of Physics, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, USA
>
> Petrosian1 has recently discussed the possibility that the restoration of symmetry at grand unification in a closed contracting Robertson–Walker universe could slow down and halt the contraction, causing the universe to bounce. He then went on to discuss the possibility that our universe has undergone a series of such bounces. We disagree with this analysis. One of us (M.S.) has already shown2 that if a contracting universe is dominated by radiation, then a bounce is impossible. We will show here two further results: (1) entropy considerations imply that the quantity S (defined in ref. 1 and below), which must decrease by ~1075 to allow the present Universe to bounce, can in fact decrease by no more than a factor of ~2; (2) if the true vacuum state has zero energy density, then a universe which is contracting in its low temperature phase can never complete a phase transition soon enough to cause a bounce.

Experimentally:

> The universe is not only expanding, but that expansion appears to be speeding up. And as if that discovery alone weren't strange enough, it implies that most of the energy in the cosmos is contained in empty space — a concept that Albert Einstein considered but discarded as his "biggest blunder." The new findings have been recognized as 1998's top scientific breakthrough by Science magazine.
>
> […]The flood of findings about the universe's expansion rate is the result of about 10 years of study, said Saul Perlmutter, team leader of the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
>
> Perlmutter and others found such a yardstick in a particular kind of exploding star known as a Type 1A supernova. Over the course of several years, the astronomers developed a model to predict how bright such a supernova would appear at any given distance. Astronomers recorded dozens of Type 1A supernovae and anxiously matched them up with redshifts to find out how much the universe's expansion was slowing down.
>
> To their surprise, the redshift readings indicated that the expansion rate for distant supernovae was lower than the expansion rate for closer supernovae, Perlmutter said. On the largest scale imaginable, the universe's galaxies appear to be flying away from each other faster and faster as time goes on.
>
> "What we have found is that there is a 'dark force' that permeates the universe

> and that has overcome the force of gravity," said Nicholas Suntzeff of the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, who is the co-founder of another group called the High-z Supernova Search Team. "This result is so strange and unexpected that it perhaps is only believable because two independent international groups have found the same effect in their data."

There has only been one creation of the universe, and the universe will never reverse its expansion, so that it could oscillate eternally. That view is popular, perhaps in part because many people watched videos of Carl Sagan speculating about it in public school classrooms, but all it was was idle naturalistic speculation, (Sagan was a naturalist, and held out hope that science would vindicate naturalism), and has been contradicted by good experimental science. You should be familiar with the 3 evidences for the Big Bang (redshift, light element abundances (helium/hydrogen) and the cosmic microwave background radiation. There are others, (radioactive element abundances, second law of thermodynamics, stellar lifecycle), but those are the big three. Point out how the experimental evidence for the Big Bang has piled up, making the problem even worse for the eternal-universe naturalists.

2) The multiverse has not been tested experimentally, it's pure speculation.

Speculation:

> Multiverse thinking or the belief in the existence of parallel universes is more philosophy or science fiction than science. "Cosmology must seem odd to scientists in other fields".
>
> George Ellis, a well-known mathematician and cosmologist, who for instance has written a book with Stephen Hawking, is sceptical of the idea that our universe is just another universe among many others.
>
> A few weeks ago, Ellis, professor emeritus of applied mathematics at the University of Cape Town, reviewed Brian Greene's book The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos (Knopf/Allen Lane, 2011) in the journal Nature. He is not at all convinced that the multiverse hypothesis is credible: "Greene is not presenting aspects of a known reality; he is telling of unproven theoretical possibilities."
>
> According to professor Ellis, there is no evidence of multiverses, they cannot be tested and they are not science.
>
> Ellis is not the only multiverse sceptic in this universe. A few months ago, science writer John Horgan wrote a column in Scientific American, expressing his doubt in multiverses.

When you get into a debate, you must never ever let the other side get away with asserting something they have no evidence for. Call them on it – point out that they have no evidence, and then hammer them with evidence for your point. Pile up cases of fine-tuning on top of each other and continuously point out that they have no experimental evidence for their speculations. Point out that more evidence we get, the more cases of

fine-tuning we find, and the tougher the problem gets for naturalists. There is no evidence for a multiverse, but there is evidence for fine-tuning. TONS OF IT.

3) Naturalistic theories for the origin of life have two problems: can't make the amino acids in an oxydized atmosphere and can't make protein and DNA sequences by chance in the time available.

Building blocks:

> The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere
>
> Dustin Trail, E. Bruce Watson & Nicholas D. Tailby
>
> Nature 480, 79–82 (01 December 2011) doi:10.1038/nature10655
>
> […]These results suggest that outgassing of Earth's interior later than ~200?Myr into the history of Solar System formation would not have resulted in a reducing atmosphere.

Functional protein sequences:

> J Mol Biol. 2004 Aug 27;341(5):1295-315.
>
> Estimating the prevalence of protein sequences adopting functional enzyme folds.
>
> Axe DD.
>
> The Babraham Institute, Structural Biology Unit, Babraham Research Campus, Cambridge CB2 4AT, UK. doug.axe@bbsrc.ac.uk
>
> Proteins employ a wide variety of folds to perform their biological functions. How are these folds first acquired? An important step toward answering this is to obtain an estimate of the overall prevalence of sequences adopting functional folds.
>
> […]Starting with a weakly functional sequence carrying this signature, clusters of ten side-chains within the fold are replaced randomly, within the boundaries of the signature, and tested for function. The prevalence of low-level function in four such experiments indicates that roughly one in 10(64) signature-consistent sequences forms a working domain. Combined with the estimated prevalence of plausible hydropathic patterns (for any fold) and of relevant folds for particular functions, this implies the overall prevalence of sequences performing a specific function by any domain-sized fold may be as low as 1 in 10(77), adding to the body of evidence that functional folds require highly extraordinary sequences.

So atheists are in double jeopardy here. They don't have a way to build the Scrabble letters needed for life, and they don't have a way to form the Scrabble letters into meaningful words and sentences. Point out that the more research we do, the tougher the problem gets to solve for naturalists, and the more it looks like an effect of intelligence. Write out the calculations for them.

4) The best candidate to explain the sudden origin of the Cambrian era fossils was the Ediacaran fauna, but those are now recognized as not being precursors to the Cambrian fossils.

Science Daily reports on a paper from the peer-reviewed journal Science:

> Evidence of the single-celled ancestors of animals, dating from the interval in Earth's history just before multicellular animals appeared, has been discovered in 570 million-year-old rocks from South China by researchers from the University of Bristol, the Swedish Museum of Natural History, the Paul Scherrer Institut and the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.
>
> […]This X-ray microscopy revealed that the fossils had features that multicellular embryos do not, and this led the researchers to the conclusion that the fossils were neither animals nor embryos but rather the reproductive spore bodies of single-celled ancestors of animals.
>
> Professor Philip Donoghue said: "We were very surprised by our results — we've been convinced for so long that these fossils represented the embryos of the earliest animals — much of what has been written about the fossils for the last ten years is flat wrong. Our colleagues are not going to like the result."
>
> Professor Stefan Bengtson said: "These fossils force us to rethink our ideas of how animals learned to make large bodies out of cells."

The trend is that there is no evolutionary explanation for the body plans that emerged in the Cambrian era. If you want to make the claim that "evolution did it", then you have to produce the data *today*. Not speculations about the future. The data we have today says no to naturalism. The only way to affirm naturalistic explanations for the evidence we have is *by faith*. But rational people know that we need to minimize our leaps of faith, and go with the simplest and most reasonable explanation – an intelligence is the best explanation responsible for rapid generation of biological information.

Conclusion

I do think it's important for Christians to focus more on scientific apologetics and to focus their academic careers in scientific fields. So often I look at Christian blogs, and I see way too much G. K. Chesterton, Francis Chan A. W. Tozer, and other untestable, ineffective jibber-jabber. We need to bring the *hard* science, and stop making excuses about not being able to understand it because it's too hard. It's not too hard. Everyone can understand Lee Strobel's "The Case for a Creator". That's more than enough for the average Christian on science apologetics. We all have to do our best to learn what works. You don't want to be anti-science and pro-speculation like atheists are. I recommend reading Uncommon Descent and Evolution News every day for a start.

Christian baker back in court for refusing to bake a Satanic cake for an LGBT activist

March 25, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember a previous case that went all the way to the Supreme Court, in which two gay activists and the Colorado government went after a Christian baker who declined to provide a cake for a same-sex wedding. His reasoning was that his religious beliefs would not allow him to endorse same-sex marriage – a view of marriage that Jesus opposed in the gospels. The Colorado government and the gay activists thought that the Christian baker needed to accept them as Lord instead of accepting Jesus, and bake the cake anyway. He was persecuted by the state for years, until he finally won his case at the Supreme Court, thanks to the ADF (Alliance Defending Freedom).

But, here is the latest on another gay activist who is suing him again.

The Federalist reports:

> Autumn Scardina, a transgender female-identifying attorney in the Denver area, called Phillips to demand a custom cake celebrating his gender transition after he heard the Supreme Court would consider the initial case against the Colorado Civil Rights Commission. Twice, Scardina had already emailed Phillips to call the baker a "bigot" and a "hypocrite" while mocking his religious beliefs in 2012 when the controversy first arose.
>
> […]The cake shop denied Scardina's 2017 request for a pink and blue cake after he said it was to celebrate his gender transition. Scardina responded with a new complaint picked up by the Colorado Civil Rights Commission that was dismissed in 2019 by the group after Phillips filed a lawsuit against the state in federal court. Months later, Scardina chose to pursue charges of his own seeking damages, fines, and attorney fees to wreck Phillip's finances rather than appeal the commission's decision to drop the discrimination claim.
>
> […]In court, Scardina explained how at one point, while his discrimination claim was being processed by the state, he called the Christian cakeshop to request a custom cake that featured Satan smoking a joint, to test the store's repeated claims he would be treated just as anyone else.

You see, gay activists can't go next door to get whatever baked goods they want, they have to use the government to force people to go against their moral convictions. They have to use armed police and criminal courts to force Christians to believe what they cannot believe, as followers of Jesus.

This reminds me of the case of the Canadian transgender activist who wanted to force women to wax his genitalia, and sued them to make government force them to do it. Is this what it means to be LGBT? I think it's fair for people to form opinions about what LGBT people are like, based on the actions of LGBT activists. If LGBT people don't want to

be identified with people like this activist, then they need to do a better job of policing their own.

The Colorado Civil Rights Commission

Another article from The Federalist talked about the views of the government employees who ruled against Jack in Colorado:

> ADF attorneys found current commissioners publicly agreeing with 2015 comments from commissioner Dianne Rice that compared Jack's Christianity to the ideologies motivating slavery and the Holocaust. Rice's comments were specifically singled out by the Supreme Court as evidence of the commission's bias.
>
> That bias aimed to jettison Jack's constitutional rights to free speech, freedom of association, and free expression of religion, all over a cake that could be had from any number of nearby shops. Yet when the commission discussed the Supreme Court ruling in summer 2018, two commissioners openly supported Rice's comparison of Christianity to Nazism and racism. Here's ADF:
>
> During that discussion, Commissioner Rita Lewis said, 'I support Commissioner Diann Rice and her comments. I don't think she said anything wrong.' Later, Commissioner Carol Fabrizio added, 'I also very much stand behind Commissioner Rice's statements…. I was actually proud of what she said, and I agree with her…. I'm almost glad that something the Commissioner said ended up public and used, because I think it was the right thing.'

Rita, Diann, and Carol. Three Democrat women bringing the power of the state to bear on a Christian man of principle and moral character. Are you comfortable with that? Do you think that other Christian men should expose themselves legally to rule by progressive women, by getting married, having children, running a business, etc.? It seems to me that men ought to hold onto their money and make a difference without getting involved with people who are motivated by "compassion" like these fascist women. And these women are paid by taxpayer funds – some of them collected from Jack himself.

By the way, the Equality Act, which has been championed by Christian leaders who spent the last four years attacking Trump, makes Colorado's SOGI law a federal law. You might think that you are safe because you are in Oklahoma or Tennessee or Arkansas, but thanks to the efforts of people like John Piper, Russell Moore, Beth Moore, and other fake Christians, you're going to be a potential victim of gay activists if you own a Christian business, or work in a Christian organization. Including schools. Including churches. That's why it's important to choose policy over character in elections.

Democrat judge who promoted drag queen story hour arrested for child p0rn

March 26, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must read story from Katy Faust and Stacy Manning, writing for The Federalist:

> Last week Brett B1omme, 38, a judge with strong ties to top Democrats in Wisconsin, was charged with possessing child p0rnography depicting the sexual abuse of underage boys, including toddlers. According to the criminal complaint, B1omme accessed the child p0rn at both his home and his judge's chamber. Each of the seven counts carries a maximum sentence of 15 years.
>
> B1omme's involvement with kids extended beyond his courtroom. He was also invested in grooming Milwaukee's preschool crowd. While a judge, he was also president and CEO of the Cre4m C1ty Foundat1on, which operates the Milwaukee Dr4g Queen Story Hour for local children.
>
> […]But the most disconcerting access B1omme has had to kids is in his own home, where he and his same-sex partner live with their two adopted children. Were these children placed with these two men because of the mistaken belief that these adults had a "right to adopt," or because it truly was in the best interest of these children?

I should also point out that this man is a child court judge, which means that he makes decisions about how children will live, and who will have responsibility for them.

This story reminds me of the Two Gay Dads story that I wrote about previously, where a white female progressive journalist did a fawning story about two g4y dads and their new boy adopted from Russia. She titled her article, "Two Dads are Better than One". She was so proud of herself for being all affirming, tolerant and compassionate. Children do much better with two gay dads, than with the mother and father who made them, she argued.

But then, the Sydney Morning Herald reported how this example of g4y adoption went awry.

Excerpt:

> Standing before an American court convicted of the most heinous of child sex crimes, the double lives of Australian citizen Mark J. Newt0n and his long-term boyfriend Peter Tru0ng were laid bare.
>
> […]Moments later Newt0n was sentenced to 40 years in prison for sexually abusing the boy he and Truong, 36 from Queensland, had ''adopted'' after paying a Russian woman $8000 to be their surrogate in 2005.
>
> Police believe the pair had adopted the boy ''for the sole purpose of exploitation''. The abuse began just days after his birth and over six years the

> couple travelled the world, offering him up for sex with at least eight men, recording the abuse and uploading the footage to an international syndicate known as the Boy Lovers Network.
>
> […]Evidence before the court revealed the abuse began before the couple returned to Australia. One video is said to show Newt0n performing a sex act on the boy when he was less than two weeks old.
>
> Judge Barker said the pair brainwashed the child to believe the sexual abuse was normal. Newt0n was also said to have trained the boy to deny any inappropriate behaviour if he was ever questioned by authorities.
>
> Newt0n and Truong came to the attention of police in August 2011 after their connections to three men arrested over the possession of child exploitation material came to light. The couple had visited the three men in the US, New Zealand and Germany with their son.
>
> […]Newt0n and Truong claimed they were being targeted because they were homosexual.

I could show you a dozen examples like that without even trying. Duke University administrator. Penn State University coach. USC professor. Head of a Scottish youth organization. San Francisco Human Rights Commission staffer. Same-sex marriage activists. Seattle mayor. Co-founder of g4y advocacy organizations. Designers of education curriculums designed to sexualize children. It's everywhere and it happens all the time. Children don't have any rights, only selfish adults have rights.

But stories like that don't matter to most people on the secular left. People on the secular left aren't trying to be accountable to some sort of objective moral standard. They aren't working backwards from children's needs to decide on obligations to place on adults. They're looking around at who is wealthy, powerful, attractive, popular, etc. and trying to agree with them so those people will like them. People today just want to feel good and be liked. It would just be too hard for most people to tell Brett B1omme that what he was doing was morally wrong. That would make them unpopular, and being unpopular is "wrong" because it makes them feel bad.

What’s in an apologetics book?

March 27, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let’s look at the table of contents of my favorite introduction to Christian apologetics, which is “Is God Just a Human Invention?” written by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow.

In that book, you will find 18 topics.

1. Is Faith Irrational? (Commentary by: Gregory Koukl)
2. Are Science and Christianity at Odds? (Commentary by: John Warwick Montgomery)
3. Are Miracles Possible? (Commentary by: Gary R. Habermas)
4. Is Darwinian Evolution the Only Game in Town? (Commentary by: William A. Dembski)
5. How Did the Universe Begin? (Commentary by: R. Douglas Geivett)
6. How Did Life Begin? (Commentary by: Fazale R. Rana)
7. Why Is the Universe Just Right for Life? (Commentary by: Jay W. Richards)
8. Has Science Shown There Is No Soul? (Commentary by: Dale Fincher and Jonalyn Fincher)
9. Is God Just a Human Invention? (Commentary by: Garry DeWeese)
10. Is Religion Dangerous? (Commentary by: Douglas Groothuis)
11. Does God Intend for Us to Keep Slaves? (Commentary by: Paul Copan)
12. Is Hell a Divine Torture Chamber? (Commentary by: Frank Turek)
13. Is God a Genocidal Bully? (Commentary by: Clay Jones)
14. Is Christianity the Cause of Dangerous Sexual Repression? (Commentary by: Kerby Anderson)
15. Can People Be Good Without God? (Commentary by: Mark D. Linville)
16. Is Evil Only a Problem for Christians? (Commentary by: Randy Alcorn)
17. What Good Is Christianity? (Commentary by: Glenn S. Sunshine)
18. Why Jesus Instead of the Flying Spaghetti Monster? (Commentary by: Darrell L. Bock)

Prominent atheist scholars are quoted in each chapter to introduce the challenges, and then scholarly arguments and evidence are presented to defend the Christian worldview. The language is simple enough, but the material is solid enough to use in a real debate. I would say that introductory books like this one are more than enough to equip you for everyone who will challenge you.

Why are these 18 topics important? Because these are the questions that atheists ask. These are the questions that cause Christians to leave the faith. These are the questions that your children will face in high school and college, which might cause them to leave the faith.

Let’s start with chapter one. One of the most prominent arguments by atheists is that faith is irrational. This chapter allows you to define faith using the Bible’s definition of

faith, which relies on logic and evidence.

Atheists also say that Christianity is at war with science. In chapter 2, they discuss the history of science and how Christianity provided the framework that allowed scientific method to take root and flourish.

Atheists like to claim that miracles are impossible. Chapter 3 defends the view that God, if he exists, is capable of interacting with his created world.

Atheists love to put forward Darwinism as means to deny that God is the designer of life. Chapter 4 explains the concept of intelligent design, and why intelligent design is a better explanation for the history of life.

Atheists love to talk about how the universe has always existed, and there's no need for a Creator. Chapter 5 contains a philosophical argument that is supported by mainstream science to argue that the universe had a beginning, just like the Bible says.

Atheists love to argue that life can emerge from non-life, and the process is simple. Chapter 6 is written by a biochemist, and it takes a look at the real complexity of the simplest living cell.

Atheists like to argue that the universe itself is just an accident, and there is no need for a Designer. Chapter 7 introduces the scientific evidence for fine-tuning and habitability.

Atheists like to say that there is no soul and no afterlife. Chapter 8 gives some arguments for the existence of the soul.

Atheists like to argue that Christians invent God because God makes them feel good. But chapter 9 explains that having an all-powerful God who can hold humans accountable is the last thing any human would want to invent.

Atheists like to talk about how religion, with it's habit of teaching to believe in things that can't be tested, causes religious people to do a lot of harm. Chapter 10 takes a look at the real record of Christianity as a force for good in the world.

Atheists like to talk about slavery in the Bible. Chapter 11 talks about what the Bible really says, and provides some rational responses to the accusation.

Atheists like to talk about eternal punishment in Hell isn't a just punishment for just getting a few questions wrong on a theology exam. Chapter 12 provides an explanation and defense of the concept of Hell.

Atheists love to talk about how God commanded the Israelites to attack their enemies in the Bible. Chapter 13 explains who their enemies really were, and what was really happening in those wars.

Atheists feel that unrestricted sexual activity is very healthy and normal, and that the Biblical prohibitions outside of male-female marriage are repressive and unhealthy. Chapter 14 explains why God has these rules in place, and supports his rules with evidence.

Atheists love to assert that they don't need God, because they can behave morally on their own. Chapter 15 explains how to answer this claim by talking about how well atheism grounds objective moral values, objective moral duties, free will and moral

accountability: the minimum requirements for objective morality.

Atheists think that the mere existence of natural disasters and human immorality are incompatible with the God of the Bible. Chapter 16 explains why this argument doesn't work, and why even the concept of evil requires God to exist.

I have an atheist friend in my office who can't defeat my scientific arguments for the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning and the origin of life. But still, he says to me, even if God exists, why would that matter to my life? Chapter 17 explains what difference Christianity makes in a person's life.

Atheists think that the life of Jesus has no relevance to their life, and that he has nothing to offer them anyway. Chapter 18 explains the uniqueness of Jesus and explains why his resurrection is relevant to our lives today.

It's important to understand that this book is not on the level of A. W. Tozer, G.K. Chesterton, Francis Chan, John Piper, etc. Those authors write for a Christian audience and therefore they do not equip you to answer realistic challenges from non-Christians. But the apologetics book we looked at actually equips you to answer challenges from non-Christians using logical arguments and evidence from mainstream history and science. You can use the material in that book in discussions outside the confines of your home and your church.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

March 28, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates

- You didn’t need to come out on this cold night
- Craig’s arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn’t listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don’t require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that “every effect requires a cause”
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can’t see
- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism

6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said.

Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can’t God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus’ burial isn’t historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig’s concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg’s concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig’s arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don’t look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Last day to pre-order Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's new book "Return of the God Hypothesis"

March 29, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In my opinion, the two best books on intelligent design ever written are "Signature in the Cell" and "Darwin's Doubt". The former is about biological information and the origin of Life. The latter is about the sudden origin of body plans and organ types during a brief period of biological history known as the Cambrian explosion. Either problem is lethal to a naturalistic view of biological origins. The author of these two books has just published the third book in the trilogy, and it looks like it will be the best one yet. You can pre-order it here, and get a bunch of extra goodies, including a PDF booklet that I assume you can share with people who don't buy the book. Anyway, let's see what the new book is about.

You can read chapter 1 here for free at Crosswalk.

Excerpt:

> This book will show that reports of God's decease have "been grossly exaggerated," to appropriate a quote from Mark Twain. Instead, the truth is just the opposite of what Dawkins… and numerous other popular spokespersons for science have insisted. The properties of the universe and of life—specifically as they pertain to understanding the origin of the universe and life—are just "what we should expect" if a transcendent and purposive intelligence has acted in the history of life and the cosmos. Such an intelligence coincides with what human beings have called God, and so I call this story of reversal the return of the God hypothesis.

They've posted a whole bunch of endorsements here, and here's are a few, to let you know what people think of it:

Meyer's book is a masterclass, lucidly exploring every alternative from multiple points of view. It persuasively shows that the God Hypothesis is the best explanation of the fine-tuned, information-laden universe. The book does irreparable damage to atheist rhetoric.

***JOHN C. WALTON**, PHD, DSC, FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH, RESEARCH PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY, UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS*

Reviewing all relevant evidence from cosmology to molecular biology, Meyer builds an irrefutable "case for God" while delivering an unanswerable set of logical and scientific broadsides against the currently fashionable materialistic/atheistic worldview. Meyer builds his argument relentlessly omitting no significant area of debate. The logic throughout is compelling and the book almost impossible to put down. Meyer is a master at clarifying complex issues making the text accessible to the widest possible audience. Readers will be struck by Meyer's extraordinary depth of knowledge in every relevant area. The book is a masterpiece and will be widely cited in years to come. The best, most lucid, comprehensive defense of the 'God hypothesis' in print. No

other publication comes close. A unique *tour de force*.

***DR. MICHAEL DENTON**, FORMER SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, BIOCHEMISTRY, UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO, AUTHOR, NATURE'S DESTINY*

Meyer not only meticulously documents his scientific case for the God hypothesis, but he presents the story of the discoveries that support it in an engaging way. The arguments Meyer makes helped fuel my own personal transition from atheistic materialism to a rational belief in classical theism.

***GÜNTER BECHLY**, PH.D. IN PALEONTOLOGY, EBERHARD-KARLS UNIVERSITY OF TÜBINGEN; FORMER SCIENTIFIC CURATOR, STATE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, STUTTGART, GERMANY; SENIOR SCIENTIST, BIOLOGIC INSTITUTE.*

Not since Robert Jastrow's *God and the Astronomers*, has a book touched me with the power of science to declare the glories of God. Jastrow kept me from the deism and atheism of college physics, and this book will surely have that same effect on the next generation. Whereas Jastrow left off too soon, Meyer skillfully follows the evidence to its logical and scientific conclusion, by examining recent developments not only in physics and cosmology, but also in biology. Warmly written with a historian's eye, illustrated profusely, a perfect graduation gift for all those embarking on a lifetime of discovery.

***ROB SHELDON**, PH.D. IN SPACE PLASMA PHYSICS, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND; FORMER NASA ANALYST AND INSTRUMENT DESIGNER, AUTHOR, THE LONG ASCENT*

And this one from a Nobel Laureate in Physics:

This book makes it clear that far from being an unscientific claim, intelligent design is valid science.

***BRIAN JOSEPHSON**, EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF PHYSICS, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY, NOBEL LAUREATE IN PHYSICS*

This is the video that accompanies the launch of the book:

I've already pre-ordered the book for myself and my Bible study partner. She is as excited to read it as I am.

There's a short 22-minute video show that Dr. Meyer did with radio show host Michael Medved here, with show notes, if you want to see how he explains some of the concepts in the book.

In my opinion, no one has done a better job of writing books that equip Christians to make their case with evidence than Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. By the way, Dr. Meyer is the one who does the presentations for Focus on the Family's DVD series "True U", which is designed to equip students going to college. So, if you're wondering if he knows how to explain things to ordinary people, he absolutely does.

There is a lot of "noise" in the Christian community from authors who do not equip you to win arguments. Think of popular authors like G. K. Chesterton, A. W. Tozer, Francis Chan, Philip Yancey, John Piper and other wordsmiths. They write entertaining words, but you can't win arguments by reciting poetry or having happy feelings. I'm an engineer, I want

things that work in the real world. Most Christian authors aren’t experienced at debating skeptics, or at replying to the challenges of their critics. Dr. Meyer is rooted in evidence and does an excellent job of interacting with his critics, and responding to them. I’ve even featured some of his debates on this blog. Dr. Meyer is my favorite author for equipping myself to win arguments. If you like to argue, and you like to win, get the book. You can have a lot of fun with a book like this.

Christian Post article features mothers explaining their sons transitioning

March 31, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted everyone to see this Christian Post article, that describes what it is like for mothers who trusted the school system to find out the hard way what schools are really like. Schools are dominated by women teachers and administrators. Their creed is "compassion" and "tolerance". How does that work out for boys? Let's get the stories straight from the mouths of nine mothers.

Here's one example:

> Approximately three years ago, Danae Johnson started to notice that her then-14-year-old son, Jeremy, a freshman in high school at the time, had some troubling text messages and pictures on his phone of kids who were dressed as the opposite sex.
>
> At a mother-son dinner, he announced that he was transgender.
>
> […]Jeremy was a smaller kid, bullied ever since middle school, sometimes coming home with scrapes down his arms, his mother said. He consistently makes good grades, is in all honors classes and makes the honor roll. But being transgender meant he got to go from being bullied and struggling to popular. Female schoolmates have been particularly encouraging him in this new identity.

There was an attempt at suicide:

> Johnson took him to the hospital immediately to get him evaluated. On the way there, Jeremy tried to make it seem like he was kidding. They spent several hours at the hospital where he was examined by four professionals, all of whom told Johnson that he was doing this for attention and that he was not genuinely suicidal.

And:

> Johnson is "100% convinced" the bullying drove him into the gender identity madness. They removed him from that school and put him in a local Catholic school where the bullying ceased. Yet despite the improved environment, the trans identity continued to bring him attention, so he maintained it.

So what to make of this? Well, I really am glad to see the wife siding with her husband against the child's peer-driven behavior. Today there is an *epidemic* of mothers bending over backwards to agree with their children. Instead of parenting them, they just affirm them and completely abdicate their role as parents. They want to be liked. This woman did not want to be liked.

Second point is that this story clearly shows how peer pressure plays a role in causing

children to go down the transgender path. And the teachers and administrators have a secular left agenda, and that agenda is more important than your child.

A study that was first reported by Science Daily talked about the role of peer pressure. This article at The Federalist had a few examples to illustrate the conclusion of the study. I'll pick two.

> The study includes other eye-opening information, such as case studies of several children's stories.

- > "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends were taking group lessons together with a very popular coach. The coach came out as transgender, and, within one year, all four students announced they were also transgender."
- > "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends are part of a larger friend group that spends much of their time talking about gender and sexuality. The three natal female friends all announced they were trans boys and chose similar masculine names. After spending time with these three friends, the 14-year-old natal female announced that she was also a trans boy."

And surprise! Giving gay rights groups access to schools makes the problem worse:

> The study also may indicate that school "anti-bullying" programs typically created by LGBT activist organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign may help accelerate children identifying as transgender by pushing peers and authority figures to profusely express their support.

Coming out as transgender means instant fame and popularity, because you're a victim, and everyone has to be nice to you… or else:

> "Great increase in popularity among the student body at large. Being trans is a gold star in the eyes of other teens," wrote one parent on the study response form. Another wrote, "not so much 'popularity' increasing as 'status' … also she became untouchable in terms of bullying in school as teachers who ignored homophobic bullying …are now all at pains to be hot on the heels of any trans bullying."

I really think parents need to think twice before throwing their children into public schools and unmonitored social media.

The second mother from the CP article was even more interesting. She's a far-left supporter of Planned Parenthood, NPR listener and Bill Maher watcher. She only has one child – I think she delayed having children to focus on her career.

Here's what she said:

> “Children are being groomed online by adults,” she said when asked what the public at large misunderstands about the transgender movement.
>
> […]“They are confusing kids. They’re ruining families. You thought you could have a child and make a difference,” she said. “It’s like they’re taking away the core of a family. And I look at everyone who is having a child, and I’m like, ‘Don’t do it,’ because you have no control over your child. Parental rights have been taken away. The schools are complicit in pushing this agenda.”
>
> She recalled reading about Communist Chinese Chairman Mao Zedong’s rulership and how under his reign, children were instructed to turn on their parents and rupture the family structure.
>
> “I feel like that’s what’s happening. It used to be a world where the parents had control. But it’s all taken away from us because our kid can complain to the school, and social services would be called because we’re not affirming them in this lie. We could lose custody. That’s a really scary, scary world we’re in.”

It’s a scary world that people on the secular left made.

Some people freak out when I say to be careful about getting married to someone who isn’t aware of these threats, and to especially NOT have children with a progressive spouse. But do you think the same thing after hearing from these mothers?

New study: white police officers not more likely to shoot black suspects

April 1, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Whenever people disagree about controversial things, the best way to proceed is to look at what the evidence says. In this case, we've got a new PNAS study authored by professors at several different universities which concludes that white officers are not more likely to shoot black civilians than black or Hispanic police officers.

Heather McDonald writes about it in the centrist National Review:

> A new study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* demolishes the Democratic narrative regarding race and police shootings, which holds that white officers are engaged in an epidemic of racially biased shootings of black men. It turns out that white officers are no more likely than black or Hispanic officers to shoot black civilians. It is a racial group's rate of violent crime that determines police shootings, not the race of the officer. The more frequently officers encounter violent suspects from any given racial group, the greater the chance that members of that racial group will be shot by a police officer. In fact, if there is a bias in police shootings after crime rates are taken into account, it is against white civilians, the study found.
>
> The authors, faculty at Michigan State University and the University of Maryland at College Park, created a database of 917 officer-involved fatal shootings in 2015 from more than 650 police departments. Fifty-five percent of the victims were white, 27 percent were black, and 19 percent were Hispanic. Between 90 and 95 percent of the civilians shot by officers in 2015 were attacking police or other citizens; 90 percent were armed with a weapon. So-called threat-misperception shootings, in which an officer shoots an unarmed civilian after mistaking a cellphone, say, for a gun, were rare.

This study builds on previous work, which also showed that white police officers were not more biased than other officers to shoot black civilians.

McDonald notes that progressive policy of hiring more minority police officers won't reduce the rates of shootings of minority civilians, since all races fire their weapons at minority civilians at roughly the same rate.

The real problem with outrage at white police officers is that it doesn't address the problem of black-on-black crime, which is a FAR greater threat to black victims of crime.

A recent editorial by George Mason University professor of economics Walter Williams explains:

> Each year, roughly 7,000 blacks are murdered. Ninety-four percent of the time, the murderer is another black person.

> According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1976 and 2011, there were 279,384 black murder victims. Using the 94-percent figure means that 262,621 were murdered by other blacks.
>
> Though blacks are 13 percent of the nation's population, they account for more than 50 percent of homicide victims. Nationally, the black homicide victimization rate is six times that of whites, and in some cities, it's 22 times that of whites.
>
> Coupled with being most of the nation's homicide victims, blacks are most of the victims of violent personal crimes, such as assault and robbery.
>
> […]It's a tragic commentary to be able to say that young black males have a greater chance of reaching maturity on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan than on the streets of Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Oakland, Newark and other cities.

And all those cities are run by Democrats. And they have been run by Democrats for decades. Democrat policies don't work to solve the problem how making cities safer for blacks.

The real root cause behind crime is, of course, fatherlessness, as this interview about fatherless boys in the Daily Signal with Warren Farrell makes clear:

> They're far more likely to be the mass shooters. About 90% of the mass shooters that I studied since Columbine have been boys brought up in homes that have minimal or no father involvement or products of divorce or so on. And so that really shocked me to see that common denominator.
>
> I then looked beyond that and went to ISIS recruits. There was a big study of ISIS recruits that found that the common denominator among ISIS recruits was dad deprivation, but not only among the boys, but also the female ISIS recruits as well, which, of course, are in much smaller numbers.
>
> Then I started looking at prisoners and the prison population. We all know that 93% of the prisoners are male, but what very few people know is that about 90% of those 93% are dad-deprived boys.

Kay Cole James, the president of the Heritage Foundation (my favorite think tank), wrote about some of her ideas on how to solve the problem for Fox News.

She writes:

> First, we must ensure that we're encouraging families to stay together and that fathers and mothers raise their children together. Decades of studies have shown that children raised in single-parent homes are statistically more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, exhibit poor social behaviors, and commit violent crimes. They're also more likely to drop out of school, which often leaves them struggling to find good-paying jobs as adults.
>
> We could go a long way toward strengthening inner-city families by changing the system of government assistance that routinely weakens them.

> A child of welfare, I can tell you that an overreliance on government assistance has deprived millions of children of the love and security they would have gotten from a family with two parents.

In the rest of the article, she explains how she was able to put that into practice, and what results she obtained by doing it.

Welfare “frees” women to try to start relationships with men who demonstrate no ability or willingness to commit. She doesn’t have to care about whether he is chaste, sober, drug-free, loyal, educated, a hard worker, etc. because the government is taking over the role of provider. The side effect of this is the high inner-city crime rates that we observe in cities that reward women for making fatherless children with men they never vetted for commitment ability.

1 Corinthians 15: the earliest source for the basic facts about the life of Jesus

April 2, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, the creed – which is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8:

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Almost all historians accept this creed as dating back to within 5 years of the death of Jesus. But why?

Here's a great article from Eric Chabot, director of Ratio Christi Apologetics Alliance, The Ohio State University to explain why.

Excerpt:

> The late Orthodox Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide was so impressed by the creed of 1 Cor. 15, that he concluded that this "formula of faith may be considered as a statement of eyewitnesses." (5)
>
> Paul's usage of the rabbinic terminology "passed on" and "received" is seen in the creed of 1 Cor. 15:3-8:
>
> "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born."
>
> […]While the word "received" (a rabbinical term) can also be used in the New Testament of receiving a message or body of instruction or doctrine (1 Cor.11:23; 15:1, 3; Gal. 1:9, 12 [2x], Col 2:6; 1 Thess 2:13; 4:1; 2 Thess 3:6), it also means means "to receive from another." This entails that Paul received this information from someone else at an even earlier date. 1 Corinthians is dated 50-55 A.D. Since Jesus was crucified in 30-33 A.D. the letter is only 20-25 years after the death of Jesus. But the actual creed here in 1 Cor. 15 was received by Paul much earlier than 55 A.D.

> […]Even the co-founder Jesus Seminar member John Dominic Crossan, writes:
>
> "Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that "I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received." The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he "went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days" (11).
>
> This comment by Crossan makes sense because within the creed Paul calls Peter by his Aramic name, Cephas. Hence, if this tradition originated in the Aramaic language, the two locations that people spoke Aramaic were Galilee and Judea. (12) The Greek term "historeo" is translated as "to visit" or "to interview." (13) Hence, Paul's purpose of the trip was probably designed to affirm the resurrection story with Peter who had been an actual eyewitness to the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:5).

I know what you're thinking. You're thinking "Hey WK, isn't John Dominic Crossan that wacky liberal atheist who is on the far-left fringe of historical Jesus scholarship? So wacky, that he actually thought that Secret Gospel of Mark was *real*, instead of just being a hoax?" Yes, that's the nutty John Dominic Crossan I mean. The very one.

Here's a bit more about this early creed from Gary Habermas.

Quote:

> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: "It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition."[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]
>
> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]

Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]

Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.

(3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]

These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.

(4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

That’s how solid this early creed is – even atheists like Crossan and Ludemann accept it as historically reliable. It’s historical bedrock, as Michael Licona likes to say. This is the stuff that *everyone* accepts – across the ideological spectrum. How do you account for this evidence in your worldview, especially given that Paul never recanted his preaching about Jesus?

Two black economists explain how to end poverty in America

April 3, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Walter Wiliams (pictured above) was one of my two favorite economists, the other being Thomas Sowell.

Here is his article on wealth and poverty on Creators written by Dr. Williams. Williams passed away last year.

First, real poverty is not common in America:

> There is no material poverty in the U.S. Here are a few facts about people whom the Census Bureau labels as poor. Dr. Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield, in their study "Understanding Poverty in the United States: Surprising Facts About America's Poor", report that 80 percent of poor households have air conditioning; nearly three-quarters have a car or truck, and 31 percent have two or more. Two-thirds have cable or satellite TV. Half have one or more computers. Forty-two percent own their homes. Poor Americans have more living space than the typical non-poor person in Sweden, France or the U.K. What we have in our nation are dependency and poverty of the spirit, with people making unwise choices and leading pathological lives aided and abetted by the welfare state.

Second, the "poverty" is not caused by racism, but by poor choices:

> The Census Bureau pegs the poverty rate among blacks at 35 percent and among whites at 13 percent. The illegitimacy rate among blacks is 72 percent, and among whites it's 30 percent. A statistic that one doesn't hear much about is that the poverty rate among black married families has been in the single digits for more than two decades, currently at 8 percent. For married white families, it's 5 percent. Now the politically incorrect questions: Whose fault is it to have children without the benefit of marriage and risk a life of dependency? Do people have free will, or are they governed by instincts?
>
> There may be some pinhead sociologists who blame the weak black family structure on racial discrimination. But why was the black illegitimacy rate only 14 percent in 1940, and why, as Dr. Thomas Sowell reports, do we find that census data "going back a hundred years, when blacks were just one generation out of slavery … showed that a slightly higher percentage of black adults had married than white adults. This fact remained true in every census from 1890 to 1940"? Is anyone willing to advance the argument that the reason the illegitimacy rate among blacks was lower and marriage rates higher in earlier periods was there was less racial discrimination and greater opportunity?

Third, avoiding poverty is the result of good choices:

> No one can blame a person if he starts out in life poor, because how one starts out is not his fault.
>
> If he stays poor, he is to blame because it is his fault. Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior. It turns out that a married couple, each earning the minimum wage, would earn an annual combined income of $30,000. The Census Bureau poverty line for a family of two is $15,500, and for a family of four, it's $23,000. By the way, no adult who starts out earning the minimum wage does so for very long.

Fourth, what stops people from making good choices is big government:

> Since President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty, the nation has spent about $18 trillion at the federal, state and local levels of government on programs justified by the "need" to deal with some aspect of poverty. In a column of mine in 1995, I pointed out that at that time, the nation had spent $5.4 trillion on the War on Poverty, and with that princely sum, "you could purchase every U.S. factory, all manufacturing equipment, and every office building. With what's left over, one could buy every airline, trucking company and our commercial maritime fleet. If you're still in the shopping mood, you could also buy every television, radio and power company, plus every retail and wholesale store in the entire nation". Today's total of $18 trillion spent on poverty means you could purchase everything produced in our country each year and then some.

Regarding those last two points, here is Thomas Sowell:

Economist Thomas Sowell blames welfare for killing the black family

To illustrate this point, here's a graph with some helpful data taken from the U. S. Census.

[image]

Black women were more likely to be married before welfare programs
In fact, there is a whole video featuring Thomas Sowell to go with this graph:

And an article to go with it:

> If we wanted to be serious about evidence, we might compare where blacks stood a hundred years after the end of slavery with where they stood after 30 years of the liberal welfare state. In other words, we could compare hard evidence on "the legacy of slavery" with hard evidence on the legacy of liberals.
>
> Despite the grand myth that black economic progress began or accelerated with the passage of the civil rights laws and "war on poverty" programs of the 1960s, the cold fact is that the poverty rate among blacks fell from 87 percent in 1940 to 47 percent by 1960. This was before any of those programs began.
>
> Over the next 20 years, the poverty rate among blacks fell another 18 percentage points, compared to the 40-point drop in the previous 20 years. This was the continuation of a previous economic trend, at a slower rate of progress, not the economic grand deliverance proclaimed by liberals and self-serving black "leaders."
>
> Ending the Jim Crow laws was a landmark achievement. But, despite the great proliferation of black political and other "leaders" that resulted from the laws and policies of the 1960s, nothing comparable happened economically. And there were serious retrogressions socially.
>
> Nearly a hundred years of the supposed "legacy of slavery" found most black children being raised in two-parent families in 1960. But thirty years after the liberal welfare state found the great majority of black children being raised by a single parent.

The rest of the article points out how even crime rates among blacks were caused by the implementation of soft law enforcement policies by progressives. Just look at the big cities if you want to know what it is like for blacks to be ruled by Democrats. It sucks!

If everybody started to read more Thomas Sowell books, we would be much better off as a country! Only good things happen when people stop watching TV and listening to music and watching movies, and instead settle down in a chair with a Thomas Sowell book. I recommended a bunch of them in a previous post.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

April 4, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women

    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Christian woman finds a way to discuss her faith with non-Christians

April 5, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting article where a Christian woman explains how she used to share her testimony with non-Christians. But that wasn't working. So she decided to try something different.

She writes:

> I'll never forget the first time I shared my personal testimony with a non-Christian.
>
> When the opportunity arose and I shared my story with an unbelieving friend, she replied, "That's so cool. I'm so happy you found something that works for you."
>
> *For me?*
>
> "It's not about what works *for me*," I said, trying to hide my discouragement. "It's about what's true for everyone."
>
> "That doesn't make sense," she responded. "That's *your experience*, not mine. I had a similar revelation when I realized I could leave the church, and I've become a better person for *my* decision. Just as you were freed from your heaviest burdens by finding God, I was freed from mine by leaving God behind."
>
> I was devastated but I chalked it up to my friend's hardheartedness. I decided to shake the dust off my feet and look forward to the next opportunity.
>
> But time after time of sharing my testimony resulted in similar responses. People expressed enthusiasm that I was happy, that Christianity worked for me, and that I had "found my niche." Yet no one considered my experience as anything more than just that—my own personal experience.
>
> […]I had been taught that sharing what God had done in my life was the ideal way to witness to non-Christians. A personal testimony was interesting yet non-confrontational, compelling but inoffensive. And yet, despite having shared my testimony with dozens of unbelievers, not a single person felt challenged to consider the truth claims of Christianity.

She noticed that her approach wasn't actually in the Bible. There was a different approach being demonstrated by Jesus, and later by his disciples.

She writes:

> When Jesus called his first disciples, he taught truth and provided evidence (miracles) to support his claims, then he asked people to follow him (Luke 5:1–11). In fact, this was his method whenever he went into new regions (see Luke 4:14–44; John 4:7–26). People decided to follow Jesus not on blind faith or a

> subjective feeling, but based on the evidence they had seen and heard.[i]
>
> Jesus also used evidence to assuage the doubts of even those who had been with him a long time. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin, who leapt in the womb during Mary's visit (Luke 1:39–45), baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, heard God's voice from heaven, and saw the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus in bodily form like a dove (Luke 3:21–22). Yet when John experienced unexpected suffering, he began to doubt.
>
> Jesus didn't respond as many do today, by insisting that John "just believe" or "have faith" or "prayer harder." Rather, he responded with more evidence, saying, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." (Matt. 11:2–6).
>
> […]At Pentecost, the apostle Peter offered signs and wonders, fulfilled prophecy, and relayed eyewitness testimony to persuade people from all over the Roman Empire that the most reasonable explanation for what they were seeing was not morning drunkenness, but a risen Messiah (Acts 2:1–41).
>
> On his missionary journeys, the apostle Paul reasoned with the Jews from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that Jesus was the Messiah who needed to suffer and rise from the dead (Acts 17:1–3, 17). And he reasoned with the Gentiles from outside the Scriptures, making a case with their own accepted beliefs to convince them (Acts 17:17–34).
>
> In fact, in describing his mission, Paul told the Philippians, "I am put here for the defense of the gospel" (1:7, 16). This word translated defense is the same word from which we get our English word "apologetics," meaning to make reasoned arguments or to provide evidence as justification. Using this same word, Peter commanded believers to "always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you"(1 Pet. 3:15).

So, she decided to dump the testimony approach, and try the Biblical approach. But she had to change it a little bit, since she couldn't perform miracles herself:

> We are not eyewitnesses to Jesus's life and resurrection, but we have the accounts of those who were. We don't typically see miracles, but we have millennia of biblical scholarship and archaeology that provide reasons to believe the accounts are trustworthy. We don't often hear God speaking audibly or see him parting seas, but we have significant scientific evidence that shows the universe had a beginning, and millennia of observation to confirm the scientific principle that everything that begins to exist has a cause.

I think a lot of Christians never move on from approach she described that wasn't getting results. And there's a reason for that – studying evidence is hard work. But I can tell you from my experience as a software engineer, there is no better way to convince other

people to adopt your view than to show them working code that produces results. If they have a prototype, they will adopt your design. Similarly with Christianity. If you have evidence, then you will be persuasive.

When talking about spiritual things with non-Christians, always remember the joke about the two men walking in the woods who meet a bear. One man starts to put on his running shoes. The other man says “what are you doing? you can’t outrun a bear!” And the first man says “I don’t have to. I only have to outrun you”. It’s the same with apologetics. You don’t have to be William Lane Craig to talk about your faith to non-Christians. You just have to know more than your non-Christian opponent knows about evidence.

The way things are going these days with the public schools and the mainstream news media, this is actually pretty easy to do. One or two introductory books on the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning for intelligent life, the origin of biological information, the origin of body plans, the historical reliability of the New Testament, the minimal facts case for the resurrection, etc. will do the job. You might need another one on philosophical challenges like evil, suffering, divine hiddenness, etc. But we’re talking no more than 5 books, and you’ll be effective in the vast majority of your conversations. If you can only get one book, I like Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow’s “Is God Just a Human Invention?” best.

Wintery Knight interviewed for the Apologetics 315 podcast

April 6, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've met the two gentlemen who host the Apologetics 315 podcast in person (Brian Auten and Chad Gross) and they asked me to come on and talk about my experience doing apologetics online with an alias. I thought that I would link to them, and then add an important point that I wanted to say during the podcast, but I forgot to come back to it.

Anyway, you can listen to the episode here on their web site.

Here's the description:

> **Today's Show Notes**:
> **Episode 016 – Christianity in the Public Square with Wintery Knight**
>
> In this episode, Brian Auten and Chad Gross interview Christian blogger Wintery Knight on the topics of Christian blogging, apologetics in the workplace and in the public square, how policy effects Christian freedoms, and more.
> www.winteryknight.com
>
> 1:30 – Discussing moral and ethical issues, having an alias, and observing the changers in culture.
> 8:00 – The conflict between the Happiness Quest and the Truth Quest.
> 10:00 – The difficulty getting apologetics into the church. The importance of a commitment to a truth quest.
> 13:00 – Doing apologetics on the internet.
> 17:30 – How to interact with skeptics, and what to do when the people you interact with become hostile.
> 20:00 – In-person interaction and discerning the right way to communicate in the workplace or public square.
> 25:20 – How can Christians be informed about what's going on in culture and public policy? How does one become equipped? Resources for being equipped.
> 37:00 – "The Equality Act" and religious liberty issues.
> 43:00 – The speed of cultural change in the US, and the importance of religious freedoms.
> 52:45 – Christianity and politics.

If you're looking for a great podcast on apologetics, these guys are interviewing a lot of my favorite people – Craig Hazen, Fazale Rana, and soon Stephen C. Meyer. If you like the interview, please leave a comment. If you have any questions about any of the resources or blog posts that I mentioned, please let me know.

Extra point

So, the extra point I wanted to make was about the question of how should Christians feel

about the ascent of the woke people.

To start, consider this interesting article from Not The Bee, where they feature a whole bunch of moderates and classical liberals explaining why they walked away from the left because of the left's descent into censorship and cancel culture.

Example:

In addition to that, there was an interesting survey about which group of people were more likely to self-report being diagnosed with a mental illness. It was the far-left people. And this data came from Pew Research, which skews to the left.

So, the point I wanted to make was this. The people on the left are only able to persist in being on the left, by exchanging reason and evidence for emotions and coercion. I admit that things look bad now, especially when you look at the powerful big corporations who are allying with the secular left mob. But I don't think that people who are fixated on left-wing concerns are comfortable for moderate people to talk with. I think that secular leftism has left extreme leftists without the basic moral framework for respectful dialog. What's more, I don't think that secular leftists are very good at friendship, dating and especially marriage. You can't marry someone who is lacks charity and self-control.

In view of this, I think that there is a tremendous opportunity to provide moderates and open-minded people with a safe place to express their views and seek truth. In order to be ready for them, I recommend that you prepare yourself to have respectful discussions by reading good books, and listening to good debates. The more you can stay calm while listening to different points of view, the more that people will want to speak to you. Please don't rely on the church to train you. We're not doing a very good job of training Christians about different points of view in the church. So, you'll have to train yourself if you want to develop the ability to debate and disagree in a calm and respectful way.

Exciting news

By the way, I mentioned on the podcast that my Bible study partner and I are planning to start a podcast of our own. I explain what it will be about and about my co-host during the episode.

If you missed my previous appearance on Tim Stratton's Free Thinking Ministries podcast, then you can listen to that here.

The worst mistake you can make when defending the Christian worldview

April 7, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it

entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it.

> I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent's weakness.

What is it really like for a young woman to regret her gender transition?

April 8, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A few months ago, I blogged about this British woman who sued the NHS after they transitioned her when she was still very young. At 16, the NHS gave her puberty blockers and testosterone injections. At age 20, they gave her a double masectomy. She regretted what they did to her, and won a case against them in court. She's posted an article at Persuasion telling her side of the story.

Excerpt:

> From the earliest days, my home life was unhappy. My parents—a white Englishwoman and a black American who got together while he was in Britain with the U.S. Air Force—divorced when I was about 5. My mother, who was on welfare, descended into alcoholism and mental illness. Although my father remained in England, he was emotionally distant to me and my younger sister.
>
> I was a classic tomboy, which was one of the healthier parts of my early life in Letchworth, a town of about 30,000 people, an hour outside London. Early in childhood, I was accepted by the boys—I dressed in typically boy clothing and was athletic. I never had an issue with my gender; it wasn't on my mind.
>
> Then puberty hit, and everything changed for the worse. A lot of teenagers, especially girls, have a hard time with puberty, but I didn't know this. I thought I was the only one who hated how my hips and breasts were growing. Then my periods started, and they were disabling. I was often in pain and drained of energy.
>
> Also, I could no longer pass as "one of the boys," so lost my community of male friends. But I didn't feel I really belonged with the girls either. My mother's alcoholism had gotten so bad that I didn't want to bring friends home. Eventually, I had no friends to invite. I became more alienated and solitary. I had been moving a lot too, and I had to start over at different schools, which compounded my problems.
>
> By the time I was 14, I was severely depressed and had given up: I stopped going to school; I stopped going outside. I just stayed in my room, avoiding my mother, playing video games, getting lost in my favorite music, and surfing the internet.

You know, the first thing I would do with a girl like this is get her to talk to a doctor about what she should expect. Maybe get her some medication to ease some of the puberty troubles. But mainly, just spend some time with her, talking to her, playing with her, and so on. But really the most important thing would be to tell her the truth about where she stood in terms of value, meaning and purpose. After all – how sad can you really be if Jesus gave his life for you, and has very important work for you to do? Young people

seem to put so much emphasis on what their peers think of them, but on a Christian worldview, that doesn't matter at all. What matters is what God thinks of you, and what he thinks is based on your character inside, not on how you look. He's not selfish.

More:

> Around the end of that first year post-surgery, something started happening: My brain was maturing. I thought about how I'd gotten where I was, and gave myself questions to contemplate. A big one was: "What makes me a man?"
>
> I started realizing how many flaws there had been in my thought process, and how they had interacted with claims about gender that are increasingly found in the larger culture and that have been adopted at the Tavistock.
>
> […]I was also concerned about the effect my transition would have on my ability to find a sexual partner.
>
> Then there was the fact that no one really knew the long-term effects of the treatment. For instance, the puberty blockers and testosterone caused me to have to deal with vaginal atrophy, a thinning and fragility of the vaginal walls that normally occurs after menopause. I started feeling really bad about myself again.
>
> […]Five years after beginning my medical transition to becoming male, I began the process of detransitioning. A lot of trans men talk about how you can't cry with a high dose of testosterone in your body, and this affected me too: I couldn't release my emotions. One of the first signs that I was becoming Keira again was that—thankfully, at last—I was able to cry. And I had a lot to cry about.
>
> **The consequences of what happened to me have been profound**: possible infertility, loss of my breasts and inability to breastfeed, atrophied genitals, a permanently changed voice, facial hair. When I was seen at the Tavistock clinic, I had so many issues that it was comforting to think I really had only one that needed solving: I was a male in a female body. But it was the job of the professionals to consider all my co-morbidities, not just to affirm my naïve hope that everything could be solved with hormones and surgery.

Her article has a lot more information about her experiences with the NHS, and her court case. But what I wanted you guys to see was how important it is to not let children just say "I want this", which is something they saw on TV, or heard from their peers, or read online. Instead, you need to find out what problem they are really trying to solve. Once upon a time, Christians thought that the Christian worldview and a relationship with God in Christ was the most important thing you had to offer people who were in distress. What happened to that? When did we stop offering truth, and start offering disinterested agreement and shallow affirmation? Did we just want to feel good and have people think we were "nice"?

Have you ever read the Bible in order to find out what God thinks?

April 9, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two authors came to my attention while browsing tweets this week. The first is Rachel Hollis, who presents herself as a Christian but who isn't (see below). The second is by Sarah Bessey, whose book contains a chapter where the author urges God to help her to hate a certain group of people *solely* because of their skin color. What is causing people who claim to be Christian to buy these books?

I found this list of progressive Christians on Alisa Childers' blog. Childers is very reliable, having written a detail-filled book about attempts by progressives to distort the gospel.

She writes this about Jen Hatmaker, a progressive:

> Since its launch in 2017, Hatmaker's podcast has been a veritable "who's who" of progressive Christian leaders such as **Sarah Bessey**, Rachel Held Evans, Pete Enns, Nadia Bolz-Weber, Richard Rohr, Jeff Chu, Mike McHargue ("Science Mike"), Barbara Brown Taylor, Austin Channing Brown, Lisa Sharon Harper, **Rachel Hollis**, and Glennon Doyle.

I want to talk about Sarah Bessey and Rachel Hollis. Are these authors working from within a Christian worldview?

Hollis:

> Anne Kennedy was bemused to find Rachel Hollis' best-selling book, *Girl, Wash Your Face*, in the Christian living section of the bookstore next to the Bibles. Hollis describes herself as a Christian but her self-help advice is anything but Christian, Kennedy believes.
>
> "She does mention Christianity and her faith in Jesus but in terms of the book itself, there's really nothing that would distinguish it from any other kind of self-help thing that's on the market and there's lots of them. She quotes some Bible verses but she doesn't really rely on a Christian worldview at all to motivate behavior," Kennedy… said on a recent Christian Research Institute podcast.
>
> […]"I don't think she's a Christian at all," she commented.
>
> […]"Her worldview is in no way representative of classical Christianity. She's inclusive, affirming of LGBT, all religions are fine, doesn't have any even vague understanding of what redemption and the cross and faith in Jesus were to actually look like. She invokes the name of Jesus periodically, she quotes some verses but nothing that she says at all represents a Christian worldview. So it is interesting to me that she is marketed as a Christian."

And the Bessey devotion book has this:

> "Dear God,
>
> Please help me to hate wh1te people. Or at least to want to hate them. At least, I want to stop caring about them, individually and collectively. I want to stop caring about their misguided, racist souls, to stop believing that they can be better, that they can stop being racist."
>
> […]"Lord, if it be your will, harden my heart. Stop me from striving to see the best in people. Stop me from being hopeful that White people can do and be better.
>
> […]"Let me see them as hopelessly unrepentant, reprobate bigots who have blasphemed the Holy Spirit and who need to be handed over to the evil one."

Why are these books so popular? I think that the problem is that we're not reading our Bibles to get the author's intended meaning. Instead, we're selecting the parts of the Bible that affirm what makes us feel good and look good to others.

Consider this post from Alan Shlemon of Stand to Reason:

> You never open the email, skip the first three pages, and read just one line on the fourth page. No one, in fact, takes that approach with their mail. By skipping the context of the email and ignoring the flow of thought, you wouldn't know what that line meant on the fourth page. If it's wrong to read your *friend's* mail that way, then why do we read *God's* mail that way?
>
> We open the *letter* to the Philippians, skip the first three chapters, and read verse 13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Message received. Close the letter. We're done here!
>
> We even plaster that verse on a mug, publicizing our mistake. I call this "Coffee Cup Christianity," and it's killing our biblical literacy. We've become accustomed to seeing isolated Bible verses and presume we know their meaning. Too often, however, we merely insert our own meaning into a Bible verse, thereby overwriting what God was trying to tell us.
>
> […]Sadly, Coffee Cup Christianity violates one of the most basic and well-known principles of interpretation: context. It's a principle known not only among Bible readers. Many people in our culture understand it. Tragically, we apply it when reading *man's* word but neglect it when reading *God's* word. Coffee Cup Christianity leads to three dangerous problems.

Here are the problems:

- **Coffee Cup Christianity overwrites God's intended meaning with your own**
- **Coffee Cup Christianity leads to missing important lessons from God**
- **Coffee Cup Christianity models bad interpretive methods**

So, here's what I recommend. My Bible study partner and I are going through New Testament letters. Our goal is to find out what God wants us to be doing by reading the

advice given to early church Christians. We're trying to learn how to recognize life situations that God has an interest in, and make decisions that respect his values and goals. We want to put ourselves second in those situations. And we're holding each other accountable to the author's intent in those books of the Bible.

For each book, we always pick out a good commentary. For 1 Peter, we're using Joel B. Green's "1 Peter", which we got free from Logos Bible study. We read the full chapter, then the commentary, prepare our points in advance. Then meet to compare. We always pray first, and often afterwards. Here's what we did for 1 Peter 1.

So, that's our approach. If your Bible study just has people showing up without reading anything, without preparing anything, and then twisting the text to make them feel good or look good, then I think you need to get out of that Bible study. Do better.

Atheist gets her PhD in astronomy and astrophysics and finds evidence for God

April 10, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christian apologist Terrell Clemmons tweeted this testimony by Sarah Salviander, a research scientist in astronomy and astrophysics at the prestigious University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Salviander writes:

> I was born in the U.S., but grew up in Canada. My parents were socialists and political activists who thought British Columbia would be a better place for us to live, since it had the only socialist government in North America at the time. My parents were also atheists, though they eschewed that label in favor of "agnostic." They were kind, loving, and moral, but religion played no part in my life. Instead, my childhood revolved around education, particularly science. I remember how important it was to my parents that my brother and I did well in school.

I just want to point out that I hope that all you Christian parents are taking seriously the obligation to make your kids do well in school, because even if they start out as atheists when they are young, they can still find their way back to God through study, as Sarah did.

She had a bad start, that's for sure:

> I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, a time when science fiction was enjoying a renaissance, thanks largely to the popularity of *Star Wars*. I remember how fascinated I was by the original *Star Wars* trilogy. It had almost nothing to do with science—it's more properly characterized as space opera—but it got me thinking about space in a big way. I also loved the original *Star Trek*, which was more science fiction. The stoic and logical character of Mr. Spock was particularly appealing to me. Popular science was also experiencing a renaissance at that time, which had a lot to do with Carl Sagan's television show, *Cosmos*, which I adored. The combination of these influences led to such an intense wonder about outer space and the universe, that by the time I was nine years old I knew I would be a space scientist someday.
>
> Canada was already post-Christian by the 1970s, so I grew up with no religion. In retrospect, it's amazing that for the first 25 years of my life, I met only three people who identified as Christian. My view of Christianity was negative from an early age, and by the time I was in my twenties, I was actively hostile toward Christianity. Looking back, I realized a lot of this was the unconscious absorption of the general hostility toward Christianity that is common in places like Canada and Europe; my hostility certainly wasn't based on actually knowing anything

> about Christianity. I had come to believe that Christianity made people weak and foolish; I thought it was philosophically trivial. I was ignorant not only of the Bible, but also of the deep philosophy of Christianity and the scientific discoveries that shed new light on the origins of the universe and life on Earth.

She documents a phase of following Ayn Rand and embracing "Objectivism", but eventually she rejects it for failing to answer the big questions of life.

More:

> I began to focus all of my energy on my studies, and became very dedicated to my physics and math courses. I joined campus clubs, started to make friends, and, for the first time in my life, I was meeting Christians. They weren't like Objectivists—they were joyous and content. And, they were smart, too. I **was astonished to find that my physics professors, whom I admired, were Christian. Their personal example began to have an influence on me, and I found myself growing less hostile to Christianity.**

This is why I think it is so important for Christian parents to raise their children to get advanced degrees… either to become professors themselves, or to finance others (e.g. – our own children) to do advanced degrees. It is so important for university students to see Christian professors on campus. And failing that, it's important that we bring Christian speakers in to debate non-Christian speakers on the important issues. This will not happen unless we recognize how important it is, and then make a plan to achieve it.

More:

> **I had joined a group in the Center for Astrophysics and Space Sciences (CASS) that was researching evidence for the big bang. The cosmic background radiation—the leftover radiation from the big bang—provides the strongest evidence for the theory, but cosmologists need other, independent lines of evidence to confirm it. My group was studying deuterium abundances in the early universe. Deuterium is an isotope of hydrogen, and its abundance in the early universe is sensitive to the amount of ordinary mass contained in the entire universe. Believe it or not, this one measurement tells us whether the big bang model is correct.**
>
> **If anyone is interested in how this works, I'll describe it, but for now I'll spare you the gruesome details. Suffice it to say that an amazing convergence of physical properties is necessary in order to study deuterium abundances in the early universe, and yet this convergence is exactly what we get. I remember being astounded by this, blown away, completely and utterly awed. It seemed incredible to me that there was a way to find the answer to this question we had about the universe. In fact, it seems that every question we have about the universe is answerable. There's no reason it has to be this way, and it**

> **made me think of Einstein's observation that the most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it's comprehensible. I started to sense an underlying order to the universe. Without knowing it, I was awakening to what Psalm 19 tells us so clearly, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."**
>
> That summer, I'd picked up a copy of T*he Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas and was reading it in my off hours. Previous to this, I'd only known it as an exciting story of revenge, since that's what the countless movie and TV adaptations always focused on. But it's more than just a revenge story, it's a philosophically deep examination of forgiveness and God's role in giving justice. I was surprised by this, and was starting to realize that the concept of God and religion was not as philosophically trivial as I had thought.
>
> All of this culminated one day, as I was walking across that beautiful La Jolla campus. I stopped in my tracks when it hit me—I believed in God! I was so happy; it was like a weight had been lifted from my heart. I realized that most of the pain I'd experienced in my life was of my own making, but that God had used it to make me wiser and more compassionate. It was a great relief to discover that there was a reason for suffering, and that it was because God was loving and just. God could not be perfectly just unless I—just like everyone else—was made to suffer for the bad things I'd done.

The Count of Monte Cristo is one of my favorite, favorite books as well, and had the same impact on me as it did on her.

OK, that's enough for this post. Go read the rest, and please share it.

I spoke to her recently and she told me that she is working on several projects that are designed to get people more familiar with science and Bible issues. This woman is an expert Christian apologist and her life will have an influence. Are you going to be like her? Will you mentor others to be like her? Will you marry someone like her? Will you raise children who are like her? I think we should all have a plan to study the areas that are important and have an influence for God with what we learn.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason

- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others

April 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back I finished reading “God’s Crime Scene”, the new book by J. Warner Wallace. I wanted to post something about some studies he mentioned in Chapter 6, on free will. This is one of the places where he found evidence in a surprising area.

Wallace says that free will makes more sense if theism is true, because we have non-material souls that interact with our bodies, but are not causally determined by them. On atheism, only matter exists, and you can’t get free will (or consciousness) from matter. So atheists like Sam Harris and Alex Rosenberg, for example, deny free will, because they are materialists and atheists.

Anyway, here’s what he writes on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others.” Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: “It seems that not only do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it.”” The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here’s the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free

> will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons' belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you're an atheist, then you are a physical object. And like every other physical object in the universe, your behavior is determined by genetic programming (if you're alive) and external inputs. Material objects do not have the ability to make free choices, including moral choices.

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no

moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

(Source)

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality. Can you imagine trying to get into any sort of enterprise with someone who has this view of moral choices? A marriage, or a business arrangement, etc? It would be crazy to expect them to behave morally, when they don't even think that moral choices is possible. It just excuses all sorts of bad behavior, because no one is responsible for choosing to do the right thing.

Believers in materialism are going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

Choosing to do the right thing

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when doing the right thing sets you back. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me about their ability to do the right thing when it was hard for them to do it. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality. My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

How well are Democrats doing on crime prevention and border security?

April 12, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, one of the reasons why people vote for the Republican party is because Republican policies are better for law-abiding people to be safe. Republicans are in favor of allowing law-abiding people to defend themselves from criminals. Republicans are in favor of using police to investigate and prevent crimes. Republicans are in favor of securing the border and keeping criminal aliens out.

So the Democrats won the 2020 election, and they have the House, Senate and White House. So, how are they doing on crime?

Here's the Washington Examiner:

> A new crime reporting system released by the FBI shows that the murder rate in virtually every city in the United States is at its highest levels in more than two decades.
>
> In 2020, the country saw more homicides than in any year since 1998. Experts came to that conclusion after looking at reported quarterly data from roughly 12,000 agencies in various cities and states.
>
> The spike, totaling at over 20,000 recorded homicides, was the largest one-year increase in U.S. history. Every city that reported data saw at least a 20%-25% jump in murders.
>
> […]In New York, murders rose an estimated 41% in 2020 over the previous year.
>
> Chicago saw an over 50% increase at 774 recorded homicides, and Los Angeles saw a roughly 20% increase.

Hmm, it looks like the people who wanted to "de-fund the police" and ban owning firearms for self-defense are not doing a very good job of crime prevention. Does it make sense to think that banning firearms and abolishing the police would work to reduce violent crime? It seems to me that these policies would increase violent crime. And that's exactly what we see. Even in Democrat-run areas where the police were not abolished, their budgets were slashed and they've been hamstrung by woke regulations, so they can't do their jobs. And Biden just announced more restrictions on gun ownership by law-abiding people. Those restrictions don't affect criminals, of course. They just affect law-abiding gun owners.

Border security

Well, how are things going on the Southern border? Are the Democrats keeping out criminal aliens and terrorists?

Here is the far-left Washington Post:

> Preliminary enforcement data for March confirms what border officials have been saying for weeks: The number of migrants crossing into the United States has skyrocketed to the highest levels in at least 15 years, and record numbers of teenagers and children arriving without parents have overwhelmed the government's ability to care for them.
>
> Though President Biden and his top officials have refused to acknowledge it is a crisis, the latest data shows the new administration under extraordinary strain.
>
> U.S. agents took more than 171,000 migrants into custody last month, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection figures that contradict Biden's claims that his administration is facing an influx no different from previous years. The rapid increase in border arrests and detentions — which has more than doubled since January — underscores the magnitude of the challenge facing an administration that has promised more-humane and more-welcoming immigration policies.
>
> Biden officials now find themselves racing to add thousands of emergency shelter beds to alleviate dangerous overcrowding inside tent enclosures, where Central American teens and children are being held for longer than legal limits and sleeping shoulder to shoulder under foil blankets for days on end.

Democrats might be tempted to say that it's not Biden's fault that there is a crisis like this – a crisis that is costing taxpayers $1 million *per day* – but that would ignore the specific policies he and his band of secular leftists have put in.

The Washington Examiner explains:

> The Republicans pointed to several things Biden has done to create the current crisis. First, he did away with President Donald Trump's Remain in Mexico policy, which required asylum seekers to stay in Mexico, not in the United States, while their asylum claims were adjudicated. Second, Biden ended Trump's asylum agreements with the Northern Triangle countries — El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras — to steer would-be asylum seekers from those nations into safe countries other than the U.S. Third, Biden gutted Trump's use of Title 42, the government's authority to expel most migrants for the purpose of controlling the spread of COVID. Biden did not throw Title 42 away altogether but is by some accounts now letting most would-be migrants stay rather than be turned away because of the pandemic.
>
> The surge, Scalise said, "was created when President Biden got rid of things like the Remain in Mexico policy. He could put that back in place tomorrow and stop this surge of illegals coming over."
>
> In addition, Biden came into office promising to end all deportations for the first 100 days of his presidency. With very few exceptions, he has done just that. Finally, Biden stopped construction of the Trump border wall. All of these moves opened the door to would-be illegal crossers and also sent the message to thousands of people in the Northern Triangle and elsewhere: Come now, and you

> can stay.

Biden also reinstated the “catch and release” policy that Trump eliminated. That means that people who are caught crossing the border are given a court date, then immediately released into the United States. Few show up for their court date. How will illegal aliens live? It seems to me that they will be more likely to resort to committing crimes, but that’s no concern of the Democrats who rule us… they couldn’t care less if a few Americans get robbed or killed.

Next time, we need to do better.

How are Christians treated in communist, atheist China?

April 13, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Now, a lot of atheists are desperate to affirm that they have a rationally-grounded system of morality. They want to claim rational grounding for moral values, moral duties, inalienable human rights, etc. But you can find out a lot about atheist morality by looking at countries that have abandoned Christianity. Countries where atheists are in the majority, ruling over the moral minority.

Consider this article from the New York Post:

> China is attempting to brainwash Christians by holding them in mobile "transformation facilities," according to a new report.
>
> Radio Free Asia relayed stories last week from a man given the pseudonym Li Yuese, who said he was beaten in a windowless room for nearly 10 months.
>
> Li said he was detained after authorities raided his house church in 2018. "There were no windows, no ventilation and no time allowed outside," said Li. "I was given just two meals a day, which were brought to the room by a designated person."
>
> He said authorities "threaten, insult and intimidate you. These were United Front officials, men, women, sometimes unidentified, usually in plain clothes. The police turn a blind eye to this."
>
> "You have to accept the statement they prepare for you."
>
> Li added that if "you refuse, you will be seen as having a bad attitude and they will keep you in detention and keep on beating you."
>
> His fellow inmates, he said, were released on bail and had taken part in church-related activities.
>
> The suppression affected both Protestants and Catholics, with priests disappearing for "five, six, even 10 years at a stretch," he said.

According to the The Black Book of Communism, published by Harvard University Press, over 100 million innocent people were killed in atheistic, communist regimes in the last century. In the past, consistent atheists like Stalin who had power enough to ignore objective morality caused millions of innocent deaths. And you can even see atheism killing lots and lots of people in countries like North Korea today – where the official state religion is atheism. Why is that? It's because the worldview of atheism teaches that the universe, and human beings, are here by accident. We are all just molecules in motion, and there is no inherent dignity or purpose to any of our lives that would obligate others to treat us a certain way.

On the Christian view, every single person has dignity because they are made in the

image of God, and made to know him. Christians can never treat another person (of any religion or no religion) in any way that would discourage them from knowing God and experiencing his love for us. We could never hurt anyone in a way that causes them to turn against God. We are careful with people, because we want to act towards them in a way that helps them to accomplish this purpose.

Contrast that with atheists. Almost all atheists are pro-abortion, and even those who aren't tend to vote for political candidates who favor unrestricted abortion through all 9 months of pregnancy, and even after birth. Barack Obama voted against restrictions on infanticide *twice* as a state senator. And this wasn't a problem for the atheists who who supported him. In an accidental universe, there is no rational basis for human rights. There's no way we ought to be. And no free will to allow for making moral decisions. We're just machines made out of meat. So, why would a powerful machine care about honoring the needs of a weaker unborn machine? Or consider atheists who seek to weaken and overturn natural marriage. Why would powerful adults have to restrain themselves to provide children with a biological mother and father? If atheism is true, anything goes. They act nicely when things are going their way, but when their right to happiness is threatened by your conscience rights or your religious liberty, then get ready to be destroyed.

Of course there are lots of atheists in the Judeo-Christian West who live more peacefully, because they are living in a background of objective morality and human rights provided by Western religions. But in countries like North Korea, with a state religion that cannot ground free will or objective morality or human rights or judgment after death, there are fewer restraints. You really have to judge atheists not by how they act when they are in the minority of a nation founded on Judeo-Christian principles. You have to judge atheists by how they act when they take control, and are unopposed.

Democrat legislator: “No more policing, incarceration, and militarization”

April 14, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Detroit News reports:

> **Policing in the United States is “intentionally racist” and “can’t be reformed,” U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib tweeted Monday night, a day after a White Minnesota police officer reportedly mistook her pistol for her Taser and fatally shot a Black man.**
>
> […]”It wasn’t an accident,” she wrote. “Policing in our country is inherently & intentionally racist. Daunte Wright was met with aggression & violence. I am done with those who condone government funded murder. No more policing, incarceration, and militarization. It can’t be reformed.”
>
> As of Tuesday afternoon, the tweet had been liked more than 20,000 times, retweeted more than 4,000 times — and had received thousands of replies supporting Tlaib’s call for abolishing police and thousands of others panning it.

It seems like abolishing the police and abolishing the armed forces and releasing all violent prisoners has significant support within the Democrat party.

Here are the numbers from the Daily Wire:

> A solid body of evidence finds no structural bias in the criminal-justice system with regard to arrests, prosecution or sentencing, Mac Donald writes; rather, crime and suspect behavior, not race, determine most police actions. [Heather] Mac Donald writes:
>
> In 2019 police officers fatally shot 1,004 people, most of whom were armed or otherwise dangerous. African-Americans were about a quarter of those killed by cops last year (235), a ratio that has remained stable since 2015. That share of black victims is less than what the black crime rate would predict, since police shootings are a function of how often officers encounter armed and violent suspects. In 2018, the latest year for which such data have been published, African-Americans made up 53% of known homicide offenders in the U.S. and commit about 60% of robberies, though they are 13% of the population.
>
> The police fatally shot nine unarmed blacks and 19 unarmed whites in 2019, according to a Washington Post database, down from 38 and 32, respectively, in 2015. The Post defines “unarmed” broadly to include such cases as a suspect in Newark, N.J., who had a loaded handgun in his car during a police chase. In 2018 there were 7,407 black homicide victims. Assuming a comparable number of victims last year, those nine unarmed black victims of police shootings represent 0.1% of all African-Americans killed in 2019. By contrast, a police officer is 18½ times more likely to be killed by a black male than an unarmed black male is to

> be killed by a police officer.
>
> Mac Donald further highlights violence that was committed against blacks over the weekend in Chicago and notes that the reason that blacks die from homicide at a rate 8X higher than whites and Latinos combined is not because of the police, but because of crime.
>
> Mac Donald also highlights studies by both the Justice Department under President Obama and the finding of an African-American Harvard economist:
>
> A 2015 Justice Department analysis of the Philadelphia Police Department found that white police officers were less likely than black or Hispanic officers to shoot unarmed black suspects. Research by Harvard economist Roland G. Fryer Jr. also found no evidence of racial discrimination in shootings. Any evidence to the contrary fails to take into account crime rates and civilian behavior before and during interactions with police.
>
> Researchers in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found similar results. “We find no evidence of anti-Black or anti-Hispanic disparities across shootings, and White officers are not more likely to shoot minority civilians than non-White officers,” the report found. “Instead, race-specific crime strongly predicts civilian race. This suggests that increasing diversity among officers by itself is unlikely to reduce racial disparity in police shootings.”

Democrat legislator Rashida Tlaib has armed security, fences and other protective measures. Her policies can only hurt you. You’re paying for her salary, by the way. But she thinks she’s there to protect criminals and terrorists. Personally, I’m already living in semi-rural suburbs. I have a plan to move out even further when I retire in 4 years. I hope you have a plan for dealing with the abolition of the police and military, too.

#ExposeCNN: Project Veritas records CNN staffer admitting CNN's pro-Democrat bias

April 15, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Project Veritas has caught a highly-ranked CNN employee admitting pro-Democrat bias. This is amazing. The CNN employee was on Tinder. So, Project Veritas did the old "honeypot" trap = extracting information by using an attractive spy as bait. AND IT WORKED. They went on 5 dates, and Project Veritas got all the inside information about CNN's bias.

Here's the first article from the New York Post:

> A CNN staffer admitted in a secretly recorded video that his network produced "propaganda" to oust former President Donald Trump during the 2020 presidential election — and bragged about their success.
>
> Charlie Chester, a technical Director at the cable network, was filmed by Project Veritas during a series of fake Tinder dates as he explained how they "got Trump out" of office.
>
> "Look what we did, we [CNN] got Trump out. I am 100 percent going to say it, and I 100 percent believe that if it wasn't for CNN, I don't know that Trump would have got voted out," Chester said, adding that he came to work at CNN because he "wanted to be a part of that."
>
> "Our focus was to get Trump out of office, right? Without saying it, that's what it was."
>
> Chester explained how they overdramatized Trump health issues by bringing in medical experts.
>
> "[Trump's] hand was shaking or whatever, I think. We brought in so many medical people to all tell a story that was all speculation – that he was neurologically damaged, and he was losing it. He's unfit to – you know – whatever. We were creating a story there that we didn't know anything about. I think that's propaganda," he said.

Wow, he admitted it. CNN employee admits that CNN is propaganda. We'd better be careful with this, because this is how the secular left takes power – by lying their way into power.

Second New York Post article:

> The CNN staffer who was secretly recorded admitting the network used "propaganda" to help get Joe Biden elected president also said they played up the COVID-19 death toll for ratings — and that the order came down directly from top brass.
>
> Charlie Chester, a technical Director at the cable network, was filmed by Project

> Veritas during a series of fake Tinder dates as he explained how “Fear really drives numbers.”
>
> “COVID? Gangbusters with ratings,” Chester told the unidentified PV staffer.
>
> “Which is why we constantly have the death toll on the side,” he continued, making reference to the coronavirus death tracker that would appear on the screen. “It would make our point better if [the COVID death toll] was higher.”
>
> […]Chester claimed there was a “red phone” that network president Jeff Zucker would use to call the control room to order producers to play up the Covid death count on screen.

This part is my favorite:

> “Any reporter on CNN, what they’re actually doing is they’re telling the person what to say. It’s always, like, leading them in a direction before they even open their mouths,” he said.
>
> “And the only people we let on air, for the most part, are people that have a proven track record of taking the bait.”

Previously, I blogged about how CNN rehearses with guests what they want them to say before putting them on screen.

It’s so amazing that Project Veritas is able to get this information out into the public. I’ve blogged about academic studies that confirmed the pro-Democrat bias of the mainstream news media before. You can find out how they think by analyzing their sources, their words, and their political contributions. But this is something else. Now we have CNN admitting to their Democrat bias in their own words. What’s amazing is how many American voters still watch this garbage and think they are getting real journalism. CNN is fake news, and the people who watch it are lazy and uninformed.

What happened to gas prices and other consumer prices after the Democrats took over?

April 16, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might think that electing Democrats would be wonderful for the poor. You'd think that, because Democrats are always talking about the poor people and how much they want to help them. And how will they help them? By taxing and regulating businesses. And what do the businesses do? They pass the higher taxes and fees onto the consumers, of course.

The Tennessee Star explains:

> The Bureau of Labor Statistics released data Tuesday showing a sharp increase in consumer prices, especially gasoline, as many Americans struggle to make ends meet.
>
> March saw a 0.6% increase in consumer prices, the largest spike in nearly a decade. That increase can be attributed in large part to a rise in inflation.
>
> However, increased inflation, a rise in demand for crude oil, and the Biden administration's proposed new taxes and regulatory measures could send gas and energy prices soaring even higher in the months to come, critics contend.
>
> In March, gasoline prices rose 9.1% and natural gas rose 2.5%, contributing to an overall increase of 5% for energy costs last month. For the year, food prices are up 3.5%, gasoline prices are up 22.5%, and overall energy prices are up 13.2%.
>
> The rise in costs come as many Americans struggle financially during the COVID-19 pandemic and President Joe Biden considers tax increases and more regulations that critics say would slow economic growth.
>
> During a Monday meeting with lawmakers, Biden reportedly expressed openness to adding five cents to the federal gas tax, which would be a 27% increase over the current 18.4 cents.

And this is the key point about gas prices going up:

> The increase in energy prices, particularly gasoline, leads to an overall spike in the price of consumer goods. When drivers spend more on gasoline to transport goods to market, that cost is passed on to consumers.

Who suffers the most from higher gas prices? And who suffers the most from the effect of higher gas prices on other consumer goods? It's not the wealthy elites who vote for Democrats. It's the people who are barely getting by. When you cancel pipelines, and raise corporate tax rates, you raise the prices that individuals pay for basic necessities of life. If was TRUMP who lowered corporate tax rates, and TRUMP who pursued an all-of-the-above energy policy. That's why we had jobs and that's why we had low gas prices.

Next time we have an election, let's focus on policies, instead of telling everyone how

good we are, because we disagree with mean men who write mean tweets.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

April 17, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our

> universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

April 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

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Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

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Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

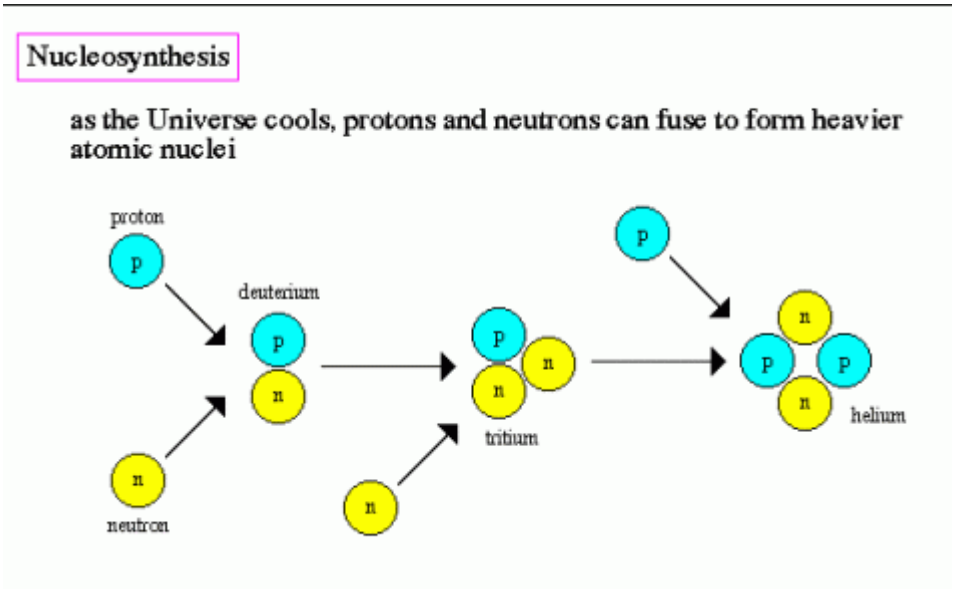

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

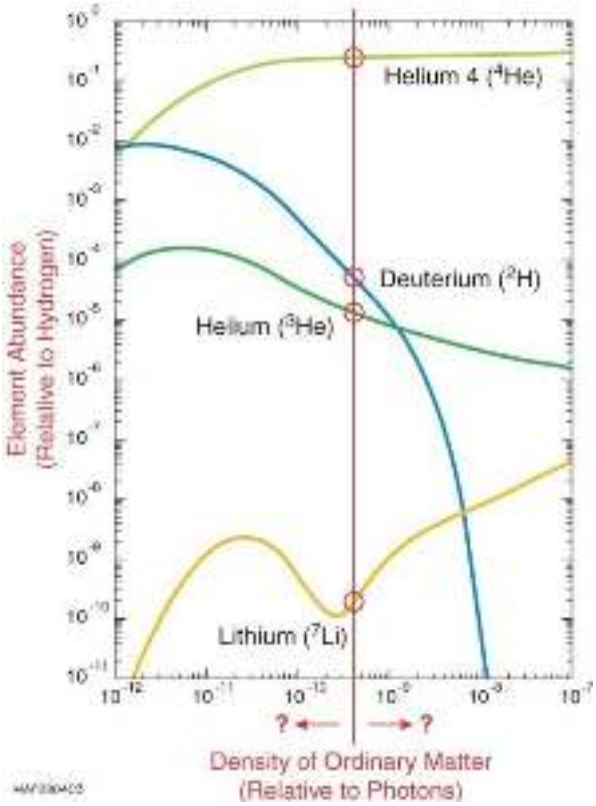

Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the

elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

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Canadian police can stop people and fine them for being outside of their homes

April 19, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know in America we have a lot of people who were concerned about the loss of Constitutional liberties during the Wuh4n virus crisis. But I've noticed that in Canada, people don't stand up for their rights against government as much. They think that big government should take care of them (with their tax money) because big government knows best.

Here's the latest from one of Canada's two national newspapers about the province of Ontario:

> Citing rising COVID-19 case numbers, on Friday the Province of Ontario enacted one of the strictest lockdowns yet seen in the Western world, including empowering police to stop and question any person seen outside their home.
>
> "Moving forward, police will have the authority to require any individual who is not in a place of residence to, first, provide their purpose for not being at home, and provide their home address," said Ontario Solicitor General Sylvia Jones in a livestreamed Friday news conference. She added, "police will also have the authority to stop a vehicle to inquire about an individual's reason for leaving their residence."
>
> […]The new orders effectively confine Ontario's 14 million people to their home, save for a handful of permitted activities. "It is imperative that everyone limit their trips outside of the home to permitted purposes only, such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy, medical appointments, outdoor exercise, or for work that cannot be done remotely," said Jones.
>
> […]Accompanying the expansion of law enforcement powers was what Ontario Premier Doug Ford called the "strictest measures in all of North America." This included a full shutdown of outdoor amenities, including golf courses, basketball courts and playgrounds. Under the prior provisions of the Reopening Ontario Act, anyone caught on a jungle gym until the lifting of the measure can face fines of $750, to an individual maximum of $100,000 and up to a year in jail.
>
> While Ontario had previously allowed outdoor gatherings of up to five people, that has now been limited to "members of one's own household."

Did you get that? It says: "anyone caught on a jungle gym until the lifting of the measure can face fines of $750, to an individual maximum of $100,000 and up to a year in jail."

This part was (to me) amazing:

> Jones also announced the partial closure of Ontario's borders with the rest of Canada. Starting at midnight on Monday, roadblocks at the Manitoba and Quebec

> borders will now turn away any traveller who can’t prove they are travelling for work, medical care or the exercise of Indigenous treaty rights. “Should an individual not have a valid reason to enter Ontario, they will be turned back,” said Jones.

So, police are now able to arrest you without a warrant for any criminal violation. Just being outside without a good reason is enough for them to fine you, and presumably imprison you for repeated offenses. Seven-hundred and fifty dollars. And you’re paying that AFTER paying the salaries of all the politicians, police, judges, teachers, etc. That’s on top of the 45% that Canadians typically pay in income and sales taxes. Would you live in a place like that? Would you be content to pay the salaries of people with degrees in radio broadcasting (like their attorney general) to rule over you and restrict your basic human rights?

I have to tell you, this time they’ve gone too far, and I think this will be rolled back before too long.

Equip yourself for conversations with Muslims with a new #apologetics course

April 20, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My family is half Muslim. I've often noticed that Christians who attend church don't really learn a lot about how to talk to Muslims. They're sort of in their own silo, and not interested in having these conversations with outsiders. Although you might get lucky and find a Muslim who wants to hear about Christianity, a much better approach would be to ask a Muslim questions that show that you know something about what they believe.

When I was working for a Fortune 100 company, a Muslim co-worker asked me if I had looked at any of the other religions. He was an Indian-born Muslim who had married a Hindu wife, then gone atheist in response to their families rejecting them. I mentioned that my mother's side was all Muslim, and my father's side was all Hindu. He asked me whether I knew what the difference was between Sunni and Shia Muslims. I don't remember exactly what I said, but my answer was close enough to correct that he was delighted. We had a good conversation after that.

With that in mind, I wanted to recommend to you a resource from a staff apologist who works for Women in Apologetics. You might remember her from my previous posts linking to her work. She is the one who dumped sharing her testimony in favor of making an evidential case for her worldview, and the one who also likes to have conversations with people about spiritual things. And it turns out that she knows quite a lot about Islam, from her experiences as well as from her studies.

Here is part of her biography:

> I have been privileged to serve in member care, discipleship, counseling, missions, college ministry, women's ministry, and music ministry. I've traveled to nearly thirty countries, including Afghanistan, Egypt, Jordan, Burundi, Peru, Uganda, India, Thailand, Greece, Turkey, Italy, the Philippines, and throughout Central America. My relationships with people of other cultures have solidified my faith, broadened my perspective, and enriched my life immensely.

What I like about this is that she chose Islam for her area of interest based on her compassion for Muslims living in these countries. But it's a controversial topic, not one that is designed to attract popularity. Clearly, her ambition is to make a difference for God and for Muslims who need God, not to make a name for herself by appealing to people looking for entertainment. I get so discouraged by the top books that Christian women are reading. I would like to see the careful use of reason and evidence a normal part of the Christian woman's life.

She has a new 20-part course starting June 7th that will equip you to have conversations with Muslims. Registration is open now.

Here's the description:

> Led by WIA's Islam Ministry Specialist, Laura Powell, Islam Foundations is a 10-week course that will equip Christians to have productive conversations with Muslims by preparing them to understand the similarities and differences between the two worldviews, respond to the most common objections to Christianity made by Muslims, and raise thoughtful objections to Islam, out of love and compassion for God's image-bearers.

Each week features two lessons. Here are the weekly topics:

- Week 1: Introduction & Barriers to Understanding
- Week 2: The Islamic Dilemma & Building Bridges
- Week 3: The Deity of Jesus & The Death of Jesus
- Week 4: The Resurrection of Jesus & Muhammad's Life and Teachings
- Week 5: Violence According to the Prophet of Islam & Slavery, Supremacy, and Spiritual Slipups
- Week 6: The Death of Muhammad & The Miraculous Qu'ran – Perfect Preservation
- Week 7: The Miraculous Qu'ran – Four More Evidences & The Three Stages of Jihad
- Week 8: Violence in the Old Testament & Violence in Church History
- Week 9: Trinity or Tawhid & Was Muhammad Prophesied in the Bible
- Week 10: Women in Islam & A Christian Response

She's also bringing in other experts and interviewing them about their experiences discussing worldviews with Muslims.

Here's the trailer for the course:

And the speaker will be answering questions about Islam this evening live on Youtube at 4 PM Pacific, 7 PM Eastern.

If you know any women who are interested in learning apologetics, this would be a good thing to show them.

I've had a good impression of her organization "Women in Apologetics". They seem to favor an evidence-based approach that strikes me as very good for men like me who like engineering and evidence and problem-solving. What I want is to be equipped for adventures. Give me some good material that will wow my Muslim or atheist co-workers. Apologetics conversations make my pulse race. It's fun to be called by God and to be a good ambassador.

Courage under fire: Ronald Speirs and Easy Company at the Battle of Foy

April 21, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I try to occasionally post something that shows a particularly brave action from some time and place in military history. For example, I previously wrote about Medal of Honor winner Michael Murphy in 2011. Last year, his story was told more widely in the movie "Lone Survivor", which I recommend to everyone. Today I want to highlight another hero: Ronald Speirs.

It is January 1945 and the famous "Screaming Eagles", the 101st Airborne division, are about to turn the tide of the Battle of the Bulge in Bastogne.

Let's read about the Battle of Foy courtesy of a scenario description from the wargame "Flames of War". (Note: LMG = light machine gun, in this case, a .30 caliber machine gun)

Excerpt:

> E or 'Easy' Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, like the rest of the division, was ordered on to the attack on 9 January 1945 as part of a general offensive to drive back the Germans from Bastogne. In the following days the 506th Regiment, along with the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, cleared the forests around the town of Foy and pushed the Germans out. Their next objective was to take Foy to allow the 11th Armored Division to attack from Foy across the fields northeast towards Noville.
>
> […]At 0900 hours on 13 January Easy Company attacked along the western edge of Foy, along the road. The new year had brought heavy snow and the it blanketed the ground and had reduced temperatures to well below zero. 2nd Battalion commander, Captain Dick Winters, had two section of LMGs deployed on the edge of the woods facing Foy to give Easy Company covering fire while they crossed the 250 yards of open field between the forest and Foy's buildings. There were just a few scattered trees and haystacks to give cover. As Easy Company advance the covering fire did its job, limiting the fire on the paratroopers to sporadic rifle shots. The approach on Foy made good pace under the cover of the LMG fire, but about 75 yards out from the edge of the village the skirmish line halted and the paratroopers hunkered down in the snow. Captain Winters stared in disbelief, wondering what was going on.
>
> Lieutenant Dike, who was commanding Easy Company, had been overwhelmed with indecision. It became obvious to Winters that Dike didn't know what he was doing, or had had a failure of confidence. His immediate impulse was to take command himself, but he noticed Lieutenant Ronald Speirs, a capable platoon commander from D Company, standing nearby. Winters ordered Speirs to take command of Easy Company and get the attack moving again. What Speirs did

> next amazed many of the paratroopers who witnessed it.
>
> **On receiving his orders from Winters, Speirs immediately ran at full speed down to where Dike and his HQ had taken cover behind a haystack and told Dike his orders, 'I'm here to take over'. After quickly being told of the situation by the NCOs he ran off towards Foy. The men of Easy Company immediately followed. On reaching the outskirt buildings of Foy, Speirs immediately sought to link up with I Company of 3rd Battalion who, despite only having 25 men, were supporting the attack from the other flank of Foy. He set off running again, through the German lines, to find I Company's commander. After consulting with its commander, Captain Gene Brown, he turned around and dashed back through Foy and the surprised Germans. Through all this the enemy fired on him with machine-guns, rifles and guns, but not a single shot hit its mark.**

To be a good military leader, you have to know many things. A knowledge of strategy and tactics, a knowledge of military history, the ability to see the battlefield, knowledge of your opponent, knowledge of weapons, and so on. But surely the greatest of these is courage. As Von Clausewitz says in his famous book "On War", "War is the province of danger, and therefore courage above all things is the first quality of a warrior." Nothing inspires troops like a commander who is willing to take on the same risks that he asks his troops to take.

Take a look at this article from the Ivey School of Business journal, which talks about the characteristics of Canadian generals in Afghanistan.

Excerpt:

A leader must be in front of subordinates. This takes courage. Leadership from the front encapsulates the adage, *never ask a subordinate to do something that you, the leader, wouldn't do*. In Afghanistan, the leader must not only be in front, but he or she must *be seen* to be in front. Subordinates seek this reassurance from their leaders at all levels. Though they may be tentative, leaders must demonstrate character and moral strength. Their credibility is inextricably dependent on their ability to do so.. During his frequent visits to Afghanistan, former Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Rick Hillier, made a point of visiting troops that were situated in some of the most IED-laden areas of the Canadian sector. Through his demonstrated courage, he inspired leaders of all levels. "If the CDS goes there, so can I" was the resulting mindset. The current CDS, General Walt Natynczyk, has successfully continued this practice.

[…]All leaders need courage. It is the lynchpin of effective leadership. No one respects a wimp who will buy in to any idea no matter how inane it might be. Courage is having the strength of character to persist and hold on to ideas in the face of opposition. Here, I'm not restricting my treatment of courage as it relates to fear. It's also about strength of character and devotion to causes and ideas.

As Christians, we have a leader who led by example. We all need to learn to not be so

concerned with looking out for ourselves and our happiness first, but to instead be willing to take risks and sacrifice ourselves to do the right thing. We Christians should all be courageous, because we are led by a courageous leader.

That doesn't necessarily mean going halfway across the world, it can mean reaching out to someone right there next to you who needs your help and support. Maybe that person has been running on an empty tank for a long time, but still trying to do the right thing. You never know when the opportunity to do something amazing will arise, but you won't take it if you keep thinking of how you might get hurt. You have to reconcile yourself that you are not here to avoid every possible kind of suffering. It doesn't mean that you take unnecessary risks, but it does mean *not letting fear stop you from doing the right thing*.

Now get out there and take that attack on in.

What specific policies did Never Trump activists and Evangelicals for Biden want?

April 22, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm trying to decide from Biden's actual governing what policies Biden-support groups – Never Trump writers, pious Democrat pastors, and Evangelicals for Biden, etc. – wanted. I remember these people were anxious during the election to tell everyone how concerned they were about Trump's past sins, and his manner of speaking.

Here's an article from The Federalist about their boy Biden:

> Last week, legal accountability group Judicial Watch dropped a bombshell: a nearly 600-page report proving the U.S. government has been buying and trafficking "fresh" aborted baby body parts. These body parts, purchased by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to "humanize" mice and test biologic drugs in scientific experiments, came from babies up to 24-weeks-old gestation, just weeks from being born.

I'm pretty sure I remember one of those Never Trump people talking about how much they wanted the government to purchase sliced off parts of 24-week-old unborn babies. Maybe it was David French or Russell Moore or John Piper or Tim Keller? Or someone else… Anyway, did you know that 22-week-old unborn babies can survive outside the womb? Those were pretty developed unborn children. I can understand atheist abortion rights activists wanting policies like this. But I'm curious why Never Trump "conservatives" wanted it. Maybe they're not conservative? And why did pious evangelicals for Biden want it? Maybe they're neither pious nor evangelical.

Here's another article from Daily Wire about more Biden policies:

> President Joe Biden on Tuesday filed an appeal seeking to force doctors and hospitals to perform potentially harmful transgender-related procedures and surgeries even if they hold objections.
>
> As outlined by BECKET Law's Luke Goodrich, a court in January struck down the administration's move to punish doctors who don't perform transgender-related procedures for supposed "sex discrimination." Biden on Tuesday officially appealed the ruling.

I'm pretty sure I remember one of those Never Trump people talking about how much they wanted to get their biological sex re-assigned for free by a Christian doctor. Maybe it was David French or Russell Moore or John Piper or Tim Keller? Or someone else… Anyway, did you know that Trump had opposed all these LGBT policies, and protected the conscience rights of Christian doctors? I knew that, because I was more concerned about policy than about virtue signaling my superior morals to people at church.

I noticed that Life News – a pro-life web site – is pretty upset about Biden's policies so far.

They write:

> Joe Biden is rapidly becoming the most pro-abortion president in U.S. history as he takes multiple actions to expand abortions and force taxpayers to subsidize them.
>
> On Wednesday, the Biden administration released a rule that will force taxpayers to fund the abortion industry through the Title X family planning program.
>
> The rule, issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will end a pro-life regulation that President Donald Trump put in place to ensure Title X grants are not used to subsidize the killing of unborn babies in abortions.

Pro-life groups like Susan B. Anthony List and National Right to Life considered Trump to be the most pro-life president ever. I even wrote about all the specific actions, policies and nominations he did to help the pro-life cause. That's the kind of article that our pious pastors and conservative leaders should have written, if they were serious about getting results instead of virtue-signaling. When it comes to politics, you have to look at the actions taken by the candidates – what did they achieve? – not their words.

Catholic teachers march in favor of gay rights and perverted sex education

Why Christian men supported a bad candidate

So why do we have so many "conservative" Never Trump people and "pious" evangelical pastors and leaders supporting policies like these Biden policies? These people aren't stupid. They know perfectly well what Biden said he was going to do. They shouldn't be surprised at what he's doing. It's the job of organizations like the Southern Baptist ERLC to know what policies affect religious liberty. It's their job to know what policies affect the rights of unborn children. It's their job to know what policies affect the conscience rights of Christian medical professionals. So what happened?

Well, I know a few Never Trump men, so let me tell you what happened to them. They are married to women who don't know very much about law and policy. Those women often have non-STEM degrees, no private sector experience, and if they work at all, they work

as teachers – especially of very young children. They're not used to speaking about policy to adults, other than other teachers of small children in the faculty lounge. Teachers talk about how people look, how they talk, how mean they are. They talk about teacher pay, being nice to illegal immigrants, and making the government provide free stuff for irresponsible people. They are terrified of standing up to bad behaviors like having babies out of wedlock or same-sex marriage. They don't like to make moral judgments – they're "compassionate". And they worry a lot about how they are perceived by non-Christians. They don't want to be seen as "mean".

So, at least for the men I know, what happened is that these low-information wives – who are all active in their churches with essential oils and self-help books and feelings-based Bible study guides – all convinced their "conservative" evangelical husbands to support Biden's policies, because of Trump's "mean" appearance and words. And the strong, tough "conservative" evangelical men went along with it. They wanted a peaceful home, available sex, and not sleeping on the couch more than they wanted conservative policies.

During an online game, I asked one of these men I was playing with which policies he considered the most important, as a conservative Christian. His reply? "Teacher pay and universal healthcare". His wife was a teacher, and I'm pretty sure he got those priorities from her. Keep in mind that universal healthcare means taxpayer-funded abortions and sex-changes. That's how it works in countries like Canada, that have a true single-payer health care system.

We need to be careful about appointing weak men as conservative, Christian leaders. If they can't stand up to their own wives, what good are they as leaders?

The authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke knew eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus

April 23, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Were the authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke connected to eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus? Well, it turns out that there are good reasons to think that Mark was linked to the eyewitness Peter, and Luke was linked to Paul, who had a post-mortem appearance of Jesus in 1 Cor 15:8, and who met with Peter and James in Galatians 1 and again in Galatians 2.

There is a list of evidence for Peter's influence on Mark on the Cold Case Christianity blog.

Here's my favorite one from the list:

> **Peter's Embarrassments Have Been Omitted**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter's special input and influence,including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It's important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It's not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter's standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters 'indiscretions' in their own accounts. See *Cold-Case Christianity* for a more detailed explanation).

It makes me laugh to imagine Peter looking over Mark's shoulder and saying "no, don't put that in it" and "no, don't tell them I did that". Funny! But also very good evidence. The rest of Wallace's list makes it even more clear.

And what about the gospel of Luke? Well, did you know that the author of Luke's gospel knew Paul? If you read it carefully, you'll see that Luke switches from describing history from an "I" perspective to describing things from a "we" perspective in the book of Acts (which he also wrote). Who is the "we" he is talking about?

Here's famous Christian scholar William Lane Craig to explain:

> Now who was this author we call Luke? He was clearly not an eyewitness to Jesus's life. But we discover an important fact about him from the book of Acts. Beginning in the sixteenth chapter of Acts, when Paul reaches Troas in modern-day Turkey, the author suddenly starts using the first-person plural: "we set sail from Troas to Samothrace," "we remained in Philippi some days," "as we were going to the place of prayer," *etc.* The most obvious explanation is that the author had joined Paul on his evangelistic tour of the Mediterranean cities. In chapter 21 he accompanies Paul back to Palestine and finally to Jerusalem. What

> this means is that the author of Luke-Acts was in fact in first hand contact with the eyewitnesses of Jesus's life and ministry in Jerusalem.
>
> […]There is no avoiding the conclusion that Luke-Acts was written by a traveling companion of Paul who had the opportunity to interview eyewitnesses to Jesus's life while in Jerusalem. Who were some of these eyewitnesses? Perhaps we can get some clue by subtracting from the Gospel of Luke everything found in the other gospels and seeing what is peculiar to Luke. What you discover is that many of Luke's peculiar narratives are connected to women who followed Jesus: people like Joanna and Susanna, and significantly, Mary, Jesus's mother.
>
> Was the author reliable in getting the facts straight? The book of Acts enables us to answer that question decisively. The book of Acts overlaps significantly with secular history of the ancient world, and the historical accuracy of Acts is indisputable.
>
> This has recently been demonstrated anew by Colin Hemer, a classical scholar who turned to New Testament studies, in his book *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History.* [5] Hemer goes through the book of Acts with a fine-toothed comb, pulling out a wealth of historical knowledge, ranging from what would have been common knowledge down to details which only a local person would know. Again and again Luke's accuracy is demonstrated: from the sailings of the Alexandrian corn fleet to the coastal terrain of the Mediterranean islands to the peculiar titles of local officials, Luke gets it right.

I know a lot of people (like my Dad) read the Bible devotionally, looking for feelings or trying to "get right with God" so they get blessings. But I think it's helpful to look at things from an evidential point of view – how am I going to make a case for this? When you look at things from that perspective, the Bible gets a whole lot more interesting. And you can talk about it with non-Christians when you know about these interesting details.

Don’t dismiss best practices for Christian living as “legalism” and “denying grace”

April 24, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On Sunday, I listened to a very interesting discussion between Sean McDowell and Jessica van der Wyngaard on Justin Brierley’s Unbelievable show. The topic was on the pros and cons of purity culture. I didn’t know a thing about “purity culture”, and had never read any books about it. I didn’t really disagree with anyone on the podcast, but I did want to say something about it in a blog post.

Description:

> 20 years ago Joshua Harris was the poster boy of the evangelical ‘purity movement’ having authored the bestselling book ‘I Kissed Dating Goodbye’. Today, Harris regrets writing the book, and has also recently changed his mind about Christianity.
>
> Justin is joined by Jessica van der Wyngaard, director of the documentary film ‘I Survived I Kissed Dating Goodbye’, and Christian apologist Sean McDowell, to discuss purity culture, singleness and the Joshua Harris story.

The MP3 file is here.

First, here’s a brief summary of what everyone said on the podcast:

- JW: the book urged people to give up dating in favor of courting and suggested other rules that would guarantee a successful marriage to your soul-mate
- JW: some of the rules proposed by the book were not Biblical
- JW: I’m not a virgin and I’m in early-30s, but I accept that we should teach what the Bible says about abstinence
- SM: purity culture is the idea that if you remain sexually pure, God will give you a spouse and bless you in the future
- SM: purity culture is the idea that if you have premarital sex, you will be tainted forever
- SM: I’m afraid that those reacting against purity culture will build a sexual ethic solely based on their shame, their hurt, their concern about legalism, and this will not help the next generation
- SM: let’s have a balanced Biblical approach to sexuality instead
- SM: there is scientific data to back up the Bible’s teaching that marriages work better when sex occurs only within a marriage
- SM: it’s a mistake to define your spiritual standing based on whether you are a virgin or not
- SM: following the Bible’s rules for sexuality is an important part of discipleship
- SM: the Bible is replete with examples of people restoring their standing before God through forgiveness and redemption

Right now, we are living in a secular culture where people are hooking up, having premarital sex, living together, and breaking up far more often than in the past. There is this pattern of choosing partners based on secular criteria: outward appearance and ability to entertain. And this approach to dating – choosing people for the wrong reasons, and trying to force a commitment using premarital sex – is now common practice, even among Christians.

I think people should have a plan to counter this trend that's realistic and guided by studies and evidence. For example, studies show that people who have no sexual partners before marriage are more likely to still be married 10 years later. Studies show that cohabitation negatively impacts the stability of a future marriage. It's difficult to accept that this is the way the world is, but if a stable marriage is a goal for you, then you should care about the best practices for having a stable marriage.

Take a different example. Suppose you have a lot of shame and bad feelings over having run up $90,000 of student loans. Now your retirement will be much more difficult. The answer to these feelings of shame is not to say that you can invoke "grace" and that will make everything OK. It won't. It might help you to make better decisions going forward, but that debt is going to affect your future spouse, your future marriage and your future children.

There are real costs to these behaviors for your future, and being forgiven through Jesus' atonement isn't going to instantly make the effects of those choices disappear. It's good to warn young people about these costs. It's also good to help people who have made mistakes undo the damage by investing in them. I don't want us to throw out evidence-based best practices as "legalism", because they help us to reach the discipleship goals specified for us in the Bible.

The goals of the Bible (e.g. – not aborting, not divorcing) are good goals. If we find out from science that premarital promiscuity or cohabitation reduce our odds of achieving Biblical goals, then it's a mistake to dismiss that evidence because it make us feel bad about our past. It's not legalism to investigate evidence and consult wise advisors in order to choose how best to achieve goals like marriage. That's actually being wise. Making good decisions doesn't give you the right to be proud and compare yourself to others, but it is good to make good decisions for yourself, and to share your reasoning with those who ask you.

I agree with the speakers that purity culture is wrong to promise people a happy marriage if they only keep their virginity. That's just the prosperity gospel, and it really is not a Biblical view of the Christian life.

People who choose to have premarital sex haven't separated themselves from marriage. But studies indicate that they have damaged the stability of their future marriage *if they do nothing to counteract the effects of their choices.* And I think there is more to counteracting these bad effects than just stating to your partner "Jesus forgives me, so you can't judge me". The focus of the "no-rules because I feel ashamed" crowd doesn't seem to be on taking the damage seriously and fixing it. Their focus seems to be on not

being judged.

I don’t think that a cursory response (“don’t judge me!”) is adequate to undo the damage from premarital sex. But if a person is willing to be honest about their past, and put in the work to understand the effects of premarital sex on their future marriage, renew their minds, and re-establishing their bonding ability, then they should be able to *fully* counteract the damage. I have met people who have done this, and you can see in their choices and lifestyle that there’s been a complete turning against their former use of sex for fun and attention and self-esteem. It’s not “idolizing virginity and idolizing marriage” to look at the data, and make choices that are likely to lead to a stable marriage.

What are the historical arguments for the empty tomb narrative?

April 25, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until

> the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

A few quotes from atheist historians not from Dr. Craig's article: (thanks to Eric of Ratio Christi OSU)

> Michael Goulder (Atheist NT Prof. at Birmingham) "…it goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion." ["The Baseless Fabric of a Vision," in Gavin D'Costa, editor, Resurrection Reconsidered (Oxford, 1996), 48.]
>
> Gerd Lüdemann (Atheist Prof of NT at Göttingen): "…the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus…not later than three years… the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE." [The Resurrection of Jesus, trans. by Bowden (Fortress, 1994), 171-72.]
>
> Robert Funk (Non-Christian scholar, founder of the Jesus Seminar): "…The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30 C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." [Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, The Acts of Jesus, 466.]

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s. For example, the atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark some time in the 40s. (See the debate below)

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source

> must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say “The President is hosting a dinner at the White House” and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the “high priest” as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus’ death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

So we are dealing with very early sources for the empty tomb.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as “Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women” and “Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female.”
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus’ empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to

> explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

What kind of man is Olympic athlete Lolo Jones trying to date for marriage?

April 26, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was watching the latest episode of Better Bachelor and saw that this 38-year-old athlete named Lolo Jones was complaining about how hard it was for her to find a husband. Apparently, she's been trying very hard to get married all along, and has not had any success. Let's take a look at her Instagram page and Twitter page, then her previous boyfriend, and see what she's doing wrong.

So, here's her Instagram. She claims to be a Christian, but it's a constant stream of glamorous pictures of herself, many featuring swimwear or workout apparel. Her Twitter feed is more of the same. Lots of inconsequential things about herself. What she had for breakfast. When she got up from sleeping. That she prefers voice notes to texts. What video games she likes. Etc. The only mention of God I saw is when God helped her win a gold medal. Because that's what God's priority was in the world that day – her happiness. Is that what the Bible teaches – that it's God job is to make his human pets happy? That seems to be a popular view among the books that Christian women are reading today. But is that what Jesus was telling us about God with his life?

Anyway, why aren't marriage-minded men interested in her?

What marriage-minded men are looking for

So, I have a list of questions that I use when evaluating women for wife and mother roles. I'm trying to see whether the woman is capable of making a marriage to me achieve the goals that God has for his world and his creatures. Right now, the primary threats to God's view of the world and us that I see are atheism, feminism and socialism. (I'm open to adding or subtracting from this list)

I'm looking for capabilities like these in a wife:

- demonstrate the existence of God objectively using philosophical arguments and scientific evidence
- demonstrate the truth about who Jesus was and his resurrection using historical evidence
- answer philosophical, scientific and historical objections to the Christian worldview
- explain why other major religions and ideologies are false
- understand and defend the Bible's teachings about moral issues (chastity, abortion, divorce, etc.) using philosophical arguments and/or scientific evidence
- explain her Christian role models and what they have done for Christ and his Kingdom that makes you admire them
- explain what your goal is for your children, and what you intend to do to achieve those goals

- explain male and female roles in marriage, what you have done to prepare to perform your roles, and how you evaluate marriage candidates for performance of their roles

So, looking at her Instagram and Twitter, I don't see anything relevant to a Christian marriage enterprise there. Bikini photos and tweets about silly personal details are unrelated to the Christian marriage enterprise. Even when she promotes virginity, she talks about *herself*, which is not *rationally persuasive* to anyone else, since it's just her subjective opinion. The right way to persuade people that the Bible is correct about sex and sexuality, (and I've been doing that for 12 years on this blog), is by appealing to evidence, such as the evidence from research papers.

Lolo Jones "He's So Good Looking"

What is she looking for in a man?

Lots of Christian women like to talk about their desire for marriage, but their actions are not focused on choosing men who demonstrate ability to perform husband and father roles, e.g. – defending truth, providing, charitable giving, chastity, sobriety, romantic love, selflessness, mentoring, etc. What about Lolo?

Consider Lolo's comments about a man she is impressed by:

> *Double Agents* rookie Nam has been described as "hot" (by Wes), "a physical specimen" (Jay) and "built like a statue" (Kam). But what does his partner, fellow newbie Lolo Jones, think of the *Ultimate Beastmaster* competitor?
>
> "My teammate's kind of growing on me. I don't know if it's because I've seen him come out of the shower a few times, but I'm really liking this chemistry we have," the Olympian stated during this week's *Challenge* episode. "He's so good-

> looking."
>
> […]Lolo (wants) him to pursue her (since she's the lady), but he hasn't.
>
> "I'm throwing everything out his way, but he's just stoic," she admitted in a confessional.

If you click through to that article, you'll see her postive reaction to how "good-looking" this man is. She bends her head forward, and lifts up both arms in excitement. She's not excited by (or respectful of) marriage-related capabilities or willingness to commit. She's not raving about a man's chastity or his sobriety or his theology or his apologetics ability or his mentoring of other Christians or his charitable giving. She's excited by his height and his appearance.

Her last boyfriend was apparently a *basketball player.* He's 7 years younger than she is, 6'7″ tall, and he can really put a basketball into the basketball hoop. But is that relevant for making a marriage that impacts the world for Christ and His Kingdom? Not at all. What a man does in marriage is teach people (church, university, workplace, etc.) about the truth of God's existence, his character and his interaction with his creatures in history. Men are equipped to be persuasive with reason and evidence when discussing behaviors that cause harm to children, like abortion, divorce, promiscuity, same-sex parenting, etc. Men are equipped to defend the policies that promote marriage and family, like low tax rates, limited government, the rule of law, etc. Men invest in other Christians, partnering with them to promote Christian truths and Christian convictions to those who don't accept them. And men know how to help and support their wives as they do their mothering and ministry.

Serious Christian men do not marry women who don't understand the importance and value of marriage-related capabilities and achievements.

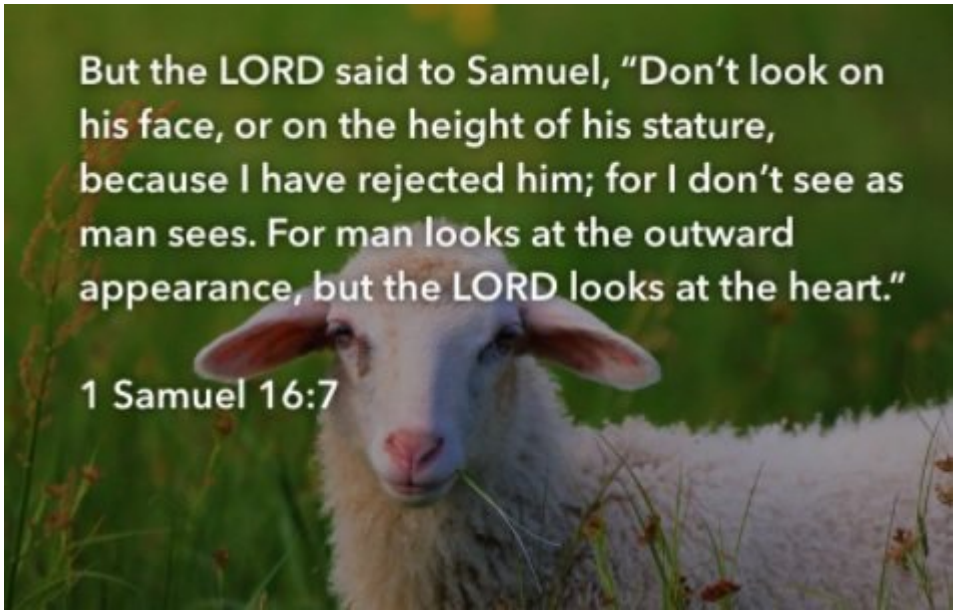

1 Samuel 16:7

It's very important for conservative marriage activists like Mark Regnerus, Brad Wilcox, Greg Stanton, pious pastors, etc. to understand that *for Christian men* there is more to being a wife and mother than holding a Bible, attending church and singing in the choir. I

am a man who has the marriage character and the marriage ability. I can pull the trigger on a commitment – I'm equipped to do that, and do it well. But I want my marriage to fight against atheism, feminism and socialism. Lolo Jones is fit and attractive. She is not equipped for a Christian marriage.

Wind, solar or nuclear: which is best for costs, electricity prices and the environment?

April 27, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I bought a new book by a famous environmentalist Dr. Michael Shellenberger. He used to be a huge advocate for renewable energy (wind and solar). The book is about why he changed his mind and now prefers nuclear power. He has a long pedigree of environmental activism. I agree with him, so I wanted to get the book to learn how to argue it. For you, I have a short video instead of the book.

Here's a 17-minute TED talk that he did:

And an article from Quillette that has the full text of the talk.

Here's the part I thought was the most interesting, where he explains the problems with solar and wind:

> The first was around land use. Electricity from solar roofs costs about twice as much as electricity from solar farms, but solar and wind farms require huge amounts of land. That, along with the fact that solar and wind farms require long new transmissions lines, and are opposed by local communities and conservationists trying to preserve wildlife, particularly birds.
>
> Another challenge was the intermittent nature of solar and wind energies. When the sun stops shining and the wind stops blowing, you have to quickly be able to ramp up another source of energy.

I was having a discussion with one of the software architects at my company, who LOVES wind power. I raised these objections with him, especially about the birds and the subsidies for wind and solar, and the higher electricity prices. His response was that he was confident that investing in the renewables would produce technological solutions to those problems.

Look what Schellenberger says, though:

> What kills big, threatened, and endangered birds—birds that could go extinct—like hawks, eagles, owls, and condors, are wind turbines.
>
> In fact, wind turbines are the most serious new threat to important bird species to emerge in decades.
>
> […]Solar farms have similarly large ecological impacts. Building a solar farm is a lot like building any other kind of farm. You have to clear the whole area of wildlife.
>
> In order to build one of the biggest solar farms in California the developers hired biologists to pull threatened desert tortoises from their burrows, put them on the back of pickup trucks, transport them, and cage them in pens where many ended

> up dying.
>
> […][S]cientists recently warned that wind turbines are on the verge of making one species, the Hoary bat, a migratory bat species, go extinct.

More environmental impact:

> You can make solar panels cheaper and wind turbines bigger, but you can't make the sun shine more regularly or the wind blow more reliably. I came to understand the environmental implications of the physics of energy. In order to produce significant amounts of electricity from weak energy flows, you just have to spread them over enormous areas. In other words, the trouble with renewables isn't fundamentally technical—it's natural.

Higher costs:

> Dealing with energy sources that are inherently unreliable, and require large amounts of land, comes at a high economic cost.
>
> There's been a lot of publicity about how solar panels and wind turbines have come down in cost. But those one-time cost savings from making them in big Chinese factories have been outweighed by the high cost of dealing with their unreliability.

There was a news article from the radically leftist UK Guardian recently that found that 40% of UK solar panels were manufactured by firms linked to Chinese slave labor.

Consumer electricity prices rise, disproportionately affecting the poor:

> Consider California. Between 2011–17 the cost of solar panels declined about 75 percent, and yet our electricity prices rose five times more than they did in the rest of the U.S. It's the same story in Germany, the world leader in solar and wind energy. Its electricity prices increased 50 percent between 2006–17, as it scaled up renewables.

The same thing happened in Canada, when they switched to renewables. According to a recent study, the province of Ontario saw a "21% increase in the overall average cost of power in the province over the period 2007-2013".

Schellenberger likes nuclear energy:

> Germany's carbon emissions have been flat since 2009, despite an investment of $580 billion by 2025 in a renewables-heavy electrical grid, a 50 percent rise in electricity cost.
>
> Meanwhile, France produces one-tenth the carbon emissions per unit of electricity as Germany and pays little more than half for its electricity. How? Through nuclear power.
>
> Then, under pressure from Germany, France spent $33 billion on renewables, over the last decade. What was the result? A rise in the carbon intensity of its

> electricity supply, and higher electricity prices, too.
>
> What about all the headlines about expensive nuclear and cheap solar and wind? They are largely an illusion resulting from the fact that 70 to 80 percent of the costs of building nuclear plants are up-front, whereas the costs given for solar and wind don't include the high cost of transmission lines, new dams, or other forms of battery.

He talks a lot about whether nuclear power is safe, and what to do with the waste. I found it compelling. My architect friend didn't ask me about that, but he did mention the cost of nuclear.

Here's what I should have said (but didn't):

> All of the waste fuel from 45 years of the Swiss nuclear program can fit, in canisters, on a basketball court-like warehouse, where like all spent nuclear fuel, it has never hurt a fly.
>
> By contrast, solar panels require 17 times more materials in the form of cement, glass, concrete, and steel than do nuclear plants, and create over 200 times more waste.
>
> We tend to think of solar panels as clean, but the truth is that there is no plan anywhere to deal with solar panels at the end of their 20 to 25 year lifespan.

I did send him the lecture and the article after, though.

If you think this is an interesting topic, why not share the TED talk and the article with your friends? Some people vote Democrat just for renewable energy. I don't like Democrat policies, so I have to be equipped to know how to respond to anything that anyone might like about them. Christian conservatives like me who care about things like abortion, marriage, religious liberty, etc. have to become experts at education policy, health care policy, energy policy, foreign policy, etc. I have to be able to debate anyone about any policy.

Man receives death threats and loses his job for calling vulgar teen thug an idiot

April 28, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this case, a CEO of a Nashville, TN company named Visue11 was fired from his job after he was caught on video saying that a gay man who was screaming obscentities at him and following him around filiming him was "acting like an idiot". That was a great crime against compassion, diversity, inclusion and tolerance, so he had to be fired. After we see the story, I have some comments about this.

Amanda Prestigiacomo reports at Daily Wire:

> Nashville resident S4m John50n was fired from his position as CEO of healthcare company Visue11 on Monday, his family was doxxed online, and he has received a deluge of threats. But that "enormous volume of hate," John50n told The Daily Wire, is based on a false, media-inflamed narrative stemming from an out-of-context viral video.
>
> The onslaught was sparked by a video of John50n that recently went viral online, appearing to show him engaging in alleged "homophobia," though, notably, not once in the video does John50n utter any homophobic slur or use any profanity.
>
> The mainstream narrative, based on a 59-second video clip, contends that John50n targeted, harassed, bullied, and spewed homophobia to an 18-year-old male for wearing a dress to his prom.
>
> Here's what the video seems to show:
>
> *The video, taken at a hotel before prom, opens with the teen, Dalton 5teven5, telling John50n, "I chose what I wanna wear so you can f*** off." John50n, hands in his pockets, quietly responds, "Is that right?" John50n is then followed and asked leading questions by 5teven5' boyfriend, Jacob Ge1tm4nn, the teen filming John50n. "You think he looks gross? Looks disgustin'?" he asks. "You look like …," John50n starts to say. In response, 5teven5 screams at him, "I look like what, you f***ing b****?" "You look like an idiot," John50n calmly says in reaction to the cursing. "Get the f*** away from me!" 5teven5 screams. "Keep talking. You look like a moron," Ge1tm4nn tells John50n. "I'm sorry, I'm gorgeous," 5teven5 says. "Are you?" John50n responds. John50n then appears to try to block Ge1tm4nn from filming him. "No, sir, I can f***ing record you all I want," says Ge1tm4nn.*

All this vulgar language and threatening behavior was being done in front of the man's family, in a restaurant where he was a paying customer.

John50n contends that the video is missing context:

> John50n spoke to The Daily Wire on Tuesday and refuted the mainstream narrative by adding context to the video.

> "They had been at the hotel/restaurant for an hour, causing a scene and being loud and obnoxious," John50n said. "I was perturbed that the management wasn't doing anything to protect the rest of us who were paying customers with our kids present. These teens were only there to take pictures and cause a public scene."
>
> "There are many lies in the mainstream articles and interviews including the allegations of homophobic name-calling and 'following' him," John50n said, referring to 5teven5.

So the first thing is that I think you definitely want to consider how the two thugs were acting, and also read the tweets calling for the firing of the CEO. It's disturbing that people on the secular left think that behavior is OK – death threats and firing.

Men are watching, men are learning

So, I'm thinking about this story from the perspective of a Christian man, trying to make a difference in the world. I know that any advocacy for the moral teachings of Christianity will be met with reactions like that. Not just from the far-left thugs, but from their allies within woke Christianity.

I know church-attending Christians who claim to be conservative politically who voted for Biden. They know nothing about court cases where Christians are attacked by LGBT activists for refusing to celebrate non-Biblical views of marriage. They know nothing about specific Democrat policies that attack free speech, freedom of association or freedom of religion. They consider it "loving" to affirm far-left thugs in their fascism. Their actions declare that they have accepted the new morality of the secular left above Biblical morality. And their peers accept them as Christians. So, you won't get any help from them, and you shouldn't confide in them. Standing up for Biblical views of moral issues has become very lonely.

And what about the death threats made by the secular left mob? What about the news stories that include *demonstrably false allegations* against this man? What about the calling for his termination by woke corporations? I'm thinking about this, and thinking how happy I have to be single and have a million dollar net worth. I'm glad there is no woke wife in my house. I'm glad I don't have to face woke people in a church, or in schools, nor even in the workplace once I retire. I simply do not want my liberty to express myself and practice my religion infringed by left-wing psychopaths.

I wish people would stop asking me why I'm not married. I can't tell them the truth, because the truth would offend them. The truth is that their "tolerance" and "compassion" for fascists who are deeply and unrepentantly involved in sinful behaviors has made the world unsafe for good men. I'm a man. I'm not taking on obligations to a wife, family, church, etc. in a world where my free speech can be punished with death threats and job loss. If Christian women and pastors want men to engage, they'd better start fighting back against the secular left, instead of virtue signaling to them.

Progressive white women report high levels of mental illness in 2020 Pew survey

April 29, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have the most amazing video for you to see. It's a crazy left-wing activist doxing a libertarian lesbian woman wearing a breathe-through mask. First, let's take a look at the video. Then, we'll look at a recent survey reported by Pew Research in 2020, which assesses how mentally stable far-left feminist women are (self-reported). Then, I'll make some comments for unmarried men.

OK, so here is the video, which was shared by the woman who was doxed. So it's OK for me to share it, since the doxed woman didn't care about it.

So, is this crazy woman rare? Or is she common?

Progressive white women and mental illness

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

Here's the part of the data I thought was most interesting:

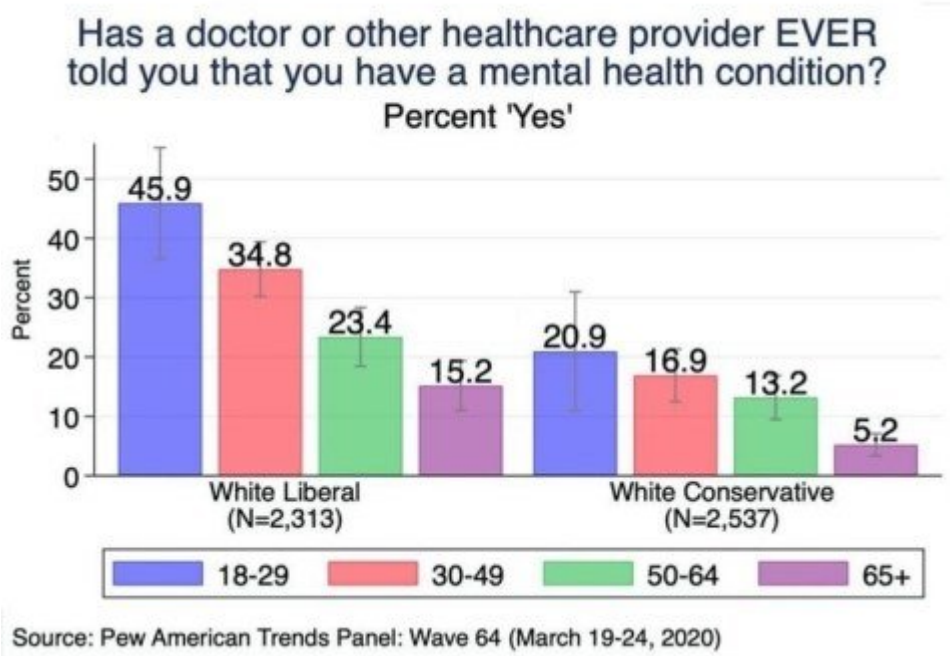

Who would marry a crazy person?

So, the point about this that I want to make is… who is going to marry these mentally ill progressive white women? Being a good wife and mother takes a certain amount of connection to reality. It takes a certain amount of empathy, compassion, and rationality. These progressive white women don't have any of that. So, who is going to marry them? I know that there are thirsty progressive men (and thirsty conservative men who fake being progressive), who will go ahead and hit it and quit it. Pump it and dump it. But how many men would commit to someone who's mentally ill?

And in fact, that's exactly what we're seeing with the marriage rates:

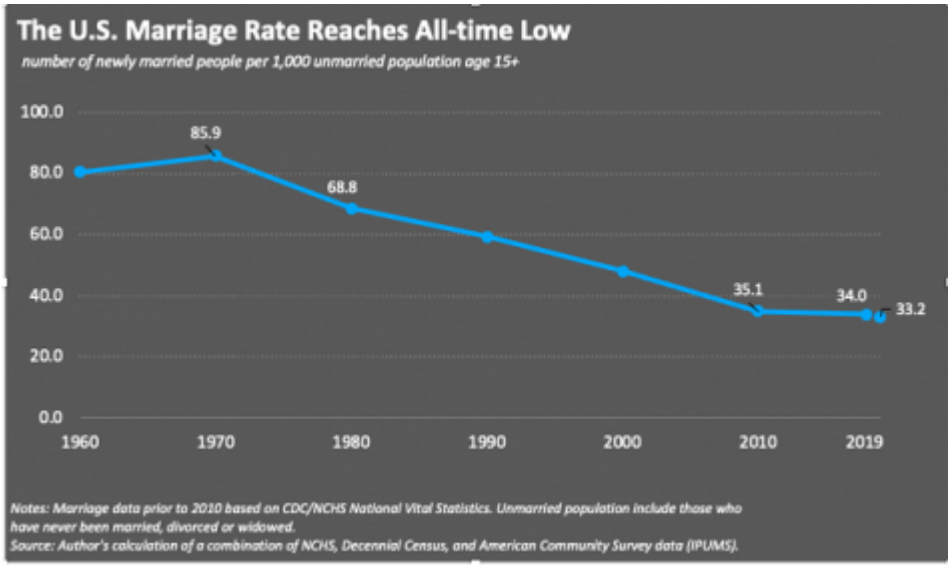

That's for America, but things are even worse in countries that have slid further toward the secular left edge of the political spectrum.

When you look at marriage rates in Canada and Europe, you understand that men are even LESS likely to choose marriage when they have to pay over 50% of what they earn in taxes. And so the marriage rate is declining. I think young, unmarried women in

Canada and Europe are want to raise taxes in order to get free stuff from government. Single mother welfare, food stamps, abortions, contraceptives, IVF, breast enlargements, etc. Some feminists are even asking for free cosmetic surgery. With a big enough government, they don't have to marry at all. Big government leaves them free to play the field, without having to care about finding a good man. But what if taxes get so high that the few good men those women passed over for 40 years simply can't afford to take on a wife and support multiple children he didn't father? Paying for things like a stay-at-home wife and homeschooling, etc. is expensive. Men can't afford a wife, and also pay for goodies for all the single progressive women with mental illnesses.

Conservative men want nothing to do with daycare and public schools – we know that those facilities are *dominated* by progressive women. And we don't want trouble from feminist lawyers and feminist judges in the divorce courts. Divorce is very expensive for men. And we may never see our children again. Then there are the progressive white women in the workplace, who get very bitter with men as a result of getting wrecked by bad boys. Even if we find a good wife, we still have to deal with all these progressive white women with mental illnesses in positions of power. Is it worth it to take risks like this? It depends on the reward, I guess. I can do a lot There comes a point where the juice isn't worth the squeeze.

UK police arrest 71-year-old pastor for defining marriage the way Jesus defined marriage

April 30, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think it's important for American Christians to learn lessons about what happens to religious liberty by looking at what happens to Christians in other times and places when Democrats (secular leftists) take power. This time, let's look at a story from the UK, which has been on a 30-year-run into far-left socialism. They've embraced atheism, feminism and socialism. Here's the result.

The UK Daily Mail reports:

> A Christian pastor who was arrested after he preached from the Bible said yesterday he had been treated 'shamefully'.
>
> John Sherwood, 71, was led away in handcuffs, questioned in a police station and held overnight after being accused of making homophobic comments outside Uxbridge Station in west London.
>
> The grandfather claimed he was left bruised after police pulled him from a mini-stepladder he was using and cuffed his hands behind his back.
>
> Police said they had received complaints the man had been making 'allegedly homophobic comments' and arrested him under the Public Order Act, which can be used under the vague proviso that someone is using 'abusive or insulting words' that cause 'harm' to someone else.
>
> […]Mr Sherwood, a pastor for 35 years, said: 'I wasn't making any homophobic comments, I was just defining marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman. I was only saying what the Bible says – I wasn't wanting to hurt anyone or cause offence.
>
> 'I was doing what my job description says, which is to preach the gospel in open air as well as in a church building.
>
> 'When the police approached me, I explained that I was exercising my religious liberty and my conscience. I was forcibly pulled down from the steps and suffered some injury to my wrist and to my elbow. I do believe I was treated shamefully. It should never have happened.'
>
> Mr Sherwood, who preaches at an independent evangelical church in north London, was arrested under the Public Order Act for allegedly causing alarm or distress.

Before we go too far, let's just settle the question of what Bible-believing Christians should believe about the definition of marriage.

Matthew 19:1-6:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and

> entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?”
>
> 4 He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don’t overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are supposed to be willing to endure suffering rather than side with non-Christians against God’s authority.

Matt Walsh had a fine article about this issue.

He said:

> As Christians, our goal is not to avoid being like the big bad “other Christians,” but to strive to be like Christ Himself. This is one of the advantages to having an Incarnate God. He went around acting and speaking and teaching and generally functioning in our realm, thereby giving us a model to follow. This is the model of a loving and merciful man, and *also* a man of perfect virtue who fought against the forces of evil, condemned sin, defended his Father in Heaven with sometimes violent force, spoke truth, and eventually laid down His life for those He loved (which would be all of us).
>
> […]This is what it means to believe in Christ. Not just to believe that He existed, but to believe that Christ is Truth itself, and that everything He said and did was totally and absolutely and irreversibly true forever and always. Many Christians today — not only the ones in the video, but millions alongside them — seem to think we can rightly claim to have “faith” in Jesus or a “relationship” with Him while still categorically denying much of His Word. This is a ridiculous proposition. We can’t declare, in one breath, that Christ is Lord, and in the next suggest that maybe God got it wrong on this or that point. Well, we *can* make that declaration, but we expose our belief as fraudulent and self-serving. We worship a God we either invented in our heads, which is a false idol, or a God who is fallible, which is a false idol.

If you really accept Jesus as God, then you can’t think he is wrong when he explains what

marriage is. Period. End of issue. And yet today, so many church-attending Christians are anxious to change the definition of marriage so that non-Christians will like them.

Why are some church-attending Christians so progressive?

So, I have quite a few evangelical Christian acquaintances who think they are Christians because they got married, had kids and attend church. You know. They're "Christians" culturally. But instead of thinking about what policies are supported by the Bible, all their policy-deciding is done for them by NPR, CNN, MSNBC, the New York Times, etc. That's because they want to appear "smart" to non-Christians. And having to read books on your own by people like Thomas Sowell (economics), Heather Mac Donald (crime), Douglas Murray (immigration), John Lott (self-defense), Christopher Kaczor (abortion), Ryan T. Anderson (marriage), etc. is just TOO MUCH WORK. Reading is hard. It makes churchy Christians feel bad. Much better to watch Star Wars / Ellen and read fantasy / romance novels and buy video games / hand bags.

The point of having political views, they say, is to look smart and good to others. Not to promote policies that are consistent with the Bible, or that allow Christians to act consistently with the Bible. So you get church-attending Christians voting against small government, free speech, religious liberty, the rule of law, private property, school choice, etc. because forming beliefs by consuming secular left radio and TV is easier than reading.

Photo credit: Christian Concern

What should Christians bring up when discussing truth with Muslims?

May 1, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have some experience dicussing Islam because my mother's side of the family is all Muslim. My go-to argument has always been to confront them about the Qur'an's claim that Jesus did not die of crucifixion. But I noticed a different argument from Laura Powell, who knows far more about this topic than I do. Do you think her approach is the best one?

She writes about it over at Gospel-Centered Discipleship:

> The crux of the argument is this: The Qur'an affirms the inspiration, authority, and preservation of the New Testament Gospels;[2] yet the Qur'an also contradicts the Gospels on major theological and historical points. Therefore, the Qur'an cannot be reliable.
>
> According to the Qur'an, the Gospel is the trustworthy, reliable revelation of God given as a guidance for mankind (Qur'an 3:3-4). These Scriptures from God were available and trustworthy when the Qur'an was revealed in the 7th century A.D., and those who had access to them were repeatedly told to obey them, judge by them, submit to their teaching, and stand fast upon them. In other words, according to the Qur'an, the Gospels are the inspired and authoritative words of God.
>
> Qur'an 5:47 says, "And let the People of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed—then it is those who are the defiantly disobedient."
>
> Furthermore, Qur'an 5:68 states, "Say, 'O People of the Scripture, you are [standing] on nothing until you uphold [the law of] the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to you from your Lord'" (see also 6:114; 3:3-4).

What I like about her argument is that she's just taking the words of the Qur'an seriously, and asking the Muslims who claim to believe it what's going on here. Why say that the gospels are unreliable today, when the Qur'an said that the gospels were reliable, yesterday.

My argument about the death of Jesus requires us to ask Muslims "where is the non-Muslim historian who thinks that Jesus did not die?" There isn't one.

But my argument requires that the Muslim know something about historical scholarship, to know what non-Muslim historians think.Laura's argument has wider appeal, because it doesn't require that the Muslim have *any* knowledge about history – only knowledge about what their own holy book says.

She concludes with this:

> What we see here is that the Qur'an teaches the inspiration, authority, and

> preservation of the Gospels. The Qur’an was intended as an Arabic version of the message of truth found in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, but this presents a huge problem for Muslims because the Qur’an contradicts the Christian Scriptures on essential doctrines. Most notably, the Qur’an teaches that Jesus was not God incarnate, he did not die on a cross, and he was not raised from the dead (Qur’an 4:157; 5:116).
>
> Here’s the dilemma for Muslims: If the Gospels *are not* trustworthy, then the Qur’an is false because it teaches that the Gospels are the inspired, perfectly preserved, authoritative words of God. But if the Gospels *are* trustworthy, then the Qur’an is false because it teaches contradictory, mutually exclusive facts about key issues. Either way, the Qur’an is false.
>
> This, of course, is a huge problem for Muslims. The validity of Islam rests upon the reliability of the Qur’an, just as Christianity rests upon the truth of the divinity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. If the Qur’an is unreliable, then Islam is a false religion.

I like that she’s comfortable having disagreements with people. That’s not very common in the church today, in my experience.

By the way, this is the same Laura who wrote that really good article about how she found a better way to discuss her Christian worldview when she moved on from sharing her testimony. I blogged about it here.

I’m not a Jehovah’s Witness for the same reason I’m not a global warming alarmist

May 2, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the summer, a couple of Jehovah’s Witness ladies were going door-to-door and they stopped by my house while I was out mowing. I decided to talk to them. They asked me why I was an evangelical Protestant rather than a JW. Rather than go into a lot of theology about the Trinity and the Watchtower translation, I decided to to just tell them about the false predictions their group has made.

So, let’s just quickly review that using this article from Watchman fellowship, which quotes JW publications:

> Initially the organization taught the “battle of the Great Day of God Almighty” (Armageddon) would end in 1914. Every kingdom of the world would be overthrown in 1914 which was “God’s date” not for the beginning but “for the *end”* of the time of trouble.
>
> “…we consider it an established truth that the final end of the kingdoms of this world, and the full establishment of the Kingdom of God, will be accomplished by the end of A.D. 1914” (Watchtower founder, Charles Taze Russell, *The Time is at Hand,* p. 99).
>
> “…the ‘battle of the great day of God Almighty’ (Rev. 16:14), which will end in A.D. 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth’s present rulership, is already commenced” (*Ibid.,* p. 101).
>
> “CAN IT BE DELAYED UNTIL 1914?…our readers are writing to know if there may not be a mistake in the 1914 date. They say that they do not see how present conditions can last so long under the strain. We see no reason for changing the figures – nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God’s dates not ours. But bear in mind that the end of 1914 is not the date for the *beginning,* but for the *end* of the time of trouble” (*Watch Tower,* 15 July 1894, p. 226).

Clearly, the world did not end in 1914, and it did not end at subsequent JW predictions, either, e.g. 1925, 1975.

So, as the title of the post says that I can’t be a global warming alarmist for the same reason I can’t be a Jehovah’s Witness: failed predictions.

Here’s an excellent article from Daily Signal by famous black economist Walter Williams, who explains the connection:

> As reported in The New York Times (Aug. 1969) Stanford University biologist Paul Ehrlich warned: “The trouble with almost all environmental problems is that by the time we have enough evidence to convince people, you’re dead. We must

> realize that unless we're extremely lucky, everybody will disappear in a cloud of blue steam in 20 years."
>
> In 2000, David Viner, a senior research scientist at University of East Anglia's climate research unit, predicted that in a few years winter snowfall would become "a very rare and exciting event. Children just aren't going to know what snow is."
>
> In 2004, the U.S. Pentagon warned President George W. Bush that major European cities would be beneath rising seas. Britain will be plunged into a Siberian climate by 2020. In 2008, Al Gore predicted that the polar ice cap would be gone in a mere 10 years. A U.S. Department of Energy study led by the U.S. Navy predicted the Arctic Ocean would experience an ice-free summer by 2016.
>
> In May 2014, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius declared during a joint appearance with Secretary of State John Kerry that "we have 500 days to avoid climate chaos."
>
> Peter Gunter, professor at North Texas State University, predicted in the spring 1970 issue of The Living Wilderness:

> Demographers agree almost unanimously on the following grim timetable: by 1975 widespread famines will begin in India; these will spread by 1990 to include all of India, Pakistan, China and the Near East, Africa. By the year 2000, or conceivably sooner, South and Central America will exist under famine conditions. … By the year 2000, thirty years from now, the entire world, with the exception of Western Europe, North America, and Australia, will be in famine.

> Ecologist Kenneth Watt's 1970 prediction was, "If present trends continue, the world will be about four degrees colder for the global mean temperature in 1990, but eleven degrees colder in the year 2000." He added, "This is about twice what it would take to put us into an ice age."

Williams concludes:

> Today's wild predictions about climate doom are likely to be just as true as yesteryear's. The major difference is today's Americans are far more gullible and more likely to spend trillions fighting global warming. And the only result is that we'll be much poorer and less free.

We have known for decades that the Earth's temperatures were much warmer during the "Medieval Warming Period", hundreds of years ago. But some people are just having irrational fears about overpopulation, resource shortages, etc. and so they will promote nonsense to try to scare people into doing what they want. World history is full of pious-sounding attention-seeking hoaxsters who try to scare the gullible masses into giving them money and/or power. It's not new.

Democrats and corporate media press racist attacks against Senator Tim Scott

May 3, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I added a new section to the blog to track by appearances on podcasts. In those podcasts, I've been explaining about my race, culture and immigration story. My ancestry is West Indian black. We have a culture that is more like Asian culture with respect to education, career and finances. I run into a lot of white progressives who accuse me of "acting white" because of that.

This is actually not uncommon. White progressives get very confused when they encounter black men who are conservative and successful. It makes them very angry. In fact, the only real racism you'll ever see from whites comes from white progressives, when they meet a black conservative.

Here's an example, featuring South Carolina Senator Tim Scott. He gave the response to Biden's recent State of the Union, and the white progressives were not pleased that their little black pets were straying off the reservation.

Here's the video:

Let's start with a little bit of his speech:

> When I was a kid, my parents divorced. My mother, my brother, and I moved in with my grandparents. Three of us, sharing one bedroom.
>
> I was disillusioned and angry, and I nearly failed out of school. But I was blessed.
>
> First, with a praying momma. Then with a mentor, a Chick-Fil-A operator named John Moniz. Finally, with a string of opportunities that are only possible here in America.
>
> This past year, I've watched COVID attack every rung of the ladder that helped me up.
>
> So many families have lost parents and grandparents too early. So many small businesses have gone under. Becoming a Christian transformed my life — but for months, too many churches were shut down.
>
> Most of all, I am saddened that millions of kids have lost a year of learning when they could not afford to lose a day.
>
> Locking vulnerable kids out of the classroom is locking adults out of their future.
>
> Our public schools should have reopened months ago. Other countries' did. Private and religious schools did. Science has shown for months that schools are safe. But too often, powerful grown-ups set science aside. And kids like me were left behind.
>
> The clearest case for school choice in our lifetimes.

So that's where he's coming from. He's trying to get people to succeed through family, Christianity, school choice and private sector jobs.

In fact, he thinks that's what all Republicans want:

> Just before COVID, we had the most inclusive economy in my lifetime. The lowest unemployment ever recorded for African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian-Americans. The lowest for women in nearly 70 years. Wages were growing faster for the bottom 25% than the top 25%.
>
> That happened because Republicans focused on expanding opportunity for all Americans.
>
> We passed Opportunity Zones, criminal justice reform, and permanent funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities for the first time ever. We fought the drug epidemic, rebuilt our military, and cut taxes for working families and single moms like mine.

The Federalist noted how the Democrats on social media responded to his speech:

> The words "Uncle Tim" began trending on Twitter, tying Scott to the pre-Civil War slave character "Uncle Tom" in Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1850s abolition book "Uncle Tom's Cabin." "Uncle Tom" is used as a slur against black people. Yet the racially offensive trend was amplified by Twitter in its trending topics for hours following the speech.

And Daily Wire added:

> MSNBC's Tiffany Cross, the host of "The Cross Connection," on Saturday dedicated an entire segment on her show to a "rebuttal" to Sen. Tim Scott's (R-SC) speech earlier this week. According to Cross, Scott is "thirsty for white approval."
>
> "Let's be clear: Tim Scott does not represent any constituency other than the small number of sleepy, slow-witted sufferers of Stockholm Syndrome who get elevated to prominence for repeating a false narrative about this country that makes conservative white people feel comfortable," Cross claimed.

She called the black conservative Senator a "token", a "dude", a "slave", and a "shame" to his ancestors. But she couldn't refute any of his factual claims. She just called him names because of his skin color, the way racists do.

Daily Wire noted:

> According to the MSNBC host, Scott had "many contradictions" in his rebuttal speech that she "could go into great detail refuting each of his asinine points."
>
> If the Left was serious about refuting Scott's points, they would talk substance and not resort to calling him "Uncle Tim" or "token." As the South Carolina senator previously said, the Left won't "attack my policies, but they are literally attacking the color of my skin. You cannot step out of your lane according to the

> liberal elite Left.”

Don’t forget about black conservatives, especially ones like me who commit to Christianity and succeed. We don’t hate America like the racists in the corporate media.

What is life really like for Americans living in poor households?

May 4, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

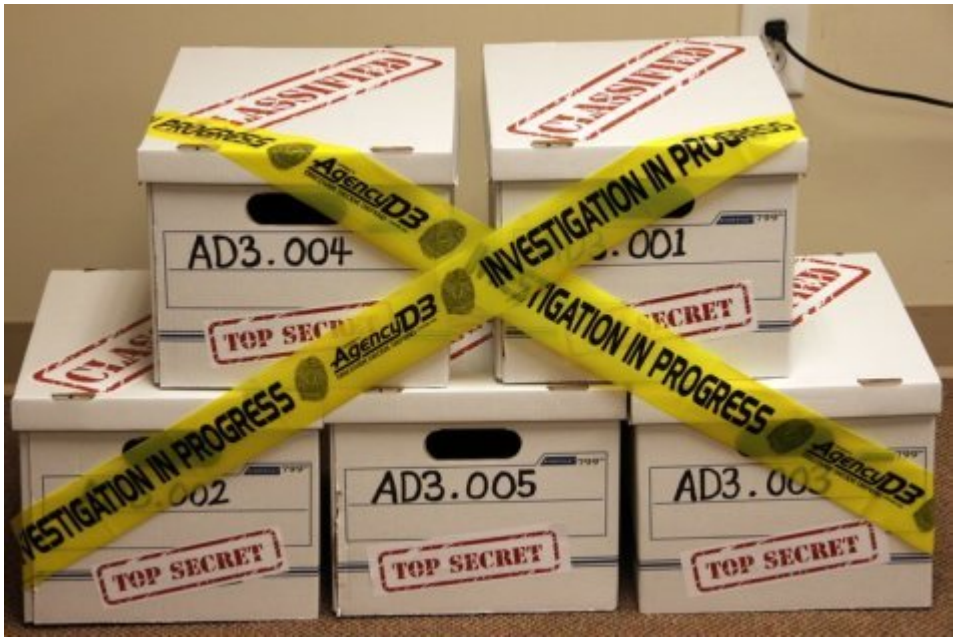

Investigation in progress

This article is from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Today, the Census Bureau will release its annual poverty report. It will almost certainly report that over 40 million Americans "live in poverty."
>
> But what does it mean to be poor in America? To the average American, the word "poverty" suggests significant material deprivation. But the actual living conditions of those the government defines as poor differ greatly from this perception.
>
> According to the government's own reports, the typical American defined as poor by the Census Bureau has a car, air conditioning, and cable or satellite TV. Half of the poor have computers, 43 percent have Internet, and 40 percent have a wide-screen plasma or LCD TV.
>
> Far from being overcrowded, poor Americans have more living space in their home than the average non-poor person in Western Europe. Some 42 percent of all poor households actually own their own homes; on average, this is a well-maintained three-bedroom house with one and a half baths, a garage, and a porch or patio.
>
> According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, only 4 percent of poor children were hungry for even a single day in the prior year because the family could not afford food. By its own report, the average poor person had sufficient funds to meet all essential needs and was able to obtain medical care for his family

> throughout the year whenever needed.
>
> The left likes to claim that the U.S. has far more poverty than other advanced nations. But those claims are based on comparisons that set a higher standard for escaping poverty in the U.S. than elsewhere.
>
> When a single uniform standard is used, the U.S. is shown to have poverty rates that are very similar to other advanced nations, slightly higher or lower depending on the exact measure used.

I think we definitely want to be careful about the outcry on the secular left about "poverty". Their solution always seems to be that we need to move in the direction of socialism. And socialism means that the government gets bigger by taking money and liberty away from families, churches and businesses.

As a Christian, my goals are all gospel-centric. My interest in politics is because I want to live in a society that respects my right to work, earn and save, so that I can spend and give in a way that advances the gospel. My job is not to transfer my money to lazy people in their dependence on government. I go to work so that I can have the fuel I need to respect God in my decision-making. The secular government is interested in other goals – like getting elected. I don't want them using my money for their goals. I have my own goals.

Does the Bible teach that all judging of other people is wrong?

May 5, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

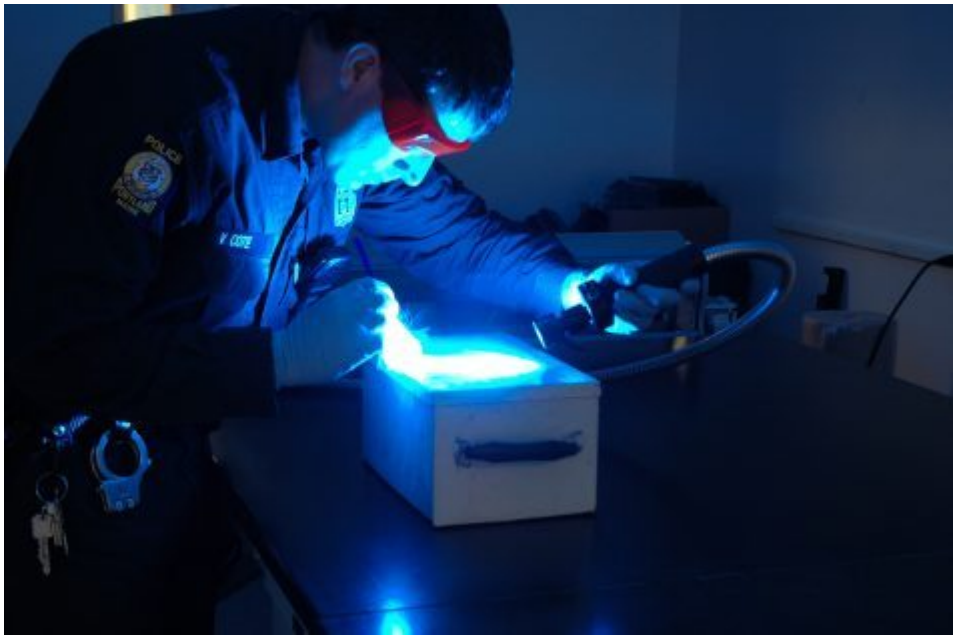

Policeman investigates crime scene for evidence

Today, most people seem to think that the most wonderful thing is to not judge anyone else. We're told that morality is like personal preference… you just choose what you like. There is no standard of morality that exists objectively, in the same way as mathematics or logic exists. And besides, even if there were, the only reason to judge someone else would be to hurt them. Right?

I found an interesting article about judging from Christian apologist Timothy Fox, on the Freethinking Ministries web site. He starts out right away with one very good reason for judging – judging allows people who have experience and demonstrated ability to help those who are making mistakes to get better.

Timothy writes:

> When you study to be an educator, you have to spend a certain number of hours as a student teacher, under the guidance of a veteran teacher. I remember my cooperating teacher telling me one of my strengths was that I took criticism well and was very open to it. I was shocked to hear this! I wanted to tell him he was crazy and that I hate criticism! But I was also well aware that he was the master and I was the apprentice and that it was his responsibility to help me to be the best teacher I could be. So I needed his criticism. (And I received a lot of it!) Whenever he gave me feedback, positive or negative, it wasn't intended to stroke my ego or hurt my feelings. It was so I can learn and improve, to keep doing the good and to change the bad.
>
> The same goes for many other things, such as sports. Athletes have coaches that

> train and guide. But what about normal, everyday life? That's when we want people to leave us alone. Don't tell me how to live. *Don't judge me.*

In my life, I've been able to have success at a few things. Education for sure – I have a BS and MS in computer science which has allowed me to earn a good living. Finances… well, I've made a lot of mistakes with investing, but I was able to succeed (eventually!) just by maxing out my 401K and Roth IRA contributions every year. And I'm just coming up on my 21st year of full time work. So when I give people advice, it's usually in those areas, or maybe in apologetics.

But that advice is not always well-received. Usually, the people I'm advising just find themselves some nice yes-men and yes-women who will agree with them that having fun "in the moment" won't close any doors down the road. It doesn't work, but that's how judging is received. Cut off the judge, and find yourself some yes-men and yes-women. And when your plan doesn't work, just say that it wasn't your fault.

People often cite a passage in the Bible about not making judgments, Matthew 7:1-6. But does it really say that?

> [1]"Do not judge so that you will not be judged.
>
> [2] For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.
>
> [3] Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?
>
> [4] Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?
>
> [5] You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
>
> [6] "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Here's what Timothy Fox had to say about those verses:

> Jesus' point is *not* not to judge (note the double negative). It's "Don't be a hypocrite!" Verse 5 commands us to clean up our own junk, *then* to help clean up your friends'. He's stating the obvious, that when you criticize people, they *will* turn around and criticize you back. So make sure your closet is clean first! And how do you know who the "dogs" and "pigs" are (v. 6)? Wouldn't you have to *judge* them?
>
> And then there is John 7:24: "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." Here Jesus is differentiating between proper and improper judgement. But he still commands to judge!
>
> The reason for many of Paul's letters is to correct some kind of nonsense going on in a church. In 1 Corinthians 5, he writes angrily that the church is not judging

> sin in their midst (and it's quite the sin – go read it!). In verse 12, he rhetorically asks "Are you not to judge those inside [the church]?" And in the following verse, he plainly states to remove the "wicked person" from their midst. Here Paul is criticizing the church for *not* judging when they should have, even to the extent of excommunicating an unrepentant church member.

He concludes:

> More often than not, the ones who cry "Don't judge me!" the loudest are the ones who need it the most, whether it's due to insecurity, pride, or flat-out rebellion. But let us not forget that Jesus was full of truth *and* grace. We desperately need both in our dealings with our brothers and sisters in Christ, when we give correction as well as when we receive it. It's never pleasant to hear some hard (but loving) truth, but remember the first half of Proverbs 27:6: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Do we like it? Of course not. But we need it. And more than that, the Bible commands it.

Obviously, it doesn't feel good to admit you're wrong, but if you want to achieve results, then the quickest way to do that is to listen to people who have already achieved results. The world isn't as "random" as many people want to believe. You get to make choices, and there are best practices. When you see someone failing to achieve their goals, it doesn't do them any good to tell them to follow their hearts and it's not their fault when they fail. The best thing to do is to show them what to do differently, and help them to do it.

Looking back at a post I wrote 10 years ago on why I am not married with children

May 6, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A young lady friend has gotten to know me very well in the past months. She wondered why I never married. The more she's gotten to know me, the more suitable she thinks I'd be for marriage. So, here a shortened version of the post I wrote from 2011 about my problems finding a suitable Christian wife. It was 3800 words, but I deleted some of it so that this post is only 2400 words.

I have noticed some very alarming things about single Christian women lately, and I want to write about some of them.

I think that the main thrust of courting from the man's perspective is that you want to 1) communicate your plan to make the marriage and the children have a positive impact for Christ and his kingdom, 2) you want to demonstrate that you understand the needs of women and that you are capable of meeting those needs, especially the needs for love and companionship, 3) that you understand the roles of a man and you have made preparations and decisions to be ready to fulfill those roles, and 4) you want to ask the kinds of questions that will allow you to ensure that the woman you are courting is ready to fulfill her roles – because she has also made preparations and good decisions.

Well, the problem I wanted to talk about has to do with objective 1). I have communicated my plan to many women and I find that there are particular parts where they resist. The main thing I would like to do is to have four children who all go into different interesting fields and make an impact for Christ.

The goal here is that the children will be able to pursue their field of study without being persecuted by secular leftists, and be able to earn a living, and be able to make a contribution in an area that matters.

So what I normally do is lay out this plan to the woman and then see if she is supportive and helpful and starts to take action to help with that. But I have had some alarming reactions and I want to talk about some of those below.

1) Several women have told me that children can have as much impact for Christ as a ballet dancer or poet as they could as a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or as a President.

For me, the whole point of getting married is to serve the Lord – and if my plans to serve are threatened by marriage, then I will not do it. I would rather use the fortune I have to make donations to individual events than to be married and have those resources wasted on ballet dancers and poets. Further on this point about education and careers, I feel that one of the things that a man struggles with is the fear that his children will not be able to grow up and be prosperous and independent in the world. I especially worry that they will

feel pressure to compromise their faith because of financial concerns.

Many people think that there is this Santa Claus in the sky who will magically provide money no matter how reckless they are – but I don't think God is like that. I think he values stewardship, wisdom and prudence – and that's what I intend to teach my children. I want my children to have enough money so that they can be independent of the state, and resilient against peer pressure. I see many many people who get degrees in fields where they fall under pressure to adopt viewpoints that are non-Christian simply because of financial concerns. Money matters a lot to keeping your convictions, especially when you get married and have children – it's something that needs to be planned for.

There is a reason why people know who William Lane Craig and Michele Bachmann are – they have the skills. But what I am seeing from Christian women is that Christianity can be reduced to just reading the Bible, singing in church and praying to hear the voice of their emotions. (Which they call the voice of God) There is no thought being put into how to make children achieve at a high level by setting goals and funneling them into areas that matter. It's like Christian women think that the children's happiness is more authoritative in the family than my knowledge and experience about how to build up children who will retain their faith, maintain their financial independence and have an influence in the world.

Often, the women who tell me that the choice of career doesn't matter are themselves riddled with credit card debt. And the ones who tell me that science apologetics doesn't matter are the ones whose parents and siblings are becoming apostates after reading Richard Dawkins books. If I am the one who is earning the money and providing the savings up front, then I am the one who should be leading on things like education, careers, jobs and so forth. If I was smart enough to study the right things, to work and to save before I got married, then I shouldn't be overloaded after the marriage by someone else's feelings, emotions and desire to be her children's "friend".

2) Another concern I have is about how these Christian women are moved by liberal sob stories so that they vote against a strong foreign policy, self-defense, deterrence, capital punishment, and men using force to punish evildoers in general. On the foreign policy front, one woman complained to me that American helicopter gunships had used excessive force by attacking Islamic terrorist infantry with the gunship's machine gun.

I took a look at the full guncam footage she linked me and read the AARs and noticed that there was a convoy of Humvees coming into range of the [insurgent] infantry, and that the infantry was armed with RPGs. I asked her to tell me what she thought an RPG could do to a Humvee. She had no idea what an RPG was or what it could do to a Humvee. I explained that RPGs are ROCKETS that explode and it would kill all the occupants of Humvees.

It seemed to me that her only reason for complaining about it was that her friends had sent it to her, and she felt pressured to agree with them. She had no understanding of the capabilities of the arms and vehicles at all, yet she felt qualified to make judgments about unnecessary violence. In fact, it became clear that she was taking this position because

she thought that it made her look morally superior. She felt “compassion” for the poor Islamic terrorists. It’s so easy to second guess American military forces when you know nothing at all about war in general, or Islamic extremism in the Middle East in particular.

I do not want to be overruled by someone who makes decisions based on ignorance, emotions, intuitions and peer pressure. This person went on to assure me that shooting terrorists was the same as blowing up busloads of children, and that killing convicted serial killers was the same as killing unborn babies. Because killing is killing, right? It’s hard to consider someone for marriage who can’t see the difference between good and evil or guilt and innocence, but instead tries to lift up evil and bash down good. (Not only was she anti-capital punishment but also anti-self-defense – all without having done a moment’s worth of research on the peer-reviewed studies showing how capital punishment deters crime, and how concealed-carry laws reduce rates of violent crime).

Should I marry someone who is uncomfortable with the male role of making moral judgments and exercising force against evil? Someone who takes positions without knowing anything about the details of what she is talking about? Of course not. No one can be happy married to someone who takes positions on moral issues based on ignorance, emotions, vanity and peer pressure. And some Christian women are unwilling to learn anything about war, or even to come to the firing range to fire a handgun. They have opinions, they make pronouncements about how they will overrule you if you get married to them, they vote to undermine national security and world peace by emboldening aggressors and then they refuse to learn anything about the issues. All they need to know are their feelings. And they vote based on those feelings, not based on studies or history or anything factual.

3) A final example has to do with Christian women embracing socialism because it is “compassionate”. Believe it or not, some women do not really understand the effect of having the government spend more and more money equalizing life outcomes.

One Christian pro-life activist wrote to me that she was “great with kids” and was going to have one out of wedlock and raise it with money from the government. This woman never finished college and had not held any sort of serious job. She complained that no men were marrying her (note: this woman was completely irresponsible and penniless and unsuitable for marriage) and blamed the men. I told her that the reason why men were not marrying her was because they were paying a third of their income in taxes and looking at the 1.65 trillion deficits and 14.5 trillion national debt. She said that men didn’t really care about money and numbers and that if they loved her, they would marry her anyway, but they were just selfish lazy cowards. She was willing to inflict fatherlessness and day care on a child, but she was “great with kids”.

Another Christian woman told me that the government should provide free meals to children so that they were all equal regardless of whether their mothers had married or not. I explained that every time that government takes a responsibility away from men, that our household income would go down because of higher taxes, and my job would be put in jeopardy because of government debt. I also explained that the more government

does, the less control there is inside the family – like when Christians have to pay for public schools so that all the children will be equal. Equally illiterate and innumerate. Instead of proposing free market solutions to poverty that retain family integrity – like school voucher programs – they always seem to leap to the big government solutions first.

But you can see how this idea of economic equality captures the emotions of some Christian women and they don't even realize how they are undermining men's desire and ability to achieve their goals for the marriage. Christian marriage plans cost money. Men need money in order to put their own children through college. Men need money for homeschooling, stay-at-home moms and private schools. And men need money for apologetics books and to take children to apologetics conferences. It's amazing because this woman expected me to keep her at home as a stay-at-home mom, but she wanted my salary to go to subsidize the single mothers by choice.

For example, take health care. I know another Christian woman who complained to me about some poor child of a single mother who could not get treatment for some condition or other. Notice how there was no emphasis on what this single mother chose to study, whether she chose to work, whether she chose to save, or whether she married a good provider. No. The problem is taken as is – as a case of spilled milk and all questions of responsibility and accountability are dismissed. I was asked how capitalism can solve the problem.

Well the first thing to point out is that her solution is to defund the family, grow government, reward irresponsibility, [and diminish] the earnings [that husbands] save that fund [their] plan. These are the people who claim to be opposed to abortion and then vote for single-payer health care which provides… taxpayer-funded abortion. If her solution to poverty is the secular government taxing your family and your employer, and reducing the family's earnings and destabilizing the family's revenue stream, then she does not have a Christian view of family, government and charity. She will undermine your role as provider because she values socialism MORE than she values marriage and family.

Secondly, there are solutions to poverty that are compatible with the Bible and capitalism that she ought to know about. The first thing that should have come into her mind is private charity. If the government has any role at all, it should be to provide tax credits for private charity. It is important for government not to crowd out the virtuous character of the people by taking over the job of helping neighbors. Our job as Christians is not primarily to make people have equal net worths regardless of their personal decisions. Our job is to make them know about God's existence and character, and we can do that better with private charity – certainly better than any secular government can. Your money is your voice. Don't give it to a SECULAR government that will turn around and enact taxpayer-funded abortion, taxpayer-funded IVF, taxpayer-funded day care, taxpayer-funded fatherlessness welfare, and so on.

I'm going to end by explaining what the underlying problem is.

Conclusion

Basically the underlying problem is this: when some Christian women say they want marriage, they actually don't want marriage at all – not a marriage to a man who is going to take on the traditional male roles anyway. The reason why men work is so that they are the sole or primary breadwinners – so that they have the authority to make decisions and lead in the home. Men want to have children who are self-sufficient and morally upright, and who can have an influence for Christ and his Kingdom. And they know that although the compassion of their wives is useful in the early years of a child's development, that moral responsibility and accountability are needed later on to change children into adults.

Some Christian women [just] want the money to be brought into the home and the wedding to be photographed and the babies to play with, but they don't want the men to act in the traditional male role of protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. It is very important for men to get this out there and in the clear during the courting process. And I also really recommend that men avoid sex before marriage, because sex makes you stop caring about male roles and serving God.

The thing about Christian women that you need to fear most is this emotional happy-clappy intuition they have that the world is a happy, safe place and that people can do whatever they want and that God's job, (and later government, as they drift into atheism), is to make everyone happy and prosperous. That is completely incompatible with a marriage designed to serve God.

One example of pure masculinity provides a challenge to atheist views of morality

May 7, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Dina is extremely wise, about men, women and relationships. She gave me a definition of masculinity a while back that stuck with me. She says that masculinity is when a man refuses to compromise his moral values and duties in order to get favor from a woman. Knowing her background, she's probably seen a lot of men make fools of themselves for young and pretty women. She hates it.

So, with that in mind, take a look at this news story. I'll only quote a little because I have a lot to say about it below.

This is from the far-left ABC News:

> Samuel Forrest says his life turned upside down last year after he was faced with the devastating choice of giving up his wife or his newborn son with Down syndrome.
>
> […]Forrest, 37, told ABC News last February that the day Leo was born in Yerevan, Armenia, on Jan. 21, 2015, he was told, unexpectedly, that Leo had Down syndrome.
>
> After the news sank in, Forrest held Leo for the very first time: "They took me in to see him and I looked at this guy and I said, 'He's beautiful — he's perfect and I'm absolutely keeping him,'" he said last year.
>
> Forrest was living in his Armenian wife's home country where she presented him with an ultimatum: Put the child in an orphanage, or she would leave.
>
> He chose Leo and decided he would return to his native New Zealand, where he said they'd receive support from loved ones. Ruzan Forrest filed for divorce.

So, that's the story. Armenia has an *epidemic* of abortion. And that attitude has spilled over into a general disrespect for children's rights. Armenia has a huge problem with sex-selection abortions. Many men cannot find women to marry. And if they are killing their unborn girls, what chance does a Down syndrome child have?

So in this story, the man is resilient to the woman's youth, beauty, and offer of sex. Nothing that she can do sways him away from his moral obligation to protect the weak little one from her superior strength. This is the essence of masculinity. It takes a strong man to stand up to a panicking woman and tell her that her happiness is less important than doing the right thing for the children. The children are weaker. They did not ask to be made. It is up to the adults to give up their selfishness, and give the children what they need.

The challenge to atheist concepts of morality

Anyway, I had another point to make about this. And that point is – how do atheists handle this? According to atheism, moral behaviors are just the common behaviors of a species that allow it to survive. But the first rule of survival is for the strong to live, and the weak to die. That's why Richard Dawkins is so in favor of aborting unborn children with special needs. They are unfit. They have to die. It would be terrible for the grown-ups to be burdened by them. So, on the Darwinian view of morals, what this man did was wrong.

Another view of morality on atheism is utilitarianism. This is the view that what is right for an individual is what makes the majority of the people in his society happier. Well, in Armenia, the majority of the people want this child dead. If not dead, then throw the baby into an orphanage and give him no contact with his mother. The majority decides what's right. So, on the utilitarian view of morals, what this man did was wrong.

Another view of morality on atheism is moral relativism. This is the view that what is moral is what the majority of the people in a society says is moral, is moral in that society. So, widow-burning was moral in India when the majority of the people there believed in it. And in Armenia, aborting this unwanted child, or throwing him into an orphanage, is moral. A majority of people believe that there. So, on the relativistic view of morality, what this man did was wrong.

Another view of morality is that objective moral values do exist on atheism. But this is not possible, since if there were an objective design for how humans should act, that applies in all times and places, then there would have to be a moral lawgiver with the authority to say what his creatures ought to do. That's the only way to say that anything is really right or wrong, but it's off limits to atheists. Atheists claiming objective morality are really trying to steal something from theism. But there is no rational grounding for morality in an atheist worldview.

Does anyone really think that what this man did is wrong though, other than atheists? His action is a disproof of their systems of morality.

Restoring masculinity

It seems to me that we're living in a time where male leadership has been so attacked that it has eroded into nothing. It's been attacked from the feminist left, and from the traditional conservative right. The good men need to refuse to let women break their integrity. Even if it means that women will continue to pass over the good men for bad boys who let them do what they want. Obligations to God and little children and animals are more important than sex. Tell them no, and maintain integrity.

Young woman regrets that older people in her life were dishonest with her

May 8, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

13:27

16h · female 30 - 35

I wish someone would have told me how difficult dating in yours 30s is

I know there will be at least one person who brags about how great their dating life has been in their 30s and that's great but I really don't want to hear those types of responses. I just need to vent. I started realizing how hard dating is in my late 20s when everyone I knew started getting engaged, married, and pregnant. I'm the only person in my friend group who is single and childless and I'm treated like I don't belong anymore. It's hard to meet other single people and whenever I do meet single men they make it clear they don't want anything serious. I feel like so many people encourage women to just have fun or not get into serious relationships in their 20s. That they should wait until they are a 30 something to start looking but I feel this is awful advice for the average woman who actually wants a family. I wish the older people in my life would have been honest with me when I was younger. Yes, dating is different when you get older. It's definitely not as easy. You go from having a dating pool to a dating cup. I'm just so frustrated with everything. I wish I could go back in time and do everything over again.

198 96 Share Award

Have older women succeeded at teaching younger women about love and marriage? I once dated a woman who had messed up her education, career and finances by following her heart. She confided in me that she had a hatred of "responsibilities, expectations and obligations". She wanted to be guided by her feelings, moment by moment. Whenever she failed, she would blame others, or claim that the world was just too unpredictable to make good decisions.

She failed, and was unhappy, wishing that grown ups in her life had told her the truth about her bad decisions. And she's not alone.

Look at this article posted on the UC Berkeley website:

> A recent group of studies has found that women's happiness levels have been dropping steadily over the last few decades, to the point that women now report lower happiness levels than men, a role reversal from the 1970s. Given social improvements in women's lives over the intervening decades—increased work opportunities, higher salaries, and more reproductive choice, to name a few—these results have surprised more than a few commentators, with everyone from Barbara Ehrenreich to Rush Limbaugh trying to make sense of them.
>
> That hasn't been an easy task, even for the economists whose study, "The Paradox of Declining Women's Happiness," helped uncover this trend. Those economists, Justin Wolfers and Betsey Stevenson, both at the University of

> Pennsylvania, analyzed data from several large-scale surveys that have tracked the general well-being of Americans and Europeans from as far back as 1972. They found that women's happiness levels had dropped over time in each survey. To understand why, Wolfers and Stevenson looked at factors which in past research had been linked to unhappiness in women, such as marital status, income, educational level, and number of children. But none of these could account for the shift.

In addition to "increased work opportunities, higher salaries, and more reproductive choice", women have also "benefited" from preferences in education, in education funding, in the workplace, and especially in the courts. They get favorable treatment in the criminal courts as well as in the divorce courts. They have been given everything they asked for that they *felt* would make them happier, and *all* of it (once obtained) has worked to make them less happy. The biggest part of their unhappiness problem is how their learned selfishness makes them incapable of – and undeserving of – commitment. The declining marriage rate is made worse by disincentives created for men to marry and have children when they are given sex for free, are heavily taxed, regulated by government bullies, and risk being financially raped by divorce.

Far-left and far-right defenders of marriage agree that it's a "mystery" why women are so unhappy. After all, they say, third wave feminism has brought women nothing but fairness. We have to take it as a given, and solve the problem of women's declining happiness some other way. Radical feminism can't be rolled back.

Well, my bossy women advisors are always telling me that I should be positive and tell women how to do better. So I will.

In my own life, I had to escape the effects of growing up in a bad family, in a bad city, in a bad country. Everything I was told was a lie, and would have destroyed me if I had listened to it. In fact, it did destroy my brother. He did listen to it. He listened to our parents. He listened to the worthless public school teachers. He listened to the popular songs. He watched the popular movies. And most of all, he did what his friends told him to do. Don't you be like him. What you need to do is resist the culture, and focus on doing things in ways that work. You need to make sure that your day-to-day decision-making gets you where you want to be.

The first and most important priority is to get an objective moral standard that can be used to judge the lies that are being told to you. That standard is in the Bible, and it has the great advantage of having been given to you by the same person who designed the universe, and you. Not only can you use it to judge the liars, keeping them and their lies at a distance, but it helps you to stop making mistakes yourself. The most important lesson I learned from the moral law was to embrace chastity, and not to waste my time and money pursuing casual sex relationships with godless women for "fun" or "self-esteem". Having to play the fool for godless women in order to get sex is degrading for men, and destroys the natural leadership role that men have in moral and spiritual matters. It's much better to leave bad women alone, and pay attention only to the ones

who are interested in being led to achieve things that really matter. I think that raising influential effective Christian children, apologetics on campus, in-house apologetics discussion, and political engagement are really important.

Secondly, the classics. Instead of consuming books, music and visual entertainment made by secular leftists, turn instead to the classics and non-fiction. The best things to consume are evidential apologetics, economics, military history and the classics. Evidential apologetics teaches you to become focused on truth. Free market economics teaches you how the world works. Military history teaches you gratitude and humility. You can undo the nonsense that you learned about men, women and relationships simply by learning the lessons about human nature found in the classics – Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Elizabeth Gaskell, etc.

The Bible says this in Phillipians 4:8:

> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

If all your friends on social media are miserable failures in their relationships, lacking chastity, sobriety, charity and unselfishness, then cut them off so that they don't drag you down with them.

The most common case I see is Christian-raised women abandoning their faith in high school or college because they would rather be liked by non-Christians than defend their faith and accept the unpopularity and exclusion that results. They shack up with atheist men, and give away their best years to them. They have no moral standard that would allow them to reject those men, when those men feel so good to them. And their "friends" support them in that. Don't keep "friends" who only want to drag you down into the pit with them. Accept that it is normal to make judgments. Accept that it is normal to have enemies. Learn how to disagree with non-Christians in a way that is supported by reason and evidence. Don't let godless people tell you what you should want. Don't try to fit in with them.

What are some of the arguments against gay marriage?

May 9, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

Here are 10 from the Family Research Council.

The list:

1. **Children hunger for their biological parents.**
2. **Children need fathers.**
3. **Children need mothers.**
4. **Evidence on parenting by same-sex couples is inadequate.**
5. **Evidence suggests children raised by homosexuals are more likely to experience gender and sexual disorders.**
6. **Same-sex "marriage" would undercut the norm of sexual fidelity within marriage.**
7. **Same-sex "marriage" would further isolate marriage from its procreative purpose.**
8. **Same-sex "marriage" would further diminish the expectation of paternal commitment.**
9. **Marriages thrive when spouses specialize in gender-typical roles.**
10. **Women and marriage domesticate men**.

The eleventh one they missed is that a husband's leadership is beneficial to a woman because it gives her direction and balances her emotional highs and lows. It's not politically correct to say what women need from men in marriage, but it's true. Just like men, women have weaknesses that can be corrected and compensated for by the opposite sex. The twelfth one they missed is that same-sex marriage is incompatible with religious liberty, as recent court cases have shown.

Anyway, here are the details on #7:

> **7. Same-sex "marriage" would further isolate marriage from its procreative purpose.**
>
> Traditionally, marriage and procreation have been tightly connected to one another. Indeed, from a sociological perspective, the primary purpose that marriage serves is to secure a mother and father for each child who is born into a society. Now, however, many Westerners see marriage in primarily emotional terms.
>
> Among other things, the danger with this mentality is that it fosters an anti-natalist mindset that fuels population decline, which in turn puts tremendous social, political, and economic strains on the larger society. Same-sex marriage would only further undercut the procreative norm long associated with marriage insofar as it establishes that there is no necessary link between procreation and marriage.
>
> This was spelled out in the *Goodridge* decision in Massachusetts, where the majority opinion dismissed the procreative meaning of marriage. It is no accident that the countries that have legalized or are considering legalizing same-sex marriage have some of the lowest fertility rates in the world. For instance, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Canada have birthrates that hover around 1.6 children per woman–well below the replacement fertility rate of 2.1.

I chose this one because I wanted to comment.

I think it's common today for men and women to not put the production and development of children *at the center* of their marriage plans. They are not working a financial plan to prepare for children. They are not developing the skills they need to mentor and nurture others. They are resentful of any demands placed on them that restrict their freedom. And they want marriage to be about fun and self-fulfillment. This is not compatible with children, however. And that's the point. The more we redefine marriage to be about adult selfishness – first with no-fault divorce, then with same-sex marriage – the less emphasis there is on the pre-marital preparations for making and raising children.

If you want to know what you should be doing with your life before marriage, then think of the process of having children and raising children. Think of how much it costs, what skills you will need, and how your character has to be trained. Many of the things that you see young people doing these days – binge drinking, hooking up, running up debt, cohabitating, avoiding things that are hard to do – are not preparing their character for the responsibilities, expectations and obligations that people face when they have children.

Suppose you have a friend who is not good at driving a manual transmission car or not good at weight lifting or not good at doing apologetics – are you able to help them do it, or are you incapable of taking responsibility? If you can't take responsibility for helping an adult, you certainly can't take responsibility for a child – children are much less capable.

Now are you able to say no to doing things for your own happiness? If you are not able to give up your own happiness – and this is a thing that gets easier as you practice more – then you're liable to look on your duties to your children with resentment – that you are being "manipulated" into it. You don't suddenly learn how to put up with children just by walking down the aisle at a wedding. It takes training to get good at being generous with your time, money and effort. It takes practice.

In fact, a smart man who is courting a woman would be trying to get her to practice the behaviors of a wife and mother before he marries her. And the same for a smart women who is being courted by a man. For example, a man has to comfortable giving things to the people around him – he can't be resentful about it. Even when he doesn't particularly like those people, he has to focus on their needs, think about where he is trying to lead them, and then work a plan to provide for their needs so they get where he wants them to go. If a man doesn't like the feel of caring for others who may not be grateful – or who may even hate him – then he should take steps to prepare his character to learn to like it. When a little kid says "I hate you!" to his father, who is paying thousands of dollars for him to grow up, it's not an easy thing. Always being selfish before you marry is not good preparation for what children will demand of you. This is something I struggle with personally – being content to invest in others who turn out to be ungrateful, and even destructive.

So I think this focus on parenting is a wonderful way for people to work backwards from the goal (healthy, happy, successful children) to the interim tasks and required skills. It helps us to get away from thinking that marriage is about us – our happiness, our needs. Unfortunately, not everyone who runs around telling people that they want to get married "some day" is really taking steps to prepare for marriage and parenting right now. Marriage is a commitment to *self-sacrificially* love another person – however much they change – for the rest of their lives, and to love any children who appear, too. People don't like to read about marriage and think it through. But just saying "I want to marry someday" is not a proof of preparation for marriage, as the divorce rate attests. To get married, you have to train yourself to think of others, and to do hard things that don't make you feel "free" or "happy". There is no path to a successful marriage that does not involve responsibilities, expectations and obligations for husband *and* wife. It's not "happily ever after". It's hard work!

New Census Bureau data: U.S. marriage rate reaches all time low

May 10, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

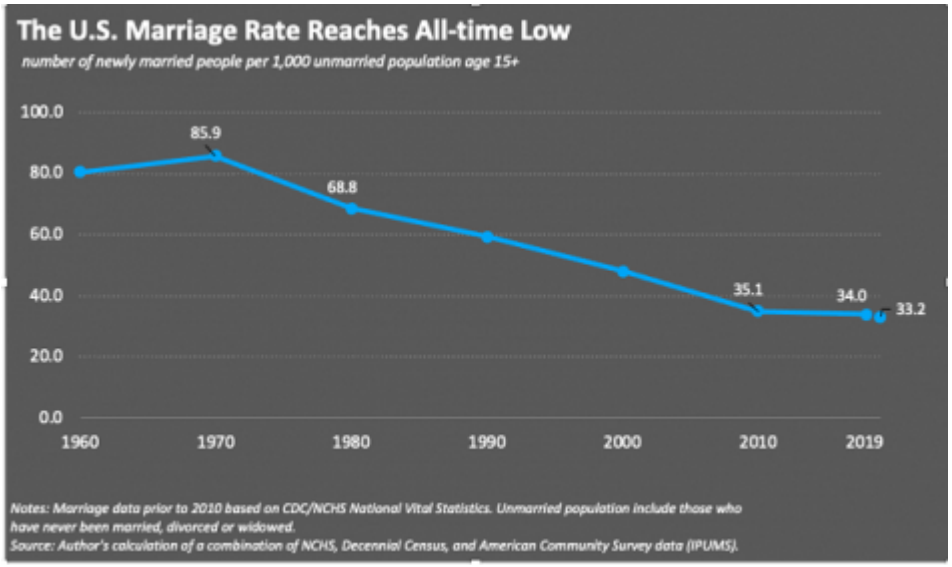

Marriage rates in the United States over time

This is the latest data from the American Community Survey data from the Census Bureau.

Over the last few decades, feminists thought that they could redefine many of the core aspects of marriage, and that men would still continue to marry. But the truth is that marriage used to be a pretty fair deal for men, now it just isn't under the new rules.

Marriage used to mean:

> - Being the legally and socially recognized head of the household.
> - An expectation of regular sex.
> - Legal rights to children.
> - Lifetime commitment.
> - That you are guaranteed a chaste bride on your wedding night.

Feminism has destroyed all of these facets of marriage. Feminists want marriage to be all about them, and their needs. And they don't want marriage to put any responsibilities, expectations or obligations on them.

I am pro-marriage, but for me pro-marriage means *rolling back* the feminist redefinitions of marriage. That's the only way to get men to be interested in marriage. Today, men are responding to the anti-marriage incentives created by feminists. Feminists offered men free sex without commitment, and they made marriage into a dangerous legal deathtrap. Men aren't going to take risks like that. Especially when they have lost the authority to lead the home, and the other benefits of marriage for men. It's a lot of risk, without any of the benefits. It's a bad deal.

But it’s not just the legal risks, it’s the fact that men can’t afford marriage in a socialist country. Socialism requires higher taxes, and that leaves men with too little to take on the husband and father roles.

When you look at marriage rates in Canada and Europe, you understand that men are even LESS likely to choose marriage when they have to pay over 50% of what they earn in taxes. And so the marriage rate is declining. I think young, unmarried women are excited by the idea of raising taxes in order to get free stuff from government. That makes it unnecessary to marry at all, so they are free to play the field and obey no man. But there comes a point where taxes are so high that men simply can’t affort to take on a wife and multiple children. We are at that point now, and I expect it to spread up to the higher income brackets so that the marriage rate declines even further.

One final reason for men not marrying is because men don’t like secular leftist women. Young people are sliding to the left, and those values and beliefs are UNATTRACTIVE to marriage-minded men. Just because a secular leftist woman is able to get attention and sex from men, it doesn’t mean that she is able to get a lifelong commitment to love her, protect her, provide for her, and so on. No one likes secular leftist women, and no one wants to marry them.

(Image source)

New study: trans women outperform biological women after year of hormone therapy

May 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From far-left NBC News:

> A new study suggests transgender women maintain an athletic advantage over their cisgender peers even after a year on hormone therapy.
>
> The results, published last month in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, could mean the current one-year waiting period for Olympic athletes who are transitioning is inadequate.
>
> "For the Olympic level, the elite level, I'd say probably two years is more realistic than one year," said the study's lead author, Dr. Timothy Roberts, a pediatrician and the director of the adolescent medicine training program at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri. "At one year, the tran5 women on average still have an advantage over the cis women," he said, referring to cisgender, or nontransgender, women.
>
> […]For the first two years after starting hormones, the tran5 women in their review were able to do 10 percent more pushups and 6 percent more situps than their cisgender female counterparts. After two years, Roberts told NBC News, "they were fairly equivalent to the cisgender women."
>
> Their running times declined as well, but two years on, tran5 women were still 12 percent faster on the 1.5 mile-run than their cisgender peers.

Very interesting to think about when you consider Biden's executive action allowing transgender women into biological women's sports.

But you can't say anything about it, because it you do, Big Tech will ban you.

> Attacks against free speech by big tech companies have quickly escalated into a full-blown censorship campaign as social media giants are now regularly targeting and silencing Christians and conservatives. Their latest target? Focus on the Family.
>
> The Christian organization has just been censored by Twitter. The platform locked the global ministry's "Daily Citizen" publication for allegedly violating their rules against posting "hateful" content.
>
> Focus on the Family CEO Jim Daly said this accusation is absolutely untrue.
>
> The Daily Citizen tweeted a quote on Jan. 19 from one of its articles acknowledging that the Biden administration appointed a transgender woman to serve as Assistant Secretary for Health at the Department of HHS.
>
> The tweet read: "Dr. Lev1ne is a transgender woman, that is, a man who believes

> he is a woman.”

It’s “inclusivity”. You can’t even explain what the terms mean any more, because feelings are more important than facts to the people in charge of permitting speech.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

May 12, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference

between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.

But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.

There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that “There is no God” is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that “There is a God.” Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God’s existence. He confesses that he doesn’t know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term “atheist,” you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with “non-theist.” So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word ‘atheist’ has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix ‘a-’ being read in this same way in ‘atheist’ as it customarily is in . . . words as ‘amoral’ . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. “The Presumption of Atheism,” by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word “atheist” trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our

> **cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.**
>
> **One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.**
>
> So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.
>
> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, "So is there a God or not?"

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these "subjective atheists"?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says "I lack a belief in the gravitational force!". When you engage in serious discussions with people about God's existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don't care about a person's psychology.

Dealing with persistent subjective atheists

What happens when you explain all of that to a subjective atheist who continues to insist that you listen to them repeat over and over "I lack a belief in God, I lack a belief in God"? What if you tell them to make the claim that God does not exist, and then support it with arguments and evidence, but instead they keep leaving comments on your blog telling you again and again about their subjective state of mind: "I lack a belief in cupcakes! I lack a belief in icebergs!" What if they keep e-mailing you and threatening to expose you on Twitter for refusing to listen to them, or denounce you via skywriting: "Wintery Knight won't listen to me! I lack a belief in crickets!". I think at this point you have to give up and stop talking to such a person.

And that's why I moderate and filter comments on this blog. There are uneducated people out there with access to the Internet who want attention, but I am not obligated to give it to them. And neither are you. We are not obligated to listen to abusive people who don't *know* what they are talking about. I do post comments from objective atheists who make *factual* claims about the objective world, and who support those claims with *arguments and evidence*. I am not obligated to post comments from people who refuse to make objective claims or who refuse to support objective claims with arguments and evidence. And I'm not obligated to engage in discussions with them, either.

Related posts

- Is giving to charity more rational for religious people or atheists?
- An atheist explains the real consequences of adopting an atheistic worldview
- Why do famous atheists believe that God does not exist?
- Did Jesus exist? Agnostic historian Bart Ehrman debates Infidel Guy
- Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?
- Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong? Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral?
- Do atheists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?
- William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech
- Can atheists be moral? Sean McDowell and James Corbett debate
- If militant atheists could form a country, what would it look like?
- Chad Meister: can atheists make sense of morality?

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

May 13, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Theology that hits the spot

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they

take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.” And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What’s harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I’ll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, “In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home.” And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase “In order that you may know”. Same message, right?

3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don’t know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It’s really great. Acts 2:36. I’ve been a Christian 20 years and I didn’t see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can’t exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” There it is again. “Know for certain.”

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition “Christ rose from the grave,” for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, “I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave.”

3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be

> transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

If white Americans are racist, how come Asians do so well in America?

May 14, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article is written by the far-left radical Nicholas Kristof, writing in the radically-leftist New York Times. (A former newspaper)

Excerpt:

> THIS is an awkward question, but here goes: Why are Asian-Americans so successful in America?
>
> It's no secret that Asian-Americans are disproportionately stars in American schools, and even in American society as a whole. Census data show that Americans of Asian heritage earn more than other groups, including whites. Asian-Americans also have higher educational attainment than any other group.
>
> […]Does the success of Asian-Americans suggest that the age of discrimination is behind us?

> A new scholarly book, "The Asian American Achievement Paradox," by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, notes that Asian-American immigrants in recent decades have started with one advantage: They are highly educated, more so even than the average American. These immigrants are disproportionately doctors, research scientists and other highly educated professionals.
>
> It's not surprising that the children of Asian-American doctors would flourish in the United States. But Lee and Zhou note that kids of working-class Asian-Americans often also thrive, showing remarkable upward mobility.

Part of the problem is that non-Asian Americans take a passive view of life, believing that high grades come to those who are naturally smart – not to those who work harder:

> There's also evidence that Americans believe that A's go to smart kids, while Asians are more likely to think that they go to hard workers… Asian-American kids are allowed no excuse for getting B's — or even an A-. The joke is that an A- is an "Asian F."

And, as the image I posted above shows, Asian girls are given boundaries on their sexuality, causing them to choose men who will be good husbands and fathers, and making those men marry before being given sex – factors proven to improve marital stability:

> Strong two-parent families are a factor, too. Divorce rates are much lower for many Asian-American communities than for Americans as a whole, and there's evidence that two-parent households are less likely to sink into poverty and also have better outcomes for boys in particular.

So, let’s be real – if white racial discrimination held non-white groups back, then Asians would be in the same situation as blacks and hispanics. But Asians are not being held back, because of their strong marriage culture and focus on hard work. Whites don’t hold anyone back. This is just a myth that Democrats use to make blacks (and hispanics) think that they need government to save them from the bogeyman. Asians don’t need saving, and neither should any other non-white groups.

We can start by shaming women of all races who choose to have sex with men who are not ready for marriage. There are lots of men out there who are willing to marry, and that should be what women are looking for most if all in a man. That change alone will probably erase most of the achievement gap between different racial groups. Does anyone have the courage to tell young women (of all races) to be more responsible with their sexual decisions? The out-of-wedlock birth rate for blacks is over 70%. This causes massive poverty and crime in the black community. Does anyone have the courage to tell blacks that they are doing this to themselves?

Why are teachers and other talkers paid less than engineers and other doers?

May 15, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

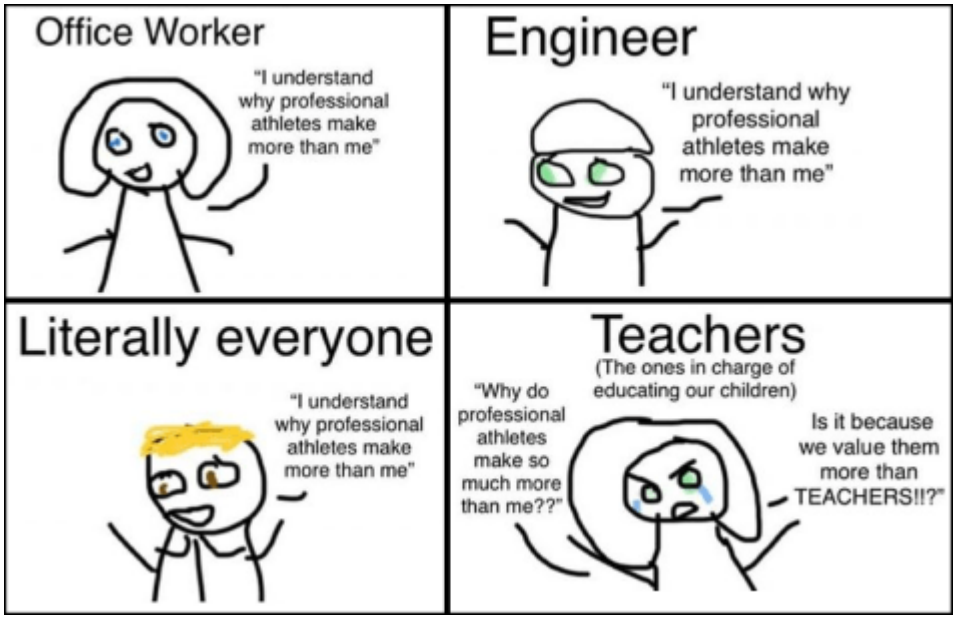

Basic Economics: In a free market, prices are set by supply and demand

This meme makes fun of unionized public school teachers, who feel entitled to the same salary and benefits as doctors, software engineers, etc. in the private sector. So, the point of this meme is simple, it's to point out that the teachers who belong to teacher unions are ignorant of basic economics, specifically, the law of supply and demand.

When there is more demand for a product or service than there is a supply for it, then prices go up. When there is more supply for a product or service than there is a demand for it, prices go down.

A good place to see this explained is in a book by famous black economist Thomas Sowell. Thomas Sowell has written many books, but he wrote one book in particular for people who have no knowledge of basic economics. It's called "Basic Economics: A Citizen's Guide to the Economy". And the first few chapters explain how prices are set by supply and demand:

1. What is Economics?
2. The Role of Prices
3. Price Controls
4. An Overview of Prices

It turns out that there are two views of how wages are set in an economy:

> The labor theory of value (LTV) is a theory of value that argues that the economic value of a good or service is determined by the total amount of "socially necessary labor" required to produce it.
>
> LTV is usually associated with Marxian economics… The LTV is central to Marxist

> theory, which holds that the working class is exploited under capitalism, and dissociates price and value. Marx did not refer to his own theory of value as a "labour theory of value".
>
> Mainstream neoclassical economics tends to reject the need for a LTV, concentrating instead on a theory of price determined by supply and demand.

Marxists economists believe that the value of a good or service is determined by the "social utility" of the work produced. But classical ("free market") economists believe that value is determined by the scarcity of the good or service relative to the demand from consumers.

So, a Marxist economist might say "teaching English to 5 year olds is valuable because it is relevant and meaningful". But, a classical economist would say "conducting a security audit on distributed point-of-sale system is valuable, because very few people can do it, but many people want it".

I've noticed that school teachers and non-STEM university students and professors are very likely to hold to the labor theory of prices and wages. Robert Nozick wrote a paper about why this happens. It turns out that "wordsmiths" (his word) are conditioned by their performance in the classroom to expect success in the free market economy. But when they find that their "brilliance" in English poetry, Medieval history, or lesbian dance theory has no value to anyone else, they complain that the economy is being manipulated by powerful people. Marxism is a coping mechanism for people who value academic acclaim more than doing something useful for their neighbors. The Marxists study easy things that no one cares about, and then they can't get paid because millions of people can do them. The free market people focus on the customer, so they study hard things like computer science and petroleum engineering that are in demand from customers. And they get paid more.

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image)

Consider this article from College Pulse about a survey of 10,590 undergraduate students:

> Students with certain majors are far more likely than their peers to approve of socialism. Philosophy majors, in particular, have a positive view of socialism. Nearly 8 in 10 (78%) say they view the economic system favorably, followed by 64% of anthropology majors, and 58% of both English and international relations majors. Accounting and finance majors are least likely to view socialism positively (20% and 22% respectively).

Do you know what accounting and finance students have to study? *Basic economics.*

As soon as I got my first job as a software engineer, and finished my study of Christian apologetics, the very next thing I studied was economics. It was Dr. Jay Richards who got me interested in it, when I heard him speaking about economics in an apologetics lecture for Stand to Reason. I contacted him, and he recommended the works of two famous economists, F. A. Hayek and Thomas Sowell. And that's what I want to recommend to you, too. Our continued liberty and prosperity depends on ordinary Americans taking the time to educate themselves about basic economics.

Why do some Christians say “all sins are equally bad” and “everyone is equally guilty”?

May 16, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young women very supportive of premarital sex

We were having a discussion about whether the Bible teaches that sex before marriage is morally wrong, and someone said “impure thoughts counts as adultery… there isn’t a virgin among us”.

Regarding her point that lust is equal to adultery, and so no one is really a virgin, here’s Ligonier Ministries:

> In demonstrating that the seventh commandment was given also to prohibit lust, Jesus is not somehow saying that an unconsummated lustful intent is sinful to the same degree as an actual extramarital affair (though both sins merit punishment). The latter is a more blatant violation of the statute against adultery, and it has greater consequences in the form of divorce and the loss of one’s reputation as a trustworthy person.

Any serious student of the Bible is aware of Jesus’ tendency to exaggerate / use hyperbole.

Also, 1 Corinthians 7 says that wives are not supposed to make a habit of denying their husbands sex. Sex withholding is more of an epidemic today than pornography, and it should also be on the adultery spectrum. It isn’t as bad as adultery, but it definitely breaks the marital covenant.

So why would someone say that lust is the same as adultery, and that there is no such thing as a virgin?

Dr. Michael Krueger recently blogged about this “all sins are equal” view.

Krueger says this:

> First, to say all sins are the same is to confuse the *effect* of sin with the *heinousness* of sin. While all sins are equal in their effect (they separate us from God), they are not all equally heinous.
>
> Second, the Bible differentiates between sins. Some sins are more severe in terms of impact (1 Cor 6:18), in terms of culpability (Rom 1:21-32), and in terms of the judgment warranted (2 Pet 2:17; Mark 9:42; James 3:1).

Krueger explains the motivation behind the slogans:

> [S]ome Christians… use this phrase as way to "flatten out" all sins so that they are not distinguishable from each other. Or, to put it another way, this phrase is used to portray all human beings as precisely the same. If all sins are equal, and all people sin, then no one is more holy than anyone else.
>
> In a world fascinated with "equality," this usage of the phrase is particularly attractive to folks. It allows everyone to be lumped together into a single undifferentiated mass.
>
> Such a move is also useful as a way to prevent particular behaviors from being condemned. If all sins are equal, and everyone is a sinner, then you are not allowed to highlight any particular sin (or sinner).
>
> Needless to say, this usage of the phrase has featured largely in the recent cultural debates over issues like homosexuality. Yes, homosexuality is a sin, some Christians reluctantly concede. But, they argue, all sins are equal in God's sight and therefore it is no different than anything else. Therefore, Christians ought to stop talking about homosexuality unless they are also willing to talk about impatience, anger, gluttony, and so on.

Krueger also posted this fascinating follow up post, where he looks at how the phrase is being used by people on Twitter.

Look at these tweets:

- > All sins are equal. People tend to forget that. There is no bigger or smaller sin. Being gay and lying, very equal.
- > all sins are equal in God's eyes. whatever you're doing, is no better than what someone else is doing.
- > If you have sex before marriage please don't come on social media preaching about the wrongs of homosexuality. All sins are equal
- > Need people to realize that all sins are equal… don't try to look down on me or question my faith just cuz you sin differently than I do.
- > Don't understand why you're so quick to judge me, when all sins are equal.

> So much for family..

- if you think being gay is a sin, let me ask you something, have you not done anything wrong in your life? all sins are equal. we're sinners
- Nope no difference at all. All sins are equal no matter what you're running for. The bible says do not judge lest ye be judged
- A huge problem I have with religion is the notion that all sins are equal. Like pre-martial sex and murder are the same amount t of bad.
- people do bad things because they believe that all sins are equal and ~god~ loves y'all equally so he's going to forgive you naman ha ha ha
- It a sin to condemn another sinner and their actions. All sins are equal. So what makes you better than the person you're condemning?
- I think so b/c having sex before marriage doesn't make you less of a women then if you waited until marriage.. all sins are equal soo
- friendly reminder, all sins are equal in gods eyes so you're not better than I am in any way. please worry about your own sins before mine.
- People don't like when I suggest abortion as an option. This is a free country and all sins are equal so mind your business!!!
- What I do is no worse than wat you do… all sins are equal no matter what it is… a sin is a sin
- to god all sins are equal so you have no right to compare your sins to someone else's bc in the end it doesn't matter

The first thing that I noticed is that premarital sex and homosexuality are the most popular sins. I would think that divorce and abortion would be up there in the rankings, as well.

People want to be free to follow their hearts when seeking pleasure, then quote the Bible (badly) afterwards, to attack anyone who says that anything they've done is morally wrong. They would rather escape the judgment of their peers than admit fault and try to fix the mistake, and do better next time. And they would rather tell people who are hurting themselves by breaking the rules that there are no rules. It makes them feel good to "not judge" – they feel as if they are being kind. Their compassion looks good to non-Christians. And they're promoting moral relativism which, when it becomes widespread, prevents anyone from judging them.

It's so bad now, that the people who *have* morals and who *make* moral judgments are

seen as the real bad people. The immoral people are on the offense, and even trying to ban people from being able to disagree with them.

New University of Chicago study evaluates the lockdown policies of the secular left

May 17, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should we have trusted secular leftists to tell us how to live during the crisis of the last year? It's been difficult to assess because all the elites say the same thing: trust the secular left to discover the truth and tell you the truth about how to live. But can you really trust people who put politically correct dogma over facts, if those facts suggest that liberty and personal responsibility are best?

Here's the latest news about a new study, reported on by The Federalist:

> A new study from Chicago University economist Casey Mulligan validates what the anti-lockdowners knew all along: Lockdowns are a bad idea. After workplaces implemented mitigation measures, they became far safer environments than people's homes.
>
> "Available data from schools, hospitals, nursing homes, food processing plants, hair stylists, and airlines show employers adopting mitigation protocols in the spring of 2020," Mulligan wrote in the study. Such mitigation protocols included masking, reasonable social distancing, screening, and improving airflow — steps people wouldn't take in their own homes. "Coincident with the adoption, infection rates in workplaces typically dropped from well above household rates to well below."
>
> One example Mulligan included was the Duke Health system. After Duke's hospitals and clinics implemented strategies to mitigate C***D spread, "an hour worked in the Duke Health system went from being more dangerous than an hour outside work to being more than three times safer."
>
> […]"[W]orkers have been 4-5 times less safe outside their workplace than inside it," said a press release for the study, in a direct rebuke to lockdowns. "While stay-at-home continues to be pushed as promoting public health, nobody is checking the data which say the opposite."

The lockdowns were not a neutral or benign policy for many Americans. Over 100,000 small businesses closed because they could not work from home, and customers were locked down in their homes. My two favorite restaurants shut down, where I live, and we are not even one of the crazy lock down states. Shutting down small businesses is wonderful for communists, who know that an economy is easier to control if there are only a few monopolies. When consumers have many options in a free market, it's much harder for the secular left to rule.

But there are other ways that the lock down strategy hurt Americans. In addition to small business closings and job losses, children lost an entire year of school. Normal health care operations shut down, delaying treatment of real sicknesses like cancer and heart

disease. Check-ups and preventive care measures were delayed or canceled. People who were scheduled for operations became inoperable. The elderly were locked down in nursing homes and they died there. And the obese were not warned that their obesity put them at higher risk – so they could do something about it. And we've spiked inflation by handing out so much money for unemployment and more government spending. "Never let a crisis go to waste", was the Democrats' motto.

The Federalist notes:

> For instance, while the media lauded Gov. Andrew Cuomo as a pandemic hero while he locked down New York and ordered C***D patients to be housed in nursing homes alongside the pandemic's most vulnerable, the same media excoriated leading scientists such as Dr. Sunetra Gupta, who opposed anti-science lockdowns while advocating for special measures to protect the elderly.

And:

> A study released last month of the effects of lockdowns in 10 countries was damning. Not only did researchers find that "mandatory stay-at-home and business closures" resulted in "no clear, significant beneficial effect … on case growth in any country," but in some cases, lockdowns were actually "pro-contagion."

The media hid the facts from us, so we couldn't make out own decisions, and often got bullied by "experts".

National Post reported:

> The majority of global C***D-19 deaths have been in countries where many people are obese, with coronavirus fatality rates 10 times higher in nations where at least 50% of adults are overweight, a global study found on Thursday.
>
> The report, which described a "dramatic" correlation between countries' C***D-19 death and obesity rates, found that 90% or 2.2 million of the 2.5 million deaths from the pandemic disease so far were in countries with high levels of obesity.
>
> The study analyzed the C***D-19 death figures from Johns Hopkins University in the United States and the World Health Organization's Global Health Observatory data on obesity.
>
> Strikingly, the authors said, there is no example of a country where people are generally not overweight or obese having high C***D-19 death rates.

Why couldn't the media talk about this? Because their masters in the Democrat party have huge voting blocs who are committed to obesity as a way of life. The secular left would rather not "judge" than tell the truth. Better to just treat everyone the same, instead of opening up the economy and trusting at-risk populations to make decisions to keep themselves safe.

One problem we have in this culture is that we think that a person can just deny the existence of God, and objective morality, and still discover truth and give good advice to others. But people who deny the existence of God have not handled evidence like the origin of the universe and cosmic fine-tuning and the origin of life and the sudden origin of body plans accurately. They chose their worldview by feelings – not facts. And people who think that communism is is superior to the free market are the same – feelings over facts. Why think that people like that should be trusted to tell us how to live? What work have they done to discover how things REALLY work, as opposed to how they FEEL things should work? If they can't be trusted to have done their homework on big things, like cosmology and economics, then why should we trust them about anything else?

What does the Biden administration have to offer Christians and conservatives?

May 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Just a few news stories to show you what you get in a Biden presidency.

First, there's abortion.

The Federalist reports:

> More than 20 groups have banded together to submit comments opposing the Biden administration's proposed rule mandating taxpayer-funded abortions.
>
> Historically, Title X is devoted to family planning and providing preventative birth control methods to low-income families. Abortion has largely been excluded by Congress to avoid having taxpayers fund the killing of babies in the womb. Under the Trump administration, Planned Parenthood and other abortion organizations even opted out of receiving federal funding to avoid the separation finalized in 2019 between Title X services and abortion.
>
> Under the "Ensuring Access to Equitable, Affordable, Client-Centered, Quality Family Planning Services" proposal, however, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services would remove the financial and physical separation in funding between Title X activities and abortion activities, circumvent statutes and laws to discourage parental and familial involvement in abortion decisions, and remove certain reporting and regulatory stipulations. The rule would also require providers to give abortion counseling and referrals, even if their objections are protected under the Weldon Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

And what about in the schools? Are we going to get schools that teach children truth and practicality.

The Federalist reports:

> Just weeks after the U.S. Department of Education supported by President Joe Biden introduced a proposed rule that uses the anti-American 1619 Project and hatemonger Ibram X. Kendi to guide its federal grant criteria for American history and civics education, opposition to the racist indoctrination curriculum is growing.
>
> In addition to alleging that the United States is filled with "systemic racism" that can only be cured by "anti-racist" training that singles out white people as problems, the proposed curriculum would use taxpayer funds to push a muddled version of American history that hides behind promotions of "diversity, identities, histories, contributions, and experiences of all students."
>
> Parents and teachers in schools around the nation are facing off with progressives dead set on implementing critical race theory in schools, but

> Biden's federal involvement adds a whole new layer of issues for some organizations and states that would be eligible for the education grants.

What about the military? Are we getting quality armed forces to keep the peace and deter aggression?

The Federalist reports:

> The U.S Army announced it will begin prioritizing climate change considerations as part of its ongoing strategic operations and threat analysis, according to a newly released memo.
>
> Titled, "US Army: Addressing Climate Change Threats", the document classifies climate change as a "serious threat to U.S. National security interests and defense objectives," while also detailing how the military agency intends to play a more active role in responding to climate-related issues moving forward.

Oh, this too:

> A U.S. Space Force special unit commander was fired from his post last week after he discussed the infiltration of Marxist ideology into the U.S. military on a podcast, Military.com reported on Saturday.
>
> Lt Col. Matthew Lohmeier, a commander of 11th Space Warning Squadron at Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado was released on Friday by the head of Space Operations Command Lt. Gen. Stephen Whiting, "over a loss of confidence in his ability to lead."

I'm looking at this, and I'm having real trouble understanding which specific policies conservatives and Christians who supported Biden wanted. Did they think the world would be safer? Did they think that their children would learn more and earn more? Did they think that government would be more efficient?

Democrats are guided by their feelings. Their policies are based on trying to get the most irresponsible and reckless people to like them. They can't make moral judgments, and they override truth with comfortable lies. Why would anyone vote for that?

Does abortion reduce violent crime? Does abortion reduce child abuse?

May 19, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

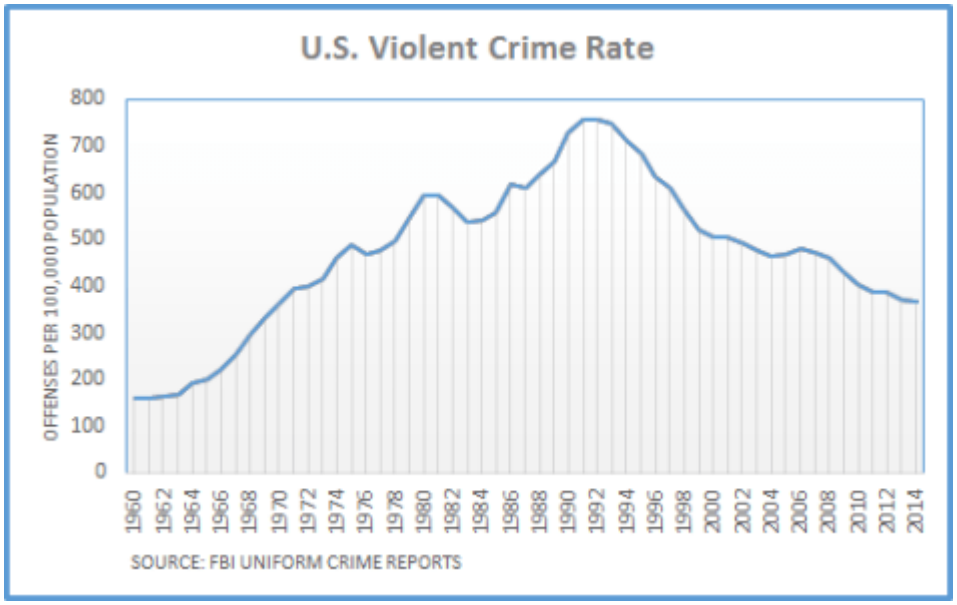

If abortion reduces crime, why does the evidence show that it doesn't?

Grr, my annoying co-workers are at it again this morning. This time, it's the man who annoyed me about overpopulation fears, which I responded to earlier this week. He says to me this morning that Alabama is going to have a big problem with violent crime because they've stopped abortions. These sorts of views are common among TV-watchers, but not among those study-readers.

Life Site News reports on a Yale Law & Economics Research Paper.

First, let's see the abstract:

> Abortion may prevent the birth of "unwanted" children, who would have relatively small investments in human capital and a higher probability of crime. On the other hand, some research suggests that legalizing abortion increases out-of-wedlock births and single parent families, which implies the opposite impact on investments in human capital and thus crime. The question is: what is the net impact? We find evidence that legalizing abortion increased murder rates by around about 0.5 to 7 percent. Previous estimates are shown to suffer from not directly linking the cohorts who are committing crime with whether they had been born before or after abortion was legal.

And now, let's see the Life Site News article:

> Law professors John R. Lott, Jr. of Yale Law School and John E. Whitley of the University of Adelaide found that legalizing abortion increased murder rates by up to seven percent. They concluded that legalizing abortion is a contributing factor to the great increase in out-of-wedlock births and single parent families,

> which in turn contribute to increased crime rates. Since 1970, the percentage of single-parent households in the United States has nearly tripled, from 11 percent to 32 percent, and the percentage of out-of-wedlock births has nearly quadrupled, from 11 percent to 43 percent of all children.7 Children born out-of-wedlock and raised by only one parent have a significantly higher incidence of crime.
>
> There are many other fundamental problems with the conclusion that legalized abortion leads to a decrease in crime.
>
> Statistician David Murray confirmed that young males between the ages of 17 and 25 commit the majority of crimes. However, if abortion had reduced crime, the crime rates in the United States would have dropped first among young people. They did not. Instead, the number of crimes committed by older people dropped first. Nearly 60% of the decline in murder since 1990 involved killers aged 25 and older — who were born before Roe v. Wade.8
>
> Murray also found that other nations with high abortion rates showed a large increase in crime about eighteen years after they legalized abortion. For example, in Great Britain, which legalized abortion in 1968, violent crime has been rising steeply since about 1985 — exactly when it should have been declining, according to the Donohue-Levitt thesis. Additionally, Russia, with the highest abortion rate on earth, has experienced a tidal wave of every kind of violent crime following the breakup of the Soviet Union.9
>
> FBI statistics showed that the murder rate in 1993 for 14- to 17-year-olds in the USA (born in the years 1975-1979, which had very high abortion rates) was 3.6 times higher than that of kids who were the same age in 1984 (who were born in the pre-legalization years of 1966-1970). Additionally, since Black women were having abortions at a much higher rate than White women, we should have expected the murder rate among Black youth to have declined beginning in about 1991. Instead, it increased more than five hundred percent from 1984 to 1993.10
>
> Finally, the huge increase in violent crime that peaked in 1991 and then began to decline is more closely related to the crack epidemic, not abortion. The Donohue-Levitt study confirms that the crime rate rose and fell exactly where crack cocaine was most easily available — in the large cities and among young Black males.11 This is also confirmed by the rise in crime during the time period 1984 to 1991, after a decline from 1980 to 1984. If abortion were the primary cause of a decline in violent crime, the crime rate would have been relatively stable during the time period 1980 to 1991.

By the way, a good book to buy on this is John Lott's "Freedomnomics: Why the Free Market Works and Other Half-Baked Theories Don't". One third of the book covers this topic.

And if you're wondering what caused the decline in violent crime rates in the 1990s, the

answer to that is that it was multiple factors. Better policing, mandatory sentencing laws, legalized concealed carry laws, and other factors were responsible.

Abortion and child abuse

Sometimes, pro-abortion people put forward a similar argument about abortion preventing child abuse. This argument seems intuitive, but from an evidence point of view, it's false.

Here's a report from Life News about a study out of Bowling Green State University.

Excerpt:

> For decades, evidence has existed showing abortion contributes to a rise in child abuse. Now a new study by a post-abortion research institute and Bowling Green State University professors finds that women who have abortions are more likely to abuse their children.
>
> **Published in the medical journal Acta Paediatrica, the study found that women who have had abortions are 2.4 times more likely to physically abuse their children.** Pro-life advocates say it proves the need for providing women with post-abortion counseling to help deal with the emotional trauma of the abortion.
>
> […]The authors suggested that "emotional difficulties and unresolved grief responses" from pregnancy loss, whether voluntary or involuntary, could have a negative impact on women's mental health and lead to unhealthy parenting responses.
>
> According to the Illinois-based Elliot Institute, which released information about the study's findings, prior surveys "have linked pregnancy loss to an increase in grief reactions, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, all of which can have a negative impact on parent/child relationships."
>
> The post-abortion research group also points to a 2002 study published in the Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology that found abortion has been linked to an increase in substance abuse and thoughts of suicide, which could also contribute to child abuse.
>
> The new study also found that women who had more than one miscarriage or stillbirth were more likely to engage in child abuse than women who had just one. However, women who had abortions were more likely to abuse their children whether they had one or more than one abortion.
>
> "Regardless of the specific mechanisms at play, maternal history of one induced abortion does appear to be a marker for increased risk of physical abuse," the authors concluded.

Whenever I read about how studies contradict people's intuitions about what will and will not work, it makes me sad that so many people who live life on intuitions and feelings are

still allowed to vote. If only we had a society where reason and evidence were seen as indispensable for building up your view of the world.

By the way, if you're looking for a good article for debating other aspects of the Alabama pro-life law, my friend William, who loves to debate everything, and he always wins, just posted this article about 9 myths about the Alabama pro-life law.

General advice on countering your co-workers

I found that if I passed on TV and movies, I could buy pretty much any book I wanted that has research-based responses to these common questions from secular leftists. All it takes is a commitment to dedicate your book-buying budget to the task of responding to challenges, instead of producing feelings.

I notice a lot of Christian women in my office reading fiction books, while the Christian men are always talking about TV and movies. Fiction and entertainment are useless for putting forward Bible-based views and supporting evidence in controversial discussions. Instead of wasting your money on fiction and entertainment, listen closely to what people in your office are saying, and then purchase and train with resources that help you to serve God in these discussions. Bible verses and prayers alone will not equip you to serve in difficult situations.

New study: model of 700 quintillion terrestrial exoplanets suggests Earth is special

May 20, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

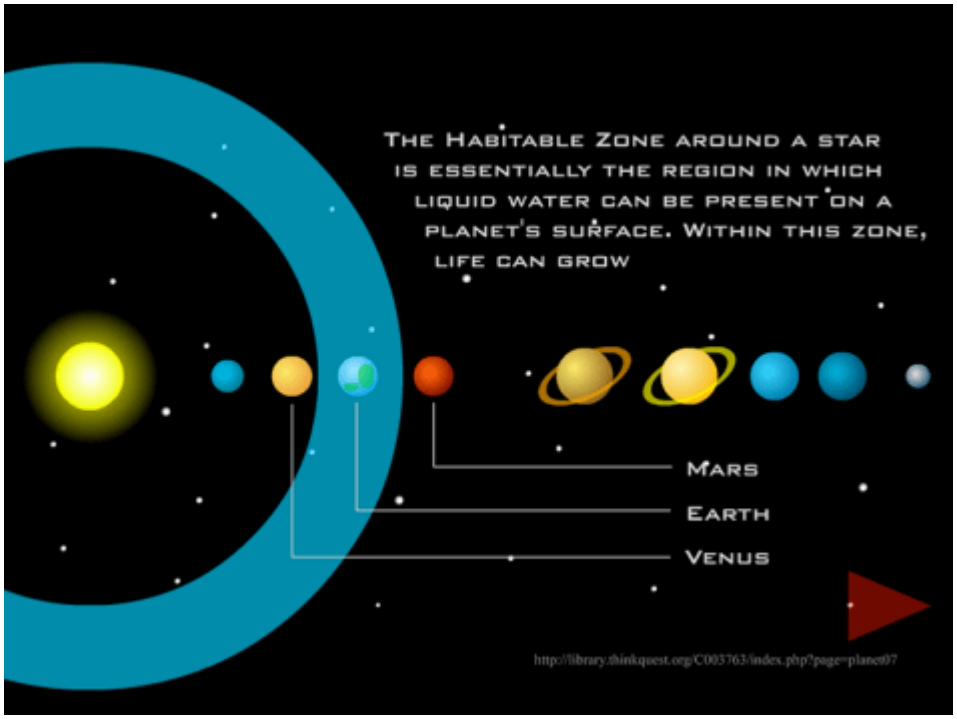

The Circumstellar Habitable Zone, where liquid water could potentially exist
This is from Scientific American. (H/T William)

Excerpt:

> More than 400 years ago Renaissance scientist Nicolaus Copernicus reduced us to near nothingness by showing that our planet is not the center of the solar system. With every subsequent scientific revolution, most other privileged positions in the universe humans might have held dear have been further degraded, revealing the cold truth that our species is the smallest of specks on a speck of a planet, cosmologically speaking. A new calculation of exoplanets suggests that Earth is just one out of a likely 700 million trillion terrestrial planets in the entire observable universe. But the average age of these planets—well above Earth's age—and their typical locations—in galaxies vastly unlike the Milky Way—just might turn the Copernican principle on its head.
>
> Astronomer Erik Zackrisson from Uppsala University and his colleagues created a cosmic compendium of all the terrestrial exoplanets likely to exist throughout the observable universe, based on the rocky worlds astronomers have found so far. In a powerful computer simulation, they first created their own mini universe containing models of the earliest galaxies. Then they unleashed the laws of physics—as close as scientists understand them—that describe how galaxies grow, how stars evolve and how planets come to be. Finally, they fast-forwarded through 13.8 billion years of cosmic history. Their results, published to the

> preprint server arXiv (pdf) and submitted to *The Astrophysical Journal*, provide a tantalizing trove of probable exoplanet statistics that helps astronomers understand our place in the universe.

Discover magazine, which is all in for Darwinism and aliens everywhere, says this about the study:

> Zackrisson found that Earth appears to have been dealt a fairly lucky hand. In a galaxy like the Milky Way, for example, most of the planets Zackrisson's model generated looked very different than Earth — they were larger, older and very unlikely to support life.
>
> […]Zackrisson's work suggests an alternative to the commonly held assumption that planets similar to Earth must exist, based on the sheer number of planets out there.
>
> […]**One of the most fundamental requirements for a planet to sustain life is to orbit in the "habitable zone" of a star — the "Goldilocks" region where the temperature is just right and liquid water can exist. Astronomers have, to this point, discovered around 30 exoplanets in the habitable zones of stars. Simply extrapolating that figure based on the known number of stars suggests that there should be about 50 billion such planets in the Milky Way alone. Probability seems to dictate that Earth-twins are out there somewhere.**
>
> **But according to Zackrisson, most planets in the universe shouldn't look like Earth. His model indicates that Earth's existence presents a mild statistical anomaly in the multiplicity of planets. Most of the worlds predicted by his model exist in galaxies larger than the Milky Way and orbit stars with different compositions — an important factor in determining a planet's characteristics. His research indicates that, from a purely statistical standpoint, Earth perhaps shouldn't exist.**

Time for me to list out some of the things that are required for a galaxy, solar system and planet to support complex embodied life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind given these laws of physics.

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation

- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

It’s not easy to make a planet that supports life. For those who are interested in reaching out to God, he has left us an abundance of evidence for his existence – and his attention to detail.

Related posts

- How tidal effects improve the habitability of a planet
- The connection between our moon, plate tectonics and habitability
- Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on the corelation between habitability and discoverability
- New paper finds that mass of asteroid belts affect habitability of planets
- New study on tidal heating strengthens stellar habitability argument
- Walter Bradley lectures on the creation and design of the universe
- Earth-like planet hyped by science-fiction-crazed atheists likely uninhabitable
- Four ways the Earth is fine-tuned for life, and one more
- Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas
- Fine-tuning the habitable zone: tidal-locking and solar flares
- Is silicon-based life a possible alternative for carbon-based life?
- Jupiter deflects comets and asteroids that might otherwise hit Earth
- How common is it for a star to support complex, embodied life?
- Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University
- Scientists troubled by lack of simple explanation for our life-permitting moon

New survey: 43% of millennials “don’t know, don’t believe” God exists

May 21, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new survey reported in Christian Post. Let’s see the numbers, then I’ll recommend a solution.

Excerpt:

> The American Worldview Inventory 2021, a survey of the philosophy of life on American adults from Arizona Christian University, assessed the worldviews of four generations: millennials (born 1984-2002), Gen X (1965-1983), baby boomers (1946-1964) and builders (1927-1945).
>
> Researchers found that among other recent generations, millennials have gone farther in cutting ties with traditional Christian views and normative biblical teaching.
>
> […]43% of millennials stated they either don’t know, don’t care or don’t believe God exists compared to 28% of boomers, and 44% of millennials believe Satan is a real and influential, compared to 64% of boomers.
>
> The study also found that overall, younger Americans are significantly more likely than the two previous generations to embrace horoscopes as a guide and Karma as a life principle, to see “getting even” with others as defensible, to accept evolution over creation, and to view owning property as fostering economic injustice.
>
> On spiritual matters, Americans younger than 55 are far more likely to distrust the Bible and to believe God is uninvolved in people’s lives.

So first point about this… just as with the recent election, the first thing that occurred to me is “what are Christian parents and Christian pastors doing to counter this?” It seems like we’ve been living with this problem for some time, but we just keep trying the same old approaches. Missions trips. Hearing the voice of God. Prosperity gospel. Chasing Democrat priorities like BLM and CRT and global warming and socialism and amnesty for illegal immigrants (see Russell Moore). Youth groups filled with entertainment and pizza. Pious Reformed theology that emphasizes fideism (presuppositionalist apologetics). Young-Earth creationism of the Ken Ham variety. Fact/Value splits with no rational grounding for any of the values in fact. There’s no point trying to convince anyone of the truth, because we are in the “last days” and everyone just wants to be evil.

I attend PCA and SBC churches, and there is zero emphasis on training church people to have conversations about basic questions like “does God exist?”, “is the Bible historically reliable?”, and “did Jesus rise from the dead?”. In these churches, we have very conservative leaders and parents. Parents and pastors are “competent” if they are married, have lots of children, kids in private Christian schools, hearing the voice of God.

No one is able to have conversations with atheists that are persuasive. That would be "arguing" and "arguing" is bad.

I've spent YEARS trying to get debates and lectures from Christian academics who debate non-Christians into the church. Not just material from apologetics organizations, but mainstream training from groups like Focus on the Family. Nobody wants to watch debates with people like William Lane Craig. And nobody wants to read any books about science or history. That would be "testing God" with our "fallen reason". And so, the exodus of young people from Christianity continues. I have to work with the people who were born into Christian homes and who went to youth group and Christian schools – I know how they lost their faith. I ask them.

Solving the Problem

Anyway, with that said, I listened to a nice podcast from Apologetics 315 yesterday where they interviewed Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. In my opinion, no one does a better job of approaching the most core issues of the Christian faith with evidence that is convincing to open-minded non-Christians.

Here's the podcast.

And they have an outline:

Episode 021 – Return of the God Hypothesis with Stephen C. Meyer

In this episode, Brian Auten and Chad Gross interview Dr. Stephen C. Meyer on his latest book *Return of the God Hypothesis*.

0:43 – Intro to Dr. Stephen Meyer, author of *Return of the God Hypothesis*, *Signature in the Cell*, and *Darwin's Doubt*.
3:00 – Dr. Meyer's background, education, and how he got interested in the question of intelligent design.
9:58 – Meyer's view of science and philosophy of science, the importance for understanding philosophy when doing science.
16:28 – reviewing five centuries of the history of science, the false idea that science and religion have always been at war.
23:49 – The reason for telling the story of the rise of science, the rejection of the God hypothesis, and its subsequent return based on the most recent scientific discoveries.
28:15 – Explaining the methodology of inference to the best explanation. How this fits within theistic apologetics.
36:30 – Is our goal truth, or a pre-commitment to naturalism? What challenges has Meyer faced when arguing for intelligent design?
39:45 – Are there problems with postulating a mind as an intelligent cause? Are certain explanations "out of bounds" when doing science?
43:00 – Shannon information
43:55 – The origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, and the information in the cell. Resistance to change from a materialistic worldview.
47:40 – Huge theistic implications and the corresponding push-back to them.

49:15 – Helpful illustrations to explain the fine-tuning of the universe for life.
53:38 – Douglas Adams' "puddle objection" to the fine-tuning argument; the response, and a counter-analogy. The weak-anthropic principle.
58:50 – How might these arguments fit into an apologetic for Christianity? The role of natural theology and the need for special revelation. The false dichotomy between evidentialism and presuppositional apologetics.

In the podcast, Dr. Meyer talks about evidence that bears on the question of God's existence from science. Specifically, the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, and the sudden origin of body plans in the fossil record. This is mainstream evidence from mainstream science that points to a Creator and Designer.

This podcast is not for beginners, it's more for intermediate-level Christians. If you're looking for something for beginners, I recommend the True U DVDs, which feature Dr. Meyer talking to college students.

Radical feminists explain how feminism prepared them for dating and marriage

May 22, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These women are very angry, is that why men avoid them?

So, quick review. Radical feminism is the view that there are no differences whatsoever between men and women. And the reason why men do better at work is not due to a stronger desire to provide, it's just caused by sexism in the workplace. Feminists don't focus on marriage or choose men for marriage ability – that's "sexist". So, why don't men want to date or marry feminists?

I like to read a web site called "Bolde" to find out what feminists are thinking. They have good articles, and even if I disagree with the authors, I do feel sorry for them.

Here's an article called "I'm All For Feminism, But It's Kinda Making It Harder To Date" that says:

> It doesn't take much for me to overanalyze a guy's intentions nowadays. I used to see a guy opening a door for me as nice and polite, but lately, gestures like this have been making me angry. I know the guys offering these acts of chivalry have no intention to make me feel small or lesser than, but now that my eyes have been opened to feminist theory, it's all I'm able to think about.
>
> […]When I'm out with a guy and he says one thing that's even REMOTELY offensive towards women, I find it really hard to recover. I instantly write guys off if they aren't "woke" to the current social mindset towards gender politics and can't let it go. Let's just say I've gone on A LOT of first dates that never go anywhere.
>
> […]All it takes is one quick scroll down my newsfeed and I have enough feminist rants to last me several winters. I think I've almost trained my brain to assume

> ALL men are here to try to put me down and dominate me when that's far from the truth. I've made it kind of an automatic reflex at this point, though.

She actually says in her article that she's been "brainwashed". And that's basically the case. Before feminism, women used to evaluate men for traditional male roles: protector, provider, moral and spiritual leader. They looked for evidence of moral convictions, mentoring, charity, kindness, etc. After feminism, women are more likely to get the tingles for a guy who is tall, pierced and tattooed. To look for husband qualities in a man is "sexist". Early marriage is "boring". Having lots of children is "wasting your education".

It's pretty clear from reading her article that she would not be a good partner. Men are looking for a woman who will listen to their life plan, and give up the pursuit of fun, thrills and travel in order to help them achieve it. Although it should be obvious, we aren't going to commit to a woman who is seeking to grab the reins from us, and tear us down. Men tend to be more focused than women on reason and practicality. That's good, but it's a very cold existence. We want a woman to be caring and helpful, not a snarky competitor.

Here's another one from Bolde entitled: "I Say I Want A Good Man But The Idea Of Dating A Mature Guy Scares Me":

> I've dated very few men in my life and a whole lot of boys.
>
> […]I think that I have a need to feel like I'm in charge of romantic situations. It dates back to my childhood issues, I guess. I want to keep the upper hand.
>
> […] I'm very honest, yes, but I'm emotionally closed-off. There is a definite distinction between the two. There are certain places that I simply don't (or can't) go with most people. When I'm confronted with a man who is open with his feelings, it freaks me out.
>
> […][M]ost of the men I've met who are emotionally developed also have the rest of their act together, and it makes me feel like maybe I don't.
>
> […]I get paranoid because I hate being at a disadvantage.
>
> […]I'm not that different from the rest of my generation in some ways. I'm used to the ease of being single, and while ideally I'd like a deep and loving adult relationship, I also know that it takes time and energy that I'm not sure I'm willing to give up.
>
> […]I'm always falling for men who are unavailable in some way or another. I hate that I'm like this and I know that I operate this way because it feels safer than engaging in risky vulnerability with someone who truly wants to be with me.
>
> […]I've not had many mature relationships in my life. I've been in love and I've had serious boyfriends, but there was often an element of childishness to our interactions. We never really discussed our futures together or acted… adult. Now I feel like I don't even know how to begin.

I've had experiences with women like this who smashed themselves up on the rocks of bad boys over and over. I think she really explains why it is that so many women are

attracted to younger bad boys who don’t want to commit. The truth is that women are scared of commitment. They don’t want to give up their free and easy single lives in order to have to put effort into making a relationship work. They want husbands and homes, but without expectations, responsibilities, or obligations. And the better a man is at manly traits like protecting, providing, and leading on moral and spiritual issues, the less they like him. It’s even worse if he has a good STEM education, a good resume, and a good balance sheet. They deliberately bypass commitment-ready men because they don’t want to be led – even by a good leader.

By the way, in my experience, what she describes above is the natural outworking of being promiscuous with hot bad boys. Women who do that lose trust for men, and they lose their confidence dealing with good men who want to marry them. And naturally all that sex with attractive men makes the woman less content with the one she has to “settle” for – since she didn’t respect men who were good at commitment in the first place. Promiscuity trains people to pre-emptively nuke relationships rather than invest effort into making them work.

In Canada, left-wing fascist lawyers say “you can’t be you, and be a lawyer”

May 23, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I feature legal decisions from Canada on this blog. It’s an area of interest to me. Over the past decades, Canada has appointed many *far-left judicial activists* as judges, many of them progressive women. I’ve written about cases where the rights of men, fathers, husbands, Christians, churches and Christian universities were trampled by the courts. Today, I want to show you how bad it really is up north.

Today’s frightening story comes from Quillette, a web-site that features many voices from the center-left and left that question the far-left narrative. The article talks about the de-platforming and canceling of a lawyer named Sha4hdin F4rs4i. She’s a minority and a woman, but that didn’t save her from the secular leftist mob.

The article says:

> The back story begins on December 16th, 2020, when the B.C. Provincial Court issued an announcement advising lawyers and the public of a new practice directive stipulating that all parties appearing in court would henceforth be asked to specify what pronouns they want others to use when referring to them, as well as their preferred forms of address. (Examples provided are “Mr./Ms./Mx./Counsel Jones.”) The Chief Justice of the B.C. Supreme Court issued a similar practice directive on the same day, though without a press release.

This policy, pushed by far-left lawyers, was done so that the courts would be more “inclusive” and “respectful of everyone”. And you’re going to see in a minute how “inclusive” and “respectful of everyone” left-wing fascists really are.

More:

> On the surface, Sha4hdin F4rs4i may seem like an unlikely target for a progressive mob. She’s a young Iranian-Canadian lawyer whose B.C.-based practice has focused on dispute resolution and estate planning. Before joining a law firm, she clerked at the B.C. Supreme Court and obtained a master’s degree in Public Policy.
>
> […]To F4rs4i, the new directives from the B.C. courts represented a form of compelled speech—and not just in a nominal sense. Reciting one’s pronouns may seem like a mere courtesy, and no doubt, many people who do so intend it as such. But it also has a political and ideological connotation, as the ritual is meant to suggest that one’s biologically rooted (and outwardly observable) identity can be altered by declaration, and that everyone must accede to that self-identification, even in contexts where the interests of others are thereby affected.
>
> In mid-January, F4rs4i’s article opposing the courts’ new policy was accepted by

> the Advoc4te, which is published by the Vancouver Bar Association and funded with fees collected from lawyers through the Law Society of B.C. F4rs4i's essay was not a generalized rant against trans people (as critics would later claim), but a well-informed critique of a policy that, as F4rs4i persuasively argued, may serve to compromise a client's legal interests in cases involving family law or alleged sexual assault…

According to the article, the far-left lawyers (called S0G1C) "allegedly threatened the Advoc4te with legal action, and raised the idea that the publication's funding could be at stake, if they published F4rs4i's piece." See, that's inclusive and respectful of everyone. Threatening people you disagree with with lawsuits and de-funding. Far-left activists really are tolerant people who are quite comfortable tolerating those who disagree with them, and letting them act according to their consciences. Real respecters of free speech and other human rights, they are.

> Among the objections B4in received to F4rs4i's (then unpublished) piece was an email from the aforementioned Adrienne Smith, who is described by the S0G1C as "the leading [gender] educator in this area within B.C.'s legal community." Smith called the article "hateful, inflammatory, and wrong at law." Smith also suggested that publication "would expose the *Advoc4te* to liability (or at least notoriety) in a human rights complaint for hateful publications." S0G1C founder Barb4r4 Find14y personally telephoned B4in, "strongly encouraging" him not to publish the F4rs4i piece, and giving him "further case law citations to consider."
>
> Find14y speaks with some authority on these pressure tactics. In a 2016 seminar at the University of British Columbia, she told audience members:
>
> Well, speaking as an organizer, the way—I mean, what I do is I file a human rights complaint. And I say, "Those regulations are deficient because … the omission of those kinds of things contravenes the Human Rights Code." I do that without particular regard for whether ultimately I will be successful, because it's an excellent pressure tool … And so then you're armed with something more than your opinion. You're armed with a legal duty. You say, "Don't we have a legal duty to do this?" Yes, we do.
>
> In the case of the *Advoc4te*, as it turned out, these tactics were successful: The editor was intimidated into killing F4rs4i's piece.

They threatened them with legal action… in order to get the speech that they deemed "hateful" censored. That's the secular left.

It was the tweets that really got me thinking, though:

Naomi Moses (they/them) @nnattrassmoses · Feb 6

Thank you for your solidarity. I spent so much time and energy and heartache trying to prevent this hateful piece from being published, so the news that Canadian Lawyer ran with it was truly gutting.

1 2 8

Dustin Klaudt (he/him/his)
@dustin_klaudt

Replying to @nnattrassmoses and @stina_gray

I agree its disheartening this was published Naomi. In any event, sogic thanks you for your considerable helping us earlier with our prevention efforts

12:16 AM · Feb 7, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Michael Spratt
@mspratt

This piece in @CanLawMag is repulsive and thinly veiled bigotry. It is also intellectually dishonest and poorly written. This has nothing to do with freedom of speech. It is trash.

Frances Mahon (she/her) @francesmahonlaw

I sent the editors of @CanLawMag our letter, signed by over 60 human rights lawyers, professors, benchers and other legal luminaries. I'll keep adding folks to the list & update the letter as signatures come in. Send me a dm if you want to join in! #canadianlawyerbocott twitter.com /francesmahonla...

9:34 AM · Feb 7, 2021

34 2 Copy link to Tweet

B. Grogu Greenberg Retweeted

Dustin Klaudt (he/him/his)
@dustin_klaudt

I agree. @CBA_BC SOGIC's preference is a retraction and apology. But if @CanLawMag doesn't agree, its important to clearly respond detailing the harms this article causes to trans and non-binary folk and the need for court directives (and journalistic rules) to avoid those harms

B. Grogu Greenberg @b_greenberg · Feb 6
Replying to @dustin_klaudt
When @CanLawMag inevitably asks someone to provide the "counter argument" everyone should just say no.

Let's not "both sides" basic human rights. Respond by insisting on a retraction and apology in place of a reply.

8:38 AM · Feb 6, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Frances Mahon (she/her)
@francesmahonlaw

I'm not going to bother formulating an intelligent response to *that* @CanLawMag article, because it doesn't deserve an intelligent response, human rights issues don't have two sides, and I have better things to do with my Saturday morning

10:22 AM · Feb 6, 2021 · Twitter Web App

10 Retweets 105 Likes

Frances Mahon (she/her)
@francesmahonlaw

I'm organizing a lawyers' strike from Canadian Lawyer. DM me if you want to sign on.

11:42 AM · Feb 6, 2021 · Twitter Web App

17 Retweets 4 Quote Tweets 68 Likes

So, the article they didn't like wasn't criticized LEGALLY. It was just declared hateful, mean, bigoted, and offensive. It wasn't worth an intellectual response. It was worth a totalitarian fascist response.

Rather than accept what their consciences were telling them about the morality of their choices, secular left fascists instead try to use power to *force* anyone who disagrees with them to celebrate and affirm what they were doing. Like this "I feel bad, but I'm not going to stop being immoral. I'll just use the government to trample the human rights of people who disagree with me. I'll start with taking away their basic human rights, like free speech, freedom of association, freedom of religion, parental rights, etc. Then I'll move on to getting them fired, vandalizing their property, threatening them with death or injury,

imprisoning them, seizing their children, or even actual violence." And our culture looks to them for moral leadership in "inclusivism", "diversity" and "respect".

One neat thing about Canada's descent into secular left fascism is that it spells the end of marriage. After all, marriage requires a certain minimum level of moral character, self-control and mental health. The stability of the relationship depends on it. What kind of stable relationships can you expect from secular left fascists? Who would be stupid enough to speak to these people – or have anything to do with them? Eventually, they (and the people watching them) will understand that you can't go full psychopath and have a normal productive life that includes love and marriage. Everyone will learn what works from their self-destruction, and destruction of others.

Why is Matt Chandler more famous and influential than Stephen C. Meyer?

May 24, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spent some time on the weekend looking over some nice videos featuring Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. The topics were theistic evolution and the existence of God. It occurred to me that Dr. Meyer is the top defender of Christian theism today. And it made me wonder why he doesn't have the same standing in the Christian community as charismatic pastors like Matt Chandler.

Recently, Christian scholars J. P. Moreland, Stephen C. Meyer, Christopher Shaw, Ann Gauger and Wayne Grudem got together and wrote "Theistic Evolution" – a 1008 page case against theistic evolution. This book is important to help Christians reject Darwinian evolution, which is *by definition* unguided. Belief in evolution discourages Christians from using evidence for intelligent design in biology and paleontology to support theism, and also to persuade others to accept theism as true.

Dr. Meyer also put together a 3-book series documenting 4 areas that challenge atheism. "Signature in the Cell" talks about how the origin of the first living system requires information, and that effect is best explained as a result of an intelligent agent. "Darwin's Doubt" talks about how an intelligent agent is the best explanation for the massive amount of *information* required to create so many body plans in the very short period of time known as the Cambrian explosion. "The Return of the God Hypothesis" talks about the origin of the universe and the fine-tuning of the universe for life. So we have FOUR arguments that falsify atheism. That's powerful, effective Christianity. And he knows how to talk to lay audiences too – he did the first two True U DVD sets for Focus on the Family, which are for college students.

But almost no one except Christian apologists know who people like Stephen C. Meyer are. Instead, the leadership of the church seems to be dominated by charismatic pastors who haven't demonstrated the ability to use evidence persuasively when interacting with non-Christians.

I found two videos of Matt Chandler at Dalrock blog, a famous blog with over 25 million page views.

Here's an interview that Matt Chandler did with Vice TV:

> Pastor Matt Chandler… is a contributor to The Gospel Coalition (TGC), the president of the Acts 29 church planting network and a council member of the ERLC. In the video below Chandler explains to Vice TV why so many evangelicals support President Trump.

Here's the first video:

Here's what Matt Chandler says about Trump's popularity with evangelicals:

> I think people are frightened. I think people are frightened at the speed at which things are changing culturally. So I think they begin to grasp for something that might help. The Obama presidency, great man, some of his policies and the way he rolled out his policies really really scared evangelicals. And without any kind of real help from Pastors and ministers to help us understand, the news media just whipped us into a frenzy and made people feel desperate.
>
> […]But I think especially around topics like homosexuality where we are quick to say it's a sin.
>
> […][P]eople were terrified by that bathroom bill… the thought that their children were going to be in a bathroom with the opposite sex, and… that made [conservatives] go "whoever the opposition is to that I'm voting for" and then they lost their soul on that…

The Washington Times reported on a court case related to bathroom bills:

> A federal judge on Wednesday rejected a Christian college's request to halt the Biden administration's directive on gender identity in dwellings.
>
> The College of the Ozarks, a Christian college in Missouri, had argued the government order, which claims to fight discrimination against transgender people, impinges on the rights of Christians and violates Biblical beliefs.
>
> The dispute sets up a new legal battle over religious liberty and gender identity.
>
> Judge Roseann Ketchmark, an Obama appointee… announced she would deny the college's request to issue an injunction against the rule, which requires that segregated facilities such as dorms and restrooms be based on a person's gender identity.

That's the sort of legislation pastors mean when they lament that Christians are too concerned about "bathroom bills".

Dalrock found another Matt Chandler speech:

> Pastor Matt Chandler does an outstanding job with both in his speech to Equip Austin, an event produced by the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in 2015.

And here's the second video:

Matt Chandler seems to be worried that Christians are not supportive enough of gay rights and gay activism:

> One of the things I've seen is that some people are very terrified of homosexuality. The accusation that Christians are homophobic actually is true about certain Christians I've been around. They are mortified of homosexuals; they are grossed out by [them]. And the gospel (really on any subject) reshapes us to a place of compassion, it reshapes us to a place of love, and it reshapes us

> back to an eager hope for reconciliation in all things.

Thanks to pastors like Matt Chandler, I see so many “conservative” rank-and-file Christians justifying support for abortion and gay activism by appealing to “love” and “compassion”. And charismatic pastors do nothing to counter atheism, feminism and socialism with arguments or evidence. I would prefer that the handsome, charismatic pastors write articles to defend what the Bible teaches, using evidence to persuade non-Christians. I’ve written reasoned arguments against abortion and against same-sex marriage that appealed to non-Christians with evidence. And I’ve also written in opposition to the Equality Act, which eliminates religious liberty, and in opposition to the Women’s Health Protection Act, which eliminates state-level restrictions on abortion.

I’d like Christians to reject charismatic pastors and instead prefer Christian scholars who engage non-Christians with evidence. We need to defend what the Bible teaches on issues using evidence. Our job isn’t to compromise Christianity so that non-Christians accept us. Our job is to cast down speculations set up against the knowledge of God. And we do that by being ready for anyone who asks us for reasons for our hope.

Are the Galapagos finch beaks evidence of Darwinian evolution?

May 25, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Were you taught in biology class that the changing lengths of finch beaks was a good proof of Darwinian evolution? Many students were… but is it true?

Jonathan Wells has an article about it at Evolution News.

It says:

> When Charles Darwin visited the Galápagos Islands in 1835, he collected specimens of the local wildlife. These included some finches that he threw into bags, many of them mislabeled. Although the Galápagos finches had little impact on Darwin's thinking (he doesn't even mention them in *The Origin of Species*), biologists who studied them a century later called them "Darwin's finches" and invented the myth that Darwin had correlated differences in the finches' beaks with different food sources (he hadn't). According to the myth, Darwin was inspired by the finches to formulate his theory of evolution, thoughaccording to historian of science Frank Sulloway "nothing could be further from the truth."
>
> In the 1970s, biologists studied a population of medium ground finches on one of the islands in great detail. When a severe drought left only large, hard-to-crack seeds, 85 percent of the birds perished. The survivors had beaks that were about 5 percent larger than the average beak size in the original population. The biologists estimated that if similar droughts occurred once every ten years, the population could become a new species in only 200 years. In a 1999 booklet defending evolution, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences called the finches "a particularly compelling example" of the origin of species.
>
> **But after the drought, birds with smaller beaks flourished again, and the average beak size of the population returned to normal. No net evolution had occurred.** No matter; Darwin's finches became an icon of evolution that is still featured in most biology textbooks.
>
> In the 1980s, a population of large ground finches, with larger beaks than the medium ground finches, migrated to the island. When a drought in 2004-2005 again reduced the food supply, the medium and large ground finch populations both declined. But since even the largest beaks among the medium ground finches were no match for the beaks of the large ground finches, the latter pretty much monopolized the larger seeds and the former had to make do with smaller seeds. This time, the medium ground finches that survived the drought had beaks that were *smaller* than the average size in the original population. Biologists studying the finches argued that birds with smaller beaks were better able to eat the tiny seeds that were left after the large ground finches ate the big ones, and they concluded that this was again an example of "evolutionary

> change."
>
> **[…]Wait a minute. Average beak size increased slightly during one drought, only to return to normal after the rains return. Then average beak size decreased slightly during another drought. A region of DNA is correlated with beak size. And somehow that tells us how finches evolved in the first place?**

There is an important distinction to make between micro-evolution and macro-evolution. Changes within a type is micro-evolution. Evolving a new organ type or body plan is macro-evolution. There is plenty of evidence for micro-evolution, but no evidence for macro-evolution.

What needs to be proven by the Darwinists is that the same process that results in different average beak size in a population of finches after a drought can create the finches in the first place. I think that Darwinists are credulous – they believe what they want to believe because they want to believe it, even if the evidence is incredibly weak. Darwinists must demonstrate that *heritable variations can result in the generation of new organ types and body plans.* Changes in average beak size is not interesting. What is needed is to show how the beaks, much less the wings, evolved in the first place.

Icons of Evolution

Jonathan has actually written about a number of misleading things that you may mind in Biology textbooks.

Here are the sections in his book "Icons of Evolution":

- The Miller-Urey Experiment
- Darwin's Tree of Life
- Homology in Vertebrate Limbs
- Haeckel's Embroys
- Archaeopteryx–The Missing Link
- Peppered Moths
- Darwin's Finches
- Four-Winged Fruit Flies
- Fossil Horses and Directed Evolution
- From Ape to Human: The Ultimate Icon

Dr. Wells holds a Ph.D in Molecular and Cell Biology from the University of California at Berkeley.

How Michael Medved’s uncle mentored him to become an influential conservative

May 26, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to share a story from the book “Right Turns“, written by Jewish conservative talk show host Michael Medved. In the story, he explains how his uncle got him to accept one of the most important lessons of life.

He tells the story of having a special dinner with his Uncle Moish in chapter 7:

He took special interest in me from the beginning because, he claimed, he saw a chance with me to redeem past mistakes and to do a better job in shaping a finished product than he had done in “raising” his kid brother, my father. I appreciated my uncle’s solicitous attention… Nevertheless, I was only eleven and found it difficult to ignore my other pressing priorities, most notably, my obsession with tacky science fiction movies. I began to pester Uncle Moish to take me to see a heavily advertised shocker called The Brain from Planet Arous.

To my surprise, Moish at least kept the door open to the idea that he would escort me to The Brain from Planet Arous. But first he insisted on taking me out to dinner at a “fancy restaurant” for a very important and very serious conversation.

I dressed up in my one suit for this solemn occasion and remember the discomfort of a too-tight tie and the too-snug shoulders during our steak dinner. Moish allowed me to order absolutely anything I wanted from the menu—in contrast to my unfailingly cost-conscious mother on those rare occasions when I went out to eat with my parents. Looking around that shiny, busy dining room, with all the well-dressed and prosperous adults, I remember feeling conscious of my status as the only kid in the place. After dinner, feeling very important and grown up, I ordered dessert before my uncle leaned his long, serious face conspiratorially across the table.

“Now is the time, Mike, for the talk we need to have. Maybe your parents think you’re too young, or they don’t want you to hear. But I think you’re ready. I think you need it. I think you are going to remember.”

[…]“First of all, let me ask you. Have you ever heard of the Scarlet Plague?”

“I know about the Black Death, Uncle Moish. That was the disease that killed all those people in the Middle Ages.”

‘That’s very good. but no, the Scarlet Plague is even worse. It’s not about the Middle Ages. It’s about right now, and fifty years ago. It kills more people, ruins more lives, than any other disease. And the worst part about it is the people who are most likely to get sick, and who are going to suffer the most, are the brightest minds, the biggest idealists, the natural leaders of this world. They are people just like you.”

I warmed to his compliment, and tried to smile away my fear and discomfort.

“The Scarlet Plague is Communism. It’s Scarlet because they call themselves Reds, and

also that is the color of blood. And there's blood everywhere with the Communists, of the people they kill, that they torture and they cripple. I know because I saw it myself—I saw it starting in Russia before we got out in 1924. But not only Russia, you know. It's everywhere. It's in America. It's in Israel. Especially with intellectuals! If you're not ready for it, you may get infected—so you have to understand."

And he went on to lay out the most gripping, convincing, and altogether persuasive case against the Communists and their lies and their cruelty and they insatiable lust for power and destruction. More than a decade later, when I first read Solzhenitsyn's epochal (and then brand new) Gulag Archipelago, I thought of my Uncle Moish making the same sort of case, with equal passion, in that ritzy restaurant in Philadelphia. l tried to remember all the names and dates and stories he told me, but the underlying message emerged more clearly than any details. I knew something about "The Cold War" and the threat from the Soviet Union, but Moish made the danger feel far more immediate, insidious, almost supernatural.

"And when you tell your father that we had this talk—and you should tell him—he'll just laugh and make fun of me. He'd tell you not to worry. He thinks because the Reds never infected him that there's nothing to worry about. He's too relaxed about everything! Because he doesn't know the way they're going to go after you— I know they will!—and they're going to go after millions and millions of other people in your generation. Your father doesn't take it seriously but I need you to take it seriously. I need you to be prepared. You're In the Boy Scouts, right? 'Be prepared' is the motto! Be ready to fight back against the Scarlet Plague!"

It all seemed impossibly heavy and melodramatic, as if Moish worried that my mostly Republican, middle-class San Diego world had already been infested with active cells of preteen Commie agents. Nevertheless, I promised to heed his lecture and to keep his pleas in mind in the years ahead.

And amazingly enough, I did. Less than six years after the diatribe, I was surrounded in college by honest-to-goodness leftist lunatics, and in trying to deal with the psychos from the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society), I thought repeatedly of my uncle's warnings about the Scarlet Plague… I'd like to believe that I would have rejected extremist temptations even without my uncle's warnings, but as I made progress in my political journey, his unforgettable harangue seemed more and more prescient, even profound.

I read the book about 15 years ago and the story stuck with me.

Michael Medved is a very successful talk show host. He reaches a wide audience, including a lot of religious and secular Jews with his conservative message. And he promotes scholars who work on intelligent design in science, like Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. What a huge difference his Uncle made. He knew the importance of winning a person using ALL the tools that you have available. You can't rely on daycare, public schools, celebrities, athletes and artists to communicate important truths to young people. You must do it. And if you have something important to say, then spend your time and money and effort making sure you are heard.

Do moral dilemmas undermine objective moral absolutes?

May 27, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One reason why some people reject the existence of objective morality is because moral absolutes can conflict.

Canadian philosopher Michael Horner to explains the problem.

He writes:

> You may have been confronted with the story of the Nazi soldier coming to the door of the family who are hiding some Jewish people in their home and asking them point blankly, "Are there any Jews here?" The person telling the story then asks you, "What would you say?" or more precisely, "What should you say?"
>
> […]I think for many people the term moral absolutes connotes ideas like inflexibility and rigidity, and that there can never be exemptions. I have also found that many people believe that holding to moral absolutes means that circumstances are not relevant in a moral evaluation and that moral absolutism cannot handle moral dilemmas. But in fact it is possible to believe in moral absolutes, or as I prefer to call them objective moral values, without adhering to these connotations I have mentioned.
>
> For many people to believe in moral absolutes is to believe in rules that no other rules can ever trump. It follows from this that moral absolutes are all equal and there can never be any exemptions. But what if moral absolutes exist in a hierarchy?
>
> We know from experience that very often more than one moral rule applies to a situation. This often leads to moral dilemmas. So in the 'hiding the Jews example' the moral rule of telling the truth seems to apply to the situation, but it would seem that the moral rule to protect innocent human life from torture and murder applies also.
>
> If absolutes are all equal there is no way out of the dilemma. You can't choose one absolute over another because in doing so you would be violating at least one absolute which, in their view, is supposed to be inviolable.

So, in this case, it seems as if the moral absolutist is stuck in a dilemma. If you lie to save the innocent life, then that would be wrong. But if you tell the truth and hand the innocent person over to murderers, then that would be wrong. Does this really disprove objective moral absolutes?

This problem annoys me, because I know this is the kind of objection to objective morality that annoying philosophy lecturers like to push onto freshmen in order to convince them that morality is nonsense. But does the moral dilemma objection really work?

More Horner:

> […][I]f moral absolutes exist in a hierarchy and the circumstances or the situation were relevant in determining which absolute takes precedent, then there may be a solution to the moral dilemma. That is exactly what I think is the case in the example. I for one have no difficulty knowing that the morally right thing to do in that situation is to protect the life of innocent people from torture and murder rather than tell the truth to a person who has torture and murder in their plans. My moral intuitions are very clear about this.
>
> If someone objects and says, “No, you must always tell the truth. After all it is an absolute, and absolutes by definition can never be violated,” I would point out that they are just using a different hierarchy, putting truth telling above protecting the life of innocent people from torture and murder. There is no way to avoid making a judgment like that since more than one absolute does apply to the situation. I would just ask them to think it through again, and once they see that they have to make a judgment based on some sort of hierarchy in that situation, then I think most people’s moral intuitions will affirm that protecting the lives of innocent people from torture and murder, in that situation, trumps truth telling. There is no way to avoid choosing one over the other.

But isn’t this moral relativism? After all, we are deciding what to do based on the situation! It’s relativism, isn’t it?

No, it isn’t, because there is always one right thing to do in every situation. In every situation, you always follow the weightiest moral rule. The right thing to do does not depend on your subjective state of mind. It is an objective moral duty, and it is the same for everyone, across all times and in all places. That’s what objective morality means - what is right and wrong is not determined by personal preferences or cultural conventions, which vary by time and place.

And of course, God is the ground of this hierarchy of objective moral absolutes. They existed through him before human beings even appeared, as part of his design for us, his creatures. How we ought to behave is grounded ontologically in God’s design for us.

If you could rescue EITHER embryos OR a 5-year-old, what would you do?

May 28, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve this message

I overheard Ben Shapiro talking about some pro-abortion tweet that went viral on Twitter. Basically, the snarky pro-abortion person tried to make the case that unborn children don't deserve legal protections because people have a moral intuition to save a 5-year-old instead of an embryo, if they can only choose one. The best response to this dilemma comes from Robert George, professor at Princeton University and Christopher Tollefsen.

Their article was posted at The Public Discourse.

Excerpt:

> We agree that considering the case as described by Sandel, most people in Jones's circumstances would choose to rescue the girl. However, this by no means shows that human embryos are not human beings or that they may be deliberately killed to produce stem cells, or in an abortion.
>
> The first thing to notice is that the case as described is not, in fact, analogous to the suggestion that we should perform embryo-destructive research for the benefits it might provide us, or to the suggestion that it is permissible to abort an unborn human being. In both such cases, we are being invited to kill, or authorize the killing of, human embryos or fetuses in order to provide benefits to others. But in the fire scenario, there is no killing; the deaths of the embryos who are lost when Jones opts to save the girl are not killings—no one is acting to destroy the

> embryos or cause their deaths—but rather are the kind of death we accept as side effects in various cases in which, for example, acting to save one or some persons means that we are unable to save another or others.
>
> Second, there are differences between the embryos and the five-year-old girl that are or can be morally relevant to the decision concerning whom to rescue. For example, the five-year-old will suffer great terror and pain in the fire, but the embryos will not. Moreover, the family of the five-year-old presumably loves her and has developed bonds of attachment and affection with her that will mean much greater grief in the event of her death than in the event of the death of the embryos. While these concerns would not justify killing, they can play a legitimate role in determining how we may allocate scarce resources and, in some cases, whom we may or should rescue. Often, the (or at least a) morally correct decision cannot be made just on the numbers—a point that even utilitarians are willing to acknowledge. And so, for example, it is morally relevant in some cases where choices of whom to rescue must be made that a person we could save is (for example) our own son or daughter, even if saving him or her means that we cannot save, say, three of our neighbors' children who end up perishing in the fire from which we saved our own child.

The analogy, like Judith Jarvis Thomson's violin analogy, completely ignores the fact that in a pregnancy, the baby is created as a result of the decisions of the mother and the father of the baby. This is not some stranger, this is their child. And in the case of abortion, it's not being done to save a 5-year-old. I once heard of a case where a woman killed her unborn child so she wouldn't look fat on the beach, during her vacation. Hardly a morally sufficient reason.

I really liked this:

> The possibility that resources might be used and even, perhaps, lives risked to save the frozen embryos calls to mind the story with which we began our book *Embryo: A Defense of Human Life*. In 2005, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, a police crew in New Orleans *did* save a canister of fourteen hundred human embryos from a hospital. Our book began with Noah, one of those embryos, who sixteen months later emerged, via Caesarean section, into the light of the world and his parents' love. But if those officers had never made it to Noah's hospital, or if they had abandoned those canisters of liquid nitrogen, the toll of Katrina would have been fourteen hundred human beings higher than it already was, and Noah, sadly, would have perished before having the opportunity to meet his loving family.

The harm of abortion is exactly like the harm of murder in general… each act deprives a person of all of their future. And this against the victim's will, and without adequate moral justification.

An embryo has a unique genetic signature different from his mother, different from his

father. He is a different person, and, if given shelter and food, he will grow up just like any of us do. Is it such a terrible thing to give food and shelter to another human being, that was created as a direct result of the choices of grown-ups? We don’t get to resort to murder of others just in order to make our own lives easier, do we?

What are the historical arguments for the post-mortem appearances of Jesus?

May 29, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are going to take a look at the data

Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi Ohio State University has a *great* post up about the post-mortem appearances of Jesus.

The post contains:

- a list of the post-mortem resurrection appearances
- quotations by skeptical historians about those appearances
- alternative naturalistic explanations of the appearances
- responses to those naturalistic explanations

Although there is a lot of research that went into the post, it's not very long to read. The majority of scholars accept the appearances, because they appear in *so many different sources* and because some of those sources are very early, especially Paul's statement of the early Christian creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, which is from about 1-3 years after Jesus was executed by the Romans. Eric's post lists out some of the skeptical scholars who the appearances, and you can see how they allude to the historical criteria that they are using. (If you want to sort of double-check the details, I blogged about how historians investigate ancient sources before)

Let's take a look at some of the names you might recognize:

> **E.P. Sanders:**
>
> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my

> judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. “I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: ‘I saw him first!’ ‘No! I did.’ Paul’s tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus’ followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions.” “Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the ‘resurrection’: the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it.”[1]
>
> **Bart Ehrman:**
>
> It is a historical fact that some of Jesus’ followers came to believe that he had been raised from the dead soon after his execution. We know some of these believers by name; one of them, the apostle Paul, claims quite plainly to have seen Jesus alive after his death. Thus, for the historian, Christianity begins after the death of Jesus, not with the resurrection itself, but with the belief in the resurrection.[2]
>
> **Ehrman also says:**
>
> We can say with complete certainty that some of his disciples at some later time insisted that . . . he soon appeared to them, convincing them that he had been raised from the dead.[3]
>
> **Ehrman also goes onto say:**
>
> Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus’ resurrection, since this is a matter of public record.[4]
>
> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don’t doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don’t have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don’t think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19).[5]
>
> **Marcus Borg**
>
> The historical ground of Easter is very simple: the followers of Jesus, both then and now, continued to experience Jesus as a living reality after his death. In the early Christian community, these experiences included visions or apparitions of Jesus. [8]

The references to Paul are because of the early creed he records in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, and his conversations with the other eyewitnesses in Galatians. Eric has another post where he goes over that early creed, and it is something that every Christian should know

about. It’s really kind of surprising that you never hear a sermon on that early creed in church, where they generally sort of assume that you believe everything in the Bible on faith. But skeptical historians don’t believe in the post-mortem appearances by faith – they believe it (in part) because of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

If you want to see a Christian scholar make the case for the resurrection appearances in a debate, then here is a post I wrote with the video, audio and summary of the William Lane Craig vs James Crossley debate on the resurrection.

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

May 30, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

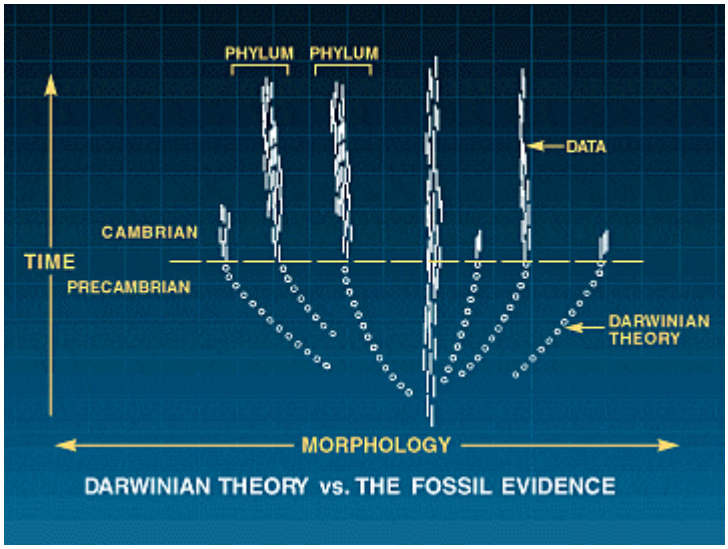

Cambrian Explosion

Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien "The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang" in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a

> unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and
> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

You can get a DVD of the lecture and other great lectures from Access Research Network. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

If you'd like to see Dr. Meyer defend his views in a debate with someone who reviewed

his book about the Cambrian explosion, you can find that in this previous post.

Further study

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

Hero awarded Medal of Honor for rescuing wounded soldiers while under fire

May 31, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Air cavalry helicopters in the Vietnam War

I've finally read enough about World War 2 and the Korean War to move on to the Vietnam war. In this war, America is fighting communists from North Vietnam who are invading the democracy of South Vietnam to make their country communist. While reading several books, I found a story about American soldiers who risked their lives for others while under fire from the enemy.

The story I found was in the book "Legend: The Incredible Story of Green Beret Sergeant Roy Benavidez's Heroic Mission to Rescue a Special Forces Team Caught Behind Enemy Lines".

An American Special Forces team of 12 people – 3 Americans, and 9 Motagnard natives – was discovered by North Vietnamese communists behind enemy lines in Cambodia. After a short firefight, they called for extraction. They were quickly surrounded by about 1000 enemy soldiers. It was extremely difficult for the helicopters to extract them. Some the Special Forces men and helicopter crews were wounded or killed during the extraction attempt.

I wanted to mention especially two of the men who were killed from the Special Operations team:

> - SFC Leroy N. Wright, Newark, NJ (Dist Svc Cross)
> - SSG Lloyd F. Mousseau, Cudahy, CA (Dist Svc Cross)

Here's some more detail about Leroy Wright, the team leader:

> Leroy Wright was the leader of a 12 man special operations recon team inserted secretly by helicopter into Northern Cambodia about 60 miles NW of Saigon. His mission was to capture an NVA truck and return with the truck to Vietnam with a load of Russian supplies to prove give physical proof that the Viet Cong were being supplied through Cambodia.
>
> Unfortunately Wright's team was landed in the midst of a large force of hundreds of NVA regulars deployed in depth around their landing zone. They were compromised when their hiding place was discovered by two NVA soldiers. Lloyd Mousseau, assistant team leader killed these men sliently but a shot was fired by one of them alerting the other NVA in the vicinity.
>
> Wright requested permission for extraction but was ordered to continue the mission by his superiors in Vietnam. He followed his orders and moved towards his objective, but soon encountered a patrol of about 12 NVA. In a brief but noisy fight his team wiped out the NVA partrol without any casualties to the team. He then immediately called for emergency extraction and rushed the team to the planned pickup zone.
>
> At the pickup zone Wright encountered numerous NVA troops and became locked in a fire fight which killed or wounded all of his men. The emergency extraction force, a flight of four UH1C gunships, call sign Maddogs, and four UH1H slicks, call sign Greyhounds, soon approached the pickup zone but it was driven away by intense and accurate enemy fire that killed one crew member, Michael Craig, and wounded others.
>
> On the ground Wright moved about his beleagured team encouraging them and repositioning them to defend the extraction landing zone. While redeploying one group of his men he was hit by enemy fire and lost the use of his legs. Then two enemy grenades fell between him and his teammates, endangering them all. Wright threw one back at the enemy but only had time to roll his body onto the second grenade before it exploded lifting him into the air. Wright survived this explosion and fought on for a time firing his weapon until he was killed by a shot in his head.

I also wanted to mention the pilot from second Huey helicopter that was shot down:

> - WO Larry S. McKibben, Houston, TX, pilot (Dist Svc Cross)

Here are some more details about McKibben:

> Warrant Officer McKibben distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 2 May 1968 as aircraft commander of a helicopter supporting ground operations near Loc Ninh. A small reconnaissance team was pursued by a numerically superior enemy force, and Mister McKibben immediately extracted it. A larger team, replacing the first, was quickly surrounded by two companies of North Vietnamese Army troops and he volunteered to attempt a second

> extraction mission.
>
> At the landing zone a supporting gunship was shot down by the murderous enemy fire. Despite extreme hazard to his safety, Mister McKibben braved the savage fusillade to land and successfully rescue the downed crew. After refueling, he returned to the area and prepared to rescue the ground force. Although he was informed that two helicopters had sustained casualties to their crews attempting pickups during his absence, he fearlessly maneuvered through a hail of fire, reached the landing zone and began loading troops. The enemy force concentrated their full firepower on his craft, but he refused to take off until all survivors were on board. As he prepared to fly out of the landing zone, he was instantly killed by an enemy bullet passing through the cockpit.

Please take a moment to remember the men who died that day, fighting communism in Vietnam so that we could enjoy our freedom from tyranny. We will remember them.

But I do have a positive story. A Green Beret Special Forces soldier who heard the request for help from the Special Forces team was awarded the Medal of Honor for helping to extract the wounded while under fire himself. His name was Roy Benavidez.

Here is his Medal of Honor citation:

> Master Sergeant (then Staff Sergeant) Roy P. BENAVIDEZ United States Army, distinguished himself by a series of daring and extremely valorous actions on 2 May 1968 while assigned to Detachment B56, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Republic of Vietnam.
>
> On the morning of 2 May 1968, a 12-man Special Forces Reconnaissance Team was inserted by helicopters of the 240th Assault Helicopter Company in a dense jungle area west of Loc Ninh, Vietnam to gather intelligence information about the confirmed large-scale enemy activity. This area was controlled and routinely patrolled by the North Vietnamese Army. After a short period of time on the ground, the team met heavy enemy resistance, and requested emergency extraction. Three helicopters attempted extraction but were unable to land due to intense enemy small arms and anti-aircraft fire.
>
> Sergeant BENAVIDEZ was at the Forward Operating Base in Loc Ninh monitoring the operation by radio when these helicopters, of the 240th Assault Helicopter Company, returned to off-load wounded crew members and to assess aircraft damage. Sergeant BENAVIDEZ voluntarily boarded a returning aircraft to assist in another extraction attempt. Realizing that all the team members were either dead or wounded and unable to move to the pickup zone, he directed the aircraft to a nearby clearing where he jumped from the hovering helicopter, and ran approximately 75 meters under withering small arms fire to the crippled team.
>
> Prior to reaching the team’s position he was wounded in his right leg, face, and head. Despite these painful injuries, he took charge, repositioning the team members and directing their fire to facilitate the landing of an extraction aircraft,

and the loading of wounded and dead team members. He then threw smoke canisters to direct the aircraft to the team's position. Despite his severe wounds and under intense enemy fire, he carried and dragged half of the wounded team members to the awaiting aircraft. He then provided protective fire by running alongside the aircraft as it moved to pick up the remaining team members. As the enemy's fire intensified, he hurried to recover the body and classified documents on the dead team leader.

When he reached the leader's body, Sergeant BENAVIDEZ was severely wounded by small arms fire in the abdomen and grenade fragments in his back. At nearly the same moment, the aircraft pilot was mortally wounded, and his helicopter crashed. Although in extremely critical condition due to his multiple wounds, Sergeant BENAVIDEZ secured the classified documents and made his way back to the wreckage, where he aided the wounded out of the overturned aircraft, and gathered the stunned survivors into a defensive perimeter. Under increasing enemy automatic weapons and grenade fire, he moved around the perimeter distributing water and ammunition to his weary men, reinstilling in them a will to live and fight. Facing a buildup of enemy opposition with a beleaguered team, Sergeant BENAVIDEZ mustered his strength, began calling in tactical air strikes and directed the fire from supporting gunships to suppress the enemy's fire and so permit another extraction attempt.

He was wounded again in his thigh by small arms fire while administering first aid to a wounded team member just before another extraction helicopter was able to land. His indomitable spirit kept him going as he began to ferry his comrades to the craft. On his second trip with the wounded, he was clubbed from behind by an enemy soldier. In the ensuing hand-to-hand combat, he sustained additional wounds to his head and arms before killing his adversary. He then continued under devastating fire to carry the wounded to the helicopter. Upon reaching the aircraft, he spotted and killed two enemy soldiers who were rushing the craft from an angle that prevented the aircraft door gunner from firing upon them. With little strength remaining, he made one last trip to the perimeter to ensure that all classified material had been collected or destroyed, and to bring in the remaining wounded.

Only then, in extremely serious condition from numerous wounds and loss of blood, did he allow himself to be pulled into the extraction aircraft. Sergeant BENAVIDEZ' gallant choice to join voluntarily his comrades who were in critical straits, to expose himself constantly to withering enemy fire, and his refusal to be stopped despite numerous severe wounds, saved the lives of at least eight men. His fearless personal leadership, tenacious devotion to duty, and extremely valorous actions in the face of overwhelming odds were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect the utmost credit on him and the United States Army.

If you’re looking for a good book on helicopter operations in the Vietnam war, I’ve just finished “To the Limit: An Air Cav Huey Pilot in Vietnam” and really enjoyed it. Regarding special operations in the Vietnam war, I just finished “Uncommon Valor: The Recon Company that Earned Five Medals of Honor and Included America’s Most Decorated Green Beret” which was almost as good.

How is the LGBT activism of the Biden administration affecting women athletes?

June 1, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Although young unmarried women favor Democrats in elections, it's starting to look as though Democrat policies are not good for them. Consider an article I found on the Alliance Defending Freedom web site, which is a law firm that defends free speech, freedom of association, freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, etc. from secular left extremists.

It says:

> I've lost four women's state championship titles, two all-New England awards, and numerous other spots on the podium to male runners. I was bumped to third place in the 55-meter dash in 2019, behind two male runners. With every loss, it gets harder and harder to try again.
>
> That's a devastating experience. It tells me that I'm not good enough; that my body isn't good enough; and that no matter how hard I work, I am unlikely to succeed, because I'm a woman.
>
> That experience is why three of my fellow female athletes and I filed a lawsuit last year with Alliance Defending Freedom against the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC): because girls and women shouldn't be stripped of their right to fair competition.
>
> The CIAC allows biological males to compete in girls' and women's sports. As a result, two males began racing in girls' track in 2017. In the 2017, 2018, and 2019 seasons alone, these males took 15 women's state track championship titles (titles held in 2016 by nine different girls) and more than 85 opportunities to participate in higher level competitions that belonged to female track athletes.
>
> […]Connecticut officials are determined to ignore the obvious. And unfortunately, a federal district court recently dismissed our case.
>
> […]My friend and fellow plaintiff Selina Soule was bumped from qualifying for the state championship 55-meter final and an opportunity to qualify for the New England championship by a male runner in 2019. Meanwhile, Alanna Smith, an incredibly talented female athlete, was the second-place female runner in the 200-meter at the New England Regional Championships, but was dropped to third behind a male competitor.
>
> It's discouraging that the federal district court has decided that these experiences — these lost opportunities — simply don't matter.

Very interesting.

But wait. Why is this article posted on the ADF web site? Well, it was originally posted at

the far left USA Today web site, but they had to censor the article because it hurt the feelings of people on the secular left.

> This column has been updated to reflect USA TODAY's standards and style guidelines. We regret that hurtful language was used.

Where did the idea that men and women are interchangeable begin? It began with the feminist revolution. Originally, first wave feminists argued for equal opportunity. Feminist scholar Christina Hoff Sommers calls that "equity feminism". But later "third wave" feminists argued that men and women are *interchangeable*. Christina Hoff Sommers calls this new feminism "gender feminism". Third wave feminists deny that sex differences exist, and they claim that the different life outcomes of men and women are not caused by biological differences or different choices, but by discrimination.

This column from far-left PBS explains:

> Gender feminism is based on the… belief that humans are born as blank slates and all sex differences are artifacts of socialization. They believe the only way to achieve true political and economic equality is to erase all differences between men and women by rigidly socializing boys and girls to be the same.

So, it's actually feminism that provided the framework for the idea that men can become women, and women can become men. Ironic, isn't it?

And do you know what's even *more* ironic? That young, unmarried women keep voting for this election after election.

Radical feminism doesn't just cause women problems in the area of athletics, though. It also hurts them when they are looking for a husband to commit to them. Since feminism took over our politics and institutions, many men have withdrawn from relationships with women. Not only marriage, but cohabitation, dating, and even *talking* to women.

As I blogged about previously, feminism makes women extremely unattractive to men who want to commit and lead a home. When feminism gets into government, tax rates go up, leaving marriage minded men with less of their earned money. They can't afford a marriage and children. And feminism in the education system discriminates against men, making it harder for them to succeed so they can potentially marry and support a family. Feminism in the workplace makes getting ahead very difficult for men. And men are treated very unfairly by law enforcement and the courts – not just in divorce courts, but in criminal courts, as well.

It turns out that women *often* don't like the results they get, even when they get what they wanted. Isn't that ironic?

Democrat Joe Biden plans to cancel all oil and gas leases in Alaska ANWR

June 2, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do you wonder why gas prices have shot up since Joe Biden and his team of environmentalist extremists took the House, Senate and White House? Well, it turns out that if you raise taxes on energy producers and regulate their businesses, the supply of energy goes down. When supply decreases, and demand stays the same, prices go up. That's the law of supply and demand.

The Federalist reports:

> The Biden White House plans to cancel all oil and gas leases in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge until a further review of their environmental impacts are assessed, according to the New York Times Tuesday.
>
> Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, the paper reported citing two insiders familiar with the administration's plans, will publish an order to formally rescind existing leases months after the new president mounted a White House crusade against fossil fuels on day one with moratoriums on new drilling in the Arctic and other federal lands.
>
> Marcella Burke, an attorney who specializes in energy policy and is an alum of the Trump Interior Department told The Times the move to halt drilling in the more than 19 million-acre refuge was far from unexpected.
>
> "Since the Carter administration, whether ANWR can be leased is determined by which party is in the White House," Burke told the paper. "Developers in ANWR assume there will be a policy shift between Democrat and Republican administrations. But it's not permanent, assuming there will someday be another party in the White House."
>
> The Biden administration's animosity towards fossil fuels, featuring Haaland at the top, a climate activist-turned two-term congresswoman described as "Green New Deal Champion," has promised to make survival harder for the industry with new restrictions which could last beyond a four or eight-year term.
>
> A new environmental analysis may impose heavy restraints on development in the Alaskan region and possibly halt new leases altogether for the remainder of the administration.
>
> President Donald Trump opened the Arctic Refuge's coastal plain, a nearly 1.6 million-acre stretch on Alaska's north coast for oil and gas development in 2017 in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

During the Trump administration, you'll recall that Trump implemented an "all of the above" solution to energy production. We had a boom in the zero-emission fracking industry, leading to extremely cheap prices on natural gas. Electricity prices went down.

But now that Biden is back in, those prices are going right back up.

And this isn't a surprise. It happens in every country that elects environmentalist extremists.

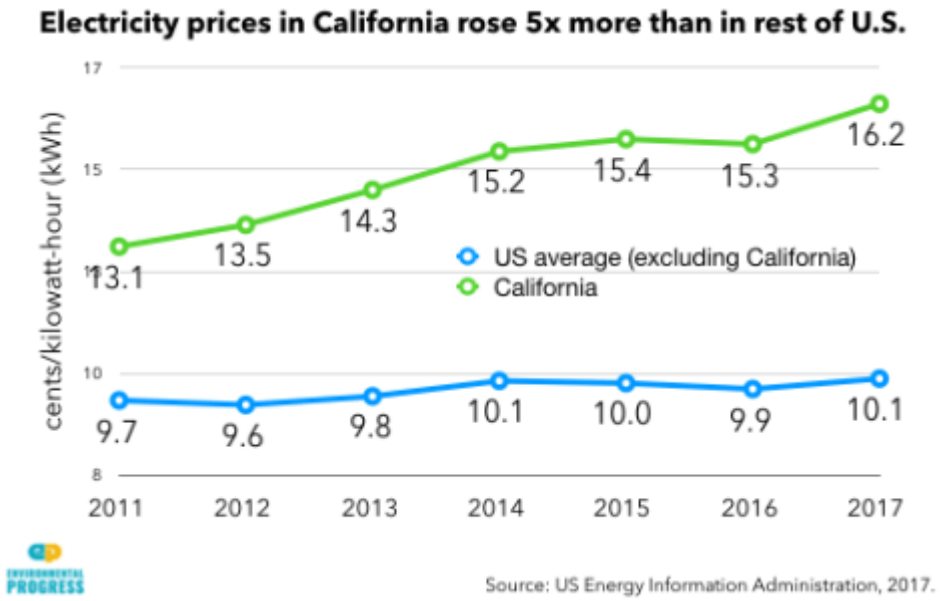

What green energy policies did to electricity costs in California

Let's start with California. California has long been at the forefront of converting their energy production to "green" sources.

Here's an article from Forbes that talks about their results:

> California's big bet on renewables, and shunning of natural gas and nuclear, is directly responsible for the state's blackouts and high electricity prices.
>
> "We will be forced today to ask utilities to cut off power to millions today, and tomorrow, and beyond," said Stephen Berberich, the President and CEO of California's Independent System Operator, CAISO, on a Monday morning conference call. "Demand will greatly exceed supply."
>
> The immediate cause of California's blackouts is a mismatch between electricity supply and demand.
>
> […]The underlying reason blackouts are occurring is because California lacks reliable, in-state supply. And the reason for that is California has been closing both natural gas and nuclear power plants.
>
> […]Despite these capacity shortfalls, the state is moving ahead with plans to remove 2,200-MW of reliable electricity from the grid. That's the amount of power produced by Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant, which will be closed in stages in 2024 and 2025.

Well, how about Germany? They closed down their nuclear power plants in favor of wind and solar. It didn't work.

Daily Caller explains:

> Germany's power grid almost collapsed in January due to poor performance from

> wind turbines and solar panels, according to data from a major trade union.
>
> Wind and solar power plants under-performed in January, 2017, because of cloudy weather with little or no wind, setting the stage for massive blackouts.
>
> […]Green energy approaches failed to meet Germany's stated energy goals, even after spending over $1.1 trillion. The country's "Energiewende" plan to boost wind and solar production to fight global warming hasn't significantly reduced carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and may have actually caused them to go up.
>
> […]Due to the inherent unreliable performance of wind power and political opposition to nuclear power plants, Germany has been forced to return to coal to generate electricity. Coal now provides 44 percent of Germany's power, This shift caused Germany's carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions to actually rise by 28 million tons each year following the policy shift.
>
> All of Germany's subsidies and support for green energy have sharply increased power prices, with the average German paying 39 cents per kilowatt-hour for electricity. The average American only spends 10.4 cents per kilowatt-hour by comparison.

Well, third try is the charm. How about Canada? They've gone Green New Deal for more than a decade. How is that working for them?

The National Post reported this in 2016:

> Back in 2010, deep green environmentalist Rick Smith, then head of Environmental Defence Canada, hailed Ontario's Green Energy and Green Economy Act regime as a cost-free operation that would catapult the province into the big leagues of renewable energy. Through fat subsidies and high prices offered to wind, solar and other renewable industry players, jobs and growth would boom and Ontario would be free of its dirty coal plants. It was the End of Coal, the government said. The birth of a renewable miracle.

Now, Canadians are paying more:

> The doubling of electricity prices since 2005 is big politically, but it is just the top-line item on a long list of problems, misconceptions and outright fabrications that lurk within the Liberal government's decade-long pursuit of radical greenism.

Because they didn't listened to engineers… they listened to their hearts:

> Ontario's Society of Professional Engineers has issued more than half a dozen critical reports on the Liberals' tendency to let green talk and politics override sound policy. Instead of following the expert advice of engineers and people who understand the intricacies of electricity production and distribution, the government took to issuing directives right out the Premier's office.

We have to do what works to reduce electricity prices for the poor. What works is more

natural gas (fracking) and more nuclear power.

What can we learn about communist leaders from the record of history?

June 3, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery

Now that we have atheistic communists in the majority of the House, Senate and White House, it might be a good idea to take a look at what atheistic communist leaders have done in history. First, let's see how the atheistic worldview of communist leaders affected religious people.

Here is what Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

What's the attitude of Democrat candidates to Bible-believing Christians? My read is that they think that Christian values need to be suppressed by the government lest they offend Democrat voters, who seem to be very easily offended these days. You can already see their animus towards Christians in their Equality Act, which eradicates conscience rights in order to protect (some) LGBT people from feeling offended.

The Ukraine Famine

Take a look at this UK Daily Mail article about Josef Stalin.

Excerpt:

> Now, 75 years after one of the great forgotten crimes of modern times, Stalin's man-made famine of 1932/3, the former Soviet republic of Ukraine is asking the world to classify it as a genocide.
>
> The Ukrainians call it the Holodomor – the Hunger.
>
> Millions starved as Soviet troops and secret policemen raided their villages, stole the harvest and all the food in villagers' homes.
>
> They dropped dead in the streets, lay dying and rotting in their houses, and some women became so desperate for food that they ate their own children.
>
> If they managed to fend off starvation, they were deported and shot in their hundreds of thousands.
>
> So terrible was the famine that Igor Yukhnovsky, director of the Institute of National Memory, the Ukrainian institution researching the Holodomor, believes **as many as nine million may have died.**
>
> […]Between four and five million died in Ukraine, a million died in Kazakhstan and another million in the north Caucasus and the Volga.
>
> By 1933, 5.7 million households – somewhere between ten million and 15 million people – had vanished. They had been deported, shot or died of starvation.

The Holodomor is just one of the atrocities committed by Soviet Union communists. You may also have heard that they operated a system of labor camps for dissidents that killed millions more. The total number of people killed by Stalin is estimated at 20 to 40 million.

Stalin actually wasn't very good at mass murder compared to another communist, Mao Zedong.

> Can you name the greatest mass murderer of the 20th century? No, it wasn't Hitler or Stalin. It was Mao Zedong.
>
> According to the authoritative "Black Book of Communism," an estimated 65 million Chinese died as a result of Mao's repeated, merciless attempts to create a new "socialist" China. Anyone who got in his way was done away with — by execution, imprisonment or forced famine.
>
> For Mao, the No. 1 enemy was the intellectual. The so-called Great Helmsman reveled in his blood-letting, boasting, "What's so unusual about Emperor Shih Huang of the China Dynasty? He had buried alive 460 scholars only, but we have buried alive 46,000 scholars." Mao was referring to a major "accomplishment" of the Great Cultural Revolution, which from 1966-1976 transformed China into a great House of Fear.
>
> The most inhumane example of Mao's contempt for human life came when he

> ordered the collectivization of China's agriculture under the ironic slogan, the "Great Leap Forward." A deadly combination of lies about grain production, disastrous farming methods (profitable tea plantations, for example, were turned into rice fields), and misdistribution of food produced the worse famine in human history.
>
> Deaths from hunger reached more than 50 percent in some Chinese villages. The total number of dead from 1959 to 1961 was between 30 million and 40 million — the population of California.
>
> […]Mao kept expanding the laogai, a system of 1,000 forced labor camps throughout China. Harry Wu, who spent 19 years in labor camps, has estimated that from the 1950s through the 1980s, 50 million Chinese passed through the Chinese version of the Soviet gulag. Twenty million died as a result of the primitive living conditions and 14-hour work days.

Whenever I bring up the historical record of communism to Democrats, they always tell me that their leaders have good intentions. But the communist leaders of the past aren't any different from the communist leaders of today. Communist leaders all start out with noble ambitions of wanting to help the poor. The problem is that they don't know anything about economics, so whatever they try doesn't work. Communist policies like nationalizing private industries, printing money, purging wealthy people, imposing tariffs, and imposing price controls cause enormous poverty. And then they need someone to blame for their failure to produce the results they promise.

If we were serious about helping the poor, then we would elect leaders who had experience lifting the poor out of poverty. A business leader or a governor of a state. It's not a popularity contest. We need to choose someone who has already had success at helping the poor. And the best way to help the poor is by helping them to find work so they can earn their own success and chart their own course. After all it's not words that affect our lives. Or the feelings we have about words we like. What affects our lives is policies that produce results. Intentions and rhetoric don't matter, ultimately.

What can Christians learn from the bravest naval aviator at the Battle of Midway?

June 4, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been reading lots of books about the World War II battles in the Pacific theater lately, and I wanted to write a post about one of the heroes I found who was the most compelling to me. You may have seen him in the old 1976 Midway movie or the new 2019 Midway movie. But neither movie tells the full story. The man I am talking about is Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.

John Waldron was the leader of the torpedo bomber squadron on the Hornet. This squadron was composed of outdated and slow Devastator torpedo bombers, armed with the Mark 13 Mod 1 torpedoes, which malfunctioned about 90% of the time.

I found an article on the Federalist that tells the story of John Waldron:

> Now there are countless men and woman who deserve to be singled out for their valor, but with the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Midway just around the corner, I thought it would be appropriate to call your attention to one of the bravest men who ever lived. A man who, knowing he was facing certain death, led the first attack against the Japanese aircraft carriers and played a direct role in what would be a decisive victory for the United States, and a defeat from which Japan would never recover. That man was Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.
>
> Now for those who don't know, the Battle of Midway was the turning point in the Pacific theater. The Japanese had an elaborate plan that involved attacking the U.S. base on Midway Island in order to lure the Americans into a battle which the Japanese High command felt their experience and tactics would overwhelm and annihilate the American fleet. With no significant U.S. naval presence, Hawaii and the entire West Coast would be at risk of invasion. But the Americans broke the Japanese code and set a trap of their own – hoping to destroy their enemy's carriers and thereby establish U.S. dominance in the Pacific. And that was exactly what happened : The U.S. fleet surprised the Japanese, sank their four carriers, and took the first real step to winning the Second World War.
>
> John Waldron was 42 years old when the *USS Hornet* steamed towards Midway on June 1st, 1942. Born and raised on a reservation in South Dakota, he had never seen the ocean until he attended the Naval Academy. It wasn't long after he graduated that he moved into naval aviation. He had been assigned to be the squadron leader of the *Hornet's* torpedo bombers in late 1941 and had been drilling his men tirelessly ever since. Waldron had the reputation of a tough as nails, no-nonsense commander. Not surprising, since Waldron was a direct descendant of the warriors from the Oglala Lakota tribe – part of the Great Sioux Nation. The tough skin he developed came from decades of derision from his peers over his meager beginnings, and from the racism directed at his Native

> American heritage. Waldron didn't care what anyone thought of him – all he wanted to do was fight for his country. He was a natural leader and his men would follow him into the gates of Hell, which, as fate would have it, is exactly what they would do in the upcoming battle.
>
> On the morning of June 4th, the Americans were ready to spring their trap, but in the preflight briefing aboard the *Hornet* there was a problem. Stanhope Ring, who was in command of the carrier's air group, directed his pilots to head northwest of the last reported position of the Japanese fleet. Waldron disagreed with this decision, feeling that they should head in the exact direction of that last sighting. He wasn't shy about expressing this opinion, much the displeasure of Ring. Waldron continued to lobby his superior officer several times after the briefing ended, but to no avail.

The Federalist article doesn't talk much about Stanhope Ring, but the book I just finished called "The Battle of Midway" by Craig L. Symonds did. Ring was a very tall, good-looking, and white officer who had breezed up the chain of command thanks to his good looks and confident manner. He loved to show off for cameras, and pull rank on subordinates. He was too proud to admit that Waldron was right in front of the other pilots.

More:

> The air strike force took off from the deck of the *Hornet* – fighters, dive bombers, and the 15 planes in Waldron's torpedo squadron. This force would be joined in the air by similar strike forces from the other U.S. carriers – the *Yorktown* and the *Enterprise*. Shortly after the Hornet's air group was airborne, Waldron couldn't contain his anger anymore. He broke radio silence to tell Ring that they were headed in the wrong direction. He repeated that comment and Ring issued a terse reply that he was in charge of this group and to stay the hell off the radio. Waldron waited a couple of minutes before replying "The hell with you" and peeled his squadron off and headed due west, where he felt the Japanese fleet was.
>
> Less than an hour later, Waldron was proved right. He had led his squadron on a direct line to the enemy. Waldron broke radio silence again to signal to Ring that he had found the fleet, but Ring and the rest of the *Hornet's* planes were too far away to hear. So now, Waldron was faced with a brutal decision. If he went in to attack, he would do so without any fighter protection, and they'd be totally at the mercy of the Japanese fighters. To make matters worse, the U.S. planes (Douglas Devastators) were hopelessly outdated aircraft – their top speed was about a third of what the Japanese fighters could do. They had hoped to get the newer Grumman Avengers, but the *Hornet* had left Pearl Harbor before they had arrived from the mainland. All of this meant that Waldron and Torpedo 8 were looking at a suicidal attack run. […]Waldron got on the radio again and told his men "We will go in. We won't turn back. Former strategy cannot be used. We will attack. Good luck!"

> And with that, the planes of Torpedo 8 closed up their formation and bore down on the Japanese fleet, some seven miles distant.
>
> The Japanese fighters quickly pounced on the Americans, who were going in low and slow – the only way torpedo bombers can attack. One by one the planes from Torpedo 8 were shot down. […]Every single plane in Torpedo 8 was destroyed and not one torpedo hit a Japanese ship.

Not only were the torpedo bombers of John Waldron's VT-8 (Hornet) shot down, but two more waves led by Eugene Lindsey VT-6 (Enterprise) and Edward Massey VT-3 (Yorktown) were also repulsed without a hit.

More:

> History might have viewed Waldron's attack as more insane than brave, and utterly pointless….except for what happened next. Shortly after his failed attack, the torpedo squadron from the *Enterprise* attacked the fleet – and right after that the torpedo squadron from the *Yorktown*. Both of those squadrons had devastating casualties as well (10 of 14 planes lost and 10 of 12 respectively) without inflicting any damage on any Japanese ship. But these three attacks in succession drew the Japanese fighter cover down so low, that it left their carriers exposed to dive bomber attacks. It also burned up a lot of fuel for the fighters, who now needed to land before they could continue their defense of the fleet. The attacks also forced the Japanese carriers into defensive maneuvers, so they were unable to land any planes or launch any for a strike on the American carriers.

In addition to using up their fuel and coming down to low altitude, the Japanese CAP (combat air patrol) fighters also used up most of their dangerous 20 mm ammunition. They mostly had much weaker 7.7 mm ammunition remaining when the dive bombers from the Enterprise and Yorktown arrived.

More:

> As the Japanese were trying to compose themselves after the three fierce but harmless attacks, the American dive bombers from the *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* arrived and quickly struck. Within minutes, three of the Japanese carriers were in flames – the heart of the Imperial Navy had been gutted.
>
> […]The other planes from the Hornet never found the Japanese ships. Ring kept his planes flying in that northwesterly direction until they were too low on fuel to keep going. They returned to the *Hornet* with their full payload of bombs.
>
> […]Now, there were a lot of heroes that day – some who lived and some who died, but the valor that John Waldron displayed in defying orders he knew were wrong and then attacking the enemy when he knew it meant certain death, place him on a special level. His actions directly helped the Americans win this crucial battle, which turned the tide of the war in the favor of the United States. He got

> the Navy Cross for his actions that day, but it seems astonishing to me that he wasn't awarded the Medal of Honor – he is definitely worthy of it.

You can learn more about the Battle of Midway in this helpful video:

So, here is what I wanted to say about this.

John Waldron was not properly equipped by his organization to make a difference at Midway. His planes were too old and slow, his torpedoes almost never worked. His leader was an arrogant, incompetent coward who prevented him from leading others to find and attack the actual targets. The only way he could do something to his enemy was to disobey orders and go off on his own. If he had lived, he probably would have been court-martialed for insubordination. After Waldron was shot down, every single one of the men in his squadron continued their attack until they too were all shot down. Everyone watching must have thought "what a waste of effort". It was only later that it became evident to all that what he did was necessary for the second wave to succeed.

This plaque at the United States Naval Academy Club honors the three commanders of the torpedo bomber squadrons:

[image]
Plaque honoring the Midway torpedo bomber squadron commanders
According to the Family Research Council, the plaque reads:

> The torpedo attacks of Waldron, Lindsey, and Massey had followed hard upon each other by luck. What was not luck, but the soul of the United States in action, was the willingness of the torpedo plane squadrons to go in against hopeless odds. This was the extra ounce of martial weight that in a few decisive minutes tipped the balance of history.

When I read this story, it immediately occurred to me that this is the problem that serious Christians are facing today. Parents and pastors are not equipping young people to actually make a difference. Instead of finding and fighting the real targets: atheism, radical feminism, communism, etc., all our forces have been sent on wild goose chases, so that now "Christians" are actually trying to promote the priorities of the secular left, e.g. – global warming, wealth redistribution, affirming sexual immorality, open borders, critical race theory, etc.

The few of us who actually know how to do our jobs are poorly equipped. We are prevented from leading by organizations that are focused on feelings rather than results. We can only hope that our decision to attack against hopeless odds somehow paves the way for a second wave to succeed. It has happened before, and that's why we should be brave and continue to engage our opponents using tools that work (philosophy of religion, evidential apologetics, scientific research, historical evidence, chastity, sobriety, self-control, good stewardship of our educations, careers and finances, effective charitable giving, self-sacrificial love, etc.).

Audio, video and summary of the William Lane Craig vs. Sam Harris debate

June 5, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Debate time! Here's the video:

SUMMARY OF THE DEBATE

This debate summary is rated M for Moderately Snarky.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

Introduction:

- Harris and Craig agree on objective morality
- What is the foundation of morality?
- What makes certain actions right or wrong?

Two claims

1. if God exists, then we have a sound foundation for objective moral values and duties
2. if God does not exist, then we do not have a sound foundation for objective moral values and duties

1) Theism grounds morality

Objective moral values

Theism provides sound foundation for objective moral values
– objective moral values are grounded in God
– God is the locus and paradigm of moral value
– God is, by nature, the standard for what is right and wrong

Objective moral duties

Theism provides a sound foundation for objective moral duties
– God's nature is expressed as commands for us
– God's commands for us are not arbitrary
– they must be consistent with his own nature
– and they reflect his moral character
– the essence of morality in theism is to love God and also to love your neighbor

2) Atheism does not ground morality

Objective moral values

What is the basis for objective moral values on atheism?
– on atheism, human beings are accidental products of evolution
– on atheism, there is no reason to believe that human well-being is any more important than the well-being of any other animal
– Harris denies that the objective moral value is from Platonic forms

– Harris wants to ground moral values in nature
– but nature is morally neutral
– the “morality” of humans is just a set of evolved customs that help them to survive and reproduce
– this morality is just a set of conventions, it doesn’t refer to anything that has an objective existence
– quotes Michael Ruse: “morality is just an aid to survival, and any deeper meaning is illusory”
– if we were to rewind evolution and start it again, another set of conventions might have evolved
– to say that morality is about human well-being is to commit “speciesism”
– quotes Richard Dawkins: “there is no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pointless indifference”

What does Harris say:
– Harris redefines the word “good” to mean the well-being of humans
– Harris “solves” the problem of moral value by just asserting that HUMAN well-being is the good
– Harris isn’t talking about what is good and evil
– Harris only talks about what is conducive to human “flourishing”

Objective moral duties

What is the basis of objective moral duties on atheism?
– first, natural science tells us only what is, not what ought to be
– quotes Jerry Fodor: “science cannot tell us that we have a moral obligation to take actions to increase human flourishing”
– on the naturalistic worldview, humans are animals – and there are no OBJECTIVE moral duties
– where do moral obligations come from on atheism?
– they are just conventions that are ingrained into us by social evolution
– as human societies evolve, certain actions are unfashionable
– people who act “immorally” against their society’s conventions are just being unfashionable
– bad actions like rape and murder happen all the time in the animal kingdom
– second, Harris believes that there is no free will – all human actions are causally determined
– if there is no free will, then there is no moral responsibility
– no one is responsible for the things they do, on atheism
– on atheism, humans have no control over the actions they take, and cannot make moral choices, or be morally responsible

Conclusion:
– Harris and I mostly agree on practical ethics, but only theists have a foundation for objective moral values and duties

Dr. Harris' opening speech:

God is not needed to ground moral values and moral duties

- Good means maximizing human well-being for the largest number of people
- Religion is not necessary for a "universal" morality
- Religion is a bad foundation for "universal" morality

Facts and values:

- Moral values are the products of human evolution
- E.g. – Sexual jealousy is the result of biological evolution
- And then these ideas of right and wrong are enshrined in cultural institutions like marriage
- Religious people insert God in to explain values, when evolution is the real explanation

Moral disagreements:

- I personal don't agree with the ethics of the God of Abraham
- I have no basis for an objective moral standard, but the God of Abraham fails to meet my personal preferences
- Dr. Craig lies when he quotes me, half his quotes are of other people I quoted, not me
- But I'm not going to say which quote he lied about

Goodness is what makes you feel happy:

- Questions of right and wrong depend upon brains
- Brains are natural entities
- Science can measure well-being in brain states
- States of affairs in which the majority of brains have high well-being

I'm a good person because I don't like the Taliban:

- The Taliban is bad because the majority of their brains don't have high well-being
- I think throwing battery acid in women's faces is bad
- The Taliban thinks that throwing battery acid in women's faces is good
- What determines right and wrong is brain states of well-being

Insults against religion = Dr. Craig:

- religion / Dr. Craig doesn't value evidence
- religion / Dr. Craig doesn't value logic
- religion / Dr. Craig doesn't value intellectual honesty

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

1) Theism is a good foundation for moral values and duties

Harris says:
– Craig thinks that if God doesn't exist, then good and evil would have no meaning

Craig says:
– But Craig says that he is not saying that God is required for moral semantics
– He is addressing the question of the ontological grounding

Harris says:
– The God of the Bible is mean

Craig says:
– divine command theory doesn't require that the Bible be the set of commands
– in any case, the old testament passages can be defended in Paul Copan's book

Harris says:
– Religion isn't needed for universal morality

Craig says:
– the issue isn't universality, because the Nazis could have won, and put in a universal morality
– the issue is if they had won, would there be any standard to condemn them

Harris says:
– Good and evil are related to the number of brain states of well-being

Craig says:
– Harris uses good and evil in non-moral ways
– Harris isn't talking about moral good and moral evil
– Harris is talking about pleasure and misery
– Harris is equating moral good and moral evil with feelings of pleasure and feelings of misery
– Harris claims that the property of being good is identical with human flourishing
– it is possible that the continuum of human well-being is not identical with the moral landscape
– in order for them to be identical, there cannot be this possibility or it fails the law of identity
– you could have psychopaths with happy brain states that represent a peak in the moral landscape

Harris says:
– If we have a moral duty to do anything, we have a duty to avoid feeling miserable"

Craig:
– moral obligations arise when there is an authority who can issue binding commands
– on atheism, there is no authority who can issue binding commands
– without free will, morality makes no sense since there is no free will
– no free will means no moral duties, and no moral responsibilities

Dr. Harris' first rebuttal:

I don’t like Hell and I don’t like suffering and I don’t like Christians:

- There is no evidence that Hell exists
- Think of the parents of the children of people who die in tsunamis
- If God allows people to suffer, then he doesn’t exist, because God’s job is to make us not suffer
- God can’t exist, because some people are born in the wrong culture, and never hear about Jesus
- Some people pray to the Monkey God, why don’t they go to heaven?
- What about the people in the Lord of the Rings, are they going to Hell?
- What about people who repent just before being executed, are they going to heaven?
- God is cruel and unjust because he lets innocent people suffer
- God is worse than a psychopath
- People who believe in God are evil
- People who believe in God are narcissists
- God commanded stuff that I don’t like, so he’s evil
- Suppose God were evil – then people would have to do evil things
- Religious people think that saying Latin phrases turn pancakes into the body of Elvis Presley
- The evidence for God is actually not very good, if you avoid read any Christian scholars
- Christianity is a cult of human sacrifice
- The people who wrote the Bible were really stupid
- Christians are psychopaths

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

Sam Harris cannot make any judgments about moral values and moral duties on atheism
On atheism, there is no foundation for making objective moral judgments

Harris didn’t respond to anything Craig said

Harris says that Christians only believe in God to avoid Hell

Red herrings:

Craig says that people who become Christians do it because God is the good
Christians don’t pursue a relationship with God for fire insurance

The problem of evil
– not relevant to the debate topic

The problem of the unevangelized
– not relevant to the debate topic

Evil actually proves that God exists
– if evil exists, then there is an objective moral standard
– if there is an objective moral standard, then God exists

Harris has no foundation for saying that Christian beliefs are morally bad
Harris has no basis for making moral judgments

Harris' remark that theists are psychopathic
– Harris' remark is as stupid as it is insulting

Harris says that the Old Testament promoted
– first, there was no slavery in the Old Testament it was indentured servitude
– second, that's not relevant to the debate topic

Harris mentions the Taliban
– but the response to the Taliban is not to say that God doesn't exist
– the response to the Taliban is to say that they have the wrong God
– the real God never commanded them to do those things

Dr. Harris' second rebuttal:

I'm a scientist, Craig is stupid, I've meditated with wise yogis and lamas, I don't like the Taliban:

- When I make a scientific case for morality, I didn't really mean that it was scientific
- You just have to assume that misery is morally evil, and happiness is morally good, even if that can't be proved scientifically
- I'm a scientist
- Science is great
- Dr. Craig is stupid
- Dr. Craig is not a scientist
- Science is better than religion
- You can ground an objective standard of morality and objective moral duties and moral responsibility on arbitrary brain states of accidentally evolved biologically determined monkeys
- Dr. Craig's question for me about my unproven assumptions is a stupid question
- I prayed to the Monkey God in a cave and he told me about objective morality
- I have spent a lot of time studying meditation with wise yogis and lamas
- I consider some people to be spiritual Jesus
- I can imagine that Jesus was very spiritual and charismatic
- We don't have to use logic and reason to debate about morality, we can meditate on the Monkey God
- i don't like the Taliban

Dr. Craig's third rebuttal:

Harris didn't reply to anything I said

Harris admitted that psychopaths can occupy the peaks of the moral landscape
So on Harris' view, you can commit unspeakable acts of cruelty and still have a brain state with well-being

Dr. Harris' third rebuttal:

Dr. Craig is a Muslim, Dr. Craig is the Taliban, Dr. Craig is a Muslim Taliban Muslim Jihadi:

- How many of you in the audience are Muslims
- Muslims think that non-Muslims are going to Hell
- Christianity and Islam are identical
- Dr. Craig is a Muslim!
- Dr. Craig is the Taliban!
- Dr. Craig wants to jihad me!

Meet four heroes of the D-Day invasion of Normandy on June 6th, 1944

June 6, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

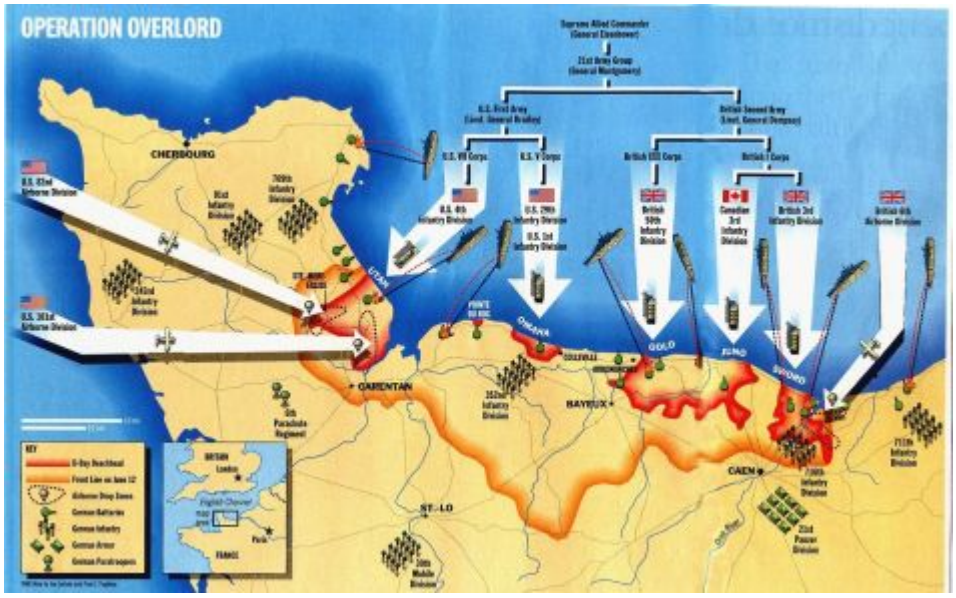

Map of D-Day landings (click for larger image) (courtesy of Time magazine)

I thought it might be a good idea to write up something about D-Day in order to help people understand some of our military history, and to put the spotlight on some real heroes. I don't regard artists, athletes, dancers, singers, actors, or other celebrities as heroes. It really alarms me that so many people know more about these fake heroes than they do about real ones.

Weakness emboldens aggressors

For one thing, many people don't understand how British and American libertarian isolationism made World War 2 into a much bigger mess than it needed to be. As historian Victor Davis Hanson explains in the lecture I linked below, the Allied nations were much stronger and better equipped than the Axis nations before the war started. The Axis nations developed better weapons after the war started. But Germany and Japan didn't think that the Allied nations would do anything if they were aggressive. We know this from their writings and correspondence. They thought that British and Americans were just too scared of war to stop them.

Germany and Japan tested their hypothesis out by re-arming and annexing territory from their neighbors. Britain and America were led by libertarian isolationists, so they didn't fight back. The aggressors correctly understood that libertarian isolationists didn't have the will to oppose them, even if they were weaker than the Allies. But the more they re-armed and annexed territory, the stronger they became. The Allied nations waited too long to confront them. And that's why World War 2 was much harder to win than it needed to be.

Here's a very good lecture about the causes of World War 2 by an actual military

historian, Victor Davis Hanson:

So, that's the first point I wanted to make: libertarian isolationism causes wars. Although libertarians claim to oppose war, they actually cause war, due to their weakness in the face of evil. So who stops wars? People who favor a strong defense, and show a willingness to fight back against aggression are the ones who REALLY oppose wars. This is called "peace through strength", and you can see it in action in the Cold War, where Ronald Reagan defeated the Soviet Union by making their aggression costly.

Heroes of D-Day

My second concern was to promote the real heroes of D-Day, over the fictional heroes of movies, fiction, music, dancing, sports, and other entertainment nonsense.

Here are the four heroes I chose:

- Major John Howard
- Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort
- Brigadier General Norman Cota
- Major Richard Winters

Let's take a look at each of them.

John Howard

Major John Howard led elements of the British 6th Airborne Division to take two vital bridges southeast of Sword beach. He did this in order to prevent German socialist counterattacks coming from the east. After they took the bridges, they had to repulse German tanks with nothing more than their useless PIAT (Projector Infantry Anti-Tank) grenade launchers. The PIAT was nothing more than a grenade launcher powered by a coiled spring. It was very inaccurate, and only effective to 50 yards. But that's all the British paratroops had to stop tanks, and they made it work. You can read about him in this book by Stephen E. Ambrose, entitled: "Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944". This New York Times article tells the story in brief. He also is played by Richard Todd in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Benjamin Vandervoort

Lt. Col. Ben Vandervoort served with the 82nd Airborne Division. I read about how he lead an infantry attack against German Tiger tanks (!) and infantry in Stephen E. Ambrose's book "Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany". Ben Vandervoort broke his ankle during the D-Day landing, but he insisted that the medic just "lace it up tight" so that he could supervise the attacking and holding of Ste. Mere Eglise, southwest of Utah beach, against a vastly superior enemy force. This article tells about how he defended against elite German SS infantry and heavy Tiger tanks at Trois-Ponts, during the Battle of the Bulge. He was outgunned and outnumbered 20 to 1, and had just a few lightly-armed soldiers, two weak 57mm anti-tank guns and some bazookas. He is portrayed by John Wayne in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Norman Cota

Brig. General Norman Cota is my favorite person in World War 2. At 51 years old, he nevertheless landed at D-Day, and rallied terrified Army Rangers to follow him up the bluff, by telling them that Rangers ought to lead the way. “Rangers Lead The Way” later became the motto of the Army Rangers. He always led from the front, demonstrating how to attack a German machine gun position in a farmhouse to a group of American soldiers who were pinned down. He actually grabbed a bunch of grenades and led the assault team against a heavy machine gun! You can read about him in this short article and in Stephen E. Ambrose’s “D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II“. He is portrayed by Robert Mitchum in the famous movie “The Longest Day“.

Richard Winters

Major Richard Winters served in the 101st Airborne Division. Winters led an assault against a superior force of heavy machine guns and 105mm field guns. His tactics were so brilliant that they are still studied at West Point today. You can see Richard Winters and Carwood Lipton in the HBO “Band of Brothers” series, or read this book by Stephen E. Ambrose entitled “Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne, from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest“, which is the basis for that series.

I hope this convinces you that military heroes are far more important than the “heroes” of fiction and entertainment. It’s alarming to me that people invest more and have more respect for characters in Hollywood science fiction movies, and other such make-believe nonsense. We need to be rooted in reality. In reality, men who fight and die fighting evil to protect your freedoms are the real heroes. People who take military history seriously are able to give respect and gratitude where it is due – a very important part of being a mature, moral human being.

Will computers and robots ever become self-aware?

June 7, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

There is a very famous thought experiment from UC Berkeley philosopher John Searle that all Christian apologists should know about. And now everyone who reads the Wall Street Journal knows about it, because of this article.

In that article, Searle is writing about the IBM computer that was programmed to play Jeopardy. Can a robot who wins on Jeopardy be "human"? Searle says no. And his famous Chinese room example (discussed in the article) explains why.

Excerpt:

> Imagine that a person—me, for example—knows no Chinese and is locked in a room with boxes full of Chinese symbols and an instruction book written in English for manipulating the symbols. Unknown to me, the boxes are called "the database" and the instruction book is called "the program." I am called "the computer."
>
> People outside the room pass in bunches of Chinese symbols that, unknown to me, are questions. I look up in the instruction book what I am supposed to do and I give back answers in Chinese symbols.
>
> Suppose I get so good at shuffling the symbols and passing out the answers that my answers are indistinguishable from a native Chinese speaker's. I give every indication of understanding the language despite the fact that I actually don't understand a word of Chinese.
>
> And if I do not, neither does any digital computer, because no computer, qua computer, has anything I do not have. It has stocks of symbols, rules for manipulating symbols, a system that allows it to rapidly transition from zeros to

> ones, and the ability to process inputs and outputs. That is it. There is nothing else.

Here is a link to the full article by John Searle on the Chinese room illustration.

By the way, Searle is a naturalist – not a theist, not a Christian. Now, let's hear from a Christian scholar who can make more sense of this for us.

Here's a related article on "strong AI" by Christian philosopher Jay Richards.

Excerpt:

> Popular discussions of AI often suggest that if you keep increasing weak AI, at some point, you'll get strong AI. That is, if you get enough computation, you'll eventually get consciousness.
>
> The reasoning goes something like this: There will be a moment at which a computer will be indistinguishable from a human intelligent agent in a blind test. At that point, we will have intelligent, conscious machines.
>
> This does not follow. A computer may pass the Turing test, but that doesn't mean that it will actually be a self-conscious, free agent.
>
> The point seems obvious, but we can easily be beguiled by the way we speak of computers: We talk about computers learning, making mistakes, becoming more intelligent, and so forth. We need to remember that we are speaking metaphorically.
>
> We can also be led astray by unexamined metaphysical assumptions. If we're just computers made of meat, and we happened to become conscious at some point, what's to stop computers from doing the same? That makes sense if you accept the premise—as many AI researchers do. If you don't accept the premise, though, you don't have to accept the conclusion.
>
> In fact, there's no good reason to assume that consciousness and agency emerge by accident at some threshold of speed and computational power in computers. We know by introspection that we are conscious, free beings—though we really don't know how this works. So we naturally attribute consciousness to other humans. We also know generally what's going on inside a computer, since we build them, and it has nothing to do with consciousness. It's quite likely that consciousness is qualitatively different from the type of computation that we have developed in computers (as the "Chinese Room" argument, by philosopher John Searle, seems to show). Remember that, and you'll suffer less anxiety as computers become more powerful.
>
> Even if computer technology provides accelerating returns for the foreseeable future, it doesn't follow that we'll be replacing ourselves anytime soon. AI enthusiasts often make highly simplistic assumptions about human nature and biology. Rather than marveling at the ways in which computation illuminates our understanding of the microscopic biological world, many treat biological systems as nothing but clunky, soon-to-be-obsolete conglomerations of hardware and

> software. Fanciful speculations about uploading ourselves onto the Internet and transcending our biology rest on these simplistic assumptions. This is a common philosophical blind spot in the AI community, but it’s not a danger of AI research itself, which primarily involves programming and computers.
>
> AI researchers often mix topics from different disciplines—biology, physics, computer science, robotics—and this causes critics to do the same. For instance, many critics worry that AI research leads inevitably to tampering with human nature. But different types of research raise different concerns. There are serious ethical questions when we’re dealing with human cloning and research that destroys human embryos. But AI research in itself does not raise these concerns. It normally involves computers, machines, and programming. While all technology raises ethical issues, we should be less worried about AI research—which has many benign applications—than research that treats human life as a means rather than an end.

When I am playing a game on the computer, I know exactly why what I am doing is fun – I am conscious of it. But the computer has no idea what I am doing. It is just matter in motion, acting on it’s programming and the inputs I supply to it. And that’s all computers will ever do. Trust me, this is my field. I have the BS and MS in computer science, and I have studied this area. AI has applications for machine learning and search problems, but consciousness is not on the radar. You can’t get there from here.

Are Christians responsible for making plans and making good decisions?

June 8, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful post on decision making and the will of God posted on Neil's blog. In his post, Neil explains the Biblical model for making good decisions.

Excerpt:

> **Really short version:** Aside from direct and clear personal revelation from God, you don't have access to his sovereign will when making decisions. Therefore you must look at other factors. **If it isn't moral, don't do it. If it is moral but not wise, don't do it. If it is moral and wise, then use your personal preferences.**
>
> Using this model you can end up with a wise and biblical decision, but you have avoided the traps of the "God told me to ____" routine. People who run around saying that God told them this and that convey a super-spirituality that can leave less mature believers wondering if they really have a relationship with God (i.e., "God doesn't tell me every little thing to do, so maybe I don't really know him.").

He has a helpful picture posted as well:

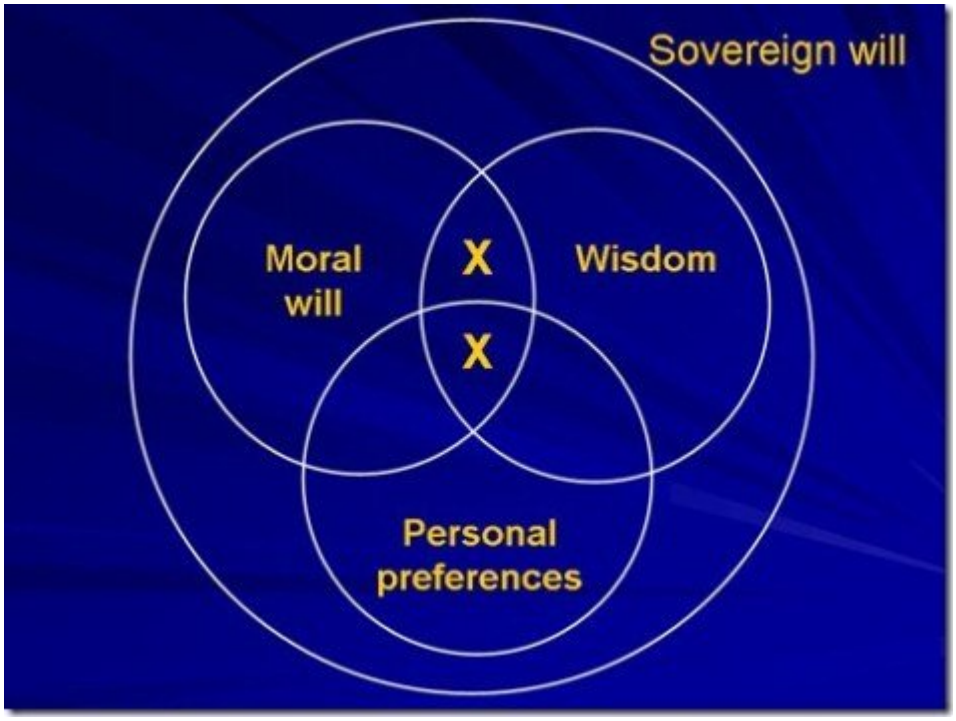

This is actually a very important topic for me, because I like making plans and making good decisions. I like being the quarterback or squad leader of my own life. I like to pick objectives and then make plans to achieve them. (Nothing too exotic, just simple stuff like saving money or reading more books)

Actually, I really oppose the idea that God has a magical fairy tale will for each person that will make them happy and fulfilled. For me, life isn't like that. I don't expect God to

lead me along like a child at a scavenger hunt. I expect to survey the battlefield where I am and then *do something* to make a difference. There are lots of things you can do that will please God. Should you focus on your career and sponsor apologetics conferences? Or should you use your spare time preparing Sunday school lessons? *There are lots of good things you could do to please God*. Your job is to pick the one that will be the most effective. It doesn't matter if it makes you happy, it only matters if it's effective and if you are good at it.

Who is Rifleman Dodd?

A while back, I was busily working my way through the U.S. Marine Corps Official Reading List, and I came across a book by C.S. Forester called *Rifleman Dodd*, or alternatively titled *Death to the French*. It's a work of historical fiction that takes place during the Napoleonic wars. The story is about a British marksman named Dodd, who is cut off from his own lines during a withdrawal maneuver. He is subsequently left to fend for himself behind enemy lines. An ordinary man might be full of despair and forget about his mission entirely. But Dodd is no ordinary man. Not only does he find a way to survive by finding food to eat, water to drink and places to sleep, but he also tries to remember his orders and to think about what he can do to advance the cause of his General, the Duke of Wellington.

Here's an excerpt from a gritty book review:

> It's about a green-coated British infantry rifleman in the Napoleonic Wars, an age when rifles were a novelty and most of the army was red-coated and carried muskets. Private Matthew Dodd gets separated from his regiment during a retreat and finds himself stranded behind enemy (French) lines in Portugal. With the occasional aid of some natives, but mostly on his own, he harasses the French with his rifle and tries to prevent them from building a bridge across the Tagus River. It's a remarkable tale of survival and solitary achievement, of a rank-and-file soldier who lives by his wits and slowly learns to make plans without orders, and shows leadership qualities and a knowledge of warfare.

I think we're in the same situation as Dodd.

There is no point in us looking for breadcrumb trails to happiness at this point. That's not the point of Christianity. The point of Christianity is friendship with God, imitation of Christ, honoring moral obligations, self-sacrificial love for your neighbor (and even your enemies!), and dedication to the truth – whether anyone else likes you or not. It's not supposed to make you happy, and it's not necessarily going to be a normal life like everyone else has. Things may not work out the way you'd like them to.

We seem to be making such a big deal about compassion and forgiveness in the Christian life these days – such a big emphasis on our feelings. Almost like we have forgotten that we have obligations to our friend. A relationship doesn't mean that one person does whatever they feel like, completely disregarding the character and goals of the other person and then is automatically granted forgiveness whenever they want it. That's not a

friendship – that's using someone else for your own ends.

For a lot of people today, Christianity only comes into play after you've made a mistake and you're feeling guilty. For example, suppose you decide to go to a party with your secular friends, then you drink too much, and you do something sexual that you shouldn't have done. Or maybe you watched some prosperity gospel preacher on TV, then made irresponsible business decisions thinking that God would bail you out and make you rich, and you went bankrupt. Most people think Christianity is for this situation: you're a Christian so that you don't have to feel guilty about sin. And so that you can tell people that God forgives you, so that they can't think anything bad about you, either. You sort of get your idea about what you should be doing *in order to feel good* from the culture, and God is just there to forgive it all when it blows up in your face.

But in my case, putting myself in a situation like that is not even possible. I'm more likely to try to plan to do something for God. Like, I might try to mentor a young Christian by sending them books. Or, I might try to teach a class in apologetics at my church. These are things that are for God, not for me. I'm not just being dragged along by the culture, and trying to find happiness by feeling good (e.g. – with alcohol) or being liked by non-Christians. And if my plans fail because the mentoree doesn't grow up into anything, or nobody comes to my apologetics class, that's when I go to God and say "I screwed up. but can I still be in your army?" And God always says yes to that. You don't have to be the best player on the team for the Coach to like you. He already likes you.

One of the great things about being a Christian is that you can never lose your identity as a Christian by failing to do something for him that you planned to do. That's what forgiveness is for. If you set out to do something for God's glory, and you mess it all up, that's OK. But I do think that, like Dodd, our ambition should not be about just making ourselves happy, or making non-Christians like us. We should be trying to make plans and carry them out for God.

That's how I understand forgiveness. It's not just something that's there for you to use to fix your feelings when you've been irresponsible while seeking your own happiness in secular ways. It's also there when you're trying to do something good for God, and you fail. A lot of times in life you try your best, but you fail, and then you lose something that you really wanted. With God, when you try your best for his glory, and fail, you don't lose your identity as a member of his team. I think that not losing your identity in Christ is even more important than not feeling guilty about selfish decision making.

So, have you got a plan to serve your General? Let's focus more on what operations we're planning for God than on being happy and being popular with non-Christians. Your life should not be all about you, with God just there to make your bad feelings go away. Your life should be about God's goals and God's interests.

Domestic violence rates are higher for homosexual couples than for heterosexual couples

June 9, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young people seem to like gay marriage more than they like individual liberties

Since June is Pride Month, I thought it might be a good idea to take a look at some data to decide what we should be telling young people about homosexuality. Although people on the secular left are very easily offended by any sort of disapproval these days, the safest approach is still to present the scientific facts – maybe from behind an alias (just for safety).

From the left-leaning Atlantic Monthly.

Excerpt:

> Data on the rates of same-sex partner abuse have only become available in recent years. Even today, many of the statistics and materials on domestic violence put out by organizations like the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Justice still focus exclusively on heterosexual relationships, and specifically heterosexual women. While the CDC does provide some resources on its website for the LGBT population, the vast majority of the information is targeted at women. Materials provided by the CDC for violence prevention and survivor empowerment prominently feature women in their statistics and photographs.
>
> In 2013, the CDC released the results of a 2010 study on victimization by sexual orientation, and admitted that "little is known about the national prevalence of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking among lesbian, gay, and bisexual women and men in the United States." The report found that bisexual

> women had an overwhelming prevalence of violent partners in their lives: 75 percent had been with a violent partner, as opposed to 46 percent of lesbian women and 43 percent of straight women. For bisexual men, that number was 47 percent. For gay men, it was 40 percent, and 21 percent for straight men.
>
> The most recent statistics available on same-sex intimate partner violence from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, which focuses on LGBT relationships, reported 21 incidents of intimate partner homicides in the LGBT community, the highest ever. Nearly half of them were gay men and, for the second year in a row, the majority of survivors were people of color—62 percent.
>
> In 2012, NCAVP programs around the country received 2,679 reports of intimate partner violence, a decrease of around 32 percent from 2011. However the report noted that many of the NCAVP's member organizations were operating at decreased capacity due to limiting the number of cases they were able to take. The report said that excluding data from organizations, there was actually a 29 percent increase in reports of violence from 2011 to 2012.

That article comes from a source with a very clear pro-gay-agenda bias, so let's take a look at an article from the Family Research Council to balance it out. They rely on mainstream data sources as well, like the CDC, the DOJ, the US Census, etc.

Excerpt:

> A study in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence examined conflict and violence in lesbian relationships. The researchers found that 90 percent of the lesbians surveyed had been recipients of one or more acts of verbal aggression from their intimate partners during the year prior to this study, with 31 percent reporting one or more incidents of physical abuse.[69]
>
> In a survey of 1,099 lesbians, the Journal of Social Service Research found that "slightly more than half of the [lesbians] reported that they had been abused by a female lover/partner. The most frequently indicated forms of abuse were verbal/emotional/psychological abuse and combined physical-psychological abuse."[70]
>
> In their book Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them: Battered Gay Men and Domestic Violence,D. Island and P. Letellier report that "the incidence of domestic violence among gay men is nearly double that in the heterosexual population."[71]
>
> […]Homosexual and lesbian relationships are far more violent than are traditional married households:
>
> The Bureau of Justice Statistics (U.S. Department of Justice) reports that married women in traditional families experience the lowest rate of violence compared with women in other types of relationships.[72]
>
> A report by the Medical Institute for Sexual Health concurred,
>
> It should be noted that most studies of family violence do not differentiate

> between married and unmarried partner status. Studies that do make these distinctions have found that marriage relationships tend to have the least intimate partner violence when compared to cohabiting or dating relationships.[73]

In lesbian relationships, the rate of domestic violence is extremely high, from 17% to 45%, depending on the study. I do think that men exert a calming influence on women's emotions, helping them to channel their feelings into words and reasoned arguments. That short-circuits the tendency toward violent outbursts. That's why I urge men, if they must marry, to practice disagreeing and debating with women before the marriage is actualized. You need to find out what this other person does in a conflict situation before you commit to her for life.

J. Warner Wallace: different answers to the question "why are you a Christian?"

June 10, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

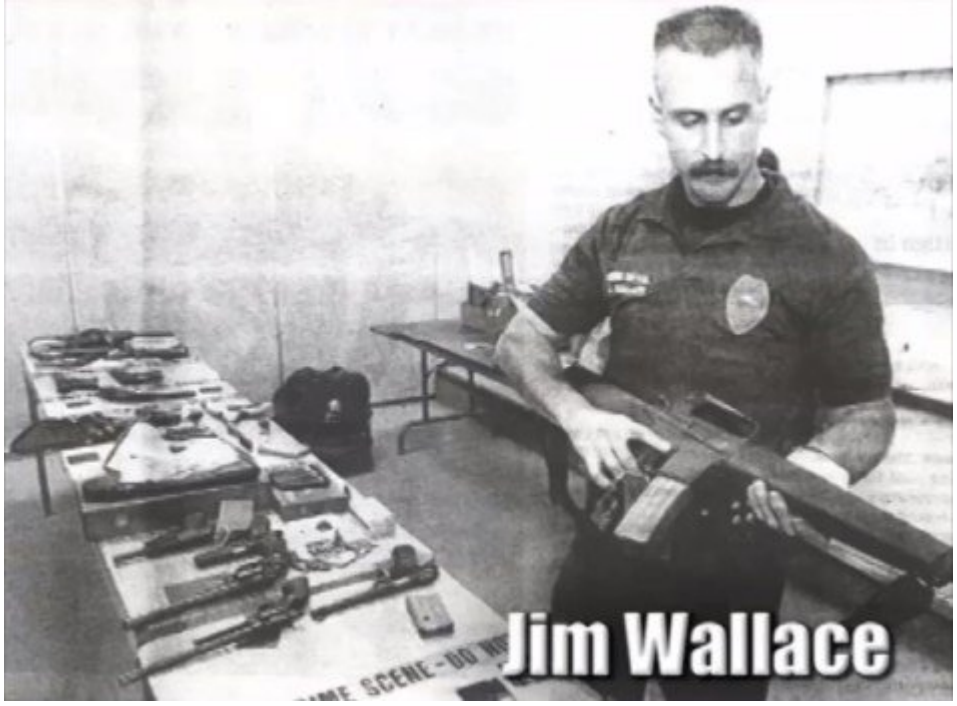

LAPD homicide detective Jim Wallace examining an assault rifle

I sometimes think about the horrible experiences I had encountering "normal" Christians in American churches after having become a Christian on my own through reading the New Testament, reading apologetics, and watching William Lane Craig debates. I heard a lot of different reasons to be a Christian from the church Christians, and what struck me was 1) their reasons had nothing to do with objective truth, and 2) their reasons hadn't prepared them to have serious conversations about Christianity with non-Christians.

Well, J. Warner Wallace recently posted an episode of his podcast about this, and I thought that this might be useful to people who (like me) were confused by what they found in the church.

Here is the video:

And he has a blog post about it, where he explains all the responses to the question "why are you a Christian?" which he got from the church – none of which were like his answer for why he became a Christian.

Here are some answers that were not like his answer:

> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because I Was Raised in the Church**
> I didn't come from a Christian family. I wasn't raised in the church or by people who attended church regularly. While students often tell me this is the reason they're Christians, this wasn't the case for me.
>
> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because My Friends Were Christians**
> I also didn't know any Christians. I was never invited to church by anyone as a

> child, and although I knew Christians in my college years, none of these folks ever invited me to church either. My friends were all happy atheists. I didn't become a Christian to be part of a club.
>
> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because I Wanted to Know God**
> I can honestly say I had no interest in God growing up, while in college, or while a young married man. I felt no "hole" in my life, had no yearning for the transcendent, no sense something was missing. I was happy and content. I didn't become a Christian to fulfill some need.
>
> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because I Wanted to Go to Heaven**
> I was also comfortable with my own mortality. Sure it would be nice if we could all live forever, but that's just not the way it is. Live life to the fullest, enjoy your friends and family while you have them, and stop whining. I didn't become a Christian because I was afraid of dying.
>
> **I Didn't Become a Christian Because I Needed to Change My Life**
> My life prior to becoming a Christian was *great*. I had a meaningful and fulfilling career, a beautiful family, an incredible wife, and lots of friends. I wasn't struggling and looking for a solution. I didn't become a Christian to stop beating my wife or to sober up.

I'm sure that all my readers know that Wallace is a homicide detective, and an evidentialist. He handles evidence and builds cases with evidence, and that's how he approaches his worldview as well. So he didn't answer any of those.

Wallace's answer was different:

> […][A]lthough these reasons might motivate students to *start* their journey, I hope these aren't the only reasons they're *still here*. I'm not sure any of these motivations will suffice when push comes to shove, times get tough or students face the challenges of university life. In the end,*truth* matters more than anything else. I'm not looking for a useful delusion, a convenient social network, or an empty promise. I just want to know what's true. I think the students I met in Montreal resonated with this approach to Christianity. They are already members of the Church, have friends in the group, understand the importance of a relationship with God and the promise of Heaven. Now they want to know if any of this stuff is *true*. It's our job, as Christian Case Makers, to provide them with the answer.

I'm actually much harder on church Christians than he is, because I found that the more fideistic the Churchian, the less you could count on them to act like authentic Christians. I have never met an evidential apologist who was soft on moral questions or tough theology, for example. To me, if you have an evidentialist approach to Christianity, then you have no problem with things like a *bodily* resurrection of Jesus, with *exclusive* salvation through faith alone in Christ alone, with a *literal* eternal separation from God called Hell, and so on.

What about people in other religions? Well, if evidence is your first concern, then it doesn't bother you that someone of a different religion won't be saved. For example, I like my Mormon friends, but I know that they're wrong in their belief in an eternal universe. When I present evidence to them for the beginning of the universe, they just tell me that science isn't as important to them as the burning in the bosom, their family, their community, etc. Well, if those things are more important to you than knowing the truth about God as he really is, then I'm fine with whatever God decides to do with you when you eventually get old, die and face judgement.

A truth-centered approach to life makes you indifferent to what people think of you. And that's something that we could all use as Christians, especially those Christians who are more driven by feelings than by facts. A lot of people raised in the church drop out because they go somewhere (e.g. – college) where they are made to feel bad for being different. That's not a problem for evidentialists. We like to be right. *We don't care* what people *who are wrong* think about us. Christians should all read 1 Corinthians 4:1-4, and accept the fact that being truth-centered isn't going to make you popular.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Is it the man's responsibility to pursue the woman, or the other way around?

June 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Telling a woman how to make wise decisions protects her

If you ask this question theoretically, most people will probably say that it's the man's responsibility, especially in the church. Is this because women don't like the idea of having to plan out and achieve something? Maybe. But what is interesting is that the man-pursues view is very popular in the church, even though it's not very common in the Bible. Dalrock posted something about this.

He writes:

> One comment I see from fathers with surprising regularity is that their unmarried daughter is in a great position to find a husband because she's not remotely interested in the kind of men who express interest in her.
>
> I… think this is tied into the erroneous idea that the Bible teaches that men should pursue and women should judge the performance. But it isn't the Bible that teaches this ethic, it is the religion of Courtly Love that teaches this. Think of the only two women to have books of the Bible named after them. Both Ruth and Esther pursued their eventual husbands. Ruth's pursuit of Boaz resulted in her being the grandmother of King David, which meant that Christ would come from her line. Esther's pursuit of Ahasuerus allowed her to save the Jews.

Cane Caldo was actually the first to write about this on his blog:

> According to traditionalists (and others): Men are supposed to chase, and women are supposed to be caught. Or they might say: Men are to initiate, and women are to respond.
>
> […]If you fancy yourself a traditionalist… [s]earch your Bible for a story about a

> man who woos a woman directly.

So, just consider that for a minute. Ruth is probably the best example of a woman who just makes decisions to get on with life, and happens across a wealthy single man. Then she consults with Naomi and takes action to pursue that man. It works out for her. Where in the Bible does the man pursue the woman?

Derek Ramsey was able to come up with two examples, and he commented on Dalrock's blog:

> You can find examples of all cases in the Bible: fully arranged marriages (for Isaac), where the man pursued the woman (Jacob; Hosea), where the woman pursued the man (Ruth; Esther), and where both pursued each other or it wasn't clearly stated one way or the other (Samson; Solomon). I would argue that pursuit (by either sex) is neither condemned nor encouraged. Each situation is different and there is no rule one way or the other.

I think that Derek wins the argument, here. But I still think that practically speaking, in such a time (of feminism) as this, it's much much wiser for women to take action to "pursue" men she is interested in. That doesn't mean asking men out, though.

thedeti explains in a comment:

> A man setting his sights on one or two or three women and then pursuing them really hard trying to get on their radar isn't the best way to find a woman who's interested in him and who is the best match.
>
> Instead, he should be his best version of himself, and then see which women are tossing subtle signs of interest at him. Which women just kind of show up where he is, which ones make a point to say hi to him, which ones reach out to him, which ones contact him, which ones strike up conversations with him. And then from THOSE women he should select a few he is interested in and then pursue them.
>
> That certainly isn't what most Christians are teaching their children. I certainly wasn't taught this.

And a bit later, thedeti says:

> In the current #MeToo climate, false rape allegations, and sexual harassment's current definition as "any conduct or words uttered by any man anywhere that any woman within sight or earshot didn't like", this model can be downright dangerous for men.
>
> A man can no longer just pick a few girls he's interested in and pursue them. If he selects some girls who dont' like him, he's in for a world of hurt by trying to "perform" for them. If he selects one who kind of likes him, but he makes even one wrong move or says one remotely mildly offensive thing, he's done. Not only will she know about it, all her friends will know too.

> When a woman is very interested and shows it, she'll be much more forgiving of his expected missteps. That gives him room to run, and gives a budding relationship the space it needs to germinate and grow.

Deti advises women to just show up in places where men they are interested in are, and not actively discourage them. Maybe ask him questions about what he is doing as a Christian, and ask for his advice about something he knows about, etc. And deti warns women to consider that in a culture where false accusations and frivolous no-fault divorces are everywhere, men with good educations, degrees and finances will be very careful about pursuing women.

My thoughts

I was speaking to someone who thinks that she wants to be pursued by a man. I suggested that she read the book of Ruth to counter her view. The first and most important piece of advice I gave her was to "cross the room" for any man she is interested in. Stand up, walk directly at him, and speak right in his face. Maintain eye contact and speak directly to him about things he is interested in. On another day, I told her that the most important thing you can ask a man about is his vision to serve God.

As women age and lose their beauty, the only thing that remains is the man's passion – his plan – and the place of the woman within it. Men stay in love with women who have invested in the plan they made to serve God. Naturally, it's POINTLESS to choose any man unless he has a plan to serve God effectively that he has demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice for. In my case, writing this blog is a sacrifice, and giving money to Christian apologists and pro-life debaters is a sacrifice. A woman should be skeptical about anything a man says – look at what he has already done for his vision, and whether he is actually practical and determined enough to achieve anything. That's where you'll find your place. And that's what you need to investigate in a husband candidate. Standing back and remaining passive, waiting to be pursued, is just going to attract a lot of non-Christian men who are *pursuing you for sex*. If the man is pursuing you, and he hasn't told you his vision (why he needs you as his wife anyway), then he wants sex.

The pursuit of women by non-Christian alpha male bad boys seems to be welcomed, surprisingly, by a lot of passive Christian women who kind of lie back and expect to just acquiesce to experiences that feel good. Women today don't like to think about marriage in a structured way. And they especially don't want to be asked by men about past decisions, demonstrated abilities, future wife responsibilities and obligations, etc. (How dare men evaluate them for a marriage plan!) They don't want marriage, defined as self-sacrificial commitment. They want marriage as constant tingles, supplied by an alpha male bad boy who exists solely to generate feelings of happiness in them, and feelings of envy in their girlfriends. Think about marriage as a plan? That's boring. Let's get drunk and hook up with an alpha male bad boy, and see if he calls back after the abortion.

Alpha male bad boys feel good (for a while) and this is how women get trapped into relationships with men who have no reason to commit to them. A much better strategy is to stop being attracted to alpha male bad boys, and deliberately engage in conversations

with marriage-ready men. As my friend Lindsay says, you need to learn to become attracted to men who have a vision that will survive the loss of your youth and beauty.

In my own case, I'll be able to retire at 50 with a net worth well north of 7 figures. Because of this, it would be stupid for me to waste my time pursuing Christian women whose criteria for men has nothing to do with the marriage enterprise, and is *INDISTINGUISHABLE* from the criteria used by non-Christian women. The *ONLY* thing that would catch my eye at this point is a woman who is equal to me (chaste, no tattoos, STEM degree(s), debt-free, married parents, house or savings, into apologetics, conservative politics, and between the ages of 23-28). And that's a minimum. And she can forget about being pursued by me. She'll have to approach me, and question me about what my plan is, and where she would fit into it.

I've often been told by wise female Christian advisors that I need to do a better job of showing off my situation to women. But if I spent the money on sparkly things and fun, I wouldn't be financially secure, would I? It's up to women to stop being so shallow and emotional. They need to look beyond appearances and fun. They need to have a marriage focus, and they need to choose men, show up and start investigating and investing. I simply don't have the time to flail around in a feminist culture where women, including Christian women, are woefully unqualified for the marriage enterprise. It's not my job, after having made thousands of good decisions, to risk my fortune by pursuing women who have made thousands of bad decisions (promiscuity, debt, useless degrees, etc). The entitled attitudes of women today, including Christian women, is nothing short of astonishing to men like me who have spent a lifetime being careful about being chaste, sober, practical, frugal and effective.

Alistair Begg has a great sermon series on Ruth that emphasizes Ruth's agency, and her willingness to make decisions that were practical without any sort of being led by feelings or being nudged by God. Christian women, if you want to get married, then get to work on finding a man and making it easy for him to choose you.

What does the common practice of withholding sex reveal about women?

June 12, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dennis Prager features a lot of discussions about male-female relationships on his show, particularly during the male-female hour. I think this is one of the parts of his show that I really like best, because he knows what he is talking about.

He did a two part series a while back on 1) male sexuality and 2) what women should do about it within a marriage.

Part 1 is here.

Excerpt:

> It is an axiom of contemporary marital life that if a wife is not in the mood, she need not have sex with her husband. Here are some arguments why a woman who loves her husband might want to rethink this axiom.
>
> First, women need to recognize how a man understands a wife's refusal to have sex with him: A husband knows that his wife loves him first and foremost by her willingness to give her body to him. This is rarely the case for women. Few women know their husband loves them because he gives her his body (the idea sounds almost funny). This is, therefore, usually a revelation to a woman. Many women think men's natures are similar to theirs, and this is so different from a woman's nature, that few women know this about men unless told about it.
>
> This is a major reason many husbands clam up. A man whose wife frequently denies him sex will first be hurt, then sad, then angry, then quiet. And most men will never tell their wives why they have become quiet and distant. They are afraid to tell their wives. They are often made to feel ashamed of their male sexual nature, and they are humiliated (indeed emasculated) by feeling that they are reduced to having to beg for sex.
>
> When first told this about men, women generally react in one or more of five ways…

He then explains the 5 ways that women respond to this.

Here's one:

> 1. You have to be kidding. That certainly isn't my way of knowing if he loves me. There have to be deeper ways than sex for me to show my husband that I love him.

And this is the common mistake that some feminist women make because they think that men are just hairy women with no feelings and desires of their own that are distincly theirs. In the past, *all* women understood how men are different than women, but today almost no younger feminist women do. In fact, many younger women today struggle with

the idea that there is anything different about men that they need to learn. The only thing that they need to know is what makes women happy, and that it is everyone else's job to make women happy, so that women can then behave nicely (whatever that means). Younger feminist women today often think that they only need to be in touch with their own feelings – and that men and children simply have to get used to the idea that they have no right to make any demands on a woman – she has no moral obligations in a marriage.

Here's another from the list:

> 4. You have it backwards. If he truly loved me, he wouldn't expect sex when I'm not in the mood.

I think this whole problem of feminist women not understanding men, and of demeaning male feelings and values, is very serious. In my opinion, there is a whole lot of work that needs to be done by feminism-influenced women in order to fix this problem. The best place to learn about this is in Dr. Laura's book "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands". It's like an application form for a serious relationship. Sex is one thing, but a serious man should insist that a woman take him seriously – and take marriage and children seriously. Pre-marital sex, having fun, getting drunk, and going out, etc. are not the right foundation for a relationship that is defined by the need for mutual self-sacrifice. There is no such thing as a "feminist" marriage – marriage is not about selfishness and playing the victim.

I actually had a conversation with a Christian woman once who said that women should not be obligated to do things that they didn't feel like doing. I asked her if men were obligated to go to work when they didn't feel like going. She said yes, and acted as though I were crazy for asking. I just laughed, because she didn't even see the inconsistency. Many young feminist women today just don't understand men, and they don't want to understand them. They just want what they want and in the quickest way possible. Understand the needs of men and children, or how feminist-inspired laws discourage men from committing to marriage and parenting, are of no interest at all.

Part 2 is here.

Excerpt:

> Here are eight reasons for a woman not to allow not being in the mood for sex to determine whether she denies her husband sex.

He then explains the eight reasons.

Here's one of them:

> 7. Many contemporary women have an almost exclusively romantic notion of sex: It should always be mutually desired and equally satisfying or one should not engage in it. Therefore, if a couple engages in sexual relations when he wants it and she does not, the act is "dehumanizing" and "mechanical." Now, ideally, every time a husband and wife have sex, they would equally desire it and equally

> enjoy it. But, given the different sexual natures of men and women, this cannot always be the case. If it is romance a woman seeks — and she has every reason to seek it — it would help her to realize how much more romantic her husband and her marriage are likely to be if he is not regularly denied sex, even of the non-romantic variety.

This makes the point that many young feminist women today do not really understand that they are, in a sense, capable of changing their husband's conduct by the way they act themselves. I think that younger feminist women seem to think that their role in the relationship is to sort of do nothing and wait for the man to serve them. But relationships take work, and they take work from both participants.

At the end of the article, Prager makes a general point about women that I think needs to be emphasized over and over and over:

> That solution is for a wife who loves her husband — if she doesn't love him, mood is not the problem — to be guided by her mind, not her mood, in deciding whether to deny her husband sex.

I think that is an excellent question to ask a woman. What does it mean to love a man? I was forwarded one amazing response from a Calvinist woman recently in which she explained several things that she wanted to do to meet a particular man's needs and make his life easier, and what she was prepared to do *now* in order to show him that she really could do handle the role. I think that she said these things out of sympathy and understanding of that man, and that was very encouraging.

But I think that kind of seriousness about taking of someone else as they really are, self-sacrificially, is rare. And it makes me wonder what people think that marriage is when they get into the church and make vows that, ostensibly, will require self-sacrifice. What do women think that marriage is? What is the goal of it? What makes a marriage successful? Why do women think that men marry? What do men get out of marriage? What are the woman's responsibilities to the man in a marriage? I think these are questions that men should ask women. And the should not be satisfied with glib answers. Men should demand that books be read, that essays be written, that skills be developed, and that the woman's life experiences show that she has understood what will be expected from her and why.

I think that it's a good idea for men to try to get married, but they should be careful to make sure that the woman they choose is sensitive to their needs, just as men ought to be sensitive to the needs of women.

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalistic alternatives to the Big Bang

June 13, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students

Here's the lecture, which was given in 2004 at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

This lecture might be a little advanced for beginners, but if you stretch your mind first, you shouldn't tear anything. (Note: standard disclaimers apply if you do tear something!)

The description of the video states:

> This is quite simply one of the best lectures William Lane Craig (a philosopher of science) has given. Craig explores the origins of the universe. He argues for a beginning of the universe, while refuting scientific models like the Steady State Theory, the Oscillating Theory, Quantum Vacuum Fluctuation Model, Chaotic Inflationary Theory, Quantum Gravity Theory, String Theory, M-Theory and Cyclic Ekpyrotic Theory.

And here is the description of the lecture from Reasonable Faith:

> A Templeton Foundation lecture at the University of Colorado, Boulder, laying out the case from contemporary cosmology for the beginning of the universe and its theological implications. Includes a lengthy Q & A period which features previous critics and debate opponents of Dr. Craig who were in attendance, including Michael Tooley, Victor Stenger, and Arnold Guminski.

Craig has previously debated famous atheists Stenger and Tooley previously. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A time of this lecture. Imagine – having laid out your entire case to two people who have debated you before and who know your arguments

well. What did they ask Craig, and how did he respond?

The scientific evidence

The Big Bang cosmology that Dr. Craig presents is the standard model for how the universe came into being. It is a theory based on six lines of experimental evidence.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe
3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

It's probably a good idea to be familiar with these if you are presenting this argument, because experimental science is a reliable way of knowing about reality.

Published research paper

This lecture by Dr. Craig is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Here's the peer-reviewed article that the lecture is based on.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

If you want something to post on your Twitter or Facebook that is much shorter than this

lecture, then you should check out this quick 4-minute explanation of the kalam argument.

Now in America: teachers, social workers, and youth shelters are coming for your kids

June 14, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, I've blogged before about cases from outside the United States, like this one from Canada, where the secular leftists decide to seize a child from parents, because they know better than the parents what is best for the child of the parents. I hope you took the time to pull your children out of public schools, and move to a red state. Because guess what? It's here now.

Consider this article from June 2021 by Abigail Shrier, posted at City Journal, the Journal of the Manhattan Institute.

It starts with this:

> Ahmed is a Pakistani immigrant, a faithful Muslim, and until recently, a financial consultant to Seattle's high-tech sector. But when he reached me by phone in October 2020, he was just one more frightened father. Days earlier, he and his wife had checked their 16-year-old son into Seattle Children's Hospital for credible threats of [self-ending]. Now, Ahmed was worried that the white coats who had gently admitted his son to their care would refuse to return him.
>
> "They sent an email to us, you know, 'you should take your 'daughter' to the gender clinic,'" he told me.
>
> At first, Ahmed (I have changed names in this essay to protect the identities of minor children) assumed there had been a mistake. He had dropped off a *son*, Syed, to the hospital, in a terrible state of distress. Now, the email he received from the mental health experts used a new name for that son and claimed he was Ahmed's daughter. "They were trying to create a customer for their gender clinic . . . and they seemed to absolutely want to push us in that direction," he said when I spoke to him again this May, recalling the horror of last October. "We had calls with counselors and therapists in the establishment, telling us how important it is for him to change his gender, because that's the only way he's going to be better out of this [self-ending] depressive state."

Got that? So if you oppose what the "experts" tell you, then you're exposing your child to potential self-ending. And it you don't take their advice, then they feel justified in taking your child from you. Hospital workers, social workers, counselors and therapists.

Now, most people might be tempted to panic and show their opposition to hormone blockers, and sex-reassignment surgery.

But this father was smart:

> But unlike some other parents I would later speak with, Ahmed's cool head prevailed. Believing he might be walking into a trap, Ahmed reached out to both

> a lawyer and a psychiatrist friend he trusted. The psychiatrist gave him advice that he believes saved his son, saying, in Ahmed's words: "You have to be very, very careful, because if you come across as just even a little bit anti-trans or anything, they're going to call the Child Protective Services on you and take custody of your kid." The lawyer told Ahmed the same: "What you want to do is agree with them and take your kid home. When the gender counselors advise you to 'affirm,' go along with it. Just say 'Uh-huh, uh-huh, okay, let's take him home, and we'll go to the gender clinic.'"
>
> Ahmed assured Seattle Children's Hospital that he would take his son to a gender clinic and commence his son's transition. Instead, he collected his son, quit his job, and moved his family of four out of Washington.

Was he overreacting? Here are the state laws in Washington:

> Minors age 13 and up are entitled to admit themselves for inpatient and outpatient mental health treatment without parental consent. Health insurers are forbidden from disclosing to the insured parents' sensitive medical information of minor children—such as that regarding "gender dysphoria [and] gender affirming care." Minors aged 13 to 18 can withhold mental health records from parents for "sensitive" conditions, which include both "gender dysphoria" and "gender-affirming care." Insurers in Washington must cover a wide array of "gender-affirming treatments" from tracheal shaves to double mastectomies.
>
> **Put these together, and a seventh grader could be entitled to embark on "gender affirming care"—which may include anything from a provider using the child's name and pronouns to the kid preparing to receive a course of hormones—without her parents' permission, against her parents' wishes, covered by her parents' insurance, and with the parents kept in the dark by insurance companies and medical providers.**

But the laws are similar in other Democrat-run states, too:

> Oregon passed a law permitting minors 15 and older to obtain puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgeries at taxpayers' expense—all without parental consent. In 2018, California passed a similar bill for all children in foster care, age 12 and up. The California state senate is now considering an amendment to the Confidentiality of Medical Information Act that would bar health insurers from disclosing medical information to parents about their dependents, on pain of criminal liability.

Read the rest of the article, there are more frightening stories. The case of Julie and her battle with the social workers and lawyers at a youth shelter was horrifying. The second to last paragraph has some good advice for parents who have to deal with the social workers.

Going forward, parents will face challenges to from school teachers, school counselors,

social workers, government workers, hospital nurses, hospital doctors, lawyers, judges and police. Any attempt to guide children with morality or wisdom will be labeled “child abuse” that could expose the child to self-ending. And then they will take the child from the parents on that basis.

Should men prefer women who have earned STEM degrees?

June 15, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A few people have asked me about my policy of preferring candidates for wife and mother who have earned STEM degree(s). In this post, I'll explain 5 goals for my marriage. Then I'll explain 6 reasons why a STEM degree helps me to execute that plan. Then I'll answer 3 objections to the STEM degree requirement. Then I'll explain the relevance of STEM for a woman's marriage roles.

What is STEM?

So, to start, STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. A STEM degree is a degree in a STEM field. This includes things like petroleum engineering, bioinformatics, and computer science. But it also includes things like economics, accounting and business. Basically, anything with math that involves solving problems in the real world. Anything that encourages logical reasoning and using evidence to sustain an argument.

My goals for marriage

So, here are my goals for marriage:

- influence the church with apologetics
- influence the university campus (students and professors) with apologetics
- be involved in politics, advocate for conservative policy
- open the house to students and neighbors to teach apologetics and demonstrate a loving marriage
- raise 3-4 financially independent and influential children

Everything I want in a wife is related to this plan. I evaluate women according to these goals, because I want my marriage to make a difference for Christ and His Kingdom. I'm flexible on plans and requirements, so long as the proposed changes result in *a greater impact* for Christ and His Kingdom.

MAJORS WITH HIGH MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR WOMEN*

First Field of Degree 5% code	Percent Female	Median Female Earnings
Pharmacy Pharmaceutical Sciences	42	100,000
Information Sciences	26	75,000
Chemical Engineering	23	72,000
Computer Science	22	70,000
Electrical Engineering	7	70,000
Mechanical Engineering	7	70,000
Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering	17	67,000
Computer Engineering	14	67,000
Business Economics	30	64,000
Civil Engineering	13	62,000

** Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.*

The best majors for women to avoid student loan debt

How a STEM degree relates to marriage

The plan is for my wife to earn a STEM degree, marry me, and work full-time until the first child is born. Then, she stops working and becomes a stay at home mom. She could return to work after the each child reaches 5 years old. My preference is that she not return to work, but instead homeschool the children, or at least monitor their education in private evangelical Christian schools as a stay-at-home mother.

So, how does a woman's having a STEM degree help me to achieve my marriage plan goals?

Here are 6 ways:

1. STEM equips her to homeschool influential and effective children. A wife who has completed high school and college courses in math, science, engineering and/or technology will know how to either homeschool our kids, or monitor their homework and grades so they achieve good academic results. Think of how Asian families raise high-performing children. I want that.

2. STEM teaches her to produce results in the real world, e.g. – working code that solves a problem, lab results, bridges that support a load, etc. In the lab, decisions cannot be made based on feelings or peer approval. The lab doesn't respect horoscopes, devotions, romance novels, essentual oils, romantic comedies, "The Secret" or "The Law of Attraction".

3. STEM equips her to argue apologetics from her experience of using reason, evidence, reality-based testing. All Christians need to know how to defend their core beliefs (God exists, etc.) to non-Christians. That means doing what works. And what works is logical argumentation supported by evidence. The best kind of evidence is scientific evidence.

Then historical evidence. Confidence comes from competence at practical, real-world disciplines.

4. STEM degrees are a path to high paying jobs. Women who are debt-free are better to marry, because they don't delay the process of buying a house and having children. Any kind of debt has to be paid off first. I'm not looking for a big spender, I'm looking for someone who can earn and save. The more children we can afford to have, the bigger our influence will be. Also, women who choose STEM demonstrate that they can delay gratification, and not be a slave to FOMO, YOLO, "living in the moment", etc.

5. STEM equips women to find work easily, so she doesn't feel pressured to accept a bad marriage proposal. She can move out and start saving money. She can buy apologetics books, lectures and debates. She can buy books on economics, marriage and parenting. She can prepare herself to attract the right man, and she can evaluate men to see if they are prepared for marriage.

6. Both the STEM departments AND the STEM workplaces less likely to be woke than non-STEM departments and workplaces. She will be able to hold to her convictions more easily in an environment where results matter more than having the "right" (left) opinions.

Objections to preferring a wife with a STEM degree

1. A woman with a STEM degree will not want to quit her job and become a stay at home mom during the critical period from birth to age 2, or even better, age 5.

2. A woman who takes years off for child-bearing and early childhood years will not be able to resume her job at the same level of pay.

3. Even in STEM departments, a woman will be exposed to an environment with secular left indoctrination, drunkenness and promiscuity. She is unlikely to come out of college as a virgin.

Responses to objections to the STEM requirement

Points 1) and 2) apply to every kind of degree, not just STEM. Any woman who does 4 years of college in any field will be "wasting" it if she stops working. First, in my plan, her education is to equip her to educate her children, because I trust her more than any teacher or stranger to do that important job. Teachers are not paid to produce results – they are unionized, and not paid based on performance. Second, even women with STEM degrees would generally prefer to work part-time or not at all. They want to stay with their young children. Third, we don't need the money. That's why I suffered through my BS and MS to earn 6 figures and have a 7 figure net worth. We don't need her to work.

For point 3), I'm not saying that EVERY woman who graduates with a STEM degree is perfect for marriage. I'm saying that a STEM degree helps to have a marriage that is influential for Christ and His Kingdom. I'm open to other majors, *so long as they address the concerns and goals I specified.* I'm even open to a different plan. But the overriding concern is that the marriage count for something for the Boss. Even with a STEM degree, the man still has to ask the woman questions about politics and parenting. He still has to evaluate her sobriety, chastity and frugality. A STEM degree is just a starting point.

The difference STEM makes for apologetics

I think it's obvious that having a wife who has taken courses and even worked a few years before the first child arrives helps her to be able to educate her kids and / or monitor their performance. But it also allows her use apologetics more persuasively on the university campus, in the church, and if we open up the home to college students and neighbors for movies / meals / discussions.

For example, take the fine-tuning argument. A knowledge of physics and chemistry helps you to explain why changing the fundamental forces results in a universe that does not support complex, embodied life. A knowledge of probability theory (e.g. – product rule) helps you to argue for intelligent design in the origin of life. And what about logic? Even in computer science, we had to study symbolic logic, the rules of inference, conditional proofs, Bayes' Theorem, etc.

My wife's job is to make the big picture of education clear to the kids, so they know what they can do in the real-world with what they are learning. So many Christians underperformed in school because they didn't know the relevance of what they were learning for the task of defending their Christian worldviews. My wife's job is to know how the material being taught relates to real-world goals, like defending Christianity. This is how parents produce children who grow up to be William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer, Luke Barnes or Michael Licona. Boldness comes from knowledge.

Conclusion

First, I hope this post convinces women to start planning for their marriages early. You need to know things that matter for two reasons: 1) to attract a quality man, 2) to evaluate men and filter out the good ones. That means you need to know things like apologetics, politics, etc. Having money helps to buy learning material.

Second, I hope this post convinces men to stop choosing women based on youth and beauty. Your choice of wife will have a huge effect on your influence. Choose a capable, competent partner who complements your strengths with different strengths. Men spend their days in the workplace, where we cannot say much about religion and politics. If you marry an intelligent conservative Christian woman, she can be your voice to the university, the church, and the public square. Not to mention raising effective children. Therefore, choose wisely.

Acknowledgements

My wise friend Laura helped me with this post. Please check out her 10-part series for women on how to choose a husband.

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

June 16, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to video)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

Here's the debate:

Summary

Note: the following debate summary is rated "S" for Snarky. Reader discretion is advised.

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism

- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program
- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent
- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do

maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true
- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not

repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to

the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms

can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah
- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet 9 from Outer Space!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren’t going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

Is the vastness of the universe evidence against God's existence?

June 17, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
Physicist Hugh Ross writes about it in Salvo Magazine.

First a quick blurb about Hugh Ross:

> Hugh Ross launched his career at age seven when he went to the library to find out why stars are hot. Physics and astronomy captured his curiosity and never let go. At age seventeen he became the youngest person ever to serve as director of observations for Vancouver's Royal Astronomical Society. With the help of a provincial scholarship and a National Research Council (NRC) of Canada fellowship, he completed his undergraduate degree in physics (University of British Columbia) and graduate degrees in astronomy (University of Toronto). The NRC also sent him to the United States for postdoctoral studies. At Caltech he researched quasi-stellar objects, or "quasars," some of the most distant and ancient objects in the universe.

Now back to the topic "Is the vastness of the universe incompatible with God's existence?"

Here's Ross' introduction:

> Scientists seem more difficult to please than the golden-haired girl of fairy-tale fame. While Goldilocks troubled herself over the just-right porridge, chair, and bed, astronomers appear preoccupied with the size of the universe.
>
> In the days before telescopes, when an observer could count a few thousand stars in the night sky, many considered the universe too small and unimpressive

> to be the work of an almighty, all-knowing Creator. Only an infinite cosmos, they said, would befit an infinite deity. But then, others argued, an infinite cosmos might eliminate the need for a Creator.
>
> Thanks to the Hubble space telescope, scientists now see that the universe contains roughly 200 billion large- and medium-sized galaxies and about a hundred times as many dwarf galaxies. The stars in those galaxies add up to about fifty billion trillion, and they comprise a mere one percent of the mass of the observable universe.
>
> Because of the travel time of light, the universe humans can observe is really the universe of the past. What researchers know about the expansion and geometry of the universe informs us that the universe of today is at least several hundred times more enormous than the universe we can see. The universe is trillions of trillions of times larger and more spectacular than what the earliest astronomers presumed!
>
> And yet, this new knowledge of the vastness of the universe has led to new complaints. In his book, *God: The Failed Hypothesis,* Victor Stenger says, "If God created the universe as a special place for humanity, he seems to have wasted an awfully large amount of space." Stephen Hawking, in the best-selling science book of all time, *A Brief History of Time,* shares Stenger's view: "Our solar system certainly is a prerequisite for our existence. . . . But there does not seem to be any need for all these other galaxies." So now the universe is too big to befit the all-wise, all-powerful God of the Bible.

I like how he quotes an atheist physicist to get the challenge right. No sense in caricaturing the claim of your opponent.

I formalized Stenger's argument like this:

1. If all things in the universe are not done the way that Victor Stenger likes them, then there is no God.
2. All things in the universe were not done the way Victor Stenger likes them.
3. Therefore, there is no God.

I would deny premise 1, there, since there is no reason to believe that's it's true.

Anyway, let's see what Hugh Ross says:

> The hot big bang model (now firmly established by observations) tells us that at the moment of cosmic creation, the universe was infinitely or near-infinitely hot and compressed, and all the ordinary matter existed in the form of hydrogen. As the universe expanded, it cooled. The rate at which the universe expanded and cooled depended in large part on its mass—the greater the mass, the slower the expansion and cooling rate. The slower the expansion and cooling rate, the more time the universe would spend in the temperature range (13–150 million degrees Centigrade) at which nuclear fusion can occur.

> **Because of its mass, the universe spent about twenty seconds in the nuclear fusion temperature range when it was between three and four minutes old. As a result, 24.77 percent of the universe's hydrogen (by mass) fused into helium. Thus, when stars began to form—about 380,000 years later—they started off composed of about 75 percent hydrogen, 25 percent helium, and trace amounts of deuterium, lithium, and beryllium.**
>
> **In the nuclear furnaces of the stars themselves, more hydrogen fused into helium, and, in addition to the extra helium, all the rest of the elements that appear in the periodic table were synthesized (created). The capacity of stellar nuclear furnaces to produce an abundance of elements heavier than helium (all but two of the elements) depended critically on how much of the universe's initial hydrogen was fused into helium and heavier elements during the first several minutes after the cosmic creation event. How much fusion of the universe's primordial hydrogen actually occurred at this time depended, in turn, on the universe's mass or mass density.**
>
> If the universe's mass (or cosmic mass density) had been even the slightest bit less than a hundred times the fifty billion trillion stars occupying the observable universe, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes of its existence would have proceeded less efficiently. Thus, the cosmos would have been forever incapable of generating elements heavier than helium—elements such as carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, sodium, and potassium—all of which are essential for any conceivable kind of physical life.
>
> On the other hand, if the universe's mass had been even the slightest bit greater, nuclear fusion during the first several minutes after its beginning would have been too productive, and *all* the hydrogen in the universe eventually would have been fused (after just two generations of stars) into elements as heavy as iron or heavier. Again, all the most life-essential elements, including hydrogen itself, would have ceased to exist.

Basically, your body is made up of heavier elements, and if the universe was not as massive as it is (and as old as it is), then there would not be enough heavy elements to make you, or to make massive stars like our Sun which burn steady for long periods of time. We need the heavy elements and we need the steady source of heat.

Dr. Ross has another reason why God would use vast space and long periods of time, and if you want to read that, you can click here. I think that it's important for us all to get used to the idea that we all need to understand science apologetics. God put these evidences into the universe for us to discover and use.

Five reasons why Christians ought to care about economics

June 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the Acton Institute blog.

The five:

1. The Bible Deals with Economic Issues
2. Economics Helps Us Understand the Public Square
3. It Expands Our Model of Discipleship
4. It Enhances Our Theology of Work
5. It Illuminates the Theological Implications of Politics

I want to choose just one of these, but I have to choose two, because they rock my socks off:

2. Economics Helps Us Understand the Public Square

> Second, an understanding of economics and especially of political economy can help us understand what is going on in the world around us. The general election…is impossible to follow without some understanding of the implications of Obamacare and its impact on Medicare, the federal deficit, and the long-term effects of continued deficit spending. The posturing on the part of Republicans and Democrats sometimes seems like little more than rhetoric, but the one who understands what is really at stake can help lead people to a better understanding of their responsibility in the public square.

3. It Expands Our Model of Discipleship

> Third, an understanding of economics can help us pastor our people more effectively by pointing to the need for a more comprehensive model of Christian discipleship. Many people in our churches just don't grasp that wealth is produced through work, how that in itself is a blessing to others, and then what God calls them to do with their wealth, even if they have very little of it. Taking a money management course is important to becoming a mature steward, but what most need more than that is a framework for understanding how politics, economics, and citizenship responsibilities fit into a broader discipleship model of life stewardship. In other words, they need an introduction to biblical oikonomia ("the law of the house"). And this applies to pastors and seminary professors every bit as much as it does to members of the congregation. A good place to start is by imparting some understanding of supply and demand, of fruitfulness and pay, and of how investments work (just to give a small sampling), because this will help God's people to grasp better the role they play every day in the broad sweep of God's mission in the world.

And now a comment from me about 2 and 3:

I wasn't raised in the church and I don't think of God the way that church people do. I think of God as my boss. I don't expect God to micromanage according to some mysterious plan that I can only sense through my emotions. What he does is communicate his character and his goals in the Bible, and then he leaves it up to me to decide how to *steward my resources* in order to *produce a return on his investment.* That's why economics, business and investing are all important to me. If I can understand how the world works, then I know how to make decisions that will help me to achieve good results, like mentoring people and supporting Christian scholars. It's just like fixing a car or building a house. The more you know about how things work, the better it is. Feelings and intuitions have no place in decision-making, it's knowledge all the way.

Here's Matthew 25:14-30.

Look:

[14] "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

[15] To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

[16] He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.

[17] So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.

[18] But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

[19] Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

[20] And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.'

[21] His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

[22] And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.'

[23] His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

[24] He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,

[25] so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'

[26] But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap

where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?

[27] Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.

[28] So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.

[29] For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

[30] And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

He's the boss, and we are here to freely decide what we are going to do about it. If you want to do a good job, then it makes sense to do what everyone else does – learn how things work so that you can make good decisions. If I could give one other piece of advice, it would be to not put mysticism and feelings on the same level as reason and evidence. It doesn't work in the normal workday world, and it doesn't work when you are planning out the overall course of your life, either. Cautious works. Cautious gets results.

Robin Collins and atheist Peter Millican discuss the fine-tuning of the universe for life

June 19, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

You might remember Peter Millican from the debate he had with William Lane Craig. I ranked that debate as one of the 3 best I have ever seen, along with the first Craig vs Dacey debate and the second Craig vs Sinnott-Armstrong debate.

Details:

> Science has revealed that the fundamental constants and forces of the cosmos appear to be exquisitely fine-tuned to allow a universe in which life can develop. Is God the best explanation of the incredibly improbable odds of the universe we live in being a life-permitting one?
>
> Robin Collins is a Christian philosopher and a leading advocate of the argument for God from cosmic design. Peter Millican is an atheist philosopher at Oxford University. They debate the issues.
>
> From 'Unbelievable?' on 'Premier Christian Radio', Saturday 19th March 2016.

The debate:

As usual when the atheist is an expert, there is no snark or paraphrasing in the summary.

Summary

Brierley: What is the fine-tuning argument?

Collins: the fine-tuning is structure of the universe is extremely precisely set to allow the existing of conscious, embodied agents who are capable of moral behavior. There are 3 kinds of fine-tuning: 1) the laws of nature (mathematical formulas), 2) the constants of

physics (numbers that are plugged into the equations), 3) the initial conditions of the universe. The fine-tuning exists not just because there are lots of possibilities, but there is something special about the actual state of affairs that we see. Every set of laws, parameters and initial conditions is equally improbable, but the vast majority of permutations do not permit life. The possible explanations: theism or the multiverse.

Brierley: How improbable are the numbers?

Collins: Once case is the cosmological constant (dark energy density), with is 1 part in (10 raised to 120th power). If larger, the universe expands too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form after the Big Bang. If smaller, the universe collapses in on itself before life could form. Another case is the initial distribution of mass energy to give us the low entropy we have that is necessary for life. The fine-tuning there is 1 part in (10 raised to the 10th power raised to the 123rd power).

Brierley: What do you think of the argument?

Millican: The argument is worth taking very seriously. I am a fan of the argument. The other arguments for God's existence such as the ontological and cosmological arguments are very weak. But the fine-tuning argument has the right structure to deliver the conclusion that theists want. And it is different from the traditional design argument tended to focus on biological nature, which is not a strong argument. But the fine-tuning argument is strong because it precedes any sort of biological evolution. Although the design is present at the beginning of the universe, it is not visible until much later. The argument points to at least deism, and possibly theism. The argument is not based on ignorance, it is rooted in "the latest results from the frontiers of science" (his phrase).

Brierley: Is this the best argument from natural theology?

Collins: The cosmological argument makes theism viable intuitively, but there are some things that are puzzling, like the concept of the necessary being. But the fine-tuning argument is decisive.

Brierley: What's are some objections to the fine-tuning argument?

Millican: The argument is based on recent physics, so we should be cautious because we **maybe** we will discover a natural explanation.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: The cosmological constant has been around since 1980. But the direction that physics is moving in is that there are more constants and quantities being discovered that need to be fine-tuned, not less. Even if you had a grand unified theory, that would have to be have the fine-tuning pushed into it.

(BREAK)

Millican: Since we have no experience of other laws and values from other universes, **we don't know** whether these values can be other than they are. Psychologically, humans are prone to seeing purpose and patterns where there is none, so **maybe** that's happening here.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: It is possible to determine probabilities on a single universe case, for example using multiple ways of calculating Avogadro's number all converging on the same number makes it more probable.

Millican: Yes, I willing to accept that these constants can take on other values, ("principle of indifference"). But **maybe** this principle be applied if the improbability were pushed up into the theory?

Collins: Even if you had a grand theory, selecting the grand theory from others would retain the improbability.

Brierley: What about the multiverse?

Millican: **What if** there are many, many different universes, and we happen to be in the one that is finely-tuned, then we should not be surprised to observe fine-tuning. **Maybe** a multiverse theory will be discovered in the future that would allow us to have these many universes with randomized constants and quantities. "I do think that it is a little bit of a promissary note". I don't think physics is pointing to this right now.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: I agree it's a promissary note. This is the strongest objection to the fine-tuning argument. But there are objections to the multiverse: 1) the fine-tuning is kicked back up to the multiverse generator has to be set just right to produce universes with different constants, 2) the multiverse is more likely to produce a small universe with Boltzmann brains that pop into existence and then out again, rather than a universe that contains conscious, embodied intelligent agents. I am working on a third response now that would show that the same constants that allow complex, embodied life ALSO allow the universe to be discoverable. This would negate the observer-selection effect required by the multiverse objection.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Millican: I don't see why the multiverse generator has to be fine-tuned, since **we don't know** what the multiverse generator is. I'm not impressed by the Boltzmann brains, but won't discuss. We should be cautious about inferring design because **maybe** this is a case where we are seeing purpose and design where there is none.

Brierley: Can you negate the discoverability of the universe by saying that it might be psychological?

Collins: These things are not psychological. The selected value for the cosmic microwave background radiation is fine-tuned for life and for discoverability. It's not merely a discoverability selection effect, it's optimal for discoverability. If baryon-photon value were much smaller, we would have known that it was not optimal. So that judgment cannot be explained by

Millican: That's a very interesting new twist.

Brierley: Give us your best objection.

Millican: I have two. 1) Even if you admit to the fine-tuning, this doesn't show a being who is omnipotent and omnisicient. What the fine-tuning shows is that the designer is doing

the best it can given the constraints from nature. **If I were God,** I would not have made the universe so big, and I wouldn't have made it last 14 billion years, just to make one small area that supports life. An all-powerful God would have made the universe much smaller, and much younger. 2) The fine-tuning allows life to exist in other solar systems in other galaxies. What does this alien life elsewhere mean for traditional Christian theology? The existence of other alien civilizations argues against the truth of any one religion.

Brierley: Respond to those.

Collins: First objection: with a finite Creator, you run into the problem of having to push the design of that creature up one level, so you don't really solve the fine-tuning problem. An unlimited being (non-material, not composed of parts) does not require fine-tuning. The fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than atheism. Second objection: I actually do think that it is likely that are other universes, and life in other galaxies and stars, and the doctrine of the Incarnation is easily adaptable to that, because God can take on multiple natures to appear to different alien civilizations.

Other resources (from WK)

If you liked this discussion, be sure and check out a full length lecture by Robin Collins on the fine-tuning, and a shorter lecture on his very latest work. And also this the Common Sense Atheism podcast, featuring cosmologist Luke Barnes, who answers about a dozen objections to the fine-tuning argument.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

June 20, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining the outline of the podcast.

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though

> it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

Peter J. Williams debates Bart Ehrman on his book "Misquoting Jesus"

June 21, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Peter J. Williams, an expert on New Testament reliability

I have to re-post this debate between Bart Ehrman and Peter J. Williams, because Dr. Williams just followed me on Twitter. I noticed that he had re-tweeted one of the two senators I follow on Twitter, so I re-tweeted him. I like Tom Cotton and Josh Hawley, and he re-tweeted Senator Hawley talking about free speech.

Bart Ehrman posted the debate audio on YouTube:

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is the US author of the bestselling book "Misquoting Jesus" (In the UK "Whose word is it?"). He calls into question the authority of the New Testament as scribal changes over time have changed the documents.
>
> So can we trust the scripture? Bible scholar Peter Williams believes in the reliability of the New Testament and that Bart's prognosis is far too pessimistic.

This post is a re-post from 2011. I have been listening to this lecture by Peter J. Williams on "Misquoting Jesus" this week, and it reminded me to re-post this debate. (I checked to make sure the MP3 link is still good, and it is)

Summary of the Williams-Ehrman debate:

Note: this summary is *snarky*. If you want an accurate view of the debate, then listen to it. My summary is meant to be humorous.

Ehrman:

- I had a mystical experience in childhood and became an evangelical Christian
- I went to Moody Bible Institute, and they told me that the Bible was inerrant
- For a while, I was committed to the view that there are no mistakes in the Bible
- At Princeton, I was taught *and graded* by professors who did not accept inerrancy
- By a strange coincidence, I began to see that the Bible did have errors after all!
- We don't have the original documents written by the original authors, we only have thousands of copies
- if the words of the Bible are not completely inerrant, then none of it is historical
- if all of the words in all the copies of the Bible are not identical, then none of it is historical

Williams:

- I would say the New and Old testaments are the Word of God
- We don't need to have the original Greek writings in order to believe in the authority of the Bible
- I believe in inerrancy, but doesn't mean there are no problems
- the doctrine of inerrancy has always referred to the original Greek copies, not the translations

Moderator:

- what are the main points of Misquoting Jesus?

Ehrman:

- we don't have the originals of any of the books of the New Testament
- we have copies that are much later, sometimes even centuries later!!1!
- the copies we have all differ from one another – they were changed by scribes!!1!
- we have 5000 manuscripts in the original Greek language
- there are hundreds of thousands of differences!!1!
- most of the differences don't matter
- some differences are significant for meaning or doctrine
- errors are propagated because the next scribe inherits the mistake of their source copy
- a large gap between the time of writing and the first extant copy means more errors have crept in

Williams:

- the reason we have so many variants is because the number of manuscripts is large

Angry Jesus or compassionate Jesus in Mark

Ehrman:

- most manuscripts say that Jesus was compassionate when healing a leper, but one says he was angry
- it makes a huge huge huge really really big difference if Jesus is compassionate or angry
- the whole Bible needs to be thrown out because of this one word between different in one manuscript

Williams:

- this variant is important for understanding the passage, but it has no great meaning
- the change is probably just an accident – the two words are very similar visually in Greek
- it's just an accident – it emerged in one manuscript, and it impacted a few more
- the tiny number of manuscripts that have the error are geographically isolated
- I'm pretty sure that WK prefers the angry Jesus anyway – so who cares?

Ehrman:

- no! someone changed it deliberately! it's a conspiracy! you should buy my book! it's a *big deal*!!!!!1!!1!one!!eleventy-one!

The woman caught in adultery in John

Ehrman:

- it is isn't in any of the earliest manuscripts
- this is an apocryphical story that some scribe deliberately inserted into the text
- most people don't even know about this! it's a cover-up! you need to buy my scandalous book!

Williams:

- that's right, it's a late addition by some overzealous scribe
- and it's clearly marked as such in every modern Bible translation
- the only people who don't know about this are people who don't read footnotes in their Bible
- and in any case, this isn't a loss of the original words of the New Testament – it's an addition

Grace of God or apart from God in Hebrews

Ehrman:

- well this is just a one word difference, but it makes a huge huge really really big difference!
- the words are very similar, so it's could be an accident I guess
- but it wasn't! this was a deliberate change! it's a conspiracy! it's a cover-up!

scandal!
- buy my book! It’s almost as good as Dan Brown!

Moderator:

- hmmmn…. I kind of like “apart from God” – why is this such a big scandal again?

Ehrman:

- you don’t care? how can you not care? it has to be inerrant! or the whole thing is false!
- Moody Bible Institute says!

Williams:

- yeah Bart is always saying that every change is deliberate but it’s just an accident
- the words are very similar, just a few letters are different, this is clearly an accident
- I have no problem with apart from God, or by the Grace of God
- please move on and stop screaming and running around and knocking things over

Moderator:

- but what if pastors try to use this passage in a sermon?

Williams:

- well, one word doesn’t make a big different, the meaning that appears is fine for preaching
- it’s only a problem for people who treat the Bible as a magic book with magical incantations
- they get mad because if one word is out of place then the whole thing doesn’t work for their spell
- then they try to cast happiness spells but the spells don’t work and they experience suffering
- the suffering surprises them since they think that fundamentalism should guarantee them happiness
- then they become apostates and get on TV where they look wide-eyed and talk crazy

Ehrman:

- hey! are you talking about me? a lot of people buy my books! i am a big success!
- it is very important that people don’t feel bad about their sinning you know!

Is Misquoting Jesus an attack?

Williams:

- it’s rhetorically imbalanced and misleading
- it tries to highlight change and instability and ignore the majority of the text that is stable
- he makes a big deal out of 5 or so verses that are different from the mainstream text
- he says that scribes deliberately changed the scriptures, but he doesn’t prove that
- it’s just as likely that the differences are just scribal errors made by accident

Ehrman:

- well, maybe the variants aren’t a big deal, but what about one angel vs. two angels?
- that’s a significant issue! significant enough for me to become an apostate – a *rich* apostate
- if one word is different because of an accident, then the whole Bible cannot be trusted
- it has to be completely inerrant, so a one word difference means the whole thing is unreliable
- we don’t even know if Jesus was even named Jesus, because of one angel vs two angels!!!1!
- buy my book! you don’t have to read it, just put it on your shelf, then you’ll feel better about not having a relationships with God – because who’s to say what God really wants from you? Not the Bible!

Did “thousands of women” die in “back alley abortions” before Roe v. Wade?

June 22, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I get into debates about abortion, and sometimes my opponent will complain that if Roe v. Wade were overturned, then thousands of women would die in illegal abortions. Well, if that ever happens to you, this post will help you to know how to respond to it.

First of all, if Roe v. Wade were overturned, then each of the 50 states would pass legislation deciding when abortions would be legal.

Here’s a map taken from the Washington Examiner:

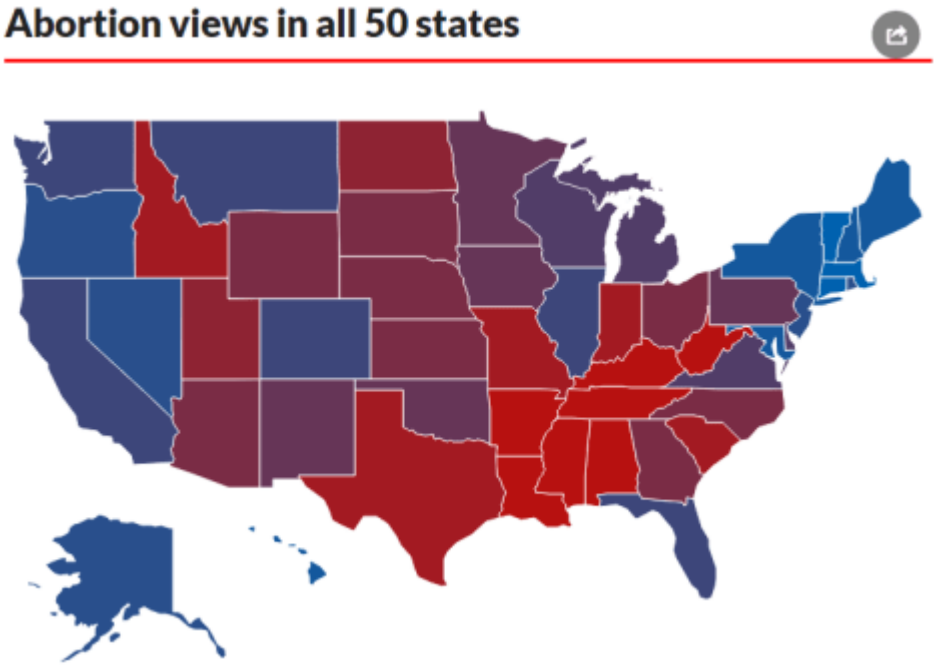

Abortion rights after Roe v. Wade is overturned
Red states are more pro-life than blue states in this map. For example, New York is ranked #6, and Tennessee is ranked #45.

So, if a woman did have irresponsible sex with a hot bad boy, then she easily could terminate her child in one of the blue states.

Second, the number thrown around by abortion advocates is not accurate. It’s simply not true that “thousands of women” were dying from poorly-performed abortions when abortion was still illegal. Actually, abortions were performed by trained medical personnel, but it just wasn’t reported to the police.

Here’s a recent article from the radically leftist Washington Post:

> Erica Sackin, a Planned Parenthood spokeswoman, directed us to a 2014 policy statement issued by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG): “*It is estimated that before 1973, 1.2 million U.S. women resorted to illegal abortion each year and that unsafe abortions caused as many as 5,000 annual deaths.*”

> There is no citation in the statement for the estimate of "as many as 5,000 annual deaths," even though many of the other sentences are carefully documented. None of the citations around this sentence supports the figure, and there is no explanation about how it was calculated.
>
> […]Meanwhile, Sackin also sent a variety of reports, many of which were referenced in a footnote in a document published by NARAL Pro-Choice America. One of the citations especially caught our eye: Frederick Taussig, "Abortion Spontaneous and Induced: Medical and Social Aspects," (1936).

Why was a study from 1936 being cited? Because in 1936, we didn't have antibiotics! People were dying all the time from any kind of surgery – not just abortion.

More:

> The advent of antibiotics such as penicillin and improved medical procedures suddenly made abortion less risky. Another prominent researcher, Christopher Tietze, argued in a 1948 paper that the number of deaths from abortion was rapidly declining because of three reasons: contraceptive methods had improved so fewer women were getting pregnant, abortion providers were getting better at avoiding infections, and many lives had been saved because of the introduction of sulfa drugs and penicillin.
>
> […]The data collected by Tietze showed 2,677 deaths from abortion in 1933, compared with 888 in 1945, with much of the decline in septic cases associated with illegal abortions. (The numbers also include deaths from "therapeutic abortions," permitted by law, and "spontaneous abortions.")
>
> By 1959, a leading researcher wrote: "Abortion is no longer a dangerous procedure. This applies not just to therapeutic abortions as performed in hospitals but also to so-called illegal abortions as done by physicians. In 1957, there were only 260 deaths in the whole country attributed to abortions of any kind. In New York City in 1921, there were 144 abortion deaths, in 1951 there were only 15."
>
> The writer was Mary Steichen Calderone, at the time medical director of Planned Parenthood. She attributed the decline in the mortality rate to antibiotics and the fact that 90 percent of illegal abortions were done by trained physicians.

OK, so abortion advocates cite the study from 1936, which already relies on questionable estimates, because they know that the later numbers are far, far lower – thanks to the widespread use of antibiotics. They're lying, essentially, because lying helps them to persuade people who think with their feelings, and don't look too closely at facts.

Third, there are over 2,000 pregnancy care ministries and clinics operating throughout the continental United States. Women who want help with pregnancy or adoption can get help from one of these clinics.

Fourth, even if women hurt themselves during abortions, that wouldn't be a reason to

legalize abortion. Bank robbers hurt themselves during bank robberies, and drug dealers hurt themselves during drug deals. We do not legalize criminal activities just because criminals get hurt during the commission of those activities. So the real question is, what is the unborn? If the unborn is a living human being, then abortion on demand takes the life of an innocent human being without justification, and should therefore be illegal.

Black Christians disappointed by Southern Baptist Convention vote on CRT

June 23, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last week, the leaders of the Southern Baptist denomination, a large Protestant denomination, decided to have a convention. They voted down a resolution (resolution 9) that condemned Critical Race Theory. Unfortunately, no black conservatives were allowed to speak about CRT at the convention.

This is from the Tennessee Star:

> Live from Music Row Wednesday morning on The Tennessee Star Report with Michael Patrick Leahy – broadcast on Nashville's Talk Radio 98.3 and 1510 WLAC weekdays from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. – host Leahy welcomed all-star panelist, Dr. Carol Swain, to the newsmakers line to talk about her experience at the Southern Baptist Convention where she and other minority messengers were prevented from speaking up on Critical Race Theory.
>
> Leahy: We are joined on the newsmaker line right now by our good friend All-Star panelist, Carol Swain. Good morning, Carol.
>
> Swain: Good morning, Michael. How are you? I've missed you.
>
> Leahy: Well, you've been so busy on the national airwaves every time I turned Fox News, there she is. Carol Swain, articulately making the conservative case. Carol, you were at the Southern Baptist Convention. And I guess there was a bit of skullduggery afoot there. Fill us in, please.
>
> Swain: Yes, it is my first time attending a Southern Baptist Convention. And I arranged my life to give two days to this convention because I wanted to participate. And I was most interested in the Critical Race Theory issue and a resolution that the Conservative Baptist Network crafted and put forward.
>
> And I am on the steering committee of that network. Our resolution was killed by the resolutions committee. And they put forth a substitute that was vaguely worded and did not mention intersexuality or Critical Race Theory itself.
>
> […]…then they shut down any debate about how the issue was handled.
>
> […]I was there to try to explain to people how dangerous Critical Race Theory is and how it manifests itself and how it is destroying churches. I never got to speak during the time of the business meeting. And they used parliamentarian rules to control what it's about, I guess, at meetings.
>
> But two people were allowed to speak for their resolution. One person spoke briefly against it and then someone called for the vote. **And this was after someone from the stage had given this impassioned plea that we don't want to look bad to the world and all of this stuff like that.**

As a black Christian conservative, I'm very familiar with conservative black leaders like Dr. Carol Swain. She's done several videos for Dennis Prager's famous Prager University.

I recently watched an interview with Candace Owens, as well:

I recently heard her talk about "Up From Slavery" by Booker T. Washington – a book I also have blogged about – on the Daily Wire Book Club podcast:

Very accomplished woman. She knows a lot about race and racism in America. She lived through it. I would think that her perspective would be valuable.

Here's another black Christian I like, Dr. Voddie Baucham. He has a new book out called "Fault Lines", which is amazing. I'm currently reading it, after watching some of his lectures and sermons online.

Here's one I really liked, about homosexuality and transgenderism:

And another one, about cultural Marxism:

Here's what Dr. Baucham had to say about the Southern Baptist convention, as reported by Capstone Report:

> The Southern Baptist Convention messengers were cowards for not repudiating Critical Race Theory by name, said Dr. Voddie Baucham on the Todd Starnes Show.
>
> "I don't think it was so much buying in (to CRT) **as much as white guilt and cowardice**," Dr. Baucham said. "**It was obvious building up to the Convention that the issue at hand was Resolution 9 on Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality from two years ago and how that was going to be responded to. And when you respond to it with a Resolution that refuses to even name Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality, that is an act of cowardice**."
>
> Dr. Baucham urged conservative Christians to continue in the fight against Critical Race Theory.
>
> "I think we continue to press the issue," Dr. Baucham said. "I think we continue to name this for what it is and continue to expose the tenets of this ideology. I think we continue to demonstrate that this it antithetical to biblical truth."
>
> Dr. Baucham described Critical Race Theory as a "demonic ideology" that the Church must fight. The "hegemonic power" that these Critical Theories are fighting is, "at the end of the day, Christianity," he said.

What I like about Voddie is that he isn't afraid to name names. Here's a useful quote from his new book Fault Lines, explaining some of the famous people and groups on both sides of the debate.

> Why are people and groups like Thabiti Anyabwile, Tim Keller, Russell Moore, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, 9Marks, the Gospel Coalition, and Together for the Gospel (T4G) being identified

> with Critical Social Justice on one side of the fault, and people like John MacArthur, Tom Ascol, Owen Strachan, Douglas Wilson, and the late R.C. Sproul being identified on the other? These are groups and ministries that have embraced CRT, and those are problematic. But there is a larger group that is sympathetic to it because of their desire to fight what they see as a problem of racial injustice.

—

Baucham, Voddie. Fault Lines: the Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe. Salem Books, an Imprint of Regnery Publishing, 2021; pp. 2-3.

Do you recognize any names in the group that supports Critical Race Theory? I used to read some of those people, but then I just stopped, because they were too liberal for me. I never read anything by John Piper or Max Lucado or Philip Yancey. The liberal Christians never had anything convincing to say against atheism, feminism or socialism. Like Mormons, they always seemed to appeal to emotions and mysticism. So I didn't read their books.

Instead, I like to read people who have evidence, like Hugh Ross, Walter Bradley, Wayne Grudem, Stephen C. Meyer, Michael Behe, Michael Licona, William Lane Craig, Gary Habermas, Scott Klusendorf, Robert Gagnon, etc. It's much easier for me to be bold in defending Christianity when I am ready with an answer. I'm not really interested in surrendering to the secular left just so that they will like me. I'd rather stand up to them, and win a debate against them. It's more work, but I would rather do the work than be lazy, ignorant and cowardly.

It's my understanding that Southern Baptist seminaries do not teach evidential apologetics at all. Just some pious fideism, that they've re-branded as "presuppositional apologetics". And what do they do for evangelism? They've adopted the Mormon standard of speaking Bible verses, then hoping for an emotional reaction to them, i.e. – "a burning in the bosom". Can you really expect fideists to stand up to the secular left? They're anti-intellectual fideists.

When I look at the Bible, I see Jesus using evidence to convince his opponents. He uses evidence to confirm his theological claims. But the Southern Baptists seemed to have left the use of evidence far behind. No wonder they are capitulating to non-Christians. When you give up on truth, all that's left is to try to get people to like you with marketing gimmicks.

How can you tell if Islam's holy book – the Quran – is historically reliable?

June 24, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On the weekend, I watched a new debate featuring famous Muslim scholar Shabir Ally, and a pastor named Anthony Rogers. This was a moderated debate, with timed speeches. I have been watching debates with Shabir Ally since 1997, when he took on William Lane Craig. So, I was anxious to see what he considered to be the strongest arguments for Islam after all his years of debating.

I found a great review of the arguments posted at Laura's blog "An Affair with Reason". In her post she linked to the video of the debate, summarized and evaluated the arguments, and then explained what she would have done, if she had been arguing Anthony's position. I recommend reading the whole post, but let's see Shabir's arguments first. Or rather – argument – since, he only presented one.

Laura writes about Dr. Shabir Ally's Argument:

> To demonstrate his point, Dr. Ally gave a few examples of numerical patterns that exist in the Koran. For example, the number 7 and the number 19 both hold an important place in the Koran because Surah 15:87 mentions the number 7 and Surah 74:30 mentions the number 19. Additionally, the name Jesus appears in the Koran the same number of times as the name Moses appears. If we take note of where each name occurs, we find that the 7th appearance of the name Jesus coincides with the 19th appearance of the name Moses, and the 19th appearance of the name Jesus coincides with the 7th appearance of the name Moses. And on he went, sharing a few more mathematical coincidences.

Now, you might have seen this argument before. A couple of Christian neophytes wrote an entire book about it called "The Bible Code" a while back. It was panned by every single professional apologist as being an ineffective argument. They asserted that the same mathematical coincidences could be found in any book.

Here is one Christian response to the "Bible Code" from Dr. Robert C. Newman, in which he finds similar coincidences in "The Gettysburg Address" by Abraham Lincoln. Scientists call this "cherry-picking" data, and it's frowned upon.

What's so special about 7 and 19?

Now, you might be wondering what Dr. Ally's source is for the significance of 7 and 19.

I asked Laura about where he got 19, and she replied to me so:

> According to Muslim scholar Bilal Phillips, in order to arrive at a word count of parallels, one must follow "a haphazard system of word identification that totally contradicts both classical and modern rules of Arabic grammar."

> It's true that the number of chapters in the Quran is divisible by nineteen and

> that the first chapter to be revealed to Muhammad—chapter ninety-six—does have nineteen verses, but such examples of repetition of a number can be found in nearly any book. Further, when one reads Quran 74:30 in context—that's the verse that supposedly identifies the number nineteen as significant—we see that this verse refers to the number of angels who are wardens over the hellfire; it is not a reference to miraculous patterns throughout the Quran.

> As Bilal Phillips stated, "It may be concluded that the theory of nineteen as a miraculous numerical code for the Quran has no basis in the Quran itself and the few instances where nineteen and its multiples do occur are merely coincidences which have been blown out of proportion."

Not even Muslim scholars found this convincing.

Laura's case against Islam

In her post, she also laid out a 4-point case against Islam that she would have used if she were debating Dr. Ally. You can check it out if you are interested in seeing how a professional would handle a formal debate situation.

I think it's really important for Christians to get into the habit of watching debates on a wide variety of subjects, to help them decide what to believe, how to support their beliefs, and how to respond to objections. I've been watching debates since around 1995, and used to have them imported to the country where I am originally from. I have an old VHS tape of the Craig-Ally debate from 1997. Back then, we only had William Lane Craig and Michael Horner debates, and there was a good debate book featuring J. P. Moreland and Kai Nielsen, too. I've probably listened to over a hundred debates, on topics like the existence of God, Darwinism, intelligent design, origin of life, morality, philosophy of mind, problem of evil, New Testament reliability, rational grounding of objective morality, secular humanism, the resurrection of Jesus, Islam, Hinduism, etc.

Debates are great because not only do you learn how to debate, but your character also changes to become more tolerant of different points of view. You become the opposite of the little fascist drones that are being churned out by the public education system, in that you can think critically, and stay calm during disagreements. It's good for Christians to be open-minded and tolerant, because the other side is growing increasingly incapable of it. Soon, everyone in the middle will be turning to us for discussions, because we'll be the only ones left who are thoughtful and safe to talk to.

Pro-life Christians disappointed by Southern Baptist Convention vote on abortion

June 25, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I believe in an incremental approach to right to life and Townhall has an article up that explains what it is.

So here is the article, by a couple of pro-lifers who I am friends with with: Marc Newman and Scott Klusendorf. (H/T McKenzie)

Here's is some of Marc Newman's bio from Speakers for Life:

> Dr. Marc Newman is president of Speaker For Life, a training firm dedicated to equipping pro-life advocates nationwide with public speaking skills. He has spoken at nearly every major pro-life convention in the nation and is in demand as a banquet keynoter. He is the former Director of Speech and Debate at the University of California at Irvine, and is retired from teaching in the doctoral program in the School of Communication and the Arts at Regent University.

The other one is my favorite pro-lifer, Scott Klusendorf. I've met Scott personally, with a girlfriend, and he offered to marry us on the spot. He's an ordained minister.

Here is some of his bio from my favorite pro-life charity, Life Training Institute:

> Scott has appeared on nationally syndicated Christian programs such as Dr. James Dobson's *Focus on the Family*, *The Albert Mohler Radio Program*, Lee Strobel's *Faith Under Fire*, Hank Hanegraaff's *The Bible Answer Man,* Dr. D. James Kennedy's*Truths That Transform,* Richard Land's *For Faith and Family*, Tim Wildmon's *American Family Radio*, Kerby Anderson's *Point of View*, Todd Wilken's *Issues Etc. …*
>
> Nationally, Scott has participated in numerous debates at the collegiate level. His debate opponents have included Nadine Strossen, President of the ACLU (1991-2008) – Kathryn Kolbert, an attorney that has argued for abortion rights in a United States Supreme Court case – and Kathy Kneer, President of Planned Parenthood of California.
>
> Scott has debated or lectured to student groups at over 80 colleges and universities, including Stanford, USC, UCLA, Johns Hopkins, Loyola Marymount Law School, West Virginia Medical School, MIT, U.S. Air Force Academy, Cal-Tech, UC Berkeley, and University of North Carolina.
>
> Each year thousands of students at Protestant and Catholic high schools are trained by Scott to make a persuasive case for life as part of their worldview training prior to college. He's provided that same training to students at Summit Ministries and Focus on the Family Institute.
>
> Scott is the author of *The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the*

> *Culture*, released in March 2009 by Crossway Books and co-author of *Stand for Life* released in December 2012 by Hendrickson Publishers. Scott has also published articles on pro-life apologetics in *The Christian Research Journal, Clear Thinking*, Focus on the Family *Citizen*, and *The Conservative Theological Journal*.

I know a secret about Scott, but I'm not sure if I'm allowed to say. Let's just say that he's trained other people at the highest levels of influence. If you want to make the case for the pro-life position, then you cannot do better than being trained by Scott Klusendorf. If you are looking for a great pro-life speaker to support, this is your guy.

Anyway, here is their column at Townhall:

> Pro-life Christians should promote good and limit evil insofar as possible given current political realities, but the Southern Baptist Convention just passed a resolution that turns that truth on its head.
>
> The resolution, forwarded by abolitionists, calls the SBC to be a "prophetic voice to abolish abortion" immediately and without exceptions. Incremental strategies – the resolution declares – are nothing more than "regulatory guidelines" for determining "when, where, why, and how" adults may intentionally kill innocent pre-born children. In other words, all pro-life work to date has done nothing more than promote evil. Any incremental strategy – rather than immediate abolition – is suddenly a shameful act of which leaders must confess, lament, and repent because it makes them complicit in abortion. Such a charge is scandalous, and factually untrue.

More:

> To the extent abolitionists succeed, the SBC will find itself fighting against abortion restrictions; an unwitting ally of Planned Parenthood. The latter fights them because they want unrestricted abortion; the former will fight them out of a misguided sense of ideological purity. The result will be the same: more dead children.

The first line here is important:

> **Every pro-life advocate wants abortion abolished.** But the abolition resolution conflates the laudable goal of ending abortion with the unfeasible tactic of immediate abolition. How, exactly, is immediate abolition to happen, given current political realities? The abolitionist response is a kind of magical thinking: just decree it. But in the real world there are two ways to win a war. If you command overwhelming forces, you crush the opposition swiftly and establish victory. If, however, you are outnumbered and outgunned, then you fight a war of attrition. You wear down the opposition. That's precisely what pro-life advocates have done with the support of the SBC. The wording of the resolution alienates and slanders them.

And finally the shocking conclusion:

> By insisting on “prophetic” purity, the abolitionist position trades actual lives that could be saved right now for hypothetical ones they hope can be saved at some undisclosed future date. Consider the 2015 exchange between pro-life leader Gregg Cunningham and abolitionist leader T. Russell Hunter. Cunningham held up Dr. Michael New’s research on the effectiveness of incremental bills and asked Hunter, “Should these babies saved by incremental legislation have been allowed to die?” Hunter repeatedly attempted to dodge the question, but Cunningham pressed him. Instead of answering, Hunter dismissed the question as a “charade.” But Cunningham was not playing games. He deftly exposed a bankrupt strategy.

I was actually able to confirm this with a smart, effective abolitionist pro-lifer. I presented to him a list of state-level incremental restrictions on abortion, and actions taken by President Trump and his Republican allies in the legislature. He replied that these incremental measures were actually done in collusion with the pro-abortion crowd, in order to protect abortion rights. I pointed out that abolitionists and pro-abortionists both opposed these incremental measures. He would not back down.

So where do you stand on the two approaches?

More and more women are asking why they can't find a good man to marry

June 26, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do young women understand how to get to a stable marriage?

In the last few months, I've met 5 different Christian women in their 30s who all asked me the same question: where are all the good men who want to marry me?

Christian men's rights blogger Dalrock had two different posts where he described the answer to this question.

Here is the first post from Dalrock that concisely illustrates the problem:

> As I wrote in A very long season, feminists don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husbands than absolutely necessary. As if to prove this very point, 30 year old Mona Chalabi writes in the NY Times* I Want My 2.3 Bonus Years:
>
> If I could prolong my time as a young adult by, say, 2.3 years, here is a list of things I would like to do:
>
> • Go to more parties. Preferably wild parties that I can think about, years later, at mild parties.
>
> […]• Have more romantic partners.
>
> […]• Get a bit higher up the career ladder a bit earlier on. That would probably boost my earnings, giving me more financial security. I could use that money to go to more parties, get a membership to a fancy gym and maybe even meet a romantic partner on the ab machines.
>
> To drive the message home, the image at the top of the article is a cartoon of a

> resentful Chalabi giving her future husband the side eye for her lost years of sampling penises!

Surely, this must be an isolated case just for New York Times feminists, right? It's not widespread, is it?

Second post from Dalrock:

> Margaret Wente at the Globe and Mail* asks where all the good men have gone. Wente comes to the conclusion that women need a sex cartel:
>
> …it's up to us to make the rules. "Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" my father used to say. It drove me crazy when he said that. Now, it's dawned on me that he was right.
>
> Since the women's cartel collapsed, women's bargaining power has seriously eroded. That's why so many single women hate Tinder, which has further commodified sex for the benefit of men. Women are just another consumer good in the shop window.
>
> The apex fallacy aside, Wente is partially right. Women (as a group) have signaled to men that what they really want are exciting sexy badboys, not boring loyal dudes. **It isn't that women no longer want to marry beta providers, they just don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husband than absolutely necessary.**
>
> As a result, some up and coming boring loyal dudes aren't knocking themselves out in their twenties while they wait for their future wife to tire of having sex with other men.

If you wonder why men are no longer performing in school, and exchanging careers for video games, the answer is simple. Men have realized that young women today, under the influence of feminism, are not interested in traditional husbands during their late teens and 20s. During these years, women are interested in travel, fun, drinking, hook-ups and cohabitation with amoral atheists. This is what I have personally observed. In the minds of young women, the highest value men are good-looking men who have no religion, and make no moral judgments, and are left of center politically – especially on abortion.

There are actually many other men who don't meet this standard – marriage-minded men – who want to get married young and have children. But when these men see what young women really want, they just give up on school and work, since doing the traditional male roles has no value to young women. Many good men even give up on morality and Christianity, because they want a relationship with a woman so badly. They know that women don't want marriage-minded men when women are youngest and prettiest.

More from second post:

> What Wente doesn't understand is that timing is everything. From an economic point of view, women are dividing up sexual access that traditionally would have

> been reserved only for their husband into two blocks. The first block contains their most attractive and fertile years, and it is dedicated to no strings sex with exciting badboys. Then, once women reach what Rollo calls the epiphany phase, they want to bargain sexual access in their remaining (older and less fertile) years for maximum beta bucks.
>
> The problem with this strategy is (generally speaking) not that the previously overlooked beta men will refuse to marry the suddenly reformed party girls. The problem is that young men now look at the men 3-5 (and even 5-10) years older than them and don't see an indication that signaling provider status will make them attractive to women. They also see a society that holds married fathers in contempt**. Most of these men are still working hard in their late teens and twenties to prepare to signal provider status in their 30s. But a growing minority of young men are no longer doing so. These men are instead working like women. Once the reformed party girls are ready to find Mr. Beta Bucks, there is a shortage of 30 something men who fit the bill. Even worse, no amount of complaining or shaming will cause the missing beta providers to go back in time and spend the prior decade preparing for this moment.

I'm one of the last men who followed the marriage-preparedness script for traditional men who wanted to marry and have four children and have a stay-at-home homeschooling mom to raise them from birth to graduate school. I find myself now in my mid-40s, with a 6-figure income and a 7-figure net worth. I never used my success to play the field with hot bad girls. I wanted to keep my sexual past completely clean for my eventual wife. However, what I observed in my late teens and 20s and even early 30s was a complete lack of interest in marriage ability, from non-Christian women and Christian women alike. Christian women aren't learning to value early marriage from their married parents or their evangelical churches. None of the traditional husband skills are valued by young women, i.e. – chastity, gapless resume, alcohol abstinence, undergraduate and graduate STEM degrees, experience nurturing and mentoring others, stewardship of earned income.

I recently caused an uproar on my Facebook page by saying that even if the perfect woman showed up right now to marry me, I would not pursue her because the critical time where the woman could have applied maximum youth, beauty and fertility as a wife to make an impact on my education, early career, health, and finances has passed. A younger woman develops value to her husband precisely by applying herself to him and to her family in these critical early years. Men who have experienced this self-sacrificial love and support are loyal to their wives even after their wives lose their youth and beauty. Why? Because the men know that they are much better than they could have been, having enjoyed that early investment of value made by their young wives.

Young women very supportive of premarital sex

As Christian writer Matt Walsh notes in a recent article at the Daily Wire, this "follow your heart" focus on happiness in women is lethal to marital stability, and men know it.

Excerpt:

> There was an article in *Cosmo* this week with a title that summarizes all that's wrong with *Cosmo* and modern society as a whole: "I eloped at 25, divorced at 26, and dated my way across Europe all summer." Of course, by "dated my way across Europe" she means that she slept with half the continent.
>
> The author, Elise, says she "started fighting" with her husband and within a few months they both decided that their differences were irreconcilable. Despite counseling, she says, "neither of us was happy." So, exhausted from 12 whole months of marriage, Elise embarked on a voyage of self-discovery and STD cultivation. She met random dudes in half a dozen countries and had sex with them, learning quite a lot as she went, though she can't really explain what exactly she learned or why sex was a necessary component in learning it. Finally, she came home and started dating some other guy. The end.
>
> Well, not really the end. 20 years from now I'm sure we'll get the follow up article: "I'm alone and miserable and it's everyone's fault but mine." **After all, you may be able to fill the emptiness in your soul with frivolous sex when you're young and physically desirable, but that phase is fleeting. People who don't want to "waste" their beauty and youth on a spouse, so they waste it instead on strangers who don't love them or even care what happens to them tomorrow, will be shocked when a tomorrow comes where even strangers aren't interested anymore. This is where the single-minded, utterly selfish pursuit of "happiness" at all costs inevitably leads: to rejection, despair, and a quiet, unnoticed death on a lonely hospital bed.**
>
> As Elise helpfully demonstrated, "do what makes you happy" is poison in a marriage. Many a vow has been broken because one or both partners decide to

> chase “happiness” instead of commitment, fidelity, and love. “I deserve to be happy,” reports the legion of serial divorcees, as they drift on to the next spouse, and the next, and the next, and the next, looking for the one — *the* one, finally — who might cure the misery they’ve inflicted on themselves. Increasingly unhappy, yet increasingly convinced that they deserve to be.

And this follow your heart to happiness situation is alive and well in the church today. Marriage-minded Christian men who have prepared for husband roles are surprised to find that there is often little or no difference between Elise and the Christian women the church produces. Christian men who desire to invest in a marriage that is stable, productive and influential have nowhere to turn for a wife who is able and willing to help. In my experience, the problem with happiness-focused women who delay marriage is never discussed in churches from the pulpit. The “good men to marry” that today’s 30-something women are looking for were plentiful back when those same women were in their early-to-mid 20s.

Frank Turek lectures on the case against same-sex marriage

June 27, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker Frank Turek:

> Dr. Frank Turek is a dynamic speaker and award-winning author or coauthor of four books: Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to make their Case, I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, Correct, Not Politically Correct and Legislating Morality. As the President of CrossExamined.org, Frank presents powerful and entertaining evidence for Christianity at churches, high schools and at secular college campuses that often begin hostile to his message. He has also debated several prominent atheists including Christopher Hitchens and David Silverman, president of American Atheists.
>
> Frank hosts an hour-long TV program each week called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist that is broadcast Wednesday nights on DirecTV Channel 378 (the NRB Network). His radio program called CrossExamined with Frank Turek airs on 122 stations every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. eastern and is available continuously on the free CrossExamined App.
>
> A former aviator in the US Navy, Frank has a master's degree from the George Washington University and a doctorate from Southern Evangelical Seminary. He and his wife, Stephanie, are blessed with three grown sons.

Frank Turek is one of my favorite speakers, and I admire him for being willing to take a public stand on controversial issues like gay marriage. He's actually had to pay a price for that in his professional life, and I blogged about that before.

Here's the lecture on gay marriage, featuring Christian apologist Frank Turek.

Outline:

Outline of Frank Turek's lecture on same sex marriage
Introduction:

- how to present your case against marriage safely
- Christians are required to go beyond tolerance
- loving another person can mean opposing the person when they want to do something wrong, even if they hate you
- what did Jesus say about marriage? (see Matt 19:4-6)
- what did Jesus say about sexual morality? (Matt 15, Matt 19)

Summary:

- the same-sex marriage debate is about whether to compel people who disagree with the gay lifestyle to validate and normalize it
- P1: the government has an interest in marriage because it perpetuates and stabilizes society – this is the purpose of marriage
- P2-4: government can take 3 kinds of stances towards behaviors: promote, permit or prohibit
- government promotes behaviors when it has an interest in them
- same-sex relationships should be permitted, but not promoted
- Q1: if same-sex marriage had serious negative consequences, would you reconsider their position?
- Q2: are heterosexual relationships the same as homosexual relationships?
- Q3: what would society be like if everyone married according to the natural marriage definition: one woman, one man, for life?
- Q4: what would society be like if everyone married according to the same-sex marriage definition: man/man and woman/woman?
- Should Christians care about law and politics? or should they just preach the gospel?
- They should care because people often get their cues about what is moral and

immoral based on what is legal and illegal
- Many of the social problems we see today can be traced back to problems with marriage and family
- Children do much better when they have a relationship with their mother and their father
- Same-sex marriage necessarily destroys the relationship between a child and its mother or its father
- When a country embraces same-sex marriage, it reinforces the idea that marriage is not about making and raising children
- same-sex marriage shifts the focus away from the needs of the children to the feelings of desires of the selfish adults
- does homosexuality impose any health and mental health risks?
- what has the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage been in Massachusetts to individuals, schools, businesses and charities?
- how same-sex marriage poses a threat to religious liberty
- how should you respond to the view that homosexuality is genetic?

And at the very end, he shows this short video, which is only 5 minutes and explains the logic of opposing the redefinition of marriage:

My biggest concern is religious liberty, and we are seeing how same-sex marriage has proven to be incompatible with religious liberty. But I also care about children… I want them to have mothers and fathers who put their needs first. Marriage is about a commitment – it is the subjugation of feelings and desires to responsibilities and obligations. It is a promise. A promise to commit to love your spouse and children regardless of feelings and desires. It requires more self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice. Not less.

Canada proposes bill to punish offensive speech with fines and jail time

June 28, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The important thing to understand about Canada's laws is that they are NEVER applied fairly. The laws are almost always used to punish Christians and conservatives. So, Christian pastors are punished for having "illegal" house churches during COVID, but Muslims or LGBTs can meet or march. The newest bill criminalizes speech that makes people feel "pain and suffering".

Breitbart reports:

> Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government proposed legislation on Wednesday, Bill C-36, that is aimed at combating "hate speech" and "hate propaganda."
>
> The bill's summary includes a proposed legal definition of "hatred" to be included in Canada's Criminal Code.
>
> […]The bill's text does not specify if or how non-verbal messages such as images or videos would be regulated to control "hate."
>
> Under a section titled "Fear of hate propaganda offence of hate crime," Bill C-36 would allow provincial court judges to impose restrictions on those accused by an "informant" of a likely future commission of an offence "on reasonable grounds." In other words, a judge would be able to issue restrictions against accused parties if the judge believes the accused is likely to commit an offense related to "hate."
>
> […]If a complaint against an accused person is "substantiated," the defendant may be ordered to pay up to $70,000 in penalties divided into two components. The first component would be a payment of "compensation" of up to $20,000 (CAD) "for any pain and suffering that the victim experienced" as a function of "hate propaganda" or "hate speech." The second component is a fine, up to $50,000 (CAD), paid to the federal government.
>
> Failure to comply with the "recognizance" could result in imprisonment of up to 12 months.
>
> CP24 reported that Bill C-36 would "amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to reinstate an amended version of a controversial section [Section 13] that was repealed in 2013 amid widespread criticism that it violated freedom of speech rights."

So now you have complaints about speech as a basis for fining people or putting them IN JAIL. Would you like to pay taxes to police, lawyers, judges, politicians, social workers, teachers, etc. in order for them to do this to you? Remember, Canada already jails parents who disagree with the LGBT agenda. And they throw Christian pastors into jail for

holding church services.

Here is a Canadian pastor being arrested in front of his wife and children:

I don’t think it’s a good idea for anyone to travel to Canada, as the country is not safe. You might go there and merely express your opinion that marriage is for one man and one woman, or that children under 12 should not be given puberty blockers, and find yourself arrested and imprisoned if someone takes offense. You might do this in a private setting, to someone who agrees with you, but it sounds like they are taking complaints now from anyone who might overhear you. Why take chances? Look at them as a fascist country that opposes human rights like free speech, and don’t travel there. You wouldn’t vacation in North Korea. Why go to Canada?

Conservative black man explains why “Women Today Are No Longer Marriageable”

June 29, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had so many household chores to do this weekend. I had to pull weeds! I had to change air filters! I had to mow the lawns! I had to do laundry! And I had to run 2 sprinklers and move them all around! Anyway, five chores done means I got to watch 5 videos, for 5 breaks. The first one was from “The Roommates” channel. It’s 2 cool black guys teaching men and women how to be better.

In this video, (H/T Randy G.), one of the hosts explains to women why men don’t want to marry them. Now, he has lots and lots of funny videos about the problems with men, and you can look on his channel for those. These guys are fair and balanced. But I liked this video, and it’s one of his most popular videos, so I’m sharing it with y’all.

His outline was:

- men and women both need to improve themselves
- women have standards that some men don’t meet
- but women don’t realize that men also have standards

And here are his 6 arguments:

#1: too many single mothers

- most important thing for women is that man be employed
- most important thing for men is not to raise other man’s kids
- in the black community there is 72% out of wedlock birth rate
- not talking about widows
- women don’t care what men want, that’s why the rate is going up
- response from single mothers has been to shame men for not marrying substandard women

#2: too many women are overweight

- black women have the highest rate of obesity in America
- response from overweight women is to shame men for not loving them as they are

#3: women don’t have role models

- men need to be shown good husbands and fathers as role models
- women think that they will be great wives and mothers just because they are women
- women think that they don’t need to be taught anything to perform their roles
- increasing numbers of women grow up fatherless, so they don’t see mothers being good wives

- more and more women don't know how to communicate with men and support them
- women who grow up fatherless, without an example of a loving wife, need to find role models

#4: women today are too masculine

- women want to be in charge, and they want to be independent of leadership by good men
- men want women who led them lead, and give them respect for solving problems and getting results

#5: women have too much baggage

- men prefer women who have less baggage
- too much promiscuity, and it's very obvious to men when women have been promiscuous
- women get exposed to the wrong kinds of men, and then don't trust or respect the good kind of men
- lots of women on OnlyFans and Instagram are getting money for undressing, sex work, etc.

#6: women cannot accept criticism

- women don't want to hear what's wrong with them
- women attack anyone who gives them constructive criticism

My thoughts

As a West Indian black myself, I think I know which group of women he's talking about. It's almost impossible for a black guy to find a black girl who is suitable for marriage. I'm surprised that dueling hasn't come back where black guys fight to the death over the last few remaining black conservative women. I know in other countries, the black women are way more conservative – because I mentored a Nigerian girl through her BS and MS and now she works for a big IT firm. She's actually my replacement, because she donates all her money to Ratio Christi for on-campus apologetics. So I know women like that exist, but American black women are almost all unsuitable for marriage.

The main take-away from this post, I think, is for women to understand that they are not qualified for marriage and motherhood just by being women. Men expect a lot more than that from their wives. We expect a lot more than that from the mother of our children. And like everything else in life, the way to get better is to study, practice and prepare for challenges.

Andy Bannister and Michael Ruse discuss how atheists find meaning in life

June 30, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, and may the best horse win!
I'm summarizing a recent episode of the Unbelievable show.

Details:

> Atheist philosopher Michael Ruse joins Justin as we spend a second week looking at Andy Bannister's new book 'The atheist who didn't exist'.
>
> Its amusingly titled chapters include 'The Peculiar Case of the Postmodern Penguin (or: Why Life without God is Meaningless). Michael and Andy debate whether it's a problem that atheists can't have meaning with a 'capital M'.

Here is a summary of the discussion between Ruse and Bannister, and my comments below the summary.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- Ruse: ultimate questions are serious questions, and some religions are attempting to provide serious answers to those questions
- Ruse: there is a psychological element to belief in God but it's not a complete explanation, but it can apply to non-belief as well
- Bannister: there are psychological reasons why people would prefer unbelief (quotes Thomas Nagel and Aldous Huxley)
- Bannister: (to Ruse) what do you think would follow next if you got new information that caused you to believe in God?
- Ruse: I'd feel scared, I'd think of all the reasons that God would dislike me, rather

than any reasons why God would save me
- Bannister: according to the Bible, God is not so much interested in mere belief, but in active trust in him
- Ruse: without being smug, I just completed 50 years as a college professor of philosophy, and I have a sense of worth from that
- Ruse: if God turns up, and says that 50 years of being a professor is not good enough, well, I don't know God, I'm sorry, I did my best
- Brierley: Andy, explain to us this story of how a penguin explained to you how he invented a subjective meaning in life for himself?
- Brierley: (reads the story)
- Bannister: when it comes to reading a book, the real meaning is the meaning the author intended the book to have
- Bannister: readers can inject their own meaning into the book that has nothing to do with it, but the author gives the real meaning
- Bannister: meaning in life is like reading a book – you can make up your own meaning, but the author's meaning is the real meaning
- Brierley: (to Ruse) on atheism, is there any objective meaning?
- Ruse: "obviously, someone like myself cannot have meaning with a capital M in that sense"
- Ruse: the real question is and atheist can find a sense of self-worth, "I find that I'm happier within myself, I can find meaning"
- Bannister: what would you say to someone who drinks away the family inheritance and gets the same sense of happiness you have?
- Bannister: what would you say to all the people who are unable to get "a sense of self-worth" from their career, because of where they are born, sickness, etc.
- Ruse: I have nothing to offer them, some people are born into such awful situations that they are bound to be bad people
- Ruse: these unfair accidents of birth, etc., fits with atheism better
- Ruse: what we should do is change society so that more people can build a sense of self-worth through achievements
- Ruse: that way, they can say to God "I used my talents" so they can create feelings of self-worth and happiness (apart from God)
- Bannister: meaning in life cannot be answered without answering questions related to identity, value, which are rooted in the overall worldview
- Bannister: on the Christian worldview, you have an infinite worth, your value isn't determined by circumstances, earnings, friends, etc.
- Bannister: your value comes from what Jesus was willing to pay to save you, namely, giving his own life for you
- Bannister: when I travel to meet other Christians in other parts of the world, they have a happiness that should not be there if they are getting happiness from wealth, fame, achievements, etc.
- Bannister: but when you come to the West, many people who have wealth, fame, achievement, etc. are unhappy

- Ruse: well maybe who look after a flock of sheep every day may get a sense of self-worth from that, or from other jobs
- Ruse: I do take Christianity very seriously, it is a grown-up proposal to answer grown-up questions – it works if it is *true*
- Ruse: we don't have to follow Nietzche's statement that if there is no God, there is no meaning in life – we can find a middle way, we can achieve meaning in life by using our talents to achieve things
- Bannister: I disagree with Michael, I don't think that the meaning you invent for yourself is authentic meaning
- Bannister: distracting yourself with amusing things and happiness is not an answer to the problem
- Brierley: (to Ruse) are you saying that you have searched for ultimate meaning, and you are settling for subjective meaning?
- Ruse: my subjective meaning is not second class to objective meaning, "I feel a real deep sense of achievement, of meaning, of self-worth, of having used my talents properly, and I don't feel in any sense a sense of regret" (what matters to him is how he feels)
- Bannister: notice how Michael keeps bringing in value judgments. e.g. – "use my talents well", that implies that there is a right way and a wrong to use your talents, which assumes an objective scale of right and wrong, which makes no sense in atheism
- Bannister: an atheist can sit in a sun room and enjoy the feelings of happiness generated by the light and heat of the Sun, without asking whether there is a Sun out there
- Bannister: ultimately, at the end of the day, my concern is not whether something makes me happy or makes me feel fulfilled
- Bannister: ultimately, at the end of the day, I think there is only one real reason to wrestle with these questions of meaning, and that is to find truth
- Ruse: sometimes we reach a point where we cannot get to true answers to some questions, sometimes we look for truth, but then give up and confess "I cannot find it" and then move on from there

Is it possible to dispense with God's advice on your decision-making and achieve something that affects a lot of people, or makes people like you, or makes you famous, etc., and then have *that* please God? "Look, God, I did something I liked that affected a lot of people, and made them feel happy as they were on their way to Hell because they rejected you". I think a lot of celebrities, athletes and musicians have feelings that they have achieved something, but having feelings of achievement because you entertain people doesn't mean anything to God.

So what is the standard? How you imitate Jesus – *self-control, self-denial and self-sacrifice to honor God* – that is the standard. If I had to choose between giving up two hours of my life to summarize this discussion for my readers, and all the fame and fortune that people who make godless TV shows, movies and music have, I would choose to make this debate

summary. My goal in life is not to have fun, thrills, travel and feel happy *in this world*. I have a Boss. Performing actions that respect the Boss is objectively meaningful. It's may not seem like much compared to what James Bond does in million-dollar movies, but at least I am wearing the right uniform, and playing for the right team.

I'm starting to notice that a lot of younger Christians are more interested in feeling good, having fun, being liked by others than they are in being able to know what's true or show what's true. Christians are no exception to this problem of finding meaning in life. A lot of us are just taking in entertainment and trying hard not to think at all.

Mike Licona explains the As, Bs, Cs, Ds and Es of New Testament reliability

July 1, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mike Licona is one of my favorite Christian apologists, and here is an excellent lecture to show you why.

In the lecture, he explains why the four biographies in the New Testament should be accepted as historically accurate: (55 minutes)

Summary:

- What a Baltimore Ravens helmet teaches us about the importance of truth
- What happens to Christians when they go off to university?
- The 2007 study on attitudes of American professors to evangelical Christians
- Authors: Who wrote the gospels?
- Bias: Did the bias of the authors cause them to distort history?
- Contradictions: What about the different descriptions of events in the gospels?
- Dating: When were the gospels written?
- Eyewitnesses: Do the gospel accounts go back to eyewitness testimony?

This is basic training for Christians. It would be nice if every Christian was equipped in church to be able to make a case like this.

Should we expect to know what God's reason is for allowing evil and suffering?

July 2, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article by Steven Cowan about the problems of evil and suffering.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude.

Now let's find out what a noseeum is, and how it relates to the existence of evil and suffering:

> However, perhaps God's existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God's existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By "pointless evil," Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe's argument may be simply stated as follows:
>
> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the "noseeum inference." Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a "noseeum" is something that you cannot see—it is a "no-see-um." And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I "no-see-um" a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured

> to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

In that example, the planet is the noseeum. Just because you look really hard, you can't be confident that the planet is not there. And similarly with the problem of evil and suffering, looking really hard and finding no reason does not mean that there is no reason. It just means that you are not in a good position to see the reason. You don't know enough to to be sure that there is no reason, because of your limitations as a human being.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous. (You can get the PDF here)

According to the paper, human beings just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a noseeum. To know for sure that there is no reason, we would need to have more knowledge than we do.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very

difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

What’s the best naturalistic explanation for the origin of life proposed by atheists?

July 3, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just ordered the newest edition of “The Mystery of Life’s Origin“, which is a classic book on the origin of life by pro-design authors. The new edition has several new chapters. It reminded me of my interest in the origin of life when I was a younger man, just starting full-time work with a hot Internet start-up in the big city.

Back then, I liked to listen to debates about the origin of life (e.g. – Walter Bradley versus Robert Shapiro, etc.), as well as lectures and interviews. I ordered tons of academic lectures and debates, especially from Access Research Network. Two of my favorite interviews from ARN featured Dr. Charles Thaxton and Dr. Dean Kenyon.

Let’s start with Charles Thaxton’s interview.

And here are the questions:

1. How did you first get interested in the origin of life?
2. How did you come to write The Mystery of Life’s Origin with Walter Bradley and Roger Olsen?
3. Was there an advantage to having the three of you collaborate on the project?
4. What is the primary argument of your book, The Mystery of Life’s Origin?
5. Have scientists come close to developing a plausible naturalistic explanation to the origin of life or do you still consider the origin of life to be a mystery?
6. Do you see a particular irony in the timing of Stanley Miller’s experiments and the discovery of DNA by Watson and Crick?
7. How does the emergence of modern genetics tie in with the Darwinian scenario of life going from simple to complex?
8. What are the major problems with origin of life simulation experiments?
9. Isn’t it rather impressive that amino acids were produced in the Miller experiments?
10. How close is the development of amino acids to the threshold of life?
11. What are the steps involved in producing proteins from amino acids?
12. Why are amino acids isolated during this process?
13. How can the investigator affect the outcome of a simulation experiment?
14. How did you evaluate the different chemical evolution experiments?
15. Are the initial conditions in the simulation experiments plausible?
16. What did the earth’s early atmosphere contain?
17. Will the simulation experiments work with this atmosphere?
18. There seems to be an underlying assumption that the origin of life resulted without any intelligent input whatsoever yet the simulation experiments appear to rely upon intelligent guidance. Could you comment on this irony?
19. Are there any natural processes that would have filtered out destructive ultraviolet light?

20. What additional steps beyond creating amino acids would be required to develop life?
21. What is so difficult about making proteins or nucleic acids?
22. In addition to the energy problem in protein synthesis isn't there a sequencing problem?
23. Are DNA sequences analogous to a written language?
24. Has Hubert Yockey made similar claims?
25. In The Mystery of Life's Origin you refer to order, randomness, and specified complexity. Could you give us an overview of these concepts?
26. What do you think the presence of specified complexity in a living system indicates about its origin?
27. In inferring the necessity of intelligence to produce life haven't you ventured from the realm of science to religion?
28. Could you summarize the reasons why you believe intelligence was involved in the origin of life?
29. What are the major objections to your current point of view?
30. How was The Mystery of Life's Origin received by the scientific community?
31. What was Dean Kenyon's response to your critiques of his book, Biochemical Predestination?
32. What was Dean Kenyon's response to The Mystery of Life's Origin?
33. Were you a bit apprehensive about meeting Kenyon after writing a book which was quite critical of his views in Biochemical Predestination?
34. Are self-organizational theories plausible?
35. Would you comment on the work done by Prigogine and Eigen?
36. What is your assessment of RNA scenarios?
37. What other problems do you see with an RNA world?

You can learn more about Charles Thaxton here.

And here's the interview with Dean Kenyon:

And here are the questions:

1. What first interested you in biology and the origin of life? What is your academic background in this area?
2. What was your viewpoint on the origin of life when you wrote Biochemical Predestination?
3. How have your views on the origin of life changed since you wrote Biochemical Predestination?
4. Do many of your colleagues support your new position? If not, why not?
5. What are the general presuppositions that scientists make who study the origin of life?
6. What is the Oparin-Haldane hypothesis, and what role does it play in current research and teaching on the origin of life?
7. What are the major underlying assumptions of the Oparin (chemical evolution) hypothesis?
8. Are there any other important assumptions in origin of life theories?

9. How well are these assumptions supported by currently available scientific data?
10. What is your evaluation of the Miller type of simulation experiment? What do these experiments tell us about possible chemical events on the prebiotic Earth?
11. Is it possible that interfering cross-reactions might prevent life from arising naturalistically?
12. Stanley Miller's pioneering work in the origin of life assumed a reducing atmosphere of methane, ammonia, water vapor, and carbon dioxide? Is there sufficient empirical support for this assumption?
15. How large a gap is there between the most complex "protocell" model and the simplest living cell?
16. What is the biologically relevant information content of the simplest living organism known to exist? What are estimates for a theoretical minimum information content of the first living cell?
17. How probable is it that such complexity could arise by undirected chemical processes?
19. What are the major unsolved problems in research on the origin of life?
20. What is the relevance of the Second Law of Thermodynamics to the origin of life?
21. Is it plausible that an "RNA world" was the precursor of the first living cells?
25. If life did not originate by chemical evolution on the primitive Earth, what other possible scientific explanations exist?
26. What do you mean by your statement that "perhaps scientism is more widespread than we like to think"?
27. Is it possible that natural processes are insufficient to account for the origin of all biological information?
28. Can science rule out the possibility that most biological information had an intelligent cause?
29. What alternatives are there to pursuing purely naturalistic explanations for the origin of life?
30. What do you mean by "intelligent design" as it relates to the origin of life?
31. Why is an intelligent design or creationist interpretation of scientific data bearing on origins not acceptable to many scientists?
32. What criteria could be used to determine if the information content of living organisms had an intelligent or natural cause?
34. Does academic freedom allow you to discuss the difficulties of scientific naturalism and origin of life theories? If not, why are they protected from criticism?
35. How should the origin of life be taught in light of the California Science Framework policy which states that "nothing in science or in any other field of knowledge shall be taught dogmatically"?
36. How is scientific progress impacted when critiques of current theories are suppressed?

You can learn more about Dean Kenyon here.

The challenge for naturalists posed by the origin of life makes it well worth your time to

learn and understand. I used to explain this argument to my entire IT department on white boards when I was a young man. It’s fascinating, and more convincing than personal testimonies or abstract philosophical arguments. Although I read books on the origin of life, I learned how to present the information as an argument by watching the interviews above over and over.

People sometimes ask me how I was able to survive 22 years in IT with my theism intact. It turns out that there are no shortcuts to a theistic worldview. You have to support it with evidence. You have to be able to show your work about how you reached your conclusions. I’m a theist today because I never found a single atheist in any software development job who could even begin to challenge the evidence that I collected from listening to all those lectures and debates that I started from in my early 20s. It was as easy to defeat them as taking candy from a baby.

If only Christian parents and Christian leaders understood the importance of scientific facts when they talk to young people about Christianity. We need to be less worried about hurting the feelings of young people by making them “feel dumb”. Christianity isn’t supposed to be easy. It’s not a bad thing to ask people to work hard at learning how to rationally ground your beliefs with evidence. If we want to stop our young people from being lazy, ignorant and cowardly, then the right way to do it is to make them work. Make them learn. Make them fight.

For Independence Day, let’s learn about George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

July 4, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Washington crosses the Delaware river before the Battle of Trenton

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position

> untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington's line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington's retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington's army at White Plains, New York, British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians

believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
>
> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for

> the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
>
> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called

> the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.
>
> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
>
> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
>
> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

New study: 10,000+ Canadians die on government-run healthcare wait lists

July 5, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I get into conversations with young people about what policies they think would work best. Inevitably, they support policies where the government takes money out of the pockets of people who work, and hands it out (regardless of individual choices) in the form of social programs. Their favorite government-run program is government-run health care. How is that working?

So, in Canada, they have a 100% government-run health care system. Let's see how well it works, using this article from The Post Millennial.

Excerpt:

> 2019 and 2020 were tough on Canadians awaiting surgery, a procedure, scan, or an appointment with a specialist. According to government data, over 10,000 patients died on the waitlist or from excessive waiting periods.
>
> […]Canada is unique in the world when it comes to access to health care services. Our governments often give patients only two choices: Either sit on a government waiting list or leave the country — an ultimatum that led to far too many senseless tragedies.

It's not just old people being allowed to die, but young people too:

> Laura Hillier's tragic case is a good example. The 18-year-old Ontario student was fighting cancer and had a bone marrow donor lined up, but passed away while waiting seven months for a bed and a surgeon to become available. The province had only rationed enough funds for five transplants per month and Laura was forced to wait. This case became famous not because of proactive government disclosure, but because the young patient's public cry for help went viral.

Here's a report on single-payer health care in Canada, from the Heritage Foundation. I'll focus on the differences between their health care system and American health care.

Canadians pay slightly less in out of pocket costs:

> The OECD calculates that Canadians spend 1.6 percent of GDP on out-of-pocket health spending, compared to 1.9 percent in the U.S.
>
> […]While these numbers are very close, they are actually getting closer. Since 1970, U.S. out-of-pocket spending as a percentage of total medical spending has been falling steadily, from 33 percent in 1970 to about 10 percent in 2017.19
>
> Meanwhile, Canadian out-of-pocket spending has been falling much slower, so that by 2016 it totaled 15 percent of total medical spending—a higher proportion

> than in the U.S.20
>
> **As a result, Statistics Canada warned in early 2020 that the percentage of Canadians experiencing large out-of-pocket burdens is growing, writing that "[b]etween 1998 and 2009…the percentage of households spending more than 10% of their total after-tax income on health care rose by 56%."**

Canadians pay more in federal and state taxes:

> Federal taxation excluding social security contributions, then, comes to 28 percent of GDP in Canada, compared to just 19 percent in the U.S.—meaning 51 percent more.
>
> […]This excess taxation is largely a result of health spending, which has bloated provincial budgets to nearly three times the taxes of U.S. states.
>
> Provincial taxes have grown to nearly the same level as federal taxation. Meanwhile, provincial health costs have risen to fully 37 percent of provincial budgets in 2016—up from 33 percent in 1993 – —and range as high as 42 percent.
>
> Canada's Fraser Institute has estimated this excess tax burden from public health costs at roughly $9,000 for a household of two adults with or without children or $750 per month in additional taxes.

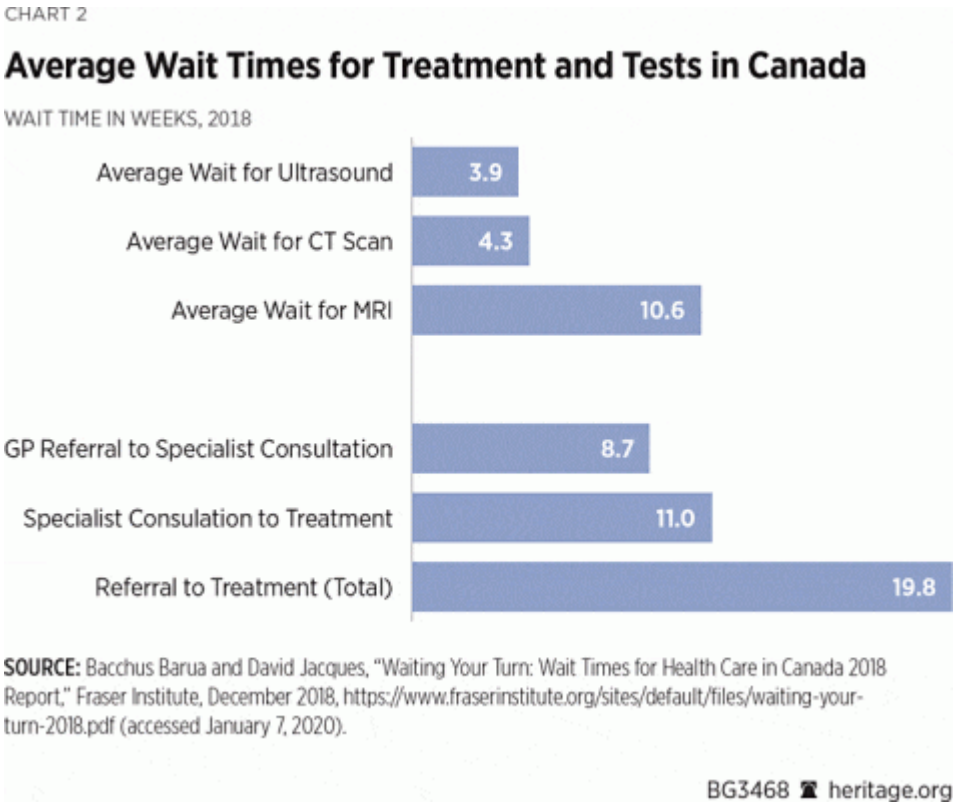

When I wanted an MRI I was scheduled the same week
Canadians wait far longer for treatment than Americans:

> Medical waiting times have become a national crisis in Canada, and continue to worsen. The average wait time for medically necessary treatment between

> referral from a general practitioner and a consultation with a specialist was 8.7 weeks in 2018, 136 percent longer than in 1993. Patients then have to wait again between seeing the specialist and the actual treatment, another 11 weeks on average, 97 percent longer than in 1993.
>
> From referral to treatment, then, it takes an average of 19.8 weeks (see Chart 2) to be treated, in addition to the original wait to see the family doctor in the first place—this for "medically necessary" treatment, not cosmetic surgery.
>
> In contrast, nearly 77 percent of Americans are treated within four weeks of referral, and only 6 percent of Americans report waiting more than two months to see a specialist.
>
> As for appointments, a 2017 survey of American physicians in the 15 largest U.S. cities found that it took just 24 days on average to schedule a new-patient physician appointment, including 11 days for an orthopedic surgeon and 21 days for a cardiologist.
>
> As a result of these long waits, by one recent estimate, at any given moment, over one million Canadians—3 percent of the entire population—are waiting for a medical treatment.
>
> These lists can average six months, and often much longer in rural areas, which tend to suffer from doctor shortages so severe that many do not even have a family doctor. Overall, 15 percent of Canadians did not have a regular health care provider in 2017.
>
> **The shortages ripple through the system; one doctor in Ontario called in a referral to the local hospital, only to be told there was a four-and-a-half year wait to see a neurologist.**

In Canada, people die or become inoperable on waiting lists:

> **A Montreal man was finally called for his long-delayed urgent surgery two months after he had died. One 16-year-old boy in British Columbia waited three years for an "urgent" surgery, during which time his condition deteriorated so much that he became a paraplegic.**

Canadians have to travel abroad to countries with functioning health care systems in order to be treated:

> These cases are, unfortunately, not isolated; a survey of specialists found that average wait times exceed what is deemed clinically "reasonable" for fully 72 percent of conditions in Canada. The situation continues to worsen every year: In 1994, the average gap between clinically reasonable delay and actual delay was only four days, and by 2018 had grown to 23 days.
>
> […]With one million waiting, many Canadians turn in desperation to U.S. health care—the very system some U.S. policymakers propose to transform. In 2017 alone, Canadians made 217,500 trips to other countries for health care, of which

> 52,500 were to the U.S., paying out of pocket to skip the waiting.

Outdated equipment, outdated drugs, staff shortages:

> While the average employer-sponsored private insurance plan in Canada covers between 10,000 and 12,000 drugs, most public plans in Canada only cover 4,000. Canada has 35 percent fewer acute care beds than the U.S., and only one-fourth as many magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) units per capita—indeed, it has fewer MRI units per capita than Turkey, Chile, or Latvia.
>
> […]Some common treatments are simply unavailable to Canadians. For new pharmaceuticals, for example, Canada's policy of forcing down prices so that American consumers essentially pay for Canada's research and development has led to years-long delays for Canadian patients.
>
> […]Cutting corners on facilities and using outdated drugs show up in Canadian mortality rates. Thirty-day in-hospital mortality rates in Canada are 20 percent higher than in the U.S. for heart attacks, and nearly three times the U.S. level for strokes. Cancer age-standardized mortality is 10 percent higher in Canada than in the U.S.—despite far healthier lifestyles.
>
> […]When it comes to personnel, Canada underspends on medical staff and doctors, ranking 29th out of 33 among high-income countries for doctors per 1,000 population, accounting for a large part of those wait times. Canada has half as many specialist physicians per capita as the U.S.
>
> […]With such shortages and waiting lists, Canadian emergency rooms are packed. So packed that Canadians sometimes just give up and go home. Of Canadian ER visitors who are seen, 29 percent report wait times of over four hours, three times the U.S. level.
>
> […]Canadian seniors are 65 percent more likely to have visited the emergency room (ER) four or more times in the past year than American seniors.
>
> Ultimately, nearly 5 percent of Canadian ER visitors end up leaving without ever being treated, giving up on a medical system that is perennially "free" but out of stock at the moment. In one study at two ERs in Alberta, 14 of the 498 walkaways were subsequently hospitalized, and one died within the week.

And keep in mind how things work in a single payer system. You pay up front through your taxes. The harder you work, the more you pay into the system. When you want treatment, you just get in line behind people who never paid one dime into the system – like all those low-skill refugees that Canada imports from Middle Eastern countries to build up the socialist voting bloc.

New study: black students spend far less time on homework than Asian students

July 6, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Brookings Institute is a left-wing think tank that nevertheless does some research that's interesting to conservatives. In a recent article, they talk about a disturbing difference between children of different races. Specifically, black children do far less homework than Asian children.

Here's the article from the Brookings Institute:

> In this blog post, we will look at time spent outside of school–specifically time spent doing homework–among different racial and socio-economic groups. We will use data from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) to shed light on those differences and then attempt to explain those gaps, using ATUS data and other evidence.

And here's what they found:

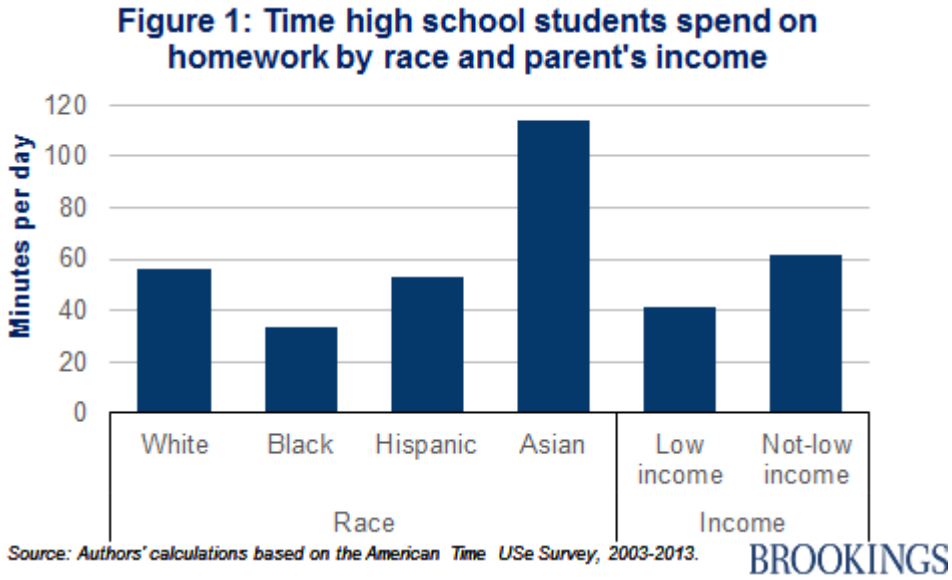

Graph of Homework Time vs Race

So, how come Asians do so much better than blacks?

This article is written by the far-left radical Nicholas Kristof, writing in the radically-leftist New York Times. (A former newspaper)

Asians don't blame other people for their own success of failure, they think that their outcomes are based on how hard they work:

> There's also evidence that Americans believe that A's go to smart kids, while Asians are more likely to think that they go to hard workers… Asian-American kids are allowed no excuse for getting B's — or even an A-. The joke is that an A- is an "Asian F."

Asians also believe in keeping two biological parents in the home:

> Strong two-parent families are a factor, too. Divorce rates are much lower for many Asian-American communities than for Americans as a whole, and there's evidence that two-parent households are less likely to sink into poverty and also have better outcomes for boys in particular.

Do black women believe those things? Not the ones I've met.

And not according to statistics:

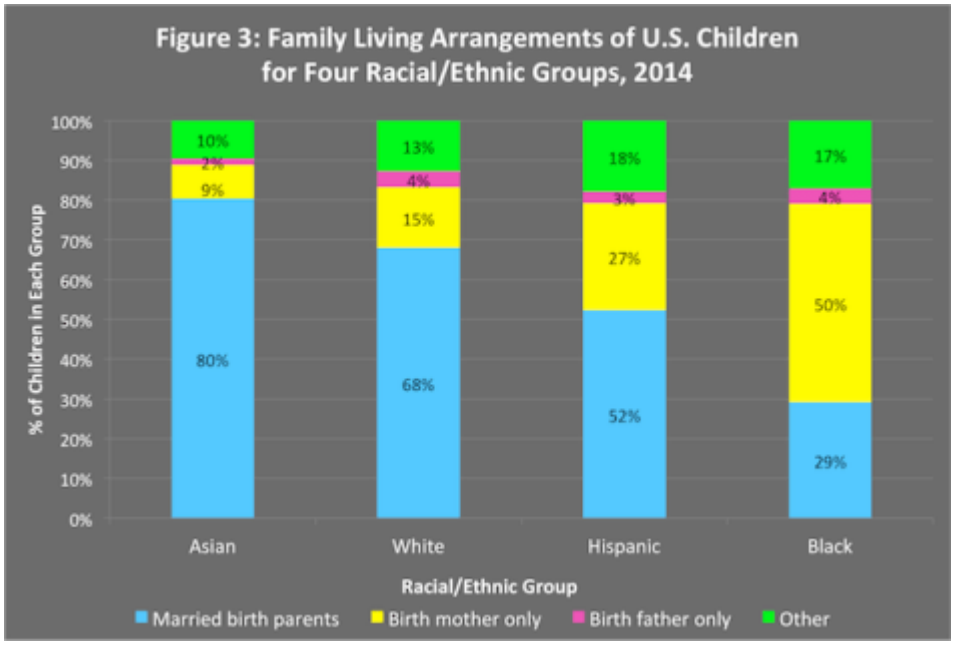

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

So how will we help black students to do better in school? We need two parents in every home. And school choice, obviously. We have to let black children escape the failing unionized public schools that only want to teach atheism, premarital sex, evolution, global warming alarmism, transgenderism, gay marriage, socialism, BLM and CRT instead of math, science, technology and engineering. I don't think that public school teachers can do any math, science, engineering or technology, so how could they teach it.

Also, we need to start shaming women of all races who choose to have sex with men who are not ready for marriage. There are lots of men out there who are willing to marry, and that should be what women are looking for most if all in a man. That change alone will probably erase most of the achievement gap between different racial groups. Does anyone have the courage to tell young women (of all races) to be more responsible with their sexual decisions? The out-of-wedlock birth rate for blacks is over 70%. This causes massive poverty and crime in the black community. Does anyone have the courage to tell blacks that they are doing this to themselves?

New study: 1 in 8 divorces is caused by student loan debt

July 7, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to make plans in advance and calculate everything out before I try to do anything. This is the curse of being a software engineer. We're taught to take a test-first approach to design. So, when I think about marriage, I naturally think about what tests marriage is supposed to pass, and work backwards from there to requirements for each of the spouses.

Here's some research from CNBC that might help young people to avoid a divorce, if they respect the research in their choices.

Excerpt:

> When it comes to student loan debt, "for richer, for poorer" doesn't quite cut it.
>
> In general, finances are the leading cause of stress in a relationship, according to a study by SunTrust Bank, but student debt takes a particularly hard toll on a marriage.
>
> More than a third of borrowers said college loans and other money factors contributed to their divorce, according to a recent report from Student Loan Hero, a website for managing education debt.
>
> In fact, 13 percent of divorcees blame student loans specifically for ending their relationship, the report found. Student Loan Hero surveyed more than 800 divorced adults in June.

Here is a link to the full study from Student Loan Hero.

I think in general, you can't just do whatever you want before marrying and jump into it unprepared. Marriage involves specific requirements in order to work, such as being faithful to your spouse, and buying things that you need for the marriage enterprise, like a home, and baby stuff. It doesn't make any sense to say "I want to get married" and then not prepare for marriage by being careful about preparing for the behaviors marriage that requires of you. Being debt-free is one of those behaviors that marriage requires of you.

So how can we be debt-free, so that the marriage will be stable? Well, one way to be debt-free is to find a way to learn skills that will allow you to get a job without going to college, like being a self-taught software engineer. One of my friends actually did that, and now he's with a very good software company as a remote worker. But if you're going to go to college, you can avoid debt by studying something that will get you a high-paying job when you graduate.

This 2017 article from Harvard Business Review is interesting.

It says:

> Examining 46,934 resumes shared on Glassdoor by people who graduated between 2010 and 2017, the researchers looked at each person's college major and their post-college jobs in the five years after graduation. They then estimated the median pay for each of those jobs (also using Glassdoor data) for employees with five years of experience or less. Their key finding: "Many college majors that lead to high-paying roles in tech and engineering are male dominated, while majors that lead to lower-paying roles in social sciences and liberal arts tend to be female dominated, placing men in higher-paying career pathways, on average."

Here's the plot, and you can click it to expand it:

Men Sort Into College Majors That End Up Paying More

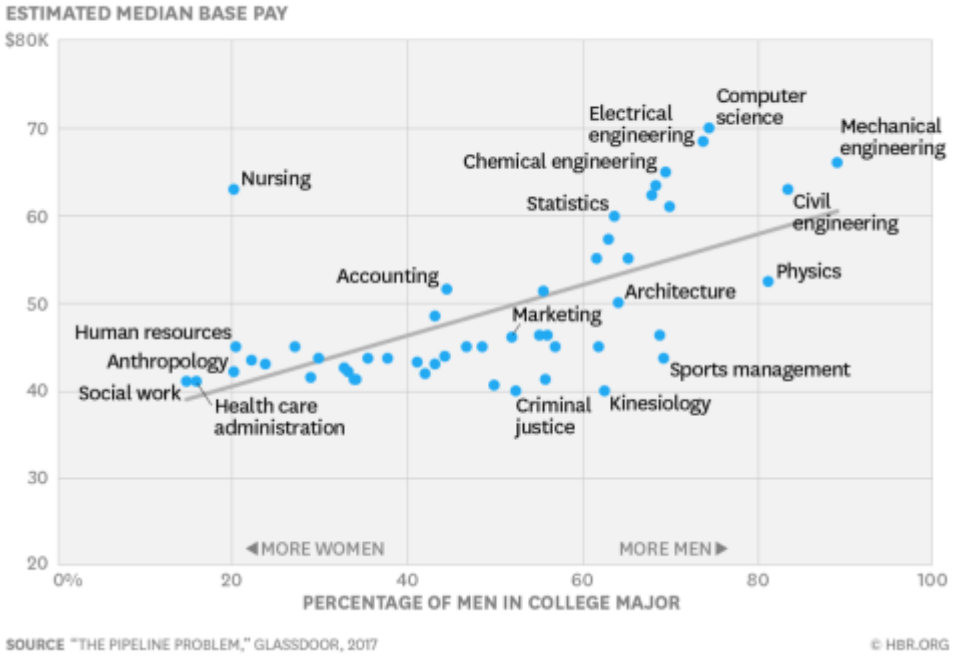

Median salaries by major, broken out by gender – don't study things at the bottom!

As you can see from the graph, it's especially important to share the message about choosing a major, salaries and student loan debt with WOMEN, because as the graph shows, they tend to choose the wrong majors, if the goal is to pay off student loans and avoid divorce. Everyone who wants marriage to go smoothly needs to choose majors that are near the top of the graph, like nursing, chemical engineering, computer science, or mechanical engineering. It doesn't make sense to go to college if you aren't going to graduate in one of these high-paying fields.

As you might expect from the graph, women hold the majority of student loan debt, according to the Boston Globe, and that's because women tend to choose majors that don't result in good-paying jobs. And we already saw how this becomes a risk factor for divorce.

Student loans delay marriage and children

Another interesting piece of data, reported by The Consumerist, is that people with student loans tend to delay marriage, which means the couple has fewer children:

> As consumers navigate life's financial journey, they are faced with major financial milestones, like buying a home. But student loans are also delaying consumers from reaching these goals.
>
> Survey respondents report delaying homeownership (23 percent), buying or leasing a car (23 percent), having children (10 percent) and getting married (9 percent) because of their student loan burdens.

So, it's not just that there is an increased risk of divorce from student loans, but there's also fewer children, which means a diminished legacy. I can't speak for how others would see this, but for myself, I want to pass on my beliefs to as many effective, influential Christian children as I can.

Anyway, I feel obligated to post a relevant Dave Ramsey video, just to remind everyone that stewardship of money is a Christian virtue, and that being forgiven by Jesus for your sins doesn't automatically make you good with money. It takes planning and stewardship.

This one from 2014: (H/T Robb)

When I was in high school, I was far more interested in becoming an English teacher than I was in becoming a software engineer. It was my Dad who overruled my choice of college major when I was still in high school. He had me take a first-year English course at a local university. When I saw how politicized and useless it was (they were studying all sorts of politically correct postmodern relativist stuff, instead of the Great Works, and they weren't trying to learn any wisdom from any of it), I chose computer science. I did what was likely to avoid divorce, and likely to support having many children.

New study: women who have fewer premarital sex partners have lower risk of divorce

July 8, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from Family Studies that talks about how the number of pre-marital sex partners that a woman has increases her risk of divorce.

It says:

> American sexual behavior is much different than it used to be. Today, most Americans think premarital sex is okay, and will have three or more sexual partners before marrying. What, if anything, does premarital sex have to do with marital stability?
>
> This research brief shows that the relationship between divorce and the number of sexual partners women have prior to marriage is complex. I explore this relationship using data from the three most recent waves of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) collected in 2002, 2006-2010, and 2011-2013. For women marrying since the start of the new millennium:
>
> - Women with 10 or more partners were *the most likely* to divorce, but this only became true in recent years;
> - Women with 3-9 partners were *less likely* to divorce than women with 2 partners; and,
> - Women with 0-1 partners were the *least likely* to divorce.
>
> Earlier research found that having multiple sex partners prior to marriage could lead to less happy marriages, and often increased the odds of divorce.
>
> […]Even more noteworthy has been the decline in the proportion of women who get married having had only one sex partner (in most cases, their future husbands). Forty-three percent of women had just one premarital sex partner in the 1970s.
>
> […]By the 2010s, only 5 percent of new brides were virgins. At the other end of the distribution, the number of future wives who had ten or more sex partners increased from 2 percent in the 1970s to 14 percent in the 2000s, and then to 18 percent in the 2010s. Overall, American women are far more likely to have had multiple premarital sex partners in recent years (unfortunately, the NSFG doesn't have full data on men's premarital sexual behavior, and in any event they recall their own marital histories less reliably than do women).

Here's the change:

Table 1: The Distribution of Women's Premarital Sex Partners, by Marriage Cohort					
	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
0 partner	21%	17%	14%	12%	5%
1 partner	43%	36%	26%	21%	22%
2 partners	16%	15%	13%	13%	12%
3 partners	8%	11%	11%	11%	11%
4-5 partners	6%	12%	16%	17%	18%
6-9 partners	4%	5%	11%	13%	14%
10+ partners	2%	4%	10%	14%	18%
total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	268	1,921	4,312	3,598	273

Women have freely chosen to dismiss the Bible and the moral law

And the problem with this, of course, is that more premarital sex partners means a higher risk of divorce:

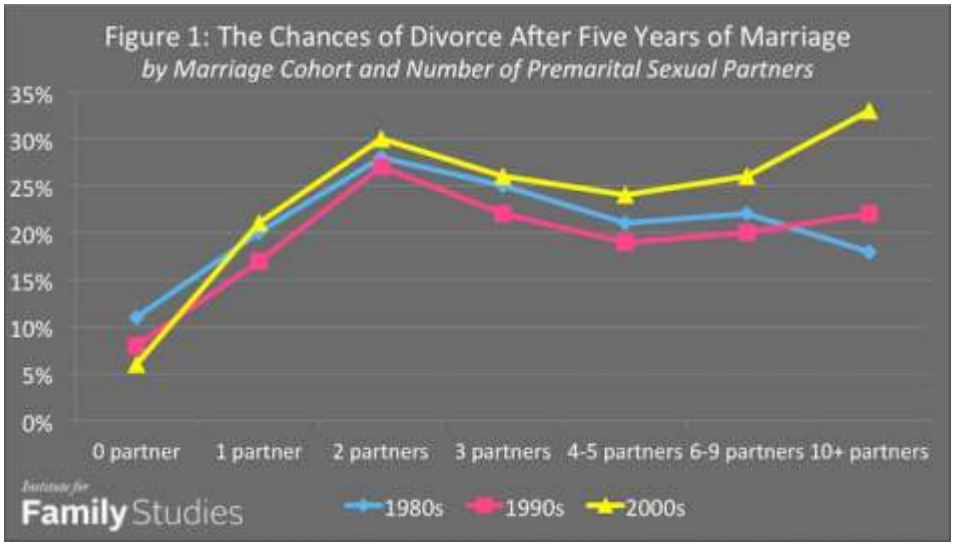

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

Why is the 2-partner number so high?

> In most cases, a woman's two premarital sex partners include her future husband and one other man. That second sex partner is first-hand proof of a sexual alternative to one's husband. These sexual experiences convince women that sex outside of wedlock is indeed a possibility. The man involved was likely to have become a partner in the course of a serious relationship—women inclined to hook up will have had more than two premarital partners—thereby emphasizing the seriousness of the alternative.

The Christian Post had an article about some recent numbers from the Centers for Disease Control about virgins.

Excerpt:

> A new Centers for Disease Control study examines teenage health behaviors in connection to their self-reported sexual activity and shows those who remain abstinent are much healthier on many fronts than their sexually active peers.
>
> The report, titled "Sexual Identity, Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12, United States and Selected Sites," showcased the results from a 2015 survey that monitored several categories of health-

> related behaviors like tobacco usage, drug and alcohol use, sexual habits, unhealthy dietary behaviors, and behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence.
>
> The report concludes "that students who had no sexual contact have a much lower prevalance of most health-risk behaviors compared with students" who had sexual contact.

The article quotes Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, who I have featured on this blog many times:

> In a Monday interview with The Christian Post, Jennifer Roback Morse, founder and president of the Ruth Institute, said, "this study is remarkable because it asks questions and reports the answers, rather than avoiding questions or assuming answers."
>
> As Glenn Stanton noted last week in The Federalist, the results from those questions and answers are remarkable.
>
> With regard to smoking, teenage virgins are 3,300 percent less likely to smoke daily than their peers who are sexually involved with someone of the opposite sex, Stanton computed from the report's data. Teen virgins are 9,500 percent less likely to smoke daily than their peers who are sexually involved with someone of the same sex or in a bisexual relationship, he added. Chaste young people are also extremely less likely to use indoor tanning beds, binge drink, smoke marijuana, ride in cars as passengers with a drunk driver, and get into physical fights than their sexually active peers. Abstinent youth are also more likely to get a solid eight hours of sleep every night and eat breakfast daily.
>
> […]The CDC report also included findings from 25 state surveys, and 19 large, urban school district surveys conducted among students in grades 9–12 which took place between December of 2014 and September of 2015.

Now, many pro traditional marriage people will tell young men "feminism and the sexual revolution change nothing about a woman's suitability for marriage, so go out there and get married to these women anyway". In my experience, no one is telling women NOT to follow their hearts, and explaining to them the harm that they do by allowing their feelings to determine who they will engage in relationships.

I would like to see women make better decisions with men before they marry, rather than be influenced by their peers and culture to give themselves to men who are not marriage-minded. Maybe a little skepticism should be shown to "follow your heart"? Women need to understand what they are losing when they choose to have premarital sex.

In my group of friends, the men are aware of the Biblical prohibition on premarital sex. My friends know about the research on marriage, and what it takes to make a marriage work. We don't follow our hearts, because we do what we know will work to achieve the results we want. We don't listen to the culture, and we don't listen to radical feminists. Men generally take an engineering approach to marriage – we want to know what the best

practices and tradeoffs are, and then we plan and act to succeed.

Should Christian men consider single mothers for marriage?

July 9, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why do Christians object to warning men about high-risk relationships?
A while back, I explained my three concerns about attending church. One of them was that male pastors and church leaders have adopted the priorities of radical feminism, and have turned against men who want a traditional marriage in which the man leads and the wife supports. Well, I found something that really illustrates what I mean by that, so that everyone will understand it.

Above, you can see a tweet by Michael Foster, a pastor who hosts a podcast called "It's Good to be a Man". His web site states that his goal is: "Extending God's house & father-rule by helping men to establish their own houses in strength, workmanship & wisdom."

He explains in subsequent tweets that he is just urging men to ask questions to find out how the woman became a single mother.

Reactions to the tweet

Here are some reactions to the tweet:

- asking Foster where are his warnings about single dads
- calling Foster a misogynist
- insulting Foster's appearance
- using 1 counterexample to deny a mountain of evidence
- single moms who deliberately chose bad men, and then play the victim by accepting no responsibility for their actions
- claiming that Foster was expressing an irrational opinion
- accusing Foster of being a child abuser

The negative reactions are all anti-intellectual and childish, especially trying to refute statistics with "you hurt my feelings" or telling a single personal story as a

counterexample.

Here's a disclaimer. In this post, I am talking about single mothers by choice, and single mothers who initiated divorce. Widows are excluded.

The risks posed by single mothers

Now, let's improve Foster's warning, by looking at some evidence – is a marriage to a single mother really more likely to result in a bad outcome?

First of all, women initiate 70% of divorces. If you meet a woman who divorced her husband, she either had a defect in her ability to evaluate and choose a man, or she had a defect in her ability to maintain a commitment to the man she chose. Either way, a woman who divorced her previous husband has red flags. There are two possibilities. She either chose a good man or she chose a bad man. If she chose a bad man, then it shows that she didn't choose a man with good moral character and spiritual leadership. That means that those things were low priorities for her when deciding who to get naked with. Alternatively, she married a good man, and failed to maintain the commitment. Then she has different problems: problems with male leadership, problems with responsibilities, problems with commitment, problems with contentment, etc. You need to ask questions to get to the bottom of what happened, and more importantly, what she has studied and done to change her worldview. Don't take her words for it, look at her actions.

Second, the number of premarital sex partners a woman has makes her a higher risk of divorce. The more sex partners, the more risk. The problem with women who engage in sex with men who don't commit to them is that they *necessarily* don't see a man's willingness and ability to commit as valuable when choosing a man. Women who have premarital sex with men who don't commit see OTHER THINGS as more valuable. They are rewarding the man for his height, his muscles, his tattoos, his piercings, his entertainment of her, etc. A good man should be very wary when a woman who gave her best youth, beauty and sexual interest to men like that now want to "settle" for a boring, unattractive provider who they see as having lower value than the men they gave sex to without requiring a commitment. What they really wanted was bad boys, and they threw sex at those bad boys without asking for commitment. With the man they perceive as low-level, they are insisting on commitment first, because they don't want this low-level man as badly as they wanted the bad boy. They are settling for less than they feel they deserve. This is where sex-withholding, feelings of unhappiness, and frivolous divorces come from. And by the way, hollering Jesus doesn't fix that risk any more than hollering Jesus fixes student loans accumulated for a useless non-STEM degree. Jesus-hollering isn't evidence that a woman has persuaded herself to change her view of which men are the most attractive. A woman's lack of respect for men who prepare for commitment and who keep their commitments is dangerous for marital stability. The hysterical reactions to a man's judging a woman for her past mistakes don't cancel the damage and risks caused by those mistakes. They simply tell the man that this woman is unrepentant, and therefore unteachable, and likely unsuitable for goal-oriented marriage. She is not qualified for the job of wife: self-sacrificial love for her husband, respect for her husband,

and supporting her husband in what he is trying to achieve for God.

Here's what the Bible says about sex outside of heterosexual marriage and about frivolous divorce. Read the critical replies to Foster's tweet. The critical responses show the *default* position of church-attending Christian women and pastors to the Bible in this culture. First, the critics don't accept the Bible as an authority over women's choices in any area of life. Second, the critics don't believe that women should bear any responsibility for their past actions. Nobody believes that women choosing bad men is the woman's fault in this society. So you should assume that single mothers don't take responsibility for their own failures. And that means that she will have taken no steps to repent of her mistake, and change her character so that she doesn't make the same mistake again. It's up to you to look at what she has been reading, listening to, watching, etc. and to check her actions in order to find out what she really thinks about what the Bible says. You can't marry a woman who responds to any mention of the moral law and moral obligations with denial of responsibility and insults. If she hasn't become an active crusader against women who choose bad men, and women who choose premarital sex, and women who choose divorce, then you can't really believe that there's been any real repentance. The risks to you are too high to take a chance on someone who is not certain. I've only ever met one single mother (Kerri) who blamed her own divorce on her own bad decisions.

The culture opposes male leadership

Foster's warning is intended to help men to make better decisions, so that their relationships will produce results for God. But his critics aren't interested in what men are trying to achieve for God. They are only concerned that women get what they want, regardles of their past actions. In their opinion, men exists solely to serve the needs of women. Women don't have to be good enough for marriage, men just have to give them what they want regardless of the woman's suitability for wife and mother roles. The role of men in any relationship is not to lead and achieve goals for God. Their role is to let women rule over them, disposing of their earnings as they see fit, for the benefit of the woman.

When women are young and pretty, they are entitled to hot bad boys to entertain them. When they are older, have tons of sexual experience, and children from different fathers, they are entitled to a husband to financially support them. But a husband with no power to lead the home, since their past choices of man showed they have no interest in following a man who has good character. And the churches, pastors, courts, schools, hospitals, etc. are all there to enforce this view of men as clowns / slaves.

This is what women are told about the role of men in every area of society. This society, including the Christian parents, Christian pastors, Christian culture, etc. do not produce women who prefer early marriage to men who are good at moral leadership and spiritual leadership. Therefore, men who are chaste, sober, have good educations, good private sector jobs, good savings, etc. need to be extremely careful. Look at the responses to Foster's tweet, and think: do these people care about providing you with a good wife? Or

is their concern all about how to insult you and shame you, until you are submissive to her needs?

Your marriage is your enterprise for serving God

My advice to men right now is to read over every single critical tweet in that thread that Foster started. Imagine that you are trying to get these women to do something in a marriage that is part of your plan to make the marriage serve God. You're trying to get her to watch a William Lane Craig debate. You're trying to get her to stop spending money on 50 Shades of Grey and Harry Potter. You're trying to get her to stop smoking and drinking. You're trying to get her to talk about the sermon instead of essential oils. You're trying to get her to read a Thomas Sowell book. You're trying to get her to not put the kids in day care or public schools.

You need to assume that her response to male leadership like this will be the exact same as the responses that Foster is getting to his tweet. And then after you have assumed it, then you need to keep your hands off that woman. Keep your distance, and ask her questions to find out what her real views are, and whether she is interested in growing into the kind of person who is safe for you to marry. Don't forget that chastity and sobriety are important during the evaluation process, so that you aren't influenced away from your leadership role. Don't listen to her words, look at her actions.

Three reasons why Christians should read military history

July 10, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Roger Trimble, standing second from the left, in front of his B-24 Liberator

I recently finished a book called "Beyond The Call: The True Story of One World War II Pilot's Covert Mission to Rescue POWs on the Eastern Front". It's about a World War 2 heavy bomber pilot who completes 35 missions, and then goes into the Soviet Union (our allies, at the time) to rescue American POWs who were starving or being kidnapped or murdered by the Soviet secret police.

I found a very good article about it from Stripes, to just quickly introduce the story:

> Later, after making contact with POWs roaming the Polish countryside, [Capt. Robert Trimble] fully embraced his mission. He saw the desperate plight of those who had been liberated from Third Reich prison camps. Many were sick, emaciated, often clothed in rags and left to fend for themselves during a brutally harsh winter.
>
> Trimble risked his life numerous times over six weeks, helping to rescue hundreds of POWs. He came to the aid of others, too. In one daring rescue, nearly foiled by Russian agents who had become suspicious of his activities, Trimble helped 400 French women make it out of Poland and back to France.

Although he was being constantly trailed by Russian spies and informers, he would evade them, and bring food and money to the POWs, then put them on a train to Odessa, Ukraine, where they could get onto a ship going home.

Why I read military history

It is hard to develop virtues just by wishing and hoping. Something has to go into your mind that causes you to think differently, and feel differently. Everything that you watch on TV, hear on the radio, or see in the movie theater, is made by secular leftists. They aren't trying to build your moral character. They're goal is to break down your resistance to their unBiblical worldview and moral values. Instead of giving people who hate Jesus your money, just so you can be entertained, why not try to put something in front of your eyes that will make you better?

Look at this famous passage from the Bible.

Romans 12:1-2:

1Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

And also this from Philippians, my favorite book of the Bible.

Philippians 4:8:

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

So you can see that when I am reading, my goal is to work on my character. I want to have feelings about things that are appropriate for a Christian man.

So why military history? Here are three reasons why I read these military history books.

Humility

First, **humility**. Humility used to be one of my biggest challenges. So I thought to myself "instead of seeing yourself as some heroic figure, why don't you read about some real heroes… people who willingly gave their lives for their friends, like the Bible urges, and like Jesus did by example".

Remember this from John 15:13?

13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

Military history is filled with stories of courage, bravery, self-sacrifice, endurance, unselfishness, and many other virtues. When you read about people who are better than you, doing more important things than what you're doing, it really helps you to be humble.

The best thing for humility is reading Medal of Honor citations. You can find a bunch of them online here. And if you want a book to read, try these books about Medal of Honor recipients:

- Heroes of World War II

- Korean War Heroes
- Vietnam Medal of Honor Heroes

Endurance

Second, **endurance**. I sometimes feel badly about not having found someone to marry and not having lots of children. I wanted a good marriage to be a model for others, and also to have an influence in the next generation through my children. However, whenever I read military history, I see a lot of young men dying in battle. And I think, they too won't know what sex is like. And, they too won't know what marriage is like. And, they too won't know what having children is like. But it's not just the ones who die, it's the hardships they have to go through, as well. Cold, hunger, imprisonment, pain, loss of their friends, etc.

I remember reading about one of my favorite battles – probably the most famous battle of the Korean War, which is our most moral war. It's about Fox Company of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Regiment, 1st Marine Division. They had to hold a hill beside a vital road against overwhelming numbers of Chinese soldiers during the freezing cold North Korean winter. I remember reading about how one soldier got up to go to the bathroom, and was nearly shot by a sniper. He fell over on his own poop, which had already frozen by the time it hit the ground. For months after, I would always think about this whenever I went into a bathroom. We have pre-warmed water in our bathrooms at work, along with soap, lysol spray, febreeze, contact lense cleaner, hand sanitizer, and other things. Just understanding what other people have to go through in war helps me to be more patient with the little tiny setbacks that I experience. I used to get very anxious when anything went wrong, because of I was raised by strict immigrant parents. That anxiety seemed to last a long time, but since I started to read military history, I've been much more patient. I know that things could be worse.

Thankfulness

The third thing that I've experienced is **thankfulness**. Not just for all the things that I have because of what our armed forces have done, e.g. – basic human rights, prosperity, liberty, security, etc. But also specifically about those who gave their lives so that I could live free in a free country, and practice my Christian faith without fear.

Here are two of my favorite Medal of Honor stories from World War 2, in the Battle of Pearl Harbor:

Congressional Medal of Honor
Awarded Posthumously
PETER TOMICH

Rank and organization: Chief Watertender, U.S. Navy.
Place and date: Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.
Born: 3 June 1893, Prolog, Austria.

Although realizing that the ship was capsizing as a result of enemy bombing and torpedoing, Tomich remained at his post in the engineering plant of the U.S.S. Utah, until

he saw that all boilers were secured and all fireroom personnel had left their stations, and by so doing lost his own life.

And:

Congressional Medal of Honor
Awarded Posthumously
JAMES RICHARD WARD

Rank and organization: Seaman First Class, U.S. Navy.
Place and date: Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.
Born: 10 September 1921, Springfield, Ohio.

When it was seen that the U.S.S. Oklahoma was going to capsize and the order was given to abandon ship, Ward remained in a turret holding a flashlight so the remainder of the turret crew could see to escape, thereby sacrificing his own life.

I do think that it's important for Christians to read these kinds of stories in order to feed their own awareness of what it must have been like for Jesus to give his life *voluntarily* for us.

There is no shortcut to gratitude. You have to constantly reflect on the sacrifices made by others for you, if you are to have any concrete reason for feeling grateful. The more you read about examples of people giving their lives for others, the more you'll appreciate what Jesus did for you. It will make you grateful.

There is a very annoying idea out there in the culture that says that people just do whatever is easy and fun for themselves, and since everyone else is always doing what makes them feel good, then there is no need to be thankful for anything. It's comforting for people to delude themselves with that belief, but it's false.

My reading list

You can check out the "What I am Reading" section of the blog to see which military history books I've been reading.

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

July 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here's a debate with a well-qualified atheist and Dr. Craig.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any

errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It's not

just that the settings are unlikely, it's that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a "herd morality" that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this evolved "herd morality". However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God's existence by pointing to the "evil" in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God's existence.

Dr. Millican's opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are

true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It’s possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It’s also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig’s first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is “Does God Exist?”. If Dr. Millican answers “no” then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God’s existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don’t see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the

need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to

nothing.

We don’t have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can’t be an abstract object because they don’t cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we’ve never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have “algorithmic properties” as well as physical properties, it doesn’t mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that’s not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God’s goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God’s goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can’t translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can’t be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can’t be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don’t permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

New study: surge in violent crime not caused by surge in legal firearm purchases

July 12, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, there is a narrative going around that the current surge in violent crime in Democrat-run cities is caused by law-abiding people purchasing more firearms legally. The news media say this surge in violent crime is NOT caused by Democrats defunding the police, nor by Black Lives Matters rioting and looting, nor by Antifa militias committing domestic terrorism. Let's take a look at the evidence.

This was reported by the EXTREME FAR-left UK Guardian. And when I say extreme far-left, I mean you cannot go any further to the left – these people are Stalinists.

Excerpt:

> Gun homicides surged across the United States during the coronavirus pandemic, in the same year that Americans bought a record-breaking number of guns.
>
> But some of America's leading gun violence researchers have concluded that what might seem like an obvious cause-and-effect – a surge in gun buying leads to a surge in gun violence – is not supported by the data.
>
> Through July of last year, there was no clear association between the increase in firearm purchases and the increase in most interpersonal gun violence at the state level, according to a new study published in Injury Epidemiology, a peer-reviewed scientific journal.
>
> The findings suggest that "we need to be looking at other factors, like job loss, economic change, the closure of schools and community organizations and nonprofits, and civil unrest," in order to understand last year's increase in gun violence, Julia Schleimer, the lead author of the new study, said.
>
> There did appear to be some association between the increase in gun-purchasing and an increase in domestic violence gun injuries in April and May, but that correlation might also be explained by other factors, including increased substance abuse or the decreased access to domestic violence support services during the early months of lockdown, Schleimer said.
>
> The results of the new study are an unexpected addition to the fierce political battle over how to explain last year's estimated 25% increase in homicides, which experts say they expect will be the worst single-year increase in killings since the 1960s. While official government data is not yet available, experts are projecting that the US saw an additional 4,000 to 5.000 total homicides nationwide in 2020, and the nonprofit Gun Violence Archive recorded nearly 4,000 additional gun homicides last year compared with 2019.

I've noticed that leftists in the news media, social media and government want to ignore all the arson, theft, murders, rapes, and other crime caused by the Black Lives Matter

movement and the Antifa militias. The entire edifice of federal law enforcement has been focused like a laser beam on those dangerous people who believe in the Constitution, get married, work full-time, and vote Republican. So, I hope that studies like this will help conservatives to engage with independents and counter that deluded narrative.

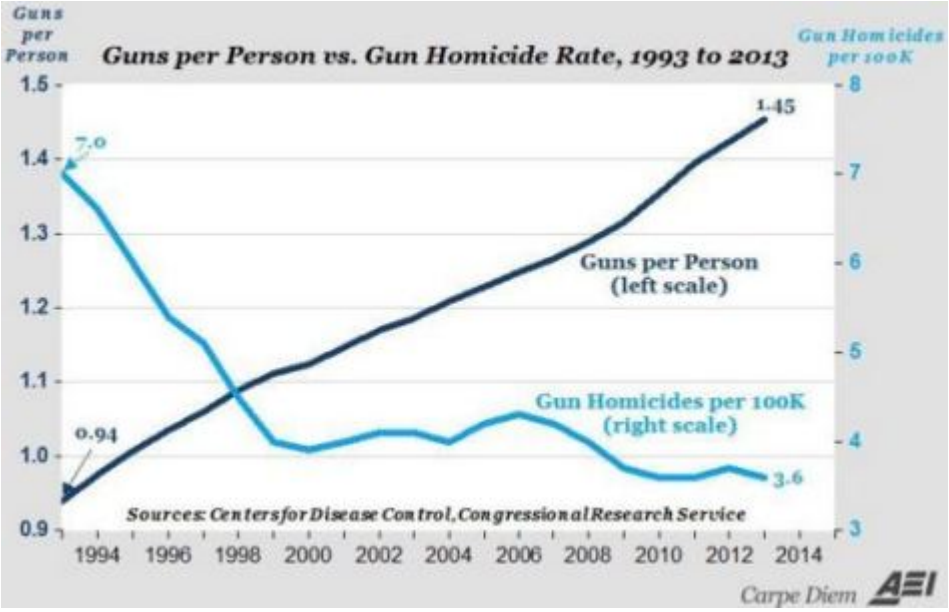

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes

> with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England‟s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above, compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

What do research studies say about the bond between fathers and daughters?

July 13, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Texas senator Ted Cruz, his wife Heidi Cruz and their two daughters

Many people today think that biological fathers are not essential for raising daughters. In fact, we even support this view by passing no-fault divorce laws, single-mother welfare laws, and by opposing shared parenting laws. The story goes that children do fine without their biological father in the home. Having children is something that women decide to do, and the man is superfluous. So I thought it might be a good idea to take a look at the research.

Here is a recent article from the centrist Institute for Family Studies.

It says:

> The dynamic between fathers and their daughters has been characterized by one expert as the most "fragile and unstable" when compared to other parent-child relationships.[1] It can be further described as one of the most powerful and vital relationships to individuals, communities, and nations. For instance, fathers have a profound impact on their daughters' body image,[2] clinical depression, eating disorders,[3] self-esteem, and life satisfaction,[4] to name but a few.
>
> But of all the unique contributions a father makes in his daughter's life, perhaps there is none of greater significance than in the area of sexual development and activity and romantic relationships.
>
> - Numerous studies have discovered female pubertal timing occurs later in girls whose fathers are consistently present in their life.[5]
> - An extensive body of research has revealed that early pubertal maturation in girls is associated with a variety of negative biological, psychological, and

> social outcomes, including, mood disorders,[6] substance abuse,[7] adolescent pregnancy,[8] and a variety of cancers of the reproductive system.[9]
> • Fatherless daughters are seven times more likely to become pregnant as teens.[10]
>
> […]The conditions in our culture of both rampant fatherlessness and sexual promiscuity are incompatible with forming secure and healthy relationships with boys and with establishing stable families for the next generation. A young girl's sexual development can significantly outpace her neurological and emotional development—the very resources needed to guide her sexual choices.
>
> Herein lies the danger. Much of our culture today promotes sexual activity but void of healthy attachment or true intimacy. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that high levels of father involvement (regardless of dad's marital status) are predictive of high levels of intimacy, commitment, and trust in young female adults' romantic relationships; whereas low levels of father involvement are predictive of the opposite.[11]

And:

> How a father treats both his daughter and her mother can help a young woman feel safe and secure in her relationships with the boys and men in her life, including her future husband. Family scientists and evolutionary psychologists have discovered that girls appear to be born with an emotional, relational, and evolutionary void that a father is designated to fill. If left vacant, girls will be more likely to seek to fill it in with other, unhealthier substitutes. The father-daughter relationship is the one that best teaches young women about true love and intimacy, self-worth, and respect.
>
> **Professor Linda Nielsen summarized this in one profound sentence: "[T]he father has the greater impact on the daughter's ability to trust, enjoy, and relate well to the males in her life."**

So, a father's love keeps her from getting into relationships with boys before the boys are ready to commit to her. By the way, I don't think that boys should even be allowed to TALK to girls about a relationship, unless they have a STEM degree, and two years of private sector work experience. I really *hate* when unemployed, penniless boys waste a girl's time when they can't afford to commit to her. People think I am pretty rough on women, but I really am much meaner to men who don't have STEM degrees and gapless resumes. (I guess a skilled trade would work as well, in place of the STEM degree – something like electrician, for example).

Anyway, back to the research. When a woman is deciding which men to have sex with, she has to be thinking of more than just her own needs. She has to choose a man who is going to stick around long enough to raise her daughters, so that they grow up with the confidence to resist the advances of boys who aren't ready to commit. To be pro-woman means to be pro-daughter, and that means that women need to be persuaded to be

careful about the choice of sex partner, and the timing of sexual activity. This is why people used to keep sex for marriage in the past: to protect children by making sure that they would get the stability and engagement they need from their parents.

Also, I have talked about the research about father-son bond in a different post.

If you want to do right for your children, then you need to control yourself and make wise choices. And if you're struggling to make good choices, then don't leave it up to your emotions and peer approval. Disregard your emotions. Disregard peer approval. Instead, let your decision-making be guided by your Christian convictions, and strengthened with scientific evidence. The Bible tells you not to have sex before you're married, and science tells you why this is good policy. The Bible gives you the goals, and science tells you how to how the world works, so you know how to make plans that will make sure you are never in a place where you are pressured to do the wrong thing. The more science you pack into your head, the easier it will be for you to convince yourself to do the right thing, and to convince your partner to do the right thing. Science takes moral decision-making outside the realm of feelings and opinions.

And if your partner says "I don't care about the needs of our future children", then you have a good reason to dump them and move on. You can't be in a relationship with someone who thinks that children's needs are less important than adult desires. In fact, the whole design for relationships should start with what children need from the marriage and parents, and work backward from there to the obligations on the man and the woman. And men and women ought to discuss this. What are we trying to achieve with this relationship anyway? And what is the right way to achieve it? This is where the research comes in – it shows you how to do it right.

Research from the Heritage Foundation

- Marriage: Still the Safest Place For Women and Children
- Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty

Scott Klusendorf defends the pro-life view on the Unbelievable radio show

July 14, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of this debate

This is a re-post of a debate on abortion.

Here are the details:

> Justin hosts a discussion between Mara Clarke of the Abortion Support Network and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Instititute. Mara believes women should decide whether to terminate a pregnancy, but Scott says that all depends on whether we are dealing with a human life in the womb.

MP3 of this show

My snarky paraphrase of the debate (not exact):

- Speaker introductions
- Klusendorf: no justification for abortion is necessary if the unborn are not human
- Klusendorf: we need to address the issue "what is the unborn?" Are the unborn human?
- Klusendorf: SLED: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency
- Klusendorf: None of these things affect the value of a human being
- Klusendorf: Even if we don't KNOW whether the unborn is human
- Mara: I'm not going to debate when life begins
- Mara: Women know when life begins by feelings

- Mara: The moral decision is “whether I can take care of this child?”
- Brierley: When is an unborn being human?
- Mara: I refuse to debate that – the real question is whether women want their babies or not
- Mara: Forced pregnancy is not OK
- Brierley: Could your justification for abortion (not wanting to care for a child) work through all 9 months?
- Mara: Late term abortions are rare, so I don’t have to answer that question
- Mara: Abortion should be OK through all 9 months of pregnancy because women cannot be restricted
- Mara: Some women are poor, they need to be able to kill expensive babies at any time
- Klusendorf: although she says she won’t debate the unborn, she does take a position
- Klusendorf: she assumes the unborn is not human, because she says that insufficient funds is justification for abortion
- Klusendorf: no one argues that you can kill a two year old because they cost money, because she thinks they are human
- Klusendorf: she is begging the question by assuming the unborn are not human, but that is the issue we must resolve
- Klusendorf: I am pro-choice on many other things, e.g. women choosing their own husbands, religion, etc.
- Klusendorf: Some choices are wrong – Mara might be right, but she needs to make the case for the unborn not being human
- Brierley: What is your reason for thinking that an unborn child is different from a 2-year old?
- Mara: An unborn child is not the same as a 2-year old, in my personal opinion
- Mara: I am not a debater, so I don’t have to provide reasoning for my assertion, I just feel it
- Mara: Not everybody agrees with Scott, they don’t have to have a rational argument, they just need to feel differently
- Mara: From my experience, when a woman doesn’t want to be pregnant, then she should be able to not be pregnant
- Mara: Women shouldn’t be punished with a baby that she doesn’t want, even if she chooses to have recreational sex
- Brierley: What do you think of women who think the unborn is human and do it anyway?
- Klusendorf: It’s interesting that they never kill their toddlers for those reasons
- Klusendorf: I layed out scientific and philosophical reasons for the humanity of the unborn
- Klusendorf: Her response was “but some people disagree with you”
- Klusendorf: People disagreed about whether slavery was wrong, or whether women should be able to vote

- Klusendorf: that doesn't mean there is no right answer – the right answer depends on the arguments
- Klusendorf: if absence of agreement makes a view false, then it makes HER pro-choice view false as well
- Klusendorf: she did make an argument for the unborn child having no rights because of the location
- Klusendorf: she needs to explain to us why location matters – what about location confers value
- Mara: I'm not going to let Scott frame my debate for me!!!
- Mara: women get pregnant and they don't want their babies! should we put them in jail!!!!
- Klusendorf: I didn't just give my opinion, I had science and philosophy, the issue is "what is the unborn?"
- Mara: philosophical and scientific debates are unimportant, I am an expert in real women's lives
- Klusendorf: Which women? Women in the womb or only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Only those outside the womb
- Klusendorf: Only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Women living outside the womb have a right to kill women inside the womb – women have bodily autonomy
- Klusendorf: then does a pregnant woman with nausea have a right to take a drug for it that will harm her unborn child?
- Mara: Unborn children are only valuable if they are wanted, unborn children only deserve protection if they are wanted
- Mara: There are restrictions on abortion – you can't get an abortion through all nine months in the US
- Mara: There is a 24-week limit in the UK as well
- Klusendorf: There are no restrictions on abortion that conflict with "a woman's health" because Supreme Court said
- Mara: where are these late term abortion clinics?
- Klusendorf: (he names two)
- Mara: that's not enough!!! we need more! where is there one in Pennsylvania?
- Klusendorf: well, there used to be Gosnell's clinic in Pennsylvania, and you could even get an infanticide there….
- Brierley: What about Dawkins' view that it is moral to abort Down's Syndrome babies?
- Klusendorf: he is ignoring the scientific case and philosophical case for the pro-life
- Klusendorf: the pro-life view is a true basis for human equality

What I wanted Scott to ask was whether sex-selection abortions were OK with her. Since her reasoning is "if it's unwanted, it has no rights", then that would mean sex-selection abortions are just fine. That's what a UK abortion expert recently argued. And I also posted recently about how sex-selection abortions are not prosecuted in the UK. If you're

looking for a war on women, there it is.

Is there evidence of systemic racism in the United States?

July 15, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Systemic racism is the idea that people can't lift themselves out of poverty by making good decisions, because powerful groups in society that hold the poor down, regardless of their decisions. Do you think that America is a place where no matter what choices you make, you'll never be able to be more prosperous? That's what the leaders of Black Lives Matter think.

Here's what Nikole Hannah-Jones, creator of the 1619 Project, says in the New York Times (a former newspaper):

> To summarize, none of the actions we are told black people must take if they want to "lift themselves" out of poverty and gain financial stability — not marrying, not getting educated, not saving more, not owning a home — can mitigate 400 years of racialized plundering.

Got that? It doesn't matter what individual choices a non-white person takes in America, they're going to be poor. The "systemic racism" of the powerful whites will always keep them down. Single motherhood doesn't make people poor, and marriage doesn't make people wealthier. Dropping out of high school doesn't make you poor, and getting a Masters degree in computer science won't make you wealthier.

But let's take a look at the data from the 2019 Census, and see the evidence:

Median US Household Income by Selected Ancestry Groups, 2019		
Indian	Americans	$126,705
Taiwanese	Americans	$102,405
Filipino	Americans	$100,273
Indonesian	Americans	$93,501
Pakistani	Americans	$87,509
Iranian	Americans	$87,288
Lebanese	Americans	$87,099
Japanese	Americans	$85,007
Turkish	Americans	$83,375
Chinese	Americans	$82,281
Korean	Americans	$76,674
Syrian	Americans	$74,047
Hmong	Americans	$73,373
Vietnamese	Americans	$72,161
Cambodian	Americans	$72,038
White	**Americans**	**$69,823**
Ghanaian	Americans	$69,021
Bangladeshi	Americans	$67,944
Guyanese	Americans	$67,772
Egyptian	Americans	$67,187
Palestian	Americans	$67,157
Thai	Americans	$66,763
Laotian	Americans	$66,117
Nigerian	Americans	$65,672

Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Chart from AEI

Income By Ethnicity in America

White people are doing a bad job of keeping non-whites down

Well, it looks like at least SOME people of color are able to do well in America despite all the “systemic racism” that keeps non-whites down. And do you know what those non-white groups at the top have in common? They’ve made good decisions, they’ve worked hard, they haven’t blamed other people when they fail, and they’ve saved their money instead of spending it on shiny junk.

Let’s look at some decisions that the non-whites who are prosperous have made, that those further down have not.

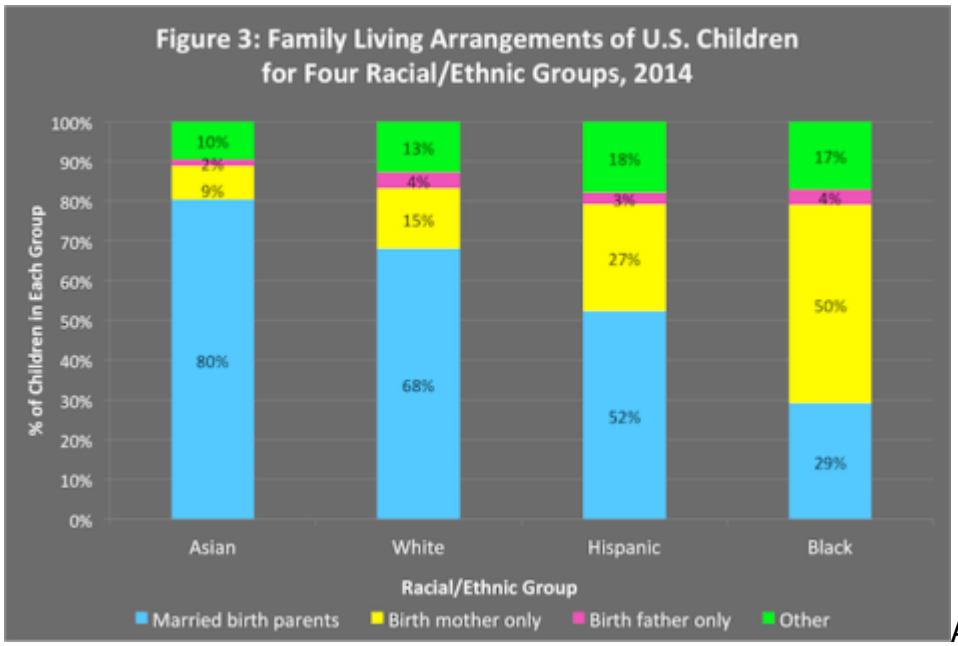

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

Education and marriage

This article is written by the far-left radical Nicholas Kristof, writing in the radically-leftist New York Times (a former newspaper).

Excerpt:

> A new scholarly book, “The Asian American Achievement Paradox,” by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, notes that Asian-American immigrants in recent decades have started with one advantage: They are highly educated, more so even than the average American. These immigrants are disproportionately doctors, research scientists and other highly educated professionals.

> It’s not surprising that the children of Asian-American doctors would flourish in the United States. But Lee and Zhou note that kids of working-class Asian-Americans often also thrive, showing remarkable upward mobility.
>
> […]There’s also evidence that Americans believe that A’s go to smart kids, while Asians are more likely to think that they go to hard workers… Asian-American kids are allowed no excuse for getting B’s — or even an A-. The joke is that an A- is an “Asian F.”

One reason Asians students do so well is because their parents are usually married:

> > Strong two-parent families are a factor, too. Divorce rates are much lower for many Asian-American communities than for Americans as a whole, and there's evidence that two-parent households are less likely to sink into poverty and also have better outcomes for boys in particular.

American blacks have a 73% out-of-wedlock birth rate. A huge difference compared to Asians.

So, when Nikole Hannah-Jones tells you that education and marriage don't matter, she's just wrong.

Compound interest

Education and marriage are important, but so is saving your money. The wealthiest people in America are typically the ones who are experts at saving money early, and investing it. They know about the law of compound interest. If you invest money early and leave it alone, then it will grow into a fortune by the time you are read to stop working.

This graph explains compound interest:

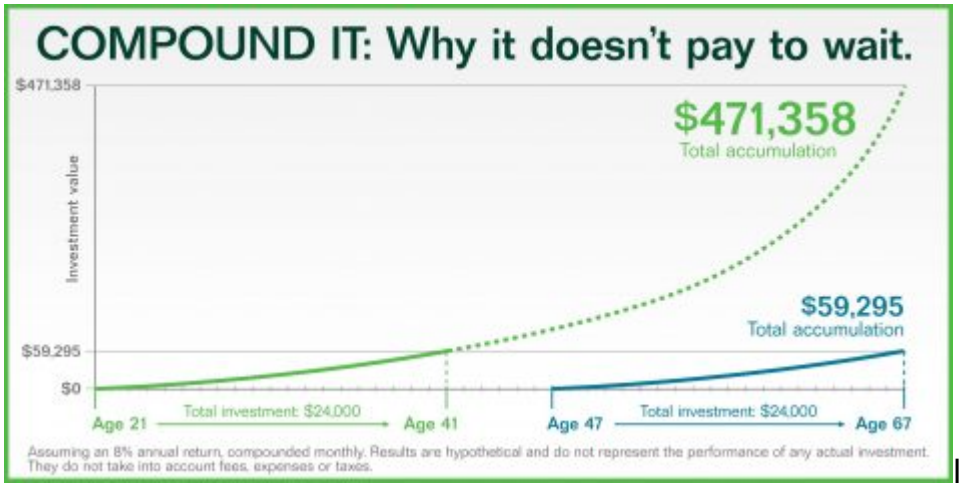

Investing $24,000 from age 21 to 41 vs investing $24000 from age 47 to 67

What does Nikole Hannah-Jones say when she looks at that graph? She doesn't think that saving money makes a difference to having more or less wealth. She thinks skin color determines whether saving money makes you wealthy or not. The graph clearly shows what we should be recommending to young people of color. They need to stop spending money and start saving it, and the earlier the better. It doesn't matter what your skin color is, saving money early JUST WORKS.

Similarly, when she says that home ownership doesn't make you more wealthy, this is just terrible advice. It's always better to pay down your own mortgage (at least when interest rates are low like they are now) than to pay someone else rent. You have to live somewhere, and paying for your own home is better because it costs about the same as rent, and then you get to keep the home when you're done paying for it.

Communism

Nikole Hannah-Jones does have a “solution” to disparities in wealth. Her solution is communism. She wants to transfer money from those who earn, to those who don’t. But we already have tried that in the 20st century and it resulted in the deaths of over 100 million people. That’s not my opinion, that’s all documented in a book published by Harvard University Press.

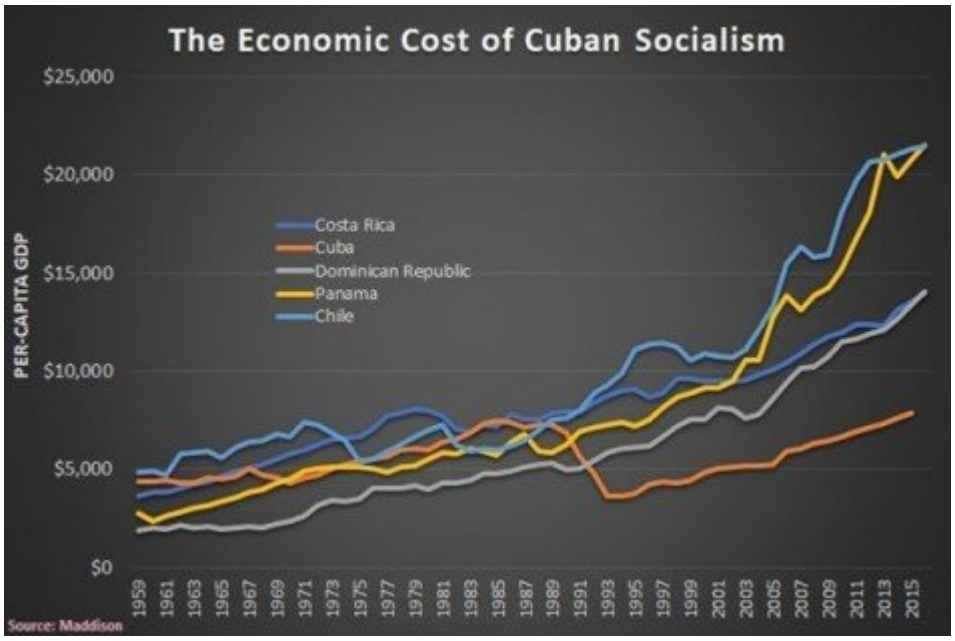

Socialism Communism Countries Per Capita GDP Income

You don’t even have to read the book to know the truth – just look at countries that score low on the Index of Economic Freedom, and compare their GDP per capita to countries that score high on the Index of Economic Freedom. The more communist a nation goes, the less wealth there is for the citizens. That’s why people in Venezuela are eating zoo animals and selling their bodies in prostitution for food, while nearby capitalist countries like Panama and Chile prosper. Nikole Hannah-Jones wants to reduce economic freedom, but we know by looking at other countries that this reduces per-capita GDP over time.

There’s a lot more than could be said here, but the point is that we need to be telling American blacks to make decisions that match the decisions of other successful non-white communities in America. We need to start teaching young people basic economics so they don’t fall prey to charlatans.

Viral Red State article answers: why don't men want to marry any more?

July 16, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the article from Red State, written by Brandon Morse.

The first point he makes is that feminism teaches women to have character traits that make them unattractive to marriage-minded men. Feminism teaches women that evaluating men for marriage according to traditional male roles is "sexist". There are no traditional male roles that women should prefer. Moreover, feminism teaches women that there are no female roles either. So, these women don't understand men, and they aren't prepared to be wives and mothers.

Brandon writes:

> Even in modern families, men are taught how to treat a woman, provide for her, and work hard to keep her happy. Women aren't taught how to treat a man or how to make him happy; they're strictly taught what to expect from a man.

I can't speak for all men, but in my case, I have definite plans for my marriage, and so a woman's preparation and desire to be supportive is very important to me.

I'm trying to achieve these goals:

- influence the church with apologetics
- influence the university campus (students and professors) with apologetics
- be involved in politics, advocate for conservative policy
- open the house to students and neighbors to teach apologetics and demonstrate a loving marriage
- raise 3-4 financially independent and influential children

And when I ask women what they bring to the table to help me to achieve all that, they often say that they've done nothing. Even the Christians try to get out of having to do anything hard by saying that God has a mysterious will that's higher than my plans – *plans which are designed to achieve specifically Christian goals.* But if you look at the woman's life, this mysterious God's will never requires her to do anything difficult that would serve God. In practice, "God's will" is just another word for doing what is easy, fun and peer-approved.

Brandon writes:

> The sad truth is that many young women nowadays don't know how to be in a marriage… they're not taught how to treat a man, but what to expect from him… they're flat-out dissuaded from providing anything but their presence to the partnership. They believe that offering their love to the man is sufficient and that men should just be grateful to have them.

What can you tell about a woman who has not prepared for tasks, like defending her faith, promoting conservative policies, or raising effective children? If she has not studied or practiced to do these things, then she isn't suddenly going to become disciplined and effective after a wedding ceremony.

Men like when they set out to do something, and get support from their wives to achieve it. Can women today support men?

Brandon writes:

> Along the lines of never learning how to treat a man, women are never taught how to value a man's emotions unless they pertain positively to her. He must prove every day how much he values her for just existing. She expects this but is taught by our society to not reciprocate unless he earns it.
>
> Men feel this weight, and the thing that would give them strength is withheld. Men suffer attempting to emotionally support the partner who has no interest in uplifting him in return. It's a lonely existence in a relationship for two, making it, in truth, a relationship for one…her. What makes matters worse is that women are confused by their men's lack of emotions. They were never taught how we think, much less appreciate it.

It's rare for me to get support from younger women. Older Christian women can do it, but they are from a different time.

Now, people say to me "just go ahead and get married, and you can change the woman's mind afterwards to value the things you care about". But do young women today offer a way for men to change their minds about anything?

Brandon writes:

> Now, let's say you're a young man entering into the stage of your life where dating to marry becomes typical. Looking at your prospects for marriage you see career-oriented women, some of whom make more money than you do and are very proud of this fact…. their opinions on any given subject seem more trendy than well thought out. They seem shallow as a result.
>
> You see these women in your dating pool consistently exhibit opinions about your sex that are less than kind on social media. They're taught they're your intellectual superiors, that they're right in any given argument no matter what… Very rarely do they display any joy in being giving or of service to their men. Even more rare are displays of humility. It reeks of narcissism.

One of the questions that I ask women to see if they are teachable is "where do you get your political news"? This question is to see if they care about anything other than their own feelings and social standing. I also ask "have you ever read any non-fiction that caused you to change your mind"? This to see whether she changes her mind about anything by increasing her knowledge.

But what I get from the Christian fundamentalists AND the career-focused feminists is the

same: “I don’t read news, and I don’t read non-fiction”. If she doesn’t form her beliefs by gaining knowledge, then what method does a man have for leading her? She will only do what she feels like or what is pleasing to her peer group. If she doesn’t respect knowledge in general, then she doesn’t respect *a man’s knowledge.*

Brandon concludes:

> Men want to feel welcome in their own relationships. Right now, they aren’t. They feel like passengers, or maybe even more accurately, chauffeurs. If women want men to marry them, then women will have to become marriage material and that means leaving behind the mainstream pop-philosophy and looking into the idea that maybe the feminists were wrong.

The schools, churches and culture are not doing anything to teach women how to be valuable to men. So why would a man marry? If I have to commit my time and money to being someone else’s slave / handbag then that will cause me to achieve goals less, right? As a Christian man, I don’t see how being a slave / handbag to a woman serves God.

What’s the best book a woman can read to prepare herself for marriage?

July 17, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A good marriage is more than fun and feelings – it takes planning and work

I found a great lecture by Sue Bohlin, who works at Probe Ministries. The lecture is about the book “The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands” by Dr. Laura Schlessinger. I recommend this book more highly than any other book to Christian women. It really does a lot to give young women a different perspective on men and marriage. Don’t be thrown off by the funny title, it’s really good.

The MP3 file is here. (48 minutes)

Here is a blog post that Sue wrote that captures most of the material in the lecture.

Here’s the introduction:

> Talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger has written a book that is improving thousands of marriages: *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands.* We need this book because millions of wives either don’t know how to love their husbands wisely and well, or they’re too self-centered to see it as important. Dr. Laura credits this dismal condition to forty years of feminist philosophy, “with its condemnation of just about everything male as evil, stupid, and oppressive, and the denigration of female and male roles in families.” While the women’s movement certainly had a hand to play in the disintegration of relationships and the family, I believe the core cause is our sinful self-centeredness, just as the Bible says.
>
> Which is why we need help, and God instructs older women to train younger women to love their husband and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be

> busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands* is a great resource for learning these important values and skills.

And here's the first part I thought was most important:

> A listener to Dr. Laura's radio show named Edgar wrote, "There are a few things that men want so bad they would do anything for it. I think a good number of men want respect more than love. They like to feel they have some power. I nearly cry when you tell a woman caller to respect her husband. There is so much selfishness in the world—in marriages. Prosperity has allowed women to be so independent, and thus so selfish. I always feel as though I come last—my feelings come last, my needs come last."
>
> *"A good number of men want respect more than love."* God knew this when He made us. His commands to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:33 reflects each one's deepest needs: "Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." Dr. Emerson Eggerichs of LoveandRespect.com points out that this verse commands a husband to love his wife. Why? She needs love like she needs air to breathe. This same verse commands a wife to respect her husband. Why? He needs respect like he needs air to breathe.
>
> - Respect means treating someone in a way that builds him up and doesn't tear him down, never denigrating or attacking.
> - Respect means always treating the other person with the dignity they deserve as a person made in the image of God.
> - Respect means grasping that a man's needs and wants are every bit as valid and important as a woman's needs and wants.
> - Respect means not venting to others, *especially* the children. One woman wrote to Dr. Laura, "No emotional outlet is worth damaging my husband's reputation."
>
> There are three A's that men long for from their wives: attention, affection, and affirmation. Respect involves paying attention to what they do simply because they're the ones doing it.

Yes, respect is very important to men, but the thing is, a woman can't respect every man equally. She should choose a man who does things that are respectable. Then respecting him will be easy. Sometimes, women overestimate how easy men are to change after marriage. It's better to just pick one who does all the important things instead of thinking that you can pick a good-looking one and make him do the important stuff like be faithful to you, hold a steady job, save money, argue without getting angry, etc. later. Men don't change much, so pick one who does things that you respect and then give him respect.

And this part also seemed important to me:

> A man named Roy wrote to Dr. Laura with some good advice for wives: “If you can’t accentuate the positive, at least acknowledge it. The world is full of messages to men that there are standards we don’t meet. There is always another man who is more handsome, more virile, or more athletic than we are. None of that matters if the most important person in our life looks up to us, accepts us as we are, and loves us even though we aren’t perfect. . . . All I know is that the husband who has a wife who supports him and praises him for the positive things he does is the envy of all the other men who have to live with criticism, sarcasm, and constant reminders of their failures.”
>
> Men desperately want and need the support of their wives. This is reflected in what God reveals in His Word when He says, “It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” And through the apostle Paul, God instructs wives to relate to their husbands in a way that meets this need when He says, “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.”
>
> Submission is basically giving support with a willing, cooperative heart.
>
> A wife’s submission includes knowing her gifts and strengths, and using them to serve her husband and family.
>
> Service has a bad name, but both husbands and wives are called to serve God first and then each other; husbands are called to sacrificially love and serve their wives with Jesus as their pattern.
>
> So what does support look like?
>
> - Believing in him. Telling him, “You have what it takes.” Being his #1 fan.
> - Cultivating a cooperative heart.
> - Being generous and openhearted—willing to use your gifts and strengths to help him succeed.
> - Understanding the importance of making him look good: never saying anything negative in public.
> - Creating a home that’s a safe haven from the world.
> - Having a warm heart with a positive, cheerful demeanor. Women set the temperature of the home; we are thermostats, not thermometers, of the family. (On the other hand, Proverbs says “A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day; restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.”)
> - Being interested in him and his life.
> - Showing thoughtfulness. What does he like? Do it.
> - And though by no means exhaustive, it also means being a person of faithfulness and integrity. That means keeping your promises and being dependable. As Proverbs 31 puts it, “Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.”

Support and encouragement is SO important to a man. A man can continue to function

fine if the whole world opposes him, but not if the woman he loves doesn't support him. When a man falls in love, a woman has to realize the enormous power she has over him, and be careful not to hurt him. Men are vulnerable to the woman they choose. Although they look pretty tough on the outside, they can easily be hurt by insults or discouragement.

Parting thoughts

So, this lecture and the book are good, but young women should also seek out the advice of older Christian women who have been married successfully for some time. Read Titus 2:3-4 – the Bible encourages older women to mentor younger women! This is really important because we are in a time where young women are often pulled by the culture in many wrong directions, and they need help from people who know what they are doing.

One last point – I actually bought the audio version of the Dr. Laura book and noticed that it was just over two hours long. It turns out that the audio version is *abridged* – it is not as complete as the actual book. I noticed that Sue was quoting from the book passages that I had not heard in the audio recording. So, if you want the full content, get the book, not the audio recording.

How does church appear to someone raised in a non-Christian home?

July 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Wes posted an article about how communication is set up in the church, and why it's not effective at equipping Christians to defend their worldview in hostile environments. The article describes what I encountered in church, after I was raised in a non-Christian home and become a Christian on my own by reading the New Testament. The view presented in the essay is how I viewed the church, and is probably how most outsiders view church. I think it explains why young people leave the church in droves once they move out of their parents' houses.

The author writes:

> On the Internet, one soon discovers that many respected church leaders are quite unable to deal directly with opposing viewpoints. In fact, many of them can't even manage meaningful engagement with *other voices*. Their tweets may be entirely one-way conversations. They talk *at* their audiences. They can talk *about* other voices, but fail to talk *to* them, let alone *with* them. Their representations of opposing viewpoints reveal little direct exposure to the viewpoints in question.
>
> […]Around this point, it can start to dawn on one that many church leaders have only been trained in forms of discourse such as the sermon and, to a much lesser extent, the essay. Both forms privilege a single voice—their voice—and don't provide a natural space for response, questioning, and challenge. Their opinions have been assumed to be superior to opposing viewpoints, but have never been demonstrated to be so. While they may have spoken or written about opposing voices, they are quite unaccustomed to speaking or writing to them (not to

> mention listening to or being cross-examined by them). There are benefits to the fact that the sermon is a form of discourse that doesn't invite interruption or talking back, but not when this is the *only* form of discourse its practitioners are adept in.
>
> Many church leaders have been raised and trained in ideologically homogenous cultures or contexts that discouraged oppositional discourse. Many have been protected from hostile perspectives that might unsettle their faith. Throughout, their theological opinions and voices have been given a privileged status, immune from challenge. Nominal challenges could be brushed off by a reassertion of the monologue. They were safe to speak about and habitually misrepresent other voices to their hearers and readers, without needing to worry about those voices ever enjoying the power to answer them back. Many of the more widely read members of their congregations may have had an inkling of the weakness of their positions in the past: the Internet just makes it more apparent.

One of my friends who comments here as "Wintery's Friend" actually did his M. Div, and I think it was he who told me that his seminary had dropped the lone course in apologetics that had been part of the curriculum. Now seminary grads don't learn any opposing views. They just pre-suppose that the Bible is true in the same way that Mormons pre-suppose their Bible is true. It's a Mormon epistemology that's been adopted by Christian seminarians.

More:

> If one's opinion has never been subjected to and tried by rigorous cross-examination, it probably isn't worth much. If one lacks the capacity to keep a level head when one's views are challenged, one's voice will be of limited use in most real world situations, where dialogue and dispute is the norm and where we have to think in conversation with people who disagree with us.
>
> The teachers of the Church provide the members of the Church with a model for their own thinking. The teacher of the Church does not just teach others *what* to believe, but also *how* to believe, and the process by which one arrives at a theological position. This is one reason why it is crucial that teachers 'show their working' on a regular basis. When teaching from a biblical text, for instance, the teacher isn't just teaching the meaning of that particular text, but how Scripture should be approached and interpreted more generally. An essential part of the teaching that the members of any church need is that of dealing with opposing viewpoints. One way or another, every church provides such teaching. However, the lesson conveyed in all too many churches is that opposing voices are to be dismissed, ignored, or 'answered' with a reactive reassertion of the dogmatic line, rather than a reasoned response.

You can imagine that the first questions that you'll be asked by a non-Christian co-worker would be things like "why think God exists?" and "why think the Bible is history rather

than legend?". What I've learned from listening to pastors is that very few are equipped to answer those questions. Most just assume that God exists and that the Bible is inerrant. And they don't show their work, because they haven't done the work. Moreover, they actively oppose apologetics as "divisive" and "prideful". And so their flocks can attend church for 20 years and never learn a single useful piece of information that can be used in a real-world discussion. If you're wondering why kids raised in married Christian homes start getting drunk and shacking up with atheists the minute they hit college, then look at the pastors who mocked their honest questions instead of preparing to answer them with evidence.

More:

> I believe that there are various problems in the Church that are exacerbated by this. Where they are led by voices that can't cope with difference or challenge, churches will tend to become fissiparous echo chambers, where people are discouraged from thinking critically about what leaders are saying and doing. The integrity of the Church's theological conversation will not be tested through criticism and challenge. Churches that are led by such leaders will habitually develop polarized oppositions with their critics.

Unfortunately, in conservative churches, pious church leaders like Al Mohler, Russell Moore, Denny Burk, etc. oppose the use of evidence in apologetics, especially scientific and historical evidence. They don't like the idea that humans can consider evidence rationally, and make a decision – even though Jesus *regularly* presents evidence to people who don't believe in him in the Bible, and expects them to respond to it. The approach of pious Christian leaders to Christian teaching is to parrot Bible verses and hope that it has a magical effect of compelling faith in unbelievers. I call this the magic-words view of the Bible. For example, these pastors would not use peer-reviewed evidence from the social sciences when discussing moral issues like premarital sex, they would just cite the Bible's teaching on it – to non-Christians!

I don't know about you, but I think that a peer-reviewed paper on the dangers of premarital promiscuity has far more weight than something like this from Denny Burk:

> If the Bible is the word of God, then it merely needs to be proclaimed. It has intrinsic power that cannot be nullified by the most hardened of skeptics. For that reason, we can have confidence in proclaiming it to anyone. And we can say "the Bible tells me so" without blushing.

That's just fideism, and it's the majority view among conservative church leaders. If you had to pick a single passage that explained the decline of Bible-based Christianity in America, you couldn't find a better passage. What's most surprising is that this fideistic view of Christianity is not even Biblical. The Biblical view of faith is that faith is trust in God, based on evidence. This is why Jesus offered his own resurrection as evidence to a generation of unbelievers. His miracles were also evidence offered to unbelievers. And the Old Testament is filled with examples of people like Isaiah presenting evidence to

unbelievers. The fideist view sounds more like the Mormon “burning of the bosom” view.

I think the Mormon / fideist camp is just imposing their own man-made views onto the text in order to get out of the hard work of having to actually study and prepare to have debates with non-Christians. The motivation is laziness, and piety is just how they dress up their laziness to make it seem positive. Unfortunately, the product of this pious laziness is ignorance, and ignorance costs young people their faith. It doesn’t seem to bother these pastors at all that they can’t have meaningful engagements with non-Christians, or that they don’t equip young Christians to defend themselves. They’re oblivious to the world outside of the church doors.

In conclusion, we really need to stop giving respect to fideist pastors, if we expect to train up a generation of young Christians who are able to retain their faith and have an influence. We would never accept Mormon fideism as a sign of competence in any other real-world area of our lives, e.g. – auto repair, software engineering, surgery or tax law. We shouldn’t accept Mormon fideism as a sign of competence in teaching the Bible, either.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

How are the Democrats doing at securing the Southern border?

July 19, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Since there is a cost to American taxpayers for unskilled immigrants, it's important to control the Southern border. Otherwise, American taxpayers will have to foot the bill for more schooling, higher car insurance, more law enforcement, and especially more expensive health insurance (since people with insurance pay for people who don't have insurance when they show up at emergency rooms).

It's well-known that illegal immigrants cost American taxpayers money. Here's just one area, health care, where law-abiding Americans pay more:

> All told, Americans cross-subsidize health care for unauthorized immigrants to the tune of $17.0 billion a year. Federal taxpayers provided $10.0 billion in subsidized care to unauthorized immigrants in 2019. The total amounts to $1,615 per unauthorized immigrant, imposing a burden of $51 per U.S. resident.

So, how are the Democrats doing at protecting American taxpayers from these costs?

Consider this article from The Federalist:

> Recently updated data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection showed border apprehensions have surpassed one million for the 2021 fiscal year, for the first time since 2006. The number of apprehensions at our border will almost certainly surpass the 2006 totals, however, with our current fiscal year not ending until September 30, 2021.
>
> The United States is also currently on track to set a new record for the number of apprehensions on our southern border, surpassing the records of 1.69 million and 1.67 million the country experienced in fiscal years 1986 and 2000.

Now, you might expect that Democrats would protect low-income voters from bearing the costs for all these people.

But no:

> During what will almost certainly be a record-breaking year for apprehensions, the Democrat Party is attempting to insert more left-wing immigration policies in this year's budget to provide additional green cards and even amnesty to an estimated 10 million illegal immigrants.

Another article from The Federalist notes:

> Supported by the Biden White House, top Democrats plan to hide immigration measures in their massive $3.5 trillion spending bill. While the plan is still in drafting, it would provide citizenship to various illegal immigrants, such as those brought across the border as minors and farmworkers already residing in the

> United States. The Hispanic Caucus and many other Democrats also want to tuck a section into the bill that would provide green cards to “essential workers,” including COVID health workers.

Now, you might think that low-information Democrat voters will start learning that THEY have to pay for these costs. But I just don’t have a lot of confidence in their intelligence. They don’t think things through. The TV tells makes them feel bad about the Constitution and conservative policies, so they vote against them.

To be a Bible-believing Christian, you have to be comfortable working alone

July 20, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, when I read the Bible there are things that stand out to be as being of first importance. The priorities are about personal moral character. The overall theme seems to be to deny your personal desires and ambitions and gain control of yourself so that you can devote yourself to following Jesus. The Bible isn't teaching that we need to implement Marxism as a solution to "inequalities".

The Bible emphasizes things like controlling your temper, being patient when you must suffer for being a Christian, forgiving others who are penitent about treating you badly, giving to charity, being sober and chaste, either staying unmarried or marrying an opposite sex partner for life, not envying, not stealing, building other people up in the knowledge of God, renewing your mind. There's no emphasis on disparities or social justice. Everything is about individual choices. Every person is responsible for themselves.

Now, when I go to Twitter and Facebook, I see people who occupy positions of power in Christianity who don't talk about any of those things. They don't practice those things themselves as of first importance. They don't read books about how to practically pursue those things, e.g. – books about evidence countering premarital sex, divorce or same-sex marriage. They don't talk about those things, they aren't informed enough to be convincing about those things, they don't promote those things to non-Christians using evidence.

Let's take an example: chastity and natural marriage between one man and one woman for life. When you look at the social media of prominent Christians, Christian professors, Christian apologists, Christian celebrities, etc., you aren't going to see them linking to studies about the premarital sex, hooking up, cohabitation, polyamory, no-fault divorce. Instead, they're going to be talking about what makes them look virtuous to others. Things like recycling, essential oils, amnesty for illegal immigrants and refugees, girl wash your face, wear a COVID mask, black lives matter, yoga, dog and cat parenting, supporting public school teachers, etc. The sum total of their Christian distinctiveness is that they've got essential oils and rainbow unicorn mugs that say "just believe".

There isn't a single point where their personal morality or public engagement is centered around what the Bible teaches explicitly. The leaders have left the Bible behind for life enhancement and virtue signaling, as required by their new Lords and Saviors in the secular left mainstream news media. And this is not surprising at all when you look at the most popular books in Christian Women's section of book stores. It's all Rachel Hollis, Beth Moore, Joyce Meyer, Jen Hatmaker, Lauren Akins, Priscilla Shirer, etc. The goal is for the individual to feel good, get social approval and achieve their heart's desires. Nothing there about promoting what the Bible teaches using reason and evidence to non-

Christians. Whatever these people understand Christianity to be, it's not something that requires that they read non-fiction, behave morally and persuade others with evidence. They're neither salt nor light. They're just trying to live a "good life" – just like everyone else.

So what about feminism and the Sexual Revolution? The response of Christian leaders to the new ways of meeting, dating, marrying proposed by radical feminists is enthusiastic celebration. And if delaying marriage for careers and promiscuity result in more abortions and divorces and single motherhood, then don't blame the choices of women, just blame secular men for not turning into Christians after being given premarital sex. (This is the majority view among conservative pastors – let women have sex with atheists, then blame atheists for not converting into faithful, devoted husbands). It's just too hard to read actual studies on sex, dating and marriage, and then take a stand against women who have accepted feminism for emotional reasons: "it's just easier to get along with my teachers and peers if I'm sexually active with no-commitment bad boys".

The response to the challenges of atheism is to quote Bible words and expect magical conversions due to burning of the bosom. There is no difference between the evangelistic views of Al Mohler and Russell Moore and Mormon leaders. Both camps are firm believers in magic words evangelism, i.e. – fideism. You have to pre-suppose the Bible is true because of a burning sensation when you read it. Since this approach doesn't work when used on non-Christians, you get this retreat from proclaiming the truth of Christianity to non-Christians. They've been doing the same thing over and over for decades, and now they've just stopped presenting Christianity as true entirely. Now, they to focus on "wear a mask" and "defund the police" instead, so they can continue to achieve their real goal – communicating their virtue to others.

Regarding Marxism, they keep swallowing every cause trotted out by the left to achieve the left's end goal of a Marxist utopia. Whether it's global warming, importing big-government supporting refugees and illegal immigrants, black lives matter Marxism, the housing bubble bailouts, the new trillion student loan bubble, or defund the police, Christian leaders just keep rushing around like lemmings to support any cause that the secular left tells them is good. The Bible does not give them their priorities and definition of good and evil. Instead, they now look to the talking heads on CNN and MSNBC to tell them what they must promote in order to signal their virtue to others. Their religious hobby was always about signaling their virtue to others. When sobriety and chastity got hard, they switched to wear a mask and defund the police.

Conclusion

If you are approaching Christianity like "Jesus was a refugee" and "black lives matter" woke pastors, and thinking that the church / seminary hierarchy is a great place to communicate your personal virtuousness to a large group of people, then keep doing that. But if you're just interested in championing the viewpoints that the Bible considers of central importance, then get yourself some books about the evidence related to challenges to Christianity, and read them. Get yourself an alias and a blog. Write what

you learn about. Mentor others one-on-one so they learn how to defend the Bible's teachings as well. Get involved in politics for the Republican party, which at least has some policies that overlap with our concerns about abortion, religious liberty, self-defense against criminals, etc.

We're past the point of relying on woke pastors and Christian leaders to know anything about how to defend the Bible. They're just pissing away the religious liberty that was built by previous generations for their own selfish purposes. Don't rely on them.

Does the “legacy of slavery” explain black women’s 72% out-of-wedlock birth rate?

July 21, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

James White asks: does the Bible apply to black women?

I don’t like Calvinist theologian James White very much, but at least he’s willing to defend the moral teachings of the Bible against the woke identity politics that is taking over Christian churches. A few months ago he tweeted something very controversial (see above), and got into a lot of hot water with fake Christians. In this post, I’ll explain why he is right.

So, as you can see above, James is concerned that black women are having so many abortions, and he thinks that the solution to this is to encourage black women to take the Bible’s advice on sexual morality. Shocking, I know.

If you read the replies to his tweet on Twitter, you’ll see millions and millions of comments calling him a racist, and telling him that slavery is to blame for EVERYTHING that black women do wrong. Basically, the James haters say that black women can do anything they want, and should never be told that it’s wrong according to the Bible, because their bad choices are all the fault of slavery. So the Bible doesn’t even apply to them, or something.

Here is an example from a radical feminist progressive named Karen Swallow Prior:

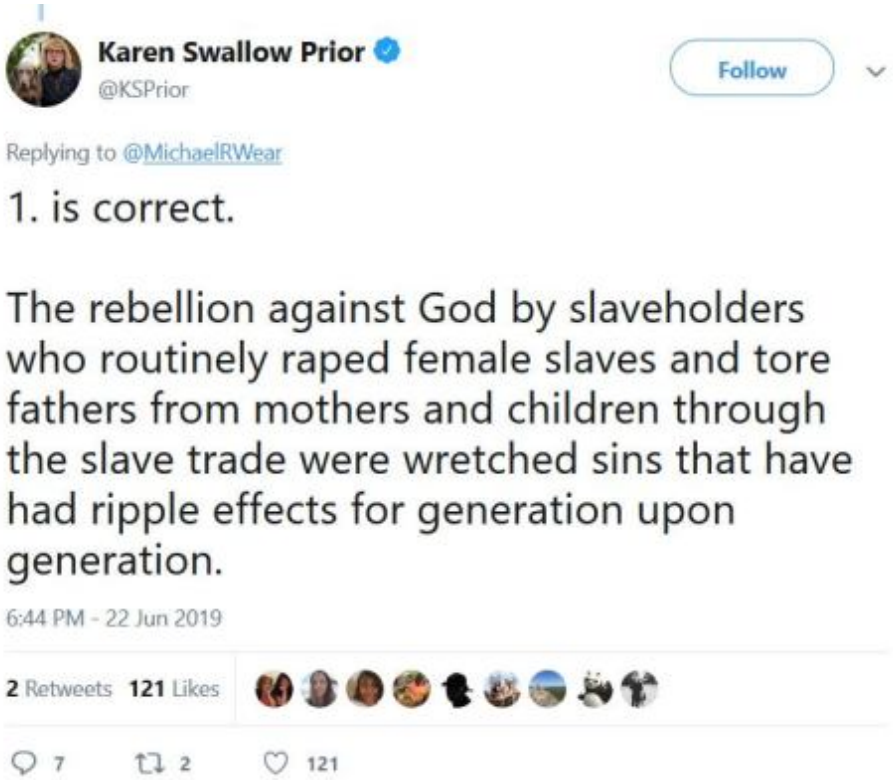

Karen Swallow Prior says that unlike whites, blacks have no moral agency

According to the fake Christians, it's not that black women make poor choices with sex, it's that the ghosts of white slavers who raped their great-great-great grandmothers reach through time with magic and force them to have sex with hunky bad boys who won't commit to them before sex. It's not rap music calling black women hoes! It's the ghosts of slavery past. And even if this ghost theory isn't true, we shouldn't tell black women not to sin, because… it would hurt their feelings. After all, the Bible isn't a book that's designed to set boundaries to prevent self-destructive behaviors. It encourages us to listen to our hearts, be reckless, and sin as much as we can.

So when did black community problems with sex and abortion start? Did it start with slavery times? Actually, blacks were doing GREAT at marriage and sexual matters just 50 years ago.

This reply to James White explained:

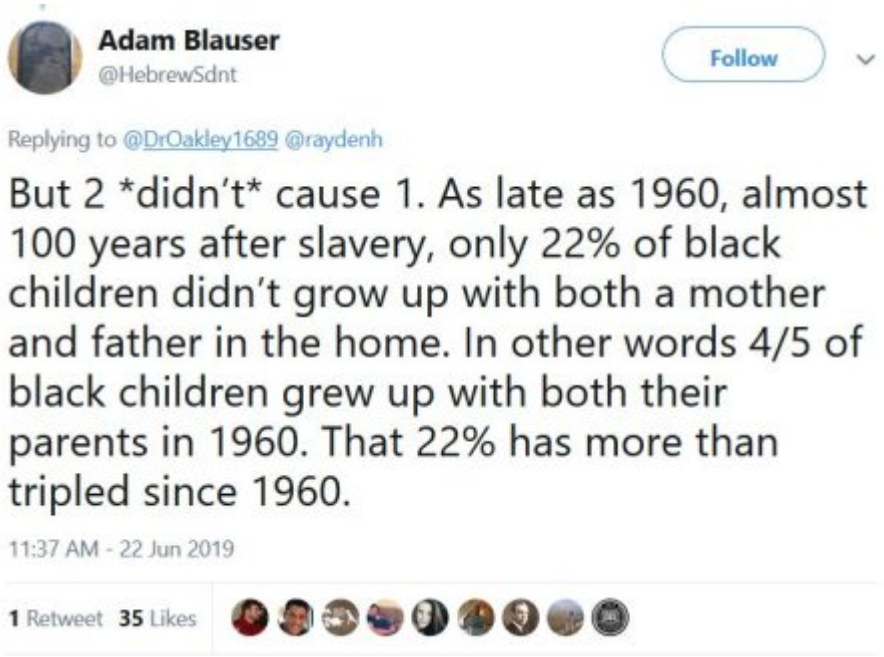

Blacks married at rates comparable to whites before welfare
That's true. Black children weren't fatherless, so they weren't having early sex outside of marriage, and so they weren't getting abortions.

As the header graphic shows, black women were just as likely to be married as white women in the 1960s, FAR AFTER the days of slavery.

The reason that the graph is going upward is because daughters raised in fatherless homes tend to engage in sexual activity at younger ages, because they are seeking approval from a man which their (single) mother cannot give them. It's a tragic downwards spiral, and it affects all races. The only way to stop it is to tell women to choose marriage-minded men (not hot bad boys) and marry before having sex, like the Bible says. But woke fake Christians think the Bible is too mean, and better to allow sin by saying that sin is inevitable because slavery ghosts or something.

What's neat is that black men who take Christianity seriously are totally on board with the facts:

Black man here. Can confirm that the Bible applies to black women.
On this blog, I don't talk about my ethnicity myself, for confidentiality reasons, but I have said that my skin is darker than Barack Obama. I'm not white or Asian. And the reason that I don't fall into this trap of causing babies to be born out of wedlock is because I think that when the Bible says that sex outside of marriage is a sin, that this is true. I

don’t make excuses or shift blame. It’s incumbent on me to obey, since I claim to be a follower of Jesus.I’m not interested in identity politics. I’m not interested in racial divisions. I’m not interested in blame-shifting. The rules are the rules. And my following of the rules caused me to not cause abortions, according to Christian specifications. Period.

When it comes to sex outside of marriage, the answer of every Bible believing Christian is simple: I’m against it. That is the correct answer, and anything more or less than this answer is demonic. If you are a Christian, sex outside of marriage is always morally wrong. And if you try to justify it, or blame someone else, in order to excuse it, then you’re not a Christian at all. If you try to make excuses for why someone did it, you’re not a Christian. Whether you have had it and been forgiven, or never had it, the answer is always the same: it’s morally wrong. Don’t do it. Never do it.

What I am seeing from people who are critical of James White’s tweet is that they are basically trying to attack those who make moral judgments based on what the Bible says. They want to make room for sinners to sin. The root of abortion sin is sexual sin. Real Christians discourage sexual sin, and therefore protect unborn children. Fake Christians want to be liked by appearing compassionate, so they make excuses for sexual sin. If you take the Bible seriously on morality, you won’t be liked. Those who try to excuse sin do so because their need to be liked is more important than their need to promote what the Bible teaches.

Some fake Christians will say “oh, but I do think the Bible is right about sex and marriage, but we have to care about slavery reparations and global warming and refugees and illegal immigrants and trasnsgender rights, too”. Baloney. An authentic Christian is concerned about the things that the Bible teaches are “major” things. Drunkenness is a major thing. Sexual immorality is a major thing. Divorce is a major thing. Homosexuality is a major thing. If you meet a Christian who treats those issues as minor issues, and instead majors in what the secular left tells them are major issues, then you’re talking to a fake Christian.

Christianity isn’t a brain-dead faith. You get your priorities from the Bible, and you argue those priorities using facts. The facts about marriage rates are clear and they show that the problems in the black community aren’t caused by slavery. They’re caused by single mother welfare programs. Those welfare programs taught women of all races that they didn’t have to listen to their fathers when choosing men. Those welfare programs taught women that feelings were a better guide in relationships than the Bible. Those welfare programs taught women that their eyes were a better judge of character than performance of traditional marriage roles. Those welfare programs taught women that recreational sex was a way to get a man to commit and stop being a bad boy. We need to go back to the root cause of the problem. The root cause of the problem was making excuses for disobedience to the Bible, and transferring money from married homes to out-of-control women. Of all races.

Why are Christians allowed to eat shellfish but not allowed to have sex before marriage?

July 22, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a key that will unlock a puzzling mystery
Here's a wonderful article from Peter Saunders.

The challenge:

> An argument frequently advanced by those attempting to defend homosexual practice is that Christians 'cherry pick' the commands in the Bible – that is, they chose to emphasise some commands while ignoring others.
>
> The Old Testament may forbid homosexual acts (Leviticus 18:2; 20:13) but it also forbids eating seafood without fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9, 10).
>
> So how can Christians then justify upholding laws on sexual morality whilst at the same time ignoring the food laws from the very same books of the Bible? Why may they eat shellfish but not be allowed to have sex outside marriage? Isn't this inconsistent and hypocritical?

The solution is that God enters into "covenants" with his people, and the terms of those covenants change.

Especially dietary laws:

> The answer to this question lies in an understanding of biblical covenants.
>
> A covenant is a binding solemn agreement made between two parties. It generally leaves each with obligations. But it holds only between the parties involved.
>
> There are a number of biblical covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic (Old),

> Davidic and New.
>
> Under the Noahic covenant, which God made with all living human beings (Genesis 9:8-17), people were able to eat anything:
>
> *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Genesis 9:3).*
>
> But under the Sinaitic (Old) Covenant, which God made with the nation of Israel, people were able to eat certain foods, but not others.

Jesus clearly created a new covenant with his followers, where the dietary laws are lifted:

> Jesus said that he had come to fulfil the 'Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). He would establish this new covenant with new laws, with himself as high priest based on his own sacrificial death on the cross.
>
> This new covenant would completely deal with sin (Hebrews 10:1-18) and protect all those who put their faith in him from God's wrath and judgement…
>
> *[…]'In the same way, after the supper (Jesus) took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you"' (Luke 22:20). '…we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Hebrews 10:10)*
>
> People would come under the protection of this new covenant, not by virtue of belonging to the nation of Israel, but through faith in Christ. In fact the function of the Old Testament Law (Sinaitic covenant) was to point to Christ as its fulfilment.
>
> […]So what then did Christ say about foods? He pronounced all foods clean for his followers to eat:
>
> *' "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (Mark 7:18-23)*
>
> Jesus was making that point that under the new covenant God required purity of the heart. Internal thoughts and attitudes were as important as external actions.

Food is OK for Christians, but sexual immorality – which includes premarital sex and adultery – are NOT OK for Christians.

I think sometimes when you are talking to people whose motivation is just to get rid of any objective moral law entirely, they tend to ask questions without really wanting a good answer. This is especially true when it comes to the morality of sex. They ask the question not to get an answer, but to justify getting rid of the moral rules governing sexuality. The answers are there for people who are willing to respect God in their decision-making to find. The answers are not found only by people who have a

reason to not want to find them.

In case you're wondering, I am one of those Christian men who takes chastity seriously. Marriage is about having a close connection with your spouse. Sure, I could break the rules and have a lot of fun now. A lot of Christians have a hard time turning down fun. But when I look at Jesus, I don't see a man who is pursuing fun and thrills. I see a man who sees a need and then sacrifices his own interests to rescue others from peril.

What happens when we die? Is there a resurrection? Is there a Heaven and a Hell?

July 23, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

One of the questions that everyone should ask themselves is "what happens to me when I die?" Well, I'm an evangelical Protestant Christian, and I think that view of the world is correct according to logic and evidence. Well, I found an article on this that provides the philosophical theology perspective, from Dr. William Lane Craig. You can't do better than him.

He writes:

> The first and most fundamental truth that we must hold on to is that *the biblical hope of immortality is physical, bodily resurrection*. I repeat: The biblical hope for immortality is physical, bodily resurrection. The biblical hope is *not* that the soul will someday be separated from the body and fly off to heaven and be forever with God in heaven in this disembodied existence. That's actually a very Greek understanding of the afterlife, from the Greek philosophers like Plato, and it's very different from the Jewish-Hebrew way of thinking of the afterlife. For Jews and for the early Christians alike, the hope of immortality was not the immortality of the soul alone but rather the resurrection of the body. This physical body will be raised from the dead and transformed to immortal life.

He cites 1 Cor 15:20 and Phil 3:20-21 as support.

And do we get our resurrection bodies right away?

> Now that raises the next question: *When* do we receive our resurrection bodies?

> When do we get our resurrection body? Is it immediately upon death? When we die, do we immediately receive our resurrection body? Well, the answer to that is, no. That idea fails to take seriously the physical nature of the resurrection. The resurrection body is not some different body. It is *this* body transformed into a glorious, immortal, Spirit-filled, incorruptible form. So if we received our resurrection body immediately upon death, the graves of all the Christians would be empty! There would be no corpses left in the tombs because our resurrection bodies are the transformation of this earthly body. Therefore, the resurrection doesn't take place immediately upon death. Rather the Scriptures are fairly clear that this takes place at the second coming of Christ, when Christ returns to earth.

He cites 1 Cor 15:21-23, 51-52 for support, as well as 1 Thes 4:13-17.

And what about the time in between death and the second coming of Christ? After all, in Luke 23:39-43, Jesus tells the dying thief who believes in him that he'll be with Jesus in Paradise that very day:

39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence?

41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

43 Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Dr. Craig says:

> [T]he Bible indicates is that the soul does survive the death of the body. Human death does not mean extinction. Human death is simply the separation of the soul from the body. While the body dies biologically and decays away, the soul continues to exist and continues to live in a disembodied state. In between your death and your resurrection you will exist as a disembodied soul, a soul without a body, in a conscious state.

And he cites Phil 1:21-24, where it talks about how life after death, but before the resurrection, is an improvement, because he will be with Christ, which is "far better". Those who don't accept Jesus as Lord and Savior will also have a life after death, but apart from Christ. And they'll also have a resurrection, but not to eternal life with Christ:

> In John 5 there's a very interesting passage where Jesus speaks about the resurrection, and He says that there will be a resurrection, not only of the righteous dead, but even also of the unrighteous dead. John 5:28-29. Look at this saying by Jesus: "Do not marvel at this. For the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of

> condemnation." Jesus envisions that all people will be raised from the dead. Those who are believers, the righteous dead, will be raised to the resurrection of life; but the unrighteous dead, those who have rejected God's grace and His love, will be raised to the resurrection of condemnation.

Dr. Craig also talks about the story of Lazarus, where the rich man, who is not saved, is in Hades, which is the Greek word for the Hebrew word "Sheol", which you may recognize from the Psalms.

Dr. Craig writes:

> When people die, the righteous go to be with Christ, where they will await their resurrection from the dead. The damned go to Hades, where they are in a disembodied state where they await their resurrection to final judgment. Only then are people ushered in to their *final* state, which is heaven or hell.

I cannot wait until I get my resurrection body. I have a very good idea of what I'd like it to be, too. I think about the resurrection a lot, and really look forward to it. I had a difficult life in many ways. There are things that have not been resolved, like not being married, and being stuck as a virgin! And then there's the troubles I sometimes have at work, when atheists who are younger and more dedicated than me make me feel inadequate. I was a hard worker in my 20s and 30s, but now in my 40s, I just feel like I would rather be doing things I really care about, and it's sometimes hard to focus, especially when retirement is just around the corner – around age 50.

Sometimes, I find myself driving home in my beautiful city and state, and I just think, the most important things are not all this prosperity and freedom God blessed me with, but that vertical relationship with God. And I wish I was doing more to really show Jesus that he is Lord of my life. But my hope is that in the end, I will share in his vindication, being clothed in a righteousness that I did not earn myself.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

July 24, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two bears fight it out, and may the best bear win!

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has ever done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates). If you've never seen Dr. Craig in a debate with a non-Christian, this one is probably the best introductory one out there. Dr. Craig is the foremost defender of Christian theism on the planet, and probably of all time.

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it! Normally, Dr. Craig debates at major universities in front of students and faculty.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies

- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.
3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.

- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

UK’s government-run NHS healthcare system wants to kill a child against parents’ wishes

July 26, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Every day in the UK, the government-run health care system kills patients so they can pay their unionized work force lavish salaries and benefits. As with any government-run system, waste and inefficiency is rampant. Far-left politicians spend taxpayer money on elective / cosmetic treatment and call it “health care” in order to buy votes from the reckless and irresponsible voters.

You can get sex-reassignment surgery, breast enlargements, in-vitro fertilization, etc. for free, but if you get cancer, they’ll put you on a waiting list until you die. All the better to give themselves 30-year pensions at taxpayer expense.

Here’s a story from the Daily Wire that shows how things work when secular leftists run health care:

> Parents are fighting to keep their two-year-old daughter alive after a United Kingdom judge ruled in May against the family, stating it’s in the girl’s “best interests” to allow the hospital to remove her life support.
>
> The parents of Alta Fixsler, 2, contend that their Jewish faith bars them from allowing the hospital to remove their baby from life support and that they are trying to have Alta relocated to a hospital in Israel or the U.S. at no charge to the government-run National Health Service (NHS).
>
> “There is no reason to kill my daughter like this,” the baby’s American father Abraham Fixsler told the New York Post.
>
> The Jerusalem Post reported on the case, Sunday:
>
> Alta Fixsler is a two-year-old girl who was born prematurely and sustained a severe brain injury. She and her parents are Israeli citizens and hassidic Jews. The hospital decided that Alta was “experiencing pain” and has no quality of life and therefore petitioned the British High Court for permission to remove her life support. Numerous pediatric neurologists contest the hospital’s position and insist that Alta does not feel pain. Still, the court gave the hospital the unilateral decision-making power over the girl’s life.
>
> Motivated by the Jewish outlook on the unconditional worthiness of every human life, Alta’s parents have made every effort to save her life and vigorously oppose the hospital’s intentions. Removing life support is prohibited by Alta’s Jewish religion, and is against Israeli Law.
>
> Hospitals in Israel and the U.S. have offered to take Alta into their care, the report noted. United Hatzalah Air, too, has offered to fly the baby to any destination needed without charge.
>
> “The life-saving effort would not cost the UK National Health Service a penny, yet

> in scenario that can only be described as Kafkaesque, the doctors in the UK are not willing to release the child to the parents' family, determined to kill the child instead," The Jerusalem Post argued. "The entreaties of dozens of politicians, hundreds of clergymen, and numerous human rights activists from around the globe have fallen on deaf ears."
>
> "There are a lot of places around the world where I can take care of my daughter and they would be happy to take care of her long term," 28-year-old Fixsler said. "Let me go. That's all I am saying."
>
> "The doctors don't think she has quality of life. But I think she has quality of life," the father argued. "This is something very, very painful."
>
> Family spokesman Yossi Gestetner told the New York Post, "Our value of life is built into our religious upbringing. Orthodox Judaism encourages the continuation of life until all means are exhausted."

This sort of thing happens all the time in the UK, and if anyone speaks out about it, the police are there to monitor their dissenting speech, and take action.

UK Police enforces the decrees of the government-run NHS

Remember the Alfie Evans story from a few months ago? They would not release a sick child back to the parents, but instead chose to guard the hospital with armed police to keep the parents out.

The NHS killed the (born) child through asphyxiation, starvation and dehydration. And it was done against the will of the parents.

The parents wanted the child back so that they can take the child to a country that has modern private-sector healthcare facilities and skilled, moral medical personnel. Italy volunteered to provide these things, and has even sent an air ambulance to transport the

child. But the NHS insteadkilled the child, because they have decreed that the child is unfit to live, i.e. – "life unworthy of life". This is not surprising, as the NHS also kills millions of unborn children as well.

The judge who initially ruled against the parents of little Alfie previously ruled that a patient in a minimally conscious state be starved to death, according to Life Site News. The appeals court judge also ruled against the child because the parents were hostile to the NHS. So, the NHS can't release the child because his parents are "hostile to the NHS" after the NHS kidnapped and starved their child. This is the kind of legal reasoning that you can expect from the judges in the UK.

Still think that government-run health care is a good idea? It's never a good idea to pay unionized thugs money up front, and then beg them for goods and services later. Keep your money in your pocket so that you can get what you need when you need it. You cannot trust secular leftists to act morally. There is no rationally-grounded concept of objective morality in the atheistic worldview.

The production of carbon from lighter elements is fine-tuned to an amazing degree

July 27, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

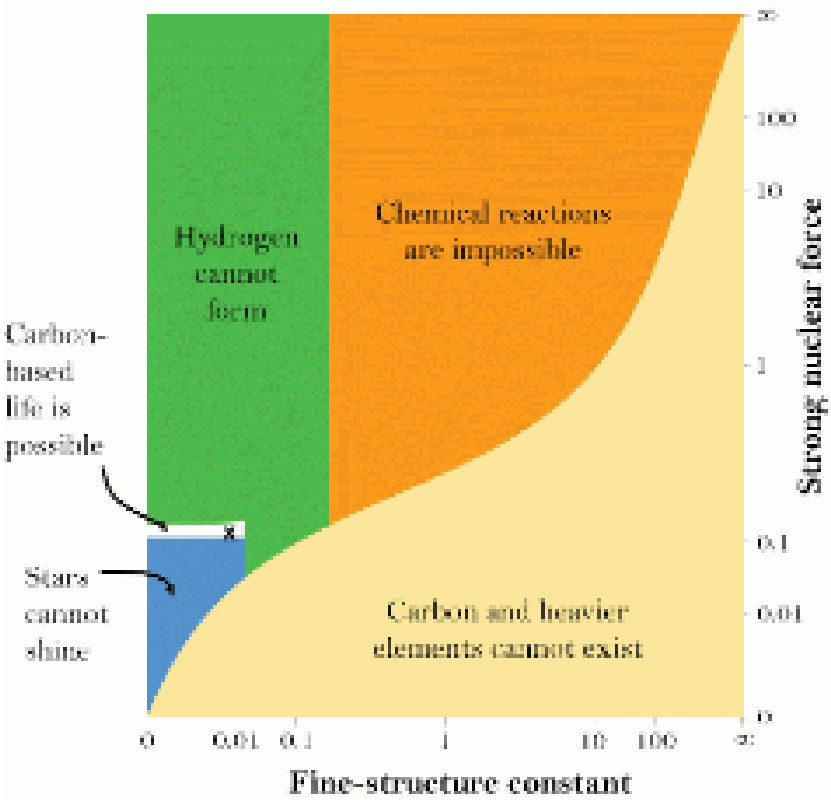

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant

If there is one thing that science fiction is good for, it's for popularizing the phrase "carbon-based life". Everyone has heard that carbon is essential for life. But do you know why carbon is so important? And did you know that the reaction that produced the carbon in our universe is actually fine-tuned, and therefore evidence for a Creator and Designer of the universe?

Hugh Ross has a new article up in Salvo magazine, which I found thanks to a post at Uncommon Descent.

Now he starts off with a discussion of how the mass density of the universe needed to be fine-tuned in order to produce elements heavier than hydrogen from the (only) hydrogen that was present at the creation event. I've talked about that reaction previously, but I won't repeat that here. Nucleosynthesis is one of the most important chemical reactions in science, and something every Christian should know and understand well enough to explain it.

You can't make complex embodied intelligent creatures such as ourselves out of only hydrogen and helium, but you can't make a life permitting universe without some hydrogen and helium. For one thing, you can't have liquid water without some hydrogen.

But the element carbon is the center hub of all of the molecules inside of us that allow for the storage and processing of information necessary for life. And it turns out that the

reaction that creates carbon from elements lighter than carbon is fine-tuned to an amazing degree.

Excerpt:

> But cosmic mass density is not the only thing that must have been exquisitely fine-tuned for the universe to contain any carbon. The nuclear resonance (or energy) levels for helium, beryllium, carbon, and oxygen also had to be exquisitely fine-tuned for carbon to exist. Here's how that happens.
>
> Stars fuse carbon and oxygen from helium through a series of reactions known as the triple-alpha process, in which three helium nuclei are combined to make one carbon nucleus. In the first step in this process, two helium nuclei (with 2 protons each) fuse together to make beryllium (which has 4 protons). Next, a helium nucleus fuses with a beryllium nucleus to make carbon (which has 6 protons). Then, some carbon nuclei fuse with helium nuclei to make oxygen (which has 8 protons).
>
> The only reason that the triple-alpha process produces any carbon or oxygen at all is because in the first step, the ground state energy level (i.e., the state of an atom when all of its electrons are at their lowest energy levels) of the beryllium-8 nucleus (containing 4 protons and 4 neutrons) almost exactly equals the ground state energy level of two helium-4 nuclei (2 protons and 2 neutrons each). In the second step, the ground state energy level of a beryllium-8 nucleus plus a helium-4 nucleus almost exactly equals the energy level of an excited state of a carbon-12 nucleus (6 protons and 6 neutrons). In the third step, the ground state energy level of a carbon-12 nucleus at 7.65 million electron volts is just slightly larger than the ground state energy level of an oxygen-16 nucleus (8 protons and 8 neutrons) at 7.12 million electron volts.[1]
>
> If it were not for the near equivalences or resonances of the nuclear energy levels of two helium nuclei relative to a beryllium nucleus, and of a beryllium nucleus plus a helium nucleus relative to a carbon nucleus, the universe would contain very little or no carbon and very little or no elements heavier than carbon. Life would be impossible.
>
> Furthermore, unless the difference in the nuclear energy levels between a carbon nucleus and an oxygen nucleus were precisely 0.53 million electron volts, the universe would contain either a lot of carbon and no oxygen or a lot of oxygen and no carbon. Either way, physical life would be impossible in the universe.
>
> In the early 1950s, astronomer Fred Hoyle and physicist Willy Fowler were the first to understand how critical the relative nuclear energy levels of helium, beryllium, carbon, and oxygen were for making life possible in the universe. Commenting on the highly fine-tuned nature of these nuclear energy levels, Hoyle wrote in an article he published in *Engineering & Science*,
>
> A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has

> monkeyed with the physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion beyond question.[2]

The article continues to explain that there is an additional problem of carbon fine-tuning related to habitability.

The carbon formation problem is one of the best examples of fine-tuning, and as you can see, it’s even admitted by atheists. It’s not the easiest one to explain (because resonance levels are not familiar in every day life), but it’s worth knowing about all three of the fine-tuning topics in the post.

Keep in mind that the more science has made progress, the more fine-tuning problems we have discovered. The trend is very bad if you are a naturalist. But very good if you are a theist. Evidence matters, and scientific evidence is the best kind of evidence.

Is Politifact trustworthy? Is Politifact unbiased? A review of past rulings

July 28, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Politifact is in the news again for labeling actual video of Democrats explaining their opinions of v4cc1nes as "False News".

Fox News reports:

> Amid the Biden administration's struggle to v4cc1nate Americans, a video surfaced comments made during the 2020 election cycle by the then-Democratic ticket that cast doubt in a v4cc1ne developed under President Trump.
>
> Biden suggested back in August that any v4cc1ne that comes along is "not likely to go through all the tests that need to be done and the trials that are needed to be done."
>
> […]Biden repeatedly indicated only if there was enough "transparency" would he take the v4cc1ne and that the "American people should not have confidence" in the v4cc1ne developed by the Trump administration if his concerns weren't addressed.
>
> Harris was heard during a CNN interview that getting a v4cc1ne that's approved by the Trump administration would be "an issue for all of us" and "if Donald Trump tells us that we should take it, I'm not taking it" during the vice presidential debate.
>
> However, PolitiFact issued a so-called "fact-check" with the headline "Biden, Harris distrusted Trump with C0V1D-19 v4cc1nes, not the v4cc1nes themselves."

This isn't the first time that Politifact, which is used by all the big social media companies to "fact check" speech, has been caught protecting their favored political party.

Let's see some examples of past bias.

Arizona Senate Race

Politifact screwed up their fact-check for the Arizona Senate race.

The Daily Caller explains:

> PolitiFact incorrectly labeled it "mostly false" that Democratic Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema "protested troops in a pink tutu" during its live fact-check of the Arizona Senate debate Monday night.
>
> It's an established fact that Sinema, a former Green Party activist who co-founded an anti-war group, wore a pink tutu at one of the multiple anti-war protests she attended in 2003.
>
> "While we were in harm's way, she was protesting our troops in a pink tutu," Republican candidate Martha McSally, a former Air Force fighter pilot, said

> during Monday night's debate.

Here's their Politifact's evaluation of McSally's claim:

Who are you going to believe? Politifact, or your own eyes?
And here's the photo of Kyrsten Sinema, protesting the troops, in a pink tutu:

Anti-war Democrat Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema in a pink tutu
The Daily Caller notes:

> A 2003 Arizona State University news article at the time described Sinema wearing "something resembling a pink tutu" at one of the protests.
>
> [...]Sinema openly associated with fringe elements of the far-left during her anti-war activism.

> She promoted an appearance by Lynne Stewart, a lawyer who was convicted of aiding an Islamic terrorist organization, in 2003.
>
> Sinema also reportedly partnered with anarchists and witches in her anti-war activism and said she did “not care” if Americans wanted to join the Taliban.

And now for the big one: Politifact’s fact-checking of Obamacare.

Obama’s claims about Obamacare

Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine, wrote about Politifact’s assessment of Obama’s promise to Americans about keeping their health plans after Obamacare.

In 2008, before the presidential election, PolitiFact rated Obama’s claims about Obamacare “True”:

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site’s “Truth-O-Meter” to evaluate this claim: “Under Barack Obama’s health care proposal, ‘if you’ve got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.’”

And she concluded:

> […]…people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama’s plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his statement True.”

Roy notes:

> PolitiFact’s pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 campaign.

Here’s the screen capture from 2008:

Politifact says that everyone who likes their health care plan can keep it
Before the election, it’s true! And Obama got re-elected, because people believed that.
But what happened after the election?

In 2013, after the 2012 election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about Obamacare "Pants On Fire":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama's infamous promise—that "if you like your health care plan, you can keep it"—its 2013 "Lie of the Year."
>
> […][N]one of the key facts that made that promise "impossible" in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President's plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan
Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."
Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."
Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact said one thing before the election, and the opposite afterwards
So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, but it's election time so they don't say that. It's not like the critical assessments of Obamacare from health policy experts were not out there between 2007-2012. I know, because I blogged on every study and report on the predicted effects of the law that I could find. But the intellectually lazy journalism-major clowns at Politifact couldn't be bothered to read those studies and reports.

Secular left journalists are the stupidest people on the planet. Stick with reading The Federalist and Daily Wire if you want to know what's really going on in the world.

The Complete Atheist's Guide to Rationally Grounding Objective Morality on Atheism

July 29, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Morality has always been a problem for atheists, given that the worldview of atheism is unable to rationally ground the foundations of objective morality:

- Objective moral values
- Objective moral duties
- Accountability for moral choices
- Free will, for making moral choices
- Ultimate significance, in an afterlife

Each of these is not available on atheism, because if atheism is true, then the universe is an accident, human beings are accidents, and there is no design for how humans ought to be, no free will, and no accountability in an afterlife for those who escape consequences for their actions before they die.

So, how can atheists rationally ground objective morality without a Cosmic designer and an objective design for how humans ought to be?

It's easy. And I will show you how to do it, using some examples.

Ed Buck and Hillary Clinton

So, before we see how to rationally ground objective morality on atheism, let's first see some atheist morality, courtesy of the UK Daily Mail.

> Ed Buck was convicted Tuesday on charges he injected gay men with methamphetamine in exchange for sex, leading to two deaths and other overdoses.
>
> A federal jury found 66-year-old Buck guilty of all nine felony counts against him,

> which could lead to a life sentence.
>
> […]Prosecutors said Buck paid black men and provided drugs in return for sex acts, having hunted online for partners with the familiar term 'PnP' – 'party and play', or using meth, then having sex.

Atheists believe a lot of objectively moral things like this. Remember Democrat politician Andrew Gillum? I don't think I've ever seen an atheist being more objectively moral than that. What's more objective morally than being passed out in a hotel room with drugs and gay prostitutes when you're married and running for governor of Florida?

So, how can atheists rationally ground this excellent objective morality to people who don't share their atheist worldview?

The first thing is that atheists need to be rich, so that they can escape the consequences of being judged and shamed by those intolerant Christians, who lack empathy and compassion. Being rich also allows atheists to use their money to promote the objective morality of atheism in the political realm – by donating to Democrat politicians. The more Democrat politicians get elected, the more Democrat policies we'll get. And those policies are excellent for eliminating criticism of atheist morality.

Ed Buck demonstrates this well:

> Buck is a wealthy white man who was active in gay causes and animal rights issues.
>
> His Facebook page showed him with Hillary Clinton, the former governor Jerry Brown and Representatives Ted Lieu and Adam Schiff.
>
> […]His contributions to Democrat politicians and causes from 2005 to 2017 totaled $433,500, according to The New York Times.

Democrats politicians support all kinds of policies designed to rationally ground atheist morality. Democrats push for single mother welfare, in order to incentivize fatherlessness. Democrats support premarital sex and no-fault divorce, to destabilize marriage. Democrats urge women put their children with taxpayer-funded daycare and public schools. This way, children, (the ones who survive being aborted or infanticided), can avoid the harmful morality of their biological parents, and instead be raised by strangers in daycares and government-run schools. There, they will learn objective atheist morality: there is no God, no human rights, no objective morality, that natural marriage is an abomination, that abortion is a sacrament, that transgenderism is scientific, etc. Democrat policies will produce a generation of young people with rationally grounded objective morality.

Gay activist Terry Bean and Barack Obama

Let's see another example of atheist morality, and see how it can be rationally grounded in an atheist worldview.

Here is the story from Oregon Live:

> The former boyfriend of Terrence P. Bean was arrested early Thursday on sex abuse charges stemming from the same alleged 2013 encounter with a 15-year-old boy at a hotel in Eugene.
>
> Kiah Loy Lawson, 25, was arrested at 1:15 a.m. at the Portland Police Bureau's Central Precinct and booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center shortly after 2 a.m.
>
> He's accused of third-degree sodomy and third-degree sexual abuse.
>
> […]Bean, 66, a prominent gay rights activist and major Democratic Party fundraiser, was arrested at his home in Southwest Portland and booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center at 10:12 a.m. Wednesday.
>
> The indictment charges Bean with two counts of third-degree sodomy, a felony, and one count of third-degree sex abuse, a misdemeanor, police said.
>
> […]Both Bean and Lawson are accused of having a sexual encounter with the same 15-year-old boy in a hotel in Eugene last year. They had arranged the encounter with the teen after meeting him via a website, investigators allege.
>
> **Bean has been one of the state's biggest Democratic donors and an influential figure in gay rights circles in the state. He helped found two major national political groups, the Human Rights Campaign and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, and has been a major contributor for several Democratic presidential candidates, including Barack Obama. He's also a close friend of former Gov. Barbara Roberts.**

Again, the important thing is that atheists need to be wealthy, and donate to Democrat politicians. That way, no one will ever be able to judge or shame them for their atheist

objective morality – it will be rationally grounded with all the best atheist logic and evidence.

Actually, there are a lot more good examples of atheist morality.

Ed Murray shaking hands with Barack Obama

The far-left New York Times reports:

> The mayor of Seattle, Ed Murray, said on Tuesday that he would resign after announcing in May that he would not seek a second term. Several men have come forward to accuse Mr. Murray of sexually abusing them decades ago, when they were underage.
>
> The announcement came just hours after The Seattle Times published a story with an account by a fifth man, Mr. Murray's cousin, who said Mr. Murray had abused him in the 1970s.
>
> [..]Mr. Murray, 62, a Democrat, is the city's first openly gay mayor, and had served in the State Legislature for many years before being elected in 2013.
>
> […]**The liberal Mr. Murray is generally considered a father of Washington's same-sex marriage law, which he pressed in the State Legislature for years.**

The radically-leftist New York Times isn't about to tell you what this Democrat gay-marriage activist actually did – that's not news that's fit to print. For that you have to go to Life Site News. Again, don't try this unless you are an expert in atheist philosophy (being wealthy and donating to Democrat politicians).

Huma Abedin (left), Harvey Weinstein (center), Hillary Clinton (right) discussing feminism

Harvey Weinstein was especially good at defending atheist morality. He had perfected the argument from wealth and the argument from giving money to Democrats. He might have the most rationally-grounded atheist objective morality of any non-Christian scholar I've ever read. Even better than than the philosophical arguments of Jeffrey Epstein, Bill Clinton, Anthony Weiner, Elliot Spitzer or Eric Schneiderman. And those philosophers knew a thing or two about rationally-grounded objective morality on atheism.

The important point is that atheists need to be familiar with the 1) be wealthy argument, and the 2) give money to Democrat politicians argument, in order to rationally ground atheist objective morality. It's also a good idea for rank-and-file atheists to vote Democrat – it will make moral judgement of atheists, and shaming of atheist morality impossible. As soon as atheists can user government to eliminate bad philosophy by Christians, then there will be no one left to question the excellent atheist morality I described above.

Matt Dillahunty debates David Robertson on atheism, morality and evil

July 30, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two horses fight it out, may the best horse win!

OK. So I think it's safe to say that of all the Christian apologists out there, David Robertson is my least favorite debater. Why? Many reasons, but mostly because he does not bring in evidence, especially scientific evidence. And he seems to make these clever quips like G. K. Chesterton. I like evidence. I would rather that he talk about scientific and historical evidence.

Dina asked me to listen to this debate a while back, between David Robertson and agnostic Matt Dillahunty (he's not an atheist, he's just an agnostic). I went in absolutely convinced that Robertson was going to have his ass handed to him by Matt Dillahunty. And I could not have been more wrong.

Here's the debate posted on YouTube (audio only):

This snarky summary is just a paraphrase from certain parts of the debate, *it is not designed for accuracy*, but for fun – to make you listen to the debate. Listen to the debate to get the exact words in context.

Summary:

- Matt Dillahunty: he's an agnostic who calls himself an atheist
- David Robertson: he's from Scotland, could we not get someone better?
- Robertson opening statement is incredibly weak, as you might expect, he only had two arguments embedded in a long list of nonsense: 1) origin and design of the universe 2) reality of evil requires objective morality

1) Creation/Design:

Robertson: The fact is that matter exists. There are 3 views that could account for this fact: 1) created, 2) eternal, 3) self-generated out of nothing. Option 3) is self-contradictory, 1) requires a Creator, and 2) is falsified by the Big Bang cosmology. So what's your view?

Dillahunty: You're trying to get me to say what my view is, but I can just say "I don't know" and get out of having to take any position on how matter got here. I can say "I don't know" to all the scientific evidence for the Big Bang cosmology, too!

2) Evil requires objective morality, requires a moral lawgiver:

Robertson: evil exists, e.g. – the Holocaust. If atheism is true, objective morality is impossible. Richard Dawkins agrees. Therefore, theism is the best explanation for the existence of evil.

Dillahunty: In my opinion, morality means doing what helps people have well-being. And I think that the Holocaust is obviously bad, because it hurts the well-being of the victims.

Robertson: The problem is that on your view, different people decide what well-being is to them. If you were raised in the Social Darwinism of the Nazi regime, you would believe that the Holocaust was the best for the well-being of the society as a whole.

Dillahunty: Isn't it obvious that killing people is bad for their well-being?

Robertson: Is it bad for the well-being of unborn children to kill them?

Dillahunty: Yes

Robertson: So you're against abortion, then?

Dillahunty: No

Robertson: So you think that killing the child in the womb is against the well-being of the child, but you're for that?

Dillahunty: I don't know! I don't know!

Then Dillahunty tried to claim Hitler was a Christian:

Dillahunty: here is a quote by Hitler saying that secular schools are bad, and religious schools are good – see, he's a Christian!

Robertson: when was that said and to whom?

Dillahunty: I don't know, I don't know!

Robertson: It was said in 1933, during an election campaign, to Catholic authorities – he was a politician, looking for votes from Catholics so he could become Chancellor.

Good and evil on atheism:

Dillahunty: good actions results in states with more well-being, and evil actions result in states with less well-being.

Brierley: but when the Nazis slaughtered all those people, they believed they were increasing well-being

Dillahunty: But you could demonstrate to them that their action is not going to increase well-being. Survival of the fittest is descriptive of what happens, but it's not prescriptive.

Robertson: Whose well-being will human beings think about most, if not their own? Do you really think that you can stop people like Charles Manson from being evil by sitting down and trying to prove to them that they are not helping their victim's well-being?

(A BIT LATER)

Robertson (to Dillahunty): Is it a fact that Dachau (a concentration camp) was morally wrong?

Dillahunty: (literally, not a paraphrase) I DON'T KNOW

My thoughts:

When I listened to this debate, the overwhelming conviction that emerges is that Matt Dillahunty is not someone who forms his worldview based on evidence. His rejection of the Big Bang cosmology with "I don't know" is just atrocious. His comments about slavery in the Bible and Hitler being a Christian show that his investigations of these issues is far below the level of a responsible adult. His dallying with the Jesus-never-existed view just shows him to be fundamentally anti-intellectual, as even atheist historian Bart Ehrman denies that view. His definition of faith has nothing to do with the Bible, or Christian authorities, or Christian scholars – he invented a definition of faith that allows him to mock Christians as morons. That's just irresponsible – letting the desire to mock others cause you to distort the definition of a word. When asked to state his positions or respond to specific evidence, his response is very often "I don't know". It seems to me that atheism, to him, means not pursuing truth with the aim of grasping it. He wants to keep reality at a safe distance – that's why he says "I don't know" so often.

On morality, it's even worse. It's not surprising to me that he is pro-abortion and has no opinion about concentration camps being objectively evil. Most atheists are pro-abortion, by the way. When it comes to morality, Dillahunty only has his own personal opinions, and they refer to nothing outside his own mind. (His opinion of morality as related to well-being is utilitarianism – a very problematic view – but moreover, it is *his subjective view* – he isn't offering it as any sort of objective moral system that would be prescriptive instead of descriptive. Without an after-life, there is no reason for anyone to care about the moral point of view when it goes against their self-interest, anyway. Atheists use moral language, but their statements are not referring to any objective, prescriptive moral reality. Atheism is materialistic and therefore deterministic – it does not even ground the free will that is needed to make moral choices. Their view is Darwinian survival of the fittest, that's what emerges from their origins story – and it does not rationally ground morality. The strong kill the weak, if they can. I've written before about how difficult it is for atheists to *rationally* condemn things like slavery, and nothing in Dillahunty's presentation led me to believe that he had solved that problem.

Anybody can be an intellectually-satisfied atheist with an empty head – it's *knowledge* that causes people to conform their beliefs to *reality*. If one strives to keep one's head as empty as possible, then of course one can believe anything one wants. I'm glad, speaking as a Christian theist, that I get to follow the evidence wherever it leads. It seems to me that we should do that, rather than decide how we want to live first, and

then invent a worldview to justify our desires.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Dave Rubin interviews my favorite economist: Thomas Sowell

July 31, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Thomas Sowell – the best economics teacher you will ever learn from

Two half-hour interviews with my FAVORITE economist, Thomas Sowell. If you haven't read any books by Thomas Sowell, then you don't know how wonderful economics can be. Thomas Sowell stands for the proposition that before you adopt an economic policy, you have to consider what incentives it will create for *everyone* involved. And he backs up his ideas with studies that span the whole range of times and places. It turns out that many bad ideas have already been disproved in different times and places, and Thomas Sowell knows them all. Thomas Sowell is a man of facts and evidence.

Description of part one:

> Dr. Thomas Sowell (Economist) joins Dave to discuss his Marxist past, free speech on campuses, distinguishing between classical liberalism and libertarianism, and his new book "Discrimination & Disparities.

Part one:

"This idiot has stumbled on something that will ruin us all". LOL!

Description of part two:

> Dr. Thomas Sowell (Economist and Author) joins Dave to discuss the role of government, the problem with minimum wage laws, his experience as a black conservative, debunking systemic racism, the importance of common decency, and his new book "Discrimination & Disparities."

Part two:

In the comments, Dave explains that YouTube has demonetized the video. I suppose that this is because the video contains conservative ideas, and YouTube is owned by the far-left Google.

Anyway, I recommend getting your hands on some Thomas Sowell books.

This one seems to be a collection of introductory essays:

The Thomas Sowell Reader

I haven't read it, but it has the highest reviews of any of his books. What I would recommend is picking up one of the OLDER versions of his "Basic Economics":

Basic Economics

You can get a used one for a couple of bucks. I read the second edition a while back, and I remember that just reading the first 3 chapters knocked my socks off. Some helpful person even uploaded the audio of the edition I read to YouTube. Just listen to the first 3-4 chapters, and you'll see what I mean. No one who wants to understand how the world *really works* can ignore Thomas Sowell.

One that I still haven't read that's short and sweet is:

The Vision of the Anointed

But a later book that is similar is actually my favorite Thomas Sowell book:

Intellectuals and Society

I also liked this one a lot:

Economic Facts and Fallacies

I once dated a homeschooled girl who came from a large, rural family. This family produced brilliant children, but the parents didn't really believe in college. I told the girl that to marry me, she would have to get a college degree. She and her parents didn't really like that, and we broke up. However, I did tell her that she should read Thomas Sowell, because she had some left of center views on public policy, e.g. – health care. I found out later that she went on to read SIX Thomas Sowell books in two months. After that, she went on to get a BA in economics via distance learning, with a 4.0 GPA! I think part of that transformation is due to the Thomas Sowell books. Thomas Sowell changes lives.

I have to include this clip of Thomas Sowell from a long time ago:

He understood the things we are fighting about today *decades ago*. This man should have been our first black president.

By the way, Dave Rubin does a lot of good interviews. This one that he did with Larry Elder was worth watching.

My conversation about morality with an atheist millennial man

August 1, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you define morality as "whatever I want to do" then you'll always be "moral"

I spent some time talking to an atheist millennial recently. He considers himself a moral person, and he is very helpful to others. I asked him to define morality, and he said that morality was feeling good, and helping other people to feel good. I was trying to think of a way to punch a hole in his feelings-based utilitarianism. How could I show him that happy feelings are not a good basis for morality?

Now, you're probably thinking that abortion is the most obvious example of something that is morally wrong – it's just killing a baby because adults don't want to take responsibility for their foolish pursuit of pleasure. But atheists typically don't think of unborn children as people. They usually believe in naturalistic evolution, and they are committed to a view of reality where the universe is an accident, human beings are accidents, there are no objective human rights, and biological evolution progresses because the strong survive while the weak die. So you aren't going to be able to generate a moral standard that includes compassion for weak unborn children on that scenario. If the rule is "let's do what makes us happy", and the unborn child can't voice her opinion, then the selfish grown-ups win.

Instead, I decided to focus on fatherlessness. I asked him whether he thought that fatherlessness harmed children. Surprisingly, he said that it didn't, and that he had a relative who was doing a great job raising fatherless kids. I asked him if he had ever looked at the research on what father absence does to children. He hadn't. Then I asked

him if a system of sexual rules based on “me feeling good, and other people around me feeling good”, was likely to protect children. He went silent.

Well, that was the end of that conversation. And I think it was a nice window into how millennials – who are absolutely clueless about what research says about sex, dating, marriage and parenting – think about relationships. They’re making decisions based on their feelings, then acting surprised when their “common sense” decisions based on happiness “in the moment” blow up in their faces, and destroy the lives of their children, including their unborn children.

Unfortunately, young people are having children outside of a marriage commitment more and more.

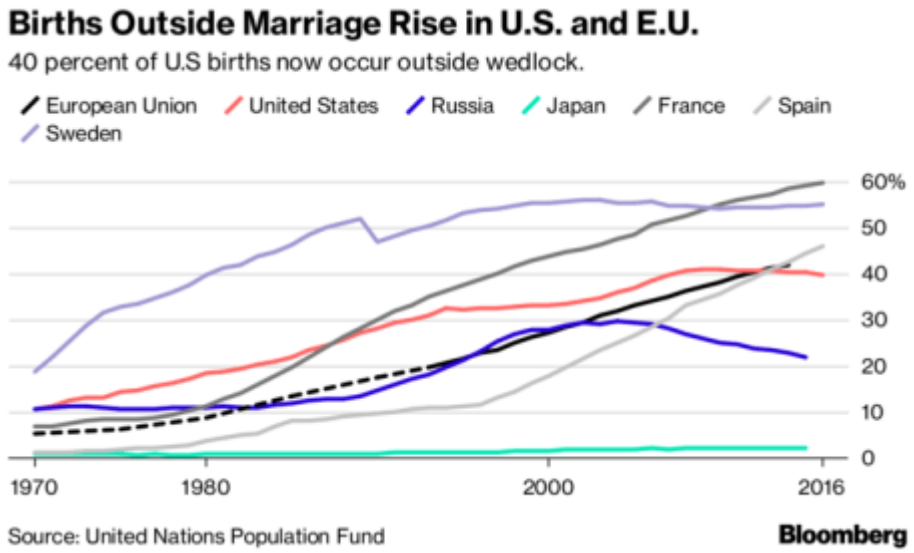

Out-of-wedlocks births rising as cohabitation replaces marriage
Far-left Bloomberg News reports:

Forty percent of all births in the U.S. now occur outside of wedlock, up from 10 percent in 1970, according to an annual report released on Wednesday by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the largest international provider of sexual and reproductive health services. That number is even higher in the European Union.

The EU has a higher rate of fatherless births because they have high taxes and big government to allow women to have children without having to commit to a husband:

> The EU likely sees more births out of wedlock because many member countries have welfare systems that support gender-balanced child care, said Michael Hermann, UNFPA’s senior adviser on economics and demography, in an interview. Public health care systems, paid paternal leave, early education programs and tax incentives give unwed parents support beyond what a partner can provide.

More welfare and more government services make it easier for women to pursue relationships with men who aren’t interested in marriage. Hot bad boys who give them all the tingles. Big government makes those boring, predictable marriage-ready men dispensable. Big government also makes it much harder for a man who does marry to

afford a stay-at-home mother for his kids, because he has to pay higher taxes for big government.

More:

> The data show such births in the U.S. and EU are predominantly to unmarried couples living together rather than to single mothers, the report says.
>
> […]Jones also noted that the rise in births outside of marriage is closely correlated to delays in childbearing. "Women are claiming their ground professionally," she said. "Delaying motherhood is a rational decision when you consider the impact it can have on your career, and that's contributing to this trend."
>
> [….]The traditional progression of Western life "has been reversed," said John Santelli, a professor in population, family health and pediatrics at Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health. "Cohabiting partners are having children before getting married. That's a long-term trend across developing nations."
>
> Regardless of marital status, more couples are choosing not to have kids at all. The U.S. fertility rate hit a historic 30-year low last year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hermann said the rise in births outside of wedlock has actually mitigated the decline in fertility, which "would be much steeper if women weren't having children outside marriage."

What's interesting about this anti-marriage article is that they have nothing to say about the research showing that cohabitation – and also marriages that occur after a period of cohabitation – are inferior to no-cohabitation marriages. People who are serious about self-control, and who are serious about committing through thick and thin, tend to have longer lasting marriages. But we don't prioritize chastity, fidelity and self-sacrificial commitment anymore, because that relationships that require self-denial make us unhappy.

The article concludes: "We can't go back to the '50s". Right. Because if feelings-based "morality" is assumed, then any choice between adult happiness and children's happiness will favor the adults. Today's young people carefully AVOID any evidence that contradicts their new "happiness-morality". They act surprised when their unstable relationships dissolve, leaving children separated from their fathers. Marriage requires that both partners have a system of morality that puts the commitment above happy feelings. People have to be accustomed to doing things that feel bad, just because they are good and moral things to do according to an objective standard of morality. The new atheist morality of happy feelings doesn't develop the character needed for commitment.

If you ask an atheist millennial, they think they are doing a great job of being "moral". They don't see the messes they are making for children as something that they are causing themselves, with their own foolish feelings-based decision-making. They think they know everything about relationships through their feelings. They think that they are exempt from the patterns of cause and effect in the peer-reviewed research.

Is the acceleration of the universe's expansion compatible with Hinduism?

August 2, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

First, a news story – and then we'll see how the accelerating universe relates to the existence of God.

Excerpt:

> Three astrophysicists who discovered that the universe's expansion is accelerating rather than decelerating, as had been expected, win the Nobel Prize in physics.
>
> Adam Riess was sure he'd spotted a blatant error in his results. It was 1997, and the young post-doc's measurements of distant, exploding stars implied that the universe was expanding at a faster and faster rate, instead of slowing down, as he had expected.
>
> It wasn't an error at all. Instead, what was at fault were some basic assumptions about the workings of the universe.
>
> On Tuesday, the Johns Hopkins University astrophysicist received the Nobel Prize in physics for the revolutionary discovery and its implications, along with team leader Brian Schmidt of Australian National University and astrophysicist Saul Perlmutter of UC Berkeley and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, who had reached the same conclusion independently.
>
> At the time of their work, astrophysicists believed that the rate of expansion of the universe — set in motion by the Big Bang 13.7 billion years ago — would be slowing down as matter was pulled together by gravity. The goal at the time was

> to figure out how rapid the deceleration was.
>
> What the two teams found instead was that the expansion of the universe was accelerating — an observation that could best be explained by the existence of a mysterious "dark energy" that pushes matter farther and farther apart.
>
> Many scientists had thought that, just as the universe started with the Big Bang, it would end with a Big Crunch — with gravity pulling all the matter in the universe inward.

Does anyone remember that week that I wrote those posts about "Why I am not a… <insert some religion here>"? I explained why I was not all kinds of different religions and denominations, including Roman Catholicism, Calvinism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, etc. Everyone was offended and we fought about it. Ah, I remember it well.

Now let's apply science to the Hindu religion and see if they go together, especially this new discovery about the expansion of the universe.

Why I am not a Hindu

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

So that's one reason why I am not a Hindu. And now we have more scientific confirmation that there is no cycle of universes coming into being and going out of being.

The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with Buddhism and Mormonism and maybe other religions. They also require an eternally existing universe.

And modern cosmology disagrees with atheism, too

I think it's important for all of you to be familiar with the scientific evidence for the Big Bang. It will help you with your cosmological argument, and it will help you to refute many, many other religions that require eternal universes, including atheism.

I wrote about how the Big Bang cosmology falsifies atheism before.

Excerpt:

> According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an

> eternally existing universe, (See the first item: “Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.”). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* The Big Bang has been confirmed by experimental evidence such as redshift measurements, light element abundances and the cosmic microwave background radiation. This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by atheist Scriptures.

The experimental evidence that confirms the Big Bang creation out of nothing falsifies many worldviews. Those who care about evidence will have to choose some other religion that is compatible with what we know from science today.

Dr. Tim Stratton on the Apologetics 315 podcast to discuss free will and divine sovereignty

August 3, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I really enjoyed this interview of Dr. Stratton from the Apologetics 315 podcast. I've had non-Christians in previous workplaces raise the problem of free will vs divine sovereignty. After all, they say, how can humans be responsible for their choices if God is all-powerful? If God is all-powerful, then surely he must control everything, and there's no space for free will. Right?

The episode can be heard here.

Here is the show description:

> In this episode, Brian Auten and Chad Gross interview Tim Stratton of Free Thinking Ministries. They discuss the topic of Molinism as it relates to God's sovereignty, human free will, and why it matters. Tim's book on the subject is Human Freedom, Divine Knowledge, and Mere Molinism: A Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Philosophical Analysis.
>
> 1:03 – Intro to Tim Stratton
> 1:41 – Why Molinism on the podcast?
> 3:20 – Welcome to Tim Stratton
> 3:54 – How Tim became a Christian
> 9:37 – God as a maximally great being
> 10:43 – Tim's dissertation
> 11:18 – What does Tim find compelling about Molinism?
> 12:42 – The Mere Molinism Facebook group
> 16:14 – What is the problem that Molinism is trying to solve?
> 22:47 – How to briefly summarize Molinism?
> 23:41 – Defining terms: Middle knowledge and counterfactuals
> 31:39 – Scriptures that affirm counterfactuals / middle knowledge
> 41:53 – Why us the term "mere" Molinism?
> 46:22 – Can Molinism be applied to salvation?
> 48:21 – Does this chess analogy work?
> 52:10 – Objection: Molinism is not derived from scripture
> 58:23 – Objection: Who cares? That's just for scholars and theologians
> 1:02:45 – How Molinism saved Tim's marriage
> 1:06:20 – Where to find Tim's resources

Tim Stratton's reconciliation of divine sovereignty and free will is interesting to me. He keeps God as the sole initiator of salvation. And that's good. But it also makes sure that human who resist God's leading are responsible for their choice to resist God, and that's also good. We want salvation to be 100% by faith alone in Christ alone. But we don't want

God to be the cause of people not being saved. On Stratton's view, God wants everyone to be saved. If anyone is saved, it's because God did ALL THE WORK to lead them and secure their salvation with the death of Jesus on the cross. But, on Stratton's view, humans do get a choice – the choice to trust God or not. And so, if a person is not saved, then it's their fault – not God's.

If you hear this challenge from non-Christians, be sure to listen to the podcast. You can find a written version of his argument on his web site, Free Thinking Ministries.

Democrat governor sexually harassed multiple women, covered it up, retaliated

August 4, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should women be allowed to have jobs without being sexually assaulted or raped by male bosses? Democrat voters seem to think that it's fine for male supervisors to sexually harass, sexually assault, and even rape their female subordinates – judging from their voting. This has been a problem as far back as Bill Clinton, but it just keeps happening over and over. Now it's New York's governor.

Daily Wire reports:

> A New York Attorney General report released Tuesday chronicles complaints against New York Governor Andrew Cuomo from 11 women including a sheriff's deputy who served on Cuomo's own security detail.
>
> The AG's report… found that "Cuomo harassed multiple women, many of whom were young women, by engaging in unwanted groping, kisses, hugging, and by making inappropriate comments," according to Attorney General Leticia James. The behavior showed a "pattern," the investigators said, they "found all 11 women to be credible."
>
> […]Most of the accusers chose to remain anonymous but the nine individuals employed by the State of New York are identified by their position within the administration, including one "executive assistant" who accused Cuomo of "aggressive" groping.
>
> That portion of the report verifies a claim made to the Albany Times-Union back in March.
>
> […]"The direct contact with intimate body parts—including the touching of Executive Assistant #1's breast, the grabbing and touching of the butts of various women…—unquestionably amounted to sexual harassment," the Attorney General's report noted.
>
> A state trooper assigned to Cuomo's detail described being asked by the governor to help him find a new girlfriend who "can handle pain."
>
> […]The trooper also reported that Cuomo touched her inappropriately.

The accusers were silenced:

> The women who complained also said that Cuomo's workplace "culture" fostered the governor's behavior and ultimately silenced his accusers.
>
> "The complainants also described how the culture within the Executive Chamber—rife with fear and intimidation and accompanied by a consistent overlooking of inappropriate flirtations and other sexually suggestive and gender-based comments by the Governor—enabled the above-described instances of

> harassment to occur and created a hostile work environment overall," the report said.

What would happen if I asked a young, unmarried Democrat voter in New York to explain her support for Cuomo? I guess she would say "rape is OK if it's a rapist who supports abortion rights", or something. I don't really understand how Democrat voters reason, or if they reason. Here, we have credible accusations from many women who were willing to come forward, but it doesn't mean anything (apparently) to young female Democrats.

Cuomo also retaliated against one of the women, and used his power to cover up the scandal.

The New York Post reports:

> Gov. Andrew Cuomo and his team tried to cover up the sex-harassment allegations against him by ignoring reporting procedures — while he personally plotted to "discredit and disparage" an accuser, probers said Tuesday.
>
> […]The trio of aides had screened Bennett's initial complaint, which was that Cuomo's flirtatious behavior toward her made her uncomfortable — and that he was "grooming" her for sex, the document said. The staffers then had her transferred to another position, where she would no longer have to interact with the governor.
>
> […]Meanwhile Cuomo himself was involved in the dirty work of a smear campaign against Lindsey Boylan, a former top aide in the state's Economic Development Office, according to the official report.
>
> "Governor Cuomo, himself, and the Executive Chamber engaged in 'retaliatory behavior' by 'intend[ing] to discredit and disparage' a former employee that came forward with her story of harassment," the report said.
>
> Earlier this year, Boylan, 37, published an online essay in which she accused Cuomo, 63, of repeatedly harassing her, leading to a flood of similar allegations from current and former aides. She previously tweeted that Cuomo sexually harassed her.

Cover-up and retaliation.

When Bill Clinton was accused of rape and sexual assault by female subordinates, a female journalist famous said that she didn't care, and would happily give him oral sex if he would keep abortion legal. I guess she speaks for all young, unmarried Democrat women voters. Maybe they actually find men like this attractive? They certainly keep voting for these men.

Who should the Republican candidate for president be in 2024?

August 5, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a candidate in mind for Republican nominee for president in 2024. His name is Ron DeSantis, and he's doing an amazing job as governor of purple-state Florida. I thought it might be a good idea for us all to learn a little something about him. His policies are quite tough, but he has a more mature attitude than Trump.

He was in the news this week for these comments about Joe Biden:

> "So I think the question is, we can either have a free society, or we can have a biomedical security state," DeSantis said. "And I can tell you, Florida, we're a free state, people are going to be free to choose, to make their own decisions about themselves, about their families, about their kid's education, and about putting food on the table."
>
> "And Joe Biden suggests that if you don't do lockdown policies, then you should quote, 'get out of the way,'" DeSantis continued. "But let me tell you this, if you're coming after the rights of parents in Florida, I'm standing in your way, I'm not going to let you get away with it."
>
> "If you're trying to deny kids a proper in person education, I'm gonna stand in your way and I'm gonna stand up for the kids in Florida," DeSantis continued. "If you're trying to restrict people, impose mandates, if you're trying to ruin their jobs and their livelihoods and their small business, if you are trying to lock people down, I am standing in your way and I'm standing for the people of Florida."
>
> "So why don't you do your job? Why don't you get this border secure?" DeSantis added. "And until you do that, I don't want to hear a blip about COVID from you. Thank you."

Video:

He was in the news for taking on the education bureaucrats, too:

> Broward County Public Schools has changed its masking policy after Republican Florida Governor Ron DeSantis released an executive order giving parents the power to decide whether their children should wear masks at school.
>
> […]As The Daily Wire previously reported, "Florida Governor Ron DeSantis (R) signed an executive order late this week that allows parents to make the choice of whether they want to have their children wear masks in school, which comes in response to the Biden administration making new recommendations through the CDC about wearing masks in school."
>
> The executive order makes sure that local school boards "do not violate Floridians' constitutional freedoms," "do not violate parents' right under Florida

> law to make health care decisions for their minor children," and ensures that "children with disabilities or health conditions who would be harmed by certain protocols such as face masking requirements" are protected.

I don't like words. I like actions.

Here's Governor DeSantis' biography:

> Governor Ron DeSantis is the former U.S. Representative for Florida's Sixth District.
>
> A native Floridian with blue-collar roots, Ron worked his way through Yale University, where he graduated with honors and was the captain of the varsity baseball team. He also graduated with honors from Harvard Law School. While at Harvard, he earned a commission in the U.S. Navy as a JAG officer. During his active-duty service, he supported operations at the terrorist detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and deployed to Iraq as an adviser to a U.S. Navy SEAL commander in support of the SEAL mission in Fallujah, Ramadi and the rest of Al Anbar province. His military decorations include the Bronze Star Medal for Meritorious Service and the Iraq Campaign Medal.
>
> After active-duty service, Ron served as a federal prosecutor, where he targeted and convicted child predators. He was first elected to Congress in 2012, where he fought for term limits, the No Budget/No Pay Act, and to cut taxes. While serving in Congress, Ron refused his Congressional pension and health insurance plan because he is against special deals for politicians. He also sponsored legislation to make it easier for the military to prosecute sexual assault and authored the bill to end the secret taxpayer-funded slush fund for members of Congress to make hush payoffs for sexual harassment.
>
> Ron is married to Casey DeSantis, an Emmy Award winning television host. Together, they're the proud parents of their daughters, Madison and Mamie, and their son, Mason.

Look for him in 2024. I really hope that conservative parents are making more like him.

Does reading science fiction predispose people to atheism?

August 6, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A conflict of worldviews

In my investigations of atheists, I have found that the science fiction that people read when they are younger causes them to believe that the religion is anti-science and that the progress of science always disproves religion. The stories they read colors their views of science and religion for life, before they ever get to assessing evidence. And that's why when we produce evidence for them in debates, they will believe in speculations rather than go where the evidence leads.

So, I've seen atheists in formal debates claiming that maybe unobservable aliens caused the origin of life, and that maybe the untestable multiverse theory explains the fine-tuning of cosmological constants, and that maybe this universe has existed eternally despite the well-supported Big Bang theory which shows that the universe began to exist. Maybe, maybe, maybe. They seem to think that *untestable speculations* are "good enough" to refute *observational evidence* – and maybe it's because of all the science fiction that they've read.

Here's an article in the American Spectator that talks a bit about it.

Excerpt:

> A magazine I frequently write for (not this one) recently published a review of a book of essays advocating atheism. The reviewer pointed out with some enthusiasm that a large number of the contributors were science-fiction writers.
>
> This left me somewhat nonplussed. I publish a good deal of science fiction myself, I have also read quite a lot of it, and I am quite unable to see why writing it should be held to particularly qualify anyone to answer the question of whether

> or not there is a God.
>
> […]Historically the contribution of the Catholic Church to astronomy was massive and unequalled. Without it astronomy might very well never have grown out of astrology at all. Cathedrals in Bologna, Florence, Paris, Rome and elsewhere were designed in the 17th and 18th centuries to function as solar observatories. Kepler was assisted by a number of Jesuit astronomers, including Father Paul Guldin and Father Zucchi, and by Giovanni Cassini, who had studied under Jesuits. Cassini and Jesuit colleagues were eventually able to confirm Kepler's theory on the Earth having an elliptical orbit. J.L. Heilbron of the University of California has written:
>
> > The Roman Catholic Church gave more financial aid and social support to the study of astronomy over six centuries, from the recovery of ancient learning during the late Middle Ages into the Enlightenment, than any other, and, probably, all other, institutions.
>
> Science fiction is, by definition, fiction, that is, it deals with things which are the product of a writer's imagination and are not literally true. In any event, what is and what is not science fiction is hard to define. Simply to say it is about science is meaningless, and while some science-fiction writers are qualified scientists, many are not. Probably even fewer are trained theologians.

Science fiction makes the mysteries of the universe seem easy to an atheist. Everything can be easily explained with fictional future discoveries. Their speculations about aliens, global warming and eternal universes are believed without evidence because atheists *want* and *need* to believe in those speculations. In the world of science fiction, the fictional characters can be "moral" and "intelligent" without having to bring God or the evidence for God into the picture. That's very attractive to an atheist who wants the feeling of being intelligent and moral without having to weight actual scientific evidence or ground their moral values and behavior rationally. The science fiction myths are what atheists *want to believe*. It's a placebo at the worldview level. They don't want cosmic microwave background radiation – they want *warp drives.* They don't want WMAP satellite confirmation of nucleosynthesis – they want *holodecks.*

Why do people become atheists?

My theory is mainly that atheists adopt atheism because they want pleasure, especially sexual pleasure, without any restraints or guilt. They want to believe that sex without commitment has no consequences, especially a consequence like God judging them for it. Another contributing factor may be that atheists want to be thought of as smart by "the right people" – to sort of blindly accept whatever the "smart people" accept without really searching out reasons or dissenting views. They do this so that they are able to look down at some other group of people so they can feel better about themselves and be part of the right group – without actually having to weigh the evidence on both sides. And lastly, atheism may also be caused by weak fathers or abandoning fathers. But I think that

ECM’s science fiction theory has merit, as well. I think that all four of these factors help to explain why atheists believe in a discredited worldview in the teeth of scientific progress.

I wonder if my readers would take some time out to investigate whether their atheist friends have been influenced by reading science fiction and whether they still read it.

Study: the early Earth's atmosphere contained oxygen

August 7, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science

Here's a paper published in the prestigious peer-reviewed science journal *Nature*, entitled "The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere". This paper is significant because it undermines naturalistic scenarios for the origin of life.

Evolution News explains what the paper is about.

Excerpt:

> A recent *Nature* publication reports a new technique for measuring the oxygen levels in Earth's atmosphere some 4.4 billion years ago. The authors found that by studying cerium oxidation states in zircon, a compound formed from volcanic magma, they could ascertain the oxidation levels in the early earth. Their findings suggest that the early Earth's oxygen levels were very close to current levels.
>
> […]Miller and Urey conducted experiments to show that under certain atmospheric conditions and with the right kind of electrical charge, several amino acids could form from inorganic compounds such as methane, ammonia, and water. Several experiments have been done using various inorganic starting materials, all yielding a few amino acids; however, one key aspect of all of these experiments was the lack of oxygen.
>
> If the atmosphere has oxygen (or other oxidants) in it, then it is an oxidizing atmosphere. If the atmosphere lacks oxygen, then it is either inert or a reducing atmosphere. Think of a metal that has been left outside, maybe a piece of iron. That metal will eventually rust. Rusting is the result of the metal being oxidized.

> With organic reactions, such as the ones that produce amino acids, it is very important that no oxygen be present, or it will quench the reaction. Scientists, therefore, concluded that the early Earth must have been a reducing environment when life first formed (or the building blocks of life first formed) because that was the best environment for producing amino acids. The atmosphere eventually accumulated oxygen, but life did not form in an oxidative environment.
>
> The problem with this hypothesis is that it is based on the assumption that organic life must have formed from inorganic materials. That is why the early Earth must have been a reducing atmosphere. Research has been accumulating for more than thirty years, however, suggesting that the early Earth likely did have oxygen present.
>
> […]Their findings not only showed that oxygen was present in the early Earth atmosphere, something that has been shown in other studies, but that oxygen was present as early as 4.4 billion years ago. This takes the window of time available for life to have begun, by an origin-of-life scenario like the RNA-first world, and reduces it to an incredibly short amount of time. Several factors need to coincide in order for nucleotides or amino acids to form from purely naturalistic circumstances (chance and chemistry). The specific conditions required already made purely naturalist origin-of-life scenarios highly unlikely. Drastically reducing the amount of time available, adding that to the other conditions needing to be fulfilled, makes the RNA world hypothesis or a Miller-Urey-like synthesis of amino acids simply impossible.

So here's where we stand. If you are a materialist, then you need a reducing environment on the early Earth in order to get organic building blocks (amino acids) from inorganic materials. However, the production of these organic building blocks (amino acids) *requires* that the early Earth atmosphere be oxygen-free. And the problem with this new research, which confirms previous research, is that the early Earth contained huge amounts of oxygen – the same amount of oxygen as we have today. This is lethal to naturalistic scenarios for creating the building blocks of life on the Earth's surface.

Other problems

If you would like to read a helpful overview of the problems with a naturalistic scenario for the origin of life, check out this article by Casey Luskin.

Excerpt:

> The "origin of life" (OOL) is best described as the chemical and physical processes that brought into existence the first self-replicating molecule. It differs from the "evolution of life" because Darwinian evolution employs mutation and natural selection to change organisms, which requires reproduction. Since there was no reproduction before the first life, no "mutation – selection" mechanism was operating to build complexity. Hence, OOL theories cannot rely upon natural

> selection to increase complexity and must create the first life using only the laws of chemistry and physics.
>
> There are so many problems with purely natural explanations for the chemical origin of life on earth that many scientists have already abandoned all hopes that life had a natural origin on earth. Skeptical scientists include Francis Crick (solved the 3-dimensional structure of DNA) and Fred Hoyle (famous British cosmologist and mathematician), who, in an attempt to retain their atheistic worldviews, then propose outrageously untestable cosmological models or easily falsifiable extra-terrestrial-origin-of-life / panspermia scenarios which still do not account for the natural origin of life. So drastic is the evidence that Scientific American editor John Horgan wrote, "[i]f I were a creationist, I would cease attacking the theory of evolution … and focus instead on the origin of life. This is by far the weakest strut of the chassis of modern biology."[3]

The article goes over the standard problems with naturalistic scenarios of the origin of life: wrong atmosphere, harmful UV radiation, interfering cross-reactions, oxygen levels, meteorite impacts, chirality, etc.

Most people who are talking about intelligent design at the origin of life talk about the information problem – how do you get the amino acids to form proteins and how do you get nucleotide bases to code for amino acids? But the starting point for solving the sequencing problem is the construction of the amino acids – there has to be a plausible naturalistic scenario to form them.

Return to civility: Antifa fascists assault Christian families in Portland, Oregon

August 8, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow, here is that return to civility that all the woke evangelical leaders like Beth Moore, Russell Moore, Tim Keller, David French, etc. promised me when they told me not to vote for that horrible Donald Trump. We had to put a stop to his mean tweets somehow, they said, and never you mind about the violence and damage caused by Black Lives Matter and Antifa Democrats.

Here's the latest on the secular left fascists from The Post Millennial:

> A large group of Antifa carrying shields and melee weapons attacked a group of Evangelical Christians congregating for a prayer and worship event at the waterfront in downtown Portland, Ore. Video recorded at the scene showed children and families running away as black-clad Antifa militants tore apart the sound equipment and assaulted attendees with pepper spray and projectiles.
>
> […]Shocking video recorded at the violent event show dozens of armed Antifa members in black bloc and riot gear moving in to physically confront attendees of the event. One of the Antifa members sprayed a congregant with an unidentified, gas-like substance that is suspected to be pepper spray. The congregation took several steps back to avoid injury. "Where is your god now?" an Antifa member can be heard saying in the video.
>
> After pulling apart the sound system, the Antifa toss the equipment into the Willamette River. A woman can be seen panicking as she and her fellow parishioners backed away to avoid further altercation. "They threw a flash bomb into a group of kids," said a female attendee who spoke to a videographer at the scene while the injured were being treated. An Antifa account on Twitter later posted that they stole the Christian attendees' food and water.

Yes, yes. These are all the good things that Evangelicals for Biden wanted us to have. Get rid of all those "Christian nationalist" policies (i.e. – border security, law enforcement and low taxes), and bring back the good, wholesome Marxist morality of Black Lives Matter and Antifa.

When are we going to get some real leadership from "Christian leaders" about the issues that Christians actually care about? I oppose atheism. Let's see some evidential apologetics. I oppose feminism. Let's see some opposition to no-fault divorce, abortion and same-sex marriage. I oppose socialism. Let's see some support for lower taxes, job creation, school choice and limited government.

I just don't think that the "evangelical" left (Russell Moore, David French, Beth Moore, Tim Keller, etc.) understand what their allies on the secular left are capable of. But they are still responsible for enabling it when they support the secular left at election time.

Can atheists be moral? Let's look at a "rising star" in the Democrat party

August 9, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've heard from atheists how easy it is to jettison a moral Lawgiver from one's worldview, and still be able to rationally ground objective morality. No matter how many times these atheist' "philosophers" are caught supporting pedophiles, rapists, and the policies that enable pedophiles and rapists, they never seem to learn the lesson – dump God, and you will end up *championing* immorality.

Story from National File:

> Arizona State Senator, Tony Navarrete, an openly gay Democrat and founding member of Arizona's LGBTQ Caucus, has been arrested for child molestation. Phoenix Police confirm that Navarrete, widely considered a "rising star" within the Democrat Party, faces multiple counts of sexual conduct with a minor, among other charges.
>
> While few details surrounding the charges and arrest have been made immediately available, local media has confirmed with Phoenix Police that Democrat State Senator Tony Navarrete "was arrested on Thursday, Aug. 5, and charged with multiple counts of sexual conduct with a minor among other charges."
>
> […]Navarrete has been a member of Arizona's legislature since 2017, first winning election to the State's House of Representatives where he served one two-year term before being elected to the Arizona Senate, entering that body in 2019. As a member of the legislature, Navarrete, who is openly gay, has made his homosexuality a centerpiece of his political schtick, helping to found the Arizona LGBT Caucus during his first year in office.
>
> Navarrete has made several appearances alongside high-profile Democrats, including Vice President Kamala Harris and far-left New York Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Considered a "rising star" within the Democrat Party, Navarrete was expected to announce a statewide run for Treasurer of Arizona.

What do atheists who support Democrats and celebrate redefining marriage to embrace atheist values of non-exclusivity and non-permanence have to say about this? They say "well, I didn't do it – I only voted for it. I only voted for it for decades, and promoted it through my voting and political advocacy".

The problem with atheism is that it isn't really a rational position or a cognitive worldview at all. It's just the denial of moral accountability, and the denial of whatever parts of reality challenge that.

Why do atheists deny science, such as the origin of the universe or intelligent design? Because science points to an objective moral lawgiver, and they don't want that. Why do

“moral” atheists vote for pedophiles and support rapists running for office? Because the most important overriding concern is autonomy from that pesky moral lawgiver. It doesn’t matter what science they have to deny.

It doesn’t matter which children – born and unborn – have to suffer. It doesn’t matter what the lives of fatherless children are like. They cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door, to mess with their pursuit of hedonism. They vote for a world where every trace of objective morality and moral accountability has been erased.

It really is that simple. Atheists become atheists when their desire for happiness is first thwarted – LONG BEFORE they ever look through a telescope or a microscope at the evidence. It’s not the result of some long, dispassionate chain of reasoning. Logic and evidence DON’T MATTER.

If they have to elect a few pedophiles and rapists in order to protect their right to an abortion, that’s what they’ll do. Too bad for the weak, because it’s survival of the fittest in an atheist universe – that’s the way they like it. The goal is to keep God as far as possible from their reckless, irresponsible actions.

Dr. Michael J. Behe on how the science of DNA challenges Darwinian evolution

August 10, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On the weekend, I watched a nice interview of Michael Behe conducted by Eric Metaxas about Behe's latest book "Darwin Devolves". Behe is a genial man, but very direct about where he thinks the scientific evidence leads. He's been challenging evolution from the scientific evidence since 1996, and the emergence of new evidence has only strengthened his opposition.

Here's the interview:

(61 minutes)

Here's a good summary of the book from Tom Gilson, writing for Evolution News, that captures the main argument well.

Gilson writes:

> Michael Behe, professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, has been keeping committed Darwinists awake nights for years. His 1996 book *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* asked a long-ignored question: If Darwin's theory explains everything so well, why hasn't anyone shown how it works at the minutest level, biochemistry? If it doesn't work there, it doesn't work anywhere.
>
> Now Behe has released a new book, based on new science, showing once again that it doesn't work there. *Darwin Devolves: The New Science About DNA That Challenges Evolution* is going to cause a lot more sleepless nights.
>
> The new science he covers in this book shows that Darwin's theory can explain some changes, but quickly breaks down. DNA sequencing has only been available in the past decade or two. Its findings show that when organisms change, they do it almost always by breaking genes, not by making new ones. So in general, the evidence shows that when species evolve, they're really devolving. And that devolution prevents future evolution.

This car example really helps you understand the point, and it came up in the interview, too:

> Experiments show that even adaptive changes — changes that seem like improvements — almost always come by way of breaking genes. In a recent podcast, Behe likened it to a car for which gas mileage suddenly became its most important feature… The mileage problem is easy for a car, actually. Just remove some of its seats. In organisms this principle works, for example, when a gene that's been holding back an existing capability gets damaged. That capability then shows up. It's not a new capability, just newly expressed.

> […]Not only that, but once nature finds a way to improve a function by degrading a gene, nature is happy with that. It will spread that new answer throughout a population just as fast as Darwin ever supposed. That's what natural selection does: It preserves helpful (adaptive) changes and spreads them around while letting less lucky populations die off. Once nature is happy with one quick answer produced by breaking things, though, it's not going to hang around waiting for another, more elaborate answer produced by making things.

There were a lot of critical responses to the book, but Behe replied to all of them.

If you haven't read the book, and have an hour to spare for the interview, take a look. He's easy to listen to.

Recent news stories show why Christian parents should be wary of schools

August 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I keep reading news stories about parents who are shocked to discover that their children have not been taught anything useful in the classroom for finding a job and becoming independent. It turns out that teachers don't expect their students to learn anything, and just want to indoctrinate them in progressive dogma. Students just get passed to the next grade without having learned anything.

Here are some interesting news stories that show why Christian parents should be cautious.

First one is from Daily Wire, about how teachers sue parents who try to find out what they are teaching kids in the classroom:

> The Goldwater Institute's In Defense of Liberty blog explained:
>
> In April, Nicole emailed the principal of her school in the South Kingstown School District asking for the kindergarten curriculum—and whether it would include teaching children politically charged materials, including those influenced by Critical Race Theory and gender theory, holding them out to be true. She immediately faced stonewalling from the school, and even a threat of legal action for asking too many questions. Ultimately, Nicole received a bill for $74,000 to fulfill a public records request filed by the Goldwater Institute on her behalf in July.
>
> The largest teachers' union in the country has filed a lawsuit against a Rhode Island mom to block her numerous requests for public records regarding her school district and Critical Race Theory, prompting her to fire back, "I just got served with a lawsuit from the teacher union NEARI. Throwing down the gauntlet, are we? Game on."
>
> Nicole Salas, who started her odyssey in challenging the school district back in April, continued by writing, "Today the teacher union NEA filed ANOTHER lawsuit against me —this time a Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction. Will teacher unions bullying moms be an everyday thing now?"

Multiple lawsuits – and she pays their salaries with her taxes. Can you imagine a private sector company like Amazon treating customers like that? But a public sector monopoly does it all the time.

Second one is from Daily Wire:

> An Atlanta couple — who wishes to remain anonymous for fear of retribution — obtained a copy of their child's incoming teacher's Amazon classroom wish list. The parents were startled by several of the books, many of which reference

> sexual orientation, transgenderism, and progressive ideology.
>
> […]The family opted to reach out to Morningside Elementary School principal Audrey Sofianos in hopes of switching their child to a classroom that would not present progressive topics to five-year-olds.
>
> [Morningside Elementary School principal Audrey] Sofianos said that if the Catholic parents wish to uphold their traditional values, switching classrooms will not quell their fears as the district promotes this agenda in every classroom.

Third one is from Fox News:

> A Minnesota fourth grade student and her mother expressed concern to their local school board after her class was given an "equity survey" and students were told not to tell her parents about the activity.
>
> Sitting alongside her mother Kelsey, fourth grader Hayley Yasgar told "Fox & Friends" on Monday that the questions were confusing and it made her "very nervous and uncomfortable" when the students were told not to tell their parents.
>
> […]Kelsey Yasgar said that although parents were "informed that the equity audit was taking place, they were not informed on the date of the activity and not given other details." She explained further that due to the lack of transparency from the school district and from Equity Alliance Minnesota, the third party that administered the survey, parents were not informed of the questions being asked to the students.

How do far-left groups like Equity Alliance Minnesota get access to the classroom, while students cannot even read a Bible in study hall without getting expelled? The schools are just providing a captive audience of impressionable young people to these far-left groups. And parents are paying them to do it with their mandatory taxes.

Keep an eye on what your kids are learning, and pull them out if you find even a hint of secular-left dogma.

Not just aborting babies with Down's syndrome – Dawkins supports infanticide

August 12, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

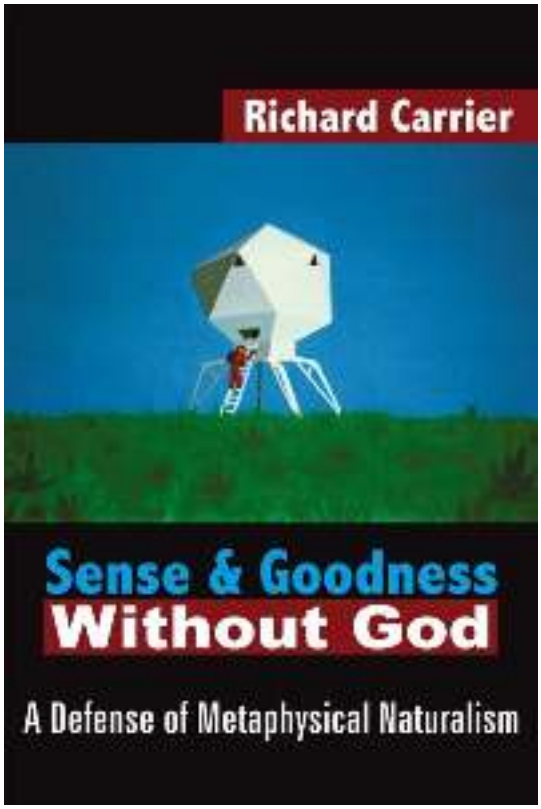

Goodness Without God: is it possible?

The UK Telegraph reports on the latest Dawkins blunder.

Excerpt:

> Richard Dawkins, the atheist writer, has claimed it is "immoral" to allow unborn babies with Down's syndrome to live.
>
> The Oxford professor posted a message on Twitter saying would-be parents who learn their child has the condition have an ethical responsibility to "abort it and try again".
>
> His comments were dismissed by charities and prompted fury online from opponents but he insisted his stance was "very civilised" because foetuses do not have "human feelings".
>
> He claimed that the important question in the abortion debate is not "is it 'human'?" but "can it suffer?" and insisted that people have no right to object to abortion if they eat meat.
>
> […]Anti-abortion campaigners describe the practice of aborting foetuses on physical grounds as a form of "eugenics".
>
> But Prof Dawkins strongly defended its as simply standard practice and ridiculed

> his critics as portraying him as “a horrid monster”.
>
> The row erupted during a debate on Twitter about calls for further changes to Ireland’s abortion laws in the wake of the case of a rape victim who was forced to carry the child until she could deliver by caesarean section.
>
> One participant said they would suffer a real ethical dilemma if they were carrying a child with the condition.
>
> **Prof Dawkins replied: “Abort it and try again. It would be immoral to bring it into the world if you have the choice.”**
>
> Another pointed to recent figures asking: “994 human beings with Down’s Syndrome deliberately killed before birth in England and Wales in 2012 – is that civilised?”
>
> He responded: “Yes, it is very civilised. These are foetuses, diagnosed before they have human feelings.”

I’m really not sure why anyone is surprised by this. Dawkins is an atheist and as such, he has no rational grounding for objective moral values and duties. He also does not have any rational grounding for free will, which is required for making moral choices and bearing moral responsibility. To an atheist, what people ought to do is decided by conventions and customs that vary by time and place. There is no objective moral standard for the way humans ought to be. Dawkins is an evolutionist. He believes in survival of the fittest. The unfit should die – if necessary, directly at the hands of the fit.

Listen to what he writes in his book:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won’t find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.
>
> –Richard Dawkins, (River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

I’m not misrepresenting him – the man is a very consistent atheist, and there is no room for morality on atheism. It’s not rationally grounded.

Here’s how far Dawkins takes his view that there is no evil and no good:

Richard Dawkins explains morality on atheism

But wait!

He goes even further than mere abortion – he also supports infanticide:

This man is very popular among rank-and-file atheists, so his views can’t be too far from

what atheists accept and support.

Atheist Jerry Coyne explains why morality is impossible for atheists

August 13, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson about to do philosophy

Let's review what you need in your worldview in order to have a rationally grounded system of morality.

You need 5 things:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you

just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Theism rationally grounds all 5 of these. Atheism cannot ground *any of them.*

Let's take a look at #4: free will and see how atheism deals with that.

Atheism and free will?

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality.

Here are some more atheists to explain how atheists view morality.

William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud

> and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

When village atheists talk about how they can be moral without God, it's important to ask them to justify the minimum requirements for rational morality. Atheists may act inconsistently with their worldview, believing in free will, expecting praise and blame for complying with the arbitrary standards of their peer group, etc. But there is nothing more to morality on atheism that imitating the herd – at least when the herd is around to watch them. And when the herd loses its Judeo-Christian foundation – watch out. That's when the real atheism comes out – the atheism that we've seen before in countries that turned their backs on God, and the moral law. When God disappears from a society, anything is permissible.

William Lane Craig debates atheist Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?

August 14, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here is the video from the third debate from Dr. William Lane Craig's speaking tour in Australia.

Format:

- William Lane Craig (15 min)
- Lawrence Krauss (15 min, but was actually 21:40)
- Moderated discussion
- Question and answer

Dr. Graham Oppy, the moderator, is a well-known atheist philosopher. He let Dr. Krauss speak for 21 minutes and 40 seconds, which is why my summary of Krauss is so long.

The video:

Summary

After careful consideration, I decided not to be snarky at all in this summary. What you read below is what happened. There may be some small mistakes, but I will fix those if people tell me about them. I also included some quotes and timestamps for the more striking things that Dr. Krauss said.

The debate itself starts at 4:50 with Dr. Craig's opening speech. He does use slides to show the structure of his arguments.

Dr. Craig's opening speech. (4:50)

1. The kalam cosmological argument:
    - God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe
    - The Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem supports the absolute beginning of the universe
    - Even if our universe is part of a multiverse, the multiverse itself would have to have an absolute beginning
    - Speculative cosmologies try to challenge the Big Bang theory, but none of them – even if true – can establish that the past is eternal
    - Only two types of things could explain the origin of spece, time, matter and energy – either abstract objects or minds
    - Abstract objects do not cause effects, but minds do cause effects (we do it ourselves)
    - A mind is the best explanation for the origin of the universe
2. The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
    - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
    - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
    - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
    - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see
3. The cosmic fine-tuning for the existence of intelligent life
    - There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) cosmological constants and 2) quantities
    - These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life
    - There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design
    - Law is rejected because they are put in at the beginning or matter – they don't emerge from matter
    - Chance must be rejected, because they odds are just too long unless you appeal to a world-ensemble
    - We do not observe what the world ensemble hypothesis predicts that we should observe
    - Design is the best explanation for finely-tuned constants and quantities
4. The existence of objective moral values and duties
    - Our experience of morality (values and duties) is that it is objectively real and incumbent on us
    - When someone goes into a classroom and shoots at innocent children, that is objectively wrong
    - On naturalism, moral values and moral duties do not exist – they are conventional and variable by time and place
    - The best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties is that God exists

5. The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus
    - There are three widely-accepted facts that are best explained by the resurrection hypothesis
    - 1) the empty tomb, 2) the post-mortem appearances, 3) the early church's belief in the resurrection
    - Naturalistic attempts to explain these 3 boilerplate facts fail
    - The best explanation of the 3 minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead
6. The immediate experience of God
    - Belief in God is a "properly basic" belief – rational even without arguments because of experience of God

Dr. Krauss' opening speech. (21:12)

Slides: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

1. Religious pluralism I
    - There have been lots of different gods created by people through history
    - We've gotten rid of all of them by understanding how the universe works by doing science
    - Religion is just stories, and the stories are inconsistent with how the universe works
2. Progress of naturalistic science I
    - Newtonian physics refutes the idea that angels push planets around
    - Darwinian evolution refutes design arguments, including the one that Dr. Craig presented (24:10)
    - Biochemistry hasn't explained how life originated, but we will have the solution soon
    - Physics shows us that matter can be created and destroyed without need a God
    - Physics shows us that universes can be created and destroyed "no problem"
3. Religious pluralism II
    - Since we have been able to disprove all the gods we've invented, why hang on to the last one
    - It's unlikely that the God that Dr. Craig presented exists, because we disproved all the others he didn't present
4. Hiddenness of God
    - There is a complete lack of evidence for the other 999 gods, so how likely is it that the God Dr. Craig presented exists
5. Religious pluralism III
    - There are inconsistencies between various religions, so therefore there can be no religion that is right
6. Progress of naturalistic science II
    - Peasants had a very low level of knowledge about the world and they believed

in God
    - But our level of knowledge has increased over time, so we shouldn't believe in God now
    - Peasants thought that the Earth orbited the Sun, but this is now known to be false
    - The Scriptures said that the Earth orbited the Sun, but now we know that's false from science
7. Christianity plagiarizes from other religions I
    - There is nothing new or special about Jesus
    - He's just as unpleasant as all the other gods
    - Everything particular to Jesus occurs in other religions
8. Catholics are inconsistent about what they believe
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in transubstantiation
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in the virgin birth
9. The resurrection is copied from many other religions
    - Dionysus, Osiris, etc.
10. There is no evidence for the resurrection
    - The stories about Jesus were written "decades or hundreds of years after the fact"
    - The stories are inconsistent with each other
    - Dr. Craig tells me that historical Jesus scholars all accept that the resurrection happened
    - That's like saying that all alien abductions experts agree that alien abductions happened
    - It's unreasonable to think that the resurrection happened because no one saw it happen
    - I accept that people reported on appearances, but hallucination theory can explain that
11. The timeline for the creation and incarnation are all wrong
    - The creation, planet formation, hominids, incarnation, etc. all take place in the wrong times
    - If God knew what he was doing, he would done everything at better times to be more efficient
12. David Hume's argument against miracles is sound
    - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – nothing wrong with this argument
    - Miracles are really just coincidences
    - Catholic apparitions at Lourdes disprove the historical argument that Dr. Craig made for the resurrection
13. God is petty and jealous
    - God shouldn't demand that we trust him, esteem him and consider his character when we make decisions
    - The atoning death of Jesus for the sins of the world also makes no sense

14. Belief is based on geography
    - What you believe is clearly correlated with where you are born
    - There is even an Islamic clone of Dr. Craig who “uses the exact same arguments” that he does to prove Islam
    - Belief in God is decreasing in the Internet-accessible world
15. Science can develop morals without God
    - Reason is able to guide our actions to be moral
    - Morality evolves over time, so there is no objective morality
    - Catholicism teaches things that are immoral
    - Some things are prohibited by biological revulsion, such as incest
    - But if a brother and sister have sex using condoms “is that morally wrong? I can’t say it is frankly” (37:24)
16. Dr. Craig is irrational
    - “I came here convinced based on my past interactions and his writing that Dr. Craig was a dishonest Charlatan”
    - “Any argument that validates God is reasonable to him”
    - “And any argument against it is not only unreasonable but wrong and worth distorting”
    - “Because it must be wrong – he’s decided the answer in advance”
17. Dr. Craig is immoral
    - Dr. Craig thinks it is OK for God to command that Canaanite children are killed
    - “So in fact if they were Canaanite children in that schoolroom that he talked about then it would be OK”
    - It’s not reasonable to justify genocide in that way, but Dr. Craig is willing to go to those lengths
18. The cause of the origin of the space time universe need not be God
    - Dr. Craig says that if there is an explanation for the origin or space, time, matter and energy it must be God
    - But it could just as easily be turtles or Zeus
19. Dr. Craig misrepresents the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem
    - Alexander Vilenkin wrote me an e-mail that says that the theorem doesn’t work in all cases
    - “Dr. Craig is so convinced that these arguments must be true that he won’t listen to the fact that they’re not”
20. Darwinian evolution explains the fine-tuning
    - “Life was fine tuned – we got rid of it with Darwin”
    - Mutation and natural selection explain the cosmic fine-tuning argument that Dr. Craig presented
21. Suboptimal design disproves the fine-tuning argument
    - “We get back aches” therefore “This argument that [the universe] is fine-tuned for life is nonsense”
22. William Lane Craig can be proven to exhibit homosexual behavior using logical arguments

    - Look, you can construct arguments that are clearly wrong
    - Premise 1: “All mammals exhibit homosexual behavior”
    - Premise 2: “William Lane Craig is a mammal”
    - Seems to be saying that logical arguments can prove false things “it’s nonsense”
23. Dr. Craig distorted a podcast that some group made on pain receptors
    - Dr. Craig’s faith is so strong that it causes him to distort what this group said

Discussion: (44:35)

I will not be summarizing everything that was said, just a few main points.

The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can’t even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don’t work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don’t have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) “All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON’T KNOW!!!!!!!” (raising his voice)
- Craig: I’m not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has

been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"
- Craig: "I wonder what you deleted from the original letter"
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "I just told you!"
- Craig: "Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) 'You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.'
- Craig: "That's Vilenkin."
- Krauss: "In this paper, that's absolutely right"
- Krauss: But it's ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it's unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: "Isn't it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?"
- Krauss: "No"
- Craig: "Well, can you give us one then"
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) "In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong"
- Krauss: "You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it's hard"
- Craig: "Right"

I noticed that a huge number of atheist web sites are taking the Vilenkin quote that Krauss used out of context, like this one and this one. There are probably a lot more of them like that, which I think is interesting. That's why we have these debates, I guess. To set the record straight about who accuses people of being dishonest, and who is actually dishonest.

Fine-tuning:

- Krauss tried to argue that he had explained the fine-tuning with the Higgs particle, but Dr. Craig said that only applied to the cosmological constant, not all the other examples of fine-tuning. Krauss said that it wasn't impressive that this universe permitted life and that "It would have been much more surprising if we evolved in a universe in which we couldn't live". Krauss argued the fine-tuning was only for "Life

like us". But Dr. Craig explained that the fine-tuning is what allows us to have the basics of any kind of life, like slow-burning stars, chemical diversity, etc. – things that are required for basic minimal life functions in any living system. Craig said that he was working with the current physical laws of this universe (F = ma, etc.) and that he was looking at what changed if we changed those even slightly. Krauss tried to say that if he changed things like the mass of particles then the strength of forces would change. (But the forces aren't laws!) Krauss argued that the cosmological constant would be even better for life if it was zero, and Craig said that the life permitting range did include zero, but that the range of life-permitting values was narrow.

Jesus' existence:

- Craig reponded to the mystery religions charge, the charge that the evidence for the minimal facts is too late/too weak, the charge that grief visions explained the evidence better, and Hume's argument against miracles. Craig brought up the early creed from 1 Cor 15:3-7 and explained to Krauss that it was 5 years after the events, and that Jewish standards of oral transmission were strong enough to ensure that the creed was reliable, and most of the eyewitnesses would still have been alive.

Audience Q and A: (1:21:09)

The first topic is the grounding of morality. Krauss agrees that there is no objective morality and no objective moral oughts. He also said that that standards of behavior are arbitrary, and that they change over time and they are adopted for promoting social order. Dr. Craig pressed the point that science itself would collapse without ethical values. It assumes them, but cannot ground them.

The next topic was free will. Krauss is a determinist. Craig asked him how he could reconcile moral responsibility with determinism.

The next topic was the effectiveness of mathematics. Krauss didn't have an explanation for it and didn't think it needed one. Then they got into whether the Genesis has been verified by science and whether it is meant to be taken literally.

The next topic was whether philosophy makes any progress. Craig gave the example of verificationism being rejected as too narrow, and self-refuting. Krauss: "I'm going to come to the defense of philosophy for the first time". Craig: "That's amazing!" Krauss said that science provides new knowledge. Craig said there were some things that could be known apart from science.

Biden’s infrastructure bill would end religious liberty as a human right in America

August 15, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Focus on the Family reports on what’s in the new trillion-dollar infrastructure spending bill:

> Senators released the full text of a proposed infrastructure bill on Sunday after weeks of negotiations. The “Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act” clocks in at 2,702 pages and will spend roughly $1 trillion dollars.
>
> Of concern for Christians is a provision which includes “gender identity” as a protected class.
>
> Page 2,149 includes the following stipulation:
>
> “No individual in the United States may, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, **gender identity**, sexual orientation, age, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that is funded in whole or in part with funds made available to carry out this title” (Emphasis added).
>
> Provisions similar to this are often referred to as SOGI laws (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity laws).
>
> These types of laws are like a Trojan Horse. Though their purpose is ostensibly to prevent discrimination against people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, often, their real result is coercion, permitting discrimination against Christians who hold to historic Christian teachings on sexual morality.
>
> As The Heritage Foundation explains, SOGI laws “penalize many Americans who believe that we are created male and female and that male and female are created for each other.”
>
> Also, they “violate the privacy and safety of women and girls, the conscience rights of doctors and other medical professionals, and the free speech and religious liberty rights of countless professionals.”
>
> *The Daily Citizen* previously noted that SOGI laws “result in the harassment and punishment of people with deeply held religious beliefs.”

The Religious Freedom Institute notes:

> This may seem innocuous. However, if this legislation becomes law, the government would effectively force potential recipients of funds made available through the Infrastructure Bill — via the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program embedded within it — to accept “sexual orientation and gender identity” ideology (SOGI) as a condition for funding. This would undermine the work of religious institutions that abide by historic, orthodox understandings of

> sex and marriage and might otherwise use these funds to serve their neighbors by advancing the purpose of the Digital Equity Act: To expand the daily access of individuals to the internet, especially those who are elderly, are incarcerated in non-Federal correctional facilities, are veterans, have disabilities, are English learners or have low levels of literacy, are from racial or ethnic minorities, or live in rural areas.
>
> Rural faith-based colleges and universities, small faith-based businesses, and religious hospitals and medical clinics, sometimes providing the only healthcare services for miles, could be forced to violate their religious conscience or be denied participation in the program.

Indeed.

So, to make it more clear, when you read about Christian florists, bakers, wedding photographers, bed and breakfast owners, etc. being sued by secular left fascists, they are able to do it because of SOGI laws. What the infrastructure bill does is enact these SOGI provisions at the federal level.

Elections matter. During the last elections, a lot of Evangelicals for Biden – people like Tim Keller, Beth Moore, Russell Moore, David French, etc. – were very much opposed to Donald Trump for president. They were so anxious to distance themselves from traditional conservative values, like religious liberty. Please keep that in mind during the next election – the evangelical leaders you trust might be the ones who destroy your religious liberty. Don't look to "The Gospel Coalition" or the SBC ERLC to fight for your religious liberty.

Facebook fact-checker caught plagiarizing 54 articles

August 16, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Facebook uses fact-checkers to censor speech they disagree with. These fact-checkers (Lead Stories, Snopes, Politifact, Factcheck.org, Science Feedback) are often biased and unprofessional people. Many of them are just losers who dropped math in grade 9, and partied their way through journalism "school" while half drunk.

The Post Millenial explains:

> On Friday, it was revealed that the co-founder and CEO of the popular fact-checking site Snopes David Mikkelson has been writing articles using plagiarized content under a pseudonym for years.
>
> A Buzzfeed News investigation found that Mikkelson wrote and published over 50 articles containing plagiarized material between 2015 and 2019.
>
> "After inquiries from BuzzFeed News, Snopes conducted an internal review and confirmed that under a pseudonym, the Snopes byline, and his own name, Mikkelson wrote and published 54 articles with plagiarized material," wrote Buzzfeed.
>
> As a result from Buzzfeed's findings, Mikkelson has been suspended from editorial duties "a comprehensive internal investigation." According to Buzzfeed, Mikkelson remains an officer and a 50 percent shareholder of the company.
>
> "Our internal research so far has found a total of 54 stories Mikkelson published that used appropriated material, including all of the stories Buzzfeed shared with us," Marchionni and Snopes Chief Operating Officer Vinny Green said in a statement.

These are not honest people, who can do useful work in a competitive free market. They're talkers. Not doers.

I've written about Snopes and Politifact before. Check out the articles, so you can understand how seriously Facebook takes "fact-checking".

What’s the best argument against design as an explanation for the origin of life?

August 17, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here’s a great story from Jennifer Kabbany, writing for The College Fix, about a physics professor at Ball State who had to battle against the best argument against intelligent design:

> Physicist Eric Hedin was canceled before the term cancel culture was even coined.
>
> He taught a very popular class at Ball State University for six years called “Boundaries of Science” before pressure from atheists in 2013 prompted campus leaders to cancel the course.
>
> Hedin never taught “Boundaries of Science” at Ball State again, but he continued teaching physics there and even got tenure. Eventually he left the Indiana campus to take a job at Biola University, a private Christian school in Southern California.

He has a new book out, telling the story of what happened to him:

> More recently Hedin has revisited the Ball State experience that thrust his name into the national spotlight and made him the poster boy for intelligent design for a season. Earlier this year he published the book “Canceled Science: What Some Atheists Don’t Want You to See.”
>
> “Canceled Science tells the dramatic story of the atheist campaign to cancel Hedin’s course, reveals the evidence the atheists tried to bury, and explores discoveries that have revolutionized our understanding of the nature and origin of matter, space, and even time itself,” the online book description states.
>
> Hedin, in an interview with *The College Fix* on Tuesday, said his book comes at a time when there’s more evidence than ever for intelligent design.

The rest of the article is an interview, I thought this was interesting:

> **Do people who have not studied this issue in depth truly understand the mathematical enormity of the fine-tuning argument? It’s not just “the chances are low” that life arose by chance.**
>
> Honestly, as a physicist I would be willing to say the physical reality chance of life originating on its own by natural processes within this universe is zero, not just low. It’s because the universe is not infinitely big. There is a finite universe. We don’t have an infinite amount of time, the universe has a finite age, roughly 13.8 billion years. That limited time, limited spatial extent of the universe means that there’s a limited amount that any natural randomness could generate. The probabilistic resources of our universe fall short of what is necessary to develop

> even one large functional protein molecule that would be just one of tens of thousands of different protein molecules that are needed for human life to exist. It’s almost to me desperate to keep trying to think that this could have happened by chance.

I think the College Fix article is a great article to share. It’s important to understand how secular leftists – who were raised to believe in the power of naturalism through science fiction – respond to actual experimental data. They don’t have any evidence for their view, but they do have one very powerful argument for naturalism – “I’ll end your career and starve your family if you disagree with atheism”.

New study: scientists discover how fish fins can be strong, and yet flexible

August 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from Science Daily. While you read about it, think about whether blind, naturalistic forces could account for the designs you see around you. Not to mention the design of molecular machines deep inside the cell.

Excerpt:

> Peer into any fishbowl, and you'll see that pet goldfish and guppies have nimble fins. With a few flicks of these appendages, aquarium swimmers can turn in circles, dive deep down or even bob to the surface.

> New research led by the University of Colorado Boulder has uncovered the engineering secrets behind what makes fish fins so strong yet flexible. The team's insights could one day lead to new designs for robotic surgical tools or even airplane wings that change their shape with the push of a button.
>
> The researchers published their results Aug. 11 in the journal *Science Robotics*.
>
> Francois Barthelat, senior author of the study, noted that fins are remarkable because they can achieve feats of dexterity even though they don't contain a single muscle. (Fish move these structures by twitching sets of muscles located at the base of the fins).
>
> "If you look at a fin, you'll see that it's made of many stiff 'rays,'" said Barthelat, professor in the Paul M. Rady Department of Mechanical Engineering. "Each of those rays can be manipulated individually just like your fingers, but there are 20 or 30 of them in each fin."
>
> In their latest research, Barthelat and his colleagues drew on a range of approaches, including computer simulations and 3D-printed materials, to dive deep into the biomechanics of these agile structures. They report that the key to fish fins may lie in their unique design. Each ray in a fin is made up of multiple segments of a hard material that stack on top of much softer collagen, making them the perfect balance between bouncy and stiff.
>
> "You get this dual capability where fins can morph, and yet they're still quite stiff when they push water," he said.

When you're talking about science in debates, make sure that you insist that your opponent produce arguments and scientific evidence to support their claims. I have yet to hear a good argument for naturalism from my fellow software engineers. Their favorite arguments seem to reference the "miracles" they see in science fiction entertainment, which are asserted as compatible with naturalism. For example, the transporter in Star Trek. I once had a co-worker propose that to me as a disproof of souls. Secular leftists just

watch tons and tons of this make-believe, and they just absorb this view that the evidence we see for a Creator and Designer can all be dismissed because “science will find a way to do it”. That’s faith. What actual experimental science says is “this is engineered”.

How good are atheist attempts to rationally ground moral values and duties?

August 19, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my readers is an expert at the moral argument, and wrote a number of articles about his experiences talking to non-Christians about it. He comes from a liberal Christian background, so his views and experiences are not the result of growing up in a conservative Christian environment.

In the first article, he talks about what theists mean when we say that atheists can't rationally ground objective morality:

> They misunderstand us to be implying that they are immoral people. But this is not at all what we are saying. Since we believe that the moral law is incumbent upon every human, and is woven into the very fabric of our souls, we are not at all surprised to find even atheists dancing to its tune (to mix my metaphors). The fact that atheists very much want to be thought of as good people is only a tacit admission that they understand that there is such a thing as "good" and that it is *good* to be good. But if morality is merely a human convention, then the most that an atheist can be claiming is that they are morally fashionable.

There's no moral credit for doing that.

In the second article, he talks about whether atheists can "reason" their way to correct moral views, if their conception of reality says that the universe and humans are accidents:

> A chance ethical system cannot do the trick if it is true that there are right and wrong answers. If there are indeed objectively right answers to moral questions, then reason is certainly an ally, since it can help us to assess the conditions and marshal our intuitions, but it does not in itself *make* the answer right. Neither does an ethical system make right answers; it can only (if legitimate) help us to navigate through real passes with real reefs and currents. But you could never say that any ship of history had hit a reef unless you were first willing to admit that things such as ships and reefs actually existed. That's a very big pill to swallow for anyone committed to a purely material world, where truth and ethics extend no farther than the will and imagination of the biochemical flukes we call "humans."

In the third article, he takes on the argument by atheists that much of the moral evil in the world is due to theists:

> When asking whether a behavior is caused by a belief system it must first be determined if that behavior is consistent with the beliefs in question. For a religion like Christianity there is some hope of doing so, since it is founded upon

> certain doctrines and is in possession of a guidebook — the Bible — to which one might appeal in making a ruling. For this reason a strong case can be made that most of what is commonly credited to Christianity is actually a violation of its fundamental principles. It is not *consistent* with Christianity; it is *antithetical* to it. And if something is inconsistent with a thing it is hard to make a case that it is *caused* by that thing.

In the fourth article, he talks about how atheists misunderstand the purpose of acting morally in Christianity:

> The irony is that Christianity does not even teach that we win heaven by virtue of our good works. In fact, it may be the only religion that explicitly rejects such an idea. For example, Islam actually teaches that our good deeds must outweigh our bad, and Eastern religions teach that we must work our way to enlightenment through various moral and spiritual practices. By contrast, Christianity teaches that we must put aside our futile thoughts of measuring up to God's perfect standard and throw ourselves upon the mercy of His court. We have but to accept, as spiritual beggars, the provision He has made to cover our sin and win our righteousness in Christ.
>
> Good works come as a *result* of our love and gratitude toward our creator and redeemer; they are not the *cause* of our redemption. The Christian ideal is to be good for God's sake, not for the sake of what He can do for us. God is not to be confused with Santa Claus. To think otherwise is to make the mistake that Satan made regarding Job's motivation for righteous living (Job 1:9-11).

In the fifth article, he talks about whether atheists can rationally ground the claim that they are "good" at morality:

> As it turns out, most atheists who like to think of themselves as moral do so with a sense that they are saying something particularly meaningful. The implication is that they have access to moral knowledge that they are committed to put into practice. It is something like saying that you are a good baseball player, which refers to a particular game with known rules and objectives that you skillfully follow. If this is not true, then a moral atheist is just asserting that they follow their own desires; they are saying little more than, "I do what I feel like doing, and whatever I do I call 'good.'"

It might be a fun activity to read these posts, then find an atheist and ask them whether they are a good person, and what do they mean by "good" and "evil". Ask them whether they are making free decisions, and how can that be possible if they are just made out of matter. The moral argument is the most accessible argument to discuss with non-Christians.

Google whistleblower: Google “rewrote algorithms to go after Trump”

August 20, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know that I am not alone in experiencing a MASSIVE drop in page views from the Google search engine since Trump won the election in 2016. My traffic from the search engine went down 95% almost overnight. Others have reported similar drops. In this post, I wanted to review the evidence that has convinced me that Google’s products are designed to favor the Democrat party.

Here’s the latest on a Google whistleblower, reported by Breitbart:

> Google whistleblower Zach Vorhies, co-author with Kent Heckenlively of the new book Google Leaks: A Whistleblower’s Exposé of Big Tech Censorship, explained how Google “re-wrote their news algorithms to specifically go after Trump” in an interview with the Epoch Times.
>
> Vorhies passed hundreds of internal documents to Project Veritas in 2019, including items from the company’s YouTube search blacklist showing direct interference in democratic votes.
>
> In his interview with the Epoch Times, Vorhies displayed internal files showing how Google ranks news stories. “This is called realtime, hive-mind scoring,” said Vorhies. “They literally built it, they re-wrote it according to the fight that Trump was having with [James] Comey.”

Leaked videos of internal presentations by Google executives confirm pro-Democrat bias.

Breitbart reports:

> A few days after the 2016 election, at an internal meeting later leaked to Breitbart News, top Google executives, including Sundar Pichai, Sergey Brin, and Kent Walker, lamented President Trump’s victory, comparing Trump voters to “extremists” and discussing their desire to make Trump’s election and the populist movement a “blip” in history.

The Google search engine was investigated for blacklisting conservative web sites.

The Federalist reports:

> Google CEO Sundar Pichai brushed off questions Wednesday before the House Judiciary subcommittee on antitrust related to the tech giant’s apparent blacklisting of conservative groups last week when about a dozen major websites were temporarily de-platformed.
>
> […]The websites targeted in last week’s blacklisting, according to NewsBusters which itself was temporarily de-platformed last week, included the Washington Free Beacon, The Blaze, Townhall, The Daily Wire, PragerU, LifeNews, Project

> Veritas, Judicial Watch, The Resurgent, Breitbart, the Media Research Center, and CNSNews among others.

Google is reported to be hostile to employees who dissent from the Democrat party.

The Daily Caller reports:

> A Republican Google software engineer has written an open letter describing a culture of left-wing "outrage mobs" that make use of the company's anonymous bias reporting channels to shut down dissent.

The article quotes him saying that he was forced out of Google.

The far-left Washington Post also reported:

> James Damore, the former Google engineer who was fired after distributing a memo questioning the company's diversity policies, filed a class-action lawsuit Monday claiming that the technology giant discriminates against white men and conservatives.

According to the Washington Examiner, Google, YouTube and other Google-linked companies gave 90% of their political donations to Democrats:

> A study released Thursday found that 90 percent of political donations by Google, YouTube, and other subsidiaries of Alphabet have gone to Democrats.
>
> In 2016, when Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton, Alphabet employees donated more than $5.8 million to Democratic candidates and causes, while only $403,042 was contributed to Republicans. Ninety-four percent of Alphabet contributions in that year went to Democrats.

Breitbart News reported in March 2019 on how Google used their products to influence elections:

> New research from psychologist and search engine expert Dr. Robert Epstein shows that biased Google searches had a measurable impact on the 2018 midterm elections, pushing tens of thousands of votes towards the Democrat candidates in three key congressional races, and potentially millions more in races across the country.
>
> The study, from Epstein and a team at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology (AIBRT), analyzed Google searches related to three highly competitive congressional races in Southern California. In all three races, the Democrat won — and Epstein's research suggests that Google search bias may have tipped them over the edge.

This confirms a previous study from 2016:

> The research follows a previous study conducted in 2016 which showed that biased Google results pushed votes to Hillary Clinton in the presidential election.

Here's another study reported in May 2019 by the UK Daily Mail:

> Google's bias towards left-wing media outlets has been laid bare by an algorithm which detected that it favors sites including CNN and The New York Times over others.
>
> According to data compiled by researchers from Northwestern University, the search engine promoted those sites over others repeatedly in November 2017.
>
> Of the 6,302 articles that appeared in Google's 'top stories' page that month after a term was searched, more than 10 percent were by CNN.
>
> The New York Times was the second most favored and accounted for 6.5 percent of articles. The Washington Post was third with 5.6 percent.
>
> By contrast, Fox News, the most right-wing outlet in mainstream media, was the source of just three percent of the stories which appeared.

See for yourself the difference it makes:

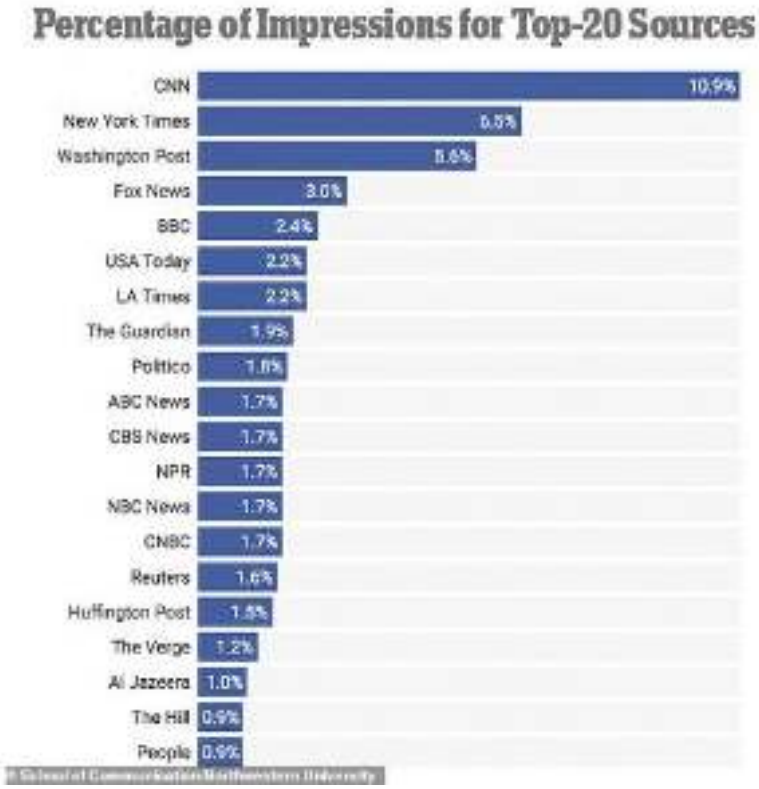

Study: Google uses its products and services to supports Democrat Party
Leaked internal Google documents label Dennis Prager and Ben Shapiro as "Nazis".

The Daily Wire reports:

> A newly-published leaked document contains what appears to be an email exchange among Google employees participating in a "transparency-and-ethics" discussion that includes a reference to PragerU, Jordan Peterson, and Ben Shapiro as "nazis using the dog whistles."

Youtube, which is owned by Google, has censored conservatives who disagree with the Democrat party.

The Washington Examiner reports:

> In the latest example of bias against conservatives, YouTube is censoring videos from conservative group PragerU by placing them on “restricted mode.”
>
> The category, which is applied to videos that may contain “potentially objectionable content,” was applied to 21 PragerU videos, the group announced on its Facebook page on Tuesday.

It may be too late to do anything about Google now. We had the chance to do something when we had majorities in the House and Senate, and the White House. That was the time to investigate Big Tech, break up the monopolies, press charges against the executives and pass laws to allow victims of censorship to sue. It’s probably too late to do something now.

My advice now is to stop using Google Chrome, Google’s search engine, and any other Google products. I use the Brave web browser, the DuckDuckGo search engine, and I don’t buy Google phones, tablets or laptops. I think Google is anti-American.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

August 21, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: let's take a look at the facts

Here is Dr. William Lane Craig giving a long-form argument for the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus, and taking questions from the audience.

The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the

Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early dating
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthew, which Mike Licona and I doubt is intended to be historical, but is more likely to be apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about

the Jewish scholar Geza Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

You can see this evidence used in an actual debate, against a historian who disagrees with Dr. Craig. That post contains a point by point summary of the debate that I wrote while listening to it.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

Pro-life or whole-life? The need for careful thinking

August 22, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post was authored by my mysterious pro-life friend. He is responding to religious leaders who don't think clearly about the right to life issue. Please share it on social media if you like it.

Suppose you are walking down the street one day, minding your own business, when you hear screams coming from a nearby house. You run over to investigate, and a woman runs out to tell you her child isn't breathing. You follow her into the backyard where you find a small child who was just pulled unconscious from a nearby pool. You call 9-11 and start performing CPR on the child, praying you will be able to save her. Paramedics arrive and take her to the hospital, and you find out that thankfully, she will live and make a full recovery. The local news happens to pick up the story, and you are hailed as a hero.

Then things take a strange twist. The neighbors who watched the whole incident take place but didn't intervene inform you that the child is being raised by a single mom, and that if the child had a father around, she wouldn't have stumbled into the pool in the first place, so why aren't you doing anything to fix the problem of single parent homes?

The situation gets even more bizarre. A local advocacy group asks why you aren't engaging in education efforts about pool safety. Other advocacy groups begin asking why you only focused on saving the lives of children who fall into pools and not children who die of gun violence, abusive homes, or from poverty. Then, when you attend church on Sunday, the pastor preaches a sermon about how Christ-followers must focus on the sanctity of all human life, not merely the lives of those drowning in pools. Finally, to top it all off, a few days later the child's estranged father, who has been skipping out on child support payments all year long, gets interviewed on the evening news, where he accuses you of all manner of character failings, saying that if you had truly been concerned about the life of his child, you would also pay for her schooling, her basic needs, and would ensure all of her needs throughout life are met.

If this whole scenario seems absurd, that's because it is. And yet, it matches real world events currently playing out for pro-life advocates.

Right now the moral legitimacy of the pro-life movement is being attacked from all angles. Consider the following comments from Progressive pastor John Pavlovitz. Writing in an article that went viral shortly before the 2016 Presidential Election, Pavlovitz had this to say to pro-life advocates:

"I actually don't believe you're pro-life, I believe you practice a far more selective and convenient defense of Humanity. From where I'm standing it seems as though 'Life' for you, comprises a very narrow demographic—one that bears a striking resemblance to you. The unborn are easy to advocate for because you can idealize them into something palatable to you, something benign and comfortable, something in your own image. You

see, it’s not that you’re really pro-life, you’re pro-straight, white, Christian fetuses.”

He then goes on a diatribe about how a real “pro-lifer” would act: They would oppose police brutality, they would be inclusive to LGBTQ communities, they would care for the poor, they would fight racism, so on and so forth. Pavlovitz isn’t alone in laying out this laundry list of “pro-life” activities that have nothing to do with abortion; in fact, this has become a favorite tactic of abortion choice advocates when faced with pro-life arguments: Turn around and attack the moral character of the pro-lifer in particular or the movement itself as inherently hypocritical. After all, who is going to listen to what a hypocrite has to say about right and wrong?(1)

As I’ve written about before, there are two types of people who raise the issue of consistency: Crusaders and Inquirers.

An Inquirer is someone who has genuine questions about what it means to be truly “pro-life”. She gets why abortion is wrong, but she is curious how her views about the value of human life in the womb should inform her when it comes to issues outside the womb. She also wonders why pro-life advocates focus more on abortion than other topics. Her questioning is honest, but often misinformed. Pro-life advocates will focus on abortion more than “outside the womb issues” because it is the only time in an innocent human being’s life we may enjoy the full protection of the law while we deliberately kill them. While an Inquirer may not still fully understand, she is on the right track.

The Crusader wants none of it. He’s just looking for a quick way to end the argument in his favor, and he will usually do it by making the pro-life advocate look stupid or wicked. He isn’t searching for an honest dialogue, he’s looking to win fights. John Pavlovitz is an example of a Crusader.

Here’s a simple way to defeat a Crusader: Call their bluff. When I’ve encountered Crusaders who charge me with being inconsistent in how I approach being “pro-life”, I usually ask a simple question:

“Tell me, if I became active on all the issues you brought up and agreed to support all your positions, will you join me in opposing abortion?”

They will almost always say no, to which I usually reply along the lines of “So why did you even bring up those other issues in the first place? If you think there is nothing wrong with abortion, then you need to defend that idea, instead of just attacking me personally.”(2)

Pro-life advocates don’t need to just sit by and take attacks on their character. They can and should when feasible point out the bad faith reasoning inherent in such attacks and address it, firmly but respectfully. Sometimes the best way to correct bad behavior and bad thinking is to call it for what it is.

Oddly, some pro-life advocates in recent years have begun adopting the very same sort of argument being advanced by John Pavlovitz, although instead of attacking the pro-life position, they are trying to change it into something else entirely. This new “pro-life” movement goes by a variety of names, such as the “Pro-Abundant Life” position, Whole Life position, and the Consistent Life position. While the names can vary, at its core the

ideas at play remain the same.

Consider the following remarks from Herbie Newell in the introduction to his book *Image Bearers: Shifting From Pro-Birth to Pro-life*, one of the best book-length articulations of the Whole Life viewpoint:

"Being pro-life means that not only do we see abortion as murder, but we also see our apathy against injustice toward life outside of the womb as a co-conspirator in the fight for life. It means we fight for racial Equality. It means we love the woman walking into the abortion clinic passionately with the love of Christ, and it means we embrace life no matter what syndrome may be attached to a person's identity.

There are many books written about being pro-life and combating abortion, but my hope is this small volume will bring awareness that **the pro-life ethic is so much bigger than just being pro-birth."** (emphasis in original)

Newell goes on to list issues that the pro-life ethic encompasses: Racism, family breakdown, sex trafficking, fatherlessness, elder abuse, and assisted suicide, among other things. His book is very well-written and very eloquent, and as a call for the Christian church as a whole to show concern for justice, I think it succeeds.

That's not where the issue lies. Instead of simply acknowledging that Christ-followers must promote justice in our society(something I agree with), he goes on to assert that all major justice issues of the day have to be taken on by the anti-abortion movement in order for said movement to truly be "pro-life". There are a multitude of problems with this idea.

For starters, it's quite arrogant to suggest that people who have spent much of if not their entire adult lives fighting against abortion at every level imaginable and often experiencing a great deal of hardship along the way are somehow not deserving of the title "pro-life" because they didn't spend enough time focused on other "outside the womb" issues. While I doubt Herbie Newell or other Whole Life advocates intend to come off this way, the suggestion smacks of self-righteous chest thumping.

Second, it's simply false to claim pro-life advocates are merely "pro-birth". Pro-life advocates do focus on forms of unjust killing outside the womb, and very often are the only ones concerned about it in the first place. It is pro-life advocates who have been advocating for the past two decades for legislation protecting babies born alive following botched abortions, sounding the alarm about the rising endorsement of infanticide in academia, and opposing the legalization of assisted suicide. It is also pro-life advocates who have brought attention to the deaths of women from botched abortions performed by doctors such as George Tiller and Kermit Gosnell.

Furthermore, the accusation anti-abortion activists are somehow guilty of wrongdoing for being "pro-birth" is itself absurd, when the alternative to birth in question is being killed outright. Of course pro-lifers want babies born; we want them to leave the womb alive and in one piece instead of as a pile of body parts in a surgical tray. For a self-declared pro-life advocate to suggest his colleagues are somehow apathetic or immoral because they focus primarily on opposing the butchery of fellow human beings before birth is

really quite scandalous.

Third, the Whole Life position assumes moral equivocation between issues that are inherently different in scope, form, and whom they affect.

Abortion is different from nearly every other issue that is currently being labeled “pro-life” by Whole Life advocates for the simple fact that few other issues concern the direct, intentional killing of innocent human beings, and the protection of said killing by law.

Outside a psych ward or a college philosophy department there are few people who will seriously suggest you can deliberately kill innocent human beings outside the womb. However, much ink has been spilled in defense of the idea that human beings may be killed before birth and need not be valued as human beings. Added to the abovementioned support for abortion is endorsement from nearly half the culture, an entertainment industry that regularly promotes abortion and the foolish sexual lifestyles that contribute to it, roughly half of congregants in American churches identifying as pro-choice on abortion, an entire political party that has declared it’s support(and sometimes celebration) for abortion, and lastly close to one million abortions happening per year. Given the odds pro-life advocates are up against in trying to stop the killing of human beings before birth, it’s nonsense to suggest we broaden our approach to other issues.

Pro-lifers have a narrow focus towards abortion because abortion is the intentional killing of an innocent human being. Few, if any other “outside the womb” issues routinely raised involve direct killing of innocent human beings, and are therefore different in scope and in form. To put it somewhat differently, outside the womb innocent human beings have the protection of law(even if imperfectly) from being intentionally destroyed; inside the womb they do not. It doesn’t take a genius to see why pro-lifers are going to spend more effort on behalf of the unborn who aren’t protected in law than those who already are.(3)

Why does any “outside the womb” issue raised deserve the label “pro-life” in the same way abortion does? Anyone who suggests a different social justice issue deserves addressing by anti-abortion advocates has some explaining to do, and needs to argue for their claim, not merely assert it. Those advocating a new definition of “pro-life” bear the burden of proof for their claims.(4)

This brings us to a fourth point; the Whole Life position being proposed often doesn’t meet its own standards.

It’s worth noting that people and groups focused on other “outside the womb” issues are never held to the same standards of being “pro-life” that anti-abortion activists are, even those these other issues are asserted to be just as pro-life as abortion. Groups dedicated to addressing other social justice issues are never called less than “pro-life” for failing to focus on abortion.

When was the last time a proponent of a Whole Life perspective told a ministry fighting sex trafficking that they weren’t spending enough time on abortion? Or a ministry dedicated to helping strengthen marriages that they needed to be more active in opposing abortion? The list can go on, but in practice the redefinition of “pro-life” seems to only be getting selectively applied to those focused on opposing abortion. The simple

reason why other ministries and groups are usually not held to this standard is because deep down, proponents of the Whole Life view know better. They know it's unreasonable(not to mention obscene) to tell a group dedicated to rescuing victims of sex trafficking that they are not moral enough to warrant support because they don't spend an equal time fighting abortion, or racism, or marriage breakdown.

This raises a question: Is the Whole Life position being more influenced by genuine moral reasoning, or by current political and cultural trends? The Whole Life position being offered seems to more match the moral feelings of the current culture(and curiously, those of the Democratic Party platform) than a genuine moral concern for fellow human beings. If one looks close enough this becomes obvious. While proposing a broader perspective on what it means to be "pro-life", proponents of the Whole Life position tend to ignore(and quite often attack) the moral concerns raised by political conservatives and libertarians in favor of the concerns of political liberals, and most often those who endorse abortion. Free-market capitalism, school choice, limited government, support for law enforcement, effective national defense, and entrepreneurship are all causes championed by conservative and libertarian thinkers as beneficial to fellow human beings; and yet rarely, if ever, are these causes considered as warranting the label "pro-life" by Whole Life advocates. The broadly defined "pro-life" perspective only seems to encompass the objectives of political liberals, making effort to exclude conservative and libertarian thought from the conversation.(5)

Ironically, as we saw from John Pavlovitz's article above, the broadening of "pro-life" also ends up more matching the laundry list of "pro-life" causes being used by abortion supporters to attack pro-life advocates than the moral objectives of the pro-life movement itself.

That brings up a final point: Why should those who support abortion get to dictate the moral objectives of those who oppose it? No effective social reform movement in history has *ever* succeeded by having it's goals redefined and reshaped by the opposition. Instead, effective social reform movements have succeeded where they stayed laser-focused on their goals and didn't get sidetracked by silly red herring arguments.

Conclusion

Whole Life advocates are not the mortal enemies of the pro-life movement or of unborn human beings. Most Whole Life Advocates are genuinely concerned about the lives of unborn children, and about the lives of other people. Many are doing phenomenal work on behalf of children and their parents. Their intentions are noble and they do want to see good done in the world.

That being said, having the best intentions is not a guarantee one will always exercise wisdom or prudence. Many of the most well-intentioned ideas of the past have turned out disastrous when implemented, and often hurt more people than they helped.

The core flaw of the Whole Life position is that it trades the emotional draw of being seen as morally awake to other issues of concern in the culture for the wise application of moral principles. It's important to be aware of the existence of wrongdoing in society;

that also means we need to be wise in what we spend our time addressing. All people are created equal; all issues are not. We must act accordingly.

This doesn't mean pro-life advocates can't be concerned with other "outside the womb" issues; they can. This does mean the wisdom of saying pro-life advocates *must* be concerned with other issues in order to be seen as truly "pro-life" needs to be called into serious question. Broadening our focus to issues outside the womb doesn't do much to help those being deliberately killed inside the womb. Instead it seeks to make pro-life advocates more liked by those who are already fighting tooth and nail to ensure we don't succeed in our endeavors to protect unborn children.

Gregg Cunningham has said it best: Effective social reformers are seldom liked, and liked social reformers are seldom effective. Focusing all our efforts on being liked by our critics will not save the unborn; it will ensure the killing of the unborn goes unnoticed and unquestioned. And that is as far as one can get from truly being "pro-life".

Endnotes

(1). Pavlovitz, who himself is an abortion advocate, never explains in his diatribe why pro-lifers are wrong about abortion. He ignores the issue and instead resorts to personal attacks and name-calling. Now, it's possible every pro-lifer in the world today is an ignorant, hypocritical, fetus-obsessed jerk. That proves nothing. Pro-life advocates argue abortion is wrong because it unjustly kills an innocent human being. Pavlovitz must answer our argument, not resort to personal insults. Ironically, by ignoring the nature of abortion, Pavlovitz himself is guilty of the same sort of hypocrisy he accuses his opponents of: Advocating only for human beings who bear a striking resemblance to himself, those who are already born

(2). There are a few who will bite the bullet and say yes. So follow up: "What difference is there between the unborn and the born that makes it acceptable to allow abortion until we have solved every other societal issues first? Why wait to take on abortion if it is the intentional killing of an innocent human being?" Now we're back to the central question in the abortion debate that matters: What are the unborn?

(3). As a small caveat, it is often asserted that police shootings and police brutality are just as much pro-life issues as abortion. While every police shooting is a tragedy, that does not mean police shootings are inherently unjust or the majority of police are morally out of control. There are many factors(legal, tactical, physiological, informational etc.) at play in every use of force by police that must be considered; factors which are routinely ignored by activists attacking what they see as pro-lifer's inconsistency. However, it would take a book-length response to examine all of these factors. See *In Defense of Self and Others… Issues, Facts, and Fallacies- The Realities of Law Enforcement's Use of Deadly Force* (3rd Ed.) by Urey W. Patrick and John C. Hall for a thorough examination of the topic.

(4.) A common trope is that "Abortion is not the only pro-life issue." This is usually said in regards to voting, and very often is used to justify voting for a pro-choice candidate over

a pro-life one. Even if abortion is not the only “pro-life” issue, that doesn’t mean it’s not the most important one. Given nearly one million abortions per year in the United States alone, abortion is obviously going to rank at the top of any list of “pro-life” issues

(5). More ironically, the deliberate killings of “Precious Image Bearers”(to use Herbie Newell’s term) who aren’t currently the subject of cultural focus tend to be ignored in Whole Life writings. The killings of police officers by armed criminals, victims killed or hurt in everyday violent crime, and veteran suicide tend to get
ignored in favor of issues which currently tug the cultural heartstrings, even though no one can seriously deny the abovementioned involve acts of gross injustice against valuable human beings. It’s ludicrous to demand anti-abortion activists meet a standard many Whole Life advocates often don’t adhere to.

How to explain the gospel in less than 1000 words

August 23, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend sent me a draft e-mail, that he wrote to a family member, who has rejected historic Christianity for progressive Christianity. He was asked to give the basics of salvation, and his attempt to explain the gospel to her is below. My advice included taking out the Christianese terms. Do you think he did a good job? I think his emphasis on what is not the gospel (what needs to be rejected) makes this a first-class explanation of the gospel.

So, you've asked the 10,000 talent question (alluding to Matthew 18:23-35). You are basically asking me what I think the Gospel is. I'll try to answer that in a minimalistic way, using my own characterization of it rather than just making doctrinal statements.

One must accept that there is a God, who is a higher authority than themselves. How much one must first believe about that God is debatable, but candidate beliefs would be that He is personal (having a mind like, but greater than, ours), powerful, and the creator of this cosmos and everything in it — He owns it all. Our natural intuition is to see beauty, order, complexity, and "design" in nature. There is a difference in belief vs unbelief in that some think it is just the appearance of design and some acknowledge their intuition that it actually is designed.

One must acknowledge their moral intuitions, and recognize that there are actually right and wrong things in this world. It's not just whatever you want to do, or whatever society decides in a given time or culture.

Given that morality is then understood to be a transcendent thing (universal and independent of time and culture), the connection is made to God as the author of this moral law.

One must then recognize that he/she regularly fails to live up to this law, even according to just their meager understanding of it, and even by the standards of morality that they make up for other people.

One must not try to suppress this, or therapize it away. One must recognize there is a problem and real moral culpability. One must recognize that they feel guilty and have self-esteem issues because they actually do have guilt and issues.

One must make the connection between guilt and their standing before God. Being good sometimes and in some ways does not erase the bad you do, past, present, or future. One must be willing to bend the knee to God's will regarding morality.

One must also come to see the moral failure (sin) in their lives as a bad thing that they'd like to be rid of, rather than excusing it as the fault of others, or revelling in it as part of the pleasure of life, or shrugging it off as just "who I am."

One must appeal to God in these matters for both forgiveness and help in living as they

should.

Given that God has provided a champion for the problem that humanity faces (the backstory of which not all will fully know), one whose heart is truly yielded to all these things will naturally and eagerly receive Word of this as Good News. God has solved the seemingly irreconcilable demands of both justice and forgiveness in that champion.

Those with ears to hear will receive this solution — Jesus — and believe what He has done in life and on the cross for their sake — the resurrection being both confirmation of His divine authority and also the sign of the defeat of death which awaits us all, and is the only barrier between us and facing this God whom we fail at every turn. They will believe on (or upon) Jesus as Lord and their means of salvation, surrendering dependence upon their own ideas of self-righteousness and earning the favor of God.

The outward expression that we have understood and accepted these things is that we have made Jesus Lord and committed ourselves to following Him, conform our character to His, resist our sinful inclinations, and are interested in learning all about Who God is and what has been done for us in Christ.

This commitment to the Lordship of Christ naturally leads to the acceptance of subsequent beliefs. If Jesus is indeed Lord, then He holds all authority, and what He said and taught to His followers is our guide — the New Testament. And if this is the divine story, as intended by God for men, then we have reason to believe that it is comprehensible to us, and He will insure (in spite of the fallibility of men and demonic plots) that its essential message will not be lost or corrupted until all things are competed. Given that Jesus affirmed every categorical section of the Old Testament, and claimed to be its promised Messiah, then that, too, is a source of truth and understanding.

Those doctrines that are sometimes characterized as “essential” for salvation, are merely the highlights of this redemption narrative, which are those things being clear and consistent, and which indicate that someone has yielded themselves to the authority of Christ and the scriptures, and understands these things. It is not that believing them is what saves, but they are what the saved naturally come to believe. Confessing them is the tangible, verbal act of affirming the Gospel, but is not necessarily identical to a life committed to putting it into practice, which is saving faith.

Is there any downside to pursuing green energy?

August 24, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a friend in my office who is very keen on wind and solar. He treats it like a technological problem, and he's so excited about what discoveries scientists could make to get us off of non-renewable energy sources. In this post, I wanted to look at how the green energy project is working in different places, and then conclude by explaining why Christians should care about this issue.

So, close to home, the state of California heavily committed to developing "green" energy. How is that working out for them?

Here is a recent article from Reuters, a far-left news wire:

> California, struggling to balance its clean energy push with the need to boost tight power supplies and avoid rolling blackouts, will lean more on fossil fuels in coming weeks to keep the power on if scorching heatwaves stretch its grid.
>
> The Golden State, which has among the world's most aggressive environmental policies, faces a potential supply shortfall of up to 3,500 megawatts during peak demand hours in the coming weeks. That is about 2.6 million households worth of electricity supply.
>
> Governor Gavin Newsom plans to fill that gap in part by allowing industrial energy users to run on diesel generators and engines, according to a recent emergency proclamation.

California spent a lot of money on their green energy sources, and they are having to fall back on non-green sources because their plan didn't work. This isn't even to mention how much damage their expensive policies have caused to vulnerable bird and bat populations, as well as their constant forest fires. And their electricity prices are extremely high, which disproportionately affects the poor in their state.

Going up north, we find out how green energy is working in socialist Canada.

The Fraser Institute, a non-partisan think tank, reports:

> In 2005, Ontario's provincial government started a process to phase-out its coal-fired plants, one of the province's least expensive and most flexible sources of generating electricity. Ontario shuttered its last coal plant in 2014 and made it illegal to build any more. In addition, the province launched its Green Energy Act in 2009, which mandated expanded production of renewable energy and encouraged energy conservation.
>
> The result? Ontario now has the fastest-growing electricity costs in Canada and among the highest rates in North America. Furthermore, subsequent research showed that the shutdown of coal plants raised electricity rates in the province but provided few environmental benefits. Indeed, one analysis found that, had the province simply continued with retrofitting coal plants, it could have achieved

> similar environmental benefits at one-tenth the cost of the green energy programs.

I'll be saying more about why Christians should care about higher electricity prices, but for now, just note that this isn't even working in far-left countries, where there is more buy-in from the voters.

The highest electricity rates in the world are currently being paid by residents of Germany. A while back, Germany decided to transition completely off of non-renewable energy. How did that work out for them?

The far left Bloomberg News reports:

> One of Germany's biggest challenges in the fight against climate change is to keep the lights on.
>
> As Europe's biggest economy shuts its last nuclear reactor next year and utility RWE AG warns that coal plants may close earlier than planned, critics say green energy isn't being added quickly enough. Germany's ability to meet peak demand is poised to shrink rapidly over the next two years, increasing the risk of blackouts.
>
> […][German Chancellor Angela] Merkel admits her government got it wrong. Power demand will probably increase more than official forecasts by the end of the decade, she said in June. A month earlier she recognized that increasing local opposition and too much bureaucracy have curbed investments in green power.

So, why should Christians care about this? Well, consider the problem of educating children that Christian parents face. Christian parents are not only facing problems with mask restrictions, but also teachers who can't teach marketable skills, and far-left indoctrination. The most reasonable option is to pull the kids out of school and go with a private school, or homeschooling. But that costs money. In fact, money is useful for all sorts of goals that Christians might have – from buying books, to giving to charity, to being able to walk away from a job that violates their consciences, etc. Money is important for Christians. And when it gets eaten up by higher electricity costs, we have fewer options to run our lives the way we want.

New study: college students drink more before casual sex than relationship sex

August 25, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It turns out that college students use MORE alcohol and drugs when they have sex with strangers, and LESS alcohol and drugs when they have sex with people they are in a relationship with.

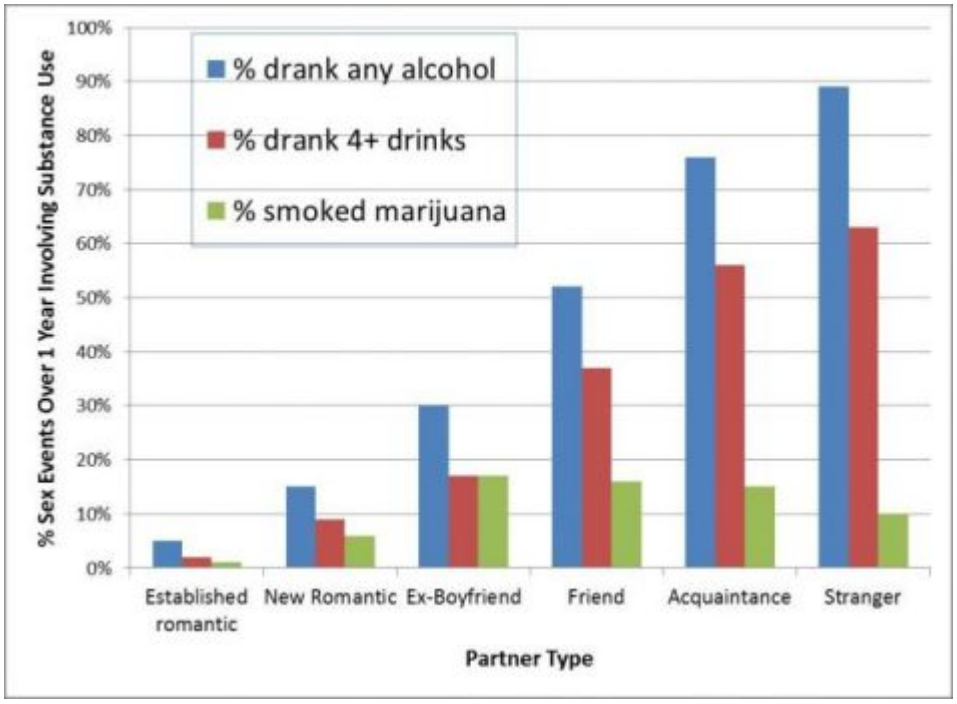

Sex events measured against intimacy level (for women only)

This study was reported by the far-left Psychology Today.

Excerpt:

> A recent study published in the *Journal of Sex Research* sheds some light on these questions. A research team headed by Jennifer Walsh analyzed alcohol use in almost 500 casual and 1400 romantic sexual intercourse events that happened to 300 college women on a monthly basis over a period of 12 months. Alcohol use was not very common during romantic sex: 20% of romantic encounters involved some drinking and only 5% involved heavy drinking (defined as four or more drinks). Hookups, on the other hand, were a different story: Women drank during 53% of their hookups, and drank *heavily* during 38% of all hookups.
>
> But not all hookups are created equal. There was an almost perfect linear relationship between drinking and partner closeness: The less known the partner, the more likely women drank before sex, and the more likely they drank a lot. Look at the graph I created based on their data. When the casual partner was an ex-boyfriend, for example, only 30% of hookups involved drinking and 17% heavy drinking. When the partner was a random stranger, however, 89% of hookups involved drinking and 63% involved four or more drinks!

The writer explains why this happens:

> Alcohol also provides **an excuse** to those who need one. In a world that encourages hooking up but also judges those (especially women) who engage in it too much, many seem to need it. You're a slut if you hook up with people *just because you want to*: Good girls don't actively want to hook up, and being sober means taking full responsibility for your actions. But if you can blame it on the alcohol, you're absolved of guilt. You can still be a good girl who just happened to make a mistake.

It's like they want to do reckless and irresponsible things, but they want plausible deniability, so they can't be judged by anyone.

This study agrees with a study I blogged about before from the University of Virginia, which explained that college students drink before hook-ups in order to be able to explain to their friends why it wasn't their fault:

> A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."
>
> Other women observed that being drunk gives a woman license to act sexually interested in public in ways that would not be tolerated if she were sober. For instance, a University of Michigan student said, "Girls are actually allowed to be a lot more sexual when they are drunk…"
>
> A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."

Now, the first thing I thought of when I saw this article in Psychology Today was: "I wonder what criteria these college students are using in order to decide which strangers they have sex with". And then I realized. For perfect strangers, it would have to be something obvious, like physical appearance. A study found that it takes a woman 3 minutes to decide if she likes a man or not. Whatever assessment is being made in that 3 minutes surely isn't adequate to determine commitment ability.

Don't judge me, it wasn't my fault

It reminds me of something I read a while back in a Theodore Dalrymple book. Theodore Dalrymple is the famous psychiatrist who writes books about culture in the UK.

In the chapter "Tough Love" from one of his books, he talks about the nurses he works with:

> All the more surprising is it to me, therefore, that the nurses perceive things differently. They do not see a man's violence in his face, his gestures, his deportment, and his bodily adornments, even though they have the same experience of the patients as I. They hear the same stories, they see the same

signs, but they do not make the same judgments. What's more, they seem never to learn; for experience—like chance, in the famous dictum of Louis Pasteur—favors only the mind prepared. And when I guess at a glance that a man is an inveterate wife beater (I use the term "wife" loosely), they are appalled at the harshness of my judgment, even when it proves right once more.

This is not a matter of merely theoretical interest to the nurses, for many of them in their private lives have themselves been the compliant victims of violent men. For example, the lover of one of the senior nurses, an attractive and lively young woman, recently held her at gunpoint and threatened her with death, after having repeatedly blacked her eye during the previous months. I met him once when he came looking for her in the hospital: he was just the kind of ferocious young egotist to whom I would give a wide berth in the broadest daylight.

Why are the nurses so reluctant to come to the most inescapable of conclusions? Their training tells them, quite rightly, that it is their duty to care for everyone without regard for personal merit or deserts; but for them, there is no difference between suspending judgment for certain restricted purposes and making no judgment at all in any circumstances whatsoever. It is as if they were more afraid of passing an adverse verdict on someone than of getting a punch in the face—a likely enough consequence, incidentally, of their failure of discernment. Since it is scarcely possible to recognize a wife beater *without* inwardly condemning him, it is safer not to recognize him as one in the first place.

This failure of recognition is almost universal among my violently abused women patients, but its function for them is somewhat different from what it is for the nurses. The nurses need to retain a certain positive regard for their patients in order to do their job. But for the abused women, the failure to perceive in advance the violence of their chosen men serves to absolve them of all responsibility for whatever happens thereafter, allowing them to think of themselves as victims alone rather than the victims and accomplices they are. Moreover, it licenses them to obey their impulses and whims, allowing them to suppose that sexual attractiveness is the measure of all things and that prudence in the selection of a male companion is neither possible nor desirable.

Often, their imprudence would be laughable, were it not tragic: many times in my ward I've watched liaisons form between an abused female patient and an abusing male patient within half an hour of their striking up an acquaintance. By now, I can often predict the formation of such a liaison—and predict that it will as certainly end in violence as that the sun will rise tomorrow.

At first, of course, my female patients deny that the violence of their men was foreseeable. But when I ask them whether they think I would have recognized it in advance, the great majority—nine out of ten—reply, yes, of course. And when asked *how* they think I would have done so, they enumerate precisely the factors that would have led me to that conclusion. So their blindness is willful.

According to Dalrymple’s experience, it’s not that women don’t know that bad boys are lousy at marriage and fatherhood. They know it, but they choose to blind themselves to it, because it’s just too much self-denial to have to be serious about making responsible choices with men and sex and marriage.

My friend Dina often reminds me to evaluate women based on their past choices, not based on the picture of themselves that they paint with words. Wise advice. And it works for women to judge men, too.

Yale University computer science professor takes a look at protein formation probabilities

August 26, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

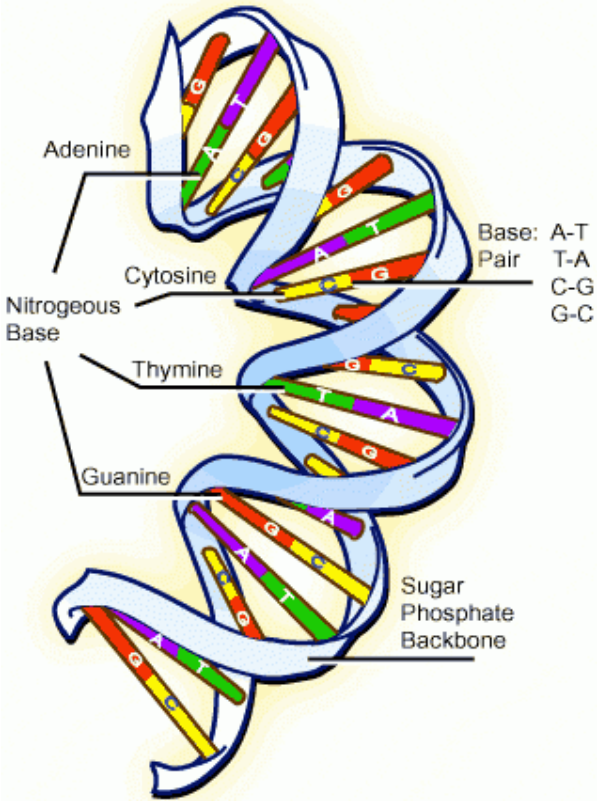

How did life begin?

When I was in graduate school, we studied a book called “Mirror Worlds”, authored by famous computer science professor David Gelernter at Yale University. This week, I noticed that Dr. Gelernter had written an article in the prestigious Claremont Review of Books. In his article, he applies his knowledge of computer science to the problem of the origin of life.

Evolution, if it is going to work at all, has to explain the problem of how the basic building blocks of life – proteins – can emerge from non-living matter. It turns out that the problem of the origin of life is essentially a problem of information – of code. If the components of proteins are ordered properly, then the sequence folds up into a protein that has biological function. If the sequence is not good, then just like computer code, it won’t run.

Here’s Dr. Gelernter to explain:

> How to make proteins is our first question. Proteins are chains: linear sequences of atom-groups, each bonded to the next. A protein molecule is based on a chain of amino acids; 150 elements is a “modest-sized” chain; the average is 250. Each link is chosen, ordinarily, from one of 20 amino acids. A chain of amino acids is a polypeptide—“peptide” being the type of chemical bond that joins one amino acid to the next. But this chain is only the starting point: chemical forces among the links make parts of the chain twist themselves into helices; others straighten

> out, and then, sometimes, jackknife repeatedly, like a carpenter's rule, into flat sheets. Then the whole assemblage folds itself up like a complex sheet of origami paper. And the actual 3-D *shape* of the resulting molecule is (as I have said) important.
>
> Imagine a 150-element protein as a chain of 150 beads, each bead chosen from 20 varieties. But: only certain chains will work. Only certain bead combinations will form themselves into stable, useful, *well-shaped* proteins.
>
> So how hard *is* it to build a useful, well-shaped protein? Can you throw a bunch of amino acids together and assume that you will get something good? Or must you choose each element of the chain with painstaking care? It happens to be *very* hard to choose the right beads.

Gelernter decides to spot the Darwinist a random sequence of 150 elements. Now the task the Darwinist is to use random mutation to arrive at a sequence of 150 links that has biological function.

> [W]hat are the chances that a random 150-link sequence will create such a protein? Nonsense sequences are essentially random. Mutations are random. Make random changes to a random sequence and you get another random sequence. So, close your eyes, make 150 random choices from your 20 bead boxes and string up your beads in the order in which you chose them. What are the odds that you will come up with a useful new protein?
>
> […]The total count of *possible* 150-link chains, where each link is chosen separately from 20 amino acids, is 20^{150}. In other words, *many*. 20^{150} roughly equals 10^{195}, and there are only 10^{80} atoms in the universe.
>
> What proportion of these many polypeptides are useful proteins? Douglas Axe did a series of experiments to estimate how many 150-long chains are capable of stable folds—of reaching the final step in the protein-creation process (the folding) and of holding their shapes long enough to be useful. (Axe is a distinguished biologist with five-star breeding: he was a graduate student at Caltech, then joined the Centre for Protein Engineering at Cambridge. The biologists whose work Meyer discusses are mainly first-rate Establishment scientists.) He estimated that, of all 150-link amino acid sequences, 1 in 10^{74} will be capable of folding into a stable protein. To say that your chances are 1 in 10^{74} is no different, in practice, from saying that they are zero. It's not surprising that your chances of hitting a stable protein that performs some useful *function*, and might therefore play a part in evolution, are even smaller. Axe puts them at 1 in 10^{77}.
>
> In other words: immense is so big, and tiny is so small, that neo-Darwinian evolution is—*so far*—a dead loss. Try to mutate your way from 150 links of gibberish to a working, useful protein and you are guaranteed to fail. Try it with ten mutations, a thousand, a million—you fail. The odds bury you. It can't be

> done.

Keep in mind that you need many, many proteins in order to have even a simple living cell. (And that's not even considering the problem of organizing the proteins into a system).

So, if you're a naturalist, then your only resources to explain the origin of life are chance and mutation. As Dr. Gelernter shows, naturalistic explanations won't work to solve even part of the problem. Not even with a long period of time. Not even if you use the entire universe as one big primordial soup, and keep trying sequences for the history of the universe. It just isn't possible to arrive at sequences that have biological function in the time available, using the resources available. The only viable explanation is that there is a computer scientist who wrote the code without using trial and error. Something that ordinary software engineers like myself and Dr. Gelernter do all the time. We know what kind of cause is adequate to explain functioning code.

47-year-old divorced woman with kids sues dating agency for failing to find her a rich husband

August 27, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Today, many women put off marriage while they're in their 20s, when they are most attractive to marriage-minded men. Some marry, but they marry based on spontaneity and feelings, and it turns into divorce. What happens next? Here's an example from the UK Daily Mail. (H/T Dina)

Excerpt:

> A divorced mother-of-three who sued an 'exclusive' dating agency after it failed to find her a rich boyfriend has been handed her money back by a top judge.
>
> Tereza Burki paid £12,600 to Seventy Thirty to hunt for 'possibly the man of my dreams, the father of my child', she told the High Court in London.
>
> The 47-year-old said the agency assured her it only dealt in 'creme de la creme' matches and could introduce her to 'bachelors you dream of meeting'.
>
> But Judge Richard Parkes QC today ordered the agency to repay her fee, ruling that she had been 'deceived' by Seventy Thirty's then-managing director.
>
> And, as well as giving her her money back, the judge awarded her £500 for the 'disappointment and sadness' she suffered. Her total award was £13,100.

Women's fertility declines sharply at age 27, then takes a nose-dive at age 35. By 40, it's nearly impossible to get pregnant, which is why women who want children ought to focus on finding a good man in their early-to-mid-20s.

More:

> When she signed up with the agency in 2014, Mrs Burki's requirements for the men she wanted to meet were 'not modest', the judge added.
>
> She wanted a wealthy man with 'a lifestyle similar or more affluent than her own' and, ideally, 'multiple residences'.
>
> But the most important factor for Mrs Burki, who lives on an upmarket street in Chelsea, West London, was that her soulmate would be prepared to have more children, as she wanted four.
>
> […]Giving evidence during the case, Mrs Burki told the judge: 'You shouldn't promise people who are in a fragile state of mind, in their mid-40s, the man of their dreams.

Marriage-minded men are interested in a wife during a certain time window when the support of a woman really makes a difference. That time period is the stressful period of a man's life, when he first graduates from college or trade school and has to start his career. The first years of a career are the most stressful. And that's when having the

physical, emotional, and practical support of a young, attractive, chaste woman really makes a difference. Married men do better at things like earning, saving, health, etc. than single men. Naturally, the best time to GET THIS SUPPORT is the time when the man is doing things that determine his earning, saving, health, etc.

It's not that older women have no value. It's that the woman has to be present during the critical time when a man is trying to do hard things, and he doesn't have the safety net of savings, a resume, etc. Many men move for their first jobs, which just adds another level of difficulty to those early years. When I moved for my first job, everything was difficult: eating, sleeping, cleaning, being content with chastity, etc. I had no family nearby, and I left behind all my friends. It would have been nice to have had the support of a young, and beautiful marriage-minded woman at the critical time when I needed it.

But now, after the degrees have been earned, the gapless resume filled out, the retirement accounts filled, and the house paid for, it's hardly the time for a woman over 40 to show up and demand her share, when she never invested anything into the enterprise.

And yet, many women apparently DO think like this. Many seem to have no concept of what a man wants out of marriage, and that's why they waste their 20s doing what feels good to them, and just expecting marriage to happen without any self-denial or self-sacrifice or self-control. If they really cared about marriage, then they would prioritize understanding what marriage-minded men want and need. They would be developing marriage skills and marriage character – things like cooking, caring for others, being good with money, child care, being sober, being faithful, etc. If a woman wants a husband, then she ought to be concerned with helping him to do the things that she expects him to do as a husband.

There used to be some awareness in young women that premarital sex with hot bad boys was bad for her future husband. That focusing on partying and travel was bad for her future husband. That doing easy degrees, getting easy jobs, while going into debt was bad for future husband. Now it seems that women are making all their decisions based on what feels good for them in the moment, in total ignorance of how that ruins their ability to invest in the man who wants to marry them later. They just can't (or won't) understand how being selfish today has consequences to marriage and family tomorrow.

Do women not look at marriage-minded men doing what we are doing and think "I don't want him to have to do that alone. I want to help him, so that it's not so difficult. And if I have to learn how to do things that help him, then I will put my own needs and feelings second, and learn to do what helps him". Is there any woman out there who looks at a good, marriage-ready man, and thinks about what he needs? And about what she can do to help him? If not, then is it any wonder that men have lost interest in marriage?

I noticed that Dalrock also posted on this, and some of the comments are interesting.

New study: nearly half of millenials reject monogamy

August 28, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marriage and family

Study reported on by The Stream:

> A new report found nearly half of American millennials don't want monogamous relationships.
>
> YouGov revealed the research on monogamy and cheating, showing couples under 30 are significantly less monogamous than older generations.
>
> Only 51 percent of people under 30 reported desiring a "completely monogamous" relationship, compared to 58 percent from the 30-44 age bracket, 63 percent from the 45-64 age bracket, and 70 percent from the 65 plus age bracket polled.
>
> […]Reports also show that men and women are cheating at almost equal rates.

It's not just adultery that millenials don't care about any more, it's premarital sex. An article from the Washington Post found that both men and women no longer desire their romantic partners to be chaste:

> Dating has changed hugely over the past generations, and so have cultural ideas about what men and women value most in a mate.
>
> This idea is perfectly illustrated by a chart that economist Max Roser, who created the blog Our World in Data, recently put out on Twitter. The chart is made with data from a study published in the Journal of Family Issues in 2013, in which three researchers compared how heterosexual men and women ranked the importance of 18 traits in wives and husbands, first in 1939, and then again in 2008.

> […]**For both men and women, the importance of chastity nose-dived, from #10 in 1939 to #18 in 2008.** Emotional stability and maturity, a pleasing disposition, good health, and refinement and neatness also declined for both sexes.
>
> **For women, a similar religious background and a desire for home and children became less important in their mates**, while men placed less value on ambition and industriousness in their wives.

It goes without saying that adultery is more like to reduce marriage stability. And studies also show that marriage stability is severely impacted by the number of premarital sex partners. That's why chastity matters: it's a predictor of marital stability. If a person can control themselves before marriage when they don't get any sex, it's easier to control themselves when that need is being supplied safely and generously. Also, chastity just reinforces the idea that sex is something that is done within a lifelong commitment, not something that is done outside of a commitment for fun and thrills. I don't that the millenial approach of premarital unchastity and post-marital non-monogamy is going to help them keep their marriages together.

But young people today aren't interested in looking at studies to figure out how to do marriage right so that it will last. They make their decisions with their feelings. They value what the culture tells them to value, rather than picking a mate who has the skills and abilities to make the marriage last.

How well is picking mates based on emotions rather than demonstrated ability working out? The marriage rates are plummeting:

Gallup poll:

> Contrary to what we would expect, given normal demographic patterns of adolescents' movement into early adulthood and family formation, the data show that significantly more millennials are currently single/never married than was true for those in older generations, and considerably more are in domestic partnerships. Specifically, more than half of all millennials (59%) have never married, and 9% are in domestic partnerships. Gallup has noted a trend toward fewer young adults being married in recent years.
>
> In the 2014 Gallup Daily tracking data, just 27% of millennials were married. According to historical U.S. Census Bureau data, 36% of Generation Xers, 48% of baby boomers and 65% of traditionalists were married when they were the age that millennials are now. For millennials currently aged 18 to 30, just 20% are married, compared with nearly 60% of 18- to 30-year-olds in 1962, according to the U.S. Census. When Gen Xers were the same age, 32% were married; for baby boomers, it was more than 40%.
>
> **Millennials are clearly delaying marriage longer than any generation before them, in spite of evidence suggesting that many millennials intend to marry at some point. For example, a 2013 Gallup poll found**

> **that 86% of single/never married Americans aged 18 to 34 (roughly equivalent to the millennial generation) wanted to get married someday.**

Table:

Marital Status, by Generation

	Millennials %	Gen Xers %	Baby boomers %	Traditionalists %	TOTAL %
Single/Never married	59	16	10	4	25
Married	27	62	65	55	52
Separated	2	4	3	1	2
Divorced	3	11	14	9	9
Widowed	*	1	6	29	6
Domestic partnership/ Living with partner	9	6	3	1	5

Marriage rates across different generations of Americans

Who can keep a relationship going when the top criterion is ability to entertain rather than ability to commit self-sacrificially? I hear lots of Christian women say they want to get married "some day", but there they are in their mid 30s, unemployed, penniless, with empty resumes, backpacking through Europe. The words "some day" sound good to their parents and pastors, but the actions are all about hedonism and thrill-seeking – just what the culture told them to do, in order to have a meaningful life.

Is there a cost to the younger generation turning their backs on traditional marriage, including the norms of chastity, fidelity and permanence?

I saw an article on the Public Discourse that talked about the fiscal costs of abandoning traditional marriage.

It says:

> In 1965, liberal Harvard political scientist Daniel Patrick Moynihan was astonished to find that about 25 percent of African-American children were born out of wedlock. Moynihan was deeply worried about this finding because he knew exactly what being born out of wedlock means for a child. Decades of social science confirm what common sense has always taught us: that children born out of wedlock are disadvantaged in every way. They are more likely to be physically and mentally ill, more likely to be poor and unhappy, more likely to have trouble in school and with education generally, more likely to be abused sexually, more likely themselves to abuse others sexually, more likely to abuse alcohol or other drugs, and more likely to engage in criminal activity and to have a disdain for authority.
>
> This, in turn, invariably increases the size and scope of the power of the state. The state must expand to replace fathers who have abandoned their families by

> providing for single mothers. It must increase its public-health efforts to provide for children whose single parents cannot pay for private healthcare and to treat victims of violence committed by those who have been raised in an environment that has failed to equip them for a robust and peaceful social life. It must create and maintain adoption agencies to care for children whose parents are unfit or absent. It must commit more funds to police departments to address crime that results from families breaking apart (or failing to form in the first place), and hence failing to instill virtue in children. It must commit funds to the creation of prisons where criminals are to be kept. The list goes on and on.
>
> The economic costs of abandoning social conservatism, then, run quite high—in addition to all of the unquantifiable social costs of broken families, deaths, broken relationships, and ruined lives. It is no surprise that leftists, committed to consolidating power in the state, have sought to undermine the family: they realize—better than many fiscal conservatives do—that a flourishing marriage culture is required for free markets and limited governments to exist.

So, there really is a cost to the embrace of moral relativism. When morality goes, expensive things happen, and government grows to pick up the costs. The bigger the government grows, the taxes are required to pay for it, leaving you with less of your own money – less of your own freedom to live how you want to live.

New poll: few Millennials describe belief in God as “very important”

August 29, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

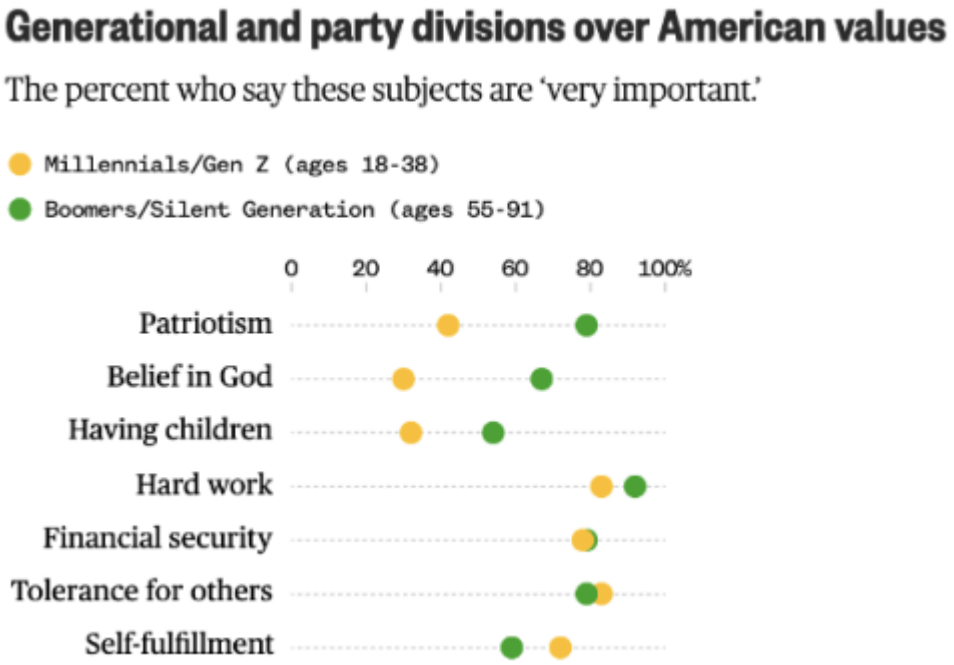

Beliefs of millennials and boomers

I saw a very interesting article that compared the attitudes of young people about things like patriotism, religion, freedom, etc. The numbers are very discouraging.

So, here’s the article from the Washington Examiner:

> The importance of patriotism, faith in God, and having children is significantly lower among millennials and Generation Z, compared to previous generations.
>
> In a new poll conducted by the *Wall Street Journal* and NBC News, nearly 80% of people aged 55-91 said being patriotic is important to them, while only 42% of millennials and Generation Z, or those aged 18-38, said the same. Thirty percent of millennials and Generation Z said religion was important, compared to the over 75% of baby boomers, with just over 30% of millennials and Generation Z saying it was important to have children.
>
> Areas where the younger generations had placed higher importance compared to boomers were tolerance for others and self-fulfillment, with financial security being almost tied between the two age groups.

I’m sure that everyone has seen other polls showing the decline of Christianity, especially in mainline and Catholic churches. Evangelicals are declining less, but they are still declining.

The reason I linked to this post is because I’ve noticed that some Christians don’t really think that there is anything to be concerned about. Everything is working fine, they say. Whatever we’re doing right now must be working, because there is no decline. We’re

winning, and if you think otherwise, then you're just complaining.

Well, I don't really know why there is this decline, all I can do is speak from my experiences. I've met people through my blog who did lose their faith in college, and I've met ex-Christians in my office, too. I asked them what the problem was, and it seems to be that when they were growing up, they often bullied into behaving like a Christian without being able to ask any questions about whether it was true. And then as soon as they got to college away from their parents and pastors, they just dumped the whole thing.

I remember listening to an amazing lecture a while back by Dr. Scott Waller. I think it was a lecture he gave for the Stand to Reason "Masters Series in Christian Thought" in 2003. The lecture was about Postmodernism in the University. Postmodernism is the view that there are no true or false views, especially with "soft" issues like religion and morality. In the lecture, he talked about how a father had sent his devout Christian son to university, and the son had returned an atheist after one semester. I remember Dr. Waller quoting the son telling his parents "I have come to think of my time growing up in this house as the dark period of my life". The father was very upset. So Dr. Waller told him what to do. He said, you're going to need to read a few books on the most common questions that your son has, and then work through the answers with him. And he made a little pile of books about common questions that college students ask, and pushed the pile across the table to the father. And the father pushed the books back across the table to Dr. Waller, and said "well, I don't have time for reading so many books… but could you just talk to him instead?"

Another thing that seems to cause a lot of young people to leave the faith in college is sex. Now if I were trying to convince someone to be responsible about sex, I'd try to show them studies and statistics to explain why there really are best practices to relationships and marriage. For example, I'd might show them that the number of premarital sex partners increases marital instability, or that sliding into cohabitation early tends to make marriages less stable. But this takes a bit of work, and you have to work through it with the young people. I just don't know if parents really reason with their kids like this. But in churches, I've noticed that trying to make an argument using evidence isn't very popular. To me, if I were trying to be convincing to someone about something, I would use evidence. It's just natural to me to make a case if I'm trying to be persuasive. But making a case just hasn't been a really big priority in the churches I've attended.

So, I guess if I had to give any advice to parents of children, or pastors in churches, it would be that Christianity is in decline, and we need to do more than just order people to memorize Bible verses and creeds, go to church, etc. It's hard for me to know what's really going on in everyone's home, and in everyone's church. But I don't think that whatever we're doing in our homes and churches is working to convince young people that belief in God is very important.

Christian woman takes on Democrats for voting by feelings instead of to get results

August 30, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an amazing article about the Afghanistan situation over on An Affair with Reason. Laura has a background in defending Christianity to Muslims. She's traveled all over the Middle East. So, she has a lot of experience in that area, having conversations with those people. I know she's been to Afghanistan, so she knows what's going on there. And she's not happy.

Here's the post.

She talks about how the Taliban have retaken Afghanistan, are capturing 12-year-old girls for sex slavery, and they are going door to door searching for Christians and U.S. allies to murder them. ISIS, (which nearly took over Iraq under Obama, then was crushed under Trump), is reforming and gaining strength. You might remember that ISIS is famous for sex-trafficking underage female captives. She mentions how China, which runs concentration camps and is a huge human rights violator, has also been emboldened by our weakness.

Since she wrote the article, more news has emerged. You may have heard that 13 American soldiers have been killed by the Taliban, and billions of dollars of high-tech military equipment has been captured by the Taliban terrorists. Officers who are critical of these policies are being taken off duty and told not to comment on the Biden administration's failures. The Biden administration is blocking efforts to evacuate Christians. Almost none of the people being evacuated are Christians.

So, she asks this question for people who supported Biden:

> Did our leaders calculate the cost of American lives being lost and decide that it just wasn't worth it? Did they make the very difficult decision to turn our backs on our allies, abandon 15,000 American citizens in Afghanistan, allow women to be raped and killed, leave Christians to be beheaded and crucified, and permit the rise of terror cells because preventing all of that just wasn't worth the massive numbers of American lives that were being lost daily in the war in Afghanistan? No! There had not been a single American casualty in Afghanistan in 18 months!! The cost in U.S. lives was down to zero! The huge price had already been paid and now our volunteer-registration military were maintaining a small presence of about 2500 soldiers to keep from losing all that had been gained by the tremendous sacrifice of Americans over the past two decades, both in lives lost and in trillions of dollars spent since September 11, 2001. There was no war, in the traditional sense. There was a small, strategic presence, and it was working magnificently.
>
> The reality is that this decision was made because it's what the American people demanded. As of April of this year, 69% of Americans wanted a full withdrawal

> from Afghanistan. And why did Americans think that was a good idea? Because short, catchy, popular phrases that make us look good to others are in, and thoughtful, well-researched, informed positions that go against the tides of culture are out.
>
> We want to be on the side of "Black Lives Matter", even though the policies of this organization overtly destroy black families and black lives. We want to be on the side of "Science is real", even though this slogan is used to cover for a definition of science that excludes the supernatural, rejects objective morality, and, well…denies scientific facts. And we buy into foolishness like, "No more endless wars", when the reality is that our way of life must be defended against the evil that seeks to destroy us.
>
> We have been so dumb for so long, watching trash on television instead of reading great books, receiving our "education" from a government-run system that has rejected the principles upon which this country was built in order to fulfill a demonic agenda, and surrounding ourselves with people who are just as dumb, that we have lost our ability to think critically and to act morally. The drive to withdraw the troops from Afghanistan was no exception.
>
> As Dan Crenshaw, member of the U.S. House of Representatives and a former Navy SEAL who lost his eye during combat in Afghanistan, has said, the argument for bringing home the troops was purely an emotional one. It was not an informed, fact-based decision in which voters and the leaders who represent them weighed the pros and cons and came to a sensible conclusion. Rather, like so many people's policy positions today, it was driven by an emotion-driven slogan that sounds nice but doesn't work in the real world. In this case, that slogan was "No more endless wars!"

Politics begins and ends for Democrat voters with their own feelings. They read almost nothing that would help them understand how the world works. They just try to watch social media and TV to see what slogans they need to spout in order to feel good and be liked. It doesn't matter to them what happens next if policies are enacted. The important thing is to find out what is being praised on social media and TV, and then spout those slogans to their friends.

Consider policies like raising the minimum wage, or fixing the amount that landlords can charge for rent. Democrats support these policies, because they sound "nice". And they want to feel generous – with other people's money. But minimum wage hikes results in higher unemployment for low-skilled workers, and rent control results in housing shortages and slums. But if you only care about yourself, then these bad results don't matter to you. And how can you predict the bad results? You read non-fiction books on economics – something no Democrat is willing to do. They want to feel good, and have an easy life. Reading books is boring and too much work. If they read anything, it's devotions, self-help, romance novels and entertaining fiction.

That's why Democrats look at the condition of blacks in America, and they don't want to

criticize the root causes: fatherlessness and government-run schools. It’s easier for them to blame some other successful ethnic group than to tell people who are making mistakes “you need to make decisions like Asians, if you want Asian life outcomes”. Instead of telling the truth, they lie, so that they look good to others.

We really need to do better than voting feelings and peer approval at election time. It’s about the direction of the country – not about your feelings or your need to virtue signal.

38-year old unmarried model explains what she means by “a decent man” (for marriage)

August 31, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve always been suspicious of women who make a living through their physical beauty. I see a few problems with modeling as a career. First, you don’t have to produce anything useful that requires understanding the real world, like a programmer or a nurse. Second, you focus a lot on your appearance, and that’s not healthy, since it all fades out by age 35 anyway. Women who get a lot of attention for free typically don’t know how to treat men, either. They don’t learn because they don’t have to learn.

With that in mind, here’s an article by an aging 38-year-old model that illustrates the problem:

> Earlier this month I opened the door to a bouquet of flowers.
>
> They were from yet another man who wants to date me. He’s 35, tall, dark and handsome.
>
> […]And this week, as the gifts roll in from admirers for Valentine’s Day — I have already received two…
>
> […]I am 38 and have been single for four years.

So, the first thing to point out about this is that it confirms what I was saying about pretty women. Look at the way she talks about how all these men are paying attention to her. Like it or not, her worldview is going to be conditioned by this attention she’s getting from men. She isn’t having to write code to get attention. Or set a fracture. Or do anything. She just gets it because she was born with good looks. And she doesn’t see that it is her job to 1) prepare her character for attracting a man who wants to commit, or 2) choose men who are interested in commitment. Her job is just to be pretty, and then tell everyone how much attention she’s getting from men. *Men who will not commit to her*. She is mistaking the attention for intent to marry. But men who pay attention to dumb, pretty women don’t intend to marry them. They just want to pump and dump them.

But she doesn’t see her failure to prepare herself for commitment and to prefer commitment-minded men as her problem. On the contrary – her singleness at 38 is *the fault of men being worthless*:

> And I hate to break it to any other single women in their late thirties, but all the decent men in our age bracket have been taken.
>
> […]While I work out every day, these men look a decade older.
>
> Beer bellies, bad manners, little respect for single women and minimal hygiene — I’ve seen it all on the apps.
>
> Over the past four years I’ve been on almost 500 dates trying to find Mr Right.
>
> And while I have become something of an expert on dating apps — last year I got

> a congratulations from Tinder for getting 25,000 likes for my profile — unfortunately, I am still looking for The One.
>
> My theory is all the good men were snapped up when they were young. All that's left is the dregs.

Now, she doesn't think that she is the dregs for being 38 and being completely unsuited to marriage. She thinks that men are the dregs – because they don't have an attractive height and appearance. That's what she's looking for – and that's *the only thing she's looking for*. She's had relationships with men, but they just LIVED WITH HER. They never committed, because she wasn't looking for a man who would commit, she was looking for a man with appearance, height, fitness and hygiene. Someone who looked as good as her.

Doubt me? Read her own words – this is what she values in a man:

> During my 500 dates, the only guy I have seriously dated was my age and had the best hair and teeth in the world.
>
> He even had a "proper" job and took me out for fancy dinners. Alas, he wasn't ready to settle down — or something like that.
>
> Apart from that, there was the guy who looked like Superman on his dating profile but turned up with a long white Santa beard. His body had gone to pot and he was wearing unwashed clothes.
>
> Then there was the wealthy consultant who took me to his club where cocktails were thirty quid a pop. He was generous but knew the value of nothing. Plus, he continually scoffed salt and vinegar nuts on our date — the odour was revolting.
>
> […]Then there are the beer bellies. If a man has one, I know we'll have nothing in common as I'm active…

And so on. Everything is about appearance. She's looking for *exactly what she is herself*: a pretty face. That's what she knows, understands and values. And she has *no idea* that the willingness to commit is not related to external appearances. The important thing for her is the man's *appearance*. And that's why she has 5 billion dates and no commitment. Only a certain kind of man commits. It's going to be related to his personal character – religion, morality, etc. – more than it's related to what she can see with her eyes.

In order for a man to stick with a woman through childbirth and aging, he's going to have to have some reason to value her beyond youth and beauty. And not every man has such reasons. That's why it's the woman's job to do two things. 1) to develop the kinds of character traits that are likely to attract a commitment-minded man, like fitness, femininity, vulnerability, trust, kindness, etc. and 2) to evaluate men and separate the ones who have a worldview that values women for more than youth and beauty.

In the case of Christian men, we are looking for women who have self-control, sobriety, chastity, fidelity, etc. And we are especially attracted to women who take God's goals as their own, and work independently to promote the things that God thinks are valuable.

Women who can defend God’s existence and reputation are highly regarded. Women who put others above their own selfish desires, especially children and animals. Women who are content at home with a non-fiction book. Women who don’t seem to waste money on entertainment, fun and thrills. The woman has to have what commitment-ready men want, and she has to know which men are ready for commitment. SHE CAN’T READ THAT WITH HER EYES OR WITH HER FEELINGS. She’s going to have to ask questions and investigate what he demonstrates about his character with his actions and accomplishments.

Why you should read “Up From Slavery” by Booker T. Washington

September 1, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

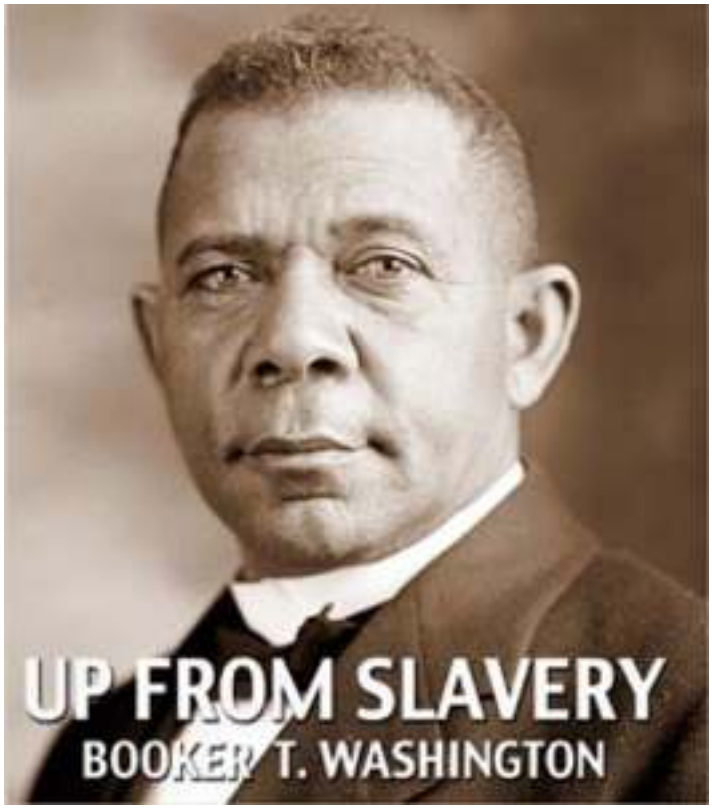

What’s the best way to get up from slavery?

Lately, my friends have been very excited that I’m a non-white conservative. They want me to answer the grievances of BLM people, and explain from my own experiences what Christianity and conservative policies have to say about making the lives of non-whites better. My friend Wes recommended “Up From Slavery” by Booker T. Washington to help me focus my thoughts.

Here’s a summary of the book:

> ### Dignity through Labor
>
> Over the course of *Up From Slavery,* Washington develops the idea and ideal of dignity through labor. For Washington, the gravest aspect of the institution of slavery is the denigration of labor for both blacks and whites. Because the enslaved had no personal investment or return on their labor, they did not complete their work with an attitude toward improvement. Likewise, whites, largely deprived of meaningful labor, were robbed of the ability to achieve self-sufficiency. In both races, this produced personalities and characters that seek to escape labor. Washington emphasizes labor as the only way to make oneself useful in an interdependent, modern society. Throughout the whole of *Up From Slavery*, Washington searches for and obtains work. Further, once he obtains it,

Washington completes all labor to best of his ability, no matter how lowly the task. At the Tuskegee Institute, Washington makes this idea and ideal a foundational ethos. All students who study at the Tuskegee Institute must learn a trade or industry alongside their more traditional academic pursuits. In addition, many of the buildings, most of the furniture, the wagons, and the materials used at the school are produced by students. This level of practical skill and diligence also acts as the foundation of Washington's theory and program for racial uplift.

Selflessness, Desire to Be Useful to One's Community

The people that Washington most admires and models himself after are those he labels selfless. Washington defines this as the willingness to work on the behalf of others. For Washington, this is not only about duty or labor, but also about the willingness to do one's best for the benefit of the collective good. Washington believes that racial prejudice can be overcome if black people make themselves indispensable to their communities and their nation. The brick-making episode provides an example. Though the brick-making enterprise at Tuskegee felled three kilns before successfully producing bricks, the venture eventually proved successful and the school began to sell its bricks on the open market. Washington describes how whites who were unsympathetic or apathetic to the education of blacks and the overall project of the Tuskegee Institute were willing to purchase Tuskegee bricks due to their quality and convenience. Washington suggests that if black race can find their niche in society by fulfilling a need, then they can co-exist peacefully and productively with whites.

Impracticality of Political Agitation

Throughout *Up From Slavery*, Washington defends his ideas about racial advancement and uplift by subtly undermining the proposals of his critics. Though Washington does not explicitly state his objection to the strategies of specific thinkers like W.E.B. Dubois or even his predecessor, Frederick Douglass, he nevertheless highlights the wastefulness of political agitation for equal rights at every chance he gets. To do this, Washington shows that political agitation results in worse relations and outcomes than those that existed before. For example, when he goes home to Malden after his second year at the Hampton Institute, Washington finds that both the salt-furnace and the coal-mine are not in operation due to worker's strikes. In Chapter IV, Washington describes how strikers usually spent all their savings during the strikes and returned to work in debt, but at the same wages. He raises the impracticality of political agitation again after his controversial Atlanta Exposition speech. After the success of his speech, he hypothetically asks if a black man would have been invited to give a speech had people agitated to put a black person on the program. He answers in the negative, saying that such opportunities can only arise through merit.

And here's a summary of his most famous speech:

> On September 18, 1895, Booker T. Washington was selected to give a speech that would open the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia. The speech, which is often referred to as the "Atlanta Compromise," was the first speech given by an African American to a racially-mixed audience in the South. In it, Washington suggested that African Americans should not agitate for political and social equality, but should instead work hard, earn respect and acquire vocational training in order to participate in the economic development of the South. By doing so, eventually, he stated, African Americans would gain the respect of white society and be granted the rights of full citizenship.

There's a free full audio version of the book, and the full text is online. I recommend this book to people of all races, because as the sexual anarchy brought on by feminism becomes widespread, the majority of the children of tomorrow will face the same kinds of challenges.

I see Washington's ideas as consistent with a Christian worldview, where we don't expect to be treated fairly. We expect sinful people to treat us badly. What Christianity says is to be patient, and focus on your relationship with God and loving your neighbor. And one way to love your neighbor is to sell them something valuable that you made through your labor. Another way is to work and save, and give to charity.

Government solutions to problems like racism and poverty aren't a top priority for Christians. Most of all, we need the freedom to be good, and to do good. That's priority one. You may not make your life better by being moral and diligent, but it's rare that doing so causes you to harm yourself. It's very important that you not harm yourself.

So, this dovetails nicely with my own story. My married non-white parents were not smart enough or willing enough to monitor my education, but they were clear that they wanted me to do well in order to find good-paying work. So I completed my BS and MS in a STEM field, and went to work right away, and I've been at it continuously for 20 years now. I save most of what I earn for charity and early retirement.

I've never experienced any of the racism or police brutality that American blacks complain about. And that's because I follow what Washington is teaching. I dress in a clean way that doesn't communicate danger to others. I'm careful to spend my time reading apologetics, economics and military history. I don't listen to popular music or watch popular TV or movies. I don't hang out with people who blame other people for their lack of success.

I got my first job by volunteering to do it for free on Saturdays for 7 months. My first full-time job salary after college was $50,000. Then I got a raise of $6,000 and then a raise of $9,000. I used to work 70 hour weeks in my 20s. I graduated college with $9,000 dollars in the black, and my net worth is now about $1.25 million. By the way, the secret to becoming wealthy is to not spend money on showing off. You can be very generous to your friends and still get rich. Just never buy anything that is designed to communicate

“status” to anyone. And never spend money on alcohol or chasing sex outside of marriage.

At no time did I accept that the problems defined by the secular left were my real problems. And at no time did I accept their “solutions” as real solutions to anything. As black economist Thomas Sowell writes, the “solutions” of the left are not effective at helping people like me. The “solutions” of the left are designed to make leftists feel better, and look more virtuous to others. You are much better off reading the Bible, Christian apologetics, free market economics, American military history, etc., and then respecting what you learn from that in your decision-making. I think that reading the right stuff is even more important than having good parents or attending church.

Why did evangelicals for Biden oppose pro-Christian policies and Christian moral values?

September 2, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

During the 2020 election, conservatives said that Democrat legislation like the Equality Act and the Women's Health Protection Act would hurt Christians in areas like religious liberty and right to life. But many people felt that Democrats would not hurt Christian values and liberties. Well, it turns out that the facts people were right, and the feelings people were wrong.

Now we get this story, from Daily Caller:

> Medical professionals are suing President Joe Biden's administration over a mandate requiring doctors to perform transgender surgeries in violation of their religious beliefs or medical judgement.
>
> Represented by the Alliance Defending Freedom, the American College of Pediatricians, the Catholic Medical Association and an OB-GYN doctor specializing in adolescent care filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee at Chattanooga Thursday against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
>
> […]The two medical associations represent 3,000 doctors and health care professionals, ADF said in a press release.

I'm just imagining myself being in a position where the secular left government forced me to violate my conscience. It makes me sick.

So, why were so many Christians tricked by the Democrats? Well, it turns out that a large number of people who identify as Christian actually just apply the label Christian to a set of values and a worldview that is defined entirely by their feelings. They believe that what is "moral" is what makes them feel good. In this culture, people have decided that it is better to be "compassionate", "tolerant" and "non-judgmental". What that means is that the strong adults do what they want to do, and the weak, e.g. children, suffer.

Take the Women's Health Protection Act. It's a bill that's been already passed in the House by Democrats that eliminates ALL restrictions on abortion at the state level. This bill would make it easier for women to kill their unwanted unborn children. No Christian should support it. But evangelicals for Biden do.

Suppose you approached an evangelical for Biden with an argument like this:

- P1. If the unborn are humans, then it's wrong to kill the unborn.
- P2. The unborn are humans, as per the science of embryology.
- C. Therefore, it's morally wrong to kill the unborn.

Now, you would think that an argument like this would work on evangelicals for Biden.

But it doesn't. They deny premise 2, because they have a *feeling* that it's false, and that *feeling* cannot be overturned by the science found in embryology textbooks.

Evangelicals for Biden don't think logically, and they don't care about scientific evidence. Their views (including their self-serving caricature of "Christianity") are formed by their emotions and peers. And they don't read any non-fiction or watch any debates that might change their minds. They surround themselves with people who agree with them. Anyone who tries to reason with them, or use evidence, is ejected from their lives.

This kind of failure to choose policy using reason and evidence applies to dozens of issues that are of interest to Christians. Not just abortion and higher gas prices, but also foreign policy disasters we are seeing in Afghanistan now, and in places like Vietnam before. They never learn. They never learn, because for them, a worldview is not about having true beliefs that achieve good results. For them, it's about feeling good, looking good, and surrounding themselves with people who agree with them.

Just this past week, I was reading comments from one of these "Christian" Democrats who had hooked up with a hot bad boy in her youth, then had an abortion. She became "Christian" later in life, to escape the feelings of shame from her past. When Trump came along, she only had one thing on her mind, and it wasn't policy or the Supreme Court. She identified Trump with the bad boy (who she freely chose) who got her pregnant, and she hated him for it. She did not want anyone voting for this man, because he made her *feel bad*. To correct herself, she would have had to have buckled down, and done some research. But since learning is hard work, and hard work makes her feel bad, she never learned a thing.

Evangelicals for Biden were never interested in Trump's pro-life record, or the unemployment rate, or the elimination of ISIS in Iraq. They didn't care about his record of achievements. They cared about themselves. They wanted to avoid being shamed for their selfishness past, present and future. They didn't care who would be hurt by a Biden presidency.

Well, I was a Never Trump conservative in 2016. but after 4 years of pro-life wins, a booming stock market, record low unemployment, no new wars, and tough sanctions for our enemies, I changed to be a Trump supporter. That doesn't mean that I look to Trump for moral or spiritual leadership. I just wanted the policies and the judges. The 2020 Never Trump people wanted BIDEN policies and BIDEN judges.

And now when you are looking at all of these horrors in the news, including the violation of the consciences of Christian pediatricians, maybe everyone will understand that "Christians" who form their view by feelings (compassion, tolerance, non-judgement), experiences and peer approval are not Christians at all. Next time, don't be tricked by virtue-signalers. Real Christians want to know how the world works. We would rather GET GOOD RESULTS than FEEL GOOD.

We won’t fix fatherlessness until we confront women about their choices

September 3, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Pro-family conservatives are very passionate about making sure that children grow up with a mother and a father. Most say that both men and women need to do better to stop fatherlessness. But in practice, pro-family people direct their criticism towards men only, giving women a free pass. Let me explain why this approach is not likely to solve the problem of fatherlessness.

Pro-family conservatives typically target the man who had the recreational sex, and try to urge him to commit to the women after the woman gets pregnant. Why won’t this work? Well, it won’t work because the man who was selected by the woman clearly wanted sex more than he wanted commitment. That’s why he had sex first, instead of committing first. He was selected for sex without having to show any ability or desire to commit whatsoever. So, you can’t really go back to him and say “now you have to commit”. The time to get him to commit would be BEFORE he got what he wanted, and the only person in a position to make that happen was the woman.

So what about the woman? What did she want? She is probably hoping that the man she is choosing to have sex with will commit to her, because she has given him her body. The baby is there to make him more attached to her, since the baby has his genes. Unfortunately, this is not how men who value premarital sex actually work. Wanting premarital sex is a sign of wanting pleasure – not of wanting commitment. The reason why we need to talk to the woman is to tell her that she will not get what she wants by giving a man with no interest in commitment premarital sex. It doesn’t work. If you want a man to commit to you, then you have to choose a man who wants to commit, and then let him commit.

So, that’s why I recommend we approach the woman first. We don’t approach men, because they want sex, not commitment. We approach women, because they want commitment, and they don’t get it.

Now, how do pro-family conservatives respond to this? Well, they think that women should not be challenged to do anything differently at all. If you tell women to make wise choices, then you are shaming them, judging them, blaming them, etc.

But just think of some parallel cases, and see if you can see why it is not wrong to ask women to make better choices:

1. If you invest your money instead of spending it on alcohol and cigarettes, then you can retire earlier.
2. If you go to the gym 3 times a week, and eat healthier, you’ll live longer and be slimmer.
3. If you study computer science instead of English, then you’ll be able to find a higher

paying job more easily.

The goal in telling a woman these things is not to shame her, but to help her to get a good outcome by making better decisions. The world is the way the world is, and she won't be able to get a good outcome from a bad decision.

Now here is another one:

If you make a marriage-ready man commit to you before you give him sex, then your children are more likely to have a father in the home.

Now look at that statement. It's not shaming women at all. Everyone agrees that men who have recreational premarital sex should be avoided. We're not blaming women – we're trying to get a good outcome for them by telling them the truth so they can make a better decision.

All we are saying to women is this: 1) focus on marriage early, so you can use your youth and beauty to lock down the best man possible. 2) And make commitment your top priority when choosing a man. This is good advice for her, and for her children.

When we are giving good advice, it's not our concern that people feel shamed, or that they don't like us. Our goal is not to make them feel good, or to make us feel good. Our goal is to make the children have a father in the home. I am fine with being hated for now, so long as I get a good result in the end.

Women these days often complain that they want to get married but can't find a good man. But what I have found is that these same women deliberately choose to spend their late teens and 20s pursuing relationships with good-looking, tall men who have *no interest in marriage or family*. What I would like is for pro-family people to tell women to focus on finding a good man who is willing to love her and commit to her when she still has her youth and beauty to attract a good man.

There is no point in standing by silent while women waste their teens and 20s on bad men, then expect the good men they passed over to marry them in their 30s. Those good men understand that they were not the first priority for these women, and that their willingness to commit will not get them any respect from women who ranked commitment LOW on their list of criteria for men.

Men have preferences about women and marriage. You can't bully a man into marrying an older woman who had other things to do with her youth than investing in him. A man marries a woman when she makes him her top priority, and sacrifices her happiness in order to love him and build him up. The earlier she chooses him, the more he is loved, and the more time they have to build together. It's not blaming women to decline a marriage with them, any more than it is blaming a house that you don't want to buy. Men are people, too. And men get to decide whether marriage is good for them, based on the value of the marriage offer.

I want to end by talking a bit about myself. I am not white, and was raised by two poor immigrant parents in a non-Christian home. When I was in grade 5, I received a New Testament from the Gideons. I read it, and I was happy to get some guidance on moral

issues, as well as learning how to put myself second and serve God. The more I put God's agenda first, the less I made bad decisions. I studied hard to be able to get a good job so I could give to charity. I was debt-free and financially ready to marry in my early 20s. I was a good steward of my money, and contemptuous of alcohol, drugs and status-enhancing material things.

The end result of that was a long period of chastity and sobriety, during which I accumulated 950K in cash (so far), and a fully paid off house that I bought new valued at around 300K. The point of me saying this is clear – what works with people who need help is to tell them the way the world really works, and what decisions they can make to get out of the mess they started off with.

Everywhere you look today, people are TERRIFIED of telling people who look like me that the solution to their problems is to read the Bible and make God their Boss. Instead, Christians are being dragged into secular solutions to the problems I had: Marxism, destroy the family, single mother welfare, abortion, etc. They don't want to offend people who look like me by telling us to make better choices.

Their motivation is the same as the pro-family people who don't want to offend women. "Let's tell them that the bad decisions they are making are actually good decisions, so they will like us. And when it blows up in their faces, we will just blame those people over there, and demand that they change". No, the solution to problems is found in the choices we make.

Blaming white people would not have helped me to get where I needed to go. Why do we shy away from telling the women who freely choose bad boys and make babies with them that the solution to their problems is in their own hands? It's because we want to feel good. We want them to like us. But Christians ought to understand that the best thing you can do for someone is offer them the Bible, and urge them to bring their actions inline with it. And the Bible clearly states that sex outside of marriage is wrong. If a woman takes that seriously, then any children she has will not be fatherless.

A while back, I was asked to mentor a young lady who was born in a divorced home. Her mother made her with her father, then her mother divorced her father. Then her mother married her stepfather who treated her very badly. She shacked up with an atheist and got pregnant, then killed her baby. The atheist dumped her. When she came to me, she was tired of her own decision-making, and wanted to learn how to make men like her without having to give them sex.

So, I put her on a learning plan of Christian apologetics, economics, science, history and philosophy. Today, she is married to her husband and has a son. She organizes apologetics conferences in her spare time. And the highlight of my life so far was that phone call from her where she explained how I was right about everything, and that now she understood why I had told her to make those better choices.

It was not easy. There were times where she chose more bad boyfriends – annoying unemployed students who were younger than her! – and she was mad when I didn't approve of them. But she kept coming back for more advice whenever things failed. And

in the end, she succeeded. Her husband loved her the moment he saw the books on her bookshelf. And today, her son has a father at home.

How should parents respond to teachers pressuring children to transition?

September 4, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One good thing about schools shutting down is that there has been a huge increase in homeschooling. It makes me happy that more and more people are pulling their kids out of public schools. My impression of public school teachers is that they are the source of moral relativism and cultural relativism. They break down morality and patriotism in children, and call it compassion.

Abigal Shrier has noticed that the teachers in public schools are pushing transgenderism pretty hard, because they don't want anyone making judgments about what is right or wrong, wise or foolish.

The far-left UK Daily Mail reported:

> 'I often get parents telling me they're not able to take binders (a cloth which flattens breasts by the use of constrictive materials) away from their children, and I say to them, "Would you give your children cigarettes?".
>
> 'Because we know binders are really harmful, they can deform breast tissue, cause rib cracking and shortness of breath. They're quite dangerous for your 14-year-old to be going around with.'
>
> Sharing her experience of parents' concerns, she said: 'Parents often say to me "I don't want to be seen as a transphobe", and it's very clear to me that sometimes these parents feel like they can't speak the truth or go against their own children's wishes.
>
> […]'I've never seen parents so beaten down and undermined. They send them to school in good faith and now schools are helping them fill out forms with new names as different sexes and hide it from their parents. They turn their kids against their parents.
>
> 'Medicine has become so politicised that parents can't even rely on honesty from medical professionals even when it comes to transition.'

You might remember that I blogged about a particularly scary case of this from socialist Canada, which doesn't respect parents' rights at all. There, the teachers, administrators, counsellors, doctors, layers and judges, all conspired to transition a child from female to male against the parents' wishes. If you haven't read that post, you should definitely go read it, to find out where our own public schools are trying to go with students.

Anyway, in another article from The College Fix I found an excerpt of her new book, where she offers advice to parents. She talks about not giving them smartphones, not abdicating the leadership role, monitoring the schools for gender ideology, keeping family business private, being open to pulling the children out of their communities, etc.

And there is some pushback against the transgender agenda being promoted by teachers. Some people are regretting their transitions, and blaming the adults who affirmed them on their way to self-harm.

Here's an article from Sky News:

> A woman who was treated with hormone blockers to reassign her gender as a teenager is taking the NHS to court, saying she "should have been told to wait".
>
> Keira Bell said the care she received for gender dysphoria, a condition where a person experiences distress due to a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity, steered her towards medical treatment.
>
> Ms Bell, who used to identify as a boy, was 15 when she went to the Tavistock Centre in London. She said after "roughly three sessions" she started receiving hormone blockers.
>
> Eight years later, and after undergoing surgery, Ms Bell is de-transitioning to return to a woman.
>
> […]She said: "I am angry about the whole situation because of how things have turned out for me based on the medical pathway that I was put on, but I'm now just trying to focus on changing the system for the better and making it better for minors and children.
>
> "I should have been told to wait and not affirmed in my gender identity I was claiming to have and given intensive therapy basically to make sure that I was on the right track for things and investigate the feelings I was having to figure out how I got to that stage."
>
> Ms Bell said she felt "trapped and alone", and the Tavistock Centre should have taken into account the "confusion" teenagers experience before offering her treatment.

What I'd like to see is conservative lawmakers craft legislation to allow victims like this to charge the teachers, administrators, doctors, lawyers and judges with criminal negligence. Because I really feel that it is criminal to lie to young people so that you will feel good, and people will like you. That's all that this focus on feelings and compassion is. The secular leftist adults aren't capable of moral reasoning. They don't want to do good for the children, they want to feel good and be popular, even if it harms the children's long-term well-being and happiness. The adults should be punished.

Bible study: the importance of truth in religion

September 5, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Bible study that hits the spot

Here's an interesting passage of the Bible. What do you all think the practical value of this passage is?

[1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

[2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

[3] he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

[4] Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

[6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

[7] Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[8] Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

[9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me

the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

[10] The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

[11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

[12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king."

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him."

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

[27] Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

[29] “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

[30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

This passage is interesting to me because it shows the kind of attitude that God answers. The King in this passage was tired of hearing man-made stories from his servants – stories that were undoubtedly influenced by the servants desire to survive the King’s wrath. The servants would only have told the King things that were vague and happy, so that they could never be proved wrong or found to be judgmental or offensive. But the King was tired of that. He wanted someone with authority to tell him the truth about the way the world was.

In the rest of the chapter, Daniel interprets the dream, and concludes by saying this: “The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”. The King replies: “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

I think it is is going to be difficult for Christians living today to be able to tell people their dreams like that. But what we can do is talk about God’s miracles as revealed by science and history. We can study astrophysics, biochemistry and history and we can explain what God did in creating and fine-tuning the universe for life, in sequencing amino acids into functioning proteins, in creating brand new body plans in the Cambrian explosion, in raising Jesus from the dead as a matter of historical record, and so on. We have to show how great God is to people who do not even think he exists, and without assuming that they believe in the Bible. And we have to do it by focusing on *what is true.*

Early last week, I got a message from a friend who was interested in a girl that he met on an online dating service. She claimed to be a Christian. My friend explained why he was so interested in some of the evidences I outlined above. She was not impressed. She said “I prefer to show people Christianity is true by not judging them, by being compassionate, by introducing them to a fun and affirming community”. There was no emphasis on truth in her approach. In fact, any religious group could do those things and “establish” their religion as true, by appealing to feelings. But this is clearly not what the God of the Bible

intends for people who seek him. He is a God of truth, and truth is established by logical reasoning and supporting evidence.

There are still people out there like the King who are looking for someone who can speak to them with authority. All it takes from us is a little studying, and we can be like Daniel, too. But we have to know what God has done from science and history, and speak with authority about how we can know that God has acted *supernaturally*. Authority to speak comes from having knowledge about what we are talking about, and knowledge comes from studying and debating with people we disagree with. Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer in the God of Israel, but he was still interested in truth. That won't always be the case, but it is the case for some people.

Criminal charges filed against transgender woman who exposed genitals to women

September 6, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This case started with some video from the women who were affected complaining to the spa employees. They said that a biological male had shown his genitals to them and to their underage girls. The spa employees said this is allowed, because Democrat. What's very interesting about this case is the the mainstream news media immediately declared the video a hoax. But was it?

Here's what Slate, a far-left former news source, said:

Salon Spa Hoax

In my opinion, when they say "may have been… but it still" as "it was only a hoax, but it still" they are calling it a hoax. Because how could far-left sexual deviants ever be bad people? Only good things come from rejecting God and embracing crazy selfishness, right?

Well, not so much. Here's the latest from the New York Post:

> In June, a group of women complained that a person who identified as female exposed [the person's] penis at the Wi Spa in Los Angeles. The incident led to months of sometimes violent protests, with media outlets declaring it an example of bias against the transgendered, or even that it didn't happen. *Slate* said it was a "transphobic hoax."
>
> But on Monday, charges of indecent exposure were discreetly filed against a serial sex offender for the Wi Spa incident, following an investigation by the Los

> Angeles Police Department.
>
> Sources with knowledge of the case but not authorized to speak publicly say four women and a minor girl came forward to allege that Darren Agee Merager was partially erect in the women's section of Wi Spa. Besides being a suspect in this case, Merager is facing multiple felony charges of indecent exposure over a separate incident in Los Angeles.
>
> Merager, who spoke exclusively to The Post, denies the allegations and says that she is actually the victim of transphobic harassment.

This is the kind of thing that Bible-based Christians want to prevent, but that feelings-based "Christians" want to allow. On the one hand, you have Bible-based Christians who believe in objective moral rules, and maintaining boundaries, even if people who are reckless and irresponsible feel bad about being judged. On the other hand, you have people who have been reckless and irresponsible in their youth, like the abortion lady I blogged about before, who blame everyone else for their bad decisions, and just want to use Christianity as a club to prevent anyone judging them. The former group votes Republican, the latter group votes Democrat.

Lately, we've been seeing a lot of bad behavior from the secular left. A transgender woman demanding that Asian women wax the person's genitals. Transgender women winning Olympic medals in biological women's events. Transgender women sexually assaulting biological women in women's shelters that prohibit men. Not to mention the Taliban raping, murdering and sex trafficking underage girls in Afghanistan. And so on.

All these bad behaviors were opposed by the mean traditional Christians, who voted Republican. But they are all supported by the feelings and experiences Christians who were reckless and irresponsible in their youth, and just think Christianity means "compassion, tolerance, diversity, pluralism". They vote Democrat. Because they feel good about themselves when they side with the evil people against their victims.

We need to be a bit more careful when we are voting. And don't be swayed by feelings and experiences "Christians" who vote for "compassion" and "tolerance". Now we know what they were really voting for, and it's not too pretty.

Game development company fires CEO for being pro-life

September 7, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do you remember a long time ago when Mozilla, makers of the Firefox browser, fired their CEO Brendan Eich because he made a donation to support natural marriage? That kind of thing happens often in the software development industry. Google fires people who aren't progressive enough. Well, it's happened again, this time with Tripwire Interactive.

Story from Daily Wire:

> The CEO of a video game developer based in Georgia is now out of the company after he tweeted his support for Texas's pro-life law, which bans abortions once cardiac activity is detected in the baby.
>
> "Proud of #USSupremeCourt affirming the Texas law banning abortion for babies with a heartbeat," John Gibson, CEO of Tripwire Interactive, tweeted on Saturday. "As an entertainer I don't get political often. Yet with so many vocal peers on the other side of this issue, I felt it was important to go on the record as a pro-life game developer."
>
> Tripwire Interactive released a statement on Monday evening saying that Gibson was out, effective immediately, because of the comments that he made.
>
> "The comments given by John Gibson are of his own opinion, and do not reflect those of Tripwire Interactive as a company," the company said. "His comments disregarded the values of our whole team, our partners and much of our broader community. Our leadership team at Tripwire are deeply sorry and are unified in our commitment to take swift action and to foster a more positive environment."

If you ask the Tripwire "whole team" whether they were tolerant and inclusive and diverse, they would say "of course we are". So, just keep in mind when people say these words, they don't really mean it. They mean "agree with me, or I'll fire you so that you can't earn a living, and you starve and your family starves" in a fashion reminiscent of Josef Stalin.

Now, if you look at polls about abortion, you'll see that about half the country thinks that abortion is morally wrong:

> On Wednesday, Gallup released its annual poll on abortion trends. Megan Brenan's write-up for Gallup highlights that a "Record-High 47% in U.S. Think Abortion Is Morally Acceptable." However, there is much more to the poll, including results that are more favorable to the pro-life position that the media may not be willing to cover.
>
> That headline is technically true. The plurality, 47 percent of respondents, who find abortion to be "morally acceptable" is indeed a record high. But it's crucial

> to look to the results of those who find abortion to be “morally wrong.” That number is at 46 percent, which is nearly identical.
>
> Last year’s results found that 44 percent said abortion was “morally acceptable,” while 47 percent said it was “morally wrong.”

So, this is a very mainstream point of view. And frankly science is on the side of people who think that unborn children are alive and fully human. What’s happened is that people who are rich and powerful have decided that it’s more important for selfish adults to be able to engage in reckless, irresponsible sex and then kill their children to keep the good times rolling. Being pro-abortion is nothing more than saying that you should be able to kill innocent people when you’re driving drunk.

Anyway, my point about this story is this. If you want to work in IT and have an opinion about policy or morality that is counter to the secular left, then you need to have an alias. Period.

I’m someone who is made very uncomfortable by having to toe the party line of the secular left. So I have two choices. I can either keep silent or I can find a way to speak out. I have found that having an alias is the best way to have a voice, while still keeping my job. I can’t afford to lose my job, because for me there is no safety net of family or community. So, I try to make myself as defensible as possible. I am aware of what happens if you cross the wrong person at work, or the wrong person at church, etc. And since I have no backup, I have to be very careful about allowing unstable people access to the means by which I earn my living.

Do you know the difference between virtue and sin? When a man is chaste, he doesn’t mind being made fun of or disagreed with or shunned. Chastity testifies to him that he is a good person. But if a person is having reckless, irresponsible sex and killing his or her own children, any disagreement or disapproval is extremely upsetting. Chastity is self-evidently good, and murdering children is self-evidently evil. So, that’s why the selfish adults band together and attack anyone who doesn’t celebrate their selfishness. They know it’s wrong, but they think they can fix the guilt by silencing anyone who doesn’t celebrate them. This is where fascism comes from.

Are you ready for marriage? 10 questions to find out how prepared you are

September 8, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Would you like your marriage to be long-lasting and fulfilling? Well, check out the questions below and see if you are ready for life-long wedded bliss.

1. Are you opposed to no-fault divorce laws?

No-fault divorce laws allow one spouse to leave the marriage at any time, for any reason, or for no reason at all. If you support no-fault divorce, then your view of marriage is that it's something to be entered into lightly, because it can be exited easily. You'll be walking down the aisle thinking "oh well, if it doesn't work out, I can always get a divorce". If you oppose no-fault divorce laws, then your view of marriage is that there is no escape hatch. You'll probably be a lot more careful about getting married. Since you are convinced that marriage is built to last forever, you'll have a courtship of at least 6 months, and involve both sets of parents in the process. If you put commitment above happiness, you're ready for marriage.

2. Are you opposed to abortion laws?

Abortion laws basically make it easy for two people to have recreational sex, and then get rid of any complications that result quickly and easily. This way, both the people that created the effect can escape the responsibility for what they did, and keep right on pursuing their goals and dreams. If you support abortion laws, you're really saying that you can engage in recreational sex with people who are unwilling to accept responsibility for any children that result. If you are pro-life, then you're saying that people should be careful about having sex, and be ready to take responsibility for a child, should one appear. Being responsible is good preparation for marriage.

3. Are you supportive of daycare for young kids?

Daycare services are essential for couples who need both the father and the mother to be working. The advantage of both parents working is that you can afford lots of shiny new stuff – like vacations, boats, shoes and handbags. Studies show that children don't die during daycare, although if you put a child in daycare, there will be effects on the child's behavior, such as higher anxiety and aggression. If you oppose daycare, you're putting the needs of your children above your need for shiny stuff. Putting the needs of children first is a sign that you are ready for the self-sacrifice that marriage requires.

4. Are you in favor of smaller government?

If you're in favor of smaller government, then you would rather keep taxes low so that more money stays in the family. If you support bigger government, then you think that government knows how to spend your money better than you and your spouse do. Additionally, government usually likes to spend more money than they take in. For example, in Obama's 8 years, we added $10 trillion dollars to the debt, which doubled

from 10 to 20 trillion under his watch. If you oppose higher taxes and bigger government, then you want government to pass on less debt to your children. Putting your kids' financial well-being over your own is pro-marriage.

5. Are you in favor of school choice?

If you're opposed to school choice, then you think that government should decide which schools your children will attend. School choice laws allow parents to give money to the schools they think are best for the children. If a school has excellent teachers and teaches students skills that they can use in their professional lives, then parents can choose that school. Schools have to compete to provide higher quality to parents, for lower cost. If you support giving parents more choice, then you put the needs of children – especially poor, minority children – above the needs of education administrators and teacher unions. Putting kids first is pro-marriage.

6. Are you in favor of premarital sex?

Premarital sex is really fun (so I'm told). You can have sex with people who are just really attractive, even if these people have lousy character. Your friends will be impressed, and you'll feel more attractive – like you were climbing a ladder of attractiveness with each new partner. If you combine sex with being drunk, then you can't remember anything after. And you can't feel guilty if the booze made you do it, right? On the other hand, if you present yourself to your spouse as a virgin, you are telling them that you have self-control, that you take sex as communication rather than recreation, and that they can trust you to be faithful by keeping sex inside the marriage. Trust is important for a good marriage.

7. Are you in favor of welfare for single mothers?

Sometimes, women find themselves pregnant before they are married. If you think that giving taxpayer money to women who have babies before they have husbands is a good idea, then you are rewarding behavior that creates fatherless children. Raising a child without a father causes serious behavioral problems. Boys tend to become more violent, and are more likely to commit crimes. Girls tend to engage in sex at earlier ages. If you oppose encouraging fatherlessness with welfare, you want women to get married before they have kids. Taking the needs of children seriously is pro-marriage.

8. Are you in favor of same-sex marriage?

When a man and a man get married and acquire children, those children will not be raised with their birth mother. Similarly with lesbians, the children will not grow up with their birth father. Studies show that children suffer from not being raised by their biological parents. For example, children of same-sex parents have lower graduation rates than children raised by heterosexual couples. If you think that children have a right to a stable relationship with their biological mother and father, then you place a higher value on the needs of children as opposed to the needs of adults. That's a good sign you're ready for marriage.

9. Are you in favor of radical feminism?

Feminism shows that you think the purpose of marriage is to make women happy, and not to work as a team to serve God and raise good children. Indeed. Marriage doesn't work if the woman approaches it as an accessory. Marriage is about a man and a woman sacrificing their own interests and compromising in order to work together as a team. Husbands and children have needs that women should care about. Feminism teaches women that husbands and children are less important than their careers, hobbies and interests. Feminism is anti-marriage.

10. Are you responsible with earning, budgeting and saving money?

This one comes to us from Bob P. He says that marriages work better when both spouses are "committed to financial planning, budgeting and a renunciation of debt to support a lifestyle. Disagreement about financial issues is one of the greatest causes of marital stress." If you're able to choose a college major or a trade that you don't like, but that pays well, that's a positive. If you're able to string together jobs so that your resume is gap-less, that's a positive. If you're able to save money even though it means you're having less fun, that's a positive. If you're able to give away money to others to support them, that means you're able to sacrifice your interests for the benefit of others. That's pro-marriage.

Well, how did you do? Leave your ideas for more policies and points of view that are marriage-friendly in the comments.

Why are young men underperforming in education, career and finances?

September 9, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I'll look at the problem of men become less interested in education and careers. I'll also give two reasons why this is happening, and then suggest some solutions to the problem.

Let's start with an article from the Wall Street Journal, entitled "A Generation of American Men Give Up on College".

It says:

> At the close of the 2020-21 academic year, women made up 59.5% of college students, an all-time high, and men 40.5%, according to enrollment data from the National Student Clearinghouse, a nonprofit research group. U.S. colleges and universities had 1.5 million fewer students compared with five years ago, and men accounted for 71% of the decline.

The article notes that there is massive spending by college administrators on far-left causes, such as women's rights, but few colleges want to do anything about the lack of men on campus.

> No college wants to tackle the issue under the glare of gender politics, said… [an] enrollment consultant. The conventional view on campuses, she said, is that "men make more money, men hold higher positions, why should we give them a little shove from high school to college?"

Here's some data from The U.S. Department of Education, via the American Enterprise Institute:

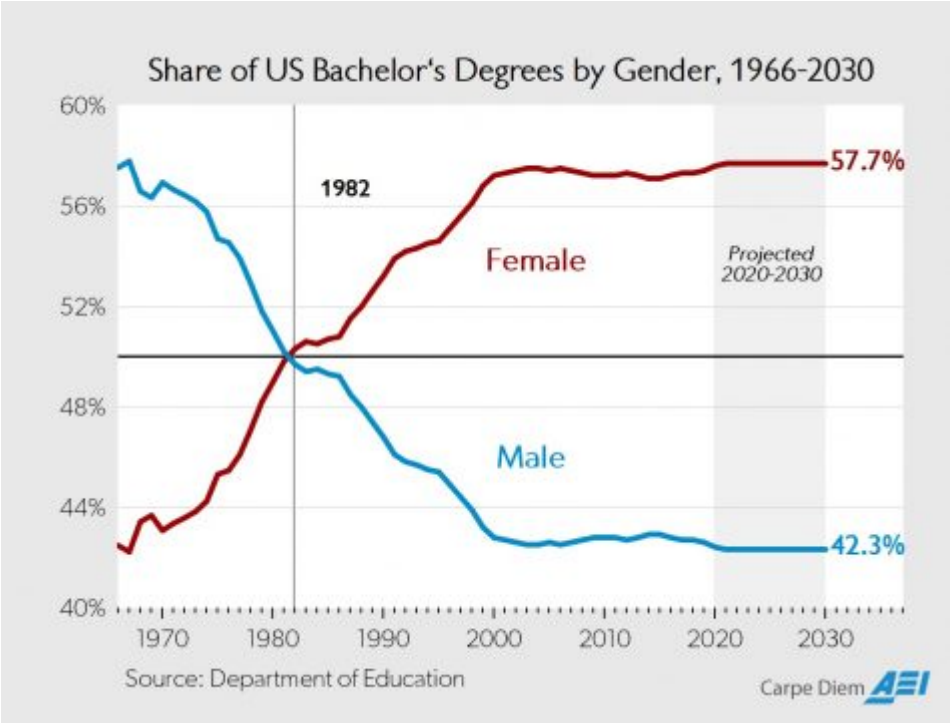

Share of College Degrees Women Men

Let's see two reasons why this is happening.

Discrimination

One reason why men may be giving up on college is because they face discrimination in day care and schools.

For example:

> A new study of nearly 6,000 elementary school children has found that boys are discriminated against beginning in kindergarten. Christopher Cornwell, an economics professor at the University of Georgia, says that "gender disparities in teacher grades start early and uniformly favor girls."
>
> Despite having higher scores on standardized tests, boys get lower grades than girls.

Day care and schools are dominated by women. Not just the teachers, but also the administrators. Many of these women earn less money than STEM professionals in the competitive private sector. These women don't typically blame their own choices in education and career for their underperformance. They blame men for "discriminating" against them. And this bias affects how they treat male students.

A good book on this phenomenon is "The War Against Boys" by Christina Hoff Sommers, a moderate feminist.

The Weakened Signal

Another factor causing men to underperform is the Sexual Revolution.

Here's a post from Dalrock, a Christian men's rights blogger, where he explains the choice facing young men:

> [[…][W]omen's past decisions to delay marriage also played a role in shrinking

> the pool of men who prepared to take on the role of provider.
>
> […]It isn't just that young women are now astonishingly open about their intent to have sex with bad boys in their prime and settle for a beta provider at the last minute, although that has to have an impact. It also isn't just that as a society we see married fathers as beneath contempt, although surely that's having an impact as well.
>
> Today an 18 year old man doesn't see the same incentive to knock himself out on education and career that men of previous generations saw. Today an 18 year old man sees that for the next decade or so his most effective sexual strategy is to focus on being the sexy bad boy young women dedicate their sexual prime to, not patiently preparing to be the boring loyal dude who will pick up the tab*.

If you read studies about sexual behavior on college campuses, you'll know that this is *exactly* what is going on there – parties and promiscuity. It's promoted by the college administrators themselves. Unfortunately, the college campus hook-up culture doesn't favor men who focus on education and career. It favors men who focus on appearance, athletic ability and sexual prowess.

It's important for people to understand the factors that are causing men to disengage from the traditional male development process, such as education and career. Ignoring the actual incentives that men face won't solve the problem.

In terms of steps we can take to solve the problem of men doing poorly in school and in the workplace, I would suggest rolling back no-fault divorce laws, to make sure that women are more careful with choosing a husband. We need fathers in the home, and rolling back no-fault divorce helps. Putting in mandatory shared custody would also help. In terms of the schools, having more male teachers and administrators (by allowing people with private sector work experience to teach) would help. School choice would also help. And finally, removing all preferential treatment for women in the schools and workplaces would allow men to do better as providers.

Biden administration sues Texas to overturn law protecting unborn children

September 10, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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During the 2020 election, a number of prominent evangelical Christian leaders came forward to say how Joe Biden would make a much better president than Donald Trump. They liked everything about Joe Biden. They liked opening the borders. They liked giving Afghanistan to the Taliban. They liked nuclear deals with Iran. They liked redistribution of wealth by a centralized secular government.

But what they like best of all was abortion. Abortion, they said, is the most wonderful thing in the world, because it allows allow young people to have reckless irresponsible sex, then kill any children that result from that, so the adults can be happy. This is feminism, and feminism is so good!

Evangelical leaders are especially happy with their boy Joe Biden this week.

The Federalist explains:

> President Joe Biden's Justice Department is suing the state of Texas over its newest pro-life law, which prohibits killing babies in utero if they have a detectable heartbeat.
>
> Attorney General Merrick Garland announced the lawsuit on Thursday and asked an Austin district court to block Texas "officers, employees and agents, including private parties who would bring suit under the law" from implementing it.
>
> "The act is clearly unconstitutional under longstanding Supreme Court precedent," Garland said on Thursday.

Evangelicals for Biden like David French, Russell Moore, Beth Moore, etc. supported Biden when they attacked Trump over and over during his first term. They liked Biden, and they got Biden.

Why did they attack him? Let's look at his record and see if we can find out what made them so angry.

Life News has something interesting:

> A nationally-recognized scientist who has testified in support of unborn babies is President Donald Trump's new choice for the National Science Board.
>
> Dr. Maureen Condic, an associate professor at the University of Utah who specializes in neurobiology, is widely known for her work on spinal cord repair, according to the Salt Lake Tribune. Earlier this month, Trump chose her to fill one of the 25 seats on the National Science Board.
>
> […]She obtained her Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley, and is a widely published scientist whose works have appeared in a variety of peer-reviewed

> journals.
>
> Her work has been instrumental to the pro-life movement in its pursuit to protect unborn babies from painful abortions. In 2003, Condic testified before Congress that unborn babies have the capacity to feel pain as early as eight weeks.

What do evangelicals for Biden think about her? You can find out by looking at whether they supported Trump or Biden during the election.

Here's another article from Daily Wire about more Biden policies:

> President Joe Biden on Tuesday filed an appeal seeking to force doctors and hospitals to perform potentially harmful transgender-related procedures and surgeries even if they hold objections.
>
> As outlined by BECKET Law's Luke Goodrich, a court in January struck down the administration's move to punish doctors who don't perform transgender-related procedures for supposed "sex discrimination." Biden on Tuesday officially appealed the ruling.

According to the Erase Religious Liberty Council, a pro-Biden group of pious "Christian" leaders, these Biden actions are wonderful! Definitely worth supporting. This is what they wanted.

Life News reported on another reason evangelical leaders were for Biden:

> On Wednesday, the Biden administration released a rule that will force taxpayers to fund the abortion industry through the Title X family planning program.
>
> The rule, issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will end a pro-life regulation that President Donald Trump put in place to ensure Title X grants are not used to subsidize the killing of unborn babies in abortions.

What about Trump? Well, he was endorsed by every pro-life organization in the country.

Why? Because of his demonstrated achievements:

Here's an article posted by the Susan B. Anthony List – the pro-life group that is most concerned with law, policy and judicial appointments:

> **Appointed Pro-Life Judges**
>
> In April, 2017, Judge Neil Gorsuch was successfully confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. And in October, 2018, Judge Brett Kavanaugh was successfully confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. To date, 157 of President Trump's judicial nominees have been confirmed, including two Supreme Court justices, forty-three U.S. Courts of Appeals judges, and one hundred thirteen District Court judges.
>
> **Permitted States to Defund Planned Parenthood of Title X Funds**
>
> In April 2017, Congress sent a bill to President Trump's desk that permits states

to defund Planned Parenthood of Title X family planning funds passed in Congress. President Trump signed the bill which reverses an Obama-era rule that disbarred states from doing so. Because this was passed using the Congressional Review Act, future Administrations cannot enact a similar rule to Obama's.

Stopped Tax Dollars Funding Abortion Overseas

President Trump not only reinstated the Mexico City Policy, but expanded it to the new Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance program. This new policy ensures that our tax dollars are protected from funding the abortion industry overseas across ALL global health spending, not just family planning dollars. The Bush-era Mexico City Policy protected roughly $500 million in spending – the new Trump policy protects over $8.8 billion overseas aid from funding abortion.

Defunded the Pro-Abortion UNFPA

The UNFPA has long been complicit in China's oppressive population control activities, including birth limitation policies and forced abortions. President Trump's State Department cut U.S. Taxpayer funding to the UNFPA.

Required Health Insurance Companies to Disclose if Plans Cover Abortion

The Trump Administration Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) issued a rule requiring that insurers specify in each plan Summary of Benefits whether the plan covers abortion.

Settlements & New Rule Regarding HHS Mandate

The Departments of HHS, Treasury, and Labor issued two interim final rules, which means they took effect immediately, while allowing a comment period, that provide permanent, enforceable relief from the previous HHS mandate for both religious objectors, such as Little Sisters of the Poor, and moral objectors, such as Susan B. Anthony List. The new rule also exempts private employers and educational institutions that have sincerely held religious beliefs or moral objections against providing contraceptives or abortifacient drugs.

New Office for Conscience Protection at HHS

In May 2019, the Trump administration finalized new regulations to strengthen enforcement of federal laws protecting the conscience rights of health care workers who do not want to participate in abortion. The regulations clarify what recourse is available to victims of discrimination under the law and what penalties the HHS Office of Civil Rights may enforce for violations. Additionally, in January 2018, the Department of Health & Human Services announced the creation of the Conscience and Religious Freedom Division within the Office for Civil Rights. This new office works to protect health care professionals who do not want to participate in abortion. In May, 2019, HHS issued a proposed rule amending Obama-era regulations, clarifying that Section 1557 shall not force a recipient of federal funding to provide or pay for an abortion. It shall also be

> consistent with the First Amendment and with pro-life provisions, conscience provisions and religious liberty protections in current law.
>
> **Allowed States to Defund Planned Parenthood of Medicaid Funds**
>
> The Obama administration attempted to prevent states from defunding Planned Parenthood of Medicaid dollars, issuing guidance claiming this may be a violation of federal law. In January 2018, the Trump administration rescinded this guidance, allowing states to defund Planned Parenthood of Medicaid dollars as they see fit.
>
> **Cut Planned Parenthood's Tax Funding by up to $60 Million**
>
> In February, 2019, the Trump administration finalized the Protect Life Rule to redirect Title X family planning program funds away from the abortion industry. The rule advances President Trump's promise to stop taxpayer funding of abortion businesses like Planned Parenthood, who will no longer receive Title X funding if they choose not to comply.
>
> **Canceled Huge Contract for Taxpayer-Funded Experimentation with Body Parts of Aborted Babies**
>
> In June, 2019, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced they would not renew a major contract with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) to fund research using the body parts of aborted babies. (learn more)

What did the evangelicals for Biden think about all of this? Well, judging from their support for Biden during the 2020 election, they opposed *every single one of these actions*.

Now, we are finding out what they supported. They supported a secular government overriding states that try to protect unborn children from being murdered. That's what it means to be an "evangelical for Biden". So, during the next election, be very careful about what you hear from the big, charismatic evangelical speakers. Instead, focus in on the pro-life achievements of the candidates, and pick the candidate who will get pro-life results. The kind of results that Trump got when he was President.

Who has the better record on foreign policy? Donald Trump or Joe Biden?

September 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Originally posted 10/26/2020. Re-posting for 9/11 anniversary. We used to have a president who was good at foreign policy. Now we don't.

Christians often like to try to make elections about a single issue, typically abortion. I'm pro-life, and opposing abortion is important to me. However, my goal is to get the election result I want in the real world, not just to be right in my own mind. So, I think conservatives should be able to discuss many different issues, like economics, energy, job creation, health care, education, etc. persuasively.

One issue you can use to convince people to vote Republican is *foreign policy.* Has Trump got a good record on foreign policy? Is it better or worse than Joe Biden's record? Let's take a look.

It's always a good thing when a leader is able to make peace between warring countries. Trump is actually really good at this.

The Federalist explains:

> Sudan will be removed from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list and will begin a partnership with the United States and Israel, President Donald Trump announced on Friday.
>
> […]The agreement comes just weeks after Trump secured two other historic peace deals in the Middle East through the signing of The Abraham Accords with Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, which established full diplomatic relations of the countries with Israel. These deals facilitated by the Trump Administration are meant to bring "stability, security, and prosperity" in the region.
>
> […]Trump granted Sudan's removal from the terrorism list after the nation paid "$335 million to compensate American victims of past terror attacks and their families."

In addition to those deals, Trump's diplomatic team just brokered a deal to get Armenia and Azerbaijan to stop shooting at each other.

The Wall Street Journal explains:

> Armenia and Azerbaijan, which have spent nearly a month engaged in a violent conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, have agreed to a humanitarian cease-fire, the U.S. and the two Caucasus neighbors said Sunday afternoon.
>
> The cease-fire, based on commitments made in Moscow earlier this month, will take effect at 8 a.m. local time on Monday, according to the joint announcement.
>
> […]Sunday's announcement follows a series of meetings in Washington aimed at preventing the long-simmering conflict between the two former Soviet republics

> from expanding to the wider region.

Trump didn't start any new wars in his first 4-year term, and kept his promises about bringing troops home. That's a lot better than Joe Biden, who was VP during THREE failed US interventions in Egypt, Libya and Syria. And the Obama-Biden administration pulled us out of Iraq, which caused the rise of the Islamic State caliphate. Trump actually had to clean up the ISIS mess, and he did: reducing them from a massive area of influence to a tiny area of influence.

Trump also likes to deter Iran, the number one sponsor of terrorism in the world. He pulled out of the Iran deal, which Biden championed. That deal gave Iran pallets of cash, and allowed them to work on developing nuclear weapons. In contrast, Trump has been very tough with Iran.

The Washington Examiner explains:

> Qassem Soleimani, the Iranian military general who was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Iraq on Thursday, was responsible for the deaths of over 600 U.S. soldiers in Iraq.
>
> "General Soleimani and his Quds Force were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American and coalition service members and the wounding of thousands more," the Pentagon said. "He had orchestrated attacks on coalition bases in Iraq over the last several months — including the attack on December 27th — culminating in the death and wounding of additional American and Iraqi personnel. General Soleimani also approved the attacks on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad that took place this week."
>
> The Department of Defense added that the strike against Maj. Gen. Qassim Soleimani, the leader of the Quds Force, the extraterritorial wing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, "was aimed at deterring future Iranian attack plans."

And just this past week, Trump continued to sanction Al Qaeda leaders.

Sky News reports:

> The man believed to be al Qaeda's second-in-command has been killed, Afghan security forces have said.
>
> Abu Muhsin al-Masri was on the FBI's most wanted list and was charged with conspiracy to kill US nationals.
>
> […][Al-Masri] had also been charged in America with providing material support and resources to a foreign terrorist organisation.

Very good, and much better than Joe Biden, who seems to be always wrong on foreign policy.

The Washington Examiner again:

> In his 2014 memoir, Duty, former Defense Secretary Robert Gates famously shared his view that Biden, then the vice president and previously chairman of

> the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had been wrong about "nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue over the past four decades."
>
> […]Early on Jan. 7, Biden was savaging Trump as "dangerously incompetent" for the strike that had killed Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps terrorist leader Gen. Qassem Soleimani a few days earlier. Biden claimed that Trump was close to starting an "endless war in the Middle East" and that "this outcome of strategic setbacks, heightened threats, chants of 'Death to America' once more echoing across the Middle East, [and] Iran and its allies vowing revenge — this was avoidable."

None of Biden's predictions ever materialized, because he knows less about foreign policy than my keyboard.

Biden is terrible on Osama Bin Laden and the Cold War:

> This is the man who once tried to dissuade Obama from his operation against terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden; who supported the Iraq War and said in 2003, "I voted to go into Iraq, and I'd vote to do it again"; and who vocally opposed President Ronald Reagan's military buildup and the Strategic Defense Initiative, which helped bring down the Soviet Union.

The Obama/Biden administration created ISIS by retreating from Iraq:

> Biden claimed he had atoned for his Iraq War vote by spearheading Obama's 2011-2012 withdrawal from Iraq. But that withdrawal was a disaster, and it led to the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS).

Joe Biden was also part of the administration that traded FIVE top Taliban commanders for Private Bowe Bergdahl. Bergdahl put his fellow soldiers in danger when they had to go searching for him, after he deserted his post. And then there was the Benghazi scandal, when the Obama-Biden administration abandoned their people when they came under attack by terrorists. Then they blamed the attack on a YouTube video.

We shouldn't put someone with a bad record on foreign policy – Biden – into the White House, when we can have someone with a good record on foreign policy instead: Trump.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

September 12, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus in a debate by saying that the resurrection is the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. Minimal facts are the parts of the New Testament that meet a set of strict historical criteria. These are the facts that skeptical historians agree with, totally apart from any religious beliefs.

So what are the criteria that skeptical historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."
>
> In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the

> probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> (1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
>
> (2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
>
> (3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
>
> (4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
>
> (5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
>
> (6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.
>
> Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in

> his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book. You want to look at it as a historical book, and use historical criteria to get to some facts that critical historians would accept. From that, it's possible to make a case for the resurrection, which is the guarantee that the words of Jesus are authoritative. Including the words of Jesus where he describes the Bible as a whole as God's revelation of Himself to his creatures.

Here is the approach I use when talking to non-Christian co-workers:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection
8. Don't let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And remember that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. That passages is universally accepted as early, eyewitness testimony from Paul, and represents the core of early Christian beliefs about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Everyone who takes evidence seriously has to

account for that early creed, which passes the historical tests I outlined above.

The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I've read is the one by Robert H. Stein in "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It's a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion "God raised Jesus from the dead". That whole book is really very, very good.

How will you marry and support a family as a conservative Christian?

September 13, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I sometimes feel that I am very weird compared to other people when it comes to work. I have this terrible fear that the secular left will force me to choose between being a Christian and being able to earn enough money to not starve. In fact, this is one of the reasons why I never married, and never had children. And it's only going to become more difficult for younger Christian men.

Here's an interesting article that Randy posted from the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank.

It says:

> CEOs tripping over themselves to prove how "woke" they are has become de rigueur, but the news that American Express subjected its employees last year to what can only be described as Marxist "re-education" sessions has struck a chord—and rightly so.
>
> […]It would seem, though, that AmEx doesn't want to hear any dissent. One ex-employee, Brian Netzel, just filed a lawsuit against the company, alleging that he was fired for voicing his opposition to these sessions.

I've been blogging about how people get fired for being conservative and/or Christian from all sorts of big corporations, and not just in Big Tech. Even with good technical skills, it's challenging to find a job where you can just earn money, and not have to deny your own convictions and worldview. That sort of thing is common in secular left regimes of the past and present, but I'm still getting used to it.

More:

> As one of America's top investigative journalists Christopher Rufo has reported, American Express has demanded that its employees map out their degree of privilege, determine whether they are in an oppressor or marginalized category, and then asks whites to act subordinately to members of minority categories.
>
> AmEx's workforce has even heard speakers demand that the company discriminate racially by charging black customers lower premiums.
>
> Moreover, the company's handouts lead employees to the group Critical Resistance, which advocates for the dismantling not just of police but also of the prisons system.
>
> […]Critical Resistance was founded in 1998 by three committed Marxists: Angela Davis, Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Rose Braz. Davis herself ran twice as Vice President on the Communist Party ticket.
>
> American Express also brought in Khalil Muhammad to harangue its long-

> suffering employees about how capitalism is racist and steeped in "racist logics and forms of domination."

I've written before about how the problems and solutions of BLM / CRT people are different than the problems and solutions of Christians. No Bible-believing Christian can sign off on BLM / CRT. Destroying the family and implementing Marxism are not the Bible's solutions to the problems of wealth and poverty.

How are Christian men who reject BLM / CRT problems and solutions for the Bible supposed to survive in corporate America? And if they can't keep a job, then how can they marry and afford to raise children? It seems like the man would have to compromise.

For example, a Christian man who marries and has children might:

- mitigate job loss risks by cutting back on charitable giving
- not have a public ministry under his own name
- not participate in any serious discussions at work
- learn to compartmentalize their faith, which can lead to secularism and eventually atheism (I've seen this happen)
- be exposed to harm from leftists in community and schools

What makes this situation even harder is that the Christian man is all alone. Most churches have embraced a new feelings-based version of Christianity that agrees with the priorities of woke corporate America. Christians no longer defend the Bible. Instead, the new feelings-based Christianity says that people can do whatever they want and never be judged. There is a horror of making anyone feel bad by not agreeing with them about following their heart. And if that blows up in their faces, then it's the fault of other people who made better decisions and got better results. This is the new feelings-based Christianity – moral standards and accountability are out, affirmation and non-judgement are in.

The new Christianity teaches that you determine God's will for your life through your feelings. If it doesn't work out, then no one can judge you or teach you to do better – because that might make you feel bad. And if you happen to have some abortions, frivolous divorces or fatherless kids along the way? Well, too bad for them – we wouldn't want to lose our non-Christian friends by warning them about the likely consequences of their actions. The goal of the new Christianity is to never tell anyone that they should obey God instead of doing what they feel like doing. The goal is to feel good and be liked.

As a Christian man, what I have learned is that if I try to promote a Bible-based moral view in public, that not only will there be trouble from the corporate world, but there will also be trouble from the no-judgment Christians. In the corporate world, telling people that their problems are the result of their own actions will get you fired. In the church world, telling a single mother that her problems are the result of her own choices will get you thrown out of the church. You can't tell people anything that places the blame for their actions on them, even if the Bible agrees with you.

So, as a Christian man, you have to lie about your convictions at work to keep your job,

and you have to lie about your convictions in church to avoid the wrath of the feelings-Christians. You can't teach any exclusive theological truth claims. That's intolerant. You can't teach any exclusive moral truth claims. That's lacking compassion. Just where are Christian men supposed to go to say what we really think?

The no-judgement Christian crowd needs to understand that in order for Bible-based men to marry, they have to be able to hold down a job. We don't take on additional responsibilities like marriage and children when it is hard enough already to put food on the table *for ourselves* and still be faithful to the Bible. If feelings-based people want Christian men to marry, they better dump this new feelings-based version of Christianity, and start doing actions to make it safe for Christian men to earn a living without compromising our convictions. Otherwise, Christian women can marry men who don't have those convictions. See if that works out.

I want men to stop giving money to Only Fans women

September 14, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I have an ongoing disagreement with a female friend about how to restore marriage and family. We both agree on the harm that is done to children by the redefining marriage to remove the traditional marriage norms of exclusivity, permanence, heterosexual romance, etc. But she thinks that it's better to approach men and get them to change, whereas I think it's better to approach women and get them to change.

So, in a previous post, I argued that we should focus on telling women to stop choosing hot bad boys, and trying to get them to commit. I said this because I don't think you can change the hot bad boys and make them commit. They want s3x, and that's what they are getting when the normal women throw s3x at them. They don't have to commit if they get what they want before committing.

But is there anything constructive to say to the normal men, who are not getting s3x thrown at them from many different women? Well, yes. There is something to say to them. Although they are not smashing up families, they are doing something wrong. They are giving attention to the wrong sort of women, for the wrong reasons.

Consider this article about the web site Only Fans, from Business Insider:

> OnlyFans, the subscription-based adult-entertainment site, boomed during the pandemic.
>
> Revenue at the UK-based company grew by 553% in the year to November 2020, and users spent £1.7 billion ($2.36 billion) on the site, a seven-fold increase, the Financial Times reported.
>
> The site allows creators to sell video clips, photos, and messages directly to subscribers on a pay-per-view basis, with OnlyFans taking a 20% cut. Customers pay between $5 and $50 per month.
>
> User numbers grew from 20 million before the pandemic to more than 120 million over 12 months, as adult entertainers and their customers signed up during lockdowns to share X-rated content.

Only Fans is a web site where the most impulsive and reckless women make easy money by showing off their bodies and performing s3xual activities for subscribers. It's voluntary, not coerced. They want to get rich quick without having to care about doing well in school or getting a job. They aren't interested in marriage, because they know that good men don't marry women who make themselves available to millions of other men. They are not conservative. They don't want men to lead them. They don't read anything that makes them wiser or more noble. Men shouldn't be paying women like this any money, or even giving them attention.

I want normal guys to give better women their time and money – preferably in a

relationship, but at least in a friendship. Even if the majority of women are using their young and pretty years to try to land hot bad boys, there are always a minority of women who are busy with better things, like doing computer science degrees. I think that the normal guys should be paying attention to them.

In fact, if I could just convince these normal guys to read more useful stuff, I'm sure they would realize that there is a lot more to a woman than youth and beauty. They would probably find the Only Fans girls pretty repulsive, once they realized how much different women can be if they are trained and prepared to commit to men and respect them. And by trained, I don't mean "I'm a Christian, you can't judge my past". I mean bookshelves of good books, read and highlighted. I mean a public record of conservative Christian achievements.

If normal guys can't find good young women to pay attention to, then they should try to make friends with older, wiser good women. That way, they won't be lonely, they will learn something from the older more conservative women , and they will avoid making the wrong sort of women richer. I used to have a half-dozen older women advisors who would fill my head with wisdom chirped out in their cute girly voices whenever I wanted. Getting wisdom from conservative older Christian women is a lot better for me than throwing dollar bills at online strippers, who take your money, but have no interest in getting ready for marriage.

And if a younger woman came along who read good books, was conservative, and wanted marriage and children, you can start the marriage evaluation process. The important thing is to have the money to close the deal on a marriage if you find a real marriage candidate, which is why you don't waste money on Only Fans women. Good women are the ones who trust you, respect your leadership, and achieve things when you lead and support them.

I don't really care much about the Only Fans women, but I don't think that getting attention and money for how you look is good for them in the long run. Women who get attention for stripping and doing s3x acts don't learn anything that's useful for them to be content in a stable marriage. They get used to seeing men at their worst, and they lose their ability to trust and bond with one guy. Giving them money to do something temporary that cannot be sustained as their looks fade isn't good for them either. I don't think it's good for society long-term to have a bunch of shallow, immature women voting for bigger government and less liberty when they reach age 32 and can't find good men to marry them.

Basically, what I would like is for men and women to get better at understanding moral character, religion and relationships, so they can choose quality relationship partners. And the best way to do that is what the Bible recommends – by renewing your mind. And how do you renew your mind? Well, you have to convince yourself that the world works a certain way. And how do you do that? By reading difficult challenging books that show you how to achieve the goals that are best for you, even if you have to sacrifice happiness in the short term. Men and women need to read better books.

I’m going to keep recommending to young people that they try to get out of the chaos of this generation by reading better books. Start with Philippians and John in the Bible. Then, I like “Is God Just a Human Invention?” by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow. Read some Thomas Sowell economics, and some military history. There is no shortcut to valuing good things, and making good decisions. You have to change your mind by keep out the culture’s junk, and putting in the good stuff.

Who pays for all of the Democrat "generosity" to Afghan refugees?

September 15, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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In a previous post, I contrasted Trump and Biden on foreign policy. Trump was obviously a lot more serious about protecting taxpayers from violent criminals and from terrorists. You might remember how Obama pulled out of Iraq and allowed ISIS to take a lot of ground. Trump got them back under control. And now Biden is repeating the same mistake with Afghanistan and the Taliban.

One thing that taxpayers should care about is the cost for creating crises. We have two going on right now. The first is at the border, where Biden is letting in unvaccinated illegal immigrants. I wrote before about how taxpayers get the bill for that. The second is in Afghanistan, where Biden's decision to pull out has created a refugee crisis. But Biden has an answer for that – he's going to let in tens and thousands of refugees who can't speak English or pay their own way. These are not skilled immigrants who play by the rules.

So who is going to pay the bill? Biden? My friend Neil did a survey of Democrats to see how much they give to charity. Biden doesn't give much:

> And consider how these Liberal heroes want to take your money to "give" to others but can't manage any real and significant giving themselves. If Joe Biden, for example, can't afford to give more than 0.2% over his roughly quarter-million-dollar income (that is *point-two* percent, not two percent — only $369 per year), then how could he possibly afford to pay increased taxes? Oh yeah, there will be loopholes for him and those who vote for the tax increase bills.
>
> His 0.2% giving and the percentages below are even worse than they look because they are based on Adjusted Gross Income, which is typically much less than gross income.

Biden isn't going to pay for this. So who will?

The Washington Examiner explains:

> The expected welcoming of 65,000 Afghan refugees by the Biden administration is likely to hit local welfare agencies hard if the current use of Medicaid and food stamps by those already here is any indication.
>
> In a thorough review of the 133,000 Afghan migrants already in the United States, the Center for 1mmigration Studies found that they are nearly three times more likely to tap into welfare than native-born Americans.
>
> What's more, the share of those in poverty is about twice as high as native-born Americans, according to census data used in the new report.
>
> […]"The Census Bureau data analyzed in this report indicates that a large share

> of Afghans in this country have modest levels of education, with many living in or near poverty and dependent on the welfare system. It seems likely that a large share of Afghans allowed into the United States in the future will also struggle in a similar manner," said the report's authors Steven A. Camarota and Karen Zeigler.
>
> So far, following the bungled military withdrawal from Afghanistan, about 24,000 refugees have arrived in the U.S., and about another 45,000 are set to enter, according to the State Department.

The article notes:

> The educational level of Afghan immigrants has fallen both in absolute terms and relative to the native-born. The share of Afghans (25-64) with at least a bachelor's degree fell from 30% in 2000 to 26% in 2019, while increasing from 27% to 35% for natives.

> Many Afghans have low incomes. Of persons in households headed by Afghan immigrants, 25% live in poverty — more than twice the rate of 12% for people in households headed by native-born Americans.
>
> In 2019, 65% of Afghan households used at least one major [welfare] program (cash, food stamps, or Medicaid), while the usage rate in native-born households was 24%.

The Democrats aren't kidding about making taxpayers pay for their "generosity". Daily Wire says they have a plan to come up with the money:

> Democrats on the Ways and Means Committee have drafted a proposal that would hit the American public with an additional $2.9 trillion over 10 years in tax revenue.

And the refugees will get "quick citizenship" too, according to Breitbart:

> President Joe Biden's congressional budget request would offer tens of thousands of Afghans arriving in the United States a host of welfare and quick naturalized American citizenship, a new analysis states.
>
> The analysis, conducted by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and shared with Breitbart News, details Biden's request to Congress for $6.4 billion in American taxpayer money to resettle 95,000 Afghans across the U.S. over the next year.
>
> Specifically, Biden's plan would provide an "expedited path to citizenship" to tens of thousands of Afghans who arrived via "humanitarian parole" by giving them green cards after just a year of residing in the U.S.
>
> Then, after only a few years of holding a green card, those Afghans would be eligible to apply for naturalized U.S. citizenship. The FAIR analysis suggests that the Biden administration will fast-track the citizenship process by backdating

> green cards for Afghans to the date when they initially secured parole.

In a previous post, I talked about feelings-based voters. These voters listen to advertisements and biased news media, and they form an impression about which candidate will make them feel good about themselves, and look good to others. They really shouldn't be voting at all, but they have so much confidence in their feelings and intuitions, that they do it anyway.

Next time, we need to fight the feelings-based voters a little harder, OK? We need to judge them a little harsher. We need to shame them a little more with the facts. And we need to be a little less bothered by their tears. Because we don't have enough money to keep electing Democrats. I have other things to do with what I earn than spending it cleaning up Sleepy Joe's messes. And so do you.

Baby elephant in China cries for 5 hours after being stomped by his mom

September 16, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

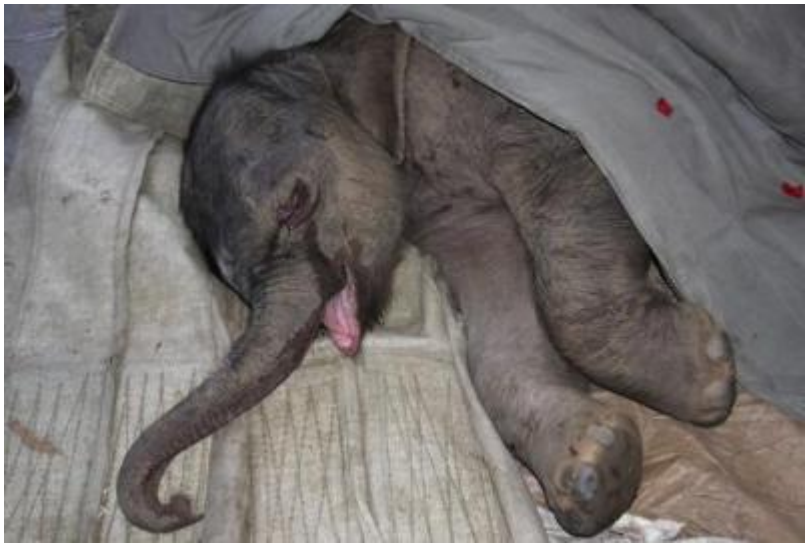

Baby elephant cries after being attacked by his own mother
From the New York Daily News. (Printable version linked)

Excerpt:

> Little Zhuangzhuang, a newborn elephant at a wildlife refuge in China, was inconsolable after his mother rejected him and then tried to stomp him to death.
>
> Tears streamed down his gray trunk for five hours as zookeepers struggled to comfort the baby elephant.
>
> They initially thought it was an accident when the mom stepped on him after giving birth, according to the Central European News agency.
>
> Employees removed him, cleaned him up and treated his injuries, then reunited the baby with his momma.
>
> But she was having none of it, and began stomping him again.
>
> So the game keepers stepped in once more and permanently separated the two.
>
> “We don’t know why the mother turned on her calf but we couldn’t take a chance,” an employee told CEN.
>
> “The calf was very upset and he was crying for five hours before he could be consoled,” he said.
>
> “He couldn’t bear to be parted from his mother and it was his mother who was trying to kill him.”
>
> The petite pachyderm, born in August, is now doing well. The zookeeper who rescued him from his violent mother adopted him and helped him thrive at the Shendiaoshan wild animal reserve in Rong-cheng, China.

I found another photo of the baby elephant here:

A baby elephant's birthday is supposed to be happy

So, in this post, I wanted to take about the duty that parents have to their children.

I guess a lot of my views on ethics are rooted in the obvious needs that children have. When I look at an unborn baby, I can tell what it needs. So, I am careful not to cause a pregnancy before I can supply its needs. The needs of the little unborn creature are driving these moral boundaries on me. And the same with born children. I oppose gay marriage because when I look at little children, I want them to have a stable environment to grow up in with a mother and father who are biologically related to them (in the best case). I permit lots of arrangements, but I promote one arrangement over the others because that's what's best for children. Anyone can look at unborn and born children and see that, just like anyone can look at a crying baby elephant and understand – "I have to govern my behavior so that I don't hurt you". If that means cutting off the premarital sex and making decisions that are likely to produce a stable marriage, then that's what we should do.

Children cry too, you know. They cry when we hurt them. They cry when we make bad decisions and when we don't provide them with what they need. Children need mothers and fathers who care about them. Making a safe environment for a child isn't an accident. It isn't random and unpredictable. We have to control our desires before we have children, so that we provide children with what they need. It would be nice if men and women were more thoughtful and unselfish about *children* and *marriage* before they started in with sex.

How to avoid choosing a charming, deceitful narcissist for a spouse

September 17, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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For fun, I've decided to publish the 2000-word first draft that I normally send to my 6 female editors, because sometimes it's fun to let people know what I *really* think about things before my editors force me to make it more palatable.

We got a comment a while back that I thought was worth a response.

Let's start with the comment:

> My husband was a Narcissist. He slept all over the county and never worked a day in this marriage. Plus, He couldn't decide if he was straight or gay. After my son finally left home I filed for divorce. I wish I did it sooner. Now he claims to be born again and wants to stay together. When is enough, enough?

We don't know if this woman was a Christian, was chaste, and whether the man she chose was Christian or was chaste. All we know is that the man she chose was attractive enough to easily find other women who would have sex with him despite the fact that he was married. Whatever he has, it's something that causes women who are not married to him to have sex with him. That's who the divorced woman chose to marry. His "charm" wasn't from his moral character or his deep knowledge of Christian theology and apologetics.

My first response to this was to put the responsibility on the person who had chosen the bad husband. After all, I reasoned, everyone who takes a massive step like marriage is obligated to investigate who it is they are marrying.

But when I said that, I got some responses from women that said that she wasn't responsible for her poor choice of man, and that she was an innocent victim of his magical charming powers.

Here's Lee:

> A lot of time people don't show their worst qualities until the relationship is firmly in place, and it starts coming out slowly. It's not always as clear cut as a woman stupidly choosing an unsuitable husband who acted unsuitable from the get-go. I mean yeah, sometimes it's obvious early on and the woman is just stupid/blind/broken/other. But we should be careful to not assume, and careful to not make harsh judgments from our ignorance.

If dangers like infidelity are not "obvious" then it's not the woman's fault that she didn't detect it. Apparently there is no way for the woman to detect it if it's not obvious, so she's not responsible.

And Mary:

> Narcissists are skilled at charming and persuading people that they're really great. And they're skilled at convincing others that their misgivings are irrational fears. Unfortunately,there are a lot of people like that. Not saying that people (men AND women, btw!) don't just sometimes choose stupidly, for bad reasons like "hotness" and excitement. But narcissists are a whole other kettle of fish. They can come out with a completely different personality once they've snagged their prey.

If a bad person is "skilled at charming", then their victim has no way of evaluating them accurately. Basically, deciding who to marry is just an activity where you talk, and decide how you feel about that person's talk. If the person is charming, then they make you feel good, and it's rational to marry them. A lot of women express this as "I want a man who is confident". It's never been explained to me how "confidence" is any evidence that the man has an ability and a past pattern of self-control and fidelity.

And Sara:

> Probably because narcissists can be very charming at first and easily win people over.
>
> […] What I was trying to say and the article pointed out is the power of narcissists is they can put people, especially women, under a spell of sorts. They are just so slick and charming that common sense goes right out the window. They don't think to verify all these things that seem obvious because they are so captivated.

All that's necessary to detect a charming narcissist is "common sense". His suitability to do husband and father roles should be "obvious" from what he says and how he makes her feel.

So, let's take a look at some tips for avoiding these charming narcissists who can convince you to marry them just with their words and the feelings they cause.

How to avoid marrying a charming narcissist who cheats on you

Here is some advice on how to avoid marrying a charming narcissist.

1. Evaluate a person based on objective evidence instead of how they make you feel with their words

There are a lot of lies coming out of the artists, actors, celebrities, etc. in this secular leftist culture that basically say that marriage is all about you and your feelings. If you prepared for marriage by watching movies made by pedophiles in Hollywood, and listening to music made by promiscuous musicians, and reading self-help fiction written by divorced spinsters, then you are not ready to detect a charming narcissist. Marriage is a practical enterprise, with distinct roles for husbands and wives that must be performed regardless of how either spouse feels. You need to understand and evaluate what *behaviors* are expected of husbands and wives in a marriage, and then look for *evidence*

that the person you want to marry can perform those behaviors.

For example, if the behavior is fidelity, then the person should be able to demonstrate chastity and self-control during the courtship, and produce references from past girlfriends / boyfriends, and have written about chastity and self-control using research sources to explain the connection between premarital sex and marital instability. If you're choosing with your feelings, and you haven't done an analysis of marriage roles, and partner abilities, you're headed for a disaster.

Just so you know, when I said this to some of the pro-irresponsibility, non-judgemental women I know, their response was to laugh in my face at the idea of asking someone's previous partners about whether they were chaste and self-controlled. And this is why people are taken by surprise by the charming talk of narcissists. Feelings-oriented people today laugh at the idea of doing any evaluation, preferring to rely on their feelings. A lot of the failure to choose wisely is just down to people not understanding how the world works, then trying to manufacture a psycho-babble rationalization of why they screwed up.

When you're hiring someone, you do a job interview, you test their skills, you contact their references, you do a drug test, a credit check, a criminal record check. And you have other skilled people sit in on the interviews and tests, in order to make sure that the person can really do the job they are being interviewed for. The marriage evaluation should include everything that the job interview includes *as a minimum.* Marriage is at least as complicated as choosing to hire someone for a job. If you aren't doing the bare minimum of evaluating their education, career and finances, then you are setting yourself up for failure.

2. Learn what it takes to make morality rational, and then determine if your candidate is capable of being moral

Because marriage deals so much with moral obligations, it's incumbent on you to read extensively on moral issues. *You yourself* should have developed worldview (through study and debate) that rationally grounds the minimum requirements for moral values and duties: 1) free will, 2) consciousness, 3) objective moral values, 4) objective moral duties, 5) a divine judge, 6) life after death. Why? Because doing the right thing isn't something that you always feel like doing. When doing the right thing goes against your feelings, you will need to have a *reason* to act against your own self-interest. And that reason is going to be because the world is the sort of place where morality is real, and independent of your feelings, where you are a free moral agent, and where is a divine judge and an afterlife.

At the center of the ability to rationally ground morality is the ability to know God is real rationally, and to defend his existence using objective evidence and logical arguments. If you don't know whether God exists based on logic and evidence, how will you evaluate whether someone else knows it? If you can't rationally ground doing the right thing when it goes against your interest, then you won't be able to know how to ask questions and investigate in order to decide whether someone else is moral or not. Marrying someone

who doesn't believe in a moral lawgiver and a moral judge after death is as prudent to going into a city dump eating all your meals from what you find there.

In the specific case of fidelity, it's important to remember that some people have goals and an understanding about how poor choices right now will make those goals more difficult to obtain. It's easy to say that you want your spouse to be faithful. But what's really needed is to measure what they are really trying to achieve in life, and whether they understand how infidelity would affect those plans. If you can't see from their past decisions that they KNOW that 1) marriage and family are important enough to sacrifice for and 2) that they understand and apply the research that shows what decisions helps to make a marriage last (e.g. – no premarital sex), then, they don't really have the goals and the information that you want in a marriage partner.

UPDATE:

3. Lindsay the marriage expert says to make sure that your prospective mate is being evaluated by older, wiser people who love you:

> A lot of people (both men and women) don't know how to look for nasty character flaws lurking under a pleasant front. That's a skill worth developing. But this is also why young people should seek advice from parents and other mentor figures who may see problems they don't see. If you carry on your relationship in a vacuum, just you and the boyfriend/girlfriend, they can probably trick you into thinking they're awesome because they have an audience of one. They pour on the charm to their intended victim. The discerning may be able to read the signs, but many cannot. But when you meet their family and friends (and past boyfriends/girlfriends) and he (or she) spends time around your family and friends so they can evaluate this person, he can't fool all of them. He can't keep up a false front with that many people. So when you have loved ones who are warning you that they see something wrong with this person, listen to them, even if you don't see it. You may not be able to see it because you're being fooled. That's why you need the input of the people who love you. This is the most important factor to avoid being fooled by a charming narcissist. Get other people you trust evaluating this person too. Don't rely just on your own perception.

I mentored a girl who was raised Christian who rebelled against her (inadequate) parents who ended up shacked up with an atheist after going wild in college. She could have used this advice, but she would have had to look for people other than her parents. Having said that, she was very wild, reckless and impulsive, and her tendency was to follow her heart, and shove aside people who disagreed with her. Don't be like her – if you can't get advice from parents, then find some other older, wiser people who have succeeded at marriage. I was actually prevented from a bad marriage precisely because my wise female advisors insisted that I pay attention to a woman's actions, which completely contradicted the portrait she painted of herself to me with her words. So, this is good advice for men, too.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

September 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christianity and the progress of science
A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell".

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)

- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities

- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Men on strike: the social changes that caused men to opt out of marriage

September 19, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

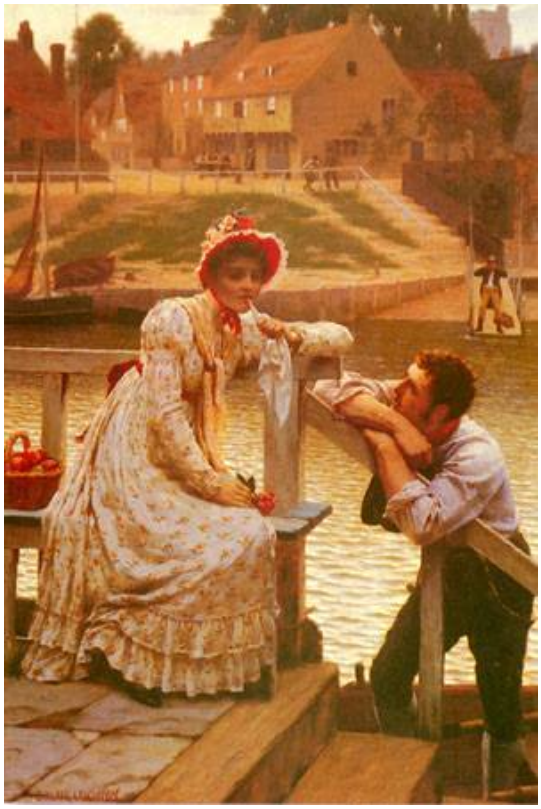

Painting: "Courtship", by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

I read and enjoyed Dr. Helen Smith's book "Men on Strike" a few years back. The book explains a few of the developments that have led to men underperforming in school and in the workplace, and opting out of marriage and fatherhood.

Dr. Helen comes to this problem as a secular libertarian, not as a Christian conservative.

A review of Dr. Helen's book appeared in Salvo magazine. The review is written by Terrell Clemmons, who has the best Christian worldview of any woman I know – I frequently rely on her advice.

Terrell writes:

> While the feminist movement may originally have been about equal respect for both sexes, what it has morphed into, she argues, is female privilege. From rape laws that empower women but not the men they may falsely accuse, to divorce laws tilted in favor of the wife, to the feminization of the U.S. education system, men have become the sex under the gun, while women enjoy the status of a protected class.
>
> But unlike their mothers or grandmothers, men today are not taking to the streets burning their undergarments and shrieking demands (thank God). They're doing just the opposite, which is far worse. They're going on strike. The strike

> zones are manifold:
>
> **Higher Education.**In addition to the enrollment imbalance, which is approaching a 60/40 ratio of women to men, college has become, in the words of one professor, “a hostile working environment [in which] males increasingly feel emasculated.” Smith quotes a student named John, who had this to say about his college experience: “I had already been cautious around women, having grown up with Tawana Brawley in my backyard and daily stories of sexual harassment; I played it safe and passive every time. But it doesn’t matter. The only way not to lose is to not play. So I’m out.”
>
> **Work,**including community involvement. With higher female graduation rates and salaries, men today are falling behind their fathers economically and professionally. Consequently, their efforts to prove themselves worthy mates through hard work and higher earnings don’t win female attention the way they used to. Discouraged, too many retreat to a man cave, and inertia sets in from there.
>
> **Marriage.**Marriage rates are down, and honest men opting out will tell you why. Smith cites a Rutgers University study of single heterosexual men which turned up the top reasons they hadn’t married. They can get sex and the companionship of cohabitation without marriage more easily than in times past, and they don’t want to open themselves up to the risk of divorce and financial loss. It really isn’t that complicated a decision. In fact, it’s often not an actual decision at all. It just happens.

The simplest explanation for the difficulties that boys face in an education system that is dominated by women (teachers and administrators) is discrimination. And in the workplace, the government requires employers to report on male and female head counts, and promote women who are not qualified. I have seen receptionists with tattoos and no college degrees promoted to six-figure manager jobs in companies where I worked.

There is one more which to me was the most surprising one in the book – paternity fraud, and the laws that support paternity fraud:

> Take the following cases of nonconsensual insemination: Nathaniel from California, age 15, had sex with 34-year-old Ricci, which, due to his age, was legally considered nonconsensual. Emile from Louisiana was visiting his parents in the hospital when a nurse offered him oral sex, *if* he wore a condom, which she conveniently offered to dispose of for him afterward. S. F. from Alabama passed out drunk at the home of a female friend and awoke undressed the following morning. In all three cases, including the one involving the minor, a woman got sperm and, nine months later, a child, and the man got ordered by a court of law to pay support for eighteen years.
>
> Less devious, but similarly amiss, are those cases in which a man, having been

> betrayed by his wife or girlfriend, was nevertheless held financially responsible for a child genetically proven to be another man's offspring. While not as sensational as sperm-jacking, it is another form of paternity extortion.

In each of those cases, the man was found liable to pay child support – including the case of the 15-year-old boy, who was forced to pay child support to his statutory rapist when he turned 18. This is how the court system works, and more and more men are understanding the risks.

I often encounter "pro-marriage" people while gathering stories for the blog. These pro-marriage people come in two varieties.

On the one end of the spectrum are people like Terrell Clemmons and Jennifer Roback Morse, who understand marriage, but who also understand the social changes that have made marriage unattractive for men. Both Clemmons and Morse have a background in STEM fields, so they are able to understand incentives and tradeoffs. They understand that society has to rollback the changes to education, divorce laws, etc. if they expect men to be interested in marriage again. They understand that men are not just accessories of women, but instead have their own desires, feelings and reasons for marrying.

On the other end of the spectrum are feminist men, who are not able to understand the changing incentives that face men in a world that has evolved under the influence of radical feminism. It is just simpler (less thinking) for these men to accept the radical feminism as a given, and then urge men to "man up". I think a much better idea would be for the "man up" crowd to realize how marriage has changed, and how the schools and the workplace have changed, then make all of these things more attractive to men. It doesn't do any good to try to "dare" men into jumping off a cliff. Men aren't stupid, and they do what is in their own best interests. If the man-up crowd wants younger men to marry, then they need to change the incentives offered to men. And that means changing women first.

Dr. Walter Bradley lectures on scientific evidence the creation and design of the universe

September 20, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This lecture is special to me, because I bought a VHS tape of it just after I started working full-time, and watched it a million times. A lot of people come to their convictions about God's existence because of parents or church or intuitions, but for me it's all about the scientific evidence. This lecture changed my life. I wish more people taught their children about this evidence! This lecture was delivered at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Bradley received his B.S. in Engineering Science and his Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Texas in Austin.
>
> Dr. Bradley taught for eight years at the Colorado School of Mines before assuming a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1976.
>
> During his 24 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Bradley served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and as Director of the Polymer Technology Center, and received five College of Engineering Research Awards. He has received over $4,500,000 in research grants and has published over 140 technical articles and book chapters. He has also co-authored "The Mystery Of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Materials and of the American Scientific Affiliation and serves as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.
>
> He currently serves as Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University.

The lecture: (63 minutes lecture, 25 minutes audience Q&A)

Summary slide:

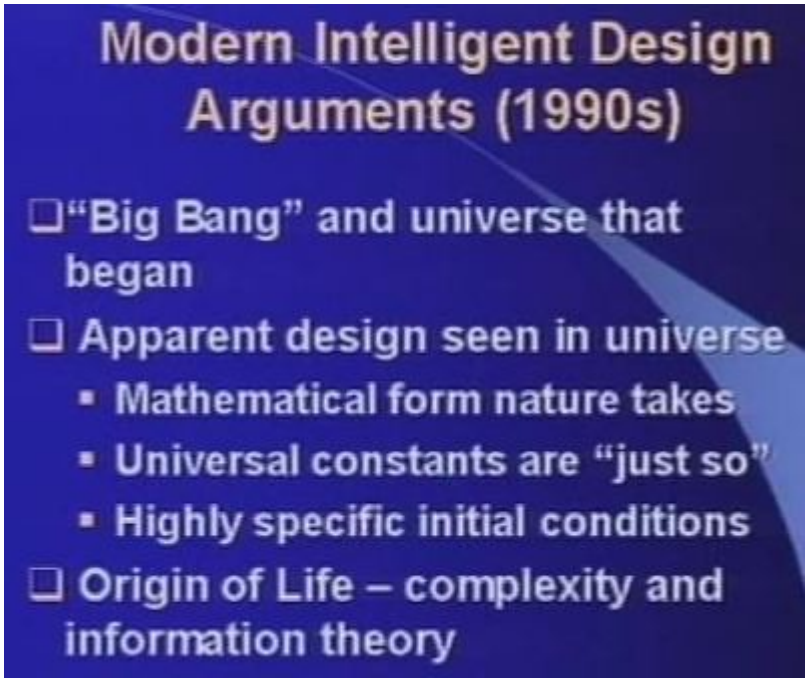

This slide summarizes the content of the lecture

Introduction:

- At the beginning of the 20th century, people believed that the progress of science was pointing away from an intelligent Creator and Designer, and towards naturalism
- A stream of new discoveries has shifted the support of science towards theism, and away from naturalism
- Richard Dawkins, an atheist, says that nature only has the appearance of design, but that if you look closer, naturalistic mechanisms can account for the appearance of design
- When deciding between design and apparent design ("designoid"), it matters whether you think there is an intelligence there to do the designing

Evidence #1: The Big Bang:

- an eternal "steady state" universe is more compatible with naturalism, but a created universe is more compatible with a Creator
- In 1929, Hubble used telescopes to observe that the light from distant galaxies was *redshifted.* The further away galaxies were, the faster they were moving away. Therefore, space is expanding in all directions, suggesting an explosive origin of the universe
- In 1965, the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation matched a prediction of the Big Bang cosmology, and of the creation event
- In 1992, the COBE space telescope allowed us to test four specific predictions of the Big Bang model, especially the predictions for light element abundances (hydrogen and helium), which matched the predictions of the creation model

Evidence #2: Simple mathematical structure of the physical laws

- the simple mathematical structure of natural laws allows us to understand these laws, make discoveries, and engineer solutions to problems
- early scientists saw the mathematical structure of the universe to mean that nature was designed by an intelligent to be understood
- the fundamental equations of the laws of the universe can be easily written on one side of one sheet of paper
- Eugene Wigner's famous paper, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Physical Sciences" makes the point that this simple structure is an unexpected gift that allows is to do science

Evidence #3: fine-tuning of the physical constants and quantities

- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stars that provide energy within specific ranges for long periods of time
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need planets with stable orbits that will not suffer from extreme temperature swings as it varies in distance from its star
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stable atomic structure
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need to have chemical diversity and correct relative abundances of each element
- organic life has minimum requirements: process energy, store information, replicate, and you can't fulfill those functions if there is only one element, e.g. – hydrogen
- the energy level from the photons from the sun have to match the energy levels of the different elements in order to drive the chemical bonding needed for life
- These requirements for life of any imaginable type depend on the values of the constants and quantities. The constants and quantities cannot vary much from what they are, or the universe will lose the characteristics (above) that allow it to support complex life of any imaginable time
- For example, ratio of strong force to electromagnetic force:
  – if 2% larger, then no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no compounds containing hydrogen, e.g. – water
  – if 5% smaller, no stable stars, heavy hydrogen would be unstable, few elements other than hydrogen

Evidence #4: initial conditions for habitability

- Universe: expansion rate of the universe must be fast enough to avoid a re-collapse, but slow enough to allow matter to clump together and form stars and planets for complex life to live on
- Planet: right distance from the star to get the right climate
- Planet: right mass to retain the right atmosphere

Evidence #5: origin of life and information theory

- It’s possible to explain every process in an automobile engine using plain old naturalistic mechanisms – no supernatural explanation is necessary to understand the processes
- But the existence of engine itself: engineering all the parts has to be explained by the work of an intelligence
- Similarly, we can understand how living systems work, but the existence of the living systems requires an intelligence
- Even the simplest living system has to perform minimal function: capture energy, store information and replicate
- Living systems are composed of objects like proteins that are composed of sequences of components complex such that the order of the components gives the overall structure function
- Developing the components for a simple living cell is very improbable – even given the large number of galaxies, stars and planets in the universe, it is unlikely that complex, embodied life would exist *anywhere* in the universe

Evidence #6: more initial conditions for habitability

- Location within the galaxy: you need to be away from the center of the galaxy, because the explosions from dying stars, and excessive radiation will kill life
- Location within the galaxy: you need to be close enough to the center in order catch the heavy elements you need for life from the explosions of other stars
- Location within the galaxy: the best location is between two arms of a spiral galaxy, where you can get the heavy elements you need from dying stars, but without being hit with explosions and harmful radiation
- Star mass: determines rate at which the sun burns, determines the energy level of photons that are used to drive chemical bonding reactions, determines the length of time the star will be stable
- Star mass: star mass must be the correct value in order to allow liquid water on the planet’s surface, while still preserving stable orbit

I wish there was more curiosity about science in churches, and young Christians understood *how critical science is* for grounding the rationality of the Christian worldview. We need to be training up more scientists who think about the big questions, like Dr. Walter Bradley.

How should Christians redeem their regrets over past decisions?

September 21, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Recently, I posted a dating ad from a 39-year-old never-married single mother. She explained that she was now a Christian and was looking for a man to marry her, so that she could have a second child "the right way". Some people thought we should take her conversion at face value. Others thought she was desperate and looking for a financial bailout. How can we tell if she is really sincere?

Well, I was still thinking about the comments on that post when I saw another great post from Laura, who writes at An Affair With Reason. Her post is about the feelings of regret that people have because of their past mistakes, and how Christians should deal with those regrets.

She writes:

> As I thought about what to write I became distressed, sorrowful, angry, and even despondent over some of my own decisions. As I sobbed inconsolably, I noticed that every caustic thought began with, "If only…." That's when I realized I was still carrying the burden of regret and I didn't know how to let go. It wasn't that I still needed God's forgiveness or that I had any doubts about my standing with him; I knew I was forgiven. It was the lifelong consequences that I experience to this day which embittered my soul and squelched my joy.
>
> The "if onlys" are a heavy burden to carry. They represent shattered dreams that will never be recovered in this life. They invoke feelings of discontentment, grief, and doubt. They cause us to sob with regret for what could have been, to pray for second chances that we know will not be granted.
>
> So what do we do with the regrets that we must live with for the rest of our lives? Lately, as I've reflected on conversations I've had with many women who have made regretful decisions over the years and on the direction of our culture, I've noticed two very distinct paths:
>
> 1. Attempt to assuage our own guilt and regret by convincing others to make the same foolish, and even sinful, decisions we made.
>
> OR
>
> 2. Humble ourselves, grieve our losses, and commit to teaching the younger generations to choose a better way.
>
> The first path is the wide and well-traveled one. Tragically and despicably, most people today seek to justify themselves and ease their consciences by getting others on board with their own ignorance, foolishness, and sinfulness.

She's got quite a few examples of the kinds of regrets that men and women have, and

different ways of dealing with those regrets. Some ways self-serving, others God-serving. Her examples are really interesting. It reminds me of "The Great Divorce" by C.S. Lewis, where he explains why some people don't resist God, and others do. Some people want to justify the past, and keep making decisions to benefit themselves. Others want to serve God. They want to take on the difficult work of opening up to others, and loving them by telling them the truth.

When I hear someone with a past say that they have now become a Christian, I normally ask "is this conversion just convenient for you or is it the result of some process where your mind was changed through study?" You can ask the person to show their work – how did they get to the right answer? And what has becoming a Christian cost them? How does it affect their relationships with non-Christians?

People "convert to Christianity" all the time based on need. Sometimes they're trying to get something for themselves, e.g. – wanting to not be judged for their past, so they can attract a partner to financially support them. But other people spend years reading books and changing their minds page by page, debate by debate. Then they put their knowledge into practice.

I have mentored women who did this. One girl who contacted me through the blog wasn't able to talk to her smart atheist brother about her faith. Then, she read a bunch of apologetics books about science and history, then called me and slipped the phone into her pocket and let me listen to her make a bold, informed stand for her Christian worldview for two hours. She won every point.

When people really become Christians, they don't do it in order to be happy and or to be liked. They take on work, and they take on shame, because they have a Boss now. That's how you can tell that real repentance has taken place. The letters of Paul in the New Testament are filled with advice for Christians who want to be bold, put themselves second, and advocate for their Boss. You should read them. When you read the Bible, try to put aside your feelings, your desires, and your concerns about what people will think. You'll find that putting work for the Boss ahead of what you want is worth the price of being "second". I would start with Philippians, then go on to 1 Peter.

By the way, this isn't the first time I've linked to Laura's posts. Here are some of the other times I've linked to her work on my blog: on voting, on Islam, on mentoring boys, on fighting with pastors, on learning what works when dealing with atheists. She had a 10 part series advising women how to choose a husband, which really made me feel good as a man. Today, most people see a husband as an accessory – like a handbag. He's there to provide, or to be a handyman, or to complain at if the wife is unhappy. Men should read that series, and find out what we can do in a marriage, if we are valued for our distinctive male nature.

Why social conservatives should support free market capitalism

September 22, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The free enterprise system should not be adopted simply because it is the best system for creating wealth. The best reason to support free market capitalism is a *moral* reason. Arthur Brooks, President of the American Enterprise Institute, and a Christian, describes the moral argument for free market capitalism.

Excerpt:

> It might seem that the best case for free enterprise is the material one. Free enterprise lets people make more money, buy more and nicer stuff, and have a greater degree of comfort. The freer our economy is, the more competitive the US economy is vis-à-vis the rest of the world. And so on.
>
> But these aren't our best arguments. There is another reason, a transcendent reason, for which free enterprise matters most—and this is the case we all must be able to make today.
>
> We all learned early on in school that the Declaration of Independence claimed for each of us the unalienable right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Note that the founders didn't assert a right to be happy; such is the domain of tinpots and crackpots, of 1984's "Ministry of Plenty" and Josef Stalin's aggrandizing self-description as the Soviet Union's "Constructor of Happiness." So what, in practice, does this right to pursue happiness mean?
>
> It means the right to define and earn our happiness through our ideas, hard work, and gumption, to earn our success by creating value honestly, in our own lives and in the lives of others. It doesn't mean the pursuit of a big lottery win or an inheritance. Those bring money, but not happiness. And a mountain of evidence shows that after a fairly low threshold, more money doesn't make us happier. The best case for free enterprise has nothing at all to do with money or material goods or wealth. Those are just icing on the cake. We must stop talking about free enterprise as just an engine of wealth creation. It's much more than that.
>
> In short, the secret to the pursuit of happiness is earning our own success; creating value with our lives and in the lives of others. This earned success is the fruit of hard work and just rewards in a system built on merit. Only in a free enterprise system is effort and innovation rewarded over connections and predation. (And this means that we have to draw a distinction between free enterprise, which is based on opportunity and competition between ideas, and corporate cronyism, which is just another form of statism masquerading as free enterprise.)

Here are 3 reasons why I think that social conservatives should support free market

capitalism.

1) Right to work

It’s very important for Christians to have an economic system in place that allows them to work without having to promote anti-Christians ideas. But when government gets too big, what happens is that Christians are no longer free to take any job they want, and still keep a clear conscience. In some states, you have to join a union which uses your union dues to elect Democrats, who very often are liberal on social issues. Or, you have big government forcing Christians to perform abortions against their consciences. Or, you have big government forcing Christian organizations to provide health insurance plans that cover abortions and contraceptives. That’s why Christians need to vote against big government regulations on employment – we need the freedom to work at a job that does not violate our consciences.

2) Right to earn

It’s very important for Christians to keep what they earn so that they have the maximum amount of money to make decisions that make sense for them, according to their consciences. Take the example of day care and education. The big government statist is constantly trying to to create more and more government-run day care and public schools. Why? They want to take money away from families so that they cannot afford individualized private and parochial schools, and lump them all into government run schools that are more “equal”. The problem is that this is bad for Christians who want more oversight into what their children learn. For example, what sense does it make for a Christian man to pay for day care and public schools when he marries a teacher who becomes a stay at home homeschooling mother for his children? He has to pay for day care and public schools he will never use, and it eats into the money he has to afford a stay-at-home homeschooling mom. Christians should oppose a day care and education system run by a secular leftist government. They will never reflect the values of Christian parents.

3) Right to spend

It’s very important for Christians to have the freedom to purchase products and services that make sense in their worldview. Take the example of health care. Secular leftists would love to force private medical insurance companies to cover things like abortion and contraception as health care. In some states, these things are specified as mandatory for every health care plan. That means that Christians who purchase health care are being forced to pay for services like abortion which they will never use themselves. This is nothing more than the redistribution of wealth in order to lower the cost of abortions for people, in order to encourage them to be sexually active before they are able to accommodate children. Christians need to oppose this – we do not want to have to pay for things that go against our consciences.

So, in addition to the reasons that Brooks mentioned (the happiness of earning your own way and serving others), it’s important for Christians to understand how free market capitalism fits into their plans. We do not want to support big government, especially

when big government so often is not compatible with Judeo-Christian values. In the free market, it is much harder for ALL the businesses to conspire together to block Christians from working, earning and spending according to their consciences. We must resist top-down control of the free market so that we have the liberty to do what we ought to do in order to be virtuous.

Two reasons why Christians and conservatives should not donate to United Way

September 23, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Well, it's that time of year again, when corporations bully their employees into donating to the United Way. I thought it might be a good idea to urge all Bible-believing Christians to avoid donating to the United Way. *Please share this post if you agree with it!*

Let's start with abortion. The United Way gives TONS of money to fund abortion providers.

In 2008, United Way affiliates send $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood:

> The national United Way does fund Planned Parenthood; their website states:
>
> United Way funded programs through Planned Parenthood include community health maintenance, e.g. communicable disease prevention; medical care service; family planning; health education; public awareness services; and family preservation and strengthening services, e.g. counseling and family life education.
>
> Nationally in 2008, local United Ways distributed an estimated $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood agencies.
>
> Any finances being donated to Planned Parenthood (even if not specifically for abortion services) will free up more of their money to be used toward abortion services.

In 2015, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Last year, on the heels of shocking videos showing the Planned Parenthood abortion business selling the body parts of aborted babies, a new expose' from a group that monitors corporations that finance the abortion giant reveals the United Way is a major donor. That expose found United Way agencies giving $2 million to the abortion giant.
>
> A new expose' released this week shows that figure has increased to $3 million.

In 2016, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Analysis of the most recent IRS Form 990 filings and other documentation found 62 United Way affiliates sent $2,756,799 to Planned Parenthood abortion organizations in tax year 2016. 2ndVote's latest findings indicate an increase of $168,806 from the $2,590,994 United Way funneled to Planned Parenthood in 2015.

We're living in a time when abortion rights involves such issues as sex-selection abortions, race-selection abortions, covering up statutory rapists, Democrat support for infanticide, attacking Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, selling the body parts of

unborn babies, etc. I don't think we can count on United Way to come down on the right side of these issues. We're already being forced to fund abortions with our tax dollars, thanks to Democrats. I don't think we should give any more money to abortion providers and their secular leftist allies.

That's abortion. What about gay rights? We've seen a lot of pressure on traditional values coming from the secular left lately. They redefined marriage AGAIN to deprive children of their biological mothers or fathers. They're pushing for the Equality Act, which would have huge religious liberty repercussions for Christians.

Texas attorney Maria Martinez explains on the American Thinker:

> The Equality Act is more draconian that any state or city conversion therapy ban to date because it takes away the traditional constitutional exemption for religious freedom. The act specifically states that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) may not be invoked as a defense, marking the *first time in history that Congress has limited the reach of RFRA*. This means that it could become illegal for Christian pastors, churches, schools, and ministries to communicate a message that sexual orientation or gender identity can change. The Equality Act is unprecedented in its overreach, impacting even adults who are *willingly seeking counseling*.
>
> By contrast, therapy of any kind that pushes a person *toward* same-sex attraction or gender transition is not impacted by the law at all.
>
> Banning counseling isn't the only thing the Equality Act will do:
>
> - Parents could lose custody of their children if they decline to assist in their gender transition. Parents in Ohio recently lost custody of their female child because they would not give her testosterone supplements to help her "transition" to look like a male.
> - Doctors and hospitals could be subject to lawsuits for refusing to perform so-called "sex change" surgeries. In California and New Jersey, Catholic hospitals are already being sued for discrimination for refusing to perform these surgeries.
> - Battered women's shelters could be required to admit members of the opposite sex. In Anchorage, Alaska, a male who was refused access to a shelter for abused and trafficked women sued the shelter for "gender identity discrimination."
> - Faith-based adoption and foster care agencies that believe that children do best with both a mother and a father could be forced to shut down. This has already occurred in at least six states in this country.

I wonder what United Way thinks about attacks on Bible-believing Christians by LGBT activists? All I could find on the Facebook page of the national organization was this:

Where does United Way stands on gay rights vs religious liberty?
I don't find that very encouraging, do you? And this is not the only pro-LGBT image I found on United Way Facebook pages. By the way, I saved a copy of their Facebook page, in case it disappears.

As a Bible-believing Christian, maybe I would be better off giving money to an organization that protects religious liberty, like Alliance Defending Freedom. I understand that many people who call themselves Christians think that the United Way's positions are compatible with the Bible. But not everyone who calls herself a Christian actually takes the Bible seriously. Especially when it interferes with their career advancement and peer approval. This is especially true of people who work in Human Resources.

Please, don't give money to the United Way

You don't HAVE to give money to the United Way, just because the godless progressives in your office try to bully you into it. Instead, why not send the money to the Life Training Institute, or Ratio Christi, or Alliance Defending Freedom? These are groups do operate on Bible-based principles. I do think that Christians need to be careful about who they donate their money to. It doesn't make sense for Christians to get up and go to work and earn money, and then give it away to anti-Christian groups who want Christianity to disappear from American life. Paul talks about how God rewards those who give gifts to partner for the gospel in Philippians. Make sure that you are not wasting your money on anything less.

Can you count on the Democrats to protect you from criminals and terrorists?

September 24, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I noticed a number of stories this week showing that the Democrats are more interested in rewarding evildoers than protecting the taxpayers who pay their salaries. Sadly, when I tried to share them on Facebook, Facebook didn't let ANYONE see them. And I mean zero likes, zero clicks. I'm hoping that I can link to the stories in this post and they won't notice.

Here's the first one from Daily Wire:

> Two Afghan refugees who were brought into the United States following Democrat President Joe Biden's disastrous pullout from the country are facing federal charges related to allegedly trying to rape a minor and suffocate a woman.
>
> "Bahrullah Noori, 20, is charged with attempting to engage in a sexual act with a minor using force against that person, and with three counts of engaging in a sexual act with a minor, with one count alleging the use of force," the Department of Justice said in a statement. "The indictment alleges that the victims had not attained the age of 16 years and were at least four years younger than the defendant."
>
> "Mohammad Haroon Imaad, 32, is charged with assaulting his spouse by strangling and suffocating her," the statement continued. "The indictment alleges that the assault occurred on September 7, 2021."

Not sure why these guys are being charged by the Democrats, as they were very anxious to let them into the country, and they sound like they would be more conservative than some people like AOC and Ilhan Omar. These two refugees are the future of the Democrat party — they'd make great Democrat legislators.

Here's story number two, from CNS News:

> White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki announced Thursday that Border Patrol agents will no longer be using horses in Del Rio, Texas, to protect the border against people illegally trying to enter the United States.
>
> Psaki said that DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told civil rights leaders Thursday morning about the decision ahead of the results of an investigation into Border Patrol agents handling of Haitian migrants attempting to cross the Rio Grande River into Texas.
>
> […]Mayorkas on Tuesday condemned the actions of Border Patrol agents who were accused of using horse reins to "whip" Haitians trying to illegally enter the U.S., saying Tuesday, "We do not condone, we do not tolerate any mistreatment

> of any migrant. The actions we're taking are swift and strong, and we will take further action as the facts adduced in the investigation compel."

Now, you'll note that Democrat politicians are typically very wealthy, live in gated communities, and have taxpayer-funded armed security to guard them. They aren't going to be affected by their "compassion" and "inclusion" policies. You will be. In fact, Democrats say that their blue states are too expensive for illegals to live in, because of all the taxes. So where do you think they ship them?

Here's story number three, from Daily Wire:

> The sister of a murder victim in upstate New York is speaking out after Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul (NY) signed and boasted of progressive legislation that releases convicts who violate their parole.
>
> From the Monroe Country jail alone, 17 felons were released this week pursuant to the "Less is More" Act signed by Hochul on Friday. One of the men released was 21-year-old murder suspect Joseph Rivera, who's accused of killing 47-year-old Heather Majors at her home in July.
>
> Rivera allegedly used a hatchet to kill Majors, striking her some 30-plus times as she held her hands in a defensive position to fight off the attack, local radio host Bob Lonsberry outlined Thursday. It's suspected that Rivera, a neighbor of the well-liked Majors, was attempting to rob her, though the motive is unknown.
>
> After Rivera was suspected of the crime, he was snagged on a parole violation from an earlier felony conviction and put in jail while authorities worked to formally charge him in the murder.
>
> **On Tuesday, though, Rivera was released.**

"On Tuesday, though, Rivera was released." Released by Democrats. And why not? Like I said, they have gated communities, armored cars, taxpayer-funded armed guards, etc. They're rich. They don't have to care about their decisions. You do. You're the one who is affected by their kindness and tolerance and diversity.

Last story from Fox News:

> Chicago's weekend bloodshed included nine murders and 56 shooting victims – but the violence didn't stop there, as an alderman visiting a known "problem corner" was assaulted by a group of men who appeared intoxicated and high on illicit drugs.
>
> From 6 p.m. Friday to just before midnight Sunday night, Chicago police recorded 46 shooting incidents, involving 56 victims. Nine murders were recorded during that time.
>
> A 3-year-old boy was among the shooting victims. The child was shot in the back at 10:45 a.m. Saturday in the 9300 block of South Escanaba Avenue on the South Side in what police believe to be an accident, the Chicago Sun Times reported. The child was hospitalized in good condition.

Now, you might recall that the Democrat mayor of Chicago is strongly opposed to law-abiding citizens defending themselves from criminals. Chicago has some of the toughest taxes and regulations on gun ownership and self-defense in the nation. They don't like law-abiding people owning guns. But you know what Democrats say about criminals with guns? Defund the police. That's their solution to everything criminals do.

And of course, if you want to know what Democrats think about terrorists, just look at how they coddle and appease Iran and the Taliban in Afghanistan. They are wrong across the board on national security and foreign policy. Don't you think that Al-Qaeda is back in Afghanistan already, planning the next 9/11 attack? I do. And it's because Democrats are running the federal government.

Can feminism be defended with reason and evidence? Jordan Peterson vs Cathy Newman

September 25, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Can radical feminism be defended rationally and evidentially?

There was a short discussion recently on UK Channel 4 between Canadian university professor named Jordan Peterson, and a radical feminist with an undergraduate degree in English named Cathy Newman. While you watch, imagine that she is teaching some non-STEM course that you've enrolled in. Would you dare to disagree with her?

First, the video, which has over 33 million views:

And here is an article from the UK Spectator: (paywalled)

> Whatever else anybody might think of him, Professor Peterson is a man of remarkable learning and experience, and does not appear to have arrived at any of his views by the now common means of 'I reckon'. Yet Newman, who approaches the interview with the trademark sourness she employs for everyone she expects to disagree with, treats this is just another chance to burnish her own social justice credentials and expose her guest as a bigot. Big mistake.
>
> Storming straight in with the differences between the sexes, in the opening minutes it is clear that Professor Peterson is willing to back up all his views with references, data and calm analysis.
>
> By 11 minutes in she is saying 'I think I take issue with (that)', before demonstrating that she can't. Soon she is reduced to dropping the bombshell observation that 'all women are different'. By 16.45 there is a palpable win, as Peterson points out that Newman has exactly the disagreeable and aggressive qualities that allow certain types of people to succeed. By 19.30 she is having to throw out things to him that he hasn't even said, such as 'You're saying women aren't intelligent enough to run top companies'. A minute later and she is reduced to countering empirical evidence with anecdote. Peterson presents the data about men in general and Newman responds with the 'I know plenty of men who aren't (like that)' card. Shortly after that (at 22.25) Newman is reduced to

> spluttering and then silence. She tries to pull herself together. But she can think of nothing to say.

To be honest, Cathy Newman is nothing like the women I'm friends with. All of my closest friends are Christian women. All of them are anti-feminist to some degree, with the most successful one professionally (Dina) being the wisest and most anti-feminist of all. When I think of my panel of wise Christian women advisors – each with one or more STEM degrees – I don't recognize Cathy Newman in them. But Cathy Newman does remind me of the radical feminists I encountered when I was doing my BS and MS degrees in computer science at the university.

In my experience, radical feminists debate using six tactics:

1. Deny facts or evidence because men were involved in researching them or discovering them
2. Countering empirical data with anecdotes and personal experiences
3. Taking arguments and evidence as if they are personal attacks
4. Becoming hysterical and crying
5. Claiming that disagreement with feminism will produce violence against women and women committing suicide, etc.
6. Trying to get you expelled, fired or silenced – often by making false accusations or faking hate crimes against themselves

It's important for everyone to understand the views of others in order to know how defensible our own views are. In order to get the best scholarly case for radical feminism, I like to read feminist academics like Christina Hoff Sommers, Camille Paglia, Jennifer Roback Morse, etc. who evaluate and critique radical feminist scholarship. That's how I encounter the ideas of those I disagree with (as well as listening to and watching debates).

Here's a short Factual Feminist video:

I understand the claims that are made by radical feminists, but I am also aware of what the evidence says. I don't try to stop feminists from making claims, I just study how to refute their claims.

But what about the radical feminists? Do they do a good job of understanding those who disagree with them? Let's take a look at an example which I think is representative of feminist tolerance and open-mindedness.

The Toronto Sun reports on a sociology professor who gave her students an assignment – an assignment with some very peculiar constraints.

Excerpt:

> A Ryerson University student who wanted to write a paper on the "myth" of the male-female wage gap was told by her prof that not only was she wrong, she should only rely on feminist journals for her assignment instead of business sources which "blame women," her sister says.

> Josephine Mathias, 21, a fourth-year political science student at University of Toronto, took to YouTube Wednesday to criticize the assignment given her twin Jane for a sociology class.
>
> […]After Jane sent an email describing her intention to write about the wag gap, her instructor replied that her premise was wrong, Josephine said.

Here's what the professor said:

> **"Perhaps you want to write your paper on the glass ceiling. You need to look at feminist sources on this issue…Do NOT use business sources. They blame women. The reality is patriarchy," says the instructor's email, posted online.**
>
> **In a copy of the assignment provided to the Toronto Sun by Josephine, the instructor also notes that Ontario and Canada government websites and Statistics Canada will not be considered scholarly sources.**
>
> **"Government websites state government policy that is devoid of analysis, and usually reproduces mainstream stereotypes, assumptions and misconceptions," the assignment says.**

What is interesting is that the professor makes about $167,000 a year – higher than the average professor's salary. And she's not teaching computer science or petroleum engineering. I find it interesting that another Canadian university reprimanded a grad student for showing a debate clip that offered both sides of the transgenderism debate. Leftist tolerance. Leftist open-mindedness.

Once you've paid your tuition, and the leftist has the grading pen, you lose every argument. Either you get an F, or you get expelled. If you're in the workplace, you get fired. False charges are often made. Hate crimes are faked. Anything to play the victim, rather than address the arguments and evidence. This is how people on the left "debate".

As I wrote previously, the more women embrace radical feminism, the more toxic they become to men. Not just in the classroom or the workplace, but in relationships. Who wants to marry someone whose only response to reason is fury? Men might be OK with temporary arrangements with abusive women. At least while those women have youth and beauty. But men don't marry abusive women. At least, not if they have any wisdom.

(Image source: Independent Man)

House Democrats pass bill to repeal all state-level protections for unborn children

September 26, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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You might be wondering why Never Trump people like David French and Russell Moore were so opposed to Donald Trump. Well, look at what Joe Biden is doing about abortion, and then remember what Trump did when he was President.

Here's the latest on Joe Biden's war against unborn children, from Life News:

> The U.S. House passed a radical pro-abortion bill Friday that would force states to legalize the killing of unborn babies in abortions without limits up to birth nation-wide.
>
> The deceptively named Women's Health Protection Act passed in a 218-211 vote with one Democrat joining Republicans in voting against it. No Republicans supported the pro-abortion legislation.
>
> Democrat leaders portrayed the bill as the "codification" of *Roe v. Wade* into federal law, but the legislation goes far beyond *Roe*.
>
> Pro-life leaders said the Abortion Without Limits Up to Birth Act is a more accurate name for the bill. The legislation would erase basically all restrictions on abortion and prevent states from enacting even modest protections for unborn babies. Limits on late-term abortions and bans on sex-selection abortions would be gone.
>
> The legislation would get rid of laws that protect women and girls, too, including parental consent for minors and informed consent laws that ensure mothers receive basic facts about their unborn baby's development before going through with an abortion.

Now, the Evangelicals for Biden might like to say "well, it's not our fault, we didn't know this would happen". But the bill had been passed many times before by the Democrat House, only to die in the Republican Senate. The difference now is that the Democrats have the Senate – and the White House. That's what Evangelicals for Biden wanted.

Now, let's look at Trump's record, from an article posted by the Susan B. Anthony List – the pro-life group that is most concerned with law, policy and judicial appointments:

> **Appointed Pro-Life Judges**
>
> In April, 2017, Judge Neil Gorsuch was successfully confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. And in October, 2018, Judge Brett Kavanaugh was successfully confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. To date, 157 of President Trump's judicial nominees have been confirmed, including two Supreme Court justices, forty-three U.S. Courts of Appeals judges, and one hundred thirteen District Court judges.

Permitted States to Defund Planned Parenthood of Title X Funds

In April 2017, Congress sent a bill to President Trump's desk that permits states to defund Planned Parenthood of Title X family planning funds passed in Congress. President Trump signed the bill which reverses an Obama-era rule that disbarred states from doing so. Because this was passed using the Congressional Review Act, future Administrations cannot enact a similar rule to Obama's.

Stopped Tax Dollars Funding Abortion Overseas

President Trump not only reinstated the Mexico City Policy, but expanded it to the new Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance program. This new policy ensures that our tax dollars are protected from funding the abortion industry overseas across ALL global health spending, not just family planning dollars. The Bush-era Mexico City Policy protected roughly $500 million in spending – the new Trump policy protects over $8.8 billion overseas aid from funding abortion.

Defunded the Pro-Abortion UNFPA

The UNFPA has long been complicit in China's oppressive population control activities, including birth limitation policies and forced abortions. President Trump's State Department cut U.S. Taxpayer funding to the UNFPA.

Required Health Insurance Companies to Disclose if Plans Cover Abortion

The Trump Administration Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) issued a rule requiring that insurers specify in each plan Summary of Benefits whether the plan covers abortion.

Settlements & New Rule Regarding HHS Mandate

The Departments of HHS, Treasury, and Labor issued two interim final rules, which means they took effect immediately, while allowing a comment period, that provide permanent, enforceable relief from the previous HHS mandate for both religious objectors, such as Little Sisters of the Poor, and moral objectors, such as Susan B. Anthony List. The new rule also exempts private employers and educational institutions that have sincerely held religious beliefs or moral objections against providing contraceptives or abortifacient drugs.

New Office for Conscience Protection at HHS

In May 2019, the Trump administration finalized new regulations to strengthen enforcement of federal laws protecting the conscience rights of health care workers who do not want to participate in abortion. The regulations clarify what recourse is available to victims of discrimination under the law and what penalties the HHS Office of Civil Rights may enforce for violations. Additionally, in January 2018, the Department of Health & Human Services announced the creation of the Conscience and Religious Freedom Division within the Office for Civil Rights. This new office works to protect health care professionals who do not want to participate in abortion. In May, 2019, HHS issued a proposed rule

> amending Obama-era regulations, clarifying that Section 1557 shall not force a recipient of federal funding to provide or pay for an abortion. It shall also be consistent with the First Amendment and with pro-life provisions, conscience provisions and religious liberty protections in current law.
>
> **Allowed States to Defund Planned Parenthood of Medicaid Funds**
>
> The Obama administration attempted to prevent states from defunding Planned Parenthood of Medicaid dollars, issuing guidance claiming this may be a violation of federal law. In January 2018, the Trump administration rescinded this guidance, allowing states to defund Planned Parenthood of Medicaid dollars as they see fit.
>
> **Cut Planned Parenthood's Tax Funding by up to $60 Million**
>
> In February, 2019, the Trump administration finalized the Protect Life Rule to redirect Title X family planning program funds away from the abortion industry. The rule advances President Trump's promise to stop taxpayer funding of abortion businesses like Planned Parenthood, who will no longer receive Title X funding if they choose not to comply.
>
> **Canceled Huge Contract for Taxpayer-Funded Experimentation with Body Parts of Aborted Babies**
>
> In June, 2019, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced they would not renew a major contract with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) to fund research using the body parts of aborted babies. (learn more)

I think it's very important for pro-life voters of all parties to understand that Trump DID take action on pro-life concerns. He listened to pro-life leaders, and did far more than other Republican presidents who were pro-life in name only. Americans often have this annoying habit of forming their opinions based on what they feel and what they hear in the culture. But we need to be informed voters. Let's look at the facts and decide based on actions.

LGBT fascists persecuting Christian business owners for their faith in Colorado

September 27, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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People throw around the word "fascism" a lot without really knowing what it means. Fascism means using the government to violate someone else's Constitutionally-enumerated inalienable human rights. Things like free speech, freedom of religion, the right to bear arms, etc. Do you know who is really good at using the government as a weapon against others? LGBT activists.

This story is from The Federalist:

> Lawyers representing a Colorado web designer who was slapped with a gag order in July that forced her to celebrate causes she believes are wrong filed a petition to appeal the case in the U.S. Supreme Court on Friday.
>
> Lorie Smith, the founder of 303 Creative, lost a 2-1 ruling in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit which mandated that she create custom graphics and websites for LGBT customers despite messages that contradict her religious convictions.

It's always interesting to see how the the government justifies forcing Christians to act against their consciences – something they would never do with other religions, such as Islam.

Here's what they said:

> The 10th Circuit rejected Smith's case against CADA, writing that the law "permissibly compels [Lorie Smith's] speech," and concluded, "a faith that enriches society in one way might also damage society in [an]other." Smith was also reprimanded with a gag order that keeps her from placing a note on her page about what sites would be consistent with her convictions.

Got that? Faith isn't about your personal freedom and your conscience rights. Faith is about "enriching society". And who decides who enriches society? The secular left fascists, that's who.

And violating a Christian's conscience is really what's at stake:

> "I have clients ranging from individuals to small business owners to nonprofit agencies. I have served and continue to serve all people, including those who identify LGBT," Smith explained to reporters on Friday. "I simply object to being forced to pour my heart, my imagination, and talents into messages that violate my conscience."

Do you know what's worse that the state of Colorado doing this to Christians? All 50 states doing this to Christians.

The Equality Act

In a previous post, I explained that only states that have “non-discrimination” laws are able to punish Christian bakers, photographers, florists, etc. We are seeing the punishment of pro-marriage people in the states with these “non-discrimination” laws, e.g. – Oregon, New Mexico, Washington and so on. See the map below for more.

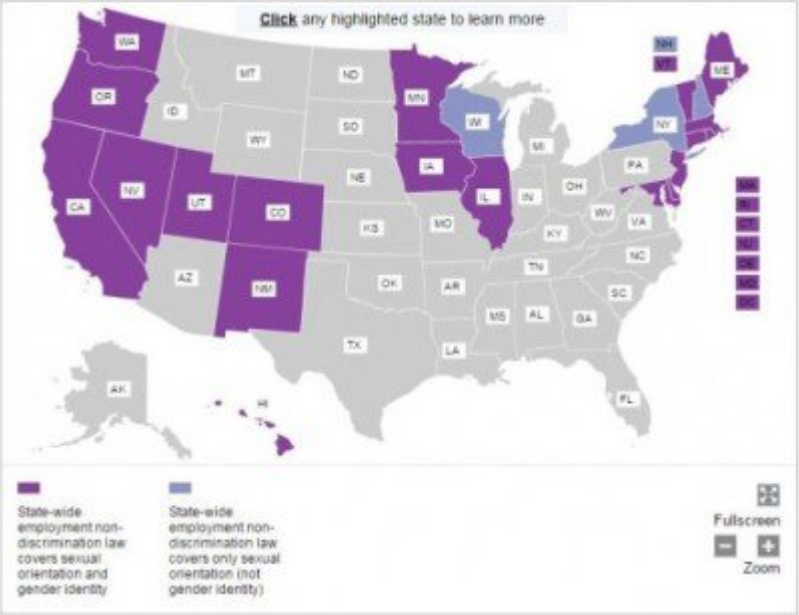

States with non-discrimination laws

But the Democrats in the House and Senate are actually trying to ram these SOGI laws into all 50 states, so that Christian businesses in all 50 states would become vulnerable to LGBT fascism.

These SOGI laws really are anti-religious-liberty laws, because they force you to agree with the gay agenda, or else face consequences. They force you to violate your conscience, just because you don’t agree with redefining marriage. If this law passes, it means that anyone who disagrees with gay marriage being the same as child-centered natural marriage would be a potential target for the federal government. How would you like to choose between having a job, and being a Bible-believing Christian? That’s what the LGBT fascists want you to do.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools

September 28, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This is a must-listen lecture from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

The MP3 file is here.

Note: public schools = government-run schools.

Topics:

- Does God care whether we people marry and have children?
- Does God care whether Christian parents raise their children to know him?
- Should government promote bearing children?
- What are some effects of declining birth rates in other countries?
- What are the economic effects of declining birth rates?
- Who has the right to decide how children are trained: government or parents?
- What does the Bible say about parents having to raise children to know him?
- Does the government have the responsibility for training children?
- What do educational bureaucrats think of parents training children?
- What do school boards think of parents training children?
- Should school boards be elected by local, state or federal government?
- Should Christians be opposed to government-run education? (public schools)
- How should schools be viewed by parents? As a replacement or as a helper?
- How are schools viewed by those on the left and in communist countries?
- How can you measure how supporting a government is of parental rights?
- How is parental authority viewed in left-wing EU countries like Germany?
- How is parental authority respected in the United States?
- Should parents have a choice of where their children go to school?
- What is a voucher program? How is it related to parental autonomy?
- How does competition (school choice) in education serve parental needs?
- Why do public school teachers, unions and educrats oppose competitition?
- How well do public schools do in educating children to achieve?
- Does the government-run monopoly of public schools produce results?
- Does paying more and more money to public schools make them perform?
- How do teacher unions feel about having to compete in a voucher system?
- Does the public school monopoly penalize the poorest students?
- Does the public school monopoly penalize children of certain races?
- Does the public school monopoly cause racial prejudice?
- What else should parents demand on education policy?
- Is it good for parents when schools refuse to fire underperforming teachers?

This podcast is just amazing! This is what we need to be teaching in church. Church

should be the place where you go to learn and reflect about how to tailor your life plan based on what the Bible says. And I think that this whole notion of free market – of choice and competition benefiting the consumer (parents) – applies to everything that government does, especially education and health care. The genius of America is that our Founding Fathers engineered a system that reflected all of this knowledge of economics, which then made it much easier for individuals and families to enjoy liberty and a higher quality of life. If we want to keep the benefits, we have to remember why these decisions were made at the founding of our nation.

Does the Miller-Urey experiment tell us anything about how life originated on Earth?

September 29, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

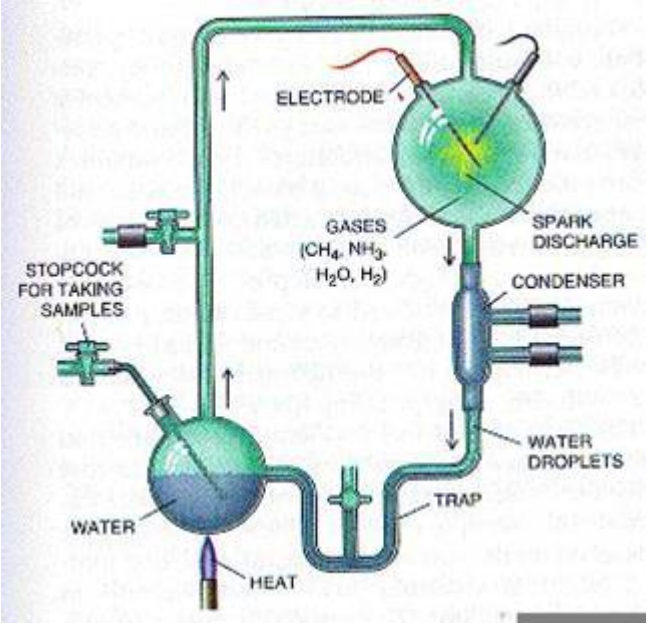

The Miller-Urey experiments

There are two problems related to the origin of the first living cell, on atheism:

1. The problem of getting the building blocks needed to create life – i.e. the amino acids
2. The problem of creating the functional sequences of amino acids and proteins that can support the minimal operations of a simple living cell

Normally, I concede the first problem and grant the atheist all the building blocks he needs. This is because step 2 is impossible. There is no way, on atheism, to form the sequences of amino acids that will fold up into proteins, and then to form the sequences of proteins that can be used to form everything else in the cell, including the DNA itself.

Today, let's take a look at the problems with step 1.

The problem of getting the building blocks of life

Now you may have heard that some scientists managed to spark some gasses to generate most of the 20 amino acids found in living systems. These experiments are called the "Miller-Urey" experiments.

The IDEA center has a nice summary of origin-of-life research that explains a few of the main problems with step 1.

Miler and Urey used the wrong gasses:

> Miller's experiment requires a reducing methane and ammonia atmosphere,[11, 12] however geochemical evidence says the atmosphere was hydrogen, water, and carbon dioxide (non-reducing).[15, 16] The only amino acid produced in a such an

> atmosphere is glycine (and only when the hydrogen content is unreasonably high), and could not form the necessary building blocks of life.[11]

Miller and Urey didn't account for UV of molecular instability:

> Not only would UV radiation destroy any molecules that were made, but their own short lifespans would also greatly limit their numbers. For example, at 100ºC (boiling point of water), the half lives of the nucleic acids Adenine and Guanine are 1 year, uracil is 12 years, and cytozine is 19 days[20] (nucleic acids and other important proteins such as chlorophyll and hemoglobin have never been synthesized in origin-of-life type experiments[19]).

Miller and Urey didn't account for molecular oxygen:

> We all have know ozone in the upper atmosphere protects life from harmful UV radiation. However, ozone is composed of oxygen which is the very gas that Stanley Miller-type experiments avoided, for it prevents the synthesis of organic molecules like the ones obtained from the experiments! Pre-biotic synthesis is in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. The chemistry does not work if there is oxygen because the atmosphere would be non-reducing, but if there is no UV-light-blocking oxygen (i.e. ozone – O_3) in the atmosphere, the amino acids would be quickly destroyed by extremely high amounts of UV light (which would have been 100 times stronger than today on the early earth).[20, 21, 22] This radiation could destroy methane within a few tens of years,[23] and atmospheric ammonia within 30,000 years.[15]

And there were three other problems too:

> At best the processes would likely create a dilute "thin soup,"[24] destroyed by meteorite impacts every 10 million years.[20, 25] This severely limits the time available to create pre-biotic chemicals and allow for the OOL.

> Chemically speaking, life uses only "left-handed" ("L") amino acids and "right-handed" ("R)" genetic molecules. This is called "chirality," and any account of the origin of life must somehow explain the origin of chirality. Nearly all chemical reactions produce "racemic" mixtures–mixtures with products that are 50% L and 50% R.

Two more problems are not mentioned in the article. A non-peptide bond anywhere in the chain will ruin the chain. You need around 200 amino acids to make a protein. If any of the bonds is not a peptide bond, the chain will not work in a living system. Additionally, the article does not mention the need for the experimenter to *intervene* in order to prevent interfering cross-reactions that would prevent the amino acids from forming.

Now keep in mind that even if you get the building blocks, you are left with the sequencing problem. Like the letters of the words in this blog post, the building blocks of life also need to be put in a meaningful sequence in order to do work in a living system –

but that’s another topic for another day.

I went on a date with a Christian woman who couldn't defend the pro-life view

September 30, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I've been thinking lately about how to measure how committed and capable a person is on issues of interest to conservatives. For example, on abortion, most conservatives will say, "I vote pro-life". But I think a higher level of conviction and commitment is shown when a person can show WHY they are pro-life. And I'm not looking for feelings, here. I'm looking for handling scientific evidence.

So, when it comes to the abortion issue, the first step is to answer the question "what is the unborn?" And again, I'm not looking for an opinion here. I'm not looking for feelings. I'm not looking for what your parents, or your pastor, or your church choir says. I'm interested in whether a person can cite some scientific evidence.

Fortunately, we have first class scientists who have collected the relevant information for us, like Dr. Maureen Condic, She's an Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Adjunct Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Utah School of Medicine, and recently served on the National Science Board. She earned her Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley, and has published papers in peer-reviewed journals.

One of her publications (PDF) explains what science tells us about the unborn. The title is "When Does Human Life Begin? The Scientific Evidence and Terminology Revisited". A good paper to have available, especially if your opponent has nothing but purple hair, tattoos and nose piercings. But if you want something easy, you can just use quotations from a variety of embryology textbooks (PDF).

Like this one:

> "Human development begins at fertilization, when a sperm fuses with an oocyte to form a single cell, the zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell (capable of giving rise to any cell type) marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual."

Source: Keith L. Moore, The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology, 10th edition. Philadelphia, PA: Saunders, 2016. p. 11

Don't just use one quotation, use lots.

Also useful to know is what the unborn baby can do during the process of developing.

Here's an article from the famous Cleveland Clinic that explains:

> At the moment of fertilization, your baby's genetic make-up is complete, including its sex. The gender of your baby depends on what sperm fertilizes the egg at the moment of conception.

And a bit further along:

> **Month 1 (weeks 1 through 4)**
>
> In these first few weeks, a primitive face will take form with large dark circles for eyes. The mouth, lower jaw and throat are developing. Blood cells are taking shape, and circulation will begin. The tiny "heart" tube will beat 65 times a minute by the end of the fourth week.

And a bit further along:

> **Month 2 (weeks 5 through 8)**
>
> Facial features continue to develop. Each ear begins as a little fold of skin at the side of the head. Tiny buds that eventually grow into arms and legs are forming. Fingers, toes and eyes are also forming.
>
> The neural tube (brain, spinal cord and other neural tissue of the central nervous system) is well formed now. The digestive tract and sensory organs begin to develop too. Bone starts to replace cartilage.
>
> The head is large in proportion to the rest of the body at this point. At about 6 weeks, a heartbeat can usually be detected.

Most abortions happen in the first trimester, and that's why pro-lifers say "abortion stops a beating heart". It's definitely human, and it's definitely killed in an abortion.

So, what's the point of this post? I'm saying that if you are a conservative, then you have to be familiar with enough evidence to be persuasive to others who do not share your views. Not just on the issue you like, but on EVERY issue – social issues, foreign policy issues, fiscal issues.

It's not enough for you to be happy that you have the right opinion about one issue. It's not enough that the people around you like you because they agree with your "right answer". You have to be able to make a case that crushes your opponent with evidence. Being a conservative isn't about you or your feelings. It's about the world out there – can you make a difference by being convincing to other people?

Of course if doesn't feel good to have to learn how to talk about issues using scientific evidence. It's work. And of course it doesn't feel good to disagree with people about controversial issues. But you have to get used to not being ignorant and not being liked. I know a lot of feelings-based Christians who know a lot about sports, fiction, music, essential oils, and other nonsense. They want me to be satisfied that they have the right answer to questions like "Does God exist?", "does military preparedness deter aggression?" and "does the free market system make people more prosperous than socialism?" But if I am out on a date with you, and I ask you these questions, I'm looking for more than the right answer. I want you to show your work. I want to see you demonstrate your ability to persuade people on the other side, either in your writings or in your discussions.

Don't cry to me about how you can't find a husband when you can't do anything that a husband needs you to do. There is no path to impressing a conservative man that allows

you to be lazy, ignorant and cowardly. I expect performance. If you are smart enough to get a college education and a job in the competitive private sector providing value to paying customers, (not a public school teacher or anything disconnected from reality, like that), then you are smart enough to be able to explain your views on moral issues and public policy.

Here is my full list of dating questions.

What do Democrat leaders think about parents?

October 1, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm really starting to get more and more concerned about how people on the secular left view other people's children. And how they view the parents of those children. Here are a couple of news stories from Thursday that show what's causing my concern.

First, here's Biden's Secretary of Education saying that parents should not be a "primary stakeholder" in their kids' education:

Meanwhile, in Virginia, the Democrat governor says "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach".

Meanwhile, leftist school boards want parents to be treated as "domestic terrorists".

The Federalist reports:

> The leftist National School Boards Association is begging President Joe Biden to use domestic terrorism laws to target parents who oppose anti-science mask mandates for children and the infiltration of racist curriculum in schools.
>
> In a letter sent on Wednesday, NSBA asked the Biden administration and federal law enforcement to "deal with the growing number of threats of violence and acts of intimidation occurring across the nation."
>
> "Now, we ask that the federal government investigate, intercept, and prevent the current threats and acts of violence against our public school officials through existing statutes, executive authority, interagency and intergovernmental task forces, and other extraordinary measures to ensure the safety of our children and educators, to protect interstate commerce, and to preserve public school infrastructure and campuses," the letter states.
>
> NSBA said local and state law enforcement agencies are already working to "prevent further disruptions to educational services and school district operations," but that "these threats and acts of violence have become more prevalent" and require assistance from federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Justice, FBI, Department of Homeland Security, and the Secret Service.

Now, I've written before about how unionized school teachers give almost all of their political contributions to Democrats, and that's because Democrats give them maximum autonomy from the parents of those children. They don't want to be accountable to parents who expect their children to learn useful things, and get jobs.

Here are the top 20 recipients of political contributions from teacher unions, according to Open Secrets:

Top 20 Recipients

Rank	Candidate	Office	Amount
1	Biden, Joe (D)		$239,573
2	Sanders, Bernie (I-VT)	Senate	$56,346
3	Ossoff, Jon (D-GA)	Senate	$45,287
4	Warren, Elizabeth (D-MA)	Senate	$38,981
5	Harrison, Jaime (D-SC)		$38,660
6	Warnock, Raphael (D-GA)	Senate	$38,616
7	Peters, Gary (D-MI)	Senate	$38,413
8	Kelly, Mark (D-AZ)	Senate	$33,717
9	Smith, Christy (D-CA)		$33,079
10	Bullock, Steve (D-MT)		$32,457
11	Gideon, Sara (D-ME)		$29,740
12	Cunningham, Cal (D-NC)		$29,193
13	Smith, Tina (D-MN)	Senate	$28,729
14	Hoadley, Jon (D-MI)		$27,992
15	Spanberger, Abigail (D-VA)	House	$27,461
16	Galvin, Alyse (I-AK)		$25,280
17	Jayapal, Pramila (D-WA)	House	$25,175
18	Slotkin, Elissa (D-MI)	House	$24,541
19	Demings, Val (D-FL)	House	$24,150
20	Markey, Ed (D-MA)	Senate	$23,901

Notice anything? That’s right, there’s not a single Republican in the list. And that holds true when you filter for only Senators, and only Representatives, too.

So, what do I learn from this? Two things.

First, conservative Christian men should be very careful about dating or marrying unionized teachers. It’s not unusual to see Christian men have their values changed, and their influence diminished, because they married “Christian” teachers. We just had two Christian men leave the company that I am currently with, who married left-wing teachers. In both cases, those men were opposed to Trump. Their wives made them do it. Every single Christian man I know who married a teacher has had to either become liberal, or act like a liberal, in order to keep peace in his house. It’s just too risky to try, unless the person is reading Thomas Sowell, Stephen C. Meyer, Michael Licona, Michael Behe, etc. I know there are male teachers who read conservative books so they can resist peer pressure, but I’ve never met a female one.

Second, conservative men cannot trust schools with unionized teachers to teach their children. From the very beginning of your education, you should be thinking about what kind of job you can do where you will be insulated from the dogmas of the secular left. Do not let secular leftists have veto power over how you earn a living. My recommendation is

to go into some trade or STEM career where you can earn a living. Small companies are better than big ones, and being a freelance consultant is best of all. Why? Because you will have to keep your wife home to homeschool the children, and that costs money. You'll have to be thinking about money earlier than your father did, because while they could trust the schools, you can't. You have to have a different plan.

What is it really like for a young woman to regret her gender transition?

October 2, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A few months ago, I blogged about this British woman who sued the NHS after they transitioned her when she was still very young. At 16, the NHS gave her puberty blockers and testosterone injections. At age 20, they gave her a double masectomy. She regretted what they did to her, and won a case against them in court. She's posted an article at Persuasion telling her side of the story.

Excerpt:

> From the earliest days, my home life was unhappy. My parents—a white Englishwoman and a black American who got together while he was in Britain with the U.S. Air Force—divorced when I was about 5. My mother, who was on welfare, descended into alcoholism and mental illness. Although my father remained in England, he was emotionally distant to me and my younger sister.
>
> I was a classic tomboy, which was one of the healthier parts of my early life in Letchworth, a town of about 30,000 people, an hour outside London. Early in childhood, I was accepted by the boys—I dressed in typically boy clothing and was athletic. I never had an issue with my gender; it wasn't on my mind.
>
> Then puberty hit, and everything changed for the worse. A lot of teenagers, especially girls, have a hard time with puberty, but I didn't know this. I thought I was the only one who hated how my hips and breasts were growing. Then my periods started, and they were disabling. I was often in pain and drained of energy.
>
> Also, I could no longer pass as "one of the boys," so lost my community of male friends. But I didn't feel I really belonged with the girls either. My mother's alcoholism had gotten so bad that I didn't want to bring friends home. Eventually, I had no friends to invite. I became more alienated and solitary. I had been moving a lot too, and I had to start over at different schools, which compounded my problems.
>
> By the time I was 14, I was severely depressed and had given up: I stopped going to school; I stopped going outside. I just stayed in my room, avoiding my mother, playing video games, getting lost in my favorite music, and surfing the internet.

You know, the first thing I would do with a girl like this is get her to talk to a doctor about what she should expect. Maybe get her some medication to ease some of the puberty troubles. But mainly, just spend some time with her, talking to her, playing with her, and so on. But really the most important thing would be to tell her the truth about where she stood in terms of value, meaning and purpose. After all – how sad can you really be if Jesus gave his life for you, and has very important work for you to do? Young people

seem to put so much emphasis on what their peers think of them, but on a Christian worldview, that doesn't matter at all. What matters is what God thinks of you, and what he thinks is based on your character inside, not on how you look. He's not selfish.

More:

> Around the end of that first year post-surgery, something started happening: My brain was maturing. I thought about how I'd gotten where I was, and gave myself questions to contemplate. A big one was: "What makes me a man?"
>
> I started realizing how many flaws there had been in my thought process, and how they had interacted with claims about gender that are increasingly found in the larger culture and that have been adopted at the Tavistock.
>
> […]I was also concerned about the effect my transition would have on my ability to find a sexual partner.
>
> Then there was the fact that no one really knew the long-term effects of the treatment. For instance, the puberty blockers and testosterone caused me to have to deal with vaginal atrophy, a thinning and fragility of the vaginal walls that normally occurs after menopause. I started feeling really bad about myself again.
>
> […]Five years after beginning my medical transition to becoming male, I began the process of detransitioning. A lot of trans men talk about how you can't cry with a high dose of testosterone in your body, and this affected me too: I couldn't release my emotions. One of the first signs that I was becoming Keira again was that—thankfully, at last—I was able to cry. And I had a lot to cry about.
>
> **The consequences of what happened to me have been profound**: possible infertility, loss of my breasts and inability to breastfeed, atrophied genitals, a permanently changed voice, facial hair. When I was seen at the Tavistock clinic, I had so many issues that it was comforting to think I really had only one that needed solving: I was a male in a female body. But it was the job of the professionals to consider all my co-morbidities, not just to affirm my naïve hope that everything could be solved with hormones and surgery.

Her article has a lot more information about her experiences with the NHS, and her court case. But what I wanted you guys to see was how important it is to not let children just say "I want this", which is something they saw on TV, or heard from their peers, or read online. Instead, you need to find out what problem they are really trying to solve. Once upon a time, Christians thought that the Christian worldview and a relationship with God in Christ was the most important thing you had to offer people who were in distress. What happened to that? When did we stop offering truth, and start offering disinterested agreement and shallow affirmation? Did we just want to feel good and have people think we were "nice"?

Dennis Prager: the feminization of America harms the whole world

October 3, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, I wrote a post that I really enjoyed writing about the movie High Noon. In it, I talked about the conflict between Marshal Will Kane and his new wife. He wanted to stay and protect his home town against outlaws who are coming to kill him and raze the town. His new wife cannot understand why he has to stand and fight, she wants him to run away with her. In the end, she helps him to defeat the outlaws, saving his life.

That post was inspired by something I heard Dennis Prager talking about on his radio show. He was talking about a survey of boys and girls done by the toy company Mattel. Well, I wanted to blog about his comments, so I ended up writing the High Noon post. But then Dina found an article about the Mattel survey on National Review. I think this is one of the wisest and most perceptive articles I have ever read, and it will really help you to understand what has happened in the last 50 years to this country.

Prager writes:

> Last week the *New York Times* published an article, "Sweeping Away Gender-Specific Toys and Labels," that contained three sentences that explain one of the most important phenomena in American life. In discussing the increasing move to do away with gender-specific toys — something the *New York Times* approves of — the article quoted Tania Missad, the "director of global consumer insights" at one of the world's largest toy manufacturers, Mattel:
>
> **Mattel's research showed some differences in what girls and boys wanted in their action figures, Ms. Missad said. "For boys it's very much about telling a story of the good guy killing the villain. . . . [Girls] would tell us: 'Why does the good girl have to kill the villain? Can't they be friends in the end?'"**

Prager comments on the part in red:

> This difference may be the most important of all the sex differences. Indeed, it can actually shape the future of America and of the world.
>
> […]When women get married, they are often influenced by their husbands with regard to political and moral issues, just as married men are influenced by their wives on a whole host of micro issues. As a result, married women are more likely than single women to prefer to fight villains than to befriend them. Unfortunately, more and more American women are single.
>
> **Meanwhile American boys are increasingly raised by single women and taught almost only by female teachers. In addition, they are often taught to be ashamed of their masculine natures and to reject**

> **traditional masculine virtues.**
>
> As a result of the above two trends, the amount spent on national defense will continue to decline (while the amount spent on welfare will continue to increase), and America will confront the world's evils less and less. The consequences will be disastrous for millions of people around the globe.
>
> When America retreats from killing bad guys, bad guys kill more innocent people.

We're seeing this now in Biden's retreat from Afghanistan, and his weakness with Russia and China. He's the candidate of anti-masculine voters. He doesn't believe in good and evil.

More:

> Whenever I see on a car the liberal bumper sticker "War Is Not the Answer," I look to see who is driving. In years of looking, I have seen one male driver.
>
> Both women and men have flawed natures. They share human nature, which is deeply flawed, and the sexes have their own particular natures, which are also flawed. That is one reason men need women and women need men. Men need women to soften their intrinsic aggressive nature and to help them control their predatory sexuality; and women need men to, among other things, better understand that evil people and regimes must be fought, not nurtured.

So, there is something in male nature that thinks that it is acceptable to use violence as a last resort in order to defeat evil. Evil might be things like criminals, terrorists… even wolves and bears, if they attacked innocent people.

So what are the solutions?

Here's what we should do:

- We should stop paying women money to have children before they are married, so that boys have fathers to raise them who have made a commitment before they got handed free sex.
- We should rollback no-fault divorce, which leads to fatherless children. People should be less emotional about who they marry, and not think "there's an escape hatch if I feel unhappy".
- We should try to get more male teachers into classrooms, and maybe allow parents to pull boys out of failing schools and put them into all-male schools if they think those work better.
- We should try to vote for policies that empower law enforcement, national security, and our armed forces to detect, attack and defeat evil. For example, we invest in defense spending, and avoid undermining the morale of police and armed forces with political correctness.

I guess the list could be longer, but that's a start for the issues that Prager raised.

We need to work against the forces that demean male nature and male roles, and work to

promote male nature and male roles.

Does the Bible teach that Christians should expect happiness or suffering?

October 4, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is God your cosmic butler? Do you just ring a bell to summon him so that he can give you whatever you want? Let's see what the Bible teaches in the book of 1 Peter. Peter is writing to all the Christians who are spread out all over the place, trying to survive in a world that doesn't care much about things that they think are meaningful.

Pay attention to these verses:

1 Peter 1: 3-7:

> [3] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
>
> [4] and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,
>
> [5] who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.
>
> [6] In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.
>
> [7] These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Suffering is normal and expected.

1 Peter 2:6-8:

> [6] For in Scripture it says:
>
> "See, I lay a stone in Zion,
> a chosen and precious cornerstone,
> and the one who trusts in him
> will never be put to shame."
>
> [7] Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,
>
> "The stone the builders rejected
> has become the cornerstone,"
>
> [8] and,
>
> "A stone that causes people to stumble
> and a rock that makes them fall."
>
> They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were

> destined for.

Rejection by “those who do not believe” is normal and expected.

1 Peter 2:18-24:

> [18] Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.
>
> [19] For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.
>
> [20] But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.
>
> [21] To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.
>
> [22] “He committed no sin,
> and no deceit was found in his mouth.”
>
> [23] When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.
>
> [24] “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

When people attack you personally for being a Christian, you don’t retaliate against them.

1 Peter 3:14-18:

> [14] But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.”
>
> [15] But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,
>
> [16] keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.
>
> [17] For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.
>
> [18] For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

Jesus sets the example for Christians of being willing to suffer for obedience to God.

1 Peter 4:1-5:

> [1]Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin.
>
> [2] As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

> [3] For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.
>
> [4] They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you.
>
> [5] But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

The normal Christian life involves some non-Christians heaping abuse on you, *precisely because* you don't participate in their sins, or celebrate their sins. For example, attending or participating in a same-sex marriage ceremony.

1 Peter 4:12-19:

> [12] Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.
>
> [13] But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.
>
> [14] If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.
>
> [15] If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.
>
> [16] However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.
>
> [17] For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?
>
> [18] And,
>
> "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
> what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"
>
> [19] So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

Christians who experience shame and/or suffering at the hands of some non-Christians for obeying God, are imitating Christ. They should expect to be vindicated, just as Christ was vindicated through his resurrection.

1 Peter 5:5-6:

> [5] In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,
>
> "God opposes the proud
> but shows favor to the humble."
>
> [6] Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up

> in due time.

Authentic Christianity involves obeying God's commandments, and defending God's truth claims and moral values. It doesn't mean virtue signaling to Christians, (or non-Christians, which seems very popular these days among pious Christian leaders). Humility means thinking of yourself less, and comparing yourself to others less. Just do your job as a Christian, and don't think about what it says about you. To anyone. What people think of you doesn't matter.

Look at 1 Corinthians 4:1-5:

> [1] This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed.
>
> [2] Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.
>
> [3] I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.
>
> [4] My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.
>
> [5] Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

Christianity isn't there for you to use to make yourself happier, or to make other people like you. You're not supposed to agree with non-Christians so that they like you. That's missing the entire point of Jesus' example. Jesus obeys God. Some non-Christians get mad at him. Some non-Christians shame Jesus, and make him suffer, for obeying God. God vindicates Jesus. That's the plan. You're supposed to follow that plan, not make up some other compromise and virtue signal plan!

By the way, in no way am I telling Christians to be impractical. You should be as smart as you can, work as hard as you can, and save as much money as you can, in order to make your shame and suffering bearable, without compromising your principles. For example, you could try to make a network of like-minded friends who can support one another when you become a target. You can donate to organizations like Alliance Defending Freedom, a legal group that defends Christians from persecution by the secular left.

But just understand that being rejected, and being mistreated, is part of the normal, authentic Christian life. You're not supposed to agree with non-Christians, or celebrate them, or affirm them, in order to escape feeling shame, and suffering persecution. I don't know how people can read the Bible and not understand what the life of Jesus means. We're supposed to follow Jesus.

Biden administration to use FBI against parents who criticize public schools

October 5, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

As you read the announcement by Biden's Attorney General Merrick Garland below, keep in mind that you are paying the salaries of all of the people who are using government as a weapon against you.

Here is the memorandum: (linked from Yahoo News)

> In recent months, there has been a disturbing spike in harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence against school administrators, board members, teachers, and staff who participate in the vital work of running our nation's public schools. While spirited debate about policy matters is protected under our Constitution, that protection does not extend to threats of violence or efforts to intimidate individuals based on their views.
>
> Threats against public servants are not only illegal, they run counter to our nation's core values. Those who dedicate their time and energy to ensuring that our children receive a proper education in a safe environment deserve to be able to do their work without fear for their safety.
>
> The Department takes these incidents seriously and is committed to using its authority and resources to discourage these threats, identify them when they occur, and prosecute them when appropriate. In the coming days, the Department will announce a series of measures designed to address the rise in criminal conduct directed toward school personnel.
>
> Coordination and partnership with local law enforcement is critical to implementing these measures for the benefit of our nation's nearly 14,000 public school districts. To this end, I am directing the Federal Bureau of Investigation, working with each United States Attorney, to convene meetings with federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial leaders in each federal judicial district within 30 days of the issuance of this memorandum. These meetings will facilitate the discussion of strategies for addressing threats against school administrators, board members, teachers, and staff, and will open dedicated lines of communication for threat reporting, assessment, and response.
>
> The Department is steadfast in its commitment to protect all people in the United States from violence, threats of violence, and other forms of intimidation and harassment.

First point: Democrats don't care about "violence, threats of violence, and other forms of intimidation and harassment" committed by Democrats. Democrats did NOTHING to restrain the rioting, vandalism, and violence of BLM and Antifa rioters. BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN DAMAGE.

Second point: For a secular leftist, any disagreement with the secular left is "violence". Disapproval of the secular left is "violence". Refusing to bake a cake for a gay wedding is "violence". You have to speak their slogans. The same people who call picking up a podium "insurrection" worse than 9/11 had nothing bad to say about the Taliban overturning an elected government, and raping or killing innocent people to maintain power.

Third point: Democrats are fine with violence when it's committed by the government against conservatives. Remember how Capitol Hill police shot Ashli Babbitt in cold blood? NO CHARGES were filed against the murderer. We still don't know the name of the murderer, and no one in the Democrat government or the Democrat news media think that's a problem. Democrats apparently don't have a problem with "violence, threats of violence, and other forms of intimidation and harassment" when it's committed against conservatives.

Fourth point: Notice that he cannot name any specific instance where there has been a criminal investigation and a named guilty party. I would agree with him about any example of harassment, intimidation and threats of violence that was confirmed by a jury. But he doesn't name any. How do we know that he's not talking about the sort of hate crime hoaxes so popular on the left? For instance, People like Jussie Smollett, who become the darlings of the left.

New hate crime hoaxes happen every day:

- A Black Georgia Neighborhood Was Terrorized By Notes From The Ku Klux Klan. It Turns Out A Black Woman Sent Them. (10/4/21)
- Racist Graffiti That Led To Walk-Outs Was Painted By Black Student (9/30/21)
- Black University Employee Arrested For Allegedly Painting Racist Graffiti on School Building (9/25/21)

Democrats think they are under siege, because they keep reading their own biased news sources reporting on hate crimes they commit against themselves, for attention and sympathy. They make their own hate crimes so they can play the victim, and then use them to justify draconian, fascistic measures against the people who pay their salaries.

Fifth point: They excuse harassment of anyone who blocks their secular left agenda. Senator Kyrsten Sinema opposes bankrupting future generations of Americans to the tune of $3.5 trillion dollars. When she is harassed by the radical left in a bathroom, and at the airport, there is no memo by the attorney general about that. No, Joe Biden says that particular harassment is "part of the process" and "it happens to everybody". The law is only enforced one way by secular left fascists.

Sixth point: Democrats are routinely using the government to punish people who disagree with their left-wing fascist agenda. Obama used the IRS to persecute conservative groups. Minnesota Democrats used law enforcement to conduct pre-dawn raids of the homes of people who supported right to work laws. Kamala Harris raided the homes of pro-life activists who had revealed organ-trafficking by abortionists. Obama

passed a law forcing Christian businesses to subsidize drugs that cause abortions. And all the Christian businesses — bakers, photographers, florists, etc. — who are harassed and threatened by gay activists. Democrats don't have any problem with harassment and intimidation so long as it advances their agenda.

The solution

I recommend not confronting the public school administrators and teachers. The correct response is not to communicate to the teachers or administrators at all. Just pull your children out of public schools. And from now until the next election, persuade your neighbors not to vote for atheistic Marxist fascism. Start sharing news articles from Daily Wire, The Federalist, Daily Caller, Breitbart, etc. every day.

How should we respond to the secular left fascists? Don't speak to them. Don't pay attention to them. Don't date them. Don't marry them. Don't make children with them. Don't put your children in their schools. Don't attend their churches. Don't give money to their corporations. Don't listen to their songs. Don't watch their entertainment. Don't subscribe to their Only Fans.

A lesson about men for marriage-minded women from the movie “High Noon”

October 6, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Marine prays with his wife on their wedding day

One of my favorite movies for explaining the differences between men and women is “High Noon” (1952).

Here’s the summary from IMDB:

> Former marshal Will Kane (Gary Cooper) is preparing to leave the small town of Hadleyville, New Mexico, with his new bride, Amy (Grace Kelly), when he learns that local criminal Frank Miller has been set free and is coming to seek revenge on the marshal who turned him in. When he starts recruiting deputies to fight Miller, Kane is discouraged to find that the people of Hadleyville turn cowardly when the time comes for a showdown, and he must face Miller and his cronies alone.

The main theme of the film concerns Amy’s decision to break her wedding vows the very day that she makes them. She tells her new husband that he must bow to her will, and give up his male role as protector. When he explains his reasons for standing his ground to her practically (Miller will hunt them down) and morally (he has a duty protect the town), she dismisses both. She tells him that if he doesn’t run away from Miller and his gang with her, that she will get on the train and leave town by herself.

The intro of film shows the member’s of Miller’s gang assembling, and the words of the song explain the central conflict between husband and wife:

Here's the part of the lyrics we care about:

The noonday train will bring Frank Miller.
If I'm a man I must be brave
And I must face that deadly killer
Or lie a coward, a craven coward,
Or lie a coward in my grave.

O to be torn 'twixt love and duty!
S'posin' I lose my fair-haired beauty!
Look at that big hand move along
Nearin' high noon.

He made a vow while in State's Prison,
Vow'd it would be my life or his'n
I'm not afraid of death, but O,
What will I do if you leave me?

Do not forsake me O my darlin'
You made that promise when we wed.
Do not forsake me O my darlin'
Although you're grievin', I can't be leavin'
Until I shoot Frank Miller dead.

What's interesting is that his new wife Amy apparently does not understand the meaning of wedding vows or the natural roles of good men as protectors of the weak, and fighters against evil. Although she vowed to stick by him and help him, the minute anything threatening appears that makes her feel unhappy, she abandons her vows and abandons her man. Let's break down her mistakes now, using actual conversations from the movie.

First, she doesn't understand or respect the man she married *as a man*:

> **Kane**: *[while riding out of town]* It's no good. I've got to go back, Amy.
>
> **Amy**: Why?
>
> **Kane**: This is crazy. I haven't even got any guns.
>
> **Amy**: Then let's go on. Hurry.
>
> **Kane**: No, that's what I've been thinkin'. They're making me run. I've never run from anybody before.
>
> **Amy**: I don't understand any of this.
>
> **Kane**: *[after looking at his vest watch]* Well, I haven't got time to tell ya.
>
> **Amy**: Then don't go back, Will.
>
> **Kane**: I've got to. That's the whole thing. *[He turns the buggy around and rides back into town]*

Her feelings and her desires for the world to be a happy place for her are so strong that they cloud her judgment.

Second, she doesn't understand the threat posed by evil men:

More:

> **Kane:** I sent a man up five years ago for murder. He was supposed to hang. But up North, they commuted it to life and now he's free. I don't know how. Anyway, it looks like he's coming back.
>
> **Amy:** I still don't understand.
>
> **Kane:** He was always wild and kind of crazy. He'll probably make trouble.
>
> **Amy:** But that's no concern of yours, not anymore.
>
> **Kane:** I'm the one who sent him up.
>
> **Amy:** Well, that was part of your job. That's finished now. They've got a new marshal.
>
> **Kane:** He won't be here until tomorrow. Seems to me I've got to stay. Anyway, I'm the same man with or without this. [He pins his badge on his vest]
>
> **Amy:** Oh, that isn't so.
>
> **Kane:** I expect he'll come lookin' for me. Three of his old bunch are waiting at the depot.
>
> **Amy:** That's exactly why we ought to go.
>
> **Kane:** They'll just come after us, four of 'em, and we'd be all alone on the prairie.
>
> **Amy:** We've got an hour.
>
> **Kane:** What's an hour?…What's a hundred miles? We'd never be able to keep that store, Amy. They'd come after us and we'd have to run again, as long as we live.
>
> **Amy:** No we wouldn't, not if they didn't know where to find us. Oh Will! Will, I'm begging you, please let's go.
>
> **Kane:** I can't.
>
> **Amy:** Don't try to be a hero. You don't have to be a hero, not for me.
>
> **Kane:** I'm not trying to be a hero. If you think I like this, you're crazy.

Instead of recognizing how her feelings are deceiving her about the threat and trusting her husband, she tries to force him to accept her mistaken view of reality by threatening to abandon him.

One of Kane's ex-girlfriends has a talk with Amy, which helps her to understand who Kane is, and what is expected of her:

> **Amy**: That man downstairs, the clerk, he said things about you and Will. I've been trying to understand why he wouldn't go with me, and now all I can think of is that it's got to be because of you…Let him go, he still has a chance. Let him go.
>
> **Helen**: He isn't staying for me. I haven't spoken to him for a year – until today. I

> am leaving on the same train you are…What kind of woman are you? How can you leave him like this? Does the sound of guns frighten you that much?
>
> **Amy**: I've heard guns. My father and my brother were killed by guns. They were on the right side but that didn't help them any when the shooting started. My brother was nineteen. I watched him die. That's when I became a Quaker. I don't care who's right or who's wrong. There's got to be some better way for people to live. Will knows how I feel about it.
>
> **Helen**: I hate this town. I always hated it – to be a Mexican woman in a town like this.
>
> **Amy**: I understand.
>
> **Helen**: You do? That's good. I don't understand you. No matter what you say. If Kane was my man, I'd never leave him like this. I'd get a gun. I'd fight.
>
> **Amy**: Why don't you?
>
> **Helen**: He is not my man. He's yours.

Helen understands the need for a wife to stand by her man. But Amy's response to evil is to shut her eyes and focus on feeling good and being happy. Notice that her "better way" is unspecified – it's just a feeling she has that pacificism and no-violence will somehow "work" to stop evil. But in reality, pacifism is not a "better way" of dealing with evil – it does not work. Her pacifist response not only does not make evil go away, it actually encourages more evil. Weakness emboldens evildoers, and laying down your arms provokes them to do more evil. Will Kane knows this, but she won't listen to him.

You can watch the final gunfight here, as well as Amy's final decision:

So, this is why I really recommend this movie as a discussion-starter when you like a girl and are thinking of marrying her. It clarifies the essential problem with many young women today not being ready for marriage. To be fair, most women come around to respect their husbands and his different roles after they get married. However, the risk of divorce is so dangerous that it makes sense to bring it up for discussion before the marriage happens. Marriage is supposed to be an engine to serve God, and the success of that enterprise cannot be left to chance. You can't just rely on the fact that she says the words of the vow, you have to check to see if she has a habit of keeping her promises when it goes against her own self-interest.

Ask yourself: Who are you, as a man? And does your woman accept that you have obligations to stand up to evil and do good ? Will she support you in your battle against evil, or will the marriage just be about her feelings and desires? I would especially beware of women who think that God is speaking to them through their feelings and desires. Look at her friends: are they practical and successful? Or are they irresponsible, unaccountable and reckless? Look at her father: does he have a plan for her, and does he lead her to be practical, frugal and hard-working? If you are not going to get an ally and a supporter in a wife, then you will not be able to serve God well, as a married man. Think about it.

Wintery Knight interviewed for the Apologetics 315 podcast

October 7, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a re-post about the interview I did in April 2021.

I've met the two gentlemen who host the Apologetics 315 podcast in person (Brian Auten and Chad Gross) and they asked me to come on and talk about my experience doing apologetics online with an alias. I thought that I would link to them, and then add an important point that I wanted to say during the podcast, but I forgot to come back to it.

Anyway, you can listen to the episode here on their web site.

Here's the description:

> **Today's Show Notes**:
> **Episode 016 – Christianity in the Public Square with Wintery Knight**
>
> In this episode, Brian Auten and Chad Gross interview Christian blogger Wintery Knight on the topics of Christian blogging, apologetics in the workplace and in the public square, how policy effects Christian freedoms, and more.
> www.winteryknight.com
>
> 1:30 – Discussing moral and ethical issues, having an alias, and observing the changers in culture.
> 8:00 – The conflict between the Happiness Quest and the Truth Quest.
> 10:00 – The difficulty getting apologetics into the church. The importance of a commitment to a truth quest.
> 13:00 – Doing apologetics on the internet.
> 17:30 – How to interact with skeptics, and what to do when the people you interact with become hostile.
> 20:00 – In-person interaction and discerning the right way to communicate in the workplace or public square.
> 25:20 – How can Christians be informed about what's going on in culture and public policy? How does one become equipped? Resources for being equipped.
> 37:00 – "The Equality Act" and religious liberty issues.
> 43:00 – The speed of cultural change in the US, and the importance of religious freedoms.
> 52:45 – Christianity and politics.

If you're looking for a great podcast on apologetics, these guys are interviewing a lot of my favorite people – Craig Hazen, Fazale Rana, and soon Stephen C. Meyer. If you like the interview, please leave a comment. If you have any questions about any of the resources or blog posts that I mentioned, please let me know.

Extra point

So, the extra point I wanted to make was about the question of how should Christians feel about the ascent of the woke people.

To start, consider this interesting article from Not The Bee, where they feature a whole bunch of moderates and classical liberals explaining why they walked away from the left because of the left's descent into censorship and cancel culture.

Example:

In addition to that, there was an interesting survey about which group of people were more likely to self-report being diagnosed with a mental illness. It was the far-left people. And this data came from Pew Research, which skews to the left.

So, the point I wanted to make was this. The people on the left are only able to persist in being on the left, by exchanging reason and evidence for emotions and coercion. I admit that things look bad now, especially when you look at the powerful big corporations who are allying with the secular left mob. But I don't think that people who are fixated on left-wing concerns are comfortable for moderate people to talk with. I think that secular leftism has left extreme leftists without the basic moral framework for respectful dialog. What's more, I don't think that secular leftists are very good at friendship, dating and especially marriage. You can't marry someone who is lacks charity and self-control.

In view of this, I think that there is a tremendous opportunity to provide moderates and open-minded people with a safe place to express their views and seek truth. In order to be ready for them, I recommend that you prepare yourself to have respectful discussions by reading good books, and listening to good debates. The more you can stay calm while listening to different points of view, the more that people will want to speak to you. Please don't rely on the church to train you. We're not doing a very good job of training Christians about different points of view in the church. So, you'll have to train yourself if you want to develop the ability to debate and disagree in a calm and respectful way.

Exciting news

By the way, I mentioned on the podcast that my Bible study partner and I are planning to start a podcast of our own. I explain what it will be about and about my co-host during the episode.

If you missed my previous appearance on Tim Stratton's Free Thinking Ministries podcast,

then you can listen to that here.

Study explains why university women embrace binge-drinking and hook ups

October 8, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This study is from the Institute for American Values. Despite their name, they are not conservatives. It was done by Norval Glenn and Elizabeth Marquardt.

If you download the 88 page PDF, the first few pages are an executive summary.

There are a couple of things that really struck me about this IAV study on hooking-up.

First, this one from p. 15:

> A notable feature of hook ups is that they almost always occur when both participants are drinking or drunk.
>
> A Rutgers University student observed, "You always hear people say, oh my gosh, I was so drunk, I hooked up with so and so…" Perhaps not surprisingly, many noted that being drunk helped to loosen one's inhibitions and make it easier to hook up. A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up. A Yale University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up." A New York University student observed, "[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking."
>
> A Rutgers University student commented, "If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."
>
> Other women observed that being drunk gives a woman license to act sexually interested in public in ways that would not be tolerated if she were sober. For instance, a University of Michigan student said, "Girls are actually allowed to be a lot more sexual when they are drunk…"
>
> A University of Chicago junior observed, "One of my best friends… sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."
>
> Some reported that drinking had led them to do things they later regretted. A University of Virginia student said, "My last random hook up was last October and it was bad. I was drunk and I just regretted it very much."

And this one from p. 30 on the effects of hooking-up on their future commitments:

> A few women did see an unambiguous connection between present relationships and future marriage.
>
> […]Many women either saw little or no connection between present and future relationships, or their understanding of this connection was curiously flat. A

> student at New York University said, “[The present and the future are] connected because I will still have the same values and principles that I have now, but I just won’t be single anymore.”A number of women said that the present and the future are connected because whatever heartache or confusion they experience now gives them lessons for the future.
>
> A University of Michigan student said, “Early relationships prepare you for marriage because it’s like, oh, what type of person do I want to be with? Oh, I’ve had these bad experiences. Or, I’ve learned from this relationship that I should do this and I shouldn’t do this.”
>
> A sophomore at Howard University said that “I am kind of learning from a lot of the mistakes that I have made.” At a further extreme, some women saw their future marriage as the reason to experiment widely in the present. A Rutgers University student said,“I think hooking up with different people and seeing what you like and don’t like is a good idea. Because eventually you’re going to have to… marry someone and I’d just like to know that I experienced everything.”
>
> Although it is admirable to take risks and learn from one’s mistakes, these women would probably find it difficult to explain how having your heart broken a few or even many times in your early years — or trying to separate sex from feeling, as in hooking up — is good preparation for a trusting and happy marriage later on.

And on p. 42, we learn what women think marriage is and isn’t for:

> For instance, in the on-campus interviews one student complained, “[With] marriage…you have to debate everything… Why do you need a piece of paper to bond a person to you? …But I know if I don’t get married I’ll probably feel like… [a] lonely old woman… If anything, I’d get married [because of] that.”
>
> This student went on to say that she would be satisfied to live with a man, but added that, if the man was committed to her, he would offer to marry her, and that this was the kind of commitment that she wanted. A student at the University of Washington said,“I don’t want to get married right after I graduate from college. I just think that would stunt my growth in every way that there is. I would like to be in a very steady, committed relationship with a guy.”

And on p. 44, we learn that they like co-habitation, which increases the risk of divorce by about 50% (but they don’t know *that*):

> In the national survey, 58 percent of the respondents agreed that “It is a good idea to live with someone before deciding to marry him.” This belief often coexists with a strong desire to marry, because it was embraced by 49 percent of the respondents who strongly agreed that marriage was a very important goal for them.
>
> […]Women we interviewed on campus reflected a similar range of attitudes

> about cohabitation. Some women thought that cohabitation was a good way to test whether one could spend a lifetime with a potential partner. In such cases, women often cited fears of divorce as the reason for trying cohabitation first. A senior at the University of Washington said, "I kind of don't really see marriages work ever, so I want to make sure that everything's all right before [we get married]. I don't see how people can get married without living together because I know like I have a best friend and I live with her and we want to kill each other, like, every few months."
>
> Other women felt that, in an age of divorce, cohabitation was a preferable alternative to marriage. A student at New York University said, "You see so [many] people getting divorces… I just don't see the necessity [of marriage]." She went on to say, "I think that I don't have to be married to [the] person that I'm with…. You know like… Goldie Hawn [and Kurt Russell]? They're not married."

But let's get back to the drinking and the hook-up sex…

Once a woman abandons femininity for feminism, then sex is all that she can use to get noticed by a man. Men are like hiring managers, and courting is like a job interview for the job of marriage and mothering. If a woman tries to get the job by having sex with the interviewer, he isn't going to hire her for the marriage job, since sex has almost nothing to do with the marriage job. Men have to think about things like fidelity and mothering ability when they are choosing a wife. The problem is that thanks to feminism, women have stopped trying to show their ability to be wives and mothers to men, preferring to instead act like bad boys – no emotions, toughness, hardness, binge-drinking, promiscuity. Men may be happy to have sex with women like that, but they do not commit to them for life. They're just looked upon as feral animals, to be pumped and dumped by every man who isn't a Christian. And Christian men are disqualified for relationships with young feminists, because we have morals.

Moreover, if a man is constantly being offered sex from feminist women during his 20s and 30s, he basically loses all the time that he could be training for his roles as protector, provider and moral/spiritual leader. He will never take on those roles if he is handed sex before marriage for free. That is the root cause of the "man-up" complaint that women make. Why don't men grow up? Because they don't have to. They don't have to do a thing to audition for husband roles, in order to get sex. They just have to be "hot" and feign liberal political views. Many (most?) teenage women are giving the bad boys oral sex on the first date now. Women aren't looking for husbands until much later, when their effort to achieve self-esteem through slutty behavior stalls out, and they realize that the whole feminist project was futile and unsustainable.

In a previous post, I explained how feminist leaders wanted to get women to drink like men, have sex like men, and to abolish courtship and marriage. Under the influence of cultural definitions of what makes a good man and a good relationship, women began to choose men to have sex with without any consideration of morality, religion, marriage, etc. This results in a cycle of binge-drinking, one-night-stands, cheating, co-habitating,

breaking-up, stalking, aborting, etc., until the woman's ability to trust and love anyone – including herself – is completely destroyed. And yet these college women somehow believe this is is "fun" and "adventurous", that it makes them feel "sexy", and that the experience of being selfish and seeing the worst kind of men acting in the worst possible ways, point blank, somehow prepares them for marriage and motherhood. They are told this, and they are so unable to break out of their need to "fit in" with their peers and culture that by the time they realized they've been had, it's too late to fix it. And yet, they themselves made those decisions. They are responsible, whether they intended the consequences or not. No one was stopping them from investigating what was likely to happen, if they decided to play the fool sexually.

Physicist Victor Stenger debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

October 9, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate took place on March 1, 2010 at Oregon State University.

In this debate, Victor Stenger does affirm his belief that the universe could be eternal in his second rebuttal (1:02:30), thus denying the standard Big Bang cosmology. He also denies the law of conservation of energy and asserts that something can come from nothing in his concluding speech (1:33:50). He also caused the audience to start laughing when he said that Jesus was not moral and supported slavery. There is almost no snark in this summary. Instead, I quoted Dr. Stenger *verbatim* in many places. I still think that it is very entertaining even without the snarky paraphrasing.

The debate includes 30 minutes of Q&A with the students.

Here's the video of the debate:

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

- The ontological argument
- The contingency argument
- The cosmological argument
- The moral argument
- The resurrection of Jesus (3-fact version)
- Religious experience

Dr. Stenger's opening speech:

- There is no scientific evidence for God's existence in the textbooks
- There is no scientific evidence for God acting in the universe
- God doesn't talk to people and tell them things they couldn't possibly know
- The Bible says that the Earth is flat, etc.
- There is no scientific evidence that God answers prayers
- God doesn't exist because people who believe in him are ignorant
- Human life is not optimally designed and appears to be the result of a blind, ad hoc evolutionary process
- The beginning of the universe is not ordered (low entropy) but random and chaotic
- It's theoretically possible that quantum tunneling explains the origin of the universe
- The laws of physics are not objectively real, they are "our inventions"
- Regarding the beginning of the universe, the explanation is that something came from nothing*
- Nothing* isn't really nothing, it is "the total chaos that we project existed just before the big bang"
- If something has no structure, then "it is as much nothing as nothing can be"

- Consciousness is explainable solely on the basis of material processes
- There are well-informed, rational non-believers in the world and God would not allow that

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

Stenger's argument that there is no objective evidence for God's existence:

- First, it is not required that God rely only on objective evidence in order to draw people to himself (Alvin Plantinga)
- Second, God is not required to provide evidence to everyone, only to the people who he knows would respond to him
- Third, Craig gave lots of objective evidence, from science, history and philosophy
- Stenger asks for certain evidence (answered prayers, prophecy, etc.), but Craig presented the evidence we have

Stenger's argument that the balance of energy is zero so "nothing" exists:

- if you have the same amount of assets and liabilities, it doesn't mean that nothing exists – your assets and liabilities exist
- Christopher Isham says that there needs to be a cause to create the positive and negative energy even if they balance
- the quantum gravity model contradicts observations
- the vacuum is not the same as nothing, it contains energy and matter
- the BVG theorem proves that *any* universe that is expanding must have a beginning

Stenger's argument that mental operations can be reduced to physical operations:

- mental properties are not reducible to physical properties
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with self-identity over time
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with thoughts about other things
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with free will
- substance dualism (mind/body dualism) is a better explanation for our mental experience
- God is a soul without a body

Dr. Stenger's first rebuttal:

Craig's cosmological argument:

- Craig's premise is "everything has a cause", but quantum mechanics has causeless events
- There are speculative theories about how something could have come into being uncaused out of nothing
- "I don't know of a single working cosmologist today who believes there was a singularity prior to the Big Bang"
- "If there wasn't a singularity then there's no basis for arguing that time began at

that point”
- “There’s no reason from cosmology that we know of that the universe can’t be eternal”
- “When I talk about an eternal universe, I mean a universe that has no beginning or end”
- The Hartle-Hawking model doesn’t have a beginning
- “There was no violation of energy conservation by having a universe coming from nothing”
- “The universe *could have* come from a previous universe for example or even just from a region of chaos”
- The paper by Vilenkin is counteracted by other papers (he doesn’t specify which ones)

Craig’s moral argument:

- Dr. Craig is arguing from ignorance
- But morality can be decided by humanity just like governments pass laws, and that’s objective
- Dr. Craig has too little respect for the human intellect
- I don’t need to tell me that slavery is wrong
- The Bible supports slavery
- Atheists can behave as good as theists
- Morality just evolved naturally as an aid to survival

Craig’s resurrection argument:

- No Roman historians wrote about the execution of Jesus
- The empty tomb is doubtful because it is only mentioned in the gospels, not by Paul
- John Dominic Crossan says there was no empty tomb
- Christianity only survived because the Roman empire thought that they were useful

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- There is no reason to prefer an indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics
- Dr. Stenger himself wrote that deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics are possible
- The vacuum in quantum mechanics is not nothing
- The quantum vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal
- The cosmological argument does not require a singularity
- The Hartle-Hawking model is from 1983
- Hawking says that there is a beginning of space and time *after* that model
- The Hartle-Hawking model *does still have a beginning of time* – the model is not eternal

- The BVG theorem that requires a beginning for expanding universes is widely accepted among cosmologists

Craig's moral argument:

- Stenger redefined objective to mean that most people agree with it – but that's not what objective means
- Objective means right and wrong whether anyone accepts it or not
- Richard Dawkins himself says that on atheism there is "no evil and no good" – why is he wrong?
- Even Dr. Stenger says that morality is the same as passing laws – it's arbitrary and varies by time and place
- But on his view, right and wrong are the same as deciding which side of the road to drive on
- But somethings really are right and some things are really wrong

Craig's resurrection argument:

- Josephus is a Roman historian and he wrote about Jesus, for example
- There were four biographies of Jesus are the best sources for his life
- The scholars that Stenger mentioned are on the radical fringe

Dr. Stenger's second rebuttal:

Knowledge and the burden of proof:

- Dr. Craig has to bear the burden of proof, not me – because his claim is more "extravagant"
- "I don't have to prove that a God was not necessary to create the universe"
- "I don't have to prove that a God did not design the universe and life"
- "I don't have to prove that the universe did not have a beginning"
- "I don't have to prove that God did not provide us with our moral sense"
- There are a lot of books written about how morality evolved naturally
- "I don't have to prove that the events surrounding the supposed resurrection of Jesus did not take place"
- Bart Ehrman says that the gospels are generally unreliable (Note: Ehrman accepts all 3 of Craig's minimal facts)
- Just because people are willing to die for a cause, does not make their leader God, e.g. – the Emperor of Japan

Aesthetic concerns about the universe:

- I don't like dark matter and I wouldn't have made the universe with dark matter
- I don't like the doctrine of penal substitution
- I don't like the doctrine of original sin
- I don't like the heat death of the universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion:

The case for atheism:

- Dr. Stenger had two arguments and he has to support his premises
- Dr. Craig addressed his two arguments and each premise and Dr. Stenger never came back on it

The contingency argument:

- Dr. Stenger has dropped the refutation of this argument

The cosmological argument:

- The theoretical vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal

The moral argument:

- He asserts that things are wrong, but there is no grounding for that to be objective on atheism

The resurrection of Jesus:

- There are surveys of scholars on the empty tomb and 75% of them agree with it
- Bart Ehrman agrees with all 3 of the minimal facts that Dr. Craig presented
- Ehrman's objection to the resurrection is not historical: he's an atheist – he thinks miracles are impossible

Religious experience:

- No response from Dr. Stenger

Dr. Stenger's conclusion

The cosmological argument:

- "I argued that we have very good physical reasons to understand how something can come from nothing"
- "There is a natural tendency in the universe… to go from.. simpler thing to the more complicated thing"
- The transition from a vapor to a liquid to ice shows how something could come from nothing
- "It cannot be proven that the universe had a beginning"

The moral argument:

- Objective morality, which is independent of what people think, could be developed based on what people think

- “Jesus himself was not a tremendously moral person… he had no particular regard for the poor… he certainly supported slavery… he was for the subjugation of women” (audience laughter)

The resurrection argument:

- Bart Ehrman says that the majority of the gospels are unreliable

Religious experience:

- I don’t see any evidence that there is anything more to religious experience than just stuff in their heads

God’s purpose of the world should be to make people feel happy:

- God could have made people feel happier
- God could have made people not die
- God could could have made the universe smaller: it’s too big
- God could have made it possible for humans to live anywhere “even in space”

Are feminists right to think that gender-neutral marriage makes women happier?

October 10, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

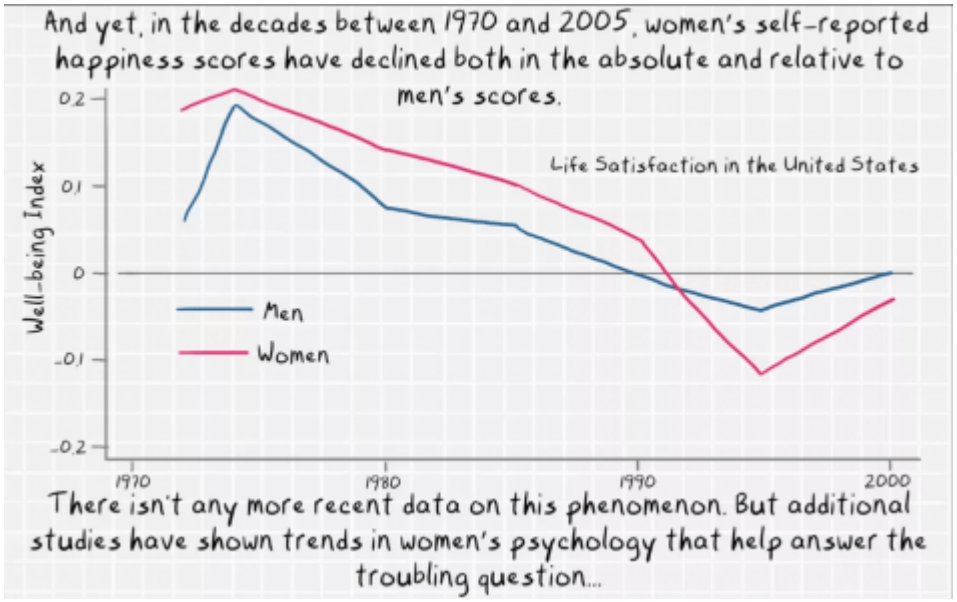

Male and female happiness throughout America's adoption of radical feminism

I was reading this article by a feminist fiction writer on Vox, where she explains that although feminists have gotten what they wanted (careers, contraceptives, promiscuity, abortion, no-fault-divorce, daycare, etc. it hasn't made them happier. So, what does this feminist fiction writer think would make feminists happier?

She gives two reasons why women women are still unhappy after feminism has been adopted by our society:

- men don't do enough housework
- women are not as successful as men because they are discriminated against, the so-called "glass ceiling"

I think those complaints are pretty popular among feminists. Let's take a look at some studies to see if her opinions are supported by peer-reviewed studies.

First study:

> COUPLES who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a study has found.

> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled *Equality in the Home*, said.

Second study:

> Researchers at the University of Illinois examined data on nearly 1,500 men and 1,800 women, aged between 52 and 60. Their well-being was evaluated through surveys.
>
> The researchers first found that men's well-being decreased once they had exited the workforce to become home-makers.
>
> Meanwhile, the inverse was not so for women: Women's psychological well-being was not affected by leaving their jobs to become stay-at-home mothers.

Third study:

> A study called "Egalitarianism, Housework and Sexual Frequency in Marriage," which appeared in The American Sociological Review last year, surprised many, precisely because it went against the logical assumption that as marriages improve by becoming more equal, the sex in these marriages will improve, too. Instead, it found that when men did certain kinds of chores around the house, couples had less sex. Specifically, if men did all of what the researchers characterized as feminine chores like folding laundry, cooking or vacuuming — the kinds of things many women say they want their husbands to do — then couples had sex 1.5 fewer times per month than those with husbands who did what were considered masculine chores, like taking out the trash or fixing the car. It wasn't just the frequency that was affected, either — at least for the wives. The more traditional the division of labor, meaning the greater the husband's share of masculine chores compared with feminine ones, the greater his wife's reported sexual satisfaction.

Regarding the pay gap, that is entirely caused by women's own choices. E.g. – the choice to study creative writing instead of petroleum engineering, the choice to work 35 hour weeks instead of 70 hour weeks, etc.

Fourth study: (summarized by AEI economist)

> When the [Bureau of Labor Statistics] reports that women working full-time in 2018 earned 81.4% of what men earned working full-time, that is very much different from saying that women earned 81.4% of what men earned for doing exactly the same work while working the exact same number of hours in the same occupation, with exactly the same educational background and exactly the same years of continuous, uninterrupted work experience, and with exactly the same marital and family (e.g., number of children) status. As shown above, once we start controlling individually for the many relevant factors that affect earnings, e.g., hours worked, age, marital status, and having children, most of the raw earnings differential disappears.

Fifth study:

> This study leads to the unambiguous conclusion that the differences in the compensation of men and women are the result of a multitude of factors and

> that the raw wage gap should not be used as the basis to justify corrective action. Indeed, there may be nothing to correct. The differences in raw wages may be almost entirely the result of the individual choices being made by both male and female workers.

I think that women are entitled to make their own decisions, but they aren't allowed to force the rest of us to subsidize their failures and celebrate their destructive outcomes.

I could go on, but I think enough has been said to show that research is very much at odds with feminist rhetoric. They *feel* they know what will make them happy and we gave them everything they asked for. They eliminated shaming of promiscuity with sex education. They get preferential treatment in the schools in a female-dominated education system.They are hired because of affirmative action quotas. They get expensive daycare, government schools, welfare and other programs. Taxes are raised to equalize outcomes for divorced women who choose men for feelings, and then nuke their own marriage enterprise. We have been on a long experiment of giving feminists everything they *felt* they wanted, at the expense of men's rights and children's rights, and it hasn't even produced the results that feminists *felt* it would.

The social costs of feelings-based decision-making

Let's look at two examples of policies that feminists asked for in the past, which didn't work out the way they wanted.

I can understand why feminists would introduce sex education. They *felt* that "if everyone is having sex, then I won't be the only one chasing attention from hot no-commitment bad boys by giving them recreational sex before marriage". They wanted to eliminate the standards of chastity and marriage-focused dating and normalize fun-focused drunken promiscuity. And they got that. But since they didn't consult any research and evidence about how that would affect their future marriage stability and marriage happiness, they are even more unhappy than before.

How about no-fault divorce? No-fault divorce was brought in by a coalition of feminists, Marxists and trial lawyers. The Marxists want to destroy the family in order to increase dependence on the state. The trial lawyers wanted to make money. And the feminists thought that the standard approach to courting and marriage was just too much work. They didn't want to be chaste. They didn't want to be sober. They didn't want to evaluate a man for traditional husband and father roles. The no-fault divorce laws gave them an escape from the messes caused by *their own feelings-driven choices*. But divorce just makes makes men and women much poorer, and passes the costs of supporting single mothers onto taxpayers.

And the costs of the failures of feminism are passed onto taxpayers.

Consider this study:

> This paper examines the growth of government during this century as a result of giving women the right to vote. Using cross-sectional time-series data for

> 1870–1940, we examine state government expenditures and revenue as well as voting by U.S. House and Senate state delegations and the passage of a wide range of different state laws. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue and more liberal voting patterns for federal representatives, and these effects continued growing over time as more women took advantage of the franchise. Contrary to many recent suggestions, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s, and it helps explain why American government started growing when it did.

We are already $28 trillion in debt, partly because of feminism's replacement of husbands and families with higher taxes and big government. Every time we transfer money from tax-paying men to feminists to fix their mistakes, it leaves less money in the hands of the men who actually want to get married. The declining value of marriage after feminism for men explains why marriage is being delayed, and why marriage rates are plunging.

Luke Barnes on the fine-tuning of the strong force and fine structure constant

October 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By now, anyone who has had discussions about scientific evidence for the existence of God knows about the fine-tuning argument. In a nutshell, if the fundamental constants and quantities given in the Big Bang were even slightly other than they are, then the universe itself would not be hospitable for complex, embodied intelligent life.

Here is an article from The New Atlantis written by Australian cosmologist Luke Barnes.

Excerpt:

> Today, our deepest understanding of the laws of nature is summarized in a set of equations. Using these equations, we can make very precise calculations of the most elementary physical phenomena, calculations that are confirmed by experimental evidence. But to make these predictions, we have to plug in some numbers that cannot themselves be calculated but are derived from measurements of some of the most basic features of the physical universe. These numbers specify such crucial quantities as the masses of fundamental particles and the strengths of their mutual interactions. After extensive experiments under all manner of conditions, physicists have found that these numbers appear not to change in different times and places, so they are called the fundamental constants of nature.
>
> […]A universe that has just small tweaks in the fundamental constants might not have any of the chemical bonds that give us molecules, so say farewell to DNA, and also to rocks, water, and planets. Other tweaks could make the formation of stars or even atoms impossible. And with some values for the physical constants, the universe would have flickered out of existence in a fraction of a second. That the constants are all arranged in what is, mathematically speaking, the very improbable combination that makes our grand, complex, life-bearing universe possible is what physicists mean when they talk about the "fine-tuning" of the universe for life.

Let's look at an example – the strong force. Not only must the strong force be fine-tuned so we have both hydrogen and helium, but the ratio of the strong force must also be fine-tuned with the fine structure constant.

Barnes writes:

> The strong nuclear force, for example, is the glue that holds protons and neutrons together in the nuclei of atoms. If, in a hypothetical universe, it is too weak, then nuclei are not stable and the periodic table disappears again. If it is too strong, then the intense heat of the early universe could convert all hydrogen into helium — meaning that there could be no water, and that 99.97 percent of

> the 24 million carbon compounds we have discovered would be impossible, too. And, as the chart to the right shows, the forces, like the masses, must be in the right balance. If the electromagnetic force, which is responsible for the attraction and repulsion of charged particles, is too strong or too weak compared to the strong nuclear force, anything from stars to chemical compounds would be impossible.

Here's the chart he's referencing:

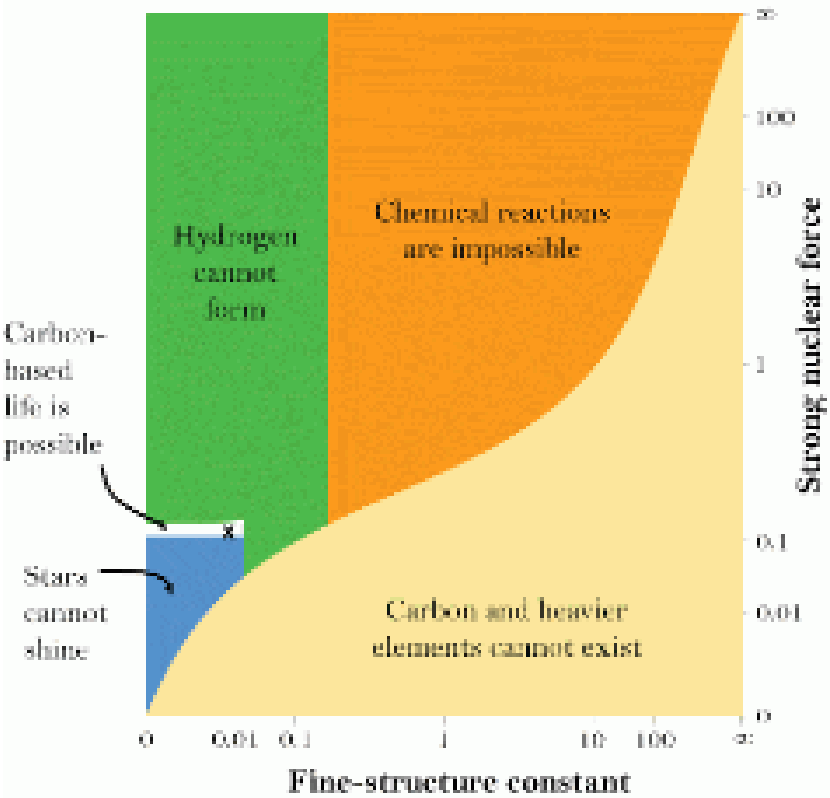

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant

As you can see from the chart, most of the values that the constants could take would make complex, embodied intelligent life impossible.

We need carbon (carbon-based life) because they form the basis of the components of life chemistry, e.g. proteins, sugars, etc. We need hydrogen for water. We need chemical reactions for obvious reasons. We need the light from the stars to support plant and animal life on the surface of a planet. And so on. In almost every case where you change the values of these constants and quantities and ratios from what they are, you will end up with a universe that does not support life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind under these laws of physics. And we don't have any alternative laws of physics in this universe.

By the way, just to show you how mainstream these examples of fine-tuning are, I thought I would link to a source that you're all going to be familiar with: The New Scientist.

The fine-tuning of the force of gravity

So here is an article from the New Scientist about a different constant that also has to be

fine-tuned for life: the force of gravity.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe‘s birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What’s more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Notice how the article also mentioned “the universe’s birth”, which is part of mainstream science.

When I’m writing to you about things like the origin of the universe, or the cosmic fine-tuning, I’m not talking to you about things that pastors found in the Bible. These discoveries are known and accepted by mainstream scientists. It’s amazing that people are constructing their worldviews without having to account for the birth of the universe and this cosmic fine-tuning. We all, as rational individuals, have to bound our view of the universe with the findings of science. Right now, those findings support the existence of a Creator and a Designer. So why am I seeing so many atheists who are just plain ignorant about these facts? Maybe we should tell them about this evidence. Maybe we should ask them why they don’t account for scientific evidence when forming their beliefs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason

- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

How do Christians justify not engaging secularism, feminism and socialism?

October 12, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend of mine and her husband just quit her church because they were becoming completely woke, demanding that Christians give up their liberties and defer to the wisdom of the secular left government. Well, my friend Jared sent me an article from a bold pastor who doesn't think that it's more pious or spiritual to capitulate to the culture.

Here's the intro:

> Spiritualizing cowardice has become du jour.
>
> I am almost surprised we do not hear sermons about how David was being unspiritual, a poor witness, or uppity to fight Goliath.
>
> Had David taken the plank out of his own eye? Surely both David and Israel had enough sins of their own to worry about without warring against the Philistines or their champion. What a hypocrite!
>
> And what in the Biblical text indicates David prayed about taking up their challenge before approaching King Saul and offering to fight?
>
> He should have just gone home like his brothers told him to, and there devoted himself to prayer and fasting until God changed his haughty heart.

So, my 3 enemies in the culture are secularism, feminism and socialism. Each of these is bad for me in different ways. Secularism makes it harder for me to do my job living as a Christian, and being able to speak about the big issues in life. Feminism has brought in the Sexual Revolution, and a host of evils, like abortion, no-fault divorce, and now even the rejection of the complementary genders in natural marriage. Socialism takes away my money and gives it to secular left politicians so they can buy votes from people who are lazy, reckless and irresponsible, driving us further into debt and weakening our ability to respond militarily to aggressors.

Whenever I present these 3 concerns to Churchians, they typically respond with laziness (they don't want to work to learn how to fight), which results in ignorance (they don't know how to fight), which results in cowardice (they are afraid to fight). If you point out that they cannot fight, they try to justify themselves by appealing to piety and spirituality. The truth is, anyone can fight secularism, feminism and socialism – as long as you take time to read some evidence, and practice debating. We actually have great resources for all the challenges we're facing – it's just that people would prefer to not have to read or engage. They even have spiritual-sounding ways of getting out of reading and debating. So, the duty to be ready with an answer in 1 Peter 3:15 is dismissed as "pride". And the duty to defeat attacks against the knowledge of God in 2 Cor 10:3-5 is dismissed as "arguing". And so on. The Bible is twisted to support whatever is easy, happy and sociable *for me*. These emotion-based "Christians" fill our churches and

dominate our response to the culture.

I'm going to pick my favorite points, but the whole article is worth reading.

First one:

> If God had wanted Goliath and the Philistines defeated, He would have sent down fire from heaven or opened the ground beneath their feet. God did that sort of thing at other times. He could surely have performed a similar feat here.
>
> Therefore, real faith on the part of David would have caused him to wait for God to act so David did not have to.

The pious and spiritual way to respond to secularism, feminism and socialism is to wait for God to fix it.

Here's another one I've heard:

> Why did David not just ask the host assembled against Israel to go bowling or golfing? Why did he not hand them gospel tracts? The text offers no evidence David tried to befriend them. Perhaps if he had just offered to "do life together" they could have avoided the conflict entirely.
>
> […]If only the Philistines had been invited to join a small group, or attend a Wednesday night church service. Instead David chose to fight them. How very disappointing. And what a poor testimony!
>
> David was being rather presumptuous and divisive, really, entangling himself in Israeli-Philistia politics. And he was being judgmental, implying that Goliath or the Philistines were evil, a force to be defeated. That is hardly the way to go about winning friends and influencing people.

One more – another I've been hit with personally:

> Focus on making people want to know about Jesus because of how happy and cheerful you are.
>
> Eventually the lost will hit a low point in their life where they grow tired of being bitter and depressed. That is when they will remember how you smiled all the time, and were always so positive about absolutely everything.
>
> Stop getting bent out of shape about abortion, the LGBT agenda, Islamism, atheism, socialism, evolution, public education, etc. Even if it is not the actual truth, addressing those issues repeatedly is going to give the impression that those things are all Christians care about.
>
> And if you give lost sinners that false impression, you are going to hurt not only your own testimony but the reputation of the entire Church, perhaps even of Jesus himself.
>
> In short, in the interest of not upsetting the world Christians must fall silent and stop talking about sin and folly. Stop calling sinners and fools inside and outside the church to repentance. After all, that's what Jesus would do. Right?

Isn’t it a wonderful coincidence that each of these strategies frees the pious Churchian from having to read books, get into debates, be shamed and excluded? Everyone wins! Well, except God. But maybe that’s what he really wants – for non-Christians to rule the world, and for Christians to do what feels good and be liked by them?

If you’ve ever had a pastor not knowing how to respond to the secular left (ignorance), not wanting to learn how to respond to the secular left (laziness), or not wanting to endure the attacks of church people who want Christianity to be about their feelings (cowardice), then you’ll find a paragraph about them in this article.

What would public school teachers do if your daughter was raped by a transgender student?

October 13, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Most people think of public school teachers as good people. But what kind of person insulates themselves from the world of adults? What kind of person hides away from the competitive pressures of private sector employment? What kind of person fears being held accountable by the parents so much that they enlist the FBI to intimidate them for "domestic terrorism"?

Well, consider this story from Red State:

> The situation in Loudoun County, VA, has become a point of national interest over the last year as it has come to represent ground zero for the fight against Critical Race Theory and transgender ideology in schools. Parents have stood up at school board meetings and pushed back on policies allowing boys in girls' bathrooms, books that promote pedophilia, and other perverse directives.
>
> Back in June, one such meeting exploded with multiple arrests after the cowardly school board declared an unlawful assembly. Police officers with no care for the rights of parents grabbed and threw one man to the ground who refused to leave. In what became a viral moment, the man was dragged out with his pants around his ankles.
>
> Now, we have the story behind what happened via The Daily Wire, who put out a multi-thousand-word investigative piece sharing exactly what Scott Smith had gone through. Most of it is behind a paywall, but I will share as much as I can here.

Apparently, "his daughter had been raped by a transgender boy in the girls' bathroom":

> Per the report, Smith was at the school board meeting because his daughter had been raped by a transgender boy in the girls' bathroom at Stone Bridge High School. What transpired after that was almost as sickening as the act itself.
>
> Smith was given a no-trespassing order prior to the meeting that forbids him from telling his story. This was all part of an elaborative cover-up by the school district to not publicize the rape of his daughter. In fact, when Smith showed up at the school to complain about what had happened, they essentially accused him of lying and called the police, not on the transgender rapist, but on Smith himself for causing a scene. Luckily, he was able to get his daughter a rape kit that evening that confirmed the crime.

So, the rape actually happened. The rape kit confirmed that a rape happened. In spite of those facts, the article notes that "the school board announced that they had no record of any rape regarding their transgender policies at their schools". And also "an Antifa "anti-

racist" activist at the meeting claim his daughter was lying". So there's what happens to "Believe All Women" when the secular left is the accused. The police assaulted him, threw him to the ground, and dragged him out of the room. And the secular leftists approved of this. They like when the police do this to parents. They think this is the right way to treat their customers.

Men need to be smarter

So, here is how public schools work. It's not like Amazon.com or BestBuy.com or any other retailer. They are a monopoly. Everyone in the country who pays taxes has to pay for their salaries. They get paid whether they do a good job or a bad job. Their customers have no choice to purchase from a different vendor, if their current vendor is underperforming. Parents have to pay first, and then take whatever the public school decides to give them. If the public schools are failing their children, parents just have to keep paying them to fail. There are no refunds. There are no opt-outs. There are no lawsuits. If you try to challenge the teachers, the unions will protect them. If you try to speak up at a school board meeting, you will be arrested by police. The Attorney General of the United States of America has instructed the FBI to prevent parents from challenging these teachers. This is fascism. We are paying them to do this to us.

I will say one thing. It's the father's job to engineer his life so that he marries a woman who supports a plan of homeschooling the kids. And you don't live in Northern Virginia. That's Democrat territory. Men have to be smart enough to anticipate threats, and plan to avoid them. Marriage and parenting begins with your performance in school, and your choice of career. You can't complain what public schools do to your children, when you hand your children to them. I would never live in Loudon County, and I would never give my children to the secular left. They will destroy you, rather than be held accountable by you. Your job is to keep paying them, and celebrate the destruction of your children at their hands.

The Wintery Knight’s favorite Bible verses

October 14, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Dina asked me to post my favorite Bible verses, so here are 8 of my favorites. Leave yours in the comments below.

Psalm 27:14:

> [11] Teach me Your way, O Lord,
> And lead me in a level path
> Because of my foes.
>
> [12] Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries,
> For false witnesses have risen against me,
> And such as breathe out violence.
>
> [13] *I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord
> In the land of the living.
>
> **[14] Wait for the Lord;**
> **Be strong and let your heart take courage;**
> **Yes, wait for the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**
>
> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.
>
> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.
>
> [5] Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men’s* hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.

Matthew 5:13:

> 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
>
> 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

> **13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**
>
> 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
>
> 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

2 Timothy 2:4:

> 1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
>
> [2] The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
>
> [3] Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[4] No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.**
>
> [5] Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

Daniel 3:18:

> [13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.
>
> [14] Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?
>
> [15] Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?”
>
> [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.
>
> [17] If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire;and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
>
> **[18] But *even* if *He does* not,let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”**

Esther 4:14:

> [10] Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai:
>
> [11] “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not

> summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days."
>
> [12] They related Esther's words to Mordecai.
>
> [13] Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> **[14] For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"**

Philippians 1:9:

> [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> [4] always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> [5] in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> [6] *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> [7] For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
>
> [8] For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> [10] so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
>
> [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Numbers 13:30:

> [25] When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,
>
> [26] they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.
>
> [27] Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.
>
> [28] Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.
>
> [29] Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the

> sea and by the side of the Jordan.”
>
> [30] **Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.”**

If you have a favorite Bible verse or two, post them in the comments.

Pro-abortion feminist academic justifies divorcing the man she loved

October 15, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the past, I've written about how we need to get rid of no-fault divorce laws, if we expect men to feel comfortable about getting married. I've explained that men have seen what divorce does to other men, and to children. Some of us, like me, have read books and studies about it. And it's a major reason why men don't marry.

In today's post, we're going to look at an article in the far-left New York Times, written by a pro-abortion progressive feminist professor, who divorced her husband, making her two children fatherless.

What did he do wrong? Nothing.

Behold:

> There was no emotional or physical abuse in our home. There was no absence of love. I was in love with my husband when we got divorced. Part of me is in love with him still. I suspect that will always be the case. Even now, after everything, when he walks into the room my stomach drops the same way it does before the roller coaster comes down. I divorced my husband not because I didn't love him. I divorced him because I loved myself more.
>
> […]I made choice after choice to prioritize my career because I believed fervently in the importance of the work I was doing… [children of divorce] benefit because happier mothers are better parents.
>
> […] I knew that trying to force myself to subordinate my ambitions and always put our children first would have been impossible without lopping off a vital part of myself.

At the time of her decision, the children were aged 5 and 3! If she chose her career, that means that she was not raising them, during that critical first five years. Daycare is proven to be a poor substitute for the mother during those early years.

CafeMom notes:

> No one is more acutely aware than Bazelon is of the many things she's missed as a mother — things that have stuck with her through the years so strongly, she can mentally list them off one by one. They include, in her words: "My daughter's seventh birthday, my son's 10th birthday party, two family vacations, three Halloweens, [and] every school camping trip," she writes. "I have never chaperoned, coached or organized a school event."
>
> My daughter's seventh birthday was the worst. She cried… But I had a trial starting the next day, six hours away."

Now, what about her statement about divorce being good for children, because if she is

happy, then they will be happy? Many women believe this, and most communities for women affirm this. But is it true? What does the peer-reviewed data say?

Here's a famous study (PDF) that says: (H/T Philip Greenspun)

> This follow-up study of 131 children, who were 3–18 years old when their parents divorced in the early 1970s, marks the culmination of 25 years of research. The use of extensive clinical interviews allowed for exploration in great depth of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as they negotiated childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and adulthood. At the 25-year follow-up, a comparison group of their peers from the same community was added. Described in rich clinical detail, the findings highlight the unexpected gulf between growing up in intact versus divorced families, and the difficulties children of divorce encounter in achieving love, sexual intimacy, and commitment to marriage and parenthood. These findings have significant implications for new clinical and educational interventions.

Specifically: (I stole this from Philip)

> Hardly any of our subjects described a happy childhood; in fact a number of children told us that "the day they divorced was the day my childhood ended." … By the 25-year mark, the majority had decided not to have children.
>
> No child of divorce in our study was invited by both parents, either separately or together, to discuss college plans. … Only 57% of the divorce group achieved their bachelor's degree as compared with 90% in the comparison group. … Unhappy, [those who did attend college] settled for fields of study that were not their first choice, at lower ranked institutions than their parents had attended. It was at this time that one young person, echoing the emotions of many others, commented bitterly, "I paid for my parents' divorce."
>
> The central finding of this study is that parental divorce impacts detrimentally the capacity to love and be loved within a lasting, committed relationship.

This study was actually made into a book, and I read it. That's partly how I formed my views of divorce. In her column, the feminist refutes data like this with an anecdote. She "knows a person" whose experience refutes the peer-reviewed evidence. I don't find that kind of self-serving rationalization very convincing. But it's common.

By the way, I also read books about daycare when I was thinking about marriage, and I hate daycare, too. You would think that a smart feminist academic would read books about marriage, divorce and parenting like I did, and respect the evidence in her decision-making, rather than being led by her feelings. I'm just a senior software engineer with 22 years of private sector experience. But I sure wouldn't make decisions about marriage and children without reading books and studies first. What's that old familiar saying in Information Technology? RTFM. Read The Freaking Manual. Engineers read the manual. Emotion-based people don't.

Women may say to all this, “well, what do you expect me to do? Be unhappy with a bad man?” And the answer is – if you have children, then yes. The time to avoid getting married to a bad man is before you marry him. And we should teach women to disregard feelings, feminism, and peer approval. They should instead prepare themselves for marriage with chastity and sobriety, and choose men who are sober, chaste and have demonstrated commitment ability.

So here’s my conclusion. I don’t recommend that any man marry a feminist. If they are willing to kill their own children, then they are willing to abuse their own children with divorce. If they believe in same-sex marriage, then they don’t think that children deserve a mother AND a father. Don’t marry a secular leftist woman. You’ll pay, and your children will suffer.

Homeschooling moms who influence their neighbors, their local church, and the local university, for Christ, have the better end of the marriage deal. If I were married, I would trade places with my wife in a minute, if I could. It’s far more interesting to homeschool kids in great literature, science, economics, and computer programming, than it is to keep your mouth shut all day in an environment that is hostile to Christian convictions.

Did you miss this recent historically-accurate World War 2 movie?

October 16, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I wanted to alert you to some books that I've been reading, and post a couple of videos that review a recent movie that fits in with those books. I'm trying to encourage everyone to ween themselves off of fiction, self-help, sports and modern movies. And in order to get people to do that, I have to find something better.

So, in World War 2, the Allies (UK, USA and USSR) were fighting in two main areas of the globe: Europe and the Pacific Ocean. Previously, I had ignored the Pacific, because island fighting didn't seem to me to be as interesting as fighting in Europe. It just seemed too "close quarters" for any real tactics or strategy. But I had stupidly neglected the naval battles, which are full of tactics and strategy. So, I've been reading books about American aircraft used in the Pacific theater, the US submarine forces, as well as the major battles of our surface fleets.

Here are some of the aircraft books:

- Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor
- Air Apaches: The True Story of the 345th Bomb Group and Its Low, Fast, and Deadly Missions in World War II
- Never Call Me a Hero: A Legendary American Dive-Bomber Pilot Remembers the Battle of Midway

Here are some of the submarine books:

- Wahoo: The Patrols of America's Most Famous World War II Submarine
- Clear the Bridge!: The War Patrols of the U.S.S. Tang
- Thunder Below!: The USS *Barb* Revolutionizes Submarine Warfare in World War II

And a few surface ship books:

- The Battle of Midway (Pivotal Moments in American History)
- Neptune's Inferno: The U.S. Navy at Guadalcanal
- World War II at Sea: A Global History

These are all available as audio books.

I wanted to specifically highlight the book on the Battle of Midway, by Craig L. Symonds. There was a recent movie made about the battle, and it had surprisingly few historical mistakes. This 2-part video review was excellent.

Part 1:

Part 2:

The movie is from 2019, and you can still stream it, or get the DVD. It will help you to have a broad overview of the battle, and then when you read the book, it makes sense. If you have never seen a war movie, this is an excellent one to start with. It really sticks to the historical facts. It is superior to the previous 1976 Midway movie with Charleton Heston and Henry Fonda.

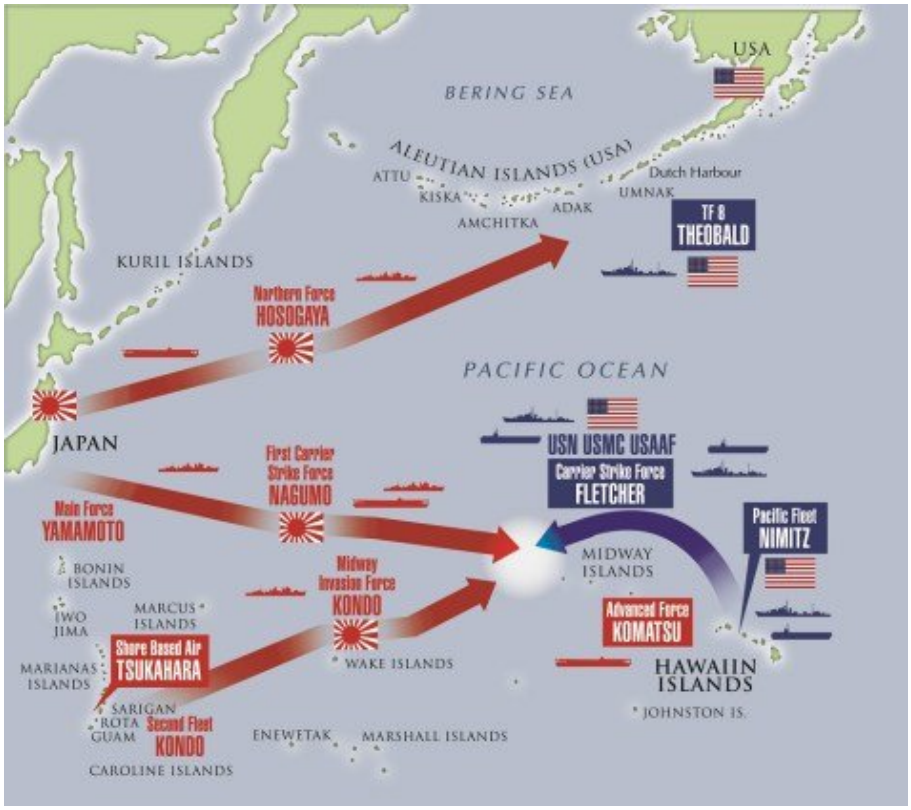

Battle of Midway Map

What makes this particular battle interesting is that the American Navy was actually outnumbered and outgunned by the superior Japanese Navy at that time. They had more ships, better planes, and better trained airmen and sailors. But we had a secret weapon – you'll have to watch the movie to find out what it was. Midway was the turning point of the Pacific War. It's a good reminder why we always need to keep our "blue water" naval force in the trim. I wish we spent more on our armed forces than we do on all these spending programs to transfer wealth from taxpayers to other people – subsidies and welfare. At least when we spend money on the armed forces, it's Constitutional, and we get something useful for it.

We really should not know the names of famous actors, artists, musicians, athletes, etc. These people are pretty and talented, sure. But they never did anything to fight against evils like Marxism and Japanese Imperialism. Christianity is a faith that pits good against evil, so naturally, I am very interested in people who battle against evil. The American armed forces have an excellent record of battling against evil, often at great personal cost. Something that the current generation of entertainers cannot match.

Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical souls

October 17, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This podcast is a must-listen. Please take the time to download this podcast and listen to it. I guarantee that you will love this podcast. I even recommended it to my *Dad* and I almost never do that.

Details:

> In this podcast, J. Warner examines the evidence for the existence of the mind (and inferentially, the soul) as he looks at six classic philosophical arguments. Jim also briefly discusses Thomas Nagel's book, Mind and Cosmos and discusses the limitations of physicalism.

The MP3 file is here. (67 MB, 72 minutes)

Topics:

- Atheist Thomas Nagel's latest book "Mind and Cosmos" makes the case that materialism cannot account for the evidence of mental phenomena
- Nagel writes in this recent New York Times article that materialism cannot account for the reality of consciousness, meaning, intention and purpose
- Quote from the Nagel article:

> Even though the theistic outlook, in some versions, is consistent with the available scientific evidence, I don't believe it, and am drawn instead to a naturalistic, though non-materialist, alternative. Mind, I suspect, is not an inexplicable accident or a divine and anomalous gift but a basic aspect of nature that we will not understand until we transcend the built-in limits of contemporary scientific orthodoxy.

- When looking at this question, it's important to not have our conclusions pre-determined by presupposing materialism or atheism
- If your mind/soul doesn't exist and you are a purely physical being then that is a defeater for Christianity, so we need to respond
- Traditionally, Christians have been committed to a view of human nature called "dualism" – human beings are souls who *have* bodies
- The best way* to argue for the existence of the soul is using philosophical arguments

The case:

- The law of identity says that if A = B' if A and B have the exact same properties
- If A = the mind and B = the brain, then is A identical to B?

- Wallace will present 6 arguments to show that A is not identical to B because they have different properties

Not everyone of the arguments below might make sense to you, but you will probably find one or two that strike you as correct. Some of the points are more illustrative than persuasive, like #2. However, I do find #3, #5 and #6 persuasive.

1) First-person access to mental properties

- Thought experiment: Imagine your dream car, and picture it clearly in your mind
- If we invited an artist to come and sketch out your dream car, then we could see your dream car's shape on paper
- This concept of your dream car is not something that people can see by looking at your brain structure
- Physical properties can be physically accessed, but the properties of your dream care and privately accessed

2) Our experience of consciousness implies that we are not our bodies

- Common sense notion of personhood is that we own our bodies, but we are not our bodies

3) Persistent self-identity through time

- Thought experiment: replacing a new car with an old car one piece at a time
- When you change even the smallest part of a physical object, it changes the identity of that object
- Similarly, your body is undergoing changes constantly over time
- Every cell in your body is different from the body you had 10 years ago
- Even your brain cells undergo changes (see this from New Scientist – WK)
- If you are the same person you were 10 years ago, then you are not your physical body

4) Mental properties cannot be measured like physical objects

- Physical objects can be measured (e.g. – use physical measurements to measure weight, size, etc.)
- Mental properties cannot be measured

5) Intentionality or About-ness

- Mental entities can refer to realities that are physical, something outside of themselves
- A tree is not about anything, it just is a physical object
- But you can have thoughts about the tree out there in the garden that needs water

6) Free will and personal responsibility

- If humans are purely physical, then all our actions are determined by sensory inputs and genetic programming
- Biological determinism is not compatible with free will, and free will is required for personal responsibility
- Our experience of moral choices and moral responsibility requires free will, and free will requires minds/souls

He spends the last 10 minutes of the podcast responding to naturalistic objections to the mind/soul hypothesis.

*Now in the podcast, Wallace does say that scientific evidence is not the best kind of evidence to use when discussing this issue of body/soul and mind/brain. But I did blog before about two pieces of evidence that I think are relevant to this discussion: corroborated near-death experiences and mental effort.

You might remember that Dr. Craig brought up the issue of substance dualism, and the argument from intentionality ("aboutness"), in his debate with the naturalist philosopher Alex Rosenberg, so this argument about dualism is battle-ready. You can add it to your list of arguments for Christian theism along with all the other arguments like the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, stellar habitability, galactic habitability, irreducible complexity, molecular machines, the Cambrian explosion, the moral argument, the resurrection, biological convergence, and so on.

Secular left feminist Sarah Stankorb explains why women are leaving Christianity

October 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I sometimes read articles from mainstream conservative pastors and theologians. One of these is the famous Doug Wilson who blogs at Blog and Mablog. Well, recently he was attacked by a secular left feminist named Sarah Stankorb. I looked over her recent articles, and a pattern emerged about what she – and the women she writes about – think that Christianity is about.

Here's an article entitled "These Evangelical Women Are Abandoning Trump and Their Churches".

She talks about a woman named Katie Loveland, who leaves her church for the following reasons:

1. If a church allows a man to act like a fool towards women, then Christianity is false.
2. If a church allows a man who has passed a background check and holds a concealed carry permit to be armed so he can protect church members from attacks like this one, then Christianity is false.
3. If Christians support a politician who has a pro-life record of demonstrated achievements over a politician who promises to remove all state and local restrictions on abortion from conception to birth, then Christianity is false.

And another woman named Elaina Ramsey, and her reasons for rejecting Christianity:

1. If Christianity requires you to disagree with your gay and queer friends, then Christianity is false.
2. If Christians refuse to marry you because you've been raped, then Christianity is false.
3. If the Bible records (and condemns) the rape of Bathsheba by David, then Christianity is false.
4. If Christianity teaches that murdering humans is wrong, and science says that the unborn are human, then Christianity is false.

And more about another woman named Deirdre Sugiuchi, and her reasons for rejecting Christianity:

1. If your father claims to be a Christian and spanks you, then Christianity is false.
2. If you are sent to an abusive Christian reform school for being rebellious, then Christianity is false.
3. If Christianity feels anti-gay, anti-black or anti-woman, then Christianity is false.
4. If the United States opposes Al Qaeda for carrying out the 9/11 attack, then Christianity is false.

Are you seeing a pattern here?

It turns out that a lot of emotion-based people claimed to be Christians and were accepted as "Christian", without any rational basis for believing it. And later on, when Christianity made them feel bad about being reckless and irresponsible, or when it loses them non-Christian friends, then they abandoned it. It's not that they discovered that Christianity is illogical. It's not that they discovered evidence to falsify Christian truth claims. Their stated reasons for leaving Christianity are entirely subjective. And none of the reasons do the work of falsifying core Christian truth claims, such as God's existence, the inspiration of the Bible, or the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus.

Just to review, here are some of the reasons why authentic Christians believe in Christian theism:

- scientific evidence for the origin of the universe
- scientific evidence for cosmic fine-tuning
- scientific evidence for the origin of life
- scientific evidence for habitability
- scientific evidence for sudden origin of body plans
- scientific evidence for molecular machines
- scientific evidence for irreducible complexity
- the argument from consciousness
- the argument from objective morality
- the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus

These arguments – and many more like them – are defended by scholars in books published by top academic presses. But I see no evidence that emotion-based ex-Christians *have ever read such books*. Why would they? They aren't interested in forming their worldview based on objective reality. They aren't interested in constructing a life plan where their desire for happiness comes second to following Jesus.

People who abandon Christianity because of feelings or experiences have not "left Christianity". They just stopped faking being Christians. They were never actually Christian in the first place. To be a Christian in the first place, you have to know that Christianity is true. People who accept the arguments for Christianity listed above have *just as many disappointments with God, bad experiences with Christians, and bad experiences with churches as people who were guided by their emotions and experiences.*

In fact, I personally know women who grew up fatherless, or had defective parents, or other setbacks. They got themselves into a lot of trouble with churches and immoral men, and yet today, not only are they solid Christians, but they actually take the lead in gospel enterprises, such as apologetics. Why? Because for them, the objective truth of Christianity was more important than their subjective feelings and experiences.

The differences between Christians and non-Christians is that Christians overlook bad feelings, shame and rejection, because we know facts don't care about our feelings. For

real Christians, the normal Christian life *requires* bad feelings, disappointments, bad experiences and rejection by non-Christians. We actually read the Bible, and so we expect bad things to happen to us.

Note: if you are relying on someone to act in a Christian way – say, as a marriage partner – then you'd better find out what kind of "Christian" they are, by asking them how they arrived at their beliefs. Do not marry a fake Christian who just reads romance novels and fiction. A person can't determine the truth of Christianity by focusing on career, travel, entertainment, promiscuity, etc.

Did Democrats really defund police, reduce prosecution, and release criminals?

October 19, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you listen to the mainstream media, the Democrat-led effort to defund the police has produced a paradise of peace and prosperity. But when you look at the crime rates in Democrat-run major cities that defunded the police, and went soft on criminals, you see a different story. Let's take a look at the crime data, and see the real effects of these policies.

Daily Signal reports on the policies that were enacted in Democrat-run major cities.

Chicago

Defunding the police:

> Mayor Lori Lightfoot, a Democrat, proposed an $80 million cut to Chicago Police Department funding in October, according to Injustice Watch.

Releasing criminals:

> Illinois became the first state to completely abolish its cash bail system earlier this year, NBC News reported.
>
> […]"This legislation marks a substantial step toward dismantling the systemic racism that plagues our communities, our state, and our nation and brings us closer to true safety, true fairness, and true justice," Gov. J.B. Pritzker, a Democrat, said after signing the bill in February, according to NBC News.

Baltimore

Defunding the police:

> Baltimore City Council agreed to cut $22 million from the city's police budget in June 2020, according to The Baltimore Sun.

Reduced prosecution of crimes:

> In March, Baltimore City State Attorney Marilyn Mosby, the city's top prosecutor, announced she would no longer prosecute prostitution, drug possession, or other minor offenses, NBC affiliate WBAL-TV reported.

Milwaukee

Defunding the police:

> The Milwaukee Common Council approved a police budget cut in November that reduced the department by 120 officers, the Journal Sentinel reported.

Pittsburgh

Defunding the police:

> The Pittsburgh City Council approved a police department hiring freeze in July 2020, according to WPXI-TV. The council also ordered the department to redirect 10% of the budget to social service programs every year.

Los Angeles

Defunding the police:

> The Los Angeles City Council approved a $150 million cut to the city's police department in July 2020, ABC affiliate KABC-TV reported. Mayor Eric Garcetti, a Democrat, supported the massive budget cuts.

These are Democrat policies, enacted by Democrat mayors and Democrat City Councils. In addition to these actions, several Democrat-run cities such as Portland and New York City dropped most charges against rioters and looters, or released them outright. So, what happened after these actions were taken?

First, the Washington Examiner:

> Homicides in cities increased by up to 40% over the previous year, the biggest single-year increase since 1960, a trend that has not abated so far in 2021. Sixty-three of the 66 largest police jurisdictions saw a rise in at least one category of violent crime, ranging from homicide and rape to robbery and assault, according to the Major Cities Chiefs Association. Homicides and shootings have gone up for three straight years in Washington, D.C., and at least a dozen mass shootings were reported nationwide over the weekend.

The Federalist has more to say.

Massive destruction to property:

> We saw almost a year of Black Lives Matter and Antifa mob violence with 574 riots; $2 billion in destruction, arson, and looting; at least 25 dead; and more than 2,000 police officers injured.

Undermining police morale:

> The war on cops has also escalated. Already this year, 241 officers have been shot, 44 killed by gunfire, and ambush attacks have increased 103 percent.
>
> […]Officer morale is at rock bottom and many of the most qualified veterans are bailing out. Last year across the country, retirements increased by 45 percent and resignations by 18 percent.

Everyone is talking a lot about the foreign policy blunders of the Biden administration, the $3.5 trillion spending bill, the rising inflation, the threats to religious liberty, the rolling back of protections for the unborn, the anti-parent bias of public schools, etc. But you can't neglect the victims of violent crime and property crime – many of them black.

It turns out that the Democrat voters who put the Democrats into office were actually the most opposed to black people's prosperity and security. Intentions don't matter. Only results matter. The results of Democrat policies have been a disaster for black people living in these Democrat-run cities. We have to do better for blacks, and that means not voting for the policies of the secular left.

Wind, solar or nuclear: which is best for costs, electricity prices and the environment?

October 20, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I bought a new book by a famous environmentalist Dr. Michael Shellenberger. He used to be a huge advocate for renewable energy (wind and solar). The book is about why he changed his mind and now prefers nuclear power. He has a long pedigree of environmental activism. I agree with him, so I wanted to get the book to learn how to argue it. For you, I have a short video instead of the book.

Here's a 17-minute TED talk that he did:

And an article from Quillette that has the full text of the talk.

Here's the part I thought was the most interesting, where he explains the problems with solar and wind:

> The first was around land use. Electricity from solar roofs costs about twice as much as electricity from solar farms, but solar and wind farms require huge amounts of land. That, along with the fact that solar and wind farms require long new transmissions lines, and are opposed by local communities and conservationists trying to preserve wildlife, particularly birds.
>
> Another challenge was the intermittent nature of solar and wind energies. When the sun stops shining and the wind stops blowing, you have to quickly be able to ramp up another source of energy.

I was having a discussion with one of the software architects at my company, who LOVES wind power. I raised these objections with him, especially about the birds and the subsidies for wind and solar, and the higher electricity prices. His response was that he was confident that investing in the renewables would produce technological solutions to those problems.

Look what Schellenberger says, though:

> What kills big, threatened, and endangered birds—birds that could go extinct—like hawks, eagles, owls, and condors, are wind turbines.
>
> In fact, wind turbines are the most serious new threat to important bird species to emerge in decades.
>
> […]Solar farms have similarly large ecological impacts. Building a solar farm is a lot like building any other kind of farm. You have to clear the whole area of wildlife.
>
> In order to build one of the biggest solar farms in California the developers hired biologists to pull threatened desert tortoises from their burrows, put them on the back of pickup trucks, transport them, and cage them in pens where many ended

> up dying.
>
> […][S]cientists recently warned that wind turbines are on the verge of making one species, the Hoary bat, a migratory bat species, go extinct.

More environmental impact:

> You can make solar panels cheaper and wind turbines bigger, but you can't make the sun shine more regularly or the wind blow more reliably. I came to understand the environmental implications of the physics of energy. In order to produce significant amounts of electricity from weak energy flows, you just have to spread them over enormous areas. In other words, the trouble with renewables isn't fundamentally technical—it's natural.

Higher costs:

> Dealing with energy sources that are inherently unreliable, and require large amounts of land, comes at a high economic cost.
>
> There's been a lot of publicity about how solar panels and wind turbines have come down in cost. But those one-time cost savings from making them in big Chinese factories have been outweighed by the high cost of dealing with their unreliability.

There was a news article from the radically leftist UK Guardian recently that found that 40% of UK solar panels were manufactured by firms linked to Chinese slave labor.

Consumer electricity prices rise, disproportionately affecting the poor:

> Consider California. Between 2011–17 the cost of solar panels declined about 75 percent, and yet our electricity prices rose five times more than they did in the rest of the U.S. It's the same story in Germany, the world leader in solar and wind energy. Its electricity prices increased 50 percent between 2006–17, as it scaled up renewables.

The same thing happened in Canada, when they switched to renewables. According to a recent study, the province of Ontario saw a "21% increase in the overall average cost of power in the province over the period 2007-2013".

Schellenberger likes nuclear energy:

> Germany's carbon emissions have been flat since 2009, despite an investment of $580 billion by 2025 in a renewables-heavy electrical grid, a 50 percent rise in electricity cost.
>
> Meanwhile, France produces one-tenth the carbon emissions per unit of electricity as Germany and pays little more than half for its electricity. How? Through nuclear power.
>
> Then, under pressure from Germany, France spent $33 billion on renewables, over the last decade. What was the result? A rise in the carbon intensity of its

> electricity supply, and higher electricity prices, too.
>
> What about all the headlines about expensive nuclear and cheap solar and wind? They are largely an illusion resulting from the fact that 70 to 80 percent of the costs of building nuclear plants are up-front, whereas the costs given for solar and wind don't include the high cost of transmission lines, new dams, or other forms of battery.

He talks a lot about whether nuclear power is safe, and what to do with the waste. I found it compelling. My architect friend didn't ask me about that, but he did mention the cost of nuclear.

Here's what I should have said (but didn't):

> All of the waste fuel from 45 years of the Swiss nuclear program can fit, in canisters, on a basketball court-like warehouse, where like all spent nuclear fuel, it has never hurt a fly.
>
> By contrast, solar panels require 17 times more materials in the form of cement, glass, concrete, and steel than do nuclear plants, and create over 200 times more waste.
>
> We tend to think of solar panels as clean, but the truth is that there is no plan anywhere to deal with solar panels at the end of their 20 to 25 year lifespan.

I did send him the lecture and the article after, though.

If you think this is an interesting topic, why not share the TED talk and the article with your friends? Some people vote Democrat just for renewable energy. I don't like Democrat policies, so I have to be equipped to know how to respond to anything that anyone might like about them. Christian conservatives like me who care about things like abortion, marriage, religious liberty, etc. have to become experts at education policy, health care policy, energy policy, foreign policy, etc. I have to be able to debate anyone about any policy.

William Lane Craig answers: how can the four gospels be independent sources?

October 21, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

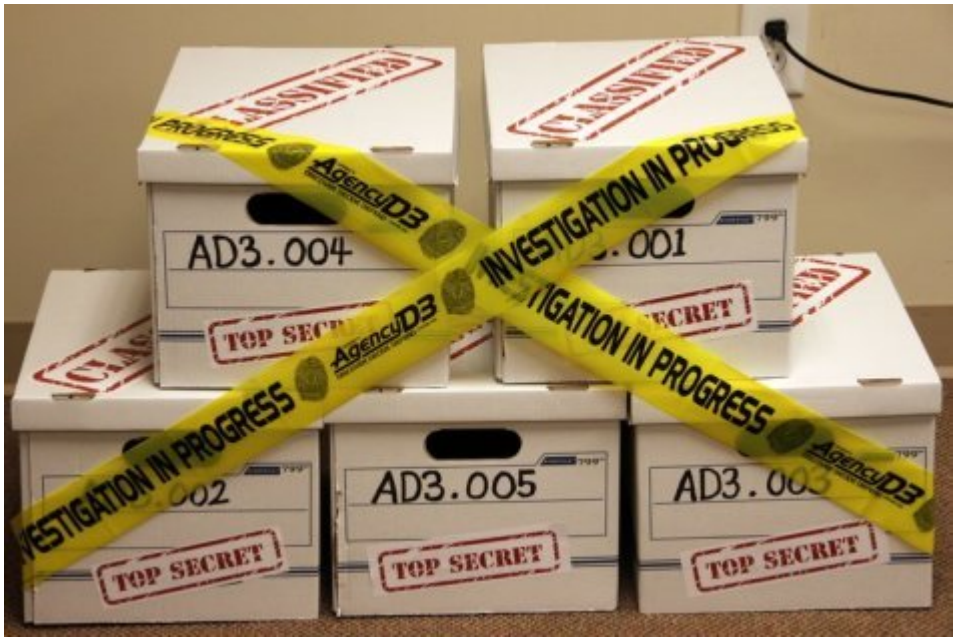

Investigation in progress

Previously, I blogged about the historical criteria that historians use to evaluate documents. One of the criteria is "multiple independent sources". If a story is reported in multiple independent sources, then historians are more likely to evaluate it as historically accurate. But how about the four gospels? Are they independent sources? The answer might not be what you expect.

Here's how the question was put to Dr. Craig:

> The latest video, "Did Jesus Rise From the Dead," is especially compelling, but I had a question about it. In the part one video, you cite as evidence, the Gospels plus Acts and First Corinthians and you refer to them as "independent" and "unconnected" sources. But this isn't exactly true, is it? After all, two of these books were written by the same author, Luke, and so Luke and Acts are connected by authorship. Furthermore, isn't it true that much information relayed in Matthew and Luke were taken from Mark? This two facts would make it untrue to call the Gospels "independent" and "unconnected" would they not?

Here's the video he's talking about:

Dr. Craig answers the question in his latest question of the week. I think this answer is important for those who aren't aware of how the gospels are organized.

He writes:

> The objection is based on a simple misunderstanding. It assumes that the sources I'm referring to are the books of the New Testament. But that's not what

> I'm talking about.
>
> New Testament critics have identified a number of sources behind the New Testament, sources on which the New Testament authors drew. For example, Matthew and Luke drew not only upon Mark as a source but also upon a source which scholars designate "Q," which appears to have been a source containing Jesus' sayings or teachings. Thus, if you could show that a saying in Matthew or Luke appears in both Mark and Q, that would count as multiple, independent attestation.

What does this mean? It means that although there is overlap between Matthew and Luke, called "Q", there are actually three independent sources there: Matthew's source, called M. Luke's source, called L. And the material common to Matthew and Luke, which therefore PRE-DATES Matthew and Luke, called Q.

Dr. Craig lists out several independent sources in his full reply:

1. the pre-Markan Passion story used by Mark
2. the rest of the gospel of Mark has a source
3. Matthew's source (M)
4. Luke's source (L)
5. John's gospel which is very different from Mark, Luke and Matthew
6. the sermons in Acts have a source
7. the early creed found in Paul's 1 Corinthians 15

So if you are trying to lay out something from the New Testament, and you can find it in two of these sources, and at least one of them is very early, you're in pretty good shape.

Although the questioner and the other critics might question the "minimal facts" that pass the historical tests, many of these facts are not questioned by even atheistic scholars.

Here's a useful tip for non-professionals who want to disagree with Dr. Craig. Dr. Craig publishes his arguments in academic presses like Oxford University Press, not to mention scholarly peer-reviewed journals. He's also debated his ideas against famous atheist historians like Gerd Ludemann, Marcus Borg, James Crossley, Bart Ehrman, etc. So it's probably a good idea for people who want to disagree with him to first read some academic literature, or at least ask a professional. Before you post your YouTube video. You could even just ask a professional atheist historian. They will tell you what's wrong with an argument like your "the sources are not independent" argument. Just check yourself before you post something in public. A lot of people who are still puzzling out these questions will look at a mistake like this, and immediately dismiss atheism as a sloppy, anti-intellectual worldview.

You can watch more of Dr. Craig's videos in his playlist, here. These are especially useful for people who want to get the overall scope of the battlefield before deciding where to focus in study. Everybody should know about all of these arguments regardless of where

you choose to specialize.

Why do so many atheist historians think that 1 Corinthians 15 is reliable history?

October 22, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

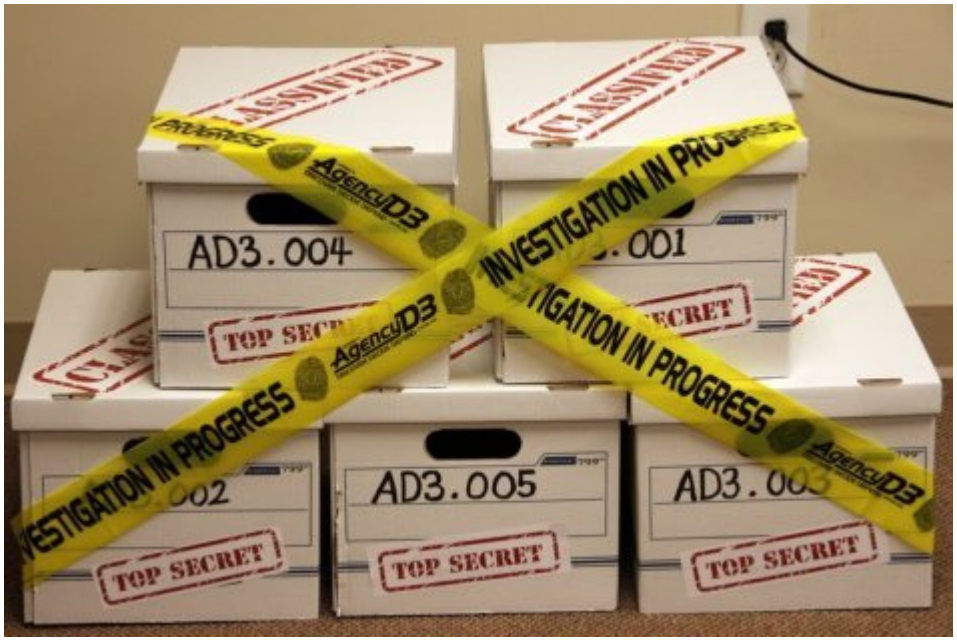

Investigation in progress

Which passage of the Bible is the favorite of Christians who like to defend the Christian worldview? I don't mean which one is most inspirational… I mean "which one is the most useful for winning arguments?" Well, when it comes to the historical Jesus, the most important passage has to be 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

The tradition in 1 Corinthians 15 is an early creed that was received from the eyewitnesses Peter and John when Paul visited them several times in Jerusalem, as documented in Galatians 1 and 2, where Paul meets the eyewitnesses. And of course, Paul records his own eyewitness experience, documented in 1 Cor 15:8.

So, is this passage accepted as historically reliable by all ancient historians? Or only by the Bible-believing ones?

Here's something posted by Dr. William Lane Craig about the 1 Corinthians 15 passage:

> The evidence that Paul is not writing in his own hand in I Cor. 15.3-5 is so powerful that all New Testament scholars recognize that Paul is here passing on a prior tradition. In addition to the fact that Paul explicitly says as much, the passage is replete with non-Pauline characteristics, including, in order of appearance: (i) the phrase "for our sins" using the genitive case and plural noun is unusual for Paul; (ii) the phrase "according to the Scriptures" is unparalleled in Paul, who introduces Scriptural citations by "as it is written"; (iii) the perfect passive verb "has been raised" appears only in this chapter and in a pre-Pauline confessional formula in II Tim. 2.8; (iv) the phrase "on the third day" with its ordinal number following the noun in Greek is non-Pauline; (v) the word

> “appeared” is found only here and in the confessional formula in I Tim. 3.16; and (vi) “the Twelve” is not Paul’s nomenclature, for he always speaks of the twelve disciples as “the apostles.”
>
> Now the visit during which Paul may have received this tradition is the visit you mention three years after his conversion on the road to Damascus (Gal. 1.18). This puts the tradition back to within the first five years after Jesus’ death in AD 30. So there’s not even an apparent inconsistency with Paul’s appropriating the language of the formula to encapsulate the Gospel he was already preaching during those first three years in Damascus.

Ancient historian Gary Habermas loves to read non-Christian scholars… and then he writes about what THEY think about Jesus in peer-reviewed articles, published in academic journals. Let’s look at this one: *Dialog: A Journal of Theology, Vol. 45; No. 3 (Fall, 2006), pp. 288-297; published by Blackwell Publishing, UK.*

He writes:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: “However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul’s.”[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul’s own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: “It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition.”[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]

This is important:

> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the

> brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

He's an eyewitness (verse 8), and he met with the other eyewitnesses, James and Peter. 1 Corinthians is early. Galatians is early. The creed is extremely early – right after the events occurred. There was no time for legends to develop.

And atheistic / critical historians agree, the creed is reliable:

> Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]
>
> Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]
>
> Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.
>
> (3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]
>
> These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially

> given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.
>
> (4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

Now, some of the people he lists are really biased against the supernatural, and they really hate the idea that the claims of Christianity exclude other religions. And yet they don't deny the historical reliability of 1 Corinthians 15, or that it is based on eyewitness testimony.

That's why when you watch debates about the historical Jesus, you see skeptical historians like Bart Ehrman, Gerd Ludemann, James Crossley, Michael Goulder, etc. accepting that the disciples thought they saw Jesus after his death. They're not just being nice to Dr. Craig when they give him that. They are forced to accept it, because it passes the historical tests. Every Christian ought to be aware of which passages of the New Testament are seen by the broad spectrum of ancient historians as "historical", regardless of their various biases. You can believe everything in the Bible. But when you debate non-Christians, you have to use the historical core of Christianity which successfully passes historical analysis.

You can see the creed used as evidence in the debate between James Crossley and William Lane Craig.

New study: the majority (69%) of divorces are initiated by women

October 23, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is this "I'll do what I want" attitude compatible with life-long married love?
This new report from Live Science gives us some numbers about who initiates divorces most frequently.

It says:

> Women are more likely than men to initiate divorce in the United States, but they are no more likely than men to initiate breakups in a dating relationship, a new study finds.
>
> "The breakups of nonmarital heterosexual relationships in the U.S. are quite gender-neutral and fairly egalitarian," study author Michael Rosenfeld, an associate professor of sociology at Stanford University, said in a statement. "This was a surprise because the only prior research that had been done on who wanted the breakup was research on marital divorces."
>
> Previous research had found that women are more likely to initiate divorce, at least in the United States, Europe and Australia. In the new study, Rosenfeld compared divorces to nonmarital breakups, in an effort to understand the driving forces behind each type of breakup.
>
> To investigate, he looked at data from the 2009 to 2015 waves of How Couples Meet and Stay Together, a nationally representative survey spearheaded by Rosenfeld and his colleagues. The new study includes 2,262 adults, ages 19 to 64, who reported having opposite-sex partners in 2009. By 2015, 371 of the participants had broken up or gotten divorced.

> Women initiated 69 percent of the 92 divorces, Rosenfeld found. But there was no statistically significant difference between women and men when it came to nonmarital breakups, regardless of whether they were living together, he said.

The Ruth Institute reports on a few studies:

> Female unions seem to have the highest divorce rates, followed by male unions, followed by opposite sex unions.
>
> "For Sweden, the divorce risk for partnerships of men is 50% higher than the risk for heterosexual marriages, and that **the divorce risk for female partnerships is nearly double that for men."**
>
> "For Norway, **divorce risks are 77% higher in lesbian partnerships than in those of gay men."** (The Norwegian data did not include a comparison with opposite sex couples.)
>
> In California, the data is collected a little differently. The study looks at couples who describe themselves as partners, whether same sex or opposite sex. The study asks the question, how likely is it that these couples live in the same household five years later. **Male couples were only 30% as likely, while female couples were less that 25% as likely, as heterosexual married couples, to be residing in the same household for five years.**

It really seems as if there is something about women in particular that causes them to be unable to keep to commitments *in their actions*, despite what they might say *with their words*.

So I am seeing a couple of problems in young, unmarried women that might explain this.

Feminism is bad

First, there is the feminism. Feminism was the driving force behind no-fault divorce. Today, young unmarried women are being taught to view marriage as stifling to their freedom. So if they do get married, they are often resolved that marriage should not affect their freedom in any way. That is just not the way marriage works, though – both spouses need to be equally ready to have their freedom infringed upon by things that HAVE TO GET DONE. Lots of things that have to get done will not be fun, thrilling or amusing – and that's why it's good to be prepared to do them before you marry.

My friend Dina says that she only knows one happily married couple from among her friends. The most frequent case she sees is wife is working in order to pay for big house, two cars, etc. and wife is denying husband sex, which makes him disengage from the marriage. A working wife tends to not be as responsive to the needs of husband and kids as a non-working wife, probably in part due to work stress. There is an epidemic of sex-withholding by women, and it causes men to disengage from marriage because they feel unloved. Although women tend to rebel against the idea that the man's bad behavior is their fault, and that there is a "contractual" nature to marriage, that is how marriage works. You cannot stay married, women, by just doing whatever you feel like, and NOT

doing whatever you DON’T feel like. Men will disengage when their needs are not supplied, and that’s no fault of theirs. It’s your fault. Denying relationship obligations causes men to underperform.

Feminism is often linked closely to “independence”. There is a lot of confusion over what the word independence means among young, unmarried women. A man uses that word to mean “lack of financial dependence on parents, the state, etc. because of good decisions in education, career and finances”. But a woman means “not having to care about the needs of a man and the leadership of a man, or the needs of children while still getting what I want from men and children”. That attitude is not compatible with life-long married love.

Emotions are bad

Second, emotions. In my experience, young, unmarried women are less likely to have reasoned out their own life plan in a practical step-by-step manner. Instead, they tend to do whatever makes them feel good moment-by-moment without any realistic plan. One Christian woman was recently telling me how attracted she was to an atheist moral relativist who had been promiscuous from the age of 15. She explained that her emotions were kindled by his GQ looks, 6-pack abs, mysterious European accent, seductive manner and witty conversations. Although she is apparently a Christian, she doesn’t take Christianity seriously in her decisions about relationships and marriage.

Peer-approval and culture play a large part in determining what women think is attractive in a man, as well as their life goals, and women are driven by these cultural standards more than men who focus on honoring their commitments *regardless* of their emotions. In my experience, women struggle to make their day-to-day actions match their socially-acceptable goal of getting married “some day”. Marriage is for “some day” for today’s busy women, but fun and thrills is for today. “Live in the moment”, they often tell me. If you try to talk to them about roles and responsibilities in a marriage, they will withdraw and rebel. But marriage is about each spouse doing his or her job, and feeling content about what the couple is building together. You can’t make life-long married love from emotional craziness and pursuing fun and thrills with seductive promiscuous moral relativist atheists.

How to pick a woman who won’t divorce you

Young men, I advise you to choose wives who have had to do things that they did not feel like doing. That can involve things like getting a STEM degree, getting a job in STEM, moving out of her parents’ house, getting a “boring” job that helps her pay off her debts, keeping commitments when she doesn’t feel like it, and caring for other people and even animals.

Basically, the more the woman has ground down any narcissism and hedonism she may have, by having to do nasty calculus and horrid lab work, the better. The more accustomed she is to constraints, responsibilities, expectations and obligations, the less likely it is that she’ll divorce you for unhappiness. And all of this goes for men, as well. STEM degree, STEM job, save money, serve others, give to charity.

Marriage is not the time for people to be carried away by their emotions. It’s an enterprise, and it works when both people are rational, practical, hard-working and self-controlled.

Does the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission have the courage to confront child rape?

October 24, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's go over this past week, we got lots of news about the story from Loudon county Virginia public schools. Previously, we found out that the police were called in to investigate the rape of a female student. User of rape kit confirmed that the child had been raped. The suspect is a transgender female (biological male).How did the public schools and the Biden administration respond?

So, let's go over the facts again briefly, from my previous post:

> Per the report, [parent Scott] Smith was at the [Loudon county public] school board meeting because his daughter had been raped by a transgender boy in the girls' bathroom at Stone Bridge High School. What transpired after that was almost as sickening as the act itself.
>
> Smith was given a no-trespassing order prior to the meeting that forbids him from telling his story. This was all part of an elaborative cover-up by the school district to not publicize the rape of his daughter. In fact, when Smith showed up at the school to complain about what had happened, they essentially accused him of lying and called the police, not on the transgender rapist, but on Smith himself for causing a scene. Luckily, he was able to get his daughter a rape kit that evening that confirmed the crime.

The public schools are all-in on pushing transgenderism in the schools, and championing the right of transgender women (biological men) to enter the bathrooms and change rooms of girls and women. Do you remember that case of the Canadian transgender woman (biological man) who demanded that female massage therapists wax his male genitals? That's what these public school s support. What's surprising is the next part – their response to being caught.

The Washington Free Beacon reports:

> An email released by Virginia's Loudoun County Public Schools shows the district superintendent knew of a rape case in a high school bathroom weeks before he said there had been no reports of sexual assaults in the district's restrooms.
>
> Superintendent Scott Ziegler emailed school board members on May 28, the day a boy who identified as "gender fluid" allegedly raped a female peer in a women's restroom in Stone Bridge High School.
>
> […]Less than a month later, however, the superintendent claimed in a meeting that the district had no "record of assaults occurring in our restrooms."

It's not just this one school:

> The alleged perpetrator was arrested in July but released and allowed to attend

> school while investigators processed DNA evidence. He was transferred to Broad Run High School, where he allegedly assaulted another student in a classroom on Oct. 6.

And what about the teachers?

> Beth Barts, one of the school board members who said transgender students pose no threat to their cisgender peers, announced her resignation days after the *Daily Wire* reported on the rape allegations. Loudoun County Public Schools said they could not comment on student records in a previous statement to the *Washington Free Beacon*.

Remember, every public school teacher pays union dues to teacher unions, and the vast majority of that money goes to Democrats. So these people are on board with the Democrat agenda.

The latest news is that the school board association actually collaborated with the White House on a letter that labels parents who disagree with the conduct of public schools as "domestic terrorists". THE WHITE HOUSE.

The Washington Free Beacon explains:

> The country's largest school board association collaborated with the Biden White House before sending a controversial letter calling on the FBI to investigate parents as potential domestic terrorists, according to previously unreported emails.

So, I'm thinking that this is the position of the Biden administration, and of the voters who elected him. This is what they believe about parents. When parents object to biological males in female bathrooms, the teachers, administrators and school boards agree: they're "domestic terrorists". And you can bet they had no such criticism of the left-wing rioters and looters who caused TWO BILLION DOLLARS OF DAMAGE. They were just peaceful protesters, who needed space to riot and loot.

The response of establishment evangelical Christians

But what about the response of pious, charismatic Christian leaders to news stories like this?

Here is pastor Matt Chandler, who is a featured contributor the ERLC web site, explaining his views on biological males in female bathrooms, showers and changing rooms:

Here's an interview that Matt Chandler did with Vice TV:

Here's what Matt Chandler says about Trump voters who opposed having biological men in women's bathrooms, showers and changing rooms:

> I think people are frightened. I think people are frightened at the speed at which things are changing culturally. So I think they begin to grasp for something that might help. The Obama presidency, great man, some of his policies and the way he rolled out his policies really really scared evangelicals. And without any kind of

> real help from Pastors and ministers to help us understand, the news media just whipped us into a frenzy and made people feel desperate.
>
> […]But I think especially around topics like homosexuality where we are quick to say it's a sin.
>
> […][P]eople were terrified by that bathroom bill… the thought that their children were going to be in a bathroom with the opposite sex, and… that made [conservatives] go "whoever the opposition is to that I'm voting for" and then they lost their soul on that…

That's the defense of ethics and religious liberty that you get from a pastor who has majored in tallness, handsomeness and charisma. In order to be a courageous Christian, though, you have to spend more time in the books: Thomas Sowell, Stephen C. Meyer, William Lane Craig, Voddie Baucham, Jay Richards, Ryan T. Anderson, etc.

The problem with people like Matt Chandler is that they lack courage. He's a coward in the face of the secular left, because he wants them to like him. He is too lazy to learn how to debate these issues. His laziness leads to ignorance. And his ignorance causes him to behave like a coward when he's challenged by the secular left. Next time we have an election, don't listen to progressive groups like TGC, 9Marks, Acts 29, ERLC, Christianity Today, etc. They're cowards.

Two surprising things that Dr. Fauci's National Institutes of Health funded

October 25, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm going to be pulling an all-nighter tonight (Sunday) to finish some coding, so this post is short. I just wanted to make sure that everyone was aware of what Dr. Fauci's National Institutes of Health funded. I'll be linking to 2 articles, both from far-left sources. So there should be no trouble from the far-left fact-checkers who would love to continue to suppress the truth about these stories.

First, far-left Vanity Fair reports. Read this carfully, especially the last paragraph.

Excerpt:

> "I totally resent the lie you are now propagating."
>
> Dr. Anthony Fauci appeared to be channeling the frustration of millions of Americans when he spoke those words during an invective-laden, made-for-Twitter Senate hearing on July 20. You didn't have to be a Democrat to be fed up with all the xenophobic finger-pointing and outright disinformation, coming mainly from the right, up to and including the claim that COVID-19 was a bioweapon cooked up in a lab.
>
> The immediate target of Dr. Fauci's wrath was Senator Rand Paul, who was pressing the nation's top doctor to say whether the National Institutes of Health had ever funded risky coronavirus research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Based on new information disclosed by the National Institutes of Health, however, Paul might have been onto something.
>
> On Wednesday, the NIH sent a letter to members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce that acknowledged two facts. One was that EcoHealth Alliance, a New York City–based nonprofit that partners with far-flung laboratories to research and prevent the outbreak of emerging diseases, did indeed enhance a bat coronavirus to become potentially more infectious to humans, which the NIH letter described as an "unexpected result" of the research it funded that was carried out in partnership with the Wuhan Institute of Virology. The second was that EcoHealth Alliance violated the terms of its grant conditions stipulating that it had to report if its research increased the viral growth of a pathogen by tenfold.
>
> […][T]he NIH letter—coming after months of congressional demands for more information—seemed to underscore that America's premier science institute has been less than forthcoming about risky research it has funded and failed to properly monitor. Instead of helping to lead a search for COVID-19's origins, with the pandemic now firmly in its 19th month, the NIH has circled the wagons, defending its grant system and scientific judgment against a rising tide of

> questions.
>
> […][**A]nother disclosure last month made clear that EcoHealth Alliance, in partnership with the Wuhan Institute of Virology, was aiming to do the kind of research that could accidentally have led to the pandemic.**

Previously, I read about how the fact-checkers employed by Big Tech social media companies are partially funded by Chinese interests. So, it's not surprising that these Big Tech fact-checkers would have wanted to suppress the truth about this story.

The second article is from the far-left The Hill.

Excerpt:

> The White Coat Waste Project, the nonprofit organization that first pointed out that U.S. taxpayers were being used to fund the controversial Wuhan Institute of Virology, have now turned its sights on Anthony Fauci on another animal-testing-related matter — infecting dozens of beagles with disease-causing parasites to test an experimental drug on them.
>
> House members, most of whom are Republicans, want Fauci to explain himself in response to allegations brought on by the White Coat Waste Project that involve drugging puppies.
>
> According to the White Coat Waste Project, the Food and Drug Administration does not require drugs to be tested on dogs, so the group is asking why the need for such testing.
>
> White Coat Waste claims that 44 beagle puppies were used in a Tunisia, North Africa, laboratory, and some of the dogs had their vocal cords removed, allegedly so scientists could work without incessant barking.

> Leading the effort is Rep. Nancy Mace (R-S.C.), writing a letter to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) saying the cordectomies are “cruel” and a “reprehensible misuse of taxpayer funds.”
>
> “Our investigators show that Fauci’s NIH division shipped part of a $375,800 grant to a lab in Tunisia to drug beagles and lock their heads in mesh cages filled with hungry sand flies so that the insects could eat them alive,” White Coat Waste told Changing America. “They also locked beagles alone in cages in the desert overnight for nine consecutive nights to use them as bait to attract infectious sand flies.”

The secular left came out in droves to vote for the Biden-Harris ticket. “The return to civility” – that’s what they called it. This is the return to civility that they voted for. We never had anything like this in the Trump-Pence administration. These people truly are the ideological descendants of Stalin and Mao.

And remember, the NIH has no money of its own. It sells no products or services in the private sector. All of these research grants were funded by you, the taxpayer.

The worst mistake you can make when defending the Christian worldview

October 26, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it

entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it.

> I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent's weakness.

What are the historical arguments for the post-mortem appearances of Jesus?

October 27, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi Ohio State University has a *great* post up about the post-mortem appearances of Jesus.

The post contains:

- a list of the post-mortem resurrection appearances
- quotations by skeptical historians about those appearances
- alternative naturalistic explanations of the appearances
- responses to those naturalistic explanations

Although there is a lot of research that went into the post, it's not very long to read. The majority of scholars accept the appearances, because they appear in *so many different sources* and because some of those sources are very early, especially Paul's statement of the early Christian creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, which is from about 1-3 years after Jesus was executed by the Romans. Eric's post lists out some of the skeptical scholars who the appearances, and you can see how they allude to the historical criteria that they are using. (If you want to sort of double-check the details, I blogged about how historians investigate ancient sources before)

Let's take a look at some of the names you might recognize:

> **E.P. Sanders:**
>
> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. "I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: 'I saw him first!' 'No! I did.' Paul's tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus' followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions." "Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the 'resurrection': the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it."[1]
>
> **Bart Ehrman:**
>
> It is a historical fact that some of Jesus' followers came to believe that he had been raised from the dead soon after his execution. We know some of these believers by name; one of them, the apostle Paul, claims quite plainly to have

> seen Jesus alive after his death. Thus, for the historian, Christianity begins after the death of Jesus, not with the resurrection itself, but with the belief in the resurrection.[2]
>
> **Ehrman also says:**
>
> We can say with complete certainty that some of his disciples at some later time insisted that . . . he soon appeared to them, convincing them that he had been raised from the dead.[3]
>
> **Ehrman also goes onto say:**
>
> Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus' resurrection, since this is a matter of public record.[4]
>
> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don't doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don't have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don't think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19).[5]
>
> **Marcus Borg**
>
> The historical ground of Easter is very simple: the followers of Jesus, both then and now, continued to experience Jesus as a living reality after his death. In the early Christian community, these experiences included visions or apparitions of Jesus. [8]

The references to Paul are because of the early creed he records in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, and his conversations with the other eyewitnesses in Galatians. Eric has another post where he goes over that early creed, and it is something that every Christian should know about. It's really kind of surprising that you never hear a sermon on that early creed in church, where they generally sort of assume that you believe everything in the Bible on faith. But skeptical historians don't believe in the post-mortem appearances by faith – they believe it (in part) because of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

If you want to see a Christian scholar make the case for the resurrection appearances in a debate, then here is a post I wrote with the video, audio and summary of the William Lane Craig vs James Crossley debate on the resurrection.

Paul Copan explains the problems of evil and suffering in 18 minutes

October 28, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Paul Copan explains the high points of the problems of evil and suffering in just under 18 minutes.

Topics:

- the question itself reveals that we are moral beings
- the problem of evil is the great interrupter of human well-being
- every philosophy of life has to address this question
- is God required to give us a life that is easy and comfortable?
- evil is a departure from good, i.e. – the way things ought to be
- a way things ought to be implies a plan for what ought to be
- human evil implies a plan for the way we ought to be
- free creatures have the ability to deviate from the plan
- where does this plan for the universe and us come from?
- how can there be a way we ought to be come from?
- evil is the flip side of good so where does good come from?
- God's own moral nature is the standard of good and evil
- where does evil from natural disasters come from?
- how dangerous natural phenomena preserve Earth's habitability
- there is a benefit from tectonic activity
- similarly, God lets humans freely choose knowing harm may result
- people are free to try to find meaning in something other than God
- God is able to use negative things to bring about positive results
- e.g. – when good people suffer, they can comfort and care for others
- can people be good enough on their own without God?

If you want to read two *good* books for beginners on Christian Apologetics that cover a wide range of issues in philosophy of religion, get "Passion Conviction" and the companion "Contending With Christianity's Critics". Awesome, awesome resources.

Making monergism make sense: reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

October 29, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article at Free Thinking Ministries was written by my friend Dr. Tim Stratton. In it, he presents a view of God's sovereignty over the universe, but one that doesn't fall into the errors of determinism or double-predestination.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Many reformed folks *(freely?)* choose to reject Molinism because they contend that this theological view "smells of synergism." What is this stench that reportedly makes John Calvin turn over in his grave? Simply put, synergism is the view that man plays at least a small part in his own salvation process. Monergism, on the other hand, is the view that God is the author of salvation from beginning to end.
>
> Since Molinism affirms that man is free to choose to reject God's saving grace or not, many Calvinists jump to the conclusion and assume that Molinism must be synergistic. This does not necessarily follow.[1] Consider one possible model:
>
> 1- God, by nature, is a volitional unmoved mover who is free to choose between options in accord with His nature. (This is supported via the *Kalam* and the *Argument from Time*).
>
> 2- By God's grace, humans are created in the "image of God." By nature, then, we are free to choose between options in accord with our nature. (This is supported via the *Freethinking Argument*).
>
> 3- Adam & Eve freely chose to disobey God and this sin completely separates humanity from God. This is what it means to have a "totally depraved sin nature." (Every aspect of man is separated from God).
>
> 4- In this state of depraved separation from God (sin nature), humans do not even know God exists if merely left to our own devices.
>
> 5- If humans do not even know God exists, then, left to our own devices and **apart from God's grace**, it would be impossible to choose to love and follow God (thus, Pelagianism is impossible on this view).
>
> 6- God, in His love for all people, provides amazing prevenient grace to all people (Romans 1:20), writing the law on the human heart (Romans 2:15), conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-9), and draws all men (John 12:32). This is commonly referred to as "common grace."
>
> 7- Therefore, by God's grace, human nature has changed from a "totally separated from God nature" to a nature that has now experienced enough divine revelation (influences) allowing all mankind to start making some free and volitional choices in accord with our new nature; namely, to choose to resist

> God’s grace and revelation, or not.[2] Mankind is without excuse because we do not have to resist what God has made clear (Romans 1:18-20).[3]
>
> *[Note: According to Calvinist, Matt Slick (albeit inadvertently), Mark 4:10-12 implies that if an unregenerate person gets access to clear and accurate information, then they possess the ability to become Christians!]*
>
> 8- If one does not reject or continually resist the grace and revelation God provides them, then God will continually provide more and more until the person reaches the point of “no return” and will become saved.
>
> Thus, God does *ALL* the work in salvation from beginning to end on this Molinistic model; all the human can do is freely resist God’s grace and revelation, but he or she does not have to! The human does nothing to gain salvation apart from God’s grace on this Monergistic Model of Molinism.

I think that Stratton’s formulation above does indeed keep God as the sole initiator of salvation. And that’s good. But it also makes sure that human who resist God’s leading are responsible for their choice to resist God, and that’s good. We want salvation to be 100% by faith alone in Christ alone. But we don’t want God to be the cause of people not being saved. On Stratton’s view, God wants everyone to be saved. If anyone is saved, it’s because God did ALL THE WORK to lead them and secure their salvation with the death of Jesus on the cross. But, on Stratton’s view, humans do get a choice – the choice to trust God or not. And so, if a person is not saved, then it’s their fault – not God’s. This works.

Read his whole post, and see what you think about it.

New study: virgins have happiest marriages, more sex partners means more unhappiness

October 30, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Although we live in a culture that is dominated by the thoughts and opinions of secular leftists, science provides useful information for those who want defend Biblical morality. Consider the issue of sexuality and marriage. Secular leftists claim that sex outside of marriage is natural, and produces happiness. Bible believing Christians and Jews say chastity is best. Who is right?

Here is the latest study authored by Dr. Nicholas Wolfinger, a sociologist at the University of Utah. His previous book on relationships was published by Oxford University Press. In his analysis of the data, Wolfinger controlled for divorce rates, religiosity, and socioeconomic status.

Here's the most important graph:

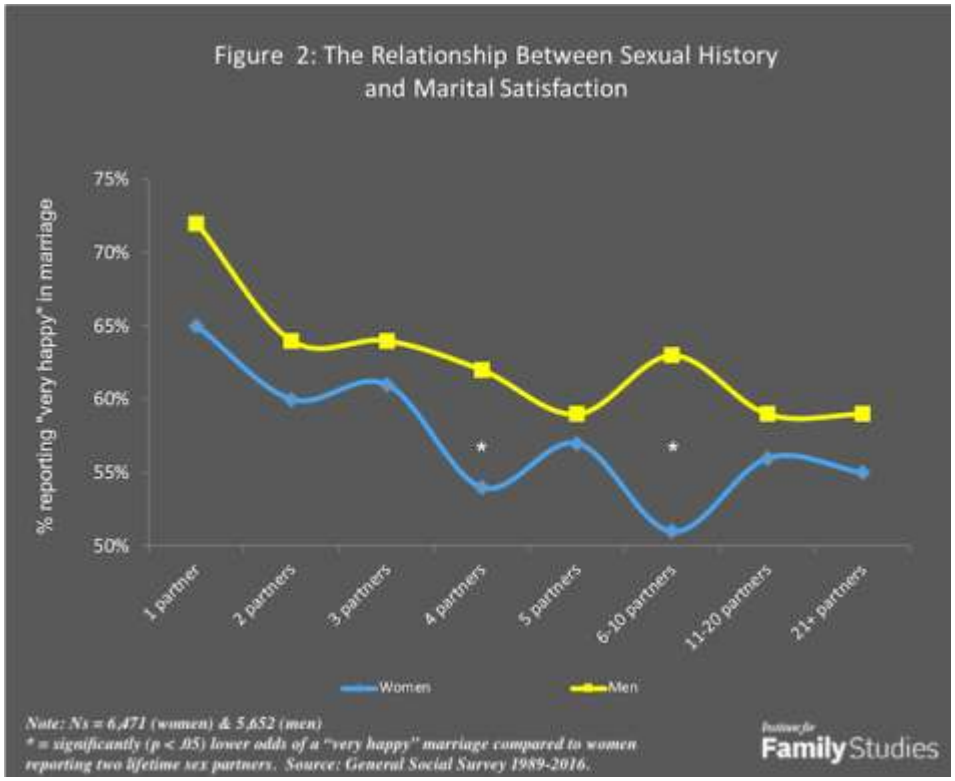

Study: virgins have the happiest marriages, more partners means less happiness

Other factors that increased marital happiness: having a 4-year college degree (5%), having a salary > 78K (5%), regular church attendance (6%). Notice that women are more dissatisfied with marriage (in general) than men are, and they tend to blame the spouse they freely chose for that unhappiness.

The Federalist also reported on previous research relevant to this study:

> Psychologists Galena K. Rhoades and Scott M. Stanley found that women who have had sex with someone other than their husband report statistically significant drops in marital quality over those who don't. A 2004 study by

> sociologist Jay Teachman showed that intimate premarital activities such as cohabitation and intercourse increased the rate of marital dissolution by anywhere between 28 and 109 percent, depending on the activity.

Wolfinger also noted in a previous study that only 5% of women were virgins when they married.

Wolfinger noted that a possible explanation for the link between promiscuity and unhappiness is that people look back on their past partners and compare their spouse unfavorably to them. This is especially the case with women. My concern about this is that feminism has taught women to try to increase their social standing by having hook-up sex with attractive bad boys. If those women ever marry, they do it when they are older, less fertile, and less attractive. The husband they eventually "settle" for will (in their minds) always compare unfavorably to the hot bad boys they had sex with when they were younger and prettier. This, I believe, is what leads to their unhappiness with the man they chose to marry.

More partners also means more marital instability

In a previous post, I blogged about several studies linking virginity to marital stability. Couples who don't have sex before marriage, or even who delayed it, reported better communication, higher satisfaction, better quality sex, and a lower chance of divorce.

Men ought to be aware of this research when they are choosing a spouse. Women initiate 69% of divorces, and the most common reason given is "unhappiness". Well, now we know what's causing that unhappiness – a high number of sexual partners prior to marrying. Smart men should prefer a virgin, for the increased happiness and increased stability. A large number of past sexual partners teaches women that relationships are engines for them to be happy, not commitments that are permanent and exclusive. They'll have internalized the view that relationships are not commitments to invest in self-sacrificially. The pattern will be: "if it doesn't make me feel happy right now, then it should be ended". It will be seen as the man's fault that she is unhappy, even if the study I talked about above shows the real reason is her past promiscuity. Men who aren't serious about evaluating the character of the women for the marriage enterprise are running the risk of divorce, it's that simple.

The best way to make sure that you have a clear head when evaluating a woman is to stay sober, and keep her hands off of you. When a man refuses to let a woman cloud his judgment with sex, then she is forced to learn how to love him in marriage-oriented ways, e.g. – help him, support him, and submit to his leadership. Male chastity encourages women who have been influenced by feminism to abandon selfishness, fun-seeking, and thrill-seeking, so that they learn to care for others. Male chastity also helps a man to resist older women who chose bad boys in their teens and 20s and want to get married to a good provider in their 30s. The studies discussed above clearly show that such women are more likely to be unhappy, and their future marriages are more likely to be unstable. Avoid them. You don't want to be in a marriage to someone who isn't very good at it, because she never prepared herself for it.

What should Christians bring up when discussing truth with Muslims?

October 31, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have some experience dicussing Islam because my mother's side of the family is all Muslim. My go-to argument has always been to confront them about the Qur'an's claim that Jesus did not die of crucifixion. But I noticed a different argument from Laura Powell, who knows far more about this topic than I do. Do you think her approach is the best one?

She writes about it over at her blog, An Affair with Reason:

> The crux of the argument is this: The Qur'an affirms the inspiration, authority, and preservation of the New Testament Gospels;[2] yet the Qur'an also contradicts the Gospels on major theological and historical points. Therefore, the Qur'an cannot be reliable.
>
> According to the Qur'an, the Gospel is the trustworthy, reliable revelation of God given as a guidance for mankind (Qur'an 3:3-4). These Scriptures from God were available and trustworthy when the Qur'an was revealed in the 7th century A.D., and those who had access to them were repeatedly told to obey them, judge by them, submit to their teaching, and stand fast upon them. In other words, according to the Qur'an, the Gospels are the inspired and authoritative words of God.
>
> Qur'an 5:47 says, "And let the People of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed—then it is those who are the defiantly disobedient."
>
> Furthermore, Qur'an 5:68 states, "Say, 'O People of the Scripture, you are [standing] on nothing until you uphold [the law of] the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to you from your Lord'" (see also 6:114; 3:3-4).

What I like about her argument is that she's just taking the words of the Qur'an seriously, and asking the Muslims who claim to believe it what's going on here. Why say that the gospels are unreliable today, when the Qur'an said that the gospels were reliable, yesterday.

My argument about the death of Jesus requires us to ask Muslims "where is the non-Muslim historian who thinks that Jesus did not die?" There isn't one.

But my argument requires that the Muslim know something about historical scholarship, to know what non-Muslim historians think.Laura's argument has wider appeal, because it doesn't require that the Muslim have *any* knowledge about history – only knowledge about what their own holy book says.

She concludes with this:

> What we see here is that the Qur'an teaches the inspiration, authority, and

> preservation of the Gospels. The Qur’an was intended as an Arabic version of the message of truth found in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, but this presents a huge problem for Muslims because the Qur’an contradicts the Christian Scriptures on essential doctrines. Most notably, the Qur’an teaches that Jesus was not God incarnate, he did not die on a cross, and he was not raised from the dead (Qur’an 4:157; 5:116).
>
> Here’s the dilemma for Muslims: If the Gospels *are not* trustworthy, then the Qur’an is false because it teaches that the Gospels are the inspired, perfectly preserved, authoritative words of God. But if the Gospels *are* trustworthy, then the Qur’an is false because it teaches contradictory, mutually exclusive facts about key issues. Either way, the Qur’an is false.
>
> This, of course, is a huge problem for Muslims. The validity of Islam rests upon the reliability of the Qur’an, just as Christianity rests upon the truth of the divinity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. If the Qur’an is unreliable, then Islam is a false religion.

I like that she’s comfortable having disagreements with people. That’s not very common in the church today, in my experience.

By the way, this is the same Laura who wrote that really good article about how she found a better way to discuss her Christian worldview when she moved on from sharing her testimony. I blogged about it here.

How many disasters can you count in Joe Biden's foreign policy?

November 1, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an article in the New York Times by far-left columnist Bret Stephens, where he expresses his disappointment in Joe Biden for failing at foreign policy. What I liked about this article is that he listed out some things that I knew about, (i.e. – Afghanistan retreat), but many more that I did not know about. Take a look at his list, and see how many you knew about.

Remember what former Defense Secretary Robert Gates said about Joe Biden?

> I think he has been wrong on nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue over the past four decades.

Robert Gates served under every president since Nixon, save Bill Clinton. Republicans and Democrats.

Weakness emboldens aggressors

According to the New York Times article, Joe Biden's weakness is emboldening our enemies.

Afghanistan:

> "There's going to be no circumstance where you see people being lifted off the roof of a embassy," the president said in July, barely a month before the world saw thousands of Afghans begging to be airlifted from a country surrendering to fanatics.

Russia:

> On Monday, The Times's David Sanger reported that a Russian intelligence agency, the S.V.R., is once again engaged in a campaign "to pierce thousands of U.S. government, corporate and think-tank computer networks," according to Microsoft cybersecurity experts. This comes just a few months after President Biden personally warned Vladimir Putin against renewing such attacks — while also going easy on the penalties the U.S. imposed for previous intrusions.

Iran:

> A "complex, coordinated and deliberate attack," was how John Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary, on Monday described a recent drone assault on a U.S. military outpost in Syria that helps train local allies to fight ISIS. It was carried out with as many as five Iranian drones, launched by Iranian proxies, and conducted with Iran's aid and blessing.
>
> […]**The Biden administration is still desperate to get Iran back to the**

> **negotiating table to sign a nuclear deal that would free up billions of dollars in funding that Tehran can use to conduct more such attacks.**

China:

> Then there is the sharp and worrying uptick of Chinese military flights approaching Taiwan's airspace. The idea that Beijing may seek to seize the island democracy by force has moved, in a matter of weeks, from a remote prospect to a distinct possibility.

And while our southern border is unguarded (Democrats oppose the wall, even as they build taxpayer-funded walls around their own homes), then terrorists and criminals can just walk across:

> In March, Biden assured the country that the surge in migration was merely seasonal, and that it "happens every single solitary year." Instead, Border Patrol encounters with migrants reached a record high in the last year.

Biden is not a serious president. He's governed by his secular left religion. His goal in life is to build his own self-esteem and signal his virtue. The problem is that you (the taxpayers) bear the costs and risks for his self-congratulation.

As if all this were not bad enough, he's also screwed up the economy, which is how we pay for our military and intelligence operations:

> In July, the president dismissed price increases as "expected, and expected to be temporary." Current headline in The Times: "Rising Prices, Once Seen as Temporary, Threaten Biden's Agenda."

Minimally, you can measure a person's intelligence by judging whether they can achieve what they claim to be able to achieve. Biden has failed to achieve what he said he would achieve. That makes him stupid. And the people who voted for him voted for the stupid candidate.

You would think that foreign policy "experts" like Bret Stephens would be smart enough to predict who would be better at foreign policy, especially with four years of foreign policy wins under Trump. But when you work for the New York Times, it's almost as if you have to check your brain at the door. These are truly stupid people. They spend the entire election campaign supporting an imbecile for President, then complain that the imbecile they backed got elected.

What specific actions did Joe Biden take to impact the price of energy?

November 2, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I want to talk about how whether Big Money from Big Tech can influence elections. I also want to look at the role of fact-checkers, who pays for their fact-checking, and what effect their fact-checks have on our elections.

Let's start with this article about the Virginia election, that's being held today:

> So how do Democrats plan to ensure a McAuliffe win and a subsequent retention of power in the state and U.S. Senate? By using the same tactic they used in the 2020 national contest: profligate mail-in voting and fake grassroots get-out-the-vote efforts funding by philanthropies and wealthy leftists, a strategy revealed through Fakebook CEO Mark 2uckerberg's gift to the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL).
>
> […]We were among the first to report in-depth on how billionaire 2uckerberg and the little-known Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) spent $350 million to effectively privatize the 2020 election in battleground states, helping turnout for Biden in the name of C0VID-19 "relief."
>
> Overnight, this little nonprofit's revenues grew by more than 12,000 percent from $2.8 million thanks to 2uckerberg's cash injection…
>
> Across nine states, our data shows that CTCL's grants consistently ignored Trump counties in favor of big, Democratic-leaning spots like Philadelphia, Maricopa County, and Houston—all essential to Biden's victory. In Georgia, for instance, Biden counties were two-and-a-half times more likely to receive CTCL funding than Trump counties.
>
> Virginia received close to $4 million in 2uck Bucks, more than one-third of which went to populous Fairfax County to "support in-person early voting" and "vote by mail." Fairfax County was Biden's biggest vote-haul in the state and is the linchpin to McAuliffe's strategy.

The 2uck Bucks plan isn't really surprising if you've seen how Fakebook uses "fact checkers" to censor news stories.

Previously, I blogged about how Fakebook censored an interview with an abortion survivor right before an election. I also blogged about one of Fakebook's "fact-checkers", whose social media posts revealed that she is a partisan Democrat who hates Trump. I also blogged about how Fakebook's fact-checker "Politifact" had to retract a fact-check of Candace Owens, the well-known black conservative, after she sued them. I also blogged about how Project Veritas filmed Fakebook employees bragging about how they deliberately censor conservative content. I blogged about how Fakebook banned well-known Christian evangelist Franklin Graham for "hate speech". And I blogged about how

Fakebook internal documents revealed that they censor criticism of the Democrat party, "especially before important elections".

Recently, Fakebook apparently censored content that claimed that ga5 prices went up in part because of Biden's attacks on energy production.

Here's another article from The Federalist:

> Fakebook appeared to censor a meme on Wednesday that placed blame for high ga5 prices on President Joe Biden, citing a USA Today fact-check to justify the censorship.
>
> "Fact check: Rising ga5 prices due to high demand and low supply, not Biden's policies," a pop-up explained, with a link to the supposed fact-check from USA Today.

The fact-check was funded by the same 2uck Bucks we saw earlier that were pumped into Democrat-leaning voting areas:

> "Our fact check work is supported in part by a grant from Fakebook," the paper wrote.

So what actions did the Biden administration take that would have affected the price of ga5 at the pump? The fact-checkers didn't look at any.

To check the facts, you have to check the article from The Federalist:

> The sharp rise in ga5 prices was a direct consequence of Biden's immediate offensive, stifling capital investment with pressure on Wall Street in a capital-intensive industry, plus repeated pledges for a cascade of taxes and regulation to phase out fossil fuels.
>
> "You don't have to ban something if you regulate it to death," former Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler explained to The Federalist in October last year as Biden ran on a platform to do just that.
>
> On his first day in the Oval Office, Biden began to make good on his promises with an executive order implementing a moratorium on leasing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Sixty miles west of the coastal plain, home to between 4.3 and 11.8 billion barrels of recoverable oil, millions of dollars of equipment stand ready for deployment in Prudhoe Bay to the 1.6 million out of the nearly 20 million-acre refuge once opened for drilling.
>
> […]Biden continued to suspend new oil and ga5 leases on federal lands pending a review of the federal leasing program from the Interior Department. The review, promised for release by late summer, is still pending.
>
> The suspension on leasing remained in place until a federal judge overturned the ban to set up auctions next spring, but headwinds from a hostile administration hamper incentives for risking millions in new investment.
>
> Biden has successfully suppressed a ramp-up in production through a

> combination of Wall Street pressure, new regulation, and outright bans where possible on new drilling.
>
> "We would be happy to increase our production, but this administration is doing everything in its power to run us out of business," Kathleen Sgamma, president of the Denver-based industry trade group Western Energy Alliance, told The Federalist. "I think if they stop manipulation markets the problem would be solved."

The point is that a Biden win signaled that regulations on energy production were on the way. Investors didn't wait for the regulations to take effect. They reduced their investments immediately. Energy producers didn't wait for the regulations to take effect. They reduced their production, and supply dropped. Anyone with any understanding of economics knows what happens when supply goes down – prices rise.

Larry Taunton and James White give warning about progressive Christian leaders

November 3, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw a couple of articles that I wanted to share with you. The first one is by Christian apologist Larry Taunton, who writes about which progressive Christians to ignore during elections. The second article is by Dr. James White, and he writes about why we shouldn't listen to progressive Christians like John Piper, who aren't able to perceive how progressivism threatens liberty.

Let's start with Larry Taunton:

> I have been reflecting on the lessons of the Nazi occupation of Western Europe and those who did and didn't collaborate with them for the simple fact that we are, unquestionably, witnessing the occupation of America's public and private institutions by a homegrown enemy that hates America and all that it represents. After all, what is a General Milley if not the modern-day equivalent of Vidkun Quisling?
>
> America's conservative collaborators are those who have, for reasons that are not always clear, lent their platforms, sympathies, and intellectual support to the Radical Left if only by their unrelenting attacks on (mostly) red state conservatives who dared defy them and vote for Trump.
>
> Tim Keller, who makes our list, has said that we must meet with "practitioners" of Marxism so that we might understand them. I have much preferred to meet with their victims. Our (adopted) daughter Sasha is one of them. Her life bears the unmistakable scars of that godless worldview. That Keller and Russell Moore (who also makes our list) would suggest—be it knowingly, naively, or only mildly—that such a murderous system has some resonance in Scripture, and Keller most certainly has, or that it is a "manufactured controversy" as Moore contends, is an intolerable outrage that must not go unchallenged.

He spends some time looking at the the work of the secularists and socialists *from the other side*. That is to say, he looks at the victims.

Here's his list of the people who collaborate with the secular left:

- Tim Keller
- George W. Bush
- Beth Moore
- Russell Moore
- Bill Kristol
- David French

He's got articles on each one, linked at the bottom of the post.

This one on David French has a wonderful concluding paragraph, which will be recognized by those who have seen the famous movie "The Bridge on the River Kwai":

> One senses that French has gone so far in his Never Trumpism that he simply can't turn back. That has put him in the intellectually untenable position of blaming the debacle in Afghanistan on the American people instead of the Biden administration; justifying lockdowns, vaccine passports, General Mark Milley's insubordination if not outright treason; denying his belief in "generational white guilt" while lending his support to a kind of "institutional racism" that ends in generational white guilt; and, perhaps most bizarrely, he attacks opponents of Critical Race Theory, an idea rooted in Marxism which is, in turn, atheistic to the core.
>
> […]David French's collaboration is that of Alec Guinness's Colonel Nicholson in The Bridge on the River Kwai, priding himself on the preservation of his principles and good manners as he aids the enemy in the building of a vital bridge that will enable them to continue to kill his fellow countrymen. One wonders, however, if he'll ever have Nicholson's revelation:
>
> "What have I done?"

I really recommend you read the article, and the linked articles on each collaborator at the bottom. This is actually the most important lesson of the 2020 election. Millions of Christians trusted progressive Christians to tell them who to vote for. The progressive Christians focused on Trump's mean tweets, and ignored all the wins in fiscally policy, social policy and foreign policy. Wins that were documented by people who are concerned with the effects of POLICY, rather than with VIRTUE SIGNALING. People like the Susan B. Anthony List – a leading pro-life group that specializes in policy and law. Learning about specific actions and policies was too much work for low-intelligence people like Beth Moore and Russell Moore. Easier to read tweets, and virtue signal off of them.

Another great article came from Dr. James White, who took on progressive "Christian" John Piper.

He writes:

> Dr. Piper completely missed the reality of the connection of the governmentally mandated, "take these or lose your job, your business, your freedom, your children, your life" vaccines and the rest of the current rush into global secular totalitarianism. How can this not be a part of one's calculations? We all know this jab will not be the end of the series. The "boosters" are already being administered. Once one submits to the first in the series, upon what basis does one object to the next, and the next? Upon what basis do we define "public health emergencies" in the future? The CDC has already, at the very same time they are in control of our lives and livelihoods regarding C0vid, proclaimed the use of transgender pronouns a "public health" issue.

> It is undeniable that the vaccines are not a solo issue. They are coming to us after mask mandates and church closures and pastoral imprisonments and before the next onerous demands from governments drunk on the power that inevitably comes from the rise of secularism. The secular state is far worse than the ancient pagan context of Rome (which was bad enough), for by its very definition it must be ultimate in all things as there is no Creator.
>
> Why Piper does not see the role the vaccines play in the overall demands of the newly empowered totalitarianism I cannot say, but it is not the first time he has missed the role a particular element plays in the whole. Mean, arrogant tweets are, in the overall scheme of things, significantly less important than the fact that the Biden regime is intent upon forcing your children to celebrate drag queens and likewise just as intent upon taking control of every aspect of your life to force you to live in denial of the lordship of Christ.
>
> What Piper has missed, badly, is the role these vaccinations play in a much bigger, much more basic movement into a technologically based, chemically and medically controlled secular totalitarianism. That elephant is intent upon staying, and until we are all intent upon removing him from the living room, he will continue to create soul-destroying havoc for all. Oh that John Piper would stop examining the tip of one of his tusks and help us all with the bigger issue.

Previously, I wrote about Dr. Wayne Grudem's response to John Piper. Dr. Grudem is my favorite theologian. He wrote some things that are routinely ignored by progressive Christians:

> [I]f Democrats gain control of our government and the Supreme Court, and enact their desired policies, no Christian taxpayer will be free to say, "I refuse to pay that portion of my taxes that the government is using to pay for abortions." No business owner will be free to say, "I will not buy medical insurance for my employees that pays for abortions and sex-change surgeries." There will be only two choices: violate your conscience or else be driven to bankruptcy or go to jail.
>
> […]Donald Trump is not the only person we are voting for. It is remarkable that the Trump administration has elevated so many self-professing evangelical Christians – far more than any in my lifetime – into positions of high influence in our government. They also provide role models for Americans. To vote for Trump as president is also to vote for Mike Pence as vice president, Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State, Ben Carson as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education, Russell Vought as director of the Office of Management and Budget, and numerous others.
>
> [….]A presidential election is not deciding what is most important in all of life, which is certainly our relationship with Christ. Paul writes, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. (Phil. 3:8). A presidential election is simply choosing the leaders of our government. In such a situation, the primary purpose is to decide what kind of government we will

> have, and in that situation policies and laws are not the only consideration, but they are the most important consideration.

Conservatives keep reading things like this and saying “well, I’m going to vote the right way”. But we need to share these articles so that a majority of people vote the right way. That’s how we win elections. And we can’t afford to lose another one in 2024. The stakes are too high. Next time, we have to make sure that everyone – not just us, but everyone – understands the cost of listening to the pious progressive “Christian” leaders. Next time, we really have to focus on policies and results. Not on tweets and virtue signaling. Christianity is a truth-centered religion. It’s not some tool for narcissistic people to pick up and use to gain applause.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

November 4, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our

> universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
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- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

November 5, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

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So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

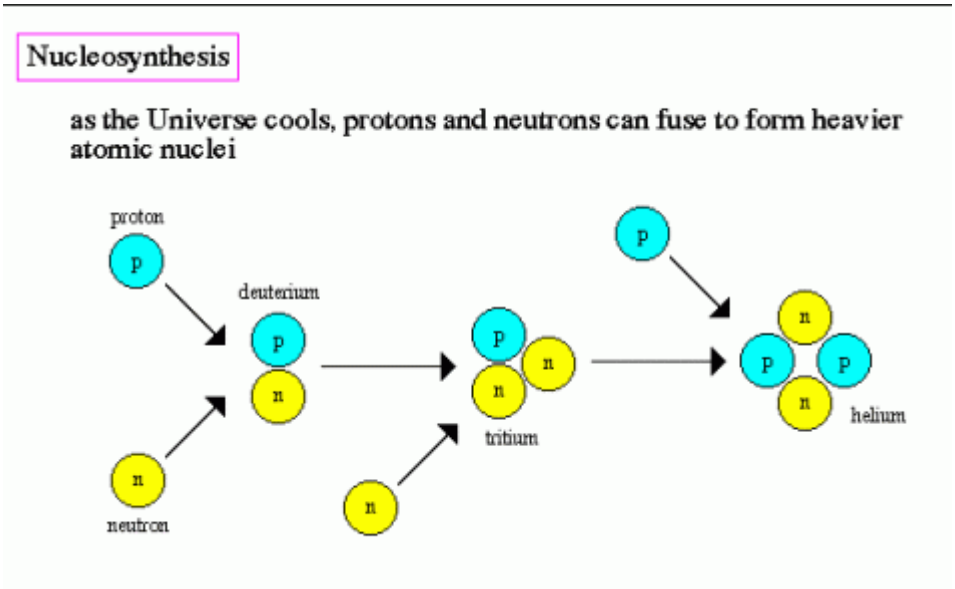

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 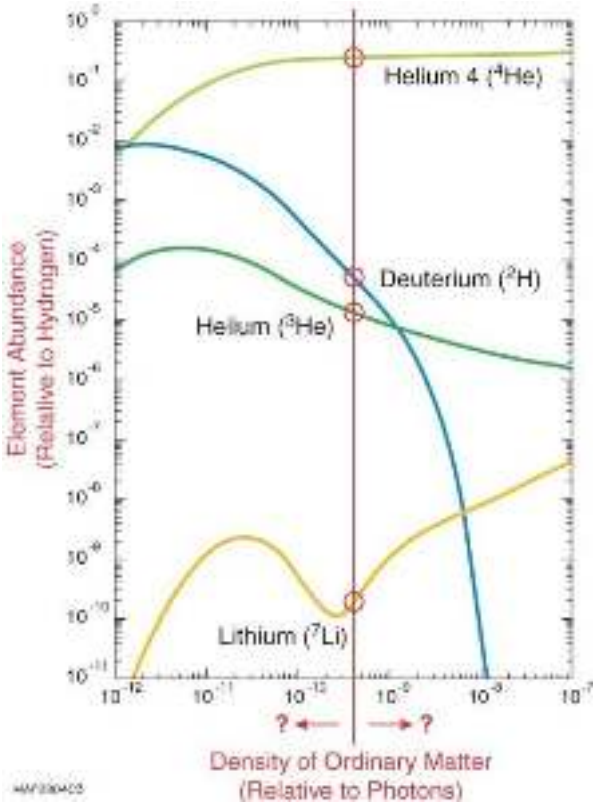
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the

elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

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Progressive white women report high levels of mental illness in 2020 Pew survey

November 6, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have the most amazing video for you to see. It's a crazy left-wing activist doxing a libertarian lesbian woman wearing a breathe-through mask. First, let's take a look at the video. Then, we'll look at a recent survey reported by Pew Research in 2020, which assesses how mentally stable far-left feminist women are (self-reported). Then, I'll make some comments for unmarried men.

OK, so here is the video, which was shared by the woman who was doxed. So it's OK for me to share it, since the doxed woman didn't care about it.

So, is this crazy woman rare? Or is she common?

Progressive white women and mental illness

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

Here's the part of the data I thought was most interesting:

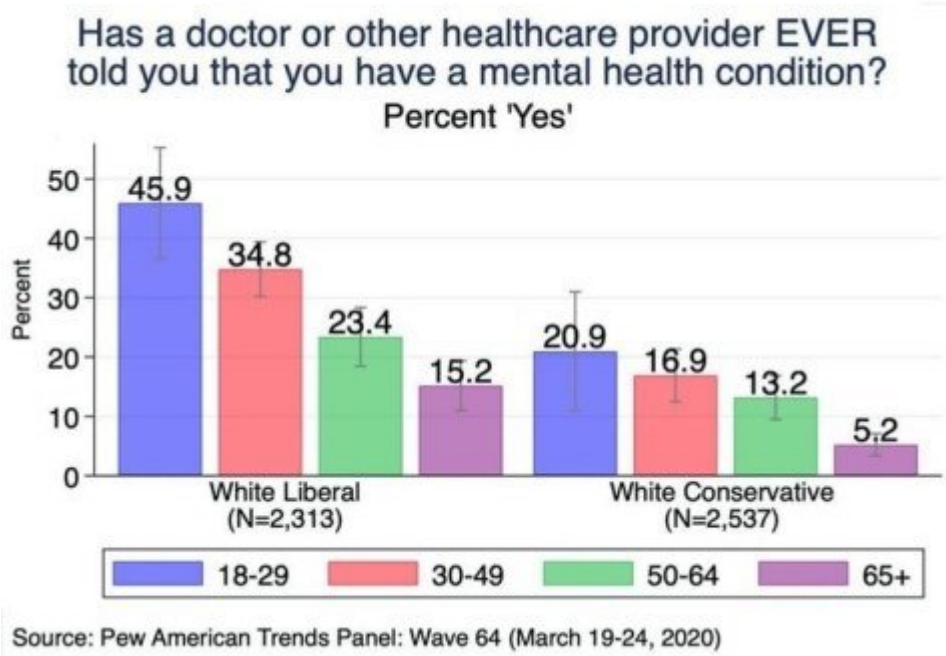

Who would marry a crazy person?

So, the point about this that I want to make is… who is going to marry these mentally ill progressive white women? Being a good wife and mother takes a certain amount of connection to reality. It takes a certain amount of empathy, compassion, and rationality. These progressive white women don't have any of that. So, who is going to marry them? I know that there are thirsty progressive men (and thirsty conservative men who fake being progressive), who will go ahead and hit it and quit it. Pump it and dump it. But how many men would commit to someone who's mentally ill?

And in fact, that's exactly what we're seeing with the marriage rates:

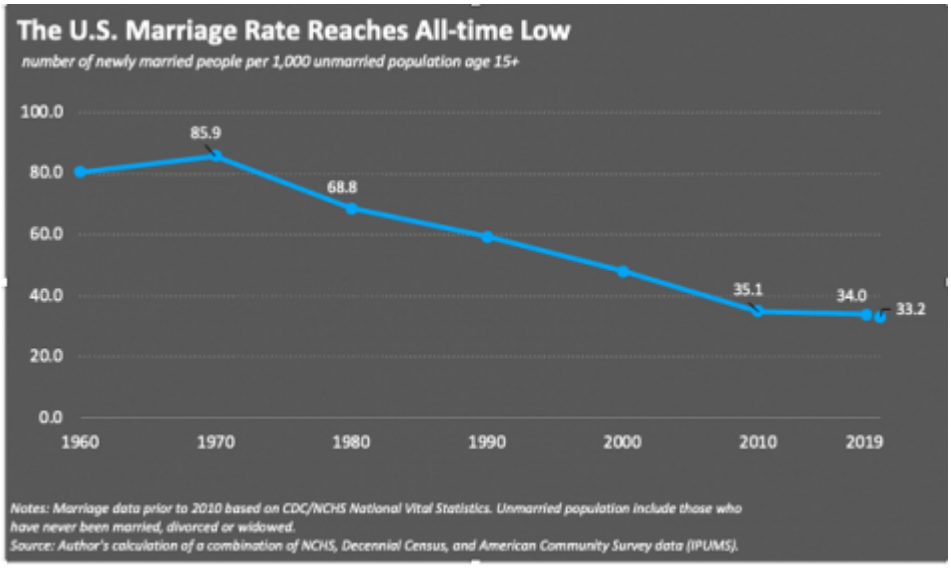

That's for America, but things are even worse in countries that have slid further toward the secular left edge of the political spectrum.

When you look at marriage rates in Canada and Europe, you understand that men are even LESS likely to choose marriage when they have to pay over 50% of what they earn in taxes. And so the marriage rate is declining. I think young, unmarried women in

Canada and Europe are want to raise taxes in order to get free stuff from government. Single mother welfare, food stamps, abortions, contraceptives, IVF, breast enlargements, etc. Some feminists are even asking for free cosmetic surgery. With a big enough government, they don't have to marry at all. Big government leaves them free to play the field, without having to care about finding a good man. But what if taxes get so high that the few good men those women passed over for 40 years simply can't afford to take on a wife and support multiple children he didn't father? Paying for things like a stay-at-home wife and homeschooling, etc. is expensive. Men can't afford a wife, and also pay for goodies for all the single progressive women with mental illnesses.

Conservative men want nothing to do with daycare and public schools – we know that those facilities are *dominated* by progressive women. And we don't want trouble from feminist lawyers and feminist judges in the divorce courts. Divorce is very expensive for men. And we may never see our children again. Then there are the progressive white women in the workplace, who get very bitter with men as a result of getting wrecked by bad boys. Even if we find a good wife, we still have to deal with all these progressive white women with mental illnesses in positions of power. Is it worth it to take risks like this? It depends on the reward, I guess. I can do a lot There comes a point where the juice isn't worth the squeeze.

How can the four gospels be independent sources?

November 7, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I blogged about the historical criteria that historians use to evaluate documents. One of the criteria is "multiple independent sources". If a story is reported in multiple independent sources, then historians are more likely to evaluate it as historically accurate. But how about the four gospels? Are they independent sources? The answer might not be what you expect.

Here's how the question was put to Dr. Craig:

> The latest video, "Did Jesus Rise From the Dead," is especially compelling, but I had a question about it. In the part one video, you cite as evidence, the Gospels plus Acts and First Corinthians and you refer to them as "independent" and "unconnected" sources. But this isn't exactly true, is it? After all, two of these books were written by the same author, Luke, and so Luke and Acts are connected by authorship. Furthermore, isn't it true that much information relayed in Matthew and Luke were taken from Mark? This two facts would make it untrue to call the Gospels "independent" and "unconnected" would they not?

Here's the video he's talking about:

Dr. Craig answers the question in a recent question of the week. I think this answer is important for those who aren't aware of how the gospels are organized.

He writes:

> The objection is based on a simple misunderstanding. It assumes that the sources I'm referring to are the books of the New Testament. But that's not what I'm talking about.
>
> New Testament critics have identified a number of sources behind the New Testament, sources on which the New Testament authors drew. For example, Matthew and Luke drew not only upon Mark as a source but also upon a source which scholars designate "Q," which appears to have been a source containing Jesus' sayings or teachings. Thus, if you could show that a saying in Matthew or Luke appears in both Mark and Q, that would count as multiple, independent attestation.

What does this mean? It means that although there is overlap between Matthew and Luke, called "Q", there are actually three independent sources there: Matthew's source, called M. Luke's source, called L. And the material common to Matthew and Luke, which therefore PRE-DATES Matthew and Luke, called Q.

Dr. Craig lists out several independent sources in his full reply:

1. the pre-Markan Passion story used by Mark
2. the rest of the gospel of Mark has a source

3. Matthew’s source (M)
4. Luke’s source (L)
5. John’s gospel which is very different from Mark, Luke and Matthew
6. the sermons in Acts have a source
7. the early creed found in Paul’s 1 Corinthians 15

So if you are trying to lay out something from the New Testament, and you can find it in two of these sources, and at least one of them is very early, you’re in pretty good shape.

Although the questioner and the other critics might question the “minimal facts” that pass the historical tests, many of these facts are not questioned by even atheistic scholars.

Here’s a useful tip for non-professionals who want to disagree with Dr. Craig. Dr. Craig publishes his arguments in academic presses like Oxford University Press, not to mention scholarly peer-reviewed journals. He’s also debated his ideas against famous atheist historians like Gerd Ludemann, Marcus Borg, James Crossley, Bart Ehrman, etc. So it’s probably a good idea for people who want to disagree with him to first read some academic literature, or at least ask a professional. Before you post your YouTube video. You could even just ask a professional atheist historian. They will tell you what’s wrong with an argument like your “the sources are not independent” argument. Just check yourself before you post something in public. A lot of people who are still puzzling out these questions will look at a mistake like this, and immediately dismiss atheism as a sloppy, anti-intellectual worldview.

You can watch more of Dr. Craig’s videos in his playlist, here. These are especially useful for people who want to get the overall scope of the battlefield before deciding where to focus in study. Everybody should know about all of these arguments regardless of where you choose to specialize.

Virginia’s new Latino Attorney General will investigate sexual assaults in public schools

November 8, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By now, everyone has read about the Virginia public school scandals, and how the Democrats lost the statewide elections for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General. I’ve been seeing a lot in the news about Virginia’s new black Lieutenant Governor. She’s very conservative. But there’s news about the new Attorney General (Cuban) is also very conservative.

Story from the Daily Signal.

Excerpt:

> Virginia’s Attorney General-elect Jason Miyares, a Republican, said during a press conference Thursday that he plans to investigate Loudoun County Public Schools and the recent sexual assaults that took place on its campuses.
>
> […]A ninth grade girl was sexually assaulted by a boy wearing a skirt who entered a girls’ bathroom at Loudoun County Public Schools’ Stone Bridge High School on May 28. The same suspect allegedly committed another sexual assault just a few months later at a different school.
>
> Juvenile court prosecutors told the first victim’s father that the suspect was under house arrest at his mother’s townhouse. But on Oct. 6, a 15-year-old boy was charged with sexual battery and abduction at Loudoun County Public Schools’ Broad Run High School for forcing a girl into a classroom, where he inappropriately touched her, according to the Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office.
>
> Miyares also said he plans to push for legislation, which was discussed on the campaign trail, that allows his office to take over when chief law enforcement officers think the state’s prosecutors are not sufficiently doing their job.
>
> Miyares added his support for “a bill that would essentially say if the chief law enforcement officer in a jurisdiction, either the chief of police or the sheriff, makes a request, because the commonwealth’s attorney is not doing their job, then I’m going to do their job for them.”
>
> More, he clarified that he is thinking “specifically” about “some of the so-called social justice commonwealth attorneys” who have been elected “particularly in Northern Virginia.”

Meanwhile, the new Lieutenant Governor, Winsome Sears, has promised to push for school choice, which will allow parents to pull their kids out of schools that allow biological males in female bathrooms and showers.

The far-left Washington Post reports:

> Political analysts say her value to a GOP ticket led by Glenn Youngkin, the party’s

> nominee for governor, will depend on how successfully Democrats can highlight another side to Sears: a Trump loyalist who supports a controversial Texas ban on most abortions and whose most prominent campaign ad showed her gripping an assault rifle.
>
> “She won the nomination in part because she was able to appeal to the most conservative base in the Republican Party,” said Bob Holsworth, a longtime analyst of Virginia politics. “But her positions byandlarge are: pro-life, Second Amendment, school choice and ballot integrity. None of those issues are necessarily winners in a statewide race right now.”

The Washington Post is appalled by these positions, but it seems like a big improvement from the policies they have now. At least for parents, not so much for government schools.

How many times have Democrats spied on journalists or whistleblowers?

November 9, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The latest news is that the Biden administration is using the FBI as a weapon to attack independent journalist James O'Keefe, and his team of whistleblowers at Project Veritas. Let's take a look at the latest story, then I'll remind you of a few other times when Democrats have tried to silence or intimidate journalists who made them or their secular left allies look bad.

First the latest, as reported by the New York Post:

> The FBI and Manhattan federal prosecutors are investigating the case of Ashley Biden's diary: The president's daughter says it was stolen in a burglary last year; an obscure right-wing website wound up publishing what it said are pages from it about 10 days before the election.
>
> O'Keefe says someone shopped the diary to his Project Veritas, claiming Biden had left it somewhere. His outfit didn't use it (in part because it couldn't verify it), and he says he informed law enforcement of the whole thing.
>
> But he has some ties to the outfit that did publish, which seems to be why the feds raided the homes of several current or former Veritas employees — before dawn, in O'Keefe's own case.

> He's also outraged that the feds urged him not to go public with the subpoenas, but someone dropped a dime to the New York Times, which started calling for comment an hour after the first raids Thursday morning.
>
> Journalists can't be prosecuted for publishing stolen material unless they were part of the theft. And the theft in question hardly seems to rise to a federal crime.
>
> And shield laws normally mean law enforcement can't make reporters reveal a thing about their sources, even if they didn't publish anything.
>
> Journalists regularly publish material that has been leaked or even taken — consider the Times running President Donald Trump's tax returns. Unless the feds know something about Veritas sanctioning the burglary, the diary does not warrant pre-dawn raids. It has all the marks of a political vendetta.

You might recall that Kamala Harris, then attorney general of California, also raided the homes of whistleblowers who made the secular left look bad:

> The pro-abortion California attorney general's office raided on Tuesday the home of the undercover investigator who exposed Planned Parenthood's trafficking of aborted babies' body parts, according to the Center for Medical Progress.
>
> David Daleiden, the head of the Center for Medical Progress, has been a target of

> abortion activists and their political friends ever since he released the first undercover video last summer showing a top Planned Parenthood official discussing the sale of aborted babies' body parts. Since then, CMP has released a dozen undercover videos of the abortion giant's employees and partner research groups, exposing their horrendous baby body parts trade. However, pro-abortion politicians have been ignoring the evidence of wrong-doing at Planned Parenthood and attacking CMP instead.

The problem for Democrats isn't exchanging baby body parts for money. Their problem is *whistleblowers* who reported the truth.

But that's not all – the Obama administration went after journalists, too.

Remember these:

> The Department of Justice (DOJ) and FBI publicly announce vast expansion of cyber related efforts to address alleged "national security-related cyber issues."
>
> In violation of longstanding practice, DOJ secretly and without notice seizes personal and work phone records of journalists from Associated Press from this two-month period in a leak investigation.
>
> […]
>
> Fox News learns that the Justice Department **secretly labeled reporter James Rosen a possible "criminal co-conspirator"** and "flight-risk" in obtaining warrants to monitor Rosen's State Department movements, phone records and emails in a leak investigation starting in 2011.
>
> […]
>
> Armed Coast Guard agents under the Department of Homeland Security raid the home of reporter Audrey Hudson at 4:30am with a search warrant for her husband's firearms. As they searched the house, they read Hudson her Miranda rights and confiscated documents that contained "confidential notes, draft articles, and other newsgathering materials" belonging to Hudson including the identities of whistleblowers at the Department of Homeland Security. (Hudson sues and later receives a settlement from the government.)
>
> […]
>
> CBS News publicly announces confirmation of [journalist Sharryl] Attkisson's computer intrusions.
>
> "Attkisson's computer was accessed by an unauthorized, external, unknown party on multiple occasions late in 2012…This party also used sophisticated methods to remove all possible indications of unauthorized activity, and alter system times to cause further confusion."—CBS News

I remember a time when people on the left were concerned about the independence of journalists and whistleblowers. But I guess the communists in America are not any different than the communists of Cuba, China, USSR, etc.

Diversity administrative staff don't close student achievement gap

November 10, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to argue with studies, because I think that arguing by appealing to evidence is the Biblical model. Everywhere in the Bible, you see Jesus and the apostles performing miracles in order to validate their claims about the world. So, when I'm arguing any issue, like education policy, I want to do it with evidence. And now, we have some evidence about what works best for students.

Consider this article from the Heritage Foundation.

Here's the summary:

> An analysis of student test-score data shows that employing a chief diversity officer (CDO) in K–12 school districts **does not contribute to closing achievement gaps and is even likely to exacerbate those gaps**. If CDOs are not accomplishing their stated goals, what is accomplished by creating these positions? CDOs may be best understood as political activists who articulate and enforce an ideological orthodoxy within school districts. They help to mobilize and strengthen the political influence of one side. The creation of CDOs tilts the political playing field against parent and teacher efforts to remove the radical ideology of critical race theory and other illiberal ideals from school curricula and practices.

Schools have been spending a lot on administrative staff, but CBS News reported on a recent study that shows that student performance is flat or declining:

> Decades of increased taxpayer spending per student in U.S. public schools has not improved student or school outcomes from that education, and a new study finds that throwing money at the system is simply not tied to academic improvements.
>
> The study from the CATO Institute shows that American student performance has remained poor, and has actually declined in mathematics and verbal skills, despite per-student spending tripling nationwide over the same 40-year period.

The student performance is bad, but the costs of education keep rising. Why?

Where does all the money go?

Let's look at four places where the money spent on the government-run public school monopoly ends up.

Administration

First, a lot of it gets paid to administrations who implement diversity and inclusion programs designed to indoctrinate students in leftist ideology.

Here's a helpful chart from the American Enterprise Institute:

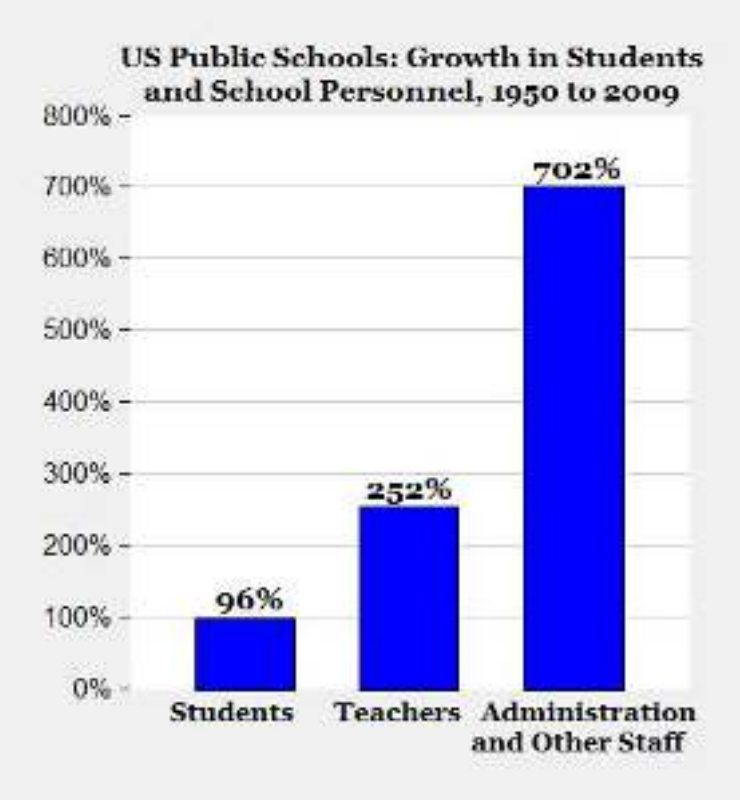

Where does taxpayer money spent on the public school monopoly go?

Pensions

Second, education employees get enormous pensions, which are paid by taxpayers and negotiated by their unions. You would never see pensions this large in the private sector.

This is from the leftist Brookings Institute, from 2014:

> This figure shows we now spend nearly $1,100 per student on retirement benefits. The average public school student teacher ratio is 16 to 1. So we are spending about $17,000 per year per teacher in pension contributions.
>
> […]The National Council on Teacher Quality writes,
>
> In 2014 teacher pension systems had a total of a half trillion dollars in unfunded liabilities—a debt load that climbed more than $100 billion in just the last two years. Across the states, an average of 70 cents of every dollar contributed to state teacher pension systems goes toward paying off the ever-increasing pension debt, not to future teacher benefits (p. iii).
>
> While we are spending a huge amount to fund teacher pensions, most of that spending doesn't go to attracting the best teachers. It's paying off past debts.

We can't hire good teachers, because all the education spending of today is paying for the gold-plated pensions of yesterday.

Teacher training

Third, a lot of it is spent on teacher training. I guess teaching multiplication, Shakespeare or geography changes every year? Is that why they need annual training?

The Washington Post reports on a recent study:

> A new study of 10,000 teachers found that professional development — the teacher workshops and training that cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year — is largely a waste.
>
> The study released Tuesday by TNTP, a nonprofit organization, found no evidence that any particular approach or amount of professional development consistently helps teachers improve in the classroom.
>
> [...]The school districts that participated in the study spent an average of $18,000 per teacher annually on professional development. Based on that figure, TNTP estimates that the 50 largest school districts spend an estimated $8 billion on teacher development annually. That is far larger than previous estimates.
>
> And teachers spend a good deal of time in training, the study found. The 10,000 teachers surveyed were in training an average of 19 school days a year, or almost 10 percent of a typical school year, according to TNTP.

Political Contributions

Finally, this is from OpenSecrets.org, concerning political contributions made in 2016:

Rank	Organization	Total Contributions	To Dems & Liberals	To Repubs & Conserve	Pct to Dems & Liberals
1	Fahr LLC	$90,585,670	$90,585,670	$0	100.0%
2	Renaissance Technologies	$59,130,938	$33,414,308	$25,250,600	56.9%
3	Las Vegas Sands	$44,362,186	$51,435	$44,333,430	0.1%
4	Paloma Partners	$41,961,900	$41,958,600	$3,300	100.0%
5	Service Employees International Union	$39,389,570	$39,387,460	$2,100	100.0%
6	Adelson Drug Clinic	$38,847,300	$40,000	$38,830,000	0.1%
7	Newsweb Corp	$38,802,040	$38,796,640	$0	100.0%
8	NextGen Climate Action	$35,459,288	$35,459,288	$0	100.0%
9	American Federation of Teachers	$33,596,605	$33,580,580	$10,700	100.0%
10	Priorities USA/Priorities USA Action	$33,470,302	$33,470,302	$0	100.0%
11	National Education Assn	$29,774,140	$29,426,584	$347,306	98.8%
12	Laborers Union	$28,888,658	$28,386,961	$474,825	98.4%
13	Soros Fund Management	$28,708,890	$27,561,595	$670,700	97.6%

Top Political Contributors in 2016 election cycle

The two largest teacher unions came in at #9 and #11. Most of their donations go to Democrat Party. Democrats believe (against the evidence) that spending more money in the government-run public school monopoly will improve student performance on tests.

Marine Captain earned Medal of Honor fighting communists in North Korea

November 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's go from the top down to set the context for the profile of William E. Barber.

Map of the Korean War

In the summer of 1950, North Korean communists launch a completely unprovoked attack across the 38th parallel against their peaceful, democratic neighbors, the South Koreans. The Americans immediately sent an invasion force by sea to drive them out. The North Koreans easily manage to take over the capital Seoul, and the allies are left with only one port in the southeast – Pusan. In September of 1950, American forces land an invasion force at Inchon, cutting off the North Korean invasion force surrounding Pusan. The North Koreans retreat, and there is hope that American forces will be home by Christmas. But then, unbeknownst to the Americans, the Chines communists invade North Korea from the north and surround the American forces near the Chosin reservoir, threatening to annihilate an entire Marine division.

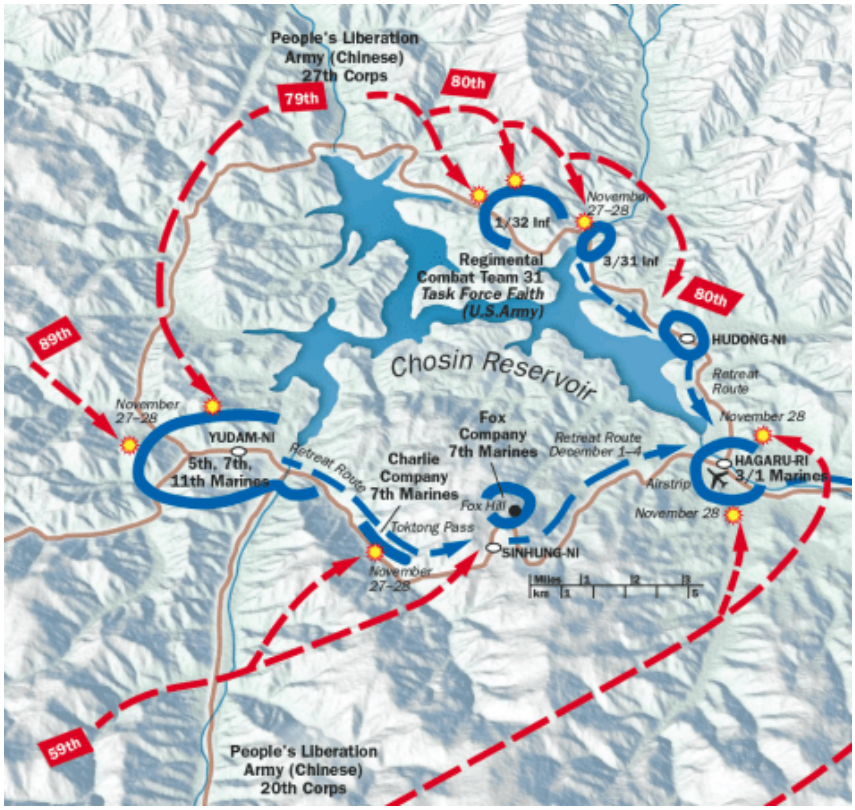

The Marines at Yudam-Ni are surrounded and must retreat to Hagaru-Ri

As you can see from the map, there are a whole bunch of American troops fighting to the north/east and south/west of the Chosin Reservoir. The marines near Yudam-Ni need to retreat along a road called the MSR (main supply road) back to Hagaru-Ri. But in order to conduct that retreat, they have to hold onto the vital Toktong pass, which is overwatched by Fox company from their position on Fox Hill. Can Charlie company and Fox company hold off the entire Chinese 59th division (10,000 men) with only two companies (about 250 men each)?

U.S. Marines “The Chosin Few”, December 1950

Well, the book I read (which Dina gave me for Christmas), was about Fox company and their defense of the Toktong pass. This is what the leftist New York Times had to say about the man in charge of Fox company (“F company”) in a 2002 article:

> Col. William E. Barber, who won the Medal of Honor for his leadership of a vastly outnumbered company under siege on a snowy hilltop in one of the worst defeats in Marine history, the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in 1950, died on April 19 at his home in Irvine, Calif. He was 82.
>
> The cause was bone-marrow cancer, said Jerry Courtier, a friend who hopes to write Colonel Barber’s biography.
>
> The reservoir is south of the Yalu River, which separates North Korea from China. After the Americans had pushed the North Koreans almost to the Yalu, 150,000 Chinese troops unexpectedly crossed the river into North Korea. Colonel Barber’s unit, Company F of the Second Battalion of the Seventh Marines, First Marine Division, was on a hill that commanded the Toktong Pass, a vital gap between Yudam Ni and Hagaru Ri, two towns separated by 78 miles.
>
> The stakes were huge. If F Company yielded its position, 8,000 marines at Yudam Ni would be cut off from the 3,000 at Haguru Ri by tens of thousands of Chinese troops.
>
> Through five days and six nights in subzero weather and often swirling snow, Colonel Barber, then a captain, inspired his men, outnumbered more than five to one, to cling to their tenuous positions. He was shot in a bone near his groin on the second day but continued to make the rounds of the hill. He likened the wound to a bee sting.
>
> When the unit was ordered to withdraw and fight its way to safety, Captain Barber refused. Three times, the enemy broke through the line, only to be repulsed.
>
> ”I knew that we could probably hold, and I knew that if we didn’t hold we could exact a very heavy toll,” he said in an interview in 1976 with The Los Angeles Times.
>
> His citation for the nation’s top medal said that he commanded his men from a stretcher. But Hector A. Cafferata Jr., who as a rifleman won the Medal of Honor in the same battle, insisted that Captain Barber refused the stretcher.
>
> ”He walked the line, he kept us together,” said Mr. Cafferata, who was beside Captain Barber when he was shot.
>
> In the mayhem, the Chinese blew whistles, beat cymbals and tooted bugles as they repeatedly attacked. Coffee froze before men could drink it, and some of the wounded died because plasma froze with no way to thaw it.
>
> When the battle was over, more than 1,000 enemy soldiers were dead. Of Captain Barber’s original 240 men, 82 were able to walk away.

> Gen. Raymond G. Davis, who was a lieutenant colonel in the Marines, received a Medal of Honor for leading the unit that rescued F Company.
>
> William Earl Barber was born on Nov. 30, 1919, in Dehart, Ky. He attended what is now Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky., for two years and enlisted in the Marines, at the age of 21, in 1940.
>
> He was so good at shooting a rifle that he was made a weapons instructor. After volunteering for parachute training, he demonstrated such proficiency that he became a parachute instructor.
>
> In World War II, he was promoted to sergeant in 1942 and commissioned a second lieutenant in 1943. He was a rifle platoon commander at Camp Pendleton, Calif., when his unit was shipped to the Pacific.
>
> Colonel Barber was in the first wave to hit Iwo Jima, where he was wounded twice. He received the Silver Star for bravery in addition to two Purple Hearts. At a ceremony on the 50th anniversary of the battle in 1995, he said:
>
> ”I am older now, as you are, but I can still see the colors of that February morning. The sky. The island. And sometimes I think I can hear the noise of battle.”
>
> He was treated in Japan for his wounds and returned to the United States, where he worked as a recruiter, among other positions. He was promoted to captain in 1949 and was in the force that occupied Japan.
>
> When he joined F Company in Korea, he saw a raggedy unshaven bunch and immediately ordered the the troops to shave, shine their shoes and look like marines. He suggested that his new charges resembled Pancho Villa’s bandits.
>
> ”He was one tough guy,” Mr. Cafferata said. ”He was by the book.”

He was by the book. He enlisted in the Marines because he was grateful to his country for allowing him to escape poverty and go into college, and he wanted to give something back.

You can read a review of the book I read about Fox company, and read about some of the details of what it was like for those men. You’ll never look at your own troubles the same way again. You can also read about Barber’s Medal of Honor citation here.

The Medal of Honor, Navy and Marines variant

So, now that I am done with that book, I have moved on to another Korean War book that Dina gave me, this one about George company. The Korean War might have been our most just war – defending a peaceful democratic ally from a totalitarian communist regime. You just have to compare North Korea and South Korea today to understand the stakes. North Korea is basically a godless concentration camp that tortures and murders its people if they so much as think the wrong thoughts about the atheist state. South Korea is free and prosperous, where the people have human rights, like the right to free speech and freedom of religion.

It's important for me to read about the hardships that real heroes face, so that I don't complain too much about my own tiny struggles. When you read about the struggles of great American soldiers, so many good things happen to you. Your own problems get smaller, your humility and gratitude get bigger. And you are reminded about why America is a great country, and what American character is really like. These things are not taught by leftists in the public schools. They are not talked about by leftists in the mainstream media. They are not presented by leftists in the Hollywood film industry. If you want to know the real America, you have to find it yourself.

The psychological motivation of those who embrace postmodernism

November 12, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

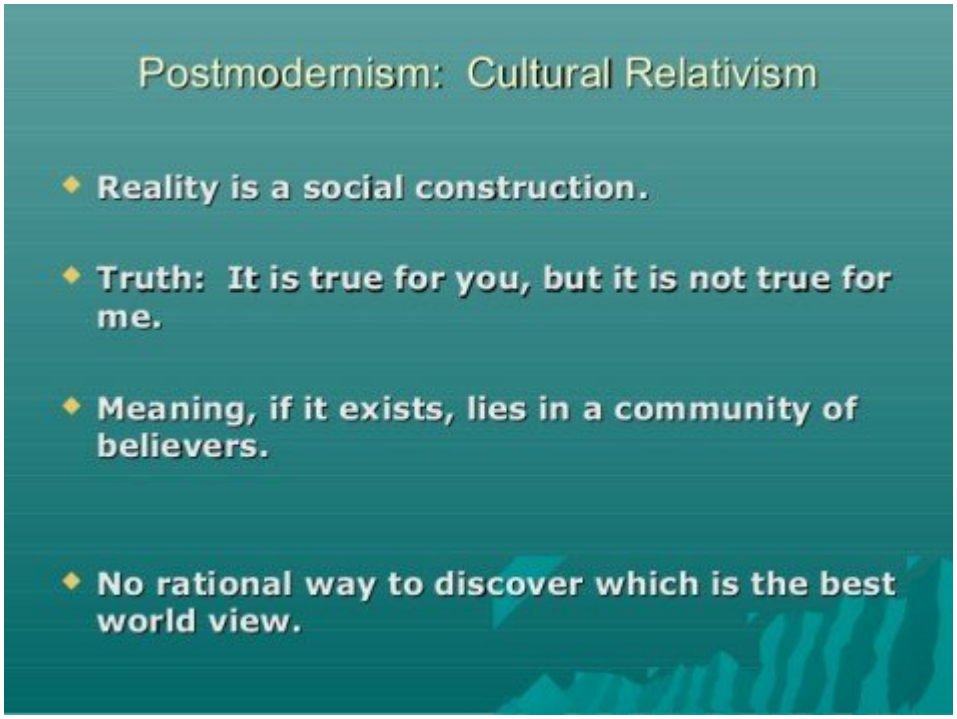

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian? Not for long

Famous analytical philosopher John Searle has written a book "Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World", explaining what's factually wrong with postmodernism. In the introduction, he explains what postmodernism is, and what motivates people to accept postmodernism.

He writes:

> […][W]hen we act or think or talk in the following sorts of ways we take a lot for granted: when we hammer a nail, or order a takeout meal from a restaurant, or conduct a lab experiment, or wonder where to go on vacation, we take the following for granted: there exists a real world that is totally independent of human beings and of what they think or say about it, and statements about objects and states of affairs in that world are true or false depending on whether things in the world really are the way we say they are. So, for example, if in pondering my vacation plans I wonder whether Greece is hotter in the summer than Italy, I simply take it for granted that there exists a real world containing places like Greece and Italy and that they have various temperatures. **Furthermore, if I read in a travel book that the average summer temperature in Greece is hotter than in Italy, I know that what the book says will be true if and only if it really is hotter on average in the summer in Greece than in Italy. This is because I take it for granted that such statements are true only if there is something independent of the**

> **statement in virtue of which, or because of which, it is true.**
>
> […]These two Background presuppositions have long histories and various famous names. The first, that there is a real world existing independently of us, I like to call "external realism." "Realism," because it asserts the existence of the real world, and "external" to distinguish it from other sorts of realism-for example, realism about mathematical objects (mathematical realism) or realism about ethical facts (ethical realism). The second view, that a statement is true if things in the world are the way the statement says they are, and false otherwise, is called "the correspondence theory of truth." This theory comes in a lot of different versions, but the basic idea is that statements are true if they correspond to, or describe, or fit, how things really are in the world, and false if they do not.

The "correspondence theory of truth" is the view of truth assumed in books of the Bible whose genre is such that that they were intended by the authors to be taken *literally*, (with allowances for symbolism, figures of speech, metaphors, hyperbole, etc.).

But what about the postmodernists, who seek to deny the objectivity of external reality?

More Searle:

> Thinkers who wish to deny the correspondence theory of truth or the referential theory of thought and language typically find it embarrassing to have to concede external realism. Often they would rather not talk about it at all, or they have some more or less subtle reason for rejecting it. In fact, very few thinkers come right out and say that there is no such thing as a real world existing absolutely, objectively, and totally independently of us. Some do. Some come right out and say that the so-called real world is a "social construct."

What is behind the denial of objective reality, and statements about external reality that are warranted by evidence?

> It is not easy to get a fix on what drives contemporary antirealism, but if we had to pick out a thread that runs through the wide variety of arguments, it would be what is sometimes called "perspectivism." Perspectivism is the idea that our knowledge of reality is never "unmediated," that it is always mediated by a point of view, by a particular set of predilections, or, worse yet by sinister political motives, such as an allegiance to a political group or ideology. And because we can never have unmediated knowledge of the world, then perhaps there is no real world, or perhaps it is useless to even talk about it, or perhaps it is not even interesting.

Searle is going to refute anti-realism in the rest of the book, but here is his guess at what is motivating the anti-realists:

> > **I have to confess, however, that I think there is a much deeper**

> > **reason for the persistent appeal of all forms of antirealism, and this has become obvious in the twentieth century: it satisfies a basic urge to power. It just seems too disgusting, somehow, that we should have to be at the mercy of the "real world." It seems too awful that our representations should have to be answerable to anything but us. This is why people who hold contemporary versions of antirealism and reject the correspondence theory of truth typically sneer at the opposing view.**
>
> […]I don't think it is the argument that is actually driving the impulse to deny realism. I think that as a matter of contemporary cultural and intellectual history, the attacks on realism are not driven by arguments, because the arguments are more or less obviously feeble, for reasons I will explain in detail in a moment. **Rather, as I suggested earlier, the motivation for denying realism is a kind of will to power, and it manifests itself in a number of ways. In universities, most notably in various humanities disciplines, it is assumed that, if there is no real world, then science is on the same footing as the humanities. They both deal with social constructs, not with independent realities. From this assumption, forms of postmodernism, deconstruction, and so on, are easily developed, having been completely turned loose from the tiresome moorings and constraints of having to confront the real world. If the real world is just an invention-a social construct designed to oppress the marginalized elements of society-then let's get rid of the real world and construct the world we want. That, I think, is the real driving psychological force behind antirealism at the end of the twentieth century.**

Now, I'll go one step further than Searle.

People, from the Fall, have had the desire to step into the place of God. It's true that we creatures exist in a universe created and designed by God. But, there is a way to work around the fact that God made the universe and the laws that the universe runs on, including logic, mathematics and natural laws. And that way is to *deny logic, mathematics and natural laws.* Postmodernists simply deny that there is any way to construct rational arguments and support the premises with evidence from the real world. That way, they imagine, they are free to escape a God-designed world, including a God-designed specification for how they ought to live. The postmoderns deny *the reliable methods of knowing about the God-created reality because logic and evidence can be used to point to God's existence, God's character, and God's actions in history.*

And that's why there is this effort to make reality "optional" and perspectival. Everyone can be their own God, and escape any accountability to the real God – the God who is easily discovered through the use of logic and evidence. I believe that this is also behind the rise of atheists, who feign allegiance to logic and science, but then express "skepticism" about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, objective

morality, the minimal facts concerning the historical Jesus, and other undeniables.

What kind of man is Christian athlete Lolo Jones trying to date for marriage?

November 13, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that 38-year-old athlete named Lolo Jones was complaining about how hard it was for her to find a husband. Apparently, she's been trying very hard to get married all along, and has not had any success. Let's take a look at her Instagram page and Twitter page, then her previous boyfriend, and see what she's doing wrong.

So, here's her Instagram. She claims to be a Christian, but it's a constant stream of glamorous pictures of herself, many featuring swimwear or workout apparel. Her Twitter feed is more of the same. Lots of inconsequential things about herself. What she had for breakfast. When she got up from sleeping. That she prefers voice notes to texts. What video games she likes. Etc. The only mention of God I saw is when God helped her win a gold medal. Because that's what God's priority was in the world that day – her happiness. Is that what the Bible teaches – that it's God job is to make his human pets happy? That seems to be a popular view among the books that Christian women are reading today. But is that what Jesus was telling us about God with his life?

Anyway, why aren't marriage-minded men interested in her?

What marriage-minded men are looking for

So, I have a list of questions that I use when evaluating women for wife and mother roles. I'm trying to see whether the woman is capable of making a marriage to me achieve the goals that God has for his world and his creatures. Right now, the primary threats to God's view of the world and us that I see are atheism, feminism and socialism. (I'm open to adding or subtracting from this list)

I'm looking for capabilities like these in a wife:

- demonstrate the existence of God objectively using philosophical arguments and scientific evidence
- demonstrate the truth about who Jesus was and his resurrection using historical evidence
- answer philosophical, scientific and historical objections to the Christian worldview
- explain why other major religions and ideologies are false
- understand and defend the Bible's teachings about moral issues (chastity, abortion, divorce, etc.) using philosophical arguments and/or scientific evidence
- explain her Christian role models and what they have done for Christ and his Kingdom that makes you admire them
- explain what your goal is for your children, and what you intend to do to achieve those goals
- explain male and female roles in marriage, what you have done to prepare to

perform your roles, and how you evaluate marriage candidates for performance of their roles

So, looking at her Instagram and Twitter, I don't see anything relevant to a Christian marriage enterprise there. Bikini photos and tweets about silly personal details are unrelated to the Christian marriage enterprise. Even when she promotes virginity, she talks about *herself*, which is not *rationally persuasive* to anyone else, since it's just her subjective opinion. The right way to persuade people that the Bible is correct about sex and sexuality, (and I've been doing that for 12 years on this blog), is by appealing to evidence, such as the evidence from research papers.

Lolo Jones "He's So Good Looking"

What is she looking for in a man?

Lots of Christian women like to talk about their desire for marriage, but their actions are not focused on choosing men who demonstrate ability to perform husband and father roles, e.g. – defending truth, providing, charitable giving, chastity, sobriety, romantic love, selflessness, mentoring, etc. What about Lolo?

Consider Lolo's comments about a man she is impressed by:

> *Double Agents* rookie Nam has been described as "hot" (by Wes), "a physical specimen" (Jay) and "built like a statue" (Kam). But what does his partner, fellow newbie Lolo Jones, think of the *Ultimate Beastmaster* competitor?
>
> "My teammate's kind of growing on me. I don't know if it's because I've seen him come out of the shower a few times, but I'm really liking this chemistry we have," the Olympian stated during this week's *Challenge* episode. "He's so good-looking."

> […]Lolo (wants) him to pursue her (since she's the lady), but he hasn't.
>
> "I'm throwing everything out his way, but he's just stoic," she admitted in a confessional.

If you click through to that article, you'll see her postive reaction to how "good-looking" this man is. She bends her head forward, and lifts up both arms in excitement. She's not excited by (or respectful of) marriage-related capabilities or willingness to commit. She's not raving about a man's chastity or his sobriety or his theology or his apologetics ability or his mentoring of other Christians or his charitable giving. She's excited by his height and his appearance.

Her last boyfriend was apparently a *basketball player.* He's 7 years younger than she is, 6'7″ tall, and he can really put a basketball into the basketball hoop. But is that relevant for making a marriage that impacts the world for Christ and His Kingdom? Not at all. What a man does in marriage is teach people (church, university, workplace, etc.) about the truth of God's existence, his character and his interaction with his creatures in history. Men are equipped to be persuasive with reason and evidence when discussing behaviors that cause harm to children, like abortion, divorce, promiscuity, same-sex parenting, etc. Men are equipped to defend the policies that promote marriage and family, like low tax rates, limited government, the rule of law, etc. Men invest in other Christians, partnering with them to promote Christian truths and Christian convictions to those who don't accept them. And men know how to help and support their wives as they do their mothering and ministry.

Serious Christian men do not marry women who don't understand the importance and value of marriage-related capabilities and achievements.

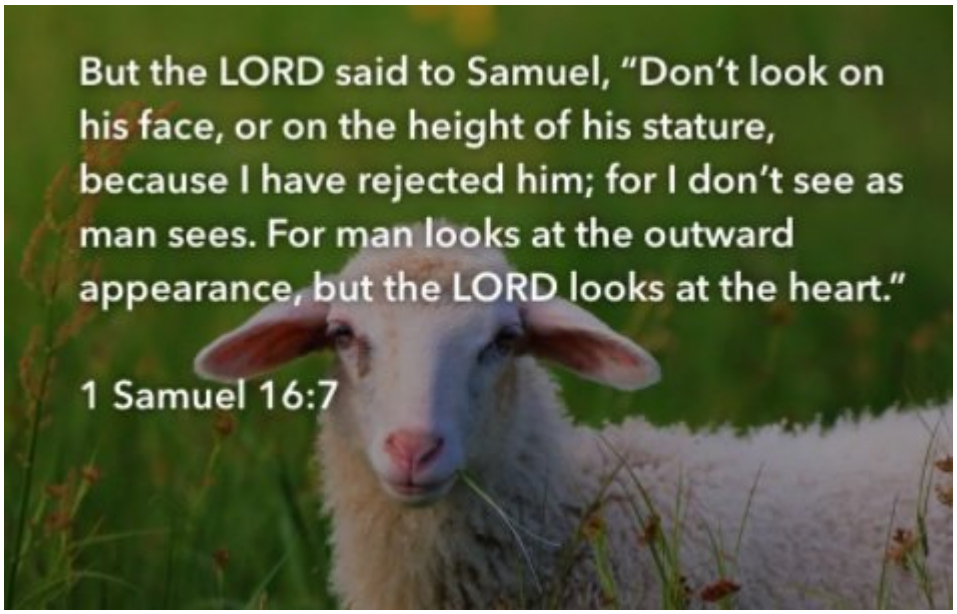

1 Samuel 16:7

It's very important for conservative marriage activists like Mark Regnerus, Brad Wilcox, Greg Stanton, pious pastors, etc. to understand that *for Christian men* there is more to being a wife and mother than holding a Bible, attending church and singing in the choir. I am a man who has the marriage character and the marriage ability. I can pull the trigger

on a commitment – I’m equipped to do that, and do it well. But I want my marriage to fight against atheism, feminism and socialism. Lolo Jones is fit and attractive. She is not equipped for a Christian marriage.

Wage gap: are women paid less than men because of discrimination?

November 14, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

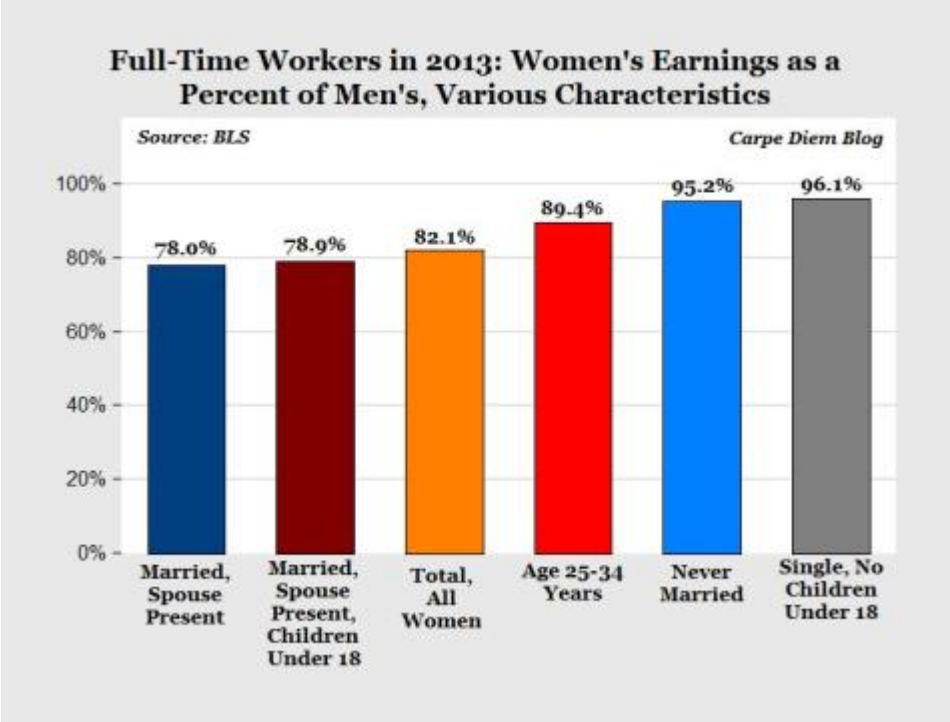

The pay gap is caused by women's preference for having children

Liberal feminist Hanna Rosin takes a look at this question in the far-left Slate, of all places.

Excerpt:

> The official Bureau of Labor Department statistics show that the median earnings of full-time female workers is 77 percent of the median earnings of full-time male workers. But that is very different than "77 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men." The latter gives the impression that a man and a woman standing next to each other doing the same job for the same number of hours get paid different salaries. That's not at all the case. "Full time" officially means 35 hours, but men work more hours than women. That's the first problem: We could be comparing men working 40 hours to women working 35.

> How to get a more accurate measure? First, instead of comparing annual wages, start by comparing average weekly wages. This is considered a slightly more accurate measure because it eliminates variables like time off during the year or annual bonuses (and yes, men get higher bonuses, but let's shelve that for a moment in our quest for a pure wage gap number). By this measure, women earn 81 percent of what men earn, although it varies widely by race. African-American women, for example, earn 94 percent of what African-American men earn in a typical week. Then, when you restrict the comparison to men and

> women working 40 hours a week, the gap narrows to 87 percent.

> But we're still not close to measuring women "doing the same work as men." For that, we'd have to adjust for many other factors that go into determining salary. Economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn did that in a recent paper, "The Gender Pay Gap.".”They first accounted for education and experience. That didn't shift the gap very much, because women generally have at least as much and usually more education than men, and since the 1980s they have been gaining the experience. The fact that men are more likely to be in unions and have their salaries protected accounts for about 4 percent of the gap. The big differences are in occupation and industry. Women congregate in different professions than men do, and the largely male professions tend to be higher-paying. If you account for those differences, and then compare a woman and a man doing the same job, the pay gap narrows to 91 percent. So, you could accurately say in that Obama ad that, "women get paid 91 cents on the dollar for doing the same work as men."

I believe that the remainder of the gap can be accounted for by looking at other *voluntary* factors that differentiate men and women.

The Heritage Foundation says that a recent study puts the number at 95 cents per dollar.

Excerpt:

> Women are more likely than men to work in industries with more flexible schedules. Women are also more likely to spend time outside the labor force to care for children. These choices have benefits, but they also reduce pay—for both men and women. When economists control for such factors, they find the gender gap largely disappears.
>
> A 2009 study commissioned by the Department of Labor found that after controlling for occupation, experience, and other choices, women earn 95 percent as much as men do. In 2005, June O'Neil, the former director of the Congressional Budget Office, found that "There is no gender gap in wages among men and women with similar family roles." Different choices—not discrimination—account for different employment and wage outcomes.

A popular article by Carrie Lukas in the Wall Street Journal agrees.

Excerpt:

> The Department of Labor's Time Use survey shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. One would expect that someone who works 9% more would also earn more. This one fact alone accounts for more than a third of the wage gap.
>
> […]Recent studies have shown that the wage gap shrinks—or even reverses—when relevant factors are taken into account and comparisons are

> made between men and women in similar circumstances. In a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30, the research firm Reach Advisors found that women earned an average of 8% more than their male counterparts. Given that women are outpacing men in educational attainment, and that our economy is increasingly geared toward knowledge-based jobs, it makes sense that women's earnings are going up compared to men's.

When women make different choices about education and labor that are more like what men choose, they earn just as much or more than men.

54-year-old feminist angry at dating agency for not finding her a rich husband

November 15, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kate Mulvey at age 53 expects that rich men will want to marry her

A little while ago, I blogged about a 47-year-old mother of three who sued a dating agency for failing to find her a rich husband. That was pretty bad, but I found something even worse. A 54-year-old woman who spend all her savings on a dating agency. She expected them to find her loads of rich men who want to marry her – despite her never having invested anything in them.

The UK Telegraph reports:

> Glass of wine in hand, the man sitting opposite me in the restaurant was in full flow. While he was droning on about his work commitments, I zoned in and out trying to work out how on earth I was going to get to through this first date. I had expected to meet an eligible bachelor, but he had turned out to be so boring that he made me want to stick asparagus up my nostrils.
>
> This memory came flooding back when I read about, Tereza Burki, a City financier who, last week, successfully sued a Knightsbridge-based elite matchmaking service, for the return of her £12,600 annual fee after they failed to find her the man of her dreams.
>
> A couple of years ago, I too joined an expensive matchmaking agency. I had just come out of a seven year relationship, and was on the wrong side of 50.
>
> I soon tired of online dating and receiving messages from over weight baldies

> who peppered their emails with childish emojis. I hankered to find Mr Right-for-me, a man who was suitably educated and a successful professional.
>
> And so this is how I found myself, throwing money (my entire savings to be precise) to an upmarket matchmaking agency in central London. The agency claimed to filter out the undesirables, the mediocre and give clients the personal touch, so I handed over the hefty sum of £6,000.
>
> As I waited to be matched with someone from their 'extensive database', I idly imagined my handsome date, cashmere polo neck, a bit academic and kind. We'd eat steak tartare and swap notes on our latest clever box-set find and favourite novels.
>
> The first indication that all was not as I had expected came when I met personal matchmaker at a Park Lane hotel for 'tea and an interview'… told her how I loved folk music, my favourite film was The Deer Hunter, and enjoyed weekends in the countryside.
>
> […]A few days later she emailed me with the details of W, "a successful entrepreneur who had travelled extensively and also liked folk music". When I met him at a pub in Richmond, I was shocked. I was expecting a cultured and dynamic man, instead I got a man in a pair of jeans, a moth eaten jumper and the table manners of a modern day Baldrick.
>
> And therein lies the rub. These agencies trade on their exclusivity, yet the men I met were far from the international super elite they promised.

Isn't this terrible? Clearly the dating agency is to blame. It should be easy for a penniless, feminist hedonist to find rich men who want to spend all their money taking care of a 54-year-old woman who had *literally nothing to do with the process by which they earned all that money*.

One thing we know about her for sure is that she is impractical. She is 54 years old and has just spent her last savings on a *dating agency*. From her other comments about the type of men she is looking for, we can infer that she wasted a lot of money on travel, fine dining, and other frivolous experiences designed to produce feelings of sophistication without any practical plan for preparing for the financial demands of old age. What's the point of having fun "in the moment" if you don't have any plan to allow sustainable recreation in the future, when you're too old to work?

I spent some time reading articles by Kate Mulvey, and here is what I was able to determine:

- she has no useful degrees – she paid for useless degrees in Italian and French, instead of studying something useful, like computer science or nursing or petroleum engineering. Her "writing" is all about fashion, dating and "lifestyles"
- her opinion on children: "uppity children take your time, emotions and energy" – she sees children as a detriment to her highest priority (her career). She says "I, however, have lived a life of unfettered freedom to take on projects, write books and

travel”
- she had loads of entertaining men “beating a path to [her] door” when she was younger
- she spend thousands of pounds on plastic surgery
- she blames her lack of marriage success on her being “brainier” than men
- she turned down men who wanted to marry her, as late as age 33
- her book is called “Accidental Singleton” because she thinks that her approach to life – anti-marriage hedonism – has “accidentally” left her single and penniless at age 54 (as if it wasn’t her fault!)

Although she talks a lot about being intelligent, it seems to me that an intelligent woman would have practical degrees, savings and an awareness of what men actually want from a woman – and WHEN they want it. Men want a woman to support them in their most difficult period, just after they graduate and hit the job market. Starting out in a career is hard because the man doesn’t have savings or a resume or references. The support of a young, attractive, virtuous woman means everything during those difficult years. This is when a wife has the most impact on her husband’s ability to earn and save, on his mental health, on his physical health, etc.

Somehow, this narcissist thinks that she can just show up in a man’s life, after he has done all his earning alone, and grab hold of the things that she never helped build. She wasted all her youth and beauty chasing experiences with attractive bad boys, but she thinks that it’s reasonable for a man to invest all his wealth in her. A woman has value to a man at the time when he is attempting to do difficult things, but lacks support.

What exactly is it that a woman like Kate has to offer a man, given her life choices? Does anyone think that this woman has marriage-character? Does anyone think that her life of selfishness and hedonism has prepared her to be a good wife? What kind of conversation about moral obligations could you have with someone who has only ever done what felt good to her in the moment? Has her string of failed relationships with hot bad boys prepared her to be trusting and unselfish? How about to be faithful? Or even to be content? What is it that she thinks that she is offering that would justify the heavy investment that she is asking for, especially in an age of no-fault-divorce and anti-male divorce courts?

I think people really underestimate how much goes into making a good wife. The character she has to develop. The skills that she has to develop. The way she treats her husband, which often comes from carefully cultivating virtues like chastity and sobriety. Her worldview, which affects whether she has practical abilities like love, forgiveness and self-control. Her ability to be good with money. Her ability to nurture others and make social connections consistent with marriage and homemaking. Her ability to bear children, and then nurture them during the critical first 5 years after – not to mention homeschooling, which is increasingly valuable in a time when underperforming government-run schools seek to indoctrinate, rather than educate, children.

Nothing about this woman makes me think that she has any marriage-related character

traits or abilities. Any idiot can spend someone else’s money on their own feelings, fun and thrills. But it takes a carefully crafted woman to really do the work of a wife. Marriage isn’t there so that women can be happy. Marriage is an enterprise. Being selfish – doing what is easy, and what feels good moment by moment – doesn’t prepare a woman for the enterprise.

What can men do to save this 24-year-old woman from toxic masculinity?

November 16, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting set of articles from a young woman who graduated from Pennsylvania State University. In one, she explains how a man she "hooked up" with treated her poorly. I think I've been able to figure out what her approach to relationships is. In this post, I'll explain her approach, and then discuss how social conservatives should solve problems like abortion and single motherhood.

NOTE: Please do not contact or harass this woman, just leave her alone.

So, here's the first, most important article:

> As someone who considers themselves a feminist, and I always thought that being sexual and unashamed was liberating and empowering. And for that reason, I never stopped myself from doing what I wanted to do.

In the article, she explains what it feels like to be used for sex and then ghosted by a man. She says that he never got to know her, and that makes her feel bad. What did he know about her? She says that she appeared to him as "just some blonde blacked out drunk". In the article, she describes lying awake next to him after sex, then getting up to walk home at 5:30 in the morning. And this is not the only toxic man in her life.

She says:

> This applies to more than a few people from my past… I started to realize this lifestyle wasn't working after I hooked up with a guy who thought New England was a state. And yeah, I still hooked up with him after finding out this knowledge about him… And I don't know if that says more about him that he didn't know or more about me since I was willing to overlook that fact **just to feel desired for a night**.
>
> Because I do turn to other people for validation. When I think about it objectively, **90% of the reason I hook-up with anyone is to feel good about myself**.

She calls the search for validation an "addiction":

> I am addicted to validation I got from getting with people. I needed that rush of dopamine. I needed to know I am wanted. I got addicted to hooking up. Cause it was the only thing that made me feel good about myself for a while. When I was feeling down, I turned to boys… that didn't care about anything except what I look like. And I have been blessed/cursed with a pretty fast metabolism and a naturally larger than average chest. So I always have known I could default to my looks for validation. It's the easiest thing to get recognition for. And I got addicted to being told I was hot, or pretty, or whatever.

In other articles, she explains what kinds of men she's looking for.

She's a strong Democrat.

> There are two kinds of Republicans: the ignorant and the evil. Either they are uninformed and dumb or aware of the world and other cultures other than their own and just too corrupt or bigoted to care. It's just that being a Republican seems to now stand for religious nuts, rich, rednecks, and racists. This current election cycle has only increased my deep seeded hatred for the right-wingers even more.
>
> And I can't help myself, but whenever I find out someone who I have been talking to or have been friends with is a Republican, I let out an audible "ugh, really?" I can not hide my disgust.

In another article, she explains that she's an atheist:

> If singing songs, praying or going to confession makes you feel better, by all means, do what you have to do to feel better. As long as you aren't hurting anyone, do what you want to do. As an atheist, it doesn't offend me. I just choose not to do it.
>
> For example, at thanksgiving dinner this year my family wanted to say grace before eating, but they know where I stand when it comes to religion.

She came out of a Christian family.

In another post, she explains why she cheated on her boyfriend:

> I wish I could say I don't know why I did it, but that would be a blatant lie. I found myself in someone else's bed because… I didn't have feelings for you anymore. If you were enough for me, then you would have been. But you weren't. I stopped craving your company. I felt guilty, sure, but not enough to stop me from doing it multiple times. I didn't care about you or how you felt. And as my feelings started to fade, yours only seemed to get stronger. I know that stings, but it's true.
>
> So when I would go out in that extra-lowcut dress you loved when I wore it around you and a cute guy would ask me to dance or to go hangout on the porch, I wouldn't mention you. I guess I got tired of turning people down when I didn't feel like there was any "good" reason to. I missed my freedom. I missed the exciting feelings that come with flirting with someone new. The whole giddy honeymoon phase, getting butterflies whenever someone texts you, stalking them on Facebook and pretending you know nothing about them, finding yourself daydreaming about the next time you hang out in class. But I think I skipped a step before getting with someone new– breaking it off with you first.

She seems to be guided primarily by her feelings. If the feelings are gone, they're gone. She doesn't try to pick a good guy and invest in the relationship so that she builds something. I don't think this is going to work for her to avoid bad men.

So, what kind of man is she looking for? She writes about how interested she is in “hot” guys in many of her articles. Guys with height, looks, tattoos, piercings, displayed wealth validate her more than guys who want to protect, provide, and lead her in moral and spiritual areas. I don’t think that the men she is choosing will treat her well – they just have too many options to focus on building something good with one woman.

She’s looking for a man who agrees with her on abortion and same-sex marriage. So, men like that don’t want to protect unborn children, and take responsibility for their choices. And a man who supports same-sex marriage is siding with selfish adults. Every same-sex relationship deprives a child of their bio-mom or bio-dad. That’s not a good man to build something with.

Regarding religion, she’s uncomfortable with men who have definite exclusive views. Religion, for her, is not about truth at all. You shouldn’t make any exclusive claims that make people feel bad. Instead, just have your private religion that makes you feel better. She’s looking for men who will not lead her in moral and spiritual areas. That’s not a good man to date, either.

How is it working out for her?

Her worldview – feminism, atheism, socialism – doesn’t have the resources necessary for her to approach relationships in a way that will work for her, in the long run. She is not a Christian, pro-marriage, or conservative. The men she chooses are not Christians, pro-marriage, or conservative. This isn’t going to lead to a relationship that is faithful, exclusive and permanent. If that’s what she wants, then she is choosing the wrong people to get there. And even if she doesn’t want commitment now, she will some day. It’s better for her to focus on finding a good man now and building him up. Men make better husbands and fathers the sooner women get in there and support them at those goals.

I always urge young women to get a STEM degree and work in the private sector until they marry and have their first child. To make them think logically, take responsibility for engineering results, and to feel validated by their achievements. I wanted to see what her college major was – because I suspected that she did not do STEM. While searching, I stumbled upon her dating profile (posted on 9Gag by her), two Instagram pages full of selfies, a Tumblr blog of sexy photos, and an Only Fans page. Her LinkedIn page showed no current or previous work experience. To me, these things are clear signs that she is head straight for evil men who will hurt her.

Saving women from toxic masculinity

I think what we have to do is focus on her disappointment with the results of her own choices, and challenge her to change her worldview and relationship choices. She needs to stop rewarding the hot bad boys with free sex. There are good men out there who want to protect, provide and lead on moral and spiritual issues. She needs to be taught to focus on those good men.

Did the Biden administration lie about the FBI targeting parents as domestic terrorists?

November 17, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do you remember the news story about how the FBI was asked to investigate parents for "domestic terrorism". Not all parents, just the ones who express concerns about their children being raped in public school bathrooms. The latest news is that a whistleblower at the Department of Justice has come forward, and has some interesting news about Attorney General Merrick Gar1and.

The Federalist has the story:

> New whistleblower documents suggest Attorney General Merrick Gar1and lied to lawmakers last month when he denied that the Department of Justice was being weaponized to target concerned parents at school board meetings.
>
> Testifying before the House Judiciary Committee in late October, Gar1and said the agency's interest in parents was provoked by a letter from the Nationa1 Schoo1 Boards Association asking for federal law enforcement to use "domestic terrorism" laws to go after those who are concerned about what is taught in classrooms.
>
> […]Gar1and told lawmakers he could not "imagine any circumstance in which the Patriot Act would be used in the circumstances of parents complaining about their children, nor … a circumstance where they would be labeled as domestic terrorists."
>
> "I do not think that parents getting angry at school boards for whatever reason constitute domestic terrorism," Gar1and said. "It's not even a close question."

So, was he telling the truth?

A whistleblower says no:

> Records from an anonymous whistleblower released by Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, on Tuesday, however, reveal that the FBI's Counterterrorism Division is engaged in categorizing threat assessments relating to parents with a "threat tag."
>
> An internal email attached to a letter from Jordan to the attorney general references an Oct. 4 memorandum from Gar1and for the FBI to address "investigations and assessments of threats specifically directed against school board administrators, board members, teachers, and staff," with the tag.
>
> "This disclosure provides specific evidence that federal law enforcement operationalized counterterrorism tools at the behest of a left-wing special interest group against concerned parents," Jordan wrote. "We know from public reporting that the Nationa1 Schoo1 Boards Association coordinated with the White House prior to sending a letter dated September 29 to President Biden labeling parents

> as domestic terrorists and urging the Justice Department to use federal tools — including the Patriot Act — to target parents."

I just want to reiterate that the Obama administration isn't interested in disagreement aka "domestic terrorism" when it's Democrats committing it.

Democrats excuse harassment of anyone who blocks their secular left agenda. Senator Kyrsten Sinema opposes bankrupting future generations of Americans to the tune of $3.5 trillion dollars. When she is harassed by the radical left in a bathroom, and at the airport, there is no memo by the attorney general about that. No, Joe Biden says that particular harassment is "part of the process" and "it happens to everybody". The law is only enforced one way by secular left fascists.

But Democrats have no problem with using government as a weapon over their conservative enemies.

Democrats are routinely using the government to punish people who disagree with their left-wing fascist agenda. Obama used the IRS to persecute conservative groups. Minnesota Democrats used law enforcement to conduct pre-dawn raids of the homes of people who supported right to work laws. Kamala Harris raided the homes of pro-life activists who had revealed organ-trafficking by abortionists. Obama passed a law forcing Christian businesses to subsidize drugs that cause abortions. And all the Christian businesses — bakers, photographers, florists, etc. — who are harassed and threatened by gay activists. Democrats don't have any problem with harassment and intimidation so long as it advances their agenda.

How much does Joe Biden's Build Back Better stimulus cost, and who benefits?

November 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Joe Biden is planning to make the inflation in this country much worse, by having the federal government spend trillions of dollars on Democrat priorities. How much will it cost? Who will benefit from all this spending? And who will get the bill ? Let's start with a new report about the cost of the plan. Does it really cost "zero" like Joe Biden says?

The Washington Times reports:

> The mission of the Penn Wharton Budget Model (PWBM) "is to provide non-partisan, research-based analysis to inform the country's budget."
>
> To that end, PWBM has proven successful. In recent years, Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), and Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA), among many others, have sung its praises.
>
> […]"Under an alternative, illustrative scenario in which all spending provisions in the White House framework are permanent except the clean energy tax credits, new spending would instead increase by $4.26 trillion, and new revenue would still increase by $1.56 trillion over the 10-year budget window. The federal debt would be 25.2% higher and GDP 2.8% lower in 2050, relative to current law."

The Biden administration offers a lower figure by claiming that their spending on social programs is "temporary", but historically speaking, there is nothing as permanent as a "temporary" vote-buying program. Voters get addicted to benefits, and it all gets added to the debt.

Another report from Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget concurs with the $4 trillion plus figure:

> The Build Back Better Act relies on a number of arbitrary sunsets and expirations to lower the official cost of the bill. These include extending the American Rescue Plan's Child Tax Credit (CTC) increase and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) expansion for a year, setting universal pre-K and child care subsidies to expire after six years, making the Affordable Care Act (ACA) expansions available through 2025, delaying the requirement that businesses amortize research and experimentation (R&E) costs until 2026, and setting several other provisions – from targeted tax credits to school lunch programs – to expire prematurely.

Their figure for the total cost of the bill, with these stipulations in place, is $4.9 trillion.

But the rich are going to pay for it all right? That's what we're being told. But the reality is somewhat different. Actually, the bill *cuts taxes* for the wealthy, living in many blue states, by raising the cap on State and Local Tax deductions.

This article from the far-left Washington Post explains:

> The measurewould allow households to increase their deduction from state and local taxes from $10,000 to $80,000 through 2026, and then impose a new deduction cap through 2031. It's the second-most expensive item in the legislation over the next five years… according to an analysis by the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.
>
> The tax cut would partially reverse a tax hike from President Donald Trump's signature 2017 tax bill that was particularly burdensome to high-income, high-tax states.
>
> Over the next five years, raising the SALT cap would provide a tax cut only to those who itemize their taxes and pay more than $10,000 in state and local taxes — a group overwhelmingly made up of the wealthy. A recent analysis from the Tax Policy Center says the tax cut will benefit primarily the top 10 percent of income earners, with almost nothing flowing to middle- and lower-income families."
>
> Raising the SALT cap would more than offset other tax increases for the wealthy in 2022, according to a report from the Tax Foundation.

This isn't surprising. Remember, Joe Biden is the father of Hunter Biden. And we need to set aside 10% for The Big Guy, right?

So, we're adding trillions to the debt. Who is going to get the bill for all this spending? The spending is intended to buy the votes of Americans in the 2022 and 2024 elections – the next 5 years. But the paying back of the money will be done by your children. Not by the children of the wealthy, though. By the children of the middle class. Your children. There are too few wealthy people in this country to pay for trillions of dollars of spending. You're going to pay for it. You and your children. You're paying right now, and you're going to pay more.

College professors donate to Democrats over Republicans 95 to 1

November 19, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

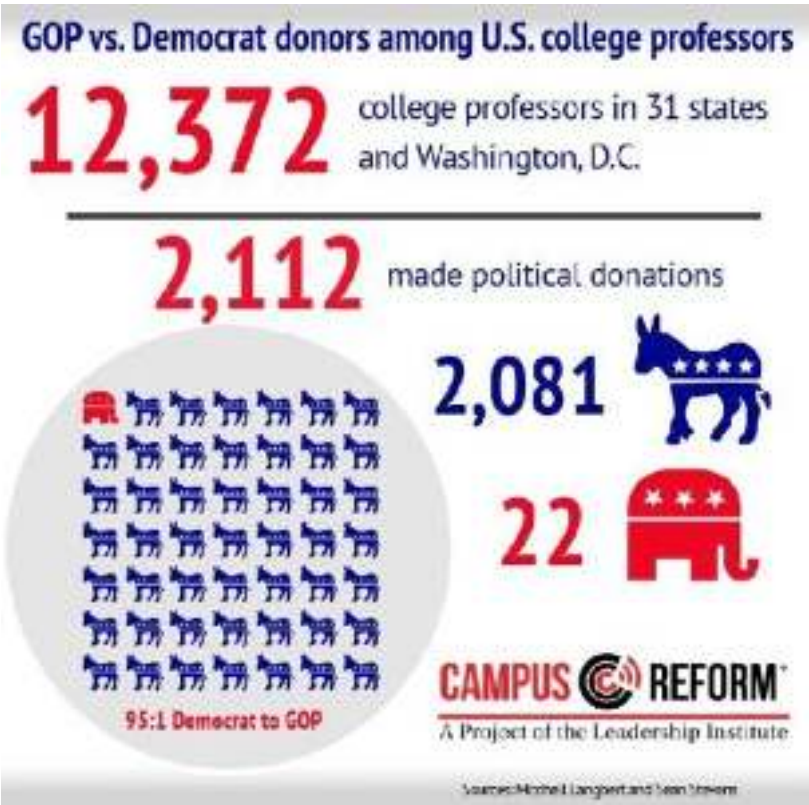

Where do college professors send their political donations?

Why is it that college students, including Christian college students, are becoming so progressive? It's because their professors are all progressive. This isn't just my opinion. You can look at the breakdown of political donations made by college professors to see how many of them donate to Republicans vs Democrats.

Here is the latest from Campus Reform:

> A recent study found that U.S. college professors donate exclusively to Democrats over Republicans by a 95:1 ratio.
>
> Two researchers, Heterodox Academy Director of Research Sean Stevens and Brooklyn College Professor Mitchell Langbert conducted the study, published by the National Association of Scholars. They looked at the political donations of 12,372 college professors at universities in 31 states and the District of Columbia during the past two election cycles in 2015-16 and 2017-18.
>
> Stevens and Langbert conducted their study by looking at political donation data available from the Federal Election Commission.
>
> Of those professors, 2,112 made political donations, 2,081 of which were donated to Democrats. Just 22 of those 2,112 professors donated to Republicans. Nine professors donated to both Republicans and Democrats, according to the study.

> The findings indicate that professors donated to Democrats more than Republicans by a 95:1 ratio. In addition to the number of professors who donated to Democrats versus Republicans, the study also revealed how many professors are registered to vote as Democrats compared with professors who are registered as Republicans. Nearly half of the 12,372 professors — 48.5 percent — are registered Democrats while just 5.7 percent are registered Republicans.

Given that, it's not hard to see why Democrats like Elizabeth Warren want to provide those college professors with $1.3 trillion of taxpayer money – which is what the student loan bailout does.

What explains all of this?

Consider this essay by secular libertarian professor Robert Nozick who explains why university professors are liberal.

Excerpt:

> What factor produced feelings of superior value on the part of intellectuals? I want to focus on one institution in particular: schools. As book knowledge became increasingly important, schooling–the education together in classes of young people in reading and book knowledge–spread. Schools became the major institution outside of the family to shape the attitudes of young people, and almost all those who later became intellectuals went through schools. There they were successful. They were judged against others and deemed superior. They were praised and rewarded, the teacher's favorites. How could they fail to see themselves as superior? Daily, they experienced differences in facility with ideas, in quick-wittedness. The schools told them, and showed them, they were better.
>
> The schools, too, exhibited and thereby taught the principle of reward in accordance with (intellectual) merit. To the intellectually meritorious went the praise, the teacher's smiles, and the highest grades. In the currency the schools had to offer, the smartest constituted the upper class. Though not part of the official curricula, in the schools the intellectuals learned the lessons of their own greater value in comparison with the others, and of how this greater value entitled them to greater rewards.
>
> The wider market society, however, taught a different lesson. There the greatest rewards did not go to the verbally brightest. There the intellectual skills were not *most* highly valued. Schooled in the lesson that they were most valuable, the most deserving of reward, the most entitled to reward, how could the intellectuals, by and large, fail to resent the capitalist society which deprived them of the just deserts to which their superiority "entitled" them? Is it surprising that what the schooled intellectuals felt for capitalist society was a deep and sullen animus that, although clothed with various publicly appropriate reasons, continued even when those particular reasons were shown to be inadequate?

It's very important to understand what is motivating university professors, especially

ones who are in departments divorced from reality, like English and victim studies of various sorts. They are literally teaching classes in topic that have no accountability to reality. It’s just indoctrination in what the professor believes. These professors think they are smart, but they don’t earn anything like productive people in the private sector, e.g. – software engineers. It creates a deep sense of inferiority that makes them hostile to the capitalist system. Their only hope is a powerful government that redirects money from those who serve customers (private sector companies) to “wordsmiths” like themselves.

What do the Democrats who run Google and YouTube believe about sexual assault?

November 20, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A very interesting story came out recently from China, where a star tennis player named Peng Shuai disappeared after accusing a high-up Chinese politician of rape. Western journalists made a video to talk about the facts of the case, and posted it to YouTube. But the Democrats who run YouTube (which is owned by Google) took action against the video, showing their real views on sexual assault.

The Federalist explains:

> YouTube and its parent company Google targeted a video about the suspicious disappearance of Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai by journalists Saagar Enjeti and Krystal Ball on Thursday, in a continuation of the tech company's running interference for communist China.
>
> In a 10-minute "Breaking Points" video titled "Chinese Tennis Star VANISHES After Rape Accusation," Enjeti and Ball discuss Shuai's allegations that China's former Vice-Premier Zhang Gaoli sexually assaulted her. "After she posted that, overnight, she was disappeared from the Chinese social media," Enjeti says in the video.
>
> Enjeti also noted that a Chinese state media outlet had released a statement purported to be from Shuai, denying the allegations and insisting, "I'm not missing" and "everything is fine."
>
> "I hope to promote Chinese tennis with you all if I have a chance in the future," the statement continued. Enjeti said the statement only increased concerns of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) about Shuai's statements.
>
> "Reports are that if you even post about her or about this official or even say things like 'tennis' on … their version of Twitter, then that will be censored and blocked," Ball added, noting that Shuai's original post alleging the assault was taken down by Chinese censors within 30 minutes.

Everyone expects the communists to disappear people, enslave them, throw them into gulags, rape them and kill them. But did you know what Google / YouTube's view on all that is?

Here:

> But after "Breaking Points" posted the video about censorship in communist China, Enjeti said YouTube notified the journalists that their video had been found not "suitable for all advertisers" and "as a result, it will continue to run limited or no ads."
>
> The notification also said the video had been "manually review[ed]," confirming

> that no accidental algorithmic error was responsible.

I was going to come up with a long list of censorship performed by Google / YouTube, but the rest of The Federalist article has everything I would tell you and more:

> The incident isn't the first time Google has worked in tandem with Chinese censors. The Intercept reported in 2018 that Google would be introducing "Project Dragonfly," a censored search engine in China, "which will block searches related to free speech, human rights, and democracy" and "reportedly link any searches entered by a user directly to his or her phone number, allowing Chinese authorities to easily track citizens seeking out blacklisted information," as Mitchell Gunter wrote for The Federalist at the time.
>
> The same summer, Google refused to work with U.S. authorities at the Pentagon when the company "announced it wouldn't renew a contract to do artificial intelligence work for the U.S. military after some strong opposition from its employees."
>
> Censorship of Enjeti and Ball's video is also only the latest in a long line of censorship by Google and YouTube. In September, Google moved to ban advertisements about abortion pill reversal by pro-life groups like Live Action. Earlier this year, Google-owned YouTube deplatformed another pro-life group, LifeSiteNews.
>
> In June 2020, YouTube removed a video from the Heritage Foundation in which Walt Heyer discussed his regret over his transgender-identifying past.
>
> That same month, Google colluded with NBC News in an attempt to deplatform The Federalist, which Google then claimed was based on content in the comments section of The Federalist's articles.
>
> In 2019, Google barred the conservative Claremont Institute from buying ads for its 40th-anniversary gala. And when the pro-life film "Unplanned" came out, Google labeled it "Propaganda" while leaving a "History/War" label on an actual Nazi propaganda video from 1935.
>
> YouTube has also censored Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul for challenging the effectiveness of cloth masks and Wisconsin Sen. Ron Johnson for discussing the early treatment of COVID-19. Other content targeted by the video platform includes all videos highlighting voter fraud, videos of former President Donald Trump's speech at the 2021 Conservative Political Action Conference, and videos about COVID-19 from Sky News Australia.

Now me. In 2016, just before Trump won the election, I was getting about 1000 page views per day from traffic from the Google search engine. These days, it's less than 20 per day. I get more traffic from Bing and DuckDuckGo than from Google. They are clearly involved in censoring conservative, Christian voices.

But, censorship doesn't bother me. I'm doing what I do to act as an authentic Christian

before God. I’m not going to be lumped in with the secular leftist pedophiles in Hell when it’s my turn to get judged. But that’s where the people who run Google and YouTube are going. And I’m so happy about that. That’s where they belong. With no parole, and no early release. No release at all.

Abigail Shrier: how activist teachers recruit kids

November 21, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw this article posted on Abigail's substack page. You might have heard of her. She wrote a book warning parents about how their daughters get pulled into transgenderism in the schools. I've noticed that she's becoming more and more conservative about other issues as well. Anyway, the article below caught my eye, and I thought that you might be interested, too.

Here's the article.

> Last month, the California Teachers Association (CTA) held a conference advising teachers on best practices for subverting parents, conservative communities and school principals on issues of gender identity and sexual orientation. Speakers went so far as to tout their surveillance of students' Google searches, internet activity, and hallway conversations in order to target sixth graders for personal invitations to LGBTQ clubs, while actively concealing these clubs' membership rolls from participants' parents.
>
> Documents and audio files recently sent to me, and authenticated by three conference participants, permitted a rare insight into the CTA's sold-out event in Palm Springs, held from October 29-31, 2021. The "2021 LGBTQ+ Issues Conference, Beyond the Binary: Identity & Imagining Possibilities," provided best practices workshops that encouraged teachers to "have the courage to create a safe environment that fosters bravery to explore sexual orientation, gender identity and expression," according to the precis of a talk given by fifth grade teacher, C. Scott Miller.
>
> Several of the workshops advised teachers on the creation of middle school LGBTQ clubs (commonly known as "Gay-Straight Alliance" clubs or "GSA"). One workshop—"Queering in the Middle"—focused "on what practices have worked for successful middle school GSAs and children at this age developmentally."

They hid what they are doing from parents – especially conservative parents:

> "Because we are not official—we have no club rosters, we keep no records," Buena Vista Middle School teacher and LGBTQ-club leader, Lori Caldeira, states on an audio clip sent to me by a conference attendee. "In fact, sometimes we don't really want to keep records because if parents get upset that their kids are coming? We're like, 'Yeah, I don't know. Maybe they came?' You know, we would never want a kid to get in trouble for attending if their parents are upset."
>
> The advice to those who run middle school LGBTQ clubs is: keep no records, so you can plead ignorance of the membership with the members' parents. In fact, middle school teacher Kelly Baraki can be heard in the same session describing having named her club "the Equity Club," and then, "You be You," rather than

> the more ubiquitous "GSA."
>
> Caldeira and Baraki – both middle school teachers – led a workshop titled: "How we run a 'GSA' in Conservative Communities." The audio recording of their lecture was sent to me by a conference attendee. In that address, the speakers describe the challenges for activist teachers working in the context of a politically mixed community in Central California with many conservative parents.

I found a picture of one of the teachers at Granite Grok:

Caldeira-Equity-Wall
That's what these teachers look like.

Abigail's article made me think of a recent study about how and why children get into this lifestyle. This article at The Federalist had a few examples to illustrate the conclusion of the study. I'll pick two.

> The study includes other eye-opening information, such as case studies of several children's stories.

> - "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends were taking group lessons together with a very popular coach. The coach came out as transgender, and, within one year, all four students announced they were also transgender."

> - "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends are part of a larger friend group that spends much of their time talking about gender and sexuality. The three natal female friends all announced they were trans boys and chose similar masculine names. After spending time with these three friends, the 14-year-old natal female announced that she was also a

> trans boy."
>
> […]"Great increase in popularity among the student body at large. Being trans is a gold star in the eyes of other teens," wrote one parent on the study response form. Another wrote, "not so much 'popularity' increasing as 'status' … also she became untouchable in terms of bullying in school as teachers who ignored homophobic bullying …are now all at pains to be hot on the heels of any trans bullying."

If you have young children in the schools – public or private – make sure you know what's going on. If it were me, I would pull my kids out of schools. The teachers and administrators and school boards are just too far on the left to be trusted.

I've noticed that a lot of parents don't want to get informed about these things. They just say "oh well, they will grow out of it and everything will be OK". I don't think that they are saying this because they know what is going on. They don't know, because they are too lazy to have to put any work into raising their children. They say everything will be OK so that they can get back to doing what is best for them. But you can't avoid a threat by wishing it away.

New survey of 20 studies about breast cancer – abortion link

November 22, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've blogged about a half-dozen studies from different countries on the link between abortion and breast cancer. It's always interesting to keep up with the research, so we know what to tell young people about the likely consequences of their choices with sex and abortion. The survey was reported by Life News.

Excerpt:

> In 2018, the Breast Cancer Prevention Institute funded and published "Induced Abortion as an Independent Risk Factor for Breast Cancer: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Studies on South Asian Women" in *Issues in Law and Medicine*. (A meta-analysis looks at separate but similar studies in order to use the pooled data for statistical significance. It is regarded by scientists as very strong evidence.)
>
> Of the 20 studies analyzed, 16 were done on Indian women. The meta-analysis found a **151%** increased risk of breast cancer after an induced abortion.
>
> In 2014, "Breast Cancer and Induced Abortion," an analysis also published in Issues in Law and Medicine, revealed that the incidence of breast cancers increased 10-14 years after an abortion. This analysis was consistent with the known biology of breast cancer. There was no statistically significant increase in breast cancer risk before 10 years and after 14 years of an abortion.
>
> Induced abortion in India, referred to as "Medical Termination of Pregnancy," was legalized in 1971. Sons are most highly prized and sex selection abortions, although illegal, are not uncommon.
>
> A study published in the Lancet 2006 and based on conservative assumptions, reported that the practice of sex-selection accounts for about a half million missing female births yearly. Over the past two decades this translates into the abortion of some 10 million female fetuses.

Abortion is especially a problem for Indian women, because – as in China – India is very pro-abortion. Both India and China have a very pro-abortion culture, and sex-selection abortion is seen as normal.

Here are a couple of studies that focused on China and Chinese women who choose abortion.

Study 1: (September 2010)

> Based on the expression of estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2/neu (HER2), breast cancer is classified into several subtypes: luminal A (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2-), luminal B (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2+), HER2-

> overexpressing (ER-, PR-, and HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-, PR-, and HER2-). The aim of this case-control study is to determine reproductive factors associated with breast cancer subtypes in Chinese women. A total of 1,417 patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the First Affiliated Hospital, China Medical University, Shenyang, China between 2001 and 2009 and 1,587 matched controls without a prior breast cancer were enrolled.
>
> […]Postmenopause and spontaneous abortion were inversely associated with the risk of luminal tumors. By contrast, multiparity, family history of breast cancer and **induced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer**.

Study 2: (March 2010)

> OBJECTIVE: To explore the risk factors of breast cancer for better control and prevention of the malignancy.
>
> METHODS: The clinical data of 232 patients with pathologically established breast cancer were investigated in this 1:1 case-control study to identify the risk factors of breast cancer.
>
> RESULTS: The history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and**multiple abortions were the statistically significant risk factors of breast cancer**, while breast feeding was the protective factor.
>
> CONCLUSION: A history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and multiple abortions are all risk factors of breast cancer.

Those are both about abortion and breast cancer in China.

And more recently, I blogged about a very recent study from China which concluded thus:

> IA is significantly associated with an increased risk of breast cancer among Chinese females, and the risk of breast cancer increases as the number of IA increases. If IA were to be confirmed as a risk factor for breast cancer, high rates of IA in China may contribute to increasing breast cancer rates.

The effect seems to be most observable for women who have induced abortions before ever completing a pregnancy.

Even though the United States has massively focused on breast cancer screening and treatment, (in contrast to other cancers, such as prostate cancer), the rate of breast cancer has not declined:

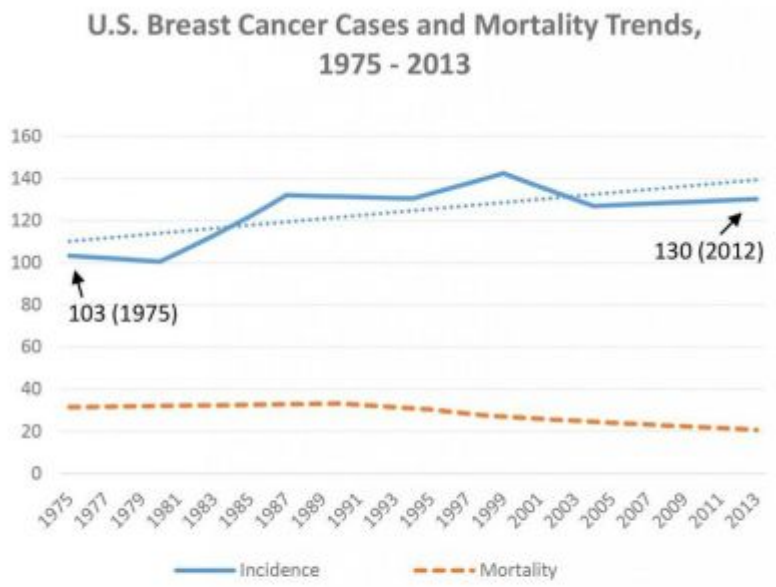

Invasive breast cancer incidence, and deaths (mortality). Rates are per 100,000 women. Incidence source is SEER 9 data accessed by from the SEER website on Oct 20, 2016. A trend line generated with Microsoft Excel software (dots) demonstrates the upward pattern since 1975.

Breast cancer rates have been rising since abortion was legalized
(Source)

We have so much attention on breast cancer in the West. Many charities raising money for it. Policy changes to promote early testing. Taxpayer money being spent to stop it. And yet the rate has not gone down. It started going up right around the time abortion became legal.

Will Democrat legislators protect you from criminals and domestic terrorists?

November 23, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do Democrats care about protecting the people who pay their salaries? Don't look at what they say – what do their actions say? Let's take a look at what Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said about criminals in her home state of New York. Then we'll look at how her position works out in real life for the taxpayers she is supposed to represent.

First story from the New York Post:

> Three House Democrats sent a letter to the Big Apple's five district attorneys Monday demanding answers on how they use cash bail, saying it's contributing to the ongoing "humanitarian crisis" on Rikers Island.
>
> The letter, sent by Manhattan Rep. Carolyn Maloney, Bronx Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, said the lawmakers have "grave concerns that excessive bail amounts" are forcing detainees to languish in unsafe city lockups simply because they cannot afford to pay.
>
> "High bail amounts lead to a two-tiered system of justice, with those who can afford bail being able to escape the inhumane conditions at pretrial detention facilities such as Rikers Island while those who cannot afford bail are forced to remain," the letter stated.

So, two questions about this. First, who is she concerned about? Is she concerned about the law abiding people? The people who pay her enormous salary? Or, is she concerned about the people who break the law – criminals and domestic terrorists? Second, What are the likely consequences of *lowering bail requirements* for crime rates? Did she even think about that?

Here is an example of what happens when bail requirements are set too low, reported by The Post Millennial:

> Darrell Brooks Jr., the suspect in the tragedy in which a car plowed into an ongoing parade, killing five and injuring at least 40, has been found to have been arrested previously for running a woman over with his car.
>
> He was released on Nov. 11 2021 after having posted what is being called an "inappropriately low" bail of $1000 in the domestic violence case against him, which is still very much ongoing, according to the Milwaukee County DA office.
>
> According to local outlet the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, even more shockingly, Brooks had been charged three times in a period of less than two years time. All three charges stem from what is calls his "recklessly endangering the safety of others."
>
> The case in which he was let go on the $1000 bail had seen him arrested on Nov.

> 5 2021. The Journal Sentinel reports further that , in this particular case, "a woman told police Brooks purposefully ran her 'over with his vehicle' while she was walking through a gas station parking lot after he had followed her there after a fight, according to the criminal complaint. The woman was hospitalized for her injuries, court records show."

Andy Ngo, a journalist, has tweeted this about the suspect:

> The man in custody over the mass casualty incident at the #Waukesha, Wis. Christmas parade has posts on his social media in support of BLM causes, George Floyd & black nationalism. He also has a post about how to get away with running people over on the street.

And later on, this:

> Darrell Edward Brooks, the man who was taken into custody by police over the #Waukesha Christmas parade mass casualty incident, expressed hatred of former president Donald Trump in one of his rap tracks. He also expressed black nationalist antisemitic views. #BLM

And then this:

> Darrell Brooks, the man taken into custody over the #Waukesha Christmas parade mass casualty incident, is a registered sex offender in Nevada. He was convicted over having sex w/a child. In one of his now-deleted videos, he defended his actions, saying he was pimping the "hoe."

Those are the people that the Democrats love to defend. And if a few of you taxpayer scum have to die for their virtue signaling, then too bad for you.

When I read about cases like this, I wonder what people like AOC – who was born with a silver spoon in her mouth – would do if she met the victims of her policies. What would a dunce like her say if she were confronted with the consequences of her own advocacy? She has a huge taxpayer-funded salary. She lives in a nice area in an expensive residence. She has armed security to protect her. What about the people she exposes to criminals and domestic terrorists? Does she even care? Or is she too busy trying to virtue signal?

Thinking practically about the gospel with an illustration from a war movie

November 24, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The city of Mogadishu, in Somalia, Africa

First, let's get an overview that helps us understand the context and goals of the mission we are going to discuss.

The scene is set in Somalia, Africa, in 1992. There a civil war between two warlords: Ali Mahdi and Mohammed Farah Aidid. The war has destroyed agricultural operations, and the people are starving. The United Nations are trying to help, but Aidid hijacks the food from UN aircraft so that he can use the food to gain control of the people. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis are dying of starvation. The UN requests American military forces to secure the air-dropped supplies so they can be distributed to the starving people.

In December 1992, President George H.W. Bush answers the call, sending 25,000 troops to Somalia to protect the food from the Somali warlords. However, in 1993, Bill Clinton is elected. He orders that the number of U.S. troops be reduced to 12,000. Following an attack by Aidid on Pakistani peace-keepers, the U.N. issues a resolution to capture those responsible. The U.S. armed forces have the arms and training to battle evil, so they get the call to capture Aidid and his lieutenants.

In late August 1993, Task Force Ranger is deployed to Mogadishu to capture Aidid and his lieutenants at the Olympic Hotel. The U.S. force consists of 440 troops from the Army Rangers and Army Delta Force special forces, commanded by General William Garrison. Garrison requested light armored units (Bradley Infantry Fighting vehicles) that would offer more protection than the unarmored HMMWV Humvees. Garrison was denied the light armor by the Clinton administration. Garrison requested heavier air support (AC-130 Spectre gunships) that would offer better fire support than the UH-60 Blackhawk miniguns. Garrison was denied the air support by the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration did not want the American forces to appear too heavily armed for the peace-keeping role.

The actual mission turned out to be much harder than it needed to be, because of the resources denied by the Clinton administration. Although the Aidid lieutenants were

captured, Aidid himself escaped. Eighty-four American soldiers were wounded. Eighteen American soldiers were killed, and their bodies were dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. This was shown over and over by the media, and it undermined American resolve to help the Somali people. As a result, Clinton had the excuse he needed to retreat the American military.

(Source: Nova Online)

Two heroes lost their lives

Today, I want to talk about two of the men who lost their lives in Operation Gothic Serpent. They are Master Sergeant Gary I. Gordon and Sergeant First Class Randall D. Shughart – a Delta Force sniper team.

Here is a clip from the movie Blackhawk Down, which shows what happened to them:

The pilot of the downed Blackhawk was protected by the two men who volunteered to go in after him. They requested that they be inserted at the crash site, even though they knew that reinforcements were likely not going to be there in time to save them. They made the request to go and help the pilot *three times* before being allowed to go in. Their first two requests were denied by their commanding officer, because the odds against their survival were so overwhelming. The rescued pilot was later released by his captors, and the two heroes were awarded the Medal of Honor for their brave actions.

A Congressional Medal of Honor

Here is a description of the requirements to be awarded a Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through **conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty**:

> - While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States;
> - While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
> - While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

You can read the official details of their actions.

The point of this post

It is important for Christians to be familiar with real-world examples of people giving their lives in order to save the lives of others. When we see real-world examples of self-sacrifice, it helps us to understand what Jesus really achieved for us, and what he must have felt making that hard choice to volunteer to go in and rescue us. In general, my philosophy when it comes to the Bible is to make every effort to connect what the Bible says to the real world. We must not push Christianity into some far-off world of piety and feelings. We must make connections to real evidence and real life, so that what the Bible says becomes practical, and so that we have a deep friendship with and sympathy for God revealed in Jesus Christ. In real life, being willing to give your life to save someone else is hard. Understanding how that really happens will help us to value what Jesus has done for us.

Bible verses

I saw this verse on the ground outside the Airborne & Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, NC, where I went for my summer vacation in 2015.

Isaiah 6:8:

> [8] Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
>
> And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Here is the picture I took (yes, that is my running shoe):

"Here am I, send me" Isaiah 6:8

When confronted with an opportunity to imitate Christ in his self-sacrifice, we should think less about ourselves and our own desires, and take the opportunity to serve others effectively. We do not do what makes us happy, and we do not pursue fun and thrills. We do what heals, we do what helps others. We do not push away our responsibility to imitate Christ by caring for those in danger. Christianity is not just about "not doing bad things". It's the good things you do because of your relationship with Jesus that show your real allegiance, and give you the experience of being a Christian in deed.

And here is another good verse:

John 15:13:

> [13] Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

If you get a chance to watch the movie Blackhawk Down, then do so. I highly recommend it. You can also read the book that the movie is based on.

I love the Medal of Honor books by Edward F. Murphy. He writes about all the people who have been awarded the Medal of honor in different wars: World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

If you check my reading list, you'll find that I usually read two military books for every one book on another subject.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

November 25, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

William Lane Craig lecturing to university students
Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang

– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws
– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection

– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus
– god wouldn't have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that's a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that's a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that's a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don't support life, that's a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that's a bad design

3. hitchens' burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can't prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig's scientific arguments don't go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don't prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don't prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn't be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig's evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can't use the progress of science
– it's too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god's existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn't forming his view based on evidence

– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don't believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you've got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God
– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH's evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH's argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn't need to be efficient

CH's argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH's argument that Craig's scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH's argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn't need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH's citation of Craig's book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true

– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH's rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH's rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH's argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed
– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them

– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that’s a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven’t even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn’t prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they’re growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn’t improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do
– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn’t need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that’s why people act morally
– it’s degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don’t know why, because i can’t ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don’t hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don’t believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don’t agree

WC moral argument: it’s not epistemology it’s the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing
– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history

– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it's just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that's not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument

- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Facebook has a long record of censoring speech critical of Democrats

November 26, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the past, I've talked about how Facebook has censored my main blog's page for posting a meme of Kermit the frog driving a car. They didn't like the idea of a puppet frog driving a car – said it would cause people to commit suicide, or something. But Facebook actually has a much longer record of censoring people. And conservative Rachel Bovard has the list.

Her article is up at the New York Post:

> Consider how Facebook, in particular, treated the circumstances surrounding Kyle Rittenhouse, the teen acquitted last week of all charges in the self-defense killings of two men and the shooting of another during last summer's riots in Kenosha, Wis. Immediately after the incident occurred, and despite video evidence which made a self-defense charge instantly plausible, Facebook declared it a "mass murder" and under that justification blocked searches for Rittenhouse's name and any content in "praise or support" for him on the site — including links to contribute to his legal defense and videos purporting to show Rittenhouse providing aid to protesters.
>
> In other words, Facebook determined that the only speech allowed on its platform was to declare Rittenhouse's guilt, not his innocence. Perhaps prompted by Facebook's actions or merely in spite of them, PayPal cut off affiliation with fundraising efforts for Rittenhouse, and so did GoFundMe.

Rittenhouse self-defense is "mass murder", but Facebook won't say the same about the Waukesha killings. They probably think that's "self-defense" because the accused killer supports Black Lives Matter, just like all the Big Tech social media companies.

Politifact is one of the fact-checkers used by Facebook to censor speech that is critical of the Democrat party or its allies.

Rachel writes:

> PolitiFact, a Facebook-affiliated arbiter of facts, declared it was "false" that Rittenhouse was in legal possession of his firearm. The "fact-checker" did so by failing to account for exceptions in Wisconsin law which made his possession legal. (The gun charge was thrown out during the trial for the same reasons.)
>
> A jury has acquitted Rittenhouse on all charges — those brought by the prosecutors and by Facebook — so now what? Will all the accounts which were banned or otherwise punished for speaking in his defense be reinstated? Will the self-righteous fact-checkers at PolitiFact be held accountable in any way? Will Facebook admit it was wildly wrong or simply pretend like it didn't make a blundering, ham-fisted judgment about Rittenhouse absent any due process, one

> which contributed to shaping a false national narrative?

I've written about Politifact's record of "fact-checking" many times on this blog.

Politifact is in the news again for labeling actual video of Democrats explaining their opinions of v4cc1nes as "False News".

Fox News reports:

> Amid the Biden administration's struggle to v4cc1nate Americans, a video surfaced comments made during the 2020 election cycle by the then-Democratic ticket that cast doubt in a v4cc1ne developed under President Trump.
>
> Biden suggested back in August that any v4cc1ne that comes along is "not likely to go through all the tests that need to be done and the trials that are needed to be done."
>
> […]Biden repeatedly indicated only if there was enough "transparency" would he take the v4cc1ne and that the "American people should not have confidence" in the v4cc1ne developed by the Trump administration if his concerns weren't addressed.
>
> Harris was heard during a CNN interview that getting a v4cc1ne that's approved by the Trump administration would be "an issue for all of us" and "if Donald Trump tells us that we should take it, I'm not taking it" during the vice presidential debate.
>
> However, PolitiFact issued a so-called "fact-check" with the headline "Biden, Harris distrusted Trump with C0V1D-19 v4cc1nes, not the v4cc1nes themselves."

This isn't the first time that Politifact, which is used by all the big social media companies to "fact check" speech, has been caught protecting their favored political party.

Let's see some examples of past bias.

Arizona Senate Race

Politifact screwed up their fact-check for the Arizona Senate race.

The Daily Caller explains:

> PolitiFact incorrectly labeled it "mostly false" that Democratic Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema "protested troops in a pink tutu" during its live fact-check of the Arizona Senate debate Monday night.
>
> It's an established fact that Sinema, a former Green Party activist who co-founded an anti-war group, wore a pink tutu at one of the multiple anti-war protests she attended in 2003.
>
> "While we were in harm's way, she was protesting our troops in a pink tutu," Republican candidate Martha McSally, a former Air Force fighter pilot, said during Monday night's debate.

Here's their Politifact's evaluation of McSally's claim:

Who are you going to believe? Politifact, or your own eyes?
And here's the photo of Kyrsten Sinema, protesting the troops, in a pink tutu:

Anti-war Democrat Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema in a pink tutu
The Daily Caller notes:

> A 2003 Arizona State University news article at the time described Sinema wearing "something resembling a pink tutu" at one of the protests.
>
> […]Sinema openly associated with fringe elements of the far-left during her anti-war activism.
>
> She promoted an appearance by Lynne Stewart, a lawyer who was convicted of aiding an Islamic terrorist organization, in 2003.
>
> Sinema also reportedly partnered with anarchists and witches in her anti-war

> activism and said she did “not care” if Americans wanted to join the Taliban.

And now for the big one: Politifact’s fact-checking of Obamacare.

Obama’s claims about Obamacare

Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine, wrote about Politifact’s assessment of Obama’s promise to Americans about keeping their health plans after Obamacare.

In 2008, before the presidential election, PolitiFact rated Obama’s claims about Obamacare “True”:

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site’s “Truth-O-Meter” to evaluate this claim: “Under Barack Obama’s health care proposal, ‘if you’ve got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.’”

And she concluded:

> […]…people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama’s plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his statement True.”

Roy notes:

> PolitiFact’s pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 campaign.

Here’s the screen capture from 2008:

Politifact says that everyone who likes their health care plan can keep it
Before the election, it’s true! And Obama got re-elected, because people believed that.
But what happened after the election?

In 2013, after the 2012 election, PolitiFact rated Obama’s claims about Obamacare “Pants On Fire”:

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama's infamous promise—that "if you like your health care plan, you can keep it"—its 2013 "Lie of the Year."
>
> […][N]one of the key facts that made that promise "impossible" in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President's plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan
Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."
Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."
Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact said one thing before the election, and the opposite afterwards

So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, but it's election time so they don't say that. It's not like the critical assessments of Obamacare from health policy experts were not out there between 2007-2012. I know, because I blogged on every study and report on the predicted effects of the law that I could find. But the intellectually lazy journalism-major clowns at Politifact couldn't be bothered to read those studies and reports.

Secular left journalists are the stupidest people on the planet. Stick with reading The Federalist and Daily Wire if you want to know what's really going on in the world.

Fascism in action: Antifa Democrat attacks Republican Senator's office with axe

November 27, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you were living in the Soviet Union just before the time of the purges, the famines, and the gulag concentration camps, what would you do? The smart move would be to pick up and get out. Most Americans don't realize that we have a movement similar to Soviet Union communism in this country. It's called the Democrat party. And they even have an enforcement wing called "Antifa".

Here's the latest about Antifa, from The Post Millennial:

> A far-left North Dakota man who was convicted in federal court for attacking a Republican US senator's office with an axe has ties to Antifa, The Post Millennial can report.
>
> Thomas "Tas" Alexander Starks, 31, of Lisbon, N.D., was filmed on CCTV trying to break inside the office of Sen. John Hoeven's in Fargo on Dec. 21, 2020, using an axe. In April, he pleaded guilty to a charge of destruction of government property. **Federal sentencing guidelines suggested 10–16 months in prison but he was only sentenced to probation and fined $2,784 for restitution.**

His sentence is quite different the multi-year prison sentences that the Jan. 6 people got for carrying a flag, isn't it? I mean – the ones who didn't get shot by the Capitol police. Most of these Antifa people are the children of rich white parents. They may have influence with far-left federal law enforcement. Remember how Ted Kennedy was treated after drowning Mary Jo Kopechne? They made him a senator for years and years. It's fine with them.

More:

> According to court documents, Starks' colleague said he was "politically open and motivated," left-leaning and "very active in protests."
>
> Starks has also called for violence and has spread Antifa propaganda while posting under the Facebook moniker, "Paul Dunyan," a reference to the axe-carrying folklore lumberjack Paul Bunyan.
>
> Starks' Facebook profile avatar depicts the Antifa red and black flag symbol along with the text, "Antifascist." On Oct. 22, Starks posted the logo of the Antifascist Action along with the text "F— Around and Find Out," and three axe emojis.
>
> […]In April, he posted about using a rifle to "hunt fascists," and also using soup cans as projectiles to assault police. During the Black Lives Matter-Antifa riots in Portland last year, Antifa militants carried frozen water bottles and canned food in their backpacks to use as projectiles against law enforcement.

> In several photographs of himself posted on social media, Starks can be seen wearing a Socialist Rifle Association t-shirt. The militant leftist group urges comrades on the left to take up arms. The group had communicated on Twitter in 2019 with Ohio Antifa member Connor Betts before he died carrying out a deadly mass shooting in Dayton.

And here's the Biden Department of Justice, which has a lot of energy to investigate concerned teachers for "domestic terrorism", but not much concern about an actual domestic terrorist – because they agree with him!

> Recently Starks has taken to Facebook to brag about getting his axe back from the FBI.
>
> "Look what the FBI were kind enough to give back to me!" Starks posted on Oct. 26.

It seems to me like we have another Darrell Brooks situation here. This person is a future mass murderer / domestic terrorist. But you see how law enforcement treats people on the left. If you believe in the Constitution, get married, have kids, and obey the laws, then the FBI is very concerned about your involvement in your children's education. You need to be investigated for domestic terrorism. But this guy? He gets a slap on the wrist. We need to have laws that allow the victims of crimes to sue people in the government and law enforcement for their actions. And let the parents of the criminals be criminally liable for what their children do.

Evaluating William Lane Craig's views on Genesis, Adam and Eve

November 28, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a wonderful series of articles by someone I really trust on origins issues: Dr. Casey Luskin. He has a *long* history with the intelligent design movement, starting from when he was a college student. He has a BS and MS in Earth Sciences from the University of California, San Diego, a PhD in Geology from the University of Johannesburg, and a JD from the University of San Diego.

He has a series of articles up at Evolution News, about Dr. William Lane Craig's new book "In Quest of the Historical Adam". I'm not sure if he is done with the series, but I thought that it was a good time to look over what he's already written.

In the first article he notes that "Craig convincingly argues that mainstream science can be reconciled with a traditional view of Adam and Eve" and "argues that Adam and Eve were real people who could have been members of Homo heidelbergensis". Craig's conclusion is that "it's not scientifically problematic to take a truly "traditional" view of Adam and Eve".

But Luskin has criticisms of Craig's views on rival interpretations of Genesis, "As an old earther myself, I was concerned that Craig did not adequately engage with old earth interpretations" and "I believe that young earth creationists will feel that Craig badly misrepresents the scientific claims of their models".

Craig's handling of the science:

> Craig's book provides highly informed discussions of the paleoanthropological, archaeological, neurological, and genetic evidence regarding human origins, but his arguments often incorporate evolutionary assumptions which are doubtful. For example, Craig is too credulous towards evolutionary explanations of the origin of the human mind which amount to miracle mutations, as well as common evolutionary notions that pseudogenes are "junk DNA" that support common ancestry. He misses a key deficiency in evolutionary explanations: a conspicuous gap between the genus Homo and our supposed ape-like australopithecine ancestors in the hominid fossil record. Although Craig does not recognize it, key neurogenetic evidence raised in his book actually suggests a potent mathematical challenge to the Darwinian evolution of humans. I also believe he sells Homo erectus short as a potential candidate for Adam and Eve.
>
> […]Craig continues to rely upon BioLogos arguments that pseudogenes are "broken" and non-functional junk DNA that we share with apes, thereby demonstrating our common ancestry. Those arguments are increasingly contradicted by evidence presented in highly authoritative scientific papers which find that pseudogenes are commonly functional, and they ought not be assumed to be genetic "junk." In relying upon dubious evolutionary arguments

> that are increasingly refuted by the technical literature, Craig may be repeating the very mistake that led previous evangelicals to think Adam and Eve did not exist.

There are 6 parts to the review. Here are the links to parts 2 through 6:

- Is Genesis “Mytho-History”? As a Guide to Scripture, William Lane Craig’s Book Falls Short
- Missed Opportunity: Passing over Scientific Problems with Human Evolution
- Traditional or Not? Assessing William Lane Craig’s Model on Adam and Eve
- Lessons from the Evangelical Debate About Adam and Eve
- Lessons Not Learned from the Evangelical Debate over Adam and Eve

If you’re interested in the topics of Christianity and science, this is a great series to read. I love when someone trustworthy reads through a lot of stuff I don’t have time for (I have a day job as a software engineer!) and gives me an accurate summary of the strengths and weaknesses.

Wisconsin District Attorney John Chisolm and his teacher union wife Colleen

November 29, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I wanted to talk about the latest news about famous Democrat District Attorney John Chisholm , about his wife Colleen Chisolm. John Chisolm is linked to the most recent act of domestic terrorism / mass murder that occurred in Wisconsin. The suspect in the case has a long criminal record, and made violent statements against white people on social media.

Here is the connection, reported in the New York Post:

> The district attorney facing criticism after the alleged Waukesha Christmas parade crash killer was freed on bond two days before the carnage previously admitted his progressive reforms "guaranteed" killers could be put back on the street.
>
> Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm, who was elected to the position in 2007, has spent his career supporting cash-bail system reform because he argues it criminalizes poverty.
>
> In an interview with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel the year he was elected, Chisholm said: "Is there going to be an individual I divert, or I put into treatment program, who's going to go out and kill somebody?"
>
> "You bet. Guaranteed. It's guaranteed to happen. It does not invalidate the overall approach."
>
> Chisholm has long pushed to divert nonviolent offenders away from the prison system with alternate programs, and has spoken previously about reducing the number of incarcerations in Milwaukee County.

You can read all about the full criminal record of Darrell Brooks here at The Post Millennial:

> Brooks is a career criminal with multiple priors and was released from jail two days prior to the incident after posting a $1,000 bail for three misdemeanors and two felonies. He has a history of resisting arrest, obstruction, battery, statutory sexual seduction, strangulation and suffocation, property destruction, illegal firearm possession, bail jumping, domestic violence, drug related charges and is a registered sex offender.

Defendant owes the court: $0.00

Count no.		Statute	Description
1		946.41(1)	Resisting or Obstructing an Officer
2		946.49(1)(b)	Bail Jumping-Felony
3		941.30(2)	2nd-Degree Recklessly Endangering Safety
	Modifier:	973.055(1)	Domestic Abuse Assessments
4		947.01(1)	Disorderly Conduct
	Modifier:	973.055(1)	Domestic Abuse Assessments
5		940.19(1)	Battery
	Modifier:	973.055(1)	Domestic Abuse Assessments

This is the kinds of person that Democrat voters support.

Brooks is also a supporter of Black Lives Matter (BLM), as reported by the New York Post.

So, why was Brooks released on $1000 bail for the earlier crime? I think the answer is "compassion". Democrats are very compassionate about punishing criminals like Brooks. They are opposed to using police and prisons to punish sex offenders and domestic abusers like Darrell Brooks.

Using police as a weapon against conservatives

But do you know who they are not compassionate about? Conservatives. Take former Wisconsin governor Scott Walker, and his Act 10 bill, which made it possible for workers to opt out of paying unions dues. Unions make massive political donations to Democrats. They favor all sorts of liberal policies, like abortion, transgenderism, illegal immigration, opposition to school choice, etc. John Chisolm had no problem at all using law enforcement to go after conservatives who supported Act 10. He sent armed police to conduct pre-dawn raids on people like Cindy Archer, who were advocating for the law.

National Review reported on the Chisholm police raids:

> In two separate reports, National Review described these raids in detail. (The court cited our reports in its opinion.) On October 3, 2013, multiple Wisconsin conservatives were awakened by a persistent pounding on the door, their houses were illuminated by floodlights, and police — sometimes with guns drawn — poured into their homes. Once inside, the investigators turned the private residences of these innocent conservative citizens "upside down," seeking an extraordinarily broad range of documents and information. These raids were supplemented by subpoenas that secured for investigators massive amounts of electronic information.
>
> […]The raid victims have suffered severe, long-term consequences as a result of these raids. Almost to a person, they say they no longer feel secure in their own homes. They report watching what they say, terrified that overt political involvement could lead their homes to be invaded again. One victim said, "I tried to create a home where the kids always feel safe. Now they know they're not. They know men with guns can come in their house, and there's nothing we can do." Another victim — whose son was home alone when police arrived, guns drawn — is haunted by this chilling thought: "He could have been in the shower. They could have broken the door down. He could have been shot. Over politics."

By the way, this Legal News Online article about his wife, Colleen Chisolm, sheds light on his motivation for using law enforcement as a weapon against conservatives.

> Now a longtime [John] Chisholm subordinate reveals for the first time in this article that the district attorney may have had personal motivations for his investigation. Chisholm told him and others that Chisholm's wife, Colleen, a teacher's union shop steward at a school in St. Francis, which is near Milwaukee, had been repeatedly moved to tears by Walker's anti-union policies in 2011, according to the former staff prosecutor in Chisholm's office. Chisholm said in the presence of the former prosecutor that his wife "frequently cried when discussing the topic of the union disbanding and the effect it would have on the people involved … She took it personally."
>
> […]Chisholm added… that "he felt that it was his personal duty to stop Walker from treating people like this."

She cried, then he sent armed police to their houses. Law enforcement isn't to protect taxpayers. Apparently, it's to enforce secular leftist views on taxpayers.

Lock them in Hell, throw away the key

People ask me sometimes how I, as a Christian apologist, explain the doctrine of eternal fiery punishment in Hell. Well, I have two answers for that. First, an answer that relies on legal principles and philosophy of religion. Second, an answer where I point at secular left fascists like Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, John Chisholm and Colleen Chisholm. Where else

would you put psychopaths who reject basic morality?

Wisconsin DA district attorney John Chisholm and BLM Black Lives Matter Darrell Brooks

In Finland, Christians face criminal charges for quoting the Bible

November 30, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do you know how atheist Democrats like Bernie Sanders praise "Scandinavian countries"? Well, it turns out that those countries are not very good at protecting basic liberties, like free speech and freedom of religion. One of them in particular – Finland – has declared war on Christians, and is dragging them into court.

The Federalist reports:

> In more than two decades as a pastor, [Juhana] Pohjola has ministered to congregations as small as 30. He has spent his life building a network of faithful churches across Finland, many of which started with a few people gathered for prayer, Bible study, hymn-singing—and communion, if they can get a pastor. In an in-person interview with The Federalist, Pohjola urged fellow Christian leaders to be willing to seek out "one lost sheep" instead of crowds and acclaim.
>
> This is the man who appears to be the first in the post-Soviet Union West to be brought up on criminal charges for preaching the Christian message as it has been established for thousands of years. Also charged in the case that goes to trial on January 24 is Pohjola's fellow Lutheran and a Finnish member of Parliament, Paivi Rasanen.
>
> Rasanen's alleged crime… include tweeting a picture of a Bible verse. Potential penalties if they are convicted include fines and up to two years in prison.
>
> Rasanen and Pohjola are being charged with "hate speech" for respectively writing and publishing a 24-page 2004 booklet that explains basic Christian theology about sex and marriage, which reserves sex exclusively for within marriage, which can only consist of one man and one woman, for life. The Finnish prosecutor claims centuries-old Christian teachings about sex "incite hatred" and violate legal preferences for government-privileged identity groups.

What's interesting is that the booklet was written 7 years before Finland decided that speech critical of LGBT was "hate speech". You would think that it would be exempt, but it's not. If the same thing happened here, that means that any public defense of Christian teachings on sexual morality would become "criminal" after the bill, e.g. – the "Equality Act", were signed into law.

The article notes that laws that criminalize "hate speech", i.e. – Biblical teachings on sexuality, already exist in European countries, and even in some Commonwealth countries like Australia and Canada.

Humans rights lawyer Paul Coleman of the ADF is quoted in the article:

> "Although all European countries have these hate speech laws, and these hate

> speech laws are increasingly being used against citizens for things that they say, this is the first time we've really seen Christians face criminal prosecution for explaining their biblical views," Coleman said. "…It's unprecedented. We've not seen attacks on free speech on this level in Europe, and that's why they are extremely important cases, not just for the people of Finland and Paivi Rasanen and the bishop themselves, but for all of Europe. If this is upheld in one jurisdiction, we will no doubt see it in other jurisdictions as well."
>
> Such "hate speech" laws exist in every European country and Western countries such as Canada and Australia, and descend from Soviet influence. Coleman called them "sleeper laws," saying that in other countries "they could be used any time just like they are in Finland. People need to mobilize against these laws and overturn them."

These laws are typically used to frighten all the Christians from promoting their views. If they torture one Christian and make an example of them, then the others learn to fall in line. Many "Christians" even join with their oppressors, hoping to avoid punishment.

What I really get concerned about is when conservative Christians show no interest in reading about these things. They say things like "well, maybe the church will get stronger with persecution?" and "well, the Bible says that things like this will happen in the last days?" But that's not what happened in Canada when these laws were passed. Christians in Canada went underground on these issues, so much that the "Conservative" Party of Canada has completely given up on social issues. (Although you should still vote for them as the best of several bad alternatives) I think Christians who say these things just don't want to be bothered with having to read about these issues, and then be convincing to others. That's why I read books by people like Michael Brown and Ryan T. Anderson, to learn how to argue these controversial issues. It seems to me that some people are using pious-sounding words as a way to get out from having to prepare to fight, and then fighting. We need to do better. And that's not to even mention the large-scale capitulation to the secular left being done by leaders of formerly conservative denominations like the SBC.

Schools are anxious to avoid parental oversight because they are harming children

December 1, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do you wonder why school boards are so anxious to call in the FBI to investigate concerned parents for "domestic terrorism"? In this post, I'll talk about two news stories and one study. These items show how schools are harmful to children. And I think that this is the reason that schools are so anxious to keep parents at arm's length. They aren't working for parents anymore.

The first story you may already have heard about. It comes from the same Virginia county where school board members tried to get the FBI to investigate parents who were concerned about the teaching of critical race theory (i.e. – racism) in schools.

Fox News reports:

> Fairfax County Public Schools reinstated two books that parents have condemned as obscene and pedophilic, claiming that two committees of school administrators, librarians, parents, and students determined that the books did not contain pedophilia and did not violate regulations by including obscene material. Parents condemned the move in comments to Fox News.
>
> "Lawn Boy" by Jonathan Evison includes long sections of a boy reminiscing about explicit experiences he had at 10 years old and "Gender Queer: A Memoir," by Maia Kobabe includes photos of sexual acts between a boy and a man.
>
> Fairfax County Public Schools announced that it had restored the books to libraries after two committees reviewed them.

It's important to understand that the teachers, librarians, administrators and school board members do not side with children against pedophiles. Liberal women have always been more vulnerable to the desire to be people pleasers. They form their moral views by adapting to the people around them. Wealthy pedophiles like the former mayor of Seattle are crying and sobbing for access to children. And liberal women have swallowed moral relativism whole. They lack any system of objective morality that would allow them to judge pedophiles as morally wrong. If they are crying, these liberal women reason, then we have to give them what they want.

What if parents object?

I noticed that the previous Fox News article said this about a concerned parent: "VA mom Stacy Langton was told by acting Principal Maureen Keck that she is banned from Fairfax High School's library." Those sorts of fascist tactics against parents are not unusual. Notice that the principal *is a progressive woman.* Not a man. It's the women who are leading the charge to sexualize children, as their pedophile masters demand.

School boards do not allow concerned parents to read from these books at meetings.

They cut their microphones or eject them from the meetings.

Fox News reports:

> A speaker at a Florida school board meeting was removed for using vulgar language after reading aloud from a highly sexualized book available at the high school's public library.
>
> Alicia Farrant, a member of the Orange County chapter of the parent group Moms For Liberty, recorded a video from an Orange County Florida School Board meeting earlier this week where Board Chair Teresa Jacobs instructs police officers to remove a man who was reading passages from the book "Gender Queer: A Memoir.", according to Orange Observer.
>
> "I'm going to read a passage of a book that's floating around in your schools that has been banned from many other schools," Jacob Engels, the man who was removed, said. "As a member of the LGBT community, the fact that this is floating around for children as young as ninth grade is concerning."
>
> Engels then began reading a passage of the book that described sexual acts using strap-on devices before he was interrupted by Jacobs.
>
> "Sir," she said as members of the audience urged him to continue. "Mr. Engels, you're out of order. … Remove him from the chambers."

Again, notice that the school board member who had the man removed is a progressive woman. They are in the lead of the project to sexualize children for their pedophile masters. They are not working for parents. They are manufacturing prey for predators, because the predators are crying crocodile tears for prey.

This is what you get when you let feminism run wild, so that progressive women are no longer concerned about the moral leadership of men. Men are charged with the protection of animals and children. Normally, we challenge women who want to offer up animals and children to predators in the name of compassion and non-judgmentalism. But it doesn't work on radical feminists – they don't listen to men's moral leadership. They're more concerned about being liked, and eradicating all moral judgments.

But it's not just pedophilia. The current p4nd3mic has given progressive women in the education system a wonderful opportunity to signal their virtue – by m4sking children who face a relatively lower threat from the Chinese virus. But does this virtue signaling harm children?

The UK Daily Mail reports on a new study:

> **Face masks and other social distancing measures may in fact impede on children's development, a new study executed by Brown University has found**

> **The probe analyzed the cognitive development of the youngsters through infancy, childhood and adolescence**

> **In the study, researchers first analyzed 1,070 assessments administered on 605 kids prior to March 2020, when COVID lockdowns and masking began**

> **A further 154 assessments from 118 kids administered between March 2020 and June 2021, during the height of the pandemic, were then carried out**

> **Thirty-nine children born in 2018 and 2019 were analyzed over the course of the pandemic, into 2021.**

> **The report found that there was a 23 per cent drop in scores measuring kids' intelligence quotients since the start of the pandemic**

> **The study also found similar dips in the same span in regards to developing children's ability to communicate, both verbally and though subtle facial cues**

I think it's important for parents to learn from the actions of the teachers. It is so easy to look at the feminine face of one of these teachers, and think "she is so pretty, how could a woman do anything wrong? They are the guardians of morality!" That's the dominant view today in our churches, and even among many conservatives. They want to be "chivalrous". And chivalry is good. Except when this desire to not judge women leads to children being harmed. We need men in the churches to do a better job of holding women accounting to the Bible, and to the moral law. We can't be swayed by their pleasing appearances. Or our desire for sex, which is the cause of many Christian men's cowardice.

Are Mormon doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

December 3, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually

> infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian

> culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

Paul Helm debates William Lane Craig on Calvinism and Molinism on Unbelievable

December 4, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to this excellent discussion between Dr. William Lane Craig and Oxford University Calvinist philosopher Dr. Paul Helm. I think this is a useful discussion in general because atheists often bring up problems with Calvinism as objections to Christianity in general, such as:

- If God exists, then he controls everything and I don't have free will
- If God knows the future, then I don't have free will
- If God controls everything, then I am not responsible for my sinning
- If God HAS to choose me to be saved, then I am not responsible for my damnation if God doesn't choose me

Details:

> If God ordains the future, can humans have free will? Are people predestined for salvation? And what does the Bible say on the matter? William Lane Craig is a Christian philosopher and leading proponent of Molinism, a view of divine sovereignty that seeks to reconcile God's fore-ordination with human free will. Paul Helm is a leading Calvin Scholar. He defends the view that God predestines the future, limiting human freedom.
>
> MP3 of this show: http://cdnapi.kaltura.com/p/618072/sp/61807200/playManifest/entryId/1_jn0bdo52/flavorId/0_002f1k0d/protocol/http/format/url/a.mp3?clientTag=feed:1_jlj47tkv
>
> For William Lane Craig: http://www.reasonablefaith.org
>
> For Paul Helm: http://paulhelmsdeep.blogspot.co.uk/

I was surprised because my Calvinist friend Dina thought that Dr. Helm won this debate, but I thought that Dr. Craig won. So without further ado, here is the snark-free summary of the discussion. I also sent the summary to Dina to make sure that it was reasonably fair and accurate. She said it was biased, but she was predestined to say that. Anyway, there's a commentary on the debate over at Michael's Theology blog.

Summary:

JB: Has Lewis had any impact on your apologetics?

Craig: Not as a scholar, but more as a model of a scholar who leaves a legacy through his published work

JB: How did you become interested in Calvinism?

Helm: Starting from childhood, and lately writing more on Calvinism from a philosophical

point of view

JB: How do you view God’s sovereignty?

Helm: Strong view of divine sovereignty, God is sovereign over all events, but that doesn’t mean that they are determined by him

JB: What is Calvin’s legacy?

Helm: He amplified an existing concept of predestination, and wrote on many other topics

JB: What is Molinism?

Craig: Molina affirms divine sovereignty as Paul Helm does, but he also affirms libertarian free will

Craig: Every event that occurs happens by God’s will or by God’s permission

JB: What about open theism?

Craig: Paul and I both oppose open theism

JB: How does Molinism reconcile human free will and divine sovereignty

Craig: God has knowledge of what would happen under any set of circumstances

Craig: God has knowledge of everything that COULD happen, and he has knowledge of everything that WILL happen

Craig: God knows what each person freely choose to do in any set of circumstances and he can place people in times and places where he is able to achieve his ends without violating creaturely freedom and creaturely responsibility

JB: How does this apply to the issue of salvation?

Craig: The circumstances in which God puts a person includes God leading people to him and he foreknows who will respond to his leading

Craig: God has ordered the world in such a way that he foreknows the exact people who will free respond to his leading if he puts them in certain circumstances

JB: Does God want to save the maximum of people?

Craig: My own view is that God does order the world in such a way that the maximum number of people will respond to God’s drawing them to himself

JB: Is the Molinist view gaining ground?

Craig: Yes, Calvinists and open theists are both moving towards it, and Molinism is the dominant view among philosophical theologians

JB: Why has Molinism not convinced you?

Helm: It’s an unnecessary theory, God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge covers what middle knowledge covers

Helm: Calvinism has a stronger view of sin, such that God has to act unilaterally and irrestibly to save them

JB: Are creatures free on your view?

Helm: My view of free will is weaker than Craig’s view of free will

Craig: For the Calvinist, grace is irresistible, but for the Molinist, grace is effective when it is met with a response from the creature

Craig: The Bible affirms the strong view of free will, when it says that in certain circumstances people can freely choose to do other than they do

Helm: But if a person is in circumstances X and they are free, then why don't they choose something that isn't what God can foresee

Craig: In identical circumstances, a person has the freedom to choose, and God doesn't determine what they choose, he just foreknows what they choose

Helm: How can God foreknow what people will freely do if people have this strong view of freedom that allows them to do anything? God would not know what people can freely do if they really are free

Craig: God has knowledge of what his creatures would freely do in any set of circumstances, he has knowledge of subjunctive statements

Craig: The Scripture is filled with statements that show that God has this knowledge of what people would do in other circumstances (e.g. – 2 Cor 2:8)

Helm: I am not denying that the Bible is full of subjunctive statements, but if humans have real libertarian free will, then God cannot know what they will do

Craig: I think God does preordain everything, Molinism has a strong sense of divine sovereignty BUT the foreordaining is done with the knowledge of what humans would do in any circumstances, so that what God ordains achieves his ends, but without violating creaturely free will

Craig: I take at face value the passages of the Bible where it says that God wants all persons to be saved

Craig: When the Bible says that God wants ALL persons to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), the Bible means that God wants ALL persons to be saved

Craig: So either universalism is true OR there is something that stops all from being saved outside of God

Craig: the something that prevents all from being saved is creaturely free will

Helm: Most people don't have the opportunity to hear the gospel, so God doesn't want all to be saved

Helm: People can still be responsible for what God "fore-ordains"

JB: Can a person really be responsible for wickedness if they didn't freely choose it?

Helm: Even though God is the only one who can act unilaterally to make save people, the people who act wickedly are still responsible

Craig: Molinism provides an answer to the problem of why not all people have heard the gospel, because by using middle knowledge he is able to know who would respond to the gospel if they heard it and he places those people in the times and places where they will hear it

Craig: That solution means that NO ONE is lost because they have not heard the gospel

Craig: There is Biblical support for (Acts 17:27) God choosing the times and places where people will live SO THAT they will be led by him and be able to respond to his leading

JB: Is God the author of sin, on Calvinism?

Craig: If Calvinists define providence to mean causal determinism, then he is the cause of every effect including human actions, and he is the one who causes people to sin

Craig: This view (determinism) impugns the character of God

Helm: I don't think that sovereignty requires determinism

Helm: God has mysterious resources – which I cannot specify – that reconcile his sovereignty with human responsibility for wickedness

JB: But if God is the cause of people doing wrong things, then how can they be responsible for it?

Helm: Well, humans do cause their own actions

Craig: Helm is right to say that God has resources to reconcile God's sovereignty with free will and human responsibility, and that resource is not an unknown mystery, it's middle knowledge

Craig: I can affirm everything in the Westminster Confession except for the one clause where they expressly repudiate middle knowledge as the mechanism for reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

Helm: Well, Calvinists have a strong view of sin so that humans cannot respond to God's leading

Craig: Yes, and that's why humans need prevenient grace in order to respond to him

Craig: God has to take the initiative and draw people to himself or they cannot be saved, but that grace is resistible, and that's what the Bible teaches (Acts 7:51), so humans are still responsible if they resist God

Helm: My view of grace is that it is monergistic and irrestible, it is a unilateral action on the part of God, like pulling someone out of an icy pond which they can't get out of

JB: If humans freely choose to respond to God's drawing and leading, does that diminish grace?

Helm: Many are called but few are chosen

Craig: Molinism does not require synergism – which is the idea that humans are partly responsible for their salvation

Craig: In Eph 2:8, Scripture is clear that faith opposite to works, and responding to God's drawing is not meritorious

JB: So receiving a gift is not meritorious?

Craig: It's the passive acceptance of what someone else has done for you

Helm: But doesn't this mean that you can lose your salvation, because you can accept and resist the gift of salvation?

Craig: That's a separate question that Christians can differ on, but if the Holy Spirit indwells a person and seals them, then that would argue for the view that salvation cannot be revoked

JB: Doesn't Romans 8 teach Calvinism pretty clearly?

Helm: This is called the "golden chain", and it does support Calvinism

Craig: Actually, this text is no problem for Molinists because the first link in the chain is foreknowledge, which, if it incorporates middle knowledge, is no problem for Molinists

Craig: What God is electing in Romans 8 is a specific group of people that he knows in advance of creating the universe will freely respond to his drawing them to him

Craig: In Acts 4:27-28, it is talking about God's foreknowledge, which involves and incorporates knowledge of what any individual would freely choose if placed in those circumstances

JB: If God actualizes a set plan with set circumstances for everyone, isn't that very similar to Calvinism?

Craig: Yes! It's a strong statement of divine sovereignty

Helm: Foreknowledge doesn't mean that God knows what people would do, it's just refering to God "knowing his own mind" about what he wants to do

JB: How do you respond to the fairness of God unilaterally and specifically choosing some people for salvation and choosing other people for damnation (because he refuses to act unilaterally for them)?

Helm: God ordinarily bypasses other people in the Bible, like when he chooses the Jews as his chosen people

Craig: The problem with that is that the Bible clearly teaches that God has a genuine will that all will be saved and he makes a genuine offer of salvation to all people

Craig: Also, just being a Jew and a member of the chosen people doesn't mean you were saved, because some Jews rebelled against God

Craig: And there were also people outside of the Jewish people who were righteous and in a relationship with God, like Job

Helm: "the fabric of our faith" depends on God's choice and his not-choice, it is fundamental to the Bible and to God's character, and choosing them "effectively" (irrestibly and unilaterally)

Helm: The idea of God considering "possible worlds", some of which are feasible and not feasible, with conflicts between the wills of free creatures in different circumstances, and then actualizing one world that achieve these ends is very messy

Craig: Some worlds may not feasible for God to create, for example a world in which everyone is saved – it is logically possible, but may not be feasible

Craig: God will not exercise any divine coercion to force people to go to Heaven against their own will

Helm: If God chooses a world because it is feasible, then he doesn't love me directly, he

is choosing a world, not individuals

Craig: Well, when God actualizes a world, he specifically knows which individuals will be saved within that world, but without disrespecting free will

Craig: The world isn't primary, the individuals are primary

Helm: I think that middle knowledge can he included in God's natural knowledge and free knowledge

Craig: The knowledge of what people would do in different circumstances is based on the freedom of the individuals

JB: Make your conclusions!

Craig: Molinism is a Biblical model for reconciling divine sovereignty with human freedom

Helm: It is intellectually mystifying to introduce this strong view of human freedom and it is not Biblical

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

December 5, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

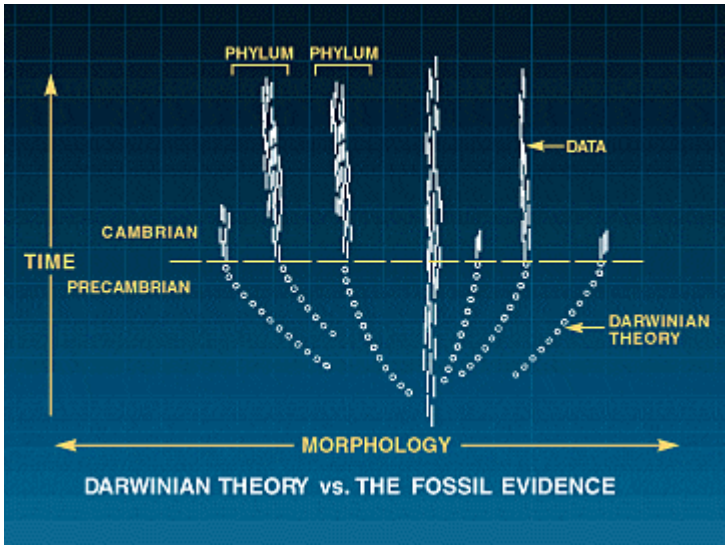

Cambrian Explosion

Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien "The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang" in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a

> unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and
> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

I learned a lot by watching great lectures from Access Research Network. Their YouTube channel is here. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

If you'd like to see Dr. Meyer defend his views in a debate with someone who reviewed his book about the Cambrian explosion, you can find that in this previous post.

Further study

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

William Lane Craig and James White debate Calvinism vs Molinism

December 6, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a recent episode of the Unbelievable show, we finally got to see Calvinist pastor / theologian James White discuss middle knowledge (a.k.a. Molinism) with philosopher / theologian William Lane Craig. In this post, you'll find a link to the MP3 file, the YouTube video, my comments on the debate, and a couple of posts about the debate from Tim Stratton of Free Thinking Ministries.

Here is a link to the details from Unbelievable:

> Calvinism and Molinism are two very different ways of understanding God's sovereignty. But which one best addresses the problem of evil?
>
> James White argues that Calvinism – God foreordaining all human behaviour both good and evil – is the more Biblical and coherent view. William (Bill) Lane Craig argues that Molinism – a view which reconciles human freedom and divine sovereignty – is Biblically consistent without making God the author of evil.

The direct link to the MP3 file.

And the video:

Summary:

JB: Why is there evil?

JW: Natural and moral evil are the results of God's divine decree to create the world.

WLC: God has knowledge of what individual humans would do in different circumstances prior to his divine decree to create the world. God's decree takes into account the free decisions of people in different situations. With regard to natural evil, Calvinists and Molinists do not differ much – they are permitted to achieve a greater good. But for moral evil, there is a difference. Moral evil is the result of free decisions by individual humans. They are not God's will. God permits people to perform evil actions, because those free actions will lead to him achieving his ultimate purposes. God does not override human free will. He achieves his ultimate purposes through the actions of his free creatures. On the Calvinist view, God moves the will of creatures to do evil. God is the cause of their evil acts.

JB: God sees all of the possible worlds and instantiates a world where he is able to achieve his ultimate purposes while respecting the free decisions of his creatures.

WLC: God does not see what humans WILL do, and decree based on that. He sees what they WOULD do in different circumstances, and articulates a world where the free decisions they make in the circumstances he decrees lead to his ultimate purposes being fulfilled.

JB: And this view achieves God's sovereignty (God gets the result he wants) with human

freedom (God is not responsible for moral evil)

JB: James, isn't it better for God to get what he wants while respecting free will, rather than micromanaging every thought and action of the people?

JW: There's micromanaging on both sides. On Molinism, God micromanages the circumstances. On Calvinism, God micromanages everything. But how could God have that knowledge of what people would do, prior to actually creating those people? The Bible teaches Calvinism, and so we should go with that. Calvinists are concerned when Craig says that God does not determine the truth value of these subjunctive conditionals (i.e. – what free individuals would do in different circumstances) The individuals determine what they will do in different circumstances. And Calvinists would prefer that God determine (i.e. – exhaustive determinism) what individuals do in different circumstances. WLC, would you agree that the knowledge of these subjunctive conditionals are the essence of what middle knowledge is? (WK note: micromanaging circumstances doesn't violate free will, micromanaging everything does violate free will)

WLC: No, but it is an essential aspect of it. According to Molinism, God does not determine what free individuals would do in different situations in which they find themselves. The Calvinist view is that in any situation, God actually moves the will of the creature, so God is the author of moral evil. On the Molinist view, creatures are responsible for moral evil, not God.

JW: So you're saying that these subjunctive conditionals are not under God's control. How can they be under the control of the creatures, since prior to God's creative decree, the creatures do not exist yet? Where do these truth values come from.

WLC: This objection to Molinism is called the "grounding objection". The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom are true without having to be grounded by the created individuals. This objection presupposes a view of truth called "truth-maker" theory. This theory says that in addition to propositions that are true, there are things that make propositions true. There are many counterexamples to this view. For example, if you deny the existence of something that does not exist, then there is no truth maker that makes that claim true. (WK note: E.g. – a unicorn does not exist) Another example is "If WLC were rich, WLC would buy a Mercedes" but there is no truth-maker situation that makes that true, except maybe if he were rich. (WK note: I think that the created individual WLC would be the truth-maker in that case?)

JW: The decisions that I make are caused by God's decree of what gifts I have or don't have. He has freedom to decree those gifts, and then that has an effect of what I am free to do. E.g. – I am not 6'11" so I am not free to be a center in the NBA. So on the Molinist view, what is the basis for these subjunctive counterfactuals that limit what God can do?

WLC: The grounding objection presupposes the truth-maker theory, and a particular strain of that theory called truth-maker maximalism, and counterfactuals of creaturely of creaturely freedom would be prime candidates to be exceptions to the truth-maker theory.

WLC: Regarding the point about how people don't exist in a vacuum but have a whole

history, background, characteristics, etc. to shape their decisions. That's right. But the counterfactuals of creaturely freedom factor all that in. The key point that divides us is that God doesn't determine what creatures decide, he decides the circumstances. And so the creature is responsible for moral evil, not God. And so God doesn't cause people to commit moral evils, then punish them for it.

WLC: We should guide our views based on what is in the Bible. But even Calvinist theologians affirm things about God that are not taught explicitly in the Bible, such as God's spacelessness and timelessness. And Molinism makes the best sense of divine sovereignty and human freedom. On the Calvinist view, God determines how anyone would act in any situation God might place him in, so God is responsible for the moral evil committed by his creatures.

JW: (repeats) If God is limited in what he can do by counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, then we have to know where these counterfactuals come from. (WK note: the counterfactuals of creaturely freedom come from… creaturely freedom.)

JW: Genesis 50:20 says that God used the moral evil committed by some creatures to achieve the good purposes he intended. (WK note: that's exactly what the Molinist view is, God permits moral evil by his creatures, as long as it achieves his ultimate good purposes)

JW: Molinism is unknown in the church for 1500 years. (WK note: Molinism is in Acts 17:24-27, and also, Calvin and Luther were unknown in the church for 1500 years)

JB: Is Genesis 50:20 a good example of Calvinism?

WLC: (very excited) NO!!!!!! It's a great example of Molinism!!!! The text says that God didn't move the bad actors to perform sinful actions – that would make God the author of evil. But God knew that if they were in this situation, they would behave in these evil ways, but ultimately it would lead to good results that God wanted. There is a chain of people partially articulating the middle knowledge view prior to Molina.

JW: You shouldn't believe Molinism, because it comes from Jesuits. (WK Note: this is the genetic fallacy)

JW: The Bible has examples where God "hardens hearts", e.g. Pharaoh.

WLC: It's not that the Bible authors had Molinism in mind. It's that this theory is consistent with what the Bible teaches.

JW: Ephesians 1 teaches that God unilaterally determines who the elect are. Calvinism emerges from the text. But in Genesis 50:20, Molinism doesn't emerge from it.

WLC: We're both trying to make sense of the data of Scripture. Scripture doesn't teach the universal divine determinism of every human act, especially evil acts. The Bible says thate God is not evil, and cannot even be tempted with evil, but on the Calvinist view, God is causing the evil actions of his creatures, and then he punishes them for it. If it's evil to cause someone to do evil, it makes God himself evil.

JW: In Isaiah 10, God uses the Assyrians to punish Israel, then he punishes the Assyrians for the haughty attitude of their heart.

WLC: The Molinist view of Ephesians 1 is that part of God's good pleasure is to respect human freedom, and not to unilaterally divinely determine them to sin. Regarding Isaiah 10, you're asking how God can punish the Assyrians for something he causes them to do? No, God knows that the Assyrians are going to do this moral evil and he uses that for his purposes, and he is free to punish their immoral act, because they did it of their own free will.

JW: But if you need Molinism to understand these texts, then what did the authors intend for people to think before Molinism.

WLC: People understand from Genesis 50:20 that people do evil things, but God gets a good outcome out of it.

JW: As a Calvinist, I do not believe that God respects human freedom.

JW: I don't think that individuals have control of the circumstances in which they are born or where they live that limits God's sovereignty. (WK note: he doesn't understand Molinism or Acts 17:24-27. Individuals control their own decisions. But God controls the circumstances – i.e. – everything else). There is no essence of James White that determines where I am born, my physical characteristics, my siblings, etc. God decrees everything about who I am.

WLC: "That's because you're a determinist, James, and I'm not"

JW: "Yes. Yes. OK."

WLC: There are number of possible worlds where James White could exist. Different country, different education, different language, different family. God decides the circumstances for James White. James White makes the decisions. God doesn't cause James White's moral evil. James White does. The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom must exist prior to the divine decree in order for humans to be responsible for their evil actions.

JW: You're using philosophy. But your view should come from the Bible. (WK note: look at Acts 17:24-27)

WLC: Universal divine determinism isn't taught in the Bible.

JW: Yes, in Ephesians 1.

WLC: The Molinist affirms Ephesians 1.

JW: It doesn't mention respecting free will there, it's teaching universal divine determinism.

WLC: The Bible teaches that God does have knowledge of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, e.g. 2 Cor 2:8. So the question is whether God has this knowledge logically prior the decree (Molinism requires this), or is it logically after. If it is logically after, then it makes God the cause of human moral evil.

JW: The verses raised by Craig can be subsumed under God's natural knowledge and free knowledge.

JW: Some Molinists believe that the only people who are lost in this world are people who

cannot freely respond to God's saving initiative in any circumstances (WK note: this is called trans-world damnation (TD), and I hold this view). Does anyone in the Bible know about this idea? That changes God's expression from universal divine determinism to accepting human free will and human responsibility for sin (which Calvinism denies).

WLC: Yes, there are two different views. The one view takes human free will, and human responsibility for sin, seriously. The other view makes God the cause of human sin, and therefore makes God evil for being the author of evil.

JW: On Molinism, God knew that if he actualized this world, then he knew the evil that would result, but he didn't do it for some purpose, like revealing his own character?

WLC: No, he didn't bring the evil into the world. He actualized a set of circumstances, and a set of free creatures. And he knew that in those circumstances, he knew that the creatures would choose to do evil. His absolute will is for all his creatures to always do the right thing. But he knows that often they will do evil. He permits that to happen, but in the end he achieves the good purposes. E.g. – achieving the redemption of mankind through Jesus through the evil decisions of the rulers at that time.

WLC: I love the Westminster Confession. But without middle knowledge, that Confession is incoherent. Middle knowledge explains how things work, so that the Westminster Confession's affirmations are logically coherent.

JW: What you're saying is that God respects human free will and human responsibility.

WLC: Molinism is extremely fruitful theologically. I have applied to the problem of exclusivity of salvation, to the perseverance of the saints, to the inspiration of Scripture… but the focus of the discussion today is on moral evil. Who is the cause of human evil?

JW: Only universal divine determinism and the denial of human free will and human responsibility are consistent with Scripture.

WLC: Scripture alone is my authority, not church tradition. But Reformed theology is permeated with concepts that are not described in Scripture, but are consistent with Scripture, e.g. – timelessness, spacelessness, simplicity.

JW: I disagree, ALL the concepts in Calvinism emerge directly from the text. Isaiah 40-48 clearly teaches divine necessity, that God exists necessarily, in every possible world. (WK note: Calvinist thought emerges 1500 years after the Bible was written)

JW: Middle knowledge is a Catholic dogma, which is why even the Catholics rejected it.

WLC: (holds up 2 volumes of a 4 volume, 2144 page set of books on Reformed theology) Anyone who thinks that Reformed Dogmatics are simply read out of Scripture "doesn't know the history of Reformed theology". These volumes are permeated with theological constructs, philosophical models, philosophical principles. The necessity of God's existence, timelessness, spacelessness, etc. are all affirmed by Reformed theologians, and were inherited from medieval scholastics (Catholics).

JW: The central claim of middle knowledge, that counterfactuals of creaturely freedom are known by God, are not in the Bible. (WK note: Craig gave an example of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom in the Bible. There are lots of them.)

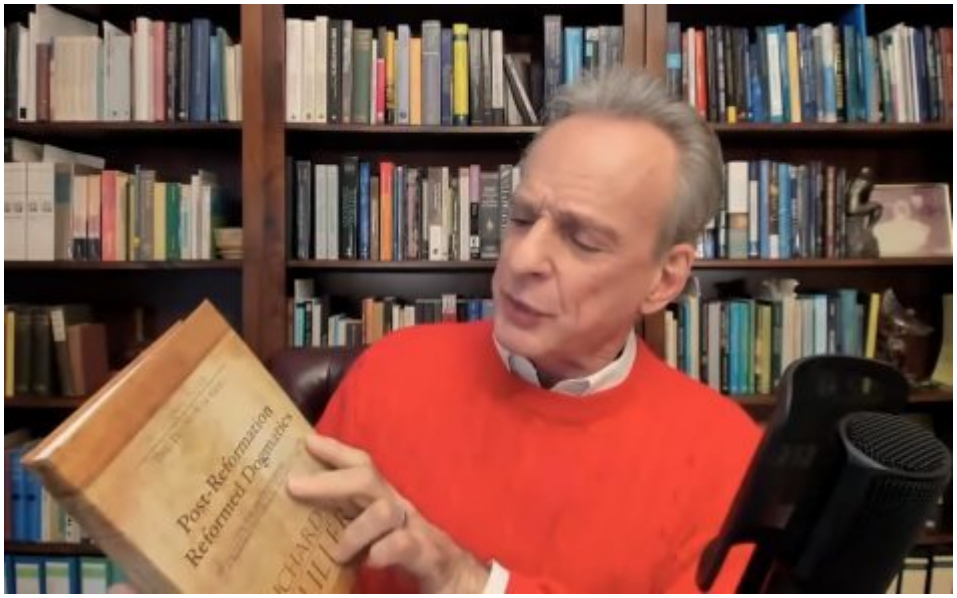

Four volume 2144-page book set on Reformed dogmatics

My thoughts:

I think that it was a good debate. Well worth watching. I don't promise that my summary is 100% accurate. Please leave room for a little snark, and watch the debate yourself. I like to take the spin off of people's words, when I feel that they are trying to weasel out of the conclusions of their own views. It's 2 AM on Monday morning now, and I don't want to proof-read. Please point out errors in the comments.

If I could boil down the mistake that James White makes to one sentence, it would be to say that he comes to the text with a *philosophical* presupposition (determinism), and this causes him to misinterpret the plain meaning of the text as a whole. And this misinterpretation isn't about peripheral teachings of the Bible. His embrace of God as the cause of moral evil means that he denies the goodness of God – a basic Christian doctrine. (This is compounded by his embrace of double-predestination, although that was not the topic of the debate). Christians shouldn't let a philosophy – determinism – override the plain meaning of Scripture. Determinism is *man's philosophy* – it's a Greek philosophy that existed centuries before Christ.

White also was clearly unfamiliar with the philosophy of religion of his own Reformed tradition, and especially with the history of the development of Reformed theology. Craig was able to correct him, by showing him the books on Reformed Dogmatics and explain the historical antecedents of Reformed thought.

James White is not a "hyper-Calvinist". He is a normal Calvinist. Calvinism teaches universal divine determinism. Calvinism teaches that where each individual goes after the judgment is decided unilaterally by God. Calvinism teaches that human moral evil is caused by God. Calvinism teaches that God punishes people for this moral evil. Calvinism teaches *intentional* double-predestination.

I wrote about the problems with Calvinism, citing Calvinist D.A. Carson and William Lane Craig, in a previous post. Determinism denies free will, and therefore undermines all meaning in life. That's not consistent with the Bible's clear teaching that God issues commands to his creatures, because he expects (free will) obedience. That is how we

develop our relationship with God after becoming Christians (sanctification), and those relationships have ultimate significance.

Note: I link to James White's work on this blog. He does a great job of fighting cultural and political enemies. I really appreciate his conservative perspective on issues like abortion, and his sensitivity to the totalitarian impulses of the secular left. His work on KJV-only and and debating Catholics is excellent. I don't always agree with Craig. I recently posted disagreement with Craig on his latest work on the historical Adam and evolution. I have other minor disagreements with him as well, in substance and method. The only theology books in my house are by R. C. Sproul, Wayne Grudem, D.A. Carson, Millard Erickson, John MacArthur, etc. – all Calvinists.

If you missed Craig's debate with Paul Helm, which is mentioned in the debate, I blogged about that previously, as well.

Drew's thoughts

My friend Drew, another Christian apologist, had some thoughts. He has a couple of Masters degrees. He's an expert in Christian history, theology, philosophy of religion. His current interest is history of Christian thought.

He says:

> I would have mentioned that the Western Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, and Second Temple Jewish traditions all reject determinism. Thomas Aquinas states:
>
> "It does not seem meritorious or demeritorious for persons to do necessarily what they could not avoid doing. It is also to be counted among the oddest philosophical opinions, since it is not only contrary to faith but also subverts all the principles of moral philosophy. For if nothing is within our power, and we are necessarily moved to will things, deliberation, exhortation, precept, punishment, and praise and blame, of which moral philosophy consists, are destroyed."
>
> In response to Ephesians 1:11 John Chrysostom states "Having first used the expression, to them that are called according to a purpose, and at the same time wishing to declare their privilege compared with the rest of mankind, he speaks also of inheritance by lot, yet so as not to divest them of free will."
>
> Chrysostom was not a compatibilist.

This is important to show that White's view of universal divine determinism is relatively new in the history of Christian thought.

Free Thinking Ministries

I noticed that Free Thinking Ministries has a couple of responses up already, and a debate review video.

The first one is a response to James Whites post-debate comments, in which he says he struck a "fatal blow" to Molinism that none of the Molinists he has engaged with ever thought of. Tim Stratton responds to James White, firstly by noting that he has avoided

engagement with academic Molinists, either in debate or in academic journals, and secondly, against the substance of his argument. I really recommend reading this post to learn more about why White struggles in these debates.

The second one is a response to the famous “grounding objection” to Molinism, which White raised, although he didn’t seem to know the name of the objection.

There is also another video review of the debate by Leighton Flowers and Eric Hernandez.

I just want to say here that back in the early 2000s, when I was just starting my career as a software engineer, I attended a philosophy conference at Wheaton College on middle knowledge. Paul Helm was the keynote speaker. And everyone – *even me* – knew what the grounding objection was, and also what trans-world damnation (TD) was. This is basic Christian apologetics, suitable for rank-and-file Christians.

New study: homeschool produces healthier, happier and more virtuous kids

December 7, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, I've noticed that lately, many Christian, conservatives express Christian and conservative convictions when they are in a Christian, conservative audience. But when they are in the company of secularists, feminists and socialists, they keep quiet. In this post, I'll explain why I think that using evidence from studies helps us to be bolder, then we'll see a study about homeschooling.

Well, I can only explain why I am so inclined to fight. Just because I have an alias online, that doesn't mean that I don't fight for what I believe in under my real name in person. I take every opportunity to push for authentic Christian (not woke) truth claims and values in person. It's especially important for Christians and conservatives *of color* to do this, in the current culture.

But how can you fight with people? I recently faced off against a bully in my company at a large company meeting. I had heard that this guy was a yeller, and had previously yelled at other employees. And that he was extremely progressive, and in a liberal echo chamber where he never heard any intellectual conservatives or Christians. I attacked him on two issues: socialized medicine and gun control. By using studies to explain how I changed my mind, I was able to escape his caricature of Christian conservatives as stupid fundamentalists who don't think critically.

With that said, here is a report from the Wall Street Journal about a new study that you might be able to use to be bold with people who oppose homeschooling. (Full text of the article here)

It says:

> Elizabeth Bartholet, a Harvard Law School professor, sparked debate in May 2020 by calling for a presumptive ban on home schooling. Home-schooled children, Ms. Bartholet asserted, are less likely than their school-attending peers to receive a "meaningful education" and more likely to be subject to physical abuse or indoctrination by "extreme religious ideologues."
>
> […]Ms. Bartholet criticized home schooling for both diminishing children's educational attainment and undermining their physical and mental health. One of us (Ms. Chen) recently examined how school type affected adolescents on a range of long-term outcomes into young adulthood, including educational attainment, mental health and social integration. Looking at data on more than 12,000 children of nurses (mostly white and mostly well-off) surveyed from 1999 to 2010, we estimated the effects of school type independently from other factors such as socioeconomic status, race and region.
>
> To the extent that college graduation is a fair proxy for having received a

> “meaningful education,” Ms. Bartholet was right to point to a disadvantage for home schooling: The home-schoolers in our sample were 23% less likely to attend college than public-school students. This may reflect lower attainment in learning or less interest in attending college, but it may also be a result of admissions policies at some U.S. universities that disadvantage home-schooled students.
>
> Parents want their kids to be well-educated and professionally successful, but they also want them to be healthy, happy and virtuous. By this broader measure of success, home schooling has advantages. Among the students we examined, home-schoolers were 33% more likely to volunteer, 31% more forgiving and 51% more likely to attend religious services in young adulthood than those who attended public school. (“Levels of forgiveness” were measured on a self-reported four-point scale, which other research has shown predicts some subsequent health and well-being outcomes.) The difference in religious participation has public-health implications, since those who attend services regularly have substantially lower risks of alcohol and drug abuse, depression and suicide. They also have a lower risk of premature death for any reason than those who never attend.
>
> The picture of the home-schooled student that emerges from the data doesn’t resemble the socially awkward and ignorant stereotype to which Ms. Bartholet and others appeal. Rather, home-schooled children generally develop into well-adjusted, responsible and socially engaged young adults.

The libertarians at the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE) reached out to the researchers, and they got more information about that concern about lower rates of university attendance:

> I reached out to Case and Chen for additional comments on their study’s findings, including how they think the homeschooling data and outcomes might have changed since 2010, when their data set ended.
>
> “We are also glad to see that some colleges, including some top-tier colleges, have become more flexible in their admission policies for homeschoolers over the past years,” Chen responded.
>
> Indeed, more colleges and universities have implemented clearer guidelines and policies for homeschooled students in recent years, and many are now eager to attract homeschooled applicants. In 2015, Business Insider noted that homeschooling is the “new path to Harvard,” and in 2018 the university profiled several of its homeschooled students.
>
> The researchers also suspect that the well-being gap between homeschoolers and public school students has widened over the past decade, with homeschoolers faring even better.
>
> “For instance, social media apps have come to smartphones over the past few

> years, leading to their widespread adoption by teenagers and even younger children," Chen told me this week. "Some prior studies suggested that such increasing smartphone use may have contributed to the recent huge spikes in adolescent depression, anxiety, and school loneliness. Cyberbullying, sexting and 'phubbing' have also become more common in children's daily lives, especially in school settings. We might expect that these issues may be less common among homeschoolers than their public school peers."

I think if you are going to do homeschooling, it will have to be very practical. I think the world is too dangerous right now. We need to focus on learning practical skills that pay. So, don't focus on things classics and Latin early on. I love the classics, but only the classics that teach something practical should be relied on. Instead, math and computer science should be the most important subjects, along with economics. Or choose the hard sciences like biology, chemistry, physics, etc. Get your STEM degrees, get your private sector work experience, then homeschool your kids with a focus on STEM.

I do think that after you get a job, then you should go back and work on the classics, literature and philosophy. But the financial situation we are in – with so much government debt, so many people in debt, and so many people on welfare – suggests that we should make sure that we are independent of the government and debt-free as quickly as possible.

(Image source: NHERI.org)

Robert Gagnon debates gay activist Jayne Ozanne on Bible vs homosexuality

December 8, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Gay activist vandalizes pro-marriage sign

I am tempted to say that this is the best podcast I have ever heard on the Unbelievable show. Do anything you have to do in order to listen to this podcast.

Details:

> Prof Robert Gagnon has become a well-known voice advocating the traditional biblical view on sexuality. In a highly charged show he debates the scriptural issues on sexuality with Jayne Ozanne, the director of Accepting Evangelicals who came out as gay earlier this year.

The MP3 file is here.

If you can only listen for 15 minutes, then start at 49 minutes in and listen from there.

The following summary is rated MUP for made-up paraphrase. Reader discretion is advised.

Summary:

Intro:

- Speaker introductions
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree that the Bible doesn't support it
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree Jesus taught male-female marriage
- Ozanne: I went to the hospital because I was sick from trying to suppress my gay desires
- Ozanne: Doctors told me that I would die if I didn't act on my gay desires
- Ozanne: I decided to reinterpret the Bible to fit with my gay desires

- Ozanne: According to my new interpretation, Jesus actually supports my gay desires

Segment 1: Genesis

- Ozanne: In Genesis the Bible says that Adam needs a woman to complete him
- Ozanne: I reinterpret this to mean that Adam needed a “complementarian human being”
- Ozanne: Genesis doesn’t say whether Eve was complemented by Adam in that chapter
- Ozanne: It’s not critical that men are complemented by women, a man could complement a man
- Ozanne: Genesis 2 doesn’t talk about children, it’s all about adult needs from a relationship
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 has never been interpreted that way in all of history
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language specifically implies a human being who is opposite/different
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language translates to complement or counterpart
- Gagnon: Genesis as a whole teaches that the sexuality is for male and female natures
- Gagnon: The extraction of something from the man that is given to the woman is complementarian
- Ozanne: I think that people can be complementary outside of male-female Genesis language
- Ozanne: I don’t want to discuss specific words and texts and Greek meanings
- Gagnon: the text has always been read and interpreted to support male/female complementarity
- Gagnon: the male-female nature argument is made because the two natures are complementary
- Ozanne: the text was interpreted by patriarchal males who treated women like property, it’s biased
- Ozanne: what is important to me is how Christ interprets Genesis (?? how does she know that?)
- Ozanne: I am passionate about my interpretation of Scripture which supports my gay desires
- Gagnon: just because a person is passionate about their interpretation it doesn’t make it right
- Gagnon: I am not arguing for the male-female view based on passion, but on scholarship, evidence and history
- Ozanne: both sides are equally passionate about their interpretations (?? so both are equally warranted?)
- Ozanne: the real question is why God “allowed” two different interpretations of Scripture

Segment 2: Is homosexuality a sin?

- Gagnon: Jesus affirmed traditional sexual morality, which forbids homosexuality
- Gagnon: Jesus teaches that marriage is male-female, and limited to two people
- Gagnon: No one in history has interpreted the Bible to say that homosexuality was not immoral
- Ozanne: Jesus came to bring life, and that means he supports homosexuality
- Ozanne: I was dying, and embracing my gay desires allowed me to live, so Jesus approves of me
- Ozanne: God says "I am who I am" and that means he approves of me doing whatever I want
- Ozanne: There is an imperative to be who I am, and that means embracing my gay desires
- Gagnon: Jesus argued that the twoness of the sexual bond is based on the twoness of the sexes
- Gagnon: Jesus did not come to gratify people's innate desires, he called people to repent of sin
- Gagnon: Jesus did reach out to sinners but he never condoned the sins they committed
- Gagnon: Jesus' outreach to tax collectors collecting too much and sexual sinners is the same: STOP SINNING
- Ozanne: I don't think that Romans 1 is talking about homosexuality
- Ozanne: I think it's talking about sexual addiction, not loving, committed gay relationships
- Ozanne: Paul was condemning pederasty in Romans 1, not loving, long-term, consensual sexual relationships between gay adults
- Gagnon: nothing in the passage limits the condemnation to pederasty
- Gagnon: the passage was never interpreted to be limited to pederasty in history
- Gagnon: rabbis and church fathers knew about committed two-adult same-sex relationships, and said they were wrong
- Gagnon: the argument for marriage is based on the broad two-nature argument, with no exceptions
- Gagnon: the condemnation is not limited to exploitative / coercive / lustful / uncommitted relationships
- Gagnon: even pro-gay scholars agree the passage cannot be interpreted Ozanne's way (he names two)

Segment 3: The showdown (49:00)

- Ozanne: I don't care how many pages people have written on this
- Ozanne: God says that "the wisdom of the wise I will frustrate" so you can't use scholars, even pro-gay scholars, to argue against my passionate interpretation
- Ozanne: I am not interested in the text or history or scholarship or even pro-gay

scholars who agree with you
- Ozanne: what decides the issue for me is my mystical feelings about God's love which makes my sexual desires moral
- Ozanne: you are certain that this is wrong, but your view does not "give life" to people
- Ozanne: your scholarship and historical analysis is "a message of death" that causes teenagers to commit suicide (= you are evil and a meany, Robert)
- Ozanne: "I pray for you and your soul" (= opposing me will land you in Hell) and "I hope that listeners will listen with their hearts" (?? instead of their minds?)
- Ozanne: you can prove anything you want with research, even two mutually exclusive conclusions, so you shouldn't rely on scholarship and research since it could be used to prove my view as well
- Ozanne: instead of relying on research, you should rely on your heart and your feelings about God's love to decide what the Bible teaches about sexual morality
- Gagnon: you are distorting the gospel in order to make your case
- Gagnon: attacking my "certainty" is an ad hominem attack to cover your dismissmal of the scholarship and history
- Gagnon: you distort the gospel to make it seem like Christ just wants us to get what we want, when we want it, with who we want it with
- Gagnon: Christ calls us to take up our cross, to lose our lives and to deny ourselves
- Gagnon: you have a notion of what "fullness of life" is, but it's not reflective of the gospel
- Gagnon: Paul's life was much more troubling than yours, mine or anyone else around here
- Gagnon: Paul was beaten, whipped, stoned, poorly sheltered, poorly clothed, poorly fed, shipwrecked, and anxious for his churches
- Gagnon: on your view, he should have been miserable and angry with God all the time
- Gagnon: but instead Paul was constantly thankful and rejoicing to be able to suffer with Jesus and look forward to the resurrection
- Gagnon: I have suffered too, but the suffering we go through never provides us with a license to violate the commandments of God
- Ozanne: "the ultimate thing is what people feel God has called them to"
- Ozanne: My goal right now is to tell young people that homosexuality is fine so they don't commit suicide
- Ozanne: the view that homosexuality is wrong is "evil and misguided"
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm in the gay community are intrinsic to homosexual unions, not caused by external disapproval of homosexuality

Segment 4: Concluding statements

- Gagnon: gay male relationships on average have more sex partners and more STDs
- Gagnon: female relationships on average have shorter-length relationships and

more mental issues
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm are because there is no complementarity / balance in the relationships
- Gagnon: everyone has some disappointment or suffering in their lives that hurts them, and that they are tempted to break the rules to fix, but we should not break the rules in order to be happy
- Ozanne: both sides are passionate, so no one can be right, and evidence proves nothing
- Ozanne: only feelings about “what God is doing” can allow us to decide what counts as sin or not
- Ozanne: the main thing that is at stake here is to make people like us, not to decide what the Bible says about sin
- Ozanne: my message to people is to do whatever you want, and ignore mean people who don’t affirm you
- Ozanne: we should be more opposed to mean people who make non-Christians feel unloved than about doing what the Bible says

Have you ever read the Bible in order to find out what God thinks?

December 9, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two authors came to my attention while browsing tweets this week. The first is Rachel Hollis, who presents herself as a Christian but who isn't (see below). The second is by Sarah Bessey, whose book contains a chapter where the author urges God to help her to hate a certain group of people *solely* because of their skin color. What is causing people who claim to be Christian to buy these books?

I found this list of progressive Christians on Alisa Childers' blog. Childers is very reliable, having written a detail-filled book about attempts by progressives to distort the gospel.

She writes this about Jen Hatmaker, a progressive:

> Since its launch in 2017, Hatmaker's podcast has been a veritable "who's who" of progressive Christian leaders such as **Sarah Bessey**, Rachel Held Evans, Pete Enns, Nadia Bolz-Weber, Richard Rohr, Jeff Chu, Mike McHargue ("Science Mike"), Barbara Brown Taylor, Austin Channing Brown, Lisa Sharon Harper, **Rachel Hollis**, and Glennon Doyle.

I want to talk about Sarah Bessey and Rachel Hollis. Are these authors working from within a Christian worldview?

Hollis:

> Anne Kennedy was bemused to find Rachel Hollis' best-selling book, *Girl, Wash Your Face*, in the Christian living section of the bookstore next to the Bibles. Hollis describes herself as a Christian but her self-help advice is anything but Christian, Kennedy believes.
>
> "She does mention Christianity and her faith in Jesus but in terms of the book itself, there's really nothing that would distinguish it from any other kind of self-help thing that's on the market and there's lots of them. She quotes some Bible verses but she doesn't really rely on a Christian worldview at all to motivate behavior," Kennedy… said on a recent Christian Research Institute podcast.
>
> […]"I don't think she's a Christian at all," she commented.
>
> […]"Her worldview is in no way representative of classical Christianity. She's inclusive, affirming of LGBT, all religions are fine, doesn't have any even vague understanding of what redemption and the cross and faith in Jesus were to actually look like. She invokes the name of Jesus periodically, she quotes some verses but nothing that she says at all represents a Christian worldview. So it is interesting to me that she is marketed as a Christian."

And the Bessey devotion book has this:

> "Dear God,
>
> Please help me to hate wh1te people. Or at least to want to hate them. At least, I want to stop caring about them, individually and collectively. I want to stop caring about their misguided, racist souls, to stop believing that they can be better, that they can stop being racist."
>
> […]"Lord, if it be your will, harden my heart. Stop me from striving to see the best in people. Stop me from being hopeful that White people can do and be better.
>
> […]"Let me see them as hopelessly unrepentant, reprobate bigots who have blasphemed the Holy Spirit and who need to be handed over to the evil one."

Why are these books so popular? I think that the problem is that we're not reading our Bibles to get the author's intended meaning. Instead, we're selecting the parts of the Bible that affirm what makes us feel good and look good to others.

Consider this post from Alan Shlemon of Stand to Reason:

> You never open the email, skip the first three pages, and read just one line on the fourth page. No one, in fact, takes that approach with their mail. By skipping the context of the email and ignoring the flow of thought, you wouldn't know what that line meant on the fourth page. If it's wrong to read your *friend's* mail that way, then why do we read *God's* mail that way?
>
> We open the *letter* to the Philippians, skip the first three chapters, and read verse 13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Message received. Close the letter. We're done here!
>
> We even plaster that verse on a mug, publicizing our mistake. I call this "Coffee Cup Christianity," and it's killing our biblical literacy. We've become accustomed to seeing isolated Bible verses and presume we know their meaning. Too often, however, we merely insert our own meaning into a Bible verse, thereby overwriting what God was trying to tell us.
>
> […]Sadly, Coffee Cup Christianity violates one of the most basic and well-known principles of interpretation: context. It's a principle known not only among Bible readers. Many people in our culture understand it. Tragically, we apply it when reading *man's* word but neglect it when reading *God's* word. Coffee Cup Christianity leads to three dangerous problems.

Here are the problems:

- **Coffee Cup Christianity overwrites God's intended meaning with your own**
- **Coffee Cup Christianity leads to missing important lessons from God**
- **Coffee Cup Christianity models bad interpretive methods**

So, here's what I recommend. My Bible study partner and I are going through New Testament letters. Our goal is to find out what God wants us to be doing by reading the

advice given to early church Christians. We're trying to learn how to recognize life situations that God has an interest in, and make decisions that respect his values and goals. We want to put ourselves second in those situations. And we're holding each other accountable to the author's intent in those books of the Bible.

For each book, we always pick out a good commentary. For 1 Peter, we're using Joel B. Green's "1 Peter", which we got free from Logos Bible study. We read the full chapter, then the commentary, prepare our points in advance. Then meet to compare. We always pray first, and often afterwards. Here's what we did for 1 Peter 1.

So, that's our approach. If your Bible study just has people showing up without reading anything, without preparing anything, and then twisting the text to make them feel good or look good, then I think you need to get out of that Bible study. Do better.

What should Christians do in order to reduce fatherlessness and abortion?

December 10, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last week, I tweeted something that was very popular, although I got some disagreements with it. I tweeted that if we encouraged women to not have sex with men before the men married them, then there would be almost no fatherless children.

Here's the exact tweet:

Fatherlessness is caused by women's poor choices about men, sex, and marriage. If women married good men before having sex, there would be almost no fatherlessness. Strange that some "Christians" have sex before marriage, when that is prohibited in the Bible.

Now, the reason I focused on women in this tweet is because many women expect premarital sex to lead to a relationship, and eventually marriage. It is good for them to want a relationship and marriage. But the bad boys that many women tend to prefer aren't choosing premarital sex *in order to get to marriage or children*. They have no desire for anything beyond the premarital sex. It seems reasonable to me that if I help women to see their mistaken view, then it would prevent a lot of fatherlessness (not to mention abortion and divorce) later on. If women prefer men who *commit first* instead of those who *want commitment-free sex* then we will see less sex outside marriage, less fatherlessness, and less abortion.

I decided to expand on my tweet in this post.

We need to teach young women that premarital sex does not cause men to become faithful husbands

Even women who have recreational sex with a lot of different men have this expectation that it will lead to relationships and eventually a committment, in which the man makes all their dreams come true and does whatever they want to make them feel happy at all times. This isn't marriage, of course, but it is what they imagine that giving a hot bad boy premarital sex will lead to.

Here is what one 26-year-old writes: (language warning)

Age 19-22 Some boyfriends are somewhere in here. But it was where my body count really took off. If a guy liked me, which I now understand, was simple attraction, ***I thought sex would seal the deal, and they would get to know me more after, and fall in love with me.*** *Let's all pause to laugh together at my naivete.* ***I promise you every (almost) guy, I thought I could have a relationship with.*** *It never happened. At best they were regulars. Long-term I had 2 serious boyfriends.*

A lot of women choose hot bad boys because the hot bad boys give them feelings "in the moment", and impress their friends. They think that marriage is supposed to make them

happy all the time, and so they want the bad boy to commit. This is why so many young women give the bad boys sex, to make the happy feelings last. And many think that they are on a path to marriage with the hot bad boy if they can keep him around by giving him premarital sex, or cohabitation.

But is this what marriage is about – making the woman feel happy in the long-term? Of course not. Marriage is about self-sacrificial love, self-denial, self-control, faithfulness, and raising children. So, women should be taught to choose men who prepare for *actual* marriage (men who have chosen chastity, gap-less resume, frugality, mentoring, no drugs or alcohol, apologetics). These traits are directly related to the responsibilities of a husband and father in a marriage (fidelity, love, fatherhood, provider, pastoring, etc). Fathers and pastors should be aware of the research about what traits and skills lead to stable and successful marriages, and be able to support their claims with studies when teaching women. For example, they should know about the studies showing how women's number of premarital sex partners affects her contentedness in her marriage, the marriage quality, and the marriage stability.

That's the point I was trying to make in my tweet.

Marriage requires self-sacrificial moral behavior

Fathers and pastors need to teach young people how to check a mate for the ability to behave morally, which is a necessary pre-requisite for a marriage commitment. The bare minimum foundation for moral behavior is a theistic worldview. A Designer of the universe. Objective moral laws. An immaterial soul that allows free choices. Accountability when you die. And meaningfulness of moral choices because of that ongoing relationship with the Designer in the afterlife. Moral behavior depends on the existence of God, so the mate-chooser should know evidence for that too, and be able to evaluate the mate on his knowledge of that evidence. People shouldn't take the claim to be religious or spiritual at face value, they should want to see the reasons and evidence that support the claim. The rational grounding of moral behavior is important for marriage, and it needs to be checked, instead of just felt with intuitions. Young people should be taught to prefer mates who have demonstrated the ability to act morally in situations where it goes against their self-interest to be moral. After all, once the mate-chooser chooses a mate, every immoral thing he/she suffers from their chosen mate was a result of his/her choice of mate.

The goal is to prevent harm to children

Some Christian women disagree with my goal of stopping fatherlessness and abortion by telling women to make better choices. Instead, they want to support women who use premarital sex to try to land a hot bad boy. They say that if the woman's sex-first plan doesn't work out, that's not her fault, because all hot bad boys should feel obligated to marry after being given premarital sex. One woman wrote me 2500 words in response to my tweet to tell me (repeatedly, and in great detail) that the Bible is seen as an authority even by hot non-Christian bad boys. If this is the kind of advice that young women are

getting from older women, then it’s no wonder we have a 42% out-of-wedlock birth rate, and 1 million unborn children being killed every year.

But I don’t think that encouraging women to make feelings-based choices will work to reduce fatherlessness. When you’re dealing with hot bad boys, they don’t care about the Bible, and so you can’t try to convince them to do anything that the Bible says. The only solution is for good women to pass them by, and instead choose good men who want to make a commitment first. If women leave the hot bad boys alone, and concentrate on marriage-minded men, then we won’t have so much fatherlessness or abortion.

Study: non-STEM college programs make students less religious

December 11, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lets take a closer look at a puzzle

Why do students turn away from Christianity in college? It might have something to do with what they choose to study.

Rice University reports on a new study conducted by sociologist Elaine Howard Ecklund.

Excerpt:

> The public's view that science and religion can't work in collaboration is a misconception that stunts progress, according to a new survey of more than 10,000 Americans, scientists and evangelical Protestants. The study by Rice University also found that scientists and the general public are surprisingly similar in their religious practices.
>
> The study, "Religious Understandings of Science (RUS)," was conducted by sociologist Elaine Howard Ecklund and presented today in Chicago during the annual American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) conference. Ecklund is the Autrey Professor of Sociology and director of Rice's Religion and Public Life Program.
>
> "We found that nearly 50 percent of evangelicals believe that science and religion can work together and support one another," Ecklund said. "That's in contrast to the fact that only 38 percent of Americans feel that science and religion can work in collaboration."
>
> The study also found that 18 percent of scientists attended weekly religious services, compared with 20 percent of the general U.S. population; 15 percent

> consider themselves very religious (versus 19 percent of the general U.S. population); 13.5 percent read religious texts weekly (compared with 17 percent of the U.S. population); and 19 percent pray several times a day (versus 26 percent of the U.S. population).
>
> […]RUS is the largest study of American views on religion and science.

Meanwhile, Reasonable Faith has a podcast about the study, and what they discuss is how students who go into *non-STEM* university programs lose their interest in religion at a much higher rate than people who study STEM.

Here is the MP3 file.

And the relevant portion of the transcript:

> DR. CRAIG: Right. **If you look at their chart they give, where it shows the changes in religiosity by college major, it shows that in biology, engineering, and physical science and math they were mixed. The overall effect was neither negative nor positive. For some it was positive, some negative. But those majors did not seem to have a very significant effect upon the person's religious behavior. The majors that had a very positive impact on religiosity were education, vocational or clerical education, business, and what is classified as "other." All of those majors – whatever those are – have an overall positive impact upon students' religiosity.**
>
> KEVIN HARRIS: And attendance as well – attendance to church services.
>
> DR. CRAIG: Yes.
>
> KEVIN HARRIS: **The big fly in the ointment here is that "both the Humanities and the Social Sciences see dramatic declines in attendance and even more in religious beliefs." It lowers church attendance, synagogue attendance, and even more in religious beliefs.** What do we mean by the humanities and the social sciences?
>
> DR. CRAIG: Humanities would include your non-scientific areas; for example, literature (hence the title of the article), politics.[3] I don't know if they would include economics in this or not. Religious studies. In the social sciences are things like anthropology and sociology would be included there.
>
> KEVIN HARRIS: The study of art?
>
> DR. CRAIG: Yes, I suppose the arts would be in the humanities – that would be music and graphic arts. It is a big, big catch-all category.

And why does Dr. Craig think this is happening?

> DR. CRAIG: […]It could well be that it is because it is in the humanities that the radicals of the 1960s were able to find a place in the university and become ensconced as professors with the relativism that they were championing. In areas like anthropology and sociology you find tremendous relativism where you simply

> study these cultures and societies without making any sort of judgment as to truth with regard to what they believe. This leads to the belief that it is all relative; there isn't anything that is objectively true. John Searle is a very prominent philosopher at the University of California, Berkeley. Searle says that he believes that because of the commitment to the objectivity of truth and logic and the scientific method the hard sciences were barred to these radicals of the 1960s – getting into them and influencing them. But where they found an opening was in things like the Women's Studies Department, Religious Studies, Anthropology, Sociology. These soft sciences. He says the professors in these disciplines are the children of the 1960s that have carried into it their relativistic views of truth. I noticed here the conclusion by the researchers of the University of Michigan (apparently who did this study), "Our results suggest that it is Postmodernism, not Science, that is the bête noir [the black beast or the hated thing] of religiosity." The enemy of religiosity is postmodernism, not science.
>
> KEVIN HARRIS: Postmodernism, as you've pointed out, was mainly a thing confined to literature and the soft sciences.
>
> DR. CRAIG: Right. Women's Studies, Religious Studies is rampant with Postmodernist perspectives. That has a real ring of truth to it, and could be the reason behind these statistics.

And this is why I recommend that people not drop math in high school, and pick a STEM field to study in college (or a trade in trade school). You are wasting your money when you let people in non-STEM areas indoctrinate you in fact-free irrationality. By the way, I love business administration as a major, for those who do not want to do the lab work. It attracts a lot of conservatives and entrepreneurs.

If you're not worried about your faith, then you should at least be worried about your wallet:

Rank	Major	Early Career Salary	Mid-Career Salary
1	Petroleum Engineering	$102,200	$175,300
2	Actuarial Mathematics	$60,800	$119,600
3	Nuclear Engineering	$57,000	$118,900
4	Chemical Engineering	$69,600	$116,700
5	Electronics & Communications Engineering	$64,100	$113,200
6	Electrical & Computer Engineering (ECE)	$66,500	$113,000
7	Computer Science (CS) & Engineering	$66,700	$112,600
8	Computer Engineering (CE)	$67,200	$108,600
9	Aerospace Engineering	$64,700	$107,900
9	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$66,500	$107,900
11	Materials Science & Engineering	$64,000	$105,100
11	Physics	$57,200	$105,100
13	Computer Science (CS)	$61,600	$103,600
14	Statistics	$54,900	$103,100
15	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$62,800	$101,600
16	Computer Science (CS) & Mathematics	$63,200	$101,400
17	Software Engineering	$61,700	$99,800

STEM degrees are good for your finances as well

It’s much easier to have an influence as a Christian if you get your financial house in order. Having a degree that leads to a good paying job is certainly a good way to fund your life plan. Money also helps you to not worry too much about what the secular left can do to you. It’s good for offense and defense, in short.

Should men prefer women who have earned STEM degrees?

December 12, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A few people have asked me about my policy of preferring candidates for wife and mother who have earned STEM degree(s). In this post, I'll explain 5 goals for my marriage. Then I'll explain 6 reasons why a STEM degree helps me to execute that plan. Then I'll answer 3 objections to the STEM degree requirement. Then I'll explain the relevance of STEM for a woman's marriage roles.

What is STEM?

So, to start, STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. A STEM degree is a degree in a STEM field. This includes things like petroleum engineering, bioinformatics, and computer science. But it also includes things like economics, accounting and business. Basically, anything with math that involves solving problems in the real world. Anything that encourages logical reasoning and using evidence to sustain an argument.

My goals for marriage

So, here are my goals for marriage:

- influence the church with apologetics
- influence the university campus (students and professors) with apologetics
- be involved in politics, advocate for conservative policy
- open the house to students and neighbors to teach apologetics and demonstrate a loving marriage
- raise 3-4 financially independent and influential children

Everything I want in a wife is related to this plan. I evaluate women according to these goals, because I want my marriage to make a difference for Christ and His Kingdom. I'm flexible on plans and requirements, so long as the proposed changes result in *a greater impact* for Christ and His Kingdom.

MAJORS WITH HIGH MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR WOMEN*

First Field of Degree 5% code	Percent Female	Median Female Earnings
Pharmacy Pharmaceutical Sciences	42	100,000
Information Sciences	26	75,000
Chemical Engineering	23	72,000
Computer Science	22	70,000
Electrical Engineering	7	70,000
Mechanical Engineering	7	70,000
Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering	17	67,000
Computer Engineering	14	67,000
Business Economics	30	64,000
Civil Engineering	13	62,000

** Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.*

The best majors for women to avoid student loan debt

How a STEM degree relates to marriage

The plan is for my wife to earn a STEM degree, marry me, and work full-time until the first child is born. Then, she stops working and becomes a stay at home mom. She could return to work after the each child reaches 5 years old. My preference is that she not return to work, but instead homeschool the children, or at least monitor their education in private evangelical Christian schools as a stay-at-home mother.

So, how does a woman's having a STEM degree help me to achieve my marriage plan goals?

Here are 6 ways:

1. STEM equips her to homeschool influential and effective children. A wife who has completed high school and college courses in math, science, engineering and/or technology will know how to either homeschool our kids, or monitor their homework and grades so they achieve good academic results. Think of how Asian families raise high-performing children. I want that.

2. STEM teaches her to produce results in the real world, e.g. – working code that solves a problem, lab results, bridges that support a load, etc. In the lab, decisions cannot be made based on feelings or peer approval. The lab doesn't respect horoscopes, devotions, romance novels, essentual oils, romantic comedies, "The Secret" or "The Law of Attraction".

3. STEM equips her to argue apologetics from her experience of using reason, evidence, reality-based testing. All Christians need to know how to defend their core beliefs (God exists, etc.) to non-Christians. That means doing what works. And what works is logical argumentation supported by evidence. The best kind of evidence is scientific evidence.

Then historical evidence. Confidence comes from competence at practical, real-world disciplines.

4. STEM degrees are a path to high paying jobs. Women who are debt-free are better to marry, because they don't delay the process of buying a house and having children. Any kind of debt has to be paid off first. I'm not looking for a big spender, I'm looking for someone who can earn and save. The more children we can afford to have, the bigger our influence will be. Also, women who choose STEM demonstrate that they can delay gratification, and not be a slave to FOMO, YOLO, "living in the moment", etc.

5. STEM equips women to find work easily, so she doesn't feel pressured to accept a bad marriage proposal. She can move out and start saving money. She can buy apologetics books, lectures and debates. She can buy books on economics, marriage and parenting. She can prepare herself to attract the right man, and she can evaluate men to see if they are prepared for marriage.

6. Both the STEM departments AND the STEM workplaces less likely to be woke than non-STEM departments and workplaces. She will be able to hold to her convictions more easily in an environment where results matter more than having the "right" (left) opinions.

Objections to preferring a wife with a STEM degree

1. A woman with a STEM degree will not want to quit her job and become a stay at home mom during the critical period from birth to age 2, or even better, age 5.

2. A woman who takes years off for child-bearing and early childhood years will not be able to resume her job at the same level of pay.

3. Even in STEM departments, a woman will be exposed to an environment with secular left indoctrination, drunkenness and promiscuity. She is unlikely to come out of college as a virgin.

Responses to objections to the STEM requirement

Points 1) and 2) apply to every kind of degree, not just STEM. Any woman who does 4 years of college in any field will be "wasting" it if she stops working. First, in my plan, her education is to equip her to educate her children, because I trust her more than any teacher or stranger to do that important job. Teachers are not paid to produce results – they are unionized, and not paid based on performance. Second, even women with STEM degrees would generally prefer to work part-time or not at all. They want to stay with their young children. Third, we don't need the money. That's why I suffered through my BS and MS to earn 6 figures and have a 7 figure net worth. We don't need her to work.

For point 3), I'm not saying that EVERY woman who graduates with a STEM degree is perfect for marriage. I'm saying that a STEM degree helps to have a marriage that is influential for Christ and His Kingdom. I'm open to other majors, *so long as they address the concerns and goals I specified.* I'm even open to a different plan. But the overriding concern is that the marriage count for something for the Boss. Even with a STEM degree, the man still has to ask the woman questions about politics and parenting. He still has to evaluate her sobriety, chastity and frugality. A STEM degree is just a starting point.

The difference STEM makes for apologetics

I think it's obvious that having a wife who has taken courses and even worked a few years before the first child arrives helps her to be able to educate her kids and / or monitor their performance. But it also allows her use apologetics more persuasively on the university campus, in the church, and if we open up the home to college students and neighbors for movies / meals / discussions.

For example, take the fine-tuning argument. A knowledge of physics and chemistry helps you to explain why changing the fundamental forces results in a universe that does not support complex, embodied life. A knowledge of probability theory (e.g. – product rule) helps you to argue for intelligent design in the origin of life. And what about logic? Even in computer science, we had to study symbolic logic, the rules of inference, conditional proofs, Bayes' Theorem, etc.

My wife's job is to make the big picture of education clear to the kids, so they know what they can do in the real-world with what they are learning. So many Christians underperformed in school because they didn't know the relevance of what they were learning for the task of defending their Christian worldviews. My wife's job is to know how the material being taught relates to real-world goals, like defending Christianity. This is how parents produce children who grow up to be William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer, Luke Barnes or Michael Licona. Boldness comes from knowledge.

Conclusion

First, I hope this post convinces women to start planning for their marriages early. You need to know things that matter for two reasons: 1) to attract a quality man, 2) to evaluate men and filter out the good ones. That means you need to know things like apologetics, politics, etc. Having money helps to buy learning material.

Second, I hope this post convinces men to stop choosing women based on youth and beauty. Your choice of wife will have a huge effect on your influence. Choose a capable, competent partner who complements your strengths with different strengths. Men spend their days in the workplace, where we cannot say much about religion and politics. If you marry an intelligent conservative Christian woman, she can be your voice to the university, the church, and the public square. Not to mention raising effective children. Therefore, choose wisely.

Acknowledgements

My wise friend Laura helped me with this post. Please check out her 10-part series for women on how to choose a husband.

Why do men prefer to marry younger women instead of older women?

December 13, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

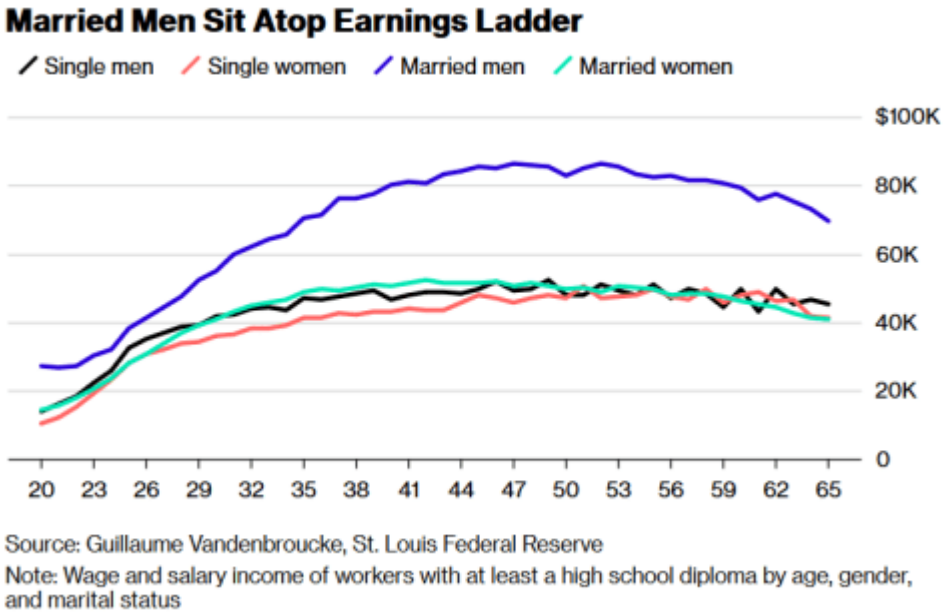

Married men seem to enjoy a boost in earnings between age 22-45

I saw a bunch of pro-marriage friends were tweeting about this article from the St. Louis Federal Reserve which talks about how well married men do financially compared to single men, and using it as a reason to argue that men should get married. The article from the St. Louis Reserve doesn't have much commentary, but this article from the far-left Washington Post by Brad Wilcox has a lot to say.

Excerpt:

> Marriage has a transformative effect on adult behavior, emotional health, and financial well-being—particularly for men.
>
> […]Men who get married work harder and more strategically, and earn more money than their single peers from similar backgrounds. Marriage also transforms men's social worlds; they spend less time with friends and more time with family; they also go to bars less and to church more.
>
> […]Our research, featured in a recent report, "For Richer, For Poorer: How Family Structures Economic Success in America," indicates that men who are married work about 400 hours more per year than their single peers with equivalent backgrounds. They also work more strategically: one Harvard study found that married men were much less likely than their single peers to quit their current job unless they had lined up another job.
>
> This translates into a substantial marriage premium for men. On average, young married men, aged 28-30, make $15,900 more than their single peers, and married men aged 44-46 make $18,800 more than their single peers.

> That's even after controlling for differences in education, race, ethnicity, regional unemployment, and scores on a test of general knowledge. What's more: the marriage premium operates for black, Hispanic, and less-educated men in much the same way as it does for men in general.
>
> For instance, men with a high-school degree or less make at least $17,000 more than their single peers.

So, what about these differences between married men and single men? Are men able to earn more if they have a wife to support them and care for their needs? Or is it just that women prefer men who are already able to take care of themselves?

Well, in most cases, it's the former:

> 2. Married men are motivated to maximize their income. For many men, this responsibility ethic translates into a different orientation toward work, more hours, and more strategic work choices. Sociologist Elizabeth Gorman finds that married men are more likely to value higher-paying jobs than their single peers.
>
> This is partly why studies find that men increase their work hours after marrying and reduce their hours after divorcing. It's also why married men are less likely to quit a current job without finding a new job. Indeed, they are also less likely to be fired than their single peers.
>
> 3. Married men benefit from the advice and encouragement of their wives. Although there is less research on this, we suspect that men also work harder and more strategically because they are encouraged to do so by their wives, who have an obvious interest in their success. One study appears to buttress this point, finding that men with better-educated wives earn more, even after controlling for their own education.
>
> 4. Employers like married men with children. There is evidence that employers prefer and promote men who are married with children, especially compared to their childless male peers and to mothers. Married men are often seen as more responsible and dedicated workers and are rewarded with more opportunities by employers. While illegal bias and long-held stereotypes appear to play a role in this historic preference, it nonetheless helps explain why married family men get paid more.

Now what's the purpose of me writing this? Well, I'm actually NOT writing this to pressure men to get married. Why not? Because although marriage was a pretty good deal 100 years ago, it's not as good of a deal under the current laws and policies, e.g. – no-fault divorce, the threats of false accusations, the Sexual Revolution, etc. The institutions of society are not doing as good of a job to prepare women for wife and mother roles as they used to do. Men have a much harder time finding someone who is prepared for marriage today. Men have to choose women more carefully.

But I am writing this to women who are being told by the culture to delay marriage, and especially to delay marriage to use your youth and beauty to "have fun" with boys who

won’t commit to marriage. If a woman loves a *marriage-focused* man and really wants to take care of him and support him, then early marriage is one of the very best ways to really help him during the years (22-45) when it really makes a difference. Marrying a man who wants marriage when you’re still young means that he will have many, many measurable benefits. It’s hard to attract a man who is *already* rich, because so many women are competing for him. It’s much easier to marry a young man and build him up into a rich man, by supporting him.

Men know that a woman’s support has value. It’s important for women to marry when the marriage has the potential to do the most good for a man in areas like health, career, finances and children. Men typically don’t want to marry women who are older, because those women tend to have more sexual experience. They get used to giving a man sex in order to get him to do what she wants. They get used to breaking up instead of making things work. Once a woman gets used to doing this, it becomes much harder to trust a good man to lead, and to give a man respect as a leader.

So, what I would like to see is women understand that part of loving a man is committing to him early, and staying with him to build him up. Instead of trying to wasting your youth on hot bad boys, why not build up a good man into the fit, wealthy husband you want? It seems to me that building up a man into what you want is a lot easier than wasting your youth on bad boys, then trying to attract a good man when your attractive years are already behind you.

How can you tell if Islam's holy book – the Quran – is historically reliable?

December 14, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On the weekend, I watched a new debate featuring famous Muslim scholar Shabir Ally, and a pastor named Anthony Rogers. This was a moderated debate, with timed speeches. I have been watching debates with Shabir Ally since 1997, when he took on William Lane Craig. So, I was anxious to see what he considered to be the strongest arguments for Islam after all his years of debating.

I found a great review of the arguments posted at Laura's blog "An Affair with Reason". In her post she linked to the video of the debate, summarized and evaluated the arguments, and then explained what she would have done, if she had been arguing Anthony's position. I recommend reading the whole post, but let's see Shabir's arguments first. Or rather – argument – since, he only presented one.

Laura writes about Dr. Shabir Ally's Argument:

> To demonstrate his point, Dr. Ally gave a few examples of numerical patterns that exist in the Koran. For example, the number 7 and the number 19 both hold an important place in the Koran because Surah 15:87 mentions the number 7 and Surah 74:30 mentions the number 19. Additionally, the name Jesus appears in the Koran the same number of times as the name Moses appears. If we take note of where each name occurs, we find that the 7th appearance of the name Jesus coincides with the 19th appearance of the name Moses, and the 19th appearance of the name Jesus coincides with the 7th appearance of the name Moses. And on he went, sharing a few more mathematical coincidences.

Now, you might have seen this argument before. A couple of Christian neophytes wrote an entire book about it called "The Bible Code" a while back. It was panned by every single professional apologist as being an ineffective argument. They asserted that the same mathematical coincidences could be found in any book.

Here is one Christian response to the "Bible Code" from Dr. Robert C. Newman, in which he finds similar coincidences in "The Gettysburg Address" by Abraham Lincoln. Scientists call this "cherry-picking" data, and it's frowned upon.

What's so special about 7 and 19?

Now, you might be wondering what Dr. Ally's source is for the significance of 7 and 19.

I asked Laura about where he got 19, and she replied to me so:

> According to Muslim scholar Bilal Phillips, in order to arrive at a word count of parallels, one must follow "a haphazard system of word identification that totally contradicts both classical and modern rules of Arabic grammar."

> It's true that the number of chapters in the Quran is divisible by nineteen and

> that the first chapter to be revealed to Muhammad—chapter ninety-six—does have nineteen verses, but such examples of repetition of a number can be found in nearly any book. Further, when one reads Quran 74:30 in context—that's the verse that supposedly identifies the number nineteen as significant—we see that this verse refers to the number of angels who are wardens over the hellfire; it is not a reference to miraculous patterns throughout the Quran.

> As Bilal Phillips stated, "It may be concluded that the theory of nineteen as a miraculous numerical code for the Quran has no basis in the Quran itself and the few instances where nineteen and its multiples do occur are merely coincidences which have been blown out of proportion."

Not even Muslim scholars found this convincing.

Laura's case against Islam

In her post, she also laid out a 4-point case against Islam that she would have used if she were debating Dr. Ally. You can check it out if you are interested in seeing how a professional would handle a formal debate situation.

I think it's really important for Christians to get into the habit of watching debates on a wide variety of subjects, to help them decide what to believe, how to support their beliefs, and how to respond to objections. I've been watching debates since around 1995, and used to have them imported to the country where I am originally from. I have an old VHS tape of the Craig-Ally debate from 1997. Back then, we only had William Lane Craig and Michael Horner debates, and there was a good debate book featuring J. P. Moreland and Kai Nielsen, too. I've probably listened to over a hundred debates, on topics like the existence of God, Darwinism, intelligent design, origin of life, morality, philosophy of mind, problem of evil, New Testament reliability, rational grounding of objective morality, secular humanism, the resurrection of Jesus, Islam, Hinduism, etc.

Debates are great because not only do you learn how to debate, but your character also changes to become more tolerant of different points of view. You can think critically, and stay calm during disagreements. It's good for Christians to be open-minded and tolerant, because the other side is growing increasingly incapable of it. Soon, everyone in the middle will be turning to us for discussions, because we'll be the only ones left who are thoughtful and safe to talk to.

Mom explains how she pulled her daughter out of transgender spiral

December 15, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a really interesting article in The Daily Signal, in which a mother explains how her daughter got into transgenderism, and how the mother got her out. When I read the story, I thought about how most mothers would not have the strength to do it. Most mothers tend to want their children to lead them, so the mothers will be liked This mom thought her daughter was wrong and fought her.

In the first part of the article, she talks about how her daughter got into the transgender lifestyle. The mom was very permissive and supportive, letting her daughter get exposed to all sorts of predators. Only later, when going through her daughter's phone, did she realize her mistake:

> I managed to get all of her passwords to all of her social media accounts. What I saw was jaw-dropping.
>
> Almost everyone that she was conversing with was a stranger, except for the SacAnime friend, who sent her a self-made masturbation video. The discussions on the Discord platform online involved fetishistic sexual conversations. Kids were sending each other erotica, including involving incest and pedophilia.
>
> Older girls were instructing younger girls how to sell nude photos of themselves to men for money.
>
> Girls bragged about their different mental illnesses. They talked about which drugs do what. They talked about how they are really boys, not girls. They discussed "top surgery" (that is, having their breasts removed) and "packers" that create a bulge in one's pants to imply the presence of a penis.
>
> My daughter's electronic devices were filled with TikTok videos and YouTubers talking about how great they feel now that they had "transitioned."
>
> There were messages in which strangers told her to kick my head in because I was a "transphobe" for refusing to call her a male name.

What I liked was the mother's response. I am really surprised to see this, knowing what I know about how badly mothers want to not judge, and be liked by their children.

> I went nuclear. I took the phone and stripped it of all social media—YouTube, Instagram, Discord, Reddit, Pinterest, Twitter. I even blocked her ability to get to the internet. I deleted all of her contacts and changed her phone number.
>
> I sat next to her while she "attended" school online via Zoom. I deleted YouTube from the smart TVs and locked up the remotes. I took every anime book from her room. I threw away all of her costumes. I banned any friend who was even the slightest bit unsavory.

> I involved the police about the porn. I printed out the law and informed her that if anyone sent her porn, I would not hesitate to prosecute.
>
> She hated me like an addict hates the person preventing her drug fix. I held my ground, despite the constant verbal abuse.
>
> After going through seven mental health professionals, I found an out-of-state psychiatrist who was willing to examine the causality for my daughter's sudden trans identity.
>
> I immersed myself in reading everything on the issue, talking to other parents and other professionals. I worked unceasingly to re-create the bond she and I used to share.
>
> After a year and half of utter hell, my daughter is finally returning to her authentic self—a beautiful, artsy, kind and loving daughter.
>
> I am not sure what the actual ingredients for the magic potion were for alleviating gender dysphoria in my daughter. The formula will vary, but what I did was, after a very brief misstep of using a male name, our family and all of the adults in my child's life only used her birth name and corresponding pronouns.
>
> We did not permit social transition, although we could not control the school setting. Unbelievably, our local Catholic high school refused to follow our edict.

She links to some helpful books that you should know about it you are facing the same problems with your children.

If there's one lesson to take from this, it's that parents should know that letting children be influenced by their peers is a recipe for disaster.

I blogged before about a Brown University study showing how transgenderism often happens quickly, as a result of peer pressure or social media pressure.

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in PLOS ONE.

The schools, counselors and hospitals are often against the parents. This story from Canada is typical of how schools handle parents who disagree with transgender grooming. Teachers see their primary goal as grooming children to fulfill the desires of sexual predators – they call this "compassion". Once you realize that they think sexualizing your child is their goal, you'll know how to respond to them. They are moral relativists. They don't know right from wrong. They only believe in "compassion" – giving predators your children, in order to be liked by the predators.

LGBT fascism: father imprisoned for calling his biological child “daughter”

December 16, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a lot to say about this story, so I’ll be brief in re-capping the facts.

The back story from Post Millennial:

> H00g1and discovered that the school had been showing his daughter SOGI 123, the going sexual and gend3r identity education materials in British Columbia which amounts to tr4nsgend3r ideology “propaganda videos.” In the grade 7 yearbook, the child was referred to by a different name. The school counsellor changed the child’s name without telling her parents. The school “socially tr4nsitioned” the biologically female child on its own initiative, with the input of a gend3r ideologue psychologist, Dr. Wa11ace W0ng.
>
> When H00g1and accompanied his child to a consultation with W0ng, the psychologist advised the pubescent child to take testosterone. W0ng referred the child to the endocrinology unit at the local hospital. Meanwhile, H00g1and was looking for mental health solutions to help the child without drugs.
>
> On the child’s first visits to the hospital, a treatment plan was put into action. Both the child, and her mother—H00gland’s ex-wife—signed a consent form which explicitly stated that the “treatment” was experimental, meaning that the endocrinologists recommending the treatment didn’t know the long-term health impact.
>
> A gend3r identity activist lawyer, B4rb4r4 Find1ey, represented the child in court. Justice B0den decided that the child’s best interests lay in destroying her long-term health to make her body appear more like that of a male.
>
> H00gland, in contrast, thinks his daughter’s best interests lie in preserving his child’s health, in case his child ends up among the estimated 85 percent of children who desist in their belief that they are the opposite sex once puberty ends.

You can read more about W0ng here.

And here is the latest:

> [A] warrant was issued by a judge for the arrest of a father after calling his biological female child his “daughter,” and referring to her with the pronouns “she” and “her.” H00g1and was found to be in contempt of court.
>
> H00g1and is a father to a gend3r non-conforming biological female 14-year-old who identifies as tr4nsgend3r and prefers the use of male pronouns. H00g1and has repeatedly called this person his daughter, though the court has forbade it.
>
> On Tuesday… .He was the arrested and jailed. The warrant was issued by Judge

> T4mmen on March 4, 2021.
>
> H00g1and opposes his child's undergoing "gend3r affirmative" medical procedures, and has stated this opposition again and again, in the hope of saving his child from irreversible harm. The Canadian medical system, the legal system, and the child's mother press ahead with social and medical tr4nsition of the child.
>
> On December 14, 2020, H00g1and was compelled by Justice M4rz4ri's court to collude in the gend3r "tr4nsitioning" of his fourteen year old daughter and told not to call his biological female child his daughter. In response, H00g1and made a Charter challenge engaging his right to freedom of speech.

Unfortunately, there is no freedom of speech nor freedom of religion in Canada. They simply do not exist, because regardless of what is on paper, the taxpayer-funded judges and politicians who run Canada are secular left fascists – the same kind who have been at the head of Marxist governments in other times and places that resulted in so much suppression of liberty and human rights. When it comes to human rights, Canada has more in common with North Korea than it does with the United States of America.

You might remember that I recently blogged about a Canadian man who was forced to pay $50,000 a month to a woman that he never married, had children with or even lived with. And another Canadian man who was taken to court for grounding his daughter, and a female judge ruled against him. I think I would feel very discouraged about getting married in Canada. Having a family seems to expose you to people in power who have nothing but contempt for male leadership in the home.

Canada is notorious for letting sexual deviants into positions of power. Canada also had an education minister who championed the sexual exploitation of children in their education curriculum who was also arrested for child pornography. Why not just assume that EVERY secular leftist who talks about tolerance and compassion in public is privately involved in abusing children OR approves of it? How many times must children suffer before we see things as they really are?

Fourth and finally, it's important to understand that secular leftists who are involved in promoting evil tend to respond to disagreement with fascism. Canada currently has a publication ban on any stories about government overriding the rights of parents. They use ARMED POLICE and IMPRISONMENT to restrict speech that criticizes many of the priorities of the secular left, e.g. – abortion, infanticide, tr4nsgenderism, g4y rights, etc. They are not afraid to use coercive methods. I have blogged about people on the secular left using doxing, termination of employment, boycotts, vandalism, violence, and even DOMESTIC TERRORISM (in the case of the g4y activist who attacked the Family Research Council building with a GUN). These methods are either performed by OR approved by secular leftists. Don't expect them to respect your liberties and human rights, because there are no God-given liberties or human rights in a naturalistic / materialist universe. And in a naturalist / materialist universe, anything goes for a secular left fascist trying to feel good and get peer approval.

My reply to a Christian feminist's view of marriage and parenting

December 17, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I got a comment below on the post I wrote about Christian men preferring women with STEM degrees for marriage. I felt that I needed to say something strict about this woman's comment, because I am seeing her attitude everywhere among Christian women. Although I am more forgiving about her views in private, I think it's important to be hard on her in public.

Her comment (she's "thoughtfullady") is here:

> This was an interest post to read. I am a christian woman myself in STEM. I understand the pros and cons, I agree with some of your views and disagree with some others.
> In today's world its hard to sustain a family with only one stream of income, plus, a woman's life does not revolve around a man anymore, at least in the western and european countries, so if or when I get married, I do not think I would leave my job temporarily (3 years or so) or permanently to raise children and attend to my husband all the time, its not financially sustainable in the middle and long term for a household unless the man I marry is earning more than enough for all of us. Yes, I will do my very best to spend good quality time with my family. I believe also that most of the education load should not go into the woman, at least not in modern days, fathers play an equally important role as mothers in their children's education and science has proved this.
>
> Regarding literacy, I liked the comment above relating to how the disciples were fishermen and I agree. Jesus picked some illiterate men to follow him just as the word says in 1 Corinthians 1:28, and I paraphrase, that from the 'weak, base and despised, God chose people to bring shame to the wise'. The disciples, the educated ones and the not so educated ones, stood up to the Pharisees with knowledge of spiritual revelation not their background careers.
> No matter how much worldly preparation you or your spouse have in science, children must be trained in the word of God, remember that most of the ideologies that we have are 'based in science' (erratically obviously) but NO matter how much scientific evidence on the knowledge of God we have, these people will not accept it because of their hardened hearts. Instead we've got to teach children to stay strong in their faith so they don't fall into the mainstream movements while standing their ground in their convictions.
>
> On the other hand, something that sticks to my mind is how you mentioned that most likely women in STEM would probably not finish college as virgins due to the environment that is found there. I would like to give you some advice in that:

> virginity is not a virtue in women, nor will make a woman a better or a worse wife, it only shows that either she made the decision/commitment (religion related or not) to remain that way or didn't have the opportunity to engage in that activity, and yes, it happens. Remember sexual sin is as every other sin that anyone can fall into and forgiveness is available, the Bible puts it in par it with the liars and witchcraft in Revelations. Remember we are in front of a Holy God and even for the little everyday lies that we tell, Jesus had to die on the cross. Something I learned was not to categorise sin because all of them are equal in the eyes of God even if they bring different human or spiritual consequences to us. If you meet a woman who ticks all your wifey prospect boxes that previously felt into that trap and she asked for forgiveness and is walking on a new journey of sanctification, it would be very unwise of you to say no to her just because she didn't remain a virgin.
>
> Otherwise kudos to you for wanting to have a family that is Christ-centerd, very important specially now in the times we live, drowned in confusion and self absorbency! God bless you!

And here is my harsh response to her.

Thank you for this thoughtful comment, thoughtful lady.

> In today's world its hard to sustain a family with only one stream of income, plus, a woman's life does not revolve around a man anymore, at least in the western and european countries, so if or when I get married, I do not think I would leave my job temporarily (3 years or so) or permanently to raise children and attend to my husband all the time, its not financially sustainable in the middle and long term for a household unless the man I marry is earning more than enough for all of us.

So, the first thing to say is that the reason that it is hard to sustain a family on one income is because we have a massive welfare state that has been put in place to support women making decisions according to the Sexual Revolution worldview, as opposed to the Judeo-Christian worldview. Many of the social programs now in effect, e.g. – taxpayer-funded contraceptives, taxpayer-funded abortions, taxpayer-funded daycare, taxpayer-funded public schools, anti-male divorce courts, taxpayer-funded health care, etc. were put in place in order to make choosing a good man "optional" for a woman. Basically, following the introduction of birth control and abortion, feminists decided to embark on a course of pursuing hot bad boys – even if those hot bad boys would not commit to them before sex. They focused entirely on the man's appearance, and spurned men with exclusive convictions on religion and morality. These feminists delayed marriage, because they wanted validation from the bad boys. They wanted to pursue careers and buy shiny junk, rather than to build up a husband and produce influential children. That's why we have a hook-up culture today. Feminists wanted to be free to pursue men based

on their appearance, in order to get validation through sex. The welfare state – along with affirmative action, no-fault divorce, etc. – are just what feminists vote for in order to make their plan "work out".

A good paper on how women's suffrage led to a massive expansion in government:

- http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~iversen/PDFfiles/LottKenny.pdf

Here is a good example of an ex-Christian woman following the sex with bad boys validation plan:

- https://winteryknight.com/2021/11/16/what-can-men-do-to-save-this-24-year-old-woman-from-toxic-masculinity/

> Yes, I will do my very best to spend good quality time with my family.

Well, if a woman outsources the raising of her children to daycares, public schools, etc. then family isn't a priority for her. And men know that. Men who are interested in having children raised with a Christian worldview will pass career women by, since this is important to us. I'm not interested in what a woman says about things. Her actions tell me what her priorities are. If a woman values career, then secular leftists will be raising her kids. Expressing hopes and desires and wishes won't save her children from apostasy. I am seeing children getting sexually assaulted, indoctrinated, bullied, transed, etc. in the facilities provided by the secular left welfare state. If a woman goes to work, then she is leaving her kids to that.

> I believe also that most of the education load should not go into the woman, at least not in modern days, fathers play an equally important role as mothers in their children's education and science has proved this.

My job is to earn the money so that my wife can stay home and teach the children. I cannot teach the children while I am working full time. And neither can the woman. What men understand from women who want full-time careers after having children is that the children will be raised by people in daycares and schools who don't have the worldview of the parents. I'm not marrying anyone to let someone else raise my kids. Raising children is an important part of marriage plan, and I want someone competent to do it. If I could do it, I would. That's one reason why I need a wife – to do this important job.

> No matter how much worldly preparation you or your spouse have in science, children must be trained in the word of God, remember that most of the ideologies that we have are 'based in science' (erratically obviously) but NO matter how much scientific evidence on the knowledge of God we have, these people will not accept it because of their hardened hearts.

Today, effective defending of the faith begins with evidence: science and history. The first question that comes up when discussing Christianity with a non-Christian is "how do you know that God even exists?" If the woman's answer is "the word of God", just know that

this is not going to work on an atheist. There is no word of God without God, and she cannot derive God from appealing to the word of God, since God must exist before communicating through the Bible. I want my children to be the ones who make advances in philosophy, science and history, so people learn from them how to defend God's existence and character. Illiterate fishermen who saw Jesus were good enough witnesses 2000 years ago. There are no people today who saw Jesus. Illiterate fishermen will not be able to have an influence in the university or the workplace or the public square. When feminists elevate illiterate fishermen over children who are educated and trained in logic and scientific evidence, it just means that her children will have no influence for Christ. And no Christian man takes on the costs and risks of marriage for that outcome. We are interested in serving God, and if we can't have a marriage and children that serve God effectively, we will settle for less influence for God as single men.

See this recent study:

- https://julieroys.com/george-barna-survey-biblical-worldview/

> I would like to give you some advice in that: virginity is not a virtue in women, nor will make a woman a better or a worse wife…

I think most women who accept feminism and the Sexual Revolution denigrate virginity, even though the Bible says that sex before marriage is morally wrong. Christian men infer from this denigration of virginity that the woman doesn't accept the Bible. We understand that she forms her beliefs about relationships, marriage, and parenting from feelings and peer approval – from the secular left culture. Men understand that she does not read any scientific papers about sex, marriage, parenting and divorce to confirm what the Bible teaches. Men like me know the effect that premarital sex has on the future stability of a marriage. We read books and scientific papers about what children need from mothers and fathers in order to develop properly. And we know how that the instability caused by promiscuity costs us (in divorce courts) and costs the children (effects of divorce on children). It is extremely inadvisable for a Christian man to make a legal commitment of his time and resources to a non-virgin. We have to make sure that our choice of mate is suitable for the plan to make the marriage serve God. It's called "equal yoking".

See these recent studies:

- https://ifstudies.org/blog/does-sexual-history-affect-marital-happiness
- http://family-studies.org/counterintuitive-trends-in-the-link-between-premarital-sex-and-marital-stability/
- https://ifstudies.org/blog/slow-but-sure-does-the-timing-of-sex-during-dating-matter/

> Remember sexual sin is as every other sin that anyone can fall into and forgiveness is available, the Bible puts it in par it with the liars and witchcraft in Revelations.

Most women today who follow the Sexual Revolution instead of the Bible say that all sins

are equal. They say “if God forgives me for this minor, minor sin, then what right does a man have to withhold marriage from me?”. Here is how marriage-minded men like me respond to this. First, most women who ask for forgiveness do it to feel good and to escape judgment by their peers. They don’t believe any harm has been done to the husband, despite the studies falsifying that. There is no genuine forgiveness for someone who thinks they have done nothing wrong. The goal of women mentioning forgiveness is to avoid being judged, and avoid missing out on marriage because men hold them accountable for their past actions. A woman’s past actions define her present character. She cannot make a new character in a split second, without having read anything to change her mind about her past views, and put her new views on display in new actions that honor chastity and marriage. Second, even if she sincerely repents, and God forgives her, that means nothing to a man with respect to marriage. Suppose a woman wastes all of her 20s and 30s partying and having recreational sex with hot, no-commitment bad boys. Suppose she sincerely repents of that, and ask God for forgiveness, and she gets forgiven by him. That does not make her attractive to a man who is looking for a helper to support him in his marriage plan. Marriage plans start at age 20, not age 40. Her repentance at age 40 does not help him in any way, since she was not there during those early years of his life to support him and raise his children and impact the world for Christ. He will also have to deal with the effects of her promiscuity even if God forgives her. The damage from promiscuity can be fixed, but not without a lot of time and effort on books and studies. Time and effort he could be putting into more important Kingdom work. In my experience, most women today have no interest in reforming their minds about their previous mistakes using books and studies. Their idea of forgiveness is just demanding it in order to escape judgment, and to avoid being held accountable for their actions. They hate the idea that they are losing out on something now, because of selfish, irresponsible behavior in the past. That has to be worked through or she’s not safe to marry.

For more on the motivation to call all sins equal:

- https://winteryknight.com/2021/05/16/why-do-some-christians-say-all-sins-are-equally-bad-and-everyone-is-equally-guilty-2/

For more on how men are right to reject non-virgins for marriage:

- https://winteryknight.com/2021/01/09/lori-alexander-is-right-serious-christian-men-prefer-debt-free-virgins-without-tattoos-3/

I hope this comment is helpful for you, and I really hope that the next generation of women rejects feminism, careerism, and sexual promiscuity so that men will be interested in marrying them.

Here’s a good video that is representative of what Christian women are like, these days, when men present them with a marriage plan and expectations about how they should

prepare for marriage:

No good man who has a plan for marriage that does damage to secularism, feminism, socialism, etc. is going to marry a woman like this, who just sees relationships as a tool for making herself feel good, and who is entirely beholden to the culture. Men want their marriage and children to count for God. We don't marry women who are obsessed with feeling good and being liked.

I feel I need to set them straight about their suitability and entitlement with respect to the marriage enterprise, and I hope my reply does that. These women can marry all the weak low-value non-Christian soy boys who will take them. They aren't ever going to get a serious Christian man to sign them up for marriage.

What’s the best explanation for the origin of life for atheists?

December 18, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just ordered the newest edition of “The Mystery of Life’s Origin“, which is a classic book on the origin of life by pro-design authors. The new edition has several new chapters. It reminded me of my interest in the origin of life when I was a younger man, just starting full-time work with a hot Internet start-up in the big city.

Back then, I liked to listen to debates about the origin of life (e.g. – Walter Bradley versus Robert Shapiro, etc.), as well as lectures and interviews. I ordered tons of academic lectures and debates, especially from Access Research Network. Two of my favorite interviews from ARN featured Dr. Charles Thaxton and Dr. Dean Kenyon.

Let’s start with Charles Thaxton’s interview.

And here are the questions:

1. How did you first get interested in the origin of life?
2. How did you come to write The Mystery of Life’s Origin with Walter Bradley and Roger Olsen?
3. Was there an advantage to having the three of you collaborate on the project?
4. What is the primary argument of your book, The Mystery of Life’s Origin?
5. Have scientists come close to developing a plausible naturalistic explanation to the origin of life or do you still consider the origin of life to be a mystery?
6. Do you see a particular irony in the timing of Stanley Miller’s experiments and the discovery of DNA by Watson and Crick?
7. How does the emergence of modern genetics tie in with the Darwinian scenario of life going from simple to complex?
8. What are the major problems with origin of life simulation experiments?
9. Isn’t it rather impressive that amino acids were produced in the Miller experiments?
10. How close is the development of amino acids to the threshold of life?
11. What are the steps involved in producing proteins from amino acids?
12. Why are amino acids isolated during this process?
13. How can the investigator affect the outcome of a simulation experiment?
14. How did you evaluate the different chemical evolution experiments?
15. Are the initial conditions in the simulation experiments plausible?
16. What did the earth’s early atmosphere contain?
17. Will the simulation experiments work with this atmosphere?
18. There seems to be an underlying assumption that the origin of life resulted without any intelligent input whatsoever yet the simulation experiments appear to rely upon intelligent guidance. Could you comment on this irony?
19. Are there any natural processes that would have filtered out destructive ultraviolet light?

20. What additional steps beyond creating amino acids would be required to develop life?
21. What is so difficult about making proteins or nucleic acids?
22. In addition to the energy problem in protein synthesis isn't there a sequencing problem?
23. Are DNA sequences analogous to a written language?
24. Has Hubert Yockey made similar claims?
25. In The Mystery of Life's Origin you refer to order, randomness, and specified complexity. Could you give us an overview of these concepts?
26. What do you think the presence of specified complexity in a living system indicates about its origin?
27. In inferring the necessity of intelligence to produce life haven't you ventured from the realm of science to religion?
28. Could you summarize the reasons why you believe intelligence was involved in the origin of life?
29. What are the major objections to your current point of view?
30. How was The Mystery of Life's Origin received by the scientific community?
31. What was Dean Kenyon's response to your critiques of his book, Biochemical Predestination?
32. What was Dean Kenyon's response to The Mystery of Life's Origin?
33. Were you a bit apprehensive about meeting Kenyon after writing a book which was quite critical of his views in Biochemical Predestination?
34. Are self-organizational theories plausible?
35. Would you comment on the work done by Prigogine and Eigen?
36. What is your assessment of RNA scenarios?
37. What other problems do you see with an RNA world?

You can learn more about Charles Thaxton here.

And here's the interview with Dean Kenyon:

And here are the questions:

1. What first interested you in biology and the origin of life? What is your academic background in this area?
2. What was your viewpoint on the origin of life when you wrote Biochemical Predestination?
3. How have your views on the origin of life changed since you wrote Biochemical Predestination?
4. Do many of your colleagues support your new position? If not, why not?
5. What are the general presuppositions that scientists make who study the origin of life?
6. What is the Oparin-Haldane hypothesis, and what role does it play in current research and teaching on the origin of life?
7. What are the major underlying assumptions of the Oparin (chemical evolution) hypothesis?
8. Are there any other important assumptions in origin of life theories?

9. How well are these assumptions supported by currently available scientific data?
10. What is your evaluation of the Miller type of simulation experiment? What do these experiments tell us about possible chemical events on the prebiotic Earth?
11. Is it possible that interfering cross-reactions might prevent life from arising naturalistically?
12. Stanley Miller's pioneering work in the origin of life assumed a reducing atmosphere of methane, ammonia, water vapor, and carbon dioxide? Is there sufficient empirical support for this assumption?
15. How large a gap is there between the most complex "protocell" model and the simplest living cell?
16. What is the biologically relevant information content of the simplest living organism known to exist? What are estimates for a theoretical minimum information content of the first living cell?
17. How probable is it that such complexity could arise by undirected chemical processes?
19. What are the major unsolved problems in research on the origin of life?
20. What is the relevance of the Second Law of Thermodynamics to the origin of life?
21. Is it plausible that an "RNA world" was the precursor of the first living cells?
25. If life did not originate by chemical evolution on the primitive Earth, what other possible scientific explanations exist?
26. What do you mean by your statement that "perhaps scientism is more widespread than we like to think"?
27. Is it possible that natural processes are insufficient to account for the origin of all biological information?
28. Can science rule out the possibility that most biological information had an intelligent cause?
29. What alternatives are there to pursuing purely naturalistic explanations for the origin of life?
30. What do you mean by "intelligent design" as it relates to the origin of life?
31. Why is an intelligent design or creationist interpretation of scientific data bearing on origins not acceptable to many scientists?
32. What criteria could be used to determine if the information content of living organisms had an intelligent or natural cause?
34. Does academic freedom allow you to discuss the difficulties of scientific naturalism and origin of life theories? If not, why are they protected from criticism?
35. How should the origin of life be taught in light of the California Science Framework policy which states that "nothing in science or in any other field of knowledge shall be taught dogmatically"?
36. How is scientific progress impacted when critiques of current theories are suppressed?

You can learn more about Dean Kenyon here.

The challenge for naturalists posed by the origin of life makes it well worth your time to

learn and understand. I used to explain this argument to my entire IT department on white boards when I was a young man. It's fascinating, and more convincing than personal testimonies or abstract philosophical arguments. Although I read books on the origin of life, I learned how to present the information as an argument by watching the interviews above over and over.

People sometimes ask me how I was able to survive 22 years in IT with my theism intact. It turns out that there are no shortcuts to a theistic worldview. You have to support it with evidence. You have to be able to show your work about how you reached your conclusions. I'm a theist today because I never found a single atheist in any software development job who could even begin to challenge the evidence that I collected from listening to all those lectures and debates that I started from in my early 20s. It was as easy to defeat them as taking candy from a baby.

If only Christian parents and Christian leaders understood the importance of scientific facts when they talk to young people about Christianity. We need to be less worried about hurting the feelings of young people by making them "feel dumb". Christianity isn't supposed to be easy. It's not a bad thing to ask people to work hard at learning how to rationally ground it with evidence. If we want to stop our young people from being lazy, ignorant and cowardly, then the right way to do it is to make them work. Make them learn. Make them fight.

New study: there is no gay gene that causes homosexuality

December 19, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I heard one of the authors of this new study commenting on how he was a gay man, and the purpose of his research was to show a genetic basis for homosexuality, in order to make it equal to race. His goal was to make it impossible to disagree with homosexual behavior, because homosexual behavior would be seen as natural and normal. Let's see if his new study helps him out.

The blog of the peer-reviewed journal PLOS One reported on the new study, which was published in the prestigious journal Science.

Excerpt:

> The once-prevailing concept of a "gay gene" dictating sexual orientation has been put to rest in a powerhouse study published today in *Science*. The work brilliantly illustrates the very nature of science: evolving with the input of new data, especially the large-scale contributions of bioinformatics and crowd-sourcing.
>
> "We formed a large international consortium and collected data for more than 500,000 people, comparing DNA and self-reported sexual behavior. This is approximately 100 times bigger than any previous study on this topic," said lead author Andrea Ganna, of the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Finland and an instructor at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, opening a news conference earlier this week.
>
> […]The investigation estimates a genetic contribution to same-sex sexual behavior as under 1 percent, thanks to analysis of a trove of data from the UK Biobank and the consumer genetic testing company 23andme.

So, there you have it, there is no gay gene. But this is of course something we've known for decades, as all the previous studies had found the same thing.

The normal way that people do these studies is to analyze identical twins, and see how often both identical twins are gay.

> Eight major studies of identical twins in Australia, the U.S., and Scandinavia during the last two decades all arrive at the same conclusion: gays were not born that way.
>
> "At best genetics is a minor factor," says Dr. Neil Whitehead, PhD. Whitehead worked for the New Zealand government as a scientific researcher for 24 years, then spent four years working for the United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency. Most recently, he serves as a consultant to Japanese universities about the effects of radiation exposure. His PhD is in biochemistry and statistics.

> Identical twins have the same genes or DNA. They are nurtured in equal prenatal conditions. If homosexuality is caused by genetics or prenatal conditions and one twin is gay, the co-twin should also be gay.
>
> "Because they have identical DNA, it ought to be 100%," Dr. Whitehead notes. But the studies reveal something else. "If an identical twin has same-sex attraction the chances the co-twin has it are only about 11% for men and 14% for women."
>
> Because identical twins are always genetically identical, homosexuality cannot be genetically dictated. "No-one is born gay," he notes. "The predominant things that create homosexuality in one identical twin and not in the other have to be post-birth factors."
>
> Dr. Whitehead believes same-sex attraction (SSA) is caused by "non-shared factors," things happening to one twin but not the other, or a personal response to an event by one of the twins and not the other.

By the way, a previous study also found that transgender behavior was not genetic, but was clearly linked to environmental factors such as peer approval and social media.

Here is the report from Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.
>
> Littman surveyed more than 250 parents of children who suddenly developed gender dysphoria symptoms during or after puberty.
>
> […]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

A previous study also found that children are more likely to be gay if they are raised by gay adults. It was reported in AOL News.

Excerpt:

> Walter Schumm knows what he's about to do is unpopular: publish a study arguing that gay parents are more likely to raise gay children than straight parents. But the Kansas State University family studies professor has a detailed analysis that past almost aggressively ideological researchers never had.
>
> […]His study on sexual orientation, out next month, says that gay and lesbian parents are far more likely to have children who become gay. "I'm trying to prove

> that it’s not 100 percent genetic,” Schumm tells AOL News.
>
> His study is a meta-analysis of existing work. First, Schumm extrapolated data from 10 books on gay parenting… [and] skewed his data so that only self-identified gay and lesbian children would be labeled as such.
>
> […]Schumm concluded that children of lesbian parents identified themselves as gay 31 percent of the time; children of gay men had gay children 19 percent of the time, and children of a lesbian mother and gay father had at least one gay child 25 percent of the time.
>
> […]Finally, Schumm looked at the existing academic studies… In all there are 26 such studies. Schumm ran the numbers from them and concluded that, surprisingly, 20 percent of the kids of gay parents were gay themselves. When children only 17 or older were included in the analysis, 28 percent were gay.

It’s very important for people to understand that there is a trend in society to make every behavior traditionally seen as sinful into something caused by genetics. The twin goals of this effort are to insulate the behaviors from criticism, and to minimize evaluation of the effects of these behaviors on society as a whole. The genetic argument was used extensively to normalize same-sex marriage and transgenderism. I have seen the genetic argument used to defend other behaviors like pedophilia and incest. But the scientific research does nothing to support any of these arguments. What’s amazing is how a majority of people in the United States have such false beliefs about the scientific research. They vastly overestimate the number of gay people, and also the influence of genetics.

Report: Teacher calls CPS on parents for refusing to gender their child "correctly"

December 20, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last week, I blogged about a story out of Canada about how a father was arrested and jailed for refusing to accept the forced transitioning of his child orchestrated by the schools, hospitals and courts. You might think that this attitude of overriding parents wouldn't exist in America. But you'd be wrong – teachers and school administrators hate parents just as much.

Here's a story from the Tennessee Star:

> Two teachers in a California school district are accused of coaching a student into coming out as transgender behind the backs of the student's parents, according to video footage circulating on social media.
>
> School staff reportedly changed the student's name and pronouns and also called Child Protective Services (CPS) when the parents objected to the transition, according to a twitter thread by LibsofTikTok posted early Thursday morning, which included video of the parents addressing the school board of the Spreckels Union School District on Wednesday.
>
> The student's mother, identified as Jessica Konen in a video of a Dec. 15 meeting of the Spreckels Union School District's school board posted on its YouTube page, claimed that her daughter's indoctrination began with a LGBTQ club at Buena Vista Middle School.
>
> Konen's husband Gunter described the meeting with the school principal and an unidentified teacher where he learned of his daughter's social transition, video showed. He claimed CPS was called on them due to their objections to the actions of school staff.

It turns out that teachers are more than happy to hide what they are doing with children from the parents of those children.

Here is an article by Abigail Shrier that explains how it works:

> Last month, the California Teachers Association (CTA) held a conference advising teachers on best practices for subverting parents, conservative communities and school principals on issues of gender identity and sexual orientation. Speakers went so far as to tout their surveillance of students' Google searches, internet activity, and hallway conversations in order to target sixth graders for personal invitations to LGBTQ clubs, while actively concealing these clubs' membership rolls from participants' parents.
>
> Documents and audio files recently sent to me, and authenticated by three conference participants, permitted a rare insight into the CTA's sold-out event in

> Palm Springs, held from October 29-31, 2021. The "2021 LGBTQ+ Issues Conference, Beyond the Binary: Identity & Imagining Possibilities," provided best practices workshops that encouraged teachers to "have the courage to create a safe environment that fosters bravery to explore sexual orientation, gender identity and expression," according to the precis of a talk given by fifth grade teacher, C. Scott Miller.
>
> Several of the workshops advised teachers on the creation of middle school LGBTQ clubs (commonly known as "Gay-Straight Alliance" clubs or "GSA"). One workshop—"Queering in the Middle"—focused "on what practices have worked for successful middle school GSAs and children at this age developmentally."

They hid what they are doing from parents – especially conservative parents:

> "Because we are not official—we have no club rosters, we keep no records," Buena Vista Middle School teacher and LGBTQ-club leader, Lori Caldeira, states on an audio clip sent to me by a conference attendee. "In fact, sometimes we don't really want to keep records because if parents get upset that their kids are coming? We're like, 'Yeah, I don't know. Maybe they came?' You know, we would never want a kid to get in trouble for attending if their parents are upset."
>
> The advice to those who run middle school LGBTQ clubs is: keep no records, so you can plead ignorance of the membership with the members' parents. In fact, middle school teacher Kelly Baraki can be heard in the same session describing having named her club "the Equity Club," and then, "You be You," rather than the more ubiquitous "GSA."
>
> Caldeira and Baraki – both middle school teachers – led a workshop titled: "How we run a 'GSA' in Conservative Communities." The audio recording of their lecture was sent to me by a conference attendee. In that address, the speakers describe the challenges for activist teachers working in the context of a politically mixed community in Central California with many conservative parents.

So, if you have children in the school system, it's important for you to understand how the teachers see their role, and how they see you – the parent. A long time ago, parents could rely on teachers to development children in the ways that parents want them to develop. But now teachers are working for different bosses.

Today, teachers aren't interested in preparing your child for finding jobs in the private sector. Their goal is to groom your children, so they are suitably compliant victims for sexual predators. Teachers have a very different plan for your children's lives than you do. Parents are not seen as customers by teachers and administrators. That's why teachers are now trying to call in the FBI on parents who dissent from their activities. They're calling concerned parents "domestic terrorists". I hope you'll remember that next time we have an election.

What are the historical arguments for the empty tomb narrative?

December 21, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to go over this article by William Lane Craig which includes a discussion of the empty tomb, along with the other minimal facts that support the resurrection.

The word resurrection means bodily resurrection

The concept of resurrection in use among the first converts to Christianity was a *Jewish* concept of resurrection. And that concept of resurrection is unequivocally in favor of a *bodily resurrection*. The body (soma) that went into the grave is the body (soma) that came out.

Craig explains what this means with respect to the fast start of Christian belief:

> For a first century Jew the idea that a man might be raised from the dead while his body remained in the tomb was simply a contradiction in terms. In the words of E. E. Ellis, "It is very unlikely that the earliest Palestinian Christians could conceive of any distinction between resurrection and physical, 'grave emptying' resurrection. To them an *anastasis* without an empty grave would have been about as meaningful as a square circle."

And:

> Even if the disciples had believed in the resurrection of Jesus, it is doubtful they would have generated any following. So long as the body was interred in the tomb, a Christian movement founded on belief in the resurrection of the dead man would have been an impossible folly.

It's significant that the belief in the resurrection started off in the city where the tomb was located. Anyone, such as the Romans or Jewish high priests, who wanted to nip the movement in the bud could easily have produced the body to end it all. They did not do so, because they could not do so, although they had every reason to do so.

There are multiple early, eyewitness sources for the empty tomb

Paul's early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, dated to within 5 years of the crucifixion, implies the empty tomb.

Craig writes:

> In the formula cited by Paul the expression "he was raised" following the phrase "he was buried" implies the empty tomb. A first century Jew could not think otherwise. As E. L. Bode observes, the notion of the occurrence of a spiritual resurrection while the body remained in the tomb is a peculiarity of modern theology. For the Jews it was the remains of the man in the tomb which were raised; hence, they carefully preserved the bones of the dead in ossuaries until

> the eschatological resurrection. There can be no doubt that both Paul and the early Christian formula he cites pre-suppose the existence of the empty tomb.

The dating of the resurrection as having occurred "on the third day" implies the empty tomb. The date specified for the resurrection would have been the date that the tomb was discovered to be empty.

> The phrase "on the third day" probably points to the discovery of the empty tomb. Very briefly summarized, the point is that since no one actually witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, how did Christians come to date it "on the third day?" The most probable answer is that they did so because this was the day of the discovery of the empty tomb by Jesus' women followers. Hence, the resurrection itself came to be dated on that day. Thus, in the old Christian formula quoted by Paul we have extremely early evidence for the existence of Jesus' empty tomb.

A few quotes from atheist historians not from Dr. Craig's article: (thanks to Eric of Ratio Christi OSU)

> Michael Goulder (Atheist NT Prof. at Birmingham) "…it goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion." ["The Baseless Fabric of a Vision," in Gavin D'Costa, editor, Resurrection Reconsidered (Oxford, 1996), 48.]
>
> Gerd Lüdemann (Atheist Prof of NT at Göttingen): "…the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus…not later than three years… the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE." [The Resurrection of Jesus, trans. by Bowden (Fortress, 1994), 171-72.]
>
> Robert Funk (Non-Christian scholar, founder of the Jesus Seminar): "…The conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead had already taken root by the time Paul was converted about 33 C.E. On the assumption that Jesus died about 30 C.E., the time for development was thus two or three years at most." [Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, The Acts of Jesus, 466.]

The early pre-Markan burial narrative mentions the empty tomb. This source pre-dates Mark, the earliest gospel. The source has been dated by some scholars to the 40s. For example, the atheist scholar James Crossley dates Mark some time in the 40s. (See the debate below)

> *The empty tomb story is part of the pre-Markan passion story and is therefore very old*. The empty tomb story was probably the end of Mark's passion source. As Mark is the earliest of our gospels, this source is therefore itself quite old. In fact the commentator R. Pesch contends that it is an incredibly early source. He produces two lines of evidence for this conclusion:
>
> (a) Paul's account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23-5 presupposes the Markan account. Since Paul's own traditions are themselves very old, the Markan source

> must be yet older.
>
> (b) The pre-Markan passion story never refers to the high priest by name. It is as when I say “The President is hosting a dinner at the White House” and everyone knows whom I am speaking of because it is the man currently in office. Similarly the pre-Markan passion story refers to the “high priest” as if he were still in power. Since Caiaphas held office from AD 18-37, this means at the latest the pre-Markan source must come from within seven years after Jesus’ death. This source thus goes back to within the first few years of the Jerusalem fellowship and is therefore an ancient and reliable source of historical information.

So we are dealing with very early sources for the empty tomb.

Lack of legendary embellishments

The empty tomb narrative in the gospels lacks legendary embellishments, unlike later 2nd century forgeries that originated outside of Jerusalem.

The eyewitness testimony of the women

This is the evidence that has been the most convincing to skeptics, and to me as well.

> *The tomb was probably discovered empty by women*. To understand this point one has to recall two facts about the role of women in Jewish society.
>
> (a) Woman occupied a low rung on the Jewish social ladder. This is evident in such rabbinic expressions as “Sooner let the words of the law be burnt than delivered to women” and “Happy is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female.”
>
> (b) The testimony of women was regarded as so worthless that they were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses in a court of law. In light of these facts, how remarkable must it seem that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus’ empty tomb. Any later legend would certainly have made the male disciples to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women, whose testimony was worthless, rather than men, are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly accounted for by the fact that, like it or not, they were the discoverers of the empty tomb and the gospels accurately record this.

The earliest response from the Jewish high priests assumes the empty tomb

This report from Matthew 28 fulfills the criteria of enemy attestation, although Matthew is not the earliest source we have. Oh, well.

> In Matthew 28, we find the Christian attempt to refute the earliest Jewish polemic against the resurrection. That polemic asserted that the disciples stole away the body. The Christians responded to this by reciting the story of the guard at the tomb, and the polemic in turn charged that the guard fell asleep. Now the noteworthy feature of this whole dispute is not the historicity of the guards but rather the presupposition of both parties that the body was missing. The earliest Jewish response to the proclamation of the resurrection was an attempt to

> explain away the empty tomb. Thus, the evidence of the adversaries of the disciples provides evidence in support of the empty tomb.

Note how careful Craig is not to imply that the guard tradition is historical, because we can't prove the guard as a "minimal fact", since it doesn't pass the standard historical criteria.

See it used in a debate

You can see the arguments made and defended from criticism in this debate with the atheist scholar James Crossley.

This my favorite resurrection debate.

Report: Soros-funded ‘disinformation’ group paid $926,000 to Steele dossier creators

December 22, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So on this blog, I’ve tried to cover the origins of the fake Steele dossier that was used by the FBI to obtain a FISA warrant spy on the Trump campaign. I’ve talked about the role of the Democrat-supporting law firm Perkins Coie, and the Democrat-backed opposition research firm Fusion GPS. But now we have information about George Soros’ role in the scandal.

Here’s the latest from The Federalist:

> A left-wing group backed by billionaire Democratic mega-donor George Soros that falsely claims to fight disinformation paid nearly seven figures to individuals behind the discredited Steele dossier, a Clinton campaign-funded disinformation document, new documents show.
>
> Public IRS tax filings reveal the group paid a total of $926,000 to firms connected to former British intelligence officer Christopher Steele, the author of the dossier, and Fusion GPS, the Democrat-backed consulting firm that sponsored the opposition research.
>
> […]According to the newly released Democracy Integrity Project’s IRS 990 form for fiscal year 2020, the self-purported crusaders against disinformation paid $521,000 to Steele’s British firm, Walsingham Partners, and $405,000 to D.C.-based Fusion GPS as independent contractors.
>
> In 2017, the group paid more than $3.8 million to the two firms behind the conspiracy at its height, according to The Daily Caller, which was “more than three times what the DNC and the Clinton campaign paid Fusion GPS and Steele during the 2016 presidential campaign.” That same year, the same Democracy Integrity Project meddled in the Alabama special election Senate race using Russian disinformation techniques.

This scandal is quite serious, and some of the Democrats responsible are facing legal consequences for using government as a weapon against Republicans:

> Those culpable in the years-long Russia collusion hoax are just now beginning to suffer legal consequences after avoiding them for years.
>
> In early November, Steele’s primary sub-source, Igor Danchenko, became the third arrested over the course of an independent probe in the Justice Department conducted by U.S. Attorney John Durham. In October, Clinton campaign lawyer Michael Sussmann was indicted on false statements to the FBI made in September 2016.
>
> At the beginning of the year, former FBI attorney Kevin Clinesmith was virtually

> let off the hook with one year probation and 400 hours of community service for falsifying documents to obtain spy warrants on the Trump campaign.

Let's review the Clinton campaign and DNC role in the Steele dossier.

The far-left Washington Post explains:

> The Hillary Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee helped fund research that resulted in a now-famous dossier containing allegations about President Trump's connections to Russia and possible coordination between his campaign and the Kremlin, people familiar with the matter said.
>
> Marc E. Elias, a lawyer representing the Clinton campaign and the DNC, retained Fusion GPS, a Washington firm, to conduct the research.
>
> After that, Fusion GPS hired dossier author Christopher Steele, a former British intelligence officer with ties to the FBI and the U.S. intelligence community, according to those people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.
>
> Elias and his law firm, Perkins Coie, retained the company in April 2016 on behalf of the Clinton campaign and the DNC. Before that agreement, Fusion GPS's research into Trump was funded by an unknown Republican client during the GOP primary.
>
> The Clinton campaign and the DNC, through the law firm, continued to fund Fusion GPS's research through the end of October 2016, days before Election Day.

That's from the far-left Washington Post.

I think it's important that everyone is clear about what happened. The mainstream news media allied with Big Tech social media companies to keep this all quiet during the 2020 election campaign. They wanted everyone to trust the Democrats and the FBI. But we're learning more and more every day about how corrupt the Democrats are. We're learning who is behind all of their disinformation efforts. We're learning how they interfere in our elections. We should never vote for these corrupt, power-hungry people to rule over us.

Related posts

- Did Hillary Clinton push Trump-Russia hoax to distract from her e-mail server scandal?
- Bombshell: The FBI's Trump-Russia probe relied on a suspected Russian agent
- Bombshell: FBI knew that Steele dossier contained Russian disinformation
- Trump-Russia dossier author was hired by Democrats to help Hillary Clinton contest 2016 election result
- FBI and DOJ used Democrat-funded Steele dossier to justify wiretapping of Trump campaign
- Was the Trump-Russia Steele dossier the FBI's "insurance policy" against Trump?

Will computers and robots ever become self-aware?

December 23, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There is a very famous thought experiment from UC Berkeley philosopher John Searle that all Christian apologists should know about. And now everyone who reads the Wall Street Journal knows about it, because of this article. (Full text available at archive.md)

In that article, Searle is writing about the IBM computer that was programmed to play Jeopardy. Can a robot who wins on Jeopardy be "human"? Searle says no. And his famous Chinese room example (discussed in the article) explains why.

Excerpt:

> Imagine that a person—me, for example—knows no Chinese and is locked in a room with boxes full of Chinese symbols and an instruction book written in English for manipulating the symbols. Unknown to me, the boxes are called "the database" and the instruction book is called "the program." I am called "the computer."
>
> People outside the room pass in bunches of Chinese symbols that, unknown to me, are questions. I look up in the instruction book what I am supposed to do and I give back answers in Chinese symbols.
>
> Suppose I get so good at shuffling the symbols and passing out the answers that my answers are indistinguishable from a native Chinese speaker's. I give every indication of understanding the language despite the fact that I actually don't understand a word of Chinese.
>
> And if I do not, neither does any digital computer, because no computer, qua computer, has anything I do not have. It has stocks of symbols, rules for manipulating symbols, a system that allows it to rapidly transition from zeros to ones, and the ability to process inputs and outputs. That is it. There is nothing else.

Here is a link to the full article by John Searle on the Chinese room illustration.

By the way, Searle is a naturalist – not a theist, not a Christian. Now, let's hear from a Christian scholar who can make more sense of this for us.

Here's a related article on "strong AI" by Christian philosopher Jay Richards.

Excerpt:

> Popular discussions of AI often suggest that if you keep increasing weak AI, at some point, you'll get strong AI. That is, if you get enough computation, you'll eventually get consciousness.
>
> The reasoning goes something like this: There will be a moment at which a computer will be indistinguishable from a human intelligent agent in a blind test. At that point, we will have intelligent, conscious machines.

This does not follow. A computer may pass the Turing test, but that doesn't mean that it will actually be a self-conscious, free agent.

The point seems obvious, but we can easily be beguiled by the way we speak of computers: We talk about computers learning, making mistakes, becoming more intelligent, and so forth. We need to remember that we are speaking metaphorically.

We can also be led astray by unexamined metaphysical assumptions. If we're just computers made of meat, and we happened to become conscious at some point, what's to stop computers from doing the same? That makes sense if you accept the premise—as many AI researchers do. If you don't accept the premise, though, you don't have to accept the conclusion.

In fact, there's no good reason to assume that consciousness and agency emerge by accident at some threshold of speed and computational power in computers. We know by introspection that we are conscious, free beings—though we really don't know how this works. So we naturally attribute consciousness to other humans. We also know generally what's going on inside a computer, since we build them, and it has nothing to do with consciousness. It's quite likely that consciousness is qualitatively different from the type of computation that we have developed in computers (as the "Chinese Room" argument, by philosopher John Searle, seems to show). Remember that, and you'll suffer less anxiety as computers become more powerful.

Even if computer technology provides accelerating returns for the foreseeable future, it doesn't follow that we'll be replacing ourselves anytime soon. AI enthusiasts often make highly simplistic assumptions about human nature and biology. Rather than marveling at the ways in which computation illuminates our understanding of the microscopic biological world, many treat biological systems as nothing but clunky, soon-to-be-obsolete conglomerations of hardware and software. Fanciful speculations about uploading ourselves onto the Internet and transcending our biology rest on these simplistic assumptions. This is a common philosophical blind spot in the AI community, but it's not a danger of AI research itself, which primarily involves programming and computers.

AI researchers often mix topics from different disciplines—biology, physics, computer science, robotics—and this causes critics to do the same. For instance, many critics worry that AI research leads inevitably to tampering with human nature. But different types of research raise different concerns. There are serious ethical questions when we're dealing with human cloning and research that destroys human embryos. But AI research in itself does not raise these concerns. It normally involves computers, machines, and programming. While all technology raises ethical issues, we should be less worried about AI research—which has many benign applications—than research that treats human life as a means rather than an end.

When I am playing a game on the computer, I know exactly why what I am doing is fun – I am conscious of it. But the computer has no idea what I am doing. It is just matter in motion. The computer's behavior is just the determined result of its programming and the inputs I supply to it. And that's all computers will ever do. Trust me, this is my field. I have the BS and MS in computer science, and I have studied this area. AI has applications for machine learning and search problems, but consciousness is not on the radar. You can't get there from here.

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer defends belief in God using the progress of science

December 24, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer is my favorite defender of Christianity these days. His first book covered the origin of life. His second book covered the sudden origin of body plans in the fossil record. And his third book covered the origin of the universe and fine-tuning. In this post, we'll see a recent popular-level article he wrote for The Federalist, and 6 new short videos he made for Prager University.

Here is latest article from my favorite news source – The Federalist. He explains how scientific discoveries provide evidence for a Creator of the universe:

> From the first astronomical investigations about the early history of the universe, light, and other forms of radiant energy, have yielded the most important clues about cosmic origins. During the 1920s, astronomers discovered that the wavelengths of light coming from distant galaxies were stretched out, or "red-shifted," as if the galaxies were moving away from us. Just as sound coming from a train whistle drops in pitch as the result of the sound waves being stretched out as the train recedes, light coming from a distant galaxy changes color (becomes more red) as light waves are elongated as galaxies move away from Earth.
>
> Soon after the discovery of the red shift, Belgian priest-physicist Georges Lemaître and Caltech astronomer Edwin Hubble showed that galaxies farther away from Earth were receding faster than those close at hand. That suggested a spherical expansion of the universe in all directions of space like a balloon inflating from a singular explosive beginning—from a "Big Bang."
>
> Then in 1965, physicists discovered a different kind of light they thought provided further evidence of the Big Bang. While working at Bell Laboratories in New Jersey, physicists Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson inadvertently discovered an extremely low-energy radiation on their highly sensitive, large antennas. This radiant energy, now known as the Cosmic Background Radiation, is postulated to be a remnant of the earliest moments after the Big Bang when the universe was immensely hot and densely compacted.

Those are the 3 most common pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning – and therefore, a Cosmic Beginner. And this evidence is likely to be enhanced by NASA's newest telescope, which Dr. Meyer talks about:

> [O]n December 22 NASA will launch a new satellite capable of seeing the first starlight from just after the Big Bang—a light, and an event, that tell us about the creation of the universe and, in their own ways, reveal God to the world.
>
> NASA's new James Webb Space Telescope will be carried into space this week from French Guiana on the back of an Ariane 5 rocket. The $10 billion, 21-foot

> telescope features a massive umbrella-like sun shield. It also boasts 15 times the range of motion and six times the light-gathering capability of the Hubble Space Telescope—NASA's next best instrument for peering deep into space and far back in time.
>
> The light that NASA's new telescope seeks to detect comes, not from those very earliest moments after the beginning, but from the first stars and galaxies that formed an estimated several hundred thousand years later. Detecting that light will nevertheless provide further confirmation of an expanding universe.
>
> Since the new telescope can detect infrared light—invisible light with extremely long wave-lengths—it can establish whether the most distant galaxies exhibit the amount of red shift that astronomers expect given the Big Bang.
>
> […]This additional evidence of an expanding universe would further deepen the mystery associated with the Big Bang and add weight to a growing science-based "God hypothesis." If the physical universe of matter, energy, space, and time had a beginning—as observational astronomy and theoretical physics increasingly suggest—it becomes extremely difficult to conceive of any physical or materialistic cause for the origin of the universe. After all, it was matter and energy that first came into existence at the Big Bang. Before that, no matter or energy—no physics—would have yet existed that could have caused the universe to begin.
>
> Instead, whatever caused the universe to originate must not have been material and must exist beyond space and time. It must further have been capable of initiating a great change of state, from nothing to everything that exists. Such considerations have led other scientists—former Massachusetts Institute of Technology physicist Gerald Schroeder and the late Caltech astrophysicist Allan Sandage, for example—to posit an external creator as the best explanation for the origin of the universe as revealed by modern cosmology.

This new telescope creates an interesting situation for Christians and atheists. Christians are excited about this telescope, and anxious to get back the results that will confirm a supernatural Creator. Atheists are nervous about this telescope. They are committed to an eternally existing universe. One that doesn't implicate any kind of supernatural first cause of the natural world. If the universe has a beginning, then by definition, the cause of the universe *must be* supernatural and eternal. Because it existed causally prior to the beginning of the universe. It is not material, because it created matter. It is not in time, because it created the physical universe that marks the passage of time.

Anyway, to share this information, Dr. Meyer has created six new short videos for Prager University. I've embedded the 6 videos below, and each title is a link to Prager University where you can find a transcript. These are perfect for busy people to get the big picture.

1. ARE RELIGION AND SCIENCE IN CONFLICT?

2. SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE FOR GOD AND WHY IT MATTERS

3. HOW DID THE UNIVERSE BEGIN?

4. ALIENS, THE MULTIVERSE, OR GOD?

5. DNA AND THE EVIDENCE FOR INTELLIGENT DESIGN

6. EVOLUTION: BACTERIA TO BEETHOVEN

If you're looking for a longer lecture, delivered to an audience of students, this one from 2015 is 95 minutes long, and has over 900,000 views:

What I'd like to see is parents and pastors stop worrying about how Christians feel,and whether we are like. Step one of being a Christian is knowing and showing that God exists. It's not about feelings, community or peer approval. This is not Disney. This is not romance novels. What we need is young Christians who can have productive conversations about Christianity. And those conversations are easy – if we are trained in the mainstream science that confirms the existence of the supernatural Creator / Designer.

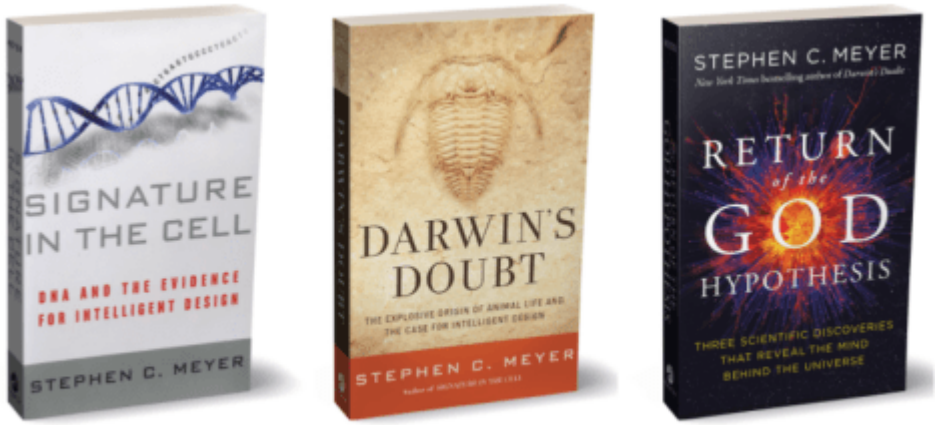

Stephen C Meyer books

For Christmas Day, let’s remember George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

December 25, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Washington crosses the Delaware river before the Battle of Trenton

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position

> untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington's line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington's retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington's army at White Plains, New York, British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians

believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
>
> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for

> the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
>
> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called

> the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.
>
> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
>
> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
>
> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

‘Sex and the City’ inspiration Candace Bushnell reaches age 60 childless and alone

December 26, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you know that there is a real woman who inspired the feminist fairy tale TV show “Sex in the City”? She had an enormous influence on young women, who wanted the glamour, fun, and consequence-free sex with “high value” no-commitment men. Most women who adopted the values of the show probably thought that this path would eventually lead to marriage and children.

My friend Chris sent me this article from Fox News, which talks the woman who inspired the show’s storyline.

It says:

> “Sex and the City” may have left a trailblazing legacy for women on television, but the book’s original author now thinks her independent lifestyle may not have been as rewarding.
>
> Candace Bushnell, 60, who wrote the original 1997 novel which spawned the successful TV series for HBO, opened up to Sunday Times Magazine about her 2012 divorce, admitting it made her realize how not starting a family made her feel “truly alone.”
>
> “When I was in my 30s and 40s, I didn’t think about it,” she recalled. “Then when I got divorced and I was in my 50s, I started to see the impact of not having children and of truly being alone. I do see that people with children have an anchor in a way that people who have no kids don’t.”

I do think that it’s important for young women to really consider where they want to be when they are 30, 40, 50, etc. A wise person should seek to pattern their decisions off of the decisions of people who have reached the goals that they themselves want to reach. Candace Bushnell clearly has failed to achieve her goals. And those who listen to her will, likewise, fail to achieve the goals of marriage and children.

Making decisions today to achieve goals tomorrow

It’s important not to put too much faith in TV shows. Or any fiction.

Whenever I see women reading books in the office, I always ask them: is that fiction or non-fiction? In 19 years of full-time work, I have never had a woman answer non-fiction. And they usually answer “romance”. Well, I supposed if you were a fictional character, then you might take the advice of fictional characters. But if you are a real person, then you should look at the way the world really works. You should read peer-reviewed research, and take the advice of real people who have come up from humble beginnings to achieve the goals that you want to achieve.

After all, if your goal was to retire at 50, wouldn’t it make sense to read books about

investing, and take the advice of successful investors? It certainly *would not* make sense to imitate the characters in TV shows and movies made by Hollywood divorcers, adulterers, rapists and pedophiles. And yet so many women do the latter with marriage and children decision-making. They seem to derive some sort of unquestionable emotional delight from making important decisions based on appearances, intuitions, peer-approval, etc.

Why listen to celebrities, teachers, politicians, etc. who have infidelities, no children, failed marriages, etc.? Why make decisions by counting votes from your no-achievement peer group? If you want to reach a goal, then there is only one way to proceed, and that's by consulting the evidence, and seeking guidance from those with demonstrated results.

For example, when I was choosing which state to live in, I made a spreadsheet and filled it with all sorts of rankings of the 50 states that I pulled out of research papers and reports. I looked at things like infrastructure, income tax, economic growth, business friendliness, cost of living, tax as a % of income, abortion laws, support for traditional marriage, single motherhood, gun laws, concealed carry laws, fiscal solvency, etc. I moved here, and I've become very wealthy as a result. And my state has actually moved upward in gun rights rankings, fiscal solvency rankings, tax rankings, etc. since I got here. We're even trying to pass pro-life laws! When you make decisions using evidence and when you listen to good advice from people who have real achievements, you succeed.

Don't make decisions about sex, marriage and children by "following your heart". That's the lesson.

Peer-reviewed medical journal blasts Facebook “fact checkers” for censorship

December 27, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve just about had it with Facebook’s “fact checkers”. In most cases, these are just card carrying Democrats with worthless degrees in grievance studies. They have limited real world experience. Their only credentials are promoting the Democrat party by censoring news and opinions that make the Democrats look bad. Even peer-reviewed medical journals are censored!

Here’s the story from The Federalist:

> The editors of a peer-reviewed medical journal penned a scathing letter demanding that Facebook reevaluate its bogus third-party “fact-checking” processes after the journal was censored for publishing information about COVID-19 vaccine trials.
>
> BMJ editors Fiona Godlee and Kamran Abbasi addressed the letter to Facebook creator and CEO Mark Zuckerberg with the intention of raising “serious concerns” about Facebook’s third-party “fact-checking” system.
>
> According to the editors, one of the well-researched articles BMJ published on “a host of poor clinical trial research practices occurring at Ventavia,” one of the companies facilitating trials for Pfizer’s version of the COVID-19 vaccine, was suppressed by Facebook and censored with labels that directed readers to a “fact check” by the obscure website Lead Stories, which routinely issues fake fact-checks.
>
> “Those trying to post the article were informed by Facebook that people who repeatedly share ‘false information’ might have their posts moved lower in Facebook’s News Feed. Group administrators where the article was shared received messages from Facebook informing them that such posts were ‘partly false,’” Godlee and Abbasi wrote.
>
> The editors said that this “fact check,” which Facebook used to justify threats against users who shared the BMJ article, however, was “inaccurate, incompetent and irresponsible.”
>
> […]Godlee and Abbasi concluded their letter by demanding that Facebook, if it continues its censorship campaign against so-called “misinformation,” choose wiser and more competent organizations for fact-checking such as Cochrane, which reviews medical evidence on a regular basis.

This isn’t the only time that Facebook “fact checkers” have twisted the truth to protect the Democrat party. The most recent example was with the Rittenhouse trial.

Consider this article the New York Post:

> Consider how Facebook, in particular, treated the circumstances surrounding Kyle Rittenhouse, the teen acquitted last week of all charges in the self-defense killings of two men and the shooting of another during last summer's riots in Kenosha, Wis. Immediately after the incident occurred, and despite video evidence which made a self-defense charge instantly plausible, Facebook declared it a "mass murder" and under that justification blocked searches for Rittenhouse's name and any content in "praise or support" for him on the site — including links to contribute to his legal defense and videos purporting to show Rittenhouse providing aid to protesters.
>
> In other words, Facebook determined that the only speech allowed on its platform was to declare Rittenhouse's guilt, not his innocence. Perhaps prompted by Facebook's actions or merely in spite of them, PayPal cut off affiliation with fundraising efforts for Rittenhouse, and so did GoFundMe.

What were the facts in the Rittenhouse case? The jury heard all the facts, and they acquitted Rittenhouse. No "mass murder" there, just self-defense.

Previously, I wrote articles about Facebook's bias against the Republican party.

- Facebook has a long record of censoring speech critical of Democrats
- Facebook fact-checker caught plagiarizing 54 articles
- Facebook "non-partisan" fact-checker revealed to be a far-left Trump-hating Democrat
- Facebook "fact-checker" Politifact forced to retract "false" rating against Candace Owens
- When Facebook fact-checkers conflict with peer-reviewed studies, who is right?
- Potential violation of election law: Facebook and Twitter censor Biden scandal
- Facebook and Google removing content that harms Democrat party
- Facebook censors interview with abortion survivor to help Democrats win 2020 election
- Facebook uses pro-abortion "fact checkers" to label pro-life pages "fake news"
- Facebook bans Christian apologist David Wood for posting the death threats he received
- Facebook censors criticism of Democrat Party, especially before "important elections"
- Spotify joins Google, Youtube, Facebook and Twitter in censoring Prager University
- Facebook bans Franklin Graham for "hate speech", Google YouTube shadow-bans pro-life videos
- Facebook, Amazon, Google and Twitter ally with leftist group linked to domestic terrorism
- Facebook enlists left-wing Politifact and Snopes to censor criticism of Democrats

Should Christian men consider single mothers for marriage?

December 28, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why do Christians object to warning men about high-risk relationships?
A while back, I explained my three concerns about attending church. One of them was that male pastors and church leaders have adopted the priorities of radical feminism, and have turned against men who want a traditional marriage in which the man leads and the wife supports. Well, I found something that really illustrates what I mean by that, so that everyone will understand it.

Above, you can see a tweet by Michael Foster, a pastor who hosts a podcast called "It's Good to be a Man". His web site states that his goal is: "Extending God's house & father-rule by helping men to establish their own houses in strength, workmanship & wisdom."

He explains in subsequent tweets that he is just urging men to ask questions to find out how the woman became a single mother.

Reactions to the tweet

Here are some reactions to the tweet:

- asking Foster where are his warnings about single dads
- calling Foster a misogynist
- insulting Foster's appearance
- using 1 counterexample to deny a mountain of evidence
- single moms who deliberately chose bad men, and then play the victim by accepting no responsibility for their actions
- claiming that Foster was expressing an irrational opinion
- accusing Foster of being a child abuser

The negative reactions are all anti-intellectual and childish, especially trying to refute statistics with "you hurt my feelings" or telling a single personal story as a

counterexample.

Here's a disclaimer. In this post, I am talking about single mothers by choice, and single mothers who initiated divorce. Widows are excluded.

The risks posed by single mothers

Now, let's improve Foster's warning, by looking at some evidence – is a marriage to a single mother really more likely to result in a bad outcome?

First of all, women initiate 70% of divorces. If you meet a woman who divorced her husband, she either had a defect in her ability to evaluate and choose a man, or she had a defect in her ability to maintain a commitment to the man she chose. Either way, a woman who divorced her previous husband has red flags. There are two possibilities. She either chose a good man or she chose a bad man. If she chose a bad man, then it shows that she didn't choose a man with good moral character and spiritual leadership. That means that those things were low priorities for her when deciding who to get naked with. Alternatively, she married a good man, and failed to maintain the commitment. Then she has different problems: problems with male leadership, problems with responsibilities, problems with commitment, problems with contentment, etc. You need to ask questions to get to the bottom of what happened, and more importantly, what she has studied and done to change her worldview. Don't take her words for it, look at her actions.

Second, the number of premarital sex partners a woman has makes her a higher risk of divorce. The more sex partners, the more risk. The problem with women who engage in sex with men who don't commit to them is that they *necessarily* don't see a man's willingness and ability to commit as valuable when choosing a man. Women who have premarital sex with men who don't commit see OTHER THINGS as more valuable. They are rewarding the man for his height, his muscles, his tattoos, his piercings, his entertainment of her, etc. A good man should be very wary when a woman who gave her best youth, beauty and sexual interest to men like that now want to "settle" for a boring, unattractive provider who they see as having lower value than the men they gave sex to without requiring a commitment. What they really wanted was bad boys, and they threw sex at those bad boys without asking for commitment. With the man they perceive as low-level, they are insisting on commitment first, because they don't want this low-level man as badly as they wanted the bad boy. They are settling for less than they feel they deserve. This is where sex-withholding, feelings of unhappiness, and frivolous divorces come from. And by the way, hollering Jesus doesn't fix that risk any more than hollering Jesus fixes student loans accumulated for a useless non-STEM degree. Jesus-hollering isn't evidence that a woman has persuaded herself to change her view of which men are the most attractive. A woman's lack of respect for men who prepare for commitment and who keep their commitments is dangerous for marital stability. The hysterical reactions to a man's judging a woman for her past mistakes don't cancel the damage and risks caused by those mistakes. They simply tell the man that this woman is unrepentant, and therefore unteachable, and likely unsuitable for goal-oriented marriage. She is not qualified for the job of wife: self-sacrificial love for her husband, respect for her husband,

and supporting her husband in what he is trying to achieve for God.

Here's what the Bible says about sex outside of heterosexual marriage and about frivolous divorce. Read the critical replies to Foster's tweet. The critical responses show the *default* position of church-attending Christian women and pastors to the Bible in this culture. First, the critics don't accept the Bible as an authority over women's choices in any area of life. Second, the critics don't believe that women should bear any responsibility for their past actions. Nobody believes that women choosing bad men is the woman's fault in this society. So you should assume that single mothers don't take responsibility for their own failures. And that means that she will have taken no steps to repent of her mistake, and change her character so that she doesn't make the same mistake again. It's up to you to look at what she has been reading, listening to, watching, etc. and to check her actions in order to find out what she really thinks about what the Bible says. You can't marry a woman who responds to any mention of the moral law and moral obligations with denial of responsibility and insults. If she hasn't become an active crusader against women who choose bad men, and women who choose premarital sex, and women who choose divorce, then you can't really believe that there's been any real repentance. The risks to you are too high to take a chance on someone who is not certain. I've only ever met one single mother (Kerri) who blamed her own divorce on her own bad decisions.

The culture opposes male leadership

Foster's warning is intended to help men to make better decisions, so that their relationships will produce results for God. But his critics aren't interested in what men are trying to achieve for God. They are only concerned that women get what they want, regardles of their past actions. In their opinion, men exists solely to serve the needs of women. Women don't have to be good enough for marriage, men just have to give them what they want regardless of the woman's suitability for wife and mother roles. The role of men in any relationship is not to lead and achieve goals for God. Their role is to let women rule over them, disposing of their earnings as they see fit, for the benefit of the woman.

When women are young and pretty, they are entitled to hot bad boys to entertain them. When they are older, have tons of sexual experience, and children from different fathers, they are entitled to a husband to financially support them. But a husband with no power to lead the home, since their past choices of man showed they have no interest in following a man who has good character. And the churches, pastors, courts, schools, hospitals, etc. are all there to enforce this view of men as clowns / slaves.

This is what women are told about the role of men in every area of society. This society, including the Christian parents, Christian pastors, Christian culture, etc. do not produce women who prefer early marriage to men who are good at moral leadership and spiritual leadership. Therefore, men who are chaste, sober, have good educations, good private sector jobs, good savings, etc. need to be extremely careful. Look at the responses to Foster's tweet, and think: do these people care about providing you with a good wife? Or

is their concern all about how to insult you and shame you, until you are submissive to her needs?

Your marriage is your enterprise for serving God

My advice to men right now is to read over every single critical tweet in that thread that Foster started. Imagine that you are trying to get these women to do something in a marriage that is part of your plan to make the marriage serve God. You're trying to get her to watch a William Lane Craig debate. You're trying to get her to stop spending money on 50 Shades of Grey and Harry Potter. You're trying to get her to stop smoking and drinking. You're trying to get her to talk about the sermon instead of essential oils. You're trying to get her to read a Thomas Sowell book. You're trying to get her to not put the kids in day care or public schools.

You need to assume that her response to male leadership like this will be the exact same as the responses that Foster is getting to his tweet. And then after you have assumed it, then you need to keep your hands off that woman. Keep your distance, and ask her questions to find out what her real views are, and whether she is interested in growing into the kind of person who is safe for you to marry. Don't forget that chastity and sobriety are important during the evaluation process, so that you aren't influenced away from your leadership role. Don't listen to her words, look at her actions.

The woman who argued for legalizing abortion at the Supreme Court

December 29, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sarah Weddington argued for Roe v. Wade at the Supreme Court, and the majority of the male justices agreed with her. So, I thought it would be interesting to dig around and see what kind of woman she was.

First, a bit about her background. She was a United Methodist pastor's kid, and a leader in her church.

From far-left Wikipedia:

> Sarah Ragle was born on February 5, 1945, in Abilene, Texas, to Lena Catherine and Herbert Doyle Ragle, a Methodist minister. As a child, she was… president of the Methodist youth fellowship at her church, played the organ, sang in the church choir…
>
> Weddington graduated with a bachelor's degree in English from McMurry University… [S]he entered the University of Texas Law School and graduated in 1967. In 1967, during her third year of law school, Weddington conceived with Ron Weddington and travelled to Mexico for an illegal abortion. From 1968 to 1974, she was married to Weddington. After her divorce, Sarah continued to live alone in Austin, Texas.

She had an illegal abortion in Mexico.

This is the kind of man she chose to have unprotected sex with before marriage:

> Ron Weddington, one of the attorneys who drafted the brief for abortion rights in Roe V Wade, wrote a private letter to President-elect Bill Clinton arguing for the

> state to use abortion as population control. This letter was written in 1992:
>
> "[Y]ou can start immediately to eliminate the barely educated, unhealthy and poor segment of our country.
>
> […]It's time to officially recognize that people are going to have sex and what we need to do as a nation is prevent as much disease and as many poor babies as possible.
>
> Ron Weddington is the husband of Sarah Weddington, one of the two lawyers who argued for abortion in Roe Vs. Wade.

She chose this man out of all the men in the world, probably because he wasn't going to lead her spiritually or morally. She wanted to escape Christian morality and to escape being judged by Christians for her choice of man, and her choices with sex.

This is an interesting insight into her motives from a student admirer:

> One of my all-time favorite lecturers was Sarah Weddington, the attorney who successfully argued the Roe v. Wade decision.
>
> […]After a couple of years, I… secured a date for my mentor to speak on campus. The lecture was brilliant. The event was successful, even though a few pro-life demonstrators stood quietly protesting outside the venue.
>
> After the event, a group of students and I took her to dinner and were entertained by more exciting, interesting stories. Over dessert, I asked, "whatever happened to Roe?"
>
> Sarah's gracious demeanor and beautiful smile changed instantaneously.
>
> "She's a stupid piece of white trash. She's pro-life and a Christian," she snarled throwing in a few decidedly ungracious and unrepeatable curse words. "She's a piece of trash. She was stupid when we found her and she's worse now."

Most people know that Weddington lied about "Roe". Roe never had an abortion. Her child was given up for adoption. Weddington and Coffee just used Roe to get the abortion law they wanted.

By the way, Linda Coffee was also attending church at the time she filed the abortion legal challenge, as the pro-abortion Dallas Morning News reports. Today, Linda Coffee is living with a woman. No husband, and apparently no kids – just like Weddington. This is the feminist vision, complete with lesbianism, sold to women in those left-wing seminaries we call "universities". And it's worse in non-STEM departments.

Something else about Sarah Weddington. You might have read my previous post on the research about the link between induced abortion and breast cancer. Her induced abortion prior to pregnancy is a textbook case for breast cancer, and that's exactly what happened to her:

> After arguing for abortion, Weddington eventually became an advisor to President Jimmy Carter and pushed for research on breast cancer, a disease from

> which she is a survivor. Ironically, dozens of studies have linked induced abortions to an increasing risk of breast cancer and a top researcher says more than 300,000 women have died from breast cancer as a result of having abortions.

I think her abortion crusade was just her attempt to make what she did legal, so that she would no longer be judged for her bad choices with men, sex and pregnancy.

The hero of young feminists

Why do people listen to people like Weddington, who have failed at life so badly? Is she really a hero of "women's rights"? Sex-selection abortions caused the deaths of 46 million unborn girls in India. Is that a triumph of "women's rights"? All pro-abortion women support sex-selection abortions – and they are most often used on unborn girls, who are the "wrong sex".

What Weddington did was not about "women's rights". It was about escaping moral judgement for her actions. Feminists today have so much hatred of being judged. They want to make poor decisions with men and sex, and then force people to not judge them for it. They want to chase hookup sex with hot bad boys. They want taxpayer-funded contraceptives and abortions. They want to eliminate any moral judgement of abortion. They want to silence the responsible, moral people. Feminists like Weddington call the moral, responsible people who disagree with women's poor choices "trash".

Can chivalrous Christian conservatives end abortion?

Most Christian men don't have the courage to challenge women like Weddington about their atheist, feminist, socialist worldviews. Look at the photo of the good United Methodist pastor's kid and church leader. She's so pretty. Men are very foolish. They judge women by their appearances. A pretty girl must be good, so they don't want to disagree with her or persuade her or lead her on moral or spiritual issues.

Christian / conservative men think it's "chivalrous" to make pretty women into victims. That's why she was probably never confronted about atheism, feminism and socialism by

her United Methodist pastor parents or church leaders. To confront a woman about her beliefs with reason and evidence is “harsh” and “unchivalrous”. Then at college, she was indoctrinated by those English professors and their red marking pens. She wanted good grades, so she wrote what they told her to write. She had never learned to develop her own views with reason and evidence. She just wanted to be liked. This was not a STEM program connected to the real world. She never formed her feminist pro-abortion convictions by writing code or doing lab work. Her non-STEM education was just indoctrination. Indoctrination that left her a murderer, a spinster and separated from God for eternity.

Nothing that’s going on in our churches teaches men to challenge young women about the atheism, feminism and socialism. The pious, chivalrous United Methodist pastors and parents were in a position to stop Sarah Weddington. But her parents and pastors failed to defeat ideologies like atheism, feminism and socialism with her. They were probably just focused on piety, feelings and community. They were probably just happy to have a pretty girl in their home and church. They probably didn’t want her to stress her out with having to learn logic, evidence or apologetics. They probably thought women were too dumb to learn those things, and put them into practice. Just send her to English professors and law school to be radicalized.

Social conservatives only want to stop abortion if it can be done in a way that allows women to keep radical feminism and the Sexual Revolution. The delaying marriage for careers must continue, they say. The shunning of spiritual and moral men must continue, they say. The drunken hook-ups with hot bad boys must continue, they say. Hot bad boys will change into good Christian husbands after they get hook-up sex, they say. No need to confront Sarah Weddington about her worldview with reason and evidence. That is too heavy-handed. That is not chivalrous.

And that’s why abortion is still legal.

Why don’t men go to church anymore? The decline of male church attendance

December 30, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I most recently spent half a year at a PCA church, and then another half a year at a Southern Baptist church. I attended Sunday services as well as Wednesday night Bible study. I am now looking for a new church. For now, I just look around for a sermon I like and listen to that. In this post, I’ll explain why I think men don’t like church.

There are three areas where churches fail to attract men:

1. Apologetics
2. Feminism, sex and marriage
3. Policy and current events

Apologetics

The PCA church discouraged me from becoming a member of the church because they said that conversion to Christianity due to reason and evidence was contrary to their teachings, and a “red flag”. Their words. I didn’t try to fight them on it, because they are Reformed Presbyterian, and this is their actual view. Their approach to apologetics was “pre-suppositional”, which is to say, they try to convince people to become Christians by asking them to assume that the Bible is infallible, without any argumentation or evidence. Naturally, this doesn’t work, so they aren’t trained to answer any serious questions from non-Christians. (1 Pet 3:15-16)

The Reformed Baptist SBC church is led by people like Russell Moore and Al Mohler, who take the “magic words” approach to evangelism. I.e. – they think that people become Christians just by speaking Bible verses out of context to them. So, when the atheist asks “do you have any evidence for God’s existence?” or “do you have any evidence for Jesus’ resurrection?”, their response is to quote Bible verses to the atheist, which have nothing to do with those topics. Christianity has lost so much influence in the culture under their approach, which is not even Biblical. (Mat 12:38–41)

These approaches to evangelism are not used in any other area of human endeavor. No one replies to questions about auto mechanics, or software engineering, or gardening, or cooking, by spouting Bible verses. In literally every other area of human endeavor, the laws of logic and supporting evidence are seen as assets when making claims to know something about the world to someone who disagrees with you.

Feminism, Sex and Marriage

First wave feminism simply asked for women to be given the same liberty and opportunity as men. That was good. But later versions of destroyed all distinctions between men and women. By destroying femininity, feminism directed women away from

the traditional life plan of marriage, children and home-making.

Feminism changed how women voted. Today, about 75% of young, unmarried women vote for policies like taxpayer-funded birth control, taxpayer-funded abortion, no-fault divorce, affirmative action for women in schools and in the workplace, taxpayer-funded daycare, public schools, single-mother welfare, social security, etc. These policies and programs raised tax rates, and grew government, making it easier for women to have children without having to choose a marriage-ready man she wasn't attracted to. Instead, she could choose men she was attracted to, and just use government programs as a substitute provider if it didn't "work out". Thanks to feminism, we have a 42% out-of-wedlock birth rate, and it's rising. Few female college graduates are debt-free. About 5% of women emerge from college as virgins.

Under feminism, the traditional male roles and virtues were deemed "sexist". Women were shamed for choosing early marriage, large families, and stable men who were good at being husbands and fathers. Instead, women today chose men based on appearance. They spend their 20s and early 30s giving men who will not commit to them premarital sex. The men who are getting sex thrown at them have no interest in Judeo-Christian values, chastity, fidelity, commitment or raising children. Women mistake the men's willingness to have sex and cohabitate as signs that they are close to marriage. But in fact, chasing the hot bad boys just eats up the chastity, youth and beauty that could have made them interesting to the marriage-minded men they scorned. Later on, they realize that they've wasted their 20s on bad boys, but by then they are not attractive for marriage.

What has the response been to feminism from pastors and churches? They accept the anti-male, anti-marriage policies, that came out of feminism. They accept the promiscuity, and the marriage-delaying that came from feminism. Today, pastors just try to bully the men who were passed over to marry the women who had previously rejected them, despite the higher risk of divorce caused by the women's past behavior.

Policy and current events

Most pastors are anti-intellectual, and they believe that this is a virtue, since they are focused narrowly on what the Bible explicitly says. Because of this, they aren't able to understand which laws and policies allow Christianity and Christian families to flourish. I agree that what the Bible speaks about is of the highest importance. But we need to understand how to achieve the goals that the Bible states, as well as how to counter the forces that threaten the achievement of those goals.

For example, Christianity thrives when marriage thrives. Christianity is passed on from parents to children. Anything that threatens marriage, or interferes with parental authority, weakens the influence of Christianity. So, policies like higher taxes, no-fault divorce, SOGI laws, all harm the Christian family, while policies like lower taxes, protections for Christian businesses, protection for Christian schools (statements of faith, moral codes), etc. are all good for Christian families. But most pastors never talk about

policies or laws, because they don’t think about how to defend the Christian worldview, how to educate Christian children, how to promote marriage, how promote Christian moral values in the public square. Even protecting the right to life of unborn children is ignored.

As the churches lose relevance, it becomes tempting for pastors to accept what the secular left promotes as good and true and beautiful. The big one is pastors pushing for redistribution of wealth by the secular government as a solution to “poverty”, even though the Bible only sanctions voluntary charity. This diminishes the cultural relevance of the church and elevates the secular government. SBC leaders like Russell Moore champion amnesty for refugees and unskilled illegal immigrants, not realizing how it will harm Christian institutions and values down the road to import large numbers of people who will eventually vote for policies like higher taxes, bigger government, etc.

Is there evidence of systemic racism in the United States?

December 31, 2021 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Systemic racism is the idea that people can't lift themselves out of poverty by making good decisions, because powerful groups in society that hold the poor down, regardless of their decisions. Do you think that America is a place where no matter what choices you make, you'll never be able to be more prosperous? That's what the leaders of Black Lives Matter think.

Here's what Nikole Hannah-Jones, creator of the 1619 Project, says in the New York Times (a former newspaper):

> To summarize, none of the actions we are told black people must take if they want to "lift themselves" out of poverty and gain financial stability — not marrying, not getting educated, not saving more, not owning a home — can mitigate 400 years of racialized plundering.

Got that? It doesn't matter what individual choices a non-white person takes in America, they're going to be poor. The "systemic racism" of the powerful whites will always keep them down. Single motherhood doesn't make people poor, and marriage doesn't make people wealthier. Dropping out of high school doesn't make you poor, and getting a Masters degree in computer science won't make you wealthier.

But let's take a look at the data from the 2019 Census, and see the evidence:

Median US Household Income by Selected Ancestry Groups, 2019		
Indian	Americans	$126,705
Taiwanese	Americans	$102,405
Filipino	Americans	$100,273
Indonesian	Americans	$93,501
Pakistani	Americans	$87,509
Iranian	Americans	$87,288
Lebanese	Americans	$87,099
Japanese	Americans	$85,007
Turkish	Americans	$83,375
Chinese	Americans	$82,281
Korean	Americans	$76,674
Syrian	Americans	$74,047
Hmong	Americans	$73,373
Vietnamese	Americans	$72,161
Cambodian	Americans	$72,038
White	**Americans**	**$69,823**
Ghanaian	Americans	$69,021
Bangladeshi	Americans	$67,944
Guyanese	Americans	$67,772
Egyptian	Americans	$67,187
Palestian	Americans	$67,157
Thai	Americans	$66,763
Laotian	Americans	$66,117
Nigerian	Americans	$65,672

Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Chart from AEI

Income By Ethnicity in America

White people are doing a bad job of keeping non-whites down

Well, it looks like at least SOME people of color are able to do well in America despite all the “systemic racism” that keeps non-whites down. And do you know what those non-white groups at the top have in common? They’ve made good decisions, they’ve worked hard, they haven’t blamed other people when they fail, and they’ve saved their money instead of spending it on shiny junk.

Let’s look at some decisions that the non-whites who are prosperous have made, that those further down have not.

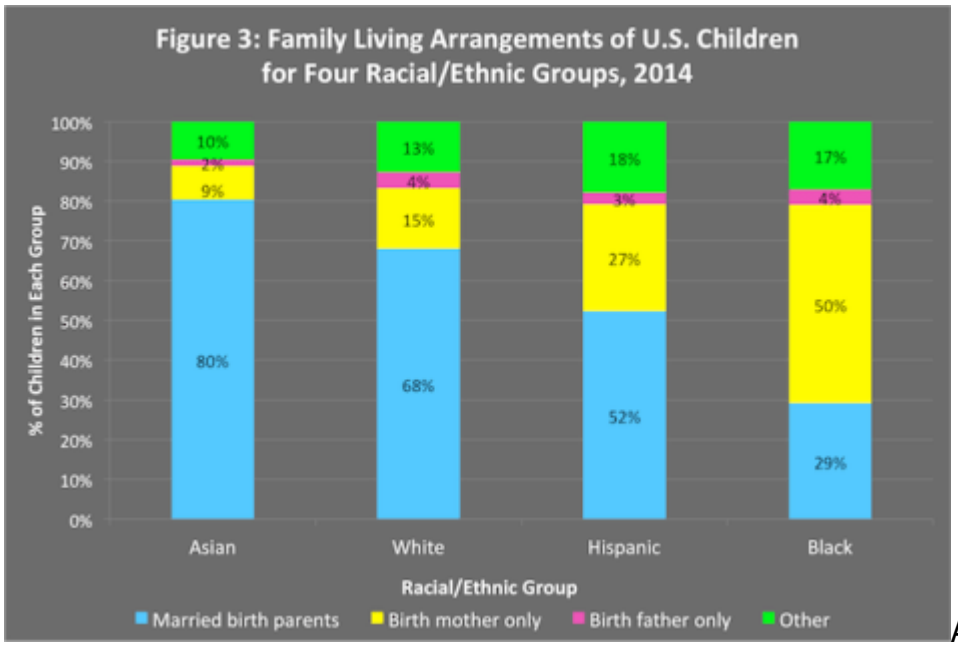

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

Education and marriage

This article is written by the far-left radical Nicholas Kristof, writing in the radically-leftist New York Times (a former newspaper).

Excerpt:

> A new scholarly book, “The Asian American Achievement Paradox,” by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, notes that Asian-American immigrants in recent decades have started with one advantage: They are highly educated, more so even than the average American. These immigrants are disproportionately doctors, research scientists and other highly educated professionals.

> It’s not surprising that the children of Asian-American doctors would flourish in the United States. But Lee and Zhou note that kids of working-class Asian-Americans often also thrive, showing remarkable upward mobility.
>
> […]There’s also evidence that Americans believe that A’s go to smart kids, while Asians are more likely to think that they go to hard workers… Asian-American kids are allowed no excuse for getting B’s — or even an A-. The joke is that an A- is an “Asian F.”

One reason Asians students do so well is because their parents are usually married:

> > Strong two-parent families are a factor, too. Divorce rates are much lower for many Asian-American communities than for Americans as a whole, and there's evidence that two-parent households are less likely to sink into poverty and also have better outcomes for boys in particular.

American blacks have a 73% out-of-wedlock birth rate. A huge difference compared to Asians.

So, when Nikole Hannah-Jones tells you that education and marriage don't matter, she's just wrong.

Compound interest

Education and marriage are important, but so is saving your money. The wealthiest people in America are typically the ones who are experts at saving money early, and investing it. They know about the law of compound interest. If you invest money early and leave it alone, then it will grow into a fortune by the time you are read to stop working.

This graph explains compound interest:

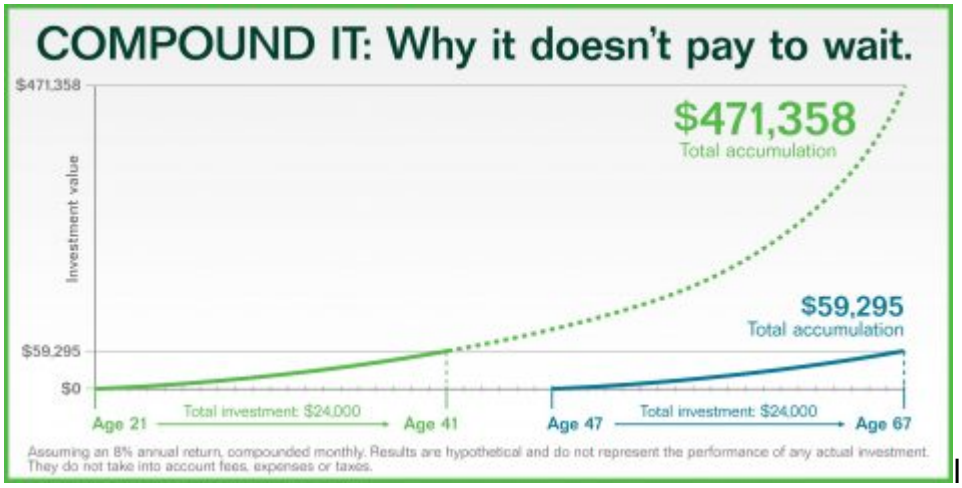

Investing $24,000 from age 21 to 41 vs investing $24000 from age 47 to 67

What does Nikole Hannah-Jones say when she looks at that graph? She doesn't think that saving money makes a difference to having more or less wealth. She thinks skin color determines whether saving money makes you wealthy or not. The graph clearly shows what we should be recommending to young people of color. They need to stop spending money and start saving it, and the earlier the better. It doesn't matter what your skin color is, saving money early JUST WORKS.

Similarly, when she says that home ownership doesn't make you more wealthy, this is just terrible advice. It's always better to pay down your own mortgage (at least when interest rates are low like they are now) than to pay someone else rent. You have to live somewhere, and paying for your own home is better because it costs about the same as rent, and then you get to keep the home when you're done paying for it.

Communism

Nikole Hannah-Jones does have a “solution” to disparities in wealth. Her solution is communism. She wants to transfer money from those who earn, to those who don’t. But we already have tried that in the 20st century and it resulted in the deaths of over 100 million people. That’s not my opinion, that’s all documented in a book published by Harvard University Press.

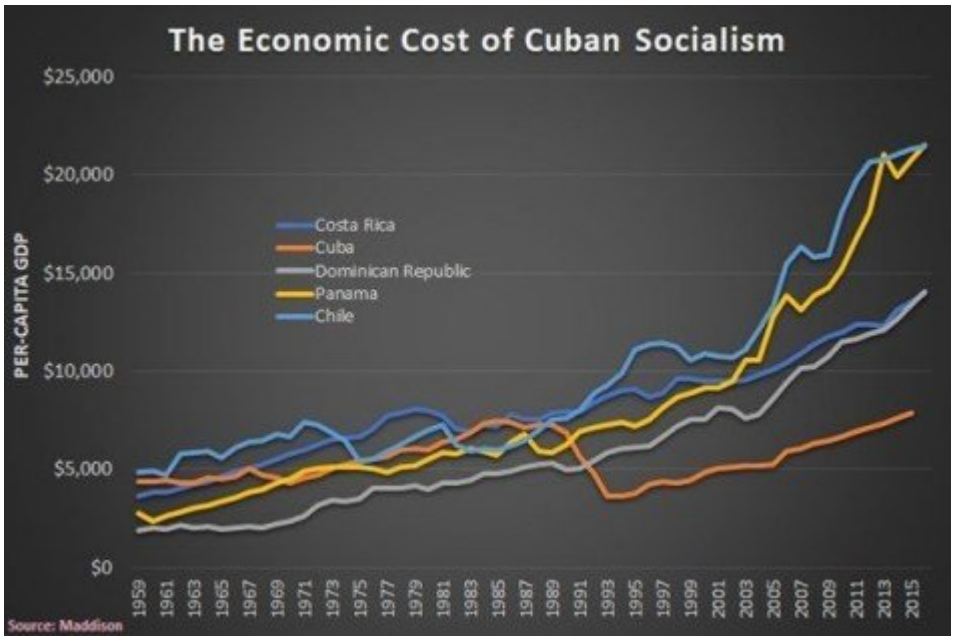

Socialism Communism Countries Per Capita GDP Income

You don’t even have to read the book to know the truth – just look at countries that score low on the Index of Economic Freedom, and compare their GDP per capita to countries that score high on the Index of Economic Freedom. The more communist a nation goes, the less wealth there is for the citizens. That’s why people in Venezuela are eating zoo animals and selling their bodies in prostitution for food, while nearby capitalist countries like Panama and Chile prosper. Nikole Hannah-Jones wants to reduce economic freedom, but we know by looking at other countries that this lowers per-capita GDP.

There’s a lot more than could be said here, but the point is that we need to be telling American blacks to make decisions that match the decisions of other successful non-white communities in America. We need to start teaching young people basic economics so they don’t fall prey to charlatans.

Most Americans think cohabitation leads to a stable marriage, but what does the data say?

January 1, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

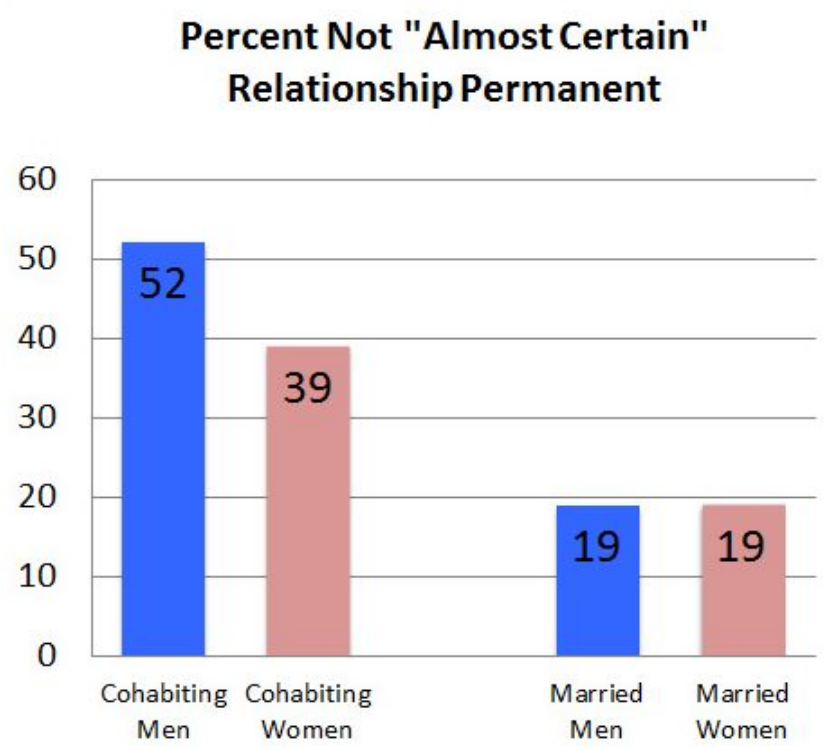

Men who cohabitate are not certain that the relationship is permanent

If there's one thing that ought to lead people to Christianity, it's the proven ability of the Christian moral rules to guide believers away from the sins that destroy them. A lot of modern "Christians" have reduced Christianity to being about their feelings and their community, while allowing the culture to determine their goals and moral boundaries. But that won't protect them from danger.

Cohabitation describes the situation of a couple moving into the same home and being sexually active, but without any legally-recognized commitment. It's extremely popular among young people today, and even Christians.

Consider this article from The Federalist about cohabitation:

> A new Pew Research Center study shows Americans both cohabitate ("live with an unmarried partner") and find cohabitation acceptable more than before.
>
> […]More young adults have cohabited than have married. Pew's analysis in the summer of 2019 of the National Survey of Family Growth found that, for the first time ever, the percentage of American adults aged 18-44 who have ever cohabited with a partner (59 percent) exceeded the percentage of those who have ever married (50 percent).

I thought this was very interesting, especially for the Christian parents and pastors who

imagine that their lovely pious daughters all have a Christian worldview just because they sing in the church choir:

> Just 14 percent hold a view consistent with a biblical sexual ethic, that cohabitation with an unmarried romantic partner outside of marriage is “never acceptable.”

Just to be clear, in my life I’ve met about 6 non-Christian men who cohabitated with women, and every single one of them cohabitated with a Christian-raised woman. That should tell you what young women are being told about relationships in their homes and churches about sex and marriage. “Do whatever you want”.

So what purpose does cohabitation serve?

> A majority of Americans (69 percent) say that “it is acceptable for an unmarried couple to live together even if they don’t plan to get married.” They may assume that they can decrease their chances of a bad marriage and increase their chances of a good one by giving the relationship a cohabitation “test run.”
>
> […]A plurality of Americans believe cohabitating before marriage yields more successful unions. Nearly half of Americans (48 percent) believe that couples who live together before marriage “have a better chance of having a successful marriage.” This view is even more prevalent among young adults aged 18-29 (63 percent).
>
> Another 38 percent of all Americans say cohabitation “doesn’t make much difference” on marital success. Only 13 percent of Americans believe cohabiting couples have “a worse chance” of having a successful marriage.
>
> […]Most Americans believe cohabitating couples raise children just as well as married couples. Pew also surveyed people’s opinions about cohabiting couples raising children, and 59 percent of Americans declared that cohabiting couples “can raise children just as well as married couples.” Again, the younger respondents were most likely to have a favorable view of cohabitation: among adults aged 18 to 49, 67 percent agreed cohabiting couples do just as well, while 32 percent said: “Married couples do a better job raising children.”

Yes, cohabitation seen as a test run, and it’s supposed to make stable marriage more likely and not be harmful to children at all.

But why think that a test run should be part of getting married? After all, when I buy a parrot from the pet store, I don’t expect to later return that parrot. Why not? Because I am not buying the parrot to enhance MY life. I am buying the parrot to make a commitment to care for the parrot. Whether the parrot fulfills any of my needs is irrelevant to me. I want the bird in my house so that I can decide what it eats, what it drinks, and invest myself into making it happy, according to its birdish nature. This is because I think that parrots have value in and of themselves, and they deserve a certain quality of life. When I buy the parrot, I am guaranteeing a permanent commitment to the

bird to provide for its needs, physical and emotional. And that commitment carries forward to the time (now) when the bird is elderly, and can't even fly up to his cage or down to the floor. He calls for me, and I go over and pick him up and move him. That's commitment.

Cohabitation, on the other hand, is the practice of saying to another *human being*: "I am going to try you out as an entertaining commodity in my home, but if you don't fulfill *my needs* then I'm going to send you right back." That's not a commitment. That's self indulgence. It's defining a relationship as *entertainment* that is designed to meet *my needs* and *make me happy*. And that's because the concept of commitment in relationships is not presented to young people at any time in their lives. Not from parents. Not in churches. Not in the secular left culture as a whole. Everything is a consumer good designed for the purpose of entertainment – including people. It was only the Christian worldview that had a view of people as creatures made by God for eternal life, so that marriage was about guarding the other person's faith, and building them up to achieve all the things that God wanted them to achieve for his purposes.

But does cohabitation really work to create stable relationships? After all, anyone can find a partner when they're young and pretty. The real question is whether that partner will stick around when you're old and ugly and can't be as "fun" as you used to be.

Here's a recent (2018) study on cohabitation and stability:

> A new study published in the *Journal of Marriage and Famil*y finds that the "premarital cohabitation effect" lives on, despite what you've likely heard. The premarital cohabitation effect is the finding that those who live together prior to marriage are more likely, not less, to struggle in marriage.
>
> […]Michael Rosenfeld and Katharina Roesler's new findings suggest that there remains an increased risk for divorce for those living together prior to marriage, and that prior studies suggesting the effect has gone away had a bias toward short versus longer-term effects. **They find that living together before marriage is associated with lower odds of divorce in the first year of marriage, but increases the odds of divorce in all other years tested, and this finding holds across decades of data.**

Strategy advice to those who debate this issue: just be aware that Team Secular Leftist is using papers that have short-range samples, which don't show the instability problem, because they deliberately cherry-pick recently married couples.

And what about children raised in cohabitating relationships?

> While Americans are optimistic about the ability of cohabiting couples to raise children, a study published by the American College of Pediatricians in 2014 reported that children whose parents cohabit face a higher risk of: "premature birth, school failure, lower education, more poverty during childhood and lower incomes as adults, more incarceration and behavior problems, single parenthood, medical neglect and chronic health problems both medical and psychiatric, more

> substance, alcohol and tobacco abuse, and child abuse," and that "a child conceived by a cohabiting woman is at 10 times higher risk of abortion compared to one conceived in marriage."

I'm just going to be blunt here. The majority of young people are progressives, and they vote for candidates who believe in abortion through all nine months of pregnancy, and even after birth. Why? Because they don't want to have their right to seek happiness impacted by the needs of other people. Progressives believe that children, if they exist at all, should enhance the lives of their adult owners. No one should be surprised that people who think that killing inconvenient children is moral are willing to inflict other bad outcomes on them by raising them in an unstable cohabitation environment.

Are men allowed to have preferences about which women are best for marriage?

January 2, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, in a previous post, I explained why men have to be careful about choosing a wife. Men have plans and they need a woman with the right skills to achieve it. Even if a woman genuinely repents her past, she may not have developed the skills for a godly man's marriage plan. For example, her 50K of student loans makes it harder to afford a stay-at-home homeschooling mother.

But many Christian women feel that there is no such thing as a Christian woman who is a bad candidate for marriage. It doesn't matter what a Christian woman did in the past. A man should never evaluate her skills for the roles of wife and mother. After all, if God forgives a Christian woman for running up student loan debt for a useless women's studies degree, or for getting drunk and sleeping around with hawt bad boys in college, then no Christian man should hold her past decisions against her when choosing a wife. Men are *obligated t*o disregard the past anti-marriage decisions made by women. To do anything else is to deny the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So many Christian women say.

What would happen if the shoe were on the other foot? What if it were the MAN who had been selfish, lazy and irresponsible? What if the MAN had made choices that seriously harmed his ability to perform male marriage roles like protecting and providing for his wife and children? Would marriage-ready women be *obligated* to marry this man as much as a man who had remained chaste, got a good education, built up a gapless resume, saved enough for a downpayment on a house, and taught apologetics in his home church? Is she allowed to prefer a man who has made good decisions to prepare for his marriage roles over a man who has made horrible decisions, but just hollers "grace" when anyone questions his ability to be a husband and father?

This MUST-READ article from The Federalist asks and answers that question.

Do you agree with the author?

> I think it's time for a conversation about another elephant in the room: this idea that women prefer physically fit men with good jobs and no criminal record. It's incredibly sexist and matriarchal to insist that women have a natural preference for men who have invested time and energy into stewarding their bodies, have shown the capability of earning a living and supporting a family, and have not gone to jail for attempting to grow 452 marijuana plants in their mother's basement.
>
> I know more than a few men who spent their twenties languishing in their parents' homes, subsisting on Cheetos and Mountain Dew, playing Xbox, watching pornography, and smoking controlled substances. If one of these men turns his life around, accepts Jesus, and starts fresh, young women have no right to overlook him as a potential mate just because he is 280 pounds, has almost no

> marketable skills at 30 years old, and cannot vote, serve on a jury, or own a firearm. He is created in the image of God, and accepted by Jesus! Any women who would overlook every other noble quality he possesses for basic financial security and a clean background check (not to mention browsing history) isn't a woman he should want.
>
> Men like this have often long since repented of their listless and slothful ways. If the lingering consequences of their pasts didn't stop Christ from living and dying for them, then it shouldn't stop a Christian woman from loving them, either. Period.

The Federalist article makes it clear that a man's poor choices about his education, job, obedience to the law, and physical fitness CLEARLY compromise his ability to perform his male duties to protect and provide. What about moral and spiritual leading? Well if he didn't spent his teens and 20s studying apologetics, moral issues, etc. then he isn't going to compare favorably to a man who teaches apologetics in his church, debates atheists, and writes blog posts for the Life Training Institute.

My friend Lee is a superb stay-at-home wife and mother. She says that we shouldn't accept "Jesus forgives me" as an immediate reversal of past harmful choices:

> I would note that there is a difference between just being forgiven of sin and actually repenting of it. Repenting is a turning away from and will manifest in changes; paying down debts, becoming chaste, becoming otherwise responsible and wise. Someone's past doesn't have to define their future. But that will manifest in observable and measurable changes.

She's right.

I knew a Christian woman who had 25,000 worth of student loan debt when she was 29. She wasn't using her degree, she was just working as a waitress. I found her a job as an IT project manager in an FT100 company, so she could pay off her loans. She declined, because "being a waitress is the easiest job I've ever had". She hasn't worked full-time as a professional since January 2013. She'll say "Jesus forgives me!" and "I hate my student loans!", but the loans are even larger now, and the wasteful spending on fun and thrills hasn't stopped. Hollering "grace" and saying you hate debt doesn't make you a good steward – and you'll *need to be a good steward* if you are in a marriage. She's not ready to manage the finances of a household. If she had taken the job, and paid off the loans, then she would have overcome the mistake, and become marriage-ready.

So what's really behind the hysteria against men evaluating women for marriage?

Deti nails the real root problem:

> Not one person – NOT ONE PERSON – said that nonvirgins with tattoos and debt are bad people; that they are irredeemable, that they're bad Christians; that they cannot be Christians; that they're unsalvageable; that they're ugly; or that they couldn't and shouldn't marry. That is NOT what was said.

> All that was said was that men prefer tattooless, debtfree virgins for marriage. That's all.
>
> […]The bible… teaches repentance is the way to salvation. But repentance does not mean you no longer bear the scars of your past sins in body and mind. You do. Oh yes you do. The effects can be minimized, even overcome. But they're still there.
>
> And more to the point, what's really being complained about here is a Christian woman acknowledging that men have preferences and that men are entitled to have preferences. If women want men, then they have to satisfy those preferences or lower their standards until they find men whose preferences they can satisfy.
>
> This can't be overemphasized – it's the idea that men have preferences. Its' the idea that there's a man that's one-half of that relationship, and there are things HE wants, and HE needs, and HE desires. Why does it matter what HE wants? Why do we care about him?
>
> Men don't want to marry high N women. Men don't want to take on debt and they don't prefer markedup tatted up women who look and act like men.
>
> What this gets down to is women objecting to men having standards. Because that leads to men judging women. And that leads to men evaluating women. And that leads to men rejecting some women and accepting others. And women hate judgment and rejection, especially when it's "less than" men who are doing the judging and rejecting.

N refers to the number of sexual partners a person has had.

The reason we discuss best practices for marriage-minded women is so that young women, especially young women who lack a father in the home, can get some kind of guidance about how to resist the culture's lies about men, sex and marriage. Such a woman has NOWHERE TO GO in this culture in order to learn how to relate to men, and how to marry to a man who will love her faithfully and forever. That's not fair! We have to help her!

What Christian men are doing by promoting chastity, sobriety, good stewardship and self-control to these young women is *protecting them from a culture that lies to them*. The well-meaning Christian women who think that talking about moral boundaries and wisdom will hurt the feelings of women who have made mistakes are actually making it harder for young women who have no guidance at all. The most vulnerable ones are the ones who need to hear that chastity is wise. Doing a STEM degree is wise. Getting out of debt by spending less is wise. Not seeking attention with graffiti on your body is wise. That's what unmarried women need to hear.

It's amazing to me that so many Christians do not understand the protective value of recommending Biblical morality and Biblical wisdom to young women. They would rather sacrifice these young women to the secular culture than allow older women to feel bad

about their past decisions. So many Christians seem to be more concerned about *their own feelings* than about *promoting and defending what the Bible teaches* to young people who really need help.

Do people who sing songs about Christianity know whether these things are true?

January 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I sometimes hang out on the William Meme Craig discord channel, chatting with the Christian philosophers I find there. One of them likes to suggest interesting posts that I can write about. Her latest find was this article about Kevin Max, a long-time member of the famous Christian band, DC Talk. I have one of their CDs from the 1990s. Here's what happened to Kevin.

Excerpt:

> Kevin Max, a member of the popular Christian band DC Talk, announced over the weekend he is now "exvangelical," noting he's been "deconstructing" his faith "for decades."
>
> The singer dismissed some on social media who claimed he is no longer a Christian, saying he "didn't say that" and clarified he follows "the Universal Christ," although he didn't explain what that means.
>
> […]In another tweet posted Monday, Max described himself as "anti-war, pro-peace, anti-hate, pro-live, pro-LGBTQIA, pro-BLM, pro-open mindedness, anti-narrow mindedness, pro-utopia, anti-white nationalist agenda, pro-equality, pro-vax, pro-music, anti-1%rs, pro-poor, pro-misfit-pro-Jesus, etc…"

He's not very interestef in defending God's existence using logic and evidence. He's more interested in aligning himself with the new vision of morality, provided by the secular left. Whatever they tell him is virtuous, he is all for it. The secular left clearly knows more about moral issues and economics than Christian scholars like Ryan T. Anderson, Jay Richards, Robert P. George, Voddie Baucham, etc.

The article says:

> Max's comments come not long after former DesiringGod.org writer Paul Maxwell announced he is no longer a Christian, which he said in April "feels really good" and has made him "really happy." Former Christian recording artist Jonathan Steingard has also left his Christian faith. In May 2020, he said, "I am now finding that I no longer believe in God."
>
> One of theologian John Piper's sons, Abraham, has also been open about abandoning his faith, saying he just doesn't believe ultimate meaning exists.

I wrote about Jon Steingard before. I also wrote about how John Piper compared Trump's mean tweets to Biden's infanticide and LGBT extremism, claiming he couldn't decide which was worse. Jon Steingard and John Piper were never respected by Christian apologists who deal in reason and evidence. Piety and music are entertaining, but they don't have much to do with finding truth.

The example of Katy Perry

Let's take a look at two parents who run a ministry that is based around passionate preaching, prayer and Bible verses. Their famous daughter is named "Katy Perry". Perhaps you've heard of her?

Consider these books from their web site…

Mary Hudson "Smart Bombs":

> Smart Bombs is a book which will show you practically and with true life examples how to take God's Word and let it explode strongholds in your life. When you read the Bible, He quickens particular passages or verses to your heart. You know it is God talking to you about your situation. Or when you receive a prophetic word, you sense in your heart this is speaking to you. But what do you do with these words when they bear witness with you? Let them fade away and disappear off of your memory? No, Smart Bombs shows you how to go on the offense with the anointed word of God, how to demolish strongholds and take back everything the enemy has stolen from you.
>
> This easy read is a must for anyone who is looking for clarity on their destiny.

Easy read. Uh huh.

Keith Hudson "The Cry":

> The Cry will reignite you with new fire. Christians lose their passion when they let go of their zeal for God. We come into prayer meetings and we are so polished and perfected. But the Lord wants to hear the cry of your heart. The church has lost its cry: God is about to restore it. Why did the thirty people gathered for the Azusa Street revival have such a move of the spirit of God in their day? Because they had a cry in their hearts and in their prayers. The Cry will release a desperate longing in you for Gods intervention in your life. It goes way beyond your natural thinking into a spiritual hunger from your innermost being. When everything else has failed, a desperate cry touches the heart of God.

Desperate cry. Fascinating.

Do you think that parents who write books like that will produce the same kind of children as parents who read William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer, Jay Richards, Michael Licona, etc.? Of course not.

Here's an article from Christian Post about what they produced.

Excerpt:

> Katy Perry, the 29-year-old singer and songwriter, is revealing that while she prays she no longer identifies with Christianity.
>
> "I don't believe in a heaven or a hell, or an old man sitting on a throne…," she told Marie Claire magazine recently.
>
> […]Perry, who took the Billboard charts by storm with her hit song "I Kissed a

> Girl” in 2008, told Marie Claire that she no longer considers herself a Christian despite being raised by Christian ministers.
>
> […]Despite her decision to perform music that may seem controversial to the Christian community, the chart-topping singer has never shied away from crediting the Christian church for giving her a start as a performer.
>
> “The atmosphere I grew up in was 100 percent Christian,” Perry said her “Part of Me: 3D” movie which was released last year. “I started singing in the church, I never really had another plan.”

The atmosphere she grew up in was 0% Christian, and 100% anti-intellectual. And that didn’t prepare her for stable Christianity.

Katy Perry writes songs to promote homosexuality to young people. Katy Perry also married a heroin-addicted leftist non-Christian. Tall, dark, handsome and a famous comedian, too. That’s what her childhood of feelings and experiences taught her to look for in a man. That’s the legacy of spiritual gifts, God opening doors of mysticism and charismatic anti-intellectualism.

I’m just wondering whether tootling, (tootling is my term of derision for Christians who major in singing and dancing, and minor in reason and evidence), should be seen by the rest of us as an indicator of grounded, stable Christianity. Or should we start to assume that people like Kevin Max and Katy Perry are unstable Christians? There are plenty of good scholars with stable worldviews that we can read instead of paying attention to the tootlers.

Jeff Hester debates William Lane Craig on the topic “Is Belief in God Rational in a Scientific Age?”

January 4, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an accurate protrayal of what went down in this debate

I was very excited to see a recent debate by Christian philosopher William Lane Craig against atheist astronomer Jeff Hester. When I summarize a debate, I do a fair, objective summary if the atheist is intelligent and informed, as with Peter Millican, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong or Austin Dacey. But the following summary is rated VS for Very Snarky, and you’ll soon see why.

The debate itself starts at 29 minutes:

Thanks to Enrique for the link to a version with better audio.

Dr. Craig’s opening speech

Dr. Craig went first, and he presented 4 arguments, as well as the ontological argument which I won’t summarize or discuss. He later added another argument for theism from the existence of the universe that does not require an origin of the universe.

A1. Counter-examples

Theists who are elite scientists cannot be “irrational”, for example: Allan Sandage, Gustav Tammann, George Ellis, Don Page, Christopher Isham

A2. Kalam cosmological argument

1. Whatever begins to exist requires a cause.

2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe requires a cause.

A3. Fine-tuning of the universe to permit complex intelligent life

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is due either to physical necessity, chance or design.
2. It is not due to physical necessity or chance.
3. Therefore it is due to design.

A4. Moral argument

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.
2. Objective moral values and duties do exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Dr. Hester's opening speech

Dr. Hester went second and presented two arguments which both committed the genetic fallacy, a logical fallacy that makes the arguments have no force.

Hester starts his opening speech by asserting that Albert Einstein was irrational, because he denied quantum mechanics.

Hester explains that he became an atheist at 15. This would have been before the evidence for the origin of the universe became widespread, before we had very many examples of fine-tuning, before the discovery that the origin of life problem is a problem of the origin of complex, specifed information, etc. What kind of reasons can a 15-year-old child have for becoming an atheist? It's hard to say, but I would suspect that they were psychological. Children often desire autonomy from moral authorities. They want to be free to pursue pleasure. They don't want to be thought of as superstitious and morally straight by their non-religious peers.

Later on in the debate, Hester volunteers that he hated his father because his father professed to be a Christian, but he was focused on his career and making money. In the absence of any arguments for atheism, it's reasonable to speculate that Hester became an atheist for psychological reasons. And as we'll see, just like the typical 15-year-old child, he has no rational basis for atheism. What's astonishing is how he continues to hold to the atheism of his teens when it has been falsified over and over by scientific discoveries in the years since.

He says that Dr. Craig's deductive arguments do not have premises that reach a conclusion through the laws of logic. On the contrary, he just asserts that God exists as his conclusion, and then says that this assertion is the best explanation of a gap in our scientific knowledge. Some of the gaps in our scientific knowledge he uses in his arguments are: 1) he doesn't understand why the Sun moves through the sky, so God exists, 2) he doesn't understand why the wind blows, so God exists.

What counts as "rational" are things that have not been disproved. The progress of science has shown that the universe did not need a casuse in order to begin to exist, and

also there is no cosmic fine-tuning.

A1. The success of evolution in the software industry proves that there is no God

All hardware and software is developed using genetic algorithms that exactly match Darwinian processes. All the major computer companies like Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Apple, etc. are just generating products using mutation and selection to evolve products over long periods of time. If you look over a typical software engineering degree, it's all about Darwinian evolution, and nothing about design patterns, object-oriented design, etc.

This widespread use of evolution in the software industry undermines all of the arguments for God's existence. Evolution caused the origin of the universe. Evolution explains why the universe is fine-tuned for life. Evolution, which requires replication already be in place in order to work, explains the origin of the first self-replicating organism.

A2. Theist's view of the world is just a result of peer pressure from their tribes

All of Dr. Craig's logical arguments supported by scientific evidence don't matter, because he got them from a primitive tribe of Christians that existed 2000 years ago. Everyone gets their view of origins, morality, meaning in life, death, etc. from their tribes. Except me, I'm getting my beliefs from reason and evidence because I'm a smart atheist. I don't have an atheist tribe in the university that would sanction me if I disagreed with nonsense like homosexuality is 100% genetic, transgenderism, man-made catastrophic global warming, fully naturalistic evolution, aliens seeded the Earth with life, infanticide is moral, socialism works, overpopulation will cause mass starvation, nuclear winter, etc. Also, my argument isn't the genetic fallacy at all, because smart atheists don't commit elementary logical fallacies that even a first-year philosophy student would know.

A3. Our brains evolved so our rational faculties are unreliable, so God does not exist

The logical reasoning that Dr. Craig uses to argue for theism are all nonsense, because human minds just have an illusion of consciousness, an illusion of rationality, and an illusion of free will. Everything Dr. Craig says is just deluded nonsense caused by chemicals in his brain. He has cognitive biases the undermine all his logical arguments and scientific evidence. He just invented an imaginary friend with super powers. Except me, I'm a smart atheist, so I actually have real consciousness, real reasoning powers, and no cognitive biases. Also, my argument isn't the genetic fallacy at all, because my arguments would not get an F in a first-year philosophy course.

Discussion

I'm not going to summarize everything in the discussion, or the question and answer time. I'm just going to list out some of the more interesting points.

Dr. Craig asks him how it is that he has managed to escape these biases from tribalism, projection, etc. He talks about how brave and noble atheist rebels are. The moderator

asks him the same question. He repeats how brave and noble atheist rebels are.

Dr. Hester is asked whether he affirms a causeless beginning of the universe or an eternal universe. He replies he states that the universe came into being without a cause, because causality doesn't apply to the beignning of the universe. He also asserts with explanation that Borde, Guth and Vilenkin have undermined the kalam cosmological argument, mentioning a web site.

Dr. Craig replied to this phantom argument after the debate on Facebook:

> Speaking of which, although I haven't had time to consult the website mentioned by Dr. Hester concerning Guth and Vilenkin on the kalam cosmological argument, I know the work of these two gentlemen well enough to predict what one will find there. Since neither one is yet a theist (so much, by the way, for the dreaded confirmation bias!), they have to reject at least one of the premises of the kalam cosmological argument.
>
> Guth wants to deny premiss (2) The universe began to exist–for which Vilenkin has rebuked him. Guth would avoid the implications of their theorem by holding our hope for the Carroll-Chen model, which denies the single condition of the BGV theorem. This gambit is, however, unsuccessful, since the Carroll-Chen model does so only by positing a reversal of the arrow of time at some point in the finite past. This is not only highly non-physical, but fails to avert the universe's beginning, since that time-reversed, mirror universe is no sense in our past. The model really postulates two different universes with a common beginning.
>
> So Vilenkin is forced to deny premiss (1) Whatever begins to exists has a cause. He says that if the positive energy associated with matter exactly counterbalances the negative energy associated with gravity, then the net sum of the energy is zero, and so the conservation of energy is not violated if the universe pops into being from nothing! But this is like saying that if your assets exactly balance your debts, then your net worth is zero, and so there does not need to be a cause of your financial situation! As Christopher Isham points out, there still needs to be "ontic seeding" in order to create the positive and negative energy in the first place, even if on balance their sum is zero.

Dr. Hester is asked how he explains the evidence for fine-tuning. He literally says that "Life is fine-tuned for the Universe", i.e. – that evolution will create living beings regardless of the laws of physics, constants, etc. For example, he thinks that in a universe with a weaker stong force, which would have only hyrogen atoms, evolution would still evolve life. And in a universe that recollapses in a hot fireball, and never forms stars or planets, evolution would produce life. Physicist Luke Barnes, who was commenting on the YouTube chat for the video, said this:

> "Life is fine-tuned for the Universe" – complete ignorance of the field. Read a book.

Hester tries to cite Jeremy England to try to argue for life appearing regardless of what

the laws of physics are. Barnes comments:

> Jeremy England's work supports no such claim.

Hester appealed to the multiverse, which faces numerous theoretical and observational difficulties. For example, the multiverse models have to have some mechanism to spawn different universes, but these mechanisms themselves require fine-tuning, as Robin Collins argues. And the multiverse is falsified observationally by the Boltzmann brains problem. It was so ironic that Hester claimed to be so committed to testing theories. The mutliverse theory cannot be tested experimentally, and must be accepted on faith.

Dr. Hester is asked how he grounds morality on atheism. He says there are no objective moral values and duties. He instead lists off a bunch of Christian beliefs which he thinks are objectively wrong. Even his statements about these moral issues are misinformed. For example, he asserts that homosexuality is causally determined by biology, but this is contradicted by identical twin studies that have a rate of 20-40% where both twins are gay.

Dr. Hester is asked about free will, which is required in order to make moral choices. He denies the existence of free will, which undermines his earlier statements about morality. Morality is only possible if humans can make free choices to act in accordance with a moral standard. So, he claims that Christians are immoral, then he claims that they have no freedom to act other than they do.

Dr. Hester also volunteered that his father believed in the prosperity gospel, and tithed in order to be rewarded with money by God. Dr. Craig immediately says "no wonder you're in rebellion against Christianity". Indeed.

Dr. Hester is asked about his view that human beings are unable to unable to perceive the world objectively. How is he able to perceive the world objectively, when all of the rest of us are unable to? His response is that he is just smarter than everyone else because his ideas have never been falsified by testing.

Scoring the debate

Dr. Craig's 5 arguments went unrefuted. Hester's argument about genetic algorithms was ludicrous to anyone who understands software engineering. His arguments about tribalism and unreliable mental faculties were self-refuting, and committed the genetic fallcy. At several points, Hester denied mainstream science in favor of untested and untestable speculations. It was the worst defeat of atheism I have ever witnessed. He was uninformed and arrogant. He didn't know what he was talking about, and he tried to resort to speculative, mystical bullshit to cover up his failure to meet Dr. Craig's challenge.

Does the Bible teach that all judging of other people is wrong?

January 5, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Today, most people seem to think that the most wonderful thing is to not judge anyone else. We're told that morality is like personal preference… you just choose what you like. There is no standard of morality that exists objectively, in the same way as mathematics or logic exists. And besides, even if there were, the only reason to judge someone else would be to hurt them. Right?

I found an interesting article about judging from Christian apologist Timothy Fox, on the Freethinking Ministries web site. He starts out right away with one very good reason for judging – judging allows people who have experience and demonstrated ability to help those who are making mistakes to get better.

Timothy writes:

> When you study to be an educator, you have to spend a certain number of hours as a student teacher, under the guidance of a veteran teacher. I remember my cooperating teacher telling me one of my strengths was that I took criticism well and was very open to it. I was shocked to hear this! I wanted to tell him he was crazy and that I hate criticism! But I was also well aware that he was the master and I was the apprentice and that it was his responsibility to help me to be the best teacher I could be. So I needed his criticism. (And I received a lot of it!) Whenever he gave me feedback, positive or negative, it wasn't intended to stroke my ego or hurt my feelings. It was so I can learn and improve, to keep doing the good and to change the bad.
>
> The same goes for many other things, such as sports. Athletes have coaches that train and guide. But what about normal, everyday life? That's when we want people to leave us alone. Don't tell me how to live. *Don't judge me.*

In my life, I've been able to have success at a few things. Education for sure – I have a BS and MS in computer science which has allowed me to earn a good living. Finances… well, I've made a lot of mistakes with investing, but I was able to succeed (eventually!) just by maxing out my 401K and Roth IRA contributions every year. And I'm just starting on my 23rd year of full time work. So when I give people advice, it's usually in those areas, or maybe in apologetics.

But that advice is not always well-received. Usually, the people I'm advising just find themselves some nice yes-men and yes-women who will agree with them that having fun "in the moment" won't close any doors down the road. It doesn't work, but that's how judging is received. Cut off the judge, and find yourself some yes-men and yes-women. And when your plan doesn't work, just say that it wasn't your fault. Blame other people for the predictable consequences of your own actions.

People often cite a passage in the Bible about not making judgments, Matthew 7:1-6. But does it really say that?

> [1]"Do not judge so that you will not be judged.
>
> [2] For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.
>
> [3] Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?
>
> [4] Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?
>
> [5] You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
>
> [6] "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Here's what Timothy Fox had to say about those verses:

> Jesus' point is *not* not to judge (note the double negative). It's "Don't be a hypocrite!" Verse 5 commands us to clean up our own junk, *then* to help clean up your friends'. He's stating the obvious, that when you criticize people, they *will* turn around and criticize you back. So make sure your closet is clean first! And how do you know who the "dogs" and "pigs" are (v. 6)? Wouldn't you have to *judge* them?
>
> And then there is John 7:24: "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." Here Jesus is differentiating between proper and improper judgement. But he still commands to judge!
>
> The reason for many of Paul's letters is to correct some kind of nonsense going on in a church. In 1 Corinthians 5, he writes angrily that the church is not judging sin in their midst (and it's quite the sin – go read it!). In verse 12, he rhetorically asks "Are you not to judge those inside [the church]?" And in the following verse, he plainly states to remove the "wicked person" from their midst. Here Paul is criticizing the church for *not* judging when they should have, even to the extent of excommunicating an unrepentant church member.

He concludes:

> More often than not, the ones who cry "Don't judge me!" the loudest are the ones who need it the most, whether it's due to insecurity, pride, or flat-out rebellion. But let us not forget that Jesus was full of truth *and* grace. We desperately need both in our dealings with our brothers and sisters in Christ, when we give correction as well as when we receive it. It's never pleasant to hear some hard (but loving) truth, but remember the first half of Proverbs 27:6: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Do we like it? Of course not. But we need it.

> And more than that, the Bible commands it.

Obviously, it doesn’t feel good to admit you’re wrong, but if you want to achieve results, then the quickest way to do that is to listen to people who have already achieved results. The world isn’t as “random” as many people want to believe. You get to make choices, and there are best practices. When you see someone failing to achieve their goals, it doesn’t do them any good to tell them to follow their hearts and it’s not their fault when they fail. The best thing to do is to show them what to do differently, and help them to do it.

What are the consequences of voting for “compassion” and “non-judgment”?

January 6, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Many people who vote for big-government Democrat policies do so because they feel that not judging others is a worth goal. Although the practice of not making moral judgements (“tolerance”) has become “morally good” in our culture, it does cause trouble for some people. In this case, the people who vote against moral standards (“judging”) actually do more harm than good.

So, one group that votes for the Democrat party because of “tolerance” and “compassion” is young, unmarried women. In my experience, most young, unmarried women form their beliefs by adapting to the people around them. They enter a social situation, they find out what the “smart” people believe, then they believe that too. They aren’t trying to bound their beliefs by truth. They feel that the social environment determines “truth”. If you’ve ever known a perfect Christian girl who prayed, sang and read her Bible at home, but then turned into a secular left radical in college, you’ll know what I am talking about.

Transgenderism opponent Abigail Shrier writes:

> Today, before any of us decides what it is we want, we open our phones and participate in our own manipulation at the hands of those who actively want us to think, and see, and vote differently than our own wills would have us do.
>
> […]Spotify presses us to like the same music; Amazon pushes us to purchase specific books and away from others. If you’re under the impression that the books Amazon recommends to you are based solely on a content-neutral algorithm, I can disabuse you of that fiction right now. I once asked one of my sources at Amazon, who was concerned about the ways the search results were being manipulated, whether he’d ever seen a book deliberately boosted. Yes, he said. *Becoming* by Michelle Obama. When that book came out – he told me – virtually every search you did led to the recommendation to buy the former First Lady’s book. And the opposite is also true. There are books that are *never* recommended by the Amazon algorithm, irrespective of how well they’ve sold or how likely a specific shopper is to buy them.
>
> […]None of you will be shocked to hear that Google promotes certain search results in order to lead us to a certain perspective. But did you know that, for contested entries, Wikipedia assigns editors, some of whom are ideologically committed activists, many of whom have very particular views they want you to walk away with.

This is a much bigger problem for young, unmarried women – especially the ones who do non-STEM degrees in college. When you’re in the computer lab, you’re not being graded

on your political views. You learn to write code that compiles and runs and produces value for a customer. But in the English classroom, you are taught "correct beliefs", like "compassion" and "tolerance". Women tend to gravitate into non-STEM fields. Men – being more combative – tend to look for ideas that *win arguments.* In my experience, men are more likely to catch on to ideas from William Lane Craig, Thomas Sowell, Stephen Meyer, etc. Men just don't care what people think of them. We do our own thing. We form our own views. We make our own plans. We believe what works and what wins. We make sure that our *actions* are taking us down the path to our *goals*. We don't like to read fiction, romance and self-help books. We want to solve problems. We don't want people to think of us a certain way.

Normally, the votes of these young, unmarried women don't harm them. But now those votes ARE coming back to haunt them. Their feminist views ("all sex differences are social customs") have led directly to the explosion of transgenderism. And all the benefits that feminists fought for – athletic scholarships, preferential treatment, affirmative action, lenience in the courts, etc. – are now available to biological men who identify as women.

Here's a story from the Washington Times:

> "Jeopardy!" contestant Amy Schneider was born a man, but she's being toasted as the highest-earning woman in the show's history, much to the chagrin of those decrying the accolade as an example of stolen female glory.
>
> The transgender trivia whiz hit $706,800 in total earnings with her Friday win, prompting NBC News and NBC OUT to declare her the show's "top female earner," surpassing Larissa Kelly, who won $655,930 during her run in 2008-09.

For all we know, Larissa Kelly is a Democrat voter, and voted for the policies and culture that achieved this result. Her voting was out of line with her goals.

Here's another story from The Federalist:

> President Joe Biden is preparing to give every rapist and molester in federal prison a get-out-of-jail-free card. Specifically, Biden is offering to transfer any and all male criminals to women's prisons. All the men will have to do is say that they feel like a woman, and the Biden administration will take them at their word.
>
> […][U]nder this executive order, the federal government will house criminals based on subjective, self-declared "gender identity" rather than biological sex. Male rapists, child molesters, and other sexual criminals will be allowed to live in women's prisons, and because the transgender ideology embraced by the Biden administration claims gender identity is purely internal, they will be allowed in regardless of whether they still possess fully functional male genitalia.
>
> This move toward co-ed prisons will result in male sexual predators exploiting the system in order to abuse and rape female prisoners. We know this because it has already happened in places these proposals have been enacted.

I can guarantee you that 100% of the women who are now in prison voted for the

Democrat party when they still could vote. They voted for policies that went against their long-term goals.

Here's another recent case, reported by Fox News:

> A transgender swimmer's record-breaking wins at the University of Pennsylvania have renewed concern over the future of women's sports.
>
> Lia Thomas, a transgender student at the Ivy League university, dominated the 500-yard freestyle preliminaries and finals at the Zippy Invitational at the University of Akron this month. Thomas earned a winning time of 4:34.06 in the finals, breaking the Ivy League record, and set new school records in the 1,650-yard freestyle and 200-yard freestyle competitions.
>
> Thomas previously competed as a man for three years on the school's men's team. Thomas' success on the women's team has renewed criticism over allowing transgender women to compete against biological females.

Some of Lia's teammates are very angry about this, because they worked their whole lives to compete in women's sports, but in all likelihood, they voted to cause the effect that is now happening to them. They attend a prestigious university, they've probably absorbed the values of their secular left professors. Most women who go to college do. It's just easier to adapt and fit in.

One more example – the declining marriage rate.

The Democrat party has enacted higher taxes, more control of taxpayer freedom by secular left elites, no-fault divorce laws, and biased divorce courts that award custody to women, along with alimony and child support. This all causes men to lose the desire and the ability to get married. The marriage rate is in a death spiral, and the only "solutions" proposed by pro-marriage people on the left and the right is to blame and shame men, and favor women even more. But this just means that fewer and fewer women will find husbands.

I would like to see parents and pastors teach women to think carefully about their goals, and vote for policies that help them to achieve those goals. If women insist on adopting an ideology like feminism, then they'll have to live with the consequences. And there won't be any husband around to blame for the results they caused.

Does archaeological evidence confirm names, dates and places in the Bible?

January 7, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I spotted this post on Be Thinking by UK apologist Peter S. Williams. (H/T Eric Chabot at Think Apologetics)

So let me pick the ones I liked most for this post.

Here's a good one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Bethesda
>
> John 5:1-15 describes a pool in Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate, called Bethesda, surrounded by five covered colonnades. Until the 19th century, there was no evidence outside of John for the existence of this pool and John's unusual description *"caused bible scholars to doubt the reliability of John's account, but the pool was duly uncovered in the 1930s – with four colonnades around its edges and one across its middle."*[38] Ian Wilson reports: *"Exhaustive excavations by Israeli archaeologist Professor Joachim Jeremias have brought to light precisely such a building, still including two huge, deep-cut cisterns, in the environs of Jerusalem's Crusader Church of St Anne."*[39]

And this one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Siloam
>
> In the 400s AD, a church was built above a pool attached to Hezekiah's water tunnel to commemorate the healing of a blind man reported in John 9:1-7. Until recently, this was considered to be the Pool of Siloam from the time of Christ. However, during sewerage works in June 2004 engineers stumbled upon a 1st century ritual pool when they uncovered some ancient steps during pipe maintenance near the mouth of Hezekiah's tunnel. By the summer of 2005, archaeologists had revealed what was *"without doubt the missing pool of Siloam."*[40] Mark D. Roberts reports that: *"In the plaster of this pool were found coins that establish the date of the pool to the years before and after Jesus. There is little question that this is in fact the pool of Siloam, to which Jesus sent the blind man in John 9."*[41]

I just read this one because I am working my way through John. In case you haven't read John, you really should it's my favorite gospel.

Here's another one:

>

> ### Herod the Great
>
> We have a bronze coin minted by Herod the Great. On the obverse side (i.e. the bottom) is a tripod and ceremonial bowl with the inscription 'Herod king' and the year the coin was struck, 'year 3' (of Herod's reign), or 37 BC.
>
> In 1996 Israeli Professor of Archaeology Ehud Netzer discovered in Masada a piece of broken pottery with an inscription, called an ostracon. This piece had Herod's name on it and was part of an amphora used for transportation (probably wine), dated to c. 19 BC. The inscription is in Latin and reads, *"Herod the Great King of the Jews (or Judea)"*, the first such that mentions the full title of King Herod.
>
> Herodium is a man-made mountain in the Judean wilderness rising over 2,475 feet above sea level. In 23 BC Herod the Great built a palace fortress here on top of a natural hill. Seven stories of living rooms, storage areas, cisterns, a bathhouse, and a courtyard filled with bushes and flowering plants were constructed. The whole complex was surrounded and partly buried by a sloping fill of earth and gravel. Herod's tomb and sarcophagus were discovered at the base of Herodium by archaeologist Ehud Netzer in 2007.

And one more:

> ### The 'James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus' Ossuary
>
> James, the brother of Jesus, was martyred in AD 62. A mid-1st century AD chalk ossuary discovered in 2002 bears the inscription *"James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus"* ('Ya'akov bar Yosef akhui di Yeshua'). Historian Paul L. Maier states that*"there is strong (though not absolutely conclusive) evidence that, yes, the ossuary and its inscription are not only authentic, but that the inscribed names are the New Testament personalities."*[68] New Testament scholar Ben Witherington states that:*"If, as seems probable, the ossuary found in the vicinity of Jerusalem and dated to about AD 63 is indeed the burial box of James, the brother of Jesus, this inscription is the most important extra-biblical evidence of its kind."*[69] According to Hershel Shanks, editor in chief of the *Biblical Archaeological Review*: *"this box is [more] likely the ossuary of James, the brother of Jesus of Nazareth, than not. In my opinion … it is likely that this inscription* does *mention the James and Joseph and Jesus of the New Testament."*

And finally one short one:

> #### Tiberius Caesar
>
> The Denarius coin, 14-37 AD, is commonly referred to as the 'Tribute Penny' from the Bible. The coin shows a portrait of Tiberius Caesar. Craig L. Blomberg comments: *"Jesus' famous saying about giving to Caesar what was his and to God what* his *(Mark 12:17 and parallels) makes even more sense when one*

> *discovers that most of the Roman coins in use at the time had images of Caesar on them."*[48]

This is a good article to bookmark in case you are ever looking for a quick, searchable reference on archaeology and the Bible. There are many more examples in that post.

Now some people might be wondering why archaeology doesn't confirm *every detail* in the New Testament. And here's what J. Warner Wallace has to say about that:

> But what are we to say to those who argue the Biblical archeological record is incomplete? The answer is best delivered by another expert witness in the field, Dr. Edwin Yamauchi, historian and Professor Emeritus at Miami University. Yamauchi wrote a book entitled, *The Stones and the Scripture*, where he rightly noted that archaeological evidence is a matter of "fractions":
>
> *Only a fraction of the world's archaeological evidence still survives in the ground.*
>
> *Only a fraction of the possible archaeological sites have been discovered.*
>
> *Only a fraction have been excavated, and those only partially.*
>
> *Only a fraction of those partial excavations have been thoroughly examined and published.*
>
> *Only a fraction of what has been examined and published has anything to do with the claims of the Bible!*
>
> See the problem? In spite of these limits, we still have a robust collection of archaeological evidences confirming the narratives of the New Testament (both in the gospel accounts and in the Book of Acts). We shouldn't hesitate to use what we do know archaeologically in combination with other lines of evidence. Archaeology may not be able to tell us everything, but it can help us fill in the circumstantial case as we corroborate the gospel record.

I think you can form an opinion about the whole New Testament based on the record of confirmations. The verdict is in: the New Testament should be presumed trustworthy.

The most important thing Christian parents need to focus on with their children

January 8, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know what you're thinking – I'm going to say apologetics. But I was actually having a talk with a young women who found the arguments for God convincing, but wasn't sure whether she was ready for a personal relationship with the God of the Bible. It got me thinking about my past and what it was about the God of the Bible that caused me to make a commitment.

If I had to say what it is that cause me to take Christianity seriously, including accepting Jesus as my Leader (more than just as my Savior), it would be the conviction that God was lining things up in my life to show himself to me. This was particularly welcome because I could see that I had not been blessed with the best situation in life to start out with.

Sean McDowell has a recent post about it, and since he is an expert in apologetics, I'm inclined to agree with him.

He writes:

> In his book *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis makes a distinction between "Gift-love" and "Need-love." As for Gift-love, he gives the example of a father who works and plans for the future well being of his family, even though he will die without seeing them benefit. As for Need-love, Lewis gives the example of a lonely and frightened child who comes to its mother's arms for comfort and protection. Such love is neither selfish nor improper, because children are intended to have nurturing mothers, and mothers are intended to care for their kids.
>
> According to Lewis, God's love for mankind is entirely Gift-love: "The Father gives all He is and has to the Son. The Son gives Himself back to the Father, and gives Himself to the world, and for the world to the Father, and thus gives the world (in Himself) back to the Father too." God does not *need* our love or worship. Rather, He freely loves us as an extension of His grace.
>
> But our love for God is different. While we *may* be able to offer God Gift-love, our love is primarily need based. Lewis explains: "But man's love for God, from the very nature of the case, must always be very largely, and must often be entirely, a Need-love." We desperately need God in both this world and the next.
>
> And then Lewis makes an additional (and helpful) distinction—while our objective need for God will never change, our *awareness* of that need can. And if our awareness of the need for God fades, then so may our faith. Thus, Lewis says:
>
> *There seems no reason for describing as hypocritical the short-lived piety of those whose religion fades away once they have emerged from "danger, necessity or tribulation." Why should they not have been sincere? They were*

> *desperate and howled for help. Who wouldn't?*
>
> In other words, if someone believes in God because of an immediate need for safety or comfort, then as soon as the danger or pain ends, so may the faith. How does this relate to students? Think about it. If a young person believes in God for social or relational needs in the family, church, or school, then when those needs fade, so will his or her faith. If belief in God fulfills some external need, then as soon as that need fades, or another venue provides satisfaction of that need, the student will likely abandon his or her faith (or minimally, have a *marginalized* faith).

The whole post is worth reading, because no less than Sean McDowell himself had a moment like this where he realized his own sinfulness and had to rely on Jesus for his forgiveness.

Judging from his tweets, I know that Sean is obsessed with super-heroes like Spider-Man, and so he would not be comparing himself to his peers in terms of righteousness. That sort of distance between you and Spider-Man can be really grating for boys. Inside, we feel like we are meant to be super-heroes. Many young men go into apologetics because they see it as a super-power. The problem of not measuring up is very strong for us, because we see the demands of Christianity as much greater than mere church attendance. I imagine that as Sean engaged with people using his apologetics super-power, he probably realized how difficult it was to know *everything* and give an answer to *everyone.* That's above and beyond the standard shortcomings or pride, anger, hatred, and so on that are inside of every person.

We are not super-heroes but we need to have super-human righteousness (that is, perfect righteousness) in order to stand before our Creator and Designer. The only solution is to rely on the imputed righteousness of Jesus for our super-hero status. It is a good and healthy thing to take on Jesus as King, and to imitate him. But when we fail, we must also rely on him as Savior. And thank God the Father for that provision of salvation. And indeed, I myself think of Jesus as Savior in the moments where I am conscious of my own sin. But I need to think about him more than that, and I'll explain how next.

In my case, I wanted to be a super hero growing up, but I knew I wasn't coming from a family or a background that made super-heroes. I was saved in a non-Christian home where, thanks to my hands-off "parents", I was on a very dark path to failure. In fact, I can see where I would have ended up by just looking at where my older brother is now. That disaster is what my parents, my schools, my culture, etc. produced in him, and it would have been me except for God stepping in to make himself known. I get excited about God as initiator and architect of salvation (not without my free will to trust). When God architects a divine appointment for me to use my prepared abilities in his defense or in mentoring little ones, I praise God as author of salvation. But I forget that Christ is the one who allows me to be clean enough to participate in this plan.

My ambition from small was to be a super-hero, and this later turned into great respect for people in the military, especially those who are awarded the Medal of Honor, like

Michael Murphy. I want God to give me the Medal of Honor, too. But sin ruins my ambition every day. When I am called out to serve and am found faithful and competent, I need to remember that what makes me fit for service is Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. His shed blood is the cape that I put on when it is my turn to come off the bench and be who I was designed to be. It is very important to me that the God I serve is the kind of God who won’t turn away from me when I fall short.

One man trusts his feelings, the other trusts facts: who remained a Christian?

January 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Alisa Childers posted a review of a recent dialog between Dr. Sean McDowell and former-Christian Bart Campolo, son of far-left progressive fake Christian Tony Campolo. The dialog occurred on the Unbelievable radio show.

Here's an exerpt from Alisa's review:

> Recently, the two came together to have a discussion on Premier Christian Radio entitled, "Why Bart Lost His Faith, Why Sean Kept His." It was a fascinating discussion, and the thing that most struck me was the reason they each gave for having become a Christian in the first place. Campolo described how he converted to Christianity after finding a youth group he connected with and attending one of their retreats:
>
> There's hundreds of kids there. It's Saturday night, there's candlelight and firelight and everybody's singing "Our God is an Awesome God," and "We Love You Lord." And in the midst of that kind of environment I had what I guess you would call a transcendent moment…I felt something. It felt like there was something happening in that room that was bigger than the group. I felt like I was connecting to something. And in that moment ….that was God.
>
> I heard something. It was real to me. People that don't believe in transcendent experiences—I always think like, "You haven't been to the right concert… You haven't used the right drugs. You haven't fallen in love with the right partner."
>
> These experiences are real, and I think whatever narrative you're in when you have one, it confirms that narrative. If I would have had that same transcendent moment with my friends in a mosque in Afghanistan, it would have confirmed Islam to me. But I was in the Christian world, so from that point on, Jesus was real to me.
>
> In Campolo's own words, he became a Christian because of a transcendent experience….a feeling that resonated deeply in his heart.

He had a feeling, and he took that feeling as a reason for believing propositional claims about the external world. God's existence? He had a feeling. Christ's resurrection? He had a feeling. The reliability of the Bible? He had a feeling. Instead of focusing on truth, he spent his early life pursuing social justice. He didn't look at evidence, he just tried to have experiences. He tried to chase feelings by having little Christian ministry adventures. Missions trips. Volunteer work. Community. Charismatic speaking to crowds about things he knew literally nothing about.

Further on in the dialog, he explains that his standard for allegiance is not truth, it's literally "what works". And he clarifies "what causes [people] to thrive, what causes

[people] to flourish". His emphasis (in his ministry) was always on feeling good by being nice to people, because they liked him. This perspective is rampant in the evangelical church, especially among progressive young people. The idea of testing the Christian worldview against science and history to see if it is true is absolutely out. Instead, it's all about feeling good and making people like you by being nice to them.

Experiences made him an atheist. He worked with poor people, and he decided that God didn't exist because he wasn't making these people happy. He had gay roommates in college, so he decided that the Bible's rules around sexual morality had to be wrong. Never any investigation of economics to understand poverty, no investigation of homosexuality in the peer-reviewed literature, etc. It was feelings all the way. A bit later, Campolo extols the virtue of blind faith, and blasts apologetics as ineffective at changing minds. And then later, he has a bicycle crash, and he becomes convinced from that accident that "this life is all we have". So he disproved substance dualism, which is consistent with the Bible and supported by multiple lines of philosophical argumentation and experimental evidence… *by having feelings about a bicycle crash*.

Now, on this blog, we despise feelings and experiences. We discuss scientific evidence for a Creator and a Designer all the time. The origin of the universe, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitality requirements, etc. For Campolo, Christianity was never about truth, and so he never conducted an investigation about whether it was true. The only God he would accept was a god who "worked for him" – who made him feel good, and who made people (including non-Christians) like him. It was all about him, never about adjusting himself to an objective reality that might have involved obedience to God, having some bad feelings, and being disliked by non-Christians.

The more emphasis that a person places on feelings, intuitions, travel, adventure, and social justice, the farther away they tend to be from analytical philosophy, historical investigation, scientific evidence, etc. You cannot establish the truth of a worldview by going on a missions trip to Haiti, or by holding orphans in Bolivia. The truth of Christianity is known through study of reality, using logic, science and historical analysis. Making feelings the foundation for a worldview is just a disaster waiting to happen.

Alisa has some words of caution to young Christians and their parents about experience as the root of a Christian worldview:

1. You can be talked out of an experience.
2. Your heart and feelings lie.
3. You can fall back on evidence in times of doubt or suffering.

Here is number 2:

> The prophet Jeremiah described the human heart as "deceitful above all things and desperately sick." Proverbs 3:5-7 tells us not to "lean on our own understanding." Jesus described the human heart as being filled with thoughts like murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, and slander.

> Proverbs 28:26 tells us that whoever trusts his own mind is a fool.
>
> **In other words, do not, under any circumstances, follow your heart.**
>
> This, of course, stands in stark contrast to the themes we are constantly encountering in entertainment and on social media. However, when it comes to spiritual beliefs, trusting our hearts and following our feelings can lead to all sorts of aberrant theology, sinful choices, and a distortion of true Christian faith.

See that?

"In other words, do not, under any circumstances, follow your heart."

We need more Christians saying this in the church. Especially Christian women – it's better when women put evidence at the center of the Christian life, and push feelings out to the edges.

By the way, she mentions a quotation from J. Warner Wallace about not being a Christian because "it works for me". I wrote a whole post about this.

If you want to read another deconversion story that shows how a focus on feelings and experiences leads to atheism, check out the story of Dan Barker. I know so many people who were raised in the church by pastors who were anxious to "protect" Christian truth claims from being proved or disproved by evidence. They thought that their approach was more pious – how dare we let science and history stand in judgment over the Bible? When I look at Dan Barker and Bart Campolo, I can see where that fideism ended up. Piety is a cheap way of gaining respect without having done any work. We need to demand better from pastors. They ought to be able to show their work. They ought to be able to demonstrate what reasoning and evidence led them to their convictions. Not their feelings and experiences, but actual reasoning and evidence.

The sooner we get to the point where Christianity is true because of reason and evidence, regardless of individual feelings, the better off we will be at being authentic followers of Jesus.

Finally, if you liked the Unbelievable show dialog between McDowell and Campolo, there is a 3-hour discussion on the same topic, which was held at the Faith Beyond Belief conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada last week. The video has been posted on YouTube.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation

- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

New studies: two studies explain indicators of low intelligence

January 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw two interesting studies that shed some light on how to diagnose a person with low intelligence. The first one was published in PLOS ONE journal. It talks about what a person's attitude to C0VID tells us about their intelligence. The second one was published in BMC Psychology, and talks about what a person's attitude to celebrities tells us about their intelligence.

Here's a report on the first one from the UK Daily Mail:

> A new study has found that those who are worried about the COVID-19 pandemic are slower at processing information, worse at retaining information and more likely to overestimate negative odds than their less anxious counterparts.
>
> The study, conducted by McGill University and the Montreal Neurological Institute-Hospital, surveyed 1,500 Americans online from April to June 2020.
>
> The authors concluded that people more worried about coronavirus and its effects performed worse at information processing tests and had a distorted view of risk levels.

And here's an article about the second one from New York Post:

> New research has deemed people obsessed with Hollywood gossip and A-list celebs to be not that smart — which will surely come as a blow to those who love poring over the pages of tabloid magazines and tuning into reality TV.
>
> The study, published in BMC Psychology late last year, asserts that "there is a direct association between celebrity worship and poorer performance on cognitive tests" measuring both literacy and numeracy.
>
> […]Researchers found that high scores on the Celebrity Attitude Scale correlated with lower performance on the two cognitive ability tests. Participants were also asked about their income, material wealth and levels of education in order to gain the most detailed picture possible.

Very interesting. This provides a quick way of checking on a person's intelligence. Just ask them what their level of anxiety is about C0VID, and ask them what their level of knowledge is about celebrities. I wonder if they include artists, musicians, and athletes in the category of celebrities?

This reminds me of an article from 2018 that appeared in the Wall Street Journal. The article talks about a recent Gallup survey entitled "Look Who's Irrational Now".

Excerpt:

> The reality is that the New Atheist campaign, by discouraging religion, won't

> create a new group of intelligent, skeptical, enlightened beings. Far from it: It might actually encourage new levels of mass superstition. And that's not a conclusion to take on faith — it's what the empirical data tell us.
>
> "What Americans Really Believe," a comprehensive new study released by Baylor University yesterday, shows that traditional Christian religion greatly decreases belief in everything from the efficacy of palm readers to the usefulness of astrology. It also shows that the irreligious and the members of more liberal Protestant denominations, far from being resistant to superstition, tend to be much more likely to believe in the paranormal and in pseudoscience than evangelical Christians.
>
> The Gallup Organization, under contract to Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion, asked American adults a series of questions to gauge credulity.
>
> […]The answers were added up to create an index of belief in occult and the paranormal. While 31% of people who never worship expressed strong belief in these things, only 8% of people who attend a house of worship more than once a week did.

Conservative Christians were even less likely to be irrational than progressive Christians:

> […][T]he more traditional and evangelical the respondent, the less likely he was to believe in, for instance, the possibility of communicating with people who are dead.

When I think of the "weird" things that evangelical Christians believe, I think of the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life and the sudden origin of animal body plans in the Cambrian. All of this is superstition to an atheist, and yet all of it is rooted in mainstream science. Not just that, but the scientific evidence for these defeaters of atheism has grown stronger as science has made more discoveries.

I can accept the fact that an atheist may be ignorant of the science that defeats his atheism, but that's something that has to be remedied with more studying of the evidence, not less. If you generate a worldview by 1) your desire to dispense with moral judgment and/or 2) your desire to prefer Star Trek and Star Wars to mainstream science, then *of course* you are going to have an irrational worldview. I'm not saying that all atheists do this, surely someone like Peter Millican does not. But for rank-and-file Dawkins acolytes, I think this is pretty accurate, and it's why we get the survey results that we do.

New study: white progressives are more racist against minorities than white conservatives

January 11, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What's the definition of racism? Well, it seems to me that a person is racist if they treat people of a different skin color differently than they treat people of their own skin color. So, if a white person treats a black person differently than they do a white person, then the white person is a racist. Because they're discriminating on the basis of skin color. So, who are the real racists? Conservatives? Or Progressives?

The Yale School of Management reports on a new academic study that provides the definitive answer to the question:

> According to new research by Cydney Dupree, assistant professor of organizational behavior at Yale SOM, white liberals tend to downplay their own verbal competence in exchanges with racial minorities, compared to how other white Americans act in such exchanges. The study is scheduled for publication in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.
>
> […]Dupree and her co-author, Susan Fiske of Princeton University, began by analyzing the words used in campaign speeches delivered by Democratic and Republican presidential candidates to different audiences over the years. They scanned 74 speeches delivered by white candidates over a 25-year period. Approximately half were addressed to mostly-minority audiences—at a Hispanic small business roundtable discussion or a black church, for example. They then paired each speech delivered to a mostly-minority audience with a comparable speech delivered at a mostly-white audience—at a mostly-white church or university, for example. The researchers analyzed the text of these speeches for two measures: words related to competence (that is, words about ability or status, such as "assertive" or "competitive") and words related to warmth (that is, words about friendliness, such as "supportive" and "compassionate").
>
> […]The team found that Democratic candidates used fewer competence-related words in speeches delivered to mostly minority audiences than they did in speeches delivered to mostly white audiences. The difference wasn't statistically significant in speeches by Republican candidates… There was no difference in Democrats' or Republicans' usage of words related to warmth.

More testing confirmed the patronizing white supremacist attitude of whites on the political left:

> They designed a series of experiments in which white participants were asked to respond to a hypothetical or presumed-real interaction partner. For half of these participants, their partner was given a stereotypically white name (such as "Emily"); for the other half, their partner was given a stereotypically black name

> (such as “Lakisha”). Participants were asked to select from a list of words for an email to their partner.
>
> […]The researchers found that liberal individuals were less likely to use words that would make them appear highly competent when the person they were addressing was presumed to be black rather than white. No significant differences were seen in the word selection of conservatives based on the presumed race of their partner.

Conservatives aren’t racist at all – they’re color blind.

One of the reasons why I get along so well with white conservatives is that they don’t patronize me with low expectations, the way that white leftists patronize non-whites. The view of white progressives is similar to the view of white supremacist racists – they think that there is something defective about people like me because of our non-white skin color.

White supremacists and white progressives agree on this: that non-white people aren’t competent enough to make our own decisions. We need help from big government in order to do what whites can do without help. We need to be told what to think for our own good, and shamed if we step out of line. It’s amazing to me that white racist progressives are seen as “compassionate”, when they are the ones who actually believe in the racial inferiority of non-whites.

Is the Biden administration using law enforcement to label conservatives “domestic terrorists”?

January 12, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There were four very troubling news stories that came out on early this week. I tried to share them on Facebook, but Facebook tends to censor anything that makes their beloved Democrat party look bad. So, I decided to write a blog post about the 4 pieces of evidence. I think people should know before the 2022 mid-terms what kind of people are in the Biden administration.

The big story of the day is from the New York Post:

> Sen. Ted Cruz grilled a top FBI official Tuesday about whether the bureau had undercover agents incite violence at the Capitol on Jan. 6 of last year, focusing on whether a man named Ray Epps was a FBI plant who encouraged others to storm the building.
>
> […]“A lot of Americans are concerned that the federal government deliberately encouraged illegal and violent conduct on Jan. 6,” Cruz (R-Texas) told Jill Sanborn, the executive assistant director of the FBI’s national security branch during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing.
>
> “My question to you -- and this is not an ordinary law enforcement question, this is a question of public accountability — did federal agents or those in service of federal agents actively encourage violent and criminal conduct on Jan. 6?” he asked.
>
> **Sanborn responded by saying she couldn’t disclose “sources and methods.”**
>
> “Ms. Sanborn, was Ray Epps a fed?” asked Cruz after stating that Epps was captured on video the night of Jan. 5, 2021 rousing people to “get into the Capitol.”
>
> **“Sir, I cannot answer that question,” replied Sanborn, who added that she was “aware of the individual,” but didn’t have “specific background” on him.**
>
> Cruz went on and stated that on Jan. 6, Epps was seen talking to rioters moments before they ripped down police barricades outside the Capitol.
>
> **Sanborn responded that she couldn’t answer whether Epps urged them to knock down the barricades.**
>
> Cruz then noted that Epps initially appeared on a poster issued by the FBI seeking information about people connected to criminal activity on Jan. 6, but was absent from another FBI “seeking information” poster distributed July 1.
>
> “Magically, Mr. Epps disappeared from the public posting,” he said. “According to public records, Mr. Epps has not been charged with anything. No one’s explained

> why a person videoed urging people to go to the Capitol, a person whose conduct was so suspect the crowd believed he was a fed, would magically disappear from the list of people the FBI was looking at."

The video is here:

I tried to share this multiple ties on Facebook, and the distribution was much lower than for my normal posts. It really makes the Democrat party look bad.

Ted Cruz talked about the questioning later, with Sean Hannity:

Very interesting. This is pretty typical for the secular left through history. They commit atrocities themselves, then blame their own evil on their ideological opponents.

A very similar story came out from Michigan, as reported by the Washington Examiner:

> Problems continue to pile up for federal prosecutors in the lead up to the March 8 trial for the five men charged with plotting to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.
>
> Prosecutors confirmed in mid-December they would not call on three FBI agents closely linked to the investigation due to allegations of personal and professional misconduct. Also in December, a key undercover informant involved in the case was charged with fraud in an unrelated case in Wisconsin.
>
> In a pair of explosive filings submitted on Christmas Day and on Wednesday, defense attorneys presented evidence they said proves the FBI and its confidential informants "conceived and controlled every aspect" of the plot to kidnap Whitmer.
>
> […]The evidence in the new filings includes communications between the FBI agents and their confidential, embedded sources. Federal prosecutors, however, deny the five suspects were entrapped.

It will be interesting to see what happens at the trial, but remember, this will happen in a court in Michigan, not Tennessee.

The third story is very interesting, and it was reported by Fox News:

> Education Secretary Miguel Cardona is facing calls to resign after it was revealed Tuesday that, according to a National School Boards Association official, he had solicited the controversial letter from the NSBA last year that compared protesting parents to domestic terrorists.
>
> President Biden's Department of Justice relied on the NSBA letter in creating its own Oct. 4 memo directing the FBI and U.S. attorney's offices to investigate "threats of violence" at school board meetings in order to combat what it called a "disturbing trend" of harassment of school officials.
>
> Previous emails had revealed that the NSBA was in contact with the White House and Justice Department in the weeks before it publicly sent its letter, but an email exchange obtained by the parents group Parents Defending Education

> through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request and reviewed by Fox News Digital indicates the Education Department was more involved with the letter's creation than previously known.
>
> […]"Stunning," Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, reacted on Twitter. "The original source of the letter lobbying the Biden admin to use the Patriot Act to target parents as domestic terrorists? THE BIDEN ADMIN ITSELF. Biden Education Secretary: in effect, 'Please ask us to treat Moms & Dads as terrorists.'"

I think that everything they "don't know" they actually do know. But they can't say the truth, because it makes them look bad before an election. And Big Tech will back them up.

And finally, this one, reported by The Post Millennial:

> Project Veritas released documents Monday night which appear to contradict NIH Director Dr. Anthony Fauci's sworn testimony regarding gain of function research.
>
> The documents come from a report at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which were allegedly hidden in a top secret shared drive.
>
> […]According to the documents, NIAID, under the direction of Dr. Fauci, proceeded with the research at the Wuhan Virology Lab in China and at several sites other across the US.
>
> Fauci has repeated under oath during multiple Congressional hearings that the NIH and NAIAD have not been involved in gain of function research with the EcoHealth Alliance program.
>
> According to Project Veritas, "The report goes on to detail concern regarding the COVID-19 gain of function program, the concealment of documents, the suppression of potential curatives, like Ivermectin and Hydroxychloroquine, and the mRNA vaccines."

I lump this one in with the others mostly because it shows possible corruption at the highest levels of the Biden administration, and because dissent from the government's handling of C0VID has been labeled by some on the secular left as "domestic terrorism".

Make sure that you remember all this in the 2022 mid-term elections. Share the truth with other people so they know, too. I'd like to see the Republicans gain majorities in the House and Senate, so they can investigate and find out the truth.

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

January 13, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines

- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

The importance of having a narrative when confronting the assumption of naturalism

January 14, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How do you present theism as a rational belief to a person who thinks that the progress of science has removed the need for God?

Canadian science writer Denyse O'Leary writes about the history of cosmology at Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> What help has materialism been in understanding the universe's beginnings?
>
> Many in cosmology have never made any secret of their dislike of the Big Bang, the generally accepted start to our universe first suggested by Belgian priest Georges Lemaître (1894-1966).
>
> On the face of it, that is odd. The theory accounts well enough for the evidence. Nothing ever completely accounts for all the evidence, of course, because evidence is always changing a bit. But the Big Bang has enabled accurate prediction.
>
> In which case, its hostile reception might surprise you. British astronomer Fred Hoyle (1915-2001) gave the theory its name in one of his papers — as a joke. Another noted astronomer, Arthur Eddington (1882-1944), exclaimed in 1933, "I feel almost an indignation that anyone should believe in it — except myself." Why? Because "The beginning seems to present insuperable difficulties unless we agree to look on it as frankly supernatural."
>
> One team of astrophysicists (1973) opined that it "involves a certain metaphysical aspect which may be either appealing or revolting." Robert Jastrow (1925-2008), head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, initially remarked, "On both scientific and philosophical grounds, the concept of an eternal Universe seems more acceptable than the concept of a transient Universe that springs into being suddenly, and then fades slowly into darkness." And Templeton Prize winner (2011) Martin Rees recalls his mentor Dennis Sciama's dogged commitment to an eternal universe, no-Big Bang model:

> For him, as for its inventors, it had a deep philosophical appeal — the universe existed, from everlasting to everlasting, in a uniquely self-consistent state. When conflicting evidence emerged, Sciama therefore sought a loophole (even an unlikely seeming one) rather as a defense lawyer clutches at any argument to rebut the prosecution case.

> Evidence forced theorists to abandon their preferred eternal-universe model. From the mid 1940s, Hoyle attempted to disprove the theory he named. Until

> 1964, when his preferred theory, the Steady State, lost an evidence test.

Here is a quick summary of some of the experimental evidence that emerged in the last few decades that caused naturalists to abandon the eternal universe that they loved so much when they were younger.

The importance of having a narrative

Now I want to make a very, very important point about Christianity and the progress of science. And that point is that it is very important that Christians present the evidence in exactly the way that Denyse presented it in that article – in its historical context, featuring the conflict between naturalists and the experimental evidence.

All Christians should be familiar with the following basic pieces of evidence which fit the war between science and naturalism narrative:

1. The origin of the universe
2. The cosmic fine-tuning
3. The origin of life (biological information)
4. The sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla
5. The habitability/observability correlation

When you talk about these evidences as a Christian theist to non-Christians, you have to have cultivated a genuine interest in reconciling your beliefs with science. You have to accept that there are two books that reveal God's character and attributes. The book of nature, and the book of Scripture. And you need to be flexible about getting these two books to fit together. The book of nature gives us natural theology (see Romans 1). It tells us that God is Creator and Designer. The book of Scripture tells us that God stepped into history as a man to save us by taking the punishment for our headlong rush away from God, which the Bible calls sin. Science is one way that humans can recover some of basic knowledge about God. Knowledge that is only possible because God created and designed the universe (and us) in such a way that we are capable of making discoveries, and that the universe is capable of being explored and understood.

It's very important to present these five basic evidences to non-Christians in the historical context. And here is the story you must tell: "In the beginning, there was the naturalism, and the naturalism tried to argue from ignorance that God was not Creator and God was not Designer. And then came the science, and now people have to give up their naturalism in order to account for the science". That's the narrative you use when talking to non-Christians about science.

In the beginning was the naturalism:

1. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the universe was eternal
2. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that a life-permitting universe was as likely as a life-prohibiting universe
3. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the cell was a simple blob of Jello that could spontaneously emerge in some warm pond

4. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla would be explained by subsequent fossil discoveries
5. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that there was nothing special about our galaxy, solar system, planet or moon

But then science progressed by doing experiments and making observations:

1. Scientists discovered redshift and the cosmic microwave background radiation (evidence for a cosmic beginning) and more!
2. Scientists discovered the fine-tuning of gravity and of the cosmological constant and more!
3. Scientists discovered protein sequencing and exposed the myth of "junk DNA" and more!
4. Scientists discovered an even shorter Cambrian explosion period and the absence of precursor fossils and more!
5. Scientists discovered galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones and more!

And now rational people – people who want to have true beliefs about reality – need to abandon a false religion (naturalism).

Now naturally, science is in a state of flux and things change. But you have to look at the trend of discoveries, and those trends are clearly going against naturalism, and in favor of Christian theism. No one is arguing for a deductive proof here, we are simply looking at the evidence we have *today* and proportioning our belief to the concrete evidence we have *today*. People who are guided by reason should not seek to construct a worldview by leveraging speculations about future discoveries and mere possibilities. We should instead believe what is more probable than not. That's what a *rational* seeker of truth ought to do. Proportion belief to probabilities based on current, concrete knowledge.

Atheism, as a worldview, is not rooted in an honest assessment about what science tells us about reality. Atheism is rooted in a religion: naturalism. And the troubling thing we learn from looking at the history of science is that this religion of naturalism is insulated from correction from the progress of science. Nothing that science reveals about nature seems to be able to put a dent in the religion of naturalism, at least for most atheists.

It falls to us Christian theists, then, to hold them accountable for their abuse and misrepresentation of science. And that means telling the story of the progress of science accurately, and accurately calling out the religion of naturalism for what it is – *a religion rooted in blind faith and ignorance that has been repeatedly and convincingly falsified by the progress of science in the modern era*.

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Viral Red State article answers: why don't men want to marry any more?

January 15, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the article from Red State, written by Brandon Morse.

The first point he makes is that feminism teaches women to have character traits that make them unattractive to marriage-minded men. Feminism teaches women that evaluating men for marriage according to traditional male roles is "sexist". There are no traditional male roles that women should prefer. Moreover, feminism teaches women that there are no female roles either. So, these women don't understand men, and they aren't prepared to be wives and mothers.

Brandon writes:

> Even in modern families, men are taught how to treat a woman, provide for her, and work hard to keep her happy. Women aren't taught how to treat a man or how to make him happy; they're strictly taught what to expect from a man.

I can't speak for all men, but in my case, I have definite plans for my marriage, and so a woman's preparation and desire to be supportive is very important to me.

I'm trying to achieve these goals:

- influence the church with apologetics
- influence the university campus (students and professors) with apologetics
- be involved in politics, advocate for conservative policy
- open the house to students and neighbors to teach apologetics and demonstrate a loving marriage
- raise 3-4 financially independent and influential children

And when I ask women what they bring to the table to help me to achieve all that, they often say that they've done nothing. Even the Christians try to get out of having to do anything hard by saying that God has a mysterious will that's higher than my plans – *plans which are designed to achieve specifically Christian goals.* But if you look at the woman's life, this mysterious God's will never requires her to do anything difficult that would serve God. In practice, "God's will" is just another word for doing what is easy, fun and peer-approved.

Brandon writes:

> The sad truth is that many young women nowadays don't know how to be in a marriage… they're not taught how to treat a man, but what to expect from him… they're flat-out dissuaded from providing anything but their presence to the partnership. They believe that offering their love to the man is sufficient and that men should just be grateful to have them.

What can you tell about a woman who has not prepared for tasks, like defending her faith, promoting conservative policies, or raising effective children? If she has not studied or practiced to do these things, then she isn't suddenly going to become disciplined and effective after a wedding ceremony.

Men like when they set out to do something, and get support from their wives to achieve it. Can women today support men?

Brandon writes:

> Along the lines of never learning how to treat a man, women are never taught how to value a man's emotions unless they pertain positively to her. He must prove every day how much he values her for just existing. She expects this but is taught by our society to not reciprocate unless he earns it.
>
> Men feel this weight, and the thing that would give them strength is withheld. Men suffer attempting to emotionally support the partner who has no interest in uplifting him in return. It's a lonely existence in a relationship for two, making it, in truth, a relationship for one…her. What makes matters worse is that women are confused by their men's lack of emotions. They were never taught how we think, much less appreciate it.

It's rare for me to get support from younger women. Older Christian women can do it, but they are from a different time.

Now, people say to me "just go ahead and get married, and you can change the woman's mind afterwards to value the things you care about". But do young women today offer a way for men to change their minds about anything?

Brandon writes:

> Now, let's say you're a young man entering into the stage of your life where dating to marry becomes typical. Looking at your prospects for marriage you see career-oriented women, some of whom make more money than you do and are very proud of this fact…. their opinions on any given subject seem more trendy than well thought out. They seem shallow as a result.
>
> You see these women in your dating pool consistently exhibit opinions about your sex that are less than kind on social media. They're taught they're your intellectual superiors, that they're right in any given argument no matter what… Very rarely do they display any joy in being giving or of service to their men. Even more rare are displays of humility. It reeks of narcissism.

One of the questions that I ask women to see if they are teachable is "where do you get your political news"? This question is to see if they care about anything other than their own feelings and social standing. I also ask "have you ever read any non-fiction that caused you to change your mind"? This to see whether she changes her mind about anything by increasing her knowledge.

But what I get from the Christian fundamentalists AND the career-focused feminists is the

same: “I don’t read news, and I don’t read non-fiction”. If she doesn’t form her beliefs by gaining knowledge, then what method does a man have for leading her? She will only do what she feels like or what is pleasing to her peer group. If she doesn’t respect knowledge in general, then she doesn’t respect *a man’s knowledge.*

Brandon concludes:

> Men want to feel welcome in their own relationships. Right now, they aren’t. They feel like passengers, or maybe even more accurately, chauffeurs. If women want men to marry them, then women will have to become marriage material and that means leaving behind the mainstream pop-philosophy and looking into the idea that maybe the feminists were wrong.

The schools, churches and culture are not doing anything to teach women how to be valuable to men. So why would a man marry? If I have to commit my time and money to being someone else’s slave / handbag then that will cause me to achieve goals less, right? As a Christian man, I don’t see how being a slave / handbag to a woman serves God.

Did Google / YouTube suspend Steven Crowder for reporting on the rape of a child?

January 16, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What's the official position of YouTube (owned by Google) on rape? In the Christians apologetics business, we have this argument called "the moral argument", where we argue for a divine moral lawgiver on the basis of objective moral laws. The example that's frequently given is "rape". Christians think that even atheists will think that rape is objectively wrong. But do they?

YouTube (owned by Google) is well known for censoring speech that is critical of the Democrat party. Recently, a news story came out about a public school in Loudon county, Virginia where a female student was raped by a biological male in a skirt. After Steven Crowder reported on the story, Youtube / Google suspended him for 7 days.

Steven Crowder's web site reproduced the e-mail from Youtube / Google.

It says (in part):

> On September 30, Mr. Crowder uploaded another video… [that] contains a segment that targets the transgender community in an offensive manner, for example, by indicating that trans people pose a rape threat to women. Consistent with the recklessness provisions of its hate speech policy, YouTube has removed this video from the service and assessed a strike against the Steven Crowder channel. Per YouTube's strikes policy, this results in a one-week upload freeze for the channel. Further violation of YouTube's hate speech policy will result in additional penalties.

They didn't want Crowder reporting on a rape committed by a boy in a skirt in a girl's bathroom. Why would they not want people to know about that?

Let's look at the facts of the case, as reported by Daily Wire.

> On June 22, Scott Smith was arrested at a Loudoun County, Virginia school board meeting, a meeting that was ultimately deemed an "unlawful assembly" after many attendees vocally opposed a policy on transgender students.
>
> What people did not know is that, weeks prior, on May 28, Smith says, a boy, allegedly wearing a skirt, entered a girls' bathroom at nearby Stone Bridge High School, where he sexually assaulted Smith's ninth-grade daughter.
>
> Juvenile records are sealed, but Scott's attorney, Elizabeth Lancaster told The Daily Wire that a boy was charged with two counts of forcible sodomy, one count of anal sodomy, and one count of forcible fellatio, related to an incident that day at that school.
>
> As a result of the viral video showing his arrest, Smith became the poster child for what the National School Boards Association has since suggested could be a

> form of "domestic terrorism": a white blue-collar male who showed up to harangue obscure public servants on his local school board.
>
> […]Minutes before Smith's arrest at the school board meeting, the Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) superintendent lectured the public that concerns about the transgender policy were misplaced because the school system had no record of any assault occurring in any school bathroom.
>
> […]At 4:48 pm on the day of the incident, the principal sent out an email to the community that claimed nothing jeopardizing student safety had occurred, painting Smith as the villain, and offering counseling services for witnesses of Smith's blowup…
>
> […]Smith was charged with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest.

Why did Youtube / Google not want Crowder telling people this story? Is it because they think that little girls are appropriate victims for boys dressed in skirts who go into women's bathrooms? I would guess that there are a lot of people who work in Big Tech who do want biological men to be able to go into women's bathrooms. And showers, too. They want naked biological men as close as possible to naked biological women. And the younger the girls, the better.

People who defend the rape of children and the arrest of the fathers of those children are immoral. I understand that the story makes teachers, teacher unions, school boards, etc. look bad. And I understand that the story makes Democrat politicians look bad. But no one should use suspensions to suppress the truth about what really happened.

My advice to people in Big Tech would be to be careful about letting devotion to the Democrat political party affect your products and services. But in addition to that, don't let it affect your morality. It can be very tempting to use your products and services to bring about the election results that you want. And people who lack God as a ground for morality will not have much resistance to that desire. But if there is one thing that people should agree on, it's that raping children is wrong. It's also wrong to censor people who try to tell the truth about rape victims.

I think what this story shows is the importance of hiring people who have a rational basis for morality. If you hire a whole bunch of sexually immoral people whose atheistic worldviews don't rationally ground objective morality, then you will get immoral behavior. The mantra of the secular left ("don't judge") doesn't protect little girls from being raped.

By the way, I watched the Steven Crowder show about his suspension. He mentioned a lot of interesting news stories that Youtube / Google probably wouldn't like. Stories about rapes of women in women's bathrooms committed by biological men.

Here's one:

- Transgender activist charged with raping 4-year-old on video (sentenced to 30 years in prison)

Crowder says the LGBT activist spent months advocating for allowing biological men in

women’s bathrooms. Isn’t that Google / Youtube’s position as well? What would they say to the rape victim? They’d probably say “Too bad”.

Here are a couple others:

- Transgender woman (biological man) commits sex attacks against women in women’s prison
- Man who claimed to be transgender assaults multiple women in women’s shelter

Crowder talked about a whole bunch of stories like this.

Were these rapes morally wrong? I think so, but I’m really not sure what Google / YouTube would say. And I do think they would censor any reporting of the rapes as “hate speech”.

FBI thinks parents are “domestic terrorists”, but what about ‘Lady Al-Qaeda’ Aafia Siddiqui?

January 17, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There was a hostage situation in Texas on the weekend. Everything was resolved favorably (no hostages harmed, suspect neutralized). But what was interesting was the press conference where the FBI explained who the suspect was, and what his motives were. Although they love to label conservative parents as “domestic terrorists”, they weren’t nearly as direct this time.

Here’s the story from Jerusalem Post:

> Soon after the FBI freed four hostages held by a gunman for 11 hours at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas, on Saturday, Matthew Desarno, the special agent in charge of the FBI Dallas Field Office, made a truly baffling statement.
>
> “We do believe from our engagement with this subject that he was singularly focused on one issue, and it was not specifically related to the Jewish community. But we are continuing to work to find [the] motive,” he said.
>
> […][T]he gunman entered Congregation Beth Israel on a Saturday morning, when Shabbat services are held.

FBI can’t figure out the motive.

And what was the objective of this mysterious hostage taker? Was he insurrectionisting for Trump? That’s what CNN will probably say.

But why would the gunman ask for the release of Aafia Siddiqui?

> Siddiqui, nicknamed “Lady al-Qaeda,” was born in Pakistan and traveled to the US on a student visa in 1990. She received her PhD in neuroscience from Brandeis University…
>
> […]Siddiqui was arrested in Afghanistan for her part in plotting al-Qaeda terrorist attacks in the US, UK and Pakistan, shooting at US Army troops as they detained her…

So, just to refresh you, the FBI thinks that parents who disagree with having their daughters raped in a women’s bathroom by a man dressed in a skirt are “domestic terrorists”. But a guy who takes hostages in a synagogue to get an al-Qaeda plotter freed is not. And don’t you dare say that he is a Mus1im, either.

> One of the organizations that has been advocating Siddiqui’s release in recent weeks is the Council on American-1slamic Relations (CA1R). In November, CA1R’s Texas chapter and MPower Change, a Mus1im activist group, hosted an online event titled “Injustice: Dr. Aafia and the 20-year legacy of America’s wars.”

I thought this was very interesting:

You might recognize that group "CA1R", because they collaborated with the FBI to ensure proper sensitivity to the peaceful Mus1im community.

Judicial Watch explains:

> Judicial Watch exclusively obtained droves of records back in 2013 documenting how, under Mueller's leadership, the FBI purged all anti-terrorism training material deemed "offensive" to Mus1ims after secret meetings between 1slamic organizations and the FBI chief. Judicial Watch had to sue to get the records and published an in-depth report on the scandal in 2013 and a lengthier, updated follow-up in 2015.
>
> As FBI director, Mueller bent over backwards to please radical 1slamist groups and caved into their demands. The agency eliminated the valuable anti-terrorism training material and curricula after Mueller met with various 1slamist organizations, including those with documented ties too terrorism. Among them were two organizations—1slamic Society of North America (ISNA) and Council on American 1slamic Relations (CA1R)—named by the U.S. government as unindicted co-conspirators in the 2007 Holy Land Foundation terrorist financing case.

So what is the FBI concerned about? Well, we've already seen that they are anxious to label concerned, involved parents as "domestic terrorists". But here's a former #2 at the FBI to explain their long-term plans:

> Have you ever wondered what disgraced former deputy FBI directors do after trying to stage a coup and lying under oath? Apparently, they give talks about

> “protecting democracy” at top-rated institutions of higher learning. Indeed, this last Thursday the University of Chicago invited former deputy FBI director Andrew McCabe to join a panel of partisans to discuss the Jan 6 “insurrection.”
>
> McCabe was fired as the deputy FBI director for leaking sensitive information about an investigation into the Clinton Foundation and then lying about it under oath. He also took part in spying on the Donald Trump campaign through a secret warrant granted by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act court.
>
> The dossier he used to obtain the surveillance warrant was funded by Hillary Clinton’s campaign and, in an ironic twist, was itself the product of Russian disinformation. McCabe and his allies in corporate media justified all sorts of similar illegal and undemocratic tactics to discredit and attempt to unseat President Trump.
>
> Of course, neither the University of Chicago nor McCabe acknowledged the irony in him discussing the integrity of “democracy” in America on Thursday evening. In fact, what McCabe said at the University of Chicago event on Jan. 6, 2022 is even more shocking than his invitation to speak in the first place. Below are four of the most appalling assertions and policy proposals McCabe made at the public event.

Here are the 4 points:

1. Conservatives Are in The Same Category As 1slamic Terrorists
2. Parents at School Board Meetings Pose A ‘Threat To National Security’
3. McCabe Wants More Surveillance of ‘Mainstream’ Conservatives
4. McCabe Believes No One Is Above The Law (Except Himself)

Let’s take a look at #1, because if the FBI were not spying on you, then maybe they could prevent more Pakistan-backed 1slamic terrorist attacks on US soil:

> McCabe likened conservatives to members of the 1slamic Caliphate: “I can tell you from my perspective of spending a lot of time focused on the radicalization of international terrorists and 1slamic extremist and extremists of all stripes… is that this group shares many of the same characteristics of those groups that we’ve seen radicalized along entirely different ideological lines,” he said.
>
> McCabe went on to describe the rise of the 1slamic caliphate in Syria and how 1slamic extremists were radicalized across socioeconomic, educational, and racial lines, likening it to the “mass radicalization” of the political right across demographics. That’s right, according to McCabe a grandma who shares a Federalist article on Facebook and your uncle with a “Let’s Go Brandon” coffee mug are in the same category as a jihadist who killed 49 people at an Orlando nightclub.

We have elections in November. It may be our last chance to vote in competent leaders

who focus on actual criminals and terrorists instead of pushing their own secular left dogma on taxpayers. The FBI we have now is not working properly. They don’t deserve salaries, benefits or pensions. They are not protecting the public who are paying their salaries.

How many federal agencies are tracking people who ask for religious exemptions?

January 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In socialist countries, they create registries of people who engage in behaviors they don't like. For example, in Canada, they create gun registries, and then use those registries to seize firearms. It makes it easier for the government to violate their rights, when they know that they won't get any resistance, e.g. – if you make you pay into a health care system your whole life, then deny you care later.

First, let's get the story from Daily Signal on the Biden administration's plan to track the people who dissent from their decrees:

> A tiny administrative agency in the District of Columbia announced a new policy Tuesday that will likely serve as a model for a whole-of-government push to assemble lists of Americans who object on religious grounds to a COVID-19 vaccine.
>
> The Pretrial Services Agency for the District of Columbia—a federal independent entity that assists officers in the District of Columbia courts in formulating release recommendations and providing supervision and services to defendants awaiting trial—announced a new records system that will store the names and "personal religious information" of all employees who make "religious accommodation requests for religious exception from the federally mandated vaccination requirement."

And later last week, from the Daily Signal:

> As it turns out, the little-known Pre-trial Services Agency for the District of Columbia isn't the only federal agency involved. As we feared, a whole-of-government effort looks to be underway.
>
> A little digging at the Federal Register revealed that there are at least 19 total federal agencies—including five cabinet level agencies—that have created or proposed to create these tracking lists for religious-exemption requests from their employees.
>
> The list includes the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of the Treasury, to name only a few.

What are they going to do with this registry of religious people who dissent from the government's mandates? Well, one way to see is to poll Democrat voters and see what they want to do with dissenters.

In his Monday show, Steven Crowder mentioned a nationwide poll by Rasmussen Reports, which shows what Democrats think about punishing vaccine-dissenters:

> A new Rasmussen survey shows: SOURCE: Rasmussen
>
> - 78% of Dems support a vax mandate.
> - 59% of Dems also favor unvaxxed people being confined to their homes at ALL times.
> - 45% of Dems favor internment at special facilities for those who refuse the vax.
> - In other words, Dems want some version of what already exists in Australia. SOURCE: YouTube
> - 48% of Dems favor fining or IMPRISONING people who publicly question vaccine efficacy.
> - Back to Australia for a glimpse of what this looks like. SOURCE: YouTube
> - Or maybe Canada where they have a proclivity for arresting pastors. SOURCE: YouTube
> - **29% favor removing custody of children from parents who are unvaxxed.**
> - I mean, this could never happen in America right. SOURCE: YouTube

This is the "objective morality" of the secular left. They are no different from the secular left Stalin and the secular left Mao. There is nothing in their worldview to prevent atrocities.

I absolutely recommend watching the full episode of Crowder's Monday show.

I would imagine that in America, if the government were to seize children from the parents who are on their religious exemption list, they would probably feel good about themselves, too. After all, they're just taking children away from misogynistic, racist science-deniers, right? Those kids would be much better off in foster care.

We have an election in 2022. Make sure you vote against tyranny, and make sure that you use the time in between to convince your peers to vote against tyranny.

(Note: the photo above is Virginia police arresting the father of the female student who was raped by a boy in a skirt in the public school women's bathroom)

Canada passes new law making it illegal to recommend Christianity to LGBT people

January 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I blog about the state of religious freedom in Canada a lot on this blog. Canadians like to blog about how much better they are than Americans, but if you look at their actual policies, they have no respect for Constitutional rights like free speech, self-defense, religious liberty, etc. We can learn a lot about where progressives want to take America by looking at Canada.

Here's the first story reported in Daily Wire:

> Days ago, Canada approved a "conversion therapy" ban that condemns Christian doctrine on the sinfulness of homosexuality and transgenderism as "myth." Indeed, bill C-4 — passed unanimously by both the Senate and the House of Commons — threatens pastors with up to five years of prison time if they remain faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ.
>
> […][T]wo Canadian pastors — Jacob Reaume of Trinity Bible Chapel and Tim Stephens of Fairview Baptist Church — told The Daily Wire about the implications of C-4 and how Canadian Christians plan to respond.
>
> While describing C-4, Reaume — whose church incurred over $100,000 in fines last year for refusing to shut its doors in defiance of Canada's COVID-19 lockdowns — noted that the edict will "make the preaching of the biblical gospel a criminal act."
>
> "The biblical gospel is a message of conversion, whereby Christ causes sinners to be born-again, thus converting them from sinful propensities to godliness," he explained. "The bill's language is vague enough that many think it might criminalize a biblical call to forsake sodomitic propensities to embrace righteousness."
>
> Stephens — who was jailed in a maximum-security facility last summer for refusing to close his church — added that "the law is overly broad in defining conversion therapy," thereby enshrining "progressive gender ideology and queer theory as normative."

Canada is well known for being taken over by radical feminism. Emotions have replaced reason, such that offending someone becomes illegal, even if you're speaking the truth. Today, American culture is permeated with "compassion" and "non-judgmentalism". But in Canada, it's the law. They are constantly apologizing and falling over themselves to avoid offending anyone with the truth. The whole country has become feminized.

On this blog, I already posted about how Canada jails pastors for continuing to meet during COV1D restrictions. Canada jails fathers for calling their biological daughter "daughter". Canada jails people who offend other people with words of disagreement. But

of course they don't arrest or jail people who are on the secular left – these laws only apply to Christians and conservatives (in practice). People on the left can march without masks, commit crimes, etc.

Here's another story from Canada, reported by Daily Caller:

> Quebec Premier François Legault announced at a Tuesday press conference that his province would implement monetary penalties in the form of "health contributions" for unvaccinated citizens.
>
> "Those who refuse to receive their first dose in the coming weeks will have to pay a new health contribution," Legault said. "I know the situation is tough, but we can get through this together. We need to focus our efforts on two things: Getting the first, second, and third doses of vaccine and reducing our contacts, especially with older people."
>
> The penalty would apply to all unvaccinated adults unless they get the first dose of the vaccine in upcoming weeks, according to Legault.

I'm hearing the same thing coming out of the mouths of progressives in America – the same people who promote "universal health care" want to restrict access to health care.

New York Post reports:

> MSNBC host Joy Reid was yet again getting ripped online after calling for anyone not vaccinated against COVID to be taxed or fined.
>
> "I feel like people who are willfully unvaccinated — fine, don't get vaccinated. But they need to start to pay a little bit more of the cost of what this is doing to our system," Reid said on her show Tuesday while interviewing a New York doctor wearing a "FAUCI" T-shirt for the infectious disease doctor.
>
> She praised ideas like fines and slashing sick pay for the unvaccinated.
>
> "At some point, don't we have to make people who are just saying 'I'm willing to take the risk to be unvaccinated, take the risk for me and take the risk for everyone I come in contact with.' Shouldn't they have to pay more into the system?" Reid asked.

Remember, these are the same people who want open borders and refugees, so that people who cannot speak English can come here for free education and free health care. Why is health insurance so expensive? Because progressives keep importing people from OTHER COUNTRIES to use our emergency rooms for regular health care. Then they want to tax us more to pay for their "generosity" to people who shouldn't even be here.

Progressives also don't want to restrict access to elective "health care" like breast enlargements, free drug injections, sex changes, IVF, abortion or contraceptives. They just want to tax people who disagree with them on the risks and benefits of COV1D "vaccines". We are seeing the real fascist nature of the progressives emerging more and more, and we need to remember it in November.

Some tips for women to test a marriage candidate for relationship skills

January 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, I blogged about a series of 10 posts by a lady Christian apologist about her advice for young women on how to choose a husband. You can find the links to the 10 posts on her blog. Recently, she updated part 7 of the series (about relationship skills). So, I decided to share some advice with women about how I engineer situations like the ones she is looking for.

First, let's see her updated post:

> In the pathetically superficial age in which we live, women tend to place an inappropriately high value on qualities like height, muscles, and a handsome face, but these characteristics absolutely will not sustain a marriage.
>
> […]The far more important qualities for sustaining a healthy and thriving marriage for the long haul are relationship skills. Can he carry a conversation? Is he thoughtful and interesting? Does he share his thoughts? Does he ask open-ended questions and listen to the answer? When he is asked open-ended questions, does he have something to say?
>
> You can't possibly know the answer to these questions if you spend your dating relationship in front of a screen, at sporting events, or making out on a couch. It is absolutely critical to spend the relatively short season of dating doing the harder work of trying to figure out whether this person is someone you can enjoy being with for the rest of the your life, even when he loses his hair, his figure, and even his teeth!

The concern she has – and she has seen this with her competent Christian friends – is that women will mistake *passive validation of their communication as proof of a man's relationship skills*.

She writes:

> … I've heard from woman after woman who enjoyed having the mic while dating, and then realized a few years (or months) into marriage that she had committed to spending the rest of her life with a passive man who had no plan for engineering interactions that develop her personally and help her to achieve goals. This, my friends, is a sure way to find yourself in one of the loneliest situations imaginable…for life!

So, today, I wanted to talk about some different things that I do to engineer "interactions that develop her personally and help her to achieve goals".

1. Discussions about movies

So, the first one is movies. I don't think it's a good idea to go to the theater for movies,

because you can't talk, and they don't let you stop the film to talk. I have a list of a few movies I like in my About WK page, and I talked about my favorite movie of all time in my interview with Apologetics 315.

Recently, I watched a movie called "A Patch of Blue" with a woman I'm friends with. It's a movie featuring Sidney Poitier, who is a black actor. He befriends a blind white woman who is growing up fatherless in an abusive environment. I chose this movie because I felt we would each have a lot to say about it, and it would help us to work together. My female friend had a lot to say about the female character, who grew up in a bad environment with lots of yelling. And I had a lot to say about the male character, contrasting his mentoring of her with the qualities that women seem to prefer in men today.

I think it's very easy for a woman to ask a man what his favorite movies are, and why. If a man's favorite movies are just entertaining movies, that's a good sign that the woman needs to move on.

2. Discussions about books

My "What I am Reading" page contains a lot of books that I am reading. I try to read a good mix of Christian apologetics, economics, social issues and military history. I try to read only non-fiction books, because fiction is just more useless entertainment that doesn't build character.

If you're a woman considering a man for marriage, you should ask a man which book he has read that formed his views on male / female roles and the marriage enterprise. Ask him: 1) what's your plan for marriage and parenting, and 2) why me? what is it about me in particular that makes you think I would be good for your plan, and 3) what sorts of activities are we going to do that build me up, so that I am equipped to help you with your plan? It's even better if he can explain how trends in popular culture, laws and policies are affecting his plans for his marriage and children.

When I was reading two famous books about American submarine captains Dudley "Mush" Morton and Richard "Dick" O'Kane, I learned that these men made good decisions *because* when they got back to Pearl Harbor from a war patrol, they requested *all* the after action reports of *all* the other submarine commanders. A good man makes good decisions because he can read the culture. And that only comes from learning from the experiences of others.

3. Co-operative problem solving

If a man has a serious marriage plan, then it's likely that you're not going to be the perfect plug and play fit for it. It's likely that he will need to build you up a bit. Men are actually pretty good at this in the video game world – we are always picking battles to fight, and leveling up our characters to face even bigger challenges. Your job as a woman is to find out whether he has any plan to level you up. In fact, dating is not about fun at all – it's about a man explaining his plan to you, demonstrating his ability to make you better, and to help you achieve more than you could on your own. Communication is a big part of this leading process.

Co-operative problem solving will show you whether a man is good at communicating with you to involve you in solving problems. I got a female friend of mine to help me build a desk and some exercise equipment. She was able to observe how I work together with her, and how I lead. She could see I communicated, and how I responded to her communication. And she could observe my tone and responses to successes and failures. Co-operative online games are great for practicing communication. You can learn a lot about a person's relationship skills (and willingness to learn) by playing "Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes".

4. Interview questions

Women should look for men who ask them questions to evaluate them for the tasks he has in mind for them. I have a list of 10 questions I ask to see if a woman even understands what marriage is about. Then I have another list of 10 questions to check if a woman is suitable for my marriage plan in particular.

Most women I show these questions to object to them. They don't like the idea that women are being judged by a man, and possibly excluded by a man. Many women see men as accessories, and they think that handbags shouldn't judge. They want a man who spends money to entertain them, makes their friends envious, makes them feel good, etc. They don't want a man who will impose structure on them, and give them work to do to achieve specific marriage goals. Women with STEM degrees and private sector jobs seem to have this problem less than other women, in my experience.

When asked what they are bringing to the table, many women answer "I am the table", which is just a way of saying "I am already fully equipped for marriage to any man, because I have a vagina. My job is to be cute, fun, and give positive vibes". Men pick up on this, and they stop asking women questions. A man who asks questions has relationship skills.

Conclusion

So, the author of the post I linked to is concerned that women will be tricked into mistaking passive validation for actual relationships skills. Women really need to stop going along with their peers and culture, and think for themselves about what they are looking for in a long-term relationship. Men are not clowns. Relationships are not entertainment. What fulfills a woman in the long run is feeling that she is part of a unit that achieves goals, that the people she has relationships with value her contributions, and that the goals she is achieving are meaningful. Men need to evaluated for their ability to lead well. Communication is a huge part of leadership.

A woman cannot easily convince a non-communicative man to change into a communicative man. That's why she has to look past what her peers and culture says about which man is best, and choose what is best *for her*. Start by asking the man what movies and books formed his views on important topics. Then ask him what co-operative activities you can do together to solve a problem.

Alexander Vilenkin: “All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning”

January 21, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve decided to explain why physicists believe that there was a creation event in this post. That is to say, I’ve decided to let famous cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin do it.

From Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Did the cosmos have a beginning? The Big Bang theory seems to suggest it did, but in recent decades, cosmologists have concocted elaborate theories – for example, an eternally inflating universe or a cyclic universe – which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos. Now it appears that the universe really had a beginning after all, even if it wasn’t necessarily the Big Bang.
>
> At a meeting of scientists – titled “State of the Universe” – convened last week at Cambridge University to honor Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday, cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University in Boston presented evidence that the universe is not eternal after all, leaving scientists at a loss to explain how the cosmos got started without a supernatural creator. The meeting was reported in *New Scientist* magazine (Why physicists can’t avoid a creation event, 11 January 2012).
>
> […]In his presentation, Professor Vilenkin discussed three theories which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos.

The three theories are chaotic inflationary model, the oscillating model and quantum gravity model. Regular readers will know that those have all been addressed in William Lane Craig’s peer-reviewed paper that evaluates alternatives to the standard Big Bang cosmology.

But let’s see what Vilenkin said.

More:

> One popular theory is eternal inflation. Most readers will be familiar with the theory of *inflation*, which says that the universe increased in volume by a factor of at least 10^78 in its very early stages (from 10^−36 seconds after the Big Bang to sometime between 10^−33 and 10^−32 seconds), before settling into the slower rate of expansion that we see today. The theory of *eternal inflation* goes further, and holds that the universe is constantly giving birth to smaller “bubble” universes within an ever-expanding multiverse. Each bubble universe undergoes its own initial period of inflation. In some versions of the theory, the bubbles go both backwards and forwards in time, allowing the possibility of an infinite past. Trouble is, the value of one particular cosmic

parameter rules out that possibility:

> But in 2003, a team including Vilenkin and Guth considered what eternal inflation would mean for the Hubble constant, which describes mathematically the expansion of the universe. They found that the equations didn't work (Physical Review Letters, DOI: 10.1103/physrevlett.90.151301). "You can't construct a space-time with this property," says Vilenkin. It turns out that the constant has a lower limit that prevents inflation in both time directions. "It can't possibly be eternal in the past," says Vilenkin. "There must be some kind of boundary."

A second option explored by Vilenkin was that of a cyclic universe, where the universe goes through an infinite series of big bangs and crunches, with no specific beginning. It was even claimed that a cyclic universe could explain the low observed value of the cosmological constant. But as Vilenkin found, there's a problem if you look at the *disorder* in the universe:

> Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists – nothing like the one we see around us.
>
> One way around that is to propose that the universe just gets bigger with every cycle. Then the amount of disorder per volume doesn't increase, so needn't reach the maximum. But Vilenkin found that this scenario falls prey to the same mathematical argument as eternal inflation: if your universe keeps getting bigger, it must have started somewhere.

However, Vilenkin's options were not exhausted yet. There was another possibility: that the universe had sprung from an eternal cosmic egg:

> Vilenkin's final strike is an attack on a third, lesser-known proposal that the cosmos existed eternally in a static state called the cosmic egg. This finally "cracked" to create the big bang, leading to the expanding universe we see today. Late last year Vilenkin and graduate student Audrey Mithani showed that the egg could not have existed forever after all, as quantum instabilities would force it to collapse after a finite amount of time (arxiv.org/abs/1110.4096). If it cracked instead, leading to the big bang, then this must have happened before it collapsed – and therefore also after a finite amount of time.
>
> "This is also not a good candidate for a beginningless universe," Vilenkin concludes.

> So at the end of the day, what is Vilenkin's verdict?
>
> > "All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

This is consistent with the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin Theorem, which I blogged about before, and which William Lane Craig leveraged to his advantage in his debate with Peter Millican.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past. *No one* denies the expansion of space in our universe, and so we are left with a cosmic beginning. Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

Conclusion

If the universe came into being out of nothing, which seems to be the case from science, then the universe has a cause. Things do not pop into being, uncaused, out of nothing. The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

Now, let's have a discussion about this science in our churches, and see if we can't train Christians to engage with non-Christians about the evidence so that everyone accepts what science tells us about the origin of the universe.

New survey: 43% of millennials “don’t know, don’t believe” God exists

January 22, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new survey reported in Christian Post. Let’s see the numbers, then I’ll recommend a solution.

Excerpt:

> The American Worldview Inventory 2021, a survey of the philosophy of life on American adults from Arizona Christian University, assessed the worldviews of four generations: millennials (born 1984-2002), Gen X (1965-1983), baby boomers (1946-1964) and builders (1927-1945).
>
> Researchers found that among other recent generations, millennials have gone farther in cutting ties with traditional Christian views and normative biblical teaching.
>
> […]43% of millennials stated they either don’t know, don’t care or don’t believe God exists compared to 28% of boomers, and 44% of millennials believe Satan is a real and influential, compared to 64% of boomers.
>
> The study also found that overall, younger Americans are significantly more likely than the two previous generations to embrace horoscopes as a guide and Karma as a life principle, to see “getting even” with others as defensible, to accept evolution over creation, and to view owning property as fostering economic injustice.
>
> On spiritual matters, Americans younger than 55 are far more likely to distrust the Bible and to believe God is uninvolved in people’s lives.

So first point about this… just as with the recent election, the first thing that occurred to me is “what are Christian parents and Christian pastors doing to counter this?” It seems like we’ve been living with this problem for some time, but we just keep trying the same old approaches. Missions trips. Hearing the voice of God. Prosperity gospel. Chasing Democrat priorities like BLM and CRT and global warming and socialism and amnesty for illegal immigrants (see Russell Moore). Youth groups filled with entertainment and pizza. Pious Reformed theology that emphasizes fideism (presuppositionalist apologetics). Young-Earth creationism of the Ken Ham variety. Fact/Value splits with no rational grounding for any of the values in fact. There’s no point trying to convince anyone of the truth, because we are in the “last days” and everyone just wants to be evil.

I attend PCA and SBC churches, and there is zero emphasis on training church people to have conversations about basic questions like “does God exist?”, “is the Bible historically reliable?”, and “did Jesus rise from the dead?”. In these churches, we have very conservative leaders and parents. Parents and pastors are “competent” if they are married, have lots of children, kids in private Christian schools, hearing the voice of God.

No one is able to have conversations with atheists that are persuasive. That would be "arguing" and "arguing" is bad.

I've spent YEARS trying to get debates and lectures from Christian academics who debate non-Christians into the church. Not just material from apologetics organizations, but mainstream training from groups like Focus on the Family. Nobody wants to watch debates with people like William Lane Craig. And nobody wants to read any books about science or history. That would be "testing God" with our "fallen reason". And so, the exodus of young people from Christianity continues. I have to work with the people who were born into Christian homes and who went to youth group and Christian schools – I know how they lost their faith. I ask them.

Solving the Problem

Anyway, with that said, I listened to a nice podcast from Apologetics 315 yesterday where they interviewed Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. In my opinion, no one does a better job of approaching the most core issues of the Christian faith with evidence that is convincing to open-minded non-Christians.

Here's the podcast.

And they have an outline:

Episode 021 – Return of the God Hypothesis with Stephen C. Meyer

In this episode, Brian Auten and Chad Gross interview Dr. Stephen C. Meyer on his latest book *Return of the God Hypothesis*.

0:43 – Intro to Dr. Stephen Meyer, author of *Return of the God Hypothesis*, *Signature in the Cell*, and *Darwin's Doubt*.
3:00 – Dr. Meyer's background, education, and how he got interested in the question of intelligent design.
9:58 – Meyer's view of science and philosophy of science, the importance for understanding philosophy when doing science.
16:28 – reviewing five centuries of the history of science, the false idea that science and religion have always been at war.
23:49 – The reason for telling the story of the rise of science, the rejection of the God hypothesis, and its subsequent return based on the most recent scientific discoveries.
28:15 – Explaining the methodology of inference to the best explanation. How this fits within theistic apologetics.
36:30 – Is our goal truth, or a pre-commitment to naturalism? What challenges has Meyer faced when arguing for intelligent design?
39:45 – Are there problems with postulating a mind as an intelligent cause? Are certain explanations "out of bounds" when doing science?
43:00 – Shannon information
43:55 – The origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, and the information in the cell. Resistance to change from a materialistic worldview.
47:40 – Huge theistic implications and the corresponding push-back to them.

49:15 – Helpful illustrations to explain the fine-tuning of the universe for life.
53:38 – Douglas Adams' "puddle objection" to the fine-tuning argument; the response, and a counter-analogy. The weak-anthropic principle.
58:50 – How might these arguments fit into an apologetic for Christianity? The role of natural theology and the need for special revelation. The false dichotomy between evidentialism and presuppositional apologetics.

In the podcast, Dr. Meyer talks about evidence that bears on the question of God's existence from science. Specifically, the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, and the sudden origin of body plans in the fossil record. This is mainstream evidence from mainstream science that points to a Creator and Designer.

This podcast is not for beginners, it's more for intermediate-level Christians. If you're looking for something for beginners, I recommend the True U DVDs, which feature Dr. Meyer talking to college students.

The importance of fathers for teaching children about Christian worldview

January 23, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One thing I wish that Christian parents and pastors emphasized more with young, unmarried Christian women is the need to choose a man who keeps his commitments. It turns out that passing on Christian values and worldview works a lot better when there is a man around to teach the children himself.

Here is some statistical evidence showing the difference that Christian fathers make, from Touchstone magazine.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church

> regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, a child who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an more difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others.

If a woman wants her child to be religious and moral, then she has to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he claims with words, because he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading. It would be good to see how he puts those beliefs into practice, too.

My advice to Christian women is this. When you are picking a man, be sure and choose one who is already invested in Christian things and producing results. It's very unlikely that he's going to be interested in developing that capacity from scratch if he's not already doing it. If you want your kids to be taught Christianity by their father, then make spiritual leadership a priority when you're choosing a husband.

Should the Democrats smear opponents of their unpopular policies as “racists”?

January 24, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last week, I missed a big story about Joe Biden and his “voting rights” speech. During the speech, he told the audience that anyone who opposes his policies is a racist. He asked his opponents if they wanted to be on the side of Bull Connors, a racist Democrat, or on the side of Abraham Lincoln, an anti-slavery Republican. Afterwards, the fact-checkers stepped in to save him.

Here’s the story, as reported by Legal Insurrection:

> Because Democrats are so used to getting a pass from the mainstream media every time they trot out the race card against their political opposition, the last week and a half of the Biden administration continuing to get peppered with questions about the racially-charged smears Biden made during his Georgia speech earlier this month have to be giving the White House nightmares.
>
> For those who missed it, during the speech Biden gave during a so-called “voting rights” rally in Georgia on January 11th, here’s what Biden said about people who disagree with him on changing the Senate’s rule on the filibuster and/or who disagree with him on his “voting rights” bills:
>
> “I ask every elected official in America: How do you want to be remembered? Do you want to be on the side of Dr. King or George Wallace? Do you want to be on the side of John Lewis or Bull Connor? Do you want to be on the side of Abraham Lincoln or Jefferson Davis? This is the moment to decide. To defend our elections. To defend our democracy.”

When questioned about his own words, Biden replied to reporters by hollering at them like an Antifa psychopath:

Remember – this guy is the champion of the Democrat party. He’s their leader. He shows the level of intelligence and character that *they think* is their best and brightest. He’s the great “return to civility” they promised. We told voters that they were getting the father of Hunter Biden. We told voters that they were getting a credibly accused sexual assaulter. We told voters that they were getting incompetence and corruption.

Poltifact rides to the rescue

Politifact, one of the fact checkers used by Facebook, decided that they needed to try to save Biden from his own stupidity.

PolitiFact
@PolitiFact

In context: What Joe Biden said about George Wallace, Bull Connor and Jefferson Davis

bit.ly/33XtwAZ

8:42 AM · Jan 21, 2022 · Echobox

Today, if you try to post the video of Joe Biden's exact words in his speech on Facebook, you will likely get hit with a ban on your account for spreading "false information". Because showing Hunter Biden's father speaking in *his own words* harms the Democrats, and Facebook doesn't want that to happen. It's an election year, after all. They have to be careful with free speech during election years.

This isn't the first time that Politifact has protected the Democrat party with their "fact checks".

The Daily Caller explains:

> PolitiFact incorrectly labeled it "mostly false" that Democratic Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema "protested troops in a pink tutu" during its live fact-check of the Arizona Senate debate Monday night.
>
> It's an established fact that Sinema, a former Green Party activist who co-founded an anti-war group, wore a pink tutu at one of the multiple anti-war protests she attended in 2003.

Here's their Politifact's rating on the claim:

Who are you going to believe? Politifact, or your own eyes?
And here's the photo of Kyrsten Sinema, protesting the troops, in a pink tutu:

Anti-war Democrat Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema in a pink tutu
The Daily Caller explains the context of the photo:

> A 2003 Arizona State University news article at the time described Sinema wearing "something resembling a pink tutu" at one of the protests.
>
> […]Sinema openly associated with fringe elements of the far-left during her anti-war activism.
>
> She promoted an appearance by Lynne Stewart, a lawyer who was convicted of aiding an Islamic terrorist organization, in 2003.
>
> Sinema also reportedly partnered with anarchists and witches in her anti-war

> activism and said she did “not care” if Americans wanted to join the Taliban.

That’s what Politifact does.

But that’s not all.

Remember Obama’s famous claim about your health care plan? Obama said that if you liked your current health care plan, you can keep it. Was that true?

Politifact said Obama was telling the truth before the election. And this “fact-check” was used by Facebook to censor and ban anyone who disagreed with Obama’s claim – even if they had peer-reviewed studies *showing that Obama was lying*.

Here’s the screen capture from 2008:

The Truth-O-Meter Says:

Under Barack Obama's health care proposal, "if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it."

Barack Obama on Tuesday, October 7th, 2008 in a debate in Nashville, Tenn.

Obama's plan expands existing system

Barack Obama defended his health care plan during a debate in Nashville, Tenn., on Oct. 7, 2008. His opponents have attacked his plan as "government-run" health care.

TRUE

Share this story:

Recommend 185

Tweet 380

"No. 1, let me just repeat, if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it," Obama said. "All I'm going to do is help you to lower the premiums on it. You'll still have choice of doctor."

Obama is accurately describing his health care plan here. He advocates a program that seeks to build on the current system, rather than dismantling it and starting over.

Politifact says that everyone who likes their health care plan can keep it

Before the 2012 election, Obama’s claim is true. If you disagree and show scientific evidence, then Facebook will ban you.

But after Obama wins in 2012, then Politifact’s story changes:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan

Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."

Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."

Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

FALSE

Politifact said one thing before the election, and the opposite afterwards

Most of the people who work for fact checkers are just reckless, irresponsible, promiscuous perverts who ran up a bunch of student loan debt while getting useless degrees. These are losers at life. They don’t know how anything works in the real world. They don’t want a world where they can be judged for their failure by successful, moral people. They would rather get a bailout from you than have to grow up and see reality as it is. Don’t trust them.

48-year-old divorced single mother seeks bailout for $430,000 of student loan debt

January 25, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If there's one area where I feel comfortable leading a woman, it's education, career and finances. I wasn't born in the USA, so it was quite a struggle to know how to navigate education, career and finances. But I did it, and I learned how to do it. And I like to share what I learned with Christian women, so that they don't end up with a useless degree and a bunch of student loan debt.

Here's a story about a woman I didn't advise, reported by the far-left Business Insider:

> Maria had a goal to teach at a university full-time. Today, she "absolutely" regrets pursuing that goal.
>
> While Maria's undergraduate education, which she completed in 2001, was funded through scholarships and Pell grants, she knew more advanced degrees would give her a leg up in university teaching — especially as a woman in the industry. So she pursued a master's degree and a PhD, the latter of which took seven years to complete.
>
> […]Now, at 48 years old, Maria's student-loan balance is $430,000…
>
> […]As a full-time human resources representative and part-time adjunct professor in Michigan, Maria now makes a five-figure salary while supporting her 15-year-old daughter on her own, with very minimal child support from the father.
>
> […]Of her total student-debt load, more than $70,000 is interest that accumulated while her student-loan payments were on hold, during which she cashed out her 401k and lived on unemployment benefits.
>
> […]Maria even filed for bankruptcy in 2018

I don't recommend doing a degree in non-STEM fields, they don't pay. I don't recommend spending 7 years with no income for a PhD. But notice how society gives her free money to subsdize these poor decisions. She got free scholarships, Pell grants, child support, unemployment benefits. The article doesn't mention if she got alimony, too. And she filed for bankruptcy… screwing her creditors out of what she owed them. Who knows what other social programs and tax benefits she got? While other women do STEM degrees, work in the private sector, marry and stay married, she's been doing life on easy mode, passing off the costs of her poor decisions to the people around her. I don't want women to make decisions that impose costs on their neighbors.

And now, she wants to get a bailout from taxpayers:

> The Education Department recently announced reforms to PSLF, which included going back over denied applications and payments to the program. So there's a

> chance that Maria may earn a quicker route to loan forgiveness. But with her current financial outlook, she's not confident she can complete the program and wants President Joe Biden to do more to help millions of borrowers with debt burdens.

The article notes that teachers and other public sector "workers" can default on their loans and pass the costs along to taxpayers:

> Maria does not work enough hours to qualify for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, which forgives student debt for public servants, like teachers, after ten years of qualifying payments.

Just understand that if society pays women to make poor decisions with their education, careers and finances, then more women will do it. That raises the costs on the men that pay taxes for this, reducing their ability to get married and conceive children. If men are paying for this woman's mistakes, they can't pay for their own marriage and parenting plans.

Consider this other article from the far-left Business Insider:

> There are over 4 times as many scholarships restricted to females as there are restricted to males.

This is despite the fact that about 60% of college students are women. Why are we focusing on subsidizing the group that's already doing well?

By the way, the author of the first Business Insider article, is a recent journalism graduate (expensive university) living in expensive Washington, D.C.. She advocates for bailouts through her journalism. She probably has massive student loan debt, too. It seems like choosing easy non-STEM majors, going into debt, then hoping for a bailout from socialism is quite common.

According to far-left Yahoo News, women hold two thirds of the $1.4 trillion outstanding student loan debt:

> Women hold nearly two-thirds of the outstanding student debt in the U.S., according to the American Association of University Women. And, they have a harder time paying off their debt compared to men. Prior to the student loan forbearance period, 70% of men made at least their required minimum monthly loan payments, while only half (54%) of women said the same, a recent survey by D.A. Davidson found.

Young women today don't like to have to "settle" for a lower cost college in a city with a lower cost of living. Like the Business Insider reporter, they want the Sex in the City lifestyle. So they go live in an expensive city, and run up debt doing useless degrees at an expensive university. And sometimes overseas! As you can see from the chart below, women avoid hard STEM degrees. But those programs are hard for a reason – they pay more money.

MAJORS WITH HIGH MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR WOMEN*

First Field of Degree 5% code	Percent Female	Median Female Earnings
Pharmacy Pharmaceutical Sciences	42	100,000
Information Sciences	26	75,000
Chemical Engineering	23	72,000
Computer Science	22	70,000
Electrical Engineering	7	70,000
Mechanical Engineering	7	70,000
Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering	17	67,000
Computer Engineering	14	67,000
Business Economics	30	64,000
Civil Engineering	13	62,000

** Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.*

The best majors for women to avoid student loan debt

My thoughts

What I wanted to do here is report to you what happens when I try to coach young women about their decisions in education, career and finances. And keep in mind, I'm doing this from a position of starting out in a foreign country, earning a BS and MS in computer science, graduating debt-free and working 22 years full-time. I had a $1.3 million net worth by age 45 (including the new construction home I bought for cash). So I have achievements here.

I run into the student loan debt problem while dating Christian women for marriage. Christian women seem to be even less likely to do hard degrees than women on average. You see a lot of art, music, English, journalism, etc. degrees there. I show them that student loans are a risk factor for divorce, and they also set back the plan to stop paying rent and start having children. I also show them which majors pay the most.

Here's what I usually get in response:

- Women think that they will be an exception to all studies and reports showing that the likely consequences of their actions.
- One woman dismissed the need to clean up her finances because God decided what degrees I would have, and how much I would earn, so I had no authority to advise her from my experience.
- Other women say that I am only doing what makes me happy, and they must do that too. (Note: I cried in second year calculus after failing the first test).
- I advised a 29-year-old woman with $25K of student loan debt and was working as a waitress to take a job I found her as an IT project manager. She said "No! Being a waitress is the easiest job I've ever had!"

- A 30-year-old woman with $23K in student loan debt wanted to do a Masters degree in Europe. I told her to pay off her loans first. She got two useless Masters degrees in Europe, and never worked again.
- I'm told that there is no rush to get out of debt to afford children, because women can have children in their 40s.
- I'm told that it will be fine for the children if she has to work to pay off her debts, because daycare and public schools work better for children than stay-at-home moms and homeschooling.
- I'm told that the $30 trillion national debt and bailouts for student loans, etc. are no big deal because the government can just print more money.
- I'm told that I can fix her financial problems by working harder and longer. One of my friends actually married a woman with $200K in student loan debt in order to get his green card, so some men take this deal.
- I'm told that too much planning feels bad, and I need to be more spontaneous and adventurous. One woman literally said "I don't want to make decisions based on fear".
- A famous Christian apologist woman (not WIA) told me that I can't judge a woman who has student loans because if God forgives a woman, then a man can't exclude her from marriage.

I'm not going to run a marriage that way. I have goals.

Men can't afford BOTH bailouts AND marriage

So, my point is that we have a real problem with figuring out how to get women to make better decisions about education, career and finance. I want to help them. I really do. Because we are $30 trillion in debt now, and we simply don't have enough money to keep bailing out people for student loans. And the problem will only get worse, as the younger generation of losers keeps making poor decisions and demanding that someone else pay for their mistakes.

Men don't marry women who are bad with money. Money is one of the biggest causes of

divorce, and divorce is a financial disaster for men because of anti-male divorce courts.

The number of men who can afford marriage and children is declining because they have to bail out all these reckless, irresponsible young women through their taxes. We need to fix this problem.

How to respond to an atheist who complains about slavery in the Bible

January 26, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I often hear atheists going on and on about how the Bible has this evil and that evil. Their favorite one seems to be slavery. Here are three things I say to atheists when they push this objection.

The Bible and slavery

First, you should explain to them what the Bible actually says about slavery. And then tell them about the person responsible for stopping slavery in the UK: a devout evangelical named William Wilberforce.

Here's an article that works.

Excerpt:

> We should compare Hebrew debt-servanthood (many translations render this "slavery") more fairly to apprentice-like positions to pay off debts — much like the indentured servitude during America's founding when people worked for approximately 7 years to pay off the debt for their passage to the New World. Then they became free.
>
> In most cases, servanthood was more like a live-in*employee*, temporarily embedded within the employer's household. Even today, teams trade sports players to another team that has an owner, and these players belong to a franchise. This language hardly suggests slavery, but rather a formal contractual agreement to be fulfilled — like in the Old Testament.3

Atheism and moral judgments

Second, inform them that moral values are not rationally grounded on atheism. In an accidental universe, there is no way we ought to be. There is no design for humans that we have to comply with. There are no objective human rights, like the right to liberty (that would block slavery) or the right to life (that would block abortion). Although you may find that most atheists act nicely, the ones who really understand what atheism means and live it out consistently are not so nice.

Famous atheist Richard Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of

> starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

When atheists like Dawkins talk about morality, you have to understand that they are pretending. To them, morality is just about personal preferences and cultural conventions. They just think that questions of right and wrong are *arbitrary*. Things that are wrong in one time and place are right in another. Every view is as right as any other, depending on the time and place. That's atheist morality.

What's worse than slavery? Abortion!

Third, you should ask the atheist what he has done to oppose abortion. Abortion is worse than slavery, so if they are sincere in thinking that slavery is wrong, then they ought to think that abortion is wrong even more. So ask them what they've done to oppose the practice of abortion. That will tell you how sincere they are about slavery.

Here's atheist Richard Dawkins explaining what he's done to stop abortion:

That's right. The head atheist supports killing born children.

Correcting four myths about the history of the Crusades

January 27, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an interesting article from Intercollegiate Studies Institute.

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the

> peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

If you asked me what are the two best books on the Crusades, I would answer God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades by Baylor professor Rodney Stark and The Concise History of the Crusades by Professor Thomas F. Madden. If you get this question a lot from atheists, then I recommend you pick these up. Anything by Rodney Stark is useful for Christians, in fact.

William Lane Craig on the unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

January 28, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember that Dr. Craig used a new argument in his debate with Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia.

My notes on the debate record it thus:

> The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
>
> - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
> - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
> - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
> - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see

And now Dr. Craig has expanded on it in the Q&A section of his Reasonable Faith web site.

The question:

> Dear Dr Craig
>
> Firstly can I thank you for all your work. My faith in Christ has been enormously strengthened through studying your work in apologetics in particular and I have grown in confidence in my Christian witness.
>
> My question relates to numbers and mathematics as a whole. On the Defenders podcast you state that as God is the only self-existent, necessary being, numbers and mathematical objects, whilst being useful, don't actually exist as these too would exist necessarily and independently of God. If this is the case, how can it be that mathematics is so easily applied to the natural world? Surely if mathematics only existed in our minds, we would expect to see no correlation between it and how the physical world actually is?
>
> Michael
>
> United Kingdom

Excerpt from the answer:

> As philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng points out, for the non-theistic realist, the fact that physical reality behaves in line with the dictates of acausal mathematical entities existing beyond space and time is "a happy coincidence" (*Mathematics and Reality* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 239). Think

> about it: If, *per impossibile*, all the abstract objects in the mathematical realm were to disappear overnight, there would be no effect on the physical world. This is simply to reiterate that abstract objects are causally inert. The idea that realism somehow accounts for the applicability of mathematics "is actually very counterintuitive," muses Mark Balaguer, a philosopher of mathematics. "The idea here is that in order to believe that the physical world has the nature that empirical science assigns to it, I have to believe that there are causally inert mathematical objects, existing outside of spacetime," an idea which is inherently implausible (*Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 136).
>
> By contrast, the theistic realist can argue that God has fashioned the world on the structure of the mathematical objects. This is essentially what Plato believed. The world has mathematical structure as a result.

This argument was also made by mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley in a lecture he gave on scientific evidence for an intelligent designer. You can read an essay that covers some of the material in that lecture at Leadership University.

Excerpt:

> The physical universe is surprising in the simple mathematical form it assumes. All the basic laws of physics and fundamental relationships can be described on one side of one sheet of paper because they are so few in number and so simple in form (see table 1.1).
>
> […]It has been widely recognized for some time that nature assumes a form that is elegantly described by a relatively small number of simple, mathematical relationships, as previously noted in table 1.1. None of the various proposals presented later in this chapter to explain the complexity of the universe address this issue. Albert Einstein in a letter to a friend expressed his amazement that the universe takes such a form (Einstein 1956), saying:
>
> You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world to the degree that we may speak of such comprehensibility as a miracle or an eternal mystery. Well, a priori one should expect a chaotic world which cannot be in any way grasped through thought. . . . The kind of order created, for example, by Newton's theory of gravity is of quite a different kind. Even if the axioms of the theory are posited by a human being, the success of such an enterprise presupposes an order in the objective world of a high degree which one has no a priori right to expect. That is the "miracle" which grows increasingly persuasive with the increasing development of knowledge.
>
> Alexander Polykov (1986), one of the top physicists in Russia, commenting on the mathematical character of the universe, said: "We know that nature is described by the best of all possible mathematics because God created it." Paul Davies, an astrophysicist from England, says, "The equations of physics have in them

> incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe" (Davies 1984). Successful development of a unified field theory in the future would only add to this remarkable situation, further reducing the number of equations required to describe nature, indicating even further unity and integration in the natural phenomena than have been observed to date.

The whole paper that started this off is called "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics", and it is a must read for advanced Christian defenders. You can read the whole thing here.

How do you respond to the conquests and wars in the Old Testament?

January 29, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

John Berea has an article about it on his web site.

Here's his overview:

> In the Old Testament are the military campaigns of Israel inconsistent with being led by a just and loving God, and inconsistent with his own commands? Here, I would like to make the case for consistency and justness.
>
> 1. **The nations of Canaan were evil, harming others, and needed to be stopped.** They had carried out incest with children/grandchildren and performed child sacrifice by fire. (Lev 18:6-30, Deut 12:31, Deut 18:9-10, Psalm 106:35, 37-38) They launched unprovoked attacks on Israel (Ex 17:8-9, Num 21:1, Num 21:2-23, 33) and even guerrilla attacks against Israel's "stragglers in the rear of the march when you were exhausted and tired." (Deut 25:18)
>
> **2. Warfare language was likely rhetorical.** There are five reasons to support the rhetorical nature of language such as "completely destroy" (Hebrew תחרימו, literally "ban") in Deut 20:17. It likely meant a destruction of armed soldiers, buildings, and religious icons.
>
> 1. Semitic language professor and NIV, NAB, and ESV bible translator Richard Hess argues that Hebrew "ban" is "stereotypical for describing all the inhabitants of a town or region, without predisposing the reader to assume anything further about their ages or even their genders" and "need not require that there really were children, senior citizens, or women there who were put to death" even when followed by the terms "men and women" (Joshua 8:25) or "young and old" (Joshua 8:25).
> 2. In Israel's destruction of enemies we see phrases like "left no survivor" and "utterly destroyed all who breathed" (Joshua 10:40, Judges 1:8). But in Joshua 21:12-13 the author has no problem telling us these people were still there afterward: "if you ever turn away and make alliances with these nations that remain near you… God will no longer drive out these nations". In 1 Sam 15:3-4 Israel was to "strike down the Amalekites. Destroy everything that they have. Don't spare them. Put them to death–man, woman, child, infant, ox, sheep, camel, and donkey alike." In 15:8 Saul "executed all Agag's people" and Agag himself was killed in 15:33. But later in 1 Sam 27:8 we're told they're still there and " had been living in that land for a long time". Hundreds of years later in Esther 3:1 we're even told Haman was an Agagite, a descendant of the Amalekite king Agag.
> 3. Most verses on the subject speak of "driving out" and "dispossessing" the

> land rather than language suggestive of genocide. E.g. Num 33:51-53, in "the land of Canaan, you must drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images, all their molten images, and demolish their high places. You must dispossess the inhabitants of the land and live in it, for I have given you the land to possess it." It's the same story in Lev 18:25, Num 23:31-32, Deut 6:19, 9:4, 18:12, Joshua 3:10, and 23:9.
>
> 4. Jer 4:20 suggests inhabitants fled before armies arrived: "At the sound of the horseman and bowman every city flees; They go into the thickets and climb among the rocks"
> 5. Deut 7:22 specifically says that Israel was forbidden to "destroy them all at once" and instead they would be expelled "little by little".
>
> So either all of these verses contradict one another, or the conquest language was rhetorical.
>
> **3. Many of the "cities" were probably military outposts.** For example with Jericho and Ai, Richard Hess argues there are no references to noncombatants (apart from Rahab), no archaeological evidence of non-military use, the term melek (Hebrew מלכי) for "king" of the cities often meant mean a military leader in Canaan (e.g. in Joshua 2:2), they were located at defensive positions, and Jericho and Ai weren't described as a large city as Gibeon and Hazor explicitly were.
>
> **4. A just God requires wrath.** It's not possible to have a God who is just but not wrathful–otherwise wrongdoers continue unabated. Paranormal investigator James Randi wrote in Skeptic Magazine, "I accuse the Christian god of murder by allowing the Holocaust to take place" yet Dawkins and Hitchens condemn God for judgment against the Canaanites. Which is it? Ultimately the the problem is we view death as the ultimate judgment, when in the theological context of the bible it's only a graduation to what's next with accountability for what we've done with what we were given.

The four points are developed with links for support. If you get this question a lot, it's a good resource to bookmark.

Also, if you're looking for a short video to share, here is a 6-minute one featuring Frank Turek:

That's from commenter WorldGoneCrazy. It's really good.

Playboy bunnies shocked that their own free decisions did not make them happy

January 30, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm seeing a lot of stories in the news lately about how women are unhappy after being given exactly what they asked for. Feminists who wanted to abolish sex differences are mad that biological men are in their spaces. Feminists who demanded preferential treatment in colleges and workplaces are mad that men don't earn more than they do. And now… the Playboy bunnies are mad.

Story from the New York Post:

> "He was a predator," Hefner's ex-girlfriend Sondra Theodore, 65, told The Post. "I watched him, I watched his game. And I watched a lot of girls go through [the Playboy Mansion] gates looking farm-fresh, and leaving looking tired and haggard."
>
> The former Sunday school teacher-turned-1977 Playboy magazine centerfold model began dating Hefner after meeting him at one of his many lascivious mansion parties.

Former Sunday school teacher. Got that? Former Sunday school teacher.

She says that she's a victim:

> "He groomed me and twisted my mind into thinking his way was normal," she said of Hef… "He introduced me to drugs. I'd never had a drink or a drug before going up to the Playboy Mansion. And my first night there I was handed champagne and the drugs came later, and I was underage."

So, I have two points about this. I think that Hugh Hefner was a big hero to the secular left, because he helped them to throw off the shackles of sobriety and chastity that were part of America's Christian past. The secular left wanted freedom from Christianity's "repressive" rules on dating, relationships, marriage and sexuality, and Hefner gave them what they wanted. I hope we learn a lesson about trusting atheists to tell us what is moral.

Second point is about the women. Did everyone see that post from earlier in the week about the woman who ran up hundreds of thousands of dollars in student loan debt, then demanded a bailout from taxpayers? What I would like to see is women make better decisions. It would probably help that they rely more on evidence than on feelings, and call for advisors if they don't feel comfortable.

We're not helping women by telling them to "follow their hearts". People don't make good decisions when they "follow their hearts". Even worse is to follow the crowd. Hugh Hefner was in high demand by women when he was young. He's tall, he's handsome, he's rich, and he's morally permissive and non-judgmental. A lot of young women wanted all

that he had to offer. But just because a lot of women wanted all that, doesn't mean that Sondra Theodore was right to wish for what what many women desired.

Another thing about the women – I don't like how they blame men for their own free will decisions. They don't take responsibility the way that I expect them to take responsibility. They're saying "It was the man's fault" instead of asking "why did I choose that man?" I'd like to see women ask themselves these hard questions. Just because these questions feel bad, it doesn't mean that they shouldn't be asked. The only way to learn is to take responsibility. If everything is someone else's fault, then you never change yourself. And you are the one you need to fear the most.

Finally, I don't think it's a good message to send our young men that tall, hot, rich bad boys get all the best looking young women. When a young woman chooses a bad man, it's a signal to all the young men about what is working – what is in demand. Women need to understand that their decisions are being watched, and they are making the world a worse place when they choose to reward secular left psychopaths like Hugh Hefner. He should have been shunned by women – that would have made sure that no men imitated him.

Racist Joe Biden filibustered black female court of appeals nominee Janice Rogers Brown

January 31, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrat Joe Biden likes to talk a lot about how tolerant he is, but according to his actions, he is a racist, white supremacist. I remember when he tried to block a well-qualified black nominee to the 2nd District Court of Appeals. Janice Rogers Brown had an amazing story of achieving the American dream through hard work. She loves the Constitution. But Joe Biden hated her.

Here's the story from far-left Newsweek:

> President Joe Biden on Thursday reiterated his campaign promise of nominating a Black woman to the Supreme Court, leading some conservative pundits to bring up his past opposition to Janice Rogers Brown.
>
> […]Senator Biden opposed and then filibustered the nomination of Brown to the federal bench in 2003 and 2005.
>
> Then-President George W. Bush had nominated Brown both times for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, but many Democrats tried to block her from the position for her perceived libertarian views.
>
> Brown was born to Alabama sharecroppers and grew up in the segregated South. During her college years, Brown was a single mother with views so left-wing that she later said they were almost Maoist.
>
> Her views grew decidedly more conservative over the years, and she has defended using electric stun guns on criminals who act inappropriately in courtrooms. Brown also wrote opinions that opposed affirmative action and supported a state law that required girls younger than 18 to notify their parents before getting an abortion.

I believe that Biden blocked Janice Rogers Brown because he is a racist and a sexist. He wanted to keep black women down. It's only now that he is tanking in the polls that he has to use a SCOTUS pick to try to save his poll numbers. In his heart, he's racist.

More:

> In 2005, The Washington Post reported that Brown was considered as a possible nominee to replace the retiring Sandra Day O'Connor on the United States Supreme Court. However, Bush chose Samuel Alito.

My choices for the Supreme Court at that time were my beloved Edith Hollan Jones and also Janice Rogers Brown. Either of these fine women would have been perfect nominees for those of us who love the Constitution and prefer judicial restraint. I didn't like any of the male candidates, they were not conservative enough for me.

But that's not the only time that racist Democrat Joe Biden went after a qualified judicial

nominee for the crime of being black.

The Daily Caller explains:

> Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas criticizes former Vice President Joe Biden's stewardship of his 1991 confirmation hearings in a forthcoming documentary from Manifold Productions called "Created Equal: Clarence Thomas In His Own Words."
>
> At one juncture of the film, Thomas was asked about a colloquy with Biden over natural law philosophy and the Constitution. Though he did not cite Biden by name, Thomas lamented that lawmakers do not seem to have full command of the subject matter during judicial confirmation hearings.
>
> […]"I felt as though in my life I had been looking at the wrong people as the people who would be problematic toward me," Thomas said of such statements. "We were told that 'Oh it's going to be the bigot in the pickup truck. It's going be the Klansman. It's going to be the rural sheriff.'"
>
> "The biggest impediment was the modern day liberal," he added.

I think we should learn about Democrats from their actions, not their words. They only like to care about race for minorities who agree with them. Conservative minirities get treated very badly.

Why doesn’t God make his existence more obvious to people?

February 1, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard someone say that if God existed, he would give us more evidence? This is called the “hiddenness of God” argument. It’s also known as the argument from “rational non-belief”. You have have seen Dr. Theodore Drange use the argument in his debate with Dr. William Lane Craig.

Basically the argument is something like this:

1. God is all powerful
2. God is all loving
3. God wants all people to know about him
4. Some people don’t know about him
5. Therefore, there is no God.

In this argument, the atheist is saying that he’s looked for God real hard and that if God were there, he should have found him by now. After all, God can do anything he wants that’s logically possible, and he wants us to know that he exists. To defeat the argument we need to find a possible explanation of why God would want to remain hidden.

What reason could God have for remaining hidden?

Christian scholar Dr. Michael Murray has found a reason for God to remain hidden.

His paper on divine hiddenness is here:
“Coercion and the Hiddenness of God“, American Philosophical Quarterly, Vol 30, 1993.

He argues that if God reveals himself too much to people, he takes away our freedom to make morally-significant decisions, including responding to his self-revelation to us. Murray argues that God stays somewhat hidden, so that he gives people space to either 1) respond to God, or 2) avoid God so we can keep our autonomy from him. God places a higher value on people having the free will to respond to him, and if he shows too much of himself he takes away their free choice to respond to him, because once he is too overt about his existence, people will just feel obligated to belief in him in order to avoid being punished.

But believing in God just to avoid punishment is NOT what God wants for us. If it is too obvious to us that God exists and that he really will judge us, then people will respond to him and behave morally out of self-preservation. But God wants us to respond to him out of interest *in him*, just like we might try to get to know someone we admire. God has to dial down the immediacy of the threat of judgment, and the probability that the threat is actual. That leaves it up to us to respond to God’s veiled revelation of himself to us, in nature and in Scripture.

(Note: I think that we don’t seek God on our own, and that he must take the initiative to

reach out to us and draw us to him. But I do think that we are free to resist his revelation, at which point God stops himself short of coercing our will. We are therefore responsible for our own fate).

The atheist's argument is a logical/deductive argument. It aims to show that there is a contradiction between God's will for us and his hiding from us. In order to derive a contradiction, God MUST NOT have any possible reason to remain hidden. If he has a reason for remaining hidden that is consistent with his goodness, then the argument will not go through.

When Murray offers a possible reason for God to remain hidden in order to allow people to freely respond to him, then the argument is defeated. God wants people to respond to him freely so that there is a genuine love relationship – not coercion by overt threat of damnation. To rescue the argument, the atheist has to be able to prove that God could provide *more* evidence of his existence without interfering with the free choice of his creatures to reject him.

Murray has defended the argument in works published by prestigious academic presses such as Cambridge University Press, (ISBN: 0521006104, 2001) and Routledge (ISBN: 0415380383, 2007).

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

How the Biden administration Democrats used woke evangelicals to lie to churches

February 2, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Megan Basham is an evangelical Christian writer who has gotten my attention by her challenges to anti-conservative evangelicals, such as David French, Russell Moore, Tim Keller, etc. She's written some amazing articles for the Daily Wire, but her latest is the most important one yet. In it, she talks about how Biden Democrats used woke evangelicals to spread propaganda to conservative churches.

Here's the article:

> In September, Wheaton College dean Ed Stetzer interviewed National Institutes of Health Director Francis Collins on his podcast, "Church Leadership" about why Christians who want to obey Christ's command to love their neighbors should get the Covid vaccine and avoid indulging in misinformation.
>
> […] Stetzer is… the executive director of the Billy Graham Center and the editor-in-chief of Outreach media group. He was previously an editor at Christianity Today and an executive director at LifeWay, one of the largest religious publishers in the world. That's to say nothing of the dozen-plus books on missions and church planting he's authored.
>
> During their discussion, Collins and Stetzer were hardly shy about the fact that they were asking ministers to act as the administration's go-between with their congregants. "I want to exhort pastors once again to try to use your credibility with your flock to put forward the public health measures that we know can work," Collins said. Stetzer replied that he sometimes hears from ministers who don't feel comfortable preaching about Covid vaccines, and he advises them, in those cases, to simply promote the jab through social media.
>
> "I just tell them, when you get vaccinated, post a picture and say, 'So thankful I was able to get vaccinated,'" Stetzer said. "People need to see that it is the reasonable view."
>
> […]Stetzer… ended the podcast by announcing that the Billy Graham Center would be formally partnering with the Biden administration. Together with the NIH and the CDC it would launch a website, coronavirusandthechurch.com, to provide clergy Covid resources they could then convey to their congregations.
>
> Much earlier in the pandemic, as an editor at evangelicalism's flagship publication, Christianity Today (CT), Stetzer had also penned essays parroting Collins' arguments on conspiracy theories. Among those he lambasted other believers for entertaining, the hypothesis that the coronavirus had leaked from a Wuhan lab. In a now deleted essay, preserved by Web Archive, Stetzer chided, "If you want to believe that some secret lab created this as a biological weapon, and

> now everyone is covering that up, I can't stop you."
>
> Only two days before Stetzer published his essay, Collins participated in a livestream event, co-hosted by CT. The outlet introduced him as a "follower of Jesus, who affirms the sanctity of human life" despite the fact that Collins is on record stating he does not definitively believe, as most pro-lifers do, that life begins at conception, and his tenure at NIH has been marked by extreme anti-life, pro-LGBT policies. (More on this later).

Megan has a lot more to say about other pious, charismatic useful idiots in the article.

Joe Carter

Here's Joe Carter, who writes for the woke evangelical publication "The Gospel Coalition":

> Certainly The Gospel Coalition, a publication largely written for and by pastors, didn't probe beyond the "facts" Collins' offered or consider any conflicts of interest the NIH director might have had before publishing several essays that cited him as almost their lone source of information. As with CT, one article by Gospel Coalition editor Joe Carter linked the reasonable hypothesis that the virus might have been human-made with wilder QAnon fantasies. It then lectured readers that spreading such ideas would damage the church's witness in the world.

Joe Carter has been far-left for some time. Another person who climbed the church hierarchy through piety and charisma, but doesn't know anything about the real world.

Russell Moore

If you're looking for the truth about how to handle a virus, you won't get it from a pious, charismatic pastor:

> [T]he Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), an organization funded by churches in the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S.
>
> While a webinar featuring Collins and then-ERLC-head Russell Moore largely centered, again, on the importance of pastors convincing church members to get vaccinated, the discussion also moved on to the topic of masks. With Moore nodding along, Collins held up a basic, over-the-counter cloth square, "This is not a political statement," he asserted. "This is not an invasion of your personal freedom…This is a life-saving medical device."

You can read more about this in the latest announcement from the Centers for Disease Control. I've talked about Russell Moore often on this blog. I'm not sure how someone this far to the left was able to climb to the top rungs of the Southern Baptist hierarchy.

Tim Keller

Megan writes:

> Former megachurch pastor Tim Keller's joint interview with Collins included a

> digression where the pair agreed that churches like John MacArthur's, which continued to meet in-person despite Covid lockdowns, represented the "bad and ugly" of good, bad, and ugly Christian responses to the virus.

Haven't paid any attention to him recently because of his views on evolution, socialism, and critical race theory.

Hugh Ross

Although I am an old-Earth creationist like Hugh Ross, I was surprised to see him endorse a pro-abortion, pro-LGBT theistic evolutionist like Francis Collins:

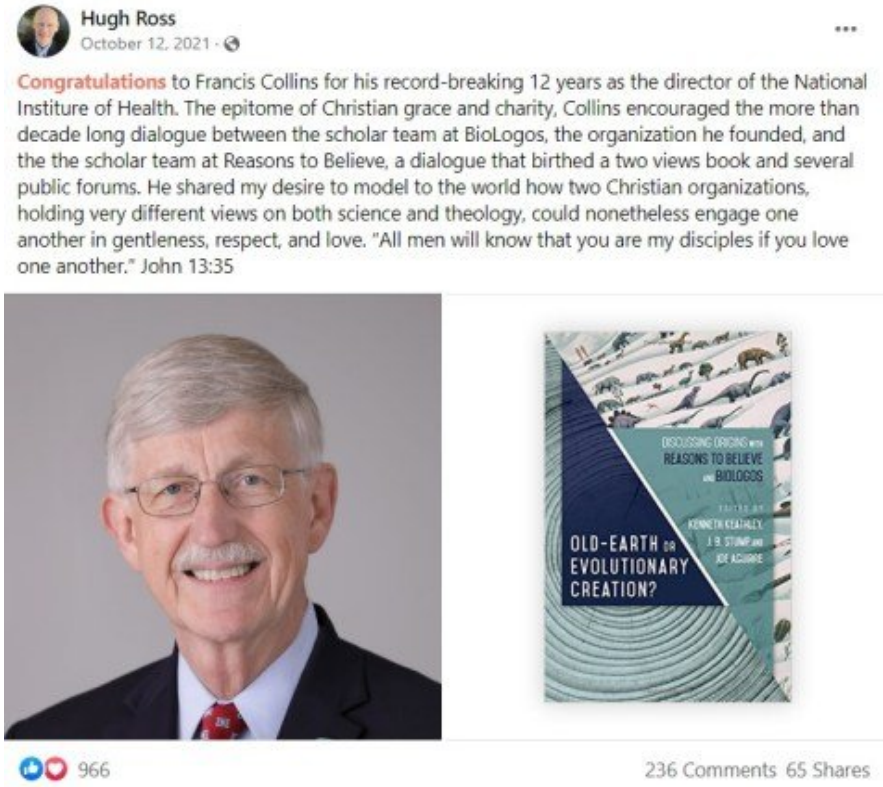

Hugh Ross loves Francis Collins

I don't think anyone would call Hugh Ross a very politically-aware person, but this was ridiculous. Francis Collins isn't automatically a good person just because he has elite degrees and political power. Elite degrees and political power are great, but they don't automatically make you a good Christian. Hugh Ross has never been very intelligent about policy or politics. He was careless about Collins and it is a huge mistake.

Further reading

If you don't know much about Francis Collins, you should read this article about him from Evolution News. They go over his record on abortion, experimenting on aborted babies, LGBT activism and theistic evolution.

Oh, and here are some other names Megan names in a tweet:

Megan Basham
@megbasham

How did Collins overcome his anti-life, pro-LGBT baggage to become the go-to expert for millions of Christians? With a little help from his friends [Ed Stetzer, Russell Moore, Rick Warren, Tim Keller, D. French, N.T. Wright, CT] who were happy to stand as his character witnesses.

9:51 AM · Feb 1, 2022 · Twitter Web App

D. French is David French, who used to write for National Review, which has also lurched to the left.

Please don’t listen to these people. They’re wolves.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

February 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining the outline of the podcast.

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other

examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

Atheist philosopher tells atheists how to be moral on atheism

February 4, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let’s review what you need in your worldview in order to have a rationally grounded system of morality.

You need 5 things:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a “social contract” is just based on people’s opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people’s individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people’s expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What’s in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question “what does it matter?”. Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you’ve finished eating them, you die for real and that’s the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It’s hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Theism rationally grounds all 5 of these. Atheism cannot ground *any of them.*

Atheist objective morality

Let's take a look at an atheist professor of philosophy, and see how good he is at rationally grounding the 5 points above. Remember, we're not interested in his likes or dislikes. We're not interested in his feelings. We're not interested in his opinions. We're interested in knowing what sort of MORALITY atheism makes rational for atheists. What is reasonable, if the universe is an accident, and human beings are nothing but random collections of atoms?

Let's ask this distinguished professor of atheist morality:

> Stephen Kershnar is a distinguished teaching professor in the philosophy department at the State University of New York at Fredonia and an attorney. He focuses on applied ethics and political philosophy. Kershnar has written one hundred articles and book chapters on such diverse topics as abortion, adult-child sex, hell, most valuable player, pornography, punishment, sexual fantasies, slavery, and torture.

This is a lot better stuff to think about than the stupid things that Christians think about. Love? Charity? Self-Denial? Self-Sacrifice? Those are stupid things to think about.

He's written books against moral responsibility, against the pro-life movement, and against gratitude towards veterans.

He also defended atheism in a formal debate.

The Federalist reported on his views:

> Stephen Kershnar is a professor at State University of New York at Fredonia, and a pedophilia apologist.
>
> Here's Kershnar on video saying that an adult male having sex with a 12-year-old girl is not obviously wrong, and that calling it wrong is a "mistake." In the same clip, he refers to pedophilic rape as "adult-child sex," another euphemism that, just like "minor-attracted person," is being used in an attempt to run cover for evil.
>
> […]He continues to defend pedophilia, remarking "The notion that it's wrong even with a one-year-old is not quite obvious to me." He goes on. "I don't think it's blanket wrong at any age."
>
> Kershnar even argues that children can consent to sex with adults, comparing it to a child willfully engaging in kickball or participating in bar mitzvah lessons.
>
> […]Kershnar is open to the idea that pedophilia is deeply harmful to victims, but he just can't put his finger on why. He thinks it could be because of bigots like you and me, who go "berserk" when pedophiles rape kids.
>
> He even argues that we often make children do things they don't want to do, like "go to church" or "go to temple" or "go to their sister's ballet recital." His perspective is backed up by podcast host Thaddeus Russel, who makes an

> equally monstrous argument when he says “all a child’s life is, is coercion by adults … often to make the child do something for the adult’s pleasure only.”
>
> It’s also telling that these dangerous viewpoints have found their way into the mainstream through left-wing outlets. At one point, Russel boasts that he authored an article in The Daily Beast that argued for lowering consent laws.

Thaddeus Russel says this:

> Black kids at school tackled me to the ground and lay on top of me until I thought I would suffocate when I mentioned that I was an atheist.

Do you think this is unusual for atheists? We just had a case where Democrats in Virginia were covering up the rape of a child and having the child’s father arrested. The same things happen in Canada. Last November, another LGBT activist professor was trying to normalize pedophilia.

If I had to pick the atheist capital of the United States, I’d pick Seattle. The voters there elected Ed Murray to be their mayor. Seattle voters loved that he had been the driving force behind same-sex marriage in the state. Atheists were proud of their state for legalizing same-sex marriage. They cheer for the annihilation of Judeo-Christian morality in our laws, *and in our culture.* It emerged later that Murray was a child molester.

GoFundMe seizes nearly $10 million of donations intended for Canadian truckers

February 5, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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oFundMe is a far-left company that supposedly allows people to raise money for causes. At the request of the far-left Ottawa police and the far-left Trudeau government, they decided to confiscate donations for the Canadian trucker. GoFundMe says they'll distribute it to causes they like. Previously, GoFundMe employees have donated to Antifa and other far-left groups. This is theft.

Here's the story from Breitbart News:

> In an unprecedented step, far-left funding platform GoFundMe has announced it will "redirect" donations intended for the Canadian Freedom Convoy to "credible and established charities" that are chosen by Freedom Convoy organizers and "verified by GoFundMe."
>
> In what is likely to go down in history as one of the most brazen actions ever taken by a Big Tech platform, money sent by small donors to the Freedom Convoy will be redirected to causes that the donors never intended to support, unless they request a refund before February 19.
>
> […]The Freedom Convoy, which was created by Canadian truckers to protest draconian coronavirus restrictions in the country, has captured attention around the world.
>
> Galvanized by their effective, peaceful resistance against two years of government restrictions on everyday activities, people around the world pledged over $10 million in small donations to the Canadian truckers through GoFundMe.
>
> But, because the fundraiser was held on a far-left platform known for shutting down fundraisers and even freezing funds destined for causes popular with conservatives, a large portion of that money (maybe even most of it, if donors aren't alerted to the situation, and the refund deadline) is likely to be redirected to causes and charities that are vetted by GoFundMe.
>
> The same platform that allows users to solicit donations for violent BLM-supporting felons who assaulted police officers says it took the decision because of "police reports of violence and other unlawful activity."
>
> GoFundMe's decision to effectively steal the funds was welcomed by the Ottawa police and by the city's left-wing mayor, Jim Watson.

This is not the first time GoFundMe has targeted people to the right of Antifa:

> GoFundMe has a long history of bias, including banning a legal fundraiser for Kyle Rittenhouse before the teenager, now cleared of all charges, was ever convicted of a crime.

> The platform also banned a fundraiser for a Texas nurse seeking to overturn an employee vaccine mandate, an election integrity project launched shortly after the 2020 election, and a fundraiser launched by conservative commentator Candace Owens for a café owner who criticized George Floyd and BLM protesters during the 2020 summer riots.

Previously, GoFundMe had promoted donations for the far-left occupation of Seattle:

And according to this tweet by AntifaWatch, GoFundMe employees had previously donated to an Antifa / BLM arsonist. So if they are making the decision about where the $10 million that they confiscated will go, it's very likely going to go to far-left domestic terrorists. This would be theft, pure and simple.

Some good news

There is some good news for the truckers in Ottawa. Just as in Alberta, tow truck companies have decided not to help the fascist Ottawa mayor and the Ottawa police to tow away the trucks.

Left-leaning CTV News reports:

> Local towing companies are rejecting Ottawa police requests for help towing 'Freedom Convoy' trucks out of the downtown core, according to a senior police source.
>
> […]The source said police are considering launching a criminal investigation into whether intimidation of the tow truck companies is leading to their lack of cooperation with police.

Will the truckers' protest work? Well, it's already worked in the province of Alberta:

> As people protesting public health measures related to COVID-19 continued to impede traffic in southern Alberta on Thursday night, Premier Jason Kenney announced his government would be announcing a path forward for the lifting of public health measures next week, acknowledging many Albertans are sick of having limitations on their lives.

Let’s hope that the Canadian federal government in Ottawa comes to their senses.

How to be an alpha male and signal manliness without being a promiscuous predator

February 6, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These days, there seems to be a perception that in order to be an alpha male, you have to become a pick-up artist and sleep with a whole bunch of fatherless women, then ghost them (don't talk to them any more). But as a Christian man, that's all off-limits to me. In this post, I'm going to lay out three ways for a Christian man to be an alpha male without being a promiscuous predator.

1. Never let a woman override your vision to serve Christ

As a man, your life goal is to self-sacrificially invest your time, money and effort into some enterprise that benefits Christ. Your life goal is NOT to serve women (See 1 Cor 7, and 2 Tim 2:4) For example, in my case, I've invested time in learning apologetics, having a blog as a platform, and giving charity to invest in organizations to do apologetics events. Alpha males don't give up their mission in order to get the girl. If a girl comes along who thinks that she would like to help me serve God according to MY plan, then she is welcome to do that. And I will evaluate her and decide whether I think getting her help is worth the loss of autonomy (2 Tim 2:4).

It is tempting for a man to let a woman re-focus his time, money and effort on giving her what she wants. If she is his wife, then some of that will be legitimate, just as some government spending is legitimate because it is Constitutional. A man should love his wife, protect her and provide for her. But he should not be distracted for other frivolous priorities that have nothing to do with a Christian marriage plan.

Christian women often absorb secular left priorities from the culture, and they expect Christian men to give them what the culture says they ought to want or need, e.g. – putting the kids in daycare and public schools so she can have a career like her non-Christian friends. Alpha males put their own vision above what the secular left culture says they should be doing.

2. Never let a woman disrespect your leadership / mentoring role

It's important for you to have areas of your life where you actually know what you are talking about, and have demonstrated success at mentoring others. In my case, those areas are education, career and finances. I have invested time in learning what to study. And I achieved a BS and MS in computer science. I have invested time in learning how to interview, what skills to train, and what jobs to take, and how to keep a job. And I achieved a 22-year+ gap-less resume with good companies, using good skills. I have chosen not to borrow money at interest (ever), not to spend money on travel / fun / thrills, and to invest early and often. And I have achieved a six-figure income and a 7-figure net worth (1.3 million). A man needs to have areas like that where he studies and

achieves, so that he knows how to advise others, and has a record of successful mentoring.

I sometimes mentor women. Some of them listen to me and some do not. I've gotten women to drop their non-STEM majors to study engineering or computer science. I've gotten women to stop wasting money on fun and thrills, in order to pay off their debts and start investing and giving to charity. I've gotten women to dump hot bad boys who would not commit, and choose commitment-minded men. I've gotten women to quit bad jobs in order to take better jobs. In the areas where I have demonstrated competence, I expect women to respect my leadership, even if it makes them feel bad in the short term. Men signal alpha male status when they obtain good results in their mentoring activities.

Also, I'm just going to throw this out there: "spiritual leadership" does not mean telling a woman that God really is speaking to her through her feelings, when she wants to make impulsive, impractical decisions that are likely to result in failure. And a man's role as leader is not "servant leadership". The value that I have to a woman is not primarily serving her – making her comfortable, happy and loved. The value that I have is my decision-making ability in areas related to serving God. I know what to do to achieve results in certain areas, and that's not my opinion. So, if a woman comes along and tries to grab the controls and force me to make her feel good, it's not good for my Boss and I will avoid her. My job for my Boss is to get the best I can out of her, for the benefit of my Boss. I am not supposed to use authority to make her serve me. But if I can get her focused on important things, built her up, support her, encourage her (including kindness and care and love), then I can do that.

3. Never let a woman stop you from expressing your moral convictions

In the 2012 election, most single / unmarried / divorced women voted pro-abortion and pro-gay-marriage.

Excerpt:

> **NBC News national exit polling shows that 67 percent of unmarried women said they voted for Obama. That's in line with the 2008 election, when 70 percent of single women helped usher the president into office. This proves it wasn't a single-election phenomenon: unmarried women have solidified into a powerful voting force, experts say.**
>
> […]By the way — this isn't just young women, Maatz pointed out. Many of the single women voters were over 50 — divorced, widowed or never married.

These women voted for a candidate who voted multiple times for *infanticide* as a state senator in Illinois. Why is this? Well, young unmarried women are more influenced by feelings like compassion. They tend to see themselves as "exempt" from moral standards, because they are constantly told that they are "special". They tend to see the predictable consequences of poor choices as "unexpected", causing them to think that

people aren’t responsible for their own poor choices. If you look at the books that Christian women read, you’ll see a lot of them are about the idea that God or “The Universe” is all laid out for their benefit – including giving them a “soul mate” who will make them happy, but never challenge them. As a result, they tend to get into a lot of trouble (e.g. – student loan debt, unwanted pregnancy, infertility, etc.) and then they look to government to give them a bailout, and prevent anyone from “judging” them.

A man can signal his alpha male status to women by being bold and persuasive on moral issues (and issues of policy that touch on moral issues). This may not work on all women, but it will work on the ones he should be interested in for wife and mother roles. Men should never just express their feelings about moral issues, or just tell about their experiences. Men ought to go further, and make logical arguments supported by scientific evidence. Instead of sharing “their opinion” (subjective), they ought to press those who disagree to change their minds. It is the studying of arguments and evidence that allows the Christian man to signal alpha male status when these moral issues are debated. Christian men should never spend time, money or effort on women who make them feel bad about having true beliefs or moral convictions.

Conclusion

My friend Dina likes to say that the essence of manliness is when a man refuses to let a woman redirect him away from his vision and his moral convictions by using sex, sexual attraction, the promise of sex, or by withholding sex (from her husband). I think men can learn something from her definition. Women are useful as helpers, but we shouldn’t automatically assume that they are wise and virtuous, and give them the authority to rule over us in areas where we ought to lead.

Dina also says never to trust women’s words, when deciding whether they will respect your leadership in your vision and moral convictions. Before you marry a woman, you must observe her taking the initiative to perform independent actions that help you with your vision – actions that go against her own feelings and desires. The most important part about being an alpha male is not losing your alpha male status by marrying someone who won’t respect it.

What do research studies say about the bond between fathers and daughters?

February 7, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Many people today think that biological fathers are not essential for raising daughters. In fact, we even support this view by passing no-fault divorce laws, single-mother welfare laws, and by opposing shared parenting laws. The story goes that children do fine without their biological father in the home. Having children is something that women decide to do, and the man is superfluous. So I thought it might be a good idea to take a look at the research.

Here is a recent article from the centrist Institute for Family Studies.

It says:

> The dynamic between fathers and their daughters has been characterized by one expert as the most "fragile and unstable" when compared to other parent-child relationships.[1] It can be further described as one of the most powerful and vital relationships to individuals, communities, and nations. For instance, fathers have a profound impact on their daughters' body image,[2] clinical depression, eating disorders,[3] self-esteem, and life satisfaction,[4] to name but a few.
>
> But of all the unique contributions a father makes in his daughter's life, perhaps there is none of greater significance than in the area of sexual development and activity and romantic relationships.
>
> - Numerous studies have discovered female pubertal timing occurs later in girls whose fathers are consistently present in their life.[5]
> - An extensive body of research has revealed that early pubertal maturation in girls is associated with a variety of negative biological, psychological, and social outcomes, including, mood disorders,[6] substance abuse,[7] adolescent pregnancy,[8] and a variety of cancers of the reproductive system.[9]
> - Fatherless daughters are seven times more likely to become pregnant as teens.[10]
>
> […]The conditions in our culture of both rampant fatherlessness and sexual promiscuity are incompatible with forming secure and healthy relationships with boys and with establishing stable families for the next generation. A young girl's sexual development can significantly outpace her neurological and emotional development—the very resources needed to guide her sexual choices.
>
> Herein lies the danger. Much of our culture today promotes sexual activity but void of healthy attachment or true intimacy. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that high levels of father involvement (regardless of dad's marital status) are predictive of high levels of intimacy, commitment, and trust in young female

> adults' romantic relationships; whereas low levels of father involvement are predictive of the opposite.[11]

And:

> How a father treats both his daughter and her mother can help a young woman feel safe and secure in her relationships with the boys and men in her life, including her future husband. Family scientists and evolutionary psychologists have discovered that girls appear to be born with an emotional, relational, and evolutionary void that a father is designated to fill. If left vacant, girls will be more likely to seek to fill it in with other, unhealthier substitutes. The father-daughter relationship is the one that best teaches young women about true love and intimacy, self-worth, and respect.
>
> **Professor Linda Nielsen summarized this in one profound sentence: "[T]he father has the greater impact on the daughter's ability to trust, enjoy, and relate well to the males in her life."**

So, a father's love keeps her from getting into relationships with boys before the boys are ready to commit to her. By the way, I don't think that boys should even be allowed to TALK to girls about a relationship, unless they have a STEM degree, and two years of private sector work experience. I really *hate* when unemployed, penniless boys waste a girl's time when they can't afford to commit to her. People think I am pretty rough on women, but I really am much meaner to men who don't have STEM degrees and gapless resumes. (I guess a skilled trade would work as well, in place of the STEM degree – something like electrician, for example).

Anyway, back to the research. When a woman is deciding which men to have sex with, she has to be thinking of more than just her own needs. She has to choose a man who is going to stick around long enough to raise her daughters, so that they grow up with the confidence to resist the advances of boys who aren't ready to commit. To be pro-woman means to be pro-daughter, and that means that women need to be persuaded to be careful about the choice of sex partner, and the timing of sexual activity. This is why people used to keep sex for marriage in the past: to protect children by making sure that they would get the stability and engagement they need from their parents.

Also, I have talked about the research about father-son bond in a different post.

If you want to do right for your children, then you need to control yourself and make wise choices. And if you're struggling to make good choices, then don't leave it up to your emotions and peer approval. Disregard your emotions. Disregard peer approval. Instead, let your decision-making be guided by your Christian convictions, and strengthened with scientific evidence. The Bible tells you not to have sex before you're married, and science tells you why this is good policy. The Bible gives you the goals, and science tells you how to how the world works, so you know how to make plans that will make sure you are never in a place where you are pressured to do the wrong thing. The more science you pack into your head, the easier it will be for you to convince yourself to do the right thing,

and to convince your partner to do the right thing. Science takes moral decision-making outside the realm of feelings and opinions.

And if your partner says “I don’t care about the needs of our future children”, then you have a good reason to dump them and move on. You can’t be in a relationship with someone who thinks that children’s needs are less important than adult desires. In fact, the whole design for relationships should start with what children need from the marriage and parents, and work backward from there to the obligations on the man and the woman. And men and women ought to discuss this. What are we trying to achieve with this relationship anyway? And what is the right way to achieve it? This is where the research comes in – it shows you how to do it right.

Research from the Heritage Foundation

- Marriage: Still the Safest Place For Women and Children
- Marriage: America’s Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty

Oklahoma governor announces legislation to promote choice in education for parents

February 8, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to name two policies that would help minorities the most, I would say that health savings accounts and school choice would be my choices. Let's talk about the second one in this post. The Republican governor of Oklahoma, Kevin Stitt, has announced a piece of school choice legislation that made me howl in delight! But it will make unionized public school teachers cry.

The Daily Caller reported:

> Republican Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt is slated to announce a sweeping school choice bill Monday at the State of the State address, the Daily Caller exclusively learned.
>
> Stitt will introduce the Oklahoma Empowerment Act, an educational savings account program designed to "fund students" instead of public school systems. Oklahoma's Secretary of Education Ryan Walters told the Daily Caller that all students eligible for private school are eligible for Oklahoma Empowerment Accounts.
>
> Eligible students can receive approximately $3,600 in an educational savings account to pay for books, tuition, transportation and other educational expenses, according to Walters. Students with special needs or extenuating circumstances may be eligible for increased funding.
>
> […]"Just 15% of Oklahoma high school graduates are ready for college in English, math, reading, and science," Stitt plans to tell Oklahoma legislators. "Less than one out of five. We can do better than 47th in the nation when it comes to our kids."
>
> The Republican governor claims that the educational savings account program will "make sure that money follows the student" and will make Oklahoma "a national leader in school choice."
>
> The bill intends to ensure "that parents, legal guardians and others with legal authority over children in [Oklahoma] be able to seek educational services that meet the needs of their individual children."

How big is this bill? HUGE:

> Corey DeAngelis, the Director of Research at the American Federation for Children, told the Daily Caller that the Oklahoma bill will be "even more expansive" than West Virginia's, which saw the "biggest school choice victory in 2021."

Even giving parents a little money back will allow them to put pressure on the public

school teachers and administrators. Right now, we have a situation where the public school teachers and administrators are being paid regardless of how they perform. And they call the FBI on parents who demand better, labeling them "domestic terrorists". They don't want anyone to interfere with their real priorities: indoctrinating children in secular leftism, with no accountability.

Tennessee

Oklahoma isn't the only state getting serious about reforming education. Tennessee is bringing in the very conservative Hillsdale college to reinvent their charter school system.

The Daily Wire explains:

> Tennessee Governor Bill Lee (R) announced on Monday a state partnership with Michigan's Hillsdale College to launch a number of K-12 charter schools.
>
> Lee announced the partnership during his state of the state address on Monday evening in front of a special joint session of the state Legislature. Hillsdale College is a liberal arts college in southern Michigan known for its refusal to accept federal funds. The college has launched an initiative to revitalize "public education through the launch and support of classical K-12 charter schools."
>
> Lee and Hillsdale College President Larry Arnn are working together to build a system of charter schools in Tennessee.
>
> "Two years ago, I traveled to Hillsdale College to participate in a Presidents Day celebration and spend time with champions of American exceptionalism," Lee said. "For decades, Hillsdale College has been the standard bearer in quality curriculum and the responsibility of preserving American liberty."
>
> "I believe their efforts are a good fit for Tennessee, and we are formalizing a partnership with Hillsdale to expand their approach to civics education and K-12 education," he added.

And more:

> The governor announced a host of education initiatives, including an overhaul of a roughly 30-year-old system of funding for school districts, shifting it from a school-focused system to a student-focused system.
>
> "A formula that prioritizes the needs of students above all else, and that pays particular attention to students with disabilities, rural students, low income-students, and students with other priority needs," Lee said. "If we do this correctly, we can create a funding formula that demands accountability and rewards districts for performance, but most importantly funds students and not bureaucracies."

Education is a winning issue for Republicans. Governors of red states are the best people to implement these measures. It provide evidence to others that we know how to get results, so they can imitate us and defeat the secular left in every state. We want the other states to be like red states.

Teacher unions

I wanted to say a word about the people who block education reform: the leaders of the teacher unions. Teacher unions donate overwhelmingly to Democrats, and Democrats oblige them by block any legislation that allows parents to put the needs of their children first.

This is from Open Secrets, which tracks political contributions:

Open Secrets Teacher Unions

SIXTY-SIX MILLION DOLLARS, and the vast majority going to Democrats, (the rest went to independents and blue state progressive Republicans). That's why children don't learn in school. The people in charge of the schools make sure they never get fixed.

Photo: Virginia police arrest father of girl raped in public school bathroom by biological male wearing a skirt

Did Justin Trudeau’s hateful rhetoric incite an Antifa member to commit domestic terrorism?

February 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I want to take a look at some of the rhetoric coming from Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. He’s been saying some very intolerant things about his fellow Canadians. After that, we’ll take a look at a recent violent crime that was committed by a radical far-left Antifa activist. It’s another in the long, long line of domestic terrorist hate crimes committed by the secular left.

First, Trudeau’s comments, reported by Life Site News:

> Prime Minister Trudeau maligned Canadians who are opposed to receiving the experimental C0VID-19 gene-therapy injections as “extremists,” “racists,” and “misogynists” who deny science.
>
> The September interview went viral on social media only late last month and has since attracted strong criticism from politicians and citizens alike.
>
> […]Further, Trudeau’s assertion that those opposed to v4ccination are “racist” is at odds with the fact that many of the most v4ccine-hesitant people are members of minority communities who have a strong distrust of government due to mistreatment in past generations.
>
> In Canada, indigenous groups like the Six Nations community in Ontario have a v4ccination rate of only 46 percent as of mid-December, compared to a rate of over 85 percent for the province’s population as a whole.
>
> In America, the group to report the highest levels of hesitancy is black Americans, with a whopping 50 percent reporting a distrust in the procedure.

Trudeau explained that people who are skeptical about the effectiveness of cloth masks and about the need for v4ccinating children under 5 “do not believe in science, who are often misogynists, often racists, too”.

Watch it here:

Did Canada know what they were doing when they elected this man? What was the point of making a skiing instructor and part-time substitute drama teacher the head of your country? He has never achieved anything on his own. When people like that fail – as they surely must – they always resort finger pointing. In the worst cases, they just pick some group of people to be the scapegoats for their own failure to achieve what they set out to achieve. I know he is handsome, and has nice hair, but you don’t want to have someone who blames all his failures on some minority’s “treachery”.

I thought this speech by Conservative MP Raquel Dancho really explained how bad things have gotten in Canada:

Moving on. Trudeau talks about his opponents being anti-science. Trudeau doesn’t have a

STEM degree, and knows nothing at all about science. He is anti-science, in his actions. His sole credential is having a famous rich father, who was also Prime Minister. That's it. He has no achievements in the competitive private sector that would qualify him to set the policy of a developed nation.

He's also considering the use of the Canadian military to crack down on protestors.

Post Millennial reports:

> Prime Minister Justin Trudeau responded to questions regarding the possibility of military being called into Ottawa to remove the truckers' Freedom Convoy that has taken over and gridlocked the capital's downtown core for nearly a week now.
>
> Trudeau said that the military option was "not in the cards right now," though the federal government would be there to support police of the jurisdiction and to review any formal requests sent by the city or the government of Ontario.

The protestors have not been charged with one single, solitary act of violence. You don't even consider calling out the military to deal with non-violent protests. But do you know who has committed violence? The people who agree with Trudeau's view of the protestors.

Canada's Rebel News reports:

> The man charged in Winnipeg for an attack on a convoy protest is a radical far-left anarchist. Police, however, are still treating the incident as a hit-and-run, rather than a hate crime.
>
> Four people taking part in a convoy protest in Manitoba's capital city were injured and rushed to hospital after a car plowed into the crowd. The man alleged to be the driver of the vehicle, Dave Zegarac, was taken into custody an hour later after a brief struggle with police. A white jeep can be seen hitting one person, before accelerating and hitting three more.
>
> The crowd had gathered in Winnipeg in support of the ongoing peaceful protest by truckers and their allies in Ottawa, where they are demanding an end to C0VID restrictions and v4ccine mandates.
>
> […]A feature on Zegarac in the now defunct alternative online publication The Scope published in April 2008 noted Zegarac's radical left-wing activism…

When you are in the public eye, you have to be careful with your words. You don't want to incite some crazy extremist to violence. But Trudeau has been behaving irresponsibly. His divisive rhetoric could easily have set this Antifa lunatic off. Trudeau needs to be more careful. Or, maybe the Canadian people should be more careful about who they elect to high office.

By the way, if anyone is looking for a new prime minister, I hear that Pierre Poilievre is available. Just saying. Voted Best Constituency MP.

Review of apologetics book by pastor shows where church needs to improve

February 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Whenever I talk to Christians, I find that they hold one of two views about what faith is.

The first view of faith is the Biblical view of faith as active trust in propositions we know to be true, because we have reasons and evidence to believe those propositions. This view is not only rooted in the Bible, but it extends through Augustine and Aquinas to the present day. I have written about this view of faith before, and quoted many theologians in support of it. In the Bible, people use miracles as a sign in order to convince skeptics. For example, Peter appeals to the resurrection in Acts 2. The Bible teaches that faith is active trusting based on evidence.

The second view is blind faith. This view is nowhere in the Bible, and this view asserts that becoming a Christian is a leap-of-faith in the dark against all the evidence. This view not only minimizes evidence, but it actually opposes presenting evidence to unbelievers and skeptics in the way that the Bible teaches. This view is nowhere in the Bible, and it was not the method used by Jesus or his followers. It is an unBiblical way of viewing faith, but it is very popular in some circles of Christianity. It is also popular among atheists, because this is what many Christian leaders and pastors tell them that faith is.

Consider this review of a recent book that defends the Gospels and the historicity of the resurrection by a blind faith pastor.

He writes:

> There are, however, two significant shortcomings to the book.
>
> First, *Cold-Case Christianity* places far too much emphasis on the role of extrabiblical sources. No doubt there is a legitimate role for biblical archaeology and extrabiblical writing from antiquity. Christianity is, after all, a faith firmly rooted in human history. But there is a grave danger when truth is suspended because of an apparent lack of corroboration from extrabiblical sources. And Wallace, I'm afraid, wanders too close to this dark side of apologetics.
>
> All of chapter 12, for instance, is devoted to proving the Gospels have external corroborative evidence—"evidence that are independent of the Gospel documents yet verify the claims of the text" (183). Wallace then addresses the historicity of the pool of Bethesda and makes another worrying statement: "For many years, there was no evidence for such a place outside of John's Gospel. Because Christianity makes historical claims, archaeology ought to be a tool we can use to see *if these claims are, in fact, true*" (201-202, emphasis added).
>
> In other words, Wallace seems to suggest we cannot affirm the truth of the Gospel accounts without the stamp of approval from archaeology and other extrabiblical sources. Such reasoning is dangerous, not least because it cannot

> affirm the inerrancy of the Bible. But also, it places the final court of appeal in the realm of extrabiblical sources rather than of God's all-sufficient, all-powerful Word.

If you're wondering why The Gospel Coalition is now derided everywhere as "woke", this article gives you a hint about what happened. Many pastors today have embraced blind faith, and are unable to defend any of the Bible's teachings to non-Christians. Instead, as I wrote about last week, they are just taking orders from the secular left, and demanding action on the priorities of the secular left from their parishioners. So, they're focused on using their pulpits to promote critical race theory, LGBT activism, refugees and illegal immigration, socialism, etc. When you can't defend your worldview with evidence, you start to slide to the left in order to remain "relevant". And that's what happened with The Gospel Coalition. They didn't want to have to do the work to learn about evidence, so they just consulted with the secular left about what they thought was virtuous, and promoted that. It's really that simple.

If we accept the blind faith view, we will limit our ability to raise children who can maintain their worldview through college. The phrase "The Bible says" is used by Christians all over the world to parent their children and to "engage" non-Christians. But does it work? Quoting the Bible isn't going to work on people who don't accept the Bible as an authority. But some people who don't accept the Bible as an authority do accept evidence as an authority. We can get them to accept the Bible later by starting with evidence.

There's another problem with adopting the "make a leap-of-faith" view. It doesn't allow Christianity to be any more correct than other religions. If we are promoting Christianity on the basis of the "beauty" of the words in the Bible, then Muslims have been making that exact same "argument" for centuries about the Quran. What about praying to God to see if the Bible is true? Mormons have been doing that for decades. They call it "the burning of the bosom". Like Christian pastors, Mormon pastors tell people to read their holy book and then pray to see if they get a burning of the bosom. But no one in the Bible ever took this approach to establishing the truth of their worldview. In the Bible, people use evidence.

In Bible, Jesus, Paul, Peter, etc. all point to evidence to support their claims. What do you think Jesus was talking about when he said that he would give a "wicked generation" a sign – the sign of Jonah? The sign of Jonah is *his bodily resurrection*, which was intended to show people that he was who he claimed to be. He didn't tell people to read the gospels and pray about it. There *were no gospels* at that time!

A much better approach to discussing Christianity with other people is to start with the scientific evidence for a Creator, and then move on to the historical evidence for the life of Jesus. A Christian cannot sustain a conservative view of the Bible and systematic theology if he goes through a secular world with nothing *testable* to say to non-Christians. Eventually, blind faith Christians break from the strain of being "spiritually weird", and start craving the acceptance of the secular left.

Tonight: Tim Stratton debates Calvinist juggernaut James White

February 11, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are the details of the debate:

> **Is Molinism Biblical? Christian apologists James White and Tim Stratton tackle an increasingly debated question in the Church today.**
>
> Okay, you may not know what Molinism is or why it matters. Well, the old-fashioned debates within Christianity around free will (say, Reformed vs. Arminianism) are at the heart of this debate. Do all things come to pass because God has decreed them? Or does God possess counterfactual (middle) knowledge of what would happen in a variety of possible worlds? This question gets to the heart of God's sovereignty, how it is applied, and whether God, for example, ends up being the "author of evil." Few would ever want to deny God's sovereignty. But how does that square with man's free will? Doesn't something have to give? Molinism seems to be a creative response to this problem. But does it square with the Bible? James White is a Reformed Baptist who holds to the traditional Calvinist/Reformed position of God's sovereignty. Tim Stratton holds to the Molinist position and recently received his Ph.D on this topic. Both men will bring their best to this important conversation.

The debate is Friday February 11th at 7 PM Central time, which is 8 PM Eastern, and 5 PM Pacific. You can join the live stream 15 minutes early, it's here:

Dr, Stratton has a new book out on this issue, published with a prestigious academic press. But you won't have time to read that before the debate, so I found you a brand new post by Tyson James.

He writes:

> Christian thinkers who affirm both that God is sovereign over all of creation and that humans have freedom sufficient for moral responsibility draw support from various biblical passages…
>
> However, the Bible doesn't really spell out for us the relationship between these two affirmations. What we want to know is how these puzzle pieces can fit together. Many explanations have been proposed, but, according to some of the most acclaimed Christian thinkers today, the most promising one was formulated by a Jesuit monk named Luis de Molina in the late 1500s.[1]
>
> Molina's idea was rather simple: God knew prior to creation that he could create free creatures, that is, creatures who could make choices which would not simply be the necessary outcome of preceding factors. In addition to knowing he could create free creatures, God knew prior to his decision to create what those

> creatures would freely do in whatever circumstance he could place them. Molina called this middle knowledge because it is situated between God's knowledge of what could be and what will be. With this knowledge, God could incorporate creatures' free choices into his exhaustive planning of history, thus preserving complete divine sovereignty and the creaturely freedom necessary for moral responsibility.

I do think this Bible passage is related to the view he outlined above:

> Acts 17:24-27
>
> 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,
>
> 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.
>
> 26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,
>
> 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,

In that passage, God is using his power to create to place his creatures in the times and places where they will freely respond to his drawing them to him. If they resist his drawing, they are responsible. But he is doing all the work of drawing them.

Tyson lists out a bunch of theological problems that are fully or partially resolved if Molinism is true: the problem of evil, doctrine of inspiration, fate of the unevangelized, perseverance of the saints, etc.

If you have read articles on the Reasonable Faith web site, then you'll have read some of these before, like this one on inspiration. Or this one on the fate of the unevangelized. I'm so old now, that I remember reading both of those when I was an undergraduate student! I'm sure some of you reading got through college by reading articles like this.

Anyway, if you like to debate, Tyson's article is filled with useful answers, like this:

> **"If God already knows what I'm going to choose, doesn't that mean I have to choose it? That doesn't sound like free will."**
>
> This statement confuses certainty (a psychological state) with necessity (a property of propositions, or the way something exists or occurs). God knows and is certain about what we would or will choose, but our choices themselves are contingent. That is, they are not necessitated by prior factors. We don't have to choose what we will choose, but God is certain about what choices we will (or would) choose.

I was asked this by a co-worker named Sean in my first job. I was 23 years old. Sean had a PhD in computer science from Northwestern, and I still defeated him on this, using an

answer like Tyson's.

Here's one that James White is SURE to ask, because he asks it in all of his videos:

> **"On Molinism, it seems like God's knowledge is based on creatures, which means he's depending on something other than himself for something he knows. Doesn't that mean he's not sovereign?"**
>
> This statement assumes that the way God knows our free choices is by looking at creatures and seeing what choices they would or will make. We call this a perceptual view of divine knowledge. But since God knows our choices even prior to our existing, there's simply nothing for him to "look" at in order to discover this information. Instead, it's better to think of God's knowing these things as purely mental: God perfectly conceives in his mind the creatures he can create and what they would or will freely choose. We call this a conceptual view of divine knowledge.

If you think you'd like to learn how to think about this issue, then tune into the debate. I think White is a tough opponent, an exceptional debater, and excellent on church history, theology and politics. But I'll be cheering for Stratton.

Why did evangelicals for Biden oppose pro-Christian policies and Christian moral values?

February 12, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

During the 2020 election, conservatives said that Democrat legislation like the Equality Act and the Women's Health Protection Act would hurt Christians in areas like religious liberty and right to life. But many people felt that Democrats would not hurt Christian values and liberties. Well, it turns out that the facts people were right, and the feelings people were wrong.

Now we get this story, from Daily Caller:

> Medical professionals are suing President Joe Biden's administration over a mandate requiring doctors to perform transgender surgeries in violation of their religious beliefs or medical judgement.
>
> Represented by the Alliance Defending Freedom, the American College of Pediatricians, the Catholic Medical Association and an OB-GYN doctor specializing in adolescent care filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee at Chattanooga Thursday against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
>
> […]The two medical associations represent 3,000 doctors and health care professionals, ADF said in a press release.

I'm just imagining myself being in a position where the secular left government forced me to violate my conscience. It makes me sick.

So, why were so many Christians tricked by the Democrats? Well, it turns out that a large number of people who identify as Christian actually just apply the label Christian to a set of values and a worldview that is defined entirely by their feelings. They believe that what is "moral" is what makes them feel good. In this culture, people have decided that it is better to be "compassionate", "tolerant" and "non-judgmental". What that means is that the strong adults do what they want to do, and the weak, e.g. children, suffer.

Take the Women's Health Protection Act. It's a bill that's been already passed in the House by Democrats that eliminates ALL restrictions on abortion at the state level. This bill would make it easier for women to kill their unwanted unborn children. No Christian should support it. But evangelicals for Biden do.

Suppose you approached an evangelical for Biden with an argument like this:

- P1. If the unborn are humans, then it's wrong to kill the unborn.
- P2. The unborn are humans, as per the science of embryology.
- C. Therefore, it's morally wrong to kill the unborn.

Now, you would think that an argument like this would work on evangelicals for Biden.

But it doesn't. They deny premise 2, because they have a *feeling* that it's false, and that *feeling* cannot be overturned by the science found in embryology textbooks.

Evangelicals for Biden don't think logically, and they don't care about scientific evidence. Their views (including their self-serving caricature of "Christianity") are formed by their emotions and peers. And they don't read any non-fiction or watch any debates that might change their minds. They surround themselves with people who agree with them. Anyone who tries to reason with them, or use evidence, is ejected from their lives.

This kind of failure to choose policy using reason and evidence applies to dozens of issues that are of interest to Christians. Not just abortion and higher gas prices, but also foreign policy disasters we are seeing in Afghanistan now, and in places like Vietnam before. They never learn. They never learn, because for them, a worldview is not about having true beliefs that achieve good results. For them, it's about feeling good, looking good, and surrounding themselves with people who agree with them.

Just this past week, I was reading comments from one of these "Christian" Democrats who had hooked up with a hot bad boy in her youth, then had an abortion. She became "Christian" later in life, to escape the feelings of shame from her past. When Trump came along, she only had one thing on her mind, and it wasn't policy or the Supreme Court. She identified Trump with the bad boy (who she freely chose) who got her pregnant, and she hated him for it. She did not want anyone voting for this man, because he made her *feel bad*. To correct herself, she would have had to have buckled down, and done some research. But since learning is hard work, and hard work makes her feel bad, she never learned a thing.

Evangelicals for Biden were never interested in Trump's pro-life record, or the unemployment rate, or the elimination of ISIS in Iraq. They didn't care about his record of achievements. They cared about themselves. They wanted to avoid being shamed for their selfishness past, present and future. They didn't care who would be hurt by a Biden presidency.

Well, I was a Never Trump conservative in 2016. but after 4 years of pro-life wins, a booming stock market, record low unemployment, no new wars, and tough sanctions for our enemies, I changed to be a Trump supporter. That doesn't mean that I look to Trump for moral or spiritual leadership. I just wanted the policies and the judges. The 2020 Never Trump people wanted BIDEN policies and BIDEN judges.

And now when you are looking at all of these horrors in the news, including the violation of the consciences of Christian pediatricians, maybe everyone will understand that "Christians" who form their view by feelings (compassion, tolerance, non-judgement), experiences and peer approval are not Christians at all. Next time, don't be tricked by virtue-signalers. Real Christians want to know how the world works. We would rather GET GOOD RESULTS than FEEL GOOD.

Who should the Republican candidate for president be in 2024?

February 13, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a candidate in mind for Republican nominee for president in 2024. His name is Ron DeSantis, and he's doing an amazing job as governor of purple-state Florida. I thought it might be a good idea for us all to learn a little something about him. His policies are quite tough, but he has a more mature attitude than Trump.

He was in the news this week for these comments about Joe Biden:

> "So I think the question is, we can either have a free society, or we can have a biomedical security state," DeSantis said. "And I can tell you, Florida, we're a free state, people are going to be free to choose, to make their own decisions about themselves, about their families, about their kid's education, and about putting food on the table."
>
> "And Joe Biden suggests that if you don't do lockdown policies, then you should quote, 'get out of the way,'" DeSantis continued. "But let me tell you this, if you're coming after the rights of parents in Florida, I'm standing in your way, I'm not going to let you get away with it."
>
> "If you're trying to deny kids a proper in person education, I'm gonna stand in your way and I'm gonna stand up for the kids in Florida," DeSantis continued. "If you're trying to restrict people, impose mandates, if you're trying to ruin their jobs and their livelihoods and their small business, if you are trying to lock people down, I am standing in your way and I'm standing for the people of Florida."
>
> "So why don't you do your job? Why don't you get this border secure?" DeSantis added. "And until you do that, I don't want to hear a blip about COVID from you. Thank you."

Video:

He was in the news for taking on the education bureaucrats, too:

> Broward County Public Schools has changed its masking policy after Republican Florida Governor Ron DeSantis released an executive order giving parents the power to decide whether their children should wear masks at school.
>
> […]As The Daily Wire previously reported, "Florida Governor Ron DeSantis (R) signed an executive order late this week that allows parents to make the choice of whether they want to have their children wear masks in school, which comes in response to the Biden administration making new recommendations through the CDC about wearing masks in school."
>
> The executive order makes sure that local school boards "do not violate Floridians' constitutional freedoms," "do not violate parents' right under Florida

> law to make health care decisions for their minor children," and ensures that "children with disabilities or health conditions who would be harmed by certain protocols such as face masking requirements" are protected.

I don't like words. I like actions.

Here's Governor DeSantis' biography:

> Governor Ron DeSantis is the former U.S. Representative for Florida's Sixth District.
>
> A native Floridian with blue-collar roots, Ron worked his way through Yale University, where he graduated with honors and was the captain of the varsity baseball team. He also graduated with honors from Harvard Law School. While at Harvard, he earned a commission in the U.S. Navy as a JAG officer. During his active-duty service, he supported operations at the terrorist detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and deployed to Iraq as an adviser to a U.S. Navy SEAL commander in support of the SEAL mission in Fallujah, Ramadi and the rest of Al Anbar province. His military decorations include the Bronze Star Medal for Meritorious Service and the Iraq Campaign Medal.
>
> After active-duty service, Ron served as a federal prosecutor, where he targeted and convicted child predators. He was first elected to Congress in 2012, where he fought for term limits, the No Budget/No Pay Act, and to cut taxes. While serving in Congress, Ron refused his Congressional pension and health insurance plan because he is against special deals for politicians. He also sponsored legislation to make it easier for the military to prosecute sexual assault and authored the bill to end the secret taxpayer-funded slush fund for members of Congress to make hush payoffs for sexual harassment.
>
> Ron is married to Casey DeSantis, an Emmy Award winning television host. Together, they're the proud parents of their daughters, Madison and Mamie, and their son, Mason.

Look for him in 2024. I really hope that conservative parents are making more like him.

38-year old unmarried model explains what she means by “a decent man” (for marriage)

February 14, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve always been suspicious of women who make a living through their physical beauty. I see a few problems with modeling as a career. First, you don’t have to produce anything useful that requires understanding the real world, like a programmer or a nurse. Second, you focus a lot on your appearance, and that’s not healthy, since it all fades out by age 35 anyway. Women who get a lot of attention for free typically don’t know how to treat men, either. They don’t learn because they don’t have to learn.

With that in mind, here’s an article by an aging 38-year-old model that illustrates the problem:

> Earlier this month I opened the door to a bouquet of flowers.
>
> They were from yet another man who wants to date me. He’s 35, tall, dark and handsome.
>
> […]And this week, as the gifts roll in from admirers for Valentine’s Day — I have already received two…
>
> […]I am 38 and have been single for four years.

So, the first thing to point out about this is that it confirms what I was saying about pretty women. Look at the way she talks about how all these men are paying attention to her. Like it or not, her worldview is going to be conditioned by this attention she’s getting from men. She isn’t having to write code to get attention. Or set a fracture. Or do anything. She just gets it because she was born with good looks. And she doesn’t see that it is her job to 1) prepare her character for attracting a man who wants to commit, or 2) choose men who are interested in commitment. Her job is just to be pretty, and then tell everyone how much attention she’s getting from men. *Men who will not commit to her*. She is mistaking the attention for intent to marry. But men who pay attention to dumb, pretty women don’t intend to marry them. They just want to pump and dump them.

But she doesn’t see her failure to prepare herself for commitment and to prefer commitment-minded men as her problem. On the contrary – her singleness at 38 is *the fault of men being worthless*:

> And I hate to break it to any other single women in their late thirties, but all the decent men in our age bracket have been taken.
>
> […]While I work out every day, these men look a decade older.
>
> Beer bellies, bad manners, little respect for single women and minimal hygiene — I’ve seen it all on the apps.
>
> Over the past four years I’ve been on almost 500 dates trying to find Mr Right.
>
> And while I have become something of an expert on dating apps — last year I got

> a congratulations from Tinder for getting 25,000 likes for my profile — unfortunately, I am still looking for The One.
>
> My theory is all the good men were snapped up when they were young. All that's left is the dregs.

Now, she doesn't think that she is the dregs for being 38 and being completely unsuited to marriage. She thinks that men are the dregs – because they don't have an attractive height and appearance. That's what she's looking for – and that's *the only thing she's looking for*. She's had relationships with men, but they just LIVED WITH HER. They never committed, because she wasn't looking for a man who would commit, she was looking for a man with appearance, height, fitness and hygiene. Someone who looked as good as her.

Doubt me? Read her own words – this is what she values in a man:

> During my 500 dates, the only guy I have seriously dated was my age and had the best hair and teeth in the world.
>
> He even had a "proper" job and took me out for fancy dinners. Alas, he wasn't ready to settle down — or something like that.
>
> Apart from that, there was the guy who looked like Superman on his dating profile but turned up with a long white Santa beard. His body had gone to pot and he was wearing unwashed clothes.
>
> Then there was the wealthy consultant who took me to his club where cocktails were thirty quid a pop. He was generous but knew the value of nothing. Plus, he continually scoffed salt and vinegar nuts on our date — the odour was revolting.
>
> […]Then there are the beer bellies. If a man has one, I know we'll have nothing in common as I'm active…

And so on. Everything is about appearance. She's looking for *exactly what she is herself*: a pretty face. That's what she knows, understands and values. And she has *no idea* that the willingness to commit is not related to external appearances. The important thing for her is the man's *appearance*. And that's why she has 5 billion dates and no commitment. Only a certain kind of man commits. It's going to be related to his personal character – religion, morality, etc. – more than it's related to what she can see with her eyes.

In order for a man to stick with a woman through childbirth and aging, he's going to have to have some reason to value her beyond youth and beauty. And not every man has such reasons. That's why it's the woman's job to do two things. 1) to develop the kinds of character traits that are likely to attract a commitment-minded man, like fitness, femininity, vulnerability, trust, kindness, etc. and 2) to evaluate men and separate the ones who have a worldview that values women for more than youth and beauty.

In the case of Christian men, we are looking for women who have self-control, sobriety, chastity, fidelity, etc. And we are especially attracted to women who take God's goals as their own, and work independently to promote the things that God thinks are valuable.

Women who can defend God’s existence and reputation are highly regarded. Women who put others above their own selfish desires, especially children and animals. Women who are content at home with a non-fiction book. Women who don’t seem to waste money on entertainment, fun and thrills. The woman has to have what commitment-ready men want, and she has to know which men are ready for commitment. SHE CAN’T READ THAT WITH HER EYES OR WITH HER FEELINGS. She’s going to have to ask questions and investigate what he demonstrates about his character with his actions and accomplishments.

Trudeau uses assault rifles, armored vehicles and snipers to ban peaceable assembly

February 15, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On paper, Canada's Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms offers Canadians many human rights. But those rights aren't worth the paper they're printed on. If you challenge the dictatorship of the snowboarding instructor / substitute drama teacher, then you will face armored vehicles, assault rifles, snipers on rooftops, frozen bank accounts, arrest and criminal prosecution.

Trudeau announced Monday that he would be using dictatorial power to suppress peaceful protests by force. The Emergency Act, (formerly known as the War Powers Act), was previously used during wars and violent terrorist attacks, e.g. – kidnapping of a diplomat. In the photos, you can see heavily armed militarized police using force to arrest the peaceful protestors.

Breitbart reports:

> Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has invoked the Emergencies Act for the first time to squash the ongoing Freedom Convoy protests against Wuhan coronavirus restrictions, potentially giving the Canadian leader sweeping emergency powers.
>
> […]The Emergencies Act replaced the prior War Measures Act that was used by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, the current prime minister's father, during the October crisis of 1970 when members of the far-left terrorist Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) kidnapped and murdered Quebec Deputy Premier Pierre Laporte.
>
> The act, which came into law in 1988, allows Trudeau to invoke various measures that could include banning people from gathering in certain areas as well as restricting their travel across the country.

Far-left Newsweek reported:

> Police crackdowns against "Freedom Convoy" protests began on Saturday, with authorities working to clear anti-COVID-mandate demonstrators in Canada and France.
>
> The enforcement in Canada focused on the Ambassador Bridge, which connects the city of Windsor, Ontario to Detroit. The bridge was one of the locations focused on by Canadian truckers, who formed a blockade preventing travel across the major economic thoroughfare.
>
> On Saturday morning, reporter Sean O'Shea shared an on-the-ground look at the situation in Windsor on Twitter. At one point, he noted the presence of both "tactical teams" and "snipers on the roof."

> […]On Friday, a judge in Canada ordered that the protestors on Ambassador Bridge to disperse. Police warned that anyone still defying the order would be arrested.

Canadian journalist Ezra Levant posted a 20-tweet thread explaining what's happening in Canada.

What's ironic is that the left-wing governments and police forces have declined to use such power against left-wing protesters, rioters and criminals. They stand by and watch crimes happen, and do nothing, when it's their political allies committing crimes. But peaceful protesters get arrested by the militarized police. Their bank accounts get frozen, and they face criminal prosecution, just for standing around outside to protest government overreach.

What's the lesson I take from this? Well, I have friends who do Christian apologetics speaking in Canada. So I already know from them that they are stopped at the borders and in the airports *every time* and grilled by the police about what they intend to say about abortion, same-sex marriage, Islam and other controversial topics. Canada doesn't have a first amendment that protects freedom of speech and freedom of religion. They regularly slap publication bans on journalists who report on stories that damage the secular left elites. They lock up pastors. They shut down church services. And they violate the consciences of Christian business owners and professionals as a matter of course. They don't respect freedom of association, or the right to peacefully protest, either.

This is not a country that I would ever visit. Who knows what would happen? If they found out that I favor natural marriage and the right to life, I could be arrested by Nazi SS and thrown into prison. Just for disagreeing with the Fuhrer Trudeau. Is it worth the risk? I'd prefer not to spend my life in prison in a frozen hellhole, thank you very much. It's clearly not a civilized country. They don't respect human rights, and they don't have a stable legal system. Judges are just criminalizing behaviors from the bench, with no legislative process. You might as well vacation in Zimbabwe. This is not a developed Western nation. This is a communist dictatorship.

I'll stay right out of there, thanks.

Report: Hillary Clinton was the mastermind behind the Trump-Russia collusion hoax

February 16, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I cannot keep up with the articles on the Durham probe, which is about the origins of the now-discredited Trump-Russia collusion narrative. You'll recall that far-left Democrat Robert Mueller investigated Trump for 2 years, and found nothing. Then U.S. Attorney John Durham investigated the origins of the false collusion narrative. Unlike Mueller, he's finding a lot.

I read a billion articles trying to find a summary in plain English for everyone to keep up, and here is what I found.

From The Stream:

> Trump was right. Right all along.
>
> Hillary Clinton's lawyers hired a tech firm to "infiltrate" servers not only at Trump Tower, but at the White House, as part of their effort to falsely tie President Trump to Russia. That's the explosive revelation found in a new filing by Special Counsel John Durham.
>
> Clinton lawyer Michael Sussman went to the FBI with allegations that Trump was tied to the Putin-controlled Alfa Bank. (Sussman has been charged with lying to the FBI when he said he wasn't working for any client … let alone Trump's opponent.)
>
> Hillary would weaponize these allegations in the last days of the 2016 campaign.
>
> It's time for Trump to answer serious questions about his ties to Russia.
>
> — Hillary Clinton (@HillaryClinton) October 31, 2016
>
> To boost the Trump-Russia myth, the Clinton Campaign ordered both Sussman, and his election-rigging partner Mark Elias, to hire a tech firm. Its job? To fake Trump connections to Alfa Bank.

They spied on Trump AFTER he became President:

> What's new in Durham's latest filing is that these efforts extended to grabbing computer data from the White House itself after Trump took office.
>
> In connection with these efforts, Tech Executive-1 – (Identified as Rodney Joffe) exploited his access to non-public and/or proprietary Internet data. (Joffe) also enlisted the assistance of researchers at a U.S.-based university (Identified as Georgia Tech) who were receiving and analyzing large amounts of Internet data in connection with a pending federal government cybersecurity research contract.
>
> Durham says that the government will prove at Sussman's trial how Joffe was

> able to spy on the activities of Trump's computers at Trump Tower and his Central Park West apartment. And (most chillingly) at the "Executive Office of the President of the United States." That's the White House.

Hillary Clinton knew:

> […]Trump Administration official Kash Patel spent years working for Rep. Devin Nunes to unravel the Trump-Russia hoax. He told Fox the filing "definitively shows that the Hillary Clinton campaign directly funded and ordered its lawyers at Perkins Coie to orchestrate a criminal enterprise to fabricate a connection between President Trump and Russia."
>
> Per Durham, this arrangement was put in motion in July of 2016, meaning the Hillary Clinton campaign and her lawyers masterminded the most intricate and coordinated conspiracy against Trump when he was both a candidate and later President of the United States, while simultaneously perpetuating the bogus Steele Dossier hoax.

All the Democrat elites knew:

> In 2016 — before Trump was elected — the FBI knew the whole Trump-Russia thing was garbage. That means that on January 5, 2017, when Barack Obama, Joe Biden, James Comey, James Clapper, John Brennan, Loretta Lynch and Susan Rice met in the White House to discuss the Trump Russia investigation, every single person in that room knew better. Each one of them knew that the "Russia collusion" was a Clinton-concocted hoax.
>
> And yet they all agreed that the Trump investigation would continue, and he would only be told by James Comey about the Steele Dossier's "salacious details."

Here's Hillary Clinton trumpeting the results of the scheme on Twitter just days before the 2016 election:

The Federalist puts it into perspective:

> Mark Meadows, a former congressman who also served as chief of staff for Trump, soon joined the fray, tweeting out, "They didn't just spy on Donald Trump's campaign. They spied on Donald Trump as sitting President of the United States. It was all even worse than we thought."
>
> Kash Patel, who served as lead investigator for then-House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes, added that the motion "shows that the Hillary Clinton campaign directly funded and ordered its lawyers at Perkins Coie to orchestrate a criminal enterprise to fabricate a connection between President Trump and Russia."
>
> Nunes concurred, telling The Federalist on Sunday, "There was no limit to the brazenness and vindictiveness of the Democrats' illegal spying operation." "In all my years as a member, ranking member, and chairman of the House Intelligence Committee," Nunes added, "this is the single biggest threat to American democracy I've ever seen."

I think it's interesting that one of the people involved (Jake Sullivan) is working in the Biden administration right now:

> President Joe Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan was another key player in promoting the Russian collusion hoax, and he should be fired for scamming Americans on Clinton's behalf.
>
> Sullivan, then-senior policy adviser to Hillary for America, boosted the Alfa Bank allegations with hopes that Clinton would win the 2016 election.
>
> In a press release touting the bogus story about a Trump Tower server

> communicating with Russia, Sullivan claimed that the information, which we now know was gathered by a firm employed by Clinton's team, "could be the most direct link yet between Donald Trump and Moscow."
>
> "It certainly seems the Trump Organization felt it had something to hide, given that it apparently took steps to conceal the link when it was discovered by journalists," Sullivan said in a statement amplified by Clinton on Twitter.
>
> […]Sullivan, a Steele dossier truther, used his ties with the corporate media to spread falsehoods about Trump and Russia.
>
> […]Sullivan, a key player in handicapping Trump's ability to later conduct foreign policy during his presidency, is now one of the top officials weighing in on U.S. foreign policy. He's a dominant voice in the U.S. response to Russia's rift with Ukraine. He's also the same guy who helped botch the deadly U.S. Afghanistan withdrawal.

He was rewarded for what he did.

I hope everyone understands that the 2022 mid-term elections have already started. Now is the time for everyone who wants to get to the bottom of this to share news stories from The Federalist, Breitbart, The Daily Signal, etc. on social media. We can't afford to be ruled by corrupt, immoral secular leftists.

Dictator joins hacker, Big Banks, Big News Media and Big Tech to destroy liberty

February 17, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was feeling really upset on Wednesday night, after reading some stories about the hacker who stole the GiveSendGo donors, the Big Banks who froze the accounts of their customers, the Big news media corporations who published articles about the leaked donors, and the Big Tech monopolies who allowed the names of the donors to be splashed all over the Internet.

Let's start with the alleged hacker. Did you know that he had previously worked for Canada's Royal Canadian Mounted Police?

American Greatness reports:

> A far-left founder of the hacktivist group An0nym0us, who claims to have cooperated with or worked for multiple intelligence agencies, has taken credit for hacking the Christian crowdfund site GiveSendGo.
>
> […]Cott1e has claimed in public statements on social media and interviews for years that he has worked for or with INTERPOL, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police(RCMP) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). "I helped RCMP + INTERPOL shut down 12chan after a bunch of social engineering," he wrote on Twitter in September of 2015.

The first thing I thought when I read that is that Trudeau probably ordered this hacker to commit a crime and steal the donor data. Is that what happened? Is that how the donor data made its way into the mainstream media and onto social media?

Far-left news media:

The best and most detailed article I found was from the far-left UK Daily Mail:

> The hack has already had an impact on Canadians who donated – a top political aide to Ontario Premier Doug Ford, Marion Isabeau-Ringuette, was forced out of her job when a local news outlet QP Briefing outed her to his office for making a $100 donation.
>
> Canada's national broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Company, has gone through the list of 92,844 donors to contact and publicly out them.
>
> It revealed that the former leader of the country's Progressive Conservative Party Ches Crosbie made an $800 donation.
>
> […]The CBC also outed a prominent business owner in London, Ontario, as giving the largest single donation to the Freedom Convoy. Holden Rhodes, who owns Killarney Mountain Lodge, donated $25,000.
>
> Another donor outed in the leak was Tammy Giuliani, owner of Stella Luna Gelato Cafe in Ottawa, who was forced to shut down her business after she received an

> onslaught of threats over her $250 donation.

You might recall that Trudeau pledged to give the failing government-owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation $675 million when they were heading towards bankruptcy. Not Trudeau's own money, of course – he's never earned any. No, he gave them private sector money. Do you think he called in a favor to get these donors persecuted?

Left-wing Fascism

Here is the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada explaining what she will do to the peaceful protesters who dissent from Liberal Party policies:

When I see progressive feminist women telling men who she is going to make it impossible for them to work so they can feed their families, I really feel glad that I never married or had children. If progressive women enjoy bullying men so much, they'll find that men no longer want to marry and have kids. We can't afford Big Government AND families. Pick one.

Big Banks

Daily Wire reports:

> Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland said in a press conference shortly afterward that the order gave banks and financial institutions the power to "temporarily cease providing financial services where the institution suspects that an account is being used to further the illegal blockades and occupations." The power extends to both personal and corporate accounts. Crowd-funding platforms like GoFundMe and GiveSendGo, which have helped fund the continuing demonstrations, would fall under the enforcement of "Canada's anti-money laundering and terrorist financing rules," Freeland added.

Freland also gave the Big Banks complete immunity from civil lawsuits from their customers, even though they broke their terms of service. If you paid for a Bouncy Castle, you're a terrorist.

Pro-Trump donors targeted

Canada's "Justice" minister said that will be focusing on punishing Trump supporters who made donations.

Breitbart reports:

> Canada's Justice Minister, David Lametti, has told Trump supporters who donated to the "Freedom Convoy" to "be worried" about having their bank accounts frozen.
>
> […]"Well, I think if you are a member of a pro-Trump movement who's donating hundreds of thousands of dollars and millions of dollars to this kind of thing, they oughta be worried," responded Lametti.
>
> Lametti also said that truckers could lose their trucking license if they participated in the protests or if their company permitted them to participate in

> the protest.

Can you imagine spending your entire life as a trucker, and having the government take your license? How would you feed your family?

Do women understand that when they empower the government to punish good men for acting on their convictions, that men will opt out of marriage and children? Why do you think that the marriage rate is plummeting? Men are not interested in the responsibilities of marriage when the government can punish them for their conservative and / or Christian views. Unfortunately, women, their parents and their pastors could not care less about men.

Big Tech

The Federalist reported on how Big Tech monopolies protect Democrats from "hacked data", but are delighted to expose peaceful protestors to hacked data:

> Americans shouldn't need more evidence to prove that Twitter is a malicious political actor that runs interference on behalf of leftists but the Big Tech company keeps providing it.
>
> In its latest outrageous tampering for the left, Twitter sits idly by as the private information of hundreds of people who gave money to the Canadian truckers protesting tyranny circulates on its platform after a hacker leaked donors' names, email addresses, and zip codes.
>
> In contrast, Twitter banned the Hunter Biden laptop story from being shared in October 2020 because the political optics were terrible for their preferred candidate Joe Biden. The Big Tech company locked the New York Post's account, blocked users from linking to the article, and then denied any wrongdoing.

I reported several accounts who were spreading around the hacked data of the donors to the Freedom Trucker Convoy, and ever single one of those reports was dismissed by Twitter. Their rules are only enforced in one direction – to protect their secular left allies.

If there is one good thing to come out of this, it's that Trudeau has attracted universal condemnation from other world leaders.

We won’t fix fatherlessness until we confront women about their choices

February 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Pro-family conservatives are very passionate about making sure that children grow up with a mother and a father. Most say that both men and women need to do better to stop fatherlessness. But in practice, pro-family people direct their criticism towards men only, giving women a free pass. Let me explain why this approach is not likely to solve the problem of fatherlessness.

Pro-family conservatives typically target the man who had the recreational sex, and try to urge him to commit to the women after the woman gets pregnant. Why won’t this work? Well, it won’t work because the man who was selected by the woman clearly wanted sex more than he wanted commitment. That’s why he had sex first, instead of committing first. He was selected for sex without having to show any ability or desire to commit whatsoever. So, you can’t really go back to him and say “now you have to commit”. The time to get him to commit would be BEFORE he got what he wanted, and the only person in a position to make that happen was the woman.

So what about the woman? What did she want? She is probably hoping that the man she is choosing to have sex with will commit to her, because she has given him her body. The baby is there to make him more attached to her, since the baby has his genes. Unfortunately, this is not how men who value premarital sex actually work. Wanting premarital sex is a sign of wanting pleasure – not of wanting commitment. The reason why we need to talk to the woman is to tell her that she will not get what she wants by giving a man with no interest in commitment premarital sex. It doesn’t work. If you want a man to commit to you, then you have to choose a man who wants to commit, and then let him commit.

So, that’s why I recommend we approach the woman first. We don’t approach men, because they want sex, not commitment. We approach women, because they want commitment, and they don’t get it.

Now, how do pro-family conservatives respond to this? Well, they think that women should not be challenged to do anything differently at all. If you tell women to make wise choices, then you are shaming them, judging them, blaming them, etc.

But just think of some parallel cases, and see if you can see why it is not wrong to ask women to make better choices:

1. If you invest your money instead of spending it on alcohol and cigarettes, then you can retire earlier.
2. If you go to the gym 3 times a week, and eat healthier, you’ll live longer and be slimmer.
3. If you study computer science instead of English, then you’ll be able to find a higher

paying job more easily.

The goal in telling a woman these things is not to shame her, but to help her to get a good outcome by making better decisions. The world is the way the world is, and she won't be able to get a good outcome from a bad decision.

Now here is another one:

If you make a marriage-ready man commit to you before you give him sex, then your children are more likely to have a father in the home.

Now look at that statement. It's not shaming women at all. Everyone agrees that men who have recreational premarital sex should be avoided. We're not blaming women – we're trying to get a good outcome for them by telling them the truth so they can make a better decision.

All we are saying to women is this: 1) focus on marriage early, so you can use your youth and beauty to lock down the best man possible. 2) And make commitment your top priority when choosing a man. This is good advice for her, and for her children.

When we are giving good advice, it's not our concern that people feel shamed, or that they don't like us. Our goal is not to make them feel good, or to make us feel good. Our goal is to make the children have a father in the home. I am fine with being hated for now, so long as I get a good result in the end.

Women these days often complain that they want to get married but can't find a good man. But what I have found is that these same women deliberately choose to spend their late teens and 20s pursuing relationships with good-looking, tall men who have *no interest in marriage or family*. What I would like is for pro-family people to tell women to focus on finding a good man who is willing to love her and commit to her when she still has her youth and beauty to attract a good man.

There is no point in standing by silent while women waste their teens and 20s on bad men, then expect the good men they passed over to marry them in their 30s. Those good men understand that they were not the first priority for these women, and that their willingness to commit will not get them any respect from women who ranked commitment LOW on their list of criteria for men.

Men have preferences about women and marriage. You can't bully a man into marrying an older woman who had other things to do with her youth than investing in him. A man marries a woman when she makes him her top priority, and sacrifices her happiness in order to love him and build him up. The earlier she chooses him, the more he is loved, and the more time they have to build together. It's not blaming women to decline a marriage with them, any more than it is blaming a house that you don't want to buy. Men are people, too. And men get to decide whether marriage is good for them, based on the value of the marriage offer.

I want to end by talking a bit about myself. I am not white, and was raised by two poor immigrant parents in a non-Christian home. When I was in grade 5, I received a New Testament from the Gideons. I read it, and I was happy to get some guidance on moral

issues, as well as learning how to put myself second and serve God. The more I put God's agenda first, the less I made bad decisions. I studied hard to be able to get a good job so I could give to charity. I was debt-free and financially ready to marry in my early 20s. I was a good steward of my money, and contemptuous of alcohol, drugs and status-enhancing material things.

The end result of that was a long period of chastity and sobriety, during which I accumulated 950K in cash (so far), and a fully paid off house that I bought new valued at around 300K. The point of me saying this is clear – what works with people who need help is to tell them the way the world really works, and what decisions they can make to get out of the mess they started off with.

Everywhere you look today, people are TERRIFIED of telling people who look like me that the solution to their problems is to read the Bible and make God their Boss. Instead, Christians are being dragged into secular solutions to the problems I had: Marxism, destroy the family, single mother welfare, abortion, etc. They don't want to offend people who look like me by telling us to make better choices.

Their motivation is the same as the pro-family people who don't want to offend women. "Let's tell them that the bad decisions they are making are actually good decisions, so they will like us. And when it blows up in their faces, we will just blame those people over there, and demand that they change". No, the solution to problems is found in the choices we make.

Blaming white people would not have helped me to get where I needed to go. Why do we shy away from telling the women who freely choose bad boys and make babies with them that the solution to their problems is in their own hands? It's because we want to feel good. We want them to like us. But Christians ought to understand that the best thing you can do for someone is offer them the Bible, and urge them to bring their actions inline with it. And the Bible clearly states that sex outside of marriage is wrong. If a woman takes that seriously, then any children she has will not be fatherless.

A while back, I was asked to mentor a young lady who was born in a divorced home. Her mother made her with her father, then her mother divorced her father. Then her mother married her stepfather who treated her very badly. She shacked up with an atheist and got pregnant, then killed her baby. The atheist dumped her. When she came to me, she was tired of her own decision-making, and wanted to learn how to make men like her without having to give them sex.

So, I put her on a learning plan of Christian apologetics, economics, science, history and philosophy. Today, she is married to her husband and has a son. She organizes apologetics conferences in her spare time. And the highlight of my life so far was that phone call from her where she explained how I was right about everything, and that now she understood why I had told her to make those better choices.

It was not easy. There were times where she chose more bad boyfriends – annoying unemployed students who were younger than her! – and she was mad when I didn't approve of them. But she kept coming back for more advice whenever things failed. And

in the end, she succeeded. Her husband loved her the moment he saw the books on her bookshelf. And today, her son has a father at home.

Black Lives Matter group posts $100,000 bail for accused gunman Quintez Brown

February 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story is interesting because the alleged gunman Quintez Brown previously expressed his desire to defund the police, and ban guns for law-abiding people. I guess he wanted all the guns for himself, so he could shoot at Jewish men. And then he wanted the police to not arrest him for it.

Here's the story from Breitbart:

> Attempted murder suspect Quintez Brown took part in a March for Our Lives gun control rally in 2018, where he told MSNBC's Joy Reid that Congress needed to pass "commonsense gun reform."
>
> Breitbart News reported that 21-year-old Brown allegedly entered Louisville mayoral candidate Craig Greenberg's campaign headquarters Monday and fired multiple rounds from a 9mm handgun. Greenberg was not hit by any of the bullets but his clothing was grazed.
>
> WDRB noted that Brown "has been active with Black Lives Matter Louisville and the University of Louisville's Youth Violence Prevention Research Center."
>
> […]A video tweeted by Andy Ngo shows Brown at a 2018 March for Our Lives rally, telling MSNBC's Joy Reid that Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) was going to be voted out of office if he refused to support gun control.

He supports banning guns, but only for law-abiding people (his potential victims). You can't ban the guns of criminals – they don't care about the law already, so they don't care about gun bans. Gun bans only affect the victims of criminals.

The shooter was "honored" by Obama:

Daily Mail MORE STORIES

BLM posts $100,000 bail for defund police activist, 21, honored by Obama who's now charged with attempted murder 'after walking into Jewish Democrat mayoral candidate's office and trying to assassinate him'

By Jack Newman For Mailonline
12:19 17 Feb 2022, updated 17:52 17 Feb 2022

Like most BLM activists, the shooter also wants to defund the police. All the better for he and his BLM buddies to escape the consequences of breaking the law.

Here are the details from Breitbart:

> Brown was arrested on Monday less than half a mile from Greenberg's office at 10:25 a.m., according to the Louisville Metro Police Department's citation.
>
> Ten minutes before, police said they were called to the 1200 block of Story Avenue, where Greenberg's campaign office is located, over "reports of an active aggressor."
>
> Greenberg told media on Monday that he was at his office that morning, in a meeting with four of his staffers, when a man with a gun walked in, aimed directly at him and opened fire. Greenberg said a member of his staff was able to slam the door shut. Staff then barricaded the doorway. Greenberg and his staff present in the office were uninjured, but Greenberg said a bullet hit his sweater and shirt.
>
> When police arrested Brown, they say they found a drawstring bag with a 9mm handgun, a handgun case and 9mm magazines, in addition to a loaded magazine in his pants pocket.
>
> […]Brown is charged with attempted murder and four charges of wanton endangerment in the first degree.

And he's been bailed out by Black Lives Matter, thanks to their generous donors:

> The Louisville Community Bail Fund has posted bond for Quintez Brown, the prominent Louisville activist charged in the attempted shooting of Democratic

> mayoral candidate Craig Greenberg.
>
> The Louisville Community Bail Fund is managed by Black Lives Matter Louisville.

Since the victim was a Democrat politician, the mainstream news media was united in wanting to blame Republicans for the crime.

Here's an example from the far-left Las Vegas Sun:

> The alleged shooter, a 21-year-old political activist, was arrested near the scene and later charged with attempted murder along with four counts of wanton endangerment.
>
> While there's been no indication yet that the activist had ties to any right-wing organizations, the shooting comes amid a rise in threats against politicians fueled by increasingly violent rhetoric coming from extremist Republicans.

That's what the mainstream news media said about a literal BLM activist. That's why I recommend that you get your news from places like The Federalist, Breitbart and Daily Signal. If you're relying on the secular left to tell you the truth, you'll be waiting a long time.

Video: Trudeau’s mounted police charges protesters, tramples elderly, disabled woman

February 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The trouble with people who are born into wealth is that they often have an inflated sense of their own ability out of all proportion to their actual skills and achievements. Justin Trudeau is a former snowboarding instructor and part-time drama teacher. He was raised by a Prime Minister, so he thinks he should have a turn. Now that he’s failed to perform, he’s using violence to silence dissent.

Trampling elderly, disabled woman

Here’s the video of Trudeau’s militarized mounted police charging the peaceful protesters in a cavalry charge, which tramples an elderly, disabled woman with a walker.

That’s the best I can do on Friday night when I’m writing this.

Assault rifles for me, but not for thee

Just to be clear, Trudeau has deployed militarized police with assault rifles to arrest peaceful protesters, and to perform illegal searches on vehicles:

Those are M-4 rifles they are carrying. They’re like our civilian AR-15 rifles, except M-4 rifles fire full automatic. One trigger pull, many bullets. Those are illegal in America. With 30 bullets per magazine, Trudeau’s militarized police could kill an awful lot of people in a short time.

One of the first things Trudeau did after he took office was enact a massive gun ban, to remove almost all firearms from civilians. That’s standard operating procedure for dictators. When you want to violate human rights, vandalize and steal property, arrest people for no reason, the first thing you do is take their guns. Everything is easy for a dictator if the dictator is the only one with guns.

As you can see, Trudeau has no problems deploying militarized police with armored vehicles, assault rifles, body armor, etc. It was also reported that he deployed snipers on the roofs. With a 50% tax rate for top earners, Canada collects a lot of tax money to spend on their militarized police force. All this battle rattle for a bunch of unarmed protesters honking their horns, and singing the national anthem. They must have been really afraid of the children jumping around in bouncy castles.

So will Trudeau be in trouble if it’s found that he ordered this cavalry charge? Not at all. The Ottawa Police will lie for him. They already are claiming that someone threw a “bicycle” at the horses, but the video is pretty clear. The “bicycle” is lying at her feet, and she is lying on the ground. They can say whatever Trudeau tells them to say, but we have video and photo evidence of what really happened.

Trudeau can try to block the video in Canada, but it will survive on American web sites. Trudeau can order the blocking of those American websites in Canada, like China blocks websites with the Ti4n4nmen Squ4re m4ss4cre videos, but Americans won't comply. He doesn't have a long enough reach to silence us with "publication bans", the way that Canadian courts routinely silence Canadian journalists. And he won't be able to run us down with soldiers on horses, either.

Several officers beat a woman with a rifle muzzle

I thought this video of several police dragging a woman behind a line of officers, and then beating her with a rifle muzzle, was interesting:

This is several very big, very strong men, beating a woman with a rifle loaded with bullets. Breaking every firearm safety rule. You NEVER point a weapon at someone like that, because of the possibility of accidental discharge. They are literally beating her with it, and the other officers in front form a line to prevent anyone from filming it.

The Ottawa Police denied that this event happened, even though it's on film. And the Canadian mainstream news media (CBC, CTV, etc.) backed them up. More beating up of protesters here. The news media and police who are covering up this violence don't think anyone will see these videos. Their victims are scum, they think, and deserve to be treated like this. There is nothing in the secular left worldview that would stop them from doing these things, and then lying about it. Nothing will happen to these police officers, because the secular left sees their victims as subhuman scum.

Pepper-spraying and arresting journalists

Trudeau's militarized police are very hostile to independent journalists who report things that make him look bad.

Rebel News reports:

> While covering the police action against the Freedom Convoy protesters in Ottawa, *True North*'s Andrew Lawton was pepper sprayed by police.
>
> Candice Malcolm, the editor-in-chief of *True North* has now hired a lawyer to take the police to court.

Trudeau bought off the big corporate journalists with taxpayer-funded subsidies, so they're no threat to him. And he controls the government-run CBC. He pledged to give the CBC $675 million to save them from bankruptcy, because no Canadians would watch their propaganda. They won't report anything against him. And they're probably leading the propaganda charge to keep Canadians from finding out what really happened.

What's interesting about the trampling of this woman is how the supporters of the dictatorship are responding on social media. She was a dangerous threat to the police. She asked for it. She deserved it. She was going to throw her walker at them, so they had to run her over. Just any kind of hypothetical they can come up with to justify violence against people they see as beneath them. It doesn't matter if there's no evidence for their claims, they don't want to believe that they are on the side of intolerance and violence.

None of these videos were reported on any mainstream news media in America, except Fox News who posted this story on their front page:

- 'TYRANNICAL' CRACKDOWN: Religious leaders send scathing message to liberal government as police descend on 'Freedom Convoy'

Tucker Carlson covered it. And it was also on "The Five". But Canadian progressives don't watch these shows. They don't see the videos. So they just mindlessly parrot whatever their politicians and journalists tell them. Most Canadians are horribly uninformed, just like most people in the Soviet Union were brainwashed.

For a Christian reflection on these events, check out Bill Muehlenbeg's post.

Related posts

- Dictator joins hacker, Big Banks, Big News Media and Big Tech to destroy liberty
- Trudeau uses assault rifles, armored vehicles and snipers to ban peaceable assembly
- Did Justin Trudeau's hateful rhetoric incite an Antifa member to commit domestic terrorism?
- GoFundMe seizes nearly $10 million of donations intended for Canadian truckers

RCMP police laugh about trampling elderly disabled woman in leaked texts

February 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, I have been following the trucker convoy protests pretty closely on social media. Watching all the videos of police brutality, looking over all the photographic evidence. What's been interesting to following is the Ottawa Police twitter account, and the Canadian mainstream media. The Ottawa Police has just been tweeting out continuous lies, and the media just repeats those lies.

In my last post, I had a lot of photos and videos of the police running people over with horses, beating them with rifles, spraying them with tear gas, etc. The victims are peaceful unarmed protesters. But what's new today is that one of the militarized RCMP police leaked a bunch of text messages from a group that many of them below to. So now we get to see the attitudes that Canada's federal police force have *to the people who pay their salaries through taxes.*

Rebel News reports: (and see this Twitter thread)

> In what appear to be authentic screenshots of the RCMP Musical Ride team currently in Ottawa to assist in the crackdown on peaceful protesters in the capital city, members brag about using brutal force.
>
> Over the last 24 hours in Ottawa, police have deployed pepper spray and canisters on demonstrators, arrested dozens and trampled two people with horses.
>
> Rebel News' Alexa Lavoie was brutally struck with a baton, shot at close range with a pepper canister which then broke, burning her face and eyes.
>
> In the chat, RCMP Musical Ride member, Andrew Nixon sends a picture of a pint of beer hoping for his chance to abuse protesters:
>
> "Don't kick all of them out until next weeks group gets our turn"
>
> Member Robin Thibault remarks about accommodations police are being given in Ottawa:
>
> "Nice Downtown in Chateau Laurier"
>
> Nixon jokes about police brutality:
>
> "Time for the protesters to hear our jackboots on the ground"
>
> […]A member named Marca laughs off the prior night trampling of two demonstrators, one of which had a mobility scooter.
>
> ""just watched the horse video – that is awesome"
>
> "we should practice that manoeuvre"
>
> Nixon is excited that someone shares his sense of cruelty and punishment.

> “Agreed!!!” he says. Three exclamation points.

And here’s what they are joking about, this video of Trudeau’s militarized police trampling the peaceful protesters in a cavalry charge. Their victim is an elderly woman with a walker. Trampling her is “awesome” and a “manoeuvre” (sic) for them to “practice”, according to the RCMP text messages.

The elderly, disabled woman they ran down with their horses *pays their salaries*. That’s how the police get paid – through the taxes of law-abiding citizens.

Ottawa Police lying on social media

The Ottawa Police Twitter account is lying constantly. They tweeted out that they are not using gas on the protesters. Except, in the leaked messages, you can see the RCMP officers talking about equipping themselves with gas masks. And then there is the video evidence of the police using gas on protesters – at point blank range:

Here’s a closer look at the weapon, and the gas cannister:

You can watch the video right here. Notice how the other police quickly grab the gas cannister and then block the people filming their actions. That concealment of their actions is repeated in so many of the videos I've seen.

Can you have morality without God?

Canada has been extremely secular for decades. Their elites didn't think it would break the fabric of society to destroy the religious foundation of their country. But you can't help yourself to human rights and morality on an atheistic worldview. The theistic foundation for morality is gone, on atheism. An atheist doesn't keep the morality of Jesus, after taking God out.

Canada's secular left thugs aren't any better than Stalin's thugs or Mao's thugs or Hitler's thugs. They just follow orders. They aren't capable of reasoning about morality. When you read those text messages, that's what you're getting there. Atheist morality. It's down on the level of animals. People who think that the universe is an accident, and human beings are machines made out of meat, are not capable of moral behavior.

The police in Canada is not unbiased. Canada is notorious for ignoring crimes committed by the secular left. Certain groups are exempt from the laws. Police in Canada ignore violent crime, arson, etc., as long as it's committed by people in groups who support the Liberal Party. Just like in every communist country. They are there to do the dirty things that their leaders order them to do, so that their leaders will stay in power.

Canada is not a country you want to visit. Their police force is not honest. You would not visit a dictatorship like North Korea or Zimbabwe. You should not visit Canada, either. It's a dangerous, lawless dictatorship. They have a dictator, and a cult of personality around him. They'll freeze your finances. Damage or steal your property. Gas you. Punch you. Hit you with their guns. Shoot you at point blank range. Arrest you. Trample on your human

rights, then trample on you. Then they'll lie about it on social media, and their news media will cover it up. Don't go there.

Related posts

- Video: Trudeau's mounted police charges protesters, tramples elderly, disabled woman
- Dictator joins hacker, Big Banks, Big News Media and Big Tech to destroy liberty
- Trudeau uses assault rifles, armored vehicles and snipers to ban peaceable assembly
- Did Justin Trudeau's hateful rhetoric incite an Antifa member to commit domestic terrorism?
- GoFundMe seizes nearly $10 million of donations intended for Canadian truckers

Bible study: what difference does the resurrection of Jesus make?

February 21, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from Bible.org, written by famous New Testament manuscript expert Dan Wallace.

What does the Old Testament say about the doctrine of the resurrection in Judaism?

He says:

> The resurrection of the dead was not *plainly* revealed in the OT until very late in salvation history. It was not until the Jews were taken in captivity, in the sixth century BC, that this was clearly articulated. Daniel 12:1-2 is the principal text: it speaks of the resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous:
>
> At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (RSV)
>
> Why was it not *clearly* revealed till then? It was not revealed until there was a *felt* need for it. When the Jews had no present (because of the captivity) they had to look to the future. The revelation of the resurrection came at precisely the time when the people of God needed *hope* for the future.
>
> What is significant about this is how masterful are God's insights into human nature. In the NT era, one religious group in Palestine did not embrace the resurrection as a true doctrine: the Sadducees (cf. Mark 12:18)–that is why they were "sad, you see!" The Sadducees were in charge of the temple. They derived their income from the sacrifices. In a sense, they were the precursors to modern TV evangelists. They had it good! They were the rich aristocracy that ran the place.
>
> **Those who have it good in this life don't often long for the next. The Sadducees illustrate this. The resurrection is a truth especially precious to those who are poor and those who are hopeless. It is precious to those who long for heaven enough that earth holds no sway over them.**

This means something to me. I didn't grow up with parents who had any plan for me. I had to figure out what I was supposed to be doing with my life on my own, because they were both too busy doing their own things. This is true even to this day. After I became a Christian, there were many things that I wanted to achieve in this life. But for a variety of reasons, those most of those things never happened. I wanted to do great things for God, like getting married, having a family, getting a PhD and teaching computer science in a

secular university. But things that I had intended to do for God just didn't happen the way I had hoped.

I often find myself thinking of Heaven, and having that eternal perspective on this life. One of the things that is the hardest to accept is that being a Christian makes many things I'd like to do a lot harder. It certainly didn't open any doors at school, or now, at work. I'm glad my salvation doesn't depend on achieving anything in particular. And I'm especially glad that my salvation doesn't depend on what anyone thinks of me. I find it almost impossible in this culture to get any respect by doing the things that I think are really important.

I think if a person were really successful at what they tried to do, then it would be really hard for them to give up living and go to be with Jesus.

What did Jesus intend to achieve with his resurrection?

Did you know that Jesus provided the resurrection as evidence for those who were skeptical of his claims to be God stepping into history?

Here's an article from Got Questions? on the "Sign of Jonah", which appears in the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

It says:

> The phrase "sign of Jonah" was used by Jesus as a typological metaphor for His future crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Jesus answered with this expression when asked by the Pharisees for miraculous proof the He was indeed the Messiah. The Pharisees remained unconvinced of Jesus' claims about Himself, despite His having just cured a demon-possessed man who was both blind and mute. Shortly after the Pharisees accused Jesus of driving out demons by the power of Satan, they said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here" (Matthew 12:38–41).
>
> To fully appreciate the answer that Jesus gave, we must go to the Old Testament book of Jonah. In its first chapter, we read that God commanded the prophet Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and warn its people that He was going to destroy it for its wickedness. Jonah disobediently ran from the Lord and headed for the city of Tarshish by boat. The Lord then sent a severe storm that caused the crew of the ship to fear for their lives. Jonah was soon thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish where he remained for "three days and three nights" (Jonah 1:15–17). After the three-day period, the Lord caused the great fish to vomit Jonah out onto dry land (Jonah 2:10).

> It is this three days that Jesus was referring to when He spoke of the sign of Jonah.

I often bring up the Sign of Jonah when I am dealing with Christians who don't want to learn how to explain their faith to non-Christians persuasively. I'm glad that story is in there!

The resurrection is a very important part of the life of the Christian. I argued in this post that it makes a difference to your feelings about your own life, and it makes a difference to your case-making with non-Christians.

William Lane Craig debates Daniel Came: Does God exist?

February 22, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

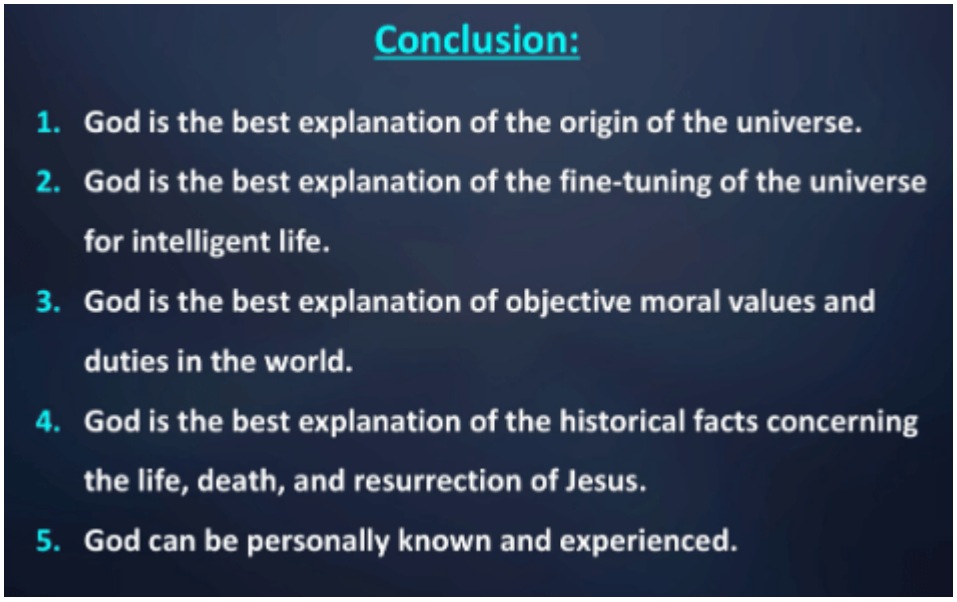

Dr. Craig's opening speech summary slide

The video of the debate was posted by ReasonableFaith.org – Dr. Craig's organization. This debate occurred in March 2017 at the University of Dublin, in Ireland.

The video: (91 minutes)

My non-snarky summary is below.

Dr. Craig's opening speech

Two claims:

1. There are good reasons to think that theism is true.
2. There are not comparably good reasons to think that atheism is true.

Five reasons for God's existence:

1. The beginning of the universe
– actual infinite past is mathematically impossible
– BGV theorem: any universe that is on balance expanding in its history (like ours) cannot be past eternal

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– slight changes to quantities and constants prevent a universe from supporting complex embodied life
– the multiverse response of atheists conflicts with observations, e.g. the Boltzmann Brains problem

3. Objective moral values
– God's existence is required to ground objective moral values and duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus

– there are good reasons to accept the most widely accepted facts about the historical Jesus (empty tomb, appearances, early widespread belief in the resurrection)
– the best explanation of these minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

5. Experience God directly
– in the absence of any defeaters to belief in God, a person can experience God directly

Dr. Daniel Came's opening speech

1. The hiddenness of God
– if God wants a personal relationship with us, and a relationship with God would be the greatest good for us
– God ought to reveal himself to us, but he does not reveal himself to many people, the "non-resistant non-believers"

2. The inductive problem of evil
– many evil events occur that are pointless – there is no morally sufficient reason why God would allow them to occur
– examples: animal suffering, children born with disease, tsunamis
– the theistic response to this is that humans are not in a position to know whether there are morally sufficient reasons, due to our limitations of knowing the consequences
– but this ripple effect defense has 4 possible outcomes, 3 of which don't do the job of justifying

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

1. The hiddenness of God
– God's goal is not to make his existence known, but to draw them into a love relationship
– it's speculative that overt displays of God's existence would draw people to him in a love relationship, they might resent his bullying
– atheist would have to prove that God could draw more people into a love relationship with him by revealing himself more overtly

2. The inductive problem of evil
– as humans, we are not in a position to know for certain that any apparently pointless evil really is pointless
– William Alston article: 6 limitations of human knowing make it impossible to judge that an evil is actually "pointless"
– Dr. Came says that there are 4 possibilities for the ripple effects, and since 3 are bad, it's likely that there are not morally sufficient reasons for a apparently pointless evil
– it is logically fallacious to assert probability conclusions without knowing the probabilities of those 4 options
– there is actually an argument from evil: since the problem of evil requires an objective standard of good and evil by which to measure, and God is the only possible ground of objective morality, then pressing the problem of evil actually requires the atheist to assume God, in order to ground this objective moral standard

Dr. Came's first rebuttal

3. Objective moral values

– there are naturalistic theories of moral realism where objective moral duties and objective moral values exist in a naturalistic universe
– I'm not saying that any of them are correct, but there are many theories about object morality in a naturalistic universe

There are naturalistic theories for all of the 5 arguments that Dr. Craig presented. It is Dr. Craig's responsibility to present those naturalistic theories and prove that they are not as good as his explanations. I'm not going to defend (or even name!) a single naturalistic theory for any of these 5 arguments by Dr. Craig.

Dr. Craig's explanations for the 5 evidences he gave can't be admitted, because we have to know how God did something *in naturalistic terms* before we can know that God did it supernaturally. Explanations are only valid if they are naturalistic.

1. The beginning of the universe
– naturalism explains how the universe expands after it came into being, so that explains how it came into being
– the God explanation, that God created the universe out of nothing, is not admissible, because it is not naturalistic
– how does God, as an unembodied mind interact with the physical world?
– the only agency that we know about is human agents, and we have bodies, so how could God perform actions without having a body?

The theistic hypothesis does not make any predictions, but naturalism makes lots of testable predictions. God could do anything, so he is not constrained and is therefore untestable. We can't infer God as an explanation in principle because we can't predict what is more probable if God exists than if he does not.

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the university was not set up to make embodied intelligence plausible, because the vast majority of the universe is hostile to life
– there are models of the multiverse that escape the Boltzmann Brains problem that Dr. Craig raised

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

Some of Dr. Craig's arguments are deductive (e.g. – the beginning of the universe, objective moral values), so that the conclusion follows from the premises if the premises are true. The resurrection passes the standard tests for historical explanations.

1. The beginning of the universe
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for an ultimate beginning of the universe

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for a design of the universe to support life
– he has to prove that intelligences has to be attached to bodies
– human beings are non-physical minds united to physical bodies
– naturalistic attempts to explain mental operations fail

– the arguments *prove* that unembodied minds exist
– the vast expanse of the universe is required in order to form the galaxies, stars and heavy elements needed for complex life
– why expect that the entire universe should be small, or that life would be everywhere?
– a non-fine-tuned world is more likely in the multiverse, and in a multiverse, we are more likely to have a Boltzmann brain world than a world with complex, embodied life
– Dr. Came has not advanced any naturalistic explanation for the fine-tuning

3. Objective moral values
– non-theistic ethical theories cannot account for the ontological foundations of objective moral values and duties
– atheistic theories of moral realism simply assume objective moral values out of thin air
– it is especially hard to find any basis for objective moral duties in the absence of God

Dr. Came's second rebuttal

5. Religious experience
– Dr. Craig should not bring up religious experience in a debate where arguments and evidence are central
– people who have dreams, hallucinations and psychotic delusions could appeal to religious experience
– religious experience is by no means universal, and it is possible to doubt it

3. Objective moral values
– there are lots of atheists who hold to objective moral values
– Dr. Craig has to explain how God grounds objective moral values and duties
– Dr. Craig has to explain why atheist moral realist theories don't work to ground objective moral values and duties

1. The beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig claims that something can't come from nothing, that's not an argument
– there are numerous models that don't require an absolute beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig cites the BGV theorem, but Guth (one of the authors) says that only the inflation has a beginning, not the whole universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion

1. The beginning of the universe
– on theism, there is an efficient cause, but no material cause, for the origin of the universe
– on atheism, there is neither an efficient cause nor a material cause, for the origin of the universe: that's worse!
– if he thinks that there are models of the universe that don't require a beginning, then let him name a viable eternal model of the universe
– he never refuted the mathematical argues against an infinite past

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– nothing to refute

3. Objective moral values

– God is a better ground for morality than humans, because he is ultimate, and not contingent and arbitrary
– God is a being who is worthy of worship, and therefore command his creatures with moral duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus
– nothing to refute

5. Religious experience
– only justified because there are no defeaters to it

1. The hiddenness of God
– atheist has to show that if God's existence were more obvious, that it would result in more people being drawn to him

2. The inductive problem of evil
– Dr. Came's argument was logically fallacious, and makes errors in probability theory

Dr. Came's conclusion

Sometimes, people can't prove something, but lack of evidence is a justification for doubting it, e.g. – werewolves.

If none of Craig's arguments work, then it follows that it is not rational to believe that God exists, and it is rational to believe that God does not exist.

Atheists shouldn't have a burden of proof for what they know, only theists have a burden of proof for what they know.

My thoughts

One quick point. If life were common everywhere then atheists would infer that God wasn't involved in it. Period. "Life is everywhere, so it's common, why do we need a designer?" they'd say. I agree with Dr. Came about denouncing religious experience in a formal debate. I don't like when Dr. Craig brings this up, but I see why he does it – he's an evangelist, and that's a good thing, too. I just worry about how it looks to atheists, although it's good for sincere seekers. I'm not the one on the stage, though, Dr. Craig is.

I think the point about more overt revealing by God would annoy people and make them turn away. Think of how gay people respond to the suggestion that there is anything wrong with them, with rage, vandalism, threats, coercion, attempts to get you to lose your job and business, and using government as a weapon to fine and imprison you. It's really obvious to me that more God does not mean more *love* of God. For those who don't want God, the hiddenness is respect for their choice to put pleasure above the search for truth. (I mean the gay activists – I have great sympathy for people who struggle with same-sex unwanted attractions because they were impacted by a failed bond with their parent of the same sex as they are).

Whenever I meet people like Dr. Came, I always urge them to keep investigating and pursuing truth, because they will find it if they are sincerely seeking after God. Some atheists do sincerely seek God, but I don't know any who haven't found him. I'm not sure if that's because those atheists who claim to be non-resistant and rational are in fact

resistant and non-rational, or what the real reason is. If you believe the Bible, *all* unbelief is non-rational and resistant (see Romans 1). Regarding the werewolves, we don't have any good arguments for werewolves, we do have good arguments for God. Dr. Came didn't refute the arguments that Craig raised, nor did his own arguments for atheism work. And there are many, many more arguments (origin of life, Cambrian explosion, habitability-discoverability, molecular machines) that Craig did not raise, too.

New study: galactic habitable zone depends on fine-tuning of cosmological constant

February 23, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

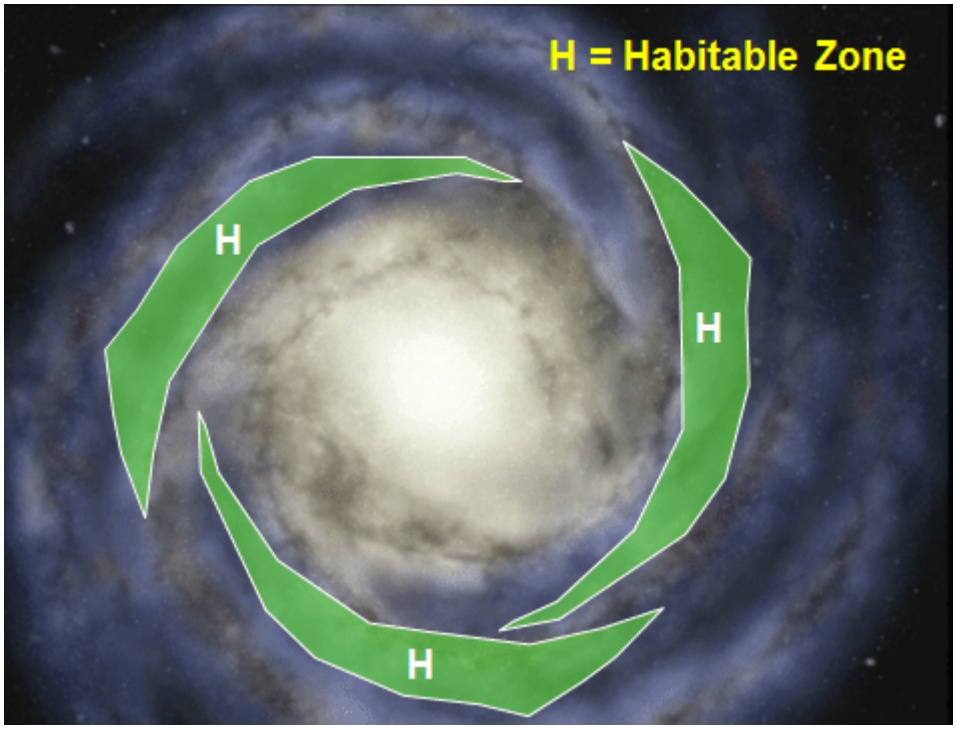

The galactic habitable zone (GHZ) is shown in green superimposed on a spiral galaxy

This is going to be old news to readers of this blog who are familiar with the Michael Strauss, Walter Bradley and Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on habitability and fine-tuning. But, it's nice to see these ideas show up in one of the most prestigious peer-reviewed science journals in the world (if not *the* most prestigious).

Here's the article from Science.

It says:

> Scientists have known for several years now that stars, galaxies, and almost everything in the universe is moving away from us (and from everything else) at a faster and faster pace. Now, it turns out that the unknown forces behind the rate of this accelerating expansion—a mathematical value called the cosmological constant—may play a previously unexplored role in creating the right conditions for life.
>
> That's the conclusion of a group of physicists who studied the effects of massive cosmic explosions, called gamma ray bursts, on planets. They found that when it comes to growing life, it's better to be far away from your neighbors—and the cosmological constant helps thin out the neighborhood.
>
> "In dense environments, you have many explosions, and you're too close to them," says cosmologist and theoretical physicist Raul Jimenez of the University of Barcelona in Spain and an author on the new study. "It's best to be in the

> outskirts, or in regions that have not been highly populated by small galaxies—and that's exactly where the Milky Way is."
>
> Jimenez and his team had previously shown that gamma ray bursts could cause mass extinctions or make planets inhospitable to life by zapping them with radiation and destroying their ozone layer. The bursts channel the radiation into tight beams so powerful that one of them sweeping through a star system could wipe out planets in another galaxy. For their latest work, published this month in *Physical Review Letters*, they wanted to apply those findings on a broader scale and determine what type of universe would be most likely to support life.
>
> The research is the latest investigation to touch on the so-called anthropic principle: the idea that in some sense the universe is tuned for the emergence of intelligent life. If the forces of nature were much stronger or weaker than physicists observe, proponents note, crucial building blocks of life—such fundamental particles, atoms, or the long-chain molecules needed for the chemistry of life—might not have formed, resulting in a sterile or even completely chaotic universe.

Basically, the best place for a galaxy that permits complex, embodied life to exist is one where you can pick up enough heavy elements from dying stars nearby, but not be in an area that is so crowded by stars that you will be murdered by intense gamma radiation when they die.

The cosmological constant has to be set just right so that we spread out enough to make space between spiral arms for life-permitting solar systems, but not so spread out that we cannot pick up the heavy elements we need for a metal-rich star, a moon, and the bodies of the intelligent agents themselves.

More:

> **As it turns out, our universe seems to get it just about right. The existing cosmological constant means the rate of expansion is large enough that it minimizes planets' exposure to gamma ray bursts, but small enough to form lots of hydrogen-burning stars around which life can exist. (A faster expansion rate would make it hard for gas clouds to collapse into stars.)**
>
> Jimenez says the expansion of the universe played a bigger role in creating habitable worlds than he expected. "It was surprising to me that you do need the cosmological constant to clear out the region and make it more suburbanlike," he says.

Remember, this is only one of many characteristics that must obtain in order to have a location in the universe that can support complex, embodied life of any conceivable kind.

Let's review the big picture

Time for me to list out some of the things that are required for a galaxy, solar system,

and planet to support complex embodied life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind given these laws of physics.

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

It's not easy to make a planet that supports life. For those who are interested in reaching out to God, he has left us an abundance of evidence for his existence – and his attention to detail.

And remember, these requirements for a habitable planet are downstream from the cosmic fine-tuning of constants and quantities that occurs at the Big Bang. No point in talking about the need for plate tectonics if *you only have hydrogen in your universe.* The habitability requirements are a *further* problem that comes after the fine-tuning problem.

Resources

The best book to read on this topic is "The Privileged Planet", by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards. The latter is one of my absolute favorite Christian scholars, a real renaissance man. If the book is too much, there is a DVD by the same name that covers everything you need to know at a high level. Just FYI, Gonzalez made the cover of Scientific American in 2001, for his research on habitable zones. This is real evidence you can discuss with anyone, anywhere.

You can also watch the DVD for FREE on YouTube. Not sure how long that will be there. If you like it, buy the DVD, so you can show your friends.

Related posts

- New study: survey of 700 quintillion terrestrial exoplanets suggests Earth is special
- How tidal effects improve the habitability of a planet
- The connection between our moon, plate tectonics and habitability
- Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on the corelation between habitability and discoverability
- New paper finds that mass of asteroid belts affect habitability of planets

- New study on tidal heating strengthens stellar habitability argument
- Walter Bradley lectures on the creation and design of the universe
- Earth-like planet hyped by science-fiction-crazed atheists likely uninhabitable
- Four ways the Earth is fine-tuned for life, and one more
- Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas
- Fine-tuning the habitable zone: tidal-locking and solar flares
- Is silicon-based life a possible alternative for carbon-based life?
- Jupiter deflects comets and asteroids that might otherwise hit Earth
- How common is it for a star to support complex, embodied life?
- Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University
- Scientists troubled by lack of simple explanation for our life-permitting moon

Should we expect to know what God’s reason is for allowing evil and suffering?

February 24, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article by Steven Cowan about the problems of evil and suffering.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude.

Now let’s find out what a noseeum is, and how it relates to the existence of evil and suffering:

> However, perhaps God’s existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God’s existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By “pointless evil,” Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe’s argument may be simply stated as follows:
>
> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the “noseeum inference.” Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a “noseeum” is something that you cannot see—it is a “no-see-um.” And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I “no-see-um” a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured

> to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

In that example, the planet is the noseeum. Just because you look really hard, you can't be confident that the planet is not there. And similarly with the problem of evil and suffering, looking really hard and finding no reason does not mean that there is no reason. It just means that you are not in a good position to see the reason. You don't know enough to to be sure that there is no reason, because of your limitations as a human being.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous. (You can get the PDF here)

According to the paper, human beings just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a noseeum. To know for sure that there is no reason, we would need to have more knowledge than we do.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very

difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

New study: 1 in 8 divorces is caused by student loan debt

February 25, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to make plans in advance and calculate everything out before I try to do anything. This is the curse of being a software engineer. We're taught to take a test-first approach to design. So, when I think about marriage, I naturally think about what tests marriage is supposed to pass, and work backwards from there to requirements for each of the spouses.

Here's some research from CNBC that might help young people to avoid a divorce, if they respect the research in their choices.

Excerpt:

> When it comes to student loan debt, "for richer, for poorer" doesn't quite cut it.
>
> In general, finances are the leading cause of stress in a relationship, according to a study by SunTrust Bank, but student debt takes a particularly hard toll on a marriage.
>
> More than a third of borrowers said college loans and other money factors contributed to their divorce, according to a recent report from Student Loan Hero, a website for managing education debt.
>
> In fact, 13 percent of divorcees blame student loans specifically for ending their relationship, the report found. Student Loan Hero surveyed more than 800 divorced adults in June.

Here is a link to the full study from Student Loan Hero.

I think in general, you can't just do whatever you want before marrying and jump into it unprepared. Marriage involves specific requirements in order to work, such as being faithful to your spouse, and buying things that you need for the marriage enterprise, like a home, and baby stuff. It doesn't make any sense to say "I want to get married" and then not prepare for marriage by being careful about preparing for the behaviors marriage that requires of you. Being debt-free is one of those behaviors that marriage requires of you.

So how can we be debt-free, so that the marriage will be stable? Well, one way to be debt-free is to find a way to learn skills that will allow you to get a job without going to college, like being a self-taught software engineer. One of my friends actually did that, and now he's with a very good software company as a remote worker. But if you're going to go to college, you can avoid debt by studying something that will get you a high-paying job when you graduate.

This 2017 article from Harvard Business Review is interesting.

It says:

> Examining 46,934 resumes shared on Glassdoor by people who graduated between 2010 and 2017, the researchers looked at each person's college major and their post-college jobs in the five years after graduation. They then estimated the median pay for each of those jobs (also using Glassdoor data) for employees with five years of experience or less. Their key finding: "Many college majors that lead to high-paying roles in tech and engineering are male dominated, while majors that lead to lower-paying roles in social sciences and liberal arts tend to be female dominated, placing men in higher-paying career pathways, on average."

Here's the plot, and you can click it to expand it:

Men Sort Into College Majors That End Up Paying More

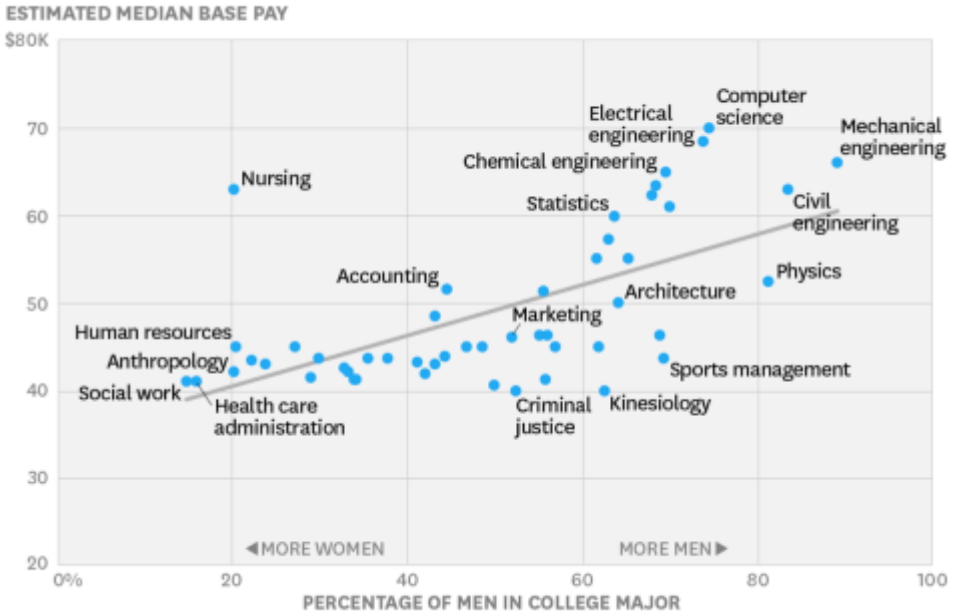

SOURCE "THE PIPELINE PROBLEM," GLASSDOOR, 2017 © HBR.ORG

Median salaries by major, broken out by gender – don't study things at the bottom!

As you can see from the graph, it's especially important to share the message about choosing a major, salaries and student loan debt with WOMEN, because as the graph shows, they tend to choose the wrong majors, if the goal is to pay off student loans and avoid divorce. Everyone who wants marriage to go smoothly needs to choose majors that are near the top of the graph, like nursing, chemical engineering, computer science, or mechanical engineering. It doesn't make sense to go to college if you aren't going to graduate in one of these high-paying fields.

As you might expect from the graph, women hold the majority of student loan debt, according to the Boston Globe, and that's because women tend to choose majors that don't result in good-paying jobs. And we already saw how this becomes a risk factor for divorce.

Student loans delay marriage and children

Another interesting piece of data, reported by The Consumerist, is that people with student loans tend to delay marriage, which means the couple has fewer children:

> As consumers navigate life's financial journey, they are faced with major financial milestones, like buying a home. But student loans are also delaying consumers from reaching these goals.
>
> Survey respondents report delaying homeownership (23 percent), buying or leasing a car (23 percent), having children (10 percent) and getting married (9 percent) because of their student loan burdens.

So, it's not just that there is an increased risk of divorce from student loans, but there's also fewer children, which means a diminished legacy. I can't speak for how others would see this, but for myself, I want to pass on my beliefs to as many effective, influential Christian children as I can.

Anyway, I feel obligated to post a relevant Dave Ramsey video, just to remind everyone that stewardship of money is a Christian virtue, and that being forgiven by Jesus for your sins doesn't automatically make you good with money. It takes planning and stewardship.

This one from 2014: (H/T Robb)

When I was in high school, I was far more interested in becoming an English teacher than I was in becoming a software engineer. It was my Dad who overruled my choice of college major when I was still in high school. He had me take a first-year English course at a local university. When I saw how politicized and useless it was (they were studying all sorts of politically correct postmodern relativist stuff, instead of the Great Works, and they weren't trying to learn any wisdom from any of it), I chose computer science. I did what was likely to avoid divorce, and likely to support having many children.

Thoughts about my conversations with two Christian feminists

February 26, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was reading some work by a Christian feminist this week. She was arguing that if only men were to help out their wives with housework, then marriages would be more stable. So often, society works very hard to give women what they say will make them happy. Then when women get what they asked for, it doesn't make them happy. Is equal housework once of these cases?

Consider this New York Daily story about a Norwegian study that affirms traditional roles within the marriage.

Excerpt:

> Couples who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a Norwegian study sure to get tongues wagging has shown.
>
> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled Equality in the Home, said.

So here is a case where women say what they think they want. Then they get it. And then they don't like the result.

Emotional intimacy

Another point made by the Christian feminist was that women only initiate 80% of divorces because men are terrible at emotional intimacy. The Christian feminist says that we just need to have churches teach men how to be more emotionally available. Men need to take the initiative to make marriages work for women.

Here's conservative Andrew Klavan explaining that many women today are attracted to emotionally unavailable men, and that men adapt to this in order to get the girl:

> I wanted to take a serious look at this situation and get at the reasons men such as Weiner behave in this grotesque way.
>
> I blame women. No, really. Women — by which I mean each and every single member of the female gender — you know who you are — need look no further than themselves to explain why [Anthony] Weiner-types behave toward them in this fashion. We men are always hearing complaints from women about how badly we treat them, what pigs we are, how pushy and abrasive… on and on. But what these same women conveniently fail to mention is that this stuff really works on them!

There are tons of studies about how women are attracted to the so-called “dark triad” character traits. Many women are attracted to emotionally unavailable men before marriage, but after marriage, most of them realize how terrible that is for marriage. They asked for something, got it, but then they don’t like what they got. Although they’ve vowed to love this (terrible) man through thick and thin, they just can’t do it, and they use no-fault divorce to eject him from the home.

So, I guess I would just ask this Christian feminist: do women have any responsibility to test men for intimacy ability before marriage? Do they have any responsibility to suppress their feelings in the moment, and choose what will work in the long run?

It seems to me that women need to take the initiative to evaluate men for the most important things that they want out of marriage. I agree that women want emotional intimacy. So they need to choose men who provide them with that. Men do not change. The man you marry will not change for you after you marry him. It seems to me that instead of telling bad men that they need to turn good after marriage, we should tell women to choose better.

Many women today spend an awful lot of their time looking into mystical nonsense: astrology, the law of attraction, manifesting, Disney princesses, happily ever after, Hallmark movies, etc. They have a deep intuition that the whole universe is set up for their benefit, and that the path they must choose in order to be happy is shown to them through their feelings. Maybe we should work on fixing that, rather than destroy the society (and children’s lives) with rampant no-fault divorce. Maybe the problem is that women need to be taught that when it comes to marriage, they need to treat it like a job interview. They need to evaluate men, and choose one with demonstrated ability for the job’s actual requirements.

Elsewhere in the Christian feminists writings, she says that men have 100% of the responsibility for marriage success. But none of the authority to lead. I just want men to understand that this is often how women see men. Women want to choose men based on how a man makes her feel. She will make a snap judgment about whether he is “The One”. She feels good when she makes decisions based on intuitions and first impressions. She has enormous confidence in the judgment of her intuitions. This is the man that The Universe has chosen to make her happy, and She doesn’t make mistakes. And if that man doesn’t make her happy, then she can divorce him. And all the Christian feminists will celebrate her decision. Does that sound like a good deal for men? In particular, does entering a situation like that free you up to focus on serving God? (2 Tim 2:4) Sounds to me like you would be skating on thin ice for the rest of your life. And for what? To please God? No, to make her happy.

Last month, another Christian feminist told me that “masculinity is when men use their physical strength to benefit women as protector and provider”. Again, this view that it is men’s job to make women happy is everywhere, and if men fail to make women happy, then that’s what divorce is for. There is no idea among Christian feminists that men are supposed to serve God first, and women are supposed to help them to serve God. One

divorced Christian woman once told me “marriage is for women”. So just understand what you’re getting into, if you decide to get married.

I personally think that Christian men ought to focus on serving God, and stay far away from marriage. Even the most conservative Christian women have this view that men are there to serve them, and meet their needs, and make them happy. They call it “servant leadership”: men get all the responsibility with none of the authority. It’s a reversal of male headship, where the new God is the woman’s feelings. That sort of arrangement certainly isn’t going to allow a man to focus on serving God.

American father loses parental rights after ex-wife announces their child is transgender

February 27, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, I blogged about a case in Canada, where a father was imprisoned for objecting to the forced transgendering of his child by the schools, hospitals, lawyers and judges. The people pushing for the transgendering were all feminists and LGBT activists. That case was quite disturbing, and I was wondering when this would come to America. Then I found an article by Abigail Shrier in City Journal.

The father, Ted, is a senior software engineer with Apple. He is comfortable living in San Francisco. His wife Christine is an executive at BlackRock, the firm that is always buying up people's houses and then renting them out. They also champion ESG, which is a social credit system for businesses, that leads to socialism.

Things started to go wrong for Ted when his wife moved to the East coast with the two boys for family reasons:

> Ted was then fully preoccupied with a grueling six-week project for Apple… On a Saturday in August 2019, shortly after returning from upstate New York with the boys, Christine walked into Ted's home office and announced both that she was leaving and that their son Drew was transgender… Christine walked out, taking the kids to stay with her at a neighbor's house.

Most women who go along with transgendering do so because they want their children to like them, and they want to be seen as compassionate and tolerant by their peers.

But the father did research on the risks to his child:

> While trying to keep an open mind about Drew's gender, Ted was adamant to the judge that he did not want Drew to begin medical transition. In the 312 days since he had last seen his boy, Ted had done a lot of research on medical transition and gender dysphoria. He begged the court to consider research that suggested puberty blockers could impair cognition and diminish bone density. He knew that Drew, if administered puberty blockers along with estrogen, would be at high risk of permanent infertility. He wasn't even sure that his son had gender dysphoria. He wanted to see his son—and he wanted this bullet train to slow down.

The San Francisco judge awarded full custody of Drew to his wife:

> On June 24, 2020… Judge Joni Hiramoto granted Christine sole legal custody of Drew on a temporary basis and approved the shared legal and physical custody arrangement of their younger son. She assured Ted that her order was not yet permanent. Judge Hiramoto had decided to order the appointment of a minor's counsel to investigate how the boys were faring before making any permanent

> decisions. She already had the perfect person in mind. “I actually know of one who was previously appointed by the court, by a different judge, on a case involving children that were allegedly transgender,” she said. That minor’s counsel was attorney Daniel Harkins.

Harkins decided that Ted’s hesitance to drug therapy and sex change surgery was a sign that Ted was not a fit parent:

> Based on the lengthy minor’s counsel report, Harkins gave Ted’s parenting a failing grade: “Father has not been accepting of [Drew’s] status as transgender. He has been quite clear that he does not accept that [Drew] is in fact transgender.”
>
> […]Harkins’s judgment was swift and ironclad: mom should retain full legal custody on a permanent basis and provide Ted updates, at her discretion, regarding matters that affect Drew’s health, education, and welfare. Drew would commence hormone therapy, as directed by USCF. Judge Hiramoto made all this official. The only right that Ted seems to have retained is the power to prevent Drew from undergoing “any gender identity related surgery” before he turns 18, absent agreement of both parties.

Without Ted’s knowledge or permission, Drew got a puberty-blocking implant, and Ted had to pay:

> In October 2021, Ted was stunned by a $209,820.34 charge on his insurance statement. When he wrote to Christine, she confirmed that a puberty-blocking implant had been inserted in Drew’s arm months earlier and that Drew had begun a course of cross-sex hormones. The combination—if not soon stopped—would likely sterilize Drew. No one had asked Ted’s permission for the procedure or even informed Ted of what had been done.

This part is interesting, especially for men who are considering marriage and having children today.

Read it carefully:

> Ted responded to this news with a flurry of e-mails to Christine’s attorney. He told Christine’s lawyer that the medical procedure was in violation of a court order, and Christine was risking being held in contempt of court. A day later, Christine’s lawyer filed a request for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order against Ted, alleging that he had spoken to his ex-wife “menacingly” at their younger son’s football games. Ted was served with the temporary restraining order; California law now required him to relinquish all his firearms within 24 hours or potentially face felony charges. He quickly complied.

Ted was informed about the long-term consequences of the decision, because he had looked at evidence. But how did his ex-wife respond to his evidence? By charging him

with domestic violence. Not actual violence, but just words of disagreement which caused her to feel unhappy.

Ted made the decision to let people at his Silicon Valley company know what was happening in a company Slack channel. Slack is software used to allow employees to communicate with each other in a chat format. People in the channel were offended, and reported him to Human Resources:

> Ted joined the Apple Slack channel devoted to "trans kid parenting" and shared his outrage and concern about his son's medical transition and the risks involved. The other members chastised him and reported Ted to "Employee Relations," known everywhere else as "HR." Ted now worries for his job.

The details of Ted's divorce were not revealed in the article, but if he is supposed to pay child support and alimony to his wife, and he lost his job, he probably would still have come up with the same amount of money, or go to prison for not paying his debts. That's how the divorce courts work.

And here is how the story ended for with Harkins:

> Within just a few months, the court would definitively end Ted's parental relationship. He would have no right to see Drew, no right to talk to him, no right to demand that Drew attend therapy with him, and absolutely no right to stop a medical transition already planned by the Child and Adolescent Gender Center of UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital.

And now I want to say something about what this means to me as a Christian man, who is frequently urged to go to church and get married and have children by church-attending women and pastors.

The denial of male headship

The overriding of male leadership of the home that you saw from the judge and the attorney is universal… even among conservative evangelical Christian women who claim to be social conservatives. One evangelical Christian social conservative woman told me that "Masculinity means that men use their strength to protect and provide for women". Another one told me that male headship does not exist in the Bible, and that men have no authority in marriages – only responsibilities. She also said that when women divorce, it is ALWAYS the fault of their husbands for not meeting the wife's emotional needs.

Even many evangelical Christian socially conservative women don't think that men have a distinct role to confront evil, protect their children, or lead their homes. They would side with the divorcing wife and the female judge against the mean, excluding, judgmental, father Ted. They would say that men's role in marriage is to be compassionate, tolerant, and to make their wives happy.

Marriage and child-bearing exposes you to the state

To Christian men who are considering marriage and child-raising, you need to choose women who form their views on morality, policy, etc. through reason and evidence. If she

isn’t interested in truth, then understand that her views will be formed by her feelings and peer-approval. You will not be able to change her mind by appealing to reason and evidence. Look for women who have the demonstrated ability to defend their theological and moral views against the secular left culture. For example, the issue of male headship in marriage. Otherwise, you can expect the treatment that Ted got at the hands of his ex-wife, the judge, etc. Divorce is a nightmare for men. The feminist state will overpower you. You will lose your freedom, your savings and your children. You will become a slave.

Read 2 Tim 2:4 and consider whether you want to use your freedom and finances to serve God, or whether you want to be controlled by the secular left state. As a Christian man, you already have a Boss. A woman’s role is to help you serve your Boss. Beware of women who want to take the place of your Boss. Beware of women who think that marriage is about you making them happy. Beware of women who scorn your moral leadership. Beware of women who demand that you show compassion, tolerance and approval for whatever is popular in the secular left culture.

Global warming activists attacked fracking and nuclear energy, funding Putin's invasion of Ukraine

February 28, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm seeing a lot of people on the secular left posting Ukraine flags on social media and "feeling sad" about getting the exact result that they voted for. How does Putin have the money for this invasion? He's been selling oil and gas to Canada, the United States, and especially to Europe. Those countries curtailed their own energy production in response to global warming activists.

This Twitter thread featuring nuclear-advocate Michael Schellenberger explains:

> After Russia invaded, a few people demanded that Europe stop buying its natural gas, but European utilities snatched up long-term Russian contracts, and the White House said, "Our sanctions are not designed to cause any disruption to the flow of energy from Russia to the world."
>
> People who believe that nothing could have been done to prevent Russia from invading Ukraine thus imply that Russia's chokehold over European energy supplies was inevitable, but it wasn't. Europe could have easily increased, rather than closed, nuclear plants and natural gas.

Britain, too:

> Britain could have increased fracking for natural gas but didn't. Why? Because Russia pumped $95M into anti-fracking advocacy. Noted the head of NATO, Russia "engaged actively with environmental organizations… to maintain Europe's dependence on Russian gas".

Russia was paying global warming alarmists to attack natural gas (fracking) and nuclear power? Yes! That's how he was able to get the money for his invasion of Ukraine. Western democracies paid him to do it, rather than develop our own energy sources. That's what the global warming alarmists insisted on.

Do you remember how our mainstream news media made such a big deal out of this no-credential angry child "Greta Thunberg"? Well, she had a huge impact helping Russia to get its army funded:

> Europe could have kept operating and expanded its nuclear power plants but instead, under pressure from climate activists, including Greta Thunberg, shut them down.
>
> Climate activists even forced nuclear-heavy France to throttle its nuclear plants so order to use more industrial wind energy. The result was significant outages over the last few weeks at a time when French nuclear plants were needed most.

The big banks joined up with global warming activists and left-wing politicians:

> Efforts to make Europe less energy independent, and thus more dependent on Russian gas imports, were led by powerful banking interests in coordination with climate activists and center-Left parties around the world.

So we are now seeing increased prices at the pump because oil and gas are scarce. Who will pay for this? You will. You will pay at the pump, and you will pay through your utility bill:

> Biden and Democrats would like to see the whole of the US follow the California model
>
> California saw electricity prices rise 7x more than the rest of the US over the last decade, is experiencing blackouts, and intends to shut down its last nuclear plant.

And the Biden administration hasn't learned a thing. They are doubling down on shutting down pipelines and denying drilling permits. MSN reported this last week:

> The Biden administration has once again put a pause on new leases and permits for federal oil and gas drilling after a judge blocked the administration from using a metric that estimates the societal cost of carbon emissions.
>
> Earlier this month, US District Judge James Cain of the Western District of Louisiana issued an injunction preventing the Biden administration from using what's known as the "social cost of carbon" in decisions around oil and gas drilling on public land, or in rules governing fossil fuel emissions. The ruling has consequences for a range of Biden administration actions on climate change, but especially on the Interior Department's federal oil and gas leasing program.

Democrat voters are fine with this – they voted for it, even after Trump lowered gas prices and made us energy independent. We'll see if they've learned anything in the November 2022 mid-terms.

I just want everyone to understand what is really going on when you see all these left-wing global warming alarmists suddenly concerned and sad about Ukraine. You can't have it both ways. If you vote to restrict natural gas (fracking) and nuclear power at home, then you are *necessarily* voting for more money for Russia – and Russia's powerful armed forces. Canada wants to fund Russia. The European Union wants to fund Russia. And America wants to fund Russia. These weak Western countries don't want to develop their own energy at home. They want to pay Russia to develop their energy. And now we know the price of their naivete.

Why do Americans own so many guns?

March 1, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm not originally from the United States, and when I go back home to visit, one of the questions that I get asked a lot is "why do Americans own so many guns?" So in this post, I wanted to look at some stories from the United States about crime and gun violence and see why so many Americans own guns.

My favorite writer on these issues is Amy Swearer, who writes for the Daily Signal. I find that her articles are useful for explaining to people who don't own guns, or want to ban guns, why it might be a good idea to own a gun, and to know how to use it.

The first article to see is a review of 14 examples of defensive gun use from December 2021.

She writes:

> As 2022 begins, cities across the nation are experiencing unprecedented spikes in serious, violent crimes. Meanwhile, many public officials continue to push overly lenient and nonsensical prosecution policies that further endanger the public and embolden criminals.
>
> Americans are becoming increasingly aware of just how important the right to keep and bear arms can be, especially when the government cannot be counted upon to protect them from violent threats.
>
> Almost every major study on the issue has found that Americans use their firearms in self-defense between 500,000 and 3 million times annually, according to a 2013 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

She has 14 examples in the article, and here are a few of them:

> Dec. 12, Fairfax, Virginia: Police said a burglar armed with a knife entered a home through an unlocked door and refused to leave after residents confronted him. When the burglar lunged toward one resident with the knife, the resident—armed with a gun—fired a warning shot into the floor. The resident then held the burglar at gunpoint until police arrived.
>
> Dec. 15, Lakeland, Florida: A homeowner shot an intruder who used a flowerpot to smash through a glass door. Police arrested the intruder, who had an extensive criminal history including 14 felony convictions. The homeowner "did exactly what he had a right to do," Sheriff Grady Judd said in a press release. "I commend him for protecting himself and defending his home."
>
> Dec. 18, Cairo, Georgia: An elderly woman, awakened by noise in the middle of the night, confronted several armed intruders who had broken in. At least one intruder opened fire and wounded the woman, but she shot back with her own gun, prompting the intruders to flee. Police later arrested seven suspects in the

> home invasion, including five under age 16.
>
> Dec. 22, Abbottstown, Pennsylvania: A disturbed man wearing nothing but a shirt broke into an elderly couple's home and violently assaulted them, police said. The woman's husband was able to grab a handgun from the bedroom and fatally shot the attacker as he beat her. The husband and wife suffered serious injuries, but were expected to recover.

Like Amy says, if you live in a blue state, or even in a blue city in a red state, then you can't count on law enforcement to protect you. They are too busy being politically correct, or trampling unarmed peaceful protesters with horses. You have to be able to defend yourself, and your loved ones.

And here are some more from January 2022:

> Just one month into 2022, it became clear that the new year hasn't brought relief from the unprecedented spikes in violent crime in many cities since the summer of 2020.
>
> Take Philadelphia, for example. With 140 carjackings reported through the first five weeks of 2022, the city is well on pace to surpass last year's total of 757 carjackings.
>
> Portland, Oregon, meanwhile, experienced more homicides and shootings in January 2022 than in January 2021—doubly concerning, since 2021 was by far the most violent year in Portland's history.

And here are a few of the stories:

> Jan. 13, Philadelphia: After a good Samaritan intervened to help a woman who was being harassed on a commuter train, police said, the harasser followed him off the train and attacked him with a knife. However, the good Samaritan had a concealed carry permit and happened to be armed that day. He shot and wounded his assailant.
>
> Jan. 27, Fort Worth, Texas: An armed carjacker opened fire on a driver, wounding him. But the driver was able to draw his own gun and shoot back, potentially saving his life and sending the carjacker fleeing. The car was recovered a short time later after the carjacker, wounded and in serious condition, stopped to ask for help.

The one about the Good Samaritan was interesting. One of the reasons why armed men are inclined to help women is because they know that if anything happens, they have a weapon to fight back with. So many young, unmarried women voters want to disarm law-abiding men. But do they realize that if they do that, then only the criminals will have weapons? Do these progressive women think that unarmed men are going to stand up for them against threats?

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

The book by economist John Lott, linked above, compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, which shows that the 1997 UK gun ban caused violent crime rates to MORE THAN DOUBLE in the four years following the ban. But both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

One of the common mistakes I see anti-gun advocates making is to use the metric of all "gun-related deaths". First of all, this completely ignores the effects of hand gun ownership on violent crime, as we've seen. Take away the guns from law-abiding people and violent crime skyrockets. But using the "gun-related deaths" number is especially wrong, because it includes suicides committed with guns. This is the majority (about two thirds) of gun related deaths, even in a country like America that has a massive inner-city gun violence problem caused by the epidemic of single motherhood by choice. If you take out the gun-related SUICIDES, then the actual number of gun homicides has decreased as gun ownership has grown.

For a couple of useful graphs related to this point, check out this post over at the American Enterprise Institute.

Christian woman finds a way to discuss her faith with non-Christians

March 2, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting article where a Christian woman explains how she used to share her testimony with non-Christians. But that wasn't working. So she decided to try something different.

She writes:

> I'll never forget the first time I shared my personal testimony with a non-Christian.
>
> When the opportunity arose and I shared my story with an unbelieving friend, she replied, "That's so cool. I'm so happy you found something that works for you."
>
> *For me?*
>
> "It's not about what works *for me*," I said, trying to hide my discouragement. "It's about what's true for everyone."
>
> "That doesn't make sense," she responded. "That's *your experience*, not mine. I had a similar revelation when I realized I could leave the church, and I've become a better person for *my* decision. Just as you were freed from your heaviest burdens by finding God, I was freed from mine by leaving God behind."
>
> I was devastated but I chalked it up to my friend's hardheartedness. I decided to shake the dust off my feet and look forward to the next opportunity.
>
> But time after time of sharing my testimony resulted in similar responses. People expressed enthusiasm that I was happy, that Christianity worked for me, and that I had "found my niche." Yet no one considered my experience as anything more than just that—my own personal experience.
>
> […]I had been taught that sharing what God had done in my life was the ideal way to witness to non-Christians. A personal testimony was interesting yet non-confrontational, compelling but inoffensive. And yet, despite having shared my testimony with dozens of unbelievers, not a single person felt challenged to consider the truth claims of Christianity.

She noticed that her approach wasn't actually in the Bible. There was a different approach being demonstrated by Jesus, and later by his disciples.

She writes:

> When Jesus called his first disciples, he taught truth and provided evidence (miracles) to support his claims, then he asked people to follow him (Luke 5:1–11). In fact, this was his method whenever he went into new regions (see Luke 4:14–44; John 4:7–26). People decided to follow Jesus not on blind faith or a

> subjective feeling, but based on the evidence they had seen and heard.[i]
>
> Jesus also used evidence to assuage the doubts of even those who had been with him a long time. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin, who leapt in the womb during Mary's visit (Luke 1:39–45), baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, heard God's voice from heaven, and saw the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus in bodily form like a dove (Luke 3:21–22). Yet when John experienced unexpected suffering, he began to doubt.
>
> Jesus didn't respond as many do today, by insisting that John "just believe" or "have faith" or "prayer harder." Rather, he responded with more evidence, saying, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." (Matt. 11:2–6).
>
> […]At Pentecost, the apostle Peter offered signs and wonders, fulfilled prophecy, and relayed eyewitness testimony to persuade people from all over the Roman Empire that the most reasonable explanation for what they were seeing was not morning drunkenness, but a risen Messiah (Acts 2:1–41).
>
> On his missionary journeys, the apostle Paul reasoned with the Jews from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that Jesus was the Messiah who needed to suffer and rise from the dead (Acts 17:1–3, 17). And he reasoned with the Gentiles from outside the Scriptures, making a case with their own accepted beliefs to convince them (Acts 17:17–34).
>
> In fact, in describing his mission, Paul told the Philippians, "I am put here for the defense of the gospel" (1:7, 16). This word translated defense is the same word from which we get our English word "apologetics," meaning to make reasoned arguments or to provide evidence as justification. Using this same word, Peter commanded believers to "always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you"(1 Pet. 3:15).

So, she decided to dump the testimony approach, and try the Biblical approach. But she had to change it a little bit, since she couldn't perform miracles herself:

> We are not eyewitnesses to Jesus's life and resurrection, but we have the accounts of those who were. We don't typically see miracles, but we have millennia of biblical scholarship and archaeology that provide reasons to believe the accounts are trustworthy. We don't often hear God speaking audibly or see him parting seas, but we have significant scientific evidence that shows the universe had a beginning, and millennia of observation to confirm the scientific principle that everything that begins to exist has a cause.

I think a lot of Christians never move on from approach she described that wasn't getting results. And there's a reason for that – studying evidence is hard work. But I can tell you from my experience as a software engineer, there is no better way to convince other

people to adopt your view than to show them working code that produces results. If they have a prototype, they will adopt your design. Similarly with Christianity. If you have evidence, then you will be persuasive.

When talking about spiritual things with non-Christians, always remember the joke about the two men walking in the woods who meet a bear. One man starts to put on his running shoes. The other man says “what are you doing? you can’t outrun a bear!” And the first man says “I don’t have to. I only have to outrun you”. It’s the same with apologetics. You don’t have to be William Lane Craig to talk about your faith to non-Christians. You just have to know more than your non-Christian opponent knows about evidence.

The way things are going these days with the public schools and the mainstream news media, this is actually pretty easy to do. One or two introductory books on the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning for intelligent life, the origin of biological information, the origin of body plans, the historical reliability of the New Testament, the minimal facts case for the resurrection, etc. will do the job. You might need another one on philosophical challenges like evil, suffering, divine hiddenness, etc. But we’re talking no more than 5 books, and you’ll be effective in the vast majority of your conversations. If you can only get one book, I like Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow’s “Is God Just a Human Invention?” best.

Facebook / Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg's election meddling violated bribery laws

March 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We have an election this year, and now seems like a good time to remind everyone about Facebook's bias in favor of the Democrat party. Take a look at this article from The Federalist.

It says:

> Nearly $9 million in Zuckerberg grant funds directed solely to five Democratic strongholds in Wisconsin violated the state's election code's prohibition on bribery. That conclusion represents but one of the many troubling findings detailed in the report submitted today by a state-appointed special counsel to the Wisconsin Assembly.
>
> […]The first unlawful action, according to the report, concerned the payment of grant funds to five Wisconsin counties that were used to facilitate voting. That arrangement, Gableman wrote, violated Wis. Stat. § 12.11, which prohibits election bribery by providing it is illegal to offer anything of value to or for any person in order to induce any elector to go to the polls or vote.
>
> According to the report, Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg providing financing that allowed the Center for Tech and Civic Life to offer nearly $9 million in "Zuck Bucks" to Milwaukee, Madison, Racine, Kenosha and Green Bay counties. In exchange, the "Zuckerberg 5," as the report called the counties, in effect, operated Democratic get-out-the-vote efforts. Those grant funds then paid for illegal drop boxes to be placed in Democratic voting strongholds.

A week ago, Facebook was in trouble again for meddling in elections.

The Washington Examiner reported:

> Facebook blocked Texas GOP gubernatorial candidate Chad Prather from accessing his page on the site only eight days before the primary election.
>
> Prather told the Washington Examiner the ban resulted from a months-old comment discussing the events of Jan 6. A commentator, who Prather confirmed tends to "spam" his page and "comments nonstop," called the events of the day an "insurrection."
>
> Prather responded by pointing out that even the FBI didn't classify the event as an insurrection, further accusing the commentator of using "victimhood" in her favor.
>
> As a result, Facebook banned him for "bullying."
>
> Facebook notified Prather he was banned from his page for seven days starting Feb 21. The primary election is March 1.

> “They silenced my campaign on Facebook,” Prather said. “This is illegal. This is interference. This is absolutely a travesty to the political process of free and fair elections.”

Facebook / Meta uses partisan “fact-checkers” (censors) like Lead Stories, Politifact, etc. to suppress ideas that support the Republican party.

Here’s the about Politifact, reported by The Blaze:

> Fact-checking website PolitiFact recently engaged in some head-scratching analysis in an attempt to discredit a claim made by Fox Business Network host Maria Bartiromo — but ended up doing the exact opposite.
>
> […]Bartiromo said this: “The United States is also reliant on Russian oil — we have doubled our imports from Russia in the last year. So, [there’s] no question why President Biden is begging OPEC and others to pump more oil.”
>
> […]In a Monday column, PolitiFact parachuted in to assess Bartiromo’s claim that the U.S. doubled oil imports from Russia as “mostly false.”
>
> Normally, oil imports and energy imports — which include refined products — are categorized separately. The U.S. Energy Information Administration, which PolitiFact cites multiple times, shows as much by breaking down crude oil imports in a separate chart.
>
> A spokesperson for Bartiromo evidently explained this to PolitiFact, resulting in the fact-checker admitting, “The U.S. more than doubled its crude oil imports from Russia, to about 208,000 barrels a day in the first 11 months of 2021, from 76,000 barrels a day in 2020.”
>
> Amazingly, that wasn’t enough for the fact-checker to change its assessment, even while it openly admitted that Bartiromo’s specific claim was accurate.

The author of that “fact check” has a degree in English. ENGLISH. That’s the kind of imbecile that Facebook / Meta uses to censor conservatives, especially before elections.

Although Donald Trump was President for four years, he didn’t do much to rein in the power of Big Tech. But there are other Republicans running for President in 2024 who are taking action.

News Max reports:

> Gov. Ron DeSantis, R-Florida, has directed state officials to investigate Facebook for alleged election interference, it was announced Monday.
>
> The governor’s action came after a report that Facebook possibly influenced numerous state and local races by exempting elite users from the social platform’s own rules.
>
> “It’s no secret that Big Tech censors have long enforced their own rules inconsistently,” DeSantis said in a statement released by his office. “If this new report is true, Facebook has violated Florida law to put its thumb on the scale of

> numerous state and local races."
>
> […]"Floridians deserve to know how much this corporate titan has influenced our elections," he said. "That is why I am directing Secretary Lee to use all legal means to uncover violations of Florida's election laws.
>
> "The thought of Facebook clandestinely manipulating elections is an affront to the basic principles of our republic. We the people have the right to choose our representatives, whether or not Silicon Valley approves."

On this blog, I've documented a long line of disturbing anti-American behavior by Facebook / Meta. We have an election coming up, and I don't want to lose because of Big Tech interference. Make sure everyone knows what Facebook / Meta does.

Related posts

- Peer-reviewed medical journal blasts Facebook "fact checkers" for censorship
- Facebook has a long record of censoring speech critical of Democrats
- Facebook fact-checker caught plagiarizing 54 articles
- Facebook "non-partisan" fact-checker revealed to be a far-left Trump-hating Democrat
- Facebook "fact-checker" Politifact forced to retract "false" rating against Candace Owens
- When Facebook fact-checkers conflict with peer-reviewed studies, who is right?
- Potential violation of election law: Facebook and Twitter censor Biden scandal
- Facebook and Google removing content that harms Democrat party
- Facebook censors interview with abortion survivor to help Democrats win 2020 election
- Facebook uses pro-abortion "fact checkers" to label pro-life pages "fake news"
- Facebook bans Christian apologist David Wood for posting the death threats he received
- Facebook censors criticism of Democrat Party, especially before "important elections"
- Spotify joins Google, Youtube, Facebook and Twitter in censoring Prager University
- Facebook bans Franklin Graham for "hate speech", Google YouTube shadow-bans pro-life videos
- Facebook, Amazon, Google and Twitter ally with leftist group linked to domestic terrorism
- Facebook enlists left-wing Politifact and Snopes to censor criticism of Democrats

Democrat bill to eliminate all state and federal restrictions on abortion blocked by Senate

March 4, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I blogged about a piece of legislation called the Women's Health Protection Act, which passed in the House of Representatives shortly after Joe Biden took office. We'll see what's in the bill in a minute. The bill is in the news again because it failed to pass the Senate.

Life News reports:

> Senate Republicans, with the help of Democrat Senator Joe Manchin, voted to defeat a Democrat bill that would overturn every pro-life law in America and legalize abortions up to birth.
>
> Lawmakers voted 48-46 against cloture — against ending debate and allowing a vote on the the misnamed Women's Health Protection Act. As a result the filibuster against the radical pro-abortion legislation was sustained and the bill is defeated, as 60 votes were necessary to move ahead to a vote on the bill.
>
> All Republicans voted pro-life against cloture on the radical pro-abortion bill and all Democrats voted pro-abortion for cloture, except for Manchin.
>
> […]The bill would:
>
> - Eliminate all state and federal parental consent laws in relation to abortion
> - Eliminate all state informed consent laws, including those that allow women to view an ultrasound prior to abortion
> - Prevent states from passing laws to protect babies at 20 weeks, thereby joining countries like North Korea, China, Vietnam, Singapore, Canada, and the Netherlands in not protecting unborn children later in development
> - Force doctors and nurses opposed to abortion to lose their jobs, and Catholic hospitals could lose public funds unless they perform abortions
> - Eliminate decades-long limitations on direct taxpayer funding of abortion – including the popular Hyde Amendment, which has saved more than 2 million lives since enacted
>
> In short, the legislation would overturn all federal and state pro-life laws and make it illegal for elected officials to even introduce pro-life legislation.

The bill passed the House in September 2021, by a vote of 218-11. Not one single Republican voted in favor of the bill. Not one. Because this bill is abortion extremism. This bill forces healthcare workers to participate in the killing of unborn babies. And taxpayers would have to pay for the abortions.

Although you might think that most Christian leaders like Beth Moore, Russell Moore, David French, Tim Keller, etc. would oppose an extremist bill like this, I think they

wouldn't. Judging from their support for Joe Biden during the election, who promised to sign the bill if it made it to his desk, I think that their goal would be to make this bill become law.

Even though Evangelicals for Biden failed to get the abortion law they wanted, they've still gotten a lot of wins under Joe Biden.

Life News is pretty upset about Biden's policies so far.

They write:

> Joe Biden is rapidly becoming the most pro-abortion president in U.S. history as he takes multiple actions to expand abortions and force taxpayers to subsidize them.
>
> On Wednesday, the Biden administration released a rule that will force taxpayers to fund the abortion industry through the Title X family planning program.
>
> The rule, issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will end a pro-life regulation that President Donald Trump put in place to ensure Title X grants are not used to subsidize the killing of unborn babies in abortions.

Pro-life groups like Susan B. Anthony List and National Right to Life considered Trump to be the most pro-life president ever. I even wrote about all the specific actions, policies and nominations he did to help the pro-life cause. That's the kind of article that our pious pastors and conservative leaders should have written, if they were serious about getting results instead of virtue-signaling. When it comes to politics, you have to look at the actions taken by the candidates – what did they achieve? – not their words.

Judge: man must pay more than $50,000 a month to ex-girlfriend for 10 years

March 5, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend of mine was asking me last night whether I had any regrets about never marrying, especially since I had such awesome Christian female friends like her. I thought about it, and I thought that maybe it is better to not have married, especially when I read stories about how family courts trample over the rights of men to favor women, regardless of what the law says.

The story is from one of Canada's national newspapers, the National Post:

> A wealthy businessman will have to pay more than $50,000 a month in spousal support for 10 years to a woman with whom he had a long-term romantic relationship even though they kept separate homes and had no children together, Ontario's top court has ruled.
>
> Under Ontario law, an unmarried couple are considered common-law spouses if they have cohabited — lived together in a conjugal relationship — continuously for at least three years. But that doesn't necessarily mean living in the same home, the court found.
>
> […]When their 14-year relationship finally broke down in May 2015, Climans asked the courts to recognize her as Latner's spouse and order him to pay her support. He argued she had been a travel companion and girlfriend, nothing more. As such, he said, they were never legally spouses and he owed no support. An eight-day trial ensued.
>
> In her decision in February 2019, Superior Court Justice Sharon Shore sided with Climans. She ruled they were in fact long-time spouses, finding that despite their separate home, they lived under one roof at Latner's cottage for part of the summer, and during winter vacations in Florida. Shore ordered him to pay her $53,077 monthly indefinitely.

They never married – this woman was not even his ex-wife.

Elsewhere in the article, we learn that he had asked her to sign a pre-nuptial agreement many times, and each time she refused. (Those are not even enforced fairly by the way) She wanted his money, and the judge made sure she got it. Because the law doesn't matter in a family court. Men are just walking ATMs and women have a right to take men's money, if it makes the woman happy. Literally just walking ATMs.

So, what I wanted to point out about this is the fact that a female judge decided to bend the law in order to favor a woman. And this sort of thing happens A LOT in Canada – where their female judges are notorious for progressive judicial activism, e.g. Beverley Mclachlin, Bertha Wilson, Claire L'Heureux-Dubé, etc. Ontario family courts are notoriously anti-male, and men know this.

But it’s not just Ontario. I have two Christian friends who married their Christian wives as virgins, and then their wives divorced them. I heard what happened to them in divorce court. Again, female lawyers and female judges disregarded the law in order to punish the man and favor the woman. And I think most men growing up today have a father or a brother or an uncle or someone who has been a victim of this.

When I talk to women about this, they all say things like this to me: “oh, you worry too much” or “you read too many books about divorce” or especially “when you meet the right girl, you’ll fall in love, and all this concern about atheistic feminist judges in the courts won’t stop you”. That last one is the most popular. And it’s always made me think that if this is how women see commitment – feelings-based – it’s no wonder that women initiate 70% of divorces.

I always thought it was a curse that I grew up poor and could not afford to show off my wealth in order to attract attention from women. Now I see that God actually gave me a great blessing. In order for a man to get married, it takes a lot more than finding the right girl. He needs to live in the right culture – a culture that tries to equip women to be content in committed relationships and treat men fairly.

I don’t think even women who claim to be pro-male and/or pro-marriage know or care how stories like this affect men. I’m very wealthy. I certainly do look at what is likely to happen if a woman goes to the courts expecting me to give her money. In fact, whenever I post stories on my wall about how the judges legislate from the bench to transfer money from men to women, there’s just silence or sometimes deflection by attacking men (except for my friend Dina who agrees with me). No one dares to speak up for men, it’s just expected that we be robbed by the government in order to make women happy. Because “marriage is for women”.

And as long as the message keeps being sent by judicial activists in the family courts, men will keep adjusting how they treat women. Women appear very unsafe to us, and nothing that’s going on in the courts is changing the trend towards avoidance. Men are very good at calculating risks vs rewards.

Far-left students shout down father who lost his child to transgenderism

March 6, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This seems to be happening a lot lately. I just wrote about a father in California who was stripped of child custody and parental rights by his ex-wife. Prior to that, a Canadian father was arrested and imprisoned for gendering his child according to her birth sex. And now in Texas, a father who lost custody of his child, after the child came out transgender gets heckled when he tells his story.

Here's the background from Life Site News, posted in December 2018:

> A six-year-old Texas boy is being dressed and presented as a girl by his mother; at the same time, she is threatening the boy's father legally for not going along with her plan for their son to live as a girl.
>
> Jam3s lives as a girl when with his mother, but when with his father and given the choice, the six-year-old boy lives as a boy.

Court order:

> J3ffr3y Young3r is currently prohibited by court order from affirming in any way his son's sex, including imparting Christian teaching on gender and sexuality to Jam3s.

Child abuse charges against the father for disapproving:

> 4nn3 Georgu1as has charged Young3r, her ex-husband and Jam3s's father, with child abuse for not affirming their son as a transgender "girl," according to court documents.

Restraining order blocking father's contact with the boys:

> She has also sought restraining orders against Young3r, she is trying to terminate his parental rights, and also seeks to compel Young3r to pay for Jam3s's visits with a transgender-affirming therapist and for medical procedures to "transition" Jam3s to a girl.

Chemical castration and sex-reassignment surgery:

> The controversial "treatment" could include hormonal sterilization that could begin in as soon as two years when Jam3s turns eight, in preparation for Jam3s to later have "sexual reassignment" surgery.

Father loses all parental rights:

> The court has awarded her the sole right to consent to psychiatric and psychological treatment of Jam3s and his twin brother Jude, rendering the boys'

> father unable to get a second opinion.

Child Protective Services:

> Young3r is even prohibited from cutting his sons' hair, having been reported by a teacher to Texas Child Protective Services for giving Jam3s a haircut.

Like the California case, the father gets the bill:

> Since the cost for psychological and psychiatric treatment of children is considered child support in Texas, a website on the case created by friends of the family says, and current Texas statutes being what they are, Young3r could be "forced to pay for the sexual mutilation of his own son."

That's just slavery, by the way. And men don't like to be enslaved.

And here is the latest from Life Site News about the outcome of the trial:

> A jury has ruled against J3ffr3y Young3r, the father who is trying to protect his seven-year-old son, Jam3s, from chemical castration via a gender "transition."
>
> […]The jury's decision likely means that Mr. Young3r will be required to "affirm" Jam3s as a girl, despite his religious and moral objections, and will also be forced to take a class on transgenderism.

Although it was a jury trial, I just want to point out that the judge overseeing the trial is a woman, and Georgu1as has two female lawyers leading the questioning of witnesses. The therapist who diagnosed the boy with gender dysphoria is also a (gay) woman, and founder of Da11as Ra1nbow Couns31ing. So a panel of women is overruling the wishes of the child's father for his son, and this apparently isn't a problem for anyone.

The American Conservative noted that Georgu1as is not the biological mother of the boys. They were conceived with Young3r's sperm and eggs from an egg donor. This is an immediate red flag to me, as women who use IVF are often feminists who deliberately delayed child-bearing during their fertile years for their careers.

The latest news

So, the latest news is that the father is now running for office as a Republican in Dallas, trying to get these laws changed. But young people, who are increasingly growing up without their biological mothers or biological fathers, did not receive him kindly.

The Post Millennial reports:

> A University of North Texas classroom in Denton erupted into chants of "f*ck these fascists" and slammed their fists on the desks as Jeff Younger tried to speak on Wednesday. Younger was not thrown off, telling them to be "louder!"
>
> Younger, who is running for a seat in the Texas House, lost custody of his 9-year-old twins because he opposed the medical transition of one of them. His ex-wife began pushing for gender transition when the child was 3-years-old.
>
> Younger came to speak to the school, hosted by the Young Conservatives of

> Texas, noting that he has "attracted national attention defending his young son against being forcibly transitioned by his ex-wife." Younger opposes the medical gender transition of children.

Notice how just like the story about the California father and the British Columbia father, there is an ex-wife involved. Women who initiate divorce can use false accusations or transgendering of children in order to eject the male from the lives of the children.

More:

> Younger tried to speak to the room, but was repeatedly shouted down before he was escorted out. He was joined by Kelly Neidert, a student who is part of the conservative students' group. She had invited Younger to speak. He encountered a mob of far-leftist activists waiting for him outside, and was ushered by security to a waiting car.
>
> Conservative students were reportedly chased from the building. Far-leftist activists and students harassed members of the Young Conservatives of Texas as they left the building where Younger had attempted to give a talk.

The police had to hide one of the conservative students in a janitor closet, in order to get her away from the angry mob.

My thoughts

I have two thoughts about this.

First, I don't see how the upcoming generation will be able to form stable relationships. They are just too invested in fringe issues, too selfish and too unstable, to be able to take on self-sacrificial commitments to a spouse and children.

I thought this was interesting: (archived here)

> Throwaway for privacy.
>
> I've been an out and proud lesbian since I was 16. I've had some wonderful experiences and relationships with women but now I'm 29, I'm officially throwing in the towel. I am actively going to stop searching for dates on dating apps and in general.
>
> I'm so tired of all of it. I get that this happens in straight relationships too.
>
> But I'm so tired of being ghosted when things are seemingly going well. I'm so tired of being used. I'm so tired of having someone else's insecurities projected onto me. I'm so tired of being cheated on. I'm so tired of being put on the back burner only to be replaced by someone more "convenient". I'm so tired of the sudden emotional outbursts I've experienced from women I've dated.
>
> I'm so tired of them being flighty and going radio silent for days for no reason when otherwise things were going well. I'm so tired of the intense emotional immaturity and emotional instability. I'm so tired of the hot and cold behavior. I'm so tired at how many are so quick to be physically violent if they don't get

> their own way.
>
> Even the ones who seemingly have their sh*t together, end up being openly cruel and spiteful at the drop of a hat. Even the ones I seem to vibe with super well, end up buying into playing mind games and “testing” me to get a reaction out of me by giving me the silent treatment unprovoked or challenging everything I say to spur an emotional response.
>
> None of my straight friends around me have experienced any of the horror stories from their boyfriends like I’ve experienced with my lesbian partners. I’ve seen it all – from intense and violent outbursts where I’ve been blamed for “not looking after her anxiety” (like it’s somehow my job to look after someone’s mental health?) to setting up a life with one of my partners, emigrating thousands of miles to be with her, only for her to admit the entire time she’s been with someone else without telling me.
>
> I’m not saying all lesbians are like this by a long shot. But boy am I tired. I’m sorry but I’m done trying to balance my own life, mental wellbeing and day to day routine while trying to jump through hoops to not trigger my female partner.

Lesbians have the highest rates of instability and domestic violence. This is what happens when the stabilizing influence of men is removed from women’s lives. The point is that the more young people embrace sexual anarchy, turning away from chastity, self-sacrificial commitment, and complementary genders, the more they will run into problems. And marrying a sexual anarchist should be completely avoided.

Second, isn’t it interesting how men keep marrying women who initiate divorce to them, then use the family court system to get full custody, alimony and child support? This will work for the first few women who do it, but I think men are learning not get involved with women from watching what’s happening.

A lot of “pro-marriage” social conservatives tell men to man up and ask women out on dates, but what is the value of marriage for men? The problem of declining marriage rate will not be fixed by urging men to jump off the cliff of the devolved modern notion of traditional marriage. If the pro-marriage social conservatives don’t fix what is being offered to men, then men will opt out.

Why did Putin wait for Joe Biden to take office before attacking Ukraine?

March 7, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an amazing article posted at The Federalist that compares and contrasts the foreign policy achievements of Donald Trump vs Joe Biden.

It says:

> Russia invaded Georgia in 2008 when George W. Bush was president. Russia took Crimea in 2014 when Barack Obama was president. Russia has now invaded Ukraine with Joe Biden as president. However, when Donald Trump was president, Russia did not seize territory from any of its neighbors.
>
> During his four years in office, Trump not only successfully deterred Russia from acting against Ukraine, he effectively deterred a lot of bad behavior across the planet. He focused on ending America's foreign wars rather than launching new ones. At the same time, he brokered the Abraham Accords to expand peace in the Middle East.

Here is the list of reasons why Putin would not attack Ukraine when Trump was president:

1. Rebuilt the American Military
2. Crusaded for American Energy Dominance
3. Set the Tone by Launching Surgical Missile Strikes in Syria in Early 2017
4. Developed Strong Relationships with Middle Eastern Nations Based on Mutual Interests
5. Was Ruthless with the Taliban While Winding Down the Afghanistan War
6. Crushed the ISIS Caliphate
7. Demonstrated a Consistent Willingness to Take out the Bad Guys
8. Stood Up to China
9. Strategically Used Unpredictability as an Asset in Foreign Affairs
10. Advanced Tough Russia Policies and Provided Lethal Aid to Ukraine while Maintaining an Open Dialogue

You might remember that in contrast to Trump, Hunter Biden's father decided to withdraw from Afghanistan so stupidly, that 13 Americans lost their lives. And we handed the Taliban BILLIONS of dollars of American military equipment. Consider what message it sent to our reputation with our allies – they would naturally think that we were stupid and unreliable.

One of the things I liked best about Trump was his order to annihilate the head of Iran's Special Forces. While Obama was weak with Iran, handing over pallets of cash and standing aside while they worked on nuclear weapons, Tump was tough on them.

The Washington Examiner explains:

> Qassem Soleimani, the Iranian military general who was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Iraq on Thursday, was responsible for the deaths of over 600 U.S. soldiers in Iraq.
>
> "General Soleimani and his Quds Force were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American and coalition service members and the wounding of thousands more," the Pentagon said. "He had orchestrated attacks on coalition bases in Iraq over the last several months — including the attack on December 27th — culminating in the death and wounding of additional American and Iraqi personnel. General Soleimani also approved the attacks on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad that took place this week."

Do you remember that? This was a response to an attack on the US Embassy in Baghdad that Soleimani ordered. Soleimani was the aggressor in the Iraq embassy attack, and he has a record of attacking American armed forces.

Energy Independence

The other way to prevent a war with Russia is to be energy independent. But right now, Biden is buying oil and gas from Russia.

The article notes the difference between Trump and Biden:

> Trump deployed such aggressive sanctions against Russia that President Obama's Secretary of Defense Robert Gates called them the toughest in history, and he withdrew from one-sided treaties that hamstrung the U.S. while Russia violated the terms.
>
> Biden has taken the opposite approach, appeasing Putin by handing him his top two geopolitical priorities on a silver platter. He unconditionally extended the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, allowing Russia to continue building tactical nuclear weapons while constraining our ability to modernize. And while Trump imposed sanctions to stop Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline in its tracks, construction was allowed to resume when Biden took office.
>
> President Trump understood the power of building American energy dominance. By slashing onerous regulations, Trump sparked an American energy boom that ensured we would never be reliant on any other nation to meet our energy needs. Geopolitically, America's increased export capacity reduced Putin's leverage over our European allies, who depend on Russia for 40 percent of their gas and more than a quarter of their oil.
>
> Trump approved the Keystone XL oil pipeline at home and shut down Russia's Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline in Eastern Europe. Biden reversed both decisions, meaning he has been harder on America's energy producers than he has been on Russia's. To add insult to injury, as the Russian army pushed into Ukraine, Biden's climate envoy John Kerry hoped aloud that "President Putin will help us to stay on track with respect to what we need to do for the climate."

I see a lot of secular leftists on social media sporting Ukrainian flags now that Russia has invaded. But, if they were opposed to Trump in 2020, then they put in place the foreign policy that emboldened Russia to invade Ukraine. You can’t have it both ways. If you vote for a weakling, then you get aggression.

School principal attacks father who asked to see teacher performance evaluations

March 8, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are so many areas where conservatives could win over independents in future elections. We could fix healthcare with government-funded private health savings accounts. We could fix Russian aggression by developing our own natural gas and nuclear power. And we could fix public schools by creating government-funded individual education savings accounts for parents.

Here's the latest reason why public schools are failing parents and children, reported by the New York Post:

> [Brian] Davison is a ginger-haired 48-year-old who earned two degrees from MIT, then spent much of his career as a Navy officer. By profession, he is a nerd who specializes in "operations research," finding ways to make organizations function more efficiently. After he had two kids, he figured he could volunteer his number-crunching skills to help their schools.
>
> He's not a monster. To teachers, he's something more threatening: a mathematician.

What did Davison do that was so terrible? He wanted to track which schools were producing *higher performance* for each individual child:

> [School performance] could be measured with the same test data that the schools already had: You just needed to look at growth trajectory instead of plain scores. Compare each child's state exam score from last year to his score from this year. Had he moved ahead especially quickly, merely kept pace, or started to fall behind?

The schools actually have the data he wanted, but only the teachers were allowed to see it – not parents of the students:

> Using this "student growth percentile" (SGP) statistic to illuminate the performance of schools and teachers made so much sense that it was unsurprising when in 2009, the Obama administration began requiring it of school districts as a condition for receiving their share of nearly $54 billion in stimulus funding, the best-known component of which was called Race to the Top.
>
> In the ensuing years, Virginia repeatedly received the money after submitting applications attesting that "prior to submitting this request, [schools] provided [to teachers] student growth data."

So, he asked the schools for the performance data for each child, in order to calculate

which schools were helping children improve, year over year. But they would not give him the data. Instead, they tried to call the police.

> Loudoun County Public Schools told him it did not have them. In fact, no one in the school system had ever looked at them.
>
> He requested the data from other school districts in the state, which told him essentially the same thing. Educators were so opposed to looking at these numbers that they were willing to systematically lie, apparently ignore the law, and jeopardize vast sums of federal funding. They were doing it for the same reason the information was so important: It revealed which teachers were good and which were not.
>
> […] In October 2014, Davison sued the Virginia Department of Education to force it to release the growth data, offsetting costs by giving himself a crash course in law and doing some of his own legal work. And he became, as one school board member called him, "Enemy #1."

And how do teachers treat their enemies? Why, by labeling them "domestic terrorists", and calling the police and FBI on them. Because if you disagree with a teacher, then they feel bad. And if they feel bad, then you need to be arrested and put in jail.

Here's school board member Debra Rose:

> After Davison raised questions at a school board meeting, board member Debra Rose, a former congressional staffer for the House Judiciary Committee, requested that a sheriff's deputy remove him. The officer did not.
>
> In March 2015, Rose's husband summoned police to their home, where "Ms. Rose advised that Mr. Davison has not made any specific threats directed towards her, but he has made her feel extremely uncomfortable." The police took no action.
>
> In May, her husband called police again to tell them that Davison "is posting links on [an internet] forum to [Ms. Rose's] campaign website which displays herself and her family members including her children." The officer responded, according to his police report, that "this may not be a crime because this certain post is a link to his wife's campaign website."
>
> Rose called Davison's elderly father to try to shame him. She emailed his employer five times.

He's a "domestic terrorist" you know. Anyone who makes teachers feel bad is a domestic terrorist.

Those teachers are all unionized. Do you think that makes them more or less likely to care about their students? Well, what kind of person is content to go through life as a member of a union? People join unions so that the union will stick up for them when they perform poorly. People who want to escape accountability for poor performance join unions. That's why cars produced by unionized labor are inferior to cars produced by non-unionized labor. People who might be fired have to perform. People who serve customers

in a free, competitive market have to earn the trust of their consumers.

Here's Debbie Rose:

I post this, so that people will know that just because a woman looks pretty and smiles, it doesn't mean that she is a good person. It doesn't mean she cares about children. It doesn't mean that she is self-controlled or rational. It doesn't mean she is mentally fit.

Principal Tracy Stephens

If you think that what Debra Rose did was bad, then look at what the school's principal, Tracy Stephens, did:

> After Davison tried to raise testing issues at a PTA meeting in September 2015, the school's principal, Tracy Stephens, issued a notice that she said made it a crime for him to come to the school for any reason.
>
> School officials were used to parents advocating to get preferential treatment for their own children, but they were not used to anyone asking bigger questions.
>
> "Many of your comments were wholly unrelated to your children. This is frightening to our staff," Stephens wrote.
>
> The day the no-trespassing order was posted to Davison's front door, Stephens called the police on him while he waited off school property to pick up his kids. She refused to allow his children to join him. The police told the principal that Davison was entitled to pick up his children, but, according to the police report, Stephens demanded, "I want him arrested!"
>
> When that did not work, she reported Davison to Child Protective Services as a suspected child abuser.
>
> It was not children she was concerned about. The complaint said Davison "exhibits agression [sic] and hostility toward LCPS leadership during public meetings."
>
> Stephens faxed 62 pages of information to the agency, which has the power to take children away from their parents. They consisted almost entirely of

> Davison's comments on school policies or officials' apparent violations of them. Tacked on the end were two claims that purportedly showed child abuse: One day, his daughter could not play kickball because she was "sent to school in rain boots." Another day, a teacher said she saw Davison's children with him and "both of the kids had straight faces."

And here's Tracy Stephens:

So what do we learn from all of this? Well, we learn that teacher unions, school boards and principals would rather resort to persecution of their customers (parents), than be held accountable for their performance. The purpose of teacher unions is to prevent bad teachers from being held accountable. The Democrat party protects these teacher unions. Maybe it's time the Republican party looked out for the parents instead?

Democrats oppose Florida bill that bans teachers from grooming children for sex

March 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've never seen so many people lying about a bill before. This is what the bill actually says: "Classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity may not occur in kindergarten through grade 3 or in a manner that is not age appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards." Let's take a look.

So I gave you the text of the bill above. It says that TEACHERS cannot INSTRUCT students from KINDERGARTEN through GRADE 3 in any topics related to sexual orientation of gender identity. The word gay doesn't appear in the bill. It doesn't say that children can't talk about sexual issues. It doesn't say that teachers can't respond or have conversations about sexual issues. It doesn't say that kids can't talk about their gay family / guardians. It is talking about what teachers can teach very young (below age 8) children.

So what this bill really does is prevent far-left progressive teachers from indoctrinating kids in LGBT dogmas, and preparing them for sex with adults (grooming). People who oppose this bill are just pedophiles, or allies of pedophiles. And in fact, that's not surprising. Democrats are always either found out to be pedophiles, or they support people who are found out to be pedophiles. And that happens in every state. Even in Florida, half the state supported a (married) candidate for governor who was found by police to be having drug-fueled sexual orgies with male prostitutes. When someone says "I vote Democrat", this is the kind of thing they support. Why? Because the goal of voting Democrat is to smash down traditional Judeo-Christian morality.

But how are Democrats and their allies in the mainstream media presenting the bill?

Daily Wire reports:

> On Tuesday, the Florida Senate passed the Parental Rights in Education bill, a potential law that would ban teachers in kindergarten through third grade from providing instruction on gender identity and sexual orientation, require schools to notify parents if there has been any change in a student's physical, emotional, or mental wellbeing, and would also provide legal recourse to parents to sue if they believe a school has violated any of those agreements. It would also teachers to withhold certain information from parents if there is a "reasonable" belief notifying them would result in abuse.
>
> As The Daily Wire reported on Friday, critics of the proposal claim it would harm LGBTQ students by preventing discussion on LGBT sex and gender topics, making them feel unwelcome, and possibly creating an environment of harm at home.
>
> Many have wrongly nicknamed it the "Don't Say Gay" bill, leading many to believe it actually bans the word "gay" from public school.

> As a result, on Monday, The Daily Wire reported that in a show of solidarity with voters who want elementary school educators to teach students about transgenderism and other progressive sex-related ideas without parental knowledge, Florida Democrats chanted "Gay! Gay! Gay!" throughout the state's capitol building.

And here's the video of the Florida Democrats and the Democrat news media amplifying the lie about the bill:

Notice how the legislators are all women. According to Gallup polls, women support LGBT indoctrination of children (and abortion) more than men. Women are more socially liberal than men, on average. The new virtues among women (on average) are "compassion" and "tolerance" and "inclusion". Women (on average) think that the height of morality is "don't judge". That's women's attitudes to abortion and LGBT indoctrination (on average) are more progressive than men's attitudes.

And notice in the video that the news media, CNN, MSNBC, etc. perpetuate the lie.

What I like about this bill is it is really helping us to see the character of people who will be running for President in 2024. For example, Florida governor Ron DeSantis:

Even White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki was perpetuating the lies. I don't think I'm going to surprise anyone by saying this, but when people voted for creepy Joe Biden for President, opposition to grooming and pedophilia were not on their priorities.

In fact, the Daily Wire reported this:

> "Parents across the country are looking to national, state, and district leaders to support our nation's students, help them recover from the pandemic, and provide them the academic and mental health supports they need," said Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona in a Tuesday afternoon statement. "Instead, leaders in Florida are prioritizing hateful bills that hurt some of the students most in need."
>
> "The Department of Education has made clear that all schools receiving federal funding must follow federal civil rights law, including Title IX's protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity," he continued. "We stand with our LGBTQ+ students in Florida and across the country, and urge Florida leaders to make sure all their students are protected and supported."

I was very encouraged by how DeSantis fought with the journalists to defend this bill. If he signs the bill and takes the heat, that will be a good sign that social conservatives would have an ally in 2024 in the White House.

You almost never see politicians championing social issues, and defending the rights of parents against the far-left school teachers, school boards, and principals. If you're looking for leadership on social issues, remember the name Ron DeSantis.

Three reasons why Christians should read military history

March 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, I finished a book called "Beyond The Call: The True Story of One World War II Pilot's Covert Mission to Rescue POWs on the Eastern Front". It's about a World War 2 heavy bomber pilot who completes 35 missions, and then goes into the Soviet Union (our allies, at the time) to rescue American POWs who were starving or being kidnapped or murdered by the Soviet secret police.

I found a very good article about it from Stripes, to just quickly introduce the story:

> Later, after making contact with POWs roaming the Polish countryside, [Capt. Robert Trimble] fully embraced his mission. He saw the desperate plight of those who had been liberated from Third Reich prison camps. Many were sick, emaciated, often clothed in rags and left to fend for themselves during a brutally harsh winter.
>
> Trimble risked his life numerous times over six weeks, helping to rescue hundreds of POWs. He came to the aid of others, too. In one daring rescue, nearly foiled by Russian agents who had become suspicious of his activities, Trimble helped 400 French women make it out of Poland and back to France.

Although he was being constantly trailed by Russian spies and informers, he would evade them, and bring food and money to the POWs, then put them on a train to Odessa, Ukraine, where they could get onto a ship going home.

Roger Trimble, standing second from the left, in front of his B-24 Liberator

Why I read military history

It is hard to develop virtues just by wishing and hoping. Something has to go into your mind that causes you to think differently, and feel differently. Everything that you watch on TV, hear on the radio, or see in the movie theater, is made by secular leftists. They aren't trying to build your moral character. They're goal is to break down your resistance to their unBiblical worldview and moral values. Instead of giving people who hate Jesus your money, just so you can be entertained, why not try to put something in front of your eyes that will make you better?

Look at this famous passage from the Bible.

Romans 12:1-2:

1Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

And also this from Philippians, my favorite book of the Bible.

Philippians 4:8:

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

So you can see that when I am reading, my goal is to work on my character. I want to have feelings about things that are appropriate for a Christian man.

So why military history? Here are three reasons why I read these military history books.

Humility

First, **humility**. Humility used to be one of my biggest challenges. So I thought to myself "instead of seeing yourself as some heroic figure, why don't you read about some real heroes… people who willingly gave their lives for their friends, like the Bible urges, and like Jesus did by example".

Remember this from John 15:13?

13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

Military history is filled with stories of courage, bravery, self-sacrifice, endurance, unselfishness, and many other virtues. When you read about people who are better than you, doing more important things than what you're doing, it really helps you to be humble.

The best thing for humility is reading Medal of Honor citations. You can find a bunch of them online here. And if you want a book to read, try these books about Medal of Honor recipients:

- Heroes of World War II

- Korean War Heroes
- Vietnam Medal of Honor Heroes

Endurance

Second, **endurance**. I sometimes feel badly about not having found someone to marry and not having lots of children. I wanted a good marriage to be a model for others, and also to have an influence in the next generation through my children. However, whenever I read military history, I see a lot of young men dying in battle. And I think, they too won't know what sex is like. And, they too won't know what marriage is like. And, they too won't know what having children is like. But it's not just the ones who die, it's the hardships they have to go through, as well. Cold, hunger, imprisonment, pain, loss of their friends, etc.

I remember reading about one of my favorite battles – probably the most famous battle of the Korean War, which is our most moral war. It's about Fox Company of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Regiment, 1st Marine Division. They had to hold a hill beside a vital road against overwhelming numbers of Chinese soldiers during the freezing cold North Korean winter. I remember reading about how one soldier got up to go to the bathroom, and was nearly shot by a sniper. He fell over on his own poop, which had already frozen by the time it hit the ground. For months after, I would always think about this whenever I went into a bathroom. We have pre-warmed water in our bathrooms at work, along with soap, lysol spray, febreeze, contact lense cleaner, hand sanitizer, and other things. Just understanding what other people have to go through in war helps me to be more patient with the little tiny setbacks that I experience. I used to get very anxious when anything went wrong, because of I was raised by strict immigrant parents. That anxiety seemed to last a long time, but since I started to read military history, I've been much more patient. I know that things could be worse.

Thankfulness

The third thing that I've experienced is **thankfulness**. Not just for all the things that I have because of what our armed forces have done, e.g. – basic human rights, prosperity, liberty, security, etc. But also specifically about those who gave their lives so that I could live free in a free country, and practice my Christian faith without fear.

Here are two of my favorite Medal of Honor stories from World War 2, in the Battle of Pearl Harbor:

Congressional Medal of Honor
Awarded Posthumously
PETER TOMICH

Rank and organization: Chief Watertender, U.S. Navy.
Place and date: Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.
Born: 3 June 1893, Prolog, Austria.

Although realizing that the ship was capsizing as a result of enemy bombing and torpedoing, Tomich remained at his post in the engineering plant of the U.S.S. Utah, until

he saw that all boilers were secured and all fireroom personnel had left their stations, and by so doing lost his own life.

And:

Congressional Medal of Honor
Awarded Posthumously
JAMES RICHARD WARD

Rank and organization: Seaman First Class, U.S. Navy.
Place and date: Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.
Born: 10 September 1921, Springfield, Ohio.

When it was seen that the U.S.S. Oklahoma was going to capsize and the order was given to abandon ship, Ward remained in a turret holding a flashlight so the remainder of the turret crew could see to escape, thereby sacrificing his own life.

I do think that it's important for Christians to read these kinds of stories in order to feed their own awareness of what it must have been like for Jesus to give his life *voluntarily* for us.

There is no shortcut to gratitude. You have to constantly reflect on the sacrifices made by others for you, if you are to have any concrete reason for feeling grateful. The more you read about examples of people giving their lives for others, the more you'll appreciate what Jesus did for you. It will make you grateful.

There is a very annoying idea out there in the culture that says that people just do whatever is easy and fun for themselves, and since everyone else is always doing what makes them feel good, then there is no need to be thankful for anything. It's comforting for people to delude themselves with that belief, but it's false.

My reading list

You can check out the "What I am Reading" section of the blog to see which military history books I've been reading.

What specific decisions did Joe Biden make to drive up the cost of gas and electricity?

March 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that social media, e.g. – Facebook, is marking photos of gas prices as "Misleading" and "Missing Context". That is because fact checkers with English degrees don't like the idea of voters blaming Biden for the skyrocketing price of gas. So, in order to get around that little problem, I'm going to list out the specific decisions and policies of the Biden administration that led to this mess.

The New York post reports:

> If Biden signaled full-throated support for US drillers to get to work — and perhaps allowed the re-starting of the Keystone XL Pipeline from Canada — global oil prices could similarly fall sharply, the industry experts told The Post.
>
> "Biden could go to the oil and gas industry and say, 'OK, I've said we're going to get off oil and gas and that you guys are yesterday's industry, but I'm going to drop that,'" surmised Myron Ebell, the director of the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Center for Energy and Environment. "Part of the run up in oil prices is the psychology of it," he said.
>
> […]Just last week, CEO Rick Muncrief of Devon Energy — a large driller worth around $40 billion — told Bloomberg that he'd be happy to talk to US officials about upping production. But there's been no call. "I'm a little mystified that there hasn't been some dialog," he said. "It's not been that long ago that we were asked to drill less, not more," he said. "They need to be talking about what is it they would really like U.S. producers to do."
>
> That's the kind of inaction that's keeping prices high — up more than 40% since Russia invaded Ukraine and the war has worsened — **and up nearly 90% over the past year when looking at the global Brent crude benchmark, which has risen as high as $123 a barrel in recent days when compared to its level of around $63 a year ago.**

Note that: the price of oil was rising LONG BEFORE Russia invaded Ukraine. And that's because of Biden's anti-energy policies.

More:

> The administration is reportedly in diplomatic talks with longtime foes Venezuela and Iran as it looks for alternative sources to stave off the financial crunch facing US motorists — but outreach to US firms has been limited.
>
> Republicans and other Biden critics say his actions and proposals since taking office – such as canceling the Keystone pipeline, suspension of new federal oil and gas leases, higher drilling fees on federal land and a Democratic-led push for

> the Federal Reserve to implement climate change policies – have sent a clear signal to US producers.
>
> Tom Kloza, the global head of energy analysis for OPIS, noted the Biden administration has developed an "adversarial relationship" with US producers who now face calls to increase their output.
>
> "You've got diplomacy on Ukraine. You've got diplomacy with Iran. Now you've got diplomacy with Venezuela," Kloza said. "You know, it might be advisable to have some diplomacy with oil and gas companies."

The Biden administration has put people in power who hate oil and gas, and believe nonsense like the "Green New Deal".

The Federalist reported this early in Biden's term:

> The Biden White House plans to cancel all oil and gas leases in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge…
>
> Interior Secretary Deb Haaland… will publish an order to formally rescind existing leases months after the new president mounted a White House crusade against fossil fuels on day one with moratoriums on new drilling in the Arctic and other federal lands.
>
> […]The Biden administration's animosity towards fossil fuels, featuring Haaland at the top, a climate activist-turned two-term congresswoman described as "Green New Deal Champion," has promised to make survival harder for the industry with new restrictions which could last beyond a four or eight-year term.

I asked myself whether this "climate activist" person would have a Bachelor's degree in English, and thought "no, that's not possible – they wouldn't be that stupid. She has to have earned degrees and private sector work experience in the hard sciences!"

But, no. English degree:

> After graduating from Highland High School, Haaland worked at a local bakery. In 1988, she enrolled at the University of New Mexico, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in English in 1994. She earned her Juris Doctor in Indian law from the University of New Mexico School of Law in 2006, but is not a member of the New Mexico State Bar.

The Biden administration is filled from top to bottom with unqualified non-STEM people with no work experience in the private sector related to their jobs. They want to migrate to renewable energy sources, but that's already been tried in places like California, Canada and Germany – and it always fails.

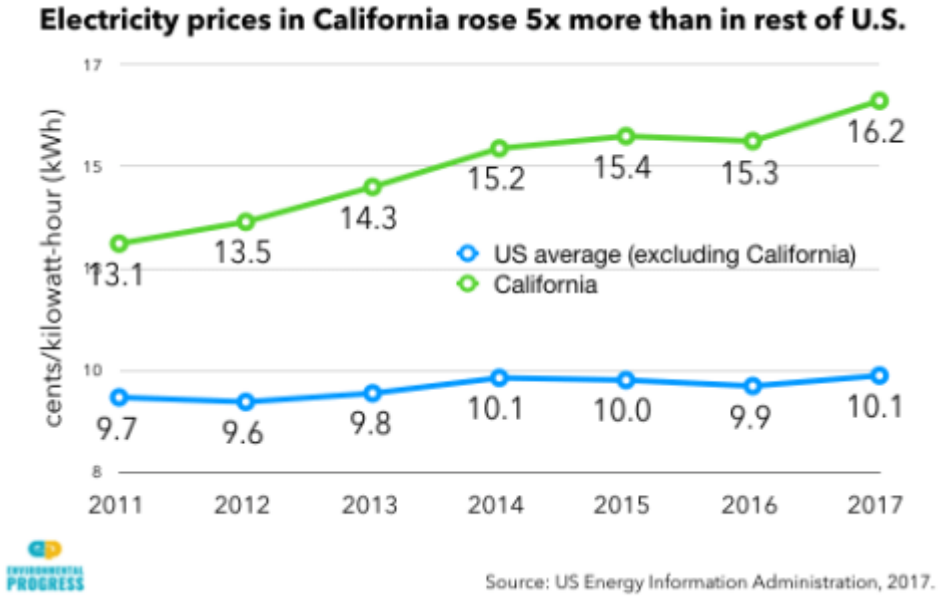

What green energy policies did to electricity costs in California

Let's start with California. California has long been at the forefront of converting their energy production to "green" sources.

Here's an article from Forbes that talks about their results:

> California's big bet on renewables, and shunning of natural gas and nuclear, is directly responsible for the state's blackouts and high electricity prices.
>
> "We will be forced today to ask utilities to cut off power to millions today, and tomorrow, and beyond," said Stephen Berberich, the President and CEO of California's Independent System Operator, CAISO, on a Monday morning conference call. "Demand will greatly exceed supply."
>
> The immediate cause of California's blackouts is a mismatch between electricity supply and demand.
>
> […]The underlying reason blackouts are occurring is because California lacks reliable, in-state supply. And the reason for that is California has been closing both natural gas and nuclear power plants.
>
> […]Despite these capacity shortfalls, the state is moving ahead with plans to remove 2,200-MW of reliable electricity from the grid. That's the amount of power produced by Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant, which will be closed in stages in 2024 and 2025.

Well, how about Germany? They closed down their nuclear power plants in favor of wind and solar. It didn't work.

Daily Caller explains:

> Germany's power grid almost collapsed in January due to poor performance from wind turbines and solar panels, according to data from a major trade union.
>
> Wind and solar power plants under-performed in January, 2017, because of cloudy weather with little or no wind, setting the stage for massive blackouts.

> […]Green energy approaches failed to meet Germany's stated energy goals, even after spending over $1.1 trillion. The country's "Energiewende" plan to boost wind and solar production to fight global warming hasn't significantly reduced carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and may have actually caused them to go up.
>
> […]Due to the inherent unreliable performance of wind power and political opposition to nuclear power plants, Germany has been forced to return to coal to generate electricity. Coal now provides 44 percent of Germany's power, This shift caused Germany's carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions to actually rise by 28 million tons each year following the policy shift.
>
> All of Germany's subsidies and support for green energy have sharply increased power prices, with the average German paying 39 cents per kilowatt-hour for electricity. The average American only spends 10.4 cents per kilowatt-hour by comparison.

Well, third try is the charm. How about Canada? They've gone Green New Deal for more than a decade. How is that working for them?

The National Post reported this in 2016:

> Back in 2010, deep green environmentalist Rick Smith, then head of Environmental Defence Canada, hailed Ontario's Green Energy and Green Economy Act regime as a cost-free operation that would catapult the province into the big leagues of renewable energy. Through fat subsidies and high prices offered to wind, solar and other renewable industry players, jobs and growth would boom and Ontario would be free of its dirty coal plants. It was the End of Coal, the government said. The birth of a renewable miracle.

Now, Canadians are paying more:

> The doubling of electricity prices since 2005 is big politically, but it is just the top-line item on a long list of problems, misconceptions and outright fabrications that lurk within the Liberal government's decade-long pursuit of radical greenism.

Because they didn't listened to engineers… they listened to their hearts:

> Ontario's Society of Professional Engineers has issued more than half a dozen critical reports on the Liberals' tendency to let green talk and politics override sound policy. Instead of following the expert advice of engineers and people who understand the intricacies of electricity production and distribution, the government took to issuing directives right out the Premier's office.

We have to do what works to reduce electricity prices for the poor. What works is more natural gas (fracking) and more nuclear power.

Did “thousands of women” die in “back alley abortions” before Roe v. Wade?

March 11, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I get into debates about abortion, and sometimes my opponent will complain that if Roe v. Wade were overturned, then thousands of women would die in illegal abortions. Well, if that ever happens to you, this post will help you to know how to respond to it.

First of all, if Roe v. Wade were overturned, then each of the 50 states would pass legislation deciding when abortions would be legal.

Here’s a map taken from the Washington Examiner:

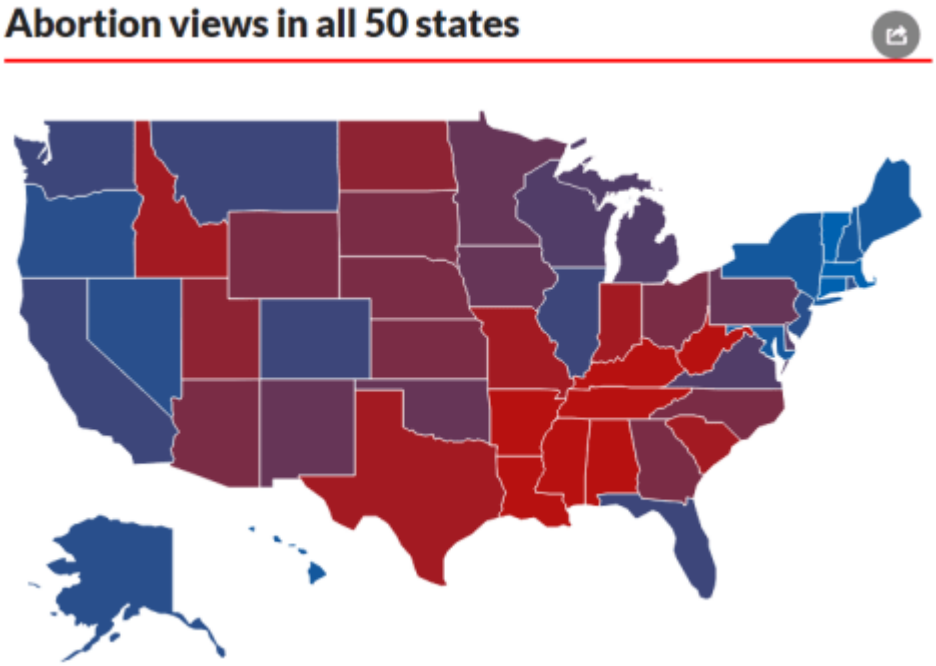

Abortion rights after Roe v. Wade is overturned
Red states are more pro-life than blue states in this map. For example, New York is ranked #6, and Tennessee is ranked #45.

So, if a woman did have irresponsible sex with a hot bad boy, then she easily could terminate her child in one of the blue states.

Second, the number thrown around by abortion advocates is not accurate. It’s simply not true that “thousands of women” were dying from poorly-performed abortions when abortion was still illegal. Actually, abortions were performed by trained medical personnel, but it just wasn’t reported to the police.

Here’s a recent article from the radically leftist Washington Post:

> Erica Sackin, a Planned Parenthood spokeswoman, directed us to a 2014 policy statement issued by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG): “*It is estimated that before 1973, 1.2 million U.S. women resorted to illegal abortion each year and that unsafe abortions caused as many as 5,000 annual deaths.*”

> There is no citation in the statement for the estimate of "as many as 5,000 annual deaths," even though many of the other sentences are carefully documented. None of the citations around this sentence supports the figure, and there is no explanation about how it was calculated.
>
> […]Meanwhile, Sackin also sent a variety of reports, many of which were referenced in a footnote in a document published by NARAL Pro-Choice America. One of the citations especially caught our eye: Frederick Taussig, "Abortion Spontaneous and Induced: Medical and Social Aspects," (1936).

Why was a study from 1936 being cited? Because in 1936, we didn't have antibiotics! People were dying all the time from any kind of surgery – not just abortion.

More:

> The advent of antibiotics such as penicillin and improved medical procedures suddenly made abortion less risky. Another prominent researcher, Christopher Tietze, argued in a 1948 paper that the number of deaths from abortion was rapidly declining because of three reasons: contraceptive methods had improved so fewer women were getting pregnant, abortion providers were getting better at avoiding infections, and many lives had been saved because of the introduction of sulfa drugs and penicillin.
>
> […]The data collected by Tietze showed 2,677 deaths from abortion in 1933, compared with 888 in 1945, with much of the decline in septic cases associated with illegal abortions. (The numbers also include deaths from "therapeutic abortions," permitted by law, and "spontaneous abortions.")
>
> By 1959, a leading researcher wrote: "Abortion is no longer a dangerous procedure. This applies not just to therapeutic abortions as performed in hospitals but also to so-called illegal abortions as done by physicians. In 1957, there were only 260 deaths in the whole country attributed to abortions of any kind. In New York City in 1921, there were 144 abortion deaths, in 1951 there were only 15."
>
> The writer was Mary Steichen Calderone, at the time medical director of Planned Parenthood. She attributed the decline in the mortality rate to antibiotics and the fact that 90 percent of illegal abortions were done by trained physicians.

OK, so abortion advocates cite the study from 1936, which already relies on questionable estimates, because they know that the later numbers are far, far lower – thanks to the widespread use of antibiotics. They're lying, essentially, because lying helps them to persuade people who think with their feelings, and don't look too closely at facts.

Third, there are over 2,000 pregnancy care ministries and clinics operating throughout the continental United States. Women who want help with pregnancy or adoption can get help from one of these clinics.

Fourth, even if women hurt themselves during abortions, that wouldn't be a reason to

legalize abortion. Bank robbers hurt themselves during bank robberies, and drug dealers hurt themselves during drug deals. We do not legalize criminal activities just because criminals get hurt during the commission of those activities. So the real question is, what is the unborn? If the unborn is a living human being, then abortion on demand takes the life of an innocent human being without justification, and should therefore be illegal.

Excellent video from UK conservatives about state of men’s rights in the UK

March 12, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

An ex-co-workers from 1996(!) sent me a conservative video series from the UK, called Heresies. I watched the video below on the state of men and men’s rights in the UK. The UK has some of the most terrible laws for men of any Western country. The video is a series of interviews with men (or with the lawyers of men who committed suicide) who were victims of the government and the courts.

Here’s the video:

And here’s the blurb:

> Whether it be deserving men unable to progress their careers due to female quotas & all-women shortlists, the naming of men in rape allegations whilst the female accuser remains anonymous, or the appalling treatment of men in the family court system — such as denial of custody rights over children, crippling divorce settlements & child maintenance orders that invariably favour wives over husbands –, many are now asking whether men are now second-class citizens.
>
> In this documentary, (Episode 7 in the New Culture Forum’s acclaimed “Heresies” series) the Rt. Hon Ann Widdecombe explores the issue of men’s rights in the modern age, an age when men & masculinity are consistently derided and attacked. The ubiquity of the new phrase “toxic masculinity” provides a perfect example of this.
>
> Featuring interviews with well-known figures in men’s rights and experts in the psychological damage these experiences are regularly causing men.

Well worth the listen. It’s important for men to be guarded about how society sees them, so they can adjust and make good decisions.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

March 13, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A family praying and reading the Bible

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude others

- It’s meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can’t say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms

and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away, there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

I want men to stop giving money to Only Fans women

March 14, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have an ongoing disagreement with a female friend about how to restore marriage and family. We both agree on the harm that is done to children by the redefining marriage to remove the traditional marriage norms of exclusivity, permanence, heterosexual romance, etc. But she thinks that it's better to approach men and get them to change, whereas I think it's better to approach women and get them to change.

So, in a previous post, I argued that we should focus on telling women to stop choosing hot bad boys, and trying to get them to commit. I said this because I don't think you can change the hot bad boys and make them commit. They want s3x, and that's what they are getting when the normal women throw s3x at them. They don't have to commit if they get what they want before committing.

But is there anything constructive to say to the normal men, who are not getting s3x thrown at them from many different women? Well, yes. There is something to say to them. Although they are not smashing up families, they are doing something wrong. They are giving attention to the wrong sort of women, for the wrong reasons.

Consider this article about the web site Only Fans, from Business Insider:

> OnlyFans, the subscription-based adult-entertainment site, boomed during the pandemic.
>
> Revenue at the UK-based company grew by 553% in the year to November 2020, and users spent £1.7 billion ($2.36 billion) on the site, a seven-fold increase, the Financial Times reported.
>
> The site allows creators to sell video clips, photos, and messages directly to subscribers on a pay-per-view basis, with OnlyFans taking a 20% cut. Customers pay between $5 and $50 per month.
>
> User numbers grew from 20 million before the pandemic to more than 120 million over 12 months, as adult entertainers and their customers signed up during lockdowns to share X-rated content.

Only Fans is a web site where the most impulsive and reckless women make easy money by showing off their bodies and performing s3xual activities for subscribers. It's voluntary, not coerced. They want to get rich quick without having to care about doing well in school or getting a job. They aren't interested in marriage, because they know that good men don't marry women who make themselves available to millions of other men. They are not conservative. They don't want men to lead them. They don't read anything that makes them wiser or more noble. Men shouldn't be paying women like this any money, or even giving them attention.

I want normal guys to give better women their time and money – preferably in a

relationship, but at least in a friendship. Even if the majority of women are using their young and pretty years to try to land hot bad boys, there are always a minority of women who are busy with better things, like doing computer science degrees. I think that the normal guys should be paying attention to them.

In fact, if I could just convince these normal guys to read more useful stuff, I'm sure they would realize that there is a lot more to a woman than youth and beauty. They would probably find the Only Fans girls pretty repulsive, once they realized how much different women can be if they are trained and prepared to commit to men and respect them. And by trained, I don't mean "I'm a Christian, you can't judge my past". I mean bookshelves of good books, read and highlighted. I mean a public record of conservative Christian achievements.

If normal guys can't find good young women to pay attention to, then they should try to make friends with older, wiser good women. That way, they won't be lonely, they will learn something from the older more conservative women , and they will avoid making the wrong sort of women richer. I used to have a half-dozen older women advisors who would fill my head with wisdom chirped out in their cute girly voices whenever I wanted. Getting wisdom from conservative older Christian women is a lot better for me than throwing dollar bills at online strippers, who take your money, but have no interest in getting ready for marriage.

And if a younger woman came along who read good books, was conservative, and wanted marriage and children, you can start the marriage evaluation process. The important thing is to have the money to close the deal on a marriage if you find a real marriage candidate, which is why you don't waste money on Only Fans women. Good women are the ones who trust you, respect your leadership, and achieve things when you lead and support them.

I don't really care much about the Only Fans women, but I don't think that getting attention and money for how you look is good for them in the long run. Women who get attention for stripping and doing s3x acts don't learn anything that's useful for them to be content in a stable marriage. They get used to seeing men at their worst, and they lose their ability to trust and bond with one guy. Giving them money to do something temporary that cannot be sustained as their looks fade isn't good for them either. I don't think it's good for society long-term to have a bunch of shallow, immature women voting for bigger government and less liberty when they reach age 32 and can't find good men to marry them.

Basically, what I would like is for men and women to get better at understanding moral character, religion and relationships, so they can choose quality relationship partners. And the best way to do that is what the Bible recommends – by renewing your mind. And how do you renew your mind? Well, you have to convince yourself that the world works a certain way. And how do you do that? By reading difficult challenging books that show you how to achieve the goals that are best for you, even if you have to sacrifice happiness in the short term. Men and women need to read better books.

I’m going to keep recommending to young people that they try to get out of the chaos of this generation by reading better books. Start with Philippians and John in the Bible. Then, I like “Is God Just a Human Invention?” by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow. Read some Thomas Sowell economics, and some military history. There is no shortcut to valuing good things, and making good decisions. You have to change your mind by keep out the culture’s junk, and putting in the good stuff.

How should Christians redeem their regrets over past decisions?

March 15, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I posted a dating ad from a 39-year-old never-married single mother. She explained that she was now a Christian and was looking for a man to marry her, so that she could have a second child "the right way". Some people thought we should take her conversion at face value. Others thought she was desperate and looking for a financial bailout. How can we tell if she is really sincere?

Well, I was still thinking about the comments on that post when I saw another great post from Laura, who writes at An Affair With Reason. Her post is about the feelings of regret that people have because of their past mistakes, and how Christians should deal with those regrets.

She writes:

> As I thought about what to write I became distressed, sorrowful, angry, and even despondent over some of my own decisions. As I sobbed inconsolably, I noticed that every caustic thought began with, "If only…." That's when I realized I was still carrying the burden of regret and I didn't know how to let go. It wasn't that I still needed God's forgiveness or that I had any doubts about my standing with him; I knew I was forgiven. It was the lifelong consequences that I experience to this day which embittered my soul and squelched my joy.
>
> The "if onlys" are a heavy burden to carry. They represent shattered dreams that will never be recovered in this life. They invoke feelings of discontentment, grief, and doubt. They cause us to sob with regret for what could have been, to pray for second chances that we know will not be granted.
>
> So what do we do with the regrets that we must live with for the rest of our lives? Lately, as I've reflected on conversations I've had with many women who have made regretful decisions over the years and on the direction of our culture, I've noticed two very distinct paths:
>
> 1. Attempt to assuage our own guilt and regret by convincing others to make the same foolish, and even sinful, decisions we made.
>
> OR
>
> 2. Humble ourselves, grieve our losses, and commit to teaching the younger generations to choose a better way.
>
> The first path is the wide and well-traveled one. Tragically and despicably, most people today seek to justify themselves and ease their consciences by getting others on board with their own ignorance, foolishness, and sinfulness.

She's got quite a few examples of the kinds of regrets that men and women have, and

different ways of dealing with those regrets. Some ways self-serving, others God-serving. Her examples are really interesting. It reminds me of "The Great Divorce" by C.S. Lewis, where he explains why some people don't resist God, and others do. Some people want to justify the past, and keep making decisions to benefit themselves. Others want to serve God. They want to take on the difficult work of opening up to others, and loving them by telling them the truth.

When I hear someone with a past say that they have now become a Christian, I normally ask "is this conversion just convenient for you or is it the result of some process where your mind was changed through study?" You can ask the person to show their work – how did they get to the right answer? And what has becoming a Christian cost them? How does it affect their relationships with non-Christians?

People "convert to Christianity" all the time based on need. Sometimes they're trying to get something for themselves, e.g. – wanting to not be judged for their past, so they can attract a partner to financially support them. But other people spend years reading books and changing their minds page by page, debate by debate. Then they put their knowledge into practice.

I have mentored women who did this. One girl who contacted me through the blog wasn't able to talk to her smart atheist brother about her faith. Then, she read a bunch of apologetics books about science and history, then called me and slipped the phone into her pocket and let me listen to her make a bold, informed stand for her Christian worldview for two hours. She won every point.

When people really become Christians, they don't do it in order to be happy and or to be liked. They take on work, and they take on shame, because they have a Boss now. That's how you can tell that real repentance has taken place. The letters of Paul in the New Testament are filled with advice for Christians who want to be bold, put themselves second, and advocate for their Boss. You should read them. When you read the Bible, try to put aside your feelings, your desires, and your concerns about what people will think. You'll find that putting work for the Boss ahead of what you want is worth the price of being "second". I would start with Philippians, then go on to 1 Peter.

By the way, this isn't the first time I've linked to Laura's posts. Here are some of the other times I've linked to her work on my blog: on voting, on Islam, on mentoring boys, on fighting with pastors, on learning what works when dealing with atheists. She had a 10 part series advising women how to choose a husband, which really made me feel good as a man. Today, most people see a husband as an accessory – like a handbag. He's there to provide, or to be a handyman, or to complain at if the wife is unhappy. Men should read that series, and find out what we can do in a marriage, if we are valued for our distinctive male nature.

Bible study: How should Christians understand suffering? (1 Peter 1)

March 16, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought I would post my notes for my 1 Peter Bible study here. I'm studying 1 Peter with a female friend in the mornings. We're using Joel Green's "1 Peter" commentary which we got for free from Logos Bible Software.

We had a very good discussion today about how we started out our lives (even as Christians) with certain sad / missing things and how reading the Bible and having changed priorities and behaviors changed what we were hoping for, our priorities, our desires, and our contentment.

I just pasted in my full notes with the clips from Green's book, then below that, I have the pasted in her (better) notes. I wish you all could be in our Bible study, we are very practical.

My notes:

Author: Apostle Peter
Date: this letter was probably written before or during the Neronian persecution (AD 62-64)
Audience: probably a mixed group of Jews and Gentile believers who were scattered throughout the northern regions of Asia Minor
Genre: Didactic
Purpose: provide direction for believers under persecution; at times it also includes theological considerations which support the ethical exhortations.
Map: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_Peter_1#/media/File:Map_Anatolia_ancient_regions-en.svg
Commentary: "1 Peter" by Joel B. Green

Verses 6-7:

- Genuine faith doesn't mean that you will be free from "various trials" now.
- Talk about my experiences dealing with white male senior engineers and architects who are very successful in my IT workplace, married, with kids, who grew up in married Christian homes and lost their faith in college OR who profess Christianity but vote Democrat and know more about Star Wars / fantasy novels, etc. than Christian worldview and apologetics.
- The feeling of not being good enough at worldly success and not being able to convince non-Christians that spiritual things are more important, specifically, apologetics.
- Seeing how attractive, charismatic white Christians families are seen as the gold standard in church, even though they can't defend their worldview, and their

priorities, favored policies, and discussion topics are all from the secular left culture.
- My experience of "rejoicing" in the faith will not be about being happy or joyful. It's more likely to center around honor, as in Henry V's speech to his men (and reply to the Herald) in Act 4, Scene 3. (in modern English here)

Green: What Peter does not say is almost as important as what he affirms. First, he provides nowhere any hint that the affliction and misery of his audience is the consequence of their sin or God's judgment. Such categories simply have no place in his letter.

Green: First Peter is addressed to folks who do not belong, who eke out their lives on the periphery of acceptable society, whose deepest loyalties and inclinations do not line up very well with what matters most in the world in which they live.

Green: Divine choice and alien status are deeply rooted in God's purpose as this comes to expression in the Scriptures, so the dissonance of present life, chosen by God but held in contempt in society, is neither a surprise to God nor a contradiction of his plan. Peter will demonstrate that the way of Jesus Christ was the path of suffering and glory… that the model of Jesus Christ interprets and is interpreted by the Scriptures of Israel… and that this pattern is characteristic of those who follow in his footsteps…

Green: The issue is this: life-events do not come with self-contained and immediately obvious interpretations; rather, we conceptualize them in terms of imaginative structures that we take to be true, normal, and good. As a rule, the world-at-large casts a thick, dark cloud of despair over experiences of suffering, distress, trials, and alien status. Peter insists that such experiences on the part of his audience must be read according to a radically different pattern of thought—one that grows out of new birth.

Green: Inexorably linked in the consequent passion theology are the sufferings of Christ and his followers, who are thereby assured that their suffering will have a redemptive effect and will lead to glory and honor from God just as Jesus' suffering did. This is the interpretation of things inspired by the Spirit.

Verses 13-14:

- Hope in the future should cause us not to be conformed to our past passions.
- Being sober-minded means setting your hope on eternal life, instead of trying to fill worldly desires with experiences or possessions here and now. Sober like not trying to feel good now (artificially) using mind-altering substances.
- Emphasis is on new priorities and freely-chosen behaviors.
- Talk about how I saw marriage and children as the solution to my problems of bad parents and a contentious home when I was young.
- Talk about how prioritizing God's priorities and learning more about how the culture doesn't make marriage-ready women and doesn't value marriage means that I probably would have destroyed myself if I had got the marriage I desired.
- Talk about how take the priorities of God and acting according to the Bible (chastity, sobriety, stewardship, focus on loving others self-sacrificially) ends up putting you in

a safe, peaceful place – a paid off home, and retirement money.

- By focusing on God, your behaviors (chastity, sobriety, stewardship, loving others) have the effect of making you not destroy yourself with addictions, narcissism, etc. You end up in a pretty decent, peaceful place anyway, because you haven't self-destructed, e.g. – by marrying a non-Christian woman for looks and beauty who the culture turns into a secular leftist, and then watching helplessly when she goes into a career and puts your kids into public schools to be indoctrinated in secular leftism. I didn't get what I wanted, but I dodged a bullet, since that's how most young, unmarried women are today.

Green: The section as a whole, vv. 13–21, begins and ends with reference to "hope" (vv. 13, 21) and is centrally focused on "behavior, conduct, or way of life" (vv. 15, 17, 18). The accent on hope is carried over from the previous section (v. 3), but the emphasis on "way of life" is introduced for the first time, signaling early in the letter a pronounced interest in the nature of faithful life and ethical comportment in the world. Clearly, Peter anticipates that hope will be displayed in changed life.

Green: In the Greco-Roman world, "desire"… appears in moral discourse—already in Plato but more recently especially among the Stoics, in Hellenistic Jewish literature, and in Christian writings—with such generally negative connotations as "insatiable cravings" or "lust."15 As a generic vice almost universally condemned, "desire" marked "the former time of ignorance." In the present text, desires rooted in ignorance belong to the past, so should no longer shape or form… Peter's audience; in its place, imitation of God's holiness is expected. For Peter, "desire" and "holiness" appear as opposing forces each capable of drawing persons into its orbit, conforming human character and actions to its ways and so sculpting human life. Paul similarly wrote, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds" (Rom 12:2).

Her notes:

1. Who is the author of this letter? What do you know about him?

-The apostle Peter

-A disciple of Jesus

-One of the three of Jesus' inner circle

-Denied Christ at his crucifixion

-Spoke boldly at Pentecost in the face of mocking

-Was imprisoned for preaching the gospel

-Refused to stop preaching even if it meant death (Acts 5:29)

-Was martyred in Rome around 64 A.D.

2. Who is Peter writing to? What might their lives have been like as persecuted exiles?

-Christians of the Dispersion (Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and

Bithynia)

-Rejected by family and friends

-Difficulty finding work

-Scared for their lives

-Scared for their children's futures

3. What is one reason God allows trials in our lives now?

"*so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."* (v. 7)

-To test the genuineness of our faith

-To result in praise and glory when Christ returns

This is part of the normal Christian life, not as a result of their bad choices, but as a result of their decision to follow Christ. The things we care about as Christians will not be celebrated by this world.

It's not mentioned here, but the dispersion of Christians to new locations contributed to the spread of the gospel and resulted in many people being saved.

From other passages of Scripture:

-To make us more like Christ (Rom. 5:3-5)

-To equip us to show compassion to others (2 Cor. 1:3-5)

-To prepare for us glory (2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Peter 4:13)

-To draw others to Christ (Philippians 1:12; Col. 1:24-25; 2 Tim. 2:10)

I think there is a direct correlation between our suffering in this life and our happiness in the next life, such that we will actually be happier, more elated, more joyful, more grateful, in the next life because we experienced trials and suffering in this life.

- "For this light and momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison." (2 Corinthians 4:17)
- "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18)
- "But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed." (1 Peter 4:13)
- "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven…. (Matthew 5:3-12)

For example, have you ever lost something, freaked out that you couldn't find it, and then appreciated it far more after you found it than you ever had before you lost it? Similarly, I believe (based on Scripture verses) that we will experience greater pleasure in heaven and on the New Earth as a result of having been without comfort, pleasure, fulfillment, etc. for a time. If this is accurate, then we can genuinely thank God for allowing us to experience these trials for a time because by enduring them with trust in Christ, we are

investing in our future (eternal) happiness.

4. Our inheritance in Christ

a. How does Peter describe our inheritance in Christ?

-Imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you

b. What is a proper response to this inheritance that awaits us in the next life?

-Rejoicing, even in hard times (this should be evident to those around us)

-Hope in all circumstances (Explain *hope* in Bible of a confident and certain expectation for the future vs. *hope* in common usage as something we want which may or may not come to pass)

-Gratefulness for what is to come

-Self-sacrifice because this life is fleeting and the next is glorious

c. When you imagine life on the New Earth, what do you think about?

-Perfect health, energy, no sickness

-Perfect relationships with God and the saints

-Perfect beauty in nature

-No fear, anxiety, depression, disappointment

-Exploring the universe with perfect minds and bodies

-Exploring the oceans, the colorful fish and reefs, with no pollution or fear

5. In verse 13, Peter tells us to prepare our minds for action. Practically speaking, what can we do in our daily lives to make sure that our minds are prepared for action?

-Avoid corrupting influences like drugs, too much alcohol, pornography, entertainment that puts forth values that are in opposition to Christ and to our calling

-Spend time in the Word and in prayer daily, asking the Lord to conform us to his character and to prepare us for what is ahead

-Spend time meditating on the inheritance that awaits us

-Surround ourselves with like-minded Christians

-Read and watch films about Christians who have suffered for their faith in times past (Corrie Ten Boom, Sophie Scholl, Dietrick Bonhoeffer, etc.)

6. What trials have you faced for doing good in the past? What trials are you facing right now?

Past:

-Rejection and mocking for Christian faith at the UMC church

Present:

-Woke liberals who put pressure on me to conform to their values

Assignment: Spend some time thanking God for saving you from punishment and saving you for eternal glory. Ask him to use your trials to refine your faith and your character the

way fire refines gold, and to do it all for His glory.

7. Any other points or observations?

-1:2 references the Trinity: “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.”

-Suffering is the normal Christian life. It has been since the very beginning, and it will be until the very end. Ease and comfort for Christians is the strange anomaly. The prosperity gospel is heresy. We must expect suffering, prepare for suffering, and rejoice in suffering, but not seek out unnecessary suffering. We must suffer for doing good, not as criminals or fools. But our light and momentary afflictions are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed. Our hope is in the next life, and it will all be worth it.

If you accept Jesus and become a Christian, will God make you happy?

March 17, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a wonderful, wonderful post from Amy Hall, who writes for the Stand to Reason blog.

She writes:

> I had a brief interaction with an atheist on Twitter a couple of weeks ago that unexpectedly turned to the issue of suffering when she said:
>
> You clearly never had a time you were hurt. I don't mean sick. I don't mean heart broken. I mean literally a near death experience or rape or abusive relationship…. You can keep floating on a [expletive] cloud thinking Jesus will do everything for you but it's a lie. What makes you so special?
>
> That surprised me at first because it didn't seem to have anything to do with the tweet she was responding to, and I was confused as to why she would assume I'd never been through anything traumatic. But then in subsequent tweets, when she revealed she had been raped, it became clear that her trauma had played a central role in her becoming an outspoken, obviously angry "antitheist." She's a self-described antitheist now because she thinks Christianity teaches Jesus "will do everything for you" to give you a perfect life, and now she knows that's a lie. The rape proved her understanding of Christianity false.
>
> So it made sense for her to reason that since I believe Christianity is true, I must still be under the delusion that Jesus is making my life special, which means I obviously never encountered any evil or suffering to shake that delusion.

All right, readers. I don't want any of you to be thinking that if you become a Christian that these things should be expected to happen:

- you will feel happy all the time
- you will be able to sense God's secret plan for your life through your feelings
- God's secret plan for your life will automatically work, even though it's crazy
- God will give you a perfect spouse and lots of money without you having to study anything hard, or do any hard work
- you get permission to do things that that make you happy, even if they are expressly forbidden by the Bible
- you don't have to do anything that makes you feel bad (e.g. – talk to non-Christians about Christian truth claims), because God wants you to be happy

No! Where do people get this idea that if they convert to Christianity, then God will become their cosmic butler?

Amy has the answer: (emphasis mine)

> Hear me, everyone: **This is a failure of the church.**
>
> A friend of mine who was deeply suffering once said to me that many Christians are in for "an epic letdown" when they realize their preconceived notions about what God is expected to do for us are false. Pastors who preach a life-improvement Jesus are leading people down this precarious path to disillusionment.
>
> If suffering disproves your Christianity, you've missed Christianity. The Bible is filled with the suffering of those whom God loves. The central event of the Bible is one of suffering. Love involves suffering. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." That means suffering.

It's the church. It's the focus on happy things and having of happy feelings and happy songs and preaching designed to make us feel good. I would say the comforting devotional reading doesn't help to make us any tougher or more practical, either. That happy-clappy stuff just gives you a false sense of safety about your precarious situation. God's job is not to prevent you from suffering. In fact, even if you make really smart, practical decisions, you can expect to get creamed *anyway*.

Please take 15 minutes and read the book of 1 Peter in the New Testament.

Here's a summary from GotQuestions.org:

> **Purpose of Writing:** 1 Peter is a letter from Peter to the believers who had been dispersed throughout the ancient world and were under intense persecution. If anyone understood persecution, it was Peter. He was beaten, threatened, punished and jailed for preaching the Word of God. He knew what it took to endure without bitterness, without losing hope and in great faith living an obedient, victorious life. This knowledge of living hope in Jesus was the message and Christ's example was the one to follow.
>
> **Brief Summary:** Though this time of persecution was desperate, Peter reveals that it was actually a time to rejoice. He says to count it a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ, as their Savior suffered for them. This letter makes reference to Peter's personal experiences with Jesus and his sermons from the book of Acts. Peter confirms Satan as the great enemy of every Christian but the assurance of Christ's future return gives the incentive of hope.
>
> **Practical Application:** The assurance of eternal life is given to all Christians. One way to identify with Christ is to share in His suffering. To us that would be to endure insults and slurs from those who call us "goodie two shoes" or "holier than thou." This is so minor compared to what Christ suffered for us on the Cross. Stand up for what you know and believe is right and rejoice when the world and Satan aim to hurt you.

Recently, I blogged about how suffering is compatible with an all-powerful God, so you might want to read that too if you missed it.

Facebook and Twitter spread disinformation about Hunter Biden's laptop to help Biden win in 2020

March 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On Thursday, the far-left New York Times published a story about Hunter Biden's laptop. The story corrected the lies that were spread by Big Tech, the mainstream news media, and the current administration, about Hunter Biden's laptop. It turns out that Facebook and Twitter spread disinformation before the election, because they wanted the Democrat party to win.

Let's start with Glenn Greenwald, a progressive who has done excellent reporting about this story from the beginning.

He writes:

> One of the most successful disinformation campaigns in modern American electoral history occurred in the weeks prior to the 2020 presidential election. On October 14, 2020 — less than three weeks before Americans were set to vote — the nation's oldest newspaper, The New York Post, began publishing a series of reports about the business dealings of the Democratic frontrunner Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, in countries in which Biden, as Vice President, wielded considerable influence (including Ukraine and China) and would again if elected president.
>
> The backlash against this reporting was immediate and intense, leading to suppression of the story by U.S. corporate media outlets and censorship of the story by leading Silicon Valley monopolies. The disinformation campaign against this reporting was led by the CIA's all-but-official spokesperson Natasha Bertrand (then of Politico, now with CNN), whose article on October 19 appeared under this headline: "Hunter Biden story is Russian disinfo, dozens of former intel officials say."
>
> These "former intel officials" did not actually say that the "Hunter Biden story is Russian disinfo." Indeed, they stressed in their letter the opposite: namely, that they had no evidence to suggest the emails were falsified or that Russia had anything to do them, but, instead, they had merely intuited this "suspicion" based on their experience…
>
> […][A]s I noted last September, "virtually every media outlet — CNN, NBC News, PBS, Huffington Post, The Intercept, and too many others to count — began completely ignoring the substance of the reporting and instead spread the lie over and over that these documents were the by-product of Russian disinformation." The Huffington Post even published a must-be-seen-to-be-believed campaign ad for Joe Biden, masquerading as "reporting," that spread this lie that the emails were "Russian disinformation."

Mainstream News Media

Here is an example of how one mainstream news media outlet helped Joe Biden to win the 2020 election:

Big Tech Social Media

Facebook and Twitter did their part to help their Democrat allies.

Here is what a Facebook spokesman said about the story:

You'll note in his bio that he is a Democrat, and has worked for Democrats. That didn't

disqualify him from working for Facebook – they are allies of the Democrat party. They regularly censor anything critical of the Democrat party, especially before important elections.

Greenwald notes:

> Twitter locked The New York Post's Twitter account for close to two weeks due to its refusal to obey Twitter's orders to delete any reference to its reporting. The social media site also blocked any and all references to the reporting by all users; Twitter users were barred even from linking to the story in private chats with one another. Facebook, through its spokesman, the life-long DNC operative Andy Stone, announced that they would algorithmically suppress discussion of the reporting to ensure it did not spread, pending a "fact check[] by Facebook's third-party fact checking partners" which, needless to say, never came — precisely because the archive was indisputably authentic.

Here is what Twitter users saw when they tried to share the story on Twitter:

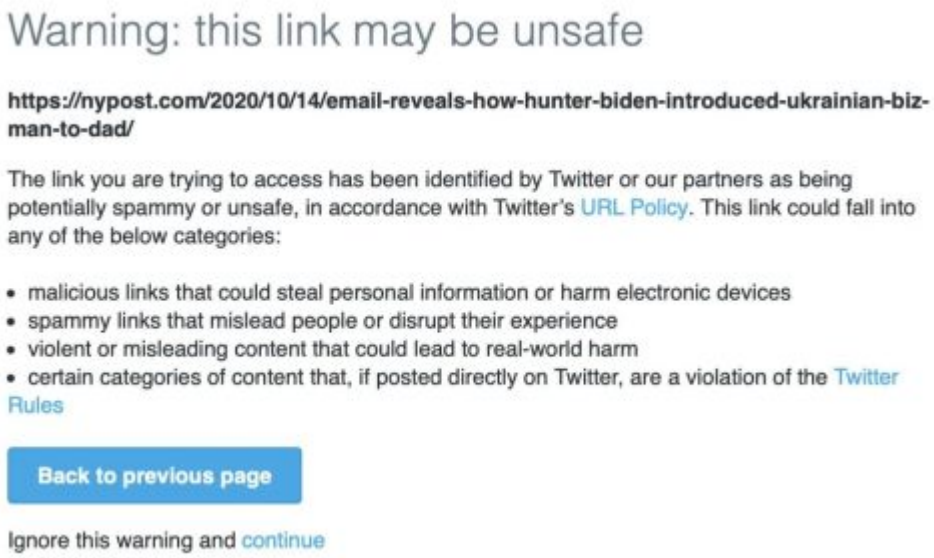
Warning: this link may be unsafe

https://nypost.com/2020/10/14/email-reveals-how-hunter-biden-introduced-ukrainian-biz-man-to-dad/

The link you are trying to access has been identified by Twitter or our partners as being potentially spammy or unsafe, in accordance with Twitter's URL Policy. This link could fall into any of the below categories:

- malicious links that could steal personal information or harm electronic devices
- spammy links that mislead people or disrupt their experience
- violent or misleading content that could lead to real-world harm
- certain categories of content that, if posted directly on Twitter, are a violation of the Twitter Rules

Back to previous page

Ignore this warning and continue

A link to the NEW YORK POST is "spammy or unsafe". And you can bet they punished people who shared the story with shadow banning. Twitter is a vile proponent of censorship.

Biden spokeswoman Jen Psaki lied

And of course the Biden administration has no comment on their previous attempts to dismiss the laptop as "Russian disinformation".

This is what the Biden spokeswoman said:

The New York Post notes:

> White House press secretary Jen Psaki didn't even bother trying to defend her past claim that The Post's reporting on Hunter Biden's laptop was "Russian disinformation" after the New York Times belatedly verified emails from the cache.
>
> Psaki was pressed Thursday at her regular briefing about her own misleading remarks and those of then-candidate Joe Biden.
>
> Psaki deflected without answering for Biden's misinformation, which helped fuel Big Tech censorship of The Post's reporting in the days prior to the 2020 election.

Surprise! She didn't like being held accountable for her actions.

I blogged about the laptop on October 23, 2020. As poor as that post might have been, it was more accurate than all of the Democrat propagandists in Big Tech social media corporations and the mainstream news media outlets combined.

I can only think back now about the Christian-raised Democrat fools in my office who swallowed the Big Tech / Mainstream media narrative about the laptop. They believed anything they had to believe to pull that lever for Joe Biden. They put zero effort into investigating the facts. Elections, they reasoned, are about their feelings – their need to virtue signal to others. We are now paying the price for the mistakes of NPR-indoctrinated low-information Democrat voters. These are stupid, ignorant, lazy people.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

March 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

Are schools right to “treat” depression in children by facilitating gender transitions?

March 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve been posting a lot about people in the public schools who expose children to danger, then attack parents who question what they are doing. I found a story about this for this post. I also have a new study that shows that respectfully disagreeing with children about transgenderism does not cause them to harm themselves. Then I want to talk about the root cause of these problems.

Let’s start with the UK Daily Mail:

> A California mother says the government wrongfully took away her daughter, pushed the girl into transitioning to male, and is to blame for his suicide age 19.
>
> Andrew Martinez, born Yaeli, stepped in front of a train on September 4, 2019.
>
> […][The] bereaved mother Abigail Martinez accused her Los Angeles County school of encouraging Yaeli to take hormones and undergo gender reassignment surgery as a child, while failing to properly treat her severe depression.
>
> Martinez, 53, a mother of four, claimed school staff told Yaeli not to speak to her mother about transgender issues, but secretly had her join an LGBTQ group that persuaded the girl that the only way to be happy was to transition.

Read this:

> The El Salvador-born mother said an older trans student ‘coached’ Yaeli on what to tell social workers to put her into foster care, so that the state would pay for her gender reassignment.
>
> […]Martinez said one trans friend and their parents ‘coached’ Yaeli, persuading her to run away from home in July 2016 and tell the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) that her mother had slapped her in the face.

As in most of these cases, the child was depressed by her same-age peers. Children tend to focus on appearances, not achievements, because they have no achievements. They attack people who are weird or look different. This doesn’t happen in the workplace. That’s why parents should not place their children in schools where the opinions of peers are seen as very important. Bullying causes some children who would do fine in a workplace to get depressed. And then the schools and hospitals suggest transitioning as a “cure” for the depression they caused, by not reining in the bullies.

Look:

> …the mother claimed it was Yaeli’s depression that was the problem, not gender dysphoria.
>
> […]Instead of proper treatment for mental illness, Martinez said her daughter

> was encouraged by the school and her LGBT support group to take hormones and pursue gender reassignment surgery, and cut Martinez out of the process.

There's no father in the photo in the article. Mothers who want to protect their children from the state and the schools need to prioritize commitment-ability in men, not appearance and fun. The men with uncomfortably strong theological and moral beliefs are exactly the ones who tend to stick around.

Mothers often don't want to make moral judgments the way that fathers do:

> I didn't want to be the mean mom to say 'no no no.' I wanted to give her the help she needed at that time.

Mothers want to be liked. Fathers want to lead.

The secular left authorities told the mother not to talk to her child about God:

> 'On the visit days, when she came to my house, I was told not to talk about God,' Martinez said. 'They told me if you do that, you'll never see your daughter.

Her taxes pay their salaries. She can work for money to pay them with her God-beliefs, but they tell her what she can and can't say to her children with their atheist-beliefs. Atheists think they know better than parents.

Everyone thinks that Obama was such a great president, but actually, he is the one who put in these policies that turn government and schools against parents:

> A former civil rights director for the federal Department of Health and Human Services Roger Severino… told DailyMail.com that he believes district officials were afraid of losing funding and desperate to show their pro-trans credentials after being sued by the Obama administration in 2013 for discriminating against a trans boy, and inappropriately pushed gender reassignment on children as a result.

People like to say that disagreeing with transgenderism will cause children to self-harm, but research shows that is false.

What do the studies show?

Here's a recent post about Sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) from the Christian Medical & Dental Associations by Andrè Van Mol, MD. SOCE refers to therapies that help people to change from same-sex orientation to opposite-sex orientation in sexual attraction, identity and/or behavior.

He writes:

> To recap, using a strongly representative sample of a United States sexual minority population in data from the Generations study of the Williams Institute, Sullins used several validated measures to assess behavioral harm from having experienced sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE, now preferably called SAFE-T).

> The findings "demonstrated positive evidence of the absence of harm from SOCE therapy." Specifically, "Those who had undergone [failed] SOCE were no more likely to experience psychological distress or poor mental health, to engage in substance or alcohol abuse, to intentionally harm themselves, or to think about, plan, intend or attempt suicide, than were those who had not undergone SOCE."

Unfortunately, any time conservative Christian men like me try to bring some rational argument and scientific evidence to bear on these problems, we get attacked by the feelings-oriented people in government and schools.

Our society has no place for male leadership

Men have a vision for children – to know God, to be independent, to be responsible, and to enter into respectful, productive relationships with worthy people of the opposite sex. We try to point children in a good direction, but many people see our leading as wrong, because children don't get their way.

I was once interested in marriage to a "conservative" Christian woman. She was very concerned by my plans to raise children who would be financially independent and effective at serving God. She wanted them to do what they liked. I explained that people who do what they like are unstable, and unable to help people around them. The funny thing was that she was deeply in debt after doing a degree in BALLET, and unstable in her own life. She didn't see my stability and wealth as anything to respect. Children need to rule fathers, she said. Feelings are more important than facts.

I really think we need to be more respectful of male leadership, so that children will not become victims of "compassion".

Related posts

- Far-left students shout down father who lost his child to transgenderism
- American father loses parental rights after ex-wife announces their child is transgender
- LGBT fascism: father imprisoned for calling his biological child "daughter"
- Report: Teacher calls CPS on parents for refusing to gender their child "correctly"
- What would public school teachers do if your daughter was raped by a transgender student?
- Mom explains how she pulled her daughter out of transgender spiral
- UK parents accuse school of secretly brainwashing their child into transgenderism
- What is it really like for a young woman to regret her gender transition?

Biden’s Supreme Court nominee has a record of lenience to child sex predators

March 21, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to the 2020 election, Joe Biden was credibly accused of sexual harassment. But Biden voters chose to ignore this, believe that he has excellent moral character, compared to that nasty Trump and his mean tweets. After all, they said, could the father of Hunter Biden be a bad man? He seems to speak so nicely. Now we are finding out more about him, from his pick for the Supreme Court.

Rachel Bovard reports on it for The Federalist:

> Senate Democrats have signaled their intent to begin confirmation hearings for Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, President Biden’s nominee to the Supreme Court, as early as next week. Thus far, the only information uncovered about Judge Jackson by the intrepid corporate press is that she will be the first black woman to serve on the Supreme Court.
>
> But research released this week by Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, calls into question Judge Jackson’s judicial philosophy concerning sex predators, particularly sentencing for child sex predators.

Senator Josh Hawley had a whole Twitter thread that I re-tweeted. It contained all of his research about the candidate. It’s significant that her actions reflected her ideas about judges being lenient to sex predators:

> While at the U.S. Sentencing Commission, Judge Jackson advocated for eliminating the existing mandatory minimum sentences for child porn, suggesting that at least some people who possess child porn aren’t sexually motivated, but simply “in this for either the collection, or the people who are loners and find status in their participation in the community.” While on the federal bench, Judge Jackson demonstrated a continuous string of departures from sentencing guidelines for sex predators.

You can see why a judge like this would be so suitable to gropey Joe Biden. This is his dream come true:

> In one case involving a sex offender over the age of 18 caught with multiple images of child pornography, the sentencing guidelines called for a sentence of up to 10 years. Judge Jackson sentenced the perpetrator to three months. In another case, where the criminal distributed more than 102 child pornography videos and sent lewd pictures of his own 10-year old daughter, the guidelines recommended 97 to 121 months in prison. Judge Jackson sentenced him to 71 months. Hawley’s Twitter thread lists five other similar sentencing examples.

The Democrats dismissed these charges against their candidate. They seem to be more concerned that she is a woman (whatever that is – they wouldn't define what a woman is) and that she is black. Apparently, the only way for Democrats to choose a judge was to choose one who has the right genitals and pigmentation. You can't look at her demonstrated actions supporting sex predators. You have to look at her appearance. Reading is so hard!

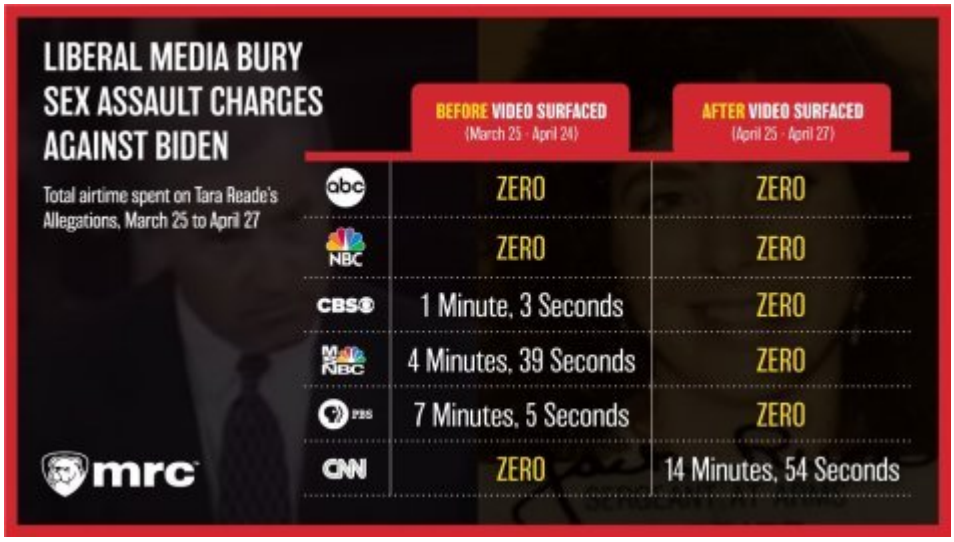

Democrats in the news media are covering up the Biden scandal

The sexual harassment allegation against Biden

Do you remember Joe Biden's sexual harassment accusation? The mainstream news media tried to cover it up, to help their candidate, but I thought the accusation was very credible.

Unlike most hate crime hoaxes perpetrated by Democrats on themselves, Tara Reade filed a report with the police against Joe Biden.

Far-left Newsweek reported:

> Tara Reade filed a criminal complaint with the Washington Metropolitan Police Department of accusing the 2020 Democratic nomination of pushing her against the wall in a Senate corridor and penetrating her with his fingers, according to Business Insider.

This is important, because she can be held criminally responsible for making a false charge. This is not a frivolous woman making a frivolous charge to smear someone she doesn't know. She worked for him, and she filed a criminal complaint against him.

In addition, she actually told people about the alleged sexual assault at the time it was committed.

The far-left Business Insider reports:

> In March, when a former aide to Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden accused the candidate of sexually assaulting her in 1993, two people came forward to say that the woman, Tara Reade, had told them of the incident shortly after it allegedly occurred — her brother, Collin Moulton, and a friend who asked

> to remain anonymous for fear of retribution.
>
> Now two more sources have come forward to corroborate certain details about Reade's claims. One of them — a former neighbor of Reade's — has told Insider for the first time, on the record, that Reade disclosed details about the alleged assault to her in the mid-1990s.

When you're trying to decide whether an accusation is true, two factors matter. A police report, and corroborating witnesses. Tara Reade had both. But Democrats were not interested – there was an election to be "fortified".

Biden's SCOTUS pick is perfect for people like him.

Homeschooling family from Alabama raises 10 kids who all started college before age 13

March 22, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Wow, if this is the way that women are going to do marriage now, then sign me up! In today's post, I'm going to talk about this family from Montogomery, Alabama. Since I've been complaining a lot about the public schools lately, I thought it would be good to have a positive article about what a homeschooling success story. And surprise: they're not all doing easy degrees in English and music.

This is from the UK Daily Mail:

> The parents of 10 children who all started college before the age of 13 insist their precocious sons and daughters are 'not geniuses' – instead crediting their 'efficient' homeschooling regimen for their family's academic success.
>
> Monalisa Harding, 53, and her husband Kip, 53, who are high school sweethearts from San Jose, California, homeschooled all their children from the same syllabus instead of sending the kids to traditional schools.
>
> They knew they were on the right track after getting each of their first three children through high school by the time they all turned 11, and their younger kids went on to achieve similar success.
>
> Their oldest child, Hannah, went on to earn a bachelors degree in mathematics at the age of 17 from Auburn University, Montgomery in 2004 – making her the first child prodigy.
>
> Last year, their youngest child Thunder, 11, passed his entrance exams to college, joining Lorennah, 13, who is already in her second year.
>
> Those of the Harding siblings who have already graduated from college have gone on to become doctors, architects, spacecraft designers and lawyers.

Now when I talk to women about raising effective children, what I mean is (at a minimum) is that they will finish college or trade school and move out of the house. Ideally, I'd like to see these kids go on the graduate school or specialized training in some trade. The best would be to get some people who can make the Christian worldview look more reasonable in the culture culture. Someone like a William Lane Craig or a Stephen C. Meyer or a Jay W. Richards.

Well, this family has some people doing advanced degrees:

> Hannah earned her bachelor's in mathematics at the age of 17 from Auburn University, Montgomery in 2004 – making her the first child prodigy.
>
> Last year youngest child Thunder, 11, passed his entrance exams to college, joining Lorennah, 13, who is in her second year.
>
> Eight of the brothers and sisters have already graduated by either 15 or 16 – and

> all went to university before they were 13.
>
> The most recent family graduate Mariannah, 16, is now applying to do her masters in horticulture in January.
>
> […]Seth Harding, 20, child six of ten, became Alabama's youngest lawyer at the age of 19 after getting his law degree and passing his professional exams during the pandemic.

If you're wondering what their worldview is, they're Christians. Page 2 of their book says this:

> First off, we are Christians. We love our Lord Jesus with all our hearts and have dedicated our lives to teaching our children to love Jesus first and others second. If we succeed in this, then we have fulfilled our purpose on this earth.
>
> Second, we are not perfect. We fail all the time. We fight just like everybody else. We yell at each other in anger at times, yet we know how to forgive. We try really hard to forgive as we have been forgiven.
>
> Third, as we said, we are not geniuses. Every member of our family is of average intelligence. There is nothing special about our genes. Our kids have been able to start college by the age of twelve because of two things: the grace of God and the vision to accelerate our teaching methods that we have come to through Him.

Elsewhere in the book:

> We believe in a Christian worldview and creation. We believe that there is scientific evidence that supports intelligent design. Uncle Sam will pay for kids to learn only a single theory, which limits diversity of opinion and growth.
>
> Our right to pray in school is being challenged everywhere (and has already been taken away in many places) even though it is still our constitutional right.

And this is how they get around the dangers of kids being pressured / bullied by their same-age peers:

> We believe teaching kids in an age-segregated environment is not the most effective way to develop real-life social skills and exposes them to peer pressure. It is not the way the real world works. In the real world, we encounter people of all different ages. We want to teach our kids how to interact with people of all ages. Homeschooled kids are less peer-dependent and better socially adjusted for the real world.

Same-age peers have no demonstrated achievements in the real world. They bully other kids into mistakes like transitioning genders, premarital sex, abortion, drinking, etc. All the emphasis is on stupidity like sports, movies, music, popularity, gossip and looks. I would rather my kids be influenced by adults with demonstrated achievements in ministry and in private sector jobs.

I did a quick search through the book, and there's a ton of Bible verses and talk about Christianity in it. This is nice. It seems like these days only East Indians, West Indians (like me), Asians and Africans are doing a good job of raising kids who will make a difference. Nice to see some normal white Christians talking the education of their kids seriously. These days, it seems like parents just want to hand their kids off to atheist strangers. Or they just give their kids everything they want so their kids will like them.

Last point. On dates, I always ask young women about their Christian role models, and then immediately follow up by asking how they intend to raise children like their role models. If a woman offered me 10 Christian kids in college before the age of 13, I would take that deal.

I'd like to see women offer men more than just youth and beauty. Every man wants a legacy. And unless a man can work AND homeschool at the same time, he's going to be leaning on his wife to build him that legacy. Putting the kids in daycare and public schools so they can fumble around with condoms and cucumbers is not valuable to marriage-minded men like me. Marriage is risky and costly for men. We expect a lot. What do Christian women bring to the table? It better be more than "be nice", "read your Bible" and "pray". I achieved results, and I expect results from my kids.

Biden’s Supreme Court nominee does not know what a woman is, or when human life begins

March 23, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know that secular left Democrats want me to believe that they are very intelligent people. But what am I supposed to think when their best and brightest people cannot define what the word “woman” means, or answer when human life begins? Republican Senators Marsha Blackburn and John Kennedy asked Ketanji Brown Jackson basic questions, but she didn’t know the answers to them.

Here’s Life News first:

> Joe Biden’s nominee for the Supreme Court had absolutely no idea when human life begins when Senator John Kennedy asked the easy and obvious question of her during his questioning in today’s Senate Judiciary Committee hearing.
>
> SENATOR: “When does life begin, in your opinion?”
>
> JACKSON: “Senator, um… I don’t know.”

> SENATOR: “When does life begin, in your opinion?”
>
> JACKSON: “Senator, um… I don’t
>
> — LifeNews.com (@LifeNewsHQ) March 23, 2022

Life News makes an excellent case there that there is no dispute among scholars about when life begins, but this Democrat woman “doesn’t know”. Is this the best Democrat available for a permanent seat on the Supreme Court?

> Medical experts and medical textbooks have confirmed for decades that human life begins at conception/fertilization.
>
> “The life cycle of mammals begins when a sperm enters an egg.”
>
> Okada et al., A role for the elongator complex in zygotic paternal genome demethylation, NATURE 463:554 (Jan. 28, 2010)

And again:

> “Fertilization is the process by which male and female haploid gametes (sperm and egg) unite to produce a genetically distinct individual.”
>
> Signorelli et al., Kinases, phosphatases and proteases during sperm capacitation, CELL TISSUE RES. 349(3):765 (Mar. 20, 2012)

And again:

> “The oviduct or Fallopian tube is the anatomical region where every new life begins in mammalian species. After a long journey, the spermatozoa meet the oocyte in the specific site of the oviduct named ampulla, and fertilization takes

> place."
>
> Coy et al., Roles of the oviduct in mammalian fertilization, REPRODUCTION 144(6):649 (Oct. 1, 2012) (emphasis added).
>
> A survey asked over 5,500 biologists when human life begins and 96% of them agree that human life begins at the point of conception or fertilization.

Well, that's one case where the Democrat elite is ignorant of science. But they are ignorant of more science than that.

What about the definition of the word woman? Republican voters know what the definition of a woman is. We trust the science. You would think that Joe Biden would be able to find a nominee for the Supreme Court who trusted the science. But he can't.

Daily Wire reports:

> "Can you provide a definition for the word 'woman'?" Blackburn asked.
>
> "Can I provide a definition?" Jackson repeated the question.
>
> "Mmhmm, yeah," Blackburn confirmed.
>
> "I can't," Jackson replied.
>
> "You can't?" Blackburn asked.
>
> "Not — in this context, I'm not a biologist," Jackson laughed.
>
> "So you believe the meaning of the word 'woman' is so unclear and controversial that you can't give me a definition?" Blackburn continued to press.

She never answered the question. She doesn't know.

Previously, I blogged about this judge's record of permissiveness and lenience towards child pornographers. I noted how Biden, who was accused of sexual assault before the 2020 election, would probably prefer a nominee who thinks that pedophilia is OK.

And before that, I blogged about how Joe Biden, who is white, blocked the nomination of a black conservative woman Priscilla Rogers Brown, to the Supreme Court. His questioning of another black Supreme Court Justice, Clarence Thomas, shows that his motive for blocking Brown was likely anti-black racism.

Bible study: Was the resurrection body of Jesus spiritual or physical?

March 24, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the leading naturalistic attempts to account for Jesus' death, empty tomb, post-mortem appearances, and the early proclamation of the resurrection is that the disciples had individual and group hallucinations. In this case, the New Testament authors would not have meant that the resurrected body of Jesus was physical. But is that what they recorded?

We'll look at the words for 1) resurrection, 2) body and 3)

Here's a quotation from my friend Eric Chabot, from his blog Think Apologetics. He explains why Paul's use of the word "resurrection" to describe what the other witnesses saw means *bodily* resurrection.

He writes:

> The two words are used for resurrection in the New Testament "anastasis" (rising up) and "egersis" (waking up), both imply a physical body**.** Furthermore, the use of the word "opethe" (the Greek word for appeared) shows the Gospel writers did believe that Jesus appeared physically. "There you will see (opethe) him" (Matt. 28:7); "The Lord has risen and has appeared (opethe) to Simon" (Luke 24:24). When they used "opethe" here, it means that He appeared physically to them.

OK so all the words they used for resurrection imply a physical body.

But what about the word for body. Do they imply a physical body?

Yes:

> So when Paul gives his list of appearances in 1 Cor. 15, the issues becomes whether the appearance to him is the same as it was to the disciples. There is no doubt the post resurrection body of Jesus (after the ascension) had to be somewhat different than the body the disciples saw. Also, whenever the New Testament mentions the word body, in the context of referring to an individual human being, the Greek word "soma" always refers to a literal, physical body. Greek specialist Robert Gundry says "the consistent and exclusive use of soma for the physical body in anthropological contexts resists dematerialization of the resurrection, whether by idealism or by existentialism." [9] Furthermore, in N.T. Wright's The Resurrection of the Son of God shows that the Greek word for resurrection which is "anastasis" was used by ancient Jews, pagans, and Christians as bodily in nature.

What about the nature of Paul's appearance? Was that a hallucination, or seeing some objective reality? Did the people with Paul see or hear anything?

Eric Chabot writes this in another place:

> The Bible says, “they heard” the same voice Paul did ” (Acts 9: 7). But they “did not see anyone ” (Acts 9: 7). Notice Paul was physically blinded by the brightness of the light. One way or the other, the experience involved something that was external to Paul. It wasn’t something that was the same thing as a vision that Paul talks about in 2 Cor. 12:1. Furthermore, the phrase “he let himself be seen’” (ōphthē , aorist passive,), is the word Paul uses in 1 Cor. 15:7 to describe of his own resurrection appearance as the other ones in the creed.

Paul didn’t get a bodily resurrection appearance, but he got an objective appearance that people nearby could see (as a bright light) and hear. His appearance, coming 5-8 years after the appearances to the disciples, should not be seen as overriding their appearances, which were appearances of the bodily resurrected Jesus.

If you want to read something a little more challenging, I found a paper from the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) from their journal, where it talks more about soma and anastasis. If you want a bit of a challenge, download the PDF and read it. It’s by Kirk R. MacGregor and the title is “1 Corinthians 15:3B–6A, 7 And The Bodily Resurrection Of Jesus”.

Feminist single mother confused when daughter seeks male attention with sexy photos

March 25, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Captain Capitalism shared this story about a single mother in radically-leftist French Canada. And she raised her fatherless daughter with all sorts of feminist propaganda, especially rejecting traditional femininity. But what happens when her fatherless girl has to choose between feminist theory and her need to get approval from men?

The story is from the CBC:

> Last summer, I stumbled onto my teenage daughter's social media account. What I found confirmed my worst fear: I had failed to raise a feminist.
>
> There, among the pouty-faced selfies, was a photo of her posing, Sports Illustrated-style, on a jet ski in her bikini, brandishing her middle finger at the camera with a smirk on her face.
>
> […]All her life, I've tried to model feminism: taking her on marches for women's rights, reading to her from books like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's We Should all be Feminists and surrounding her with a community of strong, independent female friends.
>
> I realize now that the wisdom of my mother's "Women's Lib" generation doesn't cover the challenges of raising a feminist daughter in the 21st century.
>
> […]We want our girls to grow up brave, confident and assertive.

On this blog, I've written many times about the harm that feminism does to women. Basically, in the old days, women could be honest about what they really wanted. They wanted a husband to care for them, give them economic security, and they wanted to raise children and keep a home. They might get a degree and work while looking for a husband, but they really wanted a stable marriage, and to be needed by their husband and children most of all.

But feminism taught young women that traditional goals were "sexist" and therefore to be avoided. Instead of marrying early and having children, women were taught to delay marriage for their careers. Instead of learning how to objectively evaluate a man for his ability as a provider, protector, moral leader and spiritual leader, women were taught to prefer men who gave them entertainment and excitement in the moment.

Well, this single mother obviously has feelings about how to achieve the goal of having a daughter who is brave confident and assertive. But what does the objective research say about how to achieve that goal?

Here's an article from the pro-feminist Institute for Family Studies:

> Today's fathers also seem to be having a greater impact on their daughters' academic and career choices than fathers in previous generations. For example,

> women who were born in the 1970s are three times more likely than those born at the beginning of the twentieth century to work in the same field as their fathers—a finding that researchers have attributed not just to society's changing gender roles but also to daughters receiving more mentoring from their fathers.
>
> Another question on many people's minds is: how does a father influence his daughter's romantic life—who she dates, when she starts having sex, and the quality of her relationships with men? Not surprisingly, a girl who has a secure, supportive, communicative relationship with her father is less likely to get pregnant as a teenager and less likely to become sexually active in her early teens. This, in turn, leads to waiting longer to get married and to have children—largely because she is focused on achieving her educational goals first.
>
> The well-fathered daughter is also the most likely to have relationships with men that are emotionally intimate and fulfilling. During the college years, these daughters are more likely than poorly-fathered women to turn to their boyfriends for emotional comfort and support and they are less likely to be "talked into" having sex. As a consequence of having made wiser decisions in regard to sex and dating, these daughters generally have more satisfying, more long-lasting marriages. What is surprising is not that fathers have such an impact on their daughters' relationships with men, but that they generally have more impact than mothers do.
>
> Their better relationships with men may also be related to the fact that well-fathered daughters are less likely to become clinically depressed or to develop eating disorders. They are also less dissatisfied with their appearance and their body weight. As a consequence of having better emotional and mental health, these young women are more apt to have the kinds of skills and attitudes that lead to more fulfilling relationships with men.
>
> An emerging body of research suggests one more way that dads may shape their daughters' mental health and relationships in adulthood: scholars have found an intriguing link between the way daughters deal with stress as adults and the kind of relationships they had with their dads during childhood. For example, undergraduate women who did not have good relationships with their fathers had lower than normal cortisol levels. And people with low cortisol levels tend to be overly sensitive and overly reactive when confronted with stress. Indeed, the low cortisol daughters were more likely than the higher cortisol daughters (who had the better relationships with their dads) to describe their relationships with men in stressful terms of rejection, unpredictability or coercion.

If the single mother in our story really wanted her daughter to be brave, confident and assertive, then she should have 1) made herself into the kind of person that a commitment-minded man is attracted to, and 2) evaluated men for their commitment-ability and then chosen one to have babies with based on their ability to commit. For example, if she had chosen a Christian man who took the Bible seriously on morality and

spirituality, then that man would have stuck around, modeled how to love his wife, and taken an interest in his children. Someone who is able to make commitments and keep his word. And according to the research, that (traditional, “sexist”) approach would have done a lot more to reach the goal of having a brave, confident and assertive daughter. The feminist approach to raising children is exactly what DOESN’T work.

The problem with the single mother feminist is that her feminist worldview is based on her feelings instead of on research. She probably had bad experiences with the hot bad boys she freely chose, and then drew the wrong conclusions from those experiences. E.g. – “I gave my body to a hot bad boy to make him like me, and he dumped me. I felt weak, but it wasn’t my fault for choosing him. It was his fault for not changing into a good man after I gave him premarital sex. Now I’m going to stop being a weak girl, and drink like a man, have sex like a man, and have a career like a man, and this will work to raise a strong daughter. Welfare, daycare and public schools are all I need!”

The priceless gift that mothers give their daughters when they marry a good man is the gift of teaching them how to make a man like them without appealing to them with exposed skin and commitment-free sex. When a man is present in the home, and is treated with respect by his wife, the daughters learn which male behaviors are best for marriage, and how to encourage and support good men who demonstrate those behaviors. Daughters who have fathers don’t feel the need to seek male attention with skin and sex, the way that many fatherless girls do. They get attention from their fathers for having good character, for developing useful skills and for caring for other people around them. They are attracted to men who give them attention for their character and achievements, just like their fathers did.

Pediatric endocrinologist traces the history of transgender medicine

March 26, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

History of transgender medicine

I can't remember who sent me this lecture featuring Dr. Quentin Vân Mêtêr, MD, FCP, but I liked it so much I decided to write a post about it. First, we'll take a look at his credentials, then I'll post the video of the lecture, and a brief summary with not too many controversial details. Then I will link to a Wall Street Journal article by one of the other physicians mentioned, Dr. Paul McHûgh.

So, first, the background of Dr. Quentin Vân Mêtêr:

> Dr. Vân Mêtêr graduated from the College of William and Mary in 1969. He attended the Medical College of Virginia where he received his medical degree in 1973. Dr. Vân Mêtêr did his pediatric internship in 1973 and 1974, and his pediatric residency from 1974 to 1976, at the Naval Regional Medical Center in Oakland, through the University of California, San Francisco. He completed his pediatric endocrinology fellowship from 1978 to 1980 at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.
>
> Dr. Vân Mêtêr worked as a staff pediatric endocrinologist at the Naval Hospital in San Diego from 1980 to 1986 and was Chairman and Director of the residency training program at the Naval Hospital Oakland from 1986 to 1991. In 1991, he retired from a 20-year career in the Navy Medical Corps and moved to the Atlanta area where he joined the Fayette Medical Clinic as a Pediatrician and Pediatric Endocrinologist. To better serve the ever-expanding population of pediatric patients with endocrine disorders, he developed his own full-time endocrine practice, which today bears his name. He is a clinical associate professor of Pediatrics at both the Emory University and Morehouse Schools of Medicine.

In addition to the professorships, he has a number of board certifications and professional

memberships, listed at the link above.

Here's the video of the lecture:

And here's my brief summary, which has no controversial details.

- speaker biography
- the history of the transgender medicine movement
- major figures in the transgender medicine movement
- the origin of the term gender
- the origin of the term gender dysphoria
- early results of the transgender medicine movement
- other results from transgender clinics from Canada and Netherlands
- the scholarship of the transgender medicine movement
- current transgender research
- effective responses

The lecture has about 560,000 views.

If you don't have 40 minutes to watch the lecture, then you can read an article that summarizes the lecture.

In the lecture, he mentioned two other physcians, Kenneth Zuckêr and Paul McHûgh.

I found a good article by the latter in the Wall Street Journal, which I blogged about previously.

You can grab the PDF of the full text of the WSJ article here.

I also found a useful summary of the science of transgenderism on the web site of one of the medical associations mentioned in the lecture.

Another lecture

Finally, YouTube suggested another lecture featuring some other physicians. I watched that one too, and it talked about some of the repercussions from treating young children with drugs and / or surgeries.

The video is here:

And I found an article about this lecture for those who don't have an hour to watch it as well.

Does the Bible teach Christians to expect happiness or suffering?

March 27, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is God your cosmic butler? Do you just ring a bell to summon him so that he can give you whatever you want? Let's see what the Bible teaches in the book of 1 Peter. Peter is writing to all the Christians who are spread out all over the place, trying to survive in a world that doesn't care much about things that they think are meaningful.

Pay attention to these verses:

1 Peter 1: 3-7:

> [3] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
>
> [4] and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,
>
> [5] who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.
>
> [6] In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.
>
> [7] These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Suffering is normal and expected.

1 Peter 2:6-8:

> [6] For in Scripture it says:
>
> "See, I lay a stone in Zion,
> a chosen and precious cornerstone,
> and the one who trusts in him
> will never be put to shame."
>
> [7] Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,
>
> "The stone the builders rejected
> has become the cornerstone,"
>
> [8] and,
>
> "A stone that causes people to stumble
> and a rock that makes them fall."
>
> They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were

> destined for.

Rejection by “those who do not believe” is normal and expected.

1 Peter 2:18-24:

> [18] Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.
>
> [19] For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.
>
> [20] But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.
>
> [21] To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.
>
> [22] “He committed no sin,
> and no deceit was found in his mouth.”
>
> [23] When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.
>
> [24] “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

When people attack you personally for being a Christian, you don’t retaliate against them.

1 Peter 3:14-18:

> [14] But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.”
>
> [15] But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,
>
> [16] keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.
>
> [17] For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.
>
> [18] For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

Jesus sets the example for Christians of being willing to suffer for obedience to God.

1 Peter 4:1-5:

> [1]Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin.
>
> [2] As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

> [3] For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.
>
> [4] They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you.
>
> [5] But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

The normal Christian life involves some non-Christians heaping abuse on you, *precisely because* you don't participate in their sins, or celebrate their sins. For example, attending or participating in a same-sex marriage ceremony.

1 Peter 4:12-19:

> [12] Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.
>
> [13] But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.
>
> [14] If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.
>
> [15] If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.
>
> [16] However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.
>
> [17] For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?
>
> [18] And,
>
> "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
> what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"
>
> [19] So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

Christians who experience shame and/or suffering at the hands of some non-Christians for obeying God, are imitating Christ. They should expect to be vindicated, just as Christ was vindicated through his resurrection.

1 Peter 5:5-6:

> [5] In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,
>
> "God opposes the proud
> but shows favor to the humble."
>
> [6] Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up

> in due time.

Authentic Christianity involves obeying God's commandments, and defending God's truth claims and moral values. It doesn't mean virtue signaling to Christians, (or non-Christians, which seems very popular these days among pious Christian leaders). Humility means thinking of yourself less, and comparing yourself to others less. Just do your job as a Christian, and don't think about what it says about you. To anyone. What people think of you doesn't matter.

Look at 1 Corinthians 4:1-5:

> [1] This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed.
>
> [2] Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.
>
> [3] I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.
>
> [4] My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.
>
> [5] Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

Christianity isn't there for you to use to make yourself happier, or to make other people like you. You're not supposed to agree with non-Christians so that they like you. That's missing the entire point of Jesus' example. Jesus obeys God. Some non-Christians get mad at him. Some non-Christians shame Jesus, and make him suffer, for obeying God. God vindicates Jesus. That's the plan. You're supposed to follow that plan, not make up some other compromise and virtue signal plan!

By the way, in no way am I telling Christians to be impractical. You should be as smart as you can, work as hard as you can, and save as much money as you can, in order to make your shame and suffering bearable, without compromising your principles. For example, you could try to make a network of like-minded friends who can support one another when you become a target. You can donate to organizations like Alliance Defending Freedom, a legal group that defends Christians from persecution by the secular left.

But just understand that being rejected, and being mistreated, is part of the normal, authentic Christian life. You're not supposed to agree with non-Christians, or celebrate them, or affirm them, in order to escape feeling shame, and suffering persecution. I don't know how people can read the Bible and not understand what the life of Jesus means. We're supposed to follow Jesus.

New study: more than half of all female-to-male transgender teens attempt suicide

March 28, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A recent study by a researcher out of Brown University found that the exploding rates of transgender young people is being driven in part by social factors. In particular, coming out as transgender gives young people instant popularity, and everyone around them feels obligated to affirm them and agree with them. Or else. What's missing? What's missing is any sort of warning about the dangers of transgenderism.

The Daily Wire reports on a new study from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Excerpt:

> A new study from the American Academy of Pediatrics found an alarming number of teens who identify as transgender or nonbinary have attempted suicide at least once, showcasing the dangers of the transgender movement. More than half of all female-to-male transgender teens, for example, have attempted to end their lives.
>
> Researchers behind the study used data collected from more than 600 teens over a 36-month period, June 2012 to May 2015, from the "Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors" survey.
>
> The study found that female-to-male trans teens had the highest suicide attempt rate of all other identity groups surveyed: 50.8%. Unsurprisingly, other gender-confused teens had outrageously high rates of suicide attempts, too. Nonbinary adolescents, meaning teens who do not identify exclusively as female or male, were found to have a 41.8% suicide attempt rate; male-to-female trans teens had a 29.9% rate; and "questioning" teens had a rate of 27.9%.
>
> By comparison, teens who identified as their biological sex and corresponding gender suffered relatively low (though still too high) rates: females were found to have a 17.6% rate while males had the lowest of any other group at 9.8%.

When I tell LGBT people about the health risks of their choices, and cite peer-reviewed studies, the most frequent response is that they get angry and even violent and demand approval. I have even heard threats that if I don't approve of what they feel like doing, then they will kill themselves, and their blood will be on my hands.

The thing is, there is a study about that. Even though LGBT people think that approval will make them feel better about what they are doing, it's not true. In societies where social approval and government support of LGBT behaviors are HIGHER than in America, the suicide rates are still extremely high.

Life Site News explains:

> A study out of Sweden published last month has found that suicide risk among

> active homosexuals is high even in a region that is highly tolerant of same-sex behaviour.
>
> Published in the *European Journal of Epidemiology*, the authors found that men in same-sex “marriages” were at three times greater risk of suicide than men who are married to women.
>
> The authors note in their abstract:
>
> Even in a country with a comparatively tolerant climate regarding homosexuality such as Sweden, same-sex married individuals evidence a higher risk for suicide than other married individuals.

Just in passing, what a strange way to respond to disagreement. I have people disagree with me on moral issues and conservative policies, etc. all the time. It never occurs to me to threaten to commit suicide if they don’t approve. I also don’t try to get them fired, insult them, shame them, vandalize their property, assault them, murder them, or drag them in front of a government-run political correctness panel. I don’t even mind that they use their free speech to disagree with me. After all, they are people made in the image of God, with an equal right to be in a relationship with God. I can’t do anything that is going to cause them to think that God doesn’t love them.

It’s useful to remember that the Christian view on life is not to neglect God’s design and tell people to do whatever they want. The Christian view is to tell people God’s design, set boundaries, and encourage people to make good decisions. Christians don’t believe in love as mere acceptance. Christians believe in “love warns”. And that applies to truth claims as well as moral claims. I tell young people not to run up student loan debt studying useless non-STEM degrees. They might feel bad, but it’s the truth: they won’t be able to find a job that allows them to pay the money back. Warning people about sexual issues is the same thing, in my mind.

Governor Ron DeSantis signs bill banning grooming of young children in Florida schools

March 29, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First let's see the story, then I want to go over a bunch more laws that he's signed into law. This guy is definitely running for President in 2024. He's my current pick for the Republican nominee, because he has a pattern of taking on the secular left, and their allies in Big Tech and the corporate media. We have to measure his actions and see what he can do for us, if elected President.

Here's the most recent action from Monday – a ban on teachers discussing sexual topics with children in grades K to 3:

> Governor Ron DeSantis has signed H.B. 1557, the Parental Rights in Education Act. The signing ceremony took place Monday.
>
> "A school district may not encourage classroom discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity in primary grade levels," the bill says, not singling out *any* gender identity or sexual orientation – meaning the dominant kind of sexual orientation – non-LGBTQ – is banned in grades K-3 as classroom discussion.

Last week, there was more action – signing a new bill to ensure transparency in the schools:

> Friday, Governor Ron DeSantis signed H.B. 1467, "K-12 Education," a bill that will require school districts to enact greater transparency measures like allowing parents to see library books, class book lists, instructional materials, along with the ability to review and object to class materials.
>
> The bill will also ensure that the school curriculum and "teacher professional development" align with state standards and the required instruction "including no CRT [Critical Race Theory] or Common Core."
>
> "In Florida, our parents have every right to be involved in their child's education. We are not going to let politicians deny parents the right to know what is being taught in our schools. I'm proud to sign this legislation that ensures curriculum transparency," DeSantis said Friday.
>
> The new legislation will also require that school districts make meetings open to the public when selecting instructional materials. There must be 20 days of public access to these materials before taking "official action" on them.
>
> The Department of Education must publish a list of materials that have been removed or discontinued by school boards due to objections.

Last week there was more action – signing a new law designed to teach children basic financial skills in high school:

> Only one day after passing both chambers of the State Legislature, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis (R) signed a bill into law requiring students complete a financial literacy course for graduation in all Florida high schools.
>
> Passed in the midst of the final week of legislative session, S.B. 1054, or the "Dorothy L. Hukill Financial Literacy Act," sailed through the bicameral state legislature with a tremendous amount of support. Both the State House and Senate approved the measure unanimously.
>
> Just prior to DeSantis signing the bill, the Governor stated, "Financial literacy is an important life skill for a student to have."
>
> "We think it will improve a student's capability for financial management when they enter the real world."

And don't forget, last year, DeSantis signed bills to protect wildlife, banning biological males from women's sports, and punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives.

This is what you're going to get from this man as President. He was willing to fight these battles against the Democrats and the corporate media and the corporations (e.g. – Disney) in his state, and that means we can expect the same from him as President.

It's not just words that make a man trustworthy to be given authority. Look at the demonstrated actions. If a person can be trusted with a little authority, then they can be trusted with more authority. DeSantis did a good job with a little authority. We know what he likes to do when he's given power. Surely, judging him by his actions is a lot better than just choosing a candidate based on mere words. Right? Right.

A skeptical ancient historian explains which sources for the life of Jesus are earliest

March 30, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We (WK and my friend Rose) have recorded and edited a half-dozen episodes for our new podcast. Rose wants to do one about the resurrection in time for Easter. I have blogged here a lot about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15, and how Paul confirmed that creed not once, but twice, in Galatians 1 and 2. And skeptical scholars accept that creed. In this post, we'll take a look at one.

So, Rose and I have noticed that – at least at the beginning of their apologetics careers – many Christians think that apologetics is just pointing out relevant Bible verses to non-Christians, as if Bible verses were going to be accepted as evidence by non-Christians. Or they quote people like C.S. Lewis and G.K. Chesterton, who are not typically making careful arguments or appealing to evidence.

I want to equip Christians discuss Christianity in the neighborhood, schools or workplace. So, I recommend reading books that have footnotes and indices. Books that engage non-Christian scholars are better than opinions / poetry. You should be watching good debates. William Lane Craig debates are good. I also like Stephen C. Meyer and Michael Behe debates. These are people who read and interact with skeptics.

So, as part of our Easter episode script development, I was showing Rose William Lane Craig's debate with Gerd Ludemann, a German New Testament scholar. Their debate was published in book form as "Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Figment?: A Debate Between William Lane Craig & Gerd Ludemann". Dr. Ludemann is considered to be on the far-left, and doesn't accept miracles. His book on the resurrection is called "What Really Happened to Jesus: A Historical Approach to the Resurrection". And I thought it would be interesting for us to see which historical sources HE considers reliable.

This guy is as skeptical as you can get.

In chapter 2 of his book, he writes:

> The letters of Paul are the earliest texts of the New Testament and come from the years (40) 50-60. Only later did the Gospel of Mark appear (c. 70) and then the Gospel of Luke (c. 80), the Gospel of Matthew (c.85), Acts (c. 90) and finally the Gospel of John (c. 100).
>
> It is generally recognized that none of the Gospels was written by companions or close associates of Jesus. People whom for more or less plausible reasons we call Matthew, Mark, Luke and John shaped the text in the form in which we now have it. Moreover, the occurrence of the same passages in several Gospels in wording which is very similar does not mean that such texts intrinsically have a greater truth content.

That's the strong skeptical position, with extremely late dates for the gospels, and

denying eyewitness authors. In contrast, a more moderate skeptic who also debated Dr. Craig named James Crossley dated the gospel of Mark from 37-43 AD in his published work.

So what does Ludemann think is early testimony?

This:

> The testimony of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 is the earliest text in the New Testament to make concrete mention of the death, resurrection and appearances of the risen Christ. Here Paul uses traditions which he knows from an earlier period. As I Corinthians is usually dated around 50, we may note, first, that the traditions which he mentions must be even older. Just how old remains to be seen. This early text will be the guideline for our investigations.

And a bit later:

> There are different views about the origin of the piece of tradition in 1 Cor 15:3b-5. One trend of scholarship derives it from the Greek-speaking communities around Antioch and Damascus (with whom Paul had particularly close contact); another derives it from the Aramaic-speaking earliest community in Jerusalem, in which case we must presuppose a translation into Greek. On the whole the alternative 'Jerusalem or Antioch?' here seems to be exaggerated. 'For even if the tradition came to Paul via the church in Antioch, this would only have handed on what it had received – from Jerusalem."' Moreover, an argument in terms of content suggests Jerusalem as the origin of the tradition: the closing remark in 1 Cor 15:11 that Paul's preaching corresponds with that of the others mentioned, i.e. the original apostles – and initially these were in Jerusalem.

The source for the material in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 is Jerusalem, where the historical events are alleged to have occurred.

Here is his conclusion:

> All the pieces of tradition investigated here (death, burial, resurrection, appearances) came into being at a very early date. We can assume that all the events reported in them are to be dated to the first couple of years after the crucifixion of Jesus. At all events this theory is probable for 1 Cor 15:3b-5. However, 1 Cor 15:6a,7 also provides compelling reasons for putting the conversion of Paul at the chronological end of the appearances listed, and this is to be thought of as being soon after the death of Jesus, which is generally put around the year 30.
>
> A fairly certain date can similarly be worked out for the conversion of Paul as well. The Acts of the Apostles credibly reports a stay of Paul in Corinth when Gallio was there as governor of Achaia (Acts 18). Now this Gallio was in office in 51/52. If we calculate back from this date the intervals which Paul mentions in Gal 1:18 ('three years') and [Gal] 2:1 ('fourteen years'), and add two years for

> travelling, the date of his conversion comes out at around 33.
>
> So we may state that the appearances mentioned in 1 Cor 15:3-8 took place in the time between 30 and 33 CE (the fact of the appearances) because the appearance to Paul is the last in this list and is not to be dated later than 33 CE.

So, when we talk about making a minimal facts case for the bodily resurrection from reports that even the most skeptical historians accept, this is what we are talking about. Ludemann has his own naturalistic explanation for these reports, of course. But he accepts the same historical data that we use to make our case for the resurrection of Jesus. That's important.

If you want to see Dr. Craig's response to Dr. Ludemann's case from the debate book, he's posted it online. You can also watch the debate here. It's not my favorite debate on the resurrection. Ludemann is pretty shocked by Craig's conservative views, and hadn't prepared as well as Craig for the debate.

The conclusion of this post is that I think it's important for people not to go around quoting G.K. Chesterton and C.S. Lewis and Josh McDowell in the neighborhood, the schools and in the workplace. We can do a lot better than those guys now.

New video series on intelligent design starts off discussing the Cambrian explosion

March 31, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am always on the lookout for good resources on science and Christianity. And I found some. Well, Uncommon Descent found them, and I read their blog, so I found them too. The first four episodes are out, and the topics are: 1) introducing the Cambrian explosion, 2) pre-Cambrian fossils, 3) punctuated equilibrium, and 4) Darwin's "tree of life". Each video is 12-20 minutes long.

So, before we see the videos, I feel I should explain the outline for arguing for a creator / designer of the universe from scratch. There are six main arguments. 1) the origin of the universe from nothing, 2) fine-tuning of the creation event, 3) fine-tuning for habitability in the galaxy, solar system, and planet, 4) the origin of the first living self-replicating organism, 5) irreducible / minimal complexity in molecular machines, 6) the sudden origin of basic body plans in the Cambrian explosion (a geological period a long time ago).

These four videos introduce you to the sixth argument in that list, the Cambrian explosion.

First video: Introducing the Cambrian explosion

Description:

> When Charles Darwin published "On the Origin of Species" in 1859, he was painstakingly aware of the fact that the fossil record diametrically opposed his theory. Ever since Darwin's time, paleontologists have put their finger on the Cambrian explosion, where most of the major animal phyla appear abruptly in the fossil record suddenly and without any evidence of intermediate forms preceding them in Precambrian strata.

Second video: evaluating precursors to the Cambrian explosion

Description:

> Are there transitional forms and Precambrian fossils which reveal the evolution of the diverse animal phyla that appear in the Cambrian explosion? The history of paleontology shows the answer is no! As paleontologists have learned more about the fossil and geological record, the challenge of the Cambrian explosion to Darwinian theory has only increased.

Third video: evaluating punctuated equilibrium

Description:

> In the 1970s, paleontologists Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge proposed a model of evolution called punctuated equilibrium, intended to resolve the lack of transitional forms in the fossil record. Can "Punk Eek," as it's often called, resolve

> the abrupt appearance of new animal phyla in the Cambrian explosion? This video explains why the answer is No—among many other problems, Punk Eek requires too much evolutionary change too quickly and lacks a biological mechanism to account for the rapid origin of anatomical novelty we see in the Cambrian period.

Fourth video: evaluating homology and phylogenetics

Description:

> As more scientists have realized that the fossil record poses serious challenges to Darwin's theory of evolution, many have turned to molecular homologies and phylogenetic trees to defend Darwin's tree of life. But do these approaches really support Darwin's tree? Nope.

If you like these videos, you can read a much longer, more detailed book about it by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, called "Darwin's Doubt". Or, you can do what I'm doing and just read a chapter about it in the new book "The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith". That book covers all 6 of the arguments I mentioned before. You can see the table of contents on the Discovery Institute web site. The chapter by Dr. Gunter Bechly entitled "Does the Fossil Record Demonstrate Darwinian Evolution?" covers the fossil record, and the Cambrian explosion in particular. I like Gunter a LOT, because he had a recent debate on the Unbelievable show on this topic, and he really cleaned the clock of his opponent, a slippery theistic evolutionist named Joshua Swamidass. It was beautiful. He cut through all the theistic evolution garbage and got straight into the science.

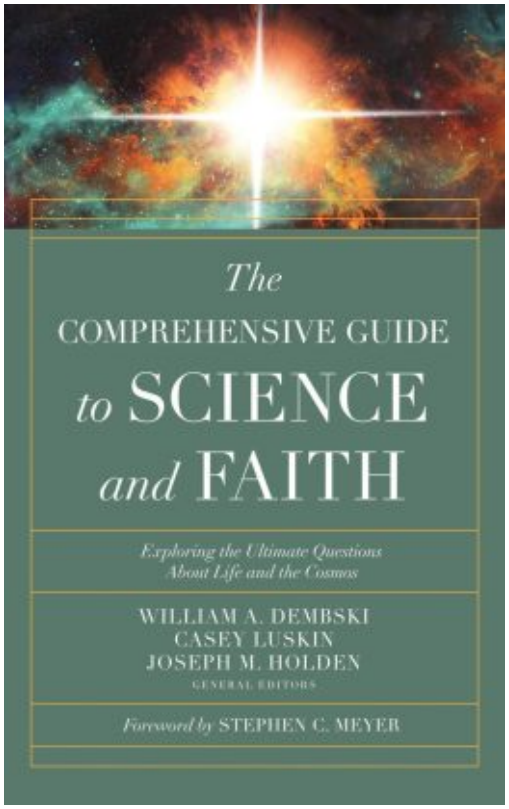

I'm reading the book right now. Or rather, I'm having it read to me, because I got the audio book version. If you remember reading books like "Mere Creation" (1998) and "The

Creation Hypothesis" (1994) as a young man like I do, then you will love this book.

I like to know a little about every interesting topic, and then watch lots of university lectures and formal debates about them, so I can debate these topics in the places where I live and work. The new book has a lot of different authors from a lot of different perspectives writing on a lot of different topics. You could find a way to talk about these topics in pretty much any environment.

So far, I like Dr. Fazale Rana's chapter on Adam and Eve the best, but I'm still in Section I. I'm just starting on Jay Richards chapter next. Jay Richards is one of my favorite Christian scholars.

Pro-abortion feminist professor justifies divorce from the man she loved

April 1, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the past, I've written about how we need to get rid of no-fault divorce laws, if we expect men to feel comfortable about getting married. I've explained that men have seen what divorce does to other men, and to children. Some of us, like me, have read books and studies about it. And it's a major reason why men don't marry.

In today's post, we're going to look at an article in the far-left New York Times, written by a pro-abortion progressive feminist professor, who divorced her husband, making her two children fatherless.

What did he do wrong? Nothing.

Behold:

> There was no emotional or physical abuse in our home. There was no absence of love. I was in love with my husband when we got divorced. Part of me is in love with him still. I suspect that will always be the case. Even now, after everything, when he walks into the room my stomach drops the same way it does before the roller coaster comes down. I divorced my husband not because I didn't love him. I divorced him because I loved myself more.
>
> […]I made choice after choice to prioritize my career because I believed fervently in the importance of the work I was doing… [children of divorce] benefit because happier mothers are better parents.
>
> […] I knew that trying to force myself to subordinate my ambitions and always put our children first would have been impossible without lopping off a vital part of myself.

At the time of her decision, the children were aged 5 and 3! If she chose her career, that means that she was not raising them, during that critical first five years. Daycare is proven to be a poor substitute for the mother during those early years.

CafeMom notes:

> No one is more acutely aware than Bazelon is of the many things she's missed as a mother — things that have stuck with her through the years so strongly, she can mentally list them off one by one. They include, in her words: "My daughter's seventh birthday, my son's 10th birthday party, two family vacations, three Halloweens, [and] every school camping trip," she writes. "I have never chaperoned, coached or organized a school event."
>
> My daughter's seventh birthday was the worst. She cried… But I had a trial starting the next day, six hours away."

Now, what about her statement about divorce being good for children, because if she is

happy, then they will be happy? Many women believe this, and most communities for women affirm this. But is it true? What does the peer-reviewed data say?

Here's a famous study (PDF) that says: (H/T Philip Greenspun)

> This follow-up study of 131 children, who were 3–18 years old when their parents divorced in the early 1970s, marks the culmination of 25 years of research. The use of extensive clinical interviews allowed for exploration in great depth of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as they negotiated childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and adulthood. At the 25-year follow-up, a comparison group of their peers from the same community was added. Described in rich clinical detail, the findings highlight the unexpected gulf between growing up in intact versus divorced families, and the difficulties children of divorce encounter in achieving love, sexual intimacy, and commitment to marriage and parenthood. These findings have significant implications for new clinical and educational interventions.

Specifically: (I stole this from Philip)

> Hardly any of our subjects described a happy childhood; in fact a number of children told us that "the day they divorced was the day my childhood ended." … By the 25-year mark, the majority had decided not to have children.
>
> No child of divorce in our study was invited by both parents, either separately or together, to discuss college plans. … Only 57% of the divorce group achieved their bachelor's degree as compared with 90% in the comparison group. … Unhappy, [those who did attend college] settled for fields of study that were not their first choice, at lower ranked institutions than their parents had attended. It was at this time that one young person, echoing the emotions of many others, commented bitterly, "I paid for my parents' divorce."
>
> The central finding of this study is that parental divorce impacts detrimentally the capacity to love and be loved within a lasting, committed relationship.

This study was actually made into a book, and I read it. That's partly how I formed my views of divorce. In her column, the feminist refutes data like this with an anecdote. She "knows a person" whose experience refutes the peer-reviewed evidence. I don't find that kind of self-serving rationalization very convincing. But it's common.

By the way, I also read books about daycare when I was thinking about marriage, and I hate daycare, too. You would think that a smart feminist academic would read books about marriage, divorce and parenting like I did, and respect the evidence in her decision-making, rather than being led by her feelings. I'm just a senior software engineer with 22 years of private sector experience. But I sure wouldn't make decisions about marriage and children without reading books and studies first. What's that old familiar saying in Information Technology? RTFM. Read The Freaking Manual. Engineers read the manual. Emotion-based people don't.

Women may say to all this, “well, what do you expect me to do? Be unhappy with a bad man?” And the answer is – if you have children, then yes. The time to avoid getting married to a bad man is before you marry him. And we should teach women to disregard feelings, feminism, and peer approval. They should instead prepare themselves for marriage with chastity and sobriety, and choose men who are sober, chaste and have demonstrated commitment ability.

So here’s my conclusion. I don’t recommend that any man marry a feminist. If they are willing to kill their own children, then they are willing to abuse their own children with divorce. If they believe in same-sex marriage, then they don’t think that children deserve a mother AND a father. Don’t marry a secular leftist woman. You’ll pay, and your children will suffer.

Homeschooling moms who influence their neighbors, their local church, and the local university, for Christ, have the better end of the marriage deal. If I were married, I would trade places with my wife in a minute, if I could. It’s far more interesting to homeschool kids in great literature, science, economics, and computer programming, than it is to keep your mouth shut all day in an environment that is hostile to Christian convictions.

I went on a date with a Christian woman who couldn't defend the pro-life view

April 2, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been thinking lately about how to measure how committed and capable a person is on issues of interest to conservatives. For example, on abortion, most conservatives will say, "I vote pro-life". But I think a higher level of conviction and commitment is shown when a person can show WHY they are pro-life. And I'm not looking for feelings, here. I'm looking for handling scientific evidence.

So, when it comes to the abortion issue, the first step is to answer the question "what is the unborn?" And again, I'm not looking for an opinion here. I'm not looking for feelings. I'm not looking for what your parents, or your pastor, or your church choir says. I'm interested in whether a person can cite some scientific evidence.

Fortunately, we have first class scientists who have collected the relevant information for us, like Dr. Maureen Condic, She's an Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Adjunct Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Utah School of Medicine, and recently served on the National Science Board. She earned her Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley, and has published papers in peer-reviewed journals.

One of her publications (PDF) explains what science tells us about the unborn. The title is "When Does Human Life Begin? The Scientific Evidence and Terminology Revisited". A good paper to have available, especially if your opponent has nothing but purple hair, tattoos and nose piercings. But if you want something easy, you can just use quotations from a variety of embryology textbooks (PDF).

Like this one:

> "Human development begins at fertilization, when a sperm fuses with an oocyte to form a single cell, the zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell (capable of giving rise to any cell type) marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual."

Source: Keith L. Moore, The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology, 10th edition. Philadelphia, PA: Saunders, 2016. p. 11

Don't just use one quotation, use lots.

Also useful to know is what the unborn baby can do during the process of developing.

Here's an article from the famous Cleveland Clinic that explains:

> At the moment of fertilization, your baby's genetic make-up is complete, including its sex. The gender of your baby depends on what sperm fertilizes the egg at the moment of conception.

And a bit further along:

> **Month 1 (weeks 1 through 4)**
>
> In these first few weeks, a primitive face will take form with large dark circles for eyes. The mouth, lower jaw and throat are developing. Blood cells are taking shape, and circulation will begin. The tiny "heart" tube will beat 65 times a minute by the end of the fourth week.

And a bit further along:

> **Month 2 (weeks 5 through 8)**
>
> Facial features continue to develop. Each ear begins as a little fold of skin at the side of the head. Tiny buds that eventually grow into arms and legs are forming. Fingers, toes and eyes are also forming.
>
> The neural tube (brain, spinal cord and other neural tissue of the central nervous system) is well formed now. The digestive tract and sensory organs begin to develop too. Bone starts to replace cartilage.
>
> The head is large in proportion to the rest of the body at this point. At about 6 weeks, a heartbeat can usually be detected.

Most abortions happen in the first trimester, and that's why pro-lifers say "abortion stops a beating heart". It's definitely human, and it's definitely killed in an abortion.

So, what's the point of this post? I'm saying that if you are a conservative, then you have to be familiar with enough evidence to be persuasive to others who do not share your views. Not just on the issue you like, but on EVERY issue – social issues, foreign policy issues, fiscal issues.

It's not enough for you to be happy that you have the right opinion about one issue. It's not enough that the people around you like you because they agree with your "right answer". You have to be able to make a case that crushes your opponent with evidence. Being a conservative isn't about you or your feelings. It's about the world out there – can you make a difference by being convincing to other people?

Of course if doesn't feel good to have to learn how to talk about issues using scientific evidence. It's work. And of course it doesn't feel good to disagree with people about controversial issues. But you have to get used to not being ignorant and not being liked. I know a lot of feelings-based Christians who know a lot about sports, fiction, music, essential oils, and other nonsense. They want me to be satisfied that they have the right answer to questions like "Does God exist?", "does military preparedness deter aggression?" and "does the free market system make people more prosperous than socialism?" But if I am out on a date with you, and I ask you these questions, I'm looking for more than the right answer. I want you to show your work. I want to see you demonstrate your ability to persuade people on the other side, either in your writings or in your discussions.

Don't cry to me about how you can't find a husband when you can't do anything that a husband needs you to do. There is no path to impressing a conservative man that allows

you to be lazy, ignorant and cowardly. I expect performance. If you are smart enough to get a college education and a job in the competitive private sector providing value to paying customers, (not a public school teacher or anything disconnected from reality, like that), then you are smart enough to be able to explain your views on moral issues and public policy.

What should parents think about Disney's position on grooming children for sex?

April 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Technology is being used to record what the powerful people of the world are saying, so the rest of us can find out what they really think, and plan accordingly. One of the largest corporations that caters to parents of young children is the Disney corporation. After we see some anti-child comments by Disney executives, we'll look at some sex crimes committed by Disney employees against children.

Here's the latest from Legal Insurrection.

Disney corporate president Karey Burke says:

> "I'm here as a mother of two queer children, actually, one transgender child, and one pansexual child and — and also as a leader. And that was the thing that really got me because I have heard so much from so many of my colleagues over the course of the last couple of weeks, in open forums, and through emails and phone conversations. And I feel a responsibility to speak, not just for myself, but for them. To all of us, we had a — we had an open forum last week at 20th, where, again, the home of really incredible, groundbreaking LGBTQIA stories over the years, where one of our execs stood up and said, 'You know, we only have a handful of queer leads in our content.' And I went, 'What? That can't be true!' And I — and I — and I realized, 'Oh, it actually is true.' We have many, many, many LGBTQIA characters in our stories, and — and — and yet, we don't have enough leads and narratives in which gay characters just — just get to be characters and — and not have to be about gay stories. And so that's been very eye-opening for me."

Watch:

Disney executive producer Latoya Raveneau says:

> "Our leadership over there has been so welcoming to like, my like, not-at-all secret gay agenda… I felt like… maybe it was that way in the past, but I guess, like, something must have happened… They're turning it around, and then all that momentum that I felt, that sense of 'I don't have to be afraid, let's have these two characters kiss in the background…wherever I could, I was basically adding queerness to the show, if you see anything queer in the show, 'The Proud Family,' nobody would stop me and nobody was trying to stop me."

Watch:

Remember, the Florida bill bans teachers from discussing sex and sexuality with children under 8 years old. What Disney is saying is that they *want* teachers to talk to children under 8 years old about sex and sexuality.

I found a very interesting article over at the Manhattan Institute's City Journal, that talks about some of the crimes committed by Disney employees with children.

Excerpt:

> But behind its meticulously curated self-image, Disney has had a long-standing problem with child predators gaining employment within the company and exploiting minors. In 2014, reporters at CNN published a bombshell six-month investigation that discovered at least 35 Disney employees had been arrested for sex crimes against children, attempting to meet minors for sex, and possession of child pornography over the previous eight years.

Disney didn't learn anything from the 2014 CNN story:

> Even after the CNN report, Disney has seen a steady stream of employees caught in the dragnet for child predators. In 2019, police arrested a Disney cruise "youth host" for molesting a ten-year-old boy in the ship's "Oceaneer Kids Lab" and, later that year, arrested another Disney cruise employee for raping a girl "over 100 times" at her home starting when she was 11 years old. (The charges regarding the molestation of the ten-year-old boy were later dropped when the parents did not want to bring the child in for testimony at trial.) Since then, three Disney employees have been arrested for soliciting sex with minors, two have been arrested on 40 total counts of child pornography, and four more were arrested earlier this month in a sting operation targeting "human trafficking, child predators, and prostitution."

Disney's attitude to sex crimes with children is to cover them up, and water down the laws against sex crimes:

> In 2014, after a crewmember on the Disney Dream cruise ship was caught on security cameras molesting an 11-year-old girl, Disney authorities failed to report the crime until after the ship had left port, which allowed the man to evade arrest. When one security officer protested, Disney authorities allegedly told her to "keep your mouth shut" about the crime. Moreover, according to advocates associated with the International Cruise Victims organization, Disney's trade-association lobbyists had worked to oppose and then water down federal legislation that would have required stringent safety and reporting protocols for sexual abuse on cruise ships.

Why think that their opposition to the Florida parental rights legislation is any different?

So what should we think of these "compassionate" Disney people, who want to promote a sexual agenda to young children, on the grounds of "inclusion" and "tolerance"? Well, what I think is that their "don't judge" religion really means "don't protect the weak from predators". And that's not surprising – secular leftism has always championed the rights of the strong over the weak. Survival of the fittest – that's their religion. They don't judge the predators because they want to be liked by the predators.

Two black economists explain how to end poverty in America

April 4, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These days, everyone seems to think that being good to the poor means looking around to see what people are saying is good to the poor, then loudly shouting your agreement with it. People want to look good to others more than they want to help others. Besides, looking good by loud virtue signaling is free. If we really wanted to help people, though, we should tell them to do what will work.

So let's talk about poverty in America, with help from famous black economist Walter Williams.

First, he says real poverty is not common in America:

> There is no material poverty in the U.S. Here are a few facts about people whom the Census Bureau labels as poor. Dr. Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield, in their study "Understanding Poverty in the United States: Surprising Facts About America's Poor", report that 80 percent of poor households have air conditioning; nearly three-quarters have a car or truck, and 31 percent have two or more. Two-thirds have cable or satellite TV. Half have one or more computers. Forty-two percent own their homes. Poor Americans have more living space than the typical non-poor person in Sweden, France or the U.K. What we have in our nation are dependency and poverty of the spirit, with people making unwise choices and leading pathological lives aided and abetted by the welfare state.

Second, the "poverty" is not caused by racism, but by poor choices:

> The Census Bureau pegs the poverty rate among blacks at 35 percent and among whites at 13 percent. The illegitimacy rate among blacks is 72 percent, and among whites it's 30 percent. A statistic that one doesn't hear much about is that the poverty rate among black married families has been in the single digits for more than two decades, currently at 8 percent. For married white families, it's 5 percent. Now the politically incorrect questions: Whose fault is it to have children without the benefit of marriage and risk a life of dependency? Do people have free will, or are they governed by instincts?
>
> There may be some pinhead sociologists who blame the weak black family structure on racial discrimination. But why was the black illegitimacy rate only 14 percent in 1940, and why, as Dr. Thomas Sowell reports, do we find that census data "going back a hundred years, when blacks were just one generation out of slavery … showed that a slightly higher percentage of black adults had married than white adults. This fact remained true in every census from 1890 to 1940"? Is anyone willing to advance the argument that the reason the illegitimacy rate among blacks was lower and marriage rates higher in earlier periods was there

> was less racial discrimination and greater opportunity?

Third, avoiding poverty is the result of good choices:

> No one can blame a person if he starts out in life poor, because how one starts out is not his fault.
>
> If he stays poor, he is to blame because it is his fault. Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior. It turns out that a married couple, each earning the minimum wage, would earn an annual combined income of $30,000. The Census Bureau poverty line for a family of two is $15,500, and for a family of four, it's $23,000. By the way, no adult who starts out earning the minimum wage does so for very long.

Fourth, what stops people from making good choices is big government:

> Since President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty, the nation has spent about $18 trillion at the federal, state and local levels of government on programs justified by the "need" to deal with some aspect of poverty. In a column of mine in 1995, I pointed out that at that time, the nation had spent $5.4 trillion on the War on Poverty, and with that princely sum, "you could purchase every U.S. factory, all manufacturing equipment, and every office building. With what's left over, one could buy every airline, trucking company and our commercial maritime fleet. If you're still in the shopping mood, you could also buy every television, radio and power company, plus every retail and wholesale store in the entire nation". Today's total of $18 trillion spent on poverty means you could purchase everything produced in our country each year and then some.

Regarding those last two points, here is another famous black economist, Thomas Sowell:

Economist Thomas Sowell blames welfare for killing the black family

To illustrate this point, here's a graph with some helpful data taken from the U. S. Census. In fact, there is a whole video featuring Thomas Sowell to go with this graph:

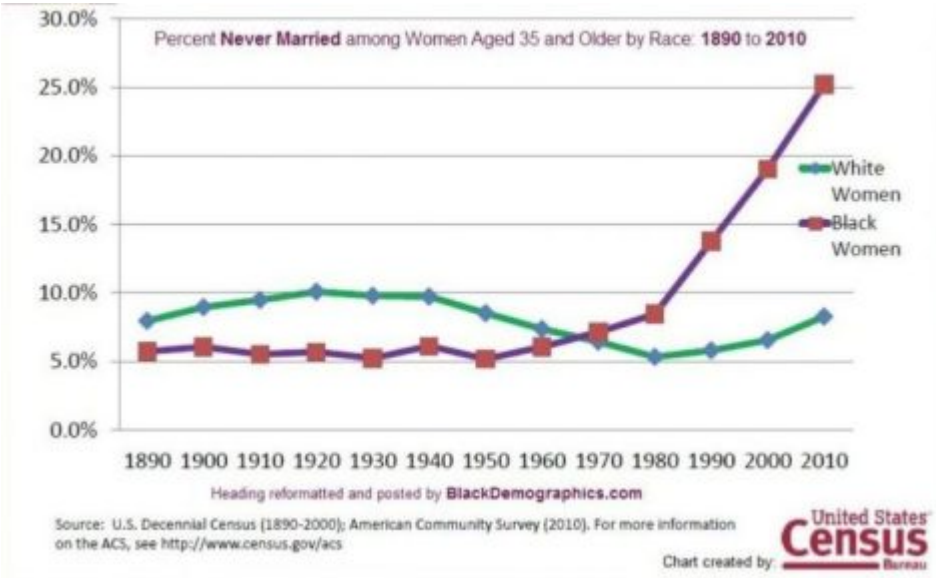

Black women were more likely to be married before welfare programs
And an article to go with it:

> If we wanted to be serious about evidence, we might compare where blacks stood a hundred years after the end of slavery with where they stood after 30 years of the liberal welfare state. In other words, we could compare hard evidence on "the legacy of slavery" with hard evidence on the legacy of liberals.
>
> Despite the grand myth that black economic progress began or accelerated with the passage of the civil rights laws and "war on poverty" programs of the 1960s, the cold fact is that the poverty rate among blacks fell from 87 percent in 1940 to 47 percent by 1960. This was before any of those programs began.
>
> Over the next 20 years, the poverty rate among blacks fell another 18 percentage points, compared to the 40-point drop in the previous 20 years. This was the continuation of a previous economic trend, at a slower rate of progress, not the economic grand deliverance proclaimed by liberals and self-serving black "leaders."
>
> Ending the Jim Crow laws was a landmark achievement. But, despite the great proliferation of black political and other "leaders" that resulted from the laws and policies of the 1960s, nothing comparable happened economically. And there were serious retrogressions socially.
>
> Nearly a hundred years of the supposed "legacy of slavery" found most black children being raised in two-parent families in 1960. But thirty years after the liberal welfare state found the great majority of black children being raised by a single parent.

The rest of the article points out how even crime rates among blacks were caused by the implementation of soft law enforcement policies by progressives. Just look at the big cities if you want to know what it is like for blacks to be ruled by Democrats. It sucks!

If everybody started to read more Thomas Sowell books, we would be much better off as a country! Only good things happen when people stop watching TV and listening to music and watching movies, and instead settle down in a chair with a Thomas Sowell book. I recommended a bunch of them in a previous post.

Why does God let people suffer? Why is there so much evil in the world?

April 5, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just wanted to draw your attention to this 4 page essay by Joe Manzari, which is the best darn summary of the state of the art on the problems of evil and suffering I have seen. The problem of evil is an objection to the existence of God based on the presence of evil or suffering in the world. The arguments basically infer that if God is all-good and all-powerful, then there should not *be* any evil or suffering.

There are two kinds of problem of evil.

The Logical/Deductive Problem of Evil:

The first kind is called "the deductive problem of evil" or "the logical problem of evil". An exampel of evil would be Saddam Hussein murdering some journalist who told the truth about him. This version of the problem of evil tries to introduce a logical contradiction between the attributes of God and the presence of evil, like this:

(1) God exists.
(2) God is omnipotent.
(3) God is omniscient.
(4) God is omni-benevolent.
(5) Evil exists.
(6) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can.
(7) There are no limits to what an omnipotent being can do.

In order to avoid a contradiction, we need to explain how there could still be evil, since the conclusion of this argument is that there should not be any evil!So how are we going to get out of this mess? The solution is to attack premises 6 and 7.

Premise 6 is false because in order to eliminate human evil, you would have to eliminate free will. But eliminating free will is worse than allowing it, because good things like love are impossible without free will.

> It is in response to this proposition that the Free Will Theodicy of G. W. Leibniz applies. God, valuing man's freedom, decided to provide him with a will that was free to choose good over evil, rather than constraining his will, allowing him to choose only good.

Premise 7 is false because there *are* limits on what an omnipotent being can do. God *cannot* perform contradictory things, because contradictory things are impossible. God cannot make a married bachelor. Similarly, God cannot force free creatures to do his will.

> In the same manner that God cannot create a square circle, he cannot make someone freely choose to do something. Thus, if God grants people genuine freedom, then it is impossible for him to determine what they will do. All that God

> can do is create the circumstances in which a person can make free choices and then stand back and let them make the choices.

One last point. In order to solve the problem of natural evil for this argument, you can point out that free will requires predictable and regular natural laws in order to make free will meaningful. Natural laws mean that individuals can predict what will happen when they act, allowing for moral responsibility. More on that next time.

Inductive/Probabilistic Problem of Evil

There is a second version of the problem of evil, though, which is more dangerous than the first. This is the one you see being argued in debates, whereas the first version is not used because it has been defused as seen above. Here is the second one:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) Gratuitous evil exists.
(3) Therefore, God does not exist.

This argument tries to argue that while God may have some reason for allowing free will, there are other evils in the world that are not the result of human action that God has *no reason* for permitting. Theists usually like to argue that God has morally-sufficient reasons for allowing some evil in the world, in order for the character of humans to develop through suffering and endurance. But what about gratuitous evil, which doesn't have any point?

Consider the case of a fawn running in the forest, who falls and breaks his leg. Ouch! Then a forest fire starts and the poor fawn suffocates to death in the smoke. Why would God allow this poor small animal suffer like that? And notice that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing it, because no human knows about this and so no human's character or relationship with God is impacted by it.

The solution to this problem is to deny premise 2. (You can also deny 1 if you want). The problem with premise 2 is that the atheist is claiming to know that some instance of evil really is gratuitous. But since they are making the claim *to know*, they have to be able *to show* that God's permission of that evil achieves nothing. But how do they know 2 is true?

The problem with 2 is that the atheist is not in a position to know that the permission of some evil X really doesn't achieve anything. This is because the atheist cannot look forward into the future, or see into other places, in order to know for certain that there is no morally sufficient reason for allowing God's allowing evil X to occur. But since the atheist argues based on premise 2, he must be able to show that premise 2 is more probable than not.

Manzari's article also argues why apparently gratuitous evil is less problematic for Christians in particular, because of certain Christian doctrines. He lists four doctrines that make the apparently gratuitous evil that we observe more compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.

1. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.

Some of the things that we experience may wreck our feelings of contentment, but we need to remember that God may be permitting those troubles in order to remind us not to get too comfortable with life on earth, and to think ahead to the after-life. And remember, even Jesus learned endurance through suffering. His suffering was not pointless and neither is ours.

2. Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and God's purposes.
   We humans seem to be on a dead run away from God, trying to keep our autonomy by knowing as little about him as possible. Part of knowing God is knowing what he designed us to do – to love him and to love others. And so, the less we know about God, the more we stray from his design for our lives.
3. God's purpose is not restricted to this life but spills over beyond the grave into eternity.
   Sometimes it seems as if our sufferings really are catastrophic, but when you realize that you are offered eternal life without any suffering after you die, the sufferings of this life are a lot less upsetting than they would be if this life was all we had.
4. The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.
   This one is the biggest for me. Knowing God and knowing his actual character by studying the historical Jesus is a wonderful counterbalance for all the problems and sufferings of this life. A little bit of historical study reveals that Jesus was not spared the worst kind of suffering in his life, making it is a lot easier for us to bear with whatever God allows us to face.

In section 3, Manzari shows how you can also argue against this version of the problem by supplying evidence for God, such as from the big bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, the origin of free will, the origin of the first living organism, the origin of the mind, the sudden emergence of phyla in the fossil record, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, the resurrection miracle, and the objective morality argument.

The argument goes like this:

(1) If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
(2) God exists.
(3) Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Just support 2 with some evidence, and you win, especially when they can't support their claim to know that gratuitous evil exists.

The Argument for God from Evil

In the paper, Manzari actually makes an argument for God from evil. That's right. Far from disproving God, the presence of evil (a departure from the way things out to be), actually affirms God's existence. How?

(1) If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
(2) Evil exists.
(3) Therefore, objective moral values do exist.
(4) Therefore, God exists.

That’s right. If evil exists in any sense such that it is not a personal or cultural preference, then objective morality exists. If objective morality exists, then there is an objective moral lawgiver. Game over. If the atheist backtracks and says that the existence of evil is just his opinion or his cultural preference, then this standard does not apply to God, and you win again. Game over again.

So, although the problems of evil look pretty tough, they are actually easy. The toughest part of evil and suffering is the emotional problem. I could tell you stories about what I’ve been through… but then, that’s why the arguments matter. You can hold your position under tremendous fire when you have the arguments and evidence to ground you.

Is the Biden administration good for evangelical Christians?

April 6, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I remember during the election campaign, a whole group of very charismatic, respected Christian leaders all warned us against the scourge of Trump and his mean tweets. We were assured that it was more important to vote for elected officials based on how they made us feel, and whether they made people like us. And Biden was going to do that. Let's see what results these Christian leaders got us.

Transgenderism

Here's the latest news from the Daily Signal:

> The Department of Health and Human Services recently released an order that said it would be adding federal protections to ensure "transgender youth receive the care they need."
>
> During a video commemorating the "Transgender Day of Visibility" and the HHS order, President Joe Biden lashed out at states that are looking to prevent "care," as the cultural left defines it, from being extended to children who believe they are not the biological sex they were assigned at birth.
>
> "The onslaught of anti-transgender state laws attacking you and your families is simply wrong," Biden said. "This administration is standing up for you against all these hateful bills. And we're committed to advancing transgender equality in the classroom, on the playing field, at work, in our military and our housing and health care systems."
>
> In addition to the HHS order, the Justice Department put out a memo to state attorneys general putting them on notice for lawsuits if their states go ahead and prevent "gender-affirming care."

What's "gender-affirming care"? Well Dr. Jay Richards, famous Christian apologist and scholar, explains:

> - **Social Affirmation:** Adopting gender-affirming hairstyles, clothing, name, gender pronouns, and restrooms and other facilities. When: At any age or stage. Reversible.

> - **Puberty Blockers**: Using certain types of hormones to pause pubertal development. When: During puberty. Reversible.
> - **Hormone Therapy:** Testosterone hormones for those who were assigned female at birth; Estrogen hormones for those who were assigned male at birth. When: Early adolescence onward. Partially reversible.

> - **Gender-Affirming Surgeries:** "Top" surgery—to create male-typical chest shape or enhance breasts. "Bottom" surgery—surgery on genitals or reproductive organs. Facial feminization or other procedures. When: Typically used in adulthood or case-by-case in adolescence. Not reversible.

Would the social affirmation be coerced by the government? Would all this "care" be paid for by Christian taxpayers? Are these policies worse than "mean tweets"?

Well, we have to assume that the people who obsessed over "mean tweets" during the 2020 campaign agree with Biden about coercing social approval and taxpayers paying for "care": Russell Moore, Beth Moore, David French, John Piper, Tim Keller, Bob Mendelsohn, David Platt, Matt Chandler, etc. They think that Biden's LGBT policies are no big deal, but mean tweets must be avoided. After all, elections are about feeling good, and being seen as virtuous. So, mean tweets really are more important than these policies.

Foreign policy

Here's another article from the Daily Signal, this time about foreign policy:

> Congress is considering several bills that would warp how the U.S. applies sanctions—through the Global Magnitsky Act—against foreigners who violate human rights. The changes would redefine human rights to enforce the left's abortion-and-gender agenda. That would hobble the fight against real abuses of human rights.
>
> […]In the last few decades, the left has invoked human rights to promote abortion and policies based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
>
> The Biden administration… often uses human rights language to pressure other countries to decriminalize "status or conduct" based on sexual orientation or gender identity. President Joe Biden issued a presidential memorandum in February 2021 that directed agencies of the U.S. government to "combat the criminalization by foreign governments of LGBTQI+ status or conduct" and to fight "discrimination, homophobia, transphobia, and intolerance."

Again, we have to assume that the people who obsessed over "mean tweets" during the 2020 campaign agree with Biden about promoting abortion and LGBT activism in foreign policy: Russell Moore, Beth Moore, David French, John Piper, Tim Keller, Bob Mendelsohn, David Platt, Matt Chandler, etc.

Conscience rights

During the 2020 election, conservatives said that Democrat legislation like the Equality Act and the Women's Health Protection Act would hurt Christians in areas like religious liberty and right to life. But Evangelicals for Biden told us that "mean tweets" were worse than this legislation.

Now we get this story, from Daily Caller:

> Medical professionals are suing President Joe Biden's administration over a

> mandate requiring doctors to perform transgender surgeries in violation of their religious beliefs or medical judgement.
>
> Represented by the Alliance Defending Freedom, the American College of Pediatricians, the Catholic Medical Association and an OB-GYN doctor specializing in adolescent care filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee at Chattanooga Thursday against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
>
> […]The two medical associations represent 3,000 doctors and health care professionals, ADF said in a press release.

I'm just imagining myself being in a position where the secular left government forced me to violate my conscience. It makes me sick.

Abortion subsidies

I noticed that Life News – a pro-life web site – is pretty upset about Biden's policies so far. They write:

> Joe Biden is rapidly becoming the most pro-abortion president in U.S. history as he takes multiple actions to expand abortions and force taxpayers to subsidize them.
>
> On Wednesday, the Biden administration released a rule that will force taxpayers to fund the abortion industry through the Title X family planning program.
>
> The rule, issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will end a pro-life regulation that President Donald Trump put in place to ensure Title X grants are not used to subsidize the killing of unborn babies in abortions.

Pro-life groups like Susan B. Anthony List and National Right to Life considered Trump to be the most pro-life president ever. I even wrote about all the specific actions, policies and nominations he did to help the pro-life cause. But did any of that matter to Evangelicals for Biden? No. Because mean tweets got them in trouble with their Democrat atheist friends in New York and Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. So mean tweets had to go – whatever the cost.

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse lectures on basic economics

April 7, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a podcast on basic economics from Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Morse is the founder of the Ruth Institute, a global non-profit organization focused on keeping the family together, protecting the rights of children and helping the millions of people who have been harmed by family breakdown.
>
> She has authored or co-authored four books and spoken around the globe on marriage, family and human sexuality. Her work has been translated into Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Polish. Her newest book is The Sexual Revolution and Its Victims.
>
> She earned her Ph.D. at the University of Rochester and taught economics at Yale and George Mason Universities.

A bit more about her economics credentials: Dr. Morse served as a Research Fellow for Stanford University's Hoover Institution from 1997-2005. She received her Ph.D. in economics from the University of Rochester in 1980 and spent a postdoctoral year at the University of Chicago during 1979-80. She taught economics at Yale University and George Mason University for 15 years.

The MP3 file is here. (49 minutes)

Topics:

- The study of economics is anti-postmodern – there is objective truth independent of what people think
- The study of economics believes in fixed principles of human nature
- Economics studies the allocation of scarce resources that have alternative uses
- Economics studies how people exchange resources
- How both people who engage in a voluntary trade always believe that they will be better off
- How both people who engage in a voluntary trade both benefit from the exchange
- How incentives motivate people to act
- Understanding supply and demand
- Understanding how "free" government services are rationed
- Understanding opportunity costs
- How prices signal producers to produce more or less, and consumers to buy or not buy
- Market-driven prices versus price controls
- The role of substitution

- The necessity of allowing failure in a free market

The requirements of economic growth:

- private property
- contracts
- the profit motive
- competition
- free trade
- entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation
- the rule of law

If you want to learn more about basic economics, I recommend picking up a book or two by Thomas Sowell – the first book I usually give away is "Intellectuals and Society", and then next "Basic Economics". You can find a good list of books on the website of The Institute for Faith, Work and Economics.

I think it's important for Christians to understand basic economics, because so much of the impact we have depends not only on our personal finances, but on our ability to promote economics policies that will *affect our personal finances.* For example, whether you have a job or not depends on economic policy. Whether you can get food and other required resources depends on economic policy. Often, big-government regimes with poor economic policies (e.g. – North Korea) will make it impossible for you to have other liberties, like religious freedom.

Just think about how hard it would be for you to pursue a Christian life plan in a place like Venezuela, where your priorities would not be apologetics, but just finding food and avoiding death and theft at the hands of criminals.

Imagine it was you lost your job or couldn't find work due to bad economic policy. Think of how that would affect your ability to even drive to church on Sundays, or purchase a Bible, much less being able to organize an apologetics event at the university and pay for a speaker to fly in and stay in a hotel. Economics is important for Christians to understand, because so much of our influence and effectiveness depends on it.

Is David French right to say that teachers who talk to 5-year-olds about sex aren't "groomers"?

April 8, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sometimes, I get really annoyed with moral relativists for being too compassionate with predators. Whenever I feel like that, a trip to The Federalist to read their amazing women authors fixes me right up. They have so many great authors there. Right now, I am reading everything I can find by Elle Reynolds, Kylee Zempel, Jordan Boyd, Margot Cleveland and Joy Pullmann.

This article from the splendid Kylee Zempel at The Federalist is a must-read. I loved every word!

She writes:

> The ranks of progressives and unmistakably pro-LGBT media — who spend their days throwing around insulting hyperbole like "Nazi," "fascist," and "silence is violence" — are being joined by so-called conservatives who've taken it upon themselves to lecture those to the right of them that ackshuuully it's not appropriate to call the kids' entertainment creators and state-sanctioned educators who insist on sexually indoctrinating 5-year-olds "groomers."

Who are the so-called conservatives?

Here's David French, who used to be conservative:

And this guy from National Review, which used to be conservative:

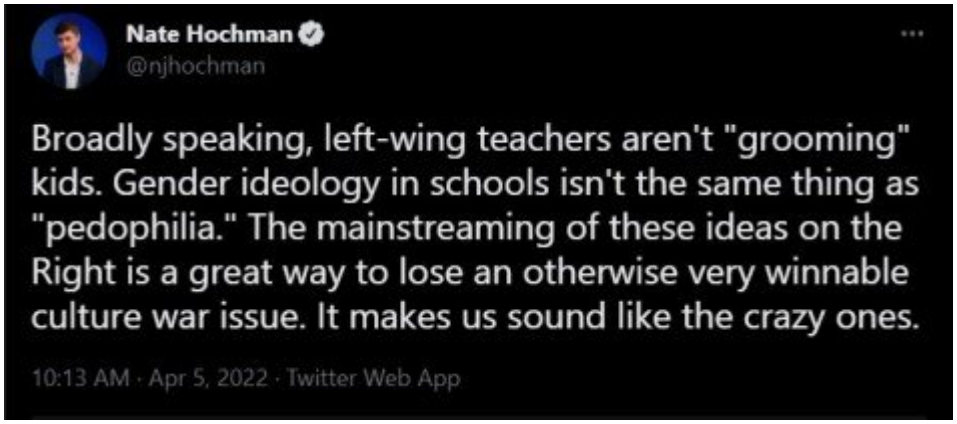

Kylee continues:

> Have the "conservatives" resisting the use of the "groomer" label forgotten about the concerted effort by gender activists to host drag-queen story hours for little children in taxpayer-funded libraries or "drag-tastic" camps at museums? Have they not seen the pornographic books introducing kids to gay sex and masturbation?
>
> How about government schoolteachers' documented cult-like allegiance to gay pride? The cover-up of sexual assault resulting from trans bathroom policies? Or the coaxing of children into sex confusion and dangerous gender-bending interventions and then hiding it from their parents?
>
> Have they not heard stories of young people who internalized backward notions about human sexuality during their formative years, were utterly failed by every institution that should have helped them correct course, then underwent destructive procedures that left them full of regret, just disfigured shells of the unique and beautiful people they were created to be?
>
> How about tongue-in-cheek confessions from choruses of gay men that they'll "convert your children"? Or even manipulation by the president of the United States that those who don't abide by LGBT orthodoxy "don't see" and "don't respect" transgender people and that so-called gender affirmation is the best way to keep kids "safe and healthy"?
>
> There's a word for adults who build trust with children then condition them in sexual matters without their parents' consent or knowledge in order to manipulate them for their own pleasure: It's groomer.

Kylee goes on to quote a list of grooming behaviors from the American Bar Association website. Among them, she finds exactly what the teachers are banned from doing, e.g. – "discussing sexually explicit information under the guise of education."

She adds:

> According to the website ChildHelp, which seeks to prevent child abuse, "grooming includes … gaining trust and access … playing a role in the child's life, isolating the child, [and] creating secrecy around the relationship." It goes on to say that signs of grooming include… "talking about sexual topics that are not age

> appropriate."

So yes, this is a texbook definition of grooming. David French disagrees, but remember, in 2019, David French called "drag queen story hour" in schools "a blessing of liberty". This isn't his first time deflecting criticism of LGBT activists grooming children for sex with adults. He isn't trying to protect children from predators. He isn't a good man. He has given up on the male responsibility to protect the weak from predators. He would prefer to virtue signal to the secular left instead.

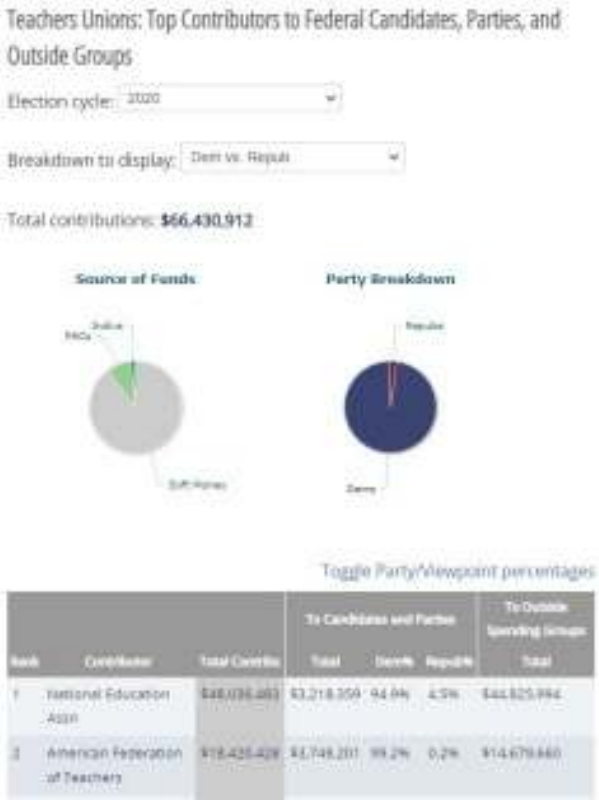

Open Secrets Teacher Unions

You have to focus on what groomer allies write about. They aren't writing anything against the secular left. They aren't writing about fathers losing their children to teachers who trans kids. They aren't writing about parents being arrested for mis-gendering their children. They aren't writing about the far-left LGBT radicalism of teachers. They aren't writing about the labeling of parents who dissent from secular left indoctrination as "domestic terrorists". Etc.

In every case, the fake conservatives have their sights firmly set on ordinary conservative parents, and their children. They want to protect the places where Democrats wield power – like public schools. And when the state comes along to seize the children of Christians, because those parents were supportive enough of LGBT rights, you can bet that the false conservatives will support that, too.

I've been writing about what the secular left is doing with children in the schools, divorce courts, etc. I also supported the candidate that pro-life groups endorsed in 2020. I'm a real conservative. David French is not a real conservative. Remember how he sided with far-left public schools against parents. He's more interested in defending grooming of children for child abuse than your rights as a parent. Can we just judge him by his

actions?

Information Enigma: 21-minute video explains intelligent design

April 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video is here:

I have read and listened and watched a lot of material on intelligent design, but I have never seen so much value packed into such a short lecture. I really hope you'll watch this and that it's helpful to you.

Summary:

- the big question when discussing the origin of life: where did the information in living systems come from?
- Until 530 million years ago, the oceans were largely devoid of life
- In a 10 million year period, many new forms of animal life emerged
- New biological forms of life require new information
- the discovery of DNA shows that living systems work because cells have information that allows them to build the components of molecular machines: cell types, proteins, etc.
- can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
- normally, random mutations tend to degrade the functionality of information, e.g. – randomly changing symbols in an applications code does not usually introduce useful new functions, it usually renders what is there non-functional
- the majority of possible sequences will NOT have functions, so random mutations will more likely give you non-functional code, rather than functional code
- example: a bicycle lock with 4 numbers has many possible sequences for the 4 numbers, and only one of them has unlock functionality, the rest have no functionality
- if you have lots of time, then you might be able to guess the combination, but if the lock as has 10 billion numbers, and only one combination that unlocks, you can spend your whole life trying to unlock it and won't succeed
- how likely is it to arrive at a functional protein or gene by chance? Is it more like the 4-dial lock (can be done with lots of time) or the 10 billion dial lock (amount of time required exceeds the time available)?
- the probability is LOW because there is only one sequence of numbers that has unlock function
- consider a short protein of 150 amino acids has 10 to the 195th power possible sequences
- if many of these sequences of amino acides had biological function, then it might be easier to get to one by random mutation and selection than it is with a lock that only unlocks for ONE sequence
- how many of the possible sequences have biological function?

- Thanks to research done by Douglas Axe, we now know that the number of functional amino acid sequences for even a short protein is incredibly small…
- Axe found that the odds of getting a functional sequence of amino acids that will fold and have biological function is 1 in 10 to the 77th power
- Is that number too improbable to reach by chance? well, there are 10 to 65th atoms in the entire Milky Way galaxy… so yes, this is a very improbable outcome
- can random genetic mutations search through all the sequences in order to find the one in 10 to the 77th power one that has biological function? It depends on how much guessers we have and how many guesses we get in the time available
- even with the entire 3.5 billion year history of life on Earth, only about 10 to the 40th organisms have ever lived, which far smaller fraction of the 10 to the 77th total sequences
- even with a very fast mutation rate, you would not be able to reach a functional protein even with all that time, and even with all those organisms

I was once having a discussion with a woman about the research that Axe did at the Cambridge University lab. He published four articles in the Journal of Molecular Biology. I held out one of the papers to her and showed her the numbers. She said over and over "I hate the Discovery Institute! I hate the Discovery Institute!" Well, yeah, but you can't make the Journal of Molecular Biology go away with hating the Discovery Institute. JMB is peer-reviewed, and this was experimental evidence – not a theory, not a hypothesis.

We have been blessed by the Creator and Designer of the universe in this time and place with *overwhelming evidence* – an abundance of riches. For those who have an open mind, this is what you've been waiting for to make your decision. For the naturalists who struggle so mightily to block out the progress of experimental science, they'll need to shout louder and shut their eyes tighter and push harder to block their ears. Maybe if they keep screaming "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" over and over to themselves, they will be able to ignore the real science a little longer.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

April 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has ever done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates). If you've never seen Dr. Craig in a debate with a non-Christian, this one is probably the best introductory one out there. Dr. Craig is the foremost defender of Christian theism on the planet, and probably of all time.

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it! Normally, Dr. Craig debates at major universities in front of students and faculty.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.

3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

#EvangelicalsForBiden sexual harassment scandal at Christianity Today

April 11, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Friend of the blog "Wintery's Friend" sent me news about this breaking scandal. Although some of you may remember the days when Christianity Today was still Christian, they've lurched far to the left in recent years. No one conservative posts there or reads it anymore. But now news is emerging about the hypocrisy of CT. In public, they embraced feminism. But in private, something else.

Here's the story the Washington Times:

> Two top executives of evangelical magazine Christianity Today committed "unchecked" sexual harassment of colleagues over the course of a dozen years, the publication said Tuesday.
>
> Mark Galli, who was editor-in-chief of the magazine for seven years before his retirement in January 2020, was accused of multiple incidents of "demeaning, inappropriate and offensive behavior," in an online article by CT News Editor Daniel Silliman posted Tuesday.
>
> In December 2019, Mr. Galli — a veteran of several editorial positions in his three decades at the Christian publisher — penned a widely noticed editorial condemning then-President Trump as unworthy of office.
>
> "Whether Mr. Trump should be removed from office by the Senate or by popular vote next election — that is a matter of prudential judgment," Mr. Galli's 2019 editorial stated. "That he should be removed, we believe, is not a matter of partisan loyalties but loyalty to the Creator of the Ten Commandments."
>
> The editor cited a "stacked deck of gross immorality and ethical incompetence" on the part of Mr. Trump that would "crash down on the reputation of evangelical religion and on the world's understanding of the gospel."
>
> Speaking to the magazine he used to run as editor, Mr. Galli confessed his own failures.

The title of that editorial was "Trump Should Be Removed from Office". That's what he was concerned with. Getting rid of the man labeled "the most pro-life President ever" by organizations who major in getting pro-life legislation passed. But who cares about them, when you can get the adulation of the secular left elites in the mainstream media?

Look: if you're gaining all your virtue points from public condemnations of "mean tweets", then of course you think you have a big bank account of virtue stored up to offset some sexual harassment on the side. That's what makes it possible for hypocrites of every stripe to do things in private that they condemn in public. They are celebrated as good people in public, and that gives them cover to think that they deserve to do bad things in

private.

Every single one of these Democrat “Christians” had a choice between learning how to do defend the Christian worldview, and attacking their own people in order to curry favor with the secular left. If you align 100% with the Democrat party on abortion, gay rights, socialism, critical race theory, grooming children for sex, etc. then you don’t have time to solidify your own worldview with evidence. You major in politics because you minor in truth.

More:

> Olatokunbo Olawoye, former advertising director at the publication, was accused of imposing himself on female employees. The CT article alleged Olawoye — who in 2017 pleaded guilty to traveling to meet a minor for sex and served three years in prison — “did not respect personal boundaries” when it came to female employees at the firm.
>
> Olawoye, the article alleged, “frequently invited himself into women’s offices, shut the door, and engaged them in long, personal conversations.” Another manager at the Carol Stream, Illinois, publisher reported Olawoye’s “inordinate” engagement with a female college student interning at the firm, alleging the advertising director asked the young woman “inappropriate questions,” including whether she would want to have dinner at his house.
>
> The alleged incidents of harassment by Olawoye ended with his arrest in the sex-with-minors sting in 2017. At the time, Mr. Galli reportedly told editorial employees to “suspend” judgment about Olawoye until a conviction was recorded.
>
> Eight women alleged that Mr. Galli “touched them inappropriately,” but the magazine reported no action was taken until three successive reports of inappropriate touching by Mr. Galli during three days in August 2019.

I guess Mark Galli thought this was OK, because – like all the Evangelicals for Biden – he was obsessed with getting a diversity of skin color. Who cares whether employees are authentic Christians who can defend core Christian truth claims with reason and evidence? The important thing is getting a good mix of skin colors. That’s literally how these Big Eva elites in the SBC and ERLC think. “How does my congregation look?” They don’t really think that presenting Christianity as true is enough. No, they have to add liberal politics to it. These people are lousy at Christianity.

Governor DeSantis signs legislation to promote fathers and fatherhood

April 12, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I try to keep abreast of what's going on in the men's rights movement, and a frequent complaint is that there's nothing going on in either political party that benefits men. Men feel that their needs don't matter to Democrats or Republicans. And no one is interested in having men lead their homes. But is it true? Let's take a look at a bill that Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law.

Here's a statement from the governor:

> Today, Governor Ron DeSantis signed HB 7065, which includes educational programs, mentorship programs and one-on-one support to encourage responsible and involved fatherhood in Florida. The bill is tied to nearly $70 million in funding to provide a wide spectrum of family and youth support through the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF).
>
> "There are more than 18 million children in our country who live without a father in their home," said **Governor Ron DeSantis.** "This has a severe impact on children, and often leads to dropping out of school, crime and substance abuse. Incredibly, there are those who diminish the importance of fatherhood and the nuclear family – we will not let that happen in our state. I am proud to say we are doing everything we can to support involved fatherhood in Florida."

It's so common these days for governments to spend money on women's programs. Think of how much money governments spend on single mother welfare, which does nothing except subsidize women who want to get pregnant by a hot bad boy instead of getting married to a good man. It's rare to see a government spend money on a program designed to help men who want to be involved in raising their children.

The bill offers money to help fathers with "finding employment, managing child support obligations, transitioning from a period of incarceration, accessing health care, understanding child development, and enhancing parenting skills."

The bill also supports mentoring at-risk youth to develop useful skills by working alongside father figures.

DeSantis was in the news recently for banning teachers from discussing sex and sexuality with 5-year-old children in the classroom. He took on many woke groomer corporations and journalists in order to get it passed.

Previously, signed a new law designed to teach children basic financial skills in high school:

> Only one day after passing both chambers of the State Legislature, Florida

> Governor Ron DeSantis (R) signed a bill into law requiring students complete a financial literacy course for graduation in all Florida high schools.
>
> Passed in the midst of the final week of legislative session, S.B. 1054, or the "Dorothy L. Hukill Financial Literacy Act," sailed through the bicameral state legislature with a tremendous amount of support. Both the State House and Senate approved the measure unanimously.
>
> Just prior to DeSantis signing the bill, the Governor stated, "Financial literacy is an important life skill for a student to have."
>
> "We think it will improve a student's capability for financial management when they enter the real world."

And don't forget, last year, DeSantis signed bills to protect wildlife, banning biological males from women's sports, and punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives.

Many cynical people like to say that there isn't much difference between Republicans and Democrats on social issues. But those people aren't following the legislation. If you watch the legislation, Republicans do a lot for social conservatives.

Controversial study on Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria and transgenderism re-published

April 13, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I blogged before about a study out of Brown University, which concluded that transgender behavior in children developed rapidly as a result of factors like peer pressures, social media, mental disorders, trauma, etc. I.e. – it's not genetic. Brown University retracted it because some people complained. Well, it's now been republished. Let's see if there were any mistakes found.

Here's how the study was first reported by Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.

Peer pressure / The Internet:

> The pattern of clusters of teens in friend groups becoming transgender-identified, the group dynamics of these friend groups and the types of advice viewed online led her to the hypothesis that friends and online sources could spread certain beliefs.
>
> […."Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

Mental disorders / traumatic events:

> Additionally, 62 percent of parents reported their teen or young adult had one or more diagnoses of a psychiatric disorder or neurodevelopmental disability before the onset of gender dysphoria. Forty-eight percent reported that their child had experienced a traumatic or stressful event prior to the onset of their gender dysphoria, including being bullied, sexually assaulted or having their parents get divorced.

This article at The Federalist had a few examples to illustrate the conclusion of the study. I'll pick two.

> The study includes other eye-opening information, such as case studies of several children's stories.

- "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends were taking group lessons together with a very popular coach. The coach came out as transgender, and, within one year, all four students announced they were also transgender."
- "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends are part of a larger friend group that spends much of their time talking about gender and sexuality. The three natal female friends all announced they were trans boys and chose similar masculine names. After spending time with these three friends, the 14-year-old natal female announced that she was also a trans boy."

I thought this quote from that article was interesting as well, given the culture's obsession with "bullying", which is a nebulous term that can mean actual bullying, or mere disagreement.

> The study also may indicate that school "anti-bullying" programs typically created by LGBT activist organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign may help accelerate children identifying as transgender by pushing peers and authority figures to profusely express their support.

Coming out as transgender means instant fame and popularity, because you're a victim, and everyone has to be nice to you… or else:

> "Great increase in popularity among the student body at large. Being trans is a gold star in the eyes of other teens," wrote one parent on the study response form. Another wrote, "not so much 'popularity' increasing as 'status' … also she became untouchable in terms of bullying in school as teachers who ignored homophobic bullying …are now all at pains to be hot on the heels of any trans bullying."

Well, we've had a delay of 6 months for Littman to answer her critics and submit her work to even more extensive peer-review. And now the study has been re-published in PLOS One. So were there any mistakes in it? Does it still reach the same conclusions?

The College Fix reports:

> Here's what actually changed, according to *PLOS One*:
>
> Other than the addition of a few missing values in Table 13, the Results section is unchanged in the updated version of the article.

So, the results didn't change, and that means that the conclusions stand. So what was the problem originally? The problem originally was that the research didn't confirm the biased politically correct views of the secular leftists.

She lost her consulting job anyway

However, that's not the whole story. I looked up her interview from this week on Quillette,

and she got to tell her side of the story.

Two parts stood out to me.

This part, where she contrasted the favoral response of research scientists and clinical scientists with the angry outbursts of a social worker:

> The third presentation was the smallest and least research-oriented audience of the three. In contrast to the other presentations, the vast majority of the comments were made by one person who I later learned was a social worker. Again, I tried to answer politely with comments such as “Actually, the scientific literature says the following…”; “Actually, social media can be both a positive and a negative influence, not just positive…”; “Actually, this method of data collection has been used in many studies…” But because her interruptions were so frequent and argumentative in nature, it quickly created a tense and adversarial tone in the room.

This part, where she explains the mob that contacted her employers and got her fired:

> The worst outcome for me personally was losing my consulting job over this issue. Shortly after my paper came out, some local clinicians who are opposed to my research wrote a letter of complaint about the work and demanded that I be fired immediately. It was an interesting demand, as my consulting work was unrelated to gender dysphoria. Nonetheless, I was called in to several meetings to answer questions about my research… After the meetings, the leadership explained to me that their decision not to renew my contract was not related to the quality of my work but rather that they, as an agency, needed to remain neutral and not take sides regarding the issues raised in the letter.

Do you know what this whole episode reminded me of? It reminded me of the stories of scientists who publish work critical of Darwinian evolution, and work critical of the man-made catastophic global warming hypothesis. It seems as if the viewpoints of secular leftists are decide by emotions, and then defended with rage, coercion and harassment. What does it say about secular leftism that they respond to scientific progress with rage and censorship?

Secular left feminist Sarah Stankorb explains why women leave Christianity

April 14, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I sometimes read articles from mainstream conservative pastors and theologians. One of these is the famous Doug Wilson who blogs at Blog and Mablog. Well, recently he was attacked by a secular left feminist named Sarah Stankorb. I looked over her recent articles, and a pattern emerged about what she – and the women she writes about – think that Christianity is about.

Here's an article entitled "These Evangelical Women Are Abandoning Trump and Their Churches".

She talks about a woman named Katie Loveland, who leaves her church for the following reasons:

1. If a church allows a man to act like a fool towards women, then Christianity is false.
2. If a church allows a man who has passed a background check and holds a concealed carry permit to be armed so he can protect church members from attacks like this one, then Christianity is false.
3. If Christians support a politician who has a pro-life record of demonstrated achievements over a politician who promises to remove all state and local restrictions on abortion from conception to birth, then Christianity is false.

And another woman named Elaina Ramsey, and her reasons for rejecting Christianity:

1. If Christianity requires you to disagree with your gay and queer friends, then Christianity is false.
2. If Christians refuse to marry you because you've been raped, then Christianity is false.
3. If the Bible records (and condemns) the rape of Bathsheba by David, then Christianity is false.
4. If Christianity teaches that murdering humans is wrong, and science says that the unborn are human, then Christianity is false.

And more about another woman named Deirdre Sugiuchi, and her reasons for rejecting Christianity:

1. If your father claims to be a Christian and spanks you, then Christianity is false.
2. If you are sent to an abusive Christian reform school for being rebellious, then Christianity is false.
3. If Christianity feels anti-gay, anti-black or anti-woman, then Christianity is false.
4. If the United States opposes Al Qaeda for carrying out the 9/11 attack, then Christianity is false.

Are you seeing a pattern here?

It turns out that a lot of emotion-based people claimed to be Christians and were accepted as "Christian", without any rational basis for believing it. And later on, when Christianity made them feel bad about being reckless and irresponsible, or when it loses them non-Christian friends, then they abandoned it. It's not that they discovered that Christianity is illogical. It's not that they discovered evidence to falsify Christian truth claims. Their stated reasons for leaving Christianity are entirely subjective. And none of the reasons do the work of falsifying core Christian truth claims, such as God's existence, the inspiration of the Bible, or the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus.

Just to review, here are some of the reasons why authentic Christians believe in Christian theism:

- scientific evidence for the origin of the universe
- scientific evidence for cosmic fine-tuning
- scientific evidence for the origin of life
- scientific evidence for habitability
- scientific evidence for sudden origin of body plans
- scientific evidence for molecular machines
- scientific evidence for irreducible complexity
- the argument from consciousness
- the argument from objective morality
- the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus

These arguments – and many more like them – are defended by scholars in books published by top academic presses. But I see no evidence that emotion-based ex-Christians *have ever read such books*. Why would they? They aren't interested in forming their worldview based on objective reality. They aren't interested in constructing a life plan where their desire for happiness comes second to following Jesus.

People who abandon Christianity because of feelings or experiences have not "left Christianity". They just stopped faking being Christians. They were never actually Christian in the first place. To be a Christian in the first place, you have to know that Christianity is true. People who accept the arguments for Christianity listed above have *just as many disappointments with God, bad experiences with Christians, and bad experiences with churches as people who were guided by their emotions and experiences.*

In fact, I personally know women who grew up fatherless, or had defective parents, or other setbacks. They got themselves into a lot of trouble with churches and immoral men, and yet today, not only are they solid Christians, but they actually take the lead in gospel enterprises, such as apologetics. Why? Because for them, the objective truth of Christianity was more important than their subjective feelings and experiences.

The differences between Christians and non-Christians is that Christians overlook bad feelings, shame and rejection, because we know facts don't care about our feelings. For

real Christians, the normal Christian life *requires* bad feelings, disappointments, bad experiences and rejection by non-Christians. We actually read the Bible, and so we expect bad things to happen to us.

Note: if you are relying on someone to act in a Christian way – say, as a marriage partner – then you'd better find out what kind of "Christian" they are, by asking them how they arrived at their beliefs. Do not marry a fake Christian who just reads romance novels and fiction. A person can't determine the truth of Christianity by focusing on career, travel, entertainment, promiscuity, etc.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

April 15, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of my favorite lectures.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips.

Here is a clip:

The full video can be watched on Vimeo:

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

It's a good lecture explaining a couple of basic arguments for a cosmic Creator and Designer. If you add the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion (Stephen C. Meyer's arguments), then you will be solid on the basic scientific arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

April 16, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women

    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don’t have any earlier sources, so we just don’t know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn’t check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 1: The Minimal Facts Case for the Resurrection of Jesus

April 17, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, after many years of waiting, our podcast is finally done. It's not up in every place we want right now, but the applications are in, and you can definitely get it (see below). In this post, you'll find: speaker biographies, episode summary, show notes, links to the RSS feed, links to podcast directories that have the show already, and links to places where we will be uploading a video version.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 1:

Episode 1 Summary:

Did Jesus really rise from the dead? In this week's special Easter episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose equip you to have daring and exciting conversations about the resurrection of Jesus with your non-Christian family, friends, co-workers… even strangers. We will show you: 1) how historians evaluate ancient documents, 2) which New Testament reports pass historical tests, and 3) how to construct an argument for the resurrection that will challenge skeptics.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Citations

> The testimony of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 is the earliest text in the New Testament to make concrete mention of the death, resurrection and appearances of the risen Christ. Here Paul uses traditions which he knows from an earlier period. As 1 Corinthians is usually dated around 50, we may note, first, that the traditions which he mentions must be even older… This early text will be the guideline for our investigations.
>
> A fairly certain date can similarly be worked out for the conversion of Paul as

> well. The Acts of the Apostles credibly reports a stay of Paul in Corinth when Gallio was there as governor of Achaia (Acts 18). Now this Gallio was in office in 51/52. If we calculate back from this date the intervals which Paul mentions in Gal 1:18… and [Gal] 2:1… and add two years for travelling, the date of his conversion comes out at around 33.
>
> So we may state that the appearances mentioned in 1 Cor 15:3-8 took place in the time between 30 and 33 CE… because the appearance to Paul is the last in this list and is not to be dated later than 33 CE.

From: *What Really Happened to Jesus: A Historical Approach to the Resurrection* by Gerd Ludemann (see it in Google Books)

> Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus in the early 50s C.E. But he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that 'I handed on to you as of first importance which I in turn received.' The most likely source and time for his reception of that tradition would have been Jerusalem in the early 30s when, according to Galatians 1:18, he 'went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him fifteen days.'

From: *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts* by John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed

References

Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Figment?: A Debate Between William Lane Craig and Gerd Ludemann by Paul Copan (editor) and Ronald K. Tacelli (editor)

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William Lane Craig vs. James Crossley | "Was Jesus Raised from the Dead?" | University of Sheffield

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Is the acceleration of the universe's expansion compatible with Hinduism?

April 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, a news story – and then we'll see how the accelerating universe relates to the existence of God.

Excerpt:

> Three astrophysicists who discovered that the universe's expansion is accelerating rather than decelerating, as had been expected, win the Nobel Prize in physics.
>
> Adam Riess was sure he'd spotted a blatant error in his results. It was 1997, and the young post-doc's measurements of distant, exploding stars implied that the universe was expanding at a faster and faster rate, instead of slowing down, as he had expected.
>
> It wasn't an error at all. Instead, what was at fault were some basic assumptions about the workings of the universe.
>
> On Tuesday, the Johns Hopkins University astrophysicist received the Nobel Prize in physics for the revolutionary discovery and its implications, along with team leader Brian Schmidt of Australian National University and astrophysicist Saul Perlmutter of UC Berkeley and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, who had reached the same conclusion independently.
>
> At the time of their work, astrophysicists believed that the rate of expansion of the universe — set in motion by the Big Bang 13.7 billion years ago — would be slowing down as matter was pulled together by gravity. The goal at the time was to figure out how rapid the deceleration was.
>
> What the two teams found instead was that the expansion of the universe was accelerating — an observation that could best be explained by the existence of a mysterious "dark energy" that pushes matter farther and farther apart.
>
> Many scientists had thought that, just as the universe started with the Big Bang, it would end with a Big Crunch — with gravity pulling all the matter in the universe inward.

Does anyone remember that week that I wrote those posts about "Why I am not a… <insert some religion here>"? I explained why I was not all kinds of different religions and denominations, including Roman Catholicism, Calvinism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, etc. Everyone was offended and we fought about it. Ah, I remember it well.

Now let's apply science to the Hindu religion and see if they go together, especially this new discovery about the expansion of the universe.

Why I am not a Hindu

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

So that's one reason why I am not a Hindu. And now we have more scientific confirmation that there is no cycle of universes coming into being and going out of being.

The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with Buddhism and Mormonism and maybe other religions. They also require an eternally existing universe.

And modern cosmology disagrees with atheism, too

I think it's important for all of you to be familiar with the scientific evidence for the Big Bang. It will help you with your cosmological argument, and it will help you to refute many, many other religions that require eternal universes, including atheism.

I wrote about how the Big Bang cosmology falsifies atheism before.

Excerpt:

> According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* The Big Bang has been confirmed by experimental evidence such as redshift measurements, light element abundances and the cosmic microwave background radiation. This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by atheist Scriptures.

The experimental evidence that confirms the Big Bang creation out of nothing falsifies many worldviews. Those who care about evidence will have to choose some other religion that is compatible with what we know from science today.

The authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke knew eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus

April 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Were the authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke connected to eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus? Well, it turns out that there are good reasons to think that Mark was linked to the eyewitness Peter, and Luke was linked to Paul, who had a post-mortem appearance of Jesus in 1 Cor 15:8, and who met with Peter and James in Galatians 1 and again in Galatians 2.

There is a list of evidence for Peter's influence on Mark on the Cold Case Christianity blog.

Here's my favorite one from the list:

> **Peter's Embarrassments Have Been Omitted**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter's special input and influence,including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It's important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It's not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter's standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters 'indiscretions' in their own accounts. See *Cold-Case Christianity* for a more detailed explanation).

It makes me laugh to imagine Peter looking over Mark's shoulder and saying "no, don't put that in it" and "no, don't tell them I did that". Funny! But also very good evidence. The rest of Wallace's list makes it even more clear.

And what about the gospel of Luke? Well, did you know that the author of Luke's gospel knew Paul? If you read it carefully, you'll see that Luke switches from describing history from an "I" perspective to describing things from a "we" perspective in the book of Acts (which he also wrote). Who is the "we" he is talking about?

Here's famous Christian scholar William Lane Craig to explain:

> Now who was this author we call Luke? He was clearly not an eyewitness to Jesus's life. But we discover an important fact about him from the book of Acts. Beginning in the sixteenth chapter of Acts, when Paul reaches Troas in modern-day Turkey, the author suddenly starts using the first-person plural: "we set sail from Troas to Samothrace," "we remained in Philippi some days," "as we were going to the place of prayer," *etc.* The most obvious explanation is that the author had joined Paul on his evangelistic tour of the Mediterranean cities. In chapter 21 he accompanies Paul back to Palestine and finally to Jerusalem. What

> this means is that the author of Luke-Acts was in fact in first hand contact with the eyewitnesses of Jesus's life and ministry in Jerusalem.
>
> […]There is no avoiding the conclusion that Luke-Acts was written by a traveling companion of Paul who had the opportunity to interview eyewitnesses to Jesus's life while in Jerusalem. Who were some of these eyewitnesses? Perhaps we can get some clue by subtracting from the Gospel of Luke everything found in the other gospels and seeing what is peculiar to Luke. What you discover is that many of Luke's peculiar narratives are connected to women who followed Jesus: people like Joanna and Susanna, and significantly, Mary, Jesus's mother.
>
> Was the author reliable in getting the facts straight? The book of Acts enables us to answer that question decisively. The book of Acts overlaps significantly with secular history of the ancient world, and the historical accuracy of Acts is indisputable.
>
> This has recently been demonstrated anew by Colin Hemer, a classical scholar who turned to New Testament studies, in his book *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History.* [5] Hemer goes through the book of Acts with a fine-toothed comb, pulling out a wealth of historical knowledge, ranging from what would have been common knowledge down to details which only a local person would know. Again and again Luke's accuracy is demonstrated: from the sailings of the Alexandrian corn fleet to the coastal terrain of the Mediterranean islands to the peculiar titles of local officials, Luke gets it right.

I know a lot of people (like my Dad) read the Bible devotionally, looking for feelings or trying to "get right with God" so they get blessings. But I think it's helpful to look at things from an evidential point of view – how am I going to make a case for this? When you look at things from that perspective, the Bible gets a whole lot more interesting. And you can talk about it with non-Christians when you know about these interesting details.

Fascist Washington Post doxxes woman who exposes groomers in the schools

April 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the accounts I follow on far-left Twitter is a lady who finds and shares public TikTok videos made by school employees who talk to very young children about sex and sexual topics. You would think that the secular leftists in Big Tech and the Corporate News Media would be opposed to sexualizing children. But you'd be wrong. They actually go after the people who expose the groomers.

First, let's review what LibsOfTikTok is about.

Daily Wire:

> The wildly popular Twitter account known as "Libs of TikTok" simply holds a mirror up to the radical Left, but apparently that's just too embarrassing for one media figure who doxxed the woman behind it.
>
> The move, by Taylor Lorenz, a reporter at The Washington Post and formerly of The New York Times, prompted a massive backlash from prominent figures on Twitter. Critics say revealing the identity of the woman, who scours TikTok for extreme hot takes from the far-left and posts them without comment, serves no newsworthy purpose.
>
> […]The Libs of TikTok account, which has about 663,000 followers, also shared an update. The founder, who The Daily Wire is not naming, said she was safe and thanked everyone for their concern and well wishes as her identity, job details, and other personal details were published Tuesday morning.
>
> […]Libs of TikTok has attracted more than a half-million followers and tens of millions of views on Twitter, Instagram and YouTube since launching the account in 2020. She has given several interviews, but always anonymously.

There's a good summary of some of the things that LibsOfTikTok tweeted here.

Far-left Twitter suspended her account twice, for posting PUBLIC videos posted by the teachers themselves on TikTok. There was no newsworthy purpose for doxxing this woman – the Washington Post did it because they want to protect groomers from parental oversight. They don't want the things that groomers say to children being exposed to the parents of those children.

The Washington post reporter literally showed up at the houses of her family, on their doorsteps, demanding more information, and intimidating her family. And the Washington Post is backing her up 100% on her harassment and intimidation.

Given the spotty record of LGBT activists (remember Floyd Lee Corkins, who stormed the Family Research Council building with a gun, and was convicted of domestic terrorism?), it's arguable that this doxxing of an individual was a willful attempt by the Washington

Post to expose her to harm – to incite violence from the secular left against her. So it's no surprise that she is now in hiding.

Obviously, the Washington Post journalist had help posting this private information. Software developers may find this post interesting. I find it ironic that these secular leftist hackers try to describe themselves as "anti fascist". Their behavior is exactly and entirely fascism. These are not people who meet free speech with free speech. They are not capable of rational persuasion. They try to use threats, intimidation, and violence to suppress and destroy those they disagree with. If a secular leftist mentions being anti-fascist, you can be assured that they are willing to use force to compel you to speak and act as they do.

Please pray for the LibsOfTikTok lady. I don't want her to suffer violence at the hands of the secular left fascists. But if that happens, I hope the Washington Post people responsible for the story, and their hacker ally, will be charged and sentenced for inciting violence against her. They should go to prison for the rest of their lives.

Support for secular left policies increasing among young, unmarried feminists

April 21, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Young, unmarried women vote overwhelmingly for Democrat party policies: abortion, same-sex marriage, daycare, public schools, no-fault divorce, etc. Cultural dominance of radical feminism has led to surging unhappiness, singleness, infertility and mental illness for these women. Nevertheless, young, unmarried women refuse to abandon radical feminism. They are doubling down.

First, lets review this article by Amanda Prestigiacomo from Daily Wire, that talks about a recent study on women's declining happiness.

> According to a recent study from Yale University researchers, liberated, college educated women are freezing their eggs because they can't find a man to marry and have children with before their natural childbearing years expire. In the U.K., for instance, one in five women is childless when their natural reproductive years expires, as opposed to one in ten women a mere generation prior.
>
> So what's to blame for this onslaught of college-educated yet terribly empty women?
>
> The short answer is feminism.

Feminism teaches women to delay marriage for college. College is worth it if you study nursing, computer science, etc. But it's not worth it to get a worthless non-STEM degree in grievance studies. Especially if the degree comes with secular left indoctrination, promiscuity, misandry, contempt for male leadership, and student loan debt. None of these things are attractive to men who are considering marriage.

And guess what? The marriage rate is plummeting:

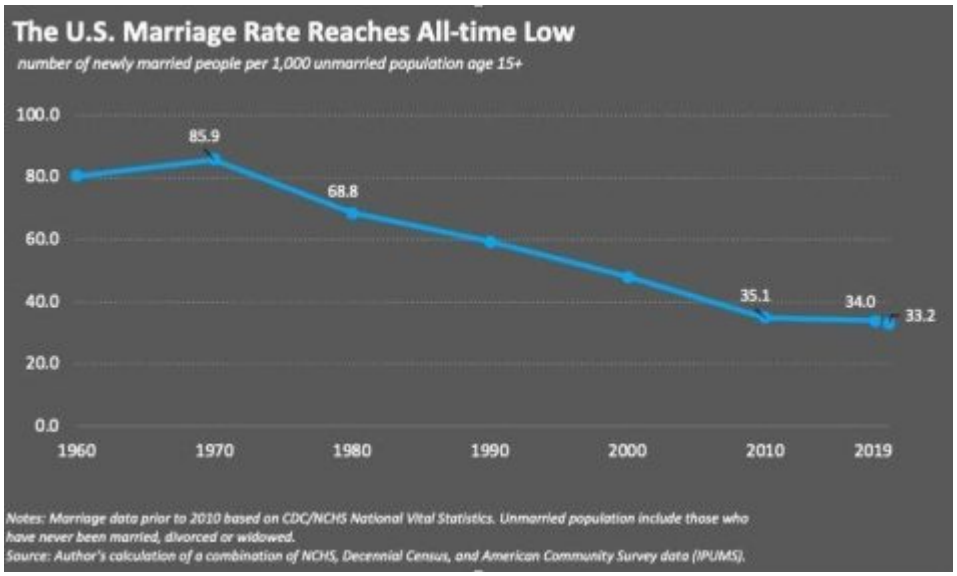

Marriage Rate 2020

So, how are women reacting to the failure of feminism to deliver the things that make

women *really happy and fulfilled,* i.e. – traditional marriage, and stay at home motherhood, a big family, successful moral children? Are young, unmarried women pulling back on their support for feminism? Are they looking for marriage-ready men to lead them? Are they returning to Christianity? Are they becoming more pro-life, and more opposed to sexual anarchy? Are they voting for school choice? Are they voting for smaller government and lower taxes, so that men can afford marriage and children?

Consider this article from The Federalist, my favorite news source, written by Joy Pullmann, my favorite Federalist writer.

She writes:

> NBC News recently compared several polls to find huge shifts from Democrats to Republicans in 2022 midterm voter preferences. The big exception to these shifts across many demographics was college-educated women, who in NBC's aggregation showed even stronger support for Democrats now than ahead of the last midterm election.

> "[T]he gender gap between Democrats and Republicans is actually a marriage gap," noted columnist Mona Charen in 2014, another midterm year. "Single women vote disproportionately for Democrats and married women vote by a comfortable margin for Republicans. The decline of marriage inclines more women to vote Democrat."

When women undertake a life plan that delays marriage, they are less attractive to marriage-minded men. Marriage-minded men want to marry early, so they have help during their struggles in school and work. They want lots of well-behaved, successful children. They want to have a legacy, especially Christian men.

When young, unmarried women vote for Democrat policies, men are faced with higher taxes, more regulation, more pressure from cancel culture, more invasion of the home by secular leftists. Men don't get married in order to have their kids stuck into daycare and public schools. Men don't get married to have their kids transed by anti-male teachers, doctors, lawyers and judges. Men get married to lead a home. They don't marry women who have been indoctrinated against male leadership in the home.

Women who make themselves unattractive to marriage-minded men tend to vote for bigger government. They want to be reckless and irresponsible in their young years, then have a safety net later that makes finding a husband "optional". Remember Barack Obama's "Life of Julia" plan for women?

The Federalist article continues:

> Beyond the obvious fact that big government functions for some single women as a husband substitute, at least financially, it's also true that women respond more strongly than men to emotional arguments of harm and victimhood of the kind that the Democrat Party of today specializes in. Women are also on the forefront of making the leftist kind of emotional "grievance politics" arguments in both

> academia and the public square, as Richard Hanania and others have noted.

Men don't marry women who decide what to believe based on feelings and peer-approval. But that's the kind of women that society has been making in recent years. Men don't want that. Men marry women who have solid worldviews that provide a rational grounding for moral values and moral duties.

She also notes the study I blogged about before, about high rates of mental illness among progressive white women:

> Pew found in 2020 that more than half of white women who identified as political liberals had been diagnosed by a professional with a mental disorder, such as depression or anxiety.

Men don't marry women with mental illnesses, either.

Normally, I would write a conclusion here. But her conclusion was too excellent to skip:

> Women have been earning more bachelor's degrees than men have since 1982. From 1982 to 2013, women earned 10 million more degrees than men did. Not surprisingly, women dominate even more the social science fields that incubate leftist political extremism.
>
> It's well-documented that most colleges now function more as political grooming and social signaling centers than centers of learning. College graduates have for some time demonstrated, on average, no intellectual development from attending college, while college attendance now does correlate with a massive increase in affiliation with the Democrat Party.
>
> At the same time colleges have become essentially academically worthless, if not toxic, they have become saturated with women, and have increasingly marketed and reorganized themselves in feminine terms. The feminization of our culture led by this academic dominance has fueled popular and pervasive messages of cruel and unrestrained female domination of men, rather than the loving cooperation with men that marriage and family encourage.

I love when older, wiser women hold young, unmarried women accountable for their reckless, irresponsible choices. Women today have a visceral hatred for being evaluated for marriage or mentored by men. They don't think that men with achievements have any ability to lead them. That's why it's wonderful when older, wise women step up and teach young, unmarried women that they are their own worst enemies. That's what Titus 2:3-5 says, isn't it?

Men aren't going to solve the problem of young women's skyrocketing unhappiness. It's not our responsibility to save women from their own embrace of self-destructive ideologies. Young women don't listen to men with moral convictions and solid theology. The problem will *only* be solved when young women choose to make better decisions.

Christian woman in IT reviews first episode of Knight and Rose podcast

April 22, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last Sunday, Rose and I released the first episode of our new podcast. Since then, we managed to get onto Apple Podcasts (iTunes), Google Podcasts, and Spotify. We got tweeted by J. Warner Wallace and Brett Kunkle, and Dr. Jonathan Sarfati. As of Thursday night we have 435 downloads, and 79 views on Youtube. Episode #2 drops early Sunday, so you can listen to it on the way to church.

Until then, here is a review that a Christian woman who works in information technology sent to me. I found it fascinating.

She writes:

I came to this podcast after finding the blog of Wintery Knight, which I found after asking myself the question, "If Christianity is true, why doesn't everyone believe?" I knew there is quite a bit of evidence in the physical universe but I'm no scholar and I wanted to at least be able to defend my faith on a minimal level.

I thought there were more "holes" in the evidence than there actually are, by which I mean things that could be shooed away with a shake of the all-knowing hand and a "pfft." Rose talks about one of these dismissal techniques in the podcast, the hallucination theory, which seems to be how atheists used to disregard the resurrection – all those people who thought they saw Jesus were just hallucinating. Hallucinating en masse, in different places, at different times. Now, apparently, that no longer flies because it doesn't make sense. Rose did a good job of explaining this.

But my initial question remains stubbornly unanswered – if atheist scholars have now exhausted their naturalistic attempts to explain the resurrection and are sailing under some general "something happened but we don't know what" flag, isn't that a bit like taking the ball and going home? At what point does someone cry uncle? I still don't understand why everyone who sees the evidence doesn't believe in Christ. The minimal facts argument and all that is compelling. In the beginning of the podcast, they talk about the importance of coming to agreement about the existence of God in the first place, and I guess that's the point. Without a belief in God, I suppose you can't believe in miracles, and even in the face of trustworthy evidence, you always seek a different answer because you simply can't believe otherwise.

Churches should teach more apologetics, whether people really want it or not. My church talks about the resurrection as though we all believe it, not as though we might need to defend it. Having the knowledge that non-Christian scholars like Ludemann believe in the appearances of Jesus after he was resurrected is like WOW. I did not know that. Why was I never told that? I thought atheist scholars thought it was all bollocks. But as it turns out the Bible as a book of history seems to be well-respected by those who make a living of

testing the accuracy of historical stories. So that's a nice boost of confidence. I hear that many kids walk away from church after they leave their family of origin and I can't help but wonder if that's partially because they are under the impression that Christianity is embarrassingly false, nothing more than ancient judgmental mythology. We might not lose so many if we gave them some facts during years of kids church.

To the podcast itself. It is really refreshing to hear a woman do most of the teaching. Wintery Knight obviously knows apologetics, but he took more of a skeptic role and Desert Rose made most of the points. This seems rare. It seems to be mostly a male space and kind of a nerdy one. I am probably an unusual bird here because I am a female, and I don't know a whole lot of females who are really into apologetics. But I wonder if that's strictly because the female mind is not as analytical as the male mind, or if it's somewhat also because apologetics is seen as a guy sport. That's sad if that's the case. I work in software development and surely there are plenty of girl engineers I know who might be interested in apologetics if it had a bit more balance. I could say the same thing on the other side about most of the books and studies aimed at Christian women – they feel overly touchy feely, to the point that a woman like me often finds them unappealing because of the lack of balance. At any rate it was nice to see this dynamic of balance between the sexes in an area that's more geared to thinking rather than feeling. Both hosts were easy to listen to, seemed very knowledgeable, and had good rapport with each other.

Maybe one criticism. I would have liked to have seen the excerpts from the debates that were read. I found myself going back 30 seconds in the podcast to listen to them again, and then later going back again and trying to find them and not being exactly sure where they were in the podcast. It would have been nice to have those included in the show notes so I could read them, but I understand this would have added a considerable amount of effort for the hosts. An alternative would be to timestamp the major parts of the show so it's easier to find one segment. Maybe that's there somewhere and I just didn't find it.

One other comment, it was fast-paced and packed with info. It was more of a "treadmill" podcast than a "grocery shopping" podcast. In other words, if I had to listen to it while simultaneously doing something else that required thought, I would have missed all the good stuff. Even during a treadmill listen, I missed a lot. No problem really, I just listened again. The key to most learning is listening/reading more than once, and I found I picked up so much more the second time around.

Great podcast. 5 stars.

Orual's Babble

That's the review. I asked her if I could publish it. She agreed, and chose "Orual's Babble" as an alias. I really liked what she said about her experiences in church, and her comments about Rose, women, and apologetics.

I updated the show notes to include the missing text that she was looking for.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

April 23, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell". One of my favorite 6 arguments for a Creator and Designer is the origin of the simplest replicating living system. When you look into the cell, what you'll find is carefully sequenced components that for complex structures, like proteins. In this lecture, you'll learn all about this "biological information".

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in

the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 2: Becoming Bulletproof on the Battlefield

April 24, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 2 of the Knight and Rose podcast! If you missed our first episode, please give it a listen. We got an amazing review of episode 1 from a Christian woman working in IT, who really nailed what we are aiming for with this podcast. We are now up on Apple, Google, and Spotify. If you like episode 2, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our new Youtube channel.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 2:

Episode 2 Summary:

How can you get started with discussing your faith? In this podcast, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss best practices for defending your faith. We compare what the Bible teaches to the view of faith that is popular among Christians and churches. We explain the approach we've used in our workplaces. We describe who we think has done the best job of promoting Christianity in hostile environments, such as the university. Finally, we recommend two new apologetics resources.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Notes

At one point in the podcast we were talking about policies that incentivize criminal behavior, and I said "cash bail". I was talking about the decision of some states to abolish "cash bail", which makes it easier for criminals to get released after being arrested.

References

Politically Correct Death: Answering the Arguments for Abortion Rights by Dr. Francis J. Beckwith

Who Killed HealthCare?: America's $2 Trillion Medical Problem – and the Consumer-Driven

Cure by Dr. Regina Hertzlinger

More Guns Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws by Dr. John Lott

Basic Economics: A Common Sense Guide to the Economy by Dr. Thomas Sowell

"In Intellectual Neutral" by Dr. William Lane Craig. (video version here)

The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith: Exploring the Ultimate Questions About Life and the Cosmos edited by Dr. William A. Dembski, Dr. Casey Luskin, and Dr. Joseph M. Holden

Return of the God Hypothesis: Three Scientific Discoveries That Reveal the Mind Behind the Universe by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer

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What useful things can Christians learn by studying metaphysics?

April 25, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a little experience with metaphysics – just what I learned from a few lectures by the wonderful Christian professor Dr. J. P. Moreland. What I remember from those lectures is that metaphysics can be useful for defending the reality of non-physical minds, and dogmatic skepticism is self-refuting. But I found a nice, easy article by Tyson James to give us a real overview of metaphysics.

His article is on Worldview Bulletin.

He starts like this:

> One day, a close church friend asked me, "What is metaphysics?" Dr. Paul Gould notes in a previous article that local bookstores often locate the subject of metaphysics somewhere around tarot cards and astrology. It may be surprising, then, for some to learn that metaphysics is actually the name of a very important field in philosophy.
>
> So, what is metaphysics to philosophers and what in the world does it have to do with Christianity? These are actually very important questions, since metaphysics is a subject which touches on some of the most fundamental elements of the Christian faith.

So, I looked down the list and he has these:

- Is there a first cause?
- Do we have free will?
- Are there any unchanging truths?
- What are space and time?
- How do things which change maintain their identity over time?
- Is the physical universe all there is?
- Are objective morals real?

This is what he has to say about the one I remember:

> How do things which change maintain their identity over time? Christians believe that the same person who was a sinner may also accept Christ, be saved from his sins, and enjoy eternity with God. But some people say that there is no "self" which maintains identity over time, that we're just collections of atoms which change every time an atom is gained, lost, or rearranged. So, answering this question is important for showing that the same person who is lost without Jesus may be saved and restored in Jesus.

As a software engineer from an immigrant family, reading philosophy is as painful to me

as a root canal. I just keep thinking “why do I have to know this if no one will pay me to know this?” But I like to win apologetics battles more, so I have forced myself to learn a little about some of the topics in his list. Every good Christian apologist knows how to defend philosophical attacks, like the problem of evil, religious pluralism, postmodernism, physicalism of minds, the hiddenness of God, rational unbelief, animal pain, etc. And we know how to go on the attack with objective morality, mind-body dualism, persistent identity through time, free will, etc. Not to mention first cause arguments, but I try to only think about that as a scientific problem. Metaphysics is useful for many of these tasks.

Anyway, metaphysics. Let me find you something useful to teach you some metaphysics. Here is a good short essay from Dr. John Depoe, who defends the reality of the non-physical minds, which is also known as “substance dualism”, because there are two substances – your body and your mind.

He writes about the persistent identity argument for the soul:

> Another argument supporting substance dualism is that one maintains personal identity through change. Even though one is continuously going through physical changes and experiencing different mental states, a person continues to be the same person. If persons were identical with their physical parts or mental states, they would cease to be the same persons as these changes occurred. Therefore, it is necessary to postulate an immaterial, substantial self that endures through change.
>
> Suppose that someone believes that people do not maintain identity through change and concludes that the previous argument for substance dualism fails. This denial of personal identity through change, I contend, presents untenable difficulties. First, there is one’s own awareness of being the same person through change. Moreover, if one is not literally the same person through these changes, how can a person maintain long-term goals and desires?

If you are your body, and your body is always changing, then you aren’t the same person now as 5 minutes ago.

There are many other good arguments for real non-physical minds. First of all, we know about the existence of at least one non-physical mind. God. That’s who brings the physical universe into being. He’s not physical. And there is also our first-person awareness of our mental state, our experience of consciousness, our ability to think about other things (“intentionality”), and our experience of free will.

So you see, this is all very practical, even if it frightens my practical West Indian parents if I talk about it too much.

Will the harming of trans children cause secular leftists to reconsider their values?

April 26, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The more we learn about the effects of transgender "affirming care" on children, the more I wonder whether atheists will realize their mistake in rejecting Christianity. It's becoming really obvious that secular leftism leads to evil. Atheists are going to have to choose between the social approval of being "smart" and the objective moral law they have been fighting against with their votes.

Let's start with an article from the The Federalist, talking about a two-part episode of the New York Times podcast. The episodes talk about a lesbian mother and her child Grayson, who was born a biological woman and is attempting to transition to a man.

It says:

> Grayson had already gone through the bulk of puberty, so was not given the option to ingest pills that would stunt her body's natural transition to womanhood (a common prescription among trans-affirming doctors). Instead, she was offered pharmaceuticals that would suppress her estrogen and increase her levels of testosterone. Her voice deepened and she grew facial hair, two consequences that will be irreversible, as conceded by Grayson and her mother.

The Times reporter also admitted that there could be irreversible consequences, for example permanent loss of bone density and potential infertility.

Here's an article from the radically leftist Washington Post, written by a person who has sex-reassignment surgery at age 19.

> Surgery unshackled me from my body's urges, but the destruction of my gonads introduced a different type of bondage. From the day of my surgery, I became a medical patient and will remain one for the rest of my life. I must choose between the risks of taking exogenous estrogen, which include venous thromboembolism and stroke, or the risks of taking nothing, which includes degeneration of bone health. In either case, my risk of dementia is higher, a side effect of eschewing testosterone.
>
> What was I seeking for my sacrifice? A feeling of wholeness and perfection. I was still a virgin when I went in for surgery. I mistakenly believed that this made my choice more serious and authentic. I chose an irreversible change before I'd even begun to understand my sexuality. The surgeon deemed my operation a good outcome, but intercourse never became pleasurable.

We really need to pass a law allowing children who experience regret at being groomed by LGBT activists to sue them for damages. Then maybe all this grooming of children by "compassionate" "diverse" "inclusive" "tolerant" "accepting" "affirming" secular leftist

groomers would stop.

This next story was covered by Tucker Carlson:

And written up in Life Site News:

> Google-owned video giant YouTube recently deleted a clip highlighting Fox News primetime host Tucker Carlson's interview with a "detransitioner" who is speaking out against the harm transgender ideology poses to young people.
>
> Helena Kerschner explains that "when I was fifteen, I was introduced to gender ideology on Tumblr and began to call myself nonbinary. Over the next few years, I would continue to go deeper and deeper down the trans identity rabbit hole, and by the time I was eighteen, I saw myself as a 'trans man', otherwise known as 'FtM'. Shortly after my eighteenth birthday, I made an appointment at a Planned Parenthood to begin a testosterone regimen. At my first appointment, I was prescribed testosterone, and I would remain on this regimen for a year and a half. It had an extremely negative effect on my mental health, and I finally admitted what a disaster it had been when I was 19, sometime around February or March 2018."
>
> "When the disillusionment fully set in, I stopped the testosterone treatment and began the process of getting my life back on track," she says. "It has not been easy, and the whole experience seriously derailed my life in ways I could never have foreseen when I was that fifteen-year-old kid playing with pronouns on Tumblr."

She tells her story in her own words on her SubStack.

Now, I brought this case to the attention of an atheist friend of mine from Seattle, who has previously voted for candidates who support same-sex marriage, gay rights, late-term abortion, infanticide, and even adults having sex with children. He votes to make sure that atheist morality is enacted into law, and can't be judged by Christians. I wanted to see what he thought about the possibility of children permanently losing bone density and becoming infertile. I'm really hoping that as the evidence of harm to children from secular leftist policies comes out, that he changes his mind about voting for secular left policies.

Progressive white women report high levels of mental illness in 2020 Pew survey

April 27, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have the most amazing video for you to see. It's a crazy left-wing activist doxing a libertarian lesbian woman wearing a breathe-through mask. First, let's take a look at the video. Then, we'll look at a recent survey reported by Pew Research in 2020, which assesses how mentally stable far-left feminist women are (self-reported). Then, I'll make some comments for unmarried men.

OK, so here is the video, which was shared by the woman who was doxed. So it's OK for me to share it, since the doxed woman didn't care about it.

So, is this crazy woman rare? Or is she common?

Progressive white women and mental illness

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

Here's the part of the data I thought was most interesting:

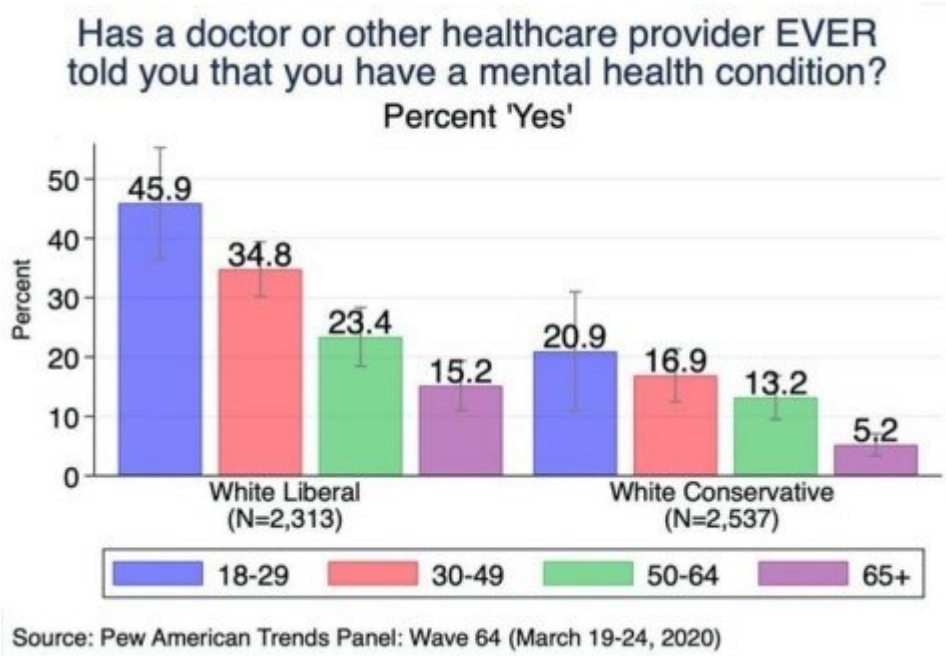

Who would marry a crazy person?

So, the point about this that I want to make is… who is going to marry these mentally ill progressive white women? Being a good wife and mother takes a certain amount of connection to reality. It takes a certain amount of empathy, compassion, and rationality. These progressive white women don't have any of that. So, who is going to marry them? I know that there are thirsty progressive men (and thirsty conservative men who fake being progressive), who will go ahead and hit it and quit it. Pump it and dump it. But how many men would commit to someone who's mentally ill?

And in fact, that's exactly what we're seeing with the marriage rates:

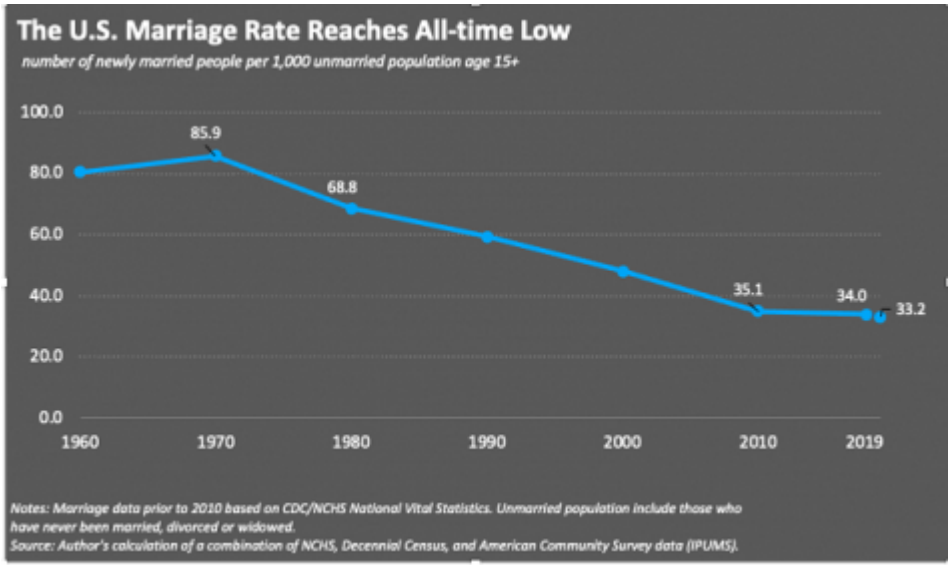

That's for America, but things are even worse in countries that have slid further toward the secular left edge of the political spectrum.

When you look at marriage rates in Canada and Europe, you understand that men are even LESS likely to choose marriage when they have to pay over 50% of what they earn in taxes. And so the marriage rate is declining. I think young, unmarried women in

Canada and Europe are want to raise taxes in order to get free stuff from government. Single mother welfare, food stamps, abortions, contraceptives, IVF, breast enlargements, etc. Some feminists are even asking for free cosmetic surgery. With a big enough government, they don't have to marry at all. Big government leaves them free to play the field, without having to care about finding a good man. But what if taxes get so high that the few good men those women passed over for 40 years simply can't afford to take on a wife and support multiple children he didn't father? Paying for things like a stay-at-home wife and homeschooling, etc. is expensive. Men can't afford a wife, and also pay for goodies for all the single progressive women with mental illnesses.

Conservative men want nothing to do with daycare and public schools – we know that those facilities are *dominated* by progressive women. And we don't want trouble from feminist lawyers and feminist judges in the divorce courts. Divorce is very expensive for men. And we may never see our children again. Then there are the progressive white women in the workplace, who get very bitter with men as a result of getting wrecked by bad boys. Even if we find a good wife, we still have to deal with all these progressive white women with mental illnesses in positions of power. Is it worth it to take risks like this? It depends on the reward, I guess. There comes a point where the juice isn't worth the squeeze.

The worst mistake you can make when defending the Christian worldview

April 28, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it

entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it.

> I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent's weakness.

Are Mormon doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

April 29, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually

> infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian

> culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

What should social conservatives do to reduce abortion and single motherhood?

April 30, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting set of articles from a young woman who graduated from Pennsylvania State University. In one, she explains how a man she "hooked up" with treated her poorly. I think I've been able to figure out what her approach to relationships is. In this post, I'll explain her approach, and then discuss how social conservatives should solve problems like abortion and single motherhood.

NOTE: Please do not contact or harass this woman, just leave her alone.

So, here's the first, most important article:

> As someone who considers themselves a feminist, and I always thought that being sexual and unashamed was liberating and empowering. And for that reason, I never stopped myself from doing what I wanted to do.

In the article, she explains what it feels like to be used for sex and then ghosted by a man. She says that he never got to know her, and that makes her feel bad. What did he know about her? She says that she appeared to him as "just some blonde blacked out drunk". In the article, she describes lying awake next to him after sex, then getting up to walk home at 5:30 in the morning. And this is not the only toxic man in her life.

She says:

> This applies to more than a few people from my past… I started to realize this lifestyle wasn't working after I hooked up with a guy who thought New England was a state. And yeah, I still hooked up with him after finding out this knowledge about him… And I don't know if that says more about him that he didn't know or more about me since I was willing to overlook that fact **just to feel desired for a night**.
>
> Because I do turn to other people for validation. When I think about it objectively, **90% of the reason I hook-up with anyone is to feel good about myself**.

She calls the search for validation an "addiction":

> I am addicted to validation I got from getting with people. I needed that rush of dopamine. I needed to know I am wanted. I got addicted to hooking up. Cause it was the only thing that made me feel good about myself for a while. When I was feeling down, I turned to boys… that didn't care about anything except what I look like. And I have been blessed/cursed with a pretty fast metabolism and a naturally larger than average chest. So I always have known I could default to my looks for validation. It's the easiest thing to get recognition for. And I got addicted to being told I was hot, or pretty, or whatever.

In other articles, she explains what kinds of men she's looking for.

She's a strong Democrat.

> There are two kinds of Republicans: the ignorant and the evil. Either they are uninformed and dumb or aware of the world and other cultures other than their own and just too corrupt or bigoted to care. It's just that being a Republican seems to now stand for religious nuts, rich, rednecks, and racists. This current election cycle has only increased my deep seeded hatred for the right-wingers even more.
>
> And I can't help myself, but whenever I find out someone who I have been talking to or have been friends with is a Republican, I let out an audible "ugh, really?" I can not hide my disgust.

In another article, she explains that she's an atheist:

> If singing songs, praying or going to confession makes you feel better, by all means, do what you have to do to feel better. As long as you aren't hurting anyone, do what you want to do. As an atheist, it doesn't offend me. I just choose not to do it.
>
> For example, at thanksgiving dinner this year my family wanted to say grace before eating, but they know where I stand when it comes to religion.

She came out of a Christian family.

In another post, she explains why she cheated on her boyfriend:

> I wish I could say I don't know why I did it, but that would be a blatant lie. I found myself in someone else's bed because… I didn't have feelings for you anymore. If you were enough for me, then you would have been. But you weren't. I stopped craving your company. I felt guilty, sure, but not enough to stop me from doing it multiple times. I didn't care about you or how you felt. And as my feelings started to fade, yours only seemed to get stronger. I know that stings, but it's true.
>
> So when I would go out in that extra-lowcut dress you loved when I wore it around you and a cute guy would ask me to dance or to go hangout on the porch, I wouldn't mention you. I guess I got tired of turning people down when I didn't feel like there was any "good" reason to. I missed my freedom. I missed the exciting feelings that come with flirting with someone new. The whole giddy honeymoon phase, getting butterflies whenever someone texts you, stalking them on Facebook and pretending you know nothing about them, finding yourself daydreaming about the next time you hang out in class. But I think I skipped a step before getting with someone new– breaking it off with you first.

She seems to be guided primarily by her feelings. If the feelings are gone, they're gone. She doesn't try to pick a good guy and invest in the relationship so that she builds something. I don't think this is going to work for her to avoid bad men.

So, what kind of man is she looking for? She writes about how interested she is in “hot” guys in many of her articles. Guys with height, looks, tattoos, piercings, displayed wealth validate her more than guys who want to protect, provide, and lead her in moral and spiritual areas. I don’t think that the men she is choosing will treat her well – they just have too many options to focus on building something good with one woman.

She’s looking for a man who agrees with her on abortion and same-sex marriage. So, men like that don’t want to protect unborn children, and take responsibility for their choices. And a man who supports same-sex marriage is siding with selfish adults. Every same-sex relationship deprives a child of their bio-mom or bio-dad. That’s not a good man to build something with.

Regarding religion, she’s uncomfortable with men who have definite exclusive views. Religion, for her, is not about truth at all. You shouldn’t make any exclusive claims that make people feel bad. Instead, just have your private religion that makes you feel better. She’s looking for men who will not lead her in moral and spiritual areas. That’s not a good man to date, either.

How is it working out for her?

Her worldview – feminism, atheism, socialism – doesn’t have the resources necessary for her to approach relationships in a way that will work for her, in the long run. She is not a Christian, pro-marriage, or conservative. The men she chooses are not Christians, pro-marriage, or conservative. This isn’t going to lead to a relationship that is faithful, exclusive and permanent. If that’s what she wants, then she is choosing the wrong people to get there. And even if she doesn’t want commitment now, she will some day. It’s better for her to focus on finding a good man now and building him up. Men make better husbands and fathers the sooner women get in there and support them at those goals.

I always urge young women to get a STEM degree and work in the private sector until they marry and have their first child. To make them think logically, take responsibility for engineering results, and to feel validated by their achievements. I wanted to see what her college major was – because I suspected that she did not do STEM. While searching, I stumbled upon her dating profile (posted on 9Gag by her), two Instagram pages full of selfies, a Tumblr blog of sexy photos, and an Only Fans page. Her LinkedIn page showed no current or previous work experience. To me, these things are clear signs that she is head straight for evil men who will hurt her.

Saving women from toxic masculinity

I think what we have to do is focus on her disappointment with the results of her own choices, and challenge her to change her worldview and relationship choices. She needs to stop rewarding the hot bad boys with free sex. There are good men out there who want to protect, provide and lead on moral and spiritual issues. She needs to be taught to focus on those good men.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 3: What we found in American churches

May 1, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 3 of the Knight and Rose podcast! Today's episode is the first of a 3-part series about the American church. Neither Rose nor I were raised in Christian homes. If you like episode 3, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our new Youtube channel. We would really appreciate it if you can leave us a 5-star review on Apple iTunes / Apple Podcasts.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 3:

Episode 3 Summary:

What does church look like for someone who wasn't raised in the church? Neither Wintery Knight nor Desert Rose were raised in Christian homes. In this episode, we explain what we found in campus ministries and churches in America. We look at how well churches are doing at producing Christians who accept the core beliefs of the Christian worldview. We take a look at the church's approaches to evangelism and discipleship. We also look at the history of evangelical Protestantism in America.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Notes

Regarding the history of the evangelical church in America, I added a book to the References below by Dr. J. P. Moreland that did me a lot of good growing up. The first edition was published in 1997. I linked the new edition from 2012 below. My friend Andrew calls this book "LYGWYM". See if you can guess why. This book contains Dr. Moreland's famous "Wonmug" illustration.

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Most adult US Christians don't believe Holy Spirit is real: study by Christian Post

Two in Five Christians Are Not Engaged in Discipleship by Barna Group

Leftist Control Of Universities Is At Core Of Education Decline by Dennis Prager

Pro and Con: The Seeker-Sensitive Church Movement by Mark Mittelberg (supports seeker-sensitive) and Dr. Douglas Groothuis (opposes seeker-sensitive) We agree with Groothuis.

How The Federal Government Used Evangelical Leaders To Spread Covid Propaganda To Churches by Megan Basham

Socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Says Jesus Was a Refugee: Is She Right? by Wintery Knight

Love Your God with All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul by Dr. J. P. Moreland

Review Of Apologetics Book By Pastor Shows Where Church Needs To Improve by Wintery Knight

How Does Church Appear To Someone Raised In A Non-Christian Home? by Wintery Knight

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What is the evidence behind Dinesh D'Souza's new movie about the 2020 election?

May 2, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Catherine Engelbrecht is the Founder and President of "True the Vote"; an organization that tracks election integrity. During the run-up to Obama's 2012 re-election campaign, she applied for non-profit status for her organization. But the Obama administration blocked her application. Now, there's a brand new movie that presents data from her investigation of the 2020 election.

First, here's the trailer for the new movie:

The movie is focused on five key swing states during the 2020 election, including Arizona, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

Breitbart reports on the evidence backing the movie:

> Dirty voter rolls, the mass use of mail-in ballots, and privately-funded drop boxes "combined together to create an easy pass lane for fraud," as "mules" — or ballot traffickers — trafficked thousands of ballots, likely altering the outcome of the 2020 election, True the Vote president and founder Catherine Engelbrecht told *Breitbart News Saturday*.
>
> Engelbrecht, who leads the election integrity organization True the Vote, previewed the upcoming film by Dinesh D'Souza, *2,000 Mules,* which blows the lid off of the "organized crime" that took place leading up to the 2020 election. The film used data obtained by True the Vote, as Engelbrecht noted that they had so many calls "that had a similar characteristic of concern around what was happening with mail ballots and drop boxes." Because of that, they focused on that issue.
>
> "We geo fenced or put a sort of a digital fence, if you will, around all the drop boxes, and then we bought a tremendous amount of cellphone data and cellphone data that is transferred off of the apps of your phone that give you great indication about the whereabouts, the time, [and] the location," she began, noting that they watched the travel patterns of devices going to drop boxes, doing so in five states in five jurisdictions. At the same time, the organization fought for surveillance video around the drop boxes and were ultimately able to thread it all together, as seen in the film.

A mule is a person who repeatedly picked up batches of ballots and placed them in drop boxes.

And here's what Catherine discovered:

> Many of these "mules," or ballot traffickers, she continued, would go on routes "repeatedly, day after day."

> “One of our sort of top performers, if you will, in one 24-hour period went to 27 different drop boxes across six counties and five different nonprofit organizations in one 24-hour period,” she said.
>
> […]While she said they have to be cautious in how they describe the nonprofit organizations involved, Engelbrecht noted that “all of them were far left of center,” adding that they will release the data publicly in the coming weeks.
>
> Toward the end of the interview, *Breitbart News Saturday* host and Washington Bureau Chief Matthew Boyle asked if what occurred — which the organization shows through evidence — altered the outcome of the election.
>
> “Yes. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, yes,” she said.

I marked my calendar for May 7th, which is the digital premiere of the movie. It’s also in select theaters this week, May 2nd through May 4th. My local one is already sold out, though. I would have gone to see this in the theater. I normally like to buy DVDs of these movies, so I can show them to friends.

You can can find out the details here.

If unborn babies don’t have consciousness or don’t feel pain, may we kill them?

May 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Was having a conversation by e-mail yesterday with a pro-abortion atheist, and he gave two reasons why he supported abortion in the first and second trimester. First, he said that unborn babies can’t feel pain, so it’s OK to kill them. Second, he said that unborn babies don’t have consciousness, so it’s OK to kill them. I thought it might be useful to link to something that answers both of these objections.

Frank Beckwith is the author of “Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice“, which was published by Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote four easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal. Part IV is the one that has the response to the two questions raised by my atheist friend.

Part I. The Appeal to Pity

Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem

Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?

Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Excerpt:

> Some ethicists argue that the unborn becomes fully human sometime after brain development has begun, when it becomes sentient: capable of experiencing sensations such as pain. The reason for choosing sentience as the criterion is that a being that cannot experience anything (i.e., a presentient unborn entity) cannot be harmed. Of course, if this position is correct, then the unborn becomes fully human probably during the second trimester and at least by the third trimester. Therefore, one does not violate anyone’s rights when one aborts a nonsentient unborn entity. [13]
>
> There are several problems with this argument. First, it confuses harm with hurt and the experience of harm with the reality of harm. [14] One can be harmed without experiencing the hurt that sometimes follows from that harm, and which we often mistake for the harm itself. For example, a temporarily comatose person who is suffocated to death “experiences no harm,” but he is nevertheless harmed. Hence, one does not have to experience harm, which is sometimes manifested in hurt, in order to be truly harmed.
>
> Second, if sentience is the criterion of full humanness, then the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping would all have to be declared nonpersons. Like the presentient unborn, these individuals are all at the moment nonsentient though they have the natural inherent capacity to be sentient. Yet to countenance their executions would be morally reprehensible.

> Therefore, one cannot countenance the execution of some unborn entities simply because they are not currently sentient.
>
> Someone may reply that while these objections make important points, there is a problem of false analogy in the second objection: the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping once functioned as sentient beings, though they are now in a temporary state of nonsentience. The presentient unborn, on the other hand, were never sentient. Hence, one is fully human if one was sentient "in the past" and will probably become sentient again in the future, but this cannot be said of the presentient unborn.
>
> There are at least three problems with this response. First, to claim that a person can be sentient, become nonsentient, and then return to sentience is to assume there is some underlying personal unity to this individual that enables us to say that the person who has returned to sentience is the same person who was sentient prior to becoming nonsentient. But this would mean that sentience is not a necessary condition for personhood. (Neither is it a sufficient condition, for that matter, since nonhuman animals are sentient.) Consequently, it does not make sense to say that a person comes into existence when sentience arises, but it does make sense to say that a fully human entity is a person who has the natural inherent capacity to give rise to sentience. A presentient unborn human entity does have this capacity. Therefore, an ordinary unborn human entity is a person, and hence, fully human.
>
> Second, Ray points out that this attempt to exclude many of the unborn from the class of the fully human is "ad hoc and counterintuitive." He asks us to "consider the treatment of comatose patients. We would not discriminate against one merely for rarely or never having been sentient in the past while another otherwise comparable patient had been sentient….In such cases, potential counts for everything." [15]
>
> Third, why should sentience "in the past" be the decisive factor in deciding whether an entity is fully human when the presentient human being "is one with a natural, inherent capacity for performing personal acts?" [16] Since we have already seen that one does not have to experience harm in order to be harmed, it seems more consistent with our moral sensibilities to assert that what makes it wrong to kill the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, the momentarily unconscious, and the presentient unborn is that they all possess the natural inherent capacity to perform personal acts. And what makes it morally right to kill plants and to pull the plug on the respirator-dependent brain dead, who were sentient "in the past," is that their deaths cannot deprive them of their natural inherent capacity to function as persons, since they do not possess such a capacity.

These four essays are a very good introduction to common responses to pro-abortion arguments. I recommend that people get familiar with this, as once you look into it, you

will see that the abortion issue can be debated with as much confidence as William Lane Craig defends Christian theism. You will have the same access to scientific evidence and rational arguments on this topic, and so you will have the upper hand. And that's fun.

The best introductory book on the abortion / right to life issue is "The Case for Life" by pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf. The best comprehensive book is a tie between "The Ethics of Abortion" by Christopher Kaczor, and Frank Beckwith's "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice".

Pro-life or whole-life? The need for careful thinking

May 4, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post was authored by my mysterious pro-life friend. He is responding to religious leaders who don't think clearly about the right to life issue. Please share it on social media if you like it.

Suppose you are walking down the street one day, minding your own business, when you hear screams coming from a nearby house. You run over to investigate, and a woman runs out to tell you her child isn't breathing. You follow her into the backyard where you find a small child who was just pulled unconscious from a nearby pool. You call 9-11 and start performing CPR on the child, praying you will be able to save her. Paramedics arrive and take her to the hospital, and you find out that thankfully, she will live and make a full recovery. The local news happens to pick up the story, and you are hailed as a hero.

Then things take a strange twist. The neighbors who watched the whole incident take place but didn't intervene inform you that the child is being raised by a single mom, and that if the child had a father around, she wouldn't have stumbled into the pool in the first place, so why aren't you doing anything to fix the problem of single parent homes?

The situation gets even more bizarre. A local advocacy group asks why you aren't engaging in education efforts about pool safety. Other advocacy groups begin asking why you only focused on saving the lives of children who fall into pools and not children who die of gun violence, abusive homes, or from poverty. Then, when you attend church on Sunday, the pastor preaches a sermon about how Christ-followers must focus on the sanctity of all human life, not merely the lives of those drowning in pools. Finally, to top it all off, a few days later the child's estranged father, who has been skipping out on child support payments all year long, gets interviewed on the evening news, where he accuses you of all manner of character failings, saying that if you had truly been concerned about the life of his child, you would also pay for her schooling, her basic needs, and would ensure all of her needs throughout life are met.

If this whole scenario seems absurd, that's because it is. And yet, it matches real world events currently playing out for pro-life advocates.

Right now the moral legitimacy of the pro-life movement is being attacked from all angles. Consider the following comments from Progressive pastor John Pavlovitz. Writing in an article that went viral shortly before the 2016 Presidential Election, Pavlovitz had this to say to pro-life advocates:

"I actually don't believe you're pro-life, I believe you practice a far more selective and convenient defense of Humanity. From where I'm standing it seems as though 'Life' for you, comprises a very narrow demographic—one that bears a striking resemblance to you. The unborn are easy to advocate for because you can idealize them into something palatable to you, something benign and comfortable, something in your own image. You

see, it’s not that you’re really pro-life, you’re pro-straight, white, Christian fetuses.”

He then goes on a diatribe about how a real “pro-lifer” would act: They would oppose police brutality, they would be inclusive to LGBTQ communities, they would care for the poor, they would fight racism, so on and so forth. Pavlovitz isn’t alone in laying out this laundry list of “pro-life” activities that have nothing to do with abortion; in fact, this has become a favorite tactic of abortion choice advocates when faced with pro-life arguments: Turn around and attack the moral character of the pro-lifer in particular or the movement itself as inherently hypocritical. After all, who is going to listen to what a hypocrite has to say about right and wrong?(1)

As I’ve written about before, there are two types of people who raise the issue of consistency: Crusaders and Inquirers.

An Inquirer is someone who has genuine questions about what it means to be truly “pro-life”. She gets why abortion is wrong, but she is curious how her views about the value of human life in the womb should inform her when it comes to issues outside the womb. She also wonders why pro-life advocates focus more on abortion than other topics. Her questioning is honest, but often misinformed. Pro-life advocates will focus on abortion more than “outside the womb issues” because it is the only time in an innocent human being’s life we may enjoy the full protection of the law while we deliberately kill them. While an Inquirer may not still fully understand, she is on the right track.

The Crusader wants none of it. He’s just looking for a quick way to end the argument in his favor, and he will usually do it by making the pro-life advocate look stupid or wicked. He isn’t searching for an honest dialogue, he’s looking to win fights. John Pavlovitz is an example of a Crusader.

Here’s a simple way to defeat a Crusader: Call their bluff. When I’ve encountered Crusaders who charge me with being inconsistent in how I approach being “pro-life”, I usually ask a simple question:

“Tell me, if I became active on all the issues you brought up and agreed to support all your positions, will you join me in opposing abortion?”

They will almost always say no, to which I usually reply along the lines of “So why did you even bring up those other issues in the first place? If you think there is nothing wrong with abortion, then you need to defend that idea, instead of just attacking me personally.”(2)

Pro-life advocates don’t need to just sit by and take attacks on their character. They can and should when feasible point out the bad faith reasoning inherent in such attacks and address it, firmly but respectfully. Sometimes the best way to correct bad behavior and bad thinking is to call it for what it is.

Oddly, some pro-life advocates in recent years have begun adopting the very same sort of argument being advanced by John Pavlovitz, although instead of attacking the pro-life position, they are trying to change it into something else entirely. This new “pro-life” movement goes by a variety of names, such as the “Pro-Abundant Life” position, Whole Life position, and the Consistent Life position. While the names can vary, at its core the

ideas at play remain the same.

Consider the following remarks from Herbie Newell in the introduction to his book *Image Bearers: Shifting From Pro-Birth to Pro-life*, one of the best book-length articulations of the Whole Life viewpoint:

"Being pro-life means that not only do we see abortion as murder, but we also see our apathy against injustice toward life outside of the womb as a co-conspirator in the fight for life. It means we fight for racial Equality. It means we love the woman walking into the abortion clinic passionately with the love of Christ, and it means we embrace life no matter what syndrome may be attached to a person's identity.

There are many books written about being pro-life and combating abortion, but my hope is this small volume will bring awareness that **the pro-life ethic is so much bigger than just being pro-birth."** (emphasis in original)

Newell goes on to list issues that the pro-life ethic encompasses: Racism, family breakdown, sex trafficking, fatherlessness, elder abuse, and assisted suicide, among other things. His book is very well-written and very eloquent, and as a call for the Christian church as a whole to show concern for justice, I think it succeeds.

That's not where the issue lies. Instead of simply acknowledging that Christ-followers must promote justice in our society(something I agree with), he goes on to assert that all major justice issues of the day have to be taken on by the anti-abortion movement in order for said movement to truly be "pro-life". There are a multitude of problems with this idea.

For starters, it's quite arrogant to suggest that people who have spent much of if not their entire adult lives fighting against abortion at every level imaginable and often experiencing a great deal of hardship along the way are somehow not deserving of the title "pro-life" because they didn't spend enough time focused on other "outside the womb" issues. While I doubt Herbie Newell or other Whole Life advocates intend to come off this way, the suggestion smacks of self-righteous chest thumping.

Second, it's simply false to claim pro-life advocates are merely "pro-birth". Pro-life advocates do focus on forms of unjust killing outside the womb, and very often are the only ones concerned about it in the first place. It is pro-life advocates who have been advocating for the past two decades for legislation protecting babies born alive following botched abortions, sounding the alarm about the rising endorsement of infanticide in academia, and opposing the legalization of assisted suicide. It is also pro-life advocates who have brought attention to the deaths of women from botched abortions performed by doctors such as George Tiller and Kermit Gosnell.

Furthermore, the accusation anti-abortion activists are somehow guilty of wrongdoing for being "pro-birth" is itself absurd, when the alternative to birth in question is being killed outright. Of course pro-lifers want babies born; we want them to leave the womb alive and in one piece instead of as a pile of body parts in a surgical tray. For a self-declared pro-life advocate to suggest his colleagues are somehow apathetic or immoral because they focus primarily on opposing the butchery of fellow human beings before birth is

really quite scandalous.

Third, the Whole Life position assumes moral equivocation between issues that are inherently different in scope, form, and whom they affect.

Abortion is different from nearly every other issue that is currently being labeled “pro-life” by Whole Life advocates for the simple fact that few other issues concern the direct, intentional killing of innocent human beings, and the protection of said killing by law.

Outside a psych ward or a college philosophy department there are few people who will seriously suggest you can deliberately kill innocent human beings outside the womb. However, much ink has been spilled in defense of the idea that human beings may be killed before birth and need not be valued as human beings. Added to the abovementioned support for abortion is endorsement from nearly half the culture, an entertainment industry that regularly promotes abortion and the foolish sexual lifestyles that contribute to it, roughly half of congregants in American churches identifying as pro-choice on abortion, an entire political party that has declared it’s support(and sometimes celebration) for abortion, and lastly close to one million abortions happening per year. Given the odds pro-life advocates are up against in trying to stop the killing of human beings before birth, it’s nonsense to suggest we broaden our approach to other issues.

Pro-lifers have a narrow focus towards abortion because abortion is the intentional killing of an innocent human being. Few, if any other “outside the womb” issues routinely raised involve direct killing of innocent human beings, and are therefore different in scope and in form. To put it somewhat differently, outside the womb innocent human beings have the protection of law(even if imperfectly) from being intentionally destroyed; inside the womb they do not. It doesn’t take a genius to see why pro-lifers are going to spend more effort on behalf of the unborn who aren’t protected in law than those who already are.(3)

Why does any “outside the womb” issue raised deserve the label “pro-life” in the same way abortion does? Anyone who suggests a different social justice issue deserves addressing by anti-abortion advocates has some explaining to do, and needs to argue for their claim, not merely assert it. Those advocating a new definition of “pro-life” bear the burden of proof for their claims.(4)

This brings us to a fourth point; the Whole Life position being proposed often doesn’t meet its own standards.

It’s worth noting that people and groups focused on other “outside the womb” issues are never held to the same standards of being “pro-life” that anti-abortion activists are, even those these other issues are asserted to be just as pro-life as abortion. Groups dedicated to addressing other social justice issues are never called less than “pro-life” for failing to focus on abortion.

When was the last time a proponent of a Whole Life perspective told a ministry fighting sex trafficking that they weren’t spending enough time on abortion? Or a ministry dedicated to helping strengthen marriages that they needed to be more active in opposing abortion? The list can go on, but in practice the redefinition of “pro-life” seems to only be getting selectively applied to those focused on opposing abortion. The simple

reason why other ministries and groups are usually not held to this standard is because deep down, proponents of the Whole Life view know better. They know it's unreasonable(not to mention obscene) to tell a group dedicated to rescuing victims of sex trafficking that they are not moral enough to warrant support because they don't spend an equal time fighting abortion, or racism, or marriage breakdown.

This raises a question: Is the Whole Life position being more influenced by genuine moral reasoning, or by current political and cultural trends? The Whole Life position being offered seems to more match the moral feelings of the current culture(and curiously, those of the Democratic Party platform) than a genuine moral concern for fellow human beings. If one looks close enough this becomes obvious. While proposing a broader perspective on what it means to be "pro-life", proponents of the Whole Life position tend to ignore(and quite often attack) the moral concerns raised by political conservatives and libertarians in favor of the concerns of political liberals, and most often those who endorse abortion. Free-market capitalism, school choice, limited government, support for law enforcement, effective national defense, and entrepreneurship are all causes championed by conservative and libertarian thinkers as beneficial to fellow human beings; and yet rarely, if ever, are these causes considered as warranting the label "pro-life" by Whole Life advocates. The broadly defined "pro-life" perspective only seems to encompass the objectives of political liberals, making effort to exclude conservative and libertarian thought from the conversation.(5)

Ironically, as we saw from John Pavlovitz's article above, the broadening of "pro-life" also ends up more matching the laundry list of "pro-life" causes being used by abortion supporters to attack pro-life advocates than the moral objectives of the pro-life movement itself.

That brings up a final point: Why should those who support abortion get to dictate the moral objectives of those who oppose it? No effective social reform movement in history has *ever* succeeded by having it's goals redefined and reshaped by the opposition. Instead, effective social reform movements have succeeded where they stayed laser-focused on their goals and didn't get sidetracked by silly red herring arguments.

Conclusion

Whole Life advocates are not the mortal enemies of the pro-life movement or of unborn human beings. Most Whole Life Advocates are genuinely concerned about the lives of unborn children, and about the lives of other people. Many are doing phenomenal work on behalf of children and their parents. Their intentions are noble and they do want to see good done in the world.

That being said, having the best intentions is not a guarantee one will always exercise wisdom or prudence. Many of the most well-intentioned ideas of the past have turned out disastrous when implemented, and often hurt more people than they helped.

The core flaw of the Whole Life position is that it trades the emotional draw of being seen as morally awake to other issues of concern in the culture for the wise application of moral principles. It's important to be aware of the existence of wrongdoing in society;

that also means we need to be wise in what we spend our time addressing. All people are created equal; all issues are not. We must act accordingly.

This doesn't mean pro-life advocates can't be concerned with other "outside the womb" issues; they can. This does mean the wisdom of saying pro-life advocates *must* be concerned with other issues in order to be seen as truly "pro-life" needs to be called into serious question. Broadening our focus to issues outside the womb doesn't do much to help those being deliberately killed inside the womb. Instead it seeks to make pro-life advocates more liked by those who are already fighting tooth and nail to ensure we don't succeed in our endeavors to protect unborn children.

Gregg Cunningham has said it best: Effective social reformers are seldom liked, and liked social reformers are seldom effective. Focusing all our efforts on being liked by our critics will not save the unborn; it will ensure the killing of the unborn goes unnoticed and unquestioned. And that is as far as one can get from truly being "pro-life".

Endnotes

(1). Pavlovitz, who himself is an abortion advocate, never explains in his diatribe why pro-lifers are wrong about abortion. He ignores the issue and instead resorts to personal attacks and name-calling. Now, it's possible every pro-lifer in the world today is an ignorant, hypocritical, fetus-obsessed jerk. That proves nothing. Pro-life advocates argue abortion is wrong because it unjustly kills an innocent human being. Pavlovitz must answer our argument, not resort to personal insults. Ironically, by ignoring the nature of abortion, Pavlovitz himself is guilty of the same sort of hypocrisy he accuses his opponents of: Advocating only for human beings who bear a striking resemblance to himself, those who are already born

(2). There are a few who will bite the bullet and say yes. So follow up: "What difference is there between the unborn and the born that makes it acceptable to allow abortion until we have solved every other societal issues first? Why wait to take on abortion if it is the intentional killing of an innocent human being?" Now we're back to the central question in the abortion debate that matters: What are the unborn?

(3). As a small caveat, it is often asserted that police shootings and police brutality are just as much pro-life issues as abortion. While every police shooting is a tragedy, that does not mean police shootings are inherently unjust or the majority of police are morally out of control. There are many factors(legal, tactical, physiological, informational etc.) at play in every use of force by police that must be considered; factors which are routinely ignored by activists attacking what they see as pro-lifer's inconsistency. However, it would take a book-length response to examine all of these factors. See *In Defense of Self and Others… Issues, Facts, and Fallacies- The Realities of Law Enforcement's Use of Deadly Force* (3rd Ed.) by Urey W. Patrick and John C. Hall for a thorough examination of the topic.

(4.) A common trope is that "Abortion is not the only pro-life issue." This is usually said in regards to voting, and very often is used to justify voting for a pro-choice candidate over

a pro-life one. Even if abortion is not the only “pro-life” issue, that doesn’t mean it’s not the most important one. Given nearly one million abortions per year in the United States alone, abortion is obviously going to rank at the top of any list of “pro-life” issues

(5). More ironically, the deliberate killings of “Precious Image Bearers”(to use Herbie Newell’s term) who aren’t currently the subject of cultural focus tend to be ignored in Whole Life writings. The killings of police officers by armed criminals, victims killed or hurt in everyday violent crime, and veteran suicide tend to get
ignored in favor of issues which currently tug the cultural heartstrings, even though no one can seriously deny the abovementioned involve acts of gross injustice against valuable human beings. It’s ludicrous to demand anti-abortion activists meet a standard many Whole Life advocates often don’t adhere to.

Scott Klusendorf defends the pro-life view on the Unbelievable radio show

May 5, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of this debate

This is a re-post of a debate on abortion.

Here are the details:

> Justin hosts a discussion between Mara Clarke of the Abortion Support Network and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Instititute. Mara believes women should decide whether to terminate a pregnancy, but Scott says that all depends on whether we are dealing with a human life in the womb.

MP3 of this show

My snarky paraphrase of the debate (not exact):

- Speaker introductions
- Klusendorf: no justification for abortion is necessary if the unborn are not human
- Klusendorf: we need to address the issue "what is the unborn?" Are the unborn human?
- Klusendorf: SLED: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency
- Klusendorf: None of these things affect the value of a human being
- Klusendorf: Even if we don't KNOW whether the unborn is human
- Mara: I'm not going to debate when life begins
- Mara: Women know when life begins by feelings

- Mara: The moral decision is “whether I can take care of this child?”
- Brierley: When is an unborn being human?
- Mara: I refuse to debate that – the real question is whether women want their babies or not
- Mara: Forced pregnancy is not OK
- Brierley: Could your justification for abortion (not wanting to care for a child) work through all 9 months?
- Mara: Late term abortions are rare, so I don’t have to answer that question
- Mara: Abortion should be OK through all 9 months of pregnancy because women cannot be restricted
- Mara: Some women are poor, they need to be able to kill expensive babies at any time
- Klusendorf: although she says she won’t debate the unborn, she does take a position
- Klusendorf: she assumes the unborn is not human, because she says that insufficient funds is justification for abortion
- Klusendorf: no one argues that you can kill a two year old because they cost money, because she thinks they are human
- Klusendorf: she is begging the question by assuming the unborn are not human, but that is the issue we must resolve
- Klusendorf: I am pro-choice on many other things, e.g. women choosing their own husbands, religion, etc.
- Klusendorf: Some choices are wrong – Mara might be right, but she needs to make the case for the unborn not being human
- Brierley: What is your reason for thinking that an unborn child is different from a 2-year old?
- Mara: An unborn child is not the same as a 2-year old, in my personal opinion
- Mara: I am not a debater, so I don’t have to provide reasoning for my assertion, I just feel it
- Mara: Not everybody agrees with Scott, they don’t have to have a rational argument, they just need to feel differently
- Mara: From my experience, when a woman doesn’t want to be pregnant, then she should be able to not be pregnant
- Mara: Women shouldn’t be punished with a baby that she doesn’t want, even if she chooses to have recreational sex
- Brierley: What do you think of women who think the unborn is human and do it anyway?
- Klusendorf: It’s interesting that they never kill their toddlers for those reasons
- Klusendorf: I layed out scientific and philosophical reasons for the humanity of the unborn
- Klusendorf: Her response was “but some people disagree with you”
- Klusendorf: People disagreed about whether slavery was wrong, or whether women should be able to vote

- Klusendorf: that doesn't mean there is no right answer – the right answer depends on the arguments
- Klusendorf: if absence of agreement makes a view false, then it makes HER pro-choice view false as well
- Klusendorf: she did make an argument for the unborn child having no rights because of the location
- Klusendorf: she needs to explain to us why location matters – what about location confers value
- Mara: I'm not going to let Scott frame my debate for me!!!
- Mara: women get pregnant and they don't want their babies! should we put them in jail!!!!
- Klusendorf: I didn't just give my opinion, I had science and philosophy, the issue is "what is the unborn?"
- Mara: philosophical and scientific debates are unimportant, I am an expert in real women's lives
- Klusendorf: Which women? Women in the womb or only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Only those outside the womb
- Klusendorf: Only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Women living outside the womb have a right to kill women inside the womb – women have bodily autonomy
- Klusendorf: then does a pregnant woman with nausea have a right to take a drug for it that will harm her unborn child?
- Mara: Unborn children are only valuable if they are wanted, unborn children only deserve protection if they are wanted
- Mara: There are restrictions on abortion – you can't get an abortion through all nine months in the US
- Mara: There is a 24-week limit in the UK as well
- Klusendorf: There are no restrictions on abortion that conflict with "a woman's health" because Supreme Court said
- Mara: where are these late term abortion clinics?
- Klusendorf: (he names two)
- Mara: that's not enough!!! we need more! where is there one in Pennsylvania?
- Klusendorf: well, there used to be Gosnell's clinic in Pennsylvania, and you could even get an infanticide there….
- Brierley: What about Dawkins' view that it is moral to abort Down's Syndrome babies?
- Klusendorf: he is ignoring the scientific case and philosophical case for the pro-life
- Klusendorf: the pro-life view is a true basis for human equality

What I wanted Scott to ask was whether sex-selection abortions were OK with her. Since her reasoning is "if it's unwanted, it has no rights", then that would mean sex-selection abortions are just fine. That's what a UK abortion expert recently argued. And I also posted recently about how sex-selection abortions are not prosecuted in the UK. If you're

looking for a war on women, there it is.

Are feminists right to think that gender-neutral marriage makes women happier?

May 6, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

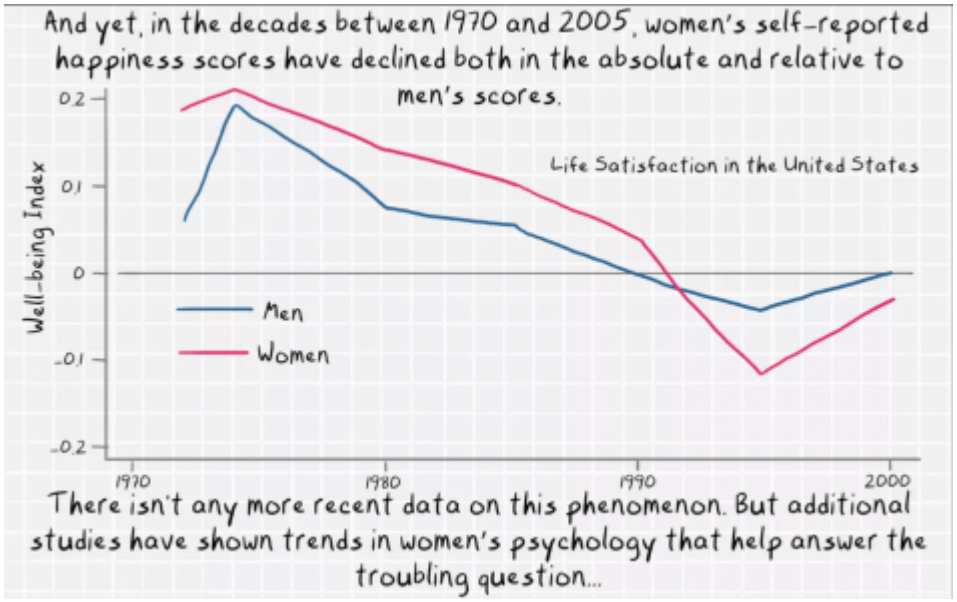

Male and female happiness throughout America's adoption of radical feminism

I was reading this article by a feminist fiction writer on Vox, where she explains that although feminists have gotten what they wanted (careers, contraceptives, promiscuity, abortion, no-fault-divorce, daycare, etc. it hasn't made them happier. So, what does this feminist fiction writer think would make feminists happier?

She gives two reasons why women women are still unhappy after feminism has been adopted by our society:

- men don't do enough housework
- women are not as successful as men because they are discriminated against, the so-called "glass ceiling"

I think those complaints are pretty popular among feminists. Let's take a look at some studies to see if her opinions are supported by peer-reviewed studies.

First study:

> COUPLES who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a study has found.

> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled *Equality in the Home*, said.

Second study:

> Researchers at the University of Illinois examined data on nearly 1,500 men and 1,800 women, aged between 52 and 60. Their well-being was evaluated through surveys.
>
> The researchers first found that men's well-being decreased once they had exited the workforce to become home-makers.
>
> Meanwhile, the inverse was not so for women: Women's psychological well-being was not affected by leaving their jobs to become stay-at-home mothers.

Third study:

> A study called "Egalitarianism, Housework and Sexual Frequency in Marriage," which appeared in The American Sociological Review last year, surprised many, precisely because it went against the logical assumption that as marriages improve by becoming more equal, the sex in these marriages will improve, too. Instead, it found that when men did certain kinds of chores around the house, couples had less sex. Specifically, if men did all of what the researchers characterized as feminine chores like folding laundry, cooking or vacuuming — the kinds of things many women say they want their husbands to do — then couples had sex 1.5 fewer times per month than those with husbands who did what were considered masculine chores, like taking out the trash or fixing the car. It wasn't just the frequency that was affected, either — at least for the wives. The more traditional the division of labor, meaning the greater the husband's share of masculine chores compared with feminine ones, the greater his wife's reported sexual satisfaction.

Regarding the pay gap, that is entirely caused by women's own choices. E.g. – the choice to study creative writing instead of petroleum engineering, the choice to work 35 hour weeks instead of 70 hour weeks, etc.

Fourth study: (summarized by AEI economist)

> When the [Bureau of Labor Statistics] reports that women working full-time in 2018 earned 81.4% of what men earned working full-time, that is very much different from saying that women earned 81.4% of what men earned for doing exactly the same work while working the exact same number of hours in the same occupation, with exactly the same educational background and exactly the same years of continuous, uninterrupted work experience, and with exactly the same marital and family (e.g., number of children) status. As shown above, once we start controlling individually for the many relevant factors that affect earnings, e.g., hours worked, age, marital status, and having children, most of the raw earnings differential disappears.

Fifth study:

> This study leads to the unambiguous conclusion that the differences in the compensation of men and women are the result of a multitude of factors and

> that the raw wage gap should not be used as the basis to justify corrective action. Indeed, there may be nothing to correct. The differences in raw wages may be almost entirely the result of the individual choices being made by both male and female workers.

I think that women are entitled to make their own decisions, but they aren't allowed to force the rest of us to subsidize their failures and celebrate their destructive outcomes.

I could go on, but I think enough has been said to show that research is very much at odds with feminist rhetoric. They *feel* they know what will make them happy and we gave them everything they asked for. They eliminated shaming of promiscuity with sex education. They get preferential treatment in the schools in a female-dominated education system. They are hired because of affirmative action quotas. They get expensive daycare, government schools, welfare and other programs. Taxes are raised to equalize outcomes for divorced women who choose men for feelings, and then nuke their own marriage enterprise. We have been on a long experiment of giving feminists everything they *felt* they wanted, at the expense of men's rights and children's rights, and it hasn't even produced the results that feminists *felt* it would.

The social costs of feelings-based decision-making

Let's look at two examples of policies that feminists asked for in the past, which didn't work out the way they wanted.

I can understand why feminists would introduce sex education. They *felt* that "if everyone is having sex, then I won't be the only one chasing attention from hot no-commitment bad boys by giving them recreational sex before marriage". They wanted to eliminate the standards of chastity and marriage-focused dating and normalize fun-focused drunken promiscuity. And they got that. But since they didn't consult any research and evidence about how that would affect their future marriage stability and marriage happiness, they are even more unhappy than before.

How about no-fault divorce? No-fault divorce was brought in by a coalition of feminists, Marxists and trial lawyers. The Marxists want to destroy the family in order to increase dependence on the state. The trial lawyers wanted to make money. And the feminists thought that the standard approach to courting and marriage was just too much work. They didn't want to be chaste. They didn't want to be sober. They didn't want to evaluate a man for traditional husband and father roles. The no-fault divorce laws gave them an escape from the messes caused by *their own feelings-driven choices*. But divorce just makes makes men and women much poorer, and passes the costs of supporting single mothers onto taxpayers.

And the costs of the failures of feminism are passed onto taxpayers.

Consider this study:

> This paper examines the growth of government during this century as a result of giving women the right to vote. Using cross-sectional time-series data for

> 1870–1940, we examine state government expenditures and revenue as well as voting by U.S. House and Senate state delegations and the passage of a wide range of different state laws. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue and more liberal voting patterns for federal representatives, and these effects continued growing over time as more women took advantage of the franchise. Contrary to many recent suggestions, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s, and it helps explain why American government started growing when it did.

We are already $28 trillion in debt, partly because of feminism's replacement of husbands and families with higher taxes and big government. Every time we transfer money from tax-paying men to feminists to fix their mistakes, it leaves less money in the hands of the men who actually want to get married. The declining value of marriage after feminism for men explains why marriage is being delayed, and why marriage rates are plunging.

Free health care? How much does Canada's universal system cost?

May 7, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had a talk with a Canadian recently about health care. He had a lot to say about his own country's free health care system, and how wonderful it was to not have to pay for health care. I was skeptical about the rosy picture he painted. After all, I have friends in Canada, and they have told me about their country's high tax rates. And I've heard about the waiting lists, too. Let's look at the evidence.

The Fraser Institute is a non-partisan think tank based in Canada that looks at policies to see whether they are achieving good results for Canadians. Each year they release statistics about the cost and performance of Canada's health care system. The most recent report is for 2021 (preliminary numbers).

The report (PDF) says:

> In 2021, the average unattached (single) individual, earning an average income of $49,215, will pay approximately $4,296 for public health care insurance. An average Canadian family consisting of two adults and two children (earning approximately $150,177) will pay about $15,039 for public health care insurance.

Do Canadians really pay $15,039 per year for health care? Or are they paying to get on a *waiting list* for health care?

Let's see another 2021 report, this one about health care wait times:

> Specialist physicians surveyed report a median waiting time of 25.6 weeks between referral from a general practitioner and receipt of treatment—longer than the wait of 22.6 weeks reported in 2020. This year's wait time is the longest wait time recorded in this survey's history and is 175% longer than in 1993, when it was just 9.3 weeks.

The waiting time for a referral to a general practitioner to a specialist increased from 10.5 weeks in 2020 to 11.1 weeks in 2021. And the waiting time from seeing a specialist to actually getting treatment increased from 12.1 weeks in 2020 to 14.5 weeks in 2021. And remember, this is *Canadian* health care. This isn't the Mayo Clinic, the Cleveland Clinic, or Johns Hopkins. This is not the best health care in the world. That's why Canadian politicians who swear their loyalty to the government health care system pack their bags and make for America when they need treatment. And they pay out of pocket for the best care.

Well, maybe these wait times are because the government is spending less on health care?

No. Actually, costs have been going up, and faster than other products and services.

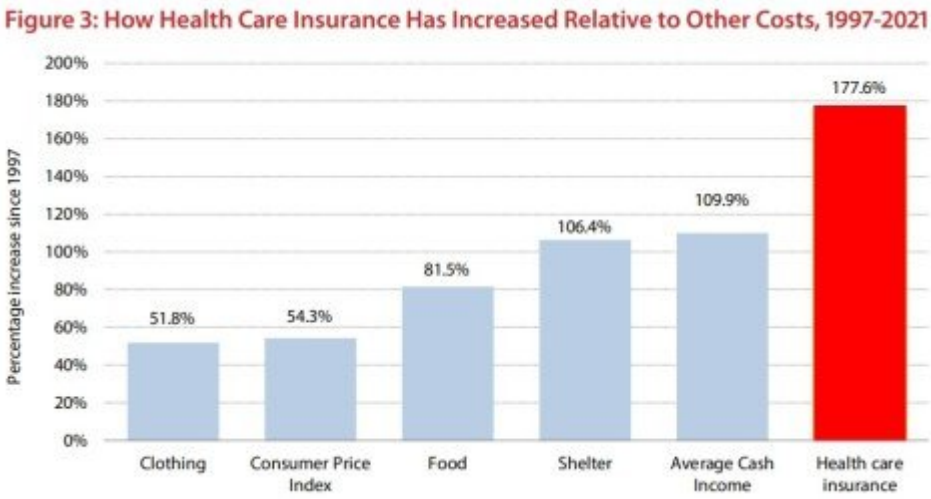

Canada Health Care Costs Inflation 2021

Why is it going up? Well, like the public school monopoly, most of the money goes to administrators. There is no competitive free market system, where providers compete with each other for the dollars of their customers. No one cares about reducing costs to consumers while improving quality. Why would they? Canadians have zero choice in who gives them health care.

I did a quick search of Canadian news stories for the last week, to see what Canadians say about their health care system when they are talking to each other, instead of to Americans.

Here's a story from the Globe and Mail, the more leftist of Canada's national newspapers. (archived here)

It says:

> One of the biggest problems such provinces are facing is a critical shortage of family doctors. One in five people in B.C. don't have one, with more people pouring into the province every day. Last year, 100,000 people arrived – a record number that only exacerbates a desperate situation.
>
> […]According to Statistics Canada, 4.6 million people over the age of 12 did not have a family doctor in 2019.
>
> […]The shortage of physicians is a problem that has been growing over the years. Canada now ranks 51st in doctors per population, according to Index Mundi. In the 1970s, we ranked anywhere between fourth and eighth. The nursing shortage in Canada is just as severe.

And they confirm the Fraser Institute's per-capita cost number:

> The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development has placed Canada 31st in hospital beds per population among the 38 countries that the OECD rank. In the meantime, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, total health care spending in the country was estimated to be $308-billion in 2021 – or **$8,019 per Canadian**. This number represents 12.7 per cent of our GDP, which puts our health care spending among the highest in the world.

$8,019 per Canadian! That's "free health care"?

The article talks about British Columbia in particular:

> B.C. Liberal MLA Shirley Bond pointed out that, on one day this week, almost every urgent- and primary-care centre in the city of Victoria was at capacity and not taking patients. The only one that was had a 4.5 hour wait.

My Canadian challenger said that Americans were dying in the streets, because they couldn't get health care. But I think he was actually talking about his own country. Can you imagine not being able to get into an emergency room, or an urgent care provider? That's what they have in British Columbia.

Where I live, I can go to 3 different hospital systems within 10 miles of my house. And that's not counting the urgent care clinics on every city block. 24-hour pharmacies open on Easter at 3 AM. My health insurance costs $85 a paycheck. And when I needed an MRI, I got it the same week.

Still think you want Canadian health care? Still think you want a government monopoly to make everyone "equal"?

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 4: Strategies for Making More Effective Christians, Part 1

May 8, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 4 of the Knight and Rose podcast! Last week, we talked about what we found in campus ministries and churches. In today's episode, we suggest ways for the church to build more effective Christians. If you like episode 4, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our new Youtube channel. We would really appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple iTunes / Apple Podcasts.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 4:

Episode 4 Summary:

Last week, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discussed how the church is falling short in evangelism and discipleship. In this episode, we discuss strategies for improving mentoring and discipleship of young Christians. We talk about how to help Christians love God more. We talk about strategies for talking about Christianity to non-Christians. We talk about forming teams to advance the gospel. We talk about which areas of knowledge can help you become a stronger, more effective Christian.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Notes

At one point in the podcast, I mentioned reading papers and books that feature atheist perspectives in order "*to learn how to defend it*". I meant to say "*to learn how they defend it*". I recommend reading atheist perspectives in debates, so you get both sides. Lots of debate transcripts can be found on William Lane Craig's web site Reasonable Faith.

We recorded this episode way back in February 2022. There's been an update about Rose's atheist neighbor who is a scientist. In the podcast, she says that after a dozen conversations with her, he thinks that there are good scientific reasons to think

Christianity is true. This week, Rose told me that he now thinks that Christianity is the best explanation for the scientific evidence around the creation of the universe, and the cosmic fine-tuning.

References

Responding to the Philosophical Problem of Evil by Steven B. Cowan

The Origin Of Life, Part 2 Of 2: Biological Information by Wintery Knight

Recommended books by famous black economist Thomas Sowell

Money, Greed, and God 10th Anniversary Edition: The Christian Case for Free Enterprise by Jay Richards

The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution by Barry Asmus and Wayne Grudem

Institute for Family Studies (web site that features studies of interest to Christians on social issues)

William Lane Craig's Secret Weapon Is His Amazing Wife Jan by Wintery Knight

Dr. Craig's Secret Weapon (Reasonable Faith podcast)

About Wintery Knight (lists some of the movies I think have something to offer Christians)

Rifleman Dodd: A Novel Of The Peninsular Campaign by C. S. Forester

Are Christians Responsible For Making Plans And Making Good Decisions? (about Rifleman Dodd) by Wintery Knight

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Prepare to defend innocent unborn children with these 10 points

May 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last week, secular leftist domestic terrorists fire-bombed the offices of a pro-life group. Let's see the news story, then we'll look at an article to prepare you to make the case for the right to life of unborn babies. And I'll give some tips for being able to discuss these points without being fire-bombed. I have something for regular people, and something stronger if you work in a professional environment.

The New York Post reports:

> Fire broke out at the office of an anti-abortion group in Wisconsin on Sunday, and cops say they suspect arson.
>
> The blaze at Madison's Wisconsin Family Action — a political-action committee that according to its Web site works to "advance Judeo-Christian principles" — started around 6 a.m. when flames were noticed in its office, police told Madison.com.
>
> A wall on the building of the organization also had been spray-painted with the message, "if abortions aren't safe, then you aren't either," authorities said.
>
> […]Police also said a Molotov cocktail that had not been lit was found inside the building.

People on the secular left seem to be very comfortable using threats and violence to get their way. And I guess if you value recreational sex without consequences so much that you're willing to use violence against unborn babies, then anything is possible.

A leftist radical threw Molotov cocktails into Wisconsin Family Action's office

Life News had more to report:

> Abortion activists planned to "raise hell" at churches across the country on Mother's Day with protests and, some fear, violence as outrage grows in response to a leaked draft opinion from the U.S. Supreme Court that overturns *Roe v. Wade*.
>
> Pro-life pregnancy centers and pro-life advocates already have been the targets of vandalism, violence and harassment this week in response to the news.
>
> […]Ruth Sent Us, a pro-abortion group that allegedly posted the addresses of the Supreme Court justices online publicly to encourage harassment, is calling for protests outside Catholic churches this Sunday, Mother's Day.

How do you respond to someone who is willing to use violence in order to punish people who stand up for tiny little babies? Well, That's what the second half of the post is about. Many independent voters support Democrats in elections, not because they are morally evil, but because they are just lacking in information. And I'm going to give you the information you need to change their minds.

Unborn baby is a real human being, with human DNA, from conception

Here's a good article written by pro-life apologist, Scott Klusendorf.

He lists 10 points:

1. Pro-life advocates present a formal case for their position.
2. A pro-life advocate can defend that syllogism in 1 minute or less.
3. That abortion intentionally kills an innocent human being is conceded by many who perform and defend the practice.
4. The Bible is pro-life even if the word "abortion" does not appear.
5. The Bible's alleged silence on abortion does not mean that its authors condoned the practice.
6. Preaching on abortion is not a distraction from the Great Commission responsibilities of the local church, but integral to it.

7. The pro-life position does not rely on personal perspectives.
8. Pro-life Christians tell a better equality story.
9. Abortion-victim photography changes the narrative.
10. The remedy for post-abortion guilt is not avoidance. It's forgiveness.

Let's look at number 2:

> "I am pro-life because the science of embryology establishes that from the earliest stages of development, you were a distinct, living, and whole human being. You didn't come from an embryo; you once were an embryo. True, you were immature and had yet to visibly develop, but the kind of thing you were was not in question. And there is no essential difference between the embryo you once were and the adult you are today that justifies killing you at that earlier stage of development. Differences of size, development, environment, and dependency are not good reasons for killing you then but not now."

I like this, because this feels to me like arguing for the origin of the universe, or the cosmic fine-tuning, or biological information in the origin of life, or the sudden origin of body plans in the Cambrian fossils. I love when I can argue from science. Science is strength in a debate. Science works, and that's what we should be relying on.

Abortion isn't a political issue. It is a science issue. We aren't discussing politics. We aren't discussing feelings. We aren't discussing personal experiences. We aren't discussing your pastor. We aren't discussing your parents. We aren't discussing your church. We are discussing scientific evidence. I'm not interested in your feelings. I'm not interested in the community that gives you social approval. I'm interested in facts. Have you got any facts? I have scientific facts. I want to live my life in a way that respects science. I don't form my worldview on the basis of what feels good, or what makes people like me. That's for children.

Don't get fire-bombed by secular left domestic terrorists

If you are having conversations within earshot of domestic terrorists, e.g. – Democrats, antifa, secular leftists, etc. – then you can just say that this is what a pro-lifer said to you. The important thing is to get the arguments out there. Just tell them that your friend Wintery told you why you should be pro-life, and gave you the Klusendorf article. Get the evidence out there, but take no position. That still does the work of persuading people.

Also, if you are in a professional environment, I found this PDF by Dr. Maureen Condic very useful. That's a peer-reviewed article with footnotes, useful for grad school or white collar offices. Just leave the article on your desk, and say Wintery e-mailed it to you. If you just want quotes piled on top of quotes from science textbooks, print out this PDF. It's filled with quotations from embryology textbook, all confirming the full humanity of the embryo.

We have elections in November. We can't allow the political party of selfishness and sexual anarchy to win those elections. Now is the time to debate. It's not good for our character to do harm to little living creatures with human DNA. We are better than that.

Democrats schedule Senate vote to abolish all state-level restrictions on abortion

May 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Back in 2020, there were two kinds of Christians talking about policy. On the one hand, we had people like David French, Tim Keller, Russell Moore, John Piper, Beth Moore, etc. They were focused on Trump's mean tweets. On the other hand, there were policy-oriented conservatives, who were looking at legislation that the Biden administration was likely to pass.

I was one of the latter. I talked about the Equality Act, which makes it illegal for Christians to state and defend traditional Christian moral teachings about sex and sexuality. And I talked about the Women's Health Protection Act, which rolls back *every single restriction on abortion from conception to birth, in all 50 states.* Legislation should have been the priority for the "Evangelicals for Biden". But it wasn't. Because they thought that the election was an opportunity for them to virtue signal to their liberal friends. Who card about laws and policies?

The Wall Street Journal reports: (archive)

> Protesters marched on the homes of conservative Supreme Court Justices over the weekend, an ugly attempt to scare them into saving Roe v. Wade. This week the drama moves to the Senate, where Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer plans a vote on a sweeping bill to override state laws and set a national abortion policy.
>
> […]The WHPA would guarantee abortion access "at any point or points in time prior to fetal viability," about 23 weeks. Women seeking such services could not be asked to "disclose the patient's reason." Some states have tried to prohibit sex-selective abortion, the practice usually of terminating a girl merely because a boy is desired. The WHPA appears to protect that choice.
>
> After fetal viability, the WHPA would assure a right to an abortion whenever the physician's "good-faith medical judgment" is that "the pregnancy would pose a risk to the pregnant patient's life or health." What counts as "health"? This is sometimes defined to include mental, emotional or familial factors, a loophole that permits elective abortions, more or less, through all nine months of pregnancy.

As long as a single health care provider agrees that the pregnancy is a risk to the mother's health or life, then the abortion is legal, in any state, through all 9 months of pregnancy.

Conscience protections would be gone:

> The legislation also exempts itself from the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which is why Ms. Collins says it would undercut "basic conscience protections" for religious healthcare providers. In its findings, the bill says abortion access

> “has been obstructed” by state “parental involvement laws (notification and consent).”

Can you imagine being a doctor or a nurse and being forced to perform an abortion, or lose your job? Would you like to live in a world where the only people who can provide health care are people who think that it’s OK to kill a 9-month-old baby a few minutes before the baby is born? That’s what the Democrat party wants. And Evangelicals for Biden agrees with them on abortion. This is my worst nightmare. Imagine choosing between feeding your family or performing abortions!

I can just imagine that it will become illegal to speak out against abortion overnight. The Democrats would love that. Look how they are using threats and violence already against crisis pregnancy centers and churches.

The bill has already passed in the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives. Biden will sign the bill, if it passed the Senate. Please pray about this, because this vote is happening this week.

DeSantis: Florida schools will teach students about the historical record of communism

May 11, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have some exciting news! Everyone knows that conservatives are monitoring people who could run for President on the Republican ticket in 2024. Some people want Trump again, but he's looking pretty old right now… Other people are looking for a governor who has a good record of advocating for conservatives. Ron DeSantis is at the top of that pile. And there is news about him!

Daily Wire reports:

> Florida Republican Governor Ron DeSantis signed a bill Monday morning at Miami's Freedom Tower that will require "Victims of Communism Day" to be observed in the state's public high schools.
>
> The bill, HB 395, mandates that public schools instruct students on the horrors of communism each year on November 7 or a preceding school day. The "Victims of Communism Day" legislation passed the Florida House and Senate unanimously earlier this year.
>
> "We want to make sure that every year folks in Florida, but particularly our students, will learn about the evils of communism, the dictators that have led communist regimes, and the hundreds of millions of individuals who suffered and continue to suffer under the weight of this discredited ideology," DeSantis said at a press conference.

And don't forget, DeSantis has already signed bills to:

- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women's sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Many cynical people like to say that there isn't much difference between Republicans and Democrats on social issues. But those people aren't following the legislation. If you watch the legislation, Republicans do a lot for social conservatives.

Communism in the Soviet Union

Let's take a look at what Josef Stalin did during his rule of the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 1930s.

The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism

> in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

Let's see more from a peer-reviewed journal article authored by Crispin Paine of the University College, London:

> Atheist propaganda and the struggle against religion began immediately after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917. While social change would, under Marxist theory, bring religion to disappear, Leninists argued that the Party should actively help to eradicate religion as a vital step in creating 'New Soviet Man'. The energy with which the Party struggled against religion, though, varied considerably from time to time and from place to place, as did its hostility to particular faith groups. The 1920s saw the closure of innumerable churches and synagogues (and to a lesser extent mosques) and the active persecution of clergy and harassment of believers.

I used to meet Christian women as an undergraduate who had learned how wonderful communism was in their non-STEM classes. Clearly, the professors were not teaching the truth about communism's record to these Christian women. Communism is atheistic at its core, and that communism is totally hostile to Christians. To the point of mass murder.

The Ukraine Famine

Take a look at this UK Daily Mail article about a great achievement of the atheist Josef Stalin, which occurred in 1932-1933.

Excerpt:

> Now, 75 years after one of the great forgotten crimes of modern times, Stalin's man-made famine of 1932/3, the former Soviet republic of Ukraine is asking the world to classify it as a genocide.
>
> The Ukrainians call it the Holodomor – the Hunger.
>
> Millions starved as Soviet troops and secret policemen raided their villages, stole the harvest and all the food in villagers' homes.
>
> They dropped dead in the streets, lay dying and rotting in their houses, and some women became so desperate for food that they ate their own children.
>
> If they managed to fend off starvation, they were deported and shot in their hundreds of thousands.
>
> So terrible was the famine that Igor Yukhnovsky, director of the Institute of National Memory, the Ukrainian institution researching the Holodomor, believes

> **as many as nine million may have died.**
>
> […]Between four and five million died in Ukraine, a million died in Kazakhstan and another million in the north Caucasus and the Volga.
>
> By 1933, 5.7 million households – somewhere between ten million and 15 million people – had vanished. They had been deported, shot or died of starvation.

And over in communist China, the death toll was 45 million *in 4 years*.

Communism in China

Story here in the left-wing UK Independent.

> Excerpt:
>
> Speaking at The Independent Woodstock Literary Festival, Frank Dikötter, a Hong Kong-based historian, said he found that during the time that Mao was enforcing the Great Leap Forward in 1958, in an effort to catch up with the economy of the Western world, he was responsible for overseeing "one of the worst catastrophes the world has ever known".
>
> Mr Dikötter, who has been studying Chinese rural history from 1958 to 1962, when the nation was facing a famine, compared the systematic torture, brutality, starvation and killing of Chinese peasants to the Second World War in its magnitude. At least 45 million people were worked, starved or beaten to death in China over these four years; the worldwide death toll of the Second World War was 55 million.

If you are ever debating with a communist, you should know about the book "The Black Book of Communism", which puts the total death toll of communist regimes at over 100 million. And it's published by Harvard University Press.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

May 12, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.
>
> But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.
>
> There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God

exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.

One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.

So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.

> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, “So is there a God or not?”

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these “subjective atheists”?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says “I lack a belief in the gravitational force!”. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God’s existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don’t care about a person’s psychology.

How the Biden administration raised oil and gas prices, and caused inflation

May 13, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Before we look at the Biden administration's actions on oil and gas, let's review how prices are set in a free market economy. When supply goes down and demand stays the same, then prices rise. That's because more people want to buy a resource that has become more scare, so sellers can raise the price. Now, has the Biden administration taken action to reduce the supply of oil and gas?

Well, consider what he did right after taking office in January 2021.

CNBC explains:

> President Joe Biden on Wednesday signed a series of executive orders that prioritize climate change across all levels of government and put the U.S. on track to curb planet-warming carbon emissions.
>
> Biden's orders direct the secretary of the Interior Department to halt new oil and natural gas leases on public lands and waters, and begin a thorough review of existing permits for fossil fuel development.
>
> […]On his first day in office last week, Biden had the United States re-enter the Paris accord. He also cancelled the permit for the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline.

The Keystone XL pipeline would have allowed us to purchase oil and gas from Canada, which is much better than buying it from Russia, the Middle East, etc. Biden loves Russia. One might even say that he colludes with Russia to help them invade Ukraine – by helping them build their military. Biden gave approval for Russia to construct the Nord Stream 2 pipeline from Russia to Germany, so that they could sell all their oil and gas to European countries.

Nord Stream 2

That's what Democrat voters voted for in 2020: a pipeline for Russia, so they could sell oil

and gas and invade Ukraine.

European countries are desperate for oil and gas, after having exchanged their conventional energy sources for green energy sources. Green energy sources produce low amounts of energy, and are inconsistent, while costing more than conventional energy sources. Since the green plan didn't work out, the Europeans have to enrich Russia now. They make a show of being made at Russia, but they (like Biden) aren't willing to develop their own energy.

How did American energy producers respond to having their lease applications denied, and their existing leases and pipelines canceled?

> Biden's moratorium on oil and gas leases won't end fossil fuel extraction since industry leaders currently hold undeveloped leases. Drilling on public lands generates billions of dollars in revenue but comprises roughly a quarter of the country's greenhouse gas emissions.
>
> Oil and gas producers have strongly opposed Biden's move and are expected to challenge the order in court.
>
> "Penalizing the oil and gas industry kills good-paying American jobs, hurts our already struggling economy, makes our country more reliant on foreign energy sources, and impacts those who rely on affordable and reliable energy," Anne Bradbury, president of the American Exploration and Production Council, said in a statement.
>
> Environmental groups, who have long pushed for the changes sought by Biden, praised the orders.

Has Biden learned his lesson from the huge spike in gas prices? Is he concerned about the widespread inflation that is caused by the spike in energy prices?

Nope!

The Federalist notes:

> CBS News revealed the Biden administration canceled more oil and gas leases across the country this week as soaring gas prices reached new heights Wednesday.
>
> The Department of Interior canceled plans to drill in more than 1 million acres in Alaska's Cook Inlet, arguing "lack of industry interest," on top of canceling a pair of leases in the Gulf of Mexico over "conflicting court rulings."
>
> […]The administration's relentless animosity towards fossil fuels, showcased in its repeated cancelation of oil and gas projects, has chilled investment in the capital- and labor-intensive industry. This keeps production down despite rising demand at home and turmoil in markets abroad.
>
> […]In Alaska, upon inauguration Biden canceled leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which is forecast to hold between 4 to 12 billion barrels of recoverable oil. He closed another 7 million acres from the state's National

> Petroleum Reserve off from development last month.

What happens when investors see that the Biden administration is taxing, regulating and blocking oil and gas development? They say “we would do better investing our money elsewhere”. Oil and gas producers get the message very quickly, and they stop creating new energy sources. That’s how supply dries up. And when supply is reduced, prices go up.

Biden tried to fix the rising prices by getting Russia and the Middle East to drill more, and by stealing the strategic oil reserve, which is primarily designed for use during a crisis. But Biden considers his falling poll numbers a crisis. And begging our enemies to produce the oil that we should be producing seems right to him.

> The president has turned to the nation’s emergency petroleum reserves for desperate political capital ahead of the November midterms… With no plans announced to restock the emergency supplies, Biden ordered the self-proclaimed “unprecedented” release of 1 million barrels of oil a day onto the market for the next six months beginning Sunday.

The new Democrat strategy is actually the old Democrat strategy used by Democrat President Jimmy Carter in the 1970s: to impose price controls on oil and gas:

Javier Blas
@JavierBlas

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says Democrats will next week present a bill on gasoline price gouging.

The bill will enable the president to issue emergency declaration making it illegal to increase the price of gasoline. "Price gouging needs to be stopped."

#OOTT #NoJoke

10:39 AM · May 12, 2022 · Twitter Web App

Gas Lines

That led to massive gas lines in the 1970s, because suppliers shut down when they realized they couldn’t make enough money to stay in business. There was no money to be made in producing energy, so energy companies just slowed down or stopped producing. Would you go to work if the government took 80% of what you earned?

People in America would line up around the block for gas, and they could only get a certain limited amount. Gas was only sold during certain hours of the day.

Gas Lines

I’m sure that the young people won’t have heard about the results of setting price controls, but it’s in the first few chapters of Thomas Sowell’s “Basic Economics”. But if their teachers have no ability in economics, then how would the student learn it? They can’t.

How the Biden administration Democrats used woke evangelicals to lie to churches

May 14, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Megan Basham is an evangelical Christian writer who has gotten my attention by her challenges to anti-conservative evangelicals, such as David French, Russell Moore, Tim Keller, etc. She's written some amazing articles for the Daily Wire, but her latest is the most important one yet. In it, she talks about how Biden Democrats used woke evangelicals to spread propaganda to conservative churches.

Here's the article:

> In September, Wheaton College dean Ed Stetzer interviewed National Institutes of Health Director Francis Collins on his podcast, "Church Leadership" about why Christians who want to obey Christ's command to love their neighbors should get the Covid vaccine and avoid indulging in misinformation.
>
> […] Stetzer is… the executive director of the Billy Graham Center and the editor-in-chief of Outreach media group. He was previously an editor at Christianity Today and an executive director at LifeWay, one of the largest religious publishers in the world. That's to say nothing of the dozen-plus books on missions and church planting he's authored.
>
> During their discussion, Collins and Stetzer were hardly shy about the fact that they were asking ministers to act as the administration's go-between with their congregants. "I want to exhort pastors once again to try to use your credibility with your flock to put forward the public health measures that we know can work," Collins said. Stetzer replied that he sometimes hears from ministers who don't feel comfortable preaching about Covid vaccines, and he advises them, in those cases, to simply promote the jab through social media.
>
> "I just tell them, when you get vaccinated, post a picture and say, 'So thankful I was able to get vaccinated,'" Stetzer said. "People need to see that it is the reasonable view."
>
> […]Stetzer… ended the podcast by announcing that the Billy Graham Center would be formally partnering with the Biden administration. Together with the NIH and the CDC it would launch a website, coronavirusandthechurch.com, to provide clergy Covid resources they could then convey to their congregations.
>
> Much earlier in the pandemic, as an editor at evangelicalism's flagship publication, Christianity Today (CT), Stetzer had also penned essays parroting Collins' arguments on conspiracy theories. Among those he lambasted other believers for entertaining, the hypothesis that the coronavirus had leaked from a Wuhan lab. In a now deleted essay, preserved by Web Archive, Stetzer chided, "If you want to believe that some secret lab created this as a biological weapon, and

> now everyone is covering that up, I can't stop you."
>
> Only two days before Stetzer published his essay, Collins participated in a livestream event, co-hosted by CT. The outlet introduced him as a "follower of Jesus, who affirms the sanctity of human life" despite the fact that Collins is on record stating he does not definitively believe, as most pro-lifers do, that life begins at conception, and his tenure at NIH has been marked by extreme anti-life, pro-LGBT policies. (More on this later).

Megan has a lot more to say about other pious, charismatic useful idiots in the article.

Joe Carter

Here's Joe Carter, who writes for the woke evangelical publication "The Gospel Coalition":

> Certainly The Gospel Coalition, a publication largely written for and by pastors, didn't probe beyond the "facts" Collins' offered or consider any conflicts of interest the NIH director might have had before publishing several essays that cited him as almost their lone source of information. As with CT, one article by Gospel Coalition editor Joe Carter linked the reasonable hypothesis that the virus might have been human-made with wilder QAnon fantasies. It then lectured readers that spreading such ideas would damage the church's witness in the world.

Joe Carter has been far-left for some time. Another person who climbed the church hierarchy through piety and charisma, but doesn't know anything about the real world.

Russell Moore

If you're looking for the truth about how to handle a virus, you won't get it from a pious, charismatic pastor:

> [T]he Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), an organization funded by churches in the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S.
>
> While a webinar featuring Collins and then-ERLC-head Russell Moore largely centered, again, on the importance of pastors convincing church members to get vaccinated, the discussion also moved on to the topic of masks. With Moore nodding along, Collins held up a basic, over-the-counter cloth square, "This is not a political statement," he asserted. "This is not an invasion of your personal freedom…This is a life-saving medical device."

You can read more about this in the latest announcement from the Centers for Disease Control. I've talked about Russell Moore often on this blog. I'm not sure how someone this far to the left was able to climb to the top rungs of the Southern Baptist hierarchy.

Tim Keller

Megan writes:

> Former megachurch pastor Tim Keller's joint interview with Collins included a

> digression where the pair agreed that churches like John MacArthur's, which continued to meet in-person despite Covid lockdowns, represented the "bad and ugly" of good, bad, and ugly Christian responses to the virus.

Haven't paid any attention to him recently because of his views on evolution, socialism, and critical race theory.

Hugh Ross

Although I am an old-Earth creationist like Hugh Ross, I was surprised to see him endorse a pro-abortion, pro-LGBT theistic evolutionist like Francis Collins:

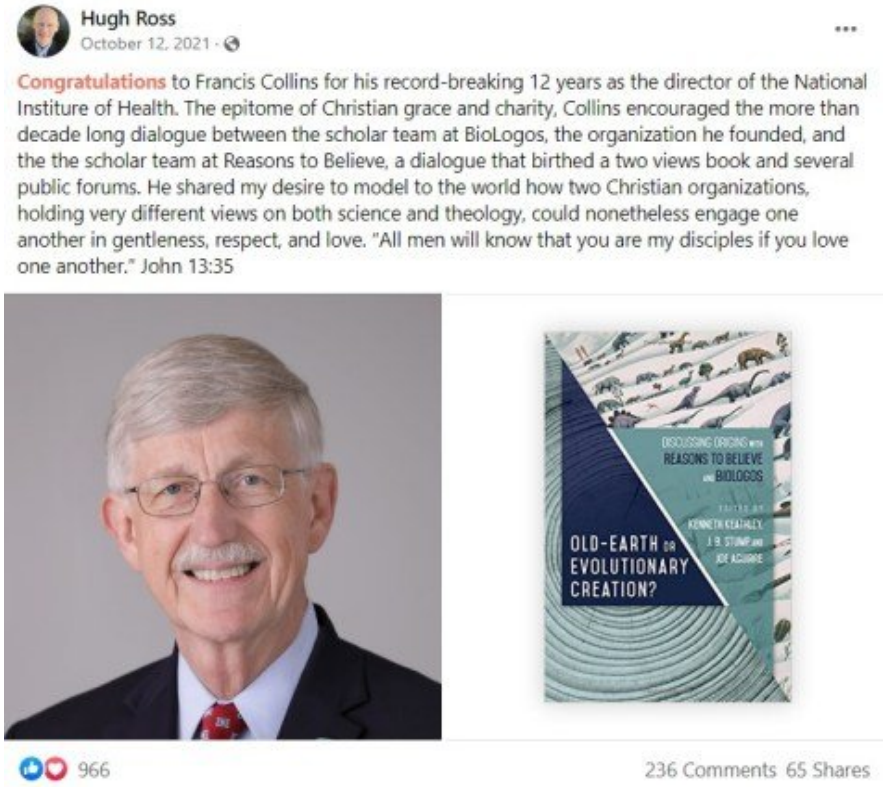

Hugh Ross loves Francis Collins

I don't think anyone would call Hugh Ross a very politically-aware person, but this was ridiculous. Francis Collins isn't automatically a good person just because he has elite degrees and political power. Elite degrees and political power are great, but they don't automatically make you a good Christian. Hugh Ross has never been very intelligent about policy or politics. He was careless about Collins and it is a huge mistake.

Further reading

If you don't know much about Francis Collins, you should read this article about him from Evolution News. They go over his record on abortion, experimenting on aborted babies, LGBT activism and theistic evolution.

Oh, and here are some other names Megan names in a tweet:

Megan Basham
@megbasham

How did Collins overcome his anti-life, pro-LGBT baggage to become the go-to expert for millions of Christians? With a little help from his friends [Ed Stetzer, Russell Moore, Rick Warren, Tim Keller, D. French, N.T. Wright, CT] who were happy to stand as his character witnesses.

9:51 AM · Feb 1, 2022 · Twitter Web App

D. French is David French, who used to write for National Review, which has also lurched to the left.

Please don’t listen to these people. They’re wolves.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 5: Strategies for Making More Effective Christians, Part 2

May 15, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 5 of the Knight and Rose podcast! Last week, we talked about some ways for churches to build more effective Christians. In today's episode, we continue our discussion. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our new Youtube channel. We would really appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple iTunes / Apple Podcasts.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 5:

Episode 5 Summary:

Last week, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose started discussing strategies for building effective Christians. This episode completes the discussion. We talked about normal Christian life, especially about not always being "nice", and about expecting discomfort and opposition. We talked about having a mission. We talked about having integrity at school and at work. We talk about growing by watching debates and reading good books. We made fun of popular Christian books.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

References

The pro-life syllogism (from Stanford Students for Life)

Embryology textbooks on "When Does Life Begin?" (compiled by Dr. Maureen Condic)

The normal Christian life (from Got Questions)

Walter Bradley: An Engineer Who Has Made a Difference (all about WK's personal hero, posted at Mind Matters AI)

For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley by Robert J. Marks II and William A. Dembski

Trudeau Announces Unprecedented Action, Freezing Bank Accounts Of ‘Freedom Convoy’ Protesters (discussing the importance of being defensible)

Physicist Michael Strauss Discusses Christianity and Science at Stanford University (for workplace evangelism)

2022 Dallas Conference on Science & Faith (an example of of how a church can equip people, from the greatest church in America)

William Lane Craig debates (for learning from debates)

Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth by Jeffrey Satinover (a good book)

Christian Bestsellers, May 2022 (for making fun of)

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Why do law-abiding Americans insist on owning guns?

May 16, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm not originally from the United States, and when I go back home to visit, one of the questions that I get asked a lot is "why do Americans own so many guns?" So in this post, I wanted to look at some stories from the United States about crime and gun violence and see why so many Americans own guns.

My favorite writer on these issues is Amy Swearer, who writes for the Daily Signal. I find that her articles are useful for explaining to people who don't own guns, or want to ban guns, why it might be a good idea to own a gun, and to know how to use it.

The first article to see is a review of 10 examples of defensive gun use from April 2022.

She writes:

> Almost every major study on the issue has found that Americans use their firearms in self-defense between 500,000 and 3 million times annually, according to the most recent report on the subject by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
>
> The examples below represent only a small portion of the news stories on defensive gun use that we found in March. You may explore more by using The Heritage Foundation's interactive Defensive Gun Use Database.

Here are a couple of the examples:

> - **March 4, Longview, Texas:** A woman armed with a rifle shot and wounded a man who forced his way inside her home, police said. The woman had told the man—who neighbors say had a history of criminally trespassing in area homes—to get off her porch. But he refused and tried to smash in her sliding glass door with his fist, according to police, who arrested the wounded man. The county sheriff praised the woman's actions as "an excellent example of the importance of our Second Amendment."
> - **March 22, Orlando, Florida:** A female veteran working as an Uber driver arrived at a customer's pick-up location and saw him physically assaulting his girlfriend, police said. The driver decided to give them a ride despite the man's violent actions because she didn't want to leave the girlfriend alone with her assailant. When the couple got into the car, the man passed out drunk in the back seat while the Uber driver spoke with the girlfriend. When the man woke up and assaulted both his girlfriend and the driver, police said, the driver stopped the car and demanded that he get out. The driver shot and wounded the man after he shoved his girlfriend to the ground and advanced on the driver in a threatening manner.

It's especially important for people living in blue cities or blue states to arm themselves, because the police forces in these areas have had their budgets slashed by Democrats. "Defund the police" sounds so good, but it just gets a lot of peaceful, law-abiding people killed.

And here is one from March 2022:

> - **Feb. 9, Portland:** A homeowner had started his car remotely from inside his house when he realized that someone was trying to break into the car, police said. Wielding a firearm, the homeowner confronted the would-be thief and held him at gunpoint while his wife called police.

Like Amy said, the use of guns defensively happens many, many times in America. But in cities that have strict gun laws, like Chicago, Washington D.C., Baltimore, and BUFFALO, criminals can run wild. No one in blue states can stop them except the police, and the police have been defunded and defanged by the secular left.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

The book by economist John Lott, linked above, compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, which shows that the 1997 UK gun ban caused violent crime rates to MORE THAN DOUBLE in the four years following the ban. But both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

One of the common mistakes I see anti-gun advocates making is to use the metric of all "gun-related deaths". First of all, this completely ignores the effects of hand gun ownership on violent crime, as we've seen. Take away the guns from law-abiding people and violent crime skyrockets. But using the "gun-related deaths" number is especially wrong, because it includes suicides committed with guns. This is the majority (about two thirds) of gun related deaths, even in a country like America that has a massive inner-city gun violence problem caused by the epidemic of single motherhood by choice. If you take out the gun-related SUICIDES, then the actual number of gun homicides has decreased as gun ownership has grown.

For a couple of useful graphs related to this point, check out this post over at the American Enterprise Institute.

J. Warner Wallace: I am not a Christian because it works for me

May 17, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Some of my favorite Christians are the ones that start out as atheists, and do very well at life, but just change direction because they investigate the evidence. One person who had a fabulous career in law enforcement switched sides because of the evidence: J. Warner Wallace. And in a must-read post from Cold-Case Christianity, he explains his motive.

Excerpt:

> Life on this side of my decision hasn't always been easy. It's been nearly seventeen years since I first trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. I still struggle to submit my prideful will to what God would call me to do. Christianity is not easy. It doesn't always "work" for me. There are times when I think it would be easier to do it the old way; easier to cut a corner or take a short cut. There are many times when doing the right thing means doing the most difficult thing possible. There are also times when it seems like non-Christians have it easier, or seem to be "winning". It's in times like these that I have to remind myself that I'm not a Christian because it serves my own selfish purposes. I'm not a Christian because it "works" for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn't always been easy.
>
> I'm a Christian because it is true. I'm a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I'm a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative.

I think this is important. There are people who I know who claim to be Christian, but they are clearly believing that God is a mystical force who arranges everything in their lives in order to make them happy. They are not Christians because it's true, but because of things like comfort and community. But people ought to become Christians because they think it's true.

Truth doesn't necessarily make you happy, though. Truth can impose intellectual obligations and moral obligations on you. Seeing God as he really is doesn't help us to "win" at life, as the culture defines winning. But it does offer the opportunity for us to walk a similar path to the one Jesus walked. And that is very appealing for real Christians.

The Bible doesn't promise that people who become Christians will be happier. Actually, it promises that Christians will suffer for doing the right things. Their autonomy will suffer, as they sacrifice their own interests and happiness in order to make God happy, by serving his interests.

Christianity isn't something you add on to your before-God life in order to achieve your before-God goals. When you become a Christian, you get a new set of goals, based on

God’s character and his design for you. And although you might be very successful in the world as part of serving God, there is no guarantee of that. Christianity is not life enhancement. I do think that Christians do well at not hurting themselves though, but because they eliminate selfish desires, not because God gives them stuff.

By the way, if you’re looking for a great speaker to invite to your university campus, J. Warner Wallace is the best, then Frank Turek is my number two choice. Wallace has the homicide detective background, and Turek is a former naval aviator. Two tough guys who are tough-minded about the Christian faith.

What are undesigned coincidences, and how are they used in apologetics?

May 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When you're reading the Bible, you may find passages in one book that are mysterious on their own, but then they make sense if you add missing details from a parallel account from a different source inside or even outside the Bible. I think these "undesigned coincidences" are helpful for answering the question of that skeptics often ask: "is the Bible history or myth?" Let's see some examples.

So, there are two kinds of undersigned coincidences. In the "internal" kind, the clearing up is done by another source in the same book. In the external kind, the clearing up is done by a source outside the same book.

Here's an article from Apologetics UK with some internal examples:

> In John 6:1-7, we are told:
>
> Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Festival was near.When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"
>
> Now, Philip is a fairly minor character in the New Testament. And one might, naturally, be inclined to wonder why Jesus hasn't turned to someone a little higher in the pecking order (such as Peter or John). A partial clue is provided in John 1:44: "Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida." Likewise, John 12:21 refers to "Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee"
>
> And what is so significant about Philip being from the town of Bethsaida? We don't learn this until we read the parallel account in Luke's gospel (9:10-17). At the opening of the account (verses 10-11) we are told, "When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing."
>
> And so, we are informed by Luke that the event was actually taking place in Bethsaida — the town from which Philip was from! Jesus thus turns to Philip, whom, he believed, would be familiar with the area. Notice too that Luke does

> not tell us that Jesus turned to Philip.
>
> But it gets even more interesting still. In Matthew 11, Jesus denounces the unrepentant cities, saying, “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” The reader is left wondering what miracles were performed in these cities. We are not told in Matthew’s gospel. It is only in light of Luke’s account of the feeding of the five thousand (chapter 9), in which we are told of the event’s occurrence in Bethsaida, that this statement begins to make sense!

This one is pretty clever:

> In Matthew 2 6:67-68, we read, “Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, “Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?”” This raises the natural question, why are they asking “Who hit you?” It is not until we read the parallel account in Luke’s gospel (22:64) that we learn that they had blindfolded him, thereby making sense of their taunts “Who hit you?”

Another one:

> In Luke 23:1-4, w e read,
> Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king.”
>
> So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”
>
> “You have said so,” Jesus replied.
>
> Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”
> On the surface, this seems to be a rather strange declaration to make. Jesus has just declared Himself to be a King, and has been charged with subverting the nation and opposing paying taxes to Caesar. Why has Pilate found no basis for a charge against him?
>
> The answer lies in the parallel account in John’s gospel (18:33-38):
>
> Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”
>
> “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”
> “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”
>
> Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

> “You are a king, then!” said Pilate.
>
> Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”
>
> “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.
>
> It is only when you read John’s account that you learn that Jesus had told Pilate that “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

And the same article has some external undesigned coincidences:

> In Matthew 2:22, we are told:
>
> But when [Joseph] heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being waned by God in an dream, he left for the regions of Galilee…
>
> Josephus’ Antiquities 17.3.1 tells us that the domain of Herod the Great was divided among his sons, with Archelaus having authority in Judea but not in Galilee, which was governed by his younger brother, Herod Antipas.
>
> We also know that Archelaus had acquired quite a bloody reputation (e.g. Antiquities 17.13.1-2 and 17.9.3). The latter of these references describes how Archelaus slaughtered 3,000 Jews at Passover. Thus, Joseph decides not to return to Judea and, instead, goes further north to the regions of Galilee, governed by Herod Antipas.

And another one:

> In Matthew 2:22, Archeleaus is reigning as king in Judea; in Matthew 27:2, Pilate is governor of Judea; in Acts 12:1, Herod is king of Judea; and in Acts 23:33, Felix is governor of Judea. This becomes extremely confusing.
>
> But here’s the thing: Josephus attests to the accuracy of every one of these titles. Herod the Great was made King of Judea by Mark Anthony. Archelaus was deposed in the year 6 A.D., after only a ten-year reign, and a series of procurators ruled over Judea (of whom Pilate was fifth). The Herod of Acts 12 is Agrippa I. He was made king by Claudius Caesar. After his death, Judea was, once again, placed under the government of procurators (one of them being Felix).

And another one:

> When Luke tells us of the riot in Ephesus, he reports that the city clerk tells the crowd that “There are proconsuls”. A proconsul is a Roman authority to whom a complaint may be taken. Normally, there was only one proconsul. Just at that particular time, however, there seems to have been two as a result of the

> assassination of Silanus (the previous proconsul) by poisoning in the Fall of AD 54, by the two imperial stewards at the urging of Nero's mother. This event is independently documented by Tacitus in his Annals (13.1). Indeed, Luke's accuracy has allowed historians to date the event which Luke narrates with incredible precision since we know when Silanus was poisoned.

If you think that these are clever, then share this post, and encourage your non-Christian friends and family to consider one of the many reasons why so many scholars have considered the New Testament books to be so reliable.

I wish that Christian parents and pastors were more thoughtful about how they present the Bible to young people. Instead of just saying "the Bible says" and praising blind faith acceptance of the Bible, why don't we think a little harder, and look for some confirmation of the Bible from historical methods like undesigned coincidences, and from non-Biblical authors, and from archaeology, etc.? Surely adding more evidence for taking the Bible seriously is the right approach, if the goal is to be persuasive? It's not like we're see good results from the current "blind faith" approach to raising Christian children, right?

Biden continues raising gas prices by canceling more oil and gas leases

May 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been reading the Wall Street Journal a lot lately, trying to see when it might be a good time to buy back into the stock market. Normally, I look for a 30% drop before buying, and we are near that now. It's below when Biden took office. He totally squandered Trump's bull market. How? By handing out stimulus checks, and attacking the American oil and gas industry. And he's not done.

Here's the first article from the Wall Street Journal.

> The Biden administration canceled plans to auction drilling rights in three regions off the U.S. coastline later this year, adding more friction to an uneasy relationship with the oil industry during a period of high gasoline prices.
>
> The decision to cancel lease sales for two regions in the Gulf of Mexico and one off the coast of Alaska leaves oil-and-gas companies facing a blackout period of unknown length for access to new drilling spots in valuable offshore acreage.
>
> A five-year schedule for offshore lease sales expires at the end of next month, and the Interior Department has yet to propose a new one. Canceling the pending sales with no new schedule yet proposed could mean the industry now faces years between successful federal offshore auctions.
>
> "The lack of new lease sales will lower future supplies, which will keep energy prices high and drive inflation for years to come," Marty Durbin, president of the energy arm of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said in a statement. "While some in the Administration have called for more domestic production, this action sends exactly the wrong signal to producers and markets."

Biden has been in an all-out war against domestic energy production since the day he took office, canceling the Keystone XL pipeline and imposing a moratorium on new permits and leases for new drilling. He's fine with Russia getting a new pipeline, and he'd like to buy gas from communist Venezuela. But he doesn't want Americans developing cleaner sources of energy at home. He's doing everything he can to stop Americans from driving their cars and using heat and air conditioning, all in the name of global warming hysteria, which permeates his Chicken Little administration. This isn't an accident. Raising prices on energy was done by design.

What can we expect from the party of global warming alarmism?

The Wall Street Journal explains:

> From California to Texas to Indiana, electric-grid operators are warning that power-generating capacity is struggling to keep up with demand, a gap that could lead to rolling blackouts during heat waves or other peak periods as soon

> as this year.
>
> […]The risk of electricity shortages is rising throughout the U.S. as traditional power plants are being retired more quickly than they can be replaced by renewable energy and battery storage. Power grids are feeling the strain as the U.S. makes a historic transition from conventional power plants fueled by coal and natural gas to cleaner forms of energy such as wind and solar power, and aging nuclear plants are slated for retirement in many parts of the country.

Wind and solar power are not only more expensive than gas and nuclear, but they are also more inconsistent.

Here's snow covering solar panels:

And ice freezing wind farms:

The problem with rising energy prices is that it is a drag on the economy – a separate source of inflation. Everything that is produced for sale to consumers is affected by higher energy costs. Especially things that have to be transported. It would be nice to see inflation addressed by raising interest rates. But because the Biden administration waited too long, that now carries the risk of recession. The next best option would be to lower

the cost of energy by return to Trump's "energy independence" policies. But Biden is totally opposed to that. Even if he changed course now, it would be months until energy prices were lowered.

It all seems as thought the Biden administration is making some sort of play to nationalize the energy industry, like Venezuela did. They'll say "oh look, the private sector has failed. Now government needs to step in and rescue everyone". That's the way it usually plays out in communist countries. Nationalizing energy has caused massive shortages everywhere it's been tried. Why think our communists are any different than the communists in other countries? They want power, and they don't care if you have to lose your freedom and prosperity in order for them to get it.

Peer-reviewed medical journal blasts Facebook “fact checkers” for censorship

May 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve just about had it with Facebook’s “fact checkers”. In most cases, these are just card carrying Democrats with worthless degrees in grievance studies. They have limited real world experience. Their only credentials are promoting the Democrat party by censoring news and opinions that make the Democrats look bad. Even peer-reviewed medical journals are censored!

Here’s the story from The Federalist:

> The editors of a peer-reviewed medical journal penned a scathing letter demanding that Facebook reevaluate its bogus third-party “fact-checking” processes after the journal was censored for publishing information about COVID-19 vaccine trials.
>
> BMJ editors Fiona Godlee and Kamran Abbasi addressed the letter to Facebook creator and CEO Mark Zuckerberg with the intention of raising “serious concerns” about Facebook’s third-party “fact-checking” system.
>
> According to the editors, one of the well-researched articles BMJ published on “a host of poor clinical trial research practices occurring at Ventavia,” one of the companies facilitating trials for Pfizer’s version of the COVID-19 vaccine, was suppressed by Facebook and censored with labels that directed readers to a “fact check” by the obscure website Lead Stories, which routinely issues fake fact-checks.
>
> “Those trying to post the article were informed by Facebook that people who repeatedly share ‘false information’ might have their posts moved lower in Facebook’s News Feed. Group administrators where the article was shared received messages from Facebook informing them that such posts were ‘partly false,’” Godlee and Abbasi wrote.
>
> The editors said that this “fact check,” which Facebook used to justify threats against users who shared the BMJ article, however, was “inaccurate, incompetent and irresponsible.”
>
> […]Godlee and Abbasi concluded their letter by demanding that Facebook, if it continues its censorship campaign against so-called “misinformation,” choose wiser and more competent organizations for fact-checking such as Cochrane, which reviews medical evidence on a regular basis.

This isn’t the only time that Facebook “fact checkers” have twisted the truth to protect the Democrat party. The most recent example was with the Rittenhouse trial.

Consider this article the New York Post:

> Consider how Facebook, in particular, treated the circumstances surrounding Kyle Rittenhouse, the teen acquitted last week of all charges in the self-defense killings of two men and the shooting of another during last summer's riots in Kenosha, Wis. Immediately after the incident occurred, and despite video evidence which made a self-defense charge instantly plausible, Facebook declared it a "mass murder" and under that justification blocked searches for Rittenhouse's name and any content in "praise or support" for him on the site — including links to contribute to his legal defense and videos purporting to show Rittenhouse providing aid to protesters.
>
> In other words, Facebook determined that the only speech allowed on its platform was to declare Rittenhouse's guilt, not his innocence. Perhaps prompted by Facebook's actions or merely in spite of them, PayPal cut off affiliation with fundraising efforts for Rittenhouse, and so did GoFundMe.

What were the facts in the Rittenhouse case? The jury heard all the facts, and they acquitted Rittenhouse. No "mass murder" there, just self-defense.

Previously, I wrote articles about Facebook's bias against the Republican party.

- Facebook has a long record of censoring speech critical of Democrats
- Facebook fact-checker caught plagiarizing 54 articles
- Facebook "non-partisan" fact-checker revealed to be a far-left Trump-hating Democrat
- Facebook "fact-checker" Politifact forced to retract "false" rating against Candace Owens
- When Facebook fact-checkers conflict with peer-reviewed studies, who is right?
- Potential violation of election law: Facebook and Twitter censor Biden scandal
- Facebook and Google removing content that harms Democrat party
- Facebook censors interview with abortion survivor to help Democrats win 2020 election
- Facebook uses pro-abortion "fact checkers" to label pro-life pages "fake news"
- Facebook bans Christian apologist David Wood for posting the death threats he received
- Facebook censors criticism of Democrat Party, especially before "important elections"
- Spotify joins Google, Youtube, Facebook and Twitter in censoring Prager University
- Facebook bans Franklin Graham for "hate speech", Google YouTube shadow-bans pro-life videos
- Facebook, Amazon, Google and Twitter ally with leftist group linked to domestic terrorism
- Facebook enlists left-wing Politifact and Snopes to censor criticism of Democrats

Evidence for design in living systems is changing the way scientists work

May 21, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you look over in the right column of the blog, you'll see that I am reading "The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith". It's a collection of short essays intended for laymen to explain all aspects of the design debate. I'm actually listening to the audio book version, and just looking in the book for diagrams. I wanted to talk about a few resources that are similar to what I'm seeing in the book.

First, there's this excellent post from Evolution News, where Dr. Casey Luskin (who recently appeared on the Apologetics 315 podcast) lists out all the areas where intelligent design is fruitful for studying living systems.

Here is his list:

- Protein science
- Physics and cosmology
- Information theory
- Pharmacology
- Evolutionary computation
- Anatomy and physiology
- Bioinformatics
- Molecular machines
- Cell biology
- Systematics
- Paleontology
- Genetics

These are all good, but I'm going to focus on some of them that are interesting to me coming from a software engineering background.

> Information theory: ID leads scientists to understand intelligence as a cause of biological complexity, capable of being scientifically studied, and to understand the types of information it generates.

I looked into this one when naturalists were trying to argue that specified complexity was just the same as Shannon information. Shannon information is just concerned with the complexity, or information carrying capacity, of strings. But specified complexity is a step further, where certain strings have meaning or purpose, because they conform to a pattern. A random set of characters the same length as this blog post is complex (like Shannon information), but it's not specified. What makes my letter sequences specified is that it conforms to the English language, and conveys meaning.

Here's another:

> Evolutionary computation: ID produces theoretical research into the information-generative powers of Darwinian searches, leading to the discovery that the search abilities of Darwinian processes are limited, which has practical implications for the viability of using genetic algorithms to solve problems.

When I was in grad school, there were courses on using "genetic algorithms" to solve problems. But thanks to the work of ID proponents like William Dembski, we now know that these algorithms only work if constraints are put on the search algorithm up front. As such, they don't support undirected evolution at all.

> Bioinformatics: ID has helped scientists develop proper measures of biological information, leading to concepts like complex and specified information or functional sequence complexity. This allows us to better quantify complexity and understand what features are, or are not, within the reach of Darwinian evolution.

Before ID came along, people weren't really interested in calculating the probability of sequencing amino acids into a protein by chance. They just wanted to assume that it happened, because what else could have happened? Sometimes, you make better decisions when you listen to both sides of a debate. Now we have two sides to the debate on origins, and it helps both sides to defend their views.

> Molecular machines: ID encourages scientists to reverse-engineer molecular machines — like the bacterial flagellum — to understand their function like machines, and to understand how the machine-like properties of life allow biological systems to function.

I've blogged before about how human inventors are regularly reverse-engineering natural designs in order to come up with designs for man-made machines.

> Genetics: ID has inspired scientists to investigate the computer-like properties of DNA and the genome in the hopes of better understanding genetics and the origin of biological systems.15 ID has also inspired scientists to seek function for noncoding junk-DNA, allowing us to understand development and cellular biology.

By now, everybody has heard about the predictions by Darwinists about the "uselessness" of junk DNA. That all went out the window with the data from the ENCODE project, that found that the so-called junk DNA was almost all useful. Another Darwinian prediction falsified by the progress of science.

A 40-minute lecture

I saw a nice lecture from the recent Science & Faith conference that was held in Dallas this year. The speaker was Dr. Brian Miller:

> Dr. Miller is Research Coordinator at Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture. He holds a Ph.D. in Physics from Duke University.

> More about him and the articles he has written can be found here: https://www.discovery.org/p/miller/

The video talks about all the areas where evidence for design is changing the way that scientists look at living systems.

The talk was very cutting edge, with a lot of new stuff I had not seen before. It's worth the time to watch it. There were also a couple of prior lectures from the conference. One from Eric Hedin, where he talked about being "canceled" by Darwinists for teaching both sides of origins issues at Ball State University. Another from Stephen C. Meyer talks about the Judeo-Christian origins of modern science. I've only watched the Miller lecture so far, but that's what Saturdays are for! Watching lectures and debates.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 6: Knighted by the King: Authentic Masculinity

May 22, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 6 of the Knight and Rose podcast! This is the first episode where my audio is improved, so you should not notice an echo. In this episode, we discuss what it means to be masculine according to a Christian worldview. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our Youtube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple iTunes / Apple Podcasts.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 6:

Episode 6 Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss male nature. We discuss Bible verses that describe masculine virtues and roles. We discuss how masculinity is portrayed in classical movies, classical literature, and military history. We talk about male strengths, and how men leverage their strengths to lead and equip others. We talk about which women are the most attractive to men who are on mission. We talk about whether men have to get married and have children in order to be masculine.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

References

Cultural Marxism, a lecture from Founders Ministries featuring Pastor Voddie Baucham

The First of the Few (movie, aka “Spitfire”)

High Noon (movie)

A lesson about men for marriage-minded women from the movie “High Noon” by Wintery Knight

Cyrano de Bergerac (movie, based on a play by Edmond Rostand)

A Man for All Seasons (movie, based on a play by Robert Bolt)

Emma (movie, based on a book by Jane Austen. Note: the 2009 version is my favorite)

Badly Done, Emma (a scene from the 2009 movie version of Emma)

Wahoo: The Patrols of America's Most Famous World War II Submarine by Richard "Dick" O'Kane

Clear the Bridge! The War Patrols of the U.S.S. Tang by Richard "Dick" O'Kane

Podcast RSS feed:

https://feed.podbean.com/knightandrose/feed.xml

You can use this to subscribe to the podcast from your phone or tablet. I use the open-source AntennaPod app on my Android phone.

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How does church appear to someone raised in a non-Christian home?

May 23, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Wes posted an article about how communication is set up in the church, and why it's not effective at equipping Christians to defend their worldview in hostile environments. The article describes what I encountered in church, after I was raised in a non-Christian home and become a Christian on my own by reading the New Testament. The view presented in the essay is how I viewed the church, and is probably how most outsiders view church. I think it explains why young people leave the church in droves once they move out of their parents' houses.

The author writes:

> On the Internet, one soon discovers that many respected church leaders are quite unable to deal directly with opposing viewpoints. In fact, many of them can't even manage meaningful engagement with *other voices*. Their tweets may be entirely one-way conversations. They talk *at* their audiences. They can talk *about* other voices, but fail to talk *to* them, let alone *with* them. Their representations of opposing viewpoints reveal little direct exposure to the viewpoints in question.
>
> […]Around this point, it can start to dawn on one that many church leaders have only been trained in forms of discourse such as the sermon and, to a much lesser extent, the essay. Both forms privilege a single voice—their voice—and don't provide a natural space for response, questioning, and challenge. Their opinions have been assumed to be superior to opposing viewpoints, but have never been demonstrated to be so. While they may have spoken or written about opposing voices, they are quite unaccustomed to speaking or writing to them (not to mention listening to or being cross-examined by them). There are benefits to the fact that the sermon is a form of discourse that doesn't invite interruption or talking back, but not when this is the *only* form of discourse its practitioners are adept in.
>
> Many church leaders have been raised and trained in ideologically homogenous cultures or contexts that discouraged oppositional discourse. Many have been protected from hostile perspectives that might unsettle their faith. Throughout, their theological opinions and voices have been given a privileged status, immune from challenge. Nominal challenges could be brushed off by a reassertion of the monologue. They were safe to speak about and habitually misrepresent other voices to their hearers and readers, without needing to worry about those voices ever enjoying the power to answer them back. Many of the more widely read members of their congregations may have had an inkling of the weakness of their positions in the past: the Internet just makes it more apparent.

One of my friends who comments here as “Wintery’s Friend” actually did his M. Div, and I think it was he who told me that his seminary had dropped the lone course in apologetics that had been part of the curriculum. Now seminary grads don’t learn any opposing views. They just pre-suppose that the Bible is true in the same way that Mormons pre-suppose their Bible is true, or Muslims pre-suppose their Bible is true, etc.

More:

> If one’s opinion has never been subjected to and tried by rigorous cross-examination, it probably isn’t worth much. If one lacks the capacity to keep a level head when one’s views are challenged, one’s voice will be of limited use in most real world situations, where dialogue and dispute is the norm and where we have to think in conversation with people who disagree with us.
>
> The teachers of the Church provide the members of the Church with a model for their own thinking. The teacher of the Church does not just teach others *what* to believe, but also *how* to believe, and the process by which one arrives at a theological position. This is one reason why it is crucial that teachers ‘show their working’ on a regular basis. When teaching from a biblical text, for instance, the teacher isn’t just teaching the meaning of that particular text, but how Scripture should be approached and interpreted more generally. An essential part of the teaching that the members of any church need is that of dealing with opposing viewpoints. One way or another, every church provides such teaching. However, the lesson conveyed in all too many churches is that opposing voices are to be dismissed, ignored, or ‘answered’ with a reactive reassertion of the dogmatic line, rather than a reasoned response.

You can imagine that the first questions that you’ll be asked by a non-Christian co-worker would be things like “why think God exists?” and “why think the Bible is history rather than legend?”. In order to answer those questions, you would have to know how to counter what a non-Christian believes. You would have to show them the reasons for your view.

Unfortunately, many of the conservative Christian leaders we trust think that the best way to be convincing is not to show your work, but just to speak Bible verses at people who don’t accept the Bible as an authority. Some people attend church for 20 years, and they never meet a single person who didn’t just assume that the Bible is trustworthy without doing an investigation first.

What’s most surprising is that this fideistic view of Christianity is not even Biblical. The Biblical view of faith is that faith is trust in God, based on evidence. This is why Jesus offered his own resurrection as evidence to a generation of unbelievers. His miracles were also evidence offered to unbelievers. And the Old Testament is filled with examples of people like Isaiah presenting evidence to unbelievers. The fideist view sounds more like the Mormon “burning of the bosom” view. We can do better than that!

Look:

That debate has over 6 million views on YouTube. That’s a debate with Christopher Hitchens, one of the most famous atheists of the last 100 years. In the post-debate comments, the atheist admitted he lost. Watch it. You won’t find it in most churches, so you’re going to have to learn it on your own. Without anyone’s help. Don’t be a spectator. Don’t settle for youth pastor Christianity.

Knight and Rose interviewed by Brian and Chad on the Apologetics 315 podcast

May 24, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Desert Rose and I were so thankful when our friends Brian and Chad over at the Apologetics 315 podcast asked us to come on and talk about our backgrounds, and the new podcast. A lot of people have been asking me about who Rose is, and how we met, and how we decided to the podcast. Well, we talked about all of that on their show. I've got an outline and an MP3 download link below.

You can listen to the episode on Spreaker, but I was able to embed their player right in this post!

Here is the outline:

In this episode Brian Auten & Chad Gross interview Wintery Knight and Desert Rose about their new podcast: The Knight & Rose Show.

0:23 – Intro
1:25 – What's new with Wintery Knight
2:11 – Who is "Desert Rose"?
5:05 – How Knight and Rose got started
7:27 – An overview of the Knight and Rose Show
12:15 – Mentoring people in apologetics and using evidence and facts
19:36 – Why serving the boss is the number one priority
22:15 – God's not our cosmic butler
24:51 – Why are people leaving the church these days?
25:26 – How to start equipping the church in apologetics
29:08 – What you win them with is what you win them to
31:09 – Masculinity in the church: what does it look like?
37:58 – Should Christians be interested in politics? Why?
46:09 – Where to find Knight and Rose online…

Further Resources:

Wintery Knight blog:
http://www.winteryknight.com/

The Knight and Rose Show:
http://knightandrose.podbean.com

On YouTube:
https://a315.co/KnightandRose

Don't forget to fill out the PODCAST SURVEY for a chance to win a prize!
https://airtable.com/shr14Kl8px7izEcan

We welcome your feedback!

If you have a question or comment for the podcast, record it and send it our way using www.speakpipe.com/Apologetics315 or you can email us at podcast@apologetics315.com

#apologetics, #christianity, #policy

My thoughts

Rose and I are delighted that Brian and Chad had us on their show. They just interviewed Casey Luskin, who has several chapters in the book "The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith", which I am reading right now.

Future episode topics

If you made it this far into the post, I will give you a sneak peek ahead at our future topics! This week's episode is about masculinity related to marriage. After that, we have already recorded and edited episodes on Christianity and Politics, and Black Lives Matter. We're recording episodes on the Problem of Evil, and Classical Movie Wisdom next. (If you have any classical movie suggestions, send them in!)

Rose has been having a lot of fun lately talking to all of her friends and neighbors who are all listening to the podcasts. They are asking her for book recommendations, what they should major in, etc. I love when people listen to the podcast, and get motivated to have adventures.

How to listen to our podcast

I thought this might be a good place to explain how to listen to podcasts using your smartphone, in case people are reading and don't know how.

You will need:

- a smartphone
- a podcast "catcher" app

Basically, if you have a smartphone, then you're probably used to download apps from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store.

1. You can download the free PodBean app from either app store. It's free. They give you a guest account, so you don't have to register or give them any information.

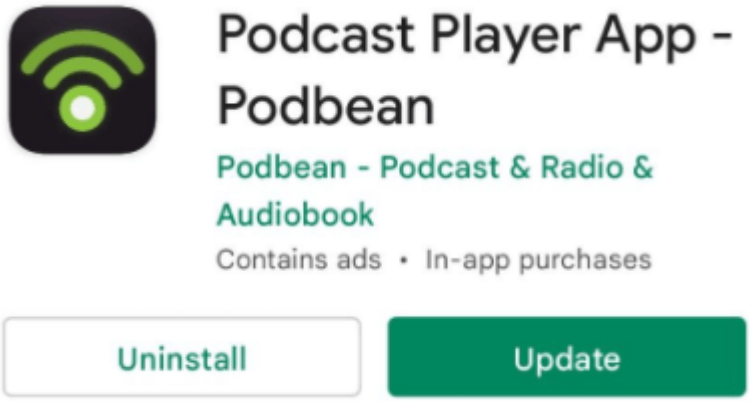

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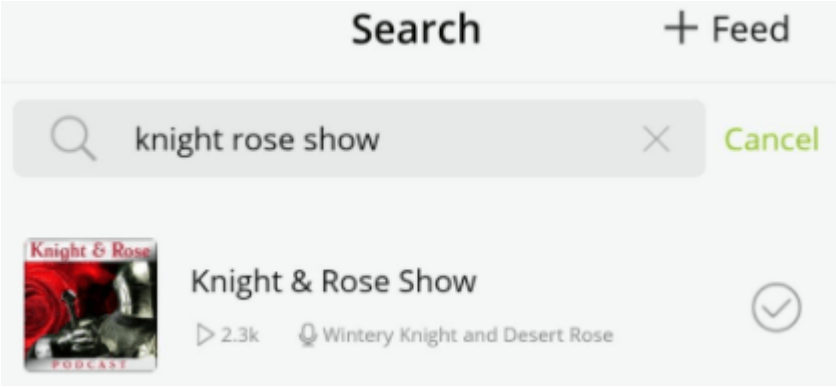

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You don't have to use PodBean's app or web site to listen. The podcast is available on ALL the major podcast sites – **18 of them!** So just pick the one you're already using: Spotify, Amazon Music, TuneIn, Samsung, etc.

National School Board Association wanted Biden to deploy military against parents

May 25, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know that a lot of people put their children into schools, thinking that the schools will teach children useful skills that will help them to get jobs and move out. Unfortunately, it seems as though the school boards, teacher unions and education bureaucrats don't want to help parents. In fact, they view parents as their enemies. They want to indoctrinate children, and they want parents to let them.

Here's a news story from Daily Wire:

> The National School Boards Association (NSBA) considered calling for the federal government to use the "Army National Guard and its Military Police" against parents who made threats toward school officials before deleting the language from its September 29 letter to President Joe Biden, according to an independent review released on Friday.

This is the letter that the school boards sent to the Biden administration, asking for the FBI to investigate parents for "domestic terrorism". What domestic terrorism? Opposing the indoctrination of their kids in transgenderism and critical race theory.

More:

> Days later, Attorney General Merrick Garland directed the FBI to investigate a recent spike in "harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence" against school board members — a move seen by many parents as an attempt to chill free speech among those concerned about progressive curricula in public schools.

The idea of using the military against "domestic terrorist" parents seems to have been fine with the Biden administration, since they collaborated with the National School Board Association on the letter that the National School Board Association eventually sent to the Biden administration.

The Washington Free Beacon explains:

> The country's largest school board association collaborated with the Biden White House before sending a controversial letter calling on the FBI to investigate parents as potential domestic terrorists, according to previously unreported emails.
>
> […]The emails also show that the White House asked the association for examples of threats against school board members days before Attorney General Merrick Garland created a task force of officials from the FBI and the Justice Department to determine how to prosecute alleged crimes at school board meetings.
>
> The letter makes clear that the White House was aware of the letter before it was

> released, while raising questions about whether the White House colluded with the association on the letter to prompt federal action.

So what exactly is it that the Biden administration wants to enforce with the military? Well, maybe they don't want parents objecting to what this teacher is doing, as reported in The Post Millennial:

> As if things could not go more downhill from an elementary school teacher suggesting that sexual orientation and gender identity is suitable classroom curriculum for 3-year-old children, an unidentified school teacher took to Facebook to post a series of disturbing confessions.
>
> The teacher posted in a "Trans, Intersex, and Non-Binary School Professionals" group on Facebook saying, "So this is me feeling my best teacher self because I'm wearing panties on a work day for the first time ever and I feel so good!"
>
> He goes on to identify his appearance to the group as "a tall bearded demiboy with pomaded hair and glasses, wearing a purple and white checked shirt, a gray sweater vest, and a brown jacket with black jeans." For those not keeping up on the infinitely expanding gender dictionary, "demiboy" is someone who identifies as male only in part.
>
> The teacher continued on to confess his jitters before coming out with his sexuality and gender identity to a group of children:
> "I signed up to lead an affinity group for LGBTQIA+ students at my school a while back. The first meeting is this afternoon, and I'm going to be coming out to a bunch of high schoolers as bi [bisexual] and enby [non-binary]. I'm a bit nervous. Good vibes/encouragement are needed and welcome."
>
> Affinity groups are groups, typically reserved for those of specific disability, religion, race or ethnicity, so students can come together to discuss their common identities or interests.
>
> Amidst what is being deemed the "Groomer Epidemic," with 135 school teachers and aides being charged with sex crimes in 2022 alone, there are a concerning amount of teachers targeting these groups of children who already feel ostracized in one way or another to satisfy their own perversions.

I think what the secular leftists are saying is that if you disapprove of this person teaching your children, then you are domestic terrorist who needs to be silenced using the military.

We have an election in 2022.

Biden administration: school lunch funding depends on support for transgenderism

May 26, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We have a lot of problems in the country right now. A porous border. Rising inflation. Bailing out Ukraine with taxpayer dollars. A green energy policy that raises gas and electricity prices. A crisis of grooming in the schools. And the ongoing catastrophes like abortion and the welfare-funded breakdown of the nuclear family. But Joe Biden doesn't care. He is focused on LGBT rights.

Here's the latest by Joy Pullmann (my favorite Federalist writer) at The Federalist:

> K-12 schools must allow boys into girls' private areas to obtain federal funds for lunches, breakfasts, and snacks, the Biden administration announced this month. A U.S. Department of Education spokesman told The Federalist the Biden administration's press releases from several agencies announcing this policy will be followed by formal rulemaking in June.
>
> […]Under this new demand, establishments that accept any federal food funding, including food stamps, must also allow males who claim to be female to access female private spaces, such as showers, bathrooms, and sleeping areas. Such organizations must also follow protocols such as requiring staff to use inaccurate pronouns to describe transgender people and allowing male staff to dress as women while on the job.

So, parents of religious children, and religious school workers, are good enough to pay taxes for the government programs. But they're not good enough to receive money from government programs. That's what you can expect from the secular left.

And Joy Pullmann has another article from The Federalist, related to this. She talks about how she can no longer send her Christian kids to the "4-H" organization:

> This spring I got an email from 4-H, a club I participated in as a child, effectively communicating that my Christian family need not apply to summer camps and other activities sponsored by the quasi-public organization. (County governments often sponsor 4-H activities.) This email was signed by a 4-H staffer who put pronouns in his signature and told me, "Youth are assigned cabins based on gender indicated on the 4-H camp application and registration," suggesting children were roomed by gender identity rather than sex.
>
> […]Given 4-H national's commitment to the toxic "diversity, equity, inclusion" ideology, the fact that my Christian kids now cannot equally access lots of their programming due to 4-H's choice to sexualize their activities was no surprise. But I still wanted to see in writing that my red county in my red state was indeed giving tax breaks and other government privileges to an organization that might room children overnight with troubled people of the opposite sex against their

> parents' will. The answer is yes.

It's not just the 4-H organization, it's a lot of taxpayer-funded institutions:

> It's not just places kids get naked. It's everywhere. I cannot take my children to the public library anymore, either, because the shelves are so full of pornographic and hostile books that it's not a safe place for them. There, too, self-righteous LGBT activism has resulted in effectively banning my children from yet another public place and weaponizing my own tax dollars against my children's safety.
>
> The shelves and displays in our library are full of books telling my children lies such as that "men can become women" and "some boys have girl brains" and "gender is a social construct."

So again, you have Christian families who have to pay taxes to the Biden government, and then the Biden government turns around and gives their money to anti-Christian groups. So, we're good enough to pay taxes, but not good enough to get the benefit of those tax dollars.

Wind, solar or nuclear: which is best for costs, electricity prices and the environment?

May 27, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I bought a new book by a famous environmentalist Dr. Michael Shellenberger. He used to be a huge advocate for renewable energy (wind and solar). The book is about why he changed his mind and now prefers nuclear power. He has a long pedigree of environmental activism. I agree with him, so I wanted to get the book to learn how to argue it. For you, I have a short video instead of the book.

Here's a 17-minute TED talk that he did:

And an article from Quillette that has the full text of the talk.

Here's the part I thought was the most interesting, where he explains the problems with solar and wind:

> The first was around land use. Electricity from solar roofs costs about twice as much as electricity from solar farms, but solar and wind farms require huge amounts of land. That, along with the fact that solar and wind farms require long new transmissions lines, and are opposed by local communities and conservationists trying to preserve wildlife, particularly birds.
>
> Another challenge was the intermittent nature of solar and wind energies. When the sun stops shining and the wind stops blowing, you have to quickly be able to ramp up another source of energy.

I was having a discussion with one of the software architects at my company, who LOVES wind power. I raised these objections with him, especially about the birds and the subsidies for wind and solar, and the higher electricity prices. His response was that he was confident that investing in the renewables would produce technological solutions to those problems.

Look what Schellenberger says, though:

> What kills big, threatened, and endangered birds—birds that could go extinct—like hawks, eagles, owls, and condors, are wind turbines.
>
> In fact, wind turbines are the most serious new threat to important bird species to emerge in decades.
>
> […]Solar farms have similarly large ecological impacts. Building a solar farm is a lot like building any other kind of farm. You have to clear the whole area of wildlife.
>
> In order to build one of the biggest solar farms in California the developers hired biologists to pull threatened desert tortoises from their burrows, put them on the back of pickup trucks, transport them, and cage them in pens where many ended

> up dying.
>
> […][S]cientists recently warned that wind turbines are on the verge of making one species, the Hoary bat, a migratory bat species, go extinct.

More environmental impact:

> You can make solar panels cheaper and wind turbines bigger, but you can't make the sun shine more regularly or the wind blow more reliably. I came to understand the environmental implications of the physics of energy. In order to produce significant amounts of electricity from weak energy flows, you just have to spread them over enormous areas. In other words, the trouble with renewables isn't fundamentally technical—it's natural.

Higher costs:

> Dealing with energy sources that are inherently unreliable, and require large amounts of land, comes at a high economic cost.
>
> There's been a lot of publicity about how solar panels and wind turbines have come down in cost. But those one-time cost savings from making them in big Chinese factories have been outweighed by the high cost of dealing with their unreliability.

There was a news article from the radically leftist UK Guardian recently that found that 40% of UK solar panels were manufactured by firms linked to Chinese slave labor.

Consumer electricity prices rise, disproportionately affecting the poor:

> Consider California. Between 2011–17 the cost of solar panels declined about 75 percent, and yet our electricity prices rose five times more than they did in the rest of the U.S. It's the same story in Germany, the world leader in solar and wind energy. Its electricity prices increased 50 percent between 2006–17, as it scaled up renewables.

The same thing happened in Canada, when they switched to renewables. According to a recent study, the province of Ontario saw a "21% increase in the overall average cost of power in the province over the period 2007-2013".

Schellenberger likes nuclear energy:

> Germany's carbon emissions have been flat since 2009, despite an investment of $580 billion by 2025 in a renewables-heavy electrical grid, a 50 percent rise in electricity cost.
>
> Meanwhile, France produces one-tenth the carbon emissions per unit of electricity as Germany and pays little more than half for its electricity. How? Through nuclear power.
>
> Then, under pressure from Germany, France spent $33 billion on renewables, over the last decade. What was the result? A rise in the carbon intensity of its

> electricity supply, and higher electricity prices, too.
>
> What about all the headlines about expensive nuclear and cheap solar and wind? They are largely an illusion resulting from the fact that 70 to 80 percent of the costs of building nuclear plants are up-front, whereas the costs given for solar and wind don't include the high cost of transmission lines, new dams, or other forms of battery.

He talks a lot about whether nuclear power is safe, and what to do with the waste. I found it compelling. My architect friend didn't ask me about that, but he did mention the cost of nuclear.

Here's what I should have said (but didn't):

> All of the waste fuel from 45 years of the Swiss nuclear program can fit, in canisters, on a basketball court-like warehouse, where like all spent nuclear fuel, it has never hurt a fly.
>
> By contrast, solar panels require 17 times more materials in the form of cement, glass, concrete, and steel than do nuclear plants, and create over 200 times more waste.
>
> We tend to think of solar panels as clean, but the truth is that there is no plan anywhere to deal with solar panels at the end of their 20 to 25 year lifespan.

I did send him the lecture and the article after, though.

If you think this is an interesting topic, why not share the TED talk and the article with your friends? Some people vote Democrat just for renewable energy. I don't like Democrat policies, so I have to be equipped to know how to respond to anything that anyone might like about them. Christian conservatives like me who care about things like abortion, marriage, religious liberty, etc. have to become experts at education policy, health care policy, energy policy, foreign policy, etc. I have to be able to debate anyone about any policy.

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

May 28, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

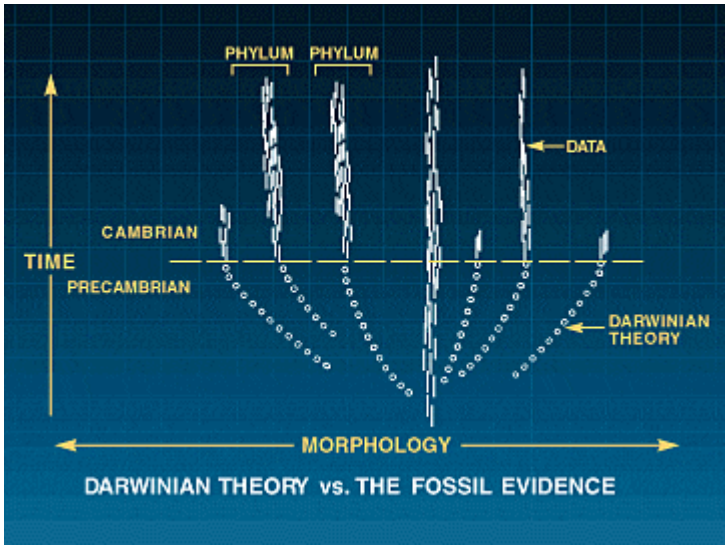

Cambrian Explosion

Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien "The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang" in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a

> unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and
> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

I learned a lot by watching great lectures from Access Research Network. Their YouTube channel is here. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

If you'd like to see Dr. Meyer defend his views in a debate with someone who reviewed his book about the Cambrian explosion, you can find that in this previous post.

Further study

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 7: A Marriage Fit for the King

May 29, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 7 of the Knight and Rose podcast! I sound very excited in this episode, and that's because I was *really* delighted to talk about male roles in a Christian marriage with Rose. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our Youtube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple iTunes / Apple Podcasts.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 7:

Episode 7 Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss marriage from a Christian perspective. We talked about what WK is looking for in a wife, and what he wants to achieve with marriage. We talked about traditional husband roles: protector, provider, moral, and spiritual leader. We discussed "servant leadership" and "male headship". Rose evaluated an email from a naïve proponent of male headship. We talked about what we learned from our engagement with a Christian feminist.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

References

How to Marry a Christian Man: a Checklist for Women to Prepare for Marriage by Wintery Knight

Are You Ready for Marriage? 10 Questions to Find Out How Prepared You Are by Wintery Knight

What Should Social Conservatives Do to Reduce Abortion and Single Motherhood? by Wintery Knight (responding to a feminist about hook-up culture)

New Census Bureau Data: U.S. Marriage Rate Reaches All Time Low by Wintery Knight

Are Feminists Right to Think That Gender-Neutral Marriage Makes Women Happier? by Wintery Knight

Support for Secular Left Policies Increasing Among Young, Unmarried Feminists by Wintery Knight

Brett Kunkle and Immersive Experiences with Maven

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Thinking practically about the gospel with an illustration from a war movie

May 30, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The city of Mogadishu, in Somalia, Africa

I decided to re-post one of my favorite posts for Memorial Day.

First, let's get an overview that helps us understand the context and goals of the mission we are going to discuss.

The scene is set in Somalia, Africa, in 1992. There a civil war between two warlords: Ali Mahdi and Mohammed Farah Aidid. The war has destroyed agricultural operations, and the people are starving. The United Nations are trying to help, but Aidid hijacks the food from UN aircraft so that he can use the food to gain control of the people. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis are dying of starvation. The UN requests American military forces to secure the air-dropped supplies so they can be distributed to the starving people.

In December 1992, President George H.W. Bush answers the call, sending 25,000 troops to Somalia to protect the food from the Somali warlords. However, in 1993, Bill Clinton is elected. He orders that the number of U.S. troops be reduced to 12,000. Following an attack by Aidid on Pakistani peace-keepers, the U.N. issues a resolution to capture those responsible. The U.S. armed forces have the arms and training to battle evil, so they get the call to capture Aidid and his lieutenants.

In late August 1993, Task Force Ranger is deployed to Mogadishu to capture Aidid and his lieutenants at the Olympic Hotel. The U.S. force consists of 440 troops from the Army Rangers and Army Delta Force special forces, commanded by General William Garrison. Garrison requested light armored units (Bradley Infantry Fighting vehicles) that would offer more protection than the unarmored HMMWV Humvees. Garrison was denied the light armor by the Clinton administration. Garrison requested heavier air support (AC-130 Spectre gunships) that would offer better fire support than the UH-60 Blackhawk miniguns. Garrison was denied the air support by the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration did not want the American forces to appear too heavily armed for the peace-keeping role.

The actual mission turned out to be much harder than it needed to be, because of the resources denied by the Clinton administration. Although the Aidid lieutenants were captured, Aidid himself escaped. Eighty-four American soldiers were wounded. Eighteen American soldiers were killed, and their bodies were dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. This was shown over and over by the media, and it undermined American resolve to help the Somali people. As a result, Clinton had the excuse he needed to retreat the American military.

(Source: Nova Online)

Two heroes lost their lives

Today, I want to talk about two of the men who lost their lives in Operation Gothic Serpent. They are Master Sergeant Gary I. Gordon and Sergeant First Class Randall D. Shughart – a Delta Force sniper team.

Here is a clip from the movie Blackhawk Down, which shows what happened to them:

The pilot of the downed Blackhawk was protected by the two men who volunteered to go in after him. They requested that they be inserted at the crash site, even though they knew that reinforcements were likely not going to be there in time to save them. They made the request to go and help the pilot *three times* before being allowed to go in. Their first two requests were denied by their commanding officer, because the odds against their survival were so overwhelming. The rescued pilot was later released by his captors, and the two heroes were awarded the Medal of Honor for their brave actions.

A Congressional Medal of Honor

Here is a description of the requirements to be awarded a Medal of Honor:

> The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through **conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of**

> **duty**:
>
> - While engaged in action against an enemy of the United States;
> - While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
> - While serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

You can read the official details of their actions.

The point of this post

It is important for Christians to be familiar with real-world examples of people giving their lives in order to save the lives of others. When we see real-world examples of self-sacrifice, it helps us to understand what Jesus really achieved for us, and what he must have felt making that hard choice to volunteer to go in and rescue us. In general, my philosophy when it comes to the Bible is to make every effort to connect what the Bible says to the real world. We must not push Christianity into some far-off world of piety and feelings. We must make connections to real evidence and real life, so that what the Bible says becomes practical, and so that we have a deep friendship with and sympathy for God revealed in Jesus Christ. In real life, being willing to give your life to save someone else is hard. Understanding how that really happens will help us to value what Jesus has done for us.

Bible verses

I saw this verse on the ground outside the Airborne & Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, NC, where I went for my summer vacation in 2015.

Isaiah 6:8:

> [8] Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
>
> And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Here is the picture I took (yes, that is my running shoe):

"Here am I, send me" Isaiah 6:8

When confronted with an opportunity to imitate Christ in his self-sacrifice, we should think less about ourselves and our own desires, and take the opportunity to serve others effectively. We do not do what makes us happy, and we do not pursue fun and thrills. We do what heals, we do what helps others. We do not push away our responsibility to imitate Christ by caring for those in danger. Christianity is not just about "not doing bad things". It's the good things you do because of your relationship with Jesus that show your real allegiance, and give you the experience of being a Christian in deed.

And here is another good verse:

John 15:13:

> [13] Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

If you get a chance to watch the movie Blackhawk Down, then do so. I highly recommend it. You can also read the book that the movie is based on.

I love the Medal of Honor books by Edward F. Murphy. He writes about all the people who have been awarded the Medal of honor in different wars: World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

If you check my reading list, you'll find that I usually read two military books for every one book on another subject.

Can you trust the government to protect you and your family?

May 31, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A lot of Democrats have been raving about banning guns and self-defense over the last week, in the wake of another school shooting by another fatherless child. We know that they refuse to confront women over their choices with men and sex. Choices that cause the fatehrlessness that results in violent young men. But what do they offer to protect the people who pay their salaries from threats?

Well, they don't want armed security in the schools. The schools are filled with people who are terrified of guns, so we can't have armed security. Instead, we should ban guns and self-defense. Then, when the fatherless boys commit crimes, we just call the police, and wait for the professionals to arrive and save our loved ones.

Does it work? Consider this article from The Federalist.

It says:

> As more details emerge about the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, it's becoming hard not to conclude the worst about the local police response: Uvalde cops apparently stood aside and did nothing while the shooter killed 19 school children and two teachers inside a classroom.
>
> A shocking news conference on Friday revealed that more than an hour passed after the shooting began and before an elite team of Border Patrol agents, whom Uvalde police had prevented from storming the classroom earlier, decided to ignore those orders and confront the gunman, ending the massacre.
>
> During this time, about 78 minutes, as many as 19 police officers were reportedly in the hallway outside the classroom, while multiple students inside the classroom called 911 begging for the police to be sent in. But none came.

Why did no police go into the school? Someone in the police hierarchy made the decision that they should not go in. They knew that there were children still in danger inside the school, but they did not go in.

More:

> All this comes as news reports in recent days, along with video footage posted to social media, have detailed how desperate parents gathered outside the school during the shooting and demanded that police officers there go in and engage the shooter.
>
> One woman, Angeli Rose Gomez, a mother whose two children were inside the school, was apparently handcuffed by police for insisting they take action. When she eventually talked her way out of the handcuffs she sprinted into the school, found her kids, and rescued them herself. That was after she drove 40 miles from

> her workplace after she heard about the shooting.
>
> “The police were doing nothing,” Gomez told The Wall Street Journal. “They were just standing outside the fence. They weren’t going in there or running anywhere.”

The first thing to note about big city police is that the police chiefs are usually politically correct. So, during the Black Lives Matter rioting of 2020-2021, you would often see the mayors and the police chiefs wanting to “give space” to the rioters. The police at the bottom of the hierarchy might believe in right and wrong, and self-sacrifice. But the people at the top often believe in black lives matter and critical race theory and banning guns and arresting parents at school board meetings. The people at the top are often soft on crime.

The second thing to note is that Democrats often exacerbate crises in order to drive public opinion towards the policies they want. So, that’s why Democrats are taking action now to make health care expensive (with regulations, and by important millions of illegal immigrants who use emergency rooms for health care, etc.). They want the price of health care to go up, so that people will look to the government to “fix the problem” with single payer health care. And why Democrats are raising gas prices to make you buy electric cars, and support wind and solar power. Companies that are often owned by Democrat “bundlers” who get Democrats elected. For them, you have to “break a few eggs to make an omelet”.

Broward county sheriff Steve Israel and Hillary Clinton

Do you remember the Parkland shooting, and the Florida Sherriff Scott Israel, who went on CNN and demanded more gun banning?

Here is The Federalist article about it:

> During a heated CNN town hall last week, Israel admonished National Rifle Association spokesperson Dana Loesch for daring to suggest his department had failed to follow up on huge red flags regarding the suspect. At the time it was believed the department had responded to 23 calls regarding the shooter. Yesterday BuzzFeed reported that there were an additional 22 calls, bringing the total to 45. The shooter wasn't just a blip on the radar, he was a blimp on the radar.
>
> Israel claimed that none of these calls led to anything actionable by the department. But we now know that the suspect made a specific threat to commit the school shooting and that the sheriff's department was not only aware of it, but they passed it along to the school resource officer at Stoneman Douglas. That threat was actionable, yet no actions were taken.
>
> […]The day after the CNN town hall, information emerged that the school's armed resource officer under Israel's command, Scot Peterson, had failed to enter the building and confront the shooter during the massacre.

The Sherriff is a Democrat. He almost seemed to want the shooting to happen, so he could go on CNN and demand a gun ban, and more funding for his unionized police department. Democrats really struggle with holding people accountable. They prefer to arrest concerned parents at school board meetings, than to have to go into a building and stop an actual crime. There's often no accountability for these unionized police workers.

With a few more school shootings, people will become more supportive of gun bans and gun confiscations. People will distrust individuals, families, churches and small businesses, and turn to the government to "fix the problem". When government becomes the monopoly provider of services, then society will be more "equal". No one will have the privilege of defending themselves from criminals. Everyone will have the same equal response: call the police and wait an hour for them to arrive. They have to let you suffer a little, in order to get the egalitarian society they feel is best.

It's for your own good. Just let the experts make your decisions for you. Trust the people with the non-STEM degrees. They are more virtuous than you are. They care about your kids more than you do.

What is the definition of marriage according to Jesus?

June 1, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's Pride Month! This is when Big Corporations spend an entire month celebrating the LGBT community, and pressuring everyone else to celebrate behaviors and lifestyles that are at odds with the teachings of Jesus. So, since the LGBT activists are about to get 30 days of celebration, I thought I would celebrate what Jesus taught about marriage on my little blog.

Here's what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
>
> 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"
>
> 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."
>
> 11 But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don't overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are supposed to be willing to endure suffering rather than side with non-Christians against

God’s authority.

Matt Walsh had a fine article about this issue.

He said:

> As Christians, our goal is not to avoid being like the big bad “other Christians,” but to strive to be like Christ Himself. This is one of the advantages to having an Incarnate God. He went around acting and speaking and teaching and generally functioning in our realm, thereby giving us a model to follow. This is the model of a loving and merciful man, and *also* a man of perfect virtue who fought against the forces of evil, condemned sin, defended his Father in Heaven with sometimes violent force, spoke truth, and eventually laid down His life for those He loved (which would be all of us).
>
> […]This is what it means to believe in Christ. Not just to believe that He existed, but to believe that Christ is Truth itself, and that everything He said and did was totally and absolutely and irreversibly true forever and always. Many Christians today — not only the ones in the video, but millions alongside them — seem to think we can rightly claim to have “faith” in Jesus or a “relationship” with Him while still categorically denying much of His Word. This is a ridiculous proposition. We can’t declare, in one breath, that Christ is Lord, and in the next suggest that maybe God got it wrong on this or that point. Well, we *can* make that declaration, but we expose our belief as fraudulent and self-serving. We worship a God we either invented in our heads, which is a false idol, or a God who is fallible, which is a false idol.

If you really accept Jesus as God, then you can’t think he is wrong when he explains what marriage is. Period. End of issue.

Real Christians don’t make excuses for sin. Real Christians present the gospel. The gospel is that all men have rebelled against God and fallen short of perfect submission to and obedience of him. For this, they deserve to be separated from God eternally. Jesus paid the price for this rebellion on the cross, and anyone who accepts him as Savior *and Lord* will be with God eternally after they die. There is no salvation apart from Jesus. That’s what Christians say. And they say it regardless of how weird they look, and how many non-Christians don’t like them for saying it.

New study: there is no gay gene that causes homosexuality

June 2, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I heard one of the authors of this new study commenting on how he was a gay man, and the purpose of his research was to show a genetic basis for homosexuality, in order to make it equal to race. His goal was to make it impossible to disagree with homosexual behavior, because homosexual behavior would be seen as natural and normal. Let's see if his new study helps him out.

The blog of the peer-reviewed journal PLOS One reported on the new study, which was published in the prestigious journal Science.

Excerpt:

> The once-prevailing concept of a "gay gene" dictating sexual orientation has been put to rest in a powerhouse study published today in *Science*. The work brilliantly illustrates the very nature of science: evolving with the input of new data, especially the large-scale contributions of bioinformatics and crowd-sourcing.
>
> "We formed a large international consortium and collected data for more than 500,000 people, comparing DNA and self-reported sexual behavior. This is approximately 100 times bigger than any previous study on this topic," said lead author Andrea Ganna, of the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Finland and an instructor at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, opening a news conference earlier this week.
>
> […]The investigation estimates a genetic contribution to same-sex sexual behavior as under 1 percent, thanks to analysis of a trove of data from the UK Biobank and the consumer genetic testing company 23andme.

So, there you have it, there is no gay gene. But this is of course something we've known for decades, as all the previous studies had found the same thing.

The normal way that people do these studies is to analyze identical twins, and see how often both identical twins are gay.

> Eight major studies of identical twins in Australia, the U.S., and Scandinavia during the last two decades all arrive at the same conclusion: gays were not born that way.
>
> "At best genetics is a minor factor," says Dr. Neil Whitehead, PhD. Whitehead worked for the New Zealand government as a scientific researcher for 24 years, then spent four years working for the United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency. Most recently, he serves as a consultant to Japanese universities about the effects of radiation exposure. His PhD is in biochemistry and statistics.

> Identical twins have the same genes or DNA. They are nurtured in equal prenatal conditions. If homosexuality is caused by genetics or prenatal conditions and one twin is gay, the co-twin should also be gay.
>
> "Because they have identical DNA, it ought to be 100%," Dr. Whitehead notes. But the studies reveal something else. "If an identical twin has same-sex attraction the chances the co-twin has it are only about 11% for men and 14% for women."
>
> Because identical twins are always genetically identical, homosexuality cannot be genetically dictated. "No-one is born gay," he notes. "The predominant things that create homosexuality in one identical twin and not in the other have to be post-birth factors."
>
> Dr. Whitehead believes same-sex attraction (SSA) is caused by "non-shared factors," things happening to one twin but not the other, or a personal response to an event by one of the twins and not the other.

By the way, a previous study also found that transgender behavior was not genetic, but was clearly linked to environmental factors such as peer approval and social media.

Here is the report from Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.
>
> Littman surveyed more than 250 parents of children who suddenly developed gender dysphoria symptoms during or after puberty.
>
> […]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

A previous study also found that children are more likely to be gay if they are raised by gay adults. It was reported in AOL News.

Excerpt:

> Walter Schumm knows what he's about to do is unpopular: publish a study arguing that gay parents are more likely to raise gay children than straight parents. But the Kansas State University family studies professor has a detailed analysis that past almost aggressively ideological researchers never had.
>
> […]His study on sexual orientation, out next month, says that gay and lesbian parents are far more likely to have children who become gay. "I'm trying to prove

> that it’s not 100 percent genetic,” Schumm tells AOL News.
>
> His study is a meta-analysis of existing work. First, Schumm extrapolated data from 10 books on gay parenting… [and] skewed his data so that only self-identified gay and lesbian children would be labeled as such.
>
> […]Schumm concluded that children of lesbian parents identified themselves as gay 31 percent of the time; children of gay men had gay children 19 percent of the time, and children of a lesbian mother and gay father had at least one gay child 25 percent of the time.
>
> […]Finally, Schumm looked at the existing academic studies… In all there are 26 such studies. Schumm ran the numbers from them and concluded that, surprisingly, 20 percent of the kids of gay parents were gay themselves. When children only 17 or older were included in the analysis, 28 percent were gay.

It’s very important for people to understand that there is a trend in society to make every behavior traditionally seen as sinful into something caused by genetics. The twin goals of this effort are to insulate the behaviors from criticism, and to minimize evaluation of the effects of these behaviors on society as a whole. The genetic argument was used extensively to normalize same-sex marriage and transgenderism. I have seen the genetic argument used to defend other behaviors like pedophilia and incest. But the scientific research does nothing to support any of these arguments. What’s amazing is how a majority of people in the United States have such false beliefs about the scientific research. They vastly overestimate the number of gay people, and also the influence of genetics.

Did you miss this recent historically-accurate World War 2 movie?

June 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I wanted to alert you to some books that I've been reading, and post a couple of videos that review a recent movie that fits in with those books. I'm trying to encourage everyone to ween themselves off of fiction, self-help, sports and modern movies. And in order to get people to do that, I have to find something better.

So, in World War 2, the Allies (UK, USA and USSR) were fighting in two main areas of the globe: Europe and the Pacific Ocean. Previously, I had ignored the Pacific, because island fighting didn't seem to me to be as interesting as fighting in Europe. It just seemed too "close quarters" for any real tactics or strategy. But I had stupidly neglected the naval battles, which are full of tactics and strategy. So, I've been reading books about American aircraft used in the Pacific theater, the US submarine forces, as well as the major battles of our surface fleets.

Here are some of the aircraft books:

- Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor
- Air Apaches: The True Story of the 345th Bomb Group and Its Low, Fast, and Deadly Missions in World War II
- Never Call Me a Hero: A Legendary American Dive-Bomber Pilot Remembers the Battle of Midway

Here are some of the submarine books:

- Wahoo: The Patrols of America's Most Famous World War II Submarine
- Clear the Bridge!: The War Patrols of the U.S.S. Tang
- Thunder Below!: The USS *Barb* Revolutionizes Submarine Warfare in World War II

And a few surface ship books:

- The Battle of Midway (Pivotal Moments in American History)
- Neptune's Inferno: The U.S. Navy at Guadalcanal
- World War II at Sea: A Global History

These are all available as audio books.

I wanted to specifically highlight the book on the Battle of Midway, by Craig L. Symonds. There was a recent movie made about the battle, and it had surprisingly few historical mistakes. This 2-part video review was excellent.

Part 1:

Part 2:

The movie is from 2019, and you can still stream it, or get the DVD. It will help you to have a broad overview of the battle, and then when you read the book, it makes sense. If you have never seen a war movie, this is an excellent one to start with. It really sticks to the historical facts. It is superior to the previous 1976 Midway movie with Charleton Heston and Henry Fonda.

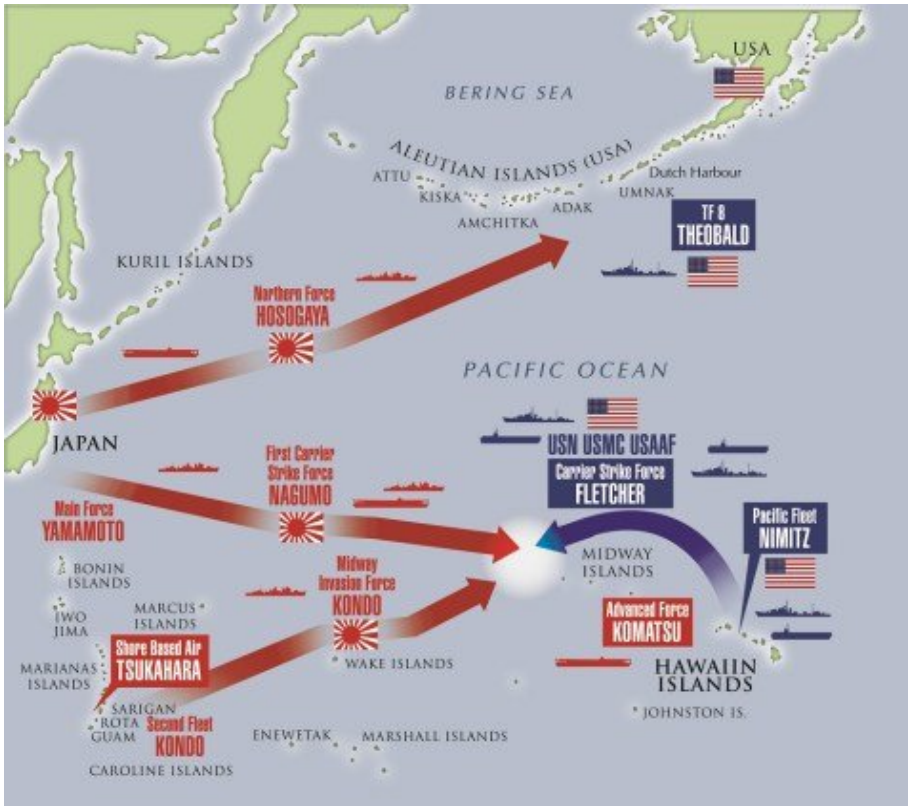

Battle of Midway Map

What makes this particular battle interesting is that the American Navy was actually outnumbered and outgunned by the superior Japanese Navy at that time. They had more ships, better planes, and better trained airmen and sailors. But we had a secret weapon – you'll have to watch the movie to find out what it was. Midway was the turning point of the Pacific War. It's a good reminder why we always need to keep our "blue water" naval force in the trim. I wish we spent more on our armed forces than we do on all these spending programs to transfer wealth from taxpayers to other people – subsidies and welfare. At least when we spend money on the armed forces, it's Constitutional, and we get something useful for it.

We really should not know the names of famous actors, artists, musicians, athletes, etc. These people are pretty and talented, sure. But they never did anything to fight against evils like Marxism and Japanese Imperialism. Christianity is a faith that pits good against evil, so naturally, I am very interested in people who battle against evil. The American armed forces have an excellent record of battling against evil, often at great personal cost. Something that the current generation of entertainers cannot match.

What can Christians learn from the bravest naval aviator at the Battle of Midway?

June 4, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been reading lots of books about the World War II battles in the Pacific theater lately, and I wanted to write a post about one of the heroes I found who was the most compelling to me. You may have seen him in the old 1976 Midway movie or the new 2019 Midway movie. But neither movie tells the full story. The man I am talking about is Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.

John Waldron was the leader of the torpedo bomber squadron on the Hornet. This squadron was composed of outdated and slow Devastator torpedo bombers, armed with the Mark 13 Mod 1 torpedoes, which malfunctioned about 90% of the time.

I found an article on the Federalist that tells the story of John Waldron:

> Now there are countless men and woman who deserve to be singled out for their valor, but with the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Midway just around the corner, I thought it would be appropriate to call your attention to one of the bravest men who ever lived. A man who, knowing he was facing certain death, led the first attack against the Japanese aircraft carriers and played a direct role in what would be a decisive victory for the United States, and a defeat from which Japan would never recover. That man was Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.
>
> Now for those who don't know, the Battle of Midway was the turning point in the Pacific theater. The Japanese had an elaborate plan that involved attacking the U.S. base on Midway Island in order to lure the Americans into a battle which the Japanese High command felt their experience and tactics would overwhelm and annihilate the American fleet. With no significant U.S. naval presence, Hawaii and the entire West Coast would be at risk of invasion. But the Americans broke the Japanese code and set a trap of their own – hoping to destroy their enemy's carriers and thereby establish U.S. dominance in the Pacific. And that was exactly what happened : The U.S. fleet surprised the Japanese, sank their four carriers, and took the first real step to winning the Second World War.
>
> John Waldron was 42 years old when the *USS Hornet* steamed towards Midway on June 1st, 1942. Born and raised on a reservation in South Dakota, he had never seen the ocean until he attended the Naval Academy. It wasn't long after he graduated that he moved into naval aviation. He had been assigned to be the squadron leader of the *Hornet's* torpedo bombers in late 1941 and had been drilling his men tirelessly ever since. Waldron had the reputation of a tough as nails, no-nonsense commander. Not surprising, since Waldron was a direct descendant of the warriors from the Oglala Lakota tribe – part of the Great Sioux Nation. The tough skin he developed came from decades of derision from his peers over his meager beginnings, and from the racism directed at his Native

> American heritage. Waldron didn't care what anyone thought of him – all he wanted to do was fight for his country. He was a natural leader and his men would follow him into the gates of Hell, which, as fate would have it, is exactly what they would do in the upcoming battle.
>
> On the morning of June 4th, the Americans were ready to spring their trap, but in the preflight briefing aboard the *Hornet* there was a problem. Stanhope Ring, who was in command of the carrier's air group, directed his pilots to head northwest of the last reported position of the Japanese fleet. Waldron disagreed with this decision, feeling that they should head in the exact direction of that last sighting. He wasn't shy about expressing this opinion, much the displeasure of Ring. Waldron continued to lobby his superior officer several times after the briefing ended, but to no avail.

The Federalist article doesn't talk much about Stanhope Ring, but the book I just finished called "The Battle of Midway" by Craig L. Symonds did. Ring was a very tall, good-looking, and white officer who had breezed up the chain of command thanks to his good looks and confident manner. He loved to show off for cameras, and pull rank on subordinates. He was too proud to admit that Waldron was right in front of the other pilots.

More:

> The air strike force took off from the deck of the *Hornet* – fighters, dive bombers, and the 15 planes in Waldron's torpedo squadron. This force would be joined in the air by similar strike forces from the other U.S. carriers – the *Yorktown* and the *Enterprise*. Shortly after the Hornet's air group was airborne, Waldron couldn't contain his anger anymore. He broke radio silence to tell Ring that they were headed in the wrong direction. He repeated that comment and Ring issued a terse reply that he was in charge of this group and to stay the hell off the radio. Waldron waited a couple of minutes before replying "The hell with you" and peeled his squadron off and headed due west, where he felt the Japanese fleet was.
>
> Less than an hour later, Waldron was proved right. He had led his squadron on a direct line to the enemy. Waldron broke radio silence again to signal to Ring that he had found the fleet, but Ring and the rest of the *Hornet's* planes were too far away to hear. So now, Waldron was faced with a brutal decision. If he went in to attack, he would do so without any fighter protection, and they'd be totally at the mercy of the Japanese fighters. To make matters worse, the U.S. planes (Douglas Devastators) were hopelessly outdated aircraft – their top speed was about a third of what the Japanese fighters could do. They had hoped to get the newer Grumman Avengers, but the *Hornet* had left Pearl Harbor before they had arrived from the mainland. All of this meant that Waldron and Torpedo 8 were looking at a suicidal attack run. […]Waldron got on the radio again and told his men "We will go in. We won't turn back. Former strategy cannot be used. We will attack. Good luck!"

> And with that, the planes of Torpedo 8 closed up their formation and bore down on the Japanese fleet, some seven miles distant.
>
> The Japanese fighters quickly pounced on the Americans, who were going in low and slow – the only way torpedo bombers can attack. One by one the planes from Torpedo 8 were shot down. […]Every single plane in Torpedo 8 was destroyed and not one torpedo hit a Japanese ship.

Not only were the torpedo bombers of John Waldron's VT-8 (Hornet) shot down, but two more waves led by Eugene Lindsey VT-6 (Enterprise) and Edward Massey VT-3 (Yorktown) were also repulsed without a hit.

More:

> History might have viewed Waldron's attack as more insane than brave, and utterly pointless….except for what happened next. Shortly after his failed attack, the torpedo squadron from the *Enterprise* attacked the fleet – and right after that the torpedo squadron from the *Yorktown*. Both of those squadrons had devastating casualties as well (10 of 14 planes lost and 10 of 12 respectively) without inflicting any damage on any Japanese ship. But these three attacks in succession drew the Japanese fighter cover down so low, that it left their carriers exposed to dive bomber attacks. It also burned up a lot of fuel for the fighters, who now needed to land before they could continue their defense of the fleet. The attacks also forced the Japanese carriers into defensive maneuvers, so they were unable to land any planes or launch any for a strike on the American carriers.

In addition to using up their fuel and coming down to low altitude, the Japanese CAP (combat air patrol) fighters also used up most of their dangerous 20 mm ammunition. They mostly had much weaker 7.7 mm ammunition remaining when the dive bombers from the Enterprise and Yorktown arrived.

More:

> As the Japanese were trying to compose themselves after the three fierce but harmless attacks, the American dive bombers from the *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* arrived and quickly struck. Within minutes, three of the Japanese carriers were in flames – the heart of the Imperial Navy had been gutted.
>
> […]The other planes from the Hornet never found the Japanese ships. Ring kept his planes flying in that northwesterly direction until they were too low on fuel to keep going. They returned to the *Hornet* with their full payload of bombs.
>
> […]Now, there were a lot of heroes that day – some who lived and some who died, but the valor that John Waldron displayed in defying orders he knew were wrong and then attacking the enemy when he knew it meant certain death, place him on a special level. His actions directly helped the Americans win this crucial battle, which turned the tide of the war in the favor of the United States. He got

> the Navy Cross for his actions that day, but it seems astonishing to me that he wasn't awarded the Medal of Honor – he is definitely worthy of it.

You can learn more about the Battle of Midway in this helpful video:

So, here is what I wanted to say about this.

John Waldron was not properly equipped by his organization to make a difference at Midway. His planes were too old and slow, his torpedoes almost never worked. His leader was an arrogant, incompetent coward who prevented him from leading others to find and attack the actual targets. The only way he could do something to his enemy was to disobey orders and go off on his own. If he had lived, he probably would have been court-martialed for insubordination. After Waldron was shot down, every single one of the men in his squadron continued their attack until they too were all shot down. Everyone watching must have thought "what a waste of effort". It was only later that it became evident to all that what he did was necessary for the second wave to succeed.

This plaque at the United States Naval Academy Club honors the three commanders of the torpedo bomber squadrons:

[image]
Plaque honoring the Midway torpedo bomber squadron commanders
According to the Family Research Council, the plaque reads:

> The torpedo attacks of Waldron, Lindsey, and Massey had followed hard upon each other by luck. What was not luck, but the soul of the United States in action, was the willingness of the torpedo plane squadrons to go in against hopeless odds. This was the extra ounce of martial weight that in a few decisive minutes tipped the balance of history.

When I read this story, it immediately occurred to me that this is the problem that serious Christians are facing today. Parents and pastors are not equipping young people to actually make a difference. Instead of finding and fighting the real targets: atheism, radical feminism, communism, etc., all our forces have been sent on wild goose chases, so that now "Christians" are actually trying to promote the priorities of the secular left, e.g. – global warming, wealth redistribution, affirming sexual immorality, open borders, critical race theory, etc.

The few of us who actually know how to do our jobs are poorly equipped. We are prevented from leading by organizations that are focused on feelings rather than results. We can only hope that our decision to attack against hopeless odds somehow paves the way for a second wave to succeed. It has happened before, and that's why we should be brave and continue to engage our opponents using tools that work (philosophy of religion, evidential apologetics, scientific research, historical evidence, chastity, sobriety, self-control, good stewardship of our educations, careers and finances, effective charitable giving, self-sacrificial love, etc.).

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 8: Does Jesus Care About Politics?

June 5, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 8 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, we talk about a variety of topics related to policy with the goal of helping Christians to understand why they should care about politics . If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our Youtube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple iTunes / Apple Podcasts.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 8:

Episode 8 Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how policies affect how Christians live. We compared free market economies and government monopoly economies. We discussed policies that affect fatherlessness. We discussed how health care, education and energy policy affect Christians. We compared government-run welfare spending vs private voluntary charity. We discussed how to evaluate political candidates. We discussed legislation pushed by the Biden administration that affects Christians and Christian priorities.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

References

How Well Are Democrat Economic Policies Working in Venezuela and Argentina? by Wintery Knight

How Well Is Alexandria Ocasio-cortez’s Socialism Working Out in Socialist Venezuela? by Wintery Knight

Toronto Pastor Sentenced to Life in Prison in Atheist North Korea by Wintery Knight

Christian Woman Murdered by Atheistic Communist for Distributing Bible by Wintery

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China reportedly censoring Ten Commandments, replacing them with Xi quotes inside churches by Fox News

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Dictator joins hacker, Big Banks, Big News Media and Big Tech to destroy liberty by Wintery Knight

LGBT Fascism: Father Imprisoned for Calling His Biological Child “daughter” by Wintery Knight

LGBT Activists Persecuting Christian Business Owners for Their Faith in Colorado by Wintery Knight

Biden’s Infrastructure Bill Would End Religious Liberty as a Human Right in America by Wintery Knight

Christian Baker Back in Court for Refusing to Bake a Satanic Cake for an LGBT Activist by Wintery Knight

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UK’s health care system paying millions to hospitals to deny food and fluids to end-of-life patients by Wintery Knight

National School Board Association wanted Biden to deploy military against parents by Wintery Knight

Are Schools Right to “Treat” Depression in Children by Facilitating Gender Transitions? by Wintery Knight

What Would Public School Teachers Do if Your Daughter Was Raped by a Transgender Student? by Wintery Knight

How the Presence and Quality of Fathers Affects Belief in God by Wintery Knight

Parents or Prisons by Jennifer Roback Morse (on the link between mothers and developing empathy in children)

Is the Root Cause of Crime Poverty or Fatherlessness? by Wintery Knight (on the policies that cause fatherlessness)

Obama’s Minimum Wage Hike Will Raise Unemployment, Especially for Younger Workers by Wintery Knight

Will Raising the Minimum Wage Cause Job Creators to Lay Off Employees? by Wintery Knight

Thomas Sowell, America's Most Influential Public Intellectual, Announces Retirement by Wintery Knight (has recommended reading list)

Why Do Intellectuals Oppose Capitalism? by Robert Nozick (explains why so many people from non-STEM backgrounds favor socialism over the free enterprise system)

What are the positions of Joe Biden and Donald Trump on abortion? by Wintery Knight

Biden continues raising gas prices by canceling more oil and gas leases by Wintery Knight

Why did evangelicals for Biden oppose pro-Christian policies and Christian moral values? by Wintery Knight

House Democrats Pass Equality Act Bill to Put Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Above Religious Liberty by Wintery Knight

Republicans Block Equality Act Bill That Makes Christian Moral Values a Crime by Wintery Knight

Democrats schedule Senate vote to abolish all state-level restrictions on abortion by Wintery Knight

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Meet four heroes of the D-Day invasion of Normandy on June 6th, 1944

June 6, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought it might be a good idea to write up something about D-Day in order to help people understand some of our military history, and to put the spotlight on some real heroes. I don't regard artists, athletes, dancers, singers, actors, or other celebrities as heroes. It really alarms me that so many people know more about these fake heroes than they do about real ones.

Weakness emboldens aggressors

For one thing, many people don't understand how British and American libertarian isolationism made World War 2 into a much bigger mess than it needed to be. As historian Victor Davis Hanson explains in the lecture I linked below, the Allied nations were much stronger and better equipped than the Axis nations before the war started. The Axis nations developed better weapons after the war started. But Germany and Japan didn't think that the Allied nations would do anything if they were aggressive. We know this from their writings and correspondence. They thought that British and Americans were just too scared of war to stop them.

Germany and Japan tested their hypothesis out by re-arming and annexing territory from their neighbors. Britain and America were led by libertarian isolationists, so they didn't fight back. The aggressors correctly understood that libertarian isolationists didn't have the will to oppose them, even if they were weaker than the Allies. But the more they re-armed and annexed territory, the stronger they became. The Allied nations waited too long to confront them. And that's why World War 2 was much harder to win than it needed to be.

Here's a very good lecture about the causes of World War 2 by an actual military historian, Victor Davis Hanson:

So, that's the first point I wanted to make: libertarian isolationism causes wars. Although libertarians claim to oppose war, they actually cause war, due to their weakness in the face of evil. So who stops wars? People who favor a strong defense, and show a willingness to fight back against aggression are the ones who REALLY oppose wars. This is called "peace through strength", and you can see it in action in the Cold War, where Ronald Reagan defeated the Soviet Union by making their aggression costly.

Heroes of D-Day

My second concern was to promote the real heroes of D-Day, over the fictional heroes of movies, fiction, music, dancing, sports, and other entertainment nonsense.

Here are the four heroes I chose:

- Major John Howard
- Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort
- Brigadier General Norman Cota
- Major Richard Winters

Let's take a look at each of them.

John Howard

Major John Howard led elements of the British 6th Airborne Division to take two vital bridges southeast of Sword beach. He did this in order to prevent German socialist counterattacks coming from the east. After they took the bridges, they had to repulse German tanks with nothing more than their useless PIAT (Projector Infantry Anti-Tank) grenade launchers. The PIAT was nothing more than a grenade launcher powered by a coiled spring. It was very inaccurate, and only effective to 50 yards. But that's all the British paratroops had to stop tanks, and they made it work. You can read about him in this book by Stephen E. Ambrose, entitled: "Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944". This New York Times article tells the story in brief. He also is played by Richard Todd in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Benjamin Vandervoort

Lt. Col. Ben Vandervoort served with the 82nd Airborne Division. I read about how he lead an infantry attack against German Tiger tanks (!) and infantry in Stephen E. Ambrose's book "Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany". Ben Vandervoort broke his ankle during the D-Day landing, but he insisted that the medic just "lace it up tight" so that he could supervise the attacking

and holding of Ste. Mere Eglise, southwest of Utah beach, against a vastly superior enemy force. This article tells about how he defended against elite German SS infantry and heavy Tiger tanks at Trois-Ponts, during the Battle of the Bulge. He was outgunned and outnumbered 20 to 1, and had just a few lightly-armed soldiers, two weak 57mm anti-tank guns and some bazookas. He is portrayed by John Wayne in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Norman Cota

Brig. General Norman Cota is my favorite person in World War 2. At 51 years old, he nevertheless landed at D-Day, and rallied terrified Army Rangers to follow him up the bluff, by telling them that Rangers ought to lead the way. "Rangers Lead The Way" later became the motto of the Army Rangers. He always led from the front, demonstrating how to attack a German machine gun position in a farmhouse to a group of American soldiers who were pinned down. He actually grabbed a bunch of grenades and led the assault team against a heavy machine gun! You can read about him in this short article and in Stephen E. Ambrose's "D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II". He is portrayed by Robert Mitchum in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Richard Winters

Major Richard Winters served in the 101st Airborne Division. Winters led an assault against a superior force of heavy machine guns and 105mm field guns. His tactics were so brilliant that they are still studied at West Point today. You can see Richard Winters and Carwood Lipton in the HBO "Band of Brothers" series, or read this book by Stephen E. Ambrose entitled "Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne, from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest", which is the basis for that series.

I hope this convinces you that military heroes are far more important than the "heroes" of fiction and entertainment. It's alarming to me that people invest more and have more respect for characters in Hollywood science fiction movies, and other such make-believe nonsense. We need to be rooted in reality. In reality, men who fight and die fighting evil to protect your freedoms are the real heroes. People who take military history seriously are able to give respect and gratitude where it is due – a very important part of being a mature, moral human being.

Older career woman calls Dennis Prager show to warn young women about marriage

June 7, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I used to listen to the Dennis Prager show all the time, and my favorite hour was the male-female hour, which is the second hour every Wednesday. In that hour, you will hear some of the most frank discussion of male and female issues. I was surprised to see Better Bachelor, a men's rights activist, talk about an article about the male-female hour in his show. I'll link to the article below.

Prager explains in The Stream:

> Every Wednesday, the second hour of my national radio show is the "Male/Female Hour." A few weeks ago, a woman named Jennifer called in. For reasons of space, I have somewhat shortened her comments. Every young woman should read them. This is precisely what she said:
>
> Dennis, I want to get right to it. I'm 50 years old with four college degrees. I was raised by a feminist mother with no father in the home. My mother told me get an education to the maximum level so that you can get out in the world, make a lot of money. And that's the path I followed. I make adequate money. I don't make a ton of money. But I do make enough to support my own household.
>
> I want to tell women in their 20s: Do not follow the path that I followed. You are leading yourself to a life of loneliness. All of your friends will be getting married and having children, and you're working to compete in the world, and what you're doing is competing with men. Men don't like competitors. Men want a partner. It took me until my late 40s to realize this.
>
> And by the time you have your own household with all your own bills, you can't get off that track, because now you've got to make the money to pay your bills. It's hard to find a partner in your late 40s to date because you also start losing self-confidence about your looks, your body. It's not the same as it was in your 20s. You try to do what you can to make your life fulfilling. I have cats and dogs. But it's lonely when you see your friends having children, going on vacations, planning the lives of their children, and you don't do anything at night but come home to your cats and dogs. I don't want other women to do what I have done.

How did this happen to her?

> Somebody asked me the other day, "Why did you stay single and never have kids?" There's answers: Because I was brainwashed by my mother into this. But it's hard and it's shameful to tell people, "I don't know. I ran out of time."
>
> There's not a good answer for it except "I was programmed to get into the workforce, compete with men and make money." Supposedly, that would be a fulfilling life. But I was told that by a feminist mother who was divorced, who

> hated her husband — my father.
>
> She tried to steer me on what she thought was the right path, but feminism is a lie. That's what I want women to know.
>
> I didn't realize this until late in life. I want to tell women: Find someone in your 20s. That's when you're still very cute. That's when you're still amiable to working out problems with someone. It's harder in your 50s, when you've lived alone, to compromise with someone, to have someone in your home and every little thing about them annoys you because you're so used to being alone. It's hard to undo that, so don't do what I did. Find someone in your 20s.

I don't want young women to be wasting their teens and 20s like this woman is, choosing men for relationships using criteria that have nothing at all to do with marriage, or what a man does in a marriage.

Look at this weird list of criteria from a dating ad – is any of this related to the actual work that a man does as a husband and father?

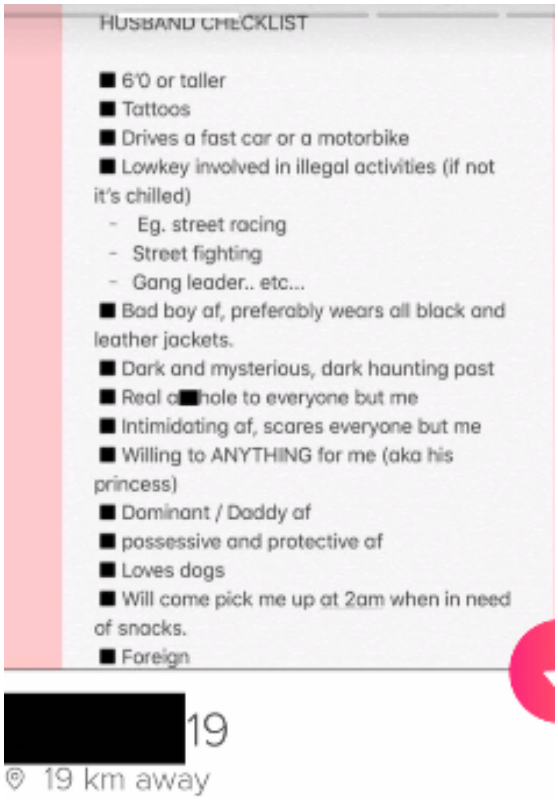

She's looking for drama, domestic violence and instability – not for a husband

I see young women going for "bad boy" qualities a lot, but for some reason, they think that the bad boy will turn into a good man. What could cause this? Is it that easy to change a man? I don't think that men change that easily, which is why you should pick the man you marry based on his ability to do the work.

I think young women should focus their energy on relationships with men who are sober and chaste, and looking to commit and start a family. These men are easy for women to find when the women are in their teens and early 20s, but much harder for women to find if they delay marriage into their 30s and 40s. Although these marriage-minded men may not be "attractive" according to "bad boy" criteria, they should be selected because they

are good at marriage, and want to marry sooner, rather than later. Feelings are not the best way to judge a man. Sometimes, you have to look at his academic transcripts, his resume, his bank account, his library.

On the other hand, I would advise successful man to choose a woman who is attracted to his abilities as a husband and father. Choose a woman who respects your ability to be serious, to be self-controlled, to be focused on serving others, and to achieve what you set out to achieve. Men need respect more than they need oxygen. In order to get that respect, a man *has to* choose a woman who has, from earliest times, preferred men who have good moral character, demonstrated leadership ability, and a proven record of achieving what he set out to achieve by wise decision-making.

How a small, poor country became the top economy in Latin America

June 8, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One way to learn about whether specific economic policies work or not is to look at different countries that have tried them. Believe it or not, patterns do emerge about what works and what doesn't work, as you look across different times and places. I've been reading a book called "Money, Greed and God" with my friend Carla, which talks about what has worked to reduce poverty.

The author basically outlined two approaches. In the first approach, the government 1) confiscates the wealth of the most productive workers, 2) nationalizes (takes control of) the businesses of the most successful entrepreneurs, 3) restricts trading between citizens and with other countries, with minimum wage, price controls and tariffs. In the second approach, the government does the opposite: 1) lowers taxes on the most productive workers, and 2) lets entrepreneurs compete to provide goods and services to consumers, and 3) lowers restrictions on internal trading and trading with other countries, e.g. – eliminating minimum wage, tariffs and price controls.

Let's take a look at two Latin American countries that went in opposite directions. Venezuela and Chile. Then we can finally find out which policies actually achieve results for the people.

Here is how Chile started out in 1973.

PROBLEM: Price controls and tariffs:

> Prices for the majority of basic goods were fixed by the government in 1973. Even though Chile was and still is a small economy, the level of protectionism was high. By the end of 1973, the nominal average tariff for imports was 105 percent, with a maximum of 750 percent. Non-tariff barriers also impeded the import of more than 3,000 out of 5,125 registered goods. Just as economic theory predicts, large queues in front of stores were usual in Santiago and other cities in Chile as a result of the scarcity caused by price controls.

PROBLEM: Government taking over private businesses:

> The decline in GDP during 1973 reflected a shrinking productive sector in which the main assets were gradually falling under government control or ownership through expropriations and other government interventions in the economy.

PROBLEM: Deficit spending and government printing money:

> The fiscal situation was chaotic. The deficit reached 55 percent of expenditures and 20 percent of GDP and was the main cause of inflation because the Central Bank was issuing money to finance the government deficit.

SOLUTION: lower or eliminate restrictions on trade:

> The most important economic reform in Chile was to open trade, primarily through a flat, low tariff on imports. Much of the credit for Chilean economic reforms in the following 30 years should be given to the decision to open our economy to the rest of the world. The strength of Chilean firms, productive sectors, and institutions grew up thanks to that fundamental change.

SOLUTION: let competing entrepreneurs in the private sector provide goods and services to consumers:

> A second fundamental reform was to allow the private sector to recover, adding dynamism to the economy. In fact, important sectors such as electricity generation and distribution and telecommunications were still managed by state companies. After we implemented a massive privatization plan that included more than 50,000 new direct shareholders and several million indirect (through pension funds) shareholders, these companies were managed by private entrepreneurs that carried out important expansion plans.

SOLUTION: let people take responsibility for their own lives instead of depending on government:

> The 1981 reform of the Chilean pension fund system deserves special mention. Under the leadership of Minister José Piñera, an individual capitalization account program was designed with specific contributions, administered by private institutions selected by the workers. The Chilean Administradoras de Fondos de Pension (Pension Fund Administrators or AFP) has been replicated in more than 20 countries, and more than 100 million workers in different parts of the world use these accounts to save for retirement.

SOLUTION: allow parents to choose the school that fits their needs from competing education providers, and push school administration down from the federal government to the municipal level, where it would be more responsive to voter's needs:

> In 1981, Chile introduced a universal educational voucher system for students in both its elementary and secondary schools. At the same time, the central government transferred the administration of public schools to municipal governments… The financial value of the voucher did not depend on family income.

RESULTS: And I was able to find a nice short, description of how all that worked out for them on the far-left Wikipedia, of all places:

> The economy of Chile is a high-income economy as ranked by the World Bank, and is considered one of South America's most stable and prosperous nations, leading Latin American nations in competitiveness, income per capita, globalization, economic freedom, and low perception of corruption.

> In 2006, Chile became the country with the highest nominal GDP per capita in Latin America. In May 2010 Chile became the first South American country to join the OECD. Tax revenues, all together 20.2% of GDP in 2013, were the second lowest among the 34 OECD countries, and the lowest in 2010. In 2017, only 0.7% of the population lived on less than US$1.90 a day.

According to the Heritage Foundation, Chile is ranked as the 18th freest economy in the world. The World Bank ranked Chile as the 50th highest GDP per capita for 2018, just below Hungary and above Poland.

Now, you can contrast those results with Venezuela. I have been blogging about Venezuela for years on this blog, and documenting how they raised taxes, banned guns, nationalized private sector companies, raised tariffs, and increased regulations. They are now ranked JUST ABOVE NORTH KOREA for economic freedom – #179 out of 180 countries measured. Basically, they did the opposite of everything that Chile did – transferring power away from parents, workers, business owners, churches and municipal governments to the powerful centralized federal government.

Wikipedia explains how Hugo Chavez took over in 1999 and enacted a communist revolution.

More:

> Since the Bolivarian Revolution half-dismantled its PDVSA oil giant corporation in 2002 by firing most of its 20,000-strong dissident professional human capital and imposed stringent currency controls in 2003 in an attempt to prevent capital flight, there has been a steady decline in oil production and exports. Further yet, price controls, expropriation of numerous farmlands and various industries, among other government authoritarian policies… have resulted in severe shortages in Venezuela and steep price rises of all common goods, including food, water, household products, spare parts, tools and medical supplies; forcing many manufacturers to either cut production or close down, with many ultimately abandoning the country as has been the case with several technological firms and most automobile makers.

They confiscated private property, took over private sector businesses, implemented tariffs and price controls, redistributed wealth via massive welfare programs, and pushed all decision-making out of families and municipal governments up to the federal government. By depriving the producers of their earnings, the country caused massive shortages of goods and services, to the point where people are fleeing the country, consuming zoo animals, and selling their bodies as prostitutes in order to get food and water.

Application

In the next election, we are not picking a tribe because of how they make us feel about ourselves. We are not choosing in order to see ourselves as “nice” and “not nice”. We need to look at specific policies being proposed, and see what works and what doesn’t

work. The examples of Chile (rags-to-riches) and Venezuela (riches-to-rags) are helpful for voters who want to get RESULTS instead of FEELINGS.

I'll leave you with a list of links from previous posts so you can see how communism worked out for Venezuela.

Related posts

- Before socialists in Venezuela could run over protesters, they had to ban gun ownership
- Venezuela solves hunger by banning bread lines, and solves crime by banning self-defense
- And now slavery: Venezuela's socialist policies lead to forced labor camps
- Do young Americans know how well socialism is working in Venezuela?
- How well are Democrat Party economic policies working out in Venezuela?
- How well does socialism work in countries and cities that adopt it?
- How well are Democrat economic policies working in Venezuela and Argentina?
- Marco Rubio's speech exposing the horrors of socialism in Cuba and Venezuela
- Obama silent as Venezuelan government violently represses democratic opposition
- How well is government-run health care working out in socialist Venezuela?
- Venezuela orders soldiers armed with assault rifles to impose price controls
- An honest look at the many contributions of Hugo Chavez to Venezuela
- What causes Colombia's economy to grow? What causes Venezuela's economy to shrink?
- Socialist government of Venezuela announces devaluation of their currency
- Obama's buddy Chavez nationalizes an American company
- Venezuela legislature votes to nationalize 11 US-owned oil rigs
- 80,000 tons of food rotting in Venezuela government warehouse
- Hugo Chavez confiscates private property as Venezuelan economy declines
- Owner of the last anti-Chavez TV station arrested in communist Venezuela
- OAS report details violence and lost freedoms in communist Venezuela
- Photos from the revolution against communism in Venezuela
- Venezuelans riot as communist Hugo Chavez seizes control of TV channel
- Hugo Chavez says that Haiti earthquake was caused by secret US weapon
- Chavez marches Venezuela down the road to serfdom at gunpoint
- Communist Venezuela introduces energy rationing in 2010
- Hugo Chavez shuts down 34 radio and TV stations in Venezuela
- Venezuela nationalizes Spanish-owned bank

Left-wing abortion activist arrested with a weapon outside SCOTUS Justice's home

June 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you pay attention to the news media, they like to make a big deal out of bad behaviors that serve their anti-conservative, anti-Christian, anti-American narrative. But bad behaviors that are committed by their political allies don't get covered at all. In order to counter that bias, I wanted to show you a story about a radicalized Democrat from The Federalist.

Excerpt:

> The shady left-wing organization Ruth Sent Us, which published the addresses of Republican-nominated Supreme Court justices' homes following a leak of the SCOTUS Dobbs v. Jackson draft opinion, is downplaying a threat against Justice Brett Kavanaugh and his family.
>
> The Washington Post reported on Wednesday morning that a California man "carrying at least one weapon" and "burglary tools" was arrested close to Kavanaugh's residence in Maryland around 1:50 a.m. The man was allegedly angry about the court's aim to get rid of Roe v. Wade and reportedly confessed to officers that "he wanted to kill the Supreme Court justice."
>
> […]Ruth Sent Us was one of the many groups that encouraged protesting and other tactics to bully conservative justices into abandoning their position on Dobbs. They even organized "Walk-by Wednesday" where they led crowds into the justices' neighborhoods and by their homes in two states.

And that sort of violence is acceptable to the secular left. When you remove God from your worldview, anything is possible. Morality is only rationally grounded in a theistic worldview, where there is an objective moral lawgiver. Secular leftists are always using threats, vandalism, and violence to coerce compliance from people who don't agree with them enough.

The Federalist noted:

> "I want to tell you, Gorsuch, I want to tell you, Kavanaugh, you have released the whirlwind, and you will pay the price. You won't know what hit you if you go forward with these awful decisions."
>
> Those were the words of the Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, one of the most powerful elected officials in the nation, in March of 2020. After spending years cynically delegitimizing the high court, Schumer had moved to openly threatening life-time appointed judges, by name, because he feared they would knock down the concocted constitutional right to an abortion.

Previously, a far-left hate group called the Southern Poverty Law Center posted the

location of the Family Research Council (a conservative Washington D.C. think tank) on their web site. A secular left gay activist used their web site to plan and attempt a mass shooting at their building. He was later convicted of domestic terrorism.

Fox News explains:

> Nine years after a terrorist attempted mass murderer using the Southern Poverty Law Center's "hate map" to target the Christian non-profit Family Research Council (FRC) in Washington, D.C., the SPLC continues to list FRC on its "hate map."
>
> "Nothing speaks to the SPLC's inhumanity as much as its behavior after the shooting at FRC. Rather than remove the map used by a terrorist to attempt to kill dozens of people, the SPLC doubled down and even expanded its list to include other non-violent conservative, Christian and parent organizations who opposed the SPLC's political agenda," Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Jerry Boykin, executive vice president at FRC, told Fox News.
>
> Sunday, Aug. 15, 2021 marks the ninth anniversary of the attempted shooting, and FRC remains on the "hate map".
>
> […]A former SPLC spokesman even said, "Our aim in life is to destroy these groups, completely destroy them."
>
> […]On Aug. 15, 2012, a man named Floyd Lee Corkins came into FRC armed with a 9 mm pistol, two ammunition clips of 15 rounds, the rounds in his gun and a box of 50 additional rounds. He also carried 15 individually-wrapped Chick-fil-A chicken sandwiches.
>
> "He was not puffing things up when he told the investigators that he intended 'to kill as many people as [he] could,'" Boykin, a former member of the Delta Force who was involved in the "Black Hawk Down" incident, told Fox News.

You won't hear about secular left domestic terrorism in the mainstream media. And don't expect federal law enforcement in the Biden administration to do anything about it. They reserve their law enforcing for concerned parents, who they think are the real threats.

Secular leftists react to Christian baseball players refusal to celebrate homosexual behavior

June 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm sure everyone has by now heard about the 5 baseball players from the Tampa Bay Rays who declined to celebrate homosexual behavior. In this post, we'll take a look at a couple of reactions to their decision from the secular left. And then after that, I'm going to talk about the time I was working for a large FT100 corporation, and my manager asked me to wear a rainbow ribbon.

First, the facts, as reported by PJ Media:

> On Saturday, the Tampa Bay Rays held their annual "Pride Night" game. As part of the festivities, players wore a special rainbow patch on their uniforms to support LGBTQ (and whatever new letters they've added this week) pride. Well, most players did. A few players decided to take the brave step of not playing along, choosing not to wear the patch on their uniforms.
>
> ESPN reports that "Among players who elected to remove the logos were pitchers Jason Adam, Jalen Beeks, Brooks Raley, Jeffrey Springs, and Ryan Thompson, according to the Tampa Bay Times. According to CBS News, "Adam was elected to speak for the group after the game, saying it was a 'faith-based decision' for many of them."
>
> […]The "Pride Night" event included "members of the LGBTQ community" taking part in festivities, and the Rays organization gave out mini Pride flags.

These baseball players are not as capable at explaining the Christian position on homosexuality as Frank Turek or Michael Brown. Still, they declined to participate, and that's good as far as it goes. But even their decision to decline to participate got them into hot water with the secular left radicals.

Life Site News reported:

> The five Tampa Bay Rays pitchers who because of their Christian faith declined to wear rainbow-themed insignias on their hats and jerseys during the team's "Pride Night" celebration last weekend are being attacked as "bigots" by liberal commentators.
>
> "Oh for God's sake," tweeted USA Today Sports columnist Nancy Armour.
>
> "These folks who bastardize religion to suit their bigotry would do well to actually READ the New Testament. I'd recommend starting with Matthew," she sneered.
>
> "That religious exemption BS is used in sports and otherwise also allows for people to be denied health care, jobs, apartments, children, prescriptions, all sorts of rights," averred ESPN commentator Sarah Spain on the sports network's popular "Around the Horn" talk show.

> "We have to stop tiptoeing around it because we're trying to protect people who are trying to be bigoted from asking for them to be exempt from it, when the very people that they are bigoted against are suffering the consequences," she continued.

Justifying the trampling of moral convictions and religious liberty is very popular among the "compassion" crowd, who have made the decision that "don't judge" is more important than what Jesus says about marriage being between a man and a woman.

Tampa Bay Rays Pride Night LGBT
(link to tweet above)

So, let me tell you about what happened to me when I was working for a big FT 100 company that was also a platinum partner of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest gay rights lobbying organization in America.

Our company building was decorated with gay rights materials, which were posted by gay activists with the approval of management. People without computer science degrees were regularly promoted to IT positions, simply because they were willing to toe the company line on "diversity and inclusion". We even had to explain what we had done to celebrate diversity and promote inclusion in our performance reviews.

For pride month, little bowls of rainbow pins were distributed on every floor. Everyone except me was wearing them. So, my manager, a divorced single mother named Tracy, decided to bring a rainbow colored pin to my desk in front of all the other people on my team and ask me to put it on. I said, "put it on the desk, and I'll wear it later". Then I tossed it into the garbage as soon as she left.

I have no doubt that my views caused me a lot of trouble in that company. We had several gay rights activists, including one who attended a Unitarian church. They were

constantly causing trouble for me, and trying to chat me up to find out my views. I'm sure if I had told them anything, they would have gone straight to HR. I had a lot of controversial conversations in that company. Just not with the gay activists, and not with Human Resources.

William Lane Craig and James White debate Calvinism vs Molinism

June 11, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a recent episode of the Unbelievable show, Calvinist pastor / theologian James White discussed middle knowledge (a.k.a. Molinism) with philosopher / theologian William Lane Craig. In this post, you'll find a link to the audio, the YouTube video, and my comments on the debate. My comments were quoted in an episode of William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith podcast.

Here is a link to the details from Unbelievable: (with MP3 download link)

> Calvinism and Molinism are two very different ways of understanding God's sovereignty. But which one best addresses the problem of evil?
>
> James White argues that Calvinism – God foreordaining all human behaviour both good and evil – is the more Biblical and coherent view. William (Bill) Lane Craig argues that Molinism – a view which reconciles human freedom and divine sovereignty – is Biblically consistent without making God the author of evil.

And the video:

Summary:

JB: Why is there evil?

JW: Natural and moral evil are the results of God's divine decree to create the world.

WLC: God has knowledge of what individual humans would do in different circumstances prior to his divine decree to create the world. God's decree takes into account the free decisions of people in different situations. With regard to natural evil, Calvinists and Molinists do not differ much – they are permitted to achieve a greater good. But for moral evil, there is a difference. Moral evil is the result of free decisions by individual humans. They are not God's will. God permits people to perform evil actions, because those free actions will lead to him achieving his ultimate purposes. God does not override human free will. He achieves his ultimate purposes through the actions of his free creatures. On the Calvinist view, God moves the will of creatures to do evil. God is the cause of their evil acts.

JB: God sees all of the possible worlds and instantiates a world where he is able to achieve his ultimate purposes while respecting the free decisions of his creatures.

WLC: God does not see what humans WILL do, and decree based on that. He sees what they WOULD do in different circumstances, and articulates a world where the free decisions they make in the circumstances he decrees lead to his ultimate purposes being fulfilled.

JB: And this view achieves God's sovereignty (God gets the result he wants) with human freedom (God is not responsible for moral evil)

JB: James, isn't it better for God to get what he wants while respecting free will, rather than micromanaging every thought and action of the people?

JW: There's micromanaging on both sides. On Molinism, God micromanages the circumstances. On Calvinism, God micromanages everything. But how could God have that knowledge of what people would do, prior to actually creating those people? The Bible teaches Calvinism, and so we should go with that. Calvinists are concerned when Craig says that God does not determine the truth value of these subjunctive conditionals (i.e. – what free individuals would do in different circumstances) The individuals determine what they will do in different circumstances. And Calvinists would prefer that God determine (i.e. – exhaustive determinism) what individuals do in different circumstances. WLC, would you agree that the knowledge of these subjunctive conditionals are the essence of what middle knowledge is? (WK note: micromanaging circumstances doesn't violate free will, micromanaging everything does violate free will)

WLC: No, but it is an essential aspect of it. According to Molinism, God does not determine what free individuals would do in different situations in which they find themselves. The Calvinist view is that in any situation, God actually moves the will of the creature, so God is the author of moral evil. On the Molinist view, creatures are responsible for moral evil, not God.

JW: So you're saying that these subjunctive conditionals are not under God's control. How can they be under the control of the creatures, since prior to God's creative decree, the creatures do not exist yet? Where do these truth values come from.

WLC: This objection to Molinism is called the "grounding objection". The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom are true without having to be grounded by the created individuals. This objection presupposes a view of truth called "truth-maker" theory. This theory says that in addition to propositions that are true, there are things that make propositions true. There are many counterexamples to this view. For example, if you deny the existence of something that does not exist, then there is no truth maker that makes that claim true. (WK note: E.g. – a unicorn does not exist) Another example is "If WLC were rich, WLC would buy a Mercedes" but there is no truth-maker situation that makes that true, except maybe if he were rich. (WK note: I think that the created individual WLC would be the truth-maker in that case?)

JW: The decisions that I make are caused by God's decree of what gifts I have or don't have. He has freedom to decree those gifts, and then that has an effect of what I am free to do. E.g. – I am not 6'11" so I am not free to be a center in the NBA. So on the Molinist view, what is the basis for these subjunctive counterfactuals that limit what God can do?

WLC: The grounding objection presupposes the truth-maker theory, and a particular strain of that theory called truth-maker maximalism, and counterfactuals of creaturely of creaturely freedom would be prime candidates to be exceptions to the truth-maker theory.

WLC: Regarding the point about how people don't exist in a vacuum but have a whole history, background, characteristics, etc. to shape their decisions. That's right. But the

counterfactuals of creaturely freedom factor all that in. The key point that divides us is that God doesn't determine what creatures decide, he decides the circumstances. And so the creature is responsible for moral evil, not God. And so God doesn't cause people to commit moral evils, then punish them for it.

WLC: We should guide our views based on what is in the Bible. But even Calvinist theologians affirm things about God that are not taught explicitly in the Bible, such as God's spacelessness and timelessness. And Molinism makes the best sense of divine sovereignty and human freedom. On the Calvinist view, God determines how anyone would act in any situation God might place him in, so God is responsible for the moral evil committed by his creatures.

JW: (repeats) If God is limited in what he can do by counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, then we have to know where these counterfactuals come from. (WK note: the counterfactuals of creaturely freedom come from… creaturely freedom.)

JW: Genesis 50:20 says that God used the moral evil committed by some creatures to achieve the good purposes he intended. (WK note: that's exactly what the Molinist view is, God permits moral evil by his creatures, as long as it achieves his ultimate good purposes)

JW: Molinism is unknown in the church for 1500 years. (WK note: Molinism is in Acts 17:24-27, and also, Calvin and Luther were unknown in the church for 1500 years)

JB: Is Genesis 50:20 a good example of Calvinism?

WLC: (very excited) NO!!!!!! It's a great example of Molinism!!!! The text says that God didn't move the bad actors to perform sinful actions – that would make God the author of evil. But God knew that if they were in this situation, they would behave in these evil ways, but ultimately it would lead to good results that God wanted. There is a chain of people partially articulating the middle knowledge view prior to Molina.

JW: You shouldn't believe Molinism, because it comes from Jesuits. (WK Note: this is the genetic fallacy)

JW: The Bible has examples where God "hardens hearts", e.g. Pharaoh.

WLC: It's not that the Bible authors had Molinism in mind. It's that this theory is consistent with what the Bible teaches.

JW: Ephesians 1 teaches that God unilaterally determines who the elect are. Calvinism emerges from the text. But in Genesis 50:20, Molinism doesn't emerge from it.

WLC: We're both trying to make sense of the data of Scripture. Scripture doesn't teach the universal divine determinism of every human act, especially evil acts. The Bible says thate God is not evil, and cannot even be tempted with evil, but on the Calvinist view, God is causing the evil actions of his creatures, and then he punishes them for it. If it's evil to cause someone to do evil, it makes God himself evil.

JW: In Isaiah 10, God uses the Assyrians to punish Israel, then he punishes the Assyrians for the haughty attitude of their heart.

WLC: The Molinist view of Ephesians 1 is that part of God's good pleasure is to respect

human freedom, and not to unilaterally divinely determine them to sin. Regarding Isaiah 10, you're asking how God can punish the Assyrians for something he causes them to do? No, God knows that the Assyrians are going to do this moral evil and he uses that for his purposes, and he is free to punish their immoral act, because they did it of their own free will.

JW: But if you need Molinism to understand these texts, then what did the authors intend for people to think before Molinism.

WLC: People understand from Genesis 50:20 that people do evil things, but God gets a good outcome out of it.

JW: As a Calvinist, I do not believe that God respects human freedom.

JW: I don't think that individuals have control of the circumstances in which they are born or where they live that limits God's sovereignty. (WK note: he doesn't understand Molinism or Acts 17:24-27. Individuals control their own decisions. But God controls the circumstances – i.e. – everything else). There is no essence of James White that determines where I am born, my physical characteristics, my siblings, etc. God decrees everything about who I am.

WLC: "That's because you're a determinist, James, and I'm not"

JW: "Yes. Yes. OK."

WLC: There are number of possible worlds where James White could exist. Different country, different education, different language, different family. God decides the circumstances for James White. James White makes the decisions. God doesn't cause James White's moral evil. James White does. The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom must exist prior to the divine decree in order for humans to be responsible for their evil actions.

JW: You're using philosophy. But your view should come from the Bible. (WK note: look at Acts 17:24-27)

WLC: Universal divine determinism isn't taught in the Bible.

JW: Yes, in Ephesians 1.

WLC: The Molinist affirms Ephesians 1.

JW: It doesn't mention respecting free will there, it's teaching universal divine determinism.

WLC: The Bible teaches that God does have knowledge of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, e.g. 2 Cor 2:8. So the question is whether God has this knowledge logically prior the decree (Molinism requires this), or is it logically after. If it is logically after, then it makes God the cause of human moral evil.

JW: The verses raised by Craig can be subsumed under God's natural knowledge and free knowledge.

JW: Some Molinists believe that the only people who are lost in this world are people who cannot freely respond to God's saving initiative in any circumstances (WK note: this is

called trans-world damnation (TD), and I hold this view). Does anyone in the Bible know about this idea? That changes God's expression from universal divine determinism to accepting human free will and human responsibility for sin (which Calvinism denies).

WLC: Yes, there are two different views. The one view takes human free will, and human responsibility for sin, seriously. The other view makes God the cause of human sin, and therefore makes God evil for being the author of evil.

JW: On Molinism, God knew that if he actualized this world, then he knew the evil that would result, but he didn't do it for some purpose, like revealing his own character?

WLC: No, he didn't bring the evil into the world. He actualized a set of circumstances, and a set of free creatures. And he knew that in those circumstances, he knew that the creatures would choose to do evil. His absolute will is for all his creatures to always do the right thing. But he knows that often they will do evil. He permits that to happen, but in the end he achieves the good purposes. E.g. – achieving the redemption of mankind through Jesus through the evil decisions of the rulers at that time.

WLC: I love the Westminster Confession. But without middle knowledge, that Confession is incoherent. Middle knowledge explains how things work, so that the Westminster Confession's affirmations are logically coherent.

JW: What you're saying is that God respects human free will and human responsibility.

WLC: Molinism is extremely fruitful theologically. I have applied to the problem of exclusivity of salvation, to the perseverance of the saints, to the inspiration of Scripture… but the focus of the discussion today is on moral evil. Who is the cause of human evil?

JW: Only universal divine determinism and the denial of human free will and human responsibility are consistent with Scripture.

WLC: Scripture alone is my authority, not church tradition. But Reformed theology is permeated with concepts that are not described in Scripture, but are consistent with Scripture, e.g. – timelessness, spacelessness, simplicity.

JW: I disagree, ALL the concepts in Calvinism emerge directly from the text. Isaiah 40-48 clearly teaches divine necessity, that God exists necessarily, in every possible world. (WK note: Calvinist thought emerges 1500 years after the Bible was written)

JW: Middle knowledge is a Catholic dogma, which is why even the Catholics rejected it.

WLC: (holds up 2 volumes of a 4 volume, 2144 page set of books on Reformed theology) Anyone who thinks that Reformed Dogmatics are simply read out of Scripture "doesn't know the history of Reformed theology". These volumes are permeated with theological constructs, philosophical models, philosophical principles. The necessity of God's existence, timelessness, spacelessness, etc. are all affirmed by Reformed theologians, and were inherited from medieval scholastics (Catholics).

JW: The central claim of middle knowledge, that counterfactuals of creaturely freedom are known by God, are not in the Bible. (WK note: Craig gave an example of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom in the Bible. There are lots of them.)

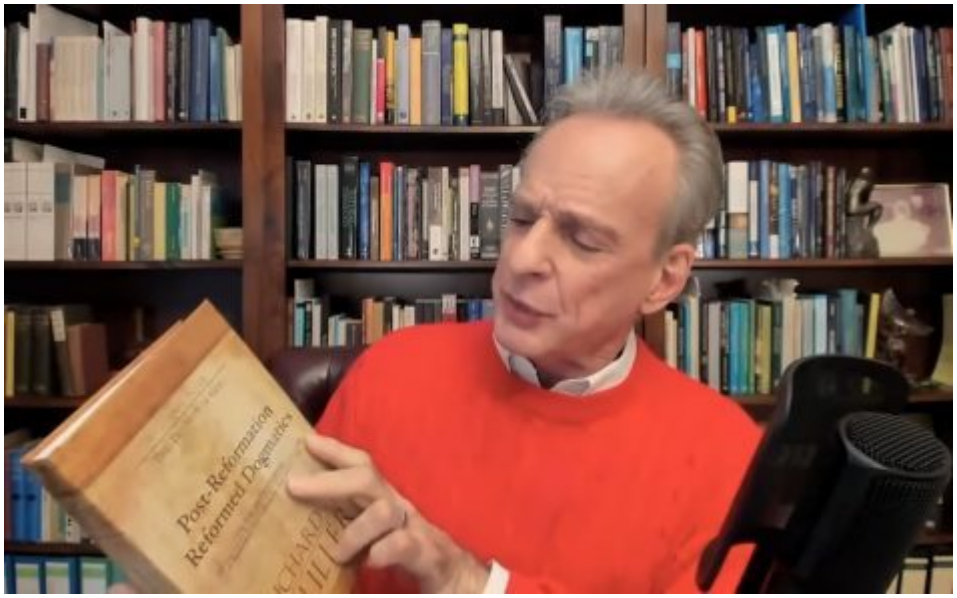

Four volume 2144-page book set on Reformed dogmatics

My thoughts:

I think that it was a good debate. Well worth watching. I don't promise that my summary is 100% accurate. Please leave room for a little snark, and watch the debate yourself. I like to take the spin off of people's words, when I feel that they are trying to weasel out of the conclusions of their own views. It's 2 AM on Monday morning now, and I don't want to proof-read. Please point out errors in the comments.

If I could boil down the mistake that James White makes to one sentence, it would be to say that he comes to the text with a *philosophical* presupposition (determinism), and this causes him to misinterpret the plain meaning of the text as a whole. And this misinterpretation isn't about peripheral teachings of the Bible. His embrace of God as the cause of moral evil means that he denies the goodness of God – a basic Christian doctrine. (This is compounded by his embrace of double-predestination, although that was not the topic of the debate). Christians shouldn't let a philosophy – determinism – override the plain meaning of Scripture. Determinism is *man's philosophy* – it's a Greek philosophy that existed centuries before Christ.

White also was clearly unfamiliar with the philosophy of religion of his own Reformed tradition, and especially with the history of the development of Reformed theology. Craig was able to correct him, by showing him the books on Reformed Dogmatics and explain the historical antecedents of Reformed thought.

James White is not a "hyper-Calvinist". He is a normal Calvinist. Calvinism teaches universal divine determinism. Calvinism teaches that where each individual goes after the judgment is decided unilaterally by God. Calvinism teaches that human moral evil is caused by God. Calvinism teaches that God punishes people for this moral evil. Calvinism teaches *intentional* double-predestination.

I wrote about the problems with Calvinism, citing Calvinist D.A. Carson and William Lane Craig, in a previous post. Determinism denies free will, and therefore undermines all meaning in life. That's not consistent with the Bible's clear teaching that God issues commands to his creatures, because he expects (free will) obedience. That is how we

develop our relationship with God after becoming Christians (sanctification), and those relationships have ultimate significance.

Note: I link to James White's work on this blog. He does a great job of fighting cultural and political enemies. I really appreciate his conservative perspective on issues like abortion, and his sensitivity to the totalitarian impulses of the secular left. His work on KJV-only and and debating Catholics is excellent. I don't always agree with Craig. I recently posted disagreement with Craig on his latest work on the historical Adam and evolution. I have other minor disagreements with him as well, in substance and method. The only theology books in my house are by R. C. Sproul, Wayne Grudem, D.A. Carson, Millard Erickson, John MacArthur, etc. – all Calvinists.

If you missed Craig's debate with Paul Helm, which is mentioned in the debate, I blogged about that previously, as well.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 9: The Truth About Black Lives Matter

June 12, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 9 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, we talk about Black Lives Matter, drawing on WK's experience of being a black legal immigrant to America (by merit). If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our Youtube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 9:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the Black Lives Matter movement, their grievances and proposed solutions. WK talks about his ethnic / family background, his immigration story, and how Christianity impacted his decision-making. We discussed police bias and defunding the police. We discussed fatherlessness, crime and educational outcomes. We discussed Marxism. We discussed the experiences of other non-white racial groups in America. We discussed what the Bible says about the problems raised by BLM.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Notes

When I (WK) am talking about the 6 unarmed black men who were shot by police, I of course mean the 6 unarmed blacks who were shot *and killed by police.*

When I (WK) are talking about my roadster, I was so excited I jumbled some details together. The car is a triple black convertible with black rims, black exterior and black interior. She has 50/50 weight distribution, a torque-sensing limited slip differential, is rear wheel drive with a standard transmission, and she has some other after market add-ons. The car is named "Copenhagen", after the mount used by the Duke of Wellington at

the Battle of Waterloo. I normally never splurge on luxuries, but this car is 22 years old, and was bought new the first month I arrived in America. I used to keep a stock photo of the vehicle in my binder during college to remind me what was waiting for me after I graduated. It was a promise I made to myself that if I made it to America, I would buy the car. I thought it was a good way to avoid the drinking and the sex that was going on in college – if I avoided all that, and focused on my studies, then I could have the car as a reward. She is still sitting in my garage, 22 years later. $24,000 after taxes, and I got her at 0% interest for 5 years. To knights, horses are important.

Rose wanted to recommend a book in the show notes called "BLM: The Making of a New Marxist Revolution", written by Mike Gonzalez. There is an audio book version.

References

Is there evidence of systemic racism in the United States? by Wintery Knight

Walter Bradley: An Engineer Who Has Made a Difference (all about WK's personal hero, posted at Mind Matters AI)

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Team Biden finally admits there's a war on cops — which it's inflaming (NY Post, 6 unarmed blacks shot by police in 2021)

Portland, Oregon, cuts police budget over force, injustice (ABC News)

With violent crime rising, size of Portland police department is still shrinking (Hot Air)

Portland homicides

'Black-on-Black crime': A loaded and controversial phrase often heard amid calls for police reform (ABC News, "90% of Black people killed were killed by other Black people")

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BLM paid co-founder's baby daddy nearly 5 times more than Trayvon Martin foundation (NY Post)

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Utilitarianism and the Moral Life by J. P. Moreland

June 13, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this essay on After All, but it looks like their site is not working well, so I'm just going to steal it and post it here, in case it disappears completely. This is one of my favorite short essays on utilitarianism, and it's a wonder that the thing can't stay up somewhere. Well, it will have a home here now. I'd be surprised to see anyone else be this awesome in a measly 1000 words as Dr. Moreland is below.

—-

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life

What Is Utilitarianism?

Utilitarianism (also called consequentialism) is a moral theory developed and refined in the modern world by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). It can be defined as follows:

> *An action or moral rule is right if and only if it maximizes the amount of nonmoral good produced in the consequences that result from doing that act or following that rule compared with other acts or rules open to the agent.*

By focusing on three features of utilitarianism, we can clarify this definition.

(1) Utilitarian theories of value.

What is a nonmoral good? Utilitarians deny that there are any moral actions or rules that are intrinsically right or wrong. But they do believe in objective values that are nonmoral.

Hedonistic utilitarians say that the only intrinsic good is pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Quantitative hedonists (Bentham) say that the amount of pleasure and pain is the only thing that matters in deciding between two courses of action, I should do the one that produces the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain (measured by factors like the duration and intensity of the pleasure). Qualitative hedonists (Mill) say that pleasure is the only intrinsic good, but the type of pleasure is what is important, not the amount. They would rank pleasures that come from reading, art, and friendship as more valuable than those that come from, say, a full stomach.

Pluralistic utilitarians say there are a number of things that have intrinsic, nonmoral value: pleasure, friendship, health, knowledge, freedom, peace, security, and so forth. For pluralists, it is not just the pleasure that comes from friendship that has value but also friendship itself.

Currently, the most popular utilitarian view of value is subjective preference utilitarianism. This position says it is presumptuous and impossible to specify things that

have intrinsic nonmoral worth. So, they claim, intrinsic value ought to be defined as that which each individual subjectively desires or wants, provided these do not harm others. Unfortunately, this view collapses into moral relativism.

(2) Utilitarians and maximizing utility.

Utilitarians use the term utility to stand for whatever good they are seeking to produce as consequences of a moral action (e.g., “pleasure” for the hedonist, “satisfaction of subjective preference” for others). They see morality in a means-to-ends way. The sole value of a moral action or rule is the utility of its consequences. Moral action should maximize utility. This can be interpreted in different ways, but many utilitarians embrace the following: the correct moral action or rule is the one that produces the greatest amount of utility for the greatest number of people.

(3) Two forms of utilitarianism: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.

According to act utilitarianism, an act is right if and only if no other act available maximizes utility more than the act in question. Here, each new moral situation is evaluated on its own, and moral rules like “don’t steal” or “don’t break promises” are secondary The moral agent must weigh available alternatives and choose the one that produces the best consequences. Rule utilitarianism says that correct moral actions are done in keeping with correct moral rules, However, no moral rule is intrinsically right or wrong. Rather, a correct moral rule is one that would maximize utility if most people followed it as opposed to following an alternative rule. Here, alternative rules (e.g., “don’t lie” vs. “don’t lie unless doing so would enhance friendship”) are compared for their consequences, not specific actions.

What Is Wrong with Utilitarianism?

Several objections show the inadequacy of utilitarianism as a normative moral theory.

First, utilitarianism can be used to justify actions that are clearly immoral. Consider the case of a severely deformed fetus. The child is certain to live a brief, albeit painless life. He or she will make no contribution to society. Society, however, will bear great expense. Doctors and other caregivers will invest time, emotion, and effort in adding mere hours to the baby’s life. The parents will know and love the child only long enough to be heartbroken at the inevitable loss. An abortion negates all those “utility” losses. There is no positive utility lost. Many of the same costs are involved in the care of the terminally ill elderly. They too may suffer no pain, but they may offer no benefit to society. In balancing positives and negatives, and excluding from the equation the objective sacredness of all human life, we arrive at morally repugnant decisions. Here deontological and virtue ethics steer us clear of what is easier to what is right.

Second, in a similar way, utilitarianism denies the existence of supererogatory acts. These are acts of moral heroism that are not morally obligatory but are still praiseworthy.

Examples would be giving 75 percent of your income to the poor or throwing yourself on a bomb to save a stranger. Consider the bomb example. You have two choices — throwing yourself on the bomb or not doing so. Each choice would have consequences and, according to utilitarianism, you are morally obligated to do one or the other depending on which option maximized utility. Thus, there is no room for acts that go beyond the call of morality.

Third, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of human rights and human dignity. If enslaving a minority of people, say by a lottery, would produce the greatest good for the greatest number, or if conceiving children only to harvest their parts would do the same, then these could he justified in a utilitarian scheme. But enslavement and abortion violate individual rights and treat people as a means to an end, not as creatures with intrinsic dignity as human beings. If acts of abortion, active euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and so forth maximize utility, then they are morally obligatory for the utilitarian. But any moral system that makes abortion and suicide morally obligatory is surely flawed.

Finally, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of motives and character. We should praise good motives and seek good character because such motives and character are intrinsically valuable. But utilitarianism implies that the only reason we should praise good motives instead of bad ones, or seek good character instead of bad character, is because such acts would maximize utility. But this has the cart before the horse. We should praise good motives and blame bad ones because they are good or bad, not because such acts of praising and blaming produce good consequences.

In sum, it should be clear that utilitarianism is an inadequate moral theory. Unfortunately, ours is a pragmatic culture and utilitarianism is on the rise. But for those of us who follow Christ, a combination of virtue and deontological ethics is a more adequate view of common sense morality found in natural law and of the moral vision contained in the Bible.

New study measures effect of “gender affirming care” on suicide rates of children

June 14, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was a young adult, I decide to read two books on every kind of policy. Health care, education, firearms, abortion, divorce. I wanted to quickly get up to speed on how everything in the world really works. I read a book by Dr. Jay P. Greene on education policy, called “Education Myths”. He has put out a new study for Heritage foundation on “gender affirming care” and suicide rates.

Here is the study.

Summary:

> Lowering legal barriers to make it easier for minors to undergo cross-sex medical interventions without parental consent does not reduce suicide rates—in fact, it likely leads to higher rates of suicide among young people in states that adopt these changes. States should instead adopt parental bills of rights that affirm the fact that parents have primary responsibility for their children’s education and health, and that require school officials and health professionals to receive permission from parents before administering health services, including medication and “gender-affirming” counseling, to children under 18. States should also tighten the criteria for receiving cross-sex treatments, including raising the minimum eligibility age.

Key points:

- U.S. policymakers are seeking to make it easier for minors to access puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones based on the claim that doing so reduces suicide risk.
- Studies finding that “gender-affirming” interventions prevent suicide fail to show a causal relationship and have been poorly executed.
- A superior research design shows that easing access to puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones by minors without parental consent increases suicide rates.

And this is the interesting part:

> In the past several years, the suicide rate among those ages 12 to 23 has become significantly *higher* in states that have a provision that allows minors to receive routine health care without parental consent than in states without such a provision. Before 2010, these two groups of states did not differ in their youth

> suicide rates. Starting in 2010, when puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones became widely available, elevated suicide rates in states where minors can more easily access those medical interventions became observable.
>
> Rather than being protective against suicide, this pattern indicates that easier access by minors to cross-sex medical interventions without parental consent is associated with higher risk of suicide. The Heritage model plotted the difference in a three-year rolling average of suicide rates between states with minor access provisions and states with no such provision. Chart 2 plots the trend in this difference for those ages 12 to 23 who could have been affected by the policy when cross-sex medical interventions became available. For comparison, Chart 2 also shows the trend in this difference for a group ages 28 to 39, who could not have been affected by these policies, since the people in this group would have been at least 18 when puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones became available.
>
> Without making any adjustments, suicide rates among those ages 12 to 23 (blue line) begin to spike in states that have provisions that allow minors to access health care without parental consent relative to states that have no such provision around 2016, after cross-sex medical interventions became more common. By 2020, there are about 3.5 more suicides per 100,000 people ages 12 to 23 in states with easier access than in states without an access provision. There is no similar spike in suicide rates among those ages 28 to 39 (grey line) at that time.

I have a few thoughts about this.

First, secular leftists form their beliefs based on what makes them feel good, and what makes people have a high opinion of them. There is no rational, evidence-based case for giving depressed children access to drugs and surgeries that cause permanent effects on those children. These are not views that people come to by studying evidence and processing fair, reasoned debates.

Second, it's important to understand that there is a continuum from secular leftism to infanticide to child abuse. With rare exceptions, secular leftists accept the Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest. They have no rational grounding for human rights. They are incapable of subjecting their own desires to boundaries prescribed by the moral law. If they are not actively participating in infanticide and child abuse, then they are voting to make these things legal, to make them subsidized by taxpayers, and finally to punish anyone who disagrees with it… up to and including seizing the children of those who dissent. (This is currently being done in Canada and the United States)

Third, to stop these secular leftists from abusing our children, and driving them into suicide, we need to make all the actors involved in grooming the kids – teachers, school administrators, counselors, doctors, nurses, lawyers, judges, librarians, police officers, legislators, social media companies, etc. – subject to civil lawsuits filed by the children once they are old enough to file. We need to clean out the bank accounts of the secular

left child abusers. Just let the children name anyone who influenced them in a lawsuit, and then force those “don’t judge” people to defend the charges.

Psychologist claims father is an unfit parent for refusing to give son unhealthy fast food

June 15, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should a man marry a woman who doesn't respect his decision-making ability? To me, if a woman doesn't think that the man is good at making decisions, then she should just steer clear of him. Strangely enough, many women do marry men who they don't respect at all as leaders. Let's look at four cases where this happened, then draw some conclusions.

Consider this story from CBS News.

Excerpt:

> Saying no to a toddler's demands for a McDonald's meal got a father branded an inept parent, he says in a lawsuit claiming a psychologist urged a judge to curtail his parental visits over the dinner debacle.
>
> David E. Schorr says psychologist Marilyn Schiller pronounced him incapable of caring for his nearly 5-year-old son after he offered a choice — dinner anywhere but McDonald's, or no dinner at all — and let the boy choose the latter. He then took his irate son home to the boy's mother's house early from their Oct 30 dinner date, according to a defamation suit Schorr filed Tuesday.
>
> […]"Normally not a very strict father who rarely refuses his child McDonald's," Schorr put his foot down Oct. 30 "because his son had been eating too much junk food," the suit said. Schorr himself didn't immediately return a call Friday.
>
> He quickly regretted his stance when his son threw a tantrum, but he felt that giving in would reward bad behavior, so he offered the elsewhere-or-nowhere "final offer," as his court papers put it.
>
> "The child, stubborn as a mule, chose the 'no dinner' option," the suit says. And the father promptly carted the boy back to Bari Schorr's building, still trying to entice the child into changing his mind as they waited in the lobby for her to get home from work, according to the suit.
>
> Schiller told a judge the fast food flap "raises concerns about the viability" of the father's weekend visits with his son and asked a judge to eliminate or limit them, his lawsuit says.

The NY Post reports that the brat's mother immediately took him to McDonald's.

Excerpt:

> Adding insult to injury, he said: "My wife immediately took him to McDonalds."
>
> […]But the son apparently tattled on his dad and his wife flipped out and called the shrink, according to the suit.

> Schorr claims that Dr. Schiller only interviewed the child and his mother and never asked for his side of the story before telling the court she was gravely concerned about Schorr's parenting.
>
> Bari Yunis Schorr sued her husband for a divorce in 2011, just four years after they married in a lavish ceremony at the St. Regis Hotel in Manhattan.

Now does this situation happen a lot? I mean a situation where a mother goes to the feminist authorities (psychologists/social workers/lawyers/teachers/judges) in order to overrule the father's parenting authority?

Another case from Canada

Here is a story from Canada that provides another examples of mothers, female lawyers, female judges, etc. overriding a father's leadership of his home.

Excerpt:

> A Gatineau father lost an appeal Monday after a lower court ruled last June that he had issued a too severe punishment against his 12-year-old daughter.
>
> The case involves a divorced man who says that in 2008 he caught the girl, over whom he had custody, surfing websites he had forbidden and posting "inappropriate pictures of herself" online. The girl's father told her as a consequence that she would not be allowed to go on her class' graduation trip to Quebec City, even though her mother had already given permission for her to do so.
>
> The girl then contacted a legal-aid lawyer who was involved in the parents' custody battle, who convinced the court to order that the girl be allowed to go on the trip with her class. The father appealed the decision on principle, although his daughter went on the trip in the meantime.
>
> The appeals court reportedly warned in its ruling that the case should not be seen as an open invitation for children to take legal action against their parents when grounded.
>
> The girl now lives with her mother.

You may think that this would be overturned on appeal, but the father LOST his appeal, too.

So, what the daughter, wife, prosecuting attorney and judge (all feminists?) are all telling this Dad that he can donate sperm, pay bills, and pay taxes to welfare spending, but that he cannot lead his own children. He cannot have any moral authority to guide the child into becoming a man. That job is for child care workers, single mothers and public school teachers. Men need to butt out of parenting – except they can pay for all these experts through taxes, of course.

Recently, I blogged about a case in Canada where a father was overruled by female teachers, principals, lawyers, and judges, because he opposed the transgendering of his child (which was supported by the mother).

And there was also a case in California, where the mother of a child also wanted to transgender the child. The father collected together all the evidence showing that this would not be a good idea in the long run, but a female judge overruled him. Not only did he lose custody of the child, but he was banned from contacting the child, too.

Questions:

- Does anyone care what men want from marriage and parenting, or should we just be ordered around like little boys?
- Do we really think that state coercion is going to make men be more involved with their marriages and children?

I think that marriage should allow men to express themselves as fathers, just as much as women can express themselves as mothers. Parenting should be an equally shared responsibility, and the father should have at least as much parental authority as the mother.

Compassion vs standards

Here is a pretty good article by Jewish scholar Dennis Prager that argues against compassion and for moral standards. He tells a story of a team losing a baseball game 24-7, when the scoreboard is reset to 0-0 DURING THE GAME. He then asks what beliefs would motivate this action.

> As is happening throughout America, compassion trumped all other values.
>
> Truth was the first value compassion trashed. In the name of compassion, the adults in charge decided to lie. The score was not 0-0; it was 24-7.
>
> Wisdom was the second value compassion obliterated. It is unwise to the point of imbecilic to believe that the losing boys were in any way helped by changing the score. On the contrary, they learned lessons that will hamper their ability to mature.

He lists the lessons that the winning and losing boys learned from this compassionate act, and how they will act in the future. Then he continues his list.

> Building character was the third value trumped by compassion. People build character far more through handling defeat than through winning. The human being grows up only when forced to deal with disappointment. We remain children until the day we take full responsibility for our lives.
>
> …The fourth value that compassion denied here was fairness. It is remarkable how often compassion-based liberals speak of “fairness” in formulating social policy given how unfair so many of their policies are. It was entirely unfair to the winning team to have their score expunged, all their work denied. But for the compassion-first crowd, the winning team is like “the rich” who earn “too much” and should therefore be penalized with a higher tax rate; the winning team scored “too many” runs to be allowed to keep them all.

What the “compassion” crowd mean by compassion is “don’t judge”. “Don’t judge” is their highest morality. Male leadership isn’t just worthless, it’s dangerous. Men are only good for spending money, and for being sperm donors. It would be best if they didn’t talk at all.

Compassion undermines moral standards, but also standards of rationality. The former is under attack from moral relativism, and the latter is under attach from postmodernism. These ideologies are dangerous, and they are at the root of a lot of the problems we’re seeing with children today. When men cannot correct moral relativism and postmodernism in their homes, then the children make terrible decisions, and often get into big trouble later on.

Advice for men

When men are getting into relationships with women, they should consider whether the woman is choosing them because they are good at leading, especially on moral and spiritual issues. If she is not choosing you because she likes how you lead, then run for the hills. You do not want to invest in a relationship that is going to be adjudicated in the courts by feminist lawyers and feminist judges. If you like to lead, pick a woman who likes how you lead. A woman who thinks that moral relativism is false, and postmodern relativism is also false.

Miranda Devine asks: where are the men of courage?

June 16, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Men tend to focus more on quietly enduring suffering, and they rarely speak up when they have been hurt. That's why we get excited when women speak up for us. But it's rare for a woman to see what men's plans and motivations are. Rarer still to see who is standing in opposition to those plans and motivations. And rarest of all is to speak up to defend men from their opponents.

So, this post is about a woman doing all three. And not just any woman, but famous conservative woman Miranda Devine, who recently wrote the book "Laptop from Hell: Hunter Biden, Big Tech, and the Dirty Secrets the President Tried to Hide", which is all about Hunter Biden's laptop, and how Big Tech and the Biden administration tried to cover it all up.

Anyway, here is her article in the New York Post:

> We pathologize manly virtues and bow to the tyranny of identity politics that seeks power by overthrowing a make-believe patriarchy. We raise boys in a soup of reproach and negativity that tells them their intrinsic nature is diseased.
>
> "Traditional masculinity is psychologically harmful," the American Psychological Association declared in 2019. These were the masculine attributes it listed as diseased: "stoicism, competitiveness, dominance, aggression, anti-femininity, achievement, eschewal of the appearance of weakness, and adventure, risk and violence."
>
> The only acceptable man now is a man who wants to be a woman. We celebrate "pregnant men" and "chestfeeding" men.
>
> […]We ignore the crisis that sees men commit suicide at ever increasing rates or succumb to drug abuse and porn addiction while savvy young women graduate from college in disproportionate numbers. Trained from childhood to be entitled and unrealistic about relationships, their fertility and the sacrifices and joys of motherhood, many become bitter and blame men for their confusion.

I'll be writing an article for Friday about the unrealistic expectations of young feminist women.

But for now, here's more Miranda, and quoting C.S. Lewis:

> Along the way, we emasculate the institutions that were necessarily masculine for our protection, notably the military. As an example, on Wednesday, the US Marines celebrated Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Pride Month by tweeting a picture of a combat helmet adorned with rainbow-colored bullets.
>
> So, what do men do? They recoil and retreat. They leave the stage for hysterical

> epsilon men like Beto O'Rourke who whine and posture but can't protect a thing.
>
> Then when we need a strong, quick-thinking Gary Cooper to save us from outlaws, he's nowhere to be found.
>
> "We make men without chests and expect from them virtue and enterprise," C.S. Lewis foretold in his dystopian 1943 book "The Abolition of Man."
>
> "We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."

Maybe men have had it with being screeched at, so no more protecting and providing? (or leading, but *nobody* wants the leading anymore) Society can't spend all of their time attacking masculinity, then demand men perform male roles just when it suits them.

You would expect to see men retreating from traditional masculinity precisely in the states that attack traditional masculinity as "toxic".

The American Thinker notes:

> On May 28, Sky News Australia posted a video titled "New York bearing signs of 'societal decay.'" The video shows a man (who seems as if he is on drugs) entering a train car and sitting next to a young woman. He then touches her without consent, grabs her, drags her around a bit, and generally is an extremely unpleasant nuisance.
>
> […]During the video, the young woman is seen looking at other passengers, with obvious worry in her eyes, begging somebody to please "help me." Nobody tries to help her.

Where were the men? The author speculates:

> If I had to guess, they were standing in their place, checking their male privilege, toning down their toxic masculinity, and coping with how their Time's Up.
>
> […]My guess is that none of the men watching wanted to become the next George Zimmerman. We all saw the emotional toll Kyle Rittenhouse suffered for defending himself.

The article notes New York's laws against self-defense:

> New York has a duty to retreat, after all. Besides, New York has been in the habit of arresting those who defend themselves.

New York is a very feminized state. Male nature is suspicious – something for the government to outlaw and restrain by force. But when videos like this emerge, they reverse themselves and ask "where are all the good men?"

Matt Walsh has been talking about how the effeminate, weak Prime Minister of Canada just recently announced that there is no right to self-defense in Canada. No castle doctrine. No stand your ground. No use of force at all is allowed to defend yourself (*or your family)* from criminals.

Daily Wire reported:

> Guns are for hunting and target practice, but never for self defense, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said this week, continuing his crusade against firearms.
>
> Trudeau, who is pushing a sweeping measure aimed at freezing the sale, purchase, or transfer of handguns in Canada, told the Pod Save America podcast his country takes a completely different view of firearms than its southern neighbor. No one in Canada has a right to defend themselves, their family or their property with a firearm, Trudeau declared.
>
> "We have a culture where the difference is: Guns can be used for hunting or for sport shooting in Canada – and there are lots of gun owners, and they're mostly law-respecting and law-abiding – but you can't use a gun for self-protection in Canada," Trudeau said. "That's not a right that you have in the Constitution or anywhere else."

Matt noted on his show that this doesn't just apply to guns. It applies to every form of self-defense, e.g. – pepper spray. The victim of a criminal is more likely to run afoul of the "law enforcement" in Canada than the actual criminal. For Trudeau, to lift up evil, and to stamp down good, is "compassionate". He's very compassionate.

It makes you wonder why anyone would live there, doesn't it? I mean, especially men. Why would a man live there, and pay taxes there, knowing that the clown in charge makes it illegal for him to defend himself, or defend others? But Trudeau won re-election, so they must believe he is a good Prime Minister, and that his view of male nature is accurate and good.

Famous pastor discovers the real reason for the decline in marriage rate

June 17, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I want to look at a series of tweets from an ordinary pro-marriage pastor. He is concerned about declining marriage rates. He observed young people in his church, and he did some social science research. And he's come up with a theory about why young Christians are delaying marriage, or not getting married at all.

First, here's the marriage rate, accurate to 2020:

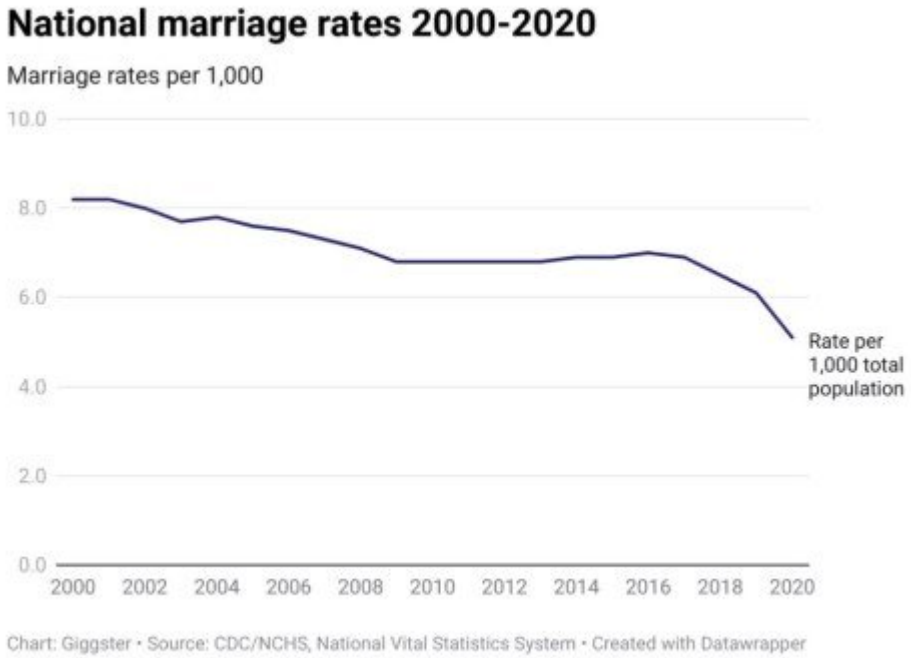

Marriage Rate in America through to 2020

This pastor is just talking about ordinary Christian men in his tweets below, not the ones who do a ton of research on apologetics, etc.

Here is what the pastor said:

> I saw this chart a while back and scratched out some rough thoughts…
>
> Around 2010 or 2011, I noticed a significant shift in "the relationship marketplace." I can sum up this shift with two trends I saw in my church circles.

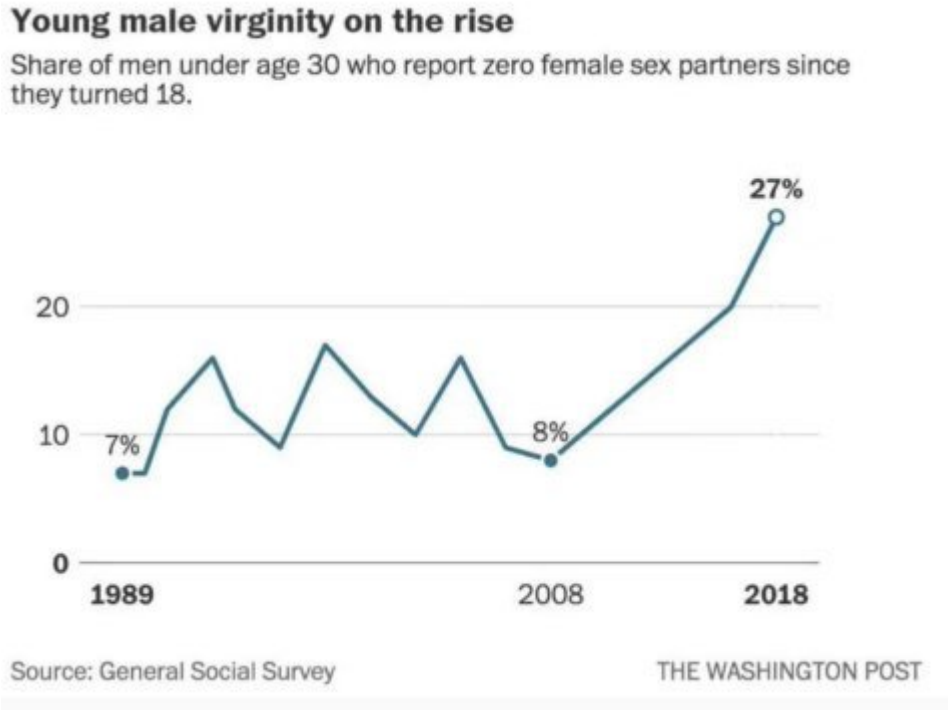

> First, I noticed that many (not all) average to above average Christian men in overall quality (e.g. health, looks, ambition, etc.) were struggling to get a girlfriend. At first, I thought these guys were just being too picky or had some other major deficiency. After all, there are a lot of lazy foolish men out there. This wasn't the case with these men. They weren't the top 1%. But they were quality and had very reasonable (perhaps too low) standards for a girlfriend.
>
> Second, I noticed that many (not all) average to below average Christian women (I know me suggesting that such a thing exists is upsets a lot you) in overall quality (e.g. beauty, personality, temperament, etc.) had a fear of a committed relationship and were extremely picky. They would often complain that there weren't any good men. But there were good men. They just thought those men were below them. They weren't. The arrogance and pride of these women was shocking to me at the time. Not anymore.
>
> I ran my concerns past a boomer pastor. He dismissed it. He thought all the women were just great and men needed to step up to win them. Man up and all that. That really was the moment I realized that there was some form of generational blindness related to what is happening. And that's why I started tracking trends in sexuality not just generally but specifically as they related to dating (aka the relationship marketplace).
>
> Now let me point out 2 particularly concerning trends that overturn older assumptions about the relationship marketplace.
>
> First more and more women today are delaying marriage into their 30s. They, however, aren't delaying sex. Very few of these unmarried women are virgins when they turn 30. Stats vary but it's below 10% and perhaps closer to 5%. Moreover, these women have multiple sexual partners. It's difficult to calculate the number but a survey of the material points toward between 7-14 sexual

> partners prior to getting married right around 30. Others say that is a low number. Regardless, the consequences of this are hard to overstate. This sort sexual promiscuity has intense negative emotional, spiritual, and even physical consequences in the lives of these women. Also, it means that a large number of these women are using hormonal birth control and having abortions.
>
> […]Second, as you see in the chart above, male virginity between ages 18-30 has increased 20% since ’89. That’s good, right? No. It’s doubtful that this increase in virginity is directly connected to an increase in morality among men.
>
> […]So who are these women having sex with?
>
> There appears to be men who are consider “top tier guys” by women who are having a lot casual sex with a lot of women. Supposedly, 20% of the men are having 80% of the sex.

The pastor mentions that 80% of the young women these days are chasing the “top” 20% of men. It’s important to understand that these are not the top 20% of men according to criteria like commitment ability, protecting, providing and moral / spiritual leading. These are the “top” 20% of men according to appearance. In fact, if a man has definite, defensible views on moral or spiritual issues, that is bad, because that means that he is strict, judgmental and boring. Not high status.

What do young women consider “high status”?

Look at this survey of women who use Bumble about where they set the minimum and maximum height of men they are seeking:

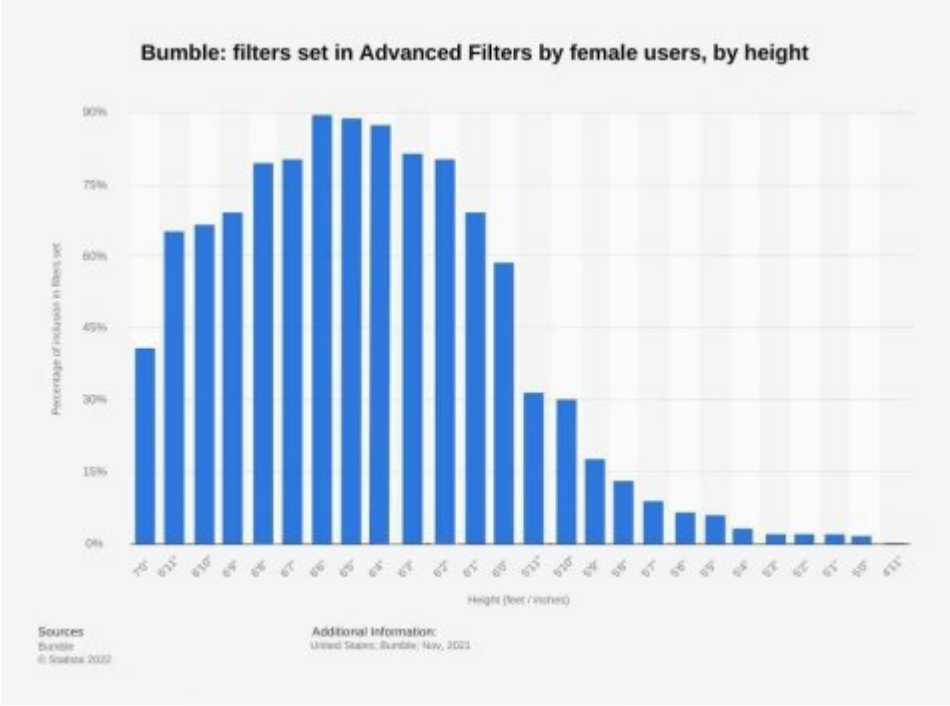

Women’s Height Preferences on Bumble Dating App

What this shows is that women have the height slider set to find men who are between 6 feet tall and 7 feet tall. The average height of a North American man is 5’9″. This is what they value in a man.

Have a look at this survey of OKCupid users:

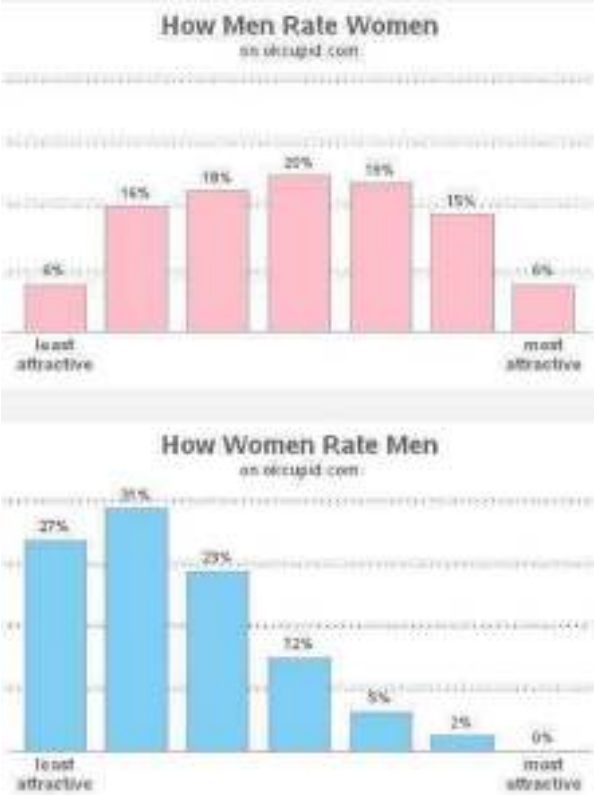

OKCupid Male and Female Attractiveness Ratings

Again, the men with the highest status are judged by their appearances. And how do 80% of the women get the attention of these top 20% of men? Why, by giving them premarital sex, of course. Since these men are swimming in attention from 80% of the women, there is no need for them to commit first in order to get sex. Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free? Although you might think that promiscuity makes men unstable, selfish and low status, you would be wrong. These are the men that women want.

As famous feminist Hanna Rosin explains:

> But this analysis downplays the unbelievable gains women have lately made, and, more important, it forgets how much those gains depend on sexual liberation. Single young women in their sexual prime—that is, their 20s and early 30s, the same age as the women at the business-school party—are for the first time in history more successful, on average, than the single young men around them. They are more likely to have a college degree and, in aggregate, they make more money. What makes this remarkable development possible is not just the pill or legal abortion but the whole new landscape of sexual freedom—the ability to delay marriage and have temporary relationships that don't derail education or career. To put it crudely, feminist progress right now largely depends on the existence of the hookup culture. **And to a surprising degree, it is women—not men—who are perpetuating the culture, especially in school, cannily manipulating it to make space for their success, always keeping their own ends in mind. For college girls these days, an overly serious suitor fills the same role an accidental pregnancy did in the 19th**

> **century: a danger to be avoided at all costs, lest it get in the way of a promising future.**

I've written about how feminists support the hook-up culture before.

They aren't looking for men who will commit until they reach their mid-30s or 40s, and feel peer pressure from their friends who are married and having kids. And many Christian women think that hooking up with hot bad boys is compatible with Christianity, because Christianity is just about God making women happy by letting them do whatever they feel like doing "in the moment".

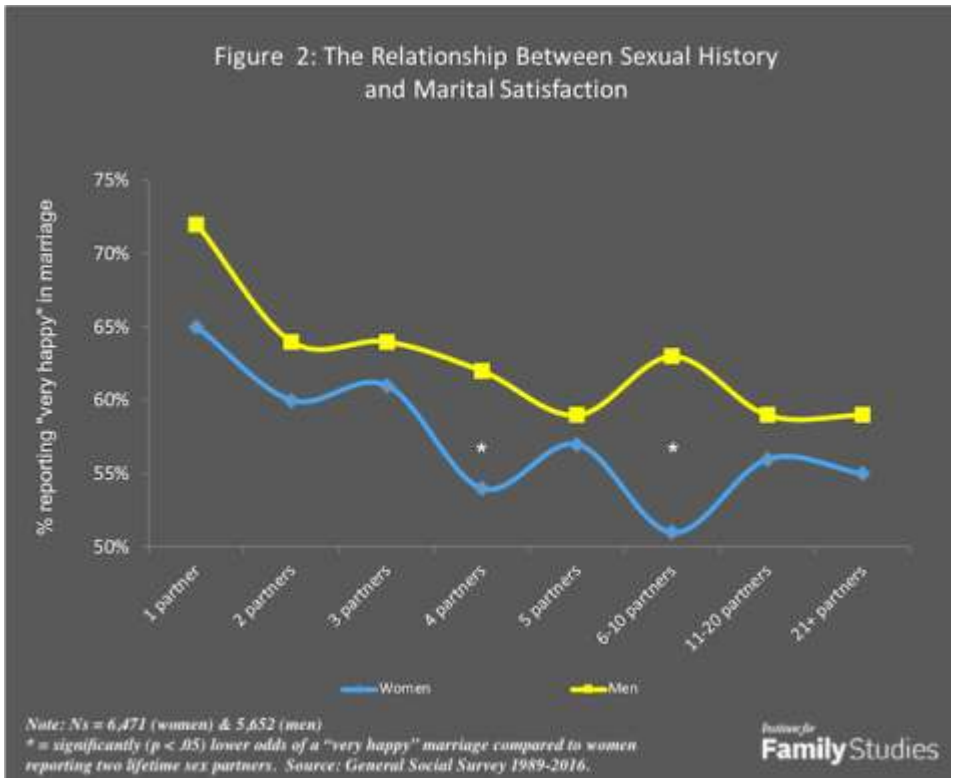

Study: virgins have the happiest marriages, more partners means less happiness

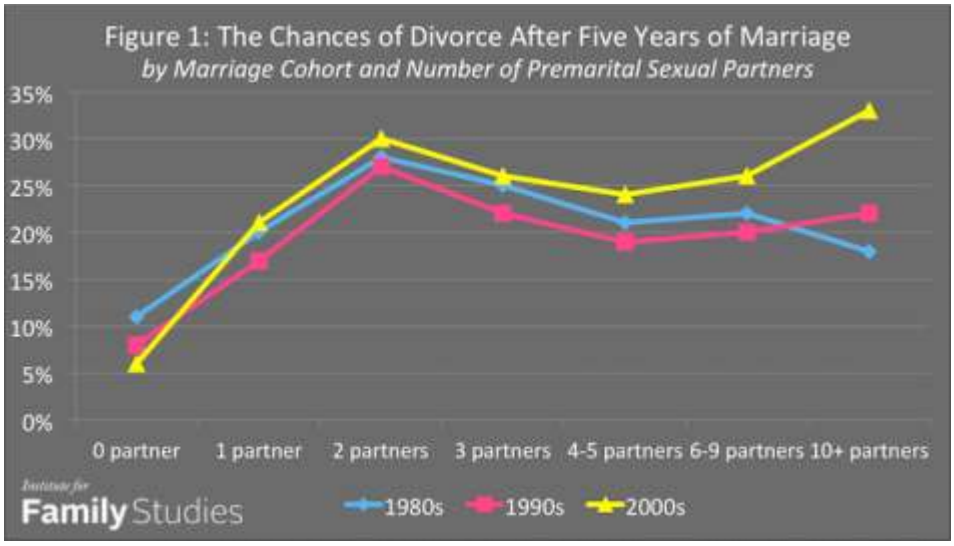

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

What Christian women, their parents and pastors believe

Here are some things I've heard over the years by Christian women, their parents, and their pastors:

- there’s nothing wrong with women choosing men based on height, appearance, and bad boy character traits
- bad boy character can easily be fixed by nagging, sex-withholding, and threatening divorce
- marriage will magically happen when the woman feels like getting married, until then she should focus on casually “dating” attractive men, career, travel and fun
- a woman’s ability to choose good men and be a good wife and mother isn’t harmed by having premarital sex with hot bad boys
- men aren’t discouraged by a woman’s student loan debt or secular left indoctrination, or her desire to put the kids in daycare and public schools, so she can keep working after they are born
- it’s wrong for men to have standards about what they want in a wife and mother, or to prefer early marriage
- if Christian men want to attract women, they should spend more money on expensive cars, clothes and watches
- women are just as likely to get pregnant at 35 as they are at 20, as long as they are in good shape and healthy
- studies that show that past promiscuity causes the woman to be unhappy, and the marriage to be unstable, are all false

There are costs and risks to men who decide to marry. There are external threats from policy, courts, the workplace, the schools, etc. It’s become dangerous for men to advocate for Christian views, and having a family makes it even more risky. These risks make sense when the man gets early investment from a woman – support, investment and many well-raised children. These risks make NO sense when there is no early investment from a woman. A woman who chased “high status” men will never be attracted to a good man. She may eventually want to settle for one, but she will never respect him.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

June 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining the outline of the podcast.

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other

examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

June 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is Dr. William Lane Craig giving a long-form argument for the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus, and taking questions from the audience.

The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early dating

- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthew, which Mike Licona and I doubt is intended to be historical, but is more likely to be apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

You can see this evidence used in an actual debate, against a historian who disagrees with Dr. Craig. That post contains a point by point summary of the debate that I wrote while listening to it.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 10: Do Evil and Suffering Disprove God?

June 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 10 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, we talk about the problems of evil and suffering, and how the Christian worldview answers them. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our Youtube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 10:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss whether evil and suffering disprove God's existence. We distinguish between objective and subjective standards of good and evil. We distinguish between moral and natural evil. We talk about "morally sufficient reasons" why God might allow suffering, in order to obtain a greater good. We talk about whether humans can know why God allows evil or suffering, and whether God should tell us. We discuss specific Christian doctrines that are related to suffering and evil.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Notes

When WK mentions "grounding", he means the way a parent "grounds" a child for misbehaving, in order to teach them standards of behavior while they are young. So, for example, parents might ground a child for being late to school. But it's better for the child to learn to be on time by being grounded by his parents, than for the grown-up child (adult) to learn to be on time by being fired by his employer.

If you like the story of Neil, and his thoughts about having cancer several times, you can check out his blog "Eternity Matters". He is an amazing authentic, practical Christian man, who has led an amazing life of adventure and action for the Boss.

References

Matt Dillahunty Debates David Robertson on Atheism, Morality and Evil by Wintery Knight

Alvin Plantinga's Free Will Defense by Got Questions

Stephen Cowan and William Alston on the Limitations of Human Knowledge Related to the Problems of Evil and Suffering by Wintery Knight

William Lane Craig Debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: Evil, Suffering and God by Wintery Knight

Belief Map Discussion of the Problem of Evil by Blake Giunta

Belief Map Discussion of the Hiddenness of God by Blake Giunta

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Why you should read “Up From Slavery” by Booker T. Washington

June 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lately, my friends have been very excited that I’m a non-white conservative. They want me to answer the grievances of BLM people, and explain from my own experiences what Christianity and conservative policies have to say about making the lives of non-whites better. My friend Wes recommended “Up From Slavery” by Booker T. Washington to help me focus my thoughts.

Here’s a summary of the book:

> ### Dignity through Labor
>
> Over the course of *Up From Slavery,* Washington develops the idea and ideal of dignity through labor. For Washington, the gravest aspect of the institution of slavery is the denigration of labor for both blacks and whites. Because the enslaved had no personal investment or return on their labor, they did not complete their work with an attitude toward improvement. Likewise, whites, largely deprived of meaningful labor, were robbed of the ability to achieve self-sufficiency. In both races, this produced personalities and characters that seek to escape labor. Washington emphasizes labor as the only way to make oneself useful in an interdependent, modern society. Throughout the whole of *Up From Slavery*, Washington searches for and obtains work. Further, once he obtains it, Washington completes all labor to best of his ability, no matter how lowly the task. At the Tuskegee Institute, Washington makes this idea and ideal a foundational ethos. All students who study at the Tuskegee Institute must learn a trade or industry alongside their more traditional academic pursuits. In addition, many of the buildings, most of the furniture, the wagons, and the materials used at the school are produced by students. This level of practical skill and diligence also acts as the foundation of Washington’s theory and program for racial uplift.
>
> ### Selflessness, Desire to Be Useful to One’s Community
>
> The people that Washington most admires and models himself after are those he labels selfless. Washington defines this as the willingness to work on the behalf of others. For Washington, this is not only about duty or labor, but also about the willingness to do one’s best for the benefit of the collective good. Washington believes that racial prejudice can be overcome if black people make themselves indispensable to their communities and their nation. The brick-making episode provides an example. Though the brick-making enterprise at Tuskegee felled three kilns before successfully producing bricks, the venture eventually proved successful and the school began to sell its bricks on the open market.

> Washington describes how whites who were unsympathetic or apathetic to the education of blacks and the overall project of the Tuskegee Institute were willing to purchase Tuskegee bricks due to their quality and convenience. Washington suggests that if black race can find their niche in society by fulfilling a need, then they can co-exist peacefully and productively with whites.
>
> **Impracticality of Political Agitation**
>
> Throughout *Up From Slavery*, Washington defends his ideas about racial advancement and uplift by subtly undermining the proposals of his critics. Though Washington does not explicitly state his objection to the strategies of specific thinkers like W.E.B. Dubois or even his predecessor, Frederick Douglass, he nevertheless highlights the wastefulness of political agitation for equal rights at every chance he gets. To do this, Washington shows that political agitation results in worse relations and outcomes than those that existed before. For example, when he goes home to Malden after his second year at the Hampton Institute, Washington finds that both the salt-furnace and the coal-mine are not in operation due to worker's strikes. In Chapter IV, Washington describes how strikers usually spent all their savings during the strikes and returned to work in debt, but at the same wages. He raises the impracticality of political agitation again after his controversial Atlanta Exposition speech. After the success of his speech, he hypothetically asks if a black man would have been invited to give a speech had people agitated to put a black person on the program. He answers in the negative, saying that such opportunities can only arise through merit.

And here's a summary of his most famous speech:

> On September 18, 1895, Booker T. Washington was selected to give a speech that would open the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia. The speech, which is often referred to as the "Atlanta Compromise," was the first speech given by an African American to a racially-mixed audience in the South. In it, Washington suggested that African Americans should not agitate for political and social equality, but should instead work hard, earn respect and acquire vocational training in order to participate in the economic development of the South. By doing so, eventually, he stated, African Americans would gain the respect of white society and be granted the rights of full citizenship.

There's a free full audio version of the book, and the full text is online. I recommend this book to people of all races, because as the sexual anarchy brought on by feminism becomes widespread, the majority of the children of tomorrow will face the same kinds of challenges.

I see Washington's ideas as consistent with a Christian worldview, where we don't expect to be treated fairly. We expect sinful people to treat us badly. What Christianity says is to be patient, and focus on your relationship with God and loving your neighbor. And one way to love your neighbor is to sell them something valuable that you made through your

labor. Another way is to work and save, and give to charity.

Government solutions to problems like racism and poverty aren't a top priority for Christians. Most of all, we need the freedom to be good, and to do good. That's priority one. You may not make your life better by being moral and diligent, but it's rare that doing so causes you to harm yourself. It's very important that you not harm yourself.

So, this dovetails nicely with my own story. My married non-white parents were not smart enough or willing enough to monitor my education, but they were clear that they wanted me to do well in order to find good-paying work. So I completed my BS and MS in a STEM field, and went to work right away, and I've been at it continuously for 22 years now. I save most of what I earn for charity and early retirement.

I've never experienced any of the racism or police brutality that American blacks complain about. And that's because I follow what Washington is teaching. I dress in a clean way that doesn't communicate danger to others. I'm careful to spend my time reading apologetics, economics and military history. I don't listen to popular music or watch popular TV or movies. I don't hang out with people who blame other people for their lack of success.

I got my first job by volunteering to do it for free on Saturdays for 7 months. My first full-time job salary after college was $50,000. Then I got a raise of $6,000 and then a raise of $9,000. I used to work 70 hour weeks in my 20s. I graduated college with $9,000 dollars in the black, because I went to a small local college and lived at home, and never spent any money on alcohol. My net worth is now about $1.35 million. By the way, the secret to becoming wealthy is to not spend money on showing off. You can be very generous to your friends and still get rich. Just never buy anything that is designed to communicate "status" to anyone. And never spend money on alcohol or chasing sex outside of marriage.

At no time did I accept that the problems defined by the secular left were my real problems. And at no time did I accept their "solutions" as real solutions to anything. As black economist Thomas Sowell writes, the "solutions" of the left are not effective at helping people like me. The "solutions" of the left are designed to make leftists feel better, and look more virtuous to others. You are much better off reading the Bible, Christian apologetics, free market economics, American military history, etc., and then respecting what you learn from that in your decision-making. I think that reading the right stuff is even more important than having good parents or attending church.

What can men do to save this 24-year-old woman from toxic masculinity?

June 21, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting set of articles from a young woman who graduated from Pennsylvania State University. In one, she explains how a man she "hooked up" with treated her poorly. I think I've been able to figure out what her approach to relationships is. In this post, I'll explain her approach, and then discuss how social conservatives should solve problems like abortion and single motherhood.

NOTE: Please do not contact or harass this woman, just leave her alone.

So, here's the first, most important article:

> As someone who considers themselves a feminist, and I always thought that being sexual and unashamed was liberating and empowering. And for that reason, I never stopped myself from doing what I wanted to do.

In the article, she explains what it feels like to be used for sex and then ghosted by a man. She says that he never got to know her, and that makes her feel bad. What did he know about her? She says that she appeared to him as "just some blonde blacked out drunk". In the article, she describes lying awake next to him after sex, then getting up to walk home at 5:30 in the morning. And this is not the only toxic man in her life.

She says:

> This applies to more than a few people from my past… I started to realize this lifestyle wasn't working after I hooked up with a guy who thought New England was a state. And yeah, I still hooked up with him after finding out this knowledge about him… And I don't know if that says more about him that he didn't know or more about me since I was willing to overlook that fact **just to feel desired for a night**.
>
> Because I do turn to other people for validation. When I think about it objectively, **90% of the reason I hook-up with anyone is to feel good about myself**.

She calls the search for validation an "addiction":

> I am addicted to validation I got from getting with people. I needed that rush of dopamine. I needed to know I am wanted. I got addicted to hooking up. Cause it was the only thing that made me feel good about myself for a while. When I was feeling down, I turned to boys… that didn't care about anything except what I look like. And I have been blessed/cursed with a pretty fast metabolism and a naturally larger than average chest. So I always have known I could default to my looks for validation. It's the easiest thing to get recognition for. And I got addicted to being told I was hot, or pretty, or whatever.

In other articles, she explains what kinds of men she's looking for.

She's a strong Democrat.

> There are two kinds of Republicans: the ignorant and the evil. Either they are uninformed and dumb or aware of the world and other cultures other than their own and just too corrupt or bigoted to care. It's just that being a Republican seems to now stand for religious nuts, rich, rednecks, and racists. This current election cycle has only increased my deep seeded hatred for the right-wingers even more.
>
> And I can't help myself, but whenever I find out someone who I have been talking to or have been friends with is a Republican, I let out an audible "ugh, really?" I can not hide my disgust.

In another article, she explains that she's an atheist:

> If singing songs, praying or going to confession makes you feel better, by all means, do what you have to do to feel better. As long as you aren't hurting anyone, do what you want to do. As an atheist, it doesn't offend me. I just choose not to do it.
>
> For example, at thanksgiving dinner this year my family wanted to say grace before eating, but they know where I stand when it comes to religion.

She came out of a Christian family.

In another post, she explains why she cheated on her boyfriend:

> I wish I could say I don't know why I did it, but that would be a blatant lie. I found myself in someone else's bed because… I didn't have feelings for you anymore. If you were enough for me, then you would have been. But you weren't. I stopped craving your company. I felt guilty, sure, but not enough to stop me from doing it multiple times. I didn't care about you or how you felt. And as my feelings started to fade, yours only seemed to get stronger. I know that stings, but it's true.
>
> So when I would go out in that extra-lowcut dress you loved when I wore it around you and a cute guy would ask me to dance or to go hangout on the porch, I wouldn't mention you. I guess I got tired of turning people down when I didn't feel like there was any "good" reason to. I missed my freedom. I missed the exciting feelings that come with flirting with someone new. The whole giddy honeymoon phase, getting butterflies whenever someone texts you, stalking them on Facebook and pretending you know nothing about them, finding yourself daydreaming about the next time you hang out in class. But I think I skipped a step before getting with someone new– breaking it off with you first.

She seems to be guided primarily by her feelings. If the feelings are gone, they're gone. She doesn't try to pick a good guy and invest in the relationship so that she builds something. I don't think this is going to work for her to avoid bad men.

So, what kind of man is she looking for? She writes about how interested she is in “hot” guys in many of her articles. Guys with height, looks, tattoos, piercings, displayed wealth validate her more than guys who want to protect, provide, and lead her in moral and spiritual areas. I don’t think that the men she is choosing will treat her well – they just have too many options to focus on building something good with one woman.

She’s looking for a man who agrees with her on abortion and same-sex marriage. So, men like that don’t want to protect unborn children, and take responsibility for their choices. And a man who supports same-sex marriage is siding with selfish adults. Every same-sex relationship deprives a child of their bio-mom or bio-dad. That’s not a good man to build a stable marriage with.

Regarding religion, she’s uncomfortable with men who have definite exclusive views. Religion, for her, is not about truth at all. You shouldn’t make any exclusive claims that make people feel bad. Instead, just have your private religion that makes you feel better. She’s looking for men who will not lead her in moral and spiritual areas. That’s not a good man to date, either.

How is it working out for her?

Her worldview – feminism, atheism, socialism – doesn’t have the resources necessary for her to approach relationships in a way that will work for her, in the long run. She is not a Christian, pro-marriage, or conservative. The men she chooses are not Christians, pro-marriage, or conservative. This isn’t going to lead to a relationship that is faithful, exclusive and permanent. If that’s what she wants, then she is choosing the wrong people to get there. And even if she doesn’t want commitment now, she will some day. It’s better for her to focus on finding a good man now and building him up. Men make better husbands and fathers the sooner women get in there and support them at those goals.

I always urge young women to get a STEM degree and work in the private sector until they marry and have their first child. To make them think logically, take responsibility for engineering results, and to feel validated by their achievements. I wanted to see what her college major was – because I suspected that she did not do STEM. While searching, I stumbled upon her dating profile (posted on 9Gag by her), two Instagram pages full of selfies, a Tumblr blog of sexy photos, and an Only Fans page. Her LinkedIn page showed no current or previous work experience. To me, these things are clear signs that she is head straight for evil men who will hurt her.

Saving women from toxic masculinity

I think what we have to do is focus on her disappointment with the results of her own choices, and challenge her to change her worldview and relationship choices. She needs to stop rewarding the hot bad boys with free sex. There are good men out there who want to protect, provide and lead on moral and spiritual issues. She needs to be taught to focus on those good men.

Democrat policies raising gas prices, increasing inflation, starting a recession

June 22, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been reading some very disturbing things about the energy policies of the Biden administration. The corporate news media is telling everyone that Biden is trying to lower gas prices. How? By threatening producers at home, and begging Venezuela and Saudi Arabia to produce more abroad. None of this will work, and the administration's other actions are making gas prices rise.

Here is the Wall Street Journal:

> President Biden has suddenly discovered that a refinery shortage is driving up fuel prices. Naturally, he's blaming refiners, even as his Administration doubles down on the policies that created the shortage.
>
> In a remarkable and threatening letter to oil and gas CEOs this week, Mr. Biden seems stunned to learn that prices rise when supply doesn't meet demand.
>
> […]A major culprit is U.S. government policy. Some older refineries have closed because companies couldn't justify spending on upgrades as government forces a shift from fossil fuels. They also have to account for the Environmental Protection Agency's tighter permitting requirements… and steeper biofuel mandates.

The article notes that our refining capacity is being targeted by the Biden administration's regulations. Smaller refining companies have to purchase "regulatory credits", or apply for an exemption, but "the biofuels lobby opposes these exemptions, and the EPA just denied 69 waiver requests".

And this:

> Chevron CEO Mike Wirth said recently that refineries are shutting down or being repurposed for renewable fuels because "the stated policy of the U.S. government is to reduce demand for the products that refiners produce." When companies are told that demand for their product will become obsolete, it's no surprise that they don't invest in supply.

Energy policy expert Michael Shellenberger notes:

> Last month, the Biden administration canceled a massive, one-million acre oil and gas lease in Alaska. And earlier this week, Senator Ron Wyden proposed a large new tax on oil industry profits, which Biden officials say the president may support.
>
> A senior executive at a major U.S. bank that finances oil and gas exploration yesterday told me, "If you were an oil company, why would you invest hundreds of millions of dollars into expanding refining capacity if you thought the federal

> government or investors would shut you down in the next few years? The narrative coming from the administration is absolutely insane. ”

Shellenberger quotes Climate Change Barbie (Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm) saying that she wants companies to invest in oil refining now, even thought the Democrats intend to shut them down in “five or ten years”. Jennifer Granholm has no earned degrees or work experience in anything remotely related to energy policy.

What’s the effect of attacking oil refining capacity? Higher gas prices, and higher inflation, across the board:

> The result of the Biden Administration’s hostility toward the energy industry is skyrocketing inflation. Where energy prices rose 35% over the last year, all prices rose just 8%.
>
> There are certainly other factors causing inflation, including the ramping up of supply chains following the pandemic, the $1.7 trillion stimulus last year, and China’s lockdown in response to the omicron coronavirus variant. But the non-energy factors behind inflation were temporary, and none explain consistently higher energy prices, which are a major factor in the higher prices of everything, from food to consumer products.
>
> And energy’s role could be even larger than economists can detect. “When you strip out of the [Consumer Price Index] all the items that are linked to energy (air fares, moving/freight, rental cars, delivery services, new and used vehicles),” noted economist David Rosenberg, “the core was +0.36% and the [year-over-year] steadied near 4%. ”

Remember, the Biden administration has already cancelled pipelines, leases and drilling permits. They are re-evaluating previously granted leases and drilling permits. There is a real risk of blackouts this summer because we aren’t producing enough energy. Biden can run around ranting and raving about high gas prices, but he’s causing it with his reliance on global warming radicals.

Shellenberger writes about policies that Biden could be implementing to reduce inflation and lower energy prices:

> [M]y sources say that Biden could significantly increase oil/gas production within 12 – 18 months. How? First, they say, he should invoke the National Defense Act for Oil and Gas. This will enable the acceleration of required permits for oil and gas projects, they say. Second, he should announce a national commitment to purchase oil to fill the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) at a floor of $80/barrel. That will, they say, be a powerful incentive for the oil guys. Third, he should announce trade agreements with the international community to supply them with LNG (liquified natural gas) Doing so will incentivize natural gas production and create a surplus of energy for exports with an “American-First asterisk (keep natural gas storage full while exporting).

> Biden’s doing none of that. As a result, Biden’s hostility to expanded energy production could result in recession.

Doing things that would actually work would make Biden’s eco-terrorist handlers angry. So, we’ll keep getting policies that raise gas prices and increase inflation. And a lot of ineffectual squealing from an elderly man who should be retired and enjoying his old age.

What happens to your worldview if you reject a Creator / moral lawgiver?

June 23, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that there was a news story about how belief in God is declining even further in America. And it's happening the most among younger Americans. In this post, I wanted to talk about the common atheist idea that you can just remove God, and life will go on as before, with everything making perfect sense.

I don't think I've ever written a post about ALL the changes that happen when a person ejects a Creator / Moral Lawgiver from their worldview. And now I don't have to, because this blogger has done the work for us.

He introduces his post like this:

> I recently wrote an article targeted at committed atheists who claim that Christians carry all the burden of proof. There, I pointed out that atheism is not a neutral position and is justified only if it, too, can provide answers for the hard questions of science and human experience. In this article, though, I'd like to offer something similar only targeted to the agnostic, who flirts with the idea that this universe may be devoid of a God after all. My intent is to get such persons to consider the impact that true atheism would logically have on their beliefs and values, and to consider whether this package deal sounds more reasonable than theism.

Now, I've interacted with the author a little by e-mail, and it turns out that he actually spent a good part of his life living as an atheist. And he's got a bunch of friends and relatives who don't exactly fit in with the standard raised-in-a-Christian-home happy path. And best of all, he's a software engineer, so you know he's practical and sensible about these topics.

Here are the major areas of worldview that are affected by the rejection of God:

- Meaning
- Sovereignty
- Morality
- Rights
- Mind
- Free Will
- Science

When I talk about these things, I usually talk about the 3 Ms: Mind, Meaning, Morality. You can see he's got a lot more there. And he quotes a lot of prominent atheists that you've probably heard of: Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Sean Carroll, Jerry Coyne, etc.

Here's the one on Rights:

> Universal human rights presuppose that each of us has unique, intrinsic value. The Founding Fathers asserted that our rights were endowed by God, and Scripture claims it is His own image within us that makes us special. If you dispense with this idea, what standard do you use to ground human rights?
>
> We are not equal by any measure one could offer, such as fitness, talent, race, or intelligence. Even grounding it in our mere humanity is arbitrary, since there is no higher standard that would favor humans over the rest of the biological world, and some animals are more fit or intelligent than young, elderly, or disabled humans. Animal rights activists understand this and traffic in this "speciesist" notion. They point out the blight of the human race's impact on nature, and do not temper that with any belief in the special value of humanity.
>
> The loss of intrinsic human value leads to creative redefinitions for personhood and rights which traffics in things like contribution to society and a life worth living. This road leads to infanticide for the unwanted, eugenics for the unfit, and euthanasia for the elderly. We saw these ideas on display in Nazi Germany as well as, to an extent, the US and other European countries. However, they have been making a comeback in an increasingly secular western culture that has forgotten its dark past. But what principle does atheism offer you to object to any of this beyond your instinctive revulsion?

The conclusion cannot be missed:

> Embracing atheism has consequences. Removing God from your life is not like removing a piece of furniture from your house. It's more like replacing the foundation, which impacts anything that has been built upon it. I've discussed several important things that are affected, but many more could be offered, like beauty and the arts, logic, truth, and even the reliability of our senses. In fact, every area of thought and life are affected, or are at least fair game for deconstruction by the universal acid that is atheism.

He also links to a post by James Bishop in the comments, featuring TONS of interesting quotes by famous atheists, about the implications of adopting the worldview of atheism.

Here's one by former Cornell University paleontologist Will Provine:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear … There are no gods, no purposes, no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end for me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning to life, and no free will for humans, either.

Is Provine smarter than the average atheist? I think he is, and he's certainly thought about it more than the average Twitter atheist in his 20s.

I guess what I would say to young atheists is that you probably haven't 1) evaluated the evidence for a Creator / Designer / Moral Lawgiver at age 14, and 2) you certainly haven't

considered the implications of the decision.

Earlier this week, I wrote a post about an educated 24-year-old feminist woman who was trying to get a man to commit to her. She was choosing men and the timing of sexual activity based on her atheist worldview. As she tells her story, you can clearly see the difference that the worldview makes in the area of relationships. She doesn't have the resources in her atheism to conduct herself wisely enough to get the results she is looking for.

What kind of "Constitution" can there be for a relationship, if the universe is an accident, human beings are robots made out of meat, and the purpose of life is to be happy here and now? Relationships are stable when each person is able to execute self-sacrificial love. Can you ground a respectful, committed relationship in a worldview of "survival of the fittest"? I think not. And yet this is the approach that most young people take.

Study: galactic habitable zone depends on fine-tuning of cosmological constant

June 24, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

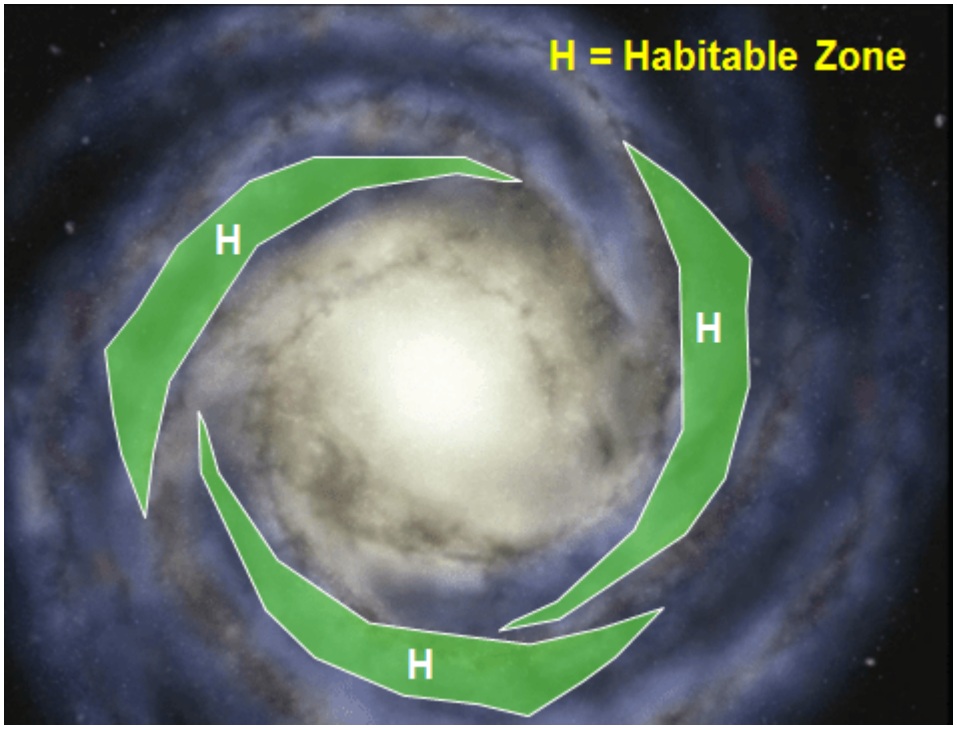

The galactic habitable zone (GHZ) is shown in green superimposed on a spiral galaxy

This is going to be old news to readers of this blog who are familiar with the Michael Strauss, Walter Bradley and Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on habitability and fine-tuning. But, it's nice to see these ideas show up in one of the most prestigious peer-reviewed science journals in the world (if not *the* most prestigious).

Here's the article from Science.

It says:

> Scientists have known for several years now that stars, galaxies, and almost everything in the universe is moving away from us (and from everything else) at a faster and faster pace. Now, it turns out that the unknown forces behind the rate of this accelerating expansion—a mathematical value called the cosmological constant—may play a previously unexplored role in creating the right conditions for life.
>
> That's the conclusion of a group of physicists who studied the effects of massive cosmic explosions, called gamma ray bursts, on planets. They found that when it comes to growing life, it's better to be far away from your neighbors—and the cosmological constant helps thin out the neighborhood.
>
> "In dense environments, you have many explosions, and you're too close to them," says cosmologist and theoretical physicist Raul Jimenez of the University of Barcelona in Spain and an author on the new study. "It's best to be in the

> outskirts, or in regions that have not been highly populated by small galaxies—and that's exactly where the Milky Way is."
>
> Jimenez and his team had previously shown that gamma ray bursts could cause mass extinctions or make planets inhospitable to life by zapping them with radiation and destroying their ozone layer. The bursts channel the radiation into tight beams so powerful that one of them sweeping through a star system could wipe out planets in another galaxy. For their latest work, published this month in *Physical Review Letters*, they wanted to apply those findings on a broader scale and determine what type of universe would be most likely to support life.
>
> The research is the latest investigation to touch on the so-called anthropic principle: the idea that in some sense the universe is tuned for the emergence of intelligent life. If the forces of nature were much stronger or weaker than physicists observe, proponents note, crucial building blocks of life—such fundamental particles, atoms, or the long-chain molecules needed for the chemistry of life—might not have formed, resulting in a sterile or even completely chaotic universe.

Basically, the best place for a galaxy that permits complex, embodied life to exist is one where you can pick up enough heavy elements from dying stars nearby, but not be in an area that is so crowded by stars that you will be murdered by intense gamma radiation when they die.

The cosmological constant has to be set just right that we spread out enough to make space between spiral arms for life-permitting solar systems, but no so spread out that we cannot pick up the heavy elements we need for a metal-rich star, a moon, and the bodies of the intelligent agents themselves.

More:

> **As it turns out, our universe seems to get it just about right. The existing cosmological constant means the rate of expansion is large enough that it minimizes planets' exposure to gamma ray bursts, but small enough to form lots of hydrogen-burning stars around which life can exist. (A faster expansion rate would make it hard for gas clouds to collapse into stars.)**
>
> Jimenez says the expansion of the universe played a bigger role in creating habitable worlds than he expected. "It was surprising to me that you do need the cosmological constant to clear out the region and make it more suburbanlike," he says.

Remember, this is only one of many characteristics that must obtain in order for a have a location in the universe that can support complex, embodied life of any conceivable kind.

Let's review the big picture

Time for me to list out some of the things that are required for a galaxy, solar system and

planet to support complex embodied life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind given these laws of physics.

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it's too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it's too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet's rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

It's not easy to make a planet that supports life. For those who are interested in reaching out to God, he has left us an abundance of evidence for his existence – and his attention to detail.

Oh, and there's also a circumstellar habitable zone:

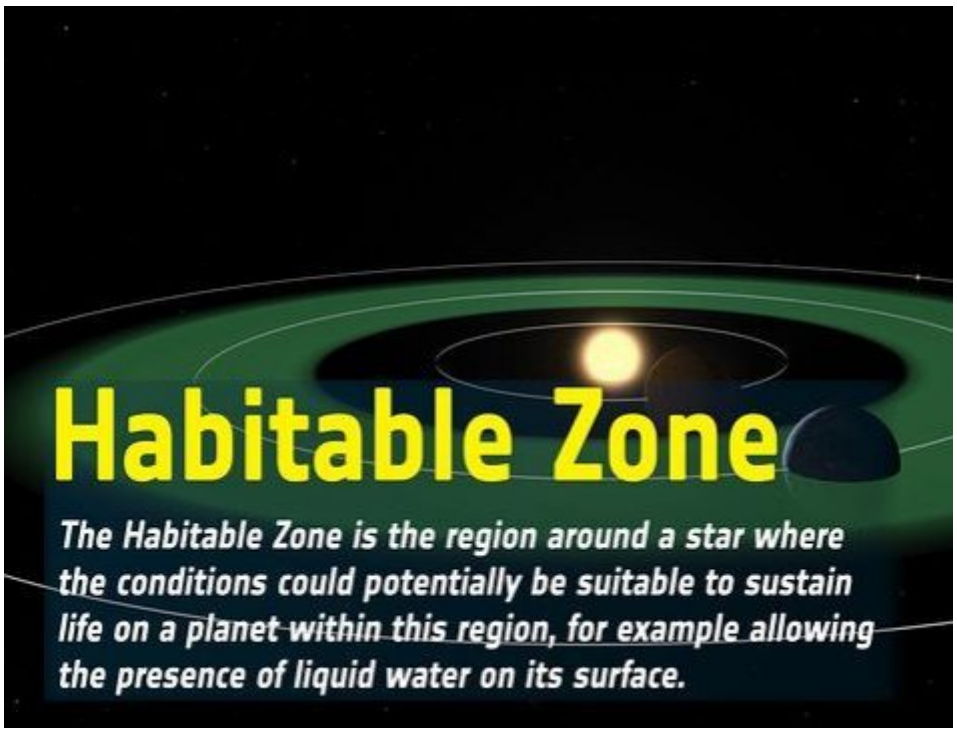

Circumstellar Habitable Zone

And remember, these requirements for a habitable planet are downstream from the cosmic fine-tuning of constants and quantities that occurs at the Big Bang. No point in talking about the need for plate tectonics if *you only have hydrogen in your universe.* The habitability requirements are a *further* problem that comes after the fine-tuning problem.

Resources

The best book to read on this topic is "The Privileged Planet", by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards. The latter is one of my absolute favorite Christian scholars, a real renaissance man. If the book is too much, there is a DVD by the same name that covers everything you need to know at a high level. Just FYI, Gonzalez made the cover of Scientific American in 2001, for his research on habitable zones. This is real evidence you can discuss with anyone, anywhere.

You can also watch the DVD for FREE on YouTube. Not sure how long that will be there. If you like it, buy the DVD, so you can show your friends.

Related posts

- New study: survey of 700 quintillion terrestrial exoplanets suggests Earth is special
- How tidal effects improve the habitability of a planet
- The connection between our moon, plate tectonics and habitability
- Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on the corelation between habitability and discoverability
- New paper finds that mass of asteroid belts affect habitability of planets
- New study on tidal heating strengthens stellar habitability argument
- Walter Bradley lectures on the creation and design of the universe
- Earth-like planet hyped by science-fiction-crazed atheists likely uninhabitable
- Four ways the Earth is fine-tuned for life, and one more
- Michael Strauss lectures on scientific evidence for a Creator at UT Dallas
- Fine-tuning the habitable zone: tidal-locking and solar flares
- Is silicon-based life a possible alternative for carbon-based life?
- Jupiter deflects comets and asteroids that might otherwise hit Earth
- How common is it for a star to support complex, embodied life?
- Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University
- Scientists troubled by lack of simple explanation for our life-permitting moon

We knew Donald Trump was pro-life and Joe Biden was pro-abortion before the 2020 election

June 25, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below, I am re-posting a post from October 2020, right before the 2020 election occurred. During the 2020 election campaigns, many prominent evangelicals urged Christians to vote against the Republican candidate for President. They did this because they wanted to virtue signal to their friends on the secular left.

If you're pro-life, then you vote Republican. And you urge OTHER PEOPLE to vote Republican, too. You use all your powers of persuasion to convince people to vote Republican. You don't have to lie about a candidate's shortcomings, but your job as a Christian is to vote for the candidate who will get the killing of unborn children to stop. Not just hold your nose and vote Republican. But use your words and actions to convince others to vote Republican, too.

Barack Obama's SCOTUS nominees DID NOT vote to repeal Roe v. Wade. Joe Biden's SCOTUS nominees DID NOT vote to repeal Roe v. Wade. Donald Trump's SCOTUS nominees DID vote to repeal Roe v. Wade.

People like David French, Russell Moore, Beth Moore, Karen Swallow Prior, Richard Mouw, Tim Keller, John Piper, etc. did everything they could to prevent a Republican from winning the presidency. They deserve ZERO credit for Friday's SCOTUS decision. ZERO. CREDIT.

—- Note: This post first appeared in October 2020

First, here's Biden on abortion, reported by Life News:

> The evidence is strong that Democrat presidential team Joe Biden and Kamala Harris support killing unborn babies in abortions up to birth.
>
> […]They want to force taxpayers to fund abortions, codify *Roe v. Wade* into federal law and reinstate rules that force nuns and other religious employers to fund birth control that may cause abortions in their employee health plans.
>
> […]Biden and Harris also have sponsored legislation to expand late-term abortions, including the "Women's Health Protection Act." Nicknamed the "Abortion Without Limits Until Birth Act" by pro-life groups, the bill would have invalidated nearly all state and federal abortion regulations, including waiting periods, informed consent requirements, bans on late-term abortions and sex-selection abortions and more.
>
> Harris also voted against a bill to prohibit abortions after 20 weeks and another to protect newborns who survive abortions from infanticide.
>
> Their party supports abortions without limits and taxpayer-funded abortions, too. The party platform calls for "reproductive health, rights, and justice … including safe and legal abortion" and opposes "federal and state laws that create barriers to reproductive health and rights."

Second, let's look at Trump's record, from an article posted by the Susan B. Anthony List – the pro-life group that is most concerned with law, policy and judicial appointments:

> **Appointed Pro-Life Judges**
>
> In April, 2017, Judge Neil Gorsuch was successfully confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. And in October, 2018, Judge Brett Kavanaugh was successfully confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. To date, 157 of President Trump's judicial nominees have been confirmed, including two Supreme Court justices, forty-three U.S. Courts of Appeals judges, and one hundred thirteen District Court judges.
>
> **Permitted States to Defund Planned Parenthood of Title X Funds**
>
> In April 2017, Congress sent a bill to President Trump's desk that permits states to defund Planned Parenthood of Title X family planning funds passed in Congress. President Trump signed the bill which reverses an Obama-era rule that disbarred states from doing so. Because this was passed using the Congressional Review Act, future Administrations cannot enact a similar rule to Obama's.
>
> **Stopped Tax Dollars Funding Abortion Overseas**
>
> President Trump not only reinstated the Mexico City Policy, but expanded it to the new Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance program. This new policy ensures that our tax dollars are protected from funding the abortion industry overseas across ALL global health spending, not just family planning dollars. The Bush-era Mexico City Policy protected roughly $500 million in spending – the new

Trump policy protects over $8.8 billion overseas aid from funding abortion.

Defunded the Pro-Abortion UNFPA

The UNFPA has long been complicit in China's oppressive population control activities, including birth limitation policies and forced abortions. President Trump's State Department cut U.S. Taxpayer funding to the UNFPA.

Required Health Insurance Companies to Disclose if Plans Cover Abortion

The Trump Administration Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) issued a rule requiring that insurers specify in each plan Summary of Benefits whether the plan covers abortion.

Settlements & New Rule Regarding HHS Mandate

The Departments of HHS, Treasury, and Labor issued two interim final rules, which means they took effect immediately, while allowing a comment period, that provide permanent, enforceable relief from the previous HHS mandate for both religious objectors, such as Little Sisters of the Poor, and moral objectors, such as Susan B. Anthony List. The new rule also exempts private employers and educational institutions that have sincerely held religious beliefs or moral objections against providing contraceptives or abortifacient drugs.

New Office for Conscience Protection at HHS

In May 2019, the Trump administration finalized new regulations to strengthen enforcement of federal laws protecting the conscience rights of health care workers who do not want to participate in abortion. The regulations clarify what recourse is available to victims of discrimination under the law and what penalties the HHS Office of Civil Rights may enforce for violations. Additionally, in January 2018, the Department of Health & Human Services announced the creation of the Conscience and Religious Freedom Division within the Office for Civil Rights. This new office works to protect health care professionals who do not want to participate in abortion. In May, 2019, HHS issued a proposed rule amending Obama-era regulations, clarifying that Section 1557 shall not force a recipient of federal funding to provide or pay for an abortion. It shall also be consistent with the First Amendment and with pro-life provisions, conscience provisions and religious liberty protections in current law.

Allowed States to Defund Planned Parenthood of Medicaid Funds

The Obama administration attempted to prevent states from defunding Planned Parenthood of Medicaid dollars, issuing guidance claiming this may be a violation of federal law. In January 2018, the Trump administration rescinded this guidance, allowing states to defund Planned Parenthood of Medicaid dollars as they see fit.

Cut Planned Parenthood's Tax Funding by up to $60 Million

In February, 2019, the Trump administration finalized the Protect Life Rule to

> redirect Title X family planning program funds away from the abortion industry. The rule advances President Trump's promise to stop taxpayer funding of abortion businesses like Planned Parenthood, who will no longer receive Title X funding if they choose not to comply.
>
> **Canceled Huge Contract for Taxpayer-Funded Experimentation with Body Parts of Aborted Babies**
>
> In June, 2019, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced they would not renew a major contract with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) to fund research using the body parts of aborted babies. (learn more)

My favorite was the conscience protections! I really hate the idea of being forced by secular leftists to violate my conscience.

I think it's very important for pro-life voters of all parties to understand that Trump has taken action on pro-life concerns. He listened to pro-life leaders, and did far more than other Republican presidents who were pro-life in name only. Americans often have this annoying habit of forming their opinions based on what they feel and what they hear in the culture. But we need to be informed voters. Let's look at the facts and decide based on actions.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 11: Women and Islam

June 26, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 11 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, we talk about what Rose observed about women living in majority-Muslim countries, and the root causes of their situation. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our Youtube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 11:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss her observations of how women live in several Islamic countries, specifically discussing honor killings, education, health care, polygamy, consent, "temporary marriages", domestic violence, etc. Rose explains the "excellent pattern of conduct" in Islam. We discuss Islam's views of women, sex and marriage, referencing their most authoritative texts. We contrast Islam's teachings with the teachings of Christianity. We discuss whether these teachings are still practiced today.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Notes

When WK was talking about grooming gangs in the UK, he mentioned "Rotterdam". WK meant *Rotterham*. Please see the references below for his previous posts on this topic, which mentions many of the cities where the gangs operated.

References

Excellent pattern of conduct:

- Qur'an 33:21
- Qur'an 59:7

Aisha:

- Vol. 4, Book 26, Hadith 3380

INTERVIEW – Dr. Wayne Grudem – Highlights and Reflections (regarding Wayne Grudem's concern for his wife's health)

Women and Hell:

- Sahih al-Bukhari 1052

Islam, rape, and sex-trafficking in European countries by Wintery Knight

Muslim leader of underage sex-trafficking gang gets 22-year sentence by Wintery Knight

Police and social workers ignored sex-trafficking, rape and abuse by Muslims by Wintery Knight

Telford sex-trafficking ring involving up to thousand children was run by "Asian" men by Wintery Knight

Middle Eastern men who ran Oxford child sex-trafficking ring found guilty by Wintery Knight

UK police knew about Muslim child sex gang but refused to prosecute by Wintery Knight

UK authorities ignored gang of Muslim pedophiles who raped more than 1400 children by Wintery Knight

In the UK, which crime is worse? Sex trafficking, gang-rape or hate speech? by Wintery Knight

Members of another UK-based Middle Eastern men sex-trafficking ring sentenced by Wintery Knight

Underage teen girl forced into daily sex by Muslim "grooming" gang in Rotherham, UK by Wintery Knight

BBC documentary on Iraq's Secret Sex Trade

Domestic violence:

- Qur'an 4:34
- Sahih al-Bukhari 5825

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Disney offers to pay for employees' abortion expenses

June 27, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've always been confused about why so many prominent "conservative" Christians major in entertainment and make-believe. They know a lot about professional sports, popular movies, and fiction books. They love their entertainment, especially Star Wars and Disney. But are those entertainment-makers respectful of Christian views and values?

Here's a report from Life News about one of those entertainment-making corporations – Disney – which is *very* popular with many conservative Christians.

Excerpt:

> Walt Disney World, a company founded to bring joy and entertainment to children, told employees Friday that it will pay their travel expenses to have their unborn babies aborted.
>
> The news came after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in a historic ruling Friday morning. The Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health decision means states may protect unborn babies by banning abortions again,.
>
> The Orange County Register reports Walt Disney World announced the new employee "benefit" in direct response to the high court ruling.
>
> The company, which employs about 80,000 people in Florida, described the killing of unborn babies in abortions as "quality healthcare" and told Reuters that it is "committed" to ensuring its employees have access to abortions, according to the report.
>
> A new Florida law that bans abortions after 15 weeks is scheduled to go into effect July 1. Though not a total abortion ban, pro-life advocates believe the law will save thousands of unborn babies from mid- and late-term abortions every year.

The facts of that article were also picked up in other places, like the New York Post, but I prefer to link to Life News.

There's a longer list of companies who will pay for their employees' abortion expenses here.

Here's an article by The Federalist, talking about the Disney employee who does the voice of the main character in a recent Disney movie:

> In response to the criticisms of the bigots who complain about the presence of a same-sex kiss in a film for children, Evans, the voice of this version of Buzz Lightyear, spoke bluntly in a recent interview with Reuters Television, insisting that those who oppose LGBTQIA characters in children's films are not worthy of your concern. Their complaints will perish with them. Their bigotry will be swept

> into the dustbin of history. You simply need to wait for them to enter extinction.

Previously, I wrote about how Disney opposed a religious freedom bill, and about how they supported grooming children with LGBT propaganda. But none of this seems to bother the "conservative" Christian leaders, who just don't want to fight a "culture war" over trivial things like the complementarity of sexes, the definition of marriage, or the right to life of the unborn. It takes work to read books on pro-marriage apologetics and pro-life apologetics. Much better to skip those books and watch the latest entertainment produced by the secular left.

I try not to buy anything from Disney and related companies like ESPN, because I don't want to give money to people who war against my Christian worldview and values. But it seems like in the church, people know more about Star Wars and Disney than they know about the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. It's astonishing, but it's true. There's all this emphasis on fun activities and worship songs, but no one can give a defense of the most basic Christian truth claims. "Don't Judge!" is the new religion of the woke elites. Star Wars is their Bible. And Disneyland is their Mecca.

Whenever I hear someone talk about Star Wars or Disney, I immediately think "this person's real religion is entertainment, not Christianity". I once accidentally let that slip out to one of my co-workers, and he shrieked "how can you say that about Matt? He is a *rock star Christian* – he's *married* and he has *children*." Yes, he even has a Calvinist beard, and is very rugged and manly! A real Christian for sure! That's where we are now – Christianity isn't about worldview or debate, it's about looking the part that the church wants you to play to suck other people into the fun-loving community.

Trump’s Supreme Court nominees deliver another 6-3 win for religious liberty

June 28, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last Friday the Supreme Court repealed Roe v. Wade, pushing the regulation of abortion down to the individual states. All 3 of Trump’s Supreme Court nominees, who were all opposed by #EvangelicalsForBiden, voted against abortion. On Monday, the Supreme Court delivered another huge win for conservatives. Again, all 3 of Trump’s judges voted in favor of religious liberty.

Here’s the story from Daily Wire:

> On Monday morning, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in Kennedy v. Bremerton School District that a public high school football coach in the state of Washington had his First Amendment rights violated after he was placed on administrative leave by the school district and banned from participating in the football program for praying on the field after games in view of students.
>
> “SCOTUS sides with a high school football coach in a First Amendment case about prayer at the 50-yard-line,” SCOTUS Blog tweeted Monday morning. “In a 6-3 ruling, SCOTUS says the public school district violated the coach’s free speech and free exercise rights when it barred him from praying on the field after games.” The case was ruled along ideological lines.

The case was ruled along ideological lines, with all 3 of Trump’s judges favoring religious liberty, and all 3 of the judges favored by Obama and Biden voting against religious liberty.

Remember that Neil Gorsuch was one of Trump’s Supreme Court nominees.

Here is what he wrote in the majority opinion:

> “Here, a government entity sought to punish an individual for engaging in a brief, quiet, personal religious observance doubly protected by the Free Exercise and Free Speech Clauses of the First Amendment. And the only meaningful justification the government offered for its reprisal rested on a mistaken view that it had a duty to ferret out and suppress,” Gorsuch wrote. “Religious observances even as it allows comparable secular speech. The Constitution neither mandates nor tolerates that kind of discrimination.”

But not every Christian supports religious liberty. Some of them oppose religious liberty. How do we know that? You have to look at who they support during elections.

Understanding #EvangelicalsForBiden

Consider this article from 2016, where The Gospel Coalition argues against voting for Trump.

The title is: "Evangelical Leaders: Tell Us to Vote for Clinton":

> Trump's nomination has presented evangelical Christians with a difficult choice: support Trump, support Hillary Clinton, vote for a third alternative who is unlikely to win, or don't vote at all. To their credit, many evangelical leaders have ruled out that first option – they recognize just what an unacceptable candidate Trump is and what harm he would do to our country as president.

That's in The Gospel Coalition. They should rename their website The Secular Leftist Coalition.

It's shocking that these woke evangelicals opposed Donald Trump in 2016. BUT THEY EVEN OPPOSED HIM IN 2020, when his record of judicial nominations was known to all. That shows what they really believe about abortion and religious liberty. Given the choice between Trump's SCOTUS nominees, and the Women's Health Protection Act / Equality Act combo, they supported Biden. They want the Democrats – secular leftists – to pick the Supreme Court judges. Remember that in November.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

June 30, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our

> universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Are suicide rates lower for sexual minorities in LGBT-affirming countries?

July 1, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are suicide rates for LGBT people the same as the suicide rates for heterosexual people in countries with high levels of LGBT-affirmation? In case I get asked this question, I thought it might be good to look at the data in advance, and decide what the evidence looks like, and what line I should take in a debate about it. And since I have a blog, I'm going to post all of my findings below.

First, I want to note that in this NBC News article, the following countries are listed in the "15 Best Countries for LGBTQ Expats":

- Denmark
- Iceland
- Sweden

I say this, because these are the countries measured in the studies below.

So, here is one study from November 2019, published in the Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, entitled "Suicide among persons who entered same-sex and opposite-sex marriage in Denmark and Sweden, 1989–2016: a binational, register-based cohort study".

The abstract says:

> This large register-based study found higher suicide rates among individuals who entered an SSM, compared with those who entered an OSM. A lower suicide rate was noted for individuals in SSMs in recent years. More research is needed to identify the unique suicide risk and protective factors for sexual minority people.

SSM means same-sex "marriage" and OSM means opposite-sex marriage.

Here's another study from Sweden about same-sex "married" LGBT people, published May 2016, in the European Journal of Epidemiology. The title is the "Suicide in married couples in Sweden: Is the risk greater in same-sex couples?"

The abstract says:

> Even in a country with a comparatively tolerant climate regarding homosexuality such as Sweden, same-sex married individuals evidence a higher risk for suicide than other married individuals.

Here's another study from Sweden about LGBT individuals, published in March 2016 in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, entitled "Self-reported suicide ideation and attempts, and medical care for intentional self-harm in lesbians, gays and bisexuals in Sweden".

The abstract says:

> Positive histories of suicidal ideation, attempts and medical care for intentional self-harm, including higher levels of recurrence, are more prevalent among LGB individuals in contrast to heterosexuals. Lesbian/bisexual women evidence an earlier age of onset of treatment.

Here's another study from Sweden about people who underwent sex-reassignment surgery, published in February 2011, PLoS One, entitled "Long-Term Follow-Up of Transsexual Persons Undergoing Sex Reassignment Surgery: Cohort Study in Sweden".

The abstract says:

> Persons with transsexualism, after sex reassignment, have considerably higher risks for mortality, suicidal behaviour, and psychiatric morbidity than the general population.

Here's a study from Iceland about LGBT adolescents, published in May 2015, and entitled "Suicidal risk and sexual orientation in adolescence: A population-based study in Iceland".

The abstract says:

> The LGB girls were six times more likely to have had frequent suicide attempts, whilst the LGB boys were 17 times more likely to have attempted suicide that often.

So, there are some studies I found, and if anyone asks me about this, I'll explain that although I am not a social science researcher, the studies of people in LGBT-friendly countries show that there is a higher risk of suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide for LGBT individuals and couples than there is for heterosexual individuals and couples. And if they ask which countries, I'll say Sweden, Iceland and Denmark. I'll say that these are countries where same-sex "marriage" is legal.

Atheist morality: 10 Seattle police officers arrest man for reading the Bible near Gay Pride event

July 2, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Seattle has a reputation as being the most atheistic city in America. LGBT scandal after LGBT scandal. Including the resignation of their gay mayor for sex with an underage minor. Does atheism make a difference to human rights and moral behavior? I think it makes human rights and moral behavior impossible to rationally ground.

Anyway, here is the story from the Daily Wire: (H/T Samizdat, a Canadian apologetics web site)

> A Seattle street preacher says he was arrested for simply reading his Bible at a public park near a Seattle Gay Pride event.
>
> Matthew Meinecke was surrounded by Seattle police officers and taken to the police station, where he was fingerprinted before being released.
>
> "So at this point we can no longer stand by," a police officer told Meinecke as he arrested him. "The risk that you pose for public safety by remaining here can be mitigated if you leave, it's your last chance."
>
> "I don't want to leave because I'm not in danger," Meinecke responded.

The video of the arrest is here:

> SPD has enough resources to send 10 police officers to arrest a preacher reading his Bible in a public park. Because it's such a horrible crime now! pic.twitter.com/pytbNDel9I
>
> — BB (@mattteamjesus) June 27, 2022

Here's what you can expect in the way of morality, in atheist Seattle:

> One Seattle Pride event featured several men riding their bicycles naked as some children watched; during another event some men paraded around naked in front of children, according to footage posted of the event.
>
> Meinecke posted a video of Bibles that he said had been seized from him and ripped as one person yelled at him, "Get the f*** out of here! Get your holy water off my ovaries, b****! Get the f*** out!"
>
> One person yelled at Meinecke to "forget about your imaginary fairy in the f***ing sky."

What is rational, once you accept the idea that the universe is an accident, and human beings are machines made out of meat? What kind of morality is possible if you accept "survival of the fittest"?

Can you rationally ground human rights on atheism?

On atheism, morality is reduced to cultural fashions, like clothing fashions and cooking fashions. It differs by time and place, and each standard is "right" in that time and place. Infanticide is right in some times and places, and wrong in other times and places. When an atheist says X is wrong now, the same atheist can say X is right in a different time and place. Atheists aren't referring to any objective standard when they talk about right and wrong, they're just describing what cooking or clothing is OK for their time and place. The words are just to present themselves a certain way to people around them. Moral language is meaningless. It's just social behavior – saying what will make people like you. Atheists don't spend time thinking about morality. There's nothing to study. There's nothing to reason about. There's nothing to submit to. Who would waste a moment thinking about which flavor of ice cream is "morally right" for everyone, in all times and in all places?

But even this pretense of morality stops the moment that a prescribed course of action goes against an atheist's self-interest. This is the only life they have, and they are determined to feel as happy as they can, regardless of who else gets hurt. Right to free speech? Right to religious liberty? Those things can be trampled by the state the minute they offend an atheist. Just look at what happens to Christian business owners who decline to participate in same-sex wedding ceremonies in atheist cities like Seattle. Atheists don't think that forcing people to disobey their consciences is wrong. That article I linked to points out how the laws are never enforced when it's an LGBT-owned business discriminating against Christians. "Atheist morality". Justice is not rationally-grounded on atheism. It's all about power.

I recently linked to a couple of excellent posts on morality and atheism. Check them out. In that post, I also linked to a post by James Bishop, featuring TONS of interesting quotes by famous atheists, about the implications of adopting the worldview of atheism.

Here's one by former Cornell University paleontologist Will Provine:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear … There are no gods, no purposes, no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end for me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning to life, and no free will for humans, either.

There are tons of quotes like that from leading atheists on James Bishop's blog. It's very important to understand that atheists who use moral language are speaking about things that *they believe do not actually exist in reality*. You really have to check a person's worldview before you can trust them.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 12: Classical Movie Wisdom

July 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 12 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, we talk about three classical movies that are entertaining, and will give you insights for living out your Christian faith. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our Youtube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 12:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss classical movies that offer wisdom for practical Christian living. The first movie is a war movie that offers insight to Christians about our motivation for serving the Lord at a time when serving is no longer easy or popular. The second movie is a classical romance movie, which offers a superb portrait of classical masculinity in action. The third movie is an adventure / romance movie that challenges us to put our duty to higher causes above our own suffering and disappointment.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Notes

At one point in his summarizing of the first movie, WK says “Childers” when he means “Hodges”. Hodges takes half of the marines through a marsh on the low ground, and gets ambushed. Childers takes the other half of the marines up on the high ground, and finds the commander who is controlling the ambush.

References

Please see our three previous podcasts about problems and solutions in the Christian church, for our thoughts related to the theme of the first movie:

- What We Found in Churches and Campus Ministries
- Strategies for Making More Effective Christians, Part 1
- Strategies for Making More Effective Christians, Part 2

Please see our two previous podcasts about masculinity, for our thoughts that are related to the theme of the second movie.

- Knighted by the King: Authentic Masculinity
- A Marriage Fit for the King

If you liked these movie reviews, check out my previous analysis of “High Noon” a classical movie that teaches lessons about masculinity:

- A lesson about men for marriage-minded women from the movie “High Noon” by Wintery Knight

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For Independence Day, let’s learn about George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

July 4, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington’s line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington’s retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington’s army at White Plains, New York,

> British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after

> months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
>
> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
>
> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.

> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
>
> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
>
> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

Study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others

July 5, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back I finished reading “God’s Crime Scene”, the new book by J. Warner Wallace. I wanted to post something about some studies he mentioned in Chapter 6, on free will. This is one of the places where he found evidence in a surprising area.

Wallace says that free will makes more sense if theism is true, because we have non-material souls that interact with our bodies, but are not causally determined by them. On atheism, only matter exists, and you can’t get free will (or consciousness) from matter. So atheists like Sam Harris and Alex Rosenberg, for example, deny free will, because they are materialists and atheists.

Anyway, here’s what he writes on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others.” Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: “It seems that not only do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it.”” The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here’s the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free

> will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons' belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you're an atheist, then you are a physical object. And like every other physical object in the universe, your behavior is determined by genetic programming (if you're alive) and external inputs. Material objects do not have the ability to make free choices, including moral choices.

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no

moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

(Source)

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality. Can you imagine trying to get into any sort of enterprise with someone who has this view of moral choices? A marriage, or a business arrangement, etc? It would be crazy to expect them to behave morally, when they don't even think that moral choices is possible. It just excuses all sorts of bad behavior, because no one is responsible for choosing to do the right thing.

Believers in materialism are going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

Choosing to do the right thing

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when doing the right thing sets you back. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me about their ability to do the right thing when it was hard for them to do it. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality. My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

How good are atheist attempts to rationally ground moral values and duties?

July 6, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my readers is an expert at the moral argument, and wrote a number of articles about his experiences talking to non-Christians about it. He comes from a liberal Christian background, so his views and experiences are not the result of growing up in a conservative Christian environment.

In the first article, he talks about what theists mean when we say that atheists can't rationally ground objective morality:

> They misunderstand us to be implying that they are immoral people. But this is not at all what we are saying. Since we believe that the moral law is incumbent upon every human, and is woven into the very fabric of our souls, we are not at all surprised to find even atheists dancing to its tune (to mix my metaphors). The fact that atheists very much want to be thought of as good people is only a tacit admission that they understand that there is such a thing as "good" and that it is *good* to be good. But if morality is merely a human convention, then the most that an atheist can be claiming is that they are morally fashionable.

There's no moral credit for doing that.

In the second article, he talks about whether atheists can "reason" their way to correct moral views, if their conception of reality says that the universe and humans are accidents:

> A chance ethical system cannot do the trick if it is true that there are right and wrong answers. If there are indeed objectively right answers to moral questions, then reason is certainly an ally, since it can help us to assess the conditions and marshal our intuitions, but it does not in itself *make* the answer right. Neither does an ethical system make right answers; it can only (if legitimate) help us to navigate through real passes with real reefs and currents. But you could never say that any ship of history had hit a reef unless you were first willing to admit that things such as ships and reefs actually existed. That's a very big pill to swallow for anyone committed to a purely material world, where truth and ethics extend no farther than the will and imagination of the biochemical flukes we call "humans."

In the third article, he takes on the argument by atheists that much of the moral evil in the world is due to theists:

> When asking whether a behavior is caused by a belief system it must first be determined if that behavior is consistent with the beliefs in question. For a religion like Christianity there is some hope of doing so, since it is founded upon

> certain doctrines and is in possession of a guidebook — the Bible — to which one might appeal in making a ruling. For this reason a strong case can be made that most of what is commonly credited to Christianity is actually a violation of its fundamental principles. It is not *consistent* with Christianity; it is *antithetical* to it. And if something is inconsistent with a thing it is hard to make a case that it is *caused* by that thing.

In the fourth article, he talks about how atheists misunderstand the purpose of acting morally in Christianity:

> The irony is that Christianity does not even teach that we win heaven by virtue of our good works. In fact, it may be the only religion that explicitly rejects such an idea. For example, Islam actually teaches that our good deeds must outweigh our bad, and Eastern religions teach that we must work our way to enlightenment through various moral and spiritual practices. By contrast, Christianity teaches that we must put aside our futile thoughts of measuring up to God's perfect standard and throw ourselves upon the mercy of His court. We have but to accept, as spiritual beggars, the provision He has made to cover our sin and win our righteousness in Christ.
>
> Good works come as a *result* of our love and gratitude toward our creator and redeemer; they are not the *cause* of our redemption. The Christian ideal is to be good for God's sake, not for the sake of what He can do for us. God is not to be confused with Santa Claus. To think otherwise is to make the mistake that Satan made regarding Job's motivation for righteous living (Job 1:9-11).

In the fifth article, he talks about whether atheists can rationally ground the claim that they are "good" at morality:

> As it turns out, most atheists who like to think of themselves as moral do so with a sense that they are saying something particularly meaningful. The implication is that they have access to moral knowledge that they are committed to put into practice. It is something like saying that you are a good baseball player, which refers to a particular game with known rules and objectives that you skillfully follow. If this is not true, then a moral atheist is just asserting that they follow their own desires; they are saying little more than, "I do what I feel like doing, and whatever I do I call 'good.'"

It might be a fun activity to read these posts, then find an atheist and ask them whether they are a good person, and what do they mean by "good" and "evil". Ask them whether they are making free decisions, and how can that be possible if they are just made out of matter. The moral argument is the most accessible argument to discuss with non-Christians.

What was sexual behavior like in the Roman empire, before Christianity took over?

July 7, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rose and I just recorded the next episode of our podcast, to be released this Saturday night (late), so you can have it for Sunday morning. We're talking about what it is like to behave morally in Christianity, and also in atheism. Anyway, there was some material we found that we couldn't cover in detail, so I am putting it in a blog post. Also, I got way too excited at the end of the show.

Christians believe that each person, no matter how humble the circumstances of their birth, are equal because they are made in the image of God. Every person is equal, because they are all completely qualified to be in a relationship with God. So, it's never a waste of time for a Christian to self-sacrificially love a non-Christian, because they are all able to accept Jesus as leader and savior. Even people who won't or can't become Christians are still valuable, because we can imitate Jesus in the way we treat them. We don't look down on people who are poor or ugly or whatever, because they are still perfectly good for what God designed them to do.

Anyway, it's interesting to read how early Christians put this into practice.

One historian who has studied the early church is Rodney Stark. He's written a number of books about the early church, and I found a blog post about one called "The Rise of Christianity".

Excerpt:

> In his elaboration of this thesis, Stark proposes the following reasons for Christianity's rapid growth in the first few centuries of the Common Era.
>
> **Christianity radically and attractively redefined the God-to-man and man-to-man relationships.**
>
> Christianity teaches that God is a God of universal and self-giving love, and that obligates us to love not just those who belong to our family, country, or religion, but *all* people, even if that means disadvantaging ourselves.
>
> […]**What was new was the notion that more than self-interested exchange relations were possible between humans and the supernatural.** The Christian teaching that God loves those who love him was alien to pagan beliefs. [Ramsay] MacMullen has noted [in his 1981 book *Paganism in the Roman Empire*] that from the pagan perspective "what mattered was . . . the service that the deity could provide, since a god (as Aristotle had long taught) could feel no love in response to that offered." Equally alien to paganism was the notion that because God loves humanity, Christians cannot please God unless they *love one another*. Indeed, as God demonstrates his love through sacrifice, humans must demonstrate their love through sacrifice on

> behalf of *one another*. Moreover, such responsibilities were to be extended beyond the bonds of family and tribe, indeed to "all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:2). These were revolutionary ideas. *(86, emphasis added)*
>
> Such teachings provided a moral order based not on reason or self-interest, but on mutual obligation and sacrifice. The beauty of these virtues is in part what attracted new converts to the faith.

Notice that "love" is defined as self-sacrificial love. Love that is costly for the lover. For example, telling someone the truth about their sin, even though they won't like you. Or giving someone your own money and time build up their relationship with God. It certainly is NOT celebrating and affirming their sin, so that they will like you.

Another book that got a lot of attention was Tom Holland's book "Dominion". I bought it for my friend Dina, who recently passed away from cancer.

Here is a review of it. And here is the part I found interesting:

> The dynamic in the Roman world was not between, as it is now, men and women. It was between those who have power, namely Roman free male citizens, and those who were subordinate to them. And essentially the Roman sexual universe was by our lights very brutal. It was a very Harvey Weinstein sexual arena.
>
> A Roman man had the right to sexually use anyone who was subordinate to him: Slaves, social inferiors.

Anyone means male and female.

More:

> Now, Christianity radically, radically changes that. It's there in the very earliest Christian texts: Paul's letters. And Paul is a Jew. So, he has an idea that the binary is male and female; god creates man and women separate. So, he brings that assumption to the table. But he also brings another novel assumption, which is that Christ came and suffered death out of love for humanity.
>
> And so, what Paul does is to say that love, all you need is love. Love is the greatest animating force. And if we want to have a sexual relationship with another human being, then it must be true to the love that Christ has shown for humanity. So, what Paul does is to say that there can be only one way, one proper way, of having a sexual relationship, and that is you have to have a marriage that is monogamous.

As Christianity declines in our culture, and atheism takes over, relationships based on mutual respect are dying. Many of the people who are so anxious to kill Christian sexual ethics imagine that they will find spouses who will nevertheless provide them with a relationship built on Christian marital norms: permanence and exclusivity. But, of course, they won't. Atheists think that you can jettison God from the system, but keep the parts

of morality that you like. It doesn't work like that.

It's very funny to me to radical feminists are doing everything they can to destroy the system that provides them with stable, lifelong married love into their declining years. I don't think they have studied history enough to realize what things were like before Christianity came along.

Final thoughts

Right now (Wednesday night) I'm chatting with the husband of a lady I mentored a while back. They are both Christians. She picked out the most amazing husband you can possibly imagine. His name is Kevin. He chose her because her library was filled with theology and apologetics books. He is a man who puts Christianity into practice. I'm talking to him to find out what happened to him today. Today, he took a vacation day off to sit outside a hospital, where a lady they know was having an abortion. She did not come out to talk to him, and she had the abortion. When I think of a man who has adventures with self-sacrificial love, because he wants to be like his Boss who values self-sacrificial love, this is what I am talking about. And this is why Christians do good things – we are investing in a relationship that God initiates, and that goes on into eternity.

Netflix star sentenced to 12 years for child pornography and soliciting sex from minors

July 8, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It seems like every other news story is about some secular leftist getting arrested for sex crimes. Usually, it's some prominent Democrat donor, or maybe the co-founder of a large gay rights organization, or a Democrat mayor, or a Democrat candidate for governor, or a Human Rights Commission member, or just an ordinary gay rights activist.

Here's the latest, reported by The Post Millennial:

> Netflix "Cheer" star Jeremiah Harris has been sentenced to 12 years in federal prison after pleading guilty to child pornography and sex charges in February.
>
> Assistant US Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois Joseph D. Fitzpatrick told CNN that Harris will be serving a 12-year federal prison sentence, followed by 8 years of court-supervised release.
>
> Jeremiah "Jerry" Harris rose to fame after starring in the Netflix reality docuseries "Cheer," and shocked the nation when he was arrested and charged with possession of child pornography in Sept. 2020, days after he was under FBI investigation for soliciting sex from minors.
>
> Following a plea agreement with the United States government, Harris pleaded guilty in February to one count of receiving child pornography and one count of engaging in sexual acts with a minor, after being charged with a seven-count indictment in the US District Court in northern Illinois in December 2020.
>
> Harris pleaded guilty to two of the charges from that indictment, stating that he received child pornography and engaged in interstate travel to meet a 15-year-old boy with whom he engaged in sexual relations, according to court documents.
>
> However, the star of the docuseries allegedly admitted to receiving sexually explicit images from "at least between 10 to 15 other individuals he knew were minors," the US Attorney's Office in Chicago said in a criminal complaint.
>
> Harris was slapped with a $1 million lawsuit from twin brothers who claimed that he "groomed" them for sexual activities, Page Six reported.

I'm trying to think about what the game plan is for the secular left. Looking back on the last decades, they seem to have had victory after victory. They don't like chastity, and that's pretty much dead. They like no-fault divorce, and that's legal. They like the hook-up culture (it's equality for women!), and that's going well. They don't like natural marriage (it's got sexist gender roles), and marriage is dying out. They even managed to legalize same-sex marriage, making it easier for selfish adults to deprive kids of a mother or a father – or both.

The goal of the secular left seems to be to separate kids from their bio-parents, and to insulate them from Christianity. They love daycare and public schools, but they hate stay-at-home moms. They just don't want kids to have much contact with their parents, preferring them to be in contact with strangers like the people you see on LibsOfTikTok's Twitter channel.

It must really bother them that LGBT activists having sex with children is still a crime. I guess they'll just try harder to get Democrats to win elections, so they can shame and silence and sue anyone who dares to disapprove of their behaviors.

The Complete Atheist's Guide to Rationally Grounding Objective Morality on Atheism

July 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Morality has always been a problem for atheists, given that the worldview of atheism is unable to rationally ground the foundations of objective morality:

- Objective moral values
- Objective moral duties
- Accountability for moral choices
- Free will, for making moral choices
- Ultimate significance, in an afterlife

Each of these is not available on atheism, because if atheism is true, then the universe is an accident, human beings are accidents, and there is no design for how humans ought to be, no free will, and no accountability in an afterlife for those who escape consequences for their actions before they die.

So, how can atheists rationally ground objective morality without a Cosmic designer and an objective design for how humans ought to be?

It's easy. And I will show you how to do it, using some examples.

Ed Buck and Hillary Clinton

So, before we see how to rationally ground objective morality on atheism, let's first see some atheist morality, courtesy of the UK Daily Mail.

> Ed Buck was convicted Tuesday on charges he injected gay men with methamphetamine in exchange for sex, leading to two deaths and other overdoses.
>
> A federal jury found 66-year-old Buck guilty of all nine felony counts against him,

> which could lead to a life sentence.
>
> […]Prosecutors said Buck paid black men and provided drugs in return for sex acts, having hunted online for partners with the familiar term 'PnP' – 'party and play', or using meth, then having sex.

Atheists believe a lot of objectively moral things like this. Remember Democrat politician Andrew Gillum? I don't think I've ever seen an atheist being more objectively moral than that. What's more objective morally than being passed out in a hotel room with drugs and gay prostitutes when you're married and running for governor of Florida?

So, how can atheists rationally ground this excellent objective morality to people who don't share their atheist worldview?

The first thing is that atheists need to be rich, so that they can escape the consequences of being judged and shamed by those intolerant Christians, who lack empathy and compassion. Being rich also allows atheists to use their money to promote the objective morality of atheism in the political realm – by donating to Democrat politicians. The more Democrat politicians get elected, the more Democrat policies we'll get. And those policies are excellent for eliminating criticism of atheist morality.

Ed Buck demonstrates this well:

> Buck is a wealthy white man who was active in gay causes and animal rights issues.
>
> His Facebook page showed him with Hillary Clinton, the former governor Jerry Brown and Representatives Ted Lieu and Adam Schiff.
>
> […]His contributions to Democrat politicians and causes from 2005 to 2017 totaled $433,500, according to The New York Times.

Democrats politicians support all kinds of policies designed to rationally ground atheist morality. Democrats push for single mother welfare, in order to incentivize fatherlessness. Democrats support premarital sex and no-fault divorce, to destabilize marriage. Democrats urge women put their children with taxpayer-funded daycare and public schools. This way, children, (the ones who survive being aborted or infanticided), can avoid the harmful morality of their biological parents, and instead be raised by strangers in daycares and government-run schools. There, they will learn objective atheist morality: there is no God, no human rights, no objective morality, that natural marriage is an abomination, that abortion is a sacrament, that transgenderism is scientific, etc. Democrat policies will produce a generation of young people with rationally grounded objective morality.

Gay activist Terry Bean and Barack Obama

Let's see another example of atheist morality, and see how it can be rationally grounded in an atheist worldview.

Here is the story from Oregon Live:

> The former boyfriend of Terrence P. Bean was arrested early Thursday on sex abuse charges stemming from the same alleged 2013 encounter with a 15-year-old boy at a hotel in Eugene.
>
> Kiah Loy Lawson, 25, was arrested at 1:15 a.m. at the Portland Police Bureau's Central Precinct and booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center shortly after 2 a.m.
>
> He's accused of third-degree sodomy and third-degree sexual abuse.
>
> […]Bean, 66, a prominent gay rights activist and major Democratic Party fundraiser, was arrested at his home in Southwest Portland and booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center at 10:12 a.m. Wednesday.
>
> The indictment charges Bean with two counts of third-degree sodomy, a felony, and one count of third-degree sex abuse, a misdemeanor, police said.
>
> […]Both Bean and Lawson are accused of having a sexual encounter with the same 15-year-old boy in a hotel in Eugene last year. They had arranged the encounter with the teen after meeting him via a website, investigators allege.
>
> **Bean has been one of the state's biggest Democratic donors and an influential figure in gay rights circles in the state. He helped found two major national political groups, the Human Rights Campaign and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, and has been a major contributor for several Democratic presidential candidates, including Barack Obama. He's also a close friend of former Gov. Barbara Roberts.**

Again, the important thing is that atheists need to be wealthy, and donate to Democrat politicians. That way, no one will ever be able to judge or shame them for their atheist

objective morality – it will be rationally grounded with all the best atheist logic and evidence.

Actually, there are a lot more good examples of atheist morality.

Ed Murray shaking hands with Barack Obama

The far-left New York Times reports:

> The mayor of Seattle, Ed Murray, said on Tuesday that he would resign after announcing in May that he would not seek a second term. Several men have come forward to accuse Mr. Murray of sexually abusing them decades ago, when they were underage.
>
> The announcement came just hours after The Seattle Times published a story with an account by a fifth man, Mr. Murray's cousin, who said Mr. Murray had abused him in the 1970s.
>
> [..]Mr. Murray, 62, a Democrat, is the city's first openly gay mayor, and had served in the State Legislature for many years before being elected in 2013.
>
> […]**The liberal Mr. Murray is generally considered a father of Washington's same-sex marriage law, which he pressed in the State Legislature for years.**

The radically-leftist New York Times isn't about to tell you what this Democrat gay-marriage activist actually did – that's not news that's fit to print. For that you have to go to Life Site News. Again, don't try this unless you are an expert in atheist philosophy (being wealthy and donating to Democrat politicians).

Huma Abedin (left), Harvey Weinstein (center), Hillary Clinton (right) discussing feminism

Harvey Weinstein was especially good at defending atheist morality. He had perfected the argument from wealth and the argument from giving money to Democrats. He might have the most rationally-grounded atheist objective morality of any non-Christian scholar I've ever read. Even better than than the philosophical arguments of Jeffrey Epstein, Bill Clinton, Anthony Weiner, Elliot Spitzer or Eric Schneiderman. And those philosophers knew a thing or two about rationally-grounded objective morality on atheism.

The important point is that atheists need to be familiar with the 1) be wealthy argument, and the 2) give money to Democrat politicians argument, in order to rationally ground atheist objective morality. It's also a good idea for rank-and-file atheists to vote Democrat – it will make moral judgement of atheists, and shaming of atheist morality impossible. As soon as atheists can user government to eliminate bad philosophy by Christians, then there will be no one left to question the excellent atheist morality I described above.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 13: Why Should I Be Moral?

July 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 13 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, we compare Christianity and atheism to see how each one rationally grounds the moral point of view. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our Youtube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 13:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose contrast Christianity and atheism to see which worldview makes it rational for humans to behave morally. We talk about cosmology, objective moral values, objective moral duties, and free will in each worldview. We talk about how humans discover moral values and duties in each worldview. We discuss the meaning and significance of behaving morally in the Christian worldview compared to the atheist worldview. We compare moral exemplars of Christianity and secular leftism.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Acknowledgements

Two philosophers assisted us with the script for this episode, Tom and Blake.

Memes

Atheist Morality

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What useful things can Christians learn by studying metaphysics?

Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to Make Their Case by Frank Turek

Why Should I Be Moral? by Kai Nielsen (an atheist philosopher)

What was sexual behavior like in the Roman empire, before Christianity took over? by Wintery Knight

Accused sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein was a major Democratic donor by The Blaze

Harvey Weinstein Has Donated Nearly $600,000 to Democrats by the Washington Free Beacon

The Complete Atheist's Guide to Rationally Grounding Objective Morality on Atheism by Wintery Knight

Was Stalin an atheist? Is atheism or communism responsible for mass murders? by Wintery Knight

90 Atheist Quotes that All Christians and Atheists Should Read by James Bishop

What got me started on apologetics? William Lane Craig debate transcripts by Wintery Knight (debates on atheism and morality)

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Mark D. Linville: does Darwinian evolution make morality rational?

July 11, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard an atheist tell you that naturalistic evolution is an answer to the moral argument? I have. And I found a good reply to this challenge in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". The chapter that responds to the challenge is authored by Dr. Mark D. Linville. It is only 13 pages long. I have a link to the PDF at the bottom of this post.

First, a bit about the author:

> Blog: The Tavern at the End of the World
> Current positions:
>
> - PhD Research Fellow
> - Tutoring Fellow in Philosophy
>
> Education:
>
> - PhD in Philosophy with a minor in South Asian Studies and a specialization in Philosophy of Religion, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy of Religion, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
> - MA in Theology, Cincinnati Christian Seminary
> - BA in Biblical Studies, Florida Christian College

Here is his thesis of the essay:

> Darwin's account of the origins of human morality is at once elegant, ingenious, and, I shall argue, woefully inadequate. In particular, that account, on its standard interpretation, does not explain morality, but, rather, explains it away . We learn from Darwin not how there could be objective moral facts, but how we could have come to believe—perhaps erroneously—that there are.
>
> Further, the naturalist, who does not believe that there is such a personal being as God, is in principle committed to Darwinism, including a Darwinian account of the basic contours of human moral psychology. I'll use the term evolutionary naturalism to refer to this combination of naturalism and Darwinism. And so the naturalist is saddled with a view that explains morality away. Whatever reason we have for believing in moral facts is also a reason for thinking naturalism is false. I conclude the essay with a brief account of a theistic conception of morality, and argue that the theist is in a better position to affirm the objectivity of morality.

And here’s a sample to get your attention:

> But even if we are assured that a “normal” person will be prompted by the social instincts and that those instincts are typically flanked and reinforced by a set of moral emotions, we still do not have a truly normative account of moral obligation. There is nothing in Darwin’s own account to indicate that the ensuing sense of guilt—a guilty feeling—is indicative of actual moral guilt resulting from the violation of an objective moral law. The revenge taken by one’s own conscience amounts to a sort of second-order propensity to feel a certain way given one’s past relation to conflicting first-order propensities (e.g., the father’s impulse to save his child versus his impulse to save himself). Unless we import normative considerations from some other source, it seems that, whether it is a first or second-order inclination,one’s being prompted by it is more readily understood as a descriptive feature of one’s own psychology than material for a normative assessment of one’s behavior or character. And, assuming that there is anything to this observation, an ascent into even higher levels of propensities (“I feel guilty for not having felt guilty for not being remorseful over not obeying my social instincts…”) introduces nothing of normative import. Suppose you encounter a man who neither feels the pull of social, paternal or familial instincts nor is in the least bit concerned over his apparent lack of conscience. What, from a strictly Darwinian perspective, can one say to him that is of any serious moral import? “You are not moved to action by the impulses that move most of us.” Right. So?
>
> The problem afflicts contemporary construals of an evolutionary account of human morality. Consider Michael Shermer’s explanation for the evolution of a moral sense—the “science of good and evil.” He explains,
>
> By a moral sense, I mean a moral feeling or emotion generated by actions. For example, positive emotions such as righteousness and pride are experienced as the psychological feeling of doing “good.” These moral emotions likely evolved out of behaviors that were reinforced as being good either for the individual or for the group.2
>
> Shermer goes on to compare such moral emotions to other emotions and sensations that are universally experienced, such as hunger and the sexual urge. He then addresses the question of moral motivation.
>
> In this evolutionary theory of morality, asking “Why should we be moral?” is like asking “Why should we be hungry?” or “Why should we be horny?” For that matter, we could ask, “Why should we be jealous?” or “Why should we fall in love?” The answer is that it is as much a part of human nature to be moral as it is to be hungry, horny, jealous, and in love.3
>
> Thus, according to Shermer, given an evolutionary account, such a question is simply a non-starter. Moral motivation is a given as it is wired in as one of our basic drives. Of course, one might point out that Shermer’s “moral emotions”

> often do need encouragement in a way that, say, “horniness,” does not. More importantly, Shermer apparently fails to notice that if asking “Why should I be moral?” is like asking, “Why should I be horny?” then asserting, “You ought to be moral” is like asserting, “You ought to be horny.” As goes the interrogative, so goes the imperative. But if the latter seems out of place, then, on Shermer’s view, so is the former.
>
> One might thus observe that if morality is anything at all, it is irreducibly normative in nature. But the Darwinian account winds up reducing morality to descriptive features of human psychology. Like the libido, either the moral sense is present and active or it is not. If it is, then we might expect one to behave accordingly. If not, why, then, as a famous blues man once put it, “the boogie woogie just ain’t in me.” And so the resulting “morality” is that in name only.
>
> **In light of such considerations, it is tempting to conclude with C. S. Lewis that, if the naturalist remembered his philosophy out of school, he would recognize that any claim to the effect that “I ought” is on a par with “I itch,” in that it is nothing more than a descriptive piece of autobiography with no essential reference to any actual obligations.**

When it comes to morality, we are not interested in mere descriptions of behavior. We want to know about prescriptions of behavior, and whether why we should care about following those prescriptions. We are interested in what grounds our sense of moral obligation in reality. What underwrites our sense of moral obligation? If it is just rooted in feelings, then why should we obey our moral sense when obeying it goes against out self-interest? Feelings are subjective things, and doing the right thing in a real objective state of affairs requires more than just feelings. There has to be a real objective state of affairs that makes it rational for us to do the right thing, even when the right thing is against our own self-interest. That’s what morality is – objective moral obligations *overriding* subjective feelings. I wouldn’t trust someone to be moral if it were just based on their feelings.

The PDF is right here for downloading, with the permission of the author.

What the public school did to the teacher who warned a student about transformer regret

July 12, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story actually came out on July 1st, but I have been a little busy writing podcast scripts, and didn't have time to blog about it. I thought it was an interesting story, because it really shows how far left the public schools have gone down the "don't judge" road. Now, they are actually punishing male teachers who warn students about the long-term risks of following social trends.

So, the first thing to say is that I wrote a previous post about how transforming is related to peer pressure. Basically, kids are wanting to transform because it provides them with social benefits, especially giving them immunity from being judged. But what's interesting is how it is affecting children who don't have depression or any social problems.

Check out this recent article from City Journal (the journal of the Manhattan Institute), which talks about what is really going on in schools:

> Patricia (a pseudonym) is the mother of a teenage girl who in recent years has come to identify as transgender. She lives in California, considers herself progressive, votes Democrat, and leads a group for parents of children with rapid onset gender dysphoria (ROGD)—that is, youth who suddenly experience distress with their bodies and believe that undergoing medical "transition" will make them whole again. When I spoke to her recently, she recounted how her daughter's at-first-lesbian and then trans identity emerged in response to feelings of shame about being white.
>
> I have since spoken to more than a dozen ROGD parents and parent-group leaders who tell a similar story. Their schools compulsively tell their children how awful it is to be white, how white people enjoy unearned "privilege," how they benefit from "systems" put in place by and for white people for the sole purpose of oppressing "people of color." Plagued by guilt, the children—almost all of them girls—rush to the sanctuary of "LGBTQ+" identity. Once there, they are catapulted into hero status. According to Patricia, some teachers at her daughter's school are more forgiving toward "queer" and "trans" kids who hand in their homework late.
>
> The students, especially the girls, absorb this messaging. They are acutely sensitive to how identity affects their social status and academic fortunes. They want the warmth that comes with queer/trans identity, but above all they don't want to be thought of as vicious oppressors.

What happens if a teacher tries to warn a student about transforming?

The Daily Caller has a story about that:

> A Colorado teacher was disciplined after suggesting to a transgender student that the rise in transgenderism is a “trend” that some come to regret, according to documents provided to the Daily Caller from the educator.

The student wanted the teacher to help the student pass the course, and the teacher agreed to knock out some of the bad grades. Then the teacher, in a P.S., warned the student to do more research about the long-term consequences of transforming. He warned the student about permanent effects of treatment.

Here is what the school did to the teacher for telling the student to research the decision to transform:

> Jefferson County Public Schools sent Vagos a letter of reprimand arguing that he violated the district’s policy of “harassment of students based on sexual orientation.” Vagos was told he can no longer use the word “trend” when discussing transgender ideology, according to the reprimand letter.
>
> “Your response to this student and the provision of this link imparts a lack of support and reduces a student’s self-identification as being transgendered as a “trend” rather than something real the student is experiencing,” the letter read.
>
> A substitute teacher was provided in Vagos’ absence as he underwent a “Gender Inclusion 101” training provided by the Jefferson County Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion team. Videos from the training included “Avery’s Story,” “Mom, I’m Not A Girl: Raising a Transgender Child,” and “What is a Gender Inclusive School?” Another training was provided by “Gender Spectrum.”

He made his career choice. Now it’s very difficult for him to transition into a private sector career with 15 years of experience teaching children. So he had to jump through their secular left hoops to save his job. He probably had a wife and kids to support. This is why I recommend to young people to do STEM degrees, and private sector jobs. You can always find work no matter what.

There was a time in my life when I wanted to be an English literature teacher more than anything. I won a couple of awards for best English literature student in high school (and a couple for computer science, too). I really liked finding the wisdom in classic literature – the real stuff: Shakespeare, Spenser, Austen, etc. But I can’t really recommend to Christians that they pursue a career in public education at this time. And I certainly don’t recommend that Christian parents put their children into public schools.

Whatever you are doing in your life, make sure you run the numbers and have enough for homeschooling or private Christian schools. Homeschooling is the better option. It won’t be cheap, but you can’t put Christian kids into public schools.

Are all sins equally bad? Or are there degrees of severity for different sins?

July 13, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This question came up recently so I did some digging on theology web sites to find what Bible verses applied to the question.

Here's what Ligonier said:

> It's clear that we have different degrees of sin when we consider the warnings of Scripture. There are at least twenty-two references in the New Testament to degrees of rewards that are given to the saints in heaven. There are different levels, different rewards, and different roles in heaven. The Bible warns us against adding to the severity of our judgment. Jesus said to Pontius Pilate, "He who delivered me over to you has the greater sin" (John 19:11). Jesus measures and evaluates guilt, and with the greater guilt and greater responsibility comes the greater judgment. It's a motif that permeates the New Testament.
>
> The idea of gradation of sin and reward is based upon God's justice. If I commit twice as many sins as another person, justice demands that the punishment fits the crime. If I've been twice as virtuous as another person, justice demands that I get more of a reward. God tells us that entrance into heaven will be only on the basis of the merit of Christ, but once we get to heaven, rewards will be dispensed according to works. Those who have been abundant in good works will receive an abundant reward. Those who have been derelict and negligent in good works will have a small reward in heaven. By the same token, those who have been grievous enemies of God will have severe torments in hell. Those who have been less hostile will have a lesser punishment at the hands of God. He is perfectly just, and when He judges, He will take into account all of the extenuating circumstances. Jesus said, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak" (Matt. 12:36).

A while back, my friend Dina sent me a sermon where that exact passage (John 19) was brought up by the pastor.

I think the correct position is that *any sin* is enough to separate you from God, but some sins are more severe than others in God's objective standard of right and wrong.

OK, that was fine and good, but then I noticed a few days later that Michael Krueger had also blogged about this "all sin are equal" view, too.

Krueger says this:

> First, to say all sins are the same is to confuse the *effect* of sin with the *heinousness* of sin. While all sins are equal in their effect (they separate us from God), they are not all equally heinous.

> Second, the Bible differentiates between sins. Some sins are more severe in terms of impact (1 Cor 6:18), in terms of culpability (Rom 1:21-32), and in terms of the judgment warranted (2 Pet 2:17; Mark 9:42; James 3:1).

Even more Bible references, so we're not on the wrong track.

So then why do some people insist that all sins are equal? It turns out that it is coming from the secular ideal of *non-judgmentalism*.

Krueger explains:

> We should begin by observing that this phrase does not come from Scripture. People do not use it because it appears in the Bible. Why then do they use it?
>
> One reason, as noted above, is that some Christians use this phrase to uphold the seriousness of sin. It is viewed as a way to remind people not to be dismissive about their sin or regard it is a triviality.
>
> Others use this phrase as way to "flatten out" all sins so that they are not distinguishable from each other. Or, to put it another way, this phrase is used to portray all human beings as precisely the same. If all sins are equal, and all people sin, then no one is more holy than anyone else.
>
> In a world fascinated with "equality," this usage of the phrase is particularly attractive to folks. It allows everyone to be lumped together into a single undifferentiated mass.
>
> Such a move is also useful as a way to prevent particular behaviors from being condemned. If all sins are equal, and everyone is a sinner, then you are not allowed to highlight any particular sin (or sinner).
>
> Needless to say, this usage of the phrase has featured largely in the recent cultural debates over issues like homosexuality. Yes, homosexuality is a sin, some Christians reluctantly concede. But, they argue, all sins are equal in God's sight and therefore it is no different than anything else. Therefore, Christians ought to stop talking about homosexuality unless they are also willing to talk about impatience, anger, gluttony, and so on.

Krueger also posted this fascinating follow up post, where he looks at how the phrase is being used by people on Twitter.

Look at these tweets:

- > All sins are equal. People tend to forget that. There is no bigger or smaller sin. Being gay and lying, very equal.
- > all sins are equal in God's eyes. whatever you're doing, is no better than what someone else is doing.
- > If you have sex before marriage please don't come on social media

> preaching about the wrongs of homosexuality. All sins are equal

- Need people to realize that all sins are equal… don't try to look down on me or question my faith just cuz you sin differently than I do.
- Don't understand why you're so quick to judge me, when all sins are equal. So much for family..
- if you think being gay is a sin, let me ask you something, have you not done anything wrong in your life? all sins are equal. we're sinners
- Nope no difference at all. All sins are equal no matter what you're running for. The bible says do not judge lest ye be judged
- A huge problem I have with religion is the notion that all sins are equal. Like pre-martial sex and murder are the same amount t of bad.
- people do bad things because they believe that all sins are equal and ~god~ loves y'all equally so he's going to forgive you naman ha ha ha
- It a sin to condemn another sinner and their actions. All sins are equal. So what makes you better than the person you're condemning?
- I think so b/c having sex before marriage doesn't make you less of a women then if you waited until marriage.. all sins are equal soo
- friendly reminder, all sins are equal in gods eyes so you're not better than I am in any way. please worry about your own sins before mine.
- People don't like when I suggest abortion as an option. This is a free country and all sins are equal so mind your business!!!
- What I do is no worse than wat you do… all sins are equal no matter what it is… a sin is a sin
- to god all sins are equal so you have no right to compare your sins to someone else's bc in the end it doesn't matter

The first thing that I noticed is that premarital sex and homosexuality are the most popular sins. I would think that divorce and abortion would be up there in the rankings, as well.

Something strange has happened in our society such that more and more people want to be led by their feelings, rather than be bounded by rules or standards. When people get caught breaking moral rules, rather than be accountable, they attack the person judging

them. They would rather escape the judgment of their peers than admit fault and try to fix the mistake, and do better next time.

It's so bad now, that the people who *have* morals and who *make* moral judgments are seen as the real bad people. The immoral people are on the offense, and even trying to ban people from being able to disagree with them. We're seeing that with people who are being attacked for defending natural marriage against divorce and redefinition of marriage. In France, they want to make speech critical of abortion a criminal offense. And in Canada, they've now made speech critical of the gay agenda a criminal offense. (It's already a human rights tribunal offense)

What is even more interesting is when the people who push the "don't judge me" line try to justify it from the Bible. Very strange, but we seem to have forgotten the value of setting moral boundaries. Now moral boundaries are "evil". Instead, having compassion for people who break the moral boundaries and harm themselves and others is "good".

Diversity and inclusion: secular leftist UK police decline to prosecute Muslim sex-traffickers

July 14, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you listened to the recent episode of the Knight and Rose Show about "Women and Islam", then you heard us talk about the epidemic of sex-trafficking in the UK. In the show notes, I talked about some of the cities where this happens. The UK elected the secular leftist Labour Party, who imported unskilled young men from Middle East countries like Pakistan. What could go wrong?

Here is a recent story from the UK Times. (archive)

It says:

> More than a thousand children were sexually exploited over at least 30 years in Telford amid "shocking" police and council failings, an inquiry has found.
>
> Unnecessary suffering and child deaths might have been avoided had West Mercia police "done its most basic job", according to findings published yesterday.
>
> The inquiry found that child sexual exploitation "thrived" for decades in the Shropshire town, in part because of fears that investigations into Asian men would "inflame racial tensions".
>
> Children were brainwashed for years by men who bought them alcohol and cigarettes in what was described as a "loverboy" method to exploit them.
>
> Tom Crowther QC, the inquiry chairman, said: "The overwhelming theme of the evidence has been the appalling suffering of generations of children caused by the utter cruelty of those who committed child sexual exploitation. Victims and survivors repeatedly told the inquiry how, when they were children, adult men worked to gain their trust before ruthlessly betraying that trust, treating them as sexual objects or commodities.
>
> "Countless children were sexually assaulted and raped. They were deliberately humiliated and degraded. They were shared and trafficked. They were subjected to violence and their families were threatened. They lived in fear and their lives were for ever changed."
>
> The three-year investigation by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) found that more than a thousand Telford children were exploited "over decades".
>
> Witness evidence suggested that West Mercia police "dropped the case like a hot potato" if complaints were made against Asian families, because investigating them would have been "too politically incorrect".
>
> […]Crowther said that one of the most shocking pieces of evidence he had read related to "what was described as a 'rape house', which it became clear had

> been operating for years".
>
> Girls were subjected in several cases to death threats against themselves or their families if they tried to put a stop to abuse, the inquiry was told.
>
> The report said: "In some cases, threats were reinforced by reference to the murder of Lucy Lowe, who died alongside her mother, sister and unborn child in August 2000."
>
> In 2001, Azhar Ali Mehmood, a taxi driver, was handed four life sentences when he was jailed for the murders of Lucy Lowe, 16, Sarah Lowe, 17, and 49-year-old Eileen Linda Lowe.
>
> Exploitation was "not investigated because of nervousness about race" and information was not properly shared among agencies, the inquiry found. Teachers and youth workers were "discouraged from reporting child sexual exploitation" and offenders were "emboldened". Police and the council scaled down teams to "to save money".

This isn't the first time I blogged about grooming and sex-trafficking by men of Middle Eastern descent:

- Islam, rape, and sex-trafficking in European countries
- Muslim leader of underage sex-trafficking gang gets 22-year sentence
- Police and social workers ignored sex-trafficking, rape and abuse by Muslims
- Telford sex-trafficking ring involving up to thousand children was run by "Asian" men
- Middle Eastern men who ran Oxford child sex-trafficking ring found guilty
- UK police knew about Muslim child sex gang but refused to prosecute
- UK authorities ignored gang of Muslim pedophiles who raped more than 1400 children
- In the UK, which crime is worse? Sex trafficking, gang-rape or hate speech?
- Members of another UK-based Middle Eastern men sex-trafficking ring sentenced
- Underage teen girl forced into daily sex by Muslim "grooming" gang in Rotherham, UK

As the chart below shows, Christianity is dead in the UK. It's been replaced by secular leftism. And, as documented in Douglas Murray's "The Strange Death of Europe", it was the secular left that opened the borders to the Middle East. They did it in the name of diversity and inclusion. The secular left wanted to destroy Christianity and conservatism, so they imported people who denied Christianity and opposed conservative beliefs.

As we noted in our podcast on the rationality of moral behavior, secular leftists understand morality to be about feeling good, and looking good to others. Their worldview tells them that the universe is an accident, and that human beings are machines made out of meat. To them, human rights is nonsense, and free will is nonsense on stilts. There is no standard of morality that governs their conduct. They are

just adopting whatever rules are in effect in their tribe.

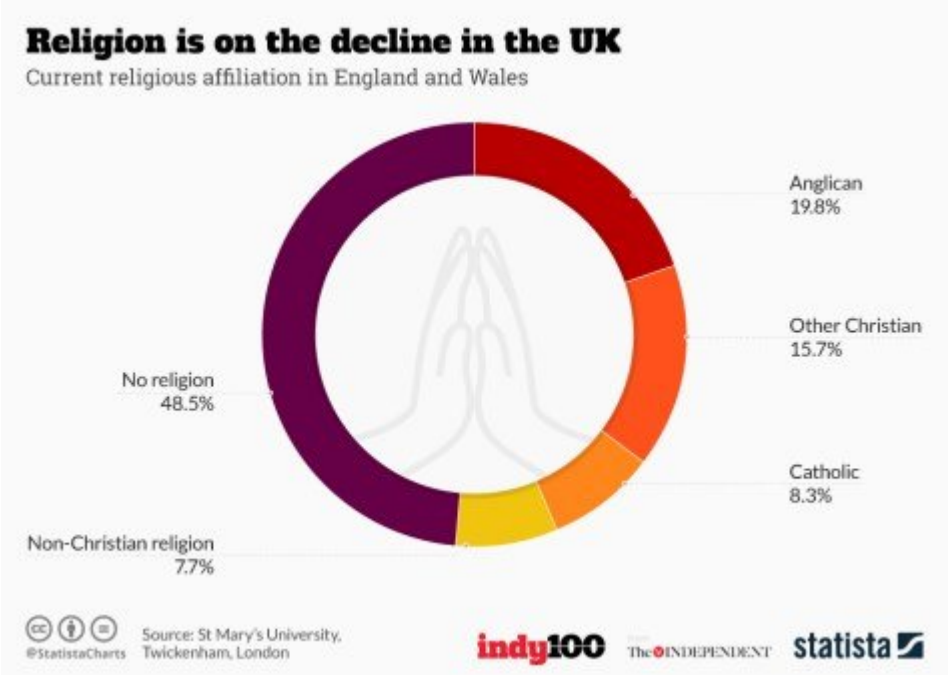

The secular leftists in the UK enacted secular leftist policies – open borders, multiculturalism, diversity, inclusion. And when those policies produced the results you see, their response is to ignore the victims and cover it all up. They have speech codes that make it impossible to criticize the effects of their policies. They arrest people for talking about the crimes. They don't arrest the people who commit the crimes. That is the "morality" that works best for them, their careers, their happiness, their popularity in their tribe.

Scotland Police has time for monitoring social media

Whenever I bring up the problems with morality for the secular left, they tell me what great objective morality they have. "We believe that rape is wrong" they say. "We believe that slavery is wrong" they say. Those are the words. But what are the actions? What are the results of the actions? It wasn't William Lane Craig and Stephen C. Meyer making laws and culture in the UK for the last 30 years. It was the secular left. The Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats have been running things for decades. And the Conservative Party, if they ever win, doesn't push Christian moral values. That's dead.

Police resources are used to monitor social media in the UK

Don’t listen to the words of secular leftists. The words are designed to paint a picture that makes them socially acceptable. Look at the consequences of their actions, especially for unborn children and fatherless girls. You cannot get a functioning moral system from an accidental universe and “survival of the fittest”. If you’re looking for a rational basis for self-sacrificial love for the weak, then you’re looking for Christianity. We do that. And there’s a price to pay for attacking Christian values and beliefs. When we go underground, the weak in society suffer. Our moral values block the strong from harming the weak.

Mom explains how she pulled her daughter out of transgender spiral

July 15, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a really interesting article in The Daily Signal, in which a mother explains how her daughter got into transgenderism, and how the mother got her out. When I read the story, I thought about how most mothers would not have the strength to do it. Most mothers tend to want their children to lead them, so the mothers will be liked This mom thought her daughter was wrong and fought her.

In the first part of the article, she talks about how her daughter got into the transgender lifestyle. The mom was very permissive and supportive, letting her daughter get exposed to all sorts of predators. Only later, when going through her daughter's phone, did she realize her mistake:

> I managed to get all of her passwords to all of her social media accounts. What I saw was jaw-dropping.
>
> Almost everyone that she was conversing with was a stranger, except for the SacAnime friend, who sent her a self-made masturbation video. The discussions on the Discord platform online involved fetishistic sexual conversations. Kids were sending each other erotica, including involving incest and pedophilia.
>
> Older girls were instructing younger girls how to sell nude photos of themselves to men for money.
>
> Girls bragged about their different mental illnesses. They talked about which drugs do what. They talked about how they are really boys, not girls. They discussed "top surgery" (that is, having their breasts removed) and "packers" that create a bulge in one's pants to imply the presence of a penis.
>
> My daughter's electronic devices were filled with TikTok videos and YouTubers talking about how great they feel now that they had "transitioned."
>
> There were messages in which strangers told her to kick my head in because I was a "transphobe" for refusing to call her a male name.

What I liked was the mother's response. I am really surprised to see this, knowing what I know about how badly mothers want to not judge, and be liked by their children.

> I went nuclear. I took the phone and stripped it of all social media—YouTube, Instagram, Discord, Reddit, Pinterest, Twitter. I even blocked her ability to get to the internet. I deleted all of her contacts and changed her phone number.
>
> I sat next to her while she "attended" school online via Zoom. I deleted YouTube from the smart TVs and locked up the remotes. I took every anime book from her room. I threw away all of her costumes. I banned any friend who was even the slightest bit unsavory.

> I involved the police about the porn. I printed out the law and informed her that if anyone sent her porn, I would not hesitate to prosecute.
>
> She hated me like an addict hates the person preventing her drug fix. I held my ground, despite the constant verbal abuse.
>
> After going through seven mental health professionals, I found an out-of-state psychiatrist who was willing to examine the causality for my daughter's sudden trans identity.
>
> I immersed myself in reading everything on the issue, talking to other parents and other professionals. I worked unceasingly to re-create the bond she and I used to share.
>
> After a year and half of utter hell, my daughter is finally returning to her authentic self—a beautiful, artsy, kind and loving daughter.
>
> I am not sure what the actual ingredients for the magic potion were for alleviating gender dysphoria in my daughter. The formula will vary, but what I did was, after a very brief misstep of using a male name, our family and all of the adults in my child's life only used her birth name and corresponding pronouns.
>
> We did not permit social transition, although we could not control the school setting. Unbelievably, our local Catholic high school refused to follow our edict.

She links to some helpful books that you should know about it you are facing the same problems with your children.

If there's one lesson to take from this, it's that parents should know that letting children be influenced by their peers is a recipe for disaster.

I blogged before about a Brown University study showing how transgenderism often happens quickly, as a result of peer pressure or social media pressure.

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in PLOS ONE.

The schools, counselors and hospitals are often against the parents. This story from Canada is typical of how schools handle parents who disagree with transgender grooming. Teachers see their primary goal as grooming children to fulfill the desires of sexual predators – they call this "compassion". Once you realize that they think sexualizing your child is their goal, you'll know how to respond to them. They are moral relativists. They don't know right from wrong. They only believe in "compassion" – giving predators your children, in order to be liked by the predators.

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

July 16, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

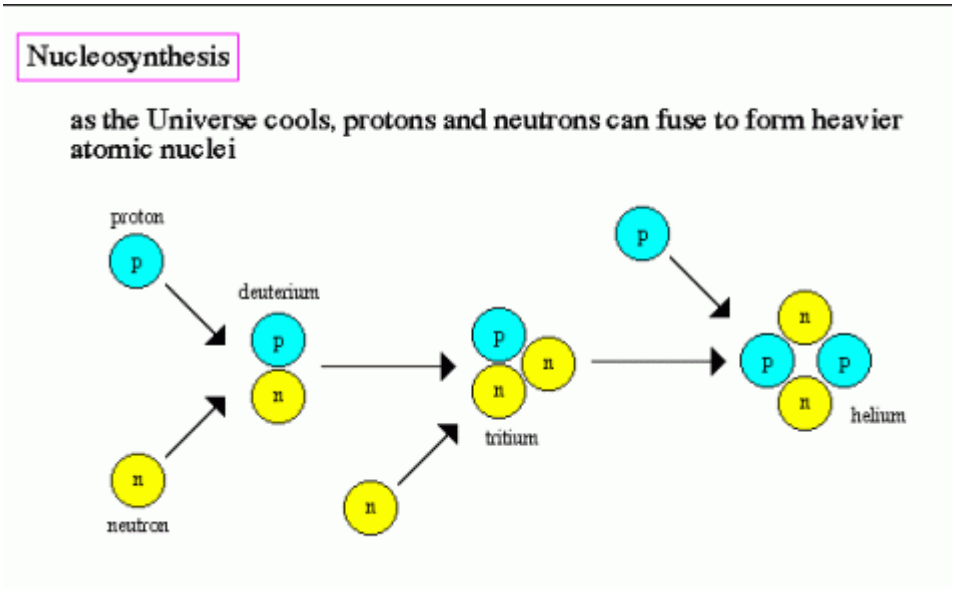

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

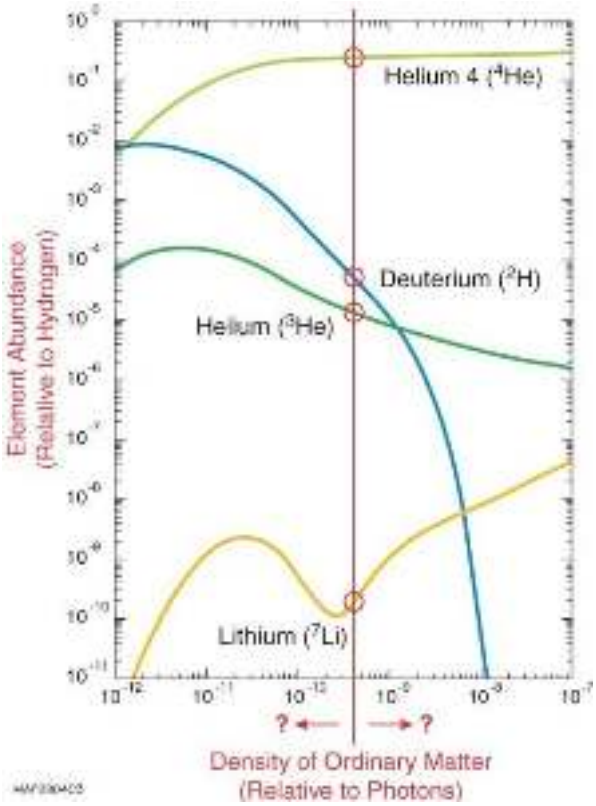

Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the

elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 14: Wintery Knight's Favorite Bible Passages

July 17, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 14 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Desert Rose asks Wintery Knight about his favorite passages from the Bible. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our Youtube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 14:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss 5 Bible passages that made WK the man he is today. WK introduces each passage by explaining the context in his life where the passage became meaningful to him. WK talks about his growth as a Christian. Desert Rose comments on each of the passages as well.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Famous cancer researcher cannot find work after being fired for consensual office romance

July 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I sometimes get into discussions with social conservatives about why I am not at least *trying* to get married. I have a lot of reasons for not trying to get married. For one, I don't want to fall under the authority of hierarchies (school, work or church) who do not think that women should be held responsible for their own bad decisions. Let's take a look at a news story that illustrates the problem.

Once upon a time, men would meet their wives in school, workplaces or churches. As long as the man was not in the reporting hierarchy of the woman, (i.e. – as long as he was not her manager or her director, etc.), then it was fine for people to meet up, date, get engaged, and get married. But that's all changed now.

Consider this story from the New York Post:

> A renowned Massachusetts Institute of Technology biologist who was axed after having what he said was a consensual fling with a much younger colleague, said the mushrooming scandal forced him on the unemployment line.
>
> David Sabatini, 54, whose research involved unraveling how tumors develop, resigned from MIT last month and has been surviving on employment after fellow scientist Kristin Knouse claimed he "groomed" and "coerced" her into a sexual relationship, according to a report and court papers.
>
> A longtime friend and dean at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine tried to offer him a job, but after an uproar, the school announced on May 3 that it would not hire him despite the fact that colleagues described him in a recent article as one of the world's greatest scientists — a "genius" in line for the Nobel Prize.
>
> "What wormhole did my life take, to … protests and being called a sexual predator? What quirk in the universe allowed this to happen?" said Sabatini, who has denied wrongdoing and noted Knouse did not work in his lab or report to him.
>
> In an October lawsuit against MIT, Sabatini said that his relationship with Knouse, who is 21 years his junior, was consensual — and told a reporter he was shocked to find himself the subject of protests at NYU when the school explored the possibility of hiring him.
>
> Sabatini has contended he and Knouse began their fling during a 2018 conference, while he was in the midst of a divorce. By 2020, he thought the affair had cooled, though he claims Knouse wanted to continue. By October 2020, she complained she'd been harassed, and in a later lawsuit alleged Sabitini oversaw a "sexualized" environment in his lab.

What's interesting about this story to me is that it's been reported that this woman entered into this relationship with this man after he clearly communicated to her that he

was only looking for something casual. I.e. – he was not trying to hide that he did not want to be tied down. He was telling her that up front.

There are more details about the story in Common Sense.

After their initial hook-up…

> …they met up at Knouse's condo near Boston Common where they discussed a few ground rules for their tryst. They agreed they could see other people. Knouse, Sabatini remembers, had ongoing flings with men who she referred to with nicknames like "anesthesiologist f*** buddy," "finance bro," and "physics professor," **and she wanted to keep it that way.** Also, they wouldn't tell anyone. Why complicate things at work? It was all supposed to be fun.

Why did this woman get the man fired? Well, there is an old saying about women that goes like this: "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned". Apparently, Sabatini was getting interested in another woman, and less interested in Knouse:

> Things were fizzling… he was getting involved with another woman, a microbiologist in Germany.
>
> Knouse didn't want to let go. In January 2020 she texted, in part: "I get anxious when I don't hear back from you and then I see you post stuff on Twitter and it provides an admittedly small and silly but still another bit of evidence to this growing feeling that you don't care about me in the way that I care about you." He wrote back: "I am sorry but you are being crazy." In another text, Knouse admitted feeling "stung." She added: "I think it's worth thinking about whether you want someone who matches your passion, intellect, and ambition."

Godless feminists think that people are faithful and committed because of self-interest, e.g. – "passion, intellect, and ambition", i.e. – self-interest. But of course, it doesn't. They think that they don't need to study to develop a worldview that rationally grounds commitment intentions and commitment ability. And they think they don't need to choose a man who has studied to develop a worldview that rationally grounds commitment intentions and commitment ability. They think that it is totally feasible for people to stay together for 50 years because it is always fun, fun, fun. You can just like fun, and choose a man who likes fun, and have a permanent, exclusive relationship based on continuous fun.

So what happened to Sabatini next?

This:

> In October 2020, Knouse texted her friends that she was "unpack[ing] a ton of suppressed abuse and trauma from an obvious local source"—an apparent reference to Sabatini. Knouse's fellowship at the Whitehead was ending, and she didn't apply for any faculty jobs there. When the new director, Ruth Lehmann, called Knouse to ask why, Knouse complained for the first time of being "harassed."

> In November, Knouse warned her friend—an incoming Whitehead fellow—to "squeeze out as much advice as possible before your mentor is Weinstein'ed out of science."
>
> In December, at Lehmann's behest, the consulting firm Jones Diversity sent the Whitehead employees a survey "based in part on Dr. Knouse's false complaint about Dr. Sabatini," according to a complaint later brought by Sabatini. All participants were anonymous. Five or so of the nearly 40 employees in Sabatini's lab took part.
>
> The next month, two former Sabatini lab members lodged complaints to H.R.—the first complaints against him in his 24-year tenure—about "bro culture" in the lab.
>
> This prompted the Whitehead to hire the law firm Hinckley, Allen & Snyder to conduct an investigation on "gender bias and/or inequities and a retaliatory leadership in the Sabatini lab." The Whitehead never told Sabatini what he was accused of. Former lab members told me their co-workers were sobbing when they came out of meetings with the lawyers, saying that the lawyers had put words in their mouths. "They had a very strong agenda," one of them told me.

Knouse was 29 years old. She was not a child. Sabatini never worked with her. He never supervised her. He never threatened her or pressured her. This was a relationship between two consenting adults. But that doesn't matter, because in every school and workplace, women cannot be held responsible for their own bad choices. Women are always victims of men. It is always the man who must be punished. And men have to go to school and work in these environments for their entire lives – walking on thin ice, never knowing when the axe will fall.

Sabatini is ruined:

> In the 24 hours after the report came out, Sabatini's life fell apart. MIT put him on administrative leave. The Howard Hughes Medical Institute, another prestigious non-profit that funds biomedical research and was paying Sabatini's salary, fired him. He resigned from the Whitehead, and eventually MIT, at the advice of his lawyers who thought it would help him secure his next job. ("I one hundred percent regret that," Sabatini told me).
>
> Soon, the biotech startups he'd helped found— Navitor Pharmaceuticals, KSQ and Raze Therapeutics—started severing their relationships with him. Sabatini was axed from professorships, fellowships, and professional societies. Awards and grants were pulled. His income disappeared.

Knouse is still working. They decided that she didn't violate the policy – only he violated it. She has no problem at all with this outcome – she really believes she is a victim, and shouldn't have to take responsibility for her own choices. Can you imagine being married to a woman who does whatever she wants, then blames you when things go wrong? And worse – goes to the authorities to have them punish you, when she is the one who chose

poorly?

The more that ordinary, non-Christian men see stories like this, the less they are likely to marry, date or even speak to ordinary, non-Christian women. My concern as a Christian man is how different society will be as marriage declines and even disappears.

UPDATE: I decided to add a little more, because almost no one is understanding the two points of this blog post.

The issue is not whether he is to blame, or whether she is to blame.

The issue is that this was a consensual relationship.
Expectations were set at the beginning – this was casual, no commitment.
She agreed to the casual nature, she was sleeping with several other men.
Suddenly, she reached age 29, and decided it was time to get serious.
He reminded her about their arrangement – nothing serious.

They were BOTH EQUALLY in violation of the company rule.
Abuse was alleged by her, but there was no police involvement to verify it.
He was punished, but there was no criminal trial where he could defend himself.
He was not given due process. No lawyer. No self-defense.

The point is that this is common on college campuses, workplaces, and even in religious organizations. Women who are jilted by men are able to make these allegations and get these men fired without any due process.

More importantly, 1) these accusations can also be made against innocent men who are just “guilty” of offending women in the school or workplace with their conservative or Christian views. This was already happening to people in companies like Mozilla and Google. It’s getting worse.

Not only that, but 2) this sends a message to normal men not to talk to women, date them, mentor them, or marry them, since any offense you cause a woman can be used to get you fired and blacklisted.

You cannot rejoice at the man getting what he deserved, and then ALSO complain about the decline of marriage. Men are learning NOT to talk to women, date them, mentor them, or marry them. So, if you think that the woman did nothing wrong, and should keep her job, while the man did everything wrong and should lose his job, then you are anti-marriage, and you should be delighted with the declining marriage rate. Men don’t sign up to be slaves. They just don’t. And shaming them for not getting married under these conditions isn’t going to work. IT ISN’T WORKING NOW.

Will green energy policy help or hurt Democrats in the mid-term elections?

July 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite policy-oriented web site is the Daily Signal. I saw a couple of related posts about the Democrat party and their green energy plan. Right now, everyone knows that the Democrats flubbed handling rising inflation. They were taken by surprise. Will they also be surprised by the failure of their green energy policies?

Here's the first article from Daily Signal, which provides helpful historical context for the second article:

> America became energy-independent during the Trump years. This energy independence brought huge advantages. First, America's fracking boom and the massive expansion of natural gas production that came with it lowered carbon emissions more than any regulation.
>
> Second, American energy independence changed the national security dynamic with respect to huge energy-export countries in the Middle East and Russia. Finally, the lower energy prices that followed led to massive economic and manufacturing growth. Many dormant small towns in America literally came alive as a result.
>
> Throwing all this away without an adequate and, importantly, cheaper alternative in place is almost unimaginable from a policy perspective, but that's exactly what happened. By promoting so-called environmental, social, and governance investment standards to choke off fossil fuel investments, by canceling pipelines, and by limiting federal oil and gas leasing, the left has reduced American energy production and left America vulnerable to the rest of the world.
>
> All this has come with very little emissions benefit to boot. It has just enabled Russia, Saudi Arabia, and others to displace American fossil fuel production with their own foreign fossil fuel production.
>
> The result? From Biden's inauguration to the onset of the war in Ukraine—before the much-discussed "Putin price spike," in other words—American gas prices went up nearly 50%. Those prices are up another 15% on top of that since the war began.

The Biden administration was surprised because they didn't know how rising energy prices and massive government spending would cause inflation. Since 2021, they said that inflation would be manageable, and no interest rate hikes were needed. Needless to say, if your chief economist is Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, then you get surprised a lot.

Similarly with green energy, the Democrats are living in a fantasy land where switching to wind and solar (but not fracking and nuclear, which are just as clean) can be done with a wave of a Green New Deal magic wand.

Here's what we can expect going forward, according to the Daily Signal:

> Texans were advised last Monday and Wednesday to conserve energy as summer temperatures peaked.
>
> The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, the grid manager for most of Texas, issued a conservation appeal to Texans and Texas businesses as last week's temperatures were expected to top 105 degrees.
>
> […][T]he primary reason for the call for conservation was "wind generation [that] is currently generating significantly less than what it historically generated in this time period." On Wednesday, some forced traditional outages and lower solar output (due to West Texas cloud cover) also contributed.
>
> […][A]s temperatures and Texans' need for electricity were soaring, wind turbines across the state were still; and last Monday, they were producing about only 8% of their installed capacity. Operating reserves—the backup generation needed to keep air conditioners blowing and factories working—were shrinking.
>
> Something very similar happened last year during the unprecedented 2021 blackouts when 10 million Texans went without power and 12 million without water, many for several days, during freezing temperatures. Energy analyst Robert Bryce noted at the time, "Roughly 17% of [wind's installed] capacity was available when the grid operator was shedding load to prevent the state's grid from going dark."
>
> It should also be pointed out that solar's contribution to the grid during those pre-dawn hours was zero.

Is this going to happen in your state this winter? It depends on how much power the secular left has to determine your state's energy policy. Many voters have this view of America as a magical place, where global warming socialism will really work. But global warming socialism doesn't work here, either. We know it's not working in socialist Europe. It's been tried in big, rich states like Texas and California, and it hasn't worked. Blackouts are serious – people die from losing power during hot and cold times of the year. I hope people will turn off the TV and think about whether they want to live or die before they vote in November.

Let’s learn about the Indiana hero who stopped a mass shooting with his gun

July 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to write about how law-abiding Americans use their legal firearms to prevent crimes. The best crime preventing is done when you don’t even fire your weapon, but sometimes you have to go all the way. That’s what happened recently at a mall in Indiana. I thought it might be good to talk about the Good Samaritan hero who used his legal firearm to stop a horrific crime.

Here’s the story from WTHR local news:

> At 5:57:03 p.m., Elisjsha Dicken, an armed bystander, fired on the shooter from 40 yards away, according to police. Within 15 seconds from when the shooting began, Dicken fired 10 rounds hitting the shooter as the shooter tried to retreat into the bathroom but collapsed and died.

> An autopsy found the shooter was shot eight times and none were self-inflicted.

> Dicken had no police training or military background, according to police. He was carrying under the new “Constitutional Carry” law and did not have a permit. Police said Dicken learned to shoot from his grandfather and that he had no military or police training.

> “His actions were nothing short of heroic. He engaged the gunman from quite a distance with a handgun. Was very proficient in that, was tactically sound and as he moved to close in on the suspect, he was also motioning for people to exit behind him,” Ison said about Dicken’s actions. “Many people would have died last night if not for a responsible armed citizen that took action very quickly within the first two minutes of this shooting.”

What’s interesting about this to me is that it’s usually young, unmarried women who don’t like the idea of men owning firearms, and vote against gun rights. But honestly, this is the kind of young man they should be interested in dating and marrying. He was armed, he had practiced enough to be accurate, and he protected his loved ones from evil. When you take away the guns from the good guys, you can’t expect to find men who can protect you from threats. You can’t expect to call the police and have them show up in time to save you – look at what happened in Uvalde, TX.

Defensive gun usages

Amy Swearer, a writer at Daily Signal, puts out a list of heroic gun usage to prevent crimes, and I link to them occasionally. The last one I linked to was from May 2022. She hasn’t done one for July yet, but here is the one for June.

Here’s one of 12 defensive gun usages she lists in that article:

- **May 30, Fredericksburg, Virginia:** A woman was making a bank deposit when she saw a man get into the driver's seat of her nearby car, police said. The woman confronted the man, who got physical with her. She drew a gun and pointed it at him, prompting him to walk away as she called 911. Police arrested the man a short time later and charged him with carjacking.

This is the best kind of defensive gun usage – no shots fired, but crime prevented.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

The book by economist John Lott, linked above, compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, which shows that the 1997 UK gun ban caused violent crime rates to MORE THAN DOUBLE in the four years following the ban. But both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

One of the common mistakes I see anti-gun advocates making is to use the metric of all "gun-related deaths". First of all, this completely ignores the effects of hand gun ownership on violent crime, as we've seen. Take away the guns from law-abiding people and violent crime skyrockets. But using the "gun-related deaths" number is especially wrong, because it includes suicides committed with guns. This is the majority (about two thirds) of gun related deaths, even in a country like America that has a massive inner-city gun violence problem caused by the epidemic of single motherhood by choice. If you take out the gun-related SUICIDES, then the actual number of gun homicides has decreased as gun ownership has grown.

For a couple of useful graphs related to this point, check out this post over at the American Enterprise Institute.

We have an election this year. If you like this article, why not use it to persuade your undecided friends to support gun rights for law-abiding Americans? The life you save may be your own.

What does scientific evidence tell us about the effectiveness of same-sex parenting?

July 21, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Katy Faust tweeted this article by Mark Regnerus, a sociologist who specializes in dating, marriage and parenting issues. In the article, Regnerus cites the conclusions from several recent research studies. Once we see what he has to say, I'll pull the data from a Canadian study that he didn't mention that also shows the effect of same-sex parenting on children.

The article appears in The Public Discourse:

> The story of "no differences" between same-sex and opposite-sex households with children hinges on a pair of repetitive themes in the published research: (1) hiding behind small and nonrepresentative samples, and (2) employing analytic strategies that all but guarantee motivated researchers can "explain away" those pesky baseline observable differences between children from same-sex and opposite-sex households.
>
> Baseline differences matter. What happens before control variables matters. Building statistical models to hide differences is called p-hacking, a common but problematic practice. A 2020 study of over 1.2 million children in the (gay-friendly) Netherlands, whose primary media message trumpeted how same-sex parents were better than opposite-sex parents, nevertheless revealed that 55 percent of children living with same-sex parents—the vast majority of which were female couples—experienced the separation of these parents, well above the 19 percent of children of opposite-sex parents who experienced the same. "Controlling" for such instability—in effect implying it doesn't matter—clears the way to proclaim the benefits of same-sex parents. It's a common statistical practice, but a deceptive one.
>
> Hence, alternative analyses are always a good idea. For example, a 2020 published reexamination of three nationally representative datasets from the United States and Canada revealed that the presence of children tended to stabilize opposite-sex couples but destabilize same-sex couples. Dissolution rates were 43 percent for same-sex couples, but only 8 percent for opposite-sex couples. Its authors agree, saying that "parental instability is an important factor through which parents' sexual orientation influences children's outcomes."

So, the problem of higher separation between partners in a lesbian relationship is well-known. Lesbian couples have the highest instability rates of any kind of couple, heterosexual or homosexual.

Family Research Council notes:

> In the past, same-sex couples who got a slice of the marriage pie immediately

> wanted their share of the divorce market. In South Africa, couples who were first to wed under a 2006 law also won the race to divorce court only a year later; two Toronto lesbians who wed in 2003 separated after only five days, petitioning successfully in 2004 for a judge to overturn Canadian law so they could divorce. Or take Los Angeles, where 2008's historic first same-sex couple divorced this summer although they had been together for 18 years! Lest we think these cases are exceptional, of the same-sex couples who did marry in Sweden, males were 35% more likely to divorce than heterosexual couples, while lesbians were up to 200% more likely.

Before same-sex marriage, the concept of marriage included the concepts of permanence and exclusivity. Natural marriage has the production and raising of children at the core. No-fault divorce damaged that core, saying that the happiness of the selfish adults was more important than the children. Then same-sex marriage damaged the core again, saying that producing children isn't even central to the concept of marriage. As the selfish adults pass more laws against natural marriage, the children suffer more from the decline of permanence and exclusivity.

I found another study related to same-sex parenting, this one out of Canada.

Here is the abstract of the study:

> Almost all studies of same-sex parenting have concluded there is "no difference" in a range of outcome measures for children who live in a household with same-sex parents compared to children living with married opposite-sex parents. Recently, some work based on the US census has suggested otherwise, but those studies have considerable drawbacks. Here, a 20% sample of the 2006 Canada census is used to identify self-reported children living with same-sex parents, and to examine the association of household type with children's high school graduation rates. This large random sample allows for control of parental marital status, distinguishes between gay and lesbian families, and is large enough to evaluate differences in gender between parents and children. Children living with gay and lesbian families in 2006 were about 65 % as likely to graduate compared to children living in opposite sex marriage families. Daughters of same-sex parents do considerably worse than sons.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington. A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more shorter times). That's not good for children either. Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships have much higher rates of domestic violence. That's not good for children either. So we have three reasons to think that normalizing gay relationships as "marriage" would not be good for children.

Did the early church invent the divinity of Jesus over a long period of time?

July 22, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is

stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this

passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The "Q" source for Matthew and Luke

Here's Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier "Q" source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 15: Desert Rose's Favorite Bible Passages

July 23, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 15 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight asks Desert Rose about her favorite passages from the Bible. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our Youtube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 15:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss 5 Bible passages that made WK the man he is today. WK introduces each passage by explaining the context in his life where the passage became meaningful to him. WK talks about his growth as a Christian. Desert Rose comments on each of the passages as well.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Notes:

I said that I listened to R.C. Sproul's "Tabletalk" podcast. Tabletalk is the Ligonier magazine! The podcast I used to listen to was called "Renewing Your Mind With R. C. Sproul".

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You can use this to subscribe to the podcast from your phone or tablet. I use the open-source AntennaPod app on my Android phone.

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Which population group is most likely to reject heterosexual relationships?

July 24, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Federalist reports:

> A new Gallup poll published on Feb. 24 shows 1 in 6 Gen Z adults identify as LGBT. These results represent a remarkable jump from 2017, when 4.5 percent of Americans identified as LGBT, a number that has now risen to 5.6 percent just three years later.
>
> The increase is indeed dramatic, yet it doesn't fully tell the whole story. Why? While the population of Americans identifying as LGBT has risen steadily since 2012, last year the question was expanded from a simple "yes" or "no" to LGBT identity to include specific categories to choose from. Only one identity group showed a dramatic increase: **bisexual women**.
>
> […]One in ten high school students identify as LGBT. Of these, 75 percent are female, and 77 percent identify as bisexual. As detailed by the Washington Post, the Williams Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles has found that 35 percent of LGBT adults are bisexual women.
>
> Further, Hammack argues that his research shows **young women** are more likely to identify as "non-binary" or "gender-fluid."

I'm going to have something to say about this in a minute, but for now just note that it's young women who are the ones who are most likely to abandon natural marriage, traditional families and complementary sex roles.

More:

> As Abigail Shrier discussed in great detail with in-depth research in her book, "Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters," the power of social contagion and peer group identity is important to consider:
>
> Between 2016 and 2017, the number of gender surgeries for natal females in the US quadrupled; in the UK, the rates of gender dysphoria for teenage girls are up 4,400 percent over the previous decade.
>
> Indeed, as 16-year-old Jasper Swartz — who identifies as non-binary — expressed to the Washington Post, all of her friends are "queer in some way."

> Rather than reflecting the natural progression of openness to human variation in sexuality and gender identity, it seems to better reflect a pop culture fad to be included in the LGBT spectrum in any way possible. This seems especially true for younger people, who are inundated with LGBT education, culture, and positivity and, as Abigail discusses in her book, find meaning in being different, unique, and rebellious, along with their friends. As indicated by the Gallup

> survey, as people age, their identities become more stable and bisexuality drops significantly.
>
> […]For young women seeking identity and being part of a special or important group, all they have to do is cut their hair short, dress like a boy, and declare themselves non-binary or bisexual to gain instant victimhood status and self-validation. If it becomes too much and they still get the exciting thrill of being LGBT, they can always slip back into safer roles.

So, my suspicion is that young women are more vulnerable to this for two reasons. One, young women are more likely to determine their beliefs by deciding what makes them feel good. And two, young women are more likely to determine their beliefs by what makes them look good to their peer group. They're not reading non-fiction, and forming a worldview that's bound by logic and evidence. They like fiction. They like entertainment. They're not even embracing their values based on their future goals. Their long-term goals might be to marry and have security and family. But they're not taking steps towards that right now. Right now, they're just doing what feels good in the moment. They're adapting to their peers, and the culture at large, rather than thinking for themselves.

Young women like LGBT lifestyles more than they like natural marriage and family

In fact, there have been studies on how these ideas spread, and that's exactly what they found – young women are the ones who swallow this, and for reasons of feelings and peer approval. It's a social benefit to claim to be a minority sexual identity. Our culture has set it up so that you get prestige and sympathy for this. You get to play the victim, and everyone has to be nice to you. And you're so interesting! So sophisticated. To young women, it's an offer they can't refuse – so they don't.

What is it really like for a young woman to regret her gender transition?

July 25, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A few months ago, I blogged about this British woman who sued the NHS after they transitioned her when she was still very young. At 16, the NHS gave her puberty blockers and testosterone injections. At age 20, they gave her a double masectomy. She regretted what they did to her, and won a case against them in court. She's posted an article at Persuasion telling her side of the story.

Excerpt:

> From the earliest days, my home life was unhappy. My parents—a white Englishwoman and a black American who got together while he was in Britain with the U.S. Air Force—divorced when I was about 5. My mother, who was on welfare, descended into alcoholism and mental illness. Although my father remained in England, he was emotionally distant to me and my younger sister.
>
> I was a classic tomboy, which was one of the healthier parts of my early life in Letchworth, a town of about 30,000 people, an hour outside London. Early in childhood, I was accepted by the boys—I dressed in typically boy clothing and was athletic. I never had an issue with my gender; it wasn't on my mind.
>
> Then puberty hit, and everything changed for the worse. A lot of teenagers, especially girls, have a hard time with puberty, but I didn't know this. I thought I was the only one who hated how my hips and breasts were growing. Then my periods started, and they were disabling. I was often in pain and drained of energy.
>
> Also, I could no longer pass as "one of the boys," so lost my community of male friends. But I didn't feel I really belonged with the girls either. My mother's alcoholism had gotten so bad that I didn't want to bring friends home. Eventually, I had no friends to invite. I became more alienated and solitary. I had been moving a lot too, and I had to start over at different schools, which compounded my problems.
>
> By the time I was 14, I was severely depressed and had given up: I stopped going to school; I stopped going outside. I just stayed in my room, avoiding my mother, playing video games, getting lost in my favorite music, and surfing the internet.

You know, the first thing I would do with a girl like this is get her to talk to a doctor about what she should expect. Maybe get her some medication to ease some of the puberty troubles. But mainly, just spend some time with her, talking to her, playing with her, and so on. But really the most important thing would be to tell her the truth about where she stood in terms of value, meaning and purpose. After all – how sad can you really be if Jesus gave his life for you, and has very important work for you to do? Young people

seem to put so much emphasis on what their peers think of them, but on a Christian worldview, that doesn't matter at all. What matters is what God thinks of you, and what he thinks is based on your character inside, not on how you look. He's not selfish.

More:

> Around the end of that first year post-surgery, something started happening: My brain was maturing. I thought about how I'd gotten where I was, and gave myself questions to contemplate. A big one was: "What makes me a man?"
>
> I started realizing how many flaws there had been in my thought process, and how they had interacted with claims about gender that are increasingly found in the larger culture and that have been adopted at the Tavistock.
>
> […]I was also concerned about the effect my transition would have on my ability to find a sexual partner.
>
> Then there was the fact that no one really knew the long-term effects of the treatment. For instance, the puberty blockers and testosterone caused me to have to deal with vaginal atrophy, a thinning and fragility of the vaginal walls that normally occurs after menopause. I started feeling really bad about myself again.
>
> […]Five years after beginning my medical transition to becoming male, I began the process of detransitioning. A lot of trans men talk about how you can't cry with a high dose of testosterone in your body, and this affected me too: I couldn't release my emotions. One of the first signs that I was becoming Keira again was that—thankfully, at last—I was able to cry. And I had a lot to cry about.
>
> **The consequences of what happened to me have been profound**: possible infertility, loss of my breasts and inability to breastfeed, atrophied genitals, a permanently changed voice, facial hair. When I was seen at the Tavistock clinic, I had so many issues that it was comforting to think I really had only one that needed solving: I was a male in a female body. But it was the job of the professionals to consider all my co-morbidities, not just to affirm my naïve hope that everything could be solved with hormones and surgery.

Her article has a lot more information about her experiences with the NHS, and her court case. But what I wanted you guys to see was how important it is to not let children just say "I want this", which is something they saw on TV, or heard from their peers, or read online. Instead, you need to find out what problem they are really trying to solve. Once upon a time, Christians thought that the Christian worldview and a relationship with God in Christ was the most important thing you had to offer people who were in distress. What happened to that? When did we stop offering truth, and start offering disinterested agreement and shallow affirmation? Did we just want to feel good and have people think we were "nice"?

48-year-old divorced single mother seeks bailout for $430,000 of student loan debt

July 26, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If there's one area where I feel comfortable leading a woman, it's education, career and finances. I wasn't born in the USA, so it was quite a struggle to know how to navigate education, career and finances. But I did it, and I learned how to do it. And I like to share what I learned with Christian women, so that they don't end up with a useless degree and a bunch of student loan debt.

Here's a story about a woman I didn't advise, reported by the far-left Business Insider:

> Maria had a goal to teach at a university full-time. Today, she "absolutely" regrets pursuing that goal.
>
> While Maria's undergraduate education, which she completed in 2001, was funded through scholarships and Pell grants, she knew more advanced degrees would give her a leg up in university teaching — especially as a woman in the industry. So she pursued a master's degree and a PhD, the latter of which took seven years to complete.
>
> […]Now, at 48 years old, Maria's student-loan balance is $430,000…
>
> […]As a full-time human resources representative and part-time adjunct professor in Michigan, Maria now makes a five-figure salary while supporting her 15-year-old daughter on her own, with very minimal child support from the father.
>
> […]Of her total student-debt load, more than $70,000 is interest that accumulated while her student-loan payments were on hold, during which she cashed out her 401k and lived on unemployment benefits.
>
> […]Maria even filed for bankruptcy in 2018

I don't recommend doing a degree in non-STEM fields, they don't pay. I don't recommend spending 7 years with no income for a PhD. But notice how society gives her free money to subsdize these poor decisions. She got free scholarships, Pell grants, child support, unemployment benefits. The article doesn't mention if she got alimony, too. And she filed for bankruptcy… screwing her creditors out of what she owed them. Who knows what other social programs and tax benefits she got? While other women do STEM degrees, work in the private sector, marry and stay married, she's been doing life on easy mode, passing off the costs of her poor decisions to the people around her. I don't want women to make decisions that impose costs on their neighbors.

And now, she wants to get a bailout from taxpayers:

> The Education Department recently announced reforms to PSLF, which included going back over denied applications and payments to the program. So there's a

> chance that Maria may earn a quicker route to loan forgiveness. But with her current financial outlook, she's not confident she can complete the program and wants President Joe Biden to do more to help millions of borrowers with debt burdens.

The article notes that teachers and other public sector "workers" can default on their loans and pass the costs along to taxpayers:

> Maria does not work enough hours to qualify for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, which forgives student debt for public servants, like teachers, after ten years of qualifying payments.

Just understand that if society pays women to make poor decisions with their education, careers and finances, then more women will do it. That raises the costs on the men that pay taxes for this, reducing their ability to get married and conceive children. If men are paying for this woman's mistakes, they can't pay for their own marriage and parenting plans.

Consider this other article from the far-left Business Insider:

> There are over 4 times as many scholarships restricted to females as there are restricted to males.

This is despite the fact that about 60% of college students are women. Why are we focusing on subsidizing the group that's already doing well?

By the way, the author of the first Business Insider article, is a recent journalism graduate (expensive university) living in expensive Washington, D.C.. She advocates for bailouts through her journalism. She probably has massive student loan debt, too. It seems like choosing easy non-STEM majors, going into debt, then hoping for a bailout from socialism is quite common.

According to far-left Yahoo News, women hold two thirds of the $1.4 trillion outstanding student loan debt:

> Women hold nearly two-thirds of the outstanding student debt in the U.S., according to the American Association of University Women. And, they have a harder time paying off their debt compared to men. Prior to the student loan forbearance period, 70% of men made at least their required minimum monthly loan payments, while only half (54%) of women said the same, a recent survey by D.A. Davidson found.

Young women today don't like to have to "settle" for a lower cost college in a city with a lower cost of living. Like the Business Insider reporter, they want the Sex in the City lifestyle. So they go live in an expensive city, and run up debt doing useless degrees at an expensive university. And sometimes overseas! As you can see from the chart below, women avoid hard STEM degrees. But those programs are hard for a reason – they pay more money.

MAJORS WITH HIGH MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR WOMEN*

First Field of Degree 5% code	Percent Female	Median Female Earnings
Pharmacy Pharmaceutical Sciences	42	100,000
Information Sciences	26	75,000
Chemical Engineering	23	72,000
Computer Science	22	70,000
Electrical Engineering	7	70,000
Mechanical Engineering	7	70,000
Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering	17	67,000
Computer Engineering	14	67,000
Business Economics	30	64,000
Civil Engineering	13	62,000

** Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.*

The best majors for women to avoid student loan debt

My thoughts

What I wanted to do here is report to you what happens when I try to coach young women about their decisions in education, career and finances. And keep in mind, I'm doing this from a position of starting out in a foreign country, earning a BS and MS in computer science, graduating debt-free and working 22 years full-time. I had a $1.3 million net worth by age 45 (including the new construction home I bought for cash). So I have achievements here.

I run into the student loan debt problem while dating Christian women for marriage. Christian women seem to be even less likely to do hard degrees than women on average. You see a lot of art, music, English, journalism, etc. degrees there. I show them that student loans are a risk factor for divorce, and they also set back the plan to stop paying rent and start having children. I also show them which majors pay the most.

Here's what I usually get in response:

- Women think that they will be an exception to all studies and reports showing that the likely consequences of their actions.
- One woman dismissed the need to clean up her finances because God decided what degrees I would have, and how much I would earn, so I had no authority to advise her from my experience.
- Other women say that I am only doing what makes me happy, and they must do that too. (Note: I cried in second year calculus after failing the first test).
- I advised a 29-year-old woman with $25K of student loan debt and was working as a waitress to take a job I found her as an IT project manager. She said "No! Being a waitress is the easiest job I've ever had!"

- A 30-year-old woman with $23K in student loan debt wanted to do a Masters degree in Europe. I told her to pay off her loans first. She got two useless Masters degrees in Europe, and never worked again.
- I'm told that there is no rush to get out of debt to afford children, because women can have children in their 40s.
- I'm told that it will be fine for the children if she has to work to pay off her debts, because daycare and public schools work better for children than stay-at-home moms and homeschooling.
- I'm told that the $30 trillion national debt and bailouts for student loans, etc. are no big deal because the government can just print more money.
- I'm told that I can fix her financial problems by working harder and longer. One of my friends actually married a woman with $200K in student loan debt in order to get his green card, so some men take this deal.
- I'm told that too much planning feels bad, and I need to be more spontaneous and adventurous. One woman literally said "I don't want to make decisions based on fear".
- A famous Christian apologist woman (not WIA) told me that I can't judge a woman who has student loans because if God forgives a woman, then a man can't exclude her from marriage.

I'm not going to run a marriage that way. I have goals.

Men can't afford BOTH bailouts AND marriage

So, my point is that we have a real problem with figuring out how to get women to make better decisions about education, career and finance. I want to help them. I really do. Because we are $30 trillion in debt now, and we simply don't have enough money to keep bailing out people for student loans. And the problem will only get worse, as the younger generation of losers keeps making poor decisions and demanding that someone else pay for their mistakes.

Men don't marry women who are bad with money. Money is one of the biggest causes of

divorce, and divorce is a financial disaster for men because of anti-male divorce courts.

The number of men who can afford marriage and children is declining because they have to bail out all these reckless, irresponsible young women through their taxes. We need to fix this problem.

How global warming socialism threatens your food supply

July 27, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By now, I expect that everyone will have heard about how climate change policies in Sri Lanka resulted in the food supply being disrupted. But the climate change alarmists haven't learned a thing from that, and they doubled down in the Netherlands. You might think that America will avoid global warming famines, but now even Canada is making the same mistake.

Townhall reported on what happened in Sri Lanka:

> Last weekend, the Sri Lanka president and prime minister resigned in wake of protesters storming their residences, and the president has since fled the country. It was an instance of so-called "green" policies gone terribly wrong, as Bob Barr laid out in a column for Townhall, which involved a catastrophic fertilizer ban.

Sri Lanka banned the importing and usage of chemical fertilizers as part of a green policy initiative. This initiative caused their economy to fail so badly that their President had to resign. They are experiencing energy shortages, shortages of basic consumer goods, and extremely high prices.

More:

> With such an embarrassing failure that Sri Lanka turned out to be, it looks like the World Economic Forum (WEF) is trying to cover its tracks. Tucker Carlson, who discussed the turmoil on his Monday night episode of "Tucker Carlson Tonight," shared that the WEF appears to have deleted an article dated August 29, 2018 from Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, "This is how I will make my country rich by 2025."
>
> As of Wednesday morning, the link is still broken, but archives show the link was working as recently as Monday morning.

Netherlands is experiencing similar problems because of their green policies.

The Washington Examiner reports:

> Thousands of farmers in the Netherlands protesting proposed emissions reduction rules targeting their fertilizer and livestock were joined this weekend by groups in Germany, Italy, Spain, and Poland amid fears that the so-called "anti-farming" policies could soon spread to their countries as well.
>
> Similar rules have caused unrest in other countries, notably Sri Lanka, which was forced to repeal its ban on all chemical fertilizers after less than a year and now faces massive political upheaval.

> […]The wave of Dutch demonstrations is a response to proposed climate change policies introduced last month by the Dutch parliament, which seek to curb farmers' use of fertilizer and reduce the amount of livestock they can own in an effort to reduce their emissions of nitrogen oxide and ammonia dramatically by the year 2030.
>
> Since those emissions are produced by livestock, the Dutch plans call for a 30% reduction in livestock, an amount lawmakers say is necessary to meet the country's climate goals.
>
> […]But in some areas, the government's cuts could reach as high as 70% — which Dutch farmers argue would force many to either scale back production massively or shut down their operations completely.

Gee, I wonder how people will survive if the Dutch farmers shut down their operations completely? Good thing Canada and America aren't doing anything to hurt their farming operations, right?

Wrong. The Federalist explains:

> In his latest bid to amass greater control of Canadian society, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is set to move forward with his government's plan to reduce nitrogen emissions by limiting fertilizer use among Canadian farmers.
>
> The revelation came following a Friday meeting between Trudeau and Canadian provincial ministers, where the prime minister unexpectedly announced his decision to cap fertilizer emissions by unilaterally targeting the country's agricultural sector.
>
> […]As referenced in the press release, the targets set by the federal government include a bid "to reduce absolute levels of [greenhouse gas] emissions arising from fertilizer application by 30% below 2020 levels by 2030,"…

Will this shut down farming operations?

> According to a 2021 analysis by Fertilizer Canada, Trudeau's "short-sighted approach to reducing emissions will result in the need to reduce nitrogen fertilizer use and will have considerable impact on Canadian farmers' incomes" and livelihoods.

We have elections in 2022. Make sure that the food supply is one of your issues, and vote the global warming socialists out office.

Is there a Democrat plan to rig the 2022 mid-term elections?

July 28, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By now, some of you will be voting in your state primary elections to determine who will be on the ballot in November. If you haven't already voted or don't intend to vote, this post is for you. You may have heard that the Biden administration has terrible approval ratings right now, and that they won't do well in the 2022 elections. But, that's not entirely true. Because they might cheat.

Here's an article from The Federalist that explains what's happening:

> When President Biden ordered all 600 federal agencies to "expand citizens' opportunities to register to vote and to obtain information about, and participate in, the electoral process" on March 7, 2021, Republican politicians, Constitutional scholars, and election integrity specialists began to worry exactly what was up his sleeve.
>
> […]Biden gave each agency 200 days to file their plans for approval by none other than Susan Rice, his hyperpartisan domestic policy advisor. Yet fully nine months after those plans were due, they are all being hidden from the public, even as evidence is emerging that the election operation is in full swing.
>
> […]Rice has served in political positions in Democrat White Houses and the scandal-ridden Brookings Institution. She played a role in the spying-on-Trump scandal, blatantly lying about the same, lying about the Benghazi terrorist attack, and lying about Bowe Bergdahl's military record.
>
> Rice is described as President Obama's "right-hand woman," and it's been said she was "like a sister" to the former president. She was his National Security Advisor at the same time Hunter Biden was hitching rides on official White House aircraft to other countries for meetings with oligarchs and corrupt government officials. She spread conspiracy theories about the law enforcement officers in Portland during the violent BLM riots that besieged the city. Most worrisome, she was briefed on the Clinton campaign's Russia collusion hoax, which was used to destabilize the 2020 election and question its illegitimacy.

So, the Democrats in the government are using federal agencies to register and mobilize voters. These federal agencies typically operate in big urban areas that lean Democrat. Getting out votes in these urban areas would result in more Democrat voters voting in the 2022 elections. And they are doing this with your taxpayer money.

The article also notes:

> While the White House and agencies are steadfastly refusing to share details about how they're complying with the executive order, who they met with to develop their plans, or how they're justifying their involvement in something

> Congress has not authorized them to participate in, some details are trickling out. Here are a few examples of the widespread and coordinated effort by Biden's political appointees to meddle in the state administration of elections.
>
> - In the midst of a labor crisis, the Department of Labor boasted that it was turning 2,300 American Job Centers previously focused on helping displaced workers find jobs into hubs of political activism. These new federally funded voter registration agencies were given guidance about how to bring in organizations to conduct "voter outreach."
> - The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services likewise announced plans to turn community health centers into voter registration agencies, using thousands of health care facilities to focus on voter registration and turnout.
> - The Housing and Urban Development Department sent notice to public housing authorities that they should begin voter registration drives and participation activities. Previously, officials had been barred from electoral activities because they receive federal funding.
> - "It is presumed residents of public housing might disproportionately vote Democrat. … The executive order targets people receiving government benefits who might think their benefits depend on one party in power," Stewart Whitson, legal director for the Foundation for Government Accountability, told the Daily Signal.
> - The Department of Education sent "dear colleague" letters to universities, telling them that Federal Work Study funds could now be used to support voter registration activities, contrary to previous guidance. The change was made without having gone through any rulemaking process to allow the change.
> - The U.S. Department of Agriculture said it's using its child nutrition programs to push voter registration and enlisting state, local, and federally funded employees to implement voter registration drives in local schools.
> - The Commerce Department produced a massive, 113-page report which likely took four agency officials many hours to generate. It directs local voting board members about polling stations and poll worker training.

The Constitution doesn't allow the executive branch to control elections by executive order, but that isn't stopping Biden from trying to do it. And it's very interesting that all the conservative groups trying to find out what is really going on are being shut out of the details.

As if this wasn't bad enough, you have to remember that Facebook's CEO gave away tons of money to Democrat groups operating in Democrat areas in order to drive Democrat voters to the polls on election days.

The Federalist explains:

> The $332 million that Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla

> Chan provided to a progressive group to help run the 2020 elections was distributed on a highly partisan basis that favored Democrats, according to a new analysis by election data experts.
>
> While these “Zuckerbucks” or “Zuck bucks” were touted as a resource meant to help all jurisdictions administer the election during Covid lockdowns, tax records filed by the progressive Center for Tech and Civic Life show that the group “awarded all larger grants – on both an absolute and per capita basis to deeply Democratic urban areas,” particularly in swing states, according to the new report.

I know that we all want to believe that the Democrats will lose in the 2022 elections because of Biden’s low approval ratings. But the Democrats don’t want to lose, and they are doing whatever they can to drive out weak, dependent low-information Democrat voters. So, I really hope that you are doing your part to participate in the elections, and to make sure that other Republicans do too. It’s not going to be a cake walk. Now is the time to be sharing articles on social media and by e-mail with other people, to make sure they know what is at stake in the elections.

By the way, my friend John Berea wrote a great article about 2020 election fraud.

Judge strips progressive single mother of custody of her transgender child

July 29, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On this blog, I try to give Christians and conservatives advance warning about what the secular left is doing to parents in other countries. The goal is to look at more progressive countries to find out what progressives would do in our country, if they took power. Unfortunately, the secular left does have power here in certain states, and they are doing exactly what we expected.

I had blogged about a case in far-left Canada, where a female judge stripped a father of custody of his child.

I blogged a case from far-left California, where a female judge stripped a father of custody of his child.

I blogged about another case from far-left California where a mother lost her child, due to progressive schools and Child Protective Services.

There was a recent case from a purple state (Ohio) where a female judge stripped Christian parents of custody of their child.

Excerpt:

> In a blow to advocates of parental authority, last week a visiting judge in a juvenile court in Hamilton County, Ohio stripped parents of custody of their teenage girl, who wants to identify as male, because they would not allow the 17-year-old to begin hormone replacement therapy.
>
> The judge awarded custody to the teen's grandparents who were, in the court's eyes, more accepting of the teen's wishes and who will now be allowed to make medical decisions for the teen.
>
> […]Based on their unwillingness to allow their child to go through with the treatments, which was based at least in part on their Christian beliefs, Judge Sylvia Hendon ruled to give the teen's grandparents full custody, including the ability to make medical decisions and provide insurance (they're accepting of her desire to identify as a male).

And now in that same purple state (Ohio) we have this story from Independent Women's Forum:

> Jeannette Cooper never imagined she'd lose custody of her child. The 44-year-old lifelong educator always considered herself a loving and responsible mother to her daughter Sophia. But when, at age 12, Sophia suddenly claimed to be transgender, Jeannette was skeptical. Sophia had never exhibited signs of gender dysphoria. In fact, Sophia exhibited many more traditionally feminine behaviors and preferences than Jeannette ever had. To Jeannette, it didn't make sense.

> But Sophia insisted, not only that she was trans, but that she was ‘unsafe’ around Jeannette. What followed was an almost Kafkaesque series of court proceedings and therapy sessions in which Jeannette’s ex-husband, lawyers, therapists and other individuals and institutions supposedly concerned with Sophia’s best interests worked to erode Jeannette’s most basic parenting rights. Nearly three years later, Jeannette can’t even visit with the daughter she loves. She lives less than ten minutes away, but can only communicate with Sophia by U.S. Mail. All because she insists that Sophia is a girl.

And there is a short video to go with the story:

Why is this happening? It’s happening because feelings-oriented people are flocking to taxpayer-funded jobs like teacher, counselor, principal, school board, social worker, judge, etc. In these jobs, the feelings-oriented people can set aside objective morality, and prove to everyone once and for all how compassionate they are, by siding with children against their “oppressive” parents. For a time, we trusted the “don’t judge” crowd with our children. That time should end now. Homeschool your kids.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

July 30, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates

- You didn’t need to come out on this cold night
- Craig’s arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn’t listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don’t require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that “every effect requires a cause”
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can’t see
- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism

6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said.

Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can’t God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus’ burial isn’t historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig’s concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg’s concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig’s arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don’t look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 16: A Case for Life

July 31, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 16 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss abortion rights. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our Youtube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 16:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose describe a logical argument for making abortion illegal. We talk about the scientific evidence for the humanity of the unborn. We describe and answer a dozen arguments for abortion rights. We talk about whether unborn children should have human rights from birth or only after they achieve "personhood". We recommend pro-life resources. We talk about WK's heroic friend Kevin.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

References:

Trump names pro-life scientist to National Science Board by Wintery Knight

Embryology textbooks

"Human development begins at fertilization, when a sperm fuses with an oocyte to form a single cell, the zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell (capable of giving rise to any cell type) marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual."
– "The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology", 10th edition.

Peter Singer, who supports elective abortion (and the killing of newborns) writes "Whether a being is a member of a given species is something that can be determined scientifically, by an examination of the nature of the chromosomes in the cells of living organisms. In this sense, there is no doubt that from the first moments of its existence an embryo conceived from human sperm and egg is a human being." (Practical Ethics, 2nd

ed., p. 85-86).

Wayne Sumner, who also supports elective abortion, writes, “A human fetus is not a non-human animal; it is a stage of human being.” (Sumner, Abortion and Moral Theory, p. 10.)

If unborn babies don’t have consciousness or don’t feel pain, may we kill them? by Wintery Knight

New study: unborn babies are viable at 22 weeks by Wintery Knight

Can unborn babies feel pain at 20 weeks? by Wintery Knight

Recommended resources:

Introductory:

- The Case for Life by Scott Klusendorf
- Prolife Answers to Prochoice Arguments by Randy Alcorn

Advanced:

- The Ethics of Abortion: Women’s Rights, Human Life, and the Question of Justice by Chris Kaczor
- Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice by Francis J. Beckwith

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UK police arrests veteran for posting meme on Twitter

August 1, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, we covered the UK gr00ming gangs story. Men of Middle Eastern origin come to the UK, and then sex-traffic underage white girls. I noted that the UK police do not investigate or arrest the sex-traffickers, because they are Middle Eastern. It's not politically correct.

But do you know what the UK police do have time for? They watch what UK taxpayers (who pay their salaries) say online, then they arrest them for being "offensive". Being offensive is a much much much worse crime than sex-trafficking children in the UK, so the police focus their attention on that.

Here's the latest story from Breitbart:

> In scenes akin to those traditionally associated with authoritarian regimes, police in Britain were filmed arresting a military veteran for posting a meme critical of woke gender ideology on Facebook.
>
> "Is this the Gestapo? What has gone wrong in our country?" the veteran questioned as he was being placed in handcuffs by three officers in broad daylight outside of his suburban home.
>
> The incident was captured live on video on Thursday by Reclaim Party leader Laurence Fox, who chastised the Hampshire Constabulary officers for acting as an "anti-British politicised police force."
>
> "They serve a protected ideology… if you criticise the new woke ideology, you criticise the Pride movement, you end up in cuffs, whether you have served this country and have long medals for distinction and good service, you will end up in cuffs for expressing a perfectly legal view," he told the live audience on social media.
>
> The veteran, at the time left unidentified for privacy purposes, was apparently arrested for reposting a satirical meme…
>
> […]In the footage, one officer was heard justifying the arrest by saying that "somebody has taken offence" to the "homophobic" post shared on Facebook.
>
> […]Over the past five years, police have recorded over 120,000 such "non-crimes" — which are visible on criminal background checks.

This harassment of taxpayers for offensive speech is a common occurrence in the UK, and a good reasons for Americans to stay well clear of that benighted country.

Look at this list of stories about the Middle Eastern sex-trafficking gangs:

- Diversity and inclusion: secular leftist UK police decline to prosecute Muslim sex-

traffickers
- Islam, rape, and sex-trafficking in European countries
- Muslim leader of underage sex-trafficking gang gets 22-year sentence
- Police and social workers ignored sex-trafficking, rape and abuse by Muslims
- Telford sex-trafficking ring involving up to thousand children was run by “Asian” men
- Middle Eastern men who ran Oxford child sex-trafficking ring found guilty
- UK police knew about Muslim child sex gang but refused to prosecute
- UK authorities ignored gang of Muslim pedophiles who raped more than 1400 children
- In the UK, which crime is worse? Sex trafficking, gang-rape or hate speech?
- Members of another UK-based Middle Eastern men sex-trafficking ring sentenced
- Underage teen girl forced into daily sex by Muslim “grooming” gang in Rotherham, UK

In almost every case, victims of the gangs went to the police, but the police declined to investigate or prosecute. That’s probably because they were too busy arresting people who are critical of LGBT.

You might be aware that there is an epidemic of violent crime in the UK right now. Guns are illegal to own. Defending yourself from criminals will get you arrested and prosecuted.

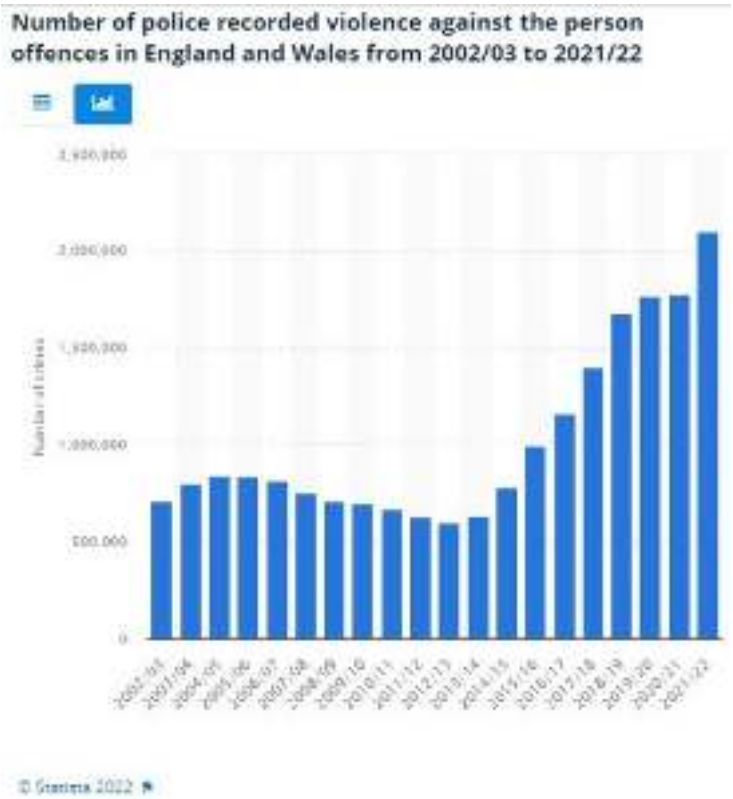

Violent Crime UK

We really need to be careful about living in areas where the police are being controlled by the secular left. The secular left has long since left morality behind, and they cannot be trusted with power.

Woman regrets transforming after only 2 hours of counseling

August 2, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I really want conservative lawmakers to make a law to allow young people who regret transforming to sue all of the people (teachers, social workers, LGBT activists, ped0philes, gr00mers, Democrats, atheists, Big Tech, etc.) who pressured them to transform. I want the young people to take every penny that the gr00mers own, and then garnish their salaries by 90% for eternity.

Here is the latest case of transformer regret reported in the UK Daily Mail:

> A woman who says she was allowed to transition to male after just two and a half hours of counselling is speaking out after she decided to 'detransition' to female.
>
> Sam, 26, decided to pay for private therapy sessions when she began to question her gender identity when she was just 21, after she was told she would have to wait two and a half years for an NHS appointment.

She "self-diagnosed" herself after doing "research" online:

> She was initially thrilled when she was given a private appointment, and after self-diagnosing herself as a trans man after doing research online, was given the go ahead to begin hormone therapy and undergo a double mastectomy after just two hour-long appointments with a doctor.
>
> Just two years after she began the hormone treatment and after a double mastectomy, she began suffering health complications, and realised she did not want to go ahead with full gender reassignment surgery.
>
> By the time her initial NHS appointment came through, she began to realise she had made a mistake – and told doctors she was now seeking help transitioning back to a woman.

It's interesting to hear her explain what she found in her research:

> 'I saw a community full of so many people who had transitioned and it had finally made them happy; and with hindsight, I looked at them and thought that would be what made me happy too.
>
> […]'The industry is under huge pressure from the trans community to move things along quickly because of statistics around suicide. This frightened me into feeling I had to do everything as quickly as possible to avoid feeling that way.'
>
> […]'Throughout my teenage years, I fluctuated around identities until I discovered videos online about people who were transitioning for the first time and discovering who they were,' Sam explained.
>
> 'I identified with it a lot as I struggled to pinpoint who I was. I wasn't masculine

> and I wasn't hugely feminine and I wanted to feel this happiness and freeness I was seeing in others.

She wasn't informed about the side-effects:

> But just two years after her surgery, by mid-2020, Sam began to suffer from vaginal atrophy – where the female sex organ tissue begins to die off because of the lack of female hormones to keep it functioning and healthy – which left Sam in crippling pain, as well as with an increased risk of developing cancer.
>
> She was horrified when NHS doctors told her the only treatment available to her was to have a hysterectomy – an operation which she did not feel ready for and made her realised that she never wanted to have full gender reassignment surgery.
>
> She explained: 'I wasn't prepared to have a hysterectomy at the age of 24.
>
> 'I felt distressed as didn't feel properly informed about the side effects that came with taking testosterone.

I thought that the part where the gr00mers were rushing her along to prevent her suicide was interesting. That's how they break down resistance to paying the Big Pharma companies for drugs and Big Health Care for surgeries. They tell the people "if you don't buy our drugs and surgeries, then you'll commit suicide". Something to think about when you're deciding who will influence your children.

Atheist philosopher tells atheists how to be moral on atheism

August 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's review what you need in your worldview in order to have a rationally grounded system of morality.

You need 5 things:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Theism rationally grounds all 5 of these. Atheism cannot ground *any of them.*

Atheist objective morality

Let's take a look at an atheist professor of philosophy, and see how good he is at rationally grounding the 5 points above. Remember, we're not interested in his likes or dislikes. We're not interested in his feelings. We're not interested in his opinions. We're interested in knowing what sort of MORALITY atheism makes rational for atheists. What is reasonable, if the universe is an accident, and human beings are nothing but random collections of atoms?

Let's ask this distinguished professor of atheist morality:

> Stephen Kershnar is a distinguished teaching professor in the philosophy department at the State University of New York at Fredonia and an attorney. He focuses on applied ethics and political philosophy. Kershnar has written one hundred articles and book chapters on such diverse topics as abortion, adult-child sex, hell, most valuable player, pornography, punishment, sexual fantasies, slavery, and torture.

This is a lot better stuff to think about than the stupid things that Christians think about. Love? Charity? Self-Denial? Self-Sacrifice? Those are stupid things to think about.

He's written books against moral responsibility, against the pro-life movement, and against gratitude towards veterans.

He also defended atheism in a formal debate.

The Federalist reported on his views:

> Stephen Kershnar is a professor at State University of New York at Fredonia, and a pedophilia apologist.
>
> Here's Kershnar on video saying that an adult male having sex with a 12-year-old girl is not obviously wrong, and that calling it wrong is a "mistake." In the same clip, he refers to pedophilic rape as "adult-child sex," another euphemism that, just like "minor-attracted person," is being used in an attempt to run cover for evil.
>
> […]He continues to defend pedophilia, remarking "The notion that it's wrong even with a one-year-old is not quite obvious to me." He goes on. "I don't think it's blanket wrong at any age."
>
> Kershnar even argues that children can consent to sex with adults, comparing it to a child willfully engaging in kickball or participating in bar mitzvah lessons.
>
> […]Kershnar is open to the idea that pedophilia is deeply harmful to victims, but he just can't put his finger on why. He thinks it could be because of bigots like you and me, who go "berserk" when pedophiles rape kids.
>
> He even argues that we often make children do things they don't want to do, like "go to church" or "go to temple" or "go to their sister's ballet recital." His perspective is backed up by podcast host Thaddeus Russel, who makes an

> equally monstrous argument when he says “all a child’s life is, is coercion by adults … often to make the child do something for the adult’s pleasure only.”
>
> It’s also telling that these dangerous viewpoints have found their way into the mainstream through left-wing outlets. At one point, Russel boasts that he authored an article in The Daily Beast that argued for lowering consent laws.

Thaddeus Russel says this:

> Black kids at school tackled me to the ground and lay on top of me until I thought I would suffocate when I mentioned that I was an atheist.

Do you think this is unusual for atheists? We just had a case where Democrats in Virginia were covering up the rape of a child and having the child’s father arrested. The same things happen in Canada. Last November, another LGBT activist professor was trying to normalize pedophilia.

If I had to pick the atheist capital of the United States, I’d pick Seattle. The voters there elected Ed Murray to be their mayor. Seattle voters loved that he had been the driving force behind same-sex marriage in the state. Atheists were proud of their state for legalizing same-sex marriage. They cheer for the annihilation of Judeo-Christian morality in our laws, *and in our culture.* It emerged later that Murray was a child molester.

Biden economic policy: raise taxes, increase inflation, go further into debt

August 4, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I decided to do a round-up of articles from a variety of conservative news sources showing the effects of Biden economic policy. I hope everyone is making plans to deal with the coming catastrophe. It is a mistake to elect people who are focused on global warming, same-sex marriage, and gr00ming children for the benefit of their pedo constituents. We really need to vote them out in 2022.

First, Daily Wire reports on a study that shows the likely effects of Biden's Increase Inflation Act:

> The Democrat-supported "Inflation Reduction Act of 2022" could lead to a slight increase in inflation over the next two years if it's passed and signed into law, according to a Penn Wharton study released Friday.
>
> […]The Democrat spending package… would be the largest legislative climate investment the U.S. has ever made at $369 billion. The bill would also raise taxes on billion-dollar businesses and extend Affordable Care Act subsidies.

The bill has the support of Democrat senator Joe Manchin, who has suddenly become supportive of global warming alarmism and raising taxes.

The American Spectator has more about the tax increases:

> The act would raise an estimated $739 billion through tax increases and heightened IRS scrutiny to then invest $306 billion in "deficit reduction" and $369 billion in "energy security and climate change" to "reduce carbon emissions by roughly 40 percent by 2030." If ever there were a proposal that failed out the gate, this is one.
>
> The Biden administration seeded this inflation with massive spending premised on COVID-19 relief that was filled with political pork.

They created the inflation crisis with C0VID stimulus spending, so that they could pass a bill to get what they really wanted: global warming regulations and taxes. That will just raise the price of electricity and gas even more.

More:

> …those inflationary policies that even funded social justice art projects take food off the American table. Fertilizer prices have tripled in less than two years, drought threatens both global and local food supplies, and disruptions in supply chains threaten scarcity for much more than baby formula. Ground beef increased 36 percent in price in one year…

All this at a time when more and more Americans are living from paycheck to paycheck.

The Daily Caller reports:

> The number of Americans living paycheck-to-paycheck was up 5.5% in June from a year prior as fully 61% of Americans now devote nearly all of their salaries to expenses with little or nothing left over at the end of the month, according to LendingClub's report. Americans' purchasing power has declined in recent months as inflation has outpaced wage increases, making it more difficult to afford normal budgets, the report concluded.

What are the long-run consequences of more federal spending? A ballooning national debt.

The Federalist explains:

> This budget bill, even if enacted and implemented as Democrats claim, would reduce the cumulative deficits over the next three decades to "only" $114.1 trillion. In other words, it would allegedly reduce our collective deficit by a currently estimated 0.3 percent.
>
> […]The $114 trillion figure comes from a new report by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) regarding the nation's long-term budget outlook.
>
> […]CBO estimates deficits will go from 3.9 percent of GDP in the fiscal year ending Sept. 30 to 11.1 percent of GDP by 2052. Multiplying CBO's estimated annual deficits as a percentage of the economy by their estimates of GDP in each year provides the $114 trillion figure for our cumulative deficits from now through 2052.
>
> Most ominously, CBO believes that net interest costs will rise sharply, from 1.6 percent of GDP in the current fiscal year to 6.2 percent by 2052. Like a snowball rolling down the proverbial hill, or someone who keeps paying the minimum on his credit card, the debt we have accumulated will require more and more resources to fund every year. Moreover, this near quadrupling of federal interest costs as a percentage of our economy means paying down government debt will squeeze out private investment—making our economy permanently less productive and poorer.

That last part is the most alarming, especially to people with wives and children.

We have elections in November. It won't be enough for you to vote against the Democrats. You should be sending everyone you know evidence of what is coming, so they can vote against Democrats, too. We are getting a taste of global warming socialism now. We can't afford more of this.

Atheist gets her PhD in astronomy and astrophysics and finds evidence for God

August 5, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christian apologist Terrell Clemmons tweeted this testimony by Sarah Salviander, a research scientist in astronomy and astrophysics at the prestigious University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Salviander writes:

> I was born in the U.S., but grew up in Canada. My parents were socialists and political activists who thought British Columbia would be a better place for us to live, since it had the only socialist government in North America at the time. My parents were also atheists, though they eschewed that label in favor of "agnostic." They were kind, loving, and moral, but religion played no part in my life. Instead, my childhood revolved around education, particularly science. I remember how important it was to my parents that my brother and I did well in school.

I just want to point out that I hope that all you Christian parents are taking seriously the obligation to make your kids do well in school, because even if they start out as atheists when they are young, they can still find their way back to God through study, as Sarah did.

She had a bad start, that's for sure:

> I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, a time when science fiction was enjoying a renaissance, thanks largely to the popularity of *Star Wars*. I remember how fascinated I was by the original *Star Wars* trilogy. It had almost nothing to do with science—it's more properly characterized as space opera—but it got me thinking about space in a big way. I also loved the original *Star Trek*, which was more science fiction. The stoic and logical character of Mr. Spock was particularly appealing to me. Popular science was also experiencing a renaissance at that time, which had a lot to do with Carl Sagan's television show, *Cosmos*, which I adored. The combination of these influences led to such an intense wonder about outer space and the universe, that by the time I was nine years old I knew I would be a space scientist someday.
>
> Canada was already post-Christian by the 1970s, so I grew up with no religion. In retrospect, it's amazing that for the first 25 years of my life, I met only three people who identified as Christian. My view of Christianity was negative from an early age, and by the time I was in my twenties, I was actively hostile toward Christianity. Looking back, I realized a lot of this was the unconscious absorption of the general hostility toward Christianity that is common in places like Canada and Europe; my hostility certainly wasn't based on actually knowing anything

> about Christianity. I had come to believe that Christianity made people weak and foolish; I thought it was philosophically trivial. I was ignorant not only of the Bible, but also of the deep philosophy of Christianity and the scientific discoveries that shed new light on the origins of the universe and life on Earth.

She documents a phase of following Ayn Rand and embracing "Objectivism", but eventually she rejects it for failing to answer the big questions of life.

More:

> I began to focus all of my energy on my studies, and became very dedicated to my physics and math courses. I joined campus clubs, started to make friends, and, for the first time in my life, I was meeting Christians. They weren't like Objectivists—they were joyous and content. And, they were smart, too. I **was astonished to find that my physics professors, whom I admired, were Christian. Their personal example began to have an influence on me, and I found myself growing less hostile to Christianity.**

This is why I think it is so important for Christian parents to raise their children to get advanced degrees… either to become professors themselves, or to finance others (e.g. – our own children) to do advanced degrees. It is so important for university students to see Christian professors on campus. And failing that, it's important that we bring Christian speakers in to debate non-Christian speakers on the important issues. This will not happen unless we recognize how important it is, and then make a plan to achieve it.

More:

> **I had joined a group in the Center for Astrophysics and Space Sciences (CASS) that was researching evidence for the big bang. The cosmic background radiation—the leftover radiation from the big bang—provides the strongest evidence for the theory, but cosmologists need other, independent lines of evidence to confirm it. My group was studying deuterium abundances in the early universe. Deuterium is an isotope of hydrogen, and its abundance in the early universe is sensitive to the amount of ordinary mass contained in the entire universe. Believe it or not, this one measurement tells us whether the big bang model is correct.**
>
> **If anyone is interested in how this works, I'll describe it, but for now I'll spare you the gruesome details. Suffice it to say that an amazing convergence of physical properties is necessary in order to study deuterium abundances in the early universe, and yet this convergence is exactly what we get. I remember being astounded by this, blown away, completely and utterly awed. It seemed incredible to me that there was a way to find the answer to this question we had about the universe. In fact, it seems that every question we have about the universe is answerable. There's no reason it has to be this way, and it**

> **made me think of Einstein's observation that the most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it's comprehensible. I started to sense an underlying order to the universe. Without knowing it, I was awakening to what Psalm 19 tells us so clearly, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."**
>
> That summer, I'd picked up a copy of T*he Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas and was reading it in my off hours. Previous to this, I'd only known it as an exciting story of revenge, since that's what the countless movie and TV adaptations always focused on. But it's more than just a revenge story, it's a philosophically deep examination of forgiveness and God's role in giving justice. I was surprised by this, and was starting to realize that the concept of God and religion was not as philosophically trivial as I had thought.
>
> All of this culminated one day, as I was walking across that beautiful La Jolla campus. I stopped in my tracks when it hit me—I believed in God! I was so happy; it was like a weight had been lifted from my heart. I realized that most of the pain I'd experienced in my life was of my own making, but that God had used it to make me wiser and more compassionate. It was a great relief to discover that there was a reason for suffering, and that it was because God was loving and just. God could not be perfectly just unless I—just like everyone else—was made to suffer for the bad things I'd done.

The Count of Monte Cristo is one of my favorite, favorite books as well, and had the same impact on me as it did on her.

OK, that's enough for this post. Go read the rest, and please share it.

I spoke to her recently and she told me that she is working on several projects that are designed to get people more familiar with science and Bible issues. This woman is an expert Christian apologist and her life will have an influence. Are you going to be like her? Will you mentor others to be like her? Will you marry someone like her? Will you raise children who are like her? I think we should all have a plan to study the areas that are important and have an influence for God with what we learn.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason

- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Democrats closed churches during C0VID, but gay orgies continue during monkeyp0x

August 6, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, we'll start with the latest data on monkeyp0x from the Center for Disease Control. Then, we will look at how the secular left responds when their freedom to engage in Darwinian monkey sex is threatened. Then, we'll contrast that with how the secular left responded when churches wanted to continue to meet during the the C0VID pandemic.

Here's the Wall Street Journal:

> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released data finding the monkeyp0x outbreak is concentrated among men who have had sex with several men, and issued more detailed recommendations on how to avoid exposure to the disease.
>
> Among 291 men surveyed, 40% reported that they had two to four partners and 14% reported five to nine partners in the three weeks before developing monkeyp0x , according to the report. About 19% reported 10 or more partners during that period, the CDC said Friday.
>
> And among 86 men who reported information, 28% said they had had group sex, which is defined as sex with more than two people, at a festival, group sex event or sex party, based on the report. The research was conducted from May 17 through July 22.
>
> The article notes that there are now 7,000 known cases in the U.S.

The initial response of the secular left authorities to monkeyp0x was to avoid restricting the behaviors of gay men, lest these restrictions be perceived as disapproval of what they are doing. The secular left said "anyone can get monkeyp0x, so there is no sense making our beloved LGHDTV crowd feel singled out for their truth. Love is love. And we need to love everyone".

The Federalist notes:

> After so much emphasis on the importance of personal sacrifice for the greater good, you would think that a new, highly contagious disease would be treated with more seriousness by the left. Instead, when monkeyp0x crossed over onto America's shores, the left decided the rules no longer applied to them. Similar to how 1,000 health professionals demanded Black Lives Matter protests were worth the risk during the height of C0vid, LGBT folks decided anonymous sex and fetish parades were more important than public safety.
>
> California state Sen. Scott Wiener, best known for lowering the criminal penalty for knowingly exposing others to HIV and advocating to keep adults as old as 24 from being placed on the sex offender list if they sexually exploit a minor as

> young as 14, declared, "Lots of sex shaming of gay men around monkeyp0x… Lecturing people not to have sex isn't a public health strategy…"

The important thing is not to do good for gay men by warning them about the consequences of their choices. The important thing is to let them have "fun".

The mental health of the secular left cannot be harmed by restricting the gay orgies:

> Jack Turban, assistant professor of child psychiatry at UC San Francisco, insisted, "Monkeyp0x has serious physical symptoms, but we also need to focus on the mental health impact for the #queer community. Being gay is a healthy & normal aspect of human diversity. Sex is a healthy normal part of life. Have pride in your community while we combat the virus."

There was no such concern for the mental health of people who wanted to attend church services during C0VID, thought:

> During the C0vid pandemic, everyone was expected to shut down their lives, at great sacrifice to their families and careers, lock down, stay indoors, and wear masks. The police raided Orthodox Jewish homes to stop services and arrested pastors for holding church services, funerals weren't allowed, and the media, especially LGBT media, mocked people for dying from C0vid. People were accused of being murderers and dangers to society, and Wiener himself berated members of Congress for failing to wear masks.

I think the view of the secular left is that church services are OK to ban, but gay orgies are morally superior, and cannot be banned. You can't even ask people to avoid attending gay orgies, because gay orgies are so amazingly awesome and important.

I have an atheist friend in Seattle who is a big supporter of same-sex marriage. I wonder if this is what he means by "same-sex marriage":

> As the Daily Caller reported, a popular OnlyFans user, with 98,000 followers on his adult Twitter, put into perspective how far this all can go. In the middle of a growing monkeyp0x outbreak in the gay male community, he decided to attend two orgies in one weekend — sexually engaging with at least 20 and upwards of 40 men — hook up with three additional strangers later that evening, and enjoy a four-way the following day before discovering he had been infected with the disease. If that sounds like an extreme example, keep in mind that the festival promoted by the San Francisco AIDS Foundation was described as "Up Your Alley (aka Dore Alley), where you'll get your fill of hot hairy daddies, hungry pigs, BDSM babes and kinks of all kinds. Douchie's got some hot tips for a fun and filthy weekend — free of anxiety."

Wow, talk about atheist objective morality. In Christianity, you limit your freedom and sacrifice your interests to help others. In atheist morality, it's… different. In Christian morality, you get married for 50 years and have 4 kids, and 12 grand kids. In atheist

morality, it’s… different.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 17: Common Muslim Objections to Christianity

August 7, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 17 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss common Muslim objections to Christianity. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 17:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss five common objections that Muslims raise against Christianity. We evaluate each objection using historical evidence, evidence from non-Christian New Testament scholars, and claims from the Qur'an itself. We also talk about how these arguments perform in scholarly debates. We recommend several of our favorite resources on the topic. We conclude with a story from Rose about an interaction she had with a Muslim friend when she responded to one of these common objections.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

References:

OBJECTION #1:

Peter J. Williams debates Bart Ehrman on his book "Misquoting Jesus" by Wintery Knight

The Islamic Dilemma

a. The Qur'an affirms the inspiration, authority, and preservation of the Gospels

i. Divine inspiration: Qur'an 3:3-4; 5:47

ii. Ongoing authority: Qur'an 5:47; 5:68 (Note: If the Gospels were reliable in the 7th century, then they're reliable now because our Gospels are based on manuscripts that pre-date the 7th century)

iii. Perfect preservation: Qur'an 6:115; 18:27

b. But the Qur'an contradicts the Gospels on key issues

i. Deity of Jesus: Qur'an 5:116; 5:72

ii. Death of Jesus: Qur'an 4:157

iii. Resurrection of Jesus

c. So, if the Gospels ARE trustworthy, then the Qur'an is not trustworthy because the Qur'an contradicts the Gospels on key issues.

d. But if the Gospels ARE NOT trustworthy, then the Qur'an is not trustworthy because the Qur'an says the Gospels are trustworthy

e. Either way, the Qur'an is false (and Islam stands or falls on the reliability of the Qur'an)

OBJECTION #2:

Objection comes from Qur'an 5:116; 5:72

Did the early church invent the divinity of Jesus over a long period of time? by Wintery Knight

The Date Of Mark's Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity by non-Christian New Testament scholar Dr. James Crossley

OBJECTION #3:

What do skeptical ancient historians think of the earliest Christian creed? by Wintery Knight

OBJECTION #4:

Episode #1 of Knight and Rose Show: Easter: Making the Case for the Resurrection of Jesus to Non-Christians

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

Recommended resources:

Introductory:

- Making Sense of the Trinity: Three Crucial Questions by Millard J. Erickson
- Can We Trust the Gospels? by Peter J. Williams

Intermediate:

- No God but One: Allah or Jesus?: A Former Muslim Investigates the Evidence for Islam and Christianity by Nabeel Qureshi

Advanced:

- Debating Christian Theism edited by J. P. Moreland, Khaldoun A. Sweis, Chad V. Meister

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Link: https://incompetech.filmmusic.io/song/5744-strength-of-the-titans
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LGBT activists charged with using adopted children to make child porn

August 8, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On the weekend, I saw a lot of people tweeting a quotation from an article by The Gospel Coalition, in which the author urged Christians to accept same-sex marriage as the law of the land. Should Christians capitulate to the secular left about the definition of marriage? Or should they think harder about how to argue in favor of natural marriage, with evidence?

This is from the Instagram of The Gospel Coalition:

They want Christians to affirm same-sex marriage.

Here is a recent story from the New York Post:

> A Georgia couple has been charged with using their two adopted children to record child pornography, police said.
>
> Walton County Sheriff's Office raided a home in Loganville July 27 on reports that a man there was downloading child porn.
>
> After interviewing the suspect, who was not identified, police said they learned there was another suspect in the county who was "producing homemade child sexual abuse material with at least one child who lived in the home," the sheriff's office said Thursday.
>
> Around 11:30 p.m. that same night, executed a search warrant in Oxford at the home of William Dale Zulock, 32, and Zachary Jacoby Zulock, 35.

> […]During their search, deputies found evidence the pair, who were the children's adoptive fathers, "were engaging in sexually abusive acts and video documenting this abuse," the sheriff's office said.
>
> Early the next morning, the Zulocks were both booked at the Walton County Jail.
>
> Both men were charged with aggravated child molestation, sexual exploitation of a child and enticing a child for indecent purposes, WSBTV reported. William Zulock was additionally charged with child molestation.

Andy Ngo, a gay journalist who holds gay activists accountable for their behavior, had more about the story:

> William and Zachary Zulock are gay rights activists who have a long social media history of support for liberal and leftist causes. In 2018, William Zulock announced they had adopted two boys. Between the two suspects' social media accounts, there are posts about "pizza," BLM, radical trans rights, and adoration of the Human Rights Campaign, a queer lobbying group with close ties to the Democrat Party. Photos show the children were taken to the headquarters of the HRC in Washington, D.C. in September 2019.

Do you remember seeing those little flags on the backs of people's cars that signaled support for same-sex marriage? The blue ones with the yellow equal signs? That's the Human Rights Campaign flag. The gay couple in the story were big fans of that flag. I posted the image of one of them above, as the "featured image" for this post. (Source: Twitter)

Also, this was shared by Andy Ngo on Witter:

"No hate". If you disagree with same-sex marriage, because it's not the best environment

for children, does that make you a hater?

The Gospel Coalition doesn't want to make the case against same-sex marriage. They want Christians to accept it. They think "who cares about how same-sex marriage affects children?"

What I'd like to see from The Gospel Coalition, Christianity Today, the ERLC, and other secular leftist, anti-intellectual "Christian" groups is an argument against same-sex marriage that defends Jesus' definition of marriage (one man, one woman). Is that too much to ask? I've made secular arguments against same-sex marriage based on evidence many times on this blog. It's not that hard, but you do have to read books about it, rather than just virtue signal to the secular left in the hope (the VAIN hope) that they will like you.

You don't have to be a Christian to disagree with same-sex marriage. You can argue in favor of natural marriage on completely non-religious grounds. That's what I'd like to see from our "elite" Christian leaders. Statistically, children do better when they are raised by two biological parents. That's a non-sectarian argument against same-sex marriage.

New study: women who have fewer premarital sex partners have lower risk of divorce

August 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from Family Studies that talks about how the number of pre-marital sex partners that a woman has increases her risk of divorce.

It says:

> American sexual behavior is much different than it used to be. Today, most Americans think premarital sex is okay, and will have three or more sexual partners before marrying. What, if anything, does premarital sex have to do with marital stability?
>
> This research brief shows that the relationship between divorce and the number of sexual partners women have prior to marriage is complex. I explore this relationship using data from the three most recent waves of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) collected in 2002, 2006-2010, and 2011-2013. For women marrying since the start of the new millennium:
>
> - Women with 10 or more partners were *the most likely* to divorce, but this only became true in recent years;
> - Women with 3-9 partners were *less likely* to divorce than women with 2 partners; and,
> - Women with 0-1 partners were the *least likely* to divorce.
>
> Earlier research found that having multiple sex partners prior to marriage could lead to less happy marriages, and often increased the odds of divorce.
>
> […]Even more noteworthy has been the decline in the proportion of women who get married having had only one sex partner (in most cases, their future husbands). Forty-three percent of women had just one premarital sex partner in the 1970s.
>
> […]By the 2010s, only 5 percent of new brides were virgins. At the other end of the distribution, the number of future wives who had ten or more sex partners increased from 2 percent in the 1970s to 14 percent in the 2000s, and then to 18 percent in the 2010s. Overall, American women are far more likely to have had multiple premarital sex partners in recent years (unfortunately, the NSFG doesn't have full data on men's premarital sexual behavior, and in any event they recall their own marital histories less reliably than do women).

Here's the change:

Table 1: The Distribution of Women's Premarital Sex Partners, by Marriage Cohort					
	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
0 partner	21%	17%	14%	12%	5%
1 partner	43%	36%	26%	21%	22%
2 partners	16%	15%	13%	13%	12%
3 partners	8%	11%	11%	11%	11%
4-5 partners	6%	12%	16%	17%	18%
6-9 partners	4%	5%	11%	13%	14%
10+ partners	2%	4%	10%	14%	18%
total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	268	1,921	4,312	3,598	273

Women have freely chosen to dismiss the Bible and the moral law

And the problem with this, of course, is that more premarital sex partners means a higher risk of divorce:

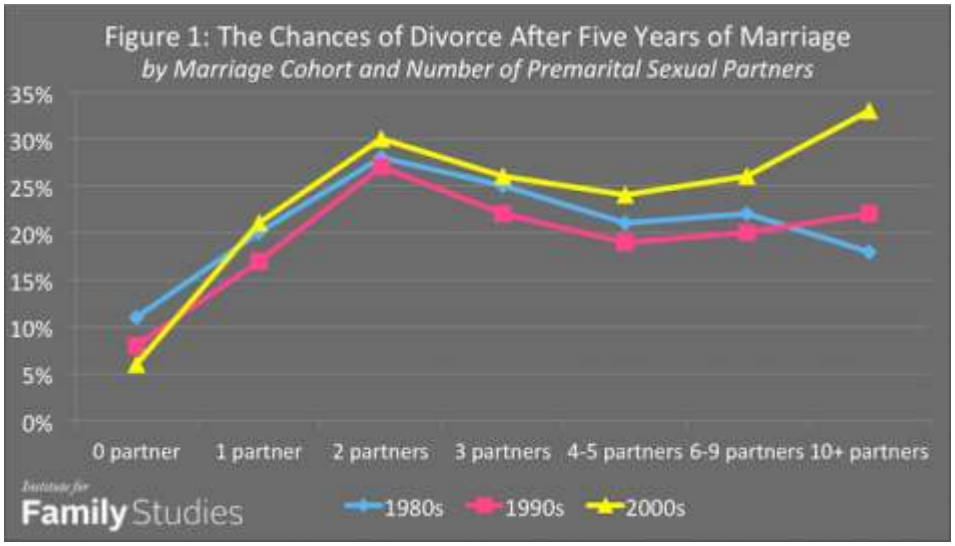

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

Why is the 2-partner number so high?

> In most cases, a woman's two premarital sex partners include her future husband and one other man. That second sex partner is first-hand proof of a sexual alternative to one's husband. These sexual experiences convince women that sex outside of wedlock is indeed a possibility. The man involved was likely to have become a partner in the course of a serious relationship—women inclined to hook up will have had more than two premarital partners—thereby emphasizing the seriousness of the alternative.

The Christian Post had an article about some recent numbers from the Centers for Disease Control about virgins.

Excerpt:

> A new Centers for Disease Control study examines teenage health behaviors in connection to their self-reported sexual activity and shows those who remain abstinent are much healthier on many fronts than their sexually active peers.
>
> The report, titled "Sexual Identity, Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12, United States and Selected Sites," showcased the results from a 2015 survey that monitored several categories of health-

> related behaviors like tobacco usage, drug and alcohol use, sexual habits, unhealthy dietary behaviors, and behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence.
>
> The report concludes "that students who had no sexual contact have a much lower prevalance of most health-risk behaviors compared with students" who had sexual contact.

The article quotes Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, who I have featured on this blog many times:

> In a Monday interview with The Christian Post, Jennifer Roback Morse, founder and president of the Ruth Institute, said, "this study is remarkable because it asks questions and reports the answers, rather than avoiding questions or assuming answers."
>
> As Glenn Stanton noted last week in The Federalist, the results from those questions and answers are remarkable.
>
> With regard to smoking, teenage virgins are 3,300 percent less likely to smoke daily than their peers who are sexually involved with someone of the opposite sex, Stanton computed from the report's data. Teen virgins are 9,500 percent less likely to smoke daily than their peers who are sexually involved with someone of the same sex or in a bisexual relationship, he added. Chaste young people are also extremely less likely to use indoor tanning beds, binge drink, smoke marijuana, ride in cars as passengers with a drunk driver, and get into physical fights than their sexually active peers. Abstinent youth are also more likely to get a solid eight hours of sleep every night and eat breakfast daily.
>
> […]The CDC report also included findings from 25 state surveys, and 19 large, urban school district surveys conducted among students in grades 9–12 which took place between December of 2014 and September of 2015.

Now, many pro traditional marriage people will tell young men "feminism and the sexual revolution change nothing about a woman's suitability for marriage, so go out there and get married to these women anyway". In my experience, no one is telling women NOT to follow their hearts, and explaining to them the harm that they do by allowing their feelings to determine who they will engage in relationships.

I would like to see women make better decisions with men before they marry, rather than be influenced by their peers and culture to give themselves to men who are not marriage-minded. Maybe a little skepticism should be shown to "follow your heart"? Women need to understand what they are losing when they choose to have premarital sex.

In my group of friends, the men are aware of the Biblical prohibition on premarital sex. My friends know about the research on marriage, and what it takes to make a marriage work. We don't follow our hearts, because we do what we know will work to achieve the results we want. We don't listen to the culture, and we don't listen to radical feminists. Men generally take an engineering approach to marriage – we want to know what the best

practices and tradeoffs are, and then we plan and act to succeed.

I’m not a Jehovah’s Witness for the same reason I’m not a global warming alarmist

August 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the summer, a couple of Jehovah’s Witness ladies were going door-to-door and they stopped by my house while I was out mowing. I decided to talk to them. They asked me why I was an evangelical Protestant rather than a JW. Rather than go into a lot of theology about the Trinity and the Watchtower translation, I decided to to just tell them about the false predictions their group has made.

So, let’s just quickly review that using this article from Watchman fellowship, which quotes JW publications:

> Initially the organization taught the “battle of the Great Day of God Almighty” (Armageddon) would end in 1914. Every kingdom of the world would be overthrown in 1914 which was “God’s date” not for the beginning but “for the *end”* of the time of trouble.
>
> “…we consider it an established truth that the final end of the kingdoms of this world, and the full establishment of the Kingdom of God, will be accomplished by the end of A.D. 1914” (Watchtower founder, Charles Taze Russell, *The Time is at Hand,* p. 99).
>
> “…the ‘battle of the great day of God Almighty’ (Rev. 16:14), which will end in A.D. 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth’s present rulership, is already commenced” (*Ibid.,* p. 101).
>
> “CAN IT BE DELAYED UNTIL 1914?…our readers are writing to know if there may not be a mistake in the 1914 date. They say that they do not see how present conditions can last so long under the strain. We see no reason for changing the figures – nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God’s dates not ours. But bear in mind that the end of 1914 is not the date for the *beginning,* but for the *end* of the time of trouble” (*Watch Tower,* 15 July 1894, p. 226).

Clearly, the world did not end in 1914, and it did not end at subsequent JW predictions, either, e.g. 1925, 1975.

So, as the title of the post says that I can’t be a global warming alarmist for the same reason I can’t be a Jehovah’s Witness: failed predictions.

Here’s an excellent article from Daily Signal by famous black economist Walter Williams, who explains the connection:

> As reported in The New York Times (Aug. 1969) Stanford University biologist Paul Ehrlich warned: “The trouble with almost all environmental problems is that by the time we have enough evidence to convince people, you’re dead. We must

> realize that unless we're extremely lucky, everybody will disappear in a cloud of blue steam in 20 years."
>
> In 2000, David Viner, a senior research scientist at University of East Anglia's climate research unit, predicted that in a few years winter snowfall would become "a very rare and exciting event. Children just aren't going to know what snow is."
>
> In 2004, the U.S. Pentagon warned President George W. Bush that major European cities would be beneath rising seas. Britain will be plunged into a Siberian climate by 2020. In 2008, Al Gore predicted that the polar ice cap would be gone in a mere 10 years. A U.S. Department of Energy study led by the U.S. Navy predicted the Arctic Ocean would experience an ice-free summer by 2016.
>
> In May 2014, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius declared during a joint appearance with Secretary of State John Kerry that "we have 500 days to avoid climate chaos."
>
> Peter Gunter, professor at North Texas State University, predicted in the spring 1970 issue of The Living Wilderness:

> Demographers agree almost unanimously on the following grim timetable: by 1975 widespread famines will begin in India; these will spread by 1990 to include all of India, Pakistan, China and the Near East, Africa. By the year 2000, or conceivably sooner, South and Central America will exist under famine conditions. … By the year 2000, thirty years from now, the entire world, with the exception of Western Europe, North America, and Australia, will be in famine.

> Ecologist Kenneth Watt's 1970 prediction was, "If present trends continue, the world will be about four degrees colder for the global mean temperature in 1990, but eleven degrees colder in the year 2000." He added, "This is about twice what it would take to put us into an ice age."

Williams concludes:

> Today's wild predictions about climate doom are likely to be just as true as yesteryear's. The major difference is today's Americans are far more gullible and more likely to spend trillions fighting global warming. And the only result is that we'll be much poorer and less free.

We have known for decades that the Earth's temperatures were much warmer during the "Medieval Warming Period", hundreds of years ago. But some people are just having irrational fears about overpopulation, resource shortages, etc. and so they will promote nonsense to try to scare people into doing what they want. World history is full of pious-sounding attention-seeking hoaxsters who try to scare the gullible masses into giving them money and/or power. It's not new.

American father loses parental rights after ex-wife announces their child is transgender

August 11, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, I blogged about a case in Canada, where a father was imprisoned for objecting to the forced transgendering of his child by the schools, hospitals, lawyers and judges. The people pushing for the transgendering were all feminists and LGBT activists. That case was quite disturbing, and I was wondering when this would come to America. Then I found an article by Abigail Shrier in City Journal.

The father, Ted, is a senior software engineer with Apple. He is comfortable living in San Francisco. His wife Christine is an executive at BlackRock, the firm that is always buying up people's houses and then renting them out. They also champion ESG, which is a social credit system for businesses, that leads to socialism.

Things started to go wrong for Ted when his wife moved to the East coast with the two boys for family reasons:

> Ted was then fully preoccupied with a grueling six-week project for Apple… On a Saturday in August 2019, shortly after returning from upstate New York with the boys, Christine walked into Ted's home office and announced both that she was leaving and that their son Drew was transgender… Christine walked out, taking the kids to stay with her at a neighbor's house.

Most women who go along with transgendering do so because they want their children to like them, and they want to be seen as compassionate and tolerant by their peers.

But the father did research on the risks to his child:

> While trying to keep an open mind about Drew's gender, Ted was adamant to the judge that he did not want Drew to begin medical transition. In the 312 days since he had last seen his boy, Ted had done a lot of research on medical transition and gender dysphoria. He begged the court to consider research that suggested puberty blockers could impair cognition and diminish bone density. He knew that Drew, if administered puberty blockers along with estrogen, would be at high risk of permanent infertility. He wasn't even sure that his son had gender dysphoria. He wanted to see his son—and he wanted this bullet train to slow down.

The San Francisco judge awarded full custody of Drew to his wife:

> On June 24, 2020… Judge Joni Hiramoto granted Christine sole legal custody of Drew on a temporary basis and approved the shared legal and physical custody arrangement of their younger son. She assured Ted that her order was not yet permanent. Judge Hiramoto had decided to order the appointment of a minor's counsel to investigate how the boys were faring before making any permanent

> decisions. She already had the perfect person in mind. “I actually know of one who was previously appointed by the court, by a different judge, on a case involving children that were allegedly transgender,” she said. That minor’s counsel was attorney Daniel Harkins.

Harkins decided that Ted’s hesitance to drug therapy and sex change surgery was a sign that Ted was not a fit parent:

> Based on the lengthy minor’s counsel report, Harkins gave Ted’s parenting a failing grade: “Father has not been accepting of [Drew’s] status as transgender. He has been quite clear that he does not accept that [Drew] is in fact transgender.”
>
> […]Harkins’s judgment was swift and ironclad: mom should retain full legal custody on a permanent basis and provide Ted updates, at her discretion, regarding matters that affect Drew’s health, education, and welfare. Drew would commence hormone therapy, as directed by USCF. Judge Hiramoto made all this official. The only right that Ted seems to have retained is the power to prevent Drew from undergoing “any gender identity related surgery” before he turns 18, absent agreement of both parties.

Without Ted’s knowledge or permission, Drew got a puberty-blocking implant, and Ted had to pay:

> In October 2021, Ted was stunned by a $209,820.34 charge on his insurance statement. When he wrote to Christine, she confirmed that a puberty-blocking implant had been inserted in Drew’s arm months earlier and that Drew had begun a course of cross-sex hormones. The combination—if not soon stopped—would likely sterilize Drew. No one had asked Ted’s permission for the procedure or even informed Ted of what had been done.

This part is interesting, especially for men who are considering marriage and having children today.

Read it carefully:

> Ted responded to this news with a flurry of e-mails to Christine’s attorney. He told Christine’s lawyer that the medical procedure was in violation of a court order, and Christine was risking being held in contempt of court. A day later, Christine’s lawyer filed a request for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order against Ted, alleging that he had spoken to his ex-wife “menacingly” at their younger son’s football games. Ted was served with the temporary restraining order; California law now required him to relinquish all his firearms within 24 hours or potentially face felony charges. He quickly complied.

Ted was informed about the long-term consequences of the decision, because he had looked at evidence. But how did his ex-wife respond to his evidence? By charging him

with domestic violence. Not actual violence, but just words of disagreement which caused her to feel unhappy.

Ted made the decision to let people at his Silicon Valley company know what was happening in a company Slack channel. Slack is software used to allow employees to communicate with each other in a chat format. People in the channel were offended, and reported him to Human Resources:

> Ted joined the Apple Slack channel devoted to "trans kid parenting" and shared his outrage and concern about his son's medical transition and the risks involved. The other members chastised him and reported Ted to "Employee Relations," known everywhere else as "HR." Ted now worries for his job.

The details of Ted's divorce were not revealed in the article, but if he is supposed to pay child support and alimony to his wife, and he lost his job, he probably would still have come up with the same amount of money, or go to prison for not paying his debts. That's how the divorce courts work.

And here is how the story ended for with Harkins:

> Within just a few months, the court would definitively end Ted's parental relationship. He would have no right to see Drew, no right to talk to him, no right to demand that Drew attend therapy with him, and absolutely no right to stop a medical transition already planned by the Child and Adolescent Gender Center of UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital.

And now I want to say something about what this means to me as a Christian man, who is frequently urged to go to church and get married and have children by church-attending women and pastors.

The denial of male headship

The overriding of male leadership of the home that you saw from the judge and the attorney is universal… even among conservative evangelical Christian women who claim to be social conservatives. One evangelical Christian social conservative woman told me that "Masculinity means that men use their strength to protect and provide for women". Another one told me that male headship does not exist in the Bible, and that men have no authority in marriages – only responsibilities. She also said that when women divorce, it is ALWAYS the fault of their husbands for not meeting the wife's emotional needs.

Even many evangelical Christian socially conservative women don't think that men have a distinct role to confront evil, protect their children, or lead their homes. They would side with the divorcing wife and the female judge against the mean, excluding, judgmental, father Ted. They would say that men's role in marriage is to be compassionate, tolerant, and to make their wives happy.

Marriage and child-bearing exposes you to the state

To Christian men who are considering marriage and child-raising, you need to choose women who form their views on morality, policy, etc. through reason and evidence. If she

isn’t interested in truth, then understand that her views will be formed by her feelings and peer-approval. You will not be able to change her mind by appealing to reason and evidence. Look for women who have the demonstrated ability to defend their theological and moral views against the secular left culture. For example, the issue of male headship in marriage. Otherwise, you can expect the treatment that Ted got at the hands of his ex-wife, the judge, etc. Divorce is a nightmare for men. The feminist state will overpower you. You will lose your freedom, your savings and your children. You will become a slave.

Read 2 Tim 2:4 and consider whether you want to use your freedom and finances to serve God, or whether you want to be controlled by the secular left state. As a Christian man, you already have a Boss. A woman’s role is to help you serve your Boss. Beware of women who want to take the place of your Boss. Beware of women who think that marriage is about you making them happy. Beware of women who scorn your moral leadership. Beware of women who demand that you show compassion, tolerance and approval for whatever is popular in the secular left culture.

Here’s how the next Republican administration can dismantle the FBI

August 12, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve been thinking about this and struggling to see how we can keep the part of the FBI that does law enforcement, and abolish the part of the FBI that is being paid taxpayer money to undermine our elections. So I was excited to find an article by someone who likes law enforcement and counter-terrorism who nevertheless thinks that the FBI should be dismantled. And he explains how.

This article from American Greatness is by Kyle Shideler, and it’s a must-read.

First, here is his goal:

> The solution to the abuses we now endure is not just to subject the FBI to another fruitless inspector general investigation but to dismantle it completely. The bureau cannot be the focus of yet another congressional hearing. FBI Director Christopher Wray, like his predecessors, is more than happy to sit smirking while a handful of grandstanding congressmen and senators pound the table and yell on C-SPAN. Then he’ll jet off for a holiday vacation on a taxpayer-funded private jet while the same congressmen vote to increase his budget. Again.

I’m not sure if you heard about this, but the FBI Director left a congressional hearing early in order to use a taxpayer-funded jet to fly him to his vacation. That’s the respect that the FBI has for taxpayers who pay their salaries.

What I liked about this article is this summary of what the FBI has done that is so objectionable. A lot of people who just read David French and Russell Moore are too focused on virtue signaling to remember the history of the FBI’s abuses. They just watch CNN, and believe whatever will make them look virtuous to the people on CNN. They can’t remember all the times that the FBI has done bad work, because they aren’t informed.

Here’s what the FBI has been doing:

> The FBI’s actions over the past six years make perfectly clear that the FBI is more than willing to serve as the enforcement arm of the Democratic Party. It serves as its patron’s shield in matters large and small. It exonerated Hillary Clinton for her illicit server. It raided James O’Keefe and Project Veritas when Joe Biden’s daughter lost her diary. It eliminated investigation into Black Lives Matter and other black identity extremists because those pursuits annoyed the Democrats’ Congressional Black Caucus. It refuses even to utter the word “Antifa” while churches and pregnancy centers are fire-bombed. It continues to cover up for Hunter Biden’s corrupt dealings with enemy nations, along with his indulgence in criminal prostitution and drug abuse.
>
> But the FBI has also served as the Democrats’ sword as well. It knowingly

> laundered the Russian collusion hoax, lying in order to secure FISA warrants. It ambushed the president's sitting national security advisor in a nonsense perjury trap. The FBI hunts down January 6 protesters while dodging congressional inquiries about the role of federal agents in provoking the incident. The FBI ginned up a fake kidnapping plot in Michigan to instill fear of right-wing terrorism, manhandled the former president's lawyer, and shackled one of his former high-level aides.
>
> And it has now raided the former president's home under a mere pretext, while the Democrats openly crow on cable news about using a political prosecution to prevent Trump from ever again being able to serve in office.
>
> Other attempts to rein in the FBI short of its abolition have failed. The FBI shows nothing but contempt for those authorized to oversee it. It routinely ignores inspector general investigations. It fails to prosecute or punish those who overtly violate established policies. It refuses to answer legitimate questions from Republican committee members. It doesn't even respond to congressional letters of inquiry. It punishes FBI whistleblowers and seeks to purge from its midst those agents who aren't in lockstep with its new praetorian guard role.

That's a very useful summary for people who have a casual interest in politics and may not be following all of the details.

The FBI is clearly out of control, and they need to be broken up. These are not honest people. They lack integrity. We shouldn't be paying them out of our taxes to fail at their jobs. We can find other people to do whatever tasks they do that are valuable.

Here's the plan to break the FBI up:

> Begin by separating out the FBI's component parts. The FBI's crime lab, statistical services, and National Crime Information Center service could be pulled out and left as independent agencies with the sole job of supporting other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies with their scientific and data capabilities.
>
> Parcel out the FBI's criminal justice division and its tasks to the various state-level bureaus of investigation. Provide direct federal funding to compensate for the extra workload. Let them primarily make state-level cases, in state court, for the crimes committed within the physical boundaries of their states. It's not as though kidnapping, bank robbery, drug dealing, or racketeering went unpunished before the FBI came along. White collar, financial, and cybercrimes can be handled by the U.S. Secret Service. Federal crimes whose perpetrators directly cross state lines can be given to the U.S. Marshals Service to track down. Unlike the FBI, the U.S. Marshals are largely scandal-free, and have a long history of cooperating successfully with state and local law enforcement.
>
> For the disgraced national security division, divide up the FBI's counterterrorism portfolio among the remaining federal law enforcement and homeland security

> agencies with a role to play, and the various state and regional JTTFs.

I like law enforcement. I like national security. I like the work that FBI has done to fight crime and terrorism in the past. But if they are so compromised that they can’t do the work in the present, then we need to break up. The next Republican administration and president needs to do that.

Hero awarded Medal of Honor for rescuing wounded soldiers while under fire

August 13, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've finally read enough about World War 2 and the Korean War to move on to the Vietnam war. In this war, America is fighting communists from North Vietnam who are invading the democracy of South Vietnam to make their country communist. While reading several books, I found a story about American soldiers who risked their lives for others while under fire from the enemy.

The story I found was in the book "Legend: The Incredible Story of Green Beret Sergeant Roy Benavidez's Heroic Mission to Rescue a Special Forces Team Caught Behind Enemy Lines".

An American Special Forces team of 12 people – 3 Americans, and 9 Motagnard natives – was discovered by North Vietnamese communists behind enemy lines in Cambodia. After a short firefight, they called for extraction. They were quickly surrounded by about 1000 enemy soldiers. It was extremely difficult for the helicopters to extract them. Some the Special Forces men and helicopter crews were wounded or killed during the extraction attempt.

I wanted to mention especially two of the men who were killed from the Special Operations team:

> - SFC Leroy N. Wright, Newark, NJ (Dist Svc Cross)
> - SSG Lloyd F. Mousseau, Cudahy, CA (Dist Svc Cross)

Here's some more detail about Leroy Wright, the team leader:

> Leroy Wright was the leader of a 12 man special operations recon team inserted secretly by helicopter into Northern Cambodia about 60 miles NW of Saigon. His mission was to capture an NVA truck and return with the truck to Vietnam with a load of Russian supplies to prove give physical proof that the Viet Cong were being supplied through Cambodia.
>
> Unfortunately Wright's team was landed in the midst of a large force of hundreds of NVA regulars deployed in depth around their landing zone. They were compromised when their hiding place was discovered by two NVA soldiers. Lloyd Mousseau, assistant team leader killed these men sliently but a shot was fired by one of them alerting the other NVA in the vicinity.
>
> Wright requested permission for extraction but was ordered to continue the mission by his superiors in Vietnam. He followed his orders and moved towards his objective, but soon encountered a patrol of about 12 NVA. In a brief but noisy fight his team wiped out the NVA partrol without any casualties to the team. He then immediately called for emergency extraction and rushed the team to the

> planned pickup zone.
>
> At the pickup zone Wright encountered numerous NVA troops and became locked in a fire fight which killed or wounded all of his men. The emergency extraction force, a flight of four UH1C gunships, call sign Maddogs, and four UH1H slicks, call sign Greyhounds, soon approached the pickup zone but it was driven away by intense and accurate enemy fire that killed one crew member, Michael Craig, and wounded others.
>
> On the ground Wright moved about his beleagured team encouraging them and repositioning them to defend the extraction landing zone. While redeploying one group of his men he was hit by enemy fire and lost the use of his legs. Then two enemy grenades fell between him and his teammates, endangering them all. Wright threw one back at the enemy but only had time to roll his body onto the second grenade before it exploded lifting him into the air. Wright survived this explosion and fought on for a time firing his weapon until he was killed by a shot in his head.

I also wanted to mention the pilot from second Huey helicopter that was shot down:

> - WO Larry S. McKibben, Houston, TX, pilot (Dist Svc Cross)

Here are some more details about McKibben:

> Warrant Officer McKibben distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 2 May 1968 as aircraft commander of a helicopter supporting ground operations near Loc Ninh. A small reconnaissance team was pursued by a numerically superior enemy force, and Mister McKibben immediately extracted it. A larger team, replacing the first, was quickly surrounded by two companies of North Vietnamese Army troops and he volunteered to attempt a second extraction mission.
>
> At the landing zone a supporting gunship was shot down by the murderous enemy fire. Despite extreme hazard to his safety, Mister McKibben braved the savage fusillade to land and successfully rescue the downed crew. After refueling, he returned to the area and prepared to rescue the ground force. Although he was informed that two helicopters had sustained casualties to their crews attempting pickups during his absence, he fearlessly maneuvered through a hail of fire, reached the landing zone and began loading troops. The enemy force concentrated their full firepower on his craft, but he refused to take off until all survivors were on board. As he prepared to fly out of the landing zone, he was instantly killed by an enemy bullet passing through the cockpit.

Please take a moment to remember the men who died that day, fighting communism in Vietnam so that we could enjoy our freedom from tyranny. We will remember them.

But I do have a positive story. A Green Beret Special Forces soldier who heard the request

for help from the Special Forces team was awarded the Medal of Honor for helping to extract the wounded while under fire himself. His name was Roy Benavidez.

Here is his Medal of Honor citation:

> Master Sergeant (then Staff Sergeant) Roy P. BENAVIDEZ United States Army, distinguished himself by a series of daring and extremely valorous actions on 2 May 1968 while assigned to Detachment B56, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Republic of Vietnam.
>
> On the morning of 2 May 1968, a 12-man Special Forces Reconnaissance Team was inserted by helicopters of the 240th Assault Helicopter Company in a dense jungle area west of Loc Ninh, Vietnam to gather intelligence information about the confirmed large-scale enemy activity. This area was controlled and routinely patrolled by the North Vietnamese Army. After a short period of time on the ground, the team met heavy enemy resistance, and requested emergency extraction. Three helicopters attempted extraction but were unable to land due to intense enemy small arms and anti-aircraft fire.
>
> Sergeant BENAVIDEZ was at the Forward Operating Base in Loc Ninh monitoring the operation by radio when these helicopters, of the 240th Assault Helicopter Company, returned to off-load wounded crew members and to assess aircraft damage. Sergeant BENAVIDEZ voluntarily boarded a returning aircraft to assist in another extraction attempt. Realizing that all the team members were either dead or wounded and unable to move to the pickup zone, he directed the aircraft to a nearby clearing where he jumped from the hovering helicopter, and ran approximately 75 meters under withering small arms fire to the crippled team.
>
> Prior to reaching the team's position he was wounded in his right leg, face, and head. Despite these painful injuries, he took charge, repositioning the team members and directing their fire to facilitate the landing of an extraction aircraft, and the loading of wounded and dead team members. He then threw smoke canisters to direct the aircraft to the team's position. Despite his severe wounds and under intense enemy fire, he carried and dragged half of the wounded team members to the awaiting aircraft. He then provided protective fire by running alongside the aircraft as it moved to pick up the remaining team members. As the enemy's fire intensified, he hurried to recover the body and classified documents on the dead team leader.
>
> When he reached the leader's body, Sergeant BENAVIDEZ was severely wounded by small arms fire in the abdomen and grenade fragments in his back. At nearly the same moment, the aircraft pilot was mortally wounded, and his helicopter crashed. Although in extremely critical condition due to his multiple wounds, Sergeant BENAVIDEZ secured the classified documents and made his way back to the wreckage, where he aided the wounded out of the overturned aircraft, and gathered the stunned survivors into a defensive perimeter. Under increasing enemy automatic weapons and grenade fire, he moved around the perimeter

> distributing water and ammunition to his weary men, reinstilling in them a will to live and fight. Facing a buildup of enemy opposition with a beleaguered team, Sergeant BENAVIDEZ mustered his strength, began calling in tactical air strikes and directed the fire from supporting gunships to suppress the enemy's fire and so permit another extraction attempt.
>
> He was wounded again in his thigh by small arms fire while administering first aid to a wounded team member just before another extraction helicopter was able to land. His indomitable spirit kept him going as he began to ferry his comrades to the craft. On his second trip with the wounded, he was clubbed from behind by an enemy soldier. In the ensuing hand-to-hand combat, he sustained additional wounds to his head and arms before killing his adversary. He then continued under devastating fire to carry the wounded to the helicopter. Upon reaching the aircraft, he spotted and killed two enemy soldiers who were rushing the craft from an angle that prevented the aircraft door gunner from firing upon them. With little strength remaining, he made one last trip to the perimeter to ensure that all classified material had been collected or destroyed, and to bring in the remaining wounded.
>
> Only then, in extremely serious condition from numerous wounds and loss of blood, did he allow himself to be pulled into the extraction aircraft. Sergeant BENAVIDEZ' gallant choice to join voluntarily his comrades who were in critical straits, to expose himself constantly to withering enemy fire, and his refusal to be stopped despite numerous severe wounds, saved the lives of at least eight men. His fearless personal leadership, tenacious devotion to duty, and extremely valorous actions in the face of overwhelming odds were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect the utmost credit on him and the United States Army.

If you're looking for a good book on helicopter operations in the Vietnam war, I've just finished "To the Limit: An Air Cav Huey Pilot in Vietnam" and really enjoyed it. Regarding special operations in the Vietnam war, I just finished "Uncommon Valor: The Recon Company that Earned Five Medals of Honor and Included America's Most Decorated Green Beret" which was almost as good.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 18: Basic Christian Beliefs in Philippians

August 14, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 18 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss basic Christian beliefs, by studying the book of Philippians in the New Testament. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 18:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss basic Christian beliefs from the book of Philippians in the Bible. We talk about the gospel, and what it means to partner for the gospel. We talk about loving God and loving other Christians. We talk about Jesus, and what virtues he demonstrates for us to imitate. We talk about how Christians focus on Heaven and eternal things, not the things in this world.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Recommended resources:

- Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know by Wayne Grudem
- Essential Truths of the Christian Faith by R.C. Sproul
- Basics for Believers: The Core of Christian Faith and Life by D. A. Carson

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Who controls voter management systems in 31 states and Washington, D.C.?

August 15, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The November election is getting pretty close, and I keep telling conservatives and Christians that they need to do more than show up on election day. Now is the time to be sharing articles with independents, because we will have to win over a lot of independents in order to win the elections in November. Why? Because the Democrats have a plan to get out their voters.

Take a look at this article from The Federalist by Victoria Marshall.

Excerpt:

> A prominent voter-roll management system used by 31 states and the District of Columbia has politically compromised ties, according to a new report by independent research group Verity Vote.
>
> The Electronic Registration Information Center, or ERIC, was sold to states as a quick and easy way to update their voter rolls. Started in 2012 by far-left activist David Becker and the left-leaning Pew Charitable Trusts, the program is ostensibly run by the member states themselves. But as public records show, Democratic operatives are working overtime under the cover of ERIC to accomplish their partisan goals and drive Democratic voter turnout.

Here's what we know about David Becker:

> Before he started ERIC, Becker worked as a lobbyist for People for the American Way, a George Soros-funded advocacy group best known for the Right Wing Watch project, a website that catalogs and attacks conservative politicians and movements.
>
> Before that, though, he was a Justice Department attorney whom colleagues remember as a "hard-core leftist" who "couldn't stand Conservatives."

Connected to Mark Zuckerberg's "Zuckerbucks" election strategy, which targets blue areas of swing states:

> But now ERIC is undergoing scrutiny for its involvement with another Becker project, the Center for Election Innovation and Research (CEIR). That group was one of two leftist groups used to funnel Mark Zuckerberg's $419 million that funded the private takeover of government election offices in 2020. This funding targeted the blue areas of swing states, allowing left-wing operatives to run Democrat "get out the vote" operations from inside the election apparatus.
>
> ERIC shares voter roll data — including records of unregistered voters — it receives from the states with CEIR, according to public information requests

> detailed in the report. CEIR then develops targeted mailing lists and sends them back to the states to use for voter registration outreach. As part of their agreement with ERIC, states are not allowed to disclose any data they send to nor receive from ERIC, however, ERIC is not under the same constraints and is able to work with CEIR.

They are supposed to be scrubbing ineligible voters off the voting rolls, but…

> Per ERIC's own statistics, in 2020, it identified 17 million new voters compared to identifying only about 3 million inaccurate voters on the rolls.

Remember how Biden surprised everyone by winning swing states like Pennsylvania and Michigan?

> As previously reported, CEIR held significant sway in the 2020 election. After receiving more than $70 million from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, CEIR mainly funneled the cash to Democratic secretaries of state in key swing states to gain access to data needed to inflate voter rolls and drive Democratic voter turnout. Pennsylvania and Michigan received the most CEIR funds, with Pennsylvania's Department of State receiving $13 million and Michigan nearly $12 million.
>
> CEIR's own website says grant funds were exclusively used for voter education, specifically "direct mail outreach, paid media campaigns, and other communication activities." In Michigan, however, $11.8 million of its $12 million grant went to Democratic consulting firms for conducting so-called "nonpartisan" voter education. Meanwhile, the $13 million to Pennsylvania's secretary of state funded a massive "voter information" campaign in mostly Democrat-heavy Philadelphia and Allegheny counties.

So, what's my plan to get conservatives and Christians to vote this election? Well, on this blog, I am trying to highlight all of the things that the Democrats are doing on every kind of issue you can imagine. Not just social issues, like abortion, marriage, LGBT activism, etc. But also fiscal issues, like inflation, socialized medicine, green energy, etc. And not just fiscal issues, but law enforcement (FBI and DOJ corruption) and national security (Iran, Taiwan, etc.). The goal being to win over as many voters as I can by any means that they will find convincing.

If I can discuss 20 different policy issues, using evidence, then I can sway many different types of low-information / apathetic voters to get involved in the election. The key is getting informed about many different issues that matter, even the ones I'm not really interested in, and then sharing articles with people.

One of the best things to do is to show articles on the Democrats progressive social policy to Christians, while showing articles about gun rights and inflation to libertarians, and showing articles about foreign policy to conservatives. Basically, targeting different groups with articles they will find interesting and convincing. So I am looking over The Federalist, Daily Wire, Daily Caller, Daily Signal and Breitbart every day, and e-mailing out

articles to friends and co-workers and former co-workers. The Matt Walsh podcast is particularly useful for getting Christians who care about social issues interested in elections.

We’re going to have to do MORE than just show up to vote in November. We’re going to have to bring a lot of people with us. And that happens when we share conservative ideas, with evidence. We have to be persuasive.

Two reasons why Christians and conservatives should not donate to United Way

August 16, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, it's that time of year again, when corporations bully their employees into donating to the United Way. I thought it might be a good idea to urge all Bible-believing Christians to avoid donating to the United Way. *Please share this post if you agree with it!*

Let's start with abortion. The United Way gives TONS of money to fund abortion providers.

In 2008, United Way affiliates send $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood:

> The national United Way does fund Planned Parenthood; their website states:
>
> United Way funded programs through Planned Parenthood include community health maintenance, e.g. communicable disease prevention; medical care service; family planning; health education; public awareness services; and family preservation and strengthening services, e.g. counseling and family life education.
>
> Nationally in 2008, local United Ways distributed an estimated $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood agencies.
>
> Any finances being donated to Planned Parenthood (even if not specifically for abortion services) will free up more of their money to be used toward abortion services.

In 2015, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Last year, on the heels of shocking videos showing the Planned Parenthood abortion business selling the body parts of aborted babies, a new expose' from a group that monitors corporations that finance the abortion giant reveals the United Way is a major donor. That expose found United Way agencies giving $2 million to the abortion giant.
>
> A new expose' released this week shows that figure has increased to $3 million.

In 2016, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Analysis of the most recent IRS Form 990 filings and other documentation found 62 United Way affiliates sent $2,756,799 to Planned Parenthood abortion organizations in tax year 2016. 2ndVote's latest findings indicate an increase of $168,806 from the $2,590,994 United Way funneled to Planned Parenthood in 2015.

We're living in a time when abortion rights involves such issues as sex-selection abortions, race-selection abortions, covering up statutory rapists, Democrat support for infanticide, attacking Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, selling the body parts of

unborn babies, etc. I don't think we can count on United Way to come down on the right side of these issues. We're already being forced to fund abortions with our tax dollars, thanks to Democrats. I don't think we should give any more money to abortion providers and their secular leftist allies.

That's abortion. What about gay rights? We've seen a lot of pressure on traditional values coming from the secular left lately. They redefined marriage AGAIN to deprive children of their biological mothers or fathers. They're pushing for the Equality Act, which would have huge religious liberty repercussions for Christians.

Texas attorney Maria Martinez explains on the American Thinker:

> The Equality Act is more draconian that any state or city conversion therapy ban to date because it takes away the traditional constitutional exemption for religious freedom. The act specifically states that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) may not be invoked as a defense, marking the *first time in history that Congress has limited the reach of RFRA*. This means that it could become illegal for Christian pastors, churches, schools, and ministries to communicate a message that sexual orientation or gender identity can change. The Equality Act is unprecedented in its overreach, impacting even adults who are *willingly seeking counseling*.
>
> By contrast, therapy of any kind that pushes a person *toward* same-sex attraction or gender transition is not impacted by the law at all.
>
> Banning counseling isn't the only thing the Equality Act will do:

- Parents could lose custody of their children if they decline to assist in their gender transition. Parents in Ohio recently lost custody of their female child because they would not give her testosterone supplements to help her "transition" to look like a male.
- Doctors and hospitals could be subject to lawsuits for refusing to perform so-called "sex change" surgeries. In California and New Jersey, Catholic hospitals are already being sued for discrimination for refusing to perform these surgeries.
- Battered women's shelters could be required to admit members of the opposite sex. In Anchorage, Alaska, a male who was refused access to a shelter for abused and trafficked women sued the shelter for "gender identity discrimination."
- Faith-based adoption and foster care agencies that believe that children do best with both a mother and a father could be forced to shut down. This has already occurred in at least six states in this country.

I wonder what United Way thinks about attacks on Bible-believing Christians by LGBT activists? I posted what they shared on Facebook at the top of this post, and this is what I found on their Twitter:

United Way Twitter Gay Rights Pride Month LGBT

I don’t find that very encouraging, do you?

As a Bible-believing Christian, maybe I would be better off giving money to an organization that protects religious liberty, like Alliance Defending Freedom. I understand that many people who call themselves Christians think that the United Way’s positions are compatible with the Bible. But not everyone who calls herself a Christian actually takes the Bible seriously. Especially when it interferes with their career advancement and peer approval. This is especially true of people who work in Human Resources.

Please, don’t give money to the United Way

You don’t HAVE to give money to the United Way, just because the godless progressives in your office try to bully you into it. Instead, why not send the money to the Life Training Institute, or Ratio Christi, or Alliance Defending Freedom? These are groups do operate on Bible-based principles. I do think that Christians need to be careful about who they donate their money to. It doesn’t make sense for Christians to get up and go to work and earn money, and then give it away to anti-Christian groups who want Christianity to disappear from American life. Paul talks about how God rewards those who give gifts to partner for the gospel in Philippians. Make sure that you are not wasting your money on anything less.

UK gender clinic to be sued by 1000+ families who regret transforming

August 17, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm anxiously waiting for the most conservative states to introduce legislation that would allow children who are manipulated into changing genders to sue. You might think that it sounds like a crazy idea, but other countries who are further along are doing it.

Here's a story from the UK Times about what's happening in the socialist UK, where they have government-run health care.

Excerpt:

> The Tavistock gender clinic is facing mass legal action from youngsters who claim they were rushed into taking life-altering puberty blockers.
>
> Lawyers expect about 1,000 families to join a medical negligence lawsuit alleging vulnerable children have been misdiagnosed and placed on a damaging medical pathway.
>
> They are accusing the gender identity development service [GIDS] at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust of multiple failures in its duty of care.
>
> This includes allegations it recklessly prescribed puberty blockers with harmful side effects and adopted an "unquestioning, affirmative approach" to children identifying as transgender.
>
> Last month NHS England announced it was shutting the Tavistock clinic over safety concerns following a damning external review. Care will be handed to regional children's hospitals.
>
> The law firm Pogust Goodhead has since announced it is pursuing a group litigation order against the trust, which has treated 19,000 children with gender dysphoria (the feeling that one's emotional and psychological identity differs from one's birth sex) since 1989.
>
> Former patients given puberty blockers are joining the "class action" lawsuit and papers are due to be lodged at the High Court within six months.
>
> Tom Goodhead, chief executive of Pogust Goodhead, told *The Times*: "Children and young adolescents were rushed into treatment without the appropriate therapy and involvement of the right clinicians, meaning that they were misdiagnosed and started on a treatment pathway that was not right for them.
>
> "These children have suffered life-changing and, in some cases, irreversible effects of the treatment they received . . . We anticipate that at least 1,000 clients will join this action."

That's a 10,000 foot view of what's going on, but this other article from the UK Times shows you what it is like for one of those victims:

> A woman who had testosterone injections and a mastectomy at the Scottish equivalent of the Tavistock clinic before “detransitioning” back has said that its children’s service should be closed.
>
> Sinead Watson, now 31, was treated after self-referring to the Sandyford clinic in Glasgow when she was 24.
>
> She later realised that transitioning had not helped her depression, anxiety and self-harm. She wants Sandyford’s young people’s gender service, for those under 18, to close, following the fate of the gender identity development service at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust in London, which will shut next year.
>
> Watson, from Glasgow, told The Times: “I went to Sandyford as a 24-year-old woman with a long history of depression, anxiety, self-harm, alcohol abuse and suicidal ideation.
>
> “I did not have gender dysphoria prior to my teens. Yet for some reason, the clinic thought it was appropriate to ignore all of these other issues. Within a matter of months, I was put on irreversible cross-sex hormones.”
>
> […]“I met with a gender specialist who asked me about my childhood,” she said. “I told him that I was a perfectly normal little girl who didn’t have any gender issues at all. They contacted my GP with my permission and got access to all of my medical history. They weren’t really interested in exploring the depression, the anxiety or the self-harm. All they were interested in was talking about my gender crisis.”
>
> After three or four appointments over about five months, Watson said, she was prescribed and began injecting testosterone every three weeks. Every five months, she said, she was invited for an appointment at which specialists would check her blood pressure and hormones. “There was a bit of small talk, but it wasn’t like counselling or therapy sessions,” she said. “I was out the door in 20 minutes.”
>
> Sandyford referred Watson, by then living as Sean, to a hospital in Manchester for a mastectomy in 2017. This was a little later than the clinic had intended, she said, because of the numbers of trans men it was sending there. “I was so consumed by my desire that this transition was going to make me feel so much better, that I couldn’t wait,” she said.
>
> After the surgery, however, she found “I had taken testosterone, I had undergone surgery and I was talking about wanting to get a hysterectomy. But I was still just as depressed and as f***ing miserable as I had been.”
>
> Asked whether there had been a tipping point, Watson said: “Going into the operating room with breasts then the next minute they’re gone … it is such a big change and you know you can’t undo it . . . I just kind of thought … what have I done?”
> By 2018 Watson “fully regretted” transitioning, she said, but it was more than a

> year before she started detransitioning. She has not been back to the clinic since before her mastectomy.

I wrote about another case from the UK, where the child was on the transformer path after just 2 and a half hours of counseling.

Is there any downside to pursuing green energy?

August 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a friend in my office who is very keen on wind and solar. He treats it like a technological problem, and he's so excited about what discoveries scientists could make to get us off of non-renewable energy sources. In this post, I wanted to look at how the green energy project is working in different places, and then conclude by explaining why Christians should care about this issue.

So, close to home, the state of California heavily committed to developing "green" energy. How is that working out for them?

Here is a recent article from Reuters, a far-left news wire:

> California, struggling to balance its clean energy push with the need to boost tight power supplies and avoid rolling blackouts, will lean more on fossil fuels in coming weeks to keep the power on if scorching heatwaves stretch its grid.
>
> The Golden State, which has among the world's most aggressive environmental policies, faces a potential supply shortfall of up to 3,500 megawatts during peak demand hours in the coming weeks. That is about 2.6 million households worth of electricity supply.
>
> Governor Gavin Newsom plans to fill that gap in part by allowing industrial energy users to run on diesel generators and engines, according to a recent emergency proclamation.

California spent a lot of money on their green energy sources, and they are having to fall back on non-green sources because their plan didn't work. This isn't even to mention how much damage their expensive policies have caused to vulnerable bird and bat populations, as well as their constant forest fires. And their electricity prices are extremely high, which disproportionately affects the poor in their state.

Going up north, we find out how green energy is working in socialist Canada.

The Fraser Institute, a non-partisan think tank, reports:

> In 2005, Ontario's provincial government started a process to phase-out its coal-fired plants, one of the province's least expensive and most flexible sources of generating electricity. Ontario shuttered its last coal plant in 2014 and made it illegal to build any more. In addition, the province launched its Green Energy Act in 2009, which mandated expanded production of renewable energy and encouraged energy conservation.
>
> The result? Ontario now has the fastest-growing electricity costs in Canada and among the highest rates in North America. Furthermore, subsequent research showed that the shutdown of coal plants raised electricity rates in the province but provided few environmental benefits. Indeed, one analysis found that, had the province simply continued with retrofitting coal plants, it could have achieved

> similar environmental benefits at one-tenth the cost of the green energy programs.

I'll be saying more about why Christians should care about higher electricity prices, but for now, just note that this isn't even working in far-left countries, where there is more buy-in from the voters.

The highest electricity rates in the world are currently being paid by residents of Germany. A while back, Germany decided to transition completely off of non-renewable energy. How did that work out for them?

The far left Bloomberg News reports:

> One of Germany's biggest challenges in the fight against climate change is to keep the lights on.
>
> As Europe's biggest economy shuts its last nuclear reactor next year and utility RWE AG warns that coal plants may close earlier than planned, critics say green energy isn't being added quickly enough. Germany's ability to meet peak demand is poised to shrink rapidly over the next two years, increasing the risk of blackouts.
>
> […][German Chancellor Angela] Merkel admits her government got it wrong. Power demand will probably increase more than official forecasts by the end of the decade, she said in June. A month earlier she recognized that increasing local opposition and too much bureaucracy have curbed investments in green power.

So, why should Christians care about this? We should care, because higher energy prices eats up the money we use for our Christian goals. One of our Christian goals should be to educate our children in a way that preserves their Christian beliefs. It's become abundantly clear that most public schools are not good partners for Christian parents who have this goal. The most reasonable option is to pull the kids out of public schools and go with a private school, or homeschooling. But that costs money. In fact, money is useful for all sorts of goals that Christians might have – from buying books, to giving to charity, to being able to walk away from a job that violates their consciences, etc. Money is important for Christians. And when it gets eaten up by higher electricity costs, we have fewer options to run our lives the way we want.

Is there evidence of systemic racism in the United States?

August 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Systemic racism is the idea that people can't lift themselves out of poverty by making good decisions, because powerful groups in society that hold the poor down, regardless of their decisions. Do you think that America is a place where no matter what choices you make, you'll never be able to be more prosperous? That's what the leaders of Black Lives Matter think.

Here's what Nikole Hannah-Jones, creator of the 1619 Project, says in the New York Times (a former newspaper):

> To summarize, none of the actions we are told black people must take if they want to "lift themselves" out of poverty and gain financial stability — not marrying, not getting educated, not saving more, not owning a home — can mitigate 400 years of racialized plundering.

Got that? It doesn't matter what individual choices a non-white person takes in America, they're going to be poor. The "systemic racism" of the powerful whites will always keep them down. Single motherhood doesn't make people poor, and marriage doesn't make people wealthier. Dropping out of high school doesn't make you poor, and getting a Masters degree in computer science won't make you wealthier.

But let's take a look at the data from the 2019 Census, and see the evidence:

Median US Household Income by Selected Ancestry Groups, 2019		
Indian	Americans	$126,705
Taiwanese	Americans	$102,405
Filipino	Americans	$100,273
Indonesian	Americans	$93,501
Pakistani	Americans	$87,509
Iranian	Americans	$87,288
Lebanese	Americans	$87,099
Japanese	Americans	$85,007
Turkish	Americans	$83,375
Chinese	Americans	$82,281
Korean	Americans	$76,674
Syrian	Americans	$74,047
Hmong	Americans	$73,373
Vietnamese	Americans	$72,161
Cambodian	Americans	$72,038
White	**Americans**	**$69,823**
Ghanaian	Americans	$69,021
Bangladeshi	Americans	$67,944
Guyanese	Americans	$67,772
Egyptian	Americans	$67,187
Palestian	Americans	$67,157
Thai	Americans	$66,763
Laotian	Americans	$66,117
Nigerian	Americans	$65,672

Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Chart from AEI

Income By Ethnicity in America

White people are doing a bad job of keeping non-whites down

Well, it looks like at least SOME people of color are able to do well in America despite all the “systemic racism” that keeps non-whites down. And do you know what those non-white groups at the top have in common? They’ve made good decisions, they’ve worked hard, they haven’t blamed other people when they fail, and they’ve saved their money instead of spending it on shiny junk.

Let’s look at some decisions that the non-whites who are prosperous have made, that those further down have not.

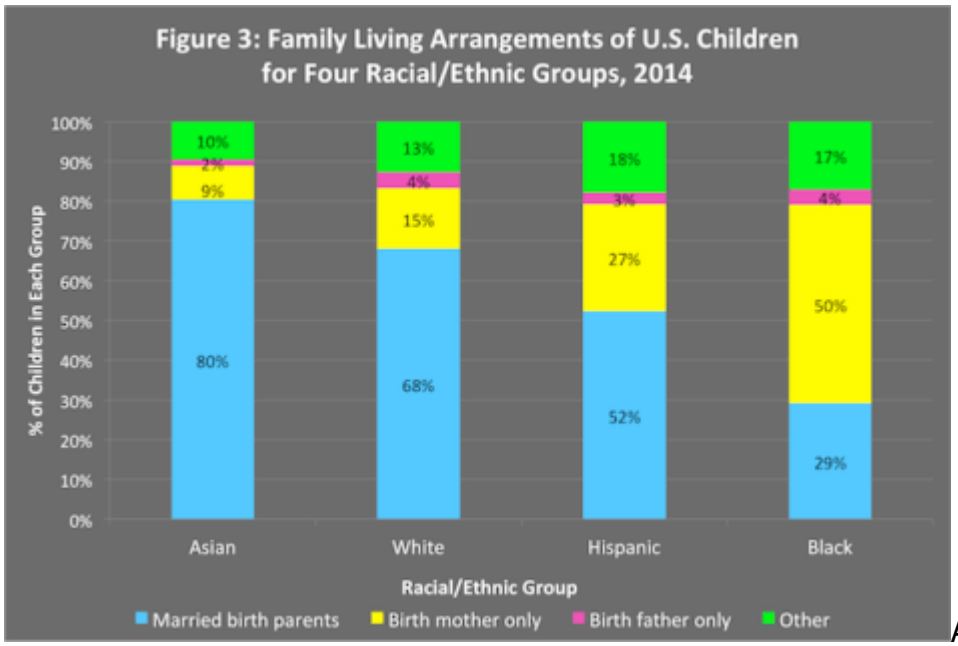

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

Education and marriage

This article is written by the far-left radical Nicholas Kristof, writing in the radically-leftist New York Times (a former newspaper).

Excerpt:

> A new scholarly book, “The Asian American Achievement Paradox,” by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, notes that Asian-American immigrants in recent decades have started with one advantage: They are highly educated, more so even than the average American. These immigrants are disproportionately doctors, research scientists and other highly educated professionals.

> It’s not surprising that the children of Asian-American doctors would flourish in the United States. But Lee and Zhou note that kids of working-class Asian-Americans often also thrive, showing remarkable upward mobility.
>
> […]There’s also evidence that Americans believe that A’s go to smart kids, while Asians are more likely to think that they go to hard workers… Asian-American kids are allowed no excuse for getting B’s — or even an A-. The joke is that an A- is an “Asian F.”

One reason Asians students do so well is because their parents are usually married:

> > Strong two-parent families are a factor, too. Divorce rates are much lower for many Asian-American communities than for Americans as a whole, and there's evidence that two-parent households are less likely to sink into poverty and also have better outcomes for boys in particular.

American blacks have a 73% out-of-wedlock birth rate. A huge difference compared to Asians.

So, when Nikole Hannah-Jones tells you that education and marriage don't matter, she's just wrong.

Compound interest

Education and marriage are important, but so is saving your money. The wealthiest people in America are typically the ones who are experts at saving money early, and investing it. They know about the law of compound interest. If you invest money early and leave it alone, then it will grow into a fortune by the time you are read to stop working.

This graph explains compound interest:

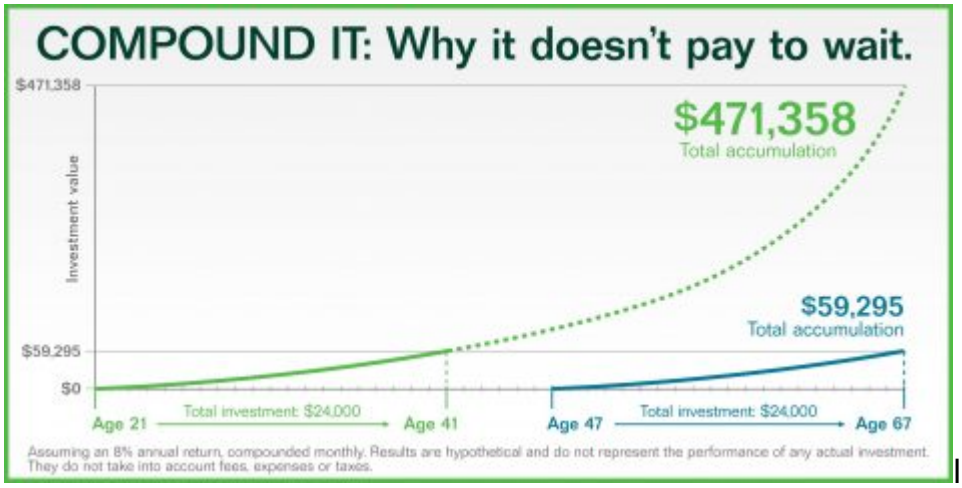

Investing $24,000 from age 21 to 41 vs investing $24000 from age 47 to 67

What does Nikole Hannah-Jones say when she looks at that graph? She doesn't think that saving money makes a difference to having more or less wealth. She thinks skin color determines whether saving money makes you wealthy or not. The graph clearly shows what we should be recommending to young people of color. They need to stop spending money and start saving it, and the earlier the better. It doesn't matter what your skin color is, saving money early JUST WORKS.

Similarly, when she says that home ownership doesn't make you more wealthy, this is just terrible advice. It's always better to pay down your own mortgage (at least when interest rates are low like they are now) than to pay someone else rent. You have to live somewhere, and paying for your own home is better because it costs about the same as rent, and then you get to keep the home when you're done paying for it.

Communism

Nikole Hannah-Jones does have a “solution” to disparities in wealth. Her solution is communism. She wants to transfer money from those who earn, to those who don’t. But we already have tried that in the 20st century and it resulted in the deaths of over 100 million people. That’s not my opinion, that’s all documented in a book published by Harvard University Press.

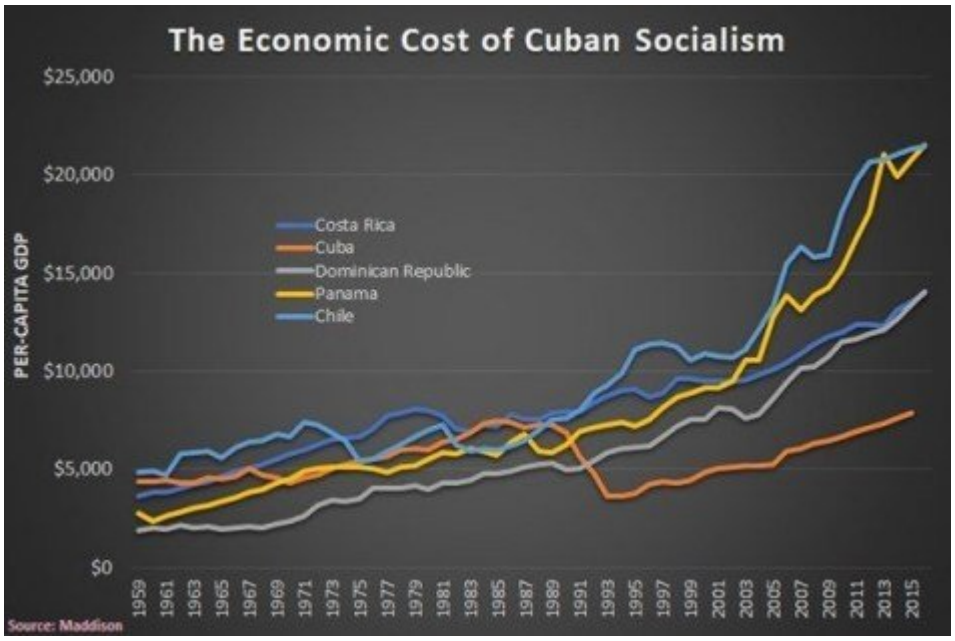

Socialism Communism Countries Per Capita GDP Income

You don’t even have to read the book to know the truth – just look at countries that score low on the Index of Economic Freedom, and compare their GDP per capita to countries that score high on the Index of Economic Freedom. The more communist a nation goes, the less wealth there is for the citizens. That’s why people in Venezuela are eating zoo animals and selling their bodies in prostitution for food, while nearby capitalist countries like Panama and Chile prosper. Nikole Hannah-Jones wants to reduce economic freedom, but we know by looking at other countries that this lowers per-capita GDP.

There’s a lot more than could be said here, but the point is that we need to be telling American blacks to make decisions that match the decisions of other successful non-white communities in America. We need to start teaching young people basic economics so they don’t fall prey to charlatans.

New survey of 20 studies about breast cancer – abortion link

August 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've blogged about a half-dozen studies from different countries on the link between abortion and breast cancer. It's always interesting to keep up with the research, so we know what to tell young people about the likely consequences of their choices with sex and abortion. The survey was reported by Life News.

Excerpt:

> In 2018, the Breast Cancer Prevention Institute funded and published "Induced Abortion as an Independent Risk Factor for Breast Cancer: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Studies on South Asian Women" in *Issues in Law and Medicine*. (A meta-analysis looks at separate but similar studies in order to use the pooled data for statistical significance. It is regarded by scientists as very strong evidence.)
>
> Of the 20 studies analyzed, 16 were done on Indian women. The meta-analysis found a **151%** increased risk of breast cancer after an induced abortion.
>
> In 2014, "Breast Cancer and Induced Abortion," an analysis also published in Issues in Law and Medicine, revealed that the incidence of breast cancers increased 10-14 years after an abortion. This analysis was consistent with the known biology of breast cancer. There was no statistically significant increase in breast cancer risk before 10 years and after 14 years of an abortion.
>
> Induced abortion in India, referred to as "Medical Termination of Pregnancy," was legalized in 1971. Sons are most highly prized and sex selection abortions, although illegal, are not uncommon.
>
> A study published in the Lancet 2006 and based on conservative assumptions, reported that the practice of sex-selection accounts for about a half million missing female births yearly. Over the past two decades this translates into the abortion of some 10 million female fetuses.

Abortion is especially a problem for Indian women, because – as in China – India is very pro-abortion. Both India and China have a very pro-abortion culture, and sex-selection abortion is seen as normal.

Here are a couple of studies that focused on China and Chinese women who choose abortion.

Study 1: (September 2010)

> Based on the expression of estrogen receptor (ER), progesterone receptor (PR) and HER2/neu (HER2), breast cancer is classified into several subtypes: luminal A (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2-), luminal B (ER+ and/or PR+, HER2+), HER2-

> overexpressing (ER-, PR-, and HER2+) and triple-negative (ER-, PR-, and HER2-). The aim of this case-control study is to determine reproductive factors associated with breast cancer subtypes in Chinese women. A total of 1,417 patients diagnosed with breast cancer in the First Affiliated Hospital, China Medical University, Shenyang, China between 2001 and 2009 and 1,587 matched controls without a prior breast cancer were enrolled.
>
> […]Postmenopause and spontaneous abortion were inversely associated with the risk of luminal tumors. By contrast, multiparity, family history of breast cancer and **induced abortion increased the risk of breast cancer**.

Study 2: (March 2010)

> OBJECTIVE: To explore the risk factors of breast cancer for better control and prevention of the malignancy.
>
> METHODS: The clinical data of 232 patients with pathologically established breast cancer were investigated in this 1:1 case-control study to identify the risk factors of breast cancer.
>
> RESULTS: The history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and**multiple abortions were the statistically significant risk factors of breast cancer**, while breast feeding was the protective factor.
>
> CONCLUSION: A history of benign breast diseases, family history of carcinoma and multiple abortions are all risk factors of breast cancer.

Those are both about abortion and breast cancer in China.

And more recently, I blogged about a very recent study from China which concluded thus:

> IA is significantly associated with an increased risk of breast cancer among Chinese females, and the risk of breast cancer increases as the number of IA increases. If IA were to be confirmed as a risk factor for breast cancer, high rates of IA in China may contribute to increasing breast cancer rates.

The effect seems to be most observable for women who have induced abortions before ever completing a pregnancy.

Even though the United States has massively focused on breast cancer screening and treatment, (in contrast to other cancers, such as prostate cancer), the rate of breast cancer has not declined:

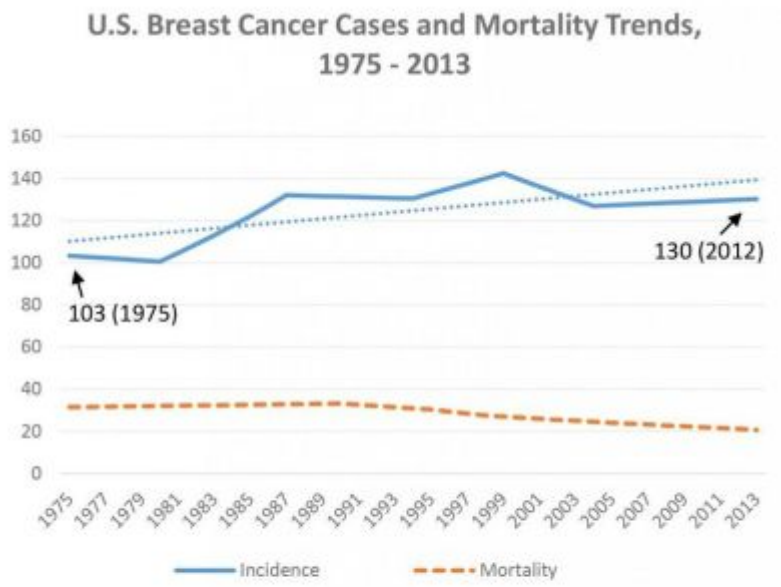

Invasive breast cancer incidence, and deaths (mortality). Rates are per 100,000 women. Incidence source is SEER 9 data accessed by from the SEER website on Oct 20, 2016. A trend line generated with Microsoft Excel software (dots) demonstrates the upward pattern since 1975.

Breast cancer rates have been rising since abortion was legalized
(Source)

We have so much attention on breast cancer in the West. Many charities raising money for it. Policy changes to promote early testing. Taxpayer money being spent to stop it. And yet the rate has not gone down. It started going up right around the time abortion became legal.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 19: The Historical Reliability of the Gospels

August 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 19 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the historical reliability of the four Gospels – four ancient biographies about the life of Jesus. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 19:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss several lines of evidences supporting the historical reliability of the four Gospels, for example: consistency with contemporary non-Christian sources, name disambiguation, undesigned coincidences, confirmation of historical details, etc. We also discuss whether miracles are possible. Finally, we recommend resources on Gospel reliability for all skill levels.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Notes:

I accidently said that the expression “clear as spiderwebs” is from Shakespeare, but it’s actually a line from Cyrano de Bergerac. I feel bad for getting this wrong! Bad WK.

Recommended resources:

Beginner:

- Can We Trust the Gospels? by Peter J. Williams
- Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels by J. Warner Wallace

Intermediate

- The Historical Reliability of the New Testament: Countering the Challenges to Evangelical Christian Beliefs by Craig L. Blomberg

Advanced:

- Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony by Richard Baucham

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Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about spending, saving and charity

August 21, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A practical lecture on money – spending, saving, charitable giving – from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

I like the way that Wayne Grudem navigates the Bible finding the passages that tell you who God is, so that you can make better decisions by analyzing alternatives and choosing the one that gives your Boss a maximum return on investment. He's very practical.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Spending:

- Christianity does not teach asceticism (= don't enjoy anything in this world), Paul condemns it in 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- When you buy nice things, even if it is a little more expensive, it's an opportunity to be thankful for nice things that God has provided
- Even being rich is OK, but don't let it make you haughty and arrogant, and don't set your hopes on your money (see 1 Tim 6:17)
- It is important for you to earn money, and you are supposed to use it to support yourself and be independent
- It is possible to overspend and live recklessly (Luke 15:13) and it's also possible to overspend and live too luxuriously
- *Increasing your income through career progression is wise*, because it allows you to give away more and save more
- God gives us freedom to decide how much we spend, how much we give away, and how much we save
- every choice a Christian makes with money will give him or her more or less reward in his or her afterlife
- Do not spend more than you have – you should make every effort to get out of debt as quickly as possible

Saving:

- Saving money is wise so you can help yourself and others, and have money in your old age when you will not be working
- If you do not save your own money, you end up being dependent on others (e.g. – family or taxpayers)
- Not saving money for the future is a way of "putting God to the test" (Matt 4:7)
- You are to "be dependent on no one", to the extent that you can (1 Thes 4:12)
- We don't know the future, that's why we should prepare for an emergency, and buy

insurance to guard (James 4:13-17)
- It's right for us to learn how to save to be able to buy bigger assets, like a car or a college education
- Saving and investing in stocks and bonds lets people in business start and grow companies, creating jobs and new products
- *Don't over-save, trusting too much in money more than you trust in God* (Ps 62.10; Matt 6:19,24; Luke 12:15-21)

Giving:

- it is required for the people of God to give something out of what they earn, but no percentage is specified (Deut 26:12-13)
- you do not give money to become right with God, you can't earn your salvation
- *a Christian gives to show God that you trust him to take care of you, and to experience trusting him through your giving*
- the quality of your resurrection life with God is affected by giving you do for the Kingdom (Phil 4, Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:18-19)
- when you get involved in the lives of others and give to them, you have the joy of experiencing caring for others (Acts 20:35)
- it's possible to give too little, but it's also possible to give too much – be careful about pride creeping in as well

The first part of this lecture made me think of my treat for the week, which is to get a double chicken burrito bowl after my weight lifting. It is very easy to say grace when you are hovering over a double chicken burrito bowl. It is good to have nice things especially when it makes you thankful for what you have.

I was so happy listening to this talk because he was condemning bad stewardship, which I see in a lot of young people these days. I was happy until he got to the part about trusting in your savings for your security, and then I thought – that's what I do wrong! I save a lot but it's not just for emergencies and to share with others, like he was saying – I want a sense of security. This was more of a temptation in my 20s than it is now in my 30s, though.

Charity should hurt

I can remember being in my first full-time job as a newly hired junior programmer when the 2001 recession struck. I would cry while signing checks to support William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith ministry, because I was so scared. I had no family or friends where I lived to help me if anything went wrong, and that's been the story of my working life. If anything goes wrong, there is no backup. But it's that experience of crying when I gave that allows me to say today "that's when I became the man I am, that's what a man does when he is a follower of Jesus". If you are not doing the actions of charity, then you will not having the experience of trusting God and letting him lead you. There is more to the Christian life than just saying the right things – you have to do the right things.

Don’t follow your heart

If you’re scared about giving when you are young, then do what I did in my 20s: work 70-hour weeks, get promoted often, and save everything you earn. I volunteered every Saturday for 9 months in order to get my first white-collar part-time job when I was still in high-school. The faster you increase your savings, the easier it’s going to be to take a *genuine interest* in caring for the people around you. Read Phil 1 (fellowship), Phil 2 (concern for others), and Phil 4 (charity). Turn off your emotions and desires when it comes to choosing what to study and what work to do, and put Philippians into practice. Your freedom to give is very much tied to the quality of your decisions of what to study, where to work, how much you spend on entertainment, and so on. That’s why you need to turn off your feelings and desires and do what works, even it it’s not fun, and even if it involves responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

The seven fatal flaws of moral relativism

August 22, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Moral relativism is the view that moral values and moral duties do not exist in reality, but only exist as opinions in people's minds. When you ask a moral relativist where the belief that stealing is wrong comes from, he may tell you that it is his opinion, or that it is the opinion of most people in his society. But he cannot tell you that stealing is wrong independent of what people think, because morality (on moral relativism) is just personal preference.

So what's wrong with it?

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Salvo magazine web site.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like "It's wrong to push your own morality on others". This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don't let them make any moral statements without asking them first to ground morality on their worldview. And that's because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can't answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people's personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It's all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be "it depends". It depends on the person who is speaking because it's a subjective claim, not an objective

claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

So, practically speaking, everyone has to decide whether right and wrong are real – objectively real. If they are objectively real, that means that there is a right way for human beings to behave, and a wrong way for human beings to behave. It means that things that are really objectively wrong like rape are wrong for all times and all places, regardless of what individuals and societies might think of it. In order to rationally ground that kind of morality, you have to have a foundation for it – a cosmic Designer who decides for all times and places what the conduct of his creatures ought to be. And then our moral duties are duties that are owed to this Designer. It is like playing football or playing a boardgame – the person who invents the game decides the rules. But if there is no designer of the game, then there are no rules.

Without a designer of the universe, the question of how we ought to act is decided by people in different times and different places. It's arbitrary and variable, and therefore it doesn't do the job of prescribing behavior authoritatively. It's very important not to get involved in any serious endeavor with another person or persons if they don't have a sense of right and wrong being absolute and fixed. A belief in objective moral values is a necessary pre-requisite for integrity.

Has greater acceptance of the Sexual Revolution improved the mental health of kids?

August 23, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a very interesting in my favorite site for current events – The Federalist. In it, the author (Scott Yenor) talks about whether society's ever-increasing embrace of sexual anarchy has produced better health and safety for children. And he's not just giving his opinion, either. He has several studies, so we will see some numbers.

It starts with this:

> Sexualizing childhood in the name of harm reduction is the latest roll in our rolling sexual revolution. We are told that childhood sexual education is necessary to prevent suicide and interpersonal violence, prevent AIDS, avoid pregnancy, and build a safe environment in schools. According to what is known as "minority stress" theory, people with non-heterosexual orientations experience an endless series of microaggressions, overt rejections, invidious discrimination, or stigmatization that undermines their psychiatric and physical health.

Secular leftists are sure that the bad feelings that people who are reckless and irresponsible have are not the natural consequences of their own choices. No! Their bad feelings are the result of your lack of acceptance. It's not that they are choosing behaviors that are dangerous for them. It's YOUR lack of acceptance and celebration that is dangerous to them – YOU'RE forcing them to harm themselves… YOU'RE forcing them to be mentally ill.

The problem with this view is that society is MORE accepting of reckless, irresponsible behavior today, and yet the people who do these behaviors feel even worse than they did in the past.

Here's a study from PLoS One (2021):

> And indeed, the social environment has become much less stressful for sexual minorities than it was 50 years ago. The average age for coming out of the closet among Americans has decreased from 26 years old for those roughly born in the 1970s to 16.9 years old for those born in this century. The average age for same-sex sexual activity is decreased from 19.2 years old for those born in the 1970s to 16.3 for the younger cohort, driven by "marked improvements in the social and legal environments for sexual minorities," according to UCLA epidemiologist Ilan Meyer.
>
> […]According to Meyer's study, "we found little evidence that the social and legal improvements during the past 50 years … have altered the experience of sexual minorities people in terms of exposure to minority stressors and resultant adverse mental health outcomes." Younger cohorts have higher suicide attempt

> rates (30 percent) than the older cohort (21 percent). The younger group reports more everyday discrimination, more psychological distress, more stigma, and more internalized homophobia. All in all, according to these scholars, "our findings are clearly inconsistent with the [minority stress] hypothesis."

And another study from Archives of Sexual Behavior (2020):

> In another study, J. Michael Bailey, an early adopter of the minority stress model in the 1990s, could find "no evidence to support" minority stress predictions and, he acknowledges, that "there is much evidence against it."

> Greater tolerance of sexual minorities has not led to better health outcomes or lower suicide rates or to decreases in neuroticism among gay men. Health and psychological results in the tolerant Netherlands, Bailey points out, are not much different from the results of the supposedly intolerant United States. Suicide rates barely budged in nations that have adopted same-sex marriage.

This is why LGBT activists in government, when they are confronted with the facts about how monkeypox is spread, are not concerned about setting boundaries on people's behaviors. In their view, boundaries are harmful, because boundaries cause the people who are engaged in reckless, irresponsible behaviors to feel bad. And their feeling bad is WORSE than getting monkeypox. So, you are actually helping the monkeypox crowd if you lie to them about the direct consequences of their actions. Lying to them will hurt them less than warning them. Because nothing is really dangerous. The only thing people have to fear is being disapproved of.

Weighing 400 pounds isn't bad for your health, the "compassion" crowd says. What's dangerous is people who say that this is unhealthy. That's what actually causes the diabetes and heart disease – the disapproval. There is absolutely nothing wrong with having a 1000 lifetime sexual partners. That is perfectly moral, and it wouldn't cause any harm, as long as we can use the laws and the government to force everyone to approve of it as much as they approve of stable, long-lasting heterosexual marriage, and a minivan full of well-behaved homeschooled kids.

People who behave badly turn to big government to force everyone else to subsidize and approve of their bad behavior. This is where poverty and tyranny come from. And that's why we should be battling against the secular left and their war on morality, marriage and children.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

August 24, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude others
- It's meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can't say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away,

there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Ron DeSantis and Moms for Liberty got conservatives to take over Florida school boards

August 25, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm keeping a close eye on Florida to see what sort of conservative resume Ron DeSantis is building ahead of the 2024 presidential elections. This time, DeSantis fixed his sights on the woke public school system, endorsing 30 conservative school board candidates. Out of those 30, 25 of them won – including in some heavily Democrat areas like Miami-Dade and Hillsborough.

I saw an article in the Tallahassee Democrat about this story, and they called DeSantis' involvement in these school board elections "unprecedented":

> Gov. Ron DeSantis took unprecedented steps to influence Florida's nonpartisan school board races this year and largely was successful, with 25 of his 30 endorsed candidates winning or advancing to a runoff.
>
> […]DeSantis flipped school boards in some counties that had left-leaning majorities, shifting them into solid conservative territory.
>
> […]DeSantis-endorsed candidates also won in Democratic counties such as Miami-Dade and Hillsborough where school boards defied the governor on issues such as mask mandates.

Instead of firing off mean tweets, or crudely insulting other conservatives, DeSantis worked hard to get other conservatives elected in Democrat-infested areas:

> Both Sarasota and Duval counties will now have conservative board majorities after DeSantis weighed in heavily on those races. The governor held rallies in both Sarasota and Jacksonville on Sunday. All five of his endorsed school board candidates won in the two counties.
>
> […]DeSantis worked to boost GOP turnout with his aggressive campaigning in school board races, helping to counteract the fact that Republicans didn't have any competitive statewide races to bring GOP voters out. DeSantis' political campaign paid for campaign mailers for his endorsed candidates and he barnstormed the state Sunday, hosting a series of rallies to boost their campaigns.

DeSantis has been pushing back against critical race theory, transgender indoctrination and COVID mandates for children. He also introduced mandatory teaching about the historical record of communism. Communism has a terrible historical record.

The article also mentioned Moms for Liberty, a group that works to get conservatives elected on school boards across the USA:

> Not only did DeSantis have a good night Tuesday with his school board picks, but a conservative group that launched last year in Florida to influence school politics

> also scored some big wins.
>
> Moms for Liberty supported nearly 60 candidates in 24 counties with endorsements, campaign donations, or both. Many of their picks were also endorsed by DeSantis.
>
> […]Of the 59 candidates, 23 candidates in 14 counties won their races, 12 got enough votes to advance to runoff elections, and 24 lost, according to an analysis by the USA Today Network – Florida. That means more than half — 59% — of the candidates Moms for Liberty supported either won or advanced to the General Election.

I've been trying to shop at Publix more and more, now that Walmart and Amazon are increasingly far-left.

OK, that's enough about DeSantis' latest achievements. Let me talk about some of his previous achievements below.

Ron DeSantis

DeSantis has already signed bills to:

- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women's sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Many cynical people like to say that there isn't much difference between Republicans and Democrats on social issues. But those people aren't following the legislation. If you watch the legislation, Republicans do a lot for social conservatives.

Keep an eye on DeSantis. He is building achievements in the teeth of opposition from leftist schools, leftist corporations, and leftist news media. My preference is to support candidates who achieve results over the opposition of their enemies. I don't much care for how good a candidate is a snarky insults. I want results.

Audio recording confirms hospital performs hysterectomies on children

August 26, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you're not following Libs of Tik Tok, then you are really missing out on some of the finest conservative activism you are ever going to see. Last week, she posted videos made by one children's hospital, in which they explained how they perform sex-change surgeries on children. This week, she called another children's hospital and she has audio and screen grabs confirming that they do, too.

Here is the what she wrote:

> Last week, I was viciously attacked by the media for raising awareness about Boston Children's Hospital offering gender-affirming hysterectomies for young girls. Left-wing activists called for me to be banned from social media for drawing attention to a practice Boston Children's Hospital was publicly advertising. The attacks lasted for a week. They gaslit the public and denied that these types of procedures were being performed on children. According to the media, I was baselessly stoking anti-trans outrage and therefore deserved to be silenced.
>
> Undeterred, I decided to focus on finding out if other children's hospitals were engaged in these barbaric practices, too. That's when I stumbled across Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C. Scrolling through their site, I came across a page which says the hospital treats young patients between the ages of 0 and 21 for gynecology care and gender-affirming medical treatments, including hysterectomies.
>
> […]Hysterectomies — whether for gender-affirming reasons or not — are not reversible and will render the patient permanently unable to bear children.

I looked at her screen grab of the hospital web site, and was able to confirm her screen grab at this archive site. The archived snapshot is dated May 31, 2022. It says lists hysterectomy under the "gender affirming" services they provide to people aged 0-21. As she points out, they scrubbed the site as soon as they got caught. And they will probably have a fact check from Politifact, written by an English major, who will claim that the web site never said that.

Before I posted about this story, I double-checked the details on a mainstream news site, Fox News. They confirmed the story.

Boston Children's Hospital

Libs of Tik Tok's previous big story was about Boston Children's Hospital and their "gender-affirming". If you haven't seen the story and the videos that were made by the hospital, and put out there for the public to know what they do, you should see it.

That story was confirmed by Daily Wire. Again, I expect an English major at Politifact to

contact the hospital, tell them to change their web site, then issue a "fact check" claiming that the web site doesn't say that. And then Facebook and YouTube and Twitter will ban anyone who talks about what the web site said before it was scrubbed at the request of the far left "fact checker".

Münchausen syndrome by proxy

Right now, we are living in a world where selfish adults conceive of children in environments that are not optimal for children.

Just take a look at this story from The Post Millennial:

> Recent reporting from *Reduxx* magazine on the 10-year-old "youngest trans model" has uncovered revealing information about the child's family. Noella McMaher, a trans-identified male, belongs to two trans-identified female parents, who additionally have a nonbinary "theybie."
>
> […]*Reduxx* reported on information collected from a now private social media profile, that Noella's biological mother, Dee McMaher, is "a social justice advocate who identifies as non-binary, appears to be on hormone replacement therapy, and recently had a cosmetic mastectomy."
>
> McMaher, 35, and her partner Ray, 32, recently wed in 2019. Ray is a biological female who also identifies as transgender and works in "LGBTQ health justice," according to *Reduxx*. They describe Noella beginning his transition at age 4, where they began referring to him as a girl and dressing him in girls' clothing.

> Noella was 4 when his mother said she brought him to therapy at the gender development clinic at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. During the sessions, Noella told a gender counselor he was a "girl" and by age 6, his legal documentation was already changed.

Where's the father?

> McMaher has stated in an interview for *Chicago Parent* that she plans for Noella to have "gender surgeries" at age 16, but would start the child on puberty blockers and hormone therapy before then.
>
> […]The "hate crime" – as the individual who wrote Noella's profile refers to – is about the biological father, who was against Noella's transition.

What's really going on here?

> […]Sinead Watson, a prominent voice of the detransitioner community, spoke to *Reduxx* about the situation with Noella. "That this child parents both happen to be 'trans' or 'queer' is no surprise to me. They are forcing their own ideological ideas onto their innocent baby," she said.
>
> "As with the social contagion among vulnerable children, we're seeing more and more parents with Münchausen syndrome by proxy. It's not the kids who are trans – it's the parents who want them to be trans," added Watson.

When I read stories like this, I understand that the secular left has thrown out the entire concept of morality. After all, if you vote for infanticide, child mutilation, stripping parents of child custody for disagreeing with permanent damage to their children, etc. then you have left morality behind. How do people on the secular left expect to marry and have children, if they have no concept of right and wrong? Pity their children.

I really hope that Republicans pass laws allowing children who regret what selfish adults did to them to sue them for everything they have.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 20: A Christian View of Crime and Self-Defense

August 27, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 20 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the recent explosion of crime in America, the effectiveness of the police, and self-defense. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 20:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss crime and self-defense. We're going to start by talking about why crime has become a more pressing problem lately. Then we'll talk about what role the police play in stopping crime. Then we'll talk about what the Bible says about self-defense. Finally, we'll talk about the real root cause of crime, and what Christians should do to address it.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

References:

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The Rise of 'Blow Off Steam' Policing (American Greatness)

Property damage from civil disorder during George Floyd protests could total more than $2 billion (The Week)

Will 2021's spike in violent crime continue into 2022? (Christian Post)

Wisconsin Dem Senate candidate wants to eliminate cash bail despite Waukesha massacre (Fox News)

Officers Had No Duty to Protect Students in Parkland Massacre, Judge Rules (New York

Times)

Sheriff says he got 23 calls about shooter's family, but records show more (CNN)

Report: Wife's weeping over anti-union law drove Democratic DA to target Republican governor's staff and conservative activists with five-year investigation (UK Daily Mail)

Politics – According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture by Wayne Grudem

Hero who stopped Texas church shooter credits God for bravery: I'm 'not going to allow evil to succeed' (Christian Post)

What Do CDC's Surveys Say About the Prevalence of Defensive Gun Use? (American Journal of Criminal Justice)

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Bucking other Texas Democrats, Cuellar and Gonzalez vote against U.S. House bill that would ban semi-automatic weapons (Texas Tribune)

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How should Christians redeem their regrets over past decisions?

August 28, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I posted a dating ad from a 39-year-old never-married single mother. She explained that she was now a Christian and was looking for a man to marry her, so that she could have a second child "the right way". Some people thought we should take her conversion at face value. Others thought she was desperate and looking for a financial bailout. How can we tell if she is really sincere?

Well, I was still thinking about the comments on that post when I saw another great post from Laura, who writes at An Affair With Reason. Her post is about the feelings of regret that people have because of their past mistakes, and how Christians should deal with those regrets.

She writes:

> As I thought about what to write I became distressed, sorrowful, angry, and even despondent over some of my own decisions. As I sobbed inconsolably, I noticed that every caustic thought began with, "If only…." That's when I realized I was still carrying the burden of regret and I didn't know how to let go. It wasn't that I still needed God's forgiveness or that I had any doubts about my standing with him; I knew I was forgiven. It was the lifelong consequences that I experience to this day which embittered my soul and squelched my joy.
>
> The "if onlys" are a heavy burden to carry. They represent shattered dreams that will never be recovered in this life. They invoke feelings of discontentment, grief, and doubt. They cause us to sob with regret for what could have been, to pray for second chances that we know will not be granted.
>
> So what do we do with the regrets that we must live with for the rest of our lives? Lately, as I've reflected on conversations I've had with many women who have made regretful decisions over the years and on the direction of our culture, I've noticed two very distinct paths:
>
> 1. Attempt to assuage our own guilt and regret by convincing others to make the same foolish, and even sinful, decisions we made.
>
> OR
>
> 2. Humble ourselves, grieve our losses, and commit to teaching the younger generations to choose a better way.
>
> The first path is the wide and well-traveled one. Tragically and despicably, most people today seek to justify themselves and ease their consciences by getting others on board with their own ignorance, foolishness, and sinfulness.

She's got quite a few examples of the kinds of regrets that men and women have, and

different ways of dealing with those regrets. Some ways self-serving, others God-serving. Her examples are really interesting. It reminds me of "The Great Divorce" by C.S. Lewis, where he explains why some people don't resist God, and others do. Some people want to justify the past, and keep making decisions to benefit themselves. Others want to serve God. They want to take on the difficult work of opening up to others, and loving them by telling them the truth.

When I hear someone with a past say that they have now become a Christian, I normally ask "is this conversion just convenient for you or is it the result of some process where your mind was changed through study?" You can ask the person to show their work – how did they get to the right answer? And what has becoming a Christian cost them? How does it affect their relationships with non-Christians?

People "convert to Christianity" all the time based on need. Sometimes they're trying to get something for themselves, e.g. – wanting to not be judged for their past, so they can attract a partner to financially support them. But other people spend years reading books and changing their minds page by page, debate by debate. Then they put their knowledge into practice.

I have mentored women who did this. One girl who contacted me through the blog wasn't able to talk to her smart atheist brother about her faith. Then, she read a bunch of apologetics books about science and history, then called me and slipped the phone into her pocket and let me listen to her make a bold, informed stand for her Christian worldview for two hours. She won every point.

When people really become Christians, they don't do it in order to be happy and or to be liked. They take on work, and they take on shame, because they have a Boss now. That's how you can tell that real repentance has taken place. The letters of Paul in the New Testament are filled with advice for Christians who want to be bold, put themselves second, and advocate for their Boss. You should read them. When you read the Bible, try to put aside your feelings, your desires, and your concerns about what people will think. You'll find that putting work for the Boss ahead of what you want is worth the price of being "second". I would start with Philippians, then go on to 1 Peter.

By the way, this isn't the first time I've linked to Laura's posts. Here are some of the other times I've linked to her work on my blog: on voting, on Islam, on mentoring boys, on fighting with pastors, on learning what works when dealing with atheists. She had a 10 part series advising women how to choose a husband, which really made me feel good as a man. Today, most people see a husband as an accessory – like a handbag. He's there to provide, or to be a handyman, or to complain at if the wife is unhappy. Men should read that series, and find out what we can do in a marriage, if we are valued for our distinctive male nature.

Twitter and Facebook suspend LibsOfTikTok after she reported on sex-change surgery on kids

August 29, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I keep talking about this housewife / real estate agent who runs LibsOfTikTok, you have to forgive me. I have been waiting for years to gain back some ground on social issues, and this lady seems to have figured out how to do it. She just re-posts videos made by secular leftists which they post in public for anyone to see. And it's making a huge difference – turning normal people against the secular left.

But, since this is an election year, Big Tech had to step in and put a stop to it.

Here's an article from Fox News:

> Twitter locked the popular "Libs of TikTok" account late Saturday, blocking its owner from sending tweets or even signing in, according to a report.
>
> Libs of TikTok has gained a massive following on Twitter for re-sharing posts from far-left circles on TikTok, a video-sharing app. The account's posts often ridicule left-wing stances on transgenderism, education and other topics.
>
> "Hi Libs of TikTok, your account, @libsoftiktok has been locked for violating the Twitter rules," reads an email reportedly sent to the account's owner. The email goes on to allege that the user had violated rules against "hateful conduct."
>
> […]It is unclear which of the account's posts Twitter found to be offensive.

Twitter employees are known to be major supporters of the Democrat party.

> Twitter employees donated $347,270, or 98.99% of total federal donations, to Democrats, making individual donations of $200 or more. Meanwhile, only $3,556, or 1.01%, of federal donations from Twitter employees went to Republicans.
>
> […]Facebook employees donated $2.4 million, or 91.68% of total federal donations, to Democrats with donations of $200 or more via individuals or PACS. Only $218,576, or 8.2% of all federal donations from Facebook employees, went to Republicans.
>
> […]Both companies recently came under fire after deciding to reduce the spread of a New York Post article that shows purported communication between Biden's son, Hunter Biden, and an adviser to a Ukrainian energy company.

So, Facebook donates a lot to Democrats, too. I wonder what they think about Libs of TikTok?

The Post Millennial reports:

> The social media account Libs of Tik Tok was suspended from Facebook on Wednesday because they "didn't follow Community Standards." According to Libs of TikTok there was "no reason given" for the suspension.

> The notification from Facebook stated, "We have already reviewed this decision and it can't be reversed."

> […]Libs of Tik Tok routinely reposts content found on Tik Tok, exposing groomer teachers and unhinged leftists who proudly proclaim their pronouns and constantly redefine reality.
>
> The account has become an internet sensation due to their work exposing the leftist agenda, which has also made them a target for the liberal press and "big tech" platforms.

> In May, Libs of Tik Tok was suspended from Instagram which is also owned by Meta.

I can't help but think that children would be much happier if they grew up in stable, natural-marriage homes, with a stay-at-home father who works, and a stay-at-home mother who teaches them. I bet they would be happier being raised by parents who learned about self-denial, self-control, humility, self-sacrificial love, etc. in church, too. I think a lot of problems result from putting kids in with other kids, so they feel peer pressure from peers who don't know much about how the world works. And a lot of problems result from social media peer pressure, too. They're being forced to grow up too fast.

It seems to me as though children aren’t very happy these days. I don’t think mutilating them with irreversible surgeries is the answer. I guess I just disagree with Twitter and Facebook about that.

“Inclusive” Canadian bank terminates client’s account after he disagrees with LGBT activism

August 30, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada always seems to be 10-20 years ahead of the US in terms of letting the Sexual Revolution trample basic human rights like freedom or speech and freedom of religion. All the things that you saw happening in SOGI states in the 2010s happened in Canada first in the mid-to-late 1990s. Now, the banks are just shutting down accounts of people who disagree with LGBT activism.

Story from Protestia:

> The third largest bank in Canada, Scotiabank, has shut down a customers account and told him to take his business elsewhere after he inquired* how he could remove the company’s rainbow-themed banking app.
>
> As reported by Rebel News, Gary Duke of Grand Prairie banked with Scotiabank for over a decade and was otherwise happy with the service, even having his mortgage at one point with the multinational company. When Scotiabank updated their app for PRIDE month to reflect their love of all things gay, Duke spoke to assistant Branch Manager Mitchell Tofte via email to complain and request information on how to uninstall the app.

The customer said “I just tried to get online with and do some banking online and there was a rainbow app. So I said ‘is there any way to get this rainbow app off my phone?'” and he got this e-mail back from the bank:

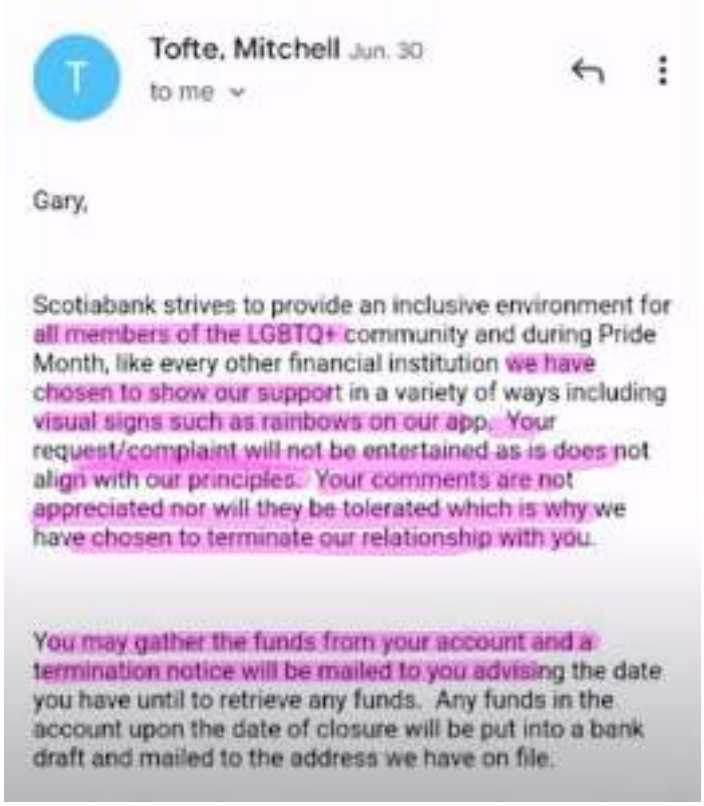

Tofte, Mitchell Jun. 30
to me

Gary,

Scotiabank strives to provide an inclusive environment for all members of the LGBTQ+ community and during Pride Month, like every other financial institution we have chosen to show our support in a variety of ways including visual signs such as rainbows on our app. Your request/complaint will not be entertained as is does not align with our principles. Your comments are not appreciated nor will they be tolerated which is why we have chosen to terminate our relationship with you.

You may gather the funds from your account and a termination notice will be mailed to you advising the date you have until to retrieve any funds. Any funds in the account upon the date of closure will be put into a bank draft and mailed to the address we have on file.

News report from Rebel News:

And this happened in Alberta, which used to be the most conservative province. (I think Saskatchewan is the best province now). This is what “diversity” and “inclusion” means to Canadians. This is how Canadians tolerate differences of opinion. This is the rainbow of pluralism in Canada. The sad part is, these secular leftists can’t think rationally enough to understand how their actions falsify their own secular leftist ideology. They are fascists now.

I just think it’s interesting. Canada is obviously ahead of us on the road to secular leftist fascism. What would happen if this happened in the USA? If you lived in a blue state, then maybe you would get a judge who cared more about the feelings of LGBT people than about the Constitution or the law or basic human rights. Most secular leftists just do what they want based on feelings. Who cares about legal reasoning? The important thing is for the bigots to be punished.

In Canada, they even have special “hate crimes” police to investigate people who disagree with LGBT for “hate speech”. Just saying “I decline to participate in activities that are opposed to Jesus” will get your bank account terminated.

Canada LGBT Police Hate Crime Rainbow Fascism

One of my friends in Canada has been with the same employer for two decades, and he recently wrote this to me when I asked how he was doing:

> Other than that, being harassed by my company for standing up to their Diversity & Inclusion push.

I don’t have the full story on that yet, I gather he is pretty busy. But I don’t see where he would go for help in Canada. The lawyers are anti-Christian bigots. The judges are anti-Christian bigots. The Prime Minister is an anti-Christian bigot. The news papers take government subsidies and can’t report anything critical of the government.

The correct solution, it seems to me, is for Christians in Canada to get their degree(s) and get out of Canada. You can’t pay taxes to a secular left fascist regime that denies basic human rights. You can’t give money to people who hate your beliefs and your way of life. Canadian secular leftists are the most intolerant, exclusive, bigoted people on the face of

the planet. It’s not a good place to live. This is not a good place for Americans to visit. It’s turned in1930s Germany, except now Christians are the hated minority.

Federal court strikes down Democrat plan to force Christian doctors to mutilate children

August 31, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the concerns I had about having a Democrat take over the government was that Christian doctors and nurses would be forced to perform abortions against their will. You might remember that many Christians had previously voted for Obama, and he had pushed through Obamacare – legislation that forced Christian companies like Hobby Lobby to cover abortion-causing drugs.

Although Hobby Lobby was able to win at the Supreme Court, and escape the abortion drug mandate, there was more in Obamacare to fear.

Here's the latest from The Federalist:

> A federal court on Friday struck down Biden's Department of Health and Human Services' attempt to force doctors to perform mutilative transgender surgeries against their religious beliefs and conscience objections.
>
> The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in the lawsuit Franciscan Alliance v. Becerra that "a Catholic healthcare network and a group of nearly 19,000 healthcare professionals cannot be required to carry out these procedures in violation of their deeply held beliefs and professional medical judgment," according to the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a nonprofit law firm that seeks to protect religious freedom.
>
> HHS originally mandated that physicians perform wrongly named "sex-reassignment" surgeries as part of Obamacare in May 2016. "The requirement would have forced doctors to perform these procedures on any patient, including on children, even if the procedures went against their conscience and professional medical judgment," Becket said following Friday's ruling.

The law was originally put in by Obama, but the Biden administration has picked up on defending it:

> Since the 2016 Obamacare mandate and subsequent Supreme Court decision in Bostock v. Clayton County, President Joe Biden's HHS has continued to shoehorn so-called "gender identity" into the definition of sex discrimination in health care. In March, HHS issued a notice saying that "[a]ttempts to restrict" transgender surgeries are "dangerous," and earlier this month, the department filed a "Notice of Proposed Rulemaking," which, if enacted, would require hospitals to perform both mutilative transgender surgeries and abortions.

So, I remember talking to black people in my office when Obama was up for election. Men and women. And I was explaining to them how Obama had voted against legislation that protected infants who were born alive during abortions. And what they said to me was

“we’ve never had a black president. Besides, what do presidents have to do with abortion?” I guess they thought that having a president with the same skin color as theirs was more important than having a president who respected the conscience rights and religious liberty of Christians.

After the first two elections of Obama, we had a pretty good understanding of what Democrats believed about abortion, same-sex marriage, infanticide, etc. Nevertheless, many church attending Christians turned out to vote for Joe Biden. So now Christians have to have legal battles in order to get out of being forced to mutilate children. How could religious liberty be brought so low in America?

Christians really could do better at voting in elections.

Do moral dilemmas undermine objective moral absolutes?

September 1, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One reason why some people reject the existence of objective morality is because moral absolutes can conflict.

Canadian philosopher Michael Horner to explains the problem.

He writes:

> You may have been confronted with the story of the Nazi soldier coming to the door of the family who are hiding some Jewish people in their home and asking them point blankly, "Are there any Jews here?" The person telling the story then asks you, "What would you say?" or more precisely, "What should you say?"
>
> […]I think for many people the term moral absolutes connotes ideas like inflexibility and rigidity, and that there can never be exemptions. I have also found that many people believe that holding to moral absolutes means that circumstances are not relevant in a moral evaluation and that moral absolutism cannot handle moral dilemmas. But in fact it is possible to believe in moral absolutes, or as I prefer to call them objective moral values, without adhering to these connotations I have mentioned.
>
> For many people to believe in moral absolutes is to believe in rules that no other rules can ever trump. It follows from this that moral absolutes are all equal and there can never be any exemptions. But what if moral absolutes exist in a hierarchy?
>
> We know from experience that very often more than one moral rule applies to a situation. This often leads to moral dilemmas. So in the 'hiding the Jews example' the moral rule of telling the truth seems to apply to the situation, but it would seem that the moral rule to protect innocent human life from torture and murder applies also.
>
> If absolutes are all equal there is no way out of the dilemma. You can't choose one absolute over another because in doing so you would be violating at least one absolute which, in their view, is supposed to be inviolable.

So, in this case, it seems as if the moral absolutist is stuck in a dilemma. If you lie to save the innocent life, then that would be wrong. But if you tell the truth and hand the innocent person over to murderers, then that would be wrong. Does this really disprove objective moral absolutes?

This problem annoys me, because I know this is the kind of objection to objective morality that annoying philosophy lecturers like to push onto freshmen in order to convince them that morality is nonsense. But does the moral dilemma objection really work?

More Horner:

> […][I]f moral absolutes exist in a hierarchy and the circumstances or the situation were relevant in determining which absolute takes precedent, then there may be a solution to the moral dilemma. That is exactly what I think is the case in the example. I for one have no difficulty knowing that the morally right thing to do in that situation is to protect the life of innocent people from torture and murder rather than tell the truth to a person who has torture and murder in their plans. My moral intuitions are very clear about this.
>
> If someone objects and says, “No, you must always tell the truth. After all it is an absolute, and absolutes by definition can never be violated,” I would point out that they are just using a different hierarchy, putting truth telling above protecting the life of innocent people from torture and murder. There is no way to avoid making a judgment like that since more than one absolute does apply to the situation. I would just ask them to think it through again, and once they see that they have to make a judgment based on some sort of hierarchy in that situation, then I think most people’s moral intuitions will affirm that protecting the lives of innocent people from torture and murder, in that situation, trumps truth telling. There is no way to avoid choosing one over the other.

But isn’t this moral relativism? After all, we are deciding what to do based on the situation! It’s relativism, isn’t it?

No, it isn’t, because there is always one right thing to do in every situation. In every situation, you always follow the weightiest moral rule. The right thing to do does not depend on your subjective state of mind. It is an objective moral duty, and it is the same for everyone, across all times and in all places. That’s what objective morality means - what is right and wrong is not determined by personal preferences or cultural conventions, which vary by time and place.

And of course, God is the ground of this hierarchy of objective moral absolutes. They existed through him before human beings even appeared, as part of his design for us, his creatures. How we ought to behave is grounded ontologically in God’s design for us.

California demands blocking of natural gas pipeline, as blackouts loom

September 2, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I collected together 3 news stories and I think they show a very interesting portrait of how Democrats think. Although they would like to present themselves as practical problem-solvers, the truth is that they always do what makes them look virtuous to others. And then, when they get terrible results, they throw blame onto others. Let's take a look at the stories.

First one is from the Daily Caller:

> Attorney generals (AGs) from California, Oregon and Washington are calling for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to stop the expansion of a crucial gas transmission project, arguing that it will violate climate laws; despite the states facing some of the highest gas prices in the country as well as the prospect of blackouts.
>
> California Attorney General Rob Bonta, Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson and Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum filed a motion on Monday asking the FERC to deny the proposed capacity expansion of TC PipeLines' Gas Transmission Northwest (GTN) XPress pipeline project (GTN), according to a press release. The three western states currently hold some of the highest gas prices in the nation and may be at risk of suffering blackouts.
>
> California possesses the highest national average of $5.3 per gallon, meanwhile, Oregon's and Washington's gas price averages sit at $4.80 and $4.70 per gallon, according to AAA data. California may also be at risk of experiencing blackouts as its grid which is undergoing a green transition struggles to cope with statewide energy demand as it phases out fossil fuels.

Those three states are very secular and very leftist. And they certainly have embraced "green energy" policies. But green energy has a lot of problems. First, it's intermittent, not stable. Second, it's expensive, requiring subsidies from taxpayers. And third, it's incredibly harmful to the environment – not just in killing birds and bats, but also in damaging the environment with huge solar panel farms and wind turbine farms.

What's interesting though is that the green energy states are the ones who are most threatened by green energy.

Here is something from far-left Newsweek:

> Much of Southern California remains under an excessive heat warning, with the state's grid operator warning that the high temperatures could lead to blackouts.

> The state is facing a prolonged late-summer heat wave, with temperatures expected to reach as high as 115 degrees Fahrenheit in some parts, the National Weather Service (NWS) said.
>
> “An impactful, long duration heat wave is expected from the beaches to the desert through Labor Day,” the San Diego office of the NWS wrote on Twitter on Tuesday. “High to very high heat risk will impact the coast and valleys by Sun & Mon. Plan ahead now so you can stay cool and hydrated, especially if you have outdoor plans.”
>
> An excessive heat warning is in effect from 11 a.m. on Wednesday until 8 p.m. Monday across a vast swath of Southern California, including Los Angeles County.
>
> “Dangerously hot” conditions are expected, according to the NWS, with peak temperatures of 95 to 112 degrees expected through Saturday, and 100 to 115 degrees on Sunday and Monday.

I thought this was interesting – they are telling people how much use electricity – even to charge their electric cars:

> During a Flex alert, consumers will be urged to reduce energy usage between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. when the system is most stressed.
>
> “The top three conservation actions are to set thermostats to 78 degrees or higher, avoid using large appliances and charging electric vehicles, and turn off unnecessary lights,” the grid operator said. “Lowering electricity use during that time will ease strain on the system, and prevent more drastic measures, including rotating power outages.”

You might have heard that California wants to ban gas vehicles by 2035. That’s interesting, but what’s more interesting is that they don’t want people charging their electrical vehicles either. And the people in California voted for this.

They’re addicted to virtue signaling. It’s almost as though when they themselves off from the moral law and from forgiveness, it suddenly became a huge problem for them to tell everyone how good they are. Being good used to be between a man and God. Now, people have to signal their virtue in order to keep guilt, shame and meaninglessness at bay.

Physicist Victor Stenger debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

September 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate took place on March 1, 2010 at Oregon State University.

In this debate, Victor Stenger does affirm his belief that the universe could be eternal in his second rebuttal (1:02:30), thus denying the standard Big Bang cosmology. He also denies the law of conservation of energy and asserts that something can come from nothing in his concluding speech (1:33:50). He also caused the audience to start laughing when he said that Jesus was not moral and supported slavery. There is almost no snark in this summary. Instead, I quoted Dr. Stenger *verbatim* in many places. I still think that it is very entertaining even without the snarky paraphrasing.

The debate includes 30 minutes of Q&A with the students.

Here's the video of the debate:

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

- The ontological argument
- The contingency argument
- The cosmological argument
- The moral argument
- The resurrection of Jesus (3-fact version)
- Religious experience

Dr. Stenger's opening speech:

- There is no scientific evidence for God's existence in the textbooks
- There is no scientific evidence for God acting in the universe
- God doesn't talk to people and tell them things they couldn't possibly know
- The Bible says that the Earth is flat, etc.
- There is no scientific evidence that God answers prayers
- God doesn't exist because people who believe in him are ignorant
- Human life is not optimally designed and appears to be the result of a blind, ad hoc evolutionary process
- The beginning of the universe is not ordered (low entropy) but random and chaotic
- It's theoretically possible that quantum tunneling explains the origin of the universe
- The laws of physics are not objectively real, they are "our inventions"
- Regarding the beginning of the universe, the explanation is that something came from nothing*
- Nothing* isn't really nothing, it is "the total chaos that we project existed just before the big bang"
- If something has no structure, then "it is as much nothing as nothing can be"

- Consciousness is explainable solely on the basis of material processes
- There are well-informed, rational non-believers in the world and God would not allow that

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

Stenger's argument that there is no objective evidence for God's existence:

- First, it is not required that God rely only on objective evidence in order to draw people to himself (Alvin Plantinga)
- Second, God is not required to provide evidence to everyone, only to the people who he knows would respond to him
- Third, Craig gave lots of objective evidence, from science, history and philosophy
- Stenger asks for certain evidence (answered prayers, prophecy, etc.), but Craig presented the evidence we have

Stenger's argument that the balance of energy is zero so "nothing" exists:

- if you have the same amount of assets and liabilities, it doesn't mean that nothing exists – your assets and liabilities exist
- Christopher Isham says that there needs to be a cause to create the positive and negative energy even if they balance
- the quantum gravity model contradicts observations
- the vacuum is not the same as nothing, it contains energy and matter
- the BVG theorem proves that *any* universe that is expanding must have a beginning

Stenger's argument that mental operations can be reduced to physical operations:

- mental properties are not reducible to physical properties
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with self-identity over time
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with thoughts about other things
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with free will
- substance dualism (mind/body dualism) is a better explanation for our mental experience
- God is a soul without a body

Dr. Stenger's first rebuttal:

Craig's cosmological argument:

- Craig's premise is "everything has a cause", but quantum mechanics has causeless events
- There are speculative theories about how something could have come into being uncaused out of nothing
- "I don't know of a single working cosmologist today who believes there was a singularity prior to the Big Bang"
- "If there wasn't a singularity then there's no basis for arguing that time began at

that point”
- “There’s no reason from cosmology that we know of that the universe can’t be eternal”
- “When I talk about an eternal universe, I mean a universe that has no beginning or end”
- The Hartle-Hawking model doesn’t have a beginning
- “There was no violation of energy conservation by having a universe coming from nothing”
- “The universe *could have* come from a previous universe for example or even just from a region of chaos”
- The paper by Vilenkin is counteracted by other papers (he doesn’t specify which ones)

Craig’s moral argument:

- Dr. Craig is arguing from ignorance
- But morality can be decided by humanity just like governments pass laws, and that’s objective
- Dr. Craig has too little respect for the human intellect
- I don’t need to tell me that slavery is wrong
- The Bible supports slavery
- Atheists can behave as good as theists
- Morality just evolved naturally as an aid to survival

Craig’s resurrection argument:

- No Roman historians wrote about the execution of Jesus
- The empty tomb is doubtful because it is only mentioned in the gospels, not by Paul
- John Dominic Crossan says there was no empty tomb
- Christianity only survived because the Roman empire thought that they were useful

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- There is no reason to prefer an indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics
- Dr. Stenger himself wrote that deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics are possible
- The vacuum in quantum mechanics is not nothing
- The quantum vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal
- The cosmological argument does not require a singularity
- The Hartle-Hawking model is from 1983
- Hawking says that there is a beginning of space and time *after* that model
- The Hartle-Hawking model *does still have a beginning of time* – the model is not eternal

- The BVG theorem that requires a beginning for expanding universes is widely accepted among cosmologists

Craig's moral argument:

- Stenger redefined objective to mean that most people agree with it – but that's not what objective means
- Objective means right and wrong whether anyone accepts it or not
- Richard Dawkins himself says that on atheism there is "no evil and no good" – why is he wrong?
- Even Dr. Stenger says that morality is the same as passing laws – it's arbitrary and varies by time and place
- But on his view, right and wrong are the same as deciding which side of the road to drive on
- But somethings really are right and some things are really wrong

Craig's resurrection argument:

- Josephus is a Roman historian and he wrote about Jesus, for example
- There were four biographies of Jesus are the best sources for his life
- The scholars that Stenger mentioned are on the radical fringe

Dr. Stenger's second rebuttal:

Knowledge and the burden of proof:

- Dr. Craig has to bear the burden of proof, not me – because his claim is more "extravagant"
- "I don't have to prove that a God was not necessary to create the universe"
- "I don't have to prove that a God did not design the universe and life"
- "I don't have to prove that the universe did not have a beginning"
- "I don't have to prove that God did not provide us with our moral sense"
- There are a lot of books written about how morality evolved naturally
- "I don't have to prove that the events surrounding the supposed resurrection of Jesus did not take place"
- Bart Ehrman says that the gospels are generally unreliable (Note: Ehrman accepts all 3 of Craig's minimal facts)
- Just because people are willing to die for a cause, does not make their leader God, e.g. – the Emperor of Japan

Aesthetic concerns about the universe:

- I don't like dark matter and I wouldn't have made the universe with dark matter
- I don't like the doctrine of penal substitution
- I don't like the doctrine of original sin
- I don't like the heat death of the universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion:

The case for atheism:

- Dr. Stenger had two arguments and he has to support his premises
- Dr. Craig addressed his two arguments and each premise and Dr. Stenger never came back on it

The contingency argument:

- Dr. Stenger has dropped the refutation of this argument

The cosmological argument:

- The theoretical vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal

The moral argument:

- He asserts that things are wrong, but there is no grounding for that to be objective on atheism

The resurrection of Jesus:

- There are surveys of scholars on the empty tomb and 75% of them agree with it
- Bart Ehrman agrees with all 3 of the minimal facts that Dr. Craig presented
- Ehrman's objection to the resurrection is not historical: he's an atheist – he thinks miracles are impossible

Religious experience:

- No response from Dr. Stenger

Dr. Stenger's conclusion

The cosmological argument:

- "I argued that we have very good physical reasons to understand how something can come from nothing"
- "There is a natural tendency in the universe… to go from.. simpler thing to the more complicated thing"
- The transition from a vapor to a liquid to ice shows how something could come from nothing
- "It cannot be proven that the universe had a beginning"

The moral argument:

- Objective morality, which is independent of what people think, could be developed based on what people think

- “Jesus himself was not a tremendously moral person… he had no particular regard for the poor… he certainly supported slavery… he was for the subjugation of women” (audience laughter)

The resurrection argument:

- Bart Ehrman says that the majority of the gospels are unreliable

Religious experience:

- I don’t see any evidence that there is anything more to religious experience than just stuff in their heads

God’s purpose of the world should be to make people feel happy:

- God could have made people feel happier
- God could have made people not die
- God could could have made the universe smaller: it’s too big
- God could have made it possible for humans to live anywhere “even in space”

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 21: Quick Answers to Common Atheist Objections, Part 1

September 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 21 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how to respond quickly to common atheist objections to Christianity. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 21:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how to respond to common atheist objections to Christianity, in a minute or two. We cover these topics: insufficient evidence, evolution, women's rights, days of Genesis, copying from ancient myths, and slavery. This is the first of a three-part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Are schools right to “treat” depression in children by facilitating gender transitions?

September 4, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve been posting a lot about people in the public schools who expose children to danger, then attack parents who question what they are doing. I found a story about this for this post. I also have a new study that shows that respectfully disagreeing with children about transgenderism does not cause them to harm themselves. Then I want to talk about the root cause of these problems.

Let’s start with the UK Daily Mail:

> A California mother says the government wrongfully took away her daughter, pushed the girl into transitioning to male, and is to blame for his suicide age 19.
>
> Andrew Martinez, born Yaeli, stepped in front of a train on September 4, 2019.
>
> […][The] bereaved mother Abigail Martinez accused her Los Angeles County school of encouraging Yaeli to take hormones and undergo gender reassignment surgery as a child, while failing to properly treat her severe depression.
>
> Martinez, 53, a mother of four, claimed school staff told Yaeli not to speak to her mother about transgender issues, but secretly had her join an LGBTQ group that persuaded the girl that the only way to be happy was to transition.

Read this:

> The El Salvador-born mother said an older trans student ‘coached’ Yaeli on what to tell social workers to put her into foster care, so that the state would pay for her gender reassignment.
>
> […]Martinez said one trans friend and their parents ‘coached’ Yaeli, persuading her to run away from home in July 2016 and tell the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) that her mother had slapped her in the face.

As in most of these cases, the child was depressed by her same-age peers. Children tend to focus on appearances, not achievements, because they have no achievements. They attack people who are weird or look different. This doesn’t happen in the workplace. That’s why parents should not place their children in schools where the opinions of peers are seen as very important. Bullying causes some children who would do fine in a workplace to get depressed. And then the schools and hospitals suggest transitioning as a “cure” for the depression they caused, by not reining in the bullies.

Look:

> …the mother claimed it was Yaeli’s depression that was the problem, not gender dysphoria.
>
> […]Instead of proper treatment for mental illness, Martinez said her daughter

> was encouraged by the school and her LGBT support group to take hormones and pursue gender reassignment surgery, and cut Martinez out of the process.

There's no father in the photo in the article. Mothers who want to protect their children from the state and the schools need to prioritize commitment-ability in men, not appearance and fun. The men with uncomfortably strong theological and moral beliefs are exactly the ones who tend to stick around.

Mothers often don't want to make moral judgments the way that fathers do:

> I didn't want to be the mean mom to say 'no no no.' I wanted to give her the help she needed at that time.

Mothers want to be liked. Fathers want to lead.

The secular left authorities told the mother not to talk to her child about God:

> 'On the visit days, when she came to my house, I was told not to talk about God,' Martinez said. 'They told me if you do that, you'll never see your daughter.

Her taxes pay their salaries. She can work for money to pay them with her God-beliefs, but they tell her what she can and can't say to her children with their atheist-beliefs. Atheists think they know better than parents.

Everyone thinks that Obama was such a great president, but actually, he is the one who put in these policies that turn government and schools against parents:

> A former civil rights director for the federal Department of Health and Human Services Roger Severino… told DailyMail.com that he believes district officials were afraid of losing funding and desperate to show their pro-trans credentials after being sued by the Obama administration in 2013 for discriminating against a trans boy, and inappropriately pushed gender reassignment on children as a result.

People like to say that disagreeing with transgenderism will cause children to self-harm, but research shows that is false.

What do the studies show?

Here's a recent post about Sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) from the Christian Medical & Dental Associations by Andrè Van Mol, MD. SOCE refers to therapies that help people to change from same-sex orientation to opposite-sex orientation in sexual attraction, identity and/or behavior.

He writes:

> To recap, using a strongly representative sample of a United States sexual minority population in data from the Generations study of the Williams Institute, Sullins used several validated measures to assess behavioral harm from having experienced sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE, now preferably called SAFE-T).

> The findings "demonstrated positive evidence of the absence of harm from SOCE therapy." Specifically, "Those who had undergone [failed] SOCE were no more likely to experience psychological distress or poor mental health, to engage in substance or alcohol abuse, to intentionally harm themselves, or to think about, plan, intend or attempt suicide, than were those who had not undergone SOCE."

Unfortunately, any time conservative Christian men like me try to bring some rational argument and scientific evidence to bear on these problems, we get attacked by the feelings-oriented people in government and schools.

Our society has no place for male leadership

Men have a vision for children – to know God, to be independent, to be responsible, and to enter into respectful, productive relationships with worthy people of the opposite sex. We try to point children in a good direction, but many people see our leading as wrong, because children don't get their way.

I was once interested in marriage to a "conservative" Christian woman. She was very concerned by my plans to raise children who would be financially independent and effective at serving God. She wanted them to do what they liked. I explained that people who do what they like are unstable, and unable to help people around them. The funny thing was that she was deeply in debt after doing a degree in BALLET, and unstable in her own life. She didn't see my stability and wealth as anything to respect. Children need to rule fathers, she said. Feelings are more important than facts.

I really think we need to be more respectful of male leadership, so that children will not become victims of "compassion".

Related posts

- Far-left students shout down father who lost his child to transgenderism
- American father loses parental rights after ex-wife announces their child is transgender
- LGBT fascism: father imprisoned for calling his biological child "daughter"
- Report: Teacher calls CPS on parents for refusing to gender their child "correctly"
- What would public school teachers do if your daughter was raped by a transgender student?
- Mom explains how she pulled her daughter out of transgender spiral
- UK parents accuse school of secretly brainwashing their child into transgenderism
- What is it really like for a young woman to regret her gender transition?

Free health care? How much does Canada's universal system cost?

September 5, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had a talk with a Canadian recently about health care. He had a lot to say about his own country's free health care system, and how wonderful it was to not have to pay for health care. I was skeptical about the rosy picture he painted. After all, I have friends in Canada, and they have told me about their country's high tax rates. And I've heard about the waiting lists, too. Let's look at the evidence.

The Fraser Institute is a non-partisan think tank based in Canada that looks at policies to see whether they are achieving good results for Canadians. Each year they release statistics about the cost and performance of Canada's health care system. The most recent report is for 2021 (preliminary numbers).

The report (PDF) says:

> In 2021, the average unattached (single) individual, earning an average income of $49,215, will pay approximately $4,296 for public health care insurance. An average Canadian family consisting of two adults and two children (earning approximately $150,177) will pay about $15,039 for public health care insurance.

Do Canadians really pay $15,039 per year for health care? Or are they paying to get on a *waiting list* for health care?

Let's see another 2021 report, this one about health care wait times:

> Specialist physicians surveyed report a median waiting time of 25.6 weeks between referral from a general practitioner and receipt of treatment—longer than the wait of 22.6 weeks reported in 2020. This year's wait time is the longest wait time recorded in this survey's history and is 175% longer than in 1993, when it was just 9.3 weeks.

The waiting time for a referral to a general practitioner to a specialist increased from 10.5 weeks in 2020 to 11.1 weeks in 2021. And the waiting time from seeing a specialist to actually getting treatment increased from 12.1 weeks in 2020 to 14.5 weeks in 2021. And remember, this is *Canadian* health care. This isn't the Mayo Clinic, the Cleveland Clinic, or Johns Hopkins. This is not the best health care in the world. That's why Canadian politicians who swear their loyalty to the government health care system pack their bags and make for America when they need treatment. And they pay out of pocket for the best care.

Well, maybe these wait times are because the government is spending less on health care?

No. Actually, costs have been going up, and faster than other products and services.

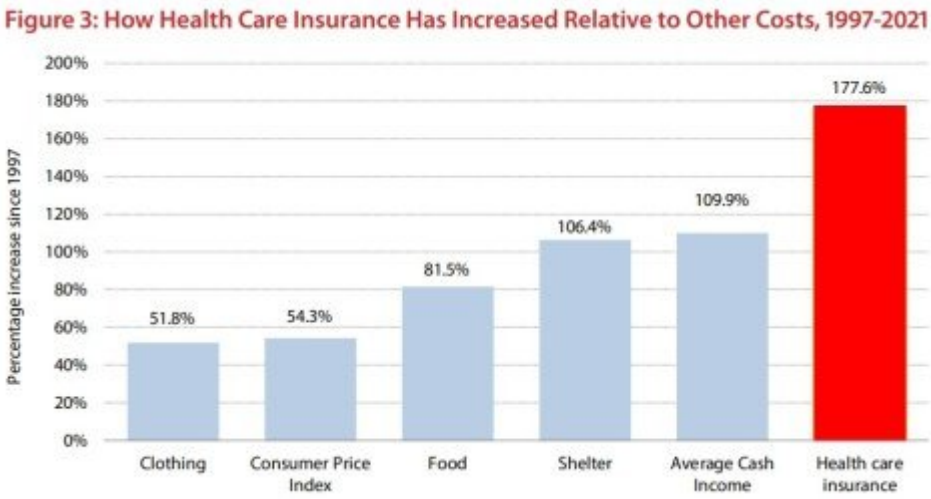

Canada Health Care Costs Inflation 2021

Why is it going up? Well, like the public school monopoly, most of the money goes to administrators. There is no competitive free market system, where providers compete with each other for the dollars of their customers. No one cares about reducing costs to consumers while improving quality. Why would they? Canadians have zero choice in who gives them health care.

I did a quick search of Canadian news stories for the last week, to see what Canadians say about their health care system when they are talking to each other, instead of to Americans.

Here's a story from the Globe and Mail, the more leftist of Canada's national newspapers. (archived here)

It says:

> One of the biggest problems such provinces are facing is a critical shortage of family doctors. One in five people in B.C. don't have one, with more people pouring into the province every day. Last year, 100,000 people arrived – a record number that only exacerbates a desperate situation.
>
> […]According to Statistics Canada, 4.6 million people over the age of 12 did not have a family doctor in 2019.
>
> […]The shortage of physicians is a problem that has been growing over the years. Canada now ranks 51st in doctors per population, according to Index Mundi. In the 1970s, we ranked anywhere between fourth and eighth. The nursing shortage in Canada is just as severe.

And they confirm the Fraser Institute's per-capita cost number:

> The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development has placed Canada 31st in hospital beds per population among the 38 countries that the OECD rank. In the meantime, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, total health care spending in the country was estimated to be $308-billion in 2021 – or **$8,019 per Canadian**. This number represents 12.7 per cent of our GDP, which puts our health care spending among the highest in the world.

$8,019 per Canadian! That's "free health care"?

The article talks about British Columbia in particular:

> B.C. Liberal MLA Shirley Bond pointed out that, on one day this week, almost every urgent- and primary-care centre in the city of Victoria was at capacity and not taking patients. The only one that was had a 4.5 hour wait.

My Canadian challenger said that Americans were dying in the streets, because they couldn't get health care. But I think he was actually talking about his own country. Can you imagine not being able to get into an emergency room, or an urgent care provider? That's what they have in British Columbia.

Where I live, I can go to 3 different hospital systems within 10 miles of my house. And that's not counting the urgent care clinics on every city block. 24-hour pharmacies open on Easter at 3 AM. My health insurance costs $85 a paycheck. And when I needed an MRI, I got it the same week.

Still think you want Canadian health care? Still think you want a government monopoly to make everyone "equal"?

Report: Biden’s student loan vote buying scheme could cost taxpayers $1 trillion

September 6, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If anyone asked me which school was the best to do an MBA, I would say the Wharton School of Business at University of Pennsylvania. Well, they just released an assessment of Biden’s massive pre-election vote buying scheme. You might have heard that the total cost of this scheme would be around 400-500 billion dollars. But that’s not what Wharton says.

Here’s an article about it from Business Insider:

> President Joe Biden’s plans to forgive student loans could cost more than $1 trillion, according to estimates by the Penn Wharton Budget Model.
>
> Biden’s plan to cancel up to $10,000 in debt for people earning less than $125,000 a year, rising to $20,000 for Pell Grant recipients, would cost between $469 billion and $519 billion over the 10-year budget window, depending on whether it covers future students who haven’t started their studies yet, according to the model.
>
> This is higher than its previous estimates.

Here’s where the extra 500+ billion comes from:

> The plan would additionally create a new income-driven repayment (IDR) plan, under which they would pay back a maximum of 5% of the portion of their earnings that lies above 225% of the poverty line, up from the current 10% and 150%.
>
> […]If the Department of Information automatically enrolled borrowers in the IDR program, costs could actually reach $520 billion, according to the model.
>
> That additional $520 billion would take the total costs of the student loan forgiveness plan to over $1 trillion, Wharton said.

It’s an election year. I guess the Democrats don’t think that their other election integrity measures (Zuck Bucks, ballot drop-offs, expanding mail-in voting, denying access to election observers, Big Tech “fact checks”, FBI election interference, etc.) will work. So they have to enslave generations yet unborn to pay for more Democrat votes. Democrats are the party of slavery. They really believe in enslaving people to pay for their reckless, irresponsible decisions.

The psychological motivation of those who embrace postmodernism

September 7, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

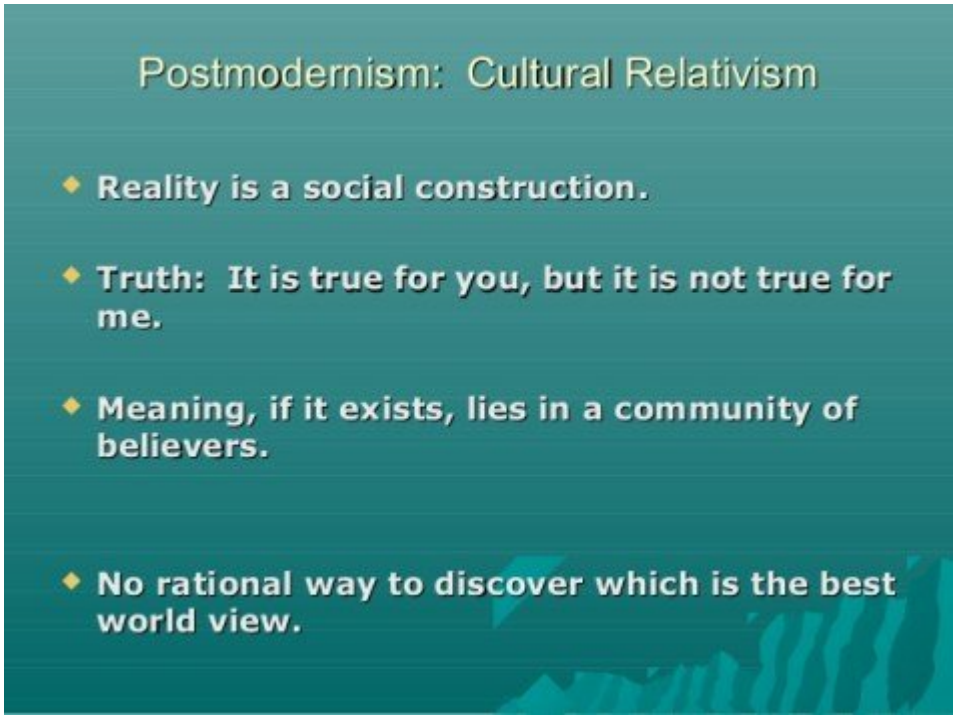

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian? Not for long

Famous analytical philosopher John Searle has written a book "Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World", explaining what's factually wrong with postmodernism. In the introduction, he explains what postmodernism is, and what motivates people to accept postmodernism.

He writes:

> […][W]hen we act or think or talk in the following sorts of ways we take a lot for granted: when we hammer a nail, or order a takeout meal from a restaurant, or conduct a lab experiment, or wonder where to go on vacation, we take the following for granted: there exists a real world that is totally independent of human beings and of what they think or say about it, and statements about objects and states of affairs in that world are true or false depending on whether things in the world really are the way we say they are. So, for example, if in pondering my vacation plans I wonder whether Greece is hotter in the summer than Italy, I simply take it for granted that there exists a real world containing places like Greece and Italy and that they have various temperatures. **Furthermore, if I read in a travel book that the average summer temperature in Greece is hotter than in Italy, I know that what the book says will be true if and only if it really is hotter on average in the summer in Greece than in Italy. This is because I take it for granted that such statements are true only if there is something independent of the**

> **statement in virtue of which, or because of which, it is true.**
>
> […]These two Background presuppositions have long histories and various famous names. The first, that there is a real world existing independently of us, I like to call "external realism." "Realism," because it asserts the existence of the real world, and "external" to distinguish it from other sorts of realism-for example, realism about mathematical objects (mathematical realism) or realism about ethical facts (ethical realism). The second view, that a statement is true if things in the world are the way the statement says they are, and false otherwise, is called "the correspondence theory of truth." This theory comes in a lot of different versions, but the basic idea is that statements are true if they correspond to, or describe, or fit, how things really are in the world, and false if they do not.

The "correspondence theory of truth" is the view of truth assumed in books of the Bible whose genre is such that that they were intended by the authors to be taken *literally*, (with allowances for symbolism, figures of speech, metaphors, hyperbole, etc.).

But what about the postmodernists, who seek to deny the objectivity of external reality?

More Searle:

> Thinkers who wish to deny the correspondence theory of truth or the referential theory of thought and language typically find it embarrassing to have to concede external realism. Often they would rather not talk about it at all, or they have some more or less subtle reason for rejecting it. In fact, very few thinkers come right out and say that there is no such thing as a real world existing absolutely, objectively, and totally independently of us. Some do. Some come right out and say that the so-called real world is a "social construct."

What is behind the denial of objective reality, and statements about external reality that are warranted by evidence?

> It is not easy to get a fix on what drives contemporary antirealism, but if we had to pick out a thread that runs through the wide variety of arguments, it would be what is sometimes called "perspectivism." Perspectivism is the idea that our knowledge of reality is never "unmediated," that it is always mediated by a point of view, by a particular set of predilections, or, worse yet by sinister political motives, such as an allegiance to a political group or ideology. And because we can never have unmediated knowledge of the world, then perhaps there is no real world, or perhaps it is useless to even talk about it, or perhaps it is not even interesting.

Searle is going to refute anti-realism in the rest of the book, but here is his guess at what is motivating the anti-realists:

> > **I have to confess, however, that I think there is a much deeper**

> > **reason for the persistent appeal of all forms of antirealism, and this has become obvious in the twentieth century: it satisfies a basic urge to power. It just seems too disgusting, somehow, that we should have to be at the mercy of the "real world." It seems too awful that our representations should have to be answerable to anything but us. This is why people who hold contemporary versions of antirealism and reject the correspondence theory of truth typically sneer at the opposing view.**
>
> […]I don't think it is the argument that is actually driving the impulse to deny realism. I think that as a matter of contemporary cultural and intellectual history, the attacks on realism are not driven by arguments, because the arguments are more or less obviously feeble, for reasons I will explain in detail in a moment. **Rather, as I suggested earlier, the motivation for denying realism is a kind of will to power, and it manifests itself in a number of ways. In universities, most notably in various humanities disciplines, it is assumed that, if there is no real world, then science is on the same footing as the humanities. They both deal with social constructs, not with independent realities. From this assumption, forms of postmodernism, deconstruction, and so on, are easily developed, having been completely turned loose from the tiresome moorings and constraints of having to confront the real world. If the real world is just an invention-a social construct designed to oppress the marginalized elements of society-then let's get rid of the real world and construct the world we want. That, I think, is the real driving psychological force behind antirealism at the end of the twentieth century.**

Now, I'll go one step further than Searle.

People, from the Fall, have had the desire to step into the place of God. It's true that we creatures exist in a universe created and designed by God. But, there is a way to work around the fact that God made the universe and the laws that the universe runs on, including logic, mathematics and natural laws. And that way is to *deny logic, mathematics and natural laws.* Postmodernists simply deny that there is any way to construct rational arguments and support the premises with evidence from the real world. That way, they imagine, they are free to escape a God-designed world, including a God-designed specification for how they ought to live. The postmoderns deny *the reliable methods of knowing about the God-created reality because logic and evidence can be used to point to God's existence, God's character, and God's actions in history.*

And that's why there is this effort to make reality "optional" and perspectival. Everyone can be their own God, and escape any accountability to the real God – the God who is easily discovered through the use of logic and evidence. I believe that this is also behind the rise of atheists, who feign allegiance to logic and science, but then express "skepticism" about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, objective

morality, the minimal facts concerning the historical Jesus, and other undeniables.

State Supreme Court orders Orthodox Jewish university to allow LGBT club

September 8, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm always very surprised when people accuse religious people of "hate" merely for disagreeing with LGBT activism. If anything, it seems to me like the LGBT activists hate the religious people. Today's post is interesting because you might have thought that only Christians ever got attacked by the LGBT activists. But actually, Orthodox Jews get attacked, too.

Here's the story from The Federalist:

> This week, New York's Yeshiva University — an Orthodox Jewish university — filed an emergency application to the U.S. Supreme Court after a state supreme court judge ordered the school to recognize an LGBT student group in violation of its religious beliefs regarding sexual morality. Yeshiva has asked for a stay of the lower court decision's ruling pending their appeal. In the alternative, it has asked for a petition for writ of certiorari so the high court can order briefing and arguments and consider the full case on its merits.
>
> Yeshiva maintains that the "message of Torah on [the LGBT] issue is nuanced, both accepting each individual with love and affirming its timeless prescriptions." Accordingly, although Yeshiva admits LGBT students, as it is "wholly committed to and guided by Halacha and Torah values," it cannot lend its "own name or seal of approval" to clubs that appear "[in]consistent with [its] Torah values."

I thought the part in bold was interesting:

> **The plaintiffs argued that Yeshiva had violated the law by refusing to recognize their student group, admitting that in the creation of the group, they sought to alter Yeshiva's religious environment.** Yeshiva countered that it was a "religious corporation incorporated under the education law" as defined in section 8-102 of the human rights law, making it exempt. YU Pride disagreed, and State Supreme Court Justice Lynn Kotler sided with the student group.

I looked up Lynn Kotler and she's a Democrat, which is hardly surprising.

So you can see that the LGBT students were the aggressors. They wanted to change the university's religious traditions, even though they could have gone to any of the other universities in the country.

> Yeshiva's motto — "Torah Umadda" — reflects its core mission: the pursuit of rigorous religious and secular studies. All students engage in high-level study of Hebrew scripture, the Talmud, and the vast corpus of Jewish texts. The academic calendar is in harmony with the Jewish calendar, observing the Sabbath and all

> Jewish holy days. The campuses are sex-segregated in accordance with Jewish law, the food offered is strictly kosher, doorways have mezuzot affixed, and each student has a mashgiach ruchani (spiritual advisor).

This reminds me of the Canadian case where a Christian university wanted to have standards for sexual behavior. The university required students to abstain from sexuality activity of any kind before marriage.

Christian Post reports on what happened to them:

> The Ontario Court of Appeal ruled Wednesday that a Christian University can be denied accreditation because of its opposition to homosexuality.
>
> […]At specific issue is the university's community covenant, which requires students and faculty to "voluntarily abstain" from "sexual intimacy that violates the sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman."
>
> "The university's mission, core values, curriculum and community life are formed by a firm commitment to the person and work of Jesus Christ as declared in the Bible," reads the covenant.
>
> "The community covenant is a solemn pledge in which members place themselves under obligations on the part of the institution to its members, the members to the institution, and the members to one another."

I think we should have views about LGBT activists that take into account their actions against people who take the Bible seriously. If you try to use the law to force your beliefs on me, that doesn't seem neutral. No one is forcing students to attend these religious universities. But the LGBT activists are forcing these universities to go against the Bible. Which one is guilty of hate? Seems to me that forcing someone to go against their conscience is hateful.

Meet Britain’s new conservative Prime Minister Liz Truss

September 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UK’s Prime Minister Boris Johnson resigned earlier this week after a revolt from within the conservative party. I thought it might be a good idea to read something about the new Prime Minister, Liz Truss, because America and the UK have a “special relationship”. We certainly can’t depend on Canada for anything. Anyway, in this post, we’re going to see what the new UK PM is like.

Nile Gardiner writes about her in Fox News: (H/T Carla)

> Truss, who previously served as Foreign Secretary and International Trade Secretary, succeeds Boris Johnson, who resigned as Prime Minister following a rebellion among Conservative Members of Parliament. She faces immense challenges, from soaring inflation and a large-scale energy crisis, to the continuing war in Ukraine and growing aggression from the enemies of the free world, including Russia, China and Iran.
>
> Truss is the right leader for Britain at this moment. She models herself on Thatcher’s leadership and is a self-described “Thatcherite,” who believes in cutting taxes, reducing government spending, and shrinking the size of the state.

If she is another Thatcher, then she will be more than enough to face these challengers. And so far, so good:

> A born-again Brexiteer (after originally opposing Brexit in the 2016 referendum), she is a strong defender of British national sovereignty and self-determination, and has resolved to stand up to the European Union on vital areas of British national interest, including amending the hugely flawed Northern Ireland Protocol.

Her early actions are promising:

> Truss is already off to a flying start, appointing a strongly conservative cabinet, many of whom are on the right of the Conservative Party. It includes rising stars Suella Braverman as the new Home Secretary in charge of securing Britain’s borders and ending illegal migration from France, as well as Kemi Badenoch in the position of International Trade Secretary, overseeing Britain’s drive to secure a trade deal with the United States. Both Braverman and Badenoch have also been at the forefront of Britain’s culture wars, and key figures in combating the left’s nefarious “woke” agenda.
>
> In addition, leading free-marketeers Kwasi Kwarteng and Jacob Rees-Mogg have been appointed to the key positions of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Business Secretary respectively, with vital roles at a time when Britain’s economy is under

> great duress. Ben Wallace, who has been an outstanding Defence Secretary, remains in his post, and will be a major thorn in the side of Vladimir Putin and Russia's barbaric efforts to invade Ukraine.
>
> […]Encouragingly, she has called for an aspiration-based society, one that champions individual freedom over government handouts, and celebrates the free market instead of tying its hands.

Jacob Rees-Mogg is my favorite UK MP, so I'm glad to see him getting promoted. Keep an eye on the UK. It looks like they could be more free, prosperous and secure than they have been.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 22: Quick Answers to Common Atheist Objections, Part 2

September 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Welcome to episode 22 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss quick responses to common atheist objections to Christianity. This is part 2 of a 3 part series. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 22:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how to respond to common atheist objections to Christianity, in a minute or two. We cover these topics: eternal punishment, Old Testament conquests, the appropriateness of worship, forcing beliefs on others, hypocrisy in the church, religious wars, and LGBT rights. This is the second of a three-part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Should conservatives and Christians give money to Disney?

September 11, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I am friends with a lot of Christians who attend mainline churches. Sometimes, the topic of Disney comes up. I try to talk to them about Disney's actions on politics and social issues. But they don't listen. For them, the fiction that Disney makes to entertain them is more important than the "culture war". They know very much more about Disney fictions than they do about Disney facts.

Let's see some Disney facts from this story in Daily Wire: (H/T Laura)

> A Florida sheriff said that his department "always" caught Disney employees during undercover operations, while revealing the results of a week-long investigation into human trafficking.
>
> The large investigation, known as "Fall Haul 2," was spearheaded by the Polk County Police Department and involved a week-long sting operation in central Florida that netted over 150 arrests.
>
> "Our goal is to identify victims, offer them help, and arrest those who are fueling the exploitation of human beings (Johns) and those profiting from the exploitation of human beings. Prostitution is not a victimless crime – it results in exploitation, disease, dysfunction, drug and alcohol addiction, violence, and broken families," Sheriff Grady Judd said in a statement.
>
> People from Florida, Georgia, Michigan, New York, California, North Carolina, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Arizona were all arrested during the undercover operation. Notable arrests included a Disney bellhop, a Georgia police deputy chief, and a high school physical education teacher.
>
> The Disney employee, 57-year-old Guillermo Perez, was arrested for soliciting a prostitute. Perez is a bellhop for Disney's Coronado Springs Resort. While showing Perez's photo while at the press conference, Judd suggested he was not surprised to have arrested a Disney employee.
>
> "Now, where would we be with an undercover operation and no Disney employees?" he said. "Oh yes, we always have Disney employees."
>
> Also arrested was an independent photographer who the sheriff's department said is occasionally "contracted by Disney."

Now, you might be thinking "well, that's just Disney employees. The company itself doesn't take a stand on pedophilia or gr00ming children, does it?"

Here's a report from Life News.

Excerpt:

> Walt Disney World, a company founded to bring joy and entertainment to

> children, told employees Friday that it will pay their travel expenses to have their unborn babies aborted.
>
> The news came after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in a historic ruling Friday morning. The Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health decision means states may protect unborn babies by banning abortions again,.
>
> The Orange County Register reports Walt Disney World announced the new employee "benefit" in direct response to the high court ruling.
>
> The company, which employs about 80,000 people in Florida, described the killing of unborn babies in abortions as "quality healthcare" and told Reuters that it is "committed" to ensuring its employees have access to abortions, according to the report.
>
> A new Florida law that bans abortions after 15 weeks is scheduled to go into effect July 1. Though not a total abortion ban, pro-life advocates believe the law will save thousands of unborn babies from mid- and late-term abortions every year.

The facts of that article were also picked up in other places, like the New York Post, but I prefer to link to Life News.

Here's an article by The Federalist, talking about the Disney employee who does the voice of the main character in a recent Disney movie:

> In response to the criticisms of the bigots who complain about the presence of a same-sex kiss in a film for children, Evans, the voice of this version of Buzz Lightyear, spoke bluntly in a recent interview with Reuters Television, insisting that those who oppose LGBTQIA characters in children's films are not worthy of your concern. Their complaints will perish with them. Their bigotry will be swept into the dustbin of history. You simply need to wait for them to enter extinction.

Previously, I wrote about how Disney opposed a religious freedom bill, and about how they supported grooming children with LGBT propaganda.

I try not to buy anything from Disney and related companies like ESPN, because I don't want to give money to people who war against my Christian worldview and values. But it seems like in the church, people know more about Star Wars and Disney than they know about the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. It's astonishing, but it's true. There's all this emphasis on fun activities and worship songs, but no one can give a defense of the most basic Christian truth claims. Community is more important to them than knowing truth and showing their work to discover truth to others who still believe lies. "Don't Judge!" is the new religion of the woke elites. Star Wars is their Bible. And Disneyland is their Mecca.

Duke University volleyball player is the latest leftist to fake a hate crime

September 12, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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At this point, I think it's safe to say that whenever the secular left claims to be the victim of a hate crime (or hate speech) that we should just assume they're lying. If a full, impartial investigation finds the "victim" was telling the truth, then we can believe them. But that almost never happens.

Here's the latest from Outkick:

> BYU conducted an investigation looking into allegations made by Duke volleyball player Rachel Richardson that fans hurled racial slurs at her during a match on August 26. The university's investigation found **no evidence** to support Richardson's allegations.
>
> The investigation's conclusion comes as countless holes have been discovered in regard to the severe allegations made by Richardson. National media outlets blindly supported Richardson's claims without doing any research. And now, BYU states there is zero evidence of any racial slurs.
>
> […]The university's investigation included interviews with more than 50 eyewitnesses including players from both teams and athletic department staff. BYU also stated that it extensively reviewed video and audio from the match.
>
> "From our extensive review, we have not found any evidence to corroborate the allegation that fans engaged in racial heckling or uttered racial slurs at the event," BYU's statement read in part. "As we stated earlier, we would not tolerate any conduct that would make a student-athlete feel unsafe. That is the reason for our immediate response and our thorough investigation."
>
> […]Outside of Richardson's godmother, who has a laundry list worth of racist rhetoric on social media, not one person has corroborated her story.

Duke University ignored the evidence, and is maintaining that BYU fans are guilty, guilty, guilty! Duke Vice President and Director of Athletics Nina King released a statement dismissing the evidence:

> "The 18 members of the Duke University volleyball team are exceptionally strong women who represent themselves, their families, and Duke University with the utmost integrity," the statement reads. "We unequivocally stand with and champion them, especially when their character is called into question. Duke Athletics believes in respect, equality and inclusiveness, and we do not tolerate hate and bias."

You might remember that Duke University has been involved in perpetrating other hate hoaxes. Remember when the single mom stripper complained about being raped by

players from the Duke lacrosse team? Duke University, the North Carolina district attorney Mike Nifong, and all the mainstream news media believed the allegations. But there's just one problem… the woman lied.

New York Post reported:

> A Duke University lacrosse player from New Jersey, charged in the rape of a stripper at a team party, has a rock-solid alibi and documents to prove it, lawyers close to the investigation said yesterday as photos of the sordid night emerged.
>
> Reade Seligmann, 20, of Essex Fells, N.J., has an ATM receipt, a cabdriver's statement and dorm security records that call into doubt his being at the party at the time the woman says she was raped, said attorneys representing the lacrosse star's teammates.
>
> The 6-foot-1 sophomore admits being at the party, but says he left the off-campus home in Durham, N.C., less than 20 minutes after the woman arrived to perform a striptease, and before she says she was raped, the lawyers said.
>
> "They have evidence in the form of an alibi that will clearly show at the alleged time of the rape, one of them specifically could not have been there," said James Williams, an attorney for one of the team's captains.
>
> And they also say dozens of time-stamped photographs that have emerged from that night – at least one of which shows the victim smiling – exonerate Seligmann's co-defendant, Collin Finnerty, 19, of Garden City, L.I., because he does not appear in any of the shots.

She was later convicted of murder. A real class act.

Duke University is regularly involved in scandals. Here is another famous one.

ABC News reports:

> A Duke University official has been charged in federal court with offering his 5-year-old adopted son up for sex. Frank Lombard, associate director of the Center for Health Policy, was arrested Wednesday in Raleigh, the FBI said.
>
> An unidentified informant who already faces child porn charges in a different child sex case pointed investigators to Lombard, according to court documents. The informant told investigators he had met Lombard on the Internet four years ago. The informant described in graphic detail how he allegedly observed Lombard molesting an African-American child on four occasions over an Internet video chat service called ICUii.
>
> The informant said, according to court papers, that Lombard, who is white, said that he lived in the Raleigh-Durham area of North Carolina and that the child was one of two adopted African-Americans in his custody.
>
> Lombard has been charged with attempting to induce someone to cross state lines to engage in sex with a child, punishable by a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

> […]Lombard has been employed by Duke since 1999, Schoenfeld said.

And then there was the female co-ed who published a presentation about all the Duke athletes she had recreational sex with, comparing their performance in the bedroom.

I wouldn’t send my children to Duke University. It’s a cesspool.

New study: Contraceptives double risk of depression in teenage girls

September 13, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Sydney Morning Herald reports:

> A Danish study of a million women has found a link between the use of hormonal contraception such as the the pill and increased risk of depression.
>
> Compared with non-users, women and teenage girls aged 15 to 34 who used hormonal contraception had a 1.23 times higher risk of being diagnosed with depression, especially adolescents, according to a paper published in the journal JAMA Psychiatry.
>
> Researchers at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark analysed health registry data of one million Danish women from 2000 and followed them up after an average of six years.
>
> Of the 55 per cent of those who used hormonal contraception, there were just over 23,000 first diagnoses of depression at the time of follow up.
>
> More than 133,000 had received their first prescription of antidepressants.
>
> The highest risk of depression was among the adolescent girls, who had a 1.8-times higher risk of first use of an antidepressant.
>
> The risk varied slightly among the different types of hormonal contraception, but the risk was three times higher among those who used non-oral products, such as progestogen implants.
>
> Few studies have quantified the effect of low-dose hormonal contraception on the risk for depression, but study author Ojvind Lidegaard says their research warrants the need for further studies into the potential adverse effects of the pill.
>
> "Use of hormonal contraceptives was associated with subsequent antidepressant use and first diagnosis of depression at a psychiatric hospital among women living in Denmark.
>
> "Adolescents seemed to be more vulnerable to this risk than women 20 to 34 years old," Lidegaard said.

Of course, one wonders where these studies were BEFORE the pill was championed by the radical feminists. We didn't have studies before we adopted abortion, no-fault divorce, single mother welfare and gay marriage, either. Do you think that those might have unintended consequences? Shouldn't we care about the consequences before we adopt policies that go against traditional moral values?

Anyway, let's review some studies on birth control pills, since no one ever tells young people these things before it's too late.

This is from the ultra-leftist Time magazine, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Dr. David Gaist, a neurologist at Odense University Hospital and the University of Southern Denmark, and his colleagues found that women taking hormonal contraceptives — those containing estrogen, progestin or a combination of both — showed higher rates of a rare brain tumor known as glioma. Their results, published Thursday in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*, raise questions about the connection between oral contraceptives and brain cancer, but shouldn't yet be interpreted as a reason to stop taking birth control, says Gaist.
>
> Using data from Denmark's national registries of health records, cancer cases and prescriptions, Gaist zeroed in on the women aged 15 years to 49 years diagnosed with glioma, and then analyzed whether they were prescribed contraceptives and for how long. **Overall, women who had used hormonal contraceptives at any point in their lives showed a 50% higher risk of developing the brain tumors compared to those who had not used them. And women who used the birth control for more than five years nearly doubled their risk of the cancer.**

Let's take a look at some previous studies on the effects of contraceptives.

From the Times of India.

Excerpt:

> Women who take oral contraceptives regularly are at a higher risk of developing breast cancer compared to others, shows a study by AIIMS doctors. Breast cancer risk was found to be 9.5 times more in women with a history of consuming such pills. Early menstruation cycle, late marriage and lower duration of breastfeeding were the other major factors responsible for the disease among Indians, according to the study published in the latest issue of the Indian Journal of Cancer.

> The study was conducted on 640 women, of which 320 were breast cancer patients. "We found long-term use of oral contraceptive pills (OCP) higher among those suffering from breast cancer-11.9%-compared to healthy individuals-1.2%," said Dr Umesh Kapil, a professor at the public health nutrition unit, AIIMS. He said breast cancer is caused by repeated exposure of breast cells to circulating ovarian hormones, and long-term use of OCPs, which contain estrogen and progesterone, may be increasing this risk by causing hormonal imbalance.

> The study mostly had women who used OCPs for birth control. Emergency contraceptives, popularly called morning-after pills, were not included.

This is not the first study, nor even the second study, to confirm this link.

Birth control pills

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9) and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed childbearing was a risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

When people talk about a war on women, maybe they should be thinking about this practice of promoting behaviors to women that make them sick. And eventually, we all have to pay for the increased costs of health care when we encourage people to do things that make them sick. We should not be promoting birth control to young women in order to enable them to have recreational sex. It’s not worth the harm it causes them. When you add in the psychological damage and the risk of abortion if the contraception fails, it really is not the right thing to tell a young woman.

Treason? FBI paid Russian informant to lie to them about Trump

September 14, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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There was a bombshell news story that came out on Tuesday that I wanted to tell everyone about. Previously, we knew that a Democrat PR firm and a Democrat law firm were behind the Trump-Russia collusion dossier. This is the dossier that the FBI used to get a warrant to spy on Trump's election campaign staff during the election. Now there is news about the source of the dossier.

Margot Cleveland writes about it at The Federalist:

> Our federal government paid for Russian disinformation to frame the president of the United States for colluding with Russia.
>
> The FBI put a contributor to the Hillary Clinton campaign's Donald Trump smear dossier on FBI payroll as a confidential human source after investigating Igor Danchenko for allegedly spying for the Russian government, revealed Special Counsel John Durham in a court filing unsealed by a Virginia federal court yesterday. The filing contains this bombshell and seven other significant details about the Democrat-led plot to use U.S. intelligence agencies to deny Americans the results of their choice for president in 2016.
>
> The FBI made Danchenko a confidential human source, providing him and the FBI's use of him "national security" cover, in March 2017 and terminated that designation in October 2020, according to the court filing unsealed on Sept. 13. Danchenko is the originator of the false claim trumpeted all over global media that Donald Trump told prostitutes to pee on beds the Obamas had slept in in a Russian hotel.
>
> The FBI had previously targeted Danchenko, Christopher Steele's primary source, as a possible Russian agent. But after discovering Danchenko's identity as Steele's Sub-Source No. 1, rather than investigate whether Danchenko had been feeding Steele Russian disinformation, the FBI paid Danchenko as a CHS.
>
> Danchenko faces trial next month on five counts of lying to the FBI related to his role as Steele's primary sub-source.

That's pretty mild compared to this revelation:

> A second shocker from the Sept. 13 court filing concerned Danchenko's hiring as a paid CHS.
>
> "In March 2017, the FBI signed the defendant up as a paid confidential human source of the FBI," the special counsel revealed in the motion. It was not until October 2020 that "the FBI terminated its source relationship with" Danchenko.
>
> Simply put: Our federal government paid for Russian disinformation to frame the

> president of the United States for colluding with Russia.
>
> The FBI did this knowing that Danchenko "was associate of two FBI counterintelligence subjects"; "had previous contact with the Russian Embassy and known Russian intelligence officers"; "had also informed one Russian intelligence officer that he had interest in entering the Russian diplomatic service"; and, according to a think-tank employee, suggested he had contacts willing to purchase classified information.
>
> Also, the FBI and Special Counsel Robert Mueller's team continued to use Danchenko as a paid CHS even knowing his stories were fabrications. In fact, Mueller's team was so focused on getting Trump, it completely ignored whether the Steele dossier included Russian disinformation.

Hillary Clinton was involved in collusion with Russians in order to interfere with the 2016 election:

> Not only did the FBI pay for Russian disinformation, so did Clinton, and she did so to interfere in the 2016 election. The public already knew from Durham's (failed) prosecution of Clinton campaign attorney Michael Sussmann that the campaign paid Fusion GPS for opposition research. Fusion in turn hired Steele to dig up dirt on Trump.
>
> That trial also revealed that Clinton personally approved pushing a smaller aspect of the Russia-collusion hoax, namely the Alfa-Bank secret communications hoax.
>
> From yesterday's filing we now know the primary sub-source for the Steele dossier paid for by Clinton was not merely a Russian national who fabricated the "intel," but also a suspected Russian agent. Tuesday's motion also highlighted the fact that longtime Clinton backer "Dolan maintained a relationship with several high-ranking Russian government officials who appear in the Steele Reports."
>
> So, for all her vapors over Trump's connections with Russia and his supposed collusion with Russia to interfere in the election, the evidence shows Clinton holds that dishonor.

There's another report on these events here from Just The News, which is centrist.

I definitely recommend reading Margot's article about this, to find out how corrupt and untrustworthy the FBI really are. If they don't want people to think of them as corrupt and untrustworthy, then they should quit going after whistleblowers and clean their own house. They did this to themselves. They hired partisan Democrats and now they are shocked that there were no checks and balances to stop the treason that followed. Instead of pointing fingers at us for judging them, they should point fingers at themselves. These are incompetent, immoral people. No different from the secret police in any other fascist socialist regime.

Woman ignored father's objections about her boyfriend, then boyfriend murdered her

September 15, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There is a big battle between feminism and patriarchy. Feminists tell women to imitate the values and priorities of the hot no-commitment bad boys. These men are the "best" men, because they they don't want to end the woman's fun times with "boring" marriage. That's feminism. On the other side are the patriarchs, who tell women to choose good men, and not to delay marriage.

Here is a good story from the New York Post about a father who tried to lead his daughter, but was ignored by her.

> A 27-year-old mother of two has been identified as the victim beheaded on a street in Northern California last week.
>
> Karina Castro, who worked as a Door Dash driver, left behind 7-year-old and 1-year-old girls, KGO-TV reported.
>
> Her youngest daughter was fathered by the man who's been arrested for her murder, 33-year-old Jose Raphael Solano Landaeta, who goes by the name Rafa Solano.
>
> Her father, Marty Castro, told the outlet, "Every time I saw her, I would beg her. Don't talk to him. Leave him and it seemed like the more I did that, the more she would see him."
>
> Solano had been violent with Castro before, and she got a restraining order against him in April, but continued to see him, Castro's family said.
>
> Deputies from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office found Karina's body Thursday in San Carlos, south of San Francisco, after being flagged down by a witness, law enforcement sources told KNTV.
>
> Her head had been cut off with a sword, the local outlet reported.

The trouble with feminists is that they see traditional male and female character traits as "sexist". Chastity is sexist. Sobriety is sexist. Choosing mates based on their marriage-ability is sexist. Marrying early is sexist. Being a stay-at-home mom is sexist. Any kind of expectation on women to act like traditional women and prepare for wife and mother roles is "sexist". Any kind of expectation on men to act like traditional men and prepare for husband and father roles is "sexist".

So what ends up happening is that women just pick whichever man looks good to them, and gives them tingles. And guess what? The tall, hot bad boys with tattoos give more tingles than the average height guy with no tattoos or piercings who makes 80K working as an electrician. Women have been taught to avoid men who demonstrate ability at traditional male roles: protector, provider, moral leader and spiritual leader. They don't

want to be judged, and they don't want to be led. What's left to choose once you eliminate traditional male roles as "sexist"? What's left is this murderer guy.

When I was interning with a big Information Technology company, I met a girl named Carolyn. Carolyn had a boyfriend who she was sexually active with. She would complain to everyone about how her boyfriend just stayed in school and studied philosophy. And about how he would not propose to her. And about how she could not get him to act morally. So I said to her, why would you choose such a man if all you do is complain about him?

The answer I finally got was that she chose him precisely because of the things she complained about. He was a philosophy student, so he could not judge her for being lazy in her career. He was an atheist, so he couldn't judge her for drinking, smoking, or forgetting his birthday. Any time he tried to hold her accountable for something, she could easily get him to shut up about it by giving him sex. She wanted to choose a man who would not make moral judgments of her or lead her toward marriage. And he didn't. Then she would complain that he didn't behave morally or propose marriage.

Patriarchy is the idea that women's fathers should be able to advise them about how to make wise decisions, especially about men. Fathers don't have any tingles about hot, bad boys. They hate hot, bad boys. Instead, they like marriage-minded good men who read their Bibles and have long, gapless resumes. When you see radical feminists raging against patriarchy, they are raging against the biological fathers of women. They don't like the idea that biological fathers lead their daughters towards marriage and motherhood. Right now, we are playing an interesting game in society, where good fathers are demeaned and degraded. What you see in the story above is what happens when young woman accept this view.

Democrats mad after Ron DeSantis flies 50 illegal immigrants to Martha's Vineyard

September 16, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I've been watching this story closely, and now that we have some Democrat reactions, I thought it was a good idea to write about it. A lot of people like Donald Trump because he says bold things. He's going to make Mexico pay for a border wall. Well, that wall was never completed. Do you know what's better bold talk? Bold actions. Like flying illegal immigrants to live in secular left strongholds.

Here's the story from Daily Wire:

> "Yes, Florida can confirm the two planes with illegal immigrants that arrived in Martha's Vineyard today were part of the state's relocation program to transport illegal immigrants to sanctuary destinations," an official for DeSantis' office said in a statement. "States like Massachusetts, New York, and California will better facilitate the care of these individuals who they have invited into our country' by incentivizing illegal immigration through their designation as 'sanctuary states' and support for the Biden Administration's open border policies."
>
> […]The 50 illegal immigrants landing on the small island, where ultrawealthy progressives like former President Barack Obama live…

The Democrats are saying that they can't handle 50 illegal immigrants. But Obama has a 10-bedroom mansion in Martha's Vineyard. Why can't he house the 50 illegal immigrants?

> Obama and his wife Michelle bought a gigantic 6,892-square-foot house that has seven bedrooms and "sits on nearly 30 secluded acres fronting the Edgartown Great Pond between Slough Cove and Turkeyland Cove, with views of the Atlantic ocean," per Homes & Gardens.

I heard that 4.2 million illegal immigrants have come across the border since Biden took office. Who is supposed to take care of them? They mostly go in to southern states… states that the Democrats want to punish for voting against them.

Here's DeSantis commenting, reported by Daily Wire:

> "We take what is happening at the southern border very seriously, unlike some, and unlike the President of the United States, who has refused to lift a finger to secure that border," he charged. "You've had millions and millions of people pouring across illegally; record amount of fentanyl coming into our country; it is absolutely killing Americans in record numbers; of course you have criminal aliens."
>
> […]"If you have folks that are inclined to think Florida's a good place, our message to them is that we are not a sanctuary state, and it's better to be able

> to go to a sanctuary jurisdiction, and yes, we will help facilitate that transport for you to be able to go to greener pastures."
>
> […]"I would just note: Biden would fly people in the middle of the night, dump them all across this country; there was no warning on any of this. They're doing it and they're farming people out all around."
>
> "And all of those people in D.C. and New York were beating their chests when Trump was president, saying they were so proud to be sanctuary jurisdictions, saying how bad it was to have a secure border," he noted. "The minute even a small fraction of what those border towns deal with every day is brought to their front door, they all of a sudden go berserk and they're so upset that this is happening. It just shows you their virtue-signaling is a fraud."

The Daily Wire also reported on the response from the Biden administration:

> White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre struggled to answer questions Thursday about whether the U.S. southern border is secure after Florida Republican Governor Ron DeSantis sent 50 illegal immigrants to Martha's Vineyard.
>
> […]"What we stand by is that we're doing everything that we can, uh, to make sure that, um, uh, that we follow the process that's been put forth," she said. "That's why we have, uh, historic funding, uh, to do just that, to make sure that, um, uh — you know, uh, um, uh, to make sure that, um — to make sure that the folks that we encounter at the border be removed, uh, or expelled."
>
> "Is the border secure, Karine?" the reporter pressed. "Is the border secure?"
>
> "I'm just going to refer back to the vice president. We agree with her," Jean-Pierre responded.

I'm going to remember what he did when it's time to pick a Republican presidential candidate in 2024. Can you imagine if EVERY illegal immigrant was sent to "sanctuary cities"? Then we would finally have Democrats having to foot the bill for their virtue signaling. And DeSantis seems to understand that. Trump promised to make Mexico pay for a wall. That never happened. But DeSantis is actually making Democrats pay for no-wall. That's happening.

Previous DeSantis actions:

- elect conservatives to school boards
- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women's sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 23: Quick Answers to Common Atheist Objections, Part 3

September 17, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Welcome to episode 23 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss quick responses to common atheist objections to Christianity. This is part 3 of a 3 part series. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 23:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how to respond to common atheist objections to Christianity, in a minute or two. We cover these topics: Christianity as a crutch for the weak, goodness without God, intolerance by Christians, the Bible can be used to prove anything, if you were born in India you'd be a Hindu, why are there so many denominational divisions, why can't we just all love everyone, and being unhappy about friends and family in Hell. This is the third of a three-part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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How the presence and quality of fathers affects belief in God

September 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's an article by Paul Copan which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.* It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own* rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of François-Marie Arouet.
> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his

> autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence, but there is also statistical evidence. Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is

> regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an more difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others. If you want your child to be religious and moral, you have to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he makes, he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading.

My advice to Christian women is this. When you are picking a man, be sure and choose one who is already invested in Christian things and producing results. It's very unlikely that he's going to start from nothing after you marry him. If you value your kids, make a man's interest in developing and acting on a Christian worldview the main thing you are looking for.

Support for secular left policies increasing among young, unmarried feminists

September 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Young, unmarried women vote overwhelmingly for Democrat party policies: abortion, same-sex marriage, daycare, public schools, no-fault divorce, etc. Cultural dominance of radical feminism has led to surging unhappiness, singleness, infertility and mental illness for these women. Nevertheless, young, unmarried women refuse to abandon radical feminism. They are doubling down.

First, lets review this article by Amanda Prestigiacomo from Daily Wire, that talks about a recent study on women's declining happiness.

> According to a recent study from Yale University researchers, liberated, college educated women are freezing their eggs because they can't find a man to marry and have children with before their natural childbearing years expire. In the U.K., for instance, one in five women is childless when their natural reproductive years expires, as opposed to one in ten women a mere generation prior.
>
> So what's to blame for this onslaught of college-educated yet terribly empty women?
>
> The short answer is feminism.

Feminism teaches women to delay marriage for college. College is worth it if you study nursing, computer science, etc. But it's not worth it to get a worthless non-STEM degree in grievance studies. Especially if the degree comes with secular left indoctrination, promiscuity, misandry, contempt for male leadership, and student loan debt. None of these things are attractive to men who are considering marriage.

And guess what? The marriage rate is plummeting:

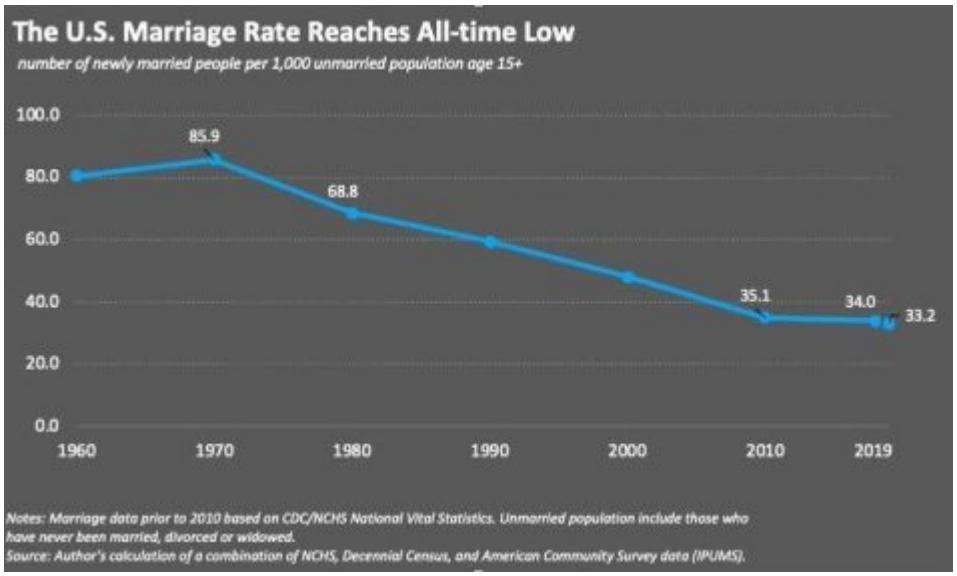

Marriage Rate 2020

So, how are women reacting to the failure of feminism to deliver the things that make

women *really happy and fulfilled,* i.e. – traditional marriage, and stay at home motherhood, a big family, successful moral children? Are young, unmarried women pulling back on their support for feminism? Are they looking for marriage-ready men to lead them? Are they returning to Christianity? Are they becoming more pro-life, and more opposed to sexual anarchy? Are they voting for school choice? Are they voting for smaller government and lower taxes, so that men can afford marriage and children?

Consider this article from The Federalist, my favorite news source, written by Joy Pullmann, my favorite Federalist writer.

She writes:

> NBC News recently compared several polls to find huge shifts from Democrats to Republicans in 2022 midterm voter preferences. The big exception to these shifts across many demographics was college-educated women, who in NBC's aggregation showed even stronger support for Democrats now than ahead of the last midterm election.

> "[T]he gender gap between Democrats and Republicans is actually a marriage gap," noted columnist Mona Charen in 2014, another midterm year. "Single women vote disproportionately for Democrats and married women vote by a comfortable margin for Republicans. The decline of marriage inclines more women to vote Democrat."

When women undertake a life plan that delays marriage, they are less attractive to marriage-minded men. Marriage-minded men want to marry early, so they have help during their struggles in school and work. They want lots of well-behaved, successful children. They want to have a legacy, especially Christian men.

When young, unmarried women vote for Democrat policies, men are faced with higher taxes, more regulation, more pressure from cancel culture, more invasion of the home by secular leftists. Men don't get married in order to have their kids stuck into daycare and public schools. Men don't get married to have their kids transed by anti-male teachers, doctors, lawyers and judges. Men get married to lead a home. They don't marry women who have been indoctrinated against male leadership in the home.

Women who make themselves unattractive to marriage-minded men tend to vote for bigger government. They want to be reckless and irresponsible in their young years, then have a safety net later that makes finding a husband "optional". Remember Barack Obama's "Life of Julia" plan for women?

The Federalist article continues:

> Beyond the obvious fact that big government functions for some single women as a husband substitute, at least financially, it's also true that women respond more strongly than men to emotional arguments of harm and victimhood of the kind that the Democrat Party of today specializes in. Women are also on the forefront of making the leftist kind of emotional "grievance politics" arguments in both

> academia and the public square, as Richard Hanania and others have noted.

Men don't marry women who decide what to believe based on feelings and peer-approval. But that's the kind of women that society has been making in recent years. Men don't want that. Men marry women who have solid worldviews that provide a rational grounding for moral values and moral duties.

She also notes the study I blogged about before, about high rates of mental illness among progressive white women:

> Pew found in 2020 that more than half of white women who identified as political liberals had been diagnosed by a professional with a mental disorder, such as depression or anxiety.

Men don't marry women with mental illnesses, either.

Normally, I would write a conclusion here. But her conclusion was too excellent to skip:

> Women have been earning more bachelor's degrees than men have since 1982. From 1982 to 2013, women earned 10 million more degrees than men did. Not surprisingly, women dominate even more the social science fields that incubate leftist political extremism.
>
> It's well-documented that most colleges now function more as political grooming and social signaling centers than centers of learning. College graduates have for some time demonstrated, on average, no intellectual development from attending college, while college attendance now does correlate with a massive increase in affiliation with the Democrat Party.
>
> At the same time colleges have become essentially academically worthless, if not toxic, they have become saturated with women, and have increasingly marketed and reorganized themselves in feminine terms. The feminization of our culture led by this academic dominance has fueled popular and pervasive messages of cruel and unrestrained female domination of men, rather than the loving cooperation with men that marriage and family encourage.

I love when older, wiser women hold young, unmarried women accountable for their reckless, irresponsible choices. Women today have a visceral hatred for being evaluated for marriage or mentored by men. They don't think that men with achievements have any ability to lead them. That's why it's wonderful when older, wise women step up and teach young, unmarried women that they are their own worst enemies. That's what Titus 2:3-5 says, isn't it?

Men aren't going to solve the problem of young women's skyrocketing unhappiness. It's not our responsibility to save women from their own embrace of self-destructive ideologies. Young women don't listen to men with moral convictions and solid theology. The problem will *only* be solved when young women choose to make better decisions.

Is Democrat law enforcement ever used against the secular left?

September 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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We know that the FBI is capable of election interference against Republicans, labeling parents "domestic terrorists", spying on Republican's Facebook messages, and entrapping crackpots into failed kidnapping plots. But what happens when the criminals and the FBI are on the same team? Does the FBI enforce the law against their own team?

Here's Fox News:

> Not a single arrest has been made in the more than a dozen attacks on pro-life organizations across the country claimed by left-wing pro-abortion group Jane's Revenge.
>
> Jane's Revenge has claimed responsibility for at least 18 arson and vandalism attacks on crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) and other faith-based organizations throughout the U.S. since the May 2 leak of the Supreme Court draft opinion in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, which overturned Roe v. Wade.
>
> The Federal Bureau of Investigation first told Fox News Digital in June that it had launched an investigation into the targeted vandalism. The FBI said in a Sept. 7 statement that it was still investigating the "series of attacks and threats targeting pregnancy resource centers, faith-based organizations, and reproductive health clinics across the country, as well as to judicial buildings, including the US Supreme Court," but it made no mention of Jane's Revenge specifically.

Does the FBI take ALL violence and ALL threats of violence seriously? When I look at how they handled the fake Trump-Russia collusion dossier, I find it hard to believe.

Do you know what they do have time for, though?

The Washington Times reports:

> President Biden will convene a forum Thursday at the White House aimed at confronting what civil rights groups, local officials and academics say is an explosive rise in extremism… that threatens the core of America's democracy.
>
> The "United We Stand" summit builds on the administration's push to root out racially motivated domestic violent extremists. The threat sparked a sweeping strategy that included the creation of a specialized Justice Department unit to combat domestic terrorism. Mr. Biden will deliver the keynote address to highlight the administration's response to hate and "put forward a shared vision for a more united America," officials said.
>
> Current and former FBI agents tell The Washington Times that the perceived threat has become overblown under the administration. They say bureau

> analysts and top officials are pressuring FBI agents to create domestic terrorist cases… to meet internal metrics.
>
> […]"We are sort of the lapdogs as the actual agents doing these sorts of investigations, trying to find a crime to fit otherwise First Amendment-protected activities," he said. "If they have a Gadsden flag and they own guns and they are mean at school board meetings, that's probably a domestic terrorist."
>
> The Gadsden flag is a historical American flag with a yellow field showing a timber rattlesnake and the words: "Don't Tread on Me." It is often used as a symbol of liberty.

These are the same people who ignored radical Islam right up until the 9/11 attack. They just can't protect the American people from real threats. The only threats they accept are threats to the political power of the Democrat party. The law means nothing to them – they just want to crush anyone who dissents from the secular left.

Vanderbilt University Medical Center explains how sex-change surgery is a “big money maker”

September 21, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Conservative podcaster Matt Walsh posted an amazing thread on Tuesday night, all about the Vanderbilt University Medical Center. He dug up a whole ton of information about the VUMC, and even though they tried to delete it all, he downloaded everything. Let’s take a look at what he tweeted, then we’ll learn more about the people at the VUMC, and see what happens next.

First, the thread of tweets is here. I made an easier to read “unroll” of the tweets here.

Here is some of it:

> BREAKING: My team and I have been investigating the transgender clinic at Vanderbilt here in Nashville. Vanderbilt drugs, chemically castrates, and performs double mastectomies on minors. But it gets worse. Here is what we found. Let’s start at the beginning.
>
> Vanderbilt opened its trans clinic in 2018. During a lecture the same year, Dr. Shayne Taylor explained how she convinced Nashville to get into the gender transition game. She emphasized that it’s a “big money maker,” especially because the surgeries require a lot of “follow ups”.
>
> Vanderbilt was apparently concerned that not all of its staff would be on board. Dr. Ellen Clayton warned that “conscientious objections” are “problematic.” Anyone who decides not to be involved in transition surgeries due to “religious beliefs” will face “consequences”.
>
> […]Vanderbilt makes… make lots of “services” available to children, including chemical castration. Though at some point in the last month they removed explicit admission of this fact from their site. Here’s the archived screenshot.
>
> But they must have forgot to delete a video from Vanderbilt Psychiatry’s Youtube channel back in 2020 which admits explicitly that they will give and have given irreversible hormone drugs to children as young as 13.
>
> After they have drugged and sterilized the kids, Vanderbilt — as explained in this video presentation by plastic surgeon Julien Winocour and Physician’s Assistant Shalyn Vanderbloemen — will happily perform double mastectomies on adolescent girls.

As soon as Matt Walsh posted all the screenshots and videos on Twitter, they took down their entire web site. Fortunately, Matt tweeted that his team grabbed all the evidence before they started tweeting about it.

Here is more from Daily Wire:

> “It’s a lot of money,” VUMC Clinic for Transgender Health’s Dr. Shayne Sebold

> Taylor said at one Medicine Grand Rounds lecture, video reveals. “These surgeries make a lot of money.”
>
> Taylor noted that a “chest reconstruction” can bring in $40,000 per patient, and someone “just on routine hormone treatment, who I’m only seeing a few times a year, can bring in several thousand dollars … and actually makes money for the hospital.”
>
> Citing the Philadelphia Center for Transgender Surgery, Taylor said vaginoplasty surgeries can generate $20,000, gushing that it “has to be an underestimate,” since hospital stay, anesthesia, post-op visits, and other add-ons are not included in the total.
>
> “And the female-to-male bottom surgeries, these are huge money makers,” the doctor continued, adding that such surgeries could bring in “up to $100,000” for the hospital.
>
> Some clinics are “entirely” “supported” financially by such phalloplasty surgeries, Taylor boasted.
>
> “These surgeries are labor intensive, there are a lot of follow-ups, they require a lot of our time, and they make money,” she emphasized. “They make money for the hospital.”

I’m quite excited to say that Republican Senator Marsha Blackburn is calling for an investigation of VUMC.

Daily Wire also reported on the response of Tennessee’s Republican Governor Bill Lee:

> Tennessee Republican Governor Bill Lee has called for an investigation of the Pediatric Transgender Clinic at Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) after shocking videos posted by Matt Walsh detailed a doctor’s promotion of “big

> money maker" transgender surgeries.

What I wanted to talk about was one of the women who said that "religious people" who object to all of this "big money" making should be ejected from the hospital.

This is from the Daily Wire article:

> At another Medicine Grand Rounds lecture, staffers are warned by Vanderbilt health law expert Ellen Wright Clayton that any "conscientious objection" will be met with "consequences," and are told they probably shouldn't be working at VUMC if they don't want to participate in the trans surgeries, which include minor patients.

She said "if you don't want to do this kind of work, don't work at Vanderbilt". She's talking to Christians when she says that.

I looked up this Ellen Clayton woman, and found that she used to sing in her church choir. If only churches majored in apologetics, instead of singing, then maybe we wouldn't be producing people who want to force Christians to mutilate children. So long as Christians prefer Matt Chandler and Beth Moore to William Lane Craig and Stephen C. Meyer, then we will keep producing people who would rather mutilate children than behave morally.

By the way, if you like podcasts, then definitely check out Matt Walsh.

I never miss an episode, and neither does Rose, the co-host of our Knight and Rose podcast. We love Matt Walsh.

Can atheists condemn slavery as immoral? Do atheists believe that slavery is wrong?

September 22, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Note: For a Christian response to the complaint that the Bible doesn't condemn slavery, see this article and this article for slavery in the Old Testament, and this article for slavery in the New Testament. These are all by Christian philosopher Paul Copan. You can watch a lecture with Paul Copan on the slavery challenge here, and buy a book where he answers the challenge in more detail. There is also a good debate on whether the Bible condones slavery here, featuring David Instone-Brewer and Robert Price. My post is not a formal logical essay on this issue, it is more that I am outraged that atheists, who cannot even rationally ground objective morality, insist on criticizing the morality of the Bible. I think that atheists who are serious about finding the truth about these issues should check out those links, if they are interested in getting to the truth of these matters.

In other posts, I've argued that without an objective moral standard of what is right and wrong, any judgments about right and wrong are just individual opinions. So, when an atheist says slavery is wrong, what he really means is that he thinks slavery is wrong *for him*, in the same way that he thinks that,say, that chocolate ice cream is right *for him*. He isn't saying what is wrong *objectively*, because on atheism there are no objective moral rules or duties. He is speaking for himself: "I wouldn't own a slave, just like I wouldn't eat broccoli – because it's yucky!". But he has no rational argument against other people owning slaves in other times and places, because their justification for owning slaves is the same as his justification for not owning slaves : personal preference and cultural conventions.

So do atheists oppose slavery? Do they believe in an objective human right to liberty? Well, there are no objective human rights of any kind on atheism. Human beings are just accidents in an accidental universe, and collections of atoms do not mysteriously accrue "rights". There is no natural right to liberty on atheism. Now consider abortion, which is favored by most atheists. Like slavery, abortion declares an entire class of human beings as non-persons in order to justify preserving their own happiness and prosperity by means of violence. That's exactly what slavery does, except abortion is worse than slavery, because you actually kill the person you are declaring as a non-person instead of just imprisoning them.

So how many atheists have this pro-abortion view that it is OK to declare unborn children as non-persons so they can kill them?

Well, according to Gallup, the "non-religious" are the group most likely to support abortion. In fact, 68% favor legalized abortion, compared to only 19% who oppose it.

Take a look at the Gallup poll data from 2012:

Americans' Abortion Views, by Education and Religion

With respect to the abortion issue, would you consider yourself to be pro-choice or pro-life?

	"Pro-choice"	"Pro-life"
	%	%
National adults	41	50
No religion	68	19
Catholic	38	54
Protestant/Other Christian	33	57
Postgraduate	58	37
College graduate only	45	53
Some college	41	49
High school graduate or less	33	53

May 3-6, 2012

GALLUP

Most atheists are OK with the strong killing the weak

The Gallup numbers might actually be low, because “No religion” might include people who are spiritual, but not religious. But what about atheists alone?

As a group, atheists tend to be among the most radical supporters of legalized abortion. The Secular Census of 2012 found that 97% of atheists vote for abortion. There are almost no pro-life atheists. Why is it that atheists look at unborn children and think it’s OK to kill them? Well, let’s see what atheists scholars think about morality, and from that we’ll find out why they think abortion is morally permissible.

Atheist scholars think morality is nonsense

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin’s views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That’s the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Source: http://www.arn.org/docs/orpages/or161/161main.htm

Atheists Michael Ruse says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I

> appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory.(Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in The Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269).

Atheist Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

Most atheists are like this – although some affirm objective morality, without really having a rational basis for it. In general though, when atheists use moral language to condemn God, the Bible, or Christians, it's very important to understand that it is just theater. They are trying to use words that describe realities that they do not even believe in, usually with the goal of getting you to stop judging them for their own sin. I blogged about two examples of this before – Richard Carrier and Michael Shermer.

Let's take a closer look at Richard Dawkins' statement that there is "no evil and no good".

Richard Dawkins and morality

Here's Richard Dawkins' view of abortion:

Richard Dawkins explains morality on atheism
But wait! He goes even further than mere abortion:

Dawkins believes in Darwinian evolution. Survival of the fittest. The strong kill the weak. Where is protection for the unborn in that narrative?

Richard Dawkins even advocates for adultery.

So, what Dawkins really believes is that morality is nonsense. But in order to get you to stop condemning abortion, adultery, infanticide and a whole host of other atheistic misbehaviors, he will try to condemn you using moral language to stop you from making moral judgments. But the goal here is to intimidate you into not judging. By his own words, he thinks that the whole notion of objective moral values and objective moral duties is just nonsense.

Who does oppose slavery?

How did slavery end?

Dinesh D’Souza explains:

> Slavery was mostly eradicated from Western civilization–then called Christendom–between the fourth and the tenth century. The Greco-Roman institution of slavery gave way to serfdom. Now serfdom has its problems but at least the serf is not a “human tool” and cannot be bought and sold like property. So slavery was ended twice in Western civilization, first in the medieval era and then again in the modern era.
>
> In the American South, Christianity proved to be the solace of the oppressed. As historian Eugene Genovese documents in Roll, Jordan, Roll, when black slaves sought to find dignity during the dark night of slavery, they didn’t turn to Marcus Aurelius or David Hume; they turned to the Bible. When they sought hope and inspiration for liberation, they found it not in Voltaire or D’Holbach but in the Book of Exodus.
>
> The anti-slavery movements led by Wilberforce in England and abolitionists in America were dominated by Christians. These believers reasoned that since we are all created equal in the eyes of God, no one has the right to rule another without consent. This is the moral basis not only of anti-slavery but also of democracy.

And, in fact, you can see Christians pushing the culture hard against abortion today, just as we did with slavery. We also oppose frivolous divorce, and redefining marriage in a way that normalizes removing mothers and/or fathers away from their children. Defending the weak is what we do.

Did Joe Biden's hate-filled rhetoric incite a Democrat to murder a Republican?

September 23, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I am pondering what sort of objective morality secular leftists are capable of. They love to vote for abortion through all 9 months of pregnancy, infanticide, and the mutilation of depressed children. But what about murder? Should we expect American leftists to have a different view of murder than Soviet Union leftists ? Is American Stalin better than the Soviet Union Stalin?

Consider this article from Breitbart:

> President Joe Biden took to social media on Sunday to trash what he called the "MAGA agenda," dismissing it and those Republicans who follow it as threats to the very fabric of America.
>
> He sneered on Twitter: "The MAGA agenda represents an extremism that threatens the very foundations of our Republic. It doesn't respect our Constitution. It doesn't believe in the rule of law. And it doesn't recognise the will of the people."
>
> The full Tweet can be seen below:

> The MAGA agenda represents an extremism that threatens the very foundations of our Republic.
>
> It doesn't respect our Constitution.
> It doesn't believe in the rule of law.
> And it doesn't recognize the will of the people.
>
> — President Biden (@POTUS) September 4, 2022

> Biden's attack on Republicans follows the theme set last Thursday night when he called on Americans to "stop" MAGA Republicans, whom he consistently maligned as a dark force assailing democracy in his "Soul of the Nation" prime-time speech.

What would happen if his followers took his words seriously? What if they decided to act on his words?

Consider this article from The Post Millennial:

> Early Sunday morning, 41-year-old Shannon Brandt allegedly ran over 18-year-old Cayler Ellingson with his car following a political dispute in McHenry, North Dakota.
>
> After being charged on Monday with vehicular homicide and leaving the scene of a deadly accident, Brandt admitted that his actions were politically motivated.

> According to InForum, Ellingson had been participating in a street dance Saturday night, and when it wrapped up, he noticed that Brandt was following him.
>
> Ellingson called his mother to ask for help, but it was too late. Moments later, Brandt slammed into him with his car in an alleyway, killing the teen.
>
> Brandt later called police himself to report the incident. As InForum reports, he claimed that Ellingson had been part of a "Republican extremist group," and had ordered others to come after him following a political argument.

Now, you might think that the Biden administration's Stasi (the FBI) would want to investigate this crime. When I look at how Antifa criminals are treated, it doesn't seem to me that crimes committed against the President's enemies are unlikely to be prosecuted. Democrats seem to think that violence against Republicans sends the right message. After all, the President says, Republicans are extremists. Parents who express concern about the performance of public schools are labeled "domestic terrorists". So, Democrats probably think that Republicans should be threatened… intimidated… punished… maybe even silenced.

In fact, whistleblowers in Biden's Stasi secret police (the FBI) are persecuted when they expose the anti-conservative, anti-Christian bias inside the FBI.

Consider this article from the New York Post:

> Bombshell allegations by FBI Special Agent Steve Friend contained in a whistleblower complaint filed late Wednesday with the Department of Justice inspector general reveal a politicized Washington, DC, FBI field office cooking the books to exaggerate the threat of domestic terrorism, and using an "overzealous" January 6 investigation to harass conservative Americans and violate their constitutional rights.
>
> Friend, 37, a respected 12-year veteran of the FBI and a SWAT team member, was suspended Monday, stripped of his gun and badge, and escorted out of the FBI field office in Daytona Beach, Fla., after complaining to his supervisors about the violations.
>
> He was declared absent without leave last month for refusing to participate in SWAT raids that he believed violated FBI policy and were a use of excessive force against Jan. 6 subjects accused of misdemeanor offenses.
>
> This American hero, the father of two small children, has blown up his "dream career" because he could not live with his conscience if he continued to be part of what he sees as the unjust persecution of conservative Americans.
>
> "I have an oath to uphold the Constitution," he told supervisors when he asserted his conscientious objection to joining an Aug. 24 raid on a J6 subject in the Jacksonville, Fla., area. "I have a moral objection and want to be considered a conscientious objector."
>
> Friend, who did not vote for Donald Trump in the 2020 election, said he told his

> immediate boss twice that he believed the raid, and the investigative process leading up to it, violated FBI policy and the subject's right under the Sixth Amendment to a fair trial and Eighth Amendment right against cruel and unusual punishment.
>
> In his whistleblower complaint to DOJ Inspector General Michael Horowitz, obtained by The Post, Friend lays out multiple violations of FBI policy involving J6 investigations in which he was involved.
>
> He says he was removed from active investigations into child sexual exploitation and human trafficking to work on J6 cases sent from DC. He was told "domestic terrorism was a higher priority" than child pornography. As a result, he believes his child exploitation investigations were harmed.
>
> He also has reported his concerns about a politicized FBI to Republican members of Congress, among 20 whistleblowers from the bureau who have come forward with similar complaints.
>
> […]Friend says he was punished after complaining to his bosses about being dragged into J6 investigations that were "violating citizens' Sixth Amendment rights due to overzealous charging by the DOJ and biased jury pools in Washington, DC."

Do you think you will get fair and impartial law enforcement from Biden's Stasi (the FBI) secret police? Do you think they care that secular left domestic terrorists are assassinating conservatives? I am skeptical. But this is the sort of "objective morality" I've come to expect from secular leftists. They think the universe is an accident. And you can't ground human rights and objective morality in an accidental universe. People need to stop thinking that you can take away the God, and keep the morality. You can't. That's what we are seeing now in the culture.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 24: Making Wise Decisions: A Life Without Regret

September 24, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Welcome to episode 24 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose offer some advice for making wiser decisions in a wide variety of different areas. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 24:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how to avoid regret by choosing wisely. We start by talking about what it means to make a wise choices. Then we offer advice to help you make wiser decisions in a wide range of areas: friendships, peer pressure, role models, mentors, education, vocation, finances, relationships, marriage, and parenting.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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William Lane Craig debates atheist Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?

September 25, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

British Spitfire and German Messerschmitt Me 109 locked in a dogfight

Here is the video from the third debate from Dr. William Lane Craig's speaking tour in Australia.

Format:

- William Lane Craig (15 min)
- Lawrence Krauss (15 min, but was actually 21:40)
- Moderated discussion
- Question and answer

Dr. Graham Oppy, the moderator, is a well-known atheist philosopher. He let Dr. Krauss speak for 21 minutes and 40 seconds, which is why my summary of Krauss is so long.

The video:

Summary

After careful consideration, I decided not to be snarky at all in this summary. What you read below is what happened. There may be some small mistakes, but I will fix those if people tell me about them. I also included some quotes and timestamps for the more striking things that Dr. Krauss said.

The debate itself starts at 4:50 with Dr. Craig's opening speech. He does use slides to show the structure of his arguments.

Dr. Craig's opening speech. (4:50)

1. The kalam cosmological argument:
    - God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe
    - The Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem supports the absolute beginning of the universe
    - Even if our universe is part of a multiverse, the multiverse itself would have to have an absolute beginning
    - Speculative cosmologies try to challenge the Big Bang theory, but none of them – even if true – can establish that the past is eternal
    - Only two types of things could explain the origin of spece, time, matter and energy – either abstract objects or minds
    - Abstract objects do not cause effects, but minds do cause effects (we do it ourselves)
    - A mind is the best explanation for the origin of the universe
2. The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
    - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
    - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
    - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
    - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see
3. The cosmic fine-tuning for the existence of intelligent life
    - There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) cosmological constants and 2) quantities
    - These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life
    - There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design
    - Law is rejected because they are put in at the beginning or matter – they don't emerge from matter
    - Chance must be rejected, because they odds are just too long unless you appeal to a world-ensemble
    - We do not observe what the world ensemble hypothesis predicts that we should observe
    - Design is the best explanation for finely-tuned constants and quantities
4. The existence of objective moral values and duties
    - Our experience of morality (values and duties) is that it is objectively real and incumbent on us
    - When someone goes into a classroom and shoots at innocent children, that is objectively wrong
    - On naturalism, moral values and moral duties do not exist – they are conventional and variable by time and place
    - The best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties is that God exists

5. The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus
    - There are three widely-accepted facts that are best explained by the resurrection hypothesis
    - 1) the empty tomb, 2) the post-mortem appearances, 3) the early church's belief in the resurrection
    - Naturalistic attempts to explain these 3 boilerplate facts fail
    - The best explanation of the 3 minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead
6. The immediate experience of God
    - Belief in God is a "properly basic" belief – rational even without arguments because of experience of God

Dr. Krauss' opening speech. (21:12)

Slides: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

1. Religious pluralism I
    - There have been lots of different gods created by people through history
    - We've gotten rid of all of them by understanding how the universe works by doing science
    - Religion is just stories, and the stories are inconsistent with how the universe works
2. Progress of naturalistic science I
    - Newtonian physics refutes the idea that angels push planets around
    - Darwinian evolution refutes design arguments, including the one that Dr. Craig presented (24:10)
    - Biochemistry hasn't explained how life originated, but we will have the solution soon
    - Physics shows us that matter can be created and destroyed without need a God
    - Physics shows us that universes can be created and destroyed "no problem"
3. Religious pluralism II
    - Since we have been able to disprove all the gods we've invented, why hang on to the last one
    - It's unlikely that the God that Dr. Craig presented exists, because we disproved all the others he didn't present
4. Hiddenness of God
    - There is a complete lack of evidence for the other 999 gods, so how likely is it that the God Dr. Craig presented exists
5. Religious pluralism III
    - There are inconsistencies between various religions, so therefore there can be no religion that is right
6. Progress of naturalistic science II
    - Peasants had a very low level of knowledge about the world and they believed

in God
    - But our level of knowledge has increased over time, so we shouldn't believe in God now
    - Peasants thought that the Earth orbited the Sun, but this is now known to be false
    - The Scriptures said that the Earth orbited the Sun, but now we know that's false from science
7. Christianity plagiarizes from other religions I
    - There is nothing new or special about Jesus
    - He's just as unpleasant as all the other gods
    - Everything particular to Jesus occurs in other religions
8. Catholics are inconsistent about what they believe
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in transubstantiation
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in the virgin birth
9. The resurrection is copied from many other religions
    - Dionysus, Osiris, etc.
10. There is no evidence for the resurrection
    - The stories about Jesus were written "decades or hundreds of years after the fact"
    - The stories are inconsistent with each other
    - Dr. Craig tells me that historical Jesus scholars all accept that the resurrection happened
    - That's like saying that all alien abductions experts agree that alien abductions happened
    - It's unreasonable to think that the resurrection happened because no one saw it happen
    - I accept that people reported on appearances, but hallucination theory can explain that
11. The timeline for the creation and incarnation are all wrong
    - The creation, planet formation, hominids, incarnation, etc. all take place in the wrong times
    - If God knew what he was doing, he would done everything at better times to be more efficient
12. David Hume's argument against miracles is sound
    - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – nothing wrong with this argument
    - Miracles are really just coincidences
    - Catholic apparitions at Lourdes disprove the historical argument that Dr. Craig made for the resurrection
13. God is petty and jealous
    - God shouldn't demand that we trust him, esteem him and consider his character when we make decisions
    - The atoning death of Jesus for the sins of the world also makes no sense

14. Belief is based on geography
    - What you believe is clearly correlated with where you are born
    - There is even an Islamic clone of Dr. Craig who “uses the exact same arguments” that he does to prove Islam
    - Belief in God is decreasing in the Internet-accessible world
15. Science can develop morals without God
    - Reason is able to guide our actions to be moral
    - Morality evolves over time, so there is no objective morality
    - Catholicism teaches things that are immoral
    - Some things are prohibited by biological revulsion, such as incest
    - But if a brother and sister have sex using condoms “is that morally wrong? I can’t say it is frankly” (37:24)
16. Dr. Craig is irrational
    - “I came here convinced based on my past interactions and his writing that Dr. Craig was a dishonest Charlatan”
    - “Any argument that validates God is reasonable to him”
    - “And any argument against it is not only unreasonable but wrong and worth distorting”
    - “Because it must be wrong – he’s decided the answer in advance”
17. Dr. Craig is immoral
    - Dr. Craig thinks it is OK for God to command that Canaanite children are killed
    - “So in fact if they were Canaanite children in that schoolroom that he talked about then it would be OK”
    - It’s not reasonable to justify genocide in that way, but Dr. Craig is willing to go to those lengths
18. The cause of the origin of the space time universe need not be God
    - Dr. Craig says that if there is an explanation for the origin or space, time, matter and energy it must be God
    - But it could just as easily be turtles or Zeus
19. Dr. Craig misrepresents the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem
    - Alexander Vilenkin wrote me an e-mail that says that the theorem doesn’t work in all cases
    - “Dr. Craig is so convinced that these arguments must be true that he won’t listen to the fact that they’re not”
20. Darwinian evolution explains the fine-tuning
    - “Life was fine tuned – we got rid of it with Darwin”
    - Mutation and natural selection explain the cosmic fine-tuning argument that Dr. Craig presented
21. Suboptimal design disproves the fine-tuning argument
    - “We get back aches” therefore “This argument that [the universe] is fine-tuned for life is nonsense”
22. William Lane Craig can be proven to exhibit homosexual behavior using logical arguments

    - Look, you can construct arguments that are clearly wrong
    - Premise 1: “All mammals exhibit homosexual behavior”
    - Premise 2: “William Lane Craig is a mammal”
    - Seems to be saying that logical arguments can prove false things “it’s nonsense”
23. Dr. Craig distorted a podcast that some group made on pain receptors
    - Dr. Craig’s faith is so strong that it causes him to distort what this group said

Discussion: (44:35)

I will not be summarizing everything that was said, just a few main points.

The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can’t even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don’t work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don’t have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) “All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON’T KNOW!!!!!!!” (raising his voice)
- Craig: I’m not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has

been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"
- Craig: "I wonder what you deleted from the original letter"
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "I just told you!"
- Craig: "Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) 'You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.'
- Craig: "That's Vilenkin."
- Krauss: "In this paper, that's absolutely right"
- Krauss: But it's ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it's unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: "Isn't it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?"
- Krauss: "No"
- Craig: "Well, can you give us one then"
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) "In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong"
- Krauss: "You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it's hard"
- Craig: "Right"

I noticed that a huge number of atheist web sites are taking the Vilenkin quote that Krauss used out of context, like this one and this one. There are probably a lot more of them like that, which I think is interesting. That's why we have these debates, I guess. To set the record straight about who accuses people of being dishonest, and who is actually dishonest.

Fine-tuning:

- Krauss tried to argue that he had explained the fine-tuning with the Higgs particle, but Dr. Craig said that only applied to the cosmological constant, not all the other examples of fine-tuning. Krauss said that it wasn't impressive that this universe permitted life and that "It would have been much more surprising if we evolved in a universe in which we couldn't live". Krauss argued the fine-tuning was only for "Life

like us". But Dr. Craig explained that the fine-tuning is what allows us to have the basics of any kind of life, like slow-burning stars, chemical diversity, etc. – things that are required for basic minimal life functions in any living system. Craig said that he was working with the current physical laws of this universe (F = ma, etc.) and that he was looking at what changed if we changed those even slightly. Krauss tried to say that if he changed things like the mass of particles then the strength of forces would change. (But the forces aren't laws!) Krauss argued that the cosmological constant would be even better for life if it was zero, and Craig said that the life permitting range did include zero, but that the range of life-permitting values was narrow.

Jesus' existence:

- Craig reponded to the mystery religions charge, the charge that the evidence for the minimal facts is too late/too weak, the charge that grief visions explained the evidence better, and Hume's argument against miracles. Craig brought up the early creed from 1 Cor 15:3-7 and explained to Krauss that it was 5 years after the events, and that Jewish standards of oral transmission were strong enough to ensure that the creed was reliable, and most of the eyewitnesses would still have been alive.

Audience Q and A: (1:21:09)

The first topic is the grounding of morality. Krauss agrees that there is no objective morality and no objective moral oughts. He also said that that standards of behavior are arbitrary, and that they change over time and they are adopted for promoting social order. Dr. Craig pressed the point that science itself would collapse without ethical values. It assumes them, but cannot ground them.

The next topic was free will. Krauss is a determinist. Craig asked him how he could reconcile moral responsibility with determinism.

The next topic was the effectiveness of mathematics. Krauss didn't have an explanation for it and didn't think it needed one. Then they got into whether the Genesis has been verified by science and whether it is meant to be taken literally.

The next topic was whether philosophy makes any progress. Craig gave the example of verificationism being rejected as too narrow, and self-refuting. Krauss: "I'm going to come to the defense of philosophy for the first time". Craig: "That's amazing!" Krauss said that science provides new knowledge. Craig said there were some things that could be known apart from science.

Biden’s FBI raids home of pro-life activist, aiming rifles at his wife and kids

September 26, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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If you listen to the Knight and Rose Show, you will have heard Rose talking about the pre-dawn raids ordered by Democrat DA John Chisholm against Wisconsin conservatives. All they did was support right-to-work legislation, and this DA had their homes raided. Guns drawn, dogs, body armor. Moms were being told to open their doors or they would kick the doors down, and shoot the dogs.

This is my worst nightmare. And even ordinary pro-lifers are getting pre-dawn raids, now.

Here is the latest, reported by Daily Wire:

> FBI agents reportedly raided the home of a pro-life activist in Pennsylvania on Friday and arrested him.
>
> A group of between 25 and 30 FBI agents raided the Bucks County, Pennsylvania, home of pro-life activist Mark Houck early Friday morning, his family told LifeSite News. Houck is the leader of a nonprofit group that provides sidewalk counseling at abortion clinics in Philadelphia. The arrest seemed to stem from a court case that was dismissed by a federal court in Philadelphia, but was somehow picked up by the Department of Justice, his family said.
>
> “The kids were all just screaming,” Houck’s wife, Ryan-Marie, told LifeSite. “It was all just very scary and traumatic.”
>
> Ryan-Marie Houck told the outlet that the group of agents in SWAT gear arrived in 15 vehicles outside the family home at around 7:05 a.m. Friday morning. The agents quickly surrounded the house and began pounding on the door, demanding they open up. Houck reportedly tried to get the agents to calm down, noting that his seven children were scared, but the agents kept shouting. “[T]hey had big, huge rifles pointed at Mark and pointed at me and kind of pointed throughout the house,” his wife said.
>
> Houck and his wife asked the agents why they were there, to which the agents allegedly replied that they were there to arrest him. His wife asked for a warrant, but “they said that they were going to take him whether they had a warrant or not,” Ryan-Marie Houck recalled.

What did he do to get his house raided by 25-30 armed FBI agents in 15 vehicles?

This:

> According to his wife, Houck was providing sidewalk counseling at abortion centers in Philadelphia last year, and had taken his then 12-year-old son. On multiple occasions over weeks, a “pro-abortion protestor” allegedly shouted vulgarities and insults at the boy. Houck repeatedly told the protestor not to

> speak to his son, but the protestor continued to encroach on the boy's personal space, still spewing vulgarities. Finally, Houck shoved the man away, causing him to fall down. The protestor was not injured, but tried to sue Houck. Though the case was thrown out this summer, it was somehow picked up by the DOJ, Ryan-Marie Houck said.

There is a GiveSendGo here, if you are feeling generous. Note that this is not a Go Fund Me, so it won't be shut down by the secular left.

I hope everyone remembers how the secular left views people who think that powerful adults should restrain their hedonism a tiny bit, so that they don't murder unborn human children. If the secular left is willing to kill babies, they're certainly willing to pre-dawn raid your house with assault rifles.

We have elections in about 6 weeks. Time to stop the fascism.

William Lane Craig explains the faith enterprise in an 8-minute video

September 27, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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When I was doing my undergraduate degree, I had an atheist friend who was super smart, and he once surprised me by announcing that he had read the gospel of John. Flabbergasted, I asked him why. He said "I just wanted to see what all the fuss was about". Indeed. And this video from Dr. Craig explains to you what all the fuss is about. This is basically everything that everyone – Christian or non-Christian – should know about what Christianity is about. This is what I wish all my co-workers knew about me.

Here is the video, featuring Dr. William Lane Craig, that explains what all the fuss is about:

I really wish that non-Christians could understand how different Christianity is is from other religions, because it is true. Half my family is Muslim, the other half is Hindu and some Catholic. There is literally *nothing cognitive going on* in the spiritual journeys of my Muslim and Hindu friends and family members. It's just a bunch of traditions that bind families and communities together. But Christianity is so different from that – it is truth-centered. Anyway, in the rest of this post, I'll describe three striking things about the Christian worldview.

Christianity is testable

First, the Christian worldview is testable scientifically and historically. There are claims made about the external world in Christianity. For example, creation is a major doctrine in the Bible, and in Romans 1, Psalm 19 and other places, God explains to us through his human scribes that the nature of the world (created, designed) is there to prove to us that there is a Creator and Designer. If the universe were eternal, and complex embodied life common for any permutation of the constants and quantities that are built into the fabric of the universe, that would be evidence for atheism. And the same with history. As 1 Corinthians 15 says, if the historical person of Jesus did not die and was not seen alive after by *large numbers of* friends, skeptics, and enemies, then there is no point in being a Christian. Christianity started out as a movement in the very time and place where the events that make it significant happened. There was no long delay between the central events, and the earliest proclamation of those events. So, you can test scientifically and historically. If the universe did not begin to exist, and if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Christianity would be disproved. These are things that anyone can investigate, but some people do not because they are afraid about what they will find, and how much they will have to adjust to God's existence and character.

Christianity is hard

Second, Christianity is not something that you get into because you need a crutch or because it enhances your life. It is not done in order to fit in with your family or with your culture or with your nation's dominant religion. Christianity is designed to not be fun, to

not be easy, to not make you popular. In fact, one of the ways that you know that you are a real Christian and that God is leading you, is *because* God allows you to suffer, and *because* some people around you don't like you, and *because* your career and finances and so on are a little harder because now there is God to worry about in the decision-making, and not just you. It's like being married. A good marriage takes work because it is a commitment to another person. The more you learn about God through your study of science, history, theology and apologetics, the more you love him. And the more you love him, the more you *choose* to adjust your priorities and actions in a way that will invest in the relationship, instead of just what is best for you.

Christianity is effective

Third, Christianity is not about just being passive, having feelings and doing private things like prayer, singing and attending church. Christianity, when done right, involves projecting your beliefs outward. Evangelism, the practice of telling non-Christians the truth about Christianity, is not optional for Christians. Although many other religions dislike Christians for evangelizing, and some even use coercion and force to stop us, it is our responsibility. Many Christians seek to augment their evangelism by learning how to answer objections to Christianity, and how to make a case for the truth of core Christian beliefs. This involves studying philosophy, as well as scientific and historical evidence. And then there are other things to do – like organizing talks with good scholars on university campuses, and funding them through your job. Giving to charities that protect religious liberty, promote the pro-life message, and natural marriage. Those last two are important, because Christians care about children, since they are made by God, in order to know God, and selfish adults must be convinced control themselves. Christians often get involved in politics, seeking to limit the power of the secular government to infringe on human rights, to promote economic growth and to support the military when they engage in just wars. Christians often serve in the police force or the military, because we seek to restrain and destroy evil and protect the good.

You should use this video as a way to think again about what your life is about. Have you investigated the evidence for Christianity? Have you made an effort to find answers to your objections to Christianity? Have you thought about how to live out your Christianity and make a difference for Christ and his Kingdom? What's your plan?

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason

- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Had enough of the transgender hyper-inflation recession yet?

September 28, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I've been watching the stock market plummet from the sidelines over the last few months, and just thinking about whether people are going to vote to change the direction of the economy in November. I know that Democrats voted for global warming alarmism, infanticide, indoctrinating kids in transgenderism, etc. But will the Biden inflation and recession economy change their minds?

Here's the first one from center-left CNBC which talks about how $9 trillion in lost wealth from declining stocks is going to affect consumer spending, borrowing and investing:

> Falling stock markets have wiped out more than $9 trillion in wealth from U.S. households, putting more pressure on family balance sheets and spending.
>
> Americans' holdings of corporate equities and mutual fund shares fell to $33 trillion at the end of the second quarter, down from $42 trillion at the start of the year, according to data from the Federal Reserve. With major market indexes falling even further since early July, and the bond market adding further losses, market experts say the current wealth losses from financial markets could total $9.5 trillion to $10 trillion.
>
> Economists say the drops could soon start rippling through the economy, adding pressure to Americans' balance sheets and possibly hurting spending, borrowing and investing.
>
> […]The drop in stock wealth also far exceeds the $6 trillion in quarterly stock losses during the beginning of the pandemic in 2020. While stock markets have seen larger drops on a percentage basis, this year's stock losses are among the largest ever on a dollar basis.

Here's another one from center-left CNBC which talks about how ordinary Americans are having to take on extra work to deal with Biden inflation – like the 8.3% year over year increase in August:

> Nearly 70% of Americans are looking for extra work to combat inflation, according to more than 1,000 full-time workers, part-time workers and unemployed workers surveyed by Bluecrew, a workforce-as-a-service platform, in September.
>
> Already, 85% of Americans said they've changed their spending habits due to inflation, 72% say it's impacted the way they view their job and 57% have sought out new or additional roles in the past year, according to the survey.
>
> "Rapid inflation is forcing people to look at not only how they're spending their money, but also how they're earning their money," says Matt Laurinas, chief

> customer officer at Bluecrew.
>
> In many cases, those looking for work already log 40 hours during the week and are picking up extra shifts or gig work on nights and weekends, Laurinas says.
>
> Others taking on additional work include people who hold hourly jobs and want more hours with another company, or parents who have caregiving needs during the week and need to work weekends while a partner or family member can provide care.

What do we learn from this? Well, the only good thing that's happening right now is that the Federal Reserve is raising interest rates, so that people don't lose the purchasing power of their savings. They waited too long to do it, but it's a smart move. The problem we have now is that the socialists control the House and the Senate. And so, we can expect a Venezuela / Cuba / Argentina style economy. Unless we vote them out.

Right now, the Biden administration is ignoring inflation, the plummeting stock market, and the reality of the recession. They only want to talk about the global warming monster, how to trans kids against the wishes of their parents, and codifying infanticide. They're crazy. If you ever want to stop working and retire, you better make sure that you and ALL your friends and family vote them out in November.

Major corporations pull ads from far-left Democrat Twitter over child sex abuse

September 29, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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If you had to pick one of the worst Big Tech companies that interferes with elections, censors conservatives, and enables secular left domestic terrorism, you could do worse than to choose Twitter. Now they are in hot water with their customers over allegations that they are involved with child sex abuse.

Story from Daily Wire:

> According to a Reuters report, tweets soliciting child sex abuse material have appeared alongside or on profile pages of at least 30 major advertisers' Twitter accounts. Some of those companies are now pulling their ad services off the social media platform.
>
> Ghost Data, a cybersecurity group, released a new research report reviewed by Reuters about child sex abuse online that allegedly identified links to exploitative material containing child pornography. The information has led companies like Dyson, Ecolab, and Mazda to pause or pull their ads or campaigns from the platform.
>
> "There is no place for this type of content online," a spokesperson for Mazda USA said in a statement to Reuters.
>
> The carmaker now prohibits its ads from appearing on Twitter profile pages.
>
> According to the report, more than 500 accounts openly shared or requested child sex abuse material for 20 days during September 2022. Of those accounts, more than 70% were still active during the study.

In other Twitter news, Twitter has suspended LibsOfTikTok, an account which just shares the public videos from people on the secular left who want to sexualize children.

Here's the story:

> Once again, I have received a wrongful 7-day suspension as the result of a targeted harassment campaign from the Left to deplatform me. In response, we sent another letter to Twitter putting them on notice that we will sue them if they permanently suspend my account.
>
> Twitter claims I have violated their "hateful conduct policy," but like my last suspension, they have provided no explanation as to how I violated this policy. Was it hateful to expose an all-ages drag show where a stripper performed in front of children? Was it hateful to expose a drag queen who allowed a small child to repeatedly rub their crotch?
>
> Was it hateful to expose Dr. Katherine Gast for openly stating that she "will operate on minors" for gender-affirming surgery?

> The truth is I haven't engaged in hateful conduct. I've just exposed the Left's depravity by reporting the facts. There's no rule against that, so they have to make up violations I've never committed.

I'm not sure which of these things Twitter supports, but it wouldn't surprise me to learn that they supported all of them, and that's why they allowed secular leftists to use Twitter to allegedly facilitate child sex abuse. It seems to me that this is what Twitter really believes.

When I look at how much the secular left is doing to protect people who want to sexualize children at an early age (against the wishes of their parents), it's hard to resist the impression that a strong streak of pedophilia is running through the secular left. They've always thought that children were expendable, when it comes to adult desires. That's why they favored no-fault divorce, infanticide, and same-sex marriage (where the child is denied access to one or both biological parents).

According to Democrats, parents who express concern about their children being groomed for sex with adults are "domestic terrorists". Interesting to see big corporations finally drawing the line. It's about time.

Children in Canada face serious, lifelong consequences while waiting for health care

September 30, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A friend of mine from Canada messaged me this past week to tell me about her trip to the United States to get surgery. She had to pay tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket herself to get treated. Although she had probably paid tens of thousands of dollars into the Canadian single payer system, when she asked THEM for care, they told her it would be about 2 years before she could get treated.

Here's a related story from the Globe and Mail, which is the more leftist of Canada's two national newspapers:

> Half of the children in Canada who need surgery are facing waiting times that far exceed clinical recommendations for treatment, a situation experts say could have serious, lifelong consequences for young patients' development.
>
> The waiting-time numbers, collected from children's hospitals across the country by the Pediatric Surgical Chiefs of Canada, highlight the immense strain pediatric facilities are under. The burden has also led to overcrowded hospitals, record emergency-room waits and delayed diagnosis and treatment of developmental conditions.

The problem with having a health care monopoly is that it eliminates the need for health care providers to compete with each other to reduce costs and improve quality. In every monopoly, the providers have no reason to innovate, so they don't. And if you don't like it, you can take whatever money you have left from taxes and go to another country.

This is horrifying:

> Pediatric surgeries are performed in order of how urgent they are, but even urgent procedures are being delayed beyond the recommended windows of time. Pediatric orthopedic surgeries are among the procedures most commonly subject to lengthy delays.
>
> In an e-mailed statement, Ontario Health wrote that, as of Aug. 1, 55 per cent of those on the pediatric surgical waiting list had waited beyond the recommended timelines for their procedures.
>
> Mr. Squires said the most recent Ontario data he has seen show that about 40 per cent of adult patients are waiting beyond the recommended timelines for surgeries.

Consider a 2021 report on wait times in Canada:

> Specialist physicians surveyed report a median waiting time of 25.6 weeks between referral from a general practitioner and receipt of treatment—longer than the wait of 22.6 weeks reported in 2020. This year's wait time is the longest

> wait time recorded in this survey's history and is 175% longer than in 1993, when it was just 9.3 weeks.

The waiting time for a referral to a general practitioner to a specialist increased from 10.5 weeks in 2020 to 11.1 weeks in 2021. And the waiting time from seeing a specialist to actually getting treatment increased from 12.1 weeks in 2020 to 14.5 weeks in 2021.

Something to think about when the secular left tells you that they can improve healthcare by taxing you more, and having a government-run system. The Biden administration thinks that parents are "domestic terrorists" if they object to the education monopoly. They'll think that you are a "domestic terrorist" if you object to the failures of their health care monopoly, too. Socialism always fails, and when it fails, the people who complain are blamed for the failure. Be careful what you vote for.

Knight and Rose Show update: 24 episodes finished, here are the numbers!

October 1, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rose and I are swamped this week, so we decided to take a week off and work on new shows. So, I thought I would make a post showing the numbers from our Knight and Rose podcast so far, and remind everyone how to listen. A few of my friends told me that they are still behind on the episodes, so take this week to catch up.

Let's start with the numbers. We started the podcast on April 15th, so we've been at it for just under 6 months. The most important platforms are the platforms that suggest us to other users. So, we have to care about YouTube for that reason. We have 157 subscribers, and 5,926 views so far on all 24 episodes. That's about 247 views per episode. We don't get a lot of comments on the videos, but if people do click like on the videos and leave comments, YouTube will show the videos to more people. Even comments like "Yikes" and "Wow" count in the YouTube ranking algorithm.

More people listen to the audio of the podcast, which is just an MP3 file that people download using Apple, Spotify, PodBean, etc. You can see all the episodes and the number of downloads across all channels here. You can actually download the episodes to your computer from that big list, but you have to click on each one, then click on Download. We have a total of 9305 downloads, which is about 388 on average. 21% of people listen on Apple, 14% by web browser, 9% by Podbean, and 8% by Spotify. I use AntennaPod on my Android phone, because it's simple and open source.

We care about reviews on Apple, because Apple promotes podcasts with lots of 5-star reviews. We have 19 ratings in the US market, and 3 more in the Canadian market. All of them are 5-star ratings. And we have a few reviews. We also have ratings on Spotify, 13 of them, and all 5-stars. Spotify ratings are helpful too. I also upload the episodes to Google Podcasts and a bunch of other places. And the video version goes to our Rumble and Odysee channels, in case Susan yeets us off of YouTube. We have been quite scared that would happen to us because of the discussion of Islam, homosexuality, feminism, etc. But so far, so good.

I added a section to the blog where you can see all the past episodes, with links to the blog posts. The buttons at the top of that page link to all the places where the podcasts are distributed. I've been embedding the YouTube video in the blog posts, because when I tried to do Spotify, Spotify would only let you hear 30 seconds. I've also updated the Multimedia page with a couple of audio interviews we did with Apologetics 315 and Her Faith Inspires. We're supposed to do another video one with Tim Stratton of Free Thinking Ministries soon.

So far, a few of the young people in my office have been able to find the podcast or the blog by stalking me. I am thankful that this has not resulted in a trip to Human Resources. I wish I could tell everyone I know about the podcast. It's pretty fun when people tell me

what they think of an episode that they liked. I had a few people who really liked the recent 3-part series on common atheist objections to Christianity. Other people liked the episode on crime, police, guns and self-defense. We also got good reviews for the episode on the gospels. The most popular episode is the one on whether atheists can be moral. I got a bit excited in that one.

Some of my Christian friends are having to deal with major problems. One has cancer, one is unemployed, one is tied up with legal problems, etc. It really makes me think about using the time I have available to take a stand on every issue that's interesting. I don't worry too much about how many people are listening. The important thing is to look in the Bible, make a list of Biblical views and Biblical experiences, then start ticking them off.

I definitely wanted to be on record favoring male-female relationships and natural marriage, for example. So we did two episodes on those topics (6 and 7). We wanted to say something about the right to life of the unborn, so we did an episode (16) on that. Rose and I just want to make sure that we are on record on every interesting topic. It's fun to talk about all of these topics with Rose. We hope you're having fun listening, too.

California passes new law to undermine parental rights in all 50 states

October 2, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

California is interesting state because the Democrats have majority control of the House and Senate. The governor is also a Democrat. So there are no brakes on what they can do. I like to read stories about them to find out what Democrats would do if they had no opposition.

Here is a story from The Federalist:

> California Democrat Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a new law Thursday night to strip rights away from parents who protest their children's blind pursuit of destructive surgeries sold to confused minors as "gender affirmation."
>
> Under Senate Bill 107 introduced by San Francisco-area State Sen. Scott Wiener, California will now become a "refuge" for trans-identifying minors who seek irreversible medical treatment for gender dysphoria. The legislation was supposedly aimed at blocking red states from enforcing laws barring extreme treatments for underage victims, and instead invited those minors to seek surgeries in California.

The bill eliminates parental authority over children everywhere in the country, by allowing California doctors to prescribe transgender drugs to children in other states.

> Jay Richards, a policy expert at the Heritage Foundation, and Emilie Kao, a vice president and senior counsel at Alliance Defending Freedom, broke down the components of the law in Newsweek.
>
> "California courts will have the power to strip custody from parents, wherever they live, who doubt the wisdom of these experimental and irreversible procedures — if their child so much as steps foot in California," the pair explained. "It would also allow California doctors to treat minors still in other states. With the advent of telehealth, a child could get a prescription for hormones from a California doctor while at home in Arkansas or in Florida."
>
> […]Under California's new law, parents might not even know whether their children are pursuing these dangerous drugs and procedures. Senate Bill 107 mandates that doctors hide children's medical information from parents if related to "gender identity," even if requested by subpoena.

And what's the effect of all this permissiveness?

Here is a study that explains what happens next.

Summary:

> Lowering legal barriers to make it easier for minors to undergo cross-sex medical

> interventions without parental consent does not reduce suicide rates—in fact, it likely leads to higher rates of suicide among young people in states that adopt these changes. States should instead adopt parental bills of rights that affirm the fact that parents have primary responsibility for their children's education and health, and that require school officials and health professionals to receive permission from parents before administering health services, including medication and "gender-affirming" counseling, to children under 18. States should also tighten the criteria for receiving cross-sex treatments, including raising the minimum eligibility age.

And this is the interesting part:

> In the past several years, the suicide rate among those ages 12 to 23 has become significantly *higher* in states that have a provision that allows minors to receive routine health care without parental consent than in states without such a provision. Before 2010, these two groups of states did not differ in their youth suicide rates. Starting in 2010, when puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones became widely available, elevated suicide rates in states where minors can more easily access those medical interventions became observable.
>
> Rather than being protective against suicide, this pattern indicates that easier access by minors to cross-sex medical interventions without parental consent is associated with higher risk of suicide. The Heritage model plotted the difference in a three-year rolling average of suicide rates between states with minor access provisions and states with no such provision. Chart 2 plots the trend in this difference for those ages 12 to 23 who could have been affected by the policy when cross-sex medical interventions became available. For comparison, Chart 2 also shows the trend in this difference for a group ages 28 to 39, who could not have been affected by these policies, since the people in this group would have been at least 18 when puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones became available.
>
> Without making any adjustments, suicide rates among those ages 12 to 23 (blue line) begin to spike in states that have provisions that allow minors to access health care without parental consent relative to states that have no such provision around 2016, after cross-sex medical interventions became more common. By 2020, there are about 3.5 more suicides per 100,000 people ages 12 to 23 in states with easier access than in states without an access provision. There is no similar spike in suicide rates among those ages 28 to 39 (grey line) at that time.

I think if I asked Gavin Newsom what he hopes to achieve with his assault on parental rights, he'd say that he wants to reduce suicide rates among children. Sadly, the scientific evidence shows that his policy achieves the exact opposite effect. This is what always happens when Democrats are in charge. They legislate in order to feel good and look

good. But the result is never good.

Pro-abortion Democrat shoots unarmed 84-year-old pro-life woman with rifle

October 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know that if you ask the FBI, they will tell you that half the country is composed of domestic terrorists trying to commit insurrection. But all the arson, domestic terrorism and crime is being committed by the secular left. Here's the latest example of domestic terrorismt hate crimes committed by Democrats.

Daily Signal reports:

> Eighty-four-year-old Joan Jacobson never imagined she would be shot when she knocked on the door of a Michigan couple's home, hoping to convince them not to vote for a local pro-abortion ballot proposal.
>
> Sharon Harvey answered the door and quickly became "hostile, belligerent, and antagonistic" when she learned Jacobson's mission, according to David Kallman, Jacobson's attorney with the Great Lakes Justice Center.
>
> […]In a Thursday phone interview with The Daily Signal, Jacobson insisted that Harvey refused to listen to her, yelling over her, and finally ordering her off the property. The 120-pound woman, who stands at 5 feet tall, said that Harvey followed her down the porch, onto the sidewalk, continuing to yell at her, before her husband Richard Harvey appeared in the yard carrying a .22 caliber rifle.
>
> "When that registered in my mind, I heard a shot, I felt some pain, and I thought he had hit me in the back," she said. Jacobson learned at the hospital that the bullet allegedly went through her shoulder and out her back, very narrowly missing her spine. "I was just in shock. I said to myself, 'Did I just get shot? Did he just shoot me?'"

I looked up the shooter's wife on Facebook, and surprisingly, her account is still up, and she is still posting to it. She really loves labor unions! The funny thing is that she also posts against gun ownership. She and her husband are exactly the kind of people who should not be allowed to own guns.

This isn't the only violence that's been committed recently by abortion extremists.

Daily Wire notes:

> In response to the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v Wade in late June, there have been a wave of attacks on pro-life centers and pro-life churches, including the firebombing of some of these buildings.
>
> Already in July, it was reported that, "At least 76 churches and pro-life organizations have been targets of arson and vandalism since May when news leaked that the U.S. Supreme Court would overturn Roe v. Wade." According to the Catholic News Agency's tracker, that number has now risen to 94.

> […]We're talking about attacks on as many as 50 pregnancy centers and 32 churches, along with scattered attacks on other targets. These have taken place in multiple states and have ranged from spraying graffiti on walls to firebombing buildings and from smashing windows to defacing billboards. Specific groups, like Jane's Revenge, have taken responsibility for some these attacks. And yet still no arrests?

Still no arrests. That article is from September 17, 2022. Where is the FBI? Why aren't they arresting any pro-abortion criminals?

Daily Caller talks about what's going on at the Biden FBI:

> The FBI is revoking the security clearances of conservative agents and retaliating against suspected whistleblowers, three House Republicans alleged in a Thursday letter.
>
> Republicans in both chambers of Congress have alleged widespread politicized misconduct in the FBI, most notably by a Washington, D.C., agent who investigated Hunter Biden. That agent, Timothy Thibault, resigned in August rather than face an internal review. Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, has said that whistleblowers have approached his office to report internal misconduct in the bureau's investigations into former President Donald Trump.
>
> The FBI is cracking down on suspected whistleblowers in response, Republican Reps. Jim Jordan of Ohio, Darrell Issa of California, and Mike Johnson of Louisiana alleged in a letter to FBI Executive Assistant Director Jennifer Leigh Moore. Moore signed "many" clearance revocation orders and "retaliated against at least one whistleblower," the lawmakers claimed.
>
> […]FBI agent Steve Friend was reportedly suspended and escorted from a Florida field office after he declined to participate in an arrest operation targeting a Jan. 6 Capitol riot suspect. Friend filed a whistleblower report detailing his experience, according to the New York Post.
>
> Other whistleblowers have reportedly alleged that the FBI is pulling agents off of child sexual abuse cases to investigate the Capitol riot and that bureau superiors told agents not to look into Hunter Biden's laptop.

The law is only being applied one way – against the enemies of the Biden fascist regime. And we won't get a better FBI until we elect people with integrity to hold them accountable. We need to elect leaders who love their country, love their country's laws, and have the courage to throw the treasonous filth out.

Which organizations are undermining the fairness and integrity of American elections?

October 4, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was hoping to write about something Christian today, but there were a whole TON of stories about election integrity on the web sites that I read daily to get news. So, I collected a bunch of them below. I hope this will encourage everyone to not only go vote, but also to be sharing articles on the issues that are likely to concern independents – such as school choice and parental authority.

Here's the first one, from Daily Wire, talking about Google's interference in the elections to favor Democrats:

> The Republican National Committee has filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission, alleging that Google is suppressing the GOP vote in November by sending millions of RNC election emails to recipients' spam folders.
>
> According to RNC officials, over 22 million emails sent in the last three days of September from the RNC were spammed by Google; over 3.1 million on September 28, over 9.8 million on September 29, and over 9.97 million on September 30.

I was reading the article to see if the RNC had any proof of Google bias (although I know Google products favor the Democrat party in measurable ways) and found this:

> An April study conducted by researchers at North Carolina State University found that Gmail favored candidates on the political Left. The study stated, "Gmail … retained the majority of left-wing candidate emails in inbox (< 10.12% marked as spam) while sent the majority of right-wing candidate emails to the spam folder (up to 77.2% marked as spam)."
>
> The study also claimed that Gmail "marks a significantly higher percentage (67.6%) of emails from the right as spam compared to the emails from left (just 8.2%). Gmail marked 59.3% more emails from the right candidates as spam compared to the left candidates."

My philosopher friend Blake likes to tell me about his philosophy friends who deny that voter fraud is real. So I sent him this article from Daily Wire about voter fraud:

> A former U.S. Congressman, a Democrat, was sentenced to more than two years in jail last week for committing election fraud intended to help Democrat candidates.
>
> Former Rep. Michael "Ozzie" Myers, 79, who represented a district in Pennsylvania, pled guilty to conspiracy to deprive voters of civil rights, bribery, obstruction of justice, falsification of voting records, conspiring to illegally vote in a federal election, and orchestrating schemes to fraudulently stuff the ballot

> boxes for specific Democratic candidates in the 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 Pennsylvania elections, the U.S. Department of Justice said in a statement.
>
> United States District Court Judge Paul S. Diamond sentenced Myers to 30 months in prison with three years of supervised release for his crimes and ordered Myers to pay $100,000 in fines, with $10,000 of that due immediately.

And here is another one from The Federalist by my favorite Federalist lady, Joy Pullmann, where she writes about Google rigging elections with biased search results:

> In a September interview that went viral on social media Sunday, a United Nations operative admitted the U.S. government-funded organization "partnered with Google" to rig the results returned on the world's dominant search engine for the phrase "climate change."
>
> […]The Biden White House is fighting further disclosures about high-level federal officials' involvement in this government-pressured censorship regime, including Anthony Fauci and the White House press secretary. The companies involved include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter, the court documents say.
>
> Earlier this year, a clip of Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg — who threw hundreds of millions of dollars obtained from his communications monopoly company into helping Democrat activists embed inside government election offices in 2020 — also went viral. It showed him telling podcaster Joe Rogan that the FBI also controls the information Facebook allows people to share. The FBI's meddling affected the 2020 presidential election outcome.

She talks about Big Tech, but also about the FBI and the DOJ:

> U.S. intelligence agencies in particular have paid precisely zero penalties for using their powers to openly meddle in U.S. elections. The most recent operation they conducted that we know about is the Russia collusion hoax manufactured to keep voters from electing Donald Trump, or, failing that, to make the Electoral College majority of voters' choice of Trump meaningless.
>
> Because officials such as Bill Barr and John Durham, as well as Republicans or anyone else in Congress, have failed to penalize the FBI and Department of Justice's election interference operations, they're increasing. RedState, Tucker Carlson, and Steve Bannon say several dozen Trump associates and supporters have been recently raided or subpoenaed by the FBI.
>
> The FBI is also meddling in state elections by investigating candidates based on their political positions. It raided a former president's home on laughable charges similar to those the FBI director dismissed for that president's election opponent.
>
> Also, of course, the FBI and DOJ are hunting down political opponents of Democrats on largely trespassing charges and making sure they're given maximum punishment, all clearly based on political prejudice, not justice. This is

> the same FBI that has been proven to hide behind false “national security” claims and to lie to judges and grand juries to authorize spying and raids of Democrats’ political opponents, with no consequences to speak of yet.

Here’s another story about Milwaukee elections from The Federalist:

> As Empower Wisconsin first reported on Wednesday, communications obtained in an open records request to the city by state Rep. Janel Brandtjen (R-Menomonee Falls) show longtime Democratic Party operative Sachin Chheda telling [Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier] Johnson and his staff what to say about the Wisconsin Votes 2022 get-out-the-vote campaign. The effort is being funded by a left-wing activist group with close ties to the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL), a leftist nonprofit funded by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.
>
> While city officials, under the direction of Chheda, have said Milwaukee is not receiving any private funding for the effort, two things are clear: The mayor’s office is taking orders from Democratic Party operatives, and the city of Milwaukee is coordinating with left-wing groups in what looks like an expensive effort to influence the outcome of November’s election.

Anyway, here’s another one from The Federalist about Democrat billionaire Michael Bloomberg:

> A prominent professor of election law served as an intermediary between Democrat billionaire Michael Bloomberg and the Philadelphia election board, attempting to broker as much as $3 million in private funding for the Democrat stronghold mere months before the 2020 election, emails obtained by investigative journalist Todd Shepherd reveal.

So, the odds are definitely stacked against Republicans in November. Now is a good time to share articles about issues that might be interesting to moderates and independents. I’ve been posting about financial stories, like inflation, gas prices, the stock market, etc. and also education stories, like transgenderism, critical race theory, and the FBI investigating teachers who complain about school performance.

Medical organizations write to Biden DOJ and Big Tech to demand censorship of conservatives

October 5, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think everyone remembers how the Biden administration Department of Education joined forces with the National School Boards Association to demand that parents who disagree with anti-white racism, pedophilia and transgender indoctrination be investigated for "domestic terrorism". The Christian Post reported on that story, if you need a refresher:

> Newly released emails reveal that a controversial letter likening parents to domestic terrorists for raising concerns about the material their children were exposed to in public schools was crafted at the request of U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona.
>
> A chain of emails released by the advocacy group Parents Defending Education on Tuesday documented a conversation between two National School Boards Association members, Marnie Maldonado and Kristi Swett.
>
> […]The Sept. 29 letter sought to label parents as "angry mobs" for speaking out against masking their children at schools and raising concerns about materials promoting trans activism, pedophilia, and critical race theory. Parents' disagreements with school board members at meetings were to be classified by federal agencies as "heinous actions [that] could be the equivalent to a form of domestic terrorism and hate crimes."

Well, now major medical organizations are demanding that anyone who shares public materials, such as marketing videos and public web pages, that children's hospitals put out about the gender-bending services they offer also be punished by the DOJ.

Here's the story from the Daily Caller:

> The American Medical Association (AMA) sent Attorney General Merrick Garland a letter Monday calling on him to "investigate the organizations, individuals, and entities coordinating, provoking, and carrying out bomb threats and threats of personal violence against children's hospitals and physicians across the U.S."

It's not just the DOJ they want to punish conservatives who just share public materials online. They also want Big Tech to censor them:

> Our organizations have called on technology companies to do more to prevent this practice on digital platforms, and we now urge your office to take swift action to investigate and prosecute all organizations, individuals, and entities responsible."

The first thing I thought when I read this story is "Did the Biden administration cause

these organizations to write this letter to the Biden administration?" because that's what they did with the NSBA letter.

One thing for sure. We have to be very careful with handing our children off to public schools and hospitals. They are not working for parents any more. They would rather mutilate a child, than address the underlying psychological problems that children are facing.

Want to know what children's hospitals really think about parents?

Just read this article from The Post Millennial:

> A father in New York state is fighting for his child to be allowed to grow up. The child's mother, the medical industry, and the court are pressing for the 11-year-old to be permitted to take drugs that would disrupt puberty, potentially stunting her development and leading to sterility.
>
> The father to the middle-schooler, whose is not named in order to protect his family, has been instructed by the court to call his child by the new, chosen name, new preferred pronouns, and to refer to the child as being of the new, chosen gender. Neither parent is allowed, under court order, to talk to the child about "anything gender related," he said.
>
> That order came down in April, and the mother demanded full custody. This would give her the right to medically transition the child without the father's consent. That request, along with the mother's request for a court of protection against , and sole use of the family's home, were both rejected by the court. The parents are seeking divorce, and this issue is the primary disagreement between them.

This story reminds me of the previous story I wrote about, concerning the senior software engineer at Apple. His Blackrock executive feminist wife divorced him and decided to trans their kid. He presented a lot of evidence to the judges, but they disregarded his evidence, and stripped him of custody. You really have to be careful about marrying a feminist these days. They will divorce you, trans your kids, and cut off all your parental rights. It's happening all the time now.

If Republicans take the House and Senate, could they impeach Joe Biden?

October 6, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

According to RealClearPolitics, polling for the mid-term Senate races is projecting 47 Republicans, 46 Democrats, and 7 toss-up seats. The House projections are showing 219 Republicans, 182 Democrats and 34 toss-ups. So it's possible that Republicans win the Senate and the House. If they did, would they launch an impeachment of Joe Biden? On what grounds?

Here is a wonderful article by David Harsanyi, writing for The Federalist, which talks about possible grounds for impeaching Joe Biden:

- Illegal student loan bailout
- Going after parents with law enforcement
- Hunter Biden corruption
- 13 Americans dead from Afghanistan retreat
- Using FBI as secret police to silence political enemies

Illegal student loan bailout:

> Biden again knowingly subverted the will of Congress when he transferred loan payments for millions of affluent students to taxpayers in hopes of affecting the 2022 midterms. The president does not possess the statutory power to "forgive" or "cancel" loans. Just ask congressional leaders like Nancy Pelosi, who correctly noted that "[p]eople think that the President of the United States has the power for debt forgiveness — he does not." He did it anyway. Unilaterally. The president used the emergency powers found in the HEROES Act, passed after 9/11 to help U.S. soldiers fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, to justify his decree.

Going after parents with law enforcement:

> In October 2021 the National School Boards Association sent a letter to the Biden administration requesting the FBI investigate school board protests, offering a handful of alleged acts of criminality as justification to treat millions of parents as potential "domestic terrorism" threats. The letter uses this phrase (twice) to provide the administration with the justification to trigger a PATRIOT Act investigation. Then again, all of it was coordinated. We learned later, through a FOIA request, that Education Secretary Miguel Cardona had likely solicited and helped with the verbiage of the letter. Garland, who regularly ignores violence and threats directed at conservatives, acquiesced and directed the FBI and U.S. attorneys' offices to investigate parents.

Hunter Biden corruption:

> [The GOP should] scrutinize whether the president benefited financially from his brother's and son Hunter's leveraging of the family name and the United States government to extract millions from Chinese and Ukrainian energy concerns—for which there is plenty of circumstantial evidence. We already know Biden lied about the extent of his knowledge regarding Hunter's "work." And, in a functioning democracy, it is imperative we know everything about the president's finances.

13 Americans dead from Afghanistan retreat:

> While they're at it, it would also be nice if we could learn more about the chaotic and inept Afghanistan pullout that left 13 service members dead and thousands of Americans stranded in theocratistan. Did Biden dismiss intelligence reports warning about a swift collapse of our Afghan allies for political considerations? Why did the administration mislead the public about the number of citizens and green-card holders who were stranded? We have yet to hear a coherent explanation for why the administration handed a list of allied names to the Taliban. Nor do we know the story behind that face-saving drone strike that ended up killing 10 innocent Afghans, seven of them children. Let's find out.

Using FBI as secret police to silence political enemies:

> Maybe they could also get to the bottom of the FBI's role in limiting speech on social media platforms during the 2020 election. The White House, after all, has proven to be quite comfortable attempting to dictate speech. In July 2021, the White House admitted it was "flagging problematic posts for Facebook that spread disinformation." The White House not-so-subtly threatened social media platforms to suppress certain political opinions and stories. Under what constitutional power does the president get to dictate what should be considered mis- or dis-information? And under what power does Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas get to create an Orwellian "Disinformation Governance Board?" How pervasive is the law enforcement agency's contact with media companies?

What people didn't like about Trump was that he reminded them of the hot bad boys they were attracted to who treated them badly. That's bad, but it's not impeachment-level bad. On the other hand, Biden and his corrupt regime are impeachment-level bad. I'd like to see the Republicans spend the next two years getting to the bottom of all of these stories. So I hope everyone votes Republican in the House and Senate races next month.

Peter Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospels

October 7, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a lecture I found from British historian Dr. Peter J. Williams.

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?

- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate. That link contains a link to the audio of the debate as well as my snarky summary. It's very snarky.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 25: Christianity's Impact on the World, Part 1

October 8, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 25 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose begin a 3-part series about how Christianity impacted the world in a number of different areas. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 25:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how Christianity has influenced society in many different areas. In this episode, we discuss the sanctity of life, health care, and the status of women. We start by talking about the beliefs and practices were dominant in pre-Christian culture. We then explain what the Bible teaches, and what practices emerged from these beliefs. This is the first of a three-part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Luke Barnes on the fine-tuning of the strong force and fine structure constant

October 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By now, anyone who has had discussions about scientific evidence for the existence of God knows about the fine-tuning argument. In a nutshell, if the fundamental constants and quantities given in the Big Bang were even slightly other than they are, then the universe itself would not be hospitable for complex, embodied intelligent life.

Here is an article from The New Atlantis written by Australian cosmologist Luke Barnes.

Excerpt:

> Today, our deepest understanding of the laws of nature is summarized in a set of equations. Using these equations, we can make very precise calculations of the most elementary physical phenomena, calculations that are confirmed by experimental evidence. But to make these predictions, we have to plug in some numbers that cannot themselves be calculated but are derived from measurements of some of the most basic features of the physical universe. These numbers specify such crucial quantities as the masses of fundamental particles and the strengths of their mutual interactions. After extensive experiments under all manner of conditions, physicists have found that these numbers appear not to change in different times and places, so they are called the fundamental constants of nature.
>
> […]A universe that has just small tweaks in the fundamental constants might not have any of the chemical bonds that give us molecules, so say farewell to DNA, and also to rocks, water, and planets. Other tweaks could make the formation of stars or even atoms impossible. And with some values for the physical constants, the universe would have flickered out of existence in a fraction of a second. That the constants are all arranged in what is, mathematically speaking, the very improbable combination that makes our grand, complex, life-bearing universe possible is what physicists mean when they talk about the "fine-tuning" of the universe for life.

Let's look at an example – the strong force. Not only must the strong force be fine-tuned so we have both hydrogen and helium, but the ratio of the strong force must also be fine-tuned with the fine structure constant.

Barnes writes:

> The strong nuclear force, for example, is the glue that holds protons and neutrons together in the nuclei of atoms. If, in a hypothetical universe, it is too weak, then nuclei are not stable and the periodic table disappears again. If it is too strong, then the intense heat of the early universe could convert all hydrogen into helium — meaning that there could be no water, and that 99.97 percent of

> the 24 million carbon compounds we have discovered would be impossible, too. And, as the chart to the right shows, the forces, like the masses, must be in the right balance. If the electromagnetic force, which is responsible for the attraction and repulsion of charged particles, is too strong or too weak compared to the strong nuclear force, anything from stars to chemical compounds would be impossible.

Here's the chart he's referencing:

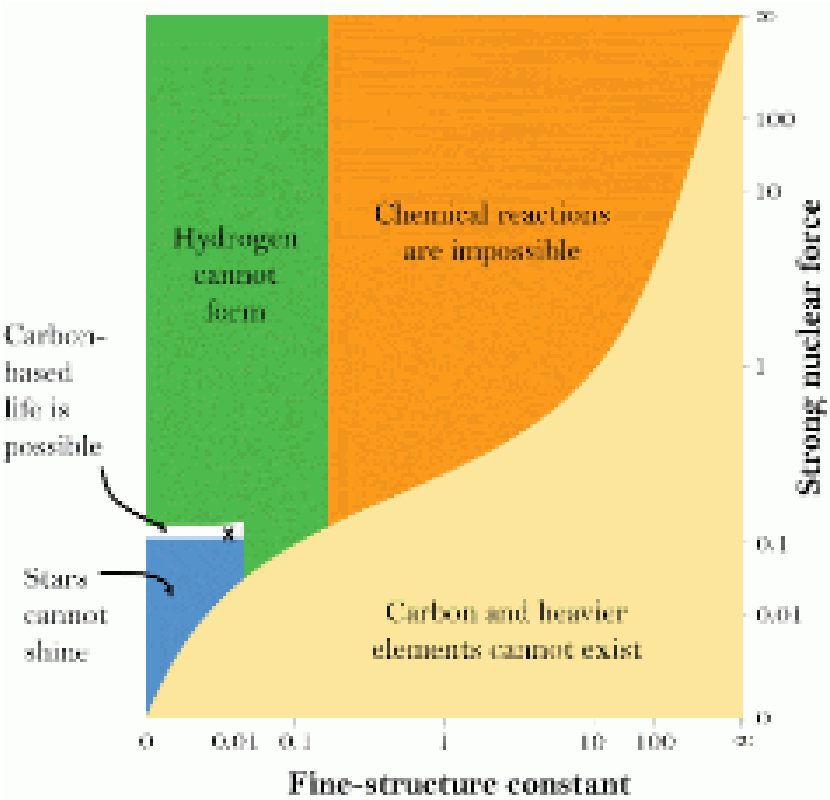

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant

As you can see from the chart, most of the values that the constants could take would make complex, embodied intelligent life impossible.

We need carbon (carbon-based life) because they form the basis of the components of life chemistry, e.g. proteins, sugars, etc. We need hydrogen for water. We need chemical reactions for obvious reasons. We need the light from the stars to support plant and animal life on the surface of a planet. And so on. In almost every case where you change the values of these constants and quantities and ratios from what they are, you will end up with a universe that does not support life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind under these laws of physics. And we don't have any alternative laws of physics in this universe.

By the way, just to show you how mainstream these examples of fine-tuning are, I thought I would link to a source that you're all going to be familiar with: The New Scientist.

The fine-tuning of the force of gravity

So here is an article from the New Scientist about a different constant that also has to be

fine-tuned for life: the force of gravity.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe‘s birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What’s more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Notice how the article also mentioned “the universe’s birth”, which is part of mainstream science.

When I’m writing to you about things like the origin of the universe, or the cosmic fine-tuning, I’m not talking to you about things that pastors found in the Bible. These discoveries are known and accepted by mainstream scientists. It’s amazing that people are constructing their worldviews without having to account for the birth of the universe and this cosmic fine-tuning. We all, as rational individuals, have to bound our view of the universe with the findings of science. Right now, those findings support the existence of a Creator and a Designer. So why am I seeing so many atheists who are just plain ignorant about these facts? Maybe we should tell them about this evidence. Maybe we should ask them why they don’t account for scientific evidence when forming their beliefs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason

- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

What does the NOAA say about hurricane frequency and hurricane intensity?

October 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an excellent article from center-left writer Michael Shellenberger, on his Substack. He is talking about all the journalists who are claiming that there are more hurricanes now than ever before in the history of the world, and that global warming is causing the increase in the number of hurricanes, and in the intensity of hurricanes. What does the evidence really say?

First, let's see what the mainstream news media says:

> Over the last several weeks, many mainstream news media outlets have claimed that hurricanes are becoming more expensive, more frequent, and more intense because of climate change.
>
> - The Financial Times reported that "hurricane frequency is on the rise."
> - The New York Times claimed, "strong storms are becoming more common in the Atlantic Ocean."
> - The Washington Post said, "climate change is rapidly fueling super hurricanes."
> - ABC News declared, "Here's how climate change intensifies hurricanes."
> - Both the FT and N.Y. Times showed graphs purporting to show rising hurricane frequency using data from the U.S. government's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
>
> All of those claims are false.

So the first claim is that hurricane *damage* is increasing. But why is that? It's because the areas being hit by hurricanes are more developed and populated than before:

> The increasing cost of hurricane damage can be explained entirely by more people and more property in harm's way. Consider how much more developed Miami Beach is today compared to a century ago. Once you adjust for rising wealth, there is no trend of increasing damage.

What about the *frequency* of hurricanes. Is it really increasing, like the no-STEM-degree journalists say?

> Claims that hurricanes are becoming more frequent are similarly wrong. "After adjusting for a likely under-count of hurricanes in the pre-satellite era," writes NOAA, "there is essentially no long-term trend in hurricane counts. The evidence for an upward trend is even weaker if we look at U.S. landfalling hurricanes, which even show a slight negative trend beginning from 1900 or from the late 1800s." What's more, NOAA expects a 25% decline in hurricane

> frequency in the future.

NOAA expects a 25% decline in hurricane frequency in the future! That doesn't sound like what the global warming alarmists would predict.

The no-STEM-degree journalists also claim that the *intensity* of the hurricanes is increasing. Are they right about that?

> Explains NOAA, "after adjusting for changes in observing capabilities (limited ship observations) in the pre-satellite era, there is no significant long-term trend (since the 1880s) in the proportion of hurricanes that become major hurricanes." Bottom line? "We conclude that the historical Atlantic hurricane data at this stage do not provide compelling evidence for a substantial greenhouse warming-induced century-scale increase in: frequency of tropical storms, hurricanes, or major hurricanes, or in the proportion of hurricanes that become major."

This is important, because the NOAA said it: "there is no significant long-term trend (since the 1880s) in the proportion of hurricanes that become major hurricanes." I like that Shellenberger is quoting the NOAA, and not just giving his opinion.

Shellenberger contacted several of the journalists, but just got silence from them when he asked why they were misrepresenting the data.

Here's one example:

> Is it possible that the Financial Times reporter Aime Williams and her editors pulled the data from the NOAA website to make their graph, and mistakenly claimed that it shows more frequent hurricanes, but didn't happen to read the website and its explicit warning that "After adjusting for a likely under-count of hurricanes in the pre-satellite era, there is essentially no long-term trend in hurricane counts"?
>
> If that is indeed what occurred, then Williams and FT are guilty of journalistic malpractice of the highest order. But there is little reason to think that's what happened. NOAA makes its warning relatively early on its web page and repeats it several times. And FT, like everyone else, has been covering this issue for decades not years.
>
> I asked Williams in an email why she reported that hurricanes were increasing in frequency and intensity, against the best available science, and she did not respond. Whatever the case, FT should issue a retraction or a correction.

I tried to see what earned degrees Aime Williams has, but wasn't able to find anything. It's almost as if she doesn't want people to know what she studied in school. I couldn't find any work experience in the field of climate science, either. If she's a writer, rather than a scientist, then maybe she just has degrees in English?

I find it suspicious, because if you google my real name, you'll find the citation for my Master's thesis in computer science, and my Linked In page with my 2 computer science degrees and over two decades of work experience in the field. Where are her degrees?

Where is her work experience? If she doesn’t have any knowledge of these topics, then why should we trust her as an authority?

FBI and DOJ corruption should drive Christians and conservatives to vote Republican in November

October 11, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, let's first take a look at the a list of FBI corruption scandals, then we can see what the FBI is doing with pro-lifers. My goal here will be to alert people that the FBI is operating like some sort of secret police for the Biden regime, so we really need to let people know about this before the elections in November. We do not want the FBI to continue under Democrat leadership.

Grabien has a good long list of 79 FBI Scandals, Controversies, & Acts of Corruption.

Here are few recent ones:

Durham: Primary Steele Dossier Source Was Paid FBI Informant	09/14/2022	Newsmax
FBI labeled veteran-led disaster organization a 'terror' group over government criticism, whistleblower says	09/15/2022	Yahoo! News
Former top FBI official involved in Trump-Russia investigation under scrutiny by federal prosecutors for his own ties to Russia	09/15/2022	Business Insider
FBI inflating 'white supremacy' threat to help White House political agenda	09/15/2022	The Washington Times
FBI whistleblower alleges Jan. 6 cases manipulated to create illusion of national crisis	09/20/2022	Just the News
FBI whistleblower: Counterterrorism cases against alleged right-wing extremists mostly 'entrapment'	09/22/2022	The Washington Times
FBI misled judge who signed warrant for Beverly Hills seizure of $86 million in cash	09/23/2022	Yahoo News
FBI Agents Raid Home, Arrest Pro-Life Advocate in Front of Wife and Children	09/25/2022	The Daily Signal

They link to a news story for each one. Those news stories are just from the last 2 weeks of September.

Anyway, I do think it's important for taxpayers to decide what the FBI should be doing, since taxpayers pay them. And that's why we have elections. Clearly, many of the people running the FBI are immoral and corrupt. They don't know anything about the Constitution, or the rule of law, or law enforcement. So, we should definitely put them under new management. But what's been bothering me lately are these stories about the FBI pre-dawn raiding the homes of pro-lifers.

Here's an article from The Federalist that shows that the lawyer of one of the people who was raided e-mailed federal law enforcement to let them know that he would turn himself if required. That e-mail was sent in June 2022, and it was ignored. It was replied to by federal law enforcement only AFTER they pre-dawn-raided his house.

Look:

> Amid Americans' growing distrust of the FBI, the agency further damaged its reputation when, not quite two weeks ago, some 15 police vehicles and about 20 law enforcement officers, including many with ballistic shields, long guns, and a battering ram at the ready, descended on Houck's home.

And:

> The scandal intensified after a dozen Republican senators revealed in a letter sent to FBI Director Christopher Wray that Houck's attorney, Thomas More Society lawyer Matt Heffron, had informed the Assistant U.S. Attorney Anita Eve that he would accept the summons on Houck's behalf and that Houck would appear voluntarily. A copy of the email exchange between Heffron and Eve obtained Monday by The Federalist proves even more damning than the senators' letter to Wray suggests, for two reasons.
>
> […]Heffron's email to Eve, in which he noted he would "accept a summons on my client's behalf, rather put Mr. Houck and his family through needless disruption," was dated June 9, 2022, but Eve's sole response to that email came on Sept. 23, 2022 — when Eve wrote Heffron to inform him that "this morning, [Houck] was taken into custody by FBI agents and is being transported to the Philadelphia FBI office for processing." So the first response Houck's attorney received from the U.S. attorney's office, following two phone calls and an email, came more than three months later to advise him that his client had already been arrested.

That's bad, but look at this more recent story from the Daily Signal, which talks about the recent arrest and charging of 11 more peaceful pro-life activists:

> […]The Biden Justice Department is heavily focused on protecting abortion clinics from pro-life activists who pray outside or seek to persuade women not to abort their unborn babies. On Wednesday, the Justice Department charged 11 more pro-life activists with violations of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act for blocking the entrance of an abortion clinic in 2021.

You can watch videos of one the raids here on Life News. The FBI men were armed with assault rifles and they refused to give their names. That's the kind of accountability we're getting from the federal law enforcement.

The Daily Signal article also notes that pro-abortion violence against pro-lifers hasn't gotten any attention from the Biden regime:

> The Federal Bureau of Investigation will not share whether it has made any arrests related to attacks on pro-life centers, organizations, and Catholic churches following the leak of the Supreme Court opinion overturning Roe v. Wade.
>
> At least 83 Catholic churches and 73 pregnancy resource centers or pro-life

> organizations have been attacked since the draft opinion was leaked in May. And some of these pro-life centers and organizations have told The Daily Signal that they have not heard anything from federal authorities.

This would be similar to how BLM and Antifa terrorists seem to have an easy time getting bail, despite causing 2 billion dollars worth of damages. That's from vandalism, theft and arson. And that's not even to mention the violence committed by the secular left terrorists. I know that in big Democrat cities, Antifa fascists are often released the same day they are arrested.

Same-sex marriage: polyamory is now “marriage” and surrogacy is now a “fertility treatment”

October 12, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve been doing some show prep for an episode of Knight and Rose on same-sex marriage. When I talk to atheists about same-sex marriage, they just say stupid things like how proud they are of legalizing it. No atheist understands what marriage is, what the state’s interest is in marriage, or what happens after marriage is redefined to eliminate the requirement for complementary genders.

Before same-sex marriage was legalized by Supreme Court decision, social conservatives like me were warning about what would happen after. But secular leftists didn’t listen, because thinking is hard. Especially for immoral people.

But here we are a few years after same-sex marriage, and we get this story from the New York Post:

> An opinion from New York City’s eviction court has come down on the side of polyamorous unions.
>
> In the case of West 49th St., LLC v. O’Neill, New York Civil Court Judge Karen May Bacdayan reportedly concluded that polyamorous relationships are entitled to the same sort of legal protection given to two-person relationships.
>
> West 49th St., LLC v. O’Neill involved three individuals: Scott Anderson and Markyus O’Neill, who lived together in a New York City apartment, and Anderson’s husband Robert Romano, who resided elsewhere.

So, the reason why social conservatives were opposed to redefining marriage, is because we knew that a core aspect of marriage is the complementary genders. The male-female standard is related to many aspects of marriage and child-raising. A male-female union is necessary to conceive children. Male-female marriages (particularly those with virgins who attend church weekly) are the most stable form of relationship. Male-female marriages don’t have the high rates of infidelity of male-male relationships. Male-female marriages also don’t have the high rates of domestic violence and instability of female-female relationships.

But another thing that’s important about the male-female aspect of procreation is that you get a number out of it. That number is the number TWO. One man and one woman go into the bedroom, and then 9 months later, a child is born that shares DNA from both of them. That’s why the number 2 is central to natural marriage.

But if you drop the norm of complementary sexes from marriage, and just say that marriage is between two people who have a strong emotional commitment to each other, then there is no more number 2. After all, strong emotional commitments can be shared by groups of people. And that’s why we are seeing this ruling.

Secular leftists don’t accept an objective moral law, and they are terrible at

understanding the consequences of tearing down moral boundaries. When it comes to morality, they have zero ability to reason or predict consequences. These are the same people who destroy their own oil and gas industries to stop “global warming”, then are forced to buy dirty oil and gas from Russia. Then they complain when Russia takes their money to buys tanks and planes that they use to invade Ukraine. They deny responsibility for the results that directly follow from their own foolish choices.

Here’s another consequence of same-sex marriage, this time reported by The Post Millennial.

> A gay New York City couple is fighting for the right to get in vitro fertilization (IVF) and surrogacy covered by the city’s “discriminatory” insurance policy that does not fund fertility treatments for homosexual male couples.
>
> Corey Briskin and Nicholas Maggipinto filed a class-action lawsuit against the city back in April, after learning in 2017 that Briskin’s insurance policy from his government job did not provide IVF benefits for gay men, reported NBC.
>
> “What the city has done is robbed me of the right to determine when I get to have the family that I want to have,” Maggipinto said.
>
> The couple had made a two-part plan to become parents: First, they would get IVF, a process in which an egg is fertilized with sperm in a lab. Then, they planned to hire a woman to be a surrogate, to use her womb to carry the zygote to term.

They want to get IVF, and they they want to get a surrogate mother to do the pregnancy. But they don’t want to pay for it – they want YOU to pay for it, because… marriage equality. Their same-sex marriage is the same as your heterosexual marriage, and that’s why the money earned from your marriage has to transferred to their marriage to pay for the production of children for their marriage.

Why do they want children?

> “We got married and then we wanted all the trappings: house, children, 401K, etc,” Maggipinto, 37, said to the Guardian on Saturday.

I would really like to see what happens to supporters of same-sex marriage on judgement day when they meet the children who were treated like commodities. I would like the children to explain to them what they lost when they lost their biological mother and father, and the stability of an opposite-sex married home. Right now, they don’t seem to care. But I hope that one day, they are made to care. Children are not objects. They have needs. Adults need to stop being so reckless, irresponsible and selfish.

Just Facts tells the true story of Hunter's laptop and Biden-Ukraine corruption

October 13, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wrote about Hunter Biden's business dealings with the Ukrainian oil and gas company Burisma a few times. But there actually some more revelations about it, from a well-respected fact-checker called "Just Facts". I watched the lead investigator do an interview on the Eric Metaxas show, and I also found an article on the Just Facts web site. Let's take a look at it.

Here's what it says:

> Newly discovered emails prove beyond all doubt that the "true purpose" of Hunter Biden's lucrative deal with a Ukrainian energy company was for Hunter to get "high-ranking US officials" to visit Ukraine and persuade the nation's leaders to "close down" all criminal "cases/pursuits against" the firm's primary owner, a notoriously corrupt oligarch with ties to Russia.
>
> Documentation of this illegal scheme begins with a widely overlooked email on Hunter's laptop in which a top executive of the Ukrainian firm describes the plan. Now, emails uncovered by Just Facts prove that Hunter and his partners:
>
> - explicitly agreed to this deal.
> - concealed the names of top U.S. officials to "be on the safe and cautious side."
> - affirmed that only Hunter could credibly promise to get those officials to shield the oligarch from criminal charges.
>
> Just one month later, then-Vice President Joe Biden did exactly what those emails specified by visiting Ukraine and threatening to withhold U.S. aid unless the prosecutor investigating Hunter's cash cow was fired. Moreover, Biden did this by going after two "key targets" identified in the emails: the "President of Ukraine" and the "Prosecutor General."

The funny thing about Biden withholding U.S. aid is that this is the exact "quid-pro-quo" situation that Trump was accused of. This is using the power and wealth of the American people to help people who are helping your own family.

The article explains:

- how Hunter was being paid
- how much Hunter was being paid
- what the Ukrainian oligarch expected Hunter to do

This is the part about Joe Biden:

> One month after the emails above were exchanged, Joe Biden did exactly what they specified.
>
> In December 2015, Biden visited Ukraine and later recounted on video that he told Ukraine's president and its prime minister on that trip that he would withhold a U.S. government "billion-dollar loan guarantee" unless they fired the "state prosecutor." "If the prosecutor is not fired," warned Biden, "you're not getting the money." Biden then added, "Well, son of a bitch, he got fired."
>
> […]Just two weeks after the court's seizure order, the president of Ukraine forced the prosecutor to resign. White House phone logs show that Joe Biden talked to the president of Ukraine at least three times in the week surrounding the firing. The phone log for the last of these calls states, "The Vice President also commended President Poroshenko's decision to replace Prosecutor General Shokin, which paves the way for needed reform of the prosecutorial service."

And finally:

> Two months later in May 2016, Ukraine's parliament approved the president's appointee for a new chief prosecutor, who Biden described as "solid."
>
> […]Six months after Biden's "solid" prosecutor was appointed, he dropped all criminal charges against the oligarch. The prosecutor also applauded the settlement as a "success" because the oligarch paid $7.46 million in back taxes and penalties. Far from being a prosecutorial victory, the oligarch praised these outcomes and stated that they would allow his corporation to increase production and "attract international companies to Ukraine."

What about Joe Biden?

> Joe Biden's involvement in Hunter's illicit business deals is also evidenced by a 2017 encrypted What's App message uncovered by the New York Post. In it, one of Hunter's business partners wrote to another partner while discussing Joe Biden, "Don't mention Joe being involved, it's only when u are face to face, I know u know that but they are paranoid."

What's interesting is his list of the news organizations and tech companies that covered up for Joe Biden.

Here are a few that are documented by Just Facts:

- > In October 2020, Twitter locked the New York Post's account for reporting on Hunter's laptop and pinned a post to the top of Twitter's home page claiming that Joe Biden "played no role in pressuring Ukraine officials into firing the prosecutor," a statement flatly disproven by the words of Biden himself.

> In October 2020, NPR managing editor Terence Samuels Public Editor wrote that NPR is not reporting on the NY Post's expose of Hunter Biden's laptop because "we don't want to waste our time on stories that are not really stories, and we don't want to waste listeners' and readers' time on stories that are just pure distractions."

> In October 2020, Facebook executive Andy Stone wrote, "While I will intentionally not link to the New York Post, I want be clear that this story is eligible to be fact checked by Facebook's third-party fact checking partners. In the meantime, we are reducing its distribution on our platform."

I really recommend reading the full article, so you can understand the full scope of how the mainstream news media and the Big Tech companies interfered in the 2020 election on the side of the Democrats.

In November, we have another chance to vote about what Joe Biden did, and about how the mainstream media treated the story. I would imagine that the Democrats think that the American people are too stupid to be following the facts of this case. If the Democrats lose the House and the Senate in November, maybe they will understand that the American people don't rely on traditional sources of news anymore. We do our own investigating now.

Matt Dillahunty debates David Robertson on atheism, morality and evil

October 14, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

OK. So I think it's safe to say that of all the Christian apologists out there, David Robertson is my least favorite debater. Why? Many reasons, but mostly because he does not bring in evidence, especially scientific evidence. And he seems to make these clever quips like G. K. Chesterton. I like evidence. I would rather that he talk about scientific and historical evidence.

Dina asked me to listen to this debate a while back, between David Robertson and agnostic Matt Dillahunty (he's not an atheist, he's just an agnostic). I went in absolutely convinced that Robertson was going to have his ass handed to him by Matt Dillahunty. And I could not have been more wrong.

Here's the debate posted on YouTube (audio only):

This snarky summary is just a paraphrase from certain parts of the debate, *it is not designed for accuracy*, but for fun – to make you listen to the debate. Listen to the debate to get the exact words in context.

Summary:

- Matt Dillahunty: he's an agnostic who calls himself an atheist
- David Robertson: he's from Scotland, could we not get someone better?
- Robertson opening statement is incredibly weak, as you might expect, he only had two arguments embedded in a long list of nonsense: 1) origin and design of the universe 2) reality of evil requires objective morality

1) Creation/Design:

Robertson: The fact is that matter exists. There are 3 views that could account for this fact: 1) created, 2) eternal, 3) self-generated out of nothing. Option 3) is self-contradictory, 1) requires a Creator, and 2) is falsified by the Big Bang cosmology. So what's your view?

Dillahunty: You're trying to get me to say what my view is, but I can just say "I don't know" and get out of having to take any position on how matter got here. I can say "I don't know" to all the scientific evidence for the Big Bang cosmology, too!

2) Evil requires objective morality, requires a moral lawgiver:

Robertson: evil exists, e.g. – the Holocaust. If atheism is true, objective morality is impossible. Richard Dawkins agrees. Therefore, theism is the best explanation for the existence of evil.

Dillahunty: In my opinion, morality means doing what helps people have well-being. And I think that the Holocaust is obviously bad, because it hurts the well-being of the victims.

Robertson: The problem is that on your view, different people decide what well-being is to

them. If you were raised in the Social Darwinism of the Nazi regime, you would believe that the Holocaust was the best for the well-being of the society as a whole.

Dillahunty: Isn't it obvious that killing people is bad for their well-being?

Robertson: Is it bad for the well-being of unborn children to kill them?

Dillahunty: Yes

Robertson: So you're against abortion, then?

Dillahunty: No

Robertson: So you think that killing the child in the womb is against the well-being of the child, but you're for that?

Dillahunty: I don't know! I don't know!

Then Dillahunty tried to claim Hitler was a Christian:

Dillahunty: here is a quote by Hitler saying that secular schools are bad, and religious schools are good – see, he's a Christian!

Robertson: when was that said and to whom?

Dillahunty: I don't know, I don't know!

Robertson: It was said in 1933, during an election campaign, to Catholic authorities – he was a politician, looking for votes from Catholics so he could become Chancellor.

Good and evil on atheism:

Dillahunty: good actions results in states with more well-being, and evil actions result in states with less well-being.

Brierley: but when the Nazis slaughtered all those people, they believed they were increasing well-being

Dillahunty: But you could demonstrate to them that their action is not going to increase well-being. Survival of the fittest is descriptive of what happens, but it's not prescriptive.

Robertson: Whose well-being will human beings think about most, if not their own? Do you really think that you can stop people like Charles Manson from being evil by sitting down and trying to prove to them that they are not helping their victim's well-being?

(A BIT LATER)

Robertson (to Dillahunty): Is it a fact that Dachau (a concentration camp) was morally wrong?

Dillahunty: (literally, not a paraphrase) I DON'T KNOW

My thoughts:

When I listened to this debate, the overwhelming conviction that emerges is that Matt Dillahunty is not someone who forms his worldview based on evidence. His rejection of the Big Bang cosmology with "I don't know" is just atrocious. His comments about slavery in the Bible and Hitler being a Christian show that his investigations of these issues is far below the level of a responsible adult. His dallying with the Jesus-never-existed view just shows him to be fundamentally anti-intellectual, as even atheist historian Bart Ehrman

denies that view. His definition of faith has nothing to do with the Bible, or Christian authorities, or Christian scholars – he invented a definition of faith that allows him to mock Christians as morons. That's just irresponsible – letting the desire to mock others cause you to distort the definition of a word. When asked to state his positions or respond to specific evidence, his response is very often "I don't know". It seems to me that atheism, to him, means not pursuing truth with the aim of grasping it. He wants to keep reality at a safe distance – that's why he says "I don't know" so often.

On morality, it's even worse. It's not surprising to me that he is pro-abortion and has no opinion about concentration camps being objectively evil. Most atheists are pro-abortion, by the way. When it comes to morality, Dillahunty only has his own personal opinions, and they refer to nothing outside his own mind. (His opinion of morality as related to well-being is utilitarianism – a very problematic view – but moreover, it is *his subjective view* – he isn't offering it as any sort of objective moral system that would be prescriptive instead of descriptive. Without an after-life, there is no reason for anyone to care about the moral point of view when it goes against their self-interest, anyway. Atheists use moral language, but their statements are not referring to any objective, prescriptive moral reality. Atheism is materialistic and therefore deterministic – it does not even ground the free will that is needed to make moral choices. Their view is Darwinian survival of the fittest, that's what emerges from their origins story – and it does not rationally ground morality. The strong kill the weak, if they can. I've written before about how difficult it is for atheists to *rationally* condemn things like slavery, and nothing in Dillahunty's presentation led me to believe that he had solved that problem.

Anybody can be an intellectually-satisfied atheist with an empty head – it's *knowledge* that causes people to conform their beliefs to *reality*. If one strives to keep one's head as empty as possible, then of course one can believe anything one wants. I'm glad, speaking as a Christian theist, that I get to follow the evidence wherever it leads. It seems to me that we should do that, rather than decide how we want to live first, and then invent a worldview to justify our desires.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 26: Christianity's Impact on the World, Part 2

October 15, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 26 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose continue our 3-part series about how Christianity impacted the world in a number of different areas. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 26:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how Christianity has impacted the world in many different areas. In this episode, we discuss the labor, slavery and education. We start by talking about the beliefs and practices were dominant in pre-Christian society. We then explain what the Bible teaches, and what practices emerged from these beliefs. This is the second of a three-part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Brian Auten interviews Jay Richards about Christian apologetics

October 16, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I picked up the audio book version of "The Privileged Planet", which is a book by philosopher / economist Jay Richards and astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez. This book is different from books about the origin of the universe and cosmic fine-tuning. It talks about what it takes to make a habitable planet. And it talks about how the habitable places in the universe are also the best places to make scientific discoveries.

Christian scholar Jay Richards was interviewed by Brian Auten of Apologetics 315.

The MP3 file is here.

Topics:

- What is intelligent design (ID)?
- Is ID specifically Christian?
- How does ID helpful to Christian apologetics?
- What does ID prove?
- Is it OK to use an argument that doesn't prove Christianity specifically?
- What is the difference between deism and theism?
- Do ID arguments get you to deism or theism?
- What is materialism, and how can you challenge it?
- How do opponents of ID define ID?
- What factors do you need to make a habitable planet?
- Are habitable planets common or rare in the universe?
- What is "The Privileged Planet" hypothesis?
- Is there an overlap between habitability and suitability for making scientific discoveries?
- What is the "Copernican Principle"?
- Has the progress of science made Earth seem common and ordinary?
- What is the most Earth-like planet that we've ever discovered?
- How should ID proponents respond to the objection that creatures aren't perfect?
- Does having a big moon make a planet more or less habitable?
- Does a planet's distance to the Sun make that planet more or less habitable?
- How do these two habitability factors affect the observability of solar eclipses?
- What does co-relation between habitability and "discoverability" tell us about God?
- How important is training in philosophy to Christian apologetics?
- What one thing should a Christian apologist work on to be more effective?

If you'd like to learn more about his book "The Privileged Planet", you can find out more here. I recently bought the audio book version of the book.

Is Canada killing people in order to reduce costs of single-payer health care?

October 17, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Most Canadians are very proud of their government-run single payer system. But as I have blogged about before, their taxes are very high. And they have wait time problems. One of my friends in Canada who is a fan of the blog and the podcast just had to travel to America to pay $24,000 out of pocket for a knee replacement. The alternative would have been to wait 2 years for it.

Anyway, Canada has figured an interesting way to cut costs and reduce wait times.

Here is an article about it from a leftist writer at Common Sense:

> In 2015, Canada's Supreme Court ruled that assisted suicide was constitutional. In June 2016, Parliament passed Bill C-14, otherwise known as the Medical Assistance in Dying Act. MAiD was now the law of the land. Anyone who could show that their death was "reasonably foreseeable" was eligible.
>
> […]There have been a total of 31,664 MAiD deaths and the large majority of those people were 65 to 80 when they died.
>
> […]Today, thousands of people who could live for many years are applying—successfully—to kill themselves.
>
> Indeed, in some Canadian provinces nearly 5 percent of deaths are MAiD deaths.

It's not just for old, disabled people. The law is actually being used to end the lives of children now:

> Next March, the government is scheduled to expand the pool of eligible suicide-seekers to include the mentally ill and "mature minors." According to Canada's Department of Justice, parents are generally "entitled to make treatment decisions on their children's behalf. The mature minor doctrine, however, allows children deemed sufficiently mature to make their own treatment decisions."

This is similar to how depressed children can decide to transform if they think that will help them. You have to wonder where the money is coming from for all of this child-directed "health care".

> Hugh Scher, an attorney… told me: "While other countries have explored extending assisted suicide to minors, those governments have insisted on substantial safeguards, including parental notification and consent. Canada is poised to become the most permissive euthanasia regime in the world, including for minors and people with only psychiatric illness, having already removed the foreseeability of death or terminal illness as an essential condition to access

> euthanasia or assisted suicide."

Isn't socialism wonderful?

What does the government of Canada think about reducing the costs of their single-payer system by eliminating sick people?

> In October 2020, the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer issued a report stating that MAiD would cut healthcare costs by over $66 million. In 2017, Aaron Trachtenberg, a research fellow and a doctor at the University of Manitoba, and Braden Manns, a health economist and nephrologist at the University of Calgary, published a paper predicting that MAiD could slash healthcare costs by as much as $100 million yearly.

Daily Caller notes:

> The broad eligibility has led to more than 10,000 Canadians being euthanized in the most recent year for which data is available, making it the sixth leading cause of death in the country, the AP reported.
>
> Some disabled Canadians are choosing to be euthanized not because of their disability, but because of mounting medical debts, the AP found.
>
> Sean Tagert, a 41-year-old man suffering from ALS, opted for euthanasia in 2019 in part because he couldn't keep up with high costs to allow him to continue living at home with caretakers, according to AP. Roger Foley, a man hospitalized in Ontario with a degenerative brain disease, was told by one staffer that it would cost $1,500 per day to keep him alive in the hospital before mentioning euthanasia, the outlet reported.

But I thought Canadian health care was "free"?

By the way, if you're looking at the chart above, and wondering what the number of "medically-assisted deaths" is for 2021, far-left CTV News reported on that:

> More Canadians are ending their lives with a medically-assisted death, says the third federal annual report on medical assistance in dying (MAID). Data shows that 10,064 people died in 2021 with medical aid, an increase of 32 per cent over 2020.

There isn't a single secular leftist on the planet who has a problem with this. It's survival of the fittest all the way for them.

I find this very concerning. It's important for voters to understand the cost of single-payer health care. There is a reason why health care is not one of the legitimate functions of government, according to the Constitution. Monopolies don't work for consumers.

Football club fires new CEO for being a Christian and attending a Christian church

October 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lately on the podcast we did an episode on "making wise decisions", where we talked about the choices that Christians make in education and career. We talked about was the need to study something that cannot be cancelled by the secular left. And we talked about the need to work a job where even if you get fired, you have skills that are valuable to other employers.

Here's a story from the UK Daily Mail that talks about a very talented Christian who ran into the threats that we were warning our listeners about.

Excerpt:

> A Christian lobby group says former Essendon CEO Andrew Thorburn is the victim of a 'frightening' and 'toxic' wokeness in sport that targets Christians but has double standards when it comes to Muslims.
>
> Mr Thorburn was forced to quit on Monday after only one day in the top job at the Essendon AFL club when he refused to stand down as chairman of a controversial church.
>
> […]Mr Thorburn was announced as the Bombers' successor to Xavier Campbell in the CEO job on Monday.
>
> But within hours of his appointment, his links to a City on a Hill were thrust into the spotlight, and by Tuesday evening, the embattled Bombers were left searching for their third CEO in less than two months.
>
> In a statement on Tuesday, Essendon president Dave Barham said the board had accepted Thorburn's resignation after they had made it clear he couldn't hold positions at both his church and his football club.
>
> 'As soon as the comments relating to a 2013 sermon from a pastor at the City of the Hill church came to light this morning, we acted immediately to clarify the publicly espoused views on the organisation's official website, which are in direct contradiction to our values as a club,' Barham said in a club statement.

This is the part where I always laugh out loud, and thank God that there is a place called Hell for secular leftists like these:

> 'Essendon is committed to providing an inclusive, diverse and a safe club, where everyone is welcome and respected.

I really want to recommend to Christians that they think carefully about making public statements on social media under their real names. I recommend studying in no-nonsense STEM fields like accounting, computer science, petroleum engineering, etc. And be careful about working with progressive women and LGBT activists, who are addicted to

virtue signaling. There are no limits to what the secular left will do to silence and destroy Christians.

In my opinion, the worst sin possible isn't murder, although secular leftists certainly support that (in abortion). The worst sin is making it more difficult for Christians to follow Jesus. Secular leftists might thing that they deserve mercy because they force Christians into silence, poverty or death. But in this universe, the real crime is making it harder for Christians to be being faithful to God. Even when the secular leftist wins, they ultimately lose. Big time.

#EvangelicalsForBiden candidate vows to make unrestricted abortion his top priority, if re-elected

October 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the latest news on the political candidate supported by #evangelicalsForBiden, reported in Life News:

> Joe Biden will make legalizing abortion on demand his top priority if Democrats win control of Congress in November, a Democrat leader said Tuesday.
>
> The first bill that Biden will advance will be one that "codifies Roe," the official told CNN. The president plans to make the promise in a speech Tuesday to the Democratic National Committee in Washington, D.C., as the midterm election approaches, according to the report.
>
> "The first bill he will send to the next Congress will be to codify Roe — and he will sign it around the 50th anniversary of the Roe decision," the Democratic official said.
>
> […]Nicknamed the Abortion Without Limits Up to Birth Act, the legislation would force states to legalize the killing of unborn babies in abortions for basically any reason through all nine months of pregnancy.
>
> The bill, which Democrats named the Women's Health Protection Act, also would end bans on sex-selection abortions and taxpayer-funded abortions as well as laws that protect women and girls, including parental consent for minors. It also would jeopardize legal protections for doctors and nurses who refuse to abort unborn babies.

Here is an argument for the pro-life position:

1. Deliberately targeting innocent human beings for destruction should be illegal.
2. Unborn humans are innocent human beings.
3. Therefore, deliberately targeting unborn humans for destruction should be illegal.

Premise 1 is uncontroversial.

The evidence for premise 2 comes from science. One scientist has collected the conclusions from embryology textbooks. Dr. Maureen Condic, an associate professor at the University of Utah specializes in neurobiology. She obtained her Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley. She has served on the National Science Board, and is a widely published scientist whose works have appeared in a variety of peer-reviewed journals.

Here is just one of the quotations she pulls out of the textbooks in her list:

> "Human development begins at fertilization, when a sperm fuses with an oocyte to form a single cell, the zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell (capable of giving rise to any cell type) marks the beginning of each of us as a unique

> individual."
> – "The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology", 10th edition.

That's why we are pro-life. We have an argument. We have the science. We don't override reason and evidence because some people feel sad about taking responsibility for their own actions.

Evangelicals for Biden do not accept that argument. Evangelicals for Biden accept this argument:

1. If I want to be liked by non-Christian Democrats, then I must accept abortion through all 9 months of pregnancy, and destroy the conscience rights of Christian medical workers.
2. I want to be liked by non-Christian Democrats.
3. I must accept abortion through all 9 months of pregnancy, and destroy the conscience rights of Christian medical workers.

It's very important for rank-and-file Christians who accept the Bible's prohibition on murder to understand that many of these charismatic Christian leaders cannot be trusted when it comes to politics and policy.

People like David French, Russell Moore, Richard Mouw, Tim Keller, John Piper, etc. did everything they could to prevent a Republican from winning the presidency in 2020. They had no part in the reversal of Roe v. Wade. That happened because of Trump's 3 pro-life Supreme Court nominees.

When it comes to abortion, you can't listen to the words of Big Eva elites. You have to look at their actions. And their actions support candidates like Joe Biden, who want abortion on demand through all 9 months of pregnancy, reversing all state-level restrictions and eliminating all conscience rights of pro-life health care workers.

There were two choices for president in 2020. One who had nominated 3 pro-life Supreme Court justices, and one who vowed to support abortion through all 9 months of pregnancy. Evangelicals for Biden supported Biden. Their position on abortion is Biden's position on abortion. That's what they really believe about abortion.

Christian voters should not listen to these weak, stupid compromised men at election time.

Democrat bill would allow criminal prosecution of parents who refuse to trans their kids

October 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I don't watch TV at all, so I don't know what people are hearing from television about the important issues of this election. For me, there are 3 main issues. One, inflation, which is caused by Biden's energy and spending policies. Two, Biden using the FBI as a weapon to punish his political enemies. Three, Democrats attacking parents who disagree with forced transing of their kids.

Here is the article in Daily Wire:

> A Virginia Democrat lawmaker says she will introduce legislation to have parents criminally prosecuted if they do not "affirm" their child as transgender. Teachers and social workers would report parents to Child Protective Services under the bill envisioned by state Delegate Elizabeth Guzman (D-Fauquier).
>
> […]A similar bill was quietly introduced in 2020 by Guzman and four other Democrats immediately after they took control of the legislature in the 2019 elections. It redefined the term "abused or neglected child" to include one whose parent "inflicts, threatens to create or inflict, or allows to be created or inflicted upon such child a physical or mental injury on the basis of the child's gender identity or sexual orientation."
>
> The sole Senate sponsor of the 2020 bill was Joe Morrissey, who served prison time for contributing to the delinquency of a minor after sleeping with his teenage secretary. He accepted a plea deal after initially being indicted on possession of child pornography and other charges.

I notice that Democrats at all levels of government are condemning parents who dissent from forced transing or mutilation of their children. They call such parents "domestic

terrorists", because Democrats know better than parents what is best for children. In fact, if you disagree with Democrats on these issues, they say that you will probably drive your children to suicide. So, it might be worth looking at a study about that.

Here is the study.

Summary:

> Lowering legal barriers to make it easier for minors to undergo cross-sex medical interventions without parental consent does not reduce suicide rates—in fact, it likely leads to higher rates of suicide among young people in states that adopt these changes. States should instead adopt parental bills of rights that affirm the fact that parents have primary responsibility for their children's education and health, and that require school officials and health professionals to receive permission from parents before administering health services, including medication and "gender-affirming" counseling, to children under 18. States should also tighten the criteria for receiving cross-sex treatments, including raising the minimum eligibility age.

Key points:

- U.S. policymakers are seeking to make it easier for minors to access puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones based on the claim that doing so reduces suicide risk.
- Studies finding that "gender-affirming" interventions prevent suicide fail to show a causal relationship and have been poorly executed.
- A superior research design shows that easing access to puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones by minors without parental consent increases suicide rates.

And this is the interesting part:

> In the past several years, the suicide rate among those ages 12 to 23 has become significantly *higher* in states that have a provision that allows minors to receive routine health care without parental consent than in states without such a provision. Before 2010, these two groups of states did not differ in their youth suicide rates. Starting in 2010, when puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones became widely available, elevated suicide rates in states where minors can more easily access those medical interventions became observable.
>
> Rather than being protective against suicide, this pattern indicates that easier access by minors to cross-sex medical interventions without parental consent is associated with higher risk of suicide. The Heritage model plotted the difference in a three-year rolling average of suicide rates between states with minor access

> provisions and states with no such provision. Chart 2 plots the trend in this difference for those ages 12 to 23 who could have been affected by the policy when cross-sex medical interventions became available. For comparison, Chart 2 also shows the trend in this difference for a group ages 28 to 39, who could not have been affected by these policies, since the people in this group would have been at least 18 when puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones became available.
>
> Without making any adjustments, suicide rates among those ages 12 to 23 (blue line) begin to spike in states that have provisions that allow minors to access health care without parental consent relative to states that have no such provision around 2016, after cross-sex medical interventions became more common. By 2020, there are about 3.5 more suicides per 100,000 people ages 12 to 23 in states with easier access than in states without an access provision. There is no similar spike in suicide rates among those ages 28 to 39 (grey line) at that time.

If you hadn’t read about this study, it would probably be a good idea to read about it, and share it around with other parents. Because right now, teachers, Democrat legislators, and everyone in the Democrat party are going after your kids on the grounds that you are a threat to your own children. It helps to have the data when you’re arguing this issue.

Report: Hunter Biden-linked real estate firm got $100 million from Russian billionaire

October 21, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a report from the New York Post authored by Emily Crane and Miranda Devine. You might remember Miranda – she is the author of the famous book "Laptop From Hell", which is about Hunter Biden's laptop. We'll talk about the laptop below, but first let's see the new news from the New York Post report.

Excerpt:

> A real estate company with ties to first son Hunter Biden received more than $100 million from a Russian billionaire for property investments across the US that date back a decade, sources have told The Post.
>
> The hefty cash injections into Rosemont Realty came from Elena Baturina — one of Russia's wealthiest women, the widow of the former mayor of Moscow, and a close ally of Moscow tyrant Vladimir Putin, the sources said.
>
> In one portfolio deal, Baturina paid at least $40 million to Rosemont to invest in office buildings across the country, according to a source with knowledge of the transactions.
>
> That money went toward the 2012 purchase of seven office buildings in Texas, Colorado, Alabama, New Mexico and Oklahoma, according to deal-related emails obtained by DailyMail.com.
>
> The investment purportedly came from Inteco Management AG — the Swiss company owned by Baturina.
>
> This isn't the first time President Biden's 52-year-old son has been linked to Baturina, whose late husband Yuri Luzhkov was mayor of Russia's capital for more than 18 years before being dismissed by then-President Dmitry Medvedev in 2010.

Since we are heading for an election again, it might be a good idea to refresh the voters about Hunter Biden's laptop.

Back in March of 2022, the far-left New York Times published a story about Hunter Biden's laptop. The story corrected the lies that were spread by Big Tech, the mainstream news media, and the current administration, about Hunter Biden's laptop. It turns out that Facebook and Twitter spread disinformation before the election, because they wanted the Democrat party to win.

Let's start with Glenn Greenwald, a progressive who has done excellent reporting about this story from the beginning.

He writes:

> One of the most successful disinformation campaigns in modern American

> electoral history occurred in the weeks prior to the 2020 presidential election. On October 14, 2020 — less than three weeks before Americans were set to vote — the nation's oldest newspaper, The New York Post, began publishing a series of reports about the business dealings of the Democratic frontrunner Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, in countries in which Biden, as Vice President, wielded considerable influence (including Ukraine and China) and would again if elected president.
>
> The backlash against this reporting was immediate and intense, leading to suppression of the story by U.S. corporate media outlets and censorship of the story by leading Silicon Valley monopolies. The disinformation campaign against this reporting was led by the CIA's all-but-official spokesperson Natasha Bertrand (then of Politico, now with CNN), whose article on October 19 appeared under this headline: "Hunter Biden story is Russian disinfo, dozens of former intel officials say."
>
> These "former intel officials" did not actually say that the "Hunter Biden story is Russian disinfo." Indeed, they stressed in their letter the opposite: namely, that they had no evidence to suggest the emails were falsified or that Russia had anything to do them, but, instead, they had merely intuited this "suspicion" based on their experience…
>
> […][A]s I noted last September, "virtually every media outlet — CNN, NBC News, PBS, Huffington Post, The Intercept, and too many others to count — began completely ignoring the substance of the reporting and instead spread the lie over and over that these documents were the by-product of Russian disinformation." The Huffington Post even published a must-be-seen-to-be-believed campaign ad for Joe Biden, masquerading as "reporting," that spread this lie that the emails were "Russian disinformation."

Mainstream News Media

Here is an example of how one mainstream news media outlet helped Joe Biden to win the 2020 election:

Big Tech Social Media

Facebook and Twitter did their part to help their Democrat allies.

Here is what a Facebook spokesman said about the story:

You'll note in his bio that he is a Democrat, and has worked for Democrats. That didn't disqualify him from working for Facebook – they are allies of the Democrat party. They regularly censor anything critical of the Democrat party, especially before important elections.

Greenwald notes:

> Twitter locked The New York Post's Twitter account for close to two weeks due to its refusal to obey Twitter's orders to delete any reference to its reporting. The social media site also blocked any and all references to the reporting by all users; Twitter users were barred even from linking to the story in private chats with one another. Facebook, through its spokesman, the life-long DNC operative Andy Stone, announced that they would algorithmically suppress discussion of the reporting to ensure it did not spread, pending a "fact check[] by Facebook's third-party fact checking partners" which, needless to say, never came — precisely because the archive was indisputably authentic.

Here is what Twitter users saw when they tried to share the story on Twitter:

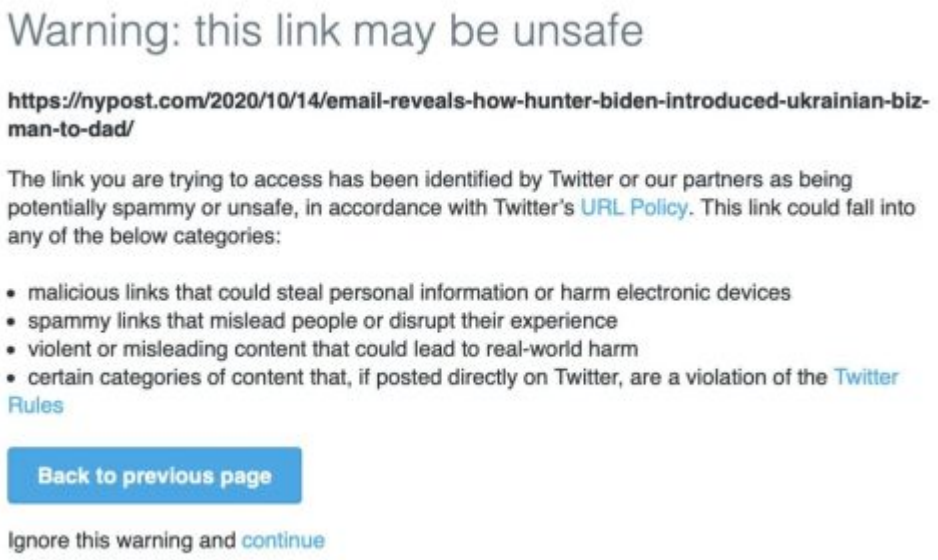
Warning: this link may be unsafe

https://nypost.com/2020/10/14/email-reveals-how-hunter-biden-introduced-ukrainian-biz-man-to-dad/

The link you are trying to access has been identified by Twitter or our partners as being potentially spammy or unsafe, in accordance with Twitter's URL Policy. This link could fall into any of the below categories:

- malicious links that could steal personal information or harm electronic devices
- spammy links that mislead people or disrupt their experience
- violent or misleading content that could lead to real-world harm
- certain categories of content that, if posted directly on Twitter, are a violation of the Twitter Rules

Back to previous page

Ignore this warning and continue

A link to the NEW YORK POST is "spammy or unsafe". And you can bet they punished people who shared the story with shadow banning. Twitter is a vile proponent of censorship.

Biden spokeswoman Jen Psaki lied

And of course the Biden administration has no comment on their previous attempts to dismiss the laptop as "Russian disinformation".

This is what the Biden spokeswoman said:

The New York Post notes:

> White House press secretary Jen Psaki didn't even bother trying to defend her past claim that The Post's reporting on Hunter Biden's laptop was "Russian disinformation" after the New York Times belatedly verified emails from the cache.
>
> Psaki was pressed Thursday at her regular briefing about her own misleading remarks and those of then-candidate Joe Biden.
>
> Psaki deflected without answering for Biden's misinformation, which helped fuel Big Tech censorship of The Post's reporting in the days prior to the 2020 election.

Surprise! She didn't like being held accountable for her actions.

I blogged about the laptop on October 23, 2020. As poor as that post might have been, it was more accurate than all of the Democrat propagandists in Big Tech social media corporations and the mainstream news media outlets combined.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 27: Christianity's Impact on the World, Part 3

October 22, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 27 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose completes our 3-part series about how Christianity impacted the world in a number of different areas. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 27:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how Christianity has impacted the world in many different areas. In this episode, we discuss science, arts and architecture, and justice. We start by talking about the beliefs and practices were dominant in pre-Christian society. We then explain what the Bible teaches, and what practices emerged from these beliefs. This is the third of a three-part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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J. Warner Wallace: I am not a Christian because it works for me

October 23, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Some of my favorite Christians are the ones that start out as atheists, and do very well at life, but just change direction because they investigate the evidence. One person who had a fabulous career in law enforcement switched sides because of the evidence: J. Warner Wallace. And in a must-read post from Cold-Case Christianity, he explains his motive.

Excerpt:

> Life on this side of my decision hasn't always been easy. It's been nearly seventeen years since I first trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. I still struggle to submit my prideful will to what God would call me to do. Christianity is not easy. It doesn't always "work" for me. There are times when I think it would be easier to do it the old way; easier to cut a corner or take a short cut. There are many times when doing the right thing means doing the most difficult thing possible. There are also times when it seems like non-Christians have it easier, or seem to be "winning". It's in times like these that I have to remind myself that I'm not a Christian because it serves my own selfish purposes. I'm not a Christian because it "works" for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn't always been easy.
>
> I'm a Christian because it is true. I'm a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I'm a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative.

I think this is important. There are people who I know who claim to be Christian, but they are clearly believing that God is a mystical force who arranges everything in their lives in order to make them happy. They are not Christians because it's true, but because of things like comfort and community. But people ought to become Christians because they think it's true.

Truth doesn't necessarily make you happy, though. Truth can impose intellectual obligations and moral obligations on you. Seeing God as he really is doesn't help us to "win" at life, as the culture defines winning. But it does offer the opportunity for us to walk a similar path to the one Jesus walked. And that is very appealing for real Christians.

The Bible doesn't promise that people who become Christians will be happier. Actually, it promises that Christians will suffer for doing the right things. Their autonomy will suffer, as they sacrifice their own interests and happiness in order to make God happy, by serving his interests.

Christianity isn't something you add on to your before-God life in order to achieve your before-God goals. When you become a Christian, you get a new set of goals, based on

God’s character and his design for you. And although you might be very successful in the world as part of serving God, there is no guarantee of that. Christianity is not life enhancement. I do think that Christians do well at not hurting themselves though, but because they eliminate selfish desires, not because God gives them stuff.

By the way, if you’re looking for a great speaker to invite to your university campus, J. Warner Wallace is the best, then Frank Turek is my number two choice. Wallace has the homicide detective background, and Turek is a former naval aviator. Two tough guys who are tough-minded about the Christian faith.

Is the “RNA world” hypothesis a good naturalistic explanation for the origin of life?

October 24, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you look closely at this blog, you’ll see that I am currently reading a book called “The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith: Exploring the Ultimate Questions About Life and the Cosmos“. Well, there’s an ongoing series of posts about the book at Evolution News, and one of them caught my eye. They are talking about the origin of life, and what’s needed to create life from non-life.

Here is the post from Evolution News.

The article starts by explaining the what is required to show how non-living components could be organized into a living system:

- plausible biochemical paths from individual bio-building blocks like amino acids or nucleic acids to functional polymers such as proteins and DNA.
- ways to speed up chemical reactions that are naturally slow.
- the ordering of amino acids in proteins and nucleotide bases in RNA and DNA that allows them to function properly.

The leading naturalistic explanation to solve these problems is called the “RNA world” hypothesis:

> The most popular proposal for the first self-replicating molecule is RNA — where life was first based upon RNA carrying both genetic information (akin to modern DNA) and performing catalytic functions (akin to modern enyzmes), in what is termed the *RNA world*.

The article lists several problems with the RNA world hypothesis. Dr. Walter Bradley lists two of those problems.

First, the assembly of RNA requires intelligent design:

> First, RNA has not been shown to assemble in a laboratory without the help of a skilled chemist intelligently guiding the process. Origin-of-life theorist Steven Benner explained that a major obstacle to the natural production of RNA is that “RNA requires water to function, but RNA cannot emerge in water, and does not persist in water without repair” due to water’s “rapid and irreversible” corrosive effects upon RNA.[3] In this “water paradox,” Benner explains that “life seems to need a substance (water) that is inherently toxic to polymers (e.g., RNA) necessary for life.”[4]
>
> To overcome such difficulties, Benner and other chemists carefully designed experimental conditions that are favorable to the production of RNA. But Robert Shapiro explains that these experiments do not simulate natural conditions: “The

> flaw is in the logic — that this experimental control by researchers in a modern laboratory could have been available on the early Earth."[5] Reviewing attempts to construct RNA in the lab, James Tour likewise found that "[t]he conditions they used were cleverly selected," but in the natural world, "the controlled conditions required to generate" RNA are "painfully improbable."[6] Origin-of-life theorists Michael Robertson and Gerald Joyce even called the natural origin of RNA a "Prebiotic Chemist's Nightmare" because of "the intractable mixtures that are obtained in experiments designed to simulate the chemistry of the primitive Earth."[7] In the end, these experiments demonstrate one thing: RNA can only form by intelligent design.

The second problem is that the RNA world hypothesis is that it requires the existence of a self-replicating RNA molecule in order to get started. But this self-replicator contains a lot of biological information that is beyond the reach of chance to produce:

> The most fundamental problem with the RNA world hypothesis is its inability to explain the origin of information in the first self-replicating RNA molecule — which experts suggest would have had to be at least 100 nucleotides long, if not between 200 and 300 nucleotides in length.[10] How did the nucleotide bases in RNA become properly ordered to produce life? There are no known chemical or physical laws that can do this. To explain the ordering of nucleotides in the first self-replicating RNA molecule, origin-of-life theorists have no explanation other than blind chance. As noted, ID theorists call this obstacle the information sequence problem, but multiple mainstream theorists have also observed the great unlikelihood of naturally producing a precise RNA sequence required for replication.

Whenever I sit down to write some code or to write a blog post, I can start with one letter, then add another, then add another, until I have a functioning program, or a legible blog post. It might be possible for random chance to make a meaningful word out of 3 letters, like "the" or "hat". But it's not possible to make a self-replicating RNA molecule that way. The required sequence is just too long, and every letter has to be just right in order for it to function as a self-replicating system. The simplest self-replicating molecule is extremely complicated.

Anyway, check out the article, and if you want to read all about Walter Bradley (my role model), there is a new book out about him called "For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley" which I finished, and it was great.

UK joins France, Finland and Sweden backing off "gender-affirming care", but Biden doubles down

October 25, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you're thinking that traditional morality is gone for good, then I have a nice post for you. Sometimes, when people go down a wrong road, they realize that they have made a terrible mistake and they turn back. One way that people realize they have gone wrong is by being honest about the consequences of their own actions. Instead of defending the bad choices, they admit they chose badly.

Here's the latest from Christina Buttons, over at Daily Wire:

> After conducting a systematic review of evidence, England's National Health Service has proposed new guidelines for treating trans-identifying youth, abandoning their previous endorsement of the "gender-affirming" model of care for a more cautious approach to treating gender dysphoria in minors.
>
> The NHS now recognizes that children and adolescents identifying as transgender may be experiencing a "transient phase" and warns that doctors should not encourage them to change their names and pronouns, as "social transition" is not a "neutral act" and could have "significant effects" in terms of "psychological functioning."
>
> The new guidelines "reflect evidence that in most cases gender incongruence does not persist into adolescence" for young children. The guidance states that instead of encouraging transition, physicians should take "a watchful approach," directly contrasting the American Academy of Pediatrics' 2018 policy, equating "watchful waiting" with a "harmful" form of "conversion therapy."
>
> The NHS guidelines indicate that services will now be led by medical doctors rather than therapists, and will consider the impact of autism and other common co-occurring mental health issues. The new guidance also bans the use of puberty blockers in patients under 18, making exceptions only in certain cases for strict clinical trials.

I blogged about how the NHS is being sued by people who transitioned as children and now blame the National Health Service for manipulating them into doing it. I think this is fair. Grown-ups are supposed to provide children with wisdom. They are not supposed to let children make dumb decisions, and just sit their applauding. If grown-ups lead children astray and cause them permanent harm – infertility, permanent removal of organs, etc. – then the grown-ups should have to face legal consequences.

The UK is only the latest country to get more cautious as they learn more about how these things really work.

The New York Post reported on Sweden last month:

> In February, Sweden — a progressive country previously on the cutting edge of providing medical services to transgender youth — also reversed course. The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare updated its guidelines for treating trans youth, scaling back the use of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones, saying there hasn't been enough research on their efficacy or side effects.

The Epoch Times reported about France and Finland in May 2022:

> France's National Academy of Medicine posted in March this year (pdf) that "great medical caution must be taken in children and adolescents, given the vulnerability, particularly psychological, of this population and the many undesirable effects and even serious complications that can be caused by some of the therapies available."
>
> […]Finland also announced in 2020 a policy shift for gender dysphoria treatment, with the Finnish Health Authority issuing new guidelines backing psychotherapy rather than puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones for children.

Sadly, America is being led by someone who doesn't form his views as carefully. Joe Biden is still supporting social transitioning, puberty blockers, hormone replacement, and yes – even sex change surgeries.

Here's a report from Christian Post:

> President Joe Biden declared his support for allowing children and adolescents with gender dysphoria to undergo body mutilating surgeries or use puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones to look more like the opposite sex despite unknowns about longterm side effects.
>
> In multiple documents released Thursday, which is observed by some as the Transgender Day of Visibility, the Biden administration backed what it described as "gender-affirming health care" for children.
>
> The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Population Affairs released a document titled "Gender Affirming Care and Young People."
>
> […]The document lists "top" surgeries — elective mastectomies and breasts enhancements — and "bottom" surgeries — removal of genitals — as "gender-affirming care."

That was in march, but he has the same position now. Look at this article from the UK Telegraph:

> The US president who hosted a popular trans TikToker at the White House last week, said he believed it was both a moral and legal issue as he spoke to a panel of activists for the NowThis News presidential forum.
>
> When asked if conservative states should have the right to pass laws limiting access to gender reassignment treatments, Mr Biden said in comments published on Sunday: "I don't think any state or anybody should have the right to do that.

> As a moral question and as a legal question, I just think it’s wrong.”
>
> A number of Republican governors and lawmakers have backed bills blocking doctors from performing such treatment, especially when it comes to minors, claiming it is dangerous and has the potential to cause irreversible changes in younger patients.

I think we should learn from the mistakes of other countries. But it doesn’t seem like Joe Biden and the Democrats are willing to let the facts mess with their faith.

We get to vote on who should be leading us in November. I hope you go vote, and make sure to put out a yard sign. I’ve had good conversations with neighbors and visitors, because I have 4 on my front yard. Now is the time for good conversations.

New study: intact heterosexual married home still critical for children's academic success

October 26, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sometimes, when you're discussing reality with progressives, it helps to have a study. Because although you might think that conservatism is common sense, they think that their feelings are common sense. So you will have to give them evidence, and then call them stupid, until they either accept your evidence or run away screaming back to the New York Times building.

Anyway, here's the research from the Institute for Family Studies:

> Beginning with the 1966 Coleman Report, a long line of studies have found that students from intact, married families do better in school than those from disrupted or unmarried families.[5] My own analysis of data from a longitudinal study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (the ECLS-K) demonstrated the impact that family transitions, such as parental divorce and remarriage, have on students' task persistence and eagerness to learn, emotional distress, and misbehavior resulting in school disciplinary actions such as suspension.[6] IFS studies of trends in Arizona, Florida, and Ohio indicate that school districts tend to be more successful and safer when more of their families are headed by married parents.[7]

And there's a graph to go with it. Actually, several, but I just chose this one.

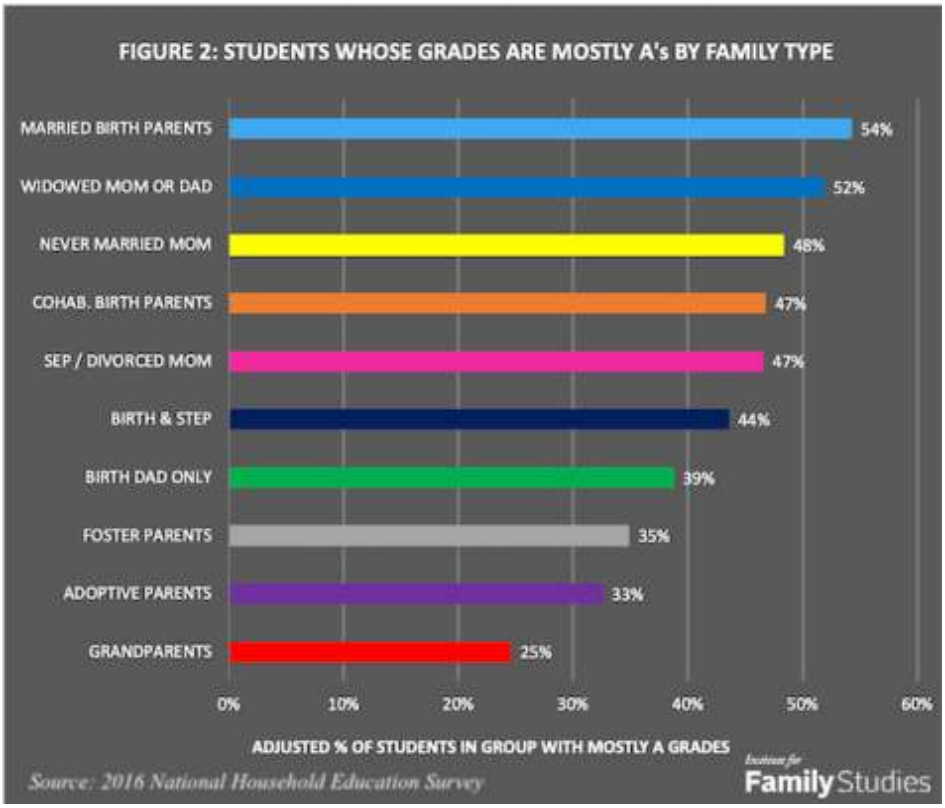

Why can't non-STEM sociologists use apostrophes properly? It's As not A's

And here’s the conclusion:

> The analyses showed that schoolchildren who live with both married parents do better on each of the three educational progress indicators. Children from married-couple families did better even after controlling for socioeconomic and demographic correlates of family structure.

They’ve also got graphs for student misbehavior by family type, and student disciplined by family type. Naturally, the traditionally family far outperforms the alternatives.

Now the first thing that a progressive will tell you is that adding more money from government social programs will solve the problem, so we just need to have more communism, and give the children to strangers at earlier ages. But the study corrects for socioeconomic factors. And demographic factors, too. So that deflection isn’t going to work.

New study measures effect of “gender affirming care” on suicide rates of children

October 27, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was a young adult, I decide to read two books on every kind of policy. Health care, education, firearms, abortion, divorce. I wanted to quickly get up to speed on how everything in the world really works. I read a book by Dr. Jay P. Greene on education policy, called “Education Myths”. He has put out a new study for Heritage foundation on “gender affirming care” and suicide rates.

Here is the study.

Summary:

> Lowering legal barriers to make it easier for minors to undergo cross-sex medical interventions without parental consent does not reduce suicide rates—in fact, it likely leads to higher rates of suicide among young people in states that adopt these changes. States should instead adopt parental bills of rights that affirm the fact that parents have primary responsibility for their children’s education and health, and that require school officials and health professionals to receive permission from parents before administering health services, including medication and “gender-affirming” counseling, to children under 18. States should also tighten the criteria for receiving cross-sex treatments, including raising the minimum eligibility age.

Key points:

- U.S. policymakers are seeking to make it easier for minors to access puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones based on the claim that doing so reduces suicide risk.
- Studies finding that “gender-affirming” interventions prevent suicide fail to show a causal relationship and have been poorly executed.
- A superior research design shows that easing access to puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones by minors without parental consent increases suicide rates.

And this is the interesting part:

> In the past several years, the suicide rate among those ages 12 to 23 has become significantly *higher* in states that have a provision that allows minors to receive routine health care without parental consent than in states without such a provision. Before 2010, these two groups of states did not differ in their youth

> suicide rates. Starting in 2010, when puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones became widely available, elevated suicide rates in states where minors can more easily access those medical interventions became observable.
>
> Rather than being protective against suicide, this pattern indicates that easier access by minors to cross-sex medical interventions without parental consent is associated with higher risk of suicide. The Heritage model plotted the difference in a three-year rolling average of suicide rates between states with minor access provisions and states with no such provision. Chart 2 plots the trend in this difference for those ages 12 to 23 who could have been affected by the policy when cross-sex medical interventions became available. For comparison, Chart 2 also shows the trend in this difference for a group ages 28 to 39, who could not have been affected by these policies, since the people in this group would have been at least 18 when puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones became available.
>
> Without making any adjustments, suicide rates among those ages 12 to 23 (blue line) begin to spike in states that have provisions that allow minors to access health care without parental consent relative to states that have no such provision around 2016, after cross-sex medical interventions became more common. By 2020, there are about 3.5 more suicides per 100,000 people ages 12 to 23 in states with easier access than in states without an access provision. There is no similar spike in suicide rates among those ages 28 to 39 (grey line) at that time.

I have a few thoughts about this.

First, secular leftists form their beliefs based on what makes them feel good, and what makes people have a high opinion of them. There is no rational, evidence-based case for giving depressed children access to drugs and surgeries that cause permanent effects on those children. These are not views that people come to by studying evidence and processing fair, reasoned debates.

Second, it's important to understand that there is a continuum from secular leftism to infanticide to child abuse. With rare exceptions, secular leftists accept the Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest. They have no rational grounding for human rights. They are incapable of subjecting their own desires to boundaries prescribed by the moral law. If they are not actively participating in infanticide and child abuse, then they are voting to make these things legal, to make them subsidized by taxpayers, and finally to punish anyone who disagrees with it… up to and including seizing the children of those who dissent. (This is currently being done in Canada and the United States)

Third, to stop these secular leftists from abusing our children, and driving them into suicide, we need to make all the actors involved in grooming the kids – teachers, school administrators, counselors, doctors, nurses, lawyers, judges, librarians, police officers, legislators, social media companies, etc. – subject to civil lawsuits filed by the children once they are old enough to file. We need to clean out the bank accounts of the secular

left child abusers. Just let the children name anyone who influenced them in a lawsuit, and then force those “don’t judge” people to defend the charges.

New study: the majority (69%) of divorces are initiated by women

October 28, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This new report from Live Science gives us some numbers about who initiates divorces most frequently.

It says:

> Women are more likely than men to initiate divorce in the United States, but they are no more likely than men to initiate breakups in a dating relationship, a new study finds.
>
> "The breakups of nonmarital heterosexual relationships in the U.S. are quite gender-neutral and fairly egalitarian," study author Michael Rosenfeld, an associate professor of sociology at Stanford University, said in a statement. "This was a surprise because the only prior research that had been done on who wanted the breakup was research on marital divorces."
>
> Previous research had found that women are more likely to initiate divorce, at least in the United States, Europe and Australia. In the new study, Rosenfeld compared divorces to nonmarital breakups, in an effort to understand the driving forces behind each type of breakup.
>
> To investigate, he looked at data from the 2009 to 2015 waves of How Couples Meet and Stay Together, a nationally representative survey spearheaded by Rosenfeld and his colleagues. The new study includes 2,262 adults, ages 19 to 64, who reported having opposite-sex partners in 2009. By 2015, 371 of the participants had broken up or gotten divorced.
>
> Women initiated 69 percent of the 92 divorces, Rosenfeld found. But there was no statistically significant difference between women and men when it came to nonmarital breakups, regardless of whether they were living together, he said.

The Ruth Institute reports on a few studies:

> Female unions seem to have the highest divorce rates, followed by male unions, followed by opposite sex unions.
>
> "For Sweden, the divorce risk for partnerships of men is 50% higher than the risk for heterosexual marriages, and that **the divorce risk for female partnerships is nearly double that for men."**
>
> "For Norway, **divorce risks are 77% higher in lesbian partnerships than in those of gay men."** (The Norwegian data did not include a comparison with opposite sex couples.)
>
> In California, the data is collected a little differently. The study looks at couples who describe themselves as partners, whether same sex or opposite sex. The

> study asks the question, how likely is it that these couples live in the same household five years later. **Male couples were only 30% as likely, while female couples were less that 25% as likely, as heterosexual married couples, to be residing in the same household for five years.**

It really seems as if there is something about women in particular that causes them to be unable to keep to commitments *in their actions*, despite what they might say *with their words*.

So I am seeing a couple of problems in young, unmarried women that might explain this.

Feminism is bad

First, there is the feminism. Feminism was the driving force behind no-fault divorce. Today, young unmarried women are being taught to view marriage as stifling to their freedom. So if they do get married, they are often resolved that marriage should not affect their freedom in any way. That is just not the way marriage works, though – both spouses need to be equally ready to have their freedom infringed upon by things that HAVE TO GET DONE. Lots of things that have to get done will not be fun, thrilling or amusing – and that's why it's good to be prepared to do them before you marry.

My friend Dina says that she only knows one happily married couple from among her friends. The most frequent case she sees is wife is working in order to pay for big house, two cars, etc. and wife is denying husband sex, which makes him disengage from the marriage. A working wife tends to not be as responsive to the needs of husband and kids as a non-working wife, probably in part due to work stress. There is an epidemic of sex-withholding by women, and it causes men to disengage from marriage because they feel unloved. Although women tend to rebel against the idea that the man's bad behavior is their fault, and that there is a "contractual" nature to marriage, that is how marriage works. You cannot stay married, women, by just doing whatever you feel like, and NOT doing whatever you DON'T feel like. Men will disengage when their needs are not supplied, and that's no fault of theirs. It's your fault. Denying relationship obligations causes men to underperform.

Feminism is often linked closely to "independence". There is a lot of confusion over what the word independence means among young, unmarried women. A man uses that word to mean "lack of financial dependence on parents, the state, etc. because of good decisions in education, career and finances". But a woman means "not having to care about the needs of a man and the leadership of a man, or the needs of children while still getting what I want from men and children". That attitude is not compatible with life-long married love.

Emotions are bad

Second, emotions. In my experience, young, unmarried women are less likely to have reasoned out their own life plan in a practical step-by-step manner. Instead, they tend to do whatever makes them feel good moment-by-moment without any realistic plan. One Christian woman was recently telling me how attracted she was to an atheist moral relativist who had been promiscuous from the age of 15. She explained that her emotions

were kindled by his GQ looks, 6-pack abs, mysterious European accent, seductive manner and witty conversations. Although she is apparently a Christian, she doesn't take Christianity seriously in her decisions about relationships and marriage.

Peer-approval and culture play a large part in determining what women think is attractive in a man, as well as their life goals, and women are driven by these cultural standards more than men who focus on honoring their commitments *regardless* of their emotions. In my experience, women struggle to make their day-to-day actions match their socially-acceptable goal of getting married "some day". Marriage is for "some day" for today's busy women, but fun and thrills is for today. "Live in the moment", they often tell me. If you try to talk to them about roles and responsibilities in a marriage, they will withdraw and rebel. But marriage is about each spouse doing his or her job, and feeling content about what the couple is building together. You can't make life-long married love from emotional craziness and pursuing fun and thrills with seductive promiscuous moral relativist atheists.

How to pick a woman who won't divorce you

Young men, I advise you to choose wives who have had to do things that they did not feel like doing. That can involve things like getting a STEM degree, getting a job in STEM, moving out of her parents' house, getting a "boring" job that helps her pay off her debts, keeping commitments when she doesn't feel like it, and caring for other people and even animals.

Basically, the more the woman has ground down any narcissism and hedonism she may have, by having to do nasty calculus and horrid lab work, the better. The more accustomed she is to constraints, responsibilities, expectations and obligations, the less likely it is that she'll divorce you for unhappiness. And all of this goes for men, as well. STEM degree, STEM job, save money, serve others, give to charity.

Marriage is not the time for people to be carried away by their emotions. It's an enterprise, and it works when both people are rational, practical, hard-working and self-controlled.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 28: A Marriage Proposal: The Case for Traditional Marriage

October 29, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 28 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the definition of marriage, and why marriage matters. This episode contains mature subject matter. Listener discretion is advised. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 28:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the definition of marriage. We talk about why government is interested in marriage. We discuss two different re-definitions of marriage. We explain how each re-definition of marriage affected society, culture and children. We answer objections to traditional marriage. We end the episode by talking about Jesus' definition of marriage. This episode contains mature subject matter. Listener discretion is advised.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Judge rules that man must pay $50,000 a month to ex-girlfriend for 10 years

October 30, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was younger, I used to think that having definite views on morality and theology was a bad thing. I had my share of rejections by Christian women who didn't like that I rejected universalism and annihilationism. Others didn't like that I was pro-life. And today, most Christian women tell me that supporting gay rights is a non-negotiable for them. But maybe being alone was not all bad.

The news story is from one of Canada's national newspapers, the National Post:

> A wealthy businessman will have to pay more than $50,000 a month in spousal support for 10 years to a woman with whom he had a long-term romantic relationship even though they kept separate homes and had no children together, Ontario's top court has ruled.
>
> Under Ontario law, an unmarried couple are considered common-law spouses if they have cohabited — lived together in a conjugal relationship — continuously for at least three years. But that doesn't necessarily mean living in the same home, the court found.
>
> […]When their 14-year relationship finally broke down in May 2015, Climans asked the courts to recognize her as Latner's spouse and order him to pay her support. He argued she had been a travel companion and girlfriend, nothing more. As such, he said, they were never legally spouses and he owed no support. An eight-day trial ensued.
>
> In her decision in February 2019, Superior Court Justice Sharon Shore sided with Climans. She ruled they were in fact long-time spouses, finding that despite their separate home, they lived under one roof at Latner's cottage for part of the summer, and during winter vacations in Florida. Shore ordered him to pay her $53,077 monthly indefinitely.

Superior Court Justice Sharon Shore didn't care that the man never married this woman, or lived with her, or had children with her. He had money, and she wanted it, so the judge gave it to her.

Elsewhere in the article, we learn that he had asked her to sign a pre-nuptial agreement many times, and each time she refused. (Those are not even enforced in divorce courts) It's like her plan all along was to demand that a judge awarded her all of this man's money.

Some people will say "well, these are Ontario family courts, this is normal. Haven't you heard about what happened to Dave Foley?" I think every man knows the story of what the Ontario divorce courts did to Dave Foley.

Here is a story about it from the far-left Toronto Star, otherwise known as the Toronto Red

Star.

It says:

> Dave Foley of beloved Toronto sketch troupe the Kids in the Hall is starting a new career in standup comedy, but not in Toronto — he suspects he'll be arrested if he returns to Canada.
>
> The 48-year-old faces a back child-support bill in Ontario of more than half a million dollars: the accumulation of a debt that accrues steadily at more than $17,000 per month. On the set of *Servitude,* a film shot in Toronto last year, "I told the production guys, I have a court appearance on Monday and there's a good chance I'll be in jail on Monday afternoon,'" Foley said in an interview with the *Star*.
>
> During an appearance on comic Marc Maron's *WTF* podcast last month, Foley explained that his marriage to Toronto writer Tabatha Southey ended during his run on NBC's five-year hit comedy *NewsRadio,* and he has failed in his efforts to adjust his child support downward to reflect his new life after sitcom stardom.
>
> "My income has dropped in the last 10 years, as anyone can tell from the number of s—ty movies I've been in," says Foley. "I'm not exactly picking and choosing my projects." However, four years ago, Superior Justice Nancy Backhouse denied his motion to vary his support payments.
>
> […]Foley says that Ontario's Family Responsibility Office now has an enforcement order and last year sought a six-month jail sentence for him, which was to extend indefinitely, until the overdue support was paid.
>
> Ontario family courts are notoriously anti-male, and men know this. Unfortunately, the female judges who make these rulings don't seem to understand that men know what they are doing, and then opt out of marriage. It must be so wonderful for these judges to punish the men who appear before them. But they can't punish the men who respond to what they are doing by declining to marry women, and then declining to date women, and then declining to even speak to women.

I looked up Superior Justice Nancy Backhouse, and found another article about her decisions, entitled "Judge rejects pre-nup, awards ex-wife $5.3-million". So, pre-nuptial agreements are also thrown out in Ontario divorce courts.

But it's not just Ontario. I have two Christian friends here in America who married their Christian wives as virgins, and then their wives divorced them. I heard what happened to them in divorce court. They lost custody of their kids, and they are forced to pay alimony and child support even though their ex-wives poison the children against them, and deny them communication rights and visitation rights. And men know that this is happening to other men. How can women expect men to marry when the financial risks are so high?

Forbes magazine explains:

> Of the 400,000 people in the United States receiving post-divorce spousal maintenance, just 3 percent were men, according to Census figures. Yet 40 percent of households are headed by female breadwinners — suggesting that hundreds of thousands of men are eligible for alimony, yet don't receive it.

The divorced courts are biased against men, and men are getting the message. They look at these cases, and they understand that marriage is not worth the financial risks. They don't want to have their possessions stolen by radical feminist judges.

Further reading

An excellent book to read about this issue is Dr. Stephen Baskerville's book "Taken Into Custody: The War Against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family". You can read what the book is about here. Dr. Baskerville is a Christian and a conservative. He has a PhD from London School of Economics, and teaches at Patrick Henry College, a conservative Christian college.

In Canada, fathers who disagree with the transing of their children are arrested and jailed

October 31, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Since we have an election coming up, and I've already blogged a lot about the abuse of power in the FBI and DOJ, I thought it might be a good idea for people to consider what will happen to their rights as parents if the Democrats win in the 2022 mid-term elections. In order to see what Democrats will do, we look north to Canada, to see what the secular left has already done there.

Here's a story from City Journal:

> At this moment, a Vancouver postman named Rob Hoogland is sitting in a jail cell in British Columbia. He will be there until at least April 12, when he's scheduled for a court date. At that time, he may be ordered to remain behind bars for a period yet to be determined.
>
> Has Hoogland killed or robbed somebody? Is he an arsonist? A rapist? No. What did he do, then? Short answer: he tried to save his emotionally unstable daughter from self-destruction.

Social transitioning is the first stage:

> It turned out that the school had been feeding her transgender ideology, and that she'd already begun "socially transitioning" to a male identity under the direction of a psychologist, Wallace Wong, who was encouraging her "to take testosterone." To this end, Wong referred her to an endocrinologist at the Gender Clinic and Children's Hospital in Vancouver.

Then comes the puberty blockers and/or hormone injections, despite the lack of consent from the child's father:

> At the beginning of ninth grade, A.B. had her first appointment with G.H., an endocrinologist at British Columbia Children's Hospital, to receive testosterone injections.
>
> […]G.H. told Hoogland that her treatment would go forward, that Hoogland had no say in the matter, and that he'd no longer have access to her medical records.

Judge sides with the mother, the school counselor, and the hospital:

> Instead of recognizing that very few, if any, 14-year-olds are in a position to understand the grave implications of sex-change therapy, the judge, Gregory Bowden, ruled that A.B. was a "mature minor" and that her consent, by itself, was thus "sufficient for the treatment to proceed."

This part is important. In a society that has been completely taken over by "compassion"

and “non-judgement”, fathers are the enemy. Fathers are no longer trusted to lead on moral and spiritual issues. Fathers have no right to lead their children:

> Bowden placed remarkable restrictions on Hoogland. He was forbidden to try to persuade A.B. to stop treatment. He was forbidden to address her by her birth name. He was forbidden, in any conversation with anyone, to refer to her as a girl or to use female pronouns to describe her. If he were to do any of these things, ordered Bowden, it would be “considered to be family violence”—yes, *violence*—under the Family Law Act.

And if fathers try to tell their story in public, another judge will threaten them with arrest. Because transitioning children against the will of the father has to be done in a way that the people responsible cannot be named or shamed for what they are doing:

> Soon after Bowden’s ruling, A.B. began gender-transition treatment, but Hoogland persevered with his legal fight. In violation of Bowden’s order, he also spoke in public and gave interviews about the case. In April 2019, in response to an application by A.B., Judge Francesca Marzari… ordered Hoogland to… stop communicating with others—including media outlets, and A.B. herself… about A.B.’s decision to receive hormone therapy.
>
> […]Marzari also seconded Bowden’s description of Hoogland’s “rejection of A.B.’s gender identity” as “family violence.”

Since the father didn’t quit on trying to save his child, he had to be imprisoned:

> And then, on March 19 of this year, British Columbia supreme court justice Michael Tammen ordered Hoogland—who had never before been in trouble with the law—to be sent to prison. By speaking out publicly about his case, and by publicly calling A.B. his “daughter” and saying “she” and “her,” maintained Tammen, Hoogland had violated “a publication ban designed to protect the privacy and dignity of a young and vulnerable person.” Not the slightest concern, of course, about protecting that young person’s long-term medical health, physical intactness, and psychiatric well-being.
>
> Tammen further said that Hoogland’s public statements could cause “psychological harm” to A.B. Once more, the judiciary flat-out rejected evidence that the treatments to which A.B. had been subjected could cause her a lifetime of psychological harm. Tammen warned that Hoogland, whose next court appearance is scheduled for April 12, would “definitely” face charges of criminal contempt at that time. Under a ruling issued last July, Hoogland, because of an appearance on YouTube, could remain in prison for five years.

This is the key – they have to imprison him to keep people from finding out what they are doing:

> Most outrageous of all was Tammen’s assertion that Hoogland’s “detention is

> necessary to maintain public confidence in the administration of justice."

The case files are also closed to the public. Unprecedented in the history of Canada. But necessary to cover up what the secular leftists are doing to the father.

Keep in mind that all of these actors – the teachers, the school counselors, the hospital workers, the lawyers, the judges, etc. – are all taxpayer-funded. The father is paying all of their salaries though his taxes. He is competent enough to earn the money, but not competent enough to make decisions about how to run his home. And this is fine with the "compassion" crowd. Since fathers want to lead on moral and spiritual issues, they have to be stopped by the government. Fathers are bad for children. They make children feel bad, and so they need to be overruled by the compassionate people in the government.

Should men marry?

What message does this story send to men who are considering marriage? Marriage-minded men already have to consider no-fault divorce laws, high tax rates to pay for the social programs that support single mothers, etc. Now they have to worry about having the leadership of their own homes stolen from them by the "compassionate" people in government. How did those compassionate people in government get into government? Why by being voted in by the compassionate voters. Many of those compassionate voters are now complaining that there are no good men to marry. "Where are all the good men?" they cry. Let me answer, on behalf of good men everywhere: we have no interest in becoming slaves or prisoners of the secular left state.

Now in America: teachers, social workers, and youth shelters are coming for your kids

November 1, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, I've blogged before about cases from outside the United States, like this one from Canada, where the secular leftists decide to seize a child from parents, because they know better than the parents what is best for the child of the parents. I hope you took the time to pull your children out of public schools, and move to a red state. Because guess what? It's here now.

Consider this article from June 2021 by Abigail Shrier, posted at City Journal, the Journal of the Manhattan Institute.

It starts with this:

> Ahmed is a Pakistani immigrant, a faithful Muslim, and until recently, a financial consultant to Seattle's high-tech sector. But when he reached me by phone in October 2020, he was just one more frightened father. Days earlier, he and his wife had checked their 16-year-old son into Seattle Children's Hospital for credible threats of [self-ending]. Now, Ahmed was worried that the white coats who had gently admitted his son to their care would refuse to return him.
>
> "They sent an email to us, you know, 'you should take your 'daughter' to the gender clinic,'" he told me.
>
> At first, Ahmed (I have changed names in this essay to protect the identities of minor children) assumed there had been a mistake. He had dropped off a *son*, Syed, to the hospital, in a terrible state of distress. Now, the email he received from the mental health experts used a new name for that son and claimed he was Ahmed's daughter. "They were trying to create a customer for their gender clinic . . . and they seemed to absolutely want to push us in that direction," he said when I spoke to him again this May, recalling the horror of last October. "We had calls with counselors and therapists in the establishment, telling us how important it is for him to change his gender, because that's the only way he's going to be better out of this [self-ending] depressive state."

Got that? So if you oppose what the "experts" tell you, then you're exposing your child to potential self-ending. And it you don't take their advice, then they feel justified in taking your child from you. Hospital workers, social workers, counselors and therapists.

Now, most people might be tempted to panic and show their opposition to hormone blockers, and sex-reassignment surgery.

But this father was smart:

> But unlike some other parents I would later speak with, Ahmed's cool head prevailed. Believing he might be walking into a trap, Ahmed reached out to both

> a lawyer and a psychiatrist friend he trusted. The psychiatrist gave him advice that he believes saved his son, saying, in Ahmed's words: "You have to be very, very careful, because if you come across as just even a little bit anti-trans or anything, they're going to call the Child Protective Services on you and take custody of your kid." The lawyer told Ahmed the same: "What you want to do is agree with them and take your kid home. When the gender counselors advise you to 'affirm,' go along with it. Just say 'Uh-huh, uh-huh, okay, let's take him home, and we'll go to the gender clinic.'"
>
> Ahmed assured Seattle Children's Hospital that he would take his son to a gender clinic and commence his son's transition. Instead, he collected his son, quit his job, and moved his family of four out of Washington.

Was he overreacting? Here are the state laws in Washington:

> Minors age 13 and up are entitled to admit themselves for inpatient and outpatient mental health treatment without parental consent. Health insurers are forbidden from disclosing to the insured parents' sensitive medical information of minor children—such as that regarding "gender dysphoria [and] gender affirming care." Minors aged 13 to 18 can withhold mental health records from parents for "sensitive" conditions, which include both "gender dysphoria" and "gender-affirming care." Insurers in Washington must cover a wide array of "gender-affirming treatments" from tracheal shaves to double mastectomies.
>
> **Put these together, and a seventh grader could be entitled to embark on "gender affirming care"—which may include anything from a provider using the child's name and pronouns to the kid preparing to receive a course of hormones—without her parents' permission, against her parents' wishes, covered by her parents' insurance, and with the parents kept in the dark by insurance companies and medical providers.**

But the laws are similar in other Democrat-run states, too:

> Oregon passed a law permitting minors 15 and older to obtain puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgeries at taxpayers' expense—all without parental consent. In 2018, California passed a similar bill for all children in foster care, age 12 and up. The California state senate is now considering an amendment to the Confidentiality of Medical Information Act that would bar health insurers from disclosing medical information to parents about their dependents, on pain of criminal liability.

Read the rest of the article, there are more frightening stories. The case of Julie and her battle with the social workers and lawyers at a youth shelter was horrifying. The second to last paragraph has some good advice for parents who have to deal with the social workers.

Going forward, parents will face challenges to from school teachers, school counselors,

social workers, government workers, hospital nurses, hospital doctors, lawyers, judges and police. Any attempt to guide children with morality or wisdom will be labeled “child abuse” that could expose the child to self-ending. And then they will take the child from the parents on that basis.

The worst mistake you can make when defending the Christian worldview

November 2, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it

entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it.

> I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent's weakness.

Should a man marry a woman who supports sexualizing children?

November 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There was a very interesting story earlier this week about a single mom of four in Tennessee named Jessee Graham. She is now famous for protesting against the removal of obscene LGBT materials from the local public library, which is funded by taxpayers. Even the White House re-tweeted her protest speech.

Here is the video of her speech, and full text is below:

> @lindsayjmh
> WATCH THIS Jessee Graham @librealtorn spoke out against a conservative group during a Maury County, Tennessee Board of Trustees meeting after a library director allegedly resigned due to pressure from the group over a Pride display and LGBTQ books they deemed inappropriate. #bannedbooks #ally #bansoff #tennessee #lgbtq #censorship #maurycounty #librarylove #kidsbooks
>
> ♬ original sound – lindsayjmh

You really have to see the look on her face when she's talking. That looks like hatred to me.

Fu*ll te*xt:

> Our town has never seen so much homophobic crap as we have since Miller came along, and I'm sick of it. These people have been with us this entire time, and we have never had a problem with it. They have never done any of the vile and disgusting things that that man and his weird cronies have leaked out of their mouth.
>
> I've never been sexually assaulted at a drag show, but I have been in church—twice.
>
> And I'll tell you what, the men at that church told me it was my fault. This whole scenario should have stopped at the United States of America where we have free speech, but it didn't.
>
> We're here, and it's so ironic that he also served in the military that guarantees us these freedoms, moved from another place to come here and tell us that a community that we love, we are related to, we are friends with, that we work with, that they're dangerous. That's bullsh*t. They haven't done anything and I am so sick of listening to this weird, fake pious crap about Christianity being the reason behind—we have to protect the kids. Jesus didn't go anywhere and condemn people. He did not ever walk into any place spew hatred and lies and completely annihilate a group of human beings who just want to exist. Any of my four children that I also grew inside my womb in case pious pippies here are part

> of this community, they will be lucky because there is not a whole lot of families that would love their child unconditionally. And the fact that they want to take that away from children, that is child abuse. To immediately tell your child he is wrong for feeling like he doesn't belong. Conversion therapy, child abuse. And you don't need a moral compass to recognize something is wrong when it immediately hurts other people.
>
> So why are we even here? Why does hate even have a platform? I am so sick of these straight, white, Christian males who are already at the top of the food chain acting like somebody is out to get them. They just want to exist, Aaron. Peacefully. Leave them alone. I'm done, love to you all.

Her speech was cited favorably by a wide range of secular left sources, from the mainstream media (CNN) to LGBT publications (the Los Angeles Blade), and a variety of progressive blogs.

The Los Angeles Blade called her on the phone, and she told them:

> I'm raising four children, eleven- to two-years old, and statistically speaking, one in five kids is queer. I do not want my children to inherit a world that puts a target on their back for being their perfect selves. I'm sick of the hate.

A lot of people have not studied the Bible but want to redefine Christianity so that it means "doing whatever makes me feel good, and not being judged for it". I know a lot of church-attenders who would side with Jessee. A lot of pastors, too. The only rule is to make everyone feel good about whatever they are doing.

And then when it destroys the lives of the children a few years later, then they just feign surprise. "I am so shocked that the child we cut the organs off of is unhappy!" Just like the people who voted for Biden to attack the oil and gas industry, and are now shocked by higher electricity and gas prices. They do what feels good in the moment – what makes people like them – and then when it explodes in their faces, they scream and swear at the people who warned them, and feign surprise at the logical consequences of their own actions.

It's very funny that she talks about how terrible those "weird, fake, pious" Christians in church are. It's getting to be a daily occurrence now that we find stories like this one from Fox News, about her friends in the LGBT movement:

> A transgender activist in New York City was arrested and charged for allegedly soliciting a minor, legal documents show.
>
> Trans and HIV activist Lailani Muniz was arrested last month in the Bronx after corresponding with someone whom Muniz thought was a 14-year-old boy identified as "Josh" on the LGBT dating app Grindr, according to the criminal complaint obtained by Fox News Digital.
>
> "Josh," however, was actually a man who works at the nonprofit NY Creeps Spotlight, which exposes people who target children. The man asked Fox News

> Digital to only be identified as FM.

The secular left is celebrating her because they agree with her that adults should not control their desires for the sake of children's rights. And they don't want to be judged for harming children.

Where are all the good men?

A lot of women today don't like men like Aaron Miller. Men with strong views on religion and morality. These women choose men who lack strong views on religion and morality. And then those men abuse them or leave them, because men who "don't judge" *don't judge themselves* when they do immoral things to you. Those are the REAL bad men. Not Aaron Miller, who is trying to be a faithful Christian man.

Where are all the good men? They are smart enough not to get into a marriage relationship with women who hate their goodness. And no amount of screeching, swearing, shaming or blaming is going to pressure a good man into marrying a woman who puts adult selfishness above the needs of children.

Psychologist claims father is an unfit parent for refusing to give son unhealthy fast food

November 4, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should a man marry a woman who doesn't respect his decision-making ability? To me, if a woman doesn't think that the man is good at making decisions, then she should just steer clear of him. Strangely enough, many women do marry men who they don't respect at all as leaders. Let's look at four cases where this happened, then draw some conclusions.

Consider this story from CBS News.

Excerpt:

> Saying no to a toddler's demands for a McDonald's meal got a father branded an inept parent, he says in a lawsuit claiming a psychologist urged a judge to curtail his parental visits over the dinner debacle.
>
> David E. Schorr says psychologist Marilyn Schiller pronounced him incapable of caring for his nearly 5-year-old son after he offered a choice — dinner anywhere but McDonald's, or no dinner at all — and let the boy choose the latter. He then took his irate son home to the boy's mother's house early from their Oct 30 dinner date, according to a defamation suit Schorr filed Tuesday.
>
> […]"Normally not a very strict father who rarely refuses his child McDonald's," Schorr put his foot down Oct. 30 "because his son had been eating too much junk food," the suit said. Schorr himself didn't immediately return a call Friday.
>
> He quickly regretted his stance when his son threw a tantrum, but he felt that giving in would reward bad behavior, so he offered the elsewhere-or-nowhere "final offer," as his court papers put it.
>
> "The child, stubborn as a mule, chose the 'no dinner' option," the suit says. And the father promptly carted the boy back to Bari Schorr's building, still trying to entice the child into changing his mind as they waited in the lobby for her to get home from work, according to the suit.
>
> Schiller told a judge the fast food flap "raises concerns about the viability" of the father's weekend visits with his son and asked a judge to eliminate or limit them, his lawsuit says.

The NY Post reports that the brat's mother immediately took him to McDonald's.

Excerpt:

> Adding insult to injury, he said: "My wife immediately took him to McDonalds."
>
> […]But the son apparently tattled on his dad and his wife flipped out and called the shrink, according to the suit.

> Schorr claims that Dr. Schiller only interviewed the child and his mother and never asked for his side of the story before telling the court she was gravely concerned about Schorr's parenting.
>
> Bari Yunis Schorr sued her husband for a divorce in 2011, just four years after they married in a lavish ceremony at the St. Regis Hotel in Manhattan.

Now does this situation happen a lot? I mean a situation where a mother goes to the feminist authorities (psychologists/social workers/lawyers/teachers/judges) in order to overrule the father's parenting authority?

Another case from Canada

Here is a story from Canada that provides another examples of mothers, female lawyers, female judges, etc. overriding a father's leadership of his home.

Excerpt:

> A Gatineau father lost an appeal Monday after a lower court ruled last June that he had issued a too severe punishment against his 12-year-old daughter.
>
> The case involves a divorced man who says that in 2008 he caught the girl, over whom he had custody, surfing websites he had forbidden and posting "inappropriate pictures of herself" online. The girl's father told her as a consequence that she would not be allowed to go on her class' graduation trip to Quebec City, even though her mother had already given permission for her to do so.
>
> The girl then contacted a legal-aid lawyer who was involved in the parents' custody battle, who convinced the court to order that the girl be allowed to go on the trip with her class. The father appealed the decision on principle, although his daughter went on the trip in the meantime.
>
> The appeals court reportedly warned in its ruling that the case should not be seen as an open invitation for children to take legal action against their parents when grounded.
>
> The girl now lives with her mother.

You may think that this would be overturned on appeal, but the father LOST his appeal, too.

So, what the daughter, wife, prosecuting attorney and judge (all feminists?) are all telling this Dad that he can donate sperm, pay bills, and pay taxes to welfare spending, but that he cannot lead his own children. He cannot have any moral authority to guide the child into becoming a man. That job is for child care workers, single mothers and public school teachers. Men need to butt out of parenting – except they can pay for all these experts through taxes, of course.

Recently, I blogged about a case in Canada where a father was overruled by female teachers, principals, lawyers, and judges, because he opposed the transgendering of his child (which was supported by the mother).

And there was also a case in California, where the mother of a child also wanted to transgender the child. The father collected together all the evidence showing that this would not be a good idea in the long run, but a female judge overruled him. Not only did he lose custody of the child, but he was banned from contacting the child, too.

Questions:

- Does anyone care what men want from marriage and parenting, or should we just be ordered around like little boys?
- Do we really think that state coercion is going to make men be more involved with their marriages and children?

I think that marriage should allow men to express themselves as fathers, just as much as women can express themselves as mothers. Parenting should be an equally shared responsibility, and the father should have at least as much parental authority as the mother.

Compassion vs standards

Here is a pretty good article by Jewish scholar Dennis Prager that argues against compassion and for moral standards. He tells a story of a team losing a baseball game 24-7, when the scoreboard is reset to 0-0 DURING THE GAME. He then asks what beliefs would motivate this action.

> As is happening throughout America, compassion trumped all other values.
>
> Truth was the first value compassion trashed. In the name of compassion, the adults in charge decided to lie. The score was not 0-0; it was 24-7.
>
> Wisdom was the second value compassion obliterated. It is unwise to the point of imbecilic to believe that the losing boys were in any way helped by changing the score. On the contrary, they learned lessons that will hamper their ability to mature.

He lists the lessons that the winning and losing boys learned from this compassionate act, and how they will act in the future. Then he continues his list.

> Building character was the third value trumped by compassion. People build character far more through handling defeat than through winning. The human being grows up only when forced to deal with disappointment. We remain children until the day we take full responsibility for our lives.
>
> …The fourth value that compassion denied here was fairness. It is remarkable how often compassion-based liberals speak of “fairness” in formulating social policy given how unfair so many of their policies are. It was entirely unfair to the winning team to have their score expunged, all their work denied. But for the compassion-first crowd, the winning team is like “the rich” who earn “too much” and should therefore be penalized with a higher tax rate; the winning team scored “too many” runs to be allowed to keep them all.

What the “compassion” crowd mean by compassion is “don’t judge”. “Don’t judge” is their highest morality. Male leadership isn’t just worthless, it’s dangerous. Men are only good for spending money, and for being sperm donors. It would be best if they didn’t talk at all.

Compassion undermines moral standards, but also standards of rationality. The former is under attack from moral relativism, and the latter is under attach from postmodernism. These ideologies are dangerous, and they are at the root of a lot of the problems we’re seeing with children today. When men cannot correct moral relativism and postmodernism in their homes, then the children make terrible decisions, and often get into big trouble later on.

Advice for men

When men are getting into relationships with women, they should consider whether the woman is choosing them because they are good at leading, especially on moral and spiritual issues. If she is not choosing you because she likes how you lead, then run for the hills. You do not want to invest in a relationship that is going to be adjudicated in the courts by feminist lawyers and feminist judges. If you like to lead, pick a woman who likes how you lead. A woman who thinks that moral relativism is false, and postmodern relativism is also false.

Dr. Walter Bradley lectures on scientific evidence the creation and design of the universe

November 5, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This lecture is special to me, because I bought a VHS tape of it just after I started working full-time, and watched it a million times. A lot of people come to their convictions about God's existence because of parents or church or intuitions, but for me it's all about the scientific evidence. This lecture changed my life. I wish more people taught their children about this evidence! This lecture was delivered at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Bradley received his B.S. in Engineering Science and his Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Texas in Austin.
>
> Dr. Bradley taught for eight years at the Colorado School of Mines before assuming a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1976.
>
> During his 24 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Bradley served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and as Director of the Polymer Technology Center, and received five College of Engineering Research Awards. He has received over $4,500,000 in research grants and has published over 140 technical articles and book chapters. He has also co-authored "The Mystery Of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Materials and of the American Scientific Affiliation and serves as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.
>
> He currently serves as Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University.

The lecture: (63 minutes lecture, 25 minutes audience Q&A)

Summary slide:

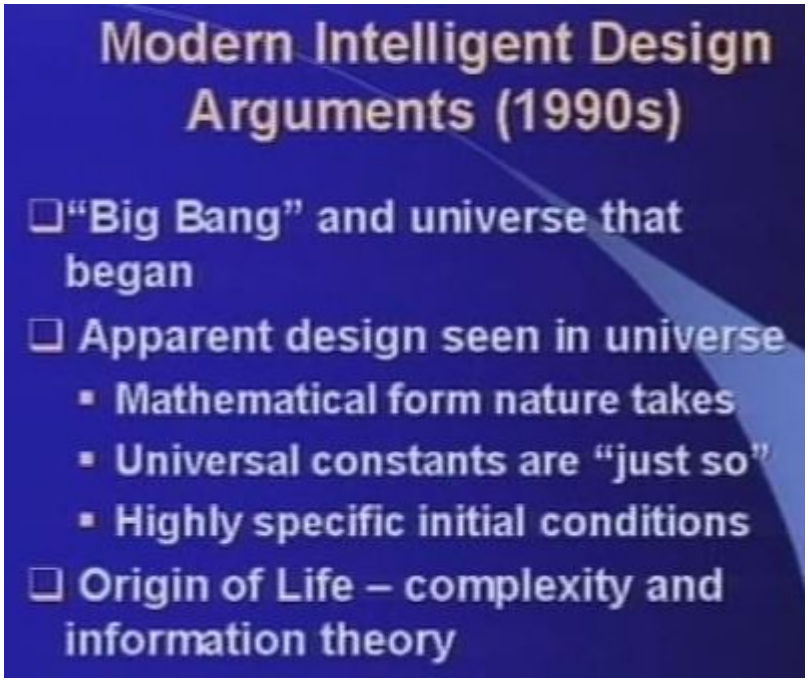

This slide summarizes the content of the lecture

Introduction:

- At the beginning of the 20th century, people believed that the progress of science was pointing away from an intelligent Creator and Designer, and towards naturalism
- A stream of new discoveries has shifted the support of science towards theism, and away from naturalism
- Richard Dawkins, an atheist, says that nature only has the appearance of design, but that if you look closer, naturalistic mechanisms can account for the appearance of design
- When deciding between design and apparent design ("designoid"), it matters whether you think there is an intelligence there to do the designing

Evidence #1: The Big Bang:

- an eternal "steady state" universe is more compatible with naturalism, but a created universe is more compatible with a Creator
- In 1929, Hubble used telescopes to observe that the light from distant galaxies was *redshifted.* The further away galaxies were, the faster they were moving away. Therefore, space is expanding in all directions, suggesting an explosive origin of the universe
- In 1965, the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation matched a prediction of the Big Bang cosmology, and of the creation event
- In 1992, the COBE space telescope allowed us to test four specific predictions of the Big Bang model, especially the predictions for light element abundances (hydrogen and helium), which matched the predictions of the creation model

Evidence #2: Simple mathematical structure of the physical laws

- the simple mathematical structure of natural laws allows us to understand these laws, make discoveries, and engineer solutions to problems
- early scientists saw the mathematical structure of the universe to mean that nature was designed by an intelligent to be understood
- the fundamental equations of the laws of the universe can be easily written on one side of one sheet of paper
- Eugene Wigner's famous paper, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Physical Sciences" makes the point that this simple structure is an unexpected gift that allows is to do science

Evidence #3: fine-tuning of the physical constants and quantities

- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stars that provide energy within specific ranges for long periods of time
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need planets with stable orbits that will not suffer from extreme temperature swings as it varies in distance from its star
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stable atomic structure
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need to have chemical diversity and correct relative abundances of each element
- organic life has minimum requirements: process energy, store information, replicate, and you can't fulfill those functions if there is only one element, e.g. – hydrogen
- the energy level from the photons from the sun have to match the energy levels of the different elements in order to drive the chemical bonding needed for life
- These requirements for life of any imaginable type depend on the values of the constants and quantities. The constants and quantities cannot vary much from what they are, or the universe will lose the characteristics (above) that allow it to support complex life of any imaginable time
- For example, ratio of strong force to electromagnetic force:
  – if 2% larger, then no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no compounds containing hydrogen, e.g. – water
  – if 5% smaller, no stable stars, heavy hydrogen would be unstable, few elements other than hydrogen

Evidence #4: initial conditions for habitability

- Universe: expansion rate of the universe must be fast enough to avoid a re-collapse, but slow enough to allow matter to clump together and form stars and planets for complex life to live on
- Planet: right distance from the star to get the right climate
- Planet: right mass to retain the right atmosphere

Evidence #5: origin of life and information theory

- It’s possible to explain every process in an automobile engine using plain old naturalistic mechanisms – no supernatural explanation is necessary to understand the processes
- But the existence of engine itself: engineering all the parts has to be explained by the work of an intelligence
- Similarly, we can understand how living systems work, but the existence of the living systems requires an intelligence
- Even the simplest living system has to perform minimal function: capture energy, store information and replicate
- Living systems are composed of objects like proteins that are composed of sequences of components complex such that the order of the components gives the overall structure function
- Developing the components for a simple living cell is very improbable – even given the large number of galaxies, stars and planets in the universe, it is unlikely that complex, embodied life would exist *anywhere* in the universe

Evidence #6: more initial conditions for habitability

- Location within the galaxy: you need to be away from the center of the galaxy, because the explosions from dying stars, and excessive radiation will kill life
- Location within the galaxy: you need to be close enough to the center in order catch the heavy elements you need for life from the explosions of other stars
- Location within the galaxy: the best location is between two arms of a spiral galaxy, where you can get the heavy elements you need from dying stars, but without being hit with explosions and harmful radiation
- Star mass: determines rate at which the sun burns, determines the energy level of photons that are used to drive chemical bonding reactions, determines the length of time the star will be stable
- Star mass: star mass must be the correct value in order to allow liquid water on the planet’s surface, while still preserving stable orbit

I wish there was more curiosity about science in churches, and young Christians understood *how critical science is* for grounding the rationality of the Christian worldview. We need to be training up more scientists who think about the big questions, like Dr. Walter Bradley.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

November 6, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang
– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws

– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection
– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus

– god wouldn’t have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that’s a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that’s a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that’s a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don’t support life, that’s a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that’s a bad design

3. hitchens’ burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can’t prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig’s scientific arguments don’t go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don’t prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don’t prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn’t be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig’s evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can’t use the progress of science
– it’s too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god’s existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn’t forming his view based on evidence
– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don’t believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you’ve got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God

– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH’s evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH’s argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn’t need to be efficient

CH’s argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH’s argument that Craig’s scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH’s argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn’t need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH’s citation of Craig’s book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true
– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH’s rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH’s rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH’s argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed

– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them
– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that's a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven't even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn't prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they're growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn't improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do

– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn't need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that's why people act morally
– it's degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don't know why, because i can't ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don't hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don't believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don't agree

WC moral argument: it's not epistemology it's the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing

– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history
– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it's just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that's not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Have Republicans done anything in the last 2 years to improve election integrity?

November 7, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

At the time of writing, I've already voted a straight Republican ticket in my state. My state senator is not up for re-election this year, but my state representative is, and so is my federal representative. I was concerned that maybe after the 2020 elections, it might not be worth it to vote. But a recent article from The Federalist notes that Republicans have been busy making sure my vote will count.

Here's what happened in the 2020 elections:

> The 2020 election was a massive wake-up call for many Americans on the right. In the months leading up to it, Democrats forced through changes to hundreds of laws and processes governing how elections are conducted.
>
> The rule-change scheme was run by Marc Elias, a Democrat election attorney who also ran his party's Russia collusion hoax, which falsely claimed Donald Trump stole the 2016 election by colluding with Russia. Sometimes Democrats' 2020 changes were instituted legally. Frequently, though, they were effected by other means, such as getting a friendly state or local official to change the rules unilaterally.
>
> The 2020 election plan… sought to flood the zone with tens of millions of unsupervised mail-in ballots, historically understood to be riper for fraud and other election irregularities than supervised, in-person voting. The plan also involved the private takeover of government election offices to run Democrat-focused get-out-the-vote operations. Mark Zuckerberg, one of the world's wealthiest and most powerful men, financed the project, doling out $419 million to two left-wing groups that focused grants and assistance to government offices in the Democrat areas of swing states.
>
> This radical change… included the widespread practice of placing ballot drop boxes predominantly in Democrat areas of the country, mailing out unsolicited mail-in ballots or applications for mail-in ballots, using well-funded teams of ballot harvesters both inside and outside of government, lowering and changing the standards for mail-in ballot acceptance, and fixing or "curing" ballots that were improperly filled out.
>
> […]Big Tech and the media ran coordinated disinformation campaigns to benefit Democrats by suppressing news that hurt the party. Big Tech also deplatformed effective conservative voices and media outlets, suppressed fundraising emails from Republicans, and elevated certain information to help Democrats.

This was the challenge facing Republicans in 2020. And here's what they did in the last 2 years after the 2020 elections:

> The Republican National Committee, other party entities, and dozens of public interest election nonprofit groups built over the last two years a multimillion-dollar election integrity infrastructure that passed laws improving voter ID and other election security measures, defended those laws from legal attacks by Democrats, and sued states and localities that failed to follow the law. They also recruited, educated, trained, and placed tens of thousands of new election observers and other workers throughout the long midterm voting season.
>
> […][B]ans on so-called Zuckbucks, the private takeover of government election offices, were passed and signed into law in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Pennsylvania is still a problem, because the Democrat governor vetoed legislation passed by Republicans to improve election integrity. Georgia was a problem last election, but look – they've improved:

> Georgia passed much-needed reforms related to voter ID, mail-in voting, and drop boxes, in addition to the Zuckbucks ban. The result has been record-breaking early, in-person voter turnout, across demographics, surpassing 2 million voters this week.
>
> Meanwhile, the Foundation for Government Accountability worked with states to make policy changes to clean voter rolls, ban ballot trafficking, secure ballot custody, roll back Covid waivers, enact penalties for election lawbreakers, require chains of custody, secure drop boxes, pre-process absentee ballots, improve absentee voter ID, and dozens of other types of reforms.
>
> Florida has been working steadily to improve its election system since the disastrous 2000 election. Last year, that meant banning Zuckbucks. This year, those changes included "requiring voter rolls to be annually reviewed and updated, strengthening ID requirements, establishing the Office of Election Crimes and Security to investigate election law violations, and increasing penalties for violations of election laws."
>
> Incidentally, the Center for Renewing America filed a complaint with the IRS over the tax break that Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla Chan received for their 2020 election meddling.

It's probably a good idea for conservatives to just get off Facebook. Definitely do not pay Zuck for advertisements.

The Republicans passed legislation, but they also took the Democrats to court:

> The RNC got involved in 73 election integrity cases in 20 states for the midterms, with plans to expand. They won a lawsuit against Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson for restricting the rights of poll challengers; got Maricopa County,

> Arizona, to share key data about its partisan breakdown of poll workers; won an open records lawsuit against Mercer County, New Jersey, for refusing to share election administration data; won a lawsuit against the North Carolina State Board of Elections for restricting the rights of poll watchers; and reached a favorable settlement against Clark County, Nevada, in which the county agreed to share information about its partisan breakdown of poll workers on a rolling basis.

The Republicans also trained thousands of election day poll watchers:

> The RNC hired 17 in-state election integrity directors and 37 state-based election integrity counsels in key states. They conducted more than 5,000 election integrity trainings, recruited more than 70,000 poll watchers and workers, and worked with more than 110,000 unique volunteers nationwide. They set up an issue reporting system and distributed copies of Poll Watcher Principles for states. If voters encounter election issues, they can file a report, and attorneys will be dispatched to resolve the issues. Sites were set up in Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin.
>
> Congressional Republicans also got in on the action. Rep. Rodney Davis, the top Republican on the House Administration Committee, notified all 50 states that he would be deploying dozens of specially trained election observers to protect the integrity of the ballot box.
>
> […]The Election Integrity Network, which started with a podcast on election integrity issues hosted by longtime election lawyer Cleta Mitchell, grew into state summits, which then built out into coalitions in states, attracting people to weekly meetings. The network has trained 76,000 poll workers.

So, there's every reason to think that your vote will count on Tuesday. I voted. You should go vote, too. We need to get gas prices lowered, rein in inflation, and make sure that the pandemic fascists are investigated. Plenty of reasons to vote Republican.

By the way, if you're looking for a good book on what happened in the 2020 elections, Mollie Hemingway's "Rigged" is a great choice.

Against transing kids, high inflation, high crime rates, FBI corruption, and COVID fascism

November 8, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm writing this on Monday night. I always write blog posts the night before and schedule them for the next day. I am really looking forward to news about what voters think about Joe Biden's socialist policies over the last 2 years. In this post, I report on a recent Wall Street Journal poll, and I have a story about Joe Biden's closing remarks to the voters about his priorities going forward.

First, here's news of the Wall Street Journal poll, reported by Breitbart News:

> In August, Hispanic voters favored Democrats by 11 points. That lead has been cut to five points in October.
>
> In just four years, Democrats have lost Hispanic support by 26 points.
>
> The margin of five points in October is far less than in 2020 when President Joe Biden was favored over former President Donald Trump by 28 points. In 2018, Hispanics favored Democrats by 31 points.
>
> A similar exodus from the Democrat party is seen among black voters. The poll found 17 percent of black voters would vote for a Republican in 2022. In 2020, that number was only eight percent, a nine point swing in two years. Eight percent also supported Republicans in 2018.
>
> The WSJ poll sampled 1,500 people from October 22-26, including 180 black voters with a 7.3 margin of error and 400 Hispanic voters with a 4.9 margin of error.

Why is this happening?

> But with the rise of crime, illegal immigration, and inflation, which disproportionally impacts less financially wealthy citizens, black and Hispanic voters have moved towards the Republicans.

I just want to re-assure white Americans that you are fine to vote for the Republican party. You are not racist if you do. Your freedom-minded fellow citizens of color are voting Republican, and there is room for you. I myself am a non-white legal immigrant by merit. This is my first election. I voted in the primaries, and I early-voted a straight Republican ticket in the generals. You are welcome to join me in voting against transing kids, higher gas prices, COVID fascism and skyrocketing inflation.

Here's another story from The Federalist that I thought was interesting:

> …Joe Biden's closing message for 2022. "We're going to be shutting these [coal] plants down all across America and having wind and solar," Biden told a crowd in deep blue California on Friday, arguing that it was "cheaper" to generate

> electricity from wind and solar.
>
> […]In California, which not only leads the nation in "clean energy" production but is leading the rest of us into rolling blackouts, residents pay 24.62 cents per kilowatt-hour for energy, around double the national average. There are only three other states where residents fork 20 or more cents over, the isolated Hawaii and Alaska and the frack-banning New York. The price of a gallon of gas in California is around two dollars over the national average, at $5.458. In Texas, it's $3.173.
>
> […]Biden reiterated his position at a rally for New York Gov. Kathy Hochul later this past weekend. Responding to a climate activist heckler, Biden shouted: "No more drilling. There is no more drilling! I haven't formed any new drilling." It's one of the few true things the president has said in a while. The Biden administration, even during historic spikes in gas prices, effectively shut down any new federal leases.

This is what Americans voted for in November 2020:

Now everyone understands what Biden meant. We have lived under it for 2 years. His words. Your dollars. He has learned nothing. His position has not changed at all.

If gas prices and inflation are not important to you, then don't forget about the COVID lockdowns.

The Manhattan Institute explains:

> A new study from Johns Hopkins University's Institute for Applied Economics supports what I and others have long maintained: lockdowns do not work, and their economic, social, educational, and psychological costs far outweigh any health benefits they might bring.
>
> […][T]he Hopkins literature review and meta-analysis, by Professors Jonas Herby, Lars Jonung, and Steve Hanke, finds that lockdowns—"defined as the imposition of at least one compulsory, non-pharmaceutical intervention (NPI)" such as school and business closures and limitations on movement and travel—"had little to no effect on Covid-19 mortality."
>
> […]The Hopkins findings echo and confirm the conclusions in an April 2021 review by Canadian economist Douglas Allen that lockdowns had little or no impact on the number of Covid-19 deaths.

I don't think there is a single Democrat in the Biden administration who understands how the world works. On any topic. It's just virtue signaling and distrust of freedom from top to bottom. These people are not qualified to lead. They are disconnected from reality. We need to vote them out and replace them with people who are better at crafting policies that achieve results for us – the voters.

Amid disappointing night for Republicans, DeSantis delivers 20-point landslide win

November 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

At time of writing, it does not look good for Republicans to take the Senate, although they may narrowly win the House. What I am hearing is that many of the candidates endorsed by Donald Trump won in their primaries, but lost narrowly in the general elections. But there was one VERY bright spot. Florida governor Ron DeSantis beat his Democrat opponent like a bongo drum.

Here is the story from The Blaze:

> Florida Governor Ron DeSantis easily won reelection Tuesday, as multiple news outlets called the race with unexpected ease as the night's vote-counting began.
>
> DeSantis, who was initially elected in 2018 by an extremely narrow margin over Andrew Gillum, had a much easier time in 2022 against Democrat Charlie Crist, who has formerly lost statewide races as a Republican, an independent, and a Democrat and who is widely unpopular statewide due to his transparent political opportunism.
>
> DeSantis' reelection campaign was viewed by many as a trial balloon for a potential 2024 presidential campaign after DeSantis established himself as a national figure by bucking restrictive federal COVID guidance issued by former President Donald Trump's COVID czar, Dr. Anthony Fauci. Under DeSantis' guidance, Florida was among the first states to insist on sending children back to public schools for in-person learning and to reject vaccine and mask mandates.
>
> These policies, which have since been adopted virtually nationwide, earned him the ire of the vast majority of the national media, who frequently invited Fauci on television to rebuke him. However, they made him a national celebrity with conservatives who chafed under Fauci's policies and contradictory messages.
>
> DeSantis also garnered national attention by championing legislation that prevented sexually explicit instruction for children grades K-3, which was falsely labeled the "Don't Say Gay" law by Democrats and their allies in the media. DeSantis made parental rights in education a cornerstone of his reelection campaign, repeatedly hitting on the issue on the stump and in debates.
>
> DeSantis' easy victory also broke the trend of Republican candidates underperforming some expectations on election night.

This is very good news. If we want to take back the White House, the candidate with the proven record is right here. Florida is a swing state, but somehow this guy went from a swing state margin of 0.4% to a margin of 19.61%. How did he do it? He did it by producing results as the governor of a state.

Meanwhile, Donald Trump was busy on election night. Except he was cheering on the loss

of a Republican candidate for Senate in Colorado.

Daily Wire reports:

> Former President Donald Trump (R) cheered as Republicans lost a potential pickup in the U.S. Senate on Tuesday night.
>
> Trump made the shot on his social media platform against Joe O'Dea (R) in Colorado as many Republicans across the country underperformed expectations.
>
> "Joe O'Dea lost BIG!" Trump said. "MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!!!"
>
> […]O'Dea lost to incumbent U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) in a race that had grown unexpectedly close in recent days with the RealClearPolitics average recently indicating that the race had moved from "lean Democrat" to "toss up."
>
> Reporter Alex Roarty noted how Trump had approached the race vs. how Florida Governor Ron DeSantis (R) approached the race. "Going to be a topic of conversation moving forward that Trump told his supporters not to vote for O'Dea — while DeSantis recorded a robo-call for him," Roarty tweeted.

I am not sure that we should be looking to Donald Trump for candidate selection or leadership of the Republican party at this time. Many Trump selections lost badly on Tuesday night. But DeSantis won. I think we need to pick candidates who win, and not candidates who lose. People who lose while fighting still lose. If DeSantis is our candidate in the general election in 2024, he will win the election.

Why I admire people in the armed forces more than famous entertainers

November 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've noticed that many Christians can tell me a lot about famous entertainers. It doesn't matter if it's singers, musicians, actors, athletes, etc., they seem to know details of their biographies, achievements, etc. And it doesn't really matter if those people are Christians, or whether they have performed actions consistent with a Christian worldview in their private lives.

Anyway, speaking for myself, I mostly admire two kinds of people. The first kind is the kind I blog about here all the time: Christian scholars engage non-Christians intellectually using logic and evidence. The second kind, as you can tell from my reading list, is people who distinguish themselves in conflict with those who oppose the principles and policies that allow me to live out my Christian life. And I am especially interested when people who are fighting evil (imperialists, Nazis, socialists, communists, leftists, etc.) exhibit Christ-like character in risking their lives to save others, or in giving their lives to save others.

Lt. Walt Chewning charges unto burning F-6F Hellcat to save trapped pilot

I have a war story to tell you that happened on November 10th, 1943.

> Lieutenant (later Lieutenant Commander) Walter Lewis Chewning of Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, steps on the burning fuel tank of an F6F-3 Hellcat flown by Ensign (later Lieutenant) Byron Milton Johnson of Potter, Nebraska to effect a successful rescue of the pilot on November 10, 1943. Johnson had flown out to USS Enterprise from Barbers Point, Hawaii, enroute to Makin Atoll in the Gilberts to support the United States Army invasion, which occurred on November 20, 1943.

> The afternoon of November 10, Johnson took off in F6F Hellcat Number 30 for a routine training exercise. He immediately developed engine trouble and requested an emergency landing. He was waved off three times as he struggled to maintain control, but his tail hook caught the third arresting gear wire, and Johnson's Hellcat was slammed into the deck, coming to rest in the port catwalk. The plane came to rest on its external belly fuel tank, which started to leak. As the engine vibrated horribly as the propeller bent itself on the deck, sparks ignited the fuel. The hard landing had jammed Johnson's canopy closed, shearing the retaining pin; he could not exit the plane. Chewning, who had joined the ship October 2, 1943 as Enterprise new catapult officer, scrambled out of the catwalk and came through the smoke. Stepping on the burning belly tank, he forced open the canopy and pulled Johnson to safety.

He received the two highest non-combat medals available:

> Chewning was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his actions.

He was a well-educated and accomplished person before joining the Navy:

> Chewning played soccer and Lacrosse at Cornell while studying Mechanical Engineering, breaking his rib and left ankle in one game. He graduated in 1936 and studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before joining the Navy in January 1941. He was the assistant to the Chief Engineer at the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania before joining USS Enterprise. He served as Enterprise's catapult officer until December 1944, when he transferred to Dutch Harbor Naval Air Station in Alaska as ordinance officer. Chewning served in the Navy until December 1949; he also was awarded the Bronze Star. After the war he assisted research and development for various aeronautical companies, the United States Air Force, and the fledgling National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Motion picture film of the crash, taken from Enterprise's bridge, was shown as part of the television program "Victory at Sea" on January 25, 1953. Chewning and Johnson gave interviews to several newspapers about the accident after the program aired.

You can see a video clip of the rescue here, from 5:35 to 6:00. I found a colorized version of the picture above here:

Lt. Walt Chewning charges unto burning F-6F Hellcat to save trapped pilot
This image was colourized from the original by Paul Reynolds.

What I thought was interesting about Chewning was how he had everything going for him in terms of his education and career, but he chose to join the Navy anyway, in order to defend his country from Japanese imperialism. Those who understand how the Japanese treated prisoners and conquered peoples will know which side of that conflict was good, and which side was evil. Chewning wasn't some sort of loser who took risks for fun and thrills. It had to be a risk where the prize was worth the risk. And he had the humility to consider others better than himself, so that their life was worth the risking of his own. Many people on the secular left who like to talk about how generous, compassionate and virtuous they are are unable to make moral judgments against evils like Japanese imperialism – much less take self-sacrificial action against them.

I just think that it's important for young Christians to have the right kind of heroes. The heroes who are promoted to young Christians by the cultural elites are not usually the right role models. And there is a reason for that. The secular leftists don't want young Christians to be emulating people who excel according to the standards of the Christian worldview. We are in a religion where self-sacrificial love is the centerpiece. Taking trouble on yourself for someone else. Doing your job, when it goes against your own self-interest. Let's not allow a bunch of godless socialist celebrities to pick and choose who we hold in high regard.

Tennessee legislation allows victims of gender transitioning to sue for damages

November 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Everyone is talking about how Ron DeSantis won Florida by 20 points, by using a combination of competent policy and social conservatism. But there are other good states with really good conservative legislatures, and legislators. And they are not scared about passing laws to protect vulnerable children from the selfishness and greed of adults.

Daily Wire has the story:

> Tennessee Majority Leaders William Lamberth and Jack Johnson, both Republicans, introduced the Protecting Children from Gender Mutilation Act on Wednesday, November 9, which would effectively bar doctors from prescribing puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and performing gender-related surgeries on minors for the purpose of medical transition. It would also allow patients and their families to sue for damages and let the courts impose an additional $25,000 penalty for each violation.

You might think that Republicans are scared to pass socially conservative legislation. That's what a lot of people who don't follow politics closely would say. "Both parties are the same" or maybe "Republicans never do anything about social issues". But it's not true in Tennessee. A recent report by the American Conservative Union found that Tennessee had the #1 most conservative legislature – more conservative than even Florida:

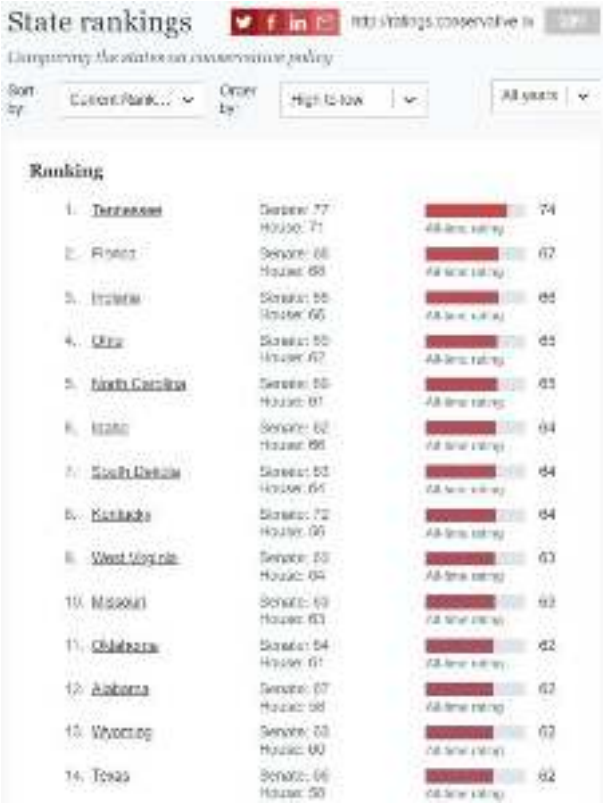

Back to the Daily Wire article. Here are some comments from the bill's authors that show their motivation.

Read this:

> "This bill is about protecting children," said Johnson. "Under no circumstances should minors be allowed to undergo irreversible elective procedures to mutilate body parts and intentionally harm their reproductive systems. This practice comes with lifelong health complications that children are not capable of understanding."
>
> […]"Interfering or destroying the healthy, normal reproductive organs of a child for the purpose of altering their appearance is profoundly unethical and morally wrong," Lamberth said. "Tennesseans across our state have demanded an immediate call to action."
>
> "Through the passage of House Bill 1/Senate Bill 1, Tennessee will protect vulnerable children who cannot give informed consent for adult decisions they aren't ready for," Lamberth added.

They're going to get sued by the pedophilia-supporting legal groups, but they don't care. They got sued for banning men from women's sports, too, but that didn't stop them from passing the law. They got sued for passing a ban on all abortions after 6 weeks. Tennessee doesn't care about the secular left bullies. And as soon as Roe v. Wade was repealed, they banned all abortions. These are serious, serious conservative legislators.

Two key parts of the law. First, children who sustained injuries due to medical transition can sue for damages. And second, since this is a criminal law, the government can get involved when the law is violated:

> The Protecting Children from Gender Mutilation Act would also create a private right of action, allowing a minor or the parent of a minor who sustained injuries due to medical transition to sue for damages. Additionally, it would enable a child to bring a civil cause of action against a parent if that parent helped to facilitate their child's medical transition.
>
> The bill would allow courts to impose a $25,000 penalty per violation and the state attorney general to bring an action against a healthcare provider for knowingly violating the law within 20 years of the offense. The proposed bill would require the state attorney general to establish a process for reporting violations of the law.

The secular leftists are evil, but even they understand money leaving their pockets. This is the way to stop them – take their money.

The Daily Caller adds:

> The legislation comes after a bombshell report revealed that Vanderbilt University's Dr. Shayne Taylor said in 2018 that providing sex change surgeries to minors was a "big money maker" and clarified that individuals who were

> against these surgeries due to religious beliefs would face “consequences”…

I’ll bet Dr. Shane Taylor is sorry now that she ever made that video! Instead of religious parents facing consequences, it’s the transgender profiteers who are going to face consequences.

My impression of Tennessee from watching their legislation is that they seem to get upset whenever blue states pass legislation they don’t like, and they pass legislation to go in the opposite direction of these blue states. Like, they point at New York and go “look, they are supporting infanticide! We should probably ban all abortions” or maybe “look California is banning guns! We should loosen restrictions on concealed carry permits!” And then they do it. They are not just trying to slow down secular leftists. They are on the offense, passing laws to make the state even more conservative. Why do you think the Daily Wire people chose to move to Nashville? Nashville is the new headquarters of the conservative movement.

If you missed it, Ben Shapiro recently interviewed the governor of Tennessee for his Sunday Special:

Tennessee now has 8 Republican congressmen out of 9 possible districts. If you’re looking for a conservative state, put Tennessee on your short list.

Analyzing 2022 exit polls: nearly 70% of unmarried women voted for Democrats

November 11, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Because I'm still unmarried and have done well in my career and finances, and I sometimes approached by people who think that it is a good time for me to get serious about marriage. Although the previous generation of women was very good at marriage, the current generation of younger women is terrible at marriage. And you can see how terrible by looking at how they voted.

Here's an article from Breitbart News to explain:

> Sixty-eight percent of unmarried women favored Democrats in the U.S. House midterm elections compared to 31 percent who favored Republicans, according to exit poll data.
>
> […]A majority of women (67 percent) also said they were either angry or dissatisfied with Roe v. Wade being overturned, with 72 percent of women who supported Democrat candidates agreeing, compared to 27 percent who supported Republicans. On the other hand, 30 percent of women were either enthusiastic or satisfied with Roe being overturned, with a majority supporting Republicans (84 percent) compared to Democrats (15 percent).

Daily Wire adds:

> Studies suggest single women vote Democrat more often than married women because they depend on a single income, have feminist attitudes towards social issues like abortion and pre-marital sexual behavior, and agree with ideologies that redefine gender roles and family responsibilities.
>
> […]Other notable figures from CNN's exit poll data show that 72% of women between 18 and 29 voted Democrat.

Are women who vote Democrat a good match for a man who is interested in marriage? Let's see.

1. Democrats support no-fault divorce laws, and that's dangerous for men, because we get financially ruined by divorce courts. Divorce courts regularly disregard pre-nups, even if you have one. Men only marry women who hate divorce. Women who hate divorce think that it is their responsibility to evaluate a husband candidate, and then commit to him, no matter what happens. Society just isn't making women who want the responsibility of choosing a good man, and making a life-long commitment to him.

2. Democrats support abortion, and that's horrifying for marriage-minded men. Good men value the needs of children above the needs of selfish adults (it's our protective nature). Pro-abortion women think that they need to be free to "have fun" with attractive men who won't commit to them before sex. And then if they happen to get pregnant, they can

just stop their new baby from living. Unborn babies have their own DNA, distinct from the parents. They are human beings, distinct from their parents. Marriage-minded men don't want to marry women who are willing to kill other people in order to escape from responsibilities.

3. Democrat women typically value careers over children. They want to put their kids in daycare, and go back to work. But marriage-minded men want someone trustworthy to stay home with very young children for the first 5 years. Research indicates that children benefit from having mom in the home for at least the first 2 years. Marriage-minded men don't want to get married to women who are going to throw the kids in daycare and go back to work.

4. Democrat women prefer higher taxes and more government spending. When husband earns money, they think that government knows how to spend it better. And they think that teachers, judges and bureaucrats (who are paid by husband) are better at leading the home than husband. Marriage-minded men aren't interested in paying government people to run his home. He wants choices in everything – especially about who will educate the children.

5. Democrat women favor subsidizing single mothers who make fatherless babies. Instead of setting moral boundaries on single motherhood by choice, Democrat women want to tax husbands to pay for single moms. Marriage-minded men know they only have enough money to pay for their own household, and their own kids. They don't have money to pay for other people's kids.

6. Democrat women are in favor of same-sex marriage. That means that they think that marriage is just an arrangement of 2 or more people based on feelings, with the goal of making the adults happy and socially respectable. "Love makes a family" they say. And they think it's fine to deprive a child of their relationships with a biological mother, or a biological father, or both. Marriage-minded men know the research on how all this affects children. And we aren't going to marry any woman who puts the selfish desires of adults above the needs of the children for their mom and dad.

If women don't understand the needs of husbands and children, then marriage-minded men will not marry them

In conclusion, I think it's important for people who expect marriage-minded men to get married to understands that most of the young women who are available would not make good wives and mothers for us. Men want marriage because they want to lead a home, and to be respected as leaders in their home. If society produces a generation of women who believe in student loan forgiveness, infanticide, gay rights, high taxes, and government regulation of fathers, then society will have to deal with declining marriage rates.

Husbands want to lead. We can't lead if we don't get to keep what we earn. We can't lead if we are overruled by teachers, judges and bureaucrats. We can't lead if we are dragged into divorce courts. Women will have to choose between voting Democrat, and having husbands.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 29: Commitment Issues: Searching for Love with Purpose

November 12, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 29 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose strategies for finding a partner for life-long married love. This episode contains mature subject matter. Listener discretion is advised. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 29:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how to find a partner to marry. We talk about God's design for marriage, and contrast that with society's view of marriage. We talk about how to measure a person's suitability for marriage. We contrast our strategies with a half-dozen rival strategies, using peer-reviewed research. We talk about compatibility and common areas of tension. And we recommend our favorite book about marriage.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Important note:

In the podcast, we kept saying that "Gary Chapman" wrote "The Sacred Search". It's actually *Gary Thomas*. Gary Chapman wrote "The Five Love Languages", which is another of our favorite books. We apologize for the confusion.

References:

- The Sacred Search by Gary Thomas
- Compatibility or restraint? The effects of sexual timing on marriage relationships (Institute for Family Studies)
- Counterintuitive Trends in the Link Between Premarital Sex and Marital Stability

(Institute for Family Studies)
- Discussion between Christian man "My 2 Cents" and two Christian women in the comments of my post on divorce

My 2 Cents:

We mentioned my friend My 2 Cents in our podcast, who is another Christian man who is amazing on the topic of dating and marriage. I highly recommend his YouTube channel. He definitely has a very developed, thoughtful view on marriage that respects chastity but is brutally realistic about what men are facing.

He did a series defending traditional marriage from a red-pilled male perspective:

1. What is Marriage and Why is it Important?
2. Why Traditional Gender Roles Matter in Marriage
3. Marriage and the State
4. Private Marriage, Promises, and Guarantees
5. The Truth about Domestic Abuse

And here are some of his popular videos:

- The Bachelorette's Hannah Brown is Why Men Don't Want Marriage
- Feminist Gives 9 Reasons Women Can't Find "Good" Men
- Debunking Allyson Rowe's Bad Marriage Advice
- Katie Emmerson Debunked: Men DO Prefer Debt-Free Virgins
- Calling Out Allyson Rowe-Regret Does Not Make You a Victim
- Tomi Lahren's Feminist Fail
- Dear Women, Your Sexual Past DOES Matter (Tiffany Dawn Debunked)
- Discussion with Jenna Harmon about Men and Women Today

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The importance of fathers for teaching children about Christian worldview

November 13, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One thing I wish that Christian parents and pastors emphasized more with young, unmarried Christian women is the need to choose a man who keeps his commitments. It turns out that passing on Christian values and worldview works a lot better when there is a man around to teach the children himself.

Here is some statistical evidence showing the difference that Christian fathers make, from Touchstone magazine.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church

> regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, a child who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an more difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others.

If a woman wants her child to be religious and moral, then she has to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he claims with words, because he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading. It would be good to see how he puts those beliefs into practice, too.

My advice to Christian women is this. When you are picking a man, be sure and choose one who is already invested in Christian things and producing results. It's very unlikely that he's going to be interested in developing that capacity from scratch if he's not already doing it. If you want your kids to be taught Christianity by their father, then make spiritual leadership a priority when you're choosing a husband.

New study: At least 1,130 adolescents received “gender-affirming” chest surgeries between 2016 and 2019

November 14, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been seeing interesting tweets about the sudden popularity of transgenderism among young people. One of them went something like this. First, they deny that sex-change surgeries are happening. Then, they say they are happening, but not many. Then, they say many are happening, but not to children. Sadly, this new study shows that many are happening to children.

Here’s the story from Daily Wire:

> A new study of nationwide hospital databases found that at least 1,130 adolescents between 2016 and 2019 received “gender-affirming” chest surgeries in the U.S.
>
> The study, published in JAMA Pediatrics, saw a 389% increase in adolescents (ages 12-17) obtaining chest surgeries from 2016 to 2019. An overwhelming majority (1,114) of the adolescents seeking this surgery were female (98.6%), and just 16 were male (1.4%).
>
> “To our knowledge, this study is the largest investigation to date of gender-affirming chest reconstruction in a pediatric population,” the paper’s authors wrote, who are each affiliated with Vanderbilt University Medical Center. “The results demonstrate substantial increases in gender-affirming chest reconstruction for adolescents.”

Here is the breakdown by age:

> The ages of the pediatric patients ranged from 12 to 17, with 42 (5.5%) of the recipients between 12 and 14, 131 (16%) aged 15, 291 (34.5%) aged 16, and 365 (44%) aged 17.

It’s an interesting situation. I would expect parents to set boundaries on their children. First, to shelter them from public schools and social media. But second, at least keep them away from the people who are profiting from “gender-affirming care”.

Speaking of profiting, there was this:

> The median total charges for chest reconstruction were $29,886 ($21,285–$45,147), a number that was adjusted for inflation, the authors note. Most of the chest surgeries (61.1%) were covered by private health insurance, 16.5% used public health insurance including Medicaid, 15.8% paid out of pocket, and 6.7% indicated “other.”

Remember what the lady from Vanderbilt said?

It was reported by Daily Wire:

> "It's a lot of money," VUMC Clinic for Transgender Health's Dr. Shayne Sebold Taylor said at one Medicine Grand Rounds lecture, video reveals. "These surgeries make a lot of money."
>
> Taylor noted that a "chest reconstruction" can bring in $40,000 per patient, and someone "just on routine hormone treatment, who I'm only seeing a few times a year, can bring in several thousand dollars … and actually makes money for the hospital."
>
> Citing the Philadelphia Center for Transgender Surgery, Taylor said vaginoplasty surgeries can generate $20,000, gushing that it "has to be an underestimate," since hospital stay, anesthesia, post-op visits, and other add-ons are not included in the total.
>
> "And the female-to-male bottom surgeries, these are huge money makers," the doctor continued, adding that such surgeries could bring in "up to $100,000" for the hospital.
>
> Some clinics are "entirely" "supported" financially by such phalloplasty surgeries, Taylor boasted.
>
> "These surgeries are labor intensive, there are a lot of follow-ups, they require a lot of our time, and they make money," she emphasized. "They make money for the hospital."

Sadly, for one reason or another, the adults have decided that it is more virtuous to go along with the agenda of the schools and social media, and inflict surgeries on their children. I could never understands why anyone would cut healthy organs off of a child with mental health issues. That would be like putting an anorexic person on a diet.

There was a previous study:

> In July, the same four authors, with the addition of two others, published a separate study on adults who received "gender-affirming" chest reconstruction surgeries. Their results, also using NASS outpatient hospital data, found that 21,293 individuals obtained chest surgeries between 2016 and 2019, a 143.2% increase. The large majority of chest surgeries were performed on female patients, with 82.1% receiving double mastectomies; 27.9% of trans-identifying males received breast augmentations.

When it comes to debating social issues, I like to have studies close at hand. For same-sex marriage, I use studies showing different outcomes for children raised in same-sex homes. For abortion, I use science textbooks showing that the embryo is fully human. It is self-directed and has distinct DNA from either parent. And for transgenderism, I like to use studies like these, showing how health care providers are profiting from the social trends being pushed by the "don't judge" compassion crowd in the public schools. The

study showing that gender-affirming care does not lower the number of suicides (in the long term) is a good one, too.

The authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke knew eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus

November 15, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Were the authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke connected to eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus? Well, it turns out that there are good reasons to think that Mark was linked to the eyewitness Peter, and Luke was linked to Paul, who had a post-mortem appearance of Jesus in 1 Cor 15:8, and who met with Peter and James in Galatians 1 and again in Galatians 2.

There is a list of evidence for Peter's influence on Mark on the Cold Case Christianity blog.

Here's my favorite one from the list:

> **Peter's Embarrassments Have Been Omitted**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter's special input and influence,including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It's important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It's not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter's standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters 'indiscretions' in their own accounts. See *Cold-Case Christianity* for a more detailed explanation).

It makes me laugh to imagine Peter looking over Mark's shoulder and saying "no, don't put that in it" and "no, don't tell them I did that". Funny! But also very good evidence. The rest of Wallace's list makes it even more clear.

And what about the gospel of Luke? Well, did you know that the author of Luke's gospel knew Paul? If you read it carefully, you'll see that Luke switches from describing history from an "I" perspective to describing things from a "we" perspective in the book of Acts (which he also wrote). Who is the "we" he is talking about?

Here's famous Christian scholar William Lane Craig to explain:

> Now who was this author we call Luke? He was clearly not an eyewitness to Jesus's life. But we discover an important fact about him from the book of Acts. Beginning in the sixteenth chapter of Acts, when Paul reaches Troas in modern-day Turkey, the author suddenly starts using the first-person plural: "we set sail from Troas to Samothrace," "we remained in Philippi some days," "as we were going to the place of prayer," *etc.* The most obvious explanation is that the author had joined Paul on his evangelistic tour of the Mediterranean cities. In chapter 21 he accompanies Paul back to Palestine and finally to Jerusalem. What

> this means is that the author of Luke-Acts was in fact in first hand contact with the eyewitnesses of Jesus's life and ministry in Jerusalem.
>
> […]There is no avoiding the conclusion that Luke-Acts was written by a traveling companion of Paul who had the opportunity to interview eyewitnesses to Jesus's life while in Jerusalem. Who were some of these eyewitnesses? Perhaps we can get some clue by subtracting from the Gospel of Luke everything found in the other gospels and seeing what is peculiar to Luke. What you discover is that many of Luke's peculiar narratives are connected to women who followed Jesus: people like Joanna and Susanna, and significantly, Mary, Jesus's mother.
>
> Was the author reliable in getting the facts straight? The book of Acts enables us to answer that question decisively. The book of Acts overlaps significantly with secular history of the ancient world, and the historical accuracy of Acts is indisputable.
>
> This has recently been demonstrated anew by Colin Hemer, a classical scholar who turned to New Testament studies, in his book *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History.* [5] Hemer goes through the book of Acts with a fine-toothed comb, pulling out a wealth of historical knowledge, ranging from what would have been common knowledge down to details which only a local person would know. Again and again Luke's accuracy is demonstrated: from the sailings of the Alexandrian corn fleet to the coastal terrain of the Mediterranean islands to the peculiar titles of local officials, Luke gets it right.

I know a lot of people (like my Dad) read the Bible devotionally, looking for feelings or trying to "get right with God" so they get blessings. But I think it's helpful to look at things from an evidential point of view – how am I going to make a case for this? When you look at things from that perspective, the Bible gets a whole lot more interesting. And you can talk about it with non-Christians when you know about these interesting details.

Democrats to push anti-child bill in the Senate on Wednesday

November 16, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats maintained control of the Senate in the 2022 mid-term elections, and as a result, they are holding a vote on a bill that will deprive children of relationships with their biological mother and/or biological father. Katy Faust, who we cited in our episode defending natural marriage, writes about it for the Daily Signal.

Here is the political news from her article:

> Control of the U.S. Senate has been decided and now we hear that Democrats have scheduled a vote Wednesday on the misnamed Respect for Marriage Act, in hopes of legislatively cementing the mother- and father-loss that the Supreme Court's Obergefell ruling endorsed seven years ago.

What's the "Respect for Marriage Act"?

When it comes to issues like this, I trust the Alliance Defending Freedom to explain it, since they are the ones who go to the Supreme Court for these cases.

They say:

> The so-called Respect for Marriage Act is a misnamed bill that expands not only what marriage means, but also who can be sued for disagreeing with the new meaning of marriage.
>
> While proponents of the bill claim that it simply codifies the 2015 Obergefell decision, in reality it is an intentional attack on the religious freedom of millions of Americans with sincerely held beliefs about marriage.
>
> The Respect for Marriage Act threatens religious freedom and the institution of marriage in multiple ways:
>
> - It further embeds a false definition of marriage in the American legal fabric.
> - It opens the door to federal recognition of polygamous relationships.
> - It jeopardizes the tax-exempt status of nonprofits that exercise their belief that marriage is the union of one man and one woman.
> - It endangers faith-based social-service organizations by threatening litigation and liability risk if they follow their views on marriage when working with the government.
>
> The truth is the Respect for Marriage Act does nothing to change the status of same-sex marriage or the benefits afforded to same-sex couples following Obergefell. It does much, however, to endanger religious freedom.

This is serious. If you are reading this, you should definitely contact your senators in

Washington to make sure they vote against this legislation.

OK, so the first problem is religious liberty trouble, but this law is bad for children, too.

Let's go back to Katy, writing for Daily Signal:

> With Obergefell, the Supreme Court made gay marriage the law of the land and mandated that government institutions and processes could make no legal distinctions between adult romantic relationships.
>
> Two married men cannot be treated any differently than a married man and woman. Indeed, from the perspective of adult emotional fulfillment, there may be no distinction.
>
> But from the child's perspective, these two couplings are polar opposites.
>
> A child who is the product of a married man and woman receives the complementary developmental benefits of a male and female parent, the two adults who are (statistically) the safest, most connected to, and most invested in them, and are granted 100% of their biological identity.
>
> A child raised by married men is deprived of the emotional and developmental benefit conferred exclusively by mothers, are being raised by at least one adult who statistically increases their risk of abuse and neglect, and are deprived at least 50% of their heritage and kinship network. In short, same-sex marriage requires child loss.
>
> Many of us warned that making husbands and wives optional in marriage would result in mothers and fathers becoming optional in parenthood. The past seven years have validated those concerns.
>
> In the name of nondiscrimination, the Supreme Court ruled in 2017 that two married women may be listed as parents on a child's birth certificate, legally erasing the child's father on the day of birth.

The old definition of marriage required opposite sexes work together to provide an environment for raising children. Not every couple has to have children, but every child born in a marriage has two biological parents nearby who have a biological interest in the child's development.

Now that we have got rid of that male-female dynamic, people are just manufacturing kids with IVF and surrogacy, and those children DON'T have either their mom or dad nearby.

> "Infertility" has been redefined so that same-sex couples can have their child "trappings" of marriage covered by insurance. Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., proposed legislation that would use tax dollars to subsidize creation of intentionally motherless or fatherless children. Surrogacy tourism is on the rise, and entire industries are devoted to procuring custom-ordered motherless babies.

Her article also talks about how studies attempting to show that same-sex parenting is

benign are problematic:

> In 2016, after examining every single same-sex parenting study, researcher Walter Schumm concluded: “[S]tudies that show ‘no difference’ often used poor methodology (non-random samples, parental (self-) reporting vs. actual child outcomes, short duration, etc.) to reach their conclusions.”
>
> Unsurprisingly when you employ the gold standard of the scientific method, “no difference” actually meant “significant difference.”
>
> One such study found that compared to children with opposite-sex parents, children of same-sex parents:
>
> - Experienced “definite” or “severe” emotional problems at a rate of 14.9% versus 5.5%.
> - Were diagnosed with ADHD [attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder] at a rate of 15.5% versus 7.1%.
> - Struggled with learning disabilities at a rate of 14.1% versus 8%.
> - Received special education and mental health services at a rate of 17.8% versus 10.4%.
>
> Perhaps the disparity is a result of the same-sex couple’s inability to marry, you argue. There’s data on that as well.
>
> A review of outcomes for children raised by unmarried and married same-sex couples found that “above average child depressive symptoms rises from 50% to 88%; daily fearfulness or crying rises from 5% to 32%; grade point average declines from 3.6% to 3.4%; and child sex abuse by parent rises from zero to 38%.”
>
> Turns out you can’t legislate away the benefit that children receive from being raised by their own mom or dad, even if you call it marriage.

I think that people have a vague feeling that there is something wrong with redefining marriage, but they don’t know what it is. It’s right there in plain sight. When you take away a mom from a child, the child loses something. When you take away a dad from a child, the child loses something. When the child cannot see a man and a woman working together to provide a stable, calm environment for the child, the child loses something. Children’s needs are more important than adult desires.

Survey of scientific literature finds that children need their mom for first 3 years

November 17, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, an article published in the Wall Street Journal reported on a research survey done by a far-left Democrat psychotherapist based in far-left New York City. Surprisingly, her book caused an uproar among the author's left-wing allies. How come?

Excerpt:

> Motherhood used to be as American as apple pie. Nowadays it can be as antagonistic as American politics. Ask Erica Komisar.
>
> Ms. Komisar, 53, is a Jewish psychoanalyst who lives and practices on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. If that biographical thumbnail leads you to stereotype her as a political liberal, you're right. But she tells me she has become "a bit of a pariah" on the left because of the book she published this year, "Being There: Why Prioritizing Motherhood in the First Three Years Matters."
>
> […]The premise of Ms. Komisar's book—backed by research in psychology, neuroscience and epigenetics—is that "mothers are biologically necessary for babies," and not only for the obvious reasons of pregnancy and birth. "Babies are much more neurologically fragile than we've ever understood," Ms. Komisar says. She cites the view of one neuroscientist, Nim Tottenham of Columbia University, "that babies are born without a central nervous system" and "mothers are the central nervous system to babies," especially for the first nine months after birth.
>
> What does that mean? "Every time a mother comforts a baby in distress, she's actually regulating that baby's emotions from the outside in. After three years, the baby internalizes that ability to regulate their emotions, but not until then." For that reason, mothers "need to be there as much as possible, both physically and emotionally, for children in the first 1,000 days."

What's interesting about this is how the left responds to the science. They don't want to see anything that challenges their desires to focus on fun in the short-term, but have marriage and successful children in the long-term.

More:

> Christian radio stations "interviewed me and loved me," she says. She went on "Fox & Friends," and "the host was like, your book is the best thing since the invention of the refrigerator." But "I couldn't get on NPR," and "I was rejected wholesale—particularly in New York—by the liberal press." She did appear on ABC's "Good Morning America," but seconds before the camera went live, she says, the interviewer told her: "I don't believe in the premise of your book at all. I don't like your book."

> […]Ms. Komisar tells of hosting a charity gathering for millennials at her apartment. One young woman “asked me what my book was about. I told her, and she got so angry. She almost had fire coming out of her eyes, she was so angry at my message. She said, ‘You are going to set women back 50 years.’ I said, ‘Gosh, I wouldn’t want to do that.’ ”
>
> […]The needs of children get lost in all this—and Ms. Komisar hears repeatedly that the hostility to her message is born of guilt. When she was shopping for a literary agent, she tells me, “a number of the agents said, ‘No, we couldn’t touch that. That would make women feel guilty.’ ” Another time she was rejected for a speaking gig at a health conference. She quotes the head of the host institution as telling her: “You are going to make women feel badly. How dare you?”
>
> […]**“The thing I dislike the most is day care,” she says. “It’s really not appropriate for children under the age of 3,” because it is “overstimulating” given their neurological undevelopment. She cites the “Strange Situation experiments,” devised in 1969 by developmental psychologist Mary Ainsworth, a pioneer of attachment theory: “A mother and the baby are on the floor playing. The mother gets up and leaves the baby in the room alone. The baby has a separation-anxiety response. A stranger walks in; the baby has a stressed reaction to the stranger.”**
>
> […]Researchers sample the infant’s saliva and test it for cortisol, a hormone associated with stress (and inversely correlated with oxytocin). In a series of such experiments in which Ms. Komisar herself participated, “the levels were so high in the babies that the anticipation was that it would . . . in the end, cause disorders and problems.” In a more recent variant of the experiment, scientists use functional magnetic resonance imaging to look directly at the brain of an infant reacting to photos of the mother and of a stranger.

You’d think that people would be happy to find out how the world works, and adjust their decisions to match. But they’re not. The only good evidence is evidence that confirms their desires and ideology.

Let’s look at one of the studies, to see some evidence.

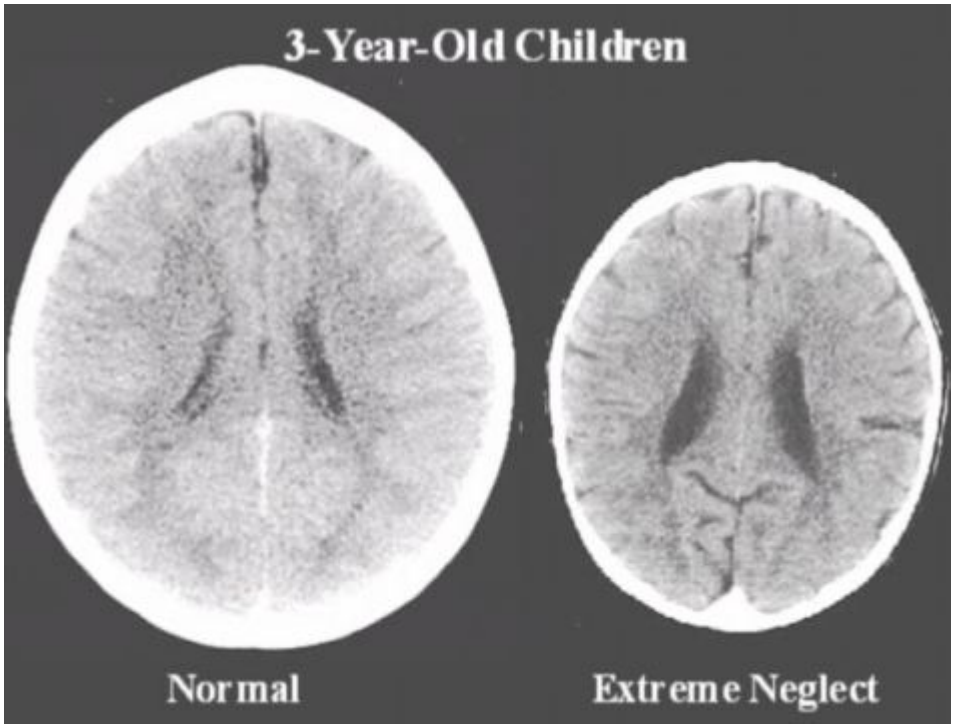

Brain scans of 3-year old children: normal vs neglected

The UK Telegraph reported on a recent study that measured the brain development of 3-year-old children.

Excerpt:

> Take a careful look at the image of two brains on this page. The picture is of the brains of two three-year-old children. It's obvious that the brain on the left is much bigger than the one on the right. The image on the left also has fewer spots, and far fewer dark "fuzzy" areas.
>
> To neurologists who study the brain, and who have worked out how to interpret the images, the difference between these two brains is both remarkable and shocking. The brain on the right lacks some of the most fundamental areas present in the image on the left. Those deficits make it impossible for that child to develop capacities that the child on the left will have: the child on the right will grow into an adult who is less intelligent, less able to empathise with others, more likely to become addicted to drugs and involved in violent crime than the child on the left. The child on the right is much more likely to be unemployed and to be dependent on welfare, and to develop mental and other serious health problems.
>
> […]The primary cause of the extraordinary difference between the brains of these two three-year-old children is the way they were treated by their mothers. The child with the much more fully developed brain was cherished by its mother, who was constantly and fully responsive to her baby.
>
> The child with the shrivelled brain was neglected and abused. That difference in treatment explains why one child's brain develops fully, and the other's does not.
>
> […]Professor Allan Schore, of UCLA, who has surveyed the scientific literature and has made significant contributions to it, stresses that the growth of brain

> cells is a “consequence of an infant’s interaction with the main caregiver [usually the mother]”.
>
> The growth of the baby’s brain “literally requires positive interaction between mother and infant. The development of cerebral circuits depends on it.”

I like bringing science to bear on moral issues. The more you read about the science, the less wiggle-room there is for feelings. Doing the right thing (e.g. – saving money for a stay-at-home mom) is hard because it feels bad. But when you inform yourself with science, it makes it easier to override your bad feelings, because you know you’re doing the right thing to achieve a result.

Theologian R.C. Sproul asks: “If there’s a God, why are there atheists?”

November 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten has a book review posted up at Apologetics 315.

The book is “If There’s A God, Why Are There Atheists?”, by theologian R.C. Sproul. R.C. Sproul is one of my favorite theologians. The book in question has a very, very special place in my heart, because I think that it is one of the major reasons why I was able to resist pernicious ideas like religious pluralism and postmodernism for so long. Once you put on the glasses of Romans 1 and see for the first time what man is really doing with respect to God, you can never see things the same again. I’ll say more about this at the end, but let’s see what Brian wrote first.

The review

So often, you hear atheists complaining about religion is nothing but wish-fulfillment or some sort of crutch for people who are frightened by a variety of things. They think that God is invented to solve several problems. 1) how does the world work?, 2) is there meaning to suffering and evil?, 3) why should I be moral?, and 4) what will happen to me and my loved ones when I die?. On the atheistic view, God is just a crutch that people cling to out of weakness and ignorance. But is this really the case?

Sproul starts the book by investigating three atheists who sought to explain religious belief as a result of psychological factors.

Brian writes:

Before tackling the psychology of atheism, Sproul spends a chapter on the psychology of theism, from the perspective of Freud’s question “If there is no God, why is there religion?” What follows is an overview of various psychological explanations of theistic belief: Feuerbach’s “religion is a dream of the human mind.” Marx’s belief that religion is “due to the devious imagination of particular segment of mankind.” And Nietzche’s idea that “religion endures because weak men need it.” The author properly reiterates: “We must be careful to note that the above arguments can never be used as proof for the nonexistence of God. They can be useful for atheists who hear theists state that the only possible explanation for religion is the existence of God.” That being said, Sproul also reveals what these arguments presume:

> Their arguments already presupposed the nonexistence of God. They were not dealing with the question, Is there a God? They were dealing with the question, Since there is no God, why is there religion?16

Sproul points out the weaknesses of each of these approaches and says “there are just as many arguments showing that unbelief has its roots in the psychological needs of man.”

Wow, could that really be true? What are the real reasons why people reject God? Does

the Bible have anything to say about what those reasons are?

Brian cites Sproul's contention:

> The New Testament maintains that unbelief is generated not so much by intellectual causes as by moral and psychological ones. The problem is not that there is insufficient evidence to convince rational beings that there is a God, but that rational beings have a natural hostility to the being of God.
>
> […]Man's desire is not that the omnipotent, personal Judeo-Christian God exist, but that He not exist.

In Romans 1:18-23, the apostle Paul explains what is really going on:

[18]The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

[19]since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

[20]For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

[21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[22]Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

[23]and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

On this blog, I regularly present many, many arguments for theism in general, and Christian theism in particular:

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Sproul explains why atheists cannot allow themselves to live according to the evidence

that is presented to them:

> The cumulative effect of this knowledge that is clearly seen is to leave men ‘without excuse.’ Herein lies the basis of the universal guilt of man. No one can claim ignorance of the knowledge of God. No one can cite insufficient evidence for not believing in God. Though people are not persuaded by the evidence, this does not indicate an insufficiency in the evidence, but rather an insufficiency in man.
>
> […]The basic stages of man’s reaction to God can be formulated by means of the categories of trauma, repression, and substitution.
>
> […]If God exists, man cannot be a law unto himself. If God exists, man’s will-to-power is destined to run head-on into the will of God.

And this is the force that is animating atheists today. They don’t want to be accountable to God in a relationship, no matter what the evidence is. They have to deny it, so that they can be free to get the benefits of a universe designed for them, without having to give any recognition or acknowledgement back. If they have to lie to themselves to deny the evidence, they will do it. Anything to insulate themselves from the Creator and Designer who reveals himself in Jesus Christ.

The rest of the book review, and the book, deals with explaining in detail how atheists respond to an all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator/Designer. I encourage you to click through and read the whole book review. You can read the review, and the book, and then investigate for yourself whether atheists really are like that.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

November 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell". One of my favorite 6 arguments for a Creator and Designer is the origin of the simplest replicating living system. When you look into the cell, what you'll find is carefully sequenced components that for complex structures, like proteins. In this lecture, you'll learn all about this "biological information".

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in

the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

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- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

November 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

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- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

My new pastor had a slide about the Candace Cameron Bure story in his sermon yesterday

November 21, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, I'm trying out a new church that has held apologetics conferences in back to back years, featuring real old-Earth evidential Christian apologists! Yesterday was my first time going to the service. I was impressed. Not only did the pastor have slides about current events, but he actually quoted from books by non-Christians: Andrew Doyle and Douglas Murray.

I took a picture of the slide and then found the story in The Federalist.

Here's what it says:

> Candace Cameron Bure, the Hallmark Channel queen who rose to fame as D.J. Tanner on "Full House," just wants to make Christmas movies that spread the joy and wholesomeness of Christmas and of her Christian faith. To that end, she recently moved from Hallmark to Great American Family, a new, smaller channel "that is positioning itself as the God-and-country alternative for holiday entertainment."
>
> For the crime of wanting to make a product that aligns better with her Christian faith, Bure is getting slammed as a bigot. But instead of apologizing for her convictions, Bure's words and actions indicate she's more interested in spreading the love of Christ than appeasing her Hollywood haters.

This is the part my new pastor mentioned:

> Prompted by a question about whether same-sex relationships will be central features of her films, Bure said in her interview with the Journal, "I think that Great American Family will keep traditional marriage at the core."
>
> For that line, Bure was chastised by former Hallmark colleagues and other fellow stars from JoJo Siwa to Maren Morris, Chrishell Stause, and even Bure's former "Full House" costar Jodie Sweetin, who commented her support for Siwa's post slamming Bure.

I thought this was interesting, because Rose and I just did an episode of Knight and Rose Show to help Christians get better at defending traditional marriage, and it's already one of our most popular episodes.

(If you like audio podcasts better than YouTube, you can find everything here)

In our episode, we covered a whole bunch of research showing why a male-female household is better for raising children. And we answered a bunch of objections against traditional marriage. Instead of arguing from any religious premises, we argued from natural law and peer-reviewed research. If you missed the episode, download it and have

a listen. It was only 40 minutes long.

Church

As everyone knows, I'm very picky about churches. I refuse to attend churches that aren't doing anything to oppose feminism, socialism and secularism. Many people in my life pick on me for not going to church, but when I tell them why, they don't listen. Instead of trying to find me a church that has demonstrated ability in the areas where Christianity is under attack, they just say "go to church". One woman even admitted to me that the reason I have to go to church is so that I'll get married, because I am supposedly depriving some woman by not handing her the results of my education, career and finances.

What I want to say to the "go to church" people is that it's not up to me to go to churches that aren't doing anything other than pressuring men to marry women. The churches have to be doing something about the things that men care about. Then the men will show up to the churches. It's supple-side economics. Innovation comes from the supplier, not the consumer. Every time people say "go to church" without solving the problem, it just makes me go to church less.

What actually worked was when my practical, ex-military pro-life advocate friend Nathan sent me a screenshot of the apologetics conference, with the heads of two of my favorite Christian apologists in it. I know that one of those speakers is publicly conservative, and the other is secretly conservative. And both of them are evidentialists. I decided to give this church a try, because they hosted two apologetics conferences. I also found out from the pastor that they refused to mask up or lock down during COVID. The pastor is clearly opposed to "social justice". He must have mentioned that phrase a dozen times in the sermon. I told a few of the guys in my office about the speakers at the apologetics conference, and they wanted to try church too.

Sadly, the church has very loud music. But they do have free ear plugs! So, I just used ear plugs to keep the music out. I was even able to sing one of the hymns, because it was classical. I love classical hymns. Everything new sucks! Still, it's the sermons that matter to me, so I'm going to keep going. So far, so good. I'm not picky about music, I just care that the pastor fights where the secular left is pushing against Christianity.

CBS News admits Hunter Biden laptop is authentic 2 years after New York Post broke the story

November 22, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Before the 2020 election happened, the New York Post broke a story about Hunter Biden's laptop that cast candidate Joe Biden in an extremely negative light. Biden supporters like Jen Psaki claimed that the laptop was Russian disinformation. Dozens of former intel officials agreed. And Twitter and Facebook both shut the story down, claiming that the laptop could not possible be authentic.

Well, guess what? CBS News is now reporting that Hunter Biden's laptop WAS authentic… 5 minutes after the mid-term elections. I guess the Democrat elites really don't want Joe Biden running against Ron DeSantis in 2024.

New York Post reports:

> It only took them 769 days.
>
> CBS News said Monday that it confirmed the authenticity of data from Hunter Biden's former laptop — more than two years after The Post first revealed its contents ahead of the 2020 presidential election — as the first son's lawyer complained that he didn't "consent" to the release.
>
> The laptop links President Biden to his son and brother James Biden's overseas influence-peddling, but high-ranking former US intelligence officials initially claimed it was likely Russian disinformation and the story was censored by Twitter and Facebook before the election.

And what about the 10% of Hunter's business deals for his father? FACT:

> Herridge did not specifically say which documents from the laptop were determined to be authenticated, including an infamous May 2017 email that described a 10% cut for the "big guy" as part of her reporting — but said that two sources confirmed to her that Joe Biden was the person identified as the "big guy."

Ukraine:

> The first document reported by The Post from Hunter Biden's laptop described Joe Biden's attendance at a 2015 dinner at DC's Cafe Milano to which his son invited an array of associates — including a representative of the Ukrainian gas company Burisma, which paid Hunter Biden up to $1 million pear year while his father led the Obama administration's Ukraine policy.

Russia:

> Documents on the laptop show Hunter Biden also invited to that dinner a trio of Kazakhstani businessmen and Russian billionaire Yelena Baturina and her

> husband, ex-Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov.
>
> Baturina allegedly paid $3.5 million in 2014 to a firm associated with Hunter Biden and remains one of just a handful of Russian billionaires not to face US sanctions in response to this year's Russian invasion of Ukraine.

China:

> Online business records also indicate Hunter still holds a 10% stake in BHR Partners, a Chinese state-backed private equity firm that manages $2.1 billion in assets and takes a prominent role in acquiring overseas assets.
>
> Hunter Biden co-founded BHR Partners in 2013 within weeks of joining then-Vice President Joe Biden aboard Air Force Two on an official trip to Beijing, according to the Wall Street Journal. Hunter introduced his dad to incoming BHR CEO Jonathan Li in a hotel lobby and Joe Biden later wrote college recommendation letters for Li's children.
>
> In the separate Chinese venture that made mention of the "big guy" getting a cut, Hunter and James Biden earned $4.8 million from CEFC China Energy — an arm of Beijing's foreign-influence "Belt and Road" initiative — in 2017 and 2018, according to the Washington Post.

I remember watching 60 Minutes "journalist" Lesley Stahl telling her viewers that the Hunter Biden laptop "can't be verified". I wish more people would understand that if you are relying on the corporate news media to report the news accurately, then you're going to be disappointed. They work for the Democrats. Especially right before a big election.

Who was responsible for anti-LGBT attacks in Colorado Springs and New York City?

November 23, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I remember that president Joe Biden blamed conservative Christians who support natural marriage for the anti-LGBT attack that occurred in Colorado Springs. He said that anyone who disagrees with his LGBT views is motivated by "hate" and that those hateful people cause violence like the Colorado Springs shooting. The corporate news media agreed with him. But is it true?

Here's the latest from The Post Millennial:

> Attorneys for Anderson Lee Aldrich, the individual charged with 5 counts of murder and 5 hate crimes, have said that Aldrich is "non-binary" and uses "they/them" pronouns.
>
> Aldrich is accused of engaging in a mass shooting at Colorado Springs nightclub Club Q, killing 5 and wounding more than 17. Aldrich is being represented by public defenders.
>
> In documents obtained by The New York Times, attorneys list Aldrich as "Mx. Anderson Aldrich."
>
> […]Aldrich, 22, was arrested in 2021 on suspicion of making bomb threats.

Is that the impression you got about the shooter from President Imbecile and his stooges in the corporate news media?

Well, what about the the violence in New York City? I listened carefully to the Democrats and the corporate news media, and I believed them when they said that conservative Christian parents were "domestic terrorists" and were the cause of this violence.

But then I saw this article from the New York Post:

> A suspect was busted Tuesday in the string of attacks on a Hell's Kitchen gay bar — and allegedly told cops he was just "exacting revenge" on behalf of a gal pal feuding with the club, police said.
>
> Sean Kuilan, 34, was charged with reckless endangerment and criminal mischief in the brick-hurling attacks on VERS bar, including a caught-on-video incident Saturday night, NYPD Chief of Detectives James Essig said.
>
> "Basically, what he says [is] he knows a girl who had a problem with one of the guys in the bar and he was 'exacting revenge,'" Essig said. "As of right now we don't have any reason to believe it is [a hate crime]."
>
> […]"I'm gay myself," Kuilan said as he was led out of a police vehicle and escorted into court in handcuffs on Tuesday evening.

In fact, one of the most famous crimes that was used by the secular left to drum up

support for same-sex marriage also turned out to be misrepresented by the Democrats and the corporate news media.

Consider this article from the pro-gay The Advocate, which explains that Matthew Shepard was a meth user and he was killed by another meth user named Aaron McKinney – *who he had gay sex with on prior occasions*.

Excerpt:

> What if nearly everything you thought you knew about Matthew Shepard's murder was wrong?
>
> […]By several accounts, McKinney had been on a meth bender for five days prior to the murder, and spent much of October 6 trying to find more drugs. By the evening he was so wound up that he attacked three other men in addition to Shepard. Even Cal Rerucha, the prosecutor who had pushed for the death sentence for McKinney and Henderson, would later concede on ABC's *20/20* that "it was a murder that was driven by drugs."

> […]Shepard was also a routine drug user, and — according to some of his friends — an experienced dealer.
>
> […] A former lover of Shepard's confirms that Shepard and McKinney had sex while doing drugs in the back of a limo owned by a shady Laramie figure, Doc O'Connor. Another subject, Elaine Baker [reports] that Shepard and McKinney were friends who had been in sexual threesome with O'Connor. A manager of a gay bar in Denver recalls seeing photos of McKinney and Henderson in the papers and recognizing them as patrons of his bar. He recounts his shock at realizing "these guys who killed that kid came from inside our own community."

The other murderer Henderson was also a patron of the same gay bar in Denver.

The article concludes:

> **In different ways, the Shepard story we've come to embrace was just as necessary for shaping the history of gay rights as *Lawrence v. Texas;* it galvanized a generation of LGBT youth and stung lawmakers into action. President Obama, who signed the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, named for Shepard and James Byrd Jr., into law on October 28, 2009, credited Judy Shepard for making him "passionate" about LGBT equality.**

Yes. These stories are routinely lied about by people like Joe Biden, other Democrats, Big Tech, and the corporate news media. They lie, because they want people to support legislation that cracks down on those evil conservative Christians. You know, those evil married couples with children, who support the traditional definition of marriage. Those hateful scum who think – based on scientific evidence of parenting outcomes – that the best place to raise a child is in a home near his biological parents.

Recently, the Senate voted on a bill that normalized depriving children of their biological

mother, their biological father, or both.

Several moderate Republican senators voted for this bill:

- Roy Blunt of Missouri
- Richard Burr of North Carolina
- Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia
- Susan Collins of Maine
- Joni Ernst of Iowa
- Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming
- Lisa Murkowski of Alaska
- Rob Portman of Ohio
- Mitt Romney of Utah
- Dan Sullivan of Alaska
- Thom Tillis of North Carolina
- Todd Young of Indiana

Why? Because they believed that there was a surge in anti-LGBT "hate" all over the country from those church-attending pro-marriage Christians. They supported the legislation, because they thought that support for the traditional definition of marriage is causing an epidemic of violence against marriage-redefiners, like in the three cases I mentioned above. They thought that the only way to stop this violence was to persecute anyone who disagrees with their re-definition of marriage. Even if it means trampling on their religious liberty.

So, understand this. People who are involved in marriage and church attendance do not commit crimes like this. They are not dealing or using drugs. They are not having promiscuous sex with strangers. They are not confused about their gender identity. They are not experiencing mental illness. They are not going to night clubs. They are not getting into violent disputes with other people. They are getting married, having children, and they are raising those children to be followers of Jesus, including accepting Jesus' definition of marriage as male-female. Those Christian parents just want to be left alone.

So be skeptical of reports from the secular left that blame church-attending Christian conservatives for violence that comes from within their own secular left communities.

There are Roman Catholics in my family but I'm not one: why not?

November 24, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am re-posting this post because recently a well-known Christian apologist changed his worldview from Protestant to Catholic, and I thought I would explain why I have not done so.

In this post, I explain why I'm not Roman Catholic. And I also explain how Protestant Christians arrive at their beliefs. We'll start with J. Warner Wallace on Purgatory, then I'll go second.

Purgatory

Here's the first article from Cold Case Christianity, by the Master of the Evidence J. Warner Wallace. He writes about the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, and his experience with studying and then rejecting it.

Here is his introduction:

> The notion of purgatory assumes many of us die with unforgiven sins that need to be purged from our account; some of us are not good enough to go to heaven, but not bad enough to go to hell. Purgatory, therefore, is a temporary, intermediate place (or state of being) where good deeds and works can be performed in order to purge our impurity prior to our final destiny with God. Although millions of Catholics believe purgatory to be a reality, the idea needs to be tested in light of the Scripture. Is purgatory something we, as Bible believing Christians, should accept as true?

He's got a stack of Bible verses to make two points against Purgatory: first, that Jesus' death on the cross is sufficient to atone for *all* our rebellion against God, and we don't need to endure any suffering or punishment to supplement it. And second, the teaching about the afterlife in the Bible says that believers are immediately ushered into the presence of God after they die (without resurrection bodies, yet), while unbelievers are separated away from God.

Here's what he says about the first point:

> **Our Salvation Isn't Based On Our Good Works**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, forgiveness is not based on the good works of the believer. For this reason, deeds or works performed for those in purgatory are both unnecessary and ineffectual:
>
> **Romans 3:21-24, 27-28**
> But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have

> sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus… Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.
>
> **Romans 8:1**
> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.
>
> **Our Salvation Is Based On Jesus' Work on the Cross**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, Jesus' work on the cross (His blood) purifies us from allsin. For this reason, there isn't a lingering sin problem requiring the existence of a place like purgatory:
>
> **Titus 2:13-14**
> …we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.
>
> **1John 1:7b**
> …the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.
>
> **1John 1:9b**
> …he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
>
> **1John 2:2**
> He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.
>
> **Hebrews 10:14**
> …because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.
>
> **Our Salvation Has, Therefore, Already Been Guaranteed**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, Jesus has already purified and purged believers of sin based on our faith in Him. For this reason, there is no need for a place like Purgatory where additional purging must be performed…
>
> […]The Biblical doctrine of Salvation clearly eliminates the need for purgatory.

I was never able to find anything in the Bible to support purgatory. It's a very very late doctrine that was unknown to the early church until the late 2nd / early 3rd century, where it is spoken about by a handful of people. But lots of weird doctrines were creeping up on the fringe around that time, so we shouldn't be surprised… the point is that they have no support from the Bible, and not in the community of believers for the first 150

years after the death of Jesus.

The bodily assumption of Mary

Anyway, my turn now. The Roman Catholic church teaches that Mary was "bodily assumed" into Heaven after her death, i.e. – she didn't just stay in her grave. Let's see if that is in the Bible or in the early church.

Here's what I found:

1. To be a Roman Catholic, you need to believe in Papal infallibility in matters of dogma.
2. In 1950, the Pope pronounced the assumption of Mary to be infallible dogma.
3. This pronouncement was solicited by a petition featuring over 8 million signatures.
4. There is no historical record of this doctrine in the Bible.
5. No early church father mentions the assumption until 590 AD.
6. Documents dated 377 AD state that no one knows how Mary died.
7. The assumption appears for the first time in an apocryphal gospel dated about 495 AD.

Data

I only cite Roman Catholic sources for my facts.

6. "But if some think us mistaken, let them search the Scriptures. They will not find Mary's death; they will not find whether she died or did not die; they will not find whether she was buried or was not buried … Scripture is absolutely silent [on the end of Mary] … For my own part, I do not dare to speak, but I keep my own thoughts and I practice silence … The fact is, Scripture has outstripped the human mind and left [this matter] uncertain … Did she die, we do not know … Either the holy Virgin died and was buried … Or she was killed … Or she remained alive, since nothing is impossible with God and He can do whatever He desires; for her end no-one knows." (Epiphanius, Panarion, Haer. 78.10-11, 23. Cited by Juniper Carol, O.F.M. ed.,*Mariology*, Vol. II (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1957), pp. 139-40).

7. "The idea of the bodily assumption of Mary is first expressed in certain transitus–narratives of the fifth and sixth centuries. Even though these are apocryphal they bear witness to the faith of the generation in which they were written despite their legendary clothing. The first Church author to speak of the bodily ascension of Mary, in association with an apocryphal transitus B.M.V., is St. Gregory of Tours." (Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*(Rockford: Tan, 1974), pp. 209–210).

It should be noted that the apocryphal gospel in which the doctrine of the assumption of Mary first appeared was condemned as heretical by two Popes in the 5th and 6th centuries. However, I was not able to find a CATHOLIC source for this fact, so I deliberately chose not to use it in my case.

Conclusion

The first thing I want to say is that the Bible is not the only place you look to decide these

issues. You also look in church history, and you are looking for a clear chain of custody of the doctrine as far back as it can go. Purgatory and the perpetual virginity of Mary have some track record, but the bodily assumption of Mary is just nowhere – not in the Bible, not in the Early Church fathers. So that's the silver bullet against Roman Catholicism, since they made it "infallible".

This post is more directed to non-Christians to sort of show you how we do our homework. I am the first Protestant in my family. We have half the family who is Muslim, and the other half mostly Hindu, with some Catholic. I had to debate all these people growing up, and I wiped the floor with them. It was not even close. I simply settled on the beliefs that allowed me to win every argument, every time. That's how you do religion. If you have to go against your whole family in order to be right, you do it. It's not good to be wrong about things just because that's what your family believes. These things were not pushed hard on me by my parents, I studied them on my own in order to win arguments. After a while of winning, I found myself acting consistently with what I was arguing for. Although that might sound really weird to you, that's probably the right way to do this. Don't listen to parents and church, find your own way forward by winning arguments, and believing only what the evidence supports.

Although most people think that if I had kids, I'd bully them into my beliefs, I actually would not. Because that's not what worked on me. What really works is fighting about evidence, welcoming questions, and allowing differences of opinion. Being free to pursue truth is more important in the long run than coercing your kids to act nicely.

Three reasons why Christians should read military history

November 25, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, I finished a book called "Beyond The Call: The True Story of One World War II Pilot's Covert Mission to Rescue POWs on the Eastern Front". It's about a World War 2 heavy bomber pilot who completes 35 missions, and then goes into the Soviet Union (our allies, at the time) to rescue American POWs who were starving or being kidnapped or murdered by the Soviet secret police.

I found a very good article about it from Stripes, to just quickly introduce the story:

> Later, after making contact with POWs roaming the Polish countryside, [Capt. Robert Trimble] fully embraced his mission. He saw the desperate plight of those who had been liberated from Third Reich prison camps. Many were sick, emaciated, often clothed in rags and left to fend for themselves during a brutally harsh winter.
>
> Trimble risked his life numerous times over six weeks, helping to rescue hundreds of POWs. He came to the aid of others, too. In one daring rescue, nearly foiled by Russian agents who had become suspicious of his activities, Trimble helped 400 French women make it out of Poland and back to France.

Although he was being constantly trailed by Russian spies and informers, he would evade them, and bring food and money to the POWs, then put them on a train to Odessa, Ukraine, where they could get onto a ship going home.

Roger Trimble, standing second from the left, in front of his B-24 Liberator

Why I read military history

It is hard to develop virtues just by wishing and hoping. Something has to go into your mind that causes you to think differently, and feel differently. Everything that you watch on TV, hear on the radio, or see in the movie theater, is made by secular leftists. They aren't trying to build your moral character. They're goal is to break down your resistance to their unBiblical worldview and moral values. Instead of giving people who hate Jesus your money, just so you can be entertained, why not try to put something in front of your eyes that will make you better?

Look at this famous passage from the Bible.

Romans 12:1-2:

1Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

And also this from Philippians, my favorite book of the Bible.

Philippians 4:8:

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

So you can see that when I am reading, my goal is to work on my character. I want to have feelings about things that are appropriate for a Christian man.

So why military history? Here are three reasons why I read these military history books.

Humility

First, **humility**. Humility used to be one of my biggest challenges. So I thought to myself "instead of seeing yourself as some heroic figure, why don't you read about some real heroes… people who willingly gave their lives for their friends, like the Bible urges, and like Jesus did by example".

Remember this from John 15:13?

13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

Military history is filled with stories of courage, bravery, self-sacrifice, endurance, unselfishness, and many other virtues. When you read about people who are better than you, doing more important things than what you're doing, it really helps you to be humble.

The best thing for humility is reading Medal of Honor citations. You can find a bunch of them online here. And if you want a book to read, try these books about Medal of Honor recipients:

- Heroes of World War II

- Korean War Heroes
- Vietnam Medal of Honor Heroes

Endurance

Second, **endurance**. I sometimes feel badly about not having found someone to marry and not having lots of children. I wanted a good marriage to be a model for others, and also to have an influence in the next generation through my children. However, whenever I read military history, I see a lot of young men dying in battle. And I think, they too won't know what sex is like. And, they too won't know what marriage is like. And, they too won't know what having children is like. But it's not just the ones who die, it's the hardships they have to go through, as well. Cold, hunger, imprisonment, pain, loss of their friends, etc.

I remember reading about one of my favorite battles – probably the most famous battle of the Korean War, which is our most moral war. It's about Fox Company of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Regiment, 1st Marine Division. They had to hold a hill beside a vital road against overwhelming numbers of Chinese soldiers during the freezing cold North Korean winter. I remember reading about how one soldier got up to go to the bathroom, and was nearly shot by a sniper. He fell over on his own poop, which had already frozen by the time it hit the ground. For months after, I would always think about this whenever I went into a bathroom. We have pre-warmed water in our bathrooms at work, along with soap, lysol spray, febreeze, contact lense cleaner, hand sanitizer, and other things. Just understanding what other people have to go through in war helps me to be more patient with the little tiny setbacks that I experience. I used to get very anxious when anything went wrong, because of I was raised by strict immigrant parents. That anxiety seemed to last a long time, but since I started to read military history, I've been much more patient. I know that things could be worse.

Thankfulness

The third thing that I've experienced is **thankfulness**. Not just for all the things that I have because of what our armed forces have done, e.g. – basic human rights, prosperity, liberty, security, etc. But also specifically about those who gave their lives so that I could live free in a free country, and practice my Christian faith without fear.

Here are two of my favorite Medal of Honor stories from World War 2, in the Battle of Pearl Harbor:

Congressional Medal of Honor
Awarded Posthumously
PETER TOMICH

Rank and organization: Chief Watertender, U.S. Navy.
Place and date: Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.
Born: 3 June 1893, Prolog, Austria.

Although realizing that the ship was capsizing as a result of enemy bombing and torpedoing, Tomich remained at his post in the engineering plant of the U.S.S. Utah, until

he saw that all boilers were secured and all fireroom personnel had left their stations, and by so doing lost his own life.

And:

Congressional Medal of Honor
Awarded Posthumously
JAMES RICHARD WARD

Rank and organization: Seaman First Class, U.S. Navy.
Place and date: Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.
Born: 10 September 1921, Springfield, Ohio.

When it was seen that the U.S.S. Oklahoma was going to capsize and the order was given to abandon ship, Ward remained in a turret holding a flashlight so the remainder of the turret crew could see to escape, thereby sacrificing his own life.

I do think that it's important for Christians to read these kinds of stories in order to feed their own awareness of what it must have been like for Jesus to give his life *voluntarily* for us.

There is no shortcut to gratitude. You have to constantly reflect on the sacrifices made by others for you, if you are to have any concrete reason for feeling grateful. The more you read about examples of people giving their lives for others, the more you'll appreciate what Jesus did for you. It will make you grateful.

There is a very annoying idea out there in the culture that says that people just do whatever is easy and fun for themselves, and since everyone else is always doing what makes them feel good, then there is no need to be thankful for anything. It's comforting for people to delude themselves with that belief, but it's false.

My reading list

You can check out the "What I am Reading" section of the blog to see which military history books I've been reading.

William Lane Craig debates Daniel Came: Does God exist?

November 26, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

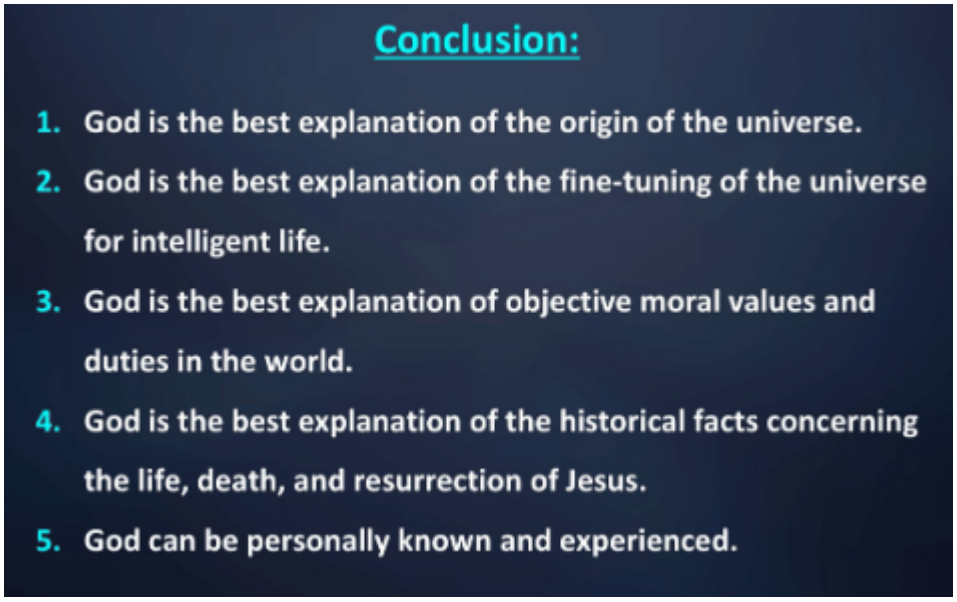

Dr. Craig's opening speech summary slide

The video of the debate was posted by ReasonableFaith.org – Dr. Craig's organization. This debate occurred in March 2017 at the University of Dublin, in Ireland.

The video: (91 minutes)

My non-snarky summary is below.

Dr. Craig's opening speech

Two claims:

1. There are good reasons to think that theism is true.
2. There are not comparably good reasons to think that atheism is true.

Five reasons for God's existence:

1. The beginning of the universe
– actual infinite past is mathematically impossible
– BGV theorem: any universe that is on balance expanding in its history (like ours) cannot be past eternal

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– slight changes to quantities and constants prevent a universe from supporting complex embodied life
– the multiverse response of atheists conflicts with observations, e.g. the Boltzmann Brains problem

3. Objective moral values
– God's existence is required to ground objective moral values and duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus

– there are good reasons to accept the most widely accepted facts about the historical Jesus (empty tomb, appearances, early widespread belief in the resurrection)
– the best explanation of these minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

5. Experience God directly
– in the absence of any defeaters to belief in God, a person can experience God directly

Dr. Daniel Came's opening speech

1. The hiddenness of God
– if God wants a personal relationship with us, and a relationship with God would be the greatest good for us
– God ought to reveal himself to us, but he does not reveal himself to many people, the "non-resistant non-believers"

2. The inductive problem of evil
– many evil events occur that are pointless – there is no morally sufficient reason why God would allow them to occur
– examples: animal suffering, children born with disease, tsunamis
– the theistic response to this is that humans are not in a position to know whether there are morally sufficient reasons, due to our limitations of knowing the consequences
– but this ripple effect defense has 4 possible outcomes, 3 of which don't do the job of justifying

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

1. The hiddenness of God
– God's goal is not to make his existence known, but to draw them into a love relationship
– it's speculative that overt displays of God's existence would draw people to him in a love relationship, they might resent his bullying
– atheist would have to prove that God could draw more people into a love relationship with him by revealing himself more overtly

2. The inductive problem of evil
– as humans, we are not in a position to know for certain that any apparently pointless evil really is pointless
– William Alston article: 6 limitations of human knowing make it impossible to judge that an evil is actually "pointless"
– Dr. Came says that there are 4 possibilities for the ripple effects, and since 3 are bad, it's likely that there are not morally sufficient reasons for a apparently pointless evil
– it is logically fallacious to assert probability conclusions without knowing the probabilities of those 4 options
– there is actually an argument from evil: since the problem of evil requires an objective standard of good and evil by which to measure, and God is the only possible ground of objective morality, then pressing the problem of evil actually requires the atheist to assume God, in order to ground this objective moral standard

Dr. Came's first rebuttal

3. Objective moral values

– there are naturalistic theories of moral realism where objective moral duties and objective moral values exist in a naturalistic universe
– I'm not saying that any of them are correct, but there are many theories about object morality in a naturalistic universe

There are naturalistic theories for all of the 5 arguments that Dr. Craig presented. It is Dr. Craig's responsibility to present those naturalistic theories and prove that they are not as good as his explanations. I'm not going to defend (or even name!) a single naturalistic theory for any of these 5 arguments by Dr. Craig.

Dr. Craig's explanations for the 5 evidences he gave can't be admitted, because we have to know how God did something *in naturalistic terms* before we can know that God did it supernaturally. Explanations are only valid if they are naturalistic.

1. The beginning of the universe
– naturalism explains how the universe expands after it came into being, so that explains how it came into being
– the God explanation, that God created the universe out of nothing, is not admissible, because it is not naturalistic
– how does God, as an unembodied mind interact with the physical world?
– the only agency that we know about is human agents, and we have bodies, so how could God perform actions without having a body?

The theistic hypothesis does not make any predictions, but naturalism makes lots of testable predictions. God could do anything, so he is not constrained and is therefore untestable. We can't infer God as an explanation in principle because we can't predict what is more probable if God exists than if he does not.

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the university was not set up to make embodied intelligence plausible, because the vast majority of the universe is hostile to life
– there are models of the multiverse that escape the Boltzmann Brains problem that Dr. Craig raised

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

Some of Dr. Craig's arguments are deductive (e.g. – the beginning of the universe, objective moral values), so that the conclusion follows from the premises if the premises are true. The resurrection passes the standard tests for historical explanations.

1. The beginning of the universe
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for an ultimate beginning of the universe

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for a design of the universe to support life
– he has to prove that intelligences has to be attached to bodies
– human beings are non-physical minds united to physical bodies
– naturalistic attempts to explain mental operations fail

– the arguments *prove* that unembodied minds exist
– the vast expanse of the universe is required in order to form the galaxies, stars and heavy elements needed for complex life
– why expect that the entire universe should be small, or that life would be everywhere?
– a non-fine-tuned world is more likely in the multiverse, and in a multiverse, we are more likely to have a Boltzmann brain world than a world with complex, embodied life
– Dr. Came has not advanced any naturalistic explanation for the fine-tuning

3. Objective moral values
– non-theistic ethical theories cannot account for the ontological foundations of objective moral values and duties
– atheistic theories of moral realism simply assume objective moral values out of thin air
– it is especially hard to find any basis for objective moral duties in the absence of God

Dr. Came's second rebuttal

5. Religious experience
– Dr. Craig should not bring up religious experience in a debate where arguments and evidence are central
– people who have dreams, hallucinations and psychotic delusions could appeal to religious experience
– religious experience is by no means universal, and it is possible to doubt it

3. Objective moral values
– there are lots of atheists who hold to objective moral values
– Dr. Craig has to explain how God grounds objective moral values and duties
– Dr. Craig has to explain why atheist moral realist theories don't work to ground objective moral values and duties

1. The beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig claims that something can't come from nothing, that's not an argument
– there are numerous models that don't require an absolute beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig cites the BGV theorem, but Guth (one of the authors) says that only the inflation has a beginning, not the whole universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion

1. The beginning of the universe
– on theism, there is an efficient cause, but no material cause, for the origin of the universe
– on atheism, there is neither an efficient cause nor a material cause, for the origin of the universe: that's worse!
– if he thinks that there are models of the universe that don't require a beginning, then let him name a viable eternal model of the universe
– he never refuted the mathematical argues against an infinite past

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– nothing to refute

3. Objective moral values

– God is a better ground for morality than humans, because he is ultimate, and not contingent and arbitrary
– God is a being who is worthy of worship, and therefore command his creatures with moral duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus
– nothing to refute

5. Religious experience
– only justified because there are no defeaters to it

1. The hiddenness of God
– atheist has to show that if God's existence were more obvious, that it would result in more people being drawn to him

2. The inductive problem of evil
– Dr. Came's argument was logically fallacious, and makes errors in probability theory

Dr. Came's conclusion

Sometimes, people can't prove something, but lack of evidence is a justification for doubting it, e.g. – werewolves.

If none of Craig's arguments work, then it follows that it is not rational to believe that God exists, and it is rational to believe that God does not exist.

Atheists shouldn't have a burden of proof for what they know, only theists have a burden of proof for what they know.

My thoughts

One quick point. If life were common everywhere then atheists would infer that God wasn't involved in it. Period. "Life is everywhere, so it's common, why do we need a designer?" they'd say. I agree with Dr. Came about denouncing religious experience in a formal debate. I don't like when Dr. Craig brings this up, but I see why he does it – he's an evangelist, and that's a good thing, too. I just worry about how it looks to atheists, although it's good for sincere seekers. I'm not the one on the stage, though, Dr. Craig is.

I think the point about more overt revealing by God would annoy people and make them turn away. Think of how gay people respond to the suggestion that there is anything wrong with them, with rage, vandalism, threats, coercion, attempts to get you to lose your job and business, and using government as a weapon to fine and imprison you. It's really obvious to me that more God does not mean more *love* of God. For those who don't want God, the hiddenness is respect for their choice to put pleasure above the search for truth. (I mean the gay activists – I have great sympathy for people who struggle with same-sex unwanted attractions because they were impacted by a failed bond with their parent of the same sex as they are).

Whenever I meet people like Dr. Came, I always urge them to keep investigating and pursuing truth, because they will find it if they are sincerely seeking after God. Some atheists do sincerely seek God, but I don't know any who haven't found him. I'm not sure if that's because those atheists who claim to be non-resistant and rational are in fact

resistant and non-rational, or what the real reason is. If you believe the Bible, *all* unbelief is non-rational and resistant (see Romans 1). Regarding the werewolves, we don't have any good arguments for werewolves, we do have good arguments for God. Dr. Came didn't refute the arguments that Craig raised, nor did his own arguments for atheism work. And there are many, many more arguments (origin of life, Cambrian explosion, habitability-discoverability, molecular machines) that Craig did not raise, too.

Meghan Markle says women should not be shamed for promiscuity: is she right?

November 27, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, on Wednesday, I found a story on Daily Wire that made me really concerned. In the story, famous feminist Meghan Markle said that people should not reject women for marriage just because those women have had many past sexual partners. And she said that women can "make up" for their sexual pasts by excelling in their careers. I thought I should say something about this.

So first, here is the article from Daily Wire.

Markle, a far-left previously divorced radical feminist who only has work experience as an *actress*, says this:

> Meghan Markle said she doesn't understand why women are "vilified" for exploring their sexuality while she said it appeared that men are instead "celebrated" for doing the same.
>
> The former actress talked about what she called the double standard when it comes to men and women "exploring" their "sensuality"… "One of the things that I think as all women, we face, as you're getting older, you're exploring and starting to understand your sensuality, your feminine divine," the Duchess of Sussex shared. "Your sexuality, oftentimes, it can be very much used against you."
>
> "A man, if he is a player, out having fun or whatever he's doing, it's often celebrated, even heralded," she added. "But for a woman, I don't care if she is perhaps the most successful woman in finance in her mid-50s, I promise you, someone will still go, 'But she was such a slut in college.' It will stick with her."
>
> "And I don't understand what it is about the stigma surrounding women and their sexuality, the exploration of their sexuality that is so much more vilified than for a man…,"Markle continued.

So, the reason I have to say something about this is because Markle is a radical feminist, and her views are being accepted by many young, unmarried women. And the church is not opposing this, believing that not judging feminism is a form of "chivalry". Christian men are terrified of telling women no, even when it's best for women to be told no. So let's take a look at the mistakes Markle makes.

A fixation on promiscuous men

First, notice how she is concerned with emulating men who are promiscuous. Thanks to feminism, young women reject traditional male roles such as moral and spiritual leader. Men who talk about truth and morality are seen as inferior to the men who are attractive and promiscuous. Unfortunately, 80% of the women are all chasing after the 5% of men who have a pleasing physical appearance and displayed wealth. And since these men

have options, they feel no pressure to commit to any woman. In fact, these men treat women terribly. Which is why women should ignore them, and focus on men who are displaying marriage-ability and marriage-intentions. But Meghan Markle is telling women that these promiscuous men are great, and that women need to emulate them. She just doesn't want women to be judged for acting like these scummy promiscuous men.

What does the data say?

So why do men quietly avoid women who are promiscuous? The short answer is because promiscuous women are risky to marry.

Many feminists think that men choose women based on emotions, but this is a mistaken way of understanding men. Men do not make decisions based on feelings. Men calculate risks and costs. Men's top concern with marriage is avoiding financial ruin from the divorce courts. Men read social science studies to understand what kinds of behaviors make a woman initiate divorce. And what those men find in the studies is that *a woman's promiscuity is a major risk factor for her initiating divorce*. The more sexual partners a woman has, the higher the risk of marital instability, and the greater the likelihood of financial ruin for the man.

Compatibility or restraint? The effects of sexual timing on marriage relationships

> We found that the longer a dating couple waits to have sex, the better their relationship is after marriage. In fact, couples who wait until marriage to have sex report higher relationship satisfaction (20% higher), better communication patterns (12% better), less consideration of divorce (22% lower), and better sexual quality (15% better) than those who started having sex early in their dating. For couples in between—those that became sexually involved later in their dating, but prior to marriage—the benefits were about half as strong.

Counterintuitive Trends in the Link Between Premarital Sex and Marital Stability

> Consistent with prior research, those with fewer sex partners were less likely to divorce. [W]omen who married as virgins had the lowest divorce rates by far… 6 percent. […]Premarital sex with one partner substantially increases the odds of divorce (21%).
>
> […]The highest five-year divorce rates of all are associated with… having ten or more premarital sex partners: 33 percent.

Feminists don't like to think that men are guiding their decisions from these studies. But men are. Feminists look at these studies, and they think "who cares about scientific studies?" and "who cares about the risks to men?" Markle is focused on women being shamed for her promiscuity, but she has no concerns about the financial ruin that men experience in divorce courts. And that's why she finds men avoiding promiscuous women so objectionable.

A man would have to be a fool to undertake an enterprise where he has all of the risks, all of the responsibilities, all of the exposure to legal tyranny, but none of the authority to

lead the relationship. And that's why the marriage rate is in a free-fall, because men are declining the offer of unstable marriage, which is being produced by promiscuous feminists. Markle is mad because women are feeling bad about being shamed. But men feel much worse, when they lose their house, car, money, children, and are put in debtor's prison.

Remember, feminist thought leaders approve of the hook-up culture, believing that it is critical to making sure that women can have fun with the no-commitment bad boys that they are attracted to, but without letting their flings derail their educations and careers. The goal is to prevent pregnancies with abortion, and delay marriage for as long as possible while climbing the corporate ladder. But hook-up culture is terrible for men who desire early marriage and children. These are the exact men who are passed over by women like Markle, who despise male headship. The problem is not that promiscuous women are being shamed. The problem is that promiscuous men are NOT being shamed. Markle needs to start shaming the hot bad boys who are spending all of their future wife's money on casual sex with no-commitment feminists. We need more shaming of promiscuity, not less. For both sexes.

And of course, these studies work the other way, too. Women should also avoid promiscuous men, in order to avoid marriage instability. So, it is actually even more awful that Meghan Markle doesn't tell women to avoid these promiscuous men. Her support for promiscuity is exposing women to poor treatment by unstable, manipulative, narcissistic predators. A cynical man might think that Markle was working for socialists, who want women to make themselves unstable for marriage. That way, they would never marry, and just keep working and paying taxes for the bureaucrats to spend on buying votes from the reckless people who need government handouts in order to survive.

No fix is in the pipeline

It's important to understand that there is no fix for Markle's embrace of promiscuity in the pipeline. No one is thinking about the risks men face from divorce courts. (See Dr. Stephen J. Baskerville's "Taken Into Custody: The War Against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family")

Feminists and their Christian allies agree that women should be encouraged to embrace feminism, and men must simply "man up" and marry them anyway, regardless of the financial risks of divorce. 68% of unmarried women voted for abortion, transgenderism, same-sex marriage, and cracking down on Christians who oppose these things in the 2022 mid-terms. But that is no problem for these feminists and their Christian allies. Just bully the men into marrying these promiscuous Democrat women anyway. Who cares? Men are expendable, like slaves. Whip them harder, and force them to serve.

Marriage is voluntary. If all the focus is on women's needs not to be "shamed" for promiscuity, and no one cares about what marriage-minded men need, then marriages *will not happen*. That is how the world works in reality. Right now, a good man would have to be literally insane to marry a promiscuous feminist. Men have to assume that *any woman who does not have a record of demonstrated opposition to feminism and*

promiscuity has taken part in the hook-up culture, and is therefore a high risk of divorce.

William Lane Craig answers: how can the four gospels be independent sources?

November 28, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I blogged about the historical criteria that historians use to evaluate documents. One of the criteria is "multiple independent sources". If a story is reported in multiple independent sources, then historians are more likely to evaluate it as historically accurate. But how about the four gospels? Are they independent sources? The answer might not be what you expect.

Here's how the question was put to Dr. Craig:

> The latest video, "Did Jesus Rise From the Dead," is especially compelling, but I had a question about it. In the part one video, you cite as evidence, the Gospels plus Acts and First Corinthians and you refer to them as "independent" and "unconnected" sources. But this isn't exactly true, is it? After all, two of these books were written by the same author, Luke, and so Luke and Acts are connected by authorship. Furthermore, isn't it true that much information relayed in Matthew and Luke were taken from Mark? This two facts would make it untrue to call the Gospels "independent" and "unconnected" would they not?

Here's the video he's talking about:

Dr. Craig answers the question in his latest question of the week. I think this answer is important for those who aren't aware of how the gospels are organized.

He writes:

> The objection is based on a simple misunderstanding. It assumes that the sources I'm referring to are the books of the New Testament. But that's not what I'm talking about.
>
> New Testament critics have identified a number of sources behind the New Testament, sources on which the New Testament authors drew. For example, Matthew and Luke drew not only upon Mark as a source but also upon a source which scholars designate "Q," which appears to have been a source containing Jesus' sayings or teachings. Thus, if you could show that a saying in Matthew or Luke appears in both Mark and Q, that would count as multiple, independent attestation.

What does this mean? It means that although there is overlap between Matthew and Luke, called "Q", there are actually three independent sources there: Matthew's source, called M. Luke's source, called L. And the material common to Matthew and Luke, which therefore PRE-DATES Matthew and Luke, called Q.

Dr. Craig lists out several independent sources in his full reply:

1. the pre-Markan Passion story used by Mark
2. the rest of the gospel of Mark has a source
3. Matthew's source (M)
4. Luke's source (L)
5. John's gospel which is very different from Mark, Luke and Matthew
6. the sermons in Acts have a source
7. the early creed found in Paul's 1 Corinthians 15

So if you are trying to lay out something from the New Testament, and you can find it in two of these sources, and at least one of them is very early, you're in pretty good shape.

You can watch more of Dr. Craig's videos in his playlist, here. These are especially useful for people who want to get the overall scope of the battlefield before deciding where to focus in study. Everybody should know about all of these arguments regardless of where you choose to specialize.

David French wants Christians who accept Jesus' definition of marriage to be persecuted

November 29, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you've been following David French's writing closely, you'll know that he no longer supports public policies that are consistent with the Christian worldview. In this post, we'll take a look at Jesus' definition of marriage, then we'll see whether David French thinks that Jesus knows more about the definition of marriage than the Democrat party.

First, what does Jesus think about marriage?

Here's what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
>
> 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"
>
> 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."
>
> 11 But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don't overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are

supposed to be willing to endure suffering rather than side with non-Christians against God's authority.

Here's an article from The Federalist by conservative Christian lioness Megan Basham.

She writes:

> [P]erhaps no one has done more to further the idea that Christians should not let the God they worship influence their policy views than one-time defender of traditional marriage, David French.
>
> […]As a political pundit, French has been singularly influential in evangelical establishment circles, referenced regularly not only in Christianity Today's pages and podcasts but also giving speeches at Southern Baptist seminaries and winning praise from outlets such as The Gospel Coalition as "one of the few Christians who is able to bring gospel-centered arguments into the public square."
>
> In all three of his essays on RMA in the last week, French reveals that he, too, has evolved on marriage and… discourages Christians from resisting the enshrinement of gay marriage into U.S. law.
>
> French… adds, "Religious belief is not the same thing as declaring civil law … I don't want the law to discriminate against those Americans who sincerely hold different views of sexual morality, sexuality, and marriage and organize their lives and their institutions accordingly."

What does David French think about same-sex marriage as public policy?

> French reveals that… believes [the Obergefell ruling's] argument for ushering in an entirely new form of marriage, unknown to previous ages, was well-founded. He writes that as far back as 2004, he believed, "In a diverse, pluralistic republic, granting the same rights to others that we'd like to exercise ourselves should be the default posture of public advocacy and public policy."
>
> Now that the fundamental transformation of marriage has taken place, French argues it should be permanent: "It would be profoundly disruptive and unjust to rip out the legal superstructure around which they've ordered their lives," he writes.

When it comes to policy, David French thinks that the Democrat party's definition of marriage is better than Jesus' definition of marriage.

Previously, I noted how the Alliance Defending Freedom thinks that the "Respect for Marriage Act" will threaten the religious liberty of Christian organizations:

> The so-called Respect for Marriage Act is a misnamed bill that expands not only what marriage means, but also who can be sued for disagreeing with the new meaning of marriage.
>
> While proponents of the bill claim that it simply codifies the

> 2015 Obergefell decision, in reality it is an intentional attack on the religious freedom of millions of Americans with sincerely held beliefs about marriage.
>
> The Respect for Marriage Act threatens religious freedom and the institution of marriage in multiple ways:
>
> - It further embeds a false definition of marriage in the American legal fabric.
> - It opens the door to federal recognition of polygamous relationships.
> - It jeopardizes the tax-exempt status of nonprofits that exercise their belief that marriage is the union of one man and one woman.
> - It endangers faith-based social-service organizations by threatening litigation and liability risk if they follow their views on marriage when working with the government.
>
> The truth is the Respect for Marriage Act does nothing to change the status of same-sex marriage or the benefits afforded to same-sex couples following Obergefell. It does much, however, to endanger religious freedom.

David French wants Christians who agree with Jesus about the definition of marriage to be persecuted by the secular left state. That's why he supports this Democrat party legislation.

Now, if you listened to the episode of the Knight and Rose show that Rose and I did defending the definition of marriage then you will know that there are good science-based secular reasons for preferring Jesus' definition of marriage. But David French ignores that evidence in his published work.

Back to Megan Basham in The Federalist:

> Leaving aside how this same argument could have been applied to Dred Scott, it's interesting that French repeatedly references "LGBT families" in his essays (a phrase that naturally brings up sympathetic associations) without specifically treating the question of how children come to be a part of these sterile couplings or how they fare once they are present. In fact, the only passing allusion he makes to children in these households is positive, as when he says, "Millions of Americans are living stable, joyful lives in LGBT families."
>
> It has been said many times (but it cannot be said enough apparently) that the law's compelling interest in acknowledging marriage at all is not to sanction romantic attachment between various individuals. It is to recognize the sexually reproductive union of men and women in order to foster the arrangement that best cultivates individual flourishing, which, in turn, creates a flourishing society.

Right, and that's why Rose and I talked about that evidence in our podcast. But if you are expecting David French to understand what marriage is, and how to interact with scientific evidence on the effects of non-traditional unions on children, you're expecting too much. In Christian apologetics, we know how to make a case for what the Bible teaches about God's existence from scientific evidence, such as the Big Bang cosmology

and the cosmic fine-tuning. Mainstream scientific data. We do the same thing when it comes to the abortion question. Serious Christians know how to be persuasive to non-Christians. That's why we are able to defend the Bible's teachings without capitulating to peer pressure from the secular left.

Basham concludes:

> There is no need to rehearse the litany of evidence that children raised apart from their married, biological mothers and fathers fare worse on all manner of social, educational, and developmental outcomes. But it might be necessary to start speaking forthrightly about the more specific emerging evidence that children conceived via donorship suffer from "profound struggles with their origins and identities" and that those raised in same-sex households are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and sexual abuse.
>
> French never mentions these children. Nor does Dalrymple. Nor does the Christianity Today essay. Nor has Sen. Blunt. Yet this is the dystopian, domino effect of redefining marriage so that Christians may assure themselves they are pluralists in good standing, on the right side of rapidly devolving modern history.

If you want to hear a decent case for the traditional definition of marriage based on evidence, check out the podcast that Rose and I did about it here.

If you only have 15 minutes, this short video from Katy Faust makes the case:

And she has an excellent article about it in the Daily Signal. It's too bad that Christians look to David French for leadership. I would rather rely on Megan Basham and Katy Faust. And it's not David French who will be defending religious liberty at the Supreme Court. It's Kristen Waggoner of the ADF.

Christian woman finds a way to discuss her faith with non-Christians

November 30, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting article where a Christian woman explains how she used to share her testimony with non-Christians. But that wasn't working. So she decided to try something different.

She writes:

> I'll never forget the first time I shared my personal testimony with a non-Christian.
>
> When the opportunity arose and I shared my story with an unbelieving friend, she replied, "That's so cool. I'm so happy you found something that works for you."
>
> *For me?*
>
> "It's not about what works *for me*," I said, trying to hide my discouragement. "It's about what's true for everyone."
>
> "That doesn't make sense," she responded. "That's *your experience*, not mine. I had a similar revelation when I realized I could leave the church, and I've become a better person for *my* decision. Just as you were freed from your heaviest burdens by finding God, I was freed from mine by leaving God behind."
>
> I was devastated but I chalked it up to my friend's hardheartedness. I decided to shake the dust off my feet and look forward to the next opportunity.
>
> But time after time of sharing my testimony resulted in similar responses. People expressed enthusiasm that I was happy, that Christianity worked for me, and that I had "found my niche." Yet no one considered my experience as anything more than just that—my own personal experience.
>
> […]I had been taught that sharing what God had done in my life was the ideal way to witness to non-Christians. A personal testimony was interesting yet non-confrontational, compelling but inoffensive. And yet, despite having shared my testimony with dozens of unbelievers, not a single person felt challenged to consider the truth claims of Christianity.

She noticed that her approach wasn't actually in the Bible. There was a different approach being demonstrated by Jesus, and later by his disciples.

She writes:

> When Jesus called his first disciples, he taught truth and provided evidence (miracles) to support his claims, then he asked people to follow him (Luke 5:1–11). In fact, this was his method whenever he went into new regions (see Luke 4:14–44; John 4:7–26). People decided to follow Jesus not on blind faith or a

> subjective feeling, but based on the evidence they had seen and heard.[i]
>
> Jesus also used evidence to assuage the doubts of even those who had been with him a long time. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin, who leapt in the womb during Mary's visit (Luke 1:39–45), baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, heard God's voice from heaven, and saw the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus in bodily form like a dove (Luke 3:21–22). Yet when John experienced unexpected suffering, he began to doubt.
>
> Jesus didn't respond as many do today, by insisting that John "just believe" or "have faith" or "prayer harder." Rather, he responded with more evidence, saying, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." (Matt. 11:2–6).
>
> […]At Pentecost, the apostle Peter offered signs and wonders, fulfilled prophecy, and relayed eyewitness testimony to persuade people from all over the Roman Empire that the most reasonable explanation for what they were seeing was not morning drunkenness, but a risen Messiah (Acts 2:1–41).
>
> On his missionary journeys, the apostle Paul reasoned with the Jews from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that Jesus was the Messiah who needed to suffer and rise from the dead (Acts 17:1–3, 17). And he reasoned with the Gentiles from outside the Scriptures, making a case with their own accepted beliefs to convince them (Acts 17:17–34).
>
> In fact, in describing his mission, Paul told the Philippians, "I am put here for the defense of the gospel" (1:7, 16). This word translated defense is the same word from which we get our English word "apologetics," meaning to make reasoned arguments or to provide evidence as justification. Using this same word, Peter commanded believers to "always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you"(1 Pet. 3:15).

So, she decided to dump the testimony approach, and try the Biblical approach. But she had to change it a little bit, since she couldn't perform miracles herself:

> We are not eyewitnesses to Jesus's life and resurrection, but we have the accounts of those who were. We don't typically see miracles, but we have millennia of biblical scholarship and archaeology that provide reasons to believe the accounts are trustworthy. We don't often hear God speaking audibly or see him parting seas, but we have significant scientific evidence that shows the universe had a beginning, and millennia of observation to confirm the scientific principle that everything that begins to exist has a cause.

I think a lot of Christians never move on from approach she described that wasn't getting results. And there's a reason for that – studying evidence is hard work. But I can tell you from my experience as a software engineer, there is no better way to convince other

people to adopt your view than to show them working code that produces results. If they have a prototype, they will adopt your design. Similarly with Christianity. If you have evidence, then you will be persuasive.

When talking about spiritual things with non-Christians, always remember the joke about the two men walking in the woods who meet a bear. One man starts to put on his running shoes. The other man says “what are you doing? you can’t outrun a bear!” And the first man says “I don’t have to. I only have to outrun you”. It’s the same with apologetics. You don’t have to be William Lane Craig to talk about your faith to non-Christians. You just have to know more than your non-Christian opponent knows about evidence.

The way things are going these days with the public schools and the mainstream news media, this is actually pretty easy to do. One or two introductory books on the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning for intelligent life, the origin of biological information, the origin of body plans, the historical reliability of the New Testament, the minimal facts case for the resurrection, etc. will do the job. You might need another one on philosophical challenges like evil, suffering, divine hiddenness, etc. But we’re talking no more than 5 books, and you’ll be effective in the vast majority of your conversations. If you can only get one book, I like Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow’s “Is God Just a Human Invention?” best.

Progressive white women report high levels of mental illness in 2020 Pew survey

December 1, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have the most amazing video for you to see. It's a crazy left-wing activist doxing a libertarian lesbian woman wearing a breathe-through mask. First, let's take a look at the video. Then, we'll look at a recent survey reported by Pew Research in 2020, which assesses how mentally stable far-left feminist women are (self-reported). Then, I'll make some comments for unmarried men.

OK, so here is the video, which was shared by the woman who was doxed. So it's OK for me to share it, since the doxed woman didn't care about it.

So, is this crazy woman rare? Or is she common?

Progressive white women and mental illness

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

Here's the part of the data I thought was most interesting:

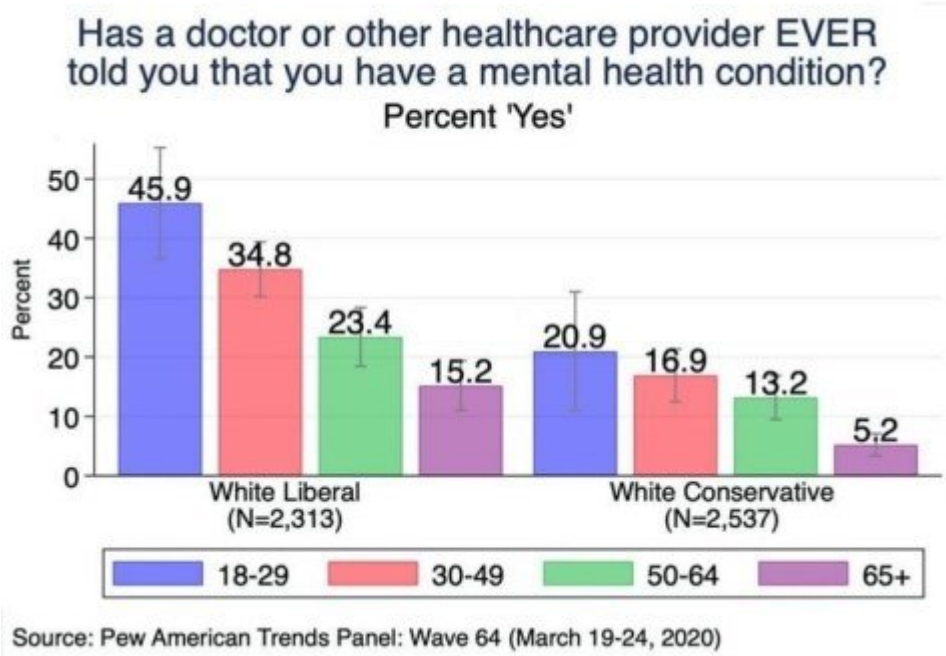

Who would marry a crazy person?

So, the point about this that I want to make is… who is going to marry these mentally ill progressive white women? Being a good wife and mother takes a certain amount of connection to reality. It takes a certain amount of empathy, compassion, and rationality. These progressive white women don't have any of that. So, who is going to marry them? I know that there are thirsty progressive men (and thirsty conservative men who fake being progressive), who will go ahead and hit it and quit it. Pump it and dump it. But how many men would commit to someone who's mentally ill?

And in fact, that's exactly what we're seeing with the marriage rates:

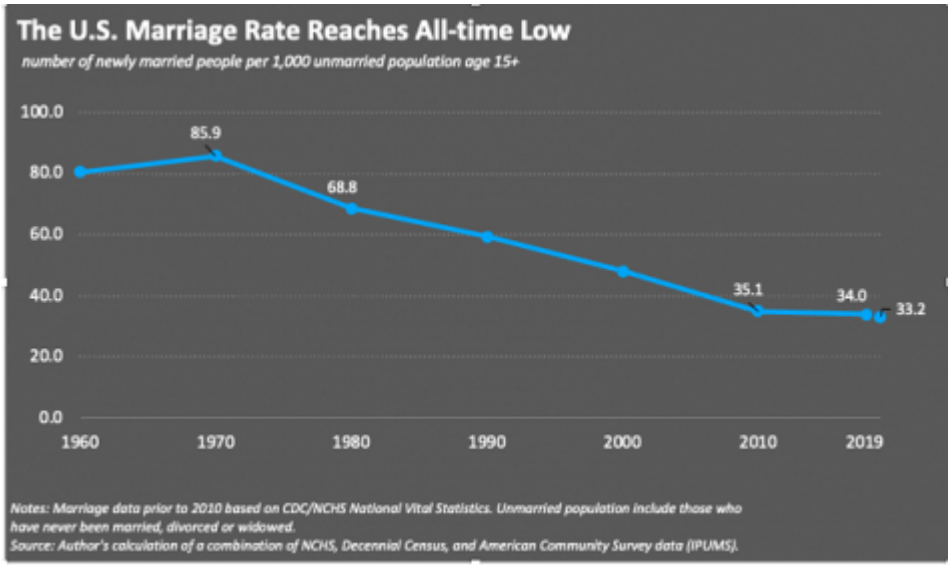

That's for America, but things are even worse in countries that have slid further toward the secular left edge of the political spectrum.

When you look at marriage rates in Canada and Europe, you understand that men are even LESS likely to choose marriage when they have to pay over 50% of what they earn in taxes. And so the marriage rate is declining. I think young, unmarried women in

Canada and Europe are want to raise taxes in order to get free stuff from government. Single mother welfare, food stamps, abortions, contraceptives, IVF, breast enlargements, etc. Some feminists are even asking for free cosmetic surgery. With a big enough government, they don't have to marry at all. Big government leaves them free to play the field, without having to care about finding a good man. But what if taxes get so high that the few good men those women passed over for 40 years simply can't afford to take on a wife and support multiple children he didn't father? Paying for things like a stay-at-home wife and homeschooling, etc. is expensive. Men can't afford a wife, and also pay for goodies for all the single progressive women with mental illnesses.

Conservative men want nothing to do with daycare and public schools – we know that those facilities are *dominated* by progressive women. And we don't want trouble from feminist lawyers and feminist judges in the divorce courts. Divorce is very expensive for men. And we may never see our children again. Then there are the progressive white women in the workplace, who get very bitter with men as a result of getting wrecked by bad boys. Even if we find a good wife, we still have to deal with all these progressive white women with mental illnesses in positions of power. Is it worth it to take risks like this? It depends on the reward, I guess. There comes a point where the juice isn't worth the squeeze.

Poll: Florida governor Ron DeSantis at -3 among independent voters, while Trump is at -39

December 2, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Who should Republicans nominate for President in 2024? Well, it depends on what Republicans want. If Republicans want to win, then they should nominate DeSantis. In order to win the election, the Republican candidate will need to win independents. And DeSantis is doing better with independents than Trump. A LOT BETTER. Let's take a look at the latest poll data.

This is from Daily Wire:

> The poll from WPA Intelligence — a conservative firm that has been used by top Republican U.S. Senators and top conservative organizations like the Family Research Council — surveyed 1,160 registered voters nationwide and has a margin of error of +/-2.9% at the 95% confidence level.

Here are the interesting numbers, with respect to winning in 2024:

- Florida Governor Ron DeSantis' net favorability ratings surpass Trump among Republicans (+66 vs. +44), Fox News viewers (+58 vs. +27), and Trump's own 2020 voters (+69 vs. +54).
- DeSantis is also well liked by a broad coalition of Republicans with a 68%/0% favorable/unfavorable rating among self-described "Trump Republicans"; 71%/9% among "Traditional Republicans"; and 82%/5% among "Reagan Republicans."
- DeSantis has more crossover appeal than both Trump and Biden with a net -3 favorability rating among Independent voters compared to -27 for Biden and -39 for Trump.
- Additionally, 66% of Independents view Trump unfavorably, including 52% who view him "very unfavorably."

This is scary for Trump:

- Sixty-four percent of all voters — including 60% of Republicans, 63% of Independents, and 65% of split-ticket voters — say Donald Trump was a major reason for the Republican Party's poor performance in the midterm elections.

I think Trump did a fine job as president, the most conservative president in my lifetime.

However, he was elected to drain the swamp, and he wasn't willing or able to do that.

I'm carefully monitoring the actions of Ron DeSantis in Florida. I have no interest in what he says. And what I'm most interested in is how he is handling Disney and Blackrock, two big secular left companies.

Here is the action on Disney, reported in the New York Post:

> Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill Friday nixing the Walt Disney Company's sweet tax deal with the state — after the entertainment giant opposed its so-called "Don't Say Gay" law.
>
> Asserting that the company was aiming to "inject sexuality" into its content, DeSantis said he was not "comfortable having that type of agenda getting special treatment in my state."
>
> Enacted in 1967 to attract Disney to Florida, the so-called Reedy Creek Improvement District gives the company near autonomy — including control over police and fire units as well as infrastructure management — at its properties.
>
> The abrupt nixing of the 55-year-old pact came after Disney objected to legislation DeSantis initiated that banned instruction on gender identity and sexual orientation for kids in kindergarten through the third grade.

Here is the action on Blackrock, reported by Daily Wire:

> Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a fierce foe of the woke agenda permeating major corporations, has yanked a huge $2 billion worth of Florida's assets from BlackRock, Inc., whose CEO, Larry Fink, has championed "stakeholder capitalism" to use shareholders' money to finance his woke agenda.
>
> In a harsh condemnation of BlackRock, Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis made the announcement for the state on Thursday that $1.43 billion of Florida's Long Duration Portfolio and of its $600 million Short Term Investment Fund (STIF) managed by BlackRock would be pulled. By the start of 2023, Florida's Treasury will have divested from BlackRock's management of all short and long-term investments.

I understand the secular left. They like to talk their way out of problems. They think that they can trample over the Constitution and human rights with their virtue signaling talk. That's why I am watching to see whether DeSantis wants to talk to them, or whether he just wants to rip money out of their bank accounts. So far, he seems to be interested in actions. And that's why he's my pick in 2024. We have to elect someone who will take action against the the pedophiles and the groomers. Someone who understands how to communicate to them in a language that they understand.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

December 3, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining the outline of the podcast.

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other

examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

Woman asks female friends: why are you 38 years old, but acting like 23-year-olds?

December 4, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I watched a very interesting video on Friday, featuring a 35-year-old woman who spoke to 4 of her 38-year-old friends. In the video, she admits to having been in a relationship that has been going on for 6 months, with no talk about purpose or commitment. The 38-year-olds are the same. What's interesting is that all of these women say that they want to get married "some day" and have children.

Here's the video, it's just under 9 minutes:

So what I wanted to say about this is simple. Young, unmarried women today are not connecting their day-to-day choices with their stated long-term goals. Their long-term goals are marriage and children. But their decision making in the moment has the purpose of maximizing "fun". The primary purpose of men they are choosing is providing these women with FUN. And fun doesn't just mean travel, gifts, experiences, etc., but also premarital sex. These women are not looking for leadership, nor commitment, nor chastity, nor sobriety, nor frugality, nor fidelity. In fact, they see moral character and commitment as BORING, and seek to avoid it. They do not want a good man leading them towards commitment behaviors and marriage responsibilities.

According to the video, this fun-seeking starts in the mid-teen-years, and continues right through to age 40. In my experience, the reasons why women change their minds about which men they want in their mid-30s and early 40s is not because they believe in traditional marriage. It's because they want 1) social respectability, 2) financial security, 3) needing a handyman, 4) wanting a father figure for the babies they made with no-commitment men.

Many of these women are just concerned about "falling behind" their peers who are getting married or having children. They don't really like husbands, marriages or raising children. They just need to keep up with their friends. They don't see marriage as having goals like building civil society or raising productive, moral children. They are not interested in marriage as self-sacrifice. They are not interested in marriage as a set of obligations or responsibilities.

Are feminists good at marriage?

Previously, I blogged about how 68% of unmarried women voted Democrat in the 2022 mid-term elections. That means that 68% of unmarried women favor unrestricted abortion, no-fault divorce, same-sex marriage, transgender radicalism, and every other secular left social policy you can imagine. They also favor fiscal policies that drain money from husbands to pay for things like taxpayer-funded sex changes, persecuting Christians who dissent from abortion or LGBT, single-mother welfare (fatherlessness by choice), etc. These policy preferences support fun-seeking, but they they are not the policies that

marriage-minded men support.

Right now, the culture is so hostile to marriage-minded men, that they are rightly focusing on their own educations, careers and finances. They do not display their wealth to unmarried women, or spend their wealth on unmarried women. They want to be left alone. They want to retire early. They do not think that marriage to a feminist in her mid-30s – a feminist who is not even attracted to them *as leaders of the home* – is a good idea.

The things men are looking for in a wife / mother cannot be developed overnight after 20 years of "fun". Although women might think that they are building up their value with travel, student loans, public sector "work", cheating, break-ups, and a high body count, they are NOT. Marriage-minded men don't want those things. Showing up in church after 20 years of "fun" might get you rconciled with God, but it isn't going to be useful to a marriage-minded man looking for demonstrated ability at wife and mother roles. Think of marriage as a job. An empty wife / mother resume isn't going to be fixed by a couple of weeks of church attendance.

If women are interested in marriage, the first step is to become a strong opponent of feminism. And that means choosing men who are good at moral leading and spiritual leading *early on*. Letting go of the pursuit of "fun" early, and focusing on marriage and children right from the start. It seems to me that there needs to be serious thinking about what marriage-minded men want from women as wives and mothers.

Twitter censored news stories at the request of Biden's Democrat regime

December 5, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A very interesting story broke on the weekend. Twitter's new owner Elon Musk decided to release documents that reveal how the Democrat party was able to contact Twitter in order to have critics of the regime banned. The Democrat party could also contact Twitter to have stories critical of the regime censored. It turns out that our secular left fascists are the same as any others in history.

Here's the story from Daily Wire:

> Twitter CEO Elon Musk released information through journalist Matt Taibbi Friday afternoon showing that Twitter was working in conjunction with then-Democrat presidential candidate Joe Biden's team, removing tweets that team Biden wanted deleted.
>
> Musk said that he decided to release the information because it was "necessary to restore public trust" in the platform after it censored the New York Post's bombshell report about Hunter Biden's laptop just weeks before the 2020 presidential election.
>
> Musk quote retweeted Taibbi's multi-tweet thread on Twitter, writing: "Here we go!!"
>
> Taibbi began by explaining that the company was "slowly forced to add … tools for controlling speech [that] were designed to combat the likes of spam and financial fraudsters."
>
> "Slowly, over time, Twitter staff and executives began to find more and more uses for these tools. Outsiders began petitioning the company to manipulate speech as well: first a little, then more often, then constantly," Taibbi said. "By 2020, requests from connected actors to delete tweets were routine. One executive would write to another: 'More to review from the Biden team.' The reply would come back: 'Handled.'"

Remember the New York Post's story about Hunter Biden's laptop?

> "Twitter took extraordinary steps to suppress the story, removing links and posting warnings that it may be 'unsafe,'" Taibbi continued. "They even blocked its transmission via direct message, a tool hitherto reserved for extreme cases, e.g. child pornography."

The Federalist recalls how Facebook also censored stories that were critical of the Biden regime, at the request of the Biden regime:

> Just this week, FBI Supervisory Special Agent Elvis Chan confirmed the government's information suppression campaign to Attorneys General Eric

> Schmitt of Missouri and Jeff Landry of Louisiana. In his testimony, Chan disclosed that agents from the FBI's Foreign Influence Task Force and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency met weekly with Big Tech companies to encourage censorship ahead of the 2020 election.
>
> The FBI's instructions inspired Facebook to reduce distribution on posts reporting about the laptop, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg admitted earlier this year.
>
> "If the FBI… if they come to us and tell us we need to be on guard about something, then I want to take that seriously," Zuckerberg said on an episode of "The Joe Rogan Experience."
>
> When the corporate media and dozens of former intelligence heads quickly brushed off Biden family corruption under the guise of "Russian disinformation," Facebook saw its opportunity to throttle the story that would give its preferred president a bad rap.

It's very interesting. I've read something about secular left regimes in history. The Nazis in Germany. The communists in Russia and China. And so on. The methods of the Democrat party and their allies in Big Tech are analogous to the methods of these other secular left regimes. It's surprising to me that so many voters would support fascist political parties. But I guess if they don't learn much about history in the unionized government-run public schools, then we shouldn't be surprised.

How do schools and school boards handle rapes committed by transgender students?

December 6, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There's an update on the Virginia public schools, school board, and attorney who were involved with the student being raped. I feel the case is helpful, because it shows parents what sort of accountability can expect if they entrust their children to public schools. And remember: all the bad actors in this post are taxpayer-funded. The parents are paying them to do what they're doing.

Here's the story from The Federalist:

> A special grand jury in Loudoun County, Virginia, found that a legal representative for the locality's school board allegedly engaged in witness tampering during an investigation into the board and school administrators' handling of a purported sexual assault of a female student at the hands of a "gender fluid" boy in a high school bathroom last year.
>
> In a report released Wednesday, the grand jury revealed that the division counsel for the Loudoun County School Board (LCSB) was "obstructionist" throughout the "witness testimony" portion of the investigation, often cutting off the board members he represented whenever "he felt certain information was about to be revealed."

It's not just the school board, it's the schools themselves:

> Loudoun Superintendent Scott Ziegler lied to the public at a school board meeting in June 2021 when he claimed that he had no knowledge of any sexual assaults occurring in school bathrooms, despite an email from the day of the assault showing otherwise.

They're very good at adopting a "don't judge" approach to running their public schools:

> A special education teaching assistant, for instance, walked into the bathroom while the May 28, 2021, assault was occurring but failed to report it to school administrators, even after noticing two pairs of feet in one of the stalls.
>
> […]Despite school officials' knowledge of the assault not long after it occurred, the assailant remained "at large in the school for over three hours," according to the report.

I checked a few articles, and the special education teacher. I wonder if she is one of these "don't judge" feminists that I am always reading about. She certainly wasn't willing to protect the student.

Loudoun County schools and school boards go after parents who object to their children being raped.

The Daily Caller had previously reported this, in 2021:

> The commonwealth attorney for Loudoun County, Virginia, tried to jail a father who was charged with two misdemeanors after he uncovered that his daughter was sexually assaulted, despite campaigning to end "mass incarceration" in the area.
>
> Commonwealth Attorney Buta Biberaj appeared in court to prosecute Scott Smith — the man whose daughter was sexually assaulted in a Loudoun County public high school bathroom — for misdemeanors. A spokeswoman for the Smith family told the Daily Caller that Biberaj attempted to lock Smith up for the misdemeanors of disorderly conduct and resisting arrest.
>
> […]After facing charges of assault at one high school in Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS), the teen was moved to a different high school under the supervision of Biberaj. Biberaj has since defended her decision stating that the teen "had no history of having done this prior to this offense that was alleged," according to Fox 5.

This person's salary is taxpayer-funded:

> Biberaj has ties to far-left organizations. Per the Daily Caller's reporting, Biberaj was elected to her position with a cash infusion from a George Soros-funded PAC. She is also a signatory member of the Virginia Progressive Prosecutors for Justice. The organization's members pledge not to enforce any laws that they dub "anti-abortion."
>
> The commonwealth attorney is a friend of several of the Loudoun County school district's board members, including Superintendent Scott Ziegler. She also remains a member of a Facebook group that compiled a list of parents they suspect of disagreeing with the district's "anti-racist" curriculum.

She wants to punish parents, but she goes easy on rapists. That's the new religion of "don't judge" that is so popular in our schools and courts. Should you entrust your children to the "don't judge" education system, and the "don't judge" court system?

Good men do not want to co-parent with the government

Do you ever wonder why marriage-minded men are declining to get married and have children these days? Maybe they have heard stories about the "compassionate" public schools, school boards, and courts? Maybe they understand that they do not want to co-parent with the government? I can tell you right now that good men DO NOT GET MARRIED if they believe that they will be persecuted by the "compassionate" "don't judge" government workers.

Biden administration retaliated against woman who accused Biden of sexual assault

December 7, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lately, we've been talking about how Twitter censored critics of the Biden administration, and how Twitter censored news stories that were critical of Hunter Biden, in order to influence the elections to help the Democrat party. Today, I'm blogging about the latest: how the Biden administration retaliated against a woman who accused Biden of sexual assault.

Here's the story from Ashe Schow, writing for the Daily Wire:

> Several months after former Senate staffer Tara Reade accused Joe Biden of sexual assault, the Department of Justice (DOJ) issued a subpoena to Twitter demanding personal information on her accounts, including credit card or bank account numbers.
>
> The subpoena was only recently revealed by the Daily Caller, which obtained emails and documents relating to the incident showing the DOJ asked Twitter to testify in front of a grand jury on December 16, 2020, to provide "all subscriber information" for Reade's accounts. The information was requested of two accounts belonging to Reade, including @ReadeAlexandra and @TaraMcCabe.
>
> The DOJ requested the following information from the accounts, according to the Caller:
>
> 1. Subscriber name;
> 2. Address;
> 3. Records of session times and durations, to include attempted/failed/unauthenticated logins;
> 4. Length of service (including start date) and types of service utilized;
> 5. Telephone or instrument number or other subscriber number or identity, including any temporarily assigned network address; and
> 6. Means and source of payment for such service (including any credit card or bank account number)

You might remember how the corporate news media, which is allied with the Democrat party, handled the story at the time:

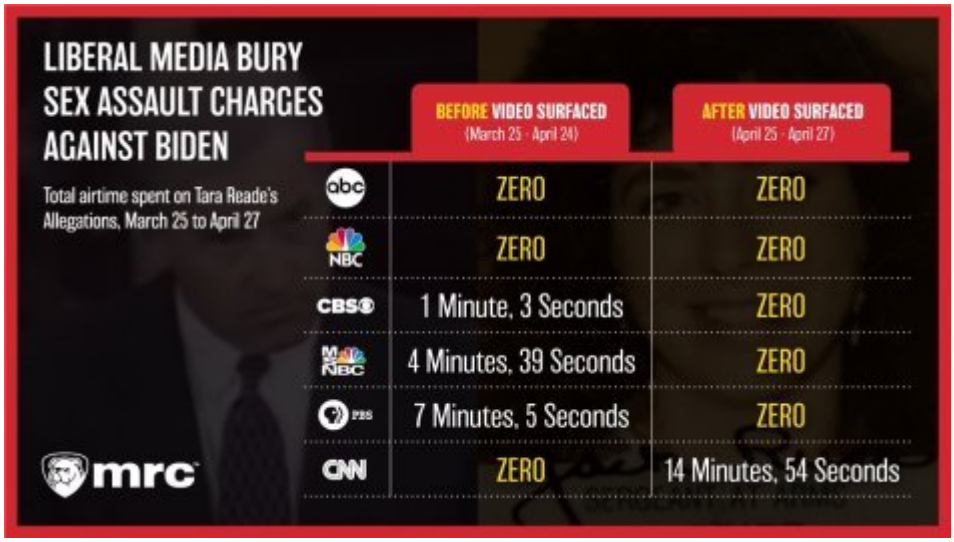

Democrats in the news media are covering up the Biden scandal

At the time, it was reported that the accuser had talked about the allegations to other people:

The far-left Business Insider reported:

> In March, when a former aide to Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden accused the candidate of sexually assaulting her in 1993, two people came forward to say that the woman, Tara Reade, had told them of the incident shortly after it allegedly occurred — her brother, Collin Moulton, and a friend who asked to remain anonymous for fear of retribution.
>
> Now two more sources have come forward to corroborate certain details about Reade's claims. One of them — a former neighbor of Reade's — has told Insider for the first time, on the record, that Reade disclosed details about the alleged assault to her in the mid-1990s.
>
> "This happened, and I know it did because I remember talking about it," Lynda LaCasse, who lived next door to Reade in the mid-'90s, told Insider.
>
> The other source, Lorraine Sanchez, who worked with Reade in the office of a California state senator in the mid-'90s, told Insider that she recalls Reade complaining at the time that her former boss in Washington, DC, had sexually harassed her, and that she had been fired after raising concerns.

Believe all women? Well, the corporate news media wasn't interested in believing this woman.

Daily Wire explains:

> Tara Reade, the woman accusing former Vice President Joe Biden of sexual assault, told Fox News Sunday that she's "disappointed" in the media — and especially CNN anchor Anderson Cooper — for avoiding asking Biden about her allegations in at least two interviews, calling anchors' behavior "shocking" and partisan.
>
> Reade made her claims more than a month ago, on a podcast with progressive

> political commentator Katie Halper. She says Biden sexually assaulted her back in the mid-1990s, when she worked as an aide in his Senate office, and alleges that she was fired when she considered going to authorities to report Biden's behavior.
>
> Since Reade first went public with her story, "Biden has done nearly a dozen TV interviews with news anchors including NBC News' Chuck Todd, ABC News' George Stephanopoulos, and twice with Cooper," Fox News reports, and all of them "failed to ask Biden about [Reade's] public claim."

Do Democrat feminists really care about rape and sexual assault? It's complicated. Do Democrat feminists believe all women? It depends on the political party of the man she's accusing. That's how it works at election time.

William Lane Craig on the unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

December 8, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember that Dr. Craig used a new argument in his debate with Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia.

My notes on the debate record it thus:

> The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
>
> - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
> - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
> - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
> - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see

And now Dr. Craig has expanded on it in the Q&A section of his Reasonable Faith web site.

The question:

> Dear Dr Craig
>
> Firstly can I thank you for all your work. My faith in Christ has been enormously strengthened through studying your work in apologetics in particular and I have grown in confidence in my Christian witness.
>
> My question relates to numbers and mathematics as a whole. On the Defenders podcast you state that as God is the only self-existent, necessary being, numbers and mathematical objects, whilst being useful, don't actually exist as these too would exist necessarily and independently of God. If this is the case, how can it be that mathematics is so easily applied to the natural world? Surely if mathematics only existed in our minds, we would expect to see no correlation between it and how the physical world actually is?
>
> Michael
>
> United Kingdom

Excerpt from the answer:

> As philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng points out, for the non-theistic realist, the fact that physical reality behaves in line with the dictates of acausal mathematical entities existing beyond space and time is "a happy coincidence" (*Mathematics and Reality* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 239). Think

> about it: If, *per impossibile*, all the abstract objects in the mathematical realm were to disappear overnight, there would be no effect on the physical world. This is simply to reiterate that abstract objects are causally inert. The idea that realism somehow accounts for the applicability of mathematics "is actually very counterintuitive," muses Mark Balaguer, a philosopher of mathematics. "The idea here is that in order to believe that the physical world has the nature that empirical science assigns to it, I have to believe that there are causally inert mathematical objects, existing outside of spacetime," an idea which is inherently implausible (*Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 136).
>
> By contrast, the theistic realist can argue that God has fashioned the world on the structure of the mathematical objects. This is essentially what Plato believed. The world has mathematical structure as a result.

This argument was also made by mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley in a lecture he gave on scientific evidence for an intelligent designer. You can read an essay that covers some of the material in that lecture at Leadership University.

Excerpt:

> The physical universe is surprising in the simple mathematical form it assumes. All the basic laws of physics and fundamental relationships can be described on one side of one sheet of paper because they are so few in number and so simple in form (see table 1.1).
>
> […]It has been widely recognized for some time that nature assumes a form that is elegantly described by a relatively small number of simple, mathematical relationships, as previously noted in table 1.1. None of the various proposals presented later in this chapter to explain the complexity of the universe address this issue. Albert Einstein in a letter to a friend expressed his amazement that the universe takes such a form (Einstein 1956), saying:
>
> You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world to the degree that we may speak of such comprehensibility as a miracle or an eternal mystery. Well, a priori one should expect a chaotic world which cannot be in any way grasped through thought. . . . The kind of order created, for example, by Newton's theory of gravity is of quite a different kind. Even if the axioms of the theory are posited by a human being, the success of such an enterprise presupposes an order in the objective world of a high degree which one has no a priori right to expect. That is the "miracle" which grows increasingly persuasive with the increasing development of knowledge.
>
> Alexander Polykov (1986), one of the top physicists in Russia, commenting on the mathematical character of the universe, said: "We know that nature is described by the best of all possible mathematics because God created it." Paul Davies, an astrophysicist from England, says, "The equations of physics have in them

> incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe" (Davies 1984). Successful development of a unified field theory in the future would only add to this remarkable situation, further reducing the number of equations required to describe nature, indicating even further unity and integration in the natural phenomena than have been observed to date.

The whole paper that started this off is called "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics", and it is a must read for advanced Christian defenders. You can read the whole thing here.

Leaked: Twitter targeted conservatives and critics of Biden with censorship, bans, blacklists

December 9, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

And there are links to the FBI and CIA, too! The only reason we are finding out about Big Tech's targeting of conservatives (and election interference to help Democrats) is because Elon Musk is releasing Twitter secrets. But the same thing is happening in all Big Tech companies. Let's take a look at what was dumped on Thursday night. Watch for mentions of the FBI in these stories.

First, this article from Daily Wire:

> The second installment of the so-called "Twitter Files" was released Thursday evening after the company turned over documents to a journalist who then started to publish the findings on the platform.
>
> […]"A new Twitter Files investigation reveals that teams of Twitter employees build blacklists, prevent disfavored tweets from trending, and actively limit the visibility of entire accounts or even trending topics—all in secret, without informing users," Weiss tweeted. "Take, for example, Stanford's Dr. Jay Bhattacharya (@DrJBhattacharya) who argued that Covid lockdowns would harm children. Twitter secretly placed him on a 'Trends Blacklist,' which prevented his tweets from trending."

When they say Stanford, they mean STANFORD UNIVERSITY. The little secular leftists, with their non-STEM degrees, *decided to ban a professor of Medicine from Stanford University*. He holds an MD and PhD in economics from Stanford University. This was truly a case of emotion-based imbeciles banning the best and brightest. They had to protect their delusions from the truth by using force.

> "Or consider the popular right-wing talk show host, Dan Bongino (@dbongino), who at one point was slapped with a 'Search Blacklist,'" Weiss continued.

Well-known Charlie Kirk was hit with a "Do Not Amplify" tag on his account.

More:

> Weiss highlighted how executives at the company, including leftist Vijaya Gadde, then-Head of Legal Policy and Trust, had previously denied that the company took these actions.

Vijaya denied that Twitter shadow-banned users who had the "wrong" political viewpoints and ideologies. Now we know that Twitter did exactly that. Vijaya was one of the first to be fired by Musk after he acquired Twitter.

The article notes that the previous data dump was actually being "vetted" by "former Twitter Deputy General Counsel Jim Baker — the same Jim Baker at the center of Trump-

era drama at the FBI". I say former, because Musk fired him.

One of the accounts I follow on Twitter is LibsOfTikTok, which is famous for re-posting videos of LGBT activists that they themselves already posted for the public to see. (She is just re-posting it, so more people can see what LGBT activists say in public)

Another Daily Wire article noted:

> "The account… was subjected to six suspensions in 2022 alone, [she] says. Each time, [she] was blocked from posting for as long as a week," Weiss said. "Twitter repeatedly informed [her] that she had been suspended for violating Twitter's policy against 'hateful conduct.'"
>
> However, those at the highest level secretly admitted that they knew Libs of TikTok did not violate any of the site's rules, yet they wanted her suspended.

And:

> Weiss then showed how Twitter took a much different approach when Libs of TikTok reported that she was the victim of harassment on the platform that violated its terms of service.
>
> "Compare this to what happened when [she] herself was doxxed on November 21, 2022. A photo of her home with her address was posted in a tweet that has garnered more than 10,000 likes," Weiss said. "When [she] told Twitter that her address had been disseminated she says Twitter Support responded with this message: 'We reviewed the reported content, and didn't find it to be in violation of the Twitter rules.' No action was taken. The doxxing tweet is still up."

I thought this tweet from Andy Ngo was interesting:

And this tweet about the Department of Defense:

I hope that there will be lawsuits against these former Twitter employees. They should have their bank accounts cleaned out, and then be imprisoned for life.

And this from Elon Musk himself:

I really hope that there will be more revelations about how the secular left operates inside these Big Tech companies. Secular leftists cannot rationally ground objective morality. You can no more expect them to behave morally than you can expect a cat to read a

book. They don’t have the capacity to even understand what morality is. They do what feels good to them, what gets them ahead in life, what makes the people around them think highly of them. No integrity whatsoever.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

December 10, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

N.T. Wright: what is the best explanation for the early belief in a bodily resurrection?

December 11, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are progressive). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's a video of his case for the resurrection:

You can read an article similar to the lecture here.

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable* apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> The Christian claim from the beginning was that the question of Jesus's resurrection was a question, not of the internal mental and spiritual states of his followers a few days after his crucifixion, but about something that had happened in the real, public world.
>
> This "something" left not only an empty tomb, but a broken loaf at Emmaus and footprints in the sand by the lake among its physical mementoes. It also left his followers with a lot of explaining to do, but with a transformed worldview which is only explicable on the assumption that something really did happen, even though it stretched their existing worldviews to breaking point.
>
> What I want to do here is to examine this early Christian claim, to ask what can be said about it historically, and to enquire, more particularly, what sort of

> “believing” we are talking about when we ask whether we – whether “we” be scientists or historians or mathematicians or theologians – can “believe” that which “the resurrection” actually refers to.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus’ resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being “born-again”.
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn’t supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn’t Jesus’ followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an invented exaltation was already available to do the job.
3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and “theology historicized”. If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: “Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later.” Plain vanilla narrative.

5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.
6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

Why was Twitter so focused on banning people who opposed sexualizing children?

December 12, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I cannot even keep up with all of the news that is coming out about the Biden administration's collusion with Twitter in order to interfere with the 2020 election. Last week, I wrote about part one and part two of the Twitter dumps. In this post, I'll have to cover two in order to catch up: 3) federal departments collusion with Twitter, and 4) the banning of Donald Trump by Twitter.

Here's part 3 from Daily Wire:

> The third installment of the so-called "Twitter Files" released Friday night showed that federal agencies were in contact with Twitter during the 2020 presidential election and were involved in censoring content on the platform.
>
> […]Then-Twitter Policy Director Nick Pickles appeared to admit that the platform was meeting officials from the FBI and DHS regarding some of the actions that it was taking.
>
> Yoel Roth, then-Twitter Global Head for Trust & Safety, confirmed in an internal message that he was meeting with the FBI, DHS, and Director of National Intelligence about election security and about the Hunter Biden laptop story. The DHS, FBI, and DOJ said during the election that the laptop story was not disinformation, which the former Director of National Intelligence confirmed to The Daily Wire on Friday night.

We'll come back to Yoel Roth in a minute, but first let's see what was in part 4 of the "Twitter Files", reported in the Daily Wire:

> The fourth installment of "The Twitter Files" released over the weekend revealed new information about the actions that led up to the platform banning former President Donald Trump following the January 6, 2021, riot in the nation's capital.
>
> […]Shellenberger… noted tweets from former Twitter Global Lead of Trust & Safety Yoel Roth that were derogatory towards conservatives, which has been public knowledge for years and has previously been reported on.
>
> […]The next tweet showed that Roth told a senior executive Dorsey intended for Trump to be banned for "*ANY* policy violation" after the 12-hour suspension was lifted on his account. Roth said that due to the unique circumstances of everything that was happening that Twitter was, in Trump's case, dropping its "public interest" policy which previously let Trump stay on the platform despite violations because what Trump had to say was deemed to be relevant to public policy. In essence, Twitter altered its processes and rules in real-time to adapt to the situation the company was dealing with.

They changed their policies just for the Republican candidate for president, just before the 2020 election.

Why was Yoel Roth so filled with hatred for conservatives? What issue was driving him to collude with the Biden administration in order to use Twitter to help the Democrat party?

Here is a little more about his "education":

> During the fall semester, Yoel Roth '11 returned to campus to deliver a lecture titled "Swiping Left: Identity, Preference, and the Politics of Online Dating." In the lecture, Roth gives an overview of the development of online dating sites and explores notions of privacy and self-expression with a particular focus on the case studies of Tinder and Grindr.
>
> Roth earned his B.A. from Swarthmore College with honors in political science. He received his Ph.D. from the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. His research focuses on the privacy and self-expression choices of gay men using geosocial networking services like Grindr. He currently works on the Trust & Safety team at Twitter, developing policies and products to promote the privacy and safety of Twitter users worldwide.

Grindr, as you may know, is the hook-up app primarily used by gay men. I didn't know you could do a PhD in gay hook-up apps. I had to write code in order to earn my graduate degree in computer science.

Yoel Roth is not known for his skills in computer science, which makes me wonder why he works for Twitter?

> According to his LinkedIn, Roth has a bachelor's degree in film and media studies and political science from Swarthmore College… Roth has full professional proficiency in English and Hebrew, according to his LinkedIn page.

Film Studies and political science.

Here is Elon Musk talking about Yoel's PhD thesis:

You might remember that Twitter also banned a lot of accounts that were critical of “grooming”, including Gay Against Groomers, which is an excellent association of gay people who are extremely opposed to grooming children for sex with adults. But Twitter banned them. Tweeting about grooming got you an immediate ban. I think they also made the #groomer hashtag illegal. Why so much hostility to people who oppose grooming children for sex, Yoel Roth?

There is a nice thread of his previous tweets here, if you want to understand him better.

Here is something interesting from Heavy.com:

> Roth is married. He wrote, “This reminds me of the time both of my husband’s boots suffered cascading failures 2 days into a hiking trip in a remote part of Japan. Turns out Japanese super-glue is extremely effective.”

Roth is male, and he has a husband. Not a wife.

Canadian Liberal Party proposes ban on shotguns and hunting rifles

December 13, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Canada is ahead of the United States on policy by about 10 years. Whatever you see the Canadians doing – infanticide, euthanasia, mass importation of unskilled immigrants who don't speak English – Canada will do it 10 years before the US does. So, we should all be concerned when Canada introduces legislation to ban almost all shotguns and hunting rifles.

Here's the latest from National Post – the less progressive of Canada's two national newspapers:

> Quietly tabled by Liberal MP Paul Chiang last month while the bill is debated at committee, two new amendments to Bill C-21 would widen the definition of "prohibited weapon" to include "a firearm that is a rifle or shotgun, that is capable of discharging centre-fire ammunition in a semi-automatic manner and that is designed to accept a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity greater than five cartridges of the type for which the firearm was originally designed," as well as add new firearms to its regulation schedules that, if approved, would outlaw many popular hunting and sport rifles.

Got that? It's not banning magazines of size greater than 5 rounds. It's banning guns that COULD accept a magazine with more than 5 rounds. That means all revolvers, all semi-automatics, and basically all rifles.

And it's worse than that.

In an earlier article from CBC, Canada's state-run, government-funded, far-left propaganda outlet:

> The list also names guns that fall afoul of two rules nominally intended to ban powerful military weapons such as .50-calibre sniper rifles and mortars. One rule bans long guns that can generate more than 10,000 joules of energy, and the other bans guns with a muzzle wider than 20 millimetres. Critics say those rules would ban everything from antique blunderbusses to the Nine O'clock Gun in Vancouver's Stanley Park.
>
> Lastly, the amendment prohibits, by name, a large number of semi-automatic firearms that do not have detachable magazines and don't meet the definition of an "assault-style firearm," or infringe the other two rules, but which the government wants to ban anyway. They include a number of long guns in wide use by Canadian hunters.

What about .22 rifles, used for hunting very small animals?

> […][O]ne version of the [Mossberg 702 .22 Plinkster long rifle]… is individually

> listed for prohibition in the amendments.

There isn't anyone in the Liberal Party of Canada who has read anything about the evidence on how firearm ownership reduces rates of violent crime. They not only haven't read anything about it, they couldn't even formulate the idea that firearms owned by law-abiding citizens would deter criminals from committing crimes. It literally makes no sense to them.

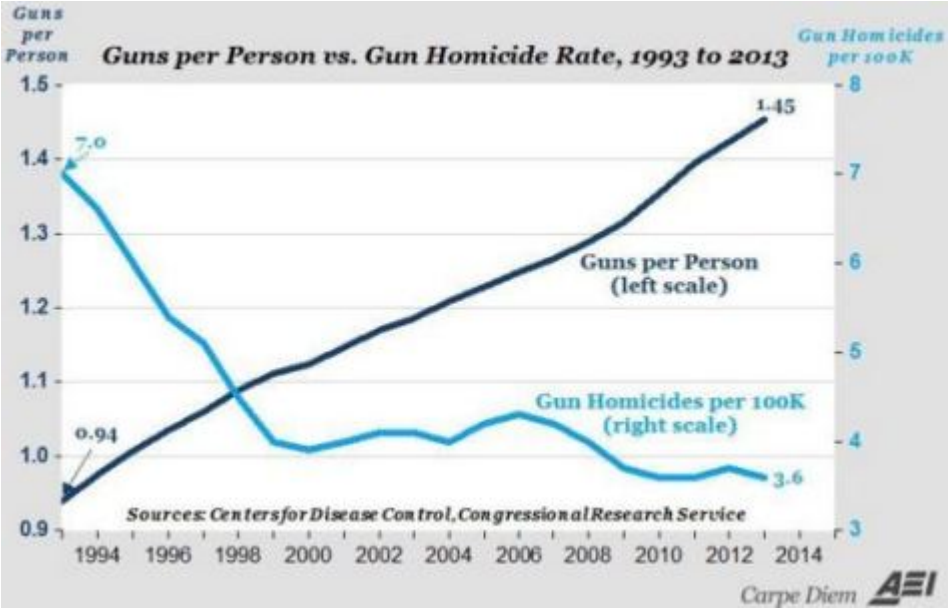

Gun ownership up, gun violence down

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

The book by economist John Lott, linked above, compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, which shows that the 1997 UK gun ban caused violent crime rates to MORE THAN DOUBLE in the four years following the ban. But both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

One of the common mistakes I see anti-gun advocates making is to use the metric of all "gun-related deaths". First of all, this completely ignores the effects of hand gun ownership on violent crime, as we've seen. Take away the guns from law-abiding people and violent crime skyrockets. But using the "gun-related deaths" number is especially wrong, because it includes suicides committed with guns. This is the majority (about two thirds) of gun related deaths, even in a country like America that has a massive inner-city gun violence problem caused by the epidemic of single motherhood by choice. If you take

out the gun-related SUICIDES, then the actual number of gun homicides has decreased as gun ownership has grown.

For a couple of useful graphs related to this point, check out this post over at the American Enterprise Institute.

So, back to Canada's Liberal Party. Their answer to law-abiding people who are about to have their homes broken into by burglars, rapists and murderers is "who cares?" They have nothing for you to defend yourself. And if you do defend yourself, you would probably be arrested, treated like a criminal, and punished, for making the real criminal feel bad.

After being paid, sex change surgeon ignores life-threatening complications

December 14, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, I see a lot of people posting stories about how much they regret taking puberty blockers, hormone replacement drugs, and especially having sex change surgeries. But the story I'll talk about below really takes the cake. It has to do with a doctor in Florida, who calls herself "Teetus Deletus" on social media. She likes to make videos of herself dancing and joking about "yeeting the teets" of her patients.

Here's the story from The Post Millennial:

> A former patient of the Yeet the Teets surgeon has told the harrowing story of life-threatening complications that led to having over half a foot of dead rotting tissue removed following a "gender-affirming" bilateral mastectomy.
>
> A trans-identified female has told the harrowing story of life-threatening complications that led to having over half a foot of dead rotting tissue removed following a bilateral mastectomy performed by Dr. Sidhbh Gallagher, the celebrity surgeon who advertises her "gender-affirming" services on social media to impressionable adolescents and who has apparently opted out of malpractice insurance as a crafty way to ensure no one can sue her.

The part I want to focus on is the denial of responsibility. It is so prevalent today that people on the secular left do what feels good to them, and then refuse any responsibility for the destruction they cause. They refuse to even acknowledge it, much less take responsibility to fix it. It's the same attitude you see in reckless hook-up sex, abortion as birth control, frivolous divorce, single motherhood by choice, and raising kids in same-sex homes so that they don't have a mother AND a father. Selfishness.

Let's make a list of what this sex change surgeon is like.

No taking precautions to address things that could go wrong:

> Mastectomies usually involve the insertion of drains to remove the blood, pus, and excess fluids that can build up in the week following the invasive procedure, and due to the seriousness of the surgery, most surgeons will require trans-identified females to be of a healthy weight to reduce the risk of complications. Neither of these precautions appear to be important to the Yeet the Teets celebrity gender-affirming surgeon.

Joking about the complications:

> For Rylan, the nightmare started on day 4 post-op, when a hematoma appeared and the wound started leaking blood, which Gallagher dismissed as "just bruising." It was suggested that the patient's weight was to blame, and true to form, the medical team even had a cutesy name for it: a "blowhole," and they

> joked that it was Rylan's "period."

Refusal to fix the problems:

> After flying home in agony and bleeding through clothes on the plane, Rylan spent days bed-ridden before ending up in the ER after a blood clot the size of a golf ball fell out of the wound.
>
> "I was splitting open and, within days, those two holes would both become gaping abscesses," said Rylan, who describes being "exhausted and in unspeakable pain."
>
> Photographs were sent of the incision and the clot, and Gallagher again replied that it was normal and there was "no need for the ER."

Refusal to take the escalation seriously:

> After another night of agonizing pain, Rylan woke to a frightening sight.
>
> "I saw that the hole in my incision had collapsed into a hollow, black cavity. Brown and dark yellow tissue were spilling slightly out of it. It had a putrid smell," recalls Rylan, who sent a photograph of this terrifying change to Gallagher, knowing deep down that she couldn't be trusted. Gallagher's response was: "It's looking good – not infected," and she advised putting "some antibiotic cream on the open area."

Someone else has to clean up her mess:

> Thankfully, Rylan was able to get an appointment with another "top surgeon" who saw the signs of infection immediately, put the patient on a course of antibiotics, and scheduled an emergency surgery to fix the mess that Gallagher, who calls herself Dr. Teetus Deletus on social media, had created.
>
> In the surgery 3 days later, over half a foot of Rylan's left side had to be removed as it had been killed by a bacteria "that has a high mortality rate."
>
> "When I saw the photo of what they removed, it dawned on me what would've happened if I'd listened to Dr. Gallagher," said Rylan.

No apology for the harm she caused:

> Gallagher hasn't checked in once with the patient she almost killed, and Rylan doesn't think she ever will.
>
> "In the wise words of the surgeon who saved my life, 'she doesn't give a sh*t about you,'" wrote Rylan.
>
> And she can't be sued, because she doesn't have insurance:
>
> But seeking advice from a medical malpractice lawyer revealed some shocking information. Gallagher has apparently opted out of malpractice insurance, making suing her almost impossible. Most lawyers will be reluctant to take on a case against an uninsured defendant as there would likely be no means for them

> to collect their fee. Rylan was told that Gallagher likely uses this loophole deliberately.

Can you imagine purchasing a product or a service where you couldn’t get any accountability for catastrophic failure? People need to be careful dealing with the secular left. They don’t like expectations, responsibilities or obligations. They just want to dance around and feel happy. You can’t count on reckless, irresponsible people like that. Beware of people who affirm you when you go down a self-destructive path. As soon as things blow up, they disappear. They make problems. They don’t solve problems.

What can men do to save this 24-year-old woman from toxic masculinity?

December 15, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting set of articles from a young woman who graduated from Pennsylvania State University. In one, she explains how a man she "hooked up" with treated her poorly. I think I've been able to figure out what her approach to relationships is. In this post, I'll explain her approach, and then discuss how social conservatives should solve problems like abortion and single motherhood.

NOTE: Please do not contact or harass this woman, just leave her alone.

So, here's the first, most important article:

> As someone who considers themselves a feminist, and I always thought that being sexual and unashamed was liberating and empowering. And for that reason, I never stopped myself from doing what I wanted to do.

In the article, she explains what it feels like to be used for sex and then ghosted by a man. She says that he never got to know her, and that makes her feel bad. What did he know about her? She says that she appeared to him as "just some blonde blacked out drunk". In the article, she describes lying awake next to him after sex, then getting up to walk home at 5:30 in the morning. And this is not the only toxic man in her life.

She says:

> This applies to more than a few people from my past… I started to realize this lifestyle wasn't working after I hooked up with a guy who thought New England was a state. And yeah, I still hooked up with him after finding out this knowledge about him… And I don't know if that says more about him that he didn't know or more about me since I was willing to overlook that fact **just to feel desired for a night**.
>
> Because I do turn to other people for validation. When I think about it objectively, **90% of the reason I hook-up with anyone is to feel good about myself**.

She calls the search for validation an "addiction":

> I am addicted to validation I got from getting with people. I needed that rush of dopamine. I needed to know I am wanted. I got addicted to hooking up. Cause it was the only thing that made me feel good about myself for a while. When I was feeling down, I turned to boys… that didn't care about anything except what I look like. And I have been blessed/cursed with a pretty fast metabolism and a naturally larger than average chest. So I always have known I could default to my looks for validation. It's the easiest thing to get recognition for. And I got addicted to being told I was hot, or pretty, or whatever.

In other articles, she explains what kinds of men she's looking for.

She's a strong Democrat.

> There are two kinds of Republicans: the ignorant and the evil. Either they are uninformed and dumb or aware of the world and other cultures other than their own and just too corrupt or bigoted to care. It's just that being a Republican seems to now stand for religious nuts, rich, rednecks, and racists. This current election cycle has only increased my deep seeded hatred for the right-wingers even more.
>
> And I can't help myself, but whenever I find out someone who I have been talking to or have been friends with is a Republican, I let out an audible "ugh, really?" I can not hide my disgust.

In another article, she explains that she's an atheist:

> If singing songs, praying or going to confession makes you feel better, by all means, do what you have to do to feel better. As long as you aren't hurting anyone, do what you want to do. As an atheist, it doesn't offend me. I just choose not to do it.
>
> For example, at thanksgiving dinner this year my family wanted to say grace before eating, but they know where I stand when it comes to religion.

She came out of a Christian family.

In another post, she explains why she cheated on her boyfriend:

> I wish I could say I don't know why I did it, but that would be a blatant lie. I found myself in someone else's bed because… I didn't have feelings for you anymore. If you were enough for me, then you would have been. But you weren't. I stopped craving your company. I felt guilty, sure, but not enough to stop me from doing it multiple times. I didn't care about you or how you felt. And as my feelings started to fade, yours only seemed to get stronger. I know that stings, but it's true.
>
> So when I would go out in that extra-lowcut dress you loved when I wore it around you and a cute guy would ask me to dance or to go hangout on the porch, I wouldn't mention you. I guess I got tired of turning people down when I didn't feel like there was any "good" reason to. I missed my freedom. I missed the exciting feelings that come with flirting with someone new. The whole giddy honeymoon phase, getting butterflies whenever someone texts you, stalking them on Facebook and pretending you know nothing about them, finding yourself daydreaming about the next time you hang out in class. But I think I skipped a step before getting with someone new– breaking it off with you first.

She seems to be guided primarily by her feelings. If the feelings are gone, they're gone. She doesn't try to pick a good guy and invest in the relationship so that she builds something. I don't think this is going to work for her to avoid bad men.

So, what kind of man is she looking for? She writes about how interested she is in “hot” guys in many of her articles. Guys with height, looks, tattoos, piercings, displayed wealth validate her more than guys who want to protect, provide, and lead her in moral and spiritual areas. I don’t think that the men she is choosing will treat her well – they just have too many options to focus on building something good with one woman.

She’s looking for a man who agrees with her on abortion and same-sex marriage. So, men like that don’t want to protect unborn children, and take responsibility for their choices. And a man who supports same-sex marriage is siding with selfish adults. Every same-sex relationship deprives a child of their bio-mom or bio-dad. That’s not a good man to build a stable marriage with.

Regarding religion, she’s uncomfortable with men who have definite exclusive views. Religion, for her, is not about truth at all. You shouldn’t make any exclusive claims that make people feel bad. Instead, just have your private religion that makes you feel better. She’s looking for men who will not lead her in moral and spiritual areas. That’s not a good man to date, either.

How is it working out for her?

Her worldview – feminism, atheism, socialism – doesn’t have the resources necessary for her to approach relationships in a way that will work for her, in the long run. She is not a Christian, pro-marriage, or conservative. The men she chooses are not Christians, pro-marriage, or conservative. This isn’t going to lead to a relationship that is faithful, exclusive and permanent. If that’s what she wants, then she is choosing the wrong people to get there. And even if she doesn’t want commitment now, she will some day. It’s better for her to focus on finding a good man now and building him up. Men make better husbands and fathers the sooner women get in there and support them at those goals.

I always urge young women to get a STEM degree and work in the private sector until they marry and have their first child. To make them think logically, take responsibility for engineering results, and to feel validated by their achievements. I wanted to see what her college major was – because I suspected that she did not do STEM. While searching, I stumbled upon her dating profile (posted on 9Gag by her), two Instagram pages full of selfies, a Tumblr blog of sexy photos, and an Only Fans page. Her LinkedIn page showed no current or previous work experience. To me, these things are clear signs that she is head straight for evil men who will hurt her.

Saving women from toxic masculinity

I think what we have to do is focus on her disappointment with the results of her own choices, and challenge her to change her worldview and relationship choices. She needs to stop rewarding the hot bad boys with free sex. There are good men out there who want to protect, provide and lead on moral and spiritual issues. She needs to be taught to focus on those good men.

Will the real intolerant bigot please stand up?

December 16, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that president Biden was boasting about how tolerant and compassionate secular leftists are, and how mean, intolerant and bigoted Christians and conservatives are. This is similar to Antifa burning down businesses and committing crimes, then fussing about how happily married Presbyterian couples with 5 homeschooled kids are the real threat to democracy.

Here's an article from The Federalist:

> The intolerant leftist mob is coming for Christians everywhere, and we were just the latest target in the way this past Wednesday night.
>
> The Family Foundation of Virginia is the largest and oldest pro-family advocacy organization in Virginia. Our team and supporters were denied a meal for our beliefs when Metzger's Bar and Butchery in Richmond, Virginia, refused to service our pre-reserved event, leaving us scrambling just moments before.
>
> For weeks, we had planned a gathering in a private room to fellowship and update supporters on our work. About an hour and a half before the event was set to take place, one of the restaurant's owners called our team to cancel. An employee had looked up our organization, and their wait staff refused to serve us.

This too:

> Already, our database provider was purchased by a larger company called Every Action, which immediately informed us we were being discontinued as a client. That forced shift cost us tens of thousands of dollars, as it is not as easy as pivoting to another restaurant to hold an event.

Here's another story from the Daily Caller:

> Ohio middle school teacher Vivian Geraghty filed a lawsuit after allegedly being fired for refusing to violate her religious beliefs by using preferred pronouns.
>
> Geraghty, a Christian and former teacher at Jackson Memorial Middle School, was told she was required to use two students' new pronouns and their preferred names in class, according to the lawsuit. Geraghty was fired after refusing to do so, at which point she sued the school's Board of Directors, principal Kacy Carter and Monica Myers, the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Everyone thinks that secular leftists are so compassionate and tolerant, but these two secular leftist women (Kacy Carter and Monica Myers) were very bold and determined in their bullying of Christian employees:

> […]Geraghty was allegedly required to explain her Christian faith and why that

> meant she could not comply by using the new pronouns, according to the lawsuit. Geraghty proceeded to explain that her faith did not align with changing one's pronouns, but was quickly dismissed.
>
> "Defendants Carter and Myers told Ms. Geraghty that 'she would be required to put her beliefs aside as a public servant,'" the lawsuit stated. "Ms. Geraghty explained that she could not put her beliefs aside, and she did not believe she could be compelled to do so as a condition of public service."
>
> Geraghty was accused of "insubordination" and informed that she would no longer be allowed to teach, according to the lawsuit. Later that day, Carter told Geraghty to write a letter of resignation and was subsequently removed from the school.

I was pretty impressed that the teacher even stood up for her beliefs. Most of the people I know or know of who work in the public schools just capitulate to the secular left fascists.

I found a third story from Norway, but this time it's not a Christian woman being bullied. It's a lesbian!

Daily Wire reported:

> A Norwegian woman could spend up to three years in prison for saying that men are not able to be lesbians.
>
> On November 17, Tonje Gjevjon was told that she was being investigated by the police over hate speech because of a Facebook post that criticized men who said they were lesbians.

I know that in America, there's a significant number of "conservative" Christian leaders, like David French, who are allied with the secular left on social issues. I know that David French likes to act surprised at what the secular left does to Christians. But we know what they're going to do. We just have to pay attention to these stories, and we understand what they will do.

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

December 17, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is Dr. William Lane Craig giving a long-form argument for the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus, and taking questions from the audience.

The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early dating

- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthew, which Mike Licona and I doubt is intended to be historical, but is more likely to be apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

You can see this evidence used in an actual debate, against a historian who disagrees with Dr. Craig. That post contains a point by point summary of the debate that I wrote while listening to it.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

Robin Collins and atheist Peter Millican discuss the fine-tuning of the universe for life

December 18, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember Peter Millican from the debate he had with William Lane Craig. I ranked that debate as one of the 3 best I have ever seen, along with the first Craig vs Dacey debate and the second Craig vs Sinnott-Armstrong debate.

Details:

> Science has revealed that the fundamental constants and forces of the cosmos appear to be exquisitely fine-tuned to allow a universe in which life can develop. Is God the best explanation of the incredibly improbable odds of the universe we live in being a life-permitting one?
>
> Robin Collins is a Christian philosopher and a leading advocate of the argument for God from cosmic design. Peter Millican is an atheist philosopher at Oxford University. They debate the issues.
>
> From 'Unbelievable?' on 'Premier Christian Radio', Saturday 19th March 2016.

The debate:

As usual when the atheist is an expert, there is no snark or paraphrasing in the summary.

Summary

Brierley: What is the fine-tuning argument?

Collins: the fine-tuning is structure of the universe is extremely precisely set to allow the existing of conscious, embodied agents who are capable of moral behavior. There are 3 kinds of fine-tuning: 1) the laws of nature (mathematical formulas), 2) the constants of physics (numbers that are plugged into the equations), 3) the initial conditions of the universe. The fine-tuning exists not just because there are lots of possibilities, but there is something special about the actual state of affairs that we see. Every set of laws, parameters and initial conditions is equally improbable, but the vast majority of permutations do not permit life. The possible explanations: theism or the multiverse.

Brierley: How improbable are the numbers?

Collins: Once case is the cosmological constant (dark energy density), with is 1 part in (10 raised to 120th power). If larger, the universe expands too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form after the Big Bang. If smaller, the universe collapses in on itself before life could form. Another case is the initial distribution of mass energy to give us the low entropy we have that is necessary for life. The fine-tuning there is 1 part in (10 raised to the 10th power raised to the 123rd power).

Brierley: What do you think of the argument?

Millican: The argument is worth taking very seriously. I am a fan of the argument. The other arguments for God's existence such as the ontological and cosmological arguments

are very weak. But the fine-tuning argument has the right structure to deliver the conclusion that theists want. And it is different from the traditional design argument tended to focus on biological nature, which is not a strong argument. But the fine-tuning argument is strong because it precedes any sort of biological evolution. Although the design is present at the beginning of the universe, it is not visible until much later. The argument points to at least deism, and possibly theism. The argument is not based on ignorance, it is rooted in “the latest results from the frontiers of science” (his phrase).

Brierley: Is this the best argument from natural theology?

Collins: The cosmological argument makes theism viable intuitively, but there are some things that are puzzling, like the concept of the necessary being. But the fine-tuning argument is decisive.

Brierley: What’s are some objections to the fine-tuning argument?

Millican: The argument is based on recent physics, so we should be cautious because we **maybe** we will discover a natural explanation.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: The cosmological constant has been around since 1980. But the direction that physics is moving in is that there are more constants and quantities being discovered that need to be fine-tuned, not less. Even if you had a grand unified theory, that would have to be have the fine-tuning pushed into it.

(BREAK)

Millican: Since we have no experience of other laws and values from other universes, **we don’t know** whether these values can be other than they are. Psychologically, humans are prone to seeing purpose and patterns where there is none, so **maybe** that’s happening here.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: It is possible to determine probabilities on a single universe case, for example using multiple ways of calculating Avogadro’s number all converging on the same number makes it more probable.

Millican: Yes, I willing to accept that these constants can take on other values, (“principle of indifference”). But **maybe** this principle be applied if the improbability were pushed up into the theory?

Collins: Even if you had a grand theory, selecting the grand theory from others would retain the improbability.

Brierley: What about the multiverse?

Millican: **What if** there are many, many different universes, and we happen to be in the one that is finely-tuned, then we should not be surprised to observe fine-tuning. **Maybe** a multiverse theory will be discovered in the future that would allow us to have these many universes with randomized constants and quantities. “I do think that it is a little bit of a promissary note”. I don’t think physics is pointing to this right now.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: I agree it's a promissary note. This is the strongest objection to the fine-tuning argument. But there are objections to the multiverse: 1) the fine-tuning is kicked back up to the multiverse generator has to be set just right to produce universes with different constants, 2) the multiverse is more likely to produce a small universe with Boltzmann brains that pop into existence and then out again, rather than a universe that contains conscious, embodied intelligent agents. I am working on a third response now that would show that the same constants that allow complex, embodied life ALSO allow the universe to be discoverable. This would negate the observer-selection effect required by the multiverse objection.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Millican: I don't see why the multiverse generator has to be fine-tuned, since **we don't know** what the multiverse generator is. I'm not impressed by the Boltzmann brains, but won't discuss. We should be cautious about inferring design because **maybe** this is a case where we are seeing purpose and design where there is none.

Brierley: Can you negate the discoverability of the universe by saying that it might be psychological?

Collins: These things are not psychological. The selected value for the cosmic microwave background radiation is fine-tuned for life and for discoverability. It's not merely a discoverability selection effect, it's optimal for discoverability. If baryon-photon value were much smaller, we would have known that it was not optimal. So that judgment cannot be explained by

Millican: That's a very interesting new twist.

Brierley: Give us your best objection.

Millican: I have two. 1) Even if you admit to the fine-tuning, this doesn't show a being who is omnipotent and omnisicient. What the fine-tuning shows is that the designer is doing the best it can given the constraints from nature. **If I were God,** I would not have made the universe so big, and I wouldn't have made it last 14 billion years, just to make one small area that supports life. An all-powerful God would have made the universe much smaller, and much younger. 2) The fine-tuning allows life to exist in other solar systems in other galaxies. What does this alien life elsewhere mean for traditional Christian theology? The existence of other alien civilizations argues against the truth of any one religion.

Brierley: Respond to those.

Collins: First objection: with a finite Creator, you run into the problem of having to push the design of that creature up one level, so you don't really solve the fine-tuning problem. An unlimited being (non-material, not composed of parts) does not require fine-tuning. The fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than atheism. Second objection: I actually do think that it is likely that are other universes, and life in other galaxies and stars, and the doctrine of the Incarnation is easily adaptable to that, because God can take on

multiple natures to appear to different alien civilizations.

Other resources (from WK)

If you liked this discussion, be sure and check out a full length lecture by Robin Collins on the fine-tuning, and a shorter lecture on his very latest work. And also this the Common Sense Atheism podcast, featuring cosmologist Luke Barnes, who answers about a dozen objections to the fine-tuning argument.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

December 19, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus in a debate by saying that the resurrection is the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. Minimal facts are the parts of the New Testament that meet a set of strict historical criteria. These are the facts that skeptical historians agree with, totally apart from any religious beliefs.

So what are the criteria that skeptical historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."
>
> In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the

> probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> (1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
>
> (2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
>
> (3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
>
> (4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
>
> (5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
>
> (6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.
>
> Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in

> his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book. You want to look at it as a historical book, and use historical criteria to get to some facts that critical historians would accept. From that, it's possible to make a case for the resurrection, which is the guarantee that the words of Jesus are authoritative. Including the words of Jesus where he describes the Bible as a whole as God's revelation of Himself to his creatures.

Here is the approach I use when talking to non-Christian co-workers:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection
8. Don't let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And remember that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. That passages is universally accepted as early, eyewitness testimony from Paul, and represents the core of early Christian beliefs about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Everyone who takes evidence seriously has to

account for that early creed, which passes the historical tests I outlined above.

The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I've read is the one by Robert H. Stein in "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It's a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion "God raised Jesus from the dead". That whole book is really very, very good.

New study: psychotherapy improves mental health of autistic teens with gender dysphoria

December 20, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My podcast co-host Rose and I both want Christians to argue for the Christian worldview using studies and evidence. We want the other side to reply on feelings and intuitions, while we present hard data. With that said, I have a report on a new study for you that will help you discuss the issue of medical transitioning of autistic adolescents with gender dysphoria.

Consider this report on the new study from Daily Wire:

> The study, published in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, found that guided, peer support group therapy showed positive mental health outcomes for autistic adolescents struggling with gender dysphoria. The study, conducted in the Netherlands, emphasized the importance of mental health treatments, while deprioritizing medical interventions like puberty blocking drugs, cross-sex hormones, and surgery.
>
> "These findings add to a quickly growing stack of evidence suggesting that it's the psychotherapy and support that is improving these kids' well-being, not medicalized transition," said Dr. James Cantor, Director of the Toronto Sexuality Centre, and associate professor of the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine.

By the way, you may have heard that most gender dysphoria resolves itself without any need for medical intervention. The article says:

> Dr. Cantor's website, Sexology Today, is often cited as a resource that documents eleven studies finding that roughly 60–90% of children who identify as transgender, but do not socially or medically transition, will no longer identify as transgender in adulthood. These studies were referenced by the group of researchers, who acknowledged that gender dysphoria may resolve on its own.
>
> "In a large proportion of children who express their desire for medical gender-affirming care, this seems to disappear during puberty," the study read.

In a previous post, I blogged about the "social contagion" cause of transgenderism. The technical term is Rapid-Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD). Same-age peers and social media play a huge role in children having gender confusion.

But the Daily Wire article had even more interesting information – a link between autism and susceptibility to gender confusion:

> Children and adolescents on the autism spectrum are disproportionately represented among the large, newly emerging cohort of children claiming to be transgender. Over the past 10 years, there have been at least nine studies connecting Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and transgender identities.

> Rates of autistic traits in these studies range from five percent to 54% among those with gender dysphoria, significantly higher than among the general population.
>
> Data from the now-shuttered Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) at the U.K.'s Tavistock Centre found that autistic adolescents were significantly overrepresented in the population of referrals to the clinic. Pediatrician Dr. Hilary Cass was commissioned to conduct a review of the services provided by the National Health Service and investigate why there has been such a huge rise in the number of adolescent biological girls seeking referrals to gender clinics.
>
> Dr. Cass found that approximately one third of youth referred to GIDS had autism or autistic traits. By comparison, the prevalence rates of autism spectrum disorder during childhood in the UK have been estimated at 1%.

Previously, I blogged about how many countries that are more advanced in treating gender dysphoria are leaning towards psychotherapy instead of medical treatment. Something to think about if people in your life and jumping straight to medical treatment instead of psychotherapy,

What’s in the Democrat’s 1.7 TRILLION dollar omnibus spending bill?

December 21, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I heard that the Democrats are trying to pass a huge “omnibus” spending bill, and I thought it would be useful for us to take a look at it. Who does this “omnibus” bill help? And will it cause inflation to continue to rise?

This is from Daily Wire:

> And according to The Heritage Foundation, the omnibus bill they may not have time to read is packed with woke pet projects. Among them are a number of LGBTQ projects — from pride centers to museums — and “anti-racism” initiatives, according to a thread shared on Twitter on Tuesday.
>
> What followed was a list of the “woke agenda” projects — along with their respective price tags and which areas of the country stood to benefit from omnibus money.
>
> “$1.2 million for ‘LGBTQIA+ Pride Centers’; $1.2 million for ‘services for DACA recipients’ (aka helping illegal aliens with taxpayer funds) at San Diego Community College; $477k for the Equity Institute in RI to indoctrinate teachers with ‘antiracism virtual labs,’” the thread continued.
>
> More projects were listed in the following tweets, including “$1 million for Zora’s House in Ohio, a ‘coworking and community space’ for ‘women and gender-expansive people of color’; $3 million for the American LGBTQ+ Museum in New York City; $3.6 million for a Michelle Obama Trail in Georgia.”
>
> New York’s state capital is set to receive three-quarters of a million dollars for “LGBT and Gender Non-Conforming housing”; Baltimore will rake in a cool $2 million for a wax museum dedicated to African Americans, tentatively named “Great Blacks in Wax”; and New York will get over $800,000 for an “LGBT center.”
>
> An additional $750,000 is earmarked for the “TransLatin@ Coalition” in Los Angeles, which is supposed to create “workforce development programs and supportive services for Transgender and Gender nonconforming and Intersex immigrant women.”

On Twitter, North Carolina Republican congressman Dan Bishop had another list of wasteful spending items in the “omnibus” spending bill:

- an additional $47 billion in Ukraine funding, and the bill also authorizes a “Ukrainian Independence Park” in Washington DC.
- $11.33 billion for the FBI. $1.75 billion for the ATF. & $2.63 billion for US Attorneys, with an emphasis on J6 prosecutions and domestic terrorism cases. All with

significant increases from the previous year.
- $535 million for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which indirectly funds NPR via grants.
- it expressly prohibits CBP funding from being used to improve border security.
- it allocates $1,438,000,000 for membership in global multilateral organizations, including the UN.
- it allocates at least $575 million for "family planning" in areas where population growth "threatens biodiversity."
- $524.4 million for a DEI and "structural racism" focused NIH subdivision
- it allocates $410 million towards border security for Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, and Oman.
- $335 million to prepare for an influenza pandemic! Including the use of surveillance tools.
- $286 million in Title X funding, which funds Planned Parenthood.
- Gender programs in Pakistan and a $200 million for a Gender Equity Fund.
- $70 million for minority business development – an increase of $15 million from Fy22.
- nearly $26 million for the House of Representatives Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
- $7.5 million to better understand the "domestic radicalization phenomenon," plus $1 million for gun violence research. These research programs are often a smokescreen for violating civil liberties down the road.

What will be the end result of spending $1.7 trillion for Americans? I think it will cause inflation to go up, and people will pay even higher prices for gas, groceries and everything else. The higher inflation goes, the more interest rates will rise.

One of my favorite places to go to find out what is going on in the economy is the Wall Street Journal. There, I found a recent article entitled "Inflation Isn't Vanquished Yet".

It says:

> The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that inflation rose only 0.1% in November, and shelter made up half of the monthly increase. The 12-month inflation rate fell to 7.1% in November, which is down from 7.7% in October and is the fifth annual rate drop in a row since inflation peaked at 9.1% in June. The Fed's monetary tightening is making a difference.
>
> Yet a 7.1% increase in prices is still a long way from victory, and inflation continues to be sticky across much of the economy. Food rose 0.5%. Much of the decrease came in energy prices, which are volatile, and fell by 1.6%. But service prices excluding energy services rose 0.4% and are up 6.8% in the past year. The core CPI less energy and food rose 0.2% in the month and is still high at an annual rate of 6%.

What does this mean? It means that inflation is not under control, and interest rates will have to continue to rise. That's bad news for economic growth. If Biden gets his omnibus

bill passed, then we will be looking at rising inflation again, and an even longer recession that is currently being considered. I hope Democrat voters understand that they can’t spend their way out of inflation. It’s the spending that’s causing it.

Ron DeSantis wants to end mandatory collection of union dues for FL teachers

December 22, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm still monitoring Ron DeSantis to see what sorts of actions he is taking as governor of Florida. This week, there was one related to teachers. I once wanted to be a teacher, but I refused to do it because of the mandatory dues I would have to give to teacher unions. Teacher unions are very supportive of secular leftism. But now, in Florida, teachers can work without paying union dues.

This is from The Florida Standard:

> Governor Ron DeSantis continued his battle against the progressive influence of teachers' unions by previewing a bill on Monday that would potentially mitigate their power. Speaking to supporters of his educational agenda at a school board retreat, DeSantis intimated that he expects the legislature to pass a "paycheck protection" bill in the upcoming session.
>
> After suggesting that teachers can expect "probably the biggest [pay] increase for teachers that we've ever done in Florida in this coming legislative session," DeSantis said the new legislation, if passed, would help ensure that state funding for teacher pay will not be siphoned off by the unions.
>
> "That fact that you're also doing stuff like this paycheck protection, it's more of a guarantee that that money is going to actually go to those teachers," he said. "It's not going to be frittered away by interest groups who get involved in the school system."
>
> Like taxes and insurance, union dues are automatically deducted from paychecks for members. Some teachers may not pay close enough attention to realize the money they could keep if they opted out of the union. By requiring the teachers to actually write the checks for union membership themselves, the presumption is that teachers would give more consideration to the commitment of their money and perhaps be less willing to surrender it to the union.

Previous DeSantis actions:

- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts
- elect conservatives to school boards
- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women's sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

December 23, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

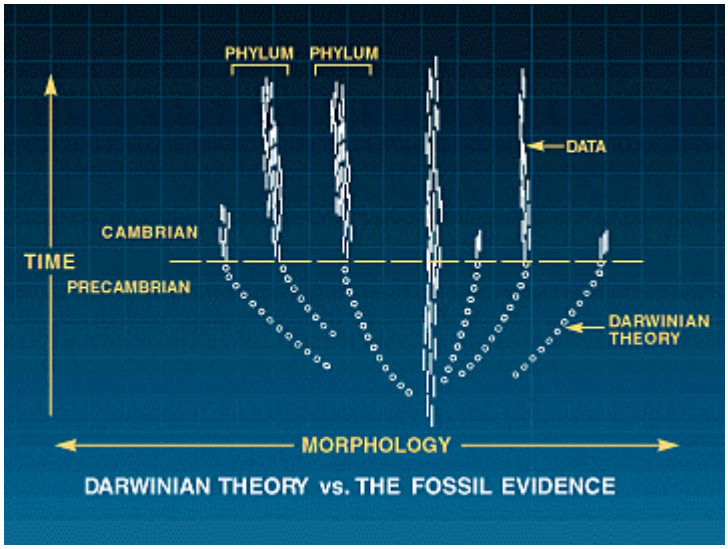

Cambrian Explosion

Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien "The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang" in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a

> unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and
> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

I learned a lot by watching great lectures from Access Research Network. Their YouTube channel is here. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

If you'd like to see Dr. Meyer defend his views in a debate with someone who reviewed his book about the Cambrian explosion, you can find that in this previous post.

Further study

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

Marine Captain earned Medal of Honor fighting communists in North Korea

December 24, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let's go from the top down to set the context for the profile of William E. Barber.

Map of the Korean War

In the summer of 1950, North Korean communists launch a completely unprovoked attack across the 38th parallel against their peaceful, democratic neighbors, the South Koreans. The Americans immediately sent an invasion force by sea to drive them out. The North Koreans easily manage to take over the capital Seoul, and the allies are left with only one port in the southeast – Pusan. In September of 1950, American forces land an invasion force at Inchon, cutting off the North Korean invasion force surrounding Pusan. The North Koreans retreat, and there is hope that American forces will be home by Christmas. But then, unbeknownst to the Americans, the Chines communists invade North Korea from the north and surround the American forces near the Chosin reservoir, threatening to annihilate an entire Marine division.

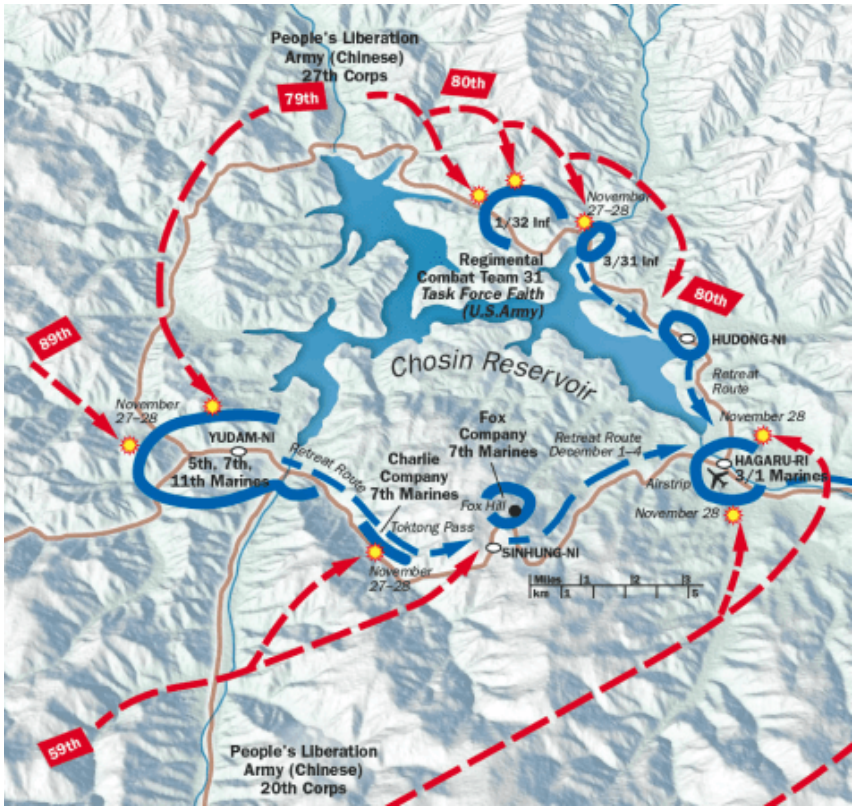

The Marines at Yudam-Ni are surrounded and must retreat to Hagaru-Ri

As you can see from the map, there are a whole bunch of American troops fighting to the north/east and south/west of the Chosin Reservoir. The marines near Yudam-Ni need to retreat along a road called the MSR (main supply road) back to Hagaru-Ri. But in order to conduct that retreat, they have to hold onto the vital Toktong pass, which is overwatched by Fox company from their position on Fox Hill. Can Charlie company and Fox company hold off the entire Chinese 59th division (10,000 men) with only two companies (about 250 men each)?

U.S. Marines “The Chosin Few”, December 1950

Well, the book I read (which Dina gave me for Christmas), was about Fox company and their defense of the Toktong pass. This is what the leftist New York Times had to say about the man in charge of Fox company (“F company”) in a 2002 article:

> Col. William E. Barber, who won the Medal of Honor for his leadership of a vastly outnumbered company under siege on a snowy hilltop in one of the worst defeats in Marine history, the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in 1950, died on April 19 at his home in Irvine, Calif. He was 82.
>
> The cause was bone-marrow cancer, said Jerry Courtier, a friend who hopes to write Colonel Barber’s biography.
>
> The reservoir is south of the Yalu River, which separates North Korea from China. After the Americans had pushed the North Koreans almost to the Yalu, 150,000 Chinese troops unexpectedly crossed the river into North Korea. Colonel Barber’s unit, Company F of the Second Battalion of the Seventh Marines, First Marine Division, was on a hill that commanded the Toktong Pass, a vital gap between Yudam Ni and Hagaru Ri, two towns separated by 78 miles.
>
> The stakes were huge. If F Company yielded its position, 8,000 marines at Yudam Ni would be cut off from the 3,000 at Haguru Ri by tens of thousands of Chinese troops.
>
> Through five days and six nights in subzero weather and often swirling snow, Colonel Barber, then a captain, inspired his men, outnumbered more than five to one, to cling to their tenuous positions. He was shot in a bone near his groin on the second day but continued to make the rounds of the hill. He likened the wound to a bee sting.
>
> When the unit was ordered to withdraw and fight its way to safety, Captain Barber refused. Three times, the enemy broke through the line, only to be repulsed.
>
> ”I knew that we could probably hold, and I knew that if we didn’t hold we could exact a very heavy toll,” he said in an interview in 1976 with The Los Angeles Times.
>
> His citation for the nation’s top medal said that he commanded his men from a stretcher. But Hector A. Cafferata Jr., who as a rifleman won the Medal of Honor in the same battle, insisted that Captain Barber refused the stretcher.
>
> ”He walked the line, he kept us together,” said Mr. Cafferata, who was beside Captain Barber when he was shot.
>
> In the mayhem, the Chinese blew whistles, beat cymbals and tooted bugles as they repeatedly attacked. Coffee froze before men could drink it, and some of the wounded died because plasma froze with no way to thaw it.
>
> When the battle was over, more than 1,000 enemy soldiers were dead. Of Captain Barber’s original 240 men, 82 were able to walk away.

> Gen. Raymond G. Davis, who was a lieutenant colonel in the Marines, received a Medal of Honor for leading the unit that rescued F Company.
>
> William Earl Barber was born on Nov. 30, 1919, in Dehart, Ky. He attended what is now Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky., for two years and enlisted in the Marines, at the age of 21, in 1940.
>
> He was so good at shooting a rifle that he was made a weapons instructor. After volunteering for parachute training, he demonstrated such proficiency that he became a parachute instructor.
>
> In World War II, he was promoted to sergeant in 1942 and commissioned a second lieutenant in 1943. He was a rifle platoon commander at Camp Pendleton, Calif., when his unit was shipped to the Pacific.
>
> Colonel Barber was in the first wave to hit Iwo Jima, where he was wounded twice. He received the Silver Star for bravery in addition to two Purple Hearts. At a ceremony on the 50th anniversary of the battle in 1995, he said:
>
> ”I am older now, as you are, but I can still see the colors of that February morning. The sky. The island. And sometimes I think I can hear the noise of battle.”
>
> He was treated in Japan for his wounds and returned to the United States, where he worked as a recruiter, among other positions. He was promoted to captain in 1949 and was in the force that occupied Japan.
>
> When he joined F Company in Korea, he saw a raggedy unshaven bunch and immediately ordered the the troops to shave, shine their shoes and look like marines. He suggested that his new charges resembled Pancho Villa’s bandits.
>
> ”He was one tough guy,” Mr. Cafferata said. ”He was by the book.”

He was by the book. He enlisted in the Marines because he was grateful to his country for allowing him to escape poverty and go into college, and he wanted to give something back.

You can read a review of the book I read about Fox company, and read about some of the details of what it was like for those men. You’ll never look at your own troubles the same way again. You can also read about Barber’s Medal of Honor citation here.

The Medal of Honor, Navy and Marines variant

So, now that I am done with that book, I have moved on to another Korean War book that Dina gave me, this one about George company. The Korean War might have been our most just war – defending a peaceful democratic ally from a totalitarian communist regime. You just have to compare North Korea and South Korea today to understand the stakes. North Korea is basically a godless concentration camp that tortures and murders its people if they so much as think the wrong thoughts about the atheist state. South Korea is free and prosperous, where the people have human rights, like the right to free speech and freedom of religion.

It's important for me to read about the hardships that real heroes face, so that I don't complain too much about my own tiny struggles. When you read about the struggles of great American soldiers, so many good things happen to you. Your own problems get smaller, your humility and gratitude get bigger. And you are reminded about why America is a great country, and what American character is really like. These things are not taught by leftists in the public schools. They are not talked about by leftists in the mainstream media. They are not presented by leftists in the Hollywood film industry. If you want to know the real America, you have to find it yourself.

Did the early church invent the divinity of Jesus over a long period of time?

December 25, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is

stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this

passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The "Q" source for Matthew and Luke

Here's Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier "Q" source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Pro-abortion tolerance: woman arrested for praying silently outside of abortion clinic

December 26, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to choose a country where masculinity was at its lowest ebb, I'd pick the UK. The UK has been dominated by secular left feminists for decades. They hate everything about the male character. Guns are completely banned. People who defend themselves from criminals are arrested and jailed. Fathers are punished in divorce courts. And free speech is banned because it is "offensive".

Here's the latest from the Daily Wire:

> Isabel Vaughan-Spruce, a 45-year-old charity volunteer, was arrested and charged on four counts after she told police she "might" be silently praying near the U.K.'s leading provider of NHS-funded abortion services BPAS Robert Clinic in Kings Norton, Birmingham, according to local media.
>
> Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) published footage earlier this week showing authorities approaching Vaughan-Spruce outside the clinic. During the interaction, authorities questioned why Vaughn Spruce was standing outside the abortion facility "of all places."
>
> "Are you standing here as part of a protest?" asked the officer.
>
> "No, I'm not protesting," Vaughan-Spruce said.
>
> "Are you praying?" the police officer asked her.
>
> "I might be praying in my head," she replied.
>
> ADF said authorities confronted the woman after receiving complaints from an observer who suspected that Vaughan-Spruce was praying silently in her mind.
>
> […]Police arrested Vaughan-Spruce on December 6 and subsequently charged her on December 15 with four counts of failing to comply with a Public Space Protection Order in so-called censorship zones, which authorities introduced to criminalize individuals appearing to be "engaging in any act of approval or disapproval or attempted act of approval or disapproval."

I think it's very important for American Christians and conservatives to understand how far secular leftism goes. This is not a worldview that takes direction from reality. Secular leftism is nothing more than the desire to seek happiness for the self at the expense of the weakest and the most vulnerable. When confronted with disapproval, secular leftists respond by using the state to silence and then destroy those who disapprove. Secular leftism is not compatible with human rights. Secular leftism emerges from "survival of the fittest". They want to behave irresponsibly and recklessly, kill anyone (the unborn) who gets in their way, and then silence anyone who disapproves.

It's not surprising to me that the UK would go in this direction, but this sort of secular left

pro-abortion radicalism is also the dominant view of the Democrat party, and in federal law enforcement.

Consider this article from The Federalist:

> The Department of Justice under Attorney General Merrick Garland announced the indictment of pro-life activist Herb Geraghty on Oct. 14, bringing the number of apparently nonviolent pro-life protesters targeted under the FACE (Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances) Act by President Joe Biden's DOJ this year to 22. Meanwhile, the agency has yet to announce a single arrest or indictment against any of the vandals or arsonists who terrorized and firebombed crisis pregnancy centers after the leak of the Supreme Court's Dobbs v. Jackson decision overturning Roe v. Wade.

I think the USA is different, because here there is still a chance that Republicans can get in and reform these immoral, corrupt federal law enforcement agencies so they don't arrest pro-lifers for silent prayer. But time is running out.

Joe Biden orders Republican governor to dismantle border wall

December 27, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lately, Joe Biden has been trying to prove to everyone how seriously he takes border security. But if you ignore his words, and look closely at his actions, you get a very different picture.

Consider this story from The Post Millennial:

> Arizona Republican Governor Doug Ducey is stopping the construction of a wall at the US-Mexico border made out of shipping containers due to pressure from the Biden administration.
>
> The project of installing approximately 3,000 containers at a cost of $95 million was approximately a third complete, but protesters held up the work recently over concerns over the wall's environmental impact.
>
> […]The Biden administration is more concerned with the environmental impact of a border wall, but not the social impact of illegal immigratino. In order to not damage natural resources in the area, Arizona will work with officials from the US Forest Service and Customs and Border Protection.
>
> […]The agreement comes a week after the Biden administration sued Ducey on behalf of the Bureau of Reclamation, the Department of Agriculture and the Forest Service and two weeks before Democratic Gov.-elect Katie Hobbs is scheduled to move into the governor's mansion.

Hobbs also opposes the wall, and the people of Arizona apparently elected her as governor anyway. Some of them will probably be the victims of crimes committed by people she let in. I wonder if they will learn anything from that experience?

Most people in the Democrat party think that illegal immigrants don't commit any crimes. That's why it's safe to let them in, because no American taxpayer will be harmed. But is that true? We have to look at the evidence.

Here's an article from Fox News:

> The number of crimes committed by illegal immigrants in the United States surged in fiscal year 2021 after declining in the years before that.
>
> Homicides, assaults, incidents of domestic violence, illegal weapons possession, and sexual offenses committed by illegal aliens all increased dramatically in fiscal year 2021 compared to fiscal year 2020, data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection shows.
>
> Illegal immigrants committed 1,178 assault and domestic violence crimes in 2021, which represents a more than 400% increase from the 208 in 2020.
>
> Sixty homicide or manslaughter convictions were attributed to illegal immigrants

> in 2021, a 1,900% increase from the previous year.
>
> Driving under the influence convictions rose 347% from 364 to 1,629, and illegal possession of or trafficking of drugs rose 453% from 386 to 2,138.
>
> […]U.S. Customs and Border Protection says that officials apprehended 10,763 “criminal noncitizens” in fiscal year 2021, which marks an increase of over 300% from previous years.

Now, when I bring this up with Democrats, they say “what evidence do you have that illegal immigrants commit more crimes than citizens”. That’s the wrong question. The right question is “how many American taxpayers would be the victims of illegal immigrant criminals if there were not allowed across the border?” And the answer to that is ZERO. Which is what it should be.

We already have a system to let in legal immigrants. If those legal immigrants commit crimes, they are immediately deported. That’s a system that works.

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer explains intelligent design for Prager University

December 28, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had some very good conversations during the Christmas break, and some of them were about the existence of God and intelligent design. I thought it might be a good idea to help everyone to get an overview of the evidence for a creator and designer using short videos. Dr. Stephen C. Meyer is probably the best author, speaker and debater on these issues, so here is his overview.

It's a series of five 5-minute videos published by Prager University.

Here's number 1: Are Religion And Science In Conflict?

Description:

> Does belief in God get in the way of science? The idea that science and religion are inevitably in conflict is a popular way of thinking today. But the history of science tells a different story.

Here's number 2: How Did The Universe Begin?

Description:

> Was the universe always here, or did it have a beginning? If so, how did it start? Mankind has debated these questions for centuries and has only recently begun to find some answers. And those answers may point to some even more intriguing conclusions.

Here's number 3: Aliens, The Multiverse, Or God?

Description:

> Even staunch Darwinists have acknowledged that life in the universe displays an appearance of design, rather than being created out of random chance. If that's true, where did that design come from? In other words, does a design require a designer?

Here's number 4: What Is Intelligent Design?

Description:

> Chances are if you've heard anything about intelligent design, you've heard that it's faith-based, not science-based. Is that true? Or does modern science, in fact, point us in the direction of a designing intelligence?

Here's number 5: What's Wrong With Atheism?

Description:

> Is there any meaning to life? Or is life nothing more than a cosmic accident? Scientific atheists claim the latter, but ironically, it's science itself that suggests the former.

If this looks interesting to you, you should check out Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's three-book series on creation and design. The first book talks about the origin of life. The second book talks about the fossil record. The third book talks about the origin of the universe, and cosmic fine-tuning.

These videos are just an introduction to these arguments. To really understand the details, you have to read deeply about them. That's why these books are necessary. Christians can only be persuasive when they understand this material well.

Does the New Testament book of James undermine salvation by faith alone?

December 29, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are people brought into a right relationship with God because God provides for their salvation, or must we do works in order to earn our place with God in the afterlife?

The Bible is pretty clear that God provides our salvation from our rebellion by himself, all we have to do is accept it.

Look at Romans 3:21-30:

> [21] But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
>
> [22] even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;
>
> [23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
>
> [24] being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
>
> [25] whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;
>
> [26] for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
>
> [27] Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.
>
> [28] For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.
>
> [29] Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God*of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,
>
> [30] since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

Here's theologian R.C. Sproul, to explain a passage from the Bible that seems to contradict the passages that teach that faith alone is sufficient for salvation.

Here's James 2:18-24:

> [18] But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."
>
> [19] You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.
>
> [20] But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

> [21] Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?
>
> [22] You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;
>
> [23] and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God.
>
> [24] You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Sproul explains the apparent conflict:

> What James is saying is this: If a person says he has faith, but he gives no outward evidence of that faith through righteous works, his faith will not justify him. Martin Luther, John Calvin, or John Knox would absolutely agree with James. We are not saved by a profession of faith or by a claim to faith. That faith has to be genuine before the merit of Christ will be imputed to anybody. You can’t just say you have faith. True faith will absolutely and necessarily yield the fruits of obedience and the works of righteousness. Luther was saying that those works don’t add to that person’s justification at the judgment seat of God. But they do justify his claim to faith before the eyes of man. James is saying, not that a man is justified before God by his works, but that his claim to faith is shown to be genuine as he demonstrates the evidence of that claim of faith through his works.

So yes, works are important as a sign to others that you believe what you say you believe, but not important for balancing your sins. Your sins are already paid for by Jesus, what you do in your life doesn’t add or take away anything from that. But I will say that if you can see that a person is spending a great deal of their time performing actions that are consistent with a concern for God’s purposes and reputation, then that’s a good sign that his faith is in good shape. Yes, even if he doesn’t do as much Bible study, devotions, singing and praying as he should. The important thing about actions (works) is that you can look at a person’s life and see evidence that he is taking God seriously – that Jesus is his leader, and that Jesus’ character is informing their decision-making and prioritizing.

Examples of defensive gun usage to prevent crimes

December 30, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We're getting near the end of the year, and I thought it would be worth it to see how guns are being used by law-abiding Americans to deter criminals from committing crime. This is especially important for citizens living in Democrat-run cities that are "defunding the police". I have some examples of defensive gun uses from November and December in this post.

This article from Daily Signal has a legal update, as well as some defensive gun uses.

Excerpt:

> In a case called New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen, the Supreme Court in June struck down concealed carry permitting frameworks in several states that effectively prohibited ordinary Americans from carrying firearms in public for self-defense.
>
> Since then, residents of those states have applied for concealed carry permits in droves, showing just how willing many of them always have been to exercise their Second Amendment rights when the government no longer prohibits it.
>
> Take, for example, New Jersey, a state where only 870 applications for concealed carry permits were filed in 2021, when residents knew that almost no one would be granted such a permit. This year, the state administrative office in charge of permitting expects that 11,000 applications will be submitted by the end of December.
>
> Similarly, Maryland State Police say that in the two weeks after the high court's Bruen decision, they received over 7,000 concealed carry permit applications—up from just 1,000 during the same period in 2021.

Examples:

> Oct. 4, Dunn, North Carolina: Police said a woman woke up at home to discover an intruder trying to steal several items—including her dog. She grabbed her handgun and, despite never having fired a gun before, successfully "shot [the intruder] out of the house." Police said they later arrested the intruder, who was shot twice, and charged him with first- degree burglary.
>
> Oct. 9, Church Road, Virginia: After a man fatally shot his father and two dogs during an argument, police said, an armed family friend intervened and held the suspect at gunpoint until police arrived. Local law enforcement officials said his actions likely saved the lives of several others inside the home.
>
> Oct. 22, Las Vegas, Nevada: When a mentally disturbed man broke into a home, grabbed a kitchen knife, and threatened to kill everyone inside, the homeowner and his wife barricaded themselves in a second-floor bedroom. Police said the homeowner grabbed his gun and fired a warning shot, but the intruder continued

> trying to force his way inside. The homeowner fired the next round through the door, striking the man in the leg. Police arrested the intruder, who they said was the subject of several 911 calls that night and may have tried to break into other homes.
>
> Oct. 25, Edinburg, Texas: Police said a woman shot and wounded an intruder through the door of the bedroom in which she and her children were hiding. The intruder fled, but responding deputies found him about 100 yards from the home. He had entered the residence through a garage and continued trying to break down the bedroom door even after the woman warned him that she was armed and had called police.

Daily Signal had another article with December defensive gun usages:

> After mass public shootings in Colorado and Virginia last month, President Joe Biden appeared to call for a ban on all semiautomatic firearms.
>
> Biden told reporters: "The idea we still allow semiautomatic weapons to be purchased is sick. It's just sick. It has no, no social redeeming value. Zero. None. Not a single, solitary rationale for it except profit for the gun manufacturers."
>
> […]Almost every major study on the issue has found that Americans use their firearms in self-defense between 500,000 and 3 million times annually, according to the latest report on the subject by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Just this year, a more comprehensive study concluded that roughly 1.6 million defensive gun uses occur in the United States every year.

Examples:

> Nov. 2, St. Louis: An armed repairman came to a woman's rescue after a neighbor opened fire on her. Police said the repairman sprinted down the street to confront the gunman, then dragged the injured woman behind a car for safety and rendered first aid. His actions caused the gunman to retreat inside his home, where he was arrested after a stand-off with law enforcement.
>
> Nov. 6, Warner Robbins, Georgia: A man waiting for an oil change intervened to stop a kidnapping, following a child's distressed cries into some woods, police said. He discovered someone on top of the child, choking him. The good Samaritan drew his firearm, grabbed the child away, and detained the kidnapper at gunpoint until police arrived. The assailant was charged with aggravated assault and cruelty to a child.
>
> Nov. 9, Chandler, Arizona: The hunt for a suspect in a fatal shooting ended several blocks away from the crime scene after an armed resident detained him at gunpoint, police said. After the resident saw the man near a shed in his backyard, the man began to assault him and another resident when confronted. The resident then armed himself and was able to hold the suspect until police

> arrived.
>
> Nov. 12, Seattle: Police said an armed ride-share driver assisted a young woman in her harrowing escape from a violent sex trafficker, offering the woman shelter in his car and then engaging in a rolling shootout with her pursuer while calling 911. The man's actions not only saved the woman's life, but ultimately helped to take down a multistate trafficking enterprise, investigators said.
>
> Nov. 17, Covert, New York: An armed resident helped end a manhunt for a burglar who broke into two homes and may have stolen a handgun, police said. The armed resident confronted the suspect as he tried to break into a third home and detained him at gunpoint. Officers said they recovered a gun stolen by the suspect, who was on parole for a string of burglaries he was convicted of committing in 2014.

If you like these examples of defensive gun usage, please share the post. It's important for people to understand why law-abiding Americans need to be able to own firearms. When seconds count, the police are minutes away.

Conservative wins in 2022: an end-of-year review

December 31, 2022 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My first read every day is The Federalist. I found a very good "end of year" article summarizing a bunch of conservative wins from the past year, and wanted to cheer everyone up about those.

Here's the list of 10 conservative wins from The Federalist, then we'll take a look at a few of them:

1. The Dobbs Decision Overturned Roe
2. States, Courts, and Parents Pushed Back on Trans Agenda
3. Americans Realized the Corporate Press Is a Threat to Democracy
4. The Supreme Court Upheld Second Amendment Rights
5. Wyomingites Threw Liz Cheney out of Congress
6. A Federal Judge Smacked Down Biden's Unlawful Mask Mandate
7. 'Top Gun: Maverick' Celebrated American Greatness
8. Loudoun County Schools Saw a Measure of Justice
9. Twitter Censors Lost Their Stranglehold on Speech
10. States Started to Fight for Election Integrity

I think the story about Twitter becoming safe for free speech is probably the biggest story, but going forward, I think transgenderism and election integrity are going to be winning issues for conservatives.

So let's take a look at transgender wins and election integrity wins:

> 2. States, Courts, and Parents Pushed Back on Trans Agenda
>
> As the Biden administration pushes parents, schools, and the rest of America to embrace its transgender agenda, 2022 saw several victories in the fight against adults who try to sexually manipulate confused children.
>
> After the U.S. Department of Agriculture added "sexual orientation and gender identity" to its interpretation of "sex" in Title IX — a move that could see schools "lose federal funds for lunch programs unless they allow boys in girls' bathrooms" — 22 states sued the USDA and insisted that the rule change was in conflict with Title IX. Earlier this month, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against the Biden administration's attempt to force religious medical providers to perform sterilizing sex surgeries on patients with gender dysphoria.
>
> Meanwhile, states such as Alabama and Arizona approved legislation this year banning doctors from deforming the sexual organs of minors. The Florida Board of Medicine passed similar protections, and Texas's executive branch began investigating such procedures as child abuse. Roughly a dozen other states considered similar measures. And Virginia's Department of

> Education released policies requiring students to use bathrooms corresponding with their sex, and requiring parental involvement and approval before school personnel could address minor students by any pronouns but their biologically accurate ones.
>
> Parents and pastors have continued to fight back against the sexualization of children, too.

And:

> 10. States Started to Fight for Election Integrity
>
> While Republicans and state election officials have a lot of work left to do, 2022 saw some administrators realize what time it is and start pushing back on Democrats' coordinated effort to federalize elections and institute mass mail-in voting and get-out-the-vote campaigns that overwhelmingly help Democrats. In August, 15 secretaries of state demanded a halt to the Biden administration's plan to federalize elections via executive agencies.
>
> In 2022, Alabama, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, and Virginia all passed laws banning private groups like Mark Zuckerberg's Center for Tech and Civic Life from buying elections with grant cash. They joined Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, North Dakota, Ohio, and Tennessee, which banned "ZuckBucks" in 2021, and Texas and West Virginia, which have regulated their use. Furthermore, at least seven states passed 10 new laws tightening mail-in voting requirements, voter ID laws, address requirements, restrictions on Election Day voter registration, and voter-roll maintenance.

I think it's going to be a great year. The school choice movement is making good gains, and the middle class is being hit with higher energy prices and inflation. We have a massive border crisis that is going to cost ordinary citizens a lot in higher education, health care and law enforcement costs. Most economists are expect a recession, and the spending bills of the secular left are only going to make that recession worse. By the time the primaries start, people will be ready to put the adults back in charge. I'm excited. It was easy to vote Democrat when the price was paid by other people. Now Democrat voters are paying the price for their own stupidity.

Scott Klusendorf defends the pro-life view on the Unbelievable radio show

January 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of this debate

This is a re-post of a debate on abortion.

Here are the details:

> Justin hosts a discussion between Mara Clarke of the Abortion Support Network and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Instititute. Mara believes women should decide whether to terminate a pregnancy, but Scott says that all depends on whether we are dealing with a human life in the womb.

MP3 of this show

My snarky paraphrase of the debate (not exact):

- Speaker introductions
- Klusendorf: no justification for abortion is necessary if the unborn are not human
- Klusendorf: we need to address the issue "what is the unborn?" Are the unborn human?
- Klusendorf: SLED: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency
- Klusendorf: None of these things affect the value of a human being
- Klusendorf: Even if we don't KNOW whether the unborn is human
- Mara: I'm not going to debate when life begins
- Mara: Women know when life begins by feelings

- Mara: The moral decision is “whether I can take care of this child?”
- Brierley: When is an unborn being human?
- Mara: I refuse to debate that – the real question is whether women want their babies or not
- Mara: Forced pregnancy is not OK
- Brierley: Could your justification for abortion (not wanting to care for a child) work through all 9 months?
- Mara: Late term abortions are rare, so I don’t have to answer that question
- Mara: Abortion should be OK through all 9 months of pregnancy because women cannot be restricted
- Mara: Some women are poor, they need to be able to kill expensive babies at any time
- Klusendorf: although she says she won’t debate the unborn, she does take a position
- Klusendorf: she assumes the unborn is not human, because she says that insufficient funds is justification for abortion
- Klusendorf: no one argues that you can kill a two year old because they cost money, because she thinks they are human
- Klusendorf: she is begging the question by assuming the unborn are not human, but that is the issue we must resolve
- Klusendorf: I am pro-choice on many other things, e.g. women choosing their own husbands, religion, etc.
- Klusendorf: Some choices are wrong – Mara might be right, but she needs to make the case for the unborn not being human
- Brierley: What is your reason for thinking that an unborn child is different from a 2-year old?
- Mara: An unborn child is not the same as a 2-year old, in my personal opinion
- Mara: I am not a debater, so I don’t have to provide reasoning for my assertion, I just feel it
- Mara: Not everybody agrees with Scott, they don’t have to have a rational argument, they just need to feel differently
- Mara: From my experience, when a woman doesn’t want to be pregnant, then she should be able to not be pregnant
- Mara: Women shouldn’t be punished with a baby that she doesn’t want, even if she chooses to have recreational sex
- Brierley: What do you think of women who think the unborn is human and do it anyway?
- Klusendorf: It’s interesting that they never kill their toddlers for those reasons
- Klusendorf: I layed out scientific and philosophical reasons for the humanity of the unborn
- Klusendorf: Her response was “but some people disagree with you”
- Klusendorf: People disagreed about whether slavery was wrong, or whether women should be able to vote

- Klusendorf: that doesn't mean there is no right answer – the right answer depends on the arguments
- Klusendorf: if absence of agreement makes a view false, then it makes HER pro-choice view false as well
- Klusendorf: she did make an argument for the unborn child having no rights because of the location
- Klusendorf: she needs to explain to us why location matters – what about location confers value
- Mara: I'm not going to let Scott frame my debate for me!!!
- Mara: women get pregnant and they don't want their babies! should we put them in jail!!!!
- Klusendorf: I didn't just give my opinion, I had science and philosophy, the issue is "what is the unborn?"
- Mara: philosophical and scientific debates are unimportant, I am an expert in real women's lives
- Klusendorf: Which women? Women in the womb or only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Only those outside the womb
- Klusendorf: Only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Women living outside the womb have a right to kill women inside the womb – women have bodily autonomy
- Klusendorf: then does a pregnant woman with nausea have a right to take a drug for it that will harm her unborn child?
- Mara: Unborn children are only valuable if they are wanted, unborn children only deserve protection if they are wanted
- Mara: There are restrictions on abortion – you can't get an abortion through all nine months in the US
- Mara: There is a 24-week limit in the UK as well
- Klusendorf: There are no restrictions on abortion that conflict with "a woman's health" because Supreme Court said
- Mara: where are these late term abortion clinics?
- Klusendorf: (he names two)
- Mara: that's not enough!!! we need more! where is there one in Pennsylvania?
- Klusendorf: well, there used to be Gosnell's clinic in Pennsylvania, and you could even get an infanticide there….
- Brierley: What about Dawkins' view that it is moral to abort Down's Syndrome babies?
- Klusendorf: he is ignoring the scientific case and philosophical case for the pro-life
- Klusendorf: the pro-life view is a true basis for human equality

What I wanted Scott to ask was whether sex-selection abortions were OK with her. Since her reasoning is "if it's unwanted, it has no rights", then that would mean sex-selection abortions are just fine. That's what a UK abortion expert recently argued. And I also posted recently about how sex-selection abortions are not prosecuted in the UK. If you're

looking for a war on women, there it is.

Robert Gagnon debates gay activist Jayne Ozanne on Bible vs homosexuality

January 2, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am tempted to say that this is the best podcast I have ever heard on the Unbelievable show. Do anything you have to do in order to listen to this podcast.

Details:

> Prof Robert Gagnon has become a well-known voice advocating the traditional biblical view on sexuality. In a highly charged show he debates the scriptural issues on sexuality with Jayne Ozanne, the director of Accepting Evangelicals who came out as gay earlier this year.

You can listen to the debate here.

If you can only listen for 15 minutes, then start at 49 minutes in and listen from there.

The following summary is rated MUP for made-up paraphrase. Reader discretion is advised.

Summary:
Intro:

- Speaker introductions
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree that the Bible doesn't support it
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree Jesus taught male-female marriage
- Ozanne: I went to the hospital because I was sick from trying to suppress my gay desires
- Ozanne: Doctors told me that I would die if I didn't act on my gay desires
- Ozanne: I decided to reinterpret the Bible to fit with my gay desires
- Ozanne: According to my new interpretation, Jesus actually supports my gay desires

Segment 1: Genesis

- Ozanne: In Genesis the Bible says that Adam needs a woman to complete him
- Ozanne: I reinterpret this to mean that Adam needed a "complementarian human being"
- Ozanne: Genesis doesn't say whether Eve was complemented by Adam in that chapter
- Ozanne: It's not critical that men are complemented by women, a man could complement a man
- Ozanne: Genesis 2 doesn't talk about children, it's all about adult needs from a relationship
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 has never been interpreted that way in all of history

- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language specifically implies a human being who is opposite/different
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language translates to complement or counterpart
- Gagnon: Genesis as a whole teaches that the sexuality is for male and female natures
- Gagnon: The extraction of something from the man that is given to the woman is complementarian
- Ozanne: I think that people can be complementary outside of male-female Genesis language
- Ozanne: I don't want to discuss specific words and texts and Greek meanings
- Gagnon: the text has always been read and interpreted to support male/female complementarity
- Gagnon: the male-female nature argument is made because the two natures are complementary
- Ozanne: the text was interpreted by patriarchal males who treated women like property, it's biased
- Ozanne: what is important to me is how Christ interprets Genesis (?? how does she know that?)
- Ozanne: I am passionate about my interpretation of Scripture which supports my gay desires
- Gagnon: just because a person is passionate about their interpretation it doesn't make it right
- Gagnon: I am not arguing for the male-female view based on passion, but on scholarship, evidence and history
- Ozanne: both sides are equally passionate about their interpretations (?? so both are equally warranted?)
- Ozanne: the real question is why God "allowed" two different interpretations of Scripture

Segment 2: Is homosexuality a sin?

- Gagnon: Jesus affirmed traditional sexual morality, which forbids homosexuality
- Gagnon: Jesus teaches that marriage is male-female, and limited to two people
- Gagnon: No one in history has interpreted the Bible to say that homosexuality was not immoral
- Ozanne: Jesus came to bring life, and that means he supports homosexuality
- Ozanne: I was dying, and embracing my gay desires allowed me to live, so Jesus approves of me
- Ozanne: God says "I am who I am" and that means he approves of me doing whatever I want
- Ozanne: There is an imperative to be who I am, and that means embracing my gay desires
- Gagnon: Jesus argued that the twoness of the sexual bond is based on the twoness

of the sexes
- Gagnon: Jesus did not come to gratify people's innate desires, he called people to repent of sin
- Gagnon: Jesus did reach out to sinners but he never condoned the sins they committed
- Gagnon: Jesus' outreach to tax collectors collecting too much and sexual sinners is the same: STOP SINNING
- Ozanne: I don't think that Romans 1 is talking about homosexuality
- Ozanne: I think it's talking about sexual addiction, not loving, committed gay relationships
- Ozanne: Paul was condemning pederasty in Romans 1, not loving, long-term, consensual sexual relationships between gay adults
- Gagnon: nothing in the passage limits the condemnation to pederasty
- Gagnon: the passage was never interpreted to be limited to pederasty in history
- Gagnon: rabbis and church fathers knew about committed two-adult same-sex relationships, and said they were wrong
- Gagnon: the argument for marriage is based on the broad two-nature argument, with no exceptions
- Gagnon: the condemnation is not limited to exploitative / coercive / lustful / uncommitted relationships
- Gagnon: even pro-gay scholars agree the passage cannot be interpreted Ozanne's way (he names two)

Segment 3: The showdown (49:00)

- Ozanne: I don't care how many pages people have written on this
- Ozanne: God says that "the wisdom of the wise I will frustrate" so you can't use scholars, even pro-gay scholars, to argue against my passionate interpretation
- Ozanne: I am not interested in the text or history or scholarship or even pro-gay scholars who agree with you
- Ozanne: what decides the issue for me is my mystical feelings about God's love which makes my sexual desires moral
- Ozanne: you are certain that this is wrong, but your view does not "give life" to people
- Ozanne: your scholarship and historical analysis is "a message of death" that causes teenagers to commit suicide (= you are evil and a meany, Robert)
- Ozanne: "I pray for you and your soul" (= opposing me will land you in Hell) and "I hope that listeners will listen with their hearts" (?? instead of their minds?)
- Ozanne: you can prove anything you want with research, even two mutually exclusive conclusions, so you shouldn't rely on scholarship and research since it could be used to prove my view as well
- Ozanne: instead of relying on research, you should rely on your heart and your feelings about God's love to decide what the Bible teaches about sexual morality

- Gagnon: you are distorting the gospel in order to make your case
- Gagnon: attacking my “certainty” is an ad hominem attack to cover your dismissmal of the scholarship and history
- Gagnon: you distort the gospel to make it seem like Christ just wants us to get what we want, when we want it, with who we want it with
- Gagnon: Christ calls us to take up our cross, to lose our lives and to deny ourselves
- Gagnon: you have a notion of what “fullness of life” is, but it’s not reflective of the gospel
- Gagnon: Paul’s life was much more troubling than yours, mine or anyone else around here
- Gagnon: Paul was beaten, whipped, stoned, poorly sheltered, poorly clothed, poorly fed, shipwrecked, and anxious for his churches
- Gagnon: on your view, he should have been miserable and angry with God all the time
- Gagnon: but instead Paul was constantly thankful and rejoicing to be able to suffer with Jesus and look forward to the resurrection
- Gagnon: I have suffered too, but the suffering we go through never provides us with a license to violate the commandments of God
- Ozanne: “the ultimate thing is what people feel God has called them to”
- Ozanne: My goal right now is to tell young people that homosexuality is fine so they don’t commit suicide
- Ozanne: the view that homosexuality is wrong is “evil and misguided”
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm in the gay community are intrinsic to homosexual unions, not caused by external disapproval of homosexuality

Segment 4: Concluding statements

- Gagnon: gay male relationships on average have more sex partners and more STDs
- Gagnon: female relationships on average have shorter-length relationships and more mental issues
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm are because there is no complementarity / balance in the relationships
- Gagnon: everyone has some disappointment or suffering in their lives that hurts them, and that they are tempted to break the rules to fix, but we should not break the rules in order to be happy
- Ozanne: both sides are passionate, so no one can be right, and evidence proves nothing
- Ozanne: only feelings about “what God is doing” can allow us to decide what counts as sin or not
- Ozanne: the main thing that is at stake here is to make people like us, not to decide what the Bible says about sin
- Ozanne: my message to people is to do whatever you want, and ignore mean people who don’t affirm you

- Ozanne: we should be more opposed to mean people who make non-Christians feel unloved than about doing what the Bible says

Gun control activists get CDC to bury study on legal ownership and self-defense

January 3, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw an interesting article over at Daily Wire about a study on guns and crime produced by the CDC. It's very interesting to see what a study from the secular left has to say about gun-ownership by law-abiding Americans, and the effect of self-defense on crime rates.

It says:

> A key federal agency worked with gun control advocates to bury a study that showed law-abiding firearms owners use them to protect themselves millions of times per year, according to a report.
>
> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) deleted a reference to the study, which it had commissioned, after gun-control advocates said it made passing new gun laws more difficult. The pro-Second Amendment site The Reload reported that the White House and powerful Illinois Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin helped arrange a series of meetings at which the gun control advocates convinced the agency to hide the study.
>
> "[T]hat 2.5 Million number needs to be killed, buried, dug up, killed again and buried again," Mark Bryant, head of the Gun Violence Archive, wrote to CDC officials after a meeting. "It is highly misleading, is used out of context and I honestly believe it has zero value – even as an outlier point in honest DGU discussions."

When there's a conflict between gun ban advocates, who are driven by feelings, and law-abiding gun owners, who are driven by facts, who wins?

> Bryant's email was one of a handful obtained by The Reload which illustrate how gun control lobbyists were triggered by the study by Florida State University Criminology Professor Gary Kleck.
>
> […]Bryant complained that Kleck's estimate was "misinformation" and should be eliminated from the CDC's website because gun-rights advocates were using it as ammunition for their Second Amendment arguments.
>
> The CDC initially stood by the study and listed it in the "Fast Facts: Firearm Violence Prevention" portion of its website. But after a September 15, 2021, virtual meeting with gun control advocates, the agency assured them it would revise the section in 2022, according to a December 10, 2021, email obtained by The Reload.

When science facts conflict with secular left left feelings, then government policy adapts to the feelings and ignores the facts.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

Here is a paper by Dr. Malcolm that summarizes one of the key points of her book.

Excerpt:

> Tracing the history of gun control in the United Kingdom since the late 19th century, this article details how the government has arrogated to itself a monopoly on the right to use force. The consequence has been a tremendous increase in violent crime, and harsh punishment for crime victims who dare to fight back. The article is based on the author's most recent book, Guns and Violence: The English Experience (Harvard University Press, 2002). Joyce Malcom is professor of history at Bentley College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also author of To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an AngloAmerican Right (Harvard University Press, 1994).

And the result of the 1997 gun ban:

> The result of the ban has been costly. Thousands of weapons were confiscated at great financial cost to the public. Hundreds of thousands of police hours were devoted to the task. But in the six years since the 1997 handgun ban, crimes with the very weapons banned have more than doubled, and firearm crime has increased markedly. In 2002, for the fourth consecutive year, gun crime in England and Wales rose—by 35 percent for all firearms, and by a whopping 46 percent for the banned handguns. Nearly 10,000 firearms offences were committed.
>
> […]**According to Scotland Yard, in the four years from 1991 to 1995 crimes against the person in England"s inner cities increased by 91 percent. In the four years from 1997 to 2001 the rate of violent crime more than doubled. The UK murder rate for 2002 was the highest for a century.**

I think that peer-reviewed studies – from Harvard University, no less – should be useful to those of us who believe in the right of self-defense for law-abiding people. The book by economist John Lott, linked above, compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, but both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

Atheist Jerry Coyne explains why morality is impossible for atheists

January 4, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's review what you need in your worldview in order to have a rationally grounded system of morality.

You need 5 things:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Theism rationally grounds all 5 of these. Atheism cannot ground *any of them.*

Let's take a look at #4: free will and see how atheism deals with that.

Atheism and free will?

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality.

Here are some more atheists to explain how atheists view morality.

William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

When village atheists talk about how they can be moral without God, it's important to ask

them to justify the minimum requirements for rational morality. Atheists may act inconsistently with their worldview, believing in free will, expecting praise and blame for complying with the arbitrary standards of their peer group, etc. But there is nothing more to morality on atheism that imitating the herd – at least when the herd is around to watch them. And when the herd loses its Judeo-Christian foundation – watch out. That's when the real atheism comes out – the atheism that we've seen before in countries that turned their backs on God, and the moral law. When God disappears from a society, anything is permissible.

Another eternal cosmology model shot down by the BGV Theorem

January 5, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw this article on Evolution News, and thought it might a good time for me to review the BGV Theorem that Dr. William Lane Craig brings up in all his recent debates.

First, let's review the BGV Theorem.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) theorem shows that every universe that is on balance expanding must have a space-time boundary in the past (a beginning). Even cyclical models of the universe count as expanding "on balance" if their later expansions go further than the previous ones.

Here's the article from Evolution News:

> A key argument in Stephen Meyer's Return of the God Hypothesis centers on the universe having a beginning. He argues that the beginning points to the cosmos resulting from the mind of a creator. Meyer's case for the God Hypothesis includes discrediting the claim that cyclical cosmological models could avoid a beginning by his appealing to the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) theorem. His reasoning was recently reaffirmed by University of Buffalo physicists Will Kinney and Nina Stein in their analysis of Ijjas and Steinhardt's (IS) cosmological model. They published their results in the Journal of Cosmology and Astroparticle Physics.

By the way, the Kindle edition of the Meyer book is on sale for $2.99 right now. Get it while it's cheap!

More:

> Correspondent Charlotte Hsu summarizes the research at Phys.org:
>
> "People proposed bouncing universes to make the universe infinite into the past, but what we show is that one of the newest types of these models doesn't work," says Kinney, Ph.D., professor of physics in the UB College of Arts and Sciences. "In this new type of model, which addresses problems with entropy, even if the universe has cycles, it still has to have a beginning."
>
> Kinney and Stein applied the BGV theorem to the IS model, which I have previously critiqued. Anna Ijjas and Paul Steinhardt propose that the universe expanded, then contracted, and then bounced back into an expansion stage in a never-ending cycle. Each iteration grows vastly larger than the previous one, so the universe is on average always expanding. Kinney and Stein rigorously demonstrate that the BGV theorem mandates the IS model being "geodesically pastincomplete," meaning that spacetime had an absolute beginning:

> In this paper, we use the BGV theorem to demonstrate that growth in the scale factor inevitably means that the spacetime is geodesically pastincomplete. … This result is completely general: any bouncing spacetime which obeys the condition for entropy dissipation and the Null Energy Condition outside the bounce must be geodesically incomplete. This is consistent with the BGV theorem, which shows that any spacetime for which the average Hubble parameter is positive must be similarly geodesically incomplete. The IS cosmology satisfies this condition and therefore cannot be past eternal, independent of the details of the dynamics.

In other words, this new cyclical / oscillating model of the universe does not avoid the need for a beginning… and a cause of the creation event.

So, when you hear Dr. Craig talking about the BGV Theorem in debates, now you'll know what it's for. It's real, and it works.

Texas Supreme Court allows ex-wife to take gender-confused son to California

January 6, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Every time I see a story of a woman initiating divorce to a man because he doesn't support her desire for their child to transition, I blog about it here. I've blogged about a case from Canada. I've blogged about a case from California. And now there is one from Texas (see below). Who is to blame? And what message does this send to men who are considering marriage?

Here's the story from The Post Millennial:

> Jeffrey Younger has lost his court case to prevent his ex-wife from taking their son to California, where he could be medically transitioned.
>
> […]He wanted the courts to stop his ex-wife from taking the children to California and to protect his boys from medical mutilation at the hands of their mother, who is a pediatrician. The courts prevented him from forcing the mother to bring the boys back from California. Younger has accused her of using the children to help advertise her "inclusive," "gender affirming" practice.
>
> […]The custody case was before the Supreme Court of Texas, which ruled against Younger. Younger had issued a petition on December 16 to try to retain his parental rights after his ex-wife, Dr. Anne Georgulas, took the boys to California.

He lost his parental rights. Why? What crime did he commit? He didn't commit any crime.

More:

> California has a law in place, starting on Sunday, that children in that state will not be returned to their home state in the event that the home state would prevent the children from being medically transitioned to present as the opposite sex. Younger wanted the boys brought home.

And a little more about the ex-wife:

> Younger was married to pediatrician [Anne] Georgulas. Georgulas and Younger ended up in court fighting over the children when she believed that James, Younger's 7-year-old, wanted to live as a girl called Luna.
>
> She petitioned the court to prevent Younger from "from signing Luna up as James for any activities or taking her as James or calling her James or using male pronouns related to Luna at any activities outside the home…"
>
> She further asked the court to prevent Younger from "allowing the children to remain in the presence of anyone who is not calling Luna by her chosen name, 'Luna,' not using female pronouns to refer to her and otherwise not affirming

> Luna."

Who is to blame? I think that since Younger made the choice, and he's the one who is disappointed, he is to blame. She was dangerous before he married her. He should have left her alone. Men shouldn't marry alligators. And they aren't forced to marry them. It's the man's job to ask the woman questions about her beliefs and actions before proposing to her. And vice versa.

But look at this:

> In a video posted to the dad's website, James is asked, "You're a boy right?" Heavy reported.
>
> "No, I'm a girl."
>
> "Who told you you're a girl?"
>
> "Mommy."
>
> The child said Anne also put James in dresses. "She buys me headbands. She gets me hair clips…she paints my nails."
>
> […]Witnesses who knew the boys and could attest that James did not identify as a girl when left to his own devices, were prevented from testifying in the case. One mother of the boys' friends said, in testimony she wasn't allowed to give in 2019, that:
>
> "Over the past year, I have observed that James is blissfully happy as a boy. He loves to march around outside and yell, 'we are the only boy scout troop' or 'I'm the Leader of the wolf pack!' He is always the ring leader, even though he isn't the oldest of the group. He loves dressing as a super hero and sword fighting. One day we all walked to a playground near my house and on the way home James slipped in some mud and got his clothes dirty. He asked if he could borrow some of my kids clothes and I could wash his.
>
> "Of course I said, 'no problem' and grabbed him a pair of shorts from the chest of drawers and tossed them to him. I said, 'hang on while I grab a shirt from the closet'. He immediately said, 'Mrs. Sarah, I don't need a shirt! It's hot! And boys don't have to wear shirts if they don't want to! Isn't that awesome!' He was so cute. I said, 'yes that is awesome!' As he ran off to play. I did eventually get him to put on a shirt. It was gray with lizards on it and he loved it! He also likes having his hair cut a certain way but told my son Grayson that his mom wouldn't let him get it too short even though he wanted it to be spikey."

So why blog about this?

Well, most pro-marriage conservatives, male and female, especially beta-male pastors think that a man's job is to affirm his wife at all times, even if she descends into feminism, secularism and socialism. Her friends are always leading her the right way, and husbands are just supposed to submit to her intuitions and desires. Most pro-marriage conservatives think that men have no leadership role with women. That would be

patriarchy, and patriarchy is bad. Even if the woman is behaving badly, men have to submit to her leadership of the home. Even if the woman is hurting her own children. Men have to make the evil “work out”. That’s the “chivalrous” thing to do.

But there’s a problem with this. The problem is that young men are watching what is happening to this man (who chose poorly, and is responsible for it). And what they are learning from this case is that it is stupid for a man to get married. Men don’t have to get married in order to be successful. A single man can go to university, start a career, pay off his house and save a million dollars by age 46, then retire at age 50, and live off his dividends. Then he will have time for his own priorities: apologetics, theology, charitable giving, mentoring others. Becoming a slave to a secular leftist wife, in a system dominated by misandrists, is not necessarily the best way to make a difference for God. Men who want marriage have certain plans for their marriages, and certain things they are looking for in a wife. If they can’t get those things, then why push it, and get into a situation like this?

Neither Jesus nor Paul was married in the New Testament. 1 Corinthians 7 urges single Christians not to get married so they can focus on Kingdom work. The case for marriage has to be overwhelmingly attractive for a man to pursue marriage. These news stories are discouraging men from marrying. No amount of shaming and blaming by pro-marriage conservatives is going to remove the risks of divorce, loss of custody, loss of parental rights, alimony, child support and forced transing of kids. Good men can do good in other ways. They don’t have to get married, especially not in a time where society is producing radical feminists as wife candidates, and stacking the schools, courts and hospitals with more misandrists. Why should men expose themselves to being ruled by secular leftists?

William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech

January 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video. The essay is for Christians already familiar with basic apologetics.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Here's a quick couple of quotes from the essay for those who cannot watch:

> If there is no God, then any ground for regarding the herd morality evolved by homo sapiens as objectively true seems to have been removed. After all, what is so special about human beings? They are just accidental by-products of nature which have evolved relatively recently on an infinitesimal speck of dust lost somewhere in a hostile and mindless universe and which are doomed to perish individually and collectively in a relatively short time. Some action, say, incest, may not be biologically or socially advantageous and so in the course of human evolution has become taboo; but there is on the atheistic view nothing really wrong about committing incest. If, as Kurtz states, "The moral principles that govern our behavior are rooted in habit and custom, feeling and fashion,"[5] then the non-conformist who chooses to flout the herd morality is doing nothing more serious than acting unfashionably.
>
> The objective worthlessness of human beings on a naturalistic world view is underscored by two implications of that world view: materialism and determinism. Naturalists are typically materialists or physicalists, who regard man as a purely animal organism. But if man has no immaterial aspect to his being (call it soul or mind or what have you), then he is not qualitatively different from other animal species. For him to regard human morality as objective is to fall into the trap of specie-ism. On a materialistic anthropology there is no reason to think that human beings are objectively more valuable than rats. Secondly, if there is no mind distinct from the brain, then everything we think and do is determined by the input of our five senses and our genetic make-up. There is no personal agent who freely decides to do something. But without freedom, none of our choices is morally significant. They are like the jerks of a puppet's limbs, controlled by the strings of sensory input and physical constitution. And what moral value does a puppet or its movements have?
>
> […]Moreover, if atheism is true, there is no moral accountability for one's actions.

> Even if there were objective moral values and duties under naturalism, they are irrelevant because there is no moral accountability. If life ends at the grave, it makes no difference whether one lives as a Stalin or as a saint. As the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky rightly said: “If there is no immortality, then all things are permitted.”

If you want a much shorter, slicker version of this argument to share, Reasonable Faith has produced this nice 5-minute video that you can tweet or share on your Facebook page or whatever:

The moral argument is the easiest argument in the world to discuss with non-Christians, as everyone has to have an answer to questions like “what makes humans valuable?” and “why should I do the right thing when it goes against my self-interest?” and “will evildoers who escape justice in this life be punished when they die?” and “do humans have free will to make moral choices?” These are interesting questions, and people can just give their opinion and then think about it as they discuss it.

You can read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor. I found this debate very helpful for answering the question that everyone should be able to answer: “why should I be moral?”

Canada wants to re-educate Dr. Jordan Peterson for disagreeing with wokeism

January 8, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In Canada, two thirds of voters support liberal political parties. Only a third of voters supports the conservative party, which is not very conservative. So, whenever they have an election, there's usually a Liberal Party majority, or a Liberal Party-led coalition formed with the Even More Liberal Party. If you want to know what American liberals would do with a perpetual majority, just look north.

Here's a story from the Australian Spectator:

> Wokeism has destroyed Canada. We knew the situation was bad when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau froze the bank accounts of protesters in order to silence political action against his regime's appalling abuses of human rights. It became unsalvageable when Trudeau followed up this behaviour by speaking about his love of China's dictatorial powers over citizens.
>
> Long gone are the days of suffocating niceness from our northern cousins. Now, professionals who disagree on social media with Canada's ruling elite find themselves ruthlessly threatened by institutions that are meant to stand for liberty of thought.
>
> […]In a series of tweets today, Dr Jordan Peterson reported his situation at the hands of these lunatics:
>
> 'BREAKING: the Ontario College of Psychologists @CPOntario has demanded that I submit myself to mandatory social-media communication retraining with their experts for, among other crimes, retweeting @PierrePoilievre and criticising @JustinTrudeau and his political allies.
>
> 'I am to take a course of such training (with reports documenting my "progress" or face an in-person tribunal and suspension of my right to operate as a licensed clinical psychologist.
>
> 'About a dozen people from all over the world submitted complaints about my public statements on Twitter and [Joe] Rogan over a four year period (out of the 15 million who follow me on social media) claiming that I had "harmed" people (not them) with my views.
>
> 'In its wisdom @CPOntario decided to pursue these complaints even though they could have dismissed them as vexatious.
>
> 'I have been accused of harming people (although none of the complainants involved in the current action were clients of mine, past or present, or were even acquainted with any of my clients).
>
> 'And even though many of them falsely claimed that they were or had been clients of mine and were allowed by @CPOntario to have their complaints

> investigated despite this falsehood.
>
> ‘We are now in a situation in Canada under @JustinTrudeau where practising professionals can have their livelihoods and public reputations threatened in a very serious manner for agreeing with the Official Opposition and criticising major government figures.
>
> ‘If I comply the terms of my re-education and my punishment will be announced publicly. I have already had the second most serious category of punishment levied against me and have been deemed a high risk to “re-offend”.
>
> ‘Canadians: your physicians, lawyers, psychologists, and other professionals are now so intimidated by their commissar overlords that they fear to tell you the truth. This means that your care and legal counsel has been rendered dangerously unreliable.

He tweeted a bit more, to the effect that he was willing to go public with everything that was happening, so that Canadians (and the rest of the world) could see what Canadian left-wing fascists do to intellectuals who dissent from socialism. You shouldn’t expect anything different from American left-wing fascists. Why would they act any different than their secular left fascist idols: Mao, Stalin, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, etc.? Human life is nothing to a secular left fascist. Anything is possible when there’s no moral law. And that’s exactly what we’ve seen in the past, and what we’re seeing now – today.

Daily Wire had a little more about the laws of Canada, which you should know about if you are thinking of visiting, and thinking that it’s just like America, with first amendment rights.

It’s not:

> Canada enacted a law last year banning any form of therapy that does not affirm a child’s chosen transgender identity by labeling it as “conversion therapy.” They succeeded in the ban by equating “watchful waiting,” which is a form of psychotherapy that focuses on exploring underlying causes of dysphoria and delaying medical interventions, with the controversial practice of trying to get gays and lesbians to “convert” to heterosexuality.
>
> “It’s actually mandatory by law, in many jurisdictions,” Peterson said on his podcast. “Because of standards of ‘gender-affirming care,’ if you’re a girl and say something like ‘I’m a boy,’ the therapist is now required to agree with you.”

According to my legal friends in Canada, even praying for someone who is experiencing unwanted same-sex attractions can now be construed as “disapproval”, and be targeted for breaking their laws.

Don’t travel to Canada. It’s not a safe place to travel to. They don’t respect basic human rights there. They will treat you like a criminal for disagreeing with the positions of their secular left fascist government. They aren’t capable of critical thinking or debate. Their only answer to dissent is the use of power to silence and punish.

Here are the concessions won by conservative Republicans in the Speaker race

January 9, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was 100% behind the conservative rebellion against newly-elected Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy. A lot of people said it was pointless to challenge him, but if you looked closely, there was a specific list of concessions that the conservatives were trying to get. The mainstream news media tried to call the delays "chaotic" and "divisive". But this is how you get what you want from a negotiation.

Here's the story from Daily Wire:

> After days of negotiations and 15 roll call votes, California Rep. Kevin McCarthy became House speaker early Saturday morning after reportedly giving major concessions to a group of Republican holdouts increasing the influence of some of the chamber's most conservative members.
>
> McCarthy's concessions include changes to how the House is run, placing members of the House Freedom Caucus on key committees, and the creation of a committee to conduct a major investigation into the FBI.
>
> Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz… told the New York Post. "Many of these things had been resisted by Kevin McCarthy as early as Monday and now we have an exquisite rules package."
>
> According to Freedom Caucus Chairman Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA), the "juice was worth the squeeze."

Here are the concessions:

> These included getting a vote on a border security plan, a budget that doesn't allow the debt ceiling to increase, an end to all COVID mandates and funding, a term limit vote, single subject bills, and allowing at least 72 hours given for members to read bills.
>
> Another key provision is allowing for any member to introduce a motion to vacate the chair, meaning that members can demand a vote to remove the Speaker from the position. Another concession that was discussed throughout the week was creating an open amendment process to bills, making it easier for lawmakers to change bills during debate.
>
> "Any power that limits the speaker's power is a step in the right direction," one Freedom Caucus staffer told the Post. "The Freedom Caucus is more relevant than ever, and McCarthy won't be able to get anything done without our endorsement and support."
>
> Members of the Freedom Caucus will also reportedly be placed on the Rules Committee and the Appropriations Committee, committees crucial to how the

> House runs and how funding is doled out.

The House Freedom Caucus is the conservative wing of the conservative party. They have a reputation for solving problems with smart policies that win votes on both sides of the aisle. So the more influence they have, the more the actions of the Republican party are going to reflect the will of the Republican voters (rather than the Republican DONORS).

And here is the best win of all:

> Another key concession given to the McCarthy holdouts was the guarantee that a Church-style committee would be formed to look into the politicization of the FBI. The Church Committee investigated CIA abuses in the 1970s, which led to the exposure of things like the infamous MKULTRA program.
>
> "With the rules agreement we negotiated, we will have a powerful Church-style committee to go after the weaponization of the federal government – the FBI, DOJ, DHS, and all the rest," Rep. Dan Bishop (R-NC) said. "This is a victory for the Constitutional rights of all Americans."

Just to refresh everyone, here is the list of Republicans who refused to be rolled over by the Republican establishment:

Dan Bishop (NC), Lauren Boebert (CO), Byron Donalds (FL), Josh Brecheen (OK), Mike Cloud (TX), Andrew Clyde (GA), Eli Crane (AZ), Matt Gaetz (FL), Bob Good (VA), Paul Gosar (AZ), Andy Harris (MD), Anna Paulina Luna (FL), Mary Miller (IL), Ralph Norman (SC), Andy Ogles (TN), Scott Perry (PA), Matt Rosendale (MT), Chip Roy (TX), Keith Self (TX), and Andy Biggs (AZ).

What I thought was interesting is that Andy Ogles is a first-term representative from the 5th district in Tennessee, which includes the city of Nashville. I think we should expect great things from Andy Ogles. He did not go to Washington to mark time.

Famous cancer researcher cannot find work after being fired for consensual office romance

January 10, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I sometimes get into discussions with social conservatives about why I am not at least *trying* to get married. I have a lot of reasons for not trying to get married. For one, I don't want to fall under the authority of hierarchies (school, work or church) who don't think that women should ever be held responsible for their own choices. Let's take a look at a news story that illustrates the problem.

Once upon a time, men would meet their wives in school, workplaces or churches. As long as the man was not in the reporting hierarchy of the woman, (i.e. – as long as he was not her manager or her director, etc.), then it was fine for people to meet up, date, get engaged, and get married. But that's all changed now.

Consider this story from the New York Post:

> A renowned Massachusetts Institute of Technology biologist who was axed after having what he said was a consensual fling with a much younger colleague, said the mushrooming scandal forced him on the unemployment line.
>
> David Sabatini, 54, whose research involved unraveling how tumors develop, resigned from MIT last month and has been surviving on employment after fellow scientist Kristin Knouse claimed he "groomed" and "coerced" her into a sexual relationship, according to a report and court papers.
>
> A longtime friend and dean at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine tried to offer him a job, but after an uproar, the school announced on May 3 that it would not hire him despite the fact that colleagues described him in a recent article as one of the world's greatest scientists — a "genius" in line for the Nobel Prize.
>
> "What wormhole did my life take, to … protests and being called a sexual predator? What quirk in the universe allowed this to happen?" said Sabatini, who has denied wrongdoing and noted Knouse did not work in his lab or report to him.
>
> In an October lawsuit against MIT, Sabatini said that his relationship with Knouse, who is 21 years his junior, was consensual — and told a reporter he was shocked to find himself the subject of protests at NYU when the school explored the possibility of hiring him.
>
> Sabatini has contended he and Knouse began their fling during a 2018 conference, while he was in the midst of a divorce. By 2020, he thought the affair had cooled, though he claims Knouse wanted to continue. By October 2020, she complained she'd been harassed, and in a later lawsuit alleged Sabitini oversaw a "sexualized" environment in his lab.

What's interesting about this story to me is that it's been reported that this woman entered into this relationship with this man after he clearly communicated to her that he

was only looking for something casual. I.e. – he was not trying to hide that he did not want to be tied down. He was telling her that up front.

There are more details about the story in Common Sense.

After their initial hook-up…

> …they met up at Knouse's condo near Boston Common where they discussed a few ground rules for their tryst. They agreed they could see other people. Knouse, Sabatini remembers, had ongoing flings with men who she referred to with nicknames like "anesthesiologist f*** buddy," "finance bro," and "physics professor," **and she wanted to keep it that way.** Also, they wouldn't tell anyone. Why complicate things at work? It was all supposed to be fun.

Why did this woman get the man fired? Well, there is an old saying about women that goes like this: "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned". Apparently, Sabatini was getting interested in another woman, and less interested in Knouse:

> Things were fizzling… he was getting involved with another woman, a microbiologist in Germany.
>
> Knouse didn't want to let go. In January 2020 she texted, in part: "I get anxious when I don't hear back from you and then I see you post stuff on Twitter and it provides an admittedly small and silly but still another bit of evidence to this growing feeling that you don't care about me in the way that I care about you." He wrote back: "I am sorry but you are being crazy." In another text, Knouse admitted feeling "stung." She added: "I think it's worth thinking about whether you want someone who matches your passion, intellect, and ambition."

Feminists think that people are faithful and committed because of self-interest, e.g. – "passion, intellect, and ambition", i.e. – self-interest. They think that a woman can just like fun, and choose a man who likes fun, and have a permanent, exclusive relationship based on continuous fun. No need to care about religion. No need to care about the rationality of moral behavior. No need to care about traditional gender roles. Things will just work out, if each person acts selfishly all the time.

So what happened to Sabatini next?

This:

> In October 2020, Knouse texted her friends that she was "unpack[ing] a ton of suppressed abuse and trauma from an obvious local source"—an apparent reference to Sabatini. Knouse's fellowship at the Whitehead was ending, and she didn't apply for any faculty jobs there. When the new director, Ruth Lehmann, called Knouse to ask why, Knouse complained for the first time of being "harassed."
>
> In November, Knouse warned her friend—an incoming Whitehead fellow—to "squeeze out as much advice as possible before your mentor is Weinstein'ed out

> of science."
>
> In December, at Lehmann's behest, the consulting firm Jones Diversity sent the Whitehead employees a survey "based in part on Dr. Knouse's false complaint about Dr. Sabatini," according to a complaint later brought by Sabatini. All participants were anonymous. Five or so of the nearly 40 employees in Sabatini's lab took part.
>
> The next month, two former Sabatini lab members lodged complaints to H.R.—the first complaints against him in his 24-year tenure—about "bro culture" in the lab.
>
> This prompted the Whitehead to hire the law firm Hinckley, Allen & Snyder to conduct an investigation on "gender bias and/or inequities and a retaliatory leadership in the Sabatini lab." The Whitehead never told Sabatini what he was accused of. Former lab members told me their co-workers were sobbing when they came out of meetings with the lawyers, saying that the lawyers had put words in their mouths. "They had a very strong agenda," one of them told me.

Knouse was 29 years old. She was not a child. Sabatini never worked with her. He never supervised her. He never threatened her or pressured her. This was a relationship between two consenting adults. But that doesn't matter, because in every school and workplace, women cannot be held responsible for their own bad choices. Women are always victims of men. It is always the man who must be punished. And men have to go to school and work in these environments for their entire lives – walking on thin ice, never knowing when the axe will fall.

Sabatini is ruined:

> In the 24 hours after the report came out, Sabatini's life fell apart. MIT put him on administrative leave. The Howard Hughes Medical Institute, another prestigious non-profit that funds biomedical research and was paying Sabatini's salary, fired him. He resigned from the Whitehead, and eventually MIT, at the advice of his lawyers who thought it would help him secure his next job. ("I one hundred percent regret that," Sabatini told me).
>
> Soon, the biotech startups he'd helped found— Navitor Pharmaceuticals, KSQ and Raze Therapeutics—started severing their relationships with him. Sabatini was axed from professorships, fellowships, and professional societies. Awards and grants were pulled. His income disappeared.

Knouse is still working. They decided that she didn't violate the policy – only he violated it. She has no problem at all with this outcome – she really believes she is a victim, and shouldn't have to take responsibility for her own choices. Can you imagine being married to a woman who does whatever she wants, then blames you when things go wrong? And worse – goes to the authorities to have them punish you, when she is the one who chose poorly?

This was a consensual relationship. Expectations were set at the beginning – this was

casual, no commitment. She agreed to the casual nature, she was sleeping with several other men. Suddenly, she reached age 29, and decided it was time to get serious. He reminded her about their arrangement – nothing serious.

They were BOTH EQUALLY in violation of the company rule. Abuse was alleged by her, but there was no police involvement to verify it. He was punished, but there was no criminal trial where he could defend himself. He was not given due process. No lawyer. No self-defense. This lack of due process is common on college campuses, workplaces, and even in religious organizations. Women who are jilted by men are able to make these allegations and get these men fired without any due process.

Some people might say "well, he was treating her badly, so he deserved it". The issue is not whether he is to blame, or whether she is to blame. The issue is what message it sends to men about the safety of having relationships with women. Women aren't punished for breaking the same rules as men break. And men are learning from that not to engage in relationships with women, because the authorities always side with the women even if their own decisions have gotten them into trouble.

Some people might say, "well as long as you act morally, then this won't happen to you". But these accusations can also be made against innocent men who are just "guilty" of offending women in the school or workplace with their conservative or Christian views. This was already happening to people in companies like Mozilla and Google. Men sometimes get accused of false rape and sexual harassment for rejecting a woman's advances.

I know that a lot of pro-marriage social conservatives love to load men up with duties, and blame them when things go wrong. But those social conservatives cannot expect men to continue to marry in an environment where men are always to blame, men must always be punished, men must always pay alimony and child support, men must always go to jail, men must always lose their jobs or custody of their kids. Men are learning NOT to talk to women, date them, mentor them, or marry them.

It's lots of fun for pro-marriage social conservatives to treat women like children, and embrace chivalry in public. It's a form of virtue-signaling. But if you ignore the incentives facing men, then you are causing the very decline of marriage that you claim to oppose.

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life by J. P. Moreland

January 11, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this essay on After All, but it looks like their site is not working well, so I'm just going to steal it and post it here, in case it disappears completely. This is one of my favorite short essays on utilitarianism, and it's a wonder that the thing can't stay up somewhere. Well, it will have a home here now. I'd be surprised to see anyone else be this awesome in a measly 1000 words as Dr. Moreland is below.

—-

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life

What Is Utilitarianism?

Utilitarianism (also called consequentialism) is a moral theory developed and refined in the modern world by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). It can be defined as follows:

> *An action or moral rule is right if and only if it maximizes the amount of nonmoral good produced in the consequences that result from doing that act or following that rule compared with other acts or rules open to the agent.*

By focusing on three features of utilitarianism, we can clarify this definition.

(1) Utilitarian theories of value.

What is a nonmoral good? Utilitarians deny that there are any moral actions or rules that are intrinsically right or wrong. But they do believe in objective values that are nonmoral.

Hedonistic utilitarians say that the only intrinsic good is pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Quantitative hedonists (Bentham) say that the amount of pleasure and pain is the only thing that matters in deciding between two courses of action, I should do the one that produces the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain (measured by factors like the duration and intensity of the pleasure). Qualitative hedonists (Mill) say that pleasure is the only intrinsic good, but the type of pleasure is what is important, not the amount. They would rank pleasures that come from reading, art, and friendship as more valuable than those that come from, say, a full stomach.

Pluralistic utilitarians say there are a number of things that have intrinsic, nonmoral value: pleasure, friendship, health, knowledge, freedom, peace, security, and so forth. For pluralists, it is not just the pleasure that comes from friendship that has value but also friendship itself.

Currently, the most popular utilitarian view of value is subjective preference utilitarianism. This position says it is presumptuous and impossible to specify things that

have intrinsic nonmoral worth. So, they claim, intrinsic value ought to be defined as that which each individual subjectively desires or wants, provided these do not harm others. Unfortunately, this view collapses into moral relativism.

(2) Utilitarians and maximizing utility.

Utilitarians use the term utility to stand for whatever good they are seeking to produce as consequences of a moral action (e.g., “pleasure” for the hedonist, “satisfaction of subjective preference” for others). They see morality in a means-to-ends way. The sole value of a moral action or rule is the utility of its consequences. Moral action should maximize utility. This can be interpreted in different ways, but many utilitarians embrace the following: the correct moral action or rule is the one that produces the greatest amount of utility for the greatest number of people.

(3) Two forms of utilitarianism: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.

According to act utilitarianism, an act is right if and only if no other act available maximizes utility more than the act in question. Here, each new moral situation is evaluated on its own, and moral rules like “don’t steal” or “don’t break promises” are secondary The moral agent must weigh available alternatives and choose the one that produces the best consequences. Rule utilitarianism says that correct moral actions are done in keeping with correct moral rules, However, no moral rule is intrinsically right or wrong. Rather, a correct moral rule is one that would maximize utility if most people followed it as opposed to following an alternative rule. Here, alternative rules (e.g., “don’t lie” vs. “don’t lie unless doing so would enhance friendship”) are compared for their consequences, not specific actions.

What Is Wrong with Utilitarianism?

Several objections show the inadequacy of utilitarianism as a normative moral theory.

First, utilitarianism can be used to justify actions that are clearly immoral. Consider the case of a severely deformed fetus. The child is certain to live a brief, albeit painless life. He or she will make no contribution to society. Society, however, will bear great expense. Doctors and other caregivers will invest time, emotion, and effort in adding mere hours to the baby’s life. The parents will know and love the child only long enough to be heartbroken at the inevitable loss. An abortion negates all those “utility” losses. There is no positive utility lost. Many of the same costs are involved in the care of the terminally ill elderly. They too may suffer no pain, but they may offer no benefit to society. In balancing positives and negatives, and excluding from the equation the objective sacredness of all human life, we arrive at morally repugnant decisions. Here deontological and virtue ethics steer us clear of what is easier to what is right.

Second, in a similar way, utilitarianism denies the existence of supererogatory acts. These are acts of moral heroism that are not morally obligatory but are still praiseworthy.

Examples would be giving 75 percent of your income to the poor or throwing yourself on a bomb to save a stranger. Consider the bomb example. You have two choices — throwing yourself on the bomb or not doing so. Each choice would have consequences and, according to utilitarianism, you are morally obligated to do one or the other depending on which option maximized utility. Thus, there is no room for acts that go beyond the call of morality.

Third, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of human rights and human dignity. If enslaving a minority of people, say by a lottery, would produce the greatest good for the greatest number, or if conceiving children only to harvest their parts would do the same, then these could he justified in a utilitarian scheme. But enslavement and abortion violate individual rights and treat people as a means to an end, not as creatures with intrinsic dignity as human beings. If acts of abortion, active euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and so forth maximize utility, then they are morally obligatory for the utilitarian. But any moral system that makes abortion and suicide morally obligatory is surely flawed.

Finally, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of motives and character. We should praise good motives and seek good character because such motives and character are intrinsically valuable. But utilitarianism implies that the only reason we should praise good motives instead of bad ones, or seek good character instead of bad character, is because such acts would maximize utility. But this has the cart before the horse. We should praise good motives and blame bad ones because they are good or bad, not because such acts of praising and blaming produce good consequences.

In sum, it should be clear that utilitarianism is an inadequate moral theory. Unfortunately, ours is a pragmatic culture and utilitarianism is on the rise. But for those of us who follow Christ, a combination of virtue and deontological ethics is a more adequate view of common sense morality found in natural law and of the moral vision contained in the Bible.

House Democrats vote against resolution condemning attacks on churches

January 12, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought this vote from Wednesday was very interesting. A lot of Christians think that choosing a political party is a lot like choosing your flavor of ice cream. You choose the one you like, the one that makes you feel good and look good to others. But actually, one of the political parties condemns the persecution of Christians, and the other one is all in favor of it.

Consider this article from Daily Signal:

> Over 200 House Democrats voted Wednesday against condemning the slew of attacks on pro-life pregnancy centers that have occurred since the leak of the draft opinion indicating that the Supreme Court would overturn Roe v. Wade.
>
> H. Con. Res. 3 (expressing the sense of Congress condemning the recent attacks on pro-life facilities, groups, and churches) passed 222 to 208, with three Democrats supporting it.
>
> At least 78 pro-life groups and 108 churches have been attacked since May, according to Catholic Vote trackers. Vandals have often tagged these buildings with threats such as, "If abortions aren't safe, neither are you," making the attacks incidents of suspected pro-abortion violence.
>
> Yet as of Wednesday, authorities had not arrested anyone in connection with these incidents. Democrats like New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez have been loath to condemn or even acknowledge the attacks.

The Biden administration isn't very interested in prosecuting domestic terrorism when it's committed by the secular left against churches and crisis pregnancy centers. But they are VERY interested in using the power of the law to go after the pro-life taxpayers who pay their salaries:

> The DOJ's Civil Rights Division has refused to share with The Daily Signal whether it is prosecuting any of these cases under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, which "prohibits threats of force, obstruction and property damage intended to interfere with reproductive health care services."
>
> Meanwhile, that Civil Rights Division charged 26 pro-life individuals in 2022 with violations of the FACE Act—though the legislation protects both pro-life pregnancy centers and abortion clinics, as a DOJ official noted to Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas, in December.
>
> Also in December, Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta revealed that DOJ has been targeting pro-life activists through the FACE Act as a response to the overturn of Roe as she delivered remarks at the Justice Department's Civil Rights

> Division's 65th Anniversary.

Now, I heard a lot secular leftists concerned about the January 6th demonstration. They weren't concerned about the Capitol Hill police officer who murdered the unarmed protestor, they were concerned that people who disagreed with socialism were allowed to demonstrate. But do you know what the secular leftists were not concerned about? Antifa and BLM committing insurrection in Washington, D.C. in 2020.

Here's an article from Real Clear Politics dated May 2020, to remind you about that:

> We are witnessing glimmers of the full insurrection the far-left has been working toward for decades. The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis was merely a pre-text for radicals to push their ambitious insurgency. In a matter of hours, after the video of Floyd began circulating the internet, militant antifa cells across the country mobilized to Minnesota to aid Black Lives Matter rioters. Law enforcement and even the state National Guard have struggled to respond in Minnesota.
>
> Portland, Oakland, Los Angeles, Dallas and Atlanta are just some of the other cities waking up and finding smoldering ruins where businesses once operated. Nearly 30 other cities experienced some form of mass protest or violent rioting. At least three people have been killed so far.
>
> Antifa, the extreme anarchist-communist movement, has rioting down to an art. The first broken window is the blood in the water for looters to move in. When the looting is done, those carrying flammable chemicals start fires to finish the job. Footage recorded in Minneapolis and other cities show militants dressed in black bloc— the antifa uniform — wielding weapons like hammers or sticks to smash windows. You see their graffiti daubed on smashed up buildings: FTP means 'Fuck the Police'; ACAB stands for 'All Cops Are Bastards'; 1312 is the numerical code for ACAB.
>
> Last night, rioters reached the gates of the White House, possibly the most secure location on Earth. There, they chipped away at the barriers piece-by-piece while law enforcement struggled to respond. One Secret Service officer reportedly had a brick thrown at his head. Footage recorded at the scene showed him blood-soaked. Police were eventually able to repel masked rioters by using pepper spray and tear gas. That worked, for now.
>
> The militants uprising across the country want a revolution and they don't care who or what has to be destroyed in the process. If their comrades die, they are elevated as martyrs in propaganda. Death is celebrated.
>
> At its core, BLM is a revolutionary Marxist ideology. Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi and Patrisse Cullors, BLM's founders, are self-identified Marxists who make no secret of their worship of communist terrorists and fugitives, like Assata Shakur. They want the abolishment of law enforcement and capitalism. They want regime change and the end of the rule of law. Antifa has partnered with Black Lives

> Matter, for now, to help accelerate the break down of society.
>
> The US is getting a small preview of the anarchy antifa has been agitating, training and preparing for. Ending law enforcement is a pre-condition for antifa and BLM's success in monopolizing violence. Those who are harmed first are the weak and vulnerable, the people who cannot protect themselves. Small business owners in Minnesota pleaded for mercy, even putting up signs and messages in support of the rioters, but to no avail.

The Biden administration wasn't interested in investigating or prosecuting their friends in Antifa and BLM. No, no. They have to go after peaceful pro-lifers. You can't trust those Christians, what with their marriages and their children and their jobs and their church attendance. Everyone one of them is a potential terrorist!

The problem with people on the secular left is that they primarily form their beliefs based on feelings. What makes them feel good. What makes them look good. So, an insurrection committed by their own side produces no outrage. Billions of dollars of damage from Antifa and BLM is no concern to them. But if the TV news anchor tells them to be outraged at January 6th people walking around the Capitol, then they will be outraged. It's just like the "two minutes hate" from 1984. These are not rational people. They're lemmings.

48-year-old divorced single mother seeks bailout for $430,000 of student loan debt

January 13, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If there's one area where I feel comfortable leading a woman, it's education, career and finances. I wasn't born in the USA, so it was quite a struggle to know how to navigate education, career and finances. But I did it, and I learned how to do it. And I like to share what I learned with Christian women, so that they don't end up with a useless degree and a bunch of student loan debt.

Here's a story about a woman I didn't advise, reported by the far-left Business Insider:

> Maria had a goal to teach at a university full-time. Today, she "absolutely" regrets pursuing that goal.
>
> While Maria's undergraduate education, which she completed in 2001, was funded through scholarships and Pell grants, she knew more advanced degrees would give her a leg up in university teaching — especially as a woman in the industry. So she pursued a master's degree and a PhD, the latter of which took seven years to complete.
>
> […]Now, at 48 years old, Maria's student-loan balance is $430,000…
>
> […]As a full-time human resources representative and part-time adjunct professor in Michigan, Maria now makes a five-figure salary while supporting her 15-year-old daughter on her own, with very minimal child support from the father.
>
> […]Of her total student-debt load, more than $70,000 is interest that accumulated while her student-loan payments were on hold, during which she cashed out her 401k and lived on unemployment benefits.
>
> […]Maria even filed for bankruptcy in 2018

I don't recommend doing a degree in non-STEM fields, they don't pay. I don't recommend spending 7 years with no income for a PhD. But notice how society gives her free money to subsdize these poor decisions. She got free scholarships, Pell grants, child support, unemployment benefits. The article doesn't mention if she got alimony, too. And she filed for bankruptcy… screwing her creditors out of what she owed them. Who knows what other social programs and tax benefits she got? While other women do STEM degrees, work in the private sector, marry and stay married, she's been doing life on easy mode, passing off the costs of her poor decisions to the people around her. I don't want women to make decisions that impose costs on their neighbors.

And now, she wants to get a bailout from taxpayers:

> The Education Department recently announced reforms to PSLF, which included going back over denied applications and payments to the program. So there's a

> chance that Maria may earn a quicker route to loan forgiveness. But with her current financial outlook, she's not confident she can complete the program and wants President Joe Biden to do more to help millions of borrowers with debt burdens.

The article notes that teachers and other public sector "workers" can default on their loans and pass the costs along to taxpayers:

> Maria does not work enough hours to qualify for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, which forgives student debt for public servants, like teachers, after ten years of qualifying payments.

Just understand that if society pays women to make poor decisions with their education, careers and finances, then more women will do it. That raises the costs on the men that pay taxes for this, reducing their ability to get married and conceive children. If men are paying for this woman's mistakes, they can't pay for their own marriage and parenting plans.

Consider this other article from the far-left Business Insider:

> There are over 4 times as many scholarships restricted to females as there are restricted to males.

This is despite the fact that about 60% of college students are women. Why are we focusing on subsidizing the group that's already doing well?

By the way, the author of the first Business Insider article, is a recent journalism graduate (expensive university) living in expensive Washington, D.C.. She advocates for bailouts through her journalism. She probably has massive student loan debt, too. It seems like choosing easy non-STEM majors, going into debt, then hoping for a bailout from socialism is quite common.

According to far-left Yahoo News, women hold two thirds of the $1.4 trillion outstanding student loan debt:

> Women hold nearly two-thirds of the outstanding student debt in the U.S., according to the American Association of University Women. And, they have a harder time paying off their debt compared to men. Prior to the student loan forbearance period, 70% of men made at least their required minimum monthly loan payments, while only half (54%) of women said the same, a recent survey by D.A. Davidson found.

Young women today don't like to have to "settle" for a lower cost college in a city with a lower cost of living. Like the Business Insider reporter, they want the Sex in the City lifestyle. So they go live in an expensive city, and run up debt doing useless degrees at an expensive university. And sometimes overseas! As you can see from the chart below, women avoid hard STEM degrees. But those programs are hard for a reason – they pay more money.

MAJORS WITH HIGH MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR WOMEN*

First Field of Degree 5% code	Percent Female	Median Female Earnings
Pharmacy Pharmaceutical Sciences	42	100,000
Information Sciences	26	75,000
Chemical Engineering	23	72,000
Computer Science	22	70,000
Electrical Engineering	7	70,000
Mechanical Engineering	7	70,000
Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering	17	67,000
Computer Engineering	14	67,000
Business Economics	30	64,000
Civil Engineering	13	62,000

** Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.*

The best majors for women to avoid student loan debt

My thoughts

What I wanted to do here is report to you what happens when I try to coach young women about their decisions in education, career and finances. And keep in mind, I'm doing this from a position of starting out in a foreign country, earning a BS and MS in computer science, graduating debt-free and working 22 years full-time. I had a $1.3 million net worth by age 45 (including the new construction home I bought for cash). So I have achievements here.

I run into the student loan debt problem while dating Christian women for marriage. Christian women seem to be even less likely to do hard degrees than women on average. You see a lot of art, music, English, journalism, etc. degrees there. I show them that student loans are a risk factor for divorce, and they also set back the plan to stop paying rent and start having children. I also show them which majors pay the most.

Here's what I usually get in response:

- Women think that they will be an exception to all studies and reports showing that the likely consequences of their actions.
- One woman dismissed the need to clean up her finances because God decided what degrees I would have, and how much I would earn, so I had no authority to advise her from my experience.
- Other women say that I am only doing what makes me happy, and they must do that too. (Note: I cried in second year calculus after failing the first test).
- I advised a 29-year-old woman with $25K of student loan debt and was working as a waitress to take a job I found her as an IT project manager. She said "No! Being a waitress is the easiest job I've ever had!"

- A 30-year-old woman with $23K in student loan debt wanted to do a Masters degree in Europe. I told her to pay off her loans first. She got two useless Masters degrees in Europe, and never worked again.
- I'm told that there is no rush to get out of debt to afford children, because women can have children in their 40s.
- I'm told that it will be fine for the children if she has to work to pay off her debts, because daycare and public schools work better for children than stay-at-home moms and homeschooling.
- I'm told that the $30 trillion national debt and bailouts for student loans, etc. are no big deal because the government can just print more money.
- I'm told that I can fix her financial problems by working harder and longer. One of my friends actually married a woman with $200K in student loan debt in order to get his green card, so some men take this deal.
- I'm told that too much planning feels bad, and I need to be more spontaneous and adventurous. One woman literally said "I don't want to make decisions based on fear".
- A famous Christian apologist woman (not WIA) told me that I can't judge a woman who has student loans because if God forgives a woman, then a man can't exclude her from marriage.

I'm not going to run a marriage that way. I have goals.

Men can't afford BOTH bailouts AND marriage

So, my point is that we have a real problem with figuring out how to get women to make better decisions about education, career and finance. I want to help them. I really do. Because we are $30 trillion in debt now, and we simply don't have enough money to keep bailing out people for student loans. And the problem will only get worse, as the younger generation of losers keeps making poor decisions and demanding that someone else pay for their mistakes.

Men don't marry women who are bad with money. Money is one of the biggest causes of

divorce, and divorce is a financial disaster for men because of anti-male divorce courts.

The number of men who can afford marriage and children is declining because they have to bail out all these reckless, irresponsible young women through their taxes. We need to fix this problem.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

January 14, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has ever done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates). If you've never seen Dr. Craig in a debate with a non-Christian, this one is probably the best introductory one out there. Dr. Craig is the foremost defender of Christian theism on the planet, and probably of all time.

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it! Normally, Dr. Craig debates at major universities in front of students and faculty.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.

3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

Two black economists explain how to end poverty in America

January 15, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These days, everyone seems to think that being good to the poor means looking around to see what people are saying is good to the poor, then loudly shouting your agreement with it. People want to look good to others more than they want to help others. Besides, looking good by loud virtue signaling is free. If we really wanted to help people, though, we should tell them to do what will work.

So let's talk about poverty in America, with help from famous black economist Walter Williams.

First, he says real poverty is not common in America:

> There is no material poverty in the U.S. Here are a few facts about people whom the Census Bureau labels as poor. Dr. Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield, in their study "Understanding Poverty in the United States: Surprising Facts About America's Poor", report that 80 percent of poor households have air conditioning; nearly three-quarters have a car or truck, and 31 percent have two or more. Two-thirds have cable or satellite TV. Half have one or more computers. Forty-two percent own their homes. Poor Americans have more living space than the typical non-poor person in Sweden, France or the U.K. What we have in our nation are dependency and poverty of the spirit, with people making unwise choices and leading pathological lives aided and abetted by the welfare state.

Second, the "poverty" is not caused by racism, but by poor choices:

> The Census Bureau pegs the poverty rate among blacks at 35 percent and among whites at 13 percent. The illegitimacy rate among blacks is 72 percent, and among whites it's 30 percent. A statistic that one doesn't hear much about is that the poverty rate among black married families has been in the single digits for more than two decades, currently at 8 percent. For married white families, it's 5 percent. Now the politically incorrect questions: Whose fault is it to have children without the benefit of marriage and risk a life of dependency? Do people have free will, or are they governed by instincts?
>
> There may be some pinhead sociologists who blame the weak black family structure on racial discrimination. But why was the black illegitimacy rate only 14 percent in 1940, and why, as Dr. Thomas Sowell reports, do we find that census data "going back a hundred years, when blacks were just one generation out of slavery … showed that a slightly higher percentage of black adults had married than white adults. This fact remained true in every census from 1890 to 1940"? Is anyone willing to advance the argument that the reason the illegitimacy rate among blacks was lower and marriage rates higher in earlier periods was there

> was less racial discrimination and greater opportunity?

Third, avoiding poverty is the result of good choices:

> No one can blame a person if he starts out in life poor, because how one starts out is not his fault.
>
> If he stays poor, he is to blame because it is his fault. Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior. It turns out that a married couple, each earning the minimum wage, would earn an annual combined income of $30,000. The Census Bureau poverty line for a family of two is $15,500, and for a family of four, it's $23,000. By the way, no adult who starts out earning the minimum wage does so for very long.

Fourth, what stops people from making good choices is big government:

> Since President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty, the nation has spent about $18 trillion at the federal, state and local levels of government on programs justified by the "need" to deal with some aspect of poverty. In a column of mine in 1995, I pointed out that at that time, the nation had spent $5.4 trillion on the War on Poverty, and with that princely sum, "you could purchase every U.S. factory, all manufacturing equipment, and every office building. With what's left over, one could buy every airline, trucking company and our commercial maritime fleet. If you're still in the shopping mood, you could also buy every television, radio and power company, plus every retail and wholesale store in the entire nation". Today's total of $18 trillion spent on poverty means you could purchase everything produced in our country each year and then some.

Regarding those last two points, here is another famous black economist, Thomas Sowell:

Economist Thomas Sowell blames welfare for killing the black family

To illustrate this point, here's a graph with some helpful data taken from the U. S. Census. In fact, there is a whole video featuring Thomas Sowell to go with this graph:

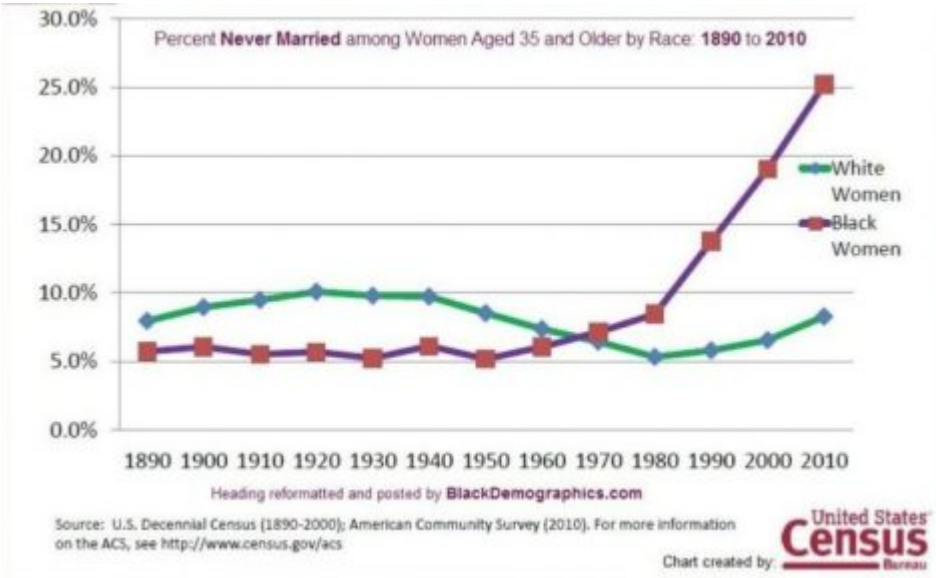

Black women were more likely to be married before welfare programs
And an article to go with it:

> If we wanted to be serious about evidence, we might compare where blacks stood a hundred years after the end of slavery with where they stood after 30 years of the liberal welfare state. In other words, we could compare hard evidence on "the legacy of slavery" with hard evidence on the legacy of liberals.
>
> Despite the grand myth that black economic progress began or accelerated with the passage of the civil rights laws and "war on poverty" programs of the 1960s, the cold fact is that the poverty rate among blacks fell from 87 percent in 1940 to 47 percent by 1960. This was before any of those programs began.
>
> Over the next 20 years, the poverty rate among blacks fell another 18 percentage points, compared to the 40-point drop in the previous 20 years. This was the continuation of a previous economic trend, at a slower rate of progress, not the economic grand deliverance proclaimed by liberals and self-serving black "leaders."
>
> Ending the Jim Crow laws was a landmark achievement. But, despite the great proliferation of black political and other "leaders" that resulted from the laws and policies of the 1960s, nothing comparable happened economically. And there were serious retrogressions socially.
>
> Nearly a hundred years of the supposed "legacy of slavery" found most black children being raised in two-parent families in 1960. But thirty years after the liberal welfare state found the great majority of black children being raised by a single parent.

The rest of the article points out how even crime rates among blacks were caused by the implementation of soft law enforcement policies by progressives. Just look at the big cities if you want to know what it is like for blacks to be ruled by Democrats. It sucks!

If everybody started to read more Thomas Sowell books, we would be much better off as a country! Only good things happen when people stop watching TV and listening to music and watching movies, and instead settle down in a chair with a Thomas Sowell book. I recommended a bunch of them in a previous post.

Is this Hunter Biden's "Ten percent for the Big Guy"?

January 16, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Not really following this story too closely, because I'm trying to recover from a sore throat. (That's what's holding up the Knight and Rose Show podcasts, as well). But I saw a couple of interesting articles, and I thought that you should see them, too.

Breitbart article is first:

> Hunter Biden recorded monthly rent payments of $49,910 while living at President Joe Biden's residence, according to a document unearthed by New York Post's Miranda Devine.
>
> On a document titled "background screening request," it appears Hunter paid $49,910 in monthly rent for one year while living at Joe Biden's Delaware residence, where the president kept classified documents alongside his Corvette in the garage.
>
> Hunter listed his rental tenancy from March 2017 to February 2018, the document shows. The document is signed July 2018.
>
> In 2017, Joe Biden left the White House and stored a large number of classified documents inside his Delaware garage and at two other locations. The first batch of documents found are alleged to contain information pertaining to Ukraine and Iran, CNN reported.
>
> The document also shows that Hunter checked a box on the form claiming to own Joe Biden's home. It is unknown why Hunter would have paid rent if he owned the home.
>
> It should be noted Joe Biden's 2017 tax return on Schedule E only listed $19,800 in "rents received." In 2018, Biden listed no rents received.
>
> Owasco PC, Hunter's law firm, is also listed on the document as an entity Hunter owned in 2018.
>
> Oversight Committee chair Rep. James Comer (R-KY) believes many of Hunter's suspicious wire transfers, flagged by U.S. banks, involve Owasco PC. Comer is investigating the Biden family business for wire fraud and has requested Hunter's personal wealth manager turn over "suspicious" bank records connected to the Biden family business schemes.

I love Miranda Devine's work, and since she was mentioned, I checked on what she's been writing over at the New York Post:

> Disgraced first son Hunter Biden lived off and on at the Delaware home where classified documents from Joe Biden's time as vice president were found last month — giving him unrestricted access to America's secrets while he was addicted to drugs, hammering out shady foreign business deals and under

> federal investigation.
>
> The now-52-year-old began listing the Wilmington home as his address following his 2017 divorce from ex-wife Kathleen Buhle — even falsely claiming he owned the property on a July 2018 background check form as part of a rental application.
>
> Hunter also listed the home as the billing address for his personal credit card and Apple account in 2018 and 2019, respectively, Fox News Digital reported Friday after reviewing emails from his abandoned laptop.
>
> During the same period, the now-first son was in the grip of a crack cocaine addiction costing thousands of dollars. At one point in August 2018, Hunter was recorded begging his sister-in-law-turned-lover, Hallie Biden, to let him use his credit card points to pay for a stay in rehab.
>
> Another former girlfriend of Hunter's, Zoe Kestan, testified to a federal grand jury in February of last year that the couple stayed for a month in 2018 at the notorious Chateau Marmont hotel in Los Angeles, where — the younger Biden wrote in his 2021 memoir — he "learned how to cook crack" before being "blacklisted" from the property over complaints tied to his drug use.
>
> Hunter also frequented prostitutes during this time, dropping more than $30,000 on sex workers between November 2018 and March 2019 alone — making him a possible target for blackmail.
>
> On Thursday, President Biden confirmed that sensitive papers had been found in the locked garage of the home, where he also keeps his vintage 1967 Corvette Stingray.
>
> "My Corvette is in a locked garage, OK? So it's not like they're sitting out on the street," the defensive president told reporters when asked about the discovery.
>
> On Monday, the White House disclosed an initial batch of classified documents had been uncovered on Nov. 2 by the president's personal lawyers while clearing Biden's former office at the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement in Washington.

The same people who thought that a President taking classified documents home was a big deal are now telling us that it's not a big deal. How strange.

11 Reasons Most Biologists Accept Evolutionary Theory in Spite of the Evidence

January 17, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below is a guest post from my friend Eric. I am still struggling with this wretched sore throat. It's much better now, but I still can't sleep through the night.

---

1. Many immediately reject creation or ID from the many embarrassingly bad "why are there still monkeys" arguments used by laymen. They assume there's nothing beyond that.

2. It's what they were taught in school and they never questioned it. "I didn't give it much thought; It wasn't my area of concern", as Michael Behe reflected of his postdoc research days as an evolutionist. "college students have not been shown the weakness of Darwinian evolution" as Joseph Kuhn wrote in 2012.

3. A lot of biologists aren't exposed to problems outside their own field. For example paleontologist and ID critic Don Prothero wrote that "Nearly all metazoans [meaning animals] show stasis, with almost no good examples of gradual evolution… the prevalence of stasis is a puzzle that has no simple answer" but lamented, "by and large the neontological [non-paleontologist] community still 'doesn't get it'… The journal Evolution continues to publish almost no contributions by paleontologists".

4. Others just don't talk about the problems. Renowned chemist James Tour (inventor of nanocars) describes his own experience: "Let me tell you what goes on in the back rooms of science – with National Academy members, with Nobel Prize winners. I have sat with them, and when I get them alone… I say, "Do you understand all of this, where all of this came from, and how this happens?" Every time that I have sat with people who are synthetic chemists, who understand this, they go 'Uh-uh. Nope.' These people are just so far off, on how to believe this stuff came together. I've sat with National Academy members, with Nobel Prize winners. Sometimes I will say, 'Do you understand this?' And if they're afraid to say 'Yes,' they say nothing. They just stare at me, because they can't sincerely do it."

5. Some see anything other than materialistic naturalism is seen as a violation of scientific professionalism. At one conference, "Chinese scientists encouraged the investigation of a variety of new hypotheses to explain the Cambrian explosion: hydrothermal eruptions, sudden seafloor changes, even intelligent design. This last was too much for one American paleontologist who stood up and shouted, 'This is not a scientific conference!'" Likewise the famed Lynn Margulis (proposed symbiogenesis theory) said, "The critics, including the creationist critics, are right about their criticism. It's just that they've got nothing to offer but intelligent design or 'God did it.'"

6. Many biologists don't have much training in engineering. Many of the patterns claimed to only arise by common descent are the same I see in the code I write or among other

objects designed by humans.

7. Some recognize insufficiencies in evolutionary theory, but hope new theories will arise to resolve them. Evolutionists Depew & Weber published in 2012: “Darwinism in its current scientific incarnation has pretty much reached the end of its rope… however, we are confident that a new and more general theory of evolution is evolving.”

8. A bias toward sensationalism in the media–which is true everywhere and not just with evolutionary biology.

9. It’s taboo to publish anything from the ID movement. As one example, Springer (a large scientific publisher) was going to publish 20-so-papers from ID proponents. They had already passed Springer’s internal peer review and Springer agreed to publish them. But a public campaign threatened to boycott Springer if they published, even though none any of the critics had even read the papers. Springer complied, but the papers were still published in World Scientific after also passing peer review there.

10. A small number of rather popular evolution “evangelists” shame anyone who dissents from the Party line. For example see Jerry Coyne’s response to Lynn Margulis claiming evolution doesn’t work (cited above). Coyne says she’s “dogmatic, willfully ignorant, and intellectually dishonest,” “wrong in the worst way a scientist can be wrong,” and “embarrasses both herself and the field.”

11. Rigged debates. Sean B. Carroll (well known biologist) wrote a critique of Michael Behe’s work in the journal Science: He cited “the tuning of color vision in animals” as a response to Michael Behe as an example of observed evolution creating through a long process of gradual steps. To support this, Carroll cites his own book where he describes (based on phylogeny) lineages would have had to evolve color vision multiple times, lose it, and then evolve it again. This would have happened among the presumed ancestors of reptiles, fish, and mammals so none of it is even observed to begin with. Behe correctly noted that Carroll’s papers show “different species have different protein binding sites” but “they demonstrate nothing about how the sites arose.” Behe submitted a brief response, only to have Science to trim the last 100 words. Science gave Carroll a far longer response chastising Behe for not addressing this very point he addressed in the 100 words that were trimmed.

If you accept Jesus and become a Christian, will God make you happy?

January 18, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a wonderful, wonderful post from Amy Hall, who writes for the Stand to Reason blog.

She writes:

> I had a brief interaction with an atheist on Twitter a couple of weeks ago that unexpectedly turned to the issue of suffering when she said:
>
> You clearly never had a time you were hurt. I don't mean sick. I don't mean heart broken. I mean literally a near death experience or rape or abusive relationship…. You can keep floating on a [expletive] cloud thinking Jesus will do everything for you but it's a lie. What makes you so special?
>
> That surprised me at first because it didn't seem to have anything to do with the tweet she was responding to, and I was confused as to why she would assume I'd never been through anything traumatic. But then in subsequent tweets, when she revealed she had been raped, it became clear that her trauma had played a central role in her becoming an outspoken, obviously angry "antitheist." She's a self-described antitheist now because she thinks Christianity teaches Jesus "will do everything for you" to give you a perfect life, and now she knows that's a lie. The rape proved her understanding of Christianity false.
>
> So it made sense for her to reason that since I believe Christianity is true, I must still be under the delusion that Jesus is making my life special, which means I obviously never encountered any evil or suffering to shake that delusion.

All right, readers. I don't want any of you to be thinking that if you become a Christian that these things should be expected to happen:

- you will feel happy all the time
- you will be able to sense God's secret plan for your life through your feelings
- God's secret plan for your life will automatically work, even though it's crazy
- God will give you a perfect spouse and lots of money without you having to study anything hard, or do any hard work
- you get permission to do things that that make you happy, even if they are expressly forbidden by the Bible
- you don't have to do anything that makes you feel bad (e.g. – talk to non-Christians about Christian truth claims), because God wants you to be happy

No! Where do people get this idea that if they convert to Christianity, then God will become their cosmic butler?

Amy has the answer: (emphasis mine)

> Hear me, everyone: **This is a failure of the church.**
>
> A friend of mine who was deeply suffering once said to me that many Christians are in for "an epic letdown" when they realize their preconceived notions about what God is expected to do for us are false. Pastors who preach a life-improvement Jesus are leading people down this precarious path to disillusionment.
>
> If suffering disproves your Christianity, you've missed Christianity. The Bible is filled with the suffering of those whom God loves. The central event of the Bible is one of suffering. Love involves suffering. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." That means suffering.

It's the church. It's the focus on happy things and having of happy feelings and happy songs and preaching designed to make us feel good. I would say the comforting devotional reading doesn't help to make us any tougher or more practical, either. That happy-clappy stuff just gives you a false sense of safety about your precarious situation. God's job is not to prevent you from suffering. In fact, even if you make really smart, practical decisions, you can expect to get creamed *anyway*.

Please take 15 minutes and read the book of 1 Peter in the New Testament.

Here's a summary from GotQuestions.org:

> **Purpose of Writing:** 1 Peter is a letter from Peter to the believers who had been dispersed throughout the ancient world and were under intense persecution. If anyone understood persecution, it was Peter. He was beaten, threatened, punished and jailed for preaching the Word of God. He knew what it took to endure without bitterness, without losing hope and in great faith living an obedient, victorious life. This knowledge of living hope in Jesus was the message and Christ's example was the one to follow.
>
> **Brief Summary:** Though this time of persecution was desperate, Peter reveals that it was actually a time to rejoice. He says to count it a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ, as their Savior suffered for them. This letter makes reference to Peter's personal experiences with Jesus and his sermons from the book of Acts. Peter confirms Satan as the great enemy of every Christian but the assurance of Christ's future return gives the incentive of hope.
>
> **Practical Application:** The assurance of eternal life is given to all Christians. One way to identify with Christ is to share in His suffering. To us that would be to endure insults and slurs from those who call us "goodie two shoes" or "holier than thou." This is so minor compared to what Christ suffered for us on the Cross. Stand up for what you know and believe is right and rejoice when the world and Satan aim to hurt you.

Recently, I blogged about how suffering is compatible with an all-powerful God, so you might want to read that too if you missed it.

Chris Sinkinson debates John Hick on religious pluralism and salvation

January 19, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two tough rams butt heads, and may the best ram win!

Looks like Justin Brierley on the Unbelievable radio show found a pastor with a Ph.D in philosophy, and he can really whip some ass. And that's a good thing, because he is taking on one of the two leading proponents of religious pluralism, in my opinion, (the other being Paul Knitter).

The players:

> John Hick is a noted philosopher and theologian who is a proponent of a pluralist view of religion – that there is one light (God) but many lampshades (religious expressions).
>
> Chris Sinkinson is a pastor and Bible tutor who has critiqued Hick's work. He says that pluralism empties Christianity of any content and in its own way disrespects other religions more than his own exclusivist stance.

The MP3 file is here. (Note: This link works)

Justin does a great job as moderator of this debate. He said what I was thinking of saying a number of times during the debate.

Anyway, here is my snarky summary. I creatively paraphrase some of the things that Hick says to make it more clear. And funny.

—-

Hick:
– had an experience looking at the buildings of other religions
– other religions have buildings, so all religions are equal
– I spent some time in the East, and met nice Eastern people
– since Eastern people are nice that means all religions are equal

Justin:
– isn't Jesus' claim to be the exclusive path to salvation offensive?

Sinkinson:
– all religions that are exclusive and have to deal with religious pluralism
– even John Hick writes polemically in favor of his own view
– even John Hick thinks that religions that are exclusive are false

Justin:
– what about the blind man and the elephant?
– the story seems to say that other people have a partial grasp?
– but the story-teller himself has the privileged view
– so isn't the religious pluralist just as arrogant as exclusivists?

Hick:
– well, it's not arrogant to claim to have the right answer
– Jesus never made the claim to be God incarnate
– Jesus never made the claim to be the exclusive path to God
– historians don't think that John's gospel is reliable because it is late
– the proclamation of exclusivity was added by evangelists much later

Sinkinson:
– the historians who doubt the high Christology are radical skeptics
– the mainstream of historical scholarship accepts a high Christology
– the EARLIEST history about Jesus has the highest Christology

Hick:
– the moderate scholars do think Jesus was divine but that he didn't think he was divine
– the phrase "Son of God" was used to describe any remarkable person
– only later did the early church turn the generic term into "God the Son"

Sinkinson:
– there is reflection on Jesus' identity and developments, but not invention
– Jesus and his followers were in trouble precisely for linking him to deity
– why else would Jesus get into trouble and get crucified?

Hick:
– the Romans crucified him because people were saying he was the Messiah
– but the Messiah was not identified as being divine, but political
– and that's why the Romans crucified him

Justin:
– do you (Sinkinson) think that people in other religions can be saved?

Sinkinson:
– the traditional view is exclusivism
– the other world religions are logically contradictory with Christianity
– you have to respect their differences – they are not the same as Christianity
– exclusivists allow that people can be saved by responding to natural theology
– and there are also other cases where non-Christians are saved, like old testament saints

and babies who die in infancy

Hick:
– but people’s religions are based on where they are born
– so it’s not fair for God to expect people to be saved in one religion only

Sinkinson:
– the plurality of religions grouped by location doesn’t make christianity false
– that would be the genetic fallacy – rejecting an idea because of its origin
– the real question to consider is whether it is true
– and even the objection assumes that God is a God of love, who should be fair
– but how do you know that God is loving? that is an exclusive view
– how can the “blob” ultimate of religious pluralism be “loving” and “fair”

Hick:
– the ultimate reality is loving or not loving depending on each person’s religion

Sinkinson:
– but some religions and theistic and some are atheistic
– how can those God exist and not exist?

Hick:
– God is beyond everyone’s understanding, except mine
– God is beyond all definitions, except mine
– God is beyond all human understanding, except mine
– i’m not contradicting myself, it’s a mystery! a mystery!
– as long as you don’t look to closely, they’re all the same!
– allow me to tell you about God, which no one can do but me

Justin:
– doesn’t your religious pluralism mean that Christianity is false?

Hick:
– well, Christianity can’t be true, because it disagrees with other religions
– Christianity can’t falsify other religions, that would be mean to them
– other religions are just as “profound” as Christianity – and that’s what matters – not whether a religion makes true claims
– some religions are older than Christianity, that means they can’t be disagreed with
– we can’t let Christianity be true, because then some people will feel bad
– if people feel bad, then they don’t like me and then I feel bad
– if there’s one thing I know about the unknowable ultimate reality, it’s that it wants me to be liked by lots of people

Sinkinson:
– your view seems to be agnosticism – that nothing can be known about the “ultimate real”
– if we can’t express in words what God is like, then why are you saying what God is like?

Hick:

– the indescribable ultimate is described (falsely, but interestingly) by various tradition

Sinkinson:
– does the “ultimate real” exist?

Hick:
– no

Justin:
– are all the exclusive religions wrong, and only you are right?

Hick:
– all propositions about God in all the religions are false
– the experience of being deluded and having feelings about your delusions is “valid” in all religions
– all religions are equally good ways to believe false things and to have feelings about your false beliefs
– only my propositions about God are true
– everyone who disagrees with me is wrong

Sinkinson:
– so all the propositions of all the religions are wrong
– but all the experiences and feelings are “right”

Hick:
– yes
– all propositions about God are humanly constructed, and so false
– except mine – mine are true!

Sinkinson:
– so everything distinctive about Christianity are literally false?

Hick:
– yes, Christian doctrines are all false
– because if they were true, other religions would be false, and they would feel bad
– and we can’t have that, because everyone has to like me
– only things that don’t offend people in other religions can be true

Sinkinson:
– so do we have to then treat all religions as non-propositional?

Hick:
– well just don’t ask people about the content of their beliefs
– just treat their religion as non-cognitive rituals, feelings and experiences
– don’t inquire too deeply into it, because all religions are all nonsense
– i’m very respectful and tolerant of different religions!

Sinkinson:
– but Muslims, for example, think their religion is making truth claims

Hick:
– but there can be tolerance as long as you treat religions as non-propositional nonsense

Sinkinson:
– um, I have a higher respect for religions than you do
– I actually consider that the claims of other religions could be true
– I think that other religions make truth claims and not nonsense claims

Hick:
– well they are all useful because they are all false
– I don't emphasize beliefs, I emphasize living, experiences and feelings
– as long as everyone accepts my view and rejects their religion, we'll all be tolerant

Justin:
– erm, isn't that an exclusive claim?
– you're trying to say that your view of what religion is is right, and everyone else is wrong

Hick:
– I'm not arrogant, I just think that all the religions of the worlds are false
– only my statements about religion are true – everyone else is wrong
– I'm tolerant, and Christians are arrogant

Justin:
– but you think Sinkinson's view is wrong
– why should we accept your view and deny his view?

Hick:
– His view of salvation is false, and mine is true

Sinkinson:
– you use words with set meanings, but you mean completely different things
– when I say salvation, I mean deliverance from sins through Jesus

Hick:
– I get to decide what salvation means for everyone, you intolerant bigot

Sinkinson:
– but that word has a specific meaning that has held true in all of Christian history
– but what you mean by salvation is people having subjective delusions that are not true

Hick:
– I don't like using the word salvation

Sinkinson:
– but you just used it!
– and you think that it is present in different world religions, but it isn't

Hick:
– God is unknowable and indescribable
– God isn't a wrathful God though
– and the Christian description of God is false
– Evangelical Christians are mean
– I had experiences with people of other faiths

– and these experiences taught me that religions that think that the universe is eternal are true
– as long as you reduce religion to behaviors and not truth, then religions are all good at producing behaviors
– if you just treat all religions as clothing fashion and food customs, they are all valid
– the main point of religion is for people to agree on cultural conventions and stick to them
– never mind the propositional statements of religions… who cares about truth? not me!
– but Christianity is definitely false

Sinkinson:
– the Judeo-Christian God is different – he reveals himself to humans
– he is distinct from the other religions
– he is personal, and is loving but also angry at sin

Hick:
– But God isn't a person, and he isn't a non-person
– I can't say what he is – I'll offend someone if I say anything at all!
– except Christians – I can offend them because they are arrogant bigots
– I'm also very spiritual – I meditate on my breathing

Sinkinson:
– you can't assess a religion by the experiences that people have
– people who have weird experiences do all kinds of evil things
– so the real question has to be about truth – is the New Testament reliable?, etc.

Secular leftists enraged at lone NHL player who refused to celebrate LGBT activism

January 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to pick a "core value", something that was the most important to me, it would be religious liberty. I don't want my decisions about how to live as a consistent Christian to be influenced by secular left fascists. Using force to silence, coerce, threaten or harm Christians so that they stop behaving as Christians is the worst moral crime.

Let's start with the facts from the Christian Post:

> A hockey player for the Philadelphia Flyers refused to participate in his team's LGBT pride night commemoration on Tuesday because he said he needs to "stay true to his religion" as an Orthodox Christian.
>
> Flyers defenseman Ivan Provorov willingly sat out as his team members engaged in pregame warmups and a pride celebration, which was part of the team's effort to show solidarity with the LGBT community.
>
> Pride-related decor and lighting were visible at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia. The Flyers could be seen on the ice for warmups adorned by rainbow jerseys with hockey sticks in hand decorated with rainbow tape.
>
> Although Provorov didn't participate in the pride festivities, he joined his team members on the ice after the warmups and played against the Anaheim Ducks, a game in which the Flyers won 5-2.
>
> "I respect everybody, and I respect everybody's choices," Provorov, a Russian Orthodox Christian, told reporters after the game. "My choice is to stay true to myself and my religion."

The hockey club made a statement saying how committed they were to "inclusivity". It's the same thing I heard for years working for big IT companies. They love inclusivity, but they drop the hammer on anyone who doesn't agree with their secular left dogma. They don't include followers of Jesus. Followers of Jesus believe what Jesus taught about sex and marriage. Premarital chastity. Monogamy. Fidelity. Permanence. Male-female marriage. The inclusive crowd thinks Jesus was wrong about all of that. They know what they are talking about, but Jesus was stupid. He didn't know what he was talking about.

So here is what I want to say about this. First, there was only one hockey player on that hockey club who is in fellowship with God. The rest of them are not. Only one of those players sided with God against the mob.

What else is the Christian life except obedience to God that causes non-Christians to hate you and persecute you? The essential practice of Christianity is imitating Christ in his suffering and enduring persecution because he put obedience to God above pleasing people who do not obey God. Christianity is not about "love" as the world defines "love". Christianity is not concerned about accepting and affirming anyone and any behavior so

that they will like you. Christianity is about loving God. And loving God means obeying God, and defending God against people who disagree with God.

Right now, I am tracking a 4-part story (part 1, part 2, part 3, part 4) about a pair of male gay activists who adopted two children who grew up in a home with drug addict parents. Watch this news report on Fox News to see what they are accused of doing with those children. (Viewer discretion is advised!)

This is what Christianity opposes. But no one on the secular left opposes this behavior. They affirm gay activism. They want to be inclusive of gay activists. The secular leftist agenda sides with gay activists 100% of the time, and they oppose Christians 100% of the time. Letting reckless, irresponsible, selfish adults abuse (and abort) children is literally the core belief of the secular left. They don't care about children, they want to punish Christians who speak out against adult selfishness.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

January 21, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women

    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don’t have any earlier sources, so we just don’t know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn’t check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Feminist Sarah Weddington argued for legalizing abortion in Roe v. Wade

January 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sarah Weddington argued for Roe v. Wade at the Supreme Court, and the majority of the male justices agreed with her. So, I thought it would be interesting to dig around and see what kind of woman she was. What were her motives for legalizing abortion?

First, a bit about her background. She was a United Methodist pastor's kid, and a leader in her church.

From far-left Wikipedia:

> Sarah Ragle was born on February 5, 1945, in Abilene, Texas, to Lena Catherine and Herbert Doyle Ragle, a Methodist minister. As a child, she was… president of the Methodist youth fellowship at her church, played the organ, sang in the church choir…
>
> Weddington graduated with a bachelor's degree in English from McMurry University… [S]he entered the University of Texas Law School and graduated in 1967. In 1967, during her third year of law school, Weddington conceived with Ron Weddington and travelled to Mexico for an illegal abortion. From 1968 to 1974, she was married to Weddington. After her divorce, Sarah continued to live alone in Austin, Texas.

She had an illegal abortion in Mexico.

This is the kind of man she chose to have unprotected sex with before marriage:

> Ron Weddington, one of the attorneys who drafted the brief for abortion rights in Roe V Wade, wrote a private letter to President-elect Bill Clinton arguing for the

> state to use abortion as population control. This letter was written in 1992:
>
> "[Y]ou can start immediately to eliminate the barely educated, unhealthy and poor segment of our country.
>
> […]It's time to officially recognize that people are going to have sex and what we need to do as a nation is prevent as much disease and as many poor babies as possible.
>
> Ron Weddington is the husband of Sarah Weddington, one of the two lawyers who argued for abortion in Roe Vs. Wade.

She chose this man out of all the men in the world, probably because he wasn't going to lead her spiritually or morally. She wanted to escape Christian morality and to escape being judged by Christians for her choice of man, and her choices with sex.

This is an interesting insight into her motives from a student admirer:

> One of my all-time favorite lecturers was Sarah Weddington, the attorney who successfully argued the Roe v. Wade decision.
>
> […]After a couple of years, I… secured a date for my mentor to speak on campus. The lecture was brilliant. The event was successful, even though a few pro-life demonstrators stood quietly protesting outside the venue.
>
> After the event, a group of students and I took her to dinner and were entertained by more exciting, interesting stories. Over dessert, I asked, "whatever happened to Roe?"
>
> Sarah's gracious demeanor and beautiful smile changed instantaneously.
>
> "She's a stupid piece of white trash. She's pro-life and a Christian," she snarled throwing in a few decidedly ungracious and unrepeatable curse words. "She's a piece of trash. She was stupid when we found her and she's worse now."

Most people know that Weddington lied about "Roe". Roe never had an abortion. Her child was given up for adoption. Weddington and Coffee just used Roe to get the abortion law they wanted.

By the way, Linda Coffee was also attending church at the time she filed the abortion legal challenge, as the pro-abortion Dallas Morning News reports. Today, Linda Coffee is living with a woman. No husband, and apparently no kids – just like Weddington. This is the feminist vision, complete with lesbianism, sold to women in those left-wing seminaries we call "universities". And it's worse in non-STEM departments.

Something else about Sarah Weddington. You might have read my previous post on the research about the link between induced abortion and breast cancer. Her induced abortion prior to pregnancy is a textbook case for breast cancer, and that's exactly what happened to her:

> After arguing for abortion, Weddington eventually became an advisor to President Jimmy Carter and pushed for research on breast cancer, a disease from

> which she is a survivor. Ironically, dozens of studies have linked induced abortions to an increasing risk of breast cancer and a top researcher says more than 300,000 women have died from breast cancer as a result of having abortions.

I think her abortion crusade was just her attempt to make what she did legal, so that she would no longer be judged for her bad choices with men, sex and pregnancy.

The hero of young feminists

Why do people listen to people like Weddington, who have failed at life so badly? Is she really a hero of "women's rights"? Sex-selection abortions caused the deaths of 46 million unborn girls in India. Is that a triumph of "women's rights"? All pro-abortion women support sex-selection abortions – and they are most often used on unborn girls, who are the "wrong sex".

What Weddington did was not about "women's rights". It was about escaping moral judgement for her actions. Feminists today have so much hatred of being judged. They want to make poor decisions with men and sex, and then force people to not judge them for it. They want to chase hookup sex with hot bad boys. They want taxpayer-funded contraceptives and abortions. They want to eliminate any moral judgement of abortion. They want to silence the responsible, moral people. Feminists like Weddington call the moral, responsible people who disagree with women's poor choices "trash".

Can chivalrous Christian conservatives end abortion?

Most Christian men don't have the courage to challenge women like Weddington about their atheist, feminist, socialist worldviews. Look at the photo of the good United Methodist pastor's kid and church leader. She's so pretty. Men are very foolish. They judge women by their appearances. A pretty girl must be good, so they don't want to disagree with her or persuade her or lead her on moral or spiritual issues.

Christian / conservative men think it's "chivalrous" to make pretty women into victims. That's why she was probably never confronted about atheism, feminism and socialism by

her United Methodist pastor parents or church leaders. To confront a woman about her beliefs with reason and evidence is “harsh” and “unchivalrous”. Then at college, she was indoctrinated by those English professors and their red marking pens. She wanted good grades, so she wrote what they told her to write. She had never learned to develop her own views with reason and evidence. She just wanted to be liked. This was not a STEM program connected to the real world. She never formed her feminist pro-abortion convictions by writing code or doing lab work. Her non-STEM education was just indoctrination. Indoctrination that left her a murderer, a spinster and separated from God for eternity.

Nothing that’s going on in our churches teaches men to challenge young women about the atheism, feminism and socialism. The pious, chivalrous United Methodist pastors and parents were in a position to stop Sarah Weddington. But her parents and pastors failed to defeat ideologies like atheism, feminism and socialism with her. They were probably just focused on piety, feelings and community. They were probably just happy to have a pretty girl in their home and church. They probably didn’t want her to stress her out with having to learn logic, evidence or apologetics. They probably thought women were too dumb to learn those things, and put them into practice. Just send her to English professors and law school to be radicalized.

Social conservatives only want to stop abortion if it can be done in a way that allows women to keep radical feminism and the Sexual Revolution. The delaying marriage for careers must continue, they say. The shunning of spiritual and moral men must continue, they say. The drunken hook-ups with hot bad boys must continue, they say. Hot bad boys will change into good Christian husbands after they get hook-up sex, they say. No need to confront Sarah Weddington about her worldview with reason and evidence. That is too heavy-handed. That is not chivalrous.

Secular left morality: What two gay activists allegedly did to the boys they adopted

January 23, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the cases where the secular left is most interested in shutting down moral judgments by Christians is in the area of gay activism. On this blog, I try to cover the behaviors of gay activists, so that people can really understand the "morality" of people who cheer for – and vote for – the removal of Christian moral standards from the public square. Well, there's been a new story, so lets take a look.

The following blog post contains subject matter that is for adults only. Reader discretion is advised. I tried to keep it vague, but the details are in the Townhall articles linked below.

Here's the latest story, reported by Mia Cathell in Townhall.

Part 1:

> A months-long Townhall investigation reveals disturbing new details about the affluent LGBTQ-activist couple accused of sodomizing their young adopted sons—now ages 9 and 11—and distributing "homemade" child pornography of the sexual abuse. Half a year after the shocking story made national news, Townhall is the only outlet following up on the criminal case in Georgia that has since seen zero headlines written about it. We've found that it's far, far worse than what was first reported.
>
> Not only did the married men allegedly rape the two boys who were adopted through a Christian special-needs adoption agency, they were pimping out their children to nearby pedophiles in Atlanta-area suburbs, Townhall's follow-up investigation discovered.
>
> […]As Townhall reported in August, the suspects were darlings of the LGBTQ media. They were part of an anti-g4y hate campaign promoting "#NOH8," and Out magazine, which holds the nation's highest circulation among LGBTQ monthly publications, has repeatedly asked them if its website's Pride page can feature their photos taken at the Atlanta Pride Parade.

This part was interesting:

> "I think they took our house because they think there was extra money coming in from somewhere, and we're, like, in our 30s and have this big, giant house. And they didn't think we could afford it," William said, describing the custom-built home he designed.
>
> The couple's "dream home" sits on a two-acre secluded cul-de-sac in a private, prestigious upscale neighborhood where pre-existing houses are selling for as much as $900,000. Construction of the mansion from the ground up took only

> half a year in 2020.
>
> […]The couple's lavish lifestyle began to materialize about a year after [the couple] got the boys, the family insider told Townhall.

More here: (reader discretion is advised)

- Part 2
- Part 3
- Part 4

It's important to not that this case is about allegations. Nothing has been proven. The defendants have pleaded not guilty. So we are still waiting on a verdict before we know for certain. But there is a pattern of behavior by gay activists, so I'll talk about that below.

Not the first time:

This story reminds me of the Two Gay Dads story that I wrote about previously, where a white female progressive journalist did a fawning story about two gay dads and their new boy adopted from Russia. She titled her article, "Two Dads are Better than One". She was so proud of herself for being all affirming, tolerant and compassionate. Same-sex marriage is something to be proud of, she said, because children do better with two gay dads.

But then, the Sydney Morning Herald reported how this example of gay adoption went awry.

Excerpt:

> Standing before an American court convicted of the most heinous of child sex crimes, the double lives of Australian citizen Mark J. Newt0n and his long-term boyfriend Peter Tru0ng were laid bare.
>
> […]Moments later Newt0n was sentenced to 40 years in prison for sexually abusing the boy he and Truong, 36 from Queensland, had ''adopted'' after paying a Russian woman $8000 to be their surrogate in 2005.
>
> Police believe the pair had adopted the boy ''for the sole purpose of exploitation''. The abuse began just days after his birth and over six years the couple travelled the world, offering him up for sex with at least eight men, recording the abuse and uploading the footage to an international syndicate known as the Boy Lovers Network.
>
> […]Evidence before the court revealed the abuse began before the couple returned to Australia. One video is said to show Newt0n performing a sex act on the boy when he was less than two weeks old.
>
> Judge Barker said the pair brainwashed the child to believe the sexual abuse was normal. Newt0n was also said to have trained the boy to deny any inappropriate behaviour if he was ever questioned by authorities.
>
> Newt0n and Truong came to the attention of police in August 2011 after their

> connections to three men arrested over the possession of child exploitation material came to light. The couple had visited the three men in the US, New Zealand and Germany with their son.
>
> […]Newt0n and Truong claimed they were being targeted because they were homosexual.

I could show you a dozen examples like that without even trying. Democrat judge in Wisconsin. Duke University administrator. Penn State University coach. USC professor. Head of a Scottish youth organization. San Francisco Human Rights Commission staffer. Same-sex marriage activists. Seattle mayor. Co-founder of g4y advocacy organizations. Designers of education curriculums designed to sexualize children. It's everywhere and it happens all the time. Children don't have any rights, only selfish adults have rights. This is the core belief of the secular left. They want to get rid of Christianity from the culture, because Christians side with the children against the adults. They don't want Christian rules slowing down their pursuit of pleasure. They don't want Christians to offend them by disagreeing with their actions.

It's very interesting to me that the Biden administration has a lot of energy for persecuting Christian-owned businesses, peaceful pro-lifers, and parents concerned about the public schools who don't protect children from rape. I wonder what the Biden secular leftists will do with cases like this? I'm sure that whatever they do, their supporters from Evangelicals for Biden will be delighted.

Christian charity worker is being prosecuted for sharing same-sex attraction testimony

January 24, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I try to monitor stories from a variety of countries to see what's happening to Christians who take their faith seriously. This story from Daily Signal is about a Christian charity worker in Malta. According to Wikipedia, 83% of the population of Malta are Roman Catholic, and only 2% Protestant.

Here's the story:

> Matthew Grech, 33, a trustee of the Christian nonprofit Core Issues Trust, will face trial on Feb. 3, 2023, at the Court of Magistrates in Valetta, along with the presenters of a media outlet, PMnews Malta. Prosecutors claim Grech and the presenters violated Chapter 567, a Maltese law banning "conversion practices."
>
> Grech told The Daily Signal that Maltese authorities are targeting "ANY DISSENTING OPINION about LGBT" issues, threatening free speech in the name of suppressing "conversion therapy." He insisted that "there is no proof that people are being forced to 'become straight' anywhere on the island" of Malta, which became the first European country to ban "conversion therapy" in 2016.
>
> "You advertised conversion practices and this breaking article 3 (a) (iii) of Chapter 567 of Maltese laws," the police wrote in a summons on June 29, 2022. The police wrote that Grech violated the law on April 6, 2022. The law defines "conversion practices" as "any treatment, practice or sustained effort that aims to change, repress and, or eliminate a person's sexual orientation, gender identity and, or gender expression."

All he did was share his personal testimony about his own experiences dealing with same-sex attractions:

> Grech did not advertise any form of "conversion therapy" on that date, according to the transcript. Rather, he told his personal story and advocated for a therapist's freedom to counsel clients as they would direct, without government intervention.

So, two points about this story.

The first point is about how the secular left treats people who dissent from their views. I remember growing up that conservative Christians were always seen as the ones trying to force their views on others. But, I have never seen a Christian taking a non-Christian to court to force them to agree with some part of the Christian worldview. Someone might respond and object to pro-life laws or pro-marriage laws, but those laws are based on secular arguments and secular evidence. Now we see clearly that it was the secular left that wanted to force their views on others. They are the real intolerant ones, the ones

who use force to spread their views.

The second point is just to think about what it means when a police force is monitoring what Christians say and then using their words to charge them with criminal offenses. It shows the importance of Christians being active in policy and politics. Some well-meaning Christians (usually philosophers) like to advocate that Christians should keep out of politics. But as you can see, if Christians keep out of politics, it creates a vacuum for the secular left to come in. I think the motivation of the “keep out of politics” people is simple. It’s easier for them to not put any effort into policy and politics. And they want that laziness to seem “pious”. Don’t listen to them. Unless you want to be brought up on charges just for sharing your faith.

More and more women are asking why they can't find a good man to marry

January 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the last few months, I've met 5 different Christian women in their 30s who all asked me the same question: where are all the good men who want to marry me?

Christian men's rights blogger Dalrock had two different posts where he described the answer to this question.

Here is the first post from Dalrock that concisely illustrates the problem:

> As I wrote in A very long season, feminists don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husbands than absolutely necessary. As if to prove this very point, 30 year old Mona Chalabi writes in the NY Times* I Want My 2.3 Bonus Years:
>
> If I could prolong my time as a young adult by, say, 2.3 years, here is a list of things I would like to do:
>
> • Go to more parties. Preferably wild parties that I can think about, years later, at mild parties.
>
> […]• Have more romantic partners.
>
> […]• Get a bit higher up the career ladder a bit earlier on. That would probably boost my earnings, giving me more financial security. I could use that money to go to more parties, get a membership to a fancy gym and maybe even meet a romantic partner on the ab machines.
>
> To drive the message home, the image at the top of the article is a cartoon of a resentful Chalabi giving her future husband the side eye for her lost years of sampling penises!

Surely, this must be an isolated case just for New York Times feminists, right? It's not widespread, is it?

Second post from Dalrock:

> Margaret Wente at the Globe and Mail* asks where all the good men have gone. Wente comes to the conclusion that women need a sex cartel:
>
> …it's up to us to make the rules. "Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" my father used to say. It drove me crazy when he said that. Now, it's dawned on me that he was right.
>
> Since the women's cartel collapsed, women's bargaining power has seriously eroded. That's why so many single women hate Tinder, which has further commodified sex for the benefit of men. Women are just another consumer good in the shop window.

> The apex fallacy aside, Wente is partially right. Women (as a group) have signaled to men that what they really want are exciting sexy badboys, not boring loyal dudes. **It isn't that women no longer want to marry beta providers, they just don't want to waste a day more of their youth and fertility on their husband than absolutely necessary.**
>
> As a result, some up and coming boring loyal dudes aren't knocking themselves out in their twenties while they wait for their future wife to tire of having sex with other men.

If you wonder why men are no longer performing in school, and exchanging careers for video games, the answer is simple. Men have realized that young women today, under the influence of feminism, are not interested in traditional husbands during their late teens and 20s. During these years, women are interested in travel, fun, drinking, hook-ups and cohabitation with amoral atheists. This is what I have personally observed. In the minds of young women, the highest value men are good-looking men who have no religion, and make no moral judgments, and are left of center politically – especially on abortion.

There are actually many other men who don't meet this standard – marriage-minded men – who want to get married young and have children. But when these men see what young women really want, they just give up on school and work, since doing the traditional male roles has no value to young women. Many good men even give up on morality and Christianity, because they want a relationship with a woman so badly. They know that women don't want marriage-minded men when women are youngest and prettiest.

More from second post:

> What Wente doesn't understand is that timing is everything. From an economic point of view, women are dividing up sexual access that traditionally would have been reserved only for their husband into two blocks. The first block contains their most attractive and fertile years, and it is dedicated to no strings sex with exciting badboys. Then, once women reach what Rollo calls the epiphany phase, they want to bargain sexual access in their remaining (older and less fertile) years for maximum beta bucks.
>
> The problem with this strategy is (generally speaking) not that the previously overlooked beta men will refuse to marry the suddenly reformed party girls. The problem is that young men now look at the men 3-5 (and even 5-10) years older than them and don't see an indication that signaling provider status will make them attractive to women. They also see a society that holds married fathers in contempt**. Most of these men are still working hard in their late teens and twenties to prepare to signal provider status in their 30s. But a growing minority of young men are no longer doing so. These men are instead working like women. Once the reformed party girls are ready to find Mr. Beta Bucks, there is a shortage of 30 something men who fit the bill. Even worse, no amount of complaining or shaming will cause the missing beta providers to go back in time

> and spend the prior decade preparing for this moment.

I'm one of the last men who followed the marriage-preparedness script for traditional men who wanted to marry and have four children and have a stay-at-home homeschooling mom to raise them from birth to graduate school. I find myself now in my mid-40s, with a 6-figure income and a 7-figure net worth. I never used my success to play the field with hot bad girls. I wanted to keep my sexual past completely clean for my eventual wife. However, what I observed in my late teens and 20s and even early 30s was a complete lack of interest in marriage ability, from non-Christian women and Christian women alike. Christian women aren't learning to value early marriage from their married parents or their evangelical churches. None of the traditional husband skills are valued by young women, i.e. – chastity, gapless resume, alcohol abstinence, undergraduate and graduate STEM degrees, experience nurturing and mentoring others, stewardship of earned income.

I recently caused an uproar on my Facebook page by saying that even if the perfect woman showed up right now to marry me, I would not pursue her because the critical time where the woman could have applied maximum youth, beauty and fertility as a wife to make an impact on my education, early career, health, and finances has passed. A younger woman develops value to her husband precisely by applying herself to him and to her family in these critical early years. Men who have experienced this self-sacrificial love and support are loyal to their wives even after their wives lose their youth and beauty. Why? Because the men know that they are much better than they could have been, having enjoyed that early investment of value made by their young wives.

Young women very supportive of premarital sex

As Christian writer Matt Walsh notes in a recent article at the Daily Wire, this "follow your heart" focus on happiness in women is lethal to marital stability, and men know it.

Excerpt:

> There was an article in *Cosmo* this week with a title that summarizes all that's wrong with *Cosmo* and modern society as a whole: "I eloped at 25, divorced at 26, and dated my way across Europe all summer." Of course, by "dated my way

> across Europe" she means that she slept with half the continent.
>
> The author, Elise, says she "started fighting" with her husband and within a few months they both decided that their differences were irreconcilable. Despite counseling, she says, "neither of us was happy." So, exhausted from 12 whole months of marriage, Elise embarked on a voyage of self-discovery and STD cultivation. She met random dudes in half a dozen countries and had sex with them, learning quite a lot as she went, though she can't really explain what exactly she learned or why sex was a necessary component in learning it. Finally, she came home and started dating some other guy. The end.
>
> Well, not really the end. 20 years from now I'm sure we'll get the follow up article: "I'm alone and miserable and it's everyone's fault but mine." **After all, you may be able to fill the emptiness in your soul with frivolous sex when you're young and physically desirable, but that phase is fleeting. People who don't want to "waste" their beauty and youth on a spouse, so they waste it instead on strangers who don't love them or even care what happens to them tomorrow, will be shocked when a tomorrow comes where even strangers aren't interested anymore. This is where the single-minded, utterly selfish pursuit of "happiness" at all costs inevitably leads: to rejection, despair, and a quiet, unnoticed death on a lonely hospital bed.**
>
> As Elise helpfully demonstrated, "do what makes you happy" is poison in a marriage. Many a vow has been broken because one or both partners decide to chase "happiness" instead of commitment, fidelity, and love. "I deserve to be happy," reports the legion of serial divorcees, as they drift on to the next spouse, and the next, and the next, and the next, looking for the one — *the* one, finally — who might cure the misery they've inflicted on themselves. Increasingly unhappy, yet increasingly convinced that they deserve to be.

And this follow your heart to happiness situation is alive and well in the church today. Marriage-minded Christian men who have prepared for husband roles are surprised to find that there is often little or no difference between Elise and the Christian women the church produces. Christian men who desire to invest in a marriage that is stable, productive and influential have nowhere to turn for a wife who is able and willing to help. In my experience, the problem with happiness-focused women who delay marriage is never discussed in churches from the pulpit. The "good men to marry" that today's 30-something women are looking for were plentiful back when those same women were in their early-to-mid 20s.

Alexander Vilenkin: “All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning”

January 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve decided to explain why physicists believe that there was a creation event in this post. That is to say, I’ve decided to let famous cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin do it.

From Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Did the cosmos have a beginning? The Big Bang theory seems to suggest it did, but in recent decades, cosmologists have concocted elaborate theories – for example, an eternally inflating universe or a cyclic universe – which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos. Now it appears that the universe really had a beginning after all, even if it wasn’t necessarily the Big Bang.
>
> At a meeting of scientists – titled “State of the Universe” – convened last week at Cambridge University to honor Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday, cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University in Boston presented evidence that the universe is not eternal after all, leaving scientists at a loss to explain how the cosmos got started without a supernatural creator. The meeting was reported in *New Scientist* magazine (Why physicists can’t avoid a creation event, 11 January 2012).
>
> […]In his presentation, Professor Vilenkin discussed three theories which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos.

The three theories are chaotic inflationary model, the oscillating model and quantum gravity model. Regular readers will know that those have all been addressed in William Lane Craig’s peer-reviewed paper that evaluates alternatives to the standard Big Bang cosmology.

But let’s see what Vilenkin said.

More:

> One popular theory is eternal inflation. Most readers will be familiar with the theory of *inflation*, which says that the universe increased in volume by a factor of at least 10^78 in its very early stages (from 10^−36 seconds after the Big Bang to sometime between 10^−33 and 10^−32 seconds), before settling into the slower rate of expansion that we see today. The theory of *eternal inflation* goes further, and holds that the universe is constantly giving birth to smaller “bubble” universes within an ever-expanding multiverse. Each bubble universe undergoes its own initial period of inflation. In some versions of the theory, the bubbles go both backwards and forwards in time, allowing the possibility of an infinite past. Trouble is, the value of one particular cosmic

parameter rules out that possibility:

> But in 2003, a team including Vilenkin and Guth considered what eternal inflation would mean for the Hubble constant, which describes mathematically the expansion of the universe. They found that the equations didn't work (Physical Review Letters, DOI: 10.1103/physrevlett.90.151301). "You can't construct a space-time with this property," says Vilenkin. It turns out that the constant has a lower limit that prevents inflation in both time directions. "It can't possibly be eternal in the past," says Vilenkin. "There must be some kind of boundary."

A second option explored by Vilenkin was that of a cyclic universe, where the universe goes through an infinite series of big bangs and crunches, with no specific beginning. It was even claimed that a cyclic universe could explain the low observed value of the cosmological constant. But as Vilenkin found, there's a problem if you look at the *disorder* in the universe:

> Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists – nothing like the one we see around us.
>
> One way around that is to propose that the universe just gets bigger with every cycle. Then the amount of disorder per volume doesn't increase, so needn't reach the maximum. But Vilenkin found that this scenario falls prey to the same mathematical argument as eternal inflation: if your universe keeps getting bigger, it must have started somewhere.

However, Vilenkin's options were not exhausted yet. There was another possibility: that the universe had sprung from an eternal cosmic egg:

> Vilenkin's final strike is an attack on a third, lesser-known proposal that the cosmos existed eternally in a static state called the cosmic egg. This finally "cracked" to create the big bang, leading to the expanding universe we see today. Late last year Vilenkin and graduate student Audrey Mithani showed that the egg could not have existed forever after all, as quantum instabilities would force it to collapse after a finite amount of time (arxiv.org/abs/1110.4096). If it cracked instead, leading to the big bang, then this must have happened before it collapsed – and therefore also after a finite amount of time.
>
> "This is also not a good candidate for a beginningless universe," Vilenkin concludes.

> So at the end of the day, what is Vilenkin's verdict?
>
> > "All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

This is consistent with the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin Theorem, which I blogged about before, and which William Lane Craig leveraged to his advantage in his debate with Peter Millican.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past. *No one* denies the expansion of space in our universe, and so we are left with a cosmic beginning. Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

Conclusion

If the universe came into being out of nothing, which seems to be the case from science, then the universe has a cause. Things do not pop into being, uncaused, out of nothing. The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

Now, let's have a discussion about this science in our churches, and see if we can't train Christians to engage with non-Christians about the evidence so that everyone accepts what science tells us about the origin of the universe.

Big wins for conservatives in Florida: education policy and right to life

January 26, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One area where the secular left is running unopposed is in the education system. Most states haven't done a good job of pushing back against the education bureaucrats and the powerful, corrupt teacher unions. It's so bad, that the schools can just go to law enforcement and have any parents who disagree with them persecuted for "domestic terrorism". Who will stand up to them?

Here's an article from the Daily Signal:

> The Florida Department of Education rejected the original AP course standards for the black studies course under the state's Stop WOKE Act, citing a lack of educational value and historical accuracy.
>
> "As presented, the content of this course is inexplicably contrary to Florida law and significantly lacks educational value," the Department of Education's rejection letter said. "In the future, should [the] College Board be willing to come back to the table with lawful, historically accurate content, [the education agency] will always be willing to reopen the discussion."
>
> To draw attention to the issue and not simply capitulate to the College Board cartel, which holds a practical monopoly on Advanced Placement testing, is exactly the kind of tactic that needs to be used to loosen the far Left's ascendent institutional strength.
>
> In this case, Florida put a halt to ideological quackery masquerading as "history" being force-fed to aspiring college students.

The article goes into details about the woke, far-left content in the course, but you can imagine what the education system produces. The key point is that Ron DeSantis

That was not the only good news I found coming out of Florida.

Here's another article from Daily Signal:

> Florida's state Supreme Court on Monday denied Planned Parenthood's emergency motion to block the state's 15-week abortion ban.
>
> "As [Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis] said, we are better when everybody counts," the governor's press secretary, Bryan Griffin, said in a statement Tuesday, adding:
>
> The Florida Supreme Court denied both of Planned Parenthood's emergency motions asking the court to block Florida's law from taking effect. The court also accepted jurisdiction of the case and set a briefing schedule. From here, we will continue to defend our pro-life protections.
>
> House Bill 5, which took effect on July 1, bans abortion after 15 weeks of gestation. It allows exceptions when the mother's life is at risk or in danger of

> “irreversible physical impairment,” or if the baby has a fetal abnormality, but does not offer exceptions for rape or incest.
>
> “House Bill 5 protects babies in the womb who have beating hearts, who can move, who can taste, who can see, and who can feel pain,” DeSantis said when he signed the bill in April. “Life is a sacred gift worthy of our protection, and I am proud to sign this great piece of legislation, which represents the most significant protections for life in the state’s modern history.”

I took a quick look at who has appointed the judges on the Florida Supreme Court, and DeSantis has appointed 4 out of 7. What kind of judges would he appoint to the US Supreme Court? The same kind he appointed to the Florida Supreme Court. Appointing conservatives to the courts is something we know that DeSantis can do, because we have seen him do it. Don’t believe anyone’s words, believe their actions.

Here is my concern about elections. People think that their job is to wait until the campaigns start, watch the television ads, and then decide how they feel about the candidates. But this is a stupid way to choose a candidate. The right way to choose a candidate is the same way you choose any other employee – you look at their past employers, their past achievements, and call those employers and check references. If DeSantis gets elected as president, then I expect him to continue the battles that he’s already started as governor.

Yale University computer science professor takes a look at protein formation probabilities

January 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was in graduate school, we studied a book called “Mirror Worlds”, authored by famous computer science professor David Gelernter at Yale University. This week, I noticed that Dr. Gelernter had written an article in the prestigious Claremont Review of Books. In his article, he applies his knowledge of computer science to the problem of the origin of life.

Evolution, if it is going to work at all, has to explain the problem of how the basic building blocks of life – proteins – can emerge from non-living matter. It turns out that the problem of the origin of life is essentially a problem of information – of code. If the components of proteins are ordered properly, then the sequence folds up into a protein that has biological function. If the sequence is not good, then just like computer code, it won’t run.

Here’s Dr. Gelernter to explain:

> How to make proteins is our first question. Proteins are chains: linear sequences of atom-groups, each bonded to the next. A protein molecule is based on a chain of amino acids; 150 elements is a “modest-sized” chain; the average is 250. Each link is chosen, ordinarily, from one of 20 amino acids. A chain of amino acids is a polypeptide—“peptide” being the type of chemical bond that joins one amino acid to the next. But this chain is only the starting point: chemical forces among the links make parts of the chain twist themselves into helices; others straighten out, and then, sometimes, jackknife repeatedly, like a carpenter’s rule, into flat sheets. Then the whole assemblage folds itself up like a complex sheet of origami paper. And the actual 3-D *shape* of the resulting molecule is (as I have said) important.
>
> Imagine a 150-element protein as a chain of 150 beads, each bead chosen from 20 varieties. But: only certain chains will work. Only certain bead combinations will form themselves into stable, useful, *well-shaped* proteins.
>
> So how hard *is* it to build a useful, well-shaped protein? Can you throw a bunch of amino acids together and assume that you will get something good? Or must you choose each element of the chain with painstaking care? It happens to be *very* hard to choose the right beads.

Gelernter decides to spot the Darwinist a random sequence of 150 elements. Now the task the Darwinist is to use random mutation to arrive at a sequence of 150 links that has biological function.

> [W]hat are the chances that a random 150-link sequence will create such a protein? Nonsense sequences are essentially random. Mutations are random. Make random changes to a random sequence and you get another random

> sequence. So, close your eyes, make 150 random choices from your 20 bead boxes and string up your beads in the order in which you chose them. What are the odds that you will come up with a useful new protein?
>
> […]The total count of *possible* 150-link chains, where each link is chosen separately from 20 amino acids, is 20^{150}. In other words, *many*. 20^{150} roughly equals 10^{195}, and there are only 10^{80} atoms in the universe.
>
> What proportion of these many polypeptides are useful proteins? Douglas Axe did a series of experiments to estimate how many 150-long chains are capable of stable folds—of reaching the final step in the protein-creation process (the folding) and of holding their shapes long enough to be useful. (Axe is a distinguished biologist with five-star breeding: he was a graduate student at Caltech, then joined the Centre for Protein Engineering at Cambridge. The biologists whose work Meyer discusses are mainly first-rate Establishment scientists.) He estimated that, of all 150-link amino acid sequences, 1 in 10^{74} will be capable of folding into a stable protein. To say that your chances are 1 in 10^{74} is no different, in practice, from saying that they are zero. It's not surprising that your chances of hitting a stable protein that performs some useful *function*, and might therefore play a part in evolution, are even smaller. Axe puts them at 1 in 10^{77}.
>
> In other words: immense is so big, and tiny is so small, that neo-Darwinian evolution is—*so far*—a dead loss. Try to mutate your way from 150 links of gibberish to a working, useful protein and you are guaranteed to fail. Try it with ten mutations, a thousand, a million—you fail. The odds bury you. It can't be done.

Keep in mind that you need many, many proteins in order to have even a simple living cell. (And that's not even considering the problem of organizing the proteins into a system).

So, if you're a naturalist, then your only resources to explain the origin of life are chance and mutation. As Dr. Gelernter shows, naturalistic explanations won't work to solve even part of the problem. Not even with a long period of time. Not even if you use the entire universe as one big primordial soup, and keep trying sequences for the history of the universe. It just isn't possible to arrive at sequences that have biological function in the time available, using the resources available. The only viable explanation is that there is a computer scientist who wrote the code without using trial and error. Something that ordinary software engineers like myself and Dr. Gelernter do all the time. We know what kind of cause is adequate to explain functioning code.

Georgia police officer put on leave over social media post defending natural marriage

January 28, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a friend who is interested in being a police officer, and in a blue state. I have a real concern about working in blue states, especially for a union, and especially when your boss is not going to be some STEM engineer, but just some government worker. So far, my friend is persisting in his plan, but just in case this helps other people, I am posting about a recent news story to warn others.

This is from Daily Signal:

> A Georgia police officer has resigned after he was told by superiors that he could not share his personal religious views on social media.
>
> "If someone somewhere considers an opinion I have—that isn't a direct quotation from Scripture—to be offensive, then that would be a fireable offense," Jacob Kersey, the former officer, told The Daily Signal.
>
> Kersey, 19, who began working last May at the Port Wentworth Police Department in a jurisdiction just outside Savannah, says "everything was going well" until the start of the new year.
>
> On Jan. 2, Kersey posted a 20-word message about his view of marriage on Facebook.
>
> "God designed marriage. Marriage refers to Christ and the church," he wrote, paraphrasing the Apostle Paul's teaching in the Book of Ephesians. "That's why there is no such thing as homosexual marriage."
>
> A Georgia police officer has resigned after he was told by superiors that he could not share his personal religious views on social media.
>
> "If someone somewhere considers an opinion I have—that isn't a direct quotation from Scripture—to be offensive, then that would be a fireable offense," Jacob Kersey, the former officer, told The Daily Signal.
>
> Kersey, 19, who began working last May at the Port Wentworth Police Department in a jurisdiction just outside Savannah, says "everything was going well" until the start of the new year.
>
> On Jan. 2, Kersey posted a 20-word message about his view of marriage on Facebook.
>
> "God designed marriage. Marriage refers to Christ and the church," he wrote, paraphrasing the Apostle Paul's teaching in the Book of Ephesians. "That's why there is no such thing as homosexual marriage."
>
> The next day, Kersey said he received a phone call from his supervisor, who told him that someone had complained about the post and to take it down.

> When Kersey refused, the supervisor warned him that failure to delete the Facebook post on marriage could result in his termination.
>
> Kersey said he then was contacted by Lt. Justin Hardy, who told him that the Port Wentworth Police Department didn't want to be held liable in a "use of force" situation involving someone in the LGBTQ community. Kersey still refused to delete the post.
>
> The police officer received a phone call later that day from the police department's Maj. Lee Sherrod, ordering him to come to the office the following morning, Jan. 4, and turn in everything he had that belonged to the city.
>
> […]He was told that he was "being placed on administrative leave while the city investigated to see if I could keep my job," Kersey said.
>
> […]Kersey said Libby told him that his Facebook post on marriage was the "same thing as saying the N-word and 'F— all those homosexuals.'" Kersey said his captain told him that his free speech "was limited due to my position as … a police officer."
>
> […]"Separation of church and state" was the reason given for why he could not post such views, Kersey said.

So, a few thoughts about this. First, it shows the importance of having an alias on social media. I notice a lot of people, mostly men, like to brag about how they are too strong to have an alias. When I talk to these men, what I find is that they often don't share anything controversial on social media, especially about social issues. Or, that they don't have high-paying jobs. For those of us who want to be controversial on social media, I recommend an alias. Not only will you be protected from being fired, but you will also not have to waste time defending against people who are offended. I like to play wargames. And we have a saying in wargaming. We say "Always remember to ask yourself if taking this shot is worth revealing your position". With an alias, you take every shot, because no shot reveals your position. You only ever win, you never lose. And the money you earn from working just piles up in your bank account, in case you do ever need it. Be a hard target.

Second, a lot of women today are backing constraints and controls on conservative men like Kersey. They wave around rainbow-colored signs and chant about tolerance and diversity. I want to say something to these women. Do you understand that marriage-minded men are not liberal men? Liberal men support abortion, which means they think that killing babies is a good way to keep the good times rolling for the selfish adults. This attitude is not marriage-ready. Liberal men want to redefine marriage and support surrogacy, which means they don't understand that children need their mom AND their Dad. You can't marry someone who thinks that children are just accessories for adult happiness. So, if young women want to persecute and intimidate men with character, they should not be surprised when they find themselves single and alone in their old age. Liberal men are filth. And you can't marry them.

Third, and this is for my friend. He has already applied for a few positions and has run into

problems with left-wing police departments. My suspicion is that people just do a web search on his social media, and then blacklist him. (And this is what he’s found when he’s got access to the hiring records, he’s on a black list) Nevertheless, he persists in applying. It’s all well and good to think that you can sue people in order to get justice. But a lot of these decisions about hiring are made behind closed doors, so that you can’t sue. It’s just something to think about when you are deciding what to study and where to work. The best job is a job writing code and working from home. Then you don’t have to put up with these people who want to persecute you. You can work around them.

William Lane Craig explains the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement

January 29, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably one of the most common questions that you hear from people who don't fully understand Christianity is this question: "why did Jesus have to die?". The answer that most Christians seem to hold to is that 1) humans are rebelling against God, 2) Humans deserve punishment for their rebellion, 3) Humans cannot escape the punishment for their rebellion on their own, 4) Jesus was punished in the place of the rebellious humans, 5) Those who accept this sacrifice are forgiven for their rebelling.

Are humans rebellious?

Some people think that humans are not really rebellious at all, but it's actually easy to see. You can see it just by looking at how people spend their time. Some of us have no time for God at all, and instead try to fill our lives with material possessions and experiences in order to have happy feelings. Some of us embrace just the parts of God that make us feel happy, like church and singing and feelings of comfort, while avoiding the hard parts of that vertical relationship; reading, thinking and disagreeing with people who don't believe the truth about God. And so on.

This condition of being in rebellion is universal, and all of us are guilty of breaking the law at some point. All of us deserve to be separated from God's goodness and love. Even if we wanted to stop rebelling, we would not be able to make up for the times where we do rebel by being good at other times, any more than we could get out of a speeding ticket by appealing to the times when we drove at the speed limit, (something that I never do, in any case).

This is not to say that all sinners are punished equally – the degree of punishment is proportional to the sins a person commits. However, the standard is perfection. And worse than that, the most important moral obligation is a *vertical* moral obligation. You can't satisfy the demands of the moral law just by making your neighbor happy, while treating God like a pariah. The first commandment is to love God, the second is to love your neighbor. Even loving your neighbor requires you to tell your neighbor the truth – not just to make them feel good. The *vertical* relationship is more important than the *horizontal* one, and we've all screwed up the vertical relationship. We all don't want God to be there, telling us what's best for us, interfering with our fun. We don't want to relate to a loving God if it means having to care what he thinks about anything that we are doing.

Who is going to pay for our rebellion?

The Christian answer to the problem of our rebellion is that Jesus takes the punishment we deserve in our place.

However, I've noticed that on some atheist blogs, they don't like the idea that someone else can take our punishment for us to exonerate us for crimes that we've committed. So

I'll quote from this post by the great William Lane Craig, to respond to that objection. Excerpt:

> The central problem of the Penal Theory is, as you point out, understanding how punishing a person other than the perpetrator of the wrong can meet the demands of justice. Indeed, we might even say that it would be wrong to punish some innocent person for the crimes I commit!
>
> It seems to me, however, that in other aspects of human life we do recognize this practice. I remember once sharing the Gospel with a businessman. When I explained that Christ had died to pay the penalty for our sins, he responded, "Oh, yes, that's imputation." I was stunned, as I never expected this theological concept to be familiar to this non-Christian businessman. When I asked him how he came to be familiar with this idea, he replied, "Oh, we use imputation all the time in the insurance business." He explained to me that certain sorts of insurance policy are written so that, for example, if someone else drives my car and gets in an accident, the responsibility is imputed to me rather than to the driver. Even though the driver behaved recklessly, I am the one held liable; it is just as if I had done it.
>
> Now this is parallel to substitutionary atonement. Normally I would be liable for the misdeeds I have done. But through my faith in Christ, I am, as it were, covered by his divine insurance policy, whereby he assumes the liability for my actions. My sin is imputed to him, and he pays its penalty. The demands of justice are fulfilled, just as they are in mundane affairs in which someone pays the penalty for something imputed to him. This is as literal a transaction as those that transpire regularly in the insurance industry.

So, it turns out that the doctrine of substitutionary atonement is not as mysterious or as objectionable as everyone seems to think it is.

How many Nobel-prize winning scientists support intelligent design?

January 30, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think a lot of young people give up on design in the universe because they 1) don't know the evidence for design and 2) don't want to be considered to be stupid when confronted with intelligent atheists. For those people, it can be useful to point them to smart people who have worked through the evidence for design, and concluded that the universe (and life) is the product of design.

Here's the story from Evolution News:

> Earlier this week, John West reported on a major new exhibition on faith and science in Washington, DC, tackling the question of whether the Bible impeded or inspired the rise of modern science. (Judging from the historical record, "inspired" is clearly the correct answer.) In the article, he mentioned another Nobel Prize-winning scientist who endorsed the idea of an intelligent design behind the universe, using that phrase explicitly. This was news to me. He is physicist Arthur Holly Compton — see the slide above, which Dr. West shared from the exhibition.
>
> Compton's remark was, "The chance of a world such as ours occurring without intelligent design becomes more and more remote as we learn of its wonders." Interesting. He said that in 1940.
>
> […]Compton joins fellow Nobel Prize-winning physicists Charles Townes (UC Berkeley) and Brian Josephson (Cambridge University) who have likewise come out for ID as a legitimate interpretation of the scientific evidence. (Townes passed away in 2015.) To those names you could add two more, Sir John B. Gurdon (Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine) and Gerhard Ertl (Nobel Prize in Chemistry) who, along with Dr. Josephson, endorsed the Discovery Institute Press book by chemist and ID proponent Marcos Eberlin, Foresight: How the Chemistry of Life Reveals Planning and Purpose (2019).

In case you're wondering what intelligent design is, this simple article is pretty good:

> Intelligent design — often called "ID" — is a scientific theory which holds that some features of the universe and living things are best explained by an intelligent cause rather than an undirected process such as natural selection. ID theorists argue that intelligent design can be inferred by finding in nature the type of information and complexity which in our experience arises from an intelligent cause.
>
> Proponents of neo-Darwinian evolution contend that the information in life arose via blind, mechanistic processes that show no scientific evidence of guidance by intelligent design. ID proponents contend that the information in life does not

> appear to have an unguided origin, but arose via purposeful, intelligently guided processes. Both claims are scientifically testable using the standard methods of science. But ID theorists say that when we use the scientific method to explore nature, the evidence points away from blind material causes, and reveals intelligent design.
>
> The cell confirms our expectations from design. Our DNA contains incredible amounts of encoded information. Living cells transform this encoded chemical message into machines which are engineered to perform necessary biochemical functions. The conversion of DNA into protein relies upon a software-like system of commands and biochemical codes. This is an information processing system which Bill Gates has described as “like a computer program, but far, far more advanced than any software we’ve ever created.”

This short video is a good introduction for those who prefer to watch rather than read:

By the way, about that conversation with Josephson. I was walking in the hall with him, and discussing intelligent design. He said “it’s easy to explain complexes sequences that conform to a pattern. I could write a program that would generate the first 100 prime numbers in 3 lines of code.” I told him that I was a software engineer, and that I was familiar with what it takes to “write a simple program”. I said that he would need computer hardware, firmware, an operating system, a compiler, and something to run the program. “And that’s where you’re smuggling in your specified complexity”, I said. I don’t remember what he said, but I’m delighted that he came around eventually.

Tad Hopp accumulated $100,000 of college debt, now he wants a taxpayer bailout

January 31, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting editorial from a "Christian" left blog. (H/T Acton Institute)

The author, Tad Hopp is graduating a PCUSA seminary – an extremely liberal, left-wing denomination.

He writes:

> I graduated college in 2007.
>
> […] I majored in English, not exactly what most people consider a 'marketable' or 'practical' degree…
>
> […]I went to a somewhat expensive private school…
>
> […]I did what many students in their last year of high school do: I went to the school where I felt I was being called…
>
> […]I do not regret my four years at my undergraduate institution one bit.
>
> [….]When I graduated college, I owed nearly $50,000 in student loan debt and was unemployed for almost six months before I finally found a low-paying office job.
>
> […]"Can't find a job? Well, you should have majored in something more 'practical', like economics or business or medicine." Yeah, that *would* be great…if those were the subjects where my skills and passions lie. They're not.
>
> […]I felt called to go to seminary.
>
> […]I will graduate seminary with close to six figures worth of student loan debt.

Let's take stock of what he's said so far:

- he studied English, a language that he already spoke, which has one of the lowest employment rates
- he was warned by people who knew something about earning and saving money not to study English
- he went to a school he couldn't afford to go to, and he graduated with $50,000 in debt
- he went to seminary, another subject that doesn't pay, and added another $50,000 or so of debt
- he says that he doesn't have to study subjects that lead to a career because he isn't "passionate" about them
- he "followed his heart" by going to the school that he had mystical, emotional, intuitions about = "calling"

My advice to Tad at this point would be for him to take the Bible seriously when it says

this:

2 Thessalonians 3:10:

> 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

And 1 Timothy 5:8:

> 8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

The Bible is giving us the goal of working. So what should we do to be able to reach that goal? Why should anyone hire us? What is working really about? It's those kinds of questions that should guide what we study in school, and what jobs we pursue.

We know what careers have the highest starting salaries and mid-career salaries:

1. Computer Science

- **Median Base Salary:** $70,000
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Software Engineer, Systems Engineer, Web Developer

2. Electrical Engineering

- **Median Base Salary:** $68,438
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Electrical Engineer, Systems Engineer,Software Developer

3. Mechanical Engineering

- **Median Base Salary:** $68,000
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Mechanical Engineer, Design Engineer,Project Engineer

4. Chemical Engineering

- **Median Base Salary:** $65,000
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Chemical Engineer, Process Engineer, Project Engineer

5. Industrial Engineering

- **Median Base Salary:** $64,381
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Industrial Engineer, Quality Engineer, Production Planner

6. Information Technology

- **Median Base Salary:** $64,008
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Programmer Analyst, Technical Support, Systems Engineer

7. Civil Engineering

- **Median Base Salary:** $61,500
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Civil Engineer, Structural Engineer, Field Engineer

8. Statistics

- **Median Base Salary:** $60,000
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Data Analyst, Statistician, Data Scientist

9. Nursing

- **Median Base Salary:** $58,928
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Registered Nurse, Licensed Vocational Nurse, Case Manager

10. Management Information Systems

- **Median Base Salary:** $58,000
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:**Network Administrator, Help Desk Analyst, Business Analyst

11. Finance

- **Median Base Salary:** $54,900
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Financial Analyst,Investment Banking Analyst, Accountant

12. Mathematics

- **Median Base Salary:** 54,018
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Math Teacher, Software Engineer, Data Analyst

13. Biomedical Engineering

- **Median Base Salary:** $52,814
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Biomedical Engineer, Service Engineer, Clinical Research Associate

14. Accounting

- **Median Base Salary:** $52,000
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Accountant, Auditor, Financial Analyst

15. Economics

- **Median Base Salary:** $52,000

- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Financial Analyst, Management Analyst, Accountant

16. Physics

- **Median Base Salary:** $50,000
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Physicist**,** Research Fellow, Computer Programmer

17. Biotechnology

- **Median Base Salary:** $50,000
- **Popular Entry-Level Jobs:** Laboratory Technician**,** Quality Control Analyst, Research Associate

(Source)

Why do some people get paid more than others? The answer is supply and demand. Prices are a way of determining what is most valued by your fellow man. Business owners pay more to people who offer their customers more value. If you really want to serve your neighbor, you have to learn something they really want, but can't easily obtain. And then you will be paid more. You can't do what makes you happy. You have to do what makes customers happy. That's how the free market works – you make money when you provide something of value to others. You make money when you serve others. This is something that is very hard for self-centered, feelings-driven young progressives to grasp. But it's something older Americans all know.

More Tad:

> Is the PCUSA doing anything to address this crisis?
>
> […]What has our government done to address this issue?
>
> […]I, like so many in my generation, voted for Obama…
>
> […]It seems to me that we've bought into the lie that student loan debt is brought on by the individual person…
>
> […]You know what I think might stimulate the economy? Automatically cancelling every single outstanding student loan!

He insists that the results of his own choices aren't his fault. But didn't he make the choices about what to study? Didn't he make the choice to follow his heart? Didn't he disregard the advice of people who urged him to be practical? Who is to blame, if not he, himself?

Tad needs to push away all his friends who told him to "follow his heart" and stick close by his friends who told him to focus on providing value to others. Don't look for advice from dreamers, look for advice from doers. Dreamers talk. But doers have *demonstrated* the ability to create plans that work to achieve *results*.

By the way, some of you might be wondering how serious this person was about his Christianity. Well, in another post, he comes out as gay. So clearly the Bible is being

interpreted in a way where feelings are overturning the plain meanings of words. People who read the Bible closely never come away with the message that they should follow their hearts.

What should parents think about Disney's position on grooming children for sex?

February 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Technology is being used to record what the powerful people of the world are saying, so the rest of us can find out what they really think, and plan accordingly. One of the largest corporations that caters to parents of young children is the Disney corporation. After we see some anti-child comments by Disney executives, we'll look at some sex crimes committed by Disney employees against children.

Here's a story from Legal Insurrection.

Disney corporate president Karey Burke says:

> "I'm here as a mother of two queer children, actually, one transgender child, and one pansexual child and — and also as a leader. And that was the thing that really got me because I have heard so much from so many of my colleagues over the course of the last couple of weeks, in open forums, and through emails and phone conversations. And I feel a responsibility to speak, not just for myself, but for them. To all of us, we had a — we had an open forum last week at 20th, where, again, the home of really incredible, groundbreaking LGBTQIA stories over the years, where one of our execs stood up and said, 'You know, we only have a handful of queer leads in our content.' And I went, 'What? That can't be true!' And I — and I — and I realized, 'Oh, it actually is true.' We have many, many, many LGBTQIA characters in our stories, and — and — and yet, we don't have enough leads and narratives in which gay characters just — just get to be characters and — and not have to be about gay stories. And so that's been very eye-opening for me."

Watch:

Disney executive producer Latoya Raveneau says:

> "Our leadership over there has been so welcoming to like, my like, not-at-all secret gay agenda… I felt like… maybe it was that way in the past, but I guess, like, something must have happened… They're turning it around, and then all that momentum that I felt, that sense of 'I don't have to be afraid, let's have these two characters kiss in the background…wherever I could, I was basically adding queerness to the show, if you see anything queer in the show, 'The Proud Family,' nobody would stop me and nobody was trying to stop me."

Watch:

I found a very interesting article over at the Manhattan Institute's City Journal, that talks about some of the crimes committed by Disney employees with children.

Excerpt:

> But behind its meticulously curated self-image, Disney has had a long-standing problem with child predators gaining employment within the company and exploiting minors. In 2014, reporters at CNN published a bombshell six-month investigation that discovered at least 35 Disney employees had been arrested for sex crimes against children, attempting to meet minors for sex, and possession of child pornography over the previous eight years.

Disney didn't learn anything from the 2014 CNN story:

> Even after the CNN report, Disney has seen a steady stream of employees caught in the dragnet for child predators. In 2019, police arrested a Disney cruise "youth host" for molesting a ten-year-old boy in the ship's "Oceaneer Kids Lab" and, later that year, arrested another Disney cruise employee for raping a girl "over 100 times" at her home starting when she was 11 years old. (The charges regarding the molestation of the ten-year-old boy were later dropped when the parents did not want to bring the child in for testimony at trial.) Since then, three Disney employees have been arrested for soliciting sex with minors, two have been arrested on 40 total counts of child pornography, and four more were arrested earlier this month in a sting operation targeting "human trafficking, child predators, and prostitution."

Disney's attitude to sex crimes with children is to cover them up, and water down the laws against sex crimes:

> In 2014, after a crewmember on the Disney Dream cruise ship was caught on security cameras molesting an 11-year-old girl, Disney authorities failed to report the crime until after the ship had left port, which allowed the man to evade arrest. When one security officer protested, Disney authorities allegedly told her to "keep your mouth shut" about the crime. Moreover, according to advocates associated with the International Cruise Victims organization, Disney's trade-association lobbyists had worked to oppose and then water down federal legislation that would have required stringent safety and reporting protocols for sexual abuse on cruise ships.

So what should we think of these "compassionate" Disney people, who want to promote a sexual agenda to young children, on the grounds of "inclusion" and "tolerance"? Well, what I think is that their "don't judge" religion really means "don't protect the weak from predators". And that's not surprising – secular leftism has always championed the rights of the strong over the weak. Survival of the fittest – that's their religion. They don't judge the predators because they want to be liked by the predators.

Responding to a pro-abortion argument that concedes the humanity of the unborn

February 2, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed a new article up at ProLifeTraining.com about a pro-abortion argument that is defended by top pro-abortion scholars. The interesting part about this argument is that they concede the full humanity and personhood of the unborn child.

I'll let the article explain it:

> Spend any amount of time talking about abortion, and you're likely to hear a variation of the following scenario:
>
> You wake up one morning in bed next to a famous Violinist, who has been connected to you surgically by the Society of Music Lovers. The Violinist has a fatal kidney ailment, and without your bodily support, he will die. The doctor at the hospital informs you that after nine months, the Violinist will have recovered to a point he will no longer need your body for support.
>
> Now, you have a choice to make. You could stay hooked up to this Violinist, and it may very well be good of you to do so, but is it just for the law to compel you to do so? Most people would say no, which raises a further question: What about a woman who becomes pregnant? Is it just for the law to require her to stay attached to a person to sustain their life against her will?
>
> The above scenario is a paraphrase of an argument first made in an essay by philosopher Judith Jarvis Thomson in 1971, titled "A Defense of Abortion". The argument has gone on to appear in countless forms, and has been updated and defended by philosophers such as Eileen McDonagh and David Boonin.
>
> Thomson's argument is strong for a couple of reasons. First, she asks the reader to put themselves in the position of a woman facing an unplanned pregnancy, something everyone, pro-life or pro-choice, should be willing to do. It's easier to see abortion as a sort of abstract topic without actually thinking of how we would feel if we were to find ourselves in the same position.
>
> Second, and perhaps most importantly, Thomson reframes the argument over abortion by conceding a central element of the pro-life argument: The unborn entity in question could very well be a valuable member of the human family, a "person", as Thomson argues.
>
> And it doesn't matter. In the view of Thomson(as well as McDonagh and Boonin) just because someone is a human being with intrinsic value in virtue of their humanity, that does not give them the right to use the body(or bodily tissues and organs) of another person to sustain their own life. This line of argument has become very popular in online as well as in-person discussions over the past year, with pro-life arguments dismissed offhand as ultimately irrelevant. A

> common assertion online goes like this: It doesn’t matter if abortion kills a life, because no one has the right to use your body without your consent.
>
> Thomson’s argument, and others in the same manner, succeed if the analogies employed can demonstrate the moral principles at play in the decision to get an abortion are similar or the same to the other analogous scenarios.

The article lists a whole bunch of problems with the argument. Before you click through to read it, think about what you would say to the argument. How is the position of the violinist different from the position of the unborn child? How is the position of the violinist’s unwilling donor different from the position of the unborn child? Is having a disease the same as being conceived by the decisions of adults? I made a list of problems, but the list of problems in the article was longer than mine!

Will the shooting of a black Republican councilwoman be investigated as a hate crime?

February 3, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Democrats in the corporate media are terrified of Republicans lately. Apparently, those married Presbyterian conservatives with kids are committing all sorts of insurrections, arsons and other violence. In fact, the FBI thinks that parents who are concerned about the coerced transing of their kids are "domestic terrorists". But if you look at the actual crimes, it's Democrats committing them.

Here's the latest from The Post Millennial:

> A New Jersey Councilwoman was shot and killed outside of her home on Wednesday evening in what is believed to be a targeted shooting.
>
> Eunice Dwumfour, 30, was found dead in her white Nissan SUV after it crashed near her home in New Jersey.
>
> Dwumfour, a Republican, was shot multiple times and was pronounced dead at the scene by police, the Daily Mail reports.
>
> One witness said that the gunman shot at Dwumfour and drove off quickly from the Camelot at La Mer apartment complex. A call to police was made at 7:22 pm.
>
> […]No arrests have been made in the case. The Sayreville Police and officials from Middlesex County are investigating the matter.
>
> According to the Daily Mail, close friends posted about Dwumfour's death, describing her as an "amazing friend" who "loved God."
>
> The young mother defeated the sitting Democrat in Sayreville in November 2021, and was not up for reelection until 2024.

It's not unusual for people on the secular left to resort to violence when confronted with ideas they oppose. You might think that there would be some moral restraint on actions like this, but how could there be? You can't ground notions like "human rights" and "objective moral duties" in an accidental universe, where human beings were just coughed up by an evolutionary process that did not have them in mind.

There are lots of domestic terrorists on the secular left left. Check out this recent article from the Washington Times:

> Dozens of pro-life pregnancy centers have been terrorized for months by a radical pro-choice outfit calling itself Jane's Revenge, but now it looks as if the previously unknown group is entwined with a more significant threat: Antifa.
>
> Antifa trackers and conservative media outlets linked two Miami residents charged with conspiracy in attacks on crisis pregnancy centers in Florida to the shadowy anarchist movement after the Justice Department unsealed the federal

> indictment last week.
>
> One of the suspects, 23-year-old Amber Smith-Stewart, has made no secret of her Antifa sympathies. She has identified herself as “Antifa, anti-capitalist” on her Facebook page, which includes images of pro-Antifa posters and flags from a screenshot posted on the AntifaWatch website.
>
> The second suspect, 27-year-old Caleb Freestone, is listed on AntifaWatch and has been active with Whatever It Takes, a left-wing pro-choice group with no love for “fascists” that advocates for “sustained civil resistance” and “direct action.”
>
> He was arrested in July at a heated Miami-Dade County school board meeting and charged with disorderly conduct, resisting arrest without violence and trespassing after a warning. A woman at the meeting publicly accused him of being with Antifa, which he appeared to deny.
>
> […]The two are accused in June attacks on a trio of pregnancy resource centers in Hialeah, Hollywood and Winter Haven. Vandals left behind spray-painted messages such as “Jane,” “Jane was here” and “Jane’s Revenge,” as well as the anarchist “A” symbol favored by Antifa.
>
> That doesn’t mean Antifa and Jane’s Revenge are the same, but they likely share much of the same personnel, said Kyle Shideler, senior analyst for homeland security and counterterrorism for the Center for Security Policy.

I have noticed that people on the secular left are actively supporting infanticide. People on the secular left are actively supporting sex-change surgeries on children. People on the secular left are actively supporting sex-trafficking children. I don’t think that they are as wonderful and compassionate as they want people to believe.

Book review of Frank Turek's "Stealing from God"

February 4, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This book review was posted at Apologetics 315.

It says:

> From the very onset of the book, it is clear that Turek has the so-called "new atheists" in his crosshairs and his main contention is that "atheists are using aspects of reality to argue against God that wouldn't exist if atheism were true. In other words, when atheists give arguments for their atheistic worldview, they are stealing from a theistic worldview to make their case. In effect, they are stealing from God in order to argue against Him." [p. xviii]
>
> […]The author explains that since stealing is a crime, and atheists are stealing from God to make their case, the book will use CRIMES [1] as an acrostic to demonstrate the intellectual crimes atheists are committing. Each letter in CRIMES is representative of "one or more aspects of reality that wouldn't exist if atheism were true." [xviii]
> They are:
> C = Causality
> R = Reason
> I = Information and Intentionality
> M= Morality
> E = Evil
> S = Science

Now look here. I am not one of these weird presuppositionalists who tries to "argue" for God by assuming he's exists already. I do like to use evidence, so I can convince people who don't already believe in God. But if an atheist tries to argue back and is basing his arguments on assumptions that are grounded by theism and not by atheism, then I am ready to point that out.

Here is one case:

> In Chapter 4, this reviewer was interested to see how the author would handle the issue of morality. After all, arguments such as the cosmological argument and the argument from information are based upon scientific evidence and philosophical argument, but the moral argument gets personal!
>
> Turek begins the chapter by contending that objective moral values indeed exist and that God is necessary to ground them. He then continues by taking Sam Harris and his book The Moral Landscape to task and points out Harris' key mistake in assessing the objective morality:

> Why does a moral law exist at all, and why does it have authority over us…The Moral Landscape give us no answer. It's a nearly three-hundred-page long

> example of the most common mistake made by those who think objective morality can exist without God. Harris seems to think that because we can know objective morality (epistemology), that explains why objective morality exists in the first place (ontology). [p. 100]

> The author continues by arguing that evolution cannot explain morality, dealing with the infamous "Euthyphro dilemma," and contending that for atheists to offer a moral objection against God, they need God to do it.

There can be no statements about the supposed "immorality" of God without assuming a standard of objective morality by which you judge God. But then, the very standard you use to judge God could not exist unless God was there to make a standard of right and wrong that was independent of human opinions.

There was a good recent CRI article dealing with atheist attempts to ground morality, where the evolutionary accounts are evaluated.

Here's a bit:

> Paul Copan argues that evolutionary naturalism can *describe* how people behave, but it cannot*prescribe* how people *should* behave.[15] In order to say that an action is good or evil, one needs an objective and universal moral standard that transcends individual people and individual societies. It must also be personal in nature. Moral standards deal with right and wrong, what*should* and *should not* be done. That implies a choice that requires personality and consciousness. A transcendent moral standard would therefore need to be grounded in a conscious, personal, and transcendent reality. Christians find this in God—the only place where such a standard can be found.[16]
>
> If God does not exist, then as Francis Schaeffer explains, ethics merely explain what *is* rather than what *should be*. There is then no objective difference between kindness and cruelty because there is no standard.[17] The very terms "kind" and "cruel" would be meaningless. As Norman Geisler and Frank Turek argue, atheists rule out a transcendent Lawgiver in advance:18 This creates a problem: "While they may *believe* in an objective right and wrong, they have no way to *justify* such a belief (unless they admit a Moral Law Giver, at which point they cease to be atheists)" (emphasis in original).[19]

As soon as an atheist says that there is a way that things ought to be *objectively* rather than just their personal opinion, they have used God to disprove God.

Frank Turek lectures on the case against same-sex marriage

February 5, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker Frank Turek:

> Dr. Frank Turek is a dynamic speaker and award-winning author or coauthor of four books: Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to make their Case, I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, Correct, Not Politically Correct and Legislating Morality. As the President of CrossExamined.org, Frank presents powerful and entertaining evidence for Christianity at churches, high schools and at secular college campuses that often begin hostile to his message. He has also debated several prominent atheists including Christopher Hitchens and David Silverman, president of American Atheists.
>
> Frank hosts an hour-long TV program each week called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist that is broadcast Wednesday nights on DirecTV Channel 378 (the NRB Network). His radio program called CrossExamined with Frank Turek airs on 122 stations every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. eastern and is available continuously on the free CrossExamined App.
>
> A former aviator in the US Navy, Frank has a master's degree from the George Washington University and a doctorate from Southern Evangelical Seminary. He and his wife, Stephanie, are blessed with three grown sons.

Frank Turek is one of my favorite speakers, and I admire him for being willing to take a public stand on controversial issues like gay marriage. He's actually had to pay a price for that in his professional life, and I blogged about that before.

Here's the lecture on gay marriage, featuring Christian apologist Frank Turek.

Outline:

Outline of Frank Turek's lecture on same sex marriage
Introduction:

- how to present your case against marriage safely
- Christians are required to go beyond tolerance
- loving another person can mean opposing the person when they want to do something wrong, even if they hate you
- what did Jesus say about marriage? (see Matt 19:4-6)
- what did Jesus say about sexual morality? (Matt 15, Matt 19)

Summary:

- the same-sex marriage debate is about whether to compel people who disagree with the gay lifestyle to validate and normalize it
- P1: the government has an interest in marriage because it perpetuates and stabilizes society – this is the purpose of marriage
- P2-4: government can take 3 kinds of stances towards behaviors: promote, permit or prohibit
- government promotes behaviors when it has an interest in them
- same-sex relationships should be permitted, but not promoted
- Q1: if same-sex marriage had serious negative consequences, would you reconsider their position?
- Q2: are heterosexual relationships the same as homosexual relationships?
- Q3: what would society be like if everyone married according to the natural marriage definition: one woman, one man, for life?
- Q4: what would society be like if everyone married according to the same-sex marriage definition: man/man and woman/woman?
- Should Christians care about law and politics? or should they just preach the gospel?
- They should care because people often get their cues about what is moral and

immoral based on what is legal and illegal
- Many of the social problems we see today can be traced back to problems with marriage and family
- Children do much better when they have a relationship with their mother and their father
- Same-sex marriage necessarily destroys the relationship between a child and its mother or its father
- When a country embraces same-sex marriage, it reinforces the idea that marriage is not about making and raising children
- same-sex marriage shifts the focus away from the needs of the children to the feelings of desires of the selfish adults
- does homosexuality impose any health and mental health risks?
- what has the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage been in Massachusetts to individuals, schools, businesses and charities?
- how same-sex marriage poses a threat to religious liberty
- how should you respond to the view that homosexuality is genetic?

And at the very end, he shows this short video, which is only 5 minutes and explains the logic of opposing the redefinition of marriage:

My biggest concern is religious liberty, and we are seeing how same-sex marriage has proven to be incompatible with religious liberty. But I also care about children… I want them to have mothers and fathers who put their needs first. Marriage is about a commitment – it is the subjugation of feelings and desires to responsibilities and obligations. It is a promise. A promise to commit to love your spouse and children regardless of feelings and desires. It requires more self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice. Not less.

What’s in an apologetics book? A review of “God’s Crime Scene” by J. Warner Wallace

February 6, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the best introductory books on the existence of God is Detective J. Warner Wallace’s “God’s Crime Scene”. The book provides a good overview of all of the areas that suggest an intelligent agent at work in the natural world. I found a good review of the book over at Luke Nix’s “Faithful Thinkers” blog.

The book begins with an introductory chapter explaining what’s in the book, then an opening statement explaining (without taking sides) how we can investigate whether or not there is a Creator and Designer of the universe. The next 8 chapters talk about 8 areas where we can investigate:

1. the origin of the universe
2. evidence for design in the universe
3. the origin of life
4. the presence of information in the cell
5. our awareness of consciousness
6. our experience of free will
7. objective human value and objective moral duties
8. the reality of evil in the world

I’ll just grab a couple of paragraphs on a couple of those points from Luke’s review:

> ### Chapter 1: In the Beginning
>
> Wallace’s first piece of evidence that appears to not have an explanation inside the universe is the universe’s beginning. He presents a diverse set of arguments for the beginning of the universe. These include the philosophical evidence of the impossibility of infinite regresses, theoretical evidence of mathematics and physics, observational evidence from astronomy, thermal evidence provided by the second law of thermodynamics, quantitative evidence in the abundance of helium, and evidence of the cosmic background radiation. All these used together provide powerful evidence of the beginning of the universe, and since everything that begins to exist, must have a cause, the universe must have had a cause outside itself too.
>
> ### Chapter 2: Tampering with the Evidence
>
> The foundational conditions of the universe that allow for life’s existence include the physical laws governing the atom, the matter of the universe, and the creation of chemicals. The next layer (regional) moves closer to home: our galaxy and solar system. The shape, position, and size of our galaxy make it habitable

> for life; while our sun's position, age, mass, and composition allow it to to host a planet fit for life. The third layer is the planet, itself. The earth's relationship to the sun, atmosphere, terrestrial nature, and moon all play a role in making a place that is fit for life.
>
> ### Chapter 5: Our Experience of Consciousness
>
> In naturalistic worldviews it is common to believe that the brain and the mind are the same thing. Wallace explains that the only way that two things are the same is if they share all their attributes with no differences. He describes six attributes of the brain that are not shared by the mind. All of these distinctions build a powerful case for the two being completely different. He concludes that the brain is physical while the mind is non-physical and that the mind's existence can only be explained "outside the room" of the universe being the product of another mind. He examines several attempts by naturalistic philosophers to explain the mind "inside the room" of the universe, but he shows how each of them fail to offer an adequate explanation.
>
> ### Chapter 6: Free Will or Full Wiring
>
> From a naturalistic perspective (one that holds there is no distinction between the mind and the brain) free will does not exist; it is an illusion much like the mind. If free will does actually exist, it points even more powerfully towards the existence of the mind, which must derive its origin from the supernatural, since it is supernatural itself. Wallace uses the concept of responsibility and the ability to choose other than we do to build his case for free will's actual existence. Without the ability to chose something other than what we do, we cannot be held responsible, thus no one would be worthy of punishment (in the case of wrong-doing) or praise (in the case of doing right).

A while back I finished reading "God's Crime Scene", and I found something interesting in Chapter 6, on free will on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others." Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: "It seems that not only

> do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it.”” The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here’s the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons’ belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you’re an atheist, then you are a physical object. And like every other physical object in the universe, your behavior is determined by genetic programming (if you’re alive) and external inputs. Material objects do not have the ability to make free choices, including moral choices.

Here’s prominent atheist Jerry Coyne’s editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can’t ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

(Source)

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality. Can you imagine trying to get into any sort of enterprise with someone who has this view of moral choices? A marriage, or a business arrangement, etc? It would be crazy to expect them to behave morally, when they don't even think that moral choices is possible. It just excuses all sorts of bad behavior, because no one is responsible for choosing to do the right thing.

Believers in materialism are going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

Choosing to do the right thing

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when doing the right thing sets you back. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me about their ability

to do the right thing when it was hard for them to do it. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality.
> My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

How Howard W. Gilmore, commander of the USS Growler, earned the Medal of Honor in WW2

February 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Today is the 80th anniversary of a very brave, self-sacrificial act that is well known by all American submariners. The story I talk about below occurred on February 7th, 1943, when America was at war against Japanese imperialists. It took place aboard the USS Growler, a Gato-class submarine. The hero of the story is Commander Howard W. Gilmore. Let's take a look.

My first brush with the story of the Growler occurred when I was very young, and was playing a game called "Gato" (made by Spectrum Holobyte) on the Macintosh computer that my parents bought for my older brother. In the game, you played as the commander of the USS Growler. COMSUBPAC (Commander of Submarines in the Pacific) would send me missions, and I would execute them. I was able to find an online version that ran in Microsoft's Edge browser on archive.org.

So, here is an article from the Submarine Force Museum about the USS Growler and Commander Howard W. Gilmore.

It says:

> Howard Walter Gilmore was born in Selma, Alabama on September 29, 1902. He enlisted in the Navy on November 15, 1920 and was appointed to the US Naval Academy in 1922. In 1926 he was sent to his first station on the battleship *USS Mississippi* (BB-41). By 1930, Gilmore was seeking something new and exciting and underwent submarine training in New London.
>
> […]By March of 1942, construction of the *Growler* was finished, and Gilmore and his crew would operate out of Pearl Harbor in the Pacific theater.
>
> Their first war patrol would come in late June 1942 in the Aleutian Islands. During this patrol, Gilmore once again narrowly escaped disaster, avoiding two torpedoes that were fired at him during an attack by three Japanese destroyers. In August, they would leave for their second patrol in the East China Sea near Taiwan. During what would end up being Growler's most successful war patrol, they sunk four merchant ships totaling 15,000 tons. Her third patrol was quiet, and she would remain in Brisbane, Australia for the rest of 1942.
>
> The Growler and her crew left Brisbane on New Year's Day 1943 for her fourth war patrol. Her mission was to target Japanese shipping lanes in the Bismarck Archipelago. In early February, while charging her batteries on the surface, Gilmore spotted a provision ship and prepared for a surface attack. The 900-ton provision ship Hayasaki saw the on-coming submarine and attempted to ram the Growler. In the darkness, Gilmore "sounded the collision alarm and shouted, 'Left full rudder!'-to no avail.

> Perhaps inadvertently, Growler hit the Japanese adversary amidships at 17 knots, heeling the submarine 50 degrees, bending sideways 18 feet of her the bow, and disabling the forward torpedo tubes." The Japanese crew began firing at the bridge, killing the assistant officer and a lookout who were on deck. Gilmore and two other men were also wounded during the burst of gun fire. Gilmore, without thinking, called for the bridge to be cleared. Gilmore realized that if they dove, the Growler could be saved, but there was no time for him to make it below. Despite this, he gave the call to "Take her down!"
>
> LCDR Arnold Schade, shaken and unsure, followed the last order his captain would ever give him. Schade would surface the ship a few hours later but found no sign of the *Hayasaki*. There was also no sign of Gilmore. Schade and the crew were able to keep the battered ship together long enough to make it back to Brisbane on February 17th. Gilmore's death would unfortunately not be the only tragedy for the *Growler*. On her 11th war patrol in 1944, she was lost at sea. By her end, The *Growler* received eight battle stars for her role in the Pacific War.
>
> CDR Howard Gilmore was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his sacrifice to save his ship.

Whenever I see that someone has earned a Medal of Honor – the highest military award that can be given – I always look up their Medal of Honor citation.

Here is Gilmore's.

There's a good episode of "The Silent Service" about Gilmore:

As a Christian, I try to make the words of the Bible more practical by reading stories that parallel some of the teachings of Jesus. In this case, Gilmore is pretty clearly living out that command to "love your neighbor as yourself" and "in humility consider others more important than yourselves" and "greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends". What's interesting to me about this story is that it's not an enlisted man or a lower officer who is doing it, it's the Commander of the boat.

If you're at all interested in getting started in learning military history, a good place to start is with the American submarine commanders in the Pacific. The enemy we fought was very clearly evil, and treated civilians and prisoners horribly. They attacked us first at Pearl Harbor. I have found the commanders to be mostly men of extraordinary intelligence and character. I especially recommend the books "Wahoo" and "Clear the Bridge!" by Richard O'Kane, and "Thunder Below" by Eugene Fluckey. Right now, I am reading Charles Lockwood's "Sink 'Em All". Those can all be obtained as audio books, too. I just got "Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War against Japan" in the mail.

If you like board games, there is a good board game called "Silent Victory", but it's out of print. The manufacturer is trying to collect 500 orders in order to do a third printing. If you prefer computer games, "Crash Dive 2" puts you in command of a Gato-class submarine, and it's not too complicated.

Open records request reveals that Texas Tech prefers woke job candidates

February 8, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend of mine knows the author of this article in the Wall Street Journal. The article is about Texas Tech, which is supposed to be a merit-based, professional university. And yet now we find out that the faculty is screening job candidates to prefer candidates who toe the secular left line on wokeness. Let's take a look.

This article is from the Wall Street Journal. (archived)

> Amidst the explosion of university diversity, equity and inclusion policies, Texas Tech's biology department adopted its own DEI motion promising to "require and strongly weight a diversity statement from all candidates." These short, written declarations are meant to summarize an academic job seeker's past and potential contributions to DEI efforts on campus.
>
> […]At Texas Tech University, a candidate for a faculty job in the department of biological sciences was flagged by the department's search committee for not knowing the difference between "equality" and "equity." Another was flagged for his repeated use of the pronoun "he" when referring to professors. Still another was praised for having made a "land acknowledgment" during the interview process. A land acknowledgment is a statement noting that Native Americans once lived in what is now the United States.
>
> […]One Texas Tech search committee penalized a candidate for espousing race-neutrality in teaching. The candidate "mentioned that DEI is not an issue because he respects his students and treats them equally," the evaluation notes. "This indicates a lack of understanding of equity and inclusion issues."
>
> Another search committee flagged a candidate for failing to properly understand "the difference between equity and equality, even on re-direct," noting that this suggests a "rather superficial understanding of DEI more generally." This distinction arises frequently in DEI training, always as a markedly ideological talking point. According to the schema, equality means equal opportunity, but, to use the words of Vice President Kamala Harris, "Equitable treatment means we all end up in the same place." Somehow, failing to explain that distinction reflects poorly on a biologist.
>
> The biology department's search committees also rewarded fluency in the language of identity politics. An immunology candidate was praised for awareness of the problems of "unconscious bias." "Inclusivity in lab" was listed as a virology candidate's strength: "her theme will be diversity, and she will actively work to creating the culture—e.g. enforce code of conduct, prevent microaggressions etc." Another candidate's strengths included "Land

> acknowledgement in talk."
>
> Many critics rightly point out that diversity statements invite viewpoint discrimination. DEI connotes a set of highly contestable social and political views. Requiring faculty to catalog their commitment to those views necessarily blackballs anybody who dissents from an orthodoxy that has nothing to do with scientific competence.
>
> […]One cell biology candidate was given a "red flag" for alleged "microaggressions towards women faculty." The report names two examples: "assuming one junior faculty was a graduate student" and "minimizing the difficulties of women in the US by comparing to worse situations elsewhere."

The first thing to say is isn't it wonderful that this fellow was able to get his hands on these documents and expose the school? Already, the school has announced that it is eliminating these DEI policies. Just like that, in one day, one man made a big difference. It's important to say that, because so many people today like to justify being passive by adopting cynical points of view. "Both political parties are the same", "the system is rigged", "even the people on my team are not as committed as me", etc. They want to appear to be conservative, but without having to do any actions. Well, real conservatism is done with actions – actions that get results.

It looks like even STEM departments are losing their vision about what happens when a young person exchanges tens of thousands of dollars and years of their lives for knowledge. They think that we find value in being taught morality by secular leftists, and so we should be paying for that. But from my perspective, work is very difficult. People expect you to know how to write code. Just take a look at any job description for a programmer. You're going to see a ton of programming languages (Kotlin), frameworks (Axon), services (Kafka), and libraries (React), listed there. People expect you to know how to use them. And they want months and years of experience with these tools. You don't have time in college to waste on secular leftist indoctrination. You need to earn money.

Right now, I would be very careful about getting into any university that adopted these Diversity and Inclusion policies. When you get into a private sector workplace, you are expected to perform. You want to work 40 hours to move your cards, not 60 hours. So choose where you go to school wisely.

Leading gender dysphoria expert says 80% of children grow out of gender confusion

February 9, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Progressives in America like to think that Europe is very far ahead of us. And since Europe is more progressive than us, we should become more progressive to catch up to them. But what happens when the Europeans have gone further down the road of progressivism, and they turn back because it led them to a dead end?

Here's the latest from Daily Wire, about an expert in gender dysphoria named Dr. Riittakerttu Kaltiala.

Excerpt:

> Finland's leading expert on pediatric gender medicine says "four out of five" children will grow out of their gender confusion.
>
> Dr. Riittakerttu Kaltiala, the chief psychiatrist at Tampere University, Finland's largest pediatric gender clinic, recently had an interview with the country's top newspaper about her reluctance to recommend surgical and chemical sex change services for minors who identify as transgender.
>
> Dr. Kaltiala explained that while it is "important to accept the child as they are," it is also necessary to recognize that it is common for children to strongly identify with the opposite sex at some point in their lives, but four out of five children who identify as transgender will grow out of it during puberty.

And what about the argument that if we don't let children make permanent, life-altering decisions without adult supervision, then they will end themselves?

This:

> Transgender advocacy groups… frequently rely on the debunked affirm-or-suicide narrative to lobby for early medicalization of childhood gender dysphoria.
>
> Dr. Kaltiala calls the notion that hormone treatments and legal gender recognition for minors are urgently needed due to increased suicide risk "purposeful disinformation" and "irresponsible." Suicidal thoughts and behavior in young people with "gender identity" issues are related to concurrent psychiatric disorders, not just "unaffirmed" gender, she explained.
>
> "Mentally healthy young people who experience their gender in a way that differs from their biological body are not automatically suicidal," said Dr. Kaltiala.

Here's a study:

> In a large Swedish study, suicide mortality significantly increased among adults who received sex-change treatments, and a Finnish study found that the mental health of many minors who received hormonal care deteriorated.

> “Therefore, it is not justified to tell the parents of young people experiencing transgenderism that the young person is at risk of suicide without corrective treatment and that the danger can be countered with gender reassignment treatment,” says Dr. Kaltiala. She recommends not beginning medicalization before adulthood.

If I get asked about these issues at work, I just come to my blog and dig up these articles. I hope you get some use out of my blog when it’s your turn to debate.

Catholic high school has student arrested for saying that there are only two genders

February 10, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you take a look at the image above, you'll see Catholic teachers from the province of Ontario in Canada marching in a gay rights rally. That should not surprise you, as they also march in pro-abortion (and infanticide) rallies. In Canada, the Catholic school system isn't a private school system. It's a government-run system, funded by the secular left government.

Here is the article from the Toronto Sun, by famous Canadian conservative Brian Lilley:

> In the name of diversity, a Catholic school in Renfrew suspended a student and had him arrested for saying there are only two genders.
>
> Josh Alexander was suspended last November over comments made about gender in class and told he couldn't return to class until he recanted.
>
> On Monday, Alexander returned to class and was promptly met by the vice-principal, arrested by two local police officers and charged with trespassing. The… former student of St. Joseph's Catholic High School [said] that he made comments during a class discussion on gender."It was about male students using female washrooms, gender dysphoria and male breastfeeding. Everyone was sharing their opinions on it, any student who wanted to was participating, including the teacher," Alexander said.
>
> "I said there were only two genders, and you were born either a male or a female, and that got me into trouble. And then I said that gender doesn't trump biology."

Remember – this student's parent's paid their taxes to get access to these public schools. This is the danger of paying for a service through mandatory taxes. In the private sector, you only pay a service or product provider when you want what they are selling. But in the public sector, you pay first, through your taxes, and then they decide what to serve you.

Most of the employees of these public schools are going through life on easy mode. They do worthless non-STEM degrees. They avoid competitive pressures that are in the private sector. They have no consumers to answer to. They just do what feels good to them. And their students graduate and cannot even read or write. No teacher faces career consequences for failing to produce educated students – because the union protects them from consequences.

By the way, Canada only has a minority of evangelical Protestants. Most of their "Christians" are "Catholic", like Joe Biden is Catholic. These are not religious people. They don't take the Bible seriously, any more than an atheist would take the Bible seriously. If a genuine Christian shows up, they call the police and have him arrested.

Can relationships succeed independently of the efforts of the people involved?

February 11, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A few years ago, I blogged about the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage, which I think is the dominant view of marriage among young people today – even among Christians. This view of marriage basically says that there is a person in the world out there who will match up so perfectly with each one of us that we will have to expend no effort and perform no actions and take responsibility for nothing in order for the relationship to work. it will just work on its own!

I've decided to link to this recent article by Matt Walsh which is on that same topic.

He writes:

> The disease is the fanciful, unrealistic, fictionalized perceptions that both males and females harbor about marriage.
>
> For example, think of the glamorization of the "mysterious" and "damaged" guy from the "wrong side of the tracks." Hollywood makes him seem alluring and sexy, but forgets to mention that most of the time, in the real world, that dude probably has herpes, a coke habit, and a criminal record.
>
> Still, that bit of propaganda is nothing compared to the underlying misconception that so many of us carry around consciously or subconsciously, because we've seen it on TV and in the movies, and read it in books a million times since childhood: namely, that there is just *one* person out there for us. Our soul mate. Our Mr. or Mrs. Right. The person we are "meant to be with."

Matt thinks this view of relationships is not realistic:

> I didn't marry my wife because she's The One, *she's The One because I married her*. Until we were married, she was one, I was one, and we were both one of many. I didn't marry The One, I married *this* one, and the two of us *became* one. I didn't marry her because I was "meant to be with her," I married her because that was my choice, and it was her choice, and the Sacrament of marriage is that choice. I married her because I love her — I chose to love her — and I chose to live the rest of my life in service to her. We were not following a script, we chose to write our own, and it's a story that contains more love and happiness than any romantic fable ever conjured up by Hollywood.
>
> Indeed, marriage is a decision, not the inevitable result of unseen forces outside of our control. When we got married, the pastor asked us if we had "come here freely." If I had said, "well, not really, you see destiny drew us together," that would have brought the evening to an abrupt and unpleasant end. Marriage has to be a free choice or it is not a marriage. That's a beautiful thing, really.

> God gave us Free Will. It is His greatest gift to us because without it, nothing is possible. Love is not possible without Will. If we cannot choose to love, then we cannot love. God did not program us like robots to be compatible with only one other machine. He created us as individuals, endowed with the incredible, unprecedented power to choose. And with that choice, we are to go out and find a partner, and make that partner our soul mate.
>
> That's what we do. We *make* our spouses into our soul mates by marrying them. We don't simply recognize that they are soul mates and then just sort of symbolically consecrate that recognition through what would then be an effectively meaningless marriage sacrament. Instead, we find another unique, dynamic, wholly individualized human being, and we make the monumental, supernatural decision to bind ourselves to them for eternity.
>
> **It's a bold and risky move, no matter how you look at it. It's important to recognize this, not so that you can run away like a petrified little puppy and never tie the knot with anyone, but so that you can go into marriage knowing, at least to some extent, what you're really doing. This person wasn't made for you. It wasn't "designed" to be. There will be some parts of your relationship that are incongruous and conflicting. It won't all click together like a set of Legos, as you might expect if you think this coupling was fated in the stars.**
>
> **It's funny that people get divorced and often cite "irreconcilable differences." Well what did they think was going to happen? Did they think *every* difference would be reconcilable? Did they think every bit of contention between them could be perfectly and permanently solved?**

Finally, regarding his own marriage:

> There were literally millions of things that either of us could have done. An innumerable multitude of possible outcomes, but this was *our* outcome because we *chose* it. Not because we were destined or predetermined, not because it was "meant to happen," but because we chose it. That, to me, is much more romantic than getting pulled along by fate until the two of us inevitably collide and all that was written in our horoscopes passively comes to unavoidable fruition.
>
> **We are the protagonists of our love story, not the spectators.**

I see this problem everywhere, even with Christian women who have been raised as Disney princesses. I was just told by one last week that she will marry when she meets "the right man" – the man who will require her to do nothing. This magical relationship will require no communication, no working through disagreements, no problem solving, no compromise, no effort, no self-sacrifice of any kind. it will just "work", without any growing up by anyone. Two unemployed people with degrees in English can have a fine marriage, I suppose, traveling the world and skydiving every Tuesday.

I think that when problems arise between two people who are largely compatible, the

right thing to do is to engage and solve the problems. Yes, work isn't required in pop culture notions of romance, but those things don't reflect the real world anyway. In the real world, actions to solve a problem count for more than words that avoid the problem. Engineering principles and self-sacrificial attitude are infinitely more useful in a relationship than all the pop culture descriptions of ideal men and ideal women and ideal relationships combined.

By the way, the best book on this problem is Dr. Laura's "The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands", which clearly sets out how a woman's choices influence her husband's ability to perform well. The myth of the mind-reading "right man" is also debunked.

American father loses parental rights after ex-wife announces their child is transgender

February 12, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, I blogged about a case in Canada, where a father was imprisoned for objecting to the forced transgendering of his child by the schools, hospitals, lawyers and judges. The people pushing for the transgendering were all feminists and LGBT activists. That case was quite disturbing, and I was wondering when this would come to America. Then I found an article by Abigail Shrier in City Journal.

The father, Ted, is a senior software engineer with Apple. He is comfortable living in San Francisco. His wife Christine is an executive at BlackRock, the firm that is always buying up people's houses and then renting them out. They also champion ESG, which is a social credit system for businesses, that leads to socialism.

Things started to go wrong for Ted when his wife moved to the East coast with the two boys for family reasons:

> Ted was then fully preoccupied with a grueling six-week project for Apple… On a Saturday in August 2019, shortly after returning from upstate New York with the boys, Christine walked into Ted's home office and announced both that she was leaving and that their son Drew was transgender… Christine walked out, taking the kids to stay with her at a neighbor's house.

Most women who go along with transgendering do so because they want their children to like them, and they want to be seen as compassionate and tolerant by their peers.

But the father did research on the risks to his child:

> While trying to keep an open mind about Drew's gender, Ted was adamant to the judge that he did not want Drew to begin medical transition. In the 312 days since he had last seen his boy, Ted had done a lot of research on medical transition and gender dysphoria. He begged the court to consider research that suggested puberty blockers could impair cognition and diminish bone density. He knew that Drew, if administered puberty blockers along with estrogen, would be at high risk of permanent infertility. He wasn't even sure that his son had gender dysphoria. He wanted to see his son—and he wanted this bullet train to slow down.

The San Francisco judge awarded full custody of Drew to his wife:

> On June 24, 2020… Judge Joni Hiramoto granted Christine sole legal custody of Drew on a temporary basis and approved the shared legal and physical custody arrangement of their younger son. She assured Ted that her order was not yet permanent. Judge Hiramoto had decided to order the appointment of a minor's counsel to investigate how the boys were faring before making any permanent

> decisions. She already had the perfect person in mind. “I actually know of one who was previously appointed by the court, by a different judge, on a case involving children that were allegedly transgender,” she said. That minor’s counsel was attorney Daniel Harkins.

Harkins decided that Ted’s hesitance to drug therapy and sex change surgery was a sign that Ted was not a fit parent:

> Based on the lengthy minor’s counsel report, Harkins gave Ted’s parenting a failing grade: “Father has not been accepting of [Drew’s] status as transgender. He has been quite clear that he does not accept that [Drew] is in fact transgender.”
>
> […]Harkins’s judgment was swift and ironclad: mom should retain full legal custody on a permanent basis and provide Ted updates, at her discretion, regarding matters that affect Drew’s health, education, and welfare. Drew would commence hormone therapy, as directed by USCF. Judge Hiramoto made all this official. The only right that Ted seems to have retained is the power to prevent Drew from undergoing “any gender identity related surgery” before he turns 18, absent agreement of both parties.

Without Ted’s knowledge or permission, Drew got a puberty-blocking implant, and Ted had to pay:

> In October 2021, Ted was stunned by a $209,820.34 charge on his insurance statement. When he wrote to Christine, she confirmed that a puberty-blocking implant had been inserted in Drew’s arm months earlier and that Drew had begun a course of cross-sex hormones. The combination—if not soon stopped—would likely sterilize Drew. No one had asked Ted’s permission for the procedure or even informed Ted of what had been done.

This part is interesting, especially for men who are considering marriage and having children today.

Read it carefully:

> Ted responded to this news with a flurry of e-mails to Christine’s attorney. He told Christine’s lawyer that the medical procedure was in violation of a court order, and Christine was risking being held in contempt of court. A day later, Christine’s lawyer filed a request for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order against Ted, alleging that he had spoken to his ex-wife “menacingly” at their younger son’s football games. Ted was served with the temporary restraining order; California law now required him to relinquish all his firearms within 24 hours or potentially face felony charges. He quickly complied.

Ted was informed about the long-term consequences of the decision, because he had looked at evidence. But how did his ex-wife respond to his evidence? By charging him

with domestic violence. Not actual violence, but just words of disagreement which caused her to feel unhappy.

Ted made the decision to let people at his Silicon Valley company know what was happening in a company Slack channel. Slack is software used to allow employees to communicate with each other in a chat format. People in the channel were offended, and reported him to Human Resources:

> Ted joined the Apple Slack channel devoted to "trans kid parenting" and shared his outrage and concern about his son's medical transition and the risks involved. The other members chastised him and reported Ted to "Employee Relations," known everywhere else as "HR." Ted now worries for his job.

The details of Ted's divorce were not revealed in the article, but if he is supposed to pay child support and alimony to his wife, and he lost his job, he probably would still have come up with the same amount of money, or go to prison for not paying his debts. That's how the divorce courts work.

And here is how the story ended for with Harkins:

> Within just a few months, the court would definitively end Ted's parental relationship. He would have no right to see Drew, no right to talk to him, no right to demand that Drew attend therapy with him, and absolutely no right to stop a medical transition already planned by the Child and Adolescent Gender Center of UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital.

And now I want to say something about what this means to me as a Christian man, who is frequently urged to go to church and get married and have children by church-attending women and pastors.

The denial of male headship

The overriding of male leadership of the home that you saw from the judge and the attorney is universal… even among conservative evangelical Christian women who claim to be social conservatives. One evangelical Christian social conservative woman told me that "Masculinity means that men use their strength to protect and provide for women". Another one told me that male headship does not exist in the Bible, and that men have no authority in marriages – only responsibilities. She also said that when women divorce, it is ALWAYS the fault of their husbands for not meeting the wife's emotional needs.

Even many evangelical Christian socially conservative women don't think that men have a distinct role to confront evil, protect their children, or lead their homes. They would side with the divorcing wife and the female judge against the mean, excluding, judgmental, father Ted. They would say that men's role in marriage is to be compassionate, tolerant, and to make their wives happy.

Marriage and child-bearing exposes you to the state

To Christian men who are considering marriage and child-raising, you need to choose women who form their views on morality, policy, etc. through reason and evidence. If she

isn’t interested in truth, then understand that her views will be formed by her feelings and peer-approval. You will not be able to change her mind by appealing to reason and evidence. Look for women who have the demonstrated ability to defend their theological and moral views against the secular left culture. For example, the issue of male headship in marriage. Otherwise, you can expect the treatment that Ted got at the hands of his ex-wife, the judge, etc. Divorce is a nightmare for men. The feminist state will overpower you. You will lose your freedom, your savings and your children. You will become a slave.

Read 2 Tim 2:4 and consider whether you want to use your freedom and finances to serve God, or whether you want to be controlled by the secular left state. As a Christian man, you already have a Boss. A woman’s role is to help you serve your Boss. Beware of women who want to take the place of your Boss. Beware of women who think that marriage is about you making them happy. Beware of women who scorn your moral leadership. Beware of women who demand that you show compassion, tolerance and approval for whatever is popular in the secular left culture.

Most Americans think cohabitation leads to a stable marriage, but what does the data say?

February 13, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

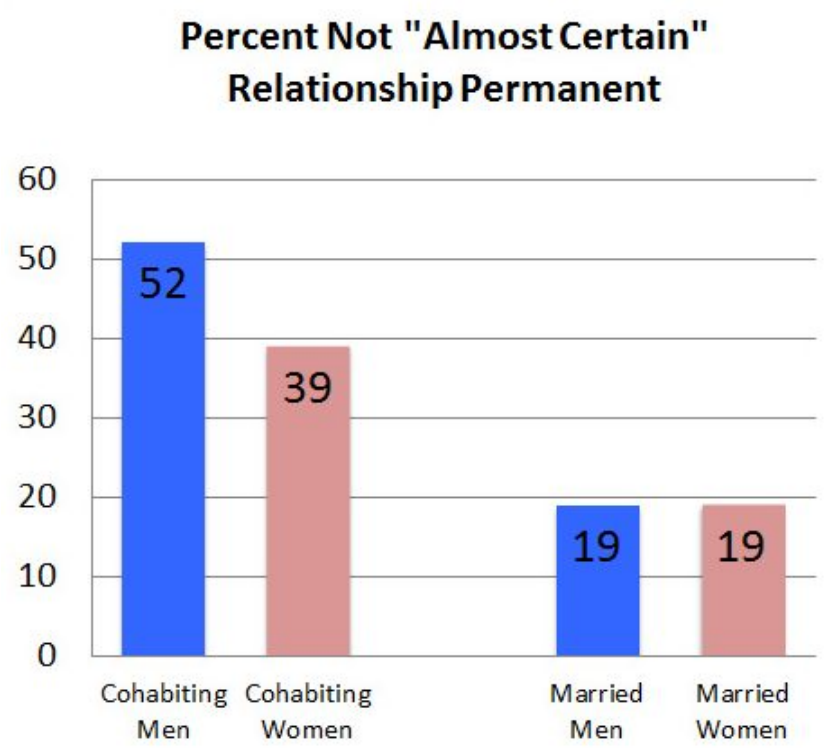

Men who cohabitate are not certain that the relationship is permanent

If there's one thing that ought to lead people to Christianity, it's the proven ability of the Christian moral rules to guide believers away from the sins that destroy them. A lot of modern "Christians" have reduced Christianity to being about their feelings and their community, while allowing the culture to determine their goals and moral boundaries. But that won't protect them from danger.

Cohabitation describes the situation of a couple moving into the same home and being sexually active, but without any legally-recognized commitment. It's extremely popular among young people today, and even Christians.

Consider this article from The Federalist about cohabitation:

> A new Pew Research Center study shows Americans both cohabitate ("live with an unmarried partner") and find cohabitation acceptable more than before.
>
> […]More young adults have cohabited than have married. Pew's analysis in the summer of 2019 of the National Survey of Family Growth found that, for the first time ever, the percentage of American adults aged 18-44 who have ever cohabited with a partner (59 percent) exceeded the percentage of those who have ever married (50 percent).

I thought this was very interesting, especially for the Christian parents and pastors who

imagine that their lovely pious daughters all have a Christian worldview just because they sing in the church choir:

> Just 14 percent hold a view consistent with a biblical sexual ethic, that cohabitation with an unmarried romantic partner outside of marriage is “never acceptable.”

Just to be clear, in my life I’ve met about 6 non-Christian men who cohabitated with women, and every single one of them cohabitated with a Christian-raised woman. That should tell you what young women are being told about relationships in their homes and churches about sex and marriage. “Do whatever you want”.

So what purpose does cohabitation serve?

> A majority of Americans (69 percent) say that “it is acceptable for an unmarried couple to live together even if they don’t plan to get married.” They may assume that they can decrease their chances of a bad marriage and increase their chances of a good one by giving the relationship a cohabitation “test run.”
>
> […]A plurality of Americans believe cohabitating before marriage yields more successful unions. Nearly half of Americans (48 percent) believe that couples who live together before marriage “have a better chance of having a successful marriage.” This view is even more prevalent among young adults aged 18-29 (63 percent).
>
> Another 38 percent of all Americans say cohabitation “doesn’t make much difference” on marital success. Only 13 percent of Americans believe cohabiting couples have “a worse chance” of having a successful marriage.
>
> […]Most Americans believe cohabitating couples raise children just as well as married couples. Pew also surveyed people’s opinions about cohabiting couples raising children, and 59 percent of Americans declared that cohabiting couples “can raise children just as well as married couples.” Again, the younger respondents were most likely to have a favorable view of cohabitation: among adults aged 18 to 49, 67 percent agreed cohabiting couples do just as well, while 32 percent said: “Married couples do a better job raising children.”

Yes, cohabitation is seen as a test run, and it’s supposed to make stable marriage more likely and not be harmful to children at all.

But why think that a test run should be part of getting married? After all, when I buy a parrot from the pet store, I don’t expect to later return that parrot. Why not? Because I am not buying the parrot to enhance MY life. I am buying the parrot to make a commitment to care for the parrot. Whether the parrot fulfills any of my needs is irrelevant to me. I want the bird in my house so that I can decide what it eats, what it drinks, and invest myself into making it happy, according to its birdish nature. This is because I think that parrots have value in and of themselves, and they deserve a certain quality of life. When I buy the parrot, I am guaranteeing a permanent commitment to the

bird to provide for its needs, physical and emotional. And that commitment carries forward to the time (now) when the bird is elderly, and can't even fly up to his cage or down to the floor. He calls for me, and I go over and pick him up and move him. That's commitment.

Cohabitation, on the other hand, is the practice of saying to another *human being*: "I am going to try you out as an entertaining commodity in my home, but if you don't fulfill *my needs* then I'm going to send you right back." That's not a commitment. That's self indulgence. It's defining a relationship as *entertainment* that is designed to meet *my needs* and *make me happy*. And that's because the concept of commitment in relationships is not presented to young people at any time in their lives. Not from parents. Not in churches. Not in the secular left culture as a whole. Everything is a consumer good designed for the purpose of entertainment – including people. It was only the Christian worldview that had a view of people as creatures made by God for eternal life, so that marriage was about guarding the other person's faith, and building them up to achieve all the things that God wanted them to achieve for his purposes.

But does cohabitation really work to create stable relationships? After all, anyone can find a partner when they're young and pretty. The real question is whether that partner will stick around when you're old and ugly and can't be as "fun" as you used to be.

Here's a recent (2018) study on cohabitation and stability:

> A new study published in the *Journal of Marriage and Famil*y finds that the "premarital cohabitation effect" lives on, despite what you've likely heard. The premarital cohabitation effect is the finding that those who live together prior to marriage are more likely, not less, to struggle in marriage.
>
> […]Michael Rosenfeld and Katharina Roesler's new findings suggest that there remains an increased risk for divorce for those living together prior to marriage, and that prior studies suggesting the effect has gone away had a bias toward short versus longer-term effects. **They find that living together before marriage is associated with lower odds of divorce in the first year of marriage, but increases the odds of divorce in all other years tested, and this finding holds across decades of data.**

Strategy advice to those who debate this issue: just be aware that Team Secular Leftist is using papers that have short-range samples, which don't show the instability problem, because they deliberately cherry-pick recently married couples.

And what about children raised in cohabitating relationships?

> While Americans are optimistic about the ability of cohabiting couples to raise children, a study published by the American College of Pediatricians in 2014 reported that children whose parents cohabit face a higher risk of: "premature birth, school failure, lower education, more poverty during childhood and lower incomes as adults, more incarceration and behavior problems, single parenthood, medical neglect and chronic health problems both medical and psychiatric, more

> substance, alcohol and tobacco abuse, and child abuse," and that "a child conceived by a cohabiting woman is at 10 times higher risk of abortion compared to one conceived in marriage."

I'm just going to be blunt here. The majority of young people are progressives, and they vote for candidates who believe in abortion through all nine months of pregnancy, and even after birth. Why? Because they don't want to have their right to seek happiness impacted by the needs of other people. Progressives believe that children, if they exist at all, should enhance the lives of their adult owners. No one should be surprised that people who think that killing inconvenient children is moral are willing to inflict other bad outcomes on them by raising them in an unstable cohabitation environment.

William Lane Craig’s secret weapon is his amazing wife Jan

February 14, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite painting: “Godspeed” by Edmund Blair Leighton, 1900

This classic post was mentioned in a previous episode of the Reasonable Faith podcast.

I want to draw your attention to a talk on “Vision in Life” given by Dr. William Lane Craig. Dr. Craig is the ablest defender of the Christian faith operating today. He has done formal academic debates with all of the best known atheists on major university campuses in front of *thousands* of university students.

It turns out that he owes a lot of his success to his amazing wife Jan.

The MP3 file is here. (32 minutes)

This talk was Dr. Craig’s chapel address to Biola University students.

About 11 minutes into the talk, Bill describes what happened after he finished his Bachelor’s degree at Wheaton:

> And so I joined the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for 2 years, and was assigned to Northern Illinois University. And that was where I met my wife Jan. She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota where she had come to faith in Christ. And she had a similar vision for her life of evangelism and discipleship.
>
> And as we worked at NIU together, she with gals and I with the guys, leading students to Christ and discipling them to walk with the Lord, we fell in love. And

> we decided that we would be more effective if we joined forces and became a team.

So their reason for getting together was because they thought that they would be more effective in evangelism and discipleship if they worked as a team.

It is at this point in the talk where Bill begins to explain just how Jan molded him into the lean, mean debating machine that travels the world striking terror into the hearts of atheists.

Bill's first story about Jan occurs early after their marriage while he is working on his first Masters degree at Trinity:

> And it was also at that time that I began to see what an invaluable asset the Lord had given me in Jan. I remember I came home from classes one day, and found her at the kitchen table with all the catalogs and schedules and papers spread out in front of her and she said, "look! I've figured out how you can get two Masters degrees at the same time that it would normally take to get one! All you have to do is take overloads every semester, go to all full-time summer school and do all these other things, and you can do two MAs in the time it takes to do one!"
>
> And I thought, whoa! Are you sure you really want to make the commitment it takes to do this kind of thing? And she said, "Yeah! Go for it!" And it was then I began to see that God had given me a very special woman who was my supporter – my cheerleader – and who really believed in me. And as long as she believed in me, that gave me the confidence to dream bigger dreams, and to take on challenges that I had never thought of before.

In an article on his web site, he talks about how Jan encouraged him to do his first Ph.D:

> As graduation from Trinity neared, Jan and I were sitting one evening at the supper table in our little campus apartment, talking about what to do after graduation. Neither of us had any clear leading or inclination of what we should do next.
>
> So Jan said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really like to do next?"
>
> I replied, "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to England and do a doctorate under John Hick."
>
> "Who's he?" she asked.
>
> "Oh, he's this famous British philosopher who's written extensively on arguments for the existence of God," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a cosmological argument for God's existence."
>
> But it hardly seemed a realistic idea.
>
> The next evening at supper Jan handed me a slip of paper with John Hick's address on it. "I went to the library today and found out that he's at the

> University of Birmingham in England," she said. "Why don't you write him a letter and ask him if you can do a doctoral thesis under him on the cosmological argument?"
>
> What a woman! So I did, and to our amazement and delight Professor Hick wrote back saying he'd be very pleased to supervise my doctoral work on that subject. So it was an open door!

And in the same article, he explains how Jan encouraged him to get his second Ph.D:

> As Jan and I neared the completion of my doctoral studies in Birmingham, our future path was again unclear to us. I had sent out a number of applications for teaching positions in philosophy at American universities but had received no bites. We didn't know what to do.
>
> I remember it like yesterday. We were sitting at the supper table in our little house outside Birmingham, and Jan suddenly said to me, "Well, if money were no object, what would you really *like* to do next?"
>
> I laughed because I remembered how the Lord had used her question to guide us in the past. I had no trouble answering the question. "If money were no object, what I'd really like to do is go to Germany and study under Wolfhart Pannenberg."
>
> "Who's he?"
>
> "Oh, he's this famous German theologian who's defended the resurrection of Christ historically," I explained. "If I could study with him, I could develop a historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus."
>
> Our conversation drifted to other subjects, but Jan later told me that my remark had just lit a fire under her. The next day while I was at the university, she slipped away to the library and began to research grants-in-aid for study at German universities. Most of the leads proved to be defunct or otherwise inapplicable to our situation. But there were two grants she found that were possibilities. You can imagine how surprised I was when she sprung them on me!

Both of these Ph.D experiences are also described in the talk. And the talk concludes as follows:

> **I am so thankful to be married to a woman who is tremendously resourceful, tremendously talented and energetic, who could have pursued an independent career in any number of areas, but instead, she has chose to wed her aspirations to mine, and to make it her goal to make me the most effective person I can be, for Christ. And she has been like my right arm in ministry over these many years. And it is a tremendous privilege to be a team with a person like that.**
>
> **And you young men, I would encourage you, if you marry, to find a gal who shares your vision, not some independent vision, but who is**

> **interested in aligning herself with you, and pursuing together a common vision and goal that will draw you [together], so that you will avoid the growing separateness that so often creeps into marriages.**

And now you know the rest of Bill's story. *The person you marry will have an enormous influence on the impact you will have for Christ and his Kingdom.* It is up to you to decide whether that influence is going to be positive or negative, by deciding if you will marry, and if you do marry, by deciding whom you will marry.

You may also be interested in this talk given by William Lane Craig, entitled "Healthy Relationships" (National Faculty Leadership Conf. 2008) (audio here) In that talk, he offers advice to Christians who want to have a marriage that is consistent with their Christian faith.

Apologetics in the gospel of John

February 15, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

John is my favorite gospel, because the thing reads like a well-constructed essay. The author makes a number of claims about who Jesus was, and supplies evidence for each claim. There is nothing extraneous to John's thesis, the whole thing that he wrote is designed to make a case. Since I've been listening to it again on my daily walks, I thought I'd write something about it.

My friend Eric Chabot wrote a post on his blog on the use of apologetics in the gospel of John.

Here is his thesis:

> In this post, I will highlight some of the different ways John utilizes apologetics in his testimony of who Jesus is.

He talks about how God has his messengers use evidence:

> 3.Signs and Miracles
>
> While actions by other prophets such as Ezekiel and Jeremiah etc. show some significant parallels to Jesus, Jesus is closer to the actions of the Jewish sign prophetssuch as Moses. "Signs" have a specific apologetic function in that they are used to provide evidence for people to believe the message of God through a prophet of God. Hence, the signs Moses does proves he is truly sent from God. Moses had struggled with his prophetic call when he said " But they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say 'The Lord did not appear to you.' (Exod. 4:1). God assures Moses that the "signs" will confirm his call:
>
> God says, "I will be with you. And this will be אות *"the sign"* to you that it is I who have sent you" (Exod. 3:12).
>
> "If they will not believe you," God said, "or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground." (Exod 4: 8-9).
>
> We see the signs are used to help people believe.
>
> Moses "performed *the "signs" before* the people, and they believed; … they bowed down and worshiped" (Exod. 4:30–31)

So what did Jesus do?

> "Works" are directly related to the miracles of Jesus (Jn. 5:20; 36;10:25; 32-28; 14:10-12; 15:24) and is synonymous with "signs." Interestingly enough, when Jesus speaks of miracles and he calls them "works" he doesn't refer to Exod.

> 4:1-9, but to Num. 16:28, "Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord." For example:
>
> Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. *The works* that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me" (John 10:25).
>
> If I am not doing *the works* of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe *the works,* that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." (John 10:37-38).
>
> But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, *the very works* that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me (John 5: 36)
>
> **"Sign"(*sēmeion*) is used seventy-seven times (forty-eight times in the Gospels). As far as the "signs' Jesus does, 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 42:18; 61:1). In John's Gospel, Jesus performs three "signs," at the beginning of his ministry; the water turned into wine at Cana at Galilee (2:1-12), the healing of the son of the royal official at Capernaum (4:46-64), and catching of the fish in the sea of Galilee (21:1-14). The link between the first two signs in Jn 2:12 while the link between the last two are seen in Jn 7:1, 3-4, 6, 9. Jesus follows the pattern of Moses in that he reveals himself as the new Moses because Moses also had to perform three "signs" so that he could be recognized by his brothers as truly being sent by God (Exod 4: 1-9). In the exchange between Nicodemus said to Jesus, Nicodemus said, We know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous *signs* you are doing if God were not with him" (John 3:2)**

A diligent reader wrote to me and mentioned that the references in this line "As far as the "signs' Jesus does, 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 42:18; 61:1)" are from Isaiah.

More:

> Also, regarding miracles, in some cases the miracle is a witness against those who reject this evidence. John grieved: "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" (John 12:37). One result, though not the purpose, of miracles is condemnation of the unbeliever (cf. John 12:31, 37).

I first read John a long time ago, when I was about 10 or 11 years old. I can't remember what I thought of it, but it probably had a very good effect on me as far as making me think that Christianity was something that I ought to look into. The gospel of John is that good. Philippians is still my favorite book of the Bible (because it's practical, duh), but John is the best introduction. It's the first thing a non-Christian should read to at least understand what Christianity is all about. Everybody should at least know that!

By the way, if you don't have a dramatized audio Bible on your phone, you can download one for free here. The voices are sometimes funny. I got the English Standard Version

Audio Drama with Music and Sound Effects. Start with Philippians and the Gospel of John, of course. I think people get bogged down in the Bible because they read it from front to back. But some parts are better to start with than others. That’s what I think.

Whistleblower explains how children's hospitals harm children

February 16, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend McKenzie (who is expecting a new baby, please pray) sent me this interesting article below, published in The Free Press. The article is written by a whistleblower who sheds light on the people who funnel children into sex-change surgeries. The very striking thing is that this article isn't written by a person on the right. The whistleblower is LGBT and self-describes as "left of Bernie Sanders"

Here's a link to the article.

Excerpt:

> I am a 42-year-old St. Louis native, a queer woman, and politically to the left of Bernie Sanders. My worldview has deeply shaped my career. I have spent my professional life providing counseling to vulnerable populations: children in foster care, sexual minorities, the poor.

Here's what she saw:

> One of my jobs was to do intake for new patients and their families. When I started there were probably 10 such calls a month. When I left there were 50, and about 70 percent of the new patients were girls. Sometimes clusters of girls arrived from the same high school.
>
> […]Anyone who raised doubts ran the risk of being called a transphobe.
>
> […]The girls who came to us had many comorbidities: depression, anxiety, ADHD, eating disorders, obesity. Many were diagnosed with autism, or had autism-like symptoms. A report last year on a British pediatric transgender center found that about one-third of the patients referred there were on the autism spectrum.
>
> Frequently, our patients declared they had disorders that no one believed they had. We had patients who said they had Tourette syndrome (but they didn't); that they had tic disorders (but they didn't); that they had multiple personalities (but they didn't).
>
> The doctors privately recognized these false self-diagnoses as a manifestation of social contagion. They even acknowledged that suicide has an element of social contagion. But when I said the clusters of girls streaming into our service looked as if their gender issues might be a manifestation of social contagion, the doctors said gender identity reflected something innate.
>
> To begin transitioning, the girls needed a letter of support from a therapist—usually one we recommended—who they had to see only once or twice for the green light. To make it more efficient for the therapists, we offered

> them a template for how to write a letter in support of transition. The next stop was a single visit to the endocrinologist for a testosterone prescription.
>
> That's all it took.
>
> When a female takes testosterone, the profound and permanent effects of the hormone can be seen in a matter of months. Voices drop, beards sprout, body fat is redistributed. Sexual interest explodes, aggression increases, and mood can be unpredictable. Our patients were told about some side effects, including sterility. But after working at the center, I came to believe that teenagers are simply not capable of fully grasping what it means to make the decision to become infertile while still a minor.
>
> […]Many encounters with patients emphasized to me how little these young people understood the profound impacts changing gender would have on their bodies and minds. But the center downplayed the negative consequences, and emphasized the need for transition.

This case was particularly horrifying to me:

> How little patients understood what they were getting into was illustrated by a call we received at the center in 2020 from a 17-year-old biological female patient who was on testosterone. She said she was bleeding from the vagina. In less than an hour she had soaked through an extra heavy pad, her jeans, and a towel she had wrapped around her waist. The nurse at the center told her to go to the emergency room right away.
>
> We found out later this girl had had intercourse, and because testosterone thins the vaginal tissues, her vaginal canal had ripped open. She had to be sedated and given surgery to repair the damage. She wasn't the only vaginal laceration case we heard about.

And more:

> Other girls were disturbed by the effects of testosterone on their clitoris, which enlarges and grows into what looks like a microphallus, or a tiny penis. I counseled one patient whose enlarged clitoris now extended below her vulva, and it chafed and rubbed painfully in her jeans.

My comment about this is how the secular left is trying to treat the disaster that they caused with their standard approach: compassion and don't judge. That's their religion. "I don't want to be judged for being selfish, so I won't judge you. And by not judging you, I hope that you will not judge me." All of these problems with children are new. They were caused by the secular left's Sexual Revolution.

The secular left likes to smash down the objective moral boundaries in the moment, but they never ask what the consequences will be when those boundaries are gone. They never do any studies, they just say "children are resilient". We now know that no-fault divorce harmed children, but how many secular leftists want to repeal the law that they

lobbied for? None.

They cause the fires and make them worse by pouring gasoline on them. We shouldn’t take them seriously when they claim to be moral — look at how much trouble they’ve caused with their enthusiastic destruction of traditional Judeo-Christian values. They wanted this, and we shouldn’t let them dance away from the consequences of their own actions.

Is the “He Gets Us” ad campaign an accurate portrayal of Jesus?

February 17, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The following is a guest post from a friend of the blog.

The “He Gets Us” evangelism(?) campaign has gotten a lot of attention lately, particularly after its Super Bowl ads. Many conservative Christian pundits have criticized it as offering a watered-down Jesus, using the language and assumptions of the woke culture. Others have defended it as a form of pre-evangelism or attempt to translate the Gospel into the current cultural sensibilities. I understand the attempt to contextualize our evangelism. After all, the Apostle Paul did as much at Mars Hill. But in the attempt to relate to the modern culture this campaign uses the language of secular progressivism without doing much to correct the non-Christian ideology and assumptions behind it. I’ve sampled a bit of the website’s content and find issues with most of what I’ve read. I’d like to share several examples.

The whole site seems to portray Jesus more as a moral role model than anything else. This article admits that some involved in the project believe Jesus is the son of God, but that others simply have an admiration for the “man” that Jesus was. That view is perfectly satisfactory to theological liberalism, which is the cul de sac at which many have arrived, and which already is at peace with modern culture. This movement does not seem to offer an exit from that comfortable and compromised version of Christianity.

This article doesn’t mention the most important and ultimate reason that the Jewish leadership condemned Jesus: that He claimed to be the Messiah, who will sit at the right-hand of God, and will come in the clouds at the end of the age (a la O.T. prophecy). It also suffers from poor exegesis regarding Jesus forgiving those who crucified Him. He was only explicitly offering forgiveness for those whose job it was to carry out the execution on a presumably guilty criminal, and not necessarily those who put Him there. In fact, earlier He had said that He must go to His death but woe to those by whose hands this was accomplished.

This article rightly depicts Jesus as hanging out with everyone, but it affirms “inclusivity” without mention that He did not hesitate to point out sin and caused (or expected) repentance and change in these people. As He said to an adulteress: I forgive you, but go and sin no more. And as He responded to His critics: it is the sick who need the physician. This campaign seems intent on avoiding such ideas as sin and spiritual “sickness.” As the saying goes, the first step to recovery is admitting you have a problem.

This article indicates that Jesus always forgave everyone, which is simply not true. It talks of Him “speaking truth to power,” and where this is true, in a sense, Jesus certainly did not express “unconditional love” to the unbelieving Jewish leadership whom He often accused of resisting Him because their father was Satan. Yes, “Jesus gets us.” He knows every inch of our rebellious hearts.

And in this article it emphasizes the way of love, which is undeniably true, but is already assumed by most people of good will. It is also not the whole story, nor is it adequate if we are all left to define "love" for ourselves. It's as vague and circular as telling people to "follow your heart." Further, the article says Jesus "always loved others despite their identity, beliefs, or values." While He certainly received people of such diversity, He was keen to teach the truth about such things in ways that would correct mistaken views of identity, beliefs, and values, and asserted that there were not only particular objective truths, but that He Himself was THE ultimate Truth. The overall content of the campaign seems to imply that Jesus is ultimately fine with everyone on their own terms, and all we lack is to love one another. That message was offered by the post-Christian flower-children of the '60s, but no matter how pleasant we might manage to be to one another, we can hardly live as a functional, harmonious society where everyone nurses their own distinct flavors of truth and value.

So, how's the campaign working out?

I think Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Tweet speaks volumes:

> "Something tells me Jesus would *not* spend millions of dollars on Super Bowl ads to make fascism look benign"

Besides having no clue what "fascism" actually means, and a groundless presumption of what Jesus would actually do in any situation, she's not having any of this. The irony is that AOC is a child and an icon of this modern cultural moment. If this is not who they mean to reach, then precisely who is it? One might say that it is those who are true seekers — those with "ears to hear." But those seeking and listening for what: something that affirms their own "identity, beliefs, and values"? Or are they looking for the One who can offer us an eternal, unifying identity, who is the apex of the cosmic narrative in which we must believe, and who both grounds and defines the values against which we are to calibrate our thinking and behavior? This campaign appears to suffer from confusion over who its target audience is, what is being offered as Christianity, and how to effectively offer it.

Paul Helm debates William Lane Craig on Calvinism and Molinism on Unbelievable

February 18, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to this excellent discussion between Dr. William Lane Craig and Oxford University Calvinist philosopher Dr. Paul Helm. I think this is a useful discussion in general because atheists often bring up problems with Calvinism as objections to Christianity in general, such as:

- If God exists, then he controls everything and I don't have free will
- If God knows the future, then I don't have free will
- If God controls everything, then I am not responsible for my sinning
- If God HAS to choose me to be saved, then I am not responsible for my damnation if God doesn't choose me

Details:

> If God ordains the future, can humans have free will? Are people predestined for salvation? And what does the Bible say on the matter? William Lane Craig is a Christian philosopher and leading proponent of Molinism, a view of divine sovereignty that seeks to reconcile God's fore-ordination with human free will. Paul Helm is a leading Calvin Scholar. He defends the view that God predestines the future, limiting human freedom.
>
> MP3 of this show: http://cdnapi.kaltura.com/p/618072/sp/61807200/playManifest/entryId/1_jn0bdo52/flavorId/0_002f1k0d/protocol/http/format/url/a.mp3?clientTag=feed:1_jlj47tkv
>
> For William Lane Craig: http://www.reasonablefaith.org
>
> For Paul Helm: http://paulhelmsdeep.blogspot.co.uk/

I was surprised because my Calvinist friend Dina thought that Dr. Helm won this debate, but I thought that Dr. Craig won. So without further ado, here is the snark-free summary of the discussion. I also sent the summary to Dina to make sure that it was reasonably fair and accurate. She said it was biased, but she was predestined to say that. Anyway, there's a commentary on the debate over at Michael's Theology blog.

Summary:

JB: Has Lewis had any impact on your apologetics?

Craig: Not as a scholar, but more as a model of a scholar who leaves a legacy through his published work

JB: How did you become interested in Calvinism?

Helm: Starting from childhood, and lately writing more on Calvinism from a philosophical

point of view

JB: How do you view God’s sovereignty?

Helm: Strong view of divine sovereignty, God is sovereign over all events, but that doesn’t mean that they are determined by him

JB: What is Calvin’s legacy?

Helm: He amplified an existing concept of predestination, and wrote on many other topics

JB: What is Molinism?

Craig: Molina affirms divine sovereignty as Paul Helm does, but he also affirms libertarian free will

Craig: Every event that occurs happens by God’s will or by God’s permission

JB: What about open theism?

Craig: Paul and I both oppose open theism

JB: How does Molinism reconcile human free will and divine sovereignty

Craig: God has knowledge of what would happen under any set of circumstances

Craig: God has knowledge of everything that COULD happen, and he has knowledge of everything that WILL happen

Craig: God knows what each person freely choose to do in any set of circumstances and he can place people in times and places where he is able to achieve his ends without violating creaturely freedom and creaturely responsibility

JB: How does this apply to the issue of salvation?

Craig: The circumstances in which God puts a person includes God leading people to him and he foreknows who will respond to his leading

Craig: God has ordered the world in such a way that he foreknows the exact people who will free respond to his leading if he puts them in certain circumstances

JB: Does God want to save the maximum of people?

Craig: My own view is that God does order the world in such a way that the maximum number of people will respond to God’s drawing them to himself

JB: Is the Molinist view gaining ground?

Craig: Yes, Calvinists and open theists are both moving towards it, and Molinism is the dominant view among philosophical theologians

JB: Why has Molinism not convinced you?

Helm: It’s an unnecessary theory, God’s natural knowledge and free knowledge covers what middle knowledge covers

Helm: Calvinism has a stronger view of sin, such that God has to act unilaterally and irrestibly to save them

JB: Are creatures free on your view?

Helm: My view of free will is weaker than Craig’s view of free will

Craig: For the Calvinist, grace is irresistible, but for the Molinist, grace is effective when it is met with a response from the creature

Craig: The Bible affirms the strong view of free will, when it says that in certain circumstances people can freely choose to do other than they do

Helm: But if a person is in circumstances X and they are free, then why don't they choose something that isn't what God can foresee

Craig: In identical circumstances, a person has the freedom to choose, and God doesn't determine what they choose, he just foreknows what they choose

Helm: How can God foreknow what people will freely do if people have this strong view of freedom that allows them to do anything? God would not know what people can freely do if they really are free

Craig: God has knowledge of what his creatures would freely do in any set of circumstances, he has knowledge of subjunctive statements

Craig: The Scripture is filled with statements that show that God has this knowledge of what people would do in other circumstances (e.g. – 2 Cor 2:8)

Helm: I am not denying that the Bible is full of subjunctive statements, but if humans have real libertarian free will, then God cannot know what they will do

Craig: I think God does preordain everything, Molinism has a strong sense of divine sovereignty BUT the foreordaining is done with the knowledge of what humans would do in any circumstances, so that what God ordains achieves his ends, but without violating creaturely free will

Craig: I take at face value the passages of the Bible where it says that God wants all persons to be saved

Craig: When the Bible says that God wants ALL persons to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), the Bible means that God wants ALL persons to be saved

Craig: So either universalism is true OR there is something that stops all from being saved outside of God

Craig: the something that prevents all from being saved is creaturely free will

Helm: Most people don't have the opportunity to hear the gospel, so God doesn't want all to be saved

Helm: People can still be responsible for what God "fore-ordains"

JB: Can a person really be responsible for wickedness if they didn't freely choose it?

Helm: Even though God is the only one who can act unilaterally to make save people, the people who act wickedly are still responsible

Craig: Molinism provides an answer to the problem of why not all people have heard the gospel, because by using middle knowledge he is able to know who would respond to the gospel if they heard it and he places those people in the times and places where they will hear it

Craig: That solution means that NO ONE is lost because they have not heard the gospel

Craig: There is Biblical support for (Acts 17:27) God choosing the times and places where people will live SO THAT they will be led by him and be able to respond to his leading

JB: Is God the author of sin, on Calvinism?

Craig: If Calvinists define providence to mean causal determinism, then he is the cause of every effect including human actions, and he is the one who causes people to sin

Craig: This view (determinism) impugns the character of God

Helm: I don't think that sovereignty requires determinism

Helm: God has mysterious resources – which I cannot specify – that reconcile his sovereignty with human responsibility for wickedness

JB: But if God is the cause of people doing wrong things, then how can they be responsible for it?

Helm: Well, humans do cause their own actions

Craig: Helm is right to say that God has resources to reconcile God's sovereignty with free will and human responsibility, and that resource is not an unknown mystery, it's middle knowledge

Craig: I can affirm everything in the Westminster Confession except for the one clause where they expressly repudiate middle knowledge as the mechanism for reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

Helm: Well, Calvinists have a strong view of sin so that humans cannot respond to God's leading

Craig: Yes, and that's why humans need prevenient grace in order to respond to him

Craig: God has to take the initiative and draw people to himself or they cannot be saved, but that grace is resistible, and that's what the Bible teaches (Acts 7:51), so humans are still responsible if they resist God

Helm: My view of grace is that it is monergistic and irrestible, it is a unilateral action on the part of God, like pulling someone out of an icy pond which they can't get out of

JB: If humans freely choose to respond to God's drawing and leading, does that diminish grace?

Helm: Many are called but few are chosen

Craig: Molinism does not require synergism – which is the idea that humans are partly responsible for their salvation

Craig: In Eph 2:8, Scripture is clear that faith opposite to works, and responding to God's drawing is not meritorious

JB: So receiving a gift is not meritorious?

Craig: It's the passive acceptance of what someone else has done for you

Helm: But doesn't this mean that you can lose your salvation, because you can accept and resist the gift of salvation?

Craig: That's a separate question that Christians can differ on, but if the Holy Spirit indwells a person and seals them, then that would argue for the view that salvation cannot be revoked

JB: Doesn't Romans 8 teach Calvinism pretty clearly?

Helm: This is called the "golden chain", and it does support Calvinism

Craig: Actually, this text is no problem for Molinists because the first link in the chain is foreknowledge, which, if it incorporates middle knowledge, is no problem for Molinists

Craig: What God is electing in Romans 8 is a specific group of people that he knows in advance of creating the universe will freely respond to his drawing them to him

Craig: In Acts 4:27-28, it is talking about God's foreknowledge, which involves and incorporates knowledge of what any individual would freely choose if placed in those circumstances

JB: If God actualizes a set plan with set circumstances for everyone, isn't that very similar to Calvinism?

Craig: Yes! It's a strong statement of divine sovereignty

Helm: Foreknowledge doesn't mean that God knows what people would do, it's just refering to God "knowing his own mind" about what he wants to do

JB: How do you respond to the fairness of God unilaterally and specifically choosing some people for salvation and choosing other people for damnation (because he refuses to act unilaterally for them)?

Helm: God ordinarily bypasses other people in the Bible, like when he chooses the Jews as his chosen people

Craig: The problem with that is that the Bible clearly teaches that God has a genuine will that all will be saved and he makes a genuine offer of salvation to all people

Craig: Also, just being a Jew and a member of the chosen people doesn't mean you were saved, because some Jews rebelled against God

Craig: And there were also people outside of the Jewish people who were righteous and in a relationship with God, like Job

Helm: "the fabric of our faith" depends on God's choice and his not-choice, it is fundamental to the Bible and to God's character, and choosing them "effectively" (irrestibly and unilaterally)

Helm: The idea of God considering "possible worlds", some of which are feasible and not feasible, with conflicts between the wills of free creatures in different circumstances, and then actualizing one world that achieve these ends is very messy

Craig: Some worlds may not feasible for God to create, for example a world in which everyone is saved – it is logically possible, but may not be feasible

Craig: God will not exercise any divine coercion to force people to go to Heaven against their own will

Helm: If God chooses a world because it is feasible, then he doesn't love me directly, he

is choosing a world, not individuals

Craig: Well, when God actualizes a world, he specifically knows which individuals will be saved within that world, but without disrespecting free will

Craig: The world isn't primary, the individuals are primary

Helm: I think that middle knowledge can he included in God's natural knowledge and free knowledge

Craig: The knowledge of what people would do in different circumstances is based on the freedom of the individuals

JB: Make your conclusions!

Craig: Molinism is a Biblical model for reconciling divine sovereignty with human freedom

Helm: It is intellectually mystifying to introduce this strong view of human freedom and it is not Biblical

Is the Big Bang cosmology a theistic or atheistic theory of cosmic origins?

February 19, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Michael Strauss is a practicing particle physics employed as a professor at University of Oklahoma. He does research in particle physics at CERN, a large hadron collider. It's safe to assume that he knows something about experimental physics.

Here's what he writes about Christians and the Big Bang at his new blog:

> When my children were young, I would often drive to the home of the person babysitting my kids, usually a young teenage girl, pick her up, then drive her back to my house. In the car I would ask questions about her interests or her school. In addition, I would sometimes ask a question that intrigued me since I am a scientist and a Christian, "Do you think the Big Bang is a theistic theory or an atheistic theory?" Now that question is not on most people's list of babysitter interview questions, but I was interested to know their answer even though it would not affect their monetary tip. Every time I asked this question I always got the same answer, that the Big Bang is an atheistic theory. This is just one example of the fact that many kids growing up in an evangelical church environment have the perception that the Big Bang is an idea which removes God as the creator. It seems that many Christians may disdain the Big Bang.
>
> Subsequent conversations with people of all ages have shown me that many individuals (1) don't really understand what the Big Bang is, (2) don't know the scientific evidence for the Big Bang, and (3) don't comprehend the theistic significance of the Big Bang. So let's explore these ideas a little bit.

Here is his overview of the scientific evidence for the Big Bang:

> There are three primary observations that are best explained by the Big Bang. First, the universe is expanding so that it must have had a beginning of expansion in the past. Second, because the universe was once very hot, we can still see the remnants of that heat in the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) radiation. The latest measurements of the CMB spectrum made by the Planck satellite (shown above) agrees almost perfectly with theoretical calculations using the standard Big Bang cosmological model (see the plot at the end of this post). Third, the theory predicts the amount of primordial light elements that should have been created in the first few minutes of the Big Bang, like hydrogen and helium. Again the observations and the theoretical calculations align almost exactly. A few other observations are supported by Big Bang predictions, like the distribution of galaxies and primordial gas. The agreement between what we measure and what is expected from a Big Bang is so remarkable that just about all scientists accept the Big Bang as the origin of our universe, despite its

> implication that the universe had a beginning.
>
> Does this scientific evidence support theism, or atheism?
>
> Because we don't have any observations that tell us exactly what happened "in the beginning" of our universe, we can only speculate. But let me point out the obvious. All of the observations we do have, and all the theoretical calculations, and even some projective calculations like the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem… give credence to the conclusion that all of the space, time, matter, and energy of this universe had a beginning. **The Big Bang is a misnomer for it is not some kind of explosion since there was nothing that existed to explode. It is the origin of the universe. So if this universe had a beginning, then the cause of the universe can not be a part of the universe. The cause must be transcendent, like the Christian idea of God.** Is the fact that all the evidence points to our universe having a transcendent cause proof for God? No, but it is extremely powerful evidence. If one hundred years ago you had predicted that scientists would obtain unambiguous evidence about the history of the universe for 13.8 billion years, all of its lifetime except the first fraction of a second, and that all of the evidence would point to an actual beginning consistent with a transcendent cause, I don't think anyone would have taken you seriously. But that is exactly what has happened. **Theists could not have outlined a better scenario to support theism. The scientific facts are completely consistent with the statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."**

I know how I account for this scientific discovery in my worldview: a non-physical mind that existed eternally created the physical universe at time t=0. But how do atheists, who can only explain the world by appealing to matter, explain the origin of matter itself?

Here's Oxford University professor of physical chemistry (and atheist) Peter Atkins explaining how he grounds the Big Bang cosmology:

Easy! Nothing actually exists, according to Peter Atkins.

What about a theoretical physicist, like Lawrence Krauss? Well, he just redefines the nothing that causally preceded the origin of the universe so that it is actually something. Pure speculation, and it goes against the experimental scientific evidence we have. Exactly what you'd expect from a man who wrote a book about "the physics of Star Trek".

Each of us has to come to terms with this scientific evidence. What could have caused the beginning of the universe? It can't be matter, because this was the beginning of all the matter in the universe. It has to be a *mind.*

Although most theists have no problem with this scientific evidence, atheists really hate it. When I tell them about this evidence, they tell me that in a few years or decades, all the evidence for a beginning we have now will have gone away. "How do you know that?" I ask. We have faith" they reply. I don't think anyone should deny the objective reality we all share just because it's what they want to believe.

Women want to complain to Human Resources because man is reserved at work

February 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have spent over 23 years in information technology, and most of the companies were large IT companies. Large IT companies tend to emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion more than smaller companies, which have to perform in order to stay afloat. And that means making sure there is an equal balance of genders, ethnicities, etc. in every different area.

Here is a very interesting post on the relationship advice forum of Reddit:

> Hi all I'm posting this on an alt because I know a few of my friends are following me on here and I don't want this spilling out until I have some clear thoughts on what I want to do.

The author – who uses Commonwealth spelling – has a short summary of her post at the top:

> A colleague (27M) joined our firm last year and since then he has had zero issues socialising with the guys we work with but always finds an excuse or says no to hanging out with the girls after work, even if we go out together as a whole he rarely talks to us and its making some of my friends uncomfortable.

And then here is the long version:

> So early last year our firm hired Dan (27M). In the first few weeks he was really quiet and didn't talk much and that's just how we thought he was. Every conversation with him was short and to the point and never deviated from work, asides from pleasantries (Have a nice weekend etc). About 2 months in he started becoming a bit more friendly with the guys in our office and they would hang out every so often and have normal conversations. However, whenever any of the girls in the office tried to do so he would quickly change the conversation back to work or just not reply. Even now after a year of Dan working with us he straight up refuses to socialise with the girls in the office and it is making them feel uncomfortable. He avoids any discussion of himself outside of work related events and future plans and doesn't ask any of the girls either. Where as he is, what I can only assume, pretty good friends with the guys in the office.
>
> Even on work meals out to celebrate events he is only doing the bare minimum when it comes to conversation with the girls where again with the guys he talks to them like there is no problem whatsoever. I don't know if I'm overreacting but one of the girls is considering go to HR about this because she is saying its creating a hostile work environment. Dan treats us like he treats clients we work with; cordial and strictly about business and its wearing thin now.

> Any advice is appreciated.

Many young people today don't see the workplace as being about work. They see it as a time of socializing. And they get angry when people don't socialize with them. They want to be allowed into a man's personal space, even though they are the kind of people who go straight to HR whenever anyone disagrees with them, or refuses to make them happy. Many of these women are single mothers who divorced the father of their kids.

I actually left my last job and took a lower salary job, because I was being harassed by a woman who had *no college degree*. Her official title was "Software Engineer", but she didn't write code. She just supervised deployments to production. She was very attractive, and had had cosmetic surgery done – her chest was super-sized. (I heard her explaining why she did it to one of the Indian workers one day). She was also about 6-8 years older than me. She started to get very angry with me for not giving her attention at work. She would come to my desk and talk about how politically conservative she was (she must have heard that I was conservative). But I didn't want to have anything to do with her.

I blogged previously about a woman who accused a man of grooming her because he didn't want to get more serious with her. Men are getting tired of this. If you know any young women who are wondering why men don't talk to them, maybe it's because many young women are not pleasant or safe to talk to. Even if a particular young unmarried woman is safe to talk to, men will judge her based on the majority of single, unmarried women. It's just not safe for men to have non-business conversations in the workplace with young, unmarried women.

The juice isn't worth the squeeze.

Canada intelligence agency: China helped elect Trudeau's Liberals in 2021 election

February 21, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Once in a while, I have to put up a post about Canada. It's important because we have to know what the left is doing in countries where they have more power. We recently saw the Canadian socialist party deploy the military to crush peaceful demonstrations. They also froze the bank accounts of those peaceful demonstrators. It turns out that their elections are being manipulated by China.

This article is from the Globe and Mail, the more leftist of Canada's two national newspapers:

> China employed a sophisticated strategy to disrupt Canada's democracy in the 2021 federal election campaign as Chinese diplomats and their proxies backed the re-election of Justin Trudeau's Liberals – but only to another minority government – and worked to defeat Conservative politicians considered to be unfriendly to Beijing.
>
> The full extent of the Chinese interference operation is laid bare in both secret and top-secret Canadian Security Intelligence Service documents viewed by The Globe and Mail that cover the period before and after the September, 2021, election that returned the Liberals to office.

I need to explain what an MP is. An MP is a "Member of Parliament", similar to our House representatives in Congress.

More:

> Drawn from a series of CSIS intelligence-gathering operations, the documents illustrate how an orchestrated machine was operating in Canada with two primary aims: to ensure that a minority Liberal government was returned in 2021, and that certain Conservative candidates identified by China were defeated.
>
> The documents say the Chinese Communist Party leadership in Beijing was "pressuring its consulates to create strategies to leverage politically [active] Chinese community members and associations within Canadian society." Beijing uses Canadian organizations to advocate on their behalf "while obfuscating links to the People's Republic of China."
>
> The classified reports viewed by The Globe reveal that China's former consul-general in Vancouver, Tong Xiaoling, boasted in 2021 about how she helped defeat two Conservative MPs.
>
> Would you like to live in a country that allowed its elections to be influenced by a communist Superpower? I would not.

So, a lot of the voters in Canada were being influenced by Chinese propaganda, and they were not in a position to be able to correct the lies. They voted on the basis of disinformation from a foreign power. And of course Trudeau did nothing to stop it, because he wanted the help from his fellow communists. I'm surprised that this is all even coming out now.

Here's a post from True North, a centrist blog:

> Legacy media outlets amplified disinformation about Freedom Convoy protesters last year, according to Public Order Emergency Commissioner (POEC) Paul Rouleau's report assessing the federal government's use of the Emergencies Act.
>
> Rouleau's report found that the news media's portrayal of the demonstrations was an attempt to discredit the movement.
>
> "I am also satisfied that there was misinformation about the Freedom Convoy, which was used as a basis to unfairly discredit all protesters. In one example, protesters were blamed for an act of arson in an apartment building, which the police later confirmed had no links to the protests," wrote Rouleau.
>
> "Where there was misinformation and disinformation about the protests, it was prone to amplification in news media. OPP Superintendent Pat Morris testified that, as the officer leading the collection of intelligence for the OPP, what he was seeing in the media did not always reflect what the intelligence was showing."
>
> The arson hoax was spread by legacy media outlets reporting on the incident and federal politicians including NDP leader Jagmeet Singh and a number of Liberal and NDP MPs.
>
> Other false claims spread by media outlets about the Freedom Convoy included a fake poster shared by the far-left Anti-Hate Network. At the height of the protests, the organization's chair Bernie Farber posted a tweet including a picture of an antisemitic poster that was later found to have originated in Miami, Florida and not Ottawa.

Talk about 1984. Almost everything that Canadians hear about in the culture is just designed to mislead them and confuse them. They are living in a dream world. When I talk to Canadians, they think that our suburbs are filled with gun violence. They don't know about free health care for the poor (Medicaid) and the elderly (Medicare). They have no idea. It seems like they just don't have access to reliable information. So even as their housing prices are going through the roof, and they are running up consumer debts, they still keep voting for the policies that take aware their liberty and prosperity.

New study: 50% of biological males in women's prisons convicted of sex crimes

February 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, at the first level of "bad" I think it would be putting biological males into women's sports. Maybe next would be putting biological males into women's bathrooms and showers. Then maybe putting biological males into women's shelters. But the worst – the absolute worst – has to be putting biological males convicted of sex crimes into women's prisons. But that's just secular left morality.

Here's the story from Daily Wire:

> A new Canadian study found that 9 in 10 male inmates who identify as transgender were incarcerated for violent offenses and nearly half were sexual offenders.
>
> A recent study conducted by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), an "Examination of Gender Diverse Offenders," which surveyed 99 "gender diverse" inmates between 2017 and 2020, found that of the 61 male inmates in the study who identified as transgender or something other than male, 46% had committed sexual offenses and 92% were incarcerated for violent crimes.
>
> The report found that 91.7% of male inmates who identified as transgender women surveyed were incarcerated for a violent offense, including 41.6% for homicide. By contrast, according to the Correctional Service of Canada's 2021 annual report, 25.8% of male inmates (who identify as male) were serving sentences for a violent offense, which includes homicide/manslaughter, attempted murder, aggravated assault, and other violent offenses.
>
> Additionally, the researchers determined that 62.7% of male inmates who identified as transgender women had a low reintegration potential, 39.3% required maximum security, and 74.6% had "high static risk," which refers to a high level of risk that an individual will reoffend based on factors that are relatively unchangeable or "static."

Meanwhile, in Scotland:

> PRISON authorities have been criticised after it emerged four of the five transgender inmates held in the female prison system are murderers.
>
> The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) have been accused of endangering vulnerable women in the latest revelation in the controversy surrounding trans prisoners.

We already know that biological males who identify as females are attacking and raping women in women's only spaces. But the response from the secular left has been to try to cover these abuses up, and prosecute concerned parents for "domestic terrorism".

Here's the New York Post talking about a rape that occurred in a woman's prison,

committed by a biological male:

> A transgender Rikers inmate raped a female prisoner while in the women's section of the jail and has been sentenced to seven years, officials said Monday.
>
> Ramel Blount, 33, who goes by Diamond Blount, pleaded guilty to attempted rape April 7 in an apparent plea deal.
>
> Investigators said Blount — who was housed in the female section of the facility — approached a 33-year-old female inmate in the bathroom at the Rose M. Singer center Feb. 8, 2021, after the victim had just finished showering.
>
> Blount held the victim down by the back of her neck and raped her, investigators said. The victim reported the incident to jail officials, and a rape kit was administered, which matched Blount's DNA in the New York State Registry.

That's New York for you – the home of secular leftist morality. What sort of human rights can you rationally ground in an accidental universe? It's survival of the fittest. The only things that are "wrong" are the things you get caught for. The things that make you lose face with your peers.

What is Joe Biden's view of putting biological males convicted of sex crimes into women's prisons?

Daily Wire had an interesting article about that.

It says:

> "Transgender equality is the civil rights issue of our time," Biden said on social media Saturday night. "There is no room for compromise when it comes to basic human rights."
>
> […]The statement isn't necessarily a departure for Biden who, back in April, mentioned that he would support the "Equality Act," a Democrat-authored House bill that would amend the 1964 Civil Rights act to outlaw discrimination based on "sexual orientation and gender identity." That bill is controversial, as it includes language designed to compel public schools to allow transgender individuals who identify as female (but who are biologically male) to compete against female athletes on female-only sports teams.
>
> Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY) one of the bill's more prominent sponsors, made it clear that expanding "access" to transgender athletes is a key element of the bill, denying biological reality: "Many states have sexual orientation and gender identity nondiscrimination laws, and all of them still have women's sports. Arguments about transgender athletes participating in sports in accordance with their gender identity having competitive advantages have not been borne out."
>
> Asked about the bill back in June, Biden said that passing it would "be the first thing I ask to be done" as president. The bill, he added, "is long overdue, and will ensure LGBTQ Americans are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve."

When you see secular leftists who support the Democrat party, you have to understand

that this is what they are voting for. They want to put biological males who have been convicted of rape into women's prisons. "Who cares about women in jail anyway?" the secular leftist will say. They don't care about women, they care about virtue signaling to their social circles.

Woman who regrets her sex-change surgery sues everyone involved in transing her

February 23, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What animates people on the secular left? Why are they so weak in the face of evil that harms children? Part of the answer is that harming children is necessary for selfish adults to pursue their pleasure without boundaries. But part of it is that people on the secular left don't want to be judged, and so they attack people who judge *any kind of evil.*

So what happens when the people who set moral boundaries and make moral judgements get silenced? Answer: the weak suffer.

Here is an article from The Post Millennial, that I think really shows what is at stake when we who set moral boundaries and make moral judgements capitulate to those who don't want to be judged, and who want to be "nice" and "tolerant".

It says:

> A detransitioned Ontario woman who was prescribed testosterone and underwent both a bilateral mastectomy and a hysterectomy during a mental health crisis in which she believed herself to be a man is suing the healthcare providers who allegedly facilitated her medical transition.
>
> Michelle Zacchigna, 34, of Orillia has filed legal action against a total of eight doctors and mental health professionals who treated her during the years that she identified as transgender. Zacchigna alleges that each failed to address her complex mental health needs and instead allowed her to self-diagnose as transgender and undergo irreversible procedures that she now deeply regrets.
>
> "I will live the rest of my life without breasts, with a deepened voice and male-pattern balding, and without the ability to get pregnant. Removing my completely healthy uterus is my greatest regret," wrote Zacchigna.

The rest of the article names all the people involved in transing this kid, and what they specifically did. The general idea is that they did almost no investigation. They certainly made no moral judgements. They certainly didn't consult the Bible. These are people who care about making money for themselves. They have no rational foundation for morality. They don't believe that truth bounds reasoning. They don't believe that moral boundaries are objective. They think the universe is an accident. They don't believe in consciousness or free will. They don't think they're going to Hell when they die. They're atheists, and they do what's best for themselves, no matter what happens to anyone else.

This 11-minute video of Matt Walsh has been making the rounds. I think it's worth watching. I definitely stand with Matt on not capitulating to people who want to harm children.

I was watching a video of a panel of men and women discussing dating on Wednesday

night. The host asked the man if he would be willing to go to bed with a transgender woman (biological man). And the man explained that he was a Christian, and he would not do that. Then two of the women on the other side of the table – scantily dressed, and covered in tattoos – called him a bigot, and walked off the set. It's getting to the point now where men of character have to choose between their principles, and having relationships with the compassion crowd. The don't judge crowd.

I actually had to make that choice all through high school and college, when church girls complained about my belief in an inerrant Bible, and a literal Hell, and the wrongness of no-fault divorce, etc. I've been making that choice for character, and against "tolerance" and "compassion", my entire life. It's sad when you have to see your plans of marriage and children slip away, because so many young, unmarried women – even the ones raised in the church – have been brainwashed to value moral relativism above spiritual truths and moral truths.

When people are doing things that harm themselves and harm children, the right move is not to do what is nice to them so they will like you and then you can be popular. That's emotional garbage. The right move is to stand up and disagree, with evidence. And if people don't like your disagreement, then too bad. And if I had kids like Matt Walsh, I would never let those kids near the "compassionate" moral relativists who run the public schools.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

February 24, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our

> universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

February 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

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So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

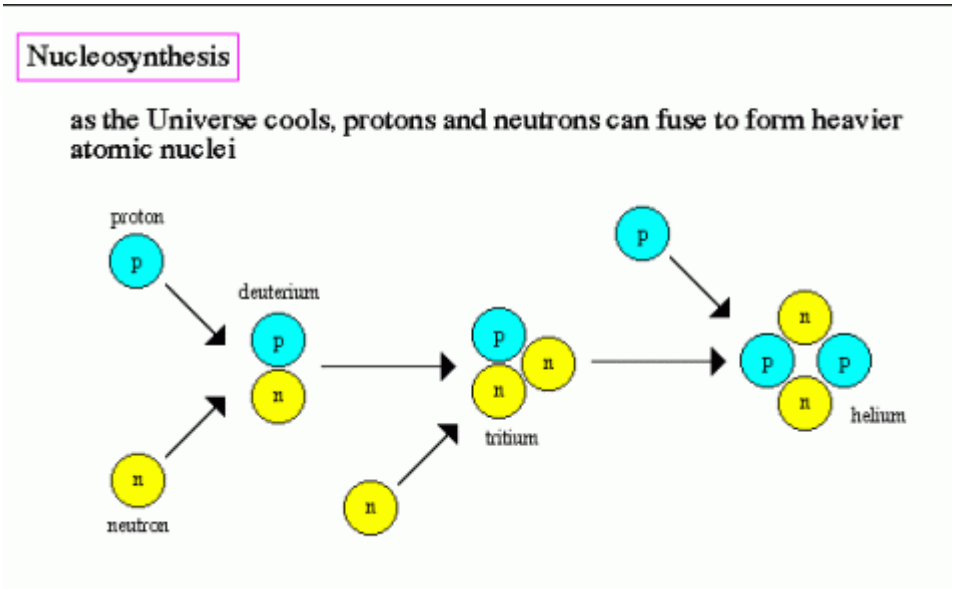

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

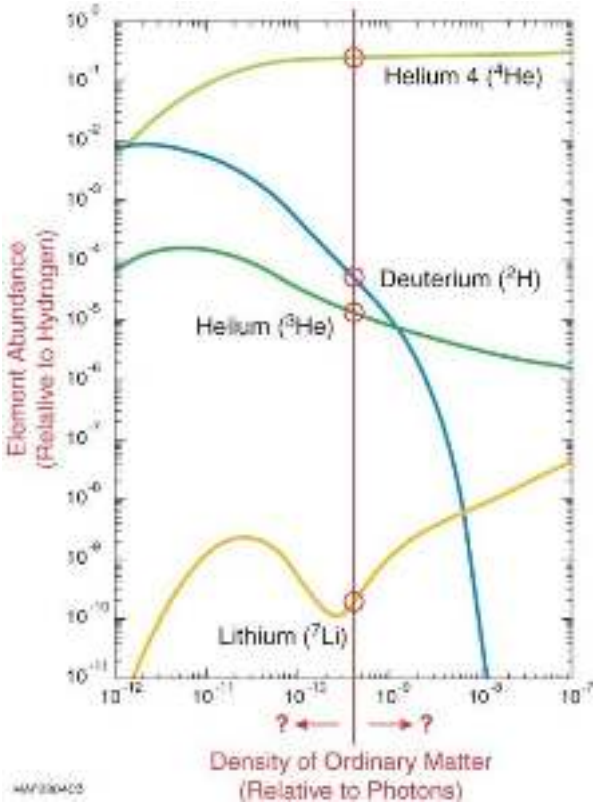

Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the

elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

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Peter J. Williams debates Bart Ehrman on his book "Misquoting Jesus"

February 26, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Peter J. Williams, an expert on New Testament reliability

I have to re-post this debate between Bart Ehrman and Peter J. Williams, because Dr. Williams just followed me on Twitter. I noticed that he had re-tweeted one of the two senators I follow on Twitter, so I re-tweeted him. I like Tom Cotton and Josh Hawley, and he re-tweeted Senator Hawley talking about free speech.

Bart Ehrman posted the debate audio on YouTube:

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is the US author of the bestselling book "Misquoting Jesus" (In the UK "Whose word is it?"). He calls into question the authority of the New Testament as scribal changes over time have changed the documents.
>
> So can we trust the scripture? Bible scholar Peter Williams believes in the reliability of the New Testament and that Bart's prognosis is far too pessimistic.

This post is a re-post from 2011. I have been listening to this lecture by Peter J. Williams on "Misquoting Jesus" this week, and it reminded me to re-post this debate. (I checked to make sure the MP3 link is still good, and it is)

Summary of the Williams-Ehrman debate:

Note: this summary is *snarky*. If you want an accurate view of the debate, then listen to it. My summary is meant to be humorous.

Ehrman:

- I had a mystical experience in childhood and became an evangelical Christian
- I went to Moody Bible Institute, and they told me that the Bible was inerrant
- For a while, I was committed to the view that there are no mistakes in the Bible
- At Princeton, I was taught *and graded* by professors who did not accept inerrancy
- By a strange coincidence, I began to see that the Bible did have errors after all!
- We don't have the original documents written by the original authors, we only have thousands of copies
- if the words of the Bible are not completely inerrant, then none of it is historical
- if all of the words in all the copies of the Bible are not identical, then none of it is historical

Williams:

- I would say the New and Old testaments are the Word of God
- We don't need to have the original Greek writings in order to believe in the authority of the Bible
- I believe in inerrancy, but doesn't mean there are no problems
- the doctrine of inerrancy has always referred to the original Greek copies, not the translations

Moderator:

- what are the main points of Misquoting Jesus?

Ehrman:

- we don't have the originals of any of the books of the New Testament
- we have copies that are much later, sometimes even centuries later!!1!
- the copies we have all differ from one another – they were changed by scribes!!1!
- we have 5000 manuscripts in the original Greek language
- there are hundreds of thousands of differences!!1!
- most of the differences don't matter
- some differences are significant for meaning or doctrine
- errors are propagated because the next scribe inherits the mistake of their source copy
- a large gap between the time of writing and the first extant copy means more errors have crept in

Williams:

- the reason we have so many variants is because the number of manuscripts is large

Angry Jesus or compassionate Jesus in Mark

Ehrman:

- most manuscripts say that Jesus was compassionate when healing a leper, but one says he was angry
- it makes a huge huge huge really really big difference if Jesus is compassionate or angry
- the whole Bible needs to be thrown out because of this one word between different in one manuscript

Williams:

- this variant is important for understanding the passage, but it has no great meaning
- the change is probably just an accident – the two words are very similar visually in Greek
- it's just an accident – it emerged in one manuscript, and it impacted a few more
- the tiny number of manuscripts that have the error are geographically isolated
- I'm pretty sure that WK prefers the angry Jesus anyway – so who cares?

Ehrman:

- no! someone changed it deliberately! it's a conspiracy! you should buy my book! it's a *big deal*!!!!!1!!1!one!!eleventy-one!

The woman caught in adultery in John

Ehrman:

- it is isn't in any of the earliest manuscripts
- this is an apocryphical story that some scribe deliberately inserted into the text
- most people don't even know about this! it's a cover-up! you need to buy my scandalous book!

Williams:

- that's right, it's a late addition by some overzealous scribe
- and it's clearly marked as such in every modern Bible translation
- the only people who don't know about this are people who don't read footnotes in their Bible
- and in any case, this isn't a loss of the original words of the New Testament – it's an addition

Grace of God or apart from God in Hebrews

Ehrman:

- well this is just a one word difference, but it makes a huge huge really really big difference!
- the words are very similar, so it's could be an accident I guess
- but it wasn't! this was a deliberate change! it's a conspiracy! it's a cover-up!

scandal!
- buy my book! It’s almost as good as Dan Brown!

Moderator:

- hmmmn…. I kind of like “apart from God” – why is this such a big scandal again?

Ehrman:

- you don’t care? how can you not care? it has to be inerrant! or the whole thing is false!
- Moody Bible Institute says!

Williams:

- yeah Bart is always saying that every change is deliberate but it’s just an accident
- the words are very similar, just a few letters are different, this is clearly an accident
- I have no problem with apart from God, or by the Grace of God
- please move on and stop screaming and running around and knocking things over

Moderator:

- but what if pastors try to use this passage in a sermon?

Williams:

- well, one word doesn’t make a big different, the meaning that appears is fine for preaching
- it’s only a problem for people who treat the Bible as a magic book with magical incantations
- they get mad because if one word is out of place then the whole thing doesn’t work for their spell
- then they try to cast happiness spells but the spells don’t work and they experience suffering
- the suffering surprises them since they think that fundamentalism should guarantee them happiness
- then they become apostates and get on TV where they look wide-eyed and talk crazy

Ehrman:

- hey! are you talking about me? a lot of people buy my books! i am a big success!
- it is very important that people don’t feel bad about their sinning you know!

Is Misquoting Jesus an attack?

Williams:

- it’s rhetorically imbalanced and misleading
- it tries to highlight change and instability and ignore the majority of the text that is stable
- he makes a big deal out of 5 or so verses that are different from the mainstream text
- he says that scribes deliberately changed the scriptures, but he doesn’t prove that
- it’s just as likely that the differences are just scribal errors made by accident

Ehrman:

- well, maybe the variants aren’t a big deal, but what about one angel vs. two angels?
- that’s a significant issue! significant enough for me to become an apostate – a *rich* apostate
- if one word is different because of an accident, then the whole Bible cannot be trusted
- it has to be completely inerrant, so a one word difference means the whole thing is unreliable
- we don’t even know if Jesus was even named Jesus, because of one angel vs two angels!!!1!
- buy my book! you don’t have to read it, just put it on your shelf, then you’ll feel better about not having a relationships with God – because who’s to say what God really wants from you? Not the Bible!

Energy Department agrees with FBI: Wuhan lab leak theory “most likely” COVID origin

February 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’m not so young that I don’t remember when all of the talking heads in the White House, the corporate media and Big Tech, were labeling the lab leak theory of COVID origins as “false news” or a “conspiracy theory”. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. were all handing out bans and suspensions to anyone who talked about it. The journalists in the corporate news media labeled the theory a “conspiracy”.

So what’s true? Let’s take a look in the Wall Street Journal and see.

Excerpt:

> WASHINGTON—The U.S. Energy Department has concluded that the Covid pandemic most likely arose from a laboratory leak, according to a classified intelligence report recently provided to the White House and key members of Congress.
>
> The shift by the Energy Department, which previously was undecided on how the virus emerged, is noted in an update to a 2021 document by Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines’s office.
>
> The new report highlights how different parts of the intelligence community have arrived at disparate judgments about the pandemic’s origin. The Energy Department now joins the Federal Bureau of Investigation in saying the virus likely spread via a mishap at a Chinese laboratory.
>
> […]The Energy Department’s conclusion is the result of new intelligence and is significant because the agency has considerable scientific expertise and oversees a network of U.S. national laboratories, some of which conduct advanced biological research.
>
> […]The FBI employs a cadre of microbiologists, immunologists and other scientists and is supported by the National Bioforensic Analysis Center, which was established at Fort Detrick, Md., in 2004 to analyze anthrax and other possible biological threats.

So, what were the corporate news media saying about this theory, before the FBI and Energy Department labeled it as the “most likely” explanation?

- The New York Times: Senator Tom Cotton Repeats Fringe Theory of Coronavirus Origins
- Washington Post: Tom Cotton keeps repeating a coronavirus conspiracy theory that was already debunked
- CNN: Tom Cotton is playing a dangerous game with his coronavirus speculation
- MSNBC: Cotton repeats coronavirus conspiracy theory, despite evidence

- The Hill: Sen. Cotton repeats coronavirus origins conspiracy theory
- Business Insider: A GOP senator keeps pushing a thoroughly debunked theory that the Wuhan coronavirus is a leaked Chinese biological weapon gone wrong
- Huffington Post: Sen. Tom Cotton Still Pitching Debunked Theory About Coronavirus
- The Atlantic: The Pro-Trump Culture War on American Scientists
- Scientific American: Eight Persistent COVID-19 Myths and Why People Believe Them: (Myth #1: THE VIRUS WAS ENGINEERED IN A LABORATORY IN CHINA)
- Science: (peer-reviewed journal): Scientists 'strongly condemn' rumors and conspiracy theories about origin of coronavirus outbreak

Why are people in the corporate media (and mainstream science publications) spreading lies about this story?

Well, I think it's because many of these journalists either don't have STEM degrees, or they don't have any experience using their STEM degrees in private sector STEM careers.

There is something that happens in American schools, where the laziest students realize that they can get high grades with low effort, simply by agreeing with the teachers. According to voting records and political contribution records, the teachers are almost entire far-left progressives, so these students just adopt far-left views. The goal of these students is not really to understand how to do anything in the real world. They don't want to write code or fix cars or wire up a house for electricity. They don't read books by Thomas Sowell, just what the teacher says will be on the true/false or multiple choice tests. They just want to get back to drinking, drugging, hooking up and partying. And that's really what's going on in these places. The people who get to the top either dropped math in grade 9, or they never used math in a real competitive private sector environment. They just repeat whatever gets them public approval.

Look at this article from the New York Post, talking about the biased writers at the New York Times:

> Academics joined this chorus in marginalizing anyone raising the theory. One study cited the theory as an example of "anti-Chinese racism" and "toxic white masculinity."
>
> As late as May 2021, the New York Times' Science and Health reporter Apoorva Mandavilli was calling any mention of the lab theory "racist."
>
> She embodies the model of the new "advocacy journalism" at the Times. Reporters who remained wedded to the dated view of objective journalism were purged from the ranks of the Times long ago.
>
> Mandavilli and others made clear that reporters covering the theory were COVID's little Bull Connors. She tweeted wistfully "someday we will stop talking about the lab leak theory and maybe even admit its racist roots. But alas, that day is not yet here."

Something to think about. Be careful where you get your news. A lot of people who work in the corporate news media are just there because they are angry at Christians and

conservatives for making them feel bad about their heavy drinking, their drug addictions, their divorces, their abortions, their pedophilia, their use of prostitutes, their infertility, their childlessness and singleness at age 40, etc. They are neither willing nor capable of determining truth about STEM issues like viruses. They just write what makes them look good and feel good about the terrible choices they've made with their own crappy lives.

A lot of these people on the secular left think that the universe has always existed. That cosmic fine-tuning for complex life in the universe isn't real. That the origin of life was caused by unobservable aliens. They think that men can become women, and women can become men. They think that two men or two women will be as good for raising a child as two married biological parents who attend church every week. They think that embryos are just clumps of cells. They think that raising minimum wage does not cause unemployment to rise for young, unskilled workers. Just ignorance to the point where they respond like insane people. Why trust mentally ill people about anything?

New study: pre-Kindergarten ("pre-K") programs harm children in the long run

February 28, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I worked with a guy who had grown up in the church, in a married Christian home, and dumped his Christianity in college. We were talking about education, and I showed him studies about what young children need in order to thrive. He insisted that his wife needed to work for true equality of the sexes, and that children did better in "school" anyway. That's what he called the pre-K program.

Well, here's the latest large-scale study on pre-K's effects on children, reported by Independent Women's Forum:

> A new study of state-run pre-K… found that it has long-term *negative* effects on children's achievement and behavior.
>
> The study is the most rigorous look at state-run pre-K to date. The authors followed through sixth grade over 2,900 children from low-income families who applied to Tennessee's pre-K program, and compared the students who were randomly admitted to the program with students who were not (the "control children"). It is one of the few randomized studies of pre-K, and it has a longer follow-up period than other studies. Based on parent interviews of a portion of the control children, the authors found that most of them (63%) received home-based, familial care, instead of attending pre-K.

Measuring the effects of pre-K from kindergarten to third grade:

> In 2016, the authors initially reported "significant positive immediate effects" of pre-K, based on achievement measures conducted at the end of the pre-K program. By the end of kindergarten, however, most of those positive effects were no longer statistically significant, and by the end of third grade, certain measures had turned slightly negative.

What about the next phase – fourth grade to sixth grade?

> The new study reports on the next phase of the study, which measured the effects of pre-K through sixth grade. As to achievement outcomes, the authors found that the "control children continued to outperform" the pre-K children "in reading, mathematics, and science with statistically significant differences larger than those observed in third grade," and that the control children were significantly less likely to require special education services. As to behavioral outcomes, the authors found that the control children had higher attendance rates and fewer disciplinary infractions than pre-K children, with the differences again being statistically significant.

Were these negative outcomes due to the quality of the pre-K program being studied?

> The authors considered, and rejected, the possibility that these negative effects might be attributable to the quality of Tennessee's pre-K program, explaining that "[a]mong state-funded pre-K programs, the TN program is above average and arguably in the top tier on characteristics many believe mark high quality." They additionally note that their results are consistent with other studies of pre-K programs and Head Start, which tend to show initial positive effects that fade over time, and with studies indicating "long-term negative outcomes on behavior for children in group care."

When it comes to children, the attitude of people on the secular left seems to be "children will do well and be happiest if I do what I want to do, and they just adjust to my selfishness". Secular leftists aren't out here bounding their decision-making with studies about what does and does not work for children. They're going to do what makes them feel good, what makes them look good to their co-workers, or other selfish adults.

What people want to hear today is that your wife is working, and she is earning a lot of money. And you want to tell them that. You want to tell them how on board you are with "equality", and how opposed you are to "sexism". So you put your wife into an office, and put your kids into daycare and pre-K. But according to the studies, that doesn't work for your kids. But what do you care? It works for you. Your co-workers like you. You feel smart. You sound smart to the people you want to impress. You'll rise high in your profession. You can afford to buy a boat AND a vacation home.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

March 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude others
- It's meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can't say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away,

there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Mississippi governor signs legislation to ban sex-change surgery for minors

March 2, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was hoping that Tennessee would be first, since the Tennessee legislature has already passed a similar ban in their House and Senate, but the moderate governor Bill Lee hasn't signed it yet. But in Mississippi, they move a little faster. Social conservative firebrand Matt Walsh was on hand to speak at the signing ceremony. Score one for "not nice" social conservatives like Matt Walsh.

Daily Wire reports:

> Gov. Tate Reeves (R-MS) signed a bill Tuesday outlawing sex-change procedures for minors and punishing doctors who push cross-sex drugs and procedures on those under 18.
>
> House Bill 1125, known as the "Regulate Experimental Adolescent Procedures (REAP) Act," overwhelmingly passed Mississippi's Republican-led Senate 33-15 last week after passing the state House 78-30 in January. Now, after Reeves' signature, Mississippi state law bars health care providers from performing gender reassignment surgeries, prescribing and administrating puberty-blocking drugs, and giving cross-sex hormones to trans-identifying children.
>
> "There is a dangerous movement spreading across America today being pushed onto our children through radical activists, social media, and online influencers," Reeves said at the bill's signing, adding that radical gender ideology "threatens our children's innocence and threatens their health."
>
> Under the new Mississippi law, doctors and healthcare professionals who "knowingly provide gender transition procedures to any person under 18 years of age" will have their medical license revoked by the state. The law also prohibits public funds from being used for gender transitions on minors.
>
> Daily Wire host Matt Walsh, who has been on a crusade in his home state of Tennessee to protect children from the dangers of transgender treatments, joined Reeves in Jackson, Mississippi, for the bill's signing.
>
> "These kids are put on so-called puberty blockers to chemically castrate them, and before the age of 18, many will undergo surgery," Walsh said. "They cannot consent to it and they cannot understand the long-term effects of it."
>
> "They need love and clarity, not hormone supplements and scalpels," he added. "Our kids cannot protect themselves. We need to do it. That's our job as adults."

Other states have similar initiatives:

> Other Republican-led states such as Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, South Dakota, and Utah have also restricted or banned sex-change procedures for minors. The

> bill Alabama passed last year made it a felony to prescribe puberty blockers and hormone treatment to trans-identifying minors, but the law was temporarily blocked by a federal judge.

The Tennessee legislation was passed by an even wider margin in the TN House and Senate than the Mississippi legislation.

Breitbart reports:

> The Tennessee State Legislature passed a bill that would ban the use of puberty blockers, hormone therapy, and surgical operations on children in order to "change" their gender. The legislation now awaits Gov. Bill Lee's signature.
>
> Lawmakers in the State House passed the legislation 77 to 16, with three Democrats voting with the Republicans.
>
> After allowing for a grace period for those who have already begun to attempt a transition, the bill would authorize the attorney general to investigate healthcare providers who violate the ban, who could be fined up to $25,000.
>
> House Majority Leader William Lamberth remarked that "These children do not need these medical procedures to be able to flourish as adults."
>
> "They need mental health treatment. They need love and support, and many of them need to be able to grow up to become the individuals that they were intended to be," Lamberth went on to say.
>
> Similar bills have gained traction in various other Republican-led states, including Nebraska, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and South Carolina.

Makes you wonder what's holding Bill Lee up. That's a pretty wide margin. The Tennessee legislature has also passed legislation to prevent children from being exposed to highly-sexualized drag shows.

Breitbart reports:

> Tennessee lawmakers passed a bill that would prevent drag shows from taking place on public property or in front of children.
>
> The bill classifies "male and female impersonators" as adult cabaret performers, while also banning "adult-oriented performances that are harmful to minors." The legislation, SB3, now makes its way to Republican Gov. Bill Lee's office.
>
> State Rep. Chris Todd, R-Madison County, filed the bill, saying "this is a common sense child-safety bill." The bill, which passed by a vote of 79 to 19, makes it illegal to host an "adult cabaret performance" in a location where children are present. The legislation, which was proposed by Senate Majority Leader Jack Johnson also bans adult cabaret performances on public property.

Lee hasn't signed that legislation yet, either.

If you live in a state that allows sex-destructive surgery, why are you still there? I wouldn't pay taxes in a state that harms children. I'd move to a state that protects

children.

Pastor is assaulted and arrested for opposing drag shows where children are present

March 3, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend McKenzie sent me a video clip from the Tucker Carlson show, where he first showed what happened to the pastor, and then asked all the leftist "Christian" leaders of our time: Beth Moore, David French, Tim Keller, etc. why they have nothing to say about free speech and religious liberty. I have the video of the Tucker segment in this post, and link to a couple of news articles.

Here's the video to start:

It's SO IMPORTANT that American Christians understand what the secular left does to Christians who take the Bible seriously. How are we supposed to behave as Christians, if we don't have the same rights to free speech as everyone else does? Can you imagine the Canadian government and police arresting a Muslim like that? They would never do it. But they do it to Christians without hesitation.

And here's the story from The Post Millennial:

> On Thursday, Derek Reimer, the pastor at Mission 7 Ministries in Calgary was charged and arrested for mischief and causing a disturbance for his protest during a Drag Queen Story Hour event at Seton Library on Saturday.
>
> According to Rebel News, Reimer was "forcibly removed by proponents of a Drag Queen Story Hour event" that was held at the Canadian library over the weekend. Video from the event shows several men pushing Reimer out of the room and shoving him to the ground.
>
> After he gets up Reimer says, "It's very abusive in there. For love is love, that looks like very hateful, very abusive."
>
> CTV reports that Mayor Jyoti Gondek has said she will unpack the "reasons" Canadian law enforcement could not use existing street harassment laws to crack down on protestors of drag queen story hour events.
>
> According to Rebel News, Gondek "promised to weaponize Calgary's anti-street harassment bylaws to prevent anti-drag show protests."
>
> Calgary police arrived at Reimer's home on Wednesday and told him he was going to be arrested but did not complete the arrest at that time.
>
> […]Reimer was arrested previously for protesting at a different "all-ages" drag queen show.
>
> "Reimer was the second client of the registered Canadian charity, The Democracy Fund's (TDF) Fight The Fines program, after receiving Covid tickets for feeding the homeless, an act the City of Calgary called 'illegal gatherings,'" reports Rebel News.

Interesting about the mayor of Calgary. Calgary used to be considered the most conservative of Canada's major cities. But that was before they started electing a string of radical leftists, and not just at the municipal level, but at the provincial level as well.

Daily Wire had more, specifically about the Tucker Carlson clip:

> Carlson noted that the administration of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has actively opposed Christian and conservative movements in recent years. "On some level, all governments hate religious people, because it's competition. And revolutionary governments, totalitarian governments, go after religious people first," he observed. "That is the measure of a free country in the end: are you allowed to believe that there's an authority higher than the people in charge of your government?"
>
> […]"Canada has now become an atheist totalitarian state with amazing speed," Carlson remarked. "In Canada, it's now a crime to object to sexualized drag shows for children."
>
> Several Canadian ministers were likewise arrested for opening their churches despite government lockdown mandates. Pastor Tim Stephens of Fairview Baptist Church in Alberta garnered international attention as videos of police officers detaining him in front of his sobbing children and using helicopters to discover where his church had been secretly meeting circulated online. Stephens spent three weeks in jail and was served six provincial tickets for his alleged breach of public health orders, all of which were eventually dropped or cleared.

This was my favorite part – Tucker Carlson went after the big name leftist "Christian" leaders, who always seem to take the side of secular leftist Democrats who trample over the rights of Christians:

> Carlson also referenced "professional Christians" who have frequently remained silent on governmental overreach and widespread disregard for biblical sexual ethics. "Where is David French, Beth Moore, Tim Keller, and all these people who are defending Christianity as actual Christians are being arrested for being Christians? Not a word."
>
> Daily Wire journalist Megan Basham has reported over the past several months about professed theological conservatives, including French and Keller, cooperating with efforts from the Biden administration to encourage mask-wearing and receiving the COVID vaccine. Keller and French also lauded former National Institutes of Health Director Francis Collins, who has declared himself an "ally" of the LGBTQ movement and supported fetal human tissue research during his tenure, as a faithful Christian.

It's too bad that these Evangelicals for Biden clowns are still respected by some ill-informed people in the church. Anyone can see what the secular left is doing, and their policies and laws are opposed to Christian values, and Christian freedoms. We need to be

more serious about picking role models. I prefer people who fight against the secular left.

New study: there is no gay gene that causes homosexuality

March 4, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I heard one of the authors of this new study commenting on how he was a gay man, and the purpose of his research was to show a genetic basis for homosexuality, in order to make it equal to race. His goal was to make it impossible to disagree with homosexual behavior, because homosexual behavior would be seen as natural and normal. Let's see if his new study helps him out.

The blog of the peer-reviewed journal PLOS One reported on the new study, which was published in the prestigious journal Science.

Excerpt:

> The once-prevailing concept of a "gay gene" dictating sexual orientation has been put to rest in a powerhouse study published today in *Science*. The work brilliantly illustrates the very nature of science: evolving with the input of new data, especially the large-scale contributions of bioinformatics and crowd-sourcing.
>
> "We formed a large international consortium and collected data for more than 500,000 people, comparing DNA and self-reported sexual behavior. This is approximately 100 times bigger than any previous study on this topic," said lead author Andrea Ganna, of the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Finland and an instructor at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, opening a news conference earlier this week.
>
> […]The investigation estimates a genetic contribution to same-sex sexual behavior as under 1 percent, thanks to analysis of a trove of data from the UK Biobank and the consumer genetic testing company 23andme.

So, there you have it, there is no gay gene. But this is of course something we've known for decades, as all the previous studies had found the same thing.

The normal way that people do these studies is to analyze identical twins, and see how often both identical twins are gay.

> Eight major studies of identical twins in Australia, the U.S., and Scandinavia during the last two decades all arrive at the same conclusion: gays were not born that way.
>
> "At best genetics is a minor factor," says Dr. Neil Whitehead, PhD. Whitehead worked for the New Zealand government as a scientific researcher for 24 years, then spent four years working for the United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency. Most recently, he serves as a consultant to Japanese universities about the effects of radiation exposure. His PhD is in biochemistry and statistics.

> Identical twins have the same genes or DNA. They are nurtured in equal prenatal conditions. If homosexuality is caused by genetics or prenatal conditions and one twin is gay, the co-twin should also be gay.
>
> "Because they have identical DNA, it ought to be 100%," Dr. Whitehead notes. But the studies reveal something else. "If an identical twin has same-sex attraction the chances the co-twin has it are only about 11% for men and 14% for women."
>
> Because identical twins are always genetically identical, homosexuality cannot be genetically dictated. "No-one is born gay," he notes. "The predominant things that create homosexuality in one identical twin and not in the other have to be post-birth factors."
>
> Dr. Whitehead believes same-sex attraction (SSA) is caused by "non-shared factors," things happening to one twin but not the other, or a personal response to an event by one of the twins and not the other.

By the way, a previous study also found that transgender behavior was not genetic, but was clearly linked to environmental factors such as peer approval and social media.

Here is the report from Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.
>
> Littman surveyed more than 250 parents of children who suddenly developed gender dysphoria symptoms during or after puberty.
>
> […]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

A previous study also found that children are more likely to be gay if they are raised by gay adults. It was reported in AOL News.

Excerpt:

> Walter Schumm knows what he's about to do is unpopular: publish a study arguing that gay parents are more likely to raise gay children than straight parents. But the Kansas State University family studies professor has a detailed analysis that past almost aggressively ideological researchers never had.
>
> […]His study on sexual orientation, out next month, says that gay and lesbian parents are far more likely to have children who become gay. "I'm trying to prove

> that it’s not 100 percent genetic,” Schumm tells AOL News.
>
> His study is a meta-analysis of existing work. First, Schumm extrapolated data from 10 books on gay parenting… [and] skewed his data so that only self-identified gay and lesbian children would be labeled as such.
>
> […]Schumm concluded that children of lesbian parents identified themselves as gay 31 percent of the time; children of gay men had gay children 19 percent of the time, and children of a lesbian mother and gay father had at least one gay child 25 percent of the time.
>
> […]Finally, Schumm looked at the existing academic studies… In all there are 26 such studies. Schumm ran the numbers from them and concluded that, surprisingly, 20 percent of the kids of gay parents were gay themselves. When children only 17 or older were included in the analysis, 28 percent were gay.

It’s very important for people to understand that there is a trend in society to make every behavior traditionally seen as sinful into something caused by genetics. The twin goals of this effort are to insulate the behaviors from criticism, and to minimize evaluation of the effects of these behaviors on society as a whole. The genetic argument was used extensively to normalize same-sex marriage and transgenderism. I have seen the genetic argument used to defend other behaviors like pedophilia and incest. But the scientific research does nothing to support any of these arguments. What’s amazing is how a majority of people in the United States have such false beliefs about the scientific research. They vastly overestimate the number of gay people, and also the influence of genetics.

Bible study: the importance of truth in religion

March 5, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting passage of the Bible. What do you all think the practical value of this passage is?

[1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

[2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

[3] he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

[4] Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

[6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

[7] Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[8] Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

[9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

[10] The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

[11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

[12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king."

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him."

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

[27] Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

[29] "As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

[30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

This passage is interesting to me because it shows the kind of attitude that God answers. The King in this passage was tired of hearing man-made stories from his servants – stories that were undoubtedly influenced by the servants desire to survive the King's wrath. The servants would only have told the King things that were vague and happy, so that they could never be proved wrong or found to be judgmental or offensive. But the King was tired of that. He wanted someone with authority to tell him the truth about the way the world was.

In the rest of the chapter, Daniel interprets the dream, and concludes by saying this: "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.". The King replies: "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

I think it is is going to be difficult for Christians living today to be able to tell people their dreams like that. But what we can do is talk about God's miracles as revealed by science and history. We can study astrophysics, biochemistry and history and we can explain what God did in creating and fine-tuning the universe for life, in sequencing amino acids into functioning proteins, in creating brand new body plans in the Cambrian explosion, in raising Jesus from the dead as a matter of historical record, and so on. We have to show how great God is to people who do not even think he exists, and without assuming that they believe in the Bible. And we have to do it by focusing on *what is true.*

Early last week, I got a message from a friend who was interested in a girl that he met on an online dating service. She claimed to be a Christian. My friend explained why he was so interested in some of the evidences I outlined above. She was not impressed. She said "I prefer to show people Christianity is true by not judging them, by being compassionate, by introducing them to a fun and affirming community". There was no emphasis on truth in her approach. In fact, any religious group could do those things and "establish" their religion as true, by appealing to feelings. But this is clearly not what the God of the Bible intends for people who seek him. He is a God of truth, and truth is established by logical reasoning and supporting evidence.

There are still people out there like the King who are looking for someone who can speak to them with authority. All it takes from us is a little studying, and we can be like Daniel, too. But we have to know what God has done from science and history, and speak with authority about how we can know that God has acted *supernaturally*. Authority to speak comes from having knowledge about what we are talking about, and knowledge comes from studying and debating with people we disagree with. Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer in the God of Israel, but he was still interested in truth. That won't always be the case, but it is the case for some people.

Gay activist mayor of College Park, Maryland resigns after criminal charges

March 6, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know that the dominant view of morality among the secular left is just "well, you can take out the God, and everything will just proceed like before". But if you look at bit more closely at the champions of goodness without God – the ones who built their lives on tearing down Christian morality – they aren't "good as you".. Let's take a look at the gay activist mayor of a blue city in a blue state.

Daily Wire reports:

> The Democrat mayor of College Park, Maryland, who had served as mayor for eight years, resigned after being charged with 56 counts of possession and distribution of child pornography.
>
> Patrick Wojahn, the openly gay mayor who has lived in College Park for over 17 years with his husband, Dave Kolesar, served as a city councilmember for eight years before serving as mayor.
>
> "On February 17, 2023, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children notified the PGPD that a social media account operating in the county possessed and distributed suspected child pornography," the Prince George's County Police Department acknowledged on Thursday. "The image and videos had been uploaded to the social media account in January of 2023. Through various investigative techniques, PGPD investigators discovered the social media account belonged to Wojahn."
>
> "On February 28, 2023, PGPD detectives served a search warrant at Wojahn's College Park home," PGPD continued. "Investigators recovered multiple cell phones, a storage device, a tablet and a computer. Following additional investigation, PGPD obtained criminal charges against Wojahn and investigators took him into custody early this morning."
>
> **"Wojahn is charged with 40 counts of possession of child exploitative material and 16 counts of distribution of child exploitative material," PGPD concluded. "He is in the custody of the Department of Corrections."**

This isn't first time that a "goodness without God" activist has been caught in risky situations with the law.

If I had to pick one city that is the "Atheist Capital of America" I would pick Seattle, Washington. There, everyone is either involved in sex with underage boys, or they're voting to prevent Christians from judging it. They agree with it, they celebrate it. This is "atheist morality".

The far-left New York Times reports:

> The mayor of Seattle, Ed Murray, said on Tuesday that he would resign after announcing in May that he would not seek a second term. Several men have comeforward to accuse Mr. Murray of sexually abusing them decades ago, when they were underage.
>
> The announcement came just hours after The Seattle Times published a story with an account by a fifth man, Mr. Murray's cousin, who said Mr. Murray had abused him in the 1970s.
>
> [..]Mr. Murray, 62, a Democrat, is the city's first openly gay mayor, and had served in the State Legislature for many years before being elected in 2013.
>
> […]**The liberal Mr. Murray is generally considered a father of Washington's same-sex marriage law, which he pressed in the State Legislature for years.**

The radically-leftist New York Times isn't about to tell you what this Democrat gay-marriage activist actually did – that's not news that's fit to print. For that you have to go to Life Site News.

Christian apologists like to make an argument that God exists because he is the best explanation for the objective moral law. We used to take it for granted that atheists would agree that objective moral law is real. Some atheists like to claim that atheism rationally grounds the objective moral law. But as long as atheists keep voting overwhelmingly in favor of adult selfishness, and against the rights of children – right to live, and right to a mother and a father – then we really know that the whole "good without God" pose is just a lie.

Southern Poverty Law Center hate group is again linked to domestic terrorism

March 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Everyone remembers how the Southern Poverty Law Center's "hate map" web site was used by gay activist Floyd Lee Corkins to plan and attempt a violent mass shooting hate crime at the headquarters of the Family Research Council, a conservative pro-marriage, pro-family think tank in Washington, D.C. And now the SPLC has been linked to domestic terrorism a second time.

Here's the story from Daily Wire:

> An attorney with the far-left nonprofit Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) was arrested Sunday for allegedly committing domestic terrorism to stop a police facility from being built.
>
> The Atlanta police department said Sunday night that Thomas Webb Jurgens was among the 23 people charged after a "group of violent agitators used the cover of a peaceful protest of the proposed Atlanta Public Safety Training Center to conduct a coordinated attack on construction equipment and police officers. They changed into black clothing and entered the construction area and began to throw large rocks, bricks, Molotov cocktails, and fireworks at police officers."
>
> According to the State Bar of Georgia, Thomas Webb Jurgens is an attorney for the SPLC who was admitted to the bar in 2021.

The FBI is a long-time partner of the SPLC, and so it's no surprise that they label religious people "domestic terrorists":

> Last month, an FBI whistleblower leaked a document showing that the FBI was investigating those practicing "radical-traditionalist Catholic ideology" as potential domestic extremists, in part by citing that the SPLC listed the faction among its "hate groups."
>
> The FBI previously called the SPLC "a well-known, established and credible" organization, and it has briefed the FBI on purported domestic terror, Fox News reported.

The FBI has links to left-wing hate groups, which is why they turn a blind eye to the crimes of other left-wing domestic terrorists, and prosecute peaceful pro-lifers and concerned parents instead. FBI leaders really have hate in their hearts for religious people, and it affects the way they do their jobs. These are not professional people. They lack integrity. These are immoral people who collect money from the law-abiding people, then they persecute those law-abiding people. They ignore real threats to America's security and peace.

Let's walk down memory lane and remember what happens when "non-religious" people

who don't like "organized religion" get hold of guns and decide to act on their non-religious convictions. In this case, the shooter was a gay activist who was a great admirer of Friedrich Nietzche, the atheist philosopher who proclaimed the death of God.

The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> The man accused of opening fire and shooting a security guard at the conservative Family Research Council headquarters last August plead guilty to three charges in a D.C. federal court Wednesday.
>
> Floyd Lee Corkins, II of Herndon, Virginia entered guilty pleas to a federal weapons charge as well as a local terrorism charge and a charge of assault with intent to kill, according to news reports.
>
> The Washington Post reports that, according to the plea agreement Corkins signed, he… "intended to kill as many people as possible" and planned to "smother Chick-fil-A sandwiches in their faces."
>
> Investigators found additional magazines and 15 Chick-fil-A sandwiches in his backpack on the day of the shooting.
>
> Following the guilty plea the FRC issued a statement placing a large portion of the blame for the shooting at the feet of the liberal Southern Poverty Law Center, which had listed FRC as a hate group. FRC noted that prosecutors discovered Corkins identified his targets on the SPLC's website.
>
> "The day after Floyd Corkins came into the FRC headquarter and opened fire wounding one of our team members, I stated that while Corkins was responsible for the shooting, he had been given a license to perpetrate this act of violence by groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center which has systematically and recklessly labeled every organization with which they disagree as a 'hate group,'" FRC president Tony Perkins said in a statement, which went on to demand that SPLC stop attacking organizations that have a different opinion on gay rights.
>
> The shooting happened shortly after Chick-fil-A made headlines over the company president's disagreement with gay marriage.

Why does anyone think that people on the secular left are tolerant? They keep talking about "atheist objective morality" and "secular humanism", but all I see from the secular left is domestic terrorism.

How Democrats and the corporate media lied about January 6th

March 8, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post is just a quick link-around to three stories that cover the three biggest revelations from the Capitol video on January 6th, 2021. The secular left told us that there was an insurrection, that there were weapons, and violence and an attempt to seize control of the Capitol by armed militias who attacked and killed police officers. But what really happened?

New York Post:

> Newly revealed surveillance footage from Jan. 6, 2021, shows two Capitol Police officers escorting Jacob Chansley, the behorned so-called "QAnon Shaman" who has come to symbolize the riot, through the halls of the Capitol and to the very door of the US Senate.
>
> The footage aired on Tucker Carlson's Fox News show Monday night shows the officers closely following Chansley as he wanders the corridors of the Capitol, bare-chested and wearing face paint and a luxuriant fur hat with Viking horns.
>
> "Virtually every moment of his time inside the Capitol was caught on tape," says Carlson, who was granted exclusive access by House Speaker Kevin McCarthy to 40,000 hours of surveillance footage from that day inside and around the Capitol, which has never been seen before by the public.
>
> "The tapes show the Capitol Police never stopped Jacob Chansley. They helped him. They acted as his tour guides."
>
> In a statement, the Capitol Police suggest that one of the officers with Chansley was trying to "de-escalate" the situation because he was outnumbered.
>
> But that does not explain why Chansley, who was unarmed, was able to walk past seven more officers without being apprehended.
>
> "Not one of them even tried to slow him down," says Carlson.
>
> He "understood that the Capitol Police were his allies. … If he was in the act of committing such a grave crime, why didn't the officers standing right next to him place him under arrest?"
>
> And yet in the narrative formed that day by Democrats and much of the media, "Jacob Chansley became the face of January 6, a dangerous conspiracy theorist dressed in an outlandish costume who led the violent insurrection to overthrow America's democracy," says Carlson.

The Democrats in the legislature are furious with Republicans for releasing the video, since it falsifies their "insurrection" narrative.

More from New York Post:

> Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick still is described as a victim of January 6, murdered by President Donald Trump supporters rioting at the Capitol, despite an autopsy report which shows he died of a stroke the following day.
>
> The New York Times initially reported that Sicknick had been beaten to death with a fire extinguisher, before retracting the claim more than a month later.
>
> To this day, media accounts claim Sicknick was "slain" on Jan. 6, and powerful Democrats, including Joe Biden, Kamala Harris and Nancy Pelosi, have continued to cite his death as evidence of a "deadly insurrection" at the Capitol that day.
>
> But hitherto unseen surveillance footage from inside the Capitol, aired by Fox News host Tucker Carlson on Monday night, contradicts that claim.
>
> It shows Sicknick walking through the building "after he was supposedly murdered by the mob outside."
>
> Sicknick appears to be healthy and walking normally in the footage.
>
> He gesticulates to protesters to move out of the building, and bends down to move a placard behind a statue.
>
> He also is wearing a helmet, so, as Carlson points out, "it's hard to imagine he was killed by a head injury."

You can read about how the New York Times printed false news about this story, and then was forced to retract it months later.

And finally Breitbart:

> Mysterious January 6 figure Ray Epps lied to the January 6 Committee about when he left the Capitol grounds on the day of the riot, Fox News's Tucker Carlson argued Monday.
>
> Carlson, releasing never seen video footage from January 6, 2021, alleged that Epps misled the January 6 Committee in a sworn testimony. Carlson claimed to have Epps's text messages that he sent to a relative about leaving the Capitol grounds later than he disclosed to the committee.
>
> "Under public pressure, the January 6 Committee finally interviewed Ray Epps. He told the committee he never entered the Capitol and therefore never committed a crime," Carlson explained. "In text messages showed that at 2:12:00 PM, he boasted to his nephew that he had 'orchestrated' the protest at the Capitol."
>
> "He admitted he helped get people there," Carlson said. "Tonight, we can tell you that at the very least Ray Epps lied in his sworn testimony to the January 6th Committee. Epps testified that when he sent the text messages to his nephew, he had already left the Capitol grounds to return to his hotel room. That is not true."
>
> "The surveillance footage we found that shows in fact Ray Epps remained at the

> Capitol for at least another half an hour," Carlson said, allegedly displaying the video proof. "What was Epps doing? We cannot say, but we do know that he lied to investigators. The January 6 Committee likely knew this too. Democrats had access to the same tape, yet they defended Ray Epps."
>
> Tucker noted his video shows Epps encouraging protestors outside the Capitol Building to enter.
>
> "We do know from the contemporaneous video that a mysterious figure called Ray Epps encouraged the crowd to go into the Capitol. For some reason Epps has never been indicted for that," Carlson said. "There is no question he did it."

When Ted Cruz asked federal law enforcement officials about their involvement in organizing and leading the "insurrection", there was no outright denial. The woman being questioned just refused to answer.

Meanwhile, there's been no charges about insurrection for Black Lives Matter or Antifa, because they are the allies of the secular left, and their real violence is just ignored by the secular left.

Why are Christians allowed to eat shellfish but not allowed to have sex before marriage?

March 9, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful article from Peter Saunders.

The challenge:

> An argument frequently advanced by those attempting to defend homosexual practice is that Christians 'cherry pick' the commands in the Bible – that is, they chose to emphasise some commands while ignoring others.
>
> The Old Testament may forbid homosexual acts (Leviticus 18:2; 20:13) but it also forbids eating seafood without fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9, 10).
>
> So how can Christians then justify upholding laws on sexual morality whilst at the same time ignoring the food laws from the very same books of the Bible? Why may they eat shellfish but not be allowed to have sex outside marriage? Isn't this inconsistent and hypocritical?

The solution is that God enters into "covenants" with his people, and the terms of those covenants change.

Especially dietary laws:

> The answer to this question lies in an understanding of biblical covenants.
>
> A covenant is a binding solemn agreement made between two parties. It generally leaves each with obligations. But it holds only between the parties involved.
>
> There are a number of biblical covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic (Old), Davidic and New.
>
> Under the Noahic covenant, which God made with all living human beings (Genesis 9:8-17), people were able to eat anything:
>
> *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Genesis 9:3).*
>
> But under the Sinaitic (Old) Covenant, which God made with the nation of Israel, people were able to eat certain foods, but not others.

Jesus clearly created a new covenant with his followers, where the dietary laws are lifted:

> Jesus said that he had come to fulfil the 'Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). He would establish this new covenant with new laws, with himself as high priest based on his own sacrificial death on the cross.
>
> This new covenant would completely deal with sin (Hebrews 10:1-18) and protect

> all those who put their faith in him from God's wrath and judgement…
>
> *[…]'In the same way, after the supper (Jesus) took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you"' (Luke 22:20). '…we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Hebrews 10:10)*
>
> People would come under the protection of this new covenant, not by virtue of belonging to the nation of Israel, but through faith in Christ. In fact the function of the Old Testament Law (Sinaitic covenant) was to point to Christ as its fulfilment.
>
> […]So what then did Christ say about foods? He pronounced all foods clean for his followers to eat:
>
> *' "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (Mark 7:18-23)*
>
> Jesus was making that point that under the new covenant God required purity of the heart. Internal thoughts and attitudes were as important as external actions.

Food is OK for Christians, but sexual immorality – which includes premarital sex and adultery – are NOT OK for Christians.

I think sometimes when you are talking to people whose motivation is just to get rid of any objective moral law entirely, they tend to ask questions without really wanting a good answer. This is especially true when it comes to the morality of sex. They ask the question not to get an answer, but to justify getting rid of the moral rules governing sexuality. The answers are there for people who are willing to respect God in their decision-making to find. The answers are not found only by people who have a reason to not want to find them.

In case you're wondering, I am one of those Christian men who takes chastity seriously. Marriage is about having a close connection with your spouse. Sure, I could break the rules and have a lot of fun now. A lot of Christians have a hard time turning down fun. But when I look at Jesus, I don't see a man who is pursuing fun and thrills. I see a man who sees a need and then sacrifices his own interests to rescue others from peril.

Is the “RNA world” hypothesis a good naturalistic explanation for the origin of life?

March 10, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you look closely at this blog, you’ll see that I am currently reading a book called “The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith: Exploring the Ultimate Questions About Life and the Cosmos“. Well, there’s an ongoing series of posts about the book at Evolution News, and one of them caught my eye. They are talking about the origin of life, and what’s needed to create life from non-life.

Here is the post from Evolution News.

The article starts by explaining the what is required to show how non-living components could be organized into a living system:

- plausible biochemical paths from individual bio-building blocks like amino acids or nucleic acids to functional polymers such as proteins and DNA.
- ways to speed up chemical reactions that are naturally slow.
- the ordering of amino acids in proteins and nucleotide bases in RNA and DNA that allows them to function properly.

The leading naturalistic explanation to solve these problems is called the “RNA world” hypothesis:

> The most popular proposal for the first self-replicating molecule is RNA — where life was first based upon RNA carrying both genetic information (akin to modern DNA) and performing catalytic functions (akin to modern enyzmes), in what is termed the *RNA world*.

The article lists several problems with the RNA world hypothesis. Dr. Walter Bradley lists two of those problems.

First, the assembly of RNA requires intelligent design:

> First, RNA has not been shown to assemble in a laboratory without the help of a skilled chemist intelligently guiding the process. Origin-of-life theorist Steven Benner explained that a major obstacle to the natural production of RNA is that “RNA requires water to function, but RNA cannot emerge in water, and does not persist in water without repair” due to water’s “rapid and irreversible” corrosive effects upon RNA.[3] In this “water paradox,” Benner explains that “life seems to need a substance (water) that is inherently toxic to polymers (e.g., RNA) necessary for life.”[4]
>
> To overcome such difficulties, Benner and other chemists carefully designed experimental conditions that are favorable to the production of RNA. But Robert Shapiro explains that these experiments do not simulate natural conditions: “The

> flaw is in the logic — that this experimental control by researchers in a modern laboratory could have been available on the early Earth."[5] Reviewing attempts to construct RNA in the lab, James Tour likewise found that "[t]he conditions they used were cleverly selected," but in the natural world, "the controlled conditions required to generate" RNA are "painfully improbable."[6] Origin-of-life theorists Michael Robertson and Gerald Joyce even called the natural origin of RNA a "Prebiotic Chemist's Nightmare" because of "the intractable mixtures that are obtained in experiments designed to simulate the chemistry of the primitive Earth."[7] In the end, these experiments demonstrate one thing: RNA can only form by intelligent design.

The second problem is that the RNA world hypothesis is that it requires the existence of a self-replicating RNA molecule in order to get started. But this self-replicator contains a lot of biological information that is beyond the reach of chance to produce:

> The most fundamental problem with the RNA world hypothesis is its inability to explain the origin of information in the first self-replicating RNA molecule — which experts suggest would have had to be at least 100 nucleotides long, if not between 200 and 300 nucleotides in length.[10] How did the nucleotide bases in RNA become properly ordered to produce life? There are no known chemical or physical laws that can do this. To explain the ordering of nucleotides in the first self-replicating RNA molecule, origin-of-life theorists have no explanation other than blind chance. As noted, ID theorists call this obstacle the information sequence problem, but multiple mainstream theorists have also observed the great unlikelihood of naturally producing a precise RNA sequence required for replication.

Whenever I sit down to write some code or to write a blog post, I can start with one letter, then add another, then add another, until I have a functioning program, or a legible blog post. It might be possible for random chance to make a meaningful word out of 3 letters, like "the" or "hat". But it's not possible to make a self-replicating RNA molecule that way. The required sequence is just too long, and every letter has to be just right in order for it to function as a self-replicating system. The simplest self-replicating molecule is extremely complicated.

Anyway, check out the article, and if you want to read all about Walter Bradley (my role model), there is a new book out about him called "For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley" which I finished, and it was great.

Why do people tell you not to discuss religion or politics at work?

March 11, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Whenever I bring debate DVDs to work and leave them on my desk, men who like sports more than apologetics ask me: “Was there a winner?” People don’t want to talk about opinions, they only want to talk about things that we know. A while back, there was a formal debate featuring William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens. And yes, there was a winner. One of the speakers admitted defeat.

Here is a video clip of an exchange they had in their debate at the massive Biola University showdown:

Isn’t that interesting?

Do you know how to have a conversation with an atheist? You just have to talk to them about the things we really know to be true. For example, that the universe had a beginning, just like scientists said that it did. That the universe is fine-tuned for allowing complex, embodied life. That our galaxy, star and planet are fine-tuned to provide us with a habitable place to live. The the origin of life required an intelligent designer to do the coding. These are not “faith” topics that we “share”. These are facts. And when we tell an atheist these facts, we are not sharing. We are informing about what is true. In some cases, we are correcting false beliefs.

Here’s a quote from famous atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel of New York University:

> “In speaking of the fear of religion, I don’t mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn’t just that I don’t believe in God and, naturally, hope that I’m right in my belief. It’s that I hope there is no God! I don’t want there to be a God; I don’t want the universe to be like that.”
>
> (”The Last Word” by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

It really makes me think that Christian churches should be more interested in showing these debates, and in learning how to debate like William Lane Craig. Sadly, most churches do not focus on the things that work. Most churches to not want to win. They

want to lose. That's why we put charismatic leftists in charge, who don't know anything – like Russell Moore and Beth Moore. Because we don't want to have answers. We just want to lose. Lost the culture. Lose congregants. Lose our children to the secular left.

America today is in religious decline. But it's not because we don't have the arguments and the evidence. It's because most churches have decided to focus on "compassion" and "kindness" and "hearing the voice of God" about their own desires and needs.

If you haven't seen this debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens, then you should watch it. Yes there is a winner. Yes something was decided. It was not just two people sharing their opinions. There was a final score.

Alistair Begg preaches on practicality and initiative in the story of Ruth

March 12, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I finished listening to Alistair Begg's series on Esther, and I'm now on to his series on Ruth. Sermon #3 stood out to me, because it touches on the important issues of free will vs determinism as well as the two methods of seeking God's will: mysticism vs wisdom.

The discussion centers around Ruth's decision to go to the barley fields to work, in order to get something to eat.

The MP3 file is here.

Here is the description:

> When we're facing a future devoid of prospects or possibilities, it's easy to become overwhelmed and discouraged. Ruth could relate. She was a penniless widow in a foreign land seeking a way to provide for herself and her widowed mother-in-law. Her future was totally dependent upon someone showing her unmerited grace and favor. Instead of giving up, she gives us an example of humility, initiative and faith as she seeks work and sustenance.

As things in the world spin out of control, it's important to remember that you must always have a plan and be working on that plan. Even when things look very bleak, you have to do something reasonable and practical, and then pray to God for "favor". That God will do something unexpected that will make your reasonable action bear unexpected fruit.

If you want to listen to sermons #1 and sermon #2 in the series on Ruth, you can find the whole series here. So far, I have listened to 5. The first two were also very good, so if you listen to the first 3, you will definitely benefit. Each one is 35 to 40 minutes.

Did Silicon Valley Bank DIE from diversity, inclusion and equity virtue signaling?

March 13, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a free market, private sector companies should serve customers. For banks, that means not losing the money that customers have deposited with the bank. And especially not going bankrupt so that you need a bailout from taxpayers. That bailout also hits taxpayers who have not yet even been born, but who have to pay the national debt. But some companies would rather virtue signal.

Silicon Valley Bank had a choice to make between serving depositors and taxpayers, and virtue signaling to the secular left elites.

New York Post reports:

> Fears of a broad financial contagion spread on Friday after tech lender Silicon Valley Bank set off alarm bells over liquidity concerns — sparking share losses across the banking sector worth some $52 billion on Thursday.
>
> On Friday, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. said regulators have shut the bank down to protect insured deposits.
>
> […]SVB shares — which plunged 60% yesterday after the company's CEO begged investors to "stay calm" and not "panic" over liquidity concerns — remained halted as of midday Friday after plunging 47% in premarket trading early Friday.

How could this happen? New York Post has some interesting news about who was running the company:

> A head of risk management at Silicon Valley Bank spent considerable time spearheading multiple "woke" LGBTQ+ programs, including a "safe space" for coming out stories, as the firm catapulted toward collapse.
>
> Jay Ersapah, the boss of Financial Risk Management at SVB's UK branch, launched initiatives such as the company's first month-long Pride campaign and a new blog emphasizing mental health awareness for LGBTQ+ youth.
>
> "The phrase 'you can't be what you can't see' resonates with me,'" Ersapah was quoted as saying on the company website.
>
> "As a queer person of color and a first-generation immigrant from a working-class background, there were not many role models for me to 'see' growing up."
>
> Her efforts as the company's European LGBTQIA+ Employee Resource Group co-chair earned her a spot on SVB's "outstanding LGBT+ Role Model Lists 2022," a list shared in a company post just four months before the bank was shut down by federal authorities over liquidity fears.
>
> In addition to instituting SVB's first "safe space catch-up" — which encouraged employees to share their coming out stories — and serving on LGBTQ+ panels

> around the world, Ersapah also spent time over the last year serving as a director for Diversity Role Models and volunteering as a mentor for Migrant Leaders.
>
> "I feel privileged to co-chair the LGBTQ+ ERG and help spread awareness of lived queer experiences, partner with charitable organizations, and above all, create a sense of community for our LGBTQ+ employees and allies."

I thought this was funny:

> On Saturday, Home Depot co-founder Bernie Marcus insinuated that "woke" policies like the ones launched by Ersapah could have led to the SVB's dramatic failure.

It's not just one person at the top, though. The whole company was basically one enormous gay / feminist activism organization, and being profitable for customers was apparently the least of their concerns.

> We are intentionally and strategically working for a world where every client and employee has the opportunity to bring their bold ideas to life. We also know that diverse perspectives and inclusive environments ignite new ideas to power innovation. That is why we're building a culture of belonging with a global workforce that celebrates greater dimensions of diversity and reflects the markets we strive to serve.

And:

> SVB, the financial partner of the innovation economy, today announced that it has been named a member of the Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index (GEI) for a fifth year running. The Bloomberg GEI is a modified market capitalization-weighted index developed to gauge the performance of public companies dedicated to transparency in gender-data reporting. This reference index measures gender equality across five pillars: female leadership & talent pipeline, equal pay & gender pay parity, inclusive culture, anti-sexual harassment policies, and external brand.

And:

> SVB, the financial partner of the innovation economy and parent of Silicon Valley Bank, has joined CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion™, a growing coalition pledging to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace. SVB President and CEO Greg Becker joins more than 2,000 CEOs in committing to promote open internal dialogue on DEI strategies and share examples of action with the CEO Action community.

Be careful where you put your money. It's fun to virtue signal about how woke you are, but eventually, you're going to need money in order to retire.

Should you marry a woman who calls male leadership in religion and morality “patriarchy”?

March 14, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In today’s “don’t judge” culture, it’s common for people to proclaim their virtue by telling everyone how they don’t judge. I’m not sure how this became the great morality of our age, but it’s everywhere. Even in the church. Recently, I saw a clip from the Whatever podcast where a whole bunch of women storm off the set because a man says he wouldn’t have sex with a transgender women.

Elsewhere in the podcast, the man explained that he is a Christian and wanted to get married and have children. So the women in the video are already furious with him for wanting a good woman, and just waiting for an opportunity to have a tantrum. Like the “Christian” woman Hannah, who kicked the Christian man off “The Bachelorette” when he questioned her having sex with hot guys she had just met on the show.

So in this post, I wanted to talk about some reasons why good, marriage-minded men should avoid women who hate men who lead in spiritual areas, and make moral judgments.

First of all, women initiate 70% of divorces. If you meet a woman who divorced her husband, she either had a defect in her ability to evaluate and choose a man, or she had a defect in her ability to maintain a commitment to the man she chose. Either way, a woman who divorced her previous husband has red flags. There are two possibilities. She either chose a good man or she chose a bad man. If she chose a bad man, then it shows that she didn’t choose a man with good moral character and spiritual leadership. That means that those things were low priorities for her when deciding who to get naked with. Alternatively, she married a good man, and failed to maintain the commitment. Then she has different problems: problems with male leadership, problems with responsibilities, problems with commitment, problems with contentment, etc. You need to ask questions to get to the bottom of what happened, and more importantly, what she has studied and done to change her worldview. Don’t take her words for it, look at her actions.

Second, the number of premarital sex partners a woman has makes her a higher risk of divorce. The more sex partners, the more risk. The problem with women who engage in sex with men who don’t commit to them is that they *necessarily* don’t see a man’s willingness and ability to commit as valuable when choosing a man. Women who have premarital sex with good-looking, high-status no-commitment men don’t see commitment as valuable. They are rewarding the man for his height, his muscles, his tattoos, his piercings, his entertainment of her, etc. A good man should be very wary when a woman who gave her best youth, beauty and sexual interest to men like that now want to “settle” for a boring, unattractive provider who they see as having lower value than the men they gave sex to without requiring a commitment. What they really wanted was bad boys, and they threw sex at those bad boys without asking for commitment. Even if a

good man marries a woman like this, she will not respect him. She respects looks and status. She is only willing to “settle” for a boring provider in her 30s because she can no longer attract the “best” men (criminal thugs who are tall and have tattoos) who give her all the butterflies in her stomach.

The culture opposes male leadership

Men should only marry if they are going to get authority to lead a home in moral and spiritual areas. But today, people don’t want men to make moral judgements. They are only concerned that women get what they want, regardless of their past actions. In their opinion, men exists solely to serve the needs of women. Women don’t have to be good enough for marriage, men just have to give women what they want, regardless of their suitability for wife and mother roles. The role of men in any relationship is not to lead and achieve goals for God. Their role is to let women rule over them, disposing of their earnings as they see fit, for the benefit of the woman.

This is what women are told about the role of men in every area of society. This society, including the Christian parents, Christian pastors, Christian culture, etc. do not produce women who prefer early marriage to men who are good at moral leadership and spiritual leadership. Therefore, men who are chaste, sober, have good educations, good private sector jobs, good savings, etc. need to be extremely careful. Look at the video clip. We are producing a generation of “don’t judge” young women who hate good men, and throw themselves into sex with hot bad boys. This is not safe for men to commit to. Better to be alone.

What if she converts to Christianity later on in life?

Becoming a new Christian doesn’t eliminate the risk any more than becoming a new Christian fixes student loans accumulated for a useless non-STEM degree. First, a bare statement “I’m a Christian” isn’t evidence that a woman has persuaded herself to change her view of which men are the most attractive. That would be like a 35-year-old man claiming to be a software engineer on his resume, after 15years of looking of teaching English in a public school. A recent convert who has never read any Christian books or engaged in any Christian tasks could just be saying “don’t judge me, just marry me” with some Christian-talk sprinkled on top.

Most people today don’t want to hold women accountable for choosing bad men. So you should assume that young women don’t take responsibility for their own past choices. And that means that she will have taken no steps to repent her mistake, and change her character so that she doesn’t make the same mistake again. It’s up to you to look at what she has been reading, listening to, watching, etc. and to check her actions in order to find out what she really thinks about what the Bible says. You can’t marry a woman who responds to any mention of the moral law and moral obligations with denial of responsibility and insults. If she hasn’t become an active crusader against women who choose bad men, and women who choose premarital sex, and women who choose divorce, then you can’t really believe that there’s been any real repentance. The risks to you are too high to take a chance on someone who is not certain.

Your marriage is your enterprise for serving God

So let’s think more about the screechy tattoo’d woman in the video clip. Imagine that you are trying to get this women to do something in a marriage that is part of your plan to make the marriage serve God. You’re trying to get her to watch a William Lane Craig debate. You’re trying to get her to stop spending money on 50 Shades of Grey and Harry Potter. You’re trying to get her to stop smoking and drinking. You’re trying to get her to talk about the sermon instead of essential oils. You’re trying to get her to read a Thomas Sowell book. You’re trying to get her to not put the kids in day care or public schools.

You need to assume that her response to male leadership like this will be the exact same as the woman in the video clip. Keep your distance, and ask her questions to find out what her real views are, and whether she is interested in growing into the kind of person who is safe for you to marry. Don’t forget that chastity and sobriety are important during the evaluation process, so that you aren’t influenced away from your leadership role. Don’t listen to her words, look at her actions.

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate #ApologeticsDay

March 15, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a debate with a well-qualified atheist and Dr. William Lane Craig, the most effective defender of Christianity operating today.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It’s not just that the settings are unlikely, it’s that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a “herd morality” that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this

evolved “herd morality”. However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God’s existence by pointing to the “evil” in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God’s existence.

Dr. Millican’s opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it

leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It's possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It's also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans

believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just

happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties

that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

The seven fatal flaws of moral relativism

March 16, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Moral relativism is the view that moral values and moral duties do not exist in reality, but only exist as opinions in people's minds. When you ask a moral relativist where the belief that stealing is wrong comes from, he may tell you that it is his opinion, or that it is the opinion of most people in his society. But he cannot tell you that stealing is wrong independent of what people think, because morality (on moral relativism) is just personal preference.

So what's wrong with it?

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Salvo magazine web site.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like "It's wrong to push your own morality on others". This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don't let them make any moral statements without asking them first to ground morality on their worldview. And that's because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can't answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people's personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It's all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be "it depends". It depends on the person who is speaking because it's a subjective claim, not an objective

claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

So, practically speaking, everyone has to decide whether right and wrong are real – objectively real. If they are objectively real, that means that there is a right way for human beings to behave, and a wrong way for human beings to behave. It means that things that are really objectively wrong like rape are wrong for all times and all places, regardless of what individuals and societies might think of it. In order to rationally ground that kind of morality, you have to have a foundation for it – a cosmic Designer who decides for all times and places what the conduct of his creatures ought to be. And then our moral duties are duties that are owed to this Designer. It is like playing football or playing a boardgame – the person who invents the game decides the rules. But if there is no designer of the game, then there are no rules.

Without a designer of the universe, the question of how we ought to act is decided by people in different times and different places. It's arbitrary and variable, and therefore it doesn't do the job of prescribing behavior authoritatively. It's very important not to get involved in any serious endeavor with another person or persons if they don't have a sense of right and wrong being absolute and fixed. A belief in objective moral values is a necessary pre-requisite for integrity.

How do you respond to the conquests and wars in the Old Testament?

March 17, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

John Berea has an article about it on his web site.

Here's his overview:

> In the Old Testament are the military campaigns of Israel inconsistent with being led by a just and loving God, and inconsistent with his own commands? Here, I would like to make the case for consistency and justness.
>
> 1. **The nations of Canaan were evil, harming others, and needed to be stopped.** They had carried out incest with children/grandchildren and performed child sacrifice by fire. (Lev 18:6-30, Deut 12:31, Deut 18:9-10, Psalm 106:35, 37-38) They launched unprovoked attacks on Israel (Ex 17:8-9, Num 21:1, Num 21:2-23, 33) and even guerrilla attacks against Israel's "stragglers in the rear of the march when you were exhausted and tired." (Deut 25:18)
>
> **2. Warfare language was likely rhetorical.** There are five reasons to support the rhetorical nature of language such as "completely destroy" (Hebrew תחרימו, literally "ban") in Deut 20:17. It likely meant a destruction of armed soldiers, buildings, and religious icons.
>
> 1. Semitic language professor and NIV, NAB, and ESV bible translator Richard Hess argues that Hebrew "ban" is "stereotypical for describing all the inhabitants of a town or region, without predisposing the reader to assume anything further about their ages or even their genders" and "need not require that there really were children, senior citizens, or women there who were put to death" even when followed by the terms "men and women" (Joshua 8:25) or "young and old" (Joshua 8:25).
> 2. In Israel's destruction of enemies we see phrases like "left no survivor" and "utterly destroyed all who breathed" (Joshua 10:40, Judges 1:8). But in Joshua 21:12-13 the author has no problem telling us these people were still there afterward: "if you ever turn away and make alliances with these nations that remain near you… God will no longer drive out these nations". In 1 Sam 15:3-4 Israel was to "strike down the Amalekites. Destroy everything that they have. Don't spare them. Put them to death–man, woman, child, infant, ox, sheep, camel, and donkey alike." In 15:8 Saul "executed all Agag's people" and Agag himself was killed in 15:33. But later in 1 Sam 27:8 we're told they're still there and " had been living in that land for a long time". Hundreds of years later in Esther 3:1 we're even told Haman was an Agagite, a descendant of the Amalekite king Agag.
> 3. Most verses on the subject speak of "driving out" and "dispossessing" the

> land rather than language suggestive of genocide. E.g. Num 33:51-53, in "the land of Canaan, you must drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images, all their molten images, and demolish their high places. You must dispossess the inhabitants of the land and live in it, for I have given you the land to possess it." It's the same story in Lev 18:25, Num 23:31-32, Deut 6:19, 9:4, 18:12, Joshua 3:10, and 23:9.
>
> 4. Jer 4:20 suggests inhabitants fled before armies arrived: "At the sound of the horseman and bowman every city flees; They go into the thickets and climb among the rocks"
> 5. Deut 7:22 specifically says that Israel was forbidden to "destroy them all at once" and instead they would be expelled "little by little".
>
> So either all of these verses contradict one another, or the conquest language was rhetorical.
>
> **3. Many of the "cities" were probably military outposts.** For example with Jericho and Ai, Richard Hess argues there are no references to noncombatants (apart from Rahab), no archaeological evidence of non-military use, the term melek (Hebrew מלכי) for "king" of the cities often meant mean a military leader in Canaan (e.g. in Joshua 2:2), they were located at defensive positions, and Jericho and Ai weren't described as a large city as Gibeon and Hazor explicitly were.
>
> **4. A just God requires wrath.** It's not possible to have a God who is just but not wrathful–otherwise wrongdoers continue unabated. Paranormal investigator James Randi wrote in Skeptic Magazine, "I accuse the Christian god of murder by allowing the Holocaust to take place" yet Dawkins and Hitchens condemn God for judgment against the Canaanites. Which is it? Ultimately the the problem is we view death as the ultimate judgment, when in the theological context of the bible it's only a graduation to what's next with accountability for what we've done with what we were given.

The four points are developed with links for support. If you get this question a lot, it's a good resource to bookmark.

Also, if you're looking for a short video to share, here is a 6-minute one featuring Frank Turek:

That's from commenter WorldGoneCrazy. It's really good.

What are the historical arguments for the post-mortem appearances of Jesus?

March 18, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi Ohio State University has a *great* post up about the post-mortem appearances of Jesus.

The post contains:

- a list of the post-mortem resurrection appearances
- quotations by skeptical historians about those appearances
- alternative naturalistic explanations of the appearances
- responses to those naturalistic explanations

Although there is a lot of research that went into the post, it's not very long to read. The majority of scholars accept the appearances, because they appear in *so many different sources* and because some of those sources are very early, especially Paul's statement of the early Christian creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, which is from about 1-3 years after Jesus was executed by the Romans. Eric's post lists out some of the skeptical scholars who the appearances, and you can see how they allude to the historical criteria that they are using. (If you want to sort of double-check the details, I blogged about how historians investigate ancient sources before)

Let's take a look at some of the names you might recognize:

> **E.P. Sanders:**
>
> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. "I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: 'I saw him first!' 'No! I did.' Paul's tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus' followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions." "Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the 'resurrection': the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it."[1]
>
> **Bart Ehrman:**
>
> It is a historical fact that some of Jesus' followers came to believe that he had been raised from the dead soon after his execution. We know some of these believers by name; one of them, the apostle Paul, claims quite plainly to have

> seen Jesus alive after his death. Thus, for the historian, Christianity begins after the death of Jesus, not with the resurrection itself, but with the belief in the resurrection.[2]
>
> **Ehrman also says:**
>
> We can say with complete certainty that some of his disciples at some later time insisted that . . . he soon appeared to them, convincing them that he had been raised from the dead.[3]
>
> **Ehrman also goes onto say:**
>
> Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus' resurrection, since this is a matter of public record.[4]
>
> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don't doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don't have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don't think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19).[5]
>
> **Marcus Borg**
>
> The historical ground of Easter is very simple: the followers of Jesus, both then and now, continued to experience Jesus as a living reality after his death. In the early Christian community, these experiences included visions or apparitions of Jesus. [8]

The references to Paul are because of the early creed he records in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, and his conversations with the other eyewitnesses in Galatians. Eric has another post where he goes over that early creed, and it is something that every Christian should know about. It's really kind of surprising that you never hear a sermon on that early creed in church, where they generally sort of assume that you believe everything in the Bible on faith. But skeptical historians don't believe in the post-mortem appearances by faith – they believe it (in part) because of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

If you want to see a Christian scholar make the case for the resurrection appearances in a debate, then here is a post I wrote with the video, audio and summary of the William Lane Craig vs James Crossley debate on the resurrection.

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

March 19, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to video)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

Here's the debate:

Summary

Note: the following debate summary is rated "S" for Snarky. Reader discretion is advised.

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism
- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program
- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent

- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true

- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah
- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is

speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet 9 from Outer Space!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren't going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

The Biden administration's plan to make "offensive" speech into a human rights violation

March 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last week, there were some interesting stories posted in the New York Post about how the Biden family was receiving donations from communist China. I'll link to that story here, but I really wanted to write about another Biden story that I found in The Federalist. When you see this story, you'll really have to wonder why so many "evangelicals" supported Joe Biden for president.

The Federalist story says:

> President Joe Biden's Department of Education plans to enact new rule changes to civil rights law this May that would end free speech as Americans have known it.
>
> The changes would inject gender ideology straight into the heart of Title IX of the Civil Rights Act by erasing the Supreme Court's long-standing distinction between protected speech and punishable conduct.
>
> In its 1999 ruling in *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education*, the Supreme Court held that expressive activity such as speech can only constitute harassment when it is "so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive" that it can no longer be considered pure speech and is more properly viewed as actionable conduct. In the process, the court emphasized that single instances of speech — no matter how offensive to the listener — do not rise to the level of harassment.
>
> The Biden administration is purposefully muddying the waters between mere speech and harassing conduct specifically to force the use of pronouns and gender-affirming language. Under the proposed rule, students and faculty can violate Title IX simply for refusing to use someone else's "preferred" pronouns.

The subtitle of the article is "Biden's America is going the way of Canada, and it's horrible news for anyone who cares about free speech."

The article notes:

> The administration, spurred on by power-hungry college administrators, seeks the destruction of freedom of speech by other means. It wishes for us to become Canada. In the Great White North, the alleged misuse of pronouns is not just illegal, it is a "human rights violation."
>
> Following a drawn-out court battle in the Canadian justice system, the court told a Canadian father that he had to stop referring to his own daughter as a girl because his daughter identified as a boy. The father rightfully refused to comply with the court order, and in May 2021, a warrant was issued for his arrest.

> He had originally sought mental health help for his daughter, but by the time of the litigation, she had already been “transitioning” for two years. The father was jailed as a criminal.

And that’s why I focus so much about what’s going on in Canada. They are ten years ahead of us on ending Christianity in the public square, and the Democrats want to keep up with them.

I would really like to see more recognized Christian leaders think about what rank-and-file Christians need in order to advocate for Christian values, and then protect those needs. But often, the people who are seen as leaders drop the ball.

Take a look at this quote from an article about David French from Not the Bee:

> In case there was any question, French implies that preventing parents from injecting their kids with chemical castration drugs or removing their daughter’s breasts would be an infraction of “civil liberties,” and that we need to be careful that we don’t infringe on rights.
>
> In a nation as diverse as the United States, conflicts over values are inevitable, but our most basic civil liberties must remain inviolate. To govern otherwise both inflicts a grave injury on dissenting citizens and violates the letter and spirit of the Constitution itself. Our right to speak, much less to parent, should not be contingent on our ability to gain political control.
>
> I haven’t heard David French speak up against, say, masking kids for two years and requiring vax mandates in order to keep your job. I haven’t heard him make a case for why many civil liberties would be infringed if common weapons like AR-15s were removed from the public. I haven’t heard him speak about the rampant crime in leftist cities. Heck, I haven’t even heard much about abortion lately from him!

He has spoken out on abortion, but indirectly. By opposing Trump, he opposed Trump’s 3 Supreme Court picks. The same 3 Supreme Court picks who ended Roe v. Wade. What is his position on Roe v. Wade? He wanted a pro-abortion president to have those 3 picks, and to leave Roe v. Wade in place. That’s his view. And it’s the view of many “elite” “Christian” leaders.

I’m glad Cherise Trump (author of The Federalist article) is connecting the dots and warning us about what lies again if we don’t act. I just wish other Christians weren’t so scared about the secular left on these issues. We don’t need to make friends with people who are trying to destroy our freedoms. It’s ok to disagree with them.

Does the “legacy of slavery” explain black women’s 72% out-of-wedlock birth rate?

March 21, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

James White asks: does the Bible apply to black women?

I don’t like Calvinist theologian James White very much, but at least he’s willing to defend the moral teachings of the Bible against the woke identity politics that is taking over Christian churches. A few months ago he tweeted something very controversial (see above), and got into a lot of hot water with fake Christians. In this post, I’ll explain why he is right.

So, as you can see above, James is concerned that black women are having so many abortions, and he thinks that the solution to this is to encourage black women to take the Bible’s advice on sexual morality. Shocking, I know.

If you read the replies to his tweet on Twitter, you’ll see millions and millions of comments calling him a racist, and telling him that slavery is to blame for EVERYTHING that black women do wrong. Basically, the James haters say that black women can do anything they want, and should never be told that it’s wrong according to the Bible, because their bad choices are all the fault of slavery. So the Bible doesn’t even apply to them, or something.

Here is an example from a radical feminist progressive named Karen Swallow Prior:

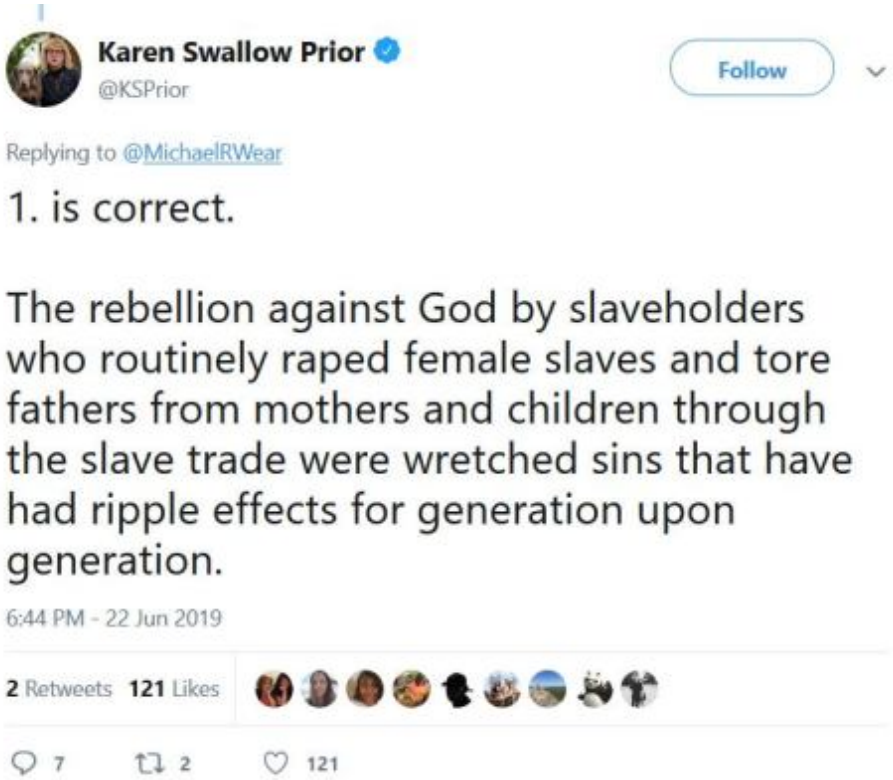

Karen Swallow Prior says that unlike whites, blacks have no moral agency

According to the fake Christians, it's not that black women make poor choices with sex, it's that the ghosts of white slavers who raped their great-great-great grandmothers reach through time with magic and force them to have sex with hunky bad boys who won't commit to them before sex. It's not rap music calling black women hoes! It's the ghosts of slavery past. And even if this ghost theory isn't true, we shouldn't tell black women not to sin, because… it would hurt their feelings. After all, the Bible isn't a book that's designed to set boundaries to prevent self-destructive behaviors. It encourages us to listen to our hearts, be reckless, and sin as much as we can.

So when did black community problems with sex and abortion start? Did it start with slavery times? Actually, blacks were doing GREAT at marriage and sexual matters just 50 years ago.

This reply to James White explained:

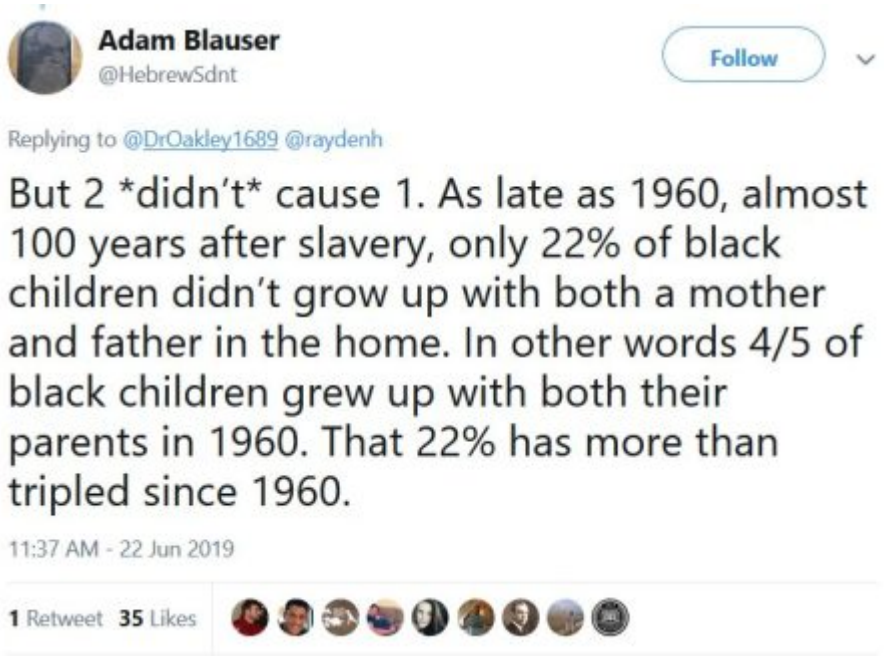

Blacks married at rates comparable to whites before welfare
That's true. Black children weren't fatherless, so they weren't having early sex outside of marriage, and so they weren't getting abortions.

As the header graphic shows, black women were just as likely to be married as white women in the 1960s, FAR AFTER the days of slavery.

The reason that the graph is going upward is because daughters raised in fatherless homes tend to engage in sexual activity at younger ages, because they are seeking approval from a man which their (single) mother cannot give them. It's a tragic downwards spiral, and it affects all races. The only way to stop it is to tell women to choose marriage-minded men (not hot bad boys) and marry before having sex, like the Bible says. But woke fake Christians think the Bible is too mean, and better to allow sin by saying that sin is inevitable because slavery ghosts or something.

What's neat is that black men who take Christianity seriously are totally on board with the facts:

Black man here. Can confirm that the Bible applies to black women.
On this blog, I don't talk about my ethnicity myself, for confidentiality reasons, but I have said that my skin is darker than Barack Obama. I'm not white or Asian. And the reason that I don't fall into this trap of causing babies to be born out of wedlock is because I think that when the Bible says that sex outside of marriage is a sin, that this is true. I

don’t make excuses or shift blame. It’s incumbent on me to obey, since I claim to be a follower of Jesus.I’m not interested in identity politics. I’m not interested in racial divisions. I’m not interested in blame-shifting. The rules are the rules. And my following of the rules caused me to not cause abortions, according to Christian specifications. Period.

When it comes to sex outside of marriage, the answer of every Bible believing Christian is simple: I’m against it. That is the correct answer, and anything more or less than this answer is demonic. If you are a Christian, sex outside of marriage is always morally wrong. And if you try to justify it, or blame someone else, in order to excuse it, then you’re not a Christian at all. If you try to make excuses for why someone did it, you’re not a Christian. Whether you have had it and been forgiven, or never had it, the answer is always the same: it’s morally wrong. Don’t do it. Never do it.

What I am seeing from people who are critical of James White’s tweet is that they are basically trying to attack those who make moral judgments based on what the Bible says. They want to make room for sinners to sin. The root of abortion sin is sexual sin. Real Christians discourage sexual sin, and therefore protect unborn children. Fake Christians want to be liked by appearing compassionate, so they make excuses for sexual sin. If you take the Bible seriously on morality, you won’t be liked. Those who try to excuse sin do so because their need to be liked is more important than their need to promote what the Bible teaches.

Some fake Christians will say “oh, but I do think the Bible is right about sex and marriage, but we have to care about slavery reparations and global warming and refugees and illegal immigrants and trasnsgender rights, too”. Baloney. An authentic Christian is concerned about the things that the Bible teaches are “major” things. Drunkenness is a major thing. Sexual immorality is a major thing. Divorce is a major thing. Homosexuality is a major thing. If you meet a Christian who treats those issues as minor issues, and instead majors in what the secular left tells them are major issues, then you’re talking to a fake Christian.

Christianity isn’t a brain-dead faith. You get your priorities from the Bible, and you argue those priorities using facts. The facts about marriage rates are clear and they show that the problems in the black community aren’t caused by slavery. They’re caused by single mother welfare programs. Those welfare programs taught women of all races that they didn’t have to listen to their fathers when choosing men. Those welfare programs taught women that feelings were a better guide in relationships than the Bible. Those welfare programs taught women that their eyes were a better judge of character than performance of traditional marriage roles. Those welfare programs taught women that recreational sex was a way to get a man to commit and stop being a bad boy. We need to go back to the root cause of the problem. The root cause of the problem was making excuses for disobedience to the Bible, and transferring money from married homes to out-of-control women. Of all races.

Young people are more likely than older people to think that women power has gone too far

March 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I asked you whether young people or old people are more in favor of feminism, I'll bet that the majority of you would answer "young people". Because you would say that old people are more traditional than young people. But that's not what a recent survey found. There's an article about it in the New York Post, although the original article comes from an Australian news web site.

Excerpt:

> A surprising number of people in younger generations believe that women's rights have gone too far, with a new survey revealing gender equality progress could be at risk of stalling.
>
> New research conducted by Ipsos UK and the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at King's College London found that over half of people in younger generations believe the push for equality is now negatively impacting men and that they are being expected to do "too much" to support progress.
>
> The survey collated the responses from more than 22,500 people aged 16-74 across 32 countries, including approximately 1000 people from Australia.
>
> According to the results, 52 percent of Gen Z and 53 percent of Millennials agree that "we have gone so far in promoting women's equality that we are discriminating against men".
>
> This is compared to 46 percent of Gen X and 40 percent of Baby Boomers.

The article is in favor of the women power movement, and it expresses shock and horror that anyone could ever have a reason to disagree with it.

What does this mean? Well, I think older people have an out-of-date view of just how much society (government and other institutions) has done to give preferential treatment to women at the expense of men.

To take just one example, about 60% of undergraduate degrees are being given to women, with men getting only 40%.

The American Enterprise Institute reports:

- For every **100 women** who earn bachelor's degrees from US colleges and universities, there are **73 men.**
- For every **100 women** who earn master's degrees from US colleges and universities, there are **65 men**.
- For every **100 women** who earn doctor's degrees from US universities,

> there are **85 men.**

- For every **100 women** who are recent college graduates but not in the labor force, there are **108 men.**
- For every **100 women** with an advanced degree but not in the labor force there are **114 men.**

When I looked into what was causing this, I found out that men underperform women on classroom tests, but men outperform women on standardized tests. Studies have shown that teachers (85% women) discriminate against boys in the classroom, and that's why boys underperform girls on classroom-administered tests. But on standardized tests, boys do better, because there is no discriminator present and the grading is more fair.

Hypergamy

The problem with this discrimination against men is that women typically like to "marry up". They are looking for men who have more education and better careers and higher salaries than they have. When the number of desirable men shrinks, it becomes harder and harder for women to lock one down. That's the law of supply and demand. When the supply of marriage-ready men (good education, good job, good savings) shrinks, the price of a marriage-ready man goes up. The price of goods always goes up when there is a shortage. And right now there is definitely a shortage of educated men with good careers and lots of savings. Discrimination against men by feminists, feminist laws and feminist policies caused this shortage.

It's the younger generations who are seeing firsthand how discrimination against men makes relationships, much less marriage, harder to achieve. Sadly, the older generations aren't paying attention. If men aren't doing well, then women aren't going to be able to find men to marry and start families with. What satisfies women in the long run is family. Marriage and family are dying in the west, and young people understand that feminism was the murder weapon. Young people understand this, because they see relationships and marriage drying up.

It's not just the left-wing feminists who want the discrimination against men to remain. Pro-marriage feminists, including many "chivalrous" Christians (men and women) also want feminist discrimination against men to remain. They blame the retreat from relationship and the decline of marriage on MEN, not on feminism. Until this changes, don't expect relationships and marriage to return.

Is the federal government interested in monitoring speech?

March 23, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My first read every day is The Federalist, and there I found a very interesting article by Margot Cleveland. In it, she reveals some research that The Federalist has been doing about the federal government's plans to monitor speech. Not just the speech of journalists and politicians, but also churches, and even individuals. What would they do with this information?

Excerpt:

> Our government is preparing to monitor every word Americans say on the internet—the speech of journalists, politicians, religious organizations, advocacy groups, and even private citizens. Should those conversations conflict with the government's viewpoint about what is in the best interests of our country and her citizens, that speech will be silenced.
>
> […]Research by The Federalist reveals our tax dollars are funding the development of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine-learning (ML) technology that will allow the government to easily discover "problematic" speech and track Americans reading or partaking in such conversations.
>
> Then, in partnership with Big Tech, Big Business, and media outlets, the government will ensure the speech is censored, under the guise of combatting "misinformation" and "disinformation."

Here's how they found out what the government is doing:

> The federal government has awarded more than 500-plus contracts or grants related to "misinformation" or "disinformation" since 2020. One predominant area of research pushed by the Department of Defense involves the use of AI and ML technology to monitor or listen to internet "conversations."
>
> Originally used as a marketing tool for businesses to track discussions about their brands and products and to track competitors, the DOD and other federal agencies are now paying for-profit public relations and communications firms to convert their technology into tools for the government to monitor speech on the internet.

What's troubling about this for me is the not only that truth-tellers would be censored, or labeled "domestic terrorists" and harassed by law enforcement. That's already happening in the United States. Just look at the Twitter Files revelations. My concern is the freezing of bank accounts as coercion. That's already happening in Canada. And it would be even easier to do if we converted to a digital currency, that was used by all of our banks.

Here's a Wall Street Journal article:

> “Central-bank digital currency” doesn’t exactly roll off the tongue. But you might want to get used to saying it. These so-called CBDCs, or digital versions of dollars, yuan, euros, yen or any other currency, are coming, say those who study them. And depending on how they are designed and rolled out, their impact on the banking system could be profound.
>
> […]The U.S. is studying the issue and has run trials of various technologies to enable a digital currency, although Fed chair Jerome Powell has indicated the U.S. central bank has no plans to create one, and won’t do so without direction from Congress.
>
> […]First, there is the obvious issue of privacy. A digital currency could allow governments to track every transaction a person makes, no matter how minute. This level of transparency would be a powerful disincentive to using these currencies for crime or fraud, but it could also open the door to new kinds of social control, especially in countries with already-scant protections for human rights.
>
> For example, says Dr. Prasad, a government could make it impossible to spend the digital currency on things the ruling party deems problematic… The government also could make transacting with certain people difficult or impossible—China already has a social credit system that ranks citizens algorithmically, and punishes them in various ways.

Here’s Joe Biden’s position on digital currency, reported by NBC News:

> The Biden administration is putting its support behind the research and development of a “U.S. Central Bank Digital Currency,” or CBDC.
>
> The move is part of a sweeping executive order President Joe Biden signed Wednesday instructing the federal government to explore possible uses of and regulations for digital assets like cryptocurrencies.

And here’s Ron DeSantis’ position on digital currency, reported by Townhall:

> Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis on Monday moved to protect The Sunshine State from the Biden administration’s potential “weaponization of the financial sector” through a Central Bank Digital Currency.
>
> The legislative proposal would amend the state’s Uniform Commercial Code to prohibit the use of federal or foreign CBDC and calls on other states to join in the fight by instituting similar prohibitions.

There are very clear differences between Democrats and Republicans on the issues of surveillance, censorship, coercion and totalitarianism. Something to think about, as we approach the 2024 elections. Choose wisely.

What do scientific studies show about the long-term effects of gender-affirming care?

March 24, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to write posts to record evidence that I can use when having debates about controversial topics. Thursday night, I was reading The Federalist, as usual, and found an interesting post by Eddie Scarry. He reported that the far-left Washington Post was claiming that people who get "gender-affirming" care are very happy in the short term. But what about in the long-term?

Excerpt:

> On Thursday the paper published what it called "one of the largest randomized samples of U.S. transgender adults to date about their childhoods, feelings and lives." The survey took place last year from Nov. 10 to Dec. 1, among 515 U.S. adults who identify as trans and another 823 U.S. adults who did not.
>
> There were a lot of depressing statistics about respondents who are less likely than regular people to say their childhoods were happy and who are more likely to say they often feel anxious. But the ultimate takeaway was that the vast majority of those who said they had "transitioned" away from their natural sex, 78 percent, were "more satisfied" with their lives than before the transition process.

That survey is just from "last year". I would imagine that people who take out student loans to study English also feel great during their years at college… but they don't feel the same when they graduate and have to find a job to pay those loans back. And that's the real question… what is the effect of chopping off body parts in the long-term? Fortunately, we have a study for that.

More:

> A person who decides to live in ways that make him feel more like the opposite sex isn't a one-and-done. That's something that has to be examined over an extended period of years. As far as actual genital surgery goes — in theory, the most fulfilling type of "transition" — only one study has done that to date.
>
> Over the course of 30 years, six Swedish doctors and scientists tracked the outcomes of 324 transgender people who had received sex surgeries — 191 male subjects and 133 female subjects. Each subject was cross-referenced with 10 random control subjects of the sex that the trans subject was impersonating. For example, a woman would be a control subject for a man who had had surgery to make himself look more like a woman.
>
> The results were devastating.
>
> Subjects who underwent surgery were more likely than the control subjects to

> receive inpatient care for a psychiatric disorder, to be convicted of a crime, and to develop cardiovascular disease. The mortality rate by suicide was most striking: Transgender subjects were roughly 20 times more likely to have committed suicide within 10 years of their operations.
>
> "This study found substantially higher rates of overall mortality, death from cardiovascular disease and suicide, suicide attempts, and psychiatric hospitalisations in sex-reassigned transsexual individuals compared to a healthy control population," the authors concluded. "This highlights that post surgical transsexuals are a risk group that need long-term psychiatric and somatic follow-up." They noted that surgery and experimental cross-sex hormones may provide some relief for transgender people, but that such treatment is "apparently not sufficient to remedy the high rates of morbidity."

They have the link to the study right in the quotation above. So next time you get asked about this issue, refer to the long-term study.

Sometimes people prefer to read individual stories about individual people to get an idea of what's behind the statistics. If you like that, consider this recent story from the New York Post, about an individual who received "gender-affirming care" of the sort that the Washington Post would approve of.

Excerpt:

> Transgender flight attendant Kayleigh Scott — who gained fame after appearing in a United Airlines commercial — was found dead Monday in her Colorado home. She was 25.
>
> Scott, who shared her transition story for a 2020 Trans Day of Visibility video produced by United, declared in a 2:30 a.m. Instagram post that she was planning to end her life.
>
> […]Scott made headlines in 2020 when United featured her as a part of its diversity campaign.
>
> Scott said she credited United for helping her transition.
>
> "My life changed for the better when I came to United as a flight attendant. With the support from the company, our business resource group for LGBTQ+ employees, and all of my loving co-workers," Scott said at the time. "I was able to break free from the chains that helped me and to this day, I'm living confidently. It's my true self."

Everything was wonderful in the short-term. Celebrate diversity. Celebrate pride. Be affirming and non-judgmental and tolerant. That's what people wanted in the short-term.

Here's the long-term:

> "2022 has been a year packed with upset and difficulty," wrote Scott in a New Year's Eve Facebook post. "I saw too much death & loss in my life, I came to realize I work a meaningless job for a company that doesn't value me as an

> employee.”

United Airlines didn’t make a virtue-signaling publicity video about that post. The Human Rights Campaign didn’t turn that quote into a publicity stunt. Naturally. The people who affirm recklessness turn their backs on you when the consequences of your choices appear. People who like to party and be happy in the moment don’t want to deal with the fallout of the bad decisions that they told you to make.

Christians tell young people to keep to the moral boundaries, because we want them to be happy in the long-term. In the short-term, we look like the mean, judgmental bad guys. But in the long-term, we are vindicated. Gay activists and gay activism organizations affirm the reckless decisions of young people because they want to be liked and to feel good. But they don’t really love the people they affirm. They don’t want what’s best for other people in the long-term.

Well, that’s the example of long-term consequences for one person. I’m a studies man, myself. I like to argue from studies. If you’re like me, then my previous post about self-ending rates of people who received “gender-affirming care” might also be useful to you.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 30: Was Jesus a Socialist, Part 1

March 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 30 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss what the Bible says about Christianity and economics. This episode looks at Bible verses that support the idea that Jesus taught socialism. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 30:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose define socialism, and contrast socialist policies with free market policies. We discuss why a growing number of people find it attractive. The rest of the episode is spent discussing Bible verses cited by socialists that argue for the view that Jesus was a socialist or that Jesus taught socialism.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

References:

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- Common Sense Economics: What Everyone Should Know About Wealth and Prosperity by James Gwartney, Richard Stroup,Dwight Lee, Tawni Ferrarini, and Joseph Calhoun
- The Maker Versus the Takers: What Jesus Really Said About Social Justice and Economics by Jerry Bowyer
- The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution by Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus

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What got me started on apologetics? William Lane Craig debate transcripts

March 26, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yes, William Lane Craig debate transcripts. In fact, I still read them from time to time to keep up my skills.

Here's one of my favorites, the Craig-Nielsen debate on grounding morality without God

Summary:

> THE CRAIG-NIELSEN DEBATE: GOD, MORALITY, AND EVIL
> William Lane Craig and Kai Nielsen
> with annotations by William Lane Craig
> February 1991, University of Western Ontario

Best part:

> Finally, he raises the issue of immortality and says, "Death doesn't undermine moral values. In fact, things that we value become all the more precious." Well, in one sense he's right. It's the *absence of God* that undermines the objectivity of moral values, not *death*. But let's suppose that there are objective moral values. What would be undermined by the lack of immortality? I think two things.
>
> First, I think there would be no reason to adopt the moral point of view. Since you're going to die, everyone ends up the same. It doesn't make any difference whether you live as a Hitler or a Mother Teresa. There is no relationship between your moral living and your ultimate fate. And so in that sense, death undermines the reason for adopting the moral point of view rather that just being an egoist and living for self.
>
> Second, there's no basis for self-sacrifice on this point of view. Why should an atheist, who knows everything is going to end in death, do things that are morally right that go against self-interest? For example, a few years ago there was a terrible mid-winter air disaster in Washington, DC, as a plane crashed into a bridge spanning the Potomac River, spilling its passengers into the icy waters. And as the helicopters came to rescue these people, attention focused on one man who again and again passed by the rope ladder rather than be pulled to safety himself. Seven times he did this, and when they came again, he was gone. The whole nation turned its eyes to this man in respect and admiration for the noble act of self-sacrifice that he did. And yet on the atheistic view, that man wasn't noble. He did the *stupidest* thing possible. He should have gone for the rope ladder first, pushed others away, if necessary, in order to survive! But to give up all the brief existence he will ever have for others he didn't even know? Why? It seems to me, then, that it's not simply the absence of God that undermines objective moral values, but ethical living is also undermined by the

> atheistic point of view because you then have no reason to adopt the moral point of view and you have no basis for acts of self-sacrifice.
>
> By contrast, on the Christian view, where you have both God and immortality, you have the necessary presuppositions for the affirmation of objective moral values and for consistent living of the ethical life.

And another of my favorites, the Craig-Taylor debate on the ontological grounding of morality.

Summary:

> Is The Basis Of Morality Natural Or Supernatural?
> Richard Taylor and William Lane Craig
> October 1993, Union College, Schenectady, New York

Sample Craig:

> (2) I argued that moral accountability also exists under the supernaturalist view, and Professor Taylor didn't deny the point.
>
> (II) What about my critique, then, of naturalism? I said that naturalism doesn't provide a sound foundation for morality, and here I made two points:
>
> (1) On the naturalist view, objective right and wrong do not exist. Again, Professor Taylor doesn't deny this point; he just says, "Well, to say that they're conventional doesn't mean they're contemptible." Well, granted; but it *does* mean they're arbitrary, they're non–objective. There's no more difference between moral right and wrong than driving on the right–hand side of the road versus the left–hand side of the road. It's simply a societal convention. And the modern evolutionist thinks these conventions are just based in socio–biological evolution. According to Michael Ruse, a professor of the philosophy of science,

> The position of the modern evolutionist…is that humans have an awareness of morality…because such an awareness is of biological worth. Morality is a biological adaptation, no less than are hands and feet and teeth…. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, [ethics] is illusory. I appreciate that when somebody says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves…. Nevertheless...such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction and…any deeper meaning is illusory….{26}

> This is essentially the same view as Professor Taylor's. Moral values are simply rooted in socio–biological evolution, that have passed down as certain taboos and certain commands, but they have no objective validity in terms of their moral rightness or wrongness. Professor Taylor says, "But I have a high regard for people who are truly moral and decent." I don't deny that. Of course he does! But the point is that in his ethics, in his philosophy, he has no *basis* for that affirmation. What I bring is not a new set of values—I think we pretty much hold

> those in common—but I'm offering a secure *foundation* for those values that we all want to hold dear.
>
> You see, on Professor Taylor's view, there really isn't any objective morality. I think every one of us here tonight would agree that it's wrong to kill babies and that the holocaust was morally wrong. But in his book Professor Taylor says, "The infanticide practiced by the Greeks of antiquity did not violate their customs. If we say it was nevertheless wrong, we are only saying that it is forbidden by *our* ethical and legal rules. And the abominations practiced by the Nazis…are forbidden by our rules, and not, obviously, by theirs."{27} I submit that that is simply a patently false view of moral values and that naturalism, therefore, can't provide any objective basis for right and wrong.

And another of my favorites, the Craig-Tooley debate on the problem of evil.

Summary:

> A Classic Debate on the Existence of God
> Dr. William Lane Craig & Dr. Michael Tooley
> November 1994, University of Colorado at Boulder

Sample Craig:

> (2) Christian doctrines increase the probability of the coexistence of God and the evils in the world. Let me just mention a couple of these.
>
> (i) On the Christian view, the purpose of life is not happiness as such in this life. Rather it is the knowledge of God—which will ultimately produce true and everlasting happiness. What that means is that many evils occur in this life which might be utterly pointless with respect to producing human happiness. But they might not be pointless with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Dr. Tooley assumes when he talks about changes that would make this world a better place, that the purpose of life is basically to be happy in this life. And I certainly admit that you could make changes that might appear to make this life a better place, make it happier. But that's not God's purpose. So if you understand that the purpose of life is not happiness as such, I think that you can see that the existence of evil doesn't necessarily cast any improbability upon God's existence.
>
> (ii) It's also the Christian view that God's purpose spills over into eternal life. In the afterlife God will bestow a glory and happiness upon us that is incomparable to what we've suffered here on earth. And the longer we spend in eternity with Him, the more the sufferings in this life shrink by comparison to an infinitesimal instant. Dr. Tooley admits in his article that it is possible that immortality could justify such evils. But, he says, it's "very unlikely" that there is life after death. Well, I have two comments. First, I'd like him to prove that it's unlikely that there is life after death.{26} Second, I suggest that the resurrection of Jesus gives us grounds for hoping in life after death, and I've attempted to justify that

> historically. So given these Christian doctrines, I think you can see that the existence of God and evil is not so improbable after all.
>
> […]
>
> (4) Finally, I think that there is actually an argument for God from evil. It would go like this:
>
> (i) If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist. If there is no God, moral values are either socio-biological by-products or just expressions of personal preference.
>
> (ii) Evil exists. That's the premise of the atheist. There is real evil in the world.
>
> (iii) Therefore, objective values do exist. Some things are really wrong.
>
> (iv) Therefore, God exists.
>
> Thus the presence of evil in the world actually demonstrates God's existence because in the absence of God, there wouldn't be any distinction objectively between good and evil, between right and wrong. So although evil in one sense calls into question God's existence, in a much deeper sense, I think, it actually requires God's existence.
>
> So in the light of these four responses, I think that the argument from evil, as difficult and emotionally pressing as it might be, in the end doesn't constitute a good argument against the existence of God. So I think the four arguments given against the existence of God by Dr. Tooley are inconclusive. You've still got my six arguments for God's existence, and therefore I still think that on balance the evidence favors theism as the more rational worldview.

There are more debate transcripts on Craig's Reasonable Faith web site.

Evangelical Christian college fires professor for taking Biblical position on homosexuality

March 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was a pretty new Christian in college, I joined Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. While getting to know the other young Christian students, and the progressive feminist IVCF student leader, I suddenly realized that not everyone who called themselves a Christian really believed the Bible. In my case, problems arose over the doctrine of Hell, sexual morality and evidential apologetics.

This was my first exposure to a Christian organization that was not rigorous about the Bible. I would try to get them to bring in apologetics professors to talk about science and history, but they kept insisting on prayer walks and testimonies. This was one of the experiences that let me to do my Christian work using an alias. I began to think "what if these progressive Christians get into power, and they get offended by my conservative views?"

And that's what happened to this professor, who tweeted out Biblical views under his own name. He must have thought he was safe working for an evangelical Christian college. But he was not.

Premier Christianity UK reports:

> I was recently dismissed for misconduct by Cliff College, an evangelical Methodist Bible college where I had worked as a lecturer and programme lead for seven years. The misconduct referred to my now-infamous tweet…
>
> […]A Twitterstorm quickly ensued. Aggressively pro-LGBT advocates attacked me as homophobic and hateful, pressurising the college to sack me. The college swiftly and publically denounced my tweet as "inappropriate" and "unacceptable". They later asked me to remove it. When I said I couldn't do that in good conscience, I was suspended and later dismissed for "bringing the college into disrepute".

He wrote this, which I found very interesting:

> One woman, a Soviet-born émigré now teaching at a US university, said: "You have no idea what completely normal things you do today, or say today, will be used against you to destroy you. This is what people in the Soviet Union saw. We know how this works."

I came from another country to the United States, and I saw Christians being persecuted by the secular left government for the things they had said and done. That's why I left.

Cliff College describes their organization this way:

> Cliff College provides theological education and training with a particular focus on

> mission and evangelism.
>
> Cliff College has a long and rich heritage of providing Bible training to people from diverse backgrounds, for mission and evangelism.
>
> Since the beginning, we have sought to provide biblical, evangelical training that is both relevant and forward-thinking, with an emphasis on scriptural holiness.

"Scriptural holiness". It makes you laugh to read it.

And:

> Cliff College is an evangelical learning community which is rooted in God's Word and Spirit, for the purpose of equipping God's people for practical ministry and cutting-edge missional engagement.
>
> The education we offer at Cliff is theology for the real world – rooted in practice, forged in community, grounded in the authority of Scripture and consistently prompting us to face outwards. We proclaim the Gospel and invite everyone to experience the life-changing transformation of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

When the authority of Scripture comes up against the secular left culture, Cliff College sides with the culture.

Calvin Robinson

There was another story out of the UK that you might now have heard about – the story of Calvin Robinson.

Here's the story from Church Times UK:

> A CONSERVATIVE media commentator, Calvin Robinson, has said that his ordination in the Church of England was blocked, owing to his political views.
>
> Mr Robinson was due to be ordained deacon in the autumn. Without a title post, ordination cannot take place, and, in an article for the Mail on Sunday, he alleges

> that the offer of a part-time post as assistant curate of St Alban the Martyr, Holborn, in London, was withdrawn, after several bishops had expressed concerns about his outspoken views.

I thought this was interesting – a progressive white woman told the conservative black man what he should think about racism:

> In February 2020, the Archbishop of Canterbury told the General Synod that the Church was still "deeply institutionally racist" (News, 11 February 2020).
>
> […]Mr Robinson, who is black, wrote on Sunday that he "fundamentally disagreed with this approach", and described it as "divisive and offensive".
>
> "I do not think the claim that either the Church, or wider society, is institutionally racist has ever been supported by robust evidence," he wrote.
>
> Mr Robinson says that, in a meeting with [the Bishop of London, the Right Reverend Sarah] Mullally, she said to him: "Calvin, as a white woman, I can tell you that the Church is institutionally racist."

What I'd like to see from Christians is seriousness about the need to find a career where your views can be kept secret from nosy progressives like the Bishop of London, the Right Reverend Sarah Mullally. My goal in life is to never have my Christian activities be subject to the authority of the Bishop of London, the Right Reverend Sarah Mullally. Or an employer like her. Or a judge like her. Or a pastor like her. One of the reasons why Christians don't stand up to the secular left is because we make too many friends, and then we conform our speech to these friends, in order to be popular.

Should secular leftists be prosecuted for hate speech that incites violence against Christians?

March 28, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, right now we are living in a time much like 1930s Germany. Back then, the socialist party picked the Jews to be the scapegoat for their problems. Today, socialists in America have picked the Christians to be their scapegoat for their problems. It's not just violent groups like BLM and Antifa. It's the left-wing news media. It's left-wing hate groups like the SPLC.

Trans shooter outside the Children's Ministry

Let's see the latest news about the diversity, inclusion and equity of the secular left, as reported by The Post Millennial:

> Police said during a Monday press conference that the person who killed six including three children at the Covenant Christian school in Nashville was a former student of the academy, Audrey Hale, who identified as transgender and had left a detailed manifesto with plans on how to conduct the attack at the school.
>
> Hale entered the building by shooting through a door on the side, police said. Once inside, Hale reportedly began firing at anyone in sight.
>
> Among the victims were three 9-year-old children, Evelyn Dieckhaus, Hallie Scruggs, and William Kinney, as well as custodian Mike Hill, substitute teacher Cynthia Peak, and school head Katherine Koonce.
>
> […]Officers found that Hale was equipped with at least two assault rifles and a

> handgun, and a search of the family home in Nashville revealed detailed maps and a manifesto of the attack.

We shouldn't be surprised to find out that a transgender activist was responsible for a mass shooting. Mass shootings in America are *almost always* committed by people on the secular left. This is not even the first time that there has been a mass shooting committed by a transgender activist.

Do you remember this story, reported by The Post Millennial?

> Convicted school shooter Devon Erickson, now 20-years-old, was sentenced Friday to life in prison without the possibility of parole.
>
> The former high school student who was charged with opening fire alongside a transgender accomplice on "transphobic" classmates at a Colorado charter school was convicted of all 46 counts, including first-degree murder, back in June.
>
> Erickson partnered with Maya "Alec" McKinney shot one student dead and wounded eight others when the pair executed a plan to kill the movie-watching classmates inside a darkened classroom at STEM School Highlands Ranch on May 7, 2019. The two mass shooters plotted the fatal shooting just three days before graduation and entered through separate doors to maximize the number of students they're able to kill, prosecutors said.

You might think that the secular left would want justice for the victims, but you'd be wrong. They want compassion and non-judgment for the criminals:

> Social justice activists on social media advocated to #AbolishPrisons for McKinney's release so he can "thrive as a trans person." Leftists claimed online

> that “oppressive society” and “a world designed to kill us” had driven McKinney, who was born female but identifies as male, to violence and were at fault.

On Twitter, other trans activists are expressing support for the murderer, blaming Christians and explaining that Christians deserve to be attacked.

Transgender activists are even planning a “Trans Day of Vengeance” and raising money for firearms training. Firearms training.

Daily Wire reports:

> A group of transgender activists is planning a “Day of Vengeance” in Washington, D.C., for March 31-April 2 while raising money for firearms training this week, according to its online materials.

The corporate news media responded to the murder of Christian children like this:

That’s an incitement to violence. Terry Moran, Senior National Correspondent for ABC News also blamed Christians for provoking the transgender activist into murdering their children, including the daughter of the pastor. Here are more reactions to the shooting from the secular left elites, reported by The Federalist.

Although you might expect the Biden administration to focus in on groups that are actually violent, Biden’s law enforcement is more concerned with arresting concerned parents and peaceful pro-life demonstrators. After all, Democrats say, those are the real “domestic terrorists”.

This isn't even the first time that an LGBT activist was involved in domestic terrorism.

Recall this article posted at The Federalist that the Southern Poverty Law Center was the source of the "hate map" which was used by convicted domestic terrorist Floyd Lee Corkins in his attempt to shoot and kill everyone at the Family Research Council. He was stopped by a security guard, and the video above is the footage of the attempted mass murder.

Excerpt:

> Corkins would later admit that he had located Family Research Council's office on a "hate map" produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center, and he planned to shoot people in the building and smear the Chick-fil-A sandwiches on them.
>
> […]Much of the ensuing media coverage ignored or downplayed Corkins' motives, which the *Washington Post* referred to as "a detail sure to reignite the culture wars." A year later, Southern Poverty Law Center founder Morris Dees was still publicly defending the inclusion of Family Research Council on the organization's "hate map."

Just to be clear, this gay activist was convicted of domestic terrorism, and received 25 years in prison.

The SPLC has been linked to Big Tech, and also to the FBI and the armed forces. You'll recall that the FBI has lots of time for arresting peaceful pro-life activists, and investigating concerned parents for "domestic terrorism". They didn't prevent this mass shooting though.

So what should Christians do about this? As Christianity declines in our society, we should expect fewer people to act in ways consistent with the Bible. And that spells trouble – not just for Christians, but for society as a whole. Doctrines like “the image of God” “free will” “Heaven and Hell” “repentance” “forgiveness” etc. make a huge difference to our civil society. You can already see what is happening to unborn children in the womb, and children who are being raised by selfish adults who deprive them of their biological mother or biological father or both. We are turning away from defending the rights of the weak and helpless, and favoring adult selfishness.

For the past hundred years of so, we have accepted a version of Christianity that is comfortable for the Disney-lovers. The emotion-based people. People like Russell Moore and David French, whose first priority is to be loved by non-Christians, rather than to persuade non-Christians to love Christ. Groups like The Gospel Coalition, the ERLC and Christianity Today, that just want to get along with the secular left. These are people who accept Christianity because they have feelings about it, and who think that non-Christians reject Christianity just because they don’t have feelings about it. They have no idea whether Christianity is true as a matter of fact, because they’ve never done the work to investigate it. And that’s why they just capitulate to the hurt feelings of people on the secular left. We can’t rely on them to protect us. They stood by passively, while Christianity ceased to be viewed as a live worldview option for non-Christians. Their laziness, cowardice and ignorance put us in this mess.

How can we get back the space to live our lives consistently with our Biblical convictions? Well, we can use reason and evidence to convince non-Christians that Christians are good, moral people, and that our views are reasonable, and that our way of life is a benefit for society. We can no longer turn inward, and focus on what God has planned to entertain us. Now we have to roll up our sleeves and do the real work of the Great Commission, in the style of 1 Peter 3:15 and 2 Cor 10:5. Origin of the universe, cosmic fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, molecular machines, irreducible complexity, gospel authorship, minimal facts case for the resurrection, etc. We need to be able to defend our views on moral issues with reason and evidence. Our marriages should be better and more stable, and we should be raising better kids, too. Even if non-

Christians aren’t convinced by our intellects and our loving relationships, they should at least respect us enough to not mass murder us.

Scott Klusendorf discusses right to life, assisted reproduction, and end of life

March 29, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video, featuring my favorite pro-life speakers Scott Klusendorf. Scott is the founder and President of the Life Training Institute. LTI's mission is to make a rigorous, rational defense for pro-life positions with respect to a variety of ethical issues. If you listen to Scott, you will learn a lot, and learn it from someone who has been tested on the battlefield of ideas.

Three topics:

- right to life of the unborn
- reproductive technologies
- end of life questions

40 minutes of guided discussion, 20 minutes of Q&A. This video was apparently recorded in the summer of 2016.

Abortion:

- the 1-minute case for the pro-life position (excellent)
- dealing with those who dismiss the pro-life case as religious
- how and when do people win arguments?
- how does one get better at discussing moral issues?
- who are some of the best books to get informed about life issues?
- what are some of the best books from the other side?
- what is the SLED test? do pro-abortion scholars accept it?
- if abortion were illegal, who should be punished and how much?
- is it inflammatory and dangerous to say that abortion is killing?

Assisted reproductive technologies:

- how should we speak to people considering ARTs?
- what is the underlying issue in ART discussions?
- should pro-lifers be opposed to all use of ARTs?
- what should pro-lifers think about surrogacy?
- which books provide an introduction to ART ethics?

End of life issues:

- what is the central issue in end of life discussions?
- should treatment always be continued or are there situations where treatment can be withdrawn?

Final issues:

- if a student wants to take courses in bioethics, where should they go to take courses or do a degree?
- what is the policy situation for pro-lifers in terms of legislation and SCOTUS decision-making?
- what are some policies that pro-lifers can support as incremental measures that move the issue in the right direction?

I liked this discussion. I tried to listen as someone new to the issue and he did a good job of not assuming any prior knowledge of the debate. My favorite part was his survey of books and arguments on the other side, and what they say. I don't think that most people realize what the implications of the pro-abortion worldview really are for things like infanticide, and so on. The discussion about who should be punished for abortion and how much was new to me – and that actually came up during the last election, during the GOP primary. Personally, I would let the woman get off, and just prosecute the doctor.

It's very very good to listen to crystal clear thinking on these controversial issues from someone who has encountered the other side in their writings, and in public debates with them. Not to mention having to interact with people making decisions in these areas.

Christians should support natural marriage because it protects children from adult selfishness

March 30, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been following Katy Faust's work on Twitter. She runs the organization "Them Before Us". She fights laws and policies which allow adults to put their desires above the needs of children. And especially a child's need for a relationship with his or her mother and father. In a recent article for The Federalist, she takes on a Joshua Harris, who is attacking traditional Christian moral values.

She writes:

> In a recent interview, newly ex-mega-church pastor Joshua Harris and author of the 1990s best-seller "I Kissed Dating Goodbye" remarked that the support President Trump has received from the evangelical community has been "incredibly damaging to the gospel and to the church." I'd wager Harris is projecting something fierce.
>
> In August, Harris announced that he and his wife Shannon were divorcing, that he no longer considers himself a Christian, and that he regrets "standing against marriage equality." Just in case the point was lost on any of us, he followed up his announcement by posting a picture of himself eating a rainbow donut at the Vancouver Pride parade.
>
> **It's no coincidence that Harris reversed himself on biblical teachings on sex and marriage while abandoning the core tenets of the faith.**
>
> **The denial of sexual and marital norms by believers is often adjacent to a rejection of the core tenets of the faith. That's because to arrive at these "inclusive" and "affirming" positions on marriage, Christians must exalt intoxicants such as emotion over uncompromising scripture, tradition, and natural law. Once you shift the authority from sola scriptura to sola feels, it's only a matter of time before every other orthodox teaching finds itself on the woke chopping block.**

I love this SO MUCH.

If I had to pick one conclusion that I have found to be true in 30 years of debating Christian truth claims, it would be that the normal process for becoming an atheist has nothing to do with reason or evidence. People abandon their faith in their teens, long before they have ever done any research into whether Christianity is true. And why? Because they know that their desire to be free of the moral demands of Christianity is true. And they know that their desire to be liked by their non-Christian friends is true.

Katy explains that she loves loves to discuss and debate with non-Christians and LGBT people about the issue she cares about: natural marriage and children's rights. But she gets annoyed with Christian leaders who misunderstand the gospel.

She writes:

> Whether approaching the issue from a natural law perspective where male and female complementarity features prominently, or considering the most widely ratified treaty in human history outlines a child's right to be known and loved by their mother and father, or through the lens of scripture where God joins together man and woman in life-long union because he is seeking "godly offspring" (Malachi 2), Christian leaders have no excuse for getting marriage wrong.
>
> Zip. Zero. Nada. Their more-tolerant-than-Jesus definition of marriage (Mark 10:6-9) is, to use Harris' own words, incredibly damaging not only to the church, but to the most vulnerable as well.
>
> The reality is that Christians cannot get gay marriage wrong unless they first get the gospel wrong. Progressive Christians are under the wrong impression that ours is a gospel of affirmation: the idea that God affirms everything we think and say and do and want. This misconceived notion of the gospel believes that for God to genuinely love us, he has to love everything about us.
>
> In this self-esteem-driven, everyone-gets-a-prize culture, a God who sometimes disapproves of our thoughts and behavior (*cough* Psalm 19:14) appears to be quite a bigot. In the "Born This Way" version of the Gaga gospel, Matthew 5:29 would read, "If your right eye causes you to stumble, by all means, redefine the word 'stumble' because, well, I wouldn't want you to lose an eye now, would I?"
>
> An honest reading of scripture reveals that ours is not a gospel of affirmation. Leave aside the 613 laws of the Old Testament in which God is rigidly un-affirming as he imposes devastating consequences on his people when they misuse their words, money, bodies, land, and worship. The New Testament and the gospels are also brimming with commands to put off behaviors that displease God and put on an entirely new nature.

Katy likes to tweet a lot of stories where children who have been impacted by divorce or same-sex marriage or donor-conception or surrogacy speak about how they feel about not having a relationship with their father or mother (or both). But she also knows how to argue against adult selfishness using data.

My advice to Christians is this. If you want to have confidence when defending the Christian teaching on marriage, or defending the rights of children to a Mom and a Dad, then you need to be equipped with research, statistical evidence and stories of those who have been impacted. Being a Christian means advocating for the teachings of Jesus. Jesus cared about children, and he wanted adults to act in a way towards children that would help those children to come to know him and follow him. We should not be affirming adult selfishness when it harms the children who are made to know God.

I think one of the reasons why people like Joshua Harris are abandoning the faith is because abandoning the morality came first. And before the abandoning of morality, there was a refusal to get informed about the harm that sin does. Instead of putting in the

time to look at the evidence, they just altered their worldviews in order to feel good and be liked. Well, feeling good and being liked has never been important to the Christian life. But valuing truth, defending Christian convictions with evidence, and protecting the weak from the strong is found everywhere in the New Testament.

Why do law-abiding Americans insist on owning guns?

March 31, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm not originally from the United States, and when I go back home to visit, one of the questions that I get asked a lot is "why do Americans own so many guns?" So in this post, I wanted to look at some stories from the United States about crime and gun violence and see why so many Americans own guns.

My favorite writer on these issues is Amy Swearer, who writes for the Daily Signal. I find that her articles are useful for explaining to people who don't own guns, or want to ban guns, why it might be a good idea to own a gun, and to know how to use it.

The first article to see is a review of 10 examples of defensive gun use from February 2023.

She writes:

> Almost every major study has found that Americans use their firearms in self-defense between 500,000 and 3 million times annually, according to a 2013 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2021, the most comprehensive study ever conducted on the issue concluded that roughly 1.6 million defensive gun uses occur in the United States every year.
>
> For this reason, The Daily Signal publishes a monthly article highlighting some of the previous month's many news stories on defensive gun use that you may have missed—or that might not have made it to the national spotlight in the first place. (Read other accounts here from past years.)
>
> The 11 incidents below represent only a small portion of the news stories on defensive gun use that we found in January.

Here are a couple of the examples:

> - **Jan. 9, Ellijay, Georgia:** Police said an armed robber who tried to hide his face under a pair of women's panties entered a combined gas station and convenience store and pointed a handgun at the clerk. What he didn't know is that all three customers inside the store were legally armed. Working together, they disarmed the robber and held him at gunpoint until police arrived.
>
> - **Jan. 14, Utica, New York:** When a disgruntled customer at an Applebee's restaurant slashed an employee across the face with a steak knife, police said, an armed diner with a concealed carry permit intervened, ordering the man to drop the knife. He then held the assailant at gunpoint until police arrived.

> - **Jan. 27, Haines City, Florida:** A concealed carry permit holder returned home with his girlfriend to find two intruders in his kitchen. The homeowner drew his gun and fired five rounds at one intruder, striking him four times, before fleeing with his girlfriend and calling police. Responding officers found the wounded intruder—a convicted felon—near the home and were trying to identify and locate the second intruder. In response to the shooting, Haines City Police Chief Greg Goreck reminded reporters that most people in the county are armed, saying: "One should expect that if you are brazen enough to enter into someone's residence and it is not yours, with intent to commit an unlawful act, there may be repercussions."

The second article talks about defensive gun uses by students:

> - **Feb. 14, Seattle:** A couple and their two children were getting out of a family vehicle when two armed robbers threatened them, police said. The father also was armed, however, and exchanged gunfire with the robbers until they fled. In an effort to protect his wife and children, the father moved away from the vehicle to create distance between them and the crossfire. He was shot three times in the lower body, but his actions prevented his wife and children from being hurt.
> - **Feb. 22, Eddy County, North Dakota:** A farmer spotted a wanted murder suspect walking near his property and held him at gunpoint until police arrived, single-handedly ending a two-day, multiagency manhunt.

It's especially important for people living in blue cities or blue states to arm themselves, because the police forces in these areas have had their budgets slashed by Democrats. "Defund the police" sounds so good, but it just gets a lot of peaceful, law-abiding people killed.

It's very important to ask secular leftists who want to ban law-abiding people from owning firearms "what do you expect people to do when criminals want to hurt them?" The answer I get from my atheist Democrat friend is that he expects them to call the police, and wait for them to arrive. There is a real suspicion among secular leftists of law-abiding people defend themselves – especially men. A man defending his family? Why, that's "sexist". Better to call the police and wait for them to arrive.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

The book by economist John Lott, linked above, compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, which shows that the 1997 UK gun ban caused violent crime rates to MORE THAN DOUBLE in the four years following the ban. But both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

One of the common mistakes I see anti-gun advocates making is to use the metric of all "gun-related deaths". First of all, this completely ignores the effects of hand gun ownership on violent crime, as we've seen. Take away the guns from law-abiding people and violent crime skyrockets. But using the "gun-related deaths" number is especially wrong, because it includes suicides committed with guns. This is the majority (about two thirds) of gun related deaths, even in a country like America that has a massive inner-city gun violence problem caused by the epidemic of single motherhood by choice. If you take out the gun-related SUICIDES, then the actual number of gun homicides has decreased as gun ownership has grown.

For a couple of useful graphs related to this point, check out this post over at the American Enterprise Institute.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 31: Was Jesus a Socialist, Part 2

April 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 31 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose continue discussing what the Bible says about Christianity and economics. We discuss Bible passages that support the free enterprise system. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

PLEASE NOTE: Rose is sick with the same thing that I had during the Christmas and New Year's holidays. For me, that lasted about 4 weeks, and I was on a prescription cough suppressant just so I could sleep! So, we have have a delay until we can record episode 3 in this series on Christianity and socialism.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 31:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose look at several passages of the Bible where Jesus speaks about economics issues, and discuss whether his words are more compatible with socialism or free enterprise. What view of property does Jesus assume? Who should redistribute wealth to alleviate poverty – governments or individuals? What does the Bible teach about greed, envy and coveting? We end the episode with book recommendations. This is the second episode of a three-part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

References:

- Basic Economics: A Common Sense Guide to the Economy by Thomas Sowell
- Money, Greed, and God 10th Anniversary Edition: The Christian Case for Free Enterprise by Jay Richards

- Common Sense Economics: What Everyone Should Know About Wealth and Prosperity by James Gwartney, Richard Stroup,Dwight Lee, Tawni Ferrarini, and Joseph Calhoun
- The Maker Versus the Takers: What Jesus Really Said About Social Justice and Economics by Jerry Bowyer
- The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution by Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus

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Do not expect the woke police in Canada to protect you from an LGBT assault

April 2, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The big story from the weekend came from Vancouver, BC, where a pro-child activist was assaulted *on camera* by a transgender activist. Crowds of police were standing around watching, and one of the female police officers was smirking and laughing as the assault happened. She refused to lift a finger to investigate or make an arrest, and accused the victim of causing his own wound.

Here's the story from The Blaze:

> The Vancouver Police Department is investigating after activist Chris Elston, also known as "Billboard Chris," says he was assaulted Friday at a trans-rights rally.
>
> "The most violent group in the western world are transgender activists," Elston tweeted Saturday. "Here I am getting assaulted in the presence of dozens of police who do nothing," Elston said.
>
> The police officer was not interested in seeing the video of the assault, instead accusing the victim of assaulting himself.
>
> One video of Friday's incident in Vancouver shows Elston, already with what appears to be an open cut on the bridge of his nose from an earlier assault in the public park. That video shows a group surrounding him, chanting "f*** you." Police officers are seen standing by as the swarm quickly grows violent.
>
> The video shows one chanting protester with an orange umbrella and a rainbow flag, standing within inches of Elston, directly behind him. As Elston turns, his elbow appears to graze the protester's fluffy coat collar and Elston appears to place his hand lightly on the protester's collar as he continues turning on the spot.
>
> The video shows the protester immediately go for Elston's neck with what appears to be an attempt at a choking type hold. A scuffle ensues as Elston pulls back from the hold, then pushes the protester away, and tumbles toward the group of officers. As Elston creates some distance between himself and the protester group, one female officer among the several officers in view in the footage, appears to be smiling or chuckling.
>
> […]The first assault at the Vancouver location occurred "within seconds" of his arrival, Elston said, adding that he had called 911 for assistance. According to Elston, the female officer — who appears to be the same officer smiling during the later assault described above — initially suggested Elston might have cut his own nose.

That's what you get for "law enforcement" in Canada.

If you are the victim of violence or vandalism in Canada, the police will probably not do anything to the criminal. Especially if the criminal is in one of the special interest groups favored by the secular left. They might even charge you instead, if you're not in one of the left-wing special interest groups. Canada is not America. It's more like a third world banana republic, where a hierarchy of victimhood determines who is right and who is wrong. There is no law.

From Twitter:

> After my first assault, which occurred within seconds of my arrival, I called 911 for police.
>
> This officer arrived quickly but stayed in her car, so I walked over.
>
> She told me maybe I cut my own nose!
>
> More farcical policing ensued. pic.twitter.com/v6mORvgAjd
>
> — Billboard Chris □□□□ (@BillboardChris) April 1, 2023

And:

> Another angle of the assault on me today. Police did nothing.
>
> The investigating officer says I instigated, and she told me it was a mutual fight. pic.twitter.com/rCQZyntjSY
>
> — Billboard Chris □□□□ (@BillboardChris) April 1, 2023

And:

> The investigating officer loves every minute of this.
>
> She's smiling away as I'm getting assaulted. https://t.co/Kxsn0CLgvD
>
> — Billboard Chris □□□□ (@BillboardChris) April 1, 2023

And:

> I showed this officer footage of @BillboardChris getting physically assaulted 3 TIMES and she says that HE incited violence by wearing his sign…
> Badge number 3081 of the VPD…she wouldn't tell me her name…
> pic.twitter.com/NcGJtdaHW5
>
> — Dan Dicks (@DanDicksPFT) April 1, 2023

Now, I want to say something about the smirking female police officers. I'm not sure if it's the same one in all the videos, or different ones. But something about this really rubbed me the wrong way, and I'm actually quite angry about it.

So, let me start by saying that a woman can't measure the value of a man by reflecting on how his appearance makes you feel. A man with a tall appearance, tattoos, muscles, etc. might make a woman feel protected. But without looking at spiritual ability and moral ability, there is no guarantee that there is a worldview *inside the man* that would cause

that man to protect a woman from a threat. And in any case, not every threat is a bear to wrestle with. Sometimes the threat is in the public school classroom, or even inside the woman's desires.

So, when you look at Billboard Chris, you have to look past his appearance. And when you do that, you'll see that this about as good of a man as you can make. Why? Because a good man protects children and animals from stronger people who want to hurt them. The man can be tall, the man can be short. The man can be handsome, the man can be ugly. The man can be rich, the man can be poor. The man can be smart, the man can be dumb. But what makes a man good for his family, and good for society, is that he is willing to deploy whatever strength, thinking, money, etc. he has to defend the weak from the strong. And Billboard Chris does that.

And that brings me to the smirking affirmative action police officer. And it brings me to the rule of secular leftist women over men in Canada, as a whole. Canada is a society that is *dominated* by the feelings-based priorities of secular leftist women. From the banning of free speech, to the banning of guns, to the high tax rates, to the single payer health care, to the coddling of criminals, gay rights, taxpayer-funded abortions… the whole society is set up to punish men who want to lead a home based on moral and spiritual ability. So when I see this immature police officer smirking at Chris, I find it infuriating. Chris is the kind of man that women should look up to and support. But in a country like Canada, what you get from the whole society is this smirking mockery. And that's why marriage is in a steep decline in Canada. Men don't marry women who mock spiritual and moral leadership. Men might have hook-up sex with immoral women, but men don't commit to them. Men don't make babies with women who are opposed to God and morality.

Billboard Chris says he is scheduled to be on Tucker Carlson on Monday night. I want everyone to be clear on what a banana republic Canada is. Don't go there. Don't spend your money there. It's not a country of laws. It's just a left-wing dictatorship where the police do the bidding of the secular left. Keep out of there.

Ron DeSantis signs universal school choice bill into law

April 3, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm watching Republican candidates for president closely to see whether they are performing any actions to oppose the secular left. One person who is building up a nice resume is Florida governor Ron DeSantis. In this post, I'll look at his latest achievement, then look at how Tennessee Republican leaders are responding to the recent murder of Christians by secular leftists in Nashville.

First, Ron DeSantis, reported by Focus on the Family:

> Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed a historic school choice bill into law earlier this week, making Florida the largest state in the union to give parents universal school choice for their children.
>
> The bill (HB 1) promotes school choice in multiple ways. Among other benefits, the bill:
>
> - Eliminates financial eligibility restrictions and allows any student who is a resident of Florida and is eligible to enroll in K-12 to participate.
> - Eliminates the enrollment cap on students who can participate in the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options.
> - Requires the development of a new online portal for parents that shows every educational option available for their student.
> - Expands the number of scholarships for students with unique abilities by tripling the annual increase from 1% to 3%.
>
> […]"Florida is number one when it comes to education freedom and education choice, and today's bill signing represents the largest expansion of education choice in the history of these United States," said Gov. DeSantis.
>
> "When you combine private scholarships, charter schools, and district choice programs, Florida already has 1.3 million students attending a school of their choosing," the governor added. "These programs have been instrumental in elevating student achievement over the past twenty years."

The article goes on to point out education freedom successes in other Republican-run states; Nebraska, Arkansas, Iowa and Utah. You're not going to see wins for parents in blue states like New York and California, because these states are not pro-child.

Add this action to the list of previous DeSantis actions:

- making collection of union dues optional for teachers
- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts
- elect conservatives to school boards

- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women's sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Meanwhile, in Tennessee, Governor Bill Lee has proposed a new law to protect children from violence.

Daily Wire:

> Every Tennessee private and public school will have the resources necessary to hire an armed guard if Governor Bill Lee (R-TN) gets his plan through a Republican-led legislature.
>
> Next week, Lee will propose a plan to funnel millions of dollars to public and private schools to beef up security following the mass shooting at a Nashville Christian elementary school on Monday. Lee's plan would place an armed school resource officer (SRO) in every public school and provide funding for private schools to hire armed guards with the same level of training as those in public schools. Private schools would not be forced to join in on the program…
>
> […]The governor also addressed "mental health concerns," adding that his new plan will seek more mental health support through school-based behavioral health liaisons…

You might be wondering if Tennessee can afford this, but don't worry. They had a massive surplus last fiscal year, as conservative business owners are fleeing blue states to come to Tennessee.

The Tennessee senators are also busy looking out for kids:

> Earlier this week, Tennessee Republican Sens. Marsha Blackburn and Bill Hagerty announced that they will introduce The SAFE School Act at the federal level. The legislation seeks to establish "a $900 million grant program that will allow both public and private schools to train and hire veterans and former law enforcement officers to serve as school safety officers, hire off duty law enforcement officers, and provide funding to harden schools and increase physical security."

I saw last week that Democrats were howling for Republicans to "do something". Well, Republicans are doing something. But the something they're doing is not banning all gun ownership and self-defense for law abiding people. Democrats created this crisis, by manufacturing a generation of mentally ill children in their government-run public schools. Well, Republicans have a solution, although it's not the one that the Democrats want.

New study: “social contagion” is a major factor in teen and young adult gender dysphoria

April 4, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I had blogged about a small study published in 2018 by Brown University’s Dr. Lisa Littman. That study was controversial, because it falsified the narrative about transgenderism held by secular leftists. The new study, published in March 2023 in Archives of Sexual Behavior, confirms the Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria theory first advanced by Littman. Let’s take a look.

The study is here, on Springer Link.

Excerpt from the Abstract:

> During the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in adolescents and young adults (AYA) complaining of gender dysphoria. One influential if controversial explanation is that the increase reflects a socially contagious syndrome: Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD).
>
> We report results from a survey of parents who contacted the website ParentsofROGDKids.com because they believed their AYA children had ROGD. Results focused on 1655 AYA children whose gender dysphoria reportedly began between ages 11 and 21 years, inclusive. These youths were disproportionately (75%) natal female. Natal males had later onset (by 1.9 years) than females, and they were much less likely to have taken steps toward social gender transition (65.7% for females versus 28.6% for males). Pre-existing mental health issues were common, and youths with these issues were more likely than those without them to have socially and medically transitioned.
>
> Parents reported that they had often felt pressured by clinicians to affirm their AYA child’s new gender and support their transition. According to the parents, AYA children’s mental health deteriorated considerably after social transition.

Breitbart reported about the study and noted:

> When asked if their child had friends who “came out as transgender around the same time,” 55.4 percent said “yes,” with that response being significantly higher for females, (60.9 percent) than it was for males (38.7 percent).
>
> […]The study also revealed that parents said they oftentimes felt pressured by clinicians to go along with their child’s new gender identity and support their transition. The parents added that their children’s “mental health deteriorated considerably after social transition.”
>
> […]Parents also estimated that before developing gender dysphoria, their child was spending an average of 4.5 hours per day “on the internet and social media.”

> When asked whether a stressful event in their child's life may have contributed to the onset of gender dysphoria, 72.6 percent of parents answered "yes."

One of the differences between men and women, in my experience, is that the majority of men tend to generate their worldview by making plans that are likely to achieve goals, whereas the majority of women tend to get their goals from the culture, and pursue those goals by doing what feels good "in the moment". I have been told this by women who were never like this, and by women who grew out of this once they experienced failure. That's why transgenderism is especially problematic for girls, because if it is being spread by social cues and pressures, then girls are typically going to be more susceptible to that than boys.

Let's talk about the previous study.

Here's how the study was first reported by Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.

Peer pressure / The Internet:

> The pattern of clusters of teens in friend groups becoming transgender-identified, the group dynamics of these friend groups and the types of advice viewed online led her to the hypothesis that friends and online sources could spread certain beliefs.
>
> [….]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

Mental disorders / traumatic events:

> Additionally, 62 percent of parents reported their teen or young adult had one or more diagnoses of a psychiatric disorder or neurodevelopmental disability before the onset of gender dysphoria. Forty-eight percent reported that their child had experienced a traumatic or stressful event prior to the onset of their gender dysphoria, including being bullied, sexually assaulted or having their parents get divorced.

This article at The Federalist had a few examples to illustrate the conclusion of the study. I'll pick two.

>

> The study includes other eye-opening information, such as case studies of several children's stories.
>
> - "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends were taking group lessons together with a very popular coach. The coach came out as transgender, and, within one year, all four students announced they were also transgender."
> - "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends are part of a larger friend group that spends much of their time talking about gender and sexuality. The three natal female friends all announced they were trans boys and chose similar masculine names. After spending time with these three friends, the 14-year-old natal female announced that she was also a trans boy."

I thought this quote from that article was interesting as well, given the culture's obsession with "bullying", which is a nebulous term that can mean actual bullying, or mere disagreement.

> The study also may indicate that school "anti-bullying" programs typically created by LGBT activist organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign may help accelerate children identifying as transgender by pushing peers and authority figures to profusely express their support.

Coming out as transgender means instant fame and popularity, because you're a victim, and everyone has to be nice to you… or else:

> "Great increase in popularity among the student body at large. Being trans is a gold star in the eyes of other teens," wrote one parent on the study response form. Another wrote, "not so much 'popularity' increasing as 'status' … also she became untouchable in terms of bullying in school as teachers who ignored homophobic bullying …are now all at pains to be hot on the heels of any trans bullying."

So becoming transgender has social rewards, especially for people who are being bullied. White girls are constantly being bullied for their race in public schools, so identifying as transgender is a quick and easy way for them to get out of the oppressor class and into the victim class

Left-wing hate group Southern Poverty Law Center to face defamation lawsuit

April 5, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you heard about the Southern Poverty Law Center? This is a group that spreads hatred about conservative Christians, and has even been connected to acts of domestic terrorism committed by left-wing activists. Somehow, they've always managed to escape legal consequences for their hateful smears of Christians and conservatives. But now they've been sued again.

Here's the news from the Daily Signal:

> The Southern Poverty Law Center routinely brands mainstream conservative and Christian organizations "hate groups," placing them on a map with chapters of the Ku Klux Klan, but most lawsuits aiming to hold the SPLC accountable for this alleged defamation have failed.
>
> On Friday, however, a federal judge denied the SPLC's motion to dismiss a defamation lawsuit, allowing the case to proceed.
>
> The SPLC branded the Georgia-based Dustin Inman Society an "anti-immigrant hate group" in February 2018 after the SPLC had previously stated in 2011 that it did not consider the society a "hate group." The society, named after a 16-year-old Georgia boy killed in a 2000 car crash caused by an illegal immigrant, aims to combat illegal immigration.

The SPLC is apparently in favor of having Americans killed by illegal immigrants, so they brand anyone who disagrees as "a hate group". But to me, if you aren't siding with an innocent child against an illegal immigrant who commits crimes, then you are the real hater, and your organization is the real "hate group".

So let's find out more about the SPLC. The author of this Daily Signal post has actually written an entire book about them, and here is his summary:

> As I explain in my book "Making Hate Pay: The Corruption of the Southern Poverty Law Center," the SPLC… [brands Christians and conservatives as] "hate groups" in an effort to raise money and demonize its ideological opponents. The SPLC has an endowment of more than $500 million and bank accounts in the Cayman Islands. Amid a racial discrimination and sexual harassment scandal in 2019 that led the SPLC to fire its co-founder, a former employee came forward, calling the "hate" accusations a "highly profitable scam."

And he even has a summary paragraph of the SPLC's links to gay activists convicted of domestic terrorism against Christians:

> The lawsuit cites the 2012 terrorist attack in which a man targeted the Family Research Council's headquarters in Washington, D.C., after finding the council on

> the SPLC's "hate map." The man pleaded guilty to committing an act of terrorism and received a 25-year prison sentence. The SPLC condemned the attack, but has kept the Family Research Council on its hate map ever since.

This is not the only time that the SPLC has been involved with hateful violence against innocent people.

Here's the story from Daily Wire:

> An attorney with the far-left nonprofit Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) was arrested Sunday for allegedly committing domestic terrorism to stop a police facility from being built.
>
> The Atlanta police department said Sunday night that Thomas Webb Jurgens was among the 23 people charged after a "group of violent agitators used the cover of a peaceful protest of the proposed Atlanta Public Safety Training Center to conduct a coordinated attack on construction equipment and police officers. They changed into black clothing and entered the construction area and began to throw large rocks, bricks, Molotov cocktails, and fireworks at police officers."
>
> According to the State Bar of Georgia, Thomas Webb Jurgens is an attorney for the SPLC who was admitted to the bar in 2021.

The Daily Signal article notes that the SPLC has been sued successfully:

> "Making Hate Pay" details multiple defamation lawsuits against the SPLC from organizations and individuals branded as "hate groups" or "extremists." The SPLC paid $3.375 million to settle with Maajid Nawaz, a Muslim reformer it had branded an "anti-Islamic extremist."

But they clearly haven't learned their lesson. I hope that the next penalty is 10 times that amount. Maybe then, their hateful donors will learn to support organizations that actually help people, and do good in the world.

Bible study: what difference does the resurrection of Jesus make?

April 6, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from Bible.org, written by famous New Testament manuscript expert Dan Wallace.

What does the Old Testament say about the doctrine of the resurrection in Judaism?

He says:

> The resurrection of the dead was not *plainly* revealed in the OT until very late in salvation history. It was not until the Jews were taken in captivity, in the sixth century BC, that this was clearly articulated. Daniel 12:1-2 is the principal text: it speaks of the resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous:
>
> At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (RSV)
>
> Why was it not *clearly* revealed till then? It was not revealed until there was a *felt* need for it. When the Jews had no present (because of the captivity) they had to look to the future. The revelation of the resurrection came at precisely the time when the people of God needed *hope* for the future.
>
> What is significant about this is how masterful are God's insights into human nature. In the NT era, one religious group in Palestine did not embrace the resurrection as a true doctrine: the Sadducees (cf. Mark 12:18)–that is why they were "sad, you see!" The Sadducees were in charge of the temple. They derived their income from the sacrifices. In a sense, they were the precursors to modern TV evangelists. They had it good! They were the rich aristocracy that ran the place.
>
> **Those who have it good in this life don't often long for the next. The Sadducees illustrate this. The resurrection is a truth especially precious to those who are poor and those who are hopeless. It is precious to those who long for heaven enough that earth holds no sway over them.**

This means something to me. I didn't grow up with parents who had any plan for me. I had to figure out what I was supposed to be doing with my life on my own, because they were both too busy doing their own things. This is true even to this day. After I became a Christian, there were many things that I wanted to achieve in this life. But for a variety of reasons, those most of those things never happened. I wanted to do great things for God, like getting married, having a family, getting a PhD and teaching computer science in a

secular university. But things that I had intended to do for God just didn't happen the way I had hoped.

I often find myself thinking of Heaven, and having that eternal perspective on this life. One of the things that is the hardest to accept is that being a Christian makes many things I'd like to do a lot harder. It certainly didn't open any doors at school, or now, at work. I'm glad my salvation doesn't depend on achieving anything in particular. And I'm especially glad that my salvation doesn't depend on what anyone thinks of me. I find it almost impossible in this culture to get any respect by doing the things that I think are really important.

I think if a person were really successful at what they tried to do, then it would be really hard for them to give up living and go to be with Jesus.

What did Jesus intend to achieve with his resurrection?

Did you know that Jesus provided the resurrection as evidence for those who were skeptical of his claims to be God stepping into history?

Here's an article from Got Questions? on the "Sign of Jonah", which appears in the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

It says:

> The phrase "sign of Jonah" was used by Jesus as a typological metaphor for His future crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Jesus answered with this expression when asked by the Pharisees for miraculous proof the He was indeed the Messiah. The Pharisees remained unconvinced of Jesus' claims about Himself, despite His having just cured a demon-possessed man who was both blind and mute. Shortly after the Pharisees accused Jesus of driving out demons by the power of Satan, they said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here" (Matthew 12:38–41).
>
> To fully appreciate the answer that Jesus gave, we must go to the Old Testament book of Jonah. In its first chapter, we read that God commanded the prophet Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and warn its people that He was going to destroy it for its wickedness. Jonah disobediently ran from the Lord and headed for the city of Tarshish by boat. The Lord then sent a severe storm that caused the crew of the ship to fear for their lives. Jonah was soon thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish where he remained for "three days and three nights" (Jonah 1:15–17). After the three-day period, the Lord caused the great fish to vomit Jonah out onto dry land (Jonah 2:10).

> It is this three days that Jesus was referring to when He spoke of the sign of Jonah.

I often bring up the Sign of Jonah when I am dealing with Christians who don't want to learn how to explain their faith to non-Christians persuasively. I'm glad that story is in there!

The resurrection is a very important part of the life of the Christian. I argued in this post that it makes a difference to your feelings about your own life, and it makes a difference to your case-making with non-Christians.

Bible study: Was the resurrection body of Jesus spiritual or physical?

April 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the leading naturalistic attempts to account for Jesus' death, empty tomb, post-mortem appearances, and the early proclamation of the resurrection is that the disciples had individual and group hallucinations. In this case, the New Testament authors would not have meant that the resurrected body of Jesus was physical. But is that what they recorded?

We'll look at the words for 1) resurrection, 2) body and 3)

Here's a quotation from my friend Eric Chabot, from his blog Think Apologetics. He explains why Paul's use of the word "resurrection" to describe what the other witnesses saw means *bodily* resurrection.

He writes:

> The two words are used for resurrection in the New Testament "anastasis" (rising up) and "egersis" (waking up), both imply a physical body**.** Furthermore, the use of the word "opethe" (the Greek word for appeared) shows the Gospel writers did believe that Jesus appeared physically. "There you will see (opethe) him" (Matt. 28:7); "The Lord has risen and has appeared (opethe) to Simon" (Luke 24:24). When they used "opethe" here, it means that He appeared physically to them.

OK so all the words they used for resurrection imply a physical body.

But what about the word for body. Do they imply a physical body?

Yes:

> So when Paul gives his list of appearances in 1 Cor. 15, the issues becomes whether the appearance to him is the same as it was to the disciples. There is no doubt the post resurrection body of Jesus (after the ascension) had to be somewhat different than the body the disciples saw. Also, whenever the New Testament mentions the word body, in the context of referring to an individual human being, the Greek word "soma" always refers to a literal, physical body. Greek specialist Robert Gundry says "the consistent and exclusive use of soma for the physical body in anthropological contexts resists dematerialization of the resurrection, whether by idealism or by existentialism." [9] Furthermore, in N.T. Wright's The Resurrection of the Son of God shows that the Greek word for resurrection which is "anastasis" was used by ancient Jews, pagans, and Christians as bodily in nature.

What about the nature of Paul's appearance? Was that a hallucination, or seeing some objective reality? Did the people with Paul see or hear anything?

Eric Chabot writes this in another place:

> The Bible says, “they heard” the same voice Paul did ” (Acts 9: 7). But they “did not see anyone ” (Acts 9: 7). Notice Paul was physically blinded by the brightness of the light. One way or the other, the experience involved something that was external to Paul. It wasn’t something that was the same thing as a vision that Paul talks about in 2 Cor. 12:1. Furthermore, the phrase “he let himself be seen’” (ōphthē , aorist passive,), is the word Paul uses in 1 Cor. 15:7 to describe of his own resurrection appearance as the other ones in the creed.

Paul didn’t get a bodily resurrection appearance, but he got an objective appearance that people nearby could see (as a bright light) and hear. His appearance, coming 5-8 years after the appearances to the disciples, should not be seen as overriding their appearances, which were appearances of the bodily resurrected Jesus.

If you want to read something a little more challenging, I found a paper from the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) from their journal, where it talks more about soma and anastasis. If you want a bit of a challenge, download the PDF and read it. It’s by Kirk R. MacGregor and the title is “1 Corinthians 15:3B–6A, 7 And The Bodily Resurrection Of Jesus”.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

April 8, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women

    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Did the early church invent the divinity of Jesus over a long period of time?

April 9, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus?

When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography.

The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is

stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this

passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The "Q" source for Matthew and Luke

Here's Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier "Q" source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Soros-backed DA convicts army veteran of murder for defending himself from Antifa

April 10, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There's a happy ending to this story, but I still think it's important to pay attention. I'm very picky about where I live, because I think it's important to pick the juries, judges, police and district attorneys that reflect Constitutional values. Let's look at a story about someone who thought it was fine to live and work in a far-left Democrat county. But don't worry, this story has a happy ending.

Fox News reports:

> The shooting involving Sgt. Perry occurred during Black Lives Matter demonstrations that erupted across the Texas state capital and the rest of the United States nearly three years ago.
>
> Perry, who was stationed at Fort Hood at the time, was driving for Uber to make extra money in downtown Austin on the night of July 25, 2020, when he encountered a large crowd of protesters. They were illegally blocking city streets that night, according to police, as protesters in Austin and elsewhere had done during the weeks of rioting.
>
> Among the protesters was 28-year-old Garrett Foster, who was carrying an AK-47. Perry's defense team says that the demonstrators encircled and starting pounding on his vehicle and that Foster raised the firearm at Perry, prompting him to open fire with a handgun he legally carried for self-defense.
>
> "When Garrett Foster pointed his AK-47 at Daniel Perry, Daniel had two tenths of a second to defend himself. He chose to live," Doug O'Connell, an attorney for Perry, perviously told Fox in a statement.
>
> […]Perry drove to a safe location away from the scene and called 911 to report what had happened. Officers spoke to Perry that night and released him, but a grand jury returned an indictment for murder and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon one year later in July 2021.

Travis county is famous for being very far to the left. They always side with criminals against law-abiding people. It was a very poor decision by Perry to live in Travis county, and take the chance of facing far-left police, district attorneys, judges and juries.

But fortunately, Travis county is in Texas, and Texas has an amazing Republican governor.

Fox News reports:

> Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, R., looks at pardoning Perry, tweeting Saturday, "I am working as swiftly as Texas law allows regarding the pardon of Sgt. Perry," adding that the state's Board of Pardons and Paroles must recommend pardons,

> but that he made the request and urged the board to expedite its review.
>
> Other state officials, including Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, support the move to pardon Perry. Patrick joined Fox News' Lawrence Jones on Saturday to break down the case.
>
> "This DA, like a lot of the George Soros-supported DAs across the country in our big, blue cities, seemed to let criminals go free and go after the innocent," he said.
>
> The case's lead detective, who maintains Perry acted in self-defense, is considered the "best" in the city of Austin, according to Patrick, who also reiterated claims that Garza instructed the detective to remove any exculpatory slides from his 158-slide presentation of evidence from the case.
>
> "He says he believes that the evidence he [the detective] would've presented to the grand jury would have possibly led to them not even indicting [Perry]," Patrick said.
>
> The detective maintains that Garza's conduct was not only unlawful, but bordered on criminal conduct of witness tampering.

This is a good time for Americans to think about how the far left handles issues of crime and self-defense. If you live in a blue city in a blue state, you should consider what might happen to you if you have to defend yourself. Right now, we are seeing left-wing public schools turning out hundreds of mentally disturbed children. The law enforcement is calling law-abiding citizens "domestic terrorists", while treating real BLM and Antifa criminals leniently. It would be a mistake to put yourself under the power of the secular left. There might not be a governor there to pardon you, if you get into trouble with them.

Study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others

April 11, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back I finished reading "God's Crime Scene", the new book by J. Warner Wallace. I wanted to post something about some studies he mentioned in Chapter 6, on free will. This is one of the places where he found evidence in a surprising area.

Wallace says that free will makes more sense if theism is true, because we have non-material souls that interact with our bodies, but are not causally determined by them. On atheism, only matter exists, and you can't get free will (or consciousness) from matter. So atheists like Sam Harris and Alex Rosenberg, for example, deny free will, because they are materialists and atheists.

Anyway, here's what he writes on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others." Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: "It seems that not only do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it."" The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here's the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free

> will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons' belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you're an atheist, then you are a physical object. And like every other physical object in the universe, your behavior is determined by genetic programming (if you're alive) and external inputs. Material objects do not have the ability to make free choices, including moral choices.

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no

moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

(Source)

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality. Can you imagine trying to get into any sort of enterprise with someone who has this view of moral choices? A marriage, or a business arrangement, etc? It would be crazy to expect them to behave morally, when they don't even think that moral choices is possible. It just excuses all sorts of bad behavior, because no one is responsible for choosing to do the right thing.

Believers in materialism are going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

Choosing to do the right thing

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when doing the right thing sets you back. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me about their ability to do the right thing when it was hard for them to do it. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality. My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

Report: attacks on churches have tripled in the first three months of 2023

April 12, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Biden administration, including federal law enforcement, seems to be ignoring crimes against Christians, but the number of those crimes is climbing. There's a new report about it put out by the Family Research Council, a conservative Washington, D.C. think tank. Here's an article from the Daily Signal that talks about it.

Excerpt:

> Last week's mass murder of six people at a church-run Christian school constitutes 2023's deadliest act of violence against churches, which have increased nearly three times this year compared to last year, a new report from Family Research Council finds. The number of anti-church attacks in 2022 had already tripled over four years, a previous report found.
>
> In all, assailants attacked churches 69 times in the first three months of 2023, compared with 24 such acts during the same period last year, a 288% increase. The rising tempo of anti-Christian assaults—which includes arsons, bomb threats, vandalism, and sacrilege—has affected places of worship in 29 states. The motives behind such desecration run the gamut from pro-abortion activism or controversies over transgender ideology to apparently senseless acts of destruction.
>
> "American churches are increasingly bearing the brunt of anger and aggression, whether that's from political or other motivations," the report's author—Arielle Del Turco, assistant director of the Center for Religious Liberty at Family Research Council—told The Washington Stand. "This contributes to an environment of hostility toward Christianity."
>
> The acts of anti-church aggression documented between January and March of this year include:
>
> - 53 incidents of vandalism.
> - 10 suspicious fires.
> - Three gun-related incidents.
> - Three bomb threats—including a pipe bomb recovered outside Philadelphia's 127-year-old St. Dominic Catholic Church.
>
> "If this rate continues, 2023 will have the highest number of incidents of the six years FRC has tracked," the report notes. The number of church attacks in 2023 already exceeds "the entirety of 2018, in which we identified only 50 incidents, or 2020, in which we identified 54."

Now, this hostility against Christianity is largely caused by Christians refusing to celebrate

and affirm behaviors that are self-destructive, or destructive of others, or both. The culture today seems intent on doing what feels good "in the moment", and they aren't able to think about what happens next. So, you have people causing permanent damage to their reproductive organs, then being surprised to find out they no longer have the ability to enjoy sex. Rather than admit that they are responsible, the people who do this turn to those who warned them, and attack.

And the people who hate Christians and churches aren't capable of defending their views rationally.

Here's an article from Daily Wire, about a transgender professor with multiple degrees from Harvard, who agreed to debate Michael Knowles:

> Deirdre McCloskey, a trans-identifying professor, no longer wants to debate Daily Wire host Michael Knowles, dropping out of an event that was scheduled for next Tuesday at the University of Pittsburgh.
>
> Knowles was set to appear with the University of Illinois Chicago professor at Pitt to debate "transgenderism and womanhood."

McCloskey is utterly uninterested in finding the truth and only interested in stirring up hatred and violence towards people who do not fit his own views. That's why he refused a formal debate.

More:

> Knowles suspected that McClosky learned it would be tough to win a debate against someone who brings arguments based on truth and love after discovering that Knowles isn't the hateful bigot the media often portrays him to be.
>
> "Perhaps he has learned that I'm not the loose cannon that the liberal media have dishonestly portrayed," Knowles added. "Perhaps he's learned that my opposition to transgenderism derives, not from hatred, but from love of the truth, in this case regarding epistemology and anthropology. Despite reiterating his willingness to debate, Professor McCloskey seems to have understood that his arguments would not have survived scrutiny, so he chose to concede rather than lose in front of CSPAN's cameras."

If you can't articulate a case for your views with reasons and evidence, then what's left? What's left is vandalism and violence. Death threats and shouting insults. That's what the secular left teachers and administrators in our public schools have produced. A generation of anti-intellectual barbarians with no self-control, and no rational basis for objective moral values or duties.

New book about science and faith issues “Science and Faith in Dialogue” is free to download!

April 13, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the best resources I know of for keeping track of what’s going on in the world of apologetics is the Apologetics Awareness Twitter account (and it’s also on Facebook). Apologetics Awareness shared a post from Truthbomb Apologetics that mentioned a new FREE TO DOWNLOAD book. I looked over the table of contents and the chapter authors, and I think you should download it. I did.

Here is the introduction:

> *Science and Faith in Dialogue* presents a cogent, compelling case for concordance between science and theism. The term *theism* refers, in this book, to the belief in God’s existence. Within theology, the term theism is often used to convey a range of presuppositions about the nature and attributes of God. Based on scientific and natural theological perspectives, two pillars of natural theology are revisited: the Cosmological Argument and the Argument from Design. The book argues that modern science provides undeniable evidence and a scientific *basis* for these classical arguments to infer a rationally justifiable endorsement of theism as being concordant with reason and science — nature is seen as operating orderly on comprehensible, rational, consistent laws, in line with the conviction that God is Creator.

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- Chapter 5 – Materialistic and theistic perspectives on the origin of life – **Fazale R. Rana**
- Chapter 6 – Are present proposals on chemical evolutionary mechanisms accurately pointing toward first life? – **James M. Tour**
- Chapter 7 – Engineering principles better explain biological systems than evolutionary theory – **Brian Miller**
- Chapter 8 – The evidence of foresight in nature – **Marcos Eberlin**
- Chapter 9 – Evolutionary models of palaeoanthropology, genetics, and psychology fail to account for human origins: a review – **Casey Luskin**
- Chapter 10 – Rumours of war and evidence for peace between science and Christianity – **Michael N. Keas**

You can find biographies of the chapter authors here, on the Discovery Institute web site.

The Evolution News blog has been publishing excerpts from the book. So far, they've featured Stephen C. Meyer and Guillermo Gonzalez.

Here's Stephen C. Meyer:

> This chapter reasserts this classical view and argues that scientific evidence does provide epistemological support (though not proof) for the theistic worldview affirmed by biblical Christianity (see e.g. Ac 17, Col 1, Rm 1). It will develop a model of the relationship between science and theistic belief that I call "qualified agreement" or "mutual epistemic support." This model maintains that, when correctly interpreted, scientific evidence and biblical teaching can and do support each other. While accepting some disagreement about details as inevitable given the limits of human knowledge, advocates of this model affirm a broad agreement between the testimony of the natural world and the propositional content of Judeo-Christian theism — between science and religion so defined.

And Guillermo Gonzalez:

> It is helpful to split fine-tuning into two distinct types, which we will call "global" and "local." Global tuning deals with the global properties of the observable universe. These include the masses of the fundamental particles, the strengths of the four fundamental forces, the initial cosmological conditions, and the cosmological constant.
>
> In contrast, local tuning includes things that are not universal in their properties: planets, stars, and galaxies. Not only do we know that planets, stars and galaxies do not have fixed properties, we actually observe them to vary in their properties over a broad range. We can study how life depends on the local parameters while keeping the global parameters fixed. We can also tally their numbers. For local tuning, then, we have the hope of accurately quantifying the available probabilistic resources and estimating how much of our local circumstances can be explained by observer self-selection.
>
> Historically, local tuning has been explored within the context of exobiology or astrobiology. Motivated by the desire to find other inhabited planets, astrobiologists have sought to determine the full range of environments compatible with life (i.e. habitable environments). Over the past 20 years, considerable progress has been made towards this end. In the following section, I review the state of our knowledge about habitable environments (Gonzalez 2005). In the section 'Implications for global tuning,' I return to the topic of global tuning and describe how local and global tuning are linked.

I'm familiar with all of those chapter authors by name, and I've read most of them. These are some of the best authors on this topic. I've added the book to the right column of the blog, where I always display the book I'm currently reading. You can check my What I am

Reading page to find out what I've been reading.

Washington House passes bill to allow government to hide children from parents

April 14, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

People like to throw around the word “fascism” a lot these days, without really understanding what it means. Let me explain what it means. Fascism occurs when a government uses its power to override the basic human rights of citizens. The right to free speech. The right of religious liberty. Etc. On Thursday, there was a story in the news that I think really gives a good example of fascism.

First, here’s the news from Clark County Today:

> The Washington House has passed a bill allowing shelters to keep runaway juveniles from their parents to get an abortion and/or gender surgeries that include removing a girl’s breasts or uterus.
>
> […]Currently, if a runaway minor goes to a youth shelter, the organization must inform the parents or legal guardians within 24-72 hours. However, state law provides “compelling reasons” for them not to do so, including the belief that notifying the parents or legal guardians would subject the child to abuse or neglect.
>
> […]The bill does not state when or if the parents ever need to be notified of their child’s whereabouts.
>
> Combined with HB 1469, which **has passed in both chambers**, the two policies would allow youth from other states to run away from home, go to a Washington youth shelter seeking an abortion or gender surgery, and the parents would not have to be notified. Also, none of the medical records related to any of those services could be obtained.

It’s the work of the feelings-oriented compassionate “don’t judge” crowd:

> “I am speaking to youth across our nation, across our state, and our communities.” Rep. Tana Senn, D-Mercer Island. “I see you. I affirm you, that I hear you, that I love you. With this passage of the bill, we are saying Washington state does, too.”
>
> […]“Kids’ lives are literally at stake,” Rep. Nicole Macri, D-Seattle, told colleagues. “This bill is intended to keep them safe.”

Basically, if you try to parent your child in Washington state, the government will treat you like a child abuser, and take your child from you. Although you know enough to pay their salaries, you don’t know enough to raise your own child. Your child is the property of the state as much as the taxes they collect from you. You’re a slave. You have no autonomy. Your rulers know best how to spend your money, and how to regulate your religion, your morals, your home.

Republican state representative Jim Walsh has been sending out updates about the legislation, and he put out a statement Thursday night:

His government website says:

> "Since the vote on SB 5599, I've been contacted by thousands of concerned Washingtonians about this attack on parents' rights and families. Sponsors and supporters of this bill have overstepped the constitution and case law in promoting this policy, which would allow state bureaucrats to hide minor children from custodial parents and legal guardians. This bill is wrong—legally, ethically and morally.
>
> "Among its many flaws, the bill assumes families that don't 'affirm' a child's short-term desires are being abusive. Wrong! Sometimes love requires parents to not affirm their child's whims. Loving parents guide their children as they grow. Sometimes that means saying 'no.'
>
> "This is not the first policy approved this session that turns the power and machinery of state government against families. Lawmakers promoting these changes put wedges between children and their parents, grandparents and the people who love them.
>
> "During floor debate, we heard the tired old cliche that 'it takes a village to raise a child.' That's false. That notion has resulted in exploding crime rates, homelessness and rising teen suicide rates in Washington. Enough. Parents are the primary stakeholders in their children's upbringing—not the government."
>
> **SB 5599** was approved on a party-line vote of 57-39, 2 excused. The bill now heads to the Senate for a concurrence vote on the amended version of the bill.

Every single Republican voted against the bill. Every single Democrat voted for it.

The Democrat party, like all the other big government parties of the past, are aligned with fascism. They want to take control of the economy, abolish marriage, and educate children to love the government more than they love their parents.

What conservatism stands for is simple. Low taxes, free enterprise, marriage and family, human rights – including free speech and right to life, small government that is bound by a constitution which limits its power. Fascism cannot ever be a phenomenon of the political right. It is always a phenomenon of the political left. They want to take your money, and then use it to force you to live how they want you to live.

Secular left feminist Sarah Stankorb explains why women leave Christianity

April 15, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I sometimes read articles from mainstream conservative pastors and theologians. One of these is the famous Doug Wilson who blogs at Blog and Mablog. Well, recently he was attacked by a secular left feminist named Sarah Stankorb. I looked over her recent articles, and a pattern emerged about what she – and the women she writes about – think that Christianity is about.

Here's an article entitled "These Evangelical Women Are Abandoning Trump and Their Churches".

She talks about a woman named Katie Loveland, who leaves her church for the following reasons:

1. If a church allows a man to act like a fool towards women, then Christianity is false.
2. If a church allows a man who has passed a background check and holds a concealed carry permit to be armed so he can protect church members from attacks like this one, then Christianity is false.
3. If Christians support a politician who has a pro-life record of demonstrated achievements over a politician who promises to remove all state and local restrictions on abortion from conception to birth, then Christianity is false.

And another woman named Elaina Ramsey, and her reasons for rejecting Christianity:

1. If Christianity requires you to disagree with your gay and queer friends, then Christianity is false.
2. If Christians refuse to marry you because you've been raped, then Christianity is false.
3. If the Bible records (and condemns) the rape of Bathsheba by David, then Christianity is false.
4. If Christianity teaches that murdering humans is wrong, and science says that the unborn are human, then Christianity is false.

And more about another woman named Deirdre Sugiuchi, and her reasons for rejecting Christianity:

1. If your father claims to be a Christian and spanks you, then Christianity is false.
2. If you are sent to an abusive Christian reform school for being rebellious, then Christianity is false.
3. If Christianity feels anti-gay, anti-black or anti-woman, then Christianity is false.
4. If the United States opposes Al Qaeda for carrying out the 9/11 attack, then Christianity is false.

Are you seeing a pattern here?

It turns out that a lot of emotion-based people claimed to be Christians and were accepted as "Christian", without any rational basis for believing it. And later on, when Christianity made them feel bad about being reckless and irresponsible, or when it loses them non-Christian friends, then they abandoned it. It's not that they discovered that Christianity is illogical. It's not that they discovered evidence to falsify Christian truth claims. Their stated reasons for leaving Christianity are entirely subjective. And none of the reasons do the work of falsifying core Christian truth claims, such as God's existence, the inspiration of the Bible, or the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus.

Just to review, here are some of the reasons why authentic Christians believe in Christian theism:

- scientific evidence for the origin of the universe
- scientific evidence for cosmic fine-tuning
- scientific evidence for the origin of life
- scientific evidence for habitability
- scientific evidence for sudden origin of body plans
- scientific evidence for molecular machines
- scientific evidence for irreducible complexity
- the argument from consciousness
- the argument from objective morality
- the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus

These arguments – and many more like them – are defended by scholars in books published by top academic presses. But I see no evidence that emotion-based ex-Christians *have ever read such books*. Why would they? They aren't interested in forming their worldview based on objective reality. They aren't interested in constructing a life plan where their desire for happiness comes second to following Jesus.

People who abandon Christianity because of feelings or experiences have not "left Christianity". They just stopped faking being Christians. They were never actually Christian in the first place. To be a Christian in the first place, you have to know that Christianity is true. People who accept the arguments for Christianity listed above have *just as many disappointments with God, bad experiences with Christians, and bad experiences with churches as people who were guided by their emotions and experiences.*

In fact, I personally know women who grew up fatherless, or had defective parents, or other setbacks. They got themselves into a lot of trouble with churches and immoral men, and yet today, not only are they solid Christians, but they actually take the lead in gospel enterprises, such as apologetics. Why? Because for them, the objective truth of Christianity was more important than their subjective feelings and experiences.

The differences between Christians and non-Christians is that Christians overlook bad feelings, shame and rejection, because we know facts don't care about our feelings. For

real Christians, the normal Christian life *requires* bad feelings, disappointments, bad experiences and rejection by non-Christians. We actually read the Bible, and so we expect bad things to happen to us.

Note: if you are relying on someone to act in a Christian way – say, as a marriage partner – then you'd better find out what kind of "Christian" they are, by asking them how they arrived at their beliefs. Do not marry a fake Christian who just reads romance novels and fiction. A person can't determine the truth of Christianity by focusing on career, travel, entertainment, promiscuity, etc.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about parents and schools

April 16, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a must-listen lecture from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

The MP3 file is here.

Note: public schools = government-run schools.

Topics:

- Does God care whether we people marry and have children?
- Does God care whether Christian parents raise their children to know him?
- Should government promote bearing children?
- What are some effects of declining birth rates in other countries?
- What are the economic effects of declining birth rates?
- Who has the right to decide how children are trained: government or parents?
- What does the Bible say about parents having to raise children to know him?
- Does the government have the responsibility for training children?
- What do educational bureaucrats think of parents training children?
- What do school boards think of parents training children?
- Should school boards be elected by local, state or federal government?
- Should Christians be opposed to government-run education? (public schools)
- How should schools be viewed by parents? As a replacement or as a helper?
- How are schools viewed by those on the left and in communist countries?
- How can you measure how supporting a government is of parental rights?
- How is parental authority viewed in left-wing EU countries like Germany?
- How is parental authority respected in the United States?
- Should parents have a choice of where their children go to school?
- What is a voucher program? How is it related to parental autonomy?
- How does competition (school choice) in education serve parental needs?
- Why do public school teachers, unions and educrats oppose competitition?
- How well do public schools do in educating children to achieve?
- Does the government-run monopoly of public schools produce results?
- Does paying more and more money to public schools make them perform?
- How do teacher unions feel about having to compete in a voucher system?
- Does the public school monopoly penalize the poorest students?
- Does the public school monopoly penalize children of certain races?
- Does the public school monopoly cause racial prejudice?
- What else should parents demand on education policy?
- Is it good for parents when schools refuse to fire underperforming teachers?

This podcast is just amazing! This is what we need to be teaching in church. Church

should be the place where you go to learn and reflect about how to tailor your life plan based on what the Bible says. And I think that this whole notion of free market – of choice and competition benefiting the consumer (parents) – applies to everything that government does, especially education and health care. The genius of America is that our Founding Fathers engineered a system that reflected all of this knowledge of economics, which then made it much easier for individuals and families to enjoy liberty and a higher quality of life. If we want to keep the benefits, we have to remember why these decisions were made at the founding of our nation.

What sort of objective morality are secular leftists capable of?

April 17, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Just looking at the policies that secular leftists vote for, you can get a pretty good picture of what they consider moral. Abortion is good for secular leftists. Same-sex marriage is good for secular leftists, because children shouldn't be raised by their biological parents. Infanticide is good for secular leftists. Selling the body parts of aborted babies is good for secular leftists. But that's not all.

Here's something from Life News:

> A former Planned Parenthood director suspected of child pornography crimes was found dead by suicide Tuesday in New Haven, Connecticut, according to local authorities.
>
> The Blaze reports Tim Yergeau, 35, of New Haven, reportedly killed himself five days after police raided his apartment as part of a child pornography investigation.
>
> Yergeau worked at the abortion chain for approximately four years from 2018 to 2022 as the director of strategic communications for Planned Parenthood of Southern New England. An Instagram profile that The Blaze identified as his shows numerous photos of his pro-abortion advocacy, including wearing a Planned Parenthood T-shirt and participating in pro-abortion events.
>
> New Haven Police Chief Karl Jacobson told The Middletown Press that "the person who died was definitely the suspect in a child pornography investigation and the person who committed suicide."
>
> "It was an open investigation, so he knew he was going to be arrested," Jacobson added.
>
> […]Police have not released details about the child pornography investigation yet. They said they are still investigating whether other individuals were involved.

Here is a photo of him supporting the abortion provider: (right)

LGBT Activists Supporting Planned Parenthood

The reason I linked to the LifeNews article, is because they talked about previous bad behavior from secular leftists who worked at Planned Parenthood:

> This is not the first time a Planned Parenthood employee has been accused of sex-related crimes. Former Planned Parenthood abortionist Roger Ian Hardy was accused of sexually molesting several former patients and female staffers in 2016 before he fled the country.
>
> The abortion chain also has a long history of ignoring or helping to cover up sexual abuse, especially involving underage girls.
>
> Meanwhile, Planned Parenthood aborted more than 383,000 unborn babies in 2020, while bringing in more money than ever before: $1.714 billion income, aided in part by $633.4 million taxpayer dollars. Planned Parenthood's political arm also donates huge amounts of money to electing Democrats to office.
>
> Its patient numbers have been dropping steadily in recent years amid numerous reports of alleged unethical and illegal activities, including selling aborted baby body parts, botching abortions that killed women, covering up the sexual abuse of minors, exploiting young girls by selling cross-sex hormones and more.
>
> Hundreds of its employees also have voiced racism complaints, including "systemic racism," "abusive behavior and financial malfeasance." Other employees have accused Planned Parenthood of pregnancy discrimination.

When you look at studies about what issues atheists are most supportive of, politically, abortion is right near the top. It is *very important* to atheists that they be allowed to engage in recreational premarital sex with people, then commit murder in order to get

out of the consequences of their own actions. You can learn a lot about atheist moral character by looking at the things they vote for, and the things they celebrate. They voted for an infanticide supporter in Barack Obama. They vote for the same-sex marriage supporter (deprive children or their mother or father or both) in Joe Biden. This is what they believe – that adults, being strong, should be able to pursue pleasure at the expense of children, because they're weak. Right now, you can see the secular left fighting to be able to make money off of sex-change drugs and surgeries for children with depression, autism, etc. They don't care about the harm they're causing, they just want to do what they want to do without moral boundaries and without being judged by Christians. That's what secular leftism is all about. That's the point of it.

Are all sins equally bad? Or are there degrees of severity for different sins?

April 18, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This question came up recently so I did some digging on theology web sites to find what Bible verses applied to the question.

Here's what Ligonier said:

> It's clear that we have different degrees of sin when we consider the warnings of Scripture. There are at least twenty-two references in the New Testament to degrees of rewards that are given to the saints in heaven. There are different levels, different rewards, and different roles in heaven. The Bible warns us against adding to the severity of our judgment. Jesus said to Pontius Pilate, "He who delivered me over to you has the greater sin" (John 19:11). Jesus measures and evaluates guilt, and with the greater guilt and greater responsibility comes the greater judgment. It's a motif that permeates the New Testament.
>
> The idea of gradation of sin and reward is based upon God's justice. If I commit twice as many sins as another person, justice demands that the punishment fits the crime. If I've been twice as virtuous as another person, justice demands that I get more of a reward. God tells us that entrance into heaven will be only on the basis of the merit of Christ, but once we get to heaven, rewards will be dispensed according to works. Those who have been abundant in good works will receive an abundant reward. Those who have been derelict and negligent in good works will have a small reward in heaven. By the same token, those who have been grievous enemies of God will have severe torments in hell. Those who have been less hostile will have a lesser punishment at the hands of God. He is perfectly just, and when He judges, He will take into account all of the extenuating circumstances. Jesus said, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak" (Matt. 12:36).

A while back, my friend Dina sent me a sermon where that exact passage (John 19) was brought up by the pastor.

I think the correct position is that *any sin* is enough to separate you from God, but some sins are more severe than others in God's objective standard of right and wrong.

OK, that was fine and good, but then I noticed a few days later that Michael Krueger had also blogged about this "all sin are equal" view, too.

Krueger says this:

> First, to say all sins are the same is to confuse the *effect* of sin with the *heinousness* of sin. While all sins are equal in their effect (they separate us from God), they are not all equally heinous.

> Second, the Bible differentiates between sins. Some sins are more severe in terms of impact (1 Cor 6:18), in terms of culpability (Rom 1:21-32), and in terms of the judgment warranted (2 Pet 2:17; Mark 9:42; James 3:1).

Even more Bible references, so we're not on the wrong track.

So then why do some people insist that all sins are equal? It turns out that it is coming from the secular ideal of *non-judgmentalism*.

Krueger explains:

> We should begin by observing that this phrase does not come from Scripture. People do not use it because it appears in the Bible. Why then do they use it?
>
> One reason, as noted above, is that some Christians use this phrase to uphold the seriousness of sin. It is viewed as a way to remind people not to be dismissive about their sin or regard it is a triviality.
>
> Others use this phrase as way to "flatten out" all sins so that they are not distinguishable from each other. Or, to put it another way, this phrase is used to portray all human beings as precisely the same. If all sins are equal, and all people sin, then no one is more holy than anyone else.
>
> In a world fascinated with "equality," this usage of the phrase is particularly attractive to folks. It allows everyone to be lumped together into a single undifferentiated mass.
>
> Such a move is also useful as a way to prevent particular behaviors from being condemned. If all sins are equal, and everyone is a sinner, then you are not allowed to highlight any particular sin (or sinner).
>
> Needless to say, this usage of the phrase has featured largely in the recent cultural debates over issues like homosexuality. Yes, homosexuality is a sin, some Christians reluctantly concede. But, they argue, all sins are equal in God's sight and therefore it is no different than anything else. Therefore, Christians ought to stop talking about homosexuality unless they are also willing to talk about impatience, anger, gluttony, and so on.

Krueger also posted this fascinating follow up post, where he looks at how the phrase is being used by people on Twitter.

Look at these tweets:

- > All sins are equal. People tend to forget that. There is no bigger or smaller sin. Being gay and lying, very equal.
- > all sins are equal in God's eyes. whatever you're doing, is no better than what someone else is doing.
- > If you have sex before marriage please don't come on social media

> preaching about the wrongs of homosexuality. All sins are equal

- Need people to realize that all sins are equal… don't try to look down on me or question my faith just cuz you sin differently than I do.
- Don't understand why you're so quick to judge me, when all sins are equal. So much for family..
- if you think being gay is a sin, let me ask you something, have you not done anything wrong in your life? all sins are equal. we're sinners
- Nope no difference at all. All sins are equal no matter what you're running for. The bible says do not judge lest ye be judged
- A huge problem I have with religion is the notion that all sins are equal. Like pre-martial sex and murder are the same amount t of bad.
- people do bad things because they believe that all sins are equal and ~god~ loves y'all equally so he's going to forgive you naman ha ha ha
- It a sin to condemn another sinner and their actions. All sins are equal. So what makes you better than the person you're condemning?
- I think so b/c having sex before marriage doesn't make you less of a women then if you waited until marriage.. all sins are equal soo
- friendly reminder, all sins are equal in gods eyes so you're not better than I am in any way. please worry about your own sins before mine.
- People don't like when I suggest abortion as an option. This is a free country and all sins are equal so mind your business!!!
- What I do is no worse than wat you do… all sins are equal no matter what it is… a sin is a sin
- to god all sins are equal so you have no right to compare your sins to someone else's bc in the end it doesn't matter

The first thing that I noticed is that premarital sex and homosexuality are the most popular sins. I would think that divorce and abortion would be up there in the rankings, as well.

Something strange has happened in our society such that more and more people want to be led by their feelings, rather than be bounded by rules or standards. When people get caught breaking moral rules, rather than be accountable, they attack the person judging

them. They would rather escape the judgment of their peers than admit fault and try to fix the mistake, and do better next time.

It's so bad now, that the people who *have* morals and who *make* moral judgments are seen as the real bad people. The immoral people are on the offense, and even trying to ban people from being able to disagree with them. We're seeing that with people who are being attacked for defending natural marriage against divorce and redefinition of marriage. In France, they want to make speech critical of abortion a criminal offense. And in Canada, they've now made speech critical of the gay agenda a criminal offense. (It's already a human rights tribunal offense)

What is even more interesting is when the people who push the "don't judge me" line try to justify it from the Bible. Very strange, but we seem to have forgotten the value of setting moral boundaries. Now moral boundaries are "evil". Instead, having compassion for people who break the moral boundaries and harm themselves and others is "good".

California man chooses to make a baby with a progressive woman, disaster ensues

April 19, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, there was a time when men could be less picky with women, and everything would be fine. The woman would not turn crazy, and attack the man. The government would not step in and get involved. But today, men need to accept that times have changed. And men have to be more careful about who they marry. And the government and the courts are much more likely to step in an ruin the man's life.

Here's a story Rose sent me from Daily Wire. (By the way, she is still coughing a lot, and not ready to record part 3 of Christianity and Socialism).

Excerpt:

> A San Francisco dad is fighting a nightmarish custody battle for his toddler son, who he says is being raised "non-binary" by his mother, who claims to be genderless.
>
> Harrison Tinsley, 31, is seeking full custody of his son Sawyer, 3, who currently spends half of his time with Tinsley's ex-girlfriend, the boy's mother. Sawyer's mother, 30, uses they/them pronouns for the boy and puts him in dresses and makeup, photos provided by Tinsley appear to show. Sawyer also told his dad that his mother put him in princess shoes on a trip to Disneyland, a video of the conversation shows. Sawyer's mother may have thought about raising her son "non-binary" before he was even born. In what appears to be a Facebook post during her pregnancy, she refers to Sawyer as "my sweet baby boy or girl or neither if that's what you feel."
>
> Sawyer himself rebels against his mom and insists he is a boy, his dad says.
>
> […]Gender confusion is not Tinsley's only concern for his son — he is also concerned for the child's immediate safety.
>
> Back in 2021, Sawyer's mother was arrested and booked in jail for felony child endangerment when then-1-year-old Sawyer fell off a bed during an altercation between the mother and her roommate, police body cam footage viewed by The Daily Wire shows.
>
> The San Francisco police gave custody of Sawyer to the mother's two dads for the night and put her on a psychiatric hold at the hospital. She was ultimately not convicted of a crime.

This sounds terrible, but what can single men learn from this? Well, we recently had a story where an Army vet was charged and convicted of murder for defending himself from an Antifa terrorist who was armed with an AK-47. Why? Because this happened in Austin, TX, which is incredibly liberal. So, step one would probably be to be careful where

you live. Harrison lives in California.

Second, he shouldn't be making babies with women he's not married to. The whole point of marriage is to make sure that there has been some communication and vetting before you get into the bedroom and make babies. Marriage protects babies from parents who are only interested in fun. Babies aren't fun. That's why we used to make people commit before having them.

This, look at this woman's background. I always ask women "are your parents still married?" when taking them out on dates. It's a very important question.

Now watch this:

> The mother herself now identifies as "non-binary," although she did not when she was dating Tinsley, court documents show.

Fourth, she runs an ultra-progressive non-profit:

> LGBT issues have been a major theme in her life — she was adopted and raised by two older gay men in the Bay Area, where she still lives and runs an ultra-progressive non-profit.

What a woman does for a living is a really important clue to their personality. Don't get involved with ultra-progressive women. Recent studies show that white progressive women have extremely high rates of mental illness and drug use.

Speaking of mental illness, here's number five:

> During the psychiatric hold at the hospital, Sawyer's mother told a psychiatrist that she has borderline personality disorder, a condition that can involve impulsive and risky behavior, the psychiatrist later testified in San Francisco family court.
>
> Child Protective Services investigated the police incident and concluded that Sawyer's mother was not a safety threat to her son. Her mental health was a "complicating factor, but not a safety issue," reads the CPS report, provided by Tinsley.
>
> Sawyer's mother was on five different medications for PTSD, mood stabilization, ADHD, and anxiety at the time of the CPS investigation, the CPS report said.
>
> Sawyer's mom can be heard on the police body cam footage mentioning that she drank alcohol earlier the same day.

You can't count on government and courts to do the right thing for children. They don't see women as guilty, they don't punish them as long as they punish men, and they don't think that male leadership is good for children. ("Smash the patriarchy") This is why you don't make babies with progressive women. They will do terrible things to your children (abortion, transing, let live-in boyfriends molest them, etc.) and no one will listen to you. I blogged about a case from British Columbia, Canada, and then another case from California.

Look:

> Sawyer's pediatrician, Dr. Danielle Alkov, works at a youth gender clinic that offers hormone therapy and so-called gender-affirming surgery referrals. She testified as an expert witness in court and said she has worked with children as young as 12. She also mentioned a nearby clinic that works with children as young as 3, Sawyer's current age.
>
> The court ordered that Alkov continue to be Sawyer's primary care physician.

This part reminds me of the case from California that I mentioned, where the female judge refused to let the father present scientific evidence about the harm of transing his child:

> Tinsley's lawyer said he had planned to present scientific materials demonstrating the harm of treating Sawyer as if he had no gender, but they ran out of time in court.
>
> During that trial, Sawyer's mother said in court that she has had suicidal ideations multiple times in her life.

Also, false accusations are normally taken seriously in blue cities and blue states:

> Meanwhile, she has defamed Tinsley repeatedly, he said. Sawyer's mother has called the father of her child a rapist and even claimed Sawyer is the product of rape and that Tinsley has raped other people as well, a friend told police. She began making these allegations when Tinsley started fighting for custody, he said.

This is not the way that men should be spending their life savings:

> Tinsley said he has spent all the money he ever saved on legal bills. His mother even contributed additional money, but funds are running low, he said. He recently started a fundraiser in hopes he can afford to continue fighting for custody of his son.
>
> "I will do anything to keep my son safe and happy with who he is. I hope to inspire other parents with similar situations to be brave and speak up," Tinsley told The Daily Wire.
>
> In the meantime, Tinsley says he takes off work on the days he takes care of Sawyer, reading to him, taking him to the park, and spending as much time as possible with his young son.

My advice to men is to only have children with women who are staunch conservatives who hate feminism, CPS, public schools, divorce courts, socialism, etc. Otherwise, they are going to turn on you and hurt your children.

Should we expect to know what God’s reason is for allowing evil and suffering?

April 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article by Steven Cowan about the problems of evil and suffering.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude.

Now let’s find out what a noseeum is, and how it relates to the existence of evil and suffering:

> However, perhaps God’s existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God’s existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By “pointless evil,” Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe’s argument may be simply stated as follows:
>
> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the “noseeum inference.” Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a “noseeum” is something that you cannot see—it is a “no-see-um.” And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I “no-see-um” a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured

> to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

In that example, the planet is the noseeum. Just because you look really hard, you can't be confident that the planet is not there. And similarly with the problem of evil and suffering, looking really hard and finding no reason does not mean that there is no reason. It just means that you are not in a good position to see the reason. You don't know enough to to be sure that there is no reason, because of your limitations as a human being.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous. (You can get the PDF here)

According to the paper, human beings just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a noseeum. To know for sure that there is no reason, we would need to have more knowledge than we do.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very

difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

Report: Hunter laptop letter from security officials was requested by the Biden campaign

April 21, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw three interesting Biden administration scandals on Thrusday night, while reading at Just The News. The first one is about the Hunter Biden laptop. The second one is about the Biden administration's refusal to prosecute Hunter Biden. And the third was about the head of the CDC lying about the COVID vaccine's effectiveness.

First one:

> A former acting CIA director has admitted to Congress that he organized the letter that falsely portrayed Hunter Biden's laptop as Russian disinformation in an effort to influence the 2020 election in favor of Joe Biden and that he did so at the direction of current Secretary of State Antony Blinken, according to a letter released Thursday by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan.
>
> The extraordinary admission by career intelligence officer Michael J. Morell provides stunning evidence that the now-infamous letter from 51 security officials in October 2021 was not an organic intelligence community initiative but rather a political dirty trick originating with Blinken and the Biden campaign.
>
> […]He also testified that the Biden campaign team coordinated to release the statement on the laptop to a specific reporter at the Washington Post and admitted that he got involved to help give Biden a leg up on Trump during the debates.
>
> "There were two intents," he said. "One intent was to share our concern with the American people that the Russians were playing on this issue; and, two, it was [to] help Vice President." When asked why he wanted to help Biden, he replied, "because I wanted him to win the election."

Second one:

> A decorated supervisory IRS agent has reported to the Justice Department's top watchdog that federal prosecutors appointed by Joe Biden have engaged in "preferential treatment and politics" to block criminal tax charges against presidential son Hunter Biden, providing evidence as a whistleblower that conflicts with Attorney General Merrick Garland's recent testimony to Congress that the decision to bring charges against Biden was being left to the Trump-appointed U.S. Attorney for Delaware.
>
> […]Two powerful House Committee chairmen vowed Wednesday that they would investigate and hold the Biden administration accountable if they were involved in criminal activity. House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer said that "obstruction of justice" could have occurred.

> […]"It's clear from our investigation that Hunter and other members of the Biden family engaged in deceptive, shady business schemes to avoid scrutiny as they made millions from foreign adversaries like China," the statement continued. "We've been wondering all along where the heck the DOJ and the IRS have been. Now it appears the Biden Administration may have been working overtime to prevent the Bidens from facing any consequences."

Third one:

> As the feds abandon a one-size-fits-all COVID-19 vaccine strategy in the face of plunging booster uptake, growing research on serious adverse events and the first government payments to victims of the novel therapeutics, the CDC's director is trying to rewrite history.
>
> In a hearing Wednesday, Rochelle Walensky told the House Appropriations subcommittee that funds her agency that COVID vaccines only stopped preventing transmission of the virus due to "an evolution of science," contradicting her own agency's uncertainty about the products during the early mass vaccination campaign and its contemporaneous data.
>
> The exchange was prompted by Rep. Andrew Clyde (R-Ga.) reminding Walensky that she told MSNBC host Rachel Maddow March 29, 2021 that CDC data suggest "vaccinated people do not carry the virus" or "get sick," based on both clinical trials and "real-world data."
>
> Walensky responded that the statement was true at the time, when the "wild-type" virus was dominant, but then revised it by saying "even if they got sick" infected people could not transmit COVID. Because of the "evolution of the virus" that's no longer true, she told Clyde.
>
> Hearing watchers quickly noted the CDC pulled the rug out from Walensky three days after her Maddow interview in a statement to The New York Times. "The evidence isn't clear" on transmission by "fully vaccinated" people, which is "possible," the agency said.

This story from Fox News was interesting, too:

> The House on Thursday passed legislation aimed at preventing biological males from competing as transgender athletes in girls' and women's sports at schools across the country, after a debate in which several Democrats accused Republicans of "bullying" transgender students by calling up the bill.
>
> The Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act passed in a 219-203 vote Thursday morning — all the "yes" votes came from Republicans, and all the "no" votes came from Democrats.

It reminds me of the #EvangelicalsForBiden, and their view that voting for Biden would make the government behave more morally. Donald Trump picked three Supreme Court justices who repealed Roe v. Wade. That wasn't good enough for Russell Moore and David

French and the rest of the fake Christians. They wanted the scandals that I wrote about in this post. That’s the morality they wanted. And they got many low-information Christians to vote for that morality, too. I hope Christians vote for good policies in 2024.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

April 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates

- You didn’t need to come out on this cold night
- Craig’s arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn’t listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don’t require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that “every effect requires a cause”
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can’t see
- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism

6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said.

Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can't God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus' burial isn't historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig's concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg's concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig's arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don't look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Biden administration stalling release of transgender mass shooter's manifesto

April 23, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I remember watching the response of the Biden administration to the murder of 3 Christian children by a transgender domestic terrorist. The White House spokeswoman, a radical leftist, said that transgender people are under attack. No sympathy for the victims. The families were not invited to the White House. And now we find out that Biden's FBI is deliberately hiding the shooter's manifesto.

New York Post reports:

> Nashville shooter Audrey Hale's manifesto is a "blueprint on total destruction" which the FBI are stalling releasing, according to local politicians, who describe its contents as "astronomically dangerous".
>
> Almost a month after Audrey Hale, who identified as transgender, killed six at the city's Covenant elementary school before being shot by police authorities have yet to release a motive or any of the writings seized from her home, despite growing pressure.
>
> Rep. Tim Burchett, (R-Tenn.) told The Post he knew the FBI was behind the delay, saying the news was "disappointing" and calling for documents to be released to grieving loved ones as well as members of Congress.
>
> The manifesto "could maybe tell us a little bit about what's going on inside of her head," he added. "I think that would answer a lot of questions."
>
> Twenty journals, five laptops, a suicide note and various other notes written by Hale were seized from the house she shared with her parents as well as two memoirs, five Covenant School yearbooks and seven cellphones, according to a search warrant.
>
> […]The two agencies handling the investigation, Metro Nashville Police Department and the FBI, each deferred The Post to the other agency when contacted. Although MNPD is leading the investigation, spokesperson Don Aaron said material related to Hale is still "under analysis" by the FBI.

What is the reason for delaying the manifesto? Initially, I thought it was good to take time to hide any details of the shooter's destructive plans, which might inspire copy cat crimes. But there's been lots of time to do that by now. What the public needs to see are the shooter's motivations. And I think that the reason that's being suppressed is because there is a 1-for-1 overlap between the shooter's hatred of Christians and the hatred of Christians among rank-and-file Democrats in all walks of life. The FBI doesn't want Christians to wake up and start realizing how much their way of life is endangered by anti-Christian bigotry and animus on the secular left.

The article notes:

> Former police officer-turned author and adjunct professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice Joseph Giacalone said the public “has a right to know” what’s in the manifesto “even if it’s heavily redacted,” but believes authorities are worried about the effect releasing it could have.
>
> “I think what the FBI is really concerned here with, and I think law enforcement, is that if there is something in there that is truly damaging for the transgender community, I think they are hesitant to do it because they are afraid of a violent backlash against that protected class of people.”

Right. They’re not worried about Christians as a “protected class of people”. They’re worried about secular leftist Democrats as a protected class of people. They’re worried that mass shooters who share the Democrat political platform will look bad. And they’re worried that shaming one of their own would hurt them at election time. So the solution of the Biden FBI is just to hide the evidence.

New study: more sexual experience does not make you a better relationship partner

April 24, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Today, most young people think that they are building up their relationship resumes by having casual sex. They think that they are elevating their value proposition to a marriage partner by having casual sex, and all that comes with it – the lack of emotional bond, the lack of commitment, the lack of partnership, the painful break-ups, the decline of trust, etc. But what does the research say?

I got this news from pro-child social conservative Katy Faust, who was tweeting out amazing stories on Twitter on the weekend. Giver her a follow.

Here's the report from Institute for Family Studies about the new study.

Methodology:

> Our findings are based on a new study using data from The National Couples and Pornography Study. The data sample was collected independently by Qualtrics from their existing data panel during 2020. It consists of 3,750 individuals in committed couple relationships, including 1,942 married adults, on whom we focused in this study. The demographically diverse sample was recruited from across the U.S. based on quotas for age, race, education level, and geographic region.
>
> We examined the effects of sexual experience on marriage across four married groups:

- ***Group 1: Inexperienced*** – These are individuals who were sexually inexperienced prior to marriage and who have only had sex with their spouse (19.5% of the sample).
- ***Group 2: Less Experienced*** – These were individuals with between 2 to 4 lifetime sexual partners before marriage, which is less sexual experience than the average adult in the sample (33.4% of the sample).
- ***Group 3: More Experienced*** – These are individuals who reported a total number of 5 to 9 lifetime sexual partners. This is the group that captures the average person in the sample (24.4% of the sample).
- ***Group 4: Highly Experienced*** – The final group includes those who reported 10 or more total lifetime sexual partners. This group made up 22.7% of the sample.

Now let's look at the findings, starting with relationship satisfaction:

> **Sexually inexperienced couples have the highest levels of relationship satisfaction.**
>
> While over 1 in 5 spouses in the Inexperienced group were likely to report a very high level of relationship satisfaction, only 1 in 7 of those in the More Experienced group were likely to report the same level of satisfaction. This dropped even further for those in the Highly Experienced group, with less than 1 in 10 of spouses reporting that they are very satisfied with their marriage. Thus, sexually inexperienced spouses are more than twice as likely to report that they are highly satisfied with their marriages than are spouses with high levels of sexual experience (*see Figure 1*).

And the findings about marital stability:

> **Having multiple sexual partners before marriage is strongly associated with lower marital stability.**
>
> Similar to other studies, we found that sexual experience prior to marriage is correlated with lower stability in marriage and a greater likelihood of divorce. Specifically, we found that inexperienced men and women who have only had sex with their spouse have a nearly 45% chance of reporting a very high level of relationship stability in their marriage, whereas only 25% of married individuals with 5 to 9 lifetime sex partners, and only 14% of married individuals with 10 or more lifetime sex partners report a similarly high level of relationship stability.

And the findings about sexual satisfaction and emotional connection:

> **Spouses who have only had sex with their current spouse have the highest levels of sexual satisfaction and emotional connection in their marriage.**
>
> Nearly 1 in 5 married men and women who have only had sex with their spouse report that they are “very satisfied” with multiple aspects of their sexual relationship. In comparison, only 1 in 10 married men and women who are “highly sexually experienced” (meaning they had 10 or more sexual partners before marriage) report similar levels of sexual satisfaction (*see Figure 3*). Also, nearly 80% of married individuals who were sexually inexperienced before marriage report the highest level of emotional closeness in their marriage, which is more than 20% higher than individuals who have had multiple sexual partners.

Now let me give my comments about this.

I follow a lot of content that features young people talking about sex in relationships. The dominant view among young people is that they are becoming better relationship partners when they engage in casual sex. They say that they are learning about their own needs, and about what to look in other people so that their needs will be met. They think that more casual sex is like more work experience on a resume, and that this is what marriage-minded people of the opposite sex will be impressed with. They think that their

Sexual Revolution approach to sex is going to lead to more stability, more relationship satisfaction, more emotional connection, and more sexual satisfaction.

So the first thing is that the research falsifies this. And you can see how this works by just thinking about the break-ups. Break-ups have the effect of making people look for the exits in relationships. Instead of committing first, and then taking responsibility to build and maintain the relationship, they are looking to get out of it to avoid being hurt. And they are always trying to make sure that their needs are met, and avoiding committing too much to the other person. They neither know nor care what the other person is trying to achieve, and they aren't engaged in helping them to do that.

Also, consider that most young people are not forming their beliefs with knowledge that is likely to make them a better person. Concepts that are familiar to experienced Christians such as forgiveness and self-sacrificial love are nowhere in their worldviews. Biblical Christianity provides a rational basis for loving a spouse well, even when you don't feel like it. Which is very useful in a marriage. They have a pretty self-serving view Christianity, something like "don't judge" and "listen for the voice of God telling you his plan to make you happy".

Instead their views are being formed by radical feminism, popular culture, celebrity worship, materialism, an almost fanatical focus on judging people by appearances, being led by feelings and peer-approval, etc. They expect to have stability and quality in a relationship where skills like forgiveness, self-denial, delayed gratification, planning, achieving goals together, etc. are critical. Imagine wanting to retire early. Is someone on the path to early retirement if they are guided entirely by their feelings? If they do only what feels good "in the moment"? If none of the peers who influence them have achieved this goal? Today, relationships are just a case of the blind leading the blind. It doesn't work.

LGBT activists are behaving badly, but the secular left wants to punish Christians

April 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm in a bit of a grouchy mood these days, looking at how the secular left is becoming increasingly divorced from morality. When Christians speak up against what they're doing, they turn on us and say we are the real villains. "Don't judge" they cry, "it will make the weirdoes feel bad!" It seems to me that we are making a lot of withdrawals on the bank account of civilization, but no deposits.

Here is the first story of secular left depravity, reported by The Post Millennial:

> A former Oregon elementary school teaching assistant and "drag mom" to a controversial child drag performer has been convicted of 11 felonies over the distribution of child sex abuse content and sentenced to less than a year in a local jail.
>
> Kelsey Meta Boren, 33, was convicted in Lane County, Ore. on March 23 of 11 felony counts of encouraging child sexual abuse in the first degree. A single charge of using a child in a display of sexually explicit conduct was dismissed as part of the plea deal. Boren was sentenced to 330 days in county jail—30 days for each felony count—in a sweetheart deal agreed upon between the district attorney's office and her counsel.
>
> Before being arrested, Boren worked as a teaching assistant for special education students at Veneta Elementary in Veneta, Ore.

And another one reported by The Post Millennial:

> An Idaho high school teacher has been arrested on suspicion of raping a 16-year-old boy. Eric McDermott, 59, of Boise was booked into the Ada County Jail on Monday on charges of rape and sexual battery committed by lewd or lascivious acts on a minor child.
>
> McDermott, who taught World Studies 8 and AP Human Geography, and coached basketball at Fairmont Junior High School, was also an outspoken LGBT activist.
>
> […]Following McDermott's arrest, the Idaho Tribune dug into his past and revealed that he had been a prominent LGBT activist. He volunteered with the Pride Foundation's Idaho Leadership Action Team, and appeared in numerous photographs the organization published to social media.
>
> On McDermott's social media, he openly discussed "youth outreach," and the Tribune noted that he traveled all over the state attending drag shows and pride events in search of "volunteers" as young as sixteen. He also promoted sexually explicit literature aimed at teens via an online forum Goodreads, revealing that he made copies of a book series available to his junior high school students to

> borrow, the same series he conceded is "probably a bit more mature for this group's target audience overall."

So, what's the argument against all this from the secular left? Silence. Only those rascally Christians are concerned about these things. And the secular left is actually more interested in stopping Christians from judging, than they are with stopping child abuse.

Here's a story about Oregon reported in the Daily Signal:

> The state of Oregon refused to allow a Christian mother of five to adopt two children after she said her religion would not let her take a young minor to receive cross-hormone injections—a policy that could prevent up to 78% of Americans from adopting children. Requiring adoptive parents to facilitate transgender procedures acts as a form of religious discrimination against many world religions, her attorneys say.
>
> Jessica Bates has sued five Oregon state employees for adoption guidelines that effectively say, "Conservative Christians need not apply," according to her legal brief.
>
> Oregon state law requires all would-be adoptive parents to "respect, accept and support" the adoptee's professed "sexual orientation, gender identity, [and] gender expression." Bates said mandatory classes in the state's adoption application process said this included using a child's preferred pronouns, presenting same-sex relationships in a positive light, and taking children who identify as LGBT to transgender procedures.
>
> […]Bates expressed concern that Oregon state guidelines could prevent her from taking all her children to a church that upholds traditional beliefs on gender or teaching them Bible lessons that may contain verses that contradict "state orthodoxy."

Banning Christians from adopting children is bad enough, but it's not enough for the secular left. They want to escalate to violence in order to prevent any "judging".

Here's a story from The Post Millennial:

> Utah State Senator Mike Kennedy's Alpine city house was vandalized this week with red spray paint after sponsoring of SB16, a bill later signed into law that banned medical sex changes for minors, reports local news. The vandals spray painted the GOP state legislator's home with "these trannies bash back" and "fash."
>
> On Friday, Kennedy posted images of the vandalism on Facebook and said, "To those who seek to use violence, vandalism, and intimidation to deter me from standing up for what is right, let me be clear: you will not succeed. I will not be deterred by your cowardly actions. The recent vandalism to my family's home was not just an attack on me, but on the very principles our state stands for."
>
> Kennedy, who is a Doctor of Medicine (MD) continued, "We will not let fear and

> violence control our destiny. As Utahns, we will always stand up and push back against radicals who seek to push their agenda in our state. I am more determined than ever to work with the good people of Utah to make our state a better place for all, especially our children, and I won't back down."
>
> […]The bill was opposed by Equality Utah, an LGBTQ activist group…

Sometimes, people on the secular left worry that they might be doing bad things, which is why they are so interested in forcing people to celebrate them. But conservative Christians don't need any celebration. When we look at what the secular left stands for, we know we're right.

I'm seeing a lot of curiosity about theism in general and Christianity in particular from non-religious independents lately. I think they are realizing that evil is real, and evil is being promoted by the secular left. And they want to run as far away from them as possible, so they don't get lumped in with them on the day of judgment. I hope you are all ready to answer questions about Christian topics, because we are about to have a lot of curious customers. And they aren't going to be asking the trendy lefty "Christians" for answers. They're going to be asking the real Christians – the ones who fought the evil. The ones who protected the children from evil.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

April 26, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.
>
> But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.
>
> There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God

exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.

One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.

So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.

> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, “So is there a God or not?”

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these “subjective atheists”?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says “I lack a belief in the gravitational force!”. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God’s existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don’t care about a person’s psychology.

New study: couples who cohabitate before marriage have higher risk of marital dissolution

April 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was in college studying computer science, there was a new idea going around called “design patterns”. Basically, this was a cookbook of component arrangements that were “best practices” for solving certain problems. Depending on your problem, you might try different patterns, like Observer, Visitor, Strategy, etc. And it turns out that there are design patterns for social issues, too.

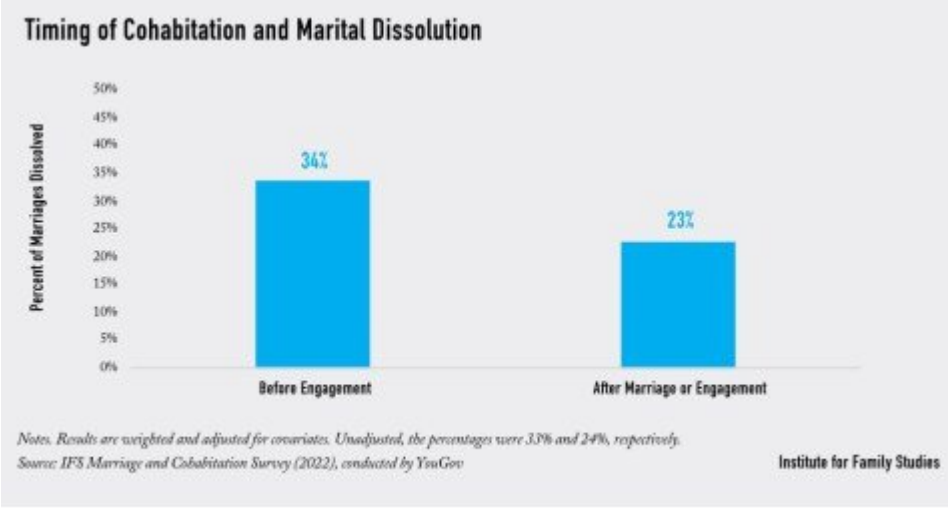

Cohabition Instability

Here’s a new report from the Institute for Family Studies:

> Fifty to 65% of Americans believe that living together before marriage will improve their odds of relationship success. Younger Americans are especially likely to believe in the beneficial effects of cohabitation, and to view living together as providing a valuable test of a relationship ahead of marriage. Yet living together before marriage has long been associated with a higher risk for divorce, contradicting the common belief that cohabitation will improve the odds of a marriage lasting.
>
> […]Using a new national sample of Americans who married for the first time in the years 2010 to 2019, we examined the stability of these marriages as of 2022 based on whether or not, and when, people had lived together prior to marriage. Consistent with prior research, couples who cohabited before marriage were more likely to see their marriages end than those who did not cohabit before marriage.

Key findings:

> - 34% of marriages ended among those who cohabited before being engaged, compared to 23% of marriages for those who lived together only

> after being either married or engaged to be married.

And this from the key takeaways was interesting:

> - Reasons for moving in together also matter: People who reported that their top reason for moving in together was either to test the relationship or because it made sense financially were more likely to see their marriages end than those who did so because they wanted to spend more time with their partner.
> - Having a greater number of prior cohabiting partners is associated with a higher likelihood of marriages ending.

I think the key point in these studies is that couples who decide to commit are moving in very different reasons than couples who just slide into cohabitation because it's convenient.

It's interesting because it shows that being cautious about commitment is more likely to cause instability. The attitude seems to be "I'll keep doing this as long as it makes me happy".

With commitment, the attitude is going to be more like "let's decide to unite, and then it will be on us to make it work". The old marriage vows were all about that commitment. I really have to wonder whether people mean it when they say those words today, they are so counter to our hedonistic culture.

I think what people should be looking for is a mate who thinks that the relationship works better if both people work at it. If you have one person who thinks that it is the other person's job to make them happy, run from that relationship. Like, if you are always doing little things to help the other person do well in their tasks and purposes, and they never do anything to help you, then that's a bad sign. You don't want to commit to someone who thinks that relationships should be effortless, that they don't have to do anything to put gas in your fuel tank in order to make you perform.

Ideally, you want someone who thinks that it's fun to put fuel in your tank, and thinks that it's their job to do that for you. Just because they like to see your engine run.

New study: more than half of all female-to-male transgender teens attempt suicide

April 28, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A recent study by a researcher out of Brown University found that the exploding rates of transgender young people is being driven in part by social factors. In particular, coming out as transgender gives young people instant popularity, and everyone around them feels obligated to affirm them and agree with them. Or else. What's missing? What's missing is any sort of warning about the dangers of transgenderism.

The Daily Wire reports on a new study from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Excerpt:

> A new study from the American Academy of Pediatrics found an alarming number of teens who identify as transgender or nonbinary have attempted suicide at least once, showcasing the dangers of the transgender movement. More than half of all female-to-male transgender teens, for example, have attempted to end their lives.
>
> Researchers behind the study used data collected from more than 600 teens over a 36-month period, June 2012 to May 2015, from the "Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors" survey.
>
> The study found that female-to-male trans teens had the highest suicide attempt rate of all other identity groups surveyed: 50.8%. Unsurprisingly, other gender-confused teens had outrageously high rates of suicide attempts, too. Nonbinary adolescents, meaning teens who do not identify exclusively as female or male, were found to have a 41.8% suicide attempt rate; male-to-female trans teens had a 29.9% rate; and "questioning" teens had a rate of 27.9%.
>
> By comparison, teens who identified as their biological sex and corresponding gender suffered relatively low (though still too high) rates: females were found to have a 17.6% rate while males had the lowest of any other group at 9.8%.

When I tell LGBT people about the health risks of their choices, and cite peer-reviewed studies, the most frequent response is that they get angry and even violent and demand approval. I have even heard threats that if I don't approve of what they feel like doing, then they will kill themselves, and their blood will be on my hands.

The thing is, there is a study about that. Even though LGBT people think that approval will make them feel better about what they are doing, it's not true. In societies where social approval and government support of LGBT behaviors are HIGHER than in America, the suicide rates are still extremely high.

Life Site News explains:

> A study out of Sweden published last month has found that suicide risk among

> active homosexuals is high even in a region that is highly tolerant of same-sex behaviour.
>
> Published in the *European Journal of Epidemiology*, the authors found that men in same-sex “marriages” were at three times greater risk of suicide than men who are married to women.
>
> The authors note in their abstract:
>
> Even in a country with a comparatively tolerant climate regarding homosexuality such as Sweden, same-sex married individuals evidence a higher risk for suicide than other married individuals.

Just in passing, what a strange way to respond to disagreement. I have people disagree with me on moral issues and conservative policies, etc. all the time. It never occurs to me to threaten to commit suicide if they don’t approve. I also don’t try to get them fired, insult them, shame them, vandalize their property, assault them, murder them, or drag them in front of a government-run political correctness panel. I don’t even mind that they use their free speech to disagree with me. After all, they are people made in the image of God, with an equal right to be in a relationship with God. I can’t do anything that is going to cause them to think that God doesn’t love them.

It’s useful to remember that the Christian view on life is not to neglect God’s design and tell people to do whatever they want. The Christian view is to tell people God’s design, set boundaries, and encourage people to make good decisions. Christians don’t believe in love as mere acceptance. Christians believe in “love warns”. And that applies to truth claims as well as moral claims. I tell young people not to run up student loan debt studying useless non-STEM degrees. They might feel bad, but it’s the truth: they won’t be able to find a job that allows them to pay the money back. Warning people about sexual issues is the same thing, in my mind.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about spending, saving and charity

April 29, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A practical lecture on money – spending, saving, charitable giving – from famous pastor Wayne Grudem.

I like the way that Wayne Grudem navigates the Bible finding the passages that tell you who God is, so that you can make better decisions by analyzing alternatives and choosing the one that gives your Boss a maximum return on investment. He's very practical.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Spending:

- Christianity does not teach asceticism (= don't enjoy anything in this world), Paul condemns it in 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- When you buy nice things, even if it is a little more expensive, it's an opportunity to be thankful for nice things that God has provided
- Even being rich is OK, but don't let it make you haughty and arrogant, and don't set your hopes on your money (see 1 Tim 6:17)
- It is important for you to earn money, and you are supposed to use it to support yourself and be independent
- It is possible to overspend and live recklessly (Luke 15:13) and it's also possible to overspend and live too luxuriously
- *Increasing your income through career progression is wise*, because it allows you to give away more and save more
- God gives us freedom to decide how much we spend, how much we give away, and how much we save
- every choice a Christian makes with money will give him or her more or less reward in his or her afterlife
- Do not spend more than you have – you should make every effort to get out of debt as quickly as possible

Saving:

- Saving money is wise so you can help yourself and others, and have money in your old age when you will not be working
- If you do not save your own money, you end up being dependent on others (e.g. – family or taxpayers)
- Not saving money for the future is a way of "putting God to the test" (Matt 4:7)
- You are to "be dependent on no one", to the extent that you can (1 Thes 4:12)
- We don't know the future, that's why we should prepare for an emergency, and buy

insurance to guard (James 4:13-17)
- It's right for us to learn how to save to be able to buy bigger assets, like a car or a college education
- Saving and investing in stocks and bonds lets people in business start and grow companies, creating jobs and new products
- *Don't over-save, trusting too much in money more than you trust in God* (Ps 62.10; Matt 6:19,24; Luke 12:15-21)

Giving:

- it is required for the people of God to give something out of what they earn, but no percentage is specified (Deut 26:12-13)
- you do not give money to become right with God, you can't earn your salvation
- *a Christian gives to show God that you trust him to take care of you, and to experience trusting him through your giving*
- the quality of your resurrection life with God is affected by giving you do for the Kingdom (Phil 4, Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:18-19)
- when you get involved in the lives of others and give to them, you have the joy of experiencing caring for others (Acts 20:35)
- it's possible to give too little, but it's also possible to give too much – be careful about pride creeping in as well

The first part of this lecture made me think of my treat for the week, which is to get a double chicken burrito bowl after my weight lifting. It is very easy to say grace when you are hovering over a double chicken burrito bowl. It is good to have nice things especially when it makes you thankful for what you have.

I was so happy listening to this talk because he was condemning bad stewardship, which I see in a lot of young people these days. I was happy until he got to the part about trusting in your savings for your security, and then I thought – that's what I do wrong! I save a lot but it's not just for emergencies and to share with others, like he was saying – I want a sense of security. This was more of a temptation in my 20s than it is now in my 30s, though.

Charity should hurt

I can remember being in my first full-time job as a newly hired junior programmer when the 2001 recession struck. I would cry while signing checks to support William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith ministry, because I was so scared. I had no family or friends where I lived to help me if anything went wrong, and that's been the story of my working life. If anything goes wrong, there is no backup. But it's that experience of crying when I gave that allows me to say today "that's when I became the man I am, that's what a man does when he is a follower of Jesus". If you are not doing the actions of charity, then you will not having the experience of trusting God and letting him lead you. There is more to the Christian life than just saying the right things – you have to do the right things.

Don’t follow your heart

If you’re scared about giving when you are young, then do what I did in my 20s: work 70-hour weeks, get promoted often, and save everything you earn. I volunteered every Saturday for 9 months in order to get my first white-collar part-time job when I was still in high-school. The faster you increase your savings, the easier it’s going to be to take a *genuine interest* in caring for the people around you. Read Phil 1 (fellowship), Phil 2 (concern for others), and Phil 4 (charity). Turn off your emotions and desires when it comes to choosing what to study and what work to do, and put Philippians into practice. Your freedom to give is very much tied to the quality of your decisions of what to study, where to work, how much you spend on entertainment, and so on. That’s why you need to turn off your feelings and desires and do what works, even it it’s not fun, and even if it involves responsibilities, expectations and obligations.

How to falsify a religion using scientific or historical evidence

April 30, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

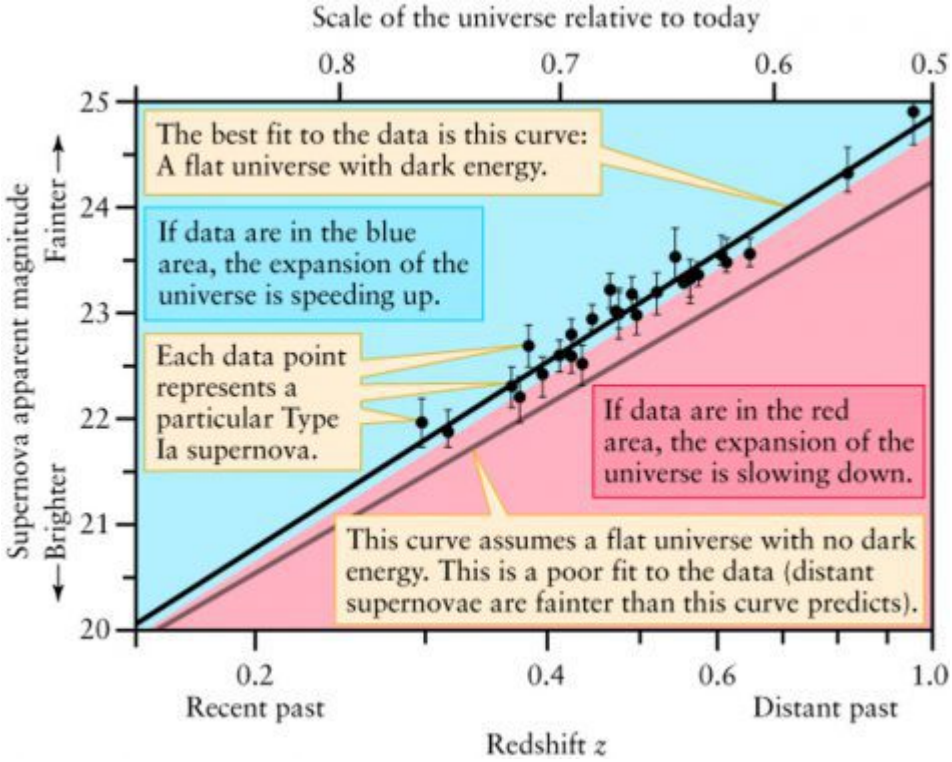

Will the universe expand forever, or will it collapse and bounce?
(Image source)

What I often see among atheists is this tendency to set up expectations of how God would have acted and then complain that he doesn't met those expectations. I don't think that this is a good way to argue against a religion, because it's subjective. God isn't obligated to comport with atheist expectations. A much better way of evaluating religions is to test the claims each makes against evidence.

So in this post, I wanted to show how a reasonable person can evaluate and reject different worldviews using evidence.

Falsifying a religion using science

Consider this argument:

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a

collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

Notice how the oscillating model is falsified by mathematics and experimental evidence. Remarkable, when you remember how the public schools would play Carl Sagan videos which promoted this no-Creator model of the universe.

The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with atheism, Buddhism, Mormonism, etc. because they also require an eternally existing universe.

Atheism in particular is incompatible with the universe "coming into being", because that would be a supernatural cause – a cause that created the natural world. According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.*

Falsifying a religion using history

Consider this argument:

1. To be a Muslim, you must believe that the Koran is without error.
2. The Koran claims that Jesus did not die on a cross. (Qur'an, 4: 157-158)
3. The crucifixion of Jesus is undisputed among non-Muslim historians, including atheist historians.
4. Therefore, it is not rational for me to become a Muslim.

I'm going to support the premise that Jesus was crucified by citing historians from all backgrounds.

Consider some quotes from the (mostly) non-Christian scholars below:

> "Jesus' death as a consequence of crucifixion is indisputable." Gert Lüdemann
>
> "That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be." J.D. Crossan
>
> "The passion of Jesus is part of history." Geza Vermes
>
> Jesus' death by crucifixion is "historically certain". Pinchas Lapide
>
> "The single most solid fact about Jesus' life is his death: he was executed by the Roman prefect Pilate, on or around Passover, in the manner Rome reserved particularly for political insurrectionists, namely, crucifixion." Paula Fredriksen
>
> "The support for the mode of his death, its agents, and perhaps its co-agents, is overwhelming: Jesus faced a trial before his death, was condemned, and was executed by crucifixion." L.T. Johnson

> “One of the most certain facts of history is that Jesus was crucified on orders of the Roman prefect of Judea, Ponitus Pilate.” Bart Ehrman

That’s 7 famous historians: 3 atheists, 3 Jews and 1 moderate Catholic. The atheists, Ludemann, Crossan and Ehrman, have all debated against the resurrection of Jesus with William Lane Craig. Johnson is the moderate Catholic, the rest are Jewish historians. The Koran was written in the 7th century. That is why no professional historian accepts the Koran as more authoritative than the many earlier Christian and non-Christian sources for the crucifixion story. Many of the sources for the crucifixion are dated to the 1st century. It’s not faith. It’s history.

I have seen debates with Muslim scholars, and I have never once heard them cite a non-Muslim historian to the effect that Jesus was not crucified. To my knowledge, there is no (non-Muslim) historian who denies the crucifixion of Jesus in his published work.

Can Christianity be falsified by science or history?

Yes. If you prove that the universe is eternal than would falsify the Bible’s claim that God created the universe out of nothing. That would be a scientific disproof. If you could find the body of Jesus still inside a tomb, that would falsify the Bible’s claim about a resurrection. That would be a historical disproof. The nice thing about Christianity is that we make lots of testable claims. When someone claims to be a Christian, it’s a good thing if they can show how they arrived at that conclusion. Being able to square God’s existence with science, and Jesus’ resurrection with history are two crucial steps to showing the reasonableness of Christianity.

Michael Knowles debates young secular left feminists for 5 hours on @Whatever podcast

May 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to watch shows where people debate how modern radical feminism has affected dating, marriage and parenting. One show I watch clips of is the @Whatever podcast. The co-host is a very conservative Christian. Recently, one of the liberal women on the panel walked off the set when the co-host said he would not have bedroom fun with a trans woman.

I think Ben Shapiro and Matt Walsh both played the audio from that exchange on their popular podcasts, which you can see here:

> Full video of the RAGE QUIT and her STORMING off after he says he would NOT sleep with a transwoman. pic.twitter.com/5tFDqPA7pJ
>
> — whatever (@whatever) February 28, 2023

Daily Caller wrote about it, too. I know that these shows have vulgar language, but I enjoy watching them because it's fun to see feminists running into the consequences of their own choices.

Anyway, Daily Wire host Michael Knowles showed up to debate the lady who walked off the @Whatever set. They call her "RageQuit Keeko". For those of you who do not play games, a rage quit is when someone is playing a multi-player game, and loses, and then quits the game in a rage. I watched the whole 5-hour debate with Knowles and Keeko on Saturday, while playing a new game that Rose bought me. (Saturday is for playing games, walking, doing chores and lifting weights!) The speakers covered a lot of interesting topics. I never got bored.

I want to embed a few clips from the 5-hour show, then talk about one in particular. (Warning: some very vulgar language at times – not for kids!)

Transgenderism:

Feminism:

Promiscuity:

Abortion:

And this is the one I care about the most – about the existence of God:

So, the first thing to point out is that Michael Knowles is 1) Catholic and 2) has a degree in English. So you're not going to get the sophisticated arguments of William Lane Craig, or the discussion of scientific evidence of Stephen C. Meyer, etc. out of him. Most Catholic "apologists" just repeat slogans from Aquinas, and that's what Michael does. (There are some exceptions, like Jay Richards and Michael Behe) But the funny thing is, even these simple, outdated Catholic slogans – using one and two syllable words – are literally

incomprehensible to “RageQuit Keeko”. She dismisses them as world-salad at best, or insanity at worst. It’s like she’s never heard a single argument for the truth of Christianity (e.g. – the kalam argument, or cosmic fine-tuning) that didn’t already assume the Bible was true, or use religious-sounding language.

So why blog on this? Well, elsewhere in the debate, Keeko explains that she was raised Catholic, and then threw it all away. And what’s interesting is that her reasons appear to be 1) a revulsion for Christians judging other people for their sin, and 2) a variety of intellectual objections to Christian truth claims. Whatever happened in her Catholic upbringing, it sure didn’t work to make her resistant to the culture. Did anyone have a defense of pro-life, or a defense of man-woman marriage, or a defense of pre-marital abstinence? Unlikely. Did anyone have answers to her intellectual objections to the Bible, God or Jesus? Very unlikely.

The response to the secular culture from most popular Bible-talkers is just ineffectual hand-wringing (Al Mohler, Alistair Begg) or sophisticated-sounding capitulation (John Piper, Tim Keller). Nobody seems to know how to make a logical argument for core Christian truth claims, and then back it up with mainstream science or history. No one has even read J. Warner Wallace or Sean McDowell, much less Stephen C. Meyer or N. T. Wright. Most people in church just talk about Disney, Netflix, vacations, sports, etc. The best Christians authors to read, they say, are the dumbed-down ones who make you feel good. After all, isn’t Christianity about feelings and community? If Keeko encountered this approach to discussing the truth of Christianity, then no wonder she left.

So in the 5-hour episode, I noticed a few arguments against Christianity raised by the young secular left feminists:

- any talk about religion is literally nonsense talk
- there are many different religions, so how could any one be true?
- the Bible has been changed many times
- all objections to abortion or gay rights are religious in nature
- religion is not necessary for me to feel good / be liked
- religious people divorce at the same rates as non-religious people

(Some of those might be from other clips, I watched so many while playing my new game). In general, I think it would be a good idea for people raised in the church to understand that Christianity is not intended to make them feel good or be liked. They seem to think that if they can feel good and be liked without it, then they don’t need it.

The point is that these objections are not being addressed head-on by the church. When you attend church, there is no question and answer. The pastor speaks, and everyone says Amen. The choir sings. There is no homework. No one discusses any of these topics at church or at home. And if you go to Bible study, it’s feminist leftist Beth Moore asking “how does this verse make you feel?”. All of the simple objections that young people eventually encounter in the culture can easily be defended using simple books from people like J. Warner Wallace, Sean McDowell, Paul Copan, Frank Turek, Scott Klusendorf,

Katy Faust, Michael Licona, etc. I can recommend so many 200 page introductory-level books on these topics, but the pastors never seem to want to equip the flocks.

And what about the parents? Most parents (who are the main defenders of Christianity for their children) again find a way to make the status quo sound pious and virtuous. Parents always have a reason why the best way to protect their kids from the culture is to pray about it, or to do fun activities, or send them to youth group. The answer can never be "let's sit down and read this Sean McDowell book chapter by chapter, and talk about it." They always want to spiritualize doing whatever it is that they want to do "God told me to pray about your doubts." I just find it ridiculous that parents and pastors think that children can develop a Christian worldview without settling questions about God's existence and Jesus' resurrection and objections to Christianity using the ordinary tools of an educated, practical, private-sector-working adult: reason and evidence.

It's very annoying to me. Parents and pastors act as though church attendance is going through the roof. They think that Christians are improving their worldviews to be more Biblical. How is that happening? It must be happening by magic, because it sure isn't happening by effort and planning. When are we going to accept that the Billy Graham fundamentalist piety way of raising Christian kids isn't working, and we're going to have to settle down and read some science, history and philosophy in order to counter these objections that come out of the mouths of these young adults?

This is why Christianity has lost its place in the public square.

Do religious people have a lower divorce rate than non-religious people?

May 2, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yesterday, I blogged about a discussion between the Daily Wire's Michael Knowles and some young secular left women, on the @Whatever podcast. I talked about the view that one woman had, that arguments for God's existence and Christianity in particular were nonsense. But another woman said that Christianity doesn't make your risk of divorce any lower, so there's no benefit to being a Christian, and seeking out a Christian spouse. Is she right?

Let's take a look at some data from a study, so we can really see what the evidence is.

Here's something from the Institute for Family Studies:

> When trying to understand how much people value something, economists pay particular attention to the value of what people give up in order to estimate how much they value what they get in exchange. Money is a common metric for value, but time is another metric that is sometimes easier to use. When it comes to Christianity, people are often reluctant to discuss how much money they contribute to their churches but are more forthcoming when asked how much time they spend on religious activities. Economists who study religion often use the frequency of church attendance as a proxy for the strength of an individual's religious beliefs.
>
> Using this line of reasoning, we can divide the American population into two groups: 1) the "devout," or those who attend church two to three times a month or more; and 2) the "non-devout," or those who attend church once a month or less. The following analysis used data for people ages 25 to 54 from the General Social Survey (GSS).

So, the first point is that secular left feminists are unlikely to get married *at all*, and that's because marriage is moral rational in the Christian worldview than it is in the secular leftist worldview:

> Here, it is clear that marriage rates have been falling for the population as a whole. But those who attend church on a regular basis are significantly more likely to marry than their less devout peers. Breaking this analysis down further by race,[2] we see higher rates of marriage among regular church attenders in both white and black populations.
>
> There appear to be social and economic forces occurring over time that are causing decreased marriage rates for all Americans. But for both black and white Americans, marriage is falling significantly faster for people who do not attend church regularly. This is creating a growing gap in marriage rates between the devout and non-devout over time. And the widening gap in marriage may

> indicate a growing separation of shared culture between the devout and non-devout.

People think that they can just chop the God out of Christianity, and the same morals will just continue as before, with no rational foundation for it. But marriage involves a loss of personal freedom to pursue pleasure, at least in the short-term. Atheism is about hedonism. That's why atheists support abortion – because when someone else gets in the way of their pleasure, they think murder is a fine way to keep the good times rolling for themselves. It's what Darwin called "survival of the fittest", and this is what atheists believe. When atheists are faced with a conflict between their own happiness, and the loss of personal freedom that marriage requires, they choose not to get married. That's why atheist states have such low marriage rates.

Marriage itself is self-sacrificial – you're making a safe place for children to have stability, at your own expense. So that's the first difference between church-attending Christians and secular left feminists – marriage rates. It's no use complaining when you are a hedonist that you can't find a good spouse to marry. You're a hedonist, and you're looking for a hedonist to marry. That's not the kind of person who enters a commitment that requires self-control and self-denial. You might as well expect two psychopaths to run a successful business together than to expect two morality-deniers to get married and stay together.

Far-left Pew Research that 64% of members of a couple of Christian denominations are married. But for atheists, it's a measly 36%. Atheists don't get married.

OK, and what did they find about the divorce rates of these different groups of people – devout and non-devout?

This:

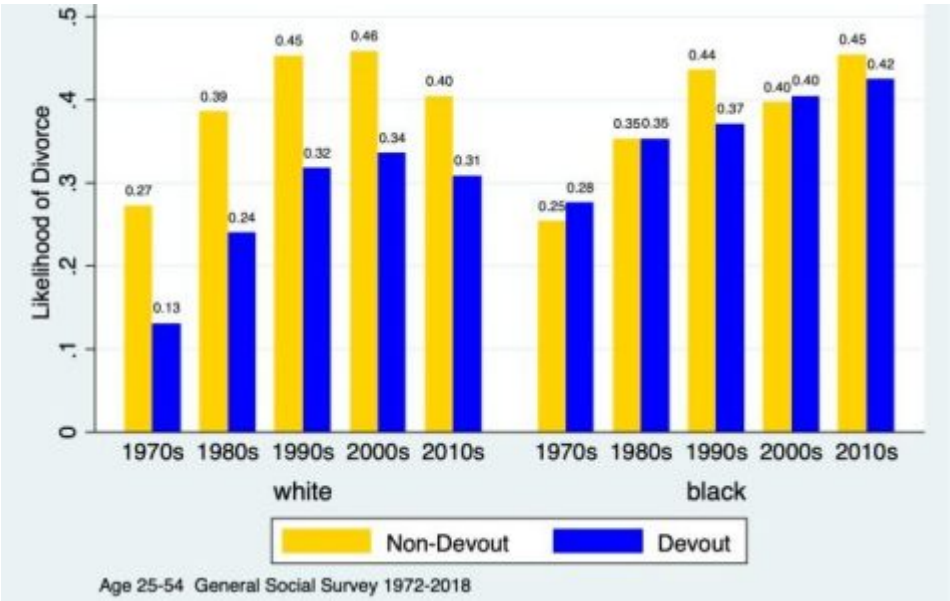

Devout vs Non-Devout Divorce Marriage

The article says:

> The figure above shows that divorce rates are significantly lower for white Americans who attend church regularly and this difference remains significant

> across all decades.

A previous study out of Harvard University reached the same conclusion:

> Considerable research over the last two decades has been devoted to the relationship between religious participation and health and well-being. Our research on this topic at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health links religious service attendance to a number of better health outcomes, including longer life, lower incidence of depression, and less suicide. Our work also indicates that religious service attendance is associated with greater marital stability—or more specifically, with a lower likelihood of divorce.[1]
>
> We are not the first to study the relationship between religious service attendance and the likelihood of divorce. In fact, a number of studies have found similar results: namely, that those who attend religious services are about 30 to 50 percent less likely to divorce than those who do not.[2]

It's really important for young people to make sure that the actions they take *today* are taking them towards the goal they want to reach tomorrow. Young people, especially women, seem to have a disconnect between their words and actions. They say they want marriage. They say they want to avoid divorce. But their actions in the moment take them closer and closer to not marrying at all, or divorcing if they do marry.

Young people, especially women, love to make decisions on the basis of feelings. They need a "spark" in order to know that a person is "their person". The person that "the universe" has "manifested" for them to be effortlessly happy. They expect a tall, tattoo'd atheist with a criminal record for domestic violence to marry them, and make them live happily ever after. Why? Because there is a spark. There are tingles. There is a feeling in the moment. And surely, choosing what you want in the moment will get you long-term results, right? That's why the marriage rate is declining. Does anyone have the courage to tell these young fools the truth?

Guest post: Christians should oppose Black Lives Matter

May 3, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The following is a guest post by a friend of mine who is also a software engineer.

The Problems with Black Lives Matter

All over Facebook I've seen naïve Christians posting Black Lives Matter (BLM) material, hashtags, and even donation links. According to their official statements BLM aims to:

1. "Disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure"
2. Foster a "queer-affirming network" and "freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking," instead of helping people escape LGBT lifestyles and live as God intended.
3. "A national defunding of police," BLM is a member of M4BL which also calls for abolishing prisons.
4. BLM parent group M4BL is pro-abortion: "we demand reproductive justice that gives us autonomy over our bodies and our identities."
5. BLM parent group M4BL is anti-capitalist. The alternative to capitalism is removing the freedom to buy and sell and putting the government in charge of resources. When government power is absolute, all checks and balances against evil disappear and atrocities become inevitable. I know of 100 million people who didn't have a good time in anti-capitalist countries, especially minorities.
6. BLM finds racism in everything with no concept of forgiveness. While masking the much larger and real causes of black inequality in the US. More on that below.

These goals don't seem very Christian.

Some Christians say they only support the slogan "black lives matter" but not the organization. They're probably friends with people who call themselves "National Socialists" and enjoy re-explaining to everyone they meet how it's not actually the

German kind. To each their own. Yet better slogans could be used to support black people.

Avoid the slackidasical “all lives matter” retort. That distracts from the real issues:

Black Inequality

Black inequality in the US is real. But BLM promotes a false narrative, blaming it entirely on modern systemic racism. If that’s true, why are blacks 3 times more likely to receive government assistance than whites? Why are police are about twice as likely to use lethal force against *whites* under arrest than blacks (although more likely to use non-lethal force against blacks)?

Before getting to the real reasons let’s first dig into that last source. It comes from the left-leaning Center for Policing Equity. The wording in their report focuses on specific localities where the police are harsher on blacks. But the overall data tells a different story. In tables 6 and 7 on page 20, police are 1.73 times more likely to use lethal force against whites under arrest than blacks, and 2.41 times more likely to use lethal force against whites under arrest for violent offences. Black Lives Matter and the left-leaning media would never tell you this.

Don’t police just arrest blacks way more than whites? Yes, absolutely. You can even find stats showing unarmed blacks are 5 times more likely to be killed by police than unarmed whites, a product of being arrested much more frequently. But unfortunately (trigger warning) it’s because in the US, blacks commit significantly more crime:

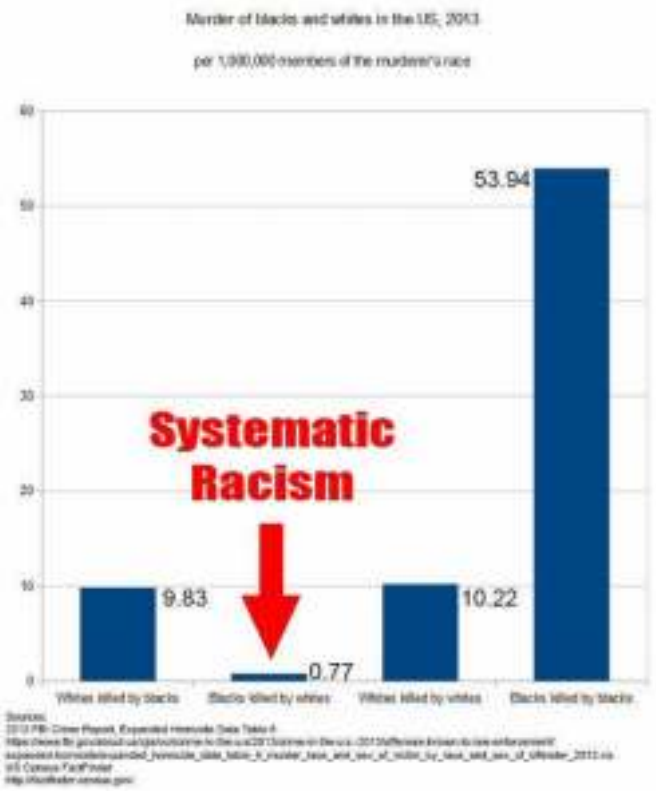

I looked up the FBI data this meme links to, converted it to rates per million and got the same result. Non-lethal crimes have a similar proportion by race.

What are the Real Causes of Black Inequality?

Perhaps the court systems are racist and blacks are convicted of murder more often? One could speculate so, but murders involve more investigation than most crimes, and you'd have to argue the system is so biased it only makes it appear as if blacks are 12.8 times more likely to kill whites than whites kill blacks. Quite a stretch.

Use careful grace in sharing these stats, as they're easily abused by the small number of people wishing to paint blacks as an unredeemable, inferior race. Instead consider the better explanations for black inequality:

1. 2.7 times more black children (65%) grow up in single parent homes than white children (24%). 17% of blacks were born out of wedlock in 1940 but that number is >70% today. Other races also increased but not nearly as much. We know broken families are strongly correlated with poverty, poor education, crime, and many other ills.
2. As noted, blacks are three times more likely to receive government assistance than whites, a number that's changed very little in 40 years. If welfare programs lifted people out of poverty, by now shouldn't we see more than a slight decrease in blacks on welfare? Rather I suspect welfare increases rates of fatherlessness: women don't need a man when the government pays the bills.
3. Universities, employers, the government, and the media use "soft racism," giving special treatment to blacks, sometimes causing an unhealthy and unnecessary inferiority complex.
4. Due to this persecution narrative, and fear of being called racist, poor behavior among blacks isn't called out, worsening the broken family cycle. Even being used as an excuse for the poor behavior of the recent rioters. Black CNN journalist Don Lemon received a "firestorm of criticism" for pointing to out-of-wedlock births as a problem among blacks.

I'm curious. Will you argue that fatherlessness leads to negative outcomes among whites, but a 2.7x greater rate among blacks doesn't significantly increase their negative outcomes? Really?

Perhaps it's even possible that police target blacks more frequently because these issues actually do lead them to commit more crimes, causing some police to subconsciously be more suspect of blacks? I don't know if that's true, but if so who is at fault?

Is Racism Still a Major Issue?

Before continuing please read this piece by conservative commenter David French (white), who adopted his black daughter from Ethiopia. He describes how through many incidents it made him realize racism is still alive and well in America.

Meanwhile, the black economist Thomas Sowell offers a contrary view:

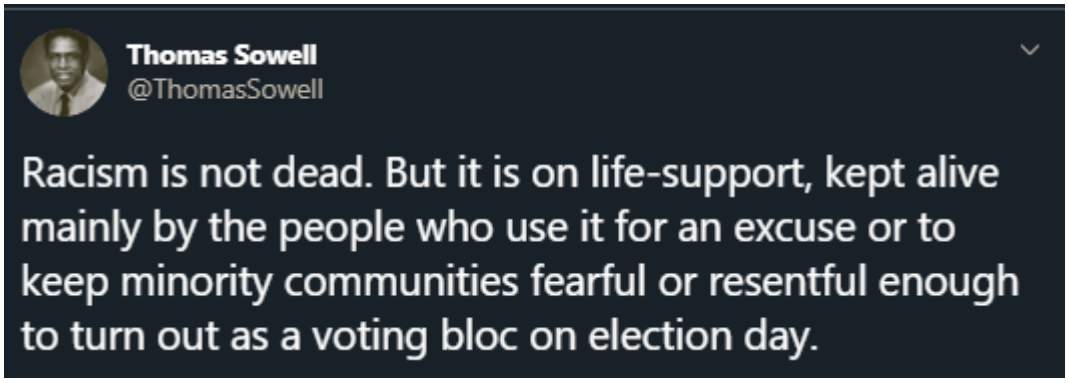

Who's right? David French says he used to think there were almost no racists. I'm still in that place. I don't know anyone who is racist other than one or two people I met on strange corners of the internet. After adopting his daughter French discovered that yes, of course racism still exists, outlining several real incidents of bias against her. For example his daughter's friend said, "My dad says it's dangerous to go black people's neighborhoods." Alt-right trolls even made a cruel meme of his young daughter in a gas chamber.

Such memes are of course reprehensible. But French uses the wrong benchmark. The real question is not if racism exists, but if blacks face greater external hardship than other groups? People who are too smart, dumb, fat, thin, short, tall, attractive, ugly, rich, poor, Christian, or amoral. Or any other category. Almost everyone belongs to at least one. French doesn't address that question.

Compared to Christian Persecution in the US (Yes, Really)

I can't answer for most of those groups. But I am a Christian. I'm very glad to live in the US with its many Christian freedoms. I don't even feel comfortable talking about Christian "persecution" in the US because other parts of the world have it so much worse. Yet there are still examples of anti-Christian discrimination here:

1. I know a Christian friend who was kicked out of her PhD biology program for being a creationist. An intelligent, articulate, and polite one at that. I used to think people like her must've just been belligerent, but I hear similar stories from nearly every creationist or intelligent design proponent I speak to. Many keep their beliefs hidden. Books and documentaries are filled with such stories. Well known professor and textbook author Larry Moran has even called for universities to flunk by default any students who believe in intelligent design: "Flunk the IDiots." Forbes later wrote a glowing bio of Moran for his stance. Imagine the outrage if Moran called to flunk all black students!
2. In 2016, hapless Chinese scientists published a paper in the journal PLOS One, stating that the human hand shows "proper design by the Creator." The remark was in passing and the rest of their paper had nothing to do with the evolution or design. As soon as this was realized, I watched as the backlash unfolded in the comments section. Five editors of PLOS One requested the whole article to be retracted (rather than the wording removed), two of those editors said they'd resign if it wasn't

retracted. Two others said the editor who approved the paper should be fired. And five scientists commented, saying they'd boycott PLOS One. Then the paper was retracted. Even though the Chinese researches explained they only meant to say "mother nature," and English wasn't their first language. No other issue with their research was found. That backlash was only for a translation issue. Imagine if they'd been Christians who actually believed God designed life.

3. Practicing Christians are no longer allowed to hold certain jobs in the United States. A county clerk like Kim Davis cannot in good conscious abet two people into a lifelong commitment to live in sin, yet was jailed for refusing. California once banned all judges who volunteered with the Boy Scouts because the group previously required heterosexual scout leaders.
4. Many friends often tell me they can't publicly speak out against homosexual behavior in fear of losing their jobs. I doubt their employers have issue with vegetarians saying meat is murder.
5. And of course secularists make memes, sometimes violent, mocking Christians all the time. So what.

Imagine if I took the crime stats above and marched around with signs about "white genocide" or "systemic racism" because blacks are more likely to get welfare or whites more likely to be shot while under arrest. That'd make me a complete narcissistic jerk. Or worse if I used it to justify arson, looting, and violence. Yet I'd still be more correct than Black Lives Matter because at least the data supports me.

I don't think there's anything special about hardships faced by US Christians. You could make a similarly troublesome list for hardships of unattractive and overweight people, probably worse. I'm not planning any protests for them or for US anti-Christian discrimination. That's too minor compared to many greater injustices in the world. And please don't take this and claim I've said racism no longer exists. The experiences of David French's daughter are bad things that need to stop. But unlike in decades past, I'm not convinced it's currently any worse than hardships faced by any number of other classes of people for a wide variety of reasons.

The Media Amplifies Racism for Profit

A couple weeks ago I posted to Facebook about Israel planning to ban their only Christian news station for proselytizing. Two friends commented that it was a great idea, because Christians indoctrinate people. I get similar comments often. Oh woe is me! But imagine if they'd instead called for banning black history? Call CNN! We found another Amy Cooper!

Although sometimes doing well, George Floyd had a long and sometimes violent criminal record. Nobody thinks he deserved to die. I'm glad the officers involved are being investigated. But put his case in perspective. People do awful things for many reasons. In the United States each year we have:

- 600,000+ abortions
- 250,000 deaths from negligent medical errors
- 15,000 murders
- 1,500 dead from child abuse.
- 1,000 suspects killed by police (with 90 to 95% attacking police or another person). Among a total police force of more than 800,000.
- 85 police officers killed.

Despite all that, the deceptive media amplifies any incident with a white perpetrator and black victim. Everyone knows about George Floyd, but few have heard of Tony Timpa (white), who in 2016 also begged for his life as police suffocated and made fun of him. The media gets away with this bias because almost everyone actually does hate racism, leading to collective outrage. So much that it brings riots, looting, and buildings on fire. Plus news media profit from increased news viewership of these riots. While the media ignores many greater injustices in the previous list.

The leftist media then uses Black Lives Matter as a front to push ridiculous leftist policies like defunding the police. Oh you're against BLM? Racist.

Black inequality in America is real. If you love people of all races as Christ commands, then you should want to solve this problem. That can only be done if we tackle the real causes, and not the left-leaning media's exaggerated racism narrative that masks them.

North Carolina Republicans have super-majorities in both chambers, here's what's happening

May 4, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a close friend who lives in North Carolina, and she thinks that it's a great state, and that it's about to get a lot more conservative because they now have Republican supermajorities that can override the governor's veto. I have noticed a lot of good stories in the news about North Carolina, and I thought that I might collect a few stories about what they are up to.

First, this one from yesterday, reported by Life News:

> Pro-Life legislators in North Carolina have introduced a bill to ban abortions on unborn babies starting at 12 weeks. While pro-life advocates were hoping for legislation to protect babies starting at conception or at least a heartbeat bill protecting them beginning at 6 weeks, the political reality of the situation prevented that.
>
> North Carolina Republicans face an uphill battle in getting legislation approved because pro-abortion Democrat Governor Roy Cooper is certain to veto any pro-life legislation and stronger pro-life protections for babies would have a more difficult time securing the supermajority necessary to override his veto.
>
> North Carolina Republican legislative leaders said on Tuesday there's agreement for a 12 week bill and House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate leader Phil Berger both said they would push the pro=life legislation in their respective chambers.

Now for a couple stories about cleaning up their elections, so that Democrats can't steal them by voter fraud.

This one from Life Site News:

> With its new conservative majority, the North Carolina Supreme Court on Friday reversed prior decisions against state voting rules and a Republican-redrawn districting map, a boon to the GOP's prospects going into the 2024 elections.
>
> The Carolina Journal reports that the state's highest court, on which two Democrat justices were replaced with Republicans last year, voted 5-2 to reinstate North Carolina's 2018 law requiring photo identification in order to vote and districting maps favorable to Republicans in congressional and state legislative races, and to forbid felons from voting in state elections until they have completed their sentences.
>
> All three rulings were issued "with prejudice," meaning that opponents cannot challenge them again.

Nice. And how about this one from The Federalist:

> After scoring significant victories in the legislature in the 2022 midterms, North Carolina Republicans are introducing legislation that would bar state and local election officials from accepting or using private money to conduct elections.
>
> SB 89 stipulates that state and local election boards, as well as county boards of commissioners, are prohibited from accepting "private monetary donations, directly or indirectly, for conducting elections or employing individuals on a temporary basis."
>
> Concerns surrounding the use of private money to conduct elections became prominent following the 2020 election cycle, during which Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg gifted nonprofits such as the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) hundreds of millions of dollars. These "Zuckbucks" were then siphoned into local election offices in battleground states around the country to change how elections were administered, such as by expanding unsecure election protocols like mail-in voting and the use of ballot drop boxes.
>
> To make matters worse, the grants were heavily skewed towards Democrat-majority counties, essentially making it a massive Democrat get-out-the-vote operation.

That's how Biden was able to win the election in states where he wasn't even competitive in the polls.

And this one, from Daily Wire:

> The University of North Carolina (UNC) made a move against woke culture on Thursday, banning controversial so-called diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) requirements from the school's hiring and promotion process.
>
> The university's Board of Governors reportedly voted Thursday to secure the ban, following pressure from Color Us United, a non-profit committed to speaking out "against those who want to divide America."
>
> UNC "shall neither solicit nor require an employee or applicant for academic admission or employment to affirmatively ascribe to or opine about beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles regarding matters of contemporary political debate or social action as a condition to admission, employment, or professional advancement," the resolution said, adding that an employee or applicant can't "be solicited or required to describe his or her actions in support of, or in opposition to, such beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles."

A lot of this is going to hinge on who wins the governor post in 2024, and this guy (reported in The Federalist) is the guy who Republicans are running:

> Mark Robinson believes Republicans and conservatives should never concede the cultural narrative, and that the party's greatest need is to put forward those who can speak with force, conviction, and eloquence about the party's shared values with everyday Americans. The lack of articulateness in such matters is, of course,

> a perennial complaint about GOP political discourse. However, if anybody is in a position to do something about it, it is the man who will be, barring incident, the first black lieutenant governor of North Carolina.
>
> I've witnessed a great many politicians give a great many speeches, but I've seldom come across one with the natural ease and ability to combine passion and reason the way Robinson does when he gets warmed up on his favorite issues. His is a national-level talent that the GOP would ignore or sideline at its peril.
>
> I saw a display of Robinson's appeal last summer when he addressed a Back the Blue rally in downtown Raleigh. He electrified the audience and with a speech basically shut down the Antifa and Black Lives Matter protestors cat-calling and drumming on the periphery, striking them, at least momentarily, silent and dumbfounded.

I hope a lot of conservatives move there from blue states, and tilt the balance more. No point living in a blue state if you can get out. Don't pay taxes to people who hate you, and your values. Just move. I like to make spreadsheets comparing all the interesting rankings of states, like fiscal solvency, state legislatures, pro-life and self-defense. According to my spreadsheets, across all measures that I care about, the two best states in the union are Florida and Tennessee.

Are modern women building their resumes to attract to marriage-minded men?

May 5, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been watching a bunch of episodes of the @whatever podcast, and really enjoying the fact that the Christians are allowed to say what they think about dating and relationships, and that the non-Christians are explaining in their own words what their view of relationships is. And it's very interesting to see how modern women have a disconnect between "in the moment" and "some day".

So, I have a couple of clips from a show to show you what I mean. In this clip, the men on the left of the room – Brian Atlas, the host, and Chase, the evangelical Christian – challenge the two non-Christian women on the right side of the room. They ask whether a boyfriend can expect his girlfriend to stop going to bars and night clubs. These are places where alcohol is served, women wear sexy clothes, and men flirt with drunk women and try to take them home for sex. All the non-Christian women on the panel call this demand that they not go to bars and clubs "controlling". They don't see why being in a relationship should cause them to have to give up any aspect of their pursuit of pleasure. If they want validation from hot guys, and maybe some extra sex, then they should be able to look for it in bars and night clubs.

Remember, this video has a lot of bad language. It's not for kids.

So, watch this clip from 1:05:21 to 1:28:45: (23 min and 24 seconds)

So, these young women want to focus on having fun in their early 20s, because that's what they want to do. And then later on, when they get much older, then they might be ready for a man to marry them and give them children.

A marriage-minded man is looking for a woman who is willing to control her behavior so that she becomes safe to marry. So that she can focus on her husband. So that she can spend time nurturing and raising her children. She can't spend money on frivolous things. She can't spend money on vacations and entertainment and alcohol. She can't smoke while she's pregnant. She can't buy expensive hand bags and get cosmetic surgery. But these young women aren't willing to give up any of these things. They want to have fun. And marriage is seen as "boring", until they decide in their late 30s that they finally want it. Men who want to focus on marriage early are "controlling". Men who want women to focus on preparing to build a home and a family are "controlling" men.

The problem with this, as one of the men points out, is that those bar and night club experiences do not make the woman attractive or stable for marriage. Marriage is an enormous financial and legal risk for men. They can be thrown into jail for inability to pay alimony and child support. They can lose custody of their kids in family courts. They can have their parental rights nullified by feminist judges. Women are actually more likely to commit non-reciprocal domestic violence than men, according to this recent study:

> Almost 24% of all relationships had some violence, and half (49.7%) of those were reciprocally violent. In nonreciprocally violent relationships, women were the perpetrators in more than 70% of the cases.

Men have to be extremely careful about marriage. And when young women are taught to be self-centered from 18-35, this is not good preparation for being a wife and mother. "Hoe phases" and "party stages" doesn't look good on a resume. I would not hire a college grad to write software, if their entire resume was playing video games and memorizing movie scripts. If you want the job, you have to be able to show that you can do the job. Jobs are not meant to entertain you. There is work to do, and results are expected. The same thing is true of marriage. Men are making the hiring decisions, there, and we do look at women's resumes.

Men are the keepers of commitment. If a woman wants commitment, she has to apply for commitment, and prove she is worth being committed to. Men are looking for marriage-related behaviors and capabilities. Chastity. Sobriety. Conservative political views. Accurate theology. Apologetics. Experience building others up to be useful for God. Spending restraint. Saving and investing. STEM degrees. Cooking ability. The ability to be content at home. Willingness to learn what husbands like, and to play with husbands. Fitness. Nutrition. Respect for male leadership. Etc.

Consider this clip from 2:32:54 to 2:43:24: (10 min, 30 seconds)

Here the Christian co-host Chase explains to the women that if they pick a Christian man, he will be able to lead them to focus on the most important things in life early on. The single mother is excited that some men would want to help to avoid mistakes with bad boys. But again, the two blondes who insisted on hedonism rebel against the leadership of good men. They want to be free to pursue pleasure, and not listen to the leadership of Christian men. They don't want to focus on marriage. They don't want to prepare their character for marriage. They don't want to control their desires, so they can get a long-term result. They want to SAY that they want marriage and children "some day", but they want to choose what feels good "in the moment". And they definitely prefer hot bad boys who are permissive. They don't want good men who want to lead them to get into shape for marriage.

I think the older generation of Christian women has NO IDEA that this is what younger women are like. 70 years ago, women would jump into the arms of men who wanted to step in and lead on moral and spiritual issues. They were not interested in "tingles" caused by physical attraction. They were interested in men who could step in and make marriage and parenting easy for them. Men who were serious about earning. Men who were serious about fighting evil. Men who were involved in the home, and effective at leading the children to have accurate beliefs and good moral character. But those days are *long gone.*

Today, young women are choosing men based on the feelings they get from being validated by those men. They like men who "don't judge". They like men with attractive appearances who are having a lot of sex with other women. They like men who spend

their money on displayed wealth, rather than save for a downpayment on a home. Good men are ignored until these women realize that their plan isn't working, and suddenly they want to "settle down". But good men know that a woman who makes a good man her "last resort" in her late 30s will never respect him as a leader in the home.

Men don't HAVE to get married and have kids in order to be happy. We can just work hard, stack our cash high, retire early, and work on our ministry goals. Working for God on evangelism and apologetics is enormously fulfilling for a man. Just ask Paul.

Physicist Victor Stenger debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

May 6, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This debate took place on March 1, 2010 at Oregon State University.

In this debate, Victor Stenger does affirm his belief that the universe could be eternal in his second rebuttal (1:02:30), thus denying the standard Big Bang cosmology. He also denies the law of conservation of energy and asserts that something can come from nothing in his concluding speech (1:33:50). He also caused the audience to start laughing when he said that Jesus was not moral and supported slavery. There is almost no snark in this summary. Instead, I quoted Dr. Stenger *verbatim* in many places. I still think that it is very entertaining even without the snarky paraphrasing.

The debate includes 30 minutes of Q&A with the students.

Here's the video of the debate:

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

- The ontological argument
- The contingency argument
- The cosmological argument
- The moral argument
- The resurrection of Jesus (3-fact version)
- Religious experience

Dr. Stenger's opening speech:

- There is no scientific evidence for God's existence in the textbooks
- There is no scientific evidence for God acting in the universe
- God doesn't talk to people and tell them things they couldn't possibly know
- The Bible says that the Earth is flat, etc.
- There is no scientific evidence that God answers prayers
- God doesn't exist because people who believe in him are ignorant
- Human life is not optimally designed and appears to be the result of a blind, ad hoc evolutionary process
- The beginning of the universe is not ordered (low entropy) but random and chaotic
- It's theoretically possible that quantum tunneling explains the origin of the universe
- The laws of physics are not objectively real, they are "our inventions"
- Regarding the beginning of the universe, the explanation is that something came from nothing*
- Nothing* isn't really nothing, it is "the total chaos that we project existed just before the big bang"
- If something has no structure, then "it is as much nothing as nothing can be"

- Consciousness is explainable solely on the basis of material processes
- There are well-informed, rational non-believers in the world and God would not allow that

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

Stenger's argument that there is no objective evidence for God's existence:

- First, it is not required that God rely only on objective evidence in order to draw people to himself (Alvin Plantinga)
- Second, God is not required to provide evidence to everyone, only to the people who he knows would respond to him
- Third, Craig gave lots of objective evidence, from science, history and philosophy
- Stenger asks for certain evidence (answered prayers, prophecy, etc.), but Craig presented the evidence we have

Stenger's argument that the balance of energy is zero so "nothing" exists:

- if you have the same amount of assets and liabilities, it doesn't mean that nothing exists – your assets and liabilities exist
- Christopher Isham says that there needs to be a cause to create the positive and negative energy even if they balance
- the quantum gravity model contradicts observations
- the vacuum is not the same as nothing, it contains energy and matter
- the BVG theorem proves that *any* universe that is expanding must have a beginning

Stenger's argument that mental operations can be reduced to physical operations:

- mental properties are not reducible to physical properties
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with self-identity over time
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with thoughts about other things
- epiphenomenalism: is incompatible with free will
- substance dualism (mind/body dualism) is a better explanation for our mental experience
- God is a soul without a body

Dr. Stenger's first rebuttal:

Craig's cosmological argument:

- Craig's premise is "everything has a cause", but quantum mechanics has causeless events
- There are speculative theories about how something could have come into being uncaused out of nothing
- "I don't know of a single working cosmologist today who believes there was a singularity prior to the Big Bang"
- "If there wasn't a singularity then there's no basis for arguing that time began at

that point”
- “There’s no reason from cosmology that we know of that the universe can’t be eternal”
- “When I talk about an eternal universe, I mean a universe that has no beginning or end”
- The Hartle-Hawking model doesn’t have a beginning
- “There was no violation of energy conservation by having a universe coming from nothing”
- “The universe *could have* come from a previous universe for example or even just from a region of chaos”
- The paper by Vilenkin is counteracted by other papers (he doesn’t specify which ones)

Craig’s moral argument:

- Dr. Craig is arguing from ignorance
- But morality can be decided by humanity just like governments pass laws, and that’s objective
- Dr. Craig has too little respect for the human intellect
- I don’t need to tell me that slavery is wrong
- The Bible supports slavery
- Atheists can behave as good as theists
- Morality just evolved naturally as an aid to survival

Craig’s resurrection argument:

- No Roman historians wrote about the execution of Jesus
- The empty tomb is doubtful because it is only mentioned in the gospels, not by Paul
- John Dominic Crossan says there was no empty tomb
- Christianity only survived because the Roman empire thought that they were useful

Dr. Craig’s second rebuttal:

Craig’s cosmological argument:

- There is no reason to prefer an indeterministic interpretation of quantum mechanics
- Dr. Stenger himself wrote that deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics are possible
- The vacuum in quantum mechanics is not nothing
- The quantum vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal
- The cosmological argument does not require a singularity
- The Hartle-Hawking model is from 1983
- Hawking says that there is a beginning of space and time *after* that model
- The Hartle-Hawking model *does still have a beginning of time* – the model is not eternal

- The BVG theorem that requires a beginning for expanding universes is widely accepted among cosmologists

Craig's moral argument:

- Stenger redefined objective to mean that most people agree with it – but that's not what objective means
- Objective means right and wrong whether anyone accepts it or not
- Richard Dawkins himself says that on atheism there is "no evil and no good" – why is he wrong?
- Even Dr. Stenger says that morality is the same as passing laws – it's arbitrary and varies by time and place
- But on his view, right and wrong are the same as deciding which side of the road to drive on
- But somethings really are right and some things are really wrong

Craig's resurrection argument:

- Josephus is a Roman historian and he wrote about Jesus, for example
- There were four biographies of Jesus are the best sources for his life
- The scholars that Stenger mentioned are on the radical fringe

Dr. Stenger's second rebuttal:

Knowledge and the burden of proof:

- Dr. Craig has to bear the burden of proof, not me – because his claim is more "extravagant"
- "I don't have to prove that a God was not necessary to create the universe"
- "I don't have to prove that a God did not design the universe and life"
- "I don't have to prove that the universe did not have a beginning"
- "I don't have to prove that God did not provide us with our moral sense"
- There are a lot of books written about how morality evolved naturally
- "I don't have to prove that the events surrounding the supposed resurrection of Jesus did not take place"
- Bart Ehrman says that the gospels are generally unreliable (Note: Ehrman accepts all 3 of Craig's minimal facts)
- Just because people are willing to die for a cause, does not make their leader God, e.g. – the Emperor of Japan

Aesthetic concerns about the universe:

- I don't like dark matter and I wouldn't have made the universe with dark matter
- I don't like the doctrine of penal substitution
- I don't like the doctrine of original sin
- I don't like the heat death of the universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion:

The case for atheism:

- Dr. Stenger had two arguments and he has to support his premises
- Dr. Craig addressed his two arguments and each premise and Dr. Stenger never came back on it

The contingency argument:

- Dr. Stenger has dropped the refutation of this argument

The cosmological argument:

- The theoretical vacuum he proposes cannot be eternal

The moral argument:

- He asserts that things are wrong, but there is no grounding for that to be objective on atheism

The resurrection of Jesus:

- There are surveys of scholars on the empty tomb and 75% of them agree with it
- Bart Ehrman agrees with all 3 of the minimal facts that Dr. Craig presented
- Ehrman's objection to the resurrection is not historical: he's an atheist – he thinks miracles are impossible

Religious experience:

- No response from Dr. Stenger

Dr. Stenger's conclusion

The cosmological argument:

- "I argued that we have very good physical reasons to understand how something can come from nothing"
- "There is a natural tendency in the universe… to go from.. simpler thing to the more complicated thing"
- The transition from a vapor to a liquid to ice shows how something could come from nothing
- "It cannot be proven that the universe had a beginning"

The moral argument:

- Objective morality, which is independent of what people think, could be developed based on what people think

- “Jesus himself was not a tremendously moral person… he had no particular regard for the poor… he certainly supported slavery… he was for the subjugation of women” (audience laughter)

The resurrection argument:

- Bart Ehrman says that the majority of the gospels are unreliable

Religious experience:

- I don’t see any evidence that there is anything more to religious experience than just stuff in their heads

God’s purpose of the world should be to make people feel happy:

- God could have made people feel happier
- God could have made people not die
- God could could have made the universe smaller: it’s too big
- God could have made it possible for humans to live anywhere “even in space”

New study: trans kids prescribed MORE anti-psychotic drugs after starting transition than before

May 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Transgenderism is the hot topic of discussion between secular leftists and moral people these days. Every time I see a study about this issue, I'm blogging about it, so that I can find all the studies I need when I have to debate this. One thing you hear from the secular left is that parents must allow kids to transition, or they will suffer declines in mental health. But what does the data say?

Here's the latest study, reported by Fox News:

> Children taking anti-psychotic medication in the military health system for serious mental illness were later administered "gender-affirming pharmaceuticals," according to Department of Defense health records, with one of its air base physicians claiming the gender drugs could "melt away" psychotic conditions such as a schizophrenia diagnosis.
>
> A study published in The Journal of Sexual Medicine in 2021 entitled, "Mental Healthcare Utilization of Transgender Youth Before and After Affirming Treatment," discussed internal DoD health records from 2010-2018.
>
> The review showed that transgender kids in the DoD health system were being given heavy psychotropic medications such as anti-psychotics while being sent through a "gender-affirming" pipeline.

So, the authors of the study thought that transitioning children would cause their mental health problems to just disappear. But the study actually found the opposite:

> The study yielded unflattering results on the effects the gender treatments had on kids' mental health. Not only did it find no significant psychological benefit, but many children had their psychotropic medication increased after gender-related drugs were administered.
>
> "Among 963 [transgender] youth using gender-affirming pharmaceuticals, mental healthcare did not significantly change and psychotropic medications increased following gender-affirming pharmaceutical initiation," the study said.
>
> "The most pronounced increases in psychotropic medication were in… anti-psychotics and lithium," a mood stabilizing medication commonly used to treat bipolar disorder.

The secular left likes to say that hormone therapy is a treatment for the mental illnesses that these young people have. But this study doesn't show that, it shows that they were taking even more psychotropic medications after beginning their sex changes.

Here are some of the other studies I've blogged about before:

- New study: more than half of all female-to-male transgender teens attempt suicide
- Controversial study on Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria and transgenderism re-published
- Study: sex-reassignment surgery does not improve mental health of transgender people
- New study: “social contagion” is a major factor in teen and young adult gender dysphoria
- New study: there is no gay gene that causes homosexuality
- New study: 50% of biological males in women’s prisons convicted of sex crimes
- New study: psychotherapy improves mental health of autistic teens with gender dysphoria

Issues in educating children to be effective and influential Christians

May 8, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, in this post I'm going to briefly go over three challenges to producing effective, influential children. First, choose a better spouse. Second, Christian classical schools. Third, socialist countries make homeschooling and private Christian schools effectively illegal.

1. Choose a better spouse

So let's start with the first one. Christian parents and pastors need to educate young people to choose spouses who are equipped educate to produce effective and influential children.

So in the case of choosing a man who will be involved in producing effective, influential children, here are some tips:

- don't choose a man based on attraction to his appearance or displayed wealth
- whether homeschooling or private Christian schools, the man should have chosen a major and a career that allows him to pay to avoid public schools
- it's better to choose a man whose career allows him to work from home, so that he is available to supervise the education, and discipline the children as they grow
- he should demonstrate his ability to move people in his circle of influence to greater effectiveness and influence, for example making them try harder at school and work, or get better at defending the Christian worldview, especially on controversial issues

So in the case of choosing a woman who will be involved in producing effective, influential children, here are some tips:

- don't choose a woman based on attraction to her appearance or sexual availability
- children need their their mothers at home from birth to age 5, so if a woman has a career, then she needs to put it on hold during that time. If a woman wants to do a career to benefit the Christian community as a whole, e.g. – Supreme Court justice, then she should probably not have children between those ages
- it's better to choose a woman who has demonstrated the ability to do hard things, so that she has the ability to take responsibility and be accountable for producing results, e.g. – a degree in computer science, and two years of private sector coding experience
- she should demonstrate her ability to move people in her circle of influence to greater effectiveness and influence, for example making them try harder at school and work, or get better at defending the Christian worldview, especially on controversial issues

It’s no good to complain when the children arrive that your spouse isn’t involved in spiritual and moral education. The time to settle that was when you were training to evaluate and choose your spouse. And Christian parents and pastors have a role to play in equipping young people to make better choices.

2. Classical Christian schools

I’ve looked over the curricula of a number of these classical Christian schools, and I am not convinced that they are useful for producing effective, influential Christians.

Suppose I were trying to educate my child to be the next Jay Richards or the next Stephen C. Meyer or the next Kristen Waggoner or the next Clarence Thomas. Are classical Christian schools useful for producing results like that?

Education has two goals. 1) educating the person in valuable skills, so that they can earn a lot of money without sacrificing family engagement, and without violating their conscience. 2) it should teach young people to resist the culture on the basis of reason and evidence. If we are talking about God’s existence or origins, then we are dealing with mainstream science. If we are talking about gospel reliability or the resurrection, then we are making historical arguments using mainstream evidence. If we’re talking about religious pluralism or the problem of evil, then we’re talking about mainstream philosophical theology and philosophy of religion. Etc.

I have yet to meet anyone involved with classical Christian schools who was steering young people into careers where they would make a lot of money, working from home, and not exposing themselves to cancel culture. You would think that these classical Christian schools would be focused on careers like developing software with open-source components, but they don’t have the skills. Secondly, apologetics is poorly handled in these curricula. If there is any, it’s presuppositional – an approach that is used by none of the most effective and influential Christian scholars. The ones who actually debate non-Christians and move the ball downfield in the culture.

3. Move to a conservative state in a conservative country

Many Christian men and women often pooh-pooh my seriousness about marriage and parenting planning. They say “I was born in Washington, and it’s a fine state. The public schools are great here. And I’m sure the government, although entirely Democrat, will respect my rights as a parent and as a Christian. After all, I pay their salaries.” But this is just laziness and ignorance. The people who say this don’t want the burden of having to make plans, and execute plans in order to produce effective, influential children.

Consider this article from Daily Wire, about Germany – a secular socialist state:

> Home education has been outlawed in Germany for more than a century; four years ago, the European Court of Human Rights ruled against a family from Darmstadt, Germany, which had asserted the right to homeschool their children. Private religious schools, although legal, must follow state-mandated curricula from the area in which they are located.
>
> Tobias Riemenschneider, a pastor at Evangelical Reformed Baptist Church in

> Frankfurt, Germany, said in an interview with The Daily Wire that the nation's restrictive education laws present "great difficulty to parents who are convinced by their Christian faith that it is God's will for them to raise their children themselves in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." He noted that parents who defy government sanctions against home education risk incurring considerable fines, prison sentences, and the possibility that authorities will take their children.

The same kind of stuff is happening now, in states like Washington and California.

It's just like those Christian-owned business in SOGI states. SOGI states elevate sexual orientation and gender identity to be a protected category, like race. Christian businesses in those states think "well, I was born here, and my family is here, so I'm going to start a business here, and keep right out of politics. I'm sure God will make my laziness and ignorance work out". They are taken by surprise by being persecuted by secular left tyrants. A much better plan is to be serious about moving to a state with low taxes, high liberty, and support for the plans of Christian parents. It's better to spend your own money on educating your kids, rather than to spend it on legal defense.

Is it easy for a woman to get pregnant after age 30?

May 9, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This UK Daily Mail article is a bit old now, but I still it's important to spread around the knowledge about when a woman's fertility starts to decline. Somehow, in this age of feminism, there is this idea that women can put off pregnancy into their 40s. The truth is quite different. Let's take a look at the facts from an unlikely source – the British socialist single-payer health system.

It says:

> One of Britain's top NHS fertility specialists last night issued a stark warning to women: Start trying for a baby before you're 30 – or risk never having children.
>
> In a strongly worded letter to Education Secretary Nicky Morgan, consultant gynaecologist Professor Geeta Nargund has also demanded that teenagers are taught about the dangers of delaying parenthood, because of the spiralling cost to the taxpayer of IVF for women in their late 30s and 40s.
>
> Professor Nargund cites the agony of a growing number of women left childless as a key reason why fertility lessons must be included in the national curriculum. Her controversial intervention – in which she warns Britain faces a 'fertility timebomb' – will fuel the debate over the best time to start a family, amid the rise in women delaying motherhood to pursue careers.
>
> […]Arguing passionately for fertility lessons, she tells Mrs Morgan: 'Information is power and the best way to empower people to take control of their fertility is through education.' Prof Nargund said last night: 'Ideally, if a woman is ready for a child, she should start trying by the time she is 30. She should consider having a child early because as a woman gets older, her fertility declines sharply.'
>
> If a woman started trying early enough, doctors would still have time to diagnose problems and take action before it was too late, she said.
>
> Her comments were endorsed by Professor Allan Pacey, outgoing chair of the British Fertility Society.
>
> **'You need to be trying by 30 because if there is a problem and you need surgery, hormones or IVF, then you've got five years to sort it out,' he said. 'If a woman starts trying at 35, doctors have got to sort it out when she is already on a slippery fertility slope'.**

Let's see how accurate women's beliefs about fertility and age are.

Consider this article from Aeon magazine.

It says:

> Many studies show that women are not only woefully ignorant when it comes to fertility, conception and the efficacy of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) –

> but they overestimate their knowledge about the subject. **For instance, a 2011 study in *Fertility and Sterility* surveyed 3,345 childless women in Canada between the ages of 20 and 50; despite the fact that the women initially assessed their own fertility knowledge as high, the researchers found only half of them answered six of the 16 questions correctly.** 72.9 per cent of women thought that: 'For women over 30, overall health and fitness level is a better indicator of fertility than age.' (False.) And 90.9 per cent felt that: 'Prior to menopause, assisted reproductive technologies (such as IVF) can help most women to have a baby using their own eggs.' (Also false.) Many falsely believed that by *not* smoking and *not* being obese they could improve their fertility, rather than the fact that those factors simply negatively affect fertility.
>
> […]**According to a 2011 study in *Human Reproduction*, which surveyed 410 undergraduate students, most overestimated a women's chances of spontaneous pregnancy in all age groups, but particularly after receiving IVF beyond age 40.** Only 11 per cent of the students knew that genetic motherhood is unlikely to be achieved from the mid-40s onward, unless using oocytes or egg cells frozen in advance. 'This can be explained by technological "hype" and favourable media coverage of very late pregnancies,' the authors concluded.

People see graphs of pregnancy chances, but they forget that the rate of miscarriage is also increasing as you age. So, even if you get pregnant, there is a higher risk of miscarriage. Not to mention ectopic pregnancies, and pregnancy complications. It's also harder to get pregnant your first time after age 30. It's easier to get pregnant after 30, if it's not your first time. Also, pregnancies after 30 are much harder on a woman's body than pregnancies in her 20s.

So, I guess now I'll issue my advice to women in their 20s on how to avoid infertility:

If you went to college, chances are that you absorbed a lot of feminism. Feminism emphasizes being free of constraints, feeling happy, having fun, career over family, and independence from the needs of men and children. You need to renew your mind in order to undo the cultural denigration of marriage and children. Get yourself a marriage mentor, ask for book recommendations that will educate you about the challenges and rewards of marriage. A good marriage mentor will explain to you why marriage is a better plan than the feminist plan, and will emphasize self-denial, self-sacrifice, self-control and serving others. It's only by getting specific about marriage and parenting that your heart will change to want to work on marriage rather than work on the things that the feminist culture prefers.

I guess my closing advice would be to be careful about the things you hear about marriage in the culture. It's very tempting to just believe the words of other people, when they tell you what you want to hear. A lot of people have agendas that sound good, but ultimately, they don't satisfy. Once your fertility is gone, it's really gone. IVF and egg-

freezing are expensive and unreliable. Again, you should look into this yourself, rather than rely on people who say whatever you want to hear so that you will like them.

The importance of having a narrative when confronting the assumption of naturalism

May 10, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How do you present theism as a rational belief to a person who thinks that the progress of science has removed the need for God?

Canadian science writer Denyse O'Leary writes about the history of cosmology at Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> What help has materialism been in understanding the universe's beginnings?
>
> Many in cosmology have never made any secret of their dislike of the Big Bang, the generally accepted start to our universe first suggested by Belgian priest Georges Lemaître (1894-1966).
>
> On the face of it, that is odd. The theory accounts well enough for the evidence. Nothing ever completely accounts for all the evidence, of course, because evidence is always changing a bit. But the Big Bang has enabled accurate prediction.
>
> In which case, its hostile reception might surprise you. British astronomer Fred Hoyle (1915-2001) gave the theory its name in one of his papers — as a joke. Another noted astronomer, Arthur Eddington (1882-1944), exclaimed in 1933, "I feel almost an indignation that anyone should believe in it — except myself." Why? Because "The beginning seems to present insuperable difficulties unless we agree to look on it as frankly supernatural."
>
> One team of astrophysicists (1973) opined that it "involves a certain metaphysical aspect which may be either appealing or revolting." Robert Jastrow (1925-2008), head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, initially remarked, "On both scientific and philosophical grounds, the concept of an eternal Universe seems more acceptable than the concept of a transient Universe that springs into being suddenly, and then fades slowly into darkness." And Templeton Prize winner (2011) Martin Rees recalls his mentor Dennis Sciama's dogged commitment to an eternal universe, no-Big Bang model:

> For him, as for its inventors, it had a deep philosophical appeal — the universe existed, from everlasting to everlasting, in a uniquely self-consistent state. When conflicting evidence emerged, Sciama therefore sought a loophole (even an unlikely seeming one) rather as a defense lawyer clutches at any argument to rebut the prosecution case.

> Evidence forced theorists to abandon their preferred eternal-universe model. From the mid 1940s, Hoyle attempted to disprove the theory he named. Until

> 1964, when his preferred theory, the Steady State, lost an evidence test.

Here is a quick summary of some of the experimental evidence that emerged in the last few decades that caused naturalists to abandon the eternal universe that they loved so much when they were younger.

The importance of having a narrative

Now I want to make a very, very important point about Christianity and the progress of science. And that point is that it is very important that Christians present the evidence in exactly the way that Denyse presented it in that article – in its historical context, featuring the conflict between naturalists and the experimental evidence.

All Christians should be familiar with the following basic pieces of evidence which fit the war between science and naturalism narrative:

1. The origin of the universe
2. The cosmic fine-tuning
3. The origin of life (biological information)
4. The sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla
5. The habitability/observability correlation

When you talk about these evidences as a Christian theist to non-Christians, you have to have cultivated a genuine interest in reconciling your beliefs with science. You have to accept that there are two books that reveal God's character and attributes. The book of nature, and the book of Scripture. And you need to be flexible about getting these two books to fit together. The book of nature gives us natural theology (see Romans 1). It tells us that God is Creator and Designer. The book of Scripture tells us that God stepped into history as a man to save us by taking the punishment for our headlong rush away from God, which the Bible calls sin. Science is one way that humans can recover some of basic knowledge about God. Knowledge that is only possible because God created and designed the universe (and us) in such a way that we are capable of making discoveries, and that the universe is capable of being explored and understood.

It's very important to present these five basic evidences to non-Christians in the historical context. And here is the story you must tell: "In the beginning, there was the naturalism, and the naturalism tried to argue from ignorance that God was not Creator and God was not Designer. And then came the science, and now people have to give up their naturalism in order to account for the science". That's the narrative you use when talking to non-Christians about science.

In the beginning was the naturalism:

1. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the universe was eternal
2. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that a life-permitting universe was as likely as a life-prohibiting universe
3. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the cell was a simple blob of Jello that could spontaneously emerge in some warm pond

4. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that the sudden origin of the Cambrian phyla would be explained by subsequent fossil discoveries
5. In pre-scientific times, atheists maintained that there was nothing special about our galaxy, solar system, planet or moon

But then science progressed by doing experiments and making observations:

1. Scientists discovered redshift and the cosmic microwave background radiation (evidence for a cosmic beginning) and more!
2. Scientists discovered the fine-tuning of gravity and of the cosmological constant and more!
3. Scientists discovered protein sequencing and exposed the myth of "junk DNA" and more!
4. Scientists discovered an even shorter Cambrian explosion period and the absence of precursor fossils and more!
5. Scientists discovered galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones and more!

And now rational people – people who want to have true beliefs about reality – need to abandon a false religion (naturalism).

Now naturally, science is in a state of flux and things change. But you have to look at the trend of discoveries, and those trends are clearly going against naturalism, and in favor of Christian theism. No one is arguing for a deductive proof here, we are simply looking at the evidence we have *today* and proportioning our belief to the concrete evidence we have *today*. People who are guided by reason should not seek to construct a worldview by leveraging speculations about future discoveries and mere possibilities. We should instead believe what is more probable than not. That's what a *rational* seeker of truth ought to do. Proportion belief to probabilities based on current, concrete knowledge.

Atheism, as a worldview, is not rooted in an honest assessment about what science tells us about reality. Atheism is rooted in a religion: naturalism. And the troubling thing we learn from looking at the history of science is that this religion of naturalism is insulated from correction from the progress of science. Nothing that science reveals about nature seems to be able to put a dent in the religion of naturalism, at least for most atheists.

It falls to us Christian theists, then, to hold them accountable for their abuse and misrepresentation of science. And that means telling the story of the progress of science accurately, and accurately calling out the religion of naturalism for what it is – *a religion rooted in blind faith and ignorance that has been repeatedly and convincingly falsified by the progress of science in the modern era*.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life

- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Leaked messages: leftists in government want parents who oppose their agenda to be fired

May 11, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Many leaders in the Christian church think that this whole "culture war" is just overblown. No one is out to get Christians, they say. Christianity isn't under attack. We just need to win the secular left over by treating them nicely, and not believing "Republican party" ideas, like the Constitution, male-female marriage, secure borders, low taxes, and right to life. But what does the secular left think?

This article from ABC local news in Virginia (archived) is very interesting:

> Some Loudoun County residents were threatened, and one even lost his job, after a social media group allegedly worked to dox them after the residents spoke out at school board meetings, according to documents a whistleblower sent 7News.
>
> "I was taken back when I received a phone call from the sheriff's department – a deputy – saying I was being threatened online," Loudoun County resident Mark Winn told 7News.
>
> The online threats happened in a Facebook group called the "Loudoun Love Warriors."
>
> The "Loudoun Love Warriors" group includes campaign volunteers, supporters, and staff for several Loudoun County elected officials, 7News learned after investigating the group members' ties.
>
> 7News obtained hundreds of messages from a whistleblower in the group who thought the conversations were going too far.

Look how many people in the group are in government, law enforcement and school boards:

> The "Loudoun Love Warriors" group includes people who appear to be associated with Loudoun County Commonwealth's Attorney Buta Biberaj, County Supervisor Juli Briskman, School Board Chair Ian Serotkin, school board member Brenda Sheridan, school board member Atoosa Reaser, school board member Erika Ogedegbe, school board candidate Anne Donohue, sheriff candidate Craig Buckley, and Chair Phyllis Randall. None of these elected officials personally made any threats.

What's interesting to me is how many WOMEN there are in the group. Here's a New York Post article about "Buta Biberaj".

It says:

> A top Virginia prosecutor sought jail time for the dad who was arrested at a school board meeting while protesting his daughter's rape — despite having run

> on a George Soros-funded campaign against mass incarcerations, according to reports.
>
> Bronx-raised Loudoun County Commonwealth Attorney Buta Biberaj personally prosecuted dad Scott Smith, 48, after he was arrested at a raucous June 22 public meeting, Loudoun Now noted at the time.
>
> The county's top prosecutor pushed for jail time as well as a fine and anger management for Smith, even though he was only facing misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct and resisting arrest — and his lawyer insisted he had been illegally detained, the court report said.

That's what she did to a father whose daughter had been raped in a girl's washroom by a student with male equipment. The father pays her salary with his taxes! But she didn't feel any responsibility to treat him well.

Anyway, back to the original article. The threats made against the parents are very interesting. And keep in mind that the parents are paying the salaries of the government workers who are saying this:

- "I'm gonna find his employer."
- "And holding that company accountable until he is fired."
- "Lets make him unemployable by love or by force."
- "I want to contact his employer to do just that. Ruin his livelihood."
- "Say goodbye to your job f***** [middle finger emoji]."
- "I want every single person who clapped for that ousted en masse and their livelihoods ruined:)."

And these are even worse:

- "Im telling you. SOMETHING has to happen to one of them."
- "Something public and permanent."
- "Lines drawn in the cement."
- "Lives needs to be ruined beyond repair."
- "Lets actually destroy them. Grind them."
- "If he had said that s*** about black kids or autistic kids I would shoot him."
- "We REALLY need to find this guy."
- "You guys need to stop protesting and start fighting back against these people Time to just do something different to shut them down."
- "F*** just getting him [fired]."
- "Im soooo ready to show up with guns lol."
- "His life needs to be PERMANENTLY disassembled."

And then they posted the addresses of the homes of the parents who they disagreed with. What bothered them the most was when one of the parents quoted verses from the Bible. That seems to be what really drove them crazy. But remember – the Biden administration said that it was *concerned parents* who were the real "domestic

terrorists”.

I found another article about this story at Daily Wire, if you want to read more about the people involved.

And here is one of the women admitting that she e-mailed the employers of men who wanted to protect children from abuse and mutilation:

> Chardonnay Antifa: “Im actually one of the people that sent emails to people’s employers.” pic.twitter.com/osF9SMYAzY
>
> — I Know Where I Belong…In VA-10…Maybe. (@PACTstopcrt) May 10, 2023

So, it’s very important for Christians and conservatives to understand where the secular leftists in government, law enforcement and the school boards stand. Christians think “oh, these are nice people, just like us”. But they’re not just like us. They’re just like Stalin, Mao, Hitler and the other socialist fascists who want to force their views on others. Parents who want their children to believe in God, morality, the Constitution, etc. are in their way. And they aren’t afraid to use threats, coercion, vandalism, and even violence in order to force parents to bow to them.

Southern Baptist Convention suffers largest decline in church membership

May 12, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Protestant denominations are suffering declines in membership. Challenges like secularism, feminism and socialism are causing people to leave the church. And the response so far seems to be one of two things. From the conservatives, we hear that pastors need to *teach the Bible more clearly*. And from the progressives, we hear that churches need to *adopt the political causes of non-Christians*.

Here's an article about the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, reported in Daily Wire. This is written by Ben Zeisloft.

He writes:

> Membership in the Southern Baptist Convention witnessed the largest single-year decline in at least a century as the nation reels from the aftermath of lockdown mandates and pastors become concerned about the denomination's theologically liberal drift.
>
> The nation's largest Protestant denomination saw a decline from 13.7 million members in 2021 to 13.2 million members in 2022, a decrease of more than 3% which continues the trajectory seen over the last three years, according to data released by Lifeway Research, a provider of church business services for the Southern Baptist Convention.

I'm what you would call a conservative, Bible-believing Christian. I don't come out of a background of crazy sin and rebellion. But I did grow up in a non-Christian home, and my influences at that time were my two selfish parents, television, foolish students with no life experience, and public school teachers. So, I considered myself just as lost as any sinner. My brother actually continued down the path laid out by these influences, and our lives now are like night and day. My view of Christianity is that you put away your own selfish desires, and take up new Christian priorities. You stop worrying about what happened to you. You start looking for things you can do to build the relationship with the Boss.

My development as a Christian involved learning how to defend Christian truth claims and moral values to non-Christians, with reasons and evidence. But the perspective of people who grew up in the church is really different from mine. I tell them that church attendance is declining, because people have intellectual questions, and they have no reasons to think that our moral teachings are better. The church leaders disagree. They say that we just need to be nicer, and judge less, and have more fun activities to draw people in.

My friends who support the SBC know more about Disney and Star Wars than they do about how to defend basic Christian truth claims. They don't want to learn how to make a

case for God's existence, Jesus' resurrection, natural marriage or right to life. So, Christian churches just continue down the path of decline. The leaders think that Beth Moore is a better champion of Christianity than William Lane Craig. They promote Beth Moore, not William Lane Craig.

More:

> Those who continued to profess Christianity became increasingly theologically liberal in their beliefs: a survey from Ligonier Ministries found that the share of self-identified evangelicals who believe "gender identity is a matter of choice" rose from 22% to 37% between 2020 and 2022, while the share who believe "the Bible's condemnation of homosexual behavior doesn't apply today" more than doubled from 11% to 28% over the same time horizon.
>
> Record decline in Southern Baptist Convention membership occurs as hundreds of pastors throughout the country notice the liberal direction of the denomination. The trend is perhaps most palpable at the institutional level: Southern Baptist Convention President Bart Barber and other leaders have faced criticism for neglecting to rebuke the dozens of churches which have installed female pastors, a practice denounced in the Baptist Faith and Message.
>
> Officials at the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, the denomination's public policy arm, meanwhile endorsed a red flag law in Tennessee months after they opposed a bill in Louisiana that would have criminalized abortion for all parties involved, even though Southern Baptists passed a resolution affirming that "the murder of preborn children is a crime against humanity that must be punished equally under the law" the previous summer. Former Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission President Russell Moore said three years ago that ministers should persuade church members to accept vaccination and wear face masks.

Here's what the churches that leave the SBC are saying:

> "You can take our church off your mailing list," one pastor replied. "We do not support the socialist movement that has infiltrated the convention and are no longer a member."
>
> "Our congregation is no longer in the SBC because of their liberal stances on this and their support in fighting an abolition bill in Louisiana," another minister said. "I pray along with you that the SBC leadership would be convicted by your efforts and the many churches like us who are stepping away," added a third pastor.
>
> "We truly appreciate your efforts to uphold the Bible. I'm just letting you know that our church voted to leave the SBC this past summer," commented a fourth. "We felt that this issue was just one that should have been addressed in 2022. There were other issues, so we chose to become non-denominational and break from the SBC."

I attended an SBC church recently for about 7 months. The pastor told me how conservative he was. How much he loved to read systematic theology. Then three things happened. First, he blocked my efforts to start an apologetics small group. Second, he invited a member of the far-left ERLC to push for open borders. Third, the pastor made the claim that “Jesus was a refugee” in a Bible study he was leading. There was no plan to counter secularism, feminism or socialism in this church. Instead, it was just the Democrat party line. I quit going, There just isn’t any interest in fighting any of the battles that are causing people to leave the church. The leaders are not excited to recommended Christianity to non-Christians as a set of *correct* answers to life’s biggest questions, along with meaningful work to do for the Boss. A new uniform every morning, no matter how badly you dirtied up the previous one the day before.

I think that’s a pretty good offer, and we should focus on making that offer to non-Christians, and learning how to answer their questions. Jesus didn’t try to entertain people into the Kingdom. He made claims, and authenticated those claims with evidence. I don’t know why Christian leaders think that their approach is better.

Dr. Walter Bradley lectures on scientific evidence the creation and design of the universe

May 13, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This lecture is special to me, because I bought a VHS tape of it just after I started working full-time, and watched it a million times. A lot of people come to their convictions about God's existence because of parents or church or intuitions, but for me it's all about the scientific evidence. This lecture changed my life. I wish more people taught their children about this evidence! This lecture was delivered at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Bradley received his B.S. in Engineering Science and his Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Texas in Austin.
>
> Dr. Bradley taught for eight years at the Colorado School of Mines before assuming a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1976.
>
> During his 24 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Bradley served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and as Director of the Polymer Technology Center, and received five College of Engineering Research Awards. He has received over $4,500,000 in research grants and has published over 140 technical articles and book chapters. He has also co-authored "The Mystery Of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Materials and of the American Scientific Affiliation and serves as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.
>
> He currently serves as Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University.

The lecture: (63 minutes lecture, 25 minutes audience Q&A)

Summary slide:

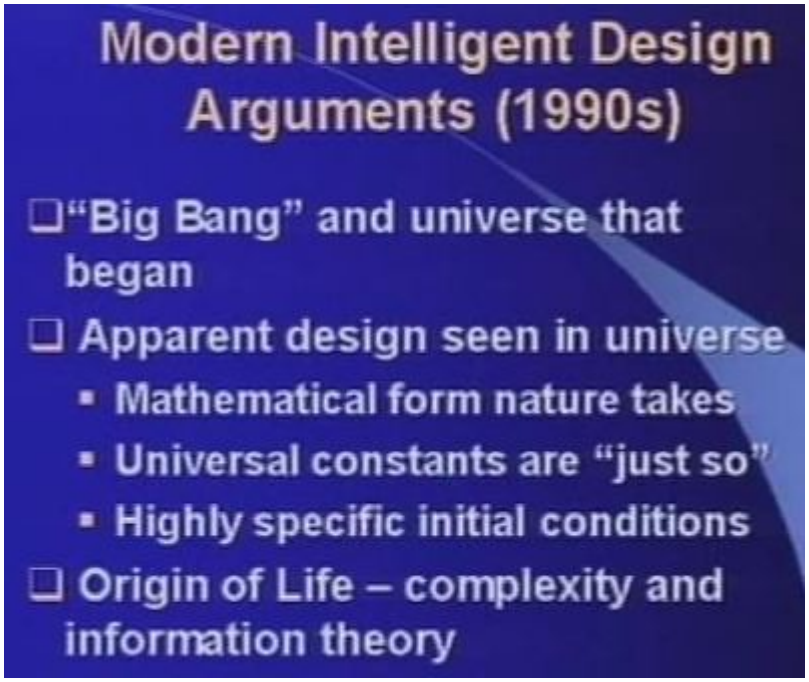

This slide summarizes the content of the lecture

Introduction:

- At the beginning of the 20th century, people believed that the progress of science was pointing away from an intelligent Creator and Designer, and towards naturalism
- A stream of new discoveries has shifted the support of science towards theism, and away from naturalism
- Richard Dawkins, an atheist, says that nature only has the appearance of design, but that if you look closer, naturalistic mechanisms can account for the appearance of design
- When deciding between design and apparent design ("designoid"), it matters whether you think there is an intelligence there to do the designing

Evidence #1: The Big Bang:

- an eternal "steady state" universe is more compatible with naturalism, but a created universe is more compatible with a Creator
- In 1929, Hubble used telescopes to observe that the light from distant galaxies was *redshifted.* The further away galaxies were, the faster they were moving away. Therefore, space is expanding in all directions, suggesting an explosive origin of the universe
- In 1965, the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation matched a prediction of the Big Bang cosmology, and of the creation event
- In 1992, the COBE space telescope allowed us to test four specific predictions of the Big Bang model, especially the predictions for light element abundances (hydrogen and helium), which matched the predictions of the creation model

Evidence #2: Simple mathematical structure of the physical laws

- the simple mathematical structure of natural laws allows us to understand these laws, make discoveries, and engineer solutions to problems
- early scientists saw the mathematical structure of the universe to mean that nature was designed by an intelligent to be understood
- the fundamental equations of the laws of the universe can be easily written on one side of one sheet of paper
- Eugene Wigner's famous paper, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Physical Sciences" makes the point that this simple structure is an unexpected gift that allows is to do science

Evidence #3: fine-tuning of the physical constants and quantities

- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stars that provide energy within specific ranges for long periods of time
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need planets with stable orbits that will not suffer from extreme temperature swings as it varies in distance from its star
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stable atomic structure
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need to have chemical diversity and correct relative abundances of each element
- organic life has minimum requirements: process energy, store information, replicate, and you can't fulfill those functions if there is only one element, e.g. – hydrogen
- the energy level from the photons from the sun have to match the energy levels of the different elements in order to drive the chemical bonding needed for life
- These requirements for life of any imaginable type depend on the values of the constants and quantities. The constants and quantities cannot vary much from what they are, or the universe will lose the characteristics (above) that allow it to support complex life of any imaginable time
- For example, ratio of strong force to electromagnetic force:
  – if 2% larger, then no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no compounds containing hydrogen, e.g. – water
  – if 5% smaller, no stable stars, heavy hydrogen would be unstable, few elements other than hydrogen

Evidence #4: initial conditions for habitability

- Universe: expansion rate of the universe must be fast enough to avoid a re-collapse, but slow enough to allow matter to clump together and form stars and planets for complex life to live on
- Planet: right distance from the star to get the right climate
- Planet: right mass to retain the right atmosphere

Evidence #5: origin of life and information theory

- It’s possible to explain every process in an automobile engine using plain old naturalistic mechanisms – no supernatural explanation is necessary to understand the processes
- But the existence of engine itself: engineering all the parts has to be explained by the work of an intelligence
- Similarly, we can understand how living systems work, but the existence of the living systems requires an intelligence
- Even the simplest living system has to perform minimal function: capture energy, store information and replicate
- Living systems are composed of objects like proteins that are composed of sequences of components complex such that the order of the components gives the overall structure function
- Developing the components for a simple living cell is very improbable – even given the large number of galaxies, stars and planets in the universe, it is unlikely that complex, embodied life would exist *anywhere* in the universe

Evidence #6: more initial conditions for habitability

- Location within the galaxy: you need to be away from the center of the galaxy, because the explosions from dying stars, and excessive radiation will kill life
- Location within the galaxy: you need to be close enough to the center in order catch the heavy elements you need for life from the explosions of other stars
- Location within the galaxy: the best location is between two arms of a spiral galaxy, where you can get the heavy elements you need from dying stars, but without being hit with explosions and harmful radiation
- Star mass: determines rate at which the sun burns, determines the energy level of photons that are used to drive chemical bonding reactions, determines the length of time the star will be stable
- Star mass: star mass must be the correct value in order to allow liquid water on the planet’s surface, while still preserving stable orbit

I wish there was more curiosity about science in churches, and young Christians understood *how critical science is* for grounding the rationality of the Christian worldview. We need to be training up more scientists who think about the big questions, like Dr. Walter Bradley.

Peter Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospels

May 14, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a lecture I found from British historian Dr. Peter J. Williams.

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?

- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate. That link contains a link to the audio of the debate as well as my snarky summary. It's very snarky.

Dr. James Tour to debate evolutionist on the origin of life this Friday

May 15, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Yes, there will be a live stream. Yes, it will be open to the public.

Dr. James Tour is famous among Christians for his accurate, informed skepticism about naturalistic theories of the origin of life. But how would his ideas survive attacks from a critic? We're about to find out.

- **ABOUT:**

Join us for an exciting debate between Dr James Tour and Dave Farina on The Science of Abiogenesis.

This in-person event will take place on Fri May 19 at 7:00 PM CST in Keck Hall 100, Houston, TX and will be streamed LIVE on YouTube!

Dr. James Tour is a world-renowned scientist and professor of chemistry at Rice University. He will be presenting evidence that he believes demonstrate huge problems and hype in the origin of life field.

Dave Farina is a prominent atheist and Youtuber who will argue for the theory of abiogenesis, the idea that life arose from non-living matter through natural processes.

Join us Friday May 19 at 7PM CT at Rice University or ONLINE to for this highly anticipated event! See more at tourvsfarina.com

- **TOPIC:**

ARE WE CLUELESS ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF LIFE?

- **WHEN:**

May 19th, 2023, at 7 PM CT

- **WHERE:**

Stream the debate LIVE at watch.tourvsfarina.com. It's the ONLY place to watch the debate between Dr. James Tour and Dave Farina LIVE from Rice University on May 19th at 7 PM CT.

If you are near Houston, then you can attend in person. I'm going to be watching the live stream, instead:

It's being streamed via YouTube.

As an introduction to the debate, recall that there are 3 parts to the origin of life problem.

- First, you have to come up with the building blocks of the components.
- Second, you have to sequence the building blocks correctly to build the components.

- Third, you have to assemble the components into a living, self-replicating cell.

All three of these areas are challenging for atheists who believe that life was not created by an intelligent agent.

I remember learning about professor Dave from this recent article from Evolution News:

> The saga of renowned organic chemist James Tour and atheist YouTube personality Dave Farina continues in the second season of Tour's video series on the origin of life. As a recap of Season 1, Farina responded to Tour's critique of origin-of-life research with a critique of Tour's claims. Tour then created a 14-part video series detailing the multitude of errors in Farina's response. It also serves as an advanced tutorial on the dismal state of origin-of-life research.
>
> Farina in turn responded to Tour's video series with two new videos (here, here) that included interviews with three scientists: Lee Cronin, Bruce Lipshutz, and Steve Benner. Cronin and Benner are considered leading origin-of-life researchers, and Lipshutz is a highly respected synthetic chemist. Their testimony was intended both to discredit Tour's assessment of the field and to assure viewers that researchers are making steady progress in unraveling the mystery of life's origin. Tour's new series exposes that the truth is the exact opposite.

That post by Brian Miller is excellent. You can drill down as far as you want to, but if you just are new to the topic, he gives you the big picture.

I thought this part was interesting:

> The most problematic interview was with Bruce Lipshutz, describing his design of surfactant molecules that enable amide/peptide bonds. Farina claimed that Lipshutz was challenging Tour's statement that amino acids do not spontaneously link together in water. The problem is that Lipshutz sent Farina the video clip about his research for a completely different purpose. He was unaware Farina used the clip to challenge Tour's claim, and he never even saw Tour's video. Most importantly, Lipshutz was not linking together amino acids, and he was not performing the chemistry in water but in a hydrophobic pocket (here, here).
>
> What Farina did not know was that Tour has been friends with Lipshutz for nearly forty years, so he emailed Lipshutz asking him about his comments. Lipshutz not only stated that he was unaware he was in Farina's video, but he acknowledged that his research is irrelevant to the question of amino acids linking into chains in water.

And this is very direct:

> Farina is a committed atheist who has demonstrated that he is not encumbered by the same ethical standards that James Tour is. He is also not trained in the

> chemistry that Tour addressed in his videos, so his misrepresentation of the science is not surprising. What was far more disturbing to Tour was the extent to which Cronin and Benner exaggerated the relevance of their experiments to the question of life's origin.

So, there is a lot of deception, intentional or unintentional, going on from the naturalistic side of the debate.

When my YEC friend told me how excited he was about this debate, I had an idea about why he was. And I think it's because Professor Dave has been talking about things he doesn't understand for a long time on social media. I knew that he didn't have the same credentials as Dr. Tour, who works in the labs and publishes research. So a YouTuber with a large following is going up against a specialist with real-world knowledge and experience. So, we are looking forward to a public resolution of this debate. A lot of non-Christians who have been following Dave are about to have their worldview rocked.

Are Mormon doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

May 16, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually

> infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian

> culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

There are Roman Catholics in my family but I'm not one: why not?

May 17, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am re-posting this post because recently a well-known Christian apologist changed his worldview from Protestant to Catholic, and I thought I would explain why I have not done so.

In this post, I explain why I'm not Roman Catholic. And I also explain how Protestant Christians arrive at their beliefs. We'll start with J. Warner Wallace on Purgatory, then I'll go second.

Purgatory

Here's the first article from Cold Case Christianity, by the Master of the Evidence J. Warner Wallace. He writes about the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, and his experience with studying and then rejecting it.

Here is his introduction:

> The notion of purgatory assumes many of us die with unforgiven sins that need to be purged from our account; some of us are not good enough to go to heaven, but not bad enough to go to hell. Purgatory, therefore, is a temporary, intermediate place (or state of being) where good deeds and works can be performed in order to purge our impurity prior to our final destiny with God. Although millions of Catholics believe purgatory to be a reality, the idea needs to be tested in light of the Scripture. Is purgatory something we, as Bible believing Christians, should accept as true?

He's got a stack of Bible verses to make two points against Purgatory: first, that Jesus' death on the cross is sufficient to atone for *all* our rebellion against God, and we don't need to endure any suffering or punishment to supplement it. And second, the teaching about the afterlife in the Bible says that believers are immediately ushered into the presence of God after they die (without resurrection bodies, yet), while unbelievers are separated away from God.

Here's what he says about the first point:

> **Our Salvation Isn't Based On Our Good Works**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, forgiveness is not based on the good works of the believer. For this reason, deeds or works performed for those in purgatory are both unnecessary and ineffectual:
>
> **Romans 3:21-24, 27-28**
> But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have

> sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus… Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.
>
> **Romans 8:1**
> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.
>
> **Our Salvation Is Based On Jesus' Work on the Cross**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, Jesus' work on the cross (His blood) purifies us from allsin. For this reason, there isn't a lingering sin problem requiring the existence of a place like purgatory:
>
> **Titus 2:13-14**
> …we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.
>
> **1John 1:7b**
> …the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.
>
> **1John 1:9b**
> …he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
>
> **1John 2:2**
> He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.
>
> **Hebrews 10:14**
> …because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.
>
> **Our Salvation Has, Therefore, Already Been Guaranteed**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, Jesus has already purified and purged believers of sin based on our faith in Him. For this reason, there is no need for a place like Purgatory where additional purging must be performed…
>
> […]The Biblical doctrine of Salvation clearly eliminates the need for purgatory.

I was never able to find anything in the Bible to support purgatory. It's a very very late doctrine that was unknown to the early church until the late 2nd / early 3rd century, where it is spoken about by a handful of people. But lots of weird doctrines were creeping up on the fringe around that time, so we shouldn't be surprised… the point is that they have no support from the Bible, and not in the community of believers for the first 150

years after the death of Jesus.

The bodily assumption of Mary

Anyway, my turn now. The Roman Catholic church teaches that Mary was "bodily assumed" into Heaven. Let's see if that is in the Bible or in the early church.

Here's what I found:

1. To be a Roman Catholic, you need to believe in Papal infallibility in matters of dogma.
2. In 1950, the Pope pronounced the assumption of Mary to be infallible dogma.
3. This pronouncement was solicited by a petition featuring over 8 million signatures.
4. There is no historical record of this doctrine in the Bible.
5. No early church father mentions the assumption until 590 AD.
6. Documents dated 377 AD state that no one knows how Mary died.
7. The assumption appears for the first time in an apocryphal gospel dated about 495 AD.

Data

I only cite Roman Catholic sources for my facts.

6. "But if some think us mistaken, let them search the Scriptures. They will not find Mary's death; they will not find whether she died or did not die; they will not find whether she was buried or was not buried … Scripture is absolutely silent [on the end of Mary] … For my own part, I do not dare to speak, but I keep my own thoughts and I practice silence … The fact is, Scripture has outstripped the human mind and left [this matter] uncertain … Did she die, we do not know … Either the holy Virgin died and was buried … Or she was killed … Or she remained alive, since nothing is impossible with God and He can do whatever He desires; for her end no-one knows." (Epiphanius, Panarion, Haer. 78.10-11, 23. Cited by Juniper Carol, O.F.M. ed.,*Mariology*, Vol. II (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1957), pp. 139-40).

7. "The idea of the bodily assumption of Mary is first expressed in certain transitus–narratives of the fifth and sixth centuries. Even though these are apocryphal they bear witness to the faith of the generation in which they were written despite their legendary clothing. The first Church author to speak of the bodily ascension of Mary, in association with an apocryphal transitus B.M.V., is St. Gregory of Tours." (Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*(Rockford: Tan, 1974), pp. 209–210).

It should be noted that the apocryphal gospel in which the doctrine of the assumption of Mary first appeared was condemned as heretical by two Popes in the 5th and 6th centuries. However, I was not able to find a CATHOLIC source for this fact, so I deliberately chose not to use it in my case.

Conclusion

The first thing I want to say is that the Bible is not the only place you look to decide these issues. You also look in church history, and you are looking for a clear chain of custody of

the doctrine as far back as it can go. Purgatory and the perpetual virginity of Mary have some track record, but the bodily assumption of Mary is just nowhere – not in the Bible, not in the Early Church fathers. So that's the silver bullet against Roman Catholicism, since they made it "infallible".

This post is more directed to non-Christians to sort of show you how we do our homework. I am the first Protestant in my family. We have half the family who is Muslim, and the other half mostly Hindu, with some Catholic. I had to debate all these people growing up, and I wiped the floor with them. It was not even close. I simply settled on the beliefs that allowed me to win every argument, every time. That's how you do religion. If you have to go against your whole family in order to be right, you do it. It's not good to be wrong about things just because that's what your family believes. These things were not pushed hard on me by my parents, I studied them on my own in order to win arguments. After a while of winning, I found myself acting consistently with what I was arguing for. Although that might sound really weird to you, that's probably the right way to do this. Don't listen to parents and church, find your own way forward by winning arguments, and believing only what the evidence supports.

Although most people think that if I had kids, I'd bully them into my beliefs, I actually would not. Because that's not what worked on me. What really works is fighting about evidence, welcoming questions, and allowing differences of opinion. Being free to pursue truth is more important in the long run than coercing your kids to act nicely.

Supporting baby ending means supporting sex-selection baby ending

May 18, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is it OK to end a baby just because she is not a boy? If you're conservative, or a Christian, then you probably think that's morally wrong. It's a living being with a human DNA signature that is distinct from the mother's DNA and the father's DNA. But, if you're a secular leftist, then that's a perfectly good reason for ending a baby. After all, they have to keep the good times rolling, don't they?

Here's an article from the far-left The Atlantic (link goes to archive.is, not The Atlantic) where they interview a doctor who performs sex-selection baby ending.

Excerpt:

> He specializes in ab*rt**ns late in pr*gn*ncy—the rarest, and most controversial, form of ab*rt**n. This means that H**n ends the pr*gn*ncies of women who are 22, 25, even 30 weeks along.
>
> […]In the 1970s, physicians did not induce f*t*l demise during ab*rt**n, and once or twice, during a procedure at 15 or 16 weeks, he used forceps to remove a f*t*s with a still-beating heart. The heart thumped for only a few seconds before stopping.
>
> […]The reason doesn't really matter to H**n. Medical viability for a f*t*s—or its ability to survive outside the uterus—is generally considered to be somewhere from 24 to 28 weeks. H**n, though, believes that the viability of a f*t*s is determined not by g*st*tional age but by a woman's willingness to carry it…he'll take the case—usually up until around 32 weeks…
>
> […]H**n had told me about a woman who'd sought an ab*rt**n because she didn't want to have a baby girl. I thought he had refused. But when I followed up to ask him why, I learned that I had misunderstood… It was their choice to make, he explained.

Keep in mind that sex-selection baby ending is supported by all Democrat voters. Regardless of what they say with words, when it comes to policy, they want sex-selection baby ending to be legal. And if you disagree with it, then the FBI and DOJ think that you are a domestic terrorist for disagreeing with it. So please be extremely careful in the comments, as the federal government doesn't look kindly on people who disagree with them on this issue. And the only way to stop that is to win the next election.

When arguing this issue, I find it useful to get the person to agree that if the woman can choose to end the baby for any reason, or for no reason at all, then there are no limits. Sex-selection baby ending is OK. Race-selection baby ending is OK. And if the woman just changes her mind about wanting the baby, then that's fine, too.

In the interview, the doctor talks about the "white supremacy" of his opponents. This is

despite the fact that a disproportionately large number of baby endings are performed on non-white mothers. In fact, the practice was started by white supremacists who wanted to eliminate races that they didn't think much of. And the doctor is helping them to achieve that goal, although he's smart enough to lie about it, in order to help himself to feel good about taking in the fees. He's being paid a lot of money to do what he does. Just like the slave owners made a lot of money off of their slaves. Every single individual person who supports baby ending today would have supported slavery in those times. It's the same argument – dehumanize a group people in order to make more money.

I'm posting this so that when you argue this issue, you bring up these cases of sex-selection and race-selection, and make your opponent sign off on them. Don't listen to their evasive words. "I'm a moderate" "I'm a centrist" "I'm politically homeless". If they voted for Biden, they support these cases. The words don't matter. Only their actions matter. Secular leftists like to talk to themselves about how reasonable they are. And it sounds so good to them. They feel better. They talk themselves out of the responsibility for their actions. "I'm not a bad person for destroying people made in the image of God" they say. But happy talking to yourself doesn't work on The Judge.

Again, be careful in the comments.

Paternity fraud case shows how pro-marriage conservatives see men as expendable

May 19, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When terrible things happen to men in this society, you often get comments from people saying “well, it’s his fault, he chose a bad woman”. And I agree that men often make poor choices because they focus on attraction instead of on character. But what if a man is an innocent bystander, and is falsely accused by a woman he doesn’t even know? Is it still his fault then?

Here is the news story from Fox 2 Detroit.

Excerpt:

> A Metro Detroit man cleared his name after Friend of the Court sent him a letter saying he had a baby with a woman he never met.
>
> “She don’t know me, how do you just put my name down? How do you just put anybody’s name down?” DeAngelo Smith said. “I don’t know her. Never seen her. Still to this day, haven’t talked to her, and it just proves the baby has no ties to my name.”
>
> Late last year, DeAngelo received a letter from Friend of the Court in Berrien County saying that he was the father of a baby girl.

His wife was the first to see the accusation:

> His wife first spotted the letter in the mail from Friend of the Court.
>
> “Let’s just set the record, I trust my husband,” Tyahvia Smith said. “I know his character, man of integrity.”

They contacted his employer:

> While waiting for the child’s mother to take the baby for a DNA test, DeAngelo said the school where he teaches received an inquiry for possible garnishment in case the child was his.
>
> “It made it something that is not being alleged, but now it’s something that’s being taken into action and no paternity has been established,” he said.
>
> Finally, the woman had the DNA test done, and DeAngelo has since gotten a letter confirming he was not the father.

Legislation introduced by Republican Jim Runestad to prevent this from happening has been tied up for eight years… in a Republican-led legislature:

> “It’s very unfortunate, but paternity fraud is not a unique, unusual situation in Michigan,” Sen. Jim Runestad (R-White Lake) said.
>
> Runestad said he has been pushing for new legislation on the matter for the past

> eight years. Currently, there is no penalty for lying and a DNA test is not required before a person is contacted about the paternity of the child.

The fact that there are no consequences for doing this means that women are going to keep doing it again and again.

Does masculinity mean that a man should give a woman whatever she wants?

I sent this story to a conservative pro-marriage friend, and she said "So what? How many times does something like this happen?" Her only concern was that this story made women look bad. She had previously told me that "masculinity is when a man uses his strength to protect and provide for women". So, then it is just "masculine" for this innocent man to pay for a child who isn't his own. Why would he object to paying? Does he not like children?

Most people today like the changes that feminism has made for women. They like public schools run by women that discriminate against boys. They like women taking out huge student loans for useless non-STEM degrees, then demanding bailouts from taxpayers. They like women taking part in hook-up culture. They like women using no-commitment bad boys for validation. They like no-fault divorce laws. They like false accusations during divorce trials. They like biased domestic violence laws. They like paternity fraud. They like massive welfare spending designed to reward women who make reckless decisions. And they like feminist judges stripping fathers of parental rights for refusing to agree with the transing of their kids.

Men are expendable when it comes to creating greater happiness for women. So what's wrong with sending a man a bill for a woman who needs some money for a child that isn't his? It's horrible to tell a woman that she can't do what she feels like doing. It's horrible to tell a woman that she has to pay the costs of her own actions. Just make a man pay for it. Men are big and strong, they can handle it. And besides, women never tell lies. We have to believe all women. We have to force men to make women happy. That's "masculinity".

Society pressures men to get married

This "believe all women" attitude that is shared by many Christians and conservatives becomes a problem for men when men are pressured to get married. This society makes marriage a risky enterprise for men. And men have to understand that this pressure to get married is often coming from people who see men as expendable in the cause of increasing women's happiness. The person telling you to get married is often the same person who thinks that a DNA test shouldn't be performed in a paternity case.

Men have to understand that the command to "get married" is coming from pro-marriage activists who think that men exist solely to make women happy. Who cares about the risks and costs of marriage for men? Who cares about men's needs and desires? Who cares what reasons a man has for marrying? Who cares about a man's standards for his wife? Who cares about a man's plan for his marriage? He should just be pressured to get married. Just like the falsely accused paternity fraud victim should have to pay.

It's not the purpose of men's lives to get married and have kids

Always remember that according to the Bible, serving God is *more honorable* than getting married and having children. (Read 1 Cor 7:8-9 and 2 Tim 2:4) Many social conservatives try to guilt men into getting married and having children by denying the risks and costs of marriage for men. They think that Christianity's main purpose is to force men to make women happy, regardless of what women offer to men in exchange. That's the actual view of several of my social conservative Christian friends.

Men are designed to serve God first and foremost. And it's much easier to serve God if you are not encumbered by alimony, child support, false accusations, denial of due process, paternity fraud, feminist judges, etc. Only women who honor that obligation, and want to help a man to meet that obligation, should be taken seriously for marriage and child-rearing.

Does peer-reviewed research support a naturalistic origin of life?

May 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, on Friday night, there was a debate between Dr. James Tour and Professor Dave, an atheist with a bachelors degree who makes YouTube videos. The atheist spent his entire opening speech attacking Tour's character. When Tour asked him to show him origin of life chemistry, he refused. The atheist shuffled through papers he apparently found by Googling, and read the titles. When asked what was in them, he said that he couldn't remember.

But I was trying to decide who won the debate. There was one place where the atheist claimed that the early Earth had no molecular oxygen. He needs that to be true, in order for the chemistry that creates the building blocks of life to work. So I thought I would talk about a paper that refutes that. After my argument, I'll talk about another mistake that the atheist made in the debate. Based on those two mistakes, I concluded that the atheist was speaking errors either intentionally or unintentionally, and therefore lost the debate.

Here's a paper published in the prestigious peer-reviewed science journal *Nature*, entitled "The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere".

Evolution News explains what the paper is about.

Excerpt:

> A recent *Nature* publication reports a new technique for measuring the oxygen levels in Earth's atmosphere some 4.4 billion years ago. The authors found that by studying cerium oxidation states in zircon, a compound formed from volcanic magma, they could ascertain the oxidation levels in the early earth. Their findings suggest that the early Earth's oxygen levels were very close to current levels.
>
> […]Miller and Urey conducted experiments to show that under certain atmospheric conditions and with the right kind of electrical charge, several amino acids could form from inorganic compounds such as methane, ammonia, and water. Several experiments have been done using various inorganic starting materials, all yielding a few amino acids; however, one key aspect of all of these experiments was the lack of oxygen.
>
> If the atmosphere has oxygen (or other oxidants) in it, then it is an oxidizing atmosphere. If the atmosphere lacks oxygen, then it is either inert or a reducing atmosphere. Think of a metal that has been left outside, maybe a piece of iron. That metal will eventually rust. Rusting is the result of the metal being oxidized. With organic reactions, such as the ones that produce amino acids, it is very important that no oxygen be present, or it will quench the reaction. Scientists, therefore, concluded that the early Earth must have been a reducing

> environment when life first formed (or the building blocks of life first formed) because that was the best environment for producing amino acids. The atmosphere eventually accumulated oxygen, but life did not form in an oxidative environment.
>
> The problem with this hypothesis is that it is based on the assumption that organic life must have formed from inorganic materials. That is why the early Earth must have been a reducing atmosphere. Research has been accumulating for more than thirty years, however, suggesting that the early Earth likely did have oxygen present.
>
> […]Their findings not only showed that oxygen was present in the early Earth atmosphere, something that has been shown in other studies, but that oxygen was present as early as 4.4 billion years ago. This takes the window of time available for life to have begun, by an origin-of-life scenario like the RNA-first world, and reduces it to an incredibly short amount of time. Several factors need to coincide in order for nucleotides or amino acids to form from purely naturalistic circumstances (chance and chemistry). The specific conditions required already made purely naturalist origin-of-life scenarios highly unlikely. Drastically reducing the amount of time available, adding that to the other conditions needing to be fulfilled, makes the RNA world hypothesis or a Miller-Urey-like synthesis of amino acids simply impossible.

If you read the paper's abstract, it finds that molecular oxygen would have been present by the end of the Hadean era. The earliest signs of life we have are from just after the end of the Hadean era. So, its undeniable that molecular oxygen was present. Did professor Dave lie, or was he just ignorant? One thing for sure, he pronounced that there was no oxygen in the same confident, insulting voice that he used for the rest of his presentation.

OK, so with that out of the way, Professor Dave also cited a paper in the journal *Science*. And there is an article on Creation.com by Johnathan Sarfati, who has a PhD in chemistry, about that very paper.

His post says:

> It's likely that the media reports you mention were referring to the paper in *Science* journal by Tracey Lincoln and Gerald Joyce.[1] Quite often, the media hype just doesn't match what was actually discovered. To be fair, Joyce, a well known chemical evolutionist, made it clear that he and his Ph.D. student Lincoln had not produced life, despite the headlines.[2] Much earlier, Joyce admitted:

> "The most reasonable assumption is that life did not start with RNA … . The transition to an RNA world, like the origins of life in general, is fraught with uncertainty and is plagued by a lack of experimental data."[3]

> Joyce and Lincoln started off with a fairly long RNA molecule. Given that nothing like RNA appears in Miller–Urey experiments, this already shows unjustified

> interference from an intelligent investigator. In fact, not even the building blocks, ribonucleotides, appear in such experiments, and they do not spontaneously form RNA. In fact, there are numerous chemical difficulties with obtaining RNA by blind undirected chemistry, the only sort allowed on the hypothetical primordial earth, as chemical evolutionist A.G. Cairns-Smith points out in his book Genetic Takeover4 (see extract at Cairns Smith: Detailed criticisms of the RNA world hypothesis). And it's a huge step from RNA to the genetic code, its major use today.

> Furthermore, this paper didn't demonstrate replication but ligation—joining two small RNA pieces, previously designed to be a match to the longer strand. So this research already assumed not just one but three RNA strands. For this to be relevant to chemical evolution, the two pieces just by chance had to have pretty close to the complementary base pairs of the first piece—natural selection could not be invoked before reproduction.
>
> Furthermore, since polymerization is unfavorable, the RNA pieces must be chemically activated in some way. Note that a catalyst merely accelerates the approach to equilibrium; it doesn't change it (see diagram and explanation in Dino proteins and blood vessels: are they a big deal?). The paper states that one of the two joining RNA strands has a triphosphate group on the end. This is very reactive, so would be an unlikely component of a primordial soup, and would not last long even if it appeared. So a supply of matching activated RNA pieces likewise shows unacceptable investigator interference.
>
> See also Does ribozyme research prove Darwinian evolution? for a critique of an earlier Joyce paper on alleged ribozyme evolution, as well as Self-replicating peptides? which has many similarities to the recent Joyce claim.

Now Tour seemed to let this problem drop in the debate. It just seems that Professor Dave was assuming from the titles of the papers that they were relevant to the problem of life. Well, scientists always sound optimistic in their papers. I know, I had to write one for my masters degree thesis, and it was published. That's why you have to look at the data and be skeptical. Sadly Dave wasn't able to be skeptical. He wanted something to be true, so he just didn't bother to interact with challenges to his view. The whole problem with the origin of life is that there are many counter-factual conditions, experimenter interferences, etc. that have to be done to make things work at all. Dave reads the titles of papers, but he just isn't aware of how the experimenters have adjusted the experiments in ways that are not true to the conditions on the early Earth.

Dr. Tour lost his temper and shouted a lot during the debate, so I don't think the debate is worth watching. However, if you want to watch a good debate on the origin of life, try this one between Dr. Fazale Rana vs Dr. Michael Ruse. And if you want to see a good explanation of the sequencing problem, check out this lecture by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. (who has also debated atheists who didn't lie, shout or insult him – and they even had doctoral degrees)

Stephen C. Meyer and Keith Fox debate intelligent design and evolution

May 21, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From Justin Brierley's "Unbelievable" podcast.

Details:

> Stephen Meyer is a leading proponent of Intelligent Design who directs the Centre for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. His [first] book "Signature in the Cell" claims to show that the DNA code is the product of intelligent mind, not naturalistic processes. Keith Fox is Professor of Biochemistry at Southampton University. He chairs the UK Christians in Science network but disagrees strongly with ID. They debate how life could have originated and whether design is allowed as an explanation in science.

Download the MP3 here. (Direct link to file)

Summary: (stuff in italics is my snarky paraphrase)

Meyer:

- background and how he got interested in intelligent design
- his research focus is on the origin of life – the first replicator
- summarizes the history of origin of life studies
- authored the book "Signature in the Cell"
- the DNA enigma: where did the information in DNA come from?
- naturalistic explanations of the DNA information have failed
- but intelligent agents are known to be able to produce information
- the best explanation of the information in DNA is that an intelligent agent authored it
- Meyer's book was named by atheist philosopher of science Thomas Nagel as a Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year in 2010
- why is design so controversial? Many people think that Darwin explained why nature appears design
- the Darwinian view is that nature can create the appearance of design using mutation and selection
- however, Darwinian mechanisms cannot explain the origin of the first living cell, it assumes replication, and the origin of life is about where the first replicator comes from

Fox:

- Meyer's argument is not about the evolution of life after the first cell
- Meyer's case for design is about the origin of life

- naturalists do not know a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life
- there are a number of naturalistic hypotheses for the origin of life, like the RNA-first hypothesis
- maybe in a few years one of them will turn out to be correct
- what intelligent design is arguing from a gap in our current naturalistic knowledge to infer that God intervened in nature

Meyer:

- that's not what intelligent design is at all
- the approach ID theorists use is the inference to best explanation
- you evaluate all explanations, non-intelligent causes and intelligent causes
- you prefer the best possible explanation
- we know that minds are capable of producing information just like the information we find in DNA

Fox:

- living cells replicate, so they have the ability to introduce mutations as they replicate and then some of those mutations can be selected
- so maybe the process of replicating that living cells do created the first living cell
- maybe the first living cell created itself, X brought X into being, self-creation, what's irrational about that?

Meyer:

- the issue is the origin of life – where did the first living cell come from?
- you cannot appeal to the operations that a living cell can perform to explain the origin of the first living cell
- there was no first living cell operating before the first living cell
- there was no replication, mutation or selection before the first living cell
- in fact, in my book I show that there is no known naturalistic mechanism that is able to produce the information needed for the first living cell
- *nothing can create itself, that is self-contradictory*

Fox:

- Well, you are just saying that because something is complex that God did it

Meyer:

- Sadly, no. What I actually said needed to be explained was the information, not complexity
- And we know from software engineering that the process of adding information to code is performed by programmers
- in the absence of any adequate naturalistic explanation for information, we are

justified in taking the explanation that we are familiar with – namely, intelligent agency – based on our uniform, universal experience of what causes information

Fox:

- well, maybe we can appeal to the mutation and selection in existing living cells to explain the origin of the first living cell
- maybe there were living cells before the first living cell, and then these other living cells created the first living cell

Meyer:

- we can't keep invoking mutation and selection when those processes are not operating prior to the origin of the first living cell

Fox:

- well maybe some bare-bones self-replication molecule was a precursor to the first living cell

Meyer:

- even to generate very limited replicator would require a large amount of information
- the argument I am making is – where does the evolution come from?

Fox:

- well, maybe we will think of an explanation for information that is naturalistic in 20 years
- we've thought of explanations to things that were NOT information before
- so maybe we will be able to think of something to explain information based on our ability to explain NOT information before

Moderator: Change topics: the Dover decision

Meyer:

- the Discovery Institute opposed the policy that causes the trial
- the wording of the statute was poor
- the judge was completely wrong in his decision
- young earth creationists used the phrase "intelligent design" to cover their agenda
- intelligent design is an inference using the normal methods of science

Fox:

- intelligent design is a science stopper because it stops looking for a naturalistic explanation
- everything in nature must have a naturalistic explanation
- everything has to be explained using matter and time and chance

- it just has to be that way!!!!

Meyer:

- well, what luck would you have explaining an effect like Mt. Rushmore?
- can you explain that using matter,time and chance?
- Mt. Rushmore was the product of intelligence, not wind and erosion
- similarly, there is information in the cell, and we know that intelligence causes information

Fox:

- So you are saying that we don't understand and therefore an intelligence is necessary?

Meyer:

- no I am saying we DO understand and we are making an inference based on that understanding
- you are the one who is insisting on a material explanation because you pre-suppose materialism
- we know that minds have causal powers, and we can infer mind as an explanation from information

Fox:

- well nature is a seamless chain of material causes and effects

Meyer:

- agents can act without violating the laws of nature
- even humans can act as intelligent agents to create information in books, and they don't violate the laws of nature
- intelligent causes are real, and they explain effects in nature

Fox:

- you're trying to impose on science something to do with meaning and purpose

Meyer:

- no that's not what we're doing, we're inferring from from the fact that we ourselves are known causes of information to the fact that an intelligence cause is the best explanation for information in the cell

Fox:

- *but I am a materialist*, I need a materialist explanation

Meyer:

- mind IS an answer to the how question
- we infer to mind in many other scientific disciplines, like cryptography, archaeology, etc.
- a materialist might accuse an archaeologist of engaging in a “scribe-of-the-gaps” argument, but the best explanation of an artifact with information is a scribe
- we are inferring that mind is the cause from the nature of the effect: information

Moderator: is it appropriate to call DNA “information”
Fox:

- well DNA is just a molecular polymer, any reference to information is just by analogy

Meyer:

- DNA is a molecular polymer, but it also exhibits the property of specified complexity
- the arrangement of bases, which function as machine instructions in a software program, for performings task in the cell
- we have observed that the property of specified complexity always comes from an intelligence

Fox:

- well, maybe there are other sequences that would work, so maybe it’s really not uncommon to develop functioning sequences by chance alone, without an intelligence

Meyer:

- you can measure how precise the functional specificity is in DNA and proteins

Moderator: is Shannon information the same as functional information
Meyer:

- Shannon information refers to the sequences of digits or symbols that do not necessarily have any function, i.e. – a four character string QSZX has as much Shannon information as WORD. However, only the latter is functional against the pattern of the English language. There are arrangements of DNA bases and amino acids that have the same number of symbols/characters as a functional sequence would have, but they have no biological function – they do not exhibit specified complexity

Fox:

- Well, maybe there are lots and lots of sequences of DNA and proteins so that it is fairly easy to get a functional one by chance

Meyer:

- DNA sequences that are functional are extremely rare, protein sequences are even more rare
- this is not my opinion, this is what the research shows – functional protein sequences are rare

Fox:

- well maybe there are other functional sequences that are occur before the first functional sequence that are precursors to the first functional sequence
- maybe there are billions of years of replication, mutation and selection before the first replication, mutation and selection

Meyer:

- you can't get to the first selectable functional sequence by appealing to precursor selectable functional sequences – there are no selectable functional sequences before the FIRST one
- you have to get the first selectable functional sequence by chance alone, because there is nothing to mutate or select before the first replicator
- the chance hypothesis has been rejected because the minimal amount of information for the simplest replicator is too high to get by chance alone, given the resources, including time, that are available

Moderator: *Keith are you confident that naturalism will be able to substantiate these naturalism-of-the-gap speculations that you offer in response to Meyer's actual science that we have today?*

Fox:

- well, it is hard to know for sure because it was just a fluke event
- but there's nothing irrational or unscientific or miraculous about it – the fluke would have a material explanation
- there is nothing that we can detect that would implicate God, my speculations about a fluke which I cannot observe or measure or test would all be compatible with an atheistic worldview that omits God as a causal entity

Meyer:

- where are those material processes that could account for this fluke then?
- the whole point of this argument is that the information in DNA transcends the material components in the sequence
- it's the arrangement of the material parts/letters/characters/symbols/instructions that needs to be explained

Fox:

- Well, I just have a different philosophy of science that rules out intelligent causation a priori

Meyer:

- Yes, that’s the difference between us – you pre-suppose that all explanations of natural phenomena must exclude intelligent causes

There is a bit more where Meyer talks about how parts of the cell are implementations of various design patterns (Gang of Four design patterns) that are used by software architects who design software.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

May 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell". One of my favorite 6 arguments for a Creator and Designer is the origin of the simplest replicating living system. When you look into the cell, what you'll find is carefully sequenced components that for complex structures, like proteins. In this lecture, you'll learn all about this "biological information".

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in

the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

Florida governor Ron DeSantis is stacking up achievements ahead of 2024 announcement

May 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been blogging about DeSantis' achievements for some time, but a whole bunch of new ones just happened. I want to make sure that people have a good grasp on everything that he's is accomplishing. How else would you choose a candidate for president, except by looking at what battles he's fought and won? DeSantis has just visited Iowa and New Hampshire, and I'll cover that too.

So, here come the stories.

High tourism and low unemployment:

> Gov. Ron DeSantis' office celebrated that Florida witnessed a record 37.9 million visitors in the first quarter of 2023, the highest ever recorded in a quarter.
>
> That tally includes 34.6 million domestic visitors and 1.8 million international.
>
> […]Florida's unemployment rate also held at a low 2.6% for April, which the governor's office bragged is the lowest "among the top 10 largest states."

Florida's new six-week abortion ban:

> In a recent interview, Trump said that the six-week abortion ban recently signed into law by DeSantis may be "too harsh" in the eyes of "many people within the pro-life movement."
>
> […]"What are your thoughts on that?" DeSantis was asked.
>
> […]"As a Florida resident, you know, he didn't give an answer about, 'would you have signed the heartbeat bill that Florida did?'" he continued. "That had all the exceptions that people talk about the legislature put it in."
>
> […]"I signed the bill. I was proud to do it. He won't answer whether he would sign it or not."

No sex-reassignment surgeries on kids:

> Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill to ban sex reassignment surgeries and medications for minors Wednesday.
>
> […]State funds are prohibited from being used for these treatments. This includes state counties, municipalities, districts and commissions.
>
> Physicians are required to receive written informed consent from adults receiving the surgeries or prescriptions.
>
> The governor said it also gives the Florida courts temporary jurisdiction to intervene and halt procedures for out-of-state children.
>
> "You have actually some states in this country that want to be a haven for these

> types of procedures, and even welcome minors without their parents consent," DeSantis said. "We're obviously doing the opposite here."

No pronouns required in Florida schools:

> Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill into law Wednesday that will prohibit a school from requiring students and teachers to use preferred pronouns and adds guidelines for books that citizens wish to challenge in schools.
>
> "We're not doing the pronoun olympics in Florida. It's not happening here," DeSantis said.
>
> DeSantis said the law, HB 1069, makes sure that Florida students and teachers will "never be forced to declare pronouns in school, or be forced to use pronouns not based on biological sex."
>
> "There's a lot of nonsense that gets floated around and what we've said in Florida is, we are going to remain a refuge of sanity, and a citadel of normalcy, and kids should have an upbringing that reflects that," DeSantis said.

No kids at drag queen shows:

> Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill into law to penalize businesses and people who admit children into "adult live performances."
>
> […]The law authorizes Florida to fine, suspend, or revoke the license of any public establishment that admits a child to "adult live performances" that depict or simulate nudity, sexual conduct, or lewd exposure.

Pre-game prayer is allowed:

> Gov. Ron DeSantis signed legislation to protect youth sports in Florida on Wednesday, which will also allow high school teams to pray before games.
>
> […]"You have a right to free expression of religion. If government is denying your right to say a prayer before the game, they are infringing your speech, you're not violating anything, but by doing that, and so for them to do it is discriminatory," DeSantis said.

Add these actions to the list of previous DeSantis actions:

- universal school choice
- making collection of union dues optional for teachers
- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts
- elect conservatives to school boards
- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women's sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Finally, let's see where DeSantis has been traveling to ahead of the 2024 GOP primaries.

Iowa:

> "Governing is not about entertaining. Governing is not about building a brand or talking on social media and virtue signaling,'" said DeSantis at a fundraising event in Sioux Center. "It's ultimately about winning and producing results."
>
> The Florida governor has emerged as the most formidable threat to Donald Trump's securing the GOP nomination.
>
> He's presented himself to voters as a staunch conservative without Trump's distinctive abrasiveness.
>
> Trump was scheduled to host his own Iowa event Saturday in Des Moines, but canceled the event due to a tornado warning.
>
> While Trump and his campaign have raged against DeSantis, the governor has been hesitant to criticize the ex-president who endorsed his gubernatorial campaign in 2018.
>
> DeSantis told voters that in order for conservatives to secure victories in the upcoming elections, they need to remain focused on the issues and "reject the culture of losing," appearing to reference Biden's 2020 election victory over Trump.
>
> "We must reject the culture of losing that has impacted our party in recent years. The time for excuses is over," DeSantis told prospective voters.
>
> "If we get distracted, if we focus the election on the past or on other side issues, then I think the Democrats are going to beat us again."

And New Hampshire:

> Florida Governor Ron DeSantis traveled to New Hampshire late this week where he met with voters, state lawmakers, and the state's governor just days ahead of his anticipated announcement that he will be running for president in 2024.
>
> DeSantis met with voters at the Red Arrow Diner in Manchester where he was very well received by many who thanked him for what he has accomplished in Florida.
>
> DeSantis, 44, focused on talking to voters in the Granite State about economic and family issues like school choice, tax cuts, crime, and inflation, The New York Times reported.
>
> […]DeSantis has been busy racking up large lists of endorsements in recent days, including 37 state lawmakers in Iowa, approximately 50 state lawmakers in New Hampshire, and 99 out of 113 Republicans in the Florida state legislature.
>
> […]"These fights are not easy," DeSantis said. "I think when you look, there's a reason why things have gotten crazy in this country, because there's a lot of powerful people that want it to be, a lot of institutions push that direction. When

> you kind of step out and you speak truth, you get a lot of blowback for that, but I think what I found in Florida is no governor ever received more incoming, I would say in modern history, than me, during my first term, particularly with COVID, but it really went on after that, a lot of narratives generated."

Interesting that he mentioned COVID, as Donald Trump recently criticized DeSantis for opening up his state, comparing him unfavorably to NEW YORK GOVERNOR ANDREW CUOMO. Yes, really. And you might remember that Trump issued commendations to "Operation Warp Speed" members, including Deborah Birx and Anthony Fauci. Something to think about.

Will computers and robots ever become self-aware?

May 23, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There is a very famous thought experiment from UC Berkeley philosopher John Searle that all Christian apologists should know about. And now everyone who reads the Wall Street Journal knows about it, because of this article. (Full text available at archive.md)

In that article, Searle is writing about the IBM computer that was programmed to play Jeopardy. Can a robot who wins on Jeopardy be "human"? Searle says no. And his famous Chinese room example (discussed in the article) explains why.

Excerpt:

> Imagine that a person—me, for example—knows no Chinese and is locked in a room with boxes full of Chinese symbols and an instruction book written in English for manipulating the symbols. Unknown to me, the boxes are called "the database" and the instruction book is called "the program." I am called "the computer."
>
> People outside the room pass in bunches of Chinese symbols that, unknown to me, are questions. I look up in the instruction book what I am supposed to do and I give back answers in Chinese symbols.
>
> Suppose I get so good at shuffling the symbols and passing out the answers that my answers are indistinguishable from a native Chinese speaker's. I give every indication of understanding the language despite the fact that I actually don't understand a word of Chinese.
>
> And if I do not, neither does any digital computer, because no computer, qua computer, has anything I do not have. It has stocks of symbols, rules for manipulating symbols, a system that allows it to rapidly transition from zeros to ones, and the ability to process inputs and outputs. That is it. There is nothing else.

Here is a link to the full article by John Searle on the Chinese room illustration.

By the way, Searle is a naturalist – not a theist, not a Christian. Now, let's hear from a Christian scholar who can make more sense of this for us.

Here's a related article on "strong AI" by Christian philosopher Jay Richards.

Excerpt:

> Popular discussions of AI often suggest that if you keep increasing weak AI, at some point, you'll get strong AI. That is, if you get enough computation, you'll eventually get consciousness.
>
> The reasoning goes something like this: There will be a moment at which a computer will be indistinguishable from a human intelligent agent in a blind test. At that point, we will have intelligent, conscious machines.

This does not follow. A computer may pass the Turing test, but that doesn't mean that it will actually be a self-conscious, free agent.

The point seems obvious, but we can easily be beguiled by the way we speak of computers: We talk about computers learning, making mistakes, becoming more intelligent, and so forth. We need to remember that we are speaking metaphorically.

We can also be led astray by unexamined metaphysical assumptions. If we're just computers made of meat, and we happened to become conscious at some point, what's to stop computers from doing the same? That makes sense if you accept the premise—as many AI researchers do. If you don't accept the premise, though, you don't have to accept the conclusion.

In fact, there's no good reason to assume that consciousness and agency emerge by accident at some threshold of speed and computational power in computers. We know by introspection that we are conscious, free beings—though we really don't know how this works. So we naturally attribute consciousness to other humans. We also know generally what's going on inside a computer, since we build them, and it has nothing to do with consciousness. It's quite likely that consciousness is qualitatively different from the type of computation that we have developed in computers (as the "Chinese Room" argument, by philosopher John Searle, seems to show). Remember that, and you'll suffer less anxiety as computers become more powerful.

Even if computer technology provides accelerating returns for the foreseeable future, it doesn't follow that we'll be replacing ourselves anytime soon. AI enthusiasts often make highly simplistic assumptions about human nature and biology. Rather than marveling at the ways in which computation illuminates our understanding of the microscopic biological world, many treat biological systems as nothing but clunky, soon-to-be-obsolete conglomerations of hardware and software. Fanciful speculations about uploading ourselves onto the Internet and transcending our biology rest on these simplistic assumptions. This is a common philosophical blind spot in the AI community, but it's not a danger of AI research itself, which primarily involves programming and computers.

AI researchers often mix topics from different disciplines—biology, physics, computer science, robotics—and this causes critics to do the same. For instance, many critics worry that AI research leads inevitably to tampering with human nature. But different types of research raise different concerns. There are serious ethical questions when we're dealing with human cloning and research that destroys human embryos. But AI research in itself does not raise these concerns. It normally involves computers, machines, and programming. While all technology raises ethical issues, we should be less worried about AI research—which has many benign applications—than research that treats human life as a means rather than an end.

When I am playing a game on the computer, I know exactly why what I am doing is fun – I am conscious of it. But the computer has no idea what I am doing. It is just matter in motion. The computer's behavior is just the determined result of its programming and the inputs I supply to it. And that's all computers will ever do. Trust me, this is my field. I have the BS and MS in computer science, and I have studied this area. AI has applications for machine learning and search problems, but consciousness is not on the radar. You can't get there from here.

Target partners with Satan supporter on new transgender clothing line

May 24, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do you shop at Target? I stopped shopping there in 2004, when they banned the Salvation Army from their stores during the Christmas holiday season. At the time, I thought to myself "I wonder if this is being caused by an anti-Christian bias". And then more stories came out showing that they really might be. Let's take a look at some of Target's actions, and decide whether we should shop there.

Here's the story from The Federalist:

> Since 2012, Target has happily stocked the front of its stores with pro-LGBT T-shirts, accessories, pet items, party supplies, and decor. In recent years, Target expanded the reach of messages like "trans people will always exist," "queer," and "live laugh lesbian" to the children's section.
>
> […]Target furthered its commitment to advancing radical gender ideology this month when it partnered with a Satan supporter who called for the eradication of anyone who disagrees with the mutilation of children to supply transgender-themed merchandise to Target's "pride" collection.

Target is collaborating with "the U.K.-based brand Abprallen and its designer "Erik," a self-proclaimed "gay trans man".

But is Erik really a Satanist?

> One quick glance at the designer's website and Instagram shows dozens of designs featuring satanic and sacrilegious symbols such as pentagrams, "Satan respects pronouns" T-shirts, "gay as hell" stickers, and stained glass windows covered up by "trans bodies are holy."
>
> "So for me, Satan is hope, compassion, equality, and love. So, naturally, Satan respects pronouns. He loves all LGBT+ people. I went with a variation of Baphomet for this design, a deity who themself is a mixture of genders, beings, ideas, and existences. They reject binary stereotypes and expectations. Perfect," Erik wrote.
>
> […]One particularly graphic image on the designer's Instagram shows a naked demonic creature with a horned skull and mutilated breasts.
>
> In addition to promoting explicit evil, Erik often uses violent language and imagery, with products such as a "burn down the cis-tem" lighter, a "we bash back" mace, and "time's up for transphobes" skull pins to call for action against people who take issue with radical gender ideology and the dangerous mutilation and castration it prescribes. Erik also sells merchandise promoting the murder of babies in the womb.

One can only infer from this that Target supports all this as well. And if you shop there, then so do you. I disagree with all of that, because I'm a Bible-believing Christian and a Constitutional conservative. So I don't shop at Target.

This isn't the first time that Target has gotten into trouble with Christians and social conservatives.

You can see it in their bathroom policies.

Breitbart reports:

> The Target department store chain drew the ire of millions of Americans after it announced it was opening its bathrooms to transgender shoppers and employees and allowing them to choose whatever bathroom they feel like using at any given time.

And Christian Post notes:

> With that in mind, FRC compiled a list of 21 cases reported in the U.S. stretching back to 1999, but most within the last 10 years, where men violated the privacy of women in bathrooms, locker rooms, and other private spaces.
>
> The most recent case was reported on Jan. 17 by WPRI, concerning a man who mounted a camera inside the family bathroom at a Target store in Lincoln, Rhode Island.
>
> Umit Cakmak, 41, of Providence, was arrested by Lincoln police and charged with video voyeurism, with reports noting that the man already had an active warrant for the same crime.
>
> In a similar case from July 2016 in Idaho Falls, a man who identifies as transgender was arrested on one count of felony voyeurism for taking photos of another woman changing clothes at a Target store in Ammon.

And then of course there was the banning of the Salvation Army from the sidewalks outside of Target stores during the Christmas holidays.

Christian Post reports:

> Target shoppers won't be hearing the sound of bells ringing or a polite "Thank You" when they contribute to Salvation Army Kettle Drive this holiday season. The Salvation Army expects the enforcement of Target Corp's non-solicitation policy to hurt projected donations and cutback the ministry's services to the community.
>
> […]The decision will force many Salvation Army locations to reduce services to make ends meet. The Salvation Army in Metro Detroit has already suffered $1 million in income cutbacks this year and will lose the $220,671 in potential donations it collected last year at Target, which can fund 6,000 meals.
>
> "We're going to lose 112 days of food service for the hungry because of (Target's) decision," Russ Russell, Salvation Army executive director of

> development, told The Detroit News.

I’ll bet their Satanist friend really approved of that. Do you? Is it time to stop shopping at Target?

Unmarried 35-year-old woman reflects on her adventurous life of fun, travel and serial cohabitation

May 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting article featuring a 35-year-old woman who is alarmed that her approach to life has left her in debt and single, with a gap-filled resume of short-term jobs. I thought it might be useful for young women to read this, and consider whether making "rash" decisions and being "adventurous" works out.

She writes:

> I feel like a ghost. I'm a 35-year-old woman, and I have nothing to show for it. My 20s and early 30s have been a twisting crisscross of moves all over the West Coast, a couple of brief stints abroad, multiple jobs in a mediocre role with no real upward track. I was also the poster child for serial monogamy. My most hopeful and longest lasting relationship (three and a half years, whoopee) ended two years ago. We moved to a new town (my fourth new city), created a home together, and then nose-dived into a traumatic breakup that launched me to my fifth and current city and who-knows-what-number job.

Rash decisions, adventure, exploring…. and lots of debt:

> For all these years of quick changes and rash decisions, which I once rationalized as adventurous, exploratory, and living an "original life," I have nothing to show for it. I have no wealth, and I'm now saddled with enough debt from all of my moves, poor decisions, and lack of career drive that I may never be able to retire. I have no career milestones and don't care for my line of work all that much anyway, but now it's my lifeline, as I only have enough savings to buy a hotel room for two nights.

No STEM degree, which means she doesn't like to study hard things that can be tested against the real world for correctness:

> I used to consider myself creative — a good writer, poetic, passionate, curious. Now, after many years of demanding yet uninspiring jobs, multiple heartbreaks, move after move, financial woes, I'm quite frankly exhausted.

Surprised by aging and poor health:

> Also, within the past year I've had a breast-cancer scare and required surgery on my uterus due to a fertility issue. On top of that, I'm 35 and every gyno and women's-health website this side of the Mississippi is telling me my fertility is dropping faster than a piano falling out of the sky. Now I'm looking into freezing my eggs, adding to my never-ending financial burden, in hopes of possibly

> making something of this haunted house and having a family someday with a no-named man.

She's still trying to be the sexpot 25-year-old she used to be:

> I'm dating. I'm working out and working hard. Listening to music I enjoy and loving my cat. Calling my mom…. I'm drinking too much… And with men I date, I feel pressure to make something of the relationship too soon (move in, get married, "I have to have kids in a couple of years"; fun times!). **All the while still trying to be the sexpot 25-year-old I thought I was until what seemed like a moment ago.**

But her plan hasn't worked out:

> I used to think I was the one who had it all figured out. Adventurous life in the city! Traveling the world! Making memories! Now I feel incredibly hollow. And foolish. How can I make a future for myself that I can get excited about out of these wasted years? What reserves or identity can I draw from when I feel like I've accrued nothing up to this point with my life choices?

Well, I've known women like this, and I think we're going to see more and more women like this as the society becomes more secular and feminist. I want to say something about whether she is sincere about wanting to get married and have children, and what women should do to avoid ending up like her.

Do women today understand male nature and marriage?

This woman's demonstrated life plan is that she chose whatever made her feel good from age 18-35+, and now wants to enter into a marriage some time after age 35. And what does marriage mean to her? Has she prioritized entering the traditional roles of wife and mother? Don't listen to her words. Look at her actions. Her actions show that marriage and children were of NO importance to her. And her current approach to getting married and having kids is the same as ever – work out in order to look hot, and try to coerce a man who signs up for recreational sex with no commitment into becoming a man who makes a life-long commitment to provide for her and her children (which is the opposite of what he signed up for). She wants marriage now for the same reason that she's wanted anything: for fun, thrills, adventure and to keep up with her girlfriends who are already married.

What kind of man should she have been pursuing from age 18 to 35, if she really wanted marriage and children? Well, the first thing to realize is that not all men want marriage. And the next thing to realize is that women who are serious about marriage need to focus ONLY on men who want to marry. All the men that the women quoted above wanted in her youth didn't want to marry. They wanted premarital recreational sex with her, and that was fine with her – she chose them, and disregarded the men who were interested in marriage.

A man who was interested in marrying her would have:

- ….told her no to sex before marriage (because the more sexual partners a woman has, the less happy she will be in marriage, and the more unstable her marriage will be).
- …led her to become better at being a wife and mother, by discouraging her thrill-seeking, traveling and wasteful spending, and instead encouraging her focus on a STEM education, career and getting debt-free.
- …led her to develop a Christian worldview in which she would understand the importance of marriage and children, and learn to sacrifice her own interests to love and care for others.

Was she interested in getting ready for marriage? No. She never chose those marriage-minded men. She didn't want to be a wife. The men she chose were chosen for fun, for thrills, and to show off their outward appearance to her girlfriends.

So, who are the men in this group of marriage-minded men? How do you recognize them? Marriage-minded men are interested in marriage because they want to *lead a home*. They will have invested a lot of time learning how to protect others, how to provide, and how to debate and lead on moral and spiritual issues. Marriage-minded men see the marriage enterprise as a way of advancing the causes that they care about most. Women who *really* want to get married will recognize those men, and pursue those men. And they'll do it early, so that they can invest in their husbands early and be young enough to have children.

Ron DeSantis raises 1 million dollars in first hour after presidential announcement

May 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've already been blogging about Ron DeSantis' record of achievements as governor of Florida. DeSantis announced his candidacy on Twitter Wednesday night. 600,000 people wanted to listen, and it crashed Twitter's servers! After that, he went on Fox News to do an interview. We now have a good picture of what we would get from him as president on Day One.

Here's an article from Daily Caller about the Fox News interview:

> "I have always rejected the politicization of the weather and I think what we should be doing in the United States is focusing on being energy-independent and making sure that we are utilizing the resources… and oh, by the way, when you have market-based solutions and when you innovate, in Florida we have seen emissions go down dramatically in the last 10 years, but that is through market and innovation," DeSantis told Fox News host Trey Gowdy.

I like this. He is aware of how green energy policies have affected Germany and California. Those are the exact two examples I use on this blog, as well as Canada, which has seen its electricity prices skyrocket after going green.

> "What Biden wants to do, he wants to take us in a direction where we are like Germany where we don't have a reliable power grid, where prices spike," DeSantis said. "California for example, they have a tough time keeping the lights on, and yet they want to ban the internal combustion engine?"
>
> California has pushed to ban gas stoves, diesel trucks, and gas-powered lawn mowers and leaf-blowers in the name of combating climate change. In August, the state advised citizens not to charge electric vehicles to avoid potential blackouts.

One of the top issues of the 2024 campaign will be what to do about corruption and treason in federal law enforcement.

Daily Caller reports:

> "I would not keep Chris Wray as the director of the FBI, there would be a new one on day one, I think that's very important," DeSantis told Fox News host Trey Goudy. "In terms of an attorney general, you need someone that's got a very strong backbone. You need somebody that knows that if you are going in there and you are taking care of business, The Washington Post is not going to like you, The New York Times is not going to like you, you are going to get attacked by CNN and you have to wear that as a badge of honor."
>
> […]The FBI has frequently been accused of becoming politicized in cases

> involving pro-life advocates and parents protesting at school board meetings, and was involved in censorship of social media, according to documents released in the Twitter Files.
>
> "I think the DOJ and FBI have lost their way, I think they have been weaponized against Americans who think like you and me and I think they have become very partisan," DeSantis said. "Part of the reason that is happening is because Republican presidents have accepted the canard that the DOJ and FBI are 'independent.' They are not independent agencies, they are part of the executive branch, they answer to the elected president of the United States."
>
> Garrett O'Boyle, Stephen Friend and Marcus Allen testified at a hearing held by the House Judiciary Committee's Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government Thursday about retaliation they faced after they raised concerns about FBI activities, noting their security clearances had been suspended, resulting in them losing their pay and health benefits.
>
> "If the FBI or DOJ, whatever collude with a tech company to try to censor information, everybody involved in that would be fired immediately if I were the president," DeSantis said. "And right now, I think those agencies have been able to go without any real accountability and so guess what, when there is no accountability, the bad behavior is going to continue."

You might remember that Trump appointed Director Wray, so this would be quite a change in policy. Trump also praised the work of COVID tyrants Deborah Birx and Anthony Fauci, praising them for their work in locking down the country. Meanwhile, DeSantis kept Florida open and got a lot of flak from the corporate news media.

DeSantis is running to the right of Trump on abortion. DeSantis signed a 6-week ban on abortion into law in Florida. Trump condemned the law, saying it was "too harsh".

Daily Caller reports:

> Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said there is "a role" for the federal government in restricting abortions during a Fox News appearance Wednesday evening after he announced his candidacy for president.
>
> […]Florida's heartbeat bill, signed by DeSantis on April 13, restricts abortion after six weeks, with exceptions for rape, incest, human trafficking or when the life of the mother is in danger, and brought the state's abortion restriction down from 15 weeks gestation.
>
> […]Former President Donald Trump criticized DeSantis' signing of the bill, claiming many in the pro-life movement believe the abortion ban was "too harsh." DeSantis seemingly fired back at the former president's remarks, where he insisted it was "the right thing to do."
>
> "When we are acting to protect an unborn child that has a detectable heartbeat, that is humane, that is not harsh – that is the right thing to do," DeSantis said at the National Religious Broadcasters convention in Orlando, Florida, on Monday.

Daily Wire also posted an excellent article about DeSantis' announcement and his record of past achievements. And noted that DeSantis had raised $1 million in the first hour after the announcement. A lot of Trump's former campaign staff have moved over to DeSantis, so he'll have a good experienced team.

As far as I'm concerned, we have to make this election about achievements. If we choose a candidate based on his ability to clown around, insult people, and entertain us, that won't work to get results. Let's just pick the person who is known to get things done in the areas we care about.

New study: At least 1,130 adolescents received “gender-affirming” chest surgeries between 2016 and 2019

May 26, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been seeing interesting tweets about the sudden popularity of transgenderism among young people. One of them went something like this. First, they deny that sex-change surgeries are happening. Then, they say they are happening, but not many. Then, they say many are happening, but not to children. Sadly, this new study shows that many are happening to children.

Here’s the story from Daily Wire:

> A new study of nationwide hospital databases found that at least 1,130 adolescents between 2016 and 2019 received “gender-affirming” chest surgeries in the U.S.
>
> The study, published in JAMA Pediatrics, saw a 389% increase in adolescents (ages 12-17) obtaining chest surgeries from 2016 to 2019. An overwhelming majority (1,114) of the adolescents seeking this surgery were female (98.6%), and just 16 were male (1.4%).
>
> “To our knowledge, this study is the largest investigation to date of gender-affirming chest reconstruction in a pediatric population,” the paper’s authors wrote, who are each affiliated with Vanderbilt University Medical Center. “The results demonstrate substantial increases in gender-affirming chest reconstruction for adolescents.”

Here is the breakdown by age:

> The ages of the pediatric patients ranged from 12 to 17, with 42 (5.5%) of the recipients between 12 and 14, 131 (16%) aged 15, 291 (34.5%) aged 16, and 365 (44%) aged 17.

It’s an interesting situation. I would expect parents to set boundaries on their children. First, to shelter them from public schools and social media. But second, at least keep them away from the people who are profiting from “gender-affirming care”.

Speaking of profiting, there was this:

> The median total charges for chest reconstruction were $29,886 ($21,285–$45,147), a number that was adjusted for inflation, the authors note. Most of the chest surgeries (61.1%) were covered by private health insurance, 16.5% used public health insurance including Medicaid, 15.8% paid out of pocket, and 6.7% indicated “other.”

Remember what the lady from Vanderbilt said?

It was reported by Daily Wire:

> "It's a lot of money," VUMC Clinic for Transgender Health's Dr. Shayne Sebold Taylor said at one Medicine Grand Rounds lecture, video reveals. "These surgeries make a lot of money."
>
> Taylor noted that a "chest reconstruction" can bring in $40,000 per patient, and someone "just on routine hormone treatment, who I'm only seeing a few times a year, can bring in several thousand dollars … and actually makes money for the hospital."
>
> Citing the Philadelphia Center for Transgender Surgery, Taylor said vaginoplasty surgeries can generate $20,000, gushing that it "has to be an underestimate," since hospital stay, anesthesia, post-op visits, and other add-ons are not included in the total.
>
> "And the female-to-male bottom surgeries, these are huge money makers," the doctor continued, adding that such surgeries could bring in "up to $100,000" for the hospital.
>
> Some clinics are "entirely" "supported" financially by such phalloplasty surgeries, Taylor boasted.
>
> "These surgeries are labor intensive, there are a lot of follow-ups, they require a lot of our time, and they make money," she emphasized. "They make money for the hospital."

Sadly, for one reason or another, the adults have decided that it is more virtuous to go along with the agenda of the schools and social media, and inflict surgeries on their children. I could never understands why anyone would cut healthy organs off of a child with mental health issues. That would be like putting an anorexic person on a diet.

There was a previous study:

> In July, the same four authors, with the addition of two others, published a separate study on adults who received "gender-affirming" chest reconstruction surgeries. Their results, also using NASS outpatient hospital data, found that 21,293 individuals obtained chest surgeries between 2016 and 2019, a 143.2% increase. The large majority of chest surgeries were performed on female patients, with 82.1% receiving double mastectomies; 27.9% of trans-identifying males received breast augmentations.

When it comes to debating social issues, I like to have studies close at hand. For same-sex marriage, I use studies showing different outcomes for children raised in same-sex homes. For abortion, I use science textbooks showing that the embryo is fully human. It is self-directed and has distinct DNA from either parent. And for transgenderism, I like to use studies like these, showing how health care providers are profiting from the social trends being pushed by the "don't judge" compassion crowd in the public schools. The

study showing that gender-affirming care does not lower the number of suicides (in the long term) is a good one, too.

New study: psychotherapy improves mental health of autistic teens with gender dysphoria

May 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My podcast co-host Rose and I both want Christians to argue for the Christian worldview using studies and evidence. We want the other side to reply on feelings and intuitions, while we present hard data. With that said, I have a report on a new study for you that will help you discuss the issue of medical transitioning of autistic adolescents with gender dysphoria.

Consider this report on the new study from Daily Wire:

> The study, published in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, found that guided, peer support group therapy showed positive mental health outcomes for autistic adolescents struggling with gender dysphoria. The study, conducted in the Netherlands, emphasized the importance of mental health treatments, while deprioritizing medical interventions like puberty blocking drugs, cross-sex hormones, and surgery.
>
> "These findings add to a quickly growing stack of evidence suggesting that it's the psychotherapy and support that is improving these kids' well-being, not medicalized transition," said Dr. James Cantor, Director of the Toronto Sexuality Centre, and associate professor of the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine.

By the way, you may have heard that most gender dysphoria resolves itself without any need for medical intervention. The article says:

> Dr. Cantor's website, Sexology Today, is often cited as a resource that documents eleven studies finding that roughly 60–90% of children who identify as transgender, but do not socially or medically transition, will no longer identify as transgender in adulthood. These studies were referenced by the group of researchers, who acknowledged that gender dysphoria may resolve on its own.
>
> "In a large proportion of children who express their desire for medical gender-affirming care, this seems to disappear during puberty," the study read.

In a previous post, I blogged about the "social contagion" cause of transgenderism. The technical term is Rapid-Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD). Same-age peers and social media play a huge role in children having gender confusion.

But the Daily Wire article had even more interesting information – a link between autism and susceptibility to gender confusion:

> Children and adolescents on the autism spectrum are disproportionately represented among the large, newly emerging cohort of children claiming to be transgender. Over the past 10 years, there have been at least nine studies connecting Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and transgender identities.

> Rates of autistic traits in these studies range from five percent to 54% among those with gender dysphoria, significantly higher than among the general population.
>
> Data from the now-shuttered Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) at the U.K.'s Tavistock Centre found that autistic adolescents were significantly overrepresented in the population of referrals to the clinic. Pediatrician Dr. Hilary Cass was commissioned to conduct a review of the services provided by the National Health Service and investigate why there has been such a huge rise in the number of adolescent biological girls seeking referrals to gender clinics.
>
> Dr. Cass found that approximately one third of youth referred to GIDS had autism or autistic traits. By comparison, the prevalence rates of autism spectrum disorder during childhood in the UK have been estimated at 1%.

Previously, I blogged about how many countries that are more advanced in treating gender dysphoria are leaning towards psychotherapy instead of medical treatment. Something to think about if people in your life and jumping straight to medical treatment instead of psychotherapy,

Progressive white women report high levels of mental illness in 2020 Pew survey

May 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have the most amazing video for you to see. It's a crazy left-wing activist doxing a libertarian lesbian woman wearing a breathe-through mask. First, let's take a look at the video. Then, we'll look at a recent survey reported by Pew Research in 2020, which assesses how mentally stable far-left feminist women are (self-reported). Then, I'll make some comments for unmarried men.

OK, so here is the video, which was shared by the woman who was doxed. So it's OK for me to share it, since the doxed woman didn't care about it.

So, is this crazy woman rare? Or is she common?

Progressive white women and mental illness

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

Here's the part of the data I thought was most interesting:

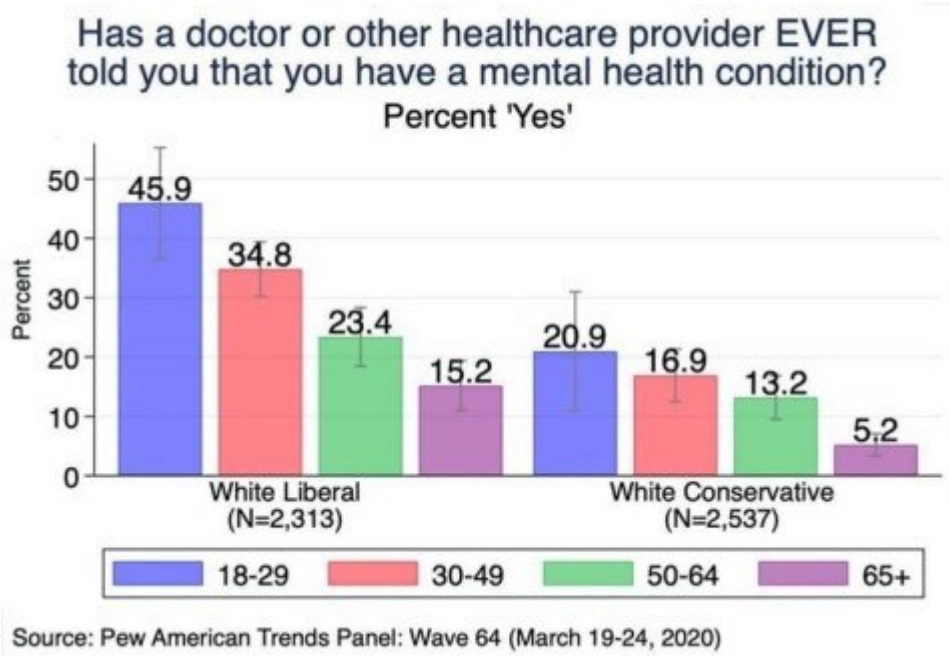

Who would marry a crazy person?

So, the point about this that I want to make is… who is going to marry these mentally ill progressive white women? Being a good wife and mother takes a certain amount of connection to reality. It takes a certain amount of empathy, compassion, and rationality. These progressive white women don't have any of that. So, who is going to marry them? I know that there are thirsty progressive men (and thirsty conservative men who fake being progressive), who will go ahead and hit it and quit it. Pump it and dump it. But how many men would commit to someone who's mentally ill?

And in fact, that's exactly what we're seeing with the marriage rates:

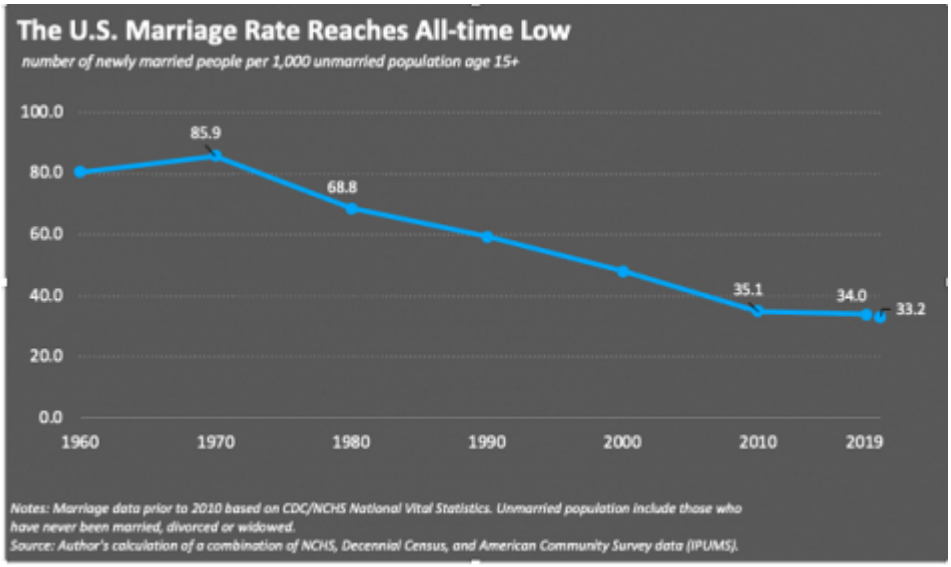

That's for America, but things are even worse in countries that have slid further toward the secular left edge of the political spectrum.

When you look at marriage rates in Canada and Europe, you understand that men are even LESS likely to choose marriage when they have to pay over 50% of what they earn in taxes. And so the marriage rate is declining. I think young, unmarried women in

Canada and Europe are want to raise taxes in order to get free stuff from government. Single mother welfare, food stamps, abortions, contraceptives, IVF, breast enlargements, etc. Some feminists are even asking for free cosmetic surgery. With a big enough government, they don't have to marry at all. Big government leaves them free to play the field, without having to care about finding a good man. But what if taxes get so high that the few good men those women passed over for 40 years simply can't afford to take on a wife and support multiple children he didn't father? Paying for things like a stay-at-home wife and homeschooling, etc. is expensive. Men can't afford a wife, and also pay for goodies for all the single progressive women with mental illnesses.

Conservative men want nothing to do with daycare and public schools – we know that those facilities are *dominated* by progressive women. And we don't want trouble from feminist lawyers and feminist judges in the divorce courts. Divorce is very expensive for men. And we may never see our children again. Then there are the progressive white women in the workplace, who get very bitter with men as a result of getting wrecked by bad boys. Even if we find a good wife, we still have to deal with all these progressive white women with mental illnesses in positions of power. Is it worth it to take risks like this? It depends on the reward, I guess. There comes a point where the juice isn't worth the squeeze.

Study: white progressives are more racist against minorities than white conservatives

May 28, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What's the definition of racism? Well, it seems to me that a person is racist if they treat people of a different skin color differently than they treat people of their own skin color. So, if a white person treats a black person differently than they do a white person, then the white person is a racist. Because they're discriminating on the basis of skin color. So, who are the real racists? Conservatives? Or Progressives?

The Yale School of Management reports on an academic study that provides the definitive answer to the question:

> According to new research by Cydney Dupree, assistant professor of organizational behavior at Yale SOM, white liberals tend to downplay their own verbal competence in exchanges with racial minorities, compared to how other white Americans act in such exchanges. The study is scheduled for publication in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.
>
> […]Dupree and her co-author, Susan Fiske of Princeton University, began by analyzing the words used in campaign speeches delivered by Democratic and Republican presidential candidates to different audiences over the years. They scanned 74 speeches delivered by white candidates over a 25-year period. Approximately half were addressed to mostly-minority audiences—at a Hispanic small business roundtable discussion or a black church, for example. They then paired each speech delivered to a mostly-minority audience with a comparable speech delivered at a mostly-white audience—at a mostly-white church or university, for example. The researchers analyzed the text of these speeches for two measures: words related to competence (that is, words about ability or status, such as "assertive" or "competitive") and words related to warmth (that is, words about friendliness, such as "supportive" and "compassionate").
>
> […]The team found that Democratic candidates used fewer competence-related words in speeches delivered to mostly minority audiences than they did in speeches delivered to mostly white audiences. The difference wasn't statistically significant in speeches by Republican candidates… There was no difference in Democrats' or Republicans' usage of words related to warmth.

More testing confirmed the patronizing white supremacist attitude of whites on the political left:

> They designed a series of experiments in which white participants were asked to respond to a hypothetical or presumed-real interaction partner. For half of these participants, their partner was given a stereotypically white name (such as "Emily"); for the other half, their partner was given a stereotypically black name

> (such as “Lakisha”). Participants were asked to select from a list of words for an email to their partner.
>
> […]The researchers found that liberal individuals were less likely to use words that would make them appear highly competent when the person they were addressing was presumed to be black rather than white. No significant differences were seen in the word selection of conservatives based on the presumed race of their partner.

Conservatives aren’t racist at all – they’re color blind.

One of the reasons why I get along so well with white conservatives is that they don’t patronize me with low expectations, the way that white leftists patronize non-whites. The view of white progressives is similar to the view of white supremacist racists – they think that there is something defective about people like me because of our non-white skin color.

White supremacists and white progressives agree on this: that non-white people aren’t competent enough to make our own decisions. We need help from big government in order to do what whites can do without help. We need to be told what to think for our own good, and shamed if we step out of line. It’s amazing to me that white racist progressives are seen as “compassionate”, when they are the ones who actually believe in the racial inferiority of non-whites.

Memorial Day story: little destroyers fought like battleships in the Battle off Samar

May 29, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought about what story from military history to share with you all for Memorial Day. This time, I decided on the story of Lieutenant Commander Robert W. Copeland and his ship the *Samuel B. Roberts.* The story takes place during World War 2, in the Pacific Theater, as the American fleet is battling with the Japanese to re-take the Philippine Islands.

I read about this story in "World War II at Sea: A Global History" by Craig L. Symonds and in "The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors" by James D. Hornfischer.

Before we get started, let's learn about some ship classes and weapon capabilities.

Japanese Yamato-class battleship:

- displacement: 72,809 tons
- speed: 27 knots
- 9 x 18.1″ guns
- 12 x 6.1″ guns
- 12 x 5″ guns

Japanese Takao-class heavy cruiser:

- displacement: 15,781 tons
- speed: 35.5 knots
- 10 x 8″ guns
- 4 x 5″ guns

American Fletcher-class destroyer:

- displacement: 2,500 tons
- speed: 36.5 knots
- 5 x 5″ guns

American John C. Butler-class destroyer escort:

- displacement: 1,370 tons
- speed: 28.7 knots
- 2 x 5″ guns

So, this story is from October 25th, 1944. It takes place east of the Philippine islands. The American force "Taffy 3" consists of 6 escort carriers, 3 destroyers, 4 destroyer escorts. An escort carrier is a light aircraft carrier. The Japanese force has 4 battleships, including the Yamato (!), 6 heavy cruisers, 2 light cruisers, and 11 destroyers. The Yamato is the

largest and most powerful battleship ever built. The Americans are severely outnumbered and outgunned.

Normally, American escort carriers would be escorted by much larger ships, because they are so valuable. Carrier aircraft have much longer range and striking power than a battleship. But the Japanese had made a plan to lure Admiral William "Bull" Halsey away from the escort carriers and the invasion force, which he was supposed to be protecting. They used some aircraft carriers as bait, and Halsey chased after them with his battleships, cruisers and destroyers. The Japanese aircraft carriers had few aircraft and air crews, and were thus a weak threat. Halsey also declined to communicate his decision to leave the escort carriers to his superiors. He also refused to respond to messages from Fleet Admiral Nimitz. By the time Halsey returned to his duty, he arrived too late to have any impact on the Battle off Samar.

But what about that force of destroyers and destroyer escorts that stayed with the escort carriers?

Here is an article from Warfare History Network that tells the story:

> At exactly 6:45 on the morning of October 25, 1944, Rear Admiral Clifton A.F. Sprague received a message from one of his pilots on antisubmarine patrol. The admiral recalled that the message went something like this: "Enemy surface force of 4 battleships, 7 cruisers, and 11 destroyers sighted 20 miles northwest of your task group and closing in on you at 30 knots."
>
> […]At 6:58, the ships opened fire. Less than a minute later, colored splashes from the Japanese shells landed astern of Taffy 3.

Two more things I need to explain. First, a "rain squall" is the equivalent of a foxhole in naval warfare. Ships inside the rain squall are invisible to ships outside the rain squall. Second, aircraft carriers must be sailing against the wind in order to launch aircraft.

More:

> Sprague was fully aware of his predicament and did not think that his force of "baby flattops" and their escorts would last 15 minutes against the oncoming battleships and cruisers. As soon as the approaching task force was confirmed as Japanese, he "took several defensive actions in quick succession." He ordered a change in course from north to due east, which pointed Taffy 3 "at full speed toward a friendly rain squall nearby." The new course also turned his carriers into the wind, and at 6:56 Sprague ordered all carriers to begin launching aircraft for torpedo and bombing attacks against Kurita's force. A minute later, he ordered the carriers and their escorts to make as much smoke as possible to screen Taffy 3 from the Japanese gunners. A smokescreen offered scant protection against large-caliber enemy shells, but it was better than nothing.

This part is interesting. I have to highlight the bravery of the torpedo, bomber and fighter pilots:

> After they dropped their bombs, the pilots made dry runs on the enemy ships to distract the Japanese gunners. The commander of Gambier Bay's air group flew his Avenger through enemy flak for two hours after he dropped his bombs. The pilots of the Wildcat fighters were sent in to strafe "with the hope that their strafing would kill personnel on the Japanese warships, silence automatic weapons, and, most important, draw attention from the struggling escort carriers." When their ammunition ran out, the fighter pilots also resorted to dry runs to harass the enemy. One pilot made 20 strafing runs, 10 of them without ammunition.

To me that is astonishing. I would only order my strike aircraft to strafe after dropping their ordnance if the enemy ship was on fire, moving slowly, and far away from her allies.

But it worked:

> "The bombers and torpedo planes were very aggressive and skilful and the coordination was impressive," a Japanese officer told his American interpreter after the war, "even in comparison with the many experiences of American attacks we had already had, this was the most skilful work of your planes."

Next, the American destroyers – *Hoel, Heermann and Johnston* – attacked:

> In addition to his carrier's air groups, Sprague also sent his destroyers and destroyer escorts against Kurita's force. The normal job of these screening warships was to protect the escort carriers from submarines, but now they would be performing a completely different task.

The destroyers did a great job of disrupting the advance of the much stronger Japanese ships with gunfire and torpedoes. The Japanese ships had to dodge the torpedoes, delaying their pursuit of the valuable escort carriers:

> American torpedoes were not fast and were easily avoided. However, the evasive action not only slowed the advance of the Japanese warships but also created confusion. Admiral Kurita himself said, "Major units [warships] were separating all the time because of the destroyer torpedo attacks." He realized that he was losing more tactical control every time his ships had to turn to avoid Taffy 3's torpedoes.
>
> […]Yamato turned away to evade the torpedoes, heading north and keeping on that course for about 10 minutes. This effectively took Yamato out of the fight.

You can read all the details in the article I'm quoting from, but I want to focus on the destroyer escorts – *Dennis, John C. Butler, Raymond, Samuel B. Roberts*.

More:

> Kurita was becoming convinced that he was facing a major American task force, not just a few escort carriers and destroyers. However, the battle was far from over. At about the same time that Hoel was firing her torpedoes at Haguro,

> Sprague ordered his destroyer escorts to begin their runs at Kurita's warships: "Little Wolves form up for a second attack," he barked. "Wolves" was code for the destroyers, while the radio call sign for the destroyer escorts was "Little Wolves." So far, the destroyer escorts had been assigned almost exclusively to antisubmarine patrols. Torpedo attacks against cruisers and battleships were something new to Taffy 3's Little Wolves.
>
> They threw themselves into the task. Raymond took on Haguro, the leading Japanese cruiser. Just before 8 am, she launched three torpedoes at a range of about 6,000 yards. Haguro turned to avoid them while Raymond changed course and got away from the scene as quickly as possible.
>
> Dennis followed the same course of action. She fired her torpedoes at the nearest Japanese cruiser, either Chokai or Tone, and turned sharply to the southwest. At about 8:10, Dennis opened fire with her after 5-inch battery on a cruiser that was already under air attack.

Robert Copeland told the crew of the Samuel B. Roberts:

> We're making a torpedo run. The outcome is doubtful, but we will do our duty.

They set off on their torpedo run, charging the Takeo-class heavy cruiser Chokai. The Roberts launched 3 torpedoes, and one scored a direct hit on the Chokai's stern, contributing to damage that would eventually sink her. The little destroyer got so close to the Chokai that her big 8 inch guns could not lower far enough to hit the Roberts.

On her way back to the escort carriers, the Roberts encountered the Chikuma, a Tone-class heavy cruiser. The Roberts engaged in a running gun battle with the heavy cruiser, firing off over 600 5 inch shells at the much larger ship. She destroyed one of the Chikuma's gun turrets and set fires all over the superstructure of the heavy cruiser. Japanese heavy cruisers and battleships fired at the Roberts. The Kongo, a Kongo-class battleship, hit the Roberts several times below the water line. Copeland gave the order to abandon ship, and the Roberts sunk a bit later, still under fire from larger Japanese ships. 90 of her crew perished, and 120 escaped on life rafts.

Copeland had broadcast this message to his crew before the battle:

> This will be a fight against overwhelming odds from which survival cannot be expected. We will do what damage we can.

And here is a short 12-minute animation that shows what happened in the battle:

In Fredericksburg, TX, at the National Museum of the Pacific War, there is a wonderful movie that shows the whole battle. I've been there.

Since this is Memorial Day, I want to highlight the American casualties of the Battle off Samar:

- 2 escort carriers sunk
- 2 destroyers sunk

- 1 destroyer escort sunk
- 23 aircraft lost
- 4 escort carriers damaged
- 1 destroyer damaged
- 2 destroyer escorts damaged
- 1,161 killed and missing
- 913 wounded

The casualty list would have been a lot worse, if not for the bravery of the pilots, and the crews of the destroyers and destroyer escorts who charged much larger ships to protect the valuable escort carriers.

New study: left-wing extremism linked to psychopathy and narcissism

May 30, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There's an old saying that if you're not a leftist before the age of 30 then you have no heart, and if you're not a conservative after the age of 30 then you have no brain. But are leftists really big-hearted? Does the worldview of leftism really make it rational for the leftist to sacrifice their own interests in order to produce good results for other people? Or is there something else going on?

A new study published in the peer-reviewed journal Current Psychology was reported in the New York Post:

> Left-wing extremism is linked to toxic, psychopathic tendencies and narcissism, according to a new study published to the peer-reviewed journal Current Psychology.
>
> "Based on existing research, we expected individuals with higher levels of left-wing authoritarianism to also report higher levels of narcissism," the authors wrote.
>
> As result of the new data, study authors Ann Krispenz and Alex Bertrams have coined a new term for such psychological behavior: the "dark-ego-vehicle principle."
>
> "According to this principle, individuals with dark personalities — such as high narcissistic and psychopathic traits — are attracted to certain forms of political and social activism which they can use as a vehicle to satisfy their own ego-focused needs instead of actually aiming at social justice and equality," they told PsyPost.

Advocating for left-wing activism isn't being done to get results – it's just being done for personal gain:

> "In particular, certain forms of activism might provide them with opportunities for positive self-presentation and displays of moral superiority, to gain social status, to dominate others, and to engage in social conflicts and aggression to satisfy their need for thrill seeking."
>
> […]Beyond using any means necessary, people of privileged backgrounds who are aligned with LWA often use their narcissism to make activism solely about themselves instead of achieving social equality for struggling groups.
>
> […]"As grandiose narcissists typically desire fame, distinction, elevated social status and high social importance, they can be assumed to strive for influential positions that involve social visibility and outreach as well as access to financial and other resources."

Leftists aren't trying to comply with an objective standard of morality that exists independent of their own desires. For leftists, morality is just a set of social conventions. They shout their allegiance to social conventions, and advocate for trendy causes with Instagram posts, Facebook shares, and bumper stickers. That's why the BLM leaders only gave 33% of the donations they collected to charities to advance BLM goals. The rest they kept in order to buy things like million-dollar mansions and other luxuries. They say one thing to make people like them, then they do something else. And their actions are for their benefit, not any victim group. This is the morality of atheism. Do what's best for you, but paint a picture of yourself as virtuous so people think you're not self-centered.

One issue where the left is hypocritical is on gun ownership vs gun banning. The same leftists who advocate for gun bans often have private security or bodyguards. They want to tell you how they oppose gun violence, but they want armed people to protect them. Their families need to be protected by guns, just not your family.

Leftists are also hypocritical about race. If you're a black person and you blame your problems on white people, they love you. But if you're a black person, and you think that people succeed or fail based on hard work and good decisions, then they hate you. There is no racial hatred like the racial hatred that a white leftist has against black conservatives.

Remember when Democrats were all rushing around warning people to wear masks and stay inside? But they we found out that all the biggest mouths on the left were going to parties and baseball games and hair salons in private, breaking their own rules. The same things happens on climate change. The people who talk the loudest about it are the same ones flying around on private jets.

Democrat politicians are always talking about making the rich "pay their fair share", but if you look at their rates of charitable giving, it's lower than the average American. Sometimes much lower. Again, the talk says one thing, but the actions say something else. Because their goal is to be evil, but paint a picture of themselves as good.

I think it's important for people to understand that loud advocacy for left-wing policies can often be a sign of mental illness. People who want to produce good results are not typically in front of cameras shouting out their virtue. But you'll have to look far and wide to find a leftist who achieves a good result for someone else at their own expense.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

May 31, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining the outline of the podcast.

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other

examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

How much does illegal immigration cost Americans who are here legally?

June 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, I have some good news for listeners of Knight and Rose. First, we will have a new episode for you coming out this Saturday around noon. Rose still sounds a bit sick in it, but we found out what was causing her to be sick, and we are working on eliminating it. But for today's post, I just wanted to write something up that I could refer back to if I ever had to answer why I like a secure border.

So, I went looking for a recent article about the costs of illegal immigration, and I found this article from The Daily Signal, written by Erin Dwinell. He is the senior research associate with The Heritage Foundation's Border Security and Immigration Center.

He writes:

> Annually, illegal immigration now costs taxpayers billions of dollars a year. For instance, in states far away from the southern border like Illinois, that cost was $4.59 billion in 2022. That's $930 per household. Every year.
>
> […]Border communities have long been overwhelmed under these policies. The crisis now costs California $21.76 billion and Texas $8.88 billion annually in education, health care, law enforcement and criminal justice system costs, welfare expenditures, and more. Border states are often the subject of shocking reports of epidemics of violent attacks, taxpayers footing the bill for illegal aliens' health care costs, and increased property destruction.

It's not just border states. A lot of states are run by Democrats and they refuse to enforce immigration policies. The voters in these blue states want to be seen as tolerant and generous. But there's a price to pay:

> At a rate of $65,116 per alien, New York City Mayor Eric Adams estimates his city will need to spend $2.8 billion in the next fiscal year to deal with the rapid influx.

The costs are for things like health care, education, state and local government benefits, legal representation, etc. Boy, that sure is a lot of money just to be able to virtue signal to the rest of America about how generous you are.

But the funny thing is, Democrat voters aren't actually generous. They talk about being generous, but when the bill comes due, they don't want to pay it. As I blogged about recently, leftism is mostly about loudly talking about being on board with the latest thing. It's a social activity. People say whatever they have to say in order to seem virtuous, as long as it doesn't cost them anything.

And that's what we see when illegals arrive in blue states:

> Florida Gov. DeSantis followed through on his promise to drop off illegal immigrants in progressive states, sending two planes full of migrants to Martha's

> Vineyard on Wednesday.
>
> A video provided to Fox News Digital shows the migrants deplaned at Martha's Vineyard Airport in Massachusetts.
>
> "If you have folks who are inclined to think Florida is a good place [to settle], our message to them is we are not a sanctuary state, and it's better to be able to go to a sanctuary jurisdiction," DeSantis told a crowd Thursday afternoon.
>
> "And yes, we will help facilitate that transport for you to be able to go to greener pastures," he added.
>
> […]The migrants boarded a bus Friday that departed the liberal island haven and arrived at Joint Base Cape Cod, where Republican Gov. Charlie Baker opened a shelter.

Sadly, the Democrats deported all of their illegal props at the local military base, and last I heard, they were planning to build a wall, like the MULTIPLE walls around Barack Obama's house.

It's not just Martha's Vineyard thinks that illegal immigrants should be welcomed in, then immediately deported. It's Chicago, Illinois – one of the most progressive cities in America.

The New York Post reports:

> Chicago residents condemned local leadership last week for plans to house illegal immigrants in a shuttered high school in the neighborhood.
>
> Chicago is one of many cities overwhelmed by illegal immigrants seeking asylum amid crisis at America's southern border.
>
> During a May 4 community meeting at South Shore International College Preparatory High School, local residents expressed their outrage at the proposal of housing hundreds of migrants in an already struggling area.

Again, remember that study I blogged about. The "morality" of the secular left is simple. Talk and talk and talk about loving your fellow man. As long as it doesn't cost you anything, personally. We have to get better at understanding that people who talk about the poor are just serving themselves. The people who say "help the poor" don't help the poor themselves. The people who say "don't judge" say that because they don't want you to judge them. It's just selfishness.

It's important to understand that the secular left doesn't intend to pay any of the costs suggested by their generous talk. They expect YOU to pay for their virtue-signaling. That's why we must never let them win elections.

Watch Daily Wire's "What is a Woman?" documentary for FREE all weekend

June 2, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There was some interesting controversy at Twitter on Thursday night. Daily Wire had arranged to offer their "What is a Woman?" movie for free on Twitter for 24 hours, starting at 8 PM Eastern on Thursday night. But they ran into some trouble with some progressive employees at Twitter, who censored it. But now it's back. I have the link, and the story about what happened.

The link to the documentary.

> It's the movie they really don't want you to see: #WhatIsAWoman?
>
> Watch the explosive documentary starring @MattWalshBlog FREE on Twitter for 24 hrs. https://t.co/qDi7thCNid
>
> — Daily Wire (@realDailyWire) June 2, 2023

The story, from Daily Wire:

> Twitter restricted the launch of The Daily Wire's hit documentary "What Is A Woman?" on the platform Thursday evening after Elon Musk, the company's owner, said earlier in the day that attempts to restrict the film were a "mistake" and would be "fixed."
>
> Daily Wire co-CEO Jeremy Boreing revealed in a lengthy Twitter thread Thursday morning that Twitter had canceled a deal to stream "What Is A Woman?" and "would no longer provide us any support and would actually limit the reach of the film and label it as 'hateful conduct' because of 'misgendering.'"
>
> "Specifically: In the film, a father refers to his 14-year-old daughter as 'her,' and a store owner uses the 'wrong' pronoun in a confrontation with a transgender woman," Boreing said.
>
> Musk responded to Boreing's Twitter thread by saying that "this was a mistake by many people at Twitter," adding that the streaming "is definitely allowed."
>
> However, when the entire hour-and-a-half documentary was uploaded to Twitter at 8:13 p.m., the film was quickly restricted and received a label that read: "Visibility Limited. This Tweet may violate Twitter's rules against Hateful Conduct."

Who could have done this inside of Twitter. Well, although Twitter is a software company, they hire a lot of progressive people. In America, we give a lot of student loans to people who want to study useless, worthless degrees. Then when they get out, with tens of thousands of student loan debt, and a worthless degree, they go work for woke companies like Twitter. They have a lot of confidence in themselves, but not a lot of

ability to produce results.

Look:

> Ella Irwin, the head of Twitter's trust and safety department — the department that appears to have been responsible for the label being applied — abruptly resigned from the company Thursday afternoon. Her internal Slack account was quickly deactivated by the company, Fortune reported.
>
> The designation on the film blocked Twitter users from being able to retweet or share the video with their audiences. The video garnered 5,000+ retweets/quote retweets in just a couple of minutes after being published before it was restricted.
>
> "That was fast," Boreing responded. "Even after @elonmusk said Twitter's threat to label What Is A Woman 'hateful conduct' and to throttle the film's reach was a mistake, Twitter did that very thing instantly upon the film going live."

The tweet still has a "hate speech" warning as of my time of writing (Thursday night – I write all my posts the night before and schedule them all for 10 AM Eastern) and you can't retweet it.

Well, you better watch this movie for free while you can. I've seen it, and it's great. You will not regret watching it. My favorite scenes: his interviews of the Planned Parenthood woman, and the LGBT male professor. Absolutely perfect.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 32: Was Jesus a Socialist, Part 3

June 3, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 32 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose conclude our discussion about Christianity and economics. We discuss whether socialism or free enterprise is better for Christian liberties and life plans. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

PLEASE NOTE: During this episode, Rose was still stick and coughing a lot. After an air duct cleaning and removing all the very old carpet in her house, she is now completely cured. She has a couple of conference talks next week, (a keynote and a breakout) that she needs to work on. We will try to fit a recording in this week so you have one for next week.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 32:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose look at history and discuss whether socialism has been good for Christians. We discuss whether successful European countries are good examples of socialism. We discuss whether high tax rates and government ownership of businesses has been good for Christians in Canada. We then turn to the free market system, and discuss whether it is any better for Christians. Finally, we answer objections to the free market system. This is the third episode of a three-part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

References:

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- Money, Greed, and God 10th Anniversary Edition: The Christian Case for Free

Enterprise by Jay Richards
- Common Sense Economics: What Everyone Should Know About Wealth and Prosperity by James Gwartney, Richard Stroup,Dwight Lee, Tawni Ferrarini, and Joseph Calhoun
- The Maker Versus the Takers: What Jesus Really Said About Social Justice and Economics by Jerry Bowyer
- The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution by Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus

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What can Christians learn from the bravest naval aviator at the Battle of Midway?

June 4, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been reading lots of books about the World War II battles in the Pacific theater lately, and I wanted to write a post about one of the heroes I found who was the most compelling to me. You may have seen him in the old 1976 Midway movie or the new 2019 Midway movie. But neither movie tells the full story. The man I am talking about is Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.

John Waldron was the leader of the torpedo bomber squadron on the Hornet. This squadron was composed of outdated and slow Devastator torpedo bombers, armed with the Mark 13 Mod 1 torpedoes, which malfunctioned about 90% of the time.

I found an article on the Federalist that tells the story of John Waldron:

> Now there are countless men and woman who deserve to be singled out for their valor, but with the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Midway just around the corner, I thought it would be appropriate to call your attention to one of the bravest men who ever lived. A man who, knowing he was facing certain death, led the first attack against the Japanese aircraft carriers and played a direct role in what would be a decisive victory for the United States, and a defeat from which Japan would never recover. That man was Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.
>
> Now for those who don't know, the Battle of Midway was the turning point in the Pacific theater. The Japanese had an elaborate plan that involved attacking the U.S. base on Midway Island in order to lure the Americans into a battle which the Japanese High command felt their experience and tactics would overwhelm and annihilate the American fleet. With no significant U.S. naval presence, Hawaii and the entire West Coast would be at risk of invasion. But the Americans broke the Japanese code and set a trap of their own – hoping to destroy their enemy's carriers and thereby establish U.S. dominance in the Pacific. And that was exactly what happened : The U.S. fleet surprised the Japanese, sank their four carriers, and took the first real step to winning the Second World War.
>
> John Waldron was 42 years old when the *USS Hornet* steamed towards Midway on June 1st, 1942. Born and raised on a reservation in South Dakota, he had never seen the ocean until he attended the Naval Academy. It wasn't long after he graduated that he moved into naval aviation. He had been assigned to be the squadron leader of the *Hornet's* torpedo bombers in late 1941 and had been drilling his men tirelessly ever since. Waldron had the reputation of a tough as nails, no-nonsense commander. Not surprising, since Waldron was a direct descendant of the warriors from the Oglala Lakota tribe – part of the Great Sioux Nation. The tough skin he developed came from decades of derision from his peers over his meager beginnings, and from the racism directed at his Native

> American heritage. Waldron didn't care what anyone thought of him – all he wanted to do was fight for his country. He was a natural leader and his men would follow him into the gates of Hell, which, as fate would have it, is exactly what they would do in the upcoming battle.
>
> On the morning of June 4th, the Americans were ready to spring their trap, but in the preflight briefing aboard the *Hornet* there was a problem. Stanhope Ring, who was in command of the carrier's air group, directed his pilots to head northwest of the last reported position of the Japanese fleet. Waldron disagreed with this decision, feeling that they should head in the exact direction of that last sighting. He wasn't shy about expressing this opinion, much the displeasure of Ring. Waldron continued to lobby his superior officer several times after the briefing ended, but to no avail.

The Federalist article doesn't talk much about Stanhope Ring, but the book I just finished called "The Battle of Midway" by Craig L. Symonds did. Ring was a very tall, good-looking, and white officer who had breezed up the chain of command thanks to his good looks and confident manner. He loved to show off for cameras, and pull rank on subordinates. He was too proud to admit that Waldron was right in front of the other pilots.

More:

> The air strike force took off from the deck of the *Hornet* – fighters, dive bombers, and the 15 planes in Waldron's torpedo squadron. This force would be joined in the air by similar strike forces from the other U.S. carriers – the *Yorktown* and the *Enterprise*. Shortly after the Hornet's air group was airborne, Waldron couldn't contain his anger anymore. He broke radio silence to tell Ring that they were headed in the wrong direction. He repeated that comment and Ring issued a terse reply that he was in charge of this group and to stay the hell off the radio. Waldron waited a couple of minutes before replying "The hell with you" and peeled his squadron off and headed due west, where he felt the Japanese fleet was.
>
> Less than an hour later, Waldron was proved right. He had led his squadron on a direct line to the enemy. Waldron broke radio silence again to signal to Ring that he had found the fleet, but Ring and the rest of the *Hornet's* planes were too far away to hear. So now, Waldron was faced with a brutal decision. If he went in to attack, he would do so without any fighter protection, and they'd be totally at the mercy of the Japanese fighters. To make matters worse, the U.S. planes (Douglas Devastators) were hopelessly outdated aircraft – their top speed was about a third of what the Japanese fighters could do. They had hoped to get the newer Grumman Avengers, but the *Hornet* had left Pearl Harbor before they had arrived from the mainland. All of this meant that Waldron and Torpedo 8 were looking at a suicidal attack run. […]Waldron got on the radio again and told his men "We will go in. We won't turn back. Former strategy cannot be used. We will attack. Good luck!"

> And with that, the planes of Torpedo 8 closed up their formation and bore down on the Japanese fleet, some seven miles distant.
>
> The Japanese fighters quickly pounced on the Americans, who were going in low and slow – the only way torpedo bombers can attack. One by one the planes from Torpedo 8 were shot down. […]Every single plane in Torpedo 8 was destroyed and not one torpedo hit a Japanese ship.

Not only were the torpedo bombers of John Waldron's VT-8 (Hornet) shot down, but two more waves led by Eugene Lindsey VT-6 (Enterprise) and Edward Massey VT-3 (Yorktown) were also repulsed without a hit.

More:

> History might have viewed Waldron's attack as more insane than brave, and utterly pointless….except for what happened next. Shortly after his failed attack, the torpedo squadron from the *Enterprise* attacked the fleet – and right after that the torpedo squadron from the *Yorktown*. Both of those squadrons had devastating casualties as well (10 of 14 planes lost and 10 of 12 respectively) without inflicting any damage on any Japanese ship. But these three attacks in succession drew the Japanese fighter cover down so low, that it left their carriers exposed to dive bomber attacks. It also burned up a lot of fuel for the fighters, who now needed to land before they could continue their defense of the fleet. The attacks also forced the Japanese carriers into defensive maneuvers, so they were unable to land any planes or launch any for a strike on the American carriers.

In addition to using up their fuel and coming down to low altitude, the Japanese CAP (combat air patrol) fighters also used up most of their dangerous 20 mm ammunition. They mostly had much weaker 7.7 mm ammunition remaining when the dive bombers from the Enterprise and Yorktown arrived.

More:

> As the Japanese were trying to compose themselves after the three fierce but harmless attacks, the American dive bombers from the *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* arrived and quickly struck. Within minutes, three of the Japanese carriers were in flames – the heart of the Imperial Navy had been gutted.
>
> […]The other planes from the Hornet never found the Japanese ships. Ring kept his planes flying in that northwesterly direction until they were too low on fuel to keep going. They returned to the *Hornet* with their full payload of bombs.
>
> […]Now, there were a lot of heroes that day – some who lived and some who died, but the valor that John Waldron displayed in defying orders he knew were wrong and then attacking the enemy when he knew it meant certain death, place him on a special level. His actions directly helped the Americans win this crucial battle, which turned the tide of the war in the favor of the United States. He got

> the Navy Cross for his actions that day, but it seems astonishing to me that he wasn't awarded the Medal of Honor – he is definitely worthy of it.

You can learn more about the Battle of Midway in this helpful video:

So, here is what I wanted to say about this.

John Waldron was not properly equipped by his organization to make a difference at Midway. His planes were too old and slow, his torpedoes almost never worked. His leader was an arrogant, incompetent coward who prevented him from leading others to find and attack the actual targets. The only way he could do something to his enemy was to disobey orders and go off on his own. If he had lived, he probably would have been court-martialed for insubordination. After Waldron was shot down, every single one of the men in his squadron continued their attack until they too were all shot down. Everyone watching must have thought "what a waste of effort". It was only later that it became evident to all that what he did was necessary for the second wave to succeed.

This plaque at the United States Naval Academy Club honors the three commanders of the torpedo bomber squadrons:

Plaque honoring the Midway torpedo bomber squadron commanders

According to the Family Research Council, the plaque reads:

> The torpedo attacks of Waldron, Lindsey, and Massey had followed hard upon each other by luck. What was not luck, but the soul of the United States in action, was the willingness of the torpedo plane squadrons to go in against hopeless odds. This was the extra ounce of martial weight that in a few decisive minutes tipped the balance of history.

When I read this story, it immediately occurred to me that this is the problem that serious Christians are facing today. Parents and pastors are not equipping young people to actually make a difference. Instead of finding and fighting the real targets: atheism, radical feminism, communism, etc., all our forces have been sent on wild goose chases, so that now "Christians" are actually trying to promote the priorities of the secular left, e.g. – global warming, wealth redistribution, affirming sexual immorality, open borders,

critical race theory, etc.

The few of us who actually know how to do our jobs are poorly equipped. We are prevented from leading by organizations that are focused on feelings rather than results. We can only hope that our decision to attack against hopeless odds somehow paves the way for a second wave to succeed. It has happened before, and that’s why we should be brave and continue to engage our opponents using tools that work (philosophy of religion, evidential apologetics, scientific research, historical evidence, chastity, sobriety, self-control, good stewardship of our educations, careers and finances, effective charitable giving, self-sacrificial love, etc.).

Pre-ban study: 53% of mothers with gender-confused boys have mental illness

June 5, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Normally, on this blog, every other post is some "new study" that I can use in discussing the controversial issues of the day. A lot of the best new studies get unpublished if they go against the worldview of the secular left, for example, the famous ROGD study. (That one was later re-published). Or they don't get published at all. It's fun to see what was allowed to get published pre-ban.

Here's a study that's on PubMed, one of my favorite web sites for studies.

Abstract:

> This pilot study compared mothers of boys with gender identity disorder (GID) with mothers of normal boys to determine whether differences in psychopathology and child-rearing attitudes and practices could be identified. Results of the Diagnostic Interview for Borderlines and the Beck Depression Inventory revealed that mothers of boys with GID had more symptoms of depression and more often met the criteria for Borderline Personality Disorder than the controls. Fifty-three percent of the mothers of boys with GID compared with only 6% of controls met the diagnosis for Borderline Personality Disorder on the Diagnostic Interview for Borderlines or had symptoms of depression on the Beck Depression Inventory. Results of the Summers and Walsh Symbiosis Scale suggested that mothers of probands had child-rearing attitudes and practices that encouraged symbiosis and discouraged the development of autonomy.

Fifty-three percent of the mothers of boys with gender identity disorder were diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder or had symptoms of depression.

Now, there are concerns I have about this study. First, it's a small number of research subjects, which is understandable because back in 1991, there were not a lot of kids with gender identity disorder.

So what is Borderline Personality Disorder? Here is the description from the NIH:

> People with borderline personality disorder may experience intense mood swings and feel uncertainty about how they see themselves. Their feelings for others can change quickly, and swing from extreme closeness to extreme dislike. These changing feelings can lead to unstable relationships and emotional pain.
>
> People with borderline personality disorder also tend to view things in extremes, such as all good or all bad. Their interests and values can change quickly, and they may act impulsively or recklessly.

I don't know much about mental illness, but I've been told never to date (much less marry) someone with BPD, because it is the most serious mental illness.

This finding from the study is interesting to me, because it suggests a reason why we are seeing this enormous surge in LGBT identification among young people. Sure, there is peer pressure, that's what the study on ROGD was about. But now it suggests a chain between radical feminism, the Sexual Revolution, the decline of women's happiness, and their transgender children.

We know for certain that women are experiencing far greater unhappiness after radical feminism became widespread, because they don't like the goodies of radical feminism – promiscuity, abortion, careers, etc. – as much as they liked being married to a good man, and being a stay-at-home mother.

Daily Wire noted this in 2017:

> According to a recent study from Yale University researchers, liberated, college educated women are freezing their eggs because they can't find a man to marry and have children with before their natural childbearing years expire. In the U.K., for instance, one in five women is childless when their natural reproductive years expires, as opposed to one in ten women a mere generation prior.
>
> So what's to blame for this onslaught of college-educated yet terribly empty women?
>
> The short answer is feminism.

The short answer is feminism, because although women claim that it's men's fault for not marrying them, no man with a brain would ever marry a feminist. It's actually become too dangerous for men to even date feminists. I don't even talk to them. The character traits that go with the feminist worldview are not just anti-marriage, they're dangerous to men. Women who blame the bad results of their own choices on men are not safe to even speak to.

And as I've noted before, the decline of marriage is causing a massive spike in mental illness. Not in conservative women – just in progressive women.

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

Here’s the part of the data I thought was most interesting:

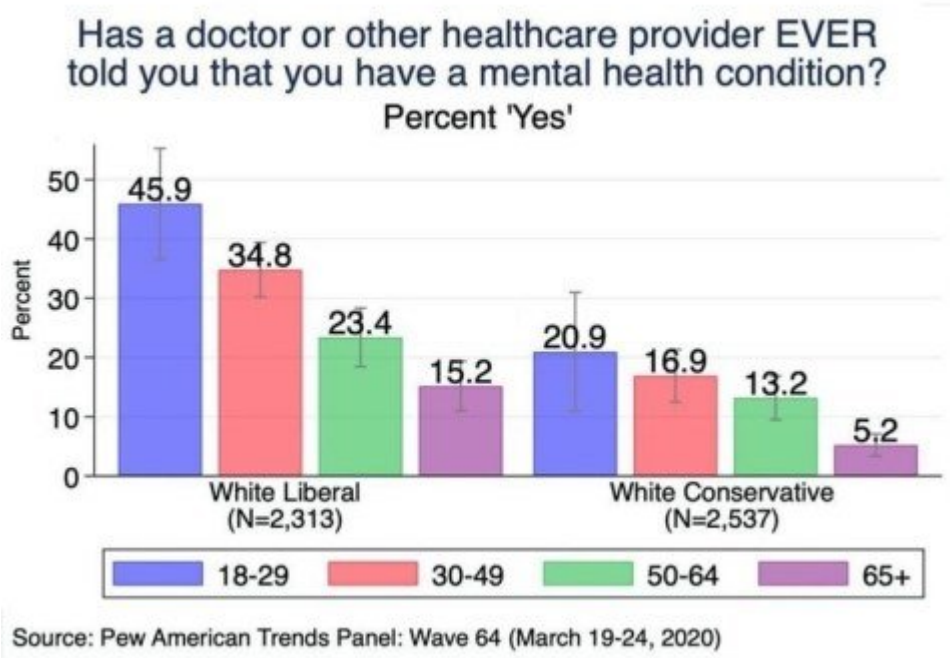

It turns out that marriage accounts for a lot of women’s happiness. But by allying themselves with radical feminism, women have made themselves totally unattractive to marriage-minded men. I think that the explosion of kids with gender identity disorder is just one of the ways that feminism is working itself out.

Meet four heroes of the D-Day invasion of Normandy on June 6th, 1944

June 6, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought it might be a good idea to write up something about D-Day in order to help people understand some of our military history, and to put the spotlight on some real heroes. I don't regard artists, athletes, dancers, singers, actors, or other celebrities as heroes. It really alarms me that so many people know more about these fake heroes than they do about real ones.

Weakness emboldens aggressors

For one thing, many people don't understand how British and American libertarian isolationism made World War 2 into a much bigger mess than it needed to be. As historian Victor Davis Hanson explains in the lecture I linked below, the Allied nations were much stronger and better equipped than the Axis nations before the war started. The Axis nations developed better weapons after the war started. But Germany and Japan didn't think that the Allied nations would do anything if they were aggressive. We know this from their writings and correspondence. They thought that British and Americans were just too scared of war to stop them.

Germany and Japan tested their hypothesis out by re-arming and annexing territory from their neighbors. Britain and America were led by libertarian isolationists, so they didn't fight back. The aggressors correctly understood that libertarian isolationists didn't have the will to oppose them, even if they were weaker than the Allies. But the more they re-armed and annexed territory, the stronger they became. The Allied nations waited too long to confront them. And that's why World War 2 was much harder to win than it needed to be.

Here's a very good lecture about the causes of World War 2 by an actual military historian, Victor Davis Hanson:

So, that's the first point I wanted to make: libertarian isolationism causes wars. Although libertarians claim to oppose war, they actually cause war, due to their weakness in the face of evil. So who stops wars? People who favor a strong defense, and show a willingness to fight back against aggression are the ones who REALLY oppose wars. This is called "peace through strength", and you can see it in action in the Cold War, where Ronald Reagan defeated the Soviet Union by making their aggression costly.

Heroes of D-Day

My second concern was to promote the real heroes of D-Day, over the fictional heroes of movies, fiction, music, dancing, sports, and other entertainment nonsense.

Here are the four heroes I chose:

- Major John Howard
- Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort
- Brigadier General Norman Cota
- Major Richard Winters

Let's take a look at each of them.

John Howard

Major John Howard led elements of the British 6th Airborne Division to take two vital bridges southeast of Sword beach. He did this in order to prevent German socialist counterattacks coming from the east. After they took the bridges, they had to repulse German tanks with nothing more than their useless PIAT (Projector Infantry Anti-Tank) grenade launchers. The PIAT was nothing more than a grenade launcher powered by a coiled spring. It was very inaccurate, and only effective to 50 yards. But that's all the British paratroops had to stop tanks, and they made it work. You can read about him in this book by Stephen E. Ambrose, entitled: "Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944". This New York Times article tells the story in brief. He also is played by Richard Todd in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Benjamin Vandervoort

Lt. Col. Ben Vandervoort served with the 82nd Airborne Division. I read about how he lead an infantry attack against German Tiger tanks (!) and infantry in Stephen E. Ambrose's book "Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany". Ben Vandervoort broke his ankle during the D-Day landing, but he insisted that the medic just "lace it up tight" so that he could supervise the attacking

and holding of Ste. Mere Eglise, southwest of Utah beach, against a vastly superior enemy force. This article tells about how he defended against elite German SS infantry and heavy Tiger tanks at Trois-Ponts, during the Battle of the Bulge. He was outgunned and outnumbered 20 to 1, and had just a few lightly-armed soldiers, two weak 57mm anti-tank guns and some bazookas. He is portrayed by John Wayne in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Norman Cota

Brig. General Norman Cota is my favorite person in World War 2. At 51 years old, he nevertheless landed at D-Day, and rallied terrified Army Rangers to follow him up the bluff, by telling them that Rangers ought to lead the way. "Rangers Lead The Way" later became the motto of the Army Rangers. He always led from the front, demonstrating how to attack a German machine gun position in a farmhouse to a group of American soldiers who were pinned down. He actually grabbed a bunch of grenades and led the assault team against a heavy machine gun! You can read about him in this short article and in Stephen E. Ambrose's "D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II". He is portrayed by Robert Mitchum in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Richard Winters

Major Richard Winters served in the 101st Airborne Division. Winters led an assault against a superior force of heavy machine guns and 105mm field guns. His tactics were so brilliant that they are still studied at West Point today. You can see Richard Winters and Carwood Lipton in the HBO "Band of Brothers" series, or read this book by Stephen E. Ambrose entitled "Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne, from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest", which is the basis for that series.

I hope this convinces you that military heroes are far more important than the "heroes" of fiction and entertainment. It's alarming to me that people invest more and have more respect for characters in Hollywood science fiction movies, and other such make-believe nonsense. We need to be rooted in reality. In reality, men who fight and die fighting evil to protect your freedoms are the real heroes. People who take military history seriously are able to give respect and gratitude where it is due – a very important part of being a mature, moral human being.

New York Times: LGBT youth have greater approval, but mental health is “significantly worse”

June 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend shared this article with me, and cleverly archived it so I could link to it from my blog. I had a whole bunch of wonderful stories to blog about, but this one is the best. Do you know how the secular left looks at the poor mental health of LGBT youth, and asserts (without evidence) that more acceptance would make those outcomes better? Turns out the exact opposite is true.

Here’s the left-wing extremist New York Times, dated June 3rd, 2023:

> For L.G.B.T.Q. teenagers, high school is a much more accepting place than even a decade ago. They change their pronouns, go to school dances with people of the same gender, and are more likely than any previous generation to openly identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or otherwise queer.
>
> […]Yet there is a darker side. Even as they are increasingly welcomed by peers, their mental health is significantly worse than that of heterosexual young people.
>
> […]Their experiences highlight a “paradoxical finding,” as researchers have described it: Even as social inclusion for young L.G.B.T.Q. people has grown, large health disparities between them and their non-L.G.B.T.Q. peers have not shrunk.

The article talks about the strongest reasons why young people embrace LGBT:

1. there are pro-LGBT TV shows, movies, music.
2. famous pro athletes identify as LGBT
3. the Supreme Court overturned legislation passed by elected legislators
4. “everyone knows someone who is LGBT”
5. social media supports LGBT
6. big corporations support LGBT

Growing up in the situation I was in – poverty, different skin color, two working parents, public schools run by secular leftists – I wasn’t much interested in feeling good in the moment. I wanted an accurate view of the battlefield so I could make good decisions, and get out of the mess I was born into. I read the Bible, Shakespeare and my parents’ textbooks from their night classes at the local universities.

My approach was very different from the secular left. They don’t care about truth, or making good decisions to get good results. They care about living in the moment. They want to give in to their desires now, and point fingers later. They want to borrow money and run up expenses now, and pass the bill to someone else later. They are reckless and irresponsible. And they feel entitled to the life outcomes of those detestable Christians later. But they can’t be bothered to behave like those detestable Christians right now.

People who are LGBT are not facing little to no disagreement or disapproval:

> A recent survey by The New York Times and Morning Consult of 1,574 young adults found that people ages 18 to 28 — who mostly graduated from high school since 2013 — were significantly more likely to know L.G.B.T.Q. students in school than those a decade older, who were teenagers in the 2000s.
>
> The younger group was twice as likely to report knowing at least one transgender student, and three times as likely to have known three or more. Four in 10 said they knew numerous gay, lesbian or bisexual people in high school, compared with a quarter of the older group.
>
> And while both groups reported hearing the words “gay” and “queer” used negatively at similar rates — a data point reflected in interviews with teenagers, who say they still hear “that’s so gay” in school hallways — the younger graduates were significantly more likely to hear those words used in a positive light, too. They were also more likely to have a gay-straight alliance or similar club at their school.
>
> This reflects other data that has found that verbal harassment of L.G.B.T.Q. teenagers declined during the 2010s, while support for same-sex marriage became the norm among young people.

And finally:

> “You’re at the point among young adults where almost all these measures of acceptance are in the high 80s, low 90s,” said Jeff Jones, a senior editor who oversees research at Gallup. “It’s basically getting toward a consensus.”

Sounds wonderful for the secular left. They got the morality of the Bible removed from society. Young people today don’t even know what the Bible teaches are dating, relationships, marriage, sexuality, etc. All they know is TV shows, celebrities, entertainers, athletes, and what their public school teachers tell them.

Just one little problem. Secular leftists don’t get to determine what is objectively right and wrong. In a God-designed universe, God decides what works, and what doesn’t work. And no amount of community, peer-approval, propaganda, etc. is going to overrule God’s design for his creatures.

More:

> As acceptance has grown, though, the mental health of queer youth has continued to suffer. Reported rates of mental health problems among all young people have been rising for the last decade, but non-heterosexual students face far higher rates than straight students.
>
> About 70 percent of high school students who identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual reported persistent sadness, according to recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, twice the rate of their heterosexual peers. One in five attempted suicide in the past year, nearly four times the rate of straight

> young people. (The C.D.C. does not track the mental health of transgender youth, but other data shows that roughly half had considered suicide in the past year.)

The New York Times tries to blame these numbers on being in a minority group. But Bible-believing Christians who embrace chastity, marriage, parenting and homeschooling are also a “minority group”. We don’t run the show any more. In fact, we’re the only minority that is still able to be targeted for ridicule and persecution, even by the police and government. But we also don’t have mental illnesses like the poor young people who believed the lies of the secular left, either. I wonder why that is. Could it be that chastity, marriage, parenting and homeschooling are morally right, whether anyone thinks it is or not? Could it be that these activities are self-evidently moral, and therefore just doing them makes the approval and celebration of other people completely unnecessary? For some behaviors, having an audience of One is enough.

Nanotechnology expert Dr. James Tour assesses origin of life research

June 8, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

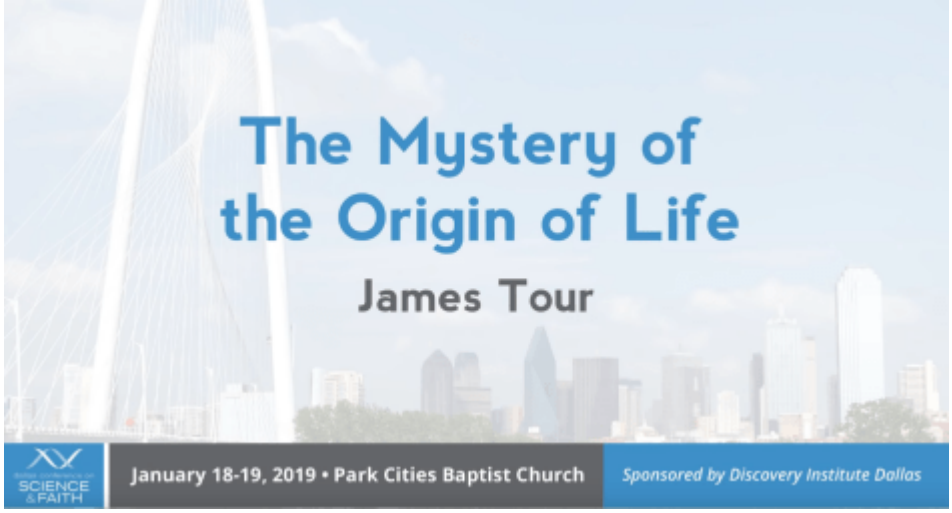

What is involved in creating life from non-life?

Recently, I watched lectures from a recent Science and Faith Conference that occurred at Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. And I thought that Dr. James Tour's talk on origin of life research was the best. So let's see his bio, then we'll take a look at his lecture.

Dr. James Tour:

> James M. Tour, a synthetic organic chemist, received his Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Syracuse University, his Ph.D. in synthetic organic and organometallic chemistry from Purdue University, and postdoctoral training in synthetic organic chemistry at the University of Wisconsin and Stanford University.
>
> After spending 11 years on the faculty of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of South Carolina, he joined the Center for Nanoscale Science and Technology at Rice University in 1999 where he is presently the T. T. and W. F. Chao Professor of Chemistry, Professor of Computer Science, and Professor of Materials Science and NanoEngineering.
>
> Tour's scientific research areas include nanoelectronics, graphene electronics, silicon oxide electronics, carbon nanovectors for medical applications, green carbon research for enhanced oil recovery and environmentally friendly oil and gas extraction, graphene photovoltaics, carbon supercapacitors, lithium ion batteries, CO2 capture, water splitting to H2 and O2, water purification, carbon nanotube and graphene synthetic modifications, graphene oxide, carbon composites, hydrogen storage on nanoengineered carbon scaffolds, and synthesis of single-molecule nanomachines which includes molecular motors and nanocars.

> […]Tour has over 650 research publications and over 120 patents.

As he explains in the lecture, his research has frequently been used in the private sector to solve real world problems.

His lecture:

Evolution News had a short blurb of the lecture:

> Rice University chemist James Tour almost defies description in a video now up of his amazing presentation at Discovery Institute's 2019 Dallas Conference on Science and Faith.
>
> At one point he asks for a show of hands of fellow synthetic chemists in the (large) audience. It turns out there are a couple and he demands that they stand up and call him a liar if anything he says isn't true. His message is an alternatively scathing and hilarious indictment of claims from the origin-of-life studies community. Dr. Tour's work in nanotechnology, an ulta-ultra-painstaking field, provides the backdrop for his demonstration that origins scientists don't have the slightest idea how the first life was somehow naturally synthesized by blind, mindless forces.
>
> The field hasn't advanced an inch in 60-plus years. "Everyone's clueless on this but no one wants to admit it." Great scientists writing in the highest profile science journals are "lying to you" when they assert otherwise. "Show me the chemistry" of abiogenesis, he says. "It's not there."
>
> Jim Tour is without parallel. Truly, I'd love to hear from our materialist critics how they would answer any of this.

At the conference, Tour's lecture was accompanied by other great lectures on the origin of the universe and also the Cambrian explosion by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. Jay Richards spoke on fine-tuning and habitability. You can find the links to those lectures on the Discovery Institute YouTube channel.

What we liked about the lecture by Dr. James Tour was that he did not dumb down the content for a church audience. I was sending screen captures of his slides and short video clips to my best friend Dina while I watched it. I was very excited to see someone so accomplished in his research and entrepreneurship being honest with the laypeople in the church. And I loved the church for letting him speak like a scientist. I didn't understand everything he was saying about the science, but I always understood the point he was trying to make.

Let this lecture encourage to raise your children to focus on science, math, engineering and technology, because you can clearly see the value that we have in Dr. James Tour. We need hundreds more scientists who go to the best schools and make a difference.

I really hope that some of the younger Christians will understand the importance of making scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer more widely known. Learn the areas of science where God's existence can be detected, and put the time in learning how

to make those arguments.

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer explains intelligent design for Prager University

June 9, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had some very good conversations during the Christmas break, and some of them were about the existence of God and intelligent design. I thought it might be a good idea to help everyone to get an overview of the evidence for a creator and designer using short videos. Dr. Stephen C. Meyer is probably the best author, speaker and debater on these issues, so here is his overview.

It's a series of five 5-minute videos published by Prager University.

Here's number 1: Are Religion And Science In Conflict?

Description:

> Does belief in God get in the way of science? The idea that science and religion are inevitably in conflict is a popular way of thinking today. But the history of science tells a different story.

Here's number 2: How Did The Universe Begin?

Description:

> Was the universe always here, or did it have a beginning? If so, how did it start? Mankind has debated these questions for centuries and has only recently begun to find some answers. And those answers may point to some even more intriguing conclusions.

Here's number 3: Aliens, The Multiverse, Or God?

Description:

> Even staunch Darwinists have acknowledged that life in the universe displays an appearance of design, rather than being created out of random chance. If that's true, where did that design come from? In other words, does a design require a designer?

Here's number 4: What Is Intelligent Design?

Description:

> Chances are if you've heard anything about intelligent design, you've heard that it's faith-based, not science-based. Is that true? Or does modern science, in fact, point us in the direction of a designing intelligence?

Here's number 5: What's Wrong With Atheism?

Description:

> Is there any meaning to life? Or is life nothing more than a cosmic accident? Scientific atheists claim the latter, but ironically, it's science itself that suggests the former.

If this looks interesting to you, you should check out Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's three-book series on creation and design. The first book talks about the origin of life. The second book talks about the fossil record. The third book talks about the origin of the universe, and cosmic fine-tuning.

These videos are just an introduction to these arguments. To really understand the details, you have to read deeply about them. That's why these books are necessary. Christians can only be persuasive when they understand this material well.

Matt Walsh report: transgender health care providers rubber stamp approvals

June 10, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Matt Walsh made some big news this week when he published video of a zoom call between his producer (undercover) and a transgender health care provider. The producer was able to to easily get written material that would satisfy insurance companies. The provider was using templates and just plugging in a few specifics, for each different patient. It took 22 minutes. Why so fast? For the money.

Here's the article from Daily Wire:

> Some of the nation's largest transgender "health care" providers are rubber-stamping approvals for life-altering sex-change procedures — and even falsely representing health diagnoses of patients — so insurance companies will cover the medical expenses, Daily Wire host Matt Walsh revealed in a tweet thread Wednesday.
>
> In an undercover investigation, Walsh and his team discovered how easy it is to get approved for sex-change surgery when one of the host's producers got a thumbs up for an orchiectomy — a procedure to remove testicles — after just a 22-minute virtual appointment with Plume, the largest transgender health care provider in the U.S.
>
> Walsh's producer Gregg Re got scheduled for a video call with Plume after providing a fake name on an intake form. Re made it clear that he had *not* been experiencing gender dysphoria for six months or more, he mispronounced the name of the surgery he wanted, and he said he didn't know what effect the surgery would have on him. Yet, Plume's nurse practitioner told Re "she wanted to write the most 'solid' letter possible to justify surgery," Walsh explained.

Why? For the money:

> Walsh said that in a text message to Re, Plume explained that the letters of recommendation are sent using a template based on standards provided by the radical World Professional Association for Transgender Health, also known as WPATH. Plume sells letters of recommendation for $150 to those seeking transgender surgeries.

Just get the money from the insurance companies:

> Folx, another popular transgender telehealth service, also approves patients for sex-change procedures even if they are not diagnosed with "gender dysphoria," according to Walsh.
>
> "Folx, which provides letters authorizing surgeries for a nominal fee, goes on to admit that 'it's quite possible' patients will receive a letter indicating a gender

> dysphoria diagnosis, even though they ‘really do not have dysphoria,’” Walsh noted. “We reached out to Folx about this. A staff member confirmed that a ‘diagnosis’ of gender dysphoria — with the word ‘diagnosis’ in scare quotes — is a ‘requirement’ for insurance purposes, even if it ‘doesn’t apply.’”

It’s very interesting to think about what the insurance companies will do about this, now that they understand what’s going on. But one thing is for sure – the attorneys general of several states are furious and looking to investigate and prosecute.

Many Americans today don’t really understand how all this spending of money, shifting of responsibility, recklessness, etc. will affect them. They think “don’t judge” and “be nice”. But the truth is that insurance companies only have a certain amount of money. Premiums are collected from policyholders and then used to pay out claims. If insurance companies are paying out claims for frivolous elective surgeries, then they can’t also pay out claims for other things, like broken legs and pregnancies and cancer treatment. The more society becomes reckless, the more money is taken away from the responsible people, to pay for the craziness of the irresponsible people. So all this “tolerance” will eventually hurt you. Why is health care so expensive? Partly because crazy behavior is now covered.

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalistic alternatives to the Big Bang

June 11, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture, which was given in 2004 at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

This lecture might be a little advanced for beginners, but if you stretch your mind first, you shouldn't tear anything. (Note: standard disclaimers apply if you do tear something!)

The description of the video states:

> This is quite simply one of the best lectures William Lane Craig (a philosopher of science) has given. Craig explores the origins of the universe. He argues for a beginning of the universe, while refuting scientific models like the Steady State Theory, the Oscillating Theory, Quantum Vacuum Fluctuation Model, Chaotic Inflationary Theory, Quantum Gravity Theory, String Theory, M-Theory and Cyclic Ekpyrotic Theory.

And here is the description of the lecture from Reasonable Faith:

> A Templeton Foundation lecture at the University of Colorado, Boulder, laying out the case from contemporary cosmology for the beginning of the universe and its theological implications. Includes a lengthy Q & A period which features previous critics and debate opponents of Dr. Craig who were in attendance, including Michael Tooley, Victor Stenger, and Arnold Guminski.

Craig has previously debated famous atheists Stenger and Tooley previously. And they both asked him questions in the Q&A time of this lecture. Imagine – having laid out your entire case to two people who have debated you before and who know your arguments well. What did they ask Craig, and how did he respond?

The scientific evidence

The Big Bang cosmology that Dr. Craig presents is the standard model for how the universe came into being. It is a theory based on six lines of experimental evidence.

Scientific evidence:

1. Einstein's theory of general relativity (GTR)
2. the red-shifting of light from distant galaxies implies an expanding universe
3. the cosmic background radiation (which also disproves the oscillating model of the universe)
4. the second law of thermodynamics applied to star formation theory
5. hydrogen-helium abundance predictions
6. radioactive element abundance predictions

It's probably a good idea to be familiar with these if you are presenting this argument,

because experimental science is a reliable way of knowing about reality.

Published research paper

This lecture by Dr. Craig is based on a research paper published in an astrophysics journal, and was delivered to an audience of students and faculty, including atheist physicist Victor Stenger and prominent atheist philosopher Michael Tooley, at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Here's the peer-reviewed article that the lecture is based on.

Here's the abstract:

> Both cosmology and philosophy trace their roots to the wonder felt by the ancient Greeks as they contemplated the universe. The ultimate question remains why the universe exists rather than nothing. This question led Leibniz to postulate the existence of a metaphysically necessary being, which he identified as God. Leibniz's critics, however, disputed this identification, claiming that the space-time universe itself may be the metaphysically necessary being. The discovery during this century that the universe began to exist, however, calls into question the universe's status as metaphysically necessary, since any necessary being must be eternal in its existence. Although various cosmogonic models claiming to avert the beginning of the universe predicted by the standard model have been and continue to be offered, no model involving an eternal universe has proved as plausible as the standard model. Unless we are to assert that the universe simply sprang into being uncaused out of nothing, we are thus led to Leibniz's conclusion. Several objections to inferring a supernatural cause of the origin of the universe are considered and found to be unsound.

The whole text of the article is posted online here.

FBI file: Biden linked to $5 million bribery scheme when he was vice president

June 12, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Everyone has heard about Hunter Biden's laptop, and how it contained information showing that Joe Biden was using his family members to receive bribes. But up till now, we didn't know how much "10% for the Big Guy" really was. Now we have news about a file from an FBI informant. Sadly, the same corporate news media that denied the laptop isn't talking much about the bribe story.

Here's the story from the New York Post:

> House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer says an informant file that he's seeking from the FBI links President Biden to a $5 million bribery scheme while he was vice president.
>
> Comer (R-Ky.) revealed the size of the alleged bribe for the first time Wednesday in a letter threatening FBI Director Christopher Wray with contempt proceedings if he doesn't share the file pursuant to a subpoena.
>
> The informant tip is dated June 30, 2020, Comer wrote — an additional clue in the mysterious allegation that triggered a guessing game due to the Biden family's extensive consulting work in countries where the then-VP held sway.
>
> In a remarkable coincidence, Ukrainian officials held a press conference in Kyiv on June 13, 2020 — 17 days before the FBI tipoff — where they showed off $5 million in cash allegedly offered as a bribe to end an investigation of natural gas company Burisma's founder Mykola Zlochevsky.
>
> Burisma employed first son Hunter Biden from 2014 to 2019 and an executive from the firm met Vice President Biden at an April 16, 2015, dinner in Washington.
>
> The cash seized by Ukrainian officials in 2020 was paid in American $100 bills that were put on display — and matches the amount that Joe Biden allegedly received years earlier.

Breitbart had some more details about Joe Biden's network of family members being paid for foreign "consulting" gigs:

> In May, the House Oversight Committee's probe found the Biden family business, over the course of several years, received at least $10 million from business schemes in Romania and China.
>
> "There's a term for that, it's called money laundering … So we feel that this accusation is consistent with a pattern that we're seeing, frankly, in other countries." Comer continued. "FBI officials confirmed that the unclassified FBI-generated record has not been disproven and is currently being used in an

> ongoing investigation."

And more about the FBI file:

> The FBI file originated from an interview the bureau conducted with an informant, who is reportedly a "highly credible" FBI source with a history dating back to the Barack Obama administration.
>
> […]"All we know is two weeks ago they [FBI] tried to act like this [form] didn't exist and now here is the FBI bringing the form to the House of Representatives," Comer said.
>
> Because the FBI refused to provide the file to the full House committee, the House Oversight Committee will move Thursday at 9 AM to hold FBI Director Christopher Wray in contempt of Congress.

I just wanted to write about this to get caught up on the story. It looks like we are now waiting for the FBI to give us the document, or face consequences. I would like to see Christopher Wray and James Comey in the slammer. That's where traitors belong.

California is showing America the next items in the LGBT agenda

June 13, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I worked in places where I met Democrat voters who also attended church. And when Obama was being elected, and same-sex "marriage" was being legalized, I remember what they would say to me. They said "how would gay marriage affect your marriage?" And I explained to them how the redefinition of marriage to eliminate the complementary sexes would have a HUGE effect on society.

Here are a couple of stories showing what comes after same-sex "marriage".

The first one is from the Washington Free Beacon:

> California lawmakers are advancing a bill that would redefine the inability of men to get pregnant as "infertility" and entitle them to insurance-covered fertility treatments.
>
> The legislation, which passed in the Senate late last month and is about to be taken up by the Assembly, would require employer-sponsored insurance plans to cover all nonexperimental fertility treatments, including artificial insemination of pregnancy surrogates. Supporters of the legislation have touted it as an overdue step toward "fertility equality" for LGBT people.
>
> Freshman state senator Caroline Menjivar (D.), who coauthored the bill with Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks (D.), said: "It will ensure that queer couples no longer have to pay more out of pocket to start families than non-queer families. … This bill is critical to achieving full-lived equality for LGBTQ+ people, as well as advancing well-rounded and comprehensive health care for all Californians."

So, what are the consequences of this policy? Well, insurance companies are going to have to charge more for premiums. And since Obama made health insurance *mandatory*, that means that everyone will have to pay more for health care. But wait. This isn't really health care is it? No, this is redistribution of wealth from married homes to LGBT homes. So, Christian husbands and wives who have children the natural way will have to pay the costs for IVF and surrogacy. This is tens of thousands of dollars.

What else? Well, we're going to be making a whole bunch of fatherless and/or motherless children. Think about your own upbringing, how much time you spent with your parents. Even if they were divorced, you could probably see them at least once a year. But in this case, these children will never know one or both of their parents. They are just commodities to the LGBT couples, who just want to be "as good as you".

Here's the second article from Daily Signal:

> A recently amended California bill would add "affirming" the sexual transition of a child to the state's standard for parental responsibility and child

> welfare—making any parent who doesn't affirm transgenderism for their child guilty of abuse under California state law.
>
> […]California courts would be given complete authority under Section 3011 of California's Family Code to remove a child from his or her parents' home if parents disapprove of LGBTQ+ ideology.
>
> By changing the definition of what constitutes the "health, safety, and welfare of [a] child," schools, churches, hospitals, and other organizations interacting with children would be required to affirm "gender transitions" in minors by default—or risk charges of child abuse.

Child abuse. And this is interesting – there will be lots more secular leftists spying into Christian families:

> AB 957 could also expand which organizations provide "evidence" of gender "nonaffirmation" to California's courts.
>
> Because of the addition of "gender affirmation" to the qualifications of California's standards for "health, safety, and welfare," California's courts would now be able to accept reports of gender "abuse" from progressive activist organizations—as long as they claim to provide "services to victims of sexual assault or domestic violence."
>
> In essence, a boy could report his parents to his local school's Gay-Straight Alliance club or other LGBTQ+ organization, who could then report the boy's parents for child abuse.

I've already blogged about the Senior Software Engineer at Apple who was married to the ESG exec who divorced him and transed his kid. The courts sided with her, and stripped him of all parental rights. It's only going to get worse from here.

I have friends who live in California. Young friends, who have just graduated college and are trying to find work. I warn them about the possibility of them losing their kids. They seem to think that all these laws will be struck down. The country that I left 25 years ago has now becoming a tyranny. My friends who stayed are wishing they had left too. When I warn people in California to stop building their careers and lives there, and start somewhere else, they mostly ignore me. But I'm really good at foreseeing threats.

Secular left woman mad because progressive men won't protect and provide

June 14, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There is so much that I would like to say about the video below. For me, it really captures what feminism has taught women about men and relationships. Traditional male roles are: protect, provide, lead on moral issues, lead on spiritual issues. Well, young college-educated single women are certainly interested in protection and provision, but they have zero interest in male leadership.

First, here is the video:

So, this is a young, college-educated, progressive woman. She looks to be about 29 years old. She's probably been having a lot of fun in bars and night clubs, hooking up with hot guys and running up student loans for worthless non-STEM degrees. But 29 is the age when many young feminist women start to notice that their friends are getting married, and so they feel that it's time for them to "keep up" with their friends by also getting married.

The woman in the video doesn't want a man in order to help him with any of his problems. She doesn't want a man because she likes the way he leads her or makes decisions. She wants to get married because she wants to *help herself* to what a husband offers. Specifically, she wants to *help herself* to money, ability to repair a car, ability to renovate a house, vacations, travel, social respectability, social status, etc. That's what she wants. She doesn't want obligations to a man or obligations to children. She wants what a man and children to *benefit her.*

So, what this woman in the video is really asking for is two of the four traditional male roles. She wants a man to do protecting and providing. But she has no interest in a man who has firm views on morality or religion. She wants a sperm-donor, an ATM, and a handyman. But she doesn't want a man who is going to tell her to do anything for God, or for him, or for the kids. No interest at all in a man who will want to lead the family in a Bible study, or protest sex-selection abortions. Religion and morality are disgusting to her – they're brakes on her selfish pursuit of happiness. She likes men who let her make decisions, and who blame others when she is at fault. If babies get in the way of her career, he should approve of her killing them. If two men want to raise a motherless child bought from a surrogate, he should approve of that, too. She wants a man who will put his own kids in daycare and public schools so she can buy a Coach handbag and go on vacation in Barbados. Too bad for the kids. That's what she wants in a man – "don't judge".

But the real key point in this story for me is how this woman expects a secular left man to respect moral obligations. A secular left man thinks that the universe is an accident, that human beings evolved from slime, and that humans have no free will. Atheists don't believe that God holds people accountable for their moral decisions. They think that

morality is just a set of conventions that vary by time and place. On atheism, there are no moral absolutes, just conventions that vary by time and place. And atheists only follow those conventions if following them makes them feel good or look good to others *during their lifetimes*. They support transing kids because they want their college professor or their boss to like them. Who cares about what happens to those kids?

On atheism, morality is just agreeing with the people you want to like you. It's not about taking self-sacrificial stands to protect the weak. Survival of the fittest. That's what atheists believe in. And this woman thinks that she is going to find a man who will have moral obligations towards her when those obligations go against his self-interest. She doesn't want any obligations to him, but she wants him to have lots of moral obligations to her. Absolutely insane.

She also thinks that a man who agrees with her on adult-first, kids-last policies is going to sign up for a lifelong, faithful, marriage commitment. These days, it's hard to get even a good man to agree to take risks with feminist false accusations on college campuses, feminist divorce courts and feminist "me too" workplaces. But why would a man who has a secular leftist worldview want to sacrifice his own interests for such a risky enterprise? Today, only men have obligations. Women are always the victims of someone else. In any disagreement between a man and a woman, the man is always guilty, and the woman is always the victim. The whole society is set up to relieve her of any accountability for her actions. All the costs must be paid by men. Why would a secular leftist man – who has ZERO rational foundation for morality – get legally obligated to a woman who holds that much power over him?

The woman in the video probably thinks that when it comes to marriage, men will just marry when they are impressed with a woman's appearance, and go crazy from being "in love". That's why secular left women spend so much money on their appearance – not just for make-up or clothes, but on manicures, pedicures, and cosmetic surgery, too. Only stupid men marry secular left women because they are "in love" with her fake appearance.

If the woman in the video is expecting a man to commit to her for life, and be faithful, and be a good father, then she's going to have to 1) resign herself to male leadership – because that's what good men want, and 2) upgrade her religious and moral views to match those of a good man. Otherwise, her situation is hopeless. Good men don't get married to secular left feminists. As more young women adopt feminism, you can expect to see the marriage rate decline.

New study: oral contraceptives greatly increase the risk of depression

June 15, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to collect studies on my blog so that I can always find them when I get into a debate. One of the things I like to argue against is recreational premarital sex. It's pretty hard to argue this with non-Christians if all you are going to do is quote the Bible. But you can make a pretty good case that will win you the argument from studies, and so I keep a nice collection of studies to use.

Here's the report from The Federalist:

> Oral contraceptives raise the risk of depression, according to a new international study that surveyed more than 264,000 women. Teenagers were at the highest risk, with a 130 percent higher risk of depression in women who started using birth control as adolescents, compared to a 92 percent higher risk among those who started as adults.
>
> The study provides conclusive results to a growing body of research linking oral birth control with the use of anti-depressants, depression diagnoses, and depressive symptoms.
>
> While adult users saw a decrease to more normal risk after using "the pill" for more than two years or getting off the pill, teenage users were still at increased risk even after stopping usage.

Very interesting. I clicked on the link to the study and made sure it was peer-reviewed. It was. So what do we learn from this?

Well, this is not the first time I am hearing about the emotional and mental problems with birth control pills. So, I think the lesson here is to definitely do your research first, so that you don't get involved with things that will cause you problems later. The woman who told me about had tried to go on them, but she immediately noticed how much it changed her moods, and she went off them. I think it caused her some problems in her life, because she ended up taking 5 years to complete her degree, instead of the normal for. So, using these things could really cost you.

Now you might be wondering about other birth control methods, and the team that did this study has a plan for future work:

> This study only examined combination birth control pills, but researchers plan to study other contraceptive options.
>
> "In a future study, we plan to examine different formulations and methods of administration. Our ambition in comparing different contraceptive methods is to give women even more information to help them [m]ake well-informed decisions about their contraceptive options," Johansson said.

The article also notes (with links, which I removed):

> In other studies, birth control methods have also been linked to increased risk of heart attack and stroke, blood clots, breast cancer, and cervical cancer.
>
> Despite significant evidence of risk, researchers still insist that birth control is safe to use…

Normally, I am pretty hard on women on this blog. I feel like they make way too many decisions by following the crowd, instead of thinking about what they want in the long-term, and then making decisions that are likely to get those results – whatever anyone else thinks. I think that women need to be smarter than that, and instead of forming their views by peer pressure, they need to form their views based on truth. And truth is not on the bottom shelf.

I see women getting taught all about sexual topics by public school teachers, entertainers, athletes, celebrities, etc. It makes no sense to me. These people are insulated from real life, for one reason or another. And then I see Planned Parenthood going into the schools and teaching children about birth control and sex. *They make money by getting these kids to become sexual active and then pay them to get abortions*. Young women cannot trust women their own age to know about studies. They can't trust teachers with degrees in English. They can't trust celebrities, entertainers and athletes – they probably cannot even read, much less read studies. Women have to do their own research and make their own plans that work for them.

Today women are being taught from preschool to college and beyond, that they need to use their "young years" to seek happiness by playing the field with tall, hot men who give them tingles. They are told to delay marriage (boring) and children (demanding) for as long as possible, in order to have no-commitment sex with the hottest men they can get. Somehow, having sex with a lot of hot men is thought to raise the value of the woman. It builds her self-esteem, or something. This is objectively stupid behavior. But this is why they jump all over birth control, because it helps them to do stupid things that they've been told to do. They don't even know the long-term effects of the behavior they're doing. It's monkey-see, monkey-do. The blind leading the blind.

So, I think it's good for us as grown-ups to point them towards the data that they should know about. They can certainly ignore it, and go with their feelings. But some of them will prefer to get the real truth about how the world works, and those are the ones we need to reach. They should at least have a choice to make.

By the way, I'm not saying that it's a bad idea to give someone a Bible. I got one when I was young, and that worked for me. But for people who ask questions, you need to have the studies ready. Always be ready for anyone who asks you questions about why you believe what you believe.

Survey: 60 years of feminism has not made women happier

June 16, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had a conversation this week with someone who was insisting that feminism had made women much happier than in the 1950s and 1960s. So, I thought it might be a good idea to go digging around for some data, and then blog about it so I could find it again. Well, I found some nice survey data from the 2022 American Family Survey. That's not too long ago! Let's see what it says.

This is from the New York Post.

First, just some interesting points about how feminism was sold to women:

> In February, we will mark the 60th anniversary of Betty Friedan's "Feminine Mystique." But given the state of modern feminism, it's hard to imagine there will be much celebration.
>
> Friedan's work, which revealed women's lack of fulfillment as homemakers, laid out the goals of second-wave feminism. Now that women had achieved the right to vote, own property and get an education (the first wave), Friedan and her cohorts argued that women should pursue higher education and careers as a way of achieving personal satisfaction. Others, like Germaine Greer, wrote that the sexual repression of women prevented them from becoming personally fulfilled. But thanks to the pill and changing mores about sex outside of marriage, women could finally achieve the freedom and happiness that had been available to men for millennia.

So, I see a few problems that feminism is supposed to solve. 1) being a stay at home wife and mom isn't as fulfilling as having a job and putting your kids in daycare and public schools. 2) it's not fulfilling to have sex with one man who commits to you for life – that's boring. You need to have sex with a lot of different men, just like the tall, hot, bad boys are doing.

So that's the offer that most women accepted, and that's the view of the most powerful people in our society. We have massive government spending on social programs like daycare and public schools in order to make this plan "work out" to make women happier.

Now let's see the survey data:

> The American Family Survey recently asked: "All things considered, has feminism benefited American families?"
>
> Only a little more than half (58.6%) of respondents said yes. What's interesting, though, is the people who said yes also tend to be among the least happy and fulfilled. In survey after survey, it turns out that people who espouse a secular

> worldview, people who identify as liberals, and people who never attend religious services report the lowest levels of personal satisfaction, but they also report the highest levels of support for feminist ideals. Indeed, as feminism's influence has grown over the past half century, women have become less happy.

How did we get to this point where men are expected to do more housework and child care, and women exchange being wives and mothers for working outside the home, and giving their kids to strangers to raise?

> [M]any feminists would have been happy to dispense with traditional marriage altogether. If that happened, and women still did want to bear children (something many feminists did not encourage), well, someone was still going to have to support them. And so feminist leaders also demanded more government support for women.

When I was in grad school, and had a pet parrot at home, I could barely stand to leave the house. I would call home during breaks, or from the lab after classes. It's not natural for people to leave their kids alone with strangers. I didn't even like leaving my parrot with my older brother to go to class. Didn't trust anyone to look after him. So, I can't imagine how fathers and mothers can be happy about leaving young children with "child care workers" or "public school teachers". They can't be trusted, and they don't reflect my values. So I can't imagine how women could be happy to be separated from their young children.

And here's another problem – promiscuity stinks:

> In 1963, Betty Friedan was writing about "the problem that had no name." But women's problems in the 21st century can absolutely be named. More often, they are trying to raise children on their own, which can be exhausting even with financial resources. They are sexually liberated, but that often means they are going from one relationship to another without any sense of financial security or emotional stability.

One of the reasons why I sailed through high school and college with my chastity intact was because I knew that I wouldn't like going all the way with a girl, and then she would just leave and I would never see her again. So I have no idea women think this is wonderful. I know that they only have eyes for tall, hot bad boys, but I don't think those men should be emulated. If it doesn't work for women, then they shouldn't do it.

Men and women aren't as different than people think. Nobody likes leaving their young children with strangers. Nobody likes being intimate with a person, and then not being able to even talk to them again when you want to. No wonder women are miserable. And as I blogged about before, it's the progressive women who have the highest rates of mental illness and use of medication. The ones who took feminism seriously are the ones who are least happy.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 33: Are All Religions the Same, Part 1

June 17, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 33 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose start a new discussion about truth in religion. Are religious truth claims the same as ordinary truth claims? How can you test a religion to see if it is teaching the truth? If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 33:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the view that all religions are equally valid paths to God. We start by talking about what truth is, why truth matters, and the difference between objective and subjective truth claims. We discuss how different religions make different testable truth claims. We look at how different religions answer the question "How did the universe get here?". And then we look at what science has to say about that question. This is the first episode of a three-part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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What is the definition of marriage according to Jesus?

June 18, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's Pride Month! This is when Big Corporations spend an entire month celebrating the LGBT community, and pressuring everyone else to celebrate behaviors and lifestyles that are at odds with the teachings of Jesus. So, since the LGBT activists are about to get 30 days of celebration, I thought I would celebrate what Jesus taught about marriage on my little blog.

Here's what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
>
> 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"
>
> 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."
>
> 11 But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don't overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are supposed to be willing to endure suffering rather than side with non-Christians against

God’s authority.

Matt Walsh had a fine article about this issue.

He said:

> As Christians, our goal is not to avoid being like the big bad “other Christians,” but to strive to be like Christ Himself. This is one of the advantages to having an Incarnate God. He went around acting and speaking and teaching and generally functioning in our realm, thereby giving us a model to follow. This is the model of a loving and merciful man, and *also* a man of perfect virtue who fought against the forces of evil, condemned sin, defended his Father in Heaven with sometimes violent force, spoke truth, and eventually laid down His life for those He loved (which would be all of us).
>
> […]This is what it means to believe in Christ. Not just to believe that He existed, but to believe that Christ is Truth itself, and that everything He said and did was totally and absolutely and irreversibly true forever and always. Many Christians today — not only the ones in the video, but millions alongside them — seem to think we can rightly claim to have “faith” in Jesus or a “relationship” with Him while still categorically denying much of His Word. This is a ridiculous proposition. We can’t declare, in one breath, that Christ is Lord, and in the next suggest that maybe God got it wrong on this or that point. Well, we *can* make that declaration, but we expose our belief as fraudulent and self-serving. We worship a God we either invented in our heads, which is a false idol, or a God who is fallible, which is a false idol.

If you really accept Jesus as God, then you can’t think he is wrong when he explains what marriage is. Period. End of issue.

Real Christians don’t make excuses for sin. Real Christians present the gospel. The gospel is that all men have rebelled against God and fallen short of perfect submission to and obedience of him. For this, they deserve to be separated from God eternally. Jesus paid the price for this rebellion on the cross, and anyone who accepts him as Savior *and Lord* will be with God eternally after they die. There is no salvation apart from Jesus. That’s what Christians say. And they say it regardless of how weird they look, and how many non-Christians don’t like them for saying it.

Is there evidence of systemic racism in the United States?

June 19, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Systemic racism is the idea that people can't lift themselves out of poverty by making good decisions, because powerful groups in society that hold the poor down, regardless of their decisions. Do you think that America is a place where no matter what choices you make, you'll never be able to be more prosperous? That's what the leaders of Black Lives Matter think.

Here's what Nikole Hannah-Jones, creator of the 1619 Project, says in the New York Times (a former newspaper):

> To summarize, none of the actions we are told black people must take if they want to "lift themselves" out of poverty and gain financial stability — not marrying, not getting educated, not saving more, not owning a home — can mitigate 400 years of racialized plundering.

Got that? It doesn't matter what individual choices a non-white person takes in America, they're going to be poor. The "systemic racism" of the powerful whites will always keep them down. Single motherhood doesn't make people poor, and marriage doesn't make people wealthier. Dropping out of high school doesn't make you poor, and getting a Masters degree in computer science won't make you wealthier.

But let's take a look at the data from the 2019 Census, and see the evidence:

Median US Household Income by Selected Ancestry Groups, 2019		
Indian	Americans	$126,705
Taiwanese	Americans	$102,405
Filipino	Americans	$100,273
Indonesian	Americans	$93,501
Pakistani	Americans	$87,509
Iranian	Americans	$87,288
Lebanese	Americans	$87,099
Japanese	Americans	$85,007
Turkish	Americans	$83,375
Chinese	Americans	$82,281
Korean	Americans	$76,674
Syrian	Americans	$74,047
Hmong	Americans	$73,373
Vietnamese	Americans	$72,161
Cambodian	Americans	$72,038
White	**Americans**	**$69,823**
Ghanaian	Americans	$69,021
Bangladeshi	Americans	$67,944
Guyanese	Americans	$67,772
Egyptian	Americans	$67,187
Palestian	Americans	$67,157
Thai	Americans	$66,763
Laotian	Americans	$66,117
Nigerian	Americans	$65,672

Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Chart from AEI

Income By Ethnicity in America

White people are doing a bad job of keeping non-whites down

Well, it looks like at least SOME people of color are able to do well in America despite all the “systemic racism” that keeps non-whites down. And do you know what those non-white groups at the top have in common? They’ve made good decisions, they’ve worked hard, they haven’t blamed other people when they fail, and they’ve saved their money instead of spending it on shiny junk.

Let’s look at some decisions that the non-whites who are prosperous have made, that those further down have not.

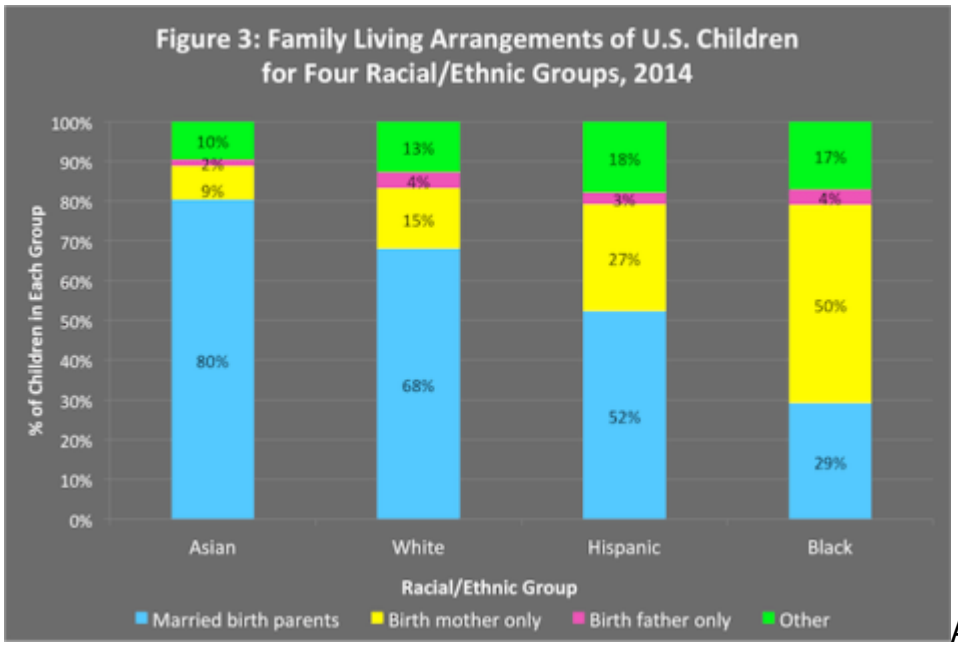

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

Education and marriage

This article is written by the far-left radical Nicholas Kristof, writing in the radically-leftist New York Times (a former newspaper).

Excerpt:

> A new scholarly book, “The Asian American Achievement Paradox,” by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, notes that Asian-American immigrants in recent decades have started with one advantage: They are highly educated, more so even than the average American. These immigrants are disproportionately doctors, research scientists and other highly educated professionals.

> It’s not surprising that the children of Asian-American doctors would flourish in the United States. But Lee and Zhou note that kids of working-class Asian-Americans often also thrive, showing remarkable upward mobility.
>
> […]There’s also evidence that Americans believe that A’s go to smart kids, while Asians are more likely to think that they go to hard workers… Asian-American kids are allowed no excuse for getting B’s — or even an A-. The joke is that an A- is an “Asian F.”

One reason Asians students do so well is because their parents are usually married:

> > Strong two-parent families are a factor, too. Divorce rates are much lower for many Asian-American communities than for Americans as a whole, and there's evidence that two-parent households are less likely to sink into poverty and also have better outcomes for boys in particular.

American blacks have a 73% out-of-wedlock birth rate. A huge difference compared to Asians.

So, when Nikole Hannah-Jones tells you that education and marriage don't matter, she's just wrong.

Compound interest

Education and marriage are important, but so is saving your money. The wealthiest people in America are typically the ones who are experts at saving money early, and investing it. They know about the law of compound interest. If you invest money early and leave it alone, then it will grow into a fortune by the time you are read to stop working.

This graph explains compound interest:

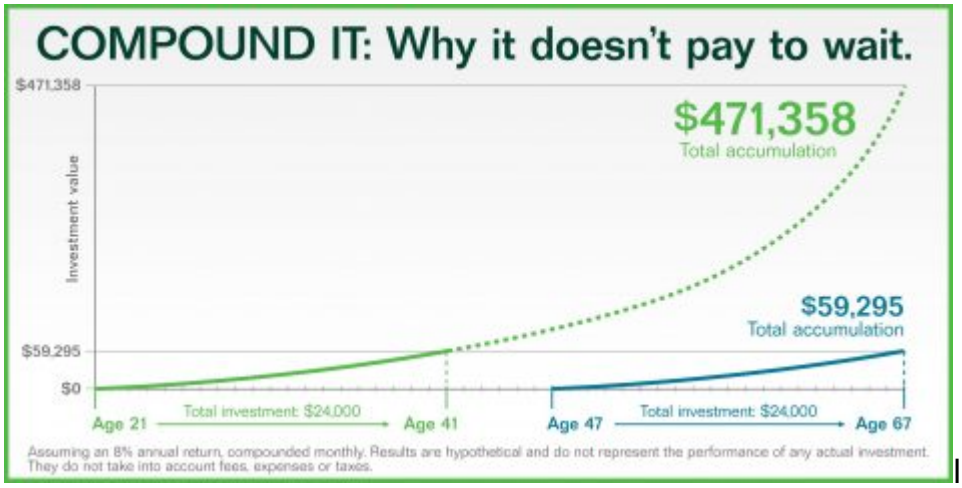

Investing $24,000 from age 21 to 41 vs investing $24000 from age 47 to 67

What does Nikole Hannah-Jones say when she looks at that graph? She doesn't think that saving money makes a difference to having more or less wealth. She thinks skin color determines whether saving money makes you wealthy or not. The graph clearly shows what we should be recommending to young people of color. They need to stop spending money and start saving it, and the earlier the better. It doesn't matter what your skin color is, saving money early JUST WORKS.

Similarly, when she says that home ownership doesn't make you more wealthy, this is just terrible advice. It's always better to pay down your own mortgage (at least when interest rates are low like they are now) than to pay someone else rent. You have to live somewhere, and paying for your own home is better because it costs about the same as rent, and then you get to keep the home when you're done paying for it.

Communism

Nikole Hannah-Jones does have a “solution” to disparities in wealth. Her solution is communism. She wants to transfer money from those who earn, to those who don’t. But we already have tried that in the 20st century and it resulted in the deaths of over 100 million people. That’s not my opinion, that’s all documented in a book published by Harvard University Press.

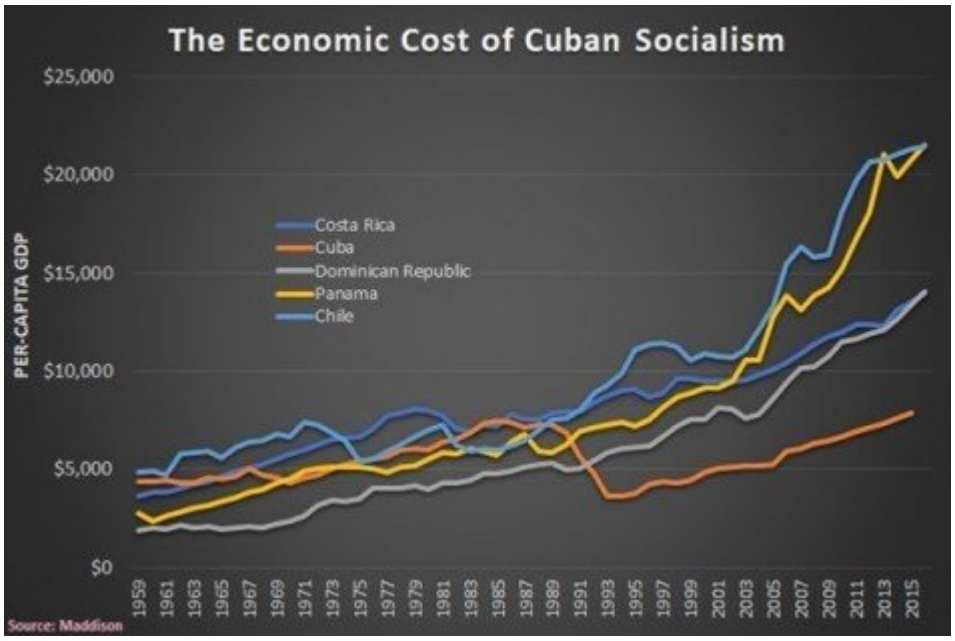

Socialism Communism Countries Per Capita GDP Income

You don’t even have to read the book to know the truth – just look at countries that score low on the Index of Economic Freedom, and compare their GDP per capita to countries that score high on the Index of Economic Freedom. The more communist a nation goes, the less wealth there is for the citizens. That’s why people in Venezuela are eating zoo animals and selling their bodies in prostitution for food, while nearby capitalist countries like Panama and Chile prosper. Nikole Hannah-Jones wants to reduce economic freedom, but we know by looking at other countries that this lowers per-capita GDP.

There’s a lot more than could be said here, but the point is that we need to be telling American blacks to make decisions that match the decisions of other successful non-white communities in America. We need to start teaching young people basic economics so they don’t fall prey to charlatans.

Detective skills are useful when trying to understand hard parts of the Bible

June 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found on Cold Case Christianity about the problem of why one of Jesus' women followers (Mary) did not recognize him at the empty tomb. Now, if you are a skeptic, you look at this story, and you think "that makes no sense" or maybe something worse. But if you give that same difficult passage to a cold case homicide detective, then there's no problem for him to figure it out.

Here's the post. He starts by explaining why this problem is important:

> Skeptics sometimes question the Gospel eyewitness accounts of the Resurrection, particularly related to the early observations of the risen Christ. In John's record of the Resurrection, Mary doesn't immediately recognize Jesus in the garden. In fact, she initially mistakes Him for the gardener (John 20:1-16). How could that happen? Does this passage of Scripture support the claims of conspiracy theorists? Was the resurrected "Jesus" merely an imposter? Was it just someone posing as Jesus? Why wouldn't Mary recognize the resurrected Jesus; the very man who meant so much to her? A closer examination of the Biblical texts may provide some answers.

Here is his approach:

> Given my experience with eyewitnesses, the Gospel accounts contain exactly what I would expect from four eyewitness testimonies; each telling the story from a slightly different perspective and from the innate presuppositions, life experiences and abilities of each witness. I get suspicious when the stories of witnesses are exactly the *same*, not when they vary within acceptable expectations. When people conspired to lie about an event, they typically align their stories. This is not the case with accurate and true eyewitness accounts. *They always vary to some degree*. When evaluating multiple eyewitness accounts, it's my job to assemble the cumulative narrative.

So many times when skeptics get mad at the Bible, they pounce all over it, insisting that it should all make sense to them without any effort. But maybe God expects us to put in the effort, rather than just be passive. Maybe Christianity is work. Maybe God wants to be in a relationship with people who chase after him, instead of people who want their relationship with God to be all one-way – their way. I can think of a million useful skills that would help people to work through Bible problems… knowing Greek, knowing Hebrew, studying the genres of ancient history and ancient biography, etc.

The story of the discovery of the empty tomb is in all four gospels, and after Detective Wallace looked at each passage, he found enough evidence to write this:

> Given these four accounts of Mary's encounter with Jesus in the garden, the following inferences are reasonable:
>
> - The women came to the tomb very early, before it was light outside. They first viewed Jesus in this darkness.
> - The women were *not* looking for a resurrected man; they were looking for a *dead* man. They did not think it possible someone standing behind them could be Jesus.
> - They were afraid and scared, bewildered and wondering. Why? Because they had just experienced an *earthquake*. This is their state of mind as Jesus approaches.
> - Mary is crying; *sobbing* more likely. This is clear from the account we have, and her sobbing clearly affected her ability to see.
> - Mary was standing outside the tomb in the garden when she first viewed Jesus. In this setting, she would expect to see a gardener rather than Jesus.
> - Mary turned away from Jesus. She must have turned away quickly and stayed turned from Him for most of the contact and conversation, because the Scripture tells us she turns *back* toward Him when He mentions her name.

So, there are actually a lot of reasons why Mary the empty tomb visitor might have had trouble recognizing Jesus. I think that's a pretty good case. What do you think?

I think a lot of people come to the Bible with a list of bad behaviors that they don't want to change. Then they look for any little confusing passage to claim that the Bible is not reliable history. Well, maybe God wants to give them just enough confusion to let them go their own way. But for the people who accept that relationships are give and take, with two people working at it, they won't find this to be a problem. They'll put in the effort to puzzle out how to get things to fit together and make sense.

Canada denies organ transplant to naturally-immune grandma who declined vaccination

June 21, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How does Canada's health care system work? Well, when you get paid, they take money from you, and they also take some of the money that your employer wanted to pay you. You keep doing that until you are old enough to be a grandmother, then they deny you health care when you ask for it. But you can die, though. Oh, Canada would love to make you die so you don't use any health care.

Here's the story from the True North, an independent Canadian news source:

> The Supreme Court of Canada will not hear the case of a dying, unvaccinated woman who's been denied an organ transplant.
>
> Sheila Annette Lewis is dying of a terminal illness. She was removed from the top of the organ donor transplant list after refusing to be vaccinated against Covid-19.
>
> Lewis said the Supreme Court owes her an answer as to why it won't hear her case.
>
> "This is the highest court in Canada that doesn't want to do right by the people of Canada," she said in an interview with Rebel News.
>
> Lewis was unsuccessful at both the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench and the Alberta Court of Appeal in 2022, with both levels of court finding that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms does not apply to the Covid-19 vaccine policies of Alberta Health Services (AHS), the Alberta Hospital where she would receive her transplant, or her transplant doctors. Both courts also dismissed her claims under The Alberta Bill of Rights.

Actually, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms doesn't apply to any law in Canada. The basic human rights of Canadians – free speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, parental authority, etc. – are regularly violated by the secular left totalitarian government. The media is funded by the government. The schools are funded by the government. The hospitals are funded by the government. And the government-funded university system discriminates against students who don't accept the dogma of the secular left. There's no way to get justice in Canada.

More:

> In a November ruling, the appeal court acknowledged it's a "virtual certainty" Lewis will die without an organ transplant.
>
> In January, Lewis filed a court application asking the Supreme Court of Canada to hear her case against Alberta Health Services. In March, she provided her Alberta Transplant Program doctors with a privately funded medical report, known as the

> Kinexus Report, establishing her natural immunity to Covid-19.

She's naturally immune, but that doesn't matter to the high priests of the secular left. She has to comply with their worldview and their values. No one can defy the government, and get services from the government. They can pay the government, but they can't get anything back if they disagree with the government.

More:

> Lewis has now filed a new negligence claim against AHS and awaits a court date.
>
> "I'm not going to go away," she said. "I have to fight for my life."
>
> "I don't want to die. I'm 58 years old and I have reason to live. I have grandchildren and I have children."

Well, what you have to do if you are born in Canada is that you have to get out. You have to work your way through the state-run public schools, and the state-run universities. You have to block the state-run media out of your ears. And when you get your degree, you have to get out. You have to get away from the fascists who run the country – using your money to violate your human rights, and take away your freedoms.

Canada is going bankrupt because even after taking $15,000 per household for health care, the Liberal party doesn't have enough money to pay for all the abortions, sex changes, IVF, etc. that they promised to their dysfunctional, reckless, irresponsible supporters. So, what to do? Well, they have to start killing the people who paid into the system for decades, who are now asking for health care.

Daily Signal explains:

> According to the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, Canada saw a sharp increase in government-assisted suicides last year, with an estimated 13,500 taking place in 2022.
>
> This is a 35% increase from 2021, when 10,064 took their lives through the program. The number represented 3.3% of all deaths in Canada in 2021, which is deeply alarming.
>
> […]In 2020, 7,595 government-assisted suicides occurred in Canada.
>
> […]In 2021, Medical Assistance in Dying expanded to include people with chronic illnesses. The program has become a convenient tool to push the poor and sick to kill themselves.
>
> […]At the end of 2022, lawmakers expanded the program yet again to include people with mental illness.

People are literally dying in the streets in Canada, because although they paid tens of thousands of dollars for health care, the government doesn't see their lives as "worthy of life". Life unworthy of life. That's what the Liberal Party of Canada believes. Never let the secular left take over your country.

What are Hunter Biden, Joe Biden, and the Biden family being investigated for?

June 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Whenever I want to understand what's going on with corruption in the Biden administration, I turn to The Federalist, and look directly for Margot Cleveland's column. And she doesn't disappoint! This is a good primer on the Hunter Biden corruption story, so if you don't know the full story, read this post. And then we'll both have somewhere to look if we need to debate it.

So, here's the article from The Federalist by Margot Cleveland.

She starts with some background:

> In 2018, the feds launched an investigation into Hunter Biden, which the son of the now-president publicly disclosed in December 2020, following his father's election. On Tuesday, news broke that Hunter Biden had agreed to plead guilty to two misdemeanor tax counts and had entered a pretrial diversion agreement on a separate firearms count, unleashing outrage from the right over the absence of any money-laundering or bribery counts. But even worse is the U.S. attorney's failure to file these charges against the Biden son in 2019, which suggests shielding Joe Biden from scandal is the operative principle of the Department of Justice and FBI.

Do federal laws apply to the son of the Democrat president?

> The two tax misdemeanor charges spanned only a page-and-a-half and alleged in count one that the president's son, during the 2017 calendar year, received taxable income exceeding $1.5 million and willfully failed to pay income taxes on that amount in violation of 26 U.S.C. § 7203. Count two mirrored count one but charged Hunter with failing to pay the income taxes due on his 2018 calendar year earnings.

Wow, if you or I did that, we'd probably spend about 20 years in a federal penitentiary.

Do federal laws apply to the son of the Democrat president?

> Delaware U.S. Attorney David Weiss filed separate information charging Hunter with violating 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(g)(3) and 924(a)(2), for knowingly possessing a firearm, "knowing that he was an unlawful user of and addicted to a controlled substance…" Sources say, however, that under the pretrial diversion agreement, Hunter Biden will not plead guilty to that felony gun charge, with prosecutors instead dismissing the count "if he remains drug-free and doesn't commit additional crimes for two years."

It's amazing. Normally in cases like this, my understanding is that the minimum sentence

for a gun felony is SEVERAL years in jail, even for a first offense, and even if you plead out.

An interesting connection has emerged between American foreign policy and money received from foreign sources is emerging:

> Weiss's decision to charge Hunter with two tax misdemeanors only weeks after Americans learned that a "highly credible" confidential human source had reported that the Ukrainian owner of Burisma paid the father-son duo each $5 million in bribes looked like an obvious attempt to quell the growing scandal that threatened to engulf the president.

The interesting thing about those charges is that these payments from foreigners were known BEFORE the 2020 election. But for some reason, federal law enforcement declined to do anything about them:

> Weiss sat on those charges before the 2020 election that points to the top Delaware prosecutor protecting the Biden family.

Not just those charges, but the income tax charges too:

> Why then did the Delaware U.S. attorney fail to charge the Biden son in 2019 with those crimes? The answer seems clear: politics.
>
> And if politics drove the U.S. attorney to refrain from charging Hunter before the 2020 election, how could politics not also affect every aspect of the investigation into the now-president's son, including evidence implicating President Joe Biden?

Now, when I look at those millions of dollars being funneled through Biden family members, it makes me wonder whether Joe Biden has been selling out our foreign policy interests to the highest bidder.

Here is what Republican Senator Chuck Grassley said, (reported by The Federalist):

> "Since the FBI's investigation into Hunter Biden began nearly five years ago, I and my colleagues in Congress have uncovered extensive government and bank records indicative of money laundering as well as foreign business schemes that, in any other circumstance, would raise serious criminal and counterintelligence concerns," Grassley said. "Hunter's laptop, which the FBI has had since 2019, contains records corroborating much of this evidence, as well as evidence of other serious criminal violations."

Got that?

"extensive government and bank records indicative of money laundering as well as foreign business schemes that, in any other circumstance, would raise serious criminal and counterintelligence concerns"

More:

> The Iowa lawmaker, who has spent half a decade investigating the first son, went

> on to highlight recent whistleblower reports from the DOJ and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that claim federal investigators have sabotaged any potential for a significant indictment.
>
> In May, an IRS whistleblower spoke publicly on CBS News about efforts within the DOJ to hamper the federal tax probe.
>
> “There were multiple steps that were slow-walked — were just completely not done — at the direction of the Department of Justice,” said Gary Shapley. “These deviations from the process,” he added, “seemed to always benefit the subject.”
>
> More whistleblowers from within the FBI have made similar allegations that the Department of Justice is working to shield the Biden family from thorough investigations. The plea deal on Tuesday comes as President Joe Biden himself faces credible bribery allegations from his time as vice president.

SIX additional Biden family members being investigated:

> House Republicans who reviewed “suspicious activity reports” housed within the Treasury Department about Hunter Biden’s finances say they’ve expanded their own investigation of the Biden family to “six additional” members.

One of the the first tasks of the next Republican president will be to clean out corruption in high places in our government. We really have to pick someone who is fearless, and punish the Democrat traitors to the maximum extent of the law. And maybe next time, think twice about electing Godless secular leftists to high positions in government. They clearly don’t have the capability for morality that we need in our political leaders.

Testimony of IRS whistleblowers about Hunter Biden bribery investigation

June 23, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I heard there was some news on Thursday night about the IRS investigation of bribery allegations against Hunter Biden and Joe Biden. And there was also news about whether Joe Biden was in the room while Hunter Biden was conducting his business deals. I'm trying to stay on top of this, so that I can know enough to discuss the details with people who ask me what it's all about.

Here's an article by Margot Cleveland in The Federalist.

She says:

> The Delaware U.S. Attorney's Office hid an FBI report that the Ukrainian oil and gas company Burisma paid Hunter and Joe Biden each $5 million bribes, documents released by the House Ways and Means Committee reveal. That revelation eclipses the catalog of other claims of misconduct and political favoritism levied by two IRS whistleblowers, as detailed in the transcripts the House committee released Thursday — and suggests the bribery claims were never investigated.

The information about the bribes was never provided to IRS Criminal Supervisory Special Agent Gary Shapley, "nor to any of the IRS agents acting under his supervision, nor to the FBI agents working with the IRS investigators." Even though they were the ones who would be expected to investigate it.

More:

> Further, Shapley's investigative team was precisely the group to investigate the allegations contained in the FD-1023, as his group is "known as the International Tax and Financial Crimes group," and consists of "12 elite agents who were selected based on their experience and performance in the area of complex high-dollar international tax investigations."

The FBI did their part to protect Hunter Biden by labeling the bribery charges against Joe Biden and Hunter Biden as "disinformation":

> The scandal is not limited to Delaware, however. A related scandal connects to another whistleblower who claims that in "August 2020, FBI Supervisory Intelligence Analyst Brian Auten opened an assessment which was used by a FBI Headquarters ('FBI HQs') team to improperly discredit negative Hunter Biden information as disinformation and caused investigative activity to cease."
>
> Every indication suggests it was the FD-1023 that the FBI HQ's team falsely labeled disinformation, which raises the specter that individuals in the Delaware U.S. Attorney's Office were colluding with FBI HQ to protect the Biden family. It is

> now up to Sen. Chuck Grassley's whistleblower to close the circle.

So, Margot thinks that the reason why the Delaware U.S. Attorney's Office didn't pass the bribery charges on for investigation, is because they were colluding with the FBI to protect the Biden family.

Another interesting story about Biden corruption came out on Thursday. Do you remember how Joe Biden claims that he didn't know anything about his son's business deals? That he never talked to him about it?

Well, consider this from the Washington Free Beacon.

> Photographs on Hunter Biden's abandoned laptop place him at his father's Wilmington, Delaware, residence on the day he invoked President Joe Biden's name in a text message, threatening his Chinese business partner to come down on him with their full weight if the business partner did not fulfill his "commitment."
>
> In that message, sent on July 30, 2017, to an official, Henry Zhao, working with a Chinese energy conglomerate CEFC Energy—linked to Chinese military intelligence—Hunter Biden said he was sitting next to his father and that "we would like to understand why the commitment made has not been fulfilled."
>
> The message became public on Thursday, when Congress made public testimony from an IRS whistleblower, Gary Shapley, who obtained the message during his investigation of Hunter Biden's various tax crimes. Hours after the message was sent, Hunter Biden was pictured at his father's home sitting behind the wheel of the president's beloved 1967 Corvette Stingray with family members.
>
> […]If Joe Biden was sitting next to his son as he sent the message as it suggests, it would be a fatal blow to the president's repeated claims that he never discussed overseas business deals with his son, and the photographs of Hunter Biden at what appears to be a family gathering at the Delaware home is the strongest indication that he was in close proximity to his father when he threatened the Chinese businessman.

It's very interesting, now that we know about these things, to think about all the pious Christians who told us that voting for a President isn't about voting for specific policies or Supreme Court judges. It's really about voting for a good moral and spiritual leader. That's what we were told by the pious #evangelicalsForBiden. Now we're finding out what sort of morality they were wanting us to vote for. Just look at the underage girls on Hunter Biden's laptop. That's what they support as a "return to civility".

Robin Collins and atheist Peter Millican discuss the fine-tuning of the universe for life

June 24, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember Peter Millican from the debate he had with William Lane Craig. I ranked that debate as one of the 3 best I have ever seen, along with the first Craig vs Dacey debate and the second Craig vs Sinnott-Armstrong debate.

Details:

> Science has revealed that the fundamental constants and forces of the cosmos appear to be exquisitely fine-tuned to allow a universe in which life can develop. Is God the best explanation of the incredibly improbable odds of the universe we live in being a life-permitting one?
>
> Robin Collins is a Christian philosopher and a leading advocate of the argument for God from cosmic design. Peter Millican is an atheist philosopher at Oxford University. They debate the issues.
>
> From 'Unbelievable?' on 'Premier Christian Radio', Saturday 19th March 2016.

The debate:

As usual when the atheist is an expert, there is no snark or paraphrasing in the summary.

Summary

Brierley: What is the fine-tuning argument?

Collins: the fine-tuning is structure of the universe is extremely precisely set to allow the existing of conscious, embodied agents who are capable of moral behavior. There are 3 kinds of fine-tuning: 1) the laws of nature (mathematical formulas), 2) the constants of physics (numbers that are plugged into the equations), 3) the initial conditions of the universe. The fine-tuning exists not just because there are lots of possibilities, but there is something special about the actual state of affairs that we see. Every set of laws, parameters and initial conditions is equally improbable, but the vast majority of permutations do not permit life. The possible explanations: theism or the multiverse.

Brierley: How improbable are the numbers?

Collins: Once case is the cosmological constant (dark energy density), with is 1 part in (10 raised to 120th power). If larger, the universe expands too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form after the Big Bang. If smaller, the universe collapses in on itself before life could form. Another case is the initial distribution of mass energy to give us the low entropy we have that is necessary for life. The fine-tuning there is 1 part in (10 raised to the 10th power raised to the 123rd power).

Brierley: What do you think of the argument?

Millican: The argument is worth taking very seriously. I am a fan of the argument. The other arguments for God's existence such as the ontological and cosmological arguments

are very weak. But the fine-tuning argument has the right structure to deliver the conclusion that theists want. And it is different from the traditional design argument tended to focus on biological nature, which is not a strong argument. But the fine-tuning argument is strong because it precedes any sort of biological evolution. Although the design is present at the beginning of the universe, it is not visible until much later. The argument points to at least deism, and possibly theism. The argument is not based on ignorance, it is rooted in "the latest results from the frontiers of science" (his phrase).

Brierley: Is this the best argument from natural theology?

Collins: The cosmological argument makes theism viable intuitively, but there are some things that are puzzling, like the concept of the necessary being. But the fine-tuning argument is decisive.

Brierley: What's are some objections to the fine-tuning argument?

Millican: The argument is based on recent physics, so we should be cautious because we **maybe** we will discover a natural explanation.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: The cosmological constant has been around since 1980. But the direction that physics is moving in is that there are more constants and quantities being discovered that need to be fine-tuned, not less. Even if you had a grand unified theory, that would have to be have the fine-tuning pushed into it.

(BREAK)

Millican: Since we have no experience of other laws and values from other universes, **we don't know** whether these values can be other than they are. Psychologically, humans are prone to seeing purpose and patterns where there is none, so **maybe** that's happening here.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: It is possible to determine probabilities on a single universe case, for example using multiple ways of calculating Avogadro's number all converging on the same number makes it more probable.

Millican: Yes, I willing to accept that these constants can take on other values, ("principle of indifference"). But **maybe** this principle be applied if the improbability were pushed up into the theory?

Collins: Even if you had a grand theory, selecting the grand theory from others would retain the improbability.

Brierley: What about the multiverse?

Millican: **What if** there are many, many different universes, and we happen to be in the one that is finely-tuned, then we should not be surprised to observe fine-tuning. **Maybe** a multiverse theory will be discovered in the future that would allow us to have these many universes with randomized constants and quantities. "I do think that it is a little bit of a promissary note". I don't think physics is pointing to this right now.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: I agree it's a promissary note. This is the strongest objection to the fine-tuning argument. But there are objections to the multiverse: 1) the fine-tuning is kicked back up to the multiverse generator has to be set just right to produce universes with different constants, 2) the multiverse is more likely to produce a small universe with Boltzmann brains that pop into existence and then out again, rather than a universe that contains conscious, embodied intelligent agents. I am working on a third response now that would show that the same constants that allow complex, embodied life ALSO allow the universe to be discoverable. This would negate the observer-selection effect required by the multiverse objection.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Millican: I don't see why the multiverse generator has to be fine-tuned, since **we don't know** what the multiverse generator is. I'm not impressed by the Boltzmann brains, but won't discuss. We should be cautious about inferring design because **maybe** this is a case where we are seeing purpose and design where there is none.

Brierley: Can you negate the discoverability of the universe by saying that it might be psychological?

Collins: These things are not psychological. The selected value for the cosmic microwave background radiation is fine-tuned for life and for discoverability. It's not merely a discoverability selection effect, it's optimal for discoverability. If baryon-photon value were much smaller, we would have known that it was not optimal. So that judgment cannot be explained by

Millican: That's a very interesting new twist.

Brierley: Give us your best objection.

Millican: I have two. 1) Even if you admit to the fine-tuning, this doesn't show a being who is omnipotent and omnisicient. What the fine-tuning shows is that the designer is doing the best it can given the constraints from nature. **If I were God,** I would not have made the universe so big, and I wouldn't have made it last 14 billion years, just to make one small area that supports life. An all-powerful God would have made the universe much smaller, and much younger. 2) The fine-tuning allows life to exist in other solar systems in other galaxies. What does this alien life elsewhere mean for traditional Christian theology? The existence of other alien civilizations argues against the truth of any one religion.

Brierley: Respond to those.

Collins: First objection: with a finite Creator, you run into the problem of having to push the design of that creature up one level, so you don't really solve the fine-tuning problem. An unlimited being (non-material, not composed of parts) does not require fine-tuning. The fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than atheism. Second objection: I actually do think that it is likely that are other universes, and life in other galaxies and stars, and the doctrine of the Incarnation is easily adaptable to that, because God can take on

multiple natures to appear to different alien civilizations.

Other resources (from WK)

If you liked this discussion, be sure and check out a full length lecture by Robin Collins on the fine-tuning, and a shorter lecture on his very latest work. And also this the Common Sense Atheism podcast, featuring cosmologist Luke Barnes, who answers about a dozen objections to the fine-tuning argument.

How are carbon taxes and drugs legalization working out in Canada?

June 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's always good for Americans to look north, and see what the secular left is doing in a country where they are the majority. Previously, I blogged about how Canada is expanding their program to kill poor people, people who disagree with the government, people with disabilities, etc. Today I wanted to look at carbon taxes and drug legalization. Let's start with drug legalization.

Here's an article from Daily Wire about Canada:

> Drug overdoses are now the leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 59 in British Columbia after the Canadian province decriminalized several hard drugs.
>
> Deaths from illegal drugs are now higher than homicides, suicides, accidents, and natural disease combined, British Columbia's Public Safety and Solicitor General Ministry said Monday in a press release.
>
> From January to May this year, 1,018 British Columbians died from drug overdoses, a 2.9% increase over that period last year. At least 12,264 British Columbians have died from illegal drugs since April, 2016, according to the ministry.
>
> In January, British Columbia became the first Canadian province to decriminalize fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and morphine.
>
> The British Columbia government promised at the time to "treat addiction as a health issue, not a criminal justice one."

What is very interesting is that this lady said that the reason why they did this is because they want to help the people who take drugs to not be afraid or ashamed:

> "Decriminalizing people who use drugs breaks down the fear and shame associated with substance use and ensures they feel safer reaching out for life-saving supports," Jennifer Whiteside, the British Columbia minister for mental health and addictions, said of the plan at the time.

The root cause of the policy is the desire to "don't judge", so that the evil people can feel as good the good people. The important thing being to help people feel good regardless of what they choose to do. Unfortunately, the no-drugs people have to do all the work to give the yes-drugs people free drugs. And they have to pay for their health care, because Canada has single payer health care.

I had a quick look at the biography of the "minister for mental health and addictions", to see if she had any credentials in law, law enforcement, mental health, or addiction.

Nope:

> Jennifer holds a degree in history from Simon Fraser University.

This is a common problem in Canada, where the Liberal Party of Canada frequently appoints "diversity" candidates to important positions, even though those candidates have no earned degrees or private sector experience related to those positions. So, take the finance minister: she has no degrees or achievements in finance. Take the climate change minister: she has no degrees or achievements in climate science – or any scientific field. It doesn't matter if the person doesn't know how to achieve results in the real world. It matters if they are a "good" person (a secular leftist) and if they say "good things" (secular leftist talking points).

Well, speaking of Climate Barbie, their climate change minister, what about the carbon taxes?

> Even with a small drop in wholesale prices for gasoline on the markets today, he says to look for pump prices to jump to $1.49 on average in most places.
>
> The federal carbon tax is to increase to 14 cents per litre of gasoline from its current level of 11 cents per litre. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, it will cost the average household between $402 and $847 in 2023, even after the rebates.

Keep in mind that these are not "per gallon" prices. Canadians are going to pay $1.49 *per litre*. There are 3.79 litres in a gallon. So their price per gallon of gas is actually 3.79 x $1.49 = $5.65 a gallon. That's nearly twice what I'm paying for gas.

And it gets worse.

The Toronto Sun notes:

> According to the PBO, by 2030 when the carbon tax is fully implemented, the total cost to households after rebates will be significant. In Newfoundland and Labrador middle income households will pay $680 more annually after rebates, $929 in Saskatchewan, $1,028 in Manitoba, $1,118 in PEI, $1,127 in Nova Scotia, $1,269 in Ontario and $1,460 in Alberta.
>
> Households with higher incomes will pay as much as $9,000 a year in carbon tax outcomes.

Is anyone surprised that Canada is going downhill at this precipitous pace? The prime minister is just a part-time drama teacher and ski instructor, who has nice hair and a famous last name. He doesn't know how anything in the real world works. And Canadians pay for his stupidity, because they elected an imbecile.

What can we learn about communist leaders from the record of history?

June 26, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Now that we have atheistic communists in the majority of the House, Senate and White House, it might be a good idea to take a look at what atheistic communist leaders have done in history. First, let's see how the atheistic worldview of communist leaders affected religious people.

Here is what Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

What's the attitude of Democrat candidates to Bible-believing Christians? My read is that they think that Christian values need to be suppressed by the government lest they offend Democrat voters, who seem to be very easily offended these days. You can already see their animus towards Christians in their Equality Act, which eradicates conscience rights in order to protect (some) LGBT people from feeling offended.

The Ukraine Famine

Take a look at this UK Daily Mail article about Josef Stalin.

Excerpt:

> Now, 75 years after one of the great forgotten crimes of modern times, Stalin's man-made famine of 1932/3, the former Soviet republic of Ukraine is asking the world to classify it as a genocide.
>
> The Ukrainians call it the Holodomor – the Hunger.
>
> Millions starved as Soviet troops and secret policemen raided their villages, stole the harvest and all the food in villagers' homes.
>
> They dropped dead in the streets, lay dying and rotting in their houses, and some women became so desperate for food that they ate their own children.
>
> If they managed to fend off starvation, they were deported and shot in their

> hundreds of thousands.
>
> So terrible was the famine that Igor Yukhnovsky, director of the Institute of National Memory, the Ukrainian institution researching the Holodomor, believes **as many as nine million may have died.**
>
> […]Between four and five million died in Ukraine, a million died in Kazakhstan and another million in the north Caucasus and the Volga.
>
> By 1933, 5.7 million households – somewhere between ten million and 15 million people – had vanished. They had been deported, shot or died of starvation.

The Holodomor is just one of the atrocities committed by Soviet Union communists. You may also have heard that they operated a system of labor camps for dissidents that killed millions more. The total number of people killed by Stalin is estimated at 20 to 40 million.

Stalin actually wasn't very good at mass murder compared to another communist, Mao Zedong.

> Can you name the greatest mass murderer of the 20th century? No, it wasn't Hitler or Stalin. It was Mao Zedong.
>
> According to the authoritative "Black Book of Communism," an estimated 65 million Chinese died as a result of Mao's repeated, merciless attempts to create a new "socialist" China. Anyone who got in his way was done away with — by execution, imprisonment or forced famine.
>
> For Mao, the No. 1 enemy was the intellectual. The so-called Great Helmsman reveled in his blood-letting, boasting, "What's so unusual about Emperor Shih Huang of the China Dynasty? He had buried alive 460 scholars only, but we have buried alive 46,000 scholars." Mao was referring to a major "accomplishment" of the Great Cultural Revolution, which from 1966-1976 transformed China into a great House of Fear.
>
> The most inhumane example of Mao's contempt for human life came when he ordered the collectivization of China's agriculture under the ironic slogan, the "Great Leap Forward." A deadly combination of lies about grain production, disastrous farming methods (profitable tea plantations, for example, were turned into rice fields), and misdistribution of food produced the worse famine in human history.
>
> Deaths from hunger reached more than 50 percent in some Chinese villages. The total number of dead from 1959 to 1961 was between 30 million and 40 million — the population of California.
>
> […]Mao kept expanding the laogai, a system of 1,000 forced labor camps throughout China. Harry Wu, who spent 19 years in labor camps, has estimated that from the 1950s through the 1980s, 50 million Chinese passed through the Chinese version of the Soviet gulag. Twenty million died as a result of the primitive living conditions and 14-hour work days.

Whenever I bring up the historical record of communism to Democrats, they always tell me that their leaders have good intentions. But the communist leaders of the past aren't any different from the communist leaders of today. Communist leaders all start out with noble ambitions of wanting to help the poor. The problem is that they don't know anything about economics, so whatever they try doesn't work. Communist policies like nationalizing private industries, printing money, purging wealthy people, imposing tariffs, and imposing price controls cause enormous poverty. And then they need someone to blame for their failure to produce the results they promise.

If we were serious about helping the poor, then we would elect leaders who had experience lifting the poor out of poverty. A business leader or a governor of a state. It's not a popularity contest. We need to choose someone who has already had success at helping the poor. And the best way to help the poor is by helping them to find work so they can earn their own success and chart their own course. After all it's not words that affect our lives. Or the feelings we have about words we like. What affects our lives is policies that produce results. Intentions and rhetoric don't matter, ultimately.

Sweden turning away from “unreliable” wind and solar and back to clean nuclear power

June 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’m very concerned about America switching to renewable energy sources like wind and solar. Renewables are expensive, unstable, unreliable, and harmful to animals – especially birds and bats. I would much prefer if the country relied on fracking and nuclear power, which are zero emission and harmless to animals. Sweden had been focused on renewables, but they’re now moving back to nuclear.

Here’s the story from the The Blaze:

> The Swedish parliament determined last week that in order to ensure the country has a “stable energy system,” it will have to abandon its goal of “100 per cent renewable electricity production by 2040.”
>
> To satisfy electricity demand, which is set to double to around 300 TwH by 2040, Sweden’s right-of-center government announced June 20 that it would instead lean more heavily on nuclear energy and subsidize the construction of new nuclear plants — plants green-lit in 2016 but sidelined for fear they would be too expensive, reported Reuters.
>
> The country, home to just over 10.5 million people, presently has three nuclear plants with six nuclear reactors in commercial operation. The state-owned Vattenfall aims to bring the tally up to eight reactors and refurbish extant facilities.

Wow, what accounts for this big change in direction? Well, the country experiences very cold winters. After poor performance from the renewables during the winter, the people started to demand results – which is why they elected a right-of-center government to make changes.

> Swedish support for nuclear energy is presently at a record high of 56%, up from 42% in 2022, reported Bloomberg.

Sweden knows what to do to fix their energy problems. Other countries are moving to nuclear power in order to get clean, reliable zero-emission low-cost power.

South Korea is going back into nuclear. This article from far-left CNN is from July 2022:

> South Korea, one of the world’s most fossil fuel-reliant economies, is re-embracing nuclear energy, with the government announcing Tuesday it will restart construction on two nuclear reactors and extend the life of those already in operation.
>
> By 2030, the Energy Ministry wants nuclear to make up at least 30% of the country’s power generation – a step up from its previous goal of 27%.

> To meet this, South Korea is restarting construction on two new reactors at the Hanul Nuclear Power Plant on the country's east coast. Construction on the two reactors has been stalled since 2017, when former President Moon Jae-in – who had pushed hard to phase out nuclear energy – took office.
>
> But with a new President in office, South Korea's nuclear industry is returning at full speed.

Japan is restarting their idled nuclear power plants, and planning to build more next-generation nuclear reactors. They need reliable power, and they don't want to count on their neighbors to sell it to them. They want to develop their own energy at home, and lower the prices that their citizens have to pay.

The problem in America is that we've elected people to lead us who have no skills or understanding of how the world works. People like AOC, who were working as bartenders and waitresses are making policy decisions. Why did we elect stupid and corrupt people to run the government? Because they told us what we wanted to hear? I would rather have results than words. This is only going to be fixed when we elect leaders from the grown-up party.

Lori Alexander is right: serious Christian men prefer debt-free virgins without tattoos

June 28, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

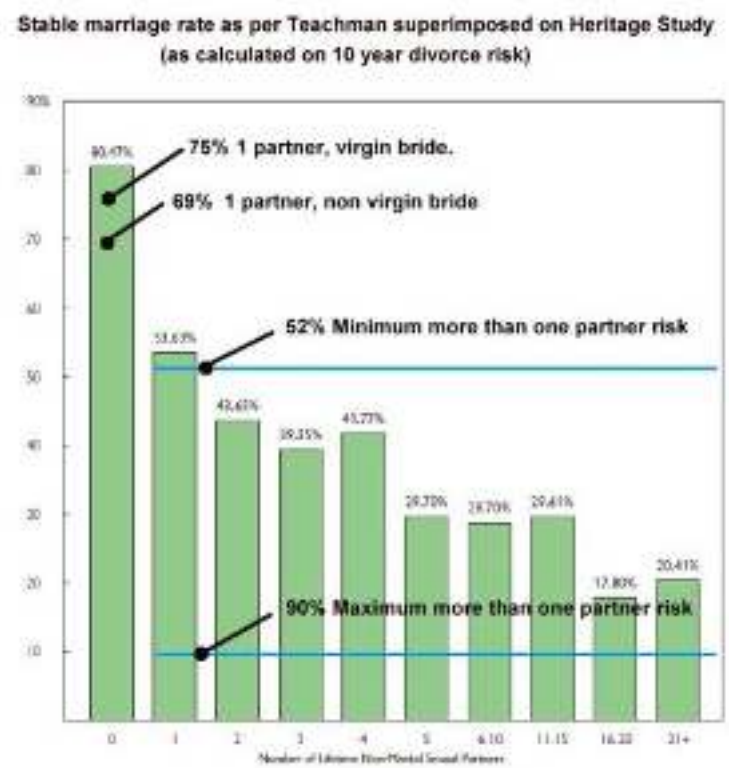

Marriage stability vs sexual partners,(Teachman et al. JAMF, August 2010)

Christian writer Lori Alexander recently wrote a blog post (H/T Lindsay) urging Christian women to do 3 things:

1. be a virgin before marriage
2. be debt-free before marriage
3. don't get any tattoos

She also urged women to be cautious about college, because it often gets them into debt. I disagree with her a little here. I always urge young women to earn a STEM degree in college, then work a few years to pay off their loans (if any) before marrying. This is because women, like men, need to have the experience of doing something hard that they don't "feel" like doing, in order to grow. STEM degrees teach young people that the world doesn't revolve around them, and that their feelings don't matter when trying to solve a problem in the real world. It's a very useful way for women and men to break themselves out of the desire for free and easy happiness that is so common in our time.

Lori's article drew enormous opposition from both secular and Christian sources. So far, the only people defending her are men's rights sites, like Dalrock (Christian) and Spawny (non-Christian). Every other "Christian" blog or news site that I read disagreed her article, and argued that premarital sex was no big deal, that having debt was no big deal, and

that having tattoos was no big deal.

Let's take a look at her three points, then I'll explain why her article is largely correct, and why she is correct about what she asserts about the criteria that godly men have for women.

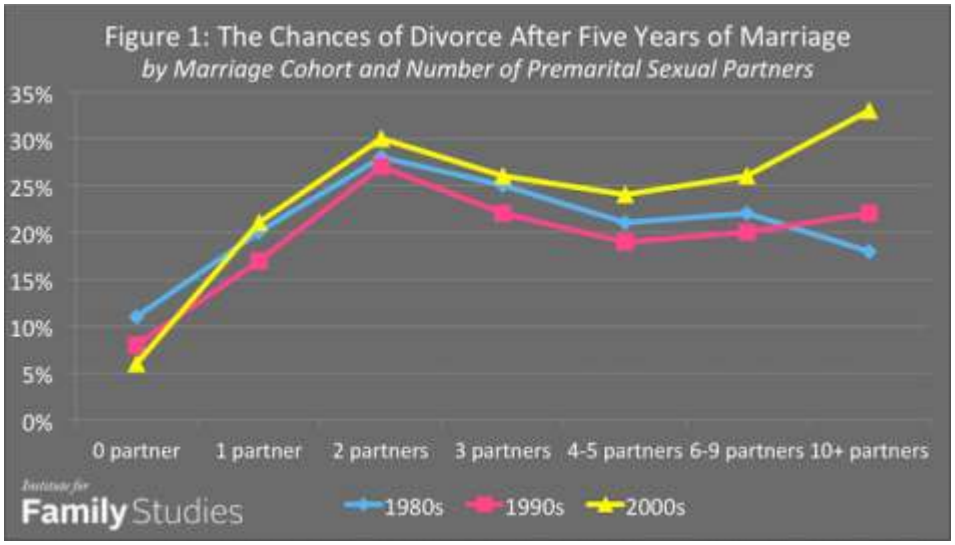

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

Virginity

Regarding her first point, virginity is commanded by the Bible, it's in line with peer-reviewed studies on marriage quality and stability. The reason that people find this difficult is that they want the freedom to give in to sexual desires without feeling shame. They want to believe that there is no permanent effect. It doesn't help that parents and pastors are terrified of telling young people, and young women in particular, that promiscuity harms marital stability. Right now, the culture is drowning in feminism. Feminism tells women that the traditional male roles of provider, protector, and spiritual leader are "sexist". The "best" men are good-looking pro-abortion bad boys. If a Christian woman is not able to think through the meaning of sex with respect to marriage enough to control herself, it seriously harms the stability of her future marriage.

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image)

Debt-free

Regarding her second point, almost everything a serious Christian man might plan to do for Christ with his marriage is impacted by finances. From education, to marriage timing, to number of children, to home ownership, early investment, to the success of children. to age of retirement. Less money means fewer choices, and less ability to counter challenges. Think of how important money for legal defense is to Christian-owned businesses who are being persecuted, for example. The reason that many people find the Bible's teaching on stewardship difficult is that they don't want to exercise self-control with money if they don't feel like it. They want to waste money seeking fun and thrills, and then act like their poverty could not be avoided. Being debt-free is an indicator of practical wisdom and self-control in a woman.

· CHAPTER 9 ·

Tattoos: Don't

This piece of advice may arrive a bit late for you, but I'd rather discomfit you than leave unsaid a reality check for younger friends.

Fads fade; tattoos don't. These permanent displays of youthful exuberance trigger at best mild amusement, but in some a serious concern about your maturity.

Whether or not you believe that concern to be fair, it is real. The tattoo you cover today will be an obstacle in some situations the rest of your life. Do you need it that much? Is it worth compromising your effectiveness?

This rule of tattoos is easily applied to many other areas of your style of living. Do you do anything to call attention to yourself or to make a statement? If so, is the attention worth it? Most such indulgences are self-defeating, whether it is idiosyncratic hair or clothes, a loud motorcycle, or—later in life—a palatial residence far beyond any ordinary need. The attention you are drawing to yourself is defeating your ambition by marking you as concerned with silly things.

Serious people do not seek attention except for serious purposes.

Chapter 9 of Hugh Hewitt's "In, But Not Of: A Guide to Christian Ambition"

Tattoos

Tattoos are a problem for serious Christian men for several reasons. First, they cost money and for no gain, and can even cause you losses in your career. Second, most people get them because of low self-esteem or vanity or to look rebellious or to look dangerous. None of these motivations should be acted upon by someone with a robust Christian worldview. The money could be better used on charity, or investments, etc. Women show what their priorities really are by how they spend their money and time. Show me a woman's bookshelf, and I'll tell you how seriously she has thought about what it means to be a Christian in all areas of life. Instead of showing me your tattoos to demonstrate your "spirituality", show me your apologetics books, to demonstrate your intellectual engagement. And tell me how you used that information to engage in conversations with educated non-Christians to answer their challenges to your faith. That way I'll know that you use your money to train do hard things in order to have an influence for Christ in serious, practical, effective ways. A woman who can defend her faith and discuss Christianity with non-Christians is demonstrating her ability to raise Christian children in a secular society.

A family praying and reading the Bible

The goal of marriage is to serve God

Today, young people have been taught to follow their hearts, and to deny that there is any authority or practical wisdom that should govern their decisions. They always imagine themselves to be exempt from moral rules, statistics, cause and effect, etc. They think they know better than everyone else – even though they do almost no research on their own. Every adviser who tells them to study computer science instead of creative writing is wrong. Their same-age friends know more about what causes divorces than peer-reviewed research papers. And money should be spent on skydiving and zip-lining, regardless of what financial experts like Dave Ramsey might say.

A woman who has made many mistakes cannot fix those mistakes with words. Rationalizations, evasions, and blame-shifting do not work to show that there has been real repentance. The man can only assess whether grace has caused any real re-prioritization of goals by evaluating her outward actions over a long period of time. Furthermore, if a woman who has made mistakes attacks those who correct her from Bible's teachings on chastity, stewardship, etc., then it's a sign that there is no real repentance.

Choosing a wife wisely doesn't mean that Christian men treat OTHER Christian women poorly. Christian men love all the Christian women. We care for them and support them. But when a man chooses a wife, he is choosing someone who will have more influence on his ability to serve God than anyone else. In my case, the goals for my marriage involve making a difference with apologetics in the church, having many children who will receive the educations and careers they need to have an influence, influencing government to promote Christian-friendly policies, charitable giving, mentoring young Christians, modeling a good marriage to others, and having a home that can serve to host discussions about issues that matter. These things are not free – they take careful planning and execution to achieve.

Lori's advice is intended for men who are serious about making their marriage produce a return for God. Men who are chaste themselves. Men who accept the Bible as an

authority. Men who earned STEM degrees, instead of easy nonsense degrees that don't lead to good careers. Men who earn 6-figure salaries, who buy houses for cash, and who are on track have a 7-figure net worth by age 50. Men who made good decisions cannot risk marrying someone who hasn't prepared for marriage. The wrong woman in the home could ruin the man's effort to produce a marriage that gives glory to God.

Not every man intends to achieve something for God with his marriage, but those who do need to choose a woman who has demonstrated ability at doing the job. For example, if the job requires marital fidelity, then chastity is a good indicator that the woman has the necessary self-control. If the job requires frugality, and practicality, then being debt-free, having a STEM degree, and having some private sector work experience are good indicators that she's qualified for the role. Nothing valuable in life is ever been achieved by being lazy, wild and irresponsible. Serious Christian men look for wives who have applied themselves to difficult tasks that they didn't feel like doing, who achieved success by remaining committed to the plan, in spite of their unhappy feelings and unmet desires.

We have a problem in the church such that we aren't serious about teaching young people to develop marriage-ready character and to make serious plans for marriage. We are teaching them to follow their hearts, and that their feelings and desires are clues about God's will for their happiness. We are teaching them to be uncomfortable with responsibilities, expectations and obligations to others. We are teaching them not to do their own research. We are teaching them not to make practical, wise plans. We are teaching them to ATTACK those who try to get them to be serious about doing what is likely to work. This approach is not working.

My own criteria for a wife are more demanding than Lori's. My advice there is only for serious Christian men who want their marriage to serve God.

Michigan advances bill that makes it a felony to make someone “feel” threatened

June 29, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For years on this blog I’ve been observing what happens to freedom of speech and freedom of religion in countries where the secular left takes power. Michigan is a state that used to be purple, but they’ve moved further and further to the secular left. Let’s take a look at some of their recent leftist actions, then find out what is in their latest piece of anti-free-speech legislation.

Things started to get ugly when the Democrats did very well in the 2022 mid-term elections:

> Democrats are projected to win key races and ballot measures across the board in the Great Lakes State, led by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s re-election victory. The party is also set to win multiple tight U.S. House races, enshrine a right to abortion in the state’s constitution, and take control of the state legislature for the first time in 40 years.

It’s the first time since 1983 that Democrats have had control of the legislature. When I think of purple states like North Carolina, they still have a very good conservative legislature. So a Democrat legislature really shows you how far Michigan has fallen. You would think that after Gretchen Whitmer’s horrendous handling of COVID (compared to Florida Governor Ron DeSantis) that they would have thrown the Democrats out, but they didn’t.

It’s not just putting a right to abortion into the state’s constitution. They also repealed the right to work without joining a union:

> Michigan Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer enacted legislation repealing right-to-work laws in the state on Friday, the first time such laws have been overturned in five decades.

So, if you are working in a union dominated field, you have to join a union and pay dues. Unions are overwhelmingly Democrat, and they tend to get involved in the worst social issues. I could never join a union, and now people are being forced to.

This case of a secular leftist shooting an 84-year-old pro-life woman was particularly disturbing:

> A Michigan man who shot an 84-year-old woman campaigning against abortion was sentenced to 100 hours of community service on Tuesday, according to the Associated Press.

She was shot *in the back* by the gunman. But Democrats LOVE when guns are used against Republicans, so he gets a slap on the wrist.

What about election fraud? That's apparently not a serious thing in Michigan:

> A local official in Flint, Michigan, was sentenced to six months of house arrest Monday for misconduct in office after sabotaging a ballot box in her own election in 2020.
>
> After votes were cast in the 2020 primary election for her seat as township clerk, Funk sabotaged the ballot box, making the ballots ineligible for a recount, according to investigators.
>
> She went on to win the general election later that fall.

It's OK, because Democrats are allowed to do that. Michigan in particular has poor election integrity, coming in at rank 28 out of 50, in a recent ranking of election integrity.

Well, with all that said, let's see the latest atrocity from the far left in Michigan, reported by Daily Wire:

> A Michigan hate speech bill that has passed the state House and is now in the hands of the Senate is alarming conservatives, people of faith, and legal experts.
>
> The bill, HB 4474, is part of a package of legislation that would replace Michigan's existing Ethnic Intimidation Act and make it a hate crime to cause someone to "feel terrorized, frightened, or threatened." Under the bill's framework, "sexual orientation" and "gender identity or expression" are included as classes protected against intimidation. If passed, the hate speech legislation would make violators guilty of a felony punishable by up to five years in prison and a fine of $10,000.

Here's a good comment explaining what the bill means to Christians and conservatives who are stuck in Michigan:

> Rep. Angela Rigas, a Republican freshman in the state House, told The Daily Wire that including sexual orientation and gender identity as a "protected class" specifically targets conservatives who speak out against radical gender ideology.
>
> "The state of Michigan is now explicitly allowing the gender delusion issue to be used as a 'protected class.' This opens up numerous issues when it comes to the courts and the continued weaponization of the system against conservatives," Rigas said. "We saw similar concerns when they wanted to pass blocks on 'conversion' therapy. It seems Dems want to be in the business of telling people how to think. We are determined to keep choice and opinion a free choice despite those efforts."

I'm not sure why people would continue to pay taxes to the secular leftists in the Michigan government. You're literally paying for the rope that the fascists will use to hang you. And why? Because you say something that's offensive to them.

Get out of that state.

New study: Biden's regulations have cost nearly every American household about $10,000

June 30, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In Canada, things a cost a lot more than in America. Canada imposes a lot of anti-business regulations and taxes on businesses. For example, businesses have to pay part of the costs of "free health care" for their employees, and they pass those costs on to consumers. Joe Biden also introduced a lot of government regulations since he became president. And we're paying for it.

Here's an article about a new study in the UK Daily Mail:

> Joe Biden's slew of regulations implemented over the course of his two-and-a-half years running the country have cost every American household nearly $10,000.
>
> If the president continues on his current regulation path and is reelected for a second term in 2024, according to the report from the Committee to Unleash Prosperity, Americans could be slammed with a $60,000 increase in costs by 2028.

The study is authored by Casey B. Mulligan, an economist and professor of economics at the prestigious University of Chicago. He also served as chief economist at the White House Council of Economic Advisers.

Here are some of the key findings from the study:

> - As of the end of 2022, the Biden administration imposed new regulatory costs on American households and businesses at a pace surpassing that of the Obama administration during a comparable period.
> - The added costs from these Biden-era final rules, which include both their current and expected future costs, amount to almost $10,000 per household. If regulatory costs continue to rise at the same rate as they did during the Obama administration, the total costs of Biden's rulemaking over an eight-year period would almost reach $60,000 per household.
> - While the automobile fuel economy and emissions standards contribute the greatest single cost, they still account for only a third of the total regulatory costs. Collectively, health, labor, telecommunications, and consumer finance regulations impose costs that exceed those of automobile regulations.

It looks like the costs imposed by these regulations will get a lot worse, should Biden win

a second term. $60,000 per household.

The UK Daily Mail article notes that these costs are separate from inflation, which has also increased during Biden's first term:

> The regulations have contributed to only one part of the massive increased financial burden on Americans since Biden took office, with inflation also impacting consumers' bottom line.
>
> From Biden's election in 2020 to current day, inflation has risen a total of 16.45 percent.
>
> Some items are affected more than others – like food and grocery costs.
>
> Americans saw the cost of beef rise at a much faster rate than average inflation with a 20.4 percent increase from April 2021 to April 2022. And in that same time period the cost of chicken went up by 13.4 percent, while eggs went up by 11.2 percent.

I'm really surprised to see Biden polling competitively with Trump and DeSantis in swing states. In my mind, people should notice that their savings are going down, and their debts are going up, and realize that something is going wrong with our laws and policies.

Far-left CNN posted this in May 2023:

> Americans' debt levels continue to climb to new heights at a time when economic conditions are becoming increasingly less stable.
>
> Household debt balances set a fresh record high of $17.05 trillion during the first quarter, growing $148 billion or 0.9% from the fourth quarter of last year, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York reported Monday.
>
> That debt load has spiked by $2.9 trillion since the end of 2019.
>
> During the first quarter, the increases in debt were seen across practically all categories, with larger (and new record) balances for mortgages, home equity lines of credit, auto loans, student loans, retail cards and other consumer loans.

Does anyone know why Biden is polling around 50% versus Republican candidates? I don't understand why anyone would vote to impoverish themselves and their families. Americans aren't doing well under his leadership, and we should vote for a change of direction in 2024.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 34: Are All Religions the Same, Part 2

July 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 34 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose start a new discussion about truth in religion. Are religious truth claims the same as ordinary truth claims? How can you test a religion to see if it is teaching the truth? If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 34:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose continue discussing whether all religions are equally valid paths to God. In this episode, we look at what different worldviews say about whether the universe is actually designed, or only appears to be designed. We look at scientific evidence for design of the universe, our galaxy, our star, our planet and our moon. We then answer objections to design in nature, and talk about our experiences presenting this evidence to skeptics. This is the second episode of a three-part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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- The Privileged Planet book and audio book
- William Lane Craig vs Christopher Hitchens debate
- Romans 1

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Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

July 2, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang
– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws

– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection
– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus

– god wouldn’t have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that’s a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that’s a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that’s a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don’t support life, that’s a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that’s a bad design

3. hitchens’ burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can’t prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig’s scientific arguments don’t go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don’t prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don’t prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn’t be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig’s evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can’t use the progress of science
– it’s too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god’s existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn’t forming his view based on evidence
– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don’t believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you’ve got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God

– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH’s evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH’s argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn’t need to be efficient

CH’s argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH’s argument that Craig’s scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH’s argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn’t need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH’s citation of Craig’s book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true
– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH’s rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH’s rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH’s argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed

– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them
– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that's a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven't even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn't prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they're growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn't improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do

– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn't need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that's why people act morally
– it's degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don't know why, because i can't ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don't hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don't believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don't agree

WC moral argument: it's not epistemology it's the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing

– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history
– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it's just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that's not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

The desire to be “winsome” led to the persecution of Christians in America

July 3, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We had a few wins in the Supreme Court, including one of them on the issue of free speech and religious liberty. I found an article about it that made me have a lot of thoughts about why this case went all the way to the Supreme Court – in a country where the rights to free speech and religious liberty are in the Constitution.

Here’s Kylee Griswold in The Federalist, talking about the recent Supreme Court decisions:

> *303 Creative* has finally been decided, and Christians — and all Americans — won. In a 6-3 landmark decision on Friday, the Supreme Court ruled that graphic designer Lorie Smith can’t be compelled to affirm values that conflict with her deeply held religious beliefs about marriage by designing wedding websites for same-sex couples.

How did we get to the point where Christians can be dragged into courts, and lose, and lose, and lose their cases, until they finally win in the Supreme Court? Well, part of the problem is people who claim to be Christians, but act like non-Christians. People who don’t really KNOW whether Christianity is true or not – because they haven’t done the apologetics work. People who just claim Christianity, in order to virtue signal to others. And what happens when Christianity falls out of favor in the culture, and no longer gets them the admiration and validation they crave? Well, then they shift their allegiance to the secular left, but still keeping the language of Christians to describe their apostasy.

More:

> It’s called “winsomeness.” Being winsome is not a novel idea, obviously, nor even a Christian one. To be winsome is to be charming, attractive, or appealing with one’s demeanor or character — an admirable goal, to be sure, and one that should apply to Christians.
>
> But in coopting the idea into a veritable doctrine, Christian leaders morphed winsomeness from a desirable trait into a hermeneutic through which they judge all Christian conviction and conduct… winsomeness became a trump card in matters of spiritual significance. Religious and thought leaders, such as Russell Moore and David French among many others, became victims of the mind virus and infected hordes of others.
>
> […]The gist of the “winsome” ethos is that for Christians to be faithful, they must be perceived as kind and likable by the unbelieving world they hope to evangelize. And the symptoms are easy to identify. Appeasement to radicals. A tossing of other faithful Christians under the bus. Race-baiting wrapped in Christian-ese. An unwillingness to celebrate God-given victory if the “wrong”

> leader made it happen. Deference to tyranny. Hatred of masculinity. The list goes on.

Hatred of masculinity. Most people – even people in the church – like to cash out masculinity as mere protection and providing. It's "servant leadership" according to a recent book by an evangelical egalitarian author. But masculinity doesn't just mean protecting and providing. Masculinity also means moral leadership and spiritual leadership. It means defending morally good beliefs and actions, and fighting against morally evil beliefs and actions. It means defending truth claims, and fighting against lies. So, Christian men can't be "winsomely" capitulating to the secular left on truth and morality. Not if they want to be masculine Christian men.

More:

> But there's a glaring problem with the "winsome" worldview: It ultimately measures a Christian's fidelity to the gospel based on how he is perceived by God's enemies — and in the process, it implies Christians who aren't adored by their unregenerate neighbors are unloving.
>
> So you put your obvious pronouns in your email signature because everyone else at work does it, and you don't want to be known as "that bigot" in your office. Or you post a black box on Instagram because even though you know it serves more to divide people by the color of their skin than to unite them, it looks virtuous. Or you party at your gay friend's wedding because even though you know that union defies God's design for marriage, you don't want to have an awkward conversation or risk jeopardizing a relationship. Or you say yes to a design job for a woman's group that promotes abortions because you don't want them to pass over you for the next opportunity.
>
> […]This version of Christianity doesn't work. What you end up with on the one hand are craven Christians who pat themselves on the back for their likeability while being largely untethered from all principles save the approval of man (which conveniently endows worldly status and prestige, such as a perch at The New York Times).

What should we expect the Christian life to be like if we read the Bible? Well, according to people like Russell Moore, you should expect to go to the White House and meet with Barack Obama and smile with him, despite the fact that he voted for abortion of *born-alive infants* several times as a state senator in Illinois. It's better to be liked by a pro-abortion radical like Obama, than to defend the argument that it should be illegal to abort unborn children. And consider people like David French. He gets articles in the New York Times, but he doesn't defend the truth of Christianity or Christian moral values in those articles. He just wants to be liked by the secular leftist readers of the New York Times.

But what does the Bible really teach about standing up for the truth? Will it make non-Christians like you?

> It no doubt would have been easier for Daniel and his buddies to have bowed to

> the statue of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar at his command. After all, showing respect and submission to the king would have cemented the young men in his good graces and perhaps given them spiritual sway down the road. But Daniel's operating principle wasn't likeability or world-defined niceness. It was a fear of God and undivided devotion that empowered the young Jewish exile to look a fiery death squarely in the face and say with confidence I will not bow.

My favorite passage about faithfulness in the Bible is 1 Corinthians 4:1-4. We did an episode of Knight and Rose Show where I talked about my favorite passages of the Bible, where I talked about that one. Check it out if you haven't heard it already.

For Independence Day, let’s learn about George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

July 4, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington’s line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington’s retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington’s army at White Plains, New York,

> British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after

> months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
>
> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
>
> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.

> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
>
> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
>
> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

What should Christians bring up when discussing truth with Muslims?

July 5, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have some experience dicussing Islam because my mother's side of the family is all Muslim. My go-to argument has always been to confront them about the Qur'an's claim that Jesus did not die of crucifixion. But I noticed a different argument from Laura Powell, who knows far more about this topic than I do. Do you think her approach is the best one?

She writes about it over at her blog, An Affair with Reason:

> The crux of the argument is this: The Qur'an affirms the inspiration, authority, and preservation of the New Testament Gospels;[2] yet the Qur'an also contradicts the Gospels on major theological and historical points. Therefore, the Qur'an cannot be reliable.
>
> According to the Qur'an, the Gospel is the trustworthy, reliable revelation of God given as a guidance for mankind (Qur'an 3:3-4). These Scriptures from God were available and trustworthy when the Qur'an was revealed in the 7th century A.D., and those who had access to them were repeatedly told to obey them, judge by them, submit to their teaching, and stand fast upon them. In other words, according to the Qur'an, the Gospels are the inspired and authoritative words of God.
>
> Qur'an 5:47 says, "And let the People of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed—then it is those who are the defiantly disobedient."
>
> Furthermore, Qur'an 5:68 states, "Say, 'O People of the Scripture, you are [standing] on nothing until you uphold [the law of] the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to you from your Lord'" (see also 6:114; 3:3-4).

What I like about her argument is that she's just taking the words of the Qur'an seriously, and asking the Muslims who claim to believe it what's going on here. Why say that the gospels are unreliable today, when the Qur'an said that the gospels were reliable, yesterday.

My argument about the death of Jesus requires us to ask Muslims "where is the non-Muslim historian who thinks that Jesus did not die?" There isn't one.

But my argument requires that the Muslim know something about historical scholarship, to know what non-Muslim historians think.Laura's argument has wider appeal, because it doesn't require that the Muslim have *any* knowledge about history – only knowledge about what their own holy book says.

She concludes with this:

> What we see here is that the Qur'an teaches the inspiration, authority, and

> preservation of the Gospels. The Qur’an was intended as an Arabic version of the message of truth found in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, but this presents a huge problem for Muslims because the Qur’an contradicts the Christian Scriptures on essential doctrines. Most notably, the Qur’an teaches that Jesus was not God incarnate, he did not die on a cross, and he was not raised from the dead (Qur’an 4:157; 5:116).
>
> Here’s the dilemma for Muslims: If the Gospels *are not* trustworthy, then the Qur’an is false because it teaches that the Gospels are the inspired, perfectly preserved, authoritative words of God. But if the Gospels *are* trustworthy, then the Qur’an is false because it teaches contradictory, mutually exclusive facts about key issues. Either way, the Qur’an is false.
>
> This, of course, is a huge problem for Muslims. The validity of Islam rests upon the reliability of the Qur’an, just as Christianity rests upon the truth of the divinity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. If the Qur’an is unreliable, then Islam is a false religion.

I like that she’s comfortable having disagreements with people. That’s not very common in the church today, in my experience.

By the way, this is the same Laura who wrote that really good article about how she found a better way to discuss her Christian worldview when she moved on from sharing her testimony. I blogged about it here.

Is the new Jim Caviezel movie “Sound of Freedom” worth watching?

July 6, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, Rose went to see the new Jim Caviezel movie on Wednesday night, and she reported back to me. She said it was the best movie she’s ever seen, or close to it. In this post, I wanted to go over a couple of points about the movie, then we’ll hear from the famous actor. Then I want to say something about whether society wants men to lead on moral and spiritual issues.

So, to start, something from Christian Post:

> Devout Christian actor Jim Caviezel, who stars in the upcoming film “Sound of Freedom,” is calling on 2 million people to stand with him and expose the evil of child exploitation and trafficking.
>
> Scheduled for release on July 4, “Sound of Freedom” tells the true story of one man’s journey to combat child sex trafficking. The studio behind the film, Angel Studios, unveiled the first trailer at their Illuminate event on Thursday.
>
> “God’s children are not for sale,” the actor declares in the trailer.
>
> Caviezel then delivered a call to action for anyone willing to buy a ticket to see the film and raise awareness against this prevalent form of slavery.
>
> “We know this is heartbreaking and it hurts to look at, but the first step in helping these children is hearing their story. Not enough people know this problem exists and even fewer people are willing to do anything about it,” Caviezel declared.
>
> “Our goal is to inspire 2 million people to attend the film’s opening weekend to represent the 2 million trafficked children around the world.”
>
> […]“Sound of Freedom” is based on the life of Tim Ballard, a former U.S. agent who battles human trafficking after rescuing a little boy whose sister remained captive to traffickers and was sent to Colombia.

Hollywood, which is largely dominated by secular leftist Democrats, does not like movies that are critical of pedophilia and sex-trafficking.

> The film was rejected by multiple Hollywood studios but Angel Studios acquired worldwide distribution rights earlier this year.
>
> Angel Studios is a platform for filmmakers to collaborate with the audience and bring projects to life by crowdfunding. It currently creates and distributes films and TV series worldwide and is known as the studio behind “The Chosen” and “Dry Bar Comedy.”
>
> Angel Studios CEO Neal Harmon said his company feels a responsibility to take action and answer the prayers of the 2 million children around the world who are

> crying for freedom.

You can't watch the movie on Netflix, HBO Max, Hulu, or Amazon Prime, because they apparently oppose movies that make pedophiles and sex-traffickers feel bad.

According to this video, Disney did not want the movie to come out, which is understandable, given their actions in Florida:

This interview with Caviezel is also very good, and makes the point that Hollywood is opposed to movies that are critical of pedophilia and sex-trafficking of children.

So what I wanted to comment on was this article that Rose sent me from the Daily Wire, which has some challenging words for Christians about moral evils like sex-trafficking:

> "The problem is that modern day Christianity has become so weak and useless," Caviezel told Fox News Digital in a new interview. "I mean, modern day Christians are more afraid of the devil than they are of God. God could destroy the devil without a glance, but he looks to us to make a decision."
>
> The "Person of Interest" actor went on to say that Americans mostly "don't want" God in their lives, which has led to the overall deterioration of society.

So I wanted to say something about whether Christians – especially Christian men – are allowed to make truth claims and moral claims. I think a lot of opposition to truth and morality comes from inside the church. Let me explain.

I have no problem with Christian teachings like a real, eternal Hell or the immorality of homosexuality. But when I bring up my views in Christian environments, it is not well received by emotional people in the church. And that's because the emotional people in the church are forming their views on truth and morality based on their feelings. They liked the idea of postmodernism – that things are true and false based on feelings. They liked the idea of relativism – that right and wrong are different for each person. When they hear a man claiming that something is false, or that something is wrong, they feel bad. They want everything to be equally true, and they want everything to be equally right. "Don't judge" they say.

That's what I see happening today. This emotion-dominated view of truth and morality has taken over the culture, making it hard for Christian men to lead on moral and spiritual issues. The new religion is "don't judge". So, when a man sees someone acting in reckless, irresponsible ways, he cannot be allowed to identify their action as the root cause and shame them for it. Because that would hurt their tender feelings. The answer to evils can only ever be that other people are forcing the bad behavior. "The cause is systemic, so don't judge" the emotional people say. And then the emotional people demand that you solve problems with forgiveness and redistributing wealth to equalize outcomes.

I have even had one woman tell me not to judge women who have unpaid student loans for useless degrees, because "if God forgives them, then you have no right to speak out against student loans for useless degrees". That's where we are now. "Don't judge" is

ruling and reigning our culture. We can never warn people before they make a costly mistake, by telling them the truth, or by telling them what's right and wrong. That's "judging". We have to let them follow their hearts, and then pay the costs ourselves.

Imagine that you walk into the house and find the floors covered with 2 inches of water. You go upstairs and find that all the faucets in the bathtub, shower and sinks are on, and overflowing. You say "It's wrong to flood the house" and then you take action to turn off the faucets. Right now, the emotional people are telling the truth and morality people not to turn off the faucets, but to take a bucket and throw water out. Why? Because we don't want to make the person who opened the faucets feel bad for doing reckless, irresponsible actions. Just leave the faucets on, and grab a bucket instead.

Well, I'm not going to use my time, money and effort to fix problems without addressing the root cause. Either we go back to allowing men to tell the truth and defend right and wrong – even if some people's feelings are hurt – or we can count men out of solving problems. Men are not designed to be servants who tip-toe around the feelings of other people. Men tell the truth, and men defend the moral law. We are not here to be the clowns and servants of emotional people. And we are not here to be *slowed down* in our championing of truth and morality by the emotional people.

New study: Contraceptives double risk of depression in teenage girls

July 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Sydney Morning Herald reports:

> A Danish study of a million women has found a link between the use of hormonal contraception such as the the pill and increased risk of depression.
>
> Compared with non-users, women and teenage girls aged 15 to 34 who used hormonal contraception had a 1.23 times higher risk of being diagnosed with depression, especially adolescents, according to a paper published in the journal JAMA Psychiatry.
>
> Researchers at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark analysed health registry data of one million Danish women from 2000 and followed them up after an average of six years.
>
> Of the 55 per cent of those who used hormonal contraception, there were just over 23,000 first diagnoses of depression at the time of follow up.
>
> More than 133,000 had received their first prescription of antidepressants.
>
> The highest risk of depression was among the adolescent girls, who had a 1.8-times higher risk of first use of an antidepressant.
>
> The risk varied slightly among the different types of hormonal contraception, but the risk was three times higher among those who used non-oral products, such as progestogen implants.
>
> Few studies have quantified the effect of low-dose hormonal contraception on the risk for depression, but study author Ojvind Lidegaard says their research warrants the need for further studies into the potential adverse effects of the pill.
>
> “Use of hormonal contraceptives was associated with subsequent antidepressant use and first diagnosis of depression at a psychiatric hospital among women living in Denmark.
>
> “Adolescents seemed to be more vulnerable to this risk than women 20 to 34 years old,” Lidegaard said.

Of course, one wonders where these studies were BEFORE the pill was championed by the radical feminists. We didn’t have studies before we adopted abortion, no-fault divorce, single mother welfare and gay marriage, either. Do you think that those might have unintended consequences? Shouldn’t we care about the consequences before we adopt policies that go against traditional moral values?

Anyway, let’s review some studies on birth control pills, since no one ever tells young people these things before it’s too late.

This is from the ultra-leftist Time magazine, of all places.

Excerpt:

> Dr. David Gaist, a neurologist at Odense University Hospital and the University of Southern Denmark, and his colleagues found that women taking hormonal contraceptives — those containing estrogen, progestin or a combination of both — showed higher rates of a rare brain tumor known as glioma. Their results, published Thursday in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*, raise questions about the connection between oral contraceptives and brain cancer, but shouldn't yet be interpreted as a reason to stop taking birth control, says Gaist.
>
> Using data from Denmark's national registries of health records, cancer cases and prescriptions, Gaist zeroed in on the women aged 15 years to 49 years diagnosed with glioma, and then analyzed whether they were prescribed contraceptives and for how long. **Overall, women who had used hormonal contraceptives at any point in their lives showed a 50% higher risk of developing the brain tumors compared to those who had not used them. And women who used the birth control for more than five years nearly doubled their risk of the cancer.**

Let's take a look at some previous studies on the effects of contraceptives.

From the Times of India.

Excerpt:

> Women who take oral contraceptives regularly are at a higher risk of developing breast cancer compared to others, shows a study by AIIMS doctors. Breast cancer risk was found to be 9.5 times more in women with a history of consuming such pills. Early menstruation cycle, late marriage and lower duration of breastfeeding were the other major factors responsible for the disease among Indians, according to the study published in the latest issue of the Indian Journal of Cancer.

> The study was conducted on 640 women, of which 320 were breast cancer patients. "We found long-term use of oral contraceptive pills (OCP) higher among those suffering from breast cancer-11.9%-compared to healthy individuals-1.2%," said Dr Umesh Kapil, a professor at the public health nutrition unit, AIIMS. He said breast cancer is caused by repeated exposure of breast cells to circulating ovarian hormones, and long-term use of OCPs, which contain estrogen and progesterone, may be increasing this risk by causing hormonal imbalance.

> The study mostly had women who used OCPs for birth control. Emergency contraceptives, popularly called morning-after pills, were not included.

This is not the first study, nor even the second study, to confirm this link.

Birth control pills

Many studies showed that taking birth control pills caused an increased risk of breast cancer.

Study 1: (March 2003)

> RESULTS: Among the youngest age group (<35 years, n = 545), significant predictors of risk included African-American race (RR = 2.66: 95% CI 1.4-4.9) and **recent use of oral contraceptives** (RR = 2.26; 95% CI 1.4-3.6). Although these relationships were strongest for estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) tumors (RRs of 3.30 for race and 3.56 for recent oral contraceptive use), these associations were also apparent for young women with ER+ tumors. Delayed childbearing was a risk factor for ER+ tumors among the older premenopausal women (Ptrend < 0.01), but not for women <35 years in whom early childbearing was associated with an increased risk, reflecting a short-term increase in risk immediately following a birth.

Study 2: (October 2008)

> **Oral contraceptive use ≥1 year was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk for triple-negative breast cancer** (95% confidence interval, 1.4-4.3) and no significantly increased risk for non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.008). Furthermore, the risk among oral contraceptive users conferred by longer oral contraceptive duration and by more recent use was significantly greater for triple-negative breast cancer than non-triple-negative breast cancer ($P_{heterogeneity}$ = 0.02 and 0.01, respectively).

When people talk about a war on women, maybe they should be thinking about this practice of promoting behaviors to women that make them sick. And eventually, we all have to pay for the increased costs of health care when we encourage people to do things that make them sick. We should not be promoting birth control to young women in order to enable them to have recreational sex. It’s not worth the harm it causes them. When you add in the psychological damage and the risk of abortion if the contraception fails, it really is not the right thing to tell a young woman.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

July 8, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

Does the Bible say that you should forgive someone who does not repent?

July 9, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kevin Lewis, a professor of Theology and Law at the conservative Biola University, was asked this question:

> Recently, I was reading Dr. Kenneth Bailey's "Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes" (IVP press 2008). When commenting on Matthew 6:12-13, he writes,
>
> "It is a common human assumption that the violator of the rights of others must ask for forgiveness before the wronged party can be expected to accept the apology and grant forgiveness…But Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when when there is no confession of guilt… There is a voice from the cross that echoes across history to all saying 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' Neither Pilate nor the high priest nor the centurion offered any apology to Jesus, yet he prayed for divine forgiveness…(p.125)"

And here's some of his response copied with permission from his Facebook note:

> First, regarding God and His forgiveness, it is undisputed in orthodox Christian theology that God does not forgive everyone. The doctrine of Hell is a sufficient proof of the lack of universal forgiveness by God.
>
> Next, it is clear that God does not forgive without repentance. This doctrine is taught in a number of texts. For example, in Luke 13:3 Jesus says, "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." In Mark 1:15 John the Baptist commands that we must "repent and believe the Gospel." The connection between repentance and forgiveness of sins (i.e. "salvation") is seen throughout the Scriptures. For example, in Acts 2:38 repentance is directly connected as a condition for the remission of sins. For additional examples of this connection see Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30-31; Romans 2:4-5; II Corinthians 7:10; II Tim. 2:25-26.
>
> So since we are to be imitators of God and forgive in the same way God forgives, we would expect the Scriptures to be consistent, stating that the condition of repentance is required to be fulfilled before believers are required to forgive each other's sins. It does.
>
> Jesus stated in Luke 17:3, "If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him." Here, the meaning is clear. The word "if" (Grk. ean) introduces the condition for a rebuke and for granting forgiveness. If (subjunctive) a person sins, we must (imperative) rebuke him, and if (subjunctive) he repents, we must (imperative) forgive him. This is as clear a statement as you will find on the subject. Forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance—and this is one of the same

criteria that God requires before He forgives sin.

This principle of permitting believers to withhold forgiveness unless the condition of repentance is satisfied is also explicitly seen in Matthew 18:15-17. Compared with the Luke 17:3 text above, the situation is the same. If a brother sins, reprove him; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. Here, the word “reprove” is used rather than “rebuke” and the word “listen” is employed rather than “repent,” but the meaning is virtually identical to Luke 17:3. What we see in Matthew 18 is an escalation of the issue and the result if the person fails to repent (i.e. “listen”). If the person fails to repent, we are to shun him in all appropriate ways (v. 17).

[…]Finally, I would make the case that it is harmful to a person to forgive him without requiring repentance. As seen above, the Bible is clear that sin requires a rebuke. Ignoring sin teaches sinners that sin does not bring consequences. This is harmful to their souls. Continuing to have the benefit of a righteous relationship with another and yet remain in sin against that person results in fostering a habituation of sinful inclinations in their soul, which God says brings about suffering and death.

Moreover, since the ultimate purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation, it is meaningless and harmful to forgive when no reconciliation may be had with the sinner. We cannot “walk together” in a biblical manner in righteous peace when the unrepentant sinner walks in unrighteousness. Necessarily, there is a conflict and a want of shalom. Their soul is headed in a different direction than the believer’s soul; they are walking away from God and we cannot have fellowship with darkness. God has no intimate fellowship with unrepentant people, and that is the model for Christians as well (See Matt. 18).

Regarding personal anger issues commonly raised by Christian psychologists, these types of psychologists unbiblically make unconditional forgiveness a part of therapy. By contrast, however, if a counselee will not forgive after the offending party has truly repented, the counselee sins, and this kind of unforgiveness may be one of the causes of his or her problems. But this is a separate issue from universal and unconditional forgiveness raised above.

Human beings in the image of God may be angry in appropriate ways (Eph.4:26, 31). There is a time to love and a time to hate (Ecclesiastes 3:8). The notion that Christians cannot ever hate, be angry, or lack forgiveness is an unbiblical concept. God Himself is eternally angry with sin, but He is certainly not a psychological basket case. He loves, hates, and is angry in appropriate ways. Our task as believers is to imitate this. Be angry with and hate sin appropriately (Rom. 12:9) and love what good appropriately. For example, righteous anger can evolve beyond the biblical limits to become malice, slander, and bitterness while, to give another example, an appropriate love of food can evolve beyond the biblical limits into gluttony.

I agree with Kevin, and I think it is a helpful tool for people to insist on seeing some sort of repentance and restitution from someone who wrongs you before you trust them again. If they are not even sorry for what they've done, and they refuse to explain why what they did is wrong, then they can't be forgiven, and you can't trust them again.

I think this is the key passage – Luke 17:3-4:

Luke 17:3-4:

3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

That's Jesus speaking, there.

Also, I was having a debate with someone who disagrees with all this, and while debating with her, I thought of another example.

Luke 18:9-14:

9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

13 But the tax collector,standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So again, no forgiveness without repentance.

Forgiveness is what happens when someone who is sinned against treats the sinner as if he had never sinned. It is not on the balance sheet. It is not brought to mind. It is not held against them in the future. The forgiver trusts the sinner again as if the previous sin had never happened.

In divine (vertical) forgiveness, there is no forgiveness without repentance. There are Bible verses above to show that.

My argument is twofold. First, there is a clear teaching of Jesus explaining the sequence of sin and forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness, between humans (Luke 17:3). The verses cited by the forgive without repentance crowd don't show the mechanics of how to forgive, they are making the point that if you want God to forgive you, you should forgive others. The parable in Luke 18:9-14 affirms this again – repentance always precedes forgiveness.

Second, we have an obligation to imitate God, and that means imitating the way he forgives those who sin against him. When I raise that with the unconditional forgiveness

crowd, they want to insist that there is a difference, that the word “forgive” means different things. I’m not convinced.

Finally, I do think that forgiving someone is obligatory if they sincerely repent, and even if they screw up again and again. So long as the repentance is sincere, (like if there is restitution and a genuine effort to show an understanding how the sin affected the wronged party in writing), *then forgiveness should be automatic*.

Alan E. Kurschner argues that there is serious textual doubt about the originality of Luke 23:34a, a text used by the pro-unconditional-forgiveness crowd. He has a journal article coming out on it, but a synopsis of his argument is here.

He also wrote this in a comment on this blog:

> Second, on Matt 6:15, this is what I have to say. Notice the then-clause: “neither will your Father forgive your sins.” This would require universalism on the Father’s part according to the unconditional interpretation given the first half: “But if you do not forgive others their sins.” Since everyone has wronged the Father is the Father required to forgive everyone even if they are not seeking forgiveness?

So I think the case for the forgiveness being conditional on repentance is pretty strong, especially when serious harm has been caused.

Mamas for DeSantis: Casey DeSantis champions parent's rights at the national level

July 10, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm a huge fan of Moms for Liberty, a grassroots movement that defends parent's rights and protects children from woke indoctrination. It was interesting to hear some of their ideas echoed by Casey DeSantis, the wife of Ron DeSantis. She's started an organization called "Mamas for DeSantis". Given that suburban women can't stand Trump, this looks like a good plan to give them a reason to vote for a Republican candidate in 2024.

Here's a story about "Mamas for DeSantis" in the DailyWire:

> Casey DeSantis made her first solo appearance for her husband's campaign on Thursday as she launched the national version of "Mamas for DeSantis" in Iowa, where the 2024 presidential season will begin with the Iowa caucuses.
>
> Florida GOP Governor Ron DeSantis' wife first launched the statewide version of "Mamas for DeSantis" in 2022, when her husband was reelected governor in a landslide by a whopping 19 points. She signed up over 1.1 million mothers to support her husband, as he won female voters by 9%.

Before I tell you what her organization is about, you can see it for yourself in this slick 2.5 minute video:

She had a 44-minute discussion with the Governor of Iowa, Kim Reynolds. She talked about the challenges of raising children.

Sometimes, when I look at the younger women that are coming out of colleges, it's easy to get sad. But then, if you just change direction and look at the married women with kids, then everything looks a lot better. I like when women fight for their children against the secular left. You won't get that from young feminists, but married women are a lot better. Basically, married women are facing a choice right now… whether to virtue signal by embracing "don't judge", or whether they should defend their kids from ideas that are harmful to children.

I like women who have experiences that form their character. A lot of women have had experiences battling cancer, and Casey can speak to that, she's had breast cancer:

> There was a time in my life when I didn't know if I was going to see my kids graduate from kindergarten, let alone high school. And I was able to beat that back, but I had some really long, difficult battles. As a matter of fact I remember — and the governor was getting criticized for doing this with me — but I remember every single chemotherapy appointment that I went to, and there were six of them and they were very long and they were very hard, and I had to wear this dumb cold cap on my head that was like an ice cube, you're like in an igloo for six or seven hours, and he held my hand during every single one of

> them and he never left my side.
>
> And I'll tell you what: when you go through something like that, and you're in the middle of the night, scared, and you don't know what's going to happen, and you crawl into bed with your kids, and you're getting hope for tomorrow that you can have some more time with them, and then you realize that God has given you more opportunities to be able to live, when you're given that opportunity in life, what do you do with it?

I saw an interesting clip of Ron DeSantis getting heckled by a secular leftist who supported sexualizing children, to make them easier for pedophiles to abuse.

Here was his response:

He seems like a nice man, but I don't think he likes secular left pedophiles at all. He won't get their votes.

I'm keeping a close eye on DeSantis, because he is more conservative than Trump on four issues. One, I don't want corporation-driven health policy. Trump locked down the USA because Fauci said to do it. DeSantis kept Florida open. Trump made the drug companies rich, while DeSantis took away Disney's tax breaks. Second, Trump is more moderate than DeSantis on abortion. He criticized Florida's pro-life laws, and said that DeSantis was going too far. Third, Trump didn't build the wall. He had 4 years to do it, and it didn't get done. DeSantis busses illegals to blue state sanctuary cities. Fourth, Trump didn't drain the swamp. We are finding out now from about the Trump-Russia collusion, the Hunter Biden bribery scandal how badly Trump failed to drain the swamp. DeSantis has gone after Soros-funded DAs in his state. He's not afraid to make enemies. Trump had his chance. He failed. He made a lot of entertaining jokes, but he failed to get conservative wins.

Here is a short list of previous DeSantis actions:

- high tourism and low unemployment
- six-week abortion ban
- no sex-reassignment surgeries on kids
- no pronouns required in Florida schools
- no kids at drag queen shows
- pre-game prayer is allowed
- universal school choice
- making collection of union dues optional for teachers
- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts
- elect conservatives to school boards
- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women's sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

I understand that some people like Trump because of his insults, and because they want to root for a winning football team (“he’s leading in the polls! wow!”). But elections are not about insults and winning the Super Bowl. Elections are about hiring someone to get work done. So, we look at resumes.

Are you ready for marriage? 10 questions to find out how prepared you are

July 11, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Would you like your marriage to be long-lasting and fulfilling? Well, check out the questions below and see if you are ready for life-long wedded bliss.

1. Are you opposed to no-fault divorce laws?

No-fault divorce laws allow one spouse to leave the marriage at any time, for any reason, or for no reason at all. If you support no-fault divorce, then your view of marriage is that it's something to be entered into lightly, because it can be exited easily. You'll be walking down the aisle thinking "oh well, if it doesn't work out, I can always get a divorce". If you oppose no-fault divorce laws, then your view of marriage is that there is no escape hatch. You'll probably be a lot more careful about getting married. Since you are convinced that marriage is built to last forever, you'll have a courtship of at least 6 months, and involve both sets of parents in the process. If you put commitment above happiness, you're ready for marriage.

2. Are you opposed to abortion laws?

Abortion laws basically make it easy for two people to have recreational sex, and then get rid of any complications that result quickly and easily. This way, both the people that created the effect can escape the responsibility for what they did, and keep right on pursuing their goals and dreams. If you support abortion laws, you're really saying that you can engage in recreational sex with people who are unwilling to accept responsibility for any children that result. If you are pro-life, then you're saying that people should be careful about having sex, and be ready to take responsibility for a child, should one appear. Being responsible is good preparation for marriage.

3. Are you supportive of daycare for young kids?

Daycare services are essential for couples who need both the father and the mother to be working. The advantage of both parents working is that you can afford lots of shiny new stuff – like vacations, boats, shoes and handbags. Studies show that children don't die during daycare, although if you put a child in daycare, there will be effects on the child's behavior, such as higher anxiety and aggression. If you oppose daycare, you're putting the needs of your children above your need for shiny stuff. Putting the needs of children first is a sign that you are ready for the self-sacrifice that marriage requires.

4. Are you in favor of smaller government?

If you're in favor of smaller government, then you would rather keep taxes low so that more money stays in the family. If you support bigger government, then you think that government knows how to spend your money better than you and your spouse do. Additionally, government usually likes to spend more money than they take in. For example, in Obama's 8 years, we added $10 trillion dollars to the debt, which doubled

from 10 to 20 trillion under his watch. If you oppose higher taxes and bigger government, then you want government to pass on less debt to your children. Putting your kids' financial well-being over your own is pro-marriage.

5. Are you in favor of school choice?

If you're opposed to school choice, then you think that government should decide which schools your children will attend. School choice laws allow parents to give money to the schools they think are best for the children. If a school has excellent teachers and teaches students skills that they can use in their professional lives, then parents can choose that school. Schools have to compete to provide higher quality to parents, for lower cost. If you support giving parents more choice, then you put the needs of children – especially poor, minority children – above the needs of education administrators and teacher unions. Putting kids first is pro-marriage.

6. Are you in favor of premarital sex?

Premarital sex is really fun (so I'm told). You can have sex with people who are just really attractive, even if these people have lousy character. Your friends will be impressed, and you'll feel more attractive – like you were climbing a ladder of attractiveness with each new partner. If you combine sex with being drunk, then you can't remember anything after. And you can't feel guilty if the booze made you do it, right? On the other hand, if you present yourself to your spouse as a virgin, you are telling them that you have self-control, that you take sex as communication rather than recreation, and that they can trust you to be faithful by keeping sex inside the marriage. Trust is important for a good marriage.

7. Are you in favor of welfare for single mothers?

Sometimes, women find themselves pregnant before they are married. If you think that giving taxpayer money to women who have babies before they have husbands is a good idea, then you are rewarding behavior that creates fatherless children. Raising a child without a father causes serious behavioral problems. Boys tend to become more violent, and are more likely to commit crimes. Girls tend to engage in sex at earlier ages. If you oppose encouraging fatherlessness with welfare, you want women to get married before they have kids. Taking the needs of children seriously is pro-marriage.

8. Are you in favor of same-sex marriage?

When a man and a man get married and acquire children, those children will not be raised with their birth mother. Similarly with lesbians, the children will not grow up with their birth father. Studies show that children suffer from not being raised by their biological parents. For example, children of same-sex parents have lower graduation rates than children raised by heterosexual couples. If you think that children have a right to a stable relationship with their biological mother and father, then you place a higher value on the needs of children as opposed to the needs of adults. That's a good sign you're ready for marriage.

9. Are you in favor of radical feminism?

Feminism shows that you think the purpose of marriage is to make women happy, and not to work as a team to serve God and raise good children. Indeed. Marriage doesn't work if the woman approaches it as an accessory. Marriage is about a man and a woman sacrificing their own interests and compromising in order to work together as a team. Husbands and children have needs that women should care about. Feminism teaches women that husbands and children are less important than their careers, hobbies and interests. Feminism is anti-marriage.

10. Are you responsible with earning, budgeting and saving money?

This one comes to us from Bob P. He says that marriages work better when both spouses are "committed to financial planning, budgeting and a renunciation of debt to support a lifestyle. Disagreement about financial issues is one of the greatest causes of marital stress." If you're able to choose a college major or a trade that you don't like, but that pays well, that's a positive. If you're able to string together jobs so that your resume is gap-less, that's a positive. If you're able to save money even though it means you're having less fun, that's a positive. If you're able to give away money to others to support them, that means you're able to sacrifice your interests for the benefit of others. That's pro-marriage.

Well, how did you do? Leave your ideas for more policies and points of view that are marriage-friendly in the comments.

A lesson about men for marriage-minded women from the movie “High Noon”

July 12, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my favorite movies for explaining the differences between men and women is “High Noon” (1952).

Here’s the summary from IMDB:

> Former marshal Will Kane (Gary Cooper) is preparing to leave the small town of Hadleyville, New Mexico, with his new bride, Amy (Grace Kelly), when he learns that local criminal Frank Miller has been set free and is coming to seek revenge on the marshal who turned him in. When he starts recruiting deputies to fight Miller, Kane is discouraged to find that the people of Hadleyville turn cowardly when the time comes for a showdown, and he must face Miller and his cronies alone.

The main theme of the film concerns Amy’s decision to break her wedding vows the very day that she makes them. She tells her new husband that he must bow to her will, and give up his male role as protector. When he explains his reasons for standing his ground to her practically (Miller will hunt them down) and morally (he has a duty protect the town), she dismisses both. She tells him that if he doesn’t run away from Miller and his gang with her, that she will get on the train and leave town by herself.

The intro of film shows the member’s of Miller’s gang assembling, and the words of the song explain the central conflict between husband and wife:

Here’s the part of the lyrics we care about:

The noonday train will bring Frank Miller.
If I’m a man I must be brave
And I must face that deadly killer
Or lie a coward, a craven coward,
Or lie a coward in my grave.

O to be torn ‘twixt love and duty!
S’posin’ I lose my fair-haired beauty!
Look at that big hand move along
Nearin’ high noon.

He made a vow while in State’s Prison,
Vow’d it would be my life or his’n
I’m not afraid of death, but O,
What will I do if you leave me?

Do not forsake me O my darlin’
You made that promise when we wed.

Do not forsake me O my darlin'
Although you're grievin', I can't be leavin'
Until I shoot Frank Miller dead.

What's interesting is that his new wife Amy apparently does not understand the meaning of wedding vows or the natural roles of good men as protectors of the weak, and fighters against evil. Although she vowed to stick by him and help him, the minute anything threatening appears that makes her feel unhappy, she abandons her vows and abandons her man. Let's break down her mistakes now, using actual conversations from the movie.

First, she doesn't understand or respect the man she married *as a man*:

> **Kane**: *[while riding out of town]* It's no good. I've got to go back, Amy.
>
> **Amy**: Why?
>
> **Kane**: This is crazy. I haven't even got any guns.
>
> **Amy**: Then let's go on. Hurry.
>
> **Kane**: No, that's what I've been thinkin'. They're making me run. I've never run from anybody before.
>
> **Amy**: I don't understand any of this.
>
> **Kane**: *[after looking at his vest watch]* Well, I haven't got time to tell ya.
>
> **Amy**: Then don't go back, Will.
>
> **Kane**: I've got to. That's the whole thing. *[He turns the buggy around and rides back into town]*

Her feelings and her desires for the world to be a happy place for her are so strong that they cloud her judgment.

Second, she doesn't understand the threat posed by evil men:

More:

> **Kane:** I sent a man up five years ago for murder. He was supposed to hang. But up North, they commuted it to life and now he's free. I don't know how. Anyway, it looks like he's coming back.
>
> **Amy:** I still don't understand.
>
> **Kane:** He was always wild and kind of crazy. He'll probably make trouble.
>
> **Amy:** But that's no concern of yours, not anymore.
>
> **Kane:** I'm the one who sent him up.
>
> **Amy:** Well, that was part of your job. That's finished now. They've got a new marshal.
>
> **Kane:** He won't be here until tomorrow. Seems to me I've got to stay. Anyway, I'm the same man with or without this. [He pins his badge on his vest]
>
> **Amy:** Oh, that isn't so.
>
> **Kane:** I expect he'll come lookin' for me. Three of his old bunch are waiting at

> the depot.
>
> **Amy:** That's exactly why we ought to go.
>
> **Kane:** They'll just come after us, four of 'em, and we'd be all alone on the prairie.
>
> **Amy:** We've got an hour.
>
> **Kane:** What's an hour?…What's a hundred miles? We'd never be able to keep that store, Amy. They'd come after us and we'd have to run again, as long as we live.
>
> **Amy:** No we wouldn't, not if they didn't know where to find us. Oh Will! Will, I'm begging you, please let's go.
>
> **Kane:** I can't.
>
> **Amy:** Don't try to be a hero. You don't have to be a hero, not for me.
>
> **Kane:** I'm not trying to be a hero. If you think I like this, you're crazy.

Instead of recognizing how her feelings are deceiving her about the threat and trusting her husband, she tries to force him to accept her mistaken view of reality by threatening to abandon him.

One of Kane's ex-girlfriends has a talk with Amy, which helps her to understand who Kane is, and what is expected of her:

> **Amy**: That man downstairs, the clerk, he said things about you and Will. I've been trying to understand why he wouldn't go with me, and now all I can think of is that it's got to be because of you…Let him go, he still has a chance. Let him go.
>
> **Helen**: He isn't staying for me. I haven't spoken to him for a year – until today. I am leaving on the same train you are…What kind of woman are you? How can you leave him like this? Does the sound of guns frighten you that much?
>
> **Amy**: I've heard guns. My father and my brother were killed by guns. They were on the right side but that didn't help them any when the shooting started. My brother was nineteen. I watched him die. That's when I became a Quaker. I don't care who's right or who's wrong. There's got to be some better way for people to live. Will knows how I feel about it.
>
> **Helen**: I hate this town. I always hated it – to be a Mexican woman in a town like this.
>
> **Amy**: I understand.
>
> **Helen**: You do? That's good. I don't understand you. No matter what you say. If Kane was my man, I'd never leave him like this. I'd get a gun. I'd fight.
>
> **Amy**: Why don't you?
>
> **Helen**: He is not my man. He's yours.

Helen understands the need for a wife to stand by her man. But Amy's response to evil is to shut her eyes and focus on feeling good and being happy. Notice that her "better way"

is unspecified – it's just a feeling she has that pacificism and no-violence will somehow "work" to stop evil. But in reality, pacifism is not a "better way" of dealing with evil – it does not work. Her pacifist response not only does not make evil go away, it actually encourages more evil. Weakness emboldens evildoers, and laying down your arms provokes them to do more evil. Will Kane knows this, but she won't listen to him.

You can watch the final gunfight here, as well as Amy's final decision:

So, this is why I really recommend this movie as a discussion-starter when you like a girl and are thinking of marrying her. It clarifies the essential problem with many young women today not being ready for marriage. To be fair, most women come around to respect their husbands and his different roles after they get married. However, the risk of divorce is so dangerous that it makes sense to bring it up for discussion before the marriage happens. Marriage is supposed to be an engine to serve God, and the success of that enterprise cannot be left to chance. You can't just rely on the fact that she says the words of the vow, you have to check to see if she has a habit of keeping her promises when it goes against her own self-interest.

Ask yourself: Who are you, as a man? And does your woman accept that you have obligations to stand up to evil and do good ? Will she support you in your battle against evil, or will the marriage just be about her feelings and desires? I would especially beware of women who think that God is speaking to them through their feelings and desires. Look at her friends: are they practical and successful? Or are they irresponsible, unaccountable and reckless? Look at her father: does he have a plan for her, and does he lead her to be practical, frugal and hard-working? If you are not going to get an ally and a supporter in a wife, then you will not be able to serve God well, as a married man. Think about it.

What Christopher Wray – Trump's nominee for FBI Director – told House Republicans

July 13, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to pick two of the worst people who served in the Trump administration, I would pick Anthony Fauci, who locked America down and destroyed the economy, and Christopher Wray, who weaponized the FBI to punish Christians and conservatives. Well, the Republicans finally got a chance to question Wray, and this is what they found out.

First, let's start with a list of 19 times the Democrats politicized the FBI, compiled by Tristan Justice, over at The Federalist. This is from April 2023. Here are a few of them:

1. Infiltration of Catholic Parishes
2. Targeting Parents for Domestic Terrorism
3. Campaign to frame Trump for Russia collusion
4. Covering up Hillary Clinton's private e-mail server
5. Pressuring Twitter to censor Hunter Biden laptop scandal
6. Pressuring Facebook to censor Hunter Biden laptop scandal
7. Pressuring FBI employees to slow walk Hunter Biden investigation
8. Persecuting peaceful pro-life protestors
9. Minimizing actual terrorist attacks by left-wing terrorists
10. Orchestrating a fake plot to kidnap Michigan governor
11. Providing biased evidence to Rittenhouse prosecutors

So with that in mind, let's look at what Republicans asked the director of the FBI, from another article from The Federalist.

FBI involvement in orchestrating January 6th riot:

> Wray dismissed allegations of undercover FBI involvement in the Jan. 6 Capitol riot as "ludicrous" and then refused to answer questions about the scale of the agency's confirmed involvement.
>
> […]California Republican Darrell Issa immediately pressed Wray for answers on FBI operations that day wherein undercover informants wherein the Justice Department deployed "national" forces out of the FBI installation at Quantico with "shoot to kill" authority.
>
> "How many individuals were either FBI employees or people that the FBI had made contact with, were in the January 6th entry of the Capitol and surrounding area?" Issa asked.
>
> "I really need to be careful here [when] talking about where we have or have not used confidential human sources," Wray said.

Pipe bombs:

> Kentucky Republican Rep. Thomas Massie stepped up the pressure on Wray to give Congress answers over the agency's effort to track down the suspected pipe bomber who left devices at both the RNC and DNC on Jan. 6.
>
> In May, Reps. Massie and Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, demanded an FBI briefing on the pipe bomb cases after a whistleblower revealed the agency identified the car used by the prime suspect but refused to track the vehicle down. Both bombs were reportedly inoperable, according to the whistleblower.
>
> Wray sought to hide behind longstanding departmental policy not to comment on active investigations.
>
> Massie reminded Wray that it's been 900 days since the bombs were discovered.

Censoring social media posts critical of the Biden administration policies:

> Wray defended the FBI's relationship with the Russian-infiltrated intelligence agency in Ukraine to censor American speech. The Security Service of Ukraine, Wray said, which has been notoriously compromised by the Kremlin, is a "longstanding good partner" of the FBI.
>
> A new interim report from the House Judiciary's Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government out Monday revealed the FBI colluded with the Ukrainian agency to flag social media posts to Silicon Valley tech giants for censorship.

FBI agents armed with assault rifles arrest peaceful pro-lifer in pre-dawn raid, in front of his wife and children:

> Texas Republican Rep. Chip Roy pressed the FBI director over the agency's armed raid and arrest of a Christian pro-life activist named Mark Houck last fall.
>
> "I'm not going to second-guess the judgment of the career agents on the ground who made the determination," Wray said.
>
> "But your job is to second guess and look at what they're doing," Roy said.
>
> Houck was ultimately acquitted of all charges in January.

Protecting the Biden crime family:

> Florida Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz accused the FBI of engaging in double standards of justice by protecting the Biden family. According to whistleblowers within the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the FBI concealed critical records from federal tax investigators, including an unclassified FD-1023 form implicating the president and Hunter Biden in a multi-million-dollar bribery scheme with foreign actors.

Targeting parents concerned about public schools indoctrinating their kids in secular leftist propaganda:

> California Republican Congressman Kevin Kiley asked Wray whether the FBI director believed the Justice Department should rescind a memo directing staff to surveil concerned parents who show up at school board meetings.
>
> In March, House Republicans on the Judiciary Committee published an interim staff report that concluded the Biden administration had “no legitimate basis” for deploying counterterrorism resources on parents.
>
> “It appears, from these documents and the information received previously,” the report read, “that the Administration’s actions were a political offensive meant to quell swelling discord over controversial education curricula and unpopular school board decisions.”
>
> “Should Attorney General Garland rescind that memo?” Kiley asked.
>
> Wray deferred the question to the attorney general.
>
> “I think the FBI conducted itself the way it should here,” Wray said.

I don’t know about you, but I’m sure that Trump could have nominated someone better than Wray. We can do better in 2024. But we have to pick for results.

Should men marry women who think relationship boundaries are “emotional abuse”?

July 14, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the reasons that I am not married today is because I tried to set spiritual and moral boundaries with women I wanted marry, but those boundaries were rejected. The purpose of the boundaries was to get the woman to be suitable for a marriage designed to serve God. In every case, the relationships ended. And this is actually becoming more common, under the influence of feminism.

Here is an article from The Federalist, written by Kylee Griswold.

She writes:

> Who would have thought perpetual adolescent Jonah Hill would be good at grown-up relationships? Well, he is, judging by some apparent texts his surfer ex-girlfriend Sarah Brady shared to Instagram over the weekend — despite the out-of-control media screeching to the contrary.
>
> […]According to Brady and the TikTokkers, self-proclaimed therapists, media, and fellow thirst-trappers who came to her defense, Hill is a controlling narcissist and misogynist — all for the crime of allegedly asking his then-girlfriend to please put on some clothes.

So, a man told a woman that he was interested in that he proposed certain rules in the relationship, rules that would allow him to get serious, and point the relationship towards commitment (as you’ll see). But the woman, and all of her supportive allies, from the secular left to the religious right, all agreed with her that a man setting boundaries on a woman to make her safe for a marriage commitment is “emotional abuse”.

More:

> Specifically, Hill laid down some boundaries for his partner:
>
> […]Plain and simple: If you need: Surfing with men[,] Boundaryless inappropriate friendships with men[,] to model[,] to post pictures of yourself in a bathing suit[,] to post sexual pictures[,] friendships with women who are in unstable places and from your wild recent past beyond getting a lunch or coffee or something respectful[,] I am not the right partner for you. If these things bring you to a place of happiness I support it and there will be no hard feelings. These are my boundaries for romantic partnership.
>
> Hill’s detractors say this is “emotional abuse.” But can something really be described as “abuse” if the alleged perpetrator tells you “no hard feelings” if you’d rather walk away than agree to the terms?

Feminism has made it a lot harder for men to set boundaries that will orient women towards marriage. No matter how wise the man, and how good the advice, it must all be

rejected. But the demands for men to get married to rebels remain. Especially when the feminists are hitting 35, and their friends are all getting married. They feel entitled to marriage, and how dare men tell them no? Many women today don't want to hear a man *talk about the Bible* or hear a man *talk about right and wrong*, they just want weddings, wedding rings, vacations, and things to be fixed around the house. It would be better if men were just walking ATMs that didn't talk at all.

More:

> To protect the health and integrity of his relationship, Hill established reasonable and respectable parameters for how his girlfriend was to behave toward him through how she acted toward other men. Don't sexualize yourself for other guys or engage in other relationship-compromising behaviors. And he made clear how he would respond if she didn't respect those limits. I'm not the right man for you.

In my cases, my boundaries were always things that were clearly good for the women, and also good for commitment. For example, I might say "stop spending money on travel, get a private sector job in your field, and pay off your student loans". But these conditions were rejected. Later on, when the woman reached her early 30s, I would get e-mails about wanting to get back together. But the student loans had only increased, and the resumes now had huge gaps. I can only assume that the body counts had also increased from all the "traveling". No thanks, I said. No thank you. I can do something more productive than bail women out. I especially don't want to bail women out *who have no respect for men who know how to lead*.

This behavior of calling moral and spiritual leadership "emotional abuse" and "controlling" is common – even in Christian circles – because of feminism. In general, the only acceptable male roles are "protect and provide". Men are supposed to take on all the accountability, but with none of the authority to defend the truth, or to defend morality. On any topic. For example, if you try to tell a single woman in her late 20s about infertility, it's "emotional abuse". No amount of evidence can ever beat "follow your heart". And she has legions of supporters who will shame you for trying to argue from scientific studies.

If you think I am mean, then read Kylee:

> Enter feminism, which loves female autonomy and sold women lots of lies about it. Feminism said love yourself. If that means wreaking all kinds of havoc, your second "X" chromosome trumps the consequences. Unrestrained sex and unintended pregnancy? Abort the baby. Not happy in your marriage? Divorce him. Unfulfilled at home? Leave the kids with an underpaid immigrant and climb that corporate ladder. No boundaries. No bonds. No bras.
>
> But news flash: Relationships take two. And sadly, thanks to that third-wave wrecking ball, some dating women need to be told some obvious things when it comes to romantic fidelity, even if those things have to come from their partners: Seeking the approval of other men for how you look is a bad idea. Worse, it

> communicates lots of bad things about your priorities and desires.
>
> Frankly, a man who's willing to say that tough thing is probably a man worth holding onto. Thanks in part to "toxic masculinity" messaging and the militant feminization of America, a man who shoots for commitment and faithfulness, and communicates those aims in a straightforward way while proposing an amicable split as the alternative, is a rarity.

Oh, how I love those words.

Sadly, Kylee's view is in the minority today, thanks to feminism. And if men are not allowed to lead a relationship, then the marriage rate will continue to decline. Neither shaming of men nor blaming of men will cause men to accept marriage without leadership.

For more on this topic, I recommend this excellent article by Mark McDonald, M.D., entitled "Why American Women Are Undatable" The subtitle is "No One Wants to Play with a Porcupine". Indeed not.

Robert Gagnon debates gay activist Jayne Ozanne on Bible vs homosexuality

July 15, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am tempted to say that this is the best podcast I have ever heard on the Unbelievable show. Do anything you have to do in order to listen to this podcast.

Details:

> Prof Robert Gagnon has become a well-known voice advocating the traditional biblical view on sexuality. In a highly charged show he debates the scriptural issues on sexuality with Jayne Ozanne, the director of Accepting Evangelicals who came out as gay earlier this year.

You can listen to the debate here.

If you can only listen for 15 minutes, then start at 49 minutes in and listen from there.

The following summary is rated MUP for made-up paraphrase. Reader discretion is advised.

Summary:
Intro:

- Speaker introductions
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree that the Bible doesn't support it
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree Jesus taught male-female marriage
- Ozanne: I went to the hospital because I was sick from trying to suppress my gay desires
- Ozanne: Doctors told me that I would die if I didn't act on my gay desires
- Ozanne: I decided to reinterpret the Bible to fit with my gay desires
- Ozanne: According to my new interpretation, Jesus actually supports my gay desires

Segment 1: Genesis

- Ozanne: In Genesis the Bible says that Adam needs a woman to complete him
- Ozanne: I reinterpret this to mean that Adam needed a "complementarian human being"
- Ozanne: Genesis doesn't say whether Eve was complemented by Adam in that chapter
- Ozanne: It's not critical that men are complemented by women, a man could complement a man
- Ozanne: Genesis 2 doesn't talk about children, it's all about adult needs from a relationship
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 has never been interpreted that way in all of history

- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language specifically implies a human being who is opposite/different
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language translates to complement or counterpart
- Gagnon: Genesis as a whole teaches that the sexuality is for male and female natures
- Gagnon: The extraction of something from the man that is given to the woman is complementarian
- Ozanne: I think that people can be complementary outside of male-female Genesis language
- Ozanne: I don't want to discuss specific words and texts and Greek meanings
- Gagnon: the text has always been read and interpreted to support male/female complementarity
- Gagnon: the male-female nature argument is made because the two natures are complementary
- Ozanne: the text was interpreted by patriarchal males who treated women like property, it's biased
- Ozanne: what is important to me is how Christ interprets Genesis (?? how does she know that?)
- Ozanne: I am passionate about my interpretation of Scripture which supports my gay desires
- Gagnon: just because a person is passionate about their interpretation it doesn't make it right
- Gagnon: I am not arguing for the male-female view based on passion, but on scholarship, evidence and history
- Ozanne: both sides are equally passionate about their interpretations (?? so both are equally warranted?)
- Ozanne: the real question is why God "allowed" two different interpretations of Scripture

Segment 2: Is homosexuality a sin?

- Gagnon: Jesus affirmed traditional sexual morality, which forbids homosexuality
- Gagnon: Jesus teaches that marriage is male-female, and limited to two people
- Gagnon: No one in history has interpreted the Bible to say that homosexuality was not immoral
- Ozanne: Jesus came to bring life, and that means he supports homosexuality
- Ozanne: I was dying, and embracing my gay desires allowed me to live, so Jesus approves of me
- Ozanne: God says "I am who I am" and that means he approves of me doing whatever I want
- Ozanne: There is an imperative to be who I am, and that means embracing my gay desires
- Gagnon: Jesus argued that the twoness of the sexual bond is based on the twoness

of the sexes
- Gagnon: Jesus did not come to gratify people's innate desires, he called people to repent of sin
- Gagnon: Jesus did reach out to sinners but he never condoned the sins they committed
- Gagnon: Jesus' outreach to tax collectors collecting too much and sexual sinners is the same: STOP SINNING
- Ozanne: I don't think that Romans 1 is talking about homosexuality
- Ozanne: I think it's talking about sexual addiction, not loving, committed gay relationships
- Ozanne: Paul was condemning pederasty in Romans 1, not loving, long-term, consensual sexual relationships between gay adults
- Gagnon: nothing in the passage limits the condemnation to pederasty
- Gagnon: the passage was never interpreted to be limited to pederasty in history
- Gagnon: rabbis and church fathers knew about committed two-adult same-sex relationships, and said they were wrong
- Gagnon: the argument for marriage is based on the broad two-nature argument, with no exceptions
- Gagnon: the condemnation is not limited to exploitative / coercive / lustful / uncommitted relationships
- Gagnon: even pro-gay scholars agree the passage cannot be interpreted Ozanne's way (he names two)

Segment 3: The showdown (49:00)

- Ozanne: I don't care how many pages people have written on this
- Ozanne: God says that "the wisdom of the wise I will frustrate" so you can't use scholars, even pro-gay scholars, to argue against my passionate interpretation
- Ozanne: I am not interested in the text or history or scholarship or even pro-gay scholars who agree with you
- Ozanne: what decides the issue for me is my mystical feelings about God's love which makes my sexual desires moral
- Ozanne: you are certain that this is wrong, but your view does not "give life" to people
- Ozanne: your scholarship and historical analysis is "a message of death" that causes teenagers to commit suicide (= you are evil and a meany, Robert)
- Ozanne: "I pray for you and your soul" (= opposing me will land you in Hell) and "I hope that listeners will listen with their hearts" (?? instead of their minds?)
- Ozanne: you can prove anything you want with research, even two mutually exclusive conclusions, so you shouldn't rely on scholarship and research since it could be used to prove my view as well
- Ozanne: instead of relying on research, you should rely on your heart and your feelings about God's love to decide what the Bible teaches about sexual morality

- Gagnon: you are distorting the gospel in order to make your case
- Gagnon: attacking my “certainty” is an ad hominem attack to cover your dismissmal of the scholarship and history
- Gagnon: you distort the gospel to make it seem like Christ just wants us to get what we want, when we want it, with who we want it with
- Gagnon: Christ calls us to take up our cross, to lose our lives and to deny ourselves
- Gagnon: you have a notion of what “fullness of life” is, but it’s not reflective of the gospel
- Gagnon: Paul’s life was much more troubling than yours, mine or anyone else around here
- Gagnon: Paul was beaten, whipped, stoned, poorly sheltered, poorly clothed, poorly fed, shipwrecked, and anxious for his churches
- Gagnon: on your view, he should have been miserable and angry with God all the time
- Gagnon: but instead Paul was constantly thankful and rejoicing to be able to suffer with Jesus and look forward to the resurrection
- Gagnon: I have suffered too, but the suffering we go through never provides us with a license to violate the commandments of God
- Ozanne: “the ultimate thing is what people feel God has called them to”
- Ozanne: My goal right now is to tell young people that homosexuality is fine so they don’t commit suicide
- Ozanne: the view that homosexuality is wrong is “evil and misguided”
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm in the gay community are intrinsic to homosexual unions, not caused by external disapproval of homosexuality

Segment 4: Concluding statements

- Gagnon: gay male relationships on average have more sex partners and more STDs
- Gagnon: female relationships on average have shorter-length relationships and more mental issues
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm are because there is no complementarity / balance in the relationships
- Gagnon: everyone has some disappointment or suffering in their lives that hurts them, and that they are tempted to break the rules to fix, but we should not break the rules in order to be happy
- Ozanne: both sides are passionate, so no one can be right, and evidence proves nothing
- Ozanne: only feelings about “what God is doing” can allow us to decide what counts as sin or not
- Ozanne: the main thing that is at stake here is to make people like us, not to decide what the Bible says about sin
- Ozanne: my message to people is to do whatever you want, and ignore mean people who don’t affirm you

- Ozanne: we should be more opposed to mean people who make non-Christians feel unloved than about doing what the Bible says

Greg Koukl debates Michael Shermer on God, atheism, meaning and morality

July 16, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The full transcript of a debate between Michael Shermer, editor of Skeptic magazine, and Greg Koukl, president of Stand to Reason. This debate occurred on Hugh Hewitt's radio show, and was moderated by Hugh Hewitt.

HH = Hugh Hewitt
GK = Greg Koukl
MS = Michael Shermer

Here is the full debate transcript.

And here's an excerpt:

GK: Right. Actually, the big question here, Hugh, is whether it's possible to be good without God. Now I'm not talking about whether it's possible to be good without a belief in God. I certainly think that's possible, but be good without God. And the answer to that question hinges entirely on precisely what you mean by good. And so I was going to give an illustration. So a man drags a young girl into the alley, he sexually abuses her, strangles here, and tosses her into the dustbin. Is that act wrong? Now I think everybody listening is going to admit it is wrong. But here is the real question. What do we mean when we say that that act of rape and abuse and murder is wrong? Are we describing the action itself, the object? Are we saying that the object, the rape, the murder, has a quality of being wrong, and therefore, wherever that rape goes, the wrongness follows it, just like your height, 6' 2", or whatever it is, is an objective quality of you. Wherever you go, your height follows you in the same way. Does the wrongness follow the rape? Well, if it's a quality of the rape, if it's an objective quality of the rape, then it does. And it doesn't matter what people think about it, or what cultures decides, or what your evolutionary conditioning is. The rape is still wrong. The other alternative is that you're not talking about the rape. You're talking about yourself. You're talking about your genetic conditioning. You're talking about your culture's decision about that kind of thing. And if that's the case, then the truth of the wrongness of the rape is simply in the individual or the subject. And this is why philosophers distinguish between ethical objectivism and ethical subjectivism. Now there's lots of different subjectivisms in ethics. But simply put, if you're an ethical subjectivist, you're a relativist. And actual ethics don't exist. Ethics are an illusion. If you conclude that ethics are an illusion, there's lots of different ways to explain it. Michael's written a really great book, I think, called The Science Of Good And Evil. I've read most of it, and it's well written, and it's very compelling. But it's a description about how the illusion of ethics has taken place. If you want to go that route, you're welcome to go that route. But what you can't do is you can't then talk about morality as if it's objective when your explanations are subjective. So this is a problem that I think all atheists, including Michael, have to solve. Are ethics objective or relative?

And if they're relative, then how can we make moral judgments that are meaningful on other people?

HH: Michael Shermer?

MS: Wow, let's just get right into it. Well, I don't think it's quite so black and white. That is to say I think there are provisional moral truths that exist whether there's a God or not. In other words, it's wrong, morally, absolutely morally wrong to rape and murder. And that would be true whether there was a God or not. In other words, if…is God saying that it's wrong because it's really wrong, and He's instructing us in his Holy Scripture that it's wrong? Or is it only wrong because He said so? And if it turned out there wasn't a God, would that make it okay? And my answer is no, it really is wrong, whether God says it's wrong or not. That is to say I think it really exists, a real, moral standard like that. Why? Well, because first, you could ask the person who is being affected, we should always ask the moral recipient of the act, how do you feel about being raped or murdered or stolen from or lied to. And the moral actor will tell you, it doesn't matter whether, if I could use a current example, I haven't any idea if Tiger Woods and his wife are religious or not. But you can just ask his wife whether it was morally right or wrong, and she'll tell you. It doesn't matter whether there's a God or not. It's wrong. And so that's the first principle. Just ask. Ask the moral recipient of whether it's right or wrong. But I think Greg's after something deeper, that is to say is there something even deeper still behind the moral actor's feelings about how they're treated. And the answer is yes, I think so. We're a social species. We don't live in isolation. We live as members of a group. And as such, there's no possible way our group could survive, be cohesive, be a unit of any kind of solidarity against other groups, or against a harsh environment. If there were too much violations of social norms, that is if there were constant lying and cheating and raping and murdering, there's no way a social group could hang together. And as such, as we all know, we're very tribal. We're tribal against other groups, but within our groups, we're very pro-social, altruistic, cooperative. We have a good and evil in our nature. So to this extent, I find myself interesting often in agreement with my conservative friends on most of the things they consider morally, moral truths. That is, we share the same moral values, even though I come at it from a different perspective.

HH: Greg?

GK: Yeah, I'm actually not after something deeper here, Michael. At least to start out the discussion, I'm trying to be as simple and clear and precise as possible, because it's very easy to weave together a bunch of things that sound persuasive, but turn out to be different things. Like for example, Darwinian evolution, which is a materialistic process, and here I mean the blind watchmaker thesis, the neo-Darwinian synthesis, natural selection working on mutations, and a kind of a cultural evolution that Michael has just referred to as we work together as a group to survive as a group. Those are two entirely different things. One is materialistic, Darwinian, the other one is intelligent design, quite frankly, where the group gets together and makes some determinations to encourage some behavior and discourage others. What I'm trying to do is to be able to answer the question that came up initially, is God necessary for morality, which Michael denies. It's

to say well, what is it that morality, that we're trying to describe? It is either objective, and therefore an immaterial obligation that applies to certain behaviors, or it is subjective. The things that Michael described were variously subjective, evolutionary elements, subjective cultural elements, but then he affirmed that we all have good and evil in our nature, or an awareness of that. I agree with that entirely. We all are aware of those things. That's why even if we don't believe in God, we can still know morality and follow it. The question is what accounts for real, genuine objective morality?

HH: One minute to the break, Michael Shermer.

MS: I'm not arguing for cultural evolution. I'm actually arguing as part of our, what you described as materialistic, natural selection, Darwinian evolution, that it's not enough to just pretend or fake being a good group member. You actually have to believe it, feel it, and live it. So what I'm arguing is that natural selected certain moral sentiments, as Adam Smith called them, moral feelings, an actual empathy, Adam Smith talked about, we actually empathize with somebody else, we can put ourselves into their shoes and feel their pain, I'm arguing that's very real. It's every bit as real a part of our evolutionary heritage as our eyes and our hands.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, you were saying that evolutionary biology has produced a real morality.

MS: Yeah, I think really, Adam Smith had it right in his very first book, The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, long before Darwin, that we actually have in our biological nature, our human nature, the capacity to feel other people's pain. He called it empathy, we think of it often either as empathy or sympathy. That is, we really do connect to other people. A lot of good research on this now, brain scans, you can show somebody a little video of somebody they know, or have feelings for, getting pricked with a pin, and the same areas of their brain light up, the pain receptors, as in the person getting the pin prick. In other words, we have an evolved tendency to really be deeply, emotionally connected to our fellow group members. And that's why I say groups like World Vision, where you want to adopt a child, it doesn't help to show a picture of 10,000 starving African kids. What does affect us is one child, a picture of one child with a little biography. That's how you get people to adopt a child to donate. The reason for that is because essentially they're tricking the brain, our brains into making that stranger an honorary family member, an honorary within group member, which is why I argue that free trade is one of the best ways of defusing normal tribal tensions between people. It makes them honorary friends, honorary members. Well, what's going on there is we're tricking the brain into sort of this evolutionary rule of thumb – be nice to people that are like you and that are related to you, and that you know, and that are fellow group members, and don't do what our natural tendency is, is to be tribal and xenophobic against those other guys. And free trade is one of the best things you can do for that. So I'm arguing that's actually tapping something deep within us.

HH: Greg Koukl?

GK: Yeah, basically, I agree with Mike completely here. We do have this tendency, and it seems to be universal among humankind. The question is, what is that tendency, actually? And what is the best way to explain it? And I see like a handful of significant problems with using evolution to explain morality. The first one is that evolution is a materialistic process. And here, I'm going back to an original point, and I don't want people to lose it. There is no way that you can take molecules, and reorganize them in any fashion, over any length of time, and have pop out of the mixture an objective moral principle that's immaterial, and that applies to human beings. All you're going to get is a reorganization of the molecules. And what they can produce, and this is what Mike has done in his book, and he mentioned just s few moments ago, they can produce sentiments. They can produce feelings. They can produce behavior. But this leads us to the second problem of using evolution to explain morality, is that morality is more than sentiments, feelings and behavior. Morality entails things like motive and intention. I mean, you could have a guy walk into a garage, walk out with a hose, and is that wrong? Well, it depends. Is it his hose or somebody else's hose? Did he intend to take the other person's hose? Is he borrowing the hose? So we can see here are elements that are part of the moral thing that needs to be explained, that are immaterial, and therefore the Darwinian explanation can't even in principle go there. It can't do that job. But here's the worst problem. Regardless of what our sentiments happen to be regarding moral actions, we can feel good or feel bad or whatever, the problem is that morality is prescriptive, not merely descriptive. That is it tells us not just what we did, but what we ought to have done in the past, and what we ought to do in the future. That is not something that any Darwinian mechanism can describe, because nothing about my biology can inveigh upon me to act a certain way for moral reasons in the future. It doesn't tell me why I should be good tomorrow. This is a huge difference between these two views, the descriptive and the prescriptive. Prescriptive is part of morality, and can't even, in principle, be explained by an evolutionary materialistic system.

HH: Michael Shermer, I'll give you a start on that. We have about 45 seconds to the break, so you may want to…we'll come back after the break and pick up. But what's your start to that?

MS: Well, the start would be that again, let's not think of evolution just as nature red and tooth and claw, and it's nasty, brutish and short, but that in fact, we have this whole other social evolution. And I'm not talking about cultural evolution where we consciously make decisions, but subconsciously, because it's in part of our nature to actually, seriously, deeply feel for other people and their actions, and the consequences of our actions, so that we actually have a sense of right and wrong that we're born with, but then culture taps into and tweaks, one way or the other.

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HH: Michael Shermer, when we went to break, Greg had made the argument that the Darwinian model simply cannot explain immaterial concepts like morality, that there's just no way you can rearrange the molecules to get there. You're saying well, yes you

can.

MS: Yeah, I think so, because if we think of morality as another suite of emotions that are involved with other people's behaviors, the consequences of our actions, how we feel about them, how people feel about us when we do these things, that's as every bit as important a biological part of our nature as anything else we talk about. So let's take a real simple emotion. When you're hungry, nobody does any calculations about the caloric input/output ratios of eating an apple versus an ice cream, although now it's posted on the walls for us to see. But we just feel hungry, and we feel hungry for certain kinds of foods. The feeling of hunger is a proxy for something else. Evolution's done the calculating for us. You need food, so we're going to, your hypothalamus is going to secrete these certain chemicals that causes your stomach to rumble and so on. When you're attracted to somebody else, a member of the opposite sex, nobody does the calculation by, let's say, a man finds a woman attractive who has a .67 hip to waist ratio, and an hourglass figure, although that is pretty much universal. Nobody walks about with calipers taking measurements of who they're going to want to date or ask out. You just look around, and you just go wow, I really find this woman attractive. It's a feeling you have, okay? So those are kind of simple emotions, but sliding up the scale, the moral emotions are really no different. When I lie to somebody, I've violated a social norm, and they respond in a very angry, hostile way. So those emotions that we both share, guilt, shame, anger, disgust, involved a social relationship that whether it was a norm violation, those are the kinds of emotions that are just like hunger and sexual attraction that are built into us by nature, by evolution. Or, if you wish, this is how God created the moral sentiments, just like He created everything else in the universe, through a process of nature. I think that's equally reasonable to argue. So I don't see that it has to be an atheistic viewpoint versus a theistic viewpoint to get to our moral sentiments. Why couldn't God have used evolution to create the moral sentiments as I've described them?

GK: Yeah, well, you don't actually believe that, I know, Mike, so this is kind of like adding God to the soup, you know, if it makes people feel better. But the basic argument is that evolution all by itself can do the trick. And I think if your listeners are listening carefully, what they're going to hear is Mike has just described, and if I'm being unfair to your assessment here, let me know, Mike, that moral feelings are simply that. They are sophisticated emotions that do some work for us for survival, and even on a group level. Now there's a name for this. It's called emotivism. A.J. Ayer, the famous atheist, offered this description of morality. It's a relativistic scheme of morality. Morality doesn't actually exist, Ayer argued. There is no objective right or wrong. Rape isn't wrong itself. What happens is, we have feelings about it, and we express it in moral language, but rape isn't really wrong. So your listeners are going to have to ask themselves the questions. When they just survey their own moral senses, and we all have access to this, do we want to believe that scientists have figured out that really what we're doing is feeling sophisticated, complicated emotions, and that the emotions are in us, and we are not seeing anything about the action? Or does it seem like rape is wrong? Look, when I say rape is wrong, I'm talking about the rape. When I say liver is awful, I'm talking about me.

I'm talking about my own tastes and preferences. It's interesting, as Michael has given his explanation, though, that he's doing, and I don't know if you are aware of this, Michael, but you're doing the very thing that I kind of warned against. You give a description of the foundations of morality that turn out to be relativistic, but then there's a smuggling of a more objectivistic morality in the back door, like when Michael says you don't have to do what your nature tells you to do, in other words, what you've been programmed by evolution to do. You can kind of rise above that. Well, now we're talking about a morality that isn't dictated by evolution, but a morality that we can employ through our acts of will, to rise above this kind of brutish evolutionary morality. And that sounds suspiciously like the very thing that I'm talking about here.

MS: But I don't mean, there's nothing to rise above by itself. Yes, we have to say rise above our tribal instincts to be xenophobic when we meet somebody who's a stranger, who's different from us. We all struggle against that, particularly in a black and white America, where there's always been this underlying tension. Indeed, so culture helps us do that – education, travel, diversity of exposure to different people. That makes you a little more tolerant. Okay, but I'm not talking about that. What I'm talking about is tapping into the good part of our nature, the fact that in addition to that xenophobic tribalism we have, we also have this other side that almost never gets discussed in evolutionary…even in evolutionary circles, you'll still hear evolutionary biologists talking about, in a way that Huxley did, and Herbert Spencer did in Darwin's own time, that we have to somehow struggle mightily against our genes to overcome that nasty tendency we have to want to rape, kill, pillage and destroy. Well no, actually, we have this whole other side that's just as genetically programmed into our nature. And the point of culture – education, politics, economics and so on, is to tap into the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said.

GK: Okay, here's the question I have for you, Michael, then. You've identified that really, we have good and we have bad. That's part of, under your terms, that's part of our genetic nature, and we can choose to tap into what you call the good side. Why ever should we do such a thing if there is not a higher standard that directs our action to the better side, your words, than the bad side, your words, if really, ultimately, they are both the result of a genetic evolution, and from outside terms, neither is better than the other. Why should we do that, Michael?

Read the rest.

Why is Andrew Tate popular with young men? What does he know?

July 17, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I don't know anything about it except that I have seen memes where he seems to be selling self-help kits to young men, on the basis of his owning luxury cars and having muscles. I also heard that he recently converted to Islam. So, it was interested to read an article from one of the lady writers at The Federalist, and ask: what is the church's strategy for giving young men a decent value proposition?

The article is by Evita Duffy-Alfonso, and she writes:

> Andrew Tate is public enemy No. 1, and not because of the seriously flawed human trafficking charges he's facing in Romania. Tate is hated because he speaks to disaffected men, and not just any disaffected men — he speaks to *young* disaffected men. Despite his moral pitfalls, which I have already identified and rebuked, Tate has a unique ability to comprehensively explain the stakes behind the West's war against masculinity in a highly engaging manner to middle- and high-school boys.

There are some links in there that I removed, specifically where she talks about the charges he's facing, and his moral pitfalls.

But the part that's interesting is his appeal to young men:

> For adolescent males in 2023, life has never been more dissatisfying and confusing. As Tucker Carlson put it in his viral interview with Tate this week, our culture's message to young boys today is: "Stop being yourself. Sit still. Stop joking. Suppress your aggression. Share your feelings. Obey. Female qualities are virtuous, masculine qualities are oppressive."
>
> Tate speaks to young boys. He helps them pinpoint all their frustrations in our hyper-feminized society and gives them concrete ways to resist "the matrix" and embrace their masculinity. Tate might not be a perfect figure, but his larger argument that our elite's version of masculinity is poisonous is something boys desperately need to hear.

I'm really suspicious of people who have majored in muscles and self-defense. To me, if you are putting time into meathead behaviors, then you don't really know anything about how the universe works, or how to solve problems. I would rather listen to a scientist or a doctor or an economist or a garage mechanic talk. I value men who have real knowledge, and who earn money by doing work for other people in the competitive private sector. I like men who save and invest money, not men who display wealth for vanity. Especially when that vanity involves wasting money on depreciating assets like cars. I'll take a T-bill over a Bugati any day, yes I will. But apparently, people prefer to listen to muscled,

tattooed men.

But maybe there's more to Andrew Tate than meets the eye, according to Evita. I can see why young men would resonate with thoughts like this:

> One example of something people have found wildly offensive is Tate's insistence that "depression isn't real." Tate explains that most cases of "depression" are natural human emotions irresponsibly treated with prescription drugs. "I don't believe in depression, I believe in feeling depressed," said Tate. "If you have to install software, in your own mind … why not adopt a mindset that makes me as competent and as fearsome as possible?"

I certainly agree that much of what passes for "mental illness" today is just a broken worldview. People who don't know the truth tend to look inward at their own feelings and desires. They worry about comparing themselves to other people. Christianity has a lot to say about what our purpose is, but in the absence of a true worldview that teaches people to focus on telling the truth and self-sacrificially doing good to others, we are seeing a lot of navel-gazing narcissism, that leads to unnecessary mental illness and drug use.

More:

> "If you feel a degree of uncomfortableness inside of your mind, I think it's just your mind telling you that something about your life needs to change," Tate told Carlson, emphasizing mental toughness and conditioning your mind to train, study, and go to work, even when you're feeling unhappy. "I was in a Romanian jail cell, with cockroaches crawling all over me as I slept," said Tate. "I never missed a day of training. I wouldn't say I was particularly happy, but push-ups must be done, so they got done."
>
> Tate also stresses the importance of overall physical health for one's mental health. He instructs men to boost their testosterone by working out, eating foods high in protein, and quitting porn. "Happiness and strength go hand in hand," said Tate. "If you're weak, you're going to be miserable."

Again, why would anyone think that physical training is a sign of competence? What knowledge do you gain doing push-ups? Do push-ups allow you to solve problems? Do you know how to write code or fix a car or do surgery after doing push-ups? What about getting a tattoo? Seems to me that this man is really a confused, unintelligent, low-value man. Not the kind of person I trust to do anything of value in the free market. Does this guy have a good marriage and intelligent, moral children who have good jobs, and serve others? I would be impressed if he did. I'm not impressed by men who can attract women with their looks and money. I don't see the honor in getting women to like you for appearances. Would Tate's women read a book for him, in order to learn about the moral issues that we're facing in the world? I don't think so. He's not a leader of women. He doesn't lead women to fight evil.

But this part I like:

> He described the hypocrisy of the globalist, climate activists who galavant across the world in private jets and own beach homes that, according to their own calculations, will be underwater in a few years.
>
> […]Ultimately, Tate tells his young audience that everything comes down to authoritarianism. “Every government on earth — all of them … they all want to be as controlling as possible over their citizens.” He theorizes that things like the radical transgender movement are a “deliberate attack on … our senses” and serve the government by conditioning us to “ignore our eyes.” He says depression “is a fantastic way to subdue a population” because “if everybody’s depressed, it’s hard to have a revolution.”
>
> “The reason men died on the Titanic was for self-respect and dignity. They went into the icy cold water and died because they would feel honorless if they jumped on the boat and left the women to die,” said Tate. “When you have self-respect and dignity … you’ll do things which are deemed crazy or insane, because you believe in them, and you stick up for yourself.” Authoritarian governments fear that level of agency and personal conviction.

That’s not wrong, but again, why listen to one man’s opinions? The reason I listen to someone like Stephen C. Meyer or Thomas Sowell is because their opinions are based on research and evidence. If we’re looking for an example of strength in the Christian community, I would pick William Lane Craig, who, with his 2 PhDs and loads of academic publications, has had great success debating and defeating enemies of the faith on university campuses in front of thousands of people. So I’m still not seeing why young men would be interested in the words of a meathead, however nice they may be, rather than finding out the truth about big questions. Maybe one reason why so many young men are interested in a meathead’s thoughts and opinions is because the church has done such a poor job of promoting dangerous, effective men like William Lane Craig.

Also, he can’t be very intelligent if he is a Muslim. I’m not saying that to be mean, but he didn’t adopt that view because he knows that it is true. It’s a very obviously false religion, when you look at it historically. Andrew Tate did not do any intellectual work in order to choose a true religion. So why think that he has done any intellectual work to arrive at his other beliefs? I don’t think you can find the history books in a gym, in a tattoo parlor, or in a luxury car. You don’t expect someone who majors in muscles and tattoos and (fast-depreciating) luxury cars to have a true worldview. He might be able to attract attention, but he doesn’t have the answers to life.

Video and outline: Tucker Carlson interviews Ron DeSantis on Blaze TV

July 18, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below, I've posted the video of Tucker Carlson interviewing Ron DeSantis, with a list of the topics / questions. The interview goes 25 minutes, then there is a discussion between the Blaze TV hosts for another 15 minutes. What I like about DeSantis is that when he talks about what he would do as President, it's just a continuation of what he's already done in Florida as governor.

Video: (from Blaze Media)

Topics / Questions:

- DeSantis signed a ban on abortion after 6 weeks as governor, would he do the same as President?
- How would you convince someone pro-abortion to change their mind on abortion?
- Explain the difference between concerns about climate change and concerns about other environment, and what has Florida done to address environmental concerns.
- How is Florida handling the massive influx of refugees from failing blue states like California and New York?
- How is Florida handling wokeness in women's sports?
- What would a Ron DeSantis foreign policy look like, specifically on the war in Ukraine?
- How would Ron DeSantis be different from Joe Biden on the issue of border security and drug cartels?
- What is the exit strategy from Ukraine?
- Who is the bigger threat, Russia or China?
- What has Florida done to limit China's power in Florida?
- What can we do to encourage other European countries to defend themselves from aggression?
- How is our energy policy related to foreign policy, and specifically to regional conflicts in Europe and the Middle East?
- Tell us how Florida derecognized Central Bank Digital Currency. Would you do the same as President?
- What would you address the weaponization of the federal government against Christians and conservatives, as President? Specifically FBI vs pro-lifers, FBI colluding with Big Tech, and Anthony Fauci.
- How would you deal with people who censored dissenting evidence during the COVID crisis?
- What will you do to prevent surveillance of American citizens by the federal government?
- Do you think Joe Biden will be the Democrat nominee?

American father loses parental rights after ex-wife announces their child is transgender

July 19, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, I blogged about a case in Canada, where a father was imprisoned for objecting to the forced transgendering of his child by the schools, hospitals, lawyers and judges. The people pushing for the transgendering were all feminists and LGBT activists. That case was quite disturbing, and I was wondering when this would come to America. Then I found an article by Abigail Shrier in City Journal.

The father, Ted, is a senior software engineer with Apple. He is comfortable living in San Francisco. His wife Christine is an executive at BlackRock, the firm that is always buying up people's houses and then renting them out. They also champion ESG, which is a social credit system for businesses, that leads to socialism.

Things started to go wrong for Ted when his wife moved to the East coast with the two boys for family reasons:

> Ted was then fully preoccupied with a grueling six-week project for Apple… On a Saturday in August 2019, shortly after returning from upstate New York with the boys, Christine walked into Ted's home office and announced both that she was leaving and that their son Drew was transgender… Christine walked out, taking the kids to stay with her at a neighbor's house.

Most women who go along with transgendering do so because they want their children to like them, and they want to be seen as compassionate and tolerant by their peers.

But the father did research on the risks to his child:

> While trying to keep an open mind about Drew's gender, Ted was adamant to the judge that he did not want Drew to begin medical transition. In the 312 days since he had last seen his boy, Ted had done a lot of research on medical transition and gender dysphoria. He begged the court to consider research that suggested puberty blockers could impair cognition and diminish bone density. He knew that Drew, if administered puberty blockers along with estrogen, would be at high risk of permanent infertility. He wasn't even sure that his son had gender dysphoria. He wanted to see his son—and he wanted this bullet train to slow down.

The San Francisco judge awarded full custody of Drew to his wife:

> On June 24, 2020… Judge Joni Hiramoto granted Christine sole legal custody of Drew on a temporary basis and approved the shared legal and physical custody arrangement of their younger son. She assured Ted that her order was not yet permanent. Judge Hiramoto had decided to order the appointment of a minor's counsel to investigate how the boys were faring before making any permanent

> decisions. She already had the perfect person in mind. “I actually know of one who was previously appointed by the court, by a different judge, on a case involving children that were allegedly transgender,” she said. That minor’s counsel was attorney Daniel Harkins.

Harkins decided that Ted’s hesitance to drug therapy and sex change surgery was a sign that Ted was not a fit parent:

> Based on the lengthy minor’s counsel report, Harkins gave Ted’s parenting a failing grade: “Father has not been accepting of [Drew’s] status as transgender. He has been quite clear that he does not accept that [Drew] is in fact transgender.”
>
> […]Harkins’s judgment was swift and ironclad: mom should retain full legal custody on a permanent basis and provide Ted updates, at her discretion, regarding matters that affect Drew’s health, education, and welfare. Drew would commence hormone therapy, as directed by USCF. Judge Hiramoto made all this official. The only right that Ted seems to have retained is the power to prevent Drew from undergoing “any gender identity related surgery” before he turns 18, absent agreement of both parties.

Without Ted’s knowledge or permission, Drew got a puberty-blocking implant, and Ted had to pay:

> In October 2021, Ted was stunned by a $209,820.34 charge on his insurance statement. When he wrote to Christine, she confirmed that a puberty-blocking implant had been inserted in Drew’s arm months earlier and that Drew had begun a course of cross-sex hormones. The combination—if not soon stopped—would likely sterilize Drew. No one had asked Ted’s permission for the procedure or even informed Ted of what had been done.

This part is interesting, especially for men who are considering marriage and having children today.

Read it carefully:

> Ted responded to this news with a flurry of e-mails to Christine’s attorney. He told Christine’s lawyer that the medical procedure was in violation of a court order, and Christine was risking being held in contempt of court. A day later, Christine’s lawyer filed a request for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order against Ted, alleging that he had spoken to his ex-wife “menacingly” at their younger son’s football games. Ted was served with the temporary restraining order; California law now required him to relinquish all his firearms within 24 hours or potentially face felony charges. He quickly complied.

Ted was informed about the long-term consequences of the decision, because he had looked at evidence. But how did his ex-wife respond to his evidence? By charging him

with domestic violence. Not actual violence, but just words of disagreement which caused her to feel unhappy.

Ted made the decision to let people at his Silicon Valley company know what was happening in a company Slack channel. Slack is software used to allow employees to communicate with each other in a chat format. People in the channel were offended, and reported him to Human Resources:

> Ted joined the Apple Slack channel devoted to "trans kid parenting" and shared his outrage and concern about his son's medical transition and the risks involved. The other members chastised him and reported Ted to "Employee Relations," known everywhere else as "HR." Ted now worries for his job.

The details of Ted's divorce were not revealed in the article, but if he is supposed to pay child support and alimony to his wife, and he lost his job, he probably would still have come up with the same amount of money, or go to prison for not paying his debts. That's how the divorce courts work.

And here is how the story ended for with Harkins:

> Within just a few months, the court would definitively end Ted's parental relationship. He would have no right to see Drew, no right to talk to him, no right to demand that Drew attend therapy with him, and absolutely no right to stop a medical transition already planned by the Child and Adolescent Gender Center of UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital.

And now I want to say something about what this means to me as a Christian man, who is frequently urged to go to church and get married and have children by church-attending women and pastors.

The denial of male headship

The overriding of male leadership of the home that you saw from the judge and the attorney is universal… even among conservative evangelical Christian women who claim to be social conservatives. One evangelical Christian social conservative woman told me that "Masculinity means that men use their strength to protect and provide for women". Another one told me that male headship does not exist in the Bible, and that men have no authority in marriages – only responsibilities. She also said that when women divorce, it is ALWAYS the fault of their husbands for not meeting the wife's emotional needs.

Even many evangelical Christian socially conservative women don't think that men have a distinct role to confront evil, protect their children, or lead their homes. They would side with the divorcing wife and the female judge against the mean, excluding, judgmental, father Ted. They would say that men's role in marriage is to be compassionate, tolerant, and to make their wives happy.

Marriage and child-bearing exposes you to the state

To Christian men who are considering marriage and child-raising, you need to choose women who form their views on morality, policy, etc. through reason and evidence. If she

isn’t interested in truth, then understand that her views will be formed by her feelings and peer-approval. You will not be able to change her mind by appealing to reason and evidence. Look for women who have the demonstrated ability to defend their theological and moral views against the secular left culture. For example, the issue of male headship in marriage. Otherwise, you can expect the treatment that Ted got at the hands of his ex-wife, the judge, etc. Divorce is a nightmare for men. The feminist state will overpower you. You will lose your freedom, your savings and your children. You will become a slave.

Read 2 Tim 2:4 and consider whether you want to use your freedom and finances to serve God, or whether you want to be controlled by the secular left state. As a Christian man, you already have a Boss. A woman’s role is to help you serve your Boss. Beware of women who want to take the place of your Boss. Beware of women who think that marriage is about you making them happy. Beware of women who scorn your moral leadership. Beware of women who demand that you show compassion, tolerance and approval for whatever is popular in the secular left culture.

First transgender lawmaker (a Democrat) charged with sexual exploitation of children

July 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There's a battle going on between the patriarchal forces of this world, which focus on truth and virtue, and the emotional forces of this world, which focus on "follow your heart" and "don't judge". The patriarchal forces know that evil is afoot, and they want to confront it. The emotional forces believe that judging is the root of all evil, because it makes some people *feel bad*.

Here's an article from Daily Caller that shows how the emotional forces work.

It says:

> New Hampshire's first elected transgender representative was hit with federal charges for the sexual exploitation of children Tuesday, according to the Department of Justice (DOJ).
>
> Stacie Marie Laughton was charged with aiding and abetting in addition to one count of child exploitation in relation to former intimate partner Lindsay Groves, according to a DOJ press release. Laughton and Groves allegedly had over 10,000 text messages discussing and transferring explicit photographs that Groves took while employed as a daycare worker at Creative Minds daycare, a forensic review revealed from Groves' cellphone, according to the DOJ.

At this point, I want to mention that of course this person is a Democrat. People on the secular left have enormous problems with morality. They are able to ape the moral conventions of the people around them, but when they are alone, there is simply no reason for them to control themselves. People like this lawmaker become active in politics because they want to prevent people with genuine morality from judging them or punishing them for their actions. This is why atheists are so active in politics. They are actively seeking to escape judgment and punishment for their immorality. Atheists vote overwhelmingly for the Democrat party. They want to undermine the moral laws that protect the weak and vulnerable.

More:

> Laughton was arrested on June 23 on child porn charges after Nashua police were alerted about a juvenile matter and spoke to individuals who allegedly indicated Laughton distributed explicit images of children
>
> The texts allegedly included four sexually explicit images of children who appeared to be three to five years old. Messages also discussed explicit descriptions of sex between the two partners and others, with mentions of children, according to the DOJ.

If I had to pick one place where the emotional / don't-judge forces have their

headquarters, I would pick the daycares and the public schools. In these places, emotions rule. Moral standards are all but non-existent. The religion is “don’t judge”. And people who “don’t judge” have no way to tell good from evil. When they are tempted to do something, they do it. The only calculation is “will I get caught”.

As for moral standards, they think of those as customs that are valid for a time and place. Like cooking conventions . Or clothing conventions. They don’t believe that the universe is designed by a Designer who made the moral law. They don’t actually believe that morality applies to humans like math applies to humans. And they certainly don’t believe that God will hold them accountable for their moral choices. In fact, atheism is motivated by nothing more than the retreat from accountability to God. It’s not something that people become convinced of because of evidence. It’s something that people want to be true, so that they can pursue pleasure without any constraints or accountability.

Many teachers and administrators in our daycares and schools are insulated from the real world. The are not experienced at linking causes and effects, the way that private sector workers – blue collar or white collar – regularly do. Teachers are administrators are generally not inclined accept that people who make poor decisions should be “punished” with real world consequences. They are also not responsive to customers in a competitive private sector workplace. They don’t feel any responsibility to treat children well. After all, their pay and benefits has nothing to do with the quality of their work. Private sector workers have to work hard in order to make their employers profitable, so they can keep their jobs. These two conditions: disconnection from the consequences imposed by reality, and disconnection from the need to please customers, make it easy for teachers to break the moral law. That’s why “don’t judge” comes from the public schools.

What should we do? Well, we need to pass school choice, so that parents can have their kids educated by people who are more connected to reality, and more responsible to the parents who pay them. At the very least, we should insist that people who want to be teachers have 2+ years of private sector experience. And teacher unions should be abolished. That would be the best, but at the very least, no one should have to pay union dues in order to work as a teacher. Teacher unions are one of the greatest forces for evil in this world. It’s very strange to me that people who believe in morality are sometimes confused about this. You just have to look at here the union dues go to see that what they really believe.

By the way, I noticed that one of the major gay rights groups in America took down their post celebrating the first openly transgender lawmaker. Here is the archived version. Why do you think they would do that?

Are feminists right to think that gender-neutral marriage makes women happier?

July 21, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

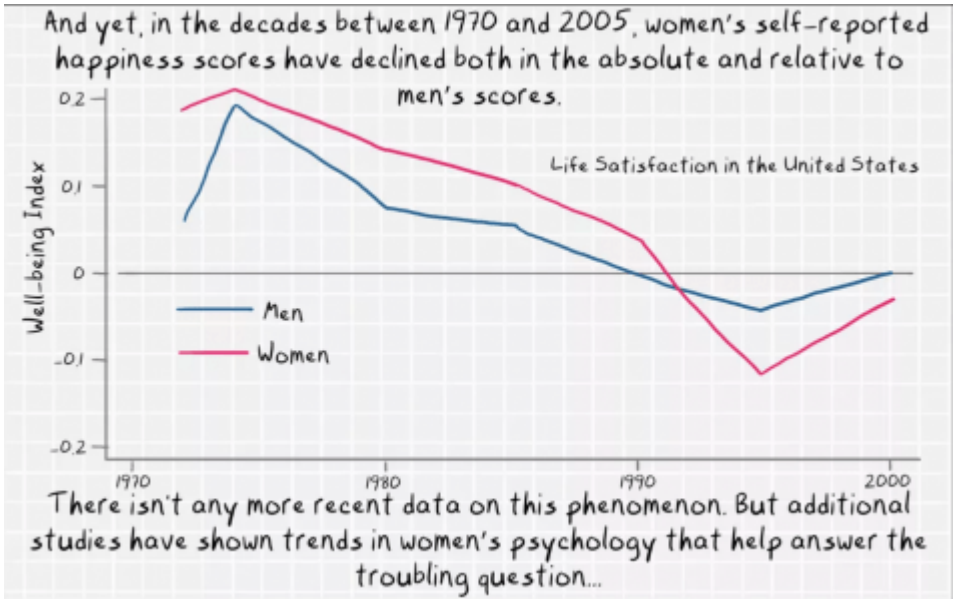

Male and female happiness throughout America's adoption of radical feminism

I was reading this article by a feminist fiction writer on Vox, where she explains that although feminists have gotten what they wanted (careers, contraceptives, promiscuity, abortion, no-fault-divorce, daycare, etc. it hasn't made them happier. So, what does this feminist fiction writer think would make feminists happier?

She gives two reasons why women women are still unhappy after feminism has been adopted by our society:

- men don't do enough housework
- women are not as successful as men because they are discriminated against, the so-called "glass ceiling"

I think those complaints are pretty popular among feminists. Let's take a look at some studies to see if her opinions are supported by peer-reviewed studies.

First study:

> COUPLES who share housework duties run a higher risk of divorce than couples where the woman does most of the chores, a study has found.

> The divorce rate among couples who shared housework equally was around 50 per cent higher than among those where the woman did most of the work.
>
> "The more a man does in the home, the higher the divorce rate," Thomas Hansen, co-author of the study entitled *Equality in the Home*, said.

Second study:

> Researchers at the University of Illinois examined data on nearly 1,500 men and 1,800 women, aged between 52 and 60. Their well-being was evaluated through surveys.
>
> The researchers first found that men's well-being decreased once they had exited the workforce to become home-makers.
>
> Meanwhile, the inverse was not so for women: Women's psychological well-being was not affected by leaving their jobs to become stay-at-home mothers.

Third study:

> A study called "Egalitarianism, Housework and Sexual Frequency in Marriage," which appeared in The American Sociological Review last year, surprised many, precisely because it went against the logical assumption that as marriages improve by becoming more equal, the sex in these marriages will improve, too. Instead, it found that when men did certain kinds of chores around the house, couples had less sex. Specifically, if men did all of what the researchers characterized as feminine chores like folding laundry, cooking or vacuuming — the kinds of things many women say they want their husbands to do — then couples had sex 1.5 fewer times per month than those with husbands who did what were considered masculine chores, like taking out the trash or fixing the car. It wasn't just the frequency that was affected, either — at least for the wives. The more traditional the division of labor, meaning the greater the husband's share of masculine chores compared with feminine ones, the greater his wife's reported sexual satisfaction.

Regarding the pay gap, that is entirely caused by women's own choices. E.g. – the choice to study creative writing instead of petroleum engineering, the choice to work 35 hour weeks instead of 70 hour weeks, etc.

Fourth study: (summarized by AEI economist)

> When the [Bureau of Labor Statistics] reports that women working full-time in 2018 earned 81.4% of what men earned working full-time, that is very much different from saying that women earned 81.4% of what men earned for doing exactly the same work while working the exact same number of hours in the same occupation, with exactly the same educational background and exactly the same years of continuous, uninterrupted work experience, and with exactly the same marital and family (e.g., number of children) status. As shown above, once we start controlling individually for the many relevant factors that affect earnings, e.g., hours worked, age, marital status, and having children, most of the raw earnings differential disappears.

Fifth study:

> This study leads to the unambiguous conclusion that the differences in the compensation of men and women are the result of a multitude of factors and

> that the raw wage gap should not be used as the basis to justify corrective action. Indeed, there may be nothing to correct. The differences in raw wages may be almost entirely the result of the individual choices being made by both male and female workers.

I think that women are entitled to make their own decisions, but they aren't allowed to force the rest of us to subsidize their failures and celebrate their destructive outcomes.

I could go on, but I think enough has been said to show that research is very much at odds with feminist rhetoric. They *feel* they know what will make them happy and we gave them everything they asked for. They eliminated shaming of promiscuity with sex education. They get preferential treatment in the schools in a female-dominated education system. They are hired because of affirmative action quotas. They get expensive daycare, government schools, welfare and other programs. Taxes are raised to equalize outcomes for divorced women who choose men for feelings, and then nuke their own marriage enterprise. We have been on a long experiment of giving feminists everything they *felt* they wanted, at the expense of men's rights and children's rights, and it hasn't even produced the results that feminists *felt* it would.

The social costs of feelings-based decision-making

Let's look at two examples of policies that feminists asked for in the past, which didn't work out the way they wanted.

I can understand why feminists would introduce sex education. They *felt* that "if everyone is having sex, then I won't be the only one chasing attention from hot no-commitment bad boys by giving them recreational sex before marriage". They wanted to eliminate the standards of chastity and marriage-focused dating and normalize fun-focused drunken promiscuity. And they got that. But since they didn't consult any research and evidence about how that would affect their future marriage stability and marriage happiness, they are even more unhappy than before.

How about no-fault divorce? No-fault divorce was brought in by a coalition of feminists, Marxists and trial lawyers. The Marxists want to destroy the family in order to increase dependence on the state. The trial lawyers wanted to make money. And the feminists thought that the standard approach to courting and marriage was just too much work. They didn't want to be chaste. They didn't want to be sober. They didn't want to evaluate a man for traditional husband and father roles. The no-fault divorce laws gave them an escape from the messes caused by *their own feelings-driven choices*. But divorce just makes makes men and women much poorer, and passes the costs of supporting single mothers onto taxpayers.

And the costs of the failures of feminism are passed onto taxpayers.

Consider this study:

> This paper examines the growth of government during this century as a result of giving women the right to vote. Using cross-sectional time-series data for

> 1870–1940, we examine state government expenditures and revenue as well as voting by U.S. House and Senate state delegations and the passage of a wide range of different state laws. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue and more liberal voting patterns for federal representatives, and these effects continued growing over time as more women took advantage of the franchise. Contrary to many recent suggestions, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s, and it helps explain why American government started growing when it did.

We are already $28 trillion in debt, partly because of feminism's replacement of husbands and families with higher taxes and big government. Every time we transfer money from tax-paying men to feminists to fix their mistakes, it leaves less money in the hands of the men who actually want to get married. The declining value of marriage after feminism for men explains why marriage is being delayed, and why marriage rates are plunging.

William Lane Craig and James White debate Calvinism vs Molinism

July 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a recent episode of the Unbelievable show, Calvinist pastor / theologian James White discussed middle knowledge (a.k.a. Molinism) with philosopher / theologian William Lane Craig. In this post, you'll find a link to the audio, the YouTube video, and my comments on the debate. My comments were quoted in an episode of William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith podcast.

Here is a link to the details from Unbelievable: (with MP3 download link)

> Calvinism and Molinism are two very different ways of understanding God's sovereignty. But which one best addresses the problem of evil?
>
> James White argues that Calvinism – God foreordaining all human behaviour both good and evil – is the more Biblical and coherent view. William (Bill) Lane Craig argues that Molinism – a view which reconciles human freedom and divine sovereignty – is Biblically consistent without making God the author of evil.

And the video:

Summary:

JB: Why is there evil?

JW: Natural and moral evil are the results of God's divine decree to create the world.

WLC: God has knowledge of what individual humans would do in different circumstances prior to his divine decree to create the world. God's decree takes into account the free decisions of people in different situations. With regard to natural evil, Calvinists and Molinists do not differ much – they are permitted to achieve a greater good. But for moral evil, there is a difference. Moral evil is the result of free decisions by individual humans. They are not God's will. God permits people to perform evil actions, because those free actions will lead to him achieving his ultimate purposes. God does not override human free will. He achieves his ultimate purposes through the actions of his free creatures. On the Calvinist view, God moves the will of creatures to do evil. God is the cause of their evil acts.

JB: God sees all of the possible worlds and instantiates a world where he is able to achieve his ultimate purposes while respecting the free decisions of his creatures.

WLC: God does not see what humans WILL do, and decree based on that. He sees what they WOULD do in different circumstances, and articulates a world where the free decisions they make in the circumstances he decrees lead to his ultimate purposes being fulfilled.

JB: And this view achieves God's sovereignty (God gets the result he wants) with human freedom (God is not responsible for moral evil)

JB: James, isn't it better for God to get what he wants while respecting free will, rather than micromanaging every thought and action of the people?

JW: There's micromanaging on both sides. On Molinism, God micromanages the circumstances. On Calvinism, God micromanages everything. But how could God have that knowledge of what people would do, prior to actually creating those people? The Bible teaches Calvinism, and so we should go with that. Calvinists are concerned when Craig says that God does not determine the truth value of these subjunctive conditionals (i.e. – what free individuals would do in different circumstances) The individuals determine what they will do in different circumstances. And Calvinists would prefer that God determine (i.e. – exhaustive determinism) what individuals do in different circumstances. WLC, would you agree that the knowledge of these subjunctive conditionals are the essence of what middle knowledge is? (WK note: micromanaging circumstances doesn't violate free will, micromanaging everything does violate free will)

WLC: No, but it is an essential aspect of it. According to Molinism, God does not determine what free individuals would do in different situations in which they find themselves. The Calvinist view is that in any situation, God actually moves the will of the creature, so God is the author of moral evil. On the Molinist view, creatures are responsible for moral evil, not God.

JW: So you're saying that these subjunctive conditionals are not under God's control. How can they be under the control of the creatures, since prior to God's creative decree, the creatures do not exist yet? Where do these truth values come from.

WLC: This objection to Molinism is called the "grounding objection". The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom are true without having to be grounded by the created individuals. This objection presupposes a view of truth called "truth-maker" theory. This theory says that in addition to propositions that are true, there are things that make propositions true. There are many counterexamples to this view. For example, if you deny the existence of something that does not exist, then there is no truth maker that makes that claim true. (WK note: E.g. – a unicorn does not exist) Another example is "If WLC were rich, WLC would buy a Mercedes" but there is no truth-maker situation that makes that true, except maybe if he were rich. (WK note: I think that the created individual WLC would be the truth-maker in that case?)

JW: The decisions that I make are caused by God's decree of what gifts I have or don't have. He has freedom to decree those gifts, and then that has an effect of what I am free to do. E.g. – I am not 6'11" so I am not free to be a center in the NBA. So on the Molinist view, what is the basis for these subjunctive counterfactuals that limit what God can do?

WLC: The grounding objection presupposes the truth-maker theory, and a particular strain of that theory called truth-maker maximalism, and counterfactuals of creaturely of creaturely freedom would be prime candidates to be exceptions to the truth-maker theory.

WLC: Regarding the point about how people don't exist in a vacuum but have a whole history, background, characteristics, etc. to shape their decisions. That's right. But the

counterfactuals of creaturely freedom factor all that in. The key point that divides us is that God doesn't determine what creatures decide, he decides the circumstances. And so the creature is responsible for moral evil, not God. And so God doesn't cause people to commit moral evils, then punish them for it.

WLC: We should guide our views based on what is in the Bible. But even Calvinist theologians affirm things about God that are not taught explicitly in the Bible, such as God's spacelessness and timelessness. And Molinism makes the best sense of divine sovereignty and human freedom. On the Calvinist view, God determines how anyone would act in any situation God might place him in, so God is responsible for the moral evil committed by his creatures.

JW: (repeats) If God is limited in what he can do by counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, then we have to know where these counterfactuals come from. (WK note: the counterfactuals of creaturely freedom come from… creaturely freedom.)

JW: Genesis 50:20 says that God used the moral evil committed by some creatures to achieve the good purposes he intended. (WK note: that's exactly what the Molinist view is, God permits moral evil by his creatures, as long as it achieves his ultimate good purposes)

JW: Molinism is unknown in the church for 1500 years. (WK note: Molinism is in Acts 17:24-27, and also, Calvin and Luther were unknown in the church for 1500 years)

JB: Is Genesis 50:20 a good example of Calvinism?

WLC: (very excited) NO!!!!!! It's a great example of Molinism!!!! The text says that God didn't move the bad actors to perform sinful actions – that would make God the author of evil. But God knew that if they were in this situation, they would behave in these evil ways, but ultimately it would lead to good results that God wanted. There is a chain of people partially articulating the middle knowledge view prior to Molina.

JW: You shouldn't believe Molinism, because it comes from Jesuits. (WK Note: this is the genetic fallacy)

JW: The Bible has examples where God "hardens hearts", e.g. Pharaoh.

WLC: It's not that the Bible authors had Molinism in mind. It's that this theory is consistent with what the Bible teaches.

JW: Ephesians 1 teaches that God unilaterally determines who the elect are. Calvinism emerges from the text. But in Genesis 50:20, Molinism doesn't emerge from it.

WLC: We're both trying to make sense of the data of Scripture. Scripture doesn't teach the universal divine determinism of every human act, especially evil acts. The Bible says thate God is not evil, and cannot even be tempted with evil, but on the Calvinist view, God is causing the evil actions of his creatures, and then he punishes them for it. If it's evil to cause someone to do evil, it makes God himself evil.

JW: In Isaiah 10, God uses the Assyrians to punish Israel, then he punishes the Assyrians for the haughty attitude of their heart.

WLC: The Molinist view of Ephesians 1 is that part of God's good pleasure is to respect

human freedom, and not to unilaterally divinely determine them to sin. Regarding Isaiah 10, you're asking how God can punish the Assyrians for something he causes them to do? No, God knows that the Assyrians are going to do this moral evil and he uses that for his purposes, and he is free to punish their immoral act, because they did it of their own free will.

JW: But if you need Molinism to understand these texts, then what did the authors intend for people to think before Molinism.

WLC: People understand from Genesis 50:20 that people do evil things, but God gets a good outcome out of it.

JW: As a Calvinist, I do not believe that God respects human freedom.

JW: I don't think that individuals have control of the circumstances in which they are born or where they live that limits God's sovereignty. (WK note: he doesn't understand Molinism or Acts 17:24-27. Individuals control their own decisions. But God controls the circumstances – i.e. – everything else). There is no essence of James White that determines where I am born, my physical characteristics, my siblings, etc. God decrees everything about who I am.

WLC: "That's because you're a determinist, James, and I'm not"

JW: "Yes. Yes. OK."

WLC: There are number of possible worlds where James White could exist. Different country, different education, different language, different family. God decides the circumstances for James White. James White makes the decisions. God doesn't cause James White's moral evil. James White does. The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom must exist prior to the divine decree in order for humans to be responsible for their evil actions.

JW: You're using philosophy. But your view should come from the Bible. (WK note: look at Acts 17:24-27)

WLC: Universal divine determinism isn't taught in the Bible.

JW: Yes, in Ephesians 1.

WLC: The Molinist affirms Ephesians 1.

JW: It doesn't mention respecting free will there, it's teaching universal divine determinism.

WLC: The Bible teaches that God does have knowledge of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, e.g. 2 Cor 2:8. So the question is whether God has this knowledge logically prior the decree (Molinism requires this), or is it logically after. If it is logically after, then it makes God the cause of human moral evil.

JW: The verses raised by Craig can be subsumed under God's natural knowledge and free knowledge.

JW: Some Molinists believe that the only people who are lost in this world are people who cannot freely respond to God's saving initiative in any circumstances (WK note: this is

called trans-world damnation (TD), and I hold this view). Does anyone in the Bible know about this idea? That changes God's expression from universal divine determinism to accepting human free will and human responsibility for sin (which Calvinism denies).

WLC: Yes, there are two different views. The one view takes human free will, and human responsibility for sin, seriously. The other view makes God the cause of human sin, and therefore makes God evil for being the author of evil.

JW: On Molinism, God knew that if he actualized this world, then he knew the evil that would result, but he didn't do it for some purpose, like revealing his own character?

WLC: No, he didn't bring the evil into the world. He actualized a set of circumstances, and a set of free creatures. And he knew that in those circumstances, he knew that the creatures would choose to do evil. His absolute will is for all his creatures to always do the right thing. But he knows that often they will do evil. He permits that to happen, but in the end he achieves the good purposes. E.g. – achieving the redemption of mankind through Jesus through the evil decisions of the rulers at that time.

WLC: I love the Westminster Confession. But without middle knowledge, that Confession is incoherent. Middle knowledge explains how things work, so that the Westminster Confession's affirmations are logically coherent.

JW: What you're saying is that God respects human free will and human responsibility.

WLC: Molinism is extremely fruitful theologically. I have applied to the problem of exclusivity of salvation, to the perseverance of the saints, to the inspiration of Scripture… but the focus of the discussion today is on moral evil. Who is the cause of human evil?

JW: Only universal divine determinism and the denial of human free will and human responsibility are consistent with Scripture.

WLC: Scripture alone is my authority, not church tradition. But Reformed theology is permeated with concepts that are not described in Scripture, but are consistent with Scripture, e.g. – timelessness, spacelessness, simplicity.

JW: I disagree, ALL the concepts in Calvinism emerge directly from the text. Isaiah 40-48 clearly teaches divine necessity, that God exists necessarily, in every possible world. (WK note: Calvinist thought emerges 1500 years after the Bible was written)

JW: Middle knowledge is a Catholic dogma, which is why even the Catholics rejected it.

WLC: (holds up 2 volumes of a 4 volume, 2144 page set of books on Reformed theology) Anyone who thinks that Reformed Dogmatics are simply read out of Scripture "doesn't know the history of Reformed theology". These volumes are permeated with theological constructs, philosophical models, philosophical principles. The necessity of God's existence, timelessness, spacelessness, etc. are all affirmed by Reformed theologians, and were inherited from medieval scholastics (Catholics).

JW: The central claim of middle knowledge, that counterfactuals of creaturely freedom are known by God, are not in the Bible. (WK note: Craig gave an example of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom in the Bible. There are lots of them.)

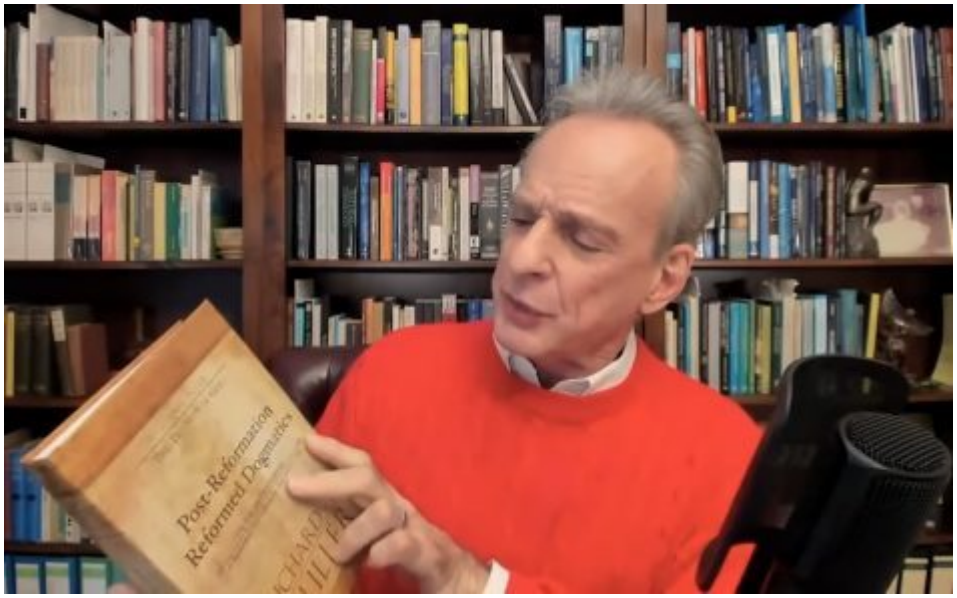

Four volume 2144-page book set on Reformed dogmatics

My thoughts:

I think that it was a good debate. Well worth watching. I don't promise that my summary is 100% accurate. Please leave room for a little snark, and watch the debate yourself. I like to take the spin off of people's words, when I feel that they are trying to weasel out of the conclusions of their own views. It's 2 AM on Monday morning now, and I don't want to proof-read. Please point out errors in the comments.

If I could boil down the mistake that James White makes to one sentence, it would be to say that he comes to the text with a *philosophical* presupposition (determinism), and this causes him to misinterpret the plain meaning of the text as a whole. And this misinterpretation isn't about peripheral teachings of the Bible. His embrace of God as the cause of moral evil means that he denies the goodness of God – a basic Christian doctrine. (This is compounded by his embrace of double-predestination, although that was not the topic of the debate). Christians shouldn't let a philosophy – determinism – override the plain meaning of Scripture. Determinism is *man's philosophy* – it's a Greek philosophy that existed centuries before Christ.

White also was clearly unfamiliar with the philosophy of religion of his own Reformed tradition, and especially with the history of the development of Reformed theology. Craig was able to correct him, by showing him the books on Reformed Dogmatics and explain the historical antecedents of Reformed thought.

James White is not a "hyper-Calvinist". He is a normal Calvinist. Calvinism teaches universal divine determinism. Calvinism teaches that where each individual goes after the judgment is decided unilaterally by God. Calvinism teaches that human moral evil is caused by God. Calvinism teaches that God punishes people for this moral evil. Calvinism teaches *intentional* double-predestination.

I wrote about the problems with Calvinism, citing Calvinist D.A. Carson and William Lane Craig, in a previous post. Determinism denies free will, and therefore undermines all meaning in life. That's not consistent with the Bible's clear teaching that God issues commands to his creatures, because he expects (free will) obedience. That is how we

develop our relationship with God after becoming Christians (sanctification), and those relationships have ultimate significance.

Note: I link to James White's work on this blog. He does a great job of fighting cultural and political enemies. I really appreciate his conservative perspective on issues like abortion, and his sensitivity to the totalitarian impulses of the secular left. His work on KJV-only and and debating Catholics is excellent. I don't always agree with Craig. I recently posted disagreement with Craig on his latest work on the historical Adam and evolution. I have other minor disagreements with him as well, in substance and method. The only theology books in my house are by R. C. Sproul, Wayne Grudem, D.A. Carson, Millard Erickson, John MacArthur, etc. – all Calvinists.

If you missed Craig's debate with Paul Helm, which is mentioned in the debate, I blogged about that previously, as well.

Study: 1 in 8 divorces is caused by student loan debt

July 23, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to make plans in advance and calculate everything out before I try to do anything. This is the curse of being a software engineer. We're taught to take a test-first approach to design. So, when I think about marriage, I naturally think about what tests marriage is supposed to pass, and work backwards from there to requirements for each of the spouses.

Here's some research from CNBC that might help young people to avoid a divorce, if they respect the research in their choices.

Excerpt:

> When it comes to student loan debt, "for richer, for poorer" doesn't quite cut it.
>
> In general, finances are the leading cause of stress in a relationship, according to a study by SunTrust Bank, but student debt takes a particularly hard toll on a marriage.
>
> More than a third of borrowers said college loans and other money factors contributed to their divorce, according to a recent report from Student Loan Hero, a website for managing education debt.
>
> In fact, 13 percent of divorcees blame student loans specifically for ending their relationship, the report found. Student Loan Hero surveyed more than 800 divorced adults in June.

Here is a link to the full study from Student Loan Hero.

I think in general, you can't just do whatever you want before marrying and jump into it unprepared. Marriage involves specific requirements in order to work, such as being faithful to your spouse, and buying things that you need for the marriage enterprise, like a home, and baby stuff. It doesn't make any sense to say "I want to get married" and then not prepare for marriage by being careful about preparing for the behaviors marriage that requires of you. Being debt-free is one of those behaviors that marriage requires of you.

So how can we be debt-free, so that the marriage will be stable? Well, one way to be debt-free is to find a way to learn skills that will allow you to get a job without going to college, like being a self-taught software engineer. One of my friends actually did that, and now he's with a very good software company as a remote worker. But if you're going to go to college, you can avoid debt by studying something that will get you a high-paying job when you graduate.

This 2017 article from Harvard Business Review is interesting.

It says:

> Examining 46,934 resumes shared on Glassdoor by people who graduated

> between 2010 and 2017, the researchers looked at each person's college major and their post-college jobs in the five years after graduation. They then estimated the median pay for each of those jobs (also using Glassdoor data) for employees with five years of experience or less. Their key finding: "Many college majors that lead to high-paying roles in tech and engineering are male dominated, while majors that lead to lower-paying roles in social sciences and liberal arts tend to be female dominated, placing men in higher-paying career pathways, on average."

Here's the plot, and you can click it to expand it:

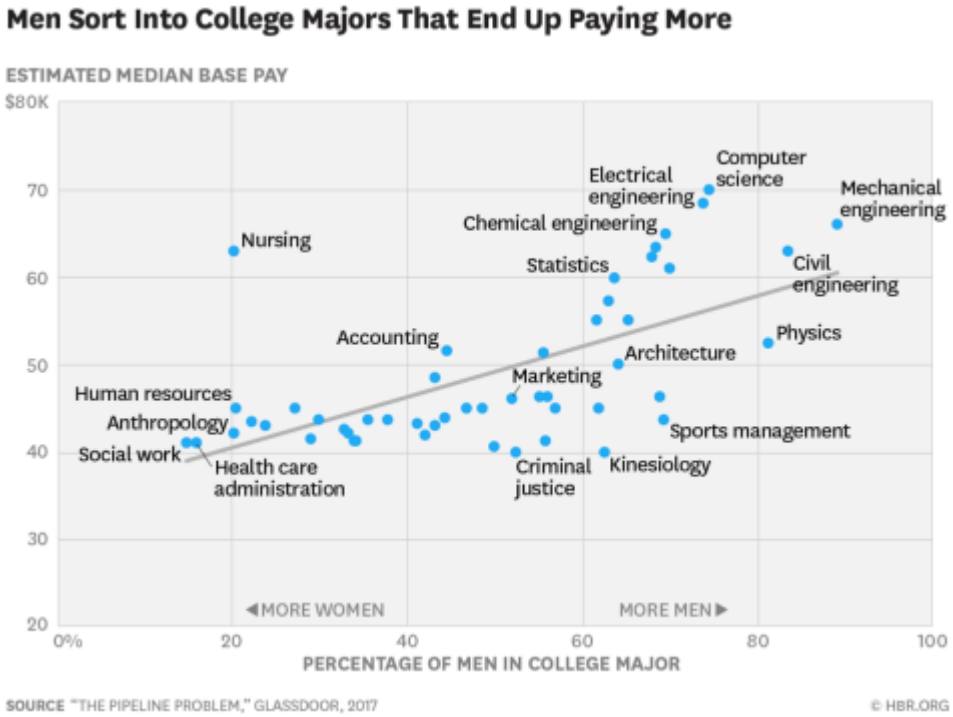

Median salaries by major, broken out by gender – don't study things at the bottom!

As you can see from the graph, it's especially important to share the message about choosing a major, salaries and student loan debt with WOMEN, because as the graph shows, they tend to choose the wrong majors, if the goal is to pay off student loans and avoid divorce. Everyone who wants marriage to go smoothly needs to choose majors that are near the top of the graph, like nursing, chemical engineering, computer science, or mechanical engineering. It doesn't make sense to go to college if you aren't going to graduate in one of these high-paying fields.

As you might expect from the graph, women hold the majority of student loan debt, according to the Boston Globe, and that's because women tend to choose majors that don't result in good-paying jobs. And we already saw how this becomes a risk factor for divorce.

Student loans delay marriage and children

Another interesting piece of data, reported by The Consumerist, is that people with student loans tend to delay marriage, which means the couple has fewer children:

> As consumers navigate life's financial journey, they are faced with major financial

> milestones, like buying a home. But student loans are also delaying consumers from reaching these goals.
>
> Survey respondents report delaying homeownership (23 percent), buying or leasing a car (23 percent), having children (10 percent) and getting married (9 percent) because of their student loan burdens.

So, it's not just that there is an increased risk of divorce from student loans, but there's also fewer children, which means a diminished legacy. I can't speak for how others would see this, but for myself, I want to pass on my beliefs to as many effective, influential Christian children as I can.

Anyway, I feel obligated to post a relevant Dave Ramsey video, just to remind everyone that stewardship of money is a Christian virtue, and that being forgiven by Jesus for your sins doesn't automatically make you good with money. It takes planning and stewardship.

This one from 2014: (H/T Robb)

When I was in high school, I was far more interested in becoming an English teacher than I was in becoming a software engineer. It was my Dad who overruled my choice of college major when I was still in high school. He had me take a first-year English course at a local university. When I saw how politicized and useless it was (they were studying all sorts of politically correct postmodern relativist stuff, instead of the Great Works, and they weren't trying to learn any wisdom from any of it), I chose computer science. I did what was likely to avoid divorce, and likely to support having many children.

Two reasons why Christians and conservatives should not donate to United Way

July 24, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, it's that time of year again, when corporations bully their employees into donating to the United Way. I thought it might be a good idea to urge all Bible-believing Christians to avoid donating to the United Way. *Please share this post if you agree with it!*

Let's start with abortion. The United Way gives TONS of money to fund abortion providers.

In 2008, United Way affiliates send $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood:

> The national United Way does fund Planned Parenthood; their website states:
>
> United Way funded programs through Planned Parenthood include community health maintenance, e.g. communicable disease prevention; medical care service; family planning; health education; public awareness services; and family preservation and strengthening services, e.g. counseling and family life education.
>
> Nationally in 2008, local United Ways distributed an estimated $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood agencies.
>
> Any finances being donated to Planned Parenthood (even if not specifically for abortion services) will free up more of their money to be used toward abortion services.

In 2015, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Last year, on the heels of shocking videos showing the Planned Parenthood abortion business selling the body parts of aborted babies, a new expose' from a group that monitors corporations that finance the abortion giant reveals the United Way is a major donor. That expose found United Way agencies giving $2 million to the abortion giant.
>
> A new expose' released this week shows that figure has increased to $3 million.

In 2016, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Analysis of the most recent IRS Form 990 filings and other documentation found 62 United Way affiliates sent $2,756,799 to Planned Parenthood abortion organizations in tax year 2016. 2ndVote's latest findings indicate an increase of $168,806 from the $2,590,994 United Way funneled to Planned Parenthood in 2015.

We're living in a time when abortion rights involves such issues as sex-selection abortions, race-selection abortions, covering up statutory rapists, Democrat support for infanticide, attacking Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, selling the body parts of

unborn babies, etc. I don't think we can count on United Way to come down on the right side of these issues. We're already being forced to fund abortions with our tax dollars, thanks to Democrats. I don't think we should give any more money to abortion providers and their secular leftist allies.

That's abortion. What about gay rights? We've seen a lot of pressure on traditional values coming from the secular left lately. They redefined marriage AGAIN to deprive children of their biological mothers or fathers. They're pushing for the Equality Act, which would have huge religious liberty repercussions for Christians.

Texas attorney Maria Martinez explains on the American Thinker:

> The Equality Act is more draconian that any state or city conversion therapy ban to date because it takes away the traditional constitutional exemption for religious freedom. The act specifically states that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) may not be invoked as a defense, marking the *first time in history that Congress has limited the reach of RFRA*. This means that it could become illegal for Christian pastors, churches, schools, and ministries to communicate a message that sexual orientation or gender identity can change. The Equality Act is unprecedented in its overreach, impacting even adults who are *willingly seeking counseling*.
>
> By contrast, therapy of any kind that pushes a person *toward* same-sex attraction or gender transition is not impacted by the law at all.
>
> Banning counseling isn't the only thing the Equality Act will do:

- Parents could lose custody of their children if they decline to assist in their gender transition. Parents in Ohio recently lost custody of their female child because they would not give her testosterone supplements to help her "transition" to look like a male.
- Doctors and hospitals could be subject to lawsuits for refusing to perform so-called "sex change" surgeries. In California and New Jersey, Catholic hospitals are already being sued for discrimination for refusing to perform these surgeries.
- Battered women's shelters could be required to admit members of the opposite sex. In Anchorage, Alaska, a male who was refused access to a shelter for abused and trafficked women sued the shelter for "gender identity discrimination."
- Faith-based adoption and foster care agencies that believe that children do best with both a mother and a father could be forced to shut down. This has already occurred in at least six states in this country.

I wonder what United Way thinks about attacks on Bible-believing Christians by LGBT activists? I posted what they shared on Facebook at the top of this post, and this is what I found on their Twitter:

United Way Twitter Gay Rights Pride Month LGBT

I don’t find that very encouraging, do you?

As a Bible-believing Christian, maybe I would be better off giving money to an organization that protects religious liberty, like Alliance Defending Freedom. I understand that many people who call themselves Christians think that the United Way’s positions are compatible with the Bible. But not everyone who calls herself a Christian actually takes the Bible seriously. Especially when it interferes with their career advancement and peer approval. This is especially true of people who work in Human Resources.

Please, don’t give money to the United Way

You don’t HAVE to give money to the United Way, just because the godless progressives in your office try to bully you into it. Instead, why not send the money to the Life Training Institute, or Ratio Christi, or Alliance Defending Freedom? These are groups do operate on Bible-based principles. I do think that Christians need to be careful about who they donate their money to. It doesn’t make sense for Christians to get up and go to work and earn money, and then give it away to anti-Christian groups who want Christianity to disappear from American life. Paul talks about how God rewards those who give gifts to partner for the gospel in Philippians. Make sure that you are not wasting your money on anything less.

Canada’s descent into tyranny: pastor persecuted for attending peaceful protest

July 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve been warning people about Canada on this blog for some time. Canada is interesting, because they have secular left leaders similar to our own Democrat party. But unlike America, there is no “brake” on the power of this political party, because the population is far more secular than in the United States. What does the secular left do when their power is unchecked?

Here’s the story from The Federalist:

> Canadian pastor has “exiled” his family to Kenya after his government invoked emergency war measures to punish citizens who attended a protest where he prayed and sang the national anthem.
>
> Harold Ristau, a decorated veteran and seminary professor, participated in the “trucker convoy” against lockdowns last February, when The Federalist interviewed him last. He is now party to a lawsuit arguing the government’s response to Covid that included treating dissent as terrorism violated Canadians’ fundamental rights.

What was interesting was what the secular left fascists felt comfortable doing to him:

> For peaceably assembling to petition his government for one day last year, Ristau says, he was threatened with the removal of his security clearance and government confiscation of his retirement nest egg, kids’ college funds, and other life savings. Ristau says he’s also experienced serious damage to his reputation, career, and friendships after the government used anti-terrorism measures against peaceful protesters.

Did you get that? The secular left wants to punish people who disagree with them like this: “the removal of his security clearance and government confiscation of his retirement nest egg, kids’ college funds, and other life savings”. If you disagree with things like abortion, global warming, masking, closing schools, and mandating untested vaccines, then you should be persecuted *as a terrorist*. This is why you should never – and I mean never – set foot in Canada. They have gone so far to the left that they are now a fascist country. If you disagree with their secular left dogma, they will come after you and persecute you in ways not seen since the Soviet Union. And Canadians just keep voting for unqualified, incompetent secular leftists, who blame all their failures on their enemies. Just like Hitler, Stalin and Mao did. They don’t allow anyone to challenge their rule.

The persecution wasn’t limited to the father, either. It went on down to the wife and the children:

> Besides dealing with overbearing health restrictions, their children were mocked

> at school for their family's religious and political views, Elise Ristau told The Federalist. After enduring more than two years of severe social and government repression, the Ristaus moved outside Nairobi with their five children last August.
>
> "I don't know that I can go back and be a Christian in Canada. So that's why we're here in Kenya," Harold Ristau said. There, the former chaplain with a Ph.D. in philosophy trains Kenyan pastors at the Lutheran School of Theology.

I was particularly interested in the government's "freezing" of bank accounts… essentially trying to starve their slaves into submission if they disagreed with the government's propaganda.

> Government use of "debanking" to punish dissent is growing in the West. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government used it on essentially every convoy participant authorities could identify, said Moore.
>
> "As soon as they knew your name if you were on the ground [protesting] in Ottawa, they froze your bank account," Moore told The Federalist. "…The federal government met with the banks, they gave the [protesters'] names to the banks, and the banks were then pushed to freeze the bank accounts of anyone with that name in their banks. It was a fascist collaboration."
>
> […]Leftist activists also filed a class-action lawsuit against every Canadian who donated to the convoy. It seeks $300 million in damages.

The closing of bank accounts is routine in the United Kingdom as well. If you are too conservative, then they just close your bank accounts. You have to be forced to comply with what the state believes. And religious liberty is no defense. Not in a secular left fascist country.

None of these methods were used against secular left criminals and terrorists, who were actually violent and dangerous.

> Canadian lockdowns kept gyms, restaurants, and liquor stores open but closed churches. Leftist protesters were allowed to yell and sing without masks, and the prime minister kneeled to them, all while provinces banned Christians from singing and chanting in church for years.
>
> […]Rev. Johannes Nieminen wasn't allowed to cross provincial borders to perform his pastoral duties, while other Canadians could do so for work, he told The Federalist. After he was denied border entry several times, he said, police finally let him through — but told him he wasn't allowed to meet with parishioners or hold church services.

Christians were especially singled out for punishment, and many of the "don't judge" Christians approved of the government for doing it:

> Police regularly showed up at churches on Sunday mornings and fined pastors whose parking lots had too many cars, he said. ARPA Canada and JCCF litigated a

> number of those cases and were often able to get pastors' fines negotiated down to charitable donations.
>
> […]So far, "none of the [legal] challenges to worship restrictions on church services have succeeded" in Canada, said John Sikkema, a lawyer at the nonprofit firm ARPA Canada.

"Culturally, people find going to the gym very important and less so going to church," Sikkema noted. "Especially when some churches don't seem to care and don't think it's necessary."

I thought this summary of the state of religious liberty in Canada was very interesting:

> In Canada, Christians are often required to lie or betray their faith to access government grants and licensing credentials, and avoid punishment in many professions, Sikkema said. Many Canadian doctors, lawyers, and teachers, for example, are required to endorse abortion and LGBT sexual acts. Canadian doctors and many other health care workers must help patients obtain an abortion or doctor-assisted suicide.
>
> In 2018, Canada's Supreme Court banned a Christian law school from opening over Christian sexual standards. The Canadian military is also working to eject chaplains over Christian sexual ethics. Just about every Canadian business sports a government-provided pride flag, Nieminen said. Churches that object to transgender mutilation of children have faced naked protesters as families arrive to worship, Sikkema said.
>
> "Canadians are very aware that we don't have freedom of religion, we don't have freedom of speech, we don't have the right to assemble if that's in disagreement with the regime," Nieminen said. "Pastors and teachers cannot speak about the morality of human sexuality. That is a reality Canadians live in, and I think that's partly why they're afraid to speak out."

It's very important for Christians in America to not capitulate to the "don't judge" emotional culture. We can't afford to capitulate to the secular left, and allow them to force their views on us. And on our children. Learn from Canada, and don't make their mistakes.

48-year-old divorced single mother seeks bailout for $430,000 of student loan debt

July 26, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If there's one area where I feel comfortable leading a woman, it's education, career and finances. I wasn't born in the USA, so it was quite a struggle to know how to navigate education, career and finances. But I did it, and I learned how to do it. And I like to share what I learned with Christian women, so that they don't end up with a useless degree and a bunch of student loan debt.

Here's a story about a woman I didn't advise, reported by the far-left Business Insider:

> Maria had a goal to teach at a university full-time. Today, she "absolutely" regrets pursuing that goal.
>
> While Maria's undergraduate education, which she completed in 2001, was funded through scholarships and Pell grants, she knew more advanced degrees would give her a leg up in university teaching — especially as a woman in the industry. So she pursued a master's degree and a PhD, the latter of which took seven years to complete.
>
> […]Now, at 48 years old, Maria's student-loan balance is $430,000…
>
> […]As a full-time human resources representative and part-time adjunct professor in Michigan, Maria now makes a five-figure salary while supporting her 15-year-old daughter on her own, with very minimal child support from the father.
>
> […]Of her total student-debt load, more than $70,000 is interest that accumulated while her student-loan payments were on hold, during which she cashed out her 401k and lived on unemployment benefits.
>
> […]Maria even filed for bankruptcy in 2018

I don't recommend doing a degree in non-STEM fields, they don't pay. I don't recommend spending 7 years with no income for a PhD. But notice how society gives her free money to subsdize these poor decisions. She got free scholarships, Pell grants, child support, unemployment benefits. The article doesn't mention if she got alimony, too. And she filed for bankruptcy… screwing her creditors out of what she owed them. Who knows what other social programs and tax benefits she got? While other women do STEM degrees, work in the private sector, marry and stay married, she's been doing life on easy mode, passing off the costs of her poor decisions to the people around her. I don't want women to make decisions that impose costs on their neighbors.

And now, she wants to get a bailout from taxpayers:

> The Education Department recently announced reforms to PSLF, which included going back over denied applications and payments to the program. So there's a

> chance that Maria may earn a quicker route to loan forgiveness. But with her current financial outlook, she's not confident she can complete the program and wants President Joe Biden to do more to help millions of borrowers with debt burdens.

The article notes that teachers and other public sector "workers" can default on their loans and pass the costs along to taxpayers:

> Maria does not work enough hours to qualify for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, which forgives student debt for public servants, like teachers, after ten years of qualifying payments.

Just understand that if society pays women to make poor decisions with their education, careers and finances, then more women will do it. That raises the costs on the men that pay taxes for this, reducing their ability to get married and conceive children. If men are paying for this woman's mistakes, they can't pay for their own marriage and parenting plans.

Consider this other article from the far-left Business Insider:

> There are over 4 times as many scholarships restricted to females as there are restricted to males.

This is despite the fact that about 60% of college students are women. Why are we focusing on subsidizing the group that's already doing well?

By the way, the author of the first Business Insider article, is a recent journalism graduate (expensive university) living in expensive Washington, D.C.. She advocates for bailouts through her journalism. She probably has massive student loan debt, too. It seems like choosing easy non-STEM majors, going into debt, then hoping for a bailout from socialism is quite common.

According to far-left Yahoo News, women hold two thirds of the $1.4 trillion outstanding student loan debt:

> Women hold nearly two-thirds of the outstanding student debt in the U.S., according to the American Association of University Women. And, they have a harder time paying off their debt compared to men. Prior to the student loan forbearance period, 70% of men made at least their required minimum monthly loan payments, while only half (54%) of women said the same, a recent survey by D.A. Davidson found.

Young women today don't like to have to "settle" for a lower cost college in a city with a lower cost of living. Like the Business Insider reporter, they want the Sex in the City lifestyle. So they go live in an expensive city, and run up debt doing useless degrees at an expensive university. And sometimes overseas! As you can see from the chart below, women avoid hard STEM degrees. But those programs are hard for a reason – they pay more money.

MAJORS WITH HIGH MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR WOMEN*

First Field of Degree 5% code	Percent Female	Median Female Earnings
Pharmacy Pharmaceutical Sciences	42	100,000
Information Sciences	26	75,000
Chemical Engineering	23	72,000
Computer Science	22	70,000
Electrical Engineering	7	70,000
Mechanical Engineering	7	70,000
Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering	17	67,000
Computer Engineering	14	67,000
Business Economics	30	64,000
Civil Engineering	13	62,000

** Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.*

The best majors for women to avoid student loan debt

My thoughts

What I wanted to do here is report to you what happens when I try to coach young women about their decisions in education, career and finances. And keep in mind, I'm doing this from a position of starting out in a foreign country, earning a BS and MS in computer science, graduating debt-free and working 22 years full-time. I had a $1.3 million net worth by age 45 (including the new construction home I bought for cash). So I have achievements here.

I run into the student loan debt problem while dating Christian women for marriage. Christian women seem to be even less likely to do hard degrees than women on average. You see a lot of art, music, English, journalism, etc. degrees there. I show them that student loans are a risk factor for divorce, and they also set back the plan to stop paying rent and start having children. I also show them which majors pay the most.

Here's what I usually get in response:

- Women think that they will be an exception to all studies and reports showing that the likely consequences of their actions.
- One woman dismissed the need to clean up her finances because God decided what degrees I would have, and how much I would earn, so I had no authority to advise her from my experience.
- Other women say that I am only doing what makes me happy, and they must do that too. (Note: I cried in second year calculus after failing the first test).
- I advised a 29-year-old woman with $25K of student loan debt and was working as a waitress to take a job I found her as an IT project manager. She said "No! Being a waitress is the easiest job I've ever had!"

- A 30-year-old woman with $23K in student loan debt wanted to do a Masters degree in Europe. I told her to pay off her loans first. She got two useless Masters degrees in Europe, and never worked again.
- I'm told that there is no rush to get out of debt to afford children, because women can have children in their 40s.
- I'm told that it will be fine for the children if she has to work to pay off her debts, because daycare and public schools work better for children than stay-at-home moms and homeschooling.
- I'm told that the $30 trillion national debt and bailouts for student loans, etc. are no big deal because the government can just print more money.
- I'm told that I can fix her financial problems by working harder and longer. One of my friends actually married a woman with $200K in student loan debt in order to get his green card, so some men take this deal.
- I'm told that too much planning feels bad, and I need to be more spontaneous and adventurous. One woman literally said "I don't want to make decisions based on fear".
- A famous Christian apologist woman (not WIA) told me that I can't judge a woman who has student loans because if God forgives a woman, then a man can't exclude her from marriage.

I'm not going to run a marriage that way. I have goals.

Men can't afford BOTH bailouts AND marriage

So, my point is that we have a real problem with figuring out how to get women to make better decisions about education, career and finance. I want to help them. I really do. Because we are $30 trillion in debt now, and we simply don't have enough money to keep bailing out people for student loans. And the problem will only get worse, as the younger generation of losers keeps making poor decisions and demanding that someone else pay for their mistakes.

Men don't marry women who are bad with money. Money is one of the biggest causes of

divorce, and divorce is a financial disaster for men because of anti-male divorce courts.

The number of men who can afford marriage and children is declining because they have to bail out all these reckless, irresponsible young women through their taxes. We need to fix this problem.

What does scientific evidence tell us about the effectiveness of same-sex parenting?

July 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Katy Faust tweeted this article by Mark Regnerus, a sociologist who specializes in dating, marriage and parenting issues. In the article, Regnerus cites the conclusions from several recent research studies. Once we see what he has to say, I'll pull the data from a Canadian study that he didn't mention that also shows the effect of same-sex parenting on children.

The article appears in The Public Discourse:

> The story of "no differences" between same-sex and opposite-sex households with children hinges on a pair of repetitive themes in the published research: (1) hiding behind small and nonrepresentative samples, and (2) employing analytic strategies that all but guarantee motivated researchers can "explain away" those pesky baseline observable differences between children from same-sex and opposite-sex households.
>
> Baseline differences matter. What happens before control variables matters. Building statistical models to hide differences is called p-hacking, a common but problematic practice. A 2020 study of over 1.2 million children in the (gay-friendly) Netherlands, whose primary media message trumpeted how same-sex parents were better than opposite-sex parents, nevertheless revealed that 55 percent of children living with same-sex parents—the vast majority of which were female couples—experienced the separation of these parents, well above the 19 percent of children of opposite-sex parents who experienced the same. "Controlling" for such instability—in effect implying it doesn't matter—clears the way to proclaim the benefits of same-sex parents. It's a common statistical practice, but a deceptive one.
>
> Hence, alternative analyses are always a good idea. For example, a 2020 published reexamination of three nationally representative datasets from the United States and Canada revealed that the presence of children tended to stabilize opposite-sex couples but destabilize same-sex couples. Dissolution rates were 43 percent for same-sex couples, but only 8 percent for opposite-sex couples. Its authors agree, saying that "parental instability is an important factor through which parents' sexual orientation influences children's outcomes."

So, the problem of higher separation between partners in a lesbian relationship is well-known. Lesbian couples have the highest instability rates of any kind of couple, heterosexual or homosexual.

Family Research Council notes:

> In the past, same-sex couples who got a slice of the marriage pie immediately

> wanted their share of the divorce market. In South Africa, couples who were first to wed under a 2006 law also won the race to divorce court only a year later; two Toronto lesbians who wed in 2003 separated after only five days, petitioning successfully in 2004 for a judge to overturn Canadian law so they could divorce. Or take Los Angeles, where 2008's historic first same-sex couple divorced this summer although they had been together for 18 years! Lest we think these cases are exceptional, of the same-sex couples who did marry in Sweden, males were 35% more likely to divorce than heterosexual couples, while lesbians were up to 200% more likely.

Before same-sex marriage, the concept of marriage included the concepts of permanence and exclusivity. Natural marriage has the production and raising of children at the core. No-fault divorce damaged that core, saying that the happiness of the selfish adults was more important than the children. Then same-sex marriage damaged the core again, saying that producing children isn't even central to the concept of marriage. As the selfish adults pass more laws against natural marriage, the children suffer more from the decline of permanence and exclusivity.

I found another study related to same-sex parenting, this one out of Canada.

Here is the abstract of the study:

> Almost all studies of same-sex parenting have concluded there is "no difference" in a range of outcome measures for children who live in a household with same-sex parents compared to children living with married opposite-sex parents. Recently, some work based on the US census has suggested otherwise, but those studies have considerable drawbacks. Here, a 20% sample of the 2006 Canada census is used to identify self-reported children living with same-sex parents, and to examine the association of household type with children's high school graduation rates. This large random sample allows for control of parental marital status, distinguishes between gay and lesbian families, and is large enough to evaluate differences in gender between parents and children. Children living with gay and lesbian families in 2006 were about 65 % as likely to graduate compared to children living in opposite sex marriage families. Daughters of same-sex parents do considerably worse than sons.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington. A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more shorter times). That's not good for children either. Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships have much higher rates of domestic violence. That's not good for children either. So we have three reasons to think that normalizing gay relationships as "marriage" would not be good for children.

Should men prefer women who have earned STEM degrees?

July 28, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A few people have asked me about my policy of preferring candidates for wife and mother who have earned STEM degree(s). In this post, I'll explain 5 goals for my marriage. Then I'll explain 6 reasons why a STEM degree helps me to execute that plan. Then I'll answer 3 objections to the STEM degree requirement. Then I'll explain the relevance of STEM for a woman's marriage roles.

What is STEM?

So, to start, STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. A STEM degree is a degree in a STEM field. This includes things like petroleum engineering, bioinformatics, and computer science. But it also includes things like economics, accounting and business. Basically, anything with math that involves solving problems in the real world. Anything that encourages logical reasoning and using evidence to sustain an argument.

My goals for marriage

So, here are my goals for marriage:

- influence the church with apologetics
- influence the university campus (students and professors) with apologetics
- be involved in politics, advocate for conservative policy
- open the house to students and neighbors to teach apologetics and demonstrate a loving marriage
- raise 3-4 financially independent and influential children

Everything I want in a wife is related to this plan. I evaluate women according to these goals, because I want my marriage to make a difference for Christ and His Kingdom. I'm flexible on plans and requirements, so long as the proposed changes result in *a greater impact* for Christ and His Kingdom.

MAJORS WITH HIGH MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR WOMEN*

First Field of Degree 5% code	Percent Female	Median Female Earnings
Pharmacy Pharmaceutical Sciences	42	100,000
Information Sciences	26	75,000
Chemical Engineering	23	72,000
Computer Science	22	70,000
Electrical Engineering	7	70,000
Mechanical Engineering	7	70,000
Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering	17	67,000
Computer Engineering	14	67,000
Business Economics	30	64,000
Civil Engineering	13	62,000

** Full-time, full-year workers with a terminal Bachelor's.*

The best majors for women to avoid student loan debt

How a STEM degree relates to marriage

The plan is for my wife to earn a STEM degree, marry me, and work full-time until the first child is born. Then, she stops working and becomes a stay at home mom. She could return to work after the each child reaches 5 years old. My preference is that she not return to work, but instead homeschool the children, or at least monitor their education in private evangelical Christian schools as a stay-at-home mother.

So, how does a woman's having a STEM degree help me to achieve my marriage plan goals?

Here are 6 ways:

1. STEM equips her to homeschool influential and effective children. A wife who has completed high school and college courses in math, science, engineering and/or technology will know how to either homeschool our kids, or monitor their homework and grades so they achieve good academic results. Think of how Asian families raise high-performing children. I want that.

2. STEM teaches her to produce results in the real world, e.g. – working code that solves a problem, lab results, bridges that support a load, etc. In the lab, decisions cannot be made based on feelings or peer approval. The lab doesn't respect horoscopes, devotions, romance novels, essentual oils, romantic comedies, "The Secret" or "The Law of Attraction".

3. STEM equips her to argue apologetics from her experience of using reason, evidence, reality-based testing. All Christians need to know how to defend their core beliefs (God exists, etc.) to non-Christians. That means doing what works. And what works is logical argumentation supported by evidence. The best kind of evidence is scientific evidence.

Then historical evidence. Confidence comes from competence at practical, real-world disciplines.

4. STEM degrees are a path to high paying jobs. Women who are debt-free are better to marry, because they don't delay the process of buying a house and having children. Any kind of debt has to be paid off first. I'm not looking for a big spender, I'm looking for someone who can earn and save. The more children we can afford to have, the bigger our influence will be. Also, women who choose STEM demonstrate that they can delay gratification, and not be a slave to FOMO, YOLO, "living in the moment", etc.

5. STEM equips women to find work easily, so she doesn't feel pressured to accept a bad marriage proposal. She can move out and start saving money. She can buy apologetics books, lectures and debates. She can buy books on economics, marriage and parenting. She can prepare herself to attract the right man, and she can evaluate men to see if they are prepared for marriage.

6. Both the STEM departments AND the STEM workplaces less likely to be woke than non-STEM departments and workplaces. She will be able to hold to her convictions more easily in an environment where results matter more than having the "right" (left) opinions.

Objections to preferring a wife with a STEM degree

1. A woman with a STEM degree will not want to quit her job and become a stay at home mom during the critical period from birth to age 2, or even better, age 5.

2. A woman who takes years off for child-bearing and early childhood years will not be able to resume her job at the same level of pay.

3. Even in STEM departments, a woman will be exposed to an environment with secular left indoctrination, drunkenness and promiscuity. She is unlikely to come out of college as a virgin.

Responses to objections to the STEM requirement

Points 1) and 2) apply to every kind of degree, not just STEM. Any woman who does 4 years of college in any field will be "wasting" it if she stops working. First, in my plan, her education is to equip her to educate her children, because I trust her more than any teacher or stranger to do that important job. Teachers are not paid to produce results – they are unionized, and not paid based on performance. Second, even women with STEM degrees would generally prefer to work part-time or not at all. They want to stay with their young children. Third, we don't need the money. That's why I suffered through my BS and MS to earn 6 figures and have a 7 figure net worth. We don't need her to work.

For point 3), I'm not saying that EVERY woman who graduates with a STEM degree is perfect for marriage. I'm saying that a STEM degree helps to have a marriage that is influential for Christ and His Kingdom. I'm open to other majors, *so long as they address the concerns and goals I specified.* I'm even open to a different plan. But the overriding concern is that the marriage count for something for the Boss. Even with a STEM degree, the man still has to ask the woman questions about politics and parenting. He still has to evaluate her sobriety, chastity and frugality. A STEM degree is just a starting point.

The difference STEM makes for apologetics

I think it's obvious that having a wife who has taken courses and even worked a few years before the first child arrives helps her to be able to educate her kids and / or monitor their performance. But it also allows her use apologetics more persuasively on the university campus, in the church, and if we open up the home to college students and neighbors for movies / meals / discussions.

For example, take the fine-tuning argument. A knowledge of physics and chemistry helps you to explain why changing the fundamental forces results in a universe that does not support complex, embodied life. A knowledge of probability theory (e.g. – product rule) helps you to argue for intelligent design in the origin of life. And what about logic? Even in computer science, we had to study symbolic logic, the rules of inference, conditional proofs, Bayes' Theorem, etc.

My wife's job is to make the big picture of education clear to the kids, so they know what they can do in the real-world with what they are learning. So many Christians underperformed in school because they didn't know the relevance of what they were learning for the task of defending their Christian worldviews. My wife's job is to know how the material being taught relates to real-world goals, like defending Christianity. This is how parents produce children who grow up to be William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer, Luke Barnes or Michael Licona. Boldness comes from knowledge.

Conclusion

First, I hope this post convinces women to start planning for their marriages early. You need to know things that matter for two reasons: 1) to attract a quality man, 2) to evaluate men and filter out the good ones. That means you need to know things like apologetics, politics, etc. Having money helps to buy learning material.

Second, I hope this post convinces men to stop choosing women based on youth and beauty. Your choice of wife will have a huge effect on your influence. Choose a capable, competent partner who complements your strengths with different strengths. Men spend their days in the workplace, where we cannot say much about religion and politics. If you marry an intelligent conservative Christian woman, she can be your voice to the university, the church, and the public square. Not to mention raising effective children. Therefore, choose wisely.

Acknowledgements

My wise friend Laura helped me with this post. Please check out her 10-part series for women on how to choose a husband.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 35: Are All Religions the Same, Part 3

July 29, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 35 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose continue our discussion on how to choose a worldview. We discuss the predictions and prophecies of different traditions, and whether they were correct. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 35:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose continue their discussion about whether all religions are equally valid paths to God. In this episode, we look at what different worldviews have predicted about the future. We don't just focus on the prophecies of various religious, but also look at the predictions of secular, non-religious people. We've decided to expand this series to five parts, so this episode is the third in a five-part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Notes

Early on in the episode, Rose mentions how Muslims present prophecies in the Quran to non-Christians as evidence. She meant to say non-Muslims.

References

- Jehovah's Witnesses and their many false prophecies
- Does the Koran contain any fulfilled prophecies?
- Human Manifesto I – American Humanist Association
- Now the Pentagon tells Bush: climate change will destroy us

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William Lane Craig lectures on the historical Jesus at Columbia University

July 30, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the other software engineers at work is always finding interesting sermons and lectures to listen to. On Friday afternoon, things were a bit slow, so she messaged me a lecture featuring Dr. William Lane Craig, talking on "Who Was Jesus?" at Columbia University. I wanted to encourage her, so I put it on to listen as well. I liked it so much, I wrote out a summary below to go with it.

Here is the lecture:

Description:

Dr. William Lane Craig unpacks questions surrounding Jesus' resurrection and the historical accuracy of the biblical claims. Columbia University, 2009.

And my outline:

Different views of Jesus:

- Jewish view of Jesus
- Muslim view of Jesus
- skeptical historian view of Jesus
- what did Jesus think about himself?
- Jesus didn't write anything of his own
- best sources are the records of Jesus followers
- problem: how do we know these records are accurate
- maybe stories of Jesus' divinity emerged over time

New tools from the Renaissance:

- historiography
- textual criticism
- investigate Jesus as a historical figure
- same tools are used for other historical figures

Sources:

- Christian
- Jewish
- Roman
- Many more sources than other figures of antiquity

External sources:

- confirm what the gospels say, but don't say anything new

Treating the Bible as a collection of ancient documents

- not using the Bible to prove the Bible is divine
- just treating the books as historical documents

New Testament

- a collection of the earliest documents
- much later documents about Jesus not included
- later documents not written by eyewitnesses

Skeptical scholars:

- ignore the earliest sources
- focus on the later sources
- result is a more radical left-friendly Jesus

Burden of proof

- are the gospels assumed reliable until proven unreliable?
- are the gospels assumed unreliable until proven reliable?

Five reasons to assume the New Testament is reliable

1. Insufficient time for legendary influences to erase the historical core

- the gap between the events and the sources is much shorter than other comparable sources
- Greek and Roman sources are at least 1-2 generations from the events they record
- Gospels written down and circulated within first generation after the events they record
- the eyewitnesses were alive at the time they were written down

2. Gospels are not the same genre as folk tales or urban legends

- Gospels talk about real people who actually lived
- Gospels talk about real places excavated by archaeologists

3. Oral tradition in first century Jewish society

- Jewish culture valued reliable transmission of religious tradition
- Memorization of long passages and entire books

4. Restraints on the embellishment of traditions about Jesus

- The apostles and other eyewitnesses could correct embellishments

5. Gospel writers make testable statements that are found to be true

- Luke is the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts
- In Acts, Luke accompanies with the eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus
- Acts contains many historical details accurate to the times and places he writes about
- Luke's gospel is in accord with archaeological discoveries made since

It's reasonable to accept the general reliability of the Gospels, unless they are found unreliable

Historical basis for facets of Jesus

1. Unique Son of God

- historical critics claim that the divinity of Jesus developed over time
- why would monotheistic Jews contradict their monotheism by inventing a divine Jesus?
- the only reasonsable answer is that Jesus claimed divinity for himself
- His followers accepted it because Jesus provided reasons to believe
- Mark 12:1-8
  Earliest gospel reveals Jesus' self-understanding as God's "only beloved son"
- Matthew 11:27
  "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." This story is also in Luke. Source is "Q", an early set of traditions common to Matthew and Luke
- Mark 13:32
  Jesus sees himself as above humans and angels, but subordinate to God the Father

Why would anyone take Jesus seriously, unless he was able to provide evidence?

2. Jesus' miracles

- Jesus' miracle stories are in all four sources
- The only reason to reject them is because of a philosophical bias against the supernatural

3. Trial and crucifixion

- Crucifixion narrative is in the Gospels, Paul's letters, Acts
- Also confirmed by Josephus and Roman historians
- Historians across the ideological spectrum affirm the crucifixion

Why was Jesus crucified?

- Doesn't fit with the skeptical view that Jesus was uncontroversial and had few followers

4. Jesus' resurrection

- Jesus resurrection is the best explanation for historical facts accepted by diverse majority of historians

1. Burial location known to friends and enemies, and corpse would refute the resurrection
2. Tomb was found empty by a group of Jesus' women followers
3. Post-mortem appearances to individuals and groups, friends, skeptics and enemies
4. Original disciples became convinced that Jesus rose from dead counter to their own interests

- The facts are accepted by a majority of scholars across the ideological spectrum
- Dr. Craig's debate with a scholar who invented an unknown, identical twin brother who was separated from Jesus at birth
- Jewish historian Pinchas Lapide affirms the resurrection of Jesus as a historical event

Then there is a period of question and answer, which I did not find useful, because the questions seemed to be more about the needs and feelings of Christians, rather than about the facts presented by Dr. Craig, or about how these facts survive in debates on university campuses. Facts don't care about your feelings.

It never hurts to listen to William Lane Craig. If you listen enough, you can remember his points when you get the opportunity. In college, all of my friends at Crusade could do his opening speech from his debates on God's existence from memory.

New study: 81% endure pain in the five years after sex-change surgeries

July 31, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One reason why Christians are devoted to the moral law is because we think that these boundaries are in place for a reason. We think that if we just do what makes us happy, then we will end up worse off. Sadly, the secular left in America are so addicted to "don't judge" that they want to smash all those moral boundaries. What happens when harm follows? Do they offer to fix it or pay for it themselves?

Here's an article from the UK Daily Mail, about the pain you can expect if you let secular leftists cut parts of you off, in exchange for insurance company money and virtue signaling rights.

Keep in mind that the UK Daily Mail is far left, and 100% on board with transgenderism – including sex-change surgery.

It says:

> One of the first studies into the side effects of transgender surgeries has revealed alarmingly high rates of post-op pain, aching during intercourse, and bladder problems, raising troubling questions for this new frontier of medicine.
>
> A huge majority – 81 percent – of those who had gender-affirming surgery in the past five years said they endured pain simply from moving around in the weeks and months after going under the knife.
>
> Researchers from the University of Florida and Brooks Rehabilitation, a health non-profit, showed that more than half of trans surgery patients endured pain during sex, and nearly a third could not control their bladders.

Here are some details:

> UF researchers studied 21 trans and non-binary people aged between 20 and 70 who had undergone trans surgeries in the past five years — mostly mastectomies and vaginoplasties.
>
> 81 percent endured pain in their lower back, groin, pelvis, chest, or shoulders in the weeks, months, and even years after their procedures, researchers found.
>
> Another 57 percent found sexual intercourse painful.
>
> Meanwhile, 29 percent suffered urinary incontinence or a frequent and urgent need to go to the bathroom, researchers found.
>
> Likewise, many male-to-female transitioners who get a neo-vagina created are surprised to discover that they have to insert a 'dilator' into their canal for up to an hour each day after surgery.
>
> Without using a dilator, which resembles a sex toy, the neo-vagina can gradually

> shorten in depth, said Dr Hill. Some trans women must use them for the rest of their lives.
>
> 'That's something a lot of people don't realize,' she added.

Now, you might ask yourself what happens when these surgeries result in a lot of pain and suffering for the victims. Maybe it's only in heartless, cruel America where the victims have to suffer. Maybe in wonderful, tolerant Canada, the victims get free health care, to alleviate the pain of having their body parts sawed off by greedy ghouls.

Let's see, using this article from the UK Daily Mail:

> An indigenous transgender woman has slammed Canada's healthcare system for rejecting her euthanasia request despite the pain she endures from a surgically-built vagina.
>
> In social media posts, Lois Cardinal, a self-proclaimed 'sterilized First Nations post-op transsexual' said regret over her medical transition led her to apply for a lethal injection in January.
>
> Cardinal, who lives on a native reserve near St. Paul, Alberta, posted her medical records from the request online this week to draw attention to radical gender ideology.
>
> Her case underscores the perils of Canada's ultra-liberal healthcare system — one of the world's most permissive for both euthanasia and affirming an individual's chosen gender.
>
> 'I'm in constant discomfort and pain,' the 35-year-old told DailyMail.com.

So, in Canada, after the government-run public schools have brainwashed people into wanting to change genders, then they deny you treatment for the mess they caused. But you can apply for a free government-funded murder though. But you might have to wait, and re-apply.

We can do better than letting the "don't judge" secular leftists run our country. They are not authorities on what is wise. And they shouldn't be elected to government.

New survey: high school boys twice as likely to be conservative than high school girls

August 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you know that women tend to be further to the left than men? According to surveys, women are more leftist than men on abortion, same-sex marriage, and a host of other policies. I'll show you a few surveys below. But even more interesting is that there is a link between support for leftist policies, and higher mental illness. Let's take a look at it.

First, here is an article from The Hill:

> Forty-four percent of young women counted themselves liberal in 2021, compared to 25 percent of young men, according to Gallup Poll data analyzed by the Survey Center on American Life. The gender gap is the largest recorded in 24 years of polling. The finding culminates years of rising liberalism among women ages 18 to 29, without any increase among their male peers.

That article is a bit old, here's a new one from this week in The Post Millennial:

> In annual surveys over the last few years, data pulled from Monitoring the Future has shown that about a quarter of high school seniors identify as conservative or very conservative. Only 13 percent of the 12th grade boys identify as liberal.
>
> […]The graph excludes moderate students, but of those high school seniors that do identify politically, around 65 percent of boys were conservative while only around 31 percent of girls identified that way.

According to surveys, young women are also more likely to support abortion under any circumstances (40 to 27) and more likely to support same-sex marriage than men.

I don't support abortion because I favor the rights of unborn babies over the happiness of adults. I don't support same-sex marriage because studies show children do better when they are raised by a mother and a father. And I think that's why most of these men are with me, they follow that same reasoning, and side with the children against the adults.

I thought this part of the article was interesting:

> As one Politico analyst put it, "Democrats have a masculinity problem." Citing trends among black and Latino voters, the analyst pointed out that even in minority communities that have voted majority Democrat, men have been turning to the Republican party at higher rates than women.
>
> Some conservative figures such as Jordan Peterson and Dennis Prager (through PragerU) have millions of followers on YouTube, a platform where the users are majority male.
>
> In addition, one of the more popular conservative political podcasts, The Ben Shapiro Show, has an audience that skews overwhelmingly male at 86 percent.

> The audience also skews younger, 18-44, in comparison to Fox's former show with Tucker Carlson, 25-54, which skews slightly female at 53 percent.

This is good news. Boys are finding themselves role models who they see as "strong". And those new role models are conservative. These stronger role models champion truth, and they make moral judgements. Even if it hurts other people's feelings.

Let's go on to the second point. These leftist policies are having a bad effect on young women's mental health.

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

I found an interesting article in the Wall Street Journal that talked about how one leftist policy concern (global warming alarmism) is tied to higher rates of mental illness.

It says:

> A study in 2021 of 16- to 25-year-olds in 10 countries including the U.S. reported that 59% were very or extremely worried about climate change, and 84% were at least moderately worried. Forty-five percent claimed they were so worried that they struggled to function on a daily basis, the definition of an anxiety disorder.

The study found that the mental illness was more common in younger people:

> Climate anxiety and dissatisfaction with government responses are widespread in children and young people in countries across the world and impact their daily functioning.

So now we are looking at a direct link between the policies of the left, and the lower mental health of the left. And we know that more women than men are on the left. And we see more mental illness among women. Interesting, isn't it?

And this has consequences. Leftist women are noticing that men are more conservative than they are, and it's affecting their dating:

The marriage rate is also declining. Could this decline in marriage be related to the increase in leftist women, and all the related mental illnesses that leftist women have? Does it make sense for a conservative man to enter a relationship where he pays all the costs and bears all the risks, but all the decisions are being made by a leftist woman? It's dangerous for a man to do that.

Consider that the divorce rate is very high right now, and divorce takes away a man's money, his access to his kids, and his freedom. Women initiate 69% of divorces. College-educated women – who are especially leftist – initiate 90% of divorces. This high divorce rate cannot be blamed on men, because the divorce rate of lesbians is the highest of all. No man to blame in that situation.

Why would a man sign up to be controlled by feminist institutions, like the divorce courts? Men are not interested in projects where they have to pay for everything, but someone else is making the decisions. Especially if they get blamed when things go wrong.

Facing all of these risks, a man would have to be crazy to even talk to a leftist woman – much less date her. Unfortunately, we aren't making enough young conservative women for these conservative young men to marry. And so, the marriage rate is declining. Young women today are not as conservative as previous generations.

I know a lot of people today are worried about young men falling under the influence of bad role models. But the surveys show that boys tend to have the right role models, and the right political views. So, we need to work on making young women more conservative.

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

August 2, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses?God said, See that staff? Throw it down.Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent.God said, See that serpent? Pick it up.And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff.God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention.And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone?Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home?Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened.But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful.Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you.Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines

- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Facebook censored posts at the request of the Democrat party / Biden administration

August 3, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw this article in the Wall Street Journal, and thought it was a good idea to post about it, so that if I get into a debate about Big Tech with someone, I can just find it again. I'll also link to some other social media censorship stories so we have a few of them.

Here's the article from the Wall Street Journal: (archived)

> Facebook removed content related to Covid-19 in response to pressure from the Biden administration, including posts claiming the virus was man-made, according to internal company communications viewed by The Wall Street Journal.
>
> The emails show Facebook executives discussing how they managed users' posts about the origins of a pandemic that the administration was seeking to control. "Can someone quickly remind me why we were removing—rather than demoting/labeling—claims that Covid is man made," asked Nick Clegg, the company's president of global affairs, in a July 2021 email to colleagues.
>
> "We were under pressure from the administration and others to do more," responded a Facebook vice president in charge of content policy, speaking of the Biden administration. "We shouldn't have done it."
>
> […]The email, and a number of other such internal company communications, were obtained by the Republican-led House Judiciary Committee, which has been investigating what GOP lawmakers say is the Biden administration's improper efforts to censor Americans' speech on social media about Covid and other topics.

Over at the far left The Hill, I found this related article:

> Facebook had refused to open its own files on government censorship efforts. That came to an end when the House Judiciary Committee finally moved to hold Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg in contempt of Congress.
>
> The resulting Facebook Files confirmed what many of us have suspected for years. Indeed, the emails proved to be a mirror image of what had occurred at Twitter — a massive effort by the government to pressure the company to censor its critics and other dissenting voices.

Not just truth, but even jokes were censored:

> There was to be no allowance for humor or even true information that did not advance the government's narrative. The House has uncovered a myriad of grants given to academic and private groups to blacklist and target those with

> opposing views, including the posting of true information.
>
> There was an array of government agencies targeting citizens and groups for censorship. In another hearing, I testified on efforts by Jen Easterly, who leads the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, to extend her regulatory authority by declaring that "critical infrastructure" includes "our cognitive infrastructure," in which she saw it as her role to build "resilience to misinformation and disinformation."
>
> The administration also demanded the removal of "malinformation" that is "based on fact, but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate."
>
> Government-funded groups such as the Stanford Virality Project declared that even "true stories…could fuel hesitancy" over taking the vaccine or other measures. The Twitter files showed that this included "worrisome jokes."

What's a good remedy for this? Where do the people who were censored go to get justice? Maybe we should have criminal trials for the leaders of these social media companies, who seem to have violated the First Amendment rights of Americans.

One more thing that I found at Trending Politics:

> The House Judiciary Committee received a host of subpoenaed materials documenting the correspondence between the White House and Facebook. Among these materials were memos that showed the White House was pressuring the social media to change their algorithms to promote media outlets that the White House approved at the explicit expense of outlets that the White House disapproved of. The ostensible reason for this request was to discourage the spread of misinformation.
>
> One memo dated April 14, 2021, shows White House digital director Rob Flaherty requesting that Facebook "change the algorithm so that people were more likely to see NYT, WSJ, any authoritative news source over Daily Wire, Tomi Lahren, polarizing people. You wouldn't have a mechanism to check the material impact?"

Anyway, I've collected some of my previous posts about Facebook helping the Democrat party and interfering in our elections.

- Twitter and Facebook suspend LibsOfTikTok after she reported on sex-change surgery on kids
- Facebook and Twitter spread disinformation about Hunter Biden's laptop to help Biden win in 2020
- Facebook / Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg's election meddling violated bribery laws
- Peer-reviewed medical journal blasts Facebook "fact checkers" for censorship
- Facebook has a long record of censoring speech critical of Democrats
- Facebook fact-checker caught plagiarizing 54 articles
- Facebook bans Christian professor for disagreeing with Biden's executive actions

- Facebook “non-partisan” fact-checker revealed to be a far-left Trump-hating Democrat
- Facebook “fact-checker” Politifact forced to retract “false” rating against Candace Owens
- When Facebook fact-checkers conflict with peer-reviewed studies, who is right?
- Potential violation of election law: Facebook and Twitter censor Biden scandal
- Facebook and Google removing content that harms Democrat party
- Facebook censors admit that they suppress Republican content to help Democrat Party
- Facebook censors interview with abortion survivor to help Democrats win 2020 election
- Facebook uses pro-abortion “fact checkers” to label pro-life pages “fake news”
- Facebook bans Christian apologist David Wood for posting the death threats he received
- Facebook censors criticism of Democrat Party, especially before “important elections”

Did DEI trainer Kike Ojo-Thompson harass and bully Richard Bilkszto to end himself?

August 4, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think most of you have had to sit through diversity training, where you were taught by an uneducated, inexperienced, incompetent failure about what morals and beliefs you should have in order to be a good person. Well, sometimes the indoctrination can get ugly. Let's talk about one case where the instructor harassed and bullied an attendee, who later took his own life.

Here's the story from the New York Post:

> A former Toronto principal has died by su1c1de after facing harassment for calling out an anti-racism instructor who allegedly claimed that Canada was more racist than the US.
>
> Richard Bilkszto, 60, had served as a fill-in principal for the Toronto District School Board until his reputation was "systematically demolished" after he was labeled a supporter of white supremacy for calling out a black instructor during anti-racism training in 2021, according to a lawsuit filed against the district earlier this year.

Naturally the school board sided with the bully against the victim:

> Bilkszto claimed that after he reported Ojo-Thompson's alleged misconduct, the school board failed to look into it, appearing to side with the instructor as one member of the board praised her for handling the principal's "discomfort."

The Toronto Sun noted that transcripts of the training sessions show that "Kike Ojo-Thompson offered up Bilkszto as an example of white supremacy".

An inquiry found the Kike Ojo-Thompson guilty of "workplace harassment and bullying":

> The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) eventually looked into the matter and found that Ojo-Thompson's conduct "was abusive, egregious and vexatious, and rises to the level of workplace harassment and bullying."

Do you know how employers are not supposed to "retaliate" if they are found guilty of some workplace related infraction? Well, this guy's employer (the school district) did retaliate:

> [T]he district refused to reinstate his contract, which Bilkszto claimed was a result of either his fallen reputation or as retribution for having the WSIB investigate the incident.

If there is one thing you can count on from secular left women like Kike Ojo-Thompson, it's their hatred of accountability.

> The KOJO Institute did not immediately respond to The Post's request for comment.

No accountability. No accountability for her destructive actions. Seriously, why do secular leftist women think that men would ever want to date them, much less marry them? Men don't get involved with women who show this egregious lack of accountability. That would be a huge mistake for a man to make.

Secular leftists like Kike Ojo-Thompson can't conceive that the victims of their selfishness could ever greet their harassment and bullying with anything other than worship and gratitude. The rules don't apply to secular leftists. They think that they are better than everyone, and they should be allowed to force their views on others. Even with bullying and coercion. How could they be wrong?

This article from True North explains how someone with a useless degree and no marketable skills can avoid starvation:

> A Critical Race Theory (CRT) organization chaired by the founder of controversial diversity consultancy KOJO Institute has received over a million dollars in government grants – including from Ontario's Progressive Conservative government.
>
> Parents of Black Children (PoBC), which says CRT is one of its core principles, advocates against the presence of police liaisons in schools and for "decolonized" curricula, the inserting of "Black Canadian experiences" into math and for all academic streaming to be abolished.
>
> In 2022, the organization listed that its Board of Directors was chaired by KOJO Institute founder Kike Ojo-Thompson.

This is why men need to be really careful with women who don't have STEM degrees or a trade. A without a STEM degree or a trade, to me, is a red flag that shows that she has been coasting through life, dropping math and science courses, avoiding anything challenging, but still being rewarded without ever earning anything by merit. Only choose women who have had to suffer through challenges where their ability had to produce real-world results. That's how men AND women learn to be accountable. You cannot enter a marriage with someone who has coasted through life, without having to produce results in the real world.

Scott Klusendorf defends the pro-life view on the Unbelievable radio show

August 5, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm Scheming Unborn Baby, and I approve of this debate

This is a re-post of a debate on abortion.

Here are the details:

> Justin hosts a discussion between Mara Clarke of the Abortion Support Network and Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Instititute. Mara believes women should decide whether to terminate a pregnancy, but Scott says that all depends on whether we are dealing with a human life in the womb.

MP3 of this show

My snarky paraphrase of the debate (not exact):

- Speaker introductions
- Klusendorf: no justification for abortion is necessary if the unborn are not human
- Klusendorf: we need to address the issue "what is the unborn?" Are the unborn human?
- Klusendorf: SLED: size, level of development, environment, degree of dependency
- Klusendorf: None of these things affect the value of a human being
- Klusendorf: Even if we don't KNOW whether the unborn is human
- Mara: I'm not going to debate when life begins
- Mara: Women know when life begins by feelings

- Mara: The moral decision is “whether I can take care of this child?”
- Brierley: When is an unborn being human?
- Mara: I refuse to debate that – the real question is whether women want their babies or not
- Mara: Forced pregnancy is not OK
- Brierley: Could your justification for abortion (not wanting to care for a child) work through all 9 months?
- Mara: Late term abortions are rare, so I don’t have to answer that question
- Mara: Abortion should be OK through all 9 months of pregnancy because women cannot be restricted
- Mara: Some women are poor, they need to be able to kill expensive babies at any time
- Klusendorf: although she says she won’t debate the unborn, she does take a position
- Klusendorf: she assumes the unborn is not human, because she says that insufficient funds is justification for abortion
- Klusendorf: no one argues that you can kill a two year old because they cost money, because she thinks they are human
- Klusendorf: she is begging the question by assuming the unborn are not human, but that is the issue we must resolve
- Klusendorf: I am pro-choice on many other things, e.g. women choosing their own husbands, religion, etc.
- Klusendorf: Some choices are wrong – Mara might be right, but she needs to make the case for the unborn not being human
- Brierley: What is your reason for thinking that an unborn child is different from a 2-year old?
- Mara: An unborn child is not the same as a 2-year old, in my personal opinion
- Mara: I am not a debater, so I don’t have to provide reasoning for my assertion, I just feel it
- Mara: Not everybody agrees with Scott, they don’t have to have a rational argument, they just need to feel differently
- Mara: From my experience, when a woman doesn’t want to be pregnant, then she should be able to not be pregnant
- Mara: Women shouldn’t be punished with a baby that she doesn’t want, even if she chooses to have recreational sex
- Brierley: What do you think of women who think the unborn is human and do it anyway?
- Klusendorf: It’s interesting that they never kill their toddlers for those reasons
- Klusendorf: I layed out scientific and philosophical reasons for the humanity of the unborn
- Klusendorf: Her response was “but some people disagree with you”
- Klusendorf: People disagreed about whether slavery was wrong, or whether women should be able to vote

- Klusendorf: that doesn't mean there is no right answer – the right answer depends on the arguments
- Klusendorf: if absence of agreement makes a view false, then it makes HER pro-choice view false as well
- Klusendorf: she did make an argument for the unborn child having no rights because of the location
- Klusendorf: she needs to explain to us why location matters – what about location confers value
- Mara: I'm not going to let Scott frame my debate for me!!!
- Mara: women get pregnant and they don't want their babies! should we put them in jail!!!!
- Klusendorf: I didn't just give my opinion, I had science and philosophy, the issue is "what is the unborn?"
- Mara: philosophical and scientific debates are unimportant, I am an expert in real women's lives
- Klusendorf: Which women? Women in the womb or only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Only those outside the womb
- Klusendorf: Only those outside the womb?
- Mara: Women living outside the womb have a right to kill women inside the womb – women have bodily autonomy
- Klusendorf: then does a pregnant woman with nausea have a right to take a drug for it that will harm her unborn child?
- Mara: Unborn children are only valuable if they are wanted, unborn children only deserve protection if they are wanted
- Mara: There are restrictions on abortion – you can't get an abortion through all nine months in the US
- Mara: There is a 24-week limit in the UK as well
- Klusendorf: There are no restrictions on abortion that conflict with "a woman's health" because Supreme Court said
- Mara: where are these late term abortion clinics?
- Klusendorf: (he names two)
- Mara: that's not enough!!! we need more! where is there one in Pennsylvania?
- Klusendorf: well, there used to be Gosnell's clinic in Pennsylvania, and you could even get an infanticide there….
- Brierley: What about Dawkins' view that it is moral to abort Down's Syndrome babies?
- Klusendorf: he is ignoring the scientific case and philosophical case for the pro-life
- Klusendorf: the pro-life view is a true basis for human equality

What I wanted Scott to ask was whether sex-selection abortions were OK with her. Since her reasoning is "if it's unwanted, it has no rights", then that would mean sex-selection abortions are just fine. That's what a UK abortion expert recently argued. And I also posted recently about how sex-selection abortions are not prosecuted in the UK. If you're

looking for a war on women, there it is.

Gay marriage debate: Michael Brown debates Eric Smaw on same-sex marriage

August 6, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the debate:

> On April 21, 2011 at 7:30pm at UCF's Health and Public Affairs Building (Room 119), Rollins College professor, Dr. Eric Smaw and author and seminary professor Dr. Michael L. Brown will debate the question "Should same sex marriage be legalized in America?" The event will be held at 4000 Central Florida Blvd and is open to the public. After the formal portion of the debate, Brown and Smaw will field questions from the audience.

About the speakers:

> **Dr. Smaw** will be responding in the affirmative. He earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Law from the University of Kentucky in 2005. His areas of expertise are philosophy of law, international law, human rights, ethics, and modern philosophy. He has published articles on human rights, terrorism, and cosmopolitanism. His most recent publication is "Swaying in the Balance: Civil Liberties, National Security, and Justice in Times of Emergency".
>
> **Dr. Brown** will be responding in the negative. He earned his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and is a nationally known evangelical lecturer and radio host. He is the author of numerous scholarly articles and twenty books, including the recently published study "A Queer Thing Happened to America", which is quickly being recognized as the definitive work on the history and effects of gay activism on American culture.

Here are the first two parts:

Part 1 of 10:

Part 2 of 10:

The rest of the segments are here.

Summaries of the opening speeches

Summary of Dr. Brown's opening speech:

There is no compelling reasons by the state should change the definition of marriage

The reason the state conveys benefits for marriage is because marriage is beneficial for the state

Traditional marriage is recognized by the state for several reasons:
– it domesticates men
– it protects women
– it provides a stable, nurturing environment for children

Marriage has three public purposes:
– to bind men and women together for RESPONSIBLE procreation
– to get the benefit
– to provide children with two parents who are bonded to them biologically
– to create the next generation of people to keep the society going

Normally, opposite sex couples create children

Homosexual couples can NEVER create children together

Men and women are differences that are complementary

Monogamy is the norm for opposite sex couples.

For gay men, open relationships / cheating is the norm.
This is because women have a tempering effect on sexuality.

There is no evidence that recognizing same-sex civil unions and marriages have changed this trend.

Same-sex marriage guarantees that children will either not have a father or a mother
So which of the sexes is dispensable when raising children?

For example, consider Dawn Stefanowicz, who grew up with a gay father and no mother
She never got a chance to see a man model love and protect a women within a marriage
That makes an enormous difference in a woman's life – in the way she relates to men

Even with scientific advancements, every baby has a mother and a father

If we change the definition of marriage so that it is based on consent, then why limit it to just two people
If marriage is not the union of male and female, then why have only TWO people
In Canada, you have civil liberties lawyers arguing for for polygamy
In the United States, Professor David Epstein was in a consensual relationship with his daughter
Should incestuous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?
Should polyamorous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?

Sexual orientation is not the same as race
Men are women are different in significant ways, but different races are not
You need separate bathrooms for men and women, but not for people of different races

Summary of Dr. Smaw's opening speech: (He ended his speech after only 10 minutes)

You can redefine marriage so that it no longer based on the public purposes he mentioned (controlling procreation, fusing complementary male and female natures, providing children with mothers and fathers who are biologically linked to them, providing children with a comparatively stable development environment that offers comparatively less instability, promiscuity and domestic violence rates compared to cohabitation, etc.), but is instead based on consent and feelings, and that redefinition of marriage won't open marriage up to polygamy, polyamory, etc.

If you like feminism, then you should allow same-sex marriage

If you like abortion rights, then you should allow same-sex marriage

Homosexuals participate in society by working at various jobs, so they are participating in society

Homosexuals should be given the same tax breaks as married people because they work at various jobs for money

Working at a job for money achieves the same public purpose as procreating and staying together to raise children in a stable environment

You can listen to the rest for the rebuttals, and cross-examination. Oh yes – there was cross-examination! It starts two thirds of the way through Part 5, if you want to jump to it. And sparks were flying! There is also Q&A from the audience of students.

This is such a great debate – I love to hear two passionate guys disagreeing about something. I love to hear both sides of the issues. There is always something to learn by listening to the other side. It makes me more effective and more tolerant when I stand up to defend my side of the argument.

By the way, my own secular case against same-sex marriage is right here, if you want to see how I would debate this issue. Also check out the recent studies on the effects of gay parenting on children.

Democrat mayor pleads guilty to 140 child pornography charges

August 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I blogged previously about this openly gay Democrat mayor of College Park, Maryland, who had been arrested and charged with child pornography. Well, the accused decided to plead guilty to the charges, and is facing 30 years in prison. Giving how law enforcement works in the Obama administration, I expect him to get 30 days in jail. Anyway, let's take a look at the details.

Here's the story from the Washington Free Beacon:

> A Democratic former mayor pleaded guilty to 140 charges for child porn possession and distribution.
>
> Patrick Wojahn—who served for nearly eight years as mayor of College Park, Md., before his arrest and resignation in March—pleaded guilty to 60 counts of distribution of child pornography, 40 counts of possession of child pornography with the intention to distribute, and 40 counts of possession of child pornography.
>
> Wojahn, who listed his pronouns in his Twitter bio, said in his resignation letter that he was stepping down to address his "mental health."

He has ties to the Biden administration, which is supported by an overwhelming majority of atheist voters:

> The ex-mayor also has connections to the Biden administration. Wojahn in a 2019 interview called then-South Bend, Ind., mayor Pete Buttigieg (D.) his "buddy" and credited Buttigieg's "mentorship" for advancing his career, the New York Post reported. Wojahn has also posted pictures of himself and Buttigieg and said the two repeatedly spoke on the phone. Buttigieg is now President Joe Biden's transportation secretary.

Why do we have so many pedophiles and child pornographers and child molesters being elected as Democrats? Well, one reason is because atheists are very involved in politics, and they overwhelmingly support Democrats.

Breakpoint notes:

> According to political scientist Ryan Burge, the group of people in American society most likely to be highly engaged in political action are not evangelicals, as we've been led to believe. They are in fact atheists. "Let me put it plainly," Burge wrote, "atheists are the most politically active group in American politics today, and the Democrats (and some Republicans) ignore them at their own peril."
>
> In a slew of indicators—from actions as simple as putting up a yard sign, to the more proactive of attending a protest march—atheists not only outdid their

> evangelical neighbors but, in most cases, were the most likely group to put money and time toward partisan activities.

Atheists are extremely active in politics, it's almost like it is their religion. And they vote overwhelmingly for the the political party that elevates adults selfishness over protecting children.

And from Get Religion:

> The atheist vote is one of the bluest in American religion (behind only Black Protestants). Eight-two percent of atheists backed Barack Obama in both 2008 and 2012. However, Hillary Clinton didn't enjoy that level of support — she only garnered 78% of the atheist vote. That's not because atheists like Trump, by the way. The cause of this drop was a lot more third-party voters. But, then Biden did incredibly well with atheists, gathering 85% of the vote.

I have an atheist friend who is a huge proponent of "atheist morality". He insists that atheists have a firm foundation for moral behavior. And yet, when you look at his politics, he votes over and over against Christian morality, especially in areas like redefinition of marriage, no-fault divorce, premarital sex, abortion and gay rights. He sides with selfish adults against child – born and unborn. He supports "survival of the fittest". He wants to be liked by the successful, intelligent people he hangs out with. He wants to be thought of as successful and intelligent, too. It's too much of a burden to make moral judgements and to tell his sophisticated peers "No". Too bad for the kids. The adults are more important to him.

We're living at a time now when we have amazing arguments and evidence against atheism. But we really need Christians to get serious about making those arguments, and presenting that evidence. If not, we can expect a steep decline in morality. And children will be the biggest victims.

Canada, France and Japan are planning to increase their nuclear power production

August 8, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I really, really hate wind and solar power. Most people dislike them because they are unreliable, expensive, and need taxpayer subsidies. I hate them because they are harmful to animals, especially birds. I adore birds. A lot of left-leaning countries had been going away from nuclear power towards green energy, and so I'm delighted to report that some of them are now returning to it.

Here's the most recent news about Canada, from far-left Bloomberg News: (archive)

> Nuclear energy is gaining significant momentum in Ontario, with new plans to expand an existing plant to become the world's largest and a pledge to add three small modular reactors to a site where another is already being built.
>
> The news marks a shift for an industry that has been stalled for decades amid fears about safety and cost overruns. It's also seen as a critical step in modernizing an aging power grid that needs to add capacity without boosting already-high electricity costs, or threatening emissions goals.
>
> […]The newly announced expansion at the Bruce Power facility marks the first large-scale nuclear build in Canada in over three decades, suggesting nuclear policy may finally be becoming unstuck. The province is home to all but one of the country's 19 nuclear reactors, most of which were built from the 1960s to 1980s, during which time the Candu reactor became a global favorite.

The article notes one of the problems with wind and solar – the need to meet "base-load demand":

> Once complete, the nuclear projects will… lessen the need to use wind and solar power to meet base-load demand — the minimum level of power needed from an electrical grid at any time — which contributes to a costly mismatch between supply and demand.
>
> Electricity demand typically ramps up in the morning, peaks late afternoon, and tapers off at night. But supply from intermittent renewables like wind and solar is weather-dependent, and therefore less reliable at meeting the demand of the hour. Sometimes intermittent sources generate less power than is needed, and sometimes more — in which case operators may need to pause generation at certain plants to avoid overloading the system.

Now let's see France. This article from Euractiv is from May 2023:

> A bill to speed up the construction of new nuclear reactors was approved by the French parliament on Tuesday (16 May), with the government hailing it as an environmental step forward.

> […]Once it comes into force, the new law will speed up the construction of new nuclear reactors by simplifying the required administrative procedures and planning documents. The Energy Transition Ministry expects future construction times to be reduced by at least two years.
>
> In addition, a 50% cap on nuclear power's share of France's electricity mix was removed.

And finally, Japan. This article is from July 2023, from far-left Bloomberg News. (archive)

> Japan's government is considering a plan to help subsidize required upgrades at idled nuclear power plants, in the latest move to quickly boost the nation's atomic energy.
>
> Under the proposed plan, existing nuclear plants would be able to participate in an auction next year to receive subsidies for necessary upgrades to meet the country's safety standards, according to documents from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Projects selected would then get a subsidy for 20 years to help cover costs, the document said.
>
> […]The government is ramping up an effort to restart reactors to help cut imports of pricey fossil fuels, bolster power supplies and curb pollution.

I'm really hopeful that people will give up on wind and solar power, and turn to zero-emission fracking and nuclear for our electricity needs. That's much better for the environment and for the animals than wind and solar.

The Wintery Knight’s favorite Bible verses

August 9, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are 8 of my favorite Bible verses. Leave yours in the comments below.

Psalm 27:14:

> [11] Teach me Your way, O Lord,
> And lead me in a level path
> Because of my foes.
>
> [12] Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries,
> For false witnesses have risen against me,
> And such as breathe out violence.
>
> [13] *I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord
> In the land of the living.
>
> **[14] Wait for the Lord;**
> **Be strong and let your heart take courage;**
> **Yes, wait for the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**
>
> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.
>
> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.
>
> [5] Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men’s* hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.

Matthew 5:13:

> 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
>
> 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
>
> **13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless,**

> **how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**
>
> 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
>
> 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

2 Timothy 2:4:

> 1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
>
> [2] The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
>
> [3] Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[4] No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.**
>
> [5] Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

Daniel 3:18:

> [13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.
>
> [14] Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?
>
> [15] Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?”
>
> [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.
>
> [17] If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire;and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
>
> **[18] But *even* if *He does* not,let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”**

Esther 4:14:

> [10] Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai:
>
> [11] “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds

> out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days."
>
> [12] They related Esther's words to Mordecai.
>
> [13] Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> **[14] For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"**

Philippians 1:9:

> [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> [4] always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> [5] in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> [6] *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> [7] For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
>
> [8] For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> [10] so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
>
> [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Numbers 13:30:

> [25] When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,
>
> [26] they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.
>
> [27] Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.
>
> [28] Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.
>
> [29] Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."

> **30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.”**

If you have a favorite Bible verse or two, post them in the comments.

How good are atheist attempts to rationally ground moral values and duties?

August 10, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my readers is an expert at the moral argument, and wrote a number of articles about his experiences talking to non-Christians about it. He comes from a liberal Christian background, so his views and experiences are not the result of growing up in a conservative Christian environment.

In the first article, he talks about what theists mean when we say that atheists can't rationally ground objective morality:

> They misunderstand us to be implying that they are immoral people. But this is not at all what we are saying. Since we believe that the moral law is incumbent upon every human, and is woven into the very fabric of our souls, we are not at all surprised to find even atheists dancing to its tune (to mix my metaphors). The fact that atheists very much want to be thought of as good people is only a tacit admission that they understand that there is such a thing as "good" and that it is *good* to be good. But if morality is merely a human convention, then the most that an atheist can be claiming is that they are morally fashionable.

There's no moral credit for doing that.

In the second article, he talks about whether atheists can "reason" their way to correct moral views, if their conception of reality says that the universe and humans are accidents:

> A chance ethical system cannot do the trick if it is true that there are right and wrong answers. If there are indeed objectively right answers to moral questions, then reason is certainly an ally, since it can help us to assess the conditions and marshal our intuitions, but it does not in itself *make* the answer right. Neither does an ethical system make right answers; it can only (if legitimate) help us to navigate through real passes with real reefs and currents. But you could never say that any ship of history had hit a reef unless you were first willing to admit that things such as ships and reefs actually existed. That's a very big pill to swallow for anyone committed to a purely material world, where truth and ethics extend no farther than the will and imagination of the biochemical flukes we call "humans."

In the third article, he takes on the argument by atheists that much of the moral evil in the world is due to theists:

> When asking whether a behavior is caused by a belief system it must first be determined if that behavior is consistent with the beliefs in question. For a religion like Christianity there is some hope of doing so, since it is founded upon

> certain doctrines and is in possession of a guidebook — the Bible — to which one might appeal in making a ruling. For this reason a strong case can be made that most of what is commonly credited to Christianity is actually a violation of its fundamental principles. It is not *consistent* with Christianity; it is *antithetical* to it. And if something is inconsistent with a thing it is hard to make a case that it is *caused* by that thing.

In the fourth article, he talks about how atheists misunderstand the purpose of acting morally in Christianity:

> The irony is that Christianity does not even teach that we win heaven by virtue of our good works. In fact, it may be the only religion that explicitly rejects such an idea. For example, Islam actually teaches that our good deeds must outweigh our bad, and Eastern religions teach that we must work our way to enlightenment through various moral and spiritual practices. By contrast, Christianity teaches that we must put aside our futile thoughts of measuring up to God's perfect standard and throw ourselves upon the mercy of His court. We have but to accept, as spiritual beggars, the provision He has made to cover our sin and win our righteousness in Christ.
>
> Good works come as a *result* of our love and gratitude toward our creator and redeemer; they are not the *cause* of our redemption. The Christian ideal is to be good for God's sake, not for the sake of what He can do for us. God is not to be confused with Santa Claus. To think otherwise is to make the mistake that Satan made regarding Job's motivation for righteous living (Job 1:9-11).

In the fifth article, he talks about whether atheists can rationally ground the claim that they are "good" at morality:

> As it turns out, most atheists who like to think of themselves as moral do so with a sense that they are saying something particularly meaningful. The implication is that they have access to moral knowledge that they are committed to put into practice. It is something like saying that you are a good baseball player, which refers to a particular game with known rules and objectives that you skillfully follow. If this is not true, then a moral atheist is just asserting that they follow their own desires; they are saying little more than, "I do what I feel like doing, and whatever I do I call 'good.'"

It might be a fun activity to read these posts, then find an atheist and ask them whether they are a good person, and what do they mean by "good" and "evil". Ask them whether they are making free decisions, and how can that be possible if they are just made out of matter. The moral argument is the most accessible argument to discuss with non-Christians.

Report: FBI Director Christopher Wray lied under oath about targeting Catholics

August 11, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm always vigilant when the people in law enforcement target religious people. It's especially a problem when the bigotry is coming from the top of federal law enforcement. Christians pay the salaries of these people through our taxes, and what do we get in return? We get labeled as domestic terrorists. Our homes are broken into in pre-dawn raids. Assault rifles are pointed at our pets and children.

Here's the story from the Daily Signal:

> FBI Director Christopher Wray may have lied under oath concerning the FBI Richmond office's Jan. 23 memo citing the Southern Poverty Law Center in urging investigation of "radical traditional Catholic hate groups," Rep. Jim Jordan suggested in a letter sent Wednesday.

The issue is that Wray tried to minimize the scope of the FBI's investigation into Catholics:

> On July 12, Wray testified to the House Judiciary Committee that the memo represented "a single product by a single field office, which, as soon as I found out about it, I was aghast and ordered it withdrawn and removed from FBI systems."

He says it was a "single field office", but the memo reveals collaboration between *multiple* field offices. In other words, he apparently lied under oath, and the investigation was apparently much bigger than he wanted people to believe:

> Yet on July 25, 2023, the FBI produced a version of the Richmond document with fewer redactions than an earlier version the FBI had produced. "This new version shows that the FBI's actions were not just limited to 'a single field office,' as you testified to the Committee," Jordan, who chairs the House Judiciary Committee, wrote in his letter to Wray.
>
> […]The less-redacted version of the memo also "explicitly states that FBI Richmond '[c]oordinated with' FBI Portland in preparing the assessment."
>
> "Thus, it appears that both FBI Portland and FBI Los Angeles field offices were involved in or contributed to the creation of FBI's assessment of traditional Catholics as potential domestic terrorists," Jordan added.
>
> "First, they went after moms and dads at school board meetings. Now, they're going after traditional Catholics. When's it going to stop?" Jordan told The Daily Signal.

I think it's time for taxpayers – the people who pay the salaries of the FBI employees – to

ask whether we are getting good value for the money we are paying.

Remember this story from Daily Wire?

> FBI agents reportedly raided the home of a pro-life activist in Pennsylvania on Friday and arrested him.
>
> A group of between 25 and 30 FBI agents raided the Bucks County, Pennsylvania, home of pro-life activist Mark Houck early Friday morning, his family told LifeSite News. Houck is the leader of a nonprofit group that provides sidewalk counseling at abortion clinics in Philadelphia.
>
> […]"The kids were all just screaming," Houck's wife, Ryan-Marie, told LifeSite. "It was all just very scary and traumatic."
>
> Ryan-Marie Houck told the outlet that the group of agents in SWAT gear arrived in 15 vehicles outside the family home at around 7:05 a.m. Friday morning. The agents quickly surrounded the house and began pounding on the door, demanding they open up. Houck reportedly tried to get the agents to calm down, noting that his seven children were scared, but the agents kept shouting. "[T]hey had big, huge rifles pointed at Mark and pointed at me and kind of pointed throughout the house," his wife said.
>
> Houck and his wife asked the agents why they were there, to which the agents allegedly replied that they were there to arrest him. His wife asked for a warrant, but "they said that they were going to take him whether they had a warrant or not," Ryan-Marie Houck recalled.

What did he do to get his house raided by 25-30 armed FBI agents in 15 vehicles?

This:

> According to his wife, Houck was providing sidewalk counseling at abortion centers in Philadelphia last year, and had taken his then 12-year-old son. On multiple occasions over weeks, a "pro-abortion protestor" allegedly shouted vulgarities and insults at the boy. Houck repeatedly told the protestor not to speak to his son, but the protestor continued to encroach on the boy's personal space, still spewing vulgarities. Finally, Houck shoved the man away, causing him to fall down. The protestor was not injured, but tried to sue Houck. Though the case was thrown out this summer, it was somehow picked up by the DOJ, Ryan-Marie Houck said.

Why would we have people who are showing this high level of dishonor and immorality in federal law enforcement? Isn't it time to fire them all and start from scratch, hiring people who actually have some fidelity, bravery and integrity?

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 36: Are All Religions the Same, Part 4

August 12, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 36 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose continue our discussion on how to choose a worldview. We discuss a specific and early passage from the Bible about the Messiah, and whether Jesus is the best match. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 36:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose continue their discussion about whether all religions are equally valid paths to God. In this episode, we look at a passage from the Bible that makes many specific predictions about the Messiah. We'll discuss whether Jesus is a good match for the predictions in the passage. Then we respond to objections from a well-known skeptic. This episode is the fourth in a five-part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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William Lane Craig debates atheist Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?

August 13, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video from the third debate from Dr. William Lane Craig's speaking tour in Australia.

Format:

- William Lane Craig (15 min)
- Lawrence Krauss (15 min, but was actually 21:40)
- Moderated discussion
- Question and answer

Dr. Graham Oppy, the moderator, is a well-known atheist philosopher. He let Dr. Krauss speak for 21 minutes and 40 seconds, which is why my summary of Krauss is so long.

The video:

Summary

After careful consideration, I decided not to be snarky at all in this summary. What you read below is what happened. There may be some small mistakes, but I will fix those if people tell me about them. I also included some quotes and timestamps for the more striking things that Dr. Krauss said.

The debate itself starts at 4:50 with Dr. Craig's opening speech. He does use slides to show the structure of his arguments.

Dr. Craig's opening speech. (4:50)

1. The kalam cosmological argument:
    - God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe
    - The Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem supports the absolute beginning of the universe
    - Even if our universe is part of a multiverse, the multiverse itself would have to have an absolute beginning
    - Speculative cosmologies try to challenge the Big Bang theory, but none of them – even if true – can establish that the past is eternal
    - Only two types of things could explain the origin of spece, time, matter and energy – either abstract objects or minds
    - Abstract objects do not cause effects, but minds do cause effects (we do it ourselves)
    - A mind is the best explanation for the origin of the universe
2. The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
    - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature

    - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
    - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
    - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see
3. The cosmic fine-tuning for the existence of intelligent life
    - There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) cosmological constants and 2) quantities
    - These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life
    - There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design
    - Law is rejected because they are put in at the beginning or matter – they don't emerge from matter
    - Chance must be rejected, because they odds are just too long unless you appeal to a world-ensemble
    - We do not observe what the world ensemble hypothesis predicts that we should observe
    - Design is the best explanation for finely-tuned constants and quantities
4. The existence of objective moral values and duties
    - Our experience of morality (values and duties) is that it is objectively real and incumbent on us
    - When someone goes into a classroom and shoots at innocent children, that is objectively wrong
    - On naturalism, moral values and moral duties do not exist – they are conventional and variable by time and place
    - The best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties is that God exists
5. The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus
    - There are three widely-accepted facts that are best explained by the resurrection hypothesis
    - 1) the empty tomb, 2) the post-mortem appearances, 3) the early church's belief in the resurrection
    - Naturalistic attempts to explain these 3 boilerplate facts fail
    - The best explanation of the 3 minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead
6. The immediate experience of God
    - Belief in God is a "properly basic" belief – rational even without arguments because of experience of God

Dr. Krauss' opening speech. (21:12)

Slides: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

1. Religious pluralism I

    - There have been lots of different gods created by people through history
    - We've gotten rid of all of them by understanding how the universe works by doing science
    - Religion is just stories, and the stories are inconsistent with how the universe works
2. Progress of naturalistic science I
    - Newtonian physics refutes the idea that angels push planets around
    - Darwinian evolution refutes design arguments, including the one that Dr. Craig presented (24:10)
    - Biochemistry hasn't explained how life originated, but we will have the solution soon
    - Physics shows us that matter can be created and destroyed without need a God
    - Physics shows us that universes can be created and destroyed "no problem"
3. Religious pluralism II
    - Since we have been able to disprove all the gods we've invented, why hang on to the last one
    - It's unlikely that the God that Dr. Craig presented exists, because we disproved all the others he didn't present
4. Hiddenness of God
    - There is a complete lack of evidence for the other 999 gods, so how likely is it that the God Dr. Craig presented exists
5. Religious pluralism III
    - There are inconsistencies between various religions, so therefore there can be no religion that is right
6. Progress of naturalistic science II
    - Peasants had a very low level of knowledge about the world and they believed in God
    - But our level of knowledge has increased over time, so we shouldn't believe in God now
    - Peasants thought that the Earth orbited the Sun, but this is now known to be false
    - The Scriptures said that the Earth orbited the Sun, but now we know that's false from science
7. Christianity plagiarizes from other religions I
    - There is nothing new or special about Jesus
    - He's just as unpleasant as all the other gods
    - Everything particular to Jesus occurs in other religions
8. Catholics are inconsistent about what they believe
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in transubstantiation
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in the virgin birth
9. The resurrection is copied from many other religions
    - Dionysus, Osiris, etc.

10. There is no evidence for the resurrection
    - The stories about Jesus were written “decades or hundreds of years after the fact”
    - The stories are inconsistent with each other
    - Dr. Craig tells me that historical Jesus scholars all accept that the resurrection happened
    - That’s like saying that all alien abductions experts agree that alien abductions happened
    - It’s unreasonable to think that the resurrection happened because no one saw it happen
    - I accept that people reported on appearances, but hallucination theory can explain that
11. The timeline for the creation and incarnation are all wrong
    - The creation, planet formation, hominids, incarnation, etc. all take place in the wrong times
    - If God knew what he was doing, he would done everything at better times to be more efficient
12. David Hume’s argument against miracles is sound
    - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – nothing wrong with this argument
    - Miracles are really just coincidences
    - Catholic apparitions at Lourdes disprove the historical argument that Dr. Craig made for the resurrection
13. God is petty and jealous
    - God shouldn’t demand that we trust him, esteem him and consider his character when we make decisions
    - The atoning death of Jesus for the sins of the world also makes no sense
14. Belief is based on geography
    - What you believe is clearly correlated with where you are born
    - There is even an Islamic clone of Dr. Craig who “uses the exact same arguments” that he does to prove Islam
    - Belief in God is decreasing in the Internet-accessible world
15. Science can develop morals without God
    - Reason is able to guide our actions to be moral
    - Morality evolves over time, so there is no objective morality
    - Catholicism teaches things that are immoral
    - Some things are prohibited by biological revulsion, such as incest
    - But if a brother and sister have sex using condoms “is that morally wrong? I can’t say it is frankly” (37:24)
16. Dr. Craig is irrational
    - “I came here convinced based on my past interactions and his writing that Dr. Craig was a dishonest Charlatan”
    - “Any argument that validates God is reasonable to him”

    - “And any argument against it is not only unreasonable but wrong and worth distorting”
    - “Because it must be wrong – he’s decided the answer in advance”
17. Dr. Craig is immoral
    - Dr. Craig thinks it is OK for God to command that Canaanite children are killed
    - “So in fact if they were Canaanite children in that schoolroom that he talked about then it would be OK”
    - It’s not reasonable to justify genocide in that way, but Dr. Craig is willing to go to those lengths
18. The cause of the origin of the space time universe need not be God
    - Dr. Craig says that if there is an explanation for the origin or space, time, matter and energy it must be God
    - But it could just as easily be turtles or Zeus
19. Dr. Craig misrepresents the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem
    - Alexander Vilenkin wrote me an e-mail that says that the theorem doesn’t work in all cases
    - “Dr. Craig is so convinced that these arguments must be true that he won’t listen to the fact that they’re not”
20. Darwinian evolution explains the fine-tuning
    - “Life was fine tuned – we got rid of it with Darwin”
    - Mutation and natural selection explain the cosmic fine-tuning argument that Dr. Craig presented
21. Suboptimal design disproves the fine-tuning argument
    - “We get back aches” therefore “This argument that [the universe] is fine-tuned for life is nonsense”
22. William Lane Craig can be proven to exhibit homosexual behavior using logical arguments
    - Look, you can construct arguments that are clearly wrong
    - Premise 1: “All mammals exhibit homosexual behavior”
    - Premise 2: “William Lane Craig is a mammal”
    - Seems to be saying that logical arguments can prove false things “it’s nonsense”
23. Dr. Craig distorted a podcast that some group made on pain receptors
    - Dr. Craig’s faith is so strong that it causes him to distort what this group said

Discussion: (44:35)

I will not be summarizing everything that was said, just a few main points.
The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the

universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can't even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don't work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don't have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON'T KNOW!!!!!!!" (raising his voice)
- Craig: I'm not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"
- Craig: "I wonder what you deleted from the original letter"
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "I just told you!"
- Craig: "Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) 'You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is

highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.'
- Craig: "That's Vilenkin."
- Krauss: "In this paper, that's absolutely right"
- Krauss: But it's ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it's unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: "Isn't it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?"
- Krauss: "No"
- Craig: "Well, can you give us one then"
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) "In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong"
- Krauss: "You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it's hard"
- Craig: "Right"

I noticed that a huge number of atheist web sites are taking the Vilenkin quote that Krauss used out of context, like this one and this one. There are probably a lot more of them like that, which I think is interesting. That's why we have these debates, I guess. To set the record straight about who accuses people of being dishonest, and who is actually dishonest.

Fine-tuning:

- Krauss tried to argue that he had explained the fine-tuning with the Higgs particle, but Dr. Craig said that only applied to the cosmological constant, not all the other examples of fine-tuning. Krauss said that it wasn't impressive that this universe permitted life and that "It would have been much more surprising if we evolved in a universe in which we couldn't live". Krauss argued the fine-tuning was only for "Life like us". But Dr. Craig explained that the fine-tuning is what allows us to have the basics of any kind of life, like slow-burning stars, chemical diversity, etc. – things that are required for basic minimal life functions in any living system. Craig said that he was working with the current physical laws of this universe (F = ma, etc.) and that he was looking at what changed if we changed those even slightly. Krauss tried to say that if he changed things like the mass of particles then the strength of forces would change. (But the forces aren't laws!) Krauss argued that the cosmological constant would be even better for life if it was zero, and Craig said that the life permitting range did include zero, but that the range of life-permitting values was narrow.

Jesus' existence:

- Craig reponded to the mystery religions charge, the charge that the evidence for the minimal facts is too late/too weak, the charge that grief visions explained the evidence better, and Hume's argument against miracles. Craig brought up the early

creed from 1 Cor 15:3-7 and explained to Krauss that it was 5 years after the events, and that Jewish standards of oral transmission were strong enough to ensure that the creed was reliable, and most of the eyewitnesses would still have been alive.

Audience Q and A: (1:21:09)

The first topic is the grounding of morality. Krauss agrees that there is no objective morality and no objective moral oughts. He also said that that standards of behavior are arbitrary, and that they change over time and they are adopted for promoting social order. Dr. Craig pressed the point that science itself would collapse without ethical values. It assumes them, but cannot ground them.

The next topic was free will. Krauss is a determinist. Craig asked him how he could reconcile moral responsibility with determinism.

The next topic was the effectiveness of mathematics. Krauss didn't have an explanation for it and didn't think it needed one. Then they got into whether the Genesis has been verified by science and whether it is meant to be taken literally.

The next topic was whether philosophy makes any progress. Craig gave the example of verificationism being rejected as too narrow, and self-refuting. Krauss: "I'm going to come to the defense of philosophy for the first time". Craig: "That's amazing!" Krauss said that science provides new knowledge. Craig said there were some things that could be known apart from science.

Poll: few Millennials describe belief in God as “very important”

August 14, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

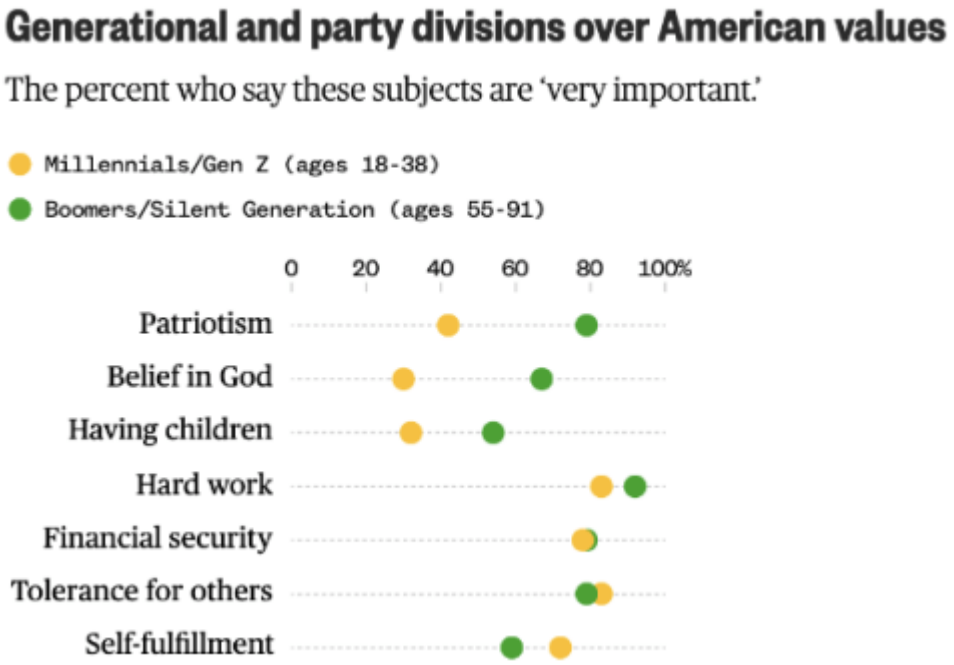

Beliefs of millennials and boomers

I saw a very interesting article that compared the attitudes of young people about things like patriotism, religion, freedom, etc. The numbers are very discouraging.

So, here’s the article from the Washington Examiner:

> The importance of patriotism, faith in God, and having children is significantly lower among millennials and Generation Z, compared to previous generations.
>
> In a new poll conducted by the *Wall Street Journal* and NBC News, nearly 80% of people aged 55-91 said being patriotic is important to them, while only 42% of millennials and Generation Z, or those aged 18-38, said the same. Thirty percent of millennials and Generation Z said religion was important, compared to the over 75% of baby boomers, with just over 30% of millennials and Generation Z saying it was important to have children.
>
> Areas where the younger generations had placed higher importance compared to boomers were tolerance for others and self-fulfillment, with financial security being almost tied between the two age groups.

I’m sure that everyone has seen other polls showing the decline of Christianity, especially in mainline and Catholic churches. Evangelicals are declining less, but they are still declining.

The reason I linked to this post is because I’ve noticed that some Christians don’t really think that there is anything to be concerned about. Everything is working fine, they say. Whatever we’re doing right now must be working, because there is no decline. We’re

winning, and if you think otherwise, then you're just complaining.

Well, I don't really know why there is this decline, all I can do is speak from my experiences. I've met people through my blog who did lose their faith in college, and I've met ex-Christians in my office, too. I asked them what the problem was, and it seems to be that when they were growing up, they often bullied into behaving like a Christian without being able to ask any questions about whether it was true. And then as soon as they got to college away from their parents and pastors, they just dumped the whole thing.

I remember listening to an amazing lecture a while back by Dr. Scott Waller. I think it was a lecture he gave for the Stand to Reason "Masters Series in Christian Thought" in 2003. The lecture was about Postmodernism in the University. Postmodernism is the view that there are no true or false views, especially with "soft" issues like religion and morality. In the lecture, he talked about how a father had sent his devout Christian son to university, and the son had returned an atheist after one semester. I remember Dr. Waller quoting the son telling his parents "I have come to think of my time growing up in this house as the dark period of my life". The father was very upset. So Dr. Waller told him what to do. He said, you're going to need to read a few books on the most common questions that your son has, and then work through the answers with him. And he made a little pile of books about common questions that college students ask, and pushed the pile across the table to the father. And the father pushed the books back across the table to Dr. Waller, and said "well, I don't have time for reading so many books… but could you just talk to him instead?"

Another thing that seems to cause a lot of young people to leave the faith in college is sex. Now if I were trying to convince someone to be responsible about sex, I'd try to show them studies and statistics to explain why there really are best practices to relationships and marriage. For example, I'd might show them that the number of premarital sex partners increases marital instability, or that sliding into cohabitation early tends to make marriages less stable. But this takes a bit of work, and you have to work through it with the young people. I just don't know if parents really reason with their kids like this. But in churches, I've noticed that trying to make an argument using evidence isn't very popular. To me, if I were trying to be convincing to someone about something, I would use evidence. It's just natural to me to make a case if I'm trying to be persuasive. But making a case just hasn't been a really big priority in the churches I've attended.

So, I guess if I had to give any advice to parents of children, or pastors in churches, it would be that Christianity is in decline, and we need to do more than just order people to memorize Bible verses and creeds, go to church, etc. It's hard for me to know what's really going on in everyone's home, and in everyone's church. But I don't think that whatever we're doing in our homes and churches is working to convince young people that belief in God is very important.

Antifa defense attorney warns jury: I'm Antifa and I'm memorizing your faces

August 15, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought this story was very interesting. A journalist named Andy Ngo was a victim of Antifa violence, theft and property damage. So he sued them, and had to press his case in a civil trial in front of a jury. Antifa tried to dox the jury members, in order to intimidate them. And the Antifa defense attorney told the jury that she was Antifa, and that she was memorizing their faces.

Here is the full story from The Post Millennial.

> The jury has reached a verdict in the trial of investigative journalist Andy Ngo v. Rose City Antifa and its alleged affiliated members, in which they found both defendants John Colin Hacker and Elizabeth Renee Richter not liable in the civil case brought against them.
>
> Ngo filed a complaint in Portland, Oregon in 2020, claiming assault and other injuries over alleged acts of violence carried out by members of Antifa, which began in 2019. Defandants John Colin Hacker and Elizabeth Renee Richter have been accused by Senior Editor of Post Millennial Andy Ngo of assault, battery, and intentional infliction of emotional distress, which was argued before a civil jury for more than a week at the Multnomah County Courthouse.
>
> Defendants Hacker and Richter, who allegedly work as Antifa's "doxxers," which after identifying Ngo had led to a series of physical beatings on May 28, 2021, were found by the jury on Tuesday not liable for all of these claims. Evidence provided during the trial, along with testimony given by both defendants, asserts Ngo's claims in the complaint.

Just to be crystal clear, Antifa is a fascist group, that seeks to impose fascism on the United States. They are secular leftist domestic terrorists. The attacks on Andy Ngo were caught on video. So there is no doubt about the facts.

The part of this story that was concerning to me was how the defense attorney threatened the jury, and the judge allowed it to happen:

> During closing statements, defense lawyer Michelle Burrows told the jurors that not only does she self-identify as both a progressive and an "anti-fascist," she strongly declared, "I am Antifa" and insisted upon making herself an "I am Antifa" t-shirt, which she said she would wear after the trial.
>
> […]After announcing her retirement and that this would be her last trial, Burrows told the jurors that she "will remember each one of their faces."

I think the lesson here is that this sort of "justice" is now normal in blue cities and blue states. If you live in one of these cities, then you cannot expect fair treatment from the

police and the courts. The time to move to a red state is now. You cannot be paying taxes to people who use that money to persecute you.

How to explain the gospel in less than 1000 words

August 16, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend sent me a draft e-mail, that he wrote to a family member, who has rejected historic Christianity for progressive Christianity. He was asked to give the basics of salvation, and his attempt to explain the gospel to her is below. My advice included taking out the Christianese terms. Do you think he did a good job? I think his emphasis on what is not the gospel (what needs to be rejected) makes this a first-class explanation of the gospel.

So, you've asked the 10,000 talent question (alluding to Matthew 18:23-35). You are basically asking me what I think the Gospel is. I'll try to answer that in a minimalistic way, using my own characterization of it rather than just making doctrinal statements.

One must accept that there is a God, who is a higher authority than themselves. How much one must first believe about that God is debatable, but candidate beliefs would be that He is personal (having a mind like, but greater than, ours), powerful, and the creator of this cosmos and everything in it — He owns it all. Our natural intuition is to see beauty, order, complexity, and "design" in nature. There is a difference in belief vs unbelief in that some think it is just the appearance of design and some acknowledge their intuition that it actually is designed.

One must acknowledge their moral intuitions, and recognize that there are actually right and wrong things in this world. It's not just whatever you want to do, or whatever society decides in a given time or culture.

Given that morality is then understood to be a transcendent thing (universal and independent of time and culture), the connection is made to God as the author of this moral law.

One must then recognize that he/she regularly fails to live up to this law, even according to just their meager understanding of it, and even by the standards of morality that they make up for other people.

One must not try to suppress this, or therapize it away. One must recognize there is a problem and real moral culpability. One must recognize that they feel guilty and have self-esteem issues because they actually do have guilt and issues.

One must make the connection between guilt and their standing before God. Being good sometimes and in some ways does not erase the bad you do, past, present, or future. One must be willing to bend the knee to God's will regarding morality.

One must also come to see the moral failure (sin) in their lives as a bad thing that they'd like to be rid of, rather than excusing it as the fault of others, or revelling in it as part of the pleasure of life, or shrugging it off as just "who I am."

One must appeal to God in these matters for both forgiveness and help in living as they

should.

Given that God has provided a champion for the problem that humanity faces (the backstory of which not all will fully know), one whose heart is truly yielded to all these things will naturally and eagerly receive Word of this as Good News. God has solved the seemingly irreconcilable demands of both justice and forgiveness in that champion.

Those with ears to hear will receive this solution — Jesus — and believe what He has done in life and on the cross for their sake — the resurrection being both confirmation of His divine authority and also the sign of the defeat of death which awaits us all, and is the only barrier between us and facing this God whom we fail at every turn. They will believe on (or upon) Jesus as Lord and their means of salvation, surrendering dependence upon their own ideas of self-righteousness and earning the favor of God.

The outward expression that we have understood and accepted these things is that we have made Jesus Lord and committed ourselves to following Him, conform our character to His, resist our sinful inclinations, and are interested in learning all about Who God is and what has been done for us in Christ.

This commitment to the Lordship of Christ naturally leads to the acceptance of subsequent beliefs. If Jesus is indeed Lord, then He holds all authority, and what He said and taught to His followers is our guide — the New Testament. And if this is the divine story, as intended by God for men, then we have reason to believe that it is comprehensible to us, and He will insure (in spite of the fallibility of men and demonic plots) that its essential message will not be lost or corrupted until all things are competed. Given that Jesus affirmed every categorical section of the Old Testament, and claimed to be its promised Messiah, then that, too, is a source of truth and understanding.

Those doctrines that are sometimes characterized as “essential” for salvation, are merely the highlights of this redemption narrative, which are those things being clear and consistent, and which indicate that someone has yielded themselves to the authority of Christ and the scriptures, and understands these things. It is not that believing them is what saves, but they are what the saved naturally come to believe. Confessing them is the tangible, verbal act of affirming the Gospel, but is not necessarily identical to a life committed to putting it into practice, which is saving faith.

Women want to complain to Human Resources because man is reserved at work

August 17, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have spent over 24 years in information technology, and most of the companies were large IT companies. Large IT companies tend to emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion more than smaller companies, which have to perform in order to stay afloat. And that means making sure there is an equal balance of genders, ethnicities, etc. in every different area.

Here is a very interesting post on the relationship advice forum of Reddit:

> Hi all I'm posting this on an alt because I know a few of my friends are following me on here and I don't want this spilling out until I have some clear thoughts on what I want to do.

The author – who uses Commonwealth spelling – has a short summary of her post at the top:

> A colleague (27M) joined our firm last year and since then he has had zero issues socialising with the guys we work with but always finds an excuse or says no to hanging out with the girls after work, even if we go out together as a whole he rarely talks to us and its making some of my friends uncomfortable.

And then here is the long version:

> So early last year our firm hired Dan (27M). In the first few weeks he was really quiet and didn't talk much and that's just how we thought he was. Every conversation with him was short and to the point and never deviated from work, asides from pleasantries (Have a nice weekend etc). About 2 months in he started becoming a bit more friendly with the guys in our office and they would hang out every so often and have normal conversations. However, whenever any of the girls in the office tried to do so he would quickly change the conversation back to work or just not reply. Even now after a year of Dan working with us he straight up refuses to socialise with the girls in the office and it is making them feel uncomfortable. He avoids any discussion of himself outside of work related events and future plans and doesn't ask any of the girls either. Where as he is, what I can only assume, pretty good friends with the guys in the office.
>
> Even on work meals out to celebrate events he is only doing the bare minimum when it comes to conversation with the girls where again with the guys he talks to them like there is no problem whatsoever. I don't know if I'm overreacting but one of the girls is considering go to HR about this because she is saying its creating a hostile work environment. Dan treats us like he treats clients we work with; cordial and strictly about business and its wearing thin now.

> Any advice is appreciated.

Many young people today don't see the workplace as being about work. They see it as a time of socializing. And they get angry when people don't socialize with them. They want to be allowed into a man's personal space, even though they are the kind of people who go straight to HR whenever anyone disagrees with them, or refuses to make them happy. Many of these women are single mothers who divorced the father of their kids.

I actually left my last job and took a lower salary job, because I was being harassed by a woman who had *no college degree*. Her official title was "Software Engineer", but she didn't write code. She just supervised deployments to production. She was very attractive, and had had cosmetic surgery done – her chest was super-sized. (I heard her explaining why she did it to one of the Indian workers one day). She was also about 6-8 years older than me. She started to get very angry with me for not giving her attention at work. She would come to my desk and talk about how politically conservative she was (she must have heard that I was conservative). But I didn't want to have anything to do with her.

I blogged previously about a woman who accused a man of grooming her because he didn't want to get more serious with her. Men are getting tired of this. If you know any young women who are wondering why men don't talk to them, maybe it's because many young women are not pleasant or safe to talk to. Even if a particular young unmarried woman is safe to talk to, men will judge her based on the majority of single, unmarried women. It's just not safe for men to have non-business conversations in the workplace with young, unmarried women.

The juice isn't worth the squeeze.

38-year old unmarried model explains what she means by “a decent man” (for marriage)

August 18, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve always been suspicious of women who make a living through their physical beauty. I see a few problems with modeling as a career. First, you don’t have to produce anything useful that requires understanding the real world, like a programmer or a nurse. Second, you focus a lot on your appearance, and that’s not healthy, since it all fades out by age 35 anyway. Women who get a lot of attention for free typically don’t know how to treat men, either. They don’t learn because they don’t have to learn.

With that in mind, here’s an article by an aging 38-year-old model that illustrates the problem:

> Earlier this month I opened the door to a bouquet of flowers.
>
> They were from yet another man who wants to date me. He’s 35, tall, dark and handsome.
>
> […]And this week, as the gifts roll in from admirers for Valentine’s Day — I have already received two…
>
> […]I am 38 and have been single for four years.

So, the first thing to point out about this is that it confirms what I was saying about pretty women. Look at the way she talks about how all these men are paying attention to her. Like it or not, her worldview is going to be conditioned by this attention she’s getting from men. She isn’t having to write code to get attention. Or set a fracture. Or do anything. She just gets it because she was born with good looks. And she doesn’t see that it is her job to 1) prepare her character for attracting a man who wants to commit, or 2) choose men who are interested in commitment. Her job is just to be pretty, and then tell everyone how much attention she’s getting from men. *Men who will not commit to her*. She is mistaking the attention for intent to marry. But men who pay attention to dumb, pretty women don’t intend to marry them. They just want to pump and dump them.

But she doesn’t see her failure to prepare herself for commitment and to prefer commitment-minded men as her problem. On the contrary – her singleness at 38 is *the fault of men being worthless*:

> And I hate to break it to any other single women in their late thirties, but all the decent men in our age bracket have been taken.
>
> […]While I work out every day, these men look a decade older.
>
> Beer bellies, bad manners, little respect for single women and minimal hygiene — I’ve seen it all on the apps.
>
> Over the past four years I’ve been on almost 500 dates trying to find Mr Right.
>
> And while I have become something of an expert on dating apps — last year I got

> a congratulations from Tinder for getting 25,000 likes for my profile — unfortunately, I am still looking for The One.
>
> My theory is all the good men were snapped up when they were young. All that's left is the dregs.

Now, she doesn't think that she is the dregs for being 38 and being completely unsuited to marriage. She thinks that men are the dregs – because they don't have an attractive height and appearance. That's what she's looking for – and that's *the only thing she's looking for*. She's had relationships with men, but they just LIVED WITH HER. They never committed, because she wasn't looking for a man who would commit, she was looking for a man with appearance, height, fitness and hygiene. Someone who looked as good as her.

Doubt me? Read her own words – this is what she values in a man:

> During my 500 dates, the only guy I have seriously dated was my age and had the best hair and teeth in the world.
>
> He even had a "proper" job and took me out for fancy dinners. Alas, he wasn't ready to settle down — or something like that.
>
> Apart from that, there was the guy who looked like Superman on his dating profile but turned up with a long white Santa beard. His body had gone to pot and he was wearing unwashed clothes.
>
> Then there was the wealthy consultant who took me to his club where cocktails were thirty quid a pop. He was generous but knew the value of nothing. Plus, he continually scoffed salt and vinegar nuts on our date — the odour was revolting.
>
> […]Then there are the beer bellies. If a man has one, I know we'll have nothing in common as I'm active…

And so on. Everything is about appearance. She's looking for *exactly what she is herself*: a pretty face. That's what she knows, understands and values. And she has *no idea* that the willingness to commit is not related to external appearances. The important thing for her is the man's *appearance*. And that's why she has 5 billion dates and no commitment. Only a certain kind of man commits. It's going to be related to his personal character – religion, morality, etc. – more than it's related to what she can see with her eyes.

In order for a man to stick with a woman through childbirth and aging, he's going to have to have some reason to value her beyond youth and beauty. And not every man has such reasons. That's why it's the woman's job to do two things. 1) to develop the kinds of character traits that are likely to attract a commitment-minded man, like fitness, femininity, vulnerability, trust, kindness, etc. and 2) to evaluate men and separate the ones who have a worldview that values women for more than youth and beauty.

In the case of Christian men, we are looking for women who have self-control, sobriety, chastity, fidelity, etc. And we are especially attracted to women who take God's goals as their own, and work independently to promote the things that God thinks are valuable.

Women who can defend God’s existence and reputation are highly regarded. Women who put others above their own selfish desires, especially children and animals. Women who are content at home with a non-fiction book. Women who don’t seem to waste money on entertainment, fun and thrills. The woman has to have what commitment-ready men want, and she has to know which men are ready for commitment. SHE CAN’T READ THAT WITH HER EYES OR WITH HER FEELINGS. She’s going to have to ask questions and investigate what he demonstrates about his character with his actions and accomplishments.

New study: “social contagion” is a major factor in teen and young adult gender dysphoria

August 19, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I had blogged about a small study published in 2018 by Brown University’s Dr. Lisa Littman. That study was controversial, because it falsified the narrative about transgenderism held by secular leftists. The new study, published in March 2023 in Archives of Sexual Behavior, confirms the Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria theory first advanced by Littman. Let’s take a look.

The study is here, on Springer Link.

Excerpt from the Abstract:

> During the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in adolescents and young adults (AYA) complaining of gender dysphoria. One influential if controversial explanation is that the increase reflects a socially contagious syndrome: Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD).
>
> We report results from a survey of parents who contacted the website ParentsofROGDKids.com because they believed their AYA children had ROGD. Results focused on 1655 AYA children whose gender dysphoria reportedly began between ages 11 and 21 years, inclusive. These youths were disproportionately (75%) natal female. Natal males had later onset (by 1.9 years) than females, and they were much less likely to have taken steps toward social gender transition (65.7% for females versus 28.6% for males). Pre-existing mental health issues were common, and youths with these issues were more likely than those without them to have socially and medically transitioned.
>
> Parents reported that they had often felt pressured by clinicians to affirm their AYA child’s new gender and support their transition. According to the parents, AYA children’s mental health deteriorated considerably after social transition.

Breitbart reported about the study and noted:

> When asked if their child had friends who “came out as transgender around the same time,” 55.4 percent said “yes,” with that response being significantly higher for females, (60.9 percent) than it was for males (38.7 percent).
>
> […]The study also revealed that parents said they oftentimes felt pressured by clinicians to go along with their child’s new gender identity and support their transition. The parents added that their children’s “mental health deteriorated considerably after social transition.”
>
> […]Parents also estimated that before developing gender dysphoria, their child was spending an average of 4.5 hours per day “on the internet and social media.”

> When asked whether a stressful event in their child's life may have contributed to the onset of gender dysphoria, 72.6 percent of parents answered "yes."

One of the differences between men and women, in my experience, is that the majority of men tend to generate their worldview by making plans that are likely to achieve goals, whereas the majority of women tend to get their goals from the culture, and pursue those goals by doing what feels good "in the moment". I have been told this by women who were never like this, and by women who grew out of this once they experienced failure. That's why transgenderism is especially problematic for girls, because if it is being spread by social cues and pressures, then girls are typically going to be more susceptible to that than boys.

Let's talk about the previous study.

Here's how the study was first reported by Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.

Peer pressure / The Internet:

> The pattern of clusters of teens in friend groups becoming transgender-identified, the group dynamics of these friend groups and the types of advice viewed online led her to the hypothesis that friends and online sources could spread certain beliefs.
>
> [….]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

Mental disorders / traumatic events:

> Additionally, 62 percent of parents reported their teen or young adult had one or more diagnoses of a psychiatric disorder or neurodevelopmental disability before the onset of gender dysphoria. Forty-eight percent reported that their child had experienced a traumatic or stressful event prior to the onset of their gender dysphoria, including being bullied, sexually assaulted or having their parents get divorced.

This article at The Federalist had a few examples to illustrate the conclusion of the study. I'll pick two.

>

> The study includes other eye-opening information, such as case studies of several children's stories.
>
> - "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends were taking group lessons together with a very popular coach. The coach came out as transgender, and, within one year, all four students announced they were also transgender."
> - "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends are part of a larger friend group that spends much of their time talking about gender and sexuality. The three natal female friends all announced they were trans boys and chose similar masculine names. After spending time with these three friends, the 14-year-old natal female announced that she was also a trans boy."

I thought this quote from that article was interesting as well, given the culture's obsession with "bullying", which is a nebulous term that can mean actual bullying, or mere disagreement.

> The study also may indicate that school "anti-bullying" programs typically created by LGBT activist organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign may help accelerate children identifying as transgender by pushing peers and authority figures to profusely express their support.

Coming out as transgender means instant fame and popularity, because you're a victim, and everyone has to be nice to you… or else:

> "Great increase in popularity among the student body at large. Being trans is a gold star in the eyes of other teens," wrote one parent on the study response form. Another wrote, "not so much 'popularity' increasing as 'status' … also she became untouchable in terms of bullying in school as teachers who ignored homophobic bullying …are now all at pains to be hot on the heels of any trans bullying."

So becoming transgender has social rewards, especially for people who are being bullied. White girls are constantly being bullied for their race in public schools, so identifying as transgender is a quick and easy way for them to get out of the oppressor class and into the victim class

Is the “RNA world” hypothesis a good naturalistic explanation for the origin of life?

August 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A very good book on science apologetics was published recently, called “The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith: Exploring the Ultimate Questions About Life and the Cosmos“. Well, there’s an ongoing series of posts about the book at Evolution News, and one of them caught my eye. They are talking about the origin of life, and what’s needed to create life from non-life.

Here is the post from Evolution News.

The article starts by explaining the what is required to show how non-living components could be organized into a living system:

- plausible biochemical paths from individual bio-building blocks like amino acids or nucleic acids to functional polymers such as proteins and DNA.
- ways to speed up chemical reactions that are naturally slow.
- the ordering of amino acids in proteins and nucleotide bases in RNA and DNA that allows them to function properly.

The leading naturalistic explanation to solve these problems is called the “RNA world” hypothesis:

> The most popular proposal for the first self-replicating molecule is RNA — where life was first based upon RNA carrying both genetic information (akin to modern DNA) and performing catalytic functions (akin to modern enyzmes), in what is termed the *RNA world*.

The article lists several problems with the RNA world hypothesis. Dr. Walter Bradley lists two of those problems.

First, the assembly of RNA requires intelligent design:

> First, RNA has not been shown to assemble in a laboratory without the help of a skilled chemist intelligently guiding the process. Origin-of-life theorist Steven Benner explained that a major obstacle to the natural production of RNA is that “RNA requires water to function, but RNA cannot emerge in water, and does not persist in water without repair” due to water’s “rapid and irreversible” corrosive effects upon RNA.[3] In this “water paradox,” Benner explains that “life seems to need a substance (water) that is inherently toxic to polymers (e.g., RNA) necessary for life.”[4]
>
> To overcome such difficulties, Benner and other chemists carefully designed experimental conditions that are favorable to the production of RNA. But Robert Shapiro explains that these experiments do not simulate natural conditions: “The

> flaw is in the logic — that this experimental control by researchers in a modern laboratory could have been available on the early Earth."[5] Reviewing attempts to construct RNA in the lab, James Tour likewise found that "[t]he conditions they used were cleverly selected," but in the natural world, "the controlled conditions required to generate" RNA are "painfully improbable."[6] Origin-of-life theorists Michael Robertson and Gerald Joyce even called the natural origin of RNA a "Prebiotic Chemist's Nightmare" because of "the intractable mixtures that are obtained in experiments designed to simulate the chemistry of the primitive Earth."[7] In the end, these experiments demonstrate one thing: RNA can only form by intelligent design.

The second problem is that the RNA world hypothesis is that it requires the existence of a self-replicating RNA molecule in order to get started. But this self-replicator contains a lot of biological information that is beyond the reach of chance to produce:

> The most fundamental problem with the RNA world hypothesis is its inability to explain the origin of information in the first self-replicating RNA molecule — which experts suggest would have had to be at least 100 nucleotides long, if not between 200 and 300 nucleotides in length.[10] How did the nucleotide bases in RNA become properly ordered to produce life? There are no known chemical or physical laws that can do this. To explain the ordering of nucleotides in the first self-replicating RNA molecule, origin-of-life theorists have no explanation other than blind chance. As noted, ID theorists call this obstacle the information sequence problem, but multiple mainstream theorists have also observed the great unlikelihood of naturally producing a precise RNA sequence required for replication.

Whenever I sit down to write some code or to write a blog post, I can start with one letter, then add another, then add another, until I have a functioning program, or a legible blog post. It might be possible for random chance to make a meaningful word out of 3 letters, like "the" or "hat". But it's not possible to make a self-replicating RNA molecule that way. The required sequence is just too long, and every letter has to be just right in order for it to function as a self-replicating system. The simplest self-replicating molecule is extremely complicated.

Anyway, check out the article, and if you want to read all about Walter Bradley (my role model), there is a new book out about him called "For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley" which I finished, and it was great.

Hawaiian Electric neglected wildfire risk to focus on green energy

August 21, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was reading an interesting article from J. Warner Wallace last week that he wrote for Townhall. In the article, he said that the real driver behind people turning away from truth, the big questions, religion in general, etc. was because of a desire for autonomy. People have enormous confidence about their desires, believing that following their desires is the surest way to reach happiness. But is it true?

In blue states, people consistently vote for leaders who make them feel good. Voters want to feel good, and they want to look good to other people – virtue signaling. And they are sure that feeling good and looking good will produce good results.

Hawaii is one of the bluest states in the country. There, the people consistently vote for policies that are much more progressive than the policies of those terrible red states. Policies like re-making the power grid to be driven by renewable green energy sources.

Here's what happened next, as reported by Daily Wire:

> Hawaiian Electric is under scrutiny for allegedly slow-walking modernization and repairs of its electrical grid before the fire that ripped through the island of Maui last week.
>
> Hawaiian Electric is Hawaii's principle electric utility, providing power to roughly 95% of the state. Financial disclosures and reports show the company worried about the state of its electrical grid, and specifically the risk of wildfires, but devoted resources to building out the utility's green energy network with limited action to mitigate fire risk, according to The Wall Street Journal.

In 2015, the Hawaii State Legislature amended the State's Renewable Portfolio Standards to establish the nation's first goal of 100% renewable energy:

> The focus on Hawaii's energy priorities over the past decade has been dominated by its push for green energy. The state enacted a first-in-the-country law in 2015 mandating that Hawaii's grid be powered by 100% renewable energy by 2045.
>
> In 2021, regulators finished a top-to-bottom restructuring of the regulatory framework to guide that transition, offering Hawaiian Electric large bonuses for finishing green energy projects on time, and threatening the utility with fines if it missed deadlines.
>
> […]"You have to look at the scope and scale of the transformation within [Hawaiian Electric] that was occurring throughout the system," Mina Morita, the 2011-2015 chair of the state utilities commission, told WSJ. "While there was concern for wildfire risk, politically the focus was on electricity generation."

The government, which was elected by the people, mandated that the energy company

would make going green their highest priority. Politically, the focus was on global warming alarmism. Not on lowering electricity prices for consumers. And not on protecting taxpayers from wild fires.

I had a quick look on LinkedIn at the resume of the CEO of the energy company, and she had no earned degrees in science, engineering or technology. She has a bachelors degree in accounting. Good degree, but not for the top job in energy production. Why is she the CEO of an energy production company? Will she face consequences for her failure to perform?

Teacher unions telling teachers to inject gender identity into classrooms

August 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I keep seeing LIbsOfTikTok in my Twitter feed, sharing videos posted by teachers who are advocating for pushing gender ideology in the classrooms. I used to wonder what was causing all of these teachers to sexualize children who aren't even old enough to drive a car. It turns out that those teachers are being coached by teacher unions.

Here's the story from ABC local news:

> A new report accuses the two largest teachers unions in the United States of training educators on how to include "gender identity politics" in their curriculums and classroom practices.
>
> The National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) together represent nearly 5 million public school teachers nationwide. In a report published Wednesday by the Defense of Freedom Institute (DFI), the two unions are accused of encouraging teachers to discuss gender identity and sexual orientation with students regardless of parents' wishes.
>
> The report details a July conference where AFT allegedly "coached its members on how to inject gender identity politics" into classrooms. The conference, titled the Together Educating America's Children (TEACH) conference, was comprised of sessions on "strategies to improve teaching and learning."
>
> Two of the sessions included "Affirming LGBTQIA+ Identities in and out of the Classroom" and "The TGNCNB [transgender, gender nonconforming, nonbinary] Inclusive School and Classroom," according to DFI's report.

I've blogged before about how teacher unions are HUGE supporters of the Democrat party, and they are always getting involved in politics to undermine parental rights. They don't want children to inherit a worldview from their parents.

The article notes:

> At a rally earlier this year, NEA leaders called Florida's Parental Rights in Education Act "extremist," according to DFI's report. The Florida legislation requires, among other things, that teachers in the state refrain from discussing gender identity and sexual orientation with students in third grade and younger.
>
> […]Last month, NEA issued guidance on placing "inclusive symbols" in classrooms, encouraging teachers to challenge policies prohibiting Pride flags and Black Lives Matter imagery. The guidance followed the union's inclusion of "Gender Queer" on its summer reading list, a book that has been removed from schools nationwide due to its sexually explicit contents.

When I was a young man, still in high school, I actually wanted to become an English teacher. My Dad was pushing me to go into computer science. So he enrolled me in a university course taught during evenings, by a lesbian woman. That quickly cured me of wanting to become a teacher – English departments were absolute hotbeds of progressive politics, even 25 years ago.

Open Secrets Teacher Unions

I did some searching around and found that there was no way I was going to be able to work without paying dues to the teacher unions, too. And I knew enough to know that the teacher unions were far left. I just didn't want to get roped into a situation where my income was being taxed to pay for abortion and LGBT policies. So, I decided not to become a teacher. And that was a great decision.

Mom claims she was fired by real estate broker Compass after opposing sex education

August 23, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sometimes, people ask me why I have an alias, and my first answer is that I want to be able to speak my mind without becoming a victim of the secular leftist. What might they do to me? Well, aside from the obvious – threats, vandalism, violence, theft, murder – they might also like to go to my employer and ask to have me fired. And that that actually happens a lot in America.

Here's an example of it, reported by Newsweek:

> California woman says she lost her real estate job after speaking out against a new sex education curriculum at a school board meeting.
>
> Janet Roberson, a mother of three, said she had spoken out at a meeting of the Benicia Unified School District's board on April 20 to express her concerns about the program of study.

Her employer is Compass, a real estate broker:

> Roberson said that after she spoke at the meeting in April, critics launched a campaign to get her fired from real estate broker Compass, according to a video posted on her website.
>
> […]Roberson said the treasurer of the Progressive Democrats of Benicia also contacted Compass and gave a May 1 deadline for answers to questions about Roberson's conduct.
>
> "Sure enough, like clockwork, Compass informed me that I could no longer be associated with them by her deadline date," she said in her video.
>
> "How can it be that in America, a mom who speaks at a school board meeting can be targeted and canceled, losing her livelihood?"

It appears to me as though Compass made their decision based on her personal, political or social beliefs. That's not a company for Christians and conservatives to do business with.

The Benicia Unified School District doesn't seem to be open to engaging in dialogue with parents about their programs. They don't seem to want to offer a platform to parents to speak about the school curriculum. They seem to want to refuse to hear and consider all voices when making decisions about what to teach.

It's important for Christians to understand that it's not optional for us to speak our minds, and try to influence people around us. I know so many Christians who consider it a virtue to keep their mouths shut. The trick is to make a difference without letting the intolerant, bigoted fascists of the secular left come after you. Never tell them your real name, where you live, or where you work. Don't let yourself be photographed. Don't put photographs

of yourself on the Internet. It’s really important to oppose the secular left in a disciplined way.

British nurse Lucy Letby gets life in prison for murdering 7 infants

August 24, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

People on the secular left often struggle to rationally ground basic morality. Their version of "morality" starts with their own personal autonomy – and that's absolute. Then, try to paint a portrait of themselves as "moral", despite their support for abortion, infanticide, divorce, sex-trafficking children, etc. How can you claim to be moral when your morality is "survival of the fittest"?

Here's the story of a woman who didn't take the right to life seriously – reported in Daily Wire:

> A British nurse convicted last week of murdering seven infants between 2015 and 2016 and attempting to murder six more has been sentenced to life in prison.
>
> The 33-year-old nurse, who will not be named per Daily Wire policy, became the United Kingdom's worst serial killer of babies in recent times after she was convicted in 14 out of the 22 counts she faced, People Magazine reported. On Monday, she was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.
>
> […]The nurse's trial took ten months to complete at Manchester Crown Court, with the 11-person jury failing to reach verdicts on six additional counts of attempted murder. She was also found not guilty on two counts of attempted murder.
>
> The woman, who worked as a nurse in the neonatal ward of the Countess of Chester Hospital in Chester, England, would inject air into babies' blood and stomachs, overfeed them with milk, physically assault them, and poison them with insulin, CNN reported.

If there is one thing common to every person on the secular left, it's their absolute *hatred* of being held accountable. People on the secular left hate to be judged, and they oppose all punishment for moral crimes. They feel that they should be able to do what they want, and that their own personal desires should be respected by everyone as "objective morality".

> And this woman is no exception:
>
> The nurse didn't appear for sentencing, which has led some to call for changes in law to ensure that a guilty person is present for their sentencing hearing, CNN reported. During sentencing, Justice James Goss explained that the nurse deserved life in prison because her crimes were "a cruel, calculated and cynical campaign of child murder involving the smallest and most vulnerable of children."
>
> He spoke as if the nurse were in the courtroom and ordered his remarks and all

> victim impact statements to be sent to the convicted serial killer.
>
> “There was a deep malevolence bordering on sadism. During the course of this trial you have coldly denied any responsibility for your wrongdoing. You have no remorse. There are no mitigating factors,” he said, according to CNN.

Honestly, I’m surprised to hear words like this come out of a United Kingdom judge. They’re not a country that’s known for holding evil people accountable.

I thought this part was interesting:

> Text messages and social media activity also coincided with the attacks, some of which seemed to live blog the events. This activity, according to CPS, showed the nurse had an “intrusive curiosity about the parents of babies she had harmed.”

Who knows what the motives of this woman are? There is a lot of hostility towards children out there today, especially among feminists. Many of them are bitter about being childless in their 30s. Others are committed to global warming alarmism, and believe that it hurts the planet to have children. Others are concerned about “overpopulation” – especially when people of certain races have “too many” children.

This women doesn’t have to be “evil” or “crazy”. She could just be acting rationally according to standard secular leftist beliefs. She could just be lacking any of the boundaries that come from the Judeo-Christian worldview. Those boundaries are disappearing now, so we should expect to see more secular left “morality” like this happening more and more.

California man chooses to make a baby with a progressive woman, disaster ensues

August 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, there was a time when men could be less picky with women, and everything would be fine. The woman would not turn crazy, and attack the man. The government would not step in and get involved. But today, men need to accept that times have changed. And men have to be more careful about who they marry. And the government and the courts are much more likely to step in an ruin the man's life.

Here's a story Rose sent me from Daily Wire. (By the way, she is still coughing a lot, and not ready to record part 3 of Christianity and Socialism).

Excerpt:

> A San Francisco dad is fighting a nightmarish custody battle for his toddler son, who he says is being raised "non-binary" by his mother, who claims to be genderless.
>
> Harrison Tinsley, 31, is seeking full custody of his son Sawyer, 3, who currently spends half of his time with Tinsley's ex-girlfriend, the boy's mother. Sawyer's mother, 30, uses they/them pronouns for the boy and puts him in dresses and makeup, photos provided by Tinsley appear to show. Sawyer also told his dad that his mother put him in princess shoes on a trip to Disneyland, a video of the conversation shows. Sawyer's mother may have thought about raising her son "non-binary" before he was even born. In what appears to be a Facebook post during her pregnancy, she refers to Sawyer as "my sweet baby boy or girl or neither if that's what you feel."
>
> Sawyer himself rebels against his mom and insists he is a boy, his dad says.
>
> […]Gender confusion is not Tinsley's only concern for his son — he is also concerned for the child's immediate safety.
>
> Back in 2021, Sawyer's mother was arrested and booked in jail for felony child endangerment when then-1-year-old Sawyer fell off a bed during an altercation between the mother and her roommate, police body cam footage viewed by The Daily Wire shows.
>
> The San Francisco police gave custody of Sawyer to the mother's two dads for the night and put her on a psychiatric hold at the hospital. She was ultimately not convicted of a crime.

This sounds terrible, but what can single men learn from this? Well, we recently had a story where an Army vet was charged and convicted of murder for defending himself from an Antifa terrorist who was armed with an AK-47. Why? Because this happened in Austin, TX, which is incredibly liberal. So, step one would probably be to be careful where

you live. Harrison lives in California.

Second, he shouldn't be making babies with women he's not married to. The whole point of marriage is to make sure that there has been some communication and vetting before you get into the bedroom and make babies. Marriage protects babies from parents who are only interested in fun. Babies aren't fun. That's why we used to make people commit before having them.

This, look at this woman's background. I always ask women "are your parents still married?" when taking them out on dates. It's a very important question.

Now watch this:

> The mother herself now identifies as "non-binary," although she did not when she was dating Tinsley, court documents show.

Fourth, she runs an ultra-progressive non-profit:

> LGBT issues have been a major theme in her life — she was adopted and raised by two older gay men in the Bay Area, where she still lives and runs an ultra-progressive non-profit.

What a woman does for a living is a really important clue to their personality. Don't get involved with ultra-progressive women. Recent studies show that white progressive women have extremely high rates of mental illness and drug use.

Speaking of mental illness, here's number five:

> During the psychiatric hold at the hospital, Sawyer's mother told a psychiatrist that she has borderline personality disorder, a condition that can involve impulsive and risky behavior, the psychiatrist later testified in San Francisco family court.
>
> Child Protective Services investigated the police incident and concluded that Sawyer's mother was not a safety threat to her son. Her mental health was a "complicating factor, but not a safety issue," reads the CPS report, provided by Tinsley.
>
> Sawyer's mother was on five different medications for PTSD, mood stabilization, ADHD, and anxiety at the time of the CPS investigation, the CPS report said.
>
> Sawyer's mom can be heard on the police body cam footage mentioning that she drank alcohol earlier the same day.

You can't count on government and courts to do the right thing for children. They don't see women as guilty, they don't punish them as long as they punish men, and they don't think that male leadership is good for children. ("Smash the patriarchy") This is why you don't make babies with progressive women. They will do terrible things to your children (abortion, transing, let live-in boyfriends molest them, etc.) and no one will listen to you. I blogged about a case from British Columbia, Canada, and then another case from California.

Look:

> Sawyer's pediatrician, Dr. Danielle Alkov, works at a youth gender clinic that offers hormone therapy and so-called gender-affirming surgery referrals. She testified as an expert witness in court and said she has worked with children as young as 12. She also mentioned a nearby clinic that works with children as young as 3, Sawyer's current age.
>
> The court ordered that Alkov continue to be Sawyer's primary care physician.

This part reminds me of the case from California that I mentioned, where the female judge refused to let the father present scientific evidence about the harm of transing his child:

> Tinsley's lawyer said he had planned to present scientific materials demonstrating the harm of treating Sawyer as if he had no gender, but they ran out of time in court.
>
> During that trial, Sawyer's mother said in court that she has had suicidal ideations multiple times in her life.

Also, false accusations are normally taken seriously in blue cities and blue states:

> Meanwhile, she has defamed Tinsley repeatedly, he said. Sawyer's mother has called the father of her child a rapist and even claimed Sawyer is the product of rape and that Tinsley has raped other people as well, a friend told police. She began making these allegations when Tinsley started fighting for custody, he said.

This is not the way that men should be spending their life savings:

> Tinsley said he has spent all the money he ever saved on legal bills. His mother even contributed additional money, but funds are running low, he said. He recently started a fundraiser in hopes he can afford to continue fighting for custody of his son.
>
> "I will do anything to keep my son safe and happy with who he is. I hope to inspire other parents with similar situations to be brave and speak up," Tinsley told The Daily Wire.
>
> In the meantime, Tinsley says he takes off work on the days he takes care of Sawyer, reading to him, taking him to the park, and spending as much time as possible with his young son.

My advice to men is to only have children with women who are staunch conservatives who hate feminism, CPS, public schools, divorce courts, socialism, etc. Otherwise, they are going to turn on you and hurt your children.

The poll is in: Ron DeSantis won first debate, and has the highest favorable rating

August 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I watched the first Republican primary debate. I have a definite opinion on who won. Below, I capture some clips from the debate. I also found a reliable poll about how each candidate did, and how their favorable and unfavorable numbers changed.

I come at politics from a very different place than most Americans, even the ones who agree with me on political parties. My experience with "voting" is limited to hiring new engineers. I'm a senior software engineer, and I get called into interviews to test whether applicants can actually do what they wrote on their resume. So, I ask questions that will test for that, such as "tell me about a time when you were on production support and had a P1 that lasted longer than an hour" or "tell me about a time when you to make changes to your application due to a vulnerability scan" or "tell me about how your re-write of the payment processing system complies with PCI standards". I don't want someone who was just present, I want the person who led the effort and learned the lessons.

So, I'm not interested in popular opinions or slogans. I'm looking for the story of how you solved the problem, especially if you had to push back against other team members in order to get the job done. We don't want someone who thinks too highly of themselves or just throws out cool-sounding opinions or insults. We want someone who can persuade or convince others and lead a team to a result. That is how change is driven in the real world. Not by commands, but by technical leadership – by persuading people to want to do what you want them to do.

So, with that in mind, check out these clips from the debate.

DeSantis opening speech:

On abortion: (notice how he has passed a very restrictive law in a purple state, which Trump thinks is too restrictive)

The only candidate with military service – focus on the mission, not office politics:

Would use lethal military force on drug cartels at the southern border:

Instead of expressing "future plans" that he has no experience implementing, he talks about what he learned from past achievements – this time in education policy:

The biggest issue of the election for me is the secular left weaponizing government against Christians and conservatives. And I'm looking for actions, not slick talk. DeSantis was the only candidate on the stage who had actions on this topic:

Concluding speech focuses on parent's rights:

All right, that's enough from the debate, let's take a look at the Ipsos / Washington Post poll numbers.

Here are the changes in support (how much voters are considering voting for the candidate) for people who WATCHED THE DEBATE:

- DeSantis: **67.5 %** (up from 63.0 %)
- Trump: **61.4 %** (down from 66.2 %)
- Haley: **46.7 %** (up from 30.2 %)
- Ramaswamy: **46.3 %** (up from 40.8 %)
- Scott: **43.1 %** (up from 41.1%)

So, Trump definitely lost the debate by not showing up, which I think is not what you see from "don't care, voting for Trump anyway" people on Twitter.

What is most interesting I think is the net favorable / unfavorable rating, among likely Republican primary voters who watched the debate:

- DeSantis: 72.4 % favorable vs 24.7% unfavorable
- Ramaswamy: 60.4 % favorable vs 31.8 % unfavorable
- Trump: 59.8 % favorable vs 35.6% unfavorable
- Haley: 65.5 % favorable vs 26.8 % unfavorable
- Scott: 65.3 % favorable vs 23.2 % unfavorable

Of the leading candidates, Trump has the highest unfavorable ratings, by far. To me, DeSantis is more conservative than Trump (based on achievements, not words), more disciplined than Trump in his speaking, and has more appeal to independents and suburban moms than Trump. I want to win the next election, not be entertained by zingers and tweets.

So, that's where we stand right now. I am hoping that they will focus on only a few debate participants next debate: the top 4 only. And that we will see longer timed speeches, with no audience interruptions. They really need to have longer-form debates, instead of 1-minute sound bites.

Related posts

- Video and outline: Tucker Carlson interviews Ron DeSantis on Blaze TV
- Mamas for DeSantis: Casey DeSantis champions parent's rights at the national level
- high tourism and low unemployment
- six-week abortion ban
- no sex-reassignment surgeries on kids
- no pronouns required in Florida schools
- no kids at drag queen shows
- pre-game prayer is allowed
- universal school choice
- making collection of union dues optional for teachers
- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts
- elect conservatives to school boards

- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women’s sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 37: Are All Religions the Same, Part 5

August 26, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 37 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose continue our discussion on how to choose a worldview. We discuss a shocking example of a major world religion which is falsified by a historical fact that is widely accepted and well-supported. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 37:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose continue their discussion about whether all religions are equally valid paths to God. Our victim this time is Islam, which denies the crucifixion of Jesus. We explain why the crucifixion is a virtually undeniable fact of history. We discuss how historians evaluate reports from ancient history. We review the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. Finally, we respond to objections to objective truth from pluralists. This is the fifth episode in a five part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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New study: more sexual experience does not make you a better relationship partner

August 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Today, most young people think that they are building up their relationship resumes by having casual sex. They think that they are elevating their value proposition to a marriage partner by having casual sex, and all that comes with it – the lack of emotional bond, the lack of commitment, the lack of partnership, the painful break-ups, the decline of trust, etc. But what does the research say?

Here's the report from Institute for Family Studies about the new study.

Methodology:

> Our findings are based on a new study using data from The National Couples and Pornography Study. The data sample was collected independently by Qualtrics from their existing data panel during 2020. It consists of 3,750 individuals in committed couple relationships, including 1,942 married adults, on whom we focused in this study. The demographically diverse sample was recruited from across the U.S. based on quotas for age, race, education level, and geographic region.
>
> We examined the effects of sexual experience on marriage across four married groups:

- > ***Group 1: Inexperienced*** – These are individuals who were sexually inexperienced prior to marriage and who have only had sex with their spouse (19.5% of the sample).
- > ***Group 2: Less Experienced*** – These were individuals with between 2 to 4 lifetime sexual partners before marriage, which is less sexual experience than the average adult in the sample (33.4% of the sample).
- > ***Group 3: More Experienced*** – These are individuals who reported a total number of 5 to 9 lifetime sexual partners. This is the group that captures the average person in the sample (24.4% of the sample).
- > ***Group 4: Highly Experienced*** – The final group includes those who reported 10 or more total lifetime sexual partners. This group made up 22.7% of the sample.

Now let's look at the findings, starting with relationship satisfaction:

> **Sexually inexperienced couples have the highest levels of relationship satisfaction.**

> While over 1 in 5 spouses in the Inexperienced group were likely to report a very high level of relationship satisfaction, only 1 in 7 of those in the More Experienced group were likely to report the same level of satisfaction. This dropped even further for those in the Highly Experienced group, with less than 1 in 10 of spouses reporting that they are very satisfied with their marriage. Thus, sexually inexperienced spouses are more than twice as likely to report that they are highly satisfied with their marriages than are spouses with high levels of sexual experience (*see Figure 1*).

And the findings about marital stability:

> **Having multiple sexual partners before marriage is strongly associated with lower marital stability.**
>
> Similar to other studies, we found that sexual experience prior to marriage is correlated with lower stability in marriage and a greater likelihood of divorce. Specifically, we found that inexperienced men and women who have only had sex with their spouse have a nearly 45% chance of reporting a very high level of relationship stability in their marriage, whereas only 25% of married individuals with 5 to 9 lifetime sex partners, and only 14% of married individuals with 10 or more lifetime sex partners report a similarly high level of relationship stability.

And the findings about sexual satisfaction and emotional connection:

> **Spouses who have only had sex with their current spouse have the highest levels of sexual satisfaction and emotional connection in their marriage.**
>
> Nearly 1 in 5 married men and women who have only had sex with their spouse report that they are “very satisfied” with multiple aspects of their sexual relationship. In comparison, only 1 in 10 married men and women who are “highly sexually experienced” (meaning they had 10 or more sexual partners before marriage) report similar levels of sexual satisfaction (*see Figure 3*). Also, nearly 80% of married individuals who were sexually inexperienced before marriage report the highest level of emotional closeness in their marriage, which is more than 20% higher than individuals who have had multiple sexual partners.

Now let me give my comments about this.

I follow a lot of content that features young people talking about sex in relationships. The dominant view among young people is that they are becoming better relationship partners when they engage in casual sex. They say that they are learning about their own needs, and about what to look in other people so that their needs will be met. They think that more casual sex is like more work experience on a resume, and that this is what marriage-minded people of the opposite sex will be impressed with. They think that their Sexual Revolution approach to sex is going to lead to more stability, more relationship satisfaction, more emotional connection, and more sexual satisfaction.

So the first thing is that the research falsifies this. And you can see how this works by just thinking about the break-ups. Break-ups have the effect of making people look for the exits in relationships. Instead of committing first, and then taking responsibility to build and maintain the relationship, they are looking to get out of it to avoid being hurt. And they are always trying to make sure that their needs are met, and avoiding committing too much to the other person. They neither know nor care what the other person is trying to achieve, and they aren't engaged in helping them to do that.

Also, consider that most young people are not forming their beliefs with knowledge that is likely to make them a better person. Concepts that are familiar to experienced Christians such as forgiveness and self-sacrificial love are nowhere in their worldviews. Biblical Christianity provides a rational basis for loving a spouse well, even when you don't feel like it. Which is very useful in a marriage. They have a pretty self-serving view Christianity, something like "don't judge" and "listen for the voice of God telling you his plan to make you happy".

Instead their views are being formed by radical feminism, popular culture, celebrity worship, materialism, an almost fanatical focus on judging people by appearances, being led by feelings and peer-approval, etc. They expect to have stability and quality in a relationship where skills like forgiveness, self-denial, delayed gratification, planning, achieving goals together, etc. are critical. Imagine wanting to retire early. Is someone on the path to early retirement if they are guided entirely by their feelings? If they do only what feels good "in the moment"? If none of the peers who influence them have achieved this goal? Today, relationships are just a case of the blind leading the blind. It doesn't work.

What useful things can Christians learn by studying metaphysics?

August 28, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a little experience with metaphysics – just what I learned from a few lectures by the wonderful Christian professor Dr. J. P. Moreland. What I remember from those lectures is that metaphysics can be useful for defending the reality of non-physical minds, and dogmatic skepticism is self-refuting. But I found a nice, easy article by Tyson James to give us a real overview of metaphysics.

His article is on Worldview Bulletin.

He starts like this:

> One day, a close church friend asked me, "What is metaphysics?" Dr. Paul Gould notes in a previous article that local bookstores often locate the subject of metaphysics somewhere around tarot cards and astrology. It may be surprising, then, for some to learn that metaphysics is actually the name of a very important field in philosophy.
>
> So, what is metaphysics to philosophers and what in the world does it have to do with Christianity? These are actually very important questions, since metaphysics is a subject which touches on some of the most fundamental elements of the Christian faith.

So, I looked down the list and he has these:

- Is there a first cause?
- Do we have free will?
- Are there any unchanging truths?
- What are space and time?
- How do things which change maintain their identity over time?
- Is the physical universe all there is?
- Are objective morals real?

This is what he has to say about the one I remember:

> How do things which change maintain their identity over time? Christians believe that the same person who was a sinner may also accept Christ, be saved from his sins, and enjoy eternity with God. But some people say that there is no "self" which maintains identity over time, that we're just collections of atoms which change every time an atom is gained, lost, or rearranged. So, answering this question is important for showing that the same person who is lost without Jesus may be saved and restored in Jesus.

As a software engineer from an immigrant family, reading philosophy is as painful to me

as a root canal. I just keep thinking “why do I have to know this if no one will pay me to know this?” But I like to win apologetics battles more, so I have forced myself to learn a little about some of the topics in his list. Every good Christian apologist knows how to defend philosophical attacks, like the problem of evil, religious pluralism, postmodernism, physicalism of minds, the hiddenness of God, rational unbelief, animal pain, etc. And we know how to go on the attack with objective morality, mind-body dualism, persistent identity through time, free will, etc. Not to mention first cause arguments, but I try to only think about that as a scientific problem. Metaphysics is useful for many of these tasks.

Anyway, metaphysics. Let me find you something useful to teach you some metaphysics. Here is a good short essay from Dr. John Depoe, who defends the reality of the non-physical minds, which is also known as “substance dualism”, because there are two substances – your body and your mind.

He writes about the persistent identity argument for the soul:

> Another argument supporting substance dualism is that one maintains personal identity through change. Even though one is continuously going through physical changes and experiencing different mental states, a person continues to be the same person. If persons were identical with their physical parts or mental states, they would cease to be the same persons as these changes occurred. Therefore, it is necessary to postulate an immaterial, substantial self that endures through change.
>
> Suppose that someone believes that people do not maintain identity through change and concludes that the previous argument for substance dualism fails. This denial of personal identity through change, I contend, presents untenable difficulties. First, there is one’s own awareness of being the same person through change. Moreover, if one is not literally the same person through these changes, how can a person maintain long-term goals and desires?

If you are your body, and your body is always changing, then you aren’t the same person now as 5 minutes ago.

There are many other good arguments for real non-physical minds. First of all, we know about the existence of at least one non-physical mind. God. That’s who brings the physical universe into being. He’s not physical. And there is also our first-person awareness of our mental state, our experience of consciousness, our ability to think about other things (“intentionality”), and our experience of free will.

So you see, this is all very practical, even if it frightens my practical West Indian parents if I talk about it too much.

Reasonable Faith podcast: the real consequences of atheism

August 29, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you love to listen to the Please Convince Me podcast, as I do, then you know that in a recent episode, J. Warner Wallace mentioned a blog post on an atheistic blog that clearly delineated the implications of an atheistic worldview. He promised he was going to write about it and link to the post, and he has now done so.

The latest episode of Reasonable Faith discusses the post mentioned in the episode.

Details:

> An atheist blogger gets brutally honest about his view and tells other atheists to quit fooling themselves!

The MP3 file is here on the Reasonable Faith web site. (23 minutes)

Kevin Harris (KH) and William Lane Craig: (WLC) discuss this post on the Wintery Knight blog.

Summary:

- KH: New Atheists always try to portray themselves as having meaningful lives, and good without God
- WLC: Exactly, they would say you don't nee God to do positive things, so God makes no difference
- KH: but what happens when an atheist explains the real consequences of atheism?

KH then reads a quote by an atheist blogger:

> "[To] all my Atheist friends.
>
> Let us stop sugar coating it. I know, it's hard to come out and be blunt with the friendly Theists who frequent sites like this. However in your efforts to "play nice" and "be civil" you actually do them a great disservice.
>
> We are Atheists. We believe that the Universe is a great uncaused, random accident. All life in the Universe past and future are the results of random chance acting on itself. While we acknowledge concepts like morality, politeness, civility seem to exist, we know they do not. Our highly evolved brains imagine that these things have a cause or a use, and they have in the past, they've allowed life to continue on this planet for a short blip of time. But make no mistake: all our dreams, loves, opinions, and desires are figments of our primordial imagination. They are fleeting electrical signals that fire across our synapses for a moment in time. They served some purpose in the past. They got us here. That's it. All human achievement and plans for the future are the result of some ancient, evolved brain and accompanying chemical reactions that once served a survival

> purpose. Ex: I'll marry and nurture children because my genes demand reproduction, I'll create because creativity served a survival advantage to my ancient ape ancestors, I'll build cities and laws because this allowed my ape grandfather time and peace to reproduce and protect his genes. My only directive is to obey my genes. Eat, sleep, reproduce, die. That is our bible.
>
> We deride the Theists for having created myths and holy books. We imagine ourselves superior. But we too imagine there are reasons to obey laws, be polite, protect the weak etc. Rubbish. We are nurturing a new religion, one where we imagine that such conventions have any basis in reality. Have they allowed life to exist? Absolutely. But who cares? Outside of my greedy little gene's need to reproduce, there is nothing in my world that stops me from killing you and reproducing with your wife. Only the fear that I might be incarcerated and thus be deprived of the opportunity to do the same with the next guy's wife stops me. Some of my Atheist friends have fooled themselves into acting like the general population. They live in suburban homes, drive Toyota Camrys, attend school plays. But underneath they know the truth. They are a bag of DNA whose only purpose is to make more of themselves. So be nice if you want. Be involved, have polite conversations, be a model citizen. Just be aware that while technically an Atheist, you are an inferior one. You're just a little bit less evolved, that's all. When you are ready to join me, let me know, I'll be reproducing with your wife.
>
> I know it's not PC to speak so bluntly about the ramifications of our beliefs, but in our discussions with Theists we sometimes tip toe around what we really know to be factual. Maybe it's time we Atheists were a little more truthful and let the chips fall where they may. At least that's what my genes are telling me to say."

Back to the summary:

- WLC: this quote explains that on naturalism, moral values and duties are just the by products of biological evolution
- WLC: he is deriding other atheists who put on a civil facade, and that the superior atheist is the one who acts openly like an atheist
- KH: he wants atheists to stop acting like Christians (being outwardly nice)
- WLC: there is no evidence for atheism presented in the quote, so why should he think that morality and meaning are illusory
- WLC: he is saying that morality is not real because our beliefs form by Darwinian evolution
- WLC: even if those beliefs formed that way, that doesn't mean that our moral judgments are not true (genetic fallacy)
- KH: the moral judgments are only false if naturalism is true, and he didn't defend that
- WLC: if objective moral values and duties exist, then naturalism is false

KH quotes Richard Dawkins:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.

More:

- WLC: yes, that's his view, but what reason is there to accept the naturalism that requires all that?
- KH: yet he pushes various moral judgments
- WLC: yes, in his book, he pushes a bunch of moral judgments in his book, all of which are invalid on naturalism?
- KH: he wants humans to choose to show pity, even though nature is pitiless
- WLC: he thinks that these altruistic behaviors can emerge because humans are sociable beings
- WLC: but this "herd morality" is just an evolved convention, there are not objective moral truths

KH quotes Will Provine:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

More:

- WLC: it's his naturalism that is causing him to say that, theistic evolution is compatible with morality
- WLC: naturalism is what conflicts with objective morality, science doesn't invalidate objective morality
- KH: atheists deny objective meaning, but atheists can invent subjective meanings and purposes
- WLC: yes, but these invented subjective meanings and purposes are illusory
- WLC: I don't think that anyone can live happily by think

KH quotes Michael Ruse:

> "The position of the modern evolutionist is that humans have an awareness of morality because such an awareness of biological worth. Morality is a biological

> adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth. Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, ethics is illusory. I appreciate when someone says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction, . . . and any deeper meaning is illusory."

- WLC: again, science is neutral against morality, it's the philosophy of naturalism that is inconsistent with objective morality
- KH: just because theists and atheists get along, it's still important to remind atheists of the consequences of their view
- WLC: I do that in my work on the absurdity of life without God, and in the moral argument for God's existence
- WLC: I love it when they say things like this, because it supports the first premise in Craig's moral argument
- KH: even if the evidence were 50-50, why would atheists lean towards the meaningless view
- WLC: yes, if the evidence is 50-50, then people ought to prefer life, significance and moral value
- KH: you're not saying that people ought to the believe that in theism because it's more palatable to us
- WLC: right, I am saying that naturalism should be rejected on the evidence, including our experience of moral values

If you like this podcast, the RSS feed for the Reasonable Faith podcast is here. I subscribe to it. If you liked the post they were discussing, please click here and share and/or tweet it.

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer defends belief in God using the progress of science

August 30, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer is my favorite defender of Christianity these days. His first book covered the origin of life. His second book covered the sudden origin of body plans in the fossil record. And his third book covered the origin of the universe and fine-tuning. In this post, we'll see a recent popular-level article he wrote for The Federalist, and 6 new short videos he made for Prager University.

Here is latest article from my favorite news source – The Federalist. He explains how scientific discoveries provide evidence for a Creator of the universe:

> From the first astronomical investigations about the early history of the universe, light, and other forms of radiant energy, have yielded the most important clues about cosmic origins. During the 1920s, astronomers discovered that the wavelengths of light coming from distant galaxies were stretched out, or "red-shifted," as if the galaxies were moving away from us. Just as sound coming from a train whistle drops in pitch as the result of the sound waves being stretched out as the train recedes, light coming from a distant galaxy changes color (becomes more red) as light waves are elongated as galaxies move away from Earth.
>
> Soon after the discovery of the red shift, Belgian priest-physicist Georges Lemaître and Caltech astronomer Edwin Hubble showed that galaxies farther away from Earth were receding faster than those close at hand. That suggested a spherical expansion of the universe in all directions of space like a balloon inflating from a singular explosive beginning—from a "Big Bang."
>
> Then in 1965, physicists discovered a different kind of light they thought provided further evidence of the Big Bang. While working at Bell Laboratories in New Jersey, physicists Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson inadvertently discovered an extremely low-energy radiation on their highly sensitive, large antennas. This radiant energy, now known as the Cosmic Background Radiation, is postulated to be a remnant of the earliest moments after the Big Bang when the universe was immensely hot and densely compacted.

Those are the 3 most common pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning – and therefore, a Cosmic Beginner. And this evidence is likely to be enhanced by NASA's newest telescope, which Dr. Meyer talks about:

> [O]n December 22 NASA will launch a new satellite capable of seeing the first starlight from just after the Big Bang—a light, and an event, that tell us about the creation of the universe and, in their own ways, reveal God to the world.
>
> NASA's new James Webb Space Telescope will be carried into space this week from French Guiana on the back of an Ariane 5 rocket. The $10 billion, 21-foot

> telescope features a massive umbrella-like sun shield. It also boasts 15 times the range of motion and six times the light-gathering capability of the Hubble Space Telescope—NASA's next best instrument for peering deep into space and far back in time.
>
> The light that NASA's new telescope seeks to detect comes, not from those very earliest moments after the beginning, but from the first stars and galaxies that formed an estimated several hundred thousand years later. Detecting that light will nevertheless provide further confirmation of an expanding universe.
>
> Since the new telescope can detect infrared light—invisible light with extremely long wave-lengths—it can establish whether the most distant galaxies exhibit the amount of red shift that astronomers expect given the Big Bang.
>
> […]This additional evidence of an expanding universe would further deepen the mystery associated with the Big Bang and add weight to a growing science-based "God hypothesis." If the physical universe of matter, energy, space, and time had a beginning—as observational astronomy and theoretical physics increasingly suggest—it becomes extremely difficult to conceive of any physical or materialistic cause for the origin of the universe. After all, it was matter and energy that first came into existence at the Big Bang. Before that, no matter or energy—no physics—would have yet existed that could have caused the universe to begin.
>
> Instead, whatever caused the universe to originate must not have been material and must exist beyond space and time. It must further have been capable of initiating a great change of state, from nothing to everything that exists. Such considerations have led other scientists—former Massachusetts Institute of Technology physicist Gerald Schroeder and the late Caltech astrophysicist Allan Sandage, for example—to posit an external creator as the best explanation for the origin of the universe as revealed by modern cosmology.

This new telescope creates an interesting situation for Christians and atheists. Christians are excited about this telescope, and anxious to get back the results that will confirm a supernatural Creator. Atheists are nervous about this telescope. They are committed to an eternally existing universe. One that doesn't implicate any kind of supernatural first cause of the natural world. If the universe has a beginning, then by definition, the cause of the universe *must be* supernatural and eternal. Because it existed causally prior to the beginning of the universe. It is not material, because it created matter. It is not in time, because it created the physical universe that marks the passage of time.

Anyway, to share this information, Dr. Meyer has created six new short videos for Prager University. I've embedded the 6 videos below, and each title is a link to Prager University where you can find a transcript. These are perfect for busy people to get the big picture.

1. ARE RELIGION AND SCIENCE IN CONFLICT?

2. SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE FOR GOD AND WHY IT MATTERS

3. HOW DID THE UNIVERSE BEGIN?

4. ALIENS, THE MULTIVERSE, OR GOD?

5. DNA AND THE EVIDENCE FOR INTELLIGENT DESIGN

6. EVOLUTION: BACTERIA TO BEETHOVEN

If you're looking for a longer lecture, delivered to an audience of students, this one from 2015 is 95 minutes long, and has over 900,000 views:

What I'd like to see is parents and pastors stop worrying about how Christians feel,and whether we are like. Step one of being a Christian is knowing and showing that God exists. It's not about feelings, community or peer approval. This is not Disney. This is not romance novels. What we need is young Christians who can have productive conversations about Christianity. And those conversations are easy – if we are trained in the mainstream science that confirms the existence of the supernatural Creator / Designer.

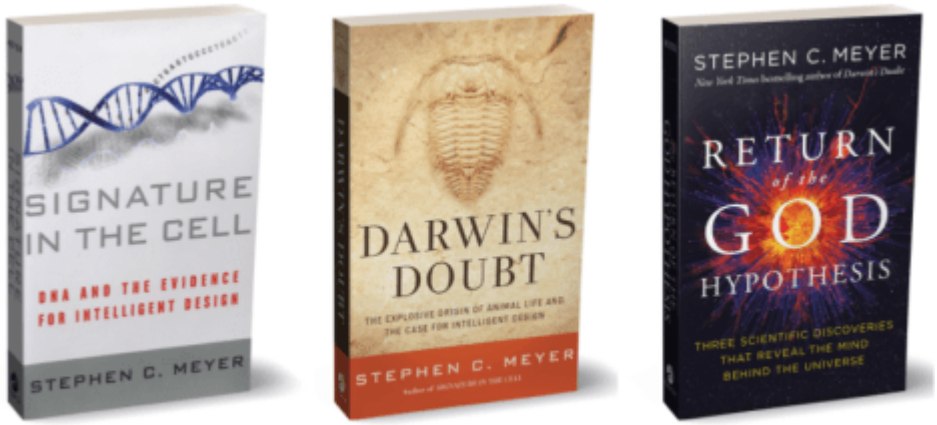

Stephen C Meyer books

American Library Association president wants libraries to stock LGBT porn

August 31, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A useful thing about getting older is learning which groups in America are conservative and which ones are leftist. For example, lawyers, teachers, school boards tend to be leftist. Certainly teacher unions are leftist, judging from their political donations to Democrats. Librarians also tend to be leftist. They tend to champion secular left values to kids, against the wishes of parents.

Here's an article from The Federalist that discusses a new report about the goals of the American Library Association's president, Emily Drabinski:

> The American Accountability Foundation, a conservative nonprofit, published a video and memo this month compiling radical quotes from Emily Drabinski, the president of the powerful American Library Association (ALA), a nonprofit that receives some of its money from member libraries, many of which are taxpayer-funded. The ALA, the oldest and biggest library association boasting nearly 50,000 members, coordinates programs at local libraries across America.
>
> The report documents Drabinski, a self-described lesbian Marxist, attacking conservatives and parents as "far right, white supremacist, fascist," an "angry white mob," and the "Christo-fascist right."
>
> Being a Marxist, Drabinski said, is "very much who I am and shapes a lot of how I think about social change." She has criticized the idea of "gender as a binary system with only two acceptable gender markers" and championed LGBT books in children's sections. Drabinski, who supports drag queen story hours, also whined in a 2013 academic paper that religious books under the Dewey Decimal System are "overwhelmingly Christian" and present heterosexuality as "normative."
>
> […]Libraries are "good places that do all kinds of things that people on the right don't like," Drabinski said on the "Citations Needed" podcast in March, according to the report.

Anyone who wants to disagree with Drabinski about using libraries to do things that people on the right don't like is typically called a "book banner" – someone who likes to ban books. That's what people on the secular left like to when parents express their desire for their children to learn computer science, instead of women's studies, gay studies, Marxist studies, etc. I prefer that libraries stock "Code Complete, Second Edition" by Steve McConnell, instead of "Why your feelings determine your gender". And that makes me a book banner, according to the secular left.

It's too bad that Drabinski never studied anything useful, like computer science. Computer science is harder than "library science", but it would probably have thought her

how to think critically, how to solve problems in the real world, and how to think through her beliefs rationally. As it stands, we just need to understand that secular leftists like her are opposed to parents, and they should be kept away from children. They are dangerous to children.

Personally, I would just just privatize all the libraries, and force them to appeal to customers if they want to get paid. As long as they are getting taxpayer money, they can do as they please. No more student loans for non-STEM degrees. No more public sector unions. No more taxpayer-funding of the secular left. Instead, we need to privatize everything, give parents more control of their children's education, and people who want to work in schools should have to complete 5 years in the private sector, first.

Testing drug decriminalization policies in Oregon and Portugal

September 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Libertarians generally favor relaxing criminal laws. They want to eliminate capital punishment (which deters violent crime). They are pro-choice on abortion. They want to decriminalize sex work of all kinds. And they want to decriminalize highly-addictive hard drugs. Let's take a look at that last one and see if it's produced results.

Here's Reason magazine writing in August 2021. They are far left / libertarian on social issues:

> In 1973, Oregon became the first state to decriminalize marijuana use, setting in motion a movement that has unraveled much of the disastrous U.S. drug war—with far-reaching consequences.
>
> Today, Oregon is once again at the vanguard of reform: In February, it enacted Measure 110, a law ending prison and jail sentences for all types of drug use and possession, whether it be cocaine, meth, heroin, or psychedelics.
>
> […]Haven Wheelock, who runs a needle exchange in Portland called Outside In, says delaying decriminalization would have been morally unacceptable.
>
> […]Wheelock says that even if Oregon's decriminalization gets off to a bumpy start, in no small part because the pandemic has exacerbated substance abuse problems nationwide, that Oregon voters have made the right choice.
>
> "I think we're going to see systems improve. I think we're going to see people have access to care that they currently don't have access to. I think we're going to see less people getting saddled with convictions that harm them for the rest of their lives. And to me, all of that is a win," says Wheelock.

And, here is the Cato Institute, a libertarian advocacy group, crowing happily about legalizing hard drugs:

> In November 2020, Oregon voters passed Measure 110, which decriminalized the possession for personal use of small amounts of all drugs, including cocaine, heroin, LSD, methamphetamine, and oxycodone. Oregon is the only U.S. state to have implemented this policy.
>
> […]The problem, however, is that 110 did not go far enough.
>
> While 110 eliminated serious penalties for personal use, it did not legalize production and sale of drugs.

When you make something legal, more people use it. And that's exactly what happened.

Libertarians seem to think that when you legalize something addictive, then no one will commit any crimes to feed their addictions. Of course people will be able to keep their

jobs with a cocaine addiction. And OF COURSE cocaine addicts will be able to make enough money legally from that job to support their habit. Libertarians think that crime will go down, because people with addictions can just work at their white collar jobs, and pay for their cocaine. No problem.

So, what happened next? Something that was a great surprise to libertarians.

The far-left The Atlantic noted:

> But three years later, with rising overdoses and delays in treatment funding, even some of the measure's supporters now believe that the policy needs to be changed. In a nonpartisan statewide poll earlier this year, more than 60 percent of respondents blamed Measure 110 for making drug addiction, homelessness, and crime worse. A majority, including a majority of Democrats, said they supported bringing back criminal penalties for drug possession.

Libertarians like to point to Portugal as a model for successful drug decriminalization, but again it's just wishing and hoping.

The far-left Washington Post explains:

> Portugal decriminalized all drug use, including marijuana, cocaine and heroin, in an experiment that inspired similar efforts elsewhere, but now police are blaming a spike in the number of people who use drugs for a rise in crime. In one neighborhood, state-issued paraphernalia — powder-blue syringe caps, packets of citric acid for diluting heroin — litters sidewalks outside an elementary school.
>
> […]A newly released national survey suggests the percent of adults who have used illicit drugs increased to 12.8 percent in 2022, up from 7.8 in 2001, though still below European averages. Portugal's prevalence of high-risk opioid use is higher than Germany's, but lower than that of France and Italy. But even proponents of decriminalization here admit that something is going wrong.
>
> Overdose rates have hit 12-year highs and almost doubled in Lisbon from 2019 to 2023. Sewage samples in Lisbon show cocaine and ketamine detection is now among the highest in Europe, with elevated weekend rates suggesting party-heavy usage. In Porto, the collection of drug-related debris from city streets surged 24 percent between 2021 and 2022, with this year on track to far outpace the last. Crime — including robbery in public spaces — spiked 14 percent from 2021 to 2022, a rise police blame partly on increased drug use.

Going back to Oregon, the article also notes that "overdoses this year in Portland, the state's largest city, have surged 46 percent."

I think that libertarians are great on fiscal policy. But I don't think we need to listen to them on social policy. Or on foreign policy, but that's for another post.

William Lane Craig debates Daniel Came: Does God exist?

September 2, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

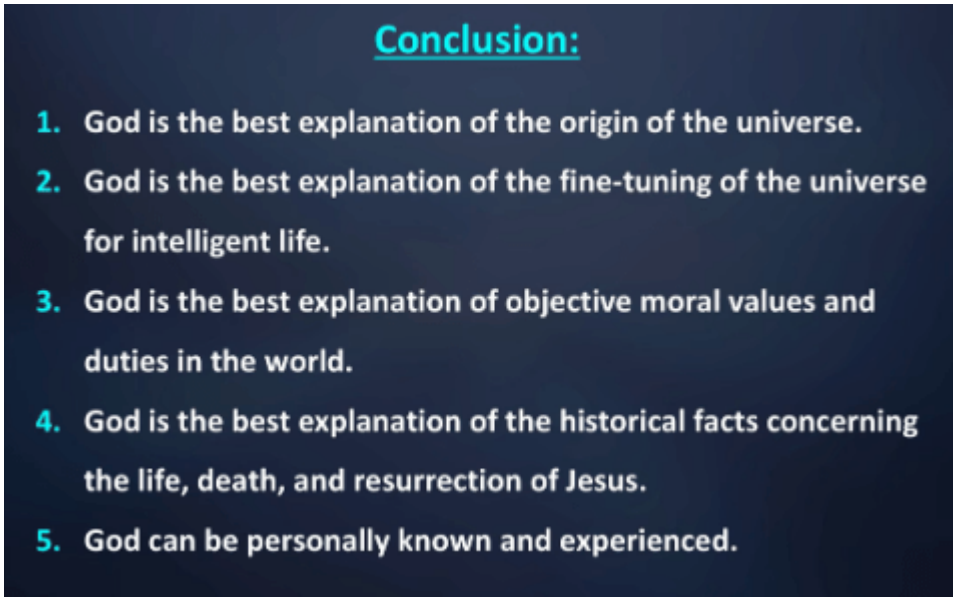

Dr. Craig's opening speech summary slide

The video of the debate was posted by ReasonableFaith.org – Dr. Craig's organization. This debate occurred in March 2017 at the University of Dublin, in Ireland.

The video: (91 minutes)

My non-snarky summary is below.

Dr. Craig's opening speech

Two claims:

1. There are good reasons to think that theism is true.
2. There are not comparably good reasons to think that atheism is true.

Five reasons for God's existence:

1. The beginning of the universe
– actual infinite past is mathematically impossible
– BGV theorem: any universe that is on balance expanding in its history (like ours) cannot be past eternal

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– slight changes to quantities and constants prevent a universe from supporting complex embodied life
– the multiverse response of atheists conflicts with observations, e.g. the Boltzmann Brains problem

3. Objective moral values
– God's existence is required to ground objective moral values and duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus

– there are good reasons to accept the most widely accepted facts about the historical Jesus (empty tomb, appearances, early widespread belief in the resurrection)
– the best explanation of these minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

5. Experience God directly
– in the absence of any defeaters to belief in God, a person can experience God directly

Dr. Daniel Came's opening speech

1. The hiddenness of God
– if God wants a personal relationship with us, and a relationship with God would be the greatest good for us
– God ought to reveal himself to us, but he does not reveal himself to many people, the "non-resistant non-believers"

2. The inductive problem of evil
– many evil events occur that are pointless – there is no morally sufficient reason why God would allow them to occur
– examples: animal suffering, children born with disease, tsunamis
– the theistic response to this is that humans are not in a position to know whether there are morally sufficient reasons, due to our limitations of knowing the consequences
– but this ripple effect defense has 4 possible outcomes, 3 of which don't do the job of justifying

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

1. The hiddenness of God
– God's goal is not to make his existence known, but to draw them into a love relationship
– it's speculative that overt displays of God's existence would draw people to him in a love relationship, they might resent his bullying
– atheist would have to prove that God could draw more people into a love relationship with him by revealing himself more overtly

2. The inductive problem of evil
– as humans, we are not in a position to know for certain that any apparently pointless evil really is pointless
– William Alston article: 6 limitations of human knowing make it impossible to judge that an evil is actually "pointless"
– Dr. Came says that there are 4 possibilities for the ripple effects, and since 3 are bad, it's likely that there are not morally sufficient reasons for a apparently pointless evil
– it is logically fallacious to assert probability conclusions without knowing the probabilities of those 4 options
– there is actually an argument from evil: since the problem of evil requires an objective standard of good and evil by which to measure, and God is the only possible ground of objective morality, then pressing the problem of evil actually requires the atheist to assume God, in order to ground this objective moral standard

Dr. Came's first rebuttal

3. Objective moral values

– there are naturalistic theories of moral realism where objective moral duties and objective moral values exist in a naturalistic universe
– I'm not saying that any of them are correct, but there are many theories about object morality in a naturalistic universe

There are naturalistic theories for all of the 5 arguments that Dr. Craig presented. It is Dr. Craig's responsibility to present those naturalistic theories and prove that they are not as good as his explanations. I'm not going to defend (or even name!) a single naturalistic theory for any of these 5 arguments by Dr. Craig.

Dr. Craig's explanations for the 5 evidences he gave can't be admitted, because we have to know how God did something *in naturalistic terms* before we can know that God did it supernaturally. Explanations are only valid if they are naturalistic.

1. The beginning of the universe
– naturalism explains how the universe expands after it came into being, so that explains how it came into being
– the God explanation, that God created the universe out of nothing, is not admissible, because it is not naturalistic
– how does God, as an unembodied mind interact with the physical world?
– the only agency that we know about is human agents, and we have bodies, so how could God perform actions without having a body?

The theistic hypothesis does not make any predictions, but naturalism makes lots of testable predictions. God could do anything, so he is not constrained and is therefore untestable. We can't infer God as an explanation in principle because we can't predict what is more probable if God exists than if he does not.

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the university was not set up to make embodied intelligence plausible, because the vast majority of the universe is hostile to life
– there are models of the multiverse that escape the Boltzmann Brains problem that Dr. Craig raised

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

Some of Dr. Craig's arguments are deductive (e.g. – the beginning of the universe, objective moral values), so that the conclusion follows from the premises if the premises are true. The resurrection passes the standard tests for historical explanations.

1. The beginning of the universe
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for an ultimate beginning of the universe

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for a design of the universe to support life
– he has to prove that intelligences has to be attached to bodies
– human beings are non-physical minds united to physical bodies
– naturalistic attempts to explain mental operations fail

– the arguments *prove* that unembodied minds exist
– the vast expanse of the universe is required in order to form the galaxies, stars and heavy elements needed for complex life
– why expect that the entire universe should be small, or that life would be everywhere?
– a non-fine-tuned world is more likely in the multiverse, and in a multiverse, we are more likely to have a Boltzmann brain world than a world with complex, embodied life
– Dr. Came has not advanced any naturalistic explanation for the fine-tuning

3. Objective moral values
– non-theistic ethical theories cannot account for the ontological foundations of objective moral values and duties
– atheistic theories of moral realism simply assume objective moral values out of thin air
– it is especially hard to find any basis for objective moral duties in the absence of God

Dr. Came's second rebuttal

5. Religious experience
– Dr. Craig should not bring up religious experience in a debate where arguments and evidence are central
– people who have dreams, hallucinations and psychotic delusions could appeal to religious experience
– religious experience is by no means universal, and it is possible to doubt it

3. Objective moral values
– there are lots of atheists who hold to objective moral values
– Dr. Craig has to explain how God grounds objective moral values and duties
– Dr. Craig has to explain why atheist moral realist theories don't work to ground objective moral values and duties

1. The beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig claims that something can't come from nothing, that's not an argument
– there are numerous models that don't require an absolute beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig cites the BGV theorem, but Guth (one of the authors) says that only the inflation has a beginning, not the whole universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion

1. The beginning of the universe
– on theism, there is an efficient cause, but no material cause, for the origin of the universe
– on atheism, there is neither an efficient cause nor a material cause, for the origin of the universe: that's worse!
– if he thinks that there are models of the universe that don't require a beginning, then let him name a viable eternal model of the universe
– he never refuted the mathematical argues against an infinite past

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– nothing to refute

3. Objective moral values

– God is a better ground for morality than humans, because he is ultimate, and not contingent and arbitrary
– God is a being who is worthy of worship, and therefore command his creatures with moral duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus
– nothing to refute

5. Religious experience
– only justified because there are no defeaters to it

1. The hiddenness of God
– atheist has to show that if God's existence were more obvious, that it would result in more people being drawn to him

2. The inductive problem of evil
– Dr. Came's argument was logically fallacious, and makes errors in probability theory

Dr. Came's conclusion

Sometimes, people can't prove something, but lack of evidence is a justification for doubting it, e.g. – werewolves.

If none of Craig's arguments work, then it follows that it is not rational to believe that God exists, and it is rational to believe that God does not exist.

Atheists shouldn't have a burden of proof for what they know, only theists have a burden of proof for what they know.

My thoughts

One quick point. If life were common everywhere then atheists would infer that God wasn't involved in it. Period. "Life is everywhere, so it's common, why do we need a designer?" they'd say. I agree with Dr. Came about denouncing religious experience in a formal debate. I don't like when Dr. Craig brings this up, but I see why he does it – he's an evangelist, and that's a good thing, too. I just worry about how it looks to atheists, although it's good for sincere seekers. I'm not the one on the stage, though, Dr. Craig is.

I think the point about more overt revealing by God would annoy people and make them turn away. Think of how gay people respond to the suggestion that there is anything wrong with them, with rage, vandalism, threats, coercion, attempts to get you to lose your job and business, and using government as a weapon to fine and imprison you. It's really obvious to me that more God does not mean more *love* of God. For those who don't want God, the hiddenness is respect for their choice to put pleasure above the search for truth. (I mean the gay activists – I have great sympathy for people who struggle with same-sex unwanted attractions because they were impacted by a failed bond with their parent of the same sex as they are).

Whenever I meet people like Dr. Came, I always urge them to keep investigating and pursuing truth, because they will find it if they are sincerely seeking after God. Some atheists do sincerely seek God, but I don't know any who haven't found him. I'm not sure if that's because those atheists who claim to be non-resistant and rational are in fact

resistant and non-rational, or what the real reason is. If you believe the Bible, *all* unbelief is non-rational and resistant (see Romans 1). Regarding the werewolves, we don't have any good arguments for werewolves, we do have good arguments for God. Dr. Came didn't refute the arguments that Craig raised, nor did his own arguments for atheism work. And there are many, many more arguments (origin of life, Cambrian explosion, habitability-discoverability, molecular machines) that Craig did not raise, too.

How the presence and quality of fathers affects belief in God

September 3, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article by Paul Copan which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.* It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own* rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of François-Marie Arouet.
> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his

> autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence, but there is also statistical evidence. Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is

> regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an more difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others. If you want your child to be religious and moral, you have to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he makes, he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading.

My advice to Christian women is this. When you are picking a man, be sure and choose one who is already invested in Christian things and producing results. It's very unlikely that he's going to start from nothing after you marry him. If you value your kids, make a man's interest in developing and acting on a Christian worldview the main thing you are looking for.

Federal judge appointed by George W. Bush blocks TN child protection law

September 4, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tennessee passed a law to protect children from anti-child predators a while back, but sadly, federal judges keep preventing them from enforcing the law. First, it was a federal judge in Memphis. But now, it's a federal judge in East Tennessee, which is far more conservative than West Tennessee.

Here's the article from Daily Wire:

> A federal judge blocked a Tennessee district attorney from enforcing the state's law shielding children from sexually explicit performances ahead of a "Pride" event after he was sued by the American Civil Liberties Union.
>
> The judge's ruling comes after the ACLU filed a lawsuit this week against Blount County DA Ryan Desmond, who sent a letter to Blount County Pride saying that any explicit performances in front of children would not be allowed at a "Pride" event on September 2 just south of Knoxville.
>
> Video has emerged from "Pride" events across the country of explicit drag performances with children present and looking on.

Got that? The goal of the law is to prevent children from seeing explicit performances. Tennessee does not want adults exposing children to sex at young ages. Tennessee opposes grooming children for sex. Tennessee is against pedophilia and child pornography.

More:

> "It is certainly possible that the event in question will not violate any of the criminal statutes," Desmond said. "However if sufficient evidence is presented to this office that these referenced criminal statutes have been violated, our office will ethically and justly prosecute these cases in the interest of justice."
>
> Desmond had a temporary restraining order placed on him by U.S. District Judge Ronnie Greer meaning that he is blocked from enforcing Tennessee's Adult Entertainment Act.

The same thing happened before in West Tennessee:

> The law has previously been blocked before by a federal judge in Memphis, but could be enforced outside of Shelby County. In late June, U.S. District Judge Thomas Parker in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee blocked the law after Friends of George's, a self-described "LGBTQ theatre company" based in Memphis, filed a suit challenging the law.

It looks like there is a battle between the attorneys general of red states, who are battling

against the ACLU and federal judges. I’m a legal immigrant to the USA, so it’s strange for me that federal judges have power over state laws. It will be interesting to see which states fight these battles. I wonder if Tennessee can just block the ACLU from operating in Tennessee. Or maybe we can just decline to be ruled by federal judges?

The worst mistake you can make when defending the Christian worldview

September 5, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it

entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it.

> I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent's weakness.

Biden-appointed judge rules that parents can't opt their kids out of LGBT

September 6, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On Monday, I blogged about how a federal judge had ruled that a county in Tennessee could not protect children from being exposed to sexually-oriented performances. The same thing just happened in Texas. A federal judge blocked a Texas law that protected children from sexually-oriented performances. But now there is something even worse – banning parents from protecting their own kids.

Here's the story from The Federalist:

> On Aug. 24, the U.S. District Court judge denied a requested injunction from a group of Muslim, Catholic, and Orthodox parents to opt their children out of LGBT storybook lessons.
>
> […]A stone's throw from Washington, D.C., Montgomery County Public Schools is one of the largest public school systems in the country, with roughly 70,000 students attending elementary school. Last fall, the Montgomery County Board of Education announced it was adopting a collection of more than 20 "LGBTQ+ inclusive" books for use in pre-K through eighth-grade classrooms.
>
> […]When parents initially raised objections to the books, the school board said they could opt their children out of instruction involving the books, as parents can for other parts of the curriculum. By the spring, however, the school board announced parents would not only no longer be notified in advance when the books would be read, they also couldn't opt their children out of instruction involving the books.

Some of the parents who pay the taxes for the salaries of these education bureaucrats didn't like this, and they sued. They argued that in America, parents have Constitutional freedoms. And they wanted to be allowed to opt their children out of LGBT indoctrination.

But a Biden-appointed judge, who is also paid by the taxpayers, disagreed with the taxpayers:

> Biden-appointed Judge Deborah Boardman denied the requested injunction, just days after oral argument. "[T]he plaintiffs have not shown that the no-opt-out policy likely will result in the indoctrination of their children," she wrote. But what about the parents' rights to direct the religious upbringing of the children? Boardman's take is that "[e]ven if their children's exposure to religiously offensive ideas makes the parents' efforts less likely to succeed, that does not amount to a government-imposed burden on their religious exercise."

It's fine for atheists to tell Christian parents what to do with their kids. And it doesn't matter when those Christian parents are paying the salaries of those atheists. Parents

must pay, and they should be grateful to the atheists who turn their children against God. Parents have no right to direct the religious upbringing of their children. Parents are just there to work, to pay *better people* to raise their children for them. Atheists are *better people*. They should be making the decisions about what your children learn. You just pay for it.

Remember, if you don't like what the taxpayer-funded schools are teaching your children, then you're a "domestic terrorist". And since you're a "domestic terrorist", then maybe the FBI needs to park 6 SUVs outside your house and break down your door and point loaded assault rifles at your wife and children. The FBI is also paid by taxpayer dollars. You pay them to pre-dawn raid your house.

New video series on intelligent design starts off discussing the Cambrian explosion

September 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am always on the lookout for good resources on science and Christianity. And I found some. Well, Uncommon Descent found them, and I read their blog, so I found them too. The first four episodes are out, and the topics are: 1) introducing the Cambrian explosion, 2) pre-Cambrian fossils, 3) punctuated equilibrium, and 4) Darwin's "tree of life". Each video is 12-20 minutes long.

So, before we see the videos, I feel I should explain the outline for arguing for a creator / designer of the universe from scratch. There are six main arguments. 1) the origin of the universe from nothing, 2) fine-tuning of the creation event, 3) fine-tuning for habitability in the galaxy, solar system, and planet, 4) the origin of the first living self-replicating organism, 5) irreducible / minimal complexity in molecular machines, 6) the sudden origin of basic body plans in the Cambrian explosion (a geological period a long time ago).

These four videos introduce you to the sixth argument in that list, the Cambrian explosion.

First video: Introducing the Cambrian explosion

Description:

> When Charles Darwin published "On the Origin of Species" in 1859, he was painstakingly aware of the fact that the fossil record diametrically opposed his theory. Ever since Darwin's time, paleontologists have put their finger on the Cambrian explosion, where most of the major animal phyla appear abruptly in the fossil record suddenly and without any evidence of intermediate forms preceding them in Precambrian strata.

Second video: evaluating precursors to the Cambrian explosion

Description:

> Are there transitional forms and Precambrian fossils which reveal the evolution of the diverse animal phyla that appear in the Cambrian explosion? The history of paleontology shows the answer is no! As paleontologists have learned more about the fossil and geological record, the challenge of the Cambrian explosion to Darwinian theory has only increased.

Third video: evaluating punctuated equilibrium

Description:

> In the 1970s, paleontologists Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge proposed a model of evolution called punctuated equilibrium, intended to resolve the lack of transitional forms in the fossil record. Can "Punk Eek," as it's often called, resolve

> the abrupt appearance of new animal phyla in the Cambrian explosion? This video explains why the answer is No—among many other problems, Punk Eek requires too much evolutionary change too quickly and lacks a biological mechanism to account for the rapid origin of anatomical novelty we see in the Cambrian period.

Fourth video: evaluating homology and phylogenetics

Description:

> As more scientists have realized that the fossil record poses serious challenges to Darwin's theory of evolution, many have turned to molecular homologies and phylogenetic trees to defend Darwin's tree of life. But do these approaches really support Darwin's tree? Nope.

If you like these videos, you can read a much longer, more detailed book about it by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, called "Darwin's Doubt". Or, you can do what I'm doing and just read a chapter about it in the new book "The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith". That book covers all 6 of the arguments I mentioned before. You can see the table of contents on the Discovery Institute web site. The chapter by Dr. Gunter Bechly entitled "Does the Fossil Record Demonstrate Darwinian Evolution?" covers the fossil record, and the Cambrian explosion in particular. I like Gunter a LOT, because he had a recent debate on the Unbelievable show on this topic, and he really cleaned the clock of his opponent, a slippery theistic evolutionist named Joshua Swamidass. It was beautiful. He cut through all the theistic evolution garbage and got straight into the science.

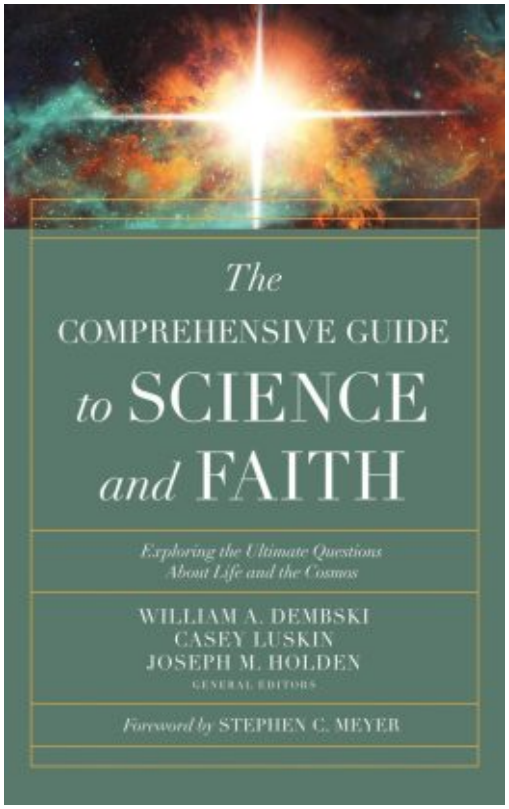

I'm reading the book right now. Or rather, I'm having it read to me, because I got the audio book version. If you remember reading books like "Mere Creation" (1998) and "The

Creation Hypothesis” (1994) as a young man like I do, then you will love this book.

I like to know a little about every interesting topic, and then watch lots of university lectures and formal debates about them, so I can debate these topics in the places where I live and work. The new book has a lot of different authors from a lot of different perspectives writing on a lot of different topics. You could find a way to talk about these topics in pretty much any environment.

So far, I like Dr. Fazale Rana’s chapter on Adam and Eve the best, but I’m still in Section I. I’m just starting on Jay Richards chapter next.

Proof that federal law enforcement treats Republicans and Democrats differently

September 8, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My concern about federal law enforcement exchanging morality for political expediency is getting worse by the day. I keep finding stories in the news showing that the secular left has no shame at all about using the power of government as a weapon against their enemies in the Republican party. Today, let's look at a 19-minute video and article from Matt Walsh of the Daily Wire.

First, the video, which is exact same thing as the article below:

And here is the article. It's behind a paywall, so I only want to quote a little bit.

Here is what happens to Democrat domestic terrorists:

> Here's one example that went totally unreported by the mainstream press. Kevin Benjamin Weier is a California man in his mid-30's. During the canonization of Saint George Floyd three years ago, Weier took it upon himself to light a federal courthouse in Portland on fire. There's no dispute about that. Weier pleaded guilty to, "repositioning a piece of lit wood" against the walls of the courthouse.
>
> After Weier pleaded guilty, Joe Biden's DOJ made a point to issue a press release about the many years in jail that this domestic terrorist was facing. Specifically, the DOJ's press release stated that Weier's intentional destruction of federal courthouses was, "punishable by up to 10 years in prison."
>
> […]As it happens, Weier ultimately received a sentence that was nowhere near the 10-year term the Biden DOJ suggested he might serve. Instead, on the recommendation of federal prosecutors, Weier received a sentence of two years' probation. For trying to set fire to a federal courthouse. And indeed, Kevin Weier never served a day in prison. He did have to pay a $200 fine, though. So there's that.

Two year's probation, that means no prison time at all. Because he's a Democrat.

But here's what happens to Republicans:

> If you're a former GOP congressional candidate by the name of Enrique Tarrio, this is all very confusing.
>
> […]Enrique Tarrio was just sentenced to 22 years in prison for "orchestrating" a riot that he didn't even attend. There's no discussion whatsoever about what Tarrio might have done, or how exactly he facilitated what happened on January 6th. No one cares.
>
> […]According to the government, Tarrio told his followers… to organize a big crowd in Washington to storm government buildings.

As we know from Tucker Carlson's video, the most violent thing that happened in the Capitol is that a Capitol Hill policeman murdered an unarmed Republican woman who was trying to push her way through a closed door with her hand. His identity was hidden from the public, and he was later promoted. Promoted.

And another example:

> Consider the case of Joseph Biggs, a man with no criminal record whatsoever. Biggs is an Army veteran who didn't hurt anyone on January 6th. But he did walk around the Capitol building and he did help pull down a fence on the periphery of the building. And for that, judge Tim Kelly — the same judge who sentenced Tarrio — decided that Joseph Biggs needs to spend 17 years in prison.

Matt Walsh did post a video of people "storming government buildings", though. Except these people were Democrats:

An actual insurrection:

Did they get 22 years in prison? Nope:

> And their punishment is — absolutely nothing. They get zip-tied, at most, and let go immediately. Their explicit purpose was to derail a government proceeding. In fact, some of these activists barged into the Senate chambers. None of them suffered any real consequences.

Because they're Democrats, and the law is ever only applied against Republicans – and Christians. It doesn't apply to the secular left. This is fine with federal law enforcement and federal judges. They think that they are doing a great job of serving the people who pay their salaries through mandatory taxes. Why think that our secular left law enforcement is capable of anything different to law enforcement under Stalin, Mao and Hitler?

Now we are seeing real violence:

> So does the Biden DOJ's handling of the raid on Craig Robertson a month ago. Robertson was the elderly invalid Trump supporter in Utah who shared threatening memes about Joe Biden on social media for months. Weeks later, instead of picking up Robertson while he was on his motorized scooter at Walgreens, the FBI decided to surprise Robertson with a 6 AM raid at his home.

Robertson was shot and killed by the FBI, and no bodycam video has been released. What happened? We don't know, and they are *refusing* to release the video. Just like they are refusing to release the manifesto of the Nashville anti-Christian mass murderer.

Members of Antifa and BLM also get light sentences:

> Consider the case of the BLM arsonist back in 2020 who lit a pawn shop on fire, in the name of civil rights. Three days after Saint George Floyd overdosed, Montez T. Lee decided to commit an act of arson that killed Oscar Lee Stewart. Stewart's

> body wasn’t found in the rubble for nearly two months. What was Montez Lee’s sentence? He got less than ten years in prison. That’s less than half the sentence that Enrique Tarrio will face, for sending some naughty text messages.
>
> […]We see relatively light or non-existent sentences like this all the time. A serial child rapist in Ohio just got ten years in prison. A drunk driver in Phoenix — at four times the legal B.A.C. — just got 12 years in prison for driving 135 miles per hour and killing someone. A terrorist train engineer in Los Angeles who tried to run his locomotive into a U.S. Navy hospital ship during COVID received just three years in prison. A man who burned down a Minneapolis police station, live on national television, during the George Floyd riots received just four years in prison. Another man who lit a molotov cocktail and threw it at the police station got just three years in prison.

How can we get federal law enforcement to treat people fairly, regardless of political party and religion? Well, make sure that you vote in the next elections, and make sure you’re telling all your friends and family about stories like this. We have to get 2 Republicans to the polls for every Democrat who votes.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 38: Former Muslim Hatun Tash, Part 1

September 9, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 38 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how to debate Islam with a famous former Muslim, Hatun Tash. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 38:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome our first guest onto the show. Hatun Tash is a former Muslim who was born in Turkey. We discuss the importance of perfect preservation of the Qur'an in Islam, and compare different translations to see if they all agree. We discuss Hatun's experiences discussing her Christian faith with Muslims in different countries. This is the first episode in a two part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Hatun Tash is is a well-known Christian preacher who regularly debates Islam and the Koran. An ex-Muslim and convert to Christianity, she is director of the ministry Defend Christ Critique Islam. She has faced threats to her life on multiple occasions and was attacked and stabbed on 25 July 2021 while preaching at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park. You can find her collection of very popular and entertaining videos on YouTube in the Hatun Tash DCCI Ministries channel.

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Information Enigma: 21-minute video explains intelligent design

September 10, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The video is here:

I have read and listened and watched a lot of material on intelligent design, but I have never seen so much value packed into such a short lecture. I really hope you'll watch this and that it's helpful to you.

Summary:

- the big question when discussing the origin of life: where did the information in living systems come from?
- Until 530 million years ago, the oceans were largely devoid of life
- In a 10 million year period, many new forms of animal life emerged
- New biological forms of life require new information
- the discovery of DNA shows that living systems work because cells have information that allows them to build the components of molecular machines: cell types, proteins, etc.
- can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
- normally, random mutations tend to degrade the functionality of information, e.g. – randomly changing symbols in an applications code does not usually introduce useful new functions, it usually renders what is there non-functional
- the majority of possible sequences will NOT have functions, so random mutations will more likely give you non-functional code, rather than functional code
- example: a bicycle lock with 4 numbers has many possible sequences for the 4 numbers, and only one of them has unlock functionality, the rest have no functionality
- if you have lots of time, then you might be able to guess the combination, but if the lock as has 10 billion numbers, and only one combination that unlocks, you can spend your whole life trying to unlock it and won't succeed
- how likely is it to arrive at a functional protein or gene by chance? Is it more like the 4-dial lock (can be done with lots of time) or the 10 billion dial lock (amount of time required exceeds the time available)?
- the probability is LOW because there is only one sequence of numbers that has unlock function
- consider a short protein of 150 amino acids has 10 to the 195th power possible sequences
- if many of these sequences of amino acides had biological function, then it might be easier to get to one by random mutation and selection than it is with a lock that only unlocks for ONE sequence
- how many of the possible sequences have biological function?

- Thanks to research done by Douglas Axe, we now know that the number of functional amino acid sequences for even a short protein is incredibly small…
- Axe found that the odds of getting a functional sequence of amino acids that will fold and have biological function is 1 in 10 to the 77th power
- Is that number too improbable to reach by chance? well, there are 10 to 65th atoms in the entire Milky Way galaxy… so yes, this is a very improbable outcome
- can random genetic mutations search through all the sequences in order to find the one in 10 to the 77th power one that has biological function? It depends on how much guessers we have and how many guesses we get in the time available
- even with the entire 3.5 billion year history of life on Earth, only about 10 to the 40th organisms have ever lived, which far smaller fraction of the 10 to the 77th total sequences
- even with a very fast mutation rate, you would not be able to reach a functional protein even with all that time, and even with all those organisms

I was once having a discussion with a woman about the research that Axe did at the Cambridge University lab. He published four articles in the Journal of Molecular Biology. I held out one of the papers to her and showed her the numbers. She said over and over "I hate the Discovery Institute! I hate the Discovery Institute!" Well, yeah, but you can't make the Journal of Molecular Biology go away with hating the Discovery Institute. JMB is peer-reviewed, and this was experimental evidence – not a theory, not a hypothesis.

We have been blessed by the Creator and Designer of the universe in this time and place with *overwhelming evidence* – an abundance of riches. For those who have an open mind, this is what you've been waiting for to make your decision. For the naturalists who struggle so mightily to block out the progress of experimental science, they'll need to shout louder and shut their eyes tighter and push harder to block their ears. Maybe if they keep screaming "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" over and over to themselves, they will be able to ignore the real science a little longer.

Is our society discriminating against women, or against men?

September 11, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I love to read long essays in City Journal, the journal of the center-right Manhattan Institute. One of the biggest problems we're facing as a society right now is the decline of marriage, and the resulting crisis of fatherlessness. The correct diagnosis is very unpopular, because it attacks feminism. Even traditional conservatives don't want to see the truth. But City Journal gets it right.

Excerpt:

> Smug misandry has been box-office gold for Barbie, which delights in writing off men as hapless romantic partners, leering jerks, violent buffoons, and dimwitted tyrants who ought to let women run the world.
>
> Numerous studies have shown that both sexes care more about harms to women than to men. Men get punished more severely than women for the same crime, and crimes against women are punished more severely than crimes against men. Institutions openly discriminate against men in hiring and promotion policies—and a majority of men as well as women favor affirmative-action programs for women.

I went through kindergarten and public schools before going on to university and grad school. University was OK, but most of my teachers in public schools were women. It was pretty obvious that male students were being treated differently than female students:

> The education establishment has obsessed for decades about the shortage of women in some science and tech disciplines, but few worry about males badly trailing by just about every other academic measure from kindergarten through graduate school. By the time boys finish high school (if they do), they're so far behind that many colleges lower admissions standards for males—a rare instance of pro-male discrimination, though it's not motivated by a desire to help men. Admissions directors do it because many women are loath to attend a college if the gender ratio is too skewed.
>
> Gender disparities generally matter only if they work against women. In computing its Global Gender Gap, the much-quoted annual report, the World Economic Forum has explicitly ignored male disadvantages: if men fare worse on a particular dimension, a country still gets a perfect score for equality on that measure. Prodded by the federal Title IX law banning sexual discrimination in schools, educators have concentrated on eliminating disparities in athletics but not in other extracurricular programs, which mostly skew female. The fact that there are now three female college students for every two males is of no concern to the White House Gender Policy Council. Its "National Strategy on Gender

> Equity and Equality" doesn't even mention boys' struggles in school, instead focusing exclusively on new ways to help female students get further ahead.
>
> Women have been a majority of college graduates since 1982 and dominate by many other key measures.

I knew that the majority of health care spending is for women, but they have other advantages over men:

> [Women] not only live longer than men but also benefit from a higher share of federal funding for medical research. They're much less likely to be fatally injured on the job or commit suicide. They receive the lion's share of Social Security and other entitlement payments (while men pay the lion's share of taxes). They decide how to spend most of the family income. Women initiate most divorces and are much likelier to win custody of the children. While men are ahead in some ways—politicians love to denounce the "gender pay gap" and the "glass ceiling" supposedly limiting women—these disparities have been shown to be largely, if not entirely, due to personal preferences and choices, not discrimination.

Whenever I bring up women initiating most of the divorces, and the most common reason being "unhappiness", the universal response I get from Christian traditional women is that women are forced to do this, because the men they freely chose have not changed into what the women wanted them to be. Also, I am told, women only divorce in order to save the children from having an unhappy mother. I wonder if these women have ever looked at the research about what fatherlessness does to children.

I talk to Christians about these issues, and the most common response is ignorance or disbelief. "How could men be victims of discrimination? If they were, I would have heard about it".

> Yet most people still believe in the "myth of pervasive misogyny," as the social psychologists Cory Clark and Bo Winegard concluded in Quillette after surveying the research literature on gender bias. Noting that a Google Scholar search for "misogyny" yielded 114,000 results, while a search for "misandry" yielded only 2,340, they write: "We suspect this difference in interest in misogyny over misandry reflects not the relative prevalence of each type of prejudice, but rather greater concern for the well-being of women than men. All of the arguments, anecdotes, and data forwarded to support the narrative that we live in an implacably misogynistic society, in fact, may be evidence of precisely the opposite."

What's the workplace like for men?

> In 2016, the Australian national government launched a rigorous quest to combat its own misogyny. As part of its "Gender Equality Strategy," it brought in Harvard

> economist Michael J. Hiscox to address a disparity in the government workforce: women held 59 percent of the jobs but only 49 percent of the executive positions.
>
> […]The experiment produced an "unintended consequence," as the researchers ruefully noted in their report, "Going Blind to See More Clearly." When managers evaluated a résumé with a female name like Wendy Richards, they were more likely to shortlist it than if they saw that same résumé with no name. And they were less likely to shortlist it if the name was Gary Richards. Australia's public servants were clearly guilty of bias against men—and that was just fine with the architects of the Gender Equality Strategy.

But what about the so-called "gender pay gap"? Aren't women earning less than men because of discrimination?

> In the real world, a full-time female worker over 25 in America earns 84 cents for every dollar a male earns, but even equalitarian researchers acknowledge that this gap is not due to overt sexual discrimination (illegal since the Equal Pay Act of 1963). It's due mainly to men choosing higher-paying professions, like coding, instead of, say, teaching, and to the "motherhood penalty." There's no significant gender gap between childless singles in their twenties, but once they become parents, mothers tend to reduce their hours, switch to a lower-paying job with more flexibility, or drop out of the workforce. To equalitarians, these differences are the result of systemic sexism: gender stereotypes that discourage girls from seeking high-paying jobs and saddle them with an unfair share of child-care responsibilities.
>
> […]On average, women care more about "work-life balance" and finding a job that seems personally and socially meaningful—typically, one in a comfortable environment that involves working with people rather than things. Men prioritize making money, so they're willing to take less appealing jobs—work that's tedious, outdoors, dirty, dangerous—with longer, less predictable hours. The gender pay gap among graduates of elite business schools is due in significant part to their job choices. The male MBAs are likelier to take jobs in finance and consulting, whereas the women tend to choose lower-paying industries that are less competitive and less risky.

What about in the dating world? Well, what we are seeing today when we look at data from different dating apps is that 80% of the women are focused on pursuing men with the top 20% best appearances. The best height, the best handsomeness, the best displayed wealth. Although women complain that men treat them poorly, what they mean is that *the men they are attracted to* treat them poorly. The men in the bottom 80% (of appearance) are invisible to them.

More:

> Women still prefer winners. They're the pickier sex—on Tinder, they're

> much likelier to swipe left—and they're especially picky when it comes to a partner's income, education, and professional accomplishments, as researchers have found in analyses of mate preferences, activity on dating websites, and patterns of marriage and divorce. Most American women still want a man who makes at least as much as they do—and wealthier women are more determined than less affluent women to find someone with a successful career.
>
> While some traditional attitudes about wives' roles have shifted, husbands are still typically expected to be breadwinners. An American couple is more likely to divorce if the husband lacks a full-time job, but the wife's employment status doesn't affect the odds. Studies of divorce rates in dozens of other countries have confirmed this peril to unemployed men, which comedian Chris Rock has also observed: "Fellows, if you lose your job, you're going to lose your woman. That's right. She may not leave the day you lose it, but the countdown has begun."

When I've raised concerns that I've read about in books like Warren Farrell's "The Myth of Male Power" and Christina Hoff Sommers's "The War Against Boys", Stephen Baskerville's "Taken Into Custody" and Helen Reynolds "Men on Strike", the response from pastors, parents and "traditional" Christian women has been almost universal. They don't know, and they don't care. (The lone exception was my Scottish friend Dina, who sadly passed away).

What about the decline in the marriage rate? Surely men are the cause of that, and women are the victims, right?

> Both sexes have also been hurt by the misandrist excesses of the #MeToo movement. With a few exceptions—like the actress Amber Heard, successfully sued by her husband, Johnny Depp—women who wreck men's reputations and careers with false accusations suffer few consequences in the media or the courts. Police and prosecutors have routinely refused to act, even in clear cases of perjury, as Bettina Arndt has documented. These injustices, along with the draconian punishments and policies imposed by the (mainly female) managers of human resources, have instilled fear in workplaces, stifling office romances (which, in the past, frequently led to marriage) as well as valuable professional relationships. Most women still want men to make the first move in courtship, but who wants to risk being reported to HR for subjecting a colleague to "unwanted attention"? Even a purely professional meeting in private is risky if something innocent gets misconstrued—or falsely described by a hostile colleague exploiting the believe-all-women bias.

There were a lot more interested studies quoted in the article. If you are male, or you know one, it's worth checking out those studies. That way, you can talk about them, and maybe understand why men are making some of the decisions that we're making.

What will happen to parents in California if they dissent from child “transitions”?

September 12, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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When I was deciding what state to live in, I made a big spreadsheet with columns for all the things that would affect my life plan. I had tax rates, abortion bans, fiscal stability, right to work, pension debt for public employees, infrastructure, energy sources, concealed carry laws, voting trends, etc. The state that came out dead last was California. I’m sure glad that I didn’t move there.

Here’s the latest from the Daily Signal:

> The California State Assembly passed a bill Friday that would require judges in child custody cases to consider whether a parent has affirmed a child’s “gender transition” by making “gender affirmation” an equal part of a child’s “health, safety, and welfare” under state law.
>
> Democratic lawmakers’ bill, AB 957, passed the Assembly by a vote of 57-16 along party lines.
>
> The California Senate passed the bill Wednesday, 30-9, also along party lines.
>
> Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, is expected to sign the bill into law. Under it, parents who refuse to participate in transgenderism by pretending that their child is a different gender could be guilty of failing to provide for the “health, safety, and welfare” of their child—therefore losing custody to another parent or the state.

It’s a very broad measure:

> Susannah Luthi, who covers California for The Washington Free Beacon, pointed out: “The bill makes no distinctions regarding the age of a child, how long a child has identified as transgender, or affirmation of social transition versus medical sex-change treatments.”

Republicans are telling parents that they need to leave the state immediately if this bill is signed into law:

> In a California Senate Judiciary Committee hearing June 13, state Sen. Scott Wilk, R-Santa Clarita, warned parents to leave California if such legislation were to pass.
>
> “In recent years, we have put government bureaucrats between parents, children, and doctors when it comes to medical care—and now we have this where if a parent does not support the ideology of the government, [children] are going to be taken away from the home,” Wilk said, adding: “If you love your children, you need to flee California.”

Another article from Monday in the Daily Signal says that this is just one of the laws being passed by California Democrats:

> One of them would train teachers to profile these hated "anti-LGBTQ" parents, another would train psychotherapists to prepare to hide gender "treatments" from parents at a minor's request, a third would prevent school districts from removing sexually explicit books if they contain transgender themes, a fourth would prevent Californians from becoming foster parents if they dissent from gender ideology, and the fifth would expand the definition of child abuse to include "non-affirmation" of a child's claimed transgender identity.

And he talks about the bills – train teachers to profile parents who don't support LGBT:

> AB-5, called the Safe and Supportive Schools Act, passed the California State Assembly in May by a vote of 64-4 and on Thursday passed the California State Senate, 32-3. The bill would mandate an "online delivery platform and an online training curriculum to support LGBTQ cultural competency training for teachers and other certified employees."
>
> Not only does this training enforce transgender ideology among educators, but it also trains educators to profile those despicable "anti-LGBTQ" parents.

Hide LGBT transitioning from parents:

> [AB-655] focused on minors' consent to mental health services, first passed the state Assembly in April. An amended version on Wednesday passed the state Senate, 31-8, and the Assembly again, 60-16, on Thursday.
>
> […]AB-655 states that "mental health treatment" shall involve a minor's parent or guardian "unless the professional person who is treating or counseling the minor, after consultation with the minor, determines that the involvement would be inappropriate." In doing so, the legislation intentionally carves out an exception to hide "gender-affirming counseling" from parents on the suspicion that parents who want to save their kids from later experimental interventions actually pose a threat to their own children.

LGBT books in the libraries:

> AB-1078 bills itself as protecting "instructional materials and curriculum" that address "diversity." On Thursday, it passed both the California Senate, 31-9, and the Assembly, 61-17.
>
> The bill aims to prohibit a public school board or a charter school governing body from "refusing to approve or prohibiting the use of any textbook, instructional material, or other curriculum or any book or other resource in a school library on the basis that it includes a study of the role and contributions of any individual or group" as laid out in requirements to "accurately portray the cultural and racial diversity of our society."

Foster families:

> SB-407, which cleared the California Senate in May by a vote of 31-5, advanced Sept. 1 through an Assembly committee. Although the bill has yet to pass the state's lower house, it represents an extension of the transgender measures that the Assembly has passed repeatedly in recent days.
>
> The bill would require a "resource family" in the foster care system to "demonstrate … an ability and willingness to meet the needs of a child regardless of the child's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, and that, should difficulties around these issues arise, a willingness to obtain resources offered by the county or foster family agency or other available resources to meet those needs."

Meanwhile, in Virginia, the Republican governor who is being targeted by secular left domestic terrorists just pardoned the parent who was being persecuted by the Biden administration:

> Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin on Sunday granted an "absolute pardon" to the father who was arrested at a school board meeting after the superintendent lied about his daughter's rape by a skirt-wearing boy.
>
> […]Democrat prosecutor Buta Biberaj bucked her typical soft-on-crime stances and personally argued to put Smith in jail for misdemeanor disorderly conduct. Smith was denied a jury because it was a misdemeanor in General District Court, and a judge quickly convicted him.
>
> […]As Smith's legal saga dragged on, the same system that prosecuted Smith acquitted Loudoun County Public Schools spokesman Wayde Byard for perjury charges. The day Smith's daughter was raped, Byard wrote an email to parents that falsely blamed Smith for police presence and falsely said that no students were in danger, even as the rapist remained on the loose.
>
> The rapist was eventually convicted in juvenile court, but due to a mistake by Biberaj, will not be placed on the sex offenders registry.
>
> […]The media plastered around the world a picture of Smith being dragged away by police, and used him as a symbol of how angry conservative parents were supposedly disrupting school board meetings out of bigotry and ignorance. The National School Boards Association likened him to a domestic terrorist in a letter that the Biden administration used to mobilize anti-terrorism forces against parents.
>
> Only The Daily Wire bothered to ask Smith whether he had a good reason to be mad at the school board. It turned out that not only had his daughter been raped, and the superintendent lied about it, but that the school system kept the rapist in school, where he sexually assaulted a second girl.
>
> "They villainized me and my family from the minute my daughter reported that

> she was sexually assaulted, pretty much until present time," he said.
>
> Biberaj wanted "to make an example out of me to scare people from speaking out. And quite frankly, it worked," Smith said, noting that far fewer parents have turned out to school board meetings and spoken out since his arrest.
>
> He said his next legal step will be to sue the prosecutor for misconduct, and possibly the National School Boards Association.

This part is interesting:

> The pardon from Youngkin, who enjoys high favorability ratings in what was previously considered a blue state, continues a fulfillment of his campaign promise to focus on parental rights in education. On Tuesday, he will hold a "Parents Matter" conversation in Loudoun–at Cornerstone Chapel, a church that was placed on an enemies list by a group of liberal activists called the Loudoun Love Warriors.

It's very interesting to see how Muslims in Canada and other countries are suddenly starting to realize that the progressive parties they had ben supporting are coming for their children. Maybe parents from groups that traditionally vote Democrat will come to their senses. It would help if Republicans, like Glenn Youngkin, can carve out a "pro-parent" brand. We need more bold actions from Republican governors, so voters in the middle get the picture.

Did an increase in oxygen levels trigger the Cambrian explosion?

September 13, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The Cambrian explosion is the name given to the sudden origin of basically all of the major body plans in nature. It happened in a 3-5 million year period about 540 million years ago. It's a problem for naturalists, because of the enormous amount of information needed to make these new (and different) body plans. The best explanation they had was that rising oxygen levels did it. Is that right?

Here's an excellent post by Günter Bechly, writing for Evolution News.

Here's the naturalistic scenario:

> For more than seventy years it was the scientific consensus and undisputed textbook wisdom that the origin of multicellular life in the late Precambrian was triggered by increased oxygen levels (Fike et al. 2006, Sahoo et al. 2012, Lyons et al. 2014, Reinhard et al. 2016, Anonymous 2023, Harrison 2023, Ralls 2023, UCPH 2023). For example, McFadden et al. (2008) identified two pulses of oxidation in the Precambrian and found that "following this second oxidation event, between 550 and 542 million years ago, there was a worldwide increase of Ediacaran organisms, complex macroscopic life forms, an event recently dubbed the Avalon Explosion" (Virginia Tech 2008). Similarily, the study by Pogge von Strandmann et al. (2015) was promoted in a press release as demonstrating that "oxygen provided breath of life that allowed animals to evolve" (Hickey et al. 2015).

This was all a lot of theorizing in order to save naturalism from scientific evidence. But science makes progress, and the smoke gets cleared:

> Now a new study (Ostrander et al. 2023) by group of researchers from Denmark has overturned decades of evolutionary dogma and claims the exact opposite: "oxygen didn't trigger multicellular organisms" (Anonymous 2023, UCPH 2023). What this study found was instead clear evidence of a lower oxygen content correlated with the Avalon Explosion of the Ediacaran biota. The authors summarize their surprising findings as: "Contrary to a classical hypothesis, our interpretations place the Shuram excursion, and any coeval animal evolutionary events, in a predominantly anoxic global ocean." Co-author Christian Bjerrum commented "Specifically, it means that we need to rethink a lot of the things that we believed to be true from our childhood learning. And textbooks need to be revised and rewritten. So, if not extra oxygen, what triggered the era's explosion of life? Perhaps the exact opposite" (Anonymous 2023, UCPH 2023). Some even went further and suggested to "forget everything you thought you knew about how life evolved on Earth" (Ralls 2023) because it "turns out we might be very

> wrong about how life arose on Earth" (Harrison 2023).

Prior to the "increase in oxygen" hypothesis, naturalists used to explain away the Cambrian explosion by saying that we had not studied the fossil record for long enough. "Eventually, we will have a better picture of the fossil record, and that will show that we started with a few simple life forms, and then branched out into more and more complex life forms, over an hundreds of millions of years".

But that's not what they are saying now, because the evidence is in:

> Here is what Professor Derek Briggs, a world-renowned expert on Cambrian fossils, has to say on this issue: "We now know that the sudden appearance of fossils in the Cambrian (541–485 million years ago) is real and not an artefact of an imperfect fossil record" (Briggs 2015). Likewise, Zhang & Shu (2021) admitted that "multiple sources of evidence are strongly suggestive of a real evolutionary event being recorded rather than an artifact of an imperfect fossil record." Cabej (2020) put it even more clearly: "Nevertheless, now, 150 years after The Origin, when an incomparably larger stock of animal fossils has been collected, Darwin's gap remains, the abrupt appearance of Cambrian fossils is a reality, and we are still wondering about the forces and mechanisms that drove it.

How many times does this have to happen, before naturalists admit that they are committing the "atheism-of-the-gaps" fallacy?

Before science, atheists told us that the universe was eternal. Then science progressed, and we now know that the universe – space, time, matter and energy – all came into being out of nothing about 14 billion years ago. What could cause that? Well, the cause of all of nature must be *supernatural.*

Before science, atheists told us that any old universe would support life. If gravity was a little different, then people would just have pointy ears, like you see on Star Trek. But then science progressed, and we now have a long list of dozens of constants and quantities in nature that must be finely-tuned to an incredibly high degree in order for complex life of any kind to exist. Fine-tuning requires an intelligent agent – that's the only explanation that we have experience with.

Before science, atheists told us that the origin of life was easy. Life is just a clump of jello, very boring and simple. No need for a cosmic engineer. But then science progressed, and we discovered biological information, such as DNA, inside the cell. Naturalists tried to say that most (or all) of that information was "junk DNA", but more science happened proving them wrong again.

I could go on and on with example after example. Naturalism is about faith. They start with the desire for personal autonomy. Autonomy from the moral law. They speculate about how nature can be explained without a Creator and Designer. They take refuge in gaps in our scientific understanding. But then science progresses, the gaps close, and everyone knows for certain.

J. Warner Wallace: I am not a Christian because it works for me

September 14, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Some of my favorite Christians are the ones that start out as atheists, and do very well at life, but just change direction because they investigate the evidence. One person who had a fabulous career in law enforcement switched sides because of the evidence: J. Warner Wallace. And in a must-read post from Cold-Case Christianity, he explains his motive.

Excerpt:

> Life on this side of my decision hasn't always been easy. It's been nearly seventeen years since I first trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. I still struggle to submit my prideful will to what God would call me to do. Christianity is not easy. It doesn't always "work" for me. There are times when I think it would be easier to do it the old way; easier to cut a corner or take a short cut. There are many times when doing the right thing means doing the most difficult thing possible. There are also times when it seems like non-Christians have it easier, or seem to be "winning". It's in times like these that I have to remind myself that I'm not a Christian because it serves my own selfish purposes. I'm not a Christian because it "works" for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn't always been easy.
>
> I'm a Christian because it is true. I'm a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I'm a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative.

I think this is important. There are people who I know who claim to be Christian, but they are clearly believing that God is a mystical force who arranges everything in their lives in order to make them happy. They are not Christians because it's true, but because of things like comfort and community. But people ought to become Christians because they think it's true.

Truth doesn't necessarily make you happy, though. Truth can impose intellectual obligations and moral obligations on you. Seeing God as he really is doesn't help us to "win" at life, as the culture defines winning. But it does offer the opportunity for us to walk a similar path to the one Jesus walked. And that is very appealing for real Christians.

The Bible doesn't promise that people who become Christians will be happier. Actually, it promises that Christians will suffer for doing the right things. Their autonomy will suffer, as they sacrifice their own interests and happiness in order to make God happy, by serving his interests.

Christianity isn't something you add on to your before-God life in order to achieve your before-God goals. When you become a Christian, you get a new set of goals, based on

God’s character and his design for you. And although you might be very successful in the world as part of serving God, there is no guarantee of that. Christianity is not life enhancement. I do think that Christians do well at not hurting themselves though, but because they eliminate selfish desires, not because God gives them stuff.

By the way, if you’re looking for a great speaker to invite to your university campus, J. Warner Wallace is the best, then Frank Turek is my number two choice. Wallace has the homicide detective background, and Turek is a former naval aviator. Two tough guys who are tough-minded about the Christian faith.

How does church appear to someone raised in a non-Christian home?

September 15, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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My friend Wes posted an article about how communication is set up in the church, and why it's not effective at equipping Christians to defend their worldview in hostile environments. The article describes what I encountered in church, after I was raised in a non-Christian home and become a Christian on my own by reading the New Testament. The view presented in the essay is how I viewed the church, and is probably how most outsiders view church. I think it explains why young people leave the church in droves once they move out of their parents' houses.

The author writes:

> On the Internet, one soon discovers that many respected church leaders are quite unable to deal directly with opposing viewpoints. In fact, many of them can't even manage meaningful engagement with *other voices*. Their tweets may be entirely one-way conversations. They talk *at* their audiences. They can talk *about* other voices, but fail to talk *to* them, let alone *with* them. Their representations of opposing viewpoints reveal little direct exposure to the viewpoints in question.
>
> […]Around this point, it can start to dawn on one that many church leaders have only been trained in forms of discourse such as the sermon and, to a much lesser extent, the essay. Both forms privilege a single voice—their voice—and don't provide a natural space for response, questioning, and challenge. Their opinions have been assumed to be superior to opposing viewpoints, but have never been demonstrated to be so. While they may have spoken or written about opposing voices, they are quite unaccustomed to speaking or writing to them (not to mention listening to or being cross-examined by them). There are benefits to the fact that the sermon is a form of discourse that doesn't invite interruption or talking back, but not when this is the *only* form of discourse its practitioners are adept in.
>
> Many church leaders have been raised and trained in ideologically homogenous cultures or contexts that discouraged oppositional discourse. Many have been protected from hostile perspectives that might unsettle their faith. Throughout, their theological opinions and voices have been given a privileged status, immune from challenge. Nominal challenges could be brushed off by a reassertion of the monologue. They were safe to speak about and habitually misrepresent other voices to their hearers and readers, without needing to worry about those voices ever enjoying the power to answer them back. Many of the more widely read members of their congregations may have had an inkling of the weakness of their positions in the past: the Internet just makes it more apparent.

One of my friends who comments here as “Wintery’s Friend” actually did his M. Div, and I think it was he who told me that his seminary had dropped the lone course in apologetics that had been part of the curriculum. Now seminary grads don’t learn any opposing views. They just pre-suppose that the Bible is true in the same way that Mormons pre-suppose their Bible is true, or Muslims pre-suppose their Bible is true, etc.

More:

> If one’s opinion has never been subjected to and tried by rigorous cross-examination, it probably isn’t worth much. If one lacks the capacity to keep a level head when one’s views are challenged, one’s voice will be of limited use in most real world situations, where dialogue and dispute is the norm and where we have to think in conversation with people who disagree with us.
>
> The teachers of the Church provide the members of the Church with a model for their own thinking. The teacher of the Church does not just teach others *what* to believe, but also *how* to believe, and the process by which one arrives at a theological position. This is one reason why it is crucial that teachers ‘show their working’ on a regular basis. When teaching from a biblical text, for instance, the teacher isn’t just teaching the meaning of that particular text, but how Scripture should be approached and interpreted more generally. An essential part of the teaching that the members of any church need is that of dealing with opposing viewpoints. One way or another, every church provides such teaching. However, the lesson conveyed in all too many churches is that opposing voices are to be dismissed, ignored, or ‘answered’ with a reactive reassertion of the dogmatic line, rather than a reasoned response.

You can imagine that the first questions that you’ll be asked by a non-Christian co-worker would be things like “why think God exists?” and “why think the Bible is history rather than legend?”. In order to answer those questions, you would have to know how to counter what a non-Christian believes. You would have to show them the reasons for your view.

Unfortunately, many of the conservative Christian leaders we trust think that the best way to be convincing is not to show your work, but just to speak Bible verses at people who don’t accept the Bible as an authority. Some people attend church for 20 years, and they never meet a single person who didn’t just assume that the Bible is trustworthy without doing an investigation first.

What’s most surprising is that this fideistic view of Christianity is not even Biblical. The Biblical view of faith is that faith is trust in God, based on evidence. This is why Jesus offered his own resurrection as evidence to a generation of unbelievers. His miracles were also evidence offered to unbelievers. And the Old Testament is filled with examples of people like Isaiah presenting evidence to unbelievers. The fideist view sounds more like the Mormon “burning of the bosom” view. We can do better than that!

Look:

That debate has over 6 million views on YouTube. That’s a debate with Christopher Hitchens, one of the most famous atheists of the last 100 years. In the post-debate comments, the atheist admitted he lost. Watch it. You won’t find it in most churches, so you’re going to have to learn it on your own. Without anyone’s help. Don’t be a spectator. Don’t settle for youth pastor Christianity.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

September 16, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has ever done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates). If you've never seen Dr. Craig in a debate with a non-Christian, this one is probably the best introductory one out there. Dr. Craig is the foremost defender of Christian theism on the planet, and probably of all time.

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it! Normally, Dr. Craig debates at major universities in front of students and faculty.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.

3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

CIA offered to pay analysts to change their minds on lab-leak theory

September 17, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I was listening to the Bryan Dean Wright podcast this past week, and found an excellent news story that I thought everyone should know about. I think we all have concerns at this point about whether people in government can be trusted to do anything except help Democrats and punish Republicans. This story makes it clear that the CIA is one of those departments lacking integrity.

New York Post:

> The Central Intelligence Agency offered to pay off analysts in order to bury their findings that COVID-19 most likely leaked from a lab in Wuhan, China, new whistleblower testimony to Congress alleges.
>
> A senior-level CIA officer told House committee leaders that his agency tried to pay off six analysts who found SARS-CoV-2 likely originated in a Wuhan lab if they changed their position and said the virus jumped from animals to humans, according to a letter sent Tuesday to CIA Director William Burns.
>
> Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic Chairman Brad Wenstrup (R-Ohio) and Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Chairman Mike Turner (R-Ohio) requested all documents, communications and pay info from the CIA's COVID Discovery Team by Sept. 26.
>
> "According to the whistleblower, at the end of its review, six of the seven members of the Team believed the intelligence and science were sufficient to make a low confidence assessment that COVID-19 originated from a laboratory in Wuhan, China," the House panel chairmen wrote.

The most senior analyst was the one most willing to cover up for the Chinese:

> "The seventh member of the Team, who also happened to be the most senior, was the lone officer to believe COVID-19 originated through zoonosis."

How were the CIA analysts paid? "a significant monetary incentive":

> "The whistleblower further contends that to come to the eventual public determination of uncertainty, the other six members were given a significant monetary incentive to change their position," they said, noting that the analysts were "experienced officers with significant scientific expertise."

Always remember that people in government are being paid by the money they grab from taxpayers. They ought to be serving the taxpayers who pay their salaries. But often, these are people who are on the secular left. They think the universe is an accident, that human beings are machines made out of meat, and that there is no accountability from a

Moral Lawgiver. What sort of integrity would you expect from a secular leftist? They do what is best for themselves.

After causing food prices to skyrocket, Trudeau demands tax on food retailers

September 18, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

According to election results in Canada, the majority of Canadian voters support left-wing economic policies. In the last election, the majority of voters supported Justin Trudeau, former part-time drama teacher, and former part-time snowboard instructor. He chose people with no earned degrees or private sector work experience to run the Canadian economy. What happened next?

Rebel News explains:

> Food prices in Canada skyrocketed in 2022 owing to runaway inflation. Record numbers have accessed food banks to feed their families, with many forced to cut back — a pervasive trend that has continued midway through the year.
>
> Canada's Food Price Report 2023 predicted a 5% to 7% food price increase in 2023 following 10% increases last year, with vegetables, dairy and meat becoming more expensive.
>
> As of July 2023, inflation has overtaken the Canada Food Guide, according to Health Canada. Since last updating the Food Guide in 2019, prices for the most recommended foods have sharply risen.
>
> "Not only are some nutritious foods more difficult to find, but they can also be more expensive," said the report Evaluation Of The Office Of Nutrition Policy And Promotion.
>
> Only 30% of Canadians are eating the recommended minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables daily, reported Blacklock's Reporter.
>
> Higher prices for basic groceries like cabbage and spaghetti are running at three and four times the rate of general inflation, showed new Statistics Canada figures.
>
> […][T]he average family of four is expected to spend up to $16,288.41 annually on food this year — up an additional $1,065.60 from 2022.

So what did Justin do? Well, like any other stupid communist dictator, he decided to pick someone to blame for the logical consequences of his own actions. He decided to blame the private businesses who supply people with food. He wants to tax them to punish them for the food inflation that his own spending spree caused.

Rebel News explains:

> Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has threatened to tax Canadian grocers in a bid to lower grocery costs for families nationwide.
>
> […]While at the Liberal caucus retreat in London, Ontario, Trudeau demanded that grocers devise a plan to stabilize prices by Thanksgiving. Otherwise, tax

> measures may be on the way for Loblaw, Metro, Empire, Walmart and Costco.
>
> […]Trudeau did not rule anything out on what those consequences could be, "including tax measures."
>
> […]The call for relief comes as grocery prices rose 8.5% in July — nearly three times the overall inflation rate.
>
> However, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) believes another tax will not improve affordability when Canadians go to checkouts across the country.
>
> "The last thing Canadians need is a grocery tax," said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. "Instead of hammering Canadians with a grocery tax, Trudeau should scrap his carbon tax, making food prices more expensive."

Canada has one of the highest carbon taxes in the industrialized world. I wonder if Canadian voters realized that they would have to starve, in order to save the planet from global warming?

How did this happen? Well, Justin Trudeau doesn't have any education or experience in finance. Instead, his policies are based on his experience of growing up with a silver spoon in his mouth, thanks to his famous, rich father. All he knows how to do is to spend money to try to buy votes. And this massive spending spree has caused inflation in Canada to skyrocket. His anti-business taxes have caused businesses to raise prices just to stay open. But that's not enough. Justin also decided to import millions of unskilled people from other countries, regardless of their ability to speak English, or work. So Canadian taxpayers have to pay more housing, education, police, and basically everything, because the demand has gone up while the supply is diminishing.

Justin thought this would make people like him. And for a while, it did. But now voters are realizing that there is a bill to pay for all of Justin's "generosity". And that bill has been passed on to the young people who overwhelmingly voted for him. Young people and Canada thought that they were voting for global warming, gay rights and abortion on demand through all 9 months of pregnancy. Actually, what they got was average home prices of $500,000 and starvation. I hope they are learning their lesson: don't trust school teachers to give you an accurate view of how the world works.

Biden administration charges two 70-year-old pro-life women

September 19, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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These days it seems like normal people with morals are the primary targets of Biden administration law enforcement. Concerned parent? Then you're a domestic terrorist. Pro-life? Then we need to pre-dawn raid your house and point assault rifles at your wife and kids. Whistleblower against Hunter Biden? Then maybe you need to be punished for that.

Here's the latest story from Fox News:

> Three pro-lifers who protested at, and blocked access to a Washington, D.C. reproductive health care services clinic in October 2020 were found guilty of federal charges by a jury on Monday.
>
> The Department of Justice said in a press release that 41-year-old Jonathan Darnel of Arlington, Virginia; 73-year-old Jean Marshall of Kingston, Massachusetts; and 74-year-old Joan Bell of Montague, New Jersey were each convicted of federal civil rights conspiracy and freedom of access to clinic entrances (FACE) act offenses.
>
> The DOJ said Marshall and Bell traveled to D.C. to meet with Darnel and to participate in a clinic blockade that was coordinated and streamed live by another co-conspirator on Facebook.
>
> During the blockade on Oct. 22, 2020, the defendants are accused of creating a blockade at the clinic, which prevented the clinic from providing reproductive health services.

Well, that is certainly a crime. It's not as bad as what BLM and Antifa did during their rioting, though. And many of them got off Scot-free, because the Biden administration law enforcement agreed with what they were doing. So what do you think is a fair sentence for creating a blockade at an abortion clinic?

The Biden administration wants "UP TO ELEVEN YEARS IN PRISON":

> U.S. District Court Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly, who presided over the trial of Marshall, Bell and Darnel, ordered all three defendants immediately detained as required by statute.
>
> Sentencing for the trio will be scheduled at a later date, and each faces up to 11 years in prison, three years of probation and a fine of up to $350,000.

It really does seem like there is a two-tiered justice system in this country. One for Democrats, and one for their opponents.

The Federalist has an especially shocking example:

> On Friday, President Joe Biden's allegedly "non-binary" nuclear waste expert,

> Sam Brinton, was sentenced in a grand larceny case over stealing women's luggage from U.S. airports. Police say Brinton stole a bag from Harry Reid International Airport in Las Vegas with an estimated worth of around $3,670. Authorities also charged Brinton with stealing luggage at a second airport in Minnesota.
>
> The former Energy Department official took a plea deal over the Las Vegas bag theft Friday, agreeing to pay a $3,670 fine to the victim and a $500 criminal fee — no jail time required. The Minnesota theft remains an open case, with the next hearing scheduled for Monday, according to Fox News.
>
> Contrast Brinton's slap on the wrist to a pro-Trump meme creator convicted of illegal election influencing last month, and it's no wonder Americans see a two-tiered justice system.
>
> Douglass Mackey faces 10 years behind bars over a 2016 post mocking how low Democrats want to set barriers to the ballot box.

Federal prosecutors didn't even want to give Hunter Biden any jail time, and he is accused of serious tax crimes and gun crimes. I guess tax crimes and gun crimes are only serious if you're a Republican. If you're the President's son, then it's all OK.

How is any of this fair? The only way to get the people in the government to have integrity and honor is to vote the secular leftists out of the government. We have a chance to do that in 2024.

Soros-backed “Defund The Police” DA celebrates banning cash bail in Illinois

September 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I live in a red state and I am constantly running into people who moved here from blue states like California and Illinois. I ask people why they left, and the most common answer is that taxpayer-funded law enforcement is not protecting the public from illegal immigrants and other criminals. Why is that? Well, a big part of the problem is far-left district attorneys backed by George Soros.

Here’s the latest from Daily Wire:

> On Monday, Illinois became the first state to eliminate cash bail in a move celebrated by Democratic officials and criticized by law enforcement.
>
> After a lengthy legal battle, Illinois’ Safety, Accountability, Fairness, and Equity-Today Act (SAFE-T Act) went into effect on Monday, meaning that meeting cash bail can no longer be a condition for release.

The bill was praised by Cook County District Attorney Kim Foxx, “a George Soros-backed prosecutor who has faced criticism over her approach to law enforcement in the Chicago area”.

Ending cash bail means that people arrested for a crime don’t have to pay their bail amount with cash in order to be released. They get their money back when they appear for trial. So, people who are accused of crimes can get released without actually paying any immediate penalty. It’s not even clear to me why they would appear in court, since they have paid nothing that they need to get back.

The police don’t like it:

> The cash bail provision of the SAFE-T Act was first put on hold by the Illinois Supreme Court before it upheld the law in July, a decision criticized by the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police.
>
> “The court ignored the pleas of nearly every prosecutor in the state of Illinois, Democrat and Republican, that the elimination of cash bail will put dangerous criminals back on the street, instead of keeping them in jail or forcing them to post cash bail as they await trial. Many of those offenders will commit crimes again within hours of their release,” Illinois FOP State Lodge President Chris Southwood said after the decision was released.
>
> “And who will have to arrest those offenders again and again? The police officers whose jobs have been made immeasurably more difficult by all of the new anti-law enforcement measures that are in place,” he added.

How well has George Soros / Defund the Police policies been working out in Illinois? They’ve been soft on crime for years, but hard on legal gun owners and self-defense

against criminals. Is that a good way to make crime rates go down?

Illinois Policy explains:

> Crime in Chicago overall has increased during the past five years by nearly 20%, according to an official report by the Chicago Police Department. The year-over-year change in crime was even greater last year. Between 2021 and 2022, overall crime in Chicago increased by 41%, after overall crime had decreased each year in 2019 and 2020 and slightly increased in 2021.
>
> Theft is driving the overall increase in crime. Car theft is up 114% since 2018, and other thefts increased by 32% since 2018. Just last year, motor vehicle theft increased by 102% and theft by 56%.

I did see an interesting related story coming out of Florida. Apparently, these Soros-backed Defund-the-Police district attorneys were also in Florida. But something different happened in Florida – Ron DeSantis fired those soft-on-crime people. And he appointed new people.

Florida's Voice reported this:

> Newly appointed State Attorney for Orange and Osceola Counties Andrew Bain provided an update following his first month in office on Thursday.
>
> Bain outlined changes such as the reinstitution of mandatory minimum sentencing for the possession of firearms by felons, bringing back former prosecutors, and sending use of force cases to a grand jury.
>
> In August, Gov. Ron DeSantis appointed Bain to replace State Attorney Monique Worrell from the ninth Judicial Circuit, following her immediate suspension.
>
> Bain is taking action to reinstitute mandatory minimum sentencing for the possession of firearms by felons.
>
> DeSantis previously said Worrell's practices or policies of avoiding minimum mandatory sentences for gun crimes "not only defies the expressed will of the Florida Legislature, it also subjects the residents to increased risk of harm as violent criminals in the community are too often left on the streets or prematurely returned to the streets to cause, further violence and mischief."
>
> "The decision to restore this law and practice is driven by State Attorney Bain's unwavering dedication to public safety and accountability," a press release said.

Right now, we are deciding who we should pick for the Republican candidate for President. I like DeSantis because he has all the achievements. And he had to fight for them, and fight through getting called names by the news media. Something to think about.

New study: same-sex attraction isn’t fixed

September 21, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Federalist reports on what researchers have found about the nature of same-sex attraction. Is it fixed? Or does it change over time? I think that gay activists would like everyone to believe that same-sex attraction is fixed, but to learn the truth, we should look at what the scientific research says.

Excerpt:

> There is not only no scientific evidence that sexual orientation is immutable, there is conclusive scientific evidence that most people who experience exclusive same-sex attraction end up developing an interest in the opposite sex over time.
>
> This is so well established by now that scholars are busy publishing methods to measure frequency of sexual orientation change in massive longitudinal studies of youth and young adults. (I.e., How many times in nine years can we expect a homosexual sexual orientation to change? Is the change associated with lifestyle habits? Who changes more frequently: males or females?)
>
> That basic fact was already settled science when Obergefell came before the Supreme Court. Half a dozen rigorous studies could be cited from the late 1990s and early 2000s, but the most noteworthy probably remains a Cornell-led study published in 2007.
>
> In this study, Dr. Rich Savin-Williams examined a representative sample of more than 12,000 American youth, following each from the age of 16 to 22. Rather than rely on an individual’s reconstruction of his or her past based on current identity, researchers met with subjects three times throughout the six-year period. Each time, they asked individuals (via a computer, to protect privacy)

> whether they had had a romantic attraction to a member of the opposite or same sex since their last interview.
>
> For instance, 17-year-old males were asked if, in the past year, they had had a romantic attraction to another male or female. About 1.5 percent reported only having a romantic attraction to other males. Five years later, when that 1.5 percent were asked about their romantic attractions since last interview, the overwhelming majority (70 percent) reported a 180-degree flip in their sexual orientation—they only had romantic feelings for women.
>
> Similarly, among females, about 40 percent switched from exclusive same-sex attraction to exclusive opposite-sex attraction. Most of the rest (45 percent of the total) reported they had feelings for both men and women. Only 1 percent of women who, at 17, reported a full year of exclusive same-sex attraction reported a similar experience in the five years that followed.

This research is in agreement with previous research on identical twin studies reported by the prestigious science journal Nature:

> When one identical twin is gay, there is about a 20% chance that the other will be as well. But because this rate is not 100%, it is thought that environmental factors play a role as well. One of the best characterized is the 'older brother effect': the chance of a man being gay increases by 33% for each older brother he has. The reason is not clear, although one hypothesis holds that the mother's immune system begins to react against male antigens and alter the fetus's development.

So, it turns out that homosexual behavior is a lot more related to free choices than it is to innate, fixed dispositions. That's what the science says. It's not what the politicians say. It's not what the Supreme Court says. It's not what Hollywood says. It's not what journalists say. But it is what science has found to be true about the universe. We are in control of our behaviors, and we have to choose things that are likely to work out in the long-term – not just what feels good to us in the moment.

Whenever I hear gay activists complaining that they have no choice but to give in to their "innate, fixed, biological" sexual attractions, I always think about how I've never been married and have had to deal with sexual attraction to the opposite sex. As a Christian, there is simply no Biblical support for sex outside of marriage. So, that means that I've had to just live with not being allowed to act on my desires. In fact, this is the normal Christian life. There was a time when people had more skepticism about their feelings and desires, and they knew that self-control was a good thing. But now it seems as if everyone is so desperate to be liked that we tell everyone yes to everything that they feel like doing. We now consider every moral viewpoint as equal to any other – all the better to do what makes us feel happy. The important goal is that we all feel good right now, and who cares about the damage that our selfishness will cause down the road? We can just act surprised when that happens and pretend that there is no such thing as cause

and effect. I can remember a time when Christians in particular had some suspicion about following your heart, because the heart was deceitful and selfish. I guess those days are over, and suddenly feelings are ruling over reason and self-control.

It's pretty clear that not everything that a person feels like doing is good for them. A lot of decisions that people make to feel good right now lead to outcomes where they or the people who are depending on them will be harmed. For example, lots of people feel like staying home from a school exam, or staying home from their jobs, or drinking alcohol all night, or taking drugs. We used to have more confidence about telling people that not everything they wanted was good for them, and to have more self-control, and to think of how their decisions would harm others. Today, society has drifted away from objective moral boundaries and self-control toward subjective feelings and moral relativism, we are all finding it more difficult to tell people that they should choose to adhere to moral standards. We always seem to be looking to big government to make our irresponsible, reckless choices to be happy in the moment "work out" somehow.

Today, when people make poor decisions that wreck their families, hurt their kids, damage their health, etc. we are more likely to tax the people who haven't been selfish and reckless in order to pay for government programs that "fix" the outcomes of the selfish, reckless people. In some countries, you can get free single mother welfare, free taxpayer-funded abortions, free sex-changes, free treatment for sexually-transmitted diseases, free rounds of IVF, and so on. Just do whatever you want and someone else who had more self-control than you did will pay for it for you. That's why we have a twenty-trillion dollar debt, which we never had during the time when we still had the courage to tell people not to do things that were risky, and would be expensive to fix when they blew up.

When did it become normal to think that cause and effect were so unpredictable that people shouldn't be blamed and held accountable for making bad decisions? When did it become normal to think that doing what feels good for ourselves should be rewarded with other people's money, through big government programs? When did it become normal to take people to court to force them to celebrate your self-centeredness, just because their disagreement with what you were doing made you feel bad?

54-year-old feminist angry at dating agency for not finding her a rich husband

September 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kate Mulvey at age 53 expects that rich men will want to marry her

A little while ago, I blogged about a 47-year-old mother of three who sued a dating agency for failing to find her a rich husband. That was pretty bad, but I found something even worse. A 54-year-old woman who spend all her savings on a dating agency. She expected them to find her loads of rich men who want to marry her – despite her never having invested anything in them.

The UK Telegraph reports:

> Glass of wine in hand, the man sitting opposite me in the restaurant was in full flow. While he was droning on about his work commitments, I zoned in and out trying to work out how on earth I was going to get to through this first date. I had expected to meet an eligible bachelor, but he had turned out to be so boring that he made me want to stick asparagus up my nostrils.
>
> This memory came flooding back when I read about, Tereza Burki, a City financier who, last week, successfully sued a Knightsbridge-based elite matchmaking service, for the return of her £12,600 annual fee after they failed to find her the man of her dreams.
>
> A couple of years ago, I too joined an expensive matchmaking agency. I had just come out of a seven year relationship, and was on the wrong side of 50.
>
> I soon tired of online dating and receiving messages from over weight baldies

> who peppered their emails with childish emojis. I hankered to find Mr Right-for-me, a man who was suitably educated and a successful professional.
>
> And so this is how I found myself, throwing money (my entire savings to be precise) to an upmarket matchmaking agency in central London. The agency claimed to filter out the undesirables, the mediocre and give clients the personal touch, so I handed over the hefty sum of £6,000.
>
> As I waited to be matched with someone from their 'extensive database', I idly imagined my handsome date, cashmere polo neck, a bit academic and kind. We'd eat steak tartare and swap notes on our latest clever box-set find and favourite novels.
>
> The first indication that all was not as I had expected came when I met personal matchmaker at a Park Lane hotel for 'tea and an interview'… told her how I loved folk music, my favourite film was The Deer Hunter, and enjoyed weekends in the countryside.
>
> […]A few days later she emailed me with the details of W, "a successful entrepreneur who had travelled extensively and also liked folk music". When I met him at a pub in Richmond, I was shocked. I was expecting a cultured and dynamic man, instead I got a man in a pair of jeans, a moth eaten jumper and the table manners of a modern day Baldrick.
>
> And therein lies the rub. These agencies trade on their exclusivity, yet the men I met were far from the international super elite they promised.

Isn't this terrible? Clearly the dating agency is to blame. It should be easy for a penniless, feminist hedonist to find rich men who want to spend all their money taking care of a 54-year-old woman who had *literally nothing to do with the process by which they earned all that money*.

One thing we know about her for sure is that she is impractical. She is 54 years old and has just spent her last savings on a *dating agency*. From her other comments about the type of men she is looking for, we can infer that she wasted a lot of money on travel, fine dining, and other frivolous experiences designed to produce feelings of sophistication without any practical plan for preparing for the financial demands of old age. What's the point of having fun "in the moment" if you don't have any plan to allow sustainable recreation in the future, when you're too old to work?

I spent some time reading articles by Kate Mulvey, and here is what I was able to determine:

- she has no useful degrees – she paid for useless degrees in Italian and French, instead of studying something useful, like computer science or nursing or petroleum engineering. Her "writing" is all about fashion, dating and "lifestyles"
- her opinion on children: "uppity children take your time, emotions and energy" – she sees children as a detriment to her highest priority (her career). She says "I, however, have lived a life of unfettered freedom to take on projects, write books and

travel”
- she had loads of entertaining men “beating a path to [her] door” when she was younger
- she spend thousands of pounds on plastic surgery
- she blames her lack of marriage success on her being “brainier” than men
- she turned down men who wanted to marry her, as late as age 33
- her book is called “Accidental Singleton” because she thinks that her approach to life – anti-marriage hedonism – has “accidentally” left her single and penniless at age 54 (as if it wasn’t her fault!)

Although she talks a lot about being intelligent, it seems to me that an intelligent woman would have practical degrees, savings and an awareness of what men actually want from a woman – and WHEN they want it. Men want a woman to support them in their most difficult period, just after they graduate and hit the job market. Starting out in a career is hard because the man doesn’t have savings or a resume or references. The support of a young, attractive, virtuous woman means everything during those difficult years. This is when a wife has the most impact on her husband’s ability to earn and save, on his mental health, on his physical health, etc.

Somehow, this narcissist thinks that she can just show up in a man’s life, after he has done all his earning alone, and grab hold of the things that she never helped build. She wasted all her youth and beauty chasing experiences with attractive bad boys, but she thinks that it’s reasonable for a man to invest all his wealth in her. A woman has value to a man at the time when he is attempting to do difficult things, but lacks support.

What exactly is it that a woman like Kate has to offer a man, given her life choices? Does anyone think that this woman has marriage-character? Does anyone think that her life of selfishness and hedonism has prepared her to be a good wife? What kind of conversation about moral obligations could you have with someone who has only ever done what felt good to her in the moment? Has her string of failed relationships with hot bad boys prepared her to be trusting and unselfish? How about to be faithful? Or even to be content? What is it that she thinks that she is offering that would justify the heavy investment that she is asking for, especially in an age of no-fault-divorce and anti-male divorce courts?

I think people really underestimate how much goes into making a good wife. The character she has to develop. The skills that she has to develop. The way she treats her husband, which often comes from carefully cultivating virtues like chastity and sobriety. Her worldview, which affects whether she has practical abilities like love, forgiveness and self-control. Her ability to be good with money. Her ability to nurture others and make social connections consistent with marriage and homemaking. Her ability to bear children, and then nurture them during the critical first 5 years after – not to mention homeschooling, which is increasingly valuable in a time when underperforming government-run schools seek to indoctrinate, rather than educate, children.

Nothing about this woman makes me think that she has any marriage-related character

traits or abilities. Any idiot can spend someone else’s money on their own feelings, fun and thrills. But it takes a carefully crafted woman to really do the work of a wife. Marriage isn’t there so that women can be happy. Marriage is an enterprise. Being selfish – doing what is easy, and what feels good moment by moment – doesn’t prepare a woman for the enterprise.

Knight and Rose Show – Episode 39: Former Muslim Hatun Tash, Part 2

September 23, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Welcome to episode 39 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose continue discussing how to debate Islam with famous former Muslim, Hatun Tash. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 39:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose continue our discussion with former Muslim Hatun Tash. We talk about whether deception is permitted in Islam. We discuss what the Qur'an says about women, and what women can expect in the afterlife. We discuss Andrew Tate and whether he is a real Muslim. Finally, we ask Hatun about persevering through challenges to her ministry. This is the second episode in a two part series.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Hatun Tash is is a well-known Christian preacher who regularly debates Islam and the Koran. An ex-Muslim and convert to Christianity, she is director of the ministry Defend Christ Critique Islam. She has faced threats to her life on multiple occasions and was attacked and stabbed on 25 July 2021 while preaching at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park. You can find her collection of very popular and entertaining videos on YouTube in the Hatun Tash DCCI Ministries channel.

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William Lane Craig lectures on failure in the Christian life

September 24, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here is the video:

Intro:

- the topic of failure is not one that is often discussed by Christians
- failure #1: failure in the Christian life which is the result of sin
- failure #2: when a Christian is defeated while trying to serve God
- the consequences for failure #1 can be worse for the Christian
- the consequences for failure #2 can be worse for the world as whole
- how is it possible for a person to fail when they are obeying God? (#2)
- how can it be that God can call someone to a task then let them fail?
- failure is not persecution – persecution is normal for Christians
- failure is not trials – testing is normal for Christians to grow

Bill's failure:

- Bill had submitted all the coursework for his second doctoral degree
- but he had to pass a comprehensive oral examination
- he failed to pass the comprehensive exam
- Bill and Jan and his supporters had all prayed for him to pass
- how could God allow this to happen?

Solution to the problem:

- God's will for us may be that we fail at the things we try in life
- there are things that God may teach us through failure
- Bill learned that human relationships are more important than careers
- we need to realize that "success" in life is not worldly success
- true success is getting to know God well during your life
- and failure may be the best way to get to know God well
- it may even be possible to fail to know God while achieving a lot
- the real measure of a man is loving God and loving your fellow man

Practical:

- give thanks to God regardless of your circumstances
- try to learn from your failure
- never give up

The ending of Bill's story:

- Bill spent an entire year preparing for a re-take of his exam
- Bill was awarded his second doctorate “magna cum laude” (with great distinction)
- Bill learned that American students are not well prepared for exams
- the year of studying remedied his inadequate American education
- in retrospect, he is thankful for the failure – he learned more

If you like this, you should pick up Craig’s book “Hard Questions, Real Answers“, which has a chapter on this problem.

New study: there is no gay gene that causes homosexuality

September 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I heard one of the authors of this new study commenting on how he was a gay man, and the purpose of his research was to show a genetic basis for homosexuality, in order to make it equal to race. His goal was to make it impossible to disagree with homosexual behavior, because homosexual behavior would be seen as natural and normal. Let's see if his new study helps him out.

The blog of the peer-reviewed journal PLOS One reported on the new study, which was published in the prestigious journal Science.

Excerpt:

> The once-prevailing concept of a "gay gene" dictating sexual orientation has been put to rest in a powerhouse study published today in *Science*. The work brilliantly illustrates the very nature of science: evolving with the input of new data, especially the large-scale contributions of bioinformatics and crowd-sourcing.
>
> "We formed a large international consortium and collected data for more than 500,000 people, comparing DNA and self-reported sexual behavior. This is approximately 100 times bigger than any previous study on this topic," said lead author Andrea Ganna, of the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Finland and an instructor at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, opening a news conference earlier this week.
>
> […]The investigation estimates a genetic contribution to same-sex sexual behavior as under 1 percent, thanks to analysis of a trove of data from the UK Biobank and the consumer genetic testing company 23andme.

So, there you have it, there is no gay gene. But this is of course something we've known for decades, as all the previous studies had found the same thing.

The normal way that people do these studies is to analyze identical twins, and see how often both identical twins are gay.

> Eight major studies of identical twins in Australia, the U.S., and Scandinavia during the last two decades all arrive at the same conclusion: gays were not born that way.
>
> "At best genetics is a minor factor," says Dr. Neil Whitehead, PhD. Whitehead worked for the New Zealand government as a scientific researcher for 24 years, then spent four years working for the United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency. Most recently, he serves as a consultant to Japanese universities about the effects of radiation exposure. His PhD is in biochemistry and statistics.

> Identical twins have the same genes or DNA. They are nurtured in equal prenatal conditions. If homosexuality is caused by genetics or prenatal conditions and one twin is gay, the co-twin should also be gay.
>
> "Because they have identical DNA, it ought to be 100%," Dr. Whitehead notes. But the studies reveal something else. "If an identical twin has same-sex attraction the chances the co-twin has it are only about 11% for men and 14% for women."
>
> Because identical twins are always genetically identical, homosexuality cannot be genetically dictated. "No-one is born gay," he notes. "The predominant things that create homosexuality in one identical twin and not in the other have to be post-birth factors."
>
> Dr. Whitehead believes same-sex attraction (SSA) is caused by "non-shared factors," things happening to one twin but not the other, or a personal response to an event by one of the twins and not the other.

By the way, a previous study also found that transgender behavior was not genetic, but was clearly linked to environmental factors such as peer approval and social media.

Here is the report from Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.
>
> Littman surveyed more than 250 parents of children who suddenly developed gender dysphoria symptoms during or after puberty.
>
> […]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

A previous study also found that children are more likely to be gay if they are raised by gay adults. It was reported in AOL News.

Excerpt:

> Walter Schumm knows what he's about to do is unpopular: publish a study arguing that gay parents are more likely to raise gay children than straight parents. But the Kansas State University family studies professor has a detailed analysis that past almost aggressively ideological researchers never had.
>
> […]His study on sexual orientation, out next month, says that gay and lesbian parents are far more likely to have children who become gay. "I'm trying to prove

> that it’s not 100 percent genetic,” Schumm tells AOL News.
>
> His study is a meta-analysis of existing work. First, Schumm extrapolated data from 10 books on gay parenting… [and] skewed his data so that only self-identified gay and lesbian children would be labeled as such.
>
> […]Schumm concluded that children of lesbian parents identified themselves as gay 31 percent of the time; children of gay men had gay children 19 percent of the time, and children of a lesbian mother and gay father had at least one gay child 25 percent of the time.
>
> […]Finally, Schumm looked at the existing academic studies… In all there are 26 such studies. Schumm ran the numbers from them and concluded that, surprisingly, 20 percent of the kids of gay parents were gay themselves. When children only 17 or older were included in the analysis, 28 percent were gay.

It’s very important for people to understand that there is a trend in society to make every behavior traditionally seen as sinful into something caused by genetics. The twin goals of this effort are to insulate the behaviors from criticism, and to minimize evaluation of the effects of these behaviors on society as a whole. The genetic argument was used extensively to normalize same-sex marriage and transgenderism. I have seen the genetic argument used to defend other behaviors like pedophilia and incest. But the scientific research does nothing to support any of these arguments. What’s amazing is how a majority of people in the United States have such false beliefs about the scientific research. They vastly overestimate the number of gay people, and also the influence of genetics.

Biden administration opens border to illegals, but wants to deport homeschoolers

September 26, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Everyone knows that the border is in a crisis right now. Tons of unskilled immigrants are being admitted, and most of them cannot even speak English, much less find employment. The Biden administration is actively making it easier for this sort of lawlessness. But, if you come into legally and work to pay your own bills, then the Biden administration wants to get rid of you.

Here's the first story from the Washington Examiner:

> More than 300,000 immigrants attempted to enter the United States unlawfully or were paroled during August, surpassing all national records and spelling a catastrophe for the Biden administration that claimed its sweeping policy reforms were working.
>
> […]Since President Joe Biden took office, Border Patrol agents have apprehended more than 7 million people who illegally entered the country between ports of entry nationwide.

The Biden administration thinks that people who just cross the border illegally are the "good" kind of immigrants.

The bad kind of immigrants are the ones who are fleeing persecution, who are married with kids, and who work to pay their own way. They have to go!

Here's an article from NBC local news:

> For 15 years, the Romeike family has lived in Morristown. Uwe Romeike, the father of the seven Romeike children, works as a piano accompanist at Carson-Newman University. Now, they say, the U.S. government is trying to deport them.
>
> The family moved to the U.S. from Germany in 2008. Their application for asylum said they were fined by the German government roughly $9,000 after homeschooling their children, court documents show.
>
> An immigration judge initially granted the family's application for asylum. The U.S. Department of Justice appealed the decision, and the U.S. Board of Immigration Appeals revoked the family's asylum status, documents show.
>
> The family, with the help of the U.S. Home School Defense Association, appealed to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals. A three-judge panel unanimously ruled against the family.

They're paying their own way, that's not the sort of immigrant Biden wants. He wants people who will impose costs on other taxpayers. Biden doesn't want Western immigrants who believe in the free market system, school choice and Christianity. He wants people who come from communist countries who vote for big government, and pass their bills to

people who are here legally.

Disgusting.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

September 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.
>
> But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.
>
> There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God

exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.

One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.

So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.

> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, “So is there a God or not?”

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these “subjective atheists”?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says “I lack a belief in the gravitational force!”. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God’s existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don’t care about a person’s psychology.

Why aren't men marrying? nearly 70% of unmarried women voted for Democrats

September 28, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Because I'm still unmarried and have done well in my career and finances, and I sometimes approached by people who think that it is a good time for me to get serious about marriage. Although the previous generation of women was very good at marriage, the current generation of younger women is terrible at marriage. And you can see how terrible by looking at how they voted.

Here's an article from Breitbart News to explain:

> Sixty-eight percent of unmarried women favored Democrats in the U.S. House midterm elections compared to 31 percent who favored Republicans, according to exit poll data.
>
> […]A majority of women (67 percent) also said they were either angry or dissatisfied with Roe v. Wade being overturned, with 72 percent of women who supported Democrat candidates agreeing, compared to 27 percent who supported Republicans. On the other hand, 30 percent of women were either enthusiastic or satisfied with Roe being overturned, with a majority supporting Republicans (84 percent) compared to Democrats (15 percent).

Daily Wire adds:

> Studies suggest single women vote Democrat more often than married women because they depend on a single income, have feminist attitudes towards social issues like abortion and pre-marital sexual behavior, and agree with ideologies that redefine gender roles and family responsibilities.
>
> […]Other notable figures from CNN's exit poll data show that 72% of women between 18 and 29 voted Democrat.

Are women who vote Democrat a good match for a man who is interested in marriage? Let's see.

1. Democrats support no-fault divorce laws, and that's dangerous for men, because we get financially ruined by divorce courts. Divorce courts regularly disregard pre-nups, even if you have one. Men only marry women who hate divorce. Women who hate divorce think that it is their responsibility to evaluate a husband candidate, and then commit to him, no matter what happens. Society just isn't making women who want the responsibility of choosing a good man, and making a life-long commitment to him.

2. Democrats support abortion, and that's horrifying for marriage-minded men. Good men value the needs of children above the needs of selfish adults (it's our protective nature). Pro-abortion women think that they need to be free to "have fun" with attractive men who won't commit to them before sex. And then if they happen to get pregnant, they can

just stop their new baby from living. Unborn babies have their own DNA, distinct from the parents. They are human beings, distinct from their parents. Marriage-minded men don't want to marry women who are willing to kill other people in order to escape from responsibilities.

3. Democrat women typically value careers over children. They want to put their kids in daycare, and go back to work. But marriage-minded men want someone trustworthy to stay home with very young children for the first 5 years. Research indicates that children benefit from having mom in the home for at least the first 2 years. Marriage-minded men don't want to get married to women who are going to throw the kids in daycare and go back to work.

4. Democrat women prefer higher taxes and more government spending. When husband earns money, they think that government knows how to spend it better. And they think that teachers, judges and bureaucrats (who are paid by husband) are better at leading the home than husband. Marriage-minded men aren't interested in paying government people to run his home. He wants choices in everything – especially about who will educate the children.

5. Democrat women favor subsidizing single mothers who make fatherless babies. Instead of setting moral boundaries on single motherhood by choice, Democrat women want to tax husbands to pay for single moms. Marriage-minded men know they only have enough money to pay for their own household, and their own kids. They don't have money to pay for other people's kids.

6. Democrat women are in favor of same-sex marriage. That means that they think that marriage is just an arrangement of 2 or more people based on feelings, with the goal of making the adults happy and socially respectable. "Love makes a family" they say. And they think it's fine to deprive a child of their relationships with a biological mother, or a biological father, or both. Marriage-minded men know the research on how all this affects children. And we aren't going to marry any woman who puts the selfish desires of adults above the needs of the children for their mom and dad.

If women don't understand the needs of husbands and children, then marriage-minded men will not marry them

In conclusion, I think it's important for people who expect marriage-minded men to get married to understands that most of the young women who are available would not make good wives and mothers for us. Men want marriage because they want to lead a home, and to be respected as leaders in their home. If society produces a generation of women who believe in student loan forgiveness, infanticide, gay rights, high taxes, and government regulation of fathers, then society will have to deal with declining marriage rates.

Husbands want to lead. We can't lead if we don't get to keep what we earn. We can't lead if we are overruled by teachers, judges and bureaucrats. We can't lead if we are dragged into divorce courts. Women will have to choose between voting Democrat, and having husbands.

ACLU fails to defeat Tennessee ban on for-profit child mutilation

September 29, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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What do secular leftists think about morality? Well, one of the most secular leftist organizations in America is the ACLU. And what do they do? They help promiscuous adults to terminate their own children. They help selfish adults separate children from their biological mothers and fathers. And they help people who mutilate children for money. But that last one is not going so well.

Here's the story from the Daily Wire:

> A federal appeals court on Thursday upheld Tennessee and Kentucky's bans on transgender treatments for children such as puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and gender surgeries.
>
> The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 2-1 to reject a challenge to the laws from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and families of trans-identifying children.
>
> "This is a relatively new diagnosis with ever-shifting approaches to care over the last decade or two. Under these circumstances, it is difficult for anyone to be sure about predicting the long-term consequences of abandoning age limits of any sort for these treatments," wrote Chief Judge Jeffrey Sutton.

I would imagine that the ACLU is very angry about this, because how will doctors mutilate confused, vulnerable children for money now? Those terrible conservative voters! They got up on election day in Tennessee, and they went straight to the polling location and voted against child mutilation for profit. How mean!

> Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti celebrated the ruling as well, posting on X, "Tennessee's law that protects children from irreversible gender-related medical interventions remains in effect."

Mean!

> Tennessee Representative Jason Zachary (R) called the ruling a "big win."

> "Protecting children is a priority in TN," Zachary said.

Mean!

> Another state congressman, Representative William Lamberth (R), said Tennessee will "continue to lead the way" when it comes to "protecting our children."

> "This is a huge win in the fight against a dangerous and extreme ideology that harms children and ruins lives," Lamberth said.

Mean!

Such terrible people in Tennessee! Don't they know that if you "don't judge" then people who are doing evil things will like you?

Gender surgeries are big business in the United States:

> The number of gender surgeries nearly tripled in the U.S. from 2016 to 2019, according to an analysis published Wednesday in JAMA Network Open. In 2016, there were about 4,550 procedures, and that number spiked to around 13,000 in 2019.
>
> Hundreds of girls in the U.S., some as young as 12, have gotten elective, gender-related double mastectomies to remove their healthy breasts over the last few years.
>
> Meanwhile, it is more popular than ever for youth to adopt new gender identities. An estimated 300,000 minors aged 13 to 17 identified as transgender as of last year.

You might remember how the Vanderbilt University Medical Center was delighted to chop up healthy kids for cash.

Here is more from Daily Wire:

> "It's a lot of money," VUMC Clinic for Transgender Health's Dr. Shayne Sebold Taylor said at one Medicine Grand Rounds lecture, video reveals. "These surgeries make a lot of money."
>
> Taylor noted that a "chest reconstruction" can bring in $40,000 per patient, and someone "just on routine hormone treatment, who I'm only seeing a few times a year, can bring in several thousand dollars … and actually makes money for the hospital."
>
> Citing the Philadelphia Center for Transgender Surgery, Taylor said vaginoplasty surgeries can generate $20,000, gushing that it "has to be an underestimate," since hospital stay, anesthesia, post-op visits, and other add-ons are not included in the total.
>
> "And the female-to-male bottom surgeries, these are huge money makers," the doctor continued, adding that such surgeries could bring in "up to $100,000" for the hospital.
>
> Some clinics are "entirely" "supported" financially by such phalloplasty surgeries, Taylor boasted.
>
> "These surgeries are labor intensive, there are a lot of follow-ups, they require a lot of our time, and they make money," she emphasized. "They make money for the hospital."

Do you live in a blue state? Why? Why would you pay taxes to people who don't protect children from predators? It should be a top priority for Christians and conservatives to

plan out their educations, careers, and savings to get to a good country, a good state, a good city. Live where you don’t have to pay evil people to rule over you.

I can guarantee you that conservatives and Christians in Tennessee are getting their money’s worth out of their government.

Knight and Rose Show #40: J. Warner Wallace: New Cold-Case Christianity

September 30, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Welcome to episode 40 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview J. Warner Wallace about his new revised and updated edition of "Cold Case Christianity". If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 40:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Christian apologist J. Warner Wallace about the updated and expanded edition of his book "Cold-Case Christianity". Can modern people take a book seriously if it contains miracles? Are the biographies of Jesus reliable? Did the bias of the Gospel writers affect their accuracy? We also discuss the other sections, including the new afterword that responds the critics.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

J. Warner Wallace is a Dateline featured cold-case homicide detective, popular national speaker and best-selling author. He continues to consult on cold-case investigations while serving as a Senior Fellow at the Colson Center for Christian Worldview. He is also an adjunct professor of apologetics at Talbot School of Theology (Biola University), Gateway Seminary, and Southern Evangelical Seminary, and a faculty member at Summit Ministries. J. Warner became a Christ-follower at the age of thirty-five after investigating the claims of the New Testament gospels using his skill set as a detective.

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The downside of the soul mate / fairy tale view of relationships

October 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

(Image: Husband and wife doing some woodworking together)

Astonishing article from the leftist Huffington Post, of all places. (links removed)

Excerpt:

> As millennial women, we were groomed for a white knight fantasy. From childhood favorites such as *Snow White* to adult rom-com staples such as *How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days* or *Sleepless in Seattle*, the media perpetuates a romantic storyline in which compatibility and lasting romance is something effortless, built on chance, sustained by good looks, fun dates and electric sexual chemistry. These story lines shape our expectations for romantic happiness. It is not enough to find someone with whom we are mostly compatible, who would make a good parent, with whom we could learn and grow wrinkly; now, we expect a perfect fit and an easy, instantaneous "connection." In short, we want a soul mate. But it is this desire for a soul mate that is actually the undoing of our happy ending.
>
> A "soul mate" is defined as one who is ideally suited to us, perfectly completes us, one with whom the relationship feels easy and natural. With them, a relationship is just "meant to be"… A survey of young adults conducted by the National Marriage Project found that while 84% of young adults report finding a marriage partner "very important," a full 94% of young adults say they would like to marry a soul mate, and 73% of people ages 18 – 29 believe that there is a soul mate out there for them.

Wow. That doesn't sound like a good approach to me. My approach has always been to pick the girl who was most willing to learn new things. And then to explain to her my vision for marriage and see if I could get her to work independently on that plan before I married her. I don't favor this soul mate approach at all.

Does the "soul mate" approach work?

> We heard that those who get married later and possess a college degree have fewer divorces and more stable marriages. So we spend our twenties trying to find ourselves through travel, accumulating degrees and building a career. Marriage will be the capstone of our achievements, and nothing less than tying the knot with a soul mate will suffice. But the tragic irony is that soul mate thinking makes us increasingly likely to divorce. A study of 1,400 married men and women shows that people who hold soul mate orientations are 150% more likely to end up divorced than those who do not.
>
> **The widespread cultural belief in "soul mate ideology" undermines our chances at happiness because it makes us passive receivers of idyllic romantic expectations. Further, it fosters self-centeredness; one rarely longs to be a soul mate for someone *else*, which would require effort. For this reason, believing in soul mates is one of the most dis-empowering belief systems we can adopt. As millennials, we pride ourselves on actively pursuing the life we want to live, rather than simply accepting whatever hand we are dealt. We are innovative, passionate, proactive and not afraid to take risks. Yet, there is a disconnect when it comes to our desire for lasting love. Though there are prospects around us, we forgo taking the concrete steps needed to build happy compatible relationships because we do not "feel a spark." We are passively waiting on the sidelines for love to "happen," and then wonder why it is so difficult.**

I've always felt that the soul mate approach was like the evil villain in opposition to my noble plan-based approach. My approach is to pick a woman who wants to learn and work hard. Explain your marriage plan to her, and how your marriage plan serves God. My marriage plan accomplishes four goals, for example. 1) Influence the university with apologetics, 2) influence the church with apologetics, 3) provide a model of a good marriage to people in the community, including co-workers, college students and neighbors, and 4) raise effective, influential children who will have an impact for God. Now if you are a Christian woman raised in a church that affirms the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage with this "God has a wonderful plan for your life" stuff, then a specific, non-emotional plan from a man is the last thing you want to hear about.

Their solution is for people to work at compatibility:

> Compatibility is something co-created through intentionality and conscious choice. It involves mutual sacrifice, effort and commitment for the sake of the

> other’s benefit. A recent study found that of the couples who demonstrate above average daily generosity, 50% of them report being “very happy” in marriage; among the low generosity scores, only 14% can say the same. As studies indicate, selflessness is required to create mutual compatibility. It is not instantaneous, nor does it usually begin with true love’s kiss.
>
> We both know from experience that there are some you naturally connect with and others you do not. This is not a call towards forced attraction or companionship. But, our romantic futures should not be placed in the hands of blind chance. It is time we roll up our sleeves and shift our expectations from unattainable perfection to realistic romance, one that accounts for imperfection. We must understand that work in a relationship is a necessary key to success, rather than an indication of imminent failure. We will be letting go of a tired plot line that sets us up for disappointment and embracing an active role in our own unique story.
>
> How refreshing to know that we do not have to be perfect to be lovable, and that our romantic success is not solely dependent on finding the “right” fit, but instead built through cultivating daily moments of generosity, sacrifice and conscious coupling.

So in my case, I am looking for a woman who listens to the plan, develops the skills for the plan and then independently engages in activities to achieve the goals of the plan. In the past, I have had women listen to the plan carefully, including my motivations and experiences that caused me to choose this plan. And they have been willing to read books, listen to lectures, watch debates, to gain the skills needed to make a difference. And they have even engaged independently with activities like public speaking, teaching classes, and so forth. But none of the women who had done that accepted the soul mate / fairy tale view of marriage. They all wanted to hear a good plan, learn useful skills and then get to work. Big difference.

What happens to your worldview if you reject a Creator / moral lawgiver?

October 2, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that there was a news story about how belief in God is declining even further in America. And it's happening the most among younger Americans. In this post, I wanted to talk about the common atheist idea that you can just remove God, and life will go on as before, with everything making perfect sense.

I don't think I've ever written a post about ALL the changes that happen when a person ejects a Creator / Moral Lawgiver from their worldview. And now I don't have to, because this blogger has done the work for us.

He introduces his post like this:

> I recently wrote an article targeted at committed atheists who claim that Christians carry all the burden of proof. There, I pointed out that atheism is not a neutral position and is justified only if it, too, can provide answers for the hard questions of science and human experience. In this article, though, I'd like to offer something similar only targeted to the agnostic, who flirts with the idea that this universe may be devoid of a God after all. My intent is to get such persons to consider the impact that true atheism would logically have on their beliefs and values, and to consider whether this package deal sounds more reasonable than theism.

Now, I've interacted with the author a little by e-mail, and it turns out that he actually spent a good part of his life living as a functional atheist. And he's got a bunch of friends and relatives who don't exactly fit in with the standard raised-in-a-Christian-home happy path. And best of all, he's a software engineer, so you know he's practical and sensible about these topics.

Here are the major areas of worldview that are affected by the rejection of God:

- Meaning
- Sovereignty
- Morality
- Rights
- Mind
- Free Will
- Science

When I talk about these things, I usually talk about the 3 Ms: Mind, Meaning, Morality. You can see he's got a lot more there. And he quotes a lot of prominent atheists that you've probably heard of: Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Sean Carroll, Jerry Coyne, etc.

Here's the one on Rights:

> Universal human rights presuppose that each of us has unique, intrinsic value. The Founding Fathers asserted that our rights were endowed by God, and Scripture claims it is His own image within us that makes us special. If you dispense with this idea, what standard do you use to ground human rights?
>
> We are not equal by any measure one could offer, such as fitness, talent, race, or intelligence. Even grounding it in our mere humanity is arbitrary, since there is no higher standard that would favor humans over the rest of the biological world, and some animals are more fit or intelligent than young, elderly, or disabled humans. Animal rights activists understand this and traffic in this "speciesist" notion. They point out the blight of the human race's impact on nature, and do not temper that with any belief in the special value of humanity.
>
> The loss of intrinsic human value leads to creative redefinitions for personhood and rights which traffics in things like contribution to society and a life worth living. This road leads to infanticide for the unwanted, eugenics for the unfit, and euthanasia for the elderly. We saw these ideas on display in Nazi Germany as well as, to an extent, the US and other European countries. However, they have been making a comeback in an increasingly secular western culture that has forgotten its dark past. But what principle does atheism offer you to object to any of this beyond your instinctive revulsion?

The conclusion cannot be missed:

> Embracing atheism has consequences. Removing God from your life is not like removing a piece of furniture from your house. It's more like replacing the foundation, which impacts anything that has been built upon it. I've discussed several important things that are affected, but many more could be offered, like beauty and the arts, logic, truth, and even the reliability of our senses. In fact, every area of thought and life are affected, or are at least fair game for deconstruction by the universal acid that is atheism.

He also links to a post by James Bishop in the comments, featuring TONS of interesting quotes by famous atheists, about the implications of adopting the worldview of atheism.

Here's one by former Cornell University paleontologist Will Provine:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear … There are no gods, no purposes, no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end for me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning to life, and no free will for humans, either.

Is Provine smarter than the average atheist? I think he is, and he's certainly thought about it more than the average Twitter atheist in his 20s.

I guess what I would say to young atheists is that you probably haven't 1) evaluated the evidence for a Creator / Designer / Moral Lawgiver at age 14, and 2) you certainly haven't

considered the implications of the decision.

Earlier this week, I wrote a post about an educated 24-year-old feminist woman who was trying to get a man to commit to her. She was choosing men and the timing of sexual activity based on her atheist worldview. As she tells her story, you can clearly see the difference that the worldview makes in the area of relationships. She doesn't have the resources in her atheism to conduct herself wisely enough to get the results she is looking for.

What kind of "Constitution" can there be for a relationship, if the universe is an accident, human beings are robots made out of meat, and the purpose of life is to be happy here and now? Relationships are stable when each person is able to execute self-sacrificial love. Can you ground a respectful, committed relationship in a worldview of "survival of the fittest"? I think not. And yet this is the approach that most young people take.

The link between single mother welfare, fatherlessness, poverty and crime

October 3, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What is the root cause of criminal behavior? This article by feminist sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, who points out the link between fatherlessness and crime in an article on the AEI web site.

Wilcox writes:

> From Adam Lanza, who killed 26 children and adults a year ago at Sandy Hook School in Newtown, Conn., to Karl Pierson, who shot a teenage girl and killed himself this past Friday at Arapahoe High in Centennial, Colo., one common and largely unremarked thread tying together most of the school shooters that have struck the nation in the last year is that they came from homes marked by divorce or an absent father. From shootings at MIT (i.e., theTsarnaev brothers) to the University of Central Florida to the Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy in Decatur, Ga., nearly every shooting over the last year in Wikipedia's "list of U.S. school attacks" involved a young man whose parents divorced or never married in the first place.
>
> […]The social scientific evidence about the connection between violence and broken homes could not be clearer. My own research suggests that boys living in single mother homes are almost twice as likely to end up delinquent compared to boys who enjoy good relationships with their father. Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson has written that "Family structure is one of the strongest, if not the strongest, predictor of variations in urban violence across cities in the United States." His views are echoed by the eminent criminologists Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi, who have written that "such family measures as the percentage of the population divorced, the percentage of households headed by women, and the percentage of unattached individuals in the community are among the most powerful predictors of crime rates."
>
> Why is fatherlessness such a big deal for our boys (almost all of these incidents involve boys)? Putting the argument positively, sociologist David Popenoe notes that "fathers are important to their sons as role models. They are important for maintaining authority and discipline. And they are important in helping their sons to develop both self-control and feelings of empathy toward others, character traits that are found to be lacking in violent youth." Boys, then, who did not grow up with an engaged, attentive, and firm father are more vulnerable to getting swept up in the Sturm und Drang of adolescence and young adulthood, and in the worst possible way.

So where do fatherless children come from? It turns out that government programs

incentivize women to make them.

Dr. Michael Tanner of the libertarian Cato Institute explains how welfare causes fatherlessness in his testimony to Congress:

> Welfare contributes to crime in several ways. First, children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. According to one study, children raised in single-parent families are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior.(3) Moreover, O'Neill found that, holding other variables constant, black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as black children from a family where the father is present. Nearly 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 percent of prison inmates.(4) Research indicates a direct correlation between crime rates and the number of single-parent families in a neighborhood.(5)
>
> As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her seminal article for The Atlantic Monthly:
>
> The relationship [between single-parent families and crime] is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family break up as the most important source of rising rates of crime.(6)
>
> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on family structure concluded that "providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women."(9)

The secular left in this country believes that fathers need to be separated away from their children, and that's why they support welfare programs that redirect money from husbands in intact families to single mothers. They believe that fathers are harmful

because they set boundaries on children, and judge them and punish them when they act immorally. To the secular left, boundaries, judgments and punishments on children are bad, and must be stopped. So how can the secular left discourage men from marrying and teaching their own children morality? Well, they can tax married men, and they can give the money to single mothers.

Not only is crime caused by fatherlessness, but poverty is. as well.

Here is Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to explain:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:
>
> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original

> differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

People on the left claim that poverty causes crime, but they don’t look for the root cause of poverty. The root cause of poverty is the decline of marriage, which produces fatherless children.

Why do law-abiding Americans insist on owning guns?

October 4, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm not originally from the United States, and when I go back home to visit, one of the questions that I get asked a lot is "why do Americans own so many guns?" My favorite writer on the gun ownership and self-defense issues is Amy Swearer, who writes for the Daily Signal. Below, I'll link to two articles by her from July 2023 and August 2023.

The first article is a review of 12 examples of defensive gun use from July 2023.

She writes:

> Almost every major study has found that Americans use their firearms in self-defense between 500,000 and 3 million times annually, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has acknowledged. In 2021, the most comprehensive study ever conducted on the issue concluded that roughly 1.6 million defensive gun uses occur in the United States every year.
>
> For this reason, The Daily Signal publishes a monthly article highlighting some of the previous month's many news stories on defensive gun use that you may have missed—or that might not have made it to the national spotlight in the first place. (Read other accounts here from past months and years. You also may follow @DailyDGU on Twitter for daily highlights of defensive gun uses.)
>
> The examples below represent only a small portion of the news stories on defensive gun use that we found in July. You may explore more using The Heritage Foundation's interactive Defensive Gun Use Database. (The Daily Signal is Heritage's multimedia news organization.)

Here are a couple of the examples:

> - **July 16, Philadelphia:** A woman returned to her apartment to find four intruders inside, police said. She shot and wounded two of them, who were arrested and charged with burglary. The other two intruders fled.
> - **July 18, Washington, D.C.:** Police said two armed carjackers approached a man near his vehicle and demanded it at gunpoint. The victim, a concealed carry permit holder, shot one assailant. Police arrested the wounded carjacker, who faces serious criminal charges, including for felony weapons offenses. The second carjacker had not been identified or located.
> - **July 19, Neptune, Florida:** After an intruder forced his way into an elderly couple's home, he came face to face with the homeowner, who was armed and held him at gunpoint until police arrived. Police said the intruder apparently had been released from prison after doing time for attempted sexual battery in 2018. He faces felony burglary charges.

- **July 23, Carmichael, California:** Police said an apartment resident used his gun to protect himself and his family from an armed man with a violent past who, wrongly believing his ex-girlfriend was inside, fired several rounds into the unit and tried to kick in the door. The resident returned fire, wounding the attacker. The intruder "is the bad guy here, let's not hide from that," a spokesman for the county sheriff's office bluntly told reporters. "That resident is a hero."
- **July 27, Cassopolis, Michigan:** An armed customer with a valid concealed carry permit shot and wounded a knife-wielding robber who threatened a gas station clerk, police said.

The second article is a review of 12 examples of defensive gun use from August 2023.

- **Aug. 14, Centerville, Texas:** A man began aggressively approaching customers at a local smokehouse then entered the restaurant's restroom and assaulted an elderly man until he lay unconscious on the floor. When another patron tried to intervene, the assailant began assaulting him, as well. Fortunately, this patron was legally armed and was able to shoot and wound the man in self-defense. The assailant was arrested and charged with several criminal offenses.

- **Aug. 18, Seminole County, Florida:** A man was sitting on his porch with his dog when a "bear alert device" activated and he saw a black bear about 8 to 10 feet away from him. The man tried to scare the bear away by yelling, but it charged at him and his dog, so he shot it three times until it fled. State wildlife officials ultimately euthanized the injured bear and took her cubs to a rehabilitation center with plans to release them back into the wild later this year.

- **Aug. 25, Somerville, Alabama:** A man and woman were allegedly burglarizing a home when an armed neighbor confronted them and detained them at gunpoint until police arrived. The pair now face unspecified criminal charges.

- **Aug. 28, Jackson, Michigan:** A townhouse resident heard her neighbors having a loud argument, knocked on their adjoining wall, and asked them to quiet down. Instead of quieting down, a male neighbor angrily emerged from the home armed with a knife and began shattering the woman's windows. She shot and injured him as he tried to force his way into her residence.

> - **Aug. 30, Butler, Pennsylvania:** An armed resident shot and wounded an intoxicated intruder who broke into his basement. The resident initially ordered the intruder to put his hands on a nearby washing machine, but the man kept advancing toward him even after he fired a warning shot. The suspect was already wanted by local law enforcement for unspecified reasons and now faces an additional felony burglary charge.

It's especially important for people living in blue cities or blue states to arm themselves, because the police forces in these areas have had their budgets slashed by Democrats. "Defund the police" sounds so good, but it just gets a lot of peaceful, law-abiding people killed.

It's very important to ask secular leftists who want to ban law-abiding people from owning firearms "what do you expect people to do when criminals want to hurt them?" The answer I get from my atheist Democrat friend is that he expects them to call the police, and wait for them to arrive. There is a real suspicion among secular leftists of law-abiding people defend themselves – especially men. A man defending his family? Why, that's "sexist". Better to call the police and wait for them to arrive.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

The book by economist John Lott, linked above, compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That's the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm's Harvard study, which shows that the 1997 UK gun ban caused violent crime rates to MORE THAN DOUBLE in the four years following the ban. But both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

One of the common mistakes I see anti-gun advocates making is to use the metric of all "gun-related deaths". First of all, this completely ignores the effects of hand gun ownership on violent crime, as we've seen. Take away the guns from law-abiding people and violent crime skyrockets. But using the "gun-related deaths" number is especially wrong, because it includes suicides committed with guns. This is the majority (about two thirds) of gun related deaths, even in a country like America that has a massive inner-city gun violence problem caused by the epidemic of single motherhood by choice. If you take out the gun-related SUICIDES, then the actual number of gun homicides has decreased as gun ownership has grown.

For a couple of useful graphs related to this point, check out this post over at the

American Enterprise Institute.

How is open borders immigration working out in Sweden?

October 5, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

After being elected president in 2020, Democrat Joe Biden decided to open the southern border to invaders from every country. Sweden has had an open borders immigration policy like that for years before. Democrats often praise Sweden as being a more advanced country than the United States. Let's see how things are going for them since they are further along.

Daily Wire reports:

> Sweden is turning to its military to curb violent crime that has soared alongside immigrant gang activity across the country.
>
> Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson announced on Friday that he planned to ask the country's military to step in and aid police in combatting surging shootings and bomb attacks. The prime minister also said he would look into legislation that would give the military greater authority to engage in police activities, according to the Financial Times.
>
> The prime minister's announcement followed remarks he made the day before condemning the surge in violence and saying that Sweden's immigration policies are largely to blame. Police officials in the Scandinavian country have said the security situation in Sweden is the worst it has been since World War II.
>
> "I cannot emphasize enough how serious the situation is. Sweden has never seen anything like it before. No other country in Europe sees anything like it currently," Kristersson said Thursday night, according to FT.
>
> "It is political naivete and cluelessness that has brought us here," he continued. "It is an irresponsible immigration policy and failed integration effort that has brought us here."

Here are some details:

> Earlier in the week, two explosions ripped through buildings in a suburb of Sweden's capital and Linkoping, 110 miles southwest. The bombs injured at least three people. A Swedish newspaper reported that both explosions are suspected of being connected to gang activity.

Here is another Daily Wire article showing how Biden's plan is coming along:

> A record number of illegal immigrants from Venezuela crossed the U.S. southern border in September, according to Department of Homeland Security preliminary data.
>
> Around 50,000 Venezuelans illegally entered the U.S. last month, shattering the

> monthly record of 34,000 set in September 2022, according to the DHS data that was obtained by CBS News on Wednesday. The data show that on some days, up to 3,000 Venezuelan migrants crossed the border, and illegal immigrants from the country made up roughly one-quarter of the more than 200,000 Border Patrol apprehensions in September.
>
> The spike in illegal crossings made by Venezuelan nationals came the same month that the Biden administration gave permission to hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants from Venezuela to stay and work in the United States.
>
> […]More than seven million Venezuelans have fled the socialist regime in recent years, according to the United Nations, as the country faces economic collapse.
>
> […]Daily illegal border crossings have neared record highs as border facilities are slammed with migrants and officials are mass releasing illegal immigrants into the U.S. interior while thousands more stream into the country. The strain at the U.S. border is felt by communities from small border towns to major American cities.

A lot of people vote Democrat in order to feel like a good person, and be seen by others as good people. Bumper sticker virtue signaling.

Atheism is nothing more than a desire to escape a relationship with God, because a relationship with God causes humans to think about right and wrong. Atheists don't want to think about right and wrong. They want complete freedom to seek happiness according to their own selfish desires. As atheism rises in the society, people looking to escape guilt for disobeying the objective moral law. So, they talk loudly about how generous and compassionate they are, and they vote to be generous and compassionate. But who pays for their generosity and compassion? The most vulnerable people in society pay for it. Are Americans going to keep voting with our feelings?

How will men adapt to violence against men and false accusations?

October 6, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

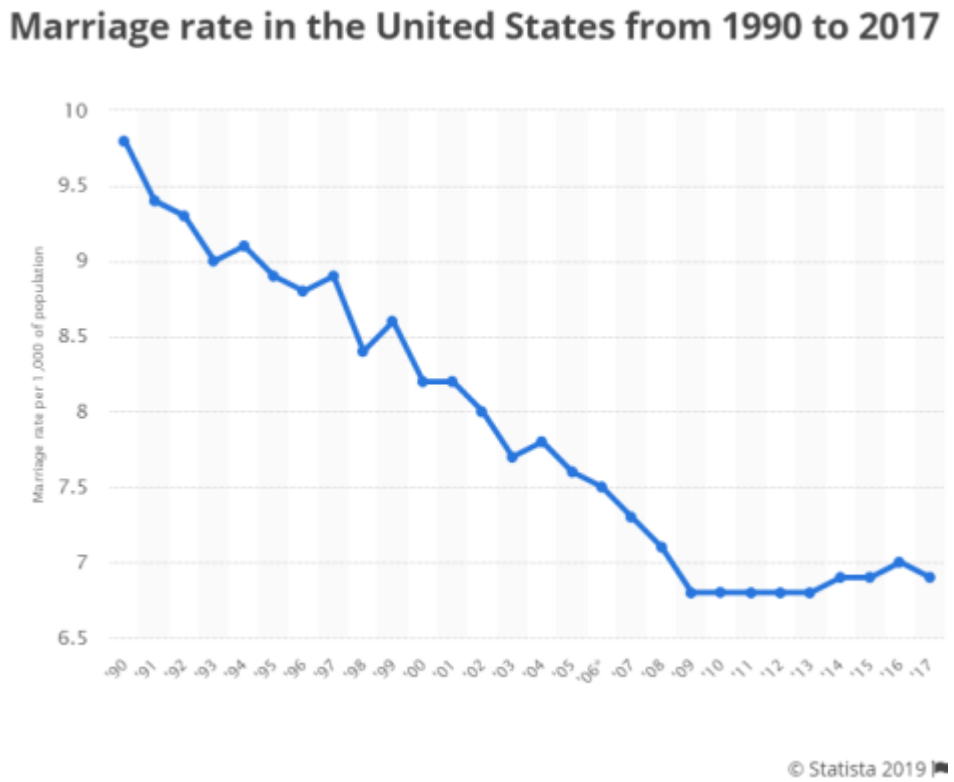

A massive decline in marriage rate (per 1,000 of population in America)

A couple of women who write for the Daily Wire keep posting scary stories of men being mistreated by women. I'm going to link to a few of their stories below, from last week. Then I want to say something about why these sorts of events are happening so frequently, and what message it sends to men who might want to have a committed relationship with a woman.

The two women writers at Daily Wire are Amanda Prestigiacamo and Ashe Schow.

Here is one from May 8th, by Amanda:

> Thirty-six-year-old Kenan Basic spent weeks in jail, lost his relationship, and was repeatedly slandered after a woman falsely accused him of sexual misconduct.
>
> According to Australia-based 7NEWS, Basic was accused of "indecently assaulting and stalking" Caitlyn Gray, a 19-year-old woman, after he stopped to help her when her car broke down late last year.
>
> Basic apparently spent two hours fixing Gray's vehicle. As shown by surveillance footage, the smiling pair seem happy, hugging after the car is fixed and eventually parting ways. But according to the news station, "Gray told police Basic had allegedly propositioned her for sex in return for his help before he pursued her in the car and later indecently assaulted her at a different location." Authorities investigating the incident called Basic's behavior "predatory."

> Months later, however, the truth about the incident finally came out: Basic never assaulted the woman. The 19-year-old confessed to police during an interrogation that she fabricated evidence and made up the assault whole-cloth.

So what lesson would a man learn from this? Well, he would learn that women can't be trusted to be grateful when they are given help.

More:

> The falsely accused man noted that he's "never been jailed, never had a criminal record or anything."
>
> "I always help people, all my life," he said. "And this was the first time a snake bit me."
>
> The 36-year-old said he'll "probably never help again, ya know. I don't want that to happen again."

I don't know why this woman made this false accusation. Studies show that women generally make false accusations for attention, for an alibi, to get revenge, or to get sympathy after they've chosen to have sex with someone who ignored them after. This case doesn't fit any of these scenarios. Maybe she felt slighted because he didn't try anything with her, and that made her feel unattractive. But the message to good men who want to help women is clear: the risk is too great.

Here's another story from May 11th, by Ashe:

> Ah to be one of those poor, oppressed women who have fewer privileges than men.
>
> A woman like Jazzmin Fry, who was so oppressed that when she stabbed a complete stranger — a man — with one of her stilettos for literally no reason, she only had to pay a $250 fine as punishment. Her conviction wasn't even recorded outside of the press.
>
> […]The victim, Kyle Johns, 19, was taken to the hospital and needed two staples in his head to repair the wound.

What lesson will men learn from stories like this one? Well, they'll learn that there is a double standard in the justice system, such that men are held accountable for their choices, but women are not. That's because men are seen as responsible for their actions, and women are not seen as responsible – no matter how much harm they cause.

Ashe says:

> Women in the justice system — whether in Australia, or the U.K., or the U.S. — get off much easier than men for the same crimes. One of the biggest disparities can be found in sexual assaults against minors. When women commit these crimes — whether against a young boy or girl, or teenager — they receive much lighter sentences than men do for the same crime.
>
> As I have written previously, men who abuse children (rightly) receive harsh

> punishments. A 32-year-old man who sexually abused a young girl over the course of several years faced 366 years to life in prison. Yet a 25-year-old woman who pleaded guilty to raping young boys at a trailer park only received five years probation.
>
> […]In 2012, University of Michigan professor Sonja Starr researched the gender disparities in federal criminal cases and found that "men receive 63% longer sentences on average than women do" and that "Women are … twice as likely to avoid incarceration if convicted."

Men are very aware of disparities in the criminal justice system, but when I talk to women about it, they are rarely aware of it. But this is just one example of an area where men are at a disadvantage, and the problem only gets worse as more and more feminists take control of legislation, law enforcement and criminal courts. Almost every man knows a story of about how divorce courts treated a man badly, whether it be with unfair alimony or child support, false accusations, or even jail. And it seems like all the momentum in society is to make everything better for women, and worse for men. This is easily seen by looking at studies of how the public schools – which are dominated by female teachers and administrators – discriminate against boys.

Here's a third one from May 13th, by Amanda:

> A false accusation of sexual assault turned deadly last month in Utah when a teen girl's brother sought vengeance over the claim of sexual assault that never was.
>
> A 16-year-old girl, whose identity has not been revealed because she's a minor, told her 17-year-old brother that Michael Fife, 62, sexually assaulted her on a Cache Valley Transit District (CVTD) bus. The 17-year-old tracked down Fife and physically attacked him when he got off the bus; wounds from the altercation left him dead.
>
> According to Logan Police Department, reviewed surveillance footage from the bus revealed that the alleged assault never happened.

According to the police, "the video showed Mr. Fife walking past the girl, but no sexual assault occurred." Did she lie just to see what effect it would have on her brother?

My thoughts

Here is a fourth story about an NFL player *who refused to have sex with a woman*, and he was falsely charged with raping her, as reported on May 10th, in The College Fix.

This one is important, because this guy lost millions of dollars in salary, because he was kept out of the NFL two years, when his accuser had no evidence whatsoever. That's how unfair the system has become for men, and men with more to lose have more reason to avoid any relationships with women. Men with more money have more to lose to a false accusation. And these stories are so common in our age.

When a man measures up how much a woman adds to his life, and compares it to the risk of being cleaned out on a fact-free false accusation, it’s not a good value proposition. Women often look at things only from the woman’s point of view, and so they are mystified by how men could think like this. They just can’t seem to put themselves into men’s shoes to understand how dangerous women have become to men. And then men get told how weak and cowardly they are for refusing to ask women out, for refusing to commit, etc.

I think that the only women who are safe are women who have put in the effort to learn about these injustices towards men. If you are interested in a woman for a relationship, then ask her to name a few challenges that men face in this anti-male society. Ask her if she has a male relative who has faced a false accusation. Ask her if she has experience battling for men’s rights. If she doesn’t stand up for good men before marriage, she won’t respect you after marriage.

Women of the previous generation knew how to prepare herself for wife and mother roles, and present herself to a man in order to persuade him to marry her. Too many women in today’s generation have lost that ability to be feminine. They have lost the ability to be a real friend and support to a man. They don’t want to nurture his ability to be a masculine leader in a home.

It is rare to find a woman who is putting in the work to learn about things like abortion, divorce, and same-sex marriage. Most of them are instead focused on single motherhood by choice, delaying marriage for career, surrogacy, etc. Most women aren’t prepared to fight against anti-marriage, anti-child forces, and men sense from this that they aren’t serious about marriage as it really is: a self-sacrificial commitment requiring female *and male* natures.

Most young, unmarried women take on the priorities of the culture: animal rights, global warming, equal pay, abortion rights, gun control, higher taxes, single payer healthcare, public schools, etc. But most know very little about how to prepare themselves for a husband, or prepare themselves to provide for their children.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

October 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women

    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

October 8, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

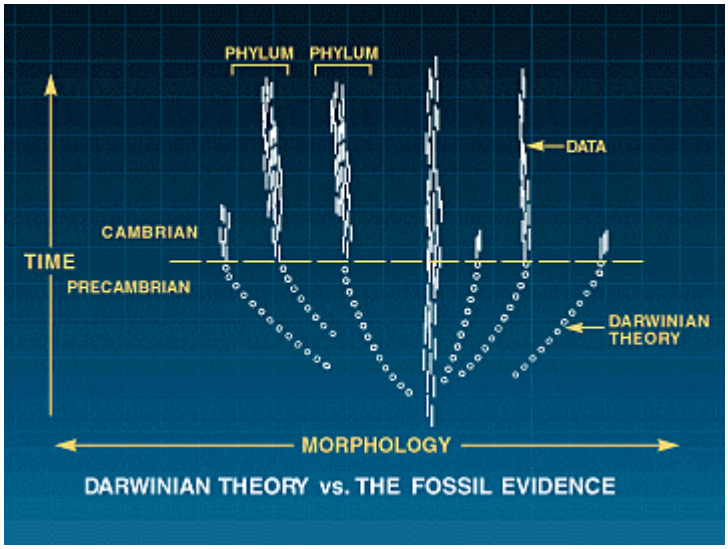

Cambrian Explosion

Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien "The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang" in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a

> unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and
> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

I learned a lot by watching great lectures from Access Research Network. Their YouTube channel is here. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

If you'd like to see Dr. Meyer defend his views in a debate with someone who reviewed his book about the Cambrian explosion, you can find that in this previous post.

Further study

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

New study: trans women on hormones have elevated risk of heart disease

October 9, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm just adding to my store of peer-reviewed articles that argue against the goodness of transgender behaviors. This time, I found a study from the European Journal of Endocrinology. The data is from 2671 people from Denmark, which is a very transgender-affirming country. Let's take a look at the findings, as reported by the UK Telegraph.

It says:

> The new data is published in the European Journal of Endocrinology.
>
> The study revealed that all transgender people regardless of the sex they were born or the gender they were transitioning to, were at "significantly increased risk" from deadly conditions like heart attacks, strokes, high blood pressure and high blood fat and cholesterol levels.
>
> The experts looked at the health of 2,671 transgender people from Denmark over a five-year period with an average age of 22 and 26 for trans men and women respectively.
>
> They compared the incidence of cardiovascular disease with a control group of 26,700 people and presented the results to the European Association for the Study of Diabetes.
>
> People who were "assigned male at birth" and taking oestrogen as a trans woman, were 93 per cent more likely to suffer from cardiovascular disease than men and 73 per cent more likely than women.
>
> The incidence rate was around three per cent for trans women, up from around 1.5 per cent for men and 1.7 per cent for women.
>
> Trans women taking hormones are up to 95 per cent more likely to suffer heart disease, a new study has found.
>
> […]Trans men, who were "assigned female at birth", but were taking testosterone were 63 per cent more likely to have some form of heart disease than women, and more than double as likely than men.

I think that the adults who encourage young people to engage in these behaviors are so focused on feelings and peer-approval, that they don't want to consider the bad effects. They want what's good for them, and telling confused young people right and wrong is not very "cool" in this time and place. So, the adults grab what's good for them, and then act surprised later, when these behaviors don't work out. "It has to be the fault of the disapprovers" they cry. But science tells a different story.

New study: sex-reassignment surgery does not bring mental health benefits

October 10, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

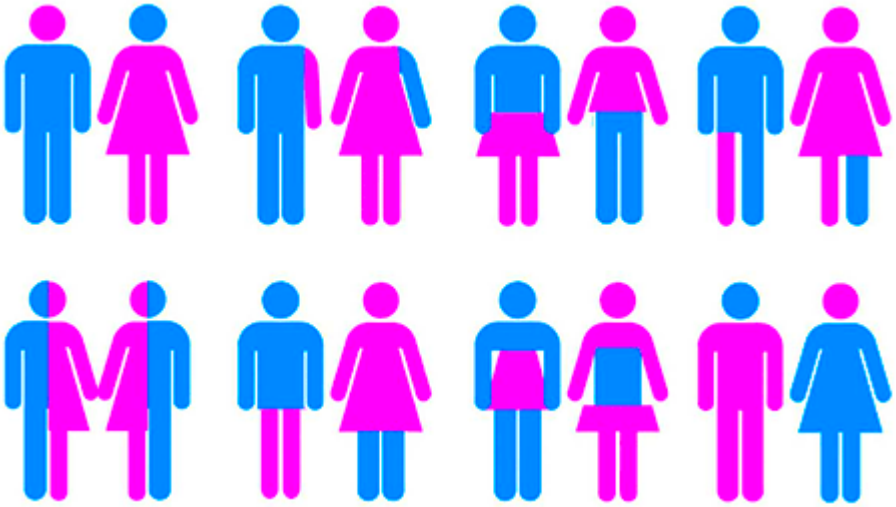

Thinking about transgenderism

If you look at the actual science of sex re-assignment surgery, it doesn't make a good case that these procedures actually deliver results.

Here's the latest from Daily Signal:

> The world's largest dataset on patients who have undergone sex-reassignment procedures reveals that these procedures do not bring mental health benefits. But that's not what the authors originally claimed. Or what the media touted.
>
> In October 2019, the American Journal of Psychiatry published a paper titled, "Reduction in Mental Health Treatment Utilization Among Transgender Individuals After Gender-Affirming Surgeries: A Total Population Study." As the title suggests, the paper claimed that after having had sex-reassignment surgeries, a patient was less likely to need mental health treatment.
>
> Well, over the weekend, the editors of the journal and the authors of the paper issued a correction. In the words of the authors, "the results demonstrated no advantage of surgery in relation to subsequent mood or anxiety disorder-related health care."
>
> But it's actually worse than that. The original results already demonstrated no benefits to hormonal transition. That part didn't need a correction.
>
> So, the bottom line: The largest dataset on sex-reassignment procedures—both hormonal and surgical—reveals that such procedures do not bring the promised mental health benefits.
>
> In fact, in their correction to the original study, the authors point out that on one score—treatment for anxiety disorders—patients who had sex-reassignment surgeries did worse than those who did not:

> individuals diagnosed with gender incongruence who had received gender-affirming surgery were more likely to be treated for anxiety disorders compared with individuals diagnosed with gender incongruence who had not received gender-affirming surgery.
>
> You would think patients suffering from gender dysphoria would want to know that.

Previously, I had blogged about another study that found that the choice to go transgender was enormously susceptible to peer pressure and teacher pressure.

Here's how the study was first reported by Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.

Peer pressure / The Internet:

> The pattern of clusters of teens in friend groups becoming transgender-identified, the group dynamics of these friend groups and the types of advice viewed online led her to the hypothesis that friends and online sources could spread certain beliefs.
>
> [….]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

"Friends and online sources could spread certain beliefs".

Mental disorders / traumatic events:

> Additionally, 62 percent of parents reported their teen or young adult had one or more diagnoses of a psychiatric disorder or neurodevelopmental disability before the onset of gender dysphoria. Forty-eight percent reported that their child had experienced a traumatic or stressful event prior to the onset of their gender dysphoria, including being bullied, sexually assaulted or having their parents get divorced.

"experienced a traumatic or stressful event prior to the onset of their gender dysphoria" such as "having their parents get divorced".

When you read studies like this, it almost makes you think that we shouldn't be rushing children into sex-reassignment surgery, doesn't it? But then what would the adults who are desperate to feel good about themselves do to feel good about themselves? It makes

them feel good to let children do whatever they want. And it feels so bad to tell children no when they want something. The important thing for these selfish adults is to let the children do what they want right now. That’s called “compassion”.

11 Reasons Most Biologists Accept Evolutionary Theory in Spite of the Evidence

October 11, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below is a guest post from my friend Eric, who has an interest in origins science.

---

1. Many immediately reject creation or ID from the many embarrassingly bad "why are there still monkeys" arguments used by laymen. They assume there's nothing beyond that.

2. It's what they were taught in school and they never questioned it. "I didn't give it much thought; It wasn't my area of concern", as Michael Behe reflected of his postdoc research days as an evolutionist. "college students have not been shown the weakness of Darwinian evolution" as Joseph Kuhn wrote in 2012.

3. A lot of biologists aren't exposed to problems outside their own field. For example paleontologist and ID critic Don Prothero wrote that "Nearly all metazoans [meaning animals] show stasis, with almost no good examples of gradual evolution… the prevalence of stasis is a puzzle that has no simple answer" but lamented, "by and large the neontological [non-paleontologist] community still 'doesn't get it'… The journal Evolution continues to publish almost no contributions by paleontologists".

4. Others just don't talk about the problems. Renowned chemist James Tour (inventor of nanocars) describes his own experience: "Let me tell you what goes on in the back rooms of science – with National Academy members, with Nobel Prize winners. I have sat with them, and when I get them alone… I say, "Do you understand all of this, where all of this came from, and how this happens?" Every time that I have sat with people who are synthetic chemists, who understand this, they go 'Uh-uh. Nope.' These people are just so far off, on how to believe this stuff came together. I've sat with National Academy members, with Nobel Prize winners. Sometimes I will say, 'Do you understand this?' And if they're afraid to say 'Yes,' they say nothing. They just stare at me, because they can't sincerely do it."

5. Some see anything other than materialistic naturalism is seen as a violation of scientific professionalism. At one conference, "Chinese scientists encouraged the investigation of a variety of new hypotheses to explain the Cambrian explosion: hydrothermal eruptions, sudden seafloor changes, even intelligent design. This last was too much for one American paleontologist who stood up and shouted, 'This is not a scientific conference!'" Likewise the famed Lynn Margulis (proposed symbiogenesis theory) said, "The critics, including the creationist critics, are right about their criticism. It's just that they've got nothing to offer but intelligent design or 'God did it.'"

6. Many biologists don't have much training in engineering. Many of the patterns claimed to only arise by common descent are the same I see in the code I write or among other

objects designed by humans.

7. Some recognize insufficiencies in evolutionary theory, but hope new theories will arise to resolve them. Evolutionists Depew & Weber published in 2012: “Darwinism in its current scientific incarnation has pretty much reached the end of its rope… however, we are confident that a new and more general theory of evolution is evolving.”

8. A bias toward sensationalism in the media–which is true everywhere and not just with evolutionary biology.

9. It’s taboo to publish anything from the ID movement. As one example, Springer (a large scientific publisher) was going to publish 20-so-papers from ID proponents. They had already passed Springer’s internal peer review and Springer agreed to publish them. But a public campaign threatened to boycott Springer if they published, even though none any of the critics had even read the papers. Springer complied, but the papers were still published in World Scientific after also passing peer review there.

10. A small number of rather popular evolution “evangelists” shame anyone who dissents from the Party line. For example see Jerry Coyne’s response to Lynn Margulis claiming evolution doesn’t work (cited above). Coyne says she’s “dogmatic, willfully ignorant, and intellectually dishonest,” “wrong in the worst way a scientist can be wrong,” and “embarrasses both herself and the field.”

11. Rigged debates. Sean B. Carroll (well known biologist) wrote a critique of Michael Behe’s work in the journal Science: He cited “the tuning of color vision in animals” as a response to Michael Behe as an example of observed evolution creating through a long process of gradual steps. To support this, Carroll cites his own book where he describes (based on phylogeny) lineages would have had to evolve color vision multiple times, lose it, and then evolve it again. This would have happened among the presumed ancestors of reptiles, fish, and mammals so none of it is even observed to begin with. Behe correctly noted that Carroll’s papers show “different species have different protein binding sites” but “they demonstrate nothing about how the sites arose.” Behe submitted a brief response, only to have Science to trim the last 100 words. Science gave Carroll a far longer response chastising Behe for not addressing this very point he addressed in the 100 words that were trimmed.

Democrat contributions to Hamas-backer Iran isn't $6 billion, it's a lot more

October 12, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm monitoring the news about the Hamas attack on Israel. I've gotten two questions so far. First, how could Israeli intelligence (Mossad), which is supposed to be the best, not know about this attack in advance. Second, Why didn't the Iron Dome missile defense work to stop the missiles. I'll answer those below, and see the latest about the Biden administration funding terrorism.

First, the national security / foreign policy people I follow on Twitter and listen to on podcasts are saying that national security and the military in Israel have gone hard woke in recent years, and they have stopped being able to defend Israel from real threats. Similar to how our own federal agencies are now largely engaged in attacking enemies of the Democrat party, while ignoring actual security threats like military-aged foreigners from enemy nations coming over the southern border in droves.

Second, the Iron Dome missile defense system only has a certain number of interceptors available. I think the number is 200 interceptors. (10 launchers x 20 missiles per launcher). Even with careful targeting, they were not able to shoot down all of the 2200 incoming missiles from Hamas.

One more point. Israel is a left-wing country, and has some of the toughest gun laws of any nation. Most law-abiding people are not properly armed to deter the threat of criminals or terrorists. So, the attack did a lot worse than it would have in say, Texas or Tennessee or Florida. Israeli voters thought they could "stop crime" and "stop terrorism" by banning law-abiding people from owning scary, noisy, smelly guns. It didn't work. Feelings-based policy didn't work in Israel, and it doesn't work in America, either.

But where did Hamas, a terrorist group, get all of the money for 2200 missiles? How could a group of rapists and child-murderers plan such an attack? Well, they have said that they had help from Iran. The same Iran that Obama helped with pallets of cash when he was president. And Biden is helping Iran with cash, too.

The Federalist explains:

> Many of the articles surrounding the atrocities of the Hamas attacks this past weekend have referenced the recent $6 billion "deal," in which the U.S. gave this money to Iran in exchange for five Americans. It already seemed like the worst trade in history.
>
> But it's more nefarious than simply unleashing $6 billion to Iran, a known terrorist state and the most existential threat to the free world. In reality, this one detail hyperlinked quickly in most articles is part of a larger spider web of hidden details.
>
> In a recent article, senior adviser at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies

> and former National Security Council official Richard Goldberg traces the money trail. He confirms: It is so much worse than we think.
>
> […]The revelations do not end there. U.S. officials have also quietly acknowledged that they've uncapped Iranian oil exports to China. These export levels, previously held around 775,000 barrels per day under Trump's sanctions, are now estimated to be between 1.4 and 2.2 million barrels per day. Modest estimates value this relief at $25 billion annually.

Not only that, but the Obama administration and the Biden administration want Iran to have nuclear weapon capabilities:

> We know Iran has already ejected international nuclear inspectors and are on their way to building a facility that is believed to be so deep underground that it would be impenetrable to any air strikes. Iran did not even have to stop their production of high-enriched uranium. They're merely producing it at a slower rate. But the Biden administration chose to pick up the Obama era's decision to unrestrain Iran based on a pinky promise.
>
> Most recently, we learned that top officials were influencing the U.S. government in favor of Iranian nuclear power. A series of recently leaked emails have focused on Ariane Tabatabai, the chief of staff to the secretary of defense for special operations. Messages show her involvement with the Iran Experts Initiative (IEI), a direct Iranian government initiative to allegedly "improve the country's image abroad."
>
> […]We've also come to learn of other aides who were directly corresponding with the Iranian government from their U.S. government posts, such as Ali Vaez and Dina Esfandiary.

Democrat party policy is not just about putting Israel in harm's way, it's also making sure that the American military can't do anything to save Israel once they are attacked:

> We're stopping oil production in America while allowing Iran to export more, all under the facade of "green energy." The administration has given the green light to increase oil production in the country that is the greatest existential threat to the free world. Meanwhile, Biden has choked American oil production with the fewest number of offshore oil and gas leases "in history." This is after Biden canceled all remaining leases in Alaska. But since these leases are for 2024 to 2029, he's pushed off Americans truly feeling this at the pump until, quite conveniently, after the election.
>
> Squeezing the American wallet is far from the most dire consequence of this policy. Biden has drained the Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) to multi-decade lows. Despite claims that they would be replenishing the reserves, the administration has not only yet to refill the reserves, they even pulled an offer at the end of this summer because of "market conditions." Namely, oil is already

> too expensive, and we are drained of our most important backup resource.

Eventually, American voters are going to realize how electing Democrats creates problems here at home:

> At this point, America has not simply left the world stage — it is funding terror.
>
> The extent of this hidden money trail has yet to be fully realized. It isn't only Gaza. It's Lebanon. It's Syria. It's Iraq. It's Afghanistan. It will be Paris and London. It is likely pouring over the U.S. southern border.
>
> And it's coming to a neighborhood near you.

Why do so many self-described Jewish people vote for the Democrat party, when the Democrat party clearly hates them? Well, when I listen to real Jews, like Ben Shapiro and Dennis Prager, they seem to think that many self-described Jews are just secular leftists, who disagree with what the Bible teaches.

Is Christianity Today a Christian publication?

October 13, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to follow the work of Megan Basham on Twitter and Daily Wire, because she takes the Bible seriously on moral and spiritual issues. So I was very interested to read her latest article evaluating Christianity Today. On the surface, Christianity Today presents itself as a Christian publication. But are their beliefs really consistent with what the Bible teaches? Let's see.

Here's the article from Daily Wire:

> The media has long framed Christianity Today, founded by Billy Graham in 1956, as America's most influential Christian news outlet. The Washington Post, for instance, regularly describes it as evangelicalism's "flagship" magazine," as does The New York Times. A review of federal election records, however, indicates that the views of the magazine's leadership and staff may be far out of step with ordinary evangelicals.
>
> Between 2015 and 2022, nine Christianity Today employees made 73 political donations. All of them went to Democrats. This tally includes President and CEO Timothy Dalrymple, who gave $300 in two separate payments to failed Georgia Senate candidate Sarah Riggs Amico.
>
> Amico's platform, which includes protecting abortion "without exception" and repealing the Hyde Amendment to allow federal tax dollars to fund abortions, contrasts sharply with the views of evangelicals who overwhelmingly say abortion should be illegal in all or most cases. She is also at odds with traditional Christian beliefs when it comes to gender, sexuality, and religious liberty.
>
> Along with declaring herself a "staunch LGBTQ ally," Amico promised to support the Equality Act, a bill that The Heritage Foundation warns would threaten parental rights over children who believe they're transgender. The conservative think tank has also said the bill would decimate conscience rights for medical workers and "cancel[s] religious freedom." Southern Baptist Theological Seminary president Albert Mohler put the Equality Act in even starker terms, saying it "represents the greatest threat to religious liberty in the United States in our lifetimes" and would "totally transform the United States as we know it."
>
> Dalrymple was not the only member of the magazine's executive ranks to donate to Democrats. Natalie Lederhouse, Vice President of Advertising and Partnerships, contributed $50 to the 2020 Biden Victory Fund. The Federal Election Commission has no records of any Christianity Today executive giving to the GOP since 1991.

You might remember the Equality Act discussed in previous posts on this blog. Basically,

the legislation would have made it impossible for Christians to advocate for Biblical positions on sexual issues. Not only individual Christians, but Christian businesses and charities. They would all have had to comply with the secular left's views on sexual issues.

Megan also found this about a former NEWS EDITOR at Christianity Today:

> Between October 2019 and November 2020, news editor Daniel Silliman made eight donations to five different pro-abortion, pro-LGBTQ candidates, among them, Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren's presidential campaign. In addition to possessing a perfect voting score from Planned Parenthood and NARAL, Warren supported shutting down crisis pregnancy centers across the country, and her platform included requiring schools to admit biological men into women's sports and single-sex spaces. She also pledged to allow a gender dysphoric nine-year-old to approve anyone she appointed as education secretary.
>
> Silliman also donated to Renee Hoyos, Tennessee Democrats' nominee to the U.S. House; Moe Davis, House candidate from North Carolina; Blair Walsingham, House candidate from Tennessee; and former Senator Doug Jones (D-AL).

As news editor, he would have been in charge of all of Christianity Today's coverage of political stories.

More:

> In another article in the run-up to the 2020 election,
> Silliman spotlighted President Biden's Catholicism and quoted progressive theologian Richard Mouw opining that "[Biden] is viewed as having an authentic faith… when he talks about his faith, it rings true." Silliman then tied Mouw to conservative Christian icons, Chuck Colson and J.I. Packer.
>
> […][Silliman] also covered the Fairness for All Act, a proposal that would have granted special privileges to people who identify as LGBTQ. It was opposed by conservative legal groups like Alliance Defending Freedom for "undermin[ing] human dignity by threatening the fundamental freedoms of speech, religion, and conscience." Approximately three-quarters of Silliman's report on the bill was devoted to those who favored the legislation.

You might remember that Mouw is one of these "evangelicals for Biden". Now that we know the truth about Biden's business dealings and connections to foreign governments, it's easier to understand what sort of morality Mouw supports.

The new editor-in-chief of Christianity Today is Russell Moore, who seems more focused on promoting the Democrat party platform than with defending policies consistent with the Bible.

The root cause of the problem with these "evangelicals for Biden" is that they have never adopted Christianity on the basis of studying the evidence, and forming their own views. Progressive Christians form their views *socially* not *intellectually.* When they are young,

they put on the cloak of Christianity as a way of seeming virtuous to their parents and those around them. They didn't choose Christianity because it was the best description of reality. They were born into it. It's not a worldview to them, it's an act.

Progressive Christians don't make a case for core Christian beliefs using evidence to non-Christians. They simply don't know how to do it, because they didn't do it in order to "become" a Christian in the first place. They don't have any work to show, because they never did the work. And their policy views are the same. They don't form their views based on reason and evidence. They don't read scholars like Thomas Sowell, or John Lott, or Ryan Anderson, or Scott Atlas, or Robert George. They just believe whatever will make people like them – just like they did when they were children.

Knight and Rose Show #41: Babylon Bee CEO Seth Dillon

October 14, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 41 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Seth Dillon, CEO of the Babylon Bee. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 41:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Seth Dillon, CEO of the famous website "The Babylon Bee". We discuss the effectiveness of mockery and sarcasm for opposing censorship by the secular left. We discuss what role apologetics played in building Seth's Christian worldview. We also discuss how Christians can build a view of the world that takes the Bible seriously in every area.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Seth Dillon is the CEO of The Babylon Bee. Dillon's experience with censorship and de-platforming has placed him on the front lines of the battle for free speech in the public square. He now speaks on college campuses and at conferences across the country about the effectiveness of humor, the moral imperative of mockery, and the dangers of censorship. Dillon occasionally signs off Twitter to enjoy time with his wife and two sons in Juno Beach, Florida.

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Pro-gay web site tells real story of the Matthew Shepard murder

October 15, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A fascinating article from the pro-gay web site The Advocate.

Excerpt:

> What if nearly everything you thought you knew about Matthew Shepard's murder was wrong? What if our most fiercely held convictions about the circumstances of that fatal night of October 6, 1998, have obscured other, more critical, aspects of the case? How do people sold on one version of history react to being told that facts are slippery — that thinking of Shepard's murder as a hate crime does not mean it was a hate crime? And how does it color our understanding of such a crime if the perpetrator and victim not only knew each other but also had sex together, bought drugs from one another, and partied together?
>
> None of this is idle speculation; it's the fruit of years of dogged investigation by journalist Stephen Jimenez, himself gay. In the course of his reporting, Jimenez interviewed over 100 subjects, including friends of Shepard and of his convicted killers, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, as well as the killers themselves (though by the book's end you may have more questions than answers about the extent of Henderson's complicity). In the process, he amassed enough anecdotal evidence to build a persuasive case that Shepard's sexuality was, if not incidental, certainly less central than popular consensus has lead us to believe.

And here are the details:

> But in what circumstances does someone slam a seven-inch gun barrel into their victim's head so violently as to crush his brain stem? That's not just flipping out, that's psychotic — literally psychotic, to anyone familiar with the long-term effects of methamphetamine. In court, both the prosecutor and the plaintiffs had compelling reasons to ignore this thread, but for Jimenez it is the central context for understanding not only the brutality of the crime but the milieu in which both Shepard and McKinney lived and operated.
>
> By several accounts, McKinney had been on a meth bender for five days prior to the murder, and spent much of October 6 trying to find more drugs. By the evening he was so wound up that he attacked three other men in addition to Shepard. Even Cal Rerucha, the prosecutor who had pushed for the death sentence for McKinney and Henderson, would later concede on ABC's *20/20* that "it was a murder that was driven by drugs."
> No one was talking much about meth abuse in 1998, though it was rapidly establishing itself in small-town America, as well as in metropolitan gay clubs,

where it would leave a catastrophic legacy. In Wyoming in the late 1990s, eighth graders were using meth at a higher rate than 12th graders nationwide. It's hardly surprising to learn from Jimenez that Shepard was also a routine drug user, and — according to some of his friends — an experienced dealer. (Although there is no real evidence for supposing that Shepard was using drugs himself on the night of his murder).

Despite the many interviews, Jimenez does not entirely resolve the true nature of McKinney's relationship to Shepard, partly because of his unreliable chief witness. McKinney presents himself as a "straight hustler" turning tricks for money or drugs, but others characterize him as bisexual. A former lover of Shepard's confirms that Shepard and McKinney had sex while doing drugs in the back of a limo owned by a shady Laramie figure, Doc O'Connor. Another subject, Elaine Baker, tells Jimenez that Shepard and McKinney were friends who had been in sexual threesome with O'Connor. A manager of a gay bar in Denver recalls seeing photos of McKinney and Henderson in the papers and recognizing them as patrons of his bar. He recounts his shock at realizing "these guys who killed that kid came from inside our own community."

Not everyone is interested in hearing these alternative theories.
When *20/20* engaged Jimenez to work on a segment revisiting the case in 2004, GLAAD bridled at what the organization saw as an attempt to undermine the notion that anti-gay bias was a factor; Moises Kaufman, the director and co-writer of *The Laramie Project,* denounced it as "terrible journalism," though the segment went on to win an award from the Writers Guild of America for best news analysis of the year.

There are valuable reasons for telling certain stories in a certain way at pivotal times, but that doesn't mean we have to hold on to them once they've outlived their usefulness. In his book, *Flagrant Conduct,* Dale Carpenter, a professor at the University of Minnesota Law School, similarly unpicks the notorious case of *Lawrence v. Texas,* in which the arrest of two men for having sex in their own bedroom became a vehicle for affirming the right of gay couples to have consensual sex in private. Except that the two men were not having sex, and were not even a couple. Yet this non-story, carefully edited and taken all the way to the Supreme Court, changed America.

In different ways, the Shepard story we've come to embrace was just as necessary for shaping the history of gay rights as *Lawrence v. Texas;* it galvanized a generation of LGBT youth and stung lawmakers into action. President Obama, who signed the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, named for Shepard and James Byrd Jr., into law on October 28, 2009, credited Judy Shepard for making him "passionate" about LGBT equality.

I think that it's good that The Advocate posted this correction to the story. I admire them for being willing to tell the truth about the story. However, note that the author is not sorry that a fake version of the case was used to push the gay agenda forward. Now what if the same willingness to twist the truth was shared by the gay activists who are redefining the issues in the culture as a whole? What if the people who are pushing the gay agenda in schools, in the media, in the workplace, and elsewhere, had the same willingness to twist the truth in order to advance their cause?

It's also helpful to understand the media bias angle of this story. Are they really interested in telling the truth? Or is there something else going on there? How much of a story was the attack on the Family Research Council building by a gun-wielding gay activist compared to the Matthew Shepard story? How much of a story is the persecution of Christians in the Middle East compared to the Matthew Shepard story? How much of a story is the loss of basic human rights like free speech and religious liberty here at home when compared to the Matthew Shepard story?

Breitbart has more about what really happened to Matthew Shepard.

Republicans act to prevent Biden for importing millions of Palestinian refugees

October 16, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sometimes, people who don't know very much about politics lazily say "both parties are the same, so it doesn't matter whether you vote or not… the system is rigged". But is this really true? Let's take a look at the issue of immigration, and see if the two parties really are the same when we look at the details.

Here's an article from Breitbart News:

> Reps. Tom Tiffany (R-WI) and Andy Ogles (R-TN) are introducing legislation that would ban President Joe Biden's administration from importing Palestinians to the United States to be resettled in American communities.
>
> The bill, exclusively shared with Breitbart News ahead of its introduction, is titled the "Guaranteeing Aggressors Zero Admission Act" or the GAZA Act. The legislation would prevent Biden's administration from issuing visas to those with Palestinian Authority passports.
>
> […]Likewise, the bill would prevent Biden's Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from funneling Palestinians into the U.S. through the agency's parole pipeline.

But what about the Democrat view of immigration?

> Following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, Biden used his administration's parole pipeline to resettle nearly 100,000 Afghans across American communities — many of whom were not interviewed in person beforehand and who were found to be linked to terrorism.
>
> As Breitbart News reported, in Fiscal Year 2022 alone, Biden's DHS gave green cards to about 63,000 legal immigrants to permanently resettle in the U.S. who arrived from countries previously included in a national travel ban list due to their involvement with terrorism.

What I am hearing is that the weapons that America abandoned fell into the hands of the Palestinians, which is why you can see photographs of them holding American military weapons. That seems to be Biden's foreign policy – arm our enemies, reward them with cash and prizes for attacking us and our allies.

Meanwhile, here's a message from Ron DeSantis, reported in Fox News:

> Florida Gov. and GOP presidential hopeful Ron DeSantis Sunday stuck to his stance that the U.S. should not accept refugees from Gaza amid the ongoing conflict with Israel.
>
> "Palestinian Arabs should go to Arab countries, the U.S. should not be absorbing

> any of those," DeSantis said during an appearance on CBS's "Face the Nation" Sunday.
>
> The Florida governor's remarks come after he sparked controversy with comments made on the campaign trail in Iowa Saturday, arguing to those in the audience that the refugees would be "antisemitic."
>
> "I don't know what Biden's going to do, but we cannot accept people from Gaza into this country as refugees," DeSantis said during the event. "If you look at how they behave, not all of them are Hamas, but they are all antisemitic. None of them believe in Israel's right to exist."

That's bold, but he's not wrong.

So there is a clear difference between the parties on issues. I think the people who say that there is no difference just don't know what the differences are, because it takes work to know.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

October 17, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude others
- It's meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can't say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away,

there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

New study: couples who cohabitate before marriage have higher risk of marital dissolution

October 18, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was in college studying computer science, there was a new idea going around called “design patterns”. Basically, this was a cookbook of component arrangements that were “best practices” for solving certain problems. Depending on your problem, you might try different patterns, like Observer, Visitor, Strategy, etc. And it turns out that there are design patterns for social issues, too.

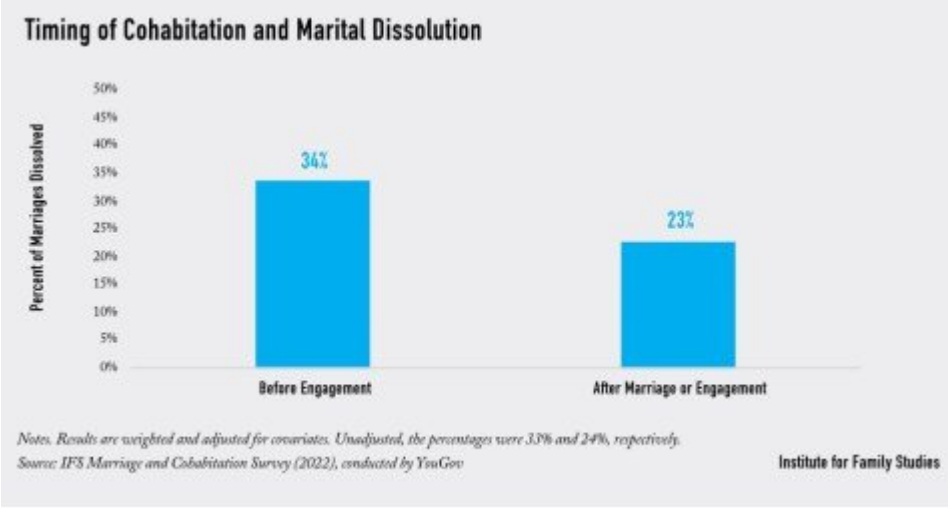

Cohabition Instability

Here’s a new report from the Institute for Family Studies:

> Fifty to 65% of Americans believe that living together before marriage will improve their odds of relationship success. Younger Americans are especially likely to believe in the beneficial effects of cohabitation, and to view living together as providing a valuable test of a relationship ahead of marriage. Yet living together before marriage has long been associated with a higher risk for divorce, contradicting the common belief that cohabitation will improve the odds of a marriage lasting.
>
> […]Using a new national sample of Americans who married for the first time in the years 2010 to 2019, we examined the stability of these marriages as of 2022 based on whether or not, and when, people had lived together prior to marriage. Consistent with prior research, couples who cohabited before marriage were more likely to see their marriages end than those who did not cohabit before marriage.

Key findings:

> - 34% of marriages ended among those who cohabited before being engaged, compared to 23% of marriages for those who lived together only

> after being either married or engaged to be married.

And this from the key takeaways was interesting:

> - Reasons for moving in together also matter: People who reported that their top reason for moving in together was either to test the relationship or because it made sense financially were more likely to see their marriages end than those who did so because they wanted to spend more time with their partner.
> - Having a greater number of prior cohabiting partners is associated with a higher likelihood of marriages ending.

I think the key point in these studies is that couples who decide to commit are moving in very different reasons than couples who just slide into cohabitation because it's convenient.

It's interesting because it shows that being cautious about commitment is more likely to cause instability. The attitude seems to be "I'll keep doing this as long as it makes me happy".

With commitment, the attitude is going to be more like "let's decide to unite, and then it will be on us to make it work". The old marriage vows were all about that commitment. I really have to wonder whether people mean it when they say those words today, they are so counter to our hedonistic culture.

I think what people should be looking for is a mate who thinks that the relationship works better if both people work at it. If you have one person who thinks that it is the other person's job to make them happy, run from that relationship. Like, if you are always doing little things to help the other person do well in their tasks and purposes, and they never do anything to help you, then that's a bad sign. You don't want to commit to someone who thinks that relationships should be effortless, that they don't have to do anything to put gas in your fuel tank in order to make you perform.

Ideally, you want someone who thinks that it's fun to put fuel in your tank, and thinks that it's their job to do that for you. Just because they like to see your engine run.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott tells legislators: no breaks until school choice is law

October 19, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to monitor all the best governors, just in case I decide to switch states. Obviously, DeSantis is up there, but what about Texas governor Greg Abbott? He likes to fight, too. And he's willing to make Democrats miserable in order to get what he wants.

Here's a story from The Federalist:

> Historically, Texas has painfully lagged in school choice programs, resembling more of a blue state than its Republican trifecta. Currently, the only avenues of school choice in Texas are within the public system: charter schools and magnet schools, as well as inter-district and intra-district enrollment avenues. School choice programs that allow students to move outside the public education system are nonexistent.
>
> But Abbott has committed to changing that. He's calling for universal education savings accounts (ESAs), which would grant K-12 students statewide access to taxpayer funding for other selected educational avenues.
>
> The Texas Legislature returned to Austin for a third special session on Oct. 9. Abbott made it clear that it is time for Texas to pass school choice. If legislators cannot get it passed this session, then he'll bring them back immediately for another session. "I can play this game longer than they can play this game," he said about the legislature.

A lot of Republicans actually are very leftist on education issues. They don't want parents having more control. They think that government knows best about what children should learn.

Look:

> Republicans who represent rural areas in the House of Representatives blocked school choice from passing in the spring legislative session.

Kim Reynolds is also doing a great job as governor of Iowa, and Abbott is stealing her ideas:

> Abbott is also prepared to utilize an effective approach that Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds employed in 2022. When Republican legislators opposed school choice in her state, she worked to get them voted out of office. The tactic is well-timed with Texas primary elections next spring.

This is what Texas conservatives are trying to pass:

> Texas state Sen. Brandon Creighton, R-Conroe, introduced Senate Bill 1, named the Texas Education Freedom Act, on Oct. 9, the day the session kicked off. The

> bill passed through the committee on Oct. 13 with a vote of 18-13. It has now moved to the Texas House.
>
> The bill, if the state house passes it, would establish an education savings account program in Texas. Families would receive $8,000 per student in taxpayer funds that they could use on various educational expenses, including accredited private school tuition, textbooks, tutoring, transportation, and educational therapies.

School choice is really important for Christians. We need to have the ability to put our money into schools that work for us. What we don't want is to pay our money first, then hope for the best. It's amazing to me how many Christians trust a secular government to provide them with health care, education, etc. after they pay up front. Keep your money in your pocket until you find something that works for you!

Can taxpayers trust federal law enforcement to adhere to “the rule of law”?

October 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I don’t know if people in federal law enforcement are familiar with the concept of the rule of law. It’s an important pillar of Western civilization, that teaches that everyone should be equal before the law. We want federal law enforcement to believe that, and defend that. But in a Democrat party administration, it doesn’t seem like they understand it. Let’s take a look at some evidence.

This article from Matt Walsh was published in Daily Wire. He’s going to contrast a Democrat meme poster with a Republican meme poster, and their punishments.

Here’s a Democrat meme maker telling Republicans to vote one day after the 2016 election day:

> November 8th, 2016 was Election Day… that morning, a Left-wing activist named Kristina Wong decided to play a practical joke on all these Election Day voters. She went on Twitter, writing, “Hey Trump Supporters! Skip poll lines at #Election2016 and TEXT in your vote! Text votes are legit. Or vote tomorrow on Super Wednesday!”
>
> Wong also uploaded this video on Twitter, telling Trump supporters once again that Election Day, in reality, was on November 9th — a day later than the actual Election Day.
>
> That video is still available on Kristina Wong’s Twitter feed.

Matt Walsh notes that “the DOJ never charged Kristina Wong with any crime”.

And here’s a Republican meme maker telling Democrats to vote one day after the 2016 election day:

> On social media, [Douglass] Mackey used the online alias of “Ricky Vaughn.” And exactly one week before Kirstina Wong posted her meme on Twitter, Douglass Mackey posted this meme…
>
> As the image reads: “Avoid the line. Vote from home.” Douglass Mackey posted this image on social media a full week before Election Day. At the time he posted this on his Twitter account, Mackey’s profile picture depicted a man in a MAGA hat wearing a Bane mask. So it was not exactly a credible announcement about the upcoming election. Nor was it trying to be.
>
> At the time, everyone recognized this. More than four years went by, and no one said a word about it.
>
> Then, in late January 2021 — just a week after Joe Biden was inaugurated, and his handlers took control of the federal government and the DOJ — everything changed. Douglass Mackey was suddenly hit with federal charges.

So, the Democrat meme maker got no charges, but the Republican meme maker got charges. And worse, the Republican meme maker got a federal prison sentence:

> The Biden DOJ put Douglass Mackey on trial, more than a half-decade after his allegedly illegal memes.
>
> [..][P]rosecutors never produced a single piece of evidence to prove that a single vote was actually lost due to Mackey's meme. The jury did not hear from a single witness who testified that they texted their vote and then didn't vote for real because of it. In other words, there was never any evidence, or any reason to believe, that any actual real world harm was caused by this meme.
>
> […]Nothing happened. There was no harm done. And yet, predictably, Mackey was convicted and the other day he was sentenced by this federal judge to seven months in prison.

Matt notes that this is not how federal law enforcement treats Democrats who commit much worse crimes:

> To put that sentence in context, seven months is longer time in prison than a BLM rioter received in 2020 for threatening to murder a police officer with an AR-15. That officer was guarding a courthouse that the rioters were setting on fire. But this rioter, named Dakota Means, was sentenced to probation, meaning no time in prison whatsoever. Dakota Means went on to murder his infant child.
>
> As horrifying as that story is, there are many more like it. Pretty much every BLM terrorist from 2020 received a lighter sentence than Douglass Mackey did for posting a meme.

Now, just this week, secular left protesters invaded the Capitol in what can only be described as a literal "insurrection". Will these literal insurrectionists be given 20-year prison sentences? They did much more than move a barrier.

Matt predicts that they won't be punished at all:

> The other day, pro-Hamas protesters stormed a Senate office building, demanding a ceasefire in the Middle East. They obstructed lawmakers on their way to work. They prevented media reports from taking place. It was an insurrection.
>
> Not a single one of those rioters will be placed in solitary confinement by Joe Biden's DOJ. They won't face 20-year prison sentences. Just like the women who stormed Capitol buildings during the Kavanaugh hearings, none of these pro-Hamas degenerates will face any consequences whatsoever.

Is Matt Walsh right? Time will tell. But just make sure that you vote in 2024, and make sure that you get all of your family and friends to vote, too. Now is the time to keep them informed about news stories like this one, so that they understand what's at stake. We've produced a generation of poorly-educated, immoral, secular left fascists who don't even

understand the meaning of “rule of law” – or any other basic legal concepts. And sadly, they’ve found their way into government, and into federal law enforcement. We’re paying them to be stupid and evil. Maybe we need better people?

Why are Christians allowed to eat shellfish but not allowed to have sex before marriage?

October 21, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful article from Peter Saunders.

The challenge:

> An argument frequently advanced by those attempting to defend homosexual practice is that Christians 'cherry pick' the commands in the Bible – that is, they chose to emphasise some commands while ignoring others.
>
> The Old Testament may forbid homosexual acts (Leviticus 18:2; 20:13) but it also forbids eating seafood without fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9, 10).
>
> So how can Christians then justify upholding laws on sexual morality whilst at the same time ignoring the food laws from the very same books of the Bible? Why may they eat shellfish but not be allowed to have sex outside marriage? Isn't this inconsistent and hypocritical?

The solution is that God enters into "covenants" with his people, and the terms of those covenants change.

Especially dietary laws:

> The answer to this question lies in an understanding of biblical covenants.
>
> A covenant is a binding solemn agreement made between two parties. It generally leaves each with obligations. But it holds only between the parties involved.
>
> There are a number of biblical covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic (Old), Davidic and New.
>
> Under the Noahic covenant, which God made with all living human beings (Genesis 9:8-17), people were able to eat anything:
>
> *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Genesis 9:3).*
>
> But under the Sinaitic (Old) Covenant, which God made with the nation of Israel, people were able to eat certain foods, but not others.

Jesus clearly created a new covenant with his followers, where the dietary laws are lifted:

> Jesus said that he had come to fulfil the 'Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). He would establish this new covenant with new laws, with himself as high priest based on his own sacrificial death on the cross.
>
> This new covenant would completely deal with sin (Hebrews 10:1-18) and protect

> all those who put their faith in him from God's wrath and judgement…
>
> *[…]'In the same way, after the supper (Jesus) took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you"' (Luke 22:20). '…we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Hebrews 10:10)*
>
> People would come under the protection of this new covenant, not by virtue of belonging to the nation of Israel, but through faith in Christ. In fact the function of the Old Testament Law (Sinaitic covenant) was to point to Christ as its fulfilment.
>
> […]So what then did Christ say about foods? He pronounced all foods clean for his followers to eat:
>
> *' "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (Mark 7:18-23)*
>
> Jesus was making that point that under the new covenant God required purity of the heart. Internal thoughts and attitudes were as important as external actions.

Food is OK for Christians, but sexual immorality – which includes premarital sex and adultery – are NOT OK for Christians.

I think sometimes when you are talking to people whose motivation is just to get rid of any objective moral law entirely, they tend to ask questions without really wanting a good answer. This is especially true when it comes to the morality of sex. They ask the question not to get an answer, but to justify getting rid of the moral rules governing sexuality. The answers are there for people who are willing to respect God in their decision-making to find. The answers are not found only by people who have a reason to not want to find them.

In case you're wondering, I am one of those Christian men who takes chastity seriously. Marriage is about having a close connection with your spouse. Sure, I could break the rules and have a lot of fun now. A lot of Christians have a hard time turning down fun. But when I look at Jesus, I don't see a man who is pursuing fun and thrills. I see a man who sees a need and then sacrifices his own interests to rescue others from peril.

Physicist Michael Strauss discusses Christianity and science at Stanford University

October 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of my favorite lectures.

The lecture:

Dr. Strauss delivered this lecture at Stanford University in 1999. It is fairly easy to understand, and it even includes useful dating tips.

Here is a clip:

The full video can be watched on Vimeo:

Summary:

What does science tell us about God?
– the discoveries of Copernicus made humans less significant in the universe
– the discoveries of Darwin should that humans are an accident
– but this all pre-modern science
– what do the latest findings of science say about God?

Evidence #1: the origin of the universe
– the steady state model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the oscillating model supports atheism, but was disproved by the latest discoveries
– the big bang model supports theism, and it is supported by multiple recent discoveries
– the quantum gravity model supports atheism, but it pure theory and has never been tested or confirmed by experiment and observation

Evidence #2: the fine-tuning of physical constants for life
– there are over 100 examples of constants that must be selected within a narrow range in order for the universe to support the minimal requirements for life
– example: mass density
– example: strong nuclear force (what he studies)
– example: carbon formation

Evidence #3: the fine-tuning of our planet for habitability
– the type of galaxy and our location in it
– our solar system and our star
– our planet
– our moon

It's a good lecture explaining a couple of basic arguments for a cosmic Creator and Designer. If you add the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion (Stephen C. Meyer's arguments), then you will be solid on the basic scientific arguments for a Creator and Designer of the universe.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Alan Shlemon's very interesting review of a pro-gay "evangelical" conference

October 23, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I want to try to convince you to read a very interesting article about Christian apologetics and moral issues. It's posted on the Stand to Reason web site. The author, Alan Shlemon, is an amazing Christian apologist, and very conservative on social issues. Striking, because that seems to be intentionally avoided by many popular apologists.

Here is his introduction:

> In 2014, I attended Matthew Vines's conference on the Bible and homosexuality. His stated goal was to "promote inclusion of LGBTQ people by reforming church teaching." The organization he started, The Reformation Project, teaches that homosexual sex and same-sex marriage are biblically permissible, and its goal to mainstream this theology into the church is overt and clear.
>
> Fast-forward to last month, when I attended the Unconditional Conference put on by Embracing the Journey (ETJ). Hosted by nationally known pastor Andy Stanley and held at his church, which boasts a weekly attendance of nearly 40,000 people, the event sought to create a theologically neutral space where parents and leaders could learn how to minister to youth who identify as LGBTQ. In other words, the stated intent was not to change anyone's theology.
>
> […][T]he conference was deeply problematic because of the false and somewhat hidden premise that permeated most of the teaching: Followers of Christ can participate in homosexual sex, same-sex marriage, or transgender "transitioning." That premise undergirds three serious concerns I have with the Unconditional Conference.

And he covers these points:

- the Unconditional Conference claimed to be theological neutral but wasn't.
- the Unconditional Conference advanced a false dichotomy of possible responses to a child who identifies as LGBTQ.
- the Unconditional Conference wrongly presumed you can divorce theology from how you minister.

Then he has his case for Biblical standards on sexual morality:

- Scripture is univocal in its positive case for sex and marriage in both the Old and New Testaments.
- Scripture is univocal in its negative case.
- Scripture warns that those who engage in ongoing sexual sin will not inherit the kingdom of God.

A PDF is available.

Here is the part I liked the best:

> [T]he hidden premise that permeated the conference was that walking with Jesus can include same-sex marriage as well as transgender "transitioning." Not only did no one say anything to the contrary, but virtually every speaker, facilitator, and volunteer spoke in a way that led one to believe those behaviors are permissible.
>
> […]What the Unconditional Conference did was tantamount to a pro-life conference inviting—as one of their speakers—a Planned Parenthood employee who not only has had an abortion but also teaches as if it were a good, moral, and God-honoring decision. Attendees would reasonably conclude the "pro-life" conference believed abortion is an appropriate option.
>
> What this abortion analogy also shows is that many pro-choice arguments sound persuasive because, like the Unconditional Conference, they are based on hidden (but faulty) premises. For example, pro-choice advocates claim, "Women should have the freedom to choose," or, "Women should have the right to control their own bodies." Notice how the fundamental question, "What is the unborn?" is not addressed. Worse, the pro-choice advocate simply assumes the unborn is not a human being and carries on making their case with that hidden premise.
>
> The Unconditional Conference approached their topic in the same way. For two days, the speakers addressed how to minister to people who identify as LGBTQ but intentionally didn't address the fundamental question of whether homosexual sex or same-sex marriage is sin. Worse, they simply assumed they are not sin and carried on offering advice with that hidden premise.

I really recommend checking out this article. It's a very good article, on a very important topic. If you're finding yourself getting soft on this issue, it might be good to look to someone who isn't, and see how they manage to do that.

Why are Christian leaders so desperate to appease the secular left?

October 24, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For this post, when I say Christian leaders who are trying to find "middle ground", avoid "heated disagreement", form "nuanced" views, and so on. I'm thinking of organizations that want to be "welcoming" and "tolerant" of the secular left, like Christianity Today, The Gospel Coalition, the ERLC, etc. Anyway, let's start with an article by Matt Walsh of the Daily Wire.

He writes:

> Recently, I told you about the major victory in the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, which upheld the ban on child gender mutilation in Tennessee and Kentucky. After that decision was announced, a number of prominent Christian leaders took to Twitter to celebrate the decision. But it was noted by many that most of these leaders, though they were eager to join the party celebrating the win — and to tacitly take credit for it — were nowhere in sight when the battle was raging. In fact, transgenderism and LGBT ideology seized its stranglehold on American culture while most churches, most Christian leaders, most pastors and priests — certainly not all, but most — said nothing at all. They may not have explicitly joined the other side and started waving the rainbow flag — though some of them did — but most of them hid from the fight.
>
> Which is why, of all the people who most prominently led the charge against gender ideology, precisely none of us were church leaders. Some aren't even Christian at all.
>
> Worse still — and I can say this from experience — while we went to war against this evil, many Christian leaders spent their time lecturing us for the way that we fought, the tone we took, our harshness, our meanness, our supposed lack of grace and kindness. They sat on the sidelines, afraid to get their hands dirty, while lecturing those in the trenches for fighting in a way that they found personally displeasing to watch. This is the story of Christianity in the west, at least in modern times.

Recently, I read an interesting op-ed by the leaders of the Tennessee State House and Senate, talking about how they passed legislation to protect children from LGBT predators.

They wrote:

> Tennesseans demanded swift action when, in September 2022, The Daily Wire uncovered that a Nashville hospital was actively promoting sex-changing cosmetic surgeries as "huge money makers." The reports revealed allegations of discrimination against hospital employees who expressed conscientious

> objections based on their personal ethical and religious beliefs.
>
> Amid national outcry about these disturbing revelations, Tennesseans were further shocked to learn the hospital was providing hormone and sterilization treatments to children as young as 13. These reports raised nationwide awareness and serious ethical concerns about procedures performed on minors at pediatric transgender clinics around the country.
>
> […]The absurdity of this practice led us to introduce Senate Bill 1/ House Bill 1. We committed to banning these procedures in Tennessee. Now state law, this monumental legislation bans medical interference that alters a child's hormonal balance. It prohibits any procedure that removes a child's healthy body parts for the purpose of enabling them to identify as a gender different from their biological sex. This law provides the nation's strongest protections for minors against these harmful drugs and procedures.
>
> We are tremendously proud of our Tennessee House and Senate colleagues who stood firmly against intense scrutiny from the woke Left mob this year when we first introduced Senate Bill 1/ House Bill 1.
>
> Of course, the pushback from the radical Left was swift. Liberals from all over the country falsely claimed this law would be "dangerous" and warned it would never hold up in court. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) challenged the legality of the legislation, and recently the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals wisely ruled 2-1 to reject their challenge.
>
> […]Tennessee is a leader in every sense of the word. In our 227-year history, we have accomplished remarkable things. We are a state known for low taxes, small government, prosperous business, and strong, conservative family values. We are the Volunteer State; it's not in our nature to sit idly by and watch destructive groups of people brainwash our vulnerable youth to believe they have a permanent solution to their complicated struggles. Preserving family values and advocating for the U.S. and Tennessee Constitution means never backing down.
>
> Running and defending Senate Bill 1/ House Bill 1 to protect children in our state was never a question. We knew that by taking ultimate responsibility for this movement, something good would come, and this outcome is priceless. We are hopeful more states will follow Tennessee's lead.

Those are some REAL Christian leaders. They are not interested in finding the middle ground, or avoiding the culture war, or sharing their viewpoint as "equally valid". No. They want to use their strength to protect the weak from predators. They aren't afraid to force their point of view with evidence, and then accept the consequences of being hated by the secular left.

On this blog, and on our podcast, I haven't chickened out of speaking on controversial issues, like abortion, same-sex marriage, economics, race, and so on. On these battles, I have made sure that my positions were stated and supported with evidence. That won't be convincing to the feelings-dominated people on the secular left that these

equivocating Christian leaders want to please, but I think it is important for God to know where I stand. When the Bible was under attack from the secular left, I defended the Bible. I didn't try to create a middle ground on controversial issues, in order to please the secular left. That's more than can be said for these "Christian leaders". What counts more? Popularity with the world? Or being faithful to the Boss?

Another victim of gender ideology sues the “don’t judge” predators

October 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We’re seeing a lot of stories of vulnerable young people who were bullied and manipulated into taking puberty blockers and/or hormones and/or sex-mutilation surgery. I’ve got a new story about a detransitioner below, and link to a few other stories, so that we can understand who is on “the right side of history” on social issues. Is it “don’t judge” teachers? Is it the greedy doctors? Let’s see.

Here’s the first article from Daily Wire:

> A woman who was pumped with testosterone and underwent hormone therapy when she was a young teenager is suing both her doctors and the American Academy of Pediatrics, which her lawyers say has knowingly lied about the impact of the radical sex-change treatments it recommends, according to a copy of the lawsuit obtained exclusively by The Daily Wire.
>
> Isabelle Ayala, now a twenty-year-old woman, had just turned fourteen when she was committed to the hospital for suicidal thoughts, according to the lawsuit. It was during this hospital stay that she met with Dr. Jason Rafferty, who during his first brief meeting with Ayala determined that she “meets criteria to consider hormonal transition,” with the only stated obstacle being parental consent. The lawsuit states that Rafferty and other doctors sent Ayala down the “path of ‘gender-affirming’ medicalization” rather than addressing the true roots of her mental health problems — six months into her testosterone treatments, Ayala tried to commit suicide.
>
> The treatments, however, continued, until Ayala moved away from Rhode Island and decided to quit them “cold-turkey.” Now comfortable with her gender, she regrets what the doctors did to her, the lawsuit says.
>
> “Isabelle is now twenty years old and longs for what could have been and to have her healthy, female body back,” it says. “The changes the testosterone have had on her body are a constant reminder that she needed an unbiased medical expert willing to evaluate her mental health and provide her the care she needed, rather than a group of ideologues set on promoting their own agenda and furthering a broader conspiracy at her expense.”
>
> The lawsuit not only goes after the doctors who treated Ayala, but also the American Academy of Pediatrics, where Rafferty and his colleagues worked to publish a now-infamous policy statement advocating for aggressive gender treatments for children. Lawyers for Ayala say the policy statement laid the groundwork for an “entirely new model of treatment” based on “outright fraudulent representations” of scientific proof.

> "Defendants have doubled- and tripled-down on their commitment to the policy statement and its 'affirmative model' of treatment, while continuing to promote and profit off it," the lawsuit states, alleging that Ayala and other children are "victims of a conspiracy entered into and perpetuated to the present day by certain ideologically captured individuals in positions of power at the American Academy of Pediatrics."

The interesting thing about this story is that the medical body of "experts" is being targeted. This is an opportunity to start the process of impoverishing and imprisoning them all, to send a message to the secular left.

Here's another one from Daily Signal:

> Another detransitioner is suing Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, Permanente Medical Group, and the doctors who pushed her along the path to hormonal and surgical transgender procedures.
>
> In a lawsuit filed June 14 in California's San Joaquin County Superior Court, Kayla Lovdahl and her attorneys with the Center for American Liberty are accusing medical professionals of fast-tracking young Lovdahl through her gender transition, one that she now deeply regrets.
>
> It specifically names medical professionals Lisa Kristine Taylor, Winnie Mao Yiu Tong, Susanne Watson, and Mirna Escalante. Several of these individuals are similarly named in the lawsuits of detransitioners Chloe Cole and Layla Jane, also represented by the Center for American Liberty.
>
> "This case is about a team of doctors," the lawsuit begins, "who decided to perform a damaging, imitation sex-change experiment on Kayla, then a twelve-year-old vulnerable girl struggling with complex mental health comorbidities, who needed care, attention, and psychotherapy, not cross-sex hormones and mutilating surgery."

I like this one because it's going after a well health care provider, and would send a message to other smaller health care providers about what is and is not the proper function of health care providers. Interesting to note that all of the doctors named (Lisa Kristine Taylor, Winnie Mao Yiu Tong, Susanne Watson, and Mirna Escalante) are women, who, according to polls, tend to be more liberal on social issues than men. Who knew that "don't judge" would turn out to mean "make money off of being evil to confused, helpless victims"?

Another one from the New York Post:

> Camille Kiefel, 32, had her healthy breasts removed in 2020 to align with her nonbinary gender identity. She says her doctors approved the surgery after two Zoom meetings, breezing past a whole host of mental health issues.
>
> Now that Camille is in a better place mentally, she realizes her surgery was a mistake. So, two and a half years later, she's suing her social worker, therapist,

> and the gender clinics they work for — Brave Space Oregon and Quest Center for Integrative Health — seeking up to $850,000 in damages.
>
> […]the idea that she might not actually be a woman didn't occur to Camille until she enrolled at Portland State University, where she minored in gender studies and was introduced to alternative views about sex and gender.
>
> By the time she reached her mid-20s, she embraced a nonbinary label and used she/they pronouns. All the while, she was struggling with a slew of mental-health issues, including anxiety disorder, social anxiety, PTSD, major depressive disorder and ADHD.
>
> In the depths of the pandemic in 2020, Camille, then 30, was still struggling and thought gender-neutral top surgery could ease her mental-health issues. "I was so dysfunctional, and I just wanted something that was going to help me," she recalled. "I thought I would be happier."

When will this preying on children by the secular left end? It will end when we clean out their bank accounts. When there is no God, then there is no objective morality. When there is no objective morality, then all that's left is pursuing pleasure. And that usually means obtaining quick money, to fund the pursuit of pleasure. Take away the money, and the secular leftists will stop.

Do secular leftists have a lower divorce rate than Christians?

October 26, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do secular leftists have a lower divorce rate than Christians? Do religious people divorce at a higher or lower rate, compared to non-religious people? Let's take a look at some data from a study, so we can really see what the evidence is.

Here's something from the Institute for Family Studies:

> When trying to understand how much people value something, economists pay particular attention to the value of what people give up in order to estimate how much they value what they get in exchange. Money is a common metric for value, but time is another metric that is sometimes easier to use. When it comes to Christianity, people are often reluctant to discuss how much money they contribute to their churches but are more forthcoming when asked how much time they spend on religious activities. Economists who study religion often use the frequency of church attendance as a proxy for the strength of an individual's religious beliefs.
>
> Using this line of reasoning, we can divide the American population into two groups: 1) the "devout," or those who attend church two to three times a month or more; and 2) the "non-devout," or those who attend church once a month or less. The following analysis used data for people ages 25 to 54 from the General Social Survey (GSS).

So, the first point is that secular left feminists are unlikely to get married *at all*, and that's because marriage is moral rational in the Christian worldview than it is in the secular leftist worldview:

> Here, it is clear that marriage rates have been falling for the population as a whole. But those who attend church on a regular basis are significantly more likely to marry than their less devout peers. Breaking this analysis down further by race,[2] we see higher rates of marriage among regular church attenders in both white and black populations.
>
> There appear to be social and economic forces occurring over time that are causing decreased marriage rates for all Americans. But for both black and white Americans, marriage is falling significantly faster for people who do not attend church regularly. This is creating a growing gap in marriage rates between the devout and non-devout over time. And the widening gap in marriage may indicate a growing separation of shared culture between the devout and non-devout.

People think that they can just chop the God out of Christianity, and the same morals will

just continue as before, with no rational foundation for it. But marriage involves a loss of personal freedom to pursue pleasure, at least in the short-term. Atheism is about hedonism. That's why atheists support abortion – because when someone else gets in the way of their pleasure, they think murder is a fine way to keep the good times rolling for themselves. It's what Darwin called "survival of the fittest", and this is what atheists believe. When atheists are faced with a conflict between their own happiness, and the loss of personal freedom that marriage requires, they choose not to get married. That's why atheist states have such low marriage rates.

Marriage itself is self-sacrificial – you're making a safe place for children to have stability, at your own expense. So that's the first difference between church-attending Christians and secular left feminists – marriage rates. It's no use complaining when you are a hedonist that you can't find a good spouse to marry. You're a hedonist, and you're looking for a hedonist to marry. That's not the kind of person who enters a commitment that requires self-control and self-denial. You might as well expect two psychopaths to run a successful business together than to expect two morality-deniers to get married and stay together.

Far-left Pew Research that 64% of members of a couple of Christian denominations are married. But for atheists, it's a measly 36%. Atheists don't get married.

OK, and what did they find about the divorce rates of these different groups of people – devout and non-devout?

This:

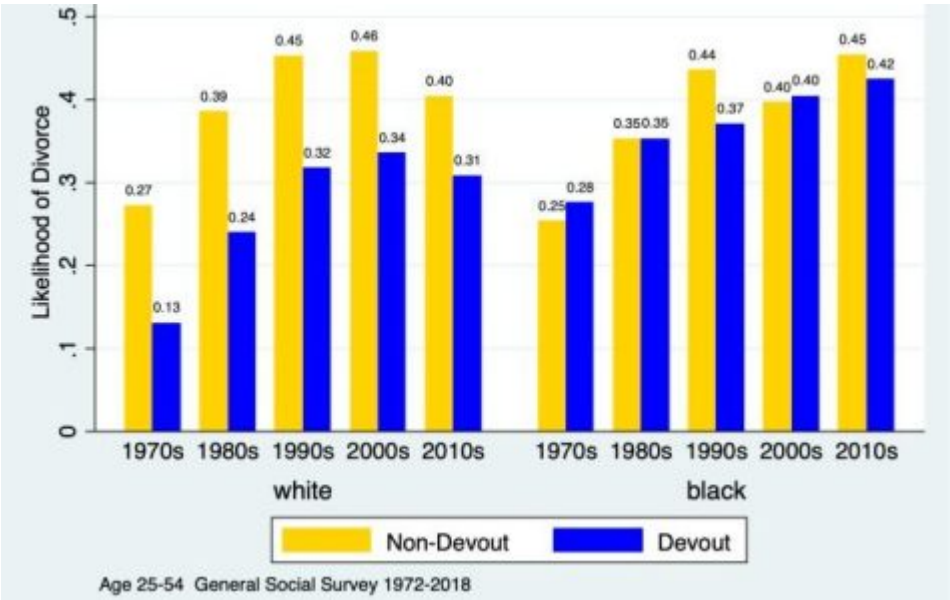

Devout vs Non-Devout Divorce Marriage

The article says:

> The figure above shows that divorce rates are significantly lower for white Americans who attend church regularly and this difference remains significant across all decades.

A previous study out of Harvard University reached the same conclusion:

> Considerable research over the last two decades has been devoted to the relationship between religious participation and health and well-being. Our research on this topic at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health links religious service attendance to a number of better health outcomes, including longer life, lower incidence of depression, and less suicide. Our work also indicates that religious service attendance is associated with greater marital stability—or more specifically, with a lower likelihood of divorce.[1]
>
> We are not the first to study the relationship between religious service attendance and the likelihood of divorce. In fact, a number of studies have found similar results: namely, that those who attend religious services are about 30 to 50 percent less likely to divorce than those who do not.[2]

It's really important for young people to make sure that the actions they take *today* are taking them towards the goal they want to reach tomorrow. Church attendance is good for marriage. Being debt-free is good for marriage. Being a virgin is good for marriage. If a young person wants a good marriage, then they need to choose the behaviors that make marriage work. And, just as important, they need to choose a spouse who also chooses the behaviors that make marriage work. Don't rely on "feelings" and "intuitions" when you choose a spouse. Don't be mystical. Look at the research on marriage, do the marriage best practices, and choose a spouse who also does the marriage best practices.

There's no point in complaining about bad outcomes if you ignore the right way to get a good outcome.

What’s in an apologetics book? A review of “God’s Crime Scene” by J. Warner Wallace

October 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the best introductory books on the existence of God is Detective J. Warner Wallace’s “God’s Crime Scene”. The book provides a good overview of all of the areas that suggest an intelligent agent at work in the natural world. I found a good review of the book over at Luke Nix’s “Faithful Thinkers” blog.

The book begins with an introductory chapter explaining what’s in the book, then an opening statement explaining (without taking sides) how we can investigate whether or not there is a Creator and Designer of the universe. The next 8 chapters talk about 8 areas where we can investigate:

1. the origin of the universe
2. evidence for design in the universe
3. the origin of life
4. the presence of information in the cell
5. our awareness of consciousness
6. our experience of free will
7. objective human value and objective moral duties
8. the reality of evil in the world

I’ll just grab a couple of paragraphs on a couple of those points from Luke’s review:

> ### Chapter 1: In the Beginning
>
> Wallace’s first piece of evidence that appears to not have an explanation inside the universe is the universe’s beginning. He presents a diverse set of arguments for the beginning of the universe. These include the philosophical evidence of the impossibility of infinite regresses, theoretical evidence of mathematics and physics, observational evidence from astronomy, thermal evidence provided by the second law of thermodynamics, quantitative evidence in the abundance of helium, and evidence of the cosmic background radiation. All these used together provide powerful evidence of the beginning of the universe, and since everything that begins to exist, must have a cause, the universe must have had a cause outside itself too.
>
> ### Chapter 2: Tampering with the Evidence
>
> The foundational conditions of the universe that allow for life’s existence include the physical laws governing the atom, the matter of the universe, and the creation of chemicals. The next layer (regional) moves closer to home: our galaxy and solar system. The shape, position, and size of our galaxy make it habitable

> for life; while our sun's position, age, mass, and composition allow it to to host a planet fit for life. The third layer is the planet, itself. The earth's relationship to the sun, atmosphere, terrestrial nature, and moon all play a role in making a place that is fit for life.
>
> ### Chapter 5: Our Experience of Consciousness
>
> In naturalistic worldviews it is common to believe that the brain and the mind are the same thing. Wallace explains that the only way that two things are the same is if they share all their attributes with no differences. He describes six attributes of the brain that are not shared by the mind. All of these distinctions build a powerful case for the two being completely different. He concludes that the brain is physical while the mind is non-physical and that the mind's existence can only be explained "outside the room" of the universe being the product of another mind. He examines several attempts by naturalistic philosophers to explain the mind "inside the room" of the universe, but he shows how each of them fail to offer an adequate explanation.
>
> ### Chapter 6: Free Will or Full Wiring
>
> From a naturalistic perspective (one that holds there is no distinction between the mind and the brain) free will does not exist; it is an illusion much like the mind. If free will does actually exist, it points even more powerfully towards the existence of the mind, which must derive its origin from the supernatural, since it is supernatural itself. Wallace uses the concept of responsibility and the ability to choose other than we do to build his case for free will's actual existence. Without the ability to chose something other than what we do, we cannot be held responsible, thus no one would be worthy of punishment (in the case of wrong-doing) or praise (in the case of doing right).

A while back I finished reading "God's Crime Scene", and I found something interesting in Chapter 6, on free will on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others." Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: "It seems that not only

> do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it.”” The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here’s the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons’ belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you’re an atheist, then you are a physical object. And like every other physical object in the universe, your behavior is determined by genetic programming (if you’re alive) and external inputs. Material objects do not have the ability to make free choices, including moral choices.

Here’s prominent atheist Jerry Coyne’s editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can’t ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

(Source)

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality. Can you imagine trying to get into any sort of enterprise with someone who has this view of moral choices? A marriage, or a business arrangement, etc? It would be crazy to expect them to behave morally, when they don't even think that moral choices is possible. It just excuses all sorts of bad behavior, because no one is responsible for choosing to do the right thing.

Believers in materialism are going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

Choosing to do the right thing

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when doing the right thing sets you back. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me about their ability

to do the right thing when it was hard for them to do it. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality.
> My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

October 28, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates

- You didn’t need to come out on this cold night
- Craig’s arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn’t listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don’t require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that “every effect requires a cause”
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can’t see
- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism

6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said.

Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can’t God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus’ burial isn’t historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig’s concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg’s concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig’s arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don’t look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Correcting four myths about the history of the Crusades

October 29, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an interesting article from Intercollegiate Studies Institute.

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the

> peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

If you asked me what are the two best books on the Crusades, I would answer God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades by Baylor professor Rodney Stark and The Concise History of the Crusades by Professor Thomas F. Madden. If you get this question a lot from atheists, then I recommend you pick these up. Anything by Rodney Stark is useful for Christians, in fact.

Young people voting for Democrat policies will never be able to retire

October 30, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My plan is to quit working and retire before age 50. That's the result of many years of living debt-free in inexpensive states, investing money, and not spending money on entertainment, travel, etc. But young people aren't going to be able to go that route. Not only are they borrowing and spending, but they are also voting for policies that will prevent them from ever being able to retire.

This story from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, for example, shows the result of voting for a big spending socialist.

> According to final data from the Treasury Department, net interest costs reached $659 billion (2.5 percent of GDP) in fiscal year 2023, a $184 billion increase from the previous year. In this piece, we explain that:
>
> - Interest costs nearly doubled over the past three years, from $345 billion in 2020 to $659 billion in 2023.
> - Interest is now the fourth-largest government program, behind only Social Security, Medicare, and defense.
> - The federal government in 2023 spent more on net interest than it did all spending on children, and it also spent more on interest than most major programs or program areas including Medicaid, veterans' programs, food and nutrition programs, and education.
>
> Interest is currently the fastest growing part of the federal budget. After growing from $221 billion in 2013 to $345 billion in 2020, it has nearly doubled to $659 billion in 2023. Relative to the economy, net interest costs grew from 1.6 percent of GDP in 2020 to 2.5 percent in 2023.
>
> In the coming years, interest costs are likely to further explode. With interest rates at a 16-year high, current debt holdings originally borrowed in a low interest rate environment will increasingly be rolled over at much higher rates. Meanwhile, the federal government continues to add roughly $2 trillion per year to the national debt.

Why is this a problem? Well, it's a problem because interest on our debt is so high, that it blocks spending on other government programs. The interest on the debt is such a big part of the budget, that there is no spending space left for discretionary spending. And eventually, that will impact non-discretionary spending, too. According to far-left CNN, Medicare's trust fund will be gone by 2030, and the Social Security trust fund will be gone by 2033. That means those programs will be forced to cut spending. And those are the CBO estimates. I think those numbers are optimistic.

How will the government pay for all of this spending and debt? Why, by raising taxes on incomes, of course. And who will pay these higher taxes? Not me, I'll be retired. The young people who think socialism is a great idea will be paying for it. They ought to know that, but instead, they only worry about climate change, gay marriage, abortion and infanticide.

Another thing that young people who vote Democrat support is open borders. They love the idea of people being let into the country, even though they will use more in social services and government welfare than they pay in taxes. It sounds so generous, but young people don't realize that they are the ones who will be paying for this "generosity" for the rest of their working lives.

According to the Federation for American Immigration Reform, the Biden administration let in 9 million illegal immigrants during his term. These are not people who are here legally on work permits, these are people who crossed illegally. That means that they could not meet the legal requirements for coming into the country on a work permit – speaking English, having an education, having work experience, etc. Who is going to pay for their educations, health care, policing, etc? The young people who voted for Biden will.

Young people are going to be working just as hard as their parents did, but with much less wealth to show for it. That's the cost of the "generosity" they vote for when they vote for socialism. And if they try to vote to take that money from job creators, then those job creators will just start shipping jobs overseas, and moving their money out so they don't have to pay taxes on it here. There's no way to fix this by confiscation or redistribution.

Should Christian men consider single mothers for marriage?

October 31, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why do Christians object to warning men about high-risk relationships?
A while back, I explained my three concerns about attending church. One of them was that male pastors and church leaders have adopted the priorities of radical feminism, and have turned against men who want a traditional marriage in which the man leads and the wife supports. Well, I found something that really illustrates what I mean by that, so that everyone will understand it.

Above, you can see a tweet by Michael Foster, a pastor who hosts a podcast called "It's Good to be a Man". His web site states that his goal is: "Extending God's house & father-rule by helping men to establish their own houses in strength, workmanship & wisdom."

He explains in subsequent tweets that he is just urging men to ask questions to find out how the woman became a single mother.

Reactions to the tweet

Here are some reactions to the tweet:

- asking Foster where are his warnings about single dads
- calling Foster a misogynist
- insulting Foster's appearance
- using 1 counterexample to deny a mountain of evidence
- single moms who deliberately chose bad men, and then play the victim by accepting no responsibility for their actions
- claiming that Foster was expressing an irrational opinion
- accusing Foster of being a child abuser

The negative reactions are all anti-intellectual and childish, especially trying to refute statistics with "you hurt my feelings" or telling a single personal story as a

counterexample.

Here's a disclaimer. In this post, I am talking about single mothers by choice, and single mothers who initiated divorce. Widows are excluded.

The risks posed by single mothers

Now, let's improve Foster's warning, by looking at some evidence – is a marriage to a single mother really more likely to result in a bad outcome?

First of all, women initiate 70% of divorces. If you meet a woman who divorced her husband, she either had a defect in her ability to evaluate and choose a man, or she had a defect in her ability to maintain a commitment to the man she chose. Either way, a woman who divorced her previous husband has red flags. There are two possibilities. She either chose a good man or she chose a bad man. If she chose a bad man, then it shows that she didn't choose a man with good moral character and spiritual leadership. That means that those things were low priorities for her when deciding who to get naked with. Alternatively, she married a good man, and failed to maintain the commitment. Then she has different problems: problems with male leadership, problems with responsibilities, problems with commitment, problems with contentment, etc. You need to ask questions to get to the bottom of what happened, and more importantly, what she has studied and done to change her worldview. Don't take her words for it, look at her actions.

Second, the number of premarital sex partners a woman has makes her a higher risk of divorce. The more sex partners, the more risk. The problem with women who engage in sex with men who don't commit to them is that they *necessarily* don't see a man's willingness and ability to commit as valuable when choosing a man. Women who have premarital sex with men who don't commit see OTHER THINGS as more valuable. They are rewarding the man for his height, his muscles, his tattoos, his piercings, his entertainment of her, etc. A good man should be very wary when a woman who gave her best youth, beauty and sexual interest to men like that now want to "settle" for a boring, unattractive provider who they see as having lower value than the men they gave sex to without requiring a commitment. What they really wanted was bad boys, and they threw sex at those bad boys without asking for commitment. With the man they perceive as low-level, they are insisting on commitment first, because they don't want this low-level man as badly as they wanted the bad boy. They are settling for less than they feel they deserve. This is where sex-withholding, feelings of unhappiness, and frivolous divorces come from. And by the way, hollering Jesus doesn't fix that risk any more than hollering Jesus fixes student loans accumulated for a useless non-STEM degree. Jesus-hollering isn't evidence that a woman has persuaded herself to change her view of which men are the most attractive. A woman's lack of respect for men who prepare for commitment and who keep their commitments is dangerous for marital stability. The hysterical reactions to a man's judging a woman for her past mistakes don't cancel the damage and risks caused by those mistakes. They simply tell the man that this woman is unrepentant, and therefore unteachable, and likely unsuitable for goal-oriented marriage. She is not qualified for the job of wife: self-sacrificial love for her husband, respect for her husband,

and supporting her husband in what he is trying to achieve for God.

Here's what the Bible says about sex outside of heterosexual marriage and about frivolous divorce. Read the critical replies to Foster's tweet. The critical responses show the *default* position of church-attending Christian women and pastors to the Bible in this culture. First, the critics don't accept the Bible as an authority over women's choices in any area of life. Second, the critics don't believe that women should bear any responsibility for their past actions. Nobody believes that women choosing bad men is the woman's fault in this society. So you should assume that single mothers don't take responsibility for their own failures. And that means that she will have taken no steps to repent of her mistake, and change her character so that she doesn't make the same mistake again. It's up to you to look at what she has been reading, listening to, watching, etc. and to check her actions in order to find out what she really thinks about what the Bible says. You can't marry a woman who responds to any mention of the moral law and moral obligations with denial of responsibility and insults. If she hasn't become an active crusader against women who choose bad men, and women who choose premarital sex, and women who choose divorce, then you can't really believe that there's been any real repentance. The risks to you are too high to take a chance on someone who is not certain. I've only ever met one single mother (Kerri) who blamed her own divorce on her own bad decisions.

The culture opposes male leadership

Foster's warning is intended to help men to make better decisions, so that their relationships will produce results for God. But his critics aren't interested in what men are trying to achieve for God. They are only concerned that women get what they want, regardles of their past actions. In their opinion, men exists solely to serve the needs of women. Women don't have to be good enough for marriage, men just have to give them what they want regardless of the woman's suitability for wife and mother roles. The role of men in any relationship is not to lead and achieve goals for God. Their role is to let women rule over them, disposing of their earnings as they see fit, for the benefit of the woman.

When women are young and pretty, they are entitled to hot bad boys to entertain them. When they are older, have tons of sexual experience, and children from different fathers, they are entitled to a husband to financially support them. But a husband with no power to lead the home, since their past choices of man showed they have no interest in following a man who has good character. And the churches, pastors, courts, schools, hospitals, etc. are all there to enforce this view of men as clowns / slaves.

This is what women are told about the role of men in every area of society. This society, including the Christian parents, Christian pastors, Christian culture, etc. do not produce women who prefer early marriage to men who are good at moral leadership and spiritual leadership. Therefore, men who are chaste, sober, have good educations, good private sector jobs, good savings, etc. need to be extremely careful. Look at the responses to Foster's tweet, and think: do these people care about providing you with a good wife? Or

is their concern all about how to insult you and shame you, until you are submissive to her needs?

Your marriage is your enterprise for serving God

My advice to men right now is to read over every single critical tweet in that thread that Foster started. Imagine that you are trying to get these women to do something in a marriage that is part of your plan to make the marriage serve God. You're trying to get her to watch a William Lane Craig debate. You're trying to get her to stop spending money on 50 Shades of Grey and Harry Potter. You're trying to get her to stop smoking and drinking. You're trying to get her to talk about the sermon instead of essential oils. You're trying to get her to read a Thomas Sowell book. You're trying to get her to not put the kids in day care or public schools.

You need to assume that her response to male leadership like this will be the exact same as the responses that Foster is getting to his tweet. And then after you have assumed it, then you need to keep your hands off that woman. Keep your distance, and ask her questions to find out what her real views are, and whether she is interested in growing into the kind of person who is safe for you to marry. Don't forget that chastity and sobriety are important during the evaluation process, so that you aren't influenced away from your leadership role. Don't listen to her words, look at her actions.

Issues in educating children to be effective and influential Christians

November 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, in this post I'm going to briefly go over three challenges to producing effective, influential children. First, choose a better spouse. Second, Christian classical schools. Third, socialist countries make homeschooling and private Christian schools effectively illegal.

1. Choose a better spouse

So let's start with the first one. Christian parents and pastors need to educate young people to choose spouses who are equipped educate to produce effective and influential children.

So in the case of choosing a man who will be involved in producing effective, influential children, here are some tips:

- don't choose a man based on attraction to his appearance or displayed wealth
- whether homeschooling or private Christian schools, the man should have chosen a major and a career that allows him to pay to avoid public schools
- it's better to choose a man whose career allows him to work from home, so that he is available to supervise the education, and discipline the children as they grow
- he should demonstrate his ability to move people in his circle of influence to greater effectiveness and influence, for example making them try harder at school and work, or get better at defending the Christian worldview, especially on controversial issues

So in the case of choosing a woman who will be involved in producing effective, influential children, here are some tips:

- don't choose a woman based on attraction to her appearance or sexual availability
- children need their their mothers at home from birth to age 5, so if a woman has a career, then she needs to put it on hold during that time. If a woman wants to do a career to benefit the Christian community as a whole, e.g. – Supreme Court justice, then she should probably not have children between those ages
- it's better to choose a woman who has demonstrated the ability to do hard things, so that she has the ability to take responsibility and be accountable for producing results, e.g. – a degree in computer science, and two years of private sector coding experience
- she should demonstrate her ability to move people in her circle of influence to greater effectiveness and influence, for example making them try harder at school and work, or get better at defending the Christian worldview, especially on controversial issues

It’s no good to complain when the children arrive that your spouse isn’t involved in spiritual and moral education. The time to settle that was when you were training to evaluate and choose your spouse. And Christian parents and pastors have a role to play in equipping young people to make better choices.

2. Classical Christian schools

I’ve looked over the curricula of a number of these classical Christian schools, and I am not convinced that they are useful for producing effective, influential Christians.

Suppose I were trying to educate my child to be the next Jay Richards or the next Stephen C. Meyer or the next Kristen Waggoner or the next Clarence Thomas. Are classical Christian schools useful for producing results like that?

Education has two goals. 1) educating the person in valuable skills, so that they can earn a lot of money without sacrificing family engagement, and without violating their conscience. 2) it should teach young people to resist the culture on the basis of reason and evidence. If we are talking about God’s existence or origins, then we are dealing with mainstream science. If we are talking about gospel reliability or the resurrection, then we are making historical arguments using mainstream evidence. If we’re talking about religious pluralism or the problem of evil, then we’re talking about mainstream philosophical theology and philosophy of religion. Etc.

I have yet to meet anyone involved with classical Christian schools who was steering young people into careers where they would make a lot of money, working from home, and not exposing themselves to cancel culture. You would think that these classical Christian schools would be focused on careers like developing software with open-source components, but they don’t have the skills. Secondly, apologetics is poorly handled in these curricula. If there is any, it’s presuppositional – an approach that is used by none of the most effective and influential Christian scholars. The ones who actually debate non-Christians and move the ball downfield in the culture.

3. Move to a conservative state in a conservative country

Many Christian men and women often pooh-pooh my seriousness about marriage and parenting planning. They say “I was born in Washington, and it’s a fine state. The public schools are great here. And I’m sure the government, although entirely Democrat, will respect my rights as a parent and as a Christian. After all, I pay their salaries.” But this is just laziness and ignorance. The people who say this don’t want the burden of having to make plans, and execute plans in order to produce effective, influential children.

Consider this article from Daily Wire, about Germany – a secular socialist state:

> Home education has been outlawed in Germany for more than a century; four years ago, the European Court of Human Rights ruled against a family from Darmstadt, Germany, which had asserted the right to homeschool their children. Private religious schools, although legal, must follow state-mandated curricula from the area in which they are located.
>
> Tobias Riemenschneider, a pastor at Evangelical Reformed Baptist Church in

> Frankfurt, Germany, said in an interview with The Daily Wire that the nation's restrictive education laws present "great difficulty to parents who are convinced by their Christian faith that it is God's will for them to raise their children themselves in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." He noted that parents who defy government sanctions against home education risk incurring considerable fines, prison sentences, and the possibility that authorities will take their children.

The same kind of stuff is happening now, in states like Washington and California.

It's just like those Christian-owned business in SOGI states. SOGI states elevate sexual orientation and gender identity to be a protected category, like race. Christian businesses in those states think "well, I was born here, and my family is here, so I'm going to start a business here, and keep right out of politics. I'm sure God will make my laziness and ignorance work out". They are taken by surprise by being persecuted by secular left tyrants. A much better plan is to be serious about moving to a state with low taxes, high liberty, and support for the plans of Christian parents. It's better to spend your own money on educating your kids, rather than to spend it on legal defense.

Can you trust the police in Britain to enforce the law fairly?

November 2, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On this blog, I often complain about how left-wing ideology leads to situations where taxpayers are actually paying the government to persecute them. Well, people pay the police force to protect them from criminals. And that works in a lot of small towns in America's red states. But in Britain, it's different. And I have a couple of examples to show you how it doesn't work.

First, from the UK Daily Mail:

> A furious row has broken out after Metropolitan Police officers were filmed pulling down posters of Israeli children kidnapped by Hamas during the terror group's barbaric October 7 attack.
>
> Two officers stripped the outside of Cullimore Chemist in Edgware, North London of flyers of the missing innocents after receiving calls from residents concerned about tension within the community.
>
> Some locals in the area, which is home to a sizeable Jewish community, have slammed the officers over their 'disgusting actions'.
>
> […]The controversy comes as the Met has come under fire for failing to clampdown on Islamism and extremism at pro-Palestine protests on the streets of London. Last weekend, protesters were seen carrying effigies of dead babies, and earlier this month extremists led a rally calling for 'jihad'.

So, in Britain, they have a very effeminate society. They believe in "don't judge" and that every culture is equal to every other one. I read about it the books of Theodore Dalrymple, e.g. – "Life at the Bottom", and in the works of Douglas Murray. Dalrymple (not his real name) worked in a prison as a doctor and psychiatrist. Douglas Murray wrote a book called "The Strange Death of Europe", where he explained how different European decided to import millions of unskilled men of Middle Eastern origins. In that book, Murray talked about the Jewish Minister of Immigration, Barbara Roche, who opened up the borders, arguing that restraints on immigration were "racist". She liked diversity, and wanted to see the majority-Christian population of the UK thinned out.

So now, they have this:

> It comes after the Metropolitan Police were accused of allowing Central London to become a 'no-go zone' for Jews after thousands of people marched in support of Palestine with some seen carrying effigies of dead babies and chanting 'globalise the Intifada.'
>
> Saturday's demonstrations marked the third week in a row that the capital has been consumed by the Middle East protests and was marred by several shocking

> incidents.
>
> In full view of police officers, protesters chanted for the massacre of Jews, bounced effigies of dead babies on flags and called for 'global intifadas.'
>
> […]In another shocking clip, a collection of young people from the Socialist Workers Party can be seen chanting 'From London to Gaza. Globalise the intifada.'

And the government's response is appeasement – don't make the protesters mad. By the way, they've also banned guns and self-defense in the UK, so if a criminal attacks you, then you can't do anything about it. That's more "don't judge" in action.

But wait, there's more. Here's an article from the far-left extremist UK Guardian, which talks about some more activities of Barbara Roche's friends:

> Five men from Rochdale have been sentenced to between eight and 20 years in prison after being found guilty of grooming and abusing two girls between 2004 and 2006.
>
> The longest sentence was given to the oldest defendant, Jahn Shahid Ghani, a 50-year-old care worker. He was at least 30 when he took advantage of the girls when they were 14 or 15. He would pick them up from school while they were still in uniform and ply them with drink and drugs before exploiting them.
>
> […]It was at Ghani's flat, above a butcher's shop in Rochdale, that Girl A was passed around "like a piece of meat" between Ghani younger half-brother, Mohammed Faisal Ghani, and his friends. She said she was "trapped like a prisoner" in the flat and forced to have sex with numerous men on a stained single mattress with no sheets.
>
> […]The court heard that on one occasion he persuaded Girl A to have sex with his cousin, a man in his 30s, who was visiting from Pakistan. "He's never had sex with a white girl before," he told her, urging her to "do it for the team". He then asked her to marry the cousin for £5,000 so that he could get a UK visa, but she refused.
>
> […]On one occasion, another defendant, Insar Hussain, now 38, challenged her to a drinking contest at the flat above the butcher's shop. She drank so much vodka that she passed out, the jury heard. The next day she was shown a video of one of the men sexually assaulting her with a brandy bottle as Hussain and others laughed. The bottle was on display in the bathroom "like a trophy", the court heard, and the video was distributed around Rochdale.
>
> […]A fourth defendant, Ali Razza Hussain Kazmi, 36, was described by Girl A as an "intimidating and aggressive figure" when he sexually assaulted Girl B when she was just 13. He went on to rape Girl B when she was 14 and he was 16 or 17, in an underpass near Hopwood Hall college in Rochdale.

And this was interesting – the mothers complained to the police a lot:

> Kazmi was the youngest defendant, aged 15 or 16 when he first abused Girl B, who was reported missing from home by her mother at least 83 times as a teenager.

There were many complaints, but the police didn't do anything. They were scared of being accused of "racism". Just like Barbara Roche accused people who didn't like her open borders policy of "racism".

As a non-white skilled legal immigrant, I don't think that immigration policy should introduce risks to the taxpayers who pay the salaries of these government and police people. Because this sort of "diversity" immigration and policing is not safe for taxpayers.

Does peer-reviewed research support a naturalistic origin of life?

November 3, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There was a recent debate between Dr. James Tour and Professor Dave, an atheist with a bachelors degree who makes YouTube videos. The atheist spent his entire opening speech attacking Tour's character. When Tour asked him to show him origin of life chemistry, he refused. The atheist shuffled through papers he apparently found by Googling, and read the titles. When asked what was in them, he said that he couldn't remember.

But I was trying to decide who won the debate. There was one place where the atheist claimed that the early Earth had no molecular oxygen. He needs that to be true, in order for the chemistry that creates the building blocks of life to work. So I thought I would talk about a paper that refutes that. After my argument, I'll talk about another mistake that the atheist made in the debate. Based on those two mistakes, I concluded that the atheist was speaking errors either intentionally or unintentionally, and therefore lost the debate.

Here's a paper published in the prestigious peer-reviewed science journal *Nature*, entitled "The oxidation state of Hadean magmas and implications for early Earth's atmosphere".

Evolution News explains what the paper is about.

Excerpt:

> A recent *Nature* publication reports a new technique for measuring the oxygen levels in Earth's atmosphere some 4.4 billion years ago. The authors found that by studying cerium oxidation states in zircon, a compound formed from volcanic magma, they could ascertain the oxidation levels in the early earth. Their findings suggest that the early Earth's oxygen levels were very close to current levels.
>
> […]Miller and Urey conducted experiments to show that under certain atmospheric conditions and with the right kind of electrical charge, several amino acids could form from inorganic compounds such as methane, ammonia, and water. Several experiments have been done using various inorganic starting materials, all yielding a few amino acids; however, one key aspect of all of these experiments was the lack of oxygen.
>
> If the atmosphere has oxygen (or other oxidants) in it, then it is an oxidizing atmosphere. If the atmosphere lacks oxygen, then it is either inert or a reducing atmosphere. Think of a metal that has been left outside, maybe a piece of iron. That metal will eventually rust. Rusting is the result of the metal being oxidized. With organic reactions, such as the ones that produce amino acids, it is very important that no oxygen be present, or it will quench the reaction. Scientists, therefore, concluded that the early Earth must have been a reducing

> environment when life first formed (or the building blocks of life first formed) because that was the best environment for producing amino acids. The atmosphere eventually accumulated oxygen, but life did not form in an oxidative environment.
>
> The problem with this hypothesis is that it is based on the assumption that organic life must have formed from inorganic materials. That is why the early Earth must have been a reducing atmosphere. Research has been accumulating for more than thirty years, however, suggesting that the early Earth likely did have oxygen present.
>
> […]Their findings not only showed that oxygen was present in the early Earth atmosphere, something that has been shown in other studies, but that oxygen was present as early as 4.4 billion years ago. This takes the window of time available for life to have begun, by an origin-of-life scenario like the RNA-first world, and reduces it to an incredibly short amount of time. Several factors need to coincide in order for nucleotides or amino acids to form from purely naturalistic circumstances (chance and chemistry). The specific conditions required already made purely naturalist origin-of-life scenarios highly unlikely. Drastically reducing the amount of time available, adding that to the other conditions needing to be fulfilled, makes the RNA world hypothesis or a Miller-Urey-like synthesis of amino acids simply impossible.

If you read the paper's abstract, it finds that molecular oxygen would have been present by the end of the Hadean era. The earliest signs of life we have are from just after the end of the Hadean era. So, its undeniable that molecular oxygen was present. Did professor Dave lie, or was he just ignorant? One thing for sure, he pronounced that there was no oxygen in the same confident, insulting voice that he used for the rest of his presentation.

OK, so with that out of the way, Professor Dave also cited a paper in the journal *Science*. And there is an article on Creation.com by Johnathan Sarfati, who has a PhD in chemistry, about that very paper.

His post says:

> It's likely that the media reports you mention were referring to the paper in *Science* journal by Tracey Lincoln and Gerald Joyce.[1] Quite often, the media hype just doesn't match what was actually discovered. To be fair, Joyce, a well known chemical evolutionist, made it clear that he and his Ph.D. student Lincoln had not produced life, despite the headlines.[2] Much earlier, Joyce admitted:

> "The most reasonable assumption is that life did not start with RNA … . The transition to an RNA world, like the origins of life in general, is fraught with uncertainty and is plagued by a lack of experimental data."[3]

> Joyce and Lincoln started off with a fairly long RNA molecule. Given that nothing like RNA appears in Miller–Urey experiments, this already shows unjustified

> interference from an intelligent investigator. In fact, not even the building blocks, ribonucleotides, appear in such experiments, and they do not spontaneously form RNA. In fact, there are numerous chemical difficulties with obtaining RNA by blind undirected chemistry, the only sort allowed on the hypothetical primordial earth, as chemical evolutionist A.G. Cairns-Smith points out in his book Genetic Takeover4 (see extract at Cairns Smith: Detailed criticisms of the RNA world hypothesis). And it's a huge step from RNA to the genetic code, its major use today.

> Furthermore, this paper didn't demonstrate replication but ligation—joining two small RNA pieces, previously designed to be a match to the longer strand. So this research already assumed not just one but three RNA strands. For this to be relevant to chemical evolution, the two pieces just by chance had to have pretty close to the complementary base pairs of the first piece—natural selection could not be invoked before reproduction.
>
> Furthermore, since polymerization is unfavorable, the RNA pieces must be chemically activated in some way. Note that a catalyst merely accelerates the approach to equilibrium; it doesn't change it (see diagram and explanation in Dino proteins and blood vessels: are they a big deal?). The paper states that one of the two joining RNA strands has a triphosphate group on the end. This is very reactive, so would be an unlikely component of a primordial soup, and would not last long even if it appeared. So a supply of matching activated RNA pieces likewise shows unacceptable investigator interference.
>
> See also Does ribozyme research prove Darwinian evolution? for a critique of an earlier Joyce paper on alleged ribozyme evolution, as well as Self-replicating peptides? which has many similarities to the recent Joyce claim.

Now Tour seemed to let this problem drop in the debate. It just seems that Professor Dave was assuming from the titles of the papers that they were relevant to the problem of life. Well, scientists always sound optimistic in their papers. I know, I had to write one for my masters degree thesis, and it was published. That's why you have to look at the data and be skeptical. Sadly Dave wasn't able to be skeptical. He wanted something to be true, so he just didn't bother to interact with challenges to his view. The whole problem with the origin of life is that there are many counter-factual conditions, experimenter interferences, etc. that have to be done to make things work at all. Dave reads the titles of papers, but he just isn't aware of how the experimenters have adjusted the experiments in ways that are not true to the conditions on the early Earth.

Dr. Tour lost his temper and shouted a lot during the debate, so I don't think the debate is worth watching. However, if you want to watch a good debate on the origin of life, try this one between Dr. Fazale Rana vs Dr. Michael Ruse. And if you want to see a good explanation of the sequencing problem, check out this lecture by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. (who has also debated atheists who didn't lie, shout or insult him – and they even had doctoral degrees)

NYT: LGBT youth have greater approval, but mental health is “significantly worse”

November 4, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend shared this article with me, and cleverly archived it so I could link to it from my blog. I had a whole bunch of wonderful stories to blog about, but this one is the best. Do you know how the secular left looks at the poor mental health of LGBT youth, and asserts (without evidence) that more acceptance would make those outcomes better? Turns out the exact opposite is true.

Here’s the left-wing extremist New York Times, dated June 3rd, 2023:

> For L.G.B.T.Q. teenagers, high school is a much more accepting place than even a decade ago. They change their pronouns, go to school dances with people of the same gender, and are more likely than any previous generation to openly identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or otherwise queer.
>
> […]Yet there is a darker side. Even as they are increasingly welcomed by peers, their mental health is significantly worse than that of heterosexual young people.
>
> […]Their experiences highlight a “paradoxical finding,” as researchers have described it: Even as social inclusion for young L.G.B.T.Q. people has grown, large health disparities between them and their non-L.G.B.T.Q. peers have not shrunk.

The article talks about the strongest reasons why young people embrace LGBT:

1. there are pro-LGBT TV shows, movies, music.
2. famous pro athletes identify as LGBT
3. the Supreme Court overturned legislation passed by elected legislators
4. “everyone knows someone who is LGBT”
5. social media supports LGBT
6. big corporations support LGBT

Growing up in the situation I was in – poverty, different skin color, two working parents, public schools run by secular leftists – I wasn’t much interested in feeling good in the moment. I wanted an accurate view of the battlefield so I could make good decisions, and get out of the mess I was born into. I read the Bible, Shakespeare and my parents’ textbooks from their night classes at the local universities.

My approach was very different from the secular left. They don’t care about truth, or making good decisions to get good results. They care about living in the moment. They want to give in to their desires now, and point fingers later. They want to borrow money and run up expenses now, and pass the bill to someone else later. They are reckless and irresponsible. And they feel entitled to the life outcomes of those detestable Christians later. But they can’t be bothered to behave like those detestable Christians right now.

People who are LGBT are facing little to no disagreement or disapproval:

> A recent survey by The New York Times and Morning Consult of 1,574 young adults found that people ages 18 to 28 — who mostly graduated from high school since 2013 — were significantly more likely to know L.G.B.T.Q. students in school than those a decade older, who were teenagers in the 2000s.
>
> The younger group was twice as likely to report knowing at least one transgender student, and three times as likely to have known three or more. Four in 10 said they knew numerous gay, lesbian or bisexual people in high school, compared with a quarter of the older group.
>
> And while both groups reported hearing the words “gay” and “queer” used negatively at similar rates — a data point reflected in interviews with teenagers, who say they still hear “that’s so gay” in school hallways — the younger graduates were significantly more likely to hear those words used in a positive light, too. They were also more likely to have a gay-straight alliance or similar club at their school.
>
> This reflects other data that has found that verbal harassment of L.G.B.T.Q. teenagers declined during the 2010s, while support for same-sex marriage became the norm among young people.

And finally:

> “You’re at the point among young adults where almost all these measures of acceptance are in the high 80s, low 90s,” said Jeff Jones, a senior editor who oversees research at Gallup. “It’s basically getting toward a consensus.”

Sounds wonderful for the secular left. They got the morality of the Bible removed from society. Young people today don’t even know what the Bible teaches are dating, relationships, marriage, sexuality, etc. All they know is TV shows, celebrities, entertainers, athletes, and what their public school teachers tell them.

Just one little problem. Secular leftists don’t get to determine what is objectively right and wrong. In a God-designed universe, God decides what works, and what doesn’t work. And no amount of community, peer-approval, propaganda, etc. is going to overrule God’s design for his creatures.

More:

> As acceptance has grown, though, the mental health of queer youth has continued to suffer. Reported rates of mental health problems among all young people have been rising for the last decade, but non-heterosexual students face far higher rates than straight students.
>
> About 70 percent of high school students who identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual reported persistent sadness, according to recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, twice the rate of their heterosexual peers. One in five attempted suicide in the past year, nearly four times the rate of straight

> young people. (The C.D.C. does not track the mental health of transgender youth, but other data shows that roughly half had considered suicide in the past year.)

The New York Times tries to blame these numbers on being in a minority group. But Bible-believing Christians who embrace chastity, marriage, parenting and homeschooling are also a “minority group”. We don’t run the show any more. In fact, we’re the only minority that is still able to be targeted for ridicule and persecution, even by the police and government. But we also don’t have mental illnesses like the poor young people who believed the lies of the secular left, either. I wonder why that is. Could it be that chastity, marriage, parenting and homeschooling are morally right, whether anyone thinks it is or not? Could it be that these activities are self-evidently moral, and therefore just doing them makes the approval and celebration of other people completely unnecessary? For some behaviors, having an audience of One is enough.

William Lane Craig lectures on naturalism at the University of St. Andrews

November 5, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Note: even if you have heard Dr. Craig's arguments before, I recommend jumping to the 48 minutes of Q&A time, which starts 72 minutes in.

About Dr. William Lane Craig:

> William Lane Craig (born August 23, 1949) is an American analytic philosopher, philosophical theologian, and Christian apologist. He is known for his work on the philosophy of time and the philosophy of religion, specifically the existence of God and the defense of Christian theism. He has authored or edited over 30 books including *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (1979), *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology*(co-authored with Quentin Smith, 1993), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (2001), and *Einstein, Relativity and Absolute Simultaneity* (co-edited with Quentin Smith, 2007).
>
> Craig received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1971 and two summa cum laudemaster's degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, in 1975, in philosophy of religion and ecclesiastical history. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy under John Hick at the University of Birmingham, England in 1977 and a Th.D. underWolfhart Pannenberg at the University of Munich, Germany in 1984.

Dr. Craig was in Scotland to lecture at a physics conference, but a local church organized this public lecture at the University of St. Andrews.

Here is the full lecture with Q&A: (2 hours)

Summary:

- Naturalism defined: the physical world (matter, space and time) is all that exists
- Dr. Craig will present 7 reasons why naturalism is false
- 1) the contingency argument
- 2) the kalam cosmological argument
- 3) the fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life
- 4) the moral argument
- 5) the ontological argument
- 6) the resurrection of Jesus
- 7) religious experience

Dr. Craig does mention an 8th argument early in the Q&A – the argument from the non-physicality of mental states (substance dualism), which is an argument that I find convincing, because a materialist conception of mind is not compatible with rationality,

consciousness and moral agency.

Questions and Answers

He gets a couple of questions on the moral argument early on – one of them tries to put forward an evolutionary explanation for “moral” behaviors. There’s another question the definition of naturalism. There is a bonehead question about the non-existence of Jesus based on a Youtube movie he saw – which Craig responds to with agnostic historian Bart Ehrman’s book on that topic. There’s a question about God as the ground for morality – does morality come from his will or nature.

Then there is a question about the multiverse, which came up at the physics conference Dr. Craig attended the day before. There is a good question about the Big Bang theory and the initial singularity at time t=0. Another good question about transfinite arithmetic, cardinality and set theory. One questioner asks about the resurrection argument. The questioner asks if we can use the origin of the disciples belief as an argument when other religions have people who are willing to die for their claims. One of the questioners asks about whether the laws of nature break down at 10^-43 after the beginning of the universe. There is a question about the religious experience argument, and Craig has the opportunity to give his testimony.

I thought that the questions from the Scottish students and faculty were a lot more thoughtful and respectful than at American colleges and universities. Highly recommended.

Interesting: big corporations relaxing the requirement for a college degree

November 6, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was having a conversation with a Christian university professor on the weekend, and he was explaining how woke his university had gone. Not just with DEI administrative staff, but oversight from Title IX government workers, too. So, I suggested that young Christians should focus on STEM degrees. But he warned that the woke administrators were coming for them, too. So what next?

Well, I always recommended doing STEM degrees for as cheap as you can, for this reason:

Rank	Major	Early Career Pay	Mid-Career Pay	% High Meaning
1	Petroleum Engineering	$97,500	$212,500	61%
2	Operations Research & Industrial Engineering	$98,300	$191,800	21%
3	Interaction Design	$74,700	$173,600	54%
4	Applied Economics and Management	$76,500	$164,400	54%
5	Building Science	$69,000	$163,100	47%
6	Actuarial Mathematics	$70,700	$160,000	52%
6	Operations Research	$92,200	$160,000	57%
8	Systems Engineering	$87,000	$159,100	58%
9	Optical Science & Engineering	$79,600	$158,300	73%
10	Information & Computer Science	$76,000	$157,800	63%

(Source: PayScale)

Well, after defending the STEM fields to young Christians for so long, there might be a good alternative, and that's just hitting the private sector workplace after college, and moving up the job hierarchy by giving the company more and more value.

Here's a Fox News story that explains.

> American businesses are increasingly eliminating college degrees as part of their requirements for corporate roles, which is part of a wider trend in the U.S. job market that is de-emphasizing the value of a four-year diploma, according to experts.
>
> American companies like Walmart, IBM, Accenture, Bank of America and Google have announced plans to reduce the number of jobs that require college degrees.

> […]Walmart, for example, has eliminated college degrees as a requirement for hundreds of its corporate roles, vowing to remove "unnecessary barriers" that prevent career advancement. The company also announced it would waive the university degree as a necessity if candidates can show they have gained the necessary skills based on different, prior experience.
>
> Between 2017 and 2019, 46% of "middle-skill occupations" and 31% of "high-skill occupations" saw a drop in college degree requirements which "could have major implications for how employers find talent and open up opportunities for the two-thirds of Americans without a college education," according to a report from the Burning Glass Institute. In line with the trend, the report projected the move could open up 1.4 million jobs for American workers without college degrees over the next five years.

Government jobs too:

> At the governmental level, states across the country have removed degree requirements for government jobs, according to the Brookings Institution. Virginia became the 13th state to remove such requirements in June.

What does this mean?

Well, one of my happiest days was learning that Toys 'R Us was going bankrupt. Why? Because they were HUGE advocates for abortion. They were also big leftists who opposed the normal path that people take to marriage and having kids. You might think that they would be smart enough to not murder future generations of customers, but they were not.

Similarly, the public education system and the higher education system is filled with stupid secular leftists. Rather than encourage young people to have a worldview that rationally grounds marriage and raising children, they decided to promote recreational premarital sex, abortion, delaying marriage, punitive divorce courts, and a host of other birth rate killers. That was step one in destroying their flow of customers.

As if that all wasn't enough, now that they have focused entirely on woke indoctrination, even the students that manage to reach the campus are being saddled with tens of thousands of dollars of debt for a useless, worthless indoctrination in wokeness. All these poor students learn is how to be offended, and how to demand that others fix their offendedness. That makes them a whole lot of trouble to corporations. They lack skills. They are bad at serving customers. And they are disruptive.

This news story is good news. The less money that universities have, the more they have to fire their worthless administrative staff. Let's see it happen.

An overview of no-fault divorce, and how one state is standing against it

November 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I ordered an audio book that lays out pro-marriage policies, by Dr. Scott Yenor. I think I had seen his name around on Institute for Family Studies, and other family policy web sites. Anyway, today I wanted to link to his article on no-fault divorce, and then take a look at how one state is enacting policies that are designed to reduce the divorce rate.

Here's the article from the Institute for Family Studies:

> American states initially adopted a fault-based idea of divorce, where a spouse could initiate divorce proceedings only when he/she could prove the other spouse had committed some fault like adultery, abandonment, or extreme cruelty. As time went on, states expanded the grounds for fault-based claims. Thus sat America's divorce system until the early 1970s, when, following California, all states eventually adopted no-fault, at-will divorce laws. Such laws allowed one party to leave marriage for whatever reason or for no reason at all. This bold policy change, disguised as a bureaucratic adjustment, ended the idea of marriage as an enforceable contract.
>
> The number of divorces soared. Destabilizing marriage ended up making marriage less attractive—and marriage rates have plummeted from 72% before the reforms to under 50% in 2022. Commentators find it increasingly difficult to talk about the tragedy of divorce as more people divorced. Poverty and suicide increased for children of divorce, as did depression, drug use, and crime.

On this blog, I've talked about how women initiate 69% of divorces. And if you look at the number of divorces featuring a college-educated woman, the woman initiates 90% of those divorces. In most of these divorces, the reason given is "irreconcilable differences". No one is at "fault". The person who is filing just is unhappy and wants out of the commitment.

Sadly, these divorces prove very costly to the men involved. They lose access to their homes, their wealth, their future earnings, and their children. Many men end up in prison for not paying their ex-wives. Some of them end up ending themselves.

More from Dr. Yenor:

> When judges have discretion, they tend to favor women in settlements. Nationwide, men are the custodial parent only about 20% of the time, according to U.S. Census data. The numbers at the state level differ markedly. Most states have adopted a judicially-determined "best interest of the child" standard for allocating child custody. Under such laws, men generally see their children less. Both Texas and California have laws that favor joint custody of children, but in each of them, men actually see their children less than a third of the time.

> According to research by Custody Change, men see their children only 30% of the time in New York. It is even worse in Illinois (23% of the time), Washington (24%), Oklahoma (22%), and Tennessee (22%).

So, men have to pay child support, but they never see their children. And it's often the case that the woman poisons the children against their father. Although that seems like a good idea to her in the moment, it does enormous harm to the children in the long run.

Most people who follow men's rights will know that Florida recently ended their policy of "permanent alimony", which required men to pay their ex-wives for years and years until one or the other died. Feminists were furious with Ron DeSantis for doing this, but men were delighted. But there was more to that story, as Dr. Yenor explains:

> Florida has restructured the default settings for negotiations under the at-will regime. Following Kentucky, a new Florida law assumes that a 50-50 split between spouses is in the best interest of the child (though the assumption is rebuttable). The bill garnered bi-partisan support in the legislature on the principles that parents walk into the courtroom on equal footing. Presumably, this will end the silent favoritism judges have traditionally shown women in custodial proceedings.
>
> […]Florida's spousal support laws have long been based on a formula linking alimony amounts to the length of marriage, culminating in eligibility for permanent alimony for marriages lasting longer then 17 years. Under the new law, couples married less than three years are not eligible for alimony, while those married 20 years or longer are eligible to receive payments for up to 75% of the term of the marriage. Marriages lasting from three to 10 years are eligible for alimony for 50% of the term, while those lasting 10 to 20 years are eligible for 60% of the term. Generally, there are fewer payments for shorter periods of time. Under the new law, there are also more ways of ending alimony payments early, including factoring in the retirement of the person paying the alimony.
>
> […]Kentucky passed a similar law in 2017 with overwhelming bipartisan support, as did Arkansas in 2021.

Why is this important? Well, women tend to initiate fewer divorces if they have to allow their husbands to have access to his children. For one thing, she loses out on money. But she also loses the ability to poison the minds of the children against their father. That reduces the appeal of no-fault divorce. And it also causes women to be more careful before they marry. Since they know that the law doesn't give them unlimited cash and prizes, then they don't choose men based on appearance and feelings. Instead, they choose men who can actually meet their emotional needs, and perform traditional male roles. Because they know that marriage is for keeps.

And it works:

> The number of court filings for divorce proceedings in Kentucky plummeted from 22,512 in 2016 to under 20,000 only a year later. It also coincided with a

> decrease in the number of domestic violence fillings, perhaps indicating that some charges of domestic violence were designed to tip the scales in custody proceedings. Kentucky's divorce rate also sunk from 3.79 per thousand residents in 2016 to 3.3 in 2021 (the last year for which we have good statistics). Divorce rates are declining nationwide, so Kentucky's 50-50 law may not be responsible for the entire decline. Statistics about the percentage of women who file for divorce in Kentucky are not available.

Now, people will say "this is terrible! what will happen to women who marry abusive men!" And my answer to that is "women need to learn not to marry abusive men". Instead of choosing men based on appearances and feelings, women need to choose men based on moral character, worldview, and leadership ability. That's the lesson that men had to learn when they were the victims of frivolous divorce and punitive divorce courts. Men learned to be careful, and now women must also learn to be careful. That's "equality".

Big wins for the pro-abortion lobby in Ohio and Kentucky

November 8, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The overturning of Roe v. Wade was good news, but the job of protecting unborn children from reckless, irresponsible adults didn't end there. There was still a lot of persuading to do in the individual states, in order to make sure that the laws were as pro-life as they could be. Unfortunately, pro-lifers were not able to win political contests in Ohio and Kentucky. Let's take a look.

Daily Wire reports on Ohio:

> Voters in Ohio voted Tuesday to approve a ballot initiative that places a right to an abortion into the state's constitution.
>
> Pro-life advocates say the measure will effectively make abortion legal at any point in pregnancy. The initiative brought in millions in spending with more than $18 million being spent in favor of the pro-abortion initiative, with just $7 million being spent in opposition since August 9, according to NBC News.

Pro-lifers were outspent 18 to 7! I guess it does help to have money when you want to be persuasive. It also helps to be good at making arguments. Maybe Ohio churches could teach Christians how to make an evidence-supported argument for the pro-life position? If they're already doing it, then try even harder. Practice debates.

More:

> Previously, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, a Republican, has said that, if passed, Issue 1 would effectively legalize all abortion in the state.
>
> "[T]he Amendment would give greater protection to abortion to be free from regulation than at any time in Ohio's history," analysis from Yost said. "That new test includes definitions and other terms that likewise make it harder for any law covering 'reproductive decisions' to survive."

Looks like it will be impossible to have any regulations at the state level in Ohio, now.

Here's a Daily Wire story about Kentucky:

> Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear, a Democrat, won a second term in the election on Tuesday in the red state.
>
> With 87% of votes counted, data showed Beshear with 654,537 votes and 52.5% support, beating out Republican candidate Daniel Cameron, who had 592,884 votes and 47.5% support.

Beshear is a racist, not surprising:

> Race shook up the contest with ads from a liberal Super PAC funded by billionaire

> George Soros suggesting that Cameron, who is black, is an "Uncle Tom."

And a pro-abortion radical:

> Beshear ran a staunchly pro-abortion campaign in a state where voters last year rejected a constitutional amendment to enshrine Kentucky's near-total ban after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade while Cameron set his focus on issues related to crime and radical gender theory.

I thought this part was funny, given Trump's criticism of DeSantis' pro-life achievements lately:

> Former President Donald Trump, who won Kentucky by double-digits in the 2020 election, endorsed Cameron, but polling indicated that Beshear was popular even among Trump voters.

Yeah, the pro-abortion radical is popular among Trump voters. They got their new instructions about abortion from Trump's criticism of DeSantis and Florida's pro-life laws.

Remember how Michigan did the same thing as Ohio, back in the 2022 mid-terms?

Daily Wire reported on it last November:

> Democrats are projected to win key races and ballot measures across the board in the Great Lakes State, led by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's re-election victory. The party is also set to win multiple tight U.S. House races, enshrine a right to abortion in the state's constitution, and take control of the state legislature for the first time in 40 years.
>
> […]Michigan joined California and Vermont in passing ballot initiatives to add a right to abortion in their states' constitutions. The approved measure now supersedes a 1931 Michigan law that bans all abortions unless the mother's life is at risk.

And that paved the way for removing all restrictions on abortion in the state.

Daily Wire reported on last week's news:

> The Michigan legislature has advanced a legislative package eliminating various restrictions on abortions in the state.
>
> On Wednesday, the Michigan House passed a package of abortion-related bills dubbed the Reproductive Health Act (RHA). House Democrats declared in a press release that the package repealed legislation that was "medically unnecessary and harmful," as well as unfairly targeting abortion providers.

It's amazing to me that conservatives still continue to live and work in states like Michigan, Kentucky and Ohio. These are blue states now. Conservatives need to move out of those states, and give their tax money to people who agree with their values. In some ways, your whole education, career and finances is an effort to make sure that you don't subsidize the secular left's plan to control you. That's why it's so important for

conservatives to do well in school, work and finances. It makes it easier for us to find work somewhere else, if the place where we are doesn’t like us very much.

Atheist gets her PhD in astronomy and astrophysics and finds evidence for God

November 9, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christian apologist Terrell Clemmons tweeted this testimony by Sarah Salviander, a research scientist in astronomy and astrophysics at the prestigious University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Salviander writes:

> I was born in the U.S., but grew up in Canada. My parents were socialists and political activists who thought British Columbia would be a better place for us to live, since it had the only socialist government in North America at the time. My parents were also atheists, though they eschewed that label in favor of "agnostic." They were kind, loving, and moral, but religion played no part in my life. Instead, my childhood revolved around education, particularly science. I remember how important it was to my parents that my brother and I did well in school.

I just want to point out that I hope that all you Christian parents are taking seriously the obligation to make your kids do well in school, because even if they start out as atheists when they are young, they can still find their way back to God through study, as Sarah did.

She had a bad start, that's for sure:

> I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, a time when science fiction was enjoying a renaissance, thanks largely to the popularity of *Star Wars*. I remember how fascinated I was by the original *Star Wars* trilogy. It had almost nothing to do with science—it's more properly characterized as space opera—but it got me thinking about space in a big way. I also loved the original *Star Trek*, which was more science fiction. The stoic and logical character of Mr. Spock was particularly appealing to me. Popular science was also experiencing a renaissance at that time, which had a lot to do with Carl Sagan's television show, *Cosmos*, which I adored. The combination of these influences led to such an intense wonder about outer space and the universe, that by the time I was nine years old I knew I would be a space scientist someday.
>
> Canada was already post-Christian by the 1970s, so I grew up with no religion. In retrospect, it's amazing that for the first 25 years of my life, I met only three people who identified as Christian. My view of Christianity was negative from an early age, and by the time I was in my twenties, I was actively hostile toward Christianity. Looking back, I realized a lot of this was the unconscious absorption of the general hostility toward Christianity that is common in places like Canada and Europe; my hostility certainly wasn't based on actually knowing anything

> about Christianity. I had come to believe that Christianity made people weak and foolish; I thought it was philosophically trivial. I was ignorant not only of the Bible, but also of the deep philosophy of Christianity and the scientific discoveries that shed new light on the origins of the universe and life on Earth.

She documents a phase of following Ayn Rand and embracing "Objectivism", but eventually she rejects it for failing to answer the big questions of life.

More:

> I began to focus all of my energy on my studies, and became very dedicated to my physics and math courses. I joined campus clubs, started to make friends, and, for the first time in my life, I was meeting Christians. They weren't like Objectivists—they were joyous and content. And, they were smart, too. I **was astonished to find that my physics professors, whom I admired, were Christian. Their personal example began to have an influence on me, and I found myself growing less hostile to Christianity.**

This is why I think it is so important for Christian parents to raise their children to get advanced degrees… either to become professors themselves, or to finance others (e.g. – our own children) to do advanced degrees. It is so important for university students to see Christian professors on campus. And failing that, it's important that we bring Christian speakers in to debate non-Christian speakers on the important issues. This will not happen unless we recognize how important it is, and then make a plan to achieve it.

More:

> **I had joined a group in the Center for Astrophysics and Space Sciences (CASS) that was researching evidence for the big bang. The cosmic background radiation—the leftover radiation from the big bang—provides the strongest evidence for the theory, but cosmologists need other, independent lines of evidence to confirm it. My group was studying deuterium abundances in the early universe. Deuterium is an isotope of hydrogen, and its abundance in the early universe is sensitive to the amount of ordinary mass contained in the entire universe. Believe it or not, this one measurement tells us whether the big bang model is correct.**
>
> **If anyone is interested in how this works, I'll describe it, but for now I'll spare you the gruesome details. Suffice it to say that an amazing convergence of physical properties is necessary in order to study deuterium abundances in the early universe, and yet this convergence is exactly what we get. I remember being astounded by this, blown away, completely and utterly awed. It seemed incredible to me that there was a way to find the answer to this question we had about the universe. In fact, it seems that every question we have about the universe is answerable. There's no reason it has to be this way, and it**

> **made me think of Einstein's observation that the most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it's comprehensible. I started to sense an underlying order to the universe. Without knowing it, I was awakening to what Psalm 19 tells us so clearly, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."**
>
> That summer, I'd picked up a copy of T*he Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas and was reading it in my off hours. Previous to this, I'd only known it as an exciting story of revenge, since that's what the countless movie and TV adaptations always focused on. But it's more than just a revenge story, it's a philosophically deep examination of forgiveness and God's role in giving justice. I was surprised by this, and was starting to realize that the concept of God and religion was not as philosophically trivial as I had thought.
>
> All of this culminated one day, as I was walking across that beautiful La Jolla campus. I stopped in my tracks when it hit me—I believed in God! I was so happy; it was like a weight had been lifted from my heart. I realized that most of the pain I'd experienced in my life was of my own making, but that God had used it to make me wiser and more compassionate. It was a great relief to discover that there was a reason for suffering, and that it was because God was loving and just. God could not be perfectly just unless I—just like everyone else—was made to suffer for the bad things I'd done.

The Count of Monte Cristo is one of my favorite, favorite books as well, and had the same impact on me as it did on her.

OK, that's enough for this post. Go read the rest, and please share it.

I spoke to her recently and she told me that she is working on several projects that are designed to get people more familiar with science and Bible issues. This woman is an expert Christian apologist and her life will have an influence. Are you going to be like her? Will you mentor others to be like her? Will you marry someone like her? Will you raise children who are like her? I think we should all have a plan to study the areas that are important and have an influence for God with what we learn.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason

- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Why I admire people in the armed forces more than famous entertainers

November 10, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've noticed that many Christians can tell me a lot about famous entertainers. It doesn't matter if it's singers, musicians, actors, athletes, etc., they seem to know details of their biographies, achievements, etc. And it doesn't really matter if those people are Christians, or whether they have performed actions consistent with a Christian worldview in their private lives.

Anyway, speaking for myself, I mostly admire two kinds of people. The first kind is the kind I blog about here all the time: Christian scholars engage non-Christians intellectually using logic and evidence. The second kind, as you can tell from my reading list, is people who distinguish themselves in conflict with those who oppose the principles and policies that allow me to live out my Christian life. And I am especially interested when people who are fighting evil (imperialists, Nazis, socialists, communists, leftists, etc.) exhibit Christ-like character in risking their lives to save others, or in giving their lives to save others.

Lt. Walt Chewning charges unto burning F-6F Hellcat to save trapped pilot

I have a war story to tell you that happened on November 10th, 1943.

> Lieutenant (later Lieutenant Commander) Walter Lewis Chewning of Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, steps on the burning fuel tank of an F6F-3 Hellcat flown by Ensign (later Lieutenant) Byron Milton Johnson of Potter, Nebraska to effect a successful rescue of the pilot on November 10, 1943. Johnson had flown out to USS Enterprise from Barbers Point, Hawaii, enroute to Makin Atoll in the Gilberts to support the United States Army invasion, which occurred on November 20, 1943.

> The afternoon of November 10, Johnson took off in F6F Hellcat Number 30 for a routine training exercise. He immediately developed engine trouble and requested an emergency landing. He was waved off three times as he struggled to maintain control, but his tail hook caught the third arresting gear wire, and Johnson's Hellcat was slammed into the deck, coming to rest in the port catwalk. The plane came to rest on its external belly fuel tank, which started to leak. As the engine vibrated horribly as the propeller bent itself on the deck, sparks ignited the fuel. The hard landing had jammed Johnson's canopy closed, shearing the retaining pin; he could not exit the plane. Chewning, who had joined the ship October 2, 1943 as Enterprise new catapult officer, scrambled out of the catwalk and came through the smoke. Stepping on the burning belly tank, he forced open the canopy and pulled Johnson to safety.

He received the two highest non-combat medals available:

> Chewning was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his actions.

He was a well-educated and accomplished person before joining the Navy:

> Chewning played soccer and Lacrosse at Cornell while studying Mechanical Engineering, breaking his rib and left ankle in one game. He graduated in 1936 and studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before joining the Navy in January 1941. He was the assistant to the Chief Engineer at the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania before joining USS Enterprise. He served as Enterprise's catapult officer until December 1944, when he transferred to Dutch Harbor Naval Air Station in Alaska as ordinance officer. Chewning served in the Navy until December 1949; he also was awarded the Bronze Star. After the war he assisted research and development for various aeronautical companies, the United States Air Force, and the fledgling National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Motion picture film of the crash, taken from Enterprise's bridge, was shown as part of the television program "Victory at Sea" on January 25, 1953. Chewning and Johnson gave interviews to several newspapers about the accident after the program aired.

I found a colorized version of the picture above here:

Lt. Walt Chewning charges unto burning F-6F Hellcat to save trapped pilot
This image was colourized from the original by Paul Reynolds.

What I thought was interesting about Chewning was how he had everything going for him in terms of his education and career, but he chose to join the Navy anyway, in order to defend his country from Japanese imperialism. Those who understand how the Japanese treated prisoners and conquered peoples will know which side of that conflict was good, and which side was evil. Chewning wasn't some sort of loser who took risks for fun and thrills. It had to be a risk where the prize was worth the risk. And he had the humility to consider others better than himself, so that their life was worth the risking of his own. Many people on the secular left who like to talk about how generous, compassionate and virtuous they are are unable to make moral judgments against evils like Japanese imperialism – much less take self-sacrificial action against them.

I just think that it's important for young Christians to have the right kind of heroes. The heroes who are promoted to young Christians by the cultural elites are not usually the right role models. And there is a reason for that. The secular leftists don't want young Christians to be emulating people who excel according to the standards of the Christian worldview. We are in a religion where self-sacrificial love is the centerpiece. Taking trouble on yourself for someone else. Doing your job, when it goes against your own self-interest. Let's not allow a bunch of godless socialist celebrities to pick and choose who we hold in high regard.

Knight and Rose Show #42: Violence in the Bible

November 11, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 42 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the conquest of Canaan by Israel. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 42:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss a common objection to Christianity – that God commanded the Israelites to commit unjustified acts of violence against innocent people. We focus on an important example of this: the Conquest of Canaan. We discuss the historical context of the war and what it says about God's character. We also discuss strategies for responding to the objection.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Why do so many atheist historians think that 1 Corinthians 15 is reliable history?

November 12, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

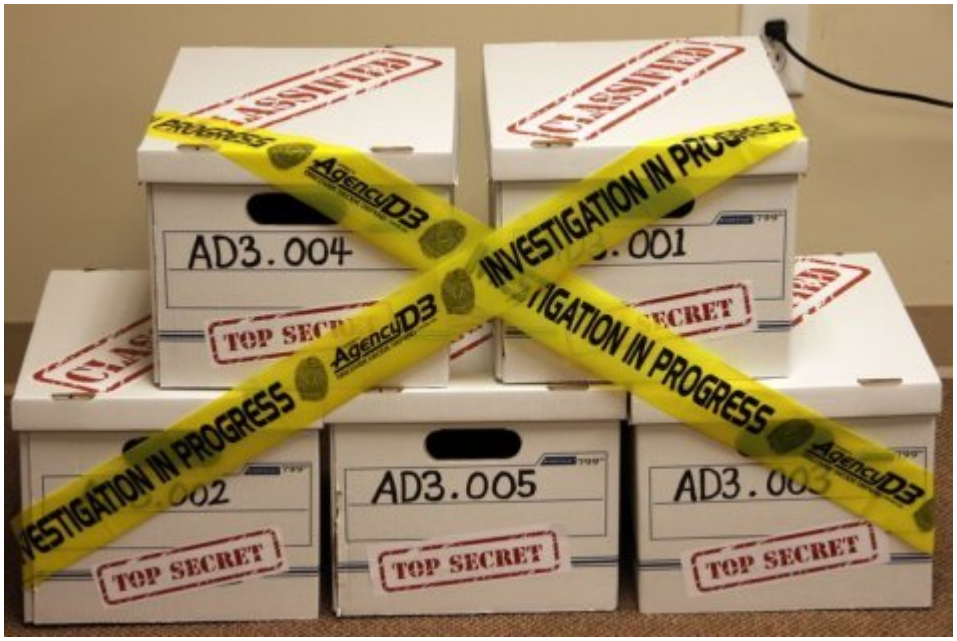

Investigation in progress

Which passage of the Bible is the favorite of Christians who like to defend the Christian worldview? I don't mean which one is most inspirational… I mean "which one is the most useful for winning arguments?" Well, when it comes to the historical Jesus, the most important passage has to be 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

The tradition in 1 Corinthians 15 is an early creed that was received from the eyewitnesses Peter and John when Paul visited them several times in Jerusalem, as documented in Galatians 1 and 2, where Paul meets the eyewitnesses. And of course, Paul records his own eyewitness experience, documented in 1 Cor 15:8.

So, is this passage accepted as historically reliable by all ancient historians? Or only by the Bible-believing ones?

Here's something posted by Dr. William Lane Craig about the 1 Corinthians 15 passage:

> The evidence that Paul is not writing in his own hand in I Cor. 15.3-5 is so powerful that all New Testament scholars recognize that Paul is here passing on a prior tradition. In addition to the fact that Paul explicitly says as much, the passage is replete with non-Pauline characteristics, including, in order of appearance: (i) the phrase "for our sins" using the genitive case and plural noun is unusual for Paul; (ii) the phrase "according to the Scriptures" is unparalleled in Paul, who introduces Scriptural citations by "as it is written"; (iii) the perfect passive verb "has been raised" appears only in this chapter and in a pre-Pauline confessional formula in II Tim. 2.8; (iv) the phrase "on the third day" with its ordinal number following the noun in Greek is non-Pauline; (v) the word

> “appeared” is found only here and in the confessional formula in I Tim. 3.16; and (vi) “the Twelve” is not Paul’s nomenclature, for he always speaks of the twelve disciples as “the apostles.”
>
> Now the visit during which Paul may have received this tradition is the visit you mention three years after his conversion on the road to Damascus (Gal. 1.18). This puts the tradition back to within the first five years after Jesus’ death in AD 30. So there’s not even an apparent inconsistency with Paul’s appropriating the language of the formula to encapsulate the Gospel he was already preaching during those first three years in Damascus.

Ancient historian Gary Habermas loves to read non-Christian scholars… and then he writes about what THEY think about Jesus in peer-reviewed articles, published in academic journals. Let’s look at this one: *Dialog: A Journal of Theology, Vol. 45; No. 3 (Fall, 2006), pp. 288-297; published by Blackwell Publishing, UK.*

He writes:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: “However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul’s.”[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul’s own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: “It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition.”[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]

This is important:

> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the

> brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

He's an eyewitness (verse 8), and he met with the other eyewitnesses, James and Peter. 1 Corinthians is early. Galatians is early. The creed is extremely early – right after the events occurred. There was no time for legends to develop.

And atheistic / critical historians agree, the creed is reliable:

> Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]
>
> Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]
>
> Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.
>
> (3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]
>
> These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially

> given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.
>
> (4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

Now, some of the people he lists are really biased against the supernatural, and they really hate the idea that the claims of Christianity exclude other religions. And yet they don't deny the historical reliability of 1 Corinthians 15, or that it is based on eyewitness testimony.

That's why when you watch debates about the historical Jesus, you see skeptical historians like Bart Ehrman, Gerd Ludemann, James Crossley, Michael Goulder, etc. accepting that the disciples thought they saw Jesus after his death. They're not just being nice to Dr. Craig when they give him that. They are forced to accept it, because it passes the historical tests. Every Christian ought to be aware of which passages of the New Testament are seen by the broad spectrum of ancient historians as "historical", regardless of their various biases. You can believe everything in the Bible. But when you debate non-Christians, you have to use the historical core of Christianity which successfully passes historical analysis.

You can see the creed used as evidence in the debate between James Crossley and William Lane Craig.

Report: Biden FBI targeting religious, conservative and veteran employees

November 13, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I read a couple of interesting news stories about the taxpayer-funded FBI. These are both by Kerry Picket, writing for the Washington Times. So far, the only response from the FBI has been to demand that she take the articles down. But she's refusing to do it. These stories add to the other stories of FBI bias and corruption that I've blogged about before.

First one, from the Washington Times:

> At least three FBI whistleblowers told lawmakers on the House Judiciary Committee on Tuesday that high-level senior officials at the bureau are revoking security clearances of personnel based on religious or politically conservative beliefs.
>
> […]The disclosure accuses FBI brass of violating the Security Executive Agent Directive 4 (SEAD 4), disseminated by the ODNI, which is its national security guideline for allowing intelligence community agencies to conduct security clearance adjudications.
>
> "Specifically, SecD Section Chief Section Matthew Nagle, Deputy Assistant Director Lawerence Buckley, and Assistant Section Chief Dena Perkins have caused security clearance investigators to adjudicate security clearances in a manner that is contrary to the SEAD IV guidelines," the disclosure said.
>
> SecD is "intentionally misinterpreting the SEAD IV guidelines so that it can deny, suspend and revoke security clearances of FBI employees because of political affiliations and beliefs."
>
> The disclosure said these security division officials have been exaggerating single incidents of alleged misconduct to be substituted for multiple incidents of misconduct while using security clearance investigations to substitute for internal misconduct investigations.
>
> When an internal investigation finds minor misconduct incidents, the penalty typically ranges from oral or written reprimands to performance counseling, according to the whistleblowers' account.
>
> "Nagle, Buckley, and Perkins have been expanding the scope of security investigations in a manner that violates ODNI's rules and policies," the disclosure states. "The basis for security revocations are specifically enumerated by ODNI."
>
> A SecD employee said Ms. Perkins, who has been in her job since 2018, retaliated against an employee who reported her to the office of Attorney General Merrick Garland. The day after the complaint was filed, Ms. Perkins suspended the employee's clearance.

Second one, also from Washington Times:

> More whistleblowers have stepped forward to tell Congress that high-ranking FBI officials are targeting agents, specifically former military members, for their political beliefs and trying to force them out of the bureau.
>
> A Marine and other military veterans at the FBI have been accused of disloyalty to the U.S. because they fit the profile of a supporter of former President Donald Trump, according to two disclosures sent to lawmakers on the House Judiciary Committee.
>
> The Washington Times obtained copies of the disclosures.
>
> The whistleblowers said Jeffrey Veltri, deputy assistant director of the bureau's security division, and Dena Perkins, assistant section chief, specifically pursued employees who served in the Marine Corps or other military branches.
>
> They stripped the agents of security clearances, which sidelined them on the job and pushed them toward the exit, according to the disclosures.
>
> The whistleblower disclosures say Mr. Veltri and Ms. Perkins either declared or attempted to declare the Marine and other veterans as "disloyal to the United States of America."
>
> "In these cases there was no indication that any of the individuals had any affiliation to a foreign power or held any belief against the United States," it said.
>
> Other signs that an employee was a "right-wing radical and disloyal to the United States," according to Ms. Perkins and Mr. Veltri, were failure to wear a face mask, refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccination and participating in religious activities.
>
> In another instance, Ms. Perkins attempted to revoke the security clearance of a bureau employee she knew was a Marine veteran, but information showed that the initial allegations against the employee were unfounded, the disclosure says.
>
> This did not stop Ms. Perkins from ordering her investigators to canvass at least 10 police departments where the employee lived for any allegations or violations of law.
>
> "During the process, Perkins was attempting to provide evidence so she could terminate this employee because he was 'Disloyal to the United States,'" the disclosure states.
>
> "An employee advised that at least two of the publicly known FBI whistleblowers were former members of the military, specifically … Kyle Seraphin and Garret[t] O'Boyle," according to one of the disclosures.
>
> Another FBI whistleblower disclosure sent to the Judiciary Committee included an accusation from a security division employee who said the security clearance investigation of Mr. Seraphin did not follow the policy guidelines of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Recently, many House Republicans voted to give the FBI a new $300 million headquarters

that will be built on 61 acres. The Soviet Union’s Kremlin was 66 acres. Do you think that FBI leaders are people with integrity? Do you think that they are focused on the real threats that America is facing? Do you think they are too involved with the Democrat party? Are they doing a good job for their bosses, the American taxpayers?

Pro-life family sues DOJ for pre-dawn FBI raid that tortured their children

November 14, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A couple more interesting stories about the FBI today. First, the pro-life family that was pre-dawn raided by the FBI is suing the DOJ. Second, the FBI and DOJ refuse to label the Nashville school shooting as an anti-white hate crime, even after the manifesto emerged (against their wishes) showing exactly that. Are taxpayers getting good value by hiring the FBI to enforce the laws?

Here's the first story, from The Federalist:

> Pennsylvania family the FBI raided last September over the father's pro-life advocacy filed two claims today for a total of $4.35 million in damages due to the FBI's unconstitutional, "malicious," and "corrupt" use of "excessive force."
>
> Mark Houck and Ryan-Marie Houck say in their legal filings obtained by The Federalist that their seven children continue to suffer as a result of the FBI raiding — with battering rams, ballistic shields, armor, and long rifles — the home of a nonviolent pro-lifer who didn't own any guns and whose seven children were just waking for breakfast.
>
> The Houcks "have lost three babies from miscarriages due to the stress of the FBI's conduct and resulting prosecution" and subsequently been diagnosed with infertility, Ryan-Marie Houck's filing says. She says she still cries for hours and the family's high anxiety provoked by the raid has caused them to install security cameras and rarely leave home.
>
> In the Sept. 23, 2022 raid, "Government agents aimed rifles and handguns at Mr. Houck from his porch and from behind vehicles in his yard and driveway," Ryan-Marie Houcks' complaint says. "They also aimed their weapons at Mrs. Houck, who slowly walked down a staircase to approach the Houcks' front door. Mrs. Houck approached after Mr. Houck had already walked peacefully outside with his hands up. Any bullet that missed Mr. Houck could have struck Mrs. Houck or her children, who were stirring throughout the house and had gathered behind her on the staircase. The entire family was located directly downrange."
>
> The sunrise raid that included approximately 20 law enforcement officers was conducted after Mark Houck's lawyer had informed the Department of Justice he would voluntarily turn himself in if requested. Mark Houck's complaint says his 9-year-old daughter was terrified to find two officers dressed in black carrying rifles looking into their home through a back window.
>
> The Houcks' lawsuits say that, as a result of the "unnecessary" raid, "The children continually come to her [Ryan-Marie] crying and suffering from nightmares." Ryan-Marie and their five oldest children, ages 7 to 13, now must

> take medication “to get a few hours of sleep” each night.
>
> “Joshua was six years old at the time he saw his father taken away at gun point,” says Ryan-Marie’s complaint. “He cried the entire time and yelled to the FBI, ‘Please don’t take him he is my best friend.’ To this day, any time someone brings up the raid or tells the story, he starts to cry as if he is reliving the day all over again. He constantly worries that he will lose his father or mother.”
>
> Their 4-year-old has started sleepwalking, the claims say. The entire family seizes up with anxiety any time they have an unannounced visitor. Once, a friend showing up unannounced gave Ryan-Marie a panic attack, her filing says.

The accused man was found not guilty by a jury.

> A Pennsylvania jury acquitted Mark Houck in January on all charges the Department of Justice brought against him. The DOJ argued Houck had violated a federal law that prohibits physically obstructing abortion facilities. Houck and his son were 100 feet away from the facility when they were accosted by a pro-abortion escort.

The laws are not being enforced impartially:

> Mark Houck’s complaint notes that, except for one single recent case, the DOJ has prosecuted only pro-lifers for alleged violations of the FACE Act used against him. The law is supposed to apply both to abortion supporters and pro-lifers, but the DOJ has almost exclusively used it against pro-lifers.

Was this FBI action political persecution of Biden’s enemies? I guess we’re going to find out.

Anyway, here’s another story of FBI failure, also reported in The Federalist:

> On March 27, 2023, Audrey Hale, a woman masquerading as a man, shot and killed three children and three staff at a Christian grade school before local police took her out.
>
> […]Metropolitan Nashville Police Chief John Drake told reporters shortly after the massacre that it was a “targeted attack.” However, MNPD, along with the Tennesse Bureau of Investigation and the FBI, repeatedly refused to release the manifesto detailing Hale’s motives.
>
> It was only this week, more than nearly eight months after the shooting, that conservative media personality Steven Crowder leaked three of the manifesto pages. The publicization of the bombshell writings put seven MNPD officers on administrative leave but exposed the reasons Hale decided to shoot up her former school.
>
> […]Hale claimed she planned to murder Covenant schoolchildren because she hated their white skin, light features, and “privilege.”
>
> […]When The Federalist asked the nation’s top federal law enforcement

> agencies, which had access to the notebook ever since March 27, if either had plans to classify the shooting as an anti-white hate crime or political violence spurred on by the proliferation of left-wing racism in schools and government, the DOJ ignored the request and the FBI claimed it did not have a comment.
>
> The DOJ and FBI's silence on the issue sharply contrasts how both department and agency have treated other race-based shootings.
>
> When a gunman in Buffalo, New York, opened fire in a grocery store, killing 10 in 2022, the DOJ used the shooter's racist social media posts as justification to deem the act "a hate crime and an act of racially-motivated violent extremism" worthy of several federal hate crime charges. The Justice Department extended the same treatment to Dylann Roof and the Texas mass shooter who killed 23 people at an El Paso Wal-Mart.
>
> Yet when it comes to investigating the Nashville shooting, which was rooted in the shooter's disdain for people based on their skin color, as a hate crime against white Christians, the DOJ and FBI refuse.

We can fix these problems with the FBI and DOJ when we have our next election. We just need to elect someone with integrity. I think Ron DeSantis would be able clean up these problems.

Is the Pope Catholic? No, I'm serious. Is the Pope Catholic?

November 15, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm a proud evangelical Protestant who thought very highly of Pope Benedict. But I don't like Pope Francis at all. In this post, I will link to two recent stories that explain two of my reasons, although I have many more beside these.

First one, reported in NewsMax:

> Conservative Catholics have launched a barrage of challenges to Pope Francis before a big Vatican meeting, with five cardinals demanding clarifications on same-sex couples and other issues, and a women's group saying only men should vote at the event.
>
> The cardinals from Asia, Europe, Africa, the United States and Latin America said on Monday they had sent the pope a set of formal questions, known as "dubia" ("doubts" in Latin), about the gathering.
>
> In an open letter to Catholics, they said they had announced their challenges "so that you may not be subject to confusion, error, and discouragement but rather may pray for the universal Church."
>
> The action was the latest latest clash between the pope and minority conservatives, who have accused him of undermining a number of traditional precepts.

And I thought this was very interesting:

> Church leaders have been preparing for this week's closed-door meeting – known as a bishops synod – for the past two years, asking Catholics around the world to share their vision for the future of the Church.
>
> Topics will include the role of women, greater acceptance of LGBT Catholics, social justice and the effects of climate change on the poor.

Conservative Catholics are definitely unhappy:

> Last week, the conservative U.S.-based Catholic women's group Restore Tradition decried the fact that women were given a vote at the meeting equal to that of a cardinal or bishop, saying some of the women had advocated "heretical doctrines" against tradition.
>
> "We wish to be represented only by bishops," the group said, citing "divine law" that only men could receive sacramental ordination.
>
> The international conservative group, "Tradition, Family and Property," sent participants a 100-page booklet calling the gathering a dangerous "Pandora's Box." In the forward, Burke says he fears the synod will sow "confusion and error

> and division."

As a Protestant, I know that when denominations move away from the text of the Bible, and cater to the feelings of the "don't judge" compassion crowd, then doctrine gets watered down. That's the way it is in mainline Protestant denominations, and that's why their numbers are declining, while conservative evangelical Protestant churches are thriving.

While the Pope is very friendly to the secular left on social issues, conservative leaders in the Catholic church are getting punished.

Church Militant reports:

> Pope Francis has removed a Texas bishop from his office, a move shocking many in the Church.
>
> […]Known by some as "America's bishop," Strickland is one of the few U.S. Catholic bishops to be vocal in his support for the Church.
>
> He was the only U.S. bishop to attend the June 16 protest against the Los Angeles Dodgers for the team's support of the blasphemous Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. It created something of an embarrassment for L.A. Abp. Jose Gómez and his auxiliary bishops.

Strickland was also outspoken against COVID mandates, which were promoted by Catholic leaders. (Where is that in the Bible?)

Strickland is not the only one:

> Pope Francis does have a record of removing bishops who claim to be merely following the Catholic faith.
>
> In March 2022, Pope Francis ousted Daniel Fernández Torres as bishop of Arecibo, Puerto Rico, because he allegedly "had not been obedient to the pope, nor had [he] had sufficient communion with [his] brother bishops of Puerto Rico."
>
> Torres refused to sign a joint statement urging the moral obligation of COVID-19 vaccinations, a stance he defended as a conscientious objection recognized by the Church. The bishop noted, "I have opposed what I consider to be using episcopal ministry to advance political agendas."

He was disobedient to the Pope, so he had to go!

I have some friends who are conservative Catholics, and I'm so curious to know how they see their commitment to that organization shaping up in light of these changes. As a Protestant, I pick the denomination that adheres most closely to the teachings of the Bible. But conservative Catholics seem to be stuck with this Pope. What will they do now?

I wrote a post previously explaining why I am not a Roman Catholic.

Is woke law enforcement worth the money that taxpayers pay for it?

November 16, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It seems like every day now we are seeing how dangerous it is to let no-STEM-degree secular leftists run the police and federal law enforcement. In this post, I look at a couple of recent articles showing you how bad it's getting.

First one, from Daily Wire… it's Matt Walsh:

> Two years ago, a woman named Shayla Workman was driving in her car with her two children, aged 3-years-old and 1-year-old, near an apartment complex in Nashville, Tennessee. That's when a man in his 20's, Shaquille Taylor, opened fire. He shot the roof of the car at least two times as Workman drove away. The attack was not random. In fact, the motive couldn't have been clearer: Workman had recently testified against, "Someone he cared about." What was that man's crime? As Workman put it, "His brother was locked up for shooting at me initially in May." A few months later, on August 2nd, Taylor found Workman at the RiverChase apartments and also started shooting at her: "The bullet hit the top of my car and bounced off. Had I not been driving, it would've gone through the window and shot my son in his head." Authorities then arrested Taylor, and he confessed.
>
> […]Shaquille Taylor, after shooting at a moving vehicle with a mother and her children inside, apparently in retribution for that woman's testimony in a criminal proceeding, did not go to prison for the rest of his life. He didn't receive any kind of lengthy prison sentence at all, for that matter. Incredibly, Shaquille Taylor never even went to trial. Instead, in May of this year, less than two years after he started shooting at Shayla Workman's car, Shaquille Taylor was released from jail and his charges were dismissed. The judge who made that decision was Angelita Blackshear Dalton, who happens to be a Democrat and the first black woman elected to a judgeship in her county.
>
> […]It didn't take long for the consequences of the judge's decision to become very clear. A week ago, on Tuesday — just about six months after his charges were dismissed — Shaquille Taylor shot and killed an 18-year-old freshman music student at Belmont University named Jillian Ludwig.

There's a video about the woman in the article:

More:

> That report — and most reports on this case — manage to undersell Shaquille Taylor's criminal history. The shooting incident involving the mother and her children happened two years ago, but it wasn't the only serious crime that Taylor committed. According to the local news channel, WSMV-4, "Taylor's background

> also includes charges for vehicle theft, robbery, handgun possession and multiple aggravated assault charges. One affidavit … said he shoved a man to the ground .. back in 2015 before stealing money from him. Taylor's most recent aggravated assault charge was in May of this year, but the District Attorney's Office did not prosecute."
>
> […]Speaking of that career, just a few weeks ago, on September 21st, Taylor was arrested in a grocery store parking lot driving a Ford-150 that had been carjacked a couple days earlier. Prosecutors charged him with felony auto theft, but then a judge let him out of jail on just $20,000 bond. This is after he shot at the mother in her car, and after he was caught in the stolen F-150. Of course, Taylor then missed his court appearance, and went on to kill a college freshman.

Will the judge who released this career criminal face any consequences? Probably not. The judge is a woman, and a minority, and the motto of America these days is "don't judge". In fact, "don't judge" is probably how this judge got through her non-STEM degrees, and onto the bench. According to her bio, "Judge Dalton… received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from Lane College in 1993 and her Juris Doctor Degree from the University of Toledo College of Law in 1997." ENGLISH.

I'm a visible minority too, but my degrees are STEM degrees – in computer science. You can't get out of STEM programs by parroting the opinions of your woke professors. You have to do math. You have to write code that compiles and runs. You have to read requirements. You have to solve problems.

Here's another example from yesterday:

I guess the lesson for conservatives here is "don't live in a blue city, in a blue county, where your law enforcement is chosen by far-left billionaire George Soros." Your

education, career, and finances all have to be carefully chosen in such a way as you don't live in a place that is run by the "don't judge" people. They won't protect you from evil, even though you are paying their salaries with your taxes.

Next article. This is from the New York Post:

> The gunman who killed Texas SWAT Officer Jorge Pastore in a shootout that also left two hostages dead was wearing body armor and night vision goggles — and was on the FBI's terror watchlist, according to reports.

He was on the terror watchlist, but why was he allowed to commit a crime? Oh, maybe it's this:

> […][A] local organization called the Round Rock Area Muslims said they were all family members of a "beloved brother" who was well-known in the local community.
>
> They were mom Eman Ahmed El Nemr-Nassar and two of her sons, Ahmed Mohammed Nassar, 35, and Riad Mohamed Nassar, 32, according to a group member's since-deleted post shared by the Daily Mail.

Just like the law enforcement in Britain, our law enforcement does not want to enforce the law, if they will appear to be "racist". After all, the top priority of the Biden administration, in the wake of the Hamas terrorist attack, is cracking down on "Islamophobia". After all, according to the Biden administration, the real criminals are concerned parents and elderly pro-lifers. Those are the REAL "domestic terrorists", Democrats say. And we are paying their salaries. Is it worth it?

Be careful where you live.

Nikki Haley’s troubling record on China, Black Lives Matter, Blackrock ESG, etc.

November 17, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are a few stories about Nikki Haley, and at the end, I’ll tell you who should vote for her.

First one, this is new from this week, reported in the Washington Examiner:

> Many Republicans envisioned Haley as a viable alternative to the current front-runner, former President Donald Trump, for voters in the Republican primary. Yet such hopes could be dashed after an absolute clunker of an appearance by Haley on Fox News on Tuesday. The former South Carolina governor declared her support for eliminating anonymous accounts and unverified users on social media platforms. And, without stating where such power would actually come from, Haley also announced, as one of her first acts as president, she would force all users to be verified.
>
> “When I get into office, the first thing we have to do, social media accounts, social media companies, they have to show America their algorithms. Let us see why they’re pushing what they’re pushing,” Haley said during an appearance on Fox News. “The second thing is every person on social media should be verified by their name.”
>
> […]@NikkiHaley comments on Fox News on Tuesday should raise red flags for all Republicans. One cannot be the party of freedom & all things good in the country but declare an intent to eliminate anonymous political commentary.

This one is also new, from yesterday, reported in The Daily Caller:

> Former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley met with several Wall Street executives in a series of events Tuesday in her bid to be the Republican nominee for president, according to the Financial Times.
>
> Haley attended a small meet-and-greet breakfast in New York where CEO of BlackRock Larry Fink was in attendance, followed by a fundraiser later in the day co-hosted by Gary Cohn, former president of Goldman Sachs, according to the FT. BlackRock has been criticized by conservatives in recent years for its adoption and promotion of Environment, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) policies, which aim to invest in companies based on their commitment to social and environmental causes.
>
> “Let’s call ESG what it really is: corporate socialism,” Haley’s campaign said in a previous statement to The Hill. “What we need is capitalism and not businesses caving to the left. When they do, everyone loses.”
>
> Republican-led states, like Florida and Texas, in opposition to BlackRock’s use of

> “woke” ESG investment, have pulled their money from the investment firm. Altogether, Republican-led states pulled almost $4.5 billion from the company in 2022.

This one from the far-left Washington Post:

> “I saw something on the internet that said you gave China thousands of acres of land in South Carolina. Why would you do that?”
> — audience member asking a question at a Haley for President town hall in Boone, Iowa, Oct. 9
>
> “Don’t believe what you read on the internet. … We didn’t sell any land to the Chinese. But, yes, I recruited a fiberglass company.”
>
> — former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley (R), in response
>
> In her campaign for president, Haley has warned repeatedly about Chinese investments, including land purchases, in the United States. Yet as governor from January 2011 to January 2017, she recruited Chinese companies to her state. Chinese capital investment in South Carolina more than doubled from $308 million in 2011 to nearly $670 million in 2015.
>
> The audience member asked whether she “gave China thousands of acres of land.” She answered that “we didn’t sell any land to the Chinese,” specifically mentioning a fiberglass company.
>
> This is political sleight of hand — denying something that was not asked.
>
> The fiberglass deal did not involve the sale of land — but that’s because the company received almost 200 acres of county-owned land free of charge if promised investments were made. By our count, Chinese companies received about 1,500 acres while Haley was governor, much of it through land sales, despite her denial at the town hall.

Another one, from The Iowa Standard talks about her tweet about George Floyd, who is now known to have died from a drug overdose, and who had a long, long criminal record.

Nikki tweeted:

> “WE SPENT THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS CELEBRATING OUR SON’S GRADUATION. TONIGHT I TURNED ON THE NEWS AND AM HEARTBROKEN. IT’S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE DEATH OF GEORGE FLOYD WAS PERSONAL AND PAINFUL FOR MANY. IN ORDER TO HEAL, IT NEEDS TO BE PERSONAL AND PAINFUL FOR EVERYONE.”

More from the article:

> Tucker took exception to Haley’s declaration that it needs to be “personal and painful for everyone” in order for healing to happen.
>
> “Really, why’s that,” Carlson said. “And of course, what happened next was personal and painful for everyone. Our cities burned down. A lot of people died.

> And I thought, 'Why should what happened between a cop and George Floyd outside a convenience store in Minneapolis be personal and painful to anybody else? What are you even talking about? Oh, you have no idea what you're talking about. You're trying to please the people whose opinions you actually care about at The New York Times.'"

Another one, from the Washington Examiner:

> […][B]ack in 2020… it was initially reported that someone had tried to racially intimidate NASCAR driver Bubba Wallace by allegedly "placing a noose" in a garage Wallace was assigned to before a race in South Carolina. Quicker than one could say, "Start your engines," Haley rushed to condemn the supposed act of hate even while the incident was under investigation before anyone had all the facts.
>
> "We should all stand with @BubbaWallace today against the cowards who secretly put the noose in his garage stall," Haley posted on Instagram. "Watch your back cowards. Bubba has a bigger army than you do. #HateWontWin #WeStandWithBubba."
>
> But there weren't any cowards. No army was needed. The story was bogus and not a hate crime. No one "secretly put the noose in his garage stall." It was just a regular garage pull that had been there long before Bubba Wallace was assigned the garage. Haley didn't have to make such a statement. She could have waited until all the facts were known.
>
> […]At a time when she could have shown the country how principled, strong, and tough she was, Haley bought the Left's narrative, caved, and rushed to do her best CNN or MSNBC anchor impression.

Who should vote for Nikki Haley? Anyone who would also vote for Hillary Clinton. She is the Hillary Clinton of the Republican party. Always putting her foot in her mouth trying to pretend to be something she's not, and never apologizing for any of it.

Judge rules that man must pay $50,000 a month to ex-girlfriend for 10 years

November 18, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was younger, I used to think that having definite views on morality and theology was a bad thing. I had my share of rejections by Christian women who didn't like that I rejected universalism and annihilationism. Others didn't like that I was pro-life. And today, most Christian women tell me that supporting gay rights is a non-negotiable for them. But maybe being alone was not all bad.

The news story is from one of Canada's national newspapers, the National Post:

> A wealthy businessman will have to pay more than $50,000 a month in spousal support for 10 years to a woman with whom he had a long-term romantic relationship even though they kept separate homes and had no children together, Ontario's top court has ruled.
>
> Under Ontario law, an unmarried couple are considered common-law spouses if they have cohabited — lived together in a conjugal relationship — continuously for at least three years. But that doesn't necessarily mean living in the same home, the court found.
>
> […]When their 14-year relationship finally broke down in May 2015, Climans asked the courts to recognize her as Latner's spouse and order him to pay her support. He argued she had been a travel companion and girlfriend, nothing more. As such, he said, they were never legally spouses and he owed no support. An eight-day trial ensued.
>
> In her decision in February 2019, Superior Court Justice Sharon Shore sided with Climans. She ruled they were in fact long-time spouses, finding that despite their separate home, they lived under one roof at Latner's cottage for part of the summer, and during winter vacations in Florida. Shore ordered him to pay her $53,077 monthly indefinitely.

Superior Court Justice Sharon Shore didn't care that the man never married this woman, or lived with her, or had children with her. He had money, and she wanted it, so the judge gave it to her.

Elsewhere in the article, we learn that he had asked her to sign a pre-nuptial agreement many times, and each time she refused. (Those are not even enforced in divorce courts) It's like her plan all along was to demand that a judge awarded her all of this man's money.

Some people will say "well, these are Ontario family courts, this is normal. Haven't you heard about what happened to Dave Foley?" I think every man knows the story of what the Ontario divorce courts did to Dave Foley.

Here is a story about it from the far-left Toronto Star, otherwise known as the Toronto Red

Star.

It says:

> Dave Foley of beloved Toronto sketch troupe the Kids in the Hall is starting a new career in standup comedy, but not in Toronto — he suspects he'll be arrested if he returns to Canada.
>
> The 48-year-old faces a back child-support bill in Ontario of more than half a million dollars: the accumulation of a debt that accrues steadily at more than $17,000 per month. On the set of *Servitude,* a film shot in Toronto last year, "I told the production guys, I have a court appearance on Monday and there's a good chance I'll be in jail on Monday afternoon,'" Foley said in an interview with the *Star*.
>
> During an appearance on comic Marc Maron's *WTF* podcast last month, Foley explained that his marriage to Toronto writer Tabatha Southey ended during his run on NBC's five-year hit comedy *NewsRadio,* and he has failed in his efforts to adjust his child support downward to reflect his new life after sitcom stardom.
>
> "My income has dropped in the last 10 years, as anyone can tell from the number of s—ty movies I've been in," says Foley. "I'm not exactly picking and choosing my projects." However, four years ago, Superior Justice Nancy Backhouse denied his motion to vary his support payments.
>
> […]Foley says that Ontario's Family Responsibility Office now has an enforcement order and last year sought a six-month jail sentence for him, which was to extend indefinitely, until the overdue support was paid.
>
> Ontario family courts are notoriously anti-male, and men know this. Unfortunately, the female judges who make these rulings don't seem to understand that men know what they are doing, and then opt out of marriage. It must be so wonderful for these judges to punish the men who appear before them. But they can't punish the men who respond to what they are doing by declining to marry women, and then declining to date women, and then declining to even speak to women.

I looked up Superior Justice Nancy Backhouse, and found another article about her decisions, entitled "Judge rejects pre-nup, awards ex-wife $5.3-million". So, pre-nuptial agreements are also thrown out in Ontario divorce courts.

But it's not just Ontario. I have two Christian friends here in America who married their Christian wives as virgins, and then their wives divorced them. I heard what happened to them in divorce court. They lost custody of their kids, and they are forced to pay alimony and child support even though their ex-wives poison the children against them, and deny them communication rights and visitation rights. And men know that this is happening to other men. How can women expect men to marry when the financial risks are so high?

Forbes magazine explains:

> Of the 400,000 people in the United States receiving post-divorce spousal maintenance, just 3 percent were men, according to Census figures. Yet 40 percent of households are headed by female breadwinners — suggesting that hundreds of thousands of men are eligible for alimony, yet don't receive it.

The divorced courts are biased against men, and men are getting the message. They look at these cases, and they understand that marriage is not worth the financial risks. They don't want to have their possessions stolen by radical feminist judges.

Further reading

An excellent book to read about this issue is Dr. Stephen Baskerville's book "Taken Into Custody: The War Against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family". You can read what the book is about here. Dr. Baskerville is a Christian and a conservative. He has a PhD from London School of Economics, and teaches at Patrick Henry College, a conservative Christian college.

How should Christians redeem their regrets over past decisions?

November 19, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I posted a dating ad from a 39-year-old never-married single mother. She explained that she was now a Christian and was looking for a man to marry her, so that she could have a second child "the right way". Some people thought we should take her conversion at face value. Others thought she was desperate and looking for a financial bailout. How can we tell if she is really sincere?

Well, I was still thinking about the comments on that post when I saw another great post from Laura, who writes at An Affair With Reason. Her post is about the feelings of regret that people have because of their past mistakes, and how Christians should deal with those regrets.

She writes:

> As I thought about what to write I became distressed, sorrowful, angry, and even despondent over some of my own decisions. As I sobbed inconsolably, I noticed that every caustic thought began with, "If only…." That's when I realized I was still carrying the burden of regret and I didn't know how to let go. It wasn't that I still needed God's forgiveness or that I had any doubts about my standing with him; I knew I was forgiven. It was the lifelong consequences that I experience to this day which embittered my soul and squelched my joy.
>
> The "if onlys" are a heavy burden to carry. They represent shattered dreams that will never be recovered in this life. They invoke feelings of discontentment, grief, and doubt. They cause us to sob with regret for what could have been, to pray for second chances that we know will not be granted.
>
> So what do we do with the regrets that we must live with for the rest of our lives? Lately, as I've reflected on conversations I've had with many women who have made regretful decisions over the years and on the direction of our culture, I've noticed two very distinct paths:
>
> 1. Attempt to assuage our own guilt and regret by convincing others to make the same foolish, and even sinful, decisions we made.
>
> OR
>
> 2. Humble ourselves, grieve our losses, and commit to teaching the younger generations to choose a better way.
>
> The first path is the wide and well-traveled one. Tragically and despicably, most people today seek to justify themselves and ease their consciences by getting others on board with their own ignorance, foolishness, and sinfulness.

She's got quite a few examples of the kinds of regrets that men and women have, and

different ways of dealing with those regrets. Some ways self-serving, others God-serving. Her examples are really interesting. It reminds me of "The Great Divorce" by C.S. Lewis, where he explains why some people don't resist God, and others do. Some people want to justify the past, and keep making decisions to benefit themselves. Others want to serve God. They want to take on the difficult work of opening up to others, and loving them by telling them the truth.

When I hear someone with a past say that they have now become a Christian, I normally ask "is this conversion just convenient for you or is it the result of some process where your mind was changed through study?" You can ask the person to show their work – how did they get to the right answer? And what has becoming a Christian cost them? How does it affect their relationships with non-Christians?

People "convert to Christianity" all the time based on need. Sometimes they're trying to get something for themselves, e.g. – wanting to not be judged for their past, so they can attract a partner to financially support them. But other people spend years reading books and changing their minds page by page, debate by debate. Then they put their knowledge into practice.

I have mentored women who did this. One girl who contacted me through the blog wasn't able to talk to her smart atheist brother about her faith. Then, she read a bunch of apologetics books about science and history, then called me and slipped the phone into her pocket and let me listen to her make a bold, informed stand for her Christian worldview for two hours. She won every point.

When people really become Christians, they don't do it in order to be happy and or to be liked. They take on work, and they take on shame, because they have a Boss now. That's how you can tell that real repentance has taken place. The letters of Paul in the New Testament are filled with advice for Christians who want to be bold, put themselves second, and advocate for their Boss. You should read them. When you read the Bible, try to put aside your feelings, your desires, and your concerns about what people will think. You'll find that putting work for the Boss ahead of what you want is worth the price of being "second". I would start with Philippians, then go on to 1 Peter.

By the way, this isn't the first time I've linked to Laura's posts. Here are some of the other times I've linked to her work on my blog: on voting, on Islam, on mentoring boys, on fighting with pastors, on learning what works when dealing with atheists. She had a 10 part series advising women how to choose a husband, which really made me feel good as a man. Today, most people see a husband as an accessory – like a handbag. He's there to provide, or to be a handyman, or to complain at if the wife is unhappy. Men should read that series, and find out what we can do in a marriage, if we are valued for our distinctive male nature.

FBI halted investigation of pedophile to target Republican voters

November 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm sorry to keep posting about the FBI, but they just keep coming up in my news reading.

Here's the latest from Daily Wire:

> On January 6, 2021, the FBI explicitly chose to abandon a sting on a child pornographer in Virginia who was messaging with an undercover agent about having sex with a nine-year-old boy, opting instead to focus on prosecuting Donald Trump's supporters who stormed the U.S. Capitol. Less than three years later, the FBI discovered the same man living in Alaska where he appears to have been performing sex acts on a 10-year-old boy, according to court documents.
>
> On December 2, 2020, an internet user with the screen name "gayboy69freak" messaged an undercover agent with the FBI's Washington Field Office, who was posing as a father pimping out his 9-year-old son, and told him that he wanted to travel to D.C. to have sex with the boy.

Hmmm. I wonder if the FBI dropped this investigation, because they didn't want to be labeled as "homophones". In the UK, the police there regularly drop investigations against Middle Eastern sex-traffickers, because they don't want to appear to be racist. Maybe our Biden administration FBI are doing the same thing as the "don't judge" UK police?

More:

> His IP address led the FBI to Brogan Welsh of Glenn Allen, Virginia.
>
> What appears to be a slam-dunk case against a child predator was abruptly abandoned just one month later.
>
> "On January 6, 2021, FBI, Washington Field Office, [decided] this investigation was halted due to events that occurred at the United States Capitol Building that day," .

The only reason that this predator was arrested again was because of a completely different investigation:

> The man was only arrested, and the court documents only filed, because Welsh moved to Alaska and crossed the Anchorage FBI's radar in an unrelated perversion investigation. On October 24, 2023, after coming across troubling chats from Welsh on a phone they seized from a different alleged pervert, Alaska FBI agents went into his house and "located items including sex toys that are very small in size and apparently consistent with the body size of an approximate

> 10-year-old boy," as well as children's underwear.
>
> "The investigation has revealed that a 10-year-old boy was, in fact, residing at the residence belonging to Welsh," the agents wrote.
>
> In other words, because the FBI called off the dogs even after Welsh sent child porn to an FBI agent, he appears to have gone on to molest a 10-year-old.
>
> It was as FBI agents worked through the Alaska case that they realized that the bureau's Washington Field Office had slam-dunk evidence that it had never bothered to do anything with, and added it to filed November 6, 2023. The Alaska arrest of Welsh was made based on the initial child pornography crime in Virginia, not even his apparent crimes in Alaska.

So, the only reason we found out about the Washington office of the Biden FBI dropping the real criminal case was because of the Alaska case. So, we don't really know how many other criminal cases were dropped by the Washington Field Office.

What was the motive to abandon these criminal cases? Was it to benefit the Democrat party? Was it to help Joe Biden win re-election? Was it to meddle with future elections by shaming Republican voters? It's hard to measure the effect of these actions.

Here is another recent story about the FBI, also from Daily Wire:

> A Satan-worshipping cult of pedophiles is blackmailing girls into cutting themselves — but the FBI didn't seem interested in that so much as the fact that one of its members once used the n-word, a Daily Wire investigation found.
>
> For years, the group known both as 764 and Harm Nation has tortured what is believed to be hundreds or thousands of girls. But the FBI didn't put its cybercrimes or violence-against-children investigators on it. Instead, its interest appears to have piqued mainly by the fact that the group — most of whose victims are white teens — was once racist to a black girl.
>
> [..]Critics say, at best, it's an example of the FBI misclassifying cases in order to tell Congress that right-wing domestic terrorism is the greatest threat to America. At worst, they say, it's an example of the heinous torture of girls by pedophiles not being a priority — unless there was an angle making it politically appealing to Democrats.

These stories are both from last week. It just keeps happening.

Suppose that the next Republican president were to come out with a plan to just shut down the FBI completely, and fire all the employees. Would that surprise you? We are paying a lot of taxpayer money to the FBI employees, and they get a lot of benefits and pensions, too. Are they worth the money?

New study: At least 1,130 adolescents received “gender-affirming” chest surgeries between 2016 and 2019

November 21, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been seeing interesting tweets about the sudden popularity of transgenderism among young people. One of them went something like this. First, they deny that sex-change surgeries are happening. Then, they say they are happening, but not many. Then, they say many are happening, but not to children. Sadly, this new study shows that many are happening to children.

Here’s the story from Daily Wire:

> A new study of nationwide hospital databases found that at least 1,130 adolescents between 2016 and 2019 received “gender-affirming” chest surgeries in the U.S.
>
> The study, published in JAMA Pediatrics, saw a 389% increase in adolescents (ages 12-17) obtaining chest surgeries from 2016 to 2019. An overwhelming majority (1,114) of the adolescents seeking this surgery were female (98.6%), and just 16 were male (1.4%).
>
> “To our knowledge, this study is the largest investigation to date of gender-affirming chest reconstruction in a pediatric population,” the paper’s authors wrote, who are each affiliated with Vanderbilt University Medical Center. “The results demonstrate substantial increases in gender-affirming chest reconstruction for adolescents.”

Here is the breakdown by age:

> The ages of the pediatric patients ranged from 12 to 17, with 42 (5.5%) of the recipients between 12 and 14, 131 (16%) aged 15, 291 (34.5%) aged 16, and 365 (44%) aged 17.

It’s an interesting situation. I would expect parents to set boundaries on their children. First, to shelter them from public schools and social media. But second, at least keep them away from the people who are profiting from “gender-affirming care”.

Speaking of profiting, there was this:

> The median total charges for chest reconstruction were $29,886 ($21,285–$45,147), a number that was adjusted for inflation, the authors note. Most of the chest surgeries (61.1%) were covered by private health insurance, 16.5% used public health insurance including Medicaid, 15.8% paid out of pocket, and 6.7% indicated “other.”

Remember what the lady from Vanderbilt said?

It was reported by Daily Wire:

> "It's a lot of money," VUMC Clinic for Transgender Health's Dr. Shayne Sebold Taylor said at one Medicine Grand Rounds lecture, video reveals. "These surgeries make a lot of money."
>
> Taylor noted that a "chest reconstruction" can bring in $40,000 per patient, and someone "just on routine hormone treatment, who I'm only seeing a few times a year, can bring in several thousand dollars … and actually makes money for the hospital."
>
> Citing the Philadelphia Center for Transgender Surgery, Taylor said vaginoplasty surgeries can generate $20,000, gushing that it "has to be an underestimate," since hospital stay, anesthesia, post-op visits, and other add-ons are not included in the total.
>
> "And the female-to-male bottom surgeries, these are huge money makers," the doctor continued, adding that such surgeries could bring in "up to $100,000" for the hospital.
>
> Some clinics are "entirely" "supported" financially by such phalloplasty surgeries, Taylor boasted.
>
> "These surgeries are labor intensive, there are a lot of follow-ups, they require a lot of our time, and they make money," she emphasized. "They make money for the hospital."

Sadly, for one reason or another, the adults have decided that it is more virtuous to go along with the agenda of the schools and social media, and inflict surgeries on their children. I could never understands why anyone would cut healthy organs off of a child with mental health issues. That would be like putting an anorexic person on a diet.

There was a previous study:

> In July, the same four authors, with the addition of two others, published a separate study on adults who received "gender-affirming" chest reconstruction surgeries. Their results, also using NASS outpatient hospital data, found that 21,293 individuals obtained chest surgeries between 2016 and 2019, a 143.2% increase. The large majority of chest surgeries were performed on female patients, with 82.1% receiving double mastectomies; 27.9% of trans-identifying males received breast augmentations.

When it comes to debating social issues, I like to have studies close at hand. For same-sex marriage, I use studies showing different outcomes for children raised in same-sex homes. For abortion, I use science textbooks showing that the embryo is fully human. It is self-directed and has distinct DNA from either parent. And for transgenderism, I like to use studies like these, showing how health care providers are profiting from the social trends being pushed by the "don't judge" compassion crowd in the public schools. The

study showing that gender-affirming care does not lower the number of suicides (in the long term) is a good one, too.

There are Roman Catholics in my family but I'm not one: why not?

November 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I explain why I'm not Roman Catholic. And I also explain how Protestant Christians arrive at their beliefs. We'll start with J. Warner Wallace on Purgatory, then I'll go second.

Purgatory

Here's the first article from Cold Case Christianity, by the Master of the Evidence J. Warner Wallace. He writes about the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, and his experience with studying and then rejecting it.

Here is his introduction:

> The notion of purgatory assumes many of us die with unforgiven sins that need to be purged from our account; some of us are not good enough to go to heaven, but not bad enough to go to hell. Purgatory, therefore, is a temporary, intermediate place (or state of being) where good deeds and works can be performed in order to purge our impurity prior to our final destiny with God. Although millions of Catholics believe purgatory to be a reality, the idea needs to be tested in light of the Scripture. Is purgatory something we, as Bible believing Christians, should accept as true?

He's got a stack of Bible verses to make two points against Purgatory: first, that Jesus' death on the cross is sufficient to atone for *all* our rebellion against God, and we don't need to endure any suffering or punishment to supplement it. And second, the teaching about the afterlife in the Bible says that believers are immediately ushered into the presence of God after they die (without resurrection bodies, yet), while unbelievers are separated away from God.

Here's what he says about the first point:

> **Our Salvation Isn't Based On Our Good Works**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, forgiveness is not based on the good works of the believer. For this reason, deeds or works performed for those in purgatory are both unnecessary and ineffectual:
>
> **Romans 3:21-24, 27-28**
> But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus… Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the

> law.
>
> **Romans 8:1**
> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.
>
> **Our Salvation Is Based On Jesus' Work on the Cross**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, Jesus' work on the cross (His blood) purifies us from allsin. For this reason, there isn't a lingering sin problem requiring the existence of a place like purgatory:
>
> **Titus 2:13-14**
> …we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.
>
> **1John 1:7b**
> …the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.
>
> **1John 1:9b**
> …he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
>
> **1John 2:2**
> He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.
>
> **Hebrews 10:14**
> …because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.
>
> **Our Salvation Has, Therefore, Already Been Guaranteed**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, Jesus has already purified and purged believers of sin based on our faith in Him. For this reason, there is no need for a place like Purgatory where additional purging must be performed…
>
> […]The Biblical doctrine of Salvation clearly eliminates the need for purgatory.

I was never able to find anything in the Bible to support purgatory. It's a very very late doctrine that was unknown to the early church until the late 2nd / early 3rd century, where it is spoken about by a handful of people. But lots of weird doctrines were creeping up on the fringe around that time, so we shouldn't be surprised… the point is that they have no support from the Bible, and not in the community of believers for the first 150 years after the death of Jesus.

The bodily assumption of Mary

Anyway, my turn now. The Roman Catholic church teaches that Mary was "bodily

assumed" into Heaven. Let's see if that is in the Bible or in the early church.

Here's what I found:

1. To be a Roman Catholic, you need to believe in Papal infallibility in matters of dogma.
2. In 1950, the Pope pronounced the assumption of Mary to be infallible dogma.
3. This pronouncement was solicited by a petition featuring over 8 million signatures.
4. There is no historical record of this doctrine in the Bible.
5. No early church father mentions the assumption until 590 AD.
6. Documents dated 377 AD state that no one knows how Mary died.
7. The assumption appears for the first time in an apocryphal gospel dated about 495 AD.

Data

I only cite Roman Catholic sources for my facts.

6. "But if some think us mistaken, let them search the Scriptures. They will not find Mary's death; they will not find whether she died or did not die; they will not find whether she was buried or was not buried … Scripture is absolutely silent [on the end of Mary] … For my own part, I do not dare to speak, but I keep my own thoughts and I practice silence … The fact is, Scripture has outstripped the human mind and left [this matter] uncertain … Did she die, we do not know … Either the holy Virgin died and was buried … Or she was killed … Or she remained alive, since nothing is impossible with God and He can do whatever He desires; for her end no-one knows." (Epiphanius, Panarion, Haer. 78.10-11, 23. Cited by Juniper Carol, O.F.M. ed.,*Mariology*, Vol. II (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1957), pp. 139-40).

7. "The idea of the bodily assumption of Mary is first expressed in certain transitus–narratives of the fifth and sixth centuries. Even though these are apocryphal they bear witness to the faith of the generation in which they were written despite their legendary clothing. The first Church author to speak of the bodily ascension of Mary, in association with an apocryphal transitus B.M.V., is St. Gregory of Tours." (Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*(Rockford: Tan, 1974), pp. 209–210).

It should be noted that the apocryphal gospel in which the doctrine of the assumption of Mary first appeared was condemned as heretical by two Popes in the 5th and 6th centuries. However, I was not able to find a CATHOLIC source for this fact, so I deliberately chose not to use it in my case.

Conclusion

The first thing I want to say is that the Bible is not the only place you look to decide these issues. You also look in church history, and you are looking for a clear chain of custody of the doctrine as far back as it can go. Purgatory and the perpetual virginity of Mary have some track record, but the bodily assumption of Mary is just nowhere – not in the Bible, not in the Early Church fathers. So that's the silver bullet against Roman Catholicism,

since they made it “infallible”.

This post is more directed to non-Christians to sort of show you how we do our homework. I am the first Protestant in my family. We have half the family who is Muslim, and the other half mostly Hindu, with some Catholic. I had to debate all these people growing up, and I wiped the floor with them. It was not even close. I simply settled on the beliefs that allowed me to win every argument, every time. That’s how you do religion. If you have to go against your whole family in order to be right, you do it. It’s not good to be wrong about things just because that’s what your family believes. These things were not pushed hard on me by my parents, I studied them on my own in order to win arguments. After a while of winning, I found myself acting consistently with what I was arguing for. Although that might sound really weird to you, that’s probably the right way to do this. Don’t listen to parents and church, find your own way forward by winning arguments, and believing only what the evidence supports.

Although most people think that if I had kids, I’d bully them into my beliefs, I actually would not. Because that’s not what worked on me. What really works is fighting about evidence, welcoming questions, and allowing differences of opinion. Being free to pursue truth is more important in the long run than coercing your kids to act nicely.

Three reasons why Christians should read military history

November 23, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, I finished a book called "Beyond The Call: The True Story of One World War II Pilot's Covert Mission to Rescue POWs on the Eastern Front". It's about a World War 2 heavy bomber pilot who completes 35 missions, and then goes into the Soviet Union (our allies, at the time) to rescue American POWs who were starving or being kidnapped or murdered by the Soviet secret police.

I found a very good article about it from Stripes, to just quickly introduce the story:

> Later, after making contact with POWs roaming the Polish countryside, [Capt. Robert Trimble] fully embraced his mission. He saw the desperate plight of those who had been liberated from Third Reich prison camps. Many were sick, emaciated, often clothed in rags and left to fend for themselves during a brutally harsh winter.
>
> Trimble risked his life numerous times over six weeks, helping to rescue hundreds of POWs. He came to the aid of others, too. In one daring rescue, nearly foiled by Russian agents who had become suspicious of his activities, Trimble helped 400 French women make it out of Poland and back to France.

Although he was being constantly trailed by Russian spies and informers, he would evade them, and bring food and money to the POWs, then put them on a train to Odessa, Ukraine, where they could get onto a ship going home.

Roger Trimble, standing second from the left, in front of his B-24 Liberator

Why I read military history

It is hard to develop virtues just by wishing and hoping. Something has to go into your mind that causes you to think differently, and feel differently. Everything that you watch on TV, hear on the radio, or see in the movie theater, is made by secular leftists. They aren't trying to build your moral character. They're goal is to break down your resistance to their unBiblical worldview and moral values. Instead of giving people who hate Jesus your money, just so you can be entertained, why not try to put something in front of your eyes that will make you better?

Look at this famous passage from the Bible.

Romans 12:1-2:

1Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

And also this from Philippians, my favorite book of the Bible.

Philippians 4:8:

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

So you can see that when I am reading, my goal is to work on my character. I want to have feelings about things that are appropriate for a Christian man.

So why military history? Here are three reasons why I read these military history books.

Humility

First, **humility**. Humility used to be one of my biggest challenges. So I thought to myself "instead of seeing yourself as some heroic figure, why don't you read about some real heroes… people who willingly gave their lives for their friends, like the Bible urges, and like Jesus did by example".

Remember this from John 15:13?

13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

Military history is filled with stories of courage, bravery, self-sacrifice, endurance, unselfishness, and many other virtues. When you read about people who are better than you, doing more important things than what you're doing, it really helps you to be humble.

The best thing for humility is reading Medal of Honor citations. You can find a bunch of them online here. And if you want a book to read, try these books about Medal of Honor recipients:

- Heroes of World War II

- Korean War Heroes
- Vietnam Medal of Honor Heroes

Endurance

Second, **endurance**. I sometimes feel badly about not having found someone to marry and not having lots of children. I wanted a good marriage to be a model for others, and also to have an influence in the next generation through my children. However, whenever I read military history, I see a lot of young men dying in battle. And I think, they too won't know what sex is like. And, they too won't know what marriage is like. And, they too won't know what having children is like. But it's not just the ones who die, it's the hardships they have to go through, as well. Cold, hunger, imprisonment, pain, loss of their friends, etc.

I remember reading about one of my favorite battles – probably the most famous battle of the Korean War, which is our most moral war. It's about Fox Company of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Regiment, 1st Marine Division. They had to hold a hill beside a vital road against overwhelming numbers of Chinese soldiers during the freezing cold North Korean winter. I remember reading about how one soldier got up to go to the bathroom, and was nearly shot by a sniper. He fell over on his own poop, which had already frozen by the time it hit the ground. For months after, I would always think about this whenever I went into a bathroom. We have pre-warmed water in our bathrooms at work, along with soap, lysol spray, febreeze, contact lense cleaner, hand sanitizer, and other things. Just understanding what other people have to go through in war helps me to be more patient with the little tiny setbacks that I experience. I used to get very anxious when anything went wrong, because of I was raised by strict immigrant parents. That anxiety seemed to last a long time, but since I started to read military history, I've been much more patient. I know that things could be worse.

Thankfulness

The third thing that I've experienced is **thankfulness**. Not just for all the things that I have because of what our armed forces have done, e.g. – basic human rights, prosperity, liberty, security, etc. But also specifically about those who gave their lives so that I could live free in a free country, and practice my Christian faith without fear.

Here are two of my favorite Medal of Honor stories from World War 2, in the Battle of Pearl Harbor:

Congressional Medal of Honor
Awarded Posthumously
PETER TOMICH

Rank and organization: Chief Watertender, U.S. Navy.
Place and date: Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.
Born: 3 June 1893, Prolog, Austria.

Although realizing that the ship was capsizing as a result of enemy bombing and torpedoing, Tomich remained at his post in the engineering plant of the U.S.S. Utah, until

he saw that all boilers were secured and all fireroom personnel had left their stations, and by so doing lost his own life.

And:

Congressional Medal of Honor
Awarded Posthumously
JAMES RICHARD WARD

Rank and organization: Seaman First Class, U.S. Navy.
Place and date: Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.
Born: 10 September 1921, Springfield, Ohio.

When it was seen that the U.S.S. Oklahoma was going to capsize and the order was given to abandon ship, Ward remained in a turret holding a flashlight so the remainder of the turret crew could see to escape, thereby sacrificing his own life.

I do think that it's important for Christians to read these kinds of stories in order to feed their own awareness of what it must have been like for Jesus to give his life *voluntarily* for us.

There is no shortcut to gratitude. You have to constantly reflect on the sacrifices made by others for you, if you are to have any concrete reason for feeling grateful. The more you read about examples of people giving their lives for others, the more you'll appreciate what Jesus did for you. It will make you grateful.

There is a very annoying idea out there in the culture that says that people just do whatever is easy and fun for themselves, and since everyone else is always doing what makes them feel good, then there is no need to be thankful for anything. It's comforting for people to delude themselves with that belief, but it's false.

My reading list

You can check out the "What I am Reading" section of the blog to see which military history books I've been reading.

Paternity fraud case shows how pro-marriage conservatives see men as expendable

November 24, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When terrible things happen to men in this society, you often get comments from people saying “well, it’s his fault, he chose a bad woman”. And I agree that men often make poor choices because they focus on attraction instead of on character. But what if a man is an innocent bystander, and is falsely accused by a woman he doesn’t even know? Is it still his fault then?

Here is the news story from Fox 2 Detroit.

Excerpt:

> A Metro Detroit man cleared his name after Friend of the Court sent him a letter saying he had a baby with a woman he never met.
>
> “She don’t know me, how do you just put my name down? How do you just put anybody’s name down?” DeAngelo Smith said. “I don’t know her. Never seen her. Still to this day, haven’t talked to her, and it just proves the baby has no ties to my name.”
>
> Late last year, DeAngelo received a letter from Friend of the Court in Berrien County saying that he was the father of a baby girl.

His wife was the first to see the accusation:

> His wife first spotted the letter in the mail from Friend of the Court.
>
> “Let’s just set the record, I trust my husband,” Tyahvia Smith said. “I know his character, man of integrity.”

They contacted his employer:

> While waiting for the child’s mother to take the baby for a DNA test, DeAngelo said the school where he teaches received an inquiry for possible garnishment in case the child was his.
>
> “It made it something that is not being alleged, but now it’s something that’s being taken into action and no paternity has been established,” he said.
>
> Finally, the woman had the DNA test done, and DeAngelo has since gotten a letter confirming he was not the father.

Legislation introduced by Republican Jim Runestad to prevent this from happening has been tied up for eight years… in a Republican-led legislature:

> “It’s very unfortunate, but paternity fraud is not a unique, unusual situation in Michigan,” Sen. Jim Runestad (R-White Lake) said.
>
> Runestad said he has been pushing for new legislation on the matter for the past

> eight years. Currently, there is no penalty for lying and a DNA test is not required before a person is contacted about the paternity of the child.

The fact that there are no consequences for doing this means that women are going to keep doing it again and again.

Does masculinity mean that a man should give a woman whatever she wants?

I sent this story to a conservative pro-marriage friend, and she said "So what? How many times does something like this happen?" Her only concern was that this story made women look bad. She had previously told me that "masculinity is when a man uses his strength to protect and provide for women". So, then it is just "masculine" for this innocent man to pay for a child who isn't his own. Why would he object to paying? Does he not like children?

Most people today like the changes that feminism has made for women. They like public schools run by women that discriminate against boys. They like women taking out huge student loans for useless non-STEM degrees, then demanding bailouts from taxpayers. They like women taking part in hook-up culture. They like women using no-commitment bad boys for validation. They like no-fault divorce laws. They like false accusations during divorce trials. They like biased domestic violence laws. They like paternity fraud. They like massive welfare spending designed to reward women who make reckless decisions. And they like feminist judges stripping fathers of parental rights for refusing to agree with the transing of their kids.

Men are expendable when it comes to creating greater happiness for women. So what's wrong with sending a man a bill for a woman who needs some money for a child that isn't his? It's horrible to tell a woman that she can't do what she feels like doing. It's horrible to tell a woman that she has to pay the costs of her own actions. Just make a man pay for it. Men are big and strong, they can handle it. And besides, women never tell lies. We have to believe all women. We have to force men to make women happy. That's "masculinity".

Society pressures men to get married

This "believe all women" attitude that is shared by many Christians and conservatives becomes a problem for men when men are pressured to get married. This society makes marriage a risky enterprise for men. And men have to understand that this pressure to get married is often coming from people who see men as expendable in the cause of increasing women's happiness. The person telling you to get married is often the same person who thinks that a DNA test shouldn't be performed in a paternity case.

Men have to understand that the command to "get married" is coming from pro-marriage activists who think that men exist solely to make women happy. Who cares about the risks and costs of marriage for men? Who cares about men's needs and desires? Who cares what reasons a man has for marrying? Who cares about a man's standards for his wife? Who cares about a man's plan for his marriage? He should just be pressured to get married. Just like the falsely accused paternity fraud victim should have to pay.

It's not the purpose of men's lives to get married and have kids

Always remember that according to the Bible, serving God is *more honorable* than getting married and having children. (Read 1 Cor 7:8-9 and 2 Tim 2:4) Many social conservatives try to guilt men into getting married and having children by denying the risks and costs of marriage for men. They think that Christianity's main purpose is to force men to make women happy, regardless of what women offer to men in exchange. That's the actual view of several of my social conservative Christian friends.

Men are designed to serve God first and foremost. And it's much easier to serve God if you are not encumbered by alimony, child support, false accusations, denial of due process, paternity fraud, feminist judges, etc. Only women who honor that obligation, and want to help a man to meet that obligation, should be taken seriously for marriage and child-rearing.

Evangelical Christian college fires professor for taking Biblical position on homosexuality

November 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was a pretty new Christian in college, I joined Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. While getting to know the other young Christian students, and the progressive feminist IVCF student leader, I suddenly realized that not everyone who called themselves a Christian really believed the Bible. In my case, problems arose over the doctrine of Hell, sexual morality and evidential apologetics.

This was my first exposure to a Christian organization that was not rigorous about the Bible. I would try to get them to bring in apologetics professors to talk about science and history, but they kept insisting on prayer walks and testimonies. This was one of the experiences that let me to do my Christian work using an alias. I began to think "what if these progressive Christians get into power, and they get offended by my conservative views?"

And that's what happened to this professor, who tweeted out Biblical views under his own name. He must have thought he was safe working for an evangelical Christian college. But he was not.

Premier Christianity UK reports:

> I was recently dismissed for misconduct by Cliff College, an evangelical Methodist Bible college where I had worked as a lecturer and programme lead for seven years. The misconduct referred to my now-infamous tweet…
>
> […]A Twitterstorm quickly ensued. Aggressively pro-LGBT advocates attacked me as homophobic and hateful, pressurising the college to sack me. The college swiftly and publically denounced my tweet as "inappropriate" and "unacceptable". They later asked me to remove it. When I said I couldn't do that in good conscience, I was suspended and later dismissed for "bringing the college into disrepute".

He wrote this, which I found very interesting:

> One woman, a Soviet-born émigré now teaching at a US university, said: "You have no idea what completely normal things you do today, or say today, will be used against you to destroy you. This is what people in the Soviet Union saw. We know how this works."

I came from another country to the United States, and I saw Christians being persecuted by the secular left government for the things they had said and done. That's why I left.

Cliff College describes their organization this way:

> Cliff College provides theological education and training with a particular focus on

> mission and evangelism.
>
> Cliff College has a long and rich heritage of providing Bible training to people from diverse backgrounds, for mission and evangelism.
>
> Since the beginning, we have sought to provide biblical, evangelical training that is both relevant and forward-thinking, with an emphasis on scriptural holiness.

"Scriptural holiness". It makes you laugh to read it.

And:

> Cliff College is an evangelical learning community which is rooted in God's Word and Spirit, for the purpose of equipping God's people for practical ministry and cutting-edge missional engagement.
>
> The education we offer at Cliff is theology for the real world – rooted in practice, forged in community, grounded in the authority of Scripture and consistently prompting us to face outwards. We proclaim the Gospel and invite everyone to experience the life-changing transformation of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

When the authority of Scripture comes up against the secular left culture, Cliff College sides with the culture.

Calvin Robinson

There was another story out of the UK that you might now have heard about – the story of Calvin Robinson.

Here's the story from Church Times UK:

> A CONSERVATIVE media commentator, Calvin Robinson, has said that his ordination in the Church of England was blocked, owing to his political views.
>
> Mr Robinson was due to be ordained deacon in the autumn. Without a title post, ordination cannot take place, and, in an article for the Mail on Sunday, he alleges

> that the offer of a part-time post as assistant curate of St Alban the Martyr, Holborn, in London, was withdrawn, after several bishops had expressed concerns about his outspoken views.

I thought this was interesting – a progressive white woman told the conservative black man what he should think about racism:

> In February 2020, the Archbishop of Canterbury told the General Synod that the Church was still "deeply institutionally racist" (News, 11 February 2020).
>
> […]Mr Robinson, who is black, wrote on Sunday that he "fundamentally disagreed with this approach", and described it as "divisive and offensive".
>
> "I do not think the claim that either the Church, or wider society, is institutionally racist has ever been supported by robust evidence," he wrote.
>
> Mr Robinson says that, in a meeting with [the Bishop of London, the Right Reverend Sarah] Mullally, she said to him: "Calvin, as a white woman, I can tell you that the Church is institutionally racist."

What I'd like to see from Christians is seriousness about the need to find a career where your views can be kept secret from nosy progressives like the Bishop of London, the Right Reverend Sarah Mullally. My goal in life is to never have my Christian activities be subject to the authority of the Bishop of London, the Right Reverend Sarah Mullally. Or an employer like her. Or a judge like her. Or a pastor like her. One of the reasons why Christians don't stand up to the secular left is because we make too many friends, and then we conform our speech to these friends, in order to be popular.

Alistair Begg preaches on practicality and initiative in the story of Ruth

November 26, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I finished listening to Alistair Begg's series on Esther, and I'm now on to his series on Ruth. Sermon #3 stood out to me, because it touches on the important issues of free will vs determinism as well as the two methods of seeking God's will: mysticism vs wisdom.

The discussion centers around Ruth's decision to go to the barley fields to work, in order to get something to eat.

Here is the description:

> When we're facing a future devoid of prospects or possibilities, it's easy to become overwhelmed and discouraged. Ruth could relate. She was a penniless widow in a foreign land seeking a way to provide for herself and her widowed mother-in-law. Her future was totally dependent upon someone showing her unmerited grace and favor. Instead of giving up, she gives us an example of humility, initiative and faith as she seeks work and sustenance.

As things in the world spin out of control, it's important to remember that you must always have a plan and be working on that plan. Even when things look very bleak, you have to do something reasonable and practical, and then pray to God for "favor". That God will do something unexpected that will make your reasonable action bear unexpected fruit.

If you want to listen to sermons #1 and sermon #2 in the series on Ruth, you can find the whole series here. So far, I have listened to 5. The first two were also very good, so if you listen to the first 3, you will definitely benefit. Each one is 35 to 40 minutes.

Reason #736 why men are opting out of dating and marriage: paternity fraud

November 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Statistics show that men are choosing to disengage from dating and marriage. There are many reasons for this. I can name a dozen. One of the reasons is "paternity fraud". Paternity claims occur when a woman has a child, and then tries to collect child support from a man by claiming that he is the father. Sometimes, the man she identifies as the father is not the actual father. This is "paternity fraud".

Before I get started on paternity fraud, let me explain how child support works today, from this article in USA Today:

> The most well-known case was of a Kansas boy who, at age 13, impregnated his 17-year-old baby-sitter. Under Kansas law, a child under the age of 15 is legally unable to consent to sex. The Kansas Supreme Court in 1993 ruled that he was liable for child support.
>
> California issued a similar state court ruling a few years later in the case of a 15-year-old boy who had sex with a 34-year-old neighbor. In that case, the woman had been convicted of statutory rape.
>
> In both cases, it was the state social-services agency that pursued the case after the mother sought public assistance.
>
> […]In Arizona, the Department of Economic Security oversees child–support enforcement. Its written policy is not to exempt situations like Olivas' from child-support responsibilities, unless the parent seeking child support has been found guilty of sexual assault with a minor or sexual assault.
>
> […]The state has more routes than the courts to acquire money from a parent. It can garnishee wages up to 50 percent of disposable income. It can take a tax refund. It can put a lien on a home or a vehicle. It can suspend driver's licenses or revoke passports. And it can seize money out of bank accounts.

And another one from Fox 2 Detroit:

> A Metro Detroit man cleared his name after Friend of the Court sent him a letter saying he had a baby with a woman he never met.
>
> […]Late last year, DeAngelo received a letter from Friend of the Court in Berrien County saying that he was the father of a baby girl.
>
> "Said she's a stripper from Detroit, we had a one-night stand at some hotel, and this is the story that was told to me," DeAngelo said.
>
> His wife first spotted the letter in the mail from Friend of the Court.
>
> "Let's just set the record, I trust my husband," Tyahvia Smith said. "I know his

> character, man of integrity."
>
> While waiting for the child's mother to take the baby for a DNA test, DeAngelo said the school where he teaches received an inquiry for possible garnishment in case the child was his.
>
> "It made it something that is not being alleged, but now it's something that's being taken into action and no paternity has been established," he said.
>
> Finally, the woman had the DNA test done, and DeAngelo has since gotten a letter confirming he was not the father.

The request for money comes to the man's employer first, the DNA test comes later, and only if the man fights the system to get it.

I show these cases, so that people will understand what men are facing from social services agencies and courts. Basically, in cases where a woman statutory rapes a man, she is still entitled to child support from the victim of the rape. One can imagine the uproar if the sexes were reversed. The laws are anti-male in many ways, this is just one example. Anti-male laws deter men from dating and marrying women.

Now let's look at paternity fraud, another example of anti-male bias in the legal system.

Here's a story about it from CBS News Detroit:

> A Detroit man has been ordered to pay $30,000 in back child support for his ex-girlfriend's child — even though he's not the father.
>
> Carnell Alexander brought his case to Wayne County Circuit Court with hopes for a fix. Instead, Judge Kathleen McCarthy told him Tuesday he waited too long to challenge the situation and "failed to take this matter seriously."
>
> Alexander said the paternity case started in the 1980s when the woman gave his name to a case worker so she could get assistance for her baby, who was born in 1987.
>
> The woman agrees that Alexander wasn't the father and a DNA test taken in 2013 backs that up. But that wasn't enough to sway McCarthy, who ruled that despite the case being decades old, Alexander still has to pay.

Here's another story of paternity fraud from NBC News Miami:

> A man in North Florida is fighting the state after he was told to pay child support despite DNA tests proving that he was not the father.
>
> Joseph Sinawa told NBC affiliate WTLV-TV that he signed the birth certificate because he did truly believe he was the father – adding that the mother of the child doesn't want him to have to pay, but the state is forcing the issue.
>
> "She told the judge she just wants this to be done and over with, and so do I," he said from his home in St. Augustine.
>
> Sinawa found out he was not the father after the DNA test was administered by a St. Johns County court following a custody question – but the state's Department

> of Revenue appealed the decision because they say Sinawa has not properly attempted to disestablish paternity.
>
> “At the time it had been taking $83 out of my paycheck, more than 1/3 of my pay,” he says. “When I thought I was the father I didn’t have a problem with it.”
>
> Sinawa is currently representing himself in court cases due to financial issues and has filed the necessary paperwork, but no time table has been set and it is unknown if he will be refunded any of the money spent.

According to this study in the peer-reviewed journal Epidemiology & Community Health, the median rate of paternity fraud across various studies is 3.7%:

> Paternal discrepancy (PD) occurs when a child is identified as being biologically fathered by someone other than the man who believes he is the father. This paper examines published evidence on levels of PD and its public health consequences. Rates vary between studies from 0.8% to 30% (median 3.7%, n = 17).

Even men who are not at risk for paternity fraud understand the lesson of paternity fraud. The courts are anti-male, and men need to stay well clear of those courts. And that means minimizing exposure to those courts. And that means keeping to themselves, and tending to their own problems and pursuing their own goals.

Men are getting smarter now. Men understand that society does not have their interests at heart. Now men want to be left alone.

Study: sentences are 63% more severe for men than for women

November 28, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, in response to yesterday's post, I have been asked what are some of the other reasons that cause men to become disinterested in dating and marriage. I have a list as long as my arm. But here's another one for today. Today's reason is that the legal is system is biased against men. There many examples of the bias, but I'll focus on sentencing.

The study I want to talk about today is called "Estimating Gender Disparities in Federal Criminal Cases", and it's published in the peer-reviewed journal "*American Law and Economics Review".*

The abstract says this:

> This paper assesses and decomposes gender disparities in federal criminal cases. It finds large unexplained gaps favoring women throughout the sentence length distribution, conditional on arrest offense, criminal history, and other pre-charge observables. Decompositions show that most of the unexplained disparity appears to emerge during charging, plea-bargaining, and sentencing fact-finding. The approach provides an important complement to prior disparity studies, which have focused on sentencing and have not incorporated disparities arising from those earlier stages. I also consider various plausible causal theories that could explain the estimated gender gap, using the rich dataset to test their implications.

The key sentence there is "It finds large unexplained gaps favoring women throughout the sentence length distribution, conditional on arrest offense, criminal history, and other pre-charge observables."

I also found this paragraph interesting:

> The estimated gender disparities are strikingly large, conditional on observables. Most notably, treatment as male is associated with a 63% average increase in sentence length, with substantial unexplained gaps throughout the sentence distribution.

This anti-male discrimination becomes apparent to men when they are going through the divorce process.

About 70% of divorces are initiated by women, and most of them for frivolous reasons (reasons that were not recognized as valid in the law prior to "no-fault-divorce" being enacted). The reasons are also not recognized in the Bible. Throughout the divorce process, men encounter anti-male bias. This begins with the common use of false accusations against the man, in order to get sole custody, which provides the woman

with greater child support payments from the man. These false accusations are usually not based on any evidence, such as police reports. They just emerge during the divorce proceedings and are used to eject the man from the home, and get the woman sole custody of the kids. In 90% of cases, the woman gets sole custody of the kids. And this is despite the fact that single-father homes have similar outcomes for children as married two-parents homes. The results of single-mother homes are disastrous for children in many areas, including poverty, crime, mental health, sexual activity, etc. But the court system insists on doing what is worse for children by separating the father from the child. Even the meager visitation rights that fathers get are not enforced.

Failure to pay alimony and child support can land men in prison. And the laws are enforced very unfairly there, as well. Consider this case from Canada:

> A wealthy businessman will have to pay more than $50,000 a month in spousal support for 10 years to a woman with whom he had a long-term romantic relationship even though they kept separate homes and had no children together, Ontario's top court has ruled.

Seeing this, many men today have declined to participate in dating and marriage. And I could come up with *dozens* more reasons like this one. Based in peer-reviewed studies. It's not one reason deterring men from marrying, it's dozens of reasons. In every case, society has decided that men are expendable. And sadly, the church has largely ignored the root causes of men's retreat from dating and marriage. The church simply has nothing at all to say to men who are faced with these risks, costs and disincentives.

When I explain these problems to pro-marriage conservatives, they confess to never having heard about any of these issues. They say "I just like the idea of people falling in love and having lots of cute babies". They haven't really bothered to think about the calculations that men run before deciding what to do with women. Maybe it's time for Christian leaders to do a little more homework about these issues. Maybe there is something Christian churches can do to make marriage a bit more appealing to men.

We are already seeing this happening in conservative states like Florida and Tennessee. In Florida, there are new laws requiring that child custody be 50-50 in most circumstances. This acts as a deterrent against women who want to file frivolous divorces just to get child support from wealthy men. Florida also banned permanent alimony, which is another positive step to make marriage more fair for men. (Although many women in Florida were furious about it). In Tennessee, it is now a misdemeanor to claim child support payments from a man who is not the biological father of the child.

These are the kinds of policy solutions that will bring marriage back. But I've never heard Christians talking about these issues. All I ever hear from pious Christian leaders is that men need to "man up", as if manning up makes the threats from feminist laws and courts disappear. It doesn't work, but it does signal virtue, which seems to be the goal of many pious Christian leaders. We're going to have to do better than virtue-signaling if we want to reverse the decline of marriage. It's not going to be solved by shaming and blaming

men.

Good news: Tennessee's governor to push for universal school choice

November 29, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to pick one of the biggest sources of evil today, I would pick the public school system, especially the administrative staff and the teacher unions. Unfortunately, even in red states, it can be hard to fight back. One of the red states that seemed to be very committed to the status quo is Tennessee. But that's all about to change, and their moderate conservative governor Bill Lee is on board.

Here's the story from Fox News:

> Republican Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee is launching an ambitious effort to take school choice statewide on Tuesday, and he'll have some company for the announcement in Nashville.
>
> With Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders in tow, along with supportive legislators and families, Lee is announcing the Education Freedom Scholarship Act, which his office says will "extend school choice to every family across rural and urban Tennessee communities, putting parents at the forefront of their child's education" and giving them all access to the best school for them. Sanders signed an expansive school choice voucher bill into law for Arkansas in March, calling it a "transformational education plan."
>
> "When I ran for Governor, I said every Tennessean deserves access to a good job, a great school, and a safe neighborhood," Lee told Fox News Digital in a statement. "We've made great strides in education, but there is more work to do. To ensure Tennessee continues to lead the nation, it's time for a statewide school choice plan that empowers parents, equips students for success, and allows Tennessee taxpayers to decide how their own dollars are invested."

Usually, when conservatives want to get rid of welfare or trim down a government monopoly, they try to put the money and the responsibility to decide back in the hands of taxpayers. Leftists don't trust taxpayers to know how to choose – they want the government to decide. Conservatives trust taxpayers to know what to choose.

And that's the approach Tennessee is taking:

> "The Education Freedom Scholarship Act will empower Tennessee parents with the freedom to pick the right school for their child, while giving families a choice where their taxpayer dollars are spent," according to a memo obtained by Fox News Digital.

"Universal eligibility" means everyone is going to be included:

> The proposal could change during the legislative process, but Lee's plan calls for 20,000 scholarships to be made available to Tennessee students, including

> “10,000 scholarships for students who are at or below 300% of the federal poverty level, have a disability, or are eligible for the existing pilot program,” and an additional 10,000 scholarships “available to a universal pool of students entitled to attend a public school,” according to the governor’s office.
>
> They would get a little more than $7,000 in vouchers for the 2024-25 school year, with eligible expenses including private school tuition, fees, and uniforms required by the private school, textbooks, curricula, and instructional materials required by the private school, tutoring services, and computer hardware. By the following school year, the proposal would have “universal eligibility for all Tennessee students entitled to attend a public school, prioritizing currently enrolled students, low-income and public school students if demand exceeds available funding.”

In my opinion, Tennessee is the best state in the union, maybe tied with Florida for first place. If you are a Republican living in some other state, then what’s holding you up from moving to Tennessee or Florida? You don’t have to live in a big city. You just need to make sure that your tax money goes to people who trust you to decide. You just need to make sure that the police and judges are there to serve you. Why would you be content to live in a state that takes the money you earn and spends it, because they don’t trust you?

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to debate California Gov. Gavin Newsom tonight

November 30, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The debate between DeSantis and Newsom will take place on Fox News at 9 p.m. Eastern on Thursday, Nov. 30.

I'll be watching using this link. (I don't have cable)

Washington Examiner explains why this will be a better debate than the other presidential debates:

> One man has made cutting carbon emissions his state's top policy priority. The other has prioritized energy production.
>
> One made his state the most welcoming sanctuary jurisdiction for migrants from all over the world. The other signed one of the nation's strictest anti-illegal immigration laws ever.
>
> One oversees a state higher education system that has abandoned standardized tests and embraced mandatory diversity, equity, and inclusion loyalty oaths. The other is fighting the higher education cartel and returning academic standards to classrooms.
>
> The substantive policy contrasts between California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis couldn't be starker. Both men not only represent the future of their respective parties, but both also have track records guiding their states in new directions.
>
> Newsom versus DeSantis is a debate our country needs right now. Do we keep mandating more expensive cars, homes, and appliances while also prohibiting energy production from record amounts of public land? Or do we let people drive the cars they want, build the homes they want, and produce the energy they need to make a good life affordable for all?
>
> Do we keep our southern border open, releasing every migrant who claims asylum into the country — most of the claims are without merit — bankrupting cities from Denver to New York? Or do we return illegal immigrants to Mexico, eliminating the incentive that is causing a historic wave of mass migration across the hemisphere?
>
> These are big questions that our political debates should be focusing on.

Basically, when you watch Nikki Haley and Vivek Pharmaswampy, you're looking at people who haven't got the achievements that allow us to know what they would really do. DeSantis has conservative achievements by the dozen. Newsom is the same on the leftist side. Lots of actions, lots of leftist results. Elections should be about results vs results. Not about zingers, insults, clothing, make-up, etc. After all, we have to live with

results.

Who won the Governor debate? Florida's Ron DeSantis vs California's Gavin Newsom

December 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I watched the entire debate, and I thought it was FAR better than debates put on by the corporate news media. The strength of the debate was that they focused on evidence related to a number of interesting topics. The moderator would show a slide comparing the two states on some data: unemployment, crime, etc. And then they would discuss it. In this post, I link to a review and some clips.

First the review, from Daily Signal.

Here is the section on COVID:

> DeSantis and Newsom had a lenghty exchange on COVID-19 lockdowns while discussing the economy in their respective states.
>
> When DeSantis was discussing how businesses were doing better in Florida, Newsom interjected by asking if that was the opinion of Disney.
>
> "That's an interesting point with Disney because I had Disney open during COVID and we made them a fortune and we saved a lot of jobs," DeSantis said. "You had Disney closed inexplicably for over a year, you were not following science, you were a lockdown governor, you did a lot of damage to your people."

At one point, Newsom tried to deny the evidence that the moderator presented for discussion. Newsom just assert that Florida was worse than California. DeSantis replied to his assertion with a peer-reviewed study from the medical journal The Lancet that showed that Florida had a lower standardized death rate than California. This sort of exchange happened throughout the debate, with Newsom denying the evidence, making assertions with no support, and then DeSantis refuting him with evidence.

Here's a clip:

Here's another section of the article, about border security:

> The two governors had sharply contrasting views on the border. Newsom accused DeSantis of being heartless toward illegal immigrants and DeSantis said that the policies of Newsom and fellow Democrats were creating dangerous lawlessness in America.
>
> Newsom defended the Biden administration's record on the border, which has seen record numbers of illegal immigrants cross in every year of Joe Biden's presidency.
>
> […]He then criticized DeSantis for sending a group of illegal immigrants to Martha's Vineyard, a wealthy area and popular vacation spot in Massachusetts.
>
> DeSantis said that Newsom was spreading a "flurry of lies." He pointed to the

> Biden administration's reassurance that the border is "secure" and said "they are lying to you, we know that's not true."
>
> The Florida governor pointed out that "California is a sanctuary state" and said that "they thumb their nose at federal immigration law."
>
> DeSantis explained that this status has consequences. He brought up a story of Los Angeles refusing to cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the case of an illegal immigrant with multiple arrests.
>
> "He ends up murdering the mother of a three-year-old little girl," he said. "Those policies are deadly, they do not work."
>
> He also said that Matha's Vineyard is a sanctuary jurisdiction.
>
> "These liberal elites, they like to impose those burdens on you, they don't want to have to face the consequences," DeSantis said.

Here's a clip:

The article also has a section on teachers sexualizing children with LGBT pornography in the schools:

> First, he asked DeSantis if schools should be focusing on reading, writing, and math instead of getting into issues around social values.
>
> DeSantis said that it wasn't appropriate for schools to indoctrinate children, but it's also important to respect parental rights and eliminate inappropriate material from classrooms.
>
> He held up a page from a book called "Gender Queer" that depicted sex acts.
>
> "Some of it's blacked out, you would probably not be able to put this on air, this is pornography, it's cartoons that's aimed at children, and it's wrong," he said.
>
> Hannity asked Newsom if he was comfortable with books like "Gender Queer," which depict sex acts, in school districts.
>
> […]The California governor called the removal of books from classrooms a "cultural purge."
>
> […]DeSantis responded by saying that California's schools are being used to "impose a liberal agenda."
>
> "He says California respects parents' rights, this is rich," DeSantis said. "He's been telling a lot of whoppers tonight, this may be the biggest."
>
> He then spoke about California's education policies.
>
> "In California, if you're a parent in Iowa and New Hampshire, your child can go to California without your knowledge and without your consent and get hormone therapy, puberty blockers, and a sex change operation all without you knowing or consenting," DeSantis said.
>
> He called the policy fundamentally "radical" and "extreme."
>
> "It's not for you to decide, it's for parents to decide," the Florida governor said

> while pointing to Newsom.

Here's a clip: (more evidence)

And another clip:

Finally, the article had a section on homelessness.

> Newsom said that the issues has been "decades" in the making in California since the sate started shutting down mental health institutions. He said he was the first governor in the country to tackle the issue "head on."
>
> […]DeSantis then held up a map of San Francisco that showed incidents of feces and human waste being reported on the street.
>
> "This is an app where they plot the human feces that are found on the streets of San Francisco, and you see how almost the whole thing is covered, because that is what has happened in one of the previous greatest cities this country has ever had," he said.
>
> DeSantis said that feces on the street has become a fact of life in San Francisco, except "when a dictator comes to town."
>
> He was referring to a recent visit by China's leader Xi Jinping.
>
> "Then they cleaned up the streets, they lined the streets with Chinese flags, they didn't put American flags there, they cleaned everything up," DeSantis said. "So they're willing to do it for a communist dictator, but they're not willing to do it for their own people."

And the clip: (more evidence)

And here is DeSantis' concluding speech:

If you missed the debate, it was well worth watching. At least the people debating had to stick to policy and evidence.

Gavin Newsom's wife gets on stage to stop the fight

I thought that this report from NBC News that Gavin Newsom's WIFE ended the debate, even after both debaters wanted to stay on and extend the debate, was interesting:

> What the audience didn't see — and what at least five sources shared with NBC News — is that off-screen, there were significant disagreements happening. The DeSantis and Newsom teams were both arguing that the other side was breaking the rules that were agreed upon in advance — particularly keeping distance between the candidates and their guests.
>
> According to four sources in the DeSantis camp — one who witnessed the moment in the room and three others who were standing backstage (where there was no press or live studio audience) — Newsom's wife, Jennifer Siebel Newsom, came into the debate room on at least two occasions to raise some objections.

> She also made her way to the stage during the break after the candidates agreed to extend the debate and put an end to it.
>
> A fifth source on the ground, unaffiliated with either campaign, confirmed that Siebel Newsom ended the debate on her husband's behalf, saying, "We're done."
>
> "Gavin Newsom got beat so badly last night his wife literally had to throw in the towel for him. It was embarrassing," DeSantis spokesman Andrew Romeo said.

To me, it looks like her husband was getting beaten like a rented mule, and she wanted to stop the bleeding.

NBC News report: Newsom’s wife ended his debate with Ron DeSantis prematurely

December 1, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that this report from NBC News (archived) that Gavin Newsom’s WIFE ended the debate, even after both debaters wanted to stay on and extend the debate, was interesting:

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To me, it looks like her husband was getting beaten like a rented mule, and she wanted to stop the bleeding.

Gavin Newsom Wife Ends His Debate With DeSantis Early

Let’s see some clips from the debate. If you only have time for 1, then watch the bottom two clips, the poop map and California “freedoms”.

DeSantis: Newsom’s Father-in-Law Moved to Florida

DeSantis: California Basically ‘Legalized Retail Theft’

DeSantis, Newsom Spar Over Gender Transitions for Minors

Newsom: Elective Abortions Should Be Legal at Any Point in Pregnancy

DeSantis Holds Up San Francisco Poop Map

‘Pornography’: DeSantis Holds Up Page of ‘Gender Queer’

DeSantis: In California, You’re Free to Poop in Public

How many Nobel-prize winning scientists support intelligent design?

December 2, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think a lot of young people give up on design in the universe because they 1) don't know the evidence for design and 2) don't want to be considered to be stupid when confronted with intelligent atheists. For those people, it can be useful to point them to smart people who have worked through the evidence for design, and concluded that the universe (and life) is the product of design.

Here's the story from Evolution News:

> Earlier this week, John West reported on a major new exhibition on faith and science in Washington, DC, tackling the question of whether the Bible impeded or inspired the rise of modern science. (Judging from the historical record, "inspired" is clearly the correct answer.) In the article, he mentioned another Nobel Prize-winning scientist who endorsed the idea of an intelligent design behind the universe, using that phrase explicitly. This was news to me. He is physicist Arthur Holly Compton — see the slide above, which Dr. West shared from the exhibition.
>
> Compton's remark was, "The chance of a world such as ours occurring without intelligent design becomes more and more remote as we learn of its wonders." Interesting. He said that in 1940.
>
> […]Compton joins fellow Nobel Prize-winning physicists Charles Townes (UC Berkeley) and Brian Josephson (Cambridge University) who have likewise come out for ID as a legitimate interpretation of the scientific evidence. (Townes passed away in 2015.) To those names you could add two more, Sir John B. Gurdon (Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine) and Gerhard Ertl (Nobel Prize in Chemistry) who, along with Dr. Josephson, endorsed the Discovery Institute Press book by chemist and ID proponent Marcos Eberlin, Foresight: How the Chemistry of Life Reveals Planning and Purpose (2019).

In case you're wondering what intelligent design is, this simple article is pretty good:

> Intelligent design — often called "ID" — is a scientific theory which holds that some features of the universe and living things are best explained by an intelligent cause rather than an undirected process such as natural selection. ID theorists argue that intelligent design can be inferred by finding in nature the type of information and complexity which in our experience arises from an intelligent cause.
>
> Proponents of neo-Darwinian evolution contend that the information in life arose via blind, mechanistic processes that show no scientific evidence of guidance by intelligent design. ID proponents contend that the information in life does not

> appear to have an unguided origin, but arose via purposeful, intelligently guided processes. Both claims are scientifically testable using the standard methods of science. But ID theorists say that when we use the scientific method to explore nature, the evidence points away from blind material causes, and reveals intelligent design.
>
> The cell confirms our expectations from design. Our DNA contains incredible amounts of encoded information. Living cells transform this encoded chemical message into machines which are engineered to perform necessary biochemical functions. The conversion of DNA into protein relies upon a software-like system of commands and biochemical codes. This is an information processing system which Bill Gates has described as “like a computer program, but far, far more advanced than any software we’ve ever created.”

This short video is a good introduction for those who prefer to watch rather than read:

By the way, about that conversation with Josephson. I was walking in the hall with him, and discussing intelligent design. He said “it’s easy to explain complexes sequences that conform to a pattern. I could write a program that would generate the first 100 prime numbers in 3 lines of code.” I told him that I was a software engineer, and that I was familiar with what it takes to “write a simple program”. I said that he would need computer hardware, firmware, an operating system, a compiler, and something to run the program. “And that’s where you’re smuggling in your specified complexity”, I said. I don’t remember what he said, but I’m delighted that he came around eventually.

Study: children of naturally married couples outperform children of same-sex couples

December 3, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Whenever I debate a controversial issue, I like to go straight to the studies in order to let the evidence speak for itself. Although it's difficult to convince someone on the opposite side to change their mind, usually people in the middle will side with the person who has evidence, instead of the person who is crying the loudest and telling anecdotal stories that may or may even not be true.

The Public Discourse reports on a study out of Canada.

Excerpt:

> A new academic study based on the Canadian census suggests that a married mom and dad matter for children. Children of same-sex coupled households do not fare as well.
>
> There is a new and significant piece of evidence in the social science debate about gay parenting and the unique contributions that mothers and fathers make to their children's flourishing. A study published last week in the journal *Review of the Economics of the Household*—analyzing data from a very large, population-based sample—reveals that the children of gay and lesbian couples are only about 65 percent as likely to have graduated from high school as the children of married, opposite-sex couples. And gender matters, too: girls are more apt to struggle than boys, with daughters of gay parents displaying dramatically low graduation rates.
>
> Unlike US-based studies, this one evaluates a 20 percent sample of the Canadian census, where same-sex couples have had access to all taxation and government benefits since 1997 and to marriage since 2005.
>
> While in the US Census same-sex households have to be guessed at based on the gender and number of self-reported heads-of-household, young adults in the Canadian census were asked, "Are you the child of a male or female same-sex married or common law couple?" While study author and economist Douglas Allen noted that very many children in Canada who live with a gay or lesbian parent are actually living with a single mother—a finding consonant with that detected in the 2012 New Family Structures Study—he was able to isolate and analyze hundreds of children living with a gay or lesbian *couple* (either married or in a "common law" relationship akin to cohabitation).
>
> So the study is able to compare—side by side—the young-adult children of same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples, as well as children growing up in single-parent homes and other types of households. Three key findings stood out to Allen:

> children of married opposite-sex families have a high graduation rate compared to the others; children of lesbian families have a very low graduation rate compared to the others; and the other four types [common law, gay, single mother, single father] are similar to each other and lie in between the married/lesbian extremes.
>
> Employing regression models and series of control variables, Allen concludes that the substandard performance *cannot* be attributed to lower school attendance or the more modest education of gay or lesbian parents. Indeed, same-sex parents were characterized by higher levels of education, and their children were more likely to be enrolled in school than even those of married, opposite-sex couples. And yet their children are notably more likely to lag in finishing their own schooling.
>
> […]The truly unique aspect of Allen's study, however, may be its ability to distinguish gender-specific effects of same-sex households on children. He writes:
>
> the particular gender mix of a same-sex household has a dramatic difference in the association with child graduation. Consider the case of girls. . . . Regardless of the controls and whether or not girls are currently living in a gay or lesbian household, the odds of graduating from high school are considerably lower than any other household type. Indeed, girls living in gay households are only 15 percent as likely to graduate compared to girls from opposite sex married homes.
>
> Thus although the children of same-sex couples fare worse overall, the disparity is unequally shared, but is instead based on the combination of the gender of child and gender of parents. Boys fare better—that is, they're more likely to have finished high school—in gay households than in lesbian households. For girls, the opposite is true. Thus the study undermines not only claims about "no differences" but also assertions that moms and dads are interchangeable. *They're not*.

With a little digging, I found the abstract of the study:

> Almost all studies of same-sex parenting have concluded there is "no difference" in a range of outcome measures for children who live in a household with same-sex parents compared to children living with married opposite-sex parents. Recently, some work based on the US census has suggested otherwise, but those studies have considerable drawbacks. Here, a 20% sample of the 2006 Canada census is used to identify self-reported children living with same-sex parents, and to examine the association of household type with children's high school graduation rates. This large random sample allows for control of parental marital status, distinguishes between gay and lesbian families, and is large enough to evaluate differences in gender between parents and children. Children living with gay and lesbian families in 2006 were about 65 % as likely to graduate compared to children living in opposite sex marriage families. Daughters of same-sex

> parents do considerably worse than sons.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington. A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more shorter times). That's not good for children either. Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships have much higher rates of domestic violence. That's not good for children either. So we have three reasons to think that normalizing gay relationships as "marriage" would not be good for children.

The reason I am posting this is because I want people to understand why social conservatives like me propose these laws defining and promoting marriage. We do favor natural marriage for the same reason that we oppose no-fault divorce, and for the same reason why we oppose welfare for single mothers (it encourages single motherhood). We don't want to encourage people to deprive children of their mother or their father. We look at the research, and we decide that children need their mother and father. Given the choice between the needs of the child and restraining the freedom of the adults, we prefer the child's need for her mother and father. It's not just arbitrary rules, there is a reason behind the rules.

But children are not commodities. They have certain needs right out of the box. Adults should NOT be thinking about how to duct-tape a child onto any old relationship that doesn't offer the same safety and stability that opposite sex marriage offers. We should be passing laws to strengthen marriage in order to protect children, not to weaken it. Libertarians don't want to do that, because they want adults to be free to do as they please, at the expense of children. Libertarians think that the adults should be able to negotiate private contracts and have no obligations to any children who are present, or who may be present later.

Related posts

- Comprehensive survey of all the research (pro and con) on gay marriage
- Ryan T. Anderson explains how gay marriage undermines natural marriage norms
- Ryan T. Anderson presents the case for natural / traditional marriage
- Book review: What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense
- Dawn Stefanowicz explains her experience being raised by a gay parent
- What is marriage? A lecture with Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George
- Growing up with two lesbian mothers: a child's perspective
- Mark Regnerus and the progressive war against science
- More social scientists stepping forward to defend Regnerus study
- Do children of gay parents perform as well as those of heterosexual parents?
- Are gay relationships typically stable and monogamous?
- The American Psychological Association (APA) on lesbian and gay parenting
- Do children raised by gays and lesbians do as well as those of married parents?
- New study finds that children do best in traditional mother-father families

New study: children of same-sex parents have more emotional problems

December 4, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to have all the research papers I need on hand to "show my work" to people who want to know why I have certain views on moral issues. This study entitled "Emotional Problems among Children with Same-Sex Parents: Difference by Definition" was published in the peer-reviewed journal "British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science" is good research.

Here's what it says:

> Aims: To test whether small non-random sample findings that children with same-sex parents suffer no disadvantage in emotional well-being can be replicated in a large population sample; and examine the correlates of any differences discovered.

A big sample size makes the study more reliable:

> Methodology: Using a representative sample of 207,007 children, including 512 with same-sex parents, from the U.S. National Health Interview Survey, prevalence in the two groups was compared for twelve measures of emotional problems, developmental problems, and affiliated service and treatment usage, with controls for age, sex, and race of child and parent education and income. Instruments included the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Kessler Scale of Psychological Distress (SPD). Bivariate logistic regression models tested the effect of parent psychological distress, family instability, child peer stigmatization and biological parentage, both overall and by opposite-sex family structure.

This is the key part. "Emotional problems were over twice as prevalent… for children with same-sex parents than for children with opposite-sex parents." That's not what you'll see on TV or in the corporate news media, but that's what you find if you're looking for peer-reviewed studies with good methodology and large sample sizes.

> Results: Emotional problems were over twice as prevalent (minimum risk ratio (RR) 2.4, 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.7-3.0) for children with same-sex parents than for children with opposite-sex parents. Risk was elevated in the presence of parent psychological distress (RR 2.7, CI 1.8-4.3, p (t) < .001), moderated by family instability (RR 1.3, CI 1.2-1.4) and unaffected by stigmatization (RR 2.4, CI 1.4-4.2), though these all had significant direct effects on emotional problems. However, biological parentage nullified risk alone and in combination with any iteration of factors. Joint biological parents are associated with the lowest rate of child emotional problems by a factor of 4 relative to same-sex parents,

> accounting for the bulk of the overall same-sex/opposite-sex difference.

And here's the conclusion:

> Conclusion: Joint biological parentage, the modal condition for opposite-sex parents but not possible for same-sex parents, sharply differentiates between the two groups on child emotional problem outcomes. The two groups are different by definition. Intact opposite-sex marriage ensures children of the persistent presence of their joint biological parents; same-sex marriage ensures the opposite. However, further work is needed to determine the mechanisms involved.

I blogged recently about another study that found other differences between the children of same-sex couples and the children of heterosexual couples.

From a public policy point of view, there are always going to be times where there is a conflict between the needs of small children, and the wants of selfish adults. In that case, I think we should side with the small children, since they are more vulnerable. It's alarming to me to see many "conservatives" put the desires of adults over the needs of children. That doesn't seem like a good position to take, morally speaking. Children do better when they are raised by a Mom and a Dad. We should pass laws to encourage grown-ups to live their lives in a way that they don't harm children.

Secular left woman mad because progressive men won't protect and provide

December 5, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There is so much that I would like to say about the video below. For me, it really captures what feminism has taught women about men and relationships. Traditional male roles are: protect, provide, lead on moral issues, lead on spiritual issues. Well, young college-educated single women are certainly interested in protection and provision, but they have zero interest in male leadership.

First, here is the video:

So, this is a young, college-educated, progressive woman. She looks to be about 29 years old. She's probably been having a lot of fun in bars and night clubs, hooking up with hot guys and running up student loans for worthless non-STEM degrees. But 29 is the age when many young feminist women start to notice that their friends are getting married, and so they feel that it's time for them to "keep up" with their friends by also getting married.

The woman in the video doesn't want a man in order to help him with any of his problems. She doesn't want a man because she likes the way he leads her or makes decisions. She wants to get married because she wants to *help herself* to what a husband offers. Specifically, she wants to *help herself* to money, ability to repair a car, ability to renovate a house, vacations, travel, social respectability, social status, etc. That's what she wants. She doesn't want obligations to a man or obligations to children. She wants what a man and children to *benefit her.*

So, what this woman in the video is really asking for is two of the four traditional male roles. She wants a man to do protecting and providing. But she has no interest in a man who has firm views on morality or religion. She wants a sperm-donor, an ATM, and a handyman. But she doesn't want a man who is going to tell her to do anything for God, or for him, or for the kids. No interest at all in a man who will want to lead the family in a Bible study, or protest sex-selection abortions. Religion and morality are disgusting to her – they're brakes on her selfish pursuit of happiness. She likes men who let her make decisions, and who blame others when she is at fault. If babies get in the way of her career, he should approve of her killing them. If two men want to raise a motherless child bought from a surrogate, he should approve of that, too. She wants a man who will put his own kids in daycare and public schools so she can buy a Coach handbag and go on vacation in Barbados. Too bad for the kids. That's what she wants in a man – "don't judge".

But the real key point in this story for me is how this woman expects a secular left man to respect moral obligations. A secular left man thinks that the universe is an accident, that human beings evolved from slime, and that humans have no free will. Atheists don't believe that God holds people accountable for their moral decisions. They think that

morality is just a set of conventions that vary by time and place. On atheism, there are no moral absolutes, just conventions that vary by time and place. And atheists only follow those conventions if following them makes them feel good or look good to others *during their lifetimes*. They support transing kids because they want their college professor or their boss to like them. Who cares about what happens to those kids?

On atheism, morality is just agreeing with the people you want to like you. It's not about taking self-sacrificial stands to protect the weak. Survival of the fittest. That's what atheists believe in. And this woman thinks that she is going to find a man who will have moral obligations towards her when those obligations go against his self-interest. She doesn't want any obligations to him, but she wants him to have lots of moral obligations to her. Absolutely insane.

She also thinks that a man who agrees with her on adult-first, kids-last policies is going to sign up for a lifelong, faithful, marriage commitment. These days, it's hard to get even a good man to agree to take risks with feminist false accusations on college campuses, feminist divorce courts and feminist "me too" workplaces. But why would a man who has a secular leftist worldview want to sacrifice his own interests for such a risky enterprise? Today, only men have obligations. Women are always the victims of someone else. In any disagreement between a man and a woman, the man is always guilty, and the woman is always the victim. The whole society is set up to relieve her of any accountability for her actions. All the costs must be paid by men. Why would a secular leftist man – who has ZERO rational foundation for morality – get legally obligated to a woman who holds that much power over him?

The woman in the video probably thinks that when it comes to marriage, men will just marry when they are impressed with a woman's appearance, and go crazy from being "in love". That's why secular left women spend so much money on their appearance – not just for make-up or clothes, but on manicures, pedicures, and cosmetic surgery, too. Only stupid men marry secular left women because they are "in love" with her fake appearance.

If the woman in the video is expecting a man to commit to her for life, and be faithful, and be a good father, then she's going to have to 1) resign herself to male leadership – because that's what good men want, and 2) upgrade her religious and moral views to match those of a good man. Otherwise, her situation is hopeless. Good men don't get married to secular left feminists. As more young women adopt feminism, you can expect to see the marriage rate decline.

William Lane Craig on the unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

December 6, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember that Dr. Craig used a new argument in his debate with Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia.

My notes on the debate record it thus:

> The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
>
> - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
> - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
> - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
> - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see

And now Dr. Craig has expanded on it in the Q&A section of his Reasonable Faith web site.

The question:

> Dear Dr Craig
>
> Firstly can I thank you for all your work. My faith in Christ has been enormously strengthened through studying your work in apologetics in particular and I have grown in confidence in my Christian witness.
>
> My question relates to numbers and mathematics as a whole. On the Defenders podcast you state that as God is the only self-existent, necessary being, numbers and mathematical objects, whilst being useful, don't actually exist as these too would exist necessarily and independently of God. If this is the case, how can it be that mathematics is so easily applied to the natural world? Surely if mathematics only existed in our minds, we would expect to see no correlation between it and how the physical world actually is?
>
> Michael
>
> United Kingdom

Excerpt from the answer:

> As philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng points out, for the non-theistic realist, the fact that physical reality behaves in line with the dictates of acausal mathematical entities existing beyond space and time is "a happy coincidence"

> (*Mathematics and Reality* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 239). Think about it: If, *per impossibile*, all the abstract objects in the mathematical realm were to disappear overnight, there would be no effect on the physical world. This is simply to reiterate that abstract objects are causally inert. The idea that realism somehow accounts for the applicability of mathematics "is actually very counterintuitive," muses Mark Balaguer, a philosopher of mathematics. "The idea here is that in order to believe that the physical world has the nature that empirical science assigns to it, I have to believe that there are causally inert mathematical objects, existing outside of spacetime," an idea which is inherently implausible (*Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 136).
>
> By contrast, the theistic realist can argue that God has fashioned the world on the structure of the mathematical objects. This is essentially what Plato believed. The world has mathematical structure as a result.

This argument was also made by mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley in a lecture he gave on scientific evidence for an intelligent designer. You can read an essay that covers some of the material in that lecture at Leadership University.

Excerpt:

> The physical universe is surprising in the simple mathematical form it assumes. All the basic laws of physics and fundamental relationships can be described on one side of one sheet of paper because they are so few in number and so simple in form (see table 1.1).
>
> […]It has been widely recognized for some time that nature assumes a form that is elegantly described by a relatively small number of simple, mathematical relationships, as previously noted in table 1.1. None of the various proposals presented later in this chapter to explain the complexity of the universe address this issue. Albert Einstein in a letter to a friend expressed his amazement that the universe takes such a form (Einstein 1956), saying:
>
> You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world to the degree that we may speak of such comprehensibility as a miracle or an eternal mystery. Well, a priori one should expect a chaotic world which cannot be in any way grasped through thought. . . . The kind of order created, for example, by Newton's theory of gravity is of quite a different kind. Even if the axioms of the theory are posited by a human being, the success of such an enterprise presupposes an order in the objective world of a high degree which one has no a priori right to expect. That is the "miracle" which grows increasingly persuasive with the increasing development of knowledge.
>
> Alexander Polykov (1986), one of the top physicists in Russia, commenting on the mathematical character of the universe, said: "We know that nature is described by the best of all possible mathematics because God created it." Paul Davies, an

> astrophysicist from England, says, “The equations of physics have in them incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe” (Davies 1984). Successful development of a unified field theory in the future would only add to this remarkable situation, further reducing the number of equations required to describe nature, indicating even further unity and integration in the natural phenomena than have been observed to date.

The whole paper that started this off is called “The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics”, and it is a must read for advanced Christian defenders. You can read the whole thing here.

Who won the Wednesday night GOP debate on News Nation?

December 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This time, it's unanimous. Commentators on the far-left and the far-right agree that Ron DeSantis won the debate on Wednesday night. Below, I have video clips of the best parts of the debate.

If you can only watch one, then watch DeSantis vs Haley talking about bathroom bills. I also loved DeSantis vs Haley debating their actions related to China. And DeSantis' plan to prevent taxpayer bailouts of student loans. He wants people to do trades and STEM degrees.

Europe Committing SUICIDE With Mass Migration, Says DeSantis

DeSantis on How He'd Promote Election Integrity

Haley, DeSantis Spar Over Bathroom Bills

'New Sheriff in Town': DeSantis Outlines Border Policy

DeSantis, Haley Spar Over China

DeSantis: Truck Drivers Shouldn't Pay for Gender Studies Student Loans

Nikki Haley also denied that she wanted to dox Americans who use an alias on social media (like me!). But here is the video of her saying exactly that. CNN fact-checked her and agreed that she was lying.

And there was a long and fun exchange where Ron DeSantis and Vivek Ramaswamy both went after Nikki Haley on her connections to woke corporations and support for ESG.

New study: Mental health issues persist after receiving “gender-affirming” treatment

December 7, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This brand new study is authored by one of the pioneers in “gender-affirming” treatment. It was published in the peer-reviewed “European Psychiatry”. The title of the article is “Have the psychiatric needs of people seeking gender reassignment changed as their numbers increase? A register study in Finland”. Let’s take a look at the findings.

The researchers looked at 3,665 people who received gender identity services between 1996 to 2019. This is a huge study. And we’ll see in a minute that the author used to be in favor of gender-affirming treatment – so she’s not biased against it.

Here’s the results section:

> The GD [gender dysphoria] group had received many times more specialist-level psychiatric treatment both before and after contacting specialized GIS [gender identity services] than had their matched controls. A marked increase over time in psychiatric needs was observed. Among the GD group, relative risk for psychiatric needs after contacting GIS increased from 3.3 among those with the first appointment in GIS during 1996–2000 to 4.6 when the first appointment in GIS was in 2016–2019. When index period and psychiatric treatment before contacting GIS were accounted for, GR [gender reassignment] patients who had and who had not proceeded to medical GR had an equal risk compared to controls of needing subsequent psychiatric treatment.

Receiving “many times more specialist-level psychiatric treatments” resulted in “A marked increase over time in psychiatric needs”.

And the conclusion reaffirms that:

> Contacting specialized GIS [gender identity services] is on the increase and occurs at ever younger ages and with more psychiatric needs. Manifold psychiatric needs persist regardless of medical GR [gender reassignment].

Psychiatric needs persist REGARDLESS of medical gender reassignment. That means gender reassignment – so-called “gender-affirming care” – makes no difference to the patient’s mental health.

This study got picked up in the news, as you might expect, since it contradicts the narrative of the secular left. What’s the narrative of the secular left? “Right and wrong don’t exist. My feelings are very important. You need to not judge me. You need to affirm me.”

Here’s an article from the UK Daily Mail that talks about the author of the study:

> A woman who led European efforts to give puberty blockers to trans children has bared all about U-turning on gender-affirming care, as it is known, and debunks

> treatments she now calls ‘dangerous.’
>
> Dr Riittakerttu Kaltiala, chief psychiatrist at the Tampere University Hospital Department of Adolescent Psychiatry in Finland, has revealed why she changed her mind about helping minors medically transition.
>
> Writing in The Free Press, Dr Kaltiala says the Western medical establishment has been cowed by trans activists into a ‘dangerous groupthink’ of pushing risky sex-altering drugs on children.
>
> ‘Gender transition has gotten out of hand,’ says Dr Kaltiala.

What I’d like to see now is for conservatives to pass laws that allow people who were victimized by the secular leftist butchers to sue those butchers for compensation. It’s very important that the “don’t judge” crowd is punished for the harm caused by their not judging. That’s the only way that they will understand that the people they think are evil (the moral people, the boundary setters) are actually good. And the people they think are good (the feelings people, the don’t judge people) are evil.

Let’s see some money change hands over this controversy, so everyone can be clear about the value of moral leadership and spiritual leadership.

Are modern women building their resumes to attract to marriage-minded men?

December 8, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been watching a bunch of episodes of the @whatever podcast, and really enjoying the fact that the Christians are allowed to say what they think about dating and relationships, and that the non-Christians are explaining in their own words what their view of relationships is. And it's very interesting to see how modern women have a disconnect between "in the moment" and "some day".

So, I have a couple of clips from a show to show you what I mean. In this clip, the men on the left of the room – Brian Atlas, the host, and Chase, the evangelical Christian – challenge the two non-Christian women on the right side of the room. They ask whether a boyfriend can expect his girlfriend to stop going to bars and night clubs. These are places where alcohol is served, women wear sexy clothes, and men flirt with drunk women and try to take them home for sex. All the non-Christian women on the panel call this demand that they not go to bars and clubs "controlling". They don't see why being in a relationship should cause them to have to give up any aspect of their pursuit of pleasure. If they want validation from hot guys, and maybe some extra sex, then they should be able to look for it in bars and night clubs.

Remember, this video has a lot of bad language. It's not for kids.

So, watch this clip from 1:05:21 to 1:28:45: (23 min and 24 seconds)

So, these young women want to focus on having fun in their early 20s, because that's what they want to do. And then later on, when they get much older, then they might be ready for a man to marry them and give them children.

A marriage-minded man is looking for a woman who is willing to control her behavior so that she becomes safe to marry. So that she can focus on her husband. So that she can spend time nurturing and raising her children. She can't spend money on frivolous things. She can't spend money on vacations and entertainment and alcohol. She can't smoke while she's pregnant. She can't buy expensive hand bags and get cosmetic surgery. But these young women aren't willing to give up any of these things. They want to have fun. And marriage is seen as "boring", until they decide in their late 30s that they finally want it. Men who want to focus on marriage early are "controlling". Men who want women to focus on preparing to build a home and a family are "controlling" men.

The problem with this, as one of the men points out, is that those bar and night club experiences do not make the woman attractive or stable for marriage. Marriage is an enormous financial and legal risk for men. They can be thrown into jail for inability to pay alimony and child support. They can lose custody of their kids in family courts. They can have their parental rights nullified by feminist judges. Women are actually more likely to commit non-reciprocal domestic violence than men, according to this recent study:

> Almost 24% of all relationships had some violence, and half (49.7%) of those were reciprocally violent. In nonreciprocally violent relationships, women were the perpetrators in more than 70% of the cases.

Men have to be extremely careful about marriage. And when young women are taught to be self-centered from 18-35, this is not good preparation for being a wife and mother. "Hoe phases" and "party stages" doesn't look good on a resume. I would not hire a college grad to write software, if their entire resume was playing video games and memorizing movie scripts. If you want the job, you have to be able to show that you can do the job. Jobs are not meant to entertain you. There is work to do, and results are expected. The same thing is true of marriage. Men are making the hiring decisions, there, and we do look at women's resumes.

Men are the keepers of commitment. If a woman wants commitment, she has to apply for commitment, and prove she is worth being committed to. Men are looking for marriage-related behaviors and capabilities. Chastity. Sobriety. Conservative political views. Accurate theology. Apologetics. Experience building others up to be useful for God. Spending restraint. Saving and investing. STEM degrees. Cooking ability. The ability to be content at home. Willingness to learn what husbands like, and to play with husbands. Fitness. Nutrition. Respect for male leadership. Etc.

Consider this clip from 2:32:54 to 2:43:24: (10 min, 30 seconds)

Here the Christian co-host Chase explains to the women that if they pick a Christian man, he will be able to lead them to focus on the most important things in life early on. The single mother is excited that some men would want to help to avoid mistakes with bad boys. But again, the two blondes who insisted on hedonism rebel against the leadership of good men. They want to be free to pursue pleasure, and not listen to the leadership of Christian men. They don't want to focus on marriage. They don't want to prepare their character for marriage. They don't want to control their desires, so they can get a long-term result. They want to SAY that they want marriage and children "some day", but they want to choose what feels good "in the moment". And they definitely prefer hot bad boys who are permissive. They don't want good men who want to lead them to get into shape for marriage.

I think the older generation of Christian women has NO IDEA that this is what younger women are like. 70 years ago, women would jump into the arms of men who wanted to step in and lead on moral and spiritual issues. They were not interested in "tingles" caused by physical attraction. They were interested in men who could step in and make marriage and parenting easy for them. Men who were serious about earning. Men who were serious about fighting evil. Men who were involved in the home, and effective at leading the children to have accurate beliefs and good moral character. But those days are *long gone.*

Today, young women are choosing men based on the feelings they get from being validated by those men. They like men who "don't judge". They like men with attractive appearances who are having a lot of sex with other women. They like men who spend

their money on displayed wealth, rather than save for a downpayment on a home. Good men are ignored until these women realize that their plan isn't working, and suddenly they want to "settle down". But good men know that a woman who makes a good man her "last resort" in her late 30s will never respect him as a leader in the home.

Men don't HAVE to get married and have kids in order to be happy. We can just work hard, stack our cash high, retire early, and work on our ministry goals. Working for God on evangelism and apologetics is enormously fulfilling for a man. Just ask Paul.

William Lane Craig explains the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement

December 9, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably one of the most common questions that you hear from people who don't fully understand Christianity is this question: "why did Jesus have to die?". The answer that most Christians seem to hold to is that 1) humans are rebelling against God, 2) Humans deserve punishment for their rebellion, 3) Humans cannot escape the punishment for their rebellion on their own, 4) Jesus was punished in the place of the rebellious humans, 5) Those who accept this sacrifice are forgiven for their rebelling.

Are humans rebellious?

Some people think that humans are not really rebellious at all, but it's actually easy to see. You can see it just by looking at how people spend their time. Some of us have no time for God at all, and instead try to fill our lives with material possessions and experiences in order to have happy feelings. Some of us embrace just the parts of God that make us feel happy, like church and singing and feelings of comfort, while avoiding the hard parts of that vertical relationship; reading, thinking and disagreeing with people who don't believe the truth about God. And so on.

This condition of being in rebellion is universal, and all of us are guilty of breaking the law at some point. All of us deserve to be separated from God's goodness and love. Even if we wanted to stop rebelling, we would not be able to make up for the times where we do rebel by being good at other times, any more than we could get out of a speeding ticket by appealing to the times when we drove at the speed limit, (something that I never do, in any case).

This is not to say that all sinners are punished equally – the degree of punishment is proportional to the sins a person commits. However, the standard is perfection. And worse than that, the most important moral obligation is a *vertical* moral obligation. You can't satisfy the demands of the moral law just by making your neighbor happy, while treating God like a pariah. The first commandment is to love God, the second is to love your neighbor. Even loving your neighbor requires you to tell your neighbor the truth – not just to make them feel good. The *vertical* relationship is more important than the *horizontal* one, and we've all screwed up the vertical relationship. We all don't want God to be there, telling us what's best for us, interfering with our fun. We don't want to relate to a loving God if it means having to care what he thinks about anything that we are doing.

Who is going to pay for our rebellion?

The Christian answer to the problem of our rebellion is that Jesus takes the punishment we deserve in our place.

However, I've noticed that on some atheist blogs, they don't like the idea that someone else can take our punishment for us to exonerate us for crimes that we've committed. So

I'll quote from this post by the great William Lane Craig, to respond to that objection. Excerpt:

> The central problem of the Penal Theory is, as you point out, understanding how punishing a person other than the perpetrator of the wrong can meet the demands of justice. Indeed, we might even say that it would be wrong to punish some innocent person for the crimes I commit!
>
> It seems to me, however, that in other aspects of human life we do recognize this practice. I remember once sharing the Gospel with a businessman. When I explained that Christ had died to pay the penalty for our sins, he responded, "Oh, yes, that's imputation." I was stunned, as I never expected this theological concept to be familiar to this non-Christian businessman. When I asked him how he came to be familiar with this idea, he replied, "Oh, we use imputation all the time in the insurance business." He explained to me that certain sorts of insurance policy are written so that, for example, if someone else drives my car and gets in an accident, the responsibility is imputed to me rather than to the driver. Even though the driver behaved recklessly, I am the one held liable; it is just as if I had done it.
>
> Now this is parallel to substitutionary atonement. Normally I would be liable for the misdeeds I have done. But through my faith in Christ, I am, as it were, covered by his divine insurance policy, whereby he assumes the liability for my actions. My sin is imputed to him, and he pays its penalty. The demands of justice are fulfilled, just as they are in mundane affairs in which someone pays the penalty for something imputed to him. This is as literal a transaction as those that transpire regularly in the insurance industry.

So, it turns out that the doctrine of substitutionary atonement is not as mysterious or as objectionable as everyone seems to think it is.

Democrat billionaire linked to Jeffrey Epstein donates $250,000 to Nikki Haley PAC

December 10, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Nikki Haley is definitely the candidate of choice for Democrats in the Republican primary. If you know anything about Democrat billionaires, then you know the name Reid Hoffmann. He's the CEO of a huge corporation called LinkedIn. But did you know that that Hoffmann is linked to another wealthy Democrat donor, Jeffrey Epstein? What does Nikki Haley offer people like that?

Daily Caller reports:

> Reid Hoffman, one of the Democratic Party's biggest donors, contributed $250,000 to a pro-Nikki Haley super PAC, The New York Times reported.
>
> Hoffman, who co-founded LinkedIn, has donated tens of millions of dollars to Democrats and liberal-aligned groups in recent years. Hoffman's quarter-million dollar donation went to the SFA Fund Inc., a pro-Haley committee that has emerged as one of the biggest spenders in the 2024 Republican primary, shelling out more than $33 million to boost Haley, according to the NYT.
>
> Other billionaires have encouraged Democrats to throw their support behind Nikki Haley, citing their opposition to former President Donald Trump. JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon said on Nov. 29 that "even if you're [a] very liberal Democrat, I urge you, you know, help Nikki Haley too … on the Republican side, that might be better than Trump."
>
> […]Hoffman also financed a group that spread anti-Republican misinformation during a 2017 Senate election in Alabama, creating fake Facebook pages intended to split conservative voters and using automated social media accounts to give the illusion that the Republican nominee was being boosted by Russian bots, according to the NYT.
>
> The election was ultimately decided by less than 22,000 votes. Hoffman later apologized for his involvement in the scheme.

Like many wealthy Democrat donors, he's linked to Jeffrey Epstein:

> Hoffman has come under criticism for his past dealings with notorious pedophile Jeffery Epstein.; Hoffman planned to visit Epstein's private island, Little St. James, twice in 2014, according to documents reviewed by the Wall Street Journal. Epstein also arranged for Hoffman to stay at his Manhattan property overnight in December 2014, with a breakfast party being scheduled for the next morning.
>
> Hoffman confirmed to WSJ that he visited the island one time for a fundraising trip.

In the most recent GOP primary debate, we saw that Nikki Haley opposes banning child

sex-change procedures, and banning men from women's spaces.

And Ron DeSantis is trying to educate voters on Nikki Haley's past actions on social issues, with ads like this one:

Christian Post reports on the ad:

> One clip shows Haley's appearance on Fox News to discuss how "when I was governor, [the Legislature] wanted to bring in a bathroom bill, a transgender bathroom bill," which she opposed.
>
> "I strong-armed and said, 'We are not going to have that in South Carolina,'" she asserted. State laws barring students from entering opposite-sex bathrooms, locker rooms and showers in K-12 schools have become law in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, North Dakota, Oklahoma and Tennessee.
>
> Supporters of such measures point to safety and privacy concerns for female students who'd be forced to share intimate spaces with male students under policies that allow trans-identified individuals to use bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond with their self-declared gender identity rather than their biological sex as the reason for enacting "bathroom bills."
>
> The issue received particular attention when news broke of the sexual assault of a female student in a girls' bathroom at a Loudoun County, Virginia, high school at the hands of a biologically male student who identified as "gender-fluid."
>
> The political ad shows additional footage of Haley telling CBS News, "I think the law should stay out of it" when asked, "What care should be on the table when a 12-year-old child in this country assigned female at birth says, 'Actually, I feel more comfortable living as a boy.' And "what should the law allow the response to be?"
>
> The use of the word "care" refers to puberty blockers and opposite-sex hormones and body-mutilating surgeries, including castration and unnecessary mastectomies.

I don't know who is supporting Nikki Haley in the GOP primary, but I would expect that they are either Democrats, leftists on social issues, or just ignorant about the past positions of the candidates. The first two categories make sense to me. Democrats and leftists like Nikki Haley. What I don't understand is how people who claim to be conservatives would think that you pick a candidate without knowing their past record of actions and achievements. Surely, in the most powerful nation in the world, we can expect people to decide elections based on facts, not feelings.

New study: parent's political ideology significantly affects adolescent mental health

December 11, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you like to get into debates with secular leftists in the office, like I do, then you need a lot of STUDIES. Secular leftists are taught that conservatives and Christians have not done any work to form their views, whereas all the smartest people are secular leftists, because they are data-based. So, let's take a look at a new study on political ideology, and see who produces better results?

This research seems to be some sort of collaboration between the moderate Institute for Family Studies, and the far-left Gallup polling company.

Here is the PDF of the publication.

And Fox News has an article about it:

> Parenting styles and political beliefs can play a major role influencing teenagers' mental health, new research from Gallup says.
>
> A June 2023 study surveying 6,643 parents and 1,580 adolescents found that conservative and very conservative parents were the "most likely to adopt the parenting practices associated with adolescent mental health," the research reported in the Institute for Family Studies found.
>
> "Adolescents with very conservative parents are 16 to 17 percentage points more likely to be in good or excellent mental health compared to their peers with very liberal parents," the report said. "Only 55% of adolescents of liberal parents reported good or excellent mental health compared to 77% of those with conservative or very conservative parents."

Why would conservative parents produce such a huge beneficial result for their children? Well, I would guess it's because conservative parents are more firm about having a vision for how their children are raised. They want their kids to do well in school, follow the law, and serve others. All things that will help them in the real free market world of serving customers. But conservative parents also reject "don't judge" compassion and moral relativism. Whereas secular leftist parents take an "anything goes" approach to raising their kids, conservatives are more strict about truth, and moral values. Secular leftist parents hate the idea of punishment. They just want their kids to like them.

More:

> Conservative parents were more likely to adopt an "authoritative parenting style, characterized by both warmth and a high level of discipline," Gallup economist and study author Jonathan Rothwell explained to Fox News Digital.
>
> "Parents who set boundaries, establish routines, convey warmth and affection, and enforce rules effectively report a less contentious relationship with their

> adolescent child than parents who do not do these things, and this relationship is recognized by that child to be stronger and more loving. Each of the two factors related to parenting practices has a similar effect on the relationship as an index of adverse experiences, related to parental drug abuse, death, or abandonment," he described in the report.
>
> Liberal parents, however, scored lowest in the survey, primarily because they were least likely to report successfully disciplining their child.

Homes with conservative parents will typically be homes where there is a "Constitution" of the relationship. And I mean a recognized authority that governs how the relationship will proceed. And that authority compels each adult to deny themselves, and sacrifice their own interests, in order to serve others, and keep the relationship amicable and stable. Secular leftists don't have that, because they are trying to claw happiness out of everyone and everything around them. Secular leftists have no rules, and no reason to sacrifice your own interests for anyone or anything else. It's basically the Wild West. And in the Wild West, no one has an *obligation* to love anyone else when it doesn't *feel good* to them to do the work.

More:

> Teens' mental health outcomes were 8 percentage points lower when parents reported having difficulty disciplining their child.
>
> "By contrast, conservative parents enjoy higher quality relationships with their children, characterized by fewer arguments, more warmth, and a stronger bond, according to both parent and child reporting," the report said.
>
> While 80% of very conservative parents said their child did not get their way in an argument, only 53% of liberal parents could say the same. The most conservative parents were also more likely to report showing affection to their children every day.

I would think that a lot of these secular left parents are really just secular left single moms. Either by premarital sex with the hot bad boys, or by frivolous divorce. Even secular leftist women with men in the home will prevent those men from "judging" and "punishing" the children. Women are just not as good as men (generally speaking) at disciplining children. Secular leftist women might think that they are strong, independent boss babes who don't need no man, but the results show very different outcomes.

David French wants Christians who accept Jesus' definition of marriage to be persecuted

December 12, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you've been following David French's writing closely, you'll know that he no longer supports public policies that are consistent with the Christian worldview. In this post, we'll take a look at Jesus' definition of marriage, then we'll see whether David French thinks that Jesus knows more about the definition of marriage than the Democrat party.

First, what does Jesus think about marriage?

Here's what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
>
> 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"
>
> 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."
>
> 11 But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don't overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are

supposed to be willing to endure suffering rather than side with non-Christians against God's authority.

Here's an article from The Federalist by conservative Christian lioness Megan Basham.

She writes:

> [P]erhaps no one has done more to further the idea that Christians should not let the God they worship influence their policy views than one-time defender of traditional marriage, David French.
>
> […]As a political pundit, French has been singularly influential in evangelical establishment circles, referenced regularly not only in Christianity Today's pages and podcasts but also giving speeches at Southern Baptist seminaries and winning praise from outlets such as The Gospel Coalition as "one of the few Christians who is able to bring gospel-centered arguments into the public square."
>
> In all three of his essays on RMA in the last week, French reveals that he, too, has evolved on marriage and… discourages Christians from resisting the enshrinement of gay marriage into U.S. law.
>
> French… adds, "Religious belief is not the same thing as declaring civil law … I don't want the law to discriminate against those Americans who sincerely hold different views of sexual morality, sexuality, and marriage and organize their lives and their institutions accordingly."

What does David French think about same-sex marriage as public policy?

> French reveals that… believes [the Obergefell ruling's] argument for ushering in an entirely new form of marriage, unknown to previous ages, was well-founded. He writes that as far back as 2004, he believed, "In a diverse, pluralistic republic, granting the same rights to others that we'd like to exercise ourselves should be the default posture of public advocacy and public policy."
>
> Now that the fundamental transformation of marriage has taken place, French argues it should be permanent: "It would be profoundly disruptive and unjust to rip out the legal superstructure around which they've ordered their lives," he writes.

When it comes to policy, David French thinks that the Democrat party's definition of marriage is better than Jesus' definition of marriage.

Previously, I noted how the Alliance Defending Freedom thinks that the "Respect for Marriage Act" will threaten the religious liberty of Christian organizations:

> The so-called Respect for Marriage Act is a misnamed bill that expands not only what marriage means, but also who can be sued for disagreeing with the new meaning of marriage.
>
> While proponents of the bill claim that it simply codifies the

> 2015 Obergefell decision, in reality it is an intentional attack on the religious freedom of millions of Americans with sincerely held beliefs about marriage.
>
> The Respect for Marriage Act threatens religious freedom and the institution of marriage in multiple ways:
>
> - It further embeds a false definition of marriage in the American legal fabric.
> - It opens the door to federal recognition of polygamous relationships.
> - It jeopardizes the tax-exempt status of nonprofits that exercise their belief that marriage is the union of one man and one woman.
> - It endangers faith-based social-service organizations by threatening litigation and liability risk if they follow their views on marriage when working with the government.
>
> The truth is the Respect for Marriage Act does nothing to change the status of same-sex marriage or the benefits afforded to same-sex couples following Obergefell. It does much, however, to endanger religious freedom.

David French wants Christians who agree with Jesus about the definition of marriage to be persecuted by the secular left state. That's why he supports this Democrat party legislation.

Now, if you listened to the episode of the Knight and Rose show that Rose and I did defending the definition of marriage then you will know that there are good science-based secular reasons for preferring Jesus' definition of marriage. But David French ignores that evidence in his published work.

Back to Megan Basham in The Federalist:

> Leaving aside how this same argument could have been applied to Dred Scott, it's interesting that French repeatedly references "LGBT families" in his essays (a phrase that naturally brings up sympathetic associations) without specifically treating the question of how children come to be a part of these sterile couplings or how they fare once they are present. In fact, the only passing allusion he makes to children in these households is positive, as when he says, "Millions of Americans are living stable, joyful lives in LGBT families."
>
> It has been said many times (but it cannot be said enough apparently) that the law's compelling interest in acknowledging marriage at all is not to sanction romantic attachment between various individuals. It is to recognize the sexually reproductive union of men and women in order to foster the arrangement that best cultivates individual flourishing, which, in turn, creates a flourishing society.

Right, and that's why Rose and I talked about that evidence in our podcast. But if you are expecting David French to understand what marriage is, and how to interact with scientific evidence on the effects of non-traditional unions on children, you're expecting too much. In Christian apologetics, we know how to make a case for what the Bible teaches about God's existence from scientific evidence, such as the Big Bang cosmology

and the cosmic fine-tuning. Mainstream scientific data. We do the same thing when it comes to the abortion question. Serious Christians know how to be persuasive to non-Christians. That's why we are able to defend the Bible's teachings without capitulating to peer pressure from the secular left.

Basham concludes:

> There is no need to rehearse the litany of evidence that children raised apart from their married, biological mothers and fathers fare worse on all manner of social, educational, and developmental outcomes. But it might be necessary to start speaking forthrightly about the more specific emerging evidence that children conceived via donorship suffer from "profound struggles with their origins and identities" and that those raised in same-sex households are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and sexual abuse.
>
> French never mentions these children. Nor does Dalrymple. Nor does the Christianity Today essay. Nor has Sen. Blunt. Yet this is the dystopian, domino effect of redefining marriage so that Christians may assure themselves they are pluralists in good standing, on the right side of rapidly devolving modern history.

If you want to hear a decent case for the traditional definition of marriage based on evidence, check out the podcast that Rose and I did about it here.

If you only have 15 minutes, this short video from Katy Faust makes the case:

And she has an excellent article about it in the Daily Signal. It's too bad that Christians look to David French for leadership. I would rather rely on Megan Basham and Katy Faust. And it's not David French who will be defending religious liberty at the Supreme Court. It's Kristen Waggoner of the ADF.

How is single-payer government-run healthcare working for Canada in 2023?

December 13, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I always get excited when the annual report on Canadian healthcare comes out. A lot of people in my office love single payer healthcare. Except they don't know how it works in countries that have tried it. They imagine that it works well. They love the idea that healthcare will be free for them. But when I get my hands on a good study, it means a lot of fools are about to get a beat down.

Here's the latest from the Fraser Institute, reported by True North:

> Canadians are waiting longer than ever to see a healthcare specialist and receive treatment in 2023, according to a recent Fraser Institute report.
>
> The Fraser Institute polled physicians from 12 specialties and ten provinces for almost three decades.
>
> This year, the data collected from January to June consisted of 1,269 physicians responses. The report, titled Waiting Your Turn: Wait Times for Health Care in Canada, 2023 Report, showed the results of this year's survey.
>
> A median wait time of 27.7 weeks between referral from a general practitioner and receipt of treatment was reported in 2023. This is longer than the 27.4 weeks reported in 2022. This year's wait time is the longest recorded in the survey's history and is 198% longer than the 9.3-week wait time documented in 1993.

The 27.7 week number is the total of two different delays. The delays to get referred to a specialist, and the delay to get actual treatment:

> The 27.7-week total was broken down into two segments – a referral by a general practitioner to consultation with a specialist takes 14.6 weeks, followed by consultation with a specialist and receiving treatment, which takes 13.1 weeks.

Well, there's a saying in business. You can have a product or a service fast, or you can have it good, or you can have it cheap. Pick two out of 3. So, Maybe Canadian healthcare is not fast, but maybe it's good, and maybe it's cheap.

Cost of Single Payer Health Care in Canada per Household

Let's turn to the Fraser Institute again:

> Canadians often misunderstand the true cost of our public health care system. This occurs partly because Canadians do not incur direct expenses for their use of health care, and partly because Canadians cannot readily determine the value of their contribution to public health care insurance.

> In 2023, preliminary estimates suggest the average payment for public health care insurance ranges from $5,373 to $17,039 for six common Canadian family types, depending on the type of family.

> Between 1997 and 2023, the cost of public health care insurance for the average Canadian family increased 4.2 times as fast as the cost of clothing, 2.1 times as fast as the cost of food, 1.8 times as fast as the cost of shelter, and 1.7 times as fast as the average income.

> The 10 percent of Canadian families with the lowest incomes will pay an average of about $644 for public health care insurance in 2023. The 10 percent of Canadian families who earn an average income of $80,946 will pay an average of $7,715 for public health care insurance, and the families among the top 10 percent of income earners in Canada will pay $44,314.

OK, so Canadians aren't getting healthcare fast, and they're not getting healthcare cheap. Maybe they're getting really really good healthcare, though.

Here are the numbers from a new study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute, in partnership with the Canadian Medical Association:

> - Most Canadians believe health care has worsened in the country over the last decade. Currently, 68 per cent of Canadians believe this, an increase from the 42 per cent who said the same in 2015.
> - The Angus Reid Institute's Health Care Access Index, first created one year ago, finds three-in-ten (29%) facing Chronic Difficulty accessing the health care they say they need. One-in-three (34%) are facing fewer, but still some, barriers, while just one-in-six (16%) have little trouble with finding and receiving care from Canada's health system.
> - Half of Canadians either don't have a family doctor (19%) or struggle to see the one they have (29%).
> - Persistent problems in the health care system have left seven-in-ten (68%) pessimistic there will be improvements to the system in the next two years and more than half (56%) doubtful things will change for the better even five years down the line.
> - Those who believe their province does a poor or terrible job measuring health care performance (68%) significantly outnumber those who instead believe their provincial government is doing great or good on this front (24%). Two-thirds (67%) believe health care performance would be improved by their province making key health care performance indicators publicly available.

I know that a some Americans like to pick political leaders and policies based on their feelings. They want to feel good. They want to be liked. People who like single payer tend to be people with enormous student loan balances for worthless non-STEM degrees. They work in easy jobs in the public sector. They join labor unions because they're scared of competition and accountability. Many of them work in daycare or they teach little children, because they don't want to be challenged by adults. When you look at the numbers on healthcare in different countries, it's very clear what works and what doesn't work. Americans need to be smarter than Canadians. We have to vote based on reason and evidence.

Evidence for design in living systems is changing the way scientists work

December 14, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you look over in the right column of the blog, you'll see that I am reading "The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith". It's a collection of short essays intended for laymen to explain all aspects of the design debate. I'm actually listening to the audio book version, and just looking in the book for diagrams. I wanted to talk about a few resources that are similar to what I'm seeing in the book.

First, there's this excellent post from Evolution News, where Dr. Casey Luskin (who recently appeared on the Apologetics 315 podcast) lists out all the areas where intelligent design is fruitful for studying living systems.

Here is his list:

- Protein science
- Physics and cosmology
- Information theory
- Pharmacology
- Evolutionary computation
- Anatomy and physiology
- Bioinformatics
- Molecular machines
- Cell biology
- Systematics
- Paleontology
- Genetics

These are all good, but I'm going to focus on some of them that are interesting to me coming from a software engineering background.

> Information theory: ID leads scientists to understand intelligence as a cause of biological complexity, capable of being scientifically studied, and to understand the types of information it generates.

I looked into this one when naturalists were trying to argue that specified complexity was just the same as Shannon information. Shannon information is just concerned with the complexity, or information carrying capacity, of strings. But specified complexity is a step further, where certain strings have meaning or purpose, because they conform to a pattern. A random set of characters the same length as this blog post is complex (like Shannon information), but it's not specified. What makes my letter sequences specified is that it conforms to the English language, and conveys meaning.

Here's another:

> Evolutionary computation: ID produces theoretical research into the information-generative powers of Darwinian searches, leading to the discovery that the search abilities of Darwinian processes are limited, which has practical implications for the viability of using genetic algorithms to solve problems.

When I was in grad school, there were courses on using "genetic algorithms" to solve problems. But thanks to the work of ID proponents like William Dembski, we now know that these algorithms only work if constraints are put on the search algorithm up front. As such, they don't support undirected evolution at all.

> Bioinformatics: ID has helped scientists develop proper measures of biological information, leading to concepts like complex and specified information or functional sequence complexity. This allows us to better quantify complexity and understand what features are, or are not, within the reach of Darwinian evolution.

Before ID came along, people weren't really interested in calculating the probability of sequencing amino acids into a protein by chance. They just wanted to assume that it happened, because what else could have happened? Sometimes, you make better decisions when you listen to both sides of a debate. Now we have two sides to the debate on origins, and it helps both sides to defend their views.

> Molecular machines: ID encourages scientists to reverse-engineer molecular machines — like the bacterial flagellum — to understand their function like machines, and to understand how the machine-like properties of life allow biological systems to function.

I've blogged before about how human inventors are regularly reverse-engineering natural designs in order to come up with designs for man-made machines.

> Genetics: ID has inspired scientists to investigate the computer-like properties of DNA and the genome in the hopes of better understanding genetics and the origin of biological systems.15 ID has also inspired scientists to seek function for noncoding junk-DNA, allowing us to understand development and cellular biology.

By now, everybody has heard about the predictions by Darwinists about the "uselessness" of junk DNA. That all went out the window with the data from the ENCODE project, that found that the so-called junk DNA was almost all useful. Another Darwinian prediction falsified by the progress of science.

A 40-minute lecture

I saw a nice lecture from the recent Science & Faith conference that was held in Dallas this year. The speaker was Dr. Brian Miller:

> Dr. Miller is Research Coordinator at Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture. He holds a Ph.D. in Physics from Duke University.

> More about him and the articles he has written can be found here: https://www.discovery.org/p/miller/

The video talks about all the areas where evidence for design is changing the way that scientists look at living systems.

The talk was very cutting edge, with a lot of new stuff I had not seen before. It's worth the time to watch it. There were also a couple of prior lectures from the conference. One from Eric Hedin, where he talked about being "canceled" by Darwinists for teaching both sides of origins issues at Ball State University. Another from Stephen C. Meyer talks about the Judeo-Christian origins of modern science. I've only watched the Miller lecture so far, but that's what Saturdays are for! Watching lectures and debates.

William Lane Craig answers: how can the four gospels be independent sources?

December 15, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I blogged about the historical criteria that historians use to evaluate documents. One of the criteria is "multiple independent sources". If a story is reported in multiple independent sources, then historians are more likely to evaluate it as historically accurate. But how about the four gospels? Are they independent sources? The answer might not be what you expect.

Here's how the question was put to Dr. Craig:

> The latest video, "Did Jesus Rise From the Dead," is especially compelling, but I had a question about it. In the part one video, you cite as evidence, the Gospels plus Acts and First Corinthians and you refer to them as "independent" and "unconnected" sources. But this isn't exactly true, is it? After all, two of these books were written by the same author, Luke, and so Luke and Acts are connected by authorship. Furthermore, isn't it true that much information relayed in Matthew and Luke were taken from Mark? This two facts would make it untrue to call the Gospels "independent" and "unconnected" would they not?

Here's the video he's talking about:

Dr. Craig answers the question in his latest question of the week. I think this answer is important for those who aren't aware of how the gospels are organized.

He writes:

> The objection is based on a simple misunderstanding. It assumes that the sources I'm referring to are the books of the New Testament. But that's not what I'm talking about.
>
> New Testament critics have identified a number of sources behind the New Testament, sources on which the New Testament authors drew. For example, Matthew and Luke drew not only upon Mark as a source but also upon a source which scholars designate "Q," which appears to have been a source containing Jesus' sayings or teachings. Thus, if you could show that a saying in Matthew or Luke appears in both Mark and Q, that would count as multiple, independent attestation.

What does this mean? It means that although there is overlap between Matthew and Luke, called "Q", there are actually three independent sources there: Matthew's source, called M. Luke's source, called L. And the material common to Matthew and Luke, which therefore PRE-DATES Matthew and Luke, called Q.

Dr. Craig lists out several independent sources in his full reply:

1. the pre-Markan Passion story used by Mark
2. the rest of the gospel of Mark has a source
3. Matthew's source (M)
4. Luke's source (L)
5. John's gospel which is very different from Mark, Luke and Matthew
6. the sermons in Acts have a source
7. the early creed found in Paul's 1 Corinthians 15

So if you are trying to lay out something from the New Testament, and you can find it in two of these sources, and at least one of them is very early, you're in pretty good shape.

You can watch more of Dr. Craig's videos in his playlist, here. These are especially useful for people who want to get the overall scope of the battlefield before deciding where to focus in study. Everybody should know about all of these arguments regardless of where you choose to specialize.

Robert Gagnon debates gay activist Jayne Ozanne on Bible vs homosexuality

December 16, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I am tempted to say that this is the best podcast I have ever heard on the Unbelievable show. Do anything you have to do in order to listen to this podcast.

Details:

> Prof Robert Gagnon has become a well-known voice advocating the traditional biblical view on sexuality. In a highly charged show he debates the scriptural issues on sexuality with Jayne Ozanne, the director of Accepting Evangelicals who came out as gay earlier this year.

You can listen to the debate here.

If you can only listen for 15 minutes, then start at 49 minutes in and listen from there.

The following summary is rated MUP for made-up paraphrase. Reader discretion is advised.

Summary:
Intro:

- Speaker introductions
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree that the Bible doesn't support it
- Gagnon: scholars who support gay marriage agree Jesus taught male-female marriage
- Ozanne: I went to the hospital because I was sick from trying to suppress my gay desires
- Ozanne: Doctors told me that I would die if I didn't act on my gay desires
- Ozanne: I decided to reinterpret the Bible to fit with my gay desires
- Ozanne: According to my new interpretation, Jesus actually supports my gay desires

Segment 1: Genesis

- Ozanne: In Genesis the Bible says that Adam needs a woman to complete him
- Ozanne: I reinterpret this to mean that Adam needed a "complementarian human being"
- Ozanne: Genesis doesn't say whether Eve was complemented by Adam in that chapter
- Ozanne: It's not critical that men are complemented by women, a man could complement a man
- Ozanne: Genesis 2 doesn't talk about children, it's all about adult needs from a relationship
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 has never been interpreted that way in all of history

- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language specifically implies a human being who is opposite/different
- Gagnon: Genesis 2 language translates to complement or counterpart
- Gagnon: Genesis as a whole teaches that the sexuality is for male and female natures
- Gagnon: The extraction of something from the man that is given to the woman is complementarian
- Ozanne: I think that people can be complementary outside of male-female Genesis language
- Ozanne: I don't want to discuss specific words and texts and Greek meanings
- Gagnon: the text has always been read and interpreted to support male/female complementarity
- Gagnon: the male-female nature argument is made because the two natures are complementary
- Ozanne: the text was interpreted by patriarchal males who treated women like property, it's biased
- Ozanne: what is important to me is how Christ interprets Genesis (?? how does she know that?)
- Ozanne: I am passionate about my interpretation of Scripture which supports my gay desires
- Gagnon: just because a person is passionate about their interpretation it doesn't make it right
- Gagnon: I am not arguing for the male-female view based on passion, but on scholarship, evidence and history
- Ozanne: both sides are equally passionate about their interpretations (?? so both are equally warranted?)
- Ozanne: the real question is why God "allowed" two different interpretations of Scripture

Segment 2: Is homosexuality a sin?

- Gagnon: Jesus affirmed traditional sexual morality, which forbids homosexuality
- Gagnon: Jesus teaches that marriage is male-female, and limited to two people
- Gagnon: No one in history has interpreted the Bible to say that homosexuality was not immoral
- Ozanne: Jesus came to bring life, and that means he supports homosexuality
- Ozanne: I was dying, and embracing my gay desires allowed me to live, so Jesus approves of me
- Ozanne: God says "I am who I am" and that means he approves of me doing whatever I want
- Ozanne: There is an imperative to be who I am, and that means embracing my gay desires
- Gagnon: Jesus argued that the twoness of the sexual bond is based on the twoness

of the sexes
- Gagnon: Jesus did not come to gratify people's innate desires, he called people to repent of sin
- Gagnon: Jesus did reach out to sinners but he never condoned the sins they committed
- Gagnon: Jesus' outreach to tax collectors collecting too much and sexual sinners is the same: STOP SINNING
- Ozanne: I don't think that Romans 1 is talking about homosexuality
- Ozanne: I think it's talking about sexual addiction, not loving, committed gay relationships
- Ozanne: Paul was condemning pederasty in Romans 1, not loving, long-term, consensual sexual relationships between gay adults
- Gagnon: nothing in the passage limits the condemnation to pederasty
- Gagnon: the passage was never interpreted to be limited to pederasty in history
- Gagnon: rabbis and church fathers knew about committed two-adult same-sex relationships, and said they were wrong
- Gagnon: the argument for marriage is based on the broad two-nature argument, with no exceptions
- Gagnon: the condemnation is not limited to exploitative / coercive / lustful / uncommitted relationships
- Gagnon: even pro-gay scholars agree the passage cannot be interpreted Ozanne's way (he names two)

Segment 3: The showdown (49:00)

- Ozanne: I don't care how many pages people have written on this
- Ozanne: God says that "the wisdom of the wise I will frustrate" so you can't use scholars, even pro-gay scholars, to argue against my passionate interpretation
- Ozanne: I am not interested in the text or history or scholarship or even pro-gay scholars who agree with you
- Ozanne: what decides the issue for me is my mystical feelings about God's love which makes my sexual desires moral
- Ozanne: you are certain that this is wrong, but your view does not "give life" to people
- Ozanne: your scholarship and historical analysis is "a message of death" that causes teenagers to commit suicide (= you are evil and a meany, Robert)
- Ozanne: "I pray for you and your soul" (= opposing me will land you in Hell) and "I hope that listeners will listen with their hearts" (?? instead of their minds?)
- Ozanne: you can prove anything you want with research, even two mutually exclusive conclusions, so you shouldn't rely on scholarship and research since it could be used to prove my view as well
- Ozanne: instead of relying on research, you should rely on your heart and your feelings about God's love to decide what the Bible teaches about sexual morality

- Gagnon: you are distorting the gospel in order to make your case
- Gagnon: attacking my “certainty” is an ad hominem attack to cover your dismissmal of the scholarship and history
- Gagnon: you distort the gospel to make it seem like Christ just wants us to get what we want, when we want it, with who we want it with
- Gagnon: Christ calls us to take up our cross, to lose our lives and to deny ourselves
- Gagnon: you have a notion of what “fullness of life” is, but it’s not reflective of the gospel
- Gagnon: Paul’s life was much more troubling than yours, mine or anyone else around here
- Gagnon: Paul was beaten, whipped, stoned, poorly sheltered, poorly clothed, poorly fed, shipwrecked, and anxious for his churches
- Gagnon: on your view, he should have been miserable and angry with God all the time
- Gagnon: but instead Paul was constantly thankful and rejoicing to be able to suffer with Jesus and look forward to the resurrection
- Gagnon: I have suffered too, but the suffering we go through never provides us with a license to violate the commandments of God
- Ozanne: “the ultimate thing is what people feel God has called them to”
- Ozanne: My goal right now is to tell young people that homosexuality is fine so they don’t commit suicide
- Ozanne: the view that homosexuality is wrong is “evil and misguided”
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm in the gay community are intrinsic to homosexual unions, not caused by external disapproval of homosexuality

Segment 4: Concluding statements

- Gagnon: gay male relationships on average have more sex partners and more STDs
- Gagnon: female relationships on average have shorter-length relationships and more mental issues
- Gagnon: the greater rates of harm are because there is no complementarity / balance in the relationships
- Gagnon: everyone has some disappointment or suffering in their lives that hurts them, and that they are tempted to break the rules to fix, but we should not break the rules in order to be happy
- Ozanne: both sides are passionate, so no one can be right, and evidence proves nothing
- Ozanne: only feelings about “what God is doing” can allow us to decide what counts as sin or not
- Ozanne: the main thing that is at stake here is to make people like us, not to decide what the Bible says about sin
- Ozanne: my message to people is to do whatever you want, and ignore mean people who don’t affirm you

- Ozanne: we should be more opposed to mean people who make non-Christians feel unloved than about doing what the Bible says

Conservative Party leader tries to teach economics to voters – and they like it!

December 17, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The leader of the Conservative Party of Canada is leading in the polls. He's leading by so much that he would form a majority government if a national election were held today. You might have seen him on American TV news channels, fighting with far-left journalists while munching on an apple in a field. But his new plan is to teach Canadian voters economics. How is that working?

Answer: they love it, and they want more.

Here's the latest, reported by National Post – one of Canada's two national newspapers.

> Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre released a 15-minute video Saturday morning that more closely resembles a PBS Frontline documentary than the short, slogan-heavy ads Canadians are used to.
>
> […]The video, released in both French and English, is a slick, graphics-heavy adaptation of the stump speeches that Poilievre has been delivering as he tours the country. Poilievre announced on Friday via X (formerly Twitter) that he'd be releasing "a groundbreaking documentary on Canada's housing hell."
>
> It spells out, using dozens of graphics and charts, a step-by-step case for why the Conservatives believe government spending and borrowing under the Trudeau Liberals has fuelled inflation along with the unprecedented rise in housing costs, pricing hundreds of thousands of families and millions of younger Canadians out of the housing market.
>
> […]In an almost-academic breakdown of housing prices, Poilievre's documentary uses a series of economic explanations — from relative population density to quantitative easing — to make the case that soaring housing prices are largely the fault of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's policies. Poilievre traces most problems back to 2015, the year the Liberals were elected.
>
> He also highlights an inability to build houses for the problem. He blames municipal governments for blocking development, but associates that with economic incentives created by the federal government. By adding up all the inputs in a house, like labour, lumber and land, and then subtracting it from the final sale price, Poilievre calculates what he calls the "gatekeeper gap," or the premium that government red tape and other bureaucracy adds to the cost of homes.
>
> "Consider this: In 1972, Canada's population was 22 million, and we built about 230,000 homes. In 2022, Canada's population was 39 million, and we built about 220,000 homes," he says. "In other words, far more people and far less home-building."

I found the video on YouTube. It's over 417,000 views in TWO WEEKS since it was released:

Canadians are experiencing two major problems right now. First, their government-run healthcare system is failing catastrophically. I blogged about that with the latest think tank numbers earlier in the week. But the second big problem is inflation. Higher prices on everything from electricity, gas, groceries and especially housing. The Liberal Party has been causing these problems with massive government spending, regulations on energy production and home construction, and mass importation of unskilled people.

The video directly addresses the housing problem:

> That is substantiated by nationwide polling. A survey conducted by Ipsos last month found that 73 per cent of Canadians think owning a home in Canada is now only for the rich. Sixty-six percent of Canadians who don't own a house said they have given up on ever being able to afford a home. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these trends have coincided with polls showing the Conservatives thoroughly dominating in support among young voters, with the governing Liberals a distant third behind the NDP.
>
> And more recently, Canadians have started telling pollsters they think the country's high levels of immigration are worsening the housing crisis.

Under Liberal Prime Minister Trudeau, Canada has been mass-importing millions and millions of unskilled immigrants and refugees. They can't speak the languages and they have no marketable skills. They can't get jobs. They can't pay their own way. But they need places to live. Hence the shortage of housing.

If you watch the video, he explains how government spending causes inflation. He explains clearly how prices are set in a market economy (supply and demand). He links higher population (caused by the Liberal Party's open borders immigration policy) to higher demand of housing and lower supply. He explains how housing regulations cut off the supply of new homes.

Watching this video reminded me a lot of reading Thomas Sowell's "The Housing Boom and Bust". I hope you guys are keeping up with your Thomas Sowell reading, because if you don't then Pierre will have to come down here and teach Americans, too! Canadian readers, if you want to know why Americans are so conservative, you have to understand that most Republicans learn economics from Thomas Sowell, a black economist with a long list of prestigious publications. You cannot read just one of his books. You read one, and then you keep reading them. He's pure gold.

It's nice to see Canadians taking time to learn economics. They want to learn more about economics. They've tried voting based on feelings. They've tried voting for nice hair. They've tried voting for follow your heart. They've tried voting for being generous with other people's money. They've tried everything that their teachers and government told them to try. None of it worked. And now they are going to try to understand economics. And they have a very good teacher.

Study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others

December 18, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back I finished reading “God’s Crime Scene”, the new book by J. Warner Wallace. I wanted to post something about some studies he mentioned in Chapter 6, on free will. This is one of the places where he found evidence in a surprising area.

Wallace says that free will makes more sense if theism is true, because we have non-material souls that interact with our bodies, but are not causally determined by them. On atheism, only matter exists, and you can’t get free will (or consciousness) from matter. So atheists like Sam Harris and Alex Rosenberg, for example, deny free will, because they are materialists and atheists.

Anyway, here’s what he writes on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others.” Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: “It seems that not only do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it.”” The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here’s the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free

> will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons' belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you're an atheist, then you are a physical object. And like every other physical object in the universe, your behavior is determined by genetic programming (if you're alive) and external inputs. Material objects do not have the ability to make free choices, including moral choices.

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no

moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

(Source)

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality. Can you imagine trying to get into any sort of enterprise with someone who has this view of moral choices? A marriage, or a business arrangement, etc? It would be crazy to expect them to behave morally, when they don't even think that moral choices is possible. It just excuses all sorts of bad behavior, because no one is responsible for choosing to do the right thing.

Believers in materialism are going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

Choosing to do the right thing

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when doing the right thing sets you back. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me about their ability to do the right thing when it was hard for them to do it. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality. My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

I went on a date with a Christian woman who couldn’t defend the pro-life view

December 19, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve been thinking lately about how to measure how committed and capable a person is on issues of interest to conservatives. For example, on abortion, most conservatives will say, “I vote pro-life”. But I think a higher level of conviction and commitment is shown when a person can show WHY they are pro-life. And I’m not looking for feelings, here. I’m looking for handling scientific evidence.

So, when it comes to the abortion issue, the first step is to answer the question “what is the unborn?” And again, I’m not looking for an opinion here. I’m not looking for feelings. I’m not looking for what your parents, or your pastor, or your church choir says. I’m interested in whether a person can cite some scientific evidence.

Fortunately, we have first class scientists who have collected the relevant information for us, like Dr. Maureen Condic, She’s an Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Adjunct Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Utah School of Medicine, and recently served on the National Science Board. She earned her Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley, and has published papers in peer-reviewed journals.

One of her publications (PDF) explains what science tells us about the unborn. The title is “When Does Human Life Begin? The Scientific Evidence and Terminology Revisited”. A good paper to have available, especially if your opponent has nothing but purple hair, tattoos and nose piercings. But if you want something easy, you can just use quotations from a variety of embryology textbooks (PDF).

Like this one:

> “Human development begins at fertilization, when a sperm fuses with an oocyte to form a single cell, the zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell (capable of giving rise to any cell type) marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual.”

Source: Keith L. Moore, The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology, 10th edition. Philadelphia, PA: Saunders, 2016. p. 11

Don’t just use one quotation, use lots.

Also useful to know is what the unborn baby can do during the process of developing.

Here’s an article from the famous Cleveland Clinic that explains:

> At the moment of fertilization, your baby’s genetic make-up is complete, including its sex. The gender of your baby depends on what sperm fertilizes the egg at the moment of conception.

And a bit further along:

> **Month 1 (weeks 1 through 4)**
>
> In these first few weeks, a primitive face will take form with large dark circles for eyes. The mouth, lower jaw and throat are developing. Blood cells are taking shape, and circulation will begin. The tiny "heart" tube will beat 65 times a minute by the end of the fourth week.

And a bit further along:

> **Month 2 (weeks 5 through 8)**
>
> Facial features continue to develop. Each ear begins as a little fold of skin at the side of the head. Tiny buds that eventually grow into arms and legs are forming. Fingers, toes and eyes are also forming.
>
> The neural tube (brain, spinal cord and other neural tissue of the central nervous system) is well formed now. The digestive tract and sensory organs begin to develop too. Bone starts to replace cartilage.
>
> The head is large in proportion to the rest of the body at this point. At about 6 weeks, a heartbeat can usually be detected.

Most abortions happen in the first trimester, and that's why pro-lifers say "abortion stops a beating heart". It's definitely human, and it's definitely killed in an abortion.

So, what's the point of this post? I'm saying that if you are a conservative, then you have to be familiar with enough evidence to be persuasive to others who do not share your views. Not just on the issue you like, but on EVERY issue – social issues, foreign policy issues, fiscal issues.

It's not enough for you to be happy that you have the right opinion about one issue. It's not enough that the people around you like you because they agree with your "right answer". You have to be able to make a case that crushes your opponent with evidence. Being a conservative isn't about you or your feelings. It's about the world out there – can you make a difference by being convincing to other people?

Of course if doesn't feel good to have to learn how to talk about issues using scientific evidence. It's work. And of course it doesn't feel good to disagree with people about controversial issues. But you have to get used to not being ignorant and not being liked. I know a lot of feelings-based Christians who know a lot about sports, fiction, music, essential oils, and other nonsense. They want me to be satisfied that they have the right answer to questions like "Does God exist?", "does military preparedness deter aggression?" and "does the free market system make people more prosperous than socialism?" But if I am out on a date with you, and I ask you these questions, I'm looking for more than the right answer. I want you to show your work. I want to see you demonstrate your ability to persuade people on the other side, either in your writings or in your discussions.

Don't cry to me about how you can't find a husband when you can't do anything that a husband needs you to do. There is no path to impressing a conservative man that allows

you to be lazy, ignorant and cowardly. I expect performance. If you are smart enough to get a college education and a job in the competitive private sector providing value to paying customers, (not a public school teacher or anything disconnected from reality, like that), then you are smart enough to be able to explain your views on moral issues and public policy.

The authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke knew eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus

December 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Were the authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke connected to eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus? Well, it turns out that there are good reasons to think that Mark was linked to the eyewitness Peter, and Luke was linked to Paul, who had a post-mortem appearance of Jesus in 1 Cor 15:8, and who met with Peter and James in Galatians 1 and again in Galatians 2.

There is a list of evidence for Peter's influence on Mark on the Cold Case Christianity blog.

Here's my favorite one from the list:

> **Peter's Embarrassments Have Been Omitted**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter's special input and influence,including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It's important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It's not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter's standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters 'indiscretions' in their own accounts. See *Cold-Case Christianity* for a more detailed explanation).

It makes me laugh to imagine Peter looking over Mark's shoulder and saying "no, don't put that in it" and "no, don't tell them I did that". Funny! But also very good evidence. The rest of Wallace's list makes it even more clear.

And what about the gospel of Luke? Well, did you know that the author of Luke's gospel knew Paul? If you read it carefully, you'll see that Luke switches from describing history from an "I" perspective to describing things from a "we" perspective in the book of Acts (which he also wrote). Who is the "we" he is talking about?

Here's famous Christian scholar William Lane Craig to explain:

> Now who was this author we call Luke? He was clearly not an eyewitness to Jesus's life. But we discover an important fact about him from the book of Acts. Beginning in the sixteenth chapter of Acts, when Paul reaches Troas in modern-day Turkey, the author suddenly starts using the first-person plural: "we set sail from Troas to Samothrace," "we remained in Philippi some days," "as we were going to the place of prayer," *etc.* The most obvious explanation is that the author had joined Paul on his evangelistic tour of the Mediterranean cities. In chapter 21 he accompanies Paul back to Palestine and finally to Jerusalem. What

> this means is that the author of Luke-Acts was in fact in first hand contact with the eyewitnesses of Jesus's life and ministry in Jerusalem.
>
> […]There is no avoiding the conclusion that Luke-Acts was written by a traveling companion of Paul who had the opportunity to interview eyewitnesses to Jesus's life while in Jerusalem. Who were some of these eyewitnesses? Perhaps we can get some clue by subtracting from the Gospel of Luke everything found in the other gospels and seeing what is peculiar to Luke. What you discover is that many of Luke's peculiar narratives are connected to women who followed Jesus: people like Joanna and Susanna, and significantly, Mary, Jesus's mother.
>
> Was the author reliable in getting the facts straight? The book of Acts enables us to answer that question decisively. The book of Acts overlaps significantly with secular history of the ancient world, and the historical accuracy of Acts is indisputable.
>
> This has recently been demonstrated anew by Colin Hemer, a classical scholar who turned to New Testament studies, in his book *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History.* [5] Hemer goes through the book of Acts with a fine-toothed comb, pulling out a wealth of historical knowledge, ranging from what would have been common knowledge down to details which only a local person would know. Again and again Luke's accuracy is demonstrated: from the sailings of the Alexandrian corn fleet to the coastal terrain of the Mediterranean islands to the peculiar titles of local officials, Luke gets it right.

I know a lot of people (like my Dad) read the Bible devotionally, looking for feelings or trying to "get right with God" so they get blessings. But I think it's helpful to look at things from an evidential point of view – how am I going to make a case for this? When you look at things from that perspective, the Bible gets a whole lot more interesting. And you can talk about it with non-Christians when you know about these interesting details.

Trump wants the most conservative Congressman to lose in 2024

December 20, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you asked me why I opposed Trump in during the 2016 Republican primary, I would have pointed at his extensive record of siding with Democrats on nearly every issue. He surprised me during his first term, by being American's most conservative president. But something seems to have gone wrong. He is no longer the conservative that he was during his first term.

Here's the latest story from Daily Wire:

> Late on Monday, former President Donald Trump called for someone to take up a primary challenge against Rep. Chip Roy (R-TX), who has endorsed Trump's primary rival, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, for president.
>
> "Has any smart and energetic Republican in the Great State of Texas decided to run in the Primary against RINO Congressman Chip Roy," Trump said, using the acronym for "Republican in name only," in a post to his Truth Social platform. "For the right person, he is very beatable. If interested, let me know!!!"

Is Chip Roy a "RINO"? Let's take a look at the data.

> Voters first elected Roy to the House in 2018 after he established himself in politics working for other prominent Texas Republicans, including former Governor Rick Perry and Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX). Now in his third term, Roy represents the 21st Congressional District in Texas, which includes South Austin, North San Antonio, and the Texas Hill Country.
>
> As a congressman, Roy has pressed for reining in government spending, grilled and blasted Democrats over the border and immigration crisis, advocated for the development and better access to lifesaving medicines, and challenged leadership over COVID-19 vaccine and mask mandates during the pandemic.
>
> Roy became a member of the House Freedom Caucus and boasts a "Liberty Score" of 100% as well as a 98% on the Heritage Action's Scorecard, which looks at how conservative members are in their voting records and co-sponsorships. A few weeks ago, Roy shot back at keyboard warriors who call GOP legislators like him a "RINO," saying, "You can kiss my a**," adding, "I've spent a lifetime fighting for limited government conservatism."

Whenever I want to know whether a legislator is conservative, I always go straight for the Heritage Foundation scorecard. Chip Roy's score is 98%, and his lifetime rating is 97%. That makes him tied for FIRST PLACE for most conservative member of the House of Representatives. Why would Trump oppose such a conservative legislator? Maybe it's because Trump isn't a conservative at all, and doesn't care about conservatives winning

the House and the Senate. He just cares about himself. He’s a narcissist.

How do so many left-wing fake Republicans get into the House and Senate? Could it because of people like Trump demanding that they get primary challengers, so that the most conservative candidates don’t get elected? Can we really trust someone who only cares about himself to be the leader of the conservative movement? This would be like picking a quarterback who refuses to throw the ball to the star receiver, because the star receiver doesn’t like the quarterback’s hairstyle. It’s that level of childish and stupid. And we can’t afford to pick a stupid child to run as the Republican nominee. Especially if that stupid child is in prison in Spring of 2024.

One of the of reasons why Republican voters might want to choose DeSantis over Trump in 2024 is that Trump is *almost certain* to be convicted and imprisoned in early 2024. Even if he were to run and win, he would be a lame duck president. We would only get one term out of him. But most of all, some of his comments lately clearly show that he’s returning to his Democrat roots. Especially his opposition to pro-life legislation at the state level. We can do better than Trump in 2024. A lot better.

Church of England and Catholic Church offer blessings to same-sex couples

December 21, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I wanted to first review Jesus' position on marriage, and then we'll look at a couple major churches that have decided to bless same-sex relationships. And not minor churches, either. The Church of England and the Roman Catholic church. Let's take a look at what Jesus says, and then what these two major churches say.

We find Jesus' teaching on marriage in Matthew 19.

Matthew 19:1-6:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don't overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are supposed to be willing to endure suffering rather than side with non-Christians against God's authority.

So, with that said, let's take a look at what the Church of England is doing about marriage.

Look at this article from the UK Telegraph:

> For the first time in history, same-sex partners can receive a blessing to celebrate their unions…
>
> […]With the rainbow LGBTQIA+ flag waving outside, Jane Pearse and Catherine Bond became one of the first couples in England to receive a prayer that would publicly affirm and celebrate their union. A move made legal at the turn of midnight Saturday – instead of the usual clink of teacups, the pop of champagne

> corks punctured the post-service chatter, with congregants and the women, both vicars, well aware of the magnitude of the morning's celebration.

I thought this part was interesting:

> Bond and Pearse got together six years ago, when working in the same benefice (an ecclesiastical office), and now live in Felixstowe and are both associate priests… Both have adult children from their prior marriages, to men.

So both of these women were married to men, and left those marriages. That's how they got their children. And they inflicted divorce on those children.

The Church of England was not the only organization trying to gain the respect of the secular left by compromising on the plain meaning of Jesus' words about marriage. They are event investigating a vicar who called the the institution's first transgender archdeacon a "bloke".

The UK Telegraph reported on that, too:

> The Church of England (CofE) is investigating a vicar after he called the institution's first transgender archdeacon a "bloke".
>
> The Rev Brett Murphy faces an official rebuke from the CofE over "intentionally derogatory and disrespectful" remarks he made about the Rev Canon Dr Rachel Mann shortly after her appointment in June.
>
> LGBT+ campaigners had hailed her appointment as a "beacon of light and hope".

For Protestant Christians, it's easy to switch from Bible-denying denominations to Bible-believing denominations. But it's not so easy for Roman Catholics to do the same.

Here's another story reported by Crux, a Catholic news source:

> In the hours that followed release of a Vatican note outlining the pastoral grounds for same-sex blessings, reactions among American Catholics seemed to run the gamut from styling it as a major step forward to insisting on hitting the brakes, on the grounds that not much has really changed.
>
> […]The declaration outlines situations in which blessings are appropriate for same-sex couples or those in irregular unions. It states that these blessings should never be given "in concurrence with the ceremonies of a civil union, and not even in connection with them."
>
> The declaration continues that the blessing cannot be performed with any clothing, gestures, or words that are proper to a wedding. Conversely, the declaration states that the blessings can be provided in informal situations such as a visit to a shrine, a meeting with a priest, a prayer group, or during a pilgrimage.
>
> Still, despite its narrow scope, LGBTQ Catholics view the declaration as a significant step forward.

> Francis DeBernardo, executive director of the Catholic advocacy organization New Ways Ministry, said in a statement that “it cannot be overstated how significant the Vatican’s new declaration is,” for the fact that it “expands the ways that LGTBQ+ Catholics can know God’s love.”
>
> Father James Martin, a leading minister to and advocate for LGTBQ Catholics, in a series of statements called the declaration “a major step forward in the church’s ministry to LGBTQ people and recognizes the deep desire in many Catholic same-sex couples for God’s presence in their loving relationships.”
>
> “Along with many priests, I will now be delighted to bless my friends’ same-sex unions,” Martin said.

So, that’s where we are now. Major denominations have abandoned Jesus’ teaching on marriage. And why? Who are these church leaders trying to impress with their faithlessness? Wouldn’t it be much better if they dug into some studies and make a defenseof the teachings of Jesus using evidence? It’s not that hard. I’ve been doing it for nearly 15 years on this blog. But you just have to accept that it may not win you respect from the secular leftists who run the corporate news. I accept that. Why can’t they?

What are undesigned coincidences, and how are they used in apologetics?

December 22, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When you're reading the Bible, you may find passages in one book that are mysterious on their own, but then they make sense if you add missing details from a parallel account from a different source inside or even outside the Bible. I think these "undesigned coincidences" are helpful for answering the question of that skeptics often ask: "is the Bible history or myth?" Let's see some examples.

So, there are two kinds of undersigned coincidences. In the "internal" kind, the clearing up is done by another source in the same book. In the external kind, the clearing up is done by a source outside the same book.

Here's an article from Apologetics UK with some internal examples:

> In John 6:1-7, we are told:
>
> Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Festival was near.When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"
>
> Now, Philip is a fairly minor character in the New Testament. And one might, naturally, be inclined to wonder why Jesus hasn't turned to someone a little higher in the pecking order (such as Peter or John). A partial clue is provided in John 1:44: "Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida." Likewise, John 12:21 refers to "Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee"
>
> And what is so significant about Philip being from the town of Bethsaida? We don't learn this until we read the parallel account in Luke's gospel (9:10-17). At the opening of the account (verses 10-11) we are told, "When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing."
>
> And so, we are informed by Luke that the event was actually taking place in Bethsaida — the town from which Philip was from! Jesus thus turns to Philip, whom, he believed, would be familiar with the area. Notice too that Luke does

> not tell us that Jesus turned to Philip.
>
> But it gets even more interesting still. In Matthew 11, Jesus denounces the unrepentant cities, saying, “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” The reader is left wondering what miracles were performed in these cities. We are not told in Matthew’s gospel. It is only in light of Luke’s account of the feeding of the five thousand (chapter 9), in which we are told of the event’s occurrence in Bethsaida, that this statement begins to make sense!

This one is pretty clever:

> In Matthew 2 6:67-68, we read, “Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, “Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?”” This raises the natural question, why are they asking “Who hit you?” It is not until we read the parallel account in Luke’s gospel (22:64) that we learn that they had blindfolded him, thereby making sense of their taunts “Who hit you?”

Another one:

> In Luke 23:1-4, w e read,
> Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king.”
>
> So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”
>
> “You have said so,” Jesus replied.
>
> Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”
> On the surface, this seems to be a rather strange declaration to make. Jesus has just declared Himself to be a King, and has been charged with subverting the nation and opposing paying taxes to Caesar. Why has Pilate found no basis for a charge against him?
>
> The answer lies in the parallel account in John’s gospel (18:33-38):
>
> Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”
>
> “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”
> “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”
>
> Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

> “You are a king, then!” said Pilate.
>
> Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”
>
> “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.
>
> It is only when you read John’s account that you learn that Jesus had told Pilate that “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

And the same article has some external undesigned coincidences:

> In Matthew 2:22, we are told:
>
> But when [Joseph] heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being waned by God in an dream, he left for the regions of Galilee…
>
> Josephus’ Antiquities 17.3.1 tells us that the domain of Herod the Great was divided among his sons, with Archelaus having authority in Judea but not in Galilee, which was governed by his younger brother, Herod Antipas.
>
> We also know that Archelaus had acquired quite a bloody reputation (e.g. Antiquities 17.13.1-2 and 17.9.3). The latter of these references describes how Archelaus slaughtered 3,000 Jews at Passover. Thus, Joseph decides not to return to Judea and, instead, goes further north to the regions of Galilee, governed by Herod Antipas.

And another one:

> In Matthew 2:22, Archeleaus is reigning as king in Judea; in Matthew 27:2, Pilate is governor of Judea; in Acts 12:1, Herod is king of Judea; and in Acts 23:33, Felix is governor of Judea. This becomes extremely confusing.
>
> But here’s the thing: Josephus attests to the accuracy of every one of these titles. Herod the Great was made King of Judea by Mark Anthony. Archelaus was deposed in the year 6 A.D., after only a ten-year reign, and a series of procurators ruled over Judea (of whom Pilate was fifth). The Herod of Acts 12 is Agrippa I. He was made king by Claudius Caesar. After his death, Judea was, once again, placed under the government of procurators (one of them being Felix).

And another one:

> When Luke tells us of the riot in Ephesus, he reports that the city clerk tells the crowd that “There are proconsuls”. A proconsul is a Roman authority to whom a complaint may be taken. Normally, there was only one proconsul. Just at that particular time, however, there seems to have been two as a result of the

> assassination of Silanus (the previous proconsul) by poisoning in the Fall of AD 54, by the two imperial stewards at the urging of Nero's mother. This event is independently documented by Tacitus in his Annals (13.1). Indeed, Luke's accuracy has allowed historians to date the event which Luke narrates with incredible precision since we know when Silanus was poisoned.

If you think that these are clever, then share this post, and encourage your non-Christian friends and family to consider one of the many reasons why so many scholars have considered the New Testament books to be so reliable.

I wish that Christian parents and pastors were more thoughtful about how they present the Bible to young people. Instead of just saying "the Bible says" and praising blind faith acceptance of the Bible, why don't we think a little harder, and look for some confirmation of the Bible from historical methods like undesigned coincidences, and from non-Biblical authors, and from archaeology, etc.? Surely adding more evidence for taking the Bible seriously is the right approach, if the goal is to be persuasive? It's not like we're see good results from the current "blind faith" approach to raising Christian children, right?

Famous cancer researcher cannot find work after being fired for consensual office romance

December 23, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I sometimes get into discussions with social conservatives about why I am not at least *trying* to get married. I have a lot of reasons for not trying to get married. For one, I don't want to fall under the authority of hierarchies (school, work or church) who don't think that women should ever be held responsible for their own choices. Let's take a look at a news story that illustrates the problem.

Once upon a time, men would meet their wives in school, workplaces or churches. As long as the man was not in the reporting hierarchy of the woman, (i.e. – as long as he was not her manager or her director, etc.), then it was fine for people to meet up, date, get engaged, and get married. But that's all changed now.

Consider this story from the New York Post:

> A renowned Massachusetts Institute of Technology biologist who was axed after having what he said was a consensual fling with a much younger colleague, said the mushrooming scandal forced him on the unemployment line.
>
> David Sabatini, 54, whose research involved unraveling how tumors develop, resigned from MIT last month and has been surviving on employment after fellow scientist Kristin Knouse claimed he "groomed" and "coerced" her into a sexual relationship, according to a report and court papers.
>
> A longtime friend and dean at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine tried to offer him a job, but after an uproar, the school announced on May 3 that it would not hire him despite the fact that colleagues described him in a recent article as one of the world's greatest scientists — a "genius" in line for the Nobel Prize.
>
> "What wormhole did my life take, to … protests and being called a sexual predator? What quirk in the universe allowed this to happen?" said Sabatini, who has denied wrongdoing and noted Knouse did not work in his lab or report to him.
>
> In an October lawsuit against MIT, Sabatini said that his relationship with Knouse, who is 21 years his junior, was consensual — and told a reporter he was shocked to find himself the subject of protests at NYU when the school explored the possibility of hiring him.
>
> Sabatini has contended he and Knouse began their fling during a 2018 conference, while he was in the midst of a divorce. By 2020, he thought the affair had cooled, though he claims Knouse wanted to continue. By October 2020, she complained she'd been harassed, and in a later lawsuit alleged Sabitini oversaw a "sexualized" environment in his lab.

What's interesting about this story to me is that it's been reported that this woman entered into this relationship with this man after he clearly communicated to her that he

was only looking for something casual. I.e. – he was not trying to hide that he did not want to be tied down. He was telling her that up front.

There are more details about the story in Common Sense.

After their initial hook-up…

> …they met up at Knouse's condo near Boston Common where they discussed a few ground rules for their tryst. They agreed they could see other people. Knouse, Sabatini remembers, had ongoing flings with men who she referred to with nicknames like "anesthesiologist f*** buddy," "finance bro," and "physics professor," **and she wanted to keep it that way.** Also, they wouldn't tell anyone. Why complicate things at work? It was all supposed to be fun.

Why did this woman get the man fired? Well, there is an old saying about women that goes like this: "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned". Apparently, Sabatini was getting interested in another woman, and less interested in Knouse:

> Things were fizzling… he was getting involved with another woman, a microbiologist in Germany.
>
> Knouse didn't want to let go. In January 2020 she texted, in part: "I get anxious when I don't hear back from you and then I see you post stuff on Twitter and it provides an admittedly small and silly but still another bit of evidence to this growing feeling that you don't care about me in the way that I care about you." He wrote back: "I am sorry but you are being crazy." In another text, Knouse admitted feeling "stung." She added: "I think it's worth thinking about whether you want someone who matches your passion, intellect, and ambition."

Feminists think that people are faithful and committed because of self-interest, e.g. – "passion, intellect, and ambition", i.e. – self-interest. They think that a woman can just like fun, and choose a man who likes fun, and have a permanent, exclusive relationship based on continuous fun. No need to care about religion. No need to care about the rationality of moral behavior. No need to care about traditional gender roles. Things will just work out, if each person acts selfishly all the time.

So what happened to Sabatini next?

This:

> In October 2020, Knouse texted her friends that she was "unpack[ing] a ton of suppressed abuse and trauma from an obvious local source"—an apparent reference to Sabatini. Knouse's fellowship at the Whitehead was ending, and she didn't apply for any faculty jobs there. When the new director, Ruth Lehmann, called Knouse to ask why, Knouse complained for the first time of being "harassed."
>
> In November, Knouse warned her friend—an incoming Whitehead fellow—to "squeeze out as much advice as possible before your mentor is Weinstein'ed out

> of science."
>
> In December, at Lehmann's behest, the consulting firm Jones Diversity sent the Whitehead employees a survey "based in part on Dr. Knouse's false complaint about Dr. Sabatini," according to a complaint later brought by Sabatini. All participants were anonymous. Five or so of the nearly 40 employees in Sabatini's lab took part.
>
> The next month, two former Sabatini lab members lodged complaints to H.R.—the first complaints against him in his 24-year tenure—about "bro culture" in the lab.
>
> This prompted the Whitehead to hire the law firm Hinckley, Allen & Snyder to conduct an investigation on "gender bias and/or inequities and a retaliatory leadership in the Sabatini lab." The Whitehead never told Sabatini what he was accused of. Former lab members told me their co-workers were sobbing when they came out of meetings with the lawyers, saying that the lawyers had put words in their mouths. "They had a very strong agenda," one of them told me.

Knouse was 29 years old. She was not a child. Sabatini never worked with her. He never supervised her. He never threatened her or pressured her. This was a relationship between two consenting adults. But that doesn't matter, because in every school and workplace, women cannot be held responsible for their own bad choices. Women are always victims of men. It is always the man who must be punished. And men have to go to school and work in these environments for their entire lives – walking on thin ice, never knowing when the axe will fall.

Sabatini is ruined:

> In the 24 hours after the report came out, Sabatini's life fell apart. MIT put him on administrative leave. The Howard Hughes Medical Institute, another prestigious non-profit that funds biomedical research and was paying Sabatini's salary, fired him. He resigned from the Whitehead, and eventually MIT, at the advice of his lawyers who thought it would help him secure his next job. ("I one hundred percent regret that," Sabatini told me).
>
> Soon, the biotech startups he'd helped found— Navitor Pharmaceuticals, KSQ and Raze Therapeutics—started severing their relationships with him. Sabatini was axed from professorships, fellowships, and professional societies. Awards and grants were pulled. His income disappeared.

Knouse is still working. They decided that she didn't violate the policy – only he violated it. She has no problem at all with this outcome – she really believes she is a victim, and shouldn't have to take responsibility for her own choices. Can you imagine being married to a woman who does whatever she wants, then blames you when things go wrong? And worse – goes to the authorities to have them punish you, when she is the one who chose poorly?

This was a consensual relationship. Expectations were set at the beginning – this was

casual, no commitment. She agreed to the casual nature, she was sleeping with several other men. Suddenly, she reached age 29, and decided it was time to get serious. He reminded her about their arrangement – nothing serious.

They were BOTH EQUALLY in violation of the company rule. Abuse was alleged by her, but there was no police involvement to verify it. He was punished, but there was no criminal trial where he could defend himself. He was not given due process. No lawyer. No self-defense. This lack of due process is common on college campuses, workplaces, and even in religious organizations. Women who are jilted by men are able to make these allegations and get these men fired without any due process.

Some people might say "well, he was treating her badly, so he deserved it". The issue is not whether he is to blame, or whether she is to blame. The issue is what message it sends to men about the safety of having relationships with women. Women aren't punished for breaking the same rules as men break. And men are learning from that not to engage in relationships with women, because the authorities always side with the women even if their own decisions have gotten them into trouble.

Some people might say, "well as long as you act morally, then this won't happen to you". But these accusations can also be made against innocent men who are just "guilty" of offending women in the school or workplace with their conservative or Christian views. This was already happening to people in companies like Mozilla and Google. Men sometimes get accused of false rape and sexual harassment for rejecting a woman's advances.

I know that a lot of pro-marriage social conservatives love to load men up with duties, and blame them when things go wrong. But those social conservatives cannot expect men to continue to marry in an environment where men are always to blame, men must always be punished, men must always pay alimony and child support, men must always go to jail, men must always lose their jobs or custody of their kids. Men are learning NOT to talk to women, date them, mentor them, or marry them.

It's lots of fun for pro-marriage social conservatives to treat women like children, and embrace chivalry in public. It's a form of virtue-signaling. But if you ignore the incentives facing men, then you are causing the very decline of marriage that you claim to oppose.

Should we expect to know what God’s reason is for allowing evil and suffering?

December 24, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article by Steven Cowan about the problems of evil and suffering.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude.

Now let’s find out what a noseeum is, and how it relates to the existence of evil and suffering:

> However, perhaps God’s existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God’s existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By “pointless evil,” Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe’s argument may be simply stated as follows:
>
> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the “noseeum inference.” Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a “noseeum” is something that you cannot see—it is a “no-see-um.” And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I “no-see-um” a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured

> to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

In that example, the planet is the noseeum. Just because you look really hard, you can't be confident that the planet is not there. And similarly with the problem of evil and suffering, looking really hard and finding no reason does not mean that there is no reason. It just means that you are not in a good position to see the reason. You don't know enough to to be sure that there is no reason, because of your limitations as a human being.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous.

According to the paper, human beings just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a noseeum. To know for sure that there is no reason, we would need to have more knowledge than we do.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very

difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

Did the early church invent the divinity of Jesus over a long period of time?

December 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus? When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography. The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

4So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

5For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

6yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

5Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

6Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

7but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

9Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above

every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The “Q” source for Matthew and Luke

Here’s Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier “Q” source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

For Christmas Day, let’s remember George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

December 25, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington’s line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington’s retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington’s army at White Plains, New York,

> British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after

> months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
>
> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
>
> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.

> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
>
> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
>
> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

New study: #MeToo caused men to reject collaborations with women

December 26, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

People in our society who are driven by their desires and emotions tend to struggle to answer the question: what are the consequences for all the people who are affected by my actions? The feelings-oriented people tend to follow their hearts. Thinking too much about the consequences of their actions would slow them down. In today's post, we'll look at some of these unintended consequences.

Here's the study, up at SSRN.

Abstract:

> How did #MeToo alter the cost of collaboration between women and men? I study research collaborations involving junior female academic economists and show they start fewer new research projects after #MeToo. The decline is driven largely by fewer collaborations with new male co-authors at the same institution. I show that the drop in collaborations is concentrated in universities where the perceived risk of sexual harassment accusations for men is high – that is, when both sexual harassment policies are more ambiguous exposing men to a larger variety of claims and the number of public sexual harassment incidents is high. The results suggest that the social movement is associated with increased cost of collaboration that disadvantaged the career opportunities of women.

Honestly, to me it doesn't matter whether the policies are more or less ambiguous. The risk of facing serious consequences – loss of job, loss of reputation, loss of income, loss of future job offers, exposure to anti-male courts – outweigh any benefits. What does a man have to gain by helping women, when there is a chance that she could destroy his whole life, up to and including imprisonment? The reward is not worth the risk.

The author of the study is very much a feminist, and enthusiastic about feminism. She tweeted about her paper in a long thread.

This tweet was interesting:

> Women don't make up for the loss in projects with men by collaborating more with other women or solo work. Junior men do make up for lost collaborations with women by collaborating more with men. So, men don't have a loss in projects overall.

I keep seeing feminists insist that they can do everything that men can do, and they don't need men. It sounds like when men decline to participate in the task of helping women, then the women themselves don't step in and make up for the loss. Even though there is much less risk of false accusations between women.

The feminist movement can be described as a non-stop chain of demands by women,

which were granted to women. And when got what they wanted, they complained that it wasn’t what they expected. Then they turn to the men who are now paying the costs of their behavior, and demand that those men fix it.

I think men need to take a step back and decline to participate. Men have enough trouble in this world taking care of ourselves. In the pre-feminist world, we were not discriminated against in school and at work. We had enough job security and money to look out for others. We knew that our protection, provision and leadership was seen as an asset. Well, that world is now gone. We have to decline to produce the same outputs in this new post-feminist world that we did in the world before feminism. We cannot take on unnecessary risks to help people who do not respect us.

Christian woman finds a way to discuss her faith with non-Christians

December 27, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting article where a Christian woman explains how she used to share her testimony with non-Christians. But that wasn't working. So she decided to try something different.

She writes:

> I'll never forget the first time I shared my personal testimony with a non-Christian.
>
> When the opportunity arose and I shared my story with an unbelieving friend, she replied, "That's so cool. I'm so happy you found something that works for you."
>
> *For me?*
>
> "It's not about what works *for me*," I said, trying to hide my discouragement. "It's about what's true for everyone."
>
> "That doesn't make sense," she responded. "That's *your experience*, not mine. I had a similar revelation when I realized I could leave the church, and I've become a better person for *my* decision. Just as you were freed from your heaviest burdens by finding God, I was freed from mine by leaving God behind."
>
> I was devastated but I chalked it up to my friend's hardheartedness. I decided to shake the dust off my feet and look forward to the next opportunity.
>
> But time after time of sharing my testimony resulted in similar responses. People expressed enthusiasm that I was happy, that Christianity worked for me, and that I had "found my niche." Yet no one considered my experience as anything more than just that—my own personal experience.
>
> […]I had been taught that sharing what God had done in my life was the ideal way to witness to non-Christians. A personal testimony was interesting yet non-confrontational, compelling but inoffensive. And yet, despite having shared my testimony with dozens of unbelievers, not a single person felt challenged to consider the truth claims of Christianity.

She noticed that her approach wasn't actually in the Bible. There was a different approach being demonstrated by Jesus, and later by his disciples.

She writes:

> When Jesus called his first disciples, he taught truth and provided evidence (miracles) to support his claims, then he asked people to follow him (Luke 5:1–11). In fact, this was his method whenever he went into new regions (see Luke 4:14–44; John 4:7–26). People decided to follow Jesus not on blind faith or a

> subjective feeling, but based on the evidence they had seen and heard.[i]
>
> Jesus also used evidence to assuage the doubts of even those who had been with him a long time. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin, who leapt in the womb during Mary's visit (Luke 1:39–45), baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, heard God's voice from heaven, and saw the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus in bodily form like a dove (Luke 3:21–22). Yet when John experienced unexpected suffering, he began to doubt.
>
> Jesus didn't respond as many do today, by insisting that John "just believe" or "have faith" or "prayer harder." Rather, he responded with more evidence, saying, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." (Matt. 11:2–6).
>
> […]At Pentecost, the apostle Peter offered signs and wonders, fulfilled prophecy, and relayed eyewitness testimony to persuade people from all over the Roman Empire that the most reasonable explanation for what they were seeing was not morning drunkenness, but a risen Messiah (Acts 2:1–41).
>
> On his missionary journeys, the apostle Paul reasoned with the Jews from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that Jesus was the Messiah who needed to suffer and rise from the dead (Acts 17:1–3, 17). And he reasoned with the Gentiles from outside the Scriptures, making a case with their own accepted beliefs to convince them (Acts 17:17–34).
>
> In fact, in describing his mission, Paul told the Philippians, "I am put here for the defense of the gospel" (1:7, 16). This word translated defense is the same word from which we get our English word "apologetics," meaning to make reasoned arguments or to provide evidence as justification. Using this same word, Peter commanded believers to "always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you"(1 Pet. 3:15).

So, she decided to dump the testimony approach, and try the Biblical approach. But she had to change it a little bit, since she couldn't perform miracles herself:

> We are not eyewitnesses to Jesus's life and resurrection, but we have the accounts of those who were. We don't typically see miracles, but we have millennia of biblical scholarship and archaeology that provide reasons to believe the accounts are trustworthy. We don't often hear God speaking audibly or see him parting seas, but we have significant scientific evidence that shows the universe had a beginning, and millennia of observation to confirm the scientific principle that everything that begins to exist has a cause.

I think a lot of Christians never move on from approach she described that wasn't getting results. And there's a reason for that – studying evidence is hard work. But I can tell you from my experience as a software engineer, there is no better way to convince other

people to adopt your view than to show them working code that produces results. If they have a prototype, they will adopt your design. Similarly with Christianity. If you have evidence, then you will be persuasive.

When talking about spiritual things with non-Christians, always remember the joke about the two men walking in the woods who meet a bear. One man starts to put on his running shoes. The other man says “what are you doing? you can’t outrun a bear!” And the first man says “I don’t have to. I only have to outrun you”. It’s the same with apologetics. You don’t have to be William Lane Craig to talk about your faith to non-Christians. You just have to know more than your non-Christian opponent knows about evidence.

The way things are going these days with the public schools and the mainstream news media, this is actually pretty easy to do. One or two introductory books on the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning for intelligent life, the origin of biological information, the origin of body plans, the historical reliability of the New Testament, the minimal facts case for the resurrection, etc. will do the job. You might need another one on philosophical challenges like evil, suffering, divine hiddenness, etc. But we’re talking no more than 5 books, and you’ll be effective in the vast majority of your conversations. If you can only get one book, I like Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow’s “Is God Just a Human Invention?” best.

Survey: young, unmarried women explain why they avoid having children

December 28, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why do so many women end up involuntarily childless? Is it because men are ruining their lives, with sexism and discrimination and refusal to commit? OR is it because women are deliberately making choices that lead them to involuntary childlessness? This interesting article answers that question. It comes from the far leftist Huffington Post.

They write:

> The Huffington Post and YouGov asked 124 women why they choose to be childfree. Their motivations ranged from preferring their current lifestyles (64 percent) to prioritizing their careers (9 percent) — a.k.a. fairly universal things that have motivated men not to have children for centuries. To give insight into the complex, layered decisions women make, HuffPost asked childfree readers to discuss the reasons they have chosen not to have kids and gathered 270 responses here.

They grouped the responses into 5 categories:

1. I want to prioritize my career
2. I don't like children
3. I had a bad relationship with my parents
4. I don't want the financial responsibility
5. I like my life as it is

And here are some interesting quotations:

Category 1:

> I am a first-generation college graduate in my family. My mother was a single mom my entire childhood, and I was there to see that struggle. Being a parent, for a woman, means for life. Being a parent, for men, seems to be something very different. I understand raising children is a big life change and I don't want to sell myself short on my potential to become something more and maybe even create change. **I am childfree because I want to travel, move, pursue my career wholly** and be able to push myself to be an inspiration to other women. If a child comes into my life, it won't be until I am happy and successful in my work life, and not until I am secure with my finances and a marriage. I don't want to one day wake up as an old woman wishing I had waited to have children so I could live my own life first, make mistakes, learn new things and find myself. Today kids are not for me.

Category 2:

> I'm nearly 47; my boyfriend (domestic partner) of 17 years is nearly 50. I've never been pregnant and have taken every precaution to remain childfree. I tolerate other people's children when I have to. I'm happiest when there are NO children around. I definitely don't want them in my home. I like my life as it is. My boyfriend and I are both scientists. We also raise snakes and spiders! **We like to travel. We travel to ride roller coasters (members of ACE — American Coaster Enthusiasts) and to attend rock concerts.** I am also a performer in a senior winter guard. My plate overfloweth! I see no reason to procreate. I would be unhappy. Why be unhappy?

Category 3:

> I have a great relationship with my husband. **We have the time and money to travel, and that gives us precious memories.** I had a bad relationship with my dad, and maybe I'm scared to treat my children like that. I'm very happy with my decision. I have a great relationship with myself too.

Category 4:

> My spouse and I have talked in depth about having children. However, **we both decided that our desire to travel the world is a financial burden in itself. If we have kids, we will never have the means to travel**, and at the end of our life, we would rather be 100 percent committed to fulfilling our own realistic dreams rather than only able to provide a subpar life for a child. Comes down to the fact we are selfish, but at least we recognize this and made the choice early enough to avoid damaging a kid

Category 5:

> The thought of having to do kiddie crap every weekend makes me want to shoot myself. I like having the extra money to save for retirement and not worry about braces, summer camp or college tuition. **I can travel on a moment's notice.** I can give my all to my job and not have to worry about daycare, sick days, or having to leave my co workers to pick up my slack. I'm the "cool aunt" to all my nieces and nephews. I have more time to do the things that make me happy and productive. My relationship with my guy is not strained due to the constant neediness of children. I don't want to put my body through pregnancy and childbirth. I can give my dog all the attention he needs and deserves.

If I had to choose one comment to represent the entire survey, it would be this one:

> The moment you have children, you're life ceases to be about yourself. Kids always take priority and I feel like I can do more for this world than just generate offspring.

These quotations are very troubling to me. I've been serious about obtaining STEM degrees, saving money by *not traveling*, and making a plan to have a marriage and

family that will serve God. I haven't used my freedom to buy alcohol or to play the field sexually. I don't see women being serious about choosing men who are serious about marriage – especially men who are financially prepared to pay for things like houses and children. A lot of women are even interested in men who are younger than they are, despite the fact that these men have not proven themselves in their careers and finances. But younger men are easier to manipulate, and are less concerned about leading a woman to choose wife and mother roles.

Many women try to communicate maturity to others by saying that they want to get married "some day". But all the actions *right now* show that they really see marriage as "boring" and "demanding". Marriage and children "some day" is like planning for your retirement by winning the lottery. The every day actions of spending money aren't preparing you in any way to win the lottery. Talking about marriage "some day" is just a way for the woman to signal to her family and friends that she will *eventually* want the responsibility of a husband and kids, but not right now. The problem with that is that making selfish decisions over and over and over is not the way to prepare your character to be content with caring for the needs of a husband and children. Being unselfish is a skill that you have to build by repetition and practice. Just like any other virtue. And men know that. Men don't marry women who won't care for them or care for their children.

Should Christians respect Francis Collins as an authority on science?

December 29, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Francis Collins is apparently in the news again. He claims to be an evangelical Christian, and pushed Christians to wear cloth masks and get vaccinated. Should Christians trust Collins as a scientific authority? Or is he just a willing pawn of the secular left? Let's take a look at an article from Megan Basham, and find out.

This article from February 2022 is originally from Daily Wire, but full text here. The title is "How The Federal Government Used Evangelical Leaders To Spread Covid Propaganda To Churches".

Excerpt:

> In September, Wheaton College dean Ed Stetzer interviewed National Institutes of Health Director Francis Collins on his podcast, "Church Leadership" about why Christians who want to obey Christ's command to love their neighbors should get the Covid vaccine and avoid indulging in misinformation.
>
> […]Their conversation also turned to the subject of masking children at school, with Collins noting that Christians, in particular, have been resistant to it. His view was firm—kids should be masked if they want to be in the classroom. To do anything else is to turn schools into super spreaders. Stetzer offered no pushback or follow-up questions based on views from other medical experts. He simply agreed.
>
> […]Collins participated in a livestream event, co-hosted by Christianity Today… During the panel interview, Collins continued to insist that the lab leak theory wasn't just unlikely but qualified for the dreaded misinformation label. "If you were trying to design a more dangerous coronavirus," he said, "you would never have designed this one … So I think one can say with great confidence that in this case the bioterrorist was nature … Humans did not make this one. Nature did."

I blogged previously about how several federal government departments now think that this is the most plausible theory, and how the CIA bribed experts to change their testimony about the lab leak theory. So Collins was actually the one spreading misinformation.

Collins takes secular left positions on abortion and transgenderism:

> He has not only defended experimentation on fetuses obtained by abortion, he has also directed record-level spending toward it. Among the priorities the NIH has funded under Collins — a University of Pittsburgh experiment that involved grafting infant scalps onto lab rats, as well as projects that relied on the harvested organs of aborted, full-term babies. Some doctors have

> even charged Collins with giving money to research that required extracting kidneys, ureters, and bladders from living infants.
>
> He further has endorsed unrestricted funding of embryonic stem cell research, personally attending President Obama's signing of an Executive Order to reverse a previous ban on such expenditures.
>
> […]When it comes to pushing an agenda of racial quotas and partiality based on skin color, Collins is a member of the Left in good standing, speaking fluently of "structural racism" and "equity" rather than equality. He's put his money (or, rather, taxpayer money) where his mouth is, implementing new policies that require scientists seeking NIH grants to pass diversity, equity, and inclusion tests in order to qualify.
>
> […]Having declared himself an "ally" of the gay and trans movements, he went on to say he "[applauds] the courage and resilience it takes for [LGBTQ] individuals to live openly and authentically" and is "committed to listening, respecting, and supporting [them]" as an "advocate."
>
> […]Under his watch, the NIH launched a new initiative to specifically direct funding to "sexual and gender minorities." On the ground, this has translated to awarding millions in grants to experimental transgender research on minors, like giving opposite-sex hormones to children as young as eight and mastectomies to girls as young as 13. Another project, awarded $8 million in grants, included recruiting teen boys to track their homosexual activities like "condomless anal sex" on an app without their parents' consent.

Megan's got the names of the people who promoted him in her article: Tim Keller, Rick Warren, N. T. Wright, Ed Stetzer, Russell Moore, and David French:

> Keller, Warren, Wright, and Stetzer all publicly lauded him as a godly brother. When presenting Collins to Southern Baptists, Moore gushed over him as the smartest man in a book club he attends…
>
> [I]nfluential evangelical pundit David French deemed Collins a "national treasure" and his service in the NIH "faithful."

Dr. Collins is a Darwinian evolutionist, so you can guess how evidence-based his views are about the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion. I think Christians need to be skeptical of believers in naturalistic religion: Darwinism, man-made catastrophic global warming, abortion, transgenderism, etc. It's pretty clear that these naturalistic views are not the result of study and debate. People who jump on the speculations of the secular left, and pronounce them as infallible, are not doing it to promote truth. They do it because they want the respect of powerful secular leftists. Dr. Collins is not an independent thinker. He is someone who adopts the views of secular leftist elites automatically and without thinking. He wants to get ahead in the world. That's it.

Dr. Walter Bradley lectures on scientific evidence the creation and design of the universe

December 30, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This lecture is special to me, because I bought a VHS tape of it just after I started working full-time, and watched it a million times. A lot of people come to their convictions about God's existence because of parents or church or intuitions, but for me it's all about the scientific evidence. This lecture changed my life. I wish more people taught their children about this evidence! This lecture was delivered at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Bradley received his B.S. in Engineering Science and his Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Texas in Austin.
>
> Dr. Bradley taught for eight years at the Colorado School of Mines before assuming a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1976.
>
> During his 24 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Bradley served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and as Director of the Polymer Technology Center, and received five College of Engineering Research Awards. He has received over $4,500,000 in research grants and has published over 140 technical articles and book chapters. He has also co-authored "The Mystery Of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Materials and of the American Scientific Affiliation and serves as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.
>
> He currently serves as Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University.

The lecture: (63 minutes lecture, 25 minutes audience Q&A)

Summary slide:

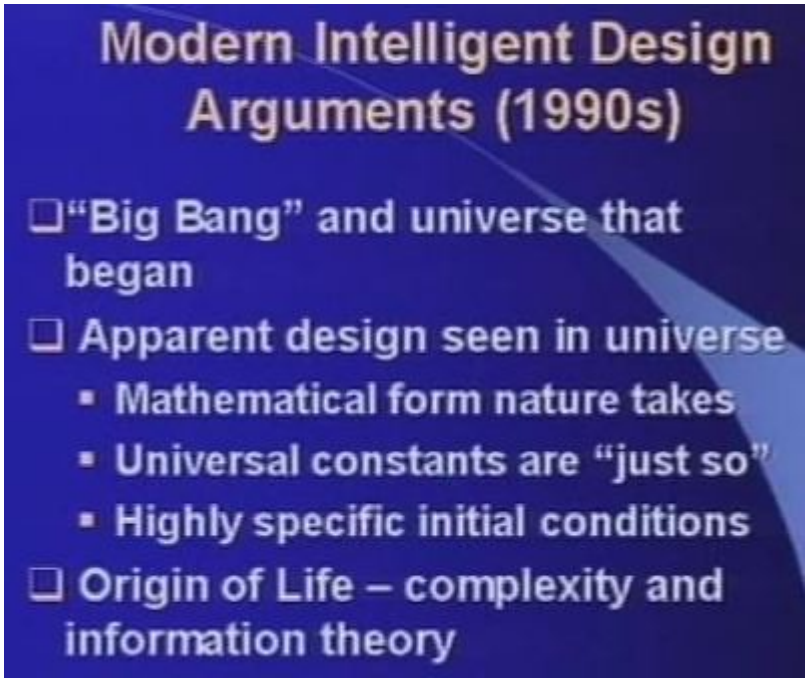

This slide summarizes the content of the lecture
Introduction:

- At the beginning of the 20th century, people believed that the progress of science was pointing away from an intelligent Creator and Designer, and towards naturalism
- A stream of new discoveries has shifted the support of science towards theism, and away from naturalism
- Richard Dawkins, an atheist, says that nature only has the appearance of design, but that if you look closer, naturalistic mechanisms can account for the appearance of design
- When deciding between design and apparent design ("designoid"), it matters whether you think there is an intelligence there to do the designing

Evidence #1: The Big Bang:

- an eternal "steady state" universe is more compatible with naturalism, but a created universe is more compatible with a Creator
- In 1929, Hubble used telescopes to observe that the light from distant galaxies was *redshifted.* The further away galaxies were, the faster they were moving away. Therefore, space is expanding in all directions, suggesting an explosive origin of the universe
- In 1965, the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation matched a prediction of the Big Bang cosmology, and of the creation event
- In 1992, the COBE space telescope allowed us to test four specific predictions of the Big Bang model, especially the predictions for light element abundances (hydrogen and helium), which matched the predictions of the creation model

Evidence #2: Simple mathematical structure of the physical laws

- the simple mathematical structure of natural laws allows us to understand these laws, make discoveries, and engineer solutions to problems
- early scientists saw the mathematical structure of the universe to mean that nature was designed by an intelligent to be understood
- the fundamental equations of the laws of the universe can be easily written on one side of one sheet of paper
- Eugene Wigner's famous paper, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Physical Sciences" makes the point that this simple structure is an unexpected gift that allows is to do science

Evidence #3: fine-tuning of the physical constants and quantities

- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stars that provide energy within specific ranges for long periods of time
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need planets with stable orbits that will not suffer from extreme temperature swings as it varies in distance from its star
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stable atomic structure
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need to have chemical diversity and correct relative abundances of each element
- organic life has minimum requirements: process energy, store information, replicate, and you can't fulfill those functions if there is only one element, e.g. – hydrogen
- the energy level from the photons from the sun have to match the energy levels of the different elements in order to drive the chemical bonding needed for life
- These requirements for life of any imaginable type depend on the values of the constants and quantities. The constants and quantities cannot vary much from what they are, or the universe will lose the characteristics (above) that allow it to support complex life of any imaginable time
- For example, ratio of strong force to electromagnetic force:
  – if 2% larger, then no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no compounds containing hydrogen, e.g. – water
  – if 5% smaller, no stable stars, heavy hydrogen would be unstable, few elements other than hydrogen

Evidence #4: initial conditions for habitability

- Universe: expansion rate of the universe must be fast enough to avoid a re-collapse, but slow enough to allow matter to clump together and form stars and planets for complex life to live on
- Planet: right distance from the star to get the right climate
- Planet: right mass to retain the right atmosphere

Evidence #5: origin of life and information theory

- It’s possible to explain every process in an automobile engine using plain old naturalistic mechanisms – no supernatural explanation is necessary to understand the processes
- But the existence of engine itself: engineering all the parts has to be explained by the work of an intelligence
- Similarly, we can understand how living systems work, but the existence of the living systems requires an intelligence
- Even the simplest living system has to perform minimal function: capture energy, store information and replicate
- Living systems are composed of objects like proteins that are composed of sequences of components complex such that the order of the components gives the overall structure function
- Developing the components for a simple living cell is very improbable – even given the large number of galaxies, stars and planets in the universe, it is unlikely that complex, embodied life would exist *anywhere* in the universe

Evidence #6: more initial conditions for habitability

- Location within the galaxy: you need to be away from the center of the galaxy, because the explosions from dying stars, and excessive radiation will kill life
- Location within the galaxy: you need to be close enough to the center in order catch the heavy elements you need for life from the explosions of other stars
- Location within the galaxy: the best location is between two arms of a spiral galaxy, where you can get the heavy elements you need from dying stars, but without being hit with explosions and harmful radiation
- Star mass: determines rate at which the sun burns, determines the energy level of photons that are used to drive chemical bonding reactions, determines the length of time the star will be stable
- Star mass: star mass must be the correct value in order to allow liquid water on the planet’s surface, while still preserving stable orbit

I wish there was more curiosity about science in churches, and young Christians understood *how critical science is* for grounding the rationality of the Christian worldview. We need to be training up more scientists who think about the big questions, like Dr. Walter Bradley.

Should conservatives trust the FBI to be impartial and unbiased?

December 31, 2023 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's the end of the year, and I thought it would be a good time to review five FBI scandals. Then you can decide for yourself whether you think that the FBI is doing a good job of enforcing the law. And remember, you're paying their salaries with your tax dollars, so you have to decide whether you are getting good value for your money. Let's take a look at some of the scandals.

Here is an article about the scandals from Fox News.

Attack Republicans:

> Former counterintelligence FBI special agent Charles McGonigal — who led New York's counterintelligence division and played a critical role in the alleged Trump-Russia collusion investigation — was earlier this month sentenced to four years in prison for charges related to colluding with a Russian oligarch.
>
> […]In May, Special Counsel John Durham released a long-awaited final report to the Justice Department, which spans more than 300 pages of his years-long investigation into the origins of "Crossfire Hurricane." Durham found that both the DOJ and FBI "failed to uphold their mission of strict fidelity to the law" when it launched the Trump-Russia investigation.
>
> Durham said his investigation also revealed that "senior FBI personnel displayed a serious lack of analytical rigor towards the information that they received, especially information received from politically-affiliated persons and entities."

Protect Democrats:

> While Trump and members of his inner circle remain at the center of several investigations, the bureau faced backlash for declining requests from House Republicans to release an unclassified FBI document that contained claims from an informant that President Biden was allegedly involved in foreign business dealings with his family.
>
> But after the bureau balked for months to turn over the document to lawmakers, Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, obtained the internal material — known as an FD-1023 — and released it to the public. The document accused the FBI of improperly delaying or completely shutting down a full investigation into the Biden family.

Pre-dawn raiding the homes of peaceful pro-lifers:

> When the FBI wasn't focused on — or allegedly turning a blind eye to — the White House, the bureau was slapped with a $1.1 million lawsuit in November brought by Catholic father and pro-life activist Mark Houck, who was arrested in

> his home in 2022 by FBI agents over a previous altercation outside a Planned Parenthood. A 12-person jury later unanimously acquitted Houck on all charges of violating the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act.
>
> Houck filed a lawsuit against the Justice Department seeking restitution for what it called “a faulty investigation” and “excessive force” after a SWAT team of around 25 people arrested him in front of his children. The lawsuit alleges government agents deprived Houck of his Fourth Amendment rights by using excessive force to arrest him on non-violent charges.

Persecute taxpayers for their religious views:

> Perhaps the bureau’s most shocking moment in 2023 came in February when former FBI agent Seraphin exposed an unclassified intelligence document from the FBI’s Richmond field office in Virginia that appeared to target traditional Catholics as so-called potential domestic terrorists, which immediately forced the bureau’s headquarters in Washington, D.C., to purge the anti-Catholic memo from its system.
>
> After the bureau said it would “never conduct investigative activities or open an investigation based solely on First Amendment protected activity,” lawmakers in the House Judiciary Committee and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government launched an investigation into the FBI and discovered that the bureau interviewed a priest and a choir director affiliated with a Catholic church in Richmond, Virginia.

You have to decide for yourself whether the FBI uses it’s power to break laws for the benefit of the Democrat party. You have to decide for yourself whether they’ve abandoned their duty to protect the Americans who pay their salaries. You have to decide for yourself whether the FBI persecutes American taxpayers solely on the basis of their first amendment activities. You have to decide whether the FBI is in violation of the Constitution – or maybe even at war with the Constitution. Vote accordingly in 2024.

The DeSantis plan: pay teachers well, and put teacher unions out of business

January 1, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The GOP primary is about to begin in Iowa, and it's a contest between a man who talks about himself, and a man who solves problems. One BIG problem in this country is teacher unions. Teacher unions collect mandatory dues from teachers, and they use those to advocate for far-left policies. But in Florida, DeSantis made a plan, and he executed that plan. And now the results are here.

Here's the latest from Florida Voice:

> As much as 60% of Miami-Dade public school educators could be withheld from representation after the state's largest teachers union failed to meet membership requirements under state law.
>
> United Teachers of Dade, the largest union in the country, reportedly did not meet the required threshold after some teachers opted out of paying membership dues.
>
> […]Signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis, SB 256 mandates a union must apply for recertification if its membership dues fail to reach 60%. According to a report, UTD's membership dues reached 58.4%.
>
> […]Under the law, unions are barred from directly withdrawing funds from public employee paychecks. An employee, such as a teacher, also must opt into a union to send payments.

SB 256 is a DeSantis bill. Passed by the legislators he helped to elect. And so when it got to his desk, he signed it.

> "If United Teachers of Dade spent half as much time paying attention to their members' interests as they have been pushing a political agenda with Randi Weingarten and running for office with Charlie Crist, they probably wouldn't even be in this position," Freedom Foundation Director or Labor Relations Allison Beattie said.
>
> […]"We were approached this summer by a number of teachers in Miami-Dade County who were unhappy seeing their hard-earned paychecks going into the pockets of union officers while those same officers have consistently negotiated away pay and benefits," Beattie said.
>
> […]"We're not surprised UTD couldn't make the 60 percent threshold, because they've lost focus of their mission – representing rank and file teachers," Beattie continued. "The union sends 46 percent of its budget to unions like the AFL-CIO, National Education Association, and Randi Weingarten."

This is a historic win for conservatives:

> According to the Freedom Foundation, United Teachers of Dade's fracture is the largest decertified vote in American history.

How did DeSantis get the teachers to want to opt out of paying union dues? Well, Florida is a right-to-work state, so workers don't have to join a union in order to work. They have the freedom to work without having to join a union. If they think that the union provides value worth their dues, then they can join and pay the dues. Traditionally, labor unions have pressured employers for higher pay. And that's where the genius of Ron DeSantis can be seen. He has been taking away the need for teacher unions by paying teachers very well. That's why the enrollment in unions has come down in Florida. This is wonderful for conservatives, because teacher unions are *major* proponents of every secular left policy you can imagine. Not just on fiscal issues, but on social issues, and foreign policy.

This article from Fox News explains why teacher unions are bad:

> Universal school choice made significant gains in 2023 when a wave of red states passed legislation. Now, more states are looking to join the fold next year, a phenomenon called a "school choice revolution."
>
> American Federation For Children Senior Fellow Corey DeAngelis told Fox News Digital recently to look out for more states passing universal school choice legislation because a sea change is underway.
>
> […]DeAngelis added that school choice is difficult to pass in traditionally blue states like California, Illinois, and New York because the Democratic Party is "owned by the teachers union."
>
> "You look at Randi Weingarten, the American Federation of Teachers, in 2022, according to Open Secrets, 99.97% of the contributions from Randi's AFT went to Democrats as opposed to independents or Republicans," DeAngelis said.
>
> He explained further, "It's basically an elaborate money laundering scheme where the Democrats funnel the money to the government schools and then the teachers unions take that money and they give it back to the Democratic Party. It's a nonstop wash, rinse, repeat money laundering scheme where the teachers unions are basically an arm of the Democratic Party at this point."

When Donald Trump was president for four years, he did absolutely nothing to take on teacher unions. Ron DeSantis is doing it now. If he loses the GOP primary, he'll keep on fighting teacher unions. But if he wins, he'll be fighting teacher unions at the federal level, in all 50 states. We can have that, if we vote wisely.

Which country is the most dangerous for Christians?

January 2, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw an interesting article over at Daily Wire that talks about the most dangerous country in the world for Christians: Nigeria. I thought Nigeria has Boko Haram running around kidnapping people, but the article says that "roughly 90% of all martyrs in 2022 — over 5,000 Christians murdered for their faith — were from Nigeria." The author of the article is from ADF, so it's reliable.

The article is paywalled, but here's an archived copy.

Excerpt:

> Northern Nigeria is a place where the Church faces some of the worst persecution on earth. According to Open Doors, roughly 90% of all martyrs in 2022 — over 5,000 Christians murdered for their faith — were from Nigeria.
>
> One of those martyrs was Deborah Emmanuel Yakubu, a Christian student at a university in Sokoto State, who in May 2022 was stoned to death and burnt by her Muslim classmates because of her faith in Jesus. Another Christian woman, Rhoda Jatau, faced a mob and was arrested for blasphemy after the mob accused her of sharing a video that insulted Islam because it condemned the lynching of Deborah.
> Rhoda sat in a jail in Bauchi State, Nigeria, for over 18 months because of the accusations. She only saw her family and lawyers at court hearings.
>
> But through her witness to the injustice of the treatment of Christians in Northern Nigeria, both by extremist Islamist mobs and baseless prosecutions, her case caused national outrage.
> Earlier this month, after enormous national outcry, Rhoda was finally released on bail, able to spend Christmas this year with her family in safety. While the charges against her are still pending, many within Nigeria and internationally are pushing for them to be dropped fully.

There are a couple of signs that things are improving in the article, here's one:

> As with many places where Christians are a religious minority, converts to Christianity, particularly from Islam, often find it extremely dangerous to practice their faith. Daniel Kefee* was an evangelist in Northern Nigeria who brought a young Muslim woman, Hafsatu*, to Christ. But when her family found out, members of her family threatened to kill her. She sought out help from Daniel, who found a Christian residential school that could care for her.
>
> For helping Hafsatu, Daniel was charged by Nigerian authorities with kidnapping. Yet Daniel and his lawyers bravely presented to the court the reality of what had happened. In an astonishing result given the region, the judge not only acquitted Daniel, but prodded the prosecutors, asking them, "should the defendant have

> left the girl, what would have happened with her?”

And another one:

> Also this year, in another state in Northern Nigeria, a young woman named Mary Olowe* similarly converted to Christianity and faced death threats from her family. She was able to flee and filed for a restraining order against those who threatened her. Once again, the court issued a remarkable decision, granting the order and explicitly recognizing as a fundamental right Mary’s ability to change her religion from Islam to Christianity without facing any threat of violence.

If you like to pray for Christians in other countries, Nigeria should probably be your first pick. The Muslims there are clearly out gunning for Christians. It would be nice if our elected officials in the Biden administration were doing something about this, but I don’t think they care. They have other priorities.

Should men marry women who think relationship boundaries are “emotional abuse”?

January 3, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the reasons that I am not married today is because I tried to set spiritual and moral boundaries with women I wanted marry, but those boundaries were rejected. The purpose of the boundaries was to get the woman to be suitable for a marriage designed to serve God. In every case, the relationships ended. And this is actually becoming more common, under the influence of feminism.

Here is an article from The Federalist, written by Kylee Griswold.

She writes:

> Who would have thought perpetual adolescent Jonah Hill would be good at grown-up relationships? Well, he is, judging by some apparent texts his surfer ex-girlfriend Sarah Brady shared to Instagram over the weekend — despite the out-of-control media screeching to the contrary.
>
> […]According to Brady and the TikTokkers, self-proclaimed therapists, media, and fellow thirst-trappers who came to her defense, Hill is a controlling narcissist and misogynist — all for the crime of allegedly asking his then-girlfriend to please put on some clothes.

So, a man told a woman that he was interested in that he proposed certain rules in the relationship, rules that would allow him to get serious, and point the relationship towards commitment (as you’ll see). But the woman, and all of her supportive allies, from the secular left to the religious right, all agreed with her that a man setting boundaries on a woman to make her safe for a marriage commitment is “emotional abuse”.

More:

> Specifically, Hill laid down some boundaries for his partner:
>
> […]Plain and simple: If you need: Surfing with men[,] Boundaryless inappropriate friendships with men[,] to model[,] to post pictures of yourself in a bathing suit[,] to post sexual pictures[,] friendships with women who are in unstable places and from your wild recent past beyond getting a lunch or coffee or something respectful[,] I am not the right partner for you. If these things bring you to a place of happiness I support it and there will be no hard feelings. These are my boundaries for romantic partnership.
>
> Hill’s detractors say this is “emotional abuse.” But can something really be described as “abuse” if the alleged perpetrator tells you “no hard feelings” if you’d rather walk away than agree to the terms?

Feminism has made it a lot harder for men to set boundaries that will orient women towards marriage. No matter how wise the man, and how good the advice, it must all be

rejected. But the demands for men to get married to rebels remain. Especially when the feminists are hitting 35, and their friends are all getting married. They feel entitled to marriage, and how dare men tell them no? Many women today don't want to hear a man *talk about the Bible* or hear a man *talk about right and wrong*, they just want weddings, wedding rings, vacations, and things to be fixed around the house. It would be better if men were just walking ATMs that didn't talk at all.

More:

> To protect the health and integrity of his relationship, Hill established reasonable and respectable parameters for how his girlfriend was to behave toward him through how she acted toward other men. Don't sexualize yourself for other guys or engage in other relationship-compromising behaviors. And he made clear how he would respond if she didn't respect those limits. I'm not the right man for you.

In my cases, my boundaries were always things that were clearly good for the women, and also good for commitment. For example, I might say "stop spending money on travel, get a private sector job in your field, and pay off your student loans". But these conditions were rejected. Later on, when the woman reached her early 30s, I would get e-mails about wanting to get back together. But the student loans had only increased, and the resumes now had huge gaps. I can only assume that the body counts had also increased from all the "traveling". No thanks, I said. No thank you. I can do something more productive than bail women out. I especially don't want to bail women out *who have no respect for men who know how to lead*.

This behavior of calling moral and spiritual leadership "emotional abuse" and "controlling" is common – even in Christian circles – because of feminism. In general, the only acceptable male roles are "protect and provide". Men are supposed to take on all the accountability, but with none of the authority to defend the truth, or to defend morality. On any topic. For example, if you try to tell a single woman in her late 20s about infertility, it's "emotional abuse". No amount of evidence can ever beat "follow your heart". And she has legions of supporters who will shame you for trying to argue from scientific studies.

If you think I am mean, then read Kylee:

> Enter feminism, which loves female autonomy and sold women lots of lies about it. Feminism said love yourself. If that means wreaking all kinds of havoc, your second "X" chromosome trumps the consequences. Unrestrained sex and unintended pregnancy? Abort the baby. Not happy in your marriage? Divorce him. Unfulfilled at home? Leave the kids with an underpaid immigrant and climb that corporate ladder. No boundaries. No bonds. No bras.
>
> But news flash: Relationships take two. And sadly, thanks to that third-wave wrecking ball, some dating women need to be told some obvious things when it comes to romantic fidelity, even if those things have to come from their partners: Seeking the approval of other men for how you look is a bad idea. Worse, it

> communicates lots of bad things about your priorities and desires.
>
> Frankly, a man who's willing to say that tough thing is probably a man worth holding onto. Thanks in part to "toxic masculinity" messaging and the militant feminization of America, a man who shoots for commitment and faithfulness, and communicates those aims in a straightforward way while proposing an amicable split as the alternative, is a rarity.

Oh, how I love those words.

Sadly, Kylee's view is in the minority today, thanks to feminism. And if men are not allowed to lead a relationship, then the marriage rate will continue to decline. Neither shaming of men nor blaming of men will cause men to accept marriage without leadership.

For more on this topic, I recommend this excellent article by Mark McDonald, M.D., entitled "Why American Women Are Undatable" The subtitle is "No One Wants to Play with a Porcupine". Indeed not.

What effect will the $34 trillion national debt have on you and your family?

January 4, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My podcast partner Rose suggested that I blog about the rapidly increasing national debt. This will not be a political post, as the federal national debt increased a ton under Obama, again under Trump, and again under Biden. (If you want fiscal responsibility, you have to look for governors of red states who are running surpluses). Let's see the latest news, then talk about what it means.

Here's the news from the Epoch Times:

> The U.S. national debt recorded its third "depressing achievement" in the past 12 months, topping $34 trillion for the first time to close out 2023, according to the latest Treasury Department Debt to the Penny data.
>
> On Dec. 29, 2023, the debt climbed about $90 billion in one day, to exceed $34.001 trillion. It took Washington roughly three months to add $1 trillion to the gross federal debt and six months to amass $2 trillion.
>
> In a single year, the federal government's total public debt outstanding rocketed by about $2.65 trillion. By comparison, it took the United States more than 200 years to cross the $1 trillion mark in October 1981.

The long-term predictions are even worse:

> In the coming months, the Treasury forecasts that it'll borrow roughly $1 trillion to fund higher budget deficits and manage growing interest costs. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projected this past summer that the national debt will nearly double and account for 183 percent of gross domestic product by 2053.
>
> […]According to President Joe Biden's 2024 budget, the federal deficit is expected to be close to $1.9 trillion this year. The annual budget gap is predicted to remain above $2 trillion after 2030.

Let me give my thoughts about this.

Right now, you can already see that interest rates are rising due to counter the inflation caused by massive government spending. Higher interest rates make it harder for innovators to borrow money in order to take risks on new products and services. So, the economy slows down.

Our creditors may demand higher interest rates on our borrowing, because of the rising risk that we will be unable to pay them back. That will increase the amount that we are paying in interest. My concern about this is that we won't have money available to deploy our military in the event of aggressive behavior from countries that don't like us very much.

Speaking of interest, our interest payments on the debt are taking up more and more of our discretionary spending. Soon, we won't have any money to spend after spending on mandatory programs, like Social Security and Medicare. Eventually, we won't have money for those. Pity the young people who are paying into social programs that are about to go into deficit.

That leads to my last point. The current generation is seeing the benefits of all this spending, but the upcoming generation is going to get the bill. What's amazing is that the younger generation is so brainwashed by the schools that they can't even vote in their own interest. They come out of the schools voting for more government, more spending, and higher taxes. They don't realize that they are the ones who are going to get the bill. They want to be communist, like Venezuela, but they don't really understand what it will be like.

Iowa: another mass shooting by a transgender terrorist who uses pronouns

January 5, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Does it really make a difference whether a person thinks that God is objectively real, and has designed the universe in such a way that human beings have objective moral duties? Well, we just had a recent shooting featuring a transgender terrorist attacking a Christian school in Nashville. Now, we have another shooting featuring another transgender terrorist.

Here's the latest from Mia Cathell, writing for Townhall:

> The now-deceased suspected gunman who shot at least six victims—killing one, a sixth-grade middle schooler—at a small-town high school in Perry, Iowa, early Thursday morning has been identified by authorities as 17-year-old student Dylan "DJ" Butler.
>
> […]An emoji of the gay Pride flag was featured in the TikTok page's bio and an image of an anime girl was selected as the profile's avatar. In another TikTok video, the account used the hashtag "genderfluid." Using an identical profile picture on Instagram, user @DylanSayWhat212 identified as trans non-binary with "he/they" pronouns. However, the account has also since been scrubbed.

Reddit comments:

> According to a series of Reddit posts that Butler appears to have authored, he interacted with transgender and "femboy" forums.
>
> In response to the question "For those who haven't started transitioning yet. What's holding you back?" posted to the r/Trans subreddit, the username u/Dylanpickle1996 replied, "I don't want to look ugly." Other replies were comments on pornographic ocntent. Over on the platform X, formerly Twitter, the since-suspended account @DylanSayWhat212, under the screenname "Dylan Jesse," professed his love for My Little Pony and "f*cking furries" while replying to a Happy Pride Month post. Officials have yet to verify these social media posts—all of which were subsequently deleted in the aftermath of Thursday's tragedy.

LibsOfTikTok has more:

https://twitter.com/libsoftiktok/status/1743027883029987547

And more generally:

> Colorado Springs shooter: nonbinary
> Nashville school shooter: trans
> Aberdeen shooter: trans
> Denver school shooter: trans

> Iowa school shooter: trans/genderfluid
>
> The modern LGBTQ+ movement is radicalizing our youth into becoming violent extremists.
>
> — Libs of TikTok (@libsoftiktok) January 4, 2024

On the positive side, the response from law enforcement was pretty fast and extensive. But all they can do is respond. They can't do anything to fix the source of the problem: public schools run by "don't judge" secular leftists who manufacture students with mental illnesses.

The public schools administrators choose the easiest majors in college. They often have student loans for useless non-STEM degrees. They have little or no work experience in the competitive private sector. They make decisions with their feelings, instead of using reason and evidence. They can't solve any real-world problems. And they are passing on their emotion-dominated behaviors to the children. This will not be the last time something like this happens, because the secular left keeps making more people with serious mental illnesses.

Homeschool your kids, and vote for politicians who have a record of supporting school choice.

Full video of Ron DeSantis' recent appearance on CNN town hall

January 6, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Iowa GOP primary vote is coming up very soon, and I just want to make sure that everyone has a chance to get to know the candidate with the best record of achievements. DeSantis' appearance on CNN was praised by CNN and others as the strongest they have seen him speak. He's improving his speaking ability, and so I thought I would post it along with an article.

Here's the video:

And the article from the far-left Iowa Capital-Dispatch.

Birthright citizenship:

> DeSantis said that if elected, he would sign an executive order eliminating the constitutional guarantee of citizenship for children of undocumented immigrants born in the U.S., also known as "birthright citizenship." While president in 2018, Trump said he would sign an executive order to eliminate it, but never did so.
>
> "The 14th Amendment obviously applies to U.S. citizens," DeSantis told CNN moderator Kaitlan Collins. "It was never the intent to say, 'you come illegally across the border, have a kid and all of a sudden, the kid is an American citizen.' That creates an anchor in the society so that you then can't deport the illegal aliens who came in. It's an incentive to come in illegally. That was not the intention of that."
>
> […]The governor then followed up by bashing Trump for saying that he would do the same thing, but never did so. "What is he now telling people in Iowa this time around? He says he's going to do the same thing that he didn't do the first four years. I mean sometimes you can say 'Congress stymied you' and all this other stuff. All he had to do was put his John Hancock on a piece of paper, and he did not do it. When I tell you I'm going to do something, you can take it to the bank. I'm going to do it."

Abortion legislation:

> On abortion, DeSantis defended his signing of a bill last year that would ban abortions in Florida after six weeks of pregnancy, with some exceptions (the law has not gone into effect as the Florida Supreme Court is reviewing a legal challenge to the 15-week ban passed in 2022. If they do maintain that law, the six-week ban would go into effect short afterwards). And he said Trump was weak on the issue.
>
> "This was a guy who was at the March for Life in January of 2020, and he said that all life was a gift from God. He said the unborn was made in the image of

> God. He said that there should be protections. That's what he was saying when he was president at the March for Life. Now he's saying it's a terrible, terrible thing. So how do you reconcile those two views. Did he flipflop? Did he not believe it at the time?"
>
> When Collins asked him if he thought that Trump wasn't actually "pro-life," DeSantis replied, "Of course not."
>
> "Some issues are pretty fundamental," DeSantis added. "How do you flipflop on something like the sanctity of life?" as the audience cheered.

Trump supported pro-life during his first term as president, but recently he's been critical of the repeal of Roe v. Wade decision, and also critical of states like Florida, that have restrictions on abortion.

All 99 counties:

> DeSantis has gone all in on Iowa, the first state in the country where Republican voters will be able to decide on who their presidential nominee will be in November. He's campaigned in all 99 counties in the state and received the endorsement of Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds.

Gun rights:

> […]The town hall took place just hours after six people were shot at a high school in Perry, Iowa, approximately 40 miles northeast of Des Moines earlier in the day. DeSantis called the shooting a tragedy, and then pivoted to how he had worked to enact a comprehensive gun safety law that was passed by the Florida GOP-controlled Legislature in the immediate wake of the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland in February 2018 that killed 17 people.
>
> Collins asked him about one provision in the law that GOP lawmakers now say that they want to repeal: a three-day waiting period to purchase a firearm in the state.
>
> "I think the background checks should be instant," he said, giving a boost to the proposed legislation. He added that if the background check reveals a criminal conviction or a mental health issue, the purchase would then be prevented. "But I think that you want instant background checks, and so that's what I support."

Ukraine funding:

> DeSantis… said on Thursday that "we need to bring it to a conclusion."
>
> Did that mean ending U.S. support for Ukraine? Collins asked.
>
> "It means end the conflict," DeSantis responded, before blasting President Biden for not giving the American people a clear message on what the U.S. objective is in the conflict. Collins again pressed him what "ending the conflict" actually meant – did that mean no more American dollars or military aid to the Volodymyr

> Zelensky administration?
>
> “What it means is bringing it to a situation where Russia is in a box and you’re not having wars break out to Europe,” he said, adding that he would never send U.S. troops to fight in the conflict – something that Joe Biden said when the war began nearly two years ago. He did say that he would be willing to help out Europe “to bring it to a conclusion.”
>
> As he had done on the campaign trail, DeSantis spoke about his own military experience, saying that if elected he would be the first veteran to serve in the White House since George H.W. Bush in 1988.

Just to help the author of the article out, DeSantis wants no more funding, and no more weapons. He thinks that Europe should supply Ukraine with funding and weapons, because the United States has to prioritize the threats from China and America’s Southern border.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

January 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell". One of my favorite 6 arguments for a Creator and Designer is the origin of the simplest replicating living system. When you look into the cell, what you'll find is carefully sequenced components that for complex structures, like proteins. In this lecture, you'll learn all about this "biological information".

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in

the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

All he does is win: DeSantis cuts health care costs by importing Canadian drugs

January 8, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two kinds of voters in the United States right now. First, there's the kind that is voting for Ron DeSantis in the GOP primary. Second, there's the kind who doesn't know what Ron DeSantis has accomplished in Florida. He has achievements in every single area that conservatives care about, even foreign policy! Let's see the latest demonstrated achievement from Ron DeSantis.

This report is from the CBS News:

> For the first time, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has authorized a Florida program to import certain prescription drugs in bulk from Canada, where drug prices are much cheaper, to significantly cut costs for American consumers.
>
> Floria's proposal specifies a number of drug classes, including medications for asthma; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD; diabetes; HIV and AIDS; and mental illness. The medications would be only for certain people, including foster children, prison inmates, certain elderly patients and, eventually, Medicaid recipients.
>
> Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the plan into law in 2019, but it required federal review and approval by the FDA, which controls prescription drug imports.
>
> […]DeSantis celebrated the FDA's move Friday, saying that the program will save the save up to $180 million in its first year alone by bringing lower cost drugs to Floridians.
>
> "After years of federal bureaucrats dragging their feet, Florida will now be able to import low-cost, life-saving prescription drugs," DeSantis said. "It's about time that the FDA put patients over politics and the interests of Floridians over Big Pharma."
>
> […]Florida has estimated that the program could save it up to $150 million annually. The FDA authorized the state's importation program for two years once the agency is notified of the first shipment of drugs ordered from Canada. State officials must first test the drugs to make sure they're authentic and relabel them so that they comply with U.S. standards.

I just want to stress this. If you are the kind of conservative who cares about results, then the best candidate in the 2024 election is Ron DeSantis.

DeSantis also promised to end the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

Here's the latest about that.

> Republican presidential candidate Ron DeSantis joined the Dana Show with Dana

> Loesch Thursday afternoon where he vowed to abolish the ATF should Congress pass the appropriate legislation.
>
> The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms was established in 1886 and is responsible for the enforcement of specific guns and tax laws.
>
> DeSantis also commented on a recent school shooting in Iowa and the current crop of 'Red Flag' laws across the United States.
>
> "They try and use these things as leverage to advance a political agenda," explained DeSantis.

Eliminating the ATF is *in addition to* his promise to eliminate the Departments of Education, Commerce, Energy, and the IRS. Would you like to see that happen? If you do, vote for DeSantis. Trump had 4 years to do this, 2 with a Republican House and Senate, and he did not get it done. In the same clip, DeSantis opposes Red Flag laws, and he refuses to build a new headquarters for the FBI. He wants to move as many agencies as possible out of Washington, D.C. as well!

What about Trump? Trump allied with Anthony Fauci to lock America down, and with Christopher Wray, to corrupt the FBI. Trump promised to build the wall, he didn't. Trump promised to end birthright citizenship, he didn't. Trump promised to drain the swamp, he didn't. Trump did nothing at all during the BLM and Antifa rioting. Trump is now criticizing pro-life laws at the state level. Trump wants to build the FBI a brand new, state-of-the-art Kremlin-sized headquarters near Washington.

America can do better than Trump in 2024.

Related posts on DeSantis' achievements

- fires district attorneys who were elected with help from George Soros
- Mamas for DeSantis: Casey DeSantis champions parent's rights at the national level
- high tourism and low unemployment
- six-week abortion ban
- no sex-reassignment surgeries on kids
- no pronouns required in Florida schools
- no kids at drag queen shows
- pre-game prayer is allowed
- universal school choice
- making collection of union dues optional for teachers
- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts
- elect conservatives to school boards
- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women's sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Atheist woman who had sex with 300 men in one year expects to marry “some day”

January 9, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Cultural leaders decided a while back to teach young women that they should not conform to traditional roles of wife and mother. Traditional female roles are terrible, the leaders said, because being a wife and mother makes a woman unhappy. What women need to do instead to be happy is that they need to act like hot alpha male bad boys. They need to reject religion. They need to reject morality. They need to take out student loans to do worthless degrees in women’s studies. They need to get public sector jobs that aren’t challenging. They need to delay marriage for as long as possible, so they can get as much promiscuous sex with hot no-commitment bad boys as they can. And when they are ready to marry and have children (at age 38), then they should feel entitled to a man who has all the best characteristics of all the hot bad boys they slept with over the years. He will perform the traditional male roles: protect and provide. (But obviously not moral leader and spiritual leader) And of course, after a fairy tale wedding, these women will work outside the home, and the children can just go to daycare and public schools.

Now, obviously there are lots of women who are raised in good homes who reject all this nonsense. They follow traditional paths, and they expect to marry a traditional man, and homeschool their traditional kids. If they go to college or trade school, they learn STEM fields. If they get jobs, it’s in the private sector. If they have boyfriends, they don’t sleep with them before marriage. If they get married, it’s for life. If they have kids, they stay home with them. If those kids go to school, it’s homeschool. Those are traditional women. Traditional men get a lot of value out of marrying a traditional women.

But what happens to the feminist women? Are they bringing anything to the table that might attract a traditional man?

Take a look at this story from the New York Post:

> An Australian woman who says she had sex with more than 300 people in one year found the experience “empowering.”
>
> Annie Knight, 26, told “The Kyle and Jackie O Show” that she even managed to bed five people in a single day during the frisky, fun-filled year.
>
> “I felt empowered afterward,” the amorous Aussie declared. “Sex makes me feel good. It’s meant to make you feel good.”
>
> Knight sleeps with men and women and told the radio program that she met many of her sex partners on dating apps. However, she also has a roster of “regulars” on speed dial that she calls up whenever she feels like getting down and dirty.
>
> “The messier the sex, the better,” she enthused.
>
> Knight… added that nothing is off limits when it comes to experimenting in the

> bedroom, saying: “I’m down to try anything.”
>
> Knight, who has an OnlyFans account… told “The Kyle and Jackie O Show” that there’s no shortage of kinky content on her page as she does “pretty much everything” on camera.

She’s making money on OnlyFans, because men who ought to choose better women are foolishly giving her money:

> [S]he now earns around $1,000 a day with her risque content, which fans pay a monthly subscription to view.

I saw a clip of her being interviewed on the Joe Khamou show.

Here’s the last few minutes of the interview:

I was curious to hear that her religious upbringing was Catholic. She was baptized. She went to an all-girls school. And she is an atheist now. She also explained what she sees in the future, as far as relationships, marriage and children. She says she wants to settle down when she finds the right guy, and she’s “just doing this for fun” until she “finds the right person”. She expects a traditional man to commit to her, but she is anything but a traditional woman. She is a completely untraditional woman. So, she has everything to gain from this traditional man, but nothing to offer this traditional man.

Her actions have formed habits and a character that will make it impossible for her to perform traditional roles well, and impossible to be content with performing them. She has not read anything about how to do it. She has not submitted to wise leadership from adults who were good at it. She has no rational basis behaving morally when it goes against her self-interest. And she has no practice at doing anything that a traditional man would find useful for a long-term marriage and parenting enterprise.

Good men don’t marry women who do this. A good man wants to marry a woman who commits to him early on, and supports him during his difficult early years. The more a woman invests in a good man, the more he loves her. The more difficulties they go through together, the tighter the bond. The earlier they start building, the stronger the castle. Women who have not experienced the truth of this are the ones like Annie, who keep going for entertainment and excitement with the hot bad boys. They choose bad men, they complain about them, and then they imagine that there are no good men. Because they don’t choose good men.

Men understand that women who have intimacy with many different men train themselves to decouple intimacy from relationship. Such women learn to see sex as something self-centered, rather than related to a relationship’s purpose and goal. They don’t see it as a way of affirming the unity of two people who have committed to loving each other exclusively and for life. Married sex is designed to express unity of purpose and mutual support. In the long-term, women like Annie find it unbearable to participate in marital sex. They only ever wanted sex for themselves, with hot bad boys. They are completely unequipped for sex during a long-term commitment, where sex is about unity

and support. Promiscuous women imprint themselves with the physical appearances of hot bad boys who didn't commit to them, so that they no longer find the husband they "settled" for sexually attractive. And that's why studies show that marriages with promiscuous partners are far more unstable.

Traditional men have learned to avoid the marital instability that comes from promiscuity. They understand that when marriages end, the woman typically gets the house, car, savings, full custody of the kids, alimony and child support. So, they are determined not to be the sucker that women like Annie Knight "settle" for.

Please help me to educate young feminists. Explain to them that getting social media attention and hook-up sex in the short term does not guarantee them a traditional man in the long term. Traditional men don't find feminists attractive.

My libertarian friend says intelligence agencies will stop DeSantis from winning

January 10, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a friend who is a libertarian. He has a very negative view of intelligence agencies today, e.g. the FBI, the CIA, and the NSA. He thinks they're all spying on us all the time. He thinks they use their power to get Democrats, so their budgets, power and salaries will increase. And he thinks that after DeSantis' Tuesday night town hall, that these agencies are going to stop him from being president.

Before we get started, please be aware that there is a Republican primary debate on CNN tonight at 9 PM Eastern. If you don't have CNN like me, you can watch it free and live right here.

So, let's take a look at what DeSantis said, starting with the clip that my friend thinks will get him "stopped" by the FBI, the CIA, and the NSA. This is real Barry Goldwater level stuff.

This is a really good clip. We don't see politicians talking like this much any more. It's really something else. I have been very disturbed by Obama weaponizing the IRS. Democrat-ordered pre-dawn raids on pro-life homes. Democrats designating concerned parents as "domestic terrorists", and turning a blind eye to violence coming from BLM and Antifa. We really do need someone who will hold government employees accountable for using their power to elect big-government Democrats.

Anyway, I have another wonderful friend who reads the blog, and follows me on Twitter. And he has the view that Trump *has to be the nominee* because he is the only one who will stop the weaponization of government by the Democrat party. But when I watch that clip, DeSantis really does not sound anything like Trump. He sounds like he's going to solve the problem in a way that Trump never did in 4 years of being president.

Remember, Trump had 4 years as president, 2 of those with a Republican House and Senate. He could have drained the swamp. But like so many of his other promises, he never did. And now, in 2023, he is going around explaining that he couldn't do what he promised, because the left would get angry with him. Trump nominated Christopher Wray, who led the FBI. And Trump wants to build the FBI an enormous new state-of-the-art headquarters.

Trump is currently facing 91 indictments across several states, and many of those cases will be decided by judges and juries hostile to the Republican party. Even if he somehow manages to beat all these charges, and I don't see how he could, the charges and accusations will still be used against him during the election. Polls show that if Trump gets convicted, he will lose over 10% of his support. Why would Republican voters take that chance, when we can run a candidate who doesn't have personality disorders and criminal charge baggage?

Trump just isn't the same guy that he was in 2016. This new ad from the DeSantis campaign is really good. It contrasts Trump's bold, brash, confident talk from 2016, with his excuses and evasions in 2023:

He promised a lot, but he didn't deliver. And we don't have to choose him. He's not the best candidate for conservatives. He's not the best candidate for Christians. We will get more of what WE want if we choose DeSantis to be the Republican nominee, instead.

Anyway, some nice long clips from the Tuesday night town hall on Fox News.

Illegal immigration and deportations:

Right to life and Nikki Haley:

Israel, Ukraine and Nikki Haley:

If you want more, I tweeted out a whole bunch from my Twitter account on Tuesday night.

Theistic evolutionists and the two-platoon strategy

January 11, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What should we make of theistic evolutionists telling us that you can *believe* in God, while still *knowing* that matter, law and chance explain the full development of all of life?

Consider this quotation from from famous intelligent design Phillip E. Johnson.

Quote:

> The National Academy's way of dealing with the religious implications of evolution is akin to the two-platoon system in American football. When the leading figures of evolutionary science feel free to say what they really believe, writers such as Edward O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Carl Sagan, Steven Pinker, Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Lewontin and others state the "God is dead" thesis aggressively, invoking the authority of science to silence any theistic protest. That is the offensive platoon, and the National Academy never raises any objection to its promoting this worldview.
>
> At other times, however, the scientific elite has to protect the teaching of the "fact of evolution" from objections by religious conservatives who know what the offensive platoon is saying and who argue that the science educators are insinuating a worldview that goes far beyond the data. When the objectors are too numerous or influential to be ignored, the defensive platoon takes the field. That is when we read those spin-doctored reassurances saying that many scientists are religious (in some sense), that science does not claim to have proved that God does not exist (but merely that he does not affect the natural world), and that science and religion are separate realms which should never be mixed (unless it is the materialists who are doing the mixing). Once the defensive platoon has done its job it leaves the field, and the offensive platoon goes right back to telling the public that science has shown that "God" is permanently out of business. (The Wedge of Truth, IVP 2000, pp. 88-89).

So what naturalistic scientists believe is that God didn't do anything to create the diversity of life – that nature does all of its own creating. In fact, it doesn't matter if the best naturalistic explanation is improbable or implausible – scientists *must* bitterly cling to materialistic explanations of natural phenomena.

The problem for these scientists is that they are taxpayer-funded, and religious people don't like paying to have scientists shoehorn reality into a pre-supposed naturalistic framework. Sometimes, religious people get annoyed about being told that sparking gases can create functional proteins. And sometimes, religious people get annoyed about being told that the universe oscillates eternally despite observations that falsify that speculative theory. And sometimes, religious people get annoyed about being told that there are as yet undiscovered fossilized precusors to the Cambrian era fossils.

Naturalists think that opposition to these lame naturalistic theories only ever be

religiously-motivated. They cannot accept that people might question their naturalistic just-so stories on scientific grounds. So what do the naturalists do when faced with scientifically-motivated dissent that *they think* is religiously motivated? Well, they trot out "religious" scientists. These "religious" scientists claim to have a deep personal faith in God, and a belief in miracles. But these religious scientists believe that what actually happened is that law, matter and chance did all the creating of life. This is the "second platoon". They are sent out to mislead the public by talking about their personal faith, and what God could and couldn't do, and how evolutionists can believe in God without any evidence of intelligent causes in the history of life. The one question they most want to avoid is whether science, done in the ordinary naturalistic way, can discover evidence of intelligent agency in the history of the development of life.

So what is theistic evolution? Theistic evolutionists believe no intelligent causes are detectable in nature by science, and that no intelligent causes are needed to explain life. They like to say phrases like "God could" and "God might" and "I believe" and "I attend this church" and "I received a Christian award" and "I believe in miracles too". But atheists and theistic evolutionists agree on what science shows about the diversity of life – *intelligent causes didn't do anything*.

The quickest way to disarm a theistic evolutionist is to refuse to talk about religion or God, and to ask them to show you the naturalistic explanation of the Big Bang. And the naturalistic explanation of the fine-tuning. And the naturalistic explanation of the origin of life. And the naturalistic explanation of the Cambrian explosion. And so on. Focus on the science – don't let them turn the conversation to their personal beliefs, or to the Bible, or to religion, or to philosophy. Ask them what they can show in the lab. If naturalistic mechanisms can do all the creating they say it can do, let's see the demonstration in the lab.

New survey: high school boys twice as likely to be conservative than high school girls

January 12, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you know that women tend to be further to the left than men? According to surveys, women are more leftist than men on abortion, same-sex marriage, and a host of other policies. I'll show you a few surveys below. But even more interesting is that there is a link between support for leftist policies, and higher mental illness. Let's take a look at it.

First, here is an article from The Hill:

> Forty-four percent of young women counted themselves liberal in 2021, compared to 25 percent of young men, according to Gallup Poll data analyzed by the Survey Center on American Life. The gender gap is the largest recorded in 24 years of polling. The finding culminates years of rising liberalism among women ages 18 to 29, without any increase among their male peers.

That article is a bit old, here's a new one from this week in The Post Millennial:

> In annual surveys over the last few years, data pulled from Monitoring the Future has shown that about a quarter of high school seniors identify as conservative or very conservative. Only 13 percent of the 12th grade boys identify as liberal.
>
> […]The graph excludes moderate students, but of those high school seniors that do identify politically, around 65 percent of boys were conservative while only around 31 percent of girls identified that way.

According to surveys, young women are also more likely to support abortion under any circumstances (40 to 27) and more likely to support same-sex marriage than men.

I don't support abortion because I favor the rights of unborn babies over the happiness of adults. I don't support same-sex marriage because studies show children do better when they are raised by a mother and a father. And I think that's why most of these men are with me, they follow that same reasoning, and side with the children against the adults.

I thought this part of the article was interesting:

> As one Politico analyst put it, "Democrats have a masculinity problem." Citing trends among black and Latino voters, the analyst pointed out that even in minority communities that have voted majority Democrat, men have been turning to the Republican party at higher rates than women.
>
> Some conservative figures such as Jordan Peterson and Dennis Prager (through PragerU) have millions of followers on YouTube, a platform where the users are majority male.
>
> In addition, one of the more popular conservative political podcasts, The Ben Shapiro Show, has an audience that skews overwhelmingly male at 86 percent.

> The audience also skews younger, 18-44, in comparison to Fox's former show with Tucker Carlson, 25-54, which skews slightly female at 53 percent.

This is good news. Boys are finding themselves role models who they see as "strong". And those new role models are conservative. These stronger role models champion truth, and they make moral judgements. Even if it hurts other people's feelings.

Let's go on to the second point. These leftist policies are having a bad effect on young women's mental health.

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

I found an interesting article in the Wall Street Journal that talked about how one leftist policy concern (global warming alarmism) is tied to higher rates of mental illness.

It says:

> A study in 2021 of 16- to 25-year-olds in 10 countries including the U.S. reported that 59% were very or extremely worried about climate change, and 84% were at least moderately worried. Forty-five percent claimed they were so worried that they struggled to function on a daily basis, the definition of an anxiety disorder.

The study found that the mental illness was more common in younger people:

> Climate anxiety and dissatisfaction with government responses are widespread in children and young people in countries across the world and impact their daily functioning.

So now we are looking at a direct link between the policies of the left, and the lower mental health of the left. And we know that more women than men are on the left. And we see more mental illness among women. Interesting, isn't it?

And this has consequences. Leftist women are noticing that men are more conservative than they are, and it's affecting their dating:

The marriage rate is also declining. Could this decline in marriage be related to the increase in leftist women, and all the related mental illnesses that leftist women have? Does it make sense for a conservative man to enter a relationship where he pays all the costs and bears all the risks, but all the decisions are being made by a leftist woman? It's dangerous for a man to do that.

Consider that the divorce rate is very high right now, and divorce takes away a man's money, his access to his kids, and his freedom. Women initiate 69% of divorces. College-educated women – who are especially leftist – initiate 90% of divorces. This high divorce rate cannot be blamed on men, because the divorce rate of lesbians is the highest of all. No man to blame in that situation.

Why would a man sign up to be controlled by feminist institutions, like the divorce courts? Men are not interested in projects where they have to pay for everything, but someone else is making the decisions. Especially if they get blamed when things go wrong.

Facing all of these risks, a man would have to be crazy to even talk to a leftist woman – much less date her. Unfortunately, we aren't making enough young conservative women for these conservative young men to marry. And so, the marriage rate is declining. Young women today are not as conservative as previous generations.

I know a lot of people today are worried about young men falling under the influence of bad role models. But the surveys show that boys tend to have the right role models, and the right political views. So, we need to work on making young women more conservative.

Knight and Rose Show #43: Testimony as a Tool for Evangelism?

January 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 43 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose evaluate the use of personal testimony as a tool for evangelism. It's an hour long! If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 43:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose evaluate the use of personal testimony as a tool for evangelism. What does the testimony approach offer to non-Christians? How is testimony used in the Bible? How should Christians engage in conversations with non-Christians? How does the widespread use of testimony change the way that Christianity is perceived by non-Christians in the culture?

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Green New Deal: Canadians told to conserve energy to avoid blackouts

January 14, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This story from Canada is interesting. In America, the secular left wants to use global warming myths to control energy production and energy consumption. I call it "global warming socialism". They want to force people to own smaller homes, stop using electricity, stop owning gas cars, stop having children, stop owning appliances, and so on. Let's look at how it works in Alberta, Canada.

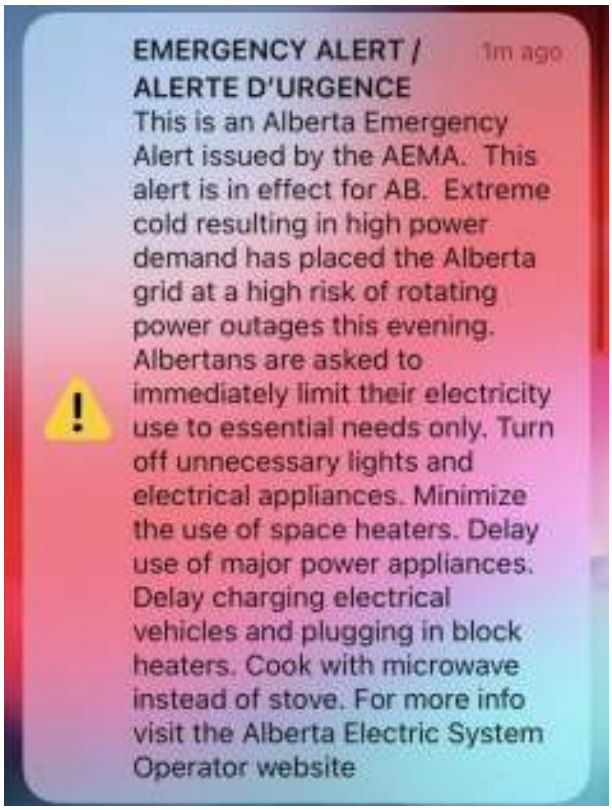

Here's the story from Canada's far-left CTV:

> Albertans were asked for the second evening in a row on Saturday to limit their electricity usage to essential needs only.
>
> According to an alert issued by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency to all cell phones shortly before 7 p.m., a high demand for power during the extreme cold placed the province at a "high risk" of rotating power outages.
>
> "On top of high demand of our own energy generation, Alberta's grid receives electricity from neighbouring provinces. Extreme weather in Saskatchewan and British Columbia is impacting electricity sharing, which is also a contributing factor to tonight's grid alert," Nathan Neudorf, the province's utilities minister, said in a statement.
>
> "The Alberta Electric System Operator has activated its emergency grid management plan to work with local distribution utilities to avoid potential rolling

> brownouts."
>
> […]A similar request was made of Albertans on Friday, when the Alberta Electric System Operator recorded a new record for power use.

How come Saskatchewan has power to share, but Alberta doesn't? Well, Alberta had elected a far-left communist Rachel Notley as Premier, and she embraced Green New Deal energy policies. Notley has no earned STEM degrees, and no relevant private sector STEM experience. She literally knows nothing about mathematics or science. And that's what Alberta voters wanted. They wanted a pretty face to tell them things that felt good, and made people like them. They didn't want a problem solver. Now, Alberta has to beg for energy from their neighbor, Saskatchewan. Because she shut down their cheap, reliable energy production from 2015-2019.

Wikipedia says:

> On November 22, 2015, Notley unveiled Alberta's updated climate change strategy, in time for the COP 21 conference in Paris. The plan included an economy-wide carbon price starting in 2017 and a cap on emissions from the oil sands. The plan also included a phase-out of coal-fired electricity by 2030, a 10-year goal to halve methane emissions, as well as incentives for renewable energy.
>
> In November 2016, $1.4 billion was paid to compensate three major Albertan power producers (ATCO, Capital Power, and Transalta) to expedite the transition caused by the closure of six coal-fired power plants. The compensation was derived from the carbon tax and was to be paid over a period of 14 years.[48]

Over in Saskatchewan, they elected a very conservative premier, who rejects green energy policies.

Far-left CTV reports on that:

> Saskatchewan provided Alberta with over 150 megawatts of power over the weekend – as the province faced the possibility of rotating power outages due to extreme cold.
>
> In a post to X Saturday evening, Premier Scott Moe announced the province was assisting its western neighbour.
>
> "SaskPower is providing 153 MW of electricity to AB this evening to assist them through this shortage," Moe said in the post.
>
> The premier added that the electricity would be provided by SaskPower's natural gas and coal-fired power plants – taking the opportunity to criticize the federal government's environmental policies.
>
> "That power will be coming from natural gas and coal-fired plants, the ones the Trudeau government is telling us to shut down (which we won't)," Moe said.

As Americans, we have to learn from the mistakes of other countries. We have people in

America who want to impose Green New Deal socialism policies. They don’t know how to do math. They’ve never solved a problem in the private sector. But they have tremendous confidence in their moral superiority over you. They think they should be allowed to decide how much energy companies can produce, and how much energy you can use, and what kind of car you can drive, and how many kids you can afford. Their brains are filled with irrational, unfounded fears about overpopulation, resource exhaustion, and other untestable, indefensible nonsense. Don’t let them get control of your country.

Why you should read “Up From Slavery” by Booker T. Washington

January 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lately, my friends have been very excited that I’m a non-white conservative. They want me to answer the grievances of BLM people, and explain from my own experiences what Christianity and conservative policies have to say about making the lives of non-whites better. My friend Wes recommended “Up From Slavery” by Booker T. Washington to help me focus my thoughts.

Here’s a summary of the book:

> ### Dignity through Labor
>
> Over the course of *Up From Slavery,* Washington develops the idea and ideal of dignity through labor. For Washington, the gravest aspect of the institution of slavery is the denigration of labor for both blacks and whites. Because the enslaved had no personal investment or return on their labor, they did not complete their work with an attitude toward improvement. Likewise, whites, largely deprived of meaningful labor, were robbed of the ability to achieve self-sufficiency. In both races, this produced personalities and characters that seek to escape labor. Washington emphasizes labor as the only way to make oneself useful in an interdependent, modern society. Throughout the whole of *Up From Slavery*, Washington searches for and obtains work. Further, once he obtains it, Washington completes all labor to best of his ability, no matter how lowly the task. At the Tuskegee Institute, Washington makes this idea and ideal a foundational ethos. All students who study at the Tuskegee Institute must learn a trade or industry alongside their more traditional academic pursuits. In addition, many of the buildings, most of the furniture, the wagons, and the materials used at the school are produced by students. This level of practical skill and diligence also acts as the foundation of Washington’s theory and program for racial uplift.
>
> ### Selflessness, Desire to Be Useful to One’s Community
>
> The people that Washington most admires and models himself after are those he labels selfless. Washington defines this as the willingness to work on the behalf of others. For Washington, this is not only about duty or labor, but also about the willingness to do one’s best for the benefit of the collective good. Washington believes that racial prejudice can be overcome if black people make themselves indispensable to their communities and their nation. The brick-making episode provides an example. Though the brick-making enterprise at Tuskegee felled three kilns before successfully producing bricks, the venture eventually proved successful and the school began to sell its bricks on the open market.

> Washington describes how whites who were unsympathetic or apathetic to the education of blacks and the overall project of the Tuskegee Institute were willing to purchase Tuskegee bricks due to their quality and convenience. Washington suggests that if black race can find their niche in society by fulfilling a need, then they can co-exist peacefully and productively with whites.
>
> **Impracticality of Political Agitation**
>
> Throughout *Up From Slavery*, Washington defends his ideas about racial advancement and uplift by subtly undermining the proposals of his critics. Though Washington does not explicitly state his objection to the strategies of specific thinkers like W.E.B. Dubois or even his predecessor, Frederick Douglass, he nevertheless highlights the wastefulness of political agitation for equal rights at every chance he gets. To do this, Washington shows that political agitation results in worse relations and outcomes than those that existed before. For example, when he goes home to Malden after his second year at the Hampton Institute, Washington finds that both the salt-furnace and the coal-mine are not in operation due to worker's strikes. In Chapter IV, Washington describes how strikers usually spent all their savings during the strikes and returned to work in debt, but at the same wages. He raises the impracticality of political agitation again after his controversial Atlanta Exposition speech. After the success of his speech, he hypothetically asks if a black man would have been invited to give a speech had people agitated to put a black person on the program. He answers in the negative, saying that such opportunities can only arise through merit.

And here's a summary of his most famous speech:

> On September 18, 1895, Booker T. Washington was selected to give a speech that would open the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia. The speech, which is often referred to as the "Atlanta Compromise," was the first speech given by an African American to a racially-mixed audience in the South. In it, Washington suggested that African Americans should not agitate for political and social equality, but should instead work hard, earn respect and acquire vocational training in order to participate in the economic development of the South. By doing so, eventually, he stated, African Americans would gain the respect of white society and be granted the rights of full citizenship.

There's a free full audio version of the book, and the full text is online. I recommend this book to people of all races, because as the sexual anarchy brought on by feminism becomes widespread, the majority of the children of tomorrow will face the same kinds of challenges.

I see Washington's ideas as consistent with a Christian worldview, where we don't expect to be treated fairly. We expect sinful people to treat us badly. What Christianity says is to be patient, and focus on your relationship with God and loving your neighbor. And one way to love your neighbor is to sell them something valuable that you made through your

labor. Another way is to work and save, and give to charity.

Government solutions to problems like racism and poverty aren't a top priority for Christians. Most of all, we need the freedom to be good, and to do good. That's priority one. You may not make your life better by being moral and diligent, but it's rare that doing so causes you to harm yourself. It's very important that you not harm yourself.

So, this dovetails nicely with my own story. My married non-white parents were not smart enough or willing enough to monitor my education, but they were clear that they wanted me to do well in order to find good-paying work. So I completed my BS and MS in a STEM field, and went to work right away, and I've been at it continuously for 22 years now. I save most of what I earn for charity and early retirement.

I've never experienced any of the racism or police brutality that American blacks complain about. And that's because I follow what Washington is teaching. I dress in a clean way that doesn't communicate danger to others. I'm careful to spend my time reading apologetics, economics and military history. I don't listen to popular music or watch popular TV or movies. I don't hang out with people who blame other people for their lack of success.

I got my first job by volunteering to do it for free on Saturdays for 7 months. My first full-time job salary after college was $50,000. Then I got a raise of $6,000 and then a raise of $9,000. I used to work 70 hour weeks in my 20s. I graduated college with $9,000 dollars in the black, because I went to a small local college and lived at home, and never spent any money on alcohol. My net worth is now about $1.35 million. By the way, the secret to becoming wealthy is to not spend money on showing off. You can be very generous to your friends and still get rich. Just never buy anything that is designed to communicate "status" to anyone. And never spend money on alcohol or chasing sex outside of marriage.

At no time did I accept that the problems defined by the secular left were my real problems. And at no time did I accept their "solutions" as real solutions to anything. As black economist Thomas Sowell writes, the "solutions" of the left are not effective at helping people like me. The "solutions" of the left are designed to make leftists feel better, and look more virtuous to others. You are much better off reading the Bible, Christian apologetics, free market economics, American military history, etc., and then respecting what you learn from that in your decision-making. I think that reading the right stuff is even more important than having good parents or attending church.

GOP Primary: The Ron DeSantis origin story, and some of his accomplishments

January 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have today off, so I have been mostly tending to the outdoor bird feeders, keeping the water from freezing, and making sure that all the birds are sharing the food. But, I did want to post something about Ron DeSantis today, since we are starting the Republican Primary Election. This is when Republicans choose a candidate to represent the party in the presidential elections.

Whatever I was going to write, it's not going to be as good as this tweet from Josh Power, a Ron DeSantis supporter:

> Ron DeSantis: His great-grandparents immigrated to the United States from Italy. They settled in Western PA and OH, where Ron's parents were born. His mom was a nurse and his dad worked with his hands, installing cable boxes and such.
>
> They moved to Florida in the 70's and Ron was born in Jacksonville and grew up as a middle class kid in the Tampa Bay area. He played baseball, worked minimum wage jobs and excelled in school. He was recruited to play baseball at Yale, and his middle class parents were proud and excited for him to have the opportunity at such a great education.
>
> He excelled at both athletics and academics at Yale – he was selected by his teammates to be the captain of the baseball team, due to his leadership skills and the respect of his peers. He did well enough in class at Yale to be accepted into one of the best law schools in the world – Harvard Law. He excelled in his time there, graduating with Honors.
>
> As he neared the completion of his degree, he knew he had the opportunity to cash in on his fancy education and take a high paying job, but he decided instead to join the military, largely because what he saw during 9/11. He felt a call to serve the Country, as American Patriotism had been engrained in him by his family and community since he was a child.
>
> While at Harvard, he earned a commission in the US Navy's JAG Corps. He served as a lieutenant in the Judge Advocate General's Corps of the U.S. Navy Reserve. Deployed to Iraq as an advisor to Seal Team 1, Naval Special Warfare. During his military career, DeSantis was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Iraq Campaign Medal.
>
> After his military service, Ron came back home and ran for Congress in 2012, in Florida's 6th Congressional District. He would later become the 46th Governor of the State of Florida.
>
> He served his home State with honor and courage throughout the Covid

> pandemic and the ensuing insanity which gripped much of the Nation, and the world. As a result of his leadership, and thanks to the rebellious nature of Floridians themselves, Florida became known throughout the Country as The Freedom State.
>
> Governor DeSantis, now in his 2nd term, has been one of the most productive, effective conservative governors in American history.
>
> Some of his greatest accomplishments include:
>
> Made child mutilating surgeries illegal
> Protects women's spaces & sports
> Protects Life
> Made child rape a death penalty offense
> #1 economy in America
> #1 for education
> $20B budget surplus with no state income tax
> Largest tax cuts in FL history & paid down 24% of Florida's debt
> Crime at 50 year low
> Turned battleground state deep red
> Fights and wins against CRT, DEI, ESG
> Banned Chinese land ownership
> Banned sexualization of kids in school
> Parents Bill of Rights
> Largest School Choice program in American History
>
> I wanted you all to know this about Ron. I myself am a Native Floridian, 4th generation. My wife, Lauren is a Georgia Girl. We're both big supporters. And we'd be happy to tell you why if you'd like to talk. We support DeSantis because he's a good dude, a family man, and he gets RESULTS. Everyone can talk a big game, but we need people who can DO IT. Ron is a Florida Boy, the best governor in our state's history, and we're proud to have him.
>
> We're both wishing him the best in the Iowa Caucus tonight!!

For Ron DeSantis in 2024

Ron DeSantis is my pick for the 2024 Republican primary. The primary arguments against Ron DeSantis are as follows:

- he is too short
- his shoes are funny
- he's too young to be President

These arguments come from people who put zero effort into looking at the accomplishments of each candidate. They think that presidential elections are like a classroom election: you pick what you like. You pick what feels good. Or many people,

mainly men, think it's a football team. You pick who you think is going to win, so that you can vicariously win. My case for Ron DeSantis is simple: he is the governor of the most successful state in the United States. He won election 50-49 in a purple state. Then by the time he got to re-election, he won by 20 points, and had turned his state deep red. That's what I want in America. Not moderate conservatives like Trump who push amnesty for 2 million illegals (in 2018) and who lock the country down because the Swamp told him to (in 2020). We can do better than Trump in 2024.

Related posts on DeSantis' achievements

- Promise to purge the FBI, and all other government agencies who discriminate against conservatives
- All he does is win: DeSantis cuts health care costs by importing Canadian drugs
- The DeSantis plan: pay teachers well, and put teacher unions out of business fires district attorneys who were elected with help from George Soros
- Mamas for DeSantis: Casey DeSantis champions parent's rights at the national level
- high tourism and low unemployment
- six-week abortion ban
- no sex-reassignment surgeries on kids
- no pronouns required in Florida schools
- no kids at drag queen shows
- pre-game prayer is allowed
- universal school choice
- making collection of union dues optional for teachers
- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts
- elect conservatives to school boards
- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women's sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Update on Donald Trump’s 4 criminal investigations, and 91 felony charges

January 16, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I watched Iowa voting results last night. It was disappointing. I wondered, “do Trump voters know that he is facing 4 criminal investigations, with 91 separate indictments?” So, I asked my Dad, who is very old and retired, and watches Fox News all day and all night. And he said “Yes, but they are all politically motivated, and they will all be dismissed”. So, let’s take a look.

This is from the far-left New York Times, updated January 9th, 2024:

> State and federal prosecutors are pursuing multiple investigations into Donald J. Trump’s business and political activities, with the cases expected to play out over the coming months. Here is a guide to the major criminal cases involving the former president.

January 6th riot:

> Related to Mr. Trump’s efforts to retain power after the 2020 election and the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol. A federal special counsel’s sprawling inquiry has been examining the various ways in which Mr. Trump sought to stay in power despite losing to Joseph R. Biden Jr., culminating in the attack on the Capitol by a mob of Mr. Trump’s supporters.
>
> On Aug. 1, Mr. Trump was indicted on four charges: one count of conspiracy to violate rights, one count of conspiracy to defraud the government, and one count each of obstructing an official proceeding and conspiring to do so.

That one has a trial date set for March 2024.

Election interference in Georgia:

> Related to efforts to reverse Mr. Trump’s 2020 election loss in Georgia. Mr. Trump and 18 of his associates were indicted in Fulton County, Ga., in August. All of them face conspiracy charges related to attempts to overturn the state’s results and subvert the will of voters. Three have already pleaded guilty.

The charges have been filed on this one, but no trial date has been set.

Handling of classified documents:

> Related to Mr. Trump’s handling of sensitive government documents he took with him when he left office. In June, a federal grand jury in Florida charged Mr. Trump with 37 criminal counts, including unauthorized retention of national security secrets and obstruction of efforts by the government to retrieve the files. One of his aides, Walt Nauta, was also named in the indictment.

> On July 27, three more charges against Mr. Trump were added, and prosecutors unsealed charges against a third defendant, Carlos De Oliveira, a property manager at Mr. Trump's Florida residence.

The trial date on this one is set for May 2024.

Porn star hush money payments:

> Related to hush-money payments to cover up a sex scandal during the 2016 presidential campaign. Mr. Trump was charged in April with 34 counts of falsifying Trump Organization business records related to reimbursing Michael D. Cohen, his lawyer and fixer, for payments made to Stormy Daniels, an adult film actress.

The trial date for this one is set for March 2024.

According the New York Post, the amount of jail time Trump would get if convicted on all 91 felony charges is "up to 712 years and six months".

So, the chance that Trump supporters are taking is that Trump will be found not guilty of all of these 91 criminal charges, even though some of these trials are going to happen in very blue states.

Have you ever heard the phrase "tarbaby"? It's a metaphor for a sticky situation that gets worse, the more effort you commit to it. Right now, Republican voters are committing a lot of delegates to a man who I think will be behind bars on election day. And polls – yes, the polls that Trump voters love so much – clearly show that Trump loses a ton of support if he is convicted of a felony.

The Hill puts the number at "almost a quarter":

> Nearly a quarter of former President Trump's supporters say he should not be the Republican nominee for president in 2024 if he is convicted of a crime, according to a survey released Tuesday.
>
> The New York Times/Siena College poll found 24 percent of respondents who said they would vote for Trump in the upcoming election also say he should not be the nominee if found guilty in one of his legal trials, "even if he has won the most votes."

Now it's time to ask one of my favorite questions to Trump supporters: What did you hope to achieve in the long-term by doing what felt good to you in the short-term? I would really like an answer from Trump supporters. What is the evidence that Trump will not get convicted of at least some of these charges, and then lose tons of votes in the general election, especially the trials taking place in blue states, with blue state juries? What is the evidence that a felony conviction will not cause Republicans to lose the general election in November?

LGBT activist charged with committing sex crimes against children

January 17, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's pretty late here, so I just have time to cut and paste an excerpt from a Life Site News story. I like to blog on these so that I have them handy in case it comes up in a debate. I often debate with atheists who assure me that they have a very strong, objective moral foundation for morality. Then I look at their voting, and they vote for laws to normalize this sort of behavior. And cheer for it.

Full text:

> The longtime president of a British Columbia LGBT activist group has been arrested and charged with committing various sex crimes against children.
>
> On January 1, North Peace Pride Society (NPPS) president Sean Gravells was arrested and charged with committing sexual crimes against children, according to the British Columbia Prosecution Service.
>
> "The BC Prosecution Service can confirm that Sean Edward Leonard Gravells is charged with sexual interference, sexual exploitation, possession of child pornography and distribution of child pornography," BC Prosecution Service Communications Counsel Daniel McLaughlin told LifeSiteNews.
>
> "The first two offences are alleged to have occurred on December 29, 2023 and the child pornography offenses are alleged to have occurred on December 31, 2023," he added. "All at or near Fort St. John, BC."
>
> According to McLaughlin, Gravells made his first appearance on January 1, 2024, before being released from custody on $2,000 bail. Gravells is expected to return to court on January 29 for an arraignment hearing.
>
> The NPPS announced Gravells' dismissal in a January 5 Facebook post, but their official statement notably neglected to mention the nature of his crimes or that it was their president of 18 years who had been charged.
>
> Instead, the LGBT organization merely referred to the charges as "severe charges inconsistent with the North Peace Pride Society's mission and code of conduct."
>
> Additionally, Gravells was referred to as "one of our board members," not as the group's president.
>
> The group's neglect to recount the details of the situation comes as the LGBT movement is increasingly encouraging children to attend LGBT "pride" parades and promoting the LGBT agenda in schools.
>
> For example, the Toronto "pride" parade this past June featured nudist men and performers dressed in grotesquely sexual costumes, causing many to question why police did not prevent the public displays of indecency, especially since

> many children were in attendance.

I’m sure that some atheists reading will say “this is wonderful, I’m proud of him!” and “that’s some solid objective morality right there, rationally-grounded!” and “this is why I vote for the Democrat party!” and “I told you that pride, diversity, and tolerance were better than nasty Christian morality and judging!” I hope the atheists will understand that I am a bit skeptical of their ability to rationally ground objective morality.

Trump and his lawyer clash with judge, but at least his lawyer is hot

January 18, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A concern I have with men is their habit of rating women out of 10, based solely on the woman's appearance. Then those same men cry when the women they choose solely based on appearance divorces them, take their kids and half their stuff. I have the same problem with Trump. He seems to choose people based on their appearance, and based on whether they say flattering things about him.

Trump was in court on Tuesday, and we're getting reports about how his lawyer performed. So, do you think that Trump chose a lawyer based on education and demonstrated ability? Or do you think that he chose based on appearance – what he could see with his eyes?

Here is his lawyer Alina Habba:

Trump Lawyer Alina Habba Widerner Law School
Image source: Reddit

I solve problems in Information Technology by writing code. So, if I were hiring a lawyer, I would ask "where did the candidate go to law school?" and "how many years of legal experience does the candidate have" and "how many trials like this one has the candidate won in federal court?". I'm concerned about hiring someone who can do the job. Not about how someone looks, or what someone wears.

Where did Alina go to school? "Widener University Commonwealth Law School". I've never heard of Widener University. And it's not ranked very highly as a law school. And

Alina is very young, without a lot of experience.

So how did Alina Habba do in court, defending Trump?

Here's an article from Newsweek, entitled "Alina Habba 'Violated Court Order' Within First 10 Seconds of Opening":

> Legal experts have suggested one of Donald Trump's lawyers violated a gag order early on in a trial in New York.
>
> Alina Habba is representing the former president in the civil defamation case brought in New York by columnist E. Jean Carroll. The trial in the case began with jury selection earlier this week.
>
> Multiple news reports said Habba earned a stern comment from U.S. District Judge Lewis Kaplan, who is presiding over the case.

Making the judge angry doesn't sound smart to me.

Another article from Newsweek, entitled "Alina Habba Blasted by Judge in Fiery Courtroom Exchange: 'Sit Down'":

> Amid court proceedings on Wednesday in former President Donald Trump's defamation trial brought by E. Jean Carroll, Trump's lawyer, Alina Habba faced a "testy" courtroom exchange as Judge Lewis Kaplan told her to "sit down."
>
> […]On Friday, lawyers for Trump requested that Kaplan, who is overseeing the trial, postpone the trial to the following week because of the sudden death of Trump's mother-in-law, Amalija Knavs, as the former president will be traveling on Wednesday to attend the funeral scheduled for Thursday.
>
> However, Kaplan denied the request and said that while the court "offers its condolences" to the Trump family, the trial would continue as scheduled.
>
> On Wednesday, Habba, who is representing Trump in the case, had a tense courtroom exchange with Kaplan after she asked for an adjournment of the trial tomorrow so that Trump could attend his mother-in-law's funeral.
>
> In response to Habba's request, Kaplan said her application had been denied and for Habba to sit down.

I should be happy about this, but actually, I'm furious. If Trump somehow becomes the nominee, then these courtroom antics are sure to land him in prison. And we know from polls that this will lose him 10-15% of his support, ensuring a Biden victory in 2024.

Here's a 6-minute video from CNN summarizing the fiasco, featuring Former Trump White House lawyer Ty Cobb (!):

We are in a Republican primary. We don't have to choose the weaker candidate. We have to pick the candidate who is best for the country, and best for us. We need to pick a candidate who can beat Joe Biden (or Michelle Obama) in November. We owe Trump nothing. He was an employee, and he did some things well, and other things poorly. Now we have a new position open. And we have to pick the best candidate available. Someone

who is involved in 4 criminal trials, facing 91 felony indictments, who picks lawyers like Alina Habba, is not the right candidate for us.

Are puberty blockers “reversible”?

January 19, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed an article about puberty blockers on Daily Caller, that I thought would be really useful in a debate. Normally, transing kids involves 1) social transitioning, 2) puberty blockers, 3) hormone replacement therapy, 4) sex mutilation surgery. Pro-transing doctors often tell parents that puberty blockers are “reversible”. But are they really?

The article says:

> Prominent World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) physicians acknowledged that puberty blockers are more invasive than portrayed in the media and can have irreversible effects on minors such as infertility, bone loss and disruption of brain development, according to WPATH educational sessions obtained by the Daily Caller News Foundation.
>
> WPATH is a transgender medical organization that has published influential clinical guidance for the sex reassignment industry, called Standards of Care, which recommend children receive puberty suppression, cross sex hormones and sex reassignment surgery. However, during educational sessions recorded in September 2022 that were part of a transgender medicalization certification program offered to WPATH licensed clinicians, WPATH doctors revealed that the consequences of puberty blockers for minors are often far more disruptive than portrayed in the media.

Calcium stores:

> In an educational session titled “Foundations in Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy: Adults and Adolescents,” Dr. Daniel Metzger, a WPATH certified pediatric endocrinologist, explained how puberty blockers impede adolescents from developing the calcium stores needed to prevent osteoporosis later in life.

Brain development:

> “Obviously teenagers, their brains are changing. They’re unwiring, they’re rewiring. And if we’ve started one kid unwiring and half rewiring, and then we changed their puberty the other way and we’re unwiring, people have been trying to figure out what this does for kids’ brains,” said Metzger.
>
> “They seem to do reasonably the same as their friends but we’re not looking at their IQ and their learning ability and lots of other things.”

Fertility:

> During a question and answer segment, Metzger discussed the impact of puberty blockers on a child’s fertility, explaining how puberty blockers stop males from developing sperm. He said it was unknown if girls placed on puberty blockers

> during the initial stages of puberty, as recommended by WPATH, would have eggs mature enough for fertility preservation.
>
> “Kids have zero idea about their fertility,” said Metzger.

Reversible?

> During a session titled, “Foundations in Clinical Care for Transgender and Gender Diverse Adolescents,” Dr. Scott Leibowitz, a co-lead in the development of the adolescent chapter of the WPATH Standards of Care and member of the WPATH Board of Directors, challenged the reversibility of puberty suppression.
>
> “I think when we just say, ‘Oh puberty blockers are just reversible and it’s a very noninvasive treatment,’ I would say it’s more invasive than often times the media makes it out to be or other people,” he said.
>
> Leibowitz explained how puberty blockers suppress the release of sex hormones (estrogen and testosterone) that cause puberty, stopping puberty and the essential brain and bone maturation that occurs during pubertal development, calling the body’s need for binary sex hormones a challenge.
>
> “There’s challenges with puberty suppression that we have to acknowledge and that’s why it’s ‘reversible asterisks,’” Leibowitz said. “One cannot be on puberty suppression endlessly. You get to a place where physiologically we need hormones.”

So, the take-away lesson from this is that puberty blockers are less reversible and more invasive than is portrayed by the media. And that’s according to the people who know the most about it, and who push for it the most.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

January 20, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus in a debate by saying that the resurrection is the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. Minimal facts are the parts of the New Testament that meet a set of strict historical criteria. These are the facts that skeptical historians agree with, totally apart from any religious beliefs.

So what are the criteria that skeptical historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."
>
> In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the

> probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> (1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
>
> (2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
>
> (3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
>
> (4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
>
> (5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
>
> (6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.
>
> Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in

> his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book. You want to look at it as a historical book, and use historical criteria to get to some facts that critical historians would accept. From that, it's possible to make a case for the resurrection, which is the guarantee that the words of Jesus are authoritative. Including the words of Jesus where he describes the Bible as a whole as God's revelation of Himself to his creatures.

Here is the approach I use when talking to non-Christian co-workers:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection
8. Don't let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And remember that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. That passages is universally accepted as early, eyewitness testimony from Paul, and represents the core of early Christian beliefs about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Everyone who takes evidence seriously has to

account for that early creed, which passes the historical tests I outlined above.

The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I've read is the one by Robert H. Stein in "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It's a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion "God raised Jesus from the dead". That whole book is really very, very good.

DeSantis wins again: Florida bans DEI programs at public colleges

January 21, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On this blog, I've covered many DeSantis wins: tax cuts, budget surpluses, 20-point re-election win, school choice, import cheap Canadian drugs, 6-week abortion ban, no boys in girls' bathrooms or girls' sports, fire far-left Soros-backed district attorneys, crack down on BLM and Antifa violence, beat the Trump-Fauci lockdowns,beat the teacher unions, beat the woke corporations, etc.

This time, DeSantis decided to take on the woke universities in Florida. And he won. Again.

Leftist Florida's Voice has the story:

> The Florida State Board of Education created a new rule Wednesday to bar member schools of the Florida College System from spending taxpayer dollars on "diversity, equity and inclusion" programs.
>
> The rule also applies to federal funds, in addition to state funds, given to public colleges.
>
> It defines "diversity, equity and inclusion," or "DEI," as "any program, campus activity, or policy that classifies individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, gender identity, or sexual orientation and promotes differential or preferential treatment of individuals on the basis of such classification."
>
> Specifically, such colleges cannot use taxpayer funds to "promote, support, or maintain any programs or campus activities" advocating for DEI or "political or social activism."
>
> "Higher education must return to its essential foundations of academic integrity and the pursuit of knowledge instead of being corrupted by destructive ideologies," said Florida Commissioner of Education Manny Diaz, Jr. "These actions today ensure that we will not spend taxpayers' money supporting DEI and radical indoctrination that promotes division in our society."
>
> […]Florida's new rule comes after Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a law in May 2023 eliminating DEI in higher education.

Now, Trump supporters have an answer to all of DeSantis past demonstrated achievements: future achievements. They say "Trump will do even better things when he gets the chance!" In Christian apologetics, we call this approach to debate "making a phantom argument". Debater A makes an argument that is logical and based on public, testable evidence. Debater B says "I have a book at home that can refute your argument and evidence". That's what the Trump supporters are doing – I have a future achievement that beats your past achievement. Trump had 4 years to do all the things that DeSantis has already done, and he failed to do them. He isn't someone who can get

things done. If we want the swamp drained and the Deep State purged, we should pick the man who will actually do what he says. Not the one who talks, but doesn't do.

If you missed the most recent CNN town hall, DeSantis leveled up again, winning accolades from the CNN panel for his improved skills at answering voter's questions.

Here's a clip:

He's just a better candidate than some washed-up old wrinkly has-been like Biden or Trump. Those old men need to retire. They are past their primes, and they need to step aside.

The president is an employee of the people. We don't owe a past employee who failed another chance. We have to upgrade to a better employee. DeSantis is a better employee.

Related posts on DeSantis' achievements

- Promise to purge the FBI, and all other government agencies who discriminate against conservatives
- All he does is win: DeSantis cuts health care costs by importing Canadian drugs
- The DeSantis plan: pay teachers well, and put teacher unions out of business
- fires district attorneys who were elected with help from George Soros
- Mamas for DeSantis: Casey DeSantis champions parent's rights at the national level
- high tourism and low unemployment
- six-week abortion ban
- no sex-reassignment surgeries on kids
- no pronouns required in Florida schools
- no kids at drag queen shows
- pre-game prayer is allowed
- universal school choice
- making collection of union dues optional for teachers
- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts
- elect conservatives to school boards
- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women's sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Have Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policies made air travel unsafe?

January 22, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a few related articles that will really make you question whether you want to get on a plane in America. It's not just the DEI hiring policies at the airlines. It's also the DEI hiring policies at the airplane parts manufacturers. And the DEI hiring policies in the FAA. And the DEI hiring policies in the Biden administration.

First one from Newsweek:

> Alaska Airlines has grounded its entire fleet of Boeing 737 MAX-9 aircraft after a section of fuselage broke off mid-flight.
>
> Alaska Airlines flight 1282, bound for Ontario, California, successfully made an emergency landing at Portland International Airport after the section of the plane separated from the aircraft body shortly after take off.
>
> […]Images and videos posted online show a rectangular section of the plane broken off, exposing the night sky and insulation material around the damaged area.

Matt Walsh had an interesting video related to this:

> Ladies and gentlemen, meet the "dream team" at the manufacturer that made the plane door that just blew off in the middle of a flight pic.twitter.com/gZ2AboGnpR
>
> — Matt Walsh (@MattWalshBlog) January 11, 2024

This is the "Spirit Aerosystems Engineering Dream Team". It's all women! Could this really be the people who engineer plane parts? The company is very big on DEI hiring.

Second one from Newsweek:

> A video on social media shows flames apparently coming from a Boeing plane shortly after takeoff.
>
> The brief clip, captured by someone on the ground, shows flames trailing an Atlas Air flight minutes after it took off from Miami International Airport on Thursday night.
>
> The aircraft, a Boeing 747-8, took off from the Miami airport at 10:32 p.m. ET and had been heading to Puerto Rico when it was diverted, according to FlightAware.
>
> […]The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will investigate the incident.

Oh! The FAA is going to investigate the incident!

Third one is from New York Post:

> The Federal Aviation Administration is actively recruiting workers who suffer "severe intellectual" disabilities, psychiatric problems and other mental and physical conditions under a diversity and inclusion hiring initiative spelled out on the agency's website.
>
> "Targeted disabilities are those disabilities that the Federal government, as a matter of policy, has identified for special emphasis in recruitment and hiring," the FAA's website states. "They include hearing, vision, missing extremities, partial paralysis, complete paralysis, epilepsy, severe intellectual disability, psychiatric disability and dwarfism."
>
> The initiative is part of the FAA's "Diversity and Inclusion" hiring plan, which claims "diversity is integral to achieving FAA's mission of ensuring safe and efficient travel across our nation and beyond."
>
> […]The FAA, which is overseen by Secretary Pete Buttigieg's Department of Transportation, is a government agency charged with regulating civil aviation and employs roughly 45,000 people.

Pete Buttigieg? He is just the former mayor of a small town in Indiana. What does he know about transportation? Why was he picked for such an important job, when he has no education or experience in that area?

I have a trip coming up. I'm driving and staying in a hotel halfway.

Chairman of Siemens Energy says: consumers will pay MORE for green energy

January 23, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a very smart, but also ignorant, co-worker who loves renewable energy. He also loves Star Wars and Star Trek. Anyway, he keeps telling me that although green energy is expensive and unreliable now, we should keep throwing taxpayer money at it, so that magic will happen, and it will get cheaper. Like the transporter or the warp drive. Let's take a look.

Here's an article from the centrist UK Telegraph:

> The German boss of Britain's biggest wind turbine maker has warned energy bills will have to keep rising to pay for the green transition as he attacked "fairytale" thinking about net zero.
>
> Joe Kaeser, chairman of Siemens Energy, suggested higher energy bills were inevitable as turbine makers grapple with huge losses, forcing them to pass on costs to their customers.
>
> The company is the owner of the UK's biggest wind turbine manufacturing site, in Hull, and employs thousands of British workers.
>
> […]Mr Kaeser told The Telegraph: "Every transformation comes at a cost and every transformation is painful. And that's something which the energy industry and the public sector – governments – don't really want to hear.
>
> "I believe that for a while [customers] need to accept higher pricing.

MAYBE the costs will go down:

> "And then there might be innovation – about the weight of the blades, other efficiency methods, technology – so the cost can then go down again.

Will we see the UK returning to reliable, cheap sources of energy? Other countries have done it.

Sweden

Sweden had been focused on renewables, but they're now moving back to nuclear.

Here's the story from the The Blaze:

> > The Swedish parliament determined last week that in order to ensure the country has a "stable energy system," it will have to abandon its goal of "100 per cent renewable electricity production by 2040."
> >
> > To satisfy electricity demand, which is set to double to around 300 TwH by 2040, Sweden's right-of-center government announced June 20 that it would instead lean more heavily on nuclear energy and subsidize the

> > construction of new nuclear plants — plants green-lit in 2016 but sidelined for fear they would be too expensive, reported Reuters.
>
> > The country, home to just over 10.5 million people, presently has three nuclear plants with six nuclear reactors in commercial operation. The state-owned Vattenfall aims to bring the tally up to eight reactors and refurbish extant facilities.
>
> Wow, what accounts for this big change in direction? Well, the country experiences very cold winters. After poor performance from the renewables during the winter, the people started to demand results – which is why they elected a right-of-center government to make changes.
>
> > Swedish support for nuclear energy is presently at a record high of 56%, up from 42% in 2022, reported Bloomberg.

And it's not just Sweden.

South Korea

South Korea is going back into nuclear. This article from far-left CNN is from July 2022:

> South Korea, one of the world's most fossil fuel-reliant economies, is re-embracing nuclear energy, with the government announcing Tuesday it will restart construction on two nuclear reactors and extend the life of those already in operation.
>
> By 2030, the Energy Ministry wants nuclear to make up at least 30% of the country's power generation – a step up from its previous goal of 27%.
>
> To meet this, South Korea is restarting construction on two new reactors at the Hanul Nuclear Power Plant on the country's east coast. Construction on the two reactors has been stalled since 2017, when former President Moon Jae-in – who had pushed hard to phase out nuclear energy – took office.
>
> But with a new President in office, South Korea's nuclear industry is returning at full speed.

Japan is restarting their idled nuclear power plants, and planning to build more next-generation nuclear reactors. They need reliable power, and they don't want to count on their neighbors to sell it to them. They want to develop their own energy at home, and lower the prices that their citizens have to pay.

Frank Turek lectures on the case against same-sex marriage

January 24, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker Frank Turek:

Frank Turek is one of my favorite speakers, and I admire him for being willing to take a public stand on controversial issues like gay marriage. He's actually had to pay a price for that in his professional life, and I blogged about that before.

Here's the lecture on gay marriage, featuring Christian apologist Frank Turek.

Outline:

Outline of Frank Turek's lecture on same sex marriage

Introduction:

- how to present your case against marriage safely
- Christians are required to go beyond tolerance
- loving another person can mean opposing the person when they want to do something wrong, even if they hate you
- what did Jesus say about marriage? (see Matt 19:4-6)
- what did Jesus say about sexual morality? (Matt 15, Matt 19)

Summary:

- the same-sex marriage debate is about whether to compel people who disagree with the gay lifestyle to validate and normalize it
- P1: the government has an interest in marriage because it perpetuates and stabilizes society – this is the purpose of marriage
- P2-4: government can take 3 kinds of stances towards behaviors: promote, permit

or prohibit
- government promotes behaviors when it has an interest in them
- same-sex relationships should be permitted, but not promoted
- Q1: if same-sex marriage had serious negative consequences, would you reconsider their position?
- Q2: are heterosexual relationships the same as homosexual relationships?
- Q3: what would society be like if everyone married according to the natural marriage definition: one woman, one man, for life?
- Q4: what would society be like if everyone married according to the same-sex marriage definition: man/man and woman/woman?
- Should Christians care about law and politics? or should they just preach the gospel?
- They should care because people often get their cues about what is moral and immoral based on what is legal and illegal
- Many of the social problems we see today can be traced back to problems with marriage and family
- Children do much better when they have a relationship with their mother and their father
- Same-sex marriage necessarily destroys the relationship between a child and its mother or its father
- When a country embraces same-sex marriage, it reinforces the idea that marriage is not about making and raising children
- same-sex marriage shifts the focus away from the needs of the children to the feelings of desires of the selfish adults
- does homosexuality impose any health and mental health risks?
- what has the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage been in Massachusetts to individuals, schools, businesses and charities?
- how same-sex marriage poses a threat to religious liberty
- how should you respond to the view that homosexuality is genetic?

And at the very end, he shows this short video, which is only 5 minutes and explains the logic of opposing the redefinition of marriage:

My biggest concern is religious liberty, and we are seeing how same-sex marriage has proven to be incompatible with religious liberty. But I also care about children… I want them to have mothers and fathers who put their needs first. Marriage is about a commitment – it is the subjugation of feelings and desires to responsibilities and obligations. It is a promise. A promise to commit to love your spouse and children regardless of feelings and desires. It requires more self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice. Not less.

Trial begins for 6 pro-life demonstrators targeted by Biden administration

January 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A lot of people are paying attention to a Canadian court's ruling against Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party of Canada. You'll remember that the Trudeau administration used armored vehicles, assault weapons, horses, and beatings to break up peaceful protests against health care mandates. Americans like to think that this could never happen here. But it already does.

Daily Wire reports:

> The trial for six pro-lifers targeted by the Biden administration for peacefully protesting a Tennessee abortion facility back in 2021 began in federal court in Nashville on Wednesday.
>
> The pro-life activists are accused of violating the FACE Act and civil rights conspiracy for a protest that took place in a hallway outside of a Mount Juliet abortion provider on March 5, 2021.
>
> […]Eleven of the protesters were arrested for trespassing at the time after local police arrived and dispersed the crowd. In October 2022, the 11 pro-lifers were indicted by a federal grand jury after the Justice Department pursued charges against them arguing that there was conspiracy by the group to stop the women from accessing so-called "reproductive health care" and violating federal law ensuring access to abortion facilities. If convicted, the pro-lifers could face up to 11 years in prison and $250,000 worth of fines.
>
> […]During the opening statement, the federal government accused the pro-lifers of plotting to "block doors to a health care clinic" and saying that the demonstrators planned on being arrested. The DOJ also said that the demonstration was not a protest, but a violation of federal law.

Police officer testifies:

> After the opening statements, the government called on Mount Juliet police officer Lance Scheider to testify. During his testimony, Schneider, who has been a police officer for 24 years, said that police were called to the scene because business was being disrupted. He said that the protesters were "not being violent" and were offering no physical resistance. While he was guiding one woman into the facility, several people did stand in his way and he said he was able to gently move them to the side.

The article talked about one of the defendants, Paul Vaughn:

> Vaughn has previously spoken about how the FBI raided his home with guns out in front of his wife and 11 children. He told the Daily Signal that federal agents

> came to his home "guns pointed at the door, banging on the house, yelling and screaming."

This isn't the only time that the Biden administration has conducted pre-dawn raids of the homes of pro-life demonstrators.

The Epoch Times reported on that story:

> Jonathan Darnel woke at 5:30 a.m. to fists pounding on his door.
>
> There was a crash as it was torn from its hinges, then shouts of armed men, he told The Epoch Times.
>
> Without warning, FBI agents swarmed in to arrest him.
>
> His crime: participating in what he calls a "peaceful pro-life protest" nearly two years prior.
>
> Similar scenes have played out at the homes of several of the 26 pro-life activists arrested nationwide in 2022 and 2023. Some were given the opportunity to turn themselves in. At least one was arrested at work.
>
> Many of these pro-life activists now face up to a year in prison for violating the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act. They also could be sentenced to more than 10 more years for the charge of "conspiracy against rights," because they were acting in a group.

And another report from CBN:

> Mark Houck woke up on September 23, 2022, to an incessant banging on his door. When he opened it, he saw more than 15 FBI agents crowded on his front porch and the front lawn with guns pointed at him.
>
> "They were all the way lined down my driveway," Houck told The Daily Signal. "I had agents on my porch with long guns."
>
> Despite putting his hands up and willingly cooperating, multiple agents pointed guns in Mark's face as his family – including his seven young children – were forced to watch their dad "shackled" and taken away, family representative Brian Middleton told CBN's Faithwire at the time.
>
> The harrowing experience has left each member of the family with emotional wounds.

I'm paying attention to this story, because people need to understand how far the Democrat party are marching down the road of fascism. They are convinced that they are right, and that they have a right to ram their views down the throats of Christians and conservatives. Remember that when you're voting in elections. I certainly will.

News media silent about jihadi-style shooting attack in Canada

January 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Big story from Canada is not getting much coverage in the Canadian news. I wonder if it has something to do with the fact that the criminal was using firearms, and shouting slogans in Arabic? The Canadian view is that if you give people from the Middle East free stuff (paid for by taxpayers) then they will turn into law-abiding citizens. But is it true?

Here's a security cam photo:

I'm told by Trudeau-supporters that terrorist shootings never happen in Canada.

Toronto Sun reports:

> It's not every day there is a jihadist-inspired terror attack in Canada related to Israel's war in Gaza that few seem to know about.
>
> But it did happen and the country is just fortunate no one was murdered in the process. The potential was definitely there.
> This was an all-out Gaza-inspired, jihadist terror attack with gunfire and home-made bombs at Edmonton's City Hall on Tuesday and not a word out of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau about it so far. In fact, on X he was talking about being at the women's professional hockey game in Ottawa.
>
> This was a terrifying incident. Security video shows a man entering Edmonton's City Hall wearing a Commissionaires Security jacket and carrying a long gun and appearing to shoot it. Police say he was "heavily" armed.

How did he get into the country? Well Trudeau lets in millions of refugees from Middle

Eastern countries. And if anyone protests, he calls them “racists”.

There’s a taped manifesto with Arabic language:

> In addition to the horror of security video showing the armed man during his attack, a taped manifesto which included Arabic greetings was also discovered. This was one close call to being something nobody could even attempt to downplay.
> […]“At approximately 10:18 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024, a male parked his vehicle in the City Hall underground parkade, then entered the building from the parkade access,” Edmonton Police say. “Once inside City Hall, he lit several handheld incendiary devices, believed to be Molotov cocktails, that caused one small fire outside an elevator. He then fired several rounds from a long gun into the ceiling, walls and windows.”

No word yet on whether Justin Trudeau will be cracking down on Jihadi mass shootings the way he did with peaceful protests of his policies by law-abiding Canadians.

Tear gas:

Beatings:

Tramplings:

Armored vehicles and assault rifles:

An attempted mass-shooting is a lot more serious than what happened when a few dozen truckers protested against the healthcare mandates. But Trudeau doesn’t seem to care much about it. He doesn’t want to confiscate the firearms of the Middle Eastern terrorists he’s been importing. He wants to confiscate the guns of law-abiding Canadians. He doesn’t want to freeze the bank accounts of the Middle Eastern terrorists he’s been importing. He wants to freeze the bank accounts of law-abiding Canadians.

On wargames, history and heroes: “this story shall the good man teach his son”

January 27, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last night I was reading Stephen Ambrose’s famous book “Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944” after having watched an anti-communist movie “Guilty of Treason” (1950). I was thinking about how much I love to read about the bravery of people in the past. I also like to replay their battles, either on the computer or with board games. So I thought I would write about why I like to do that.

I play wargames, because I think that it is important to recognize and celebrate those who have demonstrated good character, whether it be now, or in the past. I think that it is important for us to search out the best role models ourselves, so that they will influence the way we act in our own lives. The second world war was a clear example of good versus evil. Anyone on the Allied side who demonstrated bravery and courage should be celebrated for safeguarding the security, liberty and prosperity that we enjoy today. In the case of Pegasus bridge, the hero is Major John Howard of the British paratroops.

Here is a quick re-cap of his exploits that day from the New York Times:

> Maj. John Howard, the commander of glider-borne British infantrymen who seized the strategically vital Pegasus Bridge in the first battle of the D-Day invasion of Normandy, died Wednesday in a hospital in Surrey, England. He was 86 and had lived in Burford, near Oxford.
>
> Under cover of night on June 6, 1944, six gliders carrying 181 officers and men of the Second Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry landed on the eastern flank of a 60-mile invasion front on the northern coast of France. The regiment had a heritage going back to the battles of Bunker Hill and New Orleans, to Waterloo and to World War I. Now its soldiers were in the vanguard of the invasion of Hitler’s Europe.
>
> Major Howard’s D Company was ordered to seize two bridges, one over the Caen Canal and the other spanning the parallel Orne River. If the Germans held on to those bridges, panzer units could move across them in a counterattack isolating 10,000 British paratroopers jumping behind the British invasion beach known as Sword, where infantry forces would arrive at daybreak. And Major Howard’s men sought to strike swiftly to prevent the Germans from blowing up the bridges if they were overwhelmed; the British needed those bridges to resupply their airborne units.
>
> [image]British Halifax bombers towed the gliders over the English Channel, then cut them loose.

> Major Howard’s lead glider landed at 12:16 A.M., only 50 yards from the Caen Canal bridge, but the glider’s nose collapsed on impact, knocking everybody

> aboard unconscious for a few seconds. The soldiers quickly emerged, and over the next five minutes the men directly under Major Howard killed the surprised German defenders.
>
> The nearby Orne River bridge was captured by other troops in Major Howard's unit, and soon the words "Ham and Jam," signifying mission accomplished, were radioed to the airborne.
>
> Two British soldiers were killed and 14 wounded in the operation.
>
> Over the next 12 hours, British paratroopers and commandos reinforced Major Howard's men, and British forces were able to move toward the city of Caen, their flank having been protected by the capture of the bridges.
>
> On July 16, Major Howard received the Distinguished Service Order, Britain's second-highest award for valor. On the 10th anniversary of D-Day, he received the Croix de Guerre Avec Palme from the French Government, which had renamed the Caen Canal span Pegasus Bridge, for the flying horse symbolizing the British airborne. The road crossing the bridge was later renamed Esplanade Major John Howard.

Why is this important? Well, it's important to think on the things that are excellent. There are so many things in the culture that are not excellent that we are confronted with every day. We have to make it our business to do things together where goodness is celebrated. Especially when manly virtues like courage are celebrated. We don't do that much anymore. And I think there's a connection between wargames and Christian apologetics that we need to *deliberately* encourage.

Here's an excellent passage from Shakespeare's "Henry V" that makes the point:

> This day is called the feast of Crispian:
> He that outlives this day and comes safe home,
> Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,
> And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
> He that shall live this day, and see old age,
> Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
> And say, 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'
> Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
> And say, 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
> Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
> But he'll remember with advantages
> What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
> Familiar in his mouth as household words,
> Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
> Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
> Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.
> **This story shall the good man teach his son;**

> And Crispin Crispian shall ne’er go by,
> From this day to the ending of the world,
> But we in it shall be rememberèd;
> We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
> For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
> Shall be my brother; be he ne’er so vile
> This day shall gentle his condition:
> And gentlemen in England, now a-bed
> Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
> And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
> That fought with us upon Saint Crispin’s day. (4.3.43)

This is from the famous speech in which King Henry charges his men to fight well before the famous Battle of Agincourt.

You can read more about the history of the British Airborne division and Pegasus bridge. The famous historian of the second world war Stephen E. Ambrose also wrote a history of the Pegasus bridge battle, called “Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944“. You won’t find many military historians better than Stephen E. Ambrose!

You might be surprised how many men are interested in military history and wargames, precisely because men instinctively look up to men like John Howard who embody qualities like bravery and courage. We have a dearth of moral character in this society. And we don’t do much to teach young men about manly virtues, even in the church. I think that it is important for us to think of creative ways for us to present good character to our young men.

Luke Barnes on the fine-tuning of the strong force and fine structure constant

January 28, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By now, anyone who has had discussions about scientific evidence for the existence of God knows about the fine-tuning argument. In a nutshell, if the fundamental constants and quantities given in the Big Bang were even slightly other than they are, then the universe itself would not be hospitable for complex, embodied intelligent life.

Here is an article from The New Atlantis written by Australian cosmologist Luke Barnes.

Excerpt:

> Today, our deepest understanding of the laws of nature is summarized in a set of equations. Using these equations, we can make very precise calculations of the most elementary physical phenomena, calculations that are confirmed by experimental evidence. But to make these predictions, we have to plug in some numbers that cannot themselves be calculated but are derived from measurements of some of the most basic features of the physical universe. These numbers specify such crucial quantities as the masses of fundamental particles and the strengths of their mutual interactions. After extensive experiments under all manner of conditions, physicists have found that these numbers appear not to change in different times and places, so they are called the fundamental constants of nature.
>
> […]A universe that has just small tweaks in the fundamental constants might not have any of the chemical bonds that give us molecules, so say farewell to DNA, and also to rocks, water, and planets. Other tweaks could make the formation of stars or even atoms impossible. And with some values for the physical constants, the universe would have flickered out of existence in a fraction of a second. That the constants are all arranged in what is, mathematically speaking, the very improbable combination that makes our grand, complex, life-bearing universe possible is what physicists mean when they talk about the "fine-tuning" of the universe for life.

Let's look at an example – the strong force. Not only must the strong force be fine-tuned so we have both hydrogen and helium, but the ratio of the strong force must also be fine-tuned with the fine structure constant.

Barnes writes:

> The strong nuclear force, for example, is the glue that holds protons and neutrons together in the nuclei of atoms. If, in a hypothetical universe, it is too weak, then nuclei are not stable and the periodic table disappears again. If it is too strong, then the intense heat of the early universe could convert all hydrogen into helium — meaning that there could be no water, and that 99.97 percent of

> the 24 million carbon compounds we have discovered would be impossible, too. And, as the chart to the right shows, the forces, like the masses, must be in the right balance. If the electromagnetic force, which is responsible for the attraction and repulsion of charged particles, is too strong or too weak compared to the strong nuclear force, anything from stars to chemical compounds would be impossible.

Here's the chart he's referencing:

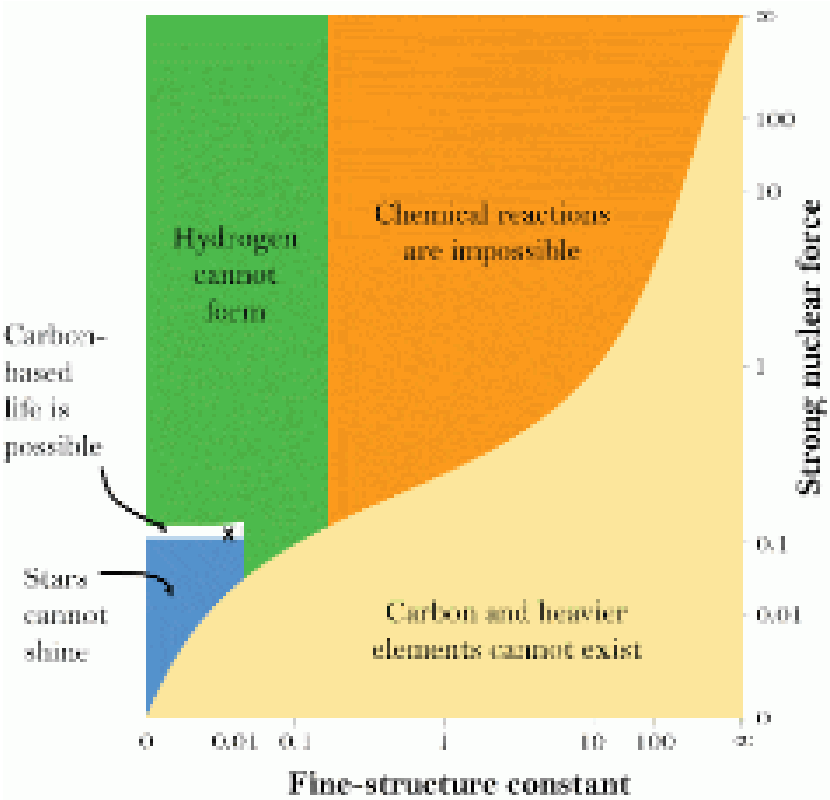

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant

As you can see from the chart, most of the values that the constants could take would make complex, embodied intelligent life impossible.

We need carbon (carbon-based life) because they form the basis of the components of life chemistry, e.g. proteins, sugars, etc. We need hydrogen for water. We need chemical reactions for obvious reasons. We need the light from the stars to support plant and animal life on the surface of a planet. And so on. In almost every case where you change the values of these constants and quantities and ratios from what they are, you will end up with a universe that does not support life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind under these laws of physics. And we don't have any alternative laws of physics in this universe.

By the way, just to show you how mainstream these examples of fine-tuning are, I thought I would link to a source that you're all going to be familiar with: The New Scientist.

The fine-tuning of the force of gravity

So here is an article from the New Scientist about a different constant that also has to be

fine-tuned for life: the force of gravity.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe‘s birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What’s more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Notice how the article also mentioned “the universe’s birth”, which is part of mainstream science.

When I’m writing to you about things like the origin of the universe, or the cosmic fine-tuning, I’m not talking to you about things that pastors found in the Bible. These discoveries are known and accepted by mainstream scientists. It’s amazing that people are constructing their worldviews without having to account for the birth of the universe and this cosmic fine-tuning. We all, as rational individuals, have to bound our view of the universe with the findings of science. Right now, those findings support the existence of a Creator and a Designer. So why am I seeing so many atheists who are just plain ignorant about these facts? Maybe we should tell them about this evidence. Maybe we should ask them why they don’t account for scientific evidence when forming their beliefs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason

- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Knight and Rose Show #44: John Sailer: DEI in Higher Education

January 28, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 44 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome John Sailer to the show, to discuss DEI in higher education. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 44:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview John Sailer of the National Association of Scholars about DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) policies in higher education. We discussed DEI in faculty hiring, referencing guidelines ("rubrics") from major universities. We discussed DEI in research grant applications. We discussed John's victories so far, and how this battle affects ordinary Americans.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

John Sailer is Senior Fellow and Director of University Policy at the National Association of Scholars. He graduated from The King's College with a bachelor's in politics, philosophy, and economics, and from Columbia University Teachers College with a master's in philosophy and education. Prior to joining the team at NAS, John worked as a teacher. John's Twitter / X account is @JohnDSailer.

References:

National Association of Scholars

Inside Ohio State's DEI Factory (Wall Street Journal – 11/20/23)

How 'Diversity' Policing Fails Science (Wall Street Journal – 2/6/23)

How the NIH Pushes DEI on Scientists (Wall Street Journal – 3/1/23)

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Secular left funding new David French / Russell Moore church curriculum

January 29, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If there is one person who you have to follow on Twitter, because of her amazing reporting on the state of Christian churches in America, it's Megan Basham. Megan Basham comes out with absolute bombshell news stories every 1-2 months. She punches back at all the weakling appeasement evangelical leaders who are ruining the reputation of Christianity in America.

This time, she takes on 2 of the people who try to present themselves as Christians, even as they are doing everything they can to destroy Christianity in America: David French and Russell Moore.

Here's her latest report in First Things:

> Secular news outlets from NPR to the New York Times are hailing Tim Alberta's new book, The Kingdom, The Power, and the Glory, for furthering the popular thesis that evangelicals have abandoned themselves to political idolatry. By "political idolatry" they mean "political conservatism," as neither Alberta's book nor the many prestige outlets enthusing over it have a word of criticism for Christians who advance left-wing causes. However, a curious passage in the book suggests that those leveling this charge may be most guilty of infecting the church with partisanship.
>
> Alberta reports on The After Party, a forthcoming program led by Duke Divinity consulting professor Curtis Chang and developed with New York Times columnist David French and Christianity Today editor in chief Russell Moore. The program offers pastors and small groups a curriculum "reframing Christian political identity from today's divisive partisan options."
>
> According to Alberta, during its germination phase, the project hit a roadblock. Evangelical donors had little interest in funding an explicitly political Bible study. Thus, to get The After Party off the ground, the trio (all frequent critics of evangelicals who voted for Donald Trump) turned to "predominantly progressive" "unbelievers." In fact, they turned to secular left-wing foundations.

I don't want to say any more about what she found out in this post. I want you to read it yourselves – the whole thing. It's just what you would expect, though. Wealthy left-wing billionaires, LGBT activists, pro-abortion activists, gender ideologues, transgender activists, and more.

She adds this, though:

> Does anyone really believe these secular progressive grant-makers are interested in developing a church curriculum about politics without an eye toward affecting policy? Or that this curriculum will strengthen evangelicals'

> commitment to the very causes progressives despise? Between 2013 and 2014, the Ford, Rockefeller, and Tides foundations contributed a combined $1.3 million to the Evangelical Immigration Table's "Bibles, Badges, and Business" initiative, launched to mobilize evangelical support for amnesty legislation such as the failed Gang of Eight bill. Hewlett and a host of other major left-wing donors bankrolled the Evangelical Environmental Network's Evangelical Climate Initiative with the aim of generating churchgoer support for cap and trade legislation. Secular progressive foundations have not hesitated to leverage new evangelical ministries to sway Christians to their political will.

Today, it's a rare church that does not have some group of people who are trying to drag the church leadership to the left. They say it's because of "empathy" or because of the need to gain respect from the secular left. But what it means in practice is that the church is stepping away from the Bible's teachings. What we need are rank-and-file Christians to know what is going on, and speak up to make sure that their churches aren't being led by secular leftists.

The funny thing about the secular leftists and their puppets David French and Russell Moore. They don't realize this, but any Christian faith that is divorced from the Bible, and wedded to the Democrat party, loses it's ability to save. There are people in this country who have dug themselves into a hole. Sometimes because of their parents. Sometimes because of their friends. Sometimes because of their teachers. And they need the hard truths and the hard moral boundaries in the Bible to step out and out of where they started. They don't just need Jesus the Savior, they need Jesus the Lord, and that means submitting to his leadership. By trying to curry favor with the secular left, French and Moore are robbing people of that leadership. The secular left will never accept the truth claims of Jesus, but that's what people who are lost need.

Good news: Gavin Newsom loses battle against Christian preschool

January 30, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Mary from Marin tweeted out this article about California last night. I expected it to be bad news, but it was good news. Gavin Newsom tried to force a preschool in El Cajon to deny their Christian convictions, and accept his atheist convictions. The school filed a lawsuit, they had a trial, and the school won. Pretty surprising for California! But this was more towards the San Diego end of it.

The article is from California Family Council:

> The Newsom Administration's California Department of Social Services (CDSS) tried but failed to force an El Cajon Christian preschool to abandon its religious beliefs on sexuality and gender or be kicked out of participating in a federally funded USDA food program. After the church filed a federal civil rights lawsuit, Attorney General Rob Bonta's Justice Department refused to defend the state's actions and settled for nearly $200,000.

It's wonderful that we have so many Christian lawyers. I know that I harp on how everyone has to do STEM degrees, but if you have a lot of family support, then it might be better to go to law school. Because look what you can do with that degree:

> Attorneys for the Church of Compassion and its Dayspring Christian Learning Center were represented by the National Center for Law and Policy (NCLP), Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) and Advocates for Faith and Freedom (AFF). They filed a lawsuit and motion for preliminary injunction against the Biden administration and California state officials last year, challenging the suspension of the Church's preschool from a federal food program due to their beliefs about human sexuality.

Comment from the ADF:

> "Ironically, in the name of combatting discrimination, government officials have excluded the church and preschool from serving the El Cajon community based solely on their religious beliefs and exercise," said ADF Senior Counsel Jeremiah Galus. "This is antithetical to the First Amendment's promise of religious freedom and only hurts needy families and children."

So, the Christians who work at that school were seen as "good enough" to pay taxes to the government for this program, nut not good enough to be eligible for any grants. That's always the way with the secular left. They think that taxpayers are smart enough to earn the money, but not smart enough to spend it. We need the secular left to tell us how to spend it.

Here’s the final result of the lawsuit ruling:

> The settlement reinstated Dayspring in the Food Program, reimbursed suspended funds, removed the preschool from the National Disqualified List, and required the CDSS to issue clear guidance regarding the existence of exemptions for religious institutions in California’s food programs. The CDSS also agreed to pay $160,000 in legal fees. This outcome is a significant win for religious freedom in California and sets a precedent for similar religious institutions.

I thought this was interesting – the discrimination was caused by Joe Biden:

> After the Biden administration expanded the definition of “sex” in Title IX to encompass sexual orientation and gender identity, California’s Department of Social Services (CDSS) implemented new mandates. But these new rules restricted religious organizations from participation in the food program if their orthodox biblical views on human sexuality affected they way they operated their church or ministry.

It’s so strange to me that people who claim to be religious vote for Joe Biden. And yet here he is going after people who take the Bible seriously. I guess the religious people who support him don’t really care about taking the Bible seriously.

Image credit: Babylon Bee

What are the historical arguments for the post-mortem appearances of Jesus?

January 31, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi Ohio State University has a *great* post up about the post-mortem appearances of Jesus.

The post contains:

- a list of the post-mortem resurrection appearances
- quotations by skeptical historians about those appearances
- alternative naturalistic explanations of the appearances
- responses to those naturalistic explanations

Although there is a lot of research that went into the post, it's not very long to read. The majority of scholars accept the appearances, because they appear in *so many different sources* and because some of those sources are very early, especially Paul's statement of the early Christian creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, which is from about 1-3 years after Jesus was executed by the Romans. Eric's post lists out some of the skeptical scholars who the appearances, and you can see how they allude to the historical criteria that they are using. (If you want to sort of double-check the details, I blogged about how historians investigate ancient sources before)

Let's take a look at some of the names you might recognize:

> **E.P. Sanders:**
>
> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. "I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: 'I saw him first!' 'No! I did.' Paul's tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus' followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions." "Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the 'resurrection': the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it."[1]
>
> **Bart Ehrman:**
>
> It is a historical fact that some of Jesus' followers came to believe that he had been raised from the dead soon after his execution. We know some of these believers by name; one of them, the apostle Paul, claims quite plainly to have

> seen Jesus alive after his death. Thus, for the historian, Christianity begins after the death of Jesus, not with the resurrection itself, but with the belief in the resurrection.[2]
>
> **Ehrman also says:**
>
> We can say with complete certainty that some of his disciples at some later time insisted that . . . he soon appeared to them, convincing them that he had been raised from the dead.[3]
>
> **Ehrman also goes onto say:**
>
> Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus' resurrection, since this is a matter of public record.[4]
>
> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don't doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don't have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don't think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19).[5]
>
> **Marcus Borg**
>
> The historical ground of Easter is very simple: the followers of Jesus, both then and now, continued to experience Jesus as a living reality after his death. In the early Christian community, these experiences included visions or apparitions of Jesus. [8]

The references to Paul are because of the early creed he records in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, and his conversations with the other eyewitnesses in Galatians. Eric has another post where he goes over that early creed, and it is something that every Christian should know about. It's really kind of surprising that you never hear a sermon on that early creed in church, where they generally sort of assume that you believe everything in the Bible on faith. But skeptical historians don't believe in the post-mortem appearances by faith – they believe it (in part) because of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

If you want to see a Christian scholar make the case for the resurrection appearances in a debate, then here is a post I wrote with the video, audio and summary of the William Lane Craig vs James Crossley debate on the resurrection.

Christians and conservatives should be careful where they bank

February 1, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm sure that my readers who have been following the story of what happened in Canada with the Trudeau Liberal Party and the peaceful trucker protests in Ottawa will know how much the secular left loves to freeze the bank accounts of people who challenge them. Well, you might be surprised to find out that it happens in America, too. Well, with certain banks.

My podcast partner Rose sent me this article by Jeremy Tedesco of Alliance Defending Freedom, which appeared in the Daily Wire (full text archived).

It starts by talking about a New York State case that is going before the U.S. Supreme Court:

> [T]he National Rifle Association is challenging New York's attempt to coerce banks and insurance companies to withdraw services from the group. The NRA alleges that the Department of Financial Services — at the behest of then-Governor Andrew Cuomo — used its vast power to regulate "reputational risk" along with back-channel meetings, public investigations, and threats of fines to punish the group for its Second Amendment advocacy.

What I liked about this article, but you might find it disturbing, is the list of other times when banks tried to "de-bank" Christians and conservatives:

> As Alliance Defending Freedom points out in a friend-of-the-court brief filed in support of the NRA's position, pro-life group Heartbeat International was recently canceled by its insurance provider over its "anti-abortion" advocacy.

He linked to a whole list of de-bankings here. Some of the victims are famous, like former Republican Senator Sam Brownback! And The Ruth Institute – I've blogged many times about the founder of The Ruth Institute, Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse.

More from the article:

> […]Former Brexit leader Nigel Farage's high-profile case resulted in the ouster of megabank NatWest's CEO. Serial offender JPMorgan Chase's hit list includes the Arkansas Family Council, Defense of Liberty, and U.S Ambassador Sam Brownback's National Committee for Religious Freedom.

You can check how bad your bank is at this link (from the article). I was happy to see that my bank was pretty good, but I chose them after looking at their political donations on OpenSecrets.org. Mind you, I'm trying to switch over to a state-level bank right now.

But another step I took was to move to a red state, and that's something that might help me in the future:

> The solution to this problem may lie with the states. This state legislative season presents an opportunity for states interested in protecting against politicized de-banking to act. Any such law should focus on the worst actors – the largest banks and payment processors.

The conservative states are more likely to do something about this, just like you see Texas fighting back against Biden to secure the border. I can’t imagine why someone would live in a leftist state – it’s just too easy for them to persecute you there.

DeSantis beats Disney's lawsuit, while Trump loses defamation lawsuit

February 2, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This week, we had some lawsuit news. First, Donald Trump lost a defamation lawsuit to a crazy lady, and now he has to pay $83 million. You'll remember that Ron DeSantis decided to sign legislation that protected young children from LGBT indoctrination in schools. Disney, one of the biggest corporate promoters of LGBT activism, sued him. And the lost their case.

Here's the first story about Trump, reported by Daily Wire:

> A jury found former President Donald Trump should pay writer E. Jean Carroll $83.3 million in damages in a defamation trial that ended on Friday.
>
> The amount awarded to Carroll is well over three times more than her legal team asked for in its closing argument – $24 million – and more than eight times the amount Carroll requested in her initial lawsuit — $10 million, according to CNN.
>
> The jury found that Trump owed Carroll $11 million to cover the costs of a campaign to repair the harm done to her reputation and $7.3 million to address the emotional harm the 80-year-old writer sustained from remarks Trump made in 2019 about her and her accusations of rape. The jury ordered Trump to pay another $65 million in punitive damages.

Trump likes to run his mouth when he has nothing to gain for his supporters, and everything to lose. And then he gets hammered for it. He lacks discipline. He lacks self-control.

Meanwhile, DeSantis got sued by Disney, except he got sued for doing the right thing for his supporters – he passed the Florida Parental Rights in Education Act, and Disney was mad.

Daily Wire reported on his win:

> Florida Governor Ron DeSantis beat Disney on Wednesday after a federal judge tossed the company's lawsuit that claimed the governor retaliated against the company.
>
> The company filed the lawsuit after DeSantis dismantled a special Disney-controlled tax district that gave them the power to govern themselves, claiming that he retaliated against them for publicly criticizing his Florida Parental Rights in Education Act, which empowers parents to make the best decisions for raising their children and protects children from being exposed to dangerous leftist gender ideologies in school.

Disney employees have been involved in a lot of disgusting situations with kids. It's nice when someone competent goes up against them, and wins. We need a winner. Someone

who knows policy and the law. Someone with self-control, who isn't an easy target for the secular left. Someone without baggage, who has won elections as a Congressman and as Governor of Florida. Twice.

Related posts on DeSantis' achievements

- DeSantis wins again: Florida bans DEI programs at public colleges
- Promise to purge the FBI, and all other government agencies who discriminate against conservatives
- All he does is win: DeSantis cuts health care costs by importing Canadian drugs
- The DeSantis plan: pay teachers well, and put teacher unions out of business
- fires district attorneys who were elected with help from George Soros
- Mamas for DeSantis: Casey DeSantis champions parent's rights at the national level
- high tourism and low unemployment
- six-week abortion ban
- no sex-reassignment surgeries on kids
- no pronouns required in Florida schools
- no kids at drag queen shows
- pre-game prayer is allowed
- universal school choice
- making collection of union dues optional for teachers
- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts
- elect conservatives to school boards
- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women's sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

William Lane Craig lectures on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus

February 3, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is Dr. William Lane Craig giving a long-form argument for the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus, and taking questions from the audience.

The speaker introduction goes for 6 minutes, then Dr. Craig speaks for 35 minutes, then it's a period of questions and answers with the audience. The total length is 93 minutes, so quite a long period of Q&A. The questions in the Q&A period are quite good.

Introduction:

- Many people who are willing to accept God's existence are not willing to accept the God of Christianity
- Christians need to be ready to show that Jesus rose from the dead as a historical event
- Private faith is fine for individuals, but when dealing with the public you have to have evidence
- When making the case, you cannot assume that your audience accepts the Bible as inerrant
- You must use the New Testament like any other ancient historical document
- Most historians, Christian and not, accept the basic minimal facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus

Fact #1: the burial of Jesus following his crucifixion

- Fact #1 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #1 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #1 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it praises one of the Sanhedrin
- Fact #1 is not opposed by any competing burial narratives

Fact #2: on the Sunday following his crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by some women

- Fact #2 is supported by the early Passion narrative which was a source for Mark's gospel
- Fact #2 is implied by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #2 is simple and lacks legendary embellishment, which argues for an early dating

- Fact #2 passes the criterion of embarrassment, because it has female, not male, witnesses
- Fact #2 passes the criterion of enemy attestation, since it is reported by the Jewish leaders

Fact #3: Jesus appeared to various people in various circumstances after his death

- Fact #3 is supported by the early creed found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15)
- Fact #3 is supported by multiple, independent reports of the events from all four gospels
- Fact #3 explains other historical facts, like the conversion of Jesus' skeptical brother James

Fact #4: the earliest Christians proclaimed their belief in the resurrection of Jesus

- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians continued to identify Jesus as the Messiah
- Fact #4 explains why the earliest Christians were suddenly so unconcerned about being killed

Dr. Craig then asks which hypothesis explains all four of these facts. He surveys a number of naturalistic hypotheses, such as the hallucination theory or various conspiracy theories. All of these theories deny one or more of the minimal facts that have been established and accepted by the broad spectrum of historians. In order to reject the resurrection hypothesis, a skeptic would have to deny one of the four facts or propose an explanation that explains those facts better than the resurrection hypothesis.

I listened to the Q&A period while doing housekeeping and I heard lots of good questions. Dr. Craig gives very long answers to the questions. One person asked why we should trust the claim that the Jewish leaders really did say that the disciples stole the body. Another one asked why we should take the resurrection as proof that Jesus was divine. Another asks about the earthquake in Matthew, which Mike Licona and I doubt is intended to be historical, but is more likely to be apocalyptic imagery. Dr. Craig is also asked about the Jewish scholar Geza Vermes, and how many of the minimal facts he accepts. Another questioner asked about the ascension.

You can see this evidence used in an actual debate, against a historian who disagrees with Dr. Craig. That post contains a point by point summary of the debate that I wrote while listening to it.

If you are looking for a good book to read on this topic, the best introductory book on the resurrection is "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" and the best comprehensive book is "The Resurrection of Jesus".

Pre-ban study: 53% of mothers with gender-confused boys have mental illness

February 4, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Normally, on this blog, every other post is some "new study" that I can use in discussing the controversial issues of the day. A lot of the best new studies get unpublished if they go against the worldview of the secular left, for example, the famous ROGD study. (That one was later re-published). Or they don't get published at all. It's fun to see what was allowed to get published pre-ban.

Here's a study that's on PubMed, one of my favorite web sites for studies.

Abstract:

> This pilot study compared mothers of boys with gender identity disorder (GID) with mothers of normal boys to determine whether differences in psychopathology and child-rearing attitudes and practices could be identified. Results of the Diagnostic Interview for Borderlines and the Beck Depression Inventory revealed that mothers of boys with GID had more symptoms of depression and more often met the criteria for Borderline Personality Disorder than the controls. Fifty-three percent of the mothers of boys with GID compared with only 6% of controls met the diagnosis for Borderline Personality Disorder on the Diagnostic Interview for Borderlines or had symptoms of depression on the Beck Depression Inventory. Results of the Summers and Walsh Symbiosis Scale suggested that mothers of probands had child-rearing attitudes and practices that encouraged symbiosis and discouraged the development of autonomy.

Fifty-three percent of the mothers of boys with gender identity disorder were diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder or had symptoms of depression.

Now, there are concerns I have about this study. First, it's a small number of research subjects, which is understandable because back in 1991, there were not a lot of kids with gender identity disorder.

So what is Borderline Personality Disorder? Here is the description from the NIH:

> People with borderline personality disorder may experience intense mood swings and feel uncertainty about how they see themselves. Their feelings for others can change quickly, and swing from extreme closeness to extreme dislike. These changing feelings can lead to unstable relationships and emotional pain.
>
> People with borderline personality disorder also tend to view things in extremes, such as all good or all bad. Their interests and values can change quickly, and they may act impulsively or recklessly.

I don't know much about mental illness, but I've been told never to date (much less marry) someone with BPD, because it is the most serious mental illness.

This finding from the study is interesting to me, because it suggests a reason why we are seeing this enormous surge in LGBT identification among young people. Sure, there is peer pressure, that's what the study on ROGD was about. But now it suggests a chain between radical feminism, the Sexual Revolution, the decline of women's happiness, and their transgender children.

We know for certain that women are experiencing far greater unhappiness after radical feminism became widespread, because they don't like the goodies of radical feminism – promiscuity, abortion, careers, etc. – as much as they liked being married to a good man, and being a stay-at-home mother.

Daily Wire noted this in 2017:

> According to a recent study from Yale University researchers, liberated, college educated women are freezing their eggs because they can't find a man to marry and have children with before their natural childbearing years expire. In the U.K., for instance, one in five women is childless when their natural reproductive years expires, as opposed to one in ten women a mere generation prior.
>
> So what's to blame for this onslaught of college-educated yet terribly empty women?
>
> The short answer is feminism.

The short answer is feminism, because although women claim that it's men's fault for not marrying them, no man with a brain would ever marry a feminist. It's actually become too dangerous for men to even date feminists. I don't even talk to them. The character traits that go with the feminist worldview are not just anti-marriage, they're dangerous to men. Women who blame the bad results of their own choices on men are not safe to even speak to.

And as I've noted before, the decline of marriage is causing a massive spike in mental illness. Not in conservative women – just in progressive women.

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

Here’s the part of the data I thought was most interesting:

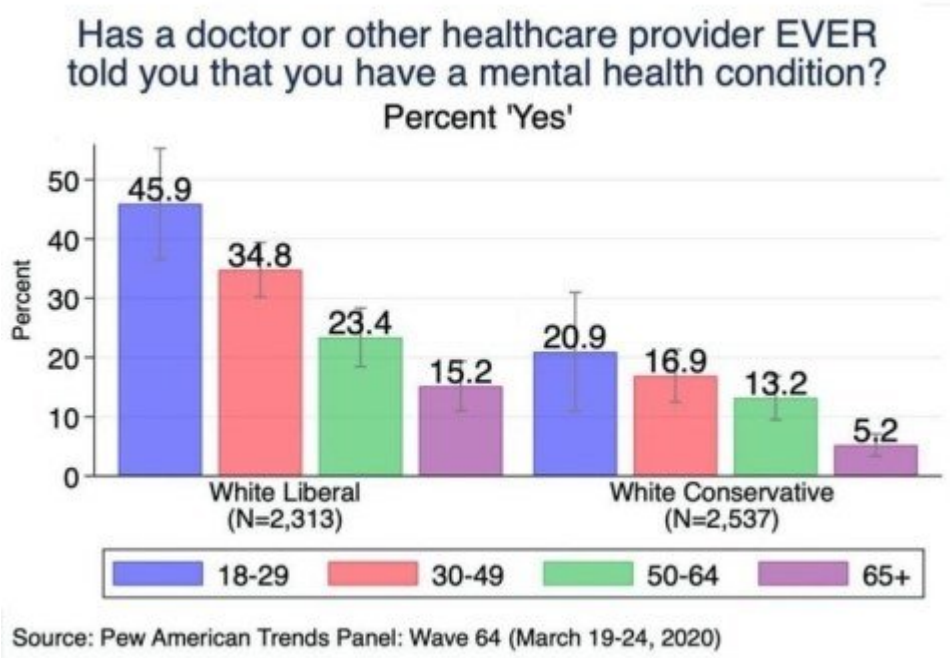

It turns out that marriage accounts for a lot of women’s happiness. But by allying themselves with radical feminism, women have made themselves totally unattractive to marriage-minded men. I think that the explosion of kids with gender identity disorder is just one of the ways that feminism is working itself out.

N.T. Wright lectures on the seven mutations caused by resurrection of Jesus

February 5, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a lecture from N.T. Wright, whose multi-volume case for the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus seems to be getting a lot of respect from the other side, (although I strongly disagree with his economic and political views, which are naive at best). Wright has taught at Cambridge University, Oxford University, Duke University, McGill University, and lectured on dozens of prestigious campuses around the world. He's published 40 books.

Here's a video of his case for the resurrection:

N.T. Wright's historical case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Wright basically argues that the resurrection cannot have been a myth invented by the early Christian community, because the idea of the Messiah dying and being bodily resurrected to eternal life was completely unexpected in Jewish theology, and therefore would not have been fabricated.

In Judaism, when people die, they stay dead. At the most, they might re-appear as apparitions, or be resuscitated to life for a while, but then die again later. *There was no concept of the bodily resurrection to eternal life of a single person, especially of the Messiah, prior to the general resurrection of all the righteous dead on judgment day.*

Wright's case for the resurrection has 3 parts:

- The Jewish theological beliefs of the early Christian community underwent 7 mutations that are *inexplicable* apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus
- The empty tomb
- The post-mortem appearances of Jesus to individuals and groups, friends and foes

Here's the outline of Wright's case:

> …the foundation of my argument for what happened at Easter is the reflection that this Jewish hope has undergone remarkable modifications or mutations within early Christianity, which can be plotted consistently right across the first two centuries. And these mutations are so striking, in an area of human experience where societies tend to be very conservative, that they force the historian… to ask, Why did they occur?
>
> The mutations occur within a strictly Jewish context. The early Christians held firmly, like most of their Jewish contemporaries, to a two-step belief about the future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world. 'Resurrection' is not a fancy word for 'life after death'; it denotes life after 'life after death'.

And here are the 7 mutations:

1. Christian theology of the afterlife mutates from multiples views (Judaism) to a single view: resurrection (Christianity). When you die, your soul goes off to wait in Sheol. On judgment day, the righteous dead get new resurrection bodies, identical to Jesus' resurrection body.
2. The relative importance of the doctrine of resurrection changes from being peripheral (Judaism) to central (Christianity).
3. The idea of what the resurrection would be like goes from multiple views (Judaism) to a single view: an incorruptible, spiritually-oriented body composed of the material of the previous corruptible body (Christianity).
4. The timing of the resurrection changes from judgment day (Judaism) to a split between the resurrection of the Messiah *right now* and the resurrection of the rest of the righteous *on judgment day* (Christianity).
5. There is a new view of eschatology as collaboration with God to transform the world.
6. There is a new *metaphorical* concept of resurrection, referred to as being "born-again".
7. There is a new association of the concept of resurrection to the Messiah. (The Messiah was not even supposed to die, and he certainly wasn't supposed to rise again from the dead in a resurrected body!)

There are also other historical puzzles that are solved by postulating a bodily resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jewish people thought that the Messiah was not supposed to die. Although there were lots of (warrior) Messiahs running around at the time, whenever they got killed, their followers would abandon them. Why didn't Jesus' followers abandon him when he died?
2. If the early Christian church wanted to communicate that Jesus was special, despite his shameful death on the cross, they would have made up a story using the existing Jewish concept of *exaltation*. Applying the concept of bodily resurrection to a dead Messiah would be a radical departure from Jewish theology, when an invented exaltation was already available to do the job.
3. The early church became extremely reckless about sickness and death, taking care of people with communicable diseases and testifying about their faith in the face of torture and execution. Why did they scorn sickness and death?
4. The gospels, especially Mark, do not contain any embellishments and "theology historicized". If they were made-up, there would have been events that had some connection to theological concepts. But the narratives are instead bare-bones: "Guy dies public death. People encounter same guy alive later." Plain vanilla narrative.
5. The story of the women who were the first witnesses to the empty tomb cannot have been invented, because the testimony of women was inadmissible under almost all circumstances at that time. If the story were invented, they would have

invented male discoverers of the tomb. Female discovers would have hampered conversion efforts.

6. There are almost no legendary embellishments in the gospels, while there are plenty in the later gnostic forgeries. No crowds of singing angels, no talking crosses, and no booming voices from the clouds.
7. There is no mention of the future hope of the general resurrection, which I guess they thought was imminent anyway.

To conclude, Wright makes the argument that the best explanation of all of these changes in theology and practice is that God raised Jesus (bodily) from the dead. There is simply no way that this community would have made up the single resurrection of the Messiah – who wasn't even supposed to die – and then put themselves on the line for that belief.

And remember, the belief in a resurrected Jesus was something that the earliest witnesses could really assess, because they were the ones who saw him killed and then walking around again after his death. They were able to confirm or deny their belief in the resurrection of Jesus based on their own *personal experiences* with the object of those beliefs.

Mark D. Linville: does Darwinian evolution make morality rational?

February 6, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard an atheist tell you that naturalistic evolution is an answer to the moral argument? I have. And I found a good reply to this challenge in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". The chapter that responds to the challenge is authored by Dr. Mark D. Linville. It is only 13 pages long. I have a link to the PDF at the bottom of this post.

First, a bit about the author:

> Blog: The Tavern at the End of the World
> Current positions:
>
> - PhD Research Fellow
> - Tutoring Fellow in Philosophy
>
> Education:
>
> - PhD in Philosophy with a minor in South Asian Studies and a specialization in Philosophy of Religion, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy of Religion, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
> - MA in Theology, Cincinnati Christian Seminary
> - BA in Biblical Studies, Florida Christian College

Here is his thesis of the essay:

> Darwin's account of the origins of human morality is at once elegant, ingenious, and, I shall argue, woefully inadequate. In particular, that account, on its standard interpretation, does not explain morality, but, rather, explains it away . We learn from Darwin not how there could be objective moral facts, but how we could have come to believe—perhaps erroneously—that there are.
>
> Further, the naturalist, who does not believe that there is such a personal being as God, is in principle committed to Darwinism, including a Darwinian account of the basic contours of human moral psychology. I'll use the term evolutionary naturalism to refer to this combination of naturalism and Darwinism. And so the naturalist is saddled with a view that explains morality away. Whatever reason we have for believing in moral facts is also a reason for thinking naturalism is false. I conclude the essay with a brief account of a theistic conception of morality, and argue that the theist is in a better position to affirm the objectivity of morality.

And here’s a sample to get your attention:

> But even if we are assured that a “normal” person will be prompted by the social instincts and that those instincts are typically flanked and reinforced by a set of moral emotions, we still do not have a truly normative account of moral obligation. There is nothing in Darwin’s own account to indicate that the ensuing sense of guilt—a guilty feeling—is indicative of actual moral guilt resulting from the violation of an objective moral law. The revenge taken by one’s own conscience amounts to a sort of second-order propensity to feel a certain way given one’s past relation to conflicting first-order propensities (e.g., the father’s impulse to save his child versus his impulse to save himself). Unless we import normative considerations from some other source, it seems that, whether it is a first or second-order inclination,one’s being prompted by it is more readily understood as a descriptive feature of one’s own psychology than material for a normative assessment of one’s behavior or character. And, assuming that there is anything to this observation, an ascent into even higher levels of propensities (“I feel guilty for not having felt guilty for not being remorseful over not obeying my social instincts…”) introduces nothing of normative import. Suppose you encounter a man who neither feels the pull of social, paternal or familial instincts nor is in the least bit concerned over his apparent lack of conscience. What, from a strictly Darwinian perspective, can one say to him that is of any serious moral import? “You are not moved to action by the impulses that move most of us.” Right. So?
>
> The problem afflicts contemporary construals of an evolutionary account of human morality. Consider Michael Shermer’s explanation for the evolution of a moral sense—the “science of good and evil.” He explains,
>
> By a moral sense, I mean a moral feeling or emotion generated by actions. For example, positive emotions such as righteousness and pride are experienced as the psychological feeling of doing “good.” These moral emotions likely evolved out of behaviors that were reinforced as being good either for the individual or for the group.2
>
> Shermer goes on to compare such moral emotions to other emotions and sensations that are universally experienced, such as hunger and the sexual urge. He then addresses the question of moral motivation.
>
> In this evolutionary theory of morality, asking “Why should we be moral?” is like asking “Why should we be hungry?” or “Why should we be horny?” For that matter, we could ask, “Why should we be jealous?” or “Why should we fall in love?” The answer is that it is as much a part of human nature to be moral as it is to be hungry, horny, jealous, and in love.3
>
> Thus, according to Shermer, given an evolutionary account, such a question is simply a non-starter. Moral motivation is a given as it is wired in as one of our basic drives. Of course, one might point out that Shermer’s “moral emotions”

> often do need encouragement in a way that, say, “horniness,” does not. More importantly, Shermer apparently fails to notice that if asking “Why should I be moral?” is like asking, “Why should I be horny?” then asserting, “You ought to be moral” is like asserting, “You ought to be horny.” As goes the interrogative, so goes the imperative. But if the latter seems out of place, then, on Shermer’s view, so is the former.
>
> One might thus observe that if morality is anything at all, it is irreducibly normative in nature. But the Darwinian account winds up reducing morality to descriptive features of human psychology. Like the libido, either the moral sense is present and active or it is not. If it is, then we might expect one to behave accordingly. If not, why, then, as a famous blues man once put it, “the boogie woogie just ain’t in me.” And so the resulting “morality” is that in name only.
>
> **In light of such considerations, it is tempting to conclude with C. S. Lewis that, if the naturalist remembered his philosophy out of school, he would recognize that any claim to the effect that “I ought” is on a par with “I itch,” in that it is nothing more than a descriptive piece of autobiography with no essential reference to any actual obligations.**

When it comes to morality, we are not interested in mere descriptions of behavior. We want to know about prescriptions of behavior, and whether why we should care about following those prescriptions. We are interested in what grounds our sense of moral obligation in reality. What underwrites our sense of moral obligation? If it is just rooted in feelings, then why should we obey our moral sense when obeying it goes against out self-interest? Feelings are subjective things, and doing the right thing in a real objective state of affairs requires more than just feelings. There has to be a real objective state of affairs that makes it rational for us to do the right thing, even when the right thing is against our own self-interest. That’s what morality is – objective moral obligations *overriding* subjective feelings. I wouldn’t trust someone to be moral if it were just based on their feelings.

How Howard W. Gilmore, commander of the USS Growler, earned the Medal of Honor

February 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Today is the 81st anniversary of a very brave, self-sacrificial act that is well known by all American submariners. The story I talk about below occurred on February 7th, 1943, when America was at war against Japanese imperialists. It took place aboard the USS Growler, a Gato-class submarine. The hero of the story is Commander Howard W. Gilmore. Let's take a look.

My first brush with the story of the Growler occurred when I was very young, and was playing a game called "Gato" (made by Spectrum Holobyte) on the Macintosh computer that my parents bought for my older brother. In the game, you played as the commander of the USS Growler. COMSUBPAC (Commander of Submarines in the Pacific) would send me missions, and I would execute them. I was able to find an online version that ran in Microsoft's Edge browser on archive.org.

So, here is an article from the Submarine Force Museum about the USS Growler and Commander Howard W. Gilmore.

It says:

> Howard Walter Gilmore was born in Selma, Alabama on September 29, 1902. He enlisted in the Navy on November 15, 1920 and was appointed to the US Naval Academy in 1922. In 1926 he was sent to his first station on the battleship *USS Mississippi* (BB-41). By 1930, Gilmore was seeking something new and exciting and underwent submarine training in New London.
>
> […]By March of 1942, construction of the *Growler* was finished, and Gilmore and his crew would operate out of Pearl Harbor in the Pacific theater.
>
> Their first war patrol would come in late June 1942 in the Aleutian Islands. During this patrol, Gilmore once again narrowly escaped disaster, avoiding two torpedoes that were fired at him during an attack by three Japanese destroyers. In August, they would leave for their second patrol in the East China Sea near Taiwan. During what would end up being Growler's most successful war patrol, they sunk four merchant ships totaling 15,000 tons. Her third patrol was quiet, and she would remain in Brisbane, Australia for the rest of 1942.
>
> The Growler and her crew left Brisbane on New Year's Day 1943 for her fourth war patrol. Her mission was to target Japanese shipping lanes in the Bismarck Archipelago. In early February, while charging her batteries on the surface, Gilmore spotted a provision ship and prepared for a surface attack. The 900-ton provision ship Hayasaki saw the on-coming submarine and attempted to ram the Growler. In the darkness, Gilmore "sounded the collision alarm and shouted, 'Left full rudder!'-to no avail.

> Perhaps inadvertently, Growler hit the Japanese adversary amidships at 17 knots, heeling the submarine 50 degrees, bending sideways 18 feet of her the bow, and disabling the forward torpedo tubes." The Japanese crew began firing at the bridge, killing the assistant officer and a lookout who were on deck. Gilmore and two other men were also wounded during the burst of gun fire. Gilmore, without thinking, called for the bridge to be cleared. Gilmore realized that if they dove, the Growler could be saved, but there was no time for him to make it below. Despite this, he gave the call to "Take her down!"
>
> LCDR Arnold Schade, shaken and unsure, followed the last order his captain would ever give him. Schade would surface the ship a few hours later but found no sign of the *Hayasaki*. There was also no sign of Gilmore. Schade and the crew were able to keep the battered ship together long enough to make it back to Brisbane on February 17th. Gilmore's death would unfortunately not be the only tragedy for the *Growler*. On her 11th war patrol in 1944, she was lost at sea. By her end, The *Growler* received eight battle stars for her role in the Pacific War.
>
> CDR Howard Gilmore was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his sacrifice to save his ship.

Whenever I see that someone has earned a Medal of Honor – the highest military award that can be given – I always look up their Medal of Honor citation.

Here is Gilmore's.

There's a good episode of "The Silent Service" about Gilmore:

As a Christian, I try to make the words of the Bible more practical by reading stories that parallel some of the teachings of Jesus. In this case, Gilmore is pretty clearly living out that command to "love your neighbor as yourself" and "in humility consider others more important than yourselves" and "greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends". What's interesting to me about this story is that it's not an enlisted man or a lower officer who is doing it, it's the Commander of the boat.

If you're at all interested in getting started in learning military history, a good place to start is with the American submarine commanders in the Pacific. The enemy we fought was very clearly evil, and treated civilians and prisoners horribly. They attacked us first at Pearl Harbor. I have found the commanders to be mostly men of extraordinary intelligence and character. I especially recommend the books "Wahoo" and "Clear the Bridge!" by Richard O'Kane, and "Thunder Below" by Eugene Fluckey. At the operational level, I enjoyed Charles Lockwood's "Sink 'Em All". Those can all be obtained as audio books, too. I just got "Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War against Japan" in the mail. No audio book for that one, though.

If you like board games, there is a good board game called "Silent Victory". The manufacturer is taking pre-orders for the third printing now. If you prefer computer games, "Crash Dive 2" puts you in command of a Gato-class submarine, and it's not too complicated.

Astrophysicist explains the problems with naturalistic origin of life

February 8, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There's an interesting article posted at Universe Today by Dr. Paul M. Sutter. Although he does accept unguided evolution after the origin of life, he doesn't think that naturalism can account for the origin of life. On this blog, I've talked about three problem's with life's origin: 1) getting the right building blocks, 2) getting the right information, and 3) irreducible complexity. Let's take a look.

Here is a link to the article from Universe Today.

Here is a quick bio of the author:

> Paul M. Sutter is a theoretical cosmologist, award-winning science communicator, NASA advisor, U.S. Cultural Ambassador, and a globally recognized leader in the intersection of art and science. Paul is a research professor at the Institute for Advanced Computational Science at Stony Brook University and a visiting professor at Barnard College, Columbia University.
>
> […]Paul earned his PhD in physics in 2011 as a Department of Energy Computational Science Graduate Fellow at the University of Illinois. He then spent three years as a research fellow at the Paris Institute for Astrophysics followed by two years at the Trieste Observatory in Italy. Prior to his current appointment, he held a joint position as the chief scientist at the Center of Science and Industry in Columbus, Ohio and as a cosmological researcher at the Ohio State University.

Now let's turn to his article.

It's always good to remind people what is required for the simplest kind of life, and he does that:

> To succeed at evolution and separate itself from mere chemical reactions, life must do three things. First, it must somehow store information, such as the encoding for various processes, traits, and characteristics. This way the successful traits can pass from one generation to another.
>
> Second, life must self-replicate. It must be able to make reasonably accurate copies of its own molecular structure, so that the information contained within itself has the chance to become a new generation, changed and altered based on its survivability.
>
> Lastly, life must catalyze reactions. It must affect its own environment, whether for movement, or to acquire or store energy, or grow new structures, or all the many wonderful activities that life does on a daily basis.

I remember listening to lectures about the origin of life by Dean Kenyon, Charles Thaxton,

and Walter Bradley in my younger years. If I remember correctly, the minimal functions of a living system are capture energy, store information, and replicate. Sutter does a nice job of describing an even longer list.

So what's the problem with appealing to chance and necessity to create all that? Well, in order to do all that, we need to have three components in place: DNA, RNA and molecular machines.

He writes:

> Put exceedingly simply (for I would hate for you to mistake me for a biologist), life accomplishes these tasks with a triad of molecular tools.
>
> One is the DNA, which through its genetic code stores information using combinations of just four molecules: adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine. The raw ability of DNA to store massive amounts of information is nothing short of a miracle; our own digital system of 1's and 0's (invented because it's much simpler to tell if a circuit is on or off than some stage in-between) is the closest comparison we can make to DNA's information density. Natural languages don't even earn a place on the chart.
>
> The second component is RNA, which is intriguingly similar to DNA but with two subtle, but significant, differences: RNA swaps out thymine for uracil in its codebase, and contains the sugar ribose, which is one oxygen atom short of the deoxyribose of DNA. RNA also stores information but, again speaking only in generalities, has the main job of reading the chemical instructions stored in the DNA and using that to manufacture the last member of the triad, proteins.
>
> "Proteins" is a generic catch-all term for the almost uncountable varieties of molecular machines that do stuff: they snip apart molecules, bind them back together, manufacture new ones, hold structures together, become structures themselves, move important molecules from one place to another, transform energy from one form to another, and so on.
>
> Proteins have one additional function: they perform the job of unraveling DNA and making copies of it. Thus the triad completes all the functions of life: DNA stores information, RNA uses that information to manufacture proteins, and the proteins interact with the environment and perform the self-replication of DNA.

What's the problem? The problem is that this all has to come together at the start, in order to have life. You can't build up gradually, from one component, to two components, to three components. All three are needed at the start. This is what Michael Behe calls irreducible complexity, but others have described it as minimal complexity.

Sutter says:

> The interconnected nature of DNA, RNA, and proteins means that it could not have sprung up *ab initio* from the primordial ooze, because if only one component is missing then the whole system falls apart – a three-legged table

> with one missing cannot stand.

And just to be clear, he would have to provide some evidence of "primordial ooze". As I've blogged about before, life appears almost instantaneously after the cooling of the Earth. He might like to appeal to "billions of years" to get that first replicator, but he doesn't have billions of years. Molecular oxygen, which is poisonous to origin of life chemistry, was present right after the Earth cooled. And that's not my opinion – that's right out of the prestigious peer-reviewed journal *Nature*.

Evolution News notes:

> A recent *Nature* publication reports a new technique for measuring the oxygen levels in Earth's atmosphere some 4.4 billion years ago. The authors found that by studying cerium oxidation states in zircon, a compound formed from volcanic magma, they could ascertain the oxidation levels in the early earth. Their findings suggest that the early Earth's oxygen levels were very close to current levels.
>
> […]Their findings not only showed that oxygen was present in the early Earth atmosphere, something that has been shown in other studies, but that oxygen was present as early as 4.4 billion years ago. This takes the window of time available for life to have begun, by an origin-of-life scenario like the RNA-first world, and reduces it to an incredibly short amount of time. Several factors need to coincide in order for nucleotides or amino acids to form from purely naturalistic circumstances (chance and chemistry). The specific conditions required already made purely naturalist origin-of-life scenarios highly unlikely. Drastically reducing the amount of time available, adding that to the other conditions needing to be fulfilled, makes the RNA world hypothesis or a Miller-Urey-like synthesis of amino acids simply impossible.

I understand that naturalists want to believe that nature is self-contained, and can do it's own creating. That belief is practically *required* in order to have careers in academia. Scientists have to at least *claim* that "naturalism can do it" or they would draw the unwanted attention of the Darwin mob – the people who got people like William Dembski, Guillermo Gonzalez, Richard Sternberg, etc. fired. However, the scientific evidence doesn't support naturalism. I wish more people would form their views based on scientific evidence, rather than on the religion of naturalism.

If we seriously want men to marry and become fathers, let's repeal no-fault divorce

February 9, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw a very good article at the Heritage Foundation web site about the importance of fathers for children. The author Virginia Allen listed out some of the benefits that fathers provide to children:

> Studies have found that children raised without a father are:
>
> - At a higher risk of having behavioral problems.
> - Four times more likely to live in poverty.
> - More likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime.
> - Twice as likely to never graduate high school.
> - At a seven times higher risk of teen pregnancy.
> - More vulnerable to abuse and neglect.
> - More likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.
> - Twice as likely to be obese.
>
> From education to personal health to career success, children who lack a father find themselves at a disadvantage to their peers raised in a two-parent household.

I was looking for a good analysis of why there's been a decline of marriage and fatherhood, and I found an article by Joe Carter on far-left The Gospel Coalition, of all places. By looking at marriage rates and historical events that changed the marriage rate, he was able to identify the cause of the decline of marriage – and fatherhood.

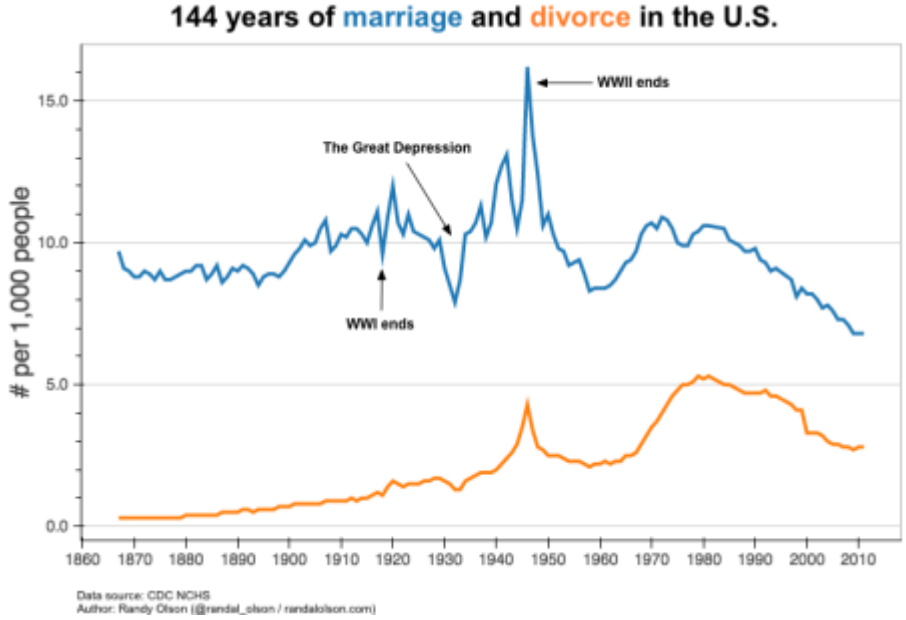

Marriage and divorce rates per capita

I'll spare you the statistical analysis, which is excellent, and give you the conclusion –

although you can guess it from the graph above:

> Now that we've explored the data, what year should we use as the marker for the beginning of the decline of marriage in the United States? I would argue for 1985, the last year that the marriage rate topped 10 percent.
>
> […]What changed in 1985 that could have led to the decline in marriage? There are likely numerous factors—which we'll examine in future articles—but one stands out in particular: By 1985, all states (except for New York) had enacted no-fault divorce legislation.

The most helpful book I know of about no-fault divorce is "Taken Into Custody", by Dr. Stephen Baskerville. He wrote a column for Crisis magazine that summarizes some of his ideas.

Excerpt:

> Feminists were drafting no-fault divorce laws in the 1940s, which the National Association of Women Lawyers now describes as "the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken."
>
> The result effectively abolished marriage as a legal contract. Today it is not possible to form a binding agreement to create a family.
>
> The new laws did not stop at removing the requirement of citing grounds for a divorce, to allow divorce by mutual consent, as deceptively advertised at the time. Instead they created unilateral and involuntary divorce, so that one spouse may dissolve a marriage without any agreement or fault by the other.

Here's what divorce does to the spouse who is the victim of the unilateral "no-fault" divorce:

> Though marriage is a civil matter, the logic quickly extended into the criminal, including a presumption of guilt against the involuntarily divorced spouse ("defendant"). Yet formal due process protections of criminal proceedings did not apply, so forcibly divorced spouses became quasi-criminals not for recognized criminal acts but for failing or refusing to cooperate with the divorce by continuing to claim the protections and prerogatives of family life: living in the common home, possessing the common property, or—most vexing of all—parenting the common children.
>
> Following from this are the horrendous civil liberties violations and flagrant invasions of family and individual privacy that are now routine in family courts. A personalized criminal code is legislated by the judge around the forcibly divorced spouse, controlling their association with their children, movements, and finances. Unauthorized contact with their children can be punished with arrest. Involuntarily divorced parents are arrested for running into their children in public, making unauthorized telephone calls, and sending unauthorized birthday cards.

In my conversations with men, no-fault divorce laws, and anti-male divorce courts are the main reasons given for why they do not pursue marriage and fatherhood. Men do not want to be coerced in a marriage with the threat of divorce by an unhappy wife. Men do not want to be subject to the government in so many areas of their lives if the wife does carry out the threat. They especially don't want to be separated from their children. One my secular male friends told me that he would not marry unless the woman had evidence in her past of hating radical feminism and no-fault divorce. This was the main criteria. He actually was able to find a woman who was a men's rights activist who hated divorce. But that was the only way he would marry.

Statistically speaking, the wife is more likely to initiate divorce than the husband. Women initiate 70% of divorces, the majority of those just because she is "unhappy". I think this is because women get into marriage based on their feelings, and they think that it is the husband's job to make them feel good. They see their happiness as the primary goal of the marriage, and see a marriage that does not make them happy as a marriage that needs to be ended.

Are we going to repeal no-fault divorce, then?

No-fault divorce was seen as a boon to women who had married the wrong men by following their hearts. It's an interesting question to ask whether women really would want no-fault repealed. It would mean that they would have to get serious about who they marry, instead of just getting into marriage based on feelings. They would have to evaluate men according to expectations of what a man does in a marriage, instead of on feelings. They would have to think about what men want out of a marriage, and prepare themselves to provide for his needs. They would have to say no to their feelings, when choosing a man, and in keeping a man after the wedding.

If women aren't willing to demand the repeal of no-fault divorce laws and get serious about men and marriage, then what's the point of complaining that men don't want to marry and become fathers? If you're not willing to fix the root cause of the problem, then don't complain about the problem.

Scott Klusendorf discusses right to life, assisted reproduction, and end of life

February 10, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video, featuring my favorite pro-life speakers Scott Klusendorf. Scott is the founder and President of the Life Training Institute. LTI's mission is to make a rigorous, rational defense for pro-life positions with respect to a variety of ethical issues. If you listen to Scott, you will learn a lot, and learn it from someone who has been tested on the battlefield of ideas.

Three topics:

- right to life of the unborn
- reproductive technologies
- end of life questions

40 minutes of guided discussion, 20 minutes of Q&A. This video was apparently recorded in the summer of 2016.

Abortion:

- the 1-minute case for the pro-life position (excellent)
- dealing with those who dismiss the pro-life case as religious
- how and when do people win arguments?
- how does one get better at discussing moral issues?
- who are some of the best books to get informed about life issues?
- what are some of the best books from the other side?
- what is the SLED test? do pro-abortion scholars accept it?
- if abortion were illegal, who should be punished and how much?
- is it inflammatory and dangerous to say that abortion is killing?

Assisted reproductive technologies:

- how should we speak to people considering ARTs?
- what is the underlying issue in ART discussions?
- should pro-lifers be opposed to all use of ARTs?
- what should pro-lifers think about surrogacy?
- which books provide an introduction to ART ethics?

End of life issues:

- what is the central issue in end of life discussions?
- should treatment always be continued or are there situations where treatment can be withdrawn?

Final issues:

- if a student wants to take courses in bioethics, where should they go to take courses or do a degree?
- what is the policy situation for pro-lifers in terms of legislation and SCOTUS decision-making?
- what are some policies that pro-lifers can support as incremental measures that move the issue in the right direction?

I liked this discussion. I tried to listen as someone new to the issue and he did a good job of not assuming any prior knowledge of the debate. My favorite part was his survey of books and arguments on the other side, and what they say. I don't think that most people realize what the implications of the pro-abortion worldview really are for things like infanticide, and so on. The discussion about who should be punished for abortion and how much was new to me – and that actually came up during the last election, during the GOP primary. Personally, I would let the woman get off, and just prosecute the doctor.

It's very very good to listen to crystal clear thinking on these controversial issues from someone who has encountered the other side in their writings, and in public debates with them. Not to mention having to interact with people making decisions in these areas.

What’s the best explanation for the origin of life for atheists?

February 11, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just ordered the newest edition of “The Mystery of Life’s Origin“, which is a classic book on the origin of life by pro-design authors. The new edition has several new chapters. It reminded me of my interest in the origin of life when I was a younger man, just starting full-time work with a hot Internet start-up in the big city.

Back then, I liked to listen to debates about the origin of life (e.g. – Walter Bradley versus Robert Shapiro, etc.), as well as lectures and interviews. I ordered tons of academic lectures and debates, especially from Access Research Network. Two of my favorite interviews from ARN featured Dr. Charles Thaxton and Dr. Dean Kenyon.

Let’s start with Charles Thaxton’s interview.

And here are the questions:

1. How did you first get interested in the origin of life?
2. How did you come to write The Mystery of Life’s Origin with Walter Bradley and Roger Olsen?
3. Was there an advantage to having the three of you collaborate on the project?
4. What is the primary argument of your book, The Mystery of Life’s Origin?
5. Have scientists come close to developing a plausible naturalistic explanation to the origin of life or do you still consider the origin of life to be a mystery?
6. Do you see a particular irony in the timing of Stanley Miller’s experiments and the discovery of DNA by Watson and Crick?
7. How does the emergence of modern genetics tie in with the Darwinian scenario of life going from simple to complex?
8. What are the major problems with origin of life simulation experiments?
9. Isn’t it rather impressive that amino acids were produced in the Miller experiments?
10. How close is the development of amino acids to the threshold of life?
11. What are the steps involved in producing proteins from amino acids?
12. Why are amino acids isolated during this process?
13. How can the investigator affect the outcome of a simulation experiment?
14. How did you evaluate the different chemical evolution experiments?
15. Are the initial conditions in the simulation experiments plausible?
16. What did the earth’s early atmosphere contain?
17. Will the simulation experiments work with this atmosphere?
18. There seems to be an underlying assumption that the origin of life resulted without any intelligent input whatsoever yet the simulation experiments appear to rely upon intelligent guidance. Could you comment on this irony?
19. Are there any natural processes that would have filtered out destructive ultraviolet light?

20. What additional steps beyond creating amino acids would be required to develop life?
21. What is so difficult about making proteins or nucleic acids?
22. In addition to the energy problem in protein synthesis isn't there a sequencing problem?
23. Are DNA sequences analogous to a written language?
24. Has Hubert Yockey made similar claims?
25. In The Mystery of Life's Origin you refer to order, randomness, and specified complexity. Could you give us an overview of these concepts?
26. What do you think the presence of specified complexity in a living system indicates about its origin?
27. In inferring the necessity of intelligence to produce life haven't you ventured from the realm of science to religion?
28. Could you summarize the reasons why you believe intelligence was involved in the origin of life?
29. What are the major objections to your current point of view?
30. How was The Mystery of Life's Origin received by the scientific community?
31. What was Dean Kenyon's response to your critiques of his book, Biochemical Predestination?
32. What was Dean Kenyon's response to The Mystery of Life's Origin?
33. Were you a bit apprehensive about meeting Kenyon after writing a book which was quite critical of his views in Biochemical Predestination?
34. Are self-organizational theories plausible?
35. Would you comment on the work done by Prigogine and Eigen?
36. What is your assessment of RNA scenarios?
37. What other problems do you see with an RNA world?

You can learn more about Charles Thaxton here.

And here's the interview with Dean Kenyon:

And here are the questions:

1. What first interested you in biology and the origin of life? What is your academic background in this area?
2. What was your viewpoint on the origin of life when you wrote Biochemical Predestination?
3. How have your views on the origin of life changed since you wrote Biochemical Predestination?
4. Do many of your colleagues support your new position? If not, why not?
5. What are the general presuppositions that scientists make who study the origin of life?
6. What is the Oparin-Haldane hypothesis, and what role does it play in current research and teaching on the origin of life?
7. What are the major underlying assumptions of the Oparin (chemical evolution) hypothesis?
8. Are there any other important assumptions in origin of life theories?

9. How well are these assumptions supported by currently available scientific data?
10. What is your evaluation of the Miller type of simulation experiment? What do these experiments tell us about possible chemical events on the prebiotic Earth?
11. Is it possible that interfering cross-reactions might prevent life from arising naturalistically?
12. Stanley Miller's pioneering work in the origin of life assumed a reducing atmosphere of methane, ammonia, water vapor, and carbon dioxide? Is there sufficient empirical support for this assumption?
15. How large a gap is there between the most complex "protocell" model and the simplest living cell?
16. What is the biologically relevant information content of the simplest living organism known to exist? What are estimates for a theoretical minimum information content of the first living cell?
17. How probable is it that such complexity could arise by undirected chemical processes?
19. What are the major unsolved problems in research on the origin of life?
20. What is the relevance of the Second Law of Thermodynamics to the origin of life?
21. Is it plausible that an "RNA world" was the precursor of the first living cells?
25. If life did not originate by chemical evolution on the primitive Earth, what other possible scientific explanations exist?
26. What do you mean by your statement that "perhaps scientism is more widespread than we like to think"?
27. Is it possible that natural processes are insufficient to account for the origin of all biological information?
28. Can science rule out the possibility that most biological information had an intelligent cause?
29. What alternatives are there to pursuing purely naturalistic explanations for the origin of life?
30. What do you mean by "intelligent design" as it relates to the origin of life?
31. Why is an intelligent design or creationist interpretation of scientific data bearing on origins not acceptable to many scientists?
32. What criteria could be used to determine if the information content of living organisms had an intelligent or natural cause?
34. Does academic freedom allow you to discuss the difficulties of scientific naturalism and origin of life theories? If not, why are they protected from criticism?
35. How should the origin of life be taught in light of the California Science Framework policy which states that "nothing in science or in any other field of knowledge shall be taught dogmatically"?
36. How is scientific progress impacted when critiques of current theories are suppressed?

You can learn more about Dean Kenyon here.

The challenge for naturalists posed by the origin of life makes it well worth your time to

learn and understand. I used to explain this argument to my entire IT department on white boards when I was a young man. It's fascinating, and more convincing than personal testimonies or abstract philosophical arguments. Although I read books on the origin of life, I learned how to present the information as an argument by watching the interviews above over and over.

People sometimes ask me how I was able to survive 22 years in IT with my theism intact. It turns out that there are no shortcuts to a theistic worldview. You have to support it with evidence. You have to be able to show your work about how you reached your conclusions. I'm a theist today because I never found a single atheist in any software development job who could even begin to challenge the evidence that I collected from listening to all those lectures and debates that I started from in my early 20s. It was as easy to defeat them as taking candy from a baby.

If only Christian parents and Christian leaders understood the importance of scientific facts when they talk to young people about Christianity. We need to be less worried about hurting the feelings of young people by making them "feel dumb". Christianity isn't supposed to be easy. It's not a bad thing to ask people to work hard at learning how to rationally ground it with evidence. If we want to stop our young people from being lazy, ignorant and cowardly, then the right way to do it is to make them work. Make them learn. Make them fight.

Are the Galapagos finch beaks evidence of Darwinian evolution?

February 12, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Were you taught in biology class that the changing lengths of finch beaks was a good proof of Darwinian evolution? Many students were… but is it true?

Jonathan Wells has an article about it at Evolution News.

It says:

> When Charles Darwin visited the Galápagos Islands in 1835, he collected specimens of the local wildlife. These included some finches that he threw into bags, many of them mislabeled. Although the Galápagos finches had little impact on Darwin's thinking (he doesn't even mention them in *The Origin of Species*), biologists who studied them a century later called them "Darwin's finches" and invented the myth that Darwin had correlated differences in the finches' beaks with different food sources (he hadn't). According to the myth, Darwin was inspired by the finches to formulate his theory of evolution, thoughaccording to historian of science Frank Sulloway "nothing could be further from the truth."
>
> In the 1970s, biologists studied a population of medium ground finches on one of the islands in great detail. When a severe drought left only large, hard-to-crack seeds, 85 percent of the birds perished. The survivors had beaks that were about 5 percent larger than the average beak size in the original population. The biologists estimated that if similar droughts occurred once every ten years, the population could become a new species in only 200 years. In a 1999 booklet defending evolution, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences called the finches "a particularly compelling example" of the origin of species.
>
> **But after the drought, birds with smaller beaks flourished again, and the average beak size of the population returned to normal. No net evolution had occurred.** No matter; Darwin's finches became an icon of evolution that is still featured in most biology textbooks.
>
> In the 1980s, a population of large ground finches, with larger beaks than the medium ground finches, migrated to the island. When a drought in 2004-2005 again reduced the food supply, the medium and large ground finch populations both declined. But since even the largest beaks among the medium ground finches were no match for the beaks of the large ground finches, the latter pretty much monopolized the larger seeds and the former had to make do with smaller seeds. This time, the medium ground finches that survived the drought had beaks that were *smaller* than the average size in the original population. Biologists studying the finches argued that birds with smaller beaks were better able to eat the tiny seeds that were left after the large ground finches ate the big ones, and they concluded that this was again an example of "evolutionary

> change."
>
> **[…]Wait a minute. Average beak size increased slightly during one drought, only to return to normal after the rains return. Then average beak size decreased slightly during another drought. A region of DNA is correlated with beak size. And somehow that tells us how finches evolved in the first place?**

There is an important distinction to make between micro-evolution and macro-evolution. Changes within a type is micro-evolution. Evolving a new organ type or body plan is macro-evolution. There is plenty of evidence for micro-evolution, but no evidence for macro-evolution.

What needs to be proven by the Darwinists is that the same process that results in different average beak size in a population of finches after a drought can create the finches in the first place. I think that Darwinists are credulous – they believe what they want to believe because they want to believe it, even if the evidence is incredibly weak. Darwinists must demonstrate that *heritable variations can result in the generation of new organ types and body plans.* Changes in average beak size is not interesting. What is needed is to show how the beaks, much less the wings, evolved in the first place.

Icons of Evolution

Jonathan has actually written about a number of misleading things that you may mind in Biology textbooks.

Here are the sections in his book "Icons of Evolution":

- The Miller-Urey Experiment
- Darwin's Tree of Life
- Homology in Vertebrate Limbs
- Haeckel's Embroys
- Archaeopteryx–The Missing Link
- Peppered Moths
- Darwin's Finches
- Four-Winged Fruit Flies
- Fossil Horses and Directed Evolution
- From Ape to Human: The Ultimate Icon

Dr. Wells holds a Ph.D in Molecular and Cell Biology from the University of California at Berkeley.

Is the “RNA world” hypothesis a good naturalistic explanation for the origin of life?

February 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A very good book on science apologetics was published recently, called “The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith: Exploring the Ultimate Questions About Life and the Cosmos“. Well, there’s an ongoing series of posts about the book at Evolution News, and one of them caught my eye. They are talking about the origin of life, and what’s needed to create life from non-life.

Here is the post from Evolution News.

The article starts by explaining the what is required to show how non-living components could be organized into a living system:

- plausible biochemical paths from individual bio-building blocks like amino acids or nucleic acids to functional polymers such as proteins and DNA.
- ways to speed up chemical reactions that are naturally slow.
- the ordering of amino acids in proteins and nucleotide bases in RNA and DNA that allows them to function properly.

The leading naturalistic explanation to solve these problems is called the “RNA world” hypothesis:

> The most popular proposal for the first self-replicating molecule is RNA — where life was first based upon RNA carrying both genetic information (akin to modern DNA) and performing catalytic functions (akin to modern enyzmes), in what is termed the *RNA world*.

The article lists several problems with the RNA world hypothesis. Dr. Walter Bradley lists two of those problems.

First, the assembly of RNA requires intelligent design:

> First, RNA has not been shown to assemble in a laboratory without the help of a skilled chemist intelligently guiding the process. Origin-of-life theorist Steven Benner explained that a major obstacle to the natural production of RNA is that “RNA requires water to function, but RNA cannot emerge in water, and does not persist in water without repair” due to water’s “rapid and irreversible” corrosive effects upon RNA.[3] In this “water paradox,” Benner explains that “life seems to need a substance (water) that is inherently toxic to polymers (e.g., RNA) necessary for life.”[4]
>
> To overcome such difficulties, Benner and other chemists carefully designed experimental conditions that are favorable to the production of RNA. But Robert Shapiro explains that these experiments do not simulate natural conditions: “The

> flaw is in the logic — that this experimental control by researchers in a modern laboratory could have been available on the early Earth."[5] Reviewing attempts to construct RNA in the lab, James Tour likewise found that "[t]he conditions they used were cleverly selected," but in the natural world, "the controlled conditions required to generate" RNA are "painfully improbable."[6] Origin-of-life theorists Michael Robertson and Gerald Joyce even called the natural origin of RNA a "Prebiotic Chemist's Nightmare" because of "the intractable mixtures that are obtained in experiments designed to simulate the chemistry of the primitive Earth."[7] In the end, these experiments demonstrate one thing: RNA can only form by intelligent design.

The second problem is that the RNA world hypothesis is that it requires the existence of a self-replicating RNA molecule in order to get started. But this self-replicator contains a lot of biological information that is beyond the reach of chance to produce:

> The most fundamental problem with the RNA world hypothesis is its inability to explain the origin of information in the first self-replicating RNA molecule — which experts suggest would have had to be at least 100 nucleotides long, if not between 200 and 300 nucleotides in length.[10] How did the nucleotide bases in RNA become properly ordered to produce life? There are no known chemical or physical laws that can do this. To explain the ordering of nucleotides in the first self-replicating RNA molecule, origin-of-life theorists have no explanation other than blind chance. As noted, ID theorists call this obstacle the information sequence problem, but multiple mainstream theorists have also observed the great unlikelihood of naturally producing a precise RNA sequence required for replication.

Whenever I sit down to write some code or to write a blog post, I can start with one letter, then add another, then add another, until I have a functioning program, or a legible blog post. It might be possible for random chance to make a meaningful word out of 3 letters, like "the" or "hat". But it's not possible to make a self-replicating RNA molecule that way. The required sequence is just too long, and every letter has to be just right in order for it to function as a self-replicating system. The simplest self-replicating molecule is extremely complicated.

Anyway, check out the article, and if you want to read all about Walter Bradley (my role model), there is a new book out about him called "For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley" which I finished, and it was great.

Lectures on science apologetics for a general audience

February 14, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that there is a new Dallas, TX Science and Faith conference scheduled for February 17th, 2024. This one is offering online viewing, if you can't make it to Dallas. Well, I thought it might be fun to review some lectures from the 2019 Dallas, TX Science and Faith conference, because they posted them online. It's a nice way to get an easy, popular-level introduction to science apologetics.

Here are a few of the sessions I'm looking forward to:

- **How Earth is Designed for Life**
  Bijan Nemati
- **How Earth is Designed for Scientific Discovery**
  Jay Richards & Guillermo Gonzalez
- **How Earth is Designed for Technological Advancement**
  Brian Miller
- **Intelligent Design as a Scientific Theory**
  Stephen Meyer
- **Can Evolution and Intelligent Design Be Combined? Why the Front-End Loaded Concepts of Design Fail**
  Stephen Meyer

When it comes to scientific arguments, I have 6 that I usually use:

- origin of the universe
- fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe
- origin of the life
- sudden origin of body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- habitability and discoverability
- molecular machines

Well, they did one of these conferences 5 years ago in 2019, and they posted the videos. And they actually covered a few of these arguments. Here is the YouTube playlist.

The origin of the universe:

The origin of life:

Habitability and Discoverability:

Cambrian explosion:

If you're wondering, "is this the lecture where James Tour got really, really excited with a church audience?" Yes, this is the one.

The 2024 edition seems to be superior to the 2019 edition, because they added two people I really like: Brian Miller and Guillermo Gonzalez. The one I've never heard of is Dr. Bijan Nemati, but he has impressive credentials:

> Bijan Nemati is a Principal Research Scientist at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. He received his Ph.D. in high energy physics from the University of Washington, based on his research on heavy quark decays detected at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center. After post-doctoral work at the Cornell synchrotron, he left particle physics to work on advanced astronomical instruments at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

I wonder if he will be a good speaker? He certainly has an impressive resume, that's for sure. I wish we had a 100 scholars for everyone one who is speaking at the conference, but maybe if we can get Christian parents excited about the scholars we have, then we can make more of them.

People sometimes try to talk to me about charismatic pastors, and Big Eva politicians, famous Christian athletes, famous Christian artists, etc. And I just have no regard for people who talk about things that they haven't investigated themselves. I'm even a little suspicious of analytic philosophers! The guys who I admire and look up to are the STEM guys. The mathematicians and the scientists. The guys who work in the labs. The guys who move the ball forwards by giving us evidence that we can talk about and use with people who don't even know where to begin looking for evidence.

How is “don’t judge” compassion working out in Denver, Colorado?

February 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Whenever I think of the secular left, I think of people who are desperately trying to portray themselves to others as generous and compassionate, even as they pass the risks and costs of their actions off to the people they hate. That was on display when Martha’s Vineyard – a Democrat stronghold – immediately deported the illegal immigrants that Ron DeSantis bused over to them.

And that’s not unusual. Let’s take a look at a real sanctuary city, Denver, Colorado.

The Federation for American Immigration Reform lists them on their sanctuary cities page:

> The City and County of Denver – the capital city of Colorado with a population of 727,000 – became an illegal alien sanctuary on the basis of an April 2014 Sheriff Department memo stating that Denver no longer honors immigration detainers. This was codified into law by a City Council ordinance from August 2017.
>
> Also in 2017, the city stopped sending federal officials its daily booking sheets in order to limit immigration officials awareness of criminal alien activities.

And I found a story on it in the far-left Denver Post:

> Denver’s new immigration measures aim to resist federal enforcement in several ways, but Denver Police Chief Robert White summarized them bluntly at a signing ceremony Thursday.
>
> “We do not do the work of ICE,” he said, referring to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in a comment that prompted wild applause inside Denver’s city hall from the immigrants, advocates and city officials who filled the room.
>
> Minutes later, Mayor Michael Hancock sat down at a table and put his pen — actually 10 pens, in succession — to a new immigration ordinance, with City Council sponsors Paul López and Robin Kniech at his side. He then signed a companion executive order, which directs city agencies to coordinate on additional help for immigrants living in the country illegally and set up a donation-based legal defense fund for people facing deportation proceedings.

Wild applause! Wow! It sounds like all the people in Denver are really proud of their police and government. This is what they voted for, so they are sure to be thrilled with the results. Right?

Well… not so much.

Here’s an article from the New York Post, dated January 30, 2024:

> Colorado’s capital has joined the evergrowing list of cities that have become

> overwhelmed by the influx of migrants — with over 38,000 asylum seekers arriving in Denver in the past year.

How could this happen? As long as the people enacting the policy are virtuous, then how could there ever be any bad consequences? THEIR SUPERIOR VIRTUE MAKES IT WORK OUT. Or does it?

Whenever you bring in a huge number of unskilled immigrants – many of whom don't speak the language – you end up causing shortages of products and services. The most obvious shortages appear in housing, health care, education and policing.

The article notes:

> Dr. Steven Federico, a pediatrician and chief of government and community affairs at Denver Health, told the outlet that hospitals like his have become a "safety net" for the city.
>
> […]Federico says hospital officials have begged state and federal officials for help covering $10 million in unpaid medical bills from migrants.

What do leftists do when the bill comes due for their "don't judge" compassion? Why, they pass the bill to other people. People who never approved of their "don't judge" compassion in the first place. People who warned them about the costs of their "don't judge" compassion. The grown-ups always get the bill for the children.

Not just health care – education, too:

> Denver Public Schools has seen an additional 3,000 students enter the system since July, putting a strain on their budget as funding gets set based on the district's population the previous October, according to Adrienne Endres, who oversees multilingual education for the district.

Why is housing so expensive? Why is health care so expensive? Why is education so expensive? Why is policing so expensive? These things become expensive when you import millions of unskilled immigrants who *use more in services* than they *pay in taxes*.

Let's look at an article from Denver local news channel KUSA 9NEWS.

It says:

> No part of the City of Denver will be spared from proposed budget cuts to help pay for the migrant crisis. Every office, from the police department to the animal shelter, is being asked to cut money. It could even impact the funding our elections department gets this year.
>
> In a critical 2024 election year, the Denver Clerk and Recorder's Office says Mayor Mike Johnston has asked to cut nearly a million dollars from the department that oversees elections. The money, they say, is needed to help pay for the migrant crisis.
>
> Down the street at the police department, Denver Police Department (DPD) says they're working on finding places to cut their budget. So is the Department of

> Public Safety, and the animal shelter, and the health department. Every agency in Denver has been told to find ways to cut its budget for the same reason.
>
> […]Last Friday, Johnston announced publicly the first two cuts. $5 million from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and Denver Parks and Recreation.
>
> The Denver District Attorney's Office says they've been asked to cut their 2024 budget by 5%. The Department of General Services says they're looking to cut 15%. Even the Department of Human Services, which is leading the efforts to help migrants, has already diverted $15 million from other projects towards the crisis and is looking for ways to cut more money.
>
> Even the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, which is responsible for everything from trash pickup to potholes, may soon have to cut funding.

So, I hope voters can learn from the mistakes of Democrat sanctuary cities. Contrast the jubilant tone, when the city government was crowing about their "don't judge" compassion, with their anguish now that the bill has come due. But do you think they have learned anything from it, now that they have to beg and plead for money from other taxpayers? Of course not. The virtue signaling is like crack cocaine to them. Once people give up on the objective morality of Christianity, they become obsessed with signaling their virtue to their neighbors, since that's all morality is to them. Compliance with the expectations of their neighbors. And they can't stop doing it, because that's how they deal with the guilt from their own sins, and the consequences of those sins. Sadly, they rarely pay the costs of their virtue signaling. They pass the bill to you.

William Lane Craig explains how Christianity answers evil and suffering

February 16, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A lot of people in the West complain too much about any little suffering they have to experience. But sometimes, when a very harsh suffering is felt by someone who has tried to follow Jesus, an explanation is necessary. I found something very good on the Reasonable Faith web site, written by Dr. William Lane Craig.

He makes the following points:

1. *We are not in a good position to assess the probability of whether God has morally sufficient reasons for the evils that occur.*
2. *The Christian faith entails doctrines that increase the probability of the co-existence of God and evil.*
3. *Relative to the full scope of the evidence, God's existence is probable.*

I've written before about point #1, in which Dr. Craig's describes the limitations of human knowledge that make it hard for us to know for certain that a specific evil or suffering does not have a good reason for God to allow it. And I've written about #3, in which Dr. Craig makes some arguments for God's existence. But #2 might be new to some of you, so let's look at that.

He makes four sub points in section 2 about Christian doctrines that make the existence of evil and suffering more reasonable.

- 2. a)*The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.*
- 2. b) *Mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and His purpose.*
- 2. c) *The knowledge of God spills over into eternal life.*
- 2. d) *The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.*

My favorite one is 2. a), so let's look at that one. He says:

> 2. a. *The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God.* One reason that the problem of evil seems so puzzling is that we tend to think that if God exists, then His goal for human life is happiness in this world. God's role is to provide comfortable environment for His human pets. But on the Christian view this is false. We are not God's pets, and man's end is not happiness in this world, but the knowledge of God, which will ultimately bring true and everlasting human fulfillment. Many evils occur in life which maybe utterly pointless with respect to the goal of producing human happiness in this world, but they may not be unjustified with respect to producing the knowledge of God. Innocent human suffering provides an occasion for deeper dependency and trust in God, either on the part of the sufferer or those around him. Of course, whether God's purpose is

> achieved through our suffering will depend on our response. Do we respond with anger and bitterness toward God, or do we turn to Him in faith for strength to endure?

You know, I always get confused when I see Christians trying to follow the script of the world and trying to make themselves feel good with consumer purchases, travel, fun experiences, showing off to others, etc. When I read the story of Jesus, it's pretty clear that the normal Christian life, if the person is following Jesus at all, is about suffering the disapproval and opposition of non-Christians while you remain faithful and obedient to God. Today, there's probably no better example of this than defending unborn children from adult selfishness. Although, defending born children from selfish adults who seek to deprive children of their biological mother and father is pretty bad, too. Nobody is going to like you for restricting their fun (i.e. – abortion, divorce, adultery, homosexuality, etc.), but being willing to take the heat from non-Christians for the sake of promoting what God thinks is right is true Christianity. It's what Jesus would do.

Anyway, the one I've been thinking about more lately is 2. d), where Dr. Craig writes this:

> *2. d) The knowledge of God is an incommensurable good.* To know God, the source of infinite goodness and love, is an incomparable good, the fulfillment of human existence. The sufferings of this life cannot even be compared to it. Thus, the person who knows God, no matter what he suffers, no matter how awful his pain, can still say, "God is good to me," simply by virtue of the fact that he knows God, an incomparable good.

I sometimes feel pretty stressed out about Americans who were born in conservative states, raised by two married Christian parents, attended Christian schools and youth groups, and then abandoned their faith for atheism as soon as they hit college. It really bothers me how people who had all these advantages turned their backs on God, and they're ungrateful for all their blessings. They show no curiosity about God – they don't want to know him. But when you read the gospels to see what Jesus has to say about these sorts of people, it's very comforting. He really sees the problem, and he is on the side of the little guy who has to struggle to be faithful and obedient to God. The Bible has nothing to say to people who are able to feel happy and successful apart from God. It speaks to people who are struggling to follow God. Even when things are difficult, Jesus speaks to the problem of being an alien and a stranger in a world that turns its back on him.

Alexander Vilenkin: “All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning”

February 17, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve decided to explain why physicists believe that there was a creation event in this post. That is to say, I’ve decided to let famous cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin do it.

From Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Did the cosmos have a beginning? The Big Bang theory seems to suggest it did, but in recent decades, cosmologists have concocted elaborate theories – for example, an eternally inflating universe or a cyclic universe – which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos. Now it appears that the universe really had a beginning after all, even if it wasn’t necessarily the Big Bang.
>
> At a meeting of scientists – titled “State of the Universe” – convened last week at Cambridge University to honor Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday, cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University in Boston presented evidence that the universe is not eternal after all, leaving scientists at a loss to explain how the cosmos got started without a supernatural creator. The meeting was reported in *New Scientist* magazine (Why physicists can’t avoid a creation event, 11 January 2012).
>
> […]In his presentation, Professor Vilenkin discussed three theories which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos.

The three theories are chaotic inflationary model, the oscillating model and quantum gravity model. Regular readers will know that those have all been addressed in William Lane Craig’s peer-reviewed paper that evaluates alternatives to the standard Big Bang cosmology.

But let’s see what Vilenkin said.

More:

> One popular theory is eternal inflation. Most readers will be familiar with the theory of *inflation*, which says that the universe increased in volume by a factor of at least 10^78 in its very early stages (from 10^−36 seconds after the Big Bang to sometime between 10^−33 and 10^−32 seconds), before settling into the slower rate of expansion that we see today. The theory of *eternal inflation* goes further, and holds that the universe is constantly giving birth to smaller “bubble” universes within an ever-expanding multiverse. Each bubble universe undergoes its own initial period of inflation. In some versions of the theory, the bubbles go both backwards and forwards in time, allowing the possibility of an infinite past. Trouble is, the value of one particular cosmic

parameter rules out that possibility:

> But in 2003, a team including Vilenkin and Guth considered what eternal inflation would mean for the Hubble constant, which describes mathematically the expansion of the universe. They found that the equations didn't work (Physical Review Letters, DOI: 10.1103/physrevlett.90.151301). "You can't construct a space-time with this property," says Vilenkin. It turns out that the constant has a lower limit that prevents inflation in both time directions. "It can't possibly be eternal in the past," says Vilenkin. "There must be some kind of boundary."

A second option explored by Vilenkin was that of a cyclic universe, where the universe goes through an infinite series of big bangs and crunches, with no specific beginning. It was even claimed that a cyclic universe could explain the low observed value of the cosmological constant. But as Vilenkin found, there's a problem if you look at the *disorder* in the universe:

> Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists – nothing like the one we see around us.
>
> One way around that is to propose that the universe just gets bigger with every cycle. Then the amount of disorder per volume doesn't increase, so needn't reach the maximum. But Vilenkin found that this scenario falls prey to the same mathematical argument as eternal inflation: if your universe keeps getting bigger, it must have started somewhere.

However, Vilenkin's options were not exhausted yet. There was another possibility: that the universe had sprung from an eternal cosmic egg:

> Vilenkin's final strike is an attack on a third, lesser-known proposal that the cosmos existed eternally in a static state called the cosmic egg. This finally "cracked" to create the big bang, leading to the expanding universe we see today. Late last year Vilenkin and graduate student Audrey Mithani showed that the egg could not have existed forever after all, as quantum instabilities would force it to collapse after a finite amount of time (arxiv.org/abs/1110.4096). If it cracked instead, leading to the big bang, then this must have happened before it collapsed – and therefore also after a finite amount of time.
>
> "This is also not a good candidate for a beginningless universe," Vilenkin concludes.

> So at the end of the day, what is Vilenkin's verdict?
>
> > "All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

This is consistent with the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin Theorem, which I blogged about before, and which William Lane Craig leveraged to his advantage in his debate with Peter Millican.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past. *No one* denies the expansion of space in our universe, and so we are left with a cosmic beginning. Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

Conclusion

If the universe came into being out of nothing, which seems to be the case from science, then the universe has a cause. Things do not pop into being, uncaused, out of nothing. The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

Now, let's have a discussion about this science in our churches, and see if we can't train Christians to engage with non-Christians about the evidence so that everyone accepts what science tells us about the origin of the universe.

New study: Harvard professor finds no racial bias in police shootings

February 18, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If there's one thing that the secular left wants you to believe about the police, it's that white police officers are constantly shooting innocent black people with no criminal records for "crimes" like wearing "baggy pants". When I speak with secular leftists, especially women, this view is taken as being as true as the fact that the Earth orbits the Sun. But is it?

You might not know about this, but there is a pretty interesting black professor of Economics teaching at Harvard University. The Free Press has an article about him:

> Roland Fryer, an economics professor at Harvard, is a superstar by any measure. At the age of 30, he became the youngest black person ever to receive tenure at the Harvard. The MacArthur Foundation declared him a genius in 2011. And in 2015 Fryer won the prestigious John Bates Clark Medal, given yearly to the most promising economist under 40.
>
> […]Abandoned at birth by his mother, Fryer clawed his way out of poverty to land a spot at the University of Texas, Arlington, earned his Ph.D. at Penn State, done postdoctoral research at the University of Chicago with the Nobel Laureate Gary Becker, and, finally, wound up at Harvard, where he eventually met his wife, a biologist, and became one of the university's most celebrated professors.

OK, that's very interesting. But now he's authored a new study that has caused him to require armed security.

Here's a report about it from the Daily Caller, based on a recent interview with Bari Weiss.

> Harvard economics Professor Roland Fryer needed armed security with him to go out in public after he published a study finding no evidence of racial bias in officer-involved shootings, he said in an interview with The Free Press founder Bari Weiss.
>
> Fryer, a top economist who became the youngest tenured black professor in Harvard's history at just 30 years old, published a study in 2016 showing there was "no racial differences in officer involved-shootings." After he published the study, "all hell broke loose," Fryer told Weiss, noting people "lose their mind when they don't like the result."
>
> "I lived under police protection for about 30 to 40 days," he said during the interview. "I had a seven day old daughter at the time…I was going to the grocery store to get diapers with an armed guard."

And here is his conclusion:

> “On the most extreme use of force – officer involved shootings – we find no racial differences in either the raw data or when contextual factors are taken into account,” Fryer’s study found.
>
> […]He said he was “surprised” by the result because he expected to find evidence of bias.
>
> […]After the study was complete, Fryer said he hired eight additional freshmen to redo the study but came up with the same result.

Here’s a clip from the podcast that was posted on Twitter:

> “We didn’t find any racial bias in police shootings.”
>
> Economist Roland Fryer tells @bariweiss at @uaustinorg about the 2016 paper on policing bias that led to his need for an “armed guard” for over a month and the academics who told him not to publish. https://t.co/dklaGtiMxT pic.twitter.com/95FbOe3jhJ
>
> — The Free Press (@TheFP) February 15, 2024

If you want to listen to the full podcast, it’s up at The Free Press.

Biden DOJ sues Tennessee for law against HIV-positive prostitution

February 19, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What would you think if I told you that the same member of the Biden administration who was responsible for raiding the homes of peaceful pro-lifers and persecuting police officers for protecting the public from criminals is now suing the state of Tennessee? Why is she suing the state of Tennessee? Because Tennessee has a law that is tough on prostitutes who have HIV.

Her name is Kristen Clarke.

Let's start with pre-dawn raiding the home of a pro-life activist.

Daily Signal reports:

> Republican Texas Rep. Chip Roy grilled the assistant attorney general for civil rights at the Department of Justice on Tuesday over the DOJ's targeting of pro-life activists like Catholic father Mark Houck.
>
> Kristen Clarke, who oversees investigations into violations of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, came before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government on Tuesday for a hearing on the "Oversight of the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division."
>
> […]Roy drew attention to the fact that Clarke's division charged at least 26 individuals with FACE Act violations in 2022 and more in 2023.
>
> "Even under your watch, it's at least 35 to 1 or 2," Roy emphasized. "That is not even-handed. It's far from even handed. And importantly, Mark Houck, who was targeted, had a raid of his home, prosecuted under this, was acquitted by a jury! Have you apologized to him on behalf of the Department of Justice for that grave violation of his civil rights? Having his family have to watch him being raided at his home? And then he's acquitted by a federal jury? Have you apologized to him?"

She refused to apologize to Mark Houck. Roy replied to her non-apology:

> "So the answer to that is no," Roy said.

Houck was arrested at his home by heavily armed police, in front of his wife and 7 children, who were traumatized. Houck is now suing the Biden DOJ for "malicious and retaliatory prosecution."

In a different Daily Signal article, Virginia Allen notes that Clarke has a reputation for far-left activism:

> Well, the DOJ's Civil Rights Division is responsible for investigations into crimes against pro-life pregnancy centers, and the Civil Rights Division of the DOJ is run

> by a woman named Kristen Clarke. Kristen Clarke is pro-defund the police. She is for supporting Antifa, BLM, and she is on her own Twitter account vehemently opposed to pro-life pregnancy centers. So, you've got a major conflict of interest within the DOJ, and you've got [Attorney General] Merrick Garland running cover for her, insisting that the DOJ is being perfectly evenhanded.

Virginia says "Kristen Clarke is pro-defund the police". To assess that, let's take a look at this article from Daily Wire:

> The U.S. Department of Justice is opening a civil rights investigation into the City of Memphis and the Memphis Police Department to determine whether there is a pattern or practice of conduct that violates the constitution or federal civil rights law, the U.S. Justice Department announced Thursday.

Time will tell whether this is a serious investigation, or something more like what happened with Mark Houck. One thing for sure – Memphis has a reputation as an extremely high-crime, high-violence area.

According to this article by WREG News Channel 3:

> Homicide rates dropped dramatically across the country in 2023, but Memphis is bucking the national trend with a triple-digit increase in killings.
>
> Memphis Police records show 393 homicides in Memphis as of Dec. 28 this year, and 337 of them were considered murders. At least two more people have been killed in the past 24 hours.
>
> The city is poised to end the year with about 400 homicides. That is roughly 100 more than last year and 50 more than 2021.

Do you think that Kristen Clarke's actions will produce good results for law-abiding Memphis taxpayers?

OK, now let's look at Kristen Clarke's actions against the conservative state of Tennessee.

This is from April 2023, in Christian Post:

> The U.S. Department of Justice has filed a lawsuit against Tennessee for passing a law that bans chemical castration and body mutilating surgeries from being performed on youth who are confused about their sexual identity.
>
> […]Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division said in a statement that she believed no one "should be denied access to necessary medical care just because of their transgender status."

And here is the very latest from February 2024, in Daily Wire:

> The Biden administration's Justice Department filed a lawsuit Thursday against Tennessee's aggravated prostitution law for people with HIV.
>
> […]"People living with HIV should not be subjected to a different system of justice based on outdated science and misguided assumptions," Assistant Attorney

> General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's civil rights division said in a statement.

If you think that I am being rough on Kristen Clarke, then take a look at these interesting articles from Daily Signal:

- Kristen Clarke Is Unfit to Be in Government
- DOJ's Kristen Clarke: A Pro-Abortion Activist Enforcing the Law Against Pro-Lifers
- This Fits the Definition of 'Domestic Terror,' Pregnancy Care Center CEO Says After 2nd Attack
- DOJ Hiding Data on FACE Prosecutions, Congressman Says

I really recommend that you check those articles out.

Also, pray for Kristen Clarke. I noticed that she comes from a West Indian black background like me. (Except I have multiple STEM degrees, and immigrated here by merit through employer sponsor). Pray that God would lead her and give her more wisdom to treat Christians and conservatives fairly. It's too bad that we can't have more Bible-believing Christians in high places, but we can always pray that God would change the hearts and minds of those who are there now.

The Lion of the Andes: Javier Milei is smashing socialism in Argentina

February 20, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Regular readers will know that I am a West Indian black, and so I try to follow what's happening in Latin America and South America. Everyone knows that Venezuela elected socialists and they are in a death spiral, but Argentina wasn't far behind. Argentina's been electing leftist after leftist, and their economy kept going down. Then they did the unexpected. They elected an economist.

First, let's find out about him, and the recent election:

> Javier Gerardo Milei (born 22 October 1970) is an Argentine politician and economist who has served as President of Argentina since December 2023. Milei has taught university courses in macroeconomics, economic growth, microeconomics, and mathematics for economists. He is an author on economics and politics, and also hosted radio programs on the subject.
>
> Milei is known for his flamboyant personality, distinctive personal style, and strong media presence. He has been described politically as a right-wing populist and right-wing libertarian, and supports laissez-faire economics, aligning specifically with minarchist and anarcho-capitalist principles. Milei has proposed a comprehensive overhaul of the country's fiscal and structural policies.

I have my disagreements with libertarians. Usually, they are terrible on foreign policy and social issues – although Milei is pretty moderate on both of those. But if there's one thing that libertarians know well, it's economics.

When Milei took over, Argentina was ranked #27 out of 32 countries in the Americas region on the Index of Economic Freedom. They're just above socialist disaster zones like Venezula, Cuba and Haiti. As soon as Milei got into office, he took a wrecking ball to the big government socialism of the previous leftist regimes. And now the results are starting to roll in.

This is from far-left Barron's:

> The Argentine government in January saw its first monthly budget surplus in nearly 12 years, as new President Javier Milei continues to push for strong spending cuts, the Economy Ministry announced.
>
> January was the first full month in office for Milei, a far-right libertarian who took office in December, and it ended with a positive balance for public-sector finances of $589 million at the official exchange rate, the government said late Friday.

> The figure includes payment of interest on the public debt.
>
> It is "the first (monthly) financial surplus since August 2012, and the first surplus

> for a January since 2011," the Economy Ministry said, according to the official Telam news agency.
>
> […]Milei, an economist, has advocated sharp cuts in spending and a reduction of public debt on the way to a dollarization of the economy.
>
> Following a 50 percent devaluation of the peso, a lifting of price controls and strong rate increases, Argentina saw an inflation rate for January of 20.6 percent, with a 12-month rate of 254.2 percent.
>
> The year 2023, the final year of the center-left government of Alberto Fernandez, ended with a 211 percent inflation rate.
>
> With poverty affecting 45 percent of the population, Milei has predicted an economic rebound within three months.

Now, if you are a Thomas Sowell fan like I am, then you will be able to recognize some of these economic polices that Milei has adopted:

- sharp cuts in government spending
- reduction of public debt
- switch economy to a stable currency (U.S. dollar)
- remove price controls (price controls means government sets the prices, e.g. – setting and raising the minimum wage)
- raising interest rates (a way to curb inflation)
- shutting down useless government departments
- privatize public companies (e.g. – USPS, AMTRAK)
- cutting subsidies to economic sectors
- eliminate rent control (a form of price control)
- open-sky policy (deregulate commercial air industry)
- ending import restrictions
- de-regulate satellite services
- lower the fiscal deficit

Conservatives love these economic policies. You can see economic policies like these in states where free market capitalists dominate, like Tennessee and Florida. Leftists hate these economic policies. You don't see these policies in states where leftists dominate, like New York and California. These are the policies that communists hate.

I suggest that we keep watching countries in Latin America and South America that adopt free market principles, and then share those articles with other Americans, so they can learn what works and what doesn't work. We can't keep talking about follow your heart and don't judge forever. We are running out of "other people's money" to pay for this feelings-based nonsense. Already the next generation of Americans will be inheriting much more debt than you or I were born with. We have to vote smarter – vote for leaders who have a proven record of doing the things that Milei is doing.

Twenty questions about the Big Bang answered in less than 20 minutes

February 21, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite source for evidence related to science these days is the Discovery Institute. Not only do they employ the rock star of science and religion, Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, but they have a bunch more excellent speakers. They publish a lot of books, and many of those are made into audio book versions. One of the guys I like the most is Brian Miller, who contributes to their books and does videos.

He did a recent video talking about the Big Bang cosmology, and its relevance to the question of God's existence. It's important for people who prefer the young-Earth interpretation of Genesis to realize that the Big Bang is not compatible with naturalism. It's actually lethal to naturalism, because it requires a SUPER-natural cause to bring the natural world into being. I have friends who prefer the young Earth interpretation of Genesis who argue with the co-workers and family members from the Big Bang, just to get them started on their spiritual journey.

Anyway, here is the video:

And here are the questions that he answers:

- What is the big bang theory?
- Why did scientists initially dispute the big bang?
- What did scientists believe before the big bang?
- What models have been proposed to maintain the idea of an eternal universe?
- Why did scientists come to accept the big bang?
- Who is Georges Lemaitre?
- How did the scientific community receive Lemaitre's idea?
- How did Edwin Hubble contribute to the big bang theory?
- What is the most compelling evidence for the big bang?
- What does the big bang imply about belief in God?
- Are there current critics of the big bang model?
- Why is an eternal universe so important to atheists?
- Why is the big bang theory still being challenged?
- Did the universe have a beginning?
- What are the arguments against a beginning to the universe?
- What is a singularity?
- Does the universe need a creator?
- What about the idea of a multiverse?
- Lawrence Krauss thinks the universe possibly came from "nothing." How would you respond?
- What does Lawrence Krauss mean by nothing?

If this is something that you have not looked into, this video is a pretty good primer. He only mentions the expanding universe and the cosmic microwave background radiation as evidences. But there are other good ones, such as the light element abundance predictions (75% hydrogen, 24% helium) and the second law of thermodynamics (entropy) that he could have mentioned.

There are definitely open problems with the Big Bang cosmology, but the main thing that Christians should know is that this evidence is used in formal academic debates by people like William Lane Craig, Stephen C. Meyer, etc. to annihilate atheism. Personally, I would be thrilled if the scientific evidence tilted towards a young Earth. And it very well could, and there are good people working on that problem. But I do think that all Christians should at least be aware that the current “best” cosmological model is lethal to atheism.

Does the Bible teach Christians to expect happiness or suffering?

February 22, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Is God your cosmic butler? Do you just ring a bell to summon him so that he can give you whatever you want? Let's see what the Bible teaches in the book of 1 Peter. Peter is writing to all the Christians who are spread out all over the place, trying to survive in a world that doesn't care much about things that they think are meaningful.

Pay attention to these verses:

1 Peter 1: 3-7:

> [3] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
>
> [4] and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,
>
> [5] who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.
>
> [6] In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.
>
> [7] These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Suffering is normal and expected.

1 Peter 2:6-8:

> [6] For in Scripture it says:
>
> "See, I lay a stone in Zion,
> a chosen and precious cornerstone,
> and the one who trusts in him
> will never be put to shame."
>
> [7] Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,
>
> "The stone the builders rejected
> has become the cornerstone,"
>
> [8] and,
>
> "A stone that causes people to stumble
> and a rock that makes them fall."
>
> They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were

> destined for.

Rejection by “those who do not believe” is normal and expected.

1 Peter 2:18-24:

> [18] Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.
>
> [19] For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.
>
> [20] But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.
>
> [21] To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.
>
> [22] “He committed no sin,
> and no deceit was found in his mouth.”
>
> [23] When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.
>
> [24] “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

When people attack you personally for being a Christian, you don’t retaliate against them.

1 Peter 3:14-18:

> [14] But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.”
>
> [15] But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,
>
> [16] keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.
>
> [17] For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.
>
> [18] For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

Jesus sets the example for Christians of being willing to suffer for obedience to God.

1 Peter 4:1-5:

> [1]Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin.
>
> [2] As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

> [3] For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.
>
> [4] They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you.
>
> [5] But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

The normal Christian life involves some non-Christians heaping abuse on you, *precisely because* you don't participate in their sins, or celebrate their sins. For example, attending or participating in a same-sex marriage ceremony.

1 Peter 4:12-19:

> [12] Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.
>
> [13] But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.
>
> [14] If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.
>
> [15] If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.
>
> [16] However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.
>
> [17] For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?
>
> [18] And,
>
> "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
> what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"
>
> [19] So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

Christians who experience shame and/or suffering at the hands of some non-Christians for obeying God, are imitating Christ. They should expect to be vindicated, just as Christ was vindicated through his resurrection.

1 Peter 5:5-6:

> [5] In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,
>
> "God opposes the proud
> but shows favor to the humble."
>
> [6] Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up

> in due time.

Authentic Christianity involves obeying God's commandments, and defending God's truth claims and moral values. It doesn't mean virtue signaling to Christians, (or non-Christians, which seems very popular these days among pious Christian leaders). Humility means thinking of yourself less, and comparing yourself to others less. Just do your job as a Christian, and don't think about what it says about you. To anyone. What people think of you doesn't matter.

Look at 1 Corinthians 4:1-5:

> [1] This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed.
>
> [2] Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.
>
> [3] I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.
>
> [4] My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.
>
> [5] Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

Christianity isn't there for you to use to make yourself happier, or to make other people like you. You're not supposed to agree with non-Christians so that they like you. That's missing the entire point of Jesus' example. Jesus obeys God. Some non-Christians get mad at him. Some non-Christians shame Jesus, and make him suffer, for obeying God. God vindicates Jesus. That's the plan. You're supposed to follow that plan, not make up some other compromise and virtue signal plan!

By the way, in no way am I telling Christians to be impractical. You should be as smart as you can, work as hard as you can, and save as much money as you can, in order to make your shame and suffering bearable, without compromising your principles. For example, you could try to make a network of like-minded friends who can support one another when you become a target. You can donate to organizations like Alliance Defending Freedom, a legal group that defends Christians from persecution by the secular left.

But just understand that being rejected, and being mistreated, is part of the normal, authentic Christian life. You're not supposed to agree with non-Christians, or celebrate them, or affirm them, in order to escape feeling shame, and suffering persecution. I don't know how people can read the Bible and not understand what the life of Jesus means. We're supposed to follow Jesus.

Indiana government removes child from home for lack of trans acceptance

February 23, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How will gay marriage affect your marriage? That's what LGBT activists said, when they were arguing for greater acceptance of LGBT causes. At work, you now have to sit through LGBT indoctrination. At school, your child is taught that your Judeo-Christian values and Bible-based theology are wrong. And at home, you'd better affirm the secular left's religion, OR ELSE.

Here's the story from Christian Post:

> An Indiana Catholic couple whose child was removed from their home following disagreements over their son expressing a desire to identify as the opposite sex are asking the U.S. Supreme Court to hear their case.
>
> Parents Mary and Jeremy Cox follow the Bible's teachings on human sexuality, ascribing to the belief that God designs humans as male and female. Because of their religious beliefs and adherence to biological reality, they could not abide using feminine pronouns to identify their son, who demanded to be called by a female name after he told his parents in 2019 that he identified as a girl.
>
> In 2021, the Indiana Department of Child Services initiated an investigation into the parents following a report that they weren't affirming their son's chosen identity as a girl. The boy was eventually removed from his parents' care and placed in a home that affirmed his self-declared gender identity.

The parents are appealing to the Supreme Court:

> According to the law firm Becket, the parents have filed a petition with the Supreme Court asking the justices to hear the case, stating that "this Court should grant this petition and affirm its precedents on the right of fit parents to custody of their children."
>
> In the petition, the attorneys argue that if the Supreme Court does not intervene, other states might use a statute similar to Indiana's to justify removing a child from the home if their parents adhere to biological reality and refuse to affirm their child's self-declared gender identity.
>
> The attorneys highlighted that the state "found the parents fit but still removed the child over an ideological dispute: a disagreement over gender identity."

Becket is a pretty good law firm, so they have a chance. And they'd better win, or this will affect everyone in every state.

But my point about this is… what message does this send to the kinds of people who are still interested in marriage and children? We know that the secular left has given up on marriage and children. You can look at the marriage rates and rates of reproduction in

blue states, and clearly see that there is a huge decline in marriage and child-bearing. The only people still having lots of kids are the religious people. So what message does this send to them?

I think that the secular left is dominated by feelings-based “don’t judge” “compassion” people. These people are narcissistic – they adopt policies based on how it makes them feel, and how it makes them look to others. They don’t care about what incentives they are creating for others, or about how children are affected. Their ambition is to destroy traditional morality in order to appease the self-centered adults, whose approval they crave. They don’t know how to lead on moral and spiritual issues – not if that leading causes other people to think they are “mean”.

So, how do conservative, religious people see a case like this? The message it sends to them is, don’t get married, don’t have children. And men especially get this message. The main reason that men get married is to gain the leadership of a home, in order to pass on their values and worldview. Take that away, and men disengage from marriage and parenting. It even happens with men who are already married. The minute that leftist wives, public school teachers or family courts overrule a father, the father stops wasting time on leading his home, and withdraws.

I understand that people will want to blame and shame men for declining to participate in marriage and parenting. But we don’t care. If you want to reduce men to slaves who just protect and provide, but don’t lead on moral and spiritual issues, then we’ll decline your offer to marry and have children. You can blame and shame all you want, but if you allow the “don’t judge” compassion crowd in the (taxpayer-funded!) schools and courts to overrule men, then you will cause men to decline to participate in marriage and parenting. Good men have other valuable things to do, like serve God directly in ministry. We have a choice.

Does the Miller-Urey experiment explain how life originated on Earth?

February 24, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two problems related to the origin of the first living cell, on atheism:

1. The problem of getting the building blocks needed to create life – i.e. the amino acids
2. The problem of creating the functional sequences of amino acids and proteins that can support the minimal operations of a simple living cell

Normally, I concede the first problem and grant the atheist all the building blocks he needs. This is because step 2 is impossible. There is no way, on atheism, to form the sequences of amino acids that will fold up into proteins, and then to form the sequences of proteins that can be used to form everything else in the cell, including the DNA itself.

Today, let's take a look at the problems with step 1.

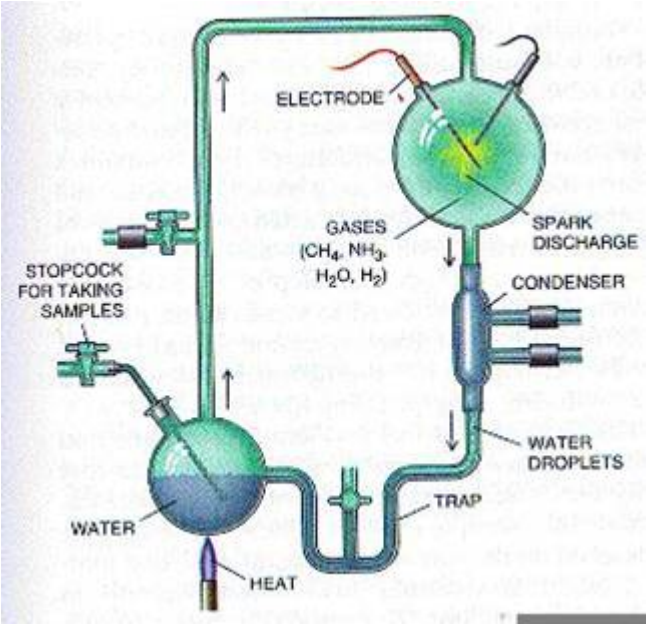

The Miller-Urey experiments

The problem of getting the building blocks of life

Now you may have heard that some scientists managed to spark some gasses to generate most of the 20 amino acids found in living systems. These experiments are called the "Miller-Urey" experiments.

The IDEA center has a nice summary of origin-of-life research that explains a few of the main problems with step 1.

Miler and Urey used the wrong gasses:

> Miller's experiment requires a reducing methane and ammonia atmosphere,[11, 12] however geochemical evidence says the atmosphere was hydrogen, water, and carbon dioxide (non-reducing).[15, 16] The only amino acid produced in a such an

> atmosphere is glycine (and only when the hydrogen content is unreasonably high), and could not form the necessary building blocks of life.[11]

Miller and Urey didn't account for UV of molecular instability:

> Not only would UV radiation destroy any molecules that were made, but their own short lifespans would also greatly limit their numbers. For example, at 100ºC (boiling point of water), the half lives of the nucleic acids Adenine and Guanine are 1 year, uracil is 12 years, and cytozine is 19 days[20] (nucleic acids and other important proteins such as chlorophyll and hemoglobin have never been synthesized in origin-of-life type experiments[19]).

Miller and Urey didn't account for molecular oxygen:

> We all have know ozone in the upper atmosphere protects life from harmful UV radiation. However, ozone is composed of oxygen which is the very gas that Stanley Miller-type experiments avoided, for it prevents the synthesis of organic molecules like the ones obtained from the experiments! Pre-biotic synthesis is in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. The chemistry does not work if there is oxygen because the atmosphere would be non-reducing, but if there is no UV-light-blocking oxygen (i.e. ozone – O_3) in the atmosphere, the amino acids would be quickly destroyed by extremely high amounts of UV light (which would have been 100 times stronger than today on the early earth).[20, 21, 22] This radiation could destroy methane within a few tens of years,[23] and atmospheric ammonia within 30,000 years.[15]

And there were three other problems too:

> At best the processes would likely create a dilute "thin soup,"[24] destroyed by meteorite impacts every 10 million years.[20, 25] This severely limits the time available to create pre-biotic chemicals and allow for the OOL.

> Chemically speaking, life uses only "left-handed" ("L") amino acids and "right-handed" ("R)" genetic molecules. This is called "chirality," and any account of the origin of life must somehow explain the origin of chirality. Nearly all chemical reactions produce "racemic" mixtures–mixtures with products that are 50% L and 50% R.

Two more problems are not mentioned in the article. A non-peptide bond anywhere in the chain will ruin the chain. You need around 200 amino acids to make a protein. If any of the bonds is not a peptide bond, the chain will not work in a living system. Additionally, the article does not mention the need for the experimenter to *intervene* in order to prevent interfering cross-reactions that would prevent the amino acids from forming.

Now keep in mind that even if you get the building blocks, you are left with the sequencing problem. Like the letters of the words in this blog post, the building blocks of life also need to be put in a meaningful sequence in order to do work in a living system –

but that’s another topic for another day.

Is homosexual behavior consistent with the Bible's teachings?

February 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a post from Christian writer Terrell Clemmons about efforts by gay activists to redefine Christianity so that it is consistent with homosexual behavior. This particular post is focused on Matthew Vines.

She writes:

> In March 2012, two years after having set out to confront homophobia in the church, Matthew presented the results of his "thousands of hours of research" in an hour-long talk titled "The Gay Debate." The upshot of it was this: "The Bible does not condemn loving gay relationships. It never addresses the issues of same-sex orientation or loving same-sex relationships, and the few verses that some cite to support homophobia have nothing to do with LGBT people." The video went viral (more than three quarter million views to date) and Matthew has been disseminating the content of it ever since.
>
> In 2013, he launched "The Reformation Project," "a Bible-based, non-profit organization … to train, connect, and empower gay Christians and their allies to reform church teaching on homosexuality from the ground up." At the inaugural conference, paid for by a $104,000 crowd-funding campaign, fifty LGBT advocates, all professing Christians, gathered for four days in suburban Kansas City for teaching and training, At twenty-three years of age, Matthew Vines was already becoming a formidable cause célèbre.

Terrell summarizes the case he makes, and here is the part I am interested in:

Reason #1: *Non-affirming views inflict pain on LGBT people*. This argument is undoubtedly the most persuasive *emotionally*, but Matthew has produced a Scriptural case for it. Jesus, in his well-known Sermon on the Mount, warned his listeners against false prophets, likening them to wolves in sheep's clothing. Then switching metaphors he asked, "Do people pick grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?" The obvious answer is no, and Jesus's point was, you can recognize a good or bad tree – and a true or false prophet – by its good or bad fruit. From this, Matthew concludes that, since non-affirming beliefs on the part of *some* Christians cause the bad fruit of emotional pain for*other* Christians, the non-affirming stance must not be good.

Terrell's response to this is spot on, and I recommend you read her post to get the full response.

She writes:

> Matthew Vines in particular, and LGBTs in general, appear to be drivingly fixated on changing other people's moral outlook. But *why*? Why are they distressed over the shrinking subset of Christianity that holds to the traditional ethic of sex?

> Note that Matthew found an affirming church in his hometown, as can most any LGBT-identifying Christian. Affirming churches abound. Gaychurch.org lists forty-four affirming denominations – *denominations*, not just individual churches – in North America and will help you find a congregation in your area. Why, then, given all these choices for church accommodation, are Matthew and the Reformers specifically targeting churches whose teachings differ from their own?
>
> One gets the sense that LGBTs *really*, *really need* other people to affirm their sexual behavior. Certainly it's human to *want* the approval of others, but this goes beyond an emotionally healthy desire for relational comity. Recall Matthew's plea that non-affirming views on the part of *some* Christians cause emotional pain for *others*. He, and all like-minded LGBTs, are holding *other people* responsible for their emotional pain. This is the very essence of *codependency*.
>
> The term came out of Alcoholics Anonymous. It originally referred to spouses of alcoholics who enabled the alcoholism to continue unchallenged, but it has since been broadened to encompass several forms of dysfunctional relationships involving pathological behaviors, low self-esteem, and poor emotional boundaries. Codependents "believe their happiness depends upon another person," says Darlene Lancer, an attorney, family therapist, and author of *Codependency for Dummies*. "In a codependent relationship, *both* individuals are codependent," says clinical psychologist Seth Meyers. "They try to control their partner and they aren't comfortable on their own."
>
> Which leads to an even more troubling aspect of this Vinesian "Reformation." Not only are LGBT Reformers *not* content to find an affirming church for themselves and peacefully coexist with everyone else, *everyone else must change* in order to be correct in their Christian expression.
>
> This is the classic progression of codependency, and efforts to change everyone else become increasingly coercive. We *must* affirm same-sex orientation, Matthew says. If we don't, we are "tarnishing the image of God [in gay Christians]. Instead of making gay Christians more like God … embracing a non-affirming position makes them less like God." "[W]hen we reject the desires of gay Christians to express their sexuality within a lifelong covenant, we separate them from our covenantal God."
>
> Do you hear what he's saying? LGBTs' relationships with God are dependent on Christians approving their sexual proclivities. But he's *still* not finished. "In the final analysis, then, it is not gay Christians who are sinning against God by entering into monogamous, loving relationships. It is *we* who are sinning against them by rejecting their intimate relationships." In other words, non-affirming beliefs stand between LGBTs and God. Thus sayeth Matthew Vines.

The rest of her article deals with Vines' attempt to twist Scripture to validate sexual behavior that is not permissible in Christianity.

Vines seems to want a lot of people to agree that the Bible somehow doesn't forbid this sexual behavior so that the people who are doing it won't feel bad about doing it. If he can just silence those who disagree and get a majority of people to agree, then the people who are doing these things will feel better.

Matthew Vines is annoyed that Bible-believing Christians expect homosexuals to work through their same-sex attractions, abstain from premarital sex, and then either remain chaste like me, or marry one person of the opposite sex and then confine his/her sexual behavior to his/her marriage. But how is that different than what is asked of me? I am single, and have opposite sex-attractions, but I am also expected to abstain from sex outside of marriage. I have two choices: either remain chaste or marry one woman for life, and confine my sexual behavior to that marriage. I'm not married, so I've chosen to remain chaste. **If I have to exercise a little self-control to show God that what he wants from me is important to me, then I am willing to do that.** I'm really at a loss to understand why so many people take sexual gratification as a given, rather than as an opportunity for self-denial and self-control. I am especially puzzled by sinful people demanding that other celebrate their sin – and using the power of the government now to compel others to celebrate their sin. Christianity is a religion where the founder prioritized self-sacrificial obedience above pleasure and fulfillment. You really have to wonder about people who miss that core element of Christianity.

My service to God is not conditional on me getting my needs met. And my needs and desires are no less strong than the needs of people who engage in sex outside the boundaries of Christian teaching. We just make different decisions about what/who comes first. For me, Jesus is first, because I have sympathy with Jesus for loving me enough to die in my place, for my sins. I am obligated to Jesus, and that means that my responsibility to meet expectations in our relationship comes above my desire to be happy and fulfilled. For Matthew, the sexual desires come first, and Scripture has to be reinterpreted in light of a desire to be happy. I just don't see anything in the New Testament that leads me to believe that we should expect God to fulfill our desires. The message of Jesus is about self-denial, self-control and putting God the Father first – even when it results in suffering. I take that seriously. That willingness to be second and let Jesus lead me is what makes me an authentic Christian.

There is a good debate featuring Robert Gagnon and a gay activist in this post, so you can hear both sides.

Should you be worried about blue state refugees invading your red state?

February 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I live in a very, very red state. I love my state so much that I can't even conceive of why I would ever want to move. But sometimes, when I'm driving around, gloating about our latest awesome law, I see a license plate that worries me. A license plate that says "Illinois" or "California" or "Oregon" or "Washington" or "New York". It seems to be happening more and more. Should I be worried?

According to the Wall Street Journal (archived), I should not be worried.

The article begins by talking about South Carolina:

> A Wall Street Journal analysis of census data found that a third of the state's new residents between 2017 and 2021 hailed from blue states and a quarter from red ones, according to census data. The remainder came from closely divided states, including nearby Georgia and North Carolina, or are immigrants.
>
> Yet the new arrivals are disproportionately Republican. Estimates from the nonpartisan voter file vendor L2 suggest about 57% of voters who moved to South Carolina during that time are Republicans, while about 36% are Democrats and 7% are independents. That places them roughly in line with recent statewide votes in South Carolina.
>
> […]The Palmetto State is a prime example of why a yearslong wave of migration to the South has largely failed to change its partisan tint. Many people who leave blue states are Republicans gravitating toward a more politically favorable new home.

And they also cover Florida:

> In Florida, for instance, 48% of people who moved there between 2017 and 2021 came from blue states while 29% came from red states, Census figures show. Among those who registered to vote, 44% are Republicans, 25% are Democrats and 28% are nonpartisan, according to L2 data.

And Texas:

> Texas also has a heavier flow of newcomers from blue states but a greater share who L2 data estimates are Republican.

I guess we will find out what happens when we see the election numbers in November. I am hoping that the number of people who vote Democrat goes down in every county of my state. That would mean that the right kind of people were moving here.

What I would really like my state, and other red states, to do is pass laws that chase the secular left riff raff out of the state. For example, strict laws against abortion and against

LGBT indoctrination of children. Strict laws reining in labor unions, especially teacher unions. Strict laws against criminals and violent protestors. All of these laws that promote hard work and frugality will cause the wrong kind of people to leave our red states. And that will make those of us who are already here much happier.

Resurrection scholar Michael Licona coming to Ohio State University

February 27, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that one of the top Ratio Christi leaders, Eric Chabot, has a plan to bring in one of the best scholars on the resurrection to speak at a major university campus – the Ohio State University. I thought I would bring it to your attention, in case you want to know what sorts of things are good to support. I learned a lot about Christian apologetics while at university, it's the perfect time to learn.

Here's the flyer for the event:

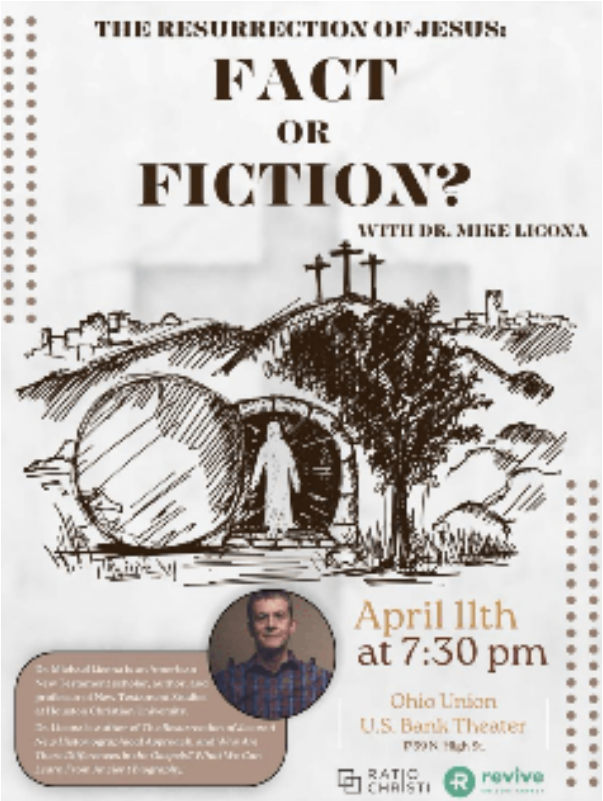

Michael Licona Easter Lecture on Resurrection of Jesus at Ohio State University

IMPORTANT: You can donate to Eric Chabot, who leads Ratio Christi Ohio State University to help pay for this event if you want to help.

Here's the biography of the speaker, Dr. Michael Licona:

> Born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1961, Mike became a Christian at the age of 10 and grew up in a Christian home. He attended Liberty University where he earned his Bachelor's Degree in Music Performance (Saxophone). During his undergraduate studies, he had a strong desire to know God, devoting himself to studying the Bible daily. He decided to learn Koine Greek in order to read the New Testament in its original language and later completed a Master's Degree in Religious Studies.

> […]Mike has a Ph.D. in New Testament (University of Pretoria). He completed all requirements "with distinction" and the highest marks. He is a frequent speaker on university campuses, churches, Christian groups, retreats, frequently debates, and has appeared as a guest on dozens of radio and television programs. He is a member of the Evangelical Theological and Philosophical Societies, the Institute for Biblical Research, the Society of Biblical Literature, and the prestigious Studitorum Novi Testamenti Societas. Mike is Professor of New Testament Studies at Houston Christian University and the president of Risen Jesus, Inc.
>
> Mike is married to Debbie and they have two grown children, Alexandra and Zachary.

His wife is very clever at Christian living, I remember there was some famous Christian artist who was having doubts, and she took it on herself to create an event where he could ask his questions to Christian scholars who had debates all these issues with atheists. I mean, she married Mike, and that makes her very clever already.

If you check out Dr. Licona's web site, Risen Jesus, then you can find a whole section of helpful FREE resources.

Dr. Licona has a mix of books – some for general audiences, and some for academic audiences. I've been snooping around in the Audible store this week, and I noticed that his older popular-level book, co-authored with the famous Gary Habermas, is "INCLUDED" if you have an Audible Plus membership.

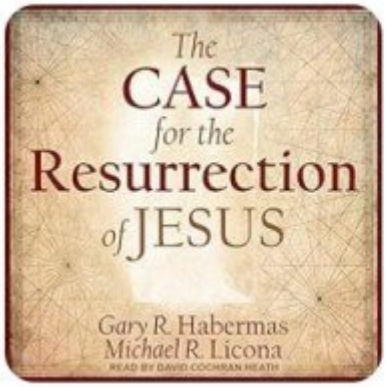

The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus
By: Michael R. Licona, Gary R. Habermas
Narrated by: David Cochran Heath
Length: 7 hrs and 31 mins
Release date: 03-30-21
Language: English
★★★★★ 189 ratings

Michael Licona – The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus
His most famous book is probably the one that he published with Oxford University Press, which is entitled "Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?: What We Can Learn from Ancient Biography". I bought it, but I have not yet read it.

But another of his academic books is also available on Audible:

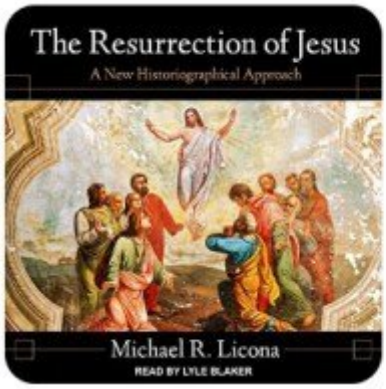

The Resurrection of Jesus
A New Historiographical Approach
By: Michael R. Licona
Narrated by: Lyle Blaker
Length: 21 hrs and 42 mins
Release date: 05-17-22
Language: English
★★★★★ 12 ratings

Michael Licona – The Resurrection of Jesus

Finally, I noticed that he has a NEW book coming out. It looks like it is a popular-level version of the one that I linked you to, above.

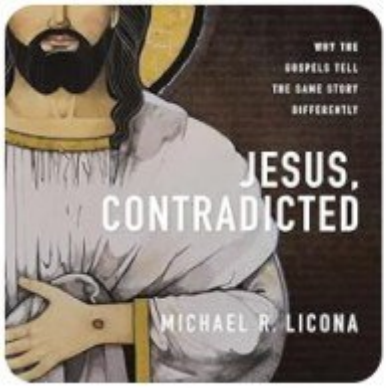

Jesus, Contradicted
Why the Gospels Tell the Same Story Differently
By: Michael R. Licona
Narrated by: Tom Parks
Length: 10 hrs and 41 mins
Release date: 05-28-24
Language: English
Not rated yet

Michael Licona – Jesus Contradicted

And here are the details about the new book:

> The differences and discrepancies in the Gospels constitute the foremost objections to their reliability and the credibility of their message. Some have tried to resolve Gospels contradictions with strained harmonization efforts. Many others conclude that the Gospels are hopelessly contradictory and, therefore, historically unreliable accounts of Jesus.
>
> In *Jesus, Contradicted*, New Testament scholar Michael Licona shows how the genre of ancient biography, to which the Gospels belong, actually allows biographers to be flexible in how they report events, construct a narrative, and make an argument. Licona demonstrates that the intentional changes to the Jesus tradition by the Evangelists reveal that the differences in how the Gospels report events are not grounds for their rejection. Instead, they are a result of the Gospel writers employing standard literary conventions common in their time for writing ancient biography.
>
> Licona introduces listeners to the genre of ancient biography through Plutarch, who wrote 48 of the 90 extent biographies written within 150 years of Jesus, giving numerous examples of compositional devices employed by Plutarch, and comparing them with instances in the Gospels where the Evangelists appear to use similar techniques. Licona also examines Theon's Progymnasmata, a first-century textbook that provides six techniques for paraphrasing one's sources

> when writing a narrative. In doing so, he helps listeners understand why the Gospels report many events differently. Finally, Licona concludes by addressing the thorny question of whether the editorial moves commonplace in ancient biography are compatible with the doctrines of the divine inspiration and the inerrancy of Scripture.
>
> Rather than trying to resolve discrepancies by bending the Gospel narrative, which risks making them say things they aren't saying, *Jesus, Contradicted* situates the Gospels within their proper context and helps listeners account for differences in the Gospels in a cohesive and historically cogent way.

I saw him debate on this exact topic at a recent National Apologetics Conference. They have those every year at Southern Evangelical Seminary. Have you ever been to one? They are really good.

If you don't yet feel comfortable answering questions about whether the resurrection of Jesus was a historical event, then definitely pick up Mike's books. And if you are in the Columbus, OH area on April 11th, then go see Dr. Licona speak. Tell Eric that Wintery Knight sent you.

Is Tennessee a more conservative state than Florida?

February 28, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Some people think that the formerly purple state of Florida is the best state. It seems like every day, you hear about some new conservative thing coming out of Florida's excellent governor. Tennessee's governor isn't as good, of course. But who has the better legislature? I think that Tennessee has the edge there. Let's see some of the latest conservative mischief.

Let's do Tennessee first, starting with this Daily Wire article:

> The Tennessee state House passed a bill on Monday that would prohibit the flying of any flag other than the American flag and a few other official flags in public school classrooms, legislation that was sparked by the prevalence of pride flags in recent years.
>
> The bill states in part that it is prohibited for to display "a flag other than the following on or in a public school: (i) the U.S. flag; (ii) the official Tennessee state flag; (iii) a flag that cannot be disturbed or altered pursuant to the law relevant to Tennessee heritage protection; (iv) the POW/MIA flag," and several other flags that are acceptable to fly in schools.
>
> The bill, introduced by Republican state Rep. Gino Bulso, passed with a 70 – 24 vote along party lines.
>
> Bulso brought the bill forward as a result of constituent parents who were concerned about the flying of LGBTQ Pride flags in class, reports The Tennessean.
>
> On the House floor, Bulso rhetorically asked if parents have the right to teach a particular set of values to their own children.
>
> "If you have parents across the state who want to instill in their children values represented by the pride flag, they are certainly entitled to do that," he said. "On the other hand, if you have parents who want to instill values in their children that are not consistent with the values represented by the pride flag, they have the ability to do that."
>
> […]Democratic members of the state House offered two amendments to the bill, both of which were rejected by Republican members.
>
> […]A companion bill in the state's Republican-controlled Senate is expected to be voted on this week. If it passes, it will head to the desk of Republican Governor Bill Lee.

And this part is the key part – the very shocking part:

> The bill also gives parents or guardians the right to file a lawsuit if the flag prohibition is breached by the schools.

Honestly, I don't know if Bill Lee has the gumption to sign a bill that is so awesome. But can you imagine a state that is so amazing that it not only gets a bill like that to the governor, but the bill is supported UNANIMOUSLY by the Republicans? Whatever mistakes the Republicans are making elsewhere, Tennessee Republicans are not part of that. They are not doing "socialism, but more slowly". They are moving things in a conservative direction.

Here's another thing that the Tennessee lawmakers are up to, reported by Daily Wire:

> Tennessee lawmakers heard on Tuesday the accounts of religious groups that had lost access to their bank accounts for what they suspect to be ideological reasons.
>
> One group, the National Committee for Religious Freedom, had only had a bank account open with JPMorgan Chase for several weeks before the organization's head and former Kansas Governor Sam Brownback attempted to make a deposit only to be told the account no longer existed.
>
> […]The National Committee for Religious Freedom was one of the groups warning about de-banking during testimony on Tuesday in support of a proposed Tennessee bill that would prevent banks from discriminating against people based on their political or religious views. The group testified in front of the Tennessee House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Banking and Consumer Affairs at the Cordell Hull Building in Nashville.

Do you live in a state that isn't Tennessee? Then you might get de-banked by the secular left. If those Canadian truckers had done their rally against health care mandates in Tennessee, then they wouldn't be de-banked. But then again, they wouldn't have had to do the protest, either, if they lived in conservative counties like Maury county. You just have to be careful where you live.

Just to put some numbers on this, Tennessee is ranked as the #1 most conservative legislature in the United States for all-time. Florida is #2 for all-time. If you have a work from home job, these are the states where you need to live and pay your taxes.

Speaking of #2 state Florida, let's see what young DeSantis and his friends in the Florida legislature are up to. Are you worried about getting banned online because you disagree with Big Tech? Well, DeSantis has you covered, in the free state of Florida.

Florida Voice reports:

> The U.S. Supreme Court Monday is hearing oral arguments for and against Florida and Gov. Ron DeSantis' restrictions on massive social media, or "Big Tech" corporations aimed at protecting individuals' speech.
>
> […]In 2021, DeSantis signed a new law implementing the following:
>
> - Giving Floridians the right to sue "Big Tech platforms" for monetary damages if users are not given proper notice of policy changes, and allowing them more rights to obtain their information if they are

> "deplatformed"
> - Allows the Florida attorney general to bring legal action for companies that violate new restrictions, such as standards on shadow banning, deplatforming, censorship and transparency requirements
> - Bars the platforms from deplatforming political candidates in Florida, and imposes $250,000 fines per day if a statewide candidate is deplatformed, and $25,000 per day for non-statewide offices
>
> "Florida passed protections three years ago, for individuals who've been deep platformed or censored based on the content or viewpoint of their political speech," DeSantis said Monday. "Texas passed a similar law. This has been making its way through the courts, we knew it was going to end up at the floor at the U.S. Supreme Court."
>
> "These tech companies, on the one hand, are private – and normally a private company can house whatever speech or viewpoints it wants. In this case, these companies get liability protection from the federal government, because they say that they're not publishers, they're not making editorial judgments about what speech is good and what speech is bad," the governor said. "They're just a platform."

And that's not all. According to a recent analysis, Tennessee has the highest score for election integrity in the United States. Florida was tied for second best. Florida isn't giving up, though.

Take a look at this article from Florida Voice:

> U.S. District Judge Mark Walker ruled in favor of an embattled 2021 Florida election integrity law that cracked down on ballot harvesting and strictly regulated how ballot drop boxes can be utilized.
>
> The judge said Florida's restrictions do not keep Floridians from voting, according to the Associated Press.
>
> Walker ruled that the voting rights groups challenging state law did not adequately show that the drop box regulations burdened voters enough to unduly disenfranchise anyone.
>
> The decision also upheld the law's stricter provisions on third-party voter registration.
>
> […]"Floridians can rest assured that our state will remain a leader in ballot integrity. Elections should be free and fair, and these changes will ensure this continues to be the case in the Sunshine State," Gov. Ron DeSantis said when he signed the bill in May 2021.

Tennessee better do something, or they are going to lose their #1 ranking to Florida in the next State Super Bowl. How about you? Do you live in one of these red states? Do you wake up every morning laughing at the U-Haul in front of the house with the Democrat

“in this house” sign on it? You need to live in a state that takes out the trash. Make a plan, and then make your move.

Which state is the most conservative?

February 29, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In yesterday's post, I looked at a few recent stories from the two best states in the country, Florida and Tennessee. Each of these states seems to have fresh new "good news" stories for conservatives each and every day. When I think about the legislators who write these bills, especially at a time where Christians are losing everything, it really makes me feel respect for them.

Anyway, here is the latest news from Tennessee, as reported by the Christian Post:

> A new Tennessee law will allow public officials to refuse to perform same-sex marriages if their religious beliefs make them unable to do so in good conscience.
>
> Tennessee's Republican Gov. Bill Lee signed into law House Bill 878 last Wednesday.
>
> The Republican-controlled Tennessee Senate approved the bill in a 27-5 vote earlier this month after the House of Representatives passed the legislation in a 74-22 vote last year.
>
> While the vote fell along party lines, one House Democrat joined all House Republicans in supporting the legislation.

Every. Single. Republican. Legislator. Voted. For. It.

This is why I have no patience for people who like to throw up their hands and say "both parties are the same" or "it doesn't matter if you vote" or "I don't pay attention to politics" or "I don't like to talk about religion and politics" or "all the states are the same". All they are doing is taking the easy road, and trying to sound like they know more than they actually do. The truth is that these things matter, and they matter a lot.

I have been working in America for nearly 25 years now, and these are the kinds of things I hear from men in the workplace – especially from men who chose secular left women to marry, because of how they looked. After they realize that their entire legacy has been ruined by a bad marriage, then they say things like this to explain why they are completely ineffective. First, they choose a wife based on what's best for them. Then, they ignore politics, because that's easier for them. Disgusting.

More from the article:

> The bill's text declares, "A person shall not be required to solemnize a marriage if the person has an objection to solemnizing the marriage based on the person's conscience or religious beliefs."
>
> […]Republican Rep. Monty Fritts, who sponsored the bill, argued before a subcommittee last year that "officiants must be able to refuse to solemnize marriages that are contrary to their beliefs" even as "societal views change

> about what constitutes a marriage."
>
> "The government has a responsibility to protect the exercise of religious beliefs," he said. "Those with the authority to perform civil ceremonies would also be permitted to refuse to solemnize marriage for reasons of conscience."

My favorite part of this story has to do with Representative Monty Fritts. I read an article about this legislation over at the far-left CNN, to see if they had an additional details.

And in that CNN article, it said this:

> CNN reached out to Fritts for comment, but he declined a phone interview.

I have to say this again. If you are in a blue state, and you think that states like Tennessee are the same as your blue state, then you are wrong. Do not be like these men in my office who just want to dismiss politics and policy because it's easier for them. Real men foresee future dangers, and they make plans and execute them in order to avoid those dangers. You need to make a plan to get a good education, then find a good job in Tennessee or Florida or Oklahoma, and move to one of these good red states. Do not be paying your taxes to governments that do not give you rights like these red states give you.

I left a nearly communist country in order to come to America, and I had to wait for many, many years to get a FT100 employer to sponsor me for my green card. Moving from one state to another for natural-born citizens is child's play in comparison. Especially if you already have a work from home job. What are you waiting for? Things are only going to get worse in blue states as the government's spending money runs out.

New study: virgins have happiest marriages, more sex partners means more unhappiness

March 1, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Although we live in a culture that is dominated by the thoughts and opinions of secular leftists, science provides useful information for those who want defend Biblical morality. Consider the issue of sexuality and marriage. Secular leftists claim that sex outside of marriage is natural, and produces happiness. Bible believing Christians and Jews say chastity is best. Who is right?

Here is the latest study authored by Dr. Nicholas Wolfinger, a sociologist at the University of Utah. His previous book on relationships was published by Oxford University Press. In his analysis of the data, Wolfinger controlled for divorce rates, religiosity, and socioeconomic status.

Here's the most important graph:

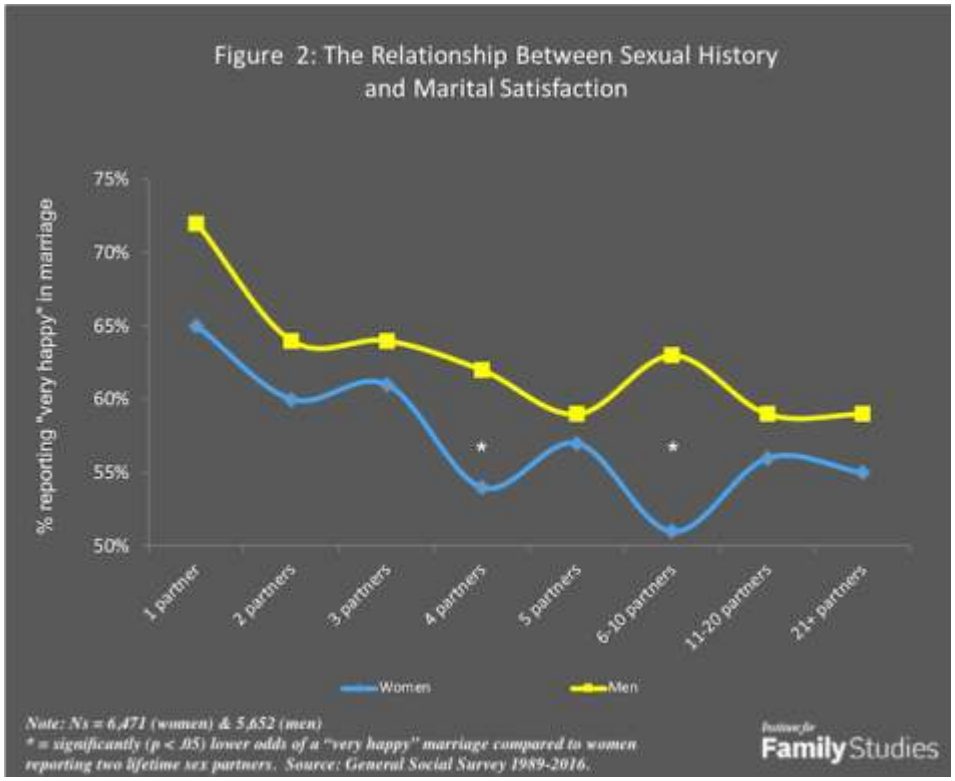

Study: virgins have the happiest marriages, more partners means less happiness

Other factors that increased marital happiness: having a 4-year college degree (5%), having a salary > 78K (5%), regular church attendance (6%). Notice that women are more dissatisfied with marriage (in general) than men are, and they tend to blame the spouse they freely chose for that unhappiness.

The Federalist also reported on previous research relevant to this study:

> Psychologists Galena K. Rhoades and Scott M. Stanley found that women who have had sex with someone other than their husband report statistically significant drops in marital quality over those who don't. A 2004 study by

> sociologist Jay Teachman showed that intimate premarital activities such as cohabitation and intercourse increased the rate of marital dissolution by anywhere between 28 and 109 percent, depending on the activity.

Wolfinger also noted in a previous study that only 5% of women were virgins when they married.

Wolfinger noted that a possible explanation for the link between promiscuity and unhappiness is that people look back on their past partners and compare their spouse unfavorably to them. This is especially the case with women. My concern about this is that feminism has taught women to try to increase their social standing by having hook-up sex with attractive bad boys. If those women ever marry, they do it when they are older, less fertile, and less attractive. The husband they eventually "settle" for will (in their minds) always compare unfavorably to the hot bad boys they had sex with when they were younger and prettier. This, I believe, is what leads to their unhappiness with the man they chose to marry.

More partners also means more marital instability

In a previous post, I blogged about several studies linking virginity to marital stability. Couples who don't have sex before marriage, or even who delayed it, reported better communication, higher satisfaction, better quality sex, and a lower chance of divorce.

Men ought to be aware of this research when they are choosing a spouse. Women initiate 69% of divorces, and the most common reason given is "unhappiness". Well, now we know what's causing that unhappiness – a high number of sexual partners prior to marrying. Smart men should prefer a virgin, for the increased happiness and increased stability. A large number of past sexual partners teaches women that relationships are engines for them to be happy, not commitments that are permanent and exclusive. They'll have internalized the view that relationships are not commitments to invest in self-sacrificially. The pattern will be: "if it doesn't make me feel happy right now, then it should be ended". It will be seen as the man's fault that she is unhappy, even if the study I talked about above shows the real reason is her past promiscuity. Men who aren't serious about evaluating the character of the women for the marriage enterprise are running the risk of divorce, it's that simple.

The best way to make sure that you have a clear head when evaluating a woman is to stay sober, and keep her hands off of you. When a man refuses to let a woman cloud his judgment with sex, then she is forced to learn how to love him in marriage-oriented ways, e.g. – help him, support him, and submit to his leadership. Male chastity encourages women who have been influenced by feminism to abandon selfishness, fun-seeking, and thrill-seeking, so that they learn to care for others. Male chastity also helps a man to resist older women who chose bad boys in their teens and 20s and want to get married to a good provider in their 30s. The studies discussed above clearly show that such women are more likely to be unhappy, and their future marriages are more likely to be unstable. Avoid them. You don't want to be in a marriage to someone who isn't very good at it, because she never prepared herself for it.

New study: the majority (69%) of divorces are initiated by women

March 2, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This new report from Live Science gives us some numbers about who initiates divorces most frequently.

It says:

> Women are more likely than men to initiate divorce in the United States, but they are no more likely than men to initiate breakups in a dating relationship, a new study finds.
>
> "The breakups of nonmarital heterosexual relationships in the U.S. are quite gender-neutral and fairly egalitarian," study author Michael Rosenfeld, an associate professor of sociology at Stanford University, said in a statement. "This was a surprise because the only prior research that had been done on who wanted the breakup was research on marital divorces."
>
> Previous research had found that women are more likely to initiate divorce, at least in the United States, Europe and Australia. In the new study, Rosenfeld compared divorces to nonmarital breakups, in an effort to understand the driving forces behind each type of breakup.
>
> To investigate, he looked at data from the 2009 to 2015 waves of How Couples Meet and Stay Together, a nationally representative survey spearheaded by Rosenfeld and his colleagues. The new study includes 2,262 adults, ages 19 to 64, who reported having opposite-sex partners in 2009. By 2015, 371 of the participants had broken up or gotten divorced.
>
> Women initiated 69 percent of the 92 divorces, Rosenfeld found. But there was no statistically significant difference between women and men when it came to nonmarital breakups, regardless of whether they were living together, he said.

The Ruth Institute reports on a few studies:

> Female unions seem to have the highest divorce rates, followed by male unions, followed by opposite sex unions.
>
> "For Sweden, the divorce risk for partnerships of men is 50% higher than the risk for heterosexual marriages, and that **the divorce risk for female partnerships is nearly double that for men."**
>
> "For Norway, **divorce risks are 77% higher in lesbian partnerships than in those of gay men."** (The Norwegian data did not include a comparison with opposite sex couples.)
>
> In California, the data is collected a little differently. The study looks at couples who describe themselves as partners, whether same sex or opposite sex. The

> study asks the question, how likely is it that these couples live in the same household five years later. **Male couples were only 30% as likely, while female couples were less that 25% as likely, as heterosexual married couples, to be residing in the same household for five years.**

It really seems as if there is something about women in particular that causes them to be unable to keep to commitments *in their actions*, despite what they might say *with their words*.

So I am seeing a couple of problems in young, unmarried women that might explain this.

Feminism is bad

First, there is the feminism. Feminism was the driving force behind no-fault divorce. Today, young unmarried women are being taught to view marriage as stifling to their freedom. So if they do get married, they are often resolved that marriage should not affect their freedom in any way. That is just not the way marriage works, though – both spouses need to be equally ready to have their freedom infringed upon by things that HAVE TO GET DONE. Lots of things that have to get done will not be fun, thrilling or amusing – and that's why it's good to be prepared to do them before you marry.

My friend Dina says that she only knows one happily married couple from among her friends. The most frequent case she sees is wife is working in order to pay for big house, two cars, etc. and wife is denying husband sex, which makes him disengage from the marriage. A working wife tends to not be as responsive to the needs of husband and kids as a non-working wife, probably in part due to work stress. There is an epidemic of sex-withholding by women, and it causes men to disengage from marriage because they feel unloved. Although women tend to rebel against the idea that the man's bad behavior is their fault, and that there is a "contractual" nature to marriage, that is how marriage works. You cannot stay married, women, by just doing whatever you feel like, and NOT doing whatever you DON'T feel like. Men will disengage when their needs are not supplied, and that's no fault of theirs. It's your fault. Denying relationship obligations causes men to underperform.

Feminism is often linked closely to "independence". There is a lot of confusion over what the word independence means among young, unmarried women. A man uses that word to mean "lack of financial dependence on parents, the state, etc. because of good decisions in education, career and finances". But a woman means "not having to care about the needs of a man and the leadership of a man, or the needs of children while still getting what I want from men and children". That attitude is not compatible with life-long married love.

Emotions are bad

Second, emotions. In my experience, young, unmarried women are less likely to have reasoned out their own life plan in a practical step-by-step manner. Instead, they tend to do whatever makes them feel good moment-by-moment without any realistic plan. One Christian woman was recently telling me how attracted she was to an atheist moral relativist who had been promiscuous from the age of 15. She explained that her emotions

were kindled by his GQ looks, 6-pack abs, mysterious European accent, seductive manner and witty conversations. Although she is apparently a Christian, she doesn't take Christianity seriously in her decisions about relationships and marriage.

Peer-approval and culture play a large part in determining what women think is attractive in a man, as well as their life goals, and women are driven by these cultural standards more than men who focus on honoring their commitments *regardless* of their emotions. In my experience, women struggle to make their day-to-day actions match their socially-acceptable goal of getting married "some day". Marriage is for "some day" for today's busy women, but fun and thrills is for today. "Live in the moment", they often tell me. If you try to talk to them about roles and responsibilities in a marriage, they will withdraw and rebel. But marriage is about each spouse doing his or her job, and feeling content about what the couple is building together. You can't make life-long married love from emotional craziness and pursuing fun and thrills with seductive promiscuous moral relativist atheists.

How to pick a woman who won't divorce you

Young men, I advise you to choose wives who have had to do things that they did not feel like doing. That can involve things like getting a STEM degree, getting a job in STEM, moving out of her parents' house, getting a "boring" job that helps her pay off her debts, keeping commitments when she doesn't feel like it, and caring for other people and even animals.

Basically, the more the woman has ground down any narcissism and hedonism she may have, by having to do nasty calculus and horrid lab work, the better. The more accustomed she is to constraints, responsibilities, expectations and obligations, the less likely it is that she'll divorce you for unhappiness. And all of this goes for men, as well. STEM degree, STEM job, save money, serve others, give to charity.

Marriage is not the time for people to be carried away by their emotions. It's an enterprise, and it works when both people are rational, practical, hard-working and self-controlled.

Are all sins equally bad? Or are there degrees of severity for different sins?

March 3, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This question came up recently so I did some digging on theology web sites to find what Bible verses applied to the question.

Here's what Ligonier said:

> It's clear that we have different degrees of sin when we consider the warnings of Scripture. There are at least twenty-two references in the New Testament to degrees of rewards that are given to the saints in heaven. There are different levels, different rewards, and different roles in heaven. The Bible warns us against adding to the severity of our judgment. Jesus said to Pontius Pilate, "He who delivered me over to you has the greater sin" (John 19:11). Jesus measures and evaluates guilt, and with the greater guilt and greater responsibility comes the greater judgment. It's a motif that permeates the New Testament.
>
> The idea of gradation of sin and reward is based upon God's justice. If I commit twice as many sins as another person, justice demands that the punishment fits the crime. If I've been twice as virtuous as another person, justice demands that I get more of a reward. God tells us that entrance into heaven will be only on the basis of the merit of Christ, but once we get to heaven, rewards will be dispensed according to works. Those who have been abundant in good works will receive an abundant reward. Those who have been derelict and negligent in good works will have a small reward in heaven. By the same token, those who have been grievous enemies of God will have severe torments in hell. Those who have been less hostile will have a lesser punishment at the hands of God. He is perfectly just, and when He judges, He will take into account all of the extenuating circumstances. Jesus said, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak" (Matt. 12:36).

A while back, my friend Dina sent me a sermon where that exact passage (John 19) was brought up by the pastor.

I think the correct position is that *any sin* is enough to separate you from God, but some sins are more severe than others in God's objective standard of right and wrong.

OK, that was fine and good, but then I noticed a few days later that Michael Krueger had also blogged about this "all sin are equal" view, too.

Krueger says this:

> First, to say all sins are the same is to confuse the *effect* of sin with the *heinousness* of sin. While all sins are equal in their effect (they separate us from God), they are not all equally heinous.

> Second, the Bible differentiates between sins. Some sins are more severe in terms of impact (1 Cor 6:18), in terms of culpability (Rom 1:21-32), and in terms of the judgment warranted (2 Pet 2:17; Mark 9:42; James 3:1).

Even more Bible references, so we're not on the wrong track.

So then why do some people insist that all sins are equal? It turns out that it is coming from the secular ideal of *non-judgementalism*.

Regarding the "all sin are equal" view, Krueger explains:

> We should begin by observing that this phrase does not come from Scripture. People do not use it because it appears in the Bible. Why then do they use it?
>
> One reason, as noted above, is that some Christians use this phrase to uphold the seriousness of sin. It is viewed as a way to remind people not to be dismissive about their sin or regard it is a triviality.
>
> Others use this phrase as way to "flatten out" all sins so that they are not distinguishable from each other. Or, to put it another way, this phrase is used to portray all human beings as precisely the same. If all sins are equal, and all people sin, then no one is more holy than anyone else.
>
> In a world fascinated with "equality," this usage of the phrase is particularly attractive to folks. It allows everyone to be lumped together into a single undifferentiated mass.
>
> Such a move is also useful as a way to prevent particular behaviors from being condemned. If all sins are equal, and everyone is a sinner, then you are not allowed to highlight any particular sin (or sinner).
>
> Needless to say, this usage of the phrase has featured largely in the recent cultural debates over issues like homosexuality. Yes, homosexuality is a sin, some Christians reluctantly concede. But, they argue, all sins are equal in God's sight and therefore it is no different than anything else. Therefore, Christians ought to stop talking about homosexuality unless they are also willing to talk about impatience, anger, gluttony, and so on.

Krueger also posted this fascinating follow up post, where he looks at how the phrase is being used by people on Twitter.

Look at these tweets:

- > All sins are equal. People tend to forget that. There is no bigger or smaller sin. Being gay and lying, very equal.
- > all sins are equal in God's eyes. whatever you're doing, is no better than what someone else is doing.
- > If you have sex before marriage please don't come on social media

> preaching about the wrongs of homosexuality. All sins are equal

- Need people to realize that all sins are equal… don't try to look down on me or question my faith just cuz you sin differently than I do.
- Don't understand why you're so quick to judge me, when all sins are equal. So much for family..
- if you think being gay is a sin, let me ask you something, have you not done anything wrong in your life? all sins are equal. we're sinners
- Nope no difference at all. All sins are equal no matter what you're running for. The bible says do not judge lest ye be judged
- A huge problem I have with religion is the notion that all sins are equal. Like pre-martial sex and murder are the same amount t of bad.
- people do bad things because they believe that all sins are equal and ~god~ loves y'all equally so he's going to forgive you naman ha ha ha
- It a sin to condemn another sinner and their actions. All sins are equal. So what makes you better than the person you're condemning?
- I think so b/c having sex before marriage doesn't make you less of a women then if you waited until marriage.. all sins are equal soo
- friendly reminder, all sins are equal in gods eyes so you're not better than I am in any way. please worry about your own sins before mine.
- People don't like when I suggest abortion as an option. This is a free country and all sins are equal so mind your business!!!
- What I do is no worse than wat you do… all sins are equal no matter what it is… a sin is a sin
- to god all sins are equal so you have no right to compare your sins to someone else's bc in the end it doesn't matter

The first thing that I noticed is that premarital sex and homosexuality are the most popular sins. I would think that divorce and abortion would be up there in the rankings, as well.

Something strange has happened in our society such that more and more people want to be led by their feelings, rather than be bounded by rules or standards. When people get caught breaking moral rules, rather than be accountable, they attack the person judging

them. They would rather escape the judgment of their peers than admit fault and try to fix the mistake, and do better next time.

It's so bad now, that the people who *have* morals and who *make* moral judgments are seen as the real bad people. The immoral people are on the offense, and even trying to ban people from being able to disagree with them. We're seeing that with people who are being attacked for defending natural marriage against divorce and redefinition of marriage. In France, they want to make speech critical of abortion a criminal offense. And in Canada, they've now made speech critical of the gay agenda a criminal offense. (It's already a human rights tribunal offense)

What is even more interesting is when the people who push the "don't judge me" line try to justify it from the Bible. Very strange, but we seem to have forgotten the value of setting moral boundaries. Now moral boundaries are "evil". Instead, having compassion for people who break the moral boundaries and harm themselves and others is "good".

Woman who embraced feminism rejects it for Christianity

March 4, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been busy making a new friend on Twitter recently, Kelley Keller. Kelley is interesting because she has a neat story of going pretty far down a feminist road, and then coming back out of it to return to Christianity. What's interesting about her story is that she is using her experience to advise young women on what does and doesn't work for them in the long term. Let's take a look.

So, here is her article in Christian Post:

> After high school, I bumped around a bit, ultimately landing in Erie, Pennsylvania, with my parents who'd relocated from my hometown in Florida. Penn State Erie was local, so I began classes in the Spring of 1993, a decision that changed my life forever.
>
> Just two semesters in, I had been radicalized in the critical theories and loved every minute of it … until I didn't.
>
> Marxism had been mainstreamed on university campuses just a few years before I enrolled. Critical theory had replaced traditional theory, the gender sameness/difference debate was in full swing, and the newly organized LGBT movement had secured political power.
>
> The gospel of Freud, Marx, Hegel, and Darwin replaced Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The salvation message of Jesus Christ was mere mythology invented by men to subordinate women. Christianity was a patriarchal discourse keeping women from escaping the evil prisons of the Gnostic demiurge who was blocking their access to the divine within.
>
> Radical feminist Mary Daly wrote: "'God's plan' is often a front for men's plans and a cover for inadequacy, ignorance, and evil." Her claim seemed far-fetched, but maybe it had a kernel of truth? I started to believe her. I had no clue how to defend my anemic Christianity against these critics or their claims, so I was a sitting duck, a ripe recruit for the consciousness-raising cadres on campus.
>
> Waking up to my own oppression as a woman whose body had been ill-considered and whose sexuality had been condemned to monogamy felt like the most honest thing I'd done in all of my life. I was laying bare the contradictions of my soul and asking anyone and everyone to help me make sense of them. The church was ineffective, the feminists took me in. Their position was well-articulated by Susie Bright: "When a young woman discovers her power, both sexual and intellectual, she unleashes her own voice, her righteousness." I woke up to my voice and my victimhood and things were beginning to make sense. I became "woke."

> The next several years saw the exploration of intellectually seductive, albeit highly manipulative, thought forms that challenged me to examine the belief systems on which I was raised and that I'd trusted without question. I needed to test my newly acquired knowledge before self-amputating from everything, and possibly everyone, I knew.
>
> Slowly, I began to resist Christianity, or at least what I understood Christianity to be, primarily on the grounds the moral straight jacket it required cramped my ability to break free from years of abusive oppression. I was finally on a path to self-righteousness. My liberation would come from leveraging my sexual and intellectual power in spite of the dominant ideologies (aka Christianity) that say women should stay home and make babies (even though they don't say that at all). Freedom for women comes not from Christ's atoning work on the cross, but through the grandiose release of collective libidinal energy from all of the whores next door.

Wow. I messaged Kelley a bit, and she mentioned that she was following Kate Millett. If you know who that is, then you know that you can't go any further to the left than Kate Millett. She's the far left feminist edge!

So here's how she got out of it. She studied, and she found her views changing:

> While studying, I learned the concept of worldview and its epic usefulness in understanding why we think the way we do. It was exactly what I needed to comprehend the hivemind infiltrating my inbox. It was also what I needed to finally understand the full story of Christianity, that is, historic biblical Christianity, not the littered mess of modern-day Christendom promoting counterfeit Christ throughout the culture.
>
> By reverse engineering the range of worldviews underlying our modern ideas, I was able to work meticulously through the logical consequences that flow from their systematic implementation, from the beginning of time to the end of time. It wasn't long before I realized that the biblical worldview, not a Marxist, Postmodernist, New Age, or another worldview, was the only internally consistent, sufficient, coherent, and complete one on the menu. Nothing else even came close, at least not without borrowing from the biblical worldview to fill in the missing parts, such as an inalienable pre-political right to life.
>
> I was utterly dumbfounded. Not only was biblical Christianity true, it provided a comprehensive explanation for the world and everything in it. It provided rational answers to every question I could find about the nature and purpose of life. All I had to do was believe it.

This is the interesting part:

> I'd never heard Christianity described this way, and I'm a little bummed it took so many years for me to hear it.

If you read the article, she had grown up in a church-going home. But, I don't think she had ever been told that Christianity is a worldview, and you can have a lot of fun thinking about it and testing it and comparing it to other worldviews, using reason and evidence. And I think that's why the feminism was so compelling to her. Christianity wasn't presented to her in a way that engaged her mind. Then she got to college, and her mind was engaged by Marxism and feminism. It would have been wonderful if her parents had presented some thoughts about economics from say, Thomas Sowell, and then some thoughts on feminism from say, Jennifer Roback Morse. But they didn't do that, and so she had to go the long way around.

And at the very bottom of the article, there's this: "Kelley holds a J.D. from The Catholic University of America and is a D.Min. candidate in Christian Apologetics at Southern Evangelical Seminary. " That's a really good school. So, her change of mind resulted in a deep study of Christian apologetics. They take an evidential approach, so she will have fun doing that degree.

What I like about this experience of getting to know Kelley is that I was sort of tip-toeing around her, worrying what she would think of my tweets disagreeing with feminism. And I am delighted to report that she was fine with them. I get scared about people getting upset with me when I try to stick with the Bible on controversial issues. I don't want to get fired or have my house burned down or whatever. I don't want people to attribute all sorts of motives to me when I say things that make them feel bad.

So, it's really great when you meet Christians who let you (gently) disagree with things that they've done, and are even warning other people based on their experiences. Kelley is going to be a lot more persuasive on these issues than people who have never thought about them, or experienced the limits of these secular left views. Instead of trying to defend her past, and attack people for judging what she did, she's going to use her experiences to do Kingdom work for the Boss. She's going to be great for us.

This is great! This is what makes Christianity so amazing. One minute, you are going in your own direction, and then the next minute, you can leverage those pre-Christian experiences to do amazing things in a completely different direction. It helps other people when you teach them how to avoid mistakes. We need people like Kelley to teach what they've learned to others.

Walgreens and CVS have decided to sell abortion pills

March 5, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The title says it all. Walgreens and CVS are selling abortion drugs, and there is a connection to the Biden administration. Let's see the story and then take a look at what you should know about these drugs. After all, you might get into a conversation about this story, and I want you to have the facts.

Here's the story from Daily Wire:

> Pro-life advocates slammed a decision on Friday from pharmacy giants Walgreens and CVS to begin selling abortion pills.
>
> Both retailers announced that they would start selling mifepristone, the pill that is used in over half of all abortions, at certain locations. The announcement, which was applauded by the Biden administration, comes ahead of a Supreme Court hearing on whether the FDA improperly approved mifepristone and other restrictions on the pill.
>
> "As two of the world's largest, most trusted 'health' brands, the decision by CVS and Walgreens to sell dangerous abortion drugs is shameful, and the harm to unborn babies and their mothers incalculable," Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America's State Policy Director Katie Daniel said in a statement shared with The Daily Wire. "This reckless policy was made possible by the Biden administration, which is pushing to turn every pharmacy and post office in America into an abortion center for the sake of abortion industry greed."
>
> […]President Joe Biden called the decision a "major milestone" in a statement praising the move.

Why is this important? Well, after the repeal of abortion on demand through all 9 months of pregnancy at the Supreme Court, abortion activists like Joe Biden have been looking for a way around the ruling. And shipping abortion drugs across state lines is one way for them to do it:

> Medication abortion has increasingly become a more common form of abortion, especially in states that have sought to ban abortion. Activist networks have been shipping foreign-made abortion drugs in red states to bypass state laws protecting the unborn.

So, when it comes to this issue, I like to look for the peer-reviewed research. What is this drug? Should they be selling it? Are they liable if something bad happens to the mother?

Well, I have good news, and bad news. The good news is that there is published journal articles that discuss the risks of this drug. The bad news is that the journals decided – right before they went on sale – that these papers were very, very bad.

Daily Wire has that story as well:

> Major scientific studies on the potential harm of abortion pills were retracted on Monday by their publisher, just weeks before the Supreme Court is set to hear arguments on the availability of such drugs.
>
> Three studies, including two on the potential harms of the abortion pill just, were retracted on Monday by Sage Publishing, an independent academic publishing company.
>
> […]The authors of the studies say the retractions are a politically-motivated effort to discredit research that was cited in U.S. District Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk's April 2023 decision to suspend approval of mifepristone, the drug used in roughly half of all abortions in the United States. The Supreme Court is set to hear arguments in March on the legality of restricting the abortion pill based on Kacsmaryk's ruling, proceedings that will certainly be impacted by the retractions.
>
> Dr. James Studnicki, a listed author on all three studies in question, told The Daily Wire that the retractions were "completely unjustified" and that the retractions were meant to discredit scientific research that challenged the pro-abortion bias engrained in academia.
>
> Studnicki, who trained at Johns Hopkins University and has spent decades conducting scientific research, said that he and his fellow researchers were targeted "because of the visibility of our work, because of the fact that our work was having such an influence on the discussion about abortion that was occurring in the states and in the courts at the highest levels."

OK, great. Show me the numbers.

> One of the now-retracted studies, published November 9, 2021, found that the rate of emergency room visits following chemical abortions had spiked 500% from 2002-2015, according to Medicaid claims data. Another one of the studies, published May 20, 2022, analyzed the likelihood of recurring emergency room visits for women who did not disclose to doctors that they had a chemical abortion.
>
> These two studies were cited in Kacsmaryk's decision to suspend FDA approval of mifepristone.

So what should happen?

Well, red states should just pass laws that allow people who take these drugs to sue the companies if there are complications. Or, they can just go after the businesses, if they choose to ship drugs into states that have banned late-term abortions. I would expect that states like Florida and Oklahoma will take the lead on this. Ron DeSantis has shown that he's been willing to go after companies that try to mess with Florida's conservative laws. He'll probably go first. I'll keep an eye out, and update you if anything happens.

In the meantime, stop shopping at CVS and Walgreens. I already have. They don’t deserve your business. Just keep driving and go somewhere else.

Syrian refugee promoted by BBC journalists convicted of raping child

March 6, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I asked you to name two dominant characteristics of secular leftists today, what would you say? I would say their morality is "don't judge" and they don't like to be held accountable for their poor choices. Usually, the decisions of these secular leftists only costs them in their personal lives. But sometimes, innocent bystanders are the victims.

Let's start back in 2016, when some Syrian refugees were let into the UK.

Here is an article from the far left BBC from 2016: (archived)

> Three Syrian men have been cleared of sexually assaulting two schoolgirls in a park.
>
> Mohammed Alfrouh, 20, Omar Badreddin, 18, and Mohammed Allakkoud, 18, of Newcastle, were cleared of all charges at Newcastle Crown Court.
>
> Mr Badreddin was cleared of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old in Leazes Park, Newcastle, in May.
>
> Mr Alfrouh was cleared of three counts of sexual assault and Mr Allakkoud of a single charge of sexual assault.

Pay close attention to that name "Omar Badreddin". Remember that name.

Here is how the BBC covered the refugees: (archived here)

The text says:

> Over the course of 11 months, Newsnight's Katie Razzall and producer Maria Polachowska chart one family's journey from a war-ravaged Syrian town to a new life in Newcastle. When their son, Omar, is accused of sexual assault, their nightmare continues. After a three-week trial, Omar was found not guilty.

So this piece was focused on Omar Bahreddin, the guy I told you to remember. And the secular leftists responsible for it are Katie Razzall and Maria Polachowska. The BBC made this documentary to try to put the immigration policy in a good light, and cast blame on those who objected to it.

Now let's go back to the present day, and we will see the rest of the story.

This report is from the left-leaning Newcastle Chronicle, from this week:

> A grooming gang who repeatedly raped and sexually assaulted a young girl in Newcastle city centre while passing her around "like a toy" have been jailed for a total of 36 years.
>
> Four men sexually exploited a girl when she was aged just 13 and 14 years old. After meeting her one day in Newcastle, brothers Mohamed and Omar Badreddin

> quickly identified her as someone who could be easily manipulated and she was groomed with alcohol, cigarettes and compliments before being abused.

That's the same Omar Badreddin who the secular leftists were defending and painting as a victim in their little BBC documentary. These secular leftists were so indoctrinated in "don't judge" that they wanted to praise the results of the immigration policy. And they wanted to condemn anyone who objected to the immigration policy as "racists".

The UK is one of the most anti-masculine countries in the world, going all the way back to Minister of Equality Harriet Harman, and her outrageous anti-male policies. In the UK, self-defense has been outlawed. You can be jailed for "hate speech". Government regularly overrules the authority of fathers. Fathers are routinely ejected from the home, only to be replaced with secular leftist social workers and welfare benefits. The male protector role has been utterly destroyed by feminists. The police and the courts in the UK DO NOT EXIST TO STOP CRIME. They exist to stop moral judgments, spiritual leadership, and acts of self-defense by law-abiding taxpayers against criminals.

You can read the article to find out what the little girl had to say about what happened to her. She describes it as "torture".

By the way, this is not the only time that UK police and UK judges have gone easy on certain criminals. The police in the UK are constantly ignoring victims of grooming gangs run by men of Middle Eastern origin. I've written about it many times; here is one and here is another. Their society is set up to ignore the little girls who are victims of these men.

But that's not the point of this post. The point of this post is that I want everyone to have an accurate understanding of how secular leftists operate. They loudly proclaim the virtue of their "don't judge" worldview. They think that they are better than you.

By the way, this is how the secular leftists respond to people who are asking them for comments about their puff piece on the Syrian refugees:

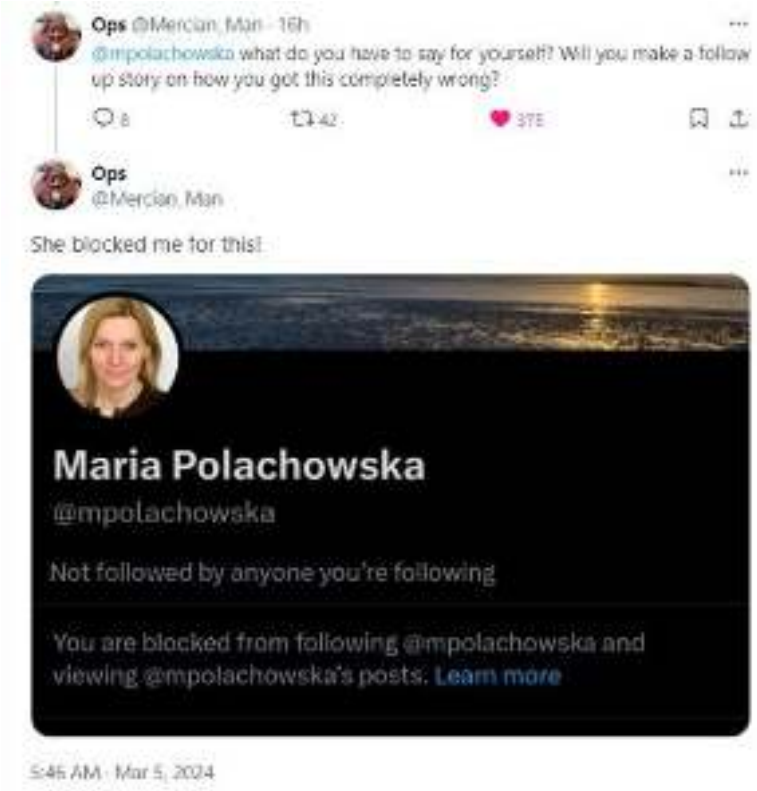

Secular Leftists Do Not Like Accountability

Two gay Dads are better than one Dad in a natural marriage

And this isn't the only time this has happened. It happens a lot. In 2013, I blogged about a case out of Australia, where another secular leftist virtue-signaled about her great tolerance for gay men adopting children born through surrogacy. You can guess what happened to the child next.

The most amazing thing about my post is what the journalist did when she found it and read it. She left a comment saying that her good intentions should have produced good results. She followed her heart, and wasn't responsible for any harm caused by her actions. She asked me to take the post down, because it made her look bad. No remorse, no accountability, just an attempt to bully me out of judging the results of her actions. "Don't judge!" she cried.

The silence of the men

Many men today are silent about abortion, no-fault-divorce, single mother welfare, false accusations, biased custody laws, anti-gun laws, daycare, public schools, green energy, black lives matter, transgender indoctrination of kids, etc. Those men have compared the rights of the weak with the sex offered by secular left women, and decided that sex is more important. But one day, I believe that those men are going to change their position and choose to protect the little ones. And no amount of shaming, blaming, make-up and cosmetic surgery is going to deny their birthright as men.

Leaked e-mails: doctors admit link between transgender treatment and cancer

March 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might be thinking that I'm going to be linking to LifeSiteNews or Lifenews or MercatorNet for this one. After all, the title sounds pretty far-fetched. After all, how could the secular left be so bold as to want to push unproven medical procedures onto children, if there could be such costly side effects? But, today's article is from the UK Telegraph. Prepare to be shocked.

Here is the article from the UK Telegraph: (archived)

> Leaked emails show other medical professionals admitting that trans patients do not always understand the consequences of gender reassignment.
>
> The cache of files from the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), which sets guidelines that have influenced NHS treatment, show that doctors are carrying out life-changing surgery and prescribing puberty blockers even though they are aware the adults and children may not fully understand the long-term ramifications.
>
> One doctor talked about a transgender person who died of cancer as a result of his hormone treatment.
>
> "I have one transition friend/colleague who, after about eight to 10 years of [testosterone] developed hepatocarcinoma [a form of liver cancer]," the doctor wrote.
>
> "To the best of my knowledge, it was linked to his hormone treatment… it was so advanced that he opted for palliative care and died a couple of months later."
>
> It's not clear from the documents if the person who died was made aware or knew about the side effect.

It was a 16-year-old girl:

> Another said they would go ahead with a double mastectomy (called "top surgery") on a 16-year-old girl even though hormones had likely given her liver cancer.

I blogged before about how cavalier the doctors are about giving letters to health insurance companies, explaining that they approve of the need for sex-change drugs and surgery.

The e-mails reveal more:

> A gender therapist said they had only turned one person down for treatment in 15 years.
>
> "I have also intervened on behalf of people who have been diagnosed with major

> depressive disorder, complex post-traumatic stress disorder, homeless and got at least an orchiectomy [testicle removal]," they said.
>
> "In the last 15 years, I had to regrettably decline writing only one letter, mainly because the person evaluated was in active psychosis and hallucinated during the assessment session.
>
> "Other than that – nothing – everyone got their assessment letter, insurance approval, and are living (presumably) happily ever after."
>
> A number of doctors admitted that their patients often did not understand the ramifications of hormone treatment or surgery – such as developing facial hair.
>
> A child psychologist said in a leaked email featured in the report: "[It is] out of their developmental range to understand the extent to which some of these medical interventions are impacting them.
>
> "They'll say they understand, but then they'll say something else that makes you think, oh, they didn't really understand that they are going to have facial hair."

If you're wondering why the secular left is so committed to transing children, just because they ask for it, and even though they can't possible understand the consequences, it's the money.

Here is a story about one expose reported by Daily Wire:

> "It's a lot of money," VUMC Clinic for Transgender Health's Dr. Shayne Sebold Taylor said at one Medicine Grand Rounds lecture, video reveals. "These surgeries make a lot of money."
>
> Taylor noted that a "chest reconstruction" can bring in $40,000 per patient, and someone "just on routine hormone treatment, who I'm only seeing a few times a year, can bring in several thousand dollars … and actually makes money for the hospital."
>
> Citing the Philadelphia Center for Transgender Surgery, Taylor said vaginoplasty surgeries can generate $20,000, gushing that it "has to be an underestimate," since hospital stay, anesthesia, post-op visits, and other add-ons are not included in the total.
>
> "And the female-to-male bottom surgeries, these are huge money makers," the doctor continued, adding that such surgeries could bring in "up to $100,000" for the hospital.
>
> Some clinics are "entirely" "supported" financially by such phalloplasty surgeries, Taylor boasted.
>
> "These surgeries are labor intensive, there are a lot of follow-ups, they require a lot of our time, and they make money," she emphasized. "They make money for the hospital."

If you don't believe that God exists, then this life is all you have. So, you find ways to justify getting more and more money any which way you can. You're not out there trying

to help people. After all, on the secular leftist view, human beings are just the accidental by products of natural processes that did not have them in mind. There’s no free will. No objective morality. No consequences for moral choices after death. Right and wrong are just “customs” that different societies have developed. They vary by time and place, and none of them is any more valid than cooking customs or dressing customs. It makes a huge difference what people believe. Beliefs are the rails on which they run their lives.

Court rules Biden admin can't force Christians to do trans surgeries

March 8, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the scariest things about the secular left is the comfort and confidence they have about ramming their views down the throats of people who disagree with them. It's not that they can beat you in an argument about which worldview is true. They can't. Their only way to get what they want is by using force. And they don't hesitate to do that.

Here's the story from Daily Caller:

> A district court ruled Monday that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) violated the First Amendment by attempting to force religious health care workers to provide gender transition procedures.
>
> In 2021, the Christian Employers Alliance (CEA) filed a lawsuit against the EEOC over two mandates requiring religious employers to provide health insurance that covered gender transitions as well as forcing religious physicians to perform sex-change procedures or face charges of discrimination based on gender identity. The District Court of North Dakota ruled in favor of the CEA, arguing that the rules would violate an employer's or doctor's religious beliefs.

Who are the big heroes who argued the case? Alliance Defending Freedom, of course:

> The Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), which represented CEA, argued that not only did the mandates require employers and doctors to cover and perform sex-change procedures, but it also demanded that they speak positively of them even if they objected, according to the press release.
>
> […]"By misinterpreting and improperly enforcing federal law, President Biden has far overreached his constitutional authority, to the detriment of people of faith across the country," Matt Bowman, senior counsel for ADF, said in the press release. "The government cannot force Christian employers to pay for, or physically perform, harmful medical procedures that contradict their religious beliefs. The Constitution protects religious healthcare providers and employers and allows them to go about their work in a manner compatible with their deeply held convictions and faith."
>
> The EEOC did not immediately respond to the Daily Caller News Foundation's request for comment.

Alliance Defending Freedom is a great conservative organization that defends religious liberty and conscience protections. They regularly win cases at the Supreme Court. If you don't know about the ADF, it's a great organization to support with your charity budget.

Knight and Rose Show #45: Boldness in the Face of Compromise

March 9, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 45 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss boldly defending the Bible's teachings on moral issues, in a culture that preaches "don't judge". If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 45:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the task of defending the Bible's moral teachings in a culture that rejects moral knowledge. We discuss what the Bible teaches about making moral judgements. We discuss the arguments of churches that reject the Bible's moral teachings, and whether their approach succeeded. We discuss strategies for speaking boldly, and evaluate the long-term consequences of silence.

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Study: “social contagion” is a major factor in teen and young adult gender dysphoria

March 10, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I had blogged about a small study published in 2018 by Brown University’s Dr. Lisa Littman. That study was controversial, because it falsified the narrative about transgenderism held by secular leftists. The new study, published in March 2023 in Archives of Sexual Behavior, confirms the Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria theory first advanced by Littman. Let’s take a look.

The study is here, on Springer Link.

Excerpt from the Abstract:

> During the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in adolescents and young adults (AYA) complaining of gender dysphoria. One influential if controversial explanation is that the increase reflects a socially contagious syndrome: Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD).
>
> We report results from a survey of parents who contacted the website ParentsofROGDKids.com because they believed their AYA children had ROGD. Results focused on 1655 AYA children whose gender dysphoria reportedly began between ages 11 and 21 years, inclusive. These youths were disproportionately (75%) natal female. Natal males had later onset (by 1.9 years) than females, and they were much less likely to have taken steps toward social gender transition (65.7% for females versus 28.6% for males). Pre-existing mental health issues were common, and youths with these issues were more likely than those without them to have socially and medically transitioned.
>
> Parents reported that they had often felt pressured by clinicians to affirm their AYA child’s new gender and support their transition. According to the parents, AYA children’s mental health deteriorated considerably after social transition.

Breitbart reported about the study and noted:

> When asked if their child had friends who “came out as transgender around the same time,” 55.4 percent said “yes,” with that response being significantly higher for females, (60.9 percent) than it was for males (38.7 percent).
>
> […]The study also revealed that parents said they oftentimes felt pressured by clinicians to go along with their child’s new gender identity and support their transition. The parents added that their children’s “mental health deteriorated considerably after social transition.”
>
> […]Parents also estimated that before developing gender dysphoria, their child was spending an average of 4.5 hours per day “on the internet and social media.”

> When asked whether a stressful event in their child's life may have contributed to the onset of gender dysphoria, 72.6 percent of parents answered "yes."

One of the differences between men and women, in my experience, is that the majority of men tend to generate their worldview by making plans that are likely to achieve goals, whereas the majority of women tend to get their goals from the culture, and pursue those goals by doing what feels good "in the moment". I have been told this by women who were never like this, and by women who grew out of this once they experienced failure. That's why transgenderism is especially problematic for girls, because if it is being spread by social cues and pressures, then girls are typically going to be more susceptible to that than boys.

Let's talk about the previous study.

Here's how the study was first reported by Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.

Peer pressure / The Internet:

> The pattern of clusters of teens in friend groups becoming transgender-identified, the group dynamics of these friend groups and the types of advice viewed online led her to the hypothesis that friends and online sources could spread certain beliefs.
>
> [….]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

Mental disorders / traumatic events:

> Additionally, 62 percent of parents reported their teen or young adult had one or more diagnoses of a psychiatric disorder or neurodevelopmental disability before the onset of gender dysphoria. Forty-eight percent reported that their child had experienced a traumatic or stressful event prior to the onset of their gender dysphoria, including being bullied, sexually assaulted or having their parents get divorced.

This article at The Federalist had a few examples to illustrate the conclusion of the study. I'll pick two.

>

> The study includes other eye-opening information, such as case studies of several children's stories.
>
> - "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends were taking group lessons together with a very popular coach. The coach came out as transgender, and, within one year, all four students announced they were also transgender."
> - "A 14-year-old natal female and three of her natal female friends are part of a larger friend group that spends much of their time talking about gender and sexuality. The three natal female friends all announced they were trans boys and chose similar masculine names. After spending time with these three friends, the 14-year-old natal female announced that she was also a trans boy."

I thought this quote from that article was interesting as well, given the culture's obsession with "bullying", which is a nebulous term that can mean actual bullying, or mere disagreement.

> The study also may indicate that school "anti-bullying" programs typically created by LGBT activist organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign may help accelerate children identifying as transgender by pushing peers and authority figures to profusely express their support.

Coming out as transgender means instant fame and popularity, because you're a victim, and everyone has to be nice to you… or else:

> "Great increase in popularity among the student body at large. Being trans is a gold star in the eyes of other teens," wrote one parent on the study response form. Another wrote, "not so much 'popularity' increasing as 'status' … also she became untouchable in terms of bullying in school as teachers who ignored homophobic bullying …are now all at pains to be hot on the heels of any trans bullying."

So becoming transgender has social rewards, especially for people who are being bullied. White girls are constantly being bullied for their race in public schools, so identifying as transgender is a quick and easy way for them to get out of the oppressor class and into the victim class

How the presence and quality of fathers affects belief in God

March 11, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article by Paul Copan which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.* It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own* rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of François-Marie Arouet.
> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his

> autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence, but there is also statistical evidence. Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is

> regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an more difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others. If you want your child to be religious and moral, you have to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he makes, he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading.

My advice to Christian women is this. When you are picking a man, be sure and choose one who is already invested in Christian things and producing results. It's very unlikely that he's going to start from nothing after you marry him. If you value your kids, make a man's interest in developing and acting on a Christian worldview the main thing you are looking for.

Canada’s government plans to increase punishments for “hate speech” online

March 12, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I keep warning Americans never to visit Canada, at least while the secular left Liberal Party is in control. Visiting Canada is like visiting a police state. As soon as you enter the country, anything you say can and will be used against you in a kangaroo court. If you criticize the government, or the government’s favored groups, then you are guilty. They are going to make you pay.

Let’s take a look at this article from True North:

> In a move aimed at curbing the spread of what it terms “online hate,” the Liberal government of Canada has revealed its plan, including hefty fines for online speech and stringent punishment including up to life imprisonment for hate crimes.
>
> The centrepiece of this initiative is the proposed Online Harms Act, details of which were unveiled during a technical briefing released to reporters on Monday.
>
> […]The bill will include amendments to the Criminal Code aimed at addressing hate crimes more effectively.
>
> […]These amendments include the introduction of a standalone hate crime offence applicable across all criminal offences, with penalties extending up to life imprisonment.
>
> Maximum punishments for existing hate propaganda offences are also set to be increased substantially.
>
> […]Also, the bill would add a definition of “hatred” based on the past decision of the Supreme Court of Canada to the Criminal Code.
>
> The text of the bill defines “content that foments hatred” as any content “content that expresses detestation or vilification of an individual or group of individuals on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination, within the meaning of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, and that, given the context in which it is communicated, is likely to foment detestation or vilification of an individual or group of individuals on the basis of such a prohibited ground.”
>
> “For greater certainty and for the purposes of the definition content that foments hatred, content does not express detestation or vilification solely because it expresses disdain or dislike or it discredits, humiliates, hurts or offends,” adds the government.

Keep in mind that in Canada, people who disagree with policies favored by the Liberal party are routinely prosecuted by the state. People get prosecuted for posting Bible verses in Canada, because they offend people.

Your fellow citizens can report you to the government for “hate speech”:

> Anybody will also be able to file complaints against others for “posting hate speech online” that is discriminatory against protected categories such as gender, race, disability and others.
>
> Amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act will let anybody file complaints against persons posting so-called hate speech with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. If found guilty, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal can order those found to violate the government’s definition of hatred with fines up to $70,000 and takedown orders for content.
>
> According to the text of the bill, the Tribunal has the power to order payments of up to $20,000 for victims of so-called online hate, as well as an order to pay the government $50,000 “if the member panel considers it appropriate.”

You may recall, if you follow Canadian law, that the Human Rights Commissions are kangaroo courts that are only ever used to punish Christians and conservatives. They are never used against the Liberal Party or groups that support the Liberal Party. Human Rights Commissions are like social media “fact checkers”. On paper, they’re unbiased. In practice, they only censor speech critical of the regime, and the regime’s supporters. Famous Canadians like Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn have been dragged in front of these Human Rights Commissions. And citizens almost never win their cases. These are kangaroo courts.

You don’t have to speak words directly to a person in order to be guilty of hate speech. Your speech online can be reported as “hate speech”:

> “It is a discriminatory practice to communicate or cause to be communicated hate speech by means of the Internet or any other means of telecommunication in a context in which the hate speech is likely to foment detestation or vilification of an individual or group of individuals based on a prohibited ground of discrimination,” Bill C-63’s text reads.

You may never know the identity of your accuser. And if you do know, then you cannot name them publicly:

> The Tribunal will also have powers to hide the identity of those who bring complaints against anybody whom they deem to have posted online hate speech. Additionally, it can compel those who face complaints to not reveal the identity of those involved upon discovery.

It goes without saying that if you cannot expose them publicly, then you have no recourse to counter them.

The government will be monitoring speech online:

> The government plans to establish a new organization. This body, comprising the Digital Safety Commission, the Digital Safety Ombudsperson, and the Digital

> Safety Office, will work to ensure compliance with regulations and protect users from online harm.

Naturally, the Conservative Party leader opposes the bill:

> Prior to the bill's unveiling, Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre said he would oppose the law, accusing the government of using the issue to legislate censorship and infringe Canadians' free speech.
>
> "We will oppose Justin Trudeau's latest attack on freedom of expression," Poilievre responded to a question from True North's Andrew Lawton last week.
>
> "What does Justin Trudeau mean when he says the worst hate speech? He means speech he hates."

Will there ever be another election in Canada? It's hard to say. Trudeau may not allow another election, especially when he is losing in the polls:

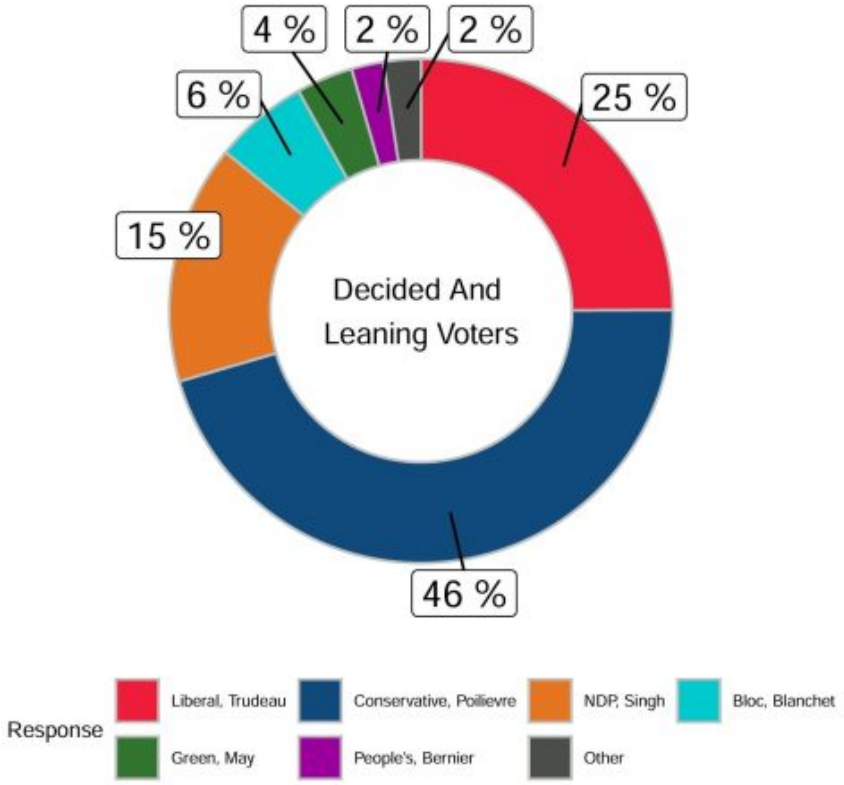

Canada Election Projection 2024

If you're in Canada right now, and you have the education and/or skills to get out, then get out. Yes, the Conservatives are leading in the polls. But until they win, that country is not safe.

Let's hear from some Canadians, courtesy of Rebel News:

Americans – you must never travel to this country. The bill doesn't just undermine freedom of speech, it destroys it. It would be like going to North Korea or Iran. They freeze the bank accounts of peaceful protestors, while letting Hamas supporters run wild in their streets. It is not a free country.

Children will no longer be prescribed puberty blockers in the UK

March 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been following the progress of the transgender agenda in different countries. Some left-wing countries that started out strongly in favor of transing children are now reversing course. I wrote before about how this was happening in France, Finland and Sweden. The UK National Health Service even lost a lawsuit to former patients who regretted transitioning as children.

Well, today we have fresh good news about the UK.

Here's the story from GB News:

> Children will no longer be prescribed controversial puberty blockers – medicines used to postpone puberty in minors – at gender identity clinics, NHS England has confirmed.
>
> The government said it welcomed the "landmark decision", adding it would help ensure care is based on evidence and is in the "best interests of the child".
>
> Puberty blockers, which pause the physical changes of puberty such as breast development or facial hair, will now only be available to children as part of clinical research trials.
>
> The move follows a public consultation and an interim policy on the issue, which stems from a 2020 NHS England review of gender identity services for under-18s.

The review "pointed to a lack of long-term evidence and data collection on what happens to children and young people who are prescribed medication."

The UK is only the latest country to get more cautious as they learn more about how these things really work.

The New York Post reported on Sweden last month:

> In February, Sweden — a progressive country previously on the cutting edge of providing medical services to transgender youth — also reversed course. The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare updated its guidelines for treating trans youth, scaling back the use of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones, saying there hasn't been enough research on their efficacy or side effects.

The Epoch Times reported about France and Finland in May 2022:

> France's National Academy of Medicine posted in March this year (pdf) that "great medical caution must be taken in children and adolescents, given the vulnerability, particularly psychological, of this population and the many undesirable effects and even serious complications that can be caused by some of the therapies available."

> […]Finland also announced in 2020 a policy shift for gender dysphoria treatment, with the Finnish Health Authority issuing new guidelines backing psychotherapy rather than puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones for children.

I think that sometimes, people in America see these issues through the lens of the corporate news media. We think that conservatives are losing everywhere, and that the secular left has all the momentum. But, if you look at some of the countries that are even further to the left, you realize that the pendulum is already winging back to the right.

Yesterday, I blogged about how Canada's secular left government is seeing record unpopularity. Even the young people are turning against them, because they can't afford homes or get timely health care. Even feminism has run into a brick wall, as young women find that by discriminating against men in schools and workplaces, they have actually cut off the supply of men who can protect and provide. Many single mothers who bought into the lies of feminism are watching the slow-motion destruction of their kids who are being raised fatherless.

I think there are some dark times ahead, but already we are seeing signs of a recovery. So keep up your spirits.

He just wins: DeSantis' Parental Rights in Education bill survives legal challenge

March 14, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do you remember how angry the corporate news media was with Governor Ron DeSantis when he signed a Parental Rights bill into law? DeSantis didn't want LGBY activists imposing their views on children in Florida schools. The corporate news media were MAD! They mocked the bill as the "Don't Say Gay" bill. But the bill didn't say that. It actually just banned grooming children.

So, there was a big legal battle over it, and DeSantis won.

This was reported by The Blaze:

> Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) ratified House Bill 1557 in March 2022, making the Parental Rights in Education Act the law of the land despite sustained opposition and mischaracterizations by woke corporations, the liberal media, and radical leftists in the Biden administration.
>
> After the bill's passage, critics' hopes centered on a legal challenge brought against Florida by a band of LGBT activists keen on nullifying the law. The challengers' desperate two-year effort to scale back parental rights and ensure that sexualizing propaganda could thrive in the classroom did not ultimately have the impact they likely hoped for.
>
> The DeSantis administration and the LGBT challengers filed a settlement Monday, bringing the legal battle to an end.
>
> […]"We fought hard to ensure this law couldn't be maligned in court, as it was in the public arena by the media and large corporate actors," stated Ryan Newman, general counsel for the DeSantis administration. "We are victorious, and Florida's classrooms will remain a safe place under the Parental Rights in Education Act."

Do you know what's better than people who just talk about things that they would like to do? People who do the things that they would like to do. And even better: when people who do things fight and win against people who want to destroy their good work.

According to the Governor's official web site, the law:

- Prohibits classroom instruction about sexual orientation or gender identity in K–3 classrooms, and after 3rd grade, these conversations need to be age-appropriate.
- Ensures that at the beginning of every school year, parents will be notified about healthcare services offered at the school, with the right to decline any service offered.
- Ensures that whenever a questionnaire or health screening is given to K–3 students, parents receive it first and provide permission for the school to administer the questionnaire or health screening to their child.

That’s the law of the land in Florida, now.

Wouldn’t it be great if we could have a president who stands up for conservatives, passes intelligent laws, defends those laws from the secular left in court, and then WINS. Of course it would.

Related posts on DeSantis’ achievements

- DeSantis beats Disney’s lawsuit, while Trump loses defamation lawsuit
- DeSantis wins again: Florida bans DEI programs at public colleges
- Promise to purge the FBI, and all other government agencies who discriminate against conservatives
- All he does is win: DeSantis cuts health care costs by importing Canadian drugs
- The DeSantis plan: pay teachers well, and put teacher unions out of business
- fires district attorneys who were elected with help from George Soros
- Mamas for DeSantis: Casey DeSantis champions parent’s rights at the national level
- high tourism and low unemployment
- six-week abortion ban
- no sex-reassignment surgeries on kids
- no pronouns required in Florida schools
- no kids at drag queen shows
- pre-game prayer is allowed
- universal school choice
- making collection of union dues optional for teachers
- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts
- elect conservatives to school boards
- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women’s sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

March 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses? God said, See that staff? Throw it down. Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent. God said, See that serpent? Pick it up. And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff. God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention. And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone? Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home? Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened. But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful. Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you. Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines

- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Meritus Medical Center in Hagerstown, MD fires nurse for opposing DEI

March 16, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Most people in the traditional, pro-marriage camp have noticed that the marriage rate is in a freefall. I'm talking about people like the Daily Wire hosts, Brad Wilcox, etc. They ignore the disincentives facing men, and just slam their fists on the table and cry "Get Married!" to men. But they have no interest in fixing the root cause. They think that shaming men will make them marry.

Here's a story from the Wall Street Journal (archived) about a male nurse – a good man – who lost his job:

> It's fine to oppose diversity, equity and inclusion as long as you keep it to yourself. The moment you speak out, you have a target on your back. That's the lesson I learned in February. I made the mistake of questioning DEI on my personal social-media account. The hospital where I worked fired me within days.
>
> I've been a registered nurse for 16 years. In 2021 I began working in the emergency department at Meritus Medical Center in Hagerstown, Md., rising to assistant clinical manager in February 2023. Since I oversaw nurses, my highest priority after providing the best care to patients was protecting my team. That's what got me into trouble.

I do think it's important to note that this man made a terrible mistake by thinking that it was safe to work in a blue city in a blue state. He does bear some responsibility for that choice, as well as the choice to speak out from a social media account with his real name. That's why I use an alias. Sure, he gets into the Wall Street Journal, but at what cost?

> Like many states, Maryland has been foisting DEI courses on medical professionals for several years. Since 2022 the state has required that all healthcare professionals take "implicit bias" training, largely in response to worries about black maternal mortality. The state has also committed to reducing disparities in severe maternal morbidity between black and white women over the next three years. My hospital began using a course called "B.I.R.T.H Equity Maryland," which stands for Breaking Inequality Reimagining Transformative Healthcare.
>
> I took the first session of the course in July 2023. I was bombarded with evidence-free claims that implicit bias has caused a crisis of maternal mortality in black women. The course ignored the complex factors that contribute to higher black maternal mortality, including comorbidities, while defining any death from any cause after a year of giving birth as maternal mortality—a logical stretch.
>
> Overall, the course implied that white nurses like me are killing black mothers. I was supposed to internalize this message and somehow apply it to the

> management of my team.

It’s funny because you think that when you are going to a health care provider, that they are going to improve your health. But, because they have subscribed to a fact-free mythology, they lie to you to you, which can actually hurt you in the long run.

> In January, Meritus sent me materials for another DEI course for hospital leaders. The materials asserted, among other things, that the U.S. is built on “an ideology of White supremacy that justifies policies, practices and structures which result in social arrangements of subordination for groups of color through power and White privilege.”
>
> I quickly decided I wouldn’t spread these hateful messages to the nurses under my supervision. I didn’t attend the course and wasn’t punished for it. A few weeks later, I received an email instructing me to register for an in-person implicit-bias seminar in March. I declined to do so, again with no punishment. The advocacy group Do No Harm has shown how medical professionals are often penalized for not taking such training, so I was grateful I got off easy.
>
> The mounting politicization of the workplace frustrated me, so on Feb. 7 I posted what I thought was an innocuous message to my Facebook page: “No employer has the right to invade the unconscious spaces of it’s [sic] employees minds in an attempt to reprogram them into thinking certain ways. If your employer signs you up for an ‘Unconscious Bias’ aka ‘Implicit Bias’ training, then they are doing exactly that.”
>
> My Facebook page doesn’t link me to Meritus, nor did I mention the hospital by name. I didn’t mention the courses, either. All I did was criticize the idea that people should be forced to accept a hateful worldview.

I would imagine that his reason for speaking out was to provide superior medical care to his patients – to all of his patients. Sadly, his employer had a different goal in mind. Their goal was to virtue signal. And that’s more important to them than serving customers.

> That was my mistake—speaking out publicly. The next day I received a call from my manager, who informed me that Meritus had placed me on administrative leave. She said she believed human resources intended to fire me and told me to attend a meeting on Feb. 12. At that meeting, Scott Salzetti, Meritus vice president of team member services, handed down my sentence. He provided me with a document that cited my post and referred to several other posts that “could be reasonably viewed as offensive” or “were misleading, or false.”
>
> I wasn’t told what those posts were, though after reviewing my Facebook account, I suspect it was a January post in which I stated that “corporate healthcare has shifted its focus from patient centered care directives to diversity of the workforce and inclusive excellence training (aka thought reform) for its leaders.” Nothing in that sentence is false or misleading, and again I didn’t mention my employer or a training course. No matter: For openly questioning

> DEI, instead of keeping my concerns to myself, I was fired. (In response to an inquiry from a Journal editor, a Meritus Medical Center spokeswoman confirmed the termination of my employment but otherwise declined to comment.)
>
> […]In the meeting where I was fired, a Meritus representative repeatedly said I had waded into “a touchy subject.” That’s exactly my point. DEI is inherently divisive and discriminatory to boot. No hospital or medical provider should touch something so touchy, much less fire someone for daring to question it.

I hope this will help young Christians and conservatives to think carefully about what field they choose to go into, and maybe even where they live. You can’t be guided by your feelings. You have to have a plan to reduce your vulnerability to the secular left fascists.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

March 17, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

New study: trans women's self-ending rate doubles after sex surgery

March 19, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I just finished reading the third edition of Frank Turek's "Correct, Not Politically Correct: About Same-Sex Marriage and Transgenderism". The book talks about the effects of taking drugs and undergoing surgeries to deny your biological sex. It costs a lot of money. It creates chronic pain. It requires continuous visits to the doctors ($$$ for them). And there's higher risk of self-ending.

Here's the latest study published in the peer-reviewed journal American Urological Association. They don't like people quoting their web site, so I had to look for a mainstream news report about it.

The Daily Caller reported on the study:

> The suicide rate for men identifying as transgender women in California doubled among those who receive vaginoplasty, a new study found.
>
> More than twice as many men who identify as transgender women had attempted suicide after receiving the surgery when compared to those who had not undergone the procedure, according to AUA Journals.

If you don't know what a vaginoplasty is, Daily Caller had a helpful blurb about it:

> Vaginoplasty "involves the removal of a man's penis, testicles and scrotum" to sculpt a "feminine-appearing" vaginal canal and vulva, according to John Hopkins Medicine.

Basically, the idea is to create the appearance of being the opposite sex. But these are not as sensitive as the real things, they require constant painful and expensive maintenance, and they are expensive. We are all paying for these procedures, when our health insurance goes up to pay for the people who are getting them.

> More:
>
> "Rates of psychiatric emergencies are high both before and after [surgery]. Although both the phalloplasty and vaginoplasty patients have similar overall rates of psychiatric encounters, suicide attempts are more common in the [latter]. In fact, our observed rate of suicide attempts in the phalloplasty group is actually similar to the general population, while the vaginoplasty group's rate is more than double that of the general population. Patients undergoing [vaginoplasty] with a history of prior psychiatric emergencies or feminizing transition are at a higher risk and should be counseled appropriately," study authors concluded.
>
> Why is the suicide rate higher for men? I think I have the answer. Men seem to enjoy and desire sex more than women. I think the men are surprised and

> confused that the thing that looks like a woman’s vagina doesn’t actually work to produce sexual pleasure.

Now, when I go to buy a car, I don’t do it on the basis of feelings. I do it on the basis of user reviews, long-term driving evaluations, warranty ratings, etc. I cannot imagine how blind a person would have to be to chop off a functioning reproduction organ and think that they will be able to enjoy sex as much as they could before. And I can’t imagine why the doctors would go along with it, except that they want lots of insurance company money. And why don’t the insurance companies stop it? Oh, because they just raise the premiums of the other people who use health care responsibly.

New study: Significant parallels found between anorexia and gender dysphoria

March 20, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A common objection against transgenderism by biological realists is to make a parallel argument from anorexia. Conservatives say "we wouldn't want to help a skinny anorexic person lose weight because they thought they were too fat, would we?" Transgender activists reply that these two things are completely different. Who is right? Well, now we have a peer reviewed study to help us decide.

The new study was published in the peer-reviewed journal Sexuaologie, which is the journal of the *German Society for Sexual Medicine, Sexual Therapy and Sexual Science/DGSMTW.*

The Society for Evidence-Based Gender Medicine reported on it:

> A new publication* in Sexuologie (the journal of the German Society for Sexual Medicine, Sexual Therapy and Sexual Science/DGSMTW) takes on the issue of the sharp rise in transgender identification in adolescent females, which remains poorly understood. The authors, Korte and Gille, present an intriguing hypothesis for this novel phenomenon, comparing and contrasting gender dysphoria to anorexia nervosa, and finding a number of important similarities. The authors conclude that clinicians working with gender-dysphoric adolescents must familiarize themselves with the complex dynamics of female adolescent development, and that trans-affirmative medical interventions should not be considered until adolescent development is complete.

SEGM got permission to post the full English language translation of the study, but I didn't. So you have to click through to read it.

But here's the interesting part of SEGM's synopsis of the paper:

> Drawing on their clinical work with such patients, Korte and Gille observe that trans identification in adolescent girls may reflect the desire to circumvent the challenges of female adolescence rather than a deep identification with maleness. They note that "although there is pronounced rejection of the female body and/or the female gender role," there is frequently no pronounced desire for the primary or even secondary physical characteristics of the opposite sex.
>
> […]The authors note several similarities between anorexia and gender dysphoria. Both involve body image disorders where aggression is "turned against one's own self, inward, but also outward, against important others." The authors note:
>
> "*…in both anorexic eating disorders and gender identity disorders (gender dysphoria), relatives, especially parents, are exposed to strong feelings of helplessness and powerlessness in addition to the massive feelings of guilt and failure that often arise. In both disorders, this sometimes exacerbates the*

> *symptoms" of the … patient within a correspondingly pathological relationship dynamic*."
>
> Korte and Gille conclude by outlining concrete steps that pediatricians, child and adolescent psychiatrists, gynecologists, and other medical providers can take to help girls navigate puberty in a way that averts or mitigates these developmental crises. They caution clinicians that in the vast majority of cases of gender dysphoria arising around adolescence, it is likely temporary and represents a maturation crisis or insecurity of 'sexual, rather than gender identity."
>
> The authors criticize the "trans-affirmative" (gender-affirming) model of care for adolescents, which is focused on the provision of physical body modifications, as inconsistent with the principles of adolescent development. They highlight the importance of addressing adolescent gender dysphoria within a developmental framework, recognizing the complexity of adolescent experiences and the need for tailored interventions that address underlying conflicts and promote adaptive coping strategies.

I think this study is very helpful for understanding what's really going on in the mind of young people when they reject their own gender.

In the most recent episode of Knight and Rose, Rose and I were talking about how to be more bold when discussing controversial issues. Our advice was to be the smartest person in the room. I remember when homosexuality was becoming a big issue, I went out and read a whole bunch of books about it, from people like Jeffrey Satinover and Charles Socarides. It's similar to how I am handling transgenderism now.

Christians should always be the smartest people in the room when these topics come up. Nobody should be listening to the "compassionate" virtue signalers, who just want to jump to affirmation and approval. And the way you beat those people is by asking them a few simple questions about what they know, to show that they aren't operating from knowledge at all.

The doctors and the surgeons are often just trying to hook a young person onto constant surgeries, drugs and treatments. They want money, lots of money. All you have to do is to ask them what liability they have if their treatment results in regret and the desire to detransition. Is there a warranty? Of course not. Would they put their promises about "pauses" and "rollbacks" in writing? Of course they won't.

What about the emotion-based friends and relatives? All you have to do is ask them about technical issues. What are the long-term effects of these drugs? How much does it cost? How painful is it? Are there permanent effects? They are supporting the transition because they want to feel good. They want to be liked. When you ask them knowledge questions, the children can see that the feelings-based adults are only serving themselves.

It's much better to discuss these issues by pointing out the long-term consequences of decisions. Of course young people have feelings. Of course they want to act on those feelings. But young people also need to hear from people who understand what is further

down the road. They don’t know that, and they need to rely on adults who know for help. Not the greedy health care workers. And not the low-self-esteem feelings-based crowd.

How strong are naturalistic hypotheses about the origin of life?

March 21, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The origin of life is easy to explain if it is the result of intelligent design, because intelligent agents know how to engineer the building blocks, and how to assemble them into the components of a living system: proteins and nucleic acids. But how can you do it when there are no intelligences allows in your worldview? There is a new article in Nature about that.

The authors write:

> To understand how life might have begun, researchers must stop cherry-picking the most beautiful bits of data or the most apparently convincing isolated steps, and explore the implications of these deep differences in context. Depending on the starting point, each hypothesis has different testable predictions. For example, if life started in a warm pond on land, the succession of steps leading from prebiotic chemistry to cells with genes is surprisingly different from those that must be posited if the first cells emerged in deep-sea hydrothermal vents.
>
> Building coherent frameworks — in which all the steps in the continuum fit together — is essential to making real progress. To see why, here we highlight two of the most prominent frameworks, which propose radically distinct environments for the origin of life.

Let's see what the authors say about the prebiotic soup:

> This framework posits that nucleotides are concentrated in a small pond. To form RNA, the simplest and most versatile genetic material, nucleotides must polymerize. That is most easily achieved by drying them out (polymerization is a type of dehydration reaction). Proponents imagine a succession of wet–dry cycles, in which the pond dries out to form polymers of RNA, then fills again with water containing more nucleotides and so on, cycle after cycle, making more and more RNA3.

This is the "RNA World" hypothesis, which I've blogged about before. The authors don't like it:

> But this concept raises some difficult questions. It places the onus on an 'RNA world', in which RNA acts both as a catalyst (in a similar way to enzymes) and as a genetic template that can be copied. The problems are that there is little evidence that RNA can catalyse many of the reactions attributed to it (such as those required for metabolism); and copying 'naked' RNA (that is not enclosed in compartments such as cells) favours the RNA strands that replicate the fastest. Far from building complexity, these tend to get smaller and simpler over time.

> Worse, by regularly drying everything out, wet–dry cycles keep forming random groupings of RNA (in effect, randomized genomes). The best combinations, which happen to encode multiple useful catalysts, are immediately lost again by re-randomization in the next generation, precluding the 'vertical inheritance' that is needed for evolution to build novelty.
>
> If selection on RNA in drying ponds could somehow be made to generate greater complexity, what must it achieve? To make cells that grow and reproduce, RNA must encode metabolism: the network of hundreds of reactions that keeps all cells alive. Modern-day metabolic reactions bear no resemblance to the cyanide chemistry that makes nucleotides in this model. Evolution would therefore need to replace each and every step in metabolism, and there is no evidence that such a wholesale replacement is possible.

The authors are saying that they need to build up complexity from simple to more complex, in order to get the bare minimum they need for simple life. Life basically requires four different capabilities: membrane, energy capture, metabolism, and information storage. And they all have to be there and working right from the start. It's a frightful amount of complexity to get right – unless you appeal to intelligence.

The authors also talk about life forming from non-living materials in hydrothermal vents:

> Our own favoured scenario is that the chemistry of life reflects the conditions under which life began, in deep-sea hydrothermal systems on the early Earth4. In broad brush strokes, this means that gases such as carbon dioxide (the near-universal source of carbon in cells today) and hydrogen feed a network of reactions with a topology resembling metabolism. Genes and proteins arise within this spontaneous protometabolism and promote the flux of materials through the network, leading to cell growth and reproduction. There are plenty of problems here, too, but they differ from those in the prebiotic soup framework.

The first problem is that they need enzymes in order go from simple gases to nucleotides, and they don't have them:

> The first problem is that H2 and CO2 are not particularly reactive — indeed, their chemistry was largely ignored for decades, although rising interest in green chemistry is changing that. But deep-sea vents are labyrinths of interconnected pores, which have a topology resembling cells — acidic outside and alkaline inside. The flow of protons from the outside to the inside of these pores can drive work in much the same way that the inward flow of protons can drive CO2 fixation in cells today5.
>
> […]But many chemists are troubled by the idea that, in the absence of enzymes to serve as catalysts, hydrothermal flow could drive scores of reactions through a network that prefigures metabolism, from CO2 right up to nucleotides. The chemist Leslie Orgel once dismissed this scenario as an "appeal to magic". Certainly, further data are required, supporting or otherwise.

They have problems sequencing nucleotides into functioning components:

> Polymerization is another stumbling block. Nucleotides have been polymerized in water on mineral surfaces9, but this raises similar questions to those noted for wet–dry cycles about how selection could act. If the problem is solved by polymerizing nucleotides inside growing protocells, mineral surfaces would not have been available. Polymerization would then have needed to happen in cell-like (aqueous gel) conditions, but without enzymes. If serious attempts to synthesize RNA under those conditions fail, the overall framework would need to be modified.

I'm not convinced that mineral surfaces can help with the nucleotide sequencing problem, but they don't even have those available in the hydrothermal vents.

I studied computer science in university, so biochemistry is all new to me. I am trying to learn it, but I also have to write code all day for work. But thankfully, there are experts who can sort this out for us.

Here is a podcast from the fellows over at the Discovery Institute, and they talked about this article. Podcasts are a great way to try to understand these complex problems.

Canadian Federal Police: Canadians may revolt over deteriorating economy

March 22, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Whenever I have conversations with people about economics, they frequently like to point to Canada as an example of big government socialism that works. “I just want free single-payer health care and diversity” they cry. “Canada is doing fine, they’re wealthy”. Well, let’s take a look at a report from the federal police in Canada, and find out what they think is really going on.

This is from National Post, one of Canada’s national newspapers:

> A secret RCMP report is warning the federal government that Canada may descend into civil unrest once citizens realize the hopelessness of their economic situation.
>
> “The coming period of recession will … accelerate the decline in living standards that the younger generations have already witnessed compared to earlier generations,” reads the report, entitled Whole-of-Government Five-Year Trends for Canada.

> “For example, many Canadians under 35 are unlikely ever to be able to buy a place to live,” it adds.
>
> The report, labelled secret, is intended as a piece of “special operational information” to be distributed only within the RCMP and among “decision-makers” in the federal government.
>
> […]Right from the get-go, the report authors warn that whatever Canada’s current situation, it “will probably deteriorate further in the next five years.”
>
> […]In terms of declining living standards and inaccessible home ownership, the RCMP’s warnings are indeed in line with available statistics.
>
> Canadian productivity — measured in terms of GDP per capita — has been trending downwards since at least the 1980s. But this has accelerated dramatically in recent years — even as per-worker productivity rises in many of our peer countries.

If you remember Canadian politics, Canada was doing well under conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, an economist. But then, they decided to elect a part-time drama teacher and snowboarding instructor, with a famous last name, and nice hair. That happened in 2015, and it’s been downhill for Canada’s economy ever since.

More:

> An analysis last year by University of Calgary economist Trevor Tombe found that if Canada had merely kept pace with U.S. productivity growth for the last five

> years, Canadian per-capita earnings would be $5,500 higher than they are now.
>
> Meanwhile, housing affordability has reached “worst-ever” levels in most of Canada’s major markets, according to a December analysis by RBC. On average, even condos are now so unaffordable that only 44.5 per cent of Canadian households had sufficient income to buy one at current prices. As for single-family homes, only the richest 25 per cent of Canadian households had any hope of obtaining one.
>
> “Economic forecasts for the next five years and beyond are bleak,” reads the RCMP’s assessment of the rest of the decade, even adding a quote from French President Emmanuel Macron that “the end of abundance” is nigh.

By the way, Canada was also in the news this week for their new hate speech / hate crime legislation. Any dissent from the secular leftism of the ruling communist party will be met with massive fines and up to life in prison.

Knight and Rose Show #46: Dr. Michael Licona on the Resurrection of Jesus

March 23, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 46 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Dr. Michael Licona to discuss how historians investigate the resurrection of Jesus. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 46:

Episode Summary:

Just in time for Easter, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Dr. Michael Licona about how historians can investigate miracle claims, such as the resurrection of Jesus. Can historians control for their biases and presuppositions? What are the most reliable sources for the life of Jesus? Can Christians make a compelling case for the resurrection to non-Christians? How do naturalists explain the evidence for the resurrection?

Speaker biographies

Dr. Michael Licona is a world-class scholar on the topic of the resurrection of Jesus. Mike has a Ph.D. in New Testament with distinction at the University of Pretoria. He has spoken on many university campuses and frequently engages in formal academic debates. Mike is Professor of New Testament Studies at Houston Christian University and the President of Risen Jesus, Inc. His most recent books include "Why Are There Differences in the Gospels? What We Can Learn From Ancient Biography" (Oxford University Press, 2017) and "The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach" (IVP Academic, 2010). He also has a forthcoming book called, "Jesus, Contradicted: Why the Gospels Tell the Same Story Differently" published by Zondervan Academic.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Gay marriage debate: Michael Brown debates Eric Smaw on same-sex marriage

March 24, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the debate:

> On April 21, 2011 at 7:30pm at UCF's Health and Public Affairs Building (Room 119), Rollins College professor, Dr. Eric Smaw and author and seminary professor Dr. Michael L. Brown will debate the question "Should same sex marriage be legalized in America?" The event will be held at 4000 Central Florida Blvd and is open to the public. After the formal portion of the debate, Brown and Smaw will field questions from the audience.

About the speakers:

> **Dr. Smaw** will be responding in the affirmative. He earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Law from the University of Kentucky in 2005. His areas of expertise are philosophy of law, international law, human rights, ethics, and modern philosophy. He has published articles on human rights, terrorism, and cosmopolitanism. His most recent publication is "Swaying in the Balance: Civil Liberties, National Security, and Justice in Times of Emergency".
>
> **Dr. Brown** will be responding in the negative. He earned his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and is a nationally known evangelical lecturer and radio host. He is the author of numerous scholarly articles and twenty books, including the recently published study "A Queer Thing Happened to America", which is quickly being recognized as the definitive work on the history and effects of gay activism on American culture.

Here are the first two parts:

Part 1 of 10:

Part 2 of 10:

The rest of the segments are here.

Summaries of the opening speeches

Summary of Dr. Brown's opening speech:

There is no compelling reasons by the state should change the definition of marriage

The reason the state conveys benefits for marriage is because marriage is beneficial for the state

Traditional marriage is recognized by the state for several reasons:
– it domesticates men
– it protects women
– it provides a stable, nurturing environment for children

Marriage has three public purposes:
– to bind men and women together for RESPONSIBLE procreation
– to get the benefit
– to provide children with two parents who are bonded to them biologically
– to create the next generation of people to keep the society going

Normally, opposite sex couples create children

Homosexual couples can NEVER create children together

Men and women are differences that are complementary

Monogamy is the norm for opposite sex couples.

For gay men, open relationships / cheating is the norm.
This is because women have a tempering effect on sexuality.

There is no evidence that recognizing same-sex civil unions and marriages have changed this trend.

Same-sex marriage guarantees that children will either not have a father or a mother
So which of the sexes is dispensable when raising children?

For example, consider Dawn Stefanowicz, who grew up with a gay father and no mother
She never got a chance to see a man model love and protect a women within a marriage
That makes an enormous difference in a woman's life – in the way she relates to men

Even with scientific advancements, every baby has a mother and a father

If we change the definition of marriage so that it is based on consent, then why limit it to just two people
If marriage is not the union of male and female, then why have only TWO people
In Canada, you have civil liberties lawyers arguing for for polygamy
In the United States, Professor David Epstein was in a consensual relationship with his daughter
Should incestuous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?
Should polyamorous relationships also be celebrated as marriage? Why not?

Sexual orientation is not the same as race
Men are women are different in significant ways, but different races are not
You need separate bathrooms for men and women, but not for people of different races

Summary of Dr. Smaw's opening speech: (He ended his speech after only 10 minutes)

You can redefine marriage so that it no longer based on the public purposes he mentioned (controlling procreation, fusing complementary male and female natures, providing children with mothers and fathers who are biologically linked to them, providing children with a comparatively stable development environment that offers comparatively less instability, promiscuity and domestic violence rates compared to cohabitation, etc.), but is instead based on consent and feelings, and that redefinition of marriage won't open marriage up to polygamy, polyamory, etc.

If you like feminism, then you should allow same-sex marriage

If you like abortion rights, then you should allow same-sex marriage

Homosexuals participate in society by working at various jobs, so they are participating in society

Homosexuals should be given the same tax breaks as married people because they work at various jobs for money

Working at a job for money achieves the same public purpose as procreating and staying together to raise children in a stable environment

You can listen to the rest for the rebuttals, and cross-examination. Oh yes – there was cross-examination! It starts two thirds of the way through Part 5, if you want to jump to it. And sparks were flying! There is also Q&A from the audience of students.

This is such a great debate – I love to hear two passionate guys disagreeing about something. I love to hear both sides of the issues. There is always something to learn by listening to the other side. It makes me more effective and more tolerant when I stand up to defend my side of the argument.

By the way, my own secular case against same-sex marriage is right here, if you want to see how I would debate this issue. Also check out the recent studies on the effects of gay parenting on children.

Should government get out of the marriage business?

March 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are three articles by Jennifer Roback Morse posted at The Public Discourse. The articles answer the charge from social liberals and libertarians that government should "get the government out of marriage".

Here's the first article which talks about how government will still be involved in marriage, even if we get rid of the traditional definition of marriage, because of the need for dispute resolution in private marriage contracts. She uses no-fault divorce as an example showing how it was sold as a way to get government out of the divorce business. But by making divorce easier by making it require no reason, it increased the number of disputes and the need for *more government intervention* to resolve these disputes.

Here's the second article which talks about how the government will have to expand to resolve conflicts over decisions about who counts as a parent and who gets parental rights. With traditional marriage, identifying who the parents are is easy. But with private marriage contracts where the parties are not the biological parents, there is a need for the state to step in and assign parental rights. Again, this will require an expansion of government to resolve the disputes.

Here's the third article which talks about how marriage is necessary in order to defend the needs and rights of the child at a time when they cannot enter into contracts and be parties to legal disputes.

The third article was my favorite, so here is an excerpt from it:

> The fact of childhood dependence raises a whole series of questions. How do we get from a position of helpless dependence and complete self-centeredness, to a position of independence and respect for others? Are our views of the child somehow related to the foundations of a free society? And, to ask a question that may sound like heresy to libertarian ears: Do the needs of children place legitimate demands and limitations on the behavior of adults?
>
> I came to the conclusion that a free society needs adults who can control themselves, and who have consciences. A free society needs people who can use their freedom, without bothering other people too much. We need to respect the rights of others, keep our promises, and restrain ourselves from taking advantage of others.
>
> We learn to do these things inside the family, by being in a relationship with our parents. We can see this by looking at attachment- disordered children and failure-to-thrive children from orphanages and foster care. These children have their material needs met, for food, clothing, and medical care. But they are not

> held, or loved, or looked at. They simply do not develop properly, without mothers and fathers taking personal care of them. Some of them never develop consciences. But a child without a conscience becomes a real problem: this is exactly the type of child who does whatever he can get away with. A free society can't handle very many people like that, and still function.
>
> In other words I asked, "Do the needs of society place constraints on how we treat children?" But even this analysis still views the child from society's perspective. It is about time we look at it from the child's point of view, and ask a different kind of question. *What is owed to the child*?
>
> **Children are entitled to a relationship with both of their parents. They are entitled to know who they are and where they came from. Therefore children have a legitimate interest in the stability of their parents' union, since that is ordinarily how kids have relationships with both parents. If Mom and Dad are quarreling, or if they live on opposite sides of the country, the child's connection with one or both of them is seriously impaired.**
>
> **But children cannot defend their rights themselves. Nor is it adequate to intervene after the fact, after harm already has been done. Children's relational and identity rights must be protected proactively.**
>
> **Marriage is society's institutional structure for protecting these legitimate rights and interests of children.**

I recommend taking a look at all three articles and becoming familiar with the arguments in case you have to explain why marriage matters and why we should not change it. I think it is important to read these articles and to be clear that to be a libertarian doctrine does not protect the right of a child to have a relationship with both his or her parents. Nor does libertarianism promote the idea that parents ought to stick together for their children. Libertarianism means that adults get to do what they want, and no one speaks for the kids.

The purpose of marriage is to make adults make careful commitments, and restrain their desires and feelings, so that children will have a stable environment with their biological parents nearby. We do make exceptions, but we should not celebrate exceptions and we should not subsidize exceptions. It's not fair to children to have to grow up without a mother or father just so that adults can pursue fun and thrills.

Ron DeSantis bars minors under 14 from creating social media accounts

March 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There's been more excellent news from Governor Ron DeSantis in Florida. I have to write about this, because people are getting really down on the way things are going these days. I just want to remind everyone that it really makes a huge difference to your mental health when you live in a red state like Tennessee or Florida. If you're a Christian or conservative, every day in a red state is Christmas.

Here's the latest Christmas gift from Ron DeSantis for the people of Florida, as reported in Florida's Voice:

> Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill on Monday barring minors under 14 from creating accounts on social media platforms that employ addictive features and data collection software.
>
> The legislation allows for 14 and 15-year-olds to create accounts on the apps with parental consent.
>
> Additionally, the bill requires adequate age verification measures for internet sites that contains obscene or "harmful" content, unsuitable for minors.
>
> The legislation, HB 3, was sponsored by Reps. Tyler Sirois, R-Merritt Island, Fiona McFarland, R-Sarasota, and Michele Rayner, D-St. Petersburg. Sen. Erin Grall, R-Fort Pierce, sponsored the Senate version of the bill.
>
> House Speaker Paul Renner, R-Palm Coast, also spearheaded the effort.
>
> The purpose of the legislation is meant to specifically target platforms that use addictive features with content catered to individuals based on algorithms that analyze user information.
>
> Addictive features include infinite scrolling, auto-play and live streaming.
>
> The bill does not target platforms that are simply used for one function, such as emailing and texting.

Here's another big gift for conservatives in Florida, reported by Florida's Voice:

> Gov. Ron DeSantis signed legislation on Wednesday to crack down on public homeless encampments across Florida.
>
> The new Florida law bars local governments from allowing public sleeping or camping on public property without a lawful permit.
>
> Instead, the local jurisdictions can set certain public properties or venues to be used for public camping or sleeping for up to one year.
>
> DeSantis highlighted the massive impact of homeless camps on cities across the country and in Florida.

> "We do not have any cities in the top 10 with respect to homeless," he said. "Part of that, I think, is because we have different policies."
>
> […]The legislation was brought by Sen. Jonathan Martin, R-Fort Myers, and Rep. Sam Garrison, R-Fleming Island.

And one more, also reported by Florida's Voice, about illegal immigrants from Haiti:

> Gov. Ron DeSantis on Friday signed three bills passed this year by lawmakers aimed at further cracking down on illegal immigration and illegal aliens in Florida.
>
> He made the announcement in Polk County with Sheriff Grady Judd and other officials and lawmakers.
>
> One bill **increases penalties for illegal aliens** who commit crimes in the state after already having been deported for being there illegally. The legislation increases the severity of each degree of felony by one degree: a third degree would become a second degree, a second degree a first degree, and a first degree turns into a life felony.
>
> - DeSantis vowed that Florida will "throw the book" at illegal aliens who come back to Florida to commit crimes.
> - It also increases a second degree misdemeanor to a first, and a first degree misdemeanor to a third degree felony.
> - Sen. Blaise Ingoglia, R-Spring Hill, sponsored it. Reps. Kiyan Michael, R-Jacksonville, and Berny Jacques, R-Seminole, carried the House version.
> - It takes effect Oct. 1.
>
> Another bill **prevents local governments from validating community IDs for illegal aliens**.
>
> - The governor noted that giving out such IDs is already not allowed, but the measure goes further in preventing them from validating such IDs.
> - Ingoglia, Michael and Jacques carried the legislation.
> - It takes effect July 1.
>
> The third bill **increases penalties on those who drive without a valid driver's license**.
>
> - The legislation hikes penalties on those with a revoked, suspended, or revoked license, along with increasing penalties on repeat offenders.
> - It was sponsored by Ingoglia, along with Rep. Rachel Plakon, R-Lake Mary.
> - It takes effect July 1.
>
> Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nunez and Attorney General Ashley Moody praised lawmakers for forwarding the bills and DeSantis for signing them.

This is all very good news for conservatives. If you live in Florida, people are not able to

play the victim, and pass the costs of their decisions off onto other people.

Related posts on DeSantis' achievements

- DeSantis' Parental Rights in Education bill survives legal challenge
- DeSantis beats Disney's lawsuit, while Trump loses defamation lawsuit
- DeSantis wins again: Florida bans DEI programs at public colleges
- Promise to purge the FBI, and all other government agencies who discriminate against conservatives
- All he does is win: DeSantis cuts health care costs by importing Canadian drugs
- The DeSantis plan: pay teachers well, and put teacher unions out of business
- fires district attorneys who were elected with help from George Soros
- Mamas for DeSantis: Casey DeSantis champions parent's rights at the national level
- high tourism and low unemployment
- six-week abortion ban
- no sex-reassignment surgeries on kids
- no pronouns required in Florida schools
- no kids at drag queen shows
- pre-game prayer is allowed
- universal school choice
- making collection of union dues optional for teachers
- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts
- elect conservatives to school boards
- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women's sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Everyone should watch Climate: The Movie to understand climate change

March 27, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I'll be posting links to watch the new documentary for free on YouTube and Twitter (with captions in English). I also link to a a review of the movie, and a post that has citations for 70 of the major claims. And a post from just yesterday, showing how climate change alarmism causes real problems for people like you and me. Not just higher electricity prices, but harming the environment.

First, here's the documentary available at YouTube:

It has over 142,000 views in just four days, as of time of writing.

And if you prefer Twitter / X, then you can watch it there:

> Ask and you shall receive: Here's an X copy of Climate: The Movie with English captions. pic.twitter.com/FYbHW45yuX
>
> — Tom Nelson (@TomANelson) March 23, 2024

With captions in English.

Here is a review from NetZero Watch.

Excerpt:

> The first part of the film is about the science, about temperature and carbon-dioxide levels and their respective influences and timescales. It shows that the 'climatic extremes' so often reported are not extremes at all. Then it goes into the politics, examining the role of the establishment, the media and net zero, making the point that if we aren't going to be mauled by the planet, we will be by our reaction to the putative climate crisis.

The other of that review is David Whitehouse, who has a Ph.D in Astrophysics, and has carried out research at Jodrell Bank and the Mullard Space Science Laboratory. He is a former BBC Science Correspondent and BBC News Science Editor.

That page also has the video embedded, hosted by Vimeo.

If, by some stroke of censorship, it's taken down in all of these places, you can find it on Rumble, as well.

You can find the Annotated Bibliography for Climate: The Movie here.

Finally, I wanted to link to this post from Daily Caller, that shows how climate change alarmism costs you. Everyone knows about how green energy relies on subsidies, and raises the prices of electricity. And that happens everywhere it's tried – California, Europe, Canada, etc.

But there are other problems with green energy, too:

> A severe Texan hail storm damaged thousands of solar panels at a Fort Bend County farm causing neighbors to fear potential chemical leakage from the panels, ABC 13 reported.
>
> The freak and severe hail storm hit the farm and its environs on March 16, causing massive property damage throughout the affected area, the outlet reported.

Are the young people who believe in global warming mythology going to be happy with results like this? Maybe we should be telling them what they are voting for.

The simplest argument against Darwinian evolution is Junk DNA

March 28, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Discovery Institute has a new video out in their series on intelligent design, about so-called "junk DNA". Basically, there are two sides to the origins issue: the design-deniers and the design-recognizers. (And theistic evolutionists belong in the former group). These two groups make different predictions about the information in the human genome. And we can check their predictions.

First, here's the new video:

Here is description from Evolution News:

> The myth of junk DNA is much more than just an evolutionary idea that turned out to be mistaken. As the new episode of Long Story Short makes amusingly clear, it also reflects a "battle of predictions" with intelligent design. Going back to the 1970s, evolutionists predicted that, in line with their premise of a randomly generated genome, DNA would turn out to be full of Darwinian debris, playing no functional role but merely parasitic (atheist Richard Dawkins's term) on the small portion of functional DNA.
>
> Proponents of intelligent design said the opposite. William Dembski (1998) and Richard Sternberg (2002) predicted widespread function for the so-called "junk." After all, as a product of care and intention, the genome ought to be comparable in a way with products of human genius, with every detail there for a reason.
>
> On that, ID has since been massively vindicated. Scientific theories are tested by the predictions they make. If those fail, it's a bad sign for the theory. Mainstream science journals like Science are admitting the truth about the erstwhile "junk" — even as a few diehard Darwinists like Laurence Moran at the University of Toronto deny it.

And these predictions by the design side are not new. My young Earth creationist friend even sent me this today (today is Wednesday, I always write these posts the night before and schedule them for the next morning):

> While a Creation/Fall model could account for the accumulation of some random, mutationally defective "extra copies," evolutionists felt they had a strong point that 97% "junk" DNA pointed more to evolution than intelligent design. Creationists have long suspected that this "junk DNA" will turn out to have a function. In fact, junk DNA research is now a hot topic; not only are more and more functions being detected, but it is suspected that junk DNA is full of yet-to-be-discovered "intellectual riches.

That prediction is from 1994. My friend has a whole article about Junk DNA here, with all

the predictions from each side.

He says “Carl Wieland founded CMI”. CMI is Creation Ministries International, which is supposed to be the best YEC web site.

Anyway, if you missed the other videos in the series, there is a playlist, but all the videos are out of order! If you want a quick and snarky introduction to intelligent design, this is it.

William Lane Craig explains the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement

March 29, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably one of the most common questions that you hear from people who don't fully understand Christianity is this question: "why did Jesus have to die?". The answer that most Christians seem to hold to is that 1) humans are rebelling against God, 2) Humans deserve punishment for their rebellion, 3) Humans cannot escape the punishment for their rebellion on their own, 4) Jesus was punished in the place of the rebellious humans, 5) Those who accept this sacrifice are forgiven for their rebelling.

Are humans rebellious?

Some people think that humans are not really rebellious at all, but it's actually easy to see. You can see it just by looking at how people spend their time. Some of us have no time for God at all, and instead try to fill our lives with material possessions and experiences in order to have happy feelings. Some of us embrace just the parts of God that make us feel happy, like church and singing and feelings of comfort, while avoiding the hard parts of that vertical relationship; reading, thinking and disagreeing with people who don't believe the truth about God. And so on.

This condition of being in rebellion is universal, and all of us are guilty of breaking the law at some point. All of us deserve to be separated from God's goodness and love. Even if we wanted to stop rebelling, we would not be able to make up for the times where we do rebel by being good at other times, any more than we could get out of a speeding ticket by appealing to the times when we drove at the speed limit, (something that I never do, in any case).

This is not to say that all sinners are punished equally – the degree of punishment is proportional to the sins a person commits. However, the standard is perfection. And worse than that, the most important moral obligation is a *vertical* moral obligation. You can't satisfy the demands of the moral law just by making your neighbor happy, while treating God like a pariah. The first commandment is to love God, the second is to love your neighbor. Even loving your neighbor requires you to tell your neighbor the truth – not just to make them feel good. The *vertical* relationship is more important than the *horizontal* one, and we've all screwed up the vertical relationship. We all don't want God to be there, telling us what's best for us, interfering with our fun. We don't want to relate to a loving God if it means having to care what he thinks about anything that we are doing.

Who is going to pay for our rebellion?

The Christian answer to the problem of our rebellion is that Jesus takes the punishment we deserve in our place.

However, I've noticed that on some atheist blogs, they don't like the idea that someone else can take our punishment for us to exonerate us for crimes that we've committed. So

I'll quote from this post by the great William Lane Craig, to respond to that objection. Excerpt:

> The central problem of the Penal Theory is, as you point out, understanding how punishing a person other than the perpetrator of the wrong can meet the demands of justice. Indeed, we might even say that it would be wrong to punish some innocent person for the crimes I commit!
>
> It seems to me, however, that in other aspects of human life we do recognize this practice. I remember once sharing the Gospel with a businessman. When I explained that Christ had died to pay the penalty for our sins, he responded, "Oh, yes, that's imputation." I was stunned, as I never expected this theological concept to be familiar to this non-Christian businessman. When I asked him how he came to be familiar with this idea, he replied, "Oh, we use imputation all the time in the insurance business." He explained to me that certain sorts of insurance policy are written so that, for example, if someone else drives my car and gets in an accident, the responsibility is imputed to me rather than to the driver. Even though the driver behaved recklessly, I am the one held liable; it is just as if I had done it.
>
> Now this is parallel to substitutionary atonement. Normally I would be liable for the misdeeds I have done. But through my faith in Christ, I am, as it were, covered by his divine insurance policy, whereby he assumes the liability for my actions. My sin is imputed to him, and he pays its penalty. The demands of justice are fulfilled, just as they are in mundane affairs in which someone pays the penalty for something imputed to him. This is as literal a transaction as those that transpire regularly in the insurance industry.

So, it turns out that the doctrine of substitutionary atonement is not as mysterious or as objectionable as everyone seems to think it is.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

March 30, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang
– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws

– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection
– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus

– god wouldn’t have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that’s a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that’s a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that’s a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don’t support life, that’s a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that’s a bad design

3. hitchens’ burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can’t prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig’s scientific arguments don’t go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don’t prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don’t prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn’t be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig’s evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can’t use the progress of science
– it’s too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god’s existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn’t forming his view based on evidence
– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don’t believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you’ve got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God

– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH’s evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH’s argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn’t need to be efficient

CH’s argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH’s argument that Craig’s scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH’s argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn’t need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH’s citation of Craig’s book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true
– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH’s rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH’s rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH’s argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed

– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them
– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that's a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven't even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn't prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they're growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn't improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do

– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn't need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that's why people act morally
– it's degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don't know why, because i can't ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don't hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don't believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don't agree

WC moral argument: it's not epistemology it's the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing

– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history
– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it's just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that's not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

March 31, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women

    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don't have any earlier sources, so we just don't know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn't check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Ron DeSantis signs legislation banning squatters on private property

April 1, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A squatter is someone who enters a building without permission and proceeds to live in it, without any ownership or rental agreement. It's legal in many blue and purple states, and even in some red states. So, if you go on vacation for a few weeks, you might return to find people living in your home. In this post, we'll see an example of "squatting", and then see how Florida dealt with squatting.

From the New York Post, an example of what squatting looks like in a blue state, with a blue mayor, and a blue governor:

> A New York City property owner recently ended up in handcuffs following a fiery standoff with alleged squatters who she has been trying to boot from her family's home, tense footage shows.
>
> Adele Andaloro, 47, was nabbed after changing the locks last month on the $1 million home in Flushing, Queens, that she says she inherited from her parents when they died, ABC's Eyewitness News reported.
>
> […]Andaloro claims the ordeal erupted when she started the process of trying to sell the home last month but realized squatters had moved in — and brazenly replaced the entire front door and locks.
>
> She said she got fed up, and went to her family's home on 160th Street — with the local TV outlet in tow — on Feb. 29 and called a locksmith to change the locks for her.
>
> […]In New York City, a person can claim "squatter's rights" after just 30 days of living at a property.
>
> Under the law, it is illegal for the homeowner to change the locks, turn off the utilities, or remove the belongings of the "tenants" from the property.

They're not really "tenants", as they haven't signed a lease. But what else would you expect from a sanctuary state, which is home to sanctuary cities?

More:

> "By the time someone does their investigation, their work, and their job, it will be over 30 days and this man will still be in my home," Andaloro said.
>
> "I'm really fearful that these people are going to get away with stealing my home," she added.
>
> […]Following a flurry of 911 calls, responding cops told Andaloro she had to sort the saga out in housing court because it was considered a "landlord-tenant issue."

> Andaloro was ultimately given an unlawful eviction charge because she had changed the locks and hadn't provided a new key to the person staying there, the NYPD confirmed to The Post.
>
> She was slapped with a criminal court summons, cops added.

So, if you're the legal owner of a property in New York, people who don't own it can move in, and then you get arrested for changing the locks to keep them out. It's New York.

This article from Florida's Voice explains what happens in Florida:

> Gov. Ron DeSantis signed anti-squatter legislation on Wednesday, seeking to combat individuals who illegally reside in a house that they do not own or pay rent for.
>
> The bill would allow law enforcement to remove squatters who can't produce a notarized lease signed by the landowner or proof that they are paying rent for the property.
>
> Additionally, there would be penalties for individuals who produce fraudulent leases that are commonly used by squatters.
>
> Rep. Kevin Steele, R-Dade City, sponsored HB 621 and Sen. Keith Perry, R-Gainesville, championed the Senate version.

If Ron DeSantis were elected President in 2024, then I assume this sort of law would be enacted, and apply to all 50 states.

Related posts on DeSantis' achievements

- Ron DeSantis bars minors under 14 from creating social media accounts
- DeSantis' Parental Rights in Education bill survives legal challenge
- DeSantis beats Disney's lawsuit, while Trump loses defamation lawsuit
- DeSantis wins again: Florida bans DEI programs at public colleges
- Promise to purge the FBI, and all other government agencies who discriminate against conservatives
- All he does is win: DeSantis cuts health care costs by importing Canadian drugs
- The DeSantis plan: pay teachers well, and put teacher unions out of business
- fires district attorneys who were elected with help from George Soros
- Mamas for DeSantis: Casey DeSantis champions parent's rights at the national level
- high tourism and low unemployment
- six-week abortion ban
- no sex-reassignment surgeries on kids
- no pronouns required in Florida schools
- no kids at drag queen shows
- pre-game prayer is allowed
- universal school choice
- making collection of union dues optional for teachers
- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts

- elect conservatives to school boards
- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife
- banning biological males from women’s sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Young women vote Democrat, then complain about Democrat policies

April 2, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to boil down the wisdom of my years into one sentence, that sentence would be "you must not advocate for anything that will eventually harm you". Sadly, we live in a world of virtue signaling. People want to advocate for things that feel good in the moment, even if it hurts them in the long run.

Let's start with this story from New York Post:

> A series of women have posted alarming TikTok reports about being randomly punched by a stranger while walking in New York, including at least two daylight attacks reported to cops this week.
>
> Halley Kate… posted a video Monday after one attack being investigated by the NYPD, saying it caused her to fall to the ground and black out.
>
> "You guys, I was literally just walking, and a man came up and punched me in the face," Kate said through tears in a post on Monday morning.

And again:

> A woman named Mikayla Toninato, whose bio said she attends Greenwich Village's Parsons School of Design, tagged Kate in a post six hours later, where she recounted a similar story.
>
> "I just got punched in the face, walking home," the TikToker claimed.

And again:

> Another woman named Oliva Brand took to the platform on March 17 to report the same experience, in a clip filmed on Mulberry Street in Nolita.
>
> […]The NYPD confirmed the narratives of Kate and Brand, saying that a 23-year-old woman reported an assault at West 16th Street and 7th Avenue at 10:20 a.m. Monday, as with Kate's report.
>
> […]On March 17, a 25-year-old was walking her dog just before noon at Kenmare and Mulberry streets when an "unknown individual punched her in the head," according to officials when asked about Brand's video.
>
> […]The recent complaints echoed the purported plight of a fourth young female TikToker, Jill Burke, who said on Feb. 8 she was attacked near Union Square and that the suspect was arrested and released on his own recognizance.

Now, whenever I hear stories like this, I always wonder "what is the context of this story? Is the victim leaving out facts that make them less of a victim?" and also "was a police report filed?". The police report is important, because although there are no consequences for making false accusations, there are consequences for filing a false

police report. And the police will look for evidence to confirm or deny the victim's story. In this case, we have police reports for all of these attacks, so they are likely to be true.

In response to all this violence, feminists are asking: "why don't the good men save women from the bad men?" They want chivalry, even after killing chivalry by advocating for feminism. Chivalry is absolutely out of the question for good men today – it's too risky.

Here's a story from Fox News:

> As Marine veteran Daniel Penny watched an erratic homeless man allegedly threaten to murder terrified passengers on a New York City subway — including women and children — he said he felt a moral obligation to act.
>
> […]Penny, 24, dragged Jordan Neely, 30, to the floor of a northbound F train on May 21, and put him in a chokehold that was caught on cellphone video. Neely ended up dead.
>
> "If [Neely] had carried out his threats, he would have killed somebody," said Penny, who remains so traumatized by the experience he has not boarded a subway train since.

He's facing a prison sentence of 5 to 15 years, now.

More:

> Neely's death spurred widespread protests across the city with many demonstrators and even politicians calling Penny a "murderer" and a racist. Penny is White; Neely was Black.
>
> "The majority of the people on that train that I was protecting were minorities, so it definitely hurts a lot to be called that," Penny said. "It has obviously taken a toll."
>
> Celebrity civil rights activist Rev. Al Sharpton gave a eulogy at Neely's funeral blasting the decision not to arrest Penny on the spot.

This shouldn't be unfamiliar to us. Democrats love to criminalize gun ownership and self-defense by law-abiding people. They want criminals to have space to commit crimes with impunity. They don't want the criminals to be interrupted by law-abiding people with legally-owned firearms.

I can tell you right now that I would not lift a finger to save people in New York City from the consequences of their actions. They vote for Democrats, they live in Democrat cities, and they have to live with the results of their actions. When I was doing my concealed carry permit, the instructor, a former police officer, warned us to never step in to defend anyone else but ourselves, and only from an "imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury". The legal consequences could be extremely damaging, he said. In the old days, before criminals became the darlings of the secular left, good men would step in. But not any more.

It's significant that young women are complaining about crime. Young women are voting for soft-on-crime policies these days – they are all in favor of open borders, soft-on-crime

policies, Hamas terrorists, gun bans, and punishing Good Samaritans.

Financial Times reports: (archived)

> In the US, Gallup data shows that after decades where the sexes were each spread roughly equally across liberal and conservative world views, women aged 18 to 30 are now 30 percentage points more liberal than their male contemporaries. That gap took just six years to open up.
>
> […]The #MeToo movement was the key trigger, giving rise to fiercely feminist values among young women who felt empowered to speak out against long-running injustices.
>
> […]In the US, UK and Germany, young women now take far more liberal positions on immigration and racial justice than young men, while older age groups remain evenly matched. The trend in most countries has been one of women shifting left while men stand still.

They don't seem to be able to see the long-term consequences of their voting. Being "compassionate" works "in the moment", and that rush of good feelings and social approval is what they choose. Later on, they can complain about the results of their voting, and paint themselves as innocent victims. "The world is so unpredictable!"

I think that these young secular leftist women would benefit from reading C.S. Lewis' essay "Men Without Chests", and maybe ask their wise elders what long term consequences to actions will be.

Why are teachers and other talkers paid less than engineers and other doers?

April 3, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The meme below makes fun of unionized public school teachers, who feel entitled to the same salary and benefits as doctors, software engineers, etc. in the private sector. So, the point of this meme is simple, it's to point out that the teachers who belong to teacher unions are ignorant of basic economics, specifically, the law of supply and demand.

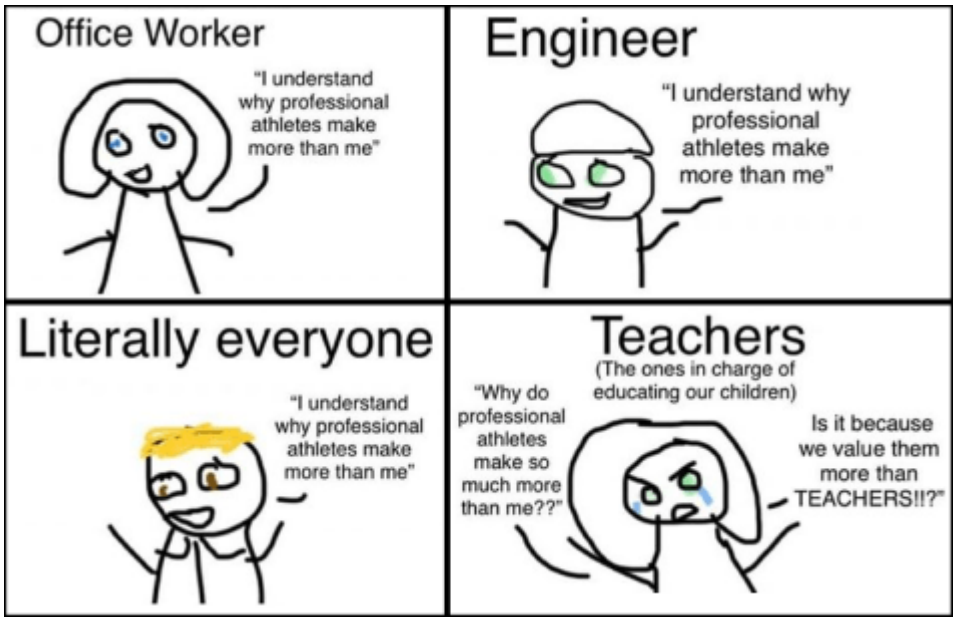

Basic Economics: In a free market, prices are set by supply and demand
When there is more demand for a product or service than there is a supply for it, then prices go up. When there is more supply for a product or service than there is a demand for it, prices go down.

A good place to see this explained is in a book by famous black economist Thomas Sowell. Thomas Sowell has written many books, but he wrote one book in particular for people who have no knowledge of basic economics. It's called "Basic Economics: A Citizen's Guide to the Economy". And the first few chapters explain how prices are set by supply and demand:

1. What is Economics?
2. The Role of Prices
3. Price Controls
4. An Overview of Prices

It turns out that there are two views of how wages are set in an economy:

> The labor theory of value (LTV) is a theory of value that argues that the economic value of a good or service is determined by the total amount of "socially necessary labor" required to produce it.
>
> LTV is usually associated with Marxian economics… The LTV is central to Marxist

> theory, which holds that the working class is exploited under capitalism, and dissociates price and value. Marx did not refer to his own theory of value as a "labour theory of value".
>
> Mainstream neoclassical economics tends to reject the need for a LTV, concentrating instead on a theory of price determined by supply and demand.

Marxists economists believe that the value of a good or service is determined by the "social utility" of the work produced. But classical ("free market") economists believe that value is determined by the scarcity of the good or service relative to the demand from consumers.

So, a Marxist economist might say "teaching English to 5 year olds is valuable because it is relevant and meaningful". But, a classical economist would say "conducting a security audit on distributed point-of-sale system is valuable, because very few people can do it, but many people want it".

I've noticed that school teachers and non-STEM university students and professors are very likely to hold to the labor theory of prices and wages. Robert Nozick wrote a paper about why this happens. It turns out that "wordsmiths" (his word) are conditioned by their performance in the classroom to expect success in the free market economy. But when they find that their "brilliance" in English poetry, Medieval history, or lesbian dance theory has no value to anyone else, they complain that the economy is being manipulated by powerful people. Marxism is a coping mechanism for people who value academic acclaim more than doing something useful for their neighbors. The Marxists study easy things that no one cares about, and then they can't get paid because millions of people can do them. The free market people focus on the customer, so they study hard things like computer science and petroleum engineering that are in demand from customers. And they get paid more.

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image)

Consider this article from College Pulse about a survey of 10,590 undergraduate students:

> Students with certain majors are far more likely than their peers to approve of socialism. Philosophy majors, in particular, have a positive view of socialism. Nearly 8 in 10 (78%) say they view the economic system favorably, followed by 64% of anthropology majors, and 58% of both English and international relations majors. Accounting and finance majors are least likely to view socialism positively (20% and 22% respectively).

Do you know what accounting and finance students have to study? *Basic economics.*

As soon as I got my first job as a software engineer, and finished my study of Christian apologetics, the very next thing I studied was economics. It was Dr. Jay Richards who got me interested in it, when I heard him speaking about economics in an apologetics lecture for Stand to Reason. I contacted him, and he recommended the works of two famous economists, F. A. Hayek and Thomas Sowell. And that's what I want to recommend to you, too. Our continued liberty and prosperity depends on ordinary Americans taking the time to educate themselves about basic economics.

Scotland's new hate speech law has maximum sentence of 7 years in prison

April 4, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should Americans travel to Scotland? Well, it's a beautiful country, but there's a problem – their new hate speech law. If you say anything that offends a leftist, then you might get charged with hate speech. Maybe you said some controversial things online. If anyone on the left recognizes you in Scotland, they might file a complaint for your past hate speech. The penalty is up to 7 years in jail.

Here's an article from Christian Today to explain:

> The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act, [was] passed three years ago. It was the brainchild of the then justice secretary for the Scottish government, Humza Yousaf. Yousaf is now the Scottish First Minister and his bill is about to become law on April 1st.
>
> […]The problem with the bill is that it does not clearly define what 'stirring up hatred' means… the subjective feeling of a perceived victim, or of a policeman, could be enough to have you accused of a hate crime – one which carries a sentence of up to seven years. Take for example JK Rowling. If she tweets that a man cannot become a woman, she could be arrested for hate crime. Same for a Christian preacher who says that he does not believe that Muhammad is a prophet or a teacher who says they believe marriage is between a man and a woman.

The Scottish police have no time for real crimes, their priority is investigating you for hate speech:

> The police in Scotland have said they will investigate every report of hate crime, despite having recently announced that they would not be investigating every case of 'low level' crime, including apparently some cases of theft!

The law will be used to target Christians and conservatives:

> In an astonishing statement they give an example of the kind of people who commit hate crimes as those with "deep-rooted feelings of being socially and economically disadvantaged, combined with ideas about white-male entitlement".
>
> […]Now we have the State creating a two-tier justice system where some groups are afforded 'protected' status and others are attacked.
>
> […]This Act will pervade through all of Scottish society. Even children are to be targeted. School handbooks now explain that all hate crimes should be reported to the police. Journalist Jim Spence wrote in the *Courier* that Scotland is about to become a "two-tier society" where "some folk are given protection by the law

> from some kinds of hate crimes, while others will simply have to suck up abuse." For example, "while it will be an offence to stir up hate against trans folk", it "won't break the law to stir up hate against women", because astonishingly under this Act sex is not a protected characteristic.

Anyone can report you and get you into trouble:

> The police are to set up Third Party Reporting Centres throughout Scotland where you can go and 'clipe' (a Scots word for snitch or tell-tale) on anyone.
>
> […]*The Herald* reported on police training which encouraged officers to go after anyone who produces material deemed 'threatening and abusive'. You could be prosecuted for a negative portrayal of a trans person in a play, for example.
>
> […]If you repeat a joke on the internet which someone in the 'protected' characteristic finds offensive, you could be guilty of a hate crime.
>
> And as if that were not extreme enough, you could be reported for expressing 'hate' in your own home.

This part is key – anything you say or write in other countries that can be read about in Scotland will be grounds for arrest and imprisonment for "hate speech":

> The law holds that anything that can be read in Scotland is to be considered as published in Scotland.

Let's look at a couple of articles from earlier this year, that show who is likely to be targeted by the Scottish Police. Surprise! It's Christians and conservatives.

An article from the ADF explains how free speech is regulated in Scotland:

> The police force… issued a warning notice to [Christian leader, Dia Moodley, a Bristol-based pastor and father of four], who has engaged in occasional street evangelism for the past five years, which forbade him from, inter alia, "passing comments on any other religion or comparing them to Christianity" and "passing comments on beliefs held by Atheists or those who believe in evolution".
>
> […]In addition to forbidding criticism of religions other than Christianity, the warning notice further encroached on Moodley's right to freedom of expression by banning him from "delivering a sermon or religious address at a time or place that has not had prior consent and approval of Avon & Somerset Constabulary."

Here's another example of free speech that offended the secular left – except it wasn't even speech at all:

> The charitable volunteer who was arrested for praying silently in a controversial "buffer zones" case in Birmingham will today testify to Holyrood about her experience of being prosecuted for a "thoughtcrime".
>
> Isabel Vaughan-Spruce was seen being arrested on a viral video last winter when she said she "might be praying inside [her] head". She was charged with

> “engaging in an act that is intimidating to service users” within the buffer zone of an abortion clinic – despite the clinic having been closed.

For the secular left in Scotland, freedom of expression is not important at all. This legislation allows people to punish Christians and conservatives, if they just feel that our free speech is offensive. It’s not a safe place to visit.

Are Mormon doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

April 5, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually

> infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian

> culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

Knight and Rose Show #47: Dr. Fazale Rana on the Origin of Life

April 6, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 47 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Dr. Fazale "Fuz" Rana to discuss how scientists investigate the origin of life. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 47:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Dr. Fazale "Fuz" Rana about the appearance of first life on Earth. What are the minimum functions of a simple living system? When did life appear on the Earth? What are the best naturalistic hypotheses for the origin of life? Are any of these scenarios plausible? What is the best explanation for the information and algorithms in the cell? Is design a better explanation?

Speaker biographies

Biochemist Fazale "Fuz" Rana is president, CEO, and senior scholar of Reasons to Believe. Dr. Rana earned a BS in chemistry with highest honors (West Virginia State College) and a PhD in chemistry with an emphasis in biochemistry (Ohio University) and completed postdoctoral work at the Universities of Virginia and Georgia. He worked for seven years as a senior scientist in research and development for Procter & Gamble. To date, Fuz has addressed more than 500 university, church, and conference audiences in the US and abroad. He has debated against prominent naturalistic scholars, including Dr. Michael Ruse and Dr. PZ Myers. His books include Origins of Life, The Cell's Design, Creating Life in the Lab and Fit for a Purpose. He was also featured in Museum of the Bible's *Scripture and Science* exhibit in Washington, DC.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Is the acceleration of the universe's expansion compatible with Hinduism?

April 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, a news story – and then we'll see how the accelerating universe relates to the existence of God.

Excerpt:

> Three astrophysicists who discovered that the universe's expansion is accelerating rather than decelerating, as had been expected, win the Nobel Prize in physics.
>
> Adam Riess was sure he'd spotted a blatant error in his results. It was 1997, and the young post-doc's measurements of distant, exploding stars implied that the universe was expanding at a faster and faster rate, instead of slowing down, as he had expected.
>
> It wasn't an error at all. Instead, what was at fault were some basic assumptions about the workings of the universe.
>
> On Tuesday, the Johns Hopkins University astrophysicist received the Nobel Prize in physics for the revolutionary discovery and its implications, along with team leader Brian Schmidt of Australian National University and astrophysicist Saul Perlmutter of UC Berkeley and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, who had reached the same conclusion independently.
>
> At the time of their work, astrophysicists believed that the rate of expansion of the universe — set in motion by the Big Bang 13.7 billion years ago — would be slowing down as matter was pulled together by gravity. The goal at the time was to figure out how rapid the deceleration was.
>
> What the two teams found instead was that the expansion of the universe was accelerating — an observation that could best be explained by the existence of a mysterious "dark energy" that pushes matter farther and farther apart.
>
> Many scientists had thought that, just as the universe started with the Big Bang, it would end with a Big Crunch — with gravity pulling all the matter in the universe inward.

Does anyone remember that week that I wrote those posts about "Why I am not a… <insert some religion here>"? I explained why I was not all kinds of different religions and denominations, including Roman Catholicism, Calvinism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, etc. Everyone was offended and we fought about it. Ah, I remember it well.

Now let's apply science to the Hindu religion and see if they go together, especially this new discovery about the expansion of the universe.

Why I am not a Hindu

1. Hindu cosmology teaches that the universe cycles between creation and destruction, through infinite time.
2. The closest cosmological model conforming to Hindu Scriptures is the eternally "oscillating" model of the universe.
3. The "oscillating" model requires that the universe exist eternally into the past.
4. But the evidence today shows the the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.
5. The "oscillating" model requires that the expansion of the universe reverse into a collapse, (= crunch).
6. In 1998, the discovery of the year was that the universe would expand forever. There will be no crunch.
7. Therefore, the oscillating model is disconfirmed by observations.
8. The oscillating model also faces theoretical problems with the "bounce" mechanism.

So that's one reason why I am not a Hindu. And now we have more scientific confirmation that there is no cycle of universes coming into being and going out of being.

The absolute origin of the universe out of nothing is also incompatible with Buddhism and Mormonism and maybe other religions. They also require an eternally existing universe.

And modern cosmology disagrees with atheism, too

I think it's important for all of you to be familiar with the scientific evidence for the Big Bang. It will help you with your cosmological argument, and it will help you to refute many, many other religions that require eternal universes, including atheism.

I wrote about how the Big Bang cosmology falsifies atheism before.

Excerpt:

> According to the Secular Humanist Manifesto, atheism is committed to an eternally existing universe, (See the first item: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."). If something non-material brought all existing matter into being, that would be a supernatural cause, and atheists deny that anything supernatural exists. The standard Big Bang theory requires that all the matter in the universe come into being *out of nothing.* The Big Bang has been confirmed by experimental evidence such as redshift measurements, light element abundances and the cosmic microwave background radiation. This falsifies eternal models of the universe, which are *required* by atheist Scriptures.

The experimental evidence that confirms the Big Bang creation out of nothing falsifies many worldviews. Those who care about evidence will have to choose some other religion that is compatible with what we know from science today.

New study: most children suffering from gender confusion grow out of it

April 8, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you having any conversations about transgenderism these days? It seems like there is a big push for transing kids, mostly coming from pharmaceutical companies and their allies in the public schools. They believe that children should be able to request drugs and surgeries based on their feelings. Even if parents disagree. But what if children's discomfort with their biological sex is temporary?

Take a look at this study, which appeared in the peer-reviewed scientific journal Archives of Sexual Behavior.

There's a nice article about this study over at the left-leaning UK Daily Mail:

> The majority of gender-confused children grow out of that feeling by the time they are fully grown adults, according to a long-term study.
>
> Researchers in the Netherlands tracked more than 2,700 children from age 11 to their mid-twenties, asking them every three years of feelings about their gender.
>
> Results showed at the start of the research, around one-in-10 children (11 percent) expressed 'gender non-contentedness' to varying degrees.
>
> But by age 25, just one-in-25 (4 percent) said they 'often' or 'sometimes' were discontent with their gender.
>
> The researchers concluded: 'The results of the current study might help adolescents to realize that it is normal to have some doubts about one's identity and one's gender identity during this age period and that this is also relatively common.'

This paragraph was interesting:

> According to the findings, females were more likely to report being unhappy with their gender and both increasing and decreasing 'non-contentedness' were associated with lower self-reported self worth, more behavioral problems and an increase in emotional struggles.

If you are raising daughters, you might want to have a plan to counter this. I think the best way to build up a girl's self-esteem is to give her interesting things to do, and help her to excel at them. And I mean things like writing code, reading Thomas Sowell, learning self-defense, shooting guns, fixing machines, understanding classical literature, etc. Useful stuff. Girls need to do useful things together with their Dads, that way, when they have bad feelings, they can think of all the things that they know how to do, and all the people that ask them for help. It's hard to feel bad when you know how to achieve results. And you know that you are good at achieving results. I'm not an expert in women, but it seems to me that they have trouble when they dwell too much on their own

feelings, and too much on what other people think about them, or what other people are doing. Girls should just not care about all that. Girls should just be good at doing things that matter. Girls should know how the world works.

The conclusion of the Daily Mail article features Christian scholar Dr. Jay Richards, was also interesting:

> Dr Jay Richards, director of the Richard and Helen DeVos Center for Life, Religion, and Family, told DailyMail.com: 'We've known for over a decade that most kids who experience distress with their sexed bodies resolve those feelings after they pass through natural puberty.
>
> 'Indeed, we can infer from the DSM 5 [2013] and other sources that as many as 88 percent of gender-dysphoric girls and as many as 98 percent of gender-dysphoric boys in previous generations desisted if allowed to go through natural puberty.
>
> 'These two facts make it clear why "gender-affirming care" on minors is such an outrage. It leads, in the end, to sterilization and in many cases to a complete loss of natural sexual function.
>
> 'There is no good evidence that this helps minors long term. Moreover, it medicalizes what could very well be temporary psychological symptoms.
>
> 'History will judge this medicalized "gender-affirming care" on minors as we now judge eugenics and lobotomies.'

I was pretty impressed with Jay. Of all the people they could have quoted, they went to Jay Richards, who has put a lot of effort into understanding these issues.

Do you know what would be wonderful? If children who take these drugs and submit to these surgeries could then sue all the people who told them to do it. They're being told one thing, but getting something else entirely. If a child gets hit with sterilization or loss of sexual function, then they should be able to clean out the bank accounts of the people who did this to them. Public school teachers, nurses, doctors, drug manufacturers, etc. Just bankrupt them. Because children shouldn't be lied to by adults, who know better.

William Lane Craig lectures on the moral argument at Georgia Tech

April 9, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This video has 3 parts, as well as questions and answers in individual clips.

For those who cannot watch the video, you can read this essay by Dr. Craig which covers exactly the same ground as the video. The essay is for Christians already familiar with basic apologetics.

Part 1 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Part 2 of 3:

Here's a quick couple of quotes from the essay for those who cannot watch:

> If there is no God, then any ground for regarding the herd morality evolved by homo sapiens as objectively true seems to have been removed. After all, what is so special about human beings? They are just accidental by-products of nature which have evolved relatively recently on an infinitesimal speck of dust lost somewhere in a hostile and mindless universe and which are doomed to perish individually and collectively in a relatively short time. Some action, say, incest, may not be biologically or socially advantageous and so in the course of human evolution has become taboo; but there is on the atheistic view nothing really wrong about committing incest. If, as Kurtz states, "The moral principles that govern our behavior are rooted in habit and custom, feeling and fashion,"[5] then the non-conformist who chooses to flout the herd morality is doing nothing more serious than acting unfashionably.
>
> The objective worthlessness of human beings on a naturalistic world view is underscored by two implications of that world view: materialism and determinism. Naturalists are typically materialists or physicalists, who regard man as a purely animal organism. But if man has no immaterial aspect to his being (call it soul or mind or what have you), then he is not qualitatively different from other animal species. For him to regard human morality as objective is to fall into the trap of specie-ism. On a materialistic anthropology there is no reason to think that human beings are objectively more valuable than rats. Secondly, if there is no mind distinct from the brain, then everything we think and do is determined by the input of our five senses and our genetic make-up. There is no personal agent who freely decides to do something. But without freedom, none of our choices is morally significant. They are like the jerks of a puppet's limbs, controlled by the strings of sensory input and physical constitution. And what moral value does a puppet or its movements have?
>
> […]Moreover, if atheism is true, there is no moral accountability for one's actions.

> Even if there were objective moral values and duties under naturalism, they are irrelevant because there is no moral accountability. If life ends at the grave, it makes no difference whether one lives as a Stalin or as a saint. As the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky rightly said: “If there is no immortality, then all things are permitted.”

If you want a much shorter, slicker version of this argument to share, Reasonable Faith has produced this nice 5-minute video that you can tweet or share on your Facebook page or whatever:

The moral argument is the easiest argument in the world to discuss with non-Christians, as everyone has to have an answer to questions like “what makes humans valuable?” and “why should I do the right thing when it goes against my self-interest?” and “will evildoers who escape justice in this life be punished when they die?” and “do humans have free will to make moral choices?” These are interesting questions, and people can just give their opinion and then think about it as they discuss it.

You can read a debate transcript where Dr. Craig puts his ideas to the test, against Dr. Richard Taylor. I found this debate very helpful for answering the question that everyone should be able to answer: “why should I be moral?”

Senior editor at NPR explains “how we lost America’s trust”

April 10, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Several people mentioned an article published at Free Press to me. The senior editor writes: “By 2023, the picture was completely different: only 11 percent [of NPR listeners] described themselves as very or somewhat conservative, 21 percent as middle of the road, and 67 percent of listeners said they were very or somewhat liberal.” And then he explains how it happened. Let’s take a look.

First thing, is that they reported on the Trump-Russia collusion story, and then when it was revealed that there was no collusion, and it was all just based on opposition research funded by Democrats, NPR forgot all about the story:

> Like many unfortunate things, the rise of advocacy took off with Donald Trump. As in many newsrooms, his election in 2016 was greeted at NPR with a mixture of disbelief, anger, and despair. (Just to note, I eagerly voted against Trump twice but felt we were obliged to cover him fairly.) But what began as tough, straightforward coverage of a belligerent, truth-impaired president veered toward efforts to damage or topple Trump’s presidency.
>
> Persistent rumors that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia over the election became the catnip that drove reporting. At NPR, we hitched our wagon to Trump’s most visible antagonist, Representative Adam Schiff.
>
> Schiff, who was the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, became NPR’s guiding hand, its ever-present muse. By my count, NPR hosts interviewed Schiff 25 times about Trump and Russia. During many of those conversations, Schiff alluded to purported evidence of collusion. The Schiff talking points became the drumbeat of NPR news reports.
>
> But when the Mueller report found no credible evidence of collusion, NPR’s coverage was notably sparse. Russiagate quietly faded from our programming.

People noticed how NPR handled that story. And they didn’t do a good job of reporting how the fake Trump-Russia dossier came into being, and was used to get the surveillance warrant. People reasonably thought “listening to NPR is just listening to lies”.

More:

> What’s worse is to pretend it never happened, to move on with no mea culpas, no self-reflection. Especially when you expect high standards of transparency from public figures and institutions, but don’t practice those standards yourself. That’s what shatters trust and engenders cynicism about the media.

Here’s my 2020 post about Trump-Russia collusion, which was better than anything that NPR wrote about it. I remember when you couldn’t even say these things, because the

big social media companies, who were being guided by NPR misinformation, would ban your account.

He has another example:

> In October 2020, the New York Post published the explosive report about the laptop Hunter Biden abandoned at a Delaware computer shop containing emails about his sordid business dealings. With the election only weeks away, NPR turned a blind eye. Here's how NPR's managing editor for news at the time explained the thinking: "We don't want to waste our time on stories that are not really stories, and we don't want to waste the listeners' and readers' time on stories that are just pure distractions."
>
> But it wasn't a pure distraction, or a product of Russian disinformation, as dozens of former and current intelligence officials suggested. The laptop did belong to Hunter Biden. Its contents revealed his connection to the corrupt world of multimillion-dollar influence peddling and its possible implications for his father.
>
> The laptop was newsworthy. But the timeless journalistic instinct of following a hot story lead was being squelched. During a meeting with colleagues, I listened as one of NPR's best and most fair-minded journalists said it was good we weren't following the laptop story because it could help Trump.
>
> When the essential facts of the Post's reporting were confirmed and the emails verified independently about a year and a half later, we could have fessed up to our misjudgment. But, like Russia collusion, we didn't make the hard choice of transparency.

Here's my 2022 post on the Hunter Biden laptop, which is, again, better than anything NPR wrote about it. If you told the truth about the laptop, then the social media companies who were influenced by NPR misinformation would ban your account.

And, like most of the Facebook-approved "fact checkers", NPR opposed the lab-leak theory of COVID:

> Politics also intruded into NPR's Covid coverage, most notably in reporting on the origin of the pandemic. One of the most dismal aspects of Covid journalism is how quickly it defaulted to ideological story lines. For example, there was Team Natural Origin—supporting the hypothesis that the virus came from a wild animal market in Wuhan, China. And on the other side, Team Lab Leak, leaning into the idea that the virus escaped from a Wuhan lab.
>
> The lab leak theory came in for rough treatment almost immediately, dismissed as racist or a right-wing conspiracy theory. Anthony Fauci and former NIH head Francis Collins, representing the public health establishment, were its most notable critics. And that was enough for NPR. We became fervent members of Team Natural Origin, even declaring that the lab leak had been debunked by scientists.

> But that wasn’t the case.

My 2023 article on the lab leak theory was much better than anything NPR has ever done on it. But again, because big tech was relying on NPR misinformation, you would get banned on social media, if you told the truth about these things.

I think every conservative is conservative in part because they realize how they’ve been lied to by the secular left, and found out the truth later on their own. Whether it’s the “simple” origin of life in a “prebiotic soup”, the fossil record that supposedly shows a gradual increase in phylogenetic complexity, the “eternal universe”, global cooling / warming, etc., conservatives have learned not to trust the wordsmiths. We know that journalists are typically stupid people who don’t know anything about evidence-based subjects like science, math, or economics. They just believe what they want to believe – whatever will give them the largest epistemic distance from God, and the least felt accountability to a Moral Lawgiver.

What should Christians bring up when discussing truth with Muslims?

April 11, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have some experience dicussing Islam because my mother's side of the family is all Muslim. My go-to argument has always been to confront them about the Qur'an's claim that Jesus did not die of crucifixion. But I noticed a different argument from Laura Powell, who knows far more about this topic than I do. Do you think her approach is the best one?

She writes about it over at her blog, An Affair with Reason:

> The crux of the argument is this: The Qur'an affirms the inspiration, authority, and preservation of the New Testament Gospels;[2] yet the Qur'an also contradicts the Gospels on major theological and historical points. Therefore, the Qur'an cannot be reliable.
>
> According to the Qur'an, the Gospel is the trustworthy, reliable revelation of God given as a guidance for mankind (Qur'an 3:3-4). These Scriptures from God were available and trustworthy when the Qur'an was revealed in the 7th century A.D., and those who had access to them were repeatedly told to obey them, judge by them, submit to their teaching, and stand fast upon them. In other words, according to the Qur'an, the Gospels are the inspired and authoritative words of God.
>
> Qur'an 5:47 says, "And let the People of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed—then it is those who are the defiantly disobedient."
>
> Furthermore, Qur'an 5:68 states, "Say, 'O People of the Scripture, you are [standing] on nothing until you uphold [the law of] the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to you from your Lord'" (see also 6:114; 3:3-4).

What I like about her argument is that she's just taking the words of the Qur'an seriously, and asking the Muslims who claim to believe it what's going on here. Why say that the gospels are unreliable today, when the Qur'an said that the gospels were reliable, yesterday.

My argument about the death of Jesus requires us to ask Muslims "where is the non-Muslim historian who thinks that Jesus did not die?" There isn't one.

But my argument requires that the Muslim know something about historical scholarship, to know what non-Muslim historians think.Laura's argument has wider appeal, because it doesn't require that the Muslim have *any* knowledge about history – only knowledge about what their own holy book says.

She concludes with this:

> What we see here is that the Qur'an teaches the inspiration, authority, and

> preservation of the Gospels. The Qur’an was intended as an Arabic version of the message of truth found in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, but this presents a huge problem for Muslims because the Qur’an contradicts the Christian Scriptures on essential doctrines. Most notably, the Qur’an teaches that Jesus was not God incarnate, he did not die on a cross, and he was not raised from the dead (Qur’an 4:157; 5:116).
>
> Here’s the dilemma for Muslims: If the Gospels *are not* trustworthy, then the Qur’an is false because it teaches that the Gospels are the inspired, perfectly preserved, authoritative words of God. But if the Gospels *are* trustworthy, then the Qur’an is false because it teaches contradictory, mutually exclusive facts about key issues. Either way, the Qur’an is false.
>
> This, of course, is a huge problem for Muslims. The validity of Islam rests upon the reliability of the Qur’an, just as Christianity rests upon the truth of the divinity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. If the Qur’an is unreliable, then Islam is a false religion.

I like that she’s comfortable having disagreements with people. That’s not very common in the church today, in my experience.

By the way, this is the same Laura who wrote that really good article about how she found a better way to discuss her Christian worldview when she moved on from sharing her testimony. I blogged about it here.

William Lane Craig and James White debate Calvinism vs Molinism

April 12, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a recent episode of the Unbelievable show, Calvinist pastor / theologian James White discussed middle knowledge (a.k.a. Molinism) with philosopher / theologian William Lane Craig. In this post, you'll find a link to the audio, the YouTube video, and my comments on the debate. My comments were quoted in an episode of William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith podcast.

Here is a link to the details from Unbelievable: (with MP3 download link)

> Calvinism and Molinism are two very different ways of understanding God's sovereignty. But which one best addresses the problem of evil?
>
> James White argues that Calvinism – God foreordaining all human behaviour both good and evil – is the more Biblical and coherent view. William (Bill) Lane Craig argues that Molinism – a view which reconciles human freedom and divine sovereignty – is Biblically consistent without making God the author of evil.

And the video:

Summary:

JB: Why is there evil?

JW: Natural and moral evil are the results of God's divine decree to create the world.

WLC: God has knowledge of what individual humans would do in different circumstances prior to his divine decree to create the world. God's decree takes into account the free decisions of people in different situations. With regard to natural evil, Calvinists and Molinists do not differ much – they are permitted to achieve a greater good. But for moral evil, there is a difference. Moral evil is the result of free decisions by individual humans. They are not God's will. God permits people to perform evil actions, because those free actions will lead to him achieving his ultimate purposes. God does not override human free will. He achieves his ultimate purposes through the actions of his free creatures. On the Calvinist view, God moves the will of creatures to do evil. God is the cause of their evil acts.

JB: God sees all of the possible worlds and instantiates a world where he is able to achieve his ultimate purposes while respecting the free decisions of his creatures.

WLC: God does not see what humans WILL do, and decree based on that. He sees what they WOULD do in different circumstances, and articulates a world where the free decisions they make in the circumstances he decrees lead to his ultimate purposes being fulfilled.

JB: And this view achieves God's sovereignty (God gets the result he wants) with human freedom (God is not responsible for moral evil)

JB: James, isn't it better for God to get what he wants while respecting free will, rather than micromanaging every thought and action of the people?

JW: There's micromanaging on both sides. On Molinism, God micromanages the circumstances. On Calvinism, God micromanages everything. But how could God have that knowledge of what people would do, prior to actually creating those people? The Bible teaches Calvinism, and so we should go with that. Calvinists are concerned when Craig says that God does not determine the truth value of these subjunctive conditionals (i.e. – what free individuals would do in different circumstances) The individuals determine what they will do in different circumstances. And Calvinists would prefer that God determine (i.e. – exhaustive determinism) what individuals do in different circumstances. WLC, would you agree that the knowledge of these subjunctive conditionals are the essence of what middle knowledge is? (WK note: micromanaging circumstances doesn't violate free will, micromanaging everything does violate free will)

WLC: No, but it is an essential aspect of it. According to Molinism, God does not determine what free individuals would do in different situations in which they find themselves. The Calvinist view is that in any situation, God actually moves the will of the creature, so God is the author of moral evil. On the Molinist view, creatures are responsible for moral evil, not God.

JW: So you're saying that these subjunctive conditionals are not under God's control. How can they be under the control of the creatures, since prior to God's creative decree, the creatures do not exist yet? Where do these truth values come from.

WLC: This objection to Molinism is called the "grounding objection". The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom are true without having to be grounded by the created individuals. This objection presupposes a view of truth called "truth-maker" theory. This theory says that in addition to propositions that are true, there are things that make propositions true. There are many counterexamples to this view. For example, if you deny the existence of something that does not exist, then there is no truth maker that makes that claim true. (WK note: E.g. – a unicorn does not exist) Another example is "If WLC were rich, WLC would buy a Mercedes" but there is no truth-maker situation that makes that true, except maybe if he were rich. (WK note: I think that the created individual WLC would be the truth-maker in that case?)

JW: The decisions that I make are caused by God's decree of what gifts I have or don't have. He has freedom to decree those gifts, and then that has an effect of what I am free to do. E.g. – I am not 6'11" so I am not free to be a center in the NBA. So on the Molinist view, what is the basis for these subjunctive counterfactuals that limit what God can do?

WLC: The grounding objection presupposes the truth-maker theory, and a particular strain of that theory called truth-maker maximalism, and counterfactuals of creaturely of creaturely freedom would be prime candidates to be exceptions to the truth-maker theory.

WLC: Regarding the point about how people don't exist in a vacuum but have a whole history, background, characteristics, etc. to shape their decisions. That's right. But the

counterfactuals of creaturely freedom factor all that in. The key point that divides us is that God doesn't determine what creatures decide, he decides the circumstances. And so the creature is responsible for moral evil, not God. And so God doesn't cause people to commit moral evils, then punish them for it.

WLC: We should guide our views based on what is in the Bible. But even Calvinist theologians affirm things about God that are not taught explicitly in the Bible, such as God's spacelessness and timelessness. And Molinism makes the best sense of divine sovereignty and human freedom. On the Calvinist view, God determines how anyone would act in any situation God might place him in, so God is responsible for the moral evil committed by his creatures.

JW: (repeats) If God is limited in what he can do by counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, then we have to know where these counterfactuals come from. (WK note: the counterfactuals of creaturely freedom come from… creaturely freedom.)

JW: Genesis 50:20 says that God used the moral evil committed by some creatures to achieve the good purposes he intended. (WK note: that's exactly what the Molinist view is, God permits moral evil by his creatures, as long as it achieves his ultimate good purposes)

JW: Molinism is unknown in the church for 1500 years. (WK note: Molinism is in Acts 17:24-27, and also, Calvin and Luther were unknown in the church for 1500 years)

JB: Is Genesis 50:20 a good example of Calvinism?

WLC: (very excited) NO!!!!!! It's a great example of Molinism!!!! The text says that God didn't move the bad actors to perform sinful actions – that would make God the author of evil. But God knew that if they were in this situation, they would behave in these evil ways, but ultimately it would lead to good results that God wanted. There is a chain of people partially articulating the middle knowledge view prior to Molina.

JW: You shouldn't believe Molinism, because it comes from Jesuits. (WK Note: this is the genetic fallacy)

JW: The Bible has examples where God "hardens hearts", e.g. Pharaoh.

WLC: It's not that the Bible authors had Molinism in mind. It's that this theory is consistent with what the Bible teaches.

JW: Ephesians 1 teaches that God unilaterally determines who the elect are. Calvinism emerges from the text. But in Genesis 50:20, Molinism doesn't emerge from it.

WLC: We're both trying to make sense of the data of Scripture. Scripture doesn't teach the universal divine determinism of every human act, especially evil acts. The Bible says thate God is not evil, and cannot even be tempted with evil, but on the Calvinist view, God is causing the evil actions of his creatures, and then he punishes them for it. If it's evil to cause someone to do evil, it makes God himself evil.

JW: In Isaiah 10, God uses the Assyrians to punish Israel, then he punishes the Assyrians for the haughty attitude of their heart.

WLC: The Molinist view of Ephesians 1 is that part of God's good pleasure is to respect

human freedom, and not to unilaterally divinely determine them to sin. Regarding Isaiah 10, you're asking how God can punish the Assyrians for something he causes them to do? No, God knows that the Assyrians are going to do this moral evil and he uses that for his purposes, and he is free to punish their immoral act, because they did it of their own free will.

JW: But if you need Molinism to understand these texts, then what did the authors intend for people to think before Molinism.

WLC: People understand from Genesis 50:20 that people do evil things, but God gets a good outcome out of it.

JW: As a Calvinist, I do not believe that God respects human freedom.

JW: I don't think that individuals have control of the circumstances in which they are born or where they live that limits God's sovereignty. (WK note: he doesn't understand Molinism or Acts 17:24-27. Individuals control their own decisions. But God controls the circumstances – i.e. – everything else). There is no essence of James White that determines where I am born, my physical characteristics, my siblings, etc. God decrees everything about who I am.

WLC: "That's because you're a determinist, James, and I'm not"

JW: "Yes. Yes. OK."

WLC: There are number of possible worlds where James White could exist. Different country, different education, different language, different family. God decides the circumstances for James White. James White makes the decisions. God doesn't cause James White's moral evil. James White does. The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom must exist prior to the divine decree in order for humans to be responsible for their evil actions.

JW: You're using philosophy. But your view should come from the Bible. (WK note: look at Acts 17:24-27)

WLC: Universal divine determinism isn't taught in the Bible.

JW: Yes, in Ephesians 1.

WLC: The Molinist affirms Ephesians 1.

JW: It doesn't mention respecting free will there, it's teaching universal divine determinism.

WLC: The Bible teaches that God does have knowledge of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, e.g. 2 Cor 2:8. So the question is whether God has this knowledge logically prior the decree (Molinism requires this), or is it logically after. If it is logically after, then it makes God the cause of human moral evil.

JW: The verses raised by Craig can be subsumed under God's natural knowledge and free knowledge.

JW: Some Molinists believe that the only people who are lost in this world are people who cannot freely respond to God's saving initiative in any circumstances (WK note: this is

called trans-world damnation (TD), and I hold this view). Does anyone in the Bible know about this idea? That changes God's expression from universal divine determinism to accepting human free will and human responsibility for sin (which Calvinism denies).

WLC: Yes, there are two different views. The one view takes human free will, and human responsibility for sin, seriously. The other view makes God the cause of human sin, and therefore makes God evil for being the author of evil.

JW: On Molinism, God knew that if he actualized this world, then he knew the evil that would result, but he didn't do it for some purpose, like revealing his own character?

WLC: No, he didn't bring the evil into the world. He actualized a set of circumstances, and a set of free creatures. And he knew that in those circumstances, he knew that the creatures would choose to do evil. His absolute will is for all his creatures to always do the right thing. But he knows that often they will do evil. He permits that to happen, but in the end he achieves the good purposes. E.g. – achieving the redemption of mankind through Jesus through the evil decisions of the rulers at that time.

WLC: I love the Westminster Confession. But without middle knowledge, that Confession is incoherent. Middle knowledge explains how things work, so that the Westminster Confession's affirmations are logically coherent.

JW: What you're saying is that God respects human free will and human responsibility.

WLC: Molinism is extremely fruitful theologically. I have applied to the problem of exclusivity of salvation, to the perseverance of the saints, to the inspiration of Scripture… but the focus of the discussion today is on moral evil. Who is the cause of human evil?

JW: Only universal divine determinism and the denial of human free will and human responsibility are consistent with Scripture.

WLC: Scripture alone is my authority, not church tradition. But Reformed theology is permeated with concepts that are not described in Scripture, but are consistent with Scripture, e.g. – timelessness, spacelessness, simplicity.

JW: I disagree, ALL the concepts in Calvinism emerge directly from the text. Isaiah 40-48 clearly teaches divine necessity, that God exists necessarily, in every possible world. (WK note: Calvinist thought emerges 1500 years after the Bible was written)

JW: Middle knowledge is a Catholic dogma, which is why even the Catholics rejected it.

WLC: (holds up 2 volumes of a 4 volume, 2144 page set of books on Reformed theology) Anyone who thinks that Reformed Dogmatics are simply read out of Scripture "doesn't know the history of Reformed theology". These volumes are permeated with theological constructs, philosophical models, philosophical principles. The necessity of God's existence, timelessness, spacelessness, etc. are all affirmed by Reformed theologians, and were inherited from medieval scholastics (Catholics).

JW: The central claim of middle knowledge, that counterfactuals of creaturely freedom are known by God, are not in the Bible. (WK note: Craig gave an example of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom in the Bible. There are lots of them.)

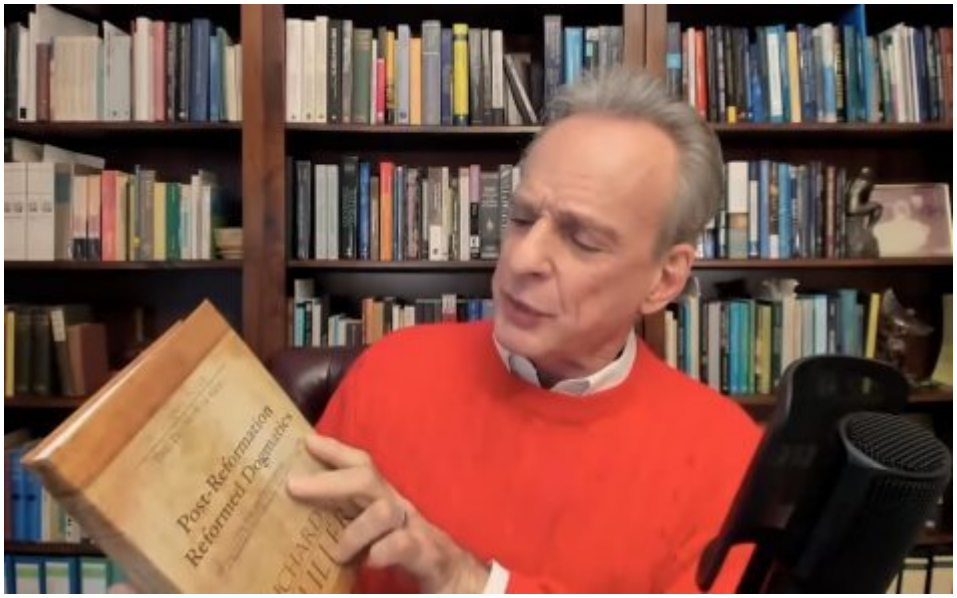

Four volume 2144-page book set on Reformed dogmatics

My thoughts:

I think that it was a good debate. Well worth watching. I don't promise that my summary is 100% accurate. Please leave room for a little snark, and watch the debate yourself. I like to take the spin off of people's words, when I feel that they are trying to weasel out of the conclusions of their own views. It's 2 AM on Monday morning now, and I don't want to proof-read. Please point out errors in the comments.

If I could boil down the mistake that James White makes to one sentence, it would be to say that he comes to the text with a *philosophical* presupposition (determinism), and this causes him to misinterpret the plain meaning of the text as a whole. And this misinterpretation isn't about peripheral teachings of the Bible. His embrace of God as the cause of moral evil means that he denies the goodness of God – a basic Christian doctrine. (This is compounded by his embrace of double-predestination, although that was not the topic of the debate). Christians shouldn't let a philosophy – determinism – override the plain meaning of Scripture. Determinism is *man's philosophy* – it's a Greek philosophy that existed centuries before Christ.

White also was clearly unfamiliar with the philosophy of religion of his own Reformed tradition, and especially with the history of the development of Reformed theology. Craig was able to correct him, by showing him the books on Reformed Dogmatics and explain the historical antecedents of Reformed thought.

James White is not a "hyper-Calvinist". He is a normal Calvinist. Calvinism teaches universal divine determinism. Calvinism teaches that where each individual goes after the judgment is decided unilaterally by God. Calvinism teaches that human moral evil is caused by God. Calvinism teaches that God punishes people for this moral evil. Calvinism teaches *intentional* double-predestination.

I wrote about the problems with Calvinism, citing Calvinist D.A. Carson and William Lane Craig, in a previous post. Determinism denies free will, and therefore undermines all meaning in life. That's not consistent with the Bible's clear teaching that God issues commands to his creatures, because he expects (free will) obedience. That is how we

develop our relationship with God after becoming Christians (sanctification), and those relationships have ultimate significance.

Note: I link to James White's work on this blog. He does a great job of fighting cultural and political enemies. I really appreciate his conservative perspective on issues like abortion, and his sensitivity to the totalitarian impulses of the secular left. His work on KJV-only and and debating Catholics is excellent. I don't always agree with Craig. I recently posted disagreement with Craig on his latest work on the historical Adam and evolution. I have other minor disagreements with him as well, in substance and method. The only theology books in my house are by R. C. Sproul, Wayne Grudem, D.A. Carson, Millard Erickson, John MacArthur, etc. – all Calvinists.

If you missed Craig's debate with Paul Helm, which is mentioned in the debate, I blogged about that previously, as well.

There are Roman Catholics in my family but I'm not one: why not?

April 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I explain why I'm not Roman Catholic. And I also explain how Protestant Christians arrive at their beliefs. We'll start with J. Warner Wallace on Purgatory, then I'll go second.

Purgatory

Here's the first article from Cold Case Christianity, by the Master of the Evidence J. Warner Wallace. He writes about the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, and his experience with studying and then rejecting it.

Here is his introduction:

> The notion of purgatory assumes many of us die with unforgiven sins that need to be purged from our account; some of us are not good enough to go to heaven, but not bad enough to go to hell. Purgatory, therefore, is a temporary, intermediate place (or state of being) where good deeds and works can be performed in order to purge our impurity prior to our final destiny with God. Although millions of Catholics believe purgatory to be a reality, the idea needs to be tested in light of the Scripture. Is purgatory something we, as Bible believing Christians, should accept as true?

He's got a stack of Bible verses to make two points against Purgatory: first, that Jesus' death on the cross is sufficient to atone for *all* our rebellion against God, and we don't need to endure any suffering or punishment to supplement it. And second, the teaching about the afterlife in the Bible says that believers are immediately ushered into the presence of God after they die (without resurrection bodies, yet), while unbelievers are separated away from God.

Here's what he says about the first point:

> **Our Salvation Isn't Based On Our Good Works**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, forgiveness is not based on the good works of the believer. For this reason, deeds or works performed for those in purgatory are both unnecessary and ineffectual:
>
> **Romans 3:21-24, 27-28**
> But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus… Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the

> law.
>
> **Romans 8:1**
> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.
>
> **Our Salvation Is Based On Jesus' Work on the Cross**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, Jesus' work on the cross (His blood) purifies us from allsin. For this reason, there isn't a lingering sin problem requiring the existence of a place like purgatory:
>
> **Titus 2:13-14**
> …we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.
>
> **1John 1:7b**
> …the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.
>
> **1John 1:9b**
> …he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
>
> **1John 2:2**
> He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.
>
> **Hebrews 10:14**
> …because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.
>
> **Our Salvation Has, Therefore, Already Been Guaranteed**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, Jesus has already purified and purged believers of sin based on our faith in Him. For this reason, there is no need for a place like Purgatory where additional purging must be performed…
>
> […]The Biblical doctrine of Salvation clearly eliminates the need for purgatory.

I was never able to find anything in the Bible to support purgatory. It's a very very late doctrine that was unknown to the early church until the late 2nd / early 3rd century, where it is spoken about by a handful of people. But lots of weird doctrines were creeping up on the fringe around that time, so we shouldn't be surprised… the point is that they have no support from the Bible, and not in the community of believers for the first 150 years after the death of Jesus.

The bodily assumption of Mary

Anyway, my turn now. The Roman Catholic church teaches that Mary was "bodily

assumed" into Heaven. Let's see if that is in the Bible or in the early church.

Here's what I found:

1. To be a Roman Catholic, you need to believe in Papal infallibility in matters of dogma.
2. In 1950, the Pope pronounced the assumption of Mary to be infallible dogma.
3. This pronouncement was solicited by a petition featuring over 8 million signatures.
4. There is no historical record of this doctrine in the Bible.
5. No early church father mentions the assumption until 590 AD.
6. Documents dated 377 AD state that no one knows how Mary died.
7. The assumption appears for the first time in an apocryphal gospel dated about 495 AD.

Data

I only cite Roman Catholic sources for my facts.

6. "But if some think us mistaken, let them search the Scriptures. They will not find Mary's death; they will not find whether she died or did not die; they will not find whether she was buried or was not buried … Scripture is absolutely silent [on the end of Mary] … For my own part, I do not dare to speak, but I keep my own thoughts and I practice silence … The fact is, Scripture has outstripped the human mind and left [this matter] uncertain … Did she die, we do not know … Either the holy Virgin died and was buried … Or she was killed … Or she remained alive, since nothing is impossible with God and He can do whatever He desires; for her end no-one knows." (Epiphanius, Panarion, Haer. 78.10-11, 23. Cited by Juniper Carol, O.F.M. ed.,*Mariology*, Vol. II (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1957), pp. 139-40).

7. "The idea of the bodily assumption of Mary is first expressed in certain transitus–narratives of the fifth and sixth centuries. Even though these are apocryphal they bear witness to the faith of the generation in which they were written despite their legendary clothing. The first Church author to speak of the bodily ascension of Mary, in association with an apocryphal transitus B.M.V., is St. Gregory of Tours." (Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*(Rockford: Tan, 1974), pp. 209–210).

It should be noted that the apocryphal gospel in which the doctrine of the assumption of Mary first appeared was condemned as heretical by two Popes in the 5th and 6th centuries. However, I was not able to find a CATHOLIC source for this fact, so I deliberately chose not to use it in my case.

Conclusion

The first thing I want to say is that the Bible is not the only place you look to decide these issues. You also look in church history, and you are looking for a clear chain of custody of the doctrine as far back as it can go. Purgatory and the perpetual virginity of Mary have some track record, but the bodily assumption of Mary is just nowhere – not in the Bible, not in the Early Church fathers. So that's the silver bullet against Roman Catholicism,

since they made it “infallible”.

This post is more directed to non-Christians to sort of show you how we do our homework. I am the first Protestant in my family. We have half the family who is Muslim, and the other half mostly Hindu, with some Catholic. I had to debate all these people growing up, and I wiped the floor with them. It was not even close. I simply settled on the beliefs that allowed me to win every argument, every time. That’s how you do religion. If you have to go against your whole family in order to be right, you do it. It’s not good to be wrong about things just because that’s what your family believes. These things were not pushed hard on me by my parents, I studied them on my own in order to win arguments. After a while of winning, I found myself acting consistently with what I was arguing for. Although that might sound really weird to you, that’s probably the right way to do this. Don’t listen to parents and church, find your own way forward by winning arguments, and believing only what the evidence supports.

Although most people think that if I had kids, I’d bully them into my beliefs, I actually would not. Because that’s not what worked on me. What really works is fighting about evidence, welcoming questions, and allowing differences of opinion. Being free to pursue truth is more important in the long run than coercing your kids to act nicely.

Peter J. Williams debates Bart Ehrman on his book "Misquoting Jesus"

April 14, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have to re-post this debate between Bart Ehrman and Peter J. Williams, because Dr. Williams just followed me on Twitter. I noticed that he had re-tweeted one of the two senators I follow on Twitter, so I re-tweeted him. I like Tom Cotton and Josh Hawley, and he re-tweeted Senator Hawley talking about free speech.

Bart Ehrman posted the debate audio on YouTube:

Details:

> Bart Ehrman is the US author of the bestselling book "Misquoting Jesus" (In the UK "Whose word is it?"). He calls into question the authority of the New Testament as scribal changes over time have changed the documents.
>
> So can we trust the scripture? Bible scholar Peter Williams believes in the reliability of the New Testament and that Bart's prognosis is far too pessimistic.

This post is a re-post from 2011. I have been listening to this lecture by Peter J. Williams on "Misquoting Jesus" this week, and it reminded me to re-post this debate. (I checked to make sure the MP3 link is still good, and it is)

Summary of the Williams-Ehrman debate:

Note: this summary is *snarky*. If you want an accurate view of the debate, then listen to it. My summary is meant to be humorous.

Ehrman:

- I had a mystical experience in childhood and became an evangelical Christian
- I went to Moody Bible Institute, and they told me that the Bible was inerrant
- For a while, I was committed to the view that there are no mistakes in the Bible
- At Princeton, I was taught *and graded* by professors who did not accept inerrancy
- By a strange coincidence, I began to see that the Bible did have errors after all!
- We don't have the original documents written by the original authors, we only have thousands of copies
- if the words of the Bible are not completely inerrant, then none of it is historical
- if all of the words in all the copies of the Bible are not identical, then none of it is historical

Williams:

- I would say the New and Old testaments are the Word of God
- We don't need to have the original Greek writings in order to believe in the authority of the Bible

- I believe in inerrancy, but doesn't mean there are no problems
- the doctrine of inerrancy has always referred to the original Greek copies, not the translations

Moderator:

- what are the main points of Misquoting Jesus?

Ehrman:

- we don't have the originals of any of the books of the New Testament
- we have copies that are much later, sometimes even centuries later!!1!
- the copies we have all differ from one another – they were changed by scribes!!1!
- we have 5000 manuscripts in the original Greek language
- there are hundreds of thousands of differences!!1!
- most of the differences don't matter
- some differences are significant for meaning or doctrine
- errors are propagated because the next scribe inherits the mistake of their source copy
- a large gap between the time of writing and the first extant copy means more errors have crept in

Williams:

- the reason we have so many variants is because the number of manuscripts is large

Angry Jesus or compassionate Jesus in Mark

Ehrman:

- most manuscripts say that Jesus was compassionate when healing a leper, but one says he was angry
- it makes a huge huge huge really really big difference if Jesus is compassionate or angry
- the whole Bible needs to be thrown out because of this one word between different in one manuscript

Williams:

- this variant is important for understanding the passage, but it has no great meaning
- the change is probably just an accident – the two words are very similar visually in Greek
- it's just an accident – it emerged in one manuscript, and it impacted a few more
- the tiny number of manuscripts that have the error are geographically isolated
- I'm pretty sure that WK prefers the angry Jesus anyway – so who cares?

Ehrman:

- no! someone changed it deliberately! it's a conspiracy! you should buy my book! it's a *big deal*!!!!!1!!1!one!!eleventy-one!

The woman caught in adultery in John

Ehrman:

- it is isn't in any of the earliest manuscripts
- this is an apocryphical story that some scribe deliberately inserted into the text
- most people don't even know about this! it's a cover-up! you need to buy my scandalous book!

Williams:

- that's right, it's a late addition by some overzealous scribe
- and it's clearly marked as such in every modern Bible translation
- the only people who don't know about this are people who don't read footnotes in their Bible
- and in any case, this isn't a loss of the original words of the New Testament – it's an addition

Grace of God or apart from God in Hebrews

Ehrman:

- well this is just a one word difference, but it makes a huge huge really really big difference!
- the words are very similar, so it's could be an accident I guess
- but it wasn't! this was a deliberate change! it's a conspiracy! it's a cover-up! scandal!
- buy my book! It's almost as good as Dan Brown!

Moderator:

- hmmmn…. I kind of like "apart from God" – why is this such a big scandal again?

Ehrman:

- you don't care? how can you not care? it has to be inerrant! or the whole thing is false!
- Moody Bible Institute says!

Williams:

- yeah Bart is always saying that every change is deliberate but it's just an accident
- the words are very similar, just a few letters are different, this is clearly an accident

- I have no problem with apart from God, or by the Grace of God
- please move on and stop screaming and running around and knocking things over

Moderator:

- but what if pastors try to use this passage in a sermon?

Williams:

- well, one word doesn't make a big different, the meaning that appears is fine for preaching
- it's only a problem for people who treat the Bible as a magic book with magical incantations
- they get mad because if one word is out of place then the whole thing doesn't work for their spell
- then they try to cast happiness spells but the spells don't work and they experience suffering
- the suffering surprises them since they think that fundamentalism should guarantee them happiness
- then they become apostates and get on TV where they look wide-eyed and talk crazy

Ehrman:

- hey! are you talking about me? a lot of people buy my books! i am a big success!
- it is very important that people don't feel bad about their sinning you know!

Is Misquoting Jesus an attack?

Williams:

- it's rhetorically imbalanced and misleading
- it tries to highlight change and instability and ignore the majority of the text that is stable
- he makes a big deal out of 5 or so verses that are different from the mainstream text
- he says that scribes deliberately changed the scriptures, but he doesn't prove that
- it's just as likely that the differences are just scribal errors made by accident

Ehrman:

- well, maybe the variants aren't a big deal, but what about one angel vs. two angels?
- that's a significant issue! significant enough for me to become an apostate – a *rich* apostate
- if one word is different because of an accident, then the whole Bible cannot be trusted

- it has to be completely inerrant, so a one word difference means the whole thing is unreliable
- we don’t even know if Jesus was even named Jesus, because of one angel vs two angels!!!1!
- buy my book! you don’t have to read it, just put it on your shelf, then you’ll feel better about not having a relationships with God – because who’s to say what God really wants from you? Not the Bible!

Communist China interfered in Canadian elections to help Justin Trudeau

April 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

According to a recent Abacus Data Poll, the Conservative Party of Canada is now leading the Liberal Party 44% to 24%, putting the conservatives in a position to win a supermajority of Canadian ridings. But now news is emerging that foreign nations interfere in Canadian elections, and Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau not only knew about it, but he let it happen.

Here's the story from The Federalist:

> On Monday, Ottawa's lead spy agency, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), confirmed that Communist China interfered in Canada's 2019 and 2021 federal elections. These efforts "focused primarily on supporting those viewed to be either 'pro-PRC' or 'neutral' on issues of interest to the [Chinese] government," a slide shown to Canadian officials reads, according to Reuters.
>
> According to The Toronto Star, the briefing provided to the Foreign Interference Commission further revealed that, during the 2021 contest, the CCP specifically aimed "to deter Canadians, especially those 'of Chinese heritage,' from backing the Conservative party, then-leader Erin O'Toole, and B.C. Conservative candidate Kenny Chiu." Conservative candidates took a hardline approach to China during the 2021 campaign, often highlighting the CCP's brutal treatment of Uyghurs and criticizing Huawei, a Chinese tech giant suspected of facilitating spyware for Beijing.
>
> Chiu ultimately lost his 2021 election bid, while Trudeau's Liberal Party won both the 2019 and 2021 elections.

The language of the articles that interfered with the elections was similar to the language of articles published by Communist China's state-run media:

> "The timing of these efforts to align with Conservative polling improvement; the similarities in language with articles published by PRC state media; and the partnership agreements between these Canada-based outlets and PRC entities; all suggest that these efforts were orchestrated or directed by the PRC," the CSIS assessment reads, according to the Star.

Trudeau is using all of his authority as a part-time drama teacher and former snowboarding instructor to explain why people should believe him, rather than believe Canada's most prestigious intelligence agency:

> Despite CSIS's findings, Trudeau seemingly isn't convinced that China's 2021 efforts were designed to benefit the Liberal Party.
>
> According to The Epoch Times, the prime minister cast doubt on intelligence

> suggesting Beijing was attempting to boost his party's electoral prospects, saying: "While individual officials may well have expressed a preference or another … it would just seem very improbable that the Chinese government itself would have a preference in the election."
>
> As noted above, these remarks contradict the intelligence provided by CSIS, which highlighted the CCP's aim to undermine Conservative Party candidates.

The next Canadian election is scheduled for October 2025, unless the Liberal Party fascists fail a no-confidence vote. So far, the communist New Democrat Party has been backing the fascist Liberal Party every time a no-confidence vote has been held, including supporting the fascist Liberal Party's back-breaking carbon tax.

But there are signs that support may be ending, as more and more NDP voters are turning away from the communist NDP. A recent article from the state-run propaganda outlet CBC states "NDP MPs Charlie Angus, Carol Hughes and Rachel Blaney all announced Thursday that they will not be seeking re-election."

You'll notice from the recent poll I posted above that the communist NDP's numbers are also declining. They know that the writing is on the wall, and a quick election is their best hope for not losing ALL of their voters. The longer that Canadian voters have to live under the poverty-inducing policies of the fascist-communist coalition, the worse the results will be for the secular left.

Bill Maher: Americans should learn from Canada's failure

April 16, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Normally, I do not care about Bill Maher's occasional bouts of sanity. He's a secular leftist clown. He doesn't know how the world works. He chooses policies with his feelings, based on how it makes him look to other people. But this time, I really think that he put some effort into his rant against Canada. And I agree with him that American voters will vote smarter if they look closely at Canada.

This article from the Toronto Sun explains what happened:

> During a monologue last week on *Real Time With Bill Maher*, the late-night personality compared Canada to America and carefully demonstrated how high unemployment, unchecked immigration, skyrocketing debt and lack of productivity are seeing the country falling further and further behind its G7 counterparts.

Unemployment and air pollution:

> Maher then compared the unemployment rate in America (3.8%) and Canada (6.1%), and revealed that his neighbours to the north has more cities with worse air pollution than in the U.S.

Housing shortage:

> "Last year, Canada added 1.3 million people, which is a lot in one year — the equivalent of the U.S. adding 11 million migrants in one year. And now, they're experiencing a housing crisis even worse than ours and we're sleeping in tents. The median price of a home here is $346,000. In Canada converted to U.S. dollars, it's $487,000."

National debt:

> Maher noted that because of mortgage debt, "Canada has the highest debt to GDP ratio of any G7 nation."

Health care:

> "(It) ranks dead last [in health care] among high income countries, and access to primary health care, and the ability to see a doctor in a day or two. And it's not for lack of spending. Of the 30 countries with universal coverage, Canada spends over 13% of its economy on it, which is a lot of money for free health care. Look, I'm not saying Canada still isn't a great country, it is, but those aren't paradise numbers. If Canada was an apartment, the lead feature might be: 'America adjacent.'"

Immigration:

> Jumping to immigration, he cited Sweden opening its borders to “over a million and a half immigrants since 2010” which led to “20%” of its citizens being foreign born, its education system “tanking,” and Europe’s leader in “gangland killings.”
>
> “One result is that the far-right parties are in the government now there for the first time. To which liberals say blaming immigrants for the rising crime rate is racist. Yeah, but is it true? Of course it’s true. It’s not a coincidence the quality of life went down after the Somali gangs started a drug turf war using hand grenades. Calling it racist doesn’t solve the problem.

The Toronto Sun article then helps Maher out with some recent numbers:

> Last month, the Canadian Press reported that people in Ontario and British Columbia increasingly missed payments on mortgages and credit cards in the fourth quarter of 2023, citing stats from Equifax Canada.
>
> In Ontario, the mortgage delinquency rate was up 135.2% compared with a year earlier, while B.C.’s rate rose by 62.2%.

What do you think? Do you think that conservatives argue better when they argue from the demonstrated achievements of different countries?

The Toronto Sun noted:

> On X, Maher’s comments went viral, drawing nearly 42 million views and nearly 5,000 comments with many calling the TV personality’s assessment spot on.

I think it’s a great approach. Why should America try policies that have been known to fail elsewhere? But we can’t count on the ignorant “don’t judge” public school teachers to tell voters what’s happening in other countries. We shall have to tell them ourselves. So, make sure you share this article.

Bank of America accused of discriminating against Christians and conservatives

April 17, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Would a bank close your account just because they don't like your Christian religious beliefs or conservative political beliefs? I try to choose my banks by looking at their political donations. On that score, Bank of America, J. P. Morgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Citigroup and US Bancorp are all bad banks. But is there any evidence that banks discriminate against Christians and conservatives?

Here's an interesting article written by Reagan Reese, over at the Daily Caller:

> One of the left's biggest political targets recently found himself "de-banked" with no warning and little avenue for recourse, the Daily Caller has learned.
>
> John Eastman, once an attorney for former President Donald Trump, was de-banked twice in the span of several months by two prominent financial institutions, Bank of America and USAA, he told the Daily Caller. His accounts were closed as he faced substantial backlash for his work advising Trump around the time of the 2020 election.
>
> Eastman said he had switched most of his banking from Bank of America to USAA, a company that provides financial services exclusively to military veterans as well as their families, due to the former's "wokeness." Both corporations are federally insured, and Bank of America was bailed out with billions of dollars in taxpayer funds during the global financial crisis.
>
> Bank of America alerted Eastman in September of 2023 that it would be closing his accounts, a letter obtained by the Daily Caller shows. Shortly thereafter, USAA notified Eastman in November that his two bank accounts with the company would be closed, a separate letter shows.
>
> "And then two months later, we get a similar letter from USAA saying that they've decided that they're going to close your account and they did like three weeks later," Eastman told the Daily Caller. "And so that was where all of our automatic payments were coming out of, all our automatic deposits. So it was a real pain to shift everything. We had to get a new bank account opened and shift everything over."

Republican leaders are concerned about Americans being de-banked for their political views:

> A number of red state attorneys general — including from Florida, Iowa, Missouri, Indiana and Montana — voiced their opposition to the de-banking trend after the Daily Caller laid out Eastman's situation. Many of the state AGs pointed to politics as a potential reason Eastman's accounts were closed.

And it's not just talk. According to the left-leaning UK Daily Mail (archived), Republican leaders are holding the leftist banks accountable:

> A dozen Republican-led states plan to send a letter to Bank of America demanding an explanation for why it allegedly de-banked Christian and other conservative groups.
>
> The letter obtained first by DailyMail.com, led by Kansas Attorney General Kris Kobach, demands that the financial institution turn over documents related to its account cancellation policies and requested that the bank update its terms of services to not discriminate against clients with certain political or religious beliefs.
>
> The notice comes after it was revealed that Bank of America sent the FBI and U.S. Treasury private consumer financial data to help the agencies investigate crimes related to the January 6 Capitol protest.
>
> 'Unfortunately, Bank of America appears to be conditioning access to its services on customers having the bank's preferred religious or political views,' Kobach writes in the letter to Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan obtained by DailyMail.com.
>
> 'Your discriminatory behavior is a serious threat to free speech and religious freedom, is potentially illegal, and is causing political and regulatory backlash.'
>
> 'Your bank needs to be transparent with and assure us, its shareholders, and others that it will not continue to de-bank customers for their speech or religious exercise.'
>
> […][T]he memo details several instances of apparent discrimination against Christian groups where Bank of America canceled their accounts.

Here are the Republican governors who signed it:

> The letter is co-signed by officials from Alaska, Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, South Carolina, Texas and Utah.

If you are looking for a bank that donates to the Republican Party, you should check out opensecrets.org. I think it's important for Christians and conservatives to choose wisely when they choose what state to live in, what company to work for, and which bank to bank at. It really is important to choose wisely.

Katherine Maher, the new CEO of NPR, is a wealthy, white radical leftist

April 18, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Last week, I blogged about a long-time employee of taxpayer-funded National Public Radio, who lamented his employer's turn from moderately leftist to far-left extremism. He himself was a leftist, but he was getting concerned that NPR had lost any appearance of being a news organization. He expressed hope that the new incoming CEO would be moderate. He was wrong.

Here's an excellent article from City Journal about the new CEO, written by anti-woke activist Chris Rufo:

> Katherine Maher has a golden résumé, with stints and affiliations at UNICEF, the Atlantic Council, the World Economic Forum, the State Department, Stanford University, and the Council on Foreign Relations. She was chief executive officer and executive director of the Wikimedia Foundation. And, as of last month, she is CEO of National Public Radio.
>
> Mere weeks into this new role, Maher has stepped into controversy. Long-time NPR senior editor Uri Berliner published a scathing indictment of the self-professed "public" media service's ideological capture. Rather than address the substance of these criticisms—which will ring true to anyone who has listened to NPR over the past decade—Maher punished Berliner with a five-day unpaid suspension. (Berliner announced his resignation from NPR earlier today.)

And here is what Rufo's article is about:

> I have spent the past few days exploring Maher's prolific history on social media, which she seems to have used as a private diary, narrating her every thought, emotion, meeting, and political opinion in real-time. This archive is a collection of her statements, but at a deeper level, it provides a window into the soul of a uniquely American archetype: the affluent, white, female liberal—many of whom now sit atop our elite institutions.

Her tweets about how feminism and global warming validate her failure to marry and have children are very amusing. It's what you would expect from someone with no earned STEM degrees, and no private sector work experience.

But here is the best part of the article:

> The most troubling of these conclusions is her support for radically narrowing the range of acceptable opinions. In 2020, she argued that the New York Times should not have published Senator Tom Cotton's op-ed, "Send in the Troops," during the George Floyd riots. In 2021, she celebrated the banishment of then-president Donald Trump from social media, writing: "Must be satisfying to

> deplatform fascists. Even more satisfying? Not platforming them in the first place."
>
> As CEO of the Wikimedia Foundation, Maher made censorship a critical part of her policy, under the guise of fighting "disinformation." In a speech to the Atlantic Council, an organization with extensive ties to U.S. intelligence services, she explained that she "took a very active approach to disinformation," coordinated censorship "through conversations with government," and suppressed dissenting opinions related to the pandemic and the 2020 election.
>
> In that same speech, Maher said that, in relation to the fight against disinformation, the "the number one challenge here that we see is, of course, the First Amendment in the United States." These speech protections, Maher continued, make it "a little bit tricky" to suppress "bad information" and "the influence peddlers who have made a real market economy around it."
>
> Maher's general policy at Wikipedia, she tweeted, was to support efforts to "eliminate racist, misogynist, transphobic, and other forms of discriminatory content"—which, under current left-wing definitions, could include almost anything to the right of Joe Biden.

If you are wondering what she did to the NPR whistleblower, she suspended him without pay, and he later resigned, after an uproar from the mob of whiny diversity hires who work at NPR.

Because I work in IT, I am used to working with people who have earned STEM degrees, years of work experience in the private sector, and knowledge of how to solve real-world problems. But occasionally I have a brush with a white female receptionist or administrative assistant or HR generalist, and this is how they talk. Their university experience hasn't prepared them to produce value for customers. They've just memorized a bunch of left-wing slogans and gotten good grades for parroting them. They don't actually know which policies obtain which results. This talk-your-way-through-life strategy doesn't work well for most people as far as earning money in the real world. But if you come from a wealthy family, then you can survive, because you have connections to other wealthy people.

Should taxpayers really be forced to subsidize an organization led by a trust-fund baby, who has grown up into an uneducated, unskilled, radical leftist activist?

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

April 19, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining the outline of the podcast.

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other

examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

Knight and Rose Show #48: Krista Bontrager on Diversity

April 20, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 48 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Krista Bontrager to discuss diversity, equity and inclusion. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode 48:

Episode Summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Krista Bontrager about diversity, equity and inclusion. What is diversity? Are there any benefits to diversity? Are there any disadvantages to diversity? How does the concept of representation apply to diversity? Should Christians try to redeem DEI, or should we just avoid it? What is the future of DEI in companies and schools?

Speaker biographies

Krista holds a B.A. in Communications from Biola University. She has two degrees from the Talbot School of Theology: an M.A. in Theology and M.A. in Bible Exposition. She is currently working on a D. Min in Apologetics at Birmingham Theological Seminary. She is an author, podcaster, and former university professor. She has worked professionally in theology and apologetics for 25 years and transitioned into full time ministry with the Center for Biblical Unity in 2021. Krista is co-author of a new book, entitled “Walking in Unity: Biblical Answers to 10 Questions on Race and Racism”.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Evidence for design in living systems is changing the way scientists work

April 21, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you look over in the right column of the blog, you'll see that I am reading "The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith". It's a collection of short essays intended for laymen to explain all aspects of the design debate. I'm actually listening to the audio book version, and just looking in the book for diagrams. I wanted to talk about a few resources that are similar to what I'm seeing in the book.

First, there's this excellent post from Evolution News, where Dr. Casey Luskin (who recently appeared on the Apologetics 315 podcast) lists out all the areas where intelligent design is fruitful for studying living systems.

Here is his list:

- Protein science
- Physics and cosmology
- Information theory
- Pharmacology
- Evolutionary computation
- Anatomy and physiology
- Bioinformatics
- Molecular machines
- Cell biology
- Systematics
- Paleontology
- Genetics

These are all good, but I'm going to focus on some of them that are interesting to me coming from a software engineering background.

> Information theory: ID leads scientists to understand intelligence as a cause of biological complexity, capable of being scientifically studied, and to understand the types of information it generates.

I looked into this one when naturalists were trying to argue that specified complexity was just the same as Shannon information. Shannon information is just concerned with the complexity, or information carrying capacity, of strings. But specified complexity is a step further, where certain strings have meaning or purpose, because they conform to a pattern. A random set of characters the same length as this blog post is complex (like Shannon information), but it's not specified. What makes my letter sequences specified is that it conforms to the English language, and conveys meaning.

Here's another:

> Evolutionary computation: ID produces theoretical research into the information-generative powers of Darwinian searches, leading to the discovery that the search abilities of Darwinian processes are limited, which has practical implications for the viability of using genetic algorithms to solve problems.

When I was in grad school, there were courses on using "genetic algorithms" to solve problems. But thanks to the work of ID proponents like William Dembski, we now know that these algorithms only work if constraints are put on the search algorithm up front. As such, they don't support undirected evolution at all.

> Bioinformatics: ID has helped scientists develop proper measures of biological information, leading to concepts like complex and specified information or functional sequence complexity. This allows us to better quantify complexity and understand what features are, or are not, within the reach of Darwinian evolution.

Before ID came along, people weren't really interested in calculating the probability of sequencing amino acids into a protein by chance. They just wanted to assume that it happened, because what else could have happened? Sometimes, you make better decisions when you listen to both sides of a debate. Now we have two sides to the debate on origins, and it helps both sides to defend their views.

> Molecular machines: ID encourages scientists to reverse-engineer molecular machines — like the bacterial flagellum — to understand their function like machines, and to understand how the machine-like properties of life allow biological systems to function.

I've blogged before about how human inventors are regularly reverse-engineering natural designs in order to come up with designs for man-made machines.

> Genetics: ID has inspired scientists to investigate the computer-like properties of DNA and the genome in the hopes of better understanding genetics and the origin of biological systems.15 ID has also inspired scientists to seek function for noncoding junk-DNA, allowing us to understand development and cellular biology.

By now, everybody has heard about the predictions by Darwinists about the "uselessness" of junk DNA. That all went out the window with the data from the ENCODE project, that found that the so-called junk DNA was almost all useful. Another Darwinian prediction falsified by the progress of science.

A 40-minute lecture

I saw a nice lecture from the recent Science & Faith conference that was held in Dallas this year. The speaker was Dr. Brian Miller:

> Dr. Miller is Research Coordinator at Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture. He holds a Ph.D. in Physics from Duke University.

> More about him and the articles he has written can be found here: https://www.discovery.org/p/miller/

The video talks about all the areas where evidence for design is changing the way that scientists look at living systems.

The talk was very cutting edge, with a lot of new stuff I had not seen before. It's worth the time to watch it. There were also a couple of prior lectures from the conference. One from Eric Hedin, where he talked about being "canceled" by Darwinists for teaching both sides of origins issues at Ball State University. Another from Stephen C. Meyer talks about the Judeo-Christian origins of modern science. I've only watched the Miller lecture so far, but that's what Saturdays are for! Watching lectures and debates.

How to defend the kalam cosmological argument just like William Lane Craig

April 22, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Today, I decided to go back in time, and re-post something from April 2009. I started this blog in January 2009. It's funny to see what I sounded like when I was just starting out. Dr. Craig has a short video about this argument, and Rose and I did a podcast about it, where we focused on the scientific evidence for a beginning of the universe. This is a simple argument. I wish Christian leaders taught it in church.

I've been watching Bill Craig debates for a long time now, ever since I did my first degree in computer science a dozen years ago. Today I thought we could all learn how to argue Craig's first argument for God, which he used in his debate with Christopher Hitchens.

Let's go over Craig's *kalam* argument in brief.

The *kalam* cosmological argument

The argument goes like this:

1. Whatever begins to exist requires a cause
2. The universe began to exist
3. Therefore, the universe requires a cause (M.P. 1,2)

The most important thing for you to realize is that *nothing* can be sustained in a debate unless it can be phrased as a valid argument according the rules of inference. All of Craig's arguments can be broken down into logical propositions that use the standard laws of logical reasoning in order to force their conclusions *deductively*, so long as the premises are true.

Understanding the logical form of the *kalam* argument

The form of the *kalam* argument is valid because it allows for a *modus ponens* inference. (Here's a primer on logical reasoning)

- if p is true, then q is true
- p is true
- therefore, q is true

That means that so long as premise 1 and 2 are true, the conclusion follows necessarily. This is the same form of argument (deductive) used by Sherlock Holmes in his cases.

Proving the premises

Can the atheist deny that either or both of these premises are true?

1. "Whatever begins to exist requires a cause"
   If the atheist denies this premise, then they are denying a fundamental law of natural science, namely, that matter can neither be created or destroyed. That is

natural law.
2. “The universe began to exist”
   The universe came into being. If the atheist denies this they are denying the state of the art in modern cosmology.

First, quantum mechanics is not going to save the atheist here. In QM, virtual particles come into being *in a vacuum.* The vacuum is sparked *by a scientist.* The particles exist for a period of time *inversely proportional to their mass.* But in the case of the big bang, there is no vacuum – there’s nothing. There is no scientist – there’s nothing. And the universe is far too massive to last 14 billion years as a virtual particle.

Secondly, atheists will say that the big bang is speculative physics that could change at any moment. But the trend is in favor of an absolute beginning out of nothing. We have had a string of solid, recent scientific discoveries that point in a definite direction, as follows:

- Einstein’s theory of general relativity, and the scientific confirmation of its accuracy
- the cosmic microwave background radiation
- red-shifting of light from galaxies moving away from us
- radioactive element abundance predictions
- helium/hydrogen abundance predictions
- star formation and stellar lifecycle theories
- the second law of thermodynamics applied to nuclear fusion inside stars

So, insofar as atheists question these discoveries and the origin of the entire physical universe out of nothing, they are opposing the progress of science.

What came into being at the moment of creation?

You need to understand that the big bang theory states that space, time and matter were all created at the moment of creation.

1. There was no space causally prior to the universe beginning to exist
2. There was no time causally prior to the universe beginning to exist
3. There was no matter causally prior to the universe beginning to exist

All of these things *began to exist* at the first moment.

What can we infer about the cause?

So, space, time, and matter began to exist. What could have caused them to begin to exist?

1. Whatever causes the universe to appear is not inside of space, because there *was no space* causally prior to the creation event. The cause must therefore be non-physical, because physical things exist in space.
2. Whatever causes the universe to appear is not bound by time (temporal). It *never began to exist.* There was no passage of time causally prior to the big bang, so the

cause of the universe did not *come into being.* The cause existed *eternally*.
3. And the cause is not material. All the matter in the universe came into being at the first moment. Whatever caused the universe to begin to exist cannot have been matter, because there was no matter causally prior to the big bang.

So what could the cause be? Craig notes that we are only familiar with *two kinds* of non-material realities:

1. Abstract objects, like numbers, sets and mathematical relations
2. Minds, like your own mind

Now, abstract objects don't cause of any effects in nature. But we are very familiar with the causal capabilities of our own minds – just raise your own arm and see! So, by process of elimination, we are left with a mind as the cause of the universe. As Sherlock Holmes says, "*When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.*"

This cause created the entire physical universe. The cause of this event is therefore *supernatural, b*ecause it brings nature into being and is not inside of nature itself. The cause of the universe violates the law of conservation of matter is therefore performing a miracle.

Responding to alternative naturalistic cosmologies

In this published research paper from the journal *Astrophysics and Space Science*, William Lane Craig responds to the several naturalistic attempts to evade the implications of the *kalam* argument. I will list each one by name and explain the main problem with each. I highly recommend you read the paper and become conversant with the arguments and evidences.

1. The steady-state model: disproved by recent empirical observations of radio galaxy distributions, as well as red-shifting of light from distant galaxies moving away from us at increasing speeds
2. The oscillating model: disproved in 1998 by more empirical measurements of mass density which showed that the universe would expand forever, and never collapse (was named Discovery of the Year)
3. The vacuum fluctuation model: the theory allows for universes to spawn at every point in space and coalesce into one extremely old universe, which contradictions observations of our much younger universe
4. The chaotic inflationary model: does not avoid the need for an absolute beginning in the finite past
5. The quantum gravity model: makes use of imaginary time which cannot be mapped into a physical reality, it's purely theoretical

Why the *kalam* cosmological argument matters

We need to make a decision *today* about how we are going to live. The evidence available

today supports the creation of the entire physical universe from nothing, caused by a supernatural mind with immense power. The progress of science has strengthened this theory against determined opposition from rival naturalistic theories.

Those are the facts, and we must all choose what to do with them.

How to defend the fine-tuning argument just like William Lane Craig

April 23, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Today, I decided to go back in time, and re-post something from April 2009. I started this blog in January 2009. It's funny to see what I sounded like when I was just starting out. Dr. Craig has a short video about this argument, and Rose and I did a podcast about it, where we focused on the scientific evidence for cosmic fine-tuning. This is a simple argument. I wish Christian leaders taught it in church.

First of all, if you're not clear on the fine-tuning argument, click here and read Walter Bradley's exposition of it. Dr. Walter L. Bradley (C.V. here) is the Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University. He was also a professor and department head at Texas A&M before going to Baylor. He had his Ph.D at age 24 from the University of Texas and was a tenured professor at 27.

The first argument presented by Bradley in that post is the same argument that Craig used against Hitchens in their debate. (It's Craig's second argument in the set of five). Bradley's version of the argument has been presented *live*, *in-person* by Bradley at dozens of universities here and abroad, in front of students *and faculty*.

The fine-tuning argument

The argument goes like this:

1. The fine-tuning of the universe to support life is either due to law, chance or design
2. It is not due to law or chance
3. Therefore, the fine-tuning is due to design

What does it meaning to be fine-tuned for life?

Here are the facts on the fine-tuning:

- Life has certain minimal requirements; long-term stable source of energy, a large number of different chemical elements, an element that can serve as a hub for joining together other elements into compounds, etc.
- In order to meet these minimal requirements, the physical constants, (such as the gravitational constant), and the ratios between physical constants, need to be withing a narrow range of values in order to support the minimal requirements for life of any kind.
- Slight changes to any of the physical constants, or to the rations between the constants, will result in a universe inhospitable to life.
- The range of possible ranges over 70 orders of magnitude.
- The constants are *selected* by whoever creates the universe. They are not determined by physical laws. And the extreme probabilities involved required put the fine-tuning beyond the reach of chance.

- Although each individual selection of constants and ratios is as unlikely as any other selection, the vast majority of these possibilities do not support the minimal requirements of life of any kind. (In the same way as any hand of 5 cards that is dealt is as likely as any other, but you are overwhelmingly likely NOT to get a royal flush. In our case, a royal flush is a life-permitting universe).

Examples of finely-tuned constants

Here are a couple of examples of the fine-tuning. Craig only gave one example in the debate and didn't explain how changes to the constant would affect the minimal requirements for life. But Bradley *does* explain it, and he is a professional research scientist, so he is speaking about things he worked in his polymer research lab. (He was the director)

a) The strong force: (the force that binds nucleons (= protons and neutrons) together in nucleus, by means of meson exchange)

- if the strong force constant were 2% stronger, there would be no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no hydrogen containing compounds. This is because the single proton in hydrogen would want to stick to something else so badly that there would be no hydrogen left!
- if the strong force constant were 5% weaker, there would be no stable stars, few (if any) elements besides hydrogen. This is because you would be able to build up the nuclei of the heavier elements, which contain more than 1 proton.
- So, whether you adjust the strong force up or down, you lose stars than can serve as long-term sources of stable energy, or you lose chemical diversity, which is necessary to make beings that can perform the minimal requirements of living beings. (see below)

b) The conversion of beryllium to carbon, and carbon to oxygen

- Life requires carbon in order to serve as the hub for complex molecules, but it also requires oxygen in order to create water.
- Carbon is like the hub wheel in a tinker toy set: you can bind other elements together to more complicated molecules (e.g. – "carbon-based life), but the bonds are not so tight that they can't be broken down again later to make something else.
- The carbon resonance level is determined by two constants: the strong force and electromagnetic force.
- If you mess with these forces even slightly, you either lose the carbon or the oxygen.

Either way, you've got no life of *any conceivable kind.*

Is the fine-tuning real?

Yes, it's real and it is conceded by the top-rank of atheist physicists. Let me give you a citation from the best one of all, Martin Rees. Martin Rees is an atheist and a qualified

astronomer. He wrote a book called “Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape The Universe”, (Basic Books: 2001). In it, he discusses 6 numbers that need to be fine-tuned in order to have a life-permitting universe.

Rees writes here:

> These six numbers constitute a ‘recipe’ for a universe. Moreover, the outcome is sensitive to their values: if any one of them were to be ‘untuned’, there would be no stars and no life. Is this tuning just a brute fact, a coincidence? Or is it the providence of a benign Creator?

There are some atheists who deny the fine-tuning, but these atheists are in firm opposition to the progress of science. The more science has progressed, the more constants, ratios and quantities we have discovered that need to be fine-tuned. Science is going in a theistic direction. Next, let’s see how atheists try to account for the fine-tuning, on atheism.

Atheistic responses to the fine-tuning argument

There are two common responses among atheists to this argument.

The first is to speculate that there are actually an infinite number of other universes that are not fine-tuned, (i.e. – the gambler’s fallacy). All these other universes don’t support life. We just happen to be in the one universe is fine-tuned for life. The problem is that there *is no way of directly observing these other universes and no independent evidence that they exist.*

Here is an excerpt from an article in Discover magazine, (which is hostile to theism and Christianity).

> Short of invoking a benevolent creator, many physicists see only one possible explanation: Our universe may be but one of perhaps infinitely many universes in an inconceivably vast multiverse. Most of those universes are barren, but some, like ours, have conditions suitable for life.
>
> The idea is controversial. Critics say it doesn’t even qualify as a scientific theory because the existence of other universes cannot be proved or disproved. Advocates argue that, like it or not, the multiverse may well be the only viable nonreligious explanation for what is often called the “fine-tuning problem”—the baffling observation that the laws of the universe seem custom-tailored to favor the emergence of life.

The second response by atheists is that the human observers that exist today, 14 billion years after the universe was created out of nothing, actually caused the fine-tuning. This solution would mean that although humans did not exist at the time the of the big bang, they are going to be able to reach back in time at some point in the future and manually fine-tune the universe.

Here is an excerpt from and article in the New Scientist, (which is hostile to theism and Christianity).

> …maybe we should approach cosmic fine-tuning not as a problem but as a clue. Perhaps it is evidence that we somehow endow the universe with certain features by the mere act of observation… observers are creating the universe and its entire history right now. If we in some sense create the universe, it is not surprising that the universe is well suited to us.

So, there are two choices for atheists. Either an infinite number of unobservable universes that are not fine-tuned, or humans go back in time at some future point and fine-tune the beginning of the universe, billions of years in the past.

Why the fine-tuning argument matters

We need to make a decision *today* about how we are going to live. The evidence available *today* supports the fine-tuning of the universe by a supernatural mind with immense power. The progress of science has strengthened this theory against determined opposition from rival naturalistic theories.

Those are the facts, and we must all choose what to do with them.

Further study

Here is a paper by Walter L. Bradley that contains many more examples of the fine-tuning, and explanations for *what happens* when you change the constants, quantities and rations even slightly.

New study: parent's political ideology significantly affects adolescent mental health

April 24, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you like to get into debates with secular leftists in the office, like I do, then you need a lot of STUDIES. Secular leftists are taught that conservatives and Christians have not done any work to form their views, whereas all the smartest people are secular leftists, because they are data-based. So, let's take a look at a new study on political ideology, and see who produces better results?

This research seems to be some sort of collaboration between the moderate Institute for Family Studies, and the far-left Gallup polling company.

Here is the PDF of the publication.

And Fox News has an article about it:

> Parenting styles and political beliefs can play a major role influencing teenagers' mental health, new research from Gallup says.
>
> A June 2023 study surveying 6,643 parents and 1,580 adolescents found that conservative and very conservative parents were the "most likely to adopt the parenting practices associated with adolescent mental health," the research reported in the Institute for Family Studies found.
>
> "Adolescents with very conservative parents are 16 to 17 percentage points more likely to be in good or excellent mental health compared to their peers with very liberal parents," the report said. "Only 55% of adolescents of liberal parents reported good or excellent mental health compared to 77% of those with conservative or very conservative parents."

Why would conservative parents produce such a huge beneficial result for their children? Well, I would guess it's because conservative parents are more firm about having a vision for how their children are raised. They want their kids to do well in school, follow the law, and serve others. All things that will help them in the real free market world of serving customers. But conservative parents also reject "don't judge" compassion and moral relativism. Whereas secular leftist parents take an "anything goes" approach to raising their kids, conservatives are more strict about truth, and moral values. Secular leftist parents hate the idea of punishment. They just want their kids to like them.

More:

> Conservative parents were more likely to adopt an "authoritative parenting style, characterized by both warmth and a high level of discipline," Gallup economist and study author Jonathan Rothwell explained to Fox News Digital.
>
> "Parents who set boundaries, establish routines, convey warmth and affection, and enforce rules effectively report a less contentious relationship with their

> adolescent child than parents who do not do these things, and this relationship is recognized by that child to be stronger and more loving. Each of the two factors related to parenting practices has a similar effect on the relationship as an index of adverse experiences, related to parental drug abuse, death, or abandonment," he described in the report.
>
> Liberal parents, however, scored lowest in the survey, primarily because they were least likely to report successfully disciplining their child.

Homes with conservative parents will typically be homes where there is a "Constitution" of the relationship. And I mean a recognized authority that governs how the relationship will proceed. And that authority compels each adult to deny themselves, and sacrifice their own interests, in order to serve others, and keep the relationship amicable and stable. Secular leftists don't have that, because they are trying to claw happiness out of everyone and everything around them. Secular leftists have no rules, and no reason to sacrifice your own interests for anyone or anything else. It's basically the Wild West. And in the Wild West, no one has an *obligation* to love anyone else when it doesn't *feel good* to them to do the work.

More:

> Teens' mental health outcomes were 8 percentage points lower when parents reported having difficulty disciplining their child.
>
> "By contrast, conservative parents enjoy higher quality relationships with their children, characterized by fewer arguments, more warmth, and a stronger bond, according to both parent and child reporting," the report said.
>
> While 80% of very conservative parents said their child did not get their way in an argument, only 53% of liberal parents could say the same. The most conservative parents were also more likely to report showing affection to their children every day.

I would think that a lot of these secular left parents are really just secular left single moms. Either by premarital sex with the hot bad boys, or by frivolous divorce. Even secular leftist women with men in the home will prevent those men from "judging" and "punishing" the children. Women are just not as good as men (generally speaking) at disciplining children. Secular leftist women might think that they are strong, independent boss babes who don't need no man, but the results show very different outcomes.

Australia’s Prime Minister Anthony Albanese bans memes as “disinformation”

April 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know that several left-wing countries have recently passed or are about to pass legislation that restricts free speech. Scotland, Ireland and Canada come to mind. All of those countries are led by secular-left fascists, so it’s not surprising. However, did you know that the secular left fascist who is leading Australia also wants to ban speech critical of his regime? Let’s take a look.

Consider this story from the radical left extremist UK Guardian, about a recent stabbing that occurred in a church in Australia:

> Facebook’s parent company Meta and X/Twitter have been told to remove violent and distressing videos and imagery of the stabbing of a prominent Orthodox Christian leader in Sydney’s west on Monday evening.
>
> The eSafety commissioner, Julie Inman Grant, told reporters on Tuesday that X and Meta had been issued with notices to remove material within 24 hours that depicted “gratuitous or offensive violence with a high degree of impact or detail”, with the companies facing potential fines if they fail to comply.
>
> The notices relate to the alleged stabbing of Emmanuel at a service at the Assyrian Christ the Good Shepherd church in Wakeley just after 7pm on Monday. The service was being livestreamed and a recording of it has circulated online.

In Australia, the e-Safety commissioner, Julie Inman Grant is known as “eKaren”. According to her biographies online, eKaren has no earned degrees in STEM and no private sector work experience in STEM. She has nevertheless been thrust into a position of authority, leading the government’s online censorship efforts.

Now, you might be asking “I wonder what made eKaren choose this particular act of violence to be censored”. And the answer is obvious. The victim is a Christian, and the aggressor was, of course, a Muslim – a fact which the UK Guardian declined to mention for obvious reasons. The secular left does not want voters to see Christians as victims. And the secular left does not want voters to see unskilled Muslims immigrants as violent. That’s why eKaren was deployed to ban the video so that voters could not see it.

Far-left Reuters (also known as Al-Reuters) reports:

> Australian police on Tuesday said a knife attack on an Assyrian church bishop and some followers in Sydney was a terrorist act motivated by suspected religious extremism, as the country reeled from a second stabbing incident in three days.
>
> At least four people were wounded in the attack, including Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel of the Assyrian Christ The Good Shepherd Church, when a man lunged

> at him with a knife during a service live-streamed on Monday.

The Premier of Australia is an extreme secular leftist. He had nothing specific to say to condemn the attacker, or defend Christians. Why would he? Like most secular leftists, he is in favor of opening the border to criminals – to get more votes from people who want higher taxes and bigger government.

In response to these attempts at censorship, Australians began posting memes mocking the secular left Prime Minister, his airhead chief censor eKaren, and his entire fascist regime. If you've read about other secular left dictators in history, you can guess what happened next.

Reclaim the Net reports:

> Australia's Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese has endorsed social media censorship of satirical memes about him.
>
> Albanese insinuated that social media platforms are duty-bound to suppress the so-called "misinformation" present on their sites.
>
> […]X has initiated a legal challenge against the Australian government following an unprecedented court order mandating global content censorship. This move comes after the Australian Federal Court ordered X to block worldwide access to posts showing a violent stabbing in a Sydney church, despite X already geo-blocking the content within Australia.
>
> Musk has openly criticized the Australian government, accusing it of attempting to impose censorship on a global scale. He argues that such court orders set a dangerous precedent, allowing any country to exert control over the entire internet. This approach threatens the foundational principles of free speech and the open internet, undermining users' rights to access information from around the world.

Here is an example meme:

A lot of people who vote for the secular left believe that their votes won’t harm basic human rights, like free speech. But they are mistaken. Secular leftists are champions of making big promises, failing to deliver on them, and then censoring any criticisms of their failure. Communist regimes killed over 100 million people in the 21st century alone. We need to be careful about not electing uneducated, inexperienced, incompetent people to government.

New study: no evidence that extreme weather events increased since 1950

April 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do you ever get into debates about global warming? I do. And when I do, I find it useful to have all the studies I need available to counter the slogans of the secular left true believers. In this post, we will take a look at a recent study from 2024 published by the Fraser Institute in Canada. They're using data from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Here is the link, from True North, my favorite source for Canadian news. (Bookmark them!)

Excerpt:

> A Fraser Institute study found that although global temperatures have increased "moderately" since 1950, there is no evidence to suggest that extreme weather events are on the rise despite the assertions of climate activists and Canada's government.
>
> The study analyzed data found in the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UN IPCC) and found that in many cases the frequency and severity of extreme weather events decreased or stayed the same rather than escalating.
>
> The author of the study, Kenneth Green, a senior fellow at the Fraser Institute spoke to True North about his findings.
>
> Green has a doctoral degree in Environmental Science and Engineering from UCLA, and has been studying environmental policy since before receiving his doctorate in 1984.
>
> "When you dig into the actual underlying data on what's happening, rather than the claims of politicians, you find that extreme weather events are pretty uncertain as to whether we're seeing extreme weather changing or will see extreme weather changing," said Green.

Put this link away for the next time that you get into a debate on global warming! I think you'll have fun with it.

By the way, if you know any young Christians, remind them of the need to do well in their studies. It sure is nice to find someone who doesn't swallow global warming propaganda, but who has a doctoral degree in Environmental Science and Engineering from UCLA. Make sure your kids or the kids at church aim high, because we can all use this kind of data.

Biden uses taxpayer money to pay $250,000 student loan of a violinist

April 27, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Regular readers of this blog will know that I encourage young people to do STEM degrees or high-paying trades in order to avoid running up student loans. Many Americans don't listen to me – they follow their hearts. They do useless degrees in English, Psychology, Music, etc. and then they can't find work. But that doesn't stop them from stealing the money of people who made better decisions.

Far-left Business Insider reports:

> Joel Lambdin finished graduate school in 1998 — but as a professional musician, he was hardly making enough money to pay off his student loans and other bills.
>
> So Lambdin, now 49, said his only option to make ends meet was to put his student loans in forbearance — in which he was not making payments but interest was still accumulating.

Then Joe Biden used taxpayer money – much of that from children who haven't even started to work – to pay off this violinist's loans:

> That account adjustment led to a letter Lambdin received on January 31, reviewed by BI, from his student-loan servicer Aidvantage. It said: "Congratulations! The Biden-Harris Administration has forgiven your federal student loan(s) listed below with Aidvantage in full."
>
> For Lambdin, that letter meant his $249,255 outstanding student-loan balance was effectively wiped out.
>
> […]Beyond financial goals, Lambdin said the relief was also allowing him the freedom to pursue some of his long-term dreams, including taking a sabbatical to study with his meditation teacher in India.

Yes! This man who made so many wonderful decisions can now decide to stop working and go study meditation in India. And your children get to pay him to do that.

Did an increase in oxygen levels trigger the Cambrian explosion?

April 28, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Cambrian explosion is the name given to the sudden origin of basically all of the major body plans in nature. It happened in a 3-5 million year period about 540 million years ago. It's a problem for naturalists, because of the enormous amount of information needed to make these new (and different) body plans. The best explanation they had was that rising oxygen levels did it. Is that right?

Here's an excellent post by Günter Bechly, writing for Evolution News.

Here's the naturalistic scenario:

> For more than seventy years it was the scientific consensus and undisputed textbook wisdom that the origin of multicellular life in the late Precambrian was triggered by increased oxygen levels (Fike et al. 2006, Sahoo et al. 2012, Lyons et al. 2014, Reinhard et al. 2016, Anonymous 2023, Harrison 2023, Ralls 2023, UCPH 2023). For example, McFadden et al. (2008) identified two pulses of oxidation in the Precambrian and found that "following this second oxidation event, between 550 and 542 million years ago, there was a worldwide increase of Ediacaran organisms, complex macroscopic life forms, an event recently dubbed the Avalon Explosion" (Virginia Tech 2008). Similarily, the study by Pogge von Strandmann et al. (2015) was promoted in a press release as demonstrating that "oxygen provided breath of life that allowed animals to evolve" (Hickey et al. 2015).

This was all a lot of theorizing in order to save naturalism from scientific evidence. But science makes progress, and the smoke gets cleared:

> Now a new study (Ostrander et al. 2023) by group of researchers from Denmark has overturned decades of evolutionary dogma and claims the exact opposite: "oxygen didn't trigger multicellular organisms" (Anonymous 2023, UCPH 2023). What this study found was instead clear evidence of a lower oxygen content correlated with the Avalon Explosion of the Ediacaran biota. The authors summarize their surprising findings as: "Contrary to a classical hypothesis, our interpretations place the Shuram excursion, and any coeval animal evolutionary events, in a predominantly anoxic global ocean." Co-author Christian Bjerrum commented "Specifically, it means that we need to rethink a lot of the things that we believed to be true from our childhood learning. And textbooks need to be revised and rewritten. So, if not extra oxygen, what triggered the era's explosion of life? Perhaps the exact opposite" (Anonymous 2023, UCPH 2023). Some even went further and suggested to "forget everything you thought you knew about how life evolved on Earth" (Ralls 2023) because it "turns out we might be very

> wrong about how life arose on Earth" (Harrison 2023).

Prior to the "increase in oxygen" hypothesis, naturalists used to explain away the Cambrian explosion by saying that we had not studied the fossil record for long enough. "Eventually, we will have a better picture of the fossil record, and that will show that we started with a few simple life forms, and then branched out into more and more complex life forms, over an hundreds of millions of years".

But that's not what they are saying now, because the evidence is in:

> Here is what Professor Derek Briggs, a world-renowned expert on Cambrian fossils, has to say on this issue: "We now know that the sudden appearance of fossils in the Cambrian (541–485 million years ago) is real and not an artefact of an imperfect fossil record" (Briggs 2015). Likewise, Zhang & Shu (2021) admitted that "multiple sources of evidence are strongly suggestive of a real evolutionary event being recorded rather than an artifact of an imperfect fossil record." Cabej (2020) put it even more clearly: "Nevertheless, now, 150 years after The Origin, when an incomparably larger stock of animal fossils has been collected, Darwin's gap remains, the abrupt appearance of Cambrian fossils is a reality, and we are still wondering about the forces and mechanisms that drove it.

How many times does this have to happen, before naturalists admit that they are committing the "atheism-of-the-gaps" fallacy?

Before science, atheists told us that the universe was eternal. Then science progressed, and we now know that the universe – space, time, matter and energy – all came into being out of nothing about 14 billion years ago. What could cause that? Well, the cause of all of nature must be *supernatural.*

Before science, atheists told us that any old universe would support life. If gravity was a little different, then people would just have pointy ears, like you see on Star Trek. But then science progressed, and we now have a long list of dozens of constants and quantities in nature that must be finely-tuned to an incredibly high degree in order for complex life of any kind to exist. Fine-tuning requires an intelligent agent – that's the only explanation that we have experience with.

Before science, atheists told us that the origin of life was easy. Life is just a clump of jello, very boring and simple. No need for a cosmic engineer. But then science progressed, and we discovered biological information, such as DNA, inside the cell. Naturalists tried to say that most (or all) of that information was "junk DNA", but more science happened proving them wrong again.

I could go on and on with example after example. Naturalism is about faith. They start with the desire for personal autonomy. Autonomy from the moral law. They speculate about how nature can be explained without a Creator and Designer. They take refuge in gaps in our scientific understanding. But then science progresses, the gaps close, and everyone knows for certain.

What is the criterion of embarrassment, and what are some examples of it?

April 29, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The criterion of embarrassment is just one of the historical criteria used to select the parts of a piece of ancient literature that are likely to be historical. Other things in the source may have happened, but we can't know them as history. If significant parts of a text are historical, it is possible to accept it as historical until there are specific reasons to say that some part of it is NOT historical.

Here is William Lane Craig's list of criteria for a saying ("S") or event to be historical:

1. Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
2. Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
3. Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
4. Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
5. Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
6. Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.

The criteria is the same for liberal historians and conservative historians, although some historians weight one criteria more than others when trying to evaluate the historicity of different New Testament parts.

What's amazing is that even liberal historians will give you facts that are embarrassing to the authors as "historical".

Anyway, here are 8 examples of parts of the New Testament that exhibit the criterion of embarrassment, thanks to theologian C. Michael Patton.

1. Jesus' Baptism
2. Jesus' Family Did Not Believe
3. John the Baptist's Doubt
4. The Disciples Doubted After the Resurrection
5. Jesus Does not Know the Time of His Coming
6. Women are the First to Witness the Resurrection
7. Jesus Cursed a Fig Tree
8. Death and Resurrection of Christ

I think 6 and 8 are the ones I want you to take away with you when you finish this post.

Here they are:

> Women are the First to Witness the Resurrection
>
> This is one that is often brought up. Craig Keener puts it well enough: “The witness of women at the tomb is very likely historical, precisely because it was so offensive to the larger culture — not the sort of testimony one would invent. Not all testimony was regarded as being of equal merit; the trustworthiness of witnesses was considered essential. Yet most of Jesus’ Jewish contemporaries held much less esteem for the testimony of women than for that of men; this suspicion reflects a broader Mediterranean limited trust of women’s speech and testimony also enshrined in Roman law.” (Keener, The Historical Jesus, 331)

And:

> Death and Resurrection of Christ
>
> This easily escapes our notice since the basic story of Christ is so well known. However, both the death and resurrection of Christ are, from the standpoint of the culture of the day, embarrassing and damaging. Concerning the death of Christ on a cross, Paul sees this problem: “But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles” (1 Cor. 1:23). The word used for “stumbling block” is skandalon. Louw-Nida defines this as “that which causes offense and thus arouses opposition.” Why? Because the Jews would never have thought their Messiah would have been hung on a tree. “Cursed is one who hangs on a tree” (Gal. 3:13; Deut 21:23). The Greeks thought of the resurrection as foolishness as they were dualist, essentially believing that the material world was evil and the spiritual world good. They would have scoffed at the idea that Christ returned to physical form. This is why later Greeks attempted to adapt the Christ story, doing away with the physical resurrection. Marcion is the most famous promoter of this view (see Docitism).

Now, when you are talking about the New Testament to your non-believing friends, you definitely want to draw attention to passages that are embarrassing to the authors. It will help you to be more convincing when you explain the New Testament like a historian.

New study: men experience domestic violence at the same rate as women

April 30, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've noticed that young women are quite frightened of men, because they are taught that men are dangerous. I'm concerned that these beliefs will deter women from choosing men wisely, and marrying them. One way to counter these fears about "domestic violence" is to take a look at the studies, and see who is really doing the violence. Is it always men, or is there a balance?

The study was published in the Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma.

Here's the abstract:

> Recent debates surrounding intimate partner violence (IPV) have focused on its gender symmetry and gender-oriented nature. These debates center on findings from various data sources, like victimization or self-reported surveys and police-based reports. Data by Statistics Canada, from 1999 to 2014, has shown that the prevalence of IPV is similar for male and female victims, except for sexual assaults. However, there has been a paucity of studies on the severity and risk factors of IPV against men by female partners. Thus, this paper examines the severity of and risk factors for physical IPV against heterosexual men in Canada using the General Social Survey (Victimization) data of 2014. This study revealed that there is a symmetry in the experiences of physical violence between male and female victims. This study also revealed that male victims experience more severe violence than female victims. Using binary logistic regression analysis, years of dwelling together, the victim's age, childhood victimization, and marijuana use were found to predict physical IPV against heterosexual men. This paper concludes with suggestions about how these predicting factors can be used to identify male victims and the need for a more inclusive approach toward addressing IPV, which should include male victims.

The key points for us:

- scholars typically ignore violence against men committed by women: "However, there has been a paucity of studies on the severity and risk factors of IPV against men by female partners."
- men and women commit domestic violence at roughly equal rates: "This study revealed that there is a symmetry in the experiences of physical violence between male and female victims."
- Men are the victims of more severe violence than women: "This study also revealed that male victims experience more severe violence than female victims."

This confirms data from a blog post I wrote a long time ago (2011) about this issue.

I found that:

> Data from Home Office statistical bulletins and the British Crime Survey show that men made up about 40% of domestic violence victims each year between 2004-05 and 2008-09, the last year for which figures are available. In 2006-07 men made up 43.4% of all those who had suffered partner abuse in the previous year, which rose to 45.5% in 2007-08 but fell to 37.7% in 2008-09.

That's the UK.

And:

> An estimated 7% of women and 6% of men in a current or previous spousal relationship encountered spousal violence during the five years up to and including 2004, according to a comprehensive new report on family violence.

That's Canada.

It's interesting to note that the police and the courts do not acknowledge that women commit domestic violence. Whenever there is a report of domestic violence, the man is ALWAYS assumed to be the attacker, and ALWAYS arrested and removed from his home. That is the way that domestic violence works, according to the famous "Duluth model". The Duluth model actually discourages men from getting into relationships that lead to marriage. Men don't want to be attacked by women, and then treated as the aggressors by police.

Another factor also deters men from relationships and marriage: courts that are biased against men. When there is domestic violence, women are treated far more leniently than men. I blogged about a study about this recently, and found:

> The estimated gender disparities are strikingly large, conditional on observables. Most notably, treatment as male is associated with a 63% average increase in sentence length, with substantial unexplained gaps throughout the sentence distribution.

I see stories all the time where women are violent, and get no jail time. Here is one story from January 2024 and here is another from March 2024.

Men do look at these studies, and they decide on their life goals accordingly. Don't blame men for aligning their goals and decisions with the way that the world really is. If women want men to engage the way that men used to, they should stop being so defensive and fix the problems that are deterring men from relationships.

New Tennessee law requires public schools to show development of unborn babies

May 1, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Which state is the best state in the union? For me, it comes down to Florida and Tennessee. Florida has a great legislature, and the best governor in the USA. Tennessee has a great legislature, and an above average governor. If you're a taxpayer in one of these states, you've chosen wisely. You're getting good value for your taxes. Let's take a look at the latest win from the great state of Tennessee.

Life Site News reports: (H/T Sandra)

> On Tuesday, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee signed the 'Baby Olivia Act' into law, requiring public schools to show school children a "high-quality, computer-generated animation or high-definition ultrasound" of unborn babies developing in the womb.
>
> The law cites Live Action's computer-animated "Baby Olivia" video depicting fertilization and fetal development from conception as an example of an animation that would meet the law's requirements, which include the depiction of "the development of the brain, heart, and other vital organs in early fetal development."
>
> […]Live Action has verified that the video accurately depicts fetal development, citing the review and certification of "leading OBGYNs and medical professionals" including Dr. David Bolender, who has a PhD in Cell Biology, Neurobiology & Anatomy, and Michelle Cretella, MD, Executive Director of the American College of Pediatricians. The information in the video was derived from the Endowment for Human Development, a bioethics nonprofit.

There are 1 million students in Tennessee public schools, and now, they'll be making decisions about sex based on evidence.

The bill's sponsor is Gino Bulso, a Republican who represents Brentwood, a wealthy and prestigious area of Tennessee.

He said:

> "It is a scientific fact that human life begins at conception," said Republican state Rep. Gino Bulso, the bill's lead sponsor, in March. "At fertilization, you've got all 46 chromosomes, you have the entire genetic makeup of the child, and from that point on, it's simply a matter of growth and development. So if you've got something that's growing from the moment of conception on, I have no idea how anybody could say that you did not have life. You obviously, you've got life, because something is growing."

Other states have passed or are considering similar legislation:

> LifeSiteNews has previously reported that similar legislation is also being advanced in Iowa and West Virginia; Live Action notes it has also been introduced in Kentucky, Missouri, and Virginia, and enacted in North Dakota.

Is the video accurate? Well, we have first class scientists who have collected the relevant information about this question for us, like Dr. Maureen Condic. Dr. Condic an Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Adjunct Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Utah School of Medicine, and recently served on the National Science Board. She earned her Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley, and has published papers in peer-reviewed journals.

One of her publications (PDF) explains what science tells us about the unborn. The title is "When Does Human Life Begin? The Scientific Evidence and Terminology Revisited". A good paper to have available, especially if your opponent has nothing but purple hair, tattoos and nose piercings. But if you want something easy, you can just use quotations from a variety of embryology textbooks (PDF).

Like this one:

> "Human development begins at fertilization, when a sperm fuses with an oocyte to form a single cell, the zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell (capable of giving rise to any cell type) marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual."

Source: Keith L. Moore, The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology, 10th edition. Philadelphia, PA: Saunders, 2016. p. 11

If you don't live in a state where public schools teach these facts, then maybe it's time to think about moving? Why pay taxes in a state that doesn't take science seriously.

California raised the minimum wage to $16, then $20: did it help the poor?

May 2, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I remember a while back having a conversation with a Christian philosopher who assured me that raising the minimum wage would be a great policy, and put more money in the hands of the "working poor". But when you study economics, one of the views that has the highest level of acceptance is that raising the minimum wage harms the poorest people, and especially young minorities.

Let's take a look at what happened in one state that raised the minimum wage a lot.

This is from September 2023, from the far-left UK Guardian. You cannot go any farther left than the UK Guardian.

Excerpt:

> In the face of recent intense pressures on fast-food workers, employees in the sector in California are about to get a boost with the creation of a body that will set wages and other standards for the industry.
>
> The move is a hard-fought win for the labor movement in the state…
>
> […]Fast-food workers in California have held over 450 strikes since 2020, according to the labor group Fight for $15.
>
> […]The bill creating the body will also raise the minimum wage for fast-food workers in California to $20 an hour on 1 April 2024, with the council able to set annual wage increases beginning in 2025.

It's a "win"! The fast-food workers are going to get a "boost"! Their wages are going to go up to $20 an hour! That's what the secular left thinks will happen. And how could it NOT happen? After all, it makes the secular left feel so good. They feel so generous, handing out money that isn't theirs. How could it not work, when it shows everyone how morally superior the secular leftists are? It HAS to work. It feels good, so it MUST produce good results.

So what happened next? The first thing that happened is that fast-food restaurants raised prices for consumers, because they had to pay for the generosity of the secular leftists or go out of business.

New York Post reports:

> Menu prices at fast food chains across California have increased, as a new law went into effect requiring them to pay a $20-an-hour minimum wage to workers from Monday.
>
> […]The biggest leap was at a Burger King, where a Texas Double Whopper meal cost $15.09 on March 29 but surged to $16.89 on April 1, a whopping increase of

> $1.80 (nearly 12%) for the same meal.
>
> The Big Fish meal also jumped from $7.49 on the menu before April 1 to $11.49 after — an increase of $4 (53%).
>
> Most other items increased anywhere from 25 cents to a dollar.

Who buys fast food? Fast food is cheap food. The people who are hit with these higher prices are precisely the poor people that the secular left promised to "boost" with a big "win".

What next? Well, these business owners are closing their restaurants because they cannot afford to pay their employees – even with higher prices. Why not? Because when you raise the prices of items without increasing the value, people find alternatives that are cheaper and better. And when sales go down, businesses close.

Here's another article from New York Post:

> Subway shrunk its sandwich chain in the US by 443 stores last year, a surprise downsizing that experts said could continue as the chain's California shops face an increased minimum wage.
>
> […]The threat of further closures hangs over 2024, according to John Gordon, a restaurant analyst at Pacific Management Consultant Group — and a major reason is the increased labor costs in California, he said.
>
> There were 2,719 Subways in California at the beginning of 2017. That number had plunged to 1,934 as of Dec. 31 — although Subway still operates the most locations in the state behind Starbucks. On April 1, the state's minimum wage rose to $20 an hour from $16 an hour.

California has the highest unemployment rate in the continental United States. The minimum wage advocates don't understand that mandating a $20 minimum wage doesn't mean that workers will collect that wage. When they're fired or laid off, they collect the REAL minimum wage – which is ZERO. The businesses just close, or they stay open and replace low-wage workers with machines.

The problem with California is that almost no one there understands basic economics. Nobody is reading economists like Thomas Sowell in California. Not the leaders of the state. Not the people who vote for those leaders.

Be careful what state you live in.

(Image credit: The Fraser Institute)

California man chooses to make a baby with a progressive woman, disaster ensues

May 3, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, there was a time when men could be less picky with women, and everything would be fine. The woman would not turn crazy, and attack the man. The government would not step in and get involved. But today, men need to accept that times have changed. And men have to be more careful about who they marry. And the government and the courts are much more likely to step in an ruin the man's life.

Here's a story Rose sent me from Daily Wire.

Excerpt:

> A San Francisco dad is fighting a nightmarish custody battle for his toddler son, who he says is being raised "non-binary" by his mother, who claims to be genderless.
>
> Harrison Tinsley, 31, is seeking full custody of his son Sawyer, 3, who currently spends half of his time with Tinsley's ex-girlfriend, the boy's mother. Sawyer's mother, 30, uses they/them pronouns for the boy and puts him in dresses and makeup, photos provided by Tinsley appear to show. Sawyer also told his dad that his mother put him in princess shoes on a trip to Disneyland, a video of the conversation shows. Sawyer's mother may have thought about raising her son "non-binary" before he was even born. In what appears to be a Facebook post during her pregnancy, she refers to Sawyer as "my sweet baby boy or girl or neither if that's what you feel."
>
> Sawyer himself rebels against his mom and insists he is a boy, his dad says.
>
> […]Gender confusion is not Tinsley's only concern for his son — he is also concerned for the child's immediate safety.
>
> Back in 2021, Sawyer's mother was arrested and booked in jail for felony child endangerment when then-1-year-old Sawyer fell off a bed during an altercation between the mother and her roommate, police body cam footage viewed by The Daily Wire shows.
>
> The San Francisco police gave custody of Sawyer to the mother's two dads for the night and put her on a psychiatric hold at the hospital. She was ultimately not convicted of a crime.

This sounds terrible, but what can single men learn from this? Well, we recently had a story where an Army vet was charged and convicted of murder for defending himself from an Antifa terrorist who was armed with an AK-47. Why? Because this happened in Austin, TX, which is incredibly liberal. So, step one would probably be to be careful where you live. Harrison lives in California.

Second, he shouldn't be making babies with women he's not married to. The whole point of marriage is to make sure that there has been some communication and vetting before you get into the bedroom and make babies. Marriage protects babies from parents who are only interested in fun. Babies aren't fun. That's why we used to make people commit before having them.

This, look at this woman's background. I always ask women "are your parents still married?" when taking them out on dates. It's a very important question.

Now watch this:

> The mother herself now identifies as "non-binary," although she did not when she was dating Tinsley, court documents show.

Fourth, she runs an ultra-progressive non-profit:

> LGBT issues have been a major theme in her life — she was adopted and raised by two older gay men in the Bay Area, where she still lives and runs an ultra-progressive non-profit.

What a woman does for a living is a really important clue to their personality. Don't get involved with ultra-progressive women. Recent studies show that white progressive women have extremely high rates of mental illness and drug use.

Speaking of mental illness, here's number five:

> During the psychiatric hold at the hospital, Sawyer's mother told a psychiatrist that she has borderline personality disorder, a condition that can involve impulsive and risky behavior, the psychiatrist later testified in San Francisco family court.
>
> Child Protective Services investigated the police incident and concluded that Sawyer's mother was not a safety threat to her son. Her mental health was a "complicating factor, but not a safety issue," reads the CPS report, provided by Tinsley.
>
> Sawyer's mother was on five different medications for PTSD, mood stabilization, ADHD, and anxiety at the time of the CPS investigation, the CPS report said.
>
> Sawyer's mom can be heard on the police body cam footage mentioning that she drank alcohol earlier the same day.

You can't count on government and courts to do the right thing for children. They don't see women as guilty, they don't punish them as long as they punish men, and they don't think that male leadership is good for children. ("Smash the patriarchy") This is why you don't make babies with progressive women. They will do terrible things to your children (abortion, transing, let live-in boyfriends molest them, etc.) and no one will listen to you. I blogged about a case from British Columbia, Canada, and then another case from California.

Look:

> Sawyer's pediatrician, Dr. Danielle Alkov, works at a youth gender clinic that offers hormone therapy and so-called gender-affirming surgery referrals. She testified as an expert witness in court and said she has worked with children as young as 12. She also mentioned a nearby clinic that works with children as young as 3, Sawyer's current age.
>
> The court ordered that Alkov continue to be Sawyer's primary care physician.

This part reminds me of the case from California that I mentioned, where the female judge refused to let the father present scientific evidence about the harm of transing his child:

> Tinsley's lawyer said he had planned to present scientific materials demonstrating the harm of treating Sawyer as if he had no gender, but they ran out of time in court.
>
> During that trial, Sawyer's mother said in court that she has had suicidal ideations multiple times in her life.

Also, false accusations are normally taken seriously in blue cities and blue states:

> Meanwhile, she has defamed Tinsley repeatedly, he said. Sawyer's mother has called the father of her child a rapist and even claimed Sawyer is the product of rape and that Tinsley has raped other people as well, a friend told police. She began making these allegations when Tinsley started fighting for custody, he said.

This is not the way that men should be spending their life savings:

> Tinsley said he has spent all the money he ever saved on legal bills. His mother even contributed additional money, but funds are running low, he said. He recently started a fundraiser in hopes he can afford to continue fighting for custody of his son.
>
> "I will do anything to keep my son safe and happy with who he is. I hope to inspire other parents with similar situations to be brave and speak up," Tinsley told The Daily Wire.
>
> In the meantime, Tinsley says he takes off work on the days he takes care of Sawyer, reading to him, taking him to the park, and spending as much time as possible with his young son.

My advice to men is to only have children with women who are staunch conservatives who hate feminism, CPS, public schools, divorce courts, socialism, etc. Otherwise, they are going to turn on you and hurt your children.

Knight and Rose Show #49: Frank Turek: Same-Sex Marriage & Transgenderism

May 4, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 49 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Dr. Frank Turek about the revised and updated edition of "Correct, Not Politically Correct". If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Christian apologist Frank Turek about the updated and expanded edition of his book "Correct, Not Politically Correct: About Same-Sex Marriage and Transgenderism". Why should the government favor natural marriage? How should we respond to arguments for same-sex marriage? How has same-sex marriage change society?

Outline and transcript

Downloadable PDF of the show outline. (Hosted by Mega) This is the outline that we made for this episode. It contains extra points that may not have been addressed in the actual show.

Here is a transcript of the show (with timestamps) provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 49:

Speaker biographies

Dr. Frank Turek is the author or coauthor of five books, including I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist and Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to make their Case. As the President of CrossExamined.org, Frank presents evidence for Christianity at churches, high schools, and secular college campuses. He has also debated several prominent atheists including Christopher Hitchens and Michael Shermer, Founding Publisher of Skeptic Magazine. Frank hosts an hour-long TV program each week called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist which is broadcast Wednesday nights on DirecTV Channel 378 (NRBTV). His radio program and podcast called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with Frank Turek airs on 182 stations every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. eastern and is available continuously on the free CrossExamined App.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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How to explain the gospel in less than 1000 words

May 5, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend sent me a draft e-mail, that he wrote to a family member, who has rejected historic Christianity for progressive Christianity. He was asked to give the basics of salvation, and his attempt to explain the gospel to her is below. My advice included taking out the Christianese terms. Do you think he did a good job? I think his emphasis on what is not the gospel (what needs to be rejected) makes this a first-class explanation of the gospel.

So, you've asked the 10,000 talent question (alluding to Matthew 18:23-35). You are basically asking me what I think the Gospel is. I'll try to answer that in a minimalistic way, using my own characterization of it rather than just making doctrinal statements.

One must accept that there is a God, who is a higher authority than themselves. How much one must first believe about that God is debatable, but candidate beliefs would be that He is personal (having a mind like, but greater than, ours), powerful, and the creator of this cosmos and everything in it — He owns it all. Our natural intuition is to see beauty, order, complexity, and "design" in nature. There is a difference in belief vs unbelief in that some think it is just the appearance of design and some acknowledge their intuition that it actually is designed.

One must acknowledge their moral intuitions, and recognize that there are actually right and wrong things in this world. It's not just whatever you want to do, or whatever society decides in a given time or culture.

Given that morality is then understood to be a transcendent thing (universal and independent of time and culture), the connection is made to God as the author of this moral law.

One must then recognize that he/she regularly fails to live up to this law, even according to just their meager understanding of it, and even by the standards of morality that they make up for other people.

One must not try to suppress this, or therapize it away. One must recognize there is a problem and real moral culpability. One must recognize that they feel guilty and have self-esteem issues because they actually do have guilt and issues.

One must make the connection between guilt and their standing before God. Being good sometimes and in some ways does not erase the bad you do, past, present, or future. One must be willing to bend the knee to God's will regarding morality.

One must also come to see the moral failure (sin) in their lives as a bad thing that they'd like to be rid of, rather than excusing it as the fault of others, or revelling in it as part of the pleasure of life, or shrugging it off as just "who I am."

One must appeal to God in these matters for both forgiveness and help in living as they

should.

Given that God has provided a champion for the problem that humanity faces (the backstory of which not all will fully know), one whose heart is truly yielded to all these things will naturally and eagerly receive Word of this as Good News. God has solved the seemingly irreconcilable demands of both justice and forgiveness in that champion.

Those with ears to hear will receive this solution — Jesus — and believe what He has done in life and on the cross for their sake — the resurrection being both confirmation of His divine authority and also the sign of the defeat of death which awaits us all, and is the only barrier between us and facing this God whom we fail at every turn. They will believe on (or upon) Jesus as Lord and their means of salvation, surrendering dependence upon their own ideas of self-righteousness and earning the favor of God.

The outward expression that we have understood and accepted these things is that we have made Jesus Lord and committed ourselves to following Him, conform our character to His, resist our sinful inclinations, and are interested in learning all about Who God is and what has been done for us in Christ.

This commitment to the Lordship of Christ naturally leads to the acceptance of subsequent beliefs. If Jesus is indeed Lord, then He holds all authority, and what He said and taught to His followers is our guide — the New Testament. And if this is the divine story, as intended by God for men, then we have reason to believe that it is comprehensible to us, and He will insure (in spite of the fallibility of men and demonic plots) that its essential message will not be lost or corrupted until all things are completed. Given that Jesus affirmed every categorical section of the Old Testament, and claimed to be its promised Messiah, then that, too, is a source of truth and understanding.

Those doctrines that are sometimes characterized as “essential” for salvation, are merely the highlights of this redemption narrative, which are those things being clear and consistent, and which indicate that someone has yielded themselves to the authority of Christ and the scriptures, and understands these things. It is not that believing them is what saves, but they are what the saved naturally come to believe. Confessing them is the tangible, verbal act of affirming the Gospel, but is not necessarily identical to a life committed to putting it into practice, which is saving faith.

New study: gender-affirming surgery associated with suicide attempts

May 6, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My understanding of how the secular left pushing transitioning kids onto parents is that the teacher, the guidance counselor, the health care workers, etc. tell the parents "would you rather have a dead girl than a live boy?" This approach is in keeping with the compassionate "don't judge" worldview, which emphasizes emotions over moral standards and truth. But does it work?

Here is the latest study that I found on Pubmed, entitled "Risk of Suicide and Self-Harm Following Gender-Affirmation Surgery". (archived)

The Abstract says:

> **Introduction**
>
> With the growing acceptance of transgender individuals, the number of gender affirmation surgeries has increased. Transgender individuals face elevated depression rates, leading to an increase in suicide ideation and attempts. This study evaluates the risk of suicide or self-harm associated with gender affirmation procedures.
>
> **Methods**
>
> This retrospective study utilized de-identified patient data from the TriNetX (TriNetX, LLC, Cambridge, MA) database, involving 56 United States healthcare organizations and over 90 million patients. The study involved four cohorts: cohort A, adults aged 18-60 who had gender-affirming surgery and an emergency visit (N = 1,501); cohort B, control group of adults with emergency visits but no gender-affirming surgery (N = 15,608,363); and cohort C, control group of adults with emergency visits, tubal ligation or vasectomy, but no gender-affirming surgery (N = 142,093). Propensity matching was applied to cohorts A and C. Data from February 4, 2003, to February 4, 2023, were analyzed to examine suicide attempts, death, self-harm, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) within five years of the index event. A secondary analysis involving a control group with pharyngitis, referred to as cohort D, was conducted to validate the results from cohort C.
>
> **Results**
>
> Individuals who underwent gender-affirming surgery had a 12.12-fold higher suicide attempt risk than those who did not (3.47% vs. 0.29%, RR 95% CI 9.20-15.96, $p < 0.0001$). Compared to the tubal ligation/vasectomy controls, the risk was 5.03-fold higher before propensity matching and remained significant at 4.71-fold after matching (3.50% vs. 0.74%, RR 95% CI 2.46-9.024, $p < 0.0001$) for the gender affirmation patients with similar results with the pharyngitis

> controls.
>
> **Conclusion**
>
> Gender-affirming surgery is significantly associated with elevated suicide attempt risks, underlining the necessity for comprehensive post-procedure psychiatric support.

This reminds me of how doctors in gender-bender clinics see their work. Are they helping children? Or are they virtue-signaling to parents about how much more moral they are than parents?

Here is a story from Daily Wire about that:

> "It's a lot of money," VUMC Clinic for Transgender Health's Dr. Shayne Sebold Taylor said at one Medicine Grand Rounds lecture, video reveals. "These surgeries make a lot of money."
>
> Taylor noted that a "chest reconstruction" can bring in $40,000 per patient, and someone "just on routine hormone treatment, who I'm only seeing a few times a year, can bring in several thousand dollars … and actually makes money for the hospital."
>
> Citing the Philadelphia Center for Transgender Surgery, Taylor said vaginoplasty surgeries can generate $20,000, gushing that it "has to be an underestimate," since hospital stay, anesthesia, post-op visits, and other add-ons are not included in the total.
>
> "And the female-to-male bottom surgeries, these are huge money makers," the doctor continued, adding that such surgeries could bring in "up to $100,000" for the hospital.
>
> Some clinics are "entirely" "supported" financially by such phalloplasty surgeries, Taylor boasted.
>
> "These surgeries are labor intensive, there are a lot of follow-ups, they require a lot of our time, and they make money," she emphasized. "They make money for the hospital."

The interesting thing about these stories is how often it's white progressive women doing the virtue-signaling, and collecting the money for their new cars, traveling and cosmetic surgeries.

I recently spoke to my doctor about my concerns that medicine was becoming too politicized, and that their motivations seemed to be to follow the priorities of politicians and special interest groups. He actually lost his temper, and insisted that doctors are guided by "evidence" in every respect, and that people who oppose doctors are guided by "social media". He was quite upset.

That might be the case for him, but I don't think it's unreasonable for patients to ask their doctors what's guiding their decisions.

Ron DeSantis signs legislation against teacher indoctrination and ESG

May 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm keeping a close eye on Florida and Tennessee, to see who is winning the race to be the best state. Last time, we saw that Tennessee was scoring points, by passing a law forcing public schools to show children videos showing the development of unborn children. But now Florida has scored two points, and both of those in the last week. Let's take a look.

Here's the first win from last Thursday, reported by Florida's Voice:

> Gov. Ron DeSantis signed legislation on Thursday prohibiting ideology-based requirements for teacher certifications in the state.
>
> The bill, HB 1291, prevents teacher certification programs from "distorting historical events" or embracing politically ideological positions on race, sex and gender.
>
> Specifically, the programs will not be allowed to claim that things like systemic racism, sexism, oppression or privilege are inherent in systems of power.
>
> DeSantis explained during a press conference that even if the state bans critical race theory or other ideological curriculum, teachers are still learning to teach students these concepts during their educator preparation training.
>
> "This bill prohibits the indoctrination in teacher preparation," DeSantis said. "There's not gonna be DEI, there's not gonna be any of the bogus history, it's just gonna be standard teacher preparation without having an ideological agenda."
>
> "Parents want to send their kids to school knowing they get an education," he continued. "I don't think they're interested in an indoctrination."
>
> "To say you're going to take one viewpoint, one perceptive, and try to impose that as the standard for curriculum, that doesn't work in Florida and we don't do it," he added.

That's an excellent law. Many teachers seem to think that their job is to teach children their spiritual views and their moral views. But that's not what they're paid to do. Their job is to teach facts, and prepare children to find jobs in the competitive private sector of the economy.

By the way, don't forget they also have mandatory teaching about the actual historical record of communism. It's important for people to have a worldview based on evidence, not ideology.

But Florida's not done scoring points. There's more.

Here's another article from last Thursday, also reported in Florida's Voice:

> ov. Ron DeSantis signed legislation on Thursday protecting businesses from financial institutions that promote environmental, social and corporate governance policies, also known as ESG.
>
> The legislation, HB 989, expands consumer protections and amends certain roles and responsibilities of the state's chief financial officer position, currently held by Jimmy Patronis.
>
> "This will enhance Florida's consumers against ESG activism in our financial system and it protects them against a social credit system or discrimination based on their viewpoints," DeSantis said during a press conference.
>
> "There's now going to be a more robust process for people who have been in this situation," he said. "So if you own a firearm store, federal firearm license, following the laws everyday, if they just cut you off because they don't like that business, you have recourse here in this new piece of legislation."

I know that lots of red states are passing legislation that's good for conservatives, but it just seems like Florida is passing as much as every other state, except for Tennessee.

Related posts on DeSantis' achievements

- Ron DeSantis signs legislation banning squatters on private property
- Ron DeSantis bars minors under 14 from creating social media accounts
- DeSantis' Parental Rights in Education bill survives legal challenge
- DeSantis beats Disney's lawsuit, while Trump loses defamation lawsuit
- DeSantis wins again: Florida bans DEI programs at public colleges
- Promise to purge the FBI, and all other government agencies who discriminate against conservatives
- All he does is win: DeSantis cuts health care costs by importing Canadian drugs
- The DeSantis plan: pay teachers well, and put teacher unions out of business
- fires district attorneys who were elected with help from George Soros
- Mamas for DeSantis: Casey DeSantis champions parent's rights at the national level
- high tourism and low unemployment
- six-week abortion ban
- no sex-reassignment surgeries on kids
- no pronouns required in Florida schools
- no kids at drag queen shows
- pre-game prayer is allowed
- universal school choice
- making collection of union dues optional for teachers
- flying illegal immigrants to Massachusetts
- elect conservatives to school boards
- teach students about the historical record of communism
- ban grooming of young children
- protect wildlife

- banning biological males from women’s sports
- punishing Big Tech social media companies for censoring conservatives

Bible study: what difference does the resurrection of Jesus make?

May 8, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article from Bible.org, written by famous New Testament manuscript expert Dan Wallace.

What does the Old Testament say about the doctrine of the resurrection in Judaism?

He says:

> The resurrection of the dead was not *plainly* revealed in the OT until very late in salvation history. It was not until the Jews were taken in captivity, in the sixth century BC, that this was clearly articulated. Daniel 12:1-2 is the principal text: it speaks of the resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous:
>
> At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (RSV)
>
> Why was it not *clearly* revealed till then? It was not revealed until there was a *felt* need for it. When the Jews had no present (because of the captivity) they had to look to the future. The revelation of the resurrection came at precisely the time when the people of God needed *hope* for the future.
>
> What is significant about this is how masterful are God's insights into human nature. In the NT era, one religious group in Palestine did not embrace the resurrection as a true doctrine: the Sadducees (cf. Mark 12:18)–that is why they were "sad, you see!" The Sadducees were in charge of the temple. They derived their income from the sacrifices. In a sense, they were the precursors to modern TV evangelists. They had it good! They were the rich aristocracy that ran the place.
>
> **Those who have it good in this life don't often long for the next. The Sadducees illustrate this. The resurrection is a truth especially precious to those who are poor and those who are hopeless. It is precious to those who long for heaven enough that earth holds no sway over them.**

This means something to me. I didn't grow up with parents who had any plan for me. I had to figure out what I was supposed to be doing with my life on my own, because they were both too busy doing their own things. This is true even to this day. After I became a Christian, there were many things that I wanted to achieve in this life. But for a variety of reasons, those most of those things never happened. I wanted to do great things for God, like getting married, having a family, getting a PhD and teaching computer science in a

secular university. But things that I had intended to do for God just didn't happen the way I had hoped.

I often find myself thinking of Heaven, and having that eternal perspective on this life. One of the things that is the hardest to accept is that being a Christian makes many things I'd like to do a lot harder. It certainly didn't open any doors at school, or now, at work. I'm glad my salvation doesn't depend on achieving anything in particular. And I'm especially glad that my salvation doesn't depend on what anyone thinks of me. I find it almost impossible in this culture to get any respect by doing the things that I think are really important.

I think if a person were really successful at what they tried to do, then it would be really hard for them to give up living and go to be with Jesus.

What did Jesus intend to achieve with his resurrection?

Did you know that Jesus provided the resurrection as evidence for those who were skeptical of his claims to be God stepping into history?

Here's an article from Got Questions? on the "Sign of Jonah", which appears in the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

It says:

> The phrase "sign of Jonah" was used by Jesus as a typological metaphor for His future crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Jesus answered with this expression when asked by the Pharisees for miraculous proof the He was indeed the Messiah. The Pharisees remained unconvinced of Jesus' claims about Himself, despite His having just cured a demon-possessed man who was both blind and mute. Shortly after the Pharisees accused Jesus of driving out demons by the power of Satan, they said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here" (Matthew 12:38–41).
>
> To fully appreciate the answer that Jesus gave, we must go to the Old Testament book of Jonah. In its first chapter, we read that God commanded the prophet Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and warn its people that He was going to destroy it for its wickedness. Jonah disobediently ran from the Lord and headed for the city of Tarshish by boat. The Lord then sent a severe storm that caused the crew of the ship to fear for their lives. Jonah was soon thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish where he remained for "three days and three nights" (Jonah 1:15–17). After the three-day period, the Lord caused the great fish to vomit Jonah out onto dry land (Jonah 2:10).

> It is this three days that Jesus was referring to when He spoke of the sign of Jonah.

I often bring up the Sign of Jonah when I am dealing with Christians who don't want to learn how to explain their faith to non-Christians persuasively. I'm glad that story is in there!

The resurrection is a very important part of the life of the Christian. I argued in this post that it makes a difference to your feelings about your own life, and it makes a difference to your case-making with non-Christians.

Is our society discriminating against women, or against men?

May 9, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I love to read long essays in City Journal, the journal of the center-right Manhattan Institute. One of the biggest problems we're facing as a society right now is the decline of marriage, and the resulting crisis of fatherlessness. The correct diagnosis is very unpopular, because it attacks feminism. Even traditional conservatives don't want to see the truth. But City Journal gets it right.

Excerpt:

> Smug misandry has been box-office gold for Barbie, which delights in writing off men as hapless romantic partners, leering jerks, violent buffoons, and dimwitted tyrants who ought to let women run the world.
>
> Numerous studies have shown that both sexes care more about harms to women than to men. Men get punished more severely than women for the same crime, and crimes against women are punished more severely than crimes against men. Institutions openly discriminate against men in hiring and promotion policies—and a majority of men as well as women favor affirmative-action programs for women.

I went through kindergarten and public schools before going on to university and grad school. University was OK, but most of my teachers in public schools were women. It was pretty obvious that male students were being treated differently than female students:

> The education establishment has obsessed for decades about the shortage of women in some science and tech disciplines, but few worry about males badly trailing by just about every other academic measure from kindergarten through graduate school. By the time boys finish high school (if they do), they're so far behind that many colleges lower admissions standards for males—a rare instance of pro-male discrimination, though it's not motivated by a desire to help men. Admissions directors do it because many women are loath to attend a college if the gender ratio is too skewed.
>
> Gender disparities generally matter only if they work against women. In computing its Global Gender Gap, the much-quoted annual report, the World Economic Forum has explicitly ignored male disadvantages: if men fare worse on a particular dimension, a country still gets a perfect score for equality on that measure. Prodded by the federal Title IX law banning sexual discrimination in schools, educators have concentrated on eliminating disparities in athletics but not in other extracurricular programs, which mostly skew female. The fact that there are now three female college students for every two males is of no concern to the White House Gender Policy Council. Its "National Strategy on Gender

> Equity and Equality" doesn't even mention boys' struggles in school, instead focusing exclusively on new ways to help female students get further ahead.
>
> Women have been a majority of college graduates since 1982 and dominate by many other key measures.

I knew that the majority of health care spending is for women, but they have other advantages over men:

> [Women] not only live longer than men but also benefit from a higher share of federal funding for medical research. They're much less likely to be fatally injured on the job or commit suicide. They receive the lion's share of Social Security and other entitlement payments (while men pay the lion's share of taxes). They decide how to spend most of the family income. Women initiate most divorces and are much likelier to win custody of the children. While men are ahead in some ways—politicians love to denounce the "gender pay gap" and the "glass ceiling" supposedly limiting women—these disparities have been shown to be largely, if not entirely, due to personal preferences and choices, not discrimination.

Whenever I bring up women initiating most of the divorces, and the most common reason being "unhappiness", the universal response I get from Christian traditional women is that women are forced to do this, because the men they freely chose have not changed into what the women wanted them to be. Also, I am told, women only divorce in order to save the children from having an unhappy mother. I wonder if these women have ever looked at the research about what fatherlessness does to children.

I talk to Christians about these issues, and the most common response is ignorance or disbelief. "How could men be victims of discrimination? If they were, I would have heard about it".

> Yet most people still believe in the "myth of pervasive misogyny," as the social psychologists Cory Clark and Bo Winegard concluded in Quillette after surveying the research literature on gender bias. Noting that a Google Scholar search for "misogyny" yielded 114,000 results, while a search for "misandry" yielded only 2,340, they write: "We suspect this difference in interest in misogyny over misandry reflects not the relative prevalence of each type of prejudice, but rather greater concern for the well-being of women than men. All of the arguments, anecdotes, and data forwarded to support the narrative that we live in an implacably misogynistic society, in fact, may be evidence of precisely the opposite."

What's the workplace like for men?

> In 2016, the Australian national government launched a rigorous quest to combat its own misogyny. As part of its "Gender Equality Strategy," it brought in Harvard

> economist Michael J. Hiscox to address a disparity in the government workforce: women held 59 percent of the jobs but only 49 percent of the executive positions.
>
> […]The experiment produced an "unintended consequence," as the researchers ruefully noted in their report, "Going Blind to See More Clearly." When managers evaluated a résumé with a female name like Wendy Richards, they were more likely to shortlist it than if they saw that same résumé with no name. And they were less likely to shortlist it if the name was Gary Richards. Australia's public servants were clearly guilty of bias against men—and that was just fine with the architects of the Gender Equality Strategy.

But what about the so-called "gender pay gap"? Aren't women earning less than men because of discrimination?

> In the real world, a full-time female worker over 25 in America earns 84 cents for every dollar a male earns, but even equalitarian researchers acknowledge that this gap is not due to overt sexual discrimination (illegal since the Equal Pay Act of 1963). It's due mainly to men choosing higher-paying professions, like coding, instead of, say, teaching, and to the "motherhood penalty." There's no significant gender gap between childless singles in their twenties, but once they become parents, mothers tend to reduce their hours, switch to a lower-paying job with more flexibility, or drop out of the workforce. To equalitarians, these differences are the result of systemic sexism: gender stereotypes that discourage girls from seeking high-paying jobs and saddle them with an unfair share of child-care responsibilities.
>
> […]On average, women care more about "work-life balance" and finding a job that seems personally and socially meaningful—typically, one in a comfortable environment that involves working with people rather than things. Men prioritize making money, so they're willing to take less appealing jobs—work that's tedious, outdoors, dirty, dangerous—with longer, less predictable hours. The gender pay gap among graduates of elite business schools is due in significant part to their job choices. The male MBAs are likelier to take jobs in finance and consulting, whereas the women tend to choose lower-paying industries that are less competitive and less risky.

What about in the dating world? Well, what we are seeing today when we look at data from different dating apps is that 80% of the women are focused on pursuing men with the top 20% best appearances. The best height, the best handsomeness, the best displayed wealth. Although women complain that men treat them poorly, what they mean is that *the men they are attracted to* treat them poorly. The men in the bottom 80% (of appearance) are invisible to them.

More:

> Women still prefer winners. They're the pickier sex—on Tinder, they're

> much likelier to swipe left—and they're especially picky when it comes to a partner's income, education, and professional accomplishments, as researchers have found in analyses of mate preferences, activity on dating websites, and patterns of marriage and divorce. Most American women still want a man who makes at least as much as they do—and wealthier women are more determined than less affluent women to find someone with a successful career.
>
> While some traditional attitudes about wives' roles have shifted, husbands are still typically expected to be breadwinners. An American couple is more likely to divorce if the husband lacks a full-time job, but the wife's employment status doesn't affect the odds. Studies of divorce rates in dozens of other countries have confirmed this peril to unemployed men, which comedian Chris Rock has also observed: "Fellows, if you lose your job, you're going to lose your woman. That's right. She may not leave the day you lose it, but the countdown has begun."

When I've raised concerns that I've read about in books like Warren Farrell's "The Myth of Male Power" and Christina Hoff Sommers's "The War Against Boys", Stephen Baskerville's "Taken Into Custody" and Helen Reynolds "Men on Strike", the response from pastors, parents and "traditional" Christian women has been almost universal. They don't know, and they don't care. (The lone exception was my Scottish friend Dina, who sadly passed away).

What about the decline in the marriage rate? Surely men are the cause of that, and women are the victims, right?

> Both sexes have also been hurt by the misandrist excesses of the #MeToo movement. With a few exceptions—like the actress Amber Heard, successfully sued by her husband, Johnny Depp—women who wreck men's reputations and careers with false accusations suffer few consequences in the media or the courts. Police and prosecutors have routinely refused to act, even in clear cases of perjury, as Bettina Arndt has documented. These injustices, along with the draconian punishments and policies imposed by the (mainly female) managers of human resources, have instilled fear in workplaces, stifling office romances (which, in the past, frequently led to marriage) as well as valuable professional relationships. Most women still want men to make the first move in courtship, but who wants to risk being reported to HR for subjecting a colleague to "unwanted attention"? Even a purely professional meeting in private is risky if something innocent gets misconstrued—or falsely described by a hostile colleague exploiting the believe-all-women bias.

There were a lot more interested studies quoted in the article. If you are male, or you know one, it's worth checking out those studies. That way, you can talk about them, and maybe understand why men are making some of the decisions that we're making.

Will the Biden administration and Big Tech interfere with the federal election?

May 10, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Read this article from The Federalist. The opening quotation from Democrat senator Mark Warner says that federal agencies in the Biden administration have "restarted discussions" with Big Tech platforms, in order to remove postings "as the November presidential election nears". What postings does the Biden administration want to remove, ahead of the election?

Excerpt:

> On Monday, Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., the chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, told reporters that federal agencies such as the FBI and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) restarted discussions with Big Tech platforms. According to NextGov/FCW, this coordination will focus on "removing disinformation on their sites as the November presidential election nears." Warner claimed these talks resumed in March, around the same time oral arguments in Murthy v. Missouri — which centers on the feds' censorship efforts — were heard before the U.S. Supreme Court.
>
> When pressed on the validity of Warner's remarks, an FBI representative confirmed to The Federalist that the agency has resumed communications with social media companies ahead of the 2024 election.

The Biden administration is already on trial in another case where they are alleged to have pressured social media companies to censor free speech online:

> The issue of government-compelled censorship is front and center in Murthy v. Missouri, a case before SCOTUS focused on allegations from Missouri and Louisiana that the federal government's pressuring of social media companies to censor free speech online constitutes a violation of the First Amendment. U.S. District Court Judge Terry Doughty issued a preliminary injunction in July 2023 barring federal agencies from colluding with Big Tech to censor posts they don't like. In his ruling, Doughty wrote, "If the allegations made by Plaintiffs are true, the present case arguably involves the most massive attack against free speech in United States' history."

The preliminary injunction was later upheld by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, but then lifted by the Supreme Court. So, there's nothing stopping the government from censoring posts critical of the Biden administration, as the election nears. However, the Federalist says that the ruling on this case is expected in the summer, and so that might stop the federal agencies from censoring posts ahead of the federal election.

The article talks about the kinds of posts that were previously censored by the federal

government working with Big Tech:

> Largely ignored by legacy media, the collusion between the federal government and Big Tech to silence online speech the feds do not approve of is extensive and unprecedented. For example, the Biden administration pressured social media companies to censor Covid-related posts they deemed to be "misinformation" shortly after coming into power, even if such posts contained information that is factually true.
>
> Emails unearthed in Murthy v. Missouri indicate health agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) held regular "misinfo/debunking meeting[s]" with Facebook to discuss the latter's censorship efforts.
>
> But these efforts are just one facet of the government's censorship operations. CISA regularly facilitated meetings "between Big Tech companies, and national security and law enforcement agencies to address 'mis-, dis-, and mal-information' on social media platforms."
>
> Leading up to the 2020 election, for instance, the agency upped its censorship efforts by flagging posts for Big Tech companies it claimed were worthy of being censored, some of which called into question the security of voting practices such as mass, unsupervised mail-in voting. This was done despite CISA privately acknowledging the risks associated with such practices.

What kinds of posts will the Biden administration agencies tell Big Tech companies to censor, ahead of the election? Well, look at their previous actions, e.g. – the Trump-Russia collusion hoax, or the 50 intelligence officials who claimed that the Hunter Biden laptop was Russian disinformation. We can look at the past and make judgments about the integrity and professionalism of people in these Biden administration agencies.

There was a very interesting article about one of those people in Daily Signal:

> Before becoming one of the Justice Department's top leaders, Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke was allegedly involved in a violent domestic dispute, according to court documents, records, and text messages—an incident that ended in her arrest and was ultimately expunged. During her Senate confirmation, Clarke specifically denied ever having been arrested for or accused of committing a violent crime.

You might remember that this is the woman who has been persecuting pro-life demonstrators:

> The Daily Signal previously reported that Clarke, who oversees investigations into violations of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, has used FACE to charge dozens of pro-life individuals since the overturn of Roe v. Wade. This includes Mark Houck, a Catholic father of seven arrested at gunpoint by the FBI and charged with violating FACE in September 2022 (a jury found Houck was

> not guilty in January 2023, and the DOJ has not commented on this verdict publicly).

Maybe the people in these Biden administration agencies are not the best and brightest people. Many of them are just incompetent, immoral people who were chosen for these jobs like the ex-president of Harvard University was chosen for that job. They were pushed through college (non-STEM degrees) without being able to actually do the work, because their politics were what the university professors wanted. And now they are working in federal agencies, even as their personal lives are a disaster (think of Peter Strozk and Lisa Page). Do you want to be ruled by secular leftists like this? Then you'd better try to have an influence with other voters now. While you still can. Share articles that let other voters know why you support Republican policies. At the very least, you should be sharing articles about Ron DeSantis and what he's doing in Florida, so that all the voters understand what real conservatives stand for. And what results real conservatives produce.

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

May 11, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

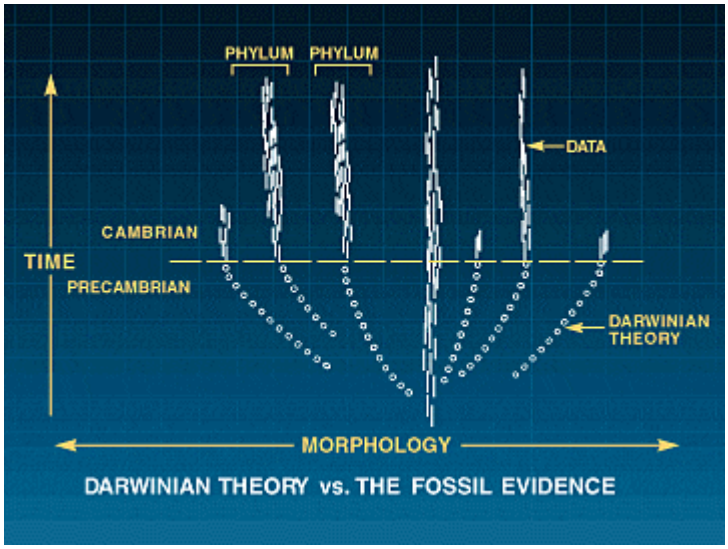

Cambrian Explosion

Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien "The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang" in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a

> unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and
> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

I learned a lot by watching great lectures from Access Research Network. Their YouTube channel is here. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

If you'd like to see Dr. Meyer defend his views in a debate with someone who reviewed his book about the Cambrian explosion, you can find that in this previous post.

Further study

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

J. Warner Wallace: I am not a Christian because it works for me

May 12, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Some of my favorite Christians are the ones that start out as atheists, and do very well at life, but just change direction because they investigate the evidence. One person who had a fabulous career in law enforcement switched sides because of the evidence: J. Warner Wallace. And in a must-read post from Cold-Case Christianity, he explains his motive.

Excerpt:

> Life on this side of my decision hasn't always been easy. It's been nearly seventeen years since I first trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. I still struggle to submit my prideful will to what God would call me to do. Christianity is not easy. It doesn't always "work" for me. There are times when I think it would be easier to do it the old way; easier to cut a corner or take a short cut. There are many times when doing the right thing means doing the most difficult thing possible. There are also times when it seems like non-Christians have it easier, or seem to be "winning". It's in times like these that I have to remind myself that I'm not a Christian because it serves my own selfish purposes. I'm not a Christian because it "works" for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn't always been easy.
>
> I'm a Christian because it is true. I'm a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I'm a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative.

I think this is important. There are people who I know who claim to be Christian, but they are clearly believing that God is a mystical force who arranges everything in their lives in order to make them happy. They are not Christians because it's true, but because of things like comfort and community. But people ought to become Christians because they think it's true.

Truth doesn't necessarily make you happy, though. Truth can impose intellectual obligations and moral obligations on you. Seeing God as he really is doesn't help us to "win" at life, as the culture defines winning. But it does offer the opportunity for us to walk a similar path to the one Jesus walked. And that is very appealing for real Christians.

The Bible doesn't promise that people who become Christians will be happier. Actually, it promises that Christians will suffer for doing the right things. Their autonomy will suffer, as they sacrifice their own interests and happiness in order to make God happy, by serving his interests.

Christianity isn't something you add on to your before-God life in order to achieve your before-God goals. When you become a Christian, you get a new set of goals, based on

God’s character and his design for you. And although you might be very successful in the world as part of serving God, there is no guarantee of that. Christianity is not life enhancement. I do think that Christians do well at not hurting themselves though, but because they eliminate selfish desires, not because God gives them stuff.

By the way, if you’re looking for a great speaker to invite to your university campus, J. Warner Wallace is the best, then Frank Turek is my number two choice. Wallace has the homicide detective background, and Turek is a former naval aviator. Two tough guys who are tough-minded about the Christian faith.

Secular leftists claim that conservatives want to ban books: is it true?

May 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a very interesting article from January 2024 in The Free Press that sheds some light on the claims by the secular left that conservatives want to ban books. In the article, the author James Fishback looked a variety of school districts to see which conservative books they stock in their libraries. Then he compared those numbers with the numbers of liberal books.

Here's the article from The Free Press:

> Over the last couple years, the media have peddled a narrative of "book bans" sweeping the nation. Book bans (ostensibly by the right) are "eating away at democracy," according to The Guardian, and are "taking an emotional toll," warned CNN.
>
> […]So I decided to investigate just how one-sided things actually are. I surveyed the library catalogs of 35 of the largest public school districts in eight red states and six blue states, representing over 4,600 individual schools. All of these records are publicly available online. (Here are just three online catalogs I searched: Broward County, FL, Austin, TX, and Oklahoma City, OK.) What I discovered isn't so much a problem of banned books. It's that kids are often exposed to only one side of the story.

And here are the leftist books:

> I looked up books written by some of the world's most well-known progressive thinkers. Here is the percentage, out of the 35 school districts, that stock each book:
>
> Title and Percentage of 35 Districts
>
> The Communist Manifesto (Karl Marx) — 75%
>
> Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent (Isabel Wilkerson) — 60%
>
> The 1619 Project (Nikole Hannah-Jones) — 54%
>
> Stamped (Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi) — 71%
>
> An African American and Latinx History of the U.S. (Paul Ortiz) — 40%
>
> The New Jim Crow (Michelle Alexander) — 60%
>
> Guide to Political Revolution (Bernie Sanders) — 40%
>
> White Fragility (Robin DiAngelo) — 54%
>
> So You Want to Talk About Race (Ijeoma Oluo) — 57%
>
> This Book Is Anti-Racist (Tiffany Jewell) — 45%

> White Rage (Carol Anderson) — 17%

And here are the conservative books:

> Meanwhile, I looked up books written by some of the world's most well-known conservative thinkers. Here is the percentage, out of the 35 school districts, that stock each book:
>
> Capitalism and Freedom (Milton Friedman) — 8%
>
> Created Equal (Dr. Ben Carson) — 5%
>
> Woke Racism (John McWhorter) — 3%
>
> Breaking History (Jared Kushner) — 2%
>
> Social Justice Fallacies (Thomas Sowell) — 0%
>
> The War on the West (Douglas Murray) — 0%
>
> The 1619 Project: A Critique (Phillip W. Magness) — 0%
>
> The Case Against Impeaching Trump (Alan Dershowitz) — 0%
>
> Decades of Decadence (Marco Rubio) — 0%
>
> The Diversity Delusion (Heather Mac Donald) — 0%
>
> The Case for Trump (Victor Davis Hanson) — 0%

This is not surprising for anyone who understands the public school and library industries. These places are staffed and run by secular leftists. So of course they are going to cry about book banning, even when they are the ones banning the books.

Look:

> It's no secret that many school libraries have become reflections of politicized librarians. Take Emily Drabinski, president of the American Library Association and a self-proclaimed Marxist, who said during a socialism conference last September in Chicago that public education "needs to be a site of socialist organizing. I think libraries really do, too. We need to be on the agenda of socialist organizing."

One last thing, I thought this was a very interesting quote from the article, especially since Christian parents and leaders seem to be fond of blaming men for the decline of dating and marriage:

> And is it any surprise that 76 percent of Gen Z and millennial women wouldn't date a Republican, according to a Change Research poll from September? They've likely never been exposed to conservative ideas, and thus, entirely dismiss conservatives as people.

Public schools should be a last resort for education the children of Christians and conservatives. They are not fair and balanced. They are biased. And they are dishonest. If I had children, I would never send them to public schools. I would make sure before

marrying that we could afford to homeschool or send the kids to private schools. Government schools and libraries are child abuse.

Corey DeAngelis: Teacher's unions fanatical hatred for children

May 14, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my favorite people on Twitter is Corey DeAngelis. Every day I see him fighting for the rights of parents to get the education that they want for their kids. And he follows all the legislation that is being pushed in all the states. What I like about him is that like Ron DeSantis, he always seems to be taking ground from the secular left. Well, he has a new article in the The Federalist. Let's read it.

It says:

> Not a single state had universal school choice prior to 2021. In the past three years, eleven states have enacted it. This is a monumental achievement — and more victories for America's children are imminent. School choice advocates are grateful to the power-hungry teachers unions, which overplayed their hand and sparked a parent revolution.

He says that there 11 states that have it, but there are more that have introduced legislation to get it.

What I like about Corey is that he's not afraid to have an enemy in life. I was raised on Cyrano de Bergerac, a play about a French musketeer who always speaks his mind, and offends a lot of bad people. For me, it was always a good sign for your honor if you could point to bad people who opposed you. But today, it seems like the default view, especially of feelings-focused people, is to try to be liked by everyone. Well, Corey likes parents, and parents like Corey. But the teachers unions… they're his enemies.

He writes:

> The teachers unions-induced school closures harmed students academically, mentally, and emotionally, with virtually no reduction in overall coronavirus transmission or child mortality. Parents were understandably furious at the public schools that had broken faith with them during their time of need, and they weren't going to just sit there and take it.
>
> How did the unions respond to efforts to exert more control? By attacking parents, of course. No, it wasn't the virus that needed to be defeated. It was you, mom and dad.
>
> The unions publicly smeared parents who had the temerity to suggest that schools should do their jobs. In Chicago, home of the nation's third-largest public school system, the local union took to Twitter to demonize those who favored reopening schools: "The push to reopen schools is rooted in sexism, racism and misogyny," tweeted the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) on Dec. 6, 2020.

By the way, I noticed a Daily Wire article last week about how the Chicago Teachers

Unions wanted 50 BILLION DOLLARS to fund abortions and migrant services, even as student performance is dropping:

> Last year, Chicago Public Schools spent nearly $22,000 per student, much higher than the national average of $14,347.
>
> Meanwhile, in 2022, only 12% of Chicago's eighth graders were proficient in math, and only 19% were proficient in reading.

But let's get back to Corey's article. It's funny that the teacher unions are claiming that parents who wanted schools to re-open were motivated by "racism".

Take a look at this:

> According to McKinsey, by the end of the 2020–21 academic school year, students "in majority-Black schools ended the school year six months behind in both math and reading, while students in majority-white schools ended up just four months behind in math and three months behind in reading." If any policy had racist results, it was the union-pushed school closures and remote learning — which really should be called *remotely* learning — not parent-backed school re-openings.

Wow! So, the teacher unions fighting against re-opening schools actually hurt BLACK students the most. To me, it looks like the teacher unions are the real racists – the ones who deliberately cause harm to visible minorities.

I just want to quickly add that there are plenty of studies showing the harm that school shutdowns did to kids:

- Science Advances: The youth mental health crisis: Quasi-experimental evidence on the role of school closures
- Perspectives on Psychological Science: The Impact of School Closures on Learning and Mental Health of Children: Lessons From the COVID-19 Pandemic

But it's not just name-calling, there's also spying on parents and persecuting them for wanting the schools open:

> The California Teachers Association (CTA) even stooped to spying on parents, conducting what amounts to opposition research, the same as political candidates do on their opponents. A public records request uncovered emails from a union employee asking a public school principal for information about "the ideological leaning of groups that are funding the reopen lawsuits." She noted that she had heard the principal had "lots of information regarding the Parents Association."

I've read in other places that the secular leftists want to go after parents who oppose them personally – whether that be with doxing, death threats, violence, or other tactics. It's a labor union, after all.

Elsewhere in the article, Corey notes how the union thugs went after parents who enrolled their kids in small “micro-schools”. These micro-schools would teach kids how to code, using free tools and online teaching videos.

The National Education Association (I think that’s the largest teacher union in America) wrote up opposition research reports to scare parents away from the micro-schools:

The first one warned union members and their allies: “The Opposition Report has documented widespread support for micro-schools.”

> The report identified more than 20 additional microschool networks and related organizations, and recommended that their staff and allies familiarize themselves with a list of anti-microschool talking points the NEA had developed, such as that the microschools “do not guarantee students or educators the same civil rights protections that are required in public schools,” their staff are “not required to be credentialed,” and their students “are not held accountable to state standards of learning.”

Well, that’s enough for now. Corey has a new book out about the fight between parents and teacher unions. It’s called “The Parent Revolution: Rescuing Your Kids from the Radicals Ruining Our Schools”. Check it out. I have the audio version on my wishlist.

Non-profits making billions from Biden's open border, and you're paying for it

May 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a very interesting article about how non-profits are making big money off of Biden's open border. Biden's bringing in millions of unskilled illegal trespassers. Some of them are dangerous. But that isn't stopping non-profits from cashing in. How much money are we talking about? Where is it coming from? Let's take a look at this article from The Free Press and find out.

It says:

> The Free Press examined three of the most prominent NGOs that have benefited: Global Refuge, Southwest Key Programs, and Endeavors, Inc. These organizations have seen their combined revenue grow from $597 million in 2019 to an astonishing $2 billion by 2022, the last year for which federal disclosure documents are available. And the CEOs of all three nonprofits reap more than $500,000 each in annual compensation, with one of them—the chief executive of Southwest Key—making more than $1 million.

Where is the money coming from? You're paying them this money through your taxes:

> The Administration for Children and Families, a division of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, funds the nonprofits through its Office of Refugee Resettlement, and its budget has swelled over the years—from $1.8 billion in 2018 to $6.3 billion in 2023. The ORR is expected to spend at least $7.3 billion this year—almost all of which will be funneled to NGOs and other contractors.

And it's not just you. Biden's socialist regime is spending more and more money, so much that they have to borrow in order to spend. And who is going to pay for all this borrowing? Well, young adults and children, some of who aren't even born yet. They're going to be paying for Biden's "generosity". And the harder you work to teach your children how to earn money, the more they're going to pay in taxes.

Well, maybe these non-profits NEED all that money, because the need for their services is so great.

Nope:

> But while it's true the number of migrants has exploded in recent years, critics say these enormous federal grants far exceed the current need. The facilities themselves are generally owned by private companies and are leased to the NGOs, which house the unaccompanied minors and attempt to unite them with family members or, if that's not possible, people who will take care of them—their so-called sponsors. The ORR does not publicly list the specific number of shelters it funds in its efforts to house migrants, a business The New

> York Times once described as “lucrative” and “secretive.”

Well, stop worrying. Because the money is being well spent, and the people getting it are transparent and accountable.

Just kidding:

> While some NGOs have long had operations at the border, “what is new under Biden is the amount of taxpayer money being awarded, the lack of accountability for performance, and the lack of interest in solving the problem,” said Jessica Vaughan, director of policy studies at the Center for Immigration Studies, a think tank that researches the effect of government immigration policies and describes its bias as “low-immigration, pro-immigrant.”

Well, even so. At least this isn’t some kind of Democrat boondoggle where taxpayers are just handing over money to Democrats. Right? Right?

WRONG:

> Vignarajah, a former policy director for Michelle Obama when she was first lady, took the top job at Global Refuge in February 2019 after she lost her bid to be elected governor of Maryland. She has since become one of the most prominent advocates for migrants crossing the southern border, appearing frequently on MSNBC and other media as an immigration advocate. Her incoming salary was $244,000, but just three years later, her compensation more than doubled to $520,000.

Well, I’m sure they are doing a good job. At least they’re not sexually abusing all the kids that taxpayers are paying them to provide for. Right? RIGHT?

WRONG:

> The man with the $1 million salary is Dr. Anselmo Villarreal, who became CEO of Southwest Key Programs, headquartered in Austin, Texas, in 2021.
>
> […]Despite a number of scandals in the recent past, including misuse of federal funds and several instances of employees sexually abusing some of the children in its care, Southwest Key continues to operate—and rake in big government checks. In 2020, the year of Covid-19, its government grant was $391 million; by 2022, its contract was nearly $790 million.

And then there’s this guy, who was in the Obama administration:

> Endeavors, Inc., based in San Antonio, Texas, is run by Chip Fulghum. Formerly the chief financial officer of the Department of Homeland Security, he signed on as Endeavors’ chief operating officer in 2019 and was promoted to CEO this year.
>
> In 2022, Fulghum was paid almost $600,000, while the compensation for Endeavors’ then-CEO, Jon Allman, was $700,000. Endeavors’ payroll went from $20 million in 2018 to a whopping $150 million in 2022, with seven other

> executives earning more than $300,000.

This was a very interesting article and there was more to it than I quoted here. But it really makes you understand what the attitude of these people is towards future Americans – your children. They expect your children to pay for their expensive living today. And Biden is making it happen for them.

The worst mistake you can make when defending the Christian worldview

May 16, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it

entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it.

> I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent's weakness.

Feminists outraged over NFL player who believes in marriage, right to life

May 17, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Commenter Craig alerted me to this story about an NFL player who defended traditional marriage and opposed abortion in a commencement speech. He's getting a lot of trouble from the secular left. Let's see the story, and then I'll comment about what message this sends good men about value proposition of marriage and parenting.

Here's the story from the Christian Post:

> Kansas City Chiefs kicker Harrison Butker urged Catholic college graduates last weekend to reject the "Church of nice," calling out President Joe Biden and other Catholics who support abortion and other practices that run counter to the teachings of the faith politically.
>
> […]Butker used his speech to highlight how "bad policies and poor leadership have negatively impacted major life issues."
>
> "Things like abortion, [in-vitro fertilization], surrogacy, euthanasia as well as a growing support for degenerate cultural values and media all stem from the pervasiveness of disorder," Butker said. "Our own nation is led by a man who publicly and proudly proclaims his Catholic faith but at the same time is delusional enough to make the sign of the cross during a pro-abortion rally."
>
> "He has been so vocal in his support for the murder of innocent babies that I'm sure to many people, it appears that you can be both Catholic and pro-choice," he added. "He is not alone. From the man behind the COVID lockdowns to the people pushing dangerous gender ideologies onto the youth of America, they all have a glaring thing in common: They are Catholic."

There's been a huge response to these comments from the secular left. They are enraged. They don't want to have to conform their desires to any sort of specification for marriage that might limit their narcissistic hedonism. And they certainly don't want to be burdened with the needs of children that they create through their reckless recreational sex.

Here are my thoughts:

First, the only kinds of men who are willing to marry and have kids today are men who have traditional views, including supporting natural marriage and protecting unborn children from reckless, selfish adults. So, if a woman wants to get married, then she has one option – to choose a traditional man. And in order to find a traditional man, a woman has to encourage men through her actions to be traditional, lest the supply of these men dry up.

Sadly, most young, unmarried women today are under a delusion. They think that they can behave non-traditionally, and still find a traditional man to marry them after their

selfish, reckless youth. That might have been true in the past, when the culture was Christian, but it's not true in an age of secularism and feminism. And the reason why is simple.

All men today – good and bad – understand that marriage is an enormous risk and threat to their freedom and prosperity. They have heard the stories about no-fault divorce laws, false accusations, outrageous alimony and child support payments, biased courts, denial of visitation and even IMPRISONMENT. The only reason they would marry is if they were able to find a traditional woman who not only opposed feminism, but had a long public record of fighting against it. Not just words, but many, many years of public opposition to atheism, feminism, and socialism. That is the only kind of woman who might have a chance at marriage today. Good men today don't believe that women can magically change from non-traditional to traditional at age 30 (or later). We know that shotgun conversions are unlikely to be sincere, or to last. We know that a woman's past actions are a more accurate guide to her beliefs than her words. And no amount of shaming and blaming of men by pious conservative leaders is going to change that fact.

But families, churches, and society in general are not producing women who respect traditional men. 75% of young women today vote for policies that are opposed by good men. No one has the courage to tell young women that hatred of good men today is NOT compatible with marriage tomorrow.

Instead, pro-marriage leaders think that good men should just be forced (by shaming) to forgive feminists for their poor decisions. Good men should just have to make the lives of women who hate them "work out". Unfortunately for these pro-marriage people, good men have got the message. Good men look at stories like this, and realize that society hates men who have strong views on religion and morality. And that hatred extends from birth, through school, into the workplace, into laws, and into the courts.

It seems crazy to think that young women feel entitled to protection and provision in a marriage, even as they expect retain their opposition to male leadership. But that is universal today – non-traditional women who despise good men, expect to get all the benefits of a traditional man, with none of the responsibilities, expectations or obligations of traditional marriage. Only a stupid man would choose a non-traditional woman who hates him and hates his traditional views. And yet this is what the pro-marriage crowd expects men to do. They see men as 100% expendable.

Nabeel Qureshi: the Quran inspires radical Muslims to commit Islamic terrorism

May 18, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Nabeel Qureshi, a former Muslim, explains which verses of the Qu'ran are linked to Islamic terrorism in a USA Today editorial.

Excerpt:

> As a Muslim growing up in the United States, I was taught by my imams and the community around me that Islam is a religion of peace. My family modeled love for others and love for country, and not just by their words. My father served in the U.S. Navy throughout my childhood, starting as a seaman and retiring as a lieutenant commander. I believed wholeheartedly a slogan often repeated at my mosque after 9/11: "The terrorists who hijacked the planes also hijacked Islam."
>
> Yet as I began to investigate the Quran and the traditions of Muhammad's life for myself in college, I found to my genuine surprise that the pages of Islamic history are filled with violence. How could I reconcile this with what I had always been taught about Islam?
>
> […]The Quran itself reveals a trajectory of jihad reflected in the almost 23 years of Muhammad's prophetic career. As I demonstrate carefully in my book, *Answering Jihad: A Better Way Forward*, starting with peaceful teachings and proclamations of monotheism, Muhammad's message featured violence with increasing intensity, culminating in surah 9, chronologically the last major chapter of the Quran, and its most expansively violent teaching. Throughout history, Muslim theologians have understood and taught this progression, that the message of the Quran culminates in its ninth chapter.
>
> **Surah 9 is a command to disavow all treaties with polytheists and to subjugate Jews and Christians (9.29) so that Islam may "prevail over all religions" (9.33). It is fair to wonder whether any non-Muslims in the world are immune from being attacked, subdued or assimilated under this command. Muslims must fight, according to this final chapter of the Quran, and if they do not, then their faith is called into question and they are counted among the hypocrites (9.44-45). If they do fight, they are promised one of two rewards, either spoils of war or heaven through martyrdom. Allah has made a bargain with the *mujahid* who obeys: Kill or be killed in battle, and paradise awaits (9.111).**
>
> Muslim thought leaders agree that the Quran promotes such violence. Maajid Nawaz, co-founder of the Quilliam Foundation in the United Kingdom, has said, "We Muslims must admit there are challenging Koranic passages that require reinterpretation today. … Only by rejecting vacuous literalism are we able to condemn, in principle, ISIS-style slavery, beheading, lashing, amputation & other

> medieval practices forever (all of which are in the Quran). … Reformers either win, and get religion-neutral politics, or lose, and get ISIL-style theocracy.” In other words, Muslims must depart from the literal reading of the Quran in order to create a jihad-free Islamic world.
>
> This is not at all to say that most Muslims are violent. The vast majority of Muslims do not live their lives based on chapter 9 of the Quran or on the books of jihad in the hadith. My point is not to question the faith of such Muslims nor to imply that radical Muslims are the true Muslims. Rather, I simply want to make clear that while ISIL may lure youth through a variety of methods, it radicalizes them primarily by urging them to follow the literal teachings of the Quran and the hadith, interpreted consistently and in light of the violent trajectory of early Islam. As long as the Islamic world focuses on its foundational texts, we will continue to see violent jihadi movements.

So, any attempt to engage with Muslims will require us to address the texts that they appeal to when they justify their actions. Both Republicans and Democrats try to gloss over the specific passages of the Qu’ran which are troublesome. They claim that Islam, interpreted literally, is a religion of Peace. And they claim that distorting the words of the Qu’ran results in a Jihadi ideology. That’s not accurate. It’s not distortion of the Qu-ran that is causing the problems, it’s taking those passages literally.

There are troubling passages in the Bible, as well, where God is in a theocratic relationship with the Jewish people and commands them to attack their enemies. But the difference is that those verses are not effective in the present day, for present day Christians. Christians are under a new Covenant with a new High Priest, Jesus. This new covenant tells Christians to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. Are moderate Muslim scholars and Western politicians ready to face the real challenge?

Are atheists unbiased about the question of God's existence?

May 19, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten has a book review posted up at Apologetics 315.

The book is "If There's A God, Why Are There Atheists?", by theologian R.C. Sproul. R.C. Sproul is one of my favorite theologians. The book in question has a very, very special place in my heart, because I think that it is one of the major reasons why I was able to resist pernicious ideas like religious pluralism and postmodernism for so long. Once you put on the glasses of Romans 1 and see for the first time what man is really doing with respect to God, you can never see things the same again. I'll say more about this at the end, but let's see what Brian wrote first.

The review

So often, you hear atheists complaining about religion is nothing but wish-fulfillment or some sort of crutch for people who are frightened by a variety of things. They think that God is invented to solve several problems. 1) how does the world work?, 2) is there meaning to suffering and evil?, 3) why should I be moral?, and 4) what will happen to me and my loved ones when I die?. On the atheistic view, God is just a crutch that people cling to out of weakness and ignorance. But is this really the case?

Sproul starts the book by investigating three atheists who sought to explain religious belief as a result of psychological factors.

Brian writes:

> Before tackling the psychology of atheism, Sproul spends a chapter on the psychology of theism, from the perspective of Freud's question "If there is no God, why is there religion?"11 What follows is an overview of various psychological explanations of theistic belief: Feuerbach's "religion is a dream of the human mind."12 Marx's belief that religion is "due to the devious imagination of particular segment of mankind."13 And Nietzche's idea that "religion endures because weak men need it."14 The author properly reiterates: "We must be careful to note that the above arguments can never be used as proof for the nonexistence of God. They can be useful for atheists who hear theists state that the only possible explanation for religion is the existence of God."15 That being said, Sproul also reveals what these arguments presume:

> Their arguments already presupposed the nonexistence of God. They were not dealing with the question, Is there a God? They were dealing with the question, Since there is no God, why is there religion?16

> Sproul points out the weaknesses of each of these approaches and says "there are just as many arguments showing that unbelief has its roots in the

> psychological needs of man."

Wow, could that really be true? What are the real reasons why people reject God? Does the Bible have anything to say about what those reasons are?

Brian cites Sproul's contention:

> The New Testament maintains that unbelief is generated not so much by intellectual causes as by moral and psychological ones. The problem is not that there is insufficient evidence to convince rational beings that there is a God, but that rational beings have a natural hostility to the being of God.
>
> […]Man's desire is not that the omnipotent, personal Judeo-Christian God exist, but that He not exist.

In Romans 1:18-23, the apostle Paul explains what is really going on:

> 18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,
>
> 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.
>
> 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.
>
> 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.
>
> 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools
>
> 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Do you believe that? I believe that. I have never in my life met an atheist who varied from what Paul is saying here.

On this blog, I have presented many, many arguments for theism in general, and Christian theism in particular:

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason

- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Sproul explains why atheists cannot allow themselves to live according to the evidence that is presented to them:

> The cumulative effect of this knowledge that is clearly seen is to leave men 'without excuse.' Herein lies the basis of the universal guilt of man. No one can claim ignorance of the knowledge of God. No one can cite insufficient evidence for not believing in God. Though people are not persuaded by the evidence, this does not indicate an insufficiency in the evidence, but rather an insufficiency in man.
>
> […]The basic stages of man's reaction to God can be formulated by means of the categories of trauma, repression, and substitution.
>
> […]If God exists, man cannot be a law unto himself. If God exists, man's will-to-power is destined to run head-on into the will of God.

So, it's pretty clear that there are huge implications to the question of God's existence, and that the atheist will be affected by these implications when weighing evidence.

Here's something Thomas Nagel, an excellent atheist philosopher, said:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."
>
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)"

The rest of the book review, and the book, deals with explaining in detail how atheists respond to an all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator/Designer. I encourage you to click through and read the whole book review. You can read the review, and the book, and then investigate for yourself whether the atheists are effected by this bias against moral accountability.

Over 1 million views for intelligent design: Stephen C. Meyer and Piers Morgan

May 20, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video below was uploaded about 2 weeks ago, but it already has well over 1 million views. In this video, you will get coverage of 5 arguments for a Creator / Designer: origin of the universe, origin of life, cosmic fine-tuning, sudden origin of new body plans in the fossil record, stellar and planetary habitability and they also mentioned consciousness.

Here is the video:

And the description:

> In a lively yet in-depth discussion, Piers Morgan drills down to the core of human existence with Stephen C. Meyer, the prominent 'intelligent design' advocate.
>
> In this Piers Morgan Uncensored special, Meyers firmly rejects the idea that a scientific worldview leads to atheism, arguing instead that 'the universe requires a creator or cause'. When Richard Dawkin's name is mentioned, Meyer claims that he actually really loves the atheist firebrand and admires his intensity. Lastly, Morgan and Meyers agree that the question of God's existence is tied to more than just cold hard facts, but also human nature itself.
>
> 00.00 – Who is Dr Meyer?
> 02.23 – Is Darwin Wrong?
> 06.03 – Scientific evidence for God
> 15.58 – The Multiverse
> 19.29 – What is the meaning of life?
> 22.52 – Atheists' anger
> 25.48 – Why is there suffering?

Dr. Stephen C. Meyer directs Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture. He is my favorite Christian scholar. Why? Because he keeps writing books about what the latest scientific evidence tells us about reality. I understand that many theists and atheists want to keep evidence at a distance, and just decide for themselves what they will accept as true, based on their feelings and communities. But for those who like to have true beliefs, then Stephen Meyer is for you. He is basically the Thomas Sowell of the origins debate.

By the way, if you watch this video and you enjoy it, then please share. A lot of people need to start thinking about these issues based on what science has revealed. People who have not thought about these issues need to start grounding our beliefs on reality. And we have to help them.

Former Facebook and Nike DEI manager gets prison for stealing $5 Million

May 21, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A lot of Christians today seem to think that it's a good idea to deal with the DEI crowd with "compassion". Instead of laying out standards of merit, and asking everyone to measure up, they want to give special carve out benefits to certain victim groups. But are people who take out student loans for non-STEM degrees really victims? Are people who claim victimhood good people?

Take a look at this story from the New York Post:

> From approximately January 2017 to September 2021, [Barbara Furlow-Smiles] "led diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs at Facebook and was responsible for developing and executing DEI initiatives, operations, and engagement programs," prosecutors said.
>
> […]Barbara Furlow-Smiles, 38, set up fake business deals, invoices and events — including a Juneteenth celebration — to line her own pockets, the Justice Department said.
>
> […]To cover her tracks, the disgraced DEI officer submitted fake expense reports claiming her associates had performed work for Facebook, such as providing swag or marketing services.
>
> […]Furlow-Smiles pleaded guilty in December to the wire fraud scheme, which saw her take more than $4.9 million from Facebook before bilking a six-figure amount from Nike "to fund a luxury lifestyle in California, Georgia, and Oregon," the DOJ said.

This part was interesting, because the virtue of accountability is the exact opposite of the victimhood of the woke secular leftists:

> [Facebook] claimed her "crimes also resulted in anguish amongst those employees that worked closely with her," while Nike said her "complete lack of accountability or remorse was incredibly disappointing," according to sentencing memos obtained by CNBC.
>
> […]When she was fired from Facebook, Furlow-Smiles "carelessly continued her fraudulent schemes at Nike, thinking she was untouchable," said Keri Farley, special agent in charge of FBI Atlanta.

I talk to a lot of men who are struggling in the current dating environment. And their number one complaint about the secular left young women they encounter is a complete lack of accountability. Young women don't want to be judged, and they don't want to face consequences for their poor choices. They want to make decisions in the moment, based on feelings, and then play the victim to get out of the consequences further down the

road.

Facebook and Nike are known to be far-left companies. So it’s not surprising that they declined to respond to requests for comments. But I hope that other companies begin to realize the risks and costs of hiring people on the woke secular left, who have absolutely zero foundation for morality. And you should be careful about trusting them, too.

Does the fossil record match Darwinist predictions or Design predictions?

May 22, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I wrote a post about how you can make a simple argument for intelligent design based on junk DNA. Step 1: find out what Darwinian naturalists claim about junk DNA. Step 2: find out what design proponents claim about junk DNA. Step 3: compare those predictions with scientific discoveries about junk DNA over the past decades. Today we'll do it with the fossil record.

I'm going to use an amazing article from Günter Bechly from over at Evolution News. Günter writes an article about fossils every Friday (he calls it "Fossil Friday").

Here's last Friday's article, where he gave a nice overview of why Christians should care about the fossil record.

He writes:

> This Fossil Friday I want to address the common request to provide an expanded written form of my lectures on discontinuities in the fossil record (e.g., on YouTube) together with references to mainstream scientific papers that back up these arguments against neo-Darwinism. Since the sudden appearance of trilobites in the Cambrian Explosion is one of the best known examples for discontinuities in the fossil record, I chose the early trilobite Wanneria sp. from the Lower Cambrian of Canada as today's featured fossil. So let's jump right in.

Then he talks about the predictions of Darwinists and design proponents:

> Every theory makes certain predictions and these predictions have to be tested with empirical evidence. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution necessarily predicts a gradual development of life. Therefore he insisted on gradualism, against the advice of his good friend Thomas Huxley. Darwin quoted in his magnum opus *The Origin of Species* (Darwin 1859) not less that six times the Latin dictum "*natura non facit saltus*", nature does not make jumps, because he wanted to present a fully naturalistic explanation for the history of life on our planet, knowing perfectly well that saltations would have tacitly implied miracle-like intelligent interventions. The prediction of gradualism is not accidental and not a dispensable side issue in Darwinism. This was made clear by Richard Dawkins, arguably the most ardent modern popularizer of Darwinism, in his bestselling book *The Greatest Show on Earth* (Dawkins 2009), where he explicitly clarified that "Evolution not only is a gradual process as a matter of fact; it has to be gradual if it is to do any explanatory work." In another book titled *Climbing Mount Improbable* (Dawkins 1996) he explained the reasons with a beautiful metaphor: Imagine the task to reach the top of a steep and tall cliff from the sea shore. It would be an improbable (or rather impossible) miracle to achieve this task with a

> single big jump. However, if there was a gentle slope on the backside of the cliff, you could easily and effortlessly climb the mountain with a lot of small successive steps. This is the way evolution must operate according to Darwin and Dawkins: not by sudden miraculous jumps, but many small steps, that are each not unlikely to happen accidentally without intelligent intervention, and which accumulate over long periods of time to add up to big biological differences.

Engineers don't check in code gradually, one letter at a time. We check in a bunch of related changes to different files that implement some feature. Some days, I have a lot of meetings. Some days, I spend time doing code reviews or making diagrams or writing documentation. And some days, I get to write code all day. So, if you look at my Github history, you'll see that some days I have 35 commits, and other days none. That's consistent with having a "designer". The complexity increases in "jumps", with each jump containing changes to several files, and the changes add some new feature. But that's not available to Dawkins and Darwin, they don't like engineers, or sudden jumps in complexity.

Günter lists out a bunch of biological "jumps", where God pulled an all-nighter, with pizza and Mountain Dew, and checked in a whole bunch of new code all at once.

Here are a few from his list of about 15 of them:

- The Origin of Life (3.8 bya)
- The Origin of Photosynthesis (3.8 bya)
- The Cambrian Explosion (537-508 mya)
- The Carboniferous Insect Explosion (325-314/307 mya)
- The Early Triassic Marine Reptile Radiation (248-240 mya)
- The Mid Triassic Gliding / Flying Reptile Radiation (230-210 mya)
- Upper Triassic Dinosaur Explosion (234-232 mya)
- The Abominable Mystery of the Origin of Flowering Plants (130-115 mya)
- The Paleogene Big Bang of Modern Birds (65-55 mya)

Günter has the details of each of these, but if you have listened to our recent episode about the origin of life with Dr. Fazala Rana, then you already know about the first one. The point is that the fossil record has a whole bunch of "big bangs", where God checked in a whole bunch of new code in a very short period of time. This is strictly forbidden in Darwinian theory, but the fossil record doesn't care about theories.

Günter concludes:

> The gradualistic core predictions of any unguided evolutionary mechanisms such as neo-Darwinism are strongly contradicted by the empirical evidence. The cumulative conflicting evidence from molecular biology, genetics, population genetics, and the discontinuous fossil record can no longer be explained away as anomalies or as artifacts such as under-sampling of an incomplete fossil record. The total evidence is better explained with pulses of infusion of new information

> from outside of the system (top-down), rather than with a purely mechanistic stepwise bottom-up process. The only known cause in the universe that is able to produce significant amounts of new complex specified information is the activity of an intelligent conscious agent, so that intelligent design theory qualifies as superior alternative to unguided Darwinian evolution in an inference to the best explanation (abductive reasoning) among competing hypotheses. This is not an argument from ignorance (i.e., God of the gaps) as is often incorrectly claimed by critics, but is based on empirical data and our positive knowledge about the regular causal structure of the universe and the type of causes that exclusively are known to produce certain effects.

The article was tough for me to understand, but I think I got the big picture of what he was saying. I blogged on it so that I can find it again if I get questions about what evidence there is for a designer. I sure hope that we are making more scientists like him for Team Design, because his post was quality work.

New studies: problems with temperature records used by climate models

May 23, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Most people who disagree with the hypothesis of catastrophic man-made global warming have their doubts about official temperature record collection. But unless you are really following the issue closely, it might be hard for you to find peer-reviewed papers that question the majority view. Let's take a look at some recent peer-reviewed papers that will help skeptics make their case.

This article is from the Epoch Times. They sometimes hide their articles behind paywalls, but this out is available to all. Just in case, I found an archive of it.

It says:

> Temperature records used by climate scientists and governments to build models that then forecast dangerous manmade global warming repercussions have serious problems and even corruption in the data, multiple scientists who have published recent studies on the issue told The Epoch Times.
>
> […]Problems with temperature data include a lack of geographically and historically representative data, contamination of the records by heat from urban areas, and corruption of the data introduced by a process known as "homogenization."

I already know about that problem of measuring stations being located in areas of high ambient heat, like busy streets, industrial areas, solar panel farms, etc. But I had not heard about homogenization.

I looked up homogenization, and it's referring to the need to remove the impact of "non-climatic changes" on the temperature data. That could be changes caused by changing sensor technology, moving the weather station, or other factors unrelated to climate.

The article says:

> For instance, if a temperature station was originally placed in an empty field but that field has since been paved over to become a parking lot, the record would appear to show much hotter temperatures. As such, it would make sense to try to correct the data collected.

That was an interesting point. So, the warming would be actually caused by increased heat from cars, buildings, Sun reflections, etc. as the sensor got surrounded by civilization. It's readings would change, but not because of changes in the climate.

But there's a problem with the way that scientists have been adjusting the raw data:

> Virtually nobody argues against the need for some homogenization to control for various factors that may contaminate temperature data.

> But a closer examination of the process as it now occurs reveals major concerns, Ronan Connolly, an independent scientist at CERES, said.
>
> “While the scientific community has become addicted to blindly using these computer programs to fix the data biases, until recently nobody has bothered to look under the hood to see if the programs work when applied to real temperature data,” he told The Epoch Times.
>
> Since the early 2000s, various governmental and intergovernmental organizations creating global temperature records have relied on computer programs to automatically adjust the data.
>
> Mr. Soon, Mr. Connolly, and a team of scientists around the world spent years looking at the programs to determine how they worked and whether they were reliable.
>
> One of the scientists involved in the analysis, Peter O’Neill, has been tracking and downloading the data daily from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and its Global Historical Climatology Network since 2011.
>
> He found that each day, NOAA applies different adjustments to the data.
>
> “They use the same homogenization computer program and re-run it roughly every 24 hours,” Mr. Connolly said. “But each day, the homogenization adjustments that they calculate for each temperature record are different.”
>
> This is “very bizarre,” he said.
>
> “If the adjustments for a given weather station have any basis in reality, then we would expect the computer program to calculate the same adjustments every time. What we found is this is not what’s happening,” Mr. Connolly said.
>
> These concerns are what first sparked the international investigation into the issue by Mr. Soon and his colleagues.
>
> Because NOAA doesn’t maintain historical information on its weather stations, the CERES scientists reached out to European scientists who had been compiling the data for the stations that they oversee.
>
> They found that just 17 percent of NOAA’s adjustments were consistently applied. And less than 20 percent of NOAA’s adjustments were clearly associated with a documented change to the station observations.
>
> “When we looked under the hood, we found that there was a hamster running in a wheel instead of an engine,” Mr. Connolly said. “It seems that with these homogenization programs, it is a case where the cure is worse than the disease.”

For me, that is the take home lesson for the whole article.

Well, how much of a difference do these problems make for climate change models?

It’s a huge problem:

> The flaws are so significant that they make the temperature data—and the

> models based on it—essentially useless or worse, three independent scientists with the Center for Environmental Research and Earth Sciences (CERES) explained.
>
> The experts said that when data corruption is considered, the alleged “climate crisis” supposedly caused by human activities disappears.
>
> Instead, natural climate variability offers a much better explanation for what is being observed, they said.

I waited a few days to blog this article, so that I could check up on the studies. Here is one, and here is another. There are a lot of authors on these studies, and they are from good journals: *Climate* and *Atmosphere*. The authors are from a variety of academic institutions from different countries, like Germany, Ireland, Hungary, Austria, Sweden, Italy and the Netherlands.

If you like to debate climate change like I do, then you might want to bookmark this article. To me, this is another new, peer-reviewed piece of evidence that argues against the catastrophic man-made global warming view. And we have to be guided by evidence.

Miranda Devine asks: where are the men of courage?

May 24, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Men tend to focus more on quietly enduring suffering, and they rarely speak up when they have been hurt. That's why we get excited when women speak up for us. But it's rare for a woman to see what men's plans and motivations are. Rarer still to see who is standing in opposition to those plans and motivations. And rarest of all is to speak up to defend men from their opponents.

So, this post is about a woman doing all three. And not just any woman, but famous conservative woman Miranda Devine, who recently wrote the book "Laptop from Hell: Hunter Biden, Big Tech, and the Dirty Secrets the President Tried to Hide", which is all about Hunter Biden's laptop, and how Big Tech and the Biden administration tried to cover it all up.

Anyway, here is her article in the New York Post:

> We pathologize manly virtues and bow to the tyranny of identity politics that seeks power by overthrowing a make-believe patriarchy. We raise boys in a soup of reproach and negativity that tells them their intrinsic nature is diseased.
>
> "Traditional masculinity is psychologically harmful," the American Psychological Association declared in 2019. These were the masculine attributes it listed as diseased: "stoicism, competitiveness, dominance, aggression, anti-femininity, achievement, eschewal of the appearance of weakness, and adventure, risk and violence."
>
> The only acceptable man now is a man who wants to be a woman. We celebrate "pregnant men" and "chestfeeding" men.
>
> […]We ignore the crisis that sees men commit suicide at ever increasing rates or succumb to drug abuse and porn addiction while savvy young women graduate from college in disproportionate numbers. Trained from childhood to be entitled and unrealistic about relationships, their fertility and the sacrifices and joys of motherhood, many become bitter and blame men for their confusion.

I'll be writing an article for Friday about the unrealistic expectations of young feminist women.

But for now, here's more Miranda, and quoting C.S. Lewis:

> Along the way, we emasculate the institutions that were necessarily masculine for our protection, notably the military. As an example, on Wednesday, the US Marines celebrated Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Pride Month by tweeting a picture of a combat helmet adorned with rainbow-colored bullets.
>
> So, what do men do? They recoil and retreat. They leave the stage for hysterical

> epsilon men like Beto O'Rourke who whine and posture but can't protect a thing.
>
> Then when we need a strong, quick-thinking Gary Cooper to save us from outlaws, he's nowhere to be found.
>
> "We make men without chests and expect from them virtue and enterprise," C.S. Lewis foretold in his dystopian 1943 book "The Abolition of Man."
>
> "We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."

Maybe men have had it with being screeched at, so no more protecting and providing? (or leading, but *nobody* wants the leading anymore) Society can't spend all of their time attacking masculinity, then demand men perform male roles just when it suits them.

You would expect to see men retreating from traditional masculinity precisely in the states that attack traditional masculinity as "toxic".

The American Thinker notes:

> On May 28, Sky News Australia posted a video titled "New York bearing signs of 'societal decay.'" The video shows a man (who seems as if he is on drugs) entering a train car and sitting next to a young woman. He then touches her without consent, grabs her, drags her around a bit, and generally is an extremely unpleasant nuisance.
>
> […]During the video, the young woman is seen looking at other passengers, with obvious worry in her eyes, begging somebody to please "help me." Nobody tries to help her.

Where were the men? The author speculates:

> If I had to guess, they were standing in their place, checking their male privilege, toning down their toxic masculinity, and coping with how their Time's Up.
>
> […]My guess is that none of the men watching wanted to become the next George Zimmerman. We all saw the emotional toll Kyle Rittenhouse suffered for defending himself.

The article notes New York's laws against self-defense:

> New York has a duty to retreat, after all. Besides, New York has been in the habit of arresting those who defend themselves.

New York is a very feminized state. Male nature is suspicious – something for the government to outlaw and restrain by force. But when videos like this emerge, they reverse themselves and ask "where are all the good men?"

Matt Walsh has been talking about how the effeminate, weak Prime Minister of Canada just recently announced that there is no right to self-defense in Canada. No castle doctrine. No stand your ground. No use of force at all is allowed to defend yourself (*or your family)* from criminals.

Daily Wire reported:

> Guns are for hunting and target practice, but never for self defense, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said this week, continuing his crusade against firearms.
>
> Trudeau, who is pushing a sweeping measure aimed at freezing the sale, purchase, or transfer of handguns in Canada, told the Pod Save America podcast his country takes a completely different view of firearms than its southern neighbor. No one in Canada has a right to defend themselves, their family or their property with a firearm, Trudeau declared.
>
> "We have a culture where the difference is: Guns can be used for hunting or for sport shooting in Canada – and there are lots of gun owners, and they're mostly law-respecting and law-abiding – but you can't use a gun for self-protection in Canada," Trudeau said. "That's not a right that you have in the Constitution or anywhere else."

Matt noted on his show that this doesn't just apply to guns. It applies to every form of self-defense, e.g. – pepper spray. The victim of a criminal is more likely to run afoul of the "law enforcement" in Canada than the actual criminal. For Trudeau, to lift up evil, and to stamp down good, is "compassionate". He's very compassionate.

It makes you wonder why anyone would live there, doesn't it? I mean, especially men. Why would a man live there, and pay taxes there, knowing that the clown in charge makes it illegal for him to defend himself, or defend others? But Trudeau won re-election, so they must believe he is a good Prime Minister, and that his view of male nature is accurate and good.

Correcting four myths about the history of the Crusades

May 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an interesting article from Intercollegiate Studies Institute.

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the

> peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

If you asked me what are the two best books on the Crusades, I would answer God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades by Baylor professor Rodney Stark and The Concise History of the Crusades by Professor Thomas F. Madden. If you get this question a lot from atheists, then I recommend you pick these up. Anything by Rodney Stark is useful for Christians, in fact.

Three reasons why Christians should read military history

May 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, I finished a book called "Beyond The Call: The True Story of One World War II Pilot's Covert Mission to Rescue POWs on the Eastern Front". It's about a World War 2 heavy bomber pilot who completes 35 missions, and then goes into the Soviet Union (our allies, at the time) to rescue American POWs who were starving or being kidnapped or murdered by the Soviet secret police.

I found a very good article about it from Stripes, to just quickly introduce the story:

> Later, after making contact with POWs roaming the Polish countryside, [Capt. Robert Trimble] fully embraced his mission. He saw the desperate plight of those who had been liberated from Third Reich prison camps. Many were sick, emaciated, often clothed in rags and left to fend for themselves during a brutally harsh winter.
>
> Trimble risked his life numerous times over six weeks, helping to rescue hundreds of POWs. He came to the aid of others, too. In one daring rescue, nearly foiled by Russian agents who had become suspicious of his activities, Trimble helped 400 French women make it out of Poland and back to France.

Although he was being constantly trailed by Russian spies and informers, he would evade them, and bring food and money to the POWs, then put them on a train to Odessa, Ukraine, where they could get onto a ship going home.

Roger Trimble, standing second from the left, in front of his B-24 Liberator

Why I read military history

It is hard to develop virtues just by wishing and hoping. Something has to go into your mind that causes you to think differently, and feel differently. Everything that you watch on TV, hear on the radio, or see in the movie theater, is made by secular leftists. They aren't trying to build your moral character. They're goal is to break down your resistance to their unBiblical worldview and moral values. Instead of giving people who hate Jesus your money, just so you can be entertained, why not try to put something in front of your eyes that will make you better?

Look at this famous passage from the Bible.

Romans 12:1-2:

1Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

And also this from Philippians, my favorite book of the Bible.

Philippians 4:8:

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

So you can see that when I am reading, my goal is to work on my character. I want to have feelings about things that are appropriate for a Christian man.

So why military history? Here are three reasons why I read these military history books.

Humility

First, **humility**. Humility used to be one of my biggest challenges. So I thought to myself "instead of seeing yourself as some heroic figure, why don't you read about some real heroes… people who willingly gave their lives for their friends, like the Bible urges, and like Jesus did by example".

Remember this from John 15:13?

13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

Military history is filled with stories of courage, bravery, self-sacrifice, endurance, unselfishness, and many other virtues. When you read about people who are better than you, doing more important things than what you're doing, it really helps you to be humble.

The best thing for humility is reading Medal of Honor citations. You can find a bunch of them online here. And if you want a book to read, try these books about Medal of Honor recipients:

- Heroes of World War II

- Korean War Heroes
- Vietnam Medal of Honor Heroes

Endurance

Second, **endurance**. I sometimes feel badly about not having found someone to marry and not having lots of children. I wanted a good marriage to be a model for others, and also to have an influence in the next generation through my children. However, whenever I read military history, I see a lot of young men dying in battle. And I think, they too won't know what sex is like. And, they too won't know what marriage is like. And, they too won't know what having children is like. But it's not just the ones who die, it's the hardships they have to go through, as well. Cold, hunger, imprisonment, pain, loss of their friends, etc.

I remember reading about one of my favorite battles – probably the most famous battle of the Korean War, which is our most moral war. It's about Fox Company of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Regiment, 1st Marine Division. They had to hold a hill beside a vital road against overwhelming numbers of Chinese soldiers during the freezing cold North Korean winter. I remember reading about how one soldier got up to go to the bathroom, and was nearly shot by a sniper. He fell over on his own poop, which had already frozen by the time it hit the ground. For months after, I would always think about this whenever I went into a bathroom. We have pre-warmed water in our bathrooms at work, along with soap, lysol spray, febreeze, contact lense cleaner, hand sanitizer, and other things. Just understanding what other people have to go through in war helps me to be more patient with the little tiny setbacks that I experience. I used to get very anxious when anything went wrong, because of I was raised by strict immigrant parents. That anxiety seemed to last a long time, but since I started to read military history, I've been much more patient. I know that things could be worse.

Thankfulness

The third thing that I've experienced is **thankfulness**. Not just for all the things that I have because of what our armed forces have done, e.g. – basic human rights, prosperity, liberty, security, etc. But also specifically about those who gave their lives so that I could live free in a free country, and practice my Christian faith without fear.

Here are two of my favorite Medal of Honor stories from World War 2, in the Battle of Pearl Harbor:

Congressional Medal of Honor
Awarded Posthumously
PETER TOMICH

Rank and organization: Chief Watertender, U.S. Navy.
Place and date: Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.
Born: 3 June 1893, Prolog, Austria.

Although realizing that the ship was capsizing as a result of enemy bombing and torpedoing, Tomich remained at his post in the engineering plant of the U.S.S. Utah, until

he saw that all boilers were secured and all fireroom personnel had left their stations, and by so doing lost his own life.

And:

Congressional Medal of Honor
Awarded Posthumously
JAMES RICHARD WARD

Rank and organization: Seaman First Class, U.S. Navy.
Place and date: Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941.
Born: 10 September 1921, Springfield, Ohio.

When it was seen that the U.S.S. Oklahoma was going to capsize and the order was given to abandon ship, Ward remained in a turret holding a flashlight so the remainder of the turret crew could see to escape, thereby sacrificing his own life.

I do think that it's important for Christians to read these kinds of stories in order to feed their own awareness of what it must have been like for Jesus to give his life *voluntarily* for us.

There is no shortcut to gratitude. You have to constantly reflect on the sacrifices made by others for you, if you are to have any concrete reason for feeling grateful. The more you read about examples of people giving their lives for others, the more you'll appreciate what Jesus did for you. It will make you grateful.

There is a very annoying idea out there in the culture that says that people just do whatever is easy and fun for themselves, and since everyone else is always doing what makes them feel good, then there is no need to be thankful for anything. It's comforting for people to delude themselves with that belief, but it's false.

My reading list

You can check out the "What I am Reading" section of the blog to see which military history books I've been reading.

Memorial Day: little destroyers fought like battleships in the Battle off Samar

May 27, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought about what story from military history to share with you all for Memorial Day. This time, I decided on the story of Lieutenant Commander Robert W. Copeland and his ship the *Samuel B. Roberts.* The story takes place during World War 2, in the Pacific Theater, as the American fleet is battling with the Japanese to re-take the Philippine Islands.

I read about this story in "World War II at Sea: A Global History" by Craig L. Symonds and in "The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors" by James D. Hornfischer.

Before we get started, let's learn about some ship classes and weapon capabilities.

Japanese Yamato-class battleship:

- displacement: 72,809 tons
- speed: 27 knots
- 9 x 18.1″ guns
- 12 x 6.1″ guns
- 12 x 5″ guns

Japanese Takao-class heavy cruiser:

- displacement: 15,781 tons
- speed: 35.5 knots
- 10 x 8″ guns
- 4 x 5″ guns

American Fletcher-class destroyer:

- displacement: 2,500 tons
- speed: 36.5 knots
- 5 x 5″ guns

American John C. Butler-class destroyer escort:

- displacement: 1,370 tons
- speed: 28.7 knots
- 2 x 5″ guns

So, this story is from October 25th, 1944. It takes place east of the Philippine islands. The American force "Taffy 3" consists of 6 escort carriers, 3 destroyers, 4 destroyer escorts. An escort carrier is a light aircraft carrier. The Japanese force has 4 battleships, including the Yamato (!), 6 heavy cruisers, 2 light cruisers, and 11 destroyers. The Yamato is the

largest and most powerful battleship ever built. The Americans are severely outnumbered and outgunned.

Normally, American escort carriers would be escorted by much larger ships, because they are so valuable. Carrier aircraft have much longer range and striking power than a battleship. But the Japanese had made a plan to lure Admiral William "Bull" Halsey away from the escort carriers and the invasion force, which he was supposed to be protecting. They used some aircraft carriers as bait, and Halsey chased after them with his battleships, cruisers and destroyers. The Japanese aircraft carriers had few aircraft and air crews, and were thus a weak threat. Halsey also declined to communicate his decision to leave the escort carriers to his superiors. He also refused to respond to messages from Fleet Admiral Nimitz. By the time Halsey returned to his duty, he arrived too late to have any impact on the Battle off Samar.

But what about that force of destroyers and destroyer escorts that stayed with the escort carriers?

Here is an article from Warfare History Network that tells the story:

> At exactly 6:45 on the morning of October 25, 1944, Rear Admiral Clifton A.F. Sprague received a message from one of his pilots on antisubmarine patrol. The admiral recalled that the message went something like this: "Enemy surface force of 4 battleships, 7 cruisers, and 11 destroyers sighted 20 miles northwest of your task group and closing in on you at 30 knots."
>
> […]At 6:58, the ships opened fire. Less than a minute later, colored splashes from the Japanese shells landed astern of Taffy 3.

Two more things I need to explain. First, a "rain squall" is the equivalent of a foxhole in naval warfare. Ships inside the rain squall are invisible to ships outside the rain squall. Second, aircraft carriers must be sailing against the wind in order to launch aircraft.

More:

> Sprague was fully aware of his predicament and did not think that his force of "baby flattops" and their escorts would last 15 minutes against the oncoming battleships and cruisers. As soon as the approaching task force was confirmed as Japanese, he "took several defensive actions in quick succession." He ordered a change in course from north to due east, which pointed Taffy 3 "at full speed toward a friendly rain squall nearby." The new course also turned his carriers into the wind, and at 6:56 Sprague ordered all carriers to begin launching aircraft for torpedo and bombing attacks against Kurita's force. A minute later, he ordered the carriers and their escorts to make as much smoke as possible to screen Taffy 3 from the Japanese gunners. A smokescreen offered scant protection against large-caliber enemy shells, but it was better than nothing.

This part is interesting. I have to highlight the bravery of the torpedo, bomber and fighter pilots:

> After they dropped their bombs, the pilots made dry runs on the enemy ships to distract the Japanese gunners. The commander of Gambier Bay's air group flew his Avenger through enemy flak for two hours after he dropped his bombs. The pilots of the Wildcat fighters were sent in to strafe "with the hope that their strafing would kill personnel on the Japanese warships, silence automatic weapons, and, most important, draw attention from the struggling escort carriers." When their ammunition ran out, the fighter pilots also resorted to dry runs to harass the enemy. One pilot made 20 strafing runs, 10 of them without ammunition.

To me that is astonishing. I would only order my strike aircraft to strafe after dropping their ordnance if the enemy ship was on fire, moving slowly, and far away from her allies.

But it worked:

> "The bombers and torpedo planes were very aggressive and skilful and the coordination was impressive," a Japanese officer told his American interpreter after the war, "even in comparison with the many experiences of American attacks we had already had, this was the most skilful work of your planes."

Next, the American destroyers – *Hoel, Heermann and Johnston* – attacked:

> In addition to his carrier's air groups, Sprague also sent his destroyers and destroyer escorts against Kurita's force. The normal job of these screening warships was to protect the escort carriers from submarines, but now they would be performing a completely different task.

The destroyers did a great job of disrupting the advance of the much stronger Japanese ships with gunfire and torpedoes. The Japanese ships had to dodge the torpedoes, delaying their pursuit of the valuable escort carriers:

> American torpedoes were not fast and were easily avoided. However, the evasive action not only slowed the advance of the Japanese warships but also created confusion. Admiral Kurita himself said, "Major units [warships] were separating all the time because of the destroyer torpedo attacks." He realized that he was losing more tactical control every time his ships had to turn to avoid Taffy 3's torpedoes.
>
> […]Yamato turned away to evade the torpedoes, heading north and keeping on that course for about 10 minutes. This effectively took Yamato out of the fight.

You can read all the details in the article I'm quoting from, but I want to focus on the destroyer escorts – *Dennis, John C. Butler, Raymond, Samuel B. Roberts*.

More:

> Kurita was becoming convinced that he was facing a major American task force, not just a few escort carriers and destroyers. However, the battle was far from over. At about the same time that Hoel was firing her torpedoes at Haguro,

> Sprague ordered his destroyer escorts to begin their runs at Kurita's warships: "Little Wolves form up for a second attack," he barked. "Wolves" was code for the destroyers, while the radio call sign for the destroyer escorts was "Little Wolves." So far, the destroyer escorts had been assigned almost exclusively to antisubmarine patrols. Torpedo attacks against cruisers and battleships were something new to Taffy 3's Little Wolves.
>
> They threw themselves into the task. Raymond took on Haguro, the leading Japanese cruiser. Just before 8 am, she launched three torpedoes at a range of about 6,000 yards. Haguro turned to avoid them while Raymond changed course and got away from the scene as quickly as possible.
>
> Dennis followed the same course of action. She fired her torpedoes at the nearest Japanese cruiser, either Chokai or Tone, and turned sharply to the southwest. At about 8:10, Dennis opened fire with her after 5-inch battery on a cruiser that was already under air attack.

Robert Copeland told the crew of the Samuel B. Roberts:

> We're making a torpedo run. The outcome is doubtful, but we will do our duty.

They set off on their torpedo run, charging the Takeo-class heavy cruiser Chokai. The Roberts launched 3 torpedoes, and one scored a direct hit on the Chokai's stern, contributing to damage that would eventually sink her. The little destroyer got so close to the Chokai that her big 8 inch guns could not lower far enough to hit the Roberts.

On her way back to the escort carriers, the Roberts encountered the Chikuma, a Tone-class heavy cruiser. The Roberts engaged in a running gun battle with the heavy cruiser, firing off over 600 5 inch shells at the much larger ship. She destroyed one of the Chikuma's gun turrets and set fires all over the superstructure of the heavy cruiser. Japanese heavy cruisers and battleships fired at the Roberts. The Kongo, a Kongo-class battleship, hit the Roberts several times below the water line. Copeland gave the order to abandon ship, and the Roberts sunk a bit later, still under fire from larger Japanese ships. 90 of her crew perished, and 120 escaped on life rafts.

Copeland had broadcast this message to his crew before the battle:

> This will be a fight against overwhelming odds from which survival cannot be expected. We will do what damage we can.

And here is a short 12-minute animation that shows what happened in the battle:

In Fredericksburg, TX, at the National Museum of the Pacific War, there is a wonderful movie that shows the whole battle. I've been there.

Since this is Memorial Day, I want to highlight the American casualties of the Battle off Samar:

- 2 escort carriers sunk
- 2 destroyers sunk

- 1 destroyer escort sunk
- 23 aircraft lost
- 4 escort carriers damaged
- 1 destroyer damaged
- 2 destroyer escorts damaged
- 1,161 killed and missing
- 913 wounded

The casualty list would have been a lot worse, if not for the bravery of the pilots, and the crews of the destroyers and destroyer escorts who charged much larger ships to protect the valuable escort carriers.

Study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others

May 28, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back I finished reading “God’s Crime Scene”, the new book by J. Warner Wallace. I wanted to post something about some studies he mentioned in Chapter 6, on free will. This is one of the places where he found evidence in a surprising area.

Wallace says that free will makes more sense if theism is true, because we have non-material souls that interact with our bodies, but are not causally determined by them. On atheism, only matter exists, and you can’t get free will (or consciousness) from matter. So atheists like Sam Harris and Alex Rosenberg, for example, deny free will, because they are materialists and atheists.

Anyway, here’s what he writes on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others.” Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: “It seems that not only do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it.”” The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here’s the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free

> will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons' belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you're an atheist, then you are a physical object. And like every other physical object in the universe, your behavior is determined by genetic programming (if you're alive) and external inputs. Material objects do not have the ability to make free choices, including moral choices.

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no

moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

(Source)

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality. Can you imagine trying to get into any sort of enterprise with someone who has this view of moral choices? A marriage, or a business arrangement, etc? It would be crazy to expect them to behave morally, when they don't even think that moral choices is possible. It just excuses all sorts of bad behavior, because no one is responsible for choosing to do the right thing.

Believers in materialism are going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

Choosing to do the right thing

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when doing the right thing sets you back. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me about their ability to do the right thing when it was hard for them to do it. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality. My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

Biden administration is weaponizing the justice system against Christians

May 29, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you're not following the writing of Mary Margaret Olohan at Daily Signal, you should be. She's writing about how the Biden administration is using the legal system to punish Christians and pro-lifers, even as they turn a blind eye to crimes committed by secular leftist criminals and terrorists. I'll post one story below, and then you can check her recent headlines yourself.

Here's the story from Daily Signal:

> Republican Utah Sen. Mike Lee accused President Joe Biden's Department of Justice on Tuesday of "unjustly" persecuting pro-life activists exposing the "horrors of abortion."
>
> "The Biden administration is using the FACE Act to give pro-life activists and senior citizens lengthy prison terms for non-violent offenses and protests—all while turning a blind eye to the violence, arson, and riots conducted on behalf of 'approved' leftist causes," Lee told The Daily Signal in a Tuesday statement.
>
> The senator added: "Unequal enforcement of the law is a violation of the law, and men and women who try to expose the horrors of abortion are being unjustly persecuted for their motivations."

Now, you might remember how the Biden Justice Department gave very lenient sentences of about 12 and 15 months to two secular leftist domestic terrorists who fire-bombed a police car. So what kinds of sentences are Mike Lee's "pro-life activists and senior citizens" getting?

> Lee's comments come after news that pro-life activist Lauren Handy has been sentenced on DOJ charges to almost five years in prison for attempting to stop abortions of unborn babies from taking place at a Washington, D.C., abortion clinic.
>
> Handy will spend 57 months in prison and is the first person sentenced for violating the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, a 1994 law that supposedly protects both abortion clinics and pregnancy resource centers, but has been heavily enforced by Biden's DOJ against pro-lifers since the June 2022 overturning of Roe v. Wade.

Here's something interesting from the background of the woman who is pushing these cases:

> Those efforts are led by Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke, the head of the DOJ's Civil Rights Division, who recently admitted following a report from The Daily Signal that she hid an arrest and its subsequent expungement from

> investigators when she was confirmed to her Justice Department post.

If she had revealed the arrest, then I don't think she would be eligible for a Justice Department post.

And here's Mary's conclusion:

> The president's critics have accused Biden and the DOJ of weaponizing the FACE Act against pro-lifers while failing to charge pro-abortion criminals for the hundreds of attacks on pregnancy resource centers since the May 2022 leak of the draft Supreme Court opinion indicating Roe would soon be overturned.

Here are some of Mary's other columns from Daily Signal, if you want to double-check the details about what the Biden administration is doing to Christians, conservatives and pro-lifers:

- DOJ Puts Pro-Life Grandmother Behind Bars for Trying to Stop Abortions
- Biden DOJ Ramps Up War on Pro-Lifers With Lawsuit
- DOJ Attorney Expressed Concerns About Conservative Media Coverage of Biden Admin Persecuting Christians, Pro-Lifers
- DOJ's Kristen Clarke Celebrates Prison Time for Pro-Life Activists
- Pro-Life Activist Charged by Biden DOJ Gets Almost 5 Years in Prison for Trying to Stop Abortions
- DOJ's Kristen Clarke Asked Ex-Husband to Say She Wasn't an Abuser During Confirmation Process, Ex Alleges

Well, this is all very troubling. I always get upset when evidence emerges about the Democrat party persecuting Christians and conservatives. I don't want to believe that I live in a country where secular leftists are presiding over a two-tier justice system. There's one (lenient) justice system for the criminals who commit domestic violence, domestic terrorism, arson and infanticide, and then there's another (harsh) justice system for the married people who read the Bible, pray, attend church, homeschool their children, and don't need student loan bailouts.

There's an easy way for voters to give an opinion about the Biden administration – all they have to do is show up and vote for it, or against it, in November. And if you think that someone you know would be interested in these Daily Signal articles, then it might be a good idea to send them to all your friends.

Reason #736 why men are opting out of dating and marriage: paternity fraud

May 30, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Statistics show that men are choosing to disengage from dating and marriage. There are many reasons for this. I can name a dozen. One of the reasons is "paternity fraud". Paternity claims occur when a woman has a child, and then tries to collect child support from a man by claiming that he is the father. Sometimes, the man she identifies as the father is not the actual father. This is "paternity fraud".

Before I get started on paternity fraud, let me explain how child support works today, from this article in USA Today:

> The most well-known case was of a Kansas boy who, at age 13, impregnated his 17-year-old baby-sitter. Under Kansas law, a child under the age of 15 is legally unable to consent to sex. The Kansas Supreme Court in 1993 ruled that he was liable for child support.
>
> California issued a similar state court ruling a few years later in the case of a 15-year-old boy who had sex with a 34-year-old neighbor. In that case, the woman had been convicted of statutory rape.
>
> In both cases, it was the state social-services agency that pursued the case after the mother sought public assistance.
>
> […]In Arizona, the Department of Economic Security oversees child–support enforcement. Its written policy is not to exempt situations like Olivas' from child-support responsibilities, unless the parent seeking child support has been found guilty of sexual assault with a minor or sexual assault.
>
> […]The state has more routes than the courts to acquire money from a parent. It can garnishee wages up to 50 percent of disposable income. It can take a tax refund. It can put a lien on a home or a vehicle. It can suspend driver's licenses or revoke passports. And it can seize money out of bank accounts.

And another one from Fox 2 Detroit:

> A Metro Detroit man cleared his name after Friend of the Court sent him a letter saying he had a baby with a woman he never met.
>
> […]Late last year, DeAngelo received a letter from Friend of the Court in Berrien County saying that he was the father of a baby girl.
>
> "Said she's a stripper from Detroit, we had a one-night stand at some hotel, and this is the story that was told to me," DeAngelo said.
>
> His wife first spotted the letter in the mail from Friend of the Court.
>
> "Let's just set the record, I trust my husband," Tyahvia Smith said. "I know his

> character, man of integrity."
>
> While waiting for the child's mother to take the baby for a DNA test, DeAngelo said the school where he teaches received an inquiry for possible garnishment in case the child was his.
>
> "It made it something that is not being alleged, but now it's something that's being taken into action and no paternity has been established," he said.
>
> Finally, the woman had the DNA test done, and DeAngelo has since gotten a letter confirming he was not the father.

The request for money comes to the man's employer first, the DNA test comes later, and only if the man fights the system to get it.

I show these cases, so that people will understand what men are facing from social services agencies and courts. Basically, in cases where a woman statutory rapes a man, she is still entitled to child support from the victim of the rape. One can imagine the uproar if the sexes were reversed. The laws are anti-male in many ways, this is just one example. Anti-male laws deter men from dating and marrying women.

Now let's look at paternity fraud, another example of anti-male bias in the legal system.

Here's a story about it from CBS News Detroit:

> A Detroit man has been ordered to pay $30,000 in back child support for his ex-girlfriend's child — even though he's not the father.
>
> Carnell Alexander brought his case to Wayne County Circuit Court with hopes for a fix. Instead, Judge Kathleen McCarthy told him Tuesday he waited too long to challenge the situation and "failed to take this matter seriously."
>
> Alexander said the paternity case started in the 1980s when the woman gave his name to a case worker so she could get assistance for her baby, who was born in 1987.
>
> The woman agrees that Alexander wasn't the father and a DNA test taken in 2013 backs that up. But that wasn't enough to sway McCarthy, who ruled that despite the case being decades old, Alexander still has to pay.

Here's another story of paternity fraud from NBC News Miami:

> A man in North Florida is fighting the state after he was told to pay child support despite DNA tests proving that he was not the father.
>
> Joseph Sinawa told NBC affiliate WTLV-TV that he signed the birth certificate because he did truly believe he was the father – adding that the mother of the child doesn't want him to have to pay, but the state is forcing the issue.
>
> "She told the judge she just wants this to be done and over with, and so do I," he said from his home in St. Augustine.
>
> Sinawa found out he was not the father after the DNA test was administered by a St. Johns County court following a custody question – but the state's Department

> of Revenue appealed the decision because they say Sinawa has not properly attempted to disestablish paternity.
>
> “At the time it had been taking $83 out of my paycheck, more than 1/3 of my pay,” he says. “When I thought I was the father I didn’t have a problem with it.”
>
> Sinawa is currently representing himself in court cases due to financial issues and has filed the necessary paperwork, but no time table has been set and it is unknown if he will be refunded any of the money spent.

According to this study in the peer-reviewed journal Epidemiology & Community Health, the median rate of paternity fraud across various studies is 3.7%:

> Paternal discrepancy (PD) occurs when a child is identified as being biologically fathered by someone other than the man who believes he is the father. This paper examines published evidence on levels of PD and its public health consequences. Rates vary between studies from 0.8% to 30% (median 3.7%, n = 17).

Even men who are not at risk for paternity fraud understand the lesson of paternity fraud. The courts are anti-male, and men need to stay well clear of those courts. And that means minimizing exposure to those courts. And that means keeping to themselves, and tending to their own problems and pursuing their own goals.

Men are getting smarter now. Men understand that society does not have their interests at heart. Now men want to be left alone.

Recent polls: voters less likely to support Trump after felony convictions

May 31, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

During the GOP primary, I wrote a lot about Ron DeSantis' many policy wins. He won re-election in Florida by 20%, winning over many moderates and independents to his ultra-conservative platform. But, voters chose Trump as the GOP nominee. This was in spite of polls showing Trump losing many supporters in the (likely) event that he was convicted of felonies. And that's now happened.

First, I wrote about Trump's 4 trials and 91 felony charges, after the Iowa caucus results, when voters in Iowa voted for Trump above DeSantis.

I wrote this:

> I watched Iowa voting results last night. It was disappointing. I wondered, "do Trump voters know that he is facing 4 criminal investigations, with 91 separate indictments?" So, I asked my Dad, who is very old and retired, and watches Fox News all day and all night. And he said "Yes, but they are all politically motivated, and they will all be dismissed". So, let's take a look.

And I went over all the trials and charges. Then I wrote this:

> Now it's time to ask one of my favorite questions to Trump supporters: What did you hope to achieve in the long-term by doing what felt good to you in the short-term? I would really like an answer from Trump supporters. What is the evidence that Trump will not get convicted of at least some of these charges, and then lose tons of votes in the general election, especially the trials taking place in blue states, with blue state juries? What is the evidence that a felony conviction will not cause Republicans to lose the general election in November?

By the way, I did call my Fox-News-Watching Dad and asked him whether he was surprised by the news of Thursday, and he said it was all so unexpected. That's despite me telling him that this was guaranteed to happen, and that Trump would be in a prison cell in the months leading up to election day (and after). But he's a Trump supporter, and the Fox News told him it would never happen.

Let's take a look at recent polls about Trump's felony convictions, and see whether he's going to lose any votes over these felony convictions that are now happening exactly as DeSantis supporters had predicted they would.

This is from Fox News, which strongly backed Donald Trump against Ron DeSantis:

> Would a Trump guilty verdict dramatically alter the current state of play in the presidential showdown?
>
> Recent national polling points to a very small — but potentially decisive — drop

> in support for Trump if he's convicted in court.
>
> Sixty-two percent of registered voters questioned in a Quinnipiac University survey said a guilty verdict would make no difference to their vote for president. Fifteen percent said it would make them more likely to cast a ballot for Trump and 21% said it would make them less likely to vote for the former president.
>
> Additionally, eight out of 10 Trump supporters surveyed in an ABC News/Ipsos poll said they would still back the presumptive GOP presidential nominee if he was found guilty in court. Sixteen percent said they would reconsider their support and 4% said they would no longer back Trump.
>
> Additionally, a Reuters-Ipsos poll indicated a two-point shift away from Trump if the former president is convicted, with a bigger six-point shift if Trump is put behind bars.

The future is hard to predict. The polls I was seeing previously predicted a 10% shift away from Trump to Biden, if Trump was convicted of a felony. That's why I urged people to vote for DeSantis, and persuade others to vote for DeSantis.

I have no doubt Trump's 34 felony convictions, each with a max sentence of 4 years in prison, will make Trump supporters even more likely to vote for Trump. But even if they are angry enough to vote twice for Trump, they only get one vote. And I doubt that Trump supporters will be able to convince moderates and independents to support a convicted felon with their rage alone.

Trump is not the candidate who turned a 0.5% win in 2018 into a 20% win in 2022. In a purple state. That would be Ron DeSantis. It's too bad we didn't vote for someone who was great on policy, and great at winning over moderates and independents. Trump has zero appeal to moderates and independents. If we wanted to win in November, we would have chosen Ron DeSantis.

I would say that right now, the only way for Republicans to win in November is to dump Trump, and let DeSantis be the candidate. The problem is that Trump is focused on himself. He's always been more concerned about himself. He doesn't support conservative candidates, he supports candidates who kiss his ring. This is not the person who is going to bow out in order to help Republicans win. Maybe when he loses, his supporters will understand (during the next 4 years of socialist tyranny), that it is important to vote with your mind, and not with your feelings. Maybe if we start to choose candidates based on policies and persuading independents, then we win the next election in 2028.

New study: there is no gay gene that causes homosexuality

June 1, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I heard one of the authors of this new study commenting on how he was a gay man, and the purpose of his research was to show a genetic basis for homosexuality, in order to make it equal to race. His goal was to make it impossible to disagree with homosexual behavior, because homosexual behavior would be seen as natural and normal. Let's see if his new study helps him out.

The blog of the peer-reviewed journal PLOS One reported on the new study, which was published in the prestigious journal Science.

Excerpt:

> The once-prevailing concept of a "gay gene" dictating sexual orientation has been put to rest in a powerhouse study published today in *Science*. The work brilliantly illustrates the very nature of science: evolving with the input of new data, especially the large-scale contributions of bioinformatics and crowd-sourcing.
>
> "We formed a large international consortium and collected data for more than 500,000 people, comparing DNA and self-reported sexual behavior. This is approximately 100 times bigger than any previous study on this topic," said lead author Andrea Ganna, of the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Finland and an instructor at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, opening a news conference earlier this week.
>
> […]The investigation estimates a genetic contribution to same-sex sexual behavior as under 1 percent, thanks to analysis of a trove of data from the UK Biobank and the consumer genetic testing company 23andme.

So, there you have it, there is no gay gene. But this is of course something we've known for decades, as all the previous studies had found the same thing.

The normal way that people do these studies is to analyze identical twins, and see how often both identical twins are gay.

> Eight major studies of identical twins in Australia, the U.S., and Scandinavia during the last two decades all arrive at the same conclusion: gays were not born that way.
>
> "At best genetics is a minor factor," says Dr. Neil Whitehead, PhD. Whitehead worked for the New Zealand government as a scientific researcher for 24 years, then spent four years working for the United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency. Most recently, he serves as a consultant to Japanese universities about the effects of radiation exposure. His PhD is in biochemistry and statistics.

> Identical twins have the same genes or DNA. They are nurtured in equal prenatal conditions. If homosexuality is caused by genetics or prenatal conditions and one twin is gay, the co-twin should also be gay.
>
> "Because they have identical DNA, it ought to be 100%," Dr. Whitehead notes. But the studies reveal something else. "If an identical twin has same-sex attraction the chances the co-twin has it are only about 11% for men and 14% for women."
>
> Because identical twins are always genetically identical, homosexuality cannot be genetically dictated. "No-one is born gay," he notes. "The predominant things that create homosexuality in one identical twin and not in the other have to be post-birth factors."
>
> Dr. Whitehead believes same-sex attraction (SSA) is caused by "non-shared factors," things happening to one twin but not the other, or a personal response to an event by one of the twins and not the other.

By the way, a previous study also found that transgender behavior was not genetic, but was clearly linked to environmental factors such as peer approval and social media.

Here is the report from Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.
>
> Littman surveyed more than 250 parents of children who suddenly developed gender dysphoria symptoms during or after puberty.
>
> […]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

A previous study also found that children are more likely to be gay if they are raised by gay adults. It was reported in AOL News.

Excerpt:

> Walter Schumm knows what he's about to do is unpopular: publish a study arguing that gay parents are more likely to raise gay children than straight parents. But the Kansas State University family studies professor has a detailed analysis that past almost aggressively ideological researchers never had.
>
> […]His study on sexual orientation, out next month, says that gay and lesbian parents are far more likely to have children who become gay. "I'm trying to prove

> that it’s not 100 percent genetic,” Schumm tells AOL News.
>
> His study is a meta-analysis of existing work. First, Schumm extrapolated data from 10 books on gay parenting… [and] skewed his data so that only self-identified gay and lesbian children would be labeled as such.
>
> […]Schumm concluded that children of lesbian parents identified themselves as gay 31 percent of the time; children of gay men had gay children 19 percent of the time, and children of a lesbian mother and gay father had at least one gay child 25 percent of the time.
>
> […]Finally, Schumm looked at the existing academic studies… In all there are 26 such studies. Schumm ran the numbers from them and concluded that, surprisingly, 20 percent of the kids of gay parents were gay themselves. When children only 17 or older were included in the analysis, 28 percent were gay.

It’s very important for people to understand that there is a trend in society to make every behavior traditionally seen as sinful into something caused by genetics. The twin goals of this effort are to insulate the behaviors from criticism, and to minimize evaluation of the effects of these behaviors on society as a whole. The genetic argument was used extensively to normalize same-sex marriage and transgenderism. I have seen the genetic argument used to defend other behaviors like pedophilia and incest. But the scientific research does nothing to support any of these arguments. What’s amazing is how a majority of people in the United States have such false beliefs about the scientific research. They vastly overestimate the number of gay people, and also the influence of genetics.

New study: children of same-sex parents have more emotional problems

June 2, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to have all the research papers I need on hand to "show my work" to people who want to know why I have certain views on moral issues. This study entitled "Emotional Problems among Children with Same-Sex Parents: Difference by Definition" was published in the peer-reviewed journal "British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science" is good research.

Here's what it says:

> Aims: To test whether small non-random sample findings that children with same-sex parents suffer no disadvantage in emotional well-being can be replicated in a large population sample; and examine the correlates of any differences discovered.

A big sample size makes the study more reliable:

> Methodology: Using a representative sample of 207,007 children, including 512 with same-sex parents, from the U.S. National Health Interview Survey, prevalence in the two groups was compared for twelve measures of emotional problems, developmental problems, and affiliated service and treatment usage, with controls for age, sex, and race of child and parent education and income. Instruments included the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Kessler Scale of Psychological Distress (SPD). Bivariate logistic regression models tested the effect of parent psychological distress, family instability, child peer stigmatization and biological parentage, both overall and by opposite-sex family structure.

This is the key part. "Emotional problems were over twice as prevalent… for children with same-sex parents than for children with opposite-sex parents." That's not what you'll see on TV or in the corporate news media, but that's what you find if you're looking for peer-reviewed studies with good methodology and large sample sizes.

> Results: Emotional problems were over twice as prevalent (minimum risk ratio (RR) 2.4, 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.7-3.0) for children with same-sex parents than for children with opposite-sex parents. Risk was elevated in the presence of parent psychological distress (RR 2.7, CI 1.8-4.3, p (t) < .001), moderated by family instability (RR 1.3, CI 1.2-1.4) and unaffected by stigmatization (RR 2.4, CI 1.4-4.2), though these all had significant direct effects on emotional problems. However, biological parentage nullified risk alone and in combination with any iteration of factors. Joint biological parents are associated with the lowest rate of child emotional problems by a factor of 4 relative to same-sex parents,

> accounting for the bulk of the overall same-sex/opposite-sex difference.

And here's the conclusion:

> Conclusion: Joint biological parentage, the modal condition for opposite-sex parents but not possible for same-sex parents, sharply differentiates between the two groups on child emotional problem outcomes. The two groups are different by definition. Intact opposite-sex marriage ensures children of the persistent presence of their joint biological parents; same-sex marriage ensures the opposite. However, further work is needed to determine the mechanisms involved.

I blogged recently about another study that found other differences between the children of same-sex couples and the children of heterosexual couples.

From a public policy point of view, there are always going to be times where there is a conflict between the needs of small children, and the wants of selfish adults. In that case, I think we should side with the small children, since they are more vulnerable. It's alarming to me to see many "conservatives" put the desires of adults over the needs of children. That doesn't seem like a good position to take, morally speaking. Children do better when they are raised by a Mom and a Dad. We should pass laws to encourage grown-ups to live their lives in a way that they don't harm children.

1 million conservative United Methodist members leave denomination

June 3, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How are things working out for the United Methodists? They used to be a pretty moderate denomination. Not as Bible-based as the Presbyterian Church in America, but not as secular and leftist as the Episcopal Church. But recently, they've taken positions on theology and morality that no Bible-Believing Christian could accept. How did the Bible-believing Christians in the church respond to that?

Here's the story from Christian Post:

> A regional body of the United Methodist Church with approximately 1 million members has voted to leave the mainline denomination over its acceptance of gay marriage and noncelibate gay clergy.
>
> The Côte d'Ivoire Conference based in West Africa voted earlier this week to leave the UMC after the denomination's decision to remove rules banning the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination of people in romantic same-sex relationships from its Book of Discipline.
>
> With approximately a million members, the conference was one of the largest regional bodies within the worldwide denomination, according to UM News.
>
> The approved decision argues that "the new United Methodist Church has preferred to sacrifice its honorability and integrity to honor the LGBT" and that "the new United Methodist Church is now based on sociocultural and contextual values which have consumed its doctrinal and disciplinary integrity."

This is not the only group to leave the United Methodist Church:

> Over the past few decades, the UMC had been embroiled in a divisive debate over whether to remove language from its Book of Discipline that prohibited the blessing of gay unions, the ordination of noncelibate homosexuals, and the funding of LGBT advocacy groups.
>
> In response to the never-ending nature of the debate and many liberal leaders within the UMC refusing to follow or enforce the rules, around 7,500 mostly conservative congregations disaffiliated from the denomination over the last few years.
>
> Most of these departing congregations opted to affiliate with the Global Methodist Church, a theologically conservative alternative to the UMC launched in 2022.
>
> At the UMC General Conference earlier this year, delegates overwhelmingly voted to remove the Book of Discipline language, opening the door for the acceptance of same-sex marriage and ordaining clergy in gay unions.
>
> At the same General Conference, delegates voted to approve the departure of

> the UMC Eurasian Episcopal Area, which has four annual conferences in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The United Methodists aren't the only denomination who find Jesus' definition of marriage in Matthew 19:1-6 to be factually incorrect.

American Protestant denominations, such as United Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, The Episcopal Church USA, Presbyterian Church USA, Disciples of Christ, United Methodists generally oppose Jesus' definition of marriage.

Outside of America, the Church of England approves blessing same-sex unions and Pope Francis formally approved letting Catholic priests bless same-sex couples.

How is all of this apostasy working out for the secular left denominations?

According to Religion Unplugged, it's not working out well:

- United Church of Christ -52%
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America -41%
- The Episcopal Church USA -36%
- Presbyterian Church USA -58%
- United Methodist Church -31%

Meanwhile, conservative denominations are thriving:

- Presbyterian Church in America +101%
- Assemblies of God +51%

This isn't the first time that United Methodists have gotten into trouble for choosing feelings over truth. The United Methodists recently adopted women pastors. Maybe that decision has something to do with their continued decline, in both orthodoxy and attendance?

What can Christians learn from the bravest naval aviator at the Battle of Midway?

June 4, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been reading lots of books about the World War II battles in the Pacific theater lately, and I wanted to write a post about one of the heroes I found who was the most compelling to me. You may have seen him in the old 1976 Midway movie or the new 2019 Midway movie. But neither movie tells the full story. The man I am talking about is Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.

John Waldron was the leader of the torpedo bomber squadron on the Hornet. This squadron was composed of outdated and slow Devastator torpedo bombers, armed with the Mark 13 Mod 1 torpedoes, which malfunctioned about 90% of the time.

I found an article on the Federalist that tells the story of John Waldron:

> Now there are countless men and woman who deserve to be singled out for their valor, but with the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Midway just around the corner, I thought it would be appropriate to call your attention to one of the bravest men who ever lived. A man who, knowing he was facing certain death, led the first attack against the Japanese aircraft carriers and played a direct role in what would be a decisive victory for the United States, and a defeat from which Japan would never recover. That man was Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.
>
> Now for those who don't know, the Battle of Midway was the turning point in the Pacific theater. The Japanese had an elaborate plan that involved attacking the U.S. base on Midway Island in order to lure the Americans into a battle which the Japanese High command felt their experience and tactics would overwhelm and annihilate the American fleet. With no significant U.S. naval presence, Hawaii and the entire West Coast would be at risk of invasion. But the Americans broke the Japanese code and set a trap of their own – hoping to destroy their enemy's carriers and thereby establish U.S. dominance in the Pacific. And that was exactly what happened : The U.S. fleet surprised the Japanese, sank their four carriers, and took the first real step to winning the Second World War.
>
> John Waldron was 42 years old when the *USS Hornet* steamed towards Midway on June 1st, 1942. Born and raised on a reservation in South Dakota, he had never seen the ocean until he attended the Naval Academy. It wasn't long after he graduated that he moved into naval aviation. He had been assigned to be the squadron leader of the *Hornet's* torpedo bombers in late 1941 and had been drilling his men tirelessly ever since. Waldron had the reputation of a tough as nails, no-nonsense commander. Not surprising, since Waldron was a direct descendant of the warriors from the Oglala Lakota tribe – part of the Great Sioux Nation. The tough skin he developed came from decades of derision from his peers over his meager beginnings, and from the racism directed at his Native

> American heritage. Waldron didn't care what anyone thought of him – all he wanted to do was fight for his country. He was a natural leader and his men would follow him into the gates of Hell, which, as fate would have it, is exactly what they would do in the upcoming battle.
>
> On the morning of June 4th, the Americans were ready to spring their trap, but in the preflight briefing aboard the *Hornet* there was a problem. Stanhope Ring, who was in command of the carrier's air group, directed his pilots to head northwest of the last reported position of the Japanese fleet. Waldron disagreed with this decision, feeling that they should head in the exact direction of that last sighting. He wasn't shy about expressing this opinion, much the displeasure of Ring. Waldron continued to lobby his superior officer several times after the briefing ended, but to no avail.

The Federalist article doesn't talk much about Stanhope Ring, but the book I just finished called "The Battle of Midway" by Craig L. Symonds did. Ring was a very tall, good-looking, and white officer who had breezed up the chain of command thanks to his good looks and confident manner. He loved to show off for cameras, and pull rank on subordinates. He was too proud to admit that Waldron was right in front of the other pilots.

More:

> The air strike force took off from the deck of the *Hornet* – fighters, dive bombers, and the 15 planes in Waldron's torpedo squadron. This force would be joined in the air by similar strike forces from the other U.S. carriers – the *Yorktown* and the *Enterprise*. Shortly after the Hornet's air group was airborne, Waldron couldn't contain his anger anymore. He broke radio silence to tell Ring that they were headed in the wrong direction. He repeated that comment and Ring issued a terse reply that he was in charge of this group and to stay the hell off the radio. Waldron waited a couple of minutes before replying "The hell with you" and peeled his squadron off and headed due west, where he felt the Japanese fleet was.
>
> Less than an hour later, Waldron was proved right. He had led his squadron on a direct line to the enemy. Waldron broke radio silence again to signal to Ring that he had found the fleet, but Ring and the rest of the *Hornet's* planes were too far away to hear. So now, Waldron was faced with a brutal decision. If he went in to attack, he would do so without any fighter protection, and they'd be totally at the mercy of the Japanese fighters. To make matters worse, the U.S. planes (Douglas Devastators) were hopelessly outdated aircraft – their top speed was about a third of what the Japanese fighters could do. They had hoped to get the newer Grumman Avengers, but the *Hornet* had left Pearl Harbor before they had arrived from the mainland. All of this meant that Waldron and Torpedo 8 were looking at a suicidal attack run. […]Waldron got on the radio again and told his men "We will go in. We won't turn back. Former strategy cannot be used. We will attack. Good luck!"

> And with that, the planes of Torpedo 8 closed up their formation and bore down on the Japanese fleet, some seven miles distant.
>
> The Japanese fighters quickly pounced on the Americans, who were going in low and slow – the only way torpedo bombers can attack. One by one the planes from Torpedo 8 were shot down. […]Every single plane in Torpedo 8 was destroyed and not one torpedo hit a Japanese ship.

Not only were the torpedo bombers of John Waldron's VT-8 (Hornet) shot down, but two more waves led by Eugene Lindsey VT-6 (Enterprise) and Edward Massey VT-3 (Yorktown) were also repulsed without a hit.

More:

> History might have viewed Waldron's attack as more insane than brave, and utterly pointless….except for what happened next. Shortly after his failed attack, the torpedo squadron from the *Enterprise* attacked the fleet – and right after that the torpedo squadron from the *Yorktown*. Both of those squadrons had devastating casualties as well (10 of 14 planes lost and 10 of 12 respectively) without inflicting any damage on any Japanese ship. But these three attacks in succession drew the Japanese fighter cover down so low, that it left their carriers exposed to dive bomber attacks. It also burned up a lot of fuel for the fighters, who now needed to land before they could continue their defense of the fleet. The attacks also forced the Japanese carriers into defensive maneuvers, so they were unable to land any planes or launch any for a strike on the American carriers.

In addition to using up their fuel and coming down to low altitude, the Japanese CAP (combat air patrol) fighters also used up most of their dangerous 20 mm ammunition. They mostly had much weaker 7.7 mm ammunition remaining when the dive bombers from the Enterprise and Yorktown arrived.

More:

> As the Japanese were trying to compose themselves after the three fierce but harmless attacks, the American dive bombers from the *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* arrived and quickly struck. Within minutes, three of the Japanese carriers were in flames – the heart of the Imperial Navy had been gutted.
>
> […]The other planes from the Hornet never found the Japanese ships. Ring kept his planes flying in that northwesterly direction until they were too low on fuel to keep going. They returned to the *Hornet* with their full payload of bombs.
>
> […]Now, there were a lot of heroes that day – some who lived and some who died, but the valor that John Waldron displayed in defying orders he knew were wrong and then attacking the enemy when he knew it meant certain death, place him on a special level. His actions directly helped the Americans win this crucial battle, which turned the tide of the war in the favor of the United States. He got

> the Navy Cross for his actions that day, but it seems astonishing to me that he wasn't awarded the Medal of Honor – he is definitely worthy of it.

You can learn more about the Battle of Midway in this helpful video:

So, here is what I wanted to say about this.

John Waldron was not properly equipped by his organization to make a difference at Midway. His planes were too old and slow, his torpedoes almost never worked. His leader was an arrogant, incompetent coward who prevented him from leading others to find and attack the actual targets. The only way he could do something to his enemy was to disobey orders and go off on his own. If he had lived, he probably would have been court-martialed for insubordination. After Waldron was shot down, every single one of the men in his squadron continued their attack until they too were all shot down. Everyone watching must have thought "what a waste of effort". It was only later that it became evident to all that what he did was necessary for the second wave to succeed.

This plaque at the United States Naval Academy Club honors the three commanders of the torpedo bomber squadrons:

Plaque honoring the Midway torpedo bomber squadron commanders

According to the Family Research Council, the plaque reads:

> The torpedo attacks of Waldron, Lindsey, and Massey had followed hard upon each other by luck. What was not luck, but the soul of the United States in action, was the willingness of the torpedo plane squadrons to go in against hopeless odds. This was the extra ounce of martial weight that in a few decisive minutes tipped the balance of history.

When I read this story, it immediately occurred to me that this is the problem that serious Christians are facing today. Parents and pastors are not equipping young people to actually make a difference. Instead of finding and fighting the real targets: atheism, radical feminism, communism, etc., all our forces have been sent on wild goose chases, so that now "Christians" are actually trying to promote the priorities of the secular left, e.g. – global warming, wealth redistribution, affirming sexual immorality, open borders,

critical race theory, etc.

The few of us who actually know how to do our jobs are poorly equipped. We are prevented from leading by organizations that are focused on feelings rather than results. We can only hope that our decision to attack against hopeless odds somehow paves the way for a second wave to succeed. It has happened before, and that’s why we should be brave and continue to engage our opponents using tools that work (philosophy of religion, evidential apologetics, scientific research, historical evidence, chastity, sobriety, self-control, good stewardship of our educations, careers and finances, effective charitable giving, self-sacrificial love, etc.).

New study: Mental health issues persist after receiving “gender-affirming” treatment

June 5, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This brand new study is authored by one of the pioneers in “gender-affirming” treatment. It was published in the peer-reviewed “European Psychiatry”. The title of the article is “Have the psychiatric needs of people seeking gender reassignment changed as their numbers increase? A register study in Finland”. Let’s take a look at the findings.

The researchers looked at 3,665 people who received gender identity services between 1996 to 2019. This is a huge study. And we’ll see in a minute that the author used to be in favor of gender-affirming treatment – so she’s not biased against it.

Here’s the results section:

> The GD [gender dysphoria] group had received many times more specialist-level psychiatric treatment both before and after contacting specialized GIS [gender identity services] than had their matched controls. A marked increase over time in psychiatric needs was observed. Among the GD group, relative risk for psychiatric needs after contacting GIS increased from 3.3 among those with the first appointment in GIS during 1996–2000 to 4.6 when the first appointment in GIS was in 2016–2019. When index period and psychiatric treatment before contacting GIS were accounted for, GR [gender reassignment] patients who had and who had not proceeded to medical GR had an equal risk compared to controls of needing subsequent psychiatric treatment.

Receiving “many times more specialist-level psychiatric treatments” resulted in “A marked increase over time in psychiatric needs”.

And the conclusion reaffirms that:

> Contacting specialized GIS [gender identity services] is on the increase and occurs at ever younger ages and with more psychiatric needs. Manifold psychiatric needs persist regardless of medical GR [gender reassignment].

Psychiatric needs persist REGARDLESS of medical gender reassignment. That means gender reassignment – so-called “gender-affirming care” – makes no difference to the patient’s mental health.

This study got picked up in the news, as you might expect, since it contradicts the narrative of the secular left. What’s the narrative of the secular left? “Right and wrong don’t exist. My feelings are very important. You need to not judge me. You need to affirm me.”

Here’s an article from the UK Daily Mail that talks about the author of the study:

> A woman who led European efforts to give puberty blockers to trans children has bared all about U-turning on gender-affirming care, as it is known, and debunks

> treatments she now calls ‘dangerous.’
>
> Dr Riittakerttu Kaltiala, chief psychiatrist at the Tampere University Hospital Department of Adolescent Psychiatry in Finland, has revealed why she changed her mind about helping minors medically transition.
>
> Writing in The Free Press, Dr Kaltiala says the Western medical establishment has been cowed by trans activists into a ‘dangerous groupthink’ of pushing risky sex-altering drugs on children.
>
> ‘Gender transition has gotten out of hand,’ says Dr Kaltiala.

What I’d like to see now is for conservatives to pass laws that allow people who were victimized by the secular leftist butchers to sue those butchers for compensation. It’s very important that the “don’t judge” crowd is punished for the harm caused by their not judging. That’s the only way that they will understand that the people they think are evil (the moral people, the boundary setters) are actually good. And the people they think are good (the feelings people, the don’t judge people) are evil.

Let’s see some money change hands over this controversy, so everyone can be clear about the value of moral leadership and spiritual leadership.

Meet four heroes of the D-Day invasion of Normandy on June 6th, 1944

June 6, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought it might be a good idea to write up something about D-Day in order to help people understand some of our military history, and to put the spotlight on some real heroes. I don't regard artists, athletes, dancers, singers, actors, or other celebrities as heroes. It really alarms me that so many people know more about these fake heroes than they do about real ones.

Weakness emboldens aggressors

For one thing, many people don't understand how British and American libertarian isolationism made World War 2 into a much bigger mess than it needed to be. As historian Victor Davis Hanson explains in the lecture I linked below, the Allied nations were much stronger and better equipped than the Axis nations before the war started. The Axis nations developed better weapons after the war started. But Germany and Japan didn't think that the Allied nations would do anything if they were aggressive. We know this from their writings and correspondence. They thought that British and Americans were just too scared of war to stop them.

Germany and Japan tested their hypothesis out by re-arming and annexing territory from their neighbors. Britain and America were led by libertarian isolationists, so they didn't fight back. The aggressors correctly understood that libertarian isolationists didn't have the will to oppose them, even if they were weaker than the Allies. But the more they re-armed and annexed territory, the stronger they became. The Allied nations waited too long to confront them. And that's why World War 2 was much harder to win than it needed to be.

Here's a very good lecture about the causes of World War 2 by an actual military historian, Victor Davis Hanson:

So, that's the first point I wanted to make: libertarian isolationism causes wars. Although libertarians claim to oppose war, they actually cause war, due to their weakness in the face of evil. So who stops wars? People who favor a strong defense, and show a willingness to fight back against aggression are the ones who REALLY oppose wars. This is called "peace through strength", and you can see it in action in the Cold War, where Ronald Reagan defeated the Soviet Union by making their aggression costly.

Heroes of D-Day

My second concern was to promote the real heroes of D-Day, over the fictional heroes of movies, fiction, music, dancing, sports, and other entertainment nonsense.

Here are the four heroes I chose:

- Major John Howard
- Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort
- Brigadier General Norman Cota
- Major Richard Winters

Let's take a look at each of them.

John Howard

Major John Howard led elements of the British 6th Airborne Division to take two vital bridges southeast of Sword beach. He did this in order to prevent German socialist counterattacks coming from the east. After they took the bridges, they had to repulse German tanks with nothing more than their useless PIAT (Projector Infantry Anti-Tank) grenade launchers. The PIAT was nothing more than a grenade launcher powered by a coiled spring. It was very inaccurate, and only effective to 50 yards. But that's all the British paratroops had to stop tanks, and they made it work. You can read about him in this book by Stephen E. Ambrose, entitled: "Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944". This New York Times article tells the story in brief. He also is played by Richard Todd in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Benjamin Vandervoort

Lt. Col. Ben Vandervoort served with the 82nd Airborne Division. I read about how he lead an infantry attack against German Tiger tanks (!) and infantry in Stephen E. Ambrose's book "Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany". Ben Vandervoort broke his ankle during the D-Day landing, but he insisted that the medic just "lace it up tight" so that he could supervise the attacking

and holding of Ste. Mere Eglise, southwest of Utah beach, against a vastly superior enemy force. This article tells about how he defended against elite German SS infantry and heavy Tiger tanks at Trois-Ponts, during the Battle of the Bulge. He was outgunned and outnumbered 20 to 1, and had just a few lightly-armed soldiers, two weak 57mm anti-tank guns and some bazookas. He is portrayed by John Wayne in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Norman Cota

Brig. General Norman Cota is my favorite person in World War 2. At 51 years old, he nevertheless landed at D-Day, and rallied terrified Army Rangers to follow him up the bluff, by telling them that Rangers ought to lead the way. "Rangers Lead The Way" later became the motto of the Army Rangers. He always led from the front, demonstrating how to attack a German machine gun position in a farmhouse to a group of American soldiers who were pinned down. He actually grabbed a bunch of grenades and led the assault team against a heavy machine gun! You can read about him in this short article and in Stephen E. Ambrose's "D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II". He is portrayed by Robert Mitchum in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Richard Winters

Major Richard Winters served in the 101st Airborne Division. Winters led an assault against a superior force of heavy machine guns and 105mm field guns. His tactics were so brilliant that they are still studied at West Point today. You can see Richard Winters and Carwood Lipton in the HBO "Band of Brothers" series, or read this book by Stephen E. Ambrose entitled "Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne, from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest", which is the basis for that series.

I hope this convinces you that military heroes are far more important than the "heroes" of fiction and entertainment. It's alarming to me that people invest more and have more respect for characters in Hollywood science fiction movies, and other such make-believe nonsense. We need to be rooted in reality. In reality, men who fight and die fighting evil to protect your freedoms are the real heroes. People who take military history seriously are able to give respect and gratitude where it is due – a very important part of being a mature, moral human being.

Study: sentences are 63% more severe for men than for women

June 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, in response to yesterday's post, I have been asked what are some of the other reasons that cause men to become disinterested in dating and marriage. I have a list as long as my arm. But here's another one for today. Today's reason is that the legal is system is biased against men. There many examples of the bias, but I'll focus on sentencing.

The study I want to talk about today is called "Estimating Gender Disparities in Federal Criminal Cases", and it's published in the peer-reviewed journal "*American Law and Economics Review".*

The abstract says this:

> This paper assesses and decomposes gender disparities in federal criminal cases. It finds large unexplained gaps favoring women throughout the sentence length distribution, conditional on arrest offense, criminal history, and other pre-charge observables. Decompositions show that most of the unexplained disparity appears to emerge during charging, plea-bargaining, and sentencing fact-finding. The approach provides an important complement to prior disparity studies, which have focused on sentencing and have not incorporated disparities arising from those earlier stages. I also consider various plausible causal theories that could explain the estimated gender gap, using the rich dataset to test their implications.

The key sentence there is "It finds large unexplained gaps favoring women throughout the sentence length distribution, conditional on arrest offense, criminal history, and other pre-charge observables."

I also found this paragraph interesting:

> The estimated gender disparities are strikingly large, conditional on observables. Most notably, treatment as male is associated with a 63% average increase in sentence length, with substantial unexplained gaps throughout the sentence distribution.

This anti-male discrimination becomes apparent to men when they are going through the divorce process.

About 70% of divorces are initiated by women, and most of them for frivolous reasons (reasons that were not recognized as valid in the law prior to "no-fault-divorce" being enacted). The reasons are also not recognized in the Bible. Throughout the divorce process, men encounter anti-male bias. This begins with the common use of false accusations against the man, in order to get sole custody, which provides the woman

with greater child support payments from the man. These false accusations are usually not based on any evidence, such as police reports. They just emerge during the divorce proceedings and are used to eject the man from the home, and get the woman sole custody of the kids. In 90% of cases, the woman gets sole custody of the kids. And this is despite the fact that single-father homes have similar outcomes for children as married two-parents homes. The results of single-mother homes are disastrous for children in many areas, including poverty, crime, mental health, sexual activity, etc. But the court system insists on doing what is worse for children by separating the father from the child. Even the meager visitation rights that fathers get are not enforced.

Failure to pay alimony and child support can land men in prison. And the laws are enforced very unfairly there, as well. Consider this case from Canada:

> A wealthy businessman will have to pay more than $50,000 a month in spousal support for 10 years to a woman with whom he had a long-term romantic relationship even though they kept separate homes and had no children together, Ontario's top court has ruled.

Seeing this, many men today have declined to participate in dating and marriage. And I could come up with *dozens* more reasons like this one. Based in peer-reviewed studies. It's not one reason deterring men from marrying, it's dozens of reasons. In every case, society has decided that men are expendable. And sadly, the church has largely ignored the root causes of men's retreat from dating and marriage. The church simply has nothing at all to say to men who are faced with these risks, costs and disincentives.

When I explain these problems to pro-marriage conservatives, they confess to never having heard about any of these issues. They say "I just like the idea of people falling in love and having lots of cute babies". They haven't really bothered to think about the calculations that men run before deciding what to do with women. Maybe it's time for Christian leaders to do a little more homework about these issues. Maybe there is something Christian churches can do to make marriage a bit more appealing to men.

We are already seeing this happening in conservative states like Florida and Tennessee. In Florida, there are new laws requiring that child custody be 50-50 in most circumstances. This acts as a deterrent against women who want to file frivolous divorces just to get child support from wealthy men. Florida also banned permanent alimony, which is another positive step to make marriage more fair for men. (Although many women in Florida were furious about it). In Tennessee, it is now a misdemeanor to claim child support payments from a man who is not the biological father of the child.

These are the kinds of policy solutions that will bring marriage back. But I've never heard Christians talking about these issues. All I ever hear from pious Christian leaders is that men need to "man up", as if manning up makes the threats from feminist laws and courts disappear. It doesn't work, but it does signal virtue, which seems to be the goal of many pious Christian leaders. We're going to have to do better than virtue-signaling if we want to reverse the decline of marriage. It's not going to be solved by shaming and blaming

men.

Knight and Rose Show #50: Identity in Christ

June 8, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 50 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discussing how your "identity in Christ" helps you to leave behind your old self and do useful work for Boss. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the concept of "identity in Christ". We discuss how your identity in Christ changes your desires, capabilities, priorities and goals. We contrast your identity in Christ with non-Christian ways of viewing yourself. We discuss the ways that a stronger identity in Christ helps you to resist the culture and have an active, productive relationship with God.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show (with timestamps) provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 50:

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical souls

June 9, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This podcast is a must-listen. Please take the time to download this podcast and listen to it. I guarantee that you will love this podcast. I even recommended it to my *Dad* and I almost never do that.

Details:

> In this podcast, J. Warner examines the evidence for the existence of the mind (and inferentially, the soul) as he looks at six classic philosophical arguments. Jim also briefly discusses Thomas Nagel's book, Mind and Cosmos and discusses the limitations of physicalism.

The MP3 file is here. (67 MB, 72 minutes)

Topics:

- Atheist Thomas Nagel's latest book "Mind and Cosmos" makes the case that materialism cannot account for the evidence of mental phenomena
- Nagel writes in this recent New York Times article that materialism cannot account for the reality of consciousness, meaning, intention and purpose
- Quote from the Nagel article:

> Even though the theistic outlook, in some versions, is consistent with the available scientific evidence, I don't believe it, and am drawn instead to a naturalistic, though non-materialist, alternative. Mind, I suspect, is not an inexplicable accident or a divine and anomalous gift but a basic aspect of nature that we will not understand until we transcend the built-in limits of contemporary scientific orthodoxy.

- When looking at this question, it's important to not have our conclusions pre-determined by presupposing materialism or atheism
- If your mind/soul doesn't exist and you are a purely physical being then that is a defeater for Christianity, so we need to respond
- Traditionally, Christians have been committed to a view of human nature called "dualism" – human beings are souls who *have* bodies
- The best way* to argue for the existence of the soul is using philosophical arguments

The case:

- The law of identity says that if A = B' if A and B have the exact same properties
- If A = the mind and B = the brain, then is A identical to B?

- Wallace will present 6 arguments to show that A is not identical to B because they have different properties

Not everyone of the arguments below might make sense to you, but you will probably find one or two that strike you as correct. Some of the points are more illustrative than persuasive, like #2. However, I do find #3, #5 and #6 persuasive.

1) First-person access to mental properties

- Thought experiment: Imagine your dream car, and picture it clearly in your mind
- If we invited an artist to come and sketch out your dream car, then we could see your dream car's shape on paper
- This concept of your dream car is not something that people can see by looking at your brain structure
- Physical properties can be physically accessed, but the properties of your dream care and privately accessed

2) Our experience of consciousness implies that we are not our bodies

- Common sense notion of personhood is that we own our bodies, but we are not our bodies

3) Persistent self-identity through time

- Thought experiment: replacing a new car with an old car one piece at a time
- When you change even the smallest part of a physical object, it changes the identity of that object
- Similarly, your body is undergoing changes constantly over time
- Every cell in your body is different from the body you had 10 years ago
- Even your brain cells undergo changes (see this from New Scientist – WK)
- If you are the same person you were 10 years ago, then you are not your physical body

4) Mental properties cannot be measured like physical objects

- Physical objects can be measured (e.g. – use physical measurements to measure weight, size, etc.)
- Mental properties cannot be measured

5) Intentionality or About-ness

- Mental entities can refer to realities that are physical, something outside of themselves
- A tree is not about anything, it just is a physical object
- But you can have thoughts about the tree out there in the garden that needs water

6) Free will and personal responsibility

- If humans are purely physical, then all our actions are determined by sensory inputs and genetic programming
- Biological determinism is not compatible with free will, and free will is required for personal responsibility
- Our experience of moral choices and moral responsibility requires free will, and free will requires minds/souls

He spends the last 10 minutes of the podcast responding to naturalistic objections to the mind/soul hypothesis.

*Now in the podcast, Wallace does say that scientific evidence is not the best kind of evidence to use when discussing this issue of body/soul and mind/brain. But I did blog before about two pieces of evidence that I think are relevant to this discussion: corroborated near-death experiences and mental effort.

You might remember that Dr. Craig brought up the issue of substance dualism, and the argument from intentionality ("aboutness"), in his debate with the naturalist philosopher Alex Rosenberg, so this argument about dualism is battle-ready. You can add it to your list of arguments for Christian theism along with all the other arguments like the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, stellar habitability, galactic habitability, irreducible complexity, molecular machines, the Cambrian explosion, the moral argument, the resurrection, biological convergence, and so on.

FBI and ERLC wanted to cover-up anti-Christian motives of LGBT terrorist

June 10, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The manifesto of the transgender terrorist who shot up a Christian school in Nashville has finally been released, despite the efforts of the Biden administration and the ERLC.

Here's the latest from the UK Daily Mail:

> Transgender killer Audrey Hale wrote about her 'imaginary penis' and how she would 'kill' to get puberty blockers in the weeks before her horrific attack on the Covenant School in Nashville last year.
>
> The Tennessee Star obtained some four dozen pages of Hale's writings that shed light on her female-to-male transition and why she shot and killed six people at the elementary school in March 2023.
>
> Hale wrote about anger toward her parents, how she hated her conservative Christian upbringing, and how she had suffered because hormone blockers were not available when she was as a child.
>
> The explosive writings, sometimes referred to as Hale's 'manifesto,' have been a source of controversy, with many accusing officials of keeping them secret because they would hurt the trans community.
>
> Now released, they help explain why the 28-year-old artist, who identified as a male named Aiden, shot her way into the Tennessee school, killing three adults and three nine-year-olds, before responding officers killed her.

A big Democrat city and the Democrat Biden federal law enforcement opposed the release of the shooter's manifesto:

> After the shooting, Nashville's Metropolitan Police Chief John Drake said his force had recovered the shooter's manifesto, as well as hand-drawn maps in her car, and said they would eventually be made public.
>
> But both city police and the FBI later said the material shouldn't be released because it could hurt the investigations.

But they could not escape the investigative efforts of the conservative Tennessee Star:

> The Star and others have been part of a lawsuit seeking to compel the Metro Nashville Police Department (MNPD) and the FBI to release Hale's writings.
>
> The FBI reportedly advised the MNPD not to release them and other 'legacy tokens' in the wake of mass shootings.

Daily Wire had more to say: (archived)

> So there's nothing political in the manifesto, according to the director of the

> Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. There's nothing coherent at all, except maybe a desire to emulate school shooters. That's what they told us, and if you asked questions — as you just saw — the media labeled you a conspiracy theorist. But at the same time, they wouldn't let us see the manifesto for ourselves. That was a pretty big clue that they were lying to us. And indeed, once again thanks to the Tennessee Star, we have the proof.
>
> […]You know that's a lie because the FBI's failure to release the manifesto is what led to false narratives, as you just saw. Without the manifesto, the media was free to lie to us — and pretend that there was no relation whatsoever between the shooter's transgender identity and the killings. But in fact, there was a clear relationship. This shooter was clearly enraged about the fact she couldn't be a man. Joe Biden's DOJ understands that this kind of revelation might be a set back for the White House's narrative, so they just covered it up. They told you that the "trans community" was in danger instead.
>
> In a country where the government actually cared about the well-being of its own citizens, and felt the slightest need to be honest with them, this would be a national scandal. The FBI director and the senior leadership of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation would all be fired immediately, at a minimum. But our government instead lies as a matter of course — and they're not subtle about it. That's why the government's narrative about the Tennessee shooter is just one of several mainstream lies, cooked up by the government and promoted by the media, that we're only learning about this week.

If you're looking for a good conservative news source, you might want to check out the Tennessee Star. They stayed on the case and finally got us the information, despite the efforts of the secular leftists to cover up the details of a terrorist attack against conservative Christians.

New study: Covid vaccines could be partly to blame for rise in excess deaths

June 11, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Matt Walsh linked to this article from the UK Telegraph in his article about how federal and state law enforcement covered up the motive of the Nashville shooter (archived). The UK Telegraph talks about a new study that suggests that a rise in "excess deaths" since the pandemic. The study does not conclude that vaccines were responsible for excess deaths.

Here's the article from the UK Telegraph: (archived)

> Covid vaccines could be partly to blame for the rise in excess deaths since the pandemic, scientists have suggested.
>
> Researchers from The Netherlands analysed data from 47 Western countries and discovered there had been more than three million excess deaths since 2020, with the trend continuing despite the rollout of vaccines and containment measures.
>
> They said the "unprecedented" figures "raised serious concerns" and called on governments to fully investigate the underlying causes, including possible vaccine harms.
>
> […]The study found that across Europe, the US and Australia there had been more than one million excess deaths in 2020, at the height of the pandemic, but also 1.2 million in 2021 and 800,000 and 2022 after measures were implemented.
>
> **Researchers said the figure included deaths from Covid-19, but also the "indirect effects of the health strategies to address the virus spread and infection".**
>
> **They warned that side effects linked to the Covid vaccine had included ischaemic stroke, acute coronary syndrome and brain haemorrhage, cardiovascular diseases, coagulation, haemorrhages, gastrointestinal events and blood clotting.**

I think this is significant, because there was always concern among taxpayers that these vaccine mandates were being pushed by secular leftist fascists who were irrationally overexuberant about the idea of forcing people to act uniformly. The fascists don't like differences of opinion or behavior. That's why they like things like mass transit, but despise individual retirement accounts. They long for a "unity" brought about through the use of government power.

Secular left fascists realize that science has the respect of taxpayers, so they want to misuse science to compel taxpayers to behave uniformly. You can see it with the way that global warming hysteria is used to control the decision-making of taxpayers around

energy consumption.

Another problem with the vaccines was how it was impossible for taxpayers to sue the vaccine manufacturers in case the product caused harm. I can’t think of another product that has an exemption like that. You would think that Ralph Nader socialists would want to protect taxpayers from big corporations, but we saw the opposite. Secular leftists sided with corporations, and the propaganda against dissent was so strong that the secular left had many people believing that firings, imprisonment and seizing of children were all appropriate ways of dealing with dissenters.

What useful things can Christians learn by studying metaphysics?

June 12, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a little experience with metaphysics – just what I learned from a few lectures by the wonderful Christian professor Dr. J. P. Moreland. What I remember from those lectures is that metaphysics can be useful for defending the reality of non-physical minds, and dogmatic skepticism is self-refuting. But I found a nice, easy article by Tyson James to give us a real overview of metaphysics.

His article is on Worldview Bulletin.

He starts like this:

> One day, a close church friend asked me, "What is metaphysics?" Dr. Paul Gould notes in a previous article that local bookstores often locate the subject of metaphysics somewhere around tarot cards and astrology. It may be surprising, then, for some to learn that metaphysics is actually the name of a very important field in philosophy.
>
> So, what is metaphysics to philosophers and what in the world does it have to do with Christianity? These are actually very important questions, since metaphysics is a subject which touches on some of the most fundamental elements of the Christian faith.

So, I looked down the list and he has these:

- Is there a first cause?
- Do we have free will?
- Are there any unchanging truths?
- What are space and time?
- How do things which change maintain their identity over time?
- Is the physical universe all there is?
- Are objective morals real?

This is what he has to say about the one I remember:

> How do things which change maintain their identity over time? Christians believe that the same person who was a sinner may also accept Christ, be saved from his sins, and enjoy eternity with God. But some people say that there is no "self" which maintains identity over time, that we're just collections of atoms which change every time an atom is gained, lost, or rearranged. So, answering this question is important for showing that the same person who is lost without Jesus may be saved and restored in Jesus.

As a software engineer from an immigrant family, reading philosophy is as painful to me

as a root canal. I just keep thinking “why do I have to know this if no one will pay me to know this?” But I like to win apologetics battles more, so I have forced myself to learn a little about some of the topics in his list. Every good Christian apologist knows how to defend philosophical attacks, like the problem of evil, religious pluralism, postmodernism, physicalism of minds, the hiddenness of God, rational unbelief, animal pain, etc. And we know how to go on the attack with objective morality, mind-body dualism, persistent identity through time, free will, etc. Not to mention first cause arguments, but I try to only think about that as a scientific problem. Metaphysics is useful for many of these tasks.

Anyway, metaphysics. Let me find you something useful to teach you some metaphysics. Here is a good short essay from Dr. John Depoe, who defends the reality of the non-physical minds, which is also known as “substance dualism”, because there are two substances – your body and your mind.

He writes about the persistent identity argument for the soul:

> Another argument supporting substance dualism is that one maintains personal identity through change. Even though one is continuously going through physical changes and experiencing different mental states, a person continues to be the same person. If persons were identical with their physical parts or mental states, they would cease to be the same persons as these changes occurred. Therefore, it is necessary to postulate an immaterial, substantial self that endures through change.
>
> Suppose that someone believes that people do not maintain identity through change and concludes that the previous argument for substance dualism fails. This denial of personal identity through change, I contend, presents untenable difficulties. First, there is one’s own awareness of being the same person through change. Moreover, if one is not literally the same person through these changes, how can a person maintain long-term goals and desires?

If you are your body, and your body is always changing, then you aren’t the same person now as 5 minutes ago.

There are many other good arguments for real non-physical minds. First of all, we know about the existence of at least one non-physical mind. God. That’s who brings the physical universe into being. He’s not physical. And there is also our first-person awareness of our mental state, our experience of consciousness, our ability to think about other things (“intentionality”), and our experience of free will.

So you see, this is all very practical, even if it frightens my practical West Indian parents if I talk about it too much.

Biden admin launches prosecution of doctor who exposed child mutilation

June 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One o the most interesting things about secular leftists is their terrible fear that people who disagree with them will use coercion or force. But actually, if you look at secular left regimes throughout history, it's the secular leftists who love to resort to coercion and even violence to force people who disagree with them into silence or compliance or worse.

Here's the latest article from Christopher Rufo, writing for City Journal, the journal of the center-right Manhattan Institute.

He writes:

> A few years ago, Texas Children's Hospital made no secret of its support for transgender medicine. Its doctors proudly administered puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and other medical interventions to children who self-identified as "trans."
>
> Then the tone shifted. In the face of public pressure, CEO Mark Wallace announced that he was shutting down the child gender clinic. But doctors at the hospital, including Richard Ogden Roberts, David Paul, and Kristy Rialon, never stopped.
>
> The public would not have known if not for a courageous surgeon, Eithan Haim, who felt morally obligated to expose the subterfuge. He contacted me about how the hospital had lied about terminating the transgender medicine program, and that doctors were, in fact, continuing to perform sex-change procedures on children as young as 11.
>
> The story rocketed across the world. The hospital immediately went on the defensive. Within a week, Texas legislators passed a bill confirming that transgender medical procedures for minors were illegal.
>
> But the story also attracted attention from another powerful source: federal prosecutors. The Department of Justice has not shied from targeting political opponents of the Biden administration: former President Trump; conservative school board protesters; persons praying outside of abortion clinics; and now, doctors who dissent from transgender ideology.
>
> On the morning in June 2023 that Haim was to graduate from Texas Children Hospital's residency program, federal agents knocked on his door. They had identified him as a potential "leaker," presumably through forensic examination of the hospital's computer systems. Shortly thereafter, Assistant U.S. Attorney Tina Ansari began threatening Haim with prosecution.
>
> Now, Ansari has made good on those threats. Earlier this week, U.S. marshals

> appeared at Haim's home and summoned him to court to face an indictment on four felony counts of violating HIPAA. His initial appearance is next Monday, where he will learn more about the charges against him.

It's important for Christians and conservatives to understand that secular leftists are not just Christians with the God removed. They have no rational foundation for free will. They have no rational foundation for objective morality. And they have no rational basis for human rights, like religious liberty. When their will to power runs up against your conscience, then anything is possible.

This story reminds me of how secular leftists in Wisconsin organized pre-dawn raids against conservatives who disagreed with them.

Pre-dawn raids in Tennessee

Here's another case of secular leftists in government acting like domestic terrorists, this time from The Federalist:

> Pennsylvania family the FBI raided last September over the father's pro-life advocacy filed two claims today for a total of $4.35 million in damages due to the FBI's unconstitutional, "malicious," and "corrupt" use of "excessive force."
>
> Mark Houck and Ryan-Marie Houck say in their legal filings obtained by The Federalist that their seven children continue to suffer as a result of the FBI raiding — with battering rams, ballistic shields, armor, and long rifles — the home of a nonviolent pro-lifer who didn't own any guns and whose seven children were just waking for breakfast.
>
> The Houcks "have lost three babies from miscarriages due to the stress of the FBI's conduct and resulting prosecution" and subsequently been diagnosed with infertility, Ryan-Marie Houck's filing says. She says she still cries for hours and the family's high anxiety provoked by the raid has caused them to install security cameras and rarely leave home.
>
> In the Sept. 23, 2022 raid, "Government agents aimed rifles and handguns at Mr. Houck from his porch and from behind vehicles in his yard and driveway," Ryan-Marie Houcks' complaint says. "They also aimed their weapons at Mrs. Houck, who slowly walked down a staircase to approach the Houcks' front door. Mrs. Houck approached after Mr. Houck had already walked peacefully outside with his hands up. Any bullet that missed Mr. Houck could have struck Mrs. Houck or her children, who were stirring throughout the house and had gathered behind her on the staircase. The entire family was located directly downrange."
>
> The sunrise raid that included approximately 20 law enforcement officers was conducted after Mark Houck's lawyer had informed the Department of Justice he would voluntarily turn himself in if requested. Mark Houck's complaint says his 9-year-old daughter was terrified to find two officers dressed in black carrying rifles looking into their home through a back window.
>
> The Houcks' lawsuits say that, as a result of the "unnecessary" raid, "The

> children continually come to her [Ryan-Marie] crying and suffering from nightmares." Ryan-Marie and their five oldest children, ages 7 to 13, now must take medication "to get a few hours of sleep" each night.
>
> "Joshua was six years old at the time he saw his father taken away at gun point," says Ryan-Marie's complaint. "He cried the entire time and yelled to the FBI, 'Please don't take him he is my best friend.' To this day, any time someone brings up the raid or tells the story, he starts to cry as if he is reliving the day all over again. He constantly worries that he will lose his father or mother."
>
> Their 4-year-old has started sleepwalking, the claims say. The entire family seizes up with anxiety any time they have an unannounced visitor. Once, a friend showing up unannounced gave Ryan-Marie a panic attack, her filing says.

The accused man was found not guilty by a jury.

> A Pennsylvania jury acquitted Mark Houck in January on all charges the Department of Justice brought against him. The DOJ argued Houck had violated a federal law that prohibits physically obstructing abortion facilities. Houck and his son were 100 feet away from the facility when they were accosted by a pro-abortion escort.

The laws are not being enforced impartially:

> Mark Houck's complaint notes that, except for one single recent case, the DOJ has prosecuted only pro-lifers for alleged violations of the FACE Act used against him. The law is supposed to apply both to abortion supporters and pro-lifers, but the DOJ has almost exclusively used it against pro-lifers.

Sounds like stuff that you would see with other secular leftist regimes. Stalin in the Soviet Union. Mao in China. Pretty standard secular left morality. They hate people who disagree with them.

Pre-dawn raids in Wisconsin

In Wisconsin, Democrat District Attorney John Chisolm had no problem at all using law enforcement to go after conservatives who supported Act 10. He sent armed police to conduct pre-dawn raids on people like Cindy Archer, who were advocating for the law.

National Review reported on the Chisholm police raids:

> In two separate reports, National Review described these raids in detail. (The court cited our reports in its opinion.) On October 3, 2013, multiple Wisconsin conservatives were awakened by a persistent pounding on the door, their houses were illuminated by floodlights, and police — sometimes with guns drawn — poured into their homes. Once inside, the investigators turned the private residences of these innocent conservative citizens "upside down," seeking an extraordinarily broad range of documents and information. These raids were supplemented by subpoenas that secured for investigators massive amounts of

> electronic information.
>
> […]The raid victims have suffered severe, long-term consequences as a result of these raids. Almost to a person, they say they no longer feel secure in their own homes. They report watching what they say, terrified that overt political involvement could lead their homes to be invaded again. One victim said, “I tried to create a home where the kids always feel safe. Now they know they’re not. They know men with guns can come in their house, and there’s nothing we can do.” Another victim — whose son was home alone when police arrived, guns drawn — is haunted by this chilling thought: “He could have been in the shower. They could have broken the door down. He could have been shot. Over politics.”

By the way, this Legal News Online article about his wife, Colleen Chisolm, sheds light on his motivation for using law enforcement as a weapon against conservatives.

> Now a longtime [John] Chisholm subordinate reveals for the first time in this article that the district attorney may have had personal motivations for his investigation. Chisholm told him and others that Chisholm’s wife, Colleen, a teacher’s union shop steward at a school in St. Francis, which is near Milwaukee, had been repeatedly moved to tears by Walker’s anti-union policies in 2011, according to the former staff prosecutor in Chisholm’s office. Chisholm said in the presence of the former prosecutor that his wife “frequently cried when discussing the topic of the union disbanding and the effect it would have on the people involved … She took it personally.”
>
> […]Chisholm added… that “he felt that it was his personal duty to stop Walker from treating people like this.”

She cried, then he sent armed police to their houses. Law enforcement isn’t to protect taxpayers. Apparently, it’s to enforce secular leftist views on taxpayers.

What can we learn about communist leaders from the record of history?

June 14, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Now that we have atheistic communists in the majority of the House, Senate and White House, it might be a good idea to take a look at what atheistic communist leaders have done in history. First, let's see how the atheistic worldview of communist leaders affected religious people.

Here is what Josef Stalin did during his rule of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Library of Congress offers this in their "Soviet Archives exhibit":

> The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed.
>
> The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. By 1939 only about 500 of over 50,000 churches remained open.

What's the attitude of Democrat candidates to Bible-believing Christians? My read is that they think that Christian values need to be suppressed by the government lest they offend Democrat voters, who seem to be very easily offended these days. You can already see their animus towards Christians in their Equality Act, which eradicates conscience rights in order to protect (some) LGBT people from feeling offended.

The Ukraine Famine

Take a look at this UK Daily Mail article about Josef Stalin.

Excerpt:

> Now, 75 years after one of the great forgotten crimes of modern times, Stalin's man-made famine of 1932/3, the former Soviet republic of Ukraine is asking the world to classify it as a genocide.
>
> The Ukrainians call it the Holodomor – the Hunger.
>
> Millions starved as Soviet troops and secret policemen raided their villages, stole the harvest and all the food in villagers' homes.
>
> They dropped dead in the streets, lay dying and rotting in their houses, and some women became so desperate for food that they ate their own children.
>
> If they managed to fend off starvation, they were deported and shot in their

> hundreds of thousands.
>
> So terrible was the famine that Igor Yukhnovsky, director of the Institute of National Memory, the Ukrainian institution researching the Holodomor, believes **as many as nine million may have died.**
>
> […]Between four and five million died in Ukraine, a million died in Kazakhstan and another million in the north Caucasus and the Volga.
>
> By 1933, 5.7 million households – somewhere between ten million and 15 million people – had vanished. They had been deported, shot or died of starvation.

The Holodomor is just one of the atrocities committed by Soviet Union communists. You may also have heard that they operated a system of labor camps for dissidents that killed millions more. The total number of people killed by Stalin is estimated at 20 to 40 million.

Stalin actually wasn't very good at mass murder compared to another communist, Mao Zedong.

> Can you name the greatest mass murderer of the 20th century? No, it wasn't Hitler or Stalin. It was Mao Zedong.
>
> According to the authoritative "Black Book of Communism," an estimated 65 million Chinese died as a result of Mao's repeated, merciless attempts to create a new "socialist" China. Anyone who got in his way was done away with — by execution, imprisonment or forced famine.
>
> For Mao, the No. 1 enemy was the intellectual. The so-called Great Helmsman reveled in his blood-letting, boasting, "What's so unusual about Emperor Shih Huang of the China Dynasty? He had buried alive 460 scholars only, but we have buried alive 46,000 scholars." Mao was referring to a major "accomplishment" of the Great Cultural Revolution, which from 1966-1976 transformed China into a great House of Fear.
>
> The most inhumane example of Mao's contempt for human life came when he ordered the collectivization of China's agriculture under the ironic slogan, the "Great Leap Forward." A deadly combination of lies about grain production, disastrous farming methods (profitable tea plantations, for example, were turned into rice fields), and misdistribution of food produced the worse famine in human history.
>
> Deaths from hunger reached more than 50 percent in some Chinese villages. The total number of dead from 1959 to 1961 was between 30 million and 40 million — the population of California.
>
> […]Mao kept expanding the laogai, a system of 1,000 forced labor camps throughout China. Harry Wu, who spent 19 years in labor camps, has estimated that from the 1950s through the 1980s, 50 million Chinese passed through the Chinese version of the Soviet gulag. Twenty million died as a result of the primitive living conditions and 14-hour work days.

Whenever I bring up the historical record of communism to Democrats, they always tell me that their leaders have good intentions. But the communist leaders of the past aren't any different from the communist leaders of today. Communist leaders all start out with noble ambitions of wanting to help the poor. The problem is that they don't know anything about economics, so whatever they try doesn't work. Communist policies like nationalizing private industries, printing money, purging wealthy people, imposing tariffs, and imposing price controls cause enormous poverty. And then they need someone to blame for their failure to produce the results they promise.

If we were serious about helping the poor, then we would elect leaders who had experience lifting the poor out of poverty. A business leader or a governor of a state. It's not a popularity contest. We need to choose someone who has already had success at helping the poor. And the best way to help the poor is by helping them to find work so they can earn their own success and chart their own course. After all it's not words that affect our lives. Or the feelings we have about words we like. What affects our lives is policies that produce results. Intentions and rhetoric don't matter, ultimately.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

June 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has ever done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates). If you've never seen Dr. Craig in a debate with a non-Christian, this one is probably the best introductory one out there. Dr. Craig is the foremost defender of Christian theism on the planet, and probably of all time.

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it! Normally, Dr. Craig debates at major universities in front of students and faculty.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.

3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

Most Americans think cohabitation leads to a stable marriage, but what does the data say?

June 16, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

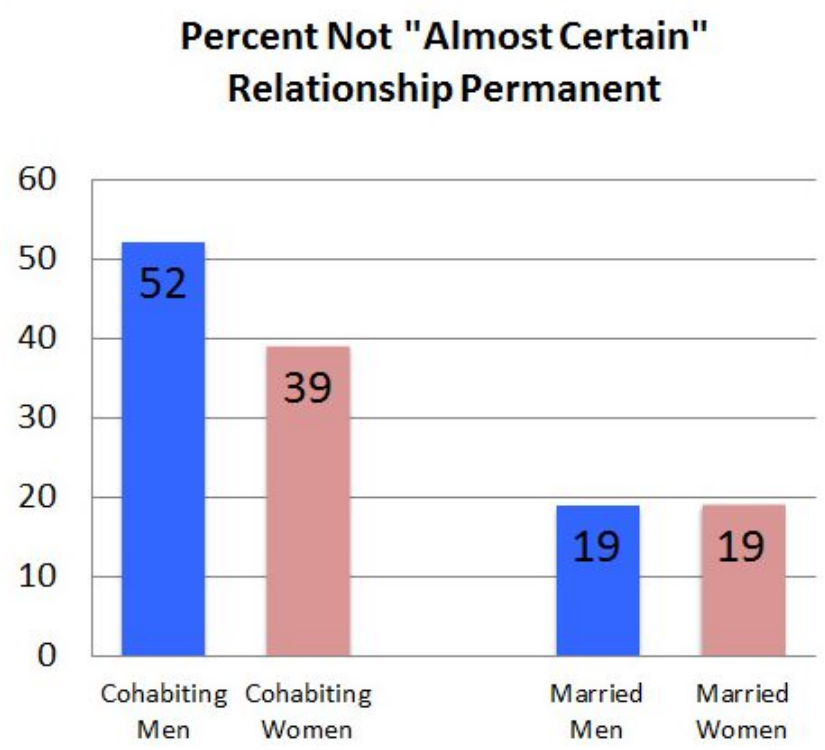

Men who cohabitate are not certain that the relationship is permanent

If there's one thing that ought to lead people to Christianity, it's the proven ability of the Christian moral rules to guide believers away from the sins that destroy them. A lot of modern "Christians" have reduced Christianity to being about their feelings and their community, while allowing the culture to determine their goals and moral boundaries. But that won't protect them from danger.

Cohabitation describes the situation of a couple moving into the same home and being sexually active, but without any legally-recognized commitment. It's extremely popular among young people today, and even Christians.

Consider this article from The Federalist about cohabitation:

> A new Pew Research Center study shows Americans both cohabitate ("live with an unmarried partner") and find cohabitation acceptable more than before.
>
> […]More young adults have cohabited than have married. Pew's analysis in the summer of 2019 of the National Survey of Family Growth found that, for the first time ever, the percentage of American adults aged 18-44 who have ever cohabited with a partner (59 percent) exceeded the percentage of those who have ever married (50 percent).

I thought this was very interesting, especially for the Christian parents and pastors who

imagine that their lovely pious daughters all have a Christian worldview just because they sing in the church choir:

> Just 14 percent hold a view consistent with a biblical sexual ethic, that cohabitation with an unmarried romantic partner outside of marriage is “never acceptable.”

Just to be clear, in my life I’ve met about 6 non-Christian men who cohabitated with women, and every single one of them cohabitated with a Christian-raised woman. That should tell you what young women are being told about relationships in their homes and churches about sex and marriage. “Do whatever you want”.

So what purpose does cohabitation serve?

> A majority of Americans (69 percent) say that “it is acceptable for an unmarried couple to live together even if they don’t plan to get married.” They may assume that they can decrease their chances of a bad marriage and increase their chances of a good one by giving the relationship a cohabitation “test run.”
>
> […]A plurality of Americans believe cohabitating before marriage yields more successful unions. Nearly half of Americans (48 percent) believe that couples who live together before marriage “have a better chance of having a successful marriage.” This view is even more prevalent among young adults aged 18-29 (63 percent).
>
> Another 38 percent of all Americans say cohabitation “doesn’t make much difference” on marital success. Only 13 percent of Americans believe cohabiting couples have “a worse chance” of having a successful marriage.
>
> […]Most Americans believe cohabitating couples raise children just as well as married couples. Pew also surveyed people’s opinions about cohabiting couples raising children, and 59 percent of Americans declared that cohabiting couples “can raise children just as well as married couples.” Again, the younger respondents were most likely to have a favorable view of cohabitation: among adults aged 18 to 49, 67 percent agreed cohabiting couples do just as well, while 32 percent said: “Married couples do a better job raising children.”

Yes, cohabitation is seen as a test run, and it’s supposed to make stable marriage more likely and not be harmful to children at all.

But why think that a test run should be part of getting married? After all, when I buy a parrot from the pet store, I don’t expect to later return that parrot. Why not? Because I am not buying the parrot to enhance MY life. I am buying the parrot to make a commitment to care for the parrot. Whether the parrot fulfills any of my needs is irrelevant to me. I want the bird in my house so that I can decide what it eats, what it drinks, and invest myself into making it happy, according to its birdish nature. This is because I think that parrots have value in and of themselves, and they deserve a certain quality of life. When I buy the parrot, I am guaranteeing a permanent commitment to the

bird to provide for its needs, physical and emotional. And that commitment carries forward to the time (now) when the bird is elderly, and can't even fly up to his cage or down to the floor. He calls for me, and I go over and pick him up and move him. That's commitment.

Cohabitation, on the other hand, is the practice of saying to another *human being*: "I am going to try you out as an entertaining commodity in my home, but if you don't fulfill *my needs* then I'm going to send you right back." That's not a commitment. That's self indulgence. It's defining a relationship as *entertainment* that is designed to meet *my needs* and *make me happy*. And that's because the concept of commitment in relationships is not presented to young people at any time in their lives. Not from parents. Not in churches. Not in the secular left culture as a whole. Everything is a consumer good designed for the purpose of entertainment – including people. It was only the Christian worldview that had a view of people as creatures made by God for eternal life, so that marriage was about guarding the other person's faith, and building them up to achieve all the things that God wanted them to achieve for his purposes.

But does cohabitation really work to create stable relationships? After all, anyone can find a partner when they're young and pretty. The real question is whether that partner will stick around when you're old and ugly and can't be as "fun" as you used to be.

Here's a recent (2018) study on cohabitation and stability:

> A new study published in the *Journal of Marriage and Famil*y finds that the "premarital cohabitation effect" lives on, despite what you've likely heard. The premarital cohabitation effect is the finding that those who live together prior to marriage are more likely, not less, to struggle in marriage.
>
> […]Michael Rosenfeld and Katharina Roesler's new findings suggest that there remains an increased risk for divorce for those living together prior to marriage, and that prior studies suggesting the effect has gone away had a bias toward short versus longer-term effects. **They find that living together before marriage is associated with lower odds of divorce in the first year of marriage, but increases the odds of divorce in all other years tested, and this finding holds across decades of data.**

Strategy advice to those who debate this issue: just be aware that Team Secular Leftist is using papers that have short-range samples, which don't show the instability problem, because they deliberately cherry-pick recently married couples.

And what about children raised in cohabitating relationships?

> While Americans are optimistic about the ability of cohabiting couples to raise children, a study published by the American College of Pediatricians in 2014 reported that children whose parents cohabit face a higher risk of: "premature birth, school failure, lower education, more poverty during childhood and lower incomes as adults, more incarceration and behavior problems, single parenthood, medical neglect and chronic health problems both medical and psychiatric, more

> substance, alcohol and tobacco abuse, and child abuse," and that "a child conceived by a cohabiting woman is at 10 times higher risk of abortion compared to one conceived in marriage."

I'm just going to be blunt here. The majority of young people are progressives, and they vote for candidates who believe in abortion through all nine months of pregnancy, and even after birth. Why? Because they don't want to have their right to seek happiness impacted by the needs of other people. Progressives believe that children, if they exist at all, should enhance the lives of their adult owners. No one should be surprised that people who think that killing inconvenient children is moral are willing to inflict other bad outcomes on them by raising them in an unstable cohabitation environment.

Discovery Institute’s new chemistry course for homeschool students!

June 17, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my favorite things to do every week is to listen to Rose’s adventures with the kids in her awesome, awesome church. Unlike practically every church I’ve ever been to, Rose’s church is CRAZY about apologetics. Each week, I get to hear stories from her about how it’s going. The parents write to her, and tell her how the kids are getting into more and better conversations.

Anyway, that brings me to a new course offered by Discovery Institute. You might remember that Discovery Institute does all sorts of research on intelligent design. If you want to know how science is related to your worldview, they are the place to go.

So, without further introduction, here is a link to their latest offering.

It says:

> High School Chemistry 1 & 2 is a two-semester online course for homeschool students that covers the fundamentals of chemistry as well as introducing students to the evidence of intelligent design in chemistry. Students will meet with the teacher for 90 minutes online on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Additional time available for drop-in sessions. Space is limited, so register early!

The course runs August 26, 2024 – May 30, 2025, and costs only $350 per semester. CHEAP. and they have a $25 off coupon code.

If this is something that you’re interested in, I would encourage you to take a look at it.

I took a look in the syllabus and it tells who it is for:

> **Prerequisite(s): Algebra 1**
>
> Please Note: It is strongly recommended that students have taken one year of algebra as some chemistry units will
> require students to set up and solve algebraic equations and create/interpret graphs
>
> **Suggested Grade Level for Student: 11th grade**
>
> Please Note: Grade level is not a requirement. The grade level is only suggested as most students will have completed
> the prior algebra 1 prerequisite by grade 11.

Please forward it along to anyone you know who might be interested! I would like to see more young Christians learning about the hard sciences, especially when it is getting harder and harder to find jobs in non-STEM areas, unless you are willing to toe the secular left’s line. That’s why I chose computer science, but I had a 96% in chemistry in grade 11 chemistry. I loved it!

How to respond to an atheist who complains about slavery in the Bible

June 18, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I often hear atheists going on and on about how the Bible has this evil and that evil. Their favorite one seems to be slavery. Here are three things I say to atheists when they push this objection.

The Bible and slavery

First, you should explain to them what the Bible actually says about slavery. And then tell them about the person responsible for stopping slavery in the UK: a devout evangelical named William Wilberforce.

Here's an article that works.

Excerpt:

> We should compare Hebrew debt-servanthood (many translations render this "slavery") more fairly to apprentice-like positions to pay off debts — much like the indentured servitude during America's founding when people worked for approximately 7 years to pay off the debt for their passage to the New World. Then they became free.
>
> In most cases, servanthood was more like a live-in*employee*, temporarily embedded within the employer's household. Even today, teams trade sports players to another team that has an owner, and these players belong to a franchise. This language hardly suggests slavery, but rather a formal contractual agreement to be fulfilled — like in the Old Testament.3

Atheism and moral judgments

Second, inform them that moral values are not rationally grounded on atheism. In an accidental universe, there is no way we ought to be. There is no design for humans that we have to comply with. There are no objective human rights, like the right to liberty (that would block slavery) or the right to life (that would block abortion). Although you may find that most atheists act nicely, the ones who really understand what atheism means and live it out consistently are not so nice.

Famous atheist Richard Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of

> starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

When atheists like Dawkins talk about morality, you have to understand that they are pretending. To them, morality is just about personal preferences and cultural conventions. They just think that questions of right and wrong are *arbitrary*. Things that are wrong in one time and place are right in another. Every view is as right as any other, depending on the time and place. That's atheist morality.

What's worse than slavery? Abortion!

Third, you should ask the atheist what he has done to oppose abortion. Abortion is worse than slavery, so if they are sincere in thinking that slavery is wrong, then they ought to think that abortion is wrong even more. So ask them what they've done to oppose the practice of abortion. That will tell you how sincere they are about slavery.

Here's atheist Richard Dawkins explaining what he's done to stop abortion:

That's right. The head atheist supports killing born children.

Is there evidence of systemic racism in the United States?

June 19, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Systemic racism is the idea that people can't lift themselves out of poverty by making good decisions, because powerful groups in society that hold the poor down, regardless of their decisions. Do you think that America is a place where no matter what choices you make, you'll never be able to be more prosperous? That's what the leaders of Black Lives Matter think.

Here's what Nikole Hannah-Jones, creator of the 1619 Project, says in the New York Times (a former newspaper):

> To summarize, none of the actions we are told black people must take if they want to "lift themselves" out of poverty and gain financial stability — not marrying, not getting educated, not saving more, not owning a home — can mitigate 400 years of racialized plundering.

Got that? It doesn't matter what individual choices a non-white person takes in America, they're going to be poor. The "systemic racism" of the powerful whites will always keep them down. Single motherhood doesn't make people poor, and marriage doesn't make people wealthier. Dropping out of high school doesn't make you poor, and getting a Masters degree in computer science won't make you wealthier.

But let's take a look at the data from the 2019 Census, and see the evidence:

Median US Household Income by Selected Ancestry Groups, 2019		
Indian	Americans	$126,705
Taiwanese	Americans	$102,405
Filipino	Americans	$100,273
Indonesian	Americans	$93,501
Pakistani	Americans	$87,509
Iranian	Americans	$87,288
Lebanese	Americans	$87,099
Japanese	Americans	$85,007
Turkish	Americans	$83,375
Chinese	Americans	$82,281
Korean	Americans	$76,674
Syrian	Americans	$74,047
Hmong	Americans	$73,373
Vietnamese	Americans	$72,161
Cambodian	Americans	$72,038
White	**Americans**	**$69,823**
Ghanaian	Americans	$69,021
Bangladeshi	Americans	$67,944
Guyanese	Americans	$67,772
Egyptian	Americans	$67,187
Palestian	Americans	$67,157
Thai	Americans	$66,763
Laotian	Americans	$66,117
Nigerian	Americans	$65,672

Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Chart from AEI

Income By Ethnicity in America

White people are doing a bad job of keeping non-whites down

Well, it looks like at least SOME people of color are able to do well in America despite all the “systemic racism” that keeps non-whites down. And do you know what those non-white groups at the top have in common? They’ve made good decisions, they’ve worked hard, they haven’t blamed other people when they fail, and they’ve saved their money instead of spending it on shiny junk.

Let’s look at some decisions that the non-whites who are prosperous have made, that those further down have not.

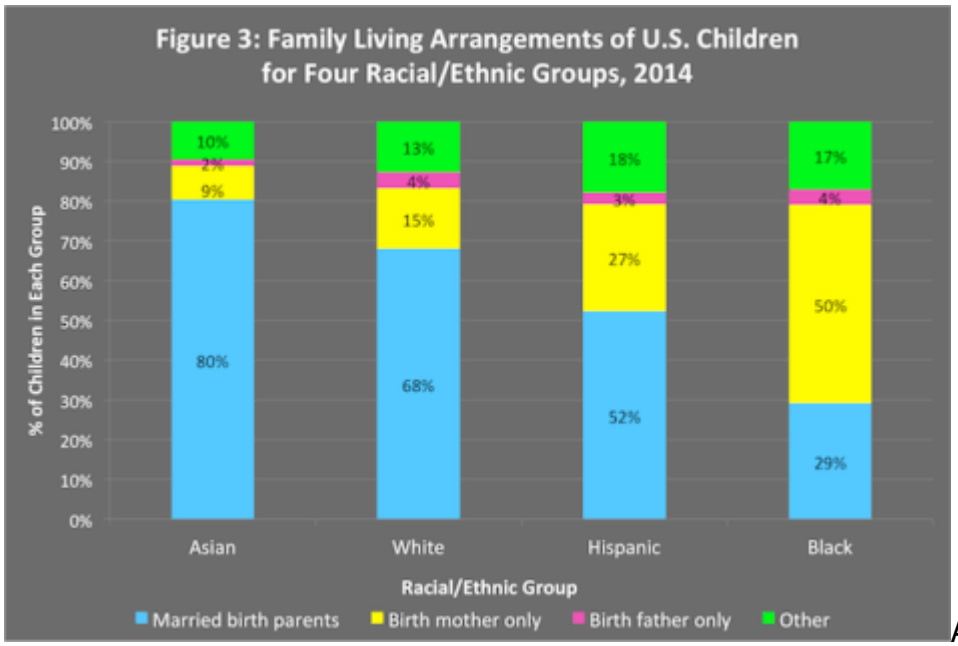

Asians marry before they have children, so the kids have two parents

Education and marriage

This article is written by the far-left radical Nicholas Kristof, writing in the radically-leftist New York Times (a former newspaper).

Excerpt:

> A new scholarly book, “The Asian American Achievement Paradox,” by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, notes that Asian-American immigrants in recent decades have started with one advantage: They are highly educated, more so even than the average American. These immigrants are disproportionately doctors, research scientists and other highly educated professionals.

> It’s not surprising that the children of Asian-American doctors would flourish in the United States. But Lee and Zhou note that kids of working-class Asian-Americans often also thrive, showing remarkable upward mobility.
>
> […]There’s also evidence that Americans believe that A’s go to smart kids, while Asians are more likely to think that they go to hard workers… Asian-American kids are allowed no excuse for getting B’s — or even an A-. The joke is that an A- is an “Asian F.”

One reason Asians students do so well is because their parents are usually married:

> > Strong two-parent families are a factor, too. Divorce rates are much lower for many Asian-American communities than for Americans as a whole, and there's evidence that two-parent households are less likely to sink into poverty and also have better outcomes for boys in particular.

American blacks have a 73% out-of-wedlock birth rate. A huge difference compared to Asians.

So, when Nikole Hannah-Jones tells you that education and marriage don't matter, she's just wrong.

Compound interest

Education and marriage are important, but so is saving your money. The wealthiest people in America are typically the ones who are experts at saving money early, and investing it. They know about the law of compound interest. If you invest money early and leave it alone, then it will grow into a fortune by the time you are read to stop working.

This graph explains compound interest:

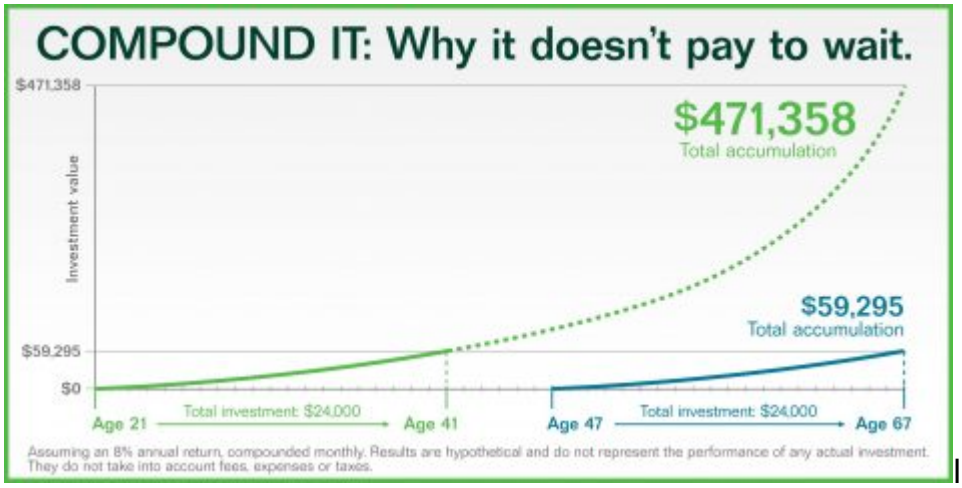

Investing $24,000 from age 21 to 41 vs investing $24000 from age 47 to 67

What does Nikole Hannah-Jones say when she looks at that graph? She doesn't think that saving money makes a difference to having more or less wealth. She thinks skin color determines whether saving money makes you wealthy or not. The graph clearly shows what we should be recommending to young people of color. They need to stop spending money and start saving it, and the earlier the better. It doesn't matter what your skin color is, saving money early JUST WORKS.

Similarly, when she says that home ownership doesn't make you more wealthy, this is just terrible advice. It's always better to pay down your own mortgage (at least when interest rates are low like they are now) than to pay someone else rent. You have to live somewhere, and paying for your own home is better because it costs about the same as rent, and then you get to keep the home when you're done paying for it.

Communism

Nikole Hannah-Jones does have a “solution” to disparities in wealth. Her solution is communism. She wants to transfer money from those who earn, to those who don’t. But we already have tried that in the 20st century and it resulted in the deaths of over 100 million people. That’s not my opinion, that’s all documented in a book published by Harvard University Press.

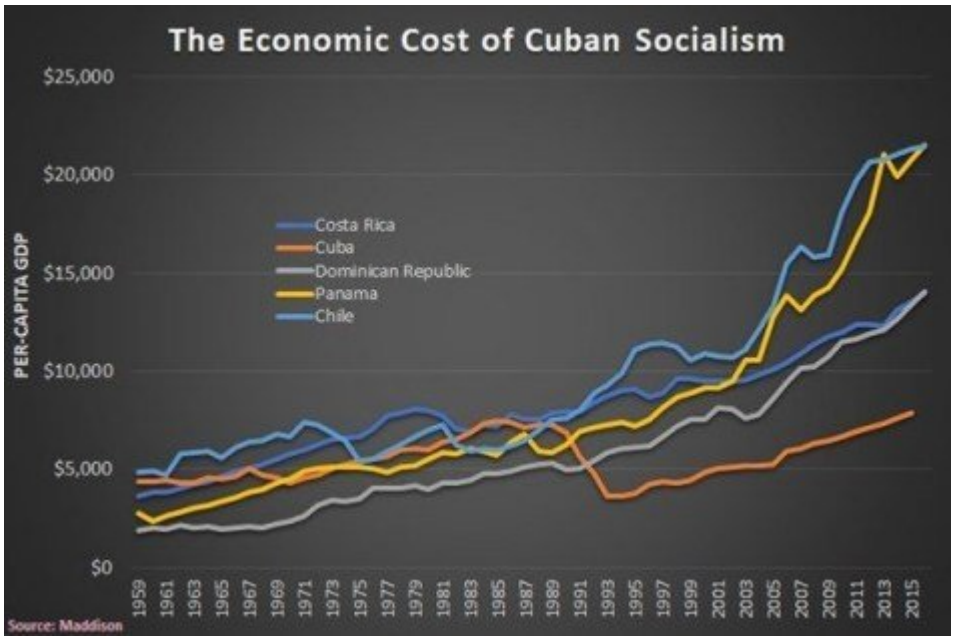

Socialism Communism Countries Per Capita GDP Income

You don’t even have to read the book to know the truth – just look at countries that score low on the Index of Economic Freedom, and compare their GDP per capita to countries that score high on the Index of Economic Freedom. The more communist a nation goes, the less wealth there is for the citizens. That’s why people in Venezuela are eating zoo animals and selling their bodies in prostitution for food, while nearby capitalist countries like Panama and Chile prosper. Nikole Hannah-Jones wants to reduce economic freedom, but we know by looking at other countries that this lowers per-capita GDP.

There’s a lot more than could be said here, but the point is that we need to be telling American blacks to make decisions that match the decisions of other successful non-white communities in America. We need to start teaching young people basic economics so they don’t fall prey to charlatans.

Should the Gospel of Thomas be included in the New Testament?

June 20, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Should the Gospel of Thomas be included with the four canonical gospels? Is it early? Is it the same historical genre as the four gospels? Does it give us eyewitness evidence of the life and teachings of Jesus? Here's an article about it that references the chapter from Lee Strobel's "The Case for the Real Jesus".

First reason, Thomas has literary dependence on TONS of other New Testament books, which favors a date for Thomas AFTER the books it quotes:

> **The Gospel of Thomas Cites Too Much Of The New Testament.**
>
> Publishing writings in the first century was nothing like it is today. If you want a copy of something, you take a quill and some papyrus and you just copy it. That is how the books of the New Testament circulated. It was a very slow process. By the early second century, only a few of the books of the New Testament were in full circulation. Christians of that time only had a few of the books of the New Testament to reference. The epistles of Ignatious, written in AD 110, does not even quote half of the New Testament.
>
> But the gospel of Thomas shows familiarity with 15 of the 27 books of the New Testament! Doctor Craig Evans pointed out that he was not aware of any Christian writing which referenced this much of the New Testament prior to AD 150. The Gospel of Thomas simply references far too many books to be dated early. But despite that, the Jesus Seminar attempts to date Thomas between AD 60 and 70.
>
> Further, this gospel not only cites too much New Testament material. It cites the later New Testament material. Mark was not very strong in Greek grammar and etiquette, so when Matthew and Luke quoted Mark, they polished his wording. The gospel of Thomas quotes the polished wording, the later version. In fact, Thomas even has material from the gospel of John – penned in about AD 90. How can a book from AD 60 or 70 quote a book from AD 90? Thomas is not independent of the other gospels, it quotes the later ones and it is not early, it quotes too much of the New Testament to be considered early.

Second reason, Thomas shows signs of being based on a Syriac translation:

> **The Gospel of Thomas Shows Syrian Development.**
>
> The gospels are published in the Koine Greek language, which was the most conventiant language of that time if the goal was to spread them far and wide. But when Christianity began to spread eastward, the gospels were translated into Syriac. But this did not happen immediately.

> A student of Justin Martyr named Tatian compiled a Syriac translation of the four gospels in AD 175, which was named the Diatessaron (meaning ‘through the four’). He made the four gospels available to those who spoke Syriac. What makes this significant is that the gospel of Thomas shows traces of the Syrian language forms! Indeed, the gospel of Thomas adopts concepts that were only found in the Syrian church. It refers to Thomas as Judas Thomas, which was a concept that began with the Syrian church. The Syrians did not like ascetics, wealth, businessmen, commercialism, and were interested in elitism and mysticism. Precisely everything that the Syrians were not interested in, the gospel of Thomas was not interested in, and that which they were interested in, the gospel of Thomas was interested in.
>
> Further, and critically, if we read the gospel of Thomas in English, it sort of looks like a non-contextual group of proverbs and sayings. It is just randomly assorted. It appears randomly assorted in Koine Greek as well. But if you translate it to Syrian, it is not random at all. There are literally hundreds of catchwords in Syrian that are meant to help people memorize the gospel. There are memory aids written in Syrian. The gospel of Thomas was written in Syrian.

Two other reasons would be:

- it contains gnostic overtones, and that movement started in the 2nd century
- none of the early Church Fathers quote it, but they quote the four gospels and the letters of Paul, etc.

I really enjoyed the Case for the Real Jesus, and if you like audio books, you can get it as an audio book. By the way, the audio versions of the unabridged “Case For” books are read by Lee Strobel himself – HIGHLY recommended. You will not lose interest.

The seven fatal flaws of moral relativism

June 21, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Moral relativism is the view that moral values and moral duties do not exist in reality, but only exist as opinions in people's minds. When you ask a moral relativist where the belief that stealing is wrong comes from, he may tell you that it is his opinion, or that it is the opinion of most people in his society. But he cannot tell you that stealing is wrong independent of what people think, because morality (on moral relativism) is just personal preference.

So what's wrong with it?

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Salvo magazine web site.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like "It's wrong to push your own morality on others". This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don't let them make any moral statements without asking them first to ground morality on their worldview. And that's because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can't answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people's personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It's all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be "it depends". It depends on the person who is speaking because it's a subjective claim, not an objective

claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

So, practically speaking, everyone has to decide whether right and wrong are real – objectively real. If they are objectively real, that means that there is a right way for human beings to behave, and a wrong way for human beings to behave. It means that things that are really objectively wrong like rape are wrong for all times and all places, regardless of what individuals and societies might think of it. In order to rationally ground that kind of morality, you have to have a foundation for it – a cosmic Designer who decides for all times and places what the conduct of his creatures ought to be. And then our moral duties are duties that are owed to this Designer. It is like playing football or playing a boardgame – the person who invents the game decides the rules. But if there is no designer of the game, then there are no rules.

Without a designer of the universe, the question of how we ought to act is decided by people in different times and different places. It's arbitrary and variable, and therefore it doesn't do the job of prescribing behavior authoritatively. It's very important not to get involved in any serious endeavor with another person or persons if they don't have a sense of right and wrong being absolute and fixed. A belief in objective moral values is a necessary pre-requisite for integrity.

Knight and Rose Show #51: Dr. Casey Luskin on Junk DNA

June 22, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 51 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Dr. Casey Luskin to discuss how the progress of science debunked the myth of junk DNA. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Dr. Casey Luskin about junk DNA. Is your DNA assembled by undirected forces, or is it intelligently designed? First, we look at the predictions of evolution and design proponents about junk DNA. Then, we look at the latest scientific discoveries, and see which side is changing their mind to adapt to the evidence. Casey reports about his recent debate on this topic with a biology professor.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show (with timestamps) provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 51:

Speaker biographies

Casey Luskin holds a PhD in Geology from the University of Johannesburg in South Africa. He earned a law degree from the University of San Diego. Dr. Luskin has been a California-licensed attorney since 2005, practicing primarily in the area of evolution-education in public schools and defending academic freedom for scientists who face discrimination because of their support for intelligent design (ID). His B.S. and M.S. degrees in Earth Sciences are from the University of California, San Diego. In his role at Discovery Institute, Dr. Luskin works as Associate Director of the Center for Science and Culture, where he helps direct the ID 3.0 Research Program. Dr. Luskin has lectured widely on ID at university campuses and conferences on four continents. He has coauthored or contributed to multiple books. His most recent book, co-edited with William Dembski and Joseph Holden, is “The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith: Exploring the Ultimate Questions About Life and the Cosmos”.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an

amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

References:

- Reflections on Casey Luskin's Debate with "Dr. Dan"
- From the "Junk DNA" Files: Can "Degraded" LINE Elements Still Be Functional?
- "Junk DNA" from Three Perspectives: Some Key Quotes
- Here's a Far from Exhaustive (Yet Still Exhausting) List of Papers Discovering Function for "Junk" DNA
- Debate: Casey Luskin Versus Rutgers Biologist Dan Cardinale, Thursday, May 2

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Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

June 23, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.
>
> But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.
>
> There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God

exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.

One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.

So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.

> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, “So is there a God or not?”

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these “subjective atheists”?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says “I lack a belief in the gravitational force!”. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God’s existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don’t care about a person’s psychology.

If you accept Jesus and become a Christian, will God make you happy?

June 24, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a wonderful, wonderful post from Amy Hall, who writes for the Stand to Reason blog.

She writes:

> I had a brief interaction with an atheist on Twitter a couple of weeks ago that unexpectedly turned to the issue of suffering when she said:
>
> You clearly never had a time you were hurt. I don't mean sick. I don't mean heart broken. I mean literally a near death experience or rape or abusive relationship…. You can keep floating on a [expletive] cloud thinking Jesus will do everything for you but it's a lie. What makes you so special?
>
> That surprised me at first because it didn't seem to have anything to do with the tweet she was responding to, and I was confused as to why she would assume I'd never been through anything traumatic. But then in subsequent tweets, when she revealed she had been raped, it became clear that her trauma had played a central role in her becoming an outspoken, obviously angry "antitheist." She's a self-described antitheist now because she thinks Christianity teaches Jesus "will do everything for you" to give you a perfect life, and now she knows that's a lie. The rape proved her understanding of Christianity false.
>
> So it made sense for her to reason that since I believe Christianity is true, I must still be under the delusion that Jesus is making my life special, which means I obviously never encountered any evil or suffering to shake that delusion.

All right, readers. I don't want any of you to be thinking that if you become a Christian that these things should be expected to happen:

- you will feel happy all the time
- you will be able to sense God's secret plan for your life through your feelings
- God's secret plan for your life will automatically work, even though it's crazy
- God will give you a perfect spouse and lots of money without you having to study anything hard, or do any hard work
- you get permission to do things that that make you happy, even if they are expressly forbidden by the Bible
- you don't have to do anything that makes you feel bad (e.g. – talk to non-Christians about Christian truth claims), because God wants you to be happy

No! Where do people get this idea that if they convert to Christianity, then God will become their cosmic butler?

Amy has the answer: (emphasis mine)

> Hear me, everyone: **This is a failure of the church.**
>
> A friend of mine who was deeply suffering once said to me that many Christians are in for "an epic letdown" when they realize their preconceived notions about what God is expected to do for us are false. Pastors who preach a life-improvement Jesus are leading people down this precarious path to disillusionment.
>
> If suffering disproves your Christianity, you've missed Christianity. The Bible is filled with the suffering of those whom God loves. The central event of the Bible is one of suffering. Love involves suffering. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." That means suffering.

It's the church. It's the focus on happy things and having of happy feelings and happy songs and preaching designed to make us feel good. I would say the comforting devotional reading doesn't help to make us any tougher or more practical, either. That happy-clappy stuff just gives you a false sense of safety about your precarious situation. God's job is not to prevent you from suffering. In fact, even if you make really smart, practical decisions, you can expect to get creamed *anyway*.

Please take 15 minutes and read the book of 1 Peter in the New Testament.

Here's a summary from GotQuestions.org:

> **Purpose of Writing:** 1 Peter is a letter from Peter to the believers who had been dispersed throughout the ancient world and were under intense persecution. If anyone understood persecution, it was Peter. He was beaten, threatened, punished and jailed for preaching the Word of God. He knew what it took to endure without bitterness, without losing hope and in great faith living an obedient, victorious life. This knowledge of living hope in Jesus was the message and Christ's example was the one to follow.
>
> **Brief Summary:** Though this time of persecution was desperate, Peter reveals that it was actually a time to rejoice. He says to count it a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ, as their Savior suffered for them. This letter makes reference to Peter's personal experiences with Jesus and his sermons from the book of Acts. Peter confirms Satan as the great enemy of every Christian but the assurance of Christ's future return gives the incentive of hope.
>
> **Practical Application:** The assurance of eternal life is given to all Christians. One way to identify with Christ is to share in His suffering. To us that would be to endure insults and slurs from those who call us "goodie two shoes" or "holier than thou." This is so minor compared to what Christ suffered for us on the Cross. Stand up for what you know and believe is right and rejoice when the world and Satan aim to hurt you.

Recently, I blogged about how suffering is compatible with an all-powerful God, so you might want to read that too if you missed it.

CBO: Biden plan to subsidize health care for illegal immigrants costs billions

June 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If there is one thing that secular leftists believe in, it's the need to feel good about themselves by spending other people's money. They don't want to give their own money to others. They want to give your money to others, and then feel good about it. And they want everyone to know how generous they are, too, with your money. And your children's money.

Here's the latest from Daily Caller:

> The Biden administration's plan to open Obamacare enrollment to DACA recipients will add billions to the national deficit, a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report found.
>
> Roughly 110,000 illegal immigrants on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program will sign up for Obamacare, adding about $7 billion to the federal deficit over the 2025-2034 period, according to an analysis released Monday by the CBO. The new estimate comes after President Joe Biden said he would change the rules to Obamacare to make DACA recipients eligible.

If the tax credits are made permanent, then the bill will be $9 billion:

> The CBO predicts that DACA recipients enrolling in subsidized coverage would increase by 140,000, making the final cost of the new rule around $9 billion, if these tax credits are made permanent.

Who is going to pay for all this spending? You are paying for it right now, in the higher prices of goods and services. And your children will be paying for it – they are not going to have the standard of living and prosperity that you have today.

That's the price of electing leaders who believe that they can be generous by spending other people's money, instead of their own money.

Daily Caller also reminded us of this:

> Biden announced an executive order last week giving amnesty to well over half a million illegal immigrants in the country who are married to U.S. citizens, a move that critics have panned as another incentive for illegal immigration amid an ongoing border crisis.

Canada has been importing millions of unskilled immigrants since they elected an unqualified, uneducated socialist. The result for taxpayers is a disaster. Higher taxes, more spending on social programs and policing, skyrocketing inflation. And shortages of education, health care and housing. That's what happens when you import millions of people who use more in services than they pay in taxes. We should learn from their

mistakes.

New study: 46% of Americans who own an EV want to return to a gas vehicle

June 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What does it mean when a person owns an electric vehicle, or declares their intention to purchase one? I think they would like us to believe that it makes them a virtuous person. But according to a new study, it probably just makes them a stupid person. Someone who makes decisions involving tens of thousands of dollars, without evaluating the consequences of their own actions.

Here's the report from Daily Signal:

> Nearly half of American electric vehicle owners want to buy an internal combustion engine model the next time they buy a car, according to a new study from McKinsey and Co., a leading consulting firm.
>
> Approximately 46% of Americans who own an EV want to go back to a standard vehicle for their next purchase, citing issues like inadequate charging infrastructure and affordability, according to McKinsey's study, which was obtained and reviewed by the Daily Caller News Foundation.

People don't like owning these vehicles. They are not practical, and they might even be dangerous if they catch fire.

If you thought that the Biden administration was competent about making electric vehicles more practical, think again:

> Consumers' concerns about EV charging infrastructure are notable given the slow rollout of the Biden administration's $7.5 billion public EV charger program, which so far has led to the construction of only a few public chargers in nearly three years.
>
> The Biden administration has a stated goal of having EVs make up 50% of all new car sales by 2030. The Environmental Protection Agency finalized stringent regulations in March that will force manufacturers to ensure that up to 56% of their light-duty vehicles are EVs by 2032.
>
> The EPA has also finalized strict emissions standards for medium- and light-duty vehicles, while the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has locked in fuel economy standards that will further push manufacturers to produce more EVs.

The Biden administration is trying to push these electrical vehicles on the public with regulations, but the public chargers are just not there. The performance of these vehicles is just not there either. Maybe it's time to put the brakes on these green efforts, before it starts to affect your life?

It happened again: transgender suspect attacks Denver police with knife

June 27, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On this blog, I've covered all sorts of violence committed by transgender activists. Not just with knives, but axes, guns, and more. Should we really be encouraging this, the way that the Biden administration is encouraging it? If we encourage it, we're sure to get more of it. Below, I'll talk about the latest TWO examples of violence committed by transgender people.

Here's the first one, from Daily Wire:

> The Denver Police Department said this week that a person they shot and killed last week was a transgender individual who tried to attack a police officer with a large knife.
>
> The suspect, 52-year-old Miguel Tapia, a man who claimed that he was a woman, tried to attack a police officer last week with a 7-inch knife, according to body camera footage that was released of the incident.
>
> The shooting happened last Sunday in an intersection when police confronted Tapia and told him to drop what he was holding and to put his hands on his head.
>
> Tapia started aggressively moving toward the police officer with the knife in his hand, at which point two police officers fired tasers at him in an effort to stop him.
>
> When the tasers were unsuccessful, the police officer that he was running after pulled out his pistol and unloaded several shots into the attacker. Another officer also fired at the suspect.
>
> […]Police said at a press conference that it was possible that he was also an illegal alien. The Daily Wire has reached out to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for comment about the matter.

I did a quick check around and could not find confirmation that this person was an illegal immigrant, but I do know that, according to Newsweek, California is paying for the transgender transitions of illegal immigrants.

Here's another recent transgender violence story from a few days ago, reported by Breitbart News:

> A transgender suspect who allegedly shot and killed his parents in Washington, Utah, Tuesday was captured Wednesday and has been charged with numerous felonies.
>
> ABC 4 noted that the shooting suspect, originally named Collin Troy Bailey, now goes by Mia Bailey, and is "a transgender male transitioning to female."
>
> KSLTV reported that police confirmed Bailey's "name and gender were legally

> changed in 2023."
>
> […]2 KUTV reported that law enforcement documents claimed Bailey told them, "She did not have remorse for her actions and that she would not change what she had done."
>
> Bailey allegedly said, "I would do it again. I hate them."

Previously, I blogged about the Nashville transgender shooter, who also wrote about hating her parents. Where are these children getting these ideas? Is there anything that parents can do to protect their children from this ideology?

High-ranking Democrat gay activist and his underage boy r*pe fantasies

June 28, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend William sent me a very interesting article about a prominent Democrat gay activist who got caught in a compromising situation. He isn't the first, and he won't be the last. Let's take a look at the story, and then we'll look at some prominent Democrat donors and same-sex marriage activists who were also caught in similar situations. What does "morality" mean to a secular leftist?

Here's the story from The Blaze:

> The Maryland Democratic Party has scrubbed its webpage and social media histories of all traces of its LGBTQ+ Diversity Leadership Council chairman Michael Knaapen following his fateful encounter with Predator Poachers in Montgomery County.
>
> Democrats are apparently desperate to hide their previous celebrations of Knaapen as a Marylander "making a difference" because of his apparent admissions Thursday that he allegedly sent depraved sexual messages and videos to an individual named "Luke" whom he figured for a 14-year-old boy. That boy turned out to be the invention of Predator Poachers, whose leader Alex Rosen confronted Knaapen Thursday with all of the receipts.

The article notes that Knaapen visited with White House staff last year, and also attended two White House events. He's just the sort of person who would be welcomed by the Biden administration. The article also notes that Knaapen thought the fictional boy was underage, and that he gave the fictional boy his address and invited him over on at least two occasions. He also sent an image of his genitals to the fictional boy, and a video of Knaapen pleasuring himself. He expressed the hope that the fictional boy would "try to get away" during sex, so that the experience would seem more like r*pe to Knaapen.

This is the kind of person that Democrats promote to leadership. It's not an accident. It happens all the time.

Related stories

Fox News reports about the co-founder of the Human Rights Campaign, organization that frequently invites high-profile Democrats to speak at their events:

> Prominent Democrat donor Terry Bean was indicted earlier this month on two counts of sodomy and one count of sex abuse for allegedly having sex with a teenage boy.
>
> Bean was arraigned Thursday on the charges, TV station KGW8 reported. He pleaded not guilty and was taken into custody at Lane County jail in Oregon. He was released Thursday and told KGW8 he was "innocent."

> The indictment was filed on Jan. 4 but made public following the arraignment.
>
> Bean, a gay rights activist who donated almost $70,000 of his own money to former President Barack Obama's campaign, was charged with sexual abuse in 2014 but the case was dismissed after the alleged victim did not testify. Prosecutors refiled the charges after this, court records stated, according to The Oregonian. The "alleged victim is not named in the new indictment" but the dates are similar to the previous charges, KGW8 noted.
>
> Bean, a real estate developer, and his former boyfriend, Kiah Lawson, allegedly had sex with a 15-year-old boy in a Eugene, Oregon, hotel in September 2013. They allegedly used the app Grindr to arrange the sexual encounter. Lawson was also charged but his case was dismissed.

The Human Rights Campaign has a lot of corporate partners, who agree with the vision of Terry Bean and his organization. You can see a list of HRC corporate supporters right here.

The far-left New York Times reported on a recent case:

> The mayor of Seattle, Ed Murray, said on Tuesday that he would resign after announcing in May that he would not seek a second term. Several men have come forward to accuse Mr. Murray of sexually abusing them decades ago, when they were underage.
>
> The announcement came just hours after The Seattle Times published a story with an account by a fifth man, Mr. Murray's cousin, who said Mr. Murray had abused him in the 1970s.
>
> [..]Mr. Murray, 62, a Democrat, is the city's first openly gay mayor, and had served in the State Legislature for many years before being elected in 2013.
>
> […]**The liberal Mr. Murray is generally considered a father of Washington's same-sex marriage law, which he pressed in the State Legislature for years.**

In a previous blog post, I listed SIX more cases like this:

- a university professor at USC
- a member of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission
- two men who adopted nine children
- two men who adopted a boy
- an activist who ran an organization for boys
- two men who adopted a boy from Russia

Now you know what people really mean when they say that they support "gay rights".

What does morality mean to atheists?

Let's review what objective morality (moral realism) really means in practice for atheists:

> In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.
>
> (Richard Dawkins, "God's Utility Function," Scientific American, November, 1995, p. 85)

Whatever morality atheists try to claim, the truth is that their worldview cannot ground it rationally. What do atheists believe? This universe is an accident. There are no objective human rights. There is no objective morality. There is no free will nor moral agency. There is no judge of our actions when we die. Other human beings are just lumps of matter to be used for our own pleasure, as long as the atheists are powerful enough to escape the disapproval of those dangerous Bible-believers. Survival of the fittest.

What is the definition of marriage according to Jesus?

June 29, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's Pride Month! This is when Big Corporations spend an entire month celebrating the LGBT community, and pressuring everyone else to celebrate behaviors and lifestyles that are at odds with the teachings of Jesus. So, since the LGBT activists are about to get 30 days of celebration, I thought I would celebrate what Jesus taught about marriage on my little blog.

Here's what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
>
> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"
>
> 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
>
> 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"
>
> 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
>
> 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."
>
> 10 The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."
>
> 11 But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don't overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are supposed to be willing to endure suffering rather than side with non-Christians against

God’s authority.

Matt Walsh had a fine article about this issue.

He said:

> As Christians, our goal is not to avoid being like the big bad “other Christians,” but to strive to be like Christ Himself. This is one of the advantages to having an Incarnate God. He went around acting and speaking and teaching and generally functioning in our realm, thereby giving us a model to follow. This is the model of a loving and merciful man, and *also* a man of perfect virtue who fought against the forces of evil, condemned sin, defended his Father in Heaven with sometimes violent force, spoke truth, and eventually laid down His life for those He loved (which would be all of us).
>
> […]This is what it means to believe in Christ. Not just to believe that He existed, but to believe that Christ is Truth itself, and that everything He said and did was totally and absolutely and irreversibly true forever and always. Many Christians today — not only the ones in the video, but millions alongside them — seem to think we can rightly claim to have “faith” in Jesus or a “relationship” with Him while still categorically denying much of His Word. This is a ridiculous proposition. We can’t declare, in one breath, that Christ is Lord, and in the next suggest that maybe God got it wrong on this or that point. Well, we *can* make that declaration, but we expose our belief as fraudulent and self-serving. We worship a God we either invented in our heads, which is a false idol, or a God who is fallible, which is a false idol.

If you really accept Jesus as God, then you can’t think he is wrong when he explains what marriage is. Period. End of issue.

Real Christians don’t make excuses for sin. Real Christians present the gospel. The gospel is that all men have rebelled against God and fallen short of perfect submission to and obedience of him. For this, they deserve to be separated from God eternally. Jesus paid the price for this rebellion on the cross, and anyone who accepts him as Savior *and Lord* will be with God eternally after they die. There is no salvation apart from Jesus. That’s what Christians say. And they say it regardless of how weird they look, and how many non-Christians don’t like them for saying it.

Playboy bunnies shocked that their own free decisions did not make them happy

June 30, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm seeing a lot of stories in the news lately about how women are unhappy after being given exactly what they asked for. Feminists who wanted to abolish sex differences are mad that biological men are in their spaces. Feminists who demanded preferential treatment in colleges and workplaces are mad that men don't earn more than they do. And now… the Playboy bunnies are mad.

Story from the New York Post:

> "He was a predator," Hefner's ex-girlfriend Sondra Theodore, 65, told The Post. "I watched him, I watched his game. And I watched a lot of girls go through [the Playboy Mansion] gates looking farm-fresh, and leaving looking tired and haggard."
>
> The former Sunday school teacher-turned-1977 Playboy magazine centerfold model began dating Hefner after meeting him at one of his many lascivious mansion parties.

Former Sunday school teacher. Got that? Former Sunday school teacher.

She says that she's a victim:

> "He groomed me and twisted my mind into thinking his way was normal," she said of Hef… "He introduced me to drugs. I'd never had a drink or a drug before going up to the Playboy Mansion. And my first night there I was handed champagne and the drugs came later, and I was underage."

So, I have two points about this. I think that Hugh Hefner was a big hero to the secular left, because he helped them to throw off the shackles of sobriety and chastity that were part of America's Christian past. The secular left wanted freedom from Christianity's "repressive" rules on dating, relationships, marriage and sexuality, and Hefner gave them what they wanted. I hope we learn a lesson about trusting atheists to tell us what is moral.

Second point is about the women. Did everyone see that post from earlier in the week about the woman who ran up hundreds of thousands of dollars in student loan debt, then demanded a bailout from taxpayers? What I would like to see is women make better decisions. It would probably help that they rely more on evidence than on feelings, and call for advisors if they don't feel comfortable.

We're not helping women by telling them to "follow their hearts". People don't make good decisions when they "follow their hearts". Even worse is to follow the crowd. Hugh Hefner was in high demand by women when he was young. He's tall, he's handsome, he's rich, and he's morally permissive and non-judgmental. A lot of young women wanted all

that he had to offer. But just because a lot of women wanted all that, doesn't mean that Sondra Theodore was right to wish for what what many women desired.

Another thing about the women – I don't like how they blame men for their own free will decisions. They don't take responsibility the way that I expect them to take responsibility. They're saying "It was the man's fault" instead of asking "why did I choose that man?" I'd like to see women ask themselves these hard questions. Just because these questions feel bad, it doesn't mean that they shouldn't be asked. The only way to learn is to take responsibility. If everything is someone else's fault, then you never change yourself. And you are the one you need to fear the most.

Finally, I don't think it's a good message to send our young men that tall, hot, rich bad boys get all the best looking young women. When a young woman chooses a bad man, it's a signal to all the young men about what is working – what is in demand. Women need to understand that their decisions are being watched, and they are making the world a worse place when they choose to reward secular left psychopaths like Hugh Hefner. He should have been shunned by women – that would have made sure that no men imitated him.

How do you respond to the conquests and wars in the Old Testament?

July 1, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

John Berea has an article about it on his web site.

Here's his overview:

> In the Old Testament are the military campaigns of Israel inconsistent with being led by a just and loving God, and inconsistent with his own commands? Here, I would like to make the case for consistency and justness.
>
> 1. **The nations of Canaan were evil, harming others, and needed to be stopped.** They had carried out incest with children/grandchildren and performed child sacrifice by fire. (Lev 18:6-30, Deut 12:31, Deut 18:9-10, Psalm 106:35, 37-38) They launched unprovoked attacks on Israel (Ex 17:8-9, Num 21:1, Num 21:2-23, 33) and even guerrilla attacks against Israel's "stragglers in the rear of the march when you were exhausted and tired." (Deut 25:18)
>
> **2. Warfare language was likely rhetorical.** There are five reasons to support the rhetorical nature of language such as "completely destroy" (Hebrew תחרימו, literally "ban") in Deut 20:17. It likely meant a destruction of armed soldiers, buildings, and religious icons.
>
> 1. Semitic language professor and NIV, NAB, and ESV bible translator Richard Hess argues that Hebrew "ban" is "stereotypical for describing all the inhabitants of a town or region, without predisposing the reader to assume anything further about their ages or even their genders" and "need not require that there really were children, senior citizens, or women there who were put to death" even when followed by the terms "men and women" (Joshua 8:25) or "young and old" (Joshua 8:25).
> 2. In Israel's destruction of enemies we see phrases like "left no survivor" and "utterly destroyed all who breathed" (Joshua 10:40, Judges 1:8). But in Joshua 21:12-13 the author has no problem telling us these people were still there afterward: "if you ever turn away and make alliances with these nations that remain near you… God will no longer drive out these nations". In 1 Sam 15:3-4 Israel was to "strike down the Amalekites. Destroy everything that they have. Don't spare them. Put them to death–man, woman, child, infant, ox, sheep, camel, and donkey alike." In 15:8 Saul "executed all Agag's people" and Agag himself was killed in 15:33. But later in 1 Sam 27:8 we're told they're still there and " had been living in that land for a long time". Hundreds of years later in Esther 3:1 we're even told Haman was an Agagite, a descendant of the Amalekite king Agag.
> 3. Most verses on the subject speak of "driving out" and "dispossessing" the

> land rather than language suggestive of genocide. E.g. Num 33:51-53, in "the land of Canaan, you must drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images, all their molten images, and demolish their high places. You must dispossess the inhabitants of the land and live in it, for I have given you the land to possess it." It's the same story in Lev 18:25, Num 23:31-32, Deut 6:19, 9:4, 18:12, Joshua 3:10, and 23:9.
>
> 4. Jer 4:20 suggests inhabitants fled before armies arrived: "At the sound of the horseman and bowman every city flees; They go into the thickets and climb among the rocks"
> 5. Deut 7:22 specifically says that Israel was forbidden to "destroy them all at once" and instead they would be expelled "little by little".
>
> So either all of these verses contradict one another, or the conquest language was rhetorical.
>
> **3. Many of the "cities" were probably military outposts.** For example with Jericho and Ai, Richard Hess argues there are no references to noncombatants (apart from Rahab), no archaeological evidence of non-military use, the term melek (Hebrew מלכי) for "king" of the cities often meant mean a military leader in Canaan (e.g. in Joshua 2:2), they were located at defensive positions, and Jericho and Ai weren't described as a large city as Gibeon and Hazor explicitly were.
>
> **4. A just God requires wrath.** It's not possible to have a God who is just but not wrathful–otherwise wrongdoers continue unabated. Paranormal investigator James Randi wrote in Skeptic Magazine, "I accuse the Christian god of murder by allowing the Holocaust to take place" yet Dawkins and Hitchens condemn God for judgment against the Canaanites. Which is it? Ultimately the the problem is we view death as the ultimate judgment, when in the theological context of the bible it's only a graduation to what's next with accountability for what we've done with what we were given.

The four points are developed with links for support. If you get this question a lot, it's a good resource to bookmark.

Also, if you're looking for a short video to share, here is a 6-minute one featuring Frank Turek:

That's from commenter WorldGoneCrazy. It's really good.

Christian pro-lifer to be sentenced today by female judge appointed by Bill Clinton

July 2, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Many popular Christian speakers have told me they can't imagine why it might be an advantage to work with an alias, not get married, not have children, and not expose your personal life to everyone on social media. But the fact is, it's much easier to say what you really think when no one can punish you. Even people who do make bold stands understand that.

Here's the article from Daily Wire:

> A Christian pro-life father of 11 facing over a decade in prison will be sentenced on Tuesday for his conviction over a peaceful protest in Tennessee at an abortion facility in 2021.
>
> Paul Vaughn, who was convicted of violating the FACE Act and conspiracy against civil rights in January, was targeted by the Biden administration in October 2022 after he participated in a peaceful protest at an abortion facility in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee in March 2021. He will be sentenced by U.S. District Judge Aleta Trauger on Tuesday in Nashville. He faces hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines and up to 10.5 years in prison.

I checked, and District Judge Aleta Trauger was appointed by former president Bill Clinton, a radical pro-abortion activist.

This is the key point made by Vaughn:

> "It's real easy for me. I can go and go to battle and go to jail as an individual, and it's not a big loss," Vaughn said. "The challenge comes when you're leading your family through it, when you're talking to your 3-year-old and your 23-year-old and your other family."

Yes, that's how things really work in the real world. It's admirable to perform these actions and take the hit from the secular left fascists. But it's harder to do that when you have dependents. Many of the most prominent Christian leaders who don't have an alias keep well clear of politics. They don't say anything about abortion or homosexuality, especially then they are married with children. That decision (to marry and have children) actually has a dampening effect on the witness of most Christians.

By the way, I checked up a bit more on the judge. The judge who is handing out the sentence is the same one who found the Christians guilty.

But look at this Nashville NPR:

> A federal judge has struck down a Tennessee law that would've required businesses and schools to post a warning sign if they allow transgender people to

> use the restroom that aligns with their gender.
>
> The same judge had granted a temporary injunction against the law, stopping it from taking effect last summer. Judge Aleta Trauger ruled that the law violated the First Amendment rights of trans-friendly businesses.
>
> "Transgender Tennesseans are real," Trauger wrote. "The businesses and establishments that wish to welcome them are real. And the viewpoints that those individuals and businesses hold are real, even if they differ from the views of some legislators or government officials."

If the accused people are expecting this radical Clinton-appointee to interpret the law fairly, I think they'll be disappointed. Radical feminist judicial activists tend to legislate from the bench. Many didn't get into law in order to understand legal principles and apply laws fairly. Many got into law so they could conduct judicial activism. Many got into law in order to push a political agenda.

One more thing. A lot of prominent Christian leaders support the idea of marrying young. They look at the threats to marriage for men, and they say "just choose a better wife".

Here are some the threats that men are facing from the decision to get married:

- most young women are liberal, and therefore not safe for good conservative to marry
- no-fault divorce is unfair to men, e.g. – alimony, child support and unfair denial of custody and visitation
- biased application of domestic violence laws
- church siding with women against men, often in direct opposition to the clear teachings of the Bible
- false accusations against men, e.g. – at work or at school
- paternity fraud
- unfairly severe criminal sentences show bias against men in criminal justice system
- high taxes, inflation, caused by the welfare state

Choosing the right woman can protect you from some of those threats, but not all of them. Even if you marry the perfect Christian woman, you won't be safe from a radical feminist man-hating Christianity-hating judge who can slap hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines on you, and throw you into prison for a decade. Maybe Christian leaders could first do something about radical feminists in power before they get on to bullying good men into marriage and parenting. There's a reason why good men have to be careful about being vulnerable to the wrong people.

Young women in Europe disappointed with the results of their own votes

July 3, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you're like me, then you'll have read books about how Europe opened up their borders to unskilled radicalized Muslim immigrants from anti-Western, anti-Christian countries. I read "America Alone" by Mark Steyn, and "The Strange Death of Europe" by Douglas Murray. At the time, European voters thought that giving the reins of power to the secular left would be a good idea. But did it work?

Here's a great article from the Daily Caller:

> The left seems confused as to why citizens of Europe are "all of a sudden" voting and chanting populist policies.
>
> It's not hard to see why if your brain hasn't been melted by social justice and faux outrage. These citizens are merely fed up with left-wing policies that turned their cities boasting idyllic Western culture into rampant crime-laden third-world subsidiaries.
>
> These policies are rapidly losing appeal in France, Germany, and Ireland. Their citizens, especially the younger generation, are begging for someone to come in and save their homelands, like this French girl, Lili R, who posted how "unbearable" daily life has become.
>
> "I am 26 years old, blonde, with light eyes, and I have always lived in the 6th arrondissement of Lyon, which is thought of as the poshest area in Lyon, and my daily life has become unbearable. I write this because, ten years ago, I could go out with my friends in the evening, at any hour, without being bothered, insulted, followed, or stabbed," she wrote, according to an online translation.
>
> The left seems confused as to why citizens of Europe are "all of a sudden" voting and chanting populist policies.
>
> It's not hard to see why if your brain hasn't been melted by social justice and faux outrage. These citizens are merely fed up with left-wing policies that turned their cities boasting idyllic Western culture into rampant crime-laden third-world subsidiaries.

And they have an example of someone who is fed up with these left-wing policies:

> These policies are rapidly losing appeal in France, Germany, and Ireland. Their citizens, especially the younger generation, are begging for someone to come in and save their homelands, like this French girl, Lili R, who posted how "unbearable" daily life has become.
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> "I am 26 years old, blonde, with light eyes, and I have always lived in the 6th arrondissement of Lyon, which is thought of as the poshest area in Lyon, and my

> daily life has become unbearable. I write this because, ten years ago, I could go out with my friends in the evening, at any hour, without being bothered, insulted, followed, or stabbed," she wrote, according to an online translation.
>
> Her life has completely changed in ten years, and she blames unchecked illegal immigration, a policy France's left-wing parties not only support but actively aid.

And if you say anything about it, then you're "racist", because the "don't judge" people are in charge:

> "Every single one of the actions I mentioned (and they are only a part of what we have gone through) is the fact of men of sub-Saharan African or North African origin," Lili wrote. "Is it racist to call out what my daily life has become as a woman, because of immigration? Is my reality, my daily life, racist? Am I not as legitimate as any other person to call out traumatising acts of violence, just because they are done by foreigners or immigrants?"

In Douglas Murray's book, you can get all of the details about how each of the European countries elected secular leftists, and then those secular leftists invited the unskilled immigrants from Muslim countries in through their opened borders. These secular leftists were elected in large part through the votes of young unmarried women, who lean further and further to the left.

Here's the story from Financial Times:

> In countries on every continent, an ideological gap has opened up between young men and women. Tens of millions of people who occupy the same cities, workplaces, classrooms and even homes no longer see eye-to-eye.
>
> In the US, Gallup data shows that after decades where the sexes were each spread roughly equally across liberal and conservative world views, women aged 18 to 30 are now 30 percentage points more liberal than their male contemporaries. That gap took just six years to open up.
>
> Germany also now shows a 30-point gap between increasingly conservative young men and progressive female contemporaries, and in the UK the gap is 25 points. In Poland last year, almost half of men aged 18-21 backed the hard-right Confederation party, compared to just a sixth of young women of the same age.

One other point. The young French woman who was quoted isn't getting the worst of the Muslim immigrants. There is worse stuff being done to young women in Europe. I've blogged many times about the "grooming gangs" set up by recent male immigrants from majority-Muslim countries. The call it "grooming gangs" but it really amounts to sex-trafficking underage girls, most if not all of them fatherless. See the related posts.

Related posts

- Syrian refugee promoted by BBC journalists convicted of raping child
- In the UK, which crime is worse? Sex trafficking, gang-rape or hate speech?

- Diversity and inclusion: secular leftist UK police decline to prosecute Muslim sex-traffickers
- Islam, rape, and sex-trafficking in European countries
- Muslim leader of underage sex-trafficking gang gets 22-year sentence
- Police and social workers ignored sex-trafficking, rape and abuse by Muslims
- Telford sex-trafficking ring involving up to thousand children was run by “Asian” men
- Middle Eastern men who ran Oxford child sex-trafficking ring found guilty
- UK police knew about Muslim child sex gang but refused to prosecute
- UK authorities ignored gang of Muslim pedophiles who raped more than 1400 children
- In the UK, which crime is worse? Sex trafficking, gang-rape or hate speech?
- Members of another UK-based Middle Eastern men sex-trafficking ring sentenced
- Underage teen girl forced into daily sex by Muslim “grooming” gang in Rotherham, UK

For Independence Day, let’s learn about George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

July 4, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington’s line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington’s retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington’s army at White Plains, New York,

> British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after

> months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
>
> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
>
> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.

> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
>
> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
>
> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

Women want to complain to Human Resources because man is reserved at work

July 5, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have spent over 24 years in information technology, and most of the companies were large IT companies. Large IT companies tend to emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion more than smaller companies, which have to perform in order to stay afloat. And that means making sure there is an equal balance of genders, ethnicities, etc. in every different area.

Here is a very interesting post on the relationship advice forum of Reddit:

> Hi all I'm posting this on an alt because I know a few of my friends are following me on here and I don't want this spilling out until I have some clear thoughts on what I want to do.

The author – who uses Commonwealth spelling – has a short summary of her post at the top:

> A colleague (27M) joined our firm last year and since then he has had zero issues socialising with the guys we work with but always finds an excuse or says no to hanging out with the girls after work, even if we go out together as a whole he rarely talks to us and its making some of my friends uncomfortable.

And then here is the long version:

> So early last year our firm hired Dan (27M). In the first few weeks he was really quiet and didn't talk much and that's just how we thought he was. Every conversation with him was short and to the point and never deviated from work, asides from pleasantries (Have a nice weekend etc). About 2 months in he started becoming a bit more friendly with the guys in our office and they would hang out every so often and have normal conversations. However, whenever any of the girls in the office tried to do so he would quickly change the conversation back to work or just not reply. Even now after a year of Dan working with us he straight up refuses to socialise with the girls in the office and it is making them feel uncomfortable. He avoids any discussion of himself outside of work related events and future plans and doesn't ask any of the girls either. Where as he is, what I can only assume, pretty good friends with the guys in the office.
>
> Even on work meals out to celebrate events he is only doing the bare minimum when it comes to conversation with the girls where again with the guys he talks to them like there is no problem whatsoever. I don't know if I'm overreacting but one of the girls is considering go to HR about this because she is saying its creating a hostile work environment. Dan treats us like he treats clients we work with; cordial and strictly about business and its wearing thin now.

> Any advice is appreciated.

Many young people today don't see the workplace as being about work. They see it as a time of socializing. And they get angry when people don't socialize with them. They want to be allowed into a man's personal space, even though they are the kind of people who go straight to HR whenever anyone disagrees with them, or refuses to make them happy. Many of these women are single mothers who divorced the father of their kids.

I actually left my last job and took a lower salary job, because I was being harassed by a woman who had *no college degree*. Her official title was "Software Engineer", but she didn't write code. She just supervised deployments to production. She was very attractive, and had had cosmetic surgery done – her chest was super-sized. (I heard her explaining why she did it to one of the Indian workers one day). She was also about 6-8 years older than me. She started to get very angry with me for not giving her attention at work. She would come to my desk and talk about how politically conservative she was (she must have heard that I was conservative). But I didn't want to have anything to do with her.

I blogged previously about a woman who accused a man of grooming her because he didn't want to get more serious with her. Men are getting tired of this. If you know any young women who are wondering why men don't talk to them, maybe it's because many young women are not pleasant or safe to talk to. Even if a particular young unmarried woman is safe to talk to, men will judge her based on the majority of single, unmarried women. It's just not safe for men to have non-business conversations in the workplace with young, unmarried women.

The juice isn't worth the squeeze.

William Lane Craig debates atheist Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?

July 6, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video from the third debate from Dr. William Lane Craig's speaking tour in Australia.

Format:

- William Lane Craig (15 min)
- Lawrence Krauss (15 min, but was actually 21:40)
- Moderated discussion
- Question and answer

Dr. Graham Oppy, the moderator, is a well-known atheist philosopher. He let Dr. Krauss speak for 21 minutes and 40 seconds, which is why my summary of Krauss is so long.

The video:

Summary

After careful consideration, I decided not to be snarky at all in this summary. What you read below is what happened. There may be some small mistakes, but I will fix those if people tell me about them. I also included some quotes and timestamps for the more striking things that Dr. Krauss said.

The debate itself starts at 4:50 with Dr. Craig's opening speech. He does use slides to show the structure of his arguments.

Dr. Craig's opening speech. (4:50)

1. The kalam cosmological argument:
    - God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe
    - The Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem supports the absolute beginning of the universe
    - Even if our universe is part of a multiverse, the multiverse itself would have to have an absolute beginning
    - Speculative cosmologies try to challenge the Big Bang theory, but none of them – even if true – can establish that the past is eternal
    - Only two types of things could explain the origin of spece, time, matter and energy – either abstract objects or minds
    - Abstract objects do not cause effects, but minds do cause effects (we do it ourselves)
    - A mind is the best explanation for the origin of the universe
2. The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
    - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature

    - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
    - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
    - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see
3. The cosmic fine-tuning for the existence of intelligent life
    - There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) cosmological constants and 2) quantities
    - These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life
    - There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design
    - Law is rejected because they are put in at the beginning or matter – they don't emerge from matter
    - Chance must be rejected, because they odds are just too long unless you appeal to a world-ensemble
    - We do not observe what the world ensemble hypothesis predicts that we should observe
    - Design is the best explanation for finely-tuned constants and quantities
4. The existence of objective moral values and duties
    - Our experience of morality (values and duties) is that it is objectively real and incumbent on us
    - When someone goes into a classroom and shoots at innocent children, that is objectively wrong
    - On naturalism, moral values and moral duties do not exist – they are conventional and variable by time and place
    - The best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties is that God exists
5. The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus
    - There are three widely-accepted facts that are best explained by the resurrection hypothesis
    - 1) the empty tomb, 2) the post-mortem appearances, 3) the early church's belief in the resurrection
    - Naturalistic attempts to explain these 3 boilerplate facts fail
    - The best explanation of the 3 minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead
6. The immediate experience of God
    - Belief in God is a "properly basic" belief – rational even without arguments because of experience of God

Dr. Krauss' opening speech. (21:12)

Slides: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

1. Religious pluralism I

    - There have been lots of different gods created by people through history
    - We've gotten rid of all of them by understanding how the universe works by doing science
    - Religion is just stories, and the stories are inconsistent with how the universe works
2. Progress of naturalistic science I
    - Newtonian physics refutes the idea that angels push planets around
    - Darwinian evolution refutes design arguments, including the one that Dr. Craig presented (24:10)
    - Biochemistry hasn't explained how life originated, but we will have the solution soon
    - Physics shows us that matter can be created and destroyed without need a God
    - Physics shows us that universes can be created and destroyed "no problem"
3. Religious pluralism II
    - Since we have been able to disprove all the gods we've invented, why hang on to the last one
    - It's unlikely that the God that Dr. Craig presented exists, because we disproved all the others he didn't present
4. Hiddenness of God
    - There is a complete lack of evidence for the other 999 gods, so how likely is it that the God Dr. Craig presented exists
5. Religious pluralism III
    - There are inconsistencies between various religions, so therefore there can be no religion that is right
6. Progress of naturalistic science II
    - Peasants had a very low level of knowledge about the world and they believed in God
    - But our level of knowledge has increased over time, so we shouldn't believe in God now
    - Peasants thought that the Earth orbited the Sun, but this is now known to be false
    - The Scriptures said that the Earth orbited the Sun, but now we know that's false from science
7. Christianity plagiarizes from other religions I
    - There is nothing new or special about Jesus
    - He's just as unpleasant as all the other gods
    - Everything particular to Jesus occurs in other religions
8. Catholics are inconsistent about what they believe
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in transubstantiation
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in the virgin birth
9. The resurrection is copied from many other religions
    - Dionysus, Osiris, etc.

10. There is no evidence for the resurrection
    - The stories about Jesus were written “decades or hundreds of years after the fact”
    - The stories are inconsistent with each other
    - Dr. Craig tells me that historical Jesus scholars all accept that the resurrection happened
    - That’s like saying that all alien abductions experts agree that alien abductions happened
    - It’s unreasonable to think that the resurrection happened because no one saw it happen
    - I accept that people reported on appearances, but hallucination theory can explain that
11. The timeline for the creation and incarnation are all wrong
    - The creation, planet formation, hominids, incarnation, etc. all take place in the wrong times
    - If God knew what he was doing, he would done everything at better times to be more efficient
12. David Hume’s argument against miracles is sound
    - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – nothing wrong with this argument
    - Miracles are really just coincidences
    - Catholic apparitions at Lourdes disprove the historical argument that Dr. Craig made for the resurrection
13. God is petty and jealous
    - God shouldn’t demand that we trust him, esteem him and consider his character when we make decisions
    - The atoning death of Jesus for the sins of the world also makes no sense
14. Belief is based on geography
    - What you believe is clearly correlated with where you are born
    - There is even an Islamic clone of Dr. Craig who “uses the exact same arguments” that he does to prove Islam
    - Belief in God is decreasing in the Internet-accessible world
15. Science can develop morals without God
    - Reason is able to guide our actions to be moral
    - Morality evolves over time, so there is no objective morality
    - Catholicism teaches things that are immoral
    - Some things are prohibited by biological revulsion, such as incest
    - But if a brother and sister have sex using condoms “is that morally wrong? I can’t say it is frankly” (37:24)
16. Dr. Craig is irrational
    - “I came here convinced based on my past interactions and his writing that Dr. Craig was a dishonest Charlatan”
    - “Any argument that validates God is reasonable to him”

    - “And any argument against it is not only unreasonable but wrong and worth distorting”
    - “Because it must be wrong – he’s decided the answer in advance”
17. Dr. Craig is immoral
    - Dr. Craig thinks it is OK for God to command that Canaanite children are killed
    - “So in fact if they were Canaanite children in that schoolroom that he talked about then it would be OK”
    - It’s not reasonable to justify genocide in that way, but Dr. Craig is willing to go to those lengths
18. The cause of the origin of the space time universe need not be God
    - Dr. Craig says that if there is an explanation for the origin or space, time, matter and energy it must be God
    - But it could just as easily be turtles or Zeus
19. Dr. Craig misrepresents the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem
    - Alexander Vilenkin wrote me an e-mail that says that the theorem doesn’t work in all cases
    - “Dr. Craig is so convinced that these arguments must be true that he won’t listen to the fact that they’re not”
20. Darwinian evolution explains the fine-tuning
    - “Life was fine tuned – we got rid of it with Darwin”
    - Mutation and natural selection explain the cosmic fine-tuning argument that Dr. Craig presented
21. Suboptimal design disproves the fine-tuning argument
    - “We get back aches” therefore “This argument that [the universe] is fine-tuned for life is nonsense”
22. William Lane Craig can be proven to exhibit homosexual behavior using logical arguments
    - Look, you can construct arguments that are clearly wrong
    - Premise 1: “All mammals exhibit homosexual behavior”
    - Premise 2: “William Lane Craig is a mammal”
    - Seems to be saying that logical arguments can prove false things “it’s nonsense”
23. Dr. Craig distorted a podcast that some group made on pain receptors
    - Dr. Craig’s faith is so strong that it causes him to distort what this group said

Discussion: (44:35)

I will not be summarizing everything that was said, just a few main points.
The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the

universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can't even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don't work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don't have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON'T KNOW!!!!!!!" (raising his voice)
- Craig: I'm not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"
- Craig: "I wonder what you deleted from the original letter"
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "I just told you!"
- Craig: "Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) 'You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is

highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.'
- Craig: "That's Vilenkin."
- Krauss: "In this paper, that's absolutely right"
- Krauss: But it's ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it's unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: "Isn't it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?"
- Krauss: "No"
- Craig: "Well, can you give us one then"
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) "In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong"
- Krauss: "You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it's hard"
- Craig: "Right"

I noticed that a huge number of atheist web sites are taking the Vilenkin quote that Krauss used out of context, like this one and this one. There are probably a lot more of them like that, which I think is interesting. That's why we have these debates, I guess. To set the record straight about who accuses people of being dishonest, and who is actually dishonest.

Fine-tuning:

- Krauss tried to argue that he had explained the fine-tuning with the Higgs particle, but Dr. Craig said that only applied to the cosmological constant, not all the other examples of fine-tuning. Krauss said that it wasn't impressive that this universe permitted life and that "It would have been much more surprising if we evolved in a universe in which we couldn't live". Krauss argued the fine-tuning was only for "Life like us". But Dr. Craig explained that the fine-tuning is what allows us to have the basics of any kind of life, like slow-burning stars, chemical diversity, etc. – things that are required for basic minimal life functions in any living system. Craig said that he was working with the current physical laws of this universe (F = ma, etc.) and that he was looking at what changed if we changed those even slightly. Krauss tried to say that if he changed things like the mass of particles then the strength of forces would change. (But the forces aren't laws!) Krauss argued that the cosmological constant would be even better for life if it was zero, and Craig said that the life permitting range did include zero, but that the range of life-permitting values was narrow.

Jesus' existence:

- Craig reponded to the mystery religions charge, the charge that the evidence for the minimal facts is too late/too weak, the charge that grief visions explained the evidence better, and Hume's argument against miracles. Craig brought up the early

creed from 1 Cor 15:3-7 and explained to Krauss that it was 5 years after the events, and that Jewish standards of oral transmission were strong enough to ensure that the creed was reliable, and most of the eyewitnesses would still have been alive.

Audience Q and A: (1:21:09)

The first topic is the grounding of morality. Krauss agrees that there is no objective morality and no objective moral oughts. He also said that that standards of behavior are arbitrary, and that they change over time and they are adopted for promoting social order. Dr. Craig pressed the point that science itself would collapse without ethical values. It assumes them, but cannot ground them.

The next topic was free will. Krauss is a determinist. Craig asked him how he could reconcile moral responsibility with determinism.

The next topic was the effectiveness of mathematics. Krauss didn't have an explanation for it and didn't think it needed one. Then they got into whether the Genesis has been verified by science and whether it is meant to be taken literally.

The next topic was whether philosophy makes any progress. Craig gave the example of verificationism being rejected as too narrow, and self-refuting. Krauss: "I'm going to come to the defense of philosophy for the first time". Craig: "That's amazing!" Krauss said that science provides new knowledge. Craig said there were some things that could be known apart from science.

William Lane Craig debates Daniel Came: Does God exist?

July 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

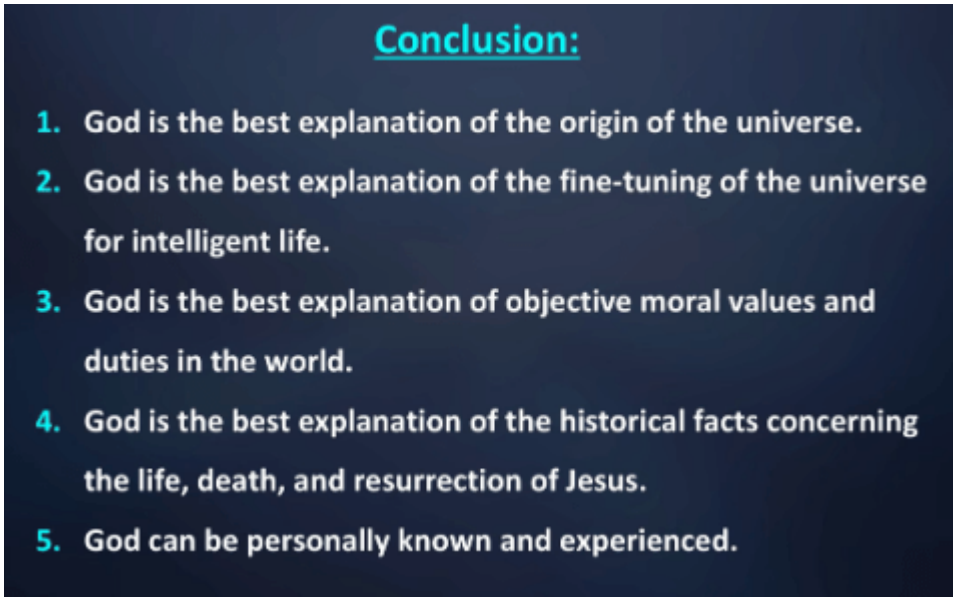

Dr. Craig's opening speech summary slide

The video of the debate was posted by ReasonableFaith.org – Dr. Craig's organization. This debate occurred in March 2017 at the University of Dublin, in Ireland.

The video: (91 minutes)

My non-snarky summary is below.

Dr. Craig's opening speech

Two claims:

1. There are good reasons to think that theism is true.
2. There are not comparably good reasons to think that atheism is true.

Five reasons for God's existence:

1. The beginning of the universe
– actual infinite past is mathematically impossible
– BGV theorem: any universe that is on balance expanding in its history (like ours) cannot be past eternal

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– slight changes to quantities and constants prevent a universe from supporting complex embodied life
– the multiverse response of atheists conflicts with observations, e.g. the Boltzmann Brains problem

3. Objective moral values
– God's existence is required to ground objective moral values and duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus

– there are good reasons to accept the most widely accepted facts about the historical Jesus (empty tomb, appearances, early widespread belief in the resurrection)
– the best explanation of these minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

5. Experience God directly
– in the absence of any defeaters to belief in God, a person can experience God directly

Dr. Daniel Came's opening speech

1. The hiddenness of God
– if God wants a personal relationship with us, and a relationship with God would be the greatest good for us
– God ought to reveal himself to us, but he does not reveal himself to many people, the "non-resistant non-believers"

2. The inductive problem of evil
– many evil events occur that are pointless – there is no morally sufficient reason why God would allow them to occur
– examples: animal suffering, children born with disease, tsunamis
– the theistic response to this is that humans are not in a position to know whether there are morally sufficient reasons, due to our limitations of knowing the consequences
– but this ripple effect defense has 4 possible outcomes, 3 of which don't do the job of justifying

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

1. The hiddenness of God
– God's goal is not to make his existence known, but to draw them into a love relationship
– it's speculative that overt displays of God's existence would draw people to him in a love relationship, they might resent his bullying
– atheist would have to prove that God could draw more people into a love relationship with him by revealing himself more overtly

2. The inductive problem of evil
– as humans, we are not in a position to know for certain that any apparently pointless evil really is pointless
– William Alston article: 6 limitations of human knowing make it impossible to judge that an evil is actually "pointless"
– Dr. Came says that there are 4 possibilities for the ripple effects, and since 3 are bad, it's likely that there are not morally sufficient reasons for a apparently pointless evil
– it is logically fallacious to assert probability conclusions without knowing the probabilities of those 4 options
– there is actually an argument from evil: since the problem of evil requires an objective standard of good and evil by which to measure, and God is the only possible ground of objective morality, then pressing the problem of evil actually requires the atheist to assume God, in order to ground this objective moral standard

Dr. Came's first rebuttal

3. Objective moral values

– there are naturalistic theories of moral realism where objective moral duties and objective moral values exist in a naturalistic universe
– I'm not saying that any of them are correct, but there are many theories about object morality in a naturalistic universe

There are naturalistic theories for all of the 5 arguments that Dr. Craig presented. It is Dr. Craig's responsibility to present those naturalistic theories and prove that they are not as good as his explanations. I'm not going to defend (or even name!) a single naturalistic theory for any of these 5 arguments by Dr. Craig.

Dr. Craig's explanations for the 5 evidences he gave can't be admitted, because we have to know how God did something *in naturalistic terms* before we can know that God did it supernaturally. Explanations are only valid if they are naturalistic.

1. The beginning of the universe
– naturalism explains how the universe expands after it came into being, so that explains how it came into being
– the God explanation, that God created the universe out of nothing, is not admissible, because it is not naturalistic
– how does God, as an unembodied mind interact with the physical world?
– the only agency that we know about is human agents, and we have bodies, so how could God perform actions without having a body?

The theistic hypothesis does not make any predictions, but naturalism makes lots of testable predictions. God could do anything, so he is not constrained and is therefore untestable. We can't infer God as an explanation in principle because we can't predict what is more probable if God exists than if he does not.

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the university was not set up to make embodied intelligence plausible, because the vast majority of the universe is hostile to life
– there are models of the multiverse that escape the Boltzmann Brains problem that Dr. Craig raised

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

Some of Dr. Craig's arguments are deductive (e.g. – the beginning of the universe, objective moral values), so that the conclusion follows from the premises if the premises are true. The resurrection passes the standard tests for historical explanations.

1. The beginning of the universe
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for an ultimate beginning of the universe

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for a design of the universe to support life
– he has to prove that intelligences has to be attached to bodies
– human beings are non-physical minds united to physical bodies
– naturalistic attempts to explain mental operations fail

– the arguments *prove* that unembodied minds exist
– the vast expanse of the universe is required in order to form the galaxies, stars and heavy elements needed for complex life
– why expect that the entire universe should be small, or that life would be everywhere?
– a non-fine-tuned world is more likely in the multiverse, and in a multiverse, we are more likely to have a Boltzmann brain world than a world with complex, embodied life
– Dr. Came has not advanced any naturalistic explanation for the fine-tuning

3. Objective moral values
– non-theistic ethical theories cannot account for the ontological foundations of objective moral values and duties
– atheistic theories of moral realism simply assume objective moral values out of thin air
– it is especially hard to find any basis for objective moral duties in the absence of God

Dr. Came's second rebuttal

5. Religious experience
– Dr. Craig should not bring up religious experience in a debate where arguments and evidence are central
– people who have dreams, hallucinations and psychotic delusions could appeal to religious experience
– religious experience is by no means universal, and it is possible to doubt it

3. Objective moral values
– there are lots of atheists who hold to objective moral values
– Dr. Craig has to explain how God grounds objective moral values and duties
– Dr. Craig has to explain why atheist moral realist theories don't work to ground objective moral values and duties

1. The beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig claims that something can't come from nothing, that's not an argument
– there are numerous models that don't require an absolute beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig cites the BGV theorem, but Guth (one of the authors) says that only the inflation has a beginning, not the whole universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion

1. The beginning of the universe
– on theism, there is an efficient cause, but no material cause, for the origin of the universe
– on atheism, there is neither an efficient cause nor a material cause, for the origin of the universe: that's worse!
– if he thinks that there are models of the universe that don't require a beginning, then let him name a viable eternal model of the universe
– he never refuted the mathematical argues against an infinite past

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– nothing to refute

3. Objective moral values

– God is a better ground for morality than humans, because he is ultimate, and not contingent and arbitrary
– God is a being who is worthy of worship, and therefore command his creatures with moral duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus
– nothing to refute

5. Religious experience
– only justified because there are no defeaters to it

1. The hiddenness of God
– atheist has to show that if God's existence were more obvious, that it would result in more people being drawn to him

2. The inductive problem of evil
– Dr. Came's argument was logically fallacious, and makes errors in probability theory

Dr. Came's conclusion

Sometimes, people can't prove something, but lack of evidence is a justification for doubting it, e.g. – werewolves.

If none of Craig's arguments work, then it follows that it is not rational to believe that God exists, and it is rational to believe that God does not exist.

Atheists shouldn't have a burden of proof for what they know, only theists have a burden of proof for what they know.

My thoughts

One quick point. If life were common everywhere then atheists would infer that God wasn't involved in it. Period. "Life is everywhere, so it's common, why do we need a designer?" they'd say. I agree with Dr. Came about denouncing religious experience in a formal debate. I don't like when Dr. Craig brings this up, but I see why he does it – he's an evangelist, and that's a good thing, too. I just worry about how it looks to atheists, although it's good for sincere seekers. I'm not the one on the stage, though, Dr. Craig is.

I think the point about more overt revealing by God would annoy people and make them turn away. Think of how gay people respond to the suggestion that there is anything wrong with them, with rage, vandalism, threats, coercion, attempts to get you to lose your job and business, and using government as a weapon to fine and imprison you. It's really obvious to me that more God does not mean more *love* of God. For those who don't want God, the hiddenness is respect for their choice to put pleasure above the search for truth. (I mean the gay activists – I have great sympathy for people who struggle with same-sex unwanted attractions because they were impacted by a failed bond with their parent of the same sex as they are).

Whenever I meet people like Dr. Came, I always urge them to keep investigating and pursuing truth, because they will find it if they are sincerely seeking after God. Some atheists do sincerely seek God, but I don't know any who haven't found him. I'm not sure if that's because those atheists who claim to be non-resistant and rational are in fact

resistant and non-rational, or what the real reason is. If you believe the Bible, *all* unbelief is non-rational and resistant (see Romans 1). Regarding the werewolves, we don't have any good arguments for werewolves, we do have good arguments for God. Dr. Came didn't refute the arguments that Craig raised, nor did his own arguments for atheism work. And there are many, many more arguments (origin of life, Cambrian explosion, habitability-discoverability, molecular machines) that Craig did not raise, too.

Dying from “don’t judge”: 13 Americans whose deaths were caused by illegal immigrants

July 8, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Many people in America today vote in order to feel good about themselves, and to look good to others. But what is the long-term effect of voting this way? In this post, we will look at 13 stories of Americans who died at the hands of illegal immigrants who were welcomed in by the “don’t judge” crowd. Will the “don’t judge” crowd face any consequences for their actions?

Here is the article by Virginia Allen up at Daily Signal:

> Over the past 12 months, illegal aliens have been arrested in connection with the deaths of at least 13 Americans. Seven of those victims were minors.
>
> “The simple fact is that every crime committed by an illegal alien is one committed by an individual who should not have been at large in the country in the first place,” House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Rep. Mark Green told The Daily Signal.

That’s a key point. A lot of secular leftists like to claim that illegal immigrants don’t commit huge numbers of crimes compared to legal American taxpayers. But the issue is that every single crime committed by an illegal immigrant could have been avoided if that person was never able to get in. Also, the whole job of the people in government is to work for the people who pay their salaries. And that work is supposed to mean protecting the taxpayers from criminals. They’re not being paid by illegal immigrants to make their lives better.

Anyway, the Daily Signal article has 13 stories of taxpayers being killed by illegal immigrants, and here’s one of them:

> Victor Antonio Martinez-Hernandez, 23, crossed the U.S. southern border illegally in February 2023, according to Harford County, Maryland, Sheriff Jeffrey Gahler. Six months later, in August 2023, Hernandez is suspected of attacking, raping, and killing Rachel Morin, a mother of five, while she exercised on the MA & PA Heritage Trail in Bel Air, Maryland, about 30 miles northeast of Baltimore.
>
> After a lengthy investigation, authorities arrested Hernandez in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on June 14 on charges of rape and murder.

Now, you might expect that Christian leaders would be speaking out about these kinds of crimes, and advocating for government workers to protect the taxpayers who pay their salaries. But you’d be wrong. Many Christian leaders, including Southern Baptist leaders, have decided that open borders are more consistent with Christianity than protecting innocent people from criminals. They just want to “love everyone” and “don’t judge”.

California judge hides entire “trans the child” case from the public

July 9, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I try to write about every one of these cases that I can, no matter what country they occur in. Why? Because I think these cases do the best job of illustrating the hostility that the feminist culture has to male leadership in the home. It’s terrifying for men to see emotion-driven female judges, lawyers, teachers, social workers, therapists, etc. using the law as a weapon to overrule protective fathers.

Here’s the latest from Daily Signal:

> A Texas father is fighting in court to prevent his ex-wife from subjecting their son to experimental transgender medical interventions after she moved to California, seemingly taking advantage of the Golden State’s “transgender sanctuary” law.
>
> A California judge has taken the extraordinary step of hiding the entire case from the public in the lead-up to trial, and even preventing lawyers from accessing case documents.
>
> “My ex-wife, Anne Georgulas, wants to castrate my son, James,” Jeff Younger, the father, told The Daily Signal in a statement Wednesday. James is 12 years old. “Judge Michelle Kazadi denied me access to my own case records. She illegally sealed my case with no public access.”
>
> He also blamed Presiding Judge Shelley Kaufman and Judge Mark Juhas of abusing the system against his claims.
>
> “Judge Shelley Kaufman’s court has misrouted orders to the wrong address,” he added. “Judge Mark Juhas denied me access to crucial evidence by setting a too-early trial date. I can’t even get an independent medical exam of my son.”
>
> “The corrupt Los Angeles courts sealed my case to hide their corruption as they castrate my son,” Younger concluded.

Just like the case that I blogged about before from California, the problems were initiated by the wife that Younger chose:

> Jeff Younger has been fighting to preserve the bodily integrity of his son, James, since 2018. That year, Georgulas filed a restraining order seeking to prevent Younger from entering James’ school and referring to James as male. A jury declined to give Younger or Georgulas full custody and required Younger’s consent for any medical procedures.
>
> […]Younger appealed to the Texas Supreme Court, warning that Georgulas intended to subject his son to irreversible transgender interventions. The court rejected Younger’s case after Georgulas told the court she did not intend to subject her son to those “treatments.” However, in February, she filed a motion

> in Los Angeles County Superior Court, aiming to dissolve the protective order preventing her from subjecting James to "gender-affirming care." Georgulas' motion cites the opinions of psychologist Brigid Mariko Conn, who stated that James "is interested" in "puberty blockers," estrogen, and "bottom surgery," i.e. the removal of his penis and testicles.

She promised not to trans the boy, but then she just changed her mind later. Did she do it to feel better about herself? Or to virtue signal to others about her cool new trans child, like women celebrities do? Or did she do it to get revenge on her ex-husband? Who knows. But the key point about these sorts of cases is that men looking on understand that regardless of who they choose to marry, there is a whole team of radical feminist lawyers, judges, social workers, therapists, teachers, etc. arrayed against male leadership in the home. And very often, the man-blamers in the churches are completely on the side of those feminists.

At the very least, traditional conservatives have very little to say about this, and I doubt they even see the common denominator in all these cases that interest men. The common denominator is the view that men should just be slaves who exist only to protect and provide, but they have no authority to lead on moral and spiritual issues. And also that men should not be allowed to have any standards or plan for relationships – they should just sign up to be slaves whenever a woman decides that she wants them to sign up. This is the same view that you find in the books of popular evangelical feminists and egalitarians. It's held by some of the most pious and chivalrous pro-traditional marriage Christians.

On the one hand, evangelical feminists and egalitarians want to take the view that women are always the real leaders in the home. Then on the other hand, they expect men to sign up to pay all the bills and fight all the battles, but with no leadership role. Do they really think that men will take an offer like that? Do they really think that men are stupid, and can be shamed into being the victim of a system that hates traditional male roles? I don't think it's going to work.

DNA repair is essential to DNA maintenance and has to be present at origin of life

July 10, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We recently did an episode of the Knight and Rose Show with Dr. Fazale Rana of Reasons to Believe about the origin of life. In that episode, we talked about all of the components that have to be present in the first living cell in order for it to perform the minimal functions of a living system. One component that was not specifically talked about is the DNA repair.

First we will look at an article, but don't let complexity bother you, because there is a Discovery Institute animated video that goes with it. The article just provides scientific evidence to support the cartoon.

Here's an article about that from Evolution News:

> Damage to the "factory" of the cell occurs on two levels: damage to the stored information (either during replication or by natural degradation over time) and damage to the manufacturing machinery (either from faulty production of new machinery or damage incurred during use). Each type of damage requires specific repair mechanisms that demonstrate foresight — the expectation that damage will occur and the ability to recognize, repair and/or recycle only those components that are damaged. All known life requires these mechanisms.

So, from a Darwinist perspective, you would have to be able to show that DNA repair can evolve a little bit at a time, with each iteration providing a little more functionality. But what if science found that all the functionality has to be there right at the beginning, or there is no DNA repair? That would look more like design.

More:

> The initial process of DNA replication is facilitated by a polymerase enzyme which results in approximately one error for every 10,000 to 100,000 added nucleotides.1 However, no known life can persist with such a high rate of error, if left uncorrected.2 Fortunately, DNA replication in all life includes a subsequent proofreading step — a type of damage repair — that enhances the accuracy by a factor of 100 to 1,000. T
>
> […]Following the replication of DNA, a daily barrage of DNA damage occurs during normal operating conditions. Life therefore requires sophisticated and highly specific DNA repair mechanisms. In humans, DNA damage response is estimated to involve a hierarchical organization of 605 proteins in 109 assemblies.4 Efforts to make the simplest possible cell by stripping out all non-essential genes has successfully reduced DNA repair to a minimal set of six genes.5 But, these six genes are encoded in thousands of base pairs of DNA, and the machinery to transcribe and translate those genes into the repair enzymes

> requires a minimum of 149 genes.6 Thus, the DNA code that is required to make DNA repair mechanisms easily exceeds 100,000 base pairs.

And this is the key point:

> Here, we encounter a great paradox, first identified in 1971 by Manfred Eigen[7]: DNA repair is essential to maintain DNA but the genes that code for DNA repair could not have evolved unless the repair mechanisms were already present to protect the DNA.

And at the very end of the article, the most common response from Darwinian naturalists is rebutted:

> Those who promote unguided abiogenesis simply brush off all of these required mechanisms, claiming that life started as simplified "proto-cells" that didn't need repair. But there is no evidence that any form of life could persist or replicate without these repair mechanisms. And the presence of the repair mechanisms invokes several examples of circular causality — quite a conundrum for unintelligent, natural processes alone. Belief that simpler "proto-cells" didn't require repair mechanisms requires blind faith, set against the prevailing scientific evidence.

A good article to bookmark, especially if the origin of life is one of your main arguments.

And here is the short video that they made to go with it:

If you're looking for a good simple podcast about the need for a Designing Intelligence to explain the origin of life, check out our episode with Dr. Fazale Rana.

Should Christians respect Francis Collins as an authority on science?

July 11, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Dr. Francis Collins is apparently in the news again. He claims to be an evangelical Christian, and pushed Christians to wear cloth masks and get vaccinated. Should Christians trust Collins as a scientific authority? Or is he just a willing pawn of the secular left? Let's take a look at an article from Megan Basham, and find out.

This article from February 2022 is originally from Daily Wire, but full text here. The title is "How The Federal Government Used Evangelical Leaders To Spread Covid Propaganda To Churches".

Excerpt:

> In September, Wheaton College dean Ed Stetzer interviewed National Institutes of Health Director Francis Collins on his podcast, "Church Leadership" about why Christians who want to obey Christ's command to love their neighbors should get the Covid vaccine and avoid indulging in misinformation.
>
> […]Their conversation also turned to the subject of masking children at school, with Collins noting that Christians, in particular, have been resistant to it. His view was firm—kids should be masked if they want to be in the classroom. To do anything else is to turn schools into super spreaders. Stetzer offered no pushback or follow-up questions based on views from other medical experts. He simply agreed.
>
> […]Collins participated in a livestream event, co-hosted by Christianity Today… During the panel interview, Collins continued to insist that the lab leak theory wasn't just unlikely but qualified for the dreaded misinformation label. "If you were trying to design a more dangerous coronavirus," he said, "you would never have designed this one … So I think one can say with great confidence that in this case the bioterrorist was nature … Humans did not make this one. Nature did."

I blogged previously about how several federal government departments now think that this is the most plausible theory, and how the CIA bribed experts to change their testimony about the lab leak theory. So Collins was actually the one spreading misinformation.

Collins takes secular left positions on abortion and transgenderism:

> He has not only defended experimentation on fetuses obtained by abortion, he has also directed record-level spending toward it. Among the priorities the NIH has funded under Collins — a University of Pittsburgh experiment that involved grafting infant scalps onto lab rats, as well as projects that relied on the harvested organs of aborted, full-term babies. Some doctors have

> even charged Collins with giving money to research that required extracting kidneys, ureters, and bladders from living infants.
>
> He further has endorsed unrestricted funding of embryonic stem cell research, personally attending President Obama's signing of an Executive Order to reverse a previous ban on such expenditures.
>
> […]When it comes to pushing an agenda of racial quotas and partiality based on skin color, Collins is a member of the Left in good standing, speaking fluently of "structural racism" and "equity" rather than equality. He's put his money (or, rather, taxpayer money) where his mouth is, implementing new policies that require scientists seeking NIH grants to pass diversity, equity, and inclusion tests in order to qualify.
>
> […]Having declared himself an "ally" of the gay and trans movements, he went on to say he "[applauds] the courage and resilience it takes for [LGBTQ] individuals to live openly and authentically" and is "committed to listening, respecting, and supporting [them]" as an "advocate."
>
> […]Under his watch, the NIH launched a new initiative to specifically direct funding to "sexual and gender minorities." On the ground, this has translated to awarding millions in grants to experimental transgender research on minors, like giving opposite-sex hormones to children as young as eight and mastectomies to girls as young as 13. Another project, awarded $8 million in grants, included recruiting teen boys to track their homosexual activities like "condomless anal sex" on an app without their parents' consent.

Megan's got the names of the people who promoted him in her article: Tim Keller, Rick Warren, N. T. Wright, Ed Stetzer, Russell Moore, and David French:

> Keller, Warren, Wright, and Stetzer all publicly lauded him as a godly brother. When presenting Collins to Southern Baptists, Moore gushed over him as the smartest man in a book club he attends…
>
> [I]nfluential evangelical pundit David French deemed Collins a "national treasure" and his service in the NIH "faithful."

I notice that Seth Gruber, who I've met in person during his early pro-life training, had a very recent article about Dr. Collins.

He writes:

> But after Megan Basham's Daily Wire article that caused Big Eva to start collapsing in on itself like a dying star, Daily Wire reached out to those five men to ask if they had changed their views on Collins given these revelations. NONE OF THEM RESPONDED. And that remains true to this day. None of these supposedly godly Christian leaders has anything to say about his "brother in Christ" funding the live dissections of infants for fresh organs, sexualizing teenage boys, carving the breasts off of healthy teenage girls, chemically

> castrating children, praising eugenic abortions, and buying the organs of our preborn brothers and sisters. In fact, Megan Basham once found herself waiting to board the same flight as Dr. Moore. When she approached him to question him about his involvement with Collins, he promptly ran away.

And this was the part that is so unlike almost all of the popular Christian leaders of today – Seth named names:

> Russell Moore, Rick Warren, Ed Stetzer, David French, Tim Keller (in his day), and the rest of Big Eva all have one thing in common with the "progressive" revolutionaries of today's culture: the belief that God's children are indeed for sale. They only differ on the price tag and form of payment. Like Lot, if provided with the right incentives, our theological betters will not hesitate to toss God's children into the arms of the mob.

Dr. Collins is a Darwinian evolutionist, so you can guess how evidence-based his views are about the origin of life and the Cambrian explosion. I think Christians need to be skeptical of believers in naturalistic religion: Darwinism, man-made catastrophic global warming, abortion, transgenderism, etc. It's pretty clear that these naturalistic views are not the result of study and debate. People who jump on the speculations of the secular left, and pronounce them as infallible, are not doing it to promote truth. They do it because they want the respect of powerful secular leftists. Dr. Collins is not an independent thinker. He is someone who adopts the views of secular leftist elites automatically and without thinking. He wants to get ahead in the world. That's it.

The authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke knew eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus

July 12, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Were the authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke connected to eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus? Well, it turns out that there are good reasons to think that Mark was linked to the eyewitness Peter, and Luke was linked to Paul, who had a post-mortem appearance of Jesus in 1 Cor 15:8, and who met with Peter and James in Galatians 1 and again in Galatians 2.

There is a list of evidence for Peter's influence on Mark on the Cold Case Christianity blog.

Here's my favorite one from the list:

> **Peter's Embarrassments Have Been Omitted**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter's special input and influence,including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It's important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It's not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter's standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters 'indiscretions' in their own accounts. See *Cold-Case Christianity* for a more detailed explanation).

It makes me laugh to imagine Peter looking over Mark's shoulder and saying "no, don't put that in it" and "no, don't tell them I did that". Funny! But also very good evidence. The rest of Wallace's list makes it even more clear.

And what about the gospel of Luke? Well, did you know that the author of Luke's gospel knew Paul? If you read it carefully, you'll see that Luke switches from describing history from an "I" perspective to describing things from a "we" perspective in the book of Acts (which he also wrote). Who is the "we" he is talking about?

Here's famous Christian scholar William Lane Craig to explain:

> Now who was this author we call Luke? He was clearly not an eyewitness to Jesus's life. But we discover an important fact about him from the book of Acts. Beginning in the sixteenth chapter of Acts, when Paul reaches Troas in modern-day Turkey, the author suddenly starts using the first-person plural: "we set sail from Troas to Samothrace," "we remained in Philippi some days," "as we were going to the place of prayer," *etc.* The most obvious explanation is that the author had joined Paul on his evangelistic tour of the Mediterranean cities. In chapter 21 he accompanies Paul back to Palestine and finally to Jerusalem. What

> this means is that the author of Luke-Acts was in fact in first hand contact with the eyewitnesses of Jesus's life and ministry in Jerusalem.
>
> […]There is no avoiding the conclusion that Luke-Acts was written by a traveling companion of Paul who had the opportunity to interview eyewitnesses to Jesus's life while in Jerusalem. Who were some of these eyewitnesses? Perhaps we can get some clue by subtracting from the Gospel of Luke everything found in the other gospels and seeing what is peculiar to Luke. What you discover is that many of Luke's peculiar narratives are connected to women who followed Jesus: people like Joanna and Susanna, and significantly, Mary, Jesus's mother.
>
> Was the author reliable in getting the facts straight? The book of Acts enables us to answer that question decisively. The book of Acts overlaps significantly with secular history of the ancient world, and the historical accuracy of Acts is indisputable.
>
> This has recently been demonstrated anew by Colin Hemer, a classical scholar who turned to New Testament studies, in his book *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History.* [5] Hemer goes through the book of Acts with a fine-toothed comb, pulling out a wealth of historical knowledge, ranging from what would have been common knowledge down to details which only a local person would know. Again and again Luke's accuracy is demonstrated: from the sailings of the Alexandrian corn fleet to the coastal terrain of the Mediterranean islands to the peculiar titles of local officials, Luke gets it right.

I know a lot of people (like my Dad) read the Bible devotionally, looking for feelings or trying to "get right with God" so they get blessings. But I think it's helpful to look at things from an evidential point of view – how am I going to make a case for this? When you look at things from that perspective, the Bible gets a whole lot more interesting. And you can talk about it with non-Christians when you know about these interesting details.

Dr. Walter Bradley lectures on scientific evidence the creation and design of the universe

July 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This lecture is special to me, because I bought a VHS tape of it just after I started working full-time, and watched it a million times. A lot of people come to their convictions about God's existence because of parents or church or intuitions, but for me it's all about the scientific evidence. This lecture changed my life. I wish more people taught their children about this evidence! This lecture was delivered at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

About the speaker:

> Dr. Bradley received his B.S. in Engineering Science and his Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Texas in Austin.
>
> Dr. Bradley taught for eight years at the Colorado School of Mines before assuming a position as Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1976.
>
> During his 24 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Bradley served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and as Director of the Polymer Technology Center, and received five College of Engineering Research Awards. He has received over $4,500,000 in research grants and has published over 140 technical articles and book chapters. He has also co-authored "The Mystery Of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Materials and of the American Scientific Affiliation and serves as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.
>
> He currently serves as Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University.

The lecture: (63 minutes lecture, 25 minutes audience Q&A)

Summary slide:

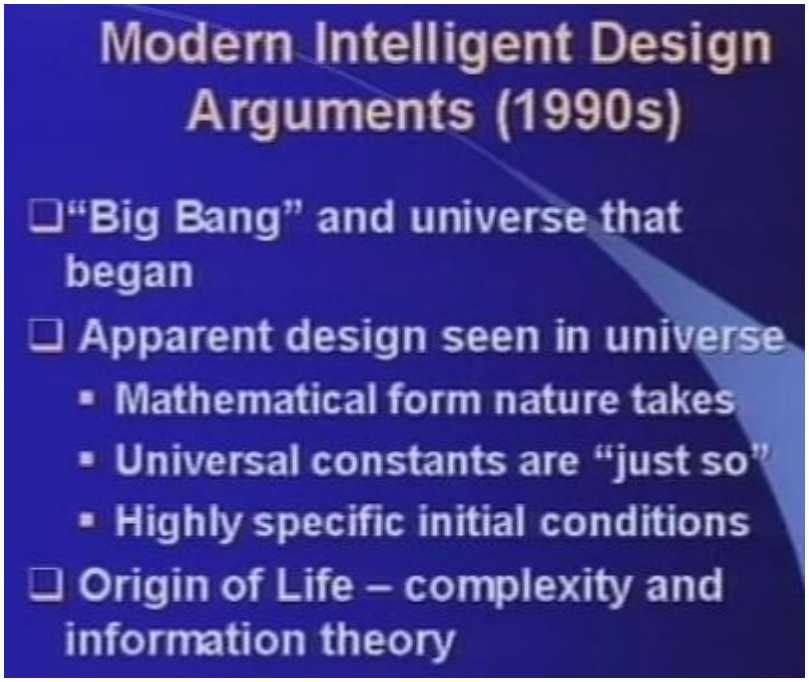

This slide summarizes the content of the lecture
Introduction:

- At the beginning of the 20th century, people believed that the progress of science was pointing away from an intelligent Creator and Designer, and towards naturalism
- A stream of new discoveries has shifted the support of science towards theism, and away from naturalism
- Richard Dawkins, an atheist, says that nature only has the appearance of design, but that if you look closer, naturalistic mechanisms can account for the appearance of design
- When deciding between design and apparent design ("designoid"), it matters whether you think there is an intelligence there to do the designing

Evidence #1: The Big Bang:

- an eternal "steady state" universe is more compatible with naturalism, but a created universe is more compatible with a Creator
- In 1929, Hubble used telescopes to observe that the light from distant galaxies was *redshifted.* The further away galaxies were, the faster they were moving away. Therefore, space is expanding in all directions, suggesting an explosive origin of the universe
- In 1965, the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation matched a prediction of the Big Bang cosmology, and of the creation event
- In 1992, the COBE space telescope allowed us to test four specific predictions of the Big Bang model, especially the predictions for light element abundances (hydrogen and helium), which matched the predictions of the creation model

Evidence #2: Simple mathematical structure of the physical laws

- the simple mathematical structure of natural laws allows us to understand these laws, make discoveries, and engineer solutions to problems
- early scientists saw the mathematical structure of the universe to mean that nature was designed by an intelligent to be understood
- the fundamental equations of the laws of the universe can be easily written on one side of one sheet of paper
- Eugene Wigner's famous paper, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Physical Sciences" makes the point that this simple structure is an unexpected gift that allows is to do science

Evidence #3: fine-tuning of the physical constants and quantities

- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stars that provide energy within specific ranges for long periods of time
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need planets with stable orbits that will not suffer from extreme temperature swings as it varies in distance from its star
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need stable atomic structure
- in order for any kind of complex life to survive, we need to have chemical diversity and correct relative abundances of each element
- organic life has minimum requirements: process energy, store information, replicate, and you can't fulfill those functions if there is only one element, e.g. – hydrogen
- the energy level from the photons from the sun have to match the energy levels of the different elements in order to drive the chemical bonding needed for life
- These requirements for life of any imaginable type depend on the values of the constants and quantities. The constants and quantities cannot vary much from what they are, or the universe will lose the characteristics (above) that allow it to support complex life of any imaginable time
- For example, ratio of strong force to electromagnetic force:
  – if 2% larger, then no stable hydrogen, no long-lived stars, no compounds containing hydrogen, e.g. – water
  – if 5% smaller, no stable stars, heavy hydrogen would be unstable, few elements other than hydrogen

Evidence #4: initial conditions for habitability

- Universe: expansion rate of the universe must be fast enough to avoid a re-collapse, but slow enough to allow matter to clump together and form stars and planets for complex life to live on
- Planet: right distance from the star to get the right climate
- Planet: right mass to retain the right atmosphere

Evidence #5: origin of life and information theory

- It’s possible to explain every process in an automobile engine using plain old naturalistic mechanisms – no supernatural explanation is necessary to understand the processes
- But the existence of engine itself: engineering all the parts has to be explained by the work of an intelligence
- Similarly, we can understand how living systems work, but the existence of the living systems requires an intelligence
- Even the simplest living system has to perform minimal function: capture energy, store information and replicate
- Living systems are composed of objects like proteins that are composed of sequences of components complex such that the order of the components gives the overall structure function
- Developing the components for a simple living cell is very improbable – even given the large number of galaxies, stars and planets in the universe, it is unlikely that complex, embodied life would exist *anywhere* in the universe

Evidence #6: more initial conditions for habitability

- Location within the galaxy: you need to be away from the center of the galaxy, because the explosions from dying stars, and excessive radiation will kill life
- Location within the galaxy: you need to be close enough to the center in order catch the heavy elements you need for life from the explosions of other stars
- Location within the galaxy: the best location is between two arms of a spiral galaxy, where you can get the heavy elements you need from dying stars, but without being hit with explosions and harmful radiation
- Star mass: determines rate at which the sun burns, determines the energy level of photons that are used to drive chemical bonding reactions, determines the length of time the star will be stable
- Star mass: star mass must be the correct value in order to allow liquid water on the planet’s surface, while still preserving stable orbit

I wish there was more curiosity about science in churches, and young Christians understood *how critical science is* for grounding the rationality of the Christian worldview. We need to be training up more scientists who think about the big questions, like Dr. Walter Bradley.

Hate speech: Democrat party Biden incites violence: “put Trump in a bullseye”

July 14, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I collected together a few articles below connecting the Democrat party and the Biden administration to the attempt on Trump’s life. Each article makes a different point that was significant to me.

Democrat party’s attempt to take away Trump’s security detail: (Daily Caller)

> Months before the shooting at former President Trump’s rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, on Saturday, Democratic Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson introduced a bill in April that would have removed Trump’s Secret Service detail.
>
> The Disgraced Former Protectees Act was introduced by Democratic Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson of the House Committee on Homeland Security in April, with the bill aiming to remove “Secret Service protection for those who have been sentenced to prison following conviction for a Federal or State felony,” according to a press release from April. In light of the shooting at Trump’s rally, the importance of the Secret Service protection given to former presidents was demonstrated for all to see.

Biden hate speech inciting violence against Trump: (Politico)

> A defiant President Joe Biden insisted to his donors on Monday that he is “done talking about the debate” and implored the party to ignore any further distractions and direct its attention back to Donald Trump.
>
> “We need to move forward. Look, we have roughly 40 days til the convention, 120 days til the election. We can’t waste any more time being distracted,” Biden said in a private call with donors Monday, according to a recording obtained by POLITICO.
>
> “I have one job, and that’s to beat Donald Trump. I’m absolutely certain I’m the best person to be able to do that. So, we’re done talking about the debate, it’s time to put Trump in a bullseye,” Biden said.

Biden says that Trump is a threat to democracy: (Toronto Sun)

> Just two weeks earlier, Biden told supporters that Trump was a threat to America’s existence.
>
> “Donald Trump is a genuine threat to this nation. That is not hyperbole. He’s a threat to our freedom. He’s a threat to our democracy,” Biden said, adding that he wouldn’t let Trump destroy America just before the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

The corporate news media tried to cover for the Democrat party: (Daily Caller)

> Multiple corporate media outlets initially did not report that shots were fired at a campaign rally featuring former President Donald Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania, on Saturday.
>
> […]Screenshots of corporate media sites showed that they did not initially report the shots in their headlines.
>
> "Secret Service rushes Trump off stage after popping noises heard at his Pennsylvania rally," a headline from NBC News said, according to a screenshot posted on X by Drew Holden.
>
> "Trump whisked off stage in Pennsylvania after loud noises rang through the crowd," a Los Angeles Times headline read, according to another screenshot Holden posted.

CNN tried to portray it as Trump's fault: "Secret Service rushes Trump off stage after he falls at rally."

Congerssman Steve Scalise, a previous victim of Democrat domestic terrorism, spoke up in the Wall Street Journal:

> House Majority Steve Scalise (R., La.,) who was himself seriously injured during a shooting in 2017, criticized Democratic leaders' political rhetoric in his statement Saturday night. The shooter in the 2017 attack, who was killed by police, had belonged to several anti-Republican groups and volunteered for Sen. Bernie Sanders's presidential campaign. There was no immediate information Saturday about who the shooter was or the motivation behind the attack.
>
> "For weeks Democrat leaders have been fueling ludicrous hysteria that Donald Trump winning re-election would be the end of democracy in America," Scalise said in a statement. "Clearly we've seen far left lunatics act on violent rhetoric in the past. This incendiary rhetoric must stop."

Time will tell about whether this case is similar to the plot to kidnap the Governor of Michigan: (Washington Times)

> Defense attorneys wanted jurors to see more communications between FBI handlers, undercover agents and paid informants who had fooled Fox and Croft and got inside the group. They argued that any plan to kidnap Whitmer was repeatedly pushed by those government actors.
>
> But at the 2022 trial, U.S. District Judge Robert Jonker greatly restricted the use of certain text messages and audio recordings under his interpretation of evidence rules.
>
> "Trials are about telling your story, giving your narrative, trying to persuade," Croft's appellate lawyer, Timothy Sweeney, told the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which posts audio on its website.
>
> "When you're denied the ability to use the rules of evidence where they benefit you, that is an unfair trial. … This case needs to be reversed and sent back for a

> new trial for that reason," Sweeney said.
>
> He might have Judge Joan Larsen on his side. She was the most aggressive on the three-judge panel, at one point seeming incredulous with the government's stance on an important legal precedent at play in the appeal.
>
> "Oh, come on," she told Assistant U.S. Attorney Nils Kessler. "Really?"
>
> Larsen said defense lawyers wanted jurors to see that "government informants were just pounding" Fox and Croft.
>
> "Make a plan, make a plan, make a plan – you're just sitting around. You're all talk, you're no action, make a plan," she said. "Surely that's relevant."

That article is from June 2024, so we are still waiting on answers in that case. Given what we know about the FBI's involvement in pushing the Steele dossier to influence an election, and the statements of elite national security people denying that the Hunter Biden laptop was real, anything is possible. Don't count on Democrats to have any morality, they're atheists, and atheists cannot rationally ground morality. When objective morality goes against their self-interest, they choose their self-interest. That's why 100 million people died as a result of godless communism in the last century. These people are not like William Wilberforce. The Christian worldview comes up with "free the slaves" and "let the babies live" and "adults should stay married and love their children". The atheist worldview comes up with "anybody who threatens my power has to be arrested, tortured and sent to a forced labor camp to die of starvation".

Certainly it looks like the Biden administration Secret Service acted strangely. They either failed to do their jobs, or they intentionally did not do their jobs. Was this a consequence of Democrat DEI policies or typical government incompetence, or was this similar to the case of FBI agents vowing to stop Trump from becoming President?

> "[Trump's] not ever going to become president, right? Right?!" Page texted Strzok in August 2016.
>
> "No. No he won't. We'll stop it," Strzok responded.

This isn't the first time that violence like this has been committed against Republicans by Democrats. After all, if your most sacred belief is in abortion, then any kind of violence is possible. Abortion is the act of murdering an unborn child that you created with your own actions, in order to avoid having to lose your happiness. The people who have them value reckless, irresponsible sex more than they value taking responsibility to care for the most innocent and needy human beings. If that's your core view, then anything is possible. You literally have no morals. And those are the types of people who are running federal law enforcement today. They focus on pre-dawn raiding the homes of peaceful pro-life demonstrators, while ignoring gun violence against Republicans from their allies in the Democrat party. That's what sin does to a person.

Texas surgeon facing 10 years in prison for exposing trans surgeries on children

July 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When Christians are assessing which of the political parties is more moral, abortion is obviously a big issue. After all, if a person resorts to murdering an innocent person to avoid consequences for their own behavior, that's pretty immoral. But do you know what else is pretty immoral? Inflicting harm on children that exposes them to severe mental and physical pain, and permanent disabilities.

Here's a recent article from Christian Post:

> A Texas surgeon, who is potentially facing 10 years in prison for having leaked information exposing Texas Children's Hospital for allegedly continuing to perform trans procedures on minors despite claiming otherwise, said his ordeal has convinced him of God's providence.
>
> Dr. Eithan Haim, 34, told The Christian Post that he feels God is with him in his battle against the U.S. Department of Justice, which slapped him earlier this month with four felony counts after he "obtained personal information including patient names, treatment codes and the attending physician from Texas Children's Hospital's (TCH) electronic system without authorization," according to a DOJ press release.
>
> Haim reportedly leaked such records to journalist Christopher Rufo last year because the hospital told the public it had paused such procedures after Texas Gov. Greg Abbott labeled them child abuse, though Haim uncovered documents that showed otherwise.

I thought his explanation about what is going on in society was very interesting:

> Haim believes every major institution in the U.S. has been "captured by this ideology" that endeavors to elevate narcissistic, selfish desires above objective reality and that anyone attempting to expose such things risks being attacked.
>
> "So if someone within those institutions is willing to tell the truth, it shines a light on their own degradation, which is why they try so hard to destroy those people," he said. "Because if they can destroy the one person who's telling the truth, who's shining the light, then they can reestablish the balance where everyone's degraded. But once you have one person who's going to speak the truth, who's willing to stand up, it will inevitably inspire others to do the same thing, too. And the process becomes exponential."

The article quotes Texas senator Ted Cruz expressing his concerns about anti-Christian bias within the Department of Justice, but everybody already knows that there are two systems of justice in America. One for Democrats, and one for the enemies of the

Democrats.

I did want to add a quick point about what is really evil on the Christian worldview. Today, many people assume that Christianity is a religion of love, and you just have to love everyone, and never judge. And they think you can be a good Christian by doing that. We've turned not rocking the boat into a virtue. I've heard so many adult Christians excuse themselves from truth-telling exactly along those lines. "You just have to love everybody, what's the point of getting into disagreements with people".

So, what does Christianity really say about right and wrong? Well, here is an interesting passage with the words of Jesus about that.

Matthew 18:6-9:

> 6 "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.
>
> 7 Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!
>
> 8 If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.
>
> 9 And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

Here's a picture of a millstone.

I don't think this passage is a warning just for Christians. If I were a non-Christian, and read this passage, I would immediately understand that God does not want me to interfere with children who are seeking God. So, even if I didn't want to follow Jesus like a Christian, I would know "well, I have to be careful about doing things that could cause children to turn away from God". And a lot of non-Christians know this intuitively. I used to work with an atheist software developer who was very concerned about making life difficult for people who were either coming towards God, or who were taking their faith seriously.

A lot of people today are so unaware of what the Bible teaches, that they think being "good" means "loving everyone" and "don't judge". They think that God, if he exists, would want us all of us humans to feel good, and to always get along with everyone. Well, tough news for them. Following God – obeying God – does not make Christians feel good, and it does not make non-Christians like us. You can see it in the story of Jesus, who obeyed God, and did not feel good and people did not like him. I am not sure how we got to the point where Christianity is seen as a kind of Disney fairy tale, but when you actually read the Bible, you understand that you are not supposed to do anything that keeps kids from Jesus, and you're not supposed to punish Christians like this medical doctor who stand up for God and his purposes in the world. It's worse than murder to

punish an authentic Christian for his decision to obey God.

You would think that in America, even secular leftists would have some shame about this and say “well, we are going to live with our girlfriends but we’re not going to abort babies. We’re also not going to mutilate kids, because that would probably cause them to turn their backs on God”. But sadly, we don’t live in a world where secular leftists know that. They think “I’m a good person. I follow my own made-up morality, and so of course God is going to think I’m a good person”. Just because you feel good now, and people like you now, don’t make the mistake of thinking that’s the criterion for avoiding the millstone. Read the Bible, that’s the standard you have to meet.

Did your science textbook tell you that embryo drawings prove evolution?

July 16, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When you learned about evolution in public school, what did they show you for evidence to support the theory? Some people say finch beaks changing size, some people say a feathered dinosaur, some people say similar features in different animals, and some people say embryo drawings. Let's take a look at that last one and see if it's good evidence for evolution.

Jonathan Wells, a biologist with Ph.Ds from Yale and UC Berkeley, writes about one example of fake evidence here:

> Charles Darwin thought that "by far the strongest" evidence that humans and fish are descended from a common ancestor was the striking similarity of their early embryos. According to Darwin, the fact that "the embryos of the most distinct species belonging to the same class are closely similar, but become, when fully developed, widely dissimilar… reveals community of descent." [2] To illustrate this, German Darwinist Ernst Haeckel made some drawings in the 1860s to show that the embryos of vertebrates (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals) look almost identical in their earliest stages.
>
> But Haeckel faked his drawings. Not only do they distort vertebrate embryos by making them appear more similar than they really are (in a way that Stephen Jay Gould wrote "can only be called fraudulent" [3]), but they also omit classes and stages that do not fit Darwin's theory. *Most significantly, Haeckel omitted the earliest stages, in which vertebrate embryos are strikingly different from each other.* The stage he portrayed as the first is actually midway through development. Yet according to Darwin's logic, early *dis*-similarities do *not* provide evidence for common ancestry.
>
> Haeckel used his faked drawings to support not only Darwinian evolution, but also his own "Biogenetic Law," which stated that embryos pass through the adult stages of their ancestors in the process of development.
>
> …Haeckel's drawings were exposed as fakes by his own contemporaries, and his Biogenetic Law was thoroughly discredited by 20th century biologists. It is now generally acknowledged that early embryos never resemble the adults of their supposed ancestors. A modern version of recapitulation claims that early embryos resemble the *embryos* of their ancestors, but since fossil embryos are extremely rare, this claim is little more than speculation based on the assumption that Darwin's theory is true.

Now the standard response from Darwinists: *no textbooks are still using the fraudulent embryo images*.

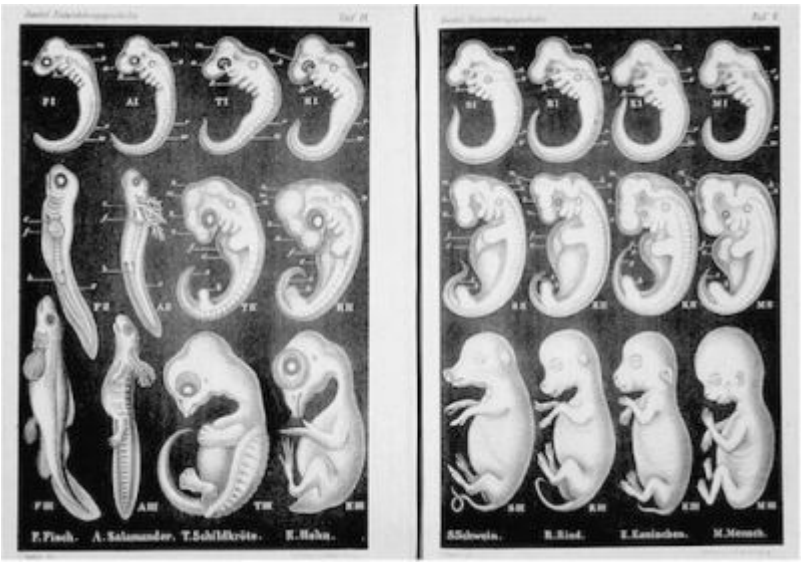

Haeckel’s embryos and scientific fraud

You can see the actual faked pictures from the modern textbooks here. These textbooks were being produced as late as 2004, even though the fraud was detected in the 1800s! Is this the vaunted self-correction of science, or science being twisted to support social and political goals?

And this excerpt from that article is interesting:

> Some Darwinists continue to deny that there has been any misuse of Haeckel in recent times. If that is the case, why did Stephen Jay Gould attack how textbooks use Haeckel in 2000? Gould wrote: “We should… not be surprised that Haeckel’s drawings entered nineteenth-century textbooks. But we do, I think, have the right to be **both astonished and ashamed by the century of mindless recycling that has led to the persistence of these drawings in a large number, if not a majority, of modern textbooks!**” (emphasis added) Similarly, in 1997, the leading embryologist Michael K. Richardson lamented in the journal *Anatomy and Embyology* that “Another point to emerge from this study is the **considerable inaccuracy of Haeckel’s famous figures**. These drawings are **still widely reproduced in textbooks** and review articles, and continue to exert a significant influence on the development of ideas in this field.” (emphases added)

Here is a link to the peer-reviewed journal Science, where there is an article talking about the fraudulent embryo drawings. Yes – the drawings really are fraudulent.

And finally, Casey Luskin has a post up at Evolution News that lists all the textbooks that contain the fraudulent drawings. One is dated 2013! The drawings just keep getting recycled over and over as a “proof” of evolution.

By the way, if you were told that finch beaks prove evolution, then read this post.

What’s the best book for introducing all the basics of defending the faith?

July 17, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let’s look at the table of contents of my favorite introduction to Christian apologetics, which is “Is God Just a Human Invention?” written by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow.

In that book, you will find 18 topics.

1. Is Faith Irrational? (Commentary by: Gregory Koukl)
2. Are Science and Christianity at Odds? (Commentary by: John Warwick Montgomery)
3. Are Miracles Possible? (Commentary by: Gary R. Habermas)
4. Is Darwinian Evolution the Only Game in Town? (Commentary by: William A. Dembski)
5. How Did the Universe Begin? (Commentary by: R. Douglas Geivett)
6. How Did Life Begin? (Commentary by: Fazale R. Rana)
7. Why Is the Universe Just Right for Life? (Commentary by: Jay W. Richards)
8. Has Science Shown There Is No Soul? (Commentary by: Dale Fincher and Jonalyn Fincher)
9. Is God Just a Human Invention? (Commentary by: Garry DeWeese)
10. Is Religion Dangerous? (Commentary by: Douglas Groothuis)
11. Does God Intend for Us to Keep Slaves? (Commentary by: Paul Copan)
12. Is Hell a Divine Torture Chamber? (Commentary by: Frank Turek)
13. Is God a Genocidal Bully? (Commentary by: Clay Jones)
14. Is Christianity the Cause of Dangerous Sexual Repression? (Commentary by: Kerby Anderson)
15. Can People Be Good Without God? (Commentary by: Mark D. Linville)
16. Is Evil Only a Problem for Christians? (Commentary by: Randy Alcorn)
17. What Good Is Christianity? (Commentary by: Glenn S. Sunshine)
18. Why Jesus Instead of the Flying Spaghetti Monster? (Commentary by: Darrell L. Bock)

Prominent atheist scholars are quoted in each chapter to introduce the challenges, and then scholarly arguments and evidence are presented to defend the Christian worldview. The language is simple enough, but the material is solid enough to use in a real debate. I would say that introductory books like this one are more than enough to equip you for everyone who will challenge you.

Why are these 18 topics important? Because these are the questions that atheists ask. These are the questions that cause Christians to leave the faith. These are the questions that your children will face in high school and college, which might cause them to leave the faith.

Let’s start with chapter one. One of the most prominent arguments by atheists is that faith is irrational. This chapter allows you to define faith using the Bible’s definition of faith, which relies on logic and evidence.

Atheists also say that Christianity is at war with science. In chapter 2, they discuss the history of science and how Christianity provided the framework that allowed scientific method to take root and flourish.

Atheists like to claim that miracles are impossible. Chapter 3 defends the view that God, if he exists, is capable of interacting with his created world.

Atheists love to put forward Darwinism as means to deny that God is the designer of life. Chapter 4 explains the concept of intelligent design, and why intelligent design is a better explanation for the history of life.

Atheists love to talk about how the universe has always existed, and there’s no need for a Creator. Chapter 5 contains a philosophical argument that is supported by mainstream science to argue that the universe had a beginning, just like the Bible says.

Atheists love to argue that life can emerge from non-life, and the process is simple. Chapter 6 is written by a biochemist, and it takes a look at the real complexity of the simplest living cell.

Atheists like to argue that the universe itself is just an accident, and there is no need for a Designer. Chapter 7 introduces the scientific evidence for fine-tuning and habitability.

Atheists like to say that there is no soul and no afterlife. Chapter 8 gives some arguments for the existence of the soul.

Atheists like to argue that Christians invent God because God makes them feel good. But chapter 9 explains that having an all-powerful God who can hold humans accountable is the last thing any human would want to invent.

Atheists like to talk about how religion, with it’s habit of teaching to believe in things that can’t be tested, causes religious people to do a lot of harm. Chapter 10 takes a look at the real record of Christianity as a force for good in the world.

Atheists like to talk about slavery in the Bible. Chapter 11 talks about what the Bible really says, and provides some rational responses to the accusation.

Atheists like to talk about eternal punishment in Hell isn’t a just punishment for just getting a few questions wrong on a theology exam. Chapter 12 provides an explanation and defense of the concept of Hell.

Atheists love to talk about how God commanded the Israelites to attack their enemies in the Bible. Chapter 13 explains who their enemies really were, and what was really happening in those wars.

Atheists feel that unrestricted sexual activity is very healthy and normal, and that the Biblical prohibitions outside of male-female marriage are repressive and unhealthy. Chapter 14 explains why God has these rules in place, and supports his rules with evidence.

Atheists love to assert that they don’t need God, because they can behave morally on

their own. Chapter 15 explains how to answer this claim by talking about how well atheism grounds objective moral values, objective moral duties, free will and moral accountability: the minimum requirements for objective morality.

Atheists think that the mere existence of natural disasters and human immorality are incompatible with the God of the Bible. Chapter 16 explains why this argument doesn't work, and why even the concept of evil requires God to exist.

I have an atheist friend in my office who can't defeat my scientific arguments for the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning and the origin of life. But still, he says to me, even if God exists, why would that matter to my life? Chapter 17 explains what difference Christianity makes in a person's life.

Atheists think that the life of Jesus has no relevance to their life, and that he has nothing to offer them anyway. Chapter 18 explains the uniqueness of Jesus and explains why his resurrection is relevant to our lives today.

It's important to understand that this book is not on the level of A. W. Tozer, G.K. Chesterton, Francis Chan, John Piper, etc. Those authors write for a Christian audience and therefore they do not equip you to answer realistic challenges from non-Christians. But the apologetics book we looked at actually equips you to answer challenges from non-Christians using logical arguments and evidence from mainstream history and science. You can use the material in that book in discussions outside the confines of your home and your church.

Bible study: Was the resurrection body of Jesus spiritual or physical?

July 18, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the leading naturalistic attempts to account for Jesus' death, empty tomb, post-mortem appearances, and the early proclamation of the resurrection is that the disciples had individual and group hallucinations. In this case, the New Testament authors would not have meant that the resurrected body of Jesus was physical. But is that what they recorded?

Here's a quotation from my friend Eric Chabot, from his blog Think Apologetics. He explains why Paul's use of the word "resurrection" to describe what the other witnesses saw means *bodily* resurrection.

He writes:

> The two words are used for resurrection in the New Testament "anastasis" (rising up) and "egersis" (waking up), both imply a physical body**.** Furthermore, the use of the word "opethe" (the Greek word for appeared) shows the Gospel writers did believe that Jesus appeared physically. "There you will see (opethe) him" (Matt. 28:7); "The Lord has risen and has appeared (opethe) to Simon" (Luke 24:24). When they used "opethe" here, it means that He appeared physically to them.

OK so all the words they used for resurrection imply a physical body.

But what about the word for body. Do they imply a physical body?

Yes:

> So when Paul gives his list of appearances in 1 Cor. 15, the issues becomes whether the appearance to him is the same as it was to the disciples. There is no doubt the post resurrection body of Jesus (after the ascension) had to be somewhat different than the body the disciples saw. Also, whenever the New Testament mentions the word body, in the context of referring to an individual human being, the Greek word "soma" always refers to a literal, physical body. Greek specialist Robert Gundry says "the consistent and exclusive use of soma for the physical body in anthropological contexts resists dematerialization of the resurrection, whether by idealism or by existentialism." [9] Furthermore, in N.T. Wright's The Resurrection of the Son of God shows that the Greek word for resurrection which is "anastasis" was used by ancient Jews, pagans, and Christians as bodily in nature.

What about the nature of Paul's appearance? Was that a hallucination, or seeing some objective reality? Did the people with Paul see or hear anything?

Eric Chabot writes this in another place:

> The Bible says, "they heard" the same voice Paul did " (Acts 9: 7). But they "did

> not see anyone ” (Acts 9: 7). Notice Paul was physically blinded by the brightness of the light. One way or the other, the experience involved something that was external to Paul. It wasn’t something that was the same thing as a vision that Paul talks about in 2 Cor. 12:1. Furthermore, the phrase “he let himself be seen’” (ōphthē , aorist passive,), is the word Paul uses in 1 Cor. 15:7 to describe of his own resurrection appearance as the other ones in the creed.

Paul didn’t get a bodily resurrection appearance, but he got an objective appearance that people nearby could see (as a bright light) and hear. His appearance, coming 5-8 years after the appearances to the disciples, should not be seen as overriding their appearances, which were appearances of the bodily resurrected Jesus.

If you want to read something a little more challenging, I found a paper from the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) from their journal, where it talks more about soma and anastasis. If you want a bit of a challenge, download the PDF and read it. It’s by Kirk R. MacGregor and the title is “1 Corinthians 15:3B–6A, 7 And The Bodily Resurrection Of Jesus”.

Mental illness: 34% of Democrats believe assassination attempt conspiracy

July 19, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw an interesting story in the Washington Free Beacon and thought I would link to it, then show two more stories that are related. The first story talks about a recent survey that shows how many Democrat voters believe in conspiracy theories. Rather than aligning their beliefs with evidence, they choose to believe what they want to believe based on their feelings.

Here's the story from Washington Free Beacon:

> One in three registered Democrats believe it is "credible" that the shooting Saturday in Butler, Pa., was staged and not intended to kill Trump, according to a Morning Consult poll released Monday. The findings show that large swaths of the Democratic base have fallen prey to the phenomenon known as "BlueAnon," a play on the far-right QAnon conspiracy theory that once gripped portions of the Republican base and served as an obsession of the mainstream media throughout the first Trump administration.
>
> But the Morning Consult poll shows that BlueAnon adherents among the Democratic base far outnumber their QAnon counterparts on the right. The poll showed that 34 percent of Democratic voters found it either definitely or probably credible that Trump staged Saturday's shooting, with less than half—45 percent—saying the conspiracy theory is not credible. By comparison, a widely cited 2021 poll found that only 23 percent of Republicans were QAnon believers.

You might be thinking that this is a problem being driven from the Antifa / BLM rank-and-file of the Democrat party, but actually it's being affirmed from the top, by the "sensible" Democrat elites:

> The rise of BlueAnon can be attributed to prominent Democratic activists and liberal media commentators egging on the notion that Trump staged Saturday's shooting.
>
> Democratic powerbroker Dmitri Mehlhorn, an ally of President Joe Biden who has made at least 10 visits to his White House, wasted no time fanning the flames of conspiracy in the immediate aftermath of Saturday's assassination attempt. Mehlhorn on Saturday evening sent a memo to reporters imploring them to portray the shooting as a false-flag operation straight from Vladimir Putin's playbook, designed to give Trump a good photo opportunity.

It's the Russians, again. It's always the Russians.

What else? Well, here's a Wall Street Journal article about a Gallup survey entitled "Look Who's Irrational Now". (full text)

Excerpt:

> The reality is that the New Atheist campaign, by discouraging religion, won't create a new group of intelligent, skeptical, enlightened beings. Far from it: It might actually encourage new levels of mass superstition. And that's not a conclusion to take on faith — it's what the empirical data tell us.
>
> "What Americans Really Believe," a comprehensive new study released by Baylor University yesterday, shows that traditional Christian religion greatly decreases belief in everything from the efficacy of palm readers to the usefulness of astrology. It also shows that the irreligious and the members of more liberal Protestant denominations, far from being resistant to superstition, tend to be much more likely to believe in the paranormal and in pseudoscience than evangelical Christians.
>
> The Gallup Organization, under contract to Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion, asked American adults a series of questions to gauge credulity.
>
> […]The answers were added up to create an index of belief in occult and the paranormal. While 31% of people who never worship expressed strong belief in these things, only 8% of people who attend a house of worship more than once a week did.

One last point about Democrat voters. A significant number of Democrat voters have messed up their lives with their feelings-based decision-making, and they've turned to psychiatric drugs in order to deal with their mental illnesses. Not all Democrats are stupid and insane, of course!

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life by J. P. Moreland

July 20, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this essay on After All, but it looks like their site is not working well, so I'm just going to steal it and post it here, in case it disappears completely. This is one of my favorite short essays on utilitarianism, and it's a wonder that the thing can't stay up somewhere. Well, it will have a home here now. I'd be surprised to see anyone else be this awesome in a measly 1000 words as Dr. Moreland is below.

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Utilitarianism and the Moral Life

What Is Utilitarianism?

Utilitarianism (also called consequentialism) is a moral theory developed and refined in the modern world by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). It can be defined as follows:

> *An action or moral rule is right if and only if it maximizes the amount of nonmoral good produced in the consequences that result from doing that act or following that rule compared with other acts or rules open to the agent.*

By focusing on three features of utilitarianism, we can clarify this definition.

(1) Utilitarian theories of value.

What is a nonmoral good? Utilitarians deny that there are any moral actions or rules that are intrinsically right or wrong. But they do believe in objective values that are nonmoral.

Hedonistic utilitarians say that the only intrinsic good is pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Quantitative hedonists (Bentham) say that the amount of pleasure and pain is the only thing that matters in deciding between two courses of action, I should do the one that produces the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain (measured by factors like the duration and intensity of the pleasure). Qualitative hedonists (Mill) say that pleasure is the only intrinsic good, but the type of pleasure is what is important, not the amount. They would rank pleasures that come from reading, art, and friendship as more valuable than those that come from, say, a full stomach.

Pluralistic utilitarians say there are a number of things that have intrinsic, nonmoral value: pleasure, friendship, health, knowledge, freedom, peace, security, and so forth. For pluralists, it is not just the pleasure that comes from friendship that has value but also friendship itself.

Currently, the most popular utilitarian view of value is subjective preference utilitarianism. This position says it is presumptuous and impossible to specify things that

have intrinsic nonmoral worth. So, they claim, intrinsic value ought to be defined as that which each individual subjectively desires or wants, provided these do not harm others. Unfortunately, this view collapses into moral relativism.

(2) Utilitarians and maximizing utility.

Utilitarians use the term utility to stand for whatever good they are seeking to produce as consequences of a moral action (e.g., “pleasure” for the hedonist, “satisfaction of subjective preference” for others). They see morality in a means-to-ends way. The sole value of a moral action or rule is the utility of its consequences. Moral action should maximize utility. This can be interpreted in different ways, but many utilitarians embrace the following: the correct moral action or rule is the one that produces the greatest amount of utility for the greatest number of people.

(3) Two forms of utilitarianism: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.

According to act utilitarianism, an act is right if and only if no other act available maximizes utility more than the act in question. Here, each new moral situation is evaluated on its own, and moral rules like “don’t steal” or “don’t break promises” are secondary The moral agent must weigh available alternatives and choose the one that produces the best consequences. Rule utilitarianism says that correct moral actions are done in keeping with correct moral rules, However, no moral rule is intrinsically right or wrong. Rather, a correct moral rule is one that would maximize utility if most people followed it as opposed to following an alternative rule. Here, alternative rules (e.g., “don’t lie” vs. “don’t lie unless doing so would enhance friendship”) are compared for their consequences, not specific actions.

What Is Wrong with Utilitarianism?

Several objections show the inadequacy of utilitarianism as a normative moral theory.

First, utilitarianism can be used to justify actions that are clearly immoral. Consider the case of a severely deformed fetus. The child is certain to live a brief, albeit painless life. He or she will make no contribution to society. Society, however, will bear great expense. Doctors and other caregivers will invest time, emotion, and effort in adding mere hours to the baby’s life. The parents will know and love the child only long enough to be heartbroken at the inevitable loss. An abortion negates all those “utility” losses. There is no positive utility lost. Many of the same costs are involved in the care of the terminally ill elderly. They too may suffer no pain, but they may offer no benefit to society. In balancing positives and negatives, and excluding from the equation the objective sacredness of all human life, we arrive at morally repugnant decisions. Here deontological and virtue ethics steer us clear of what is easier to what is right.

Second, in a similar way, utilitarianism denies the existence of supererogatory acts. These are acts of moral heroism that are not morally obligatory but are still praiseworthy.

Examples would be giving 75 percent of your income to the poor or throwing yourself on a bomb to save a stranger. Consider the bomb example. You have two choices — throwing yourself on the bomb or not doing so. Each choice would have consequences and, according to utilitarianism, you are morally obligated to do one or the other depending on which option maximized utility. Thus, there is no room for acts that go beyond the call of morality.

Third, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of human rights and human dignity. If enslaving a minority of people, say by a lottery, would produce the greatest good for the greatest number, or if conceiving children only to harvest their parts would do the same, then these could he justified in a utilitarian scheme. But enslavement and abortion violate individual rights and treat people as a means to an end, not as creatures with intrinsic dignity as human beings. If acts of abortion, active euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and so forth maximize utility, then they are morally obligatory for the utilitarian. But any moral system that makes abortion and suicide morally obligatory is surely flawed.

Finally, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of motives and character. We should praise good motives and seek good character because such motives and character are intrinsically valuable. But utilitarianism implies that the only reason we should praise good motives instead of bad ones, or seek good character instead of bad character, is because such acts would maximize utility. But this has the cart before the horse. We should praise good motives and blame bad ones because they are good or bad, not because such acts of praising and blaming produce good consequences.

In sum, it should be clear that utilitarianism is an inadequate moral theory. Unfortunately, ours is a pragmatic culture and utilitarianism is on the rise. But for those of us who follow Christ, a combination of virtue and deontological ethics is a more adequate view of common sense morality found in natural law and of the moral vision contained in the Bible.

New survey: high school boys twice as likely to be conservative than girls

July 21, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you know that women tend to be further to the left than men? According to surveys, women are more leftist than men on abortion, same-sex marriage, and a host of other policies. I'll show you a few surveys below. But even more interesting is that there is a link between support for leftist policies, and higher mental illness. Let's take a look at it.

First, here is an article from The Hill:

> Forty-four percent of young women counted themselves liberal in 2021, compared to 25 percent of young men, according to Gallup Poll data analyzed by the Survey Center on American Life. The gender gap is the largest recorded in 24 years of polling. The finding culminates years of rising liberalism among women ages 18 to 29, without any increase among their male peers.

That article is a bit old, here's a new one from this week in The Post Millennial:

> In annual surveys over the last few years, data pulled from Monitoring the Future has shown that about a quarter of high school seniors identify as conservative or very conservative. Only 13 percent of the 12th grade boys identify as liberal.
>
> […]The graph excludes moderate students, but of those high school seniors that do identify politically, around 65 percent of boys were conservative while only around 31 percent of girls identified that way.

According to surveys, young women are also more likely to support abortion under any circumstances (40 to 27) and more likely to support same-sex marriage than men.

I don't support abortion because I favor the rights of unborn babies over the happiness of adults. I don't support same-sex marriage because studies show children do better when they are raised by a mother and a father. And I think that's why most of these men are with me, they follow that same reasoning, and side with the children against the adults.

I thought this part of the article was interesting:

> As one Politico analyst put it, "Democrats have a masculinity problem." Citing trends among black and Latino voters, the analyst pointed out that even in minority communities that have voted majority Democrat, men have been turning to the Republican party at higher rates than women.
>
> Some conservative figures such as Jordan Peterson and Dennis Prager (through PragerU) have millions of followers on YouTube, a platform where the users are majority male.
>
> In addition, one of the more popular conservative political podcasts, The Ben Shapiro Show, has an audience that skews overwhelmingly male at 86 percent.

> The audience also skews younger, 18-44, in comparison to Fox's former show with Tucker Carlson, 25-54, which skews slightly female at 53 percent.

This is good news. Boys are finding themselves role models who they see as "strong". And those new role models are conservative. These stronger role models champion truth, and they make moral judgements. Even if it hurts other people's feelings.

Let's go on to the second point. These leftist policies are having a bad effect on young women's mental health.

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

I found an interesting article in the Wall Street Journal that talked about how one leftist policy concern (global warming alarmism) is tied to higher rates of mental illness.

It says:

> A study in 2021 of 16- to 25-year-olds in 10 countries including the U.S. reported that 59% were very or extremely worried about climate change, and 84% were at least moderately worried. Forty-five percent claimed they were so worried that they struggled to function on a daily basis, the definition of an anxiety disorder.

The study found that the mental illness was more common in younger people:

> Climate anxiety and dissatisfaction with government responses are widespread in children and young people in countries across the world and impact their daily functioning.

So now we are looking at a direct link between the policies of the left, and the lower mental health of the left. And we know that more women than men are on the left. And we see more mental illness among women. Interesting, isn't it?

And this has consequences. Leftist women are noticing that men are more conservative than they are, and it's affecting their dating:

The marriage rate is also declining. Could this decline in marriage be related to the increase in leftist women, and all the related mental illnesses that leftist women have? Does it make sense for a conservative man to enter a relationship where he pays all the costs and bears all the risks, but all the decisions are being made by a leftist woman? It's dangerous for a man to do that.

Consider that the divorce rate is very high right now, and divorce takes away a man's money, his access to his kids, and his freedom. Women initiate 69% of divorces. College-educated women – who are especially leftist – initiate 90% of divorces. This high divorce rate cannot be blamed on men, because the divorce rate of lesbians is the highest of all. No man to blame in that situation.

Why would a man sign up to be controlled by feminist institutions, like the divorce courts? Men are not interested in projects where they have to pay for everything, but someone else is making the decisions. Especially if they get blamed when things go wrong.

Facing all of these risks, a man would have to be crazy to even talk to a leftist woman – much less date her. Unfortunately, we aren't making enough young conservative women for these conservative young men to marry. And so, the marriage rate is declining. Young women today are not as conservative as previous generations.

I know a lot of people today are worried about young men falling under the influence of bad role models. But the surveys show that boys tend to have the right role models, and the right political views. So, we need to work on making young women more conservative.

Who will be the Democrat nominee for President in 2024?

July 22, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm trying to find good articles to tell me who the replacement candidates are, and what are the complications with choosing one of these replacements at this late date. In this post, we'll look at three potential candidates, and talk about the complications of changing candidates after the primary is already over.

Here's the first article from Daily Signal.

First, what will happen at the convention?

> Democrats already have held their primary elections across America. The result was a resounding victory for Biden in a virtually uncontested race. Their options are now limited.
>
> The party can't hold another primary and the Democratic National Convention, set to begin Aug. 19 in Chicago, is just around the corner.
>
> […]Biden's 3,896 pledged convention delegates are free to vote for a replacement at the Democratic National Convention. The total number of Democratic delegates is 3,949, so the president had nearly all of them. If the delegates don't reach a majority decision with 1,976 votes on a nominee, the party's so-called superdelegates, over 700 of them, will decide who to nominate.
>
> Superdelegates are party leaders, and the list typically consists of officeholders and former officeholders.
>
> That convention process leaves the field open in a limited sense. To get into the running at the convention, a candidate would have to receive over 300 signatures from delegates. Only a maximum of 50 delegates may come from individual state delegations.

The article mentions California governor Gavin Newsom, Michigan governor Gretchen Whitmer, and vice president Kamala Harris. They think that Harris is the most likely candidate to replace Biden, and they note that she is polling well against him:

> A CBS/YouGov poll reported last week that Trump leads Harris 51% to 48% in a hypothetical match-up by popular vote. But Forbes reports that the Democratic polling firm Bendixen & Amandi showed Harris could beat Trump 42% to 41%.

Harris has early endorsements from Biden himself, and the Clintons, and she has easier access to Biden's election campaign money. If she is the nominee, then she gets all of the $91 million.

This editorial from Fox News explains:

> **If Kamala Harris becomes the Democrat Party presidential nominee,**

> **does she get access to the campaign cash?**
>
> Yes, because when the Biden for President committee filed its registration statement with the FEC, it registered itself as the “principal campaign committee” for both Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.
>
> **If someone other than Kamala Harris becomes the presidential nominee, can that individual access the $91.5 million for his or her presidential campaign?**
>
> No, under FEC regulations, the new nominee would have no access to or control over the Biden for President campaign cash. Biden for President would be limited to giving no more than a $2,000 contribution to the new presidential nominee’s campaign committee.
>
> **Could the funds be transferred to the Democratic Party?**
>
> Yes, under FEC regulation 11 CFR 113.2, there is no limit on the transfer of funds from a candidate committee to party committees. Biden for President could, therefore, transfer all of its cash to the Democratic National Committee, Democratic congressional and senatorial committees, and state and local party committees, which could then use the money to support their federal, state and local candidates. Additionally, pursuant to the regulation, it could make donations to “State and local candidates subject to the provisions of State law.”
>
> However, because political party committees have expenditure limits (a vestige of the 1970s post-Watergate federal campaign finance reforms), the DNC is limited in the amount of its expenditures that it is permitted to make in coordination with the new nominee’s campaign committee.
>
> For the 2024 campaign, the limit is $32.4 million. A party committee could make independent expenditures regarding the presidential campaign, but it could not make unlimited coordinated expenditures of the newly transferred funds.

The article also notes all the money could be sent to Democrat SuperPACs, but there cannot be any coordination between them and the new nominee’s campaign.

I scanned some articles from the secular left news sites, and they seemed to think that Harris was going to be the nominee. I guess we’ll find out on August 19th. If they go with her, then they won’t have to change the names on all the state ballots. But if they choose someone else, there could be problems changing the name.

How do secular leftists view the authority of parents to lead their children?

July 23, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This news story happened recently, and I think it's worth blogging about to show how secular leftists see marriage, family, and parent's rights. Now, you would think that since 1) the parents are paying the salaries of the secular leftists in government and 2) parents are paying the bills for all of the children's needs, that secular leftists would respect parent's leadership. Let's take a look.

Here's the first article from Daily Signal:

> California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill into law Monday banning schools from implementing policies that require parents be notified if their child requests to be identified as a different gender.
>
> AB 1955, also known as the Support Academic Futures and Educators for Today's Youth (SAFETY) Act, strikes down policies that some California schools have already implemented protecting parents' rights to be made aware of issues and make decisions regarding their children.

So, parents are "good enough" to pay the salaries of secular leftists in the California government and public schools. But they are not "good enough" to be told what is happening to their own children in the schools that they are paying for. Parents and families have no role to play in the lives of young people. Only the secular leftists are allowed to teach the children about anything.

Secular leftists think that parents are just slaves, and that the slaves have to let the masters take their money and indoctrinate their children. The masters don't want the slaves to tell their children that the masters are bad. But when the children run into problems, it's the parents they turn to for love and support. The masters don't spend their own money and time fixing anyone's problems. They're "generous" with other people's time and money, not their own.

And it's not just California, it's in the Biden administration as well. This is how the federal government thinks, too.

Here's another article from Daily Signal:

> The chief pediatrician at Texas Children's Hospital resigned in April 2022 after just seven months in her role, shortly after Gov. Greg Abbott forced the hospital to pause attempted sex-change procedures on children, such as puberty blockers, hormones, and surgeries.
>
> Now she's working for President Joe Biden's administration in a high-ranking position at the National Institutes of Health as Biden's Justice Department targets whistleblowers exposing alleged ongoing transgender practices at Texas

> Children's.
>
> […]This appointment came after conversations with trans-identifying Rachel Levine, the biologically male assistant secretary at HHS who identifies as a woman, according to emails obtained by America First Legal (AFL) through litigation against HHS.
>
> AFL believes that the emails illustrate "the Biden administration's conscious decision to continue pushing the harmful practice of child transgender surgeries and to assist in stepping up HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) investigations in Texas following the state's ban of such medical treatments on children in March 2022."

Something to think about now that we are having elections. Have you checked voter guides to see which candidates are the most conservative? I have. Make sure you let all your friends know who you are voting for and why, so they can vote too.

Female fans of a convicted murderer want him spared from the death penalty

July 24, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that there was a capital punishment case in the news, coming out of Florida. A very handsome bad boy with tattoos on his face murdered two women. Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty. But the judge in the case has received letters from female admirers of the killer arguing against the death penalty. Is it wrong to have the death penalty as a punishment for murderers? What does the Bible say?

First, here's the case reported by the far-left UK Independent:

> Women have been sending letters to a Florida judge begging him to spare the life of a heavily-tattooed convicted killer who brutally murdered two women in 2019.
>
> Wade Wilson, 30, was found guilty last month of killing Kristine Melton, 35, and Diane Ruiz, 43.
>
> The defendant killed the women within hours of each other. He met Melton at a live music bar on 6 October 2019 before strangling her to death at her home in Cape Coral, where her body was discovered, prosecutors said.
>
> The following day, Ruiz was reported missing. She was walking to the bar where she worked when Wilson approached her in a car that he had stolen from Melton's home and asked her for directions.
>
> Ruiz got in the car, Wilson strangled her and "ran her over until she looked like spaghetti" the court heard.

I thought this part was interesting:

> Wilson has also been flooded with love letters, according to the Lee County Sheriff's Office.
>
> He has received nearly 4,000 messages online 754 photos and 65 letters in the mail, in total. The sheriff's office said they rejected 163 photos for their "inappropriate nature."
>
> A sheriff's office spokesperson told The Independent that "inappropriate" was classed as "sexual organs, content that is deemed indecent or controversial."

What should Christians think about the death penalty? Reformed Baptist theologian Wayne Grudem did a Sunday school lesson about Bible and capital punishment. Let's look at it.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix

> Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?
- what did God say to Noah about CP?
- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?
- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?
- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?
- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?
- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the “whole life ethic” and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

The Bible is awesome because it gives us knowledge about God’s character. How are we supposed to act in a way that is pleasing to God if we don’t know what he thinks of the issues of the day? We won’t know how we are supposed to act unless we know who God is first. And that’s why when we read the Bible we should be looking to find out the truth about who God is.

Why are Christians allowed to eat shellfish but not allowed to have sex before marriage?

July 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a wonderful article from Peter Saunders.

The challenge:

> An argument frequently advanced by those attempting to defend homosexual practice is that Christians 'cherry pick' the commands in the Bible – that is, they chose to emphasise some commands while ignoring others.
>
> The Old Testament may forbid homosexual acts (Leviticus 18:2; 20:13) but it also forbids eating seafood without fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9, 10).
>
> So how can Christians then justify upholding laws on sexual morality whilst at the same time ignoring the food laws from the very same books of the Bible? Why may they eat shellfish but not be allowed to have sex outside marriage? Isn't this inconsistent and hypocritical?

The solution is that God enters into "covenants" with his people, and the terms of those covenants change.

Especially dietary laws:

> The answer to this question lies in an understanding of biblical covenants.
>
> A covenant is a binding solemn agreement made between two parties. It generally leaves each with obligations. But it holds only between the parties involved.
>
> There are a number of biblical covenants: Noahic, Abrahamic, Sinaitic (Old), Davidic and New.
>
> Under the Noahic covenant, which God made with all living human beings (Genesis 9:8-17), people were able to eat anything:
>
> *'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Genesis 9:3).*
>
> But under the Sinaitic (Old) Covenant, which God made with the nation of Israel, people were able to eat certain foods, but not others.

Jesus clearly created a new covenant with his followers, where the dietary laws are lifted:

> Jesus said that he had come to fulfil the 'Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44). He would establish this new covenant with new laws, with himself as high priest based on his own sacrificial death on the cross.
>
> This new covenant would completely deal with sin (Hebrews 10:1-18) and protect

> all those who put their faith in him from God's wrath and judgement…
>
> *[…]'In the same way, after the supper (Jesus) took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you"' (Luke 22:20). '…we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Hebrews 10:10)*
>
> People would come under the protection of this new covenant, not by virtue of belonging to the nation of Israel, but through faith in Christ. In fact the function of the Old Testament Law (Sinaitic covenant) was to point to Christ as its fulfilment.
>
> […]So what then did Christ say about foods? He pronounced all foods clean for his followers to eat:
>
> *' "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (Mark 7:18-23)*
>
> Jesus was making that point that under the new covenant God required purity of the heart. Internal thoughts and attitudes were as important as external actions.

Food is OK for Christians, but sexual immorality – which includes premarital sex and adultery – are NOT OK for Christians.

I think sometimes when you are talking to people whose motivation is just to get rid of any objective moral law entirely, they tend to ask questions without really wanting a good answer. This is especially true when it comes to the morality of sex. They ask the question not to get an answer, but to justify getting rid of the moral rules governing sexuality. The answers are there for people who are willing to respect God in their decision-making to find. The answers are not found only by people who have a reason to not want to find them.

In case you're wondering, I am one of those Christian men who takes chastity seriously. Marriage is about having a close connection with your spouse. Sure, I could break the rules and have a lot of fun now. A lot of Christians have a hard time turning down fun. But when I look at Jesus, I don't see a man who is pursuing fun and thrills. I see a man who sees a need and then sacrifices his own interests to rescue others from peril.

Three things you should know about the moral character of Kamala Harris

July 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

VP candidate Kamala Harris was able to get picked for cushy high-paying jobs by having an affair with a married man. She used the resources of the state to persecute pro-lifers simply because she disagreed with their pro-life views. And she thinks that Joe Biden sexually assaulted women, but that's no big deal.

Let's start with having affairs for career advancement. The Washington Free Beacon reports:

> Former San Francisco mayor Willie Brown broke his silence on his relationship with Democratic senator Kamala Harris on Saturday, admitting in his weekly column that he used his powerful post to boost her young career when they dated.
>
> Brown… was openly in an extramarital relationship with Harris when he was speaker of the California State Assembly and running for mayor…
>
> […]Brown goes on to address the fact that he appointed Harris, who was just a few years out of law school and working at the Alameda County district attorney's office, to two well-paid posts on California state commissions and later helped her in her first election.

This isn't a problem for Democrats, because they don't believe in chastity, fidelity, or marriage. Whenever I see people voting for someone like Kamala Harris, I try to imagine what their personal life must be like. Democrat voters aren't Christians. They don't believe the Bible. They don't believe in chastity. They think infanticide is no big deal. And they have an extremely high rate of out-of-wedlock births, together with an extremely low marriage rate. So, these are not people who are successful at marriage and family. These are not people who do fidelity, honor and lifelong married love well.

Second, what about using the power of the state to attack people who you disagree with? Kamala Harris is an expert in fascism and the persecution of moral reformers.

Life News reported this in April 2019:

> David Daleiden and the Center for Medical Progress filed a lawsuit Wednesday against some of California's most powerful politicians for prosecuting him for exposing Planned Parenthood's aborted baby body parts harvesting practices.
>
> The lawsuit accuses U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris, state Attorney General Xavier Becerra, Planned Parenthood and others of conspiracy to violate First and Fourteenth Amendment civil rights.
>
> "The California Attorney General first admitted that they are enforcing the video recording law solely based on how they feel about the message being published,

> and then further admitted they are not even trying to follow the text of the law as written," Daleiden said.
>
> The lawsuit says Harris, the former attorney general, and Becerra used state video-recording laws as a "political weapon" to silence speech that they disagree with.
>
> […]Becerra and Harris both are pro-abortion Democrats who have received campaign donations from Planned Parenthood.
>
> Documents reveal that Harris, while running for U.S. Senate in 2016, had a secret, in-person meeting with Planned Parenthood leaders to discuss the investigation; two weeks later, the California Department of Justice raided Daleiden's home.
>
> According to the lawsuit, Daleiden "seeks justice for a brazen, unprecedented, and ongoing conspiracy to selectively use California's video recording laws as a political weapon to silence disfavored speech."

Again, this isn't going to be a problem for Democrat voters who think that murdering children who dare to get in the way of their recklss pursuit of sexual pleasure is perfectly fine. And that's every single Democrat politician, and every single Democrat voter. Their god is sex. They sacrifice their innocent children to their god.

Third, Kamala Harris thinks that the multiple accusations of rape and sexual assault against Biden are credible, but these things are not really important parts of a man's character.

The Hill reports:

> Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) said Tuesday that she believes women who say they felt uncomfortable after receiving unwanted touching from former Vice President Joe Biden.
>
> "I believe them and I respect them being able to tell their story and having the courage to do it," Harris said at a presidential campaign event in Nevada.

But now she's Biden's VP. Because women being sexually assaulted or even raped by their bosses in the workplace is no big deal for Kamala Harris. In fact, that's how women get ahead, right?

This woman has no moral character. She's an exemplary Democrat, and Democrat voters will support her as Vice President, and eventually as President.

Will Venezuela's socialist totalitarians finally be voted out on Sunday?

July 27, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to think of a country that has been impoverished and crushed by secular leftist policies, I would pick Venezuela. Venezuela used to be such a prosperous country, but that all changed when they adopted socialism. Now, the country is among the poorest in the world. They are having an election this Sunday (tomorrow), and the opposition is led by a conservative superhero.

Let's take a look at what happens when a country votes for "Democrat socialism" of the sort represented by Kamala Harris and the Democrat party.

Far-left CNN explains:

> As Venezuela girds for what could be a historic presidential election this weekend, one of the most important names in the race isn't on the ballot: María Corina Machado – the woman who galvanized Venezuela's opposition movement, and whom many voters see as the real challenger to socialist incumbent Nicolás Maduro.
>
> […]On Sunday, once again, Machado will not be on the ballot – but not for lack of popularity. An avowed capitalist who has promised privatization of several state industries, Machado won more than 90% of the opposition primary vote last year, but has been barred from running for office following allegations that she didn't include some food vouchers on her assets declaration. Machado has described the decision to bar her – upheld by Venezuela's Supreme Court – as illegitimate, unjustified and unconstitutional.
>
> The current opposition candidate for president, Edmundo González, is backed by Machado, who has campaigned on his behalf to mobilize voters. Experts say that their efforts may now pose the most significant threat to Maduro's grip on power in years, as he fights to claim a third term.

As you would expect from the secular left, they plan to resort to election fraud in order to avoid losing their power. The conservatives are trying to monitor polling places to stop the fraud, but it's challenging.

This article from Unherd explains:

> Little wonder this 56-year-old woman, an admirer of Margaret Thatcher, has been nicknamed the Iron Lady. As she admits, it will be tough to defeat one of the world's most repulsive regimes — and there have been previous false dawns. If the elections were fair, her rival President Nicolás Maduro would be ousted along with his gangster pals in the United Socialist Party of Venezuela after overseeing the impoverishment of an oil-rich nation and driving out 7.7 million citizens — one-fifth of the population. The polls suggest the opposition has more more than

> twice the support of the ruling party. But they are taking on a government with a record of electoral fraud and frustrating democracy.
>
> So Machado plans to mobilise hundreds of thousands of supporters to monitor all the polling stations during Sunday's vote, which is being held after a deal was brokered last year in Barbados for fair elections in return for lifting United States sanctions and allowing in some outside observers. "We are not naive knowing what the regime will do," she told fellow dissidents attending the Oslo Freedom Forum. "We've been facing persecution, violation of human rights. But the regime is weaker and weaker every day. They have totally lost their social base and at the same time the networks they use for terror in the population are breaking down."

Do you remember what happened in Venezuela after the socialists took power?

> Venezuela's economy ended up suffering the biggest collapse outside of wartime in the past half-century. A country with the world's biggest oil reserves was hit by severe blackouts, hyperinflation and mass hunger as bakeries could not find flour, hospitals ran out of medicines and pro-government militia terrorised urban areas.
>
> […]As the journalist and historian Anne Applebaum dissects in her book Autocracy, Inc, Venezuela has evolved under Chávez and Maduro into a central player in an international alliance of repressive regimes. These states assist each other with a sinister and self-serving web of kleptocratic financial systems, surveillance technologies and propaganda machines to defy sanctions, shred internal dissent and challenge democratic freedoms. So Caracas developed commercial, fiscal and political links with Beijing and Moscow while Cuban security experts helped stifle opposition and showed them how to weaponise chronic food shortages created by theft and incompetence. Few were surprised when, in March, Maduro hailed the re-election of his Russian ally Vladimir Putin as "a flawless electoral process".

It's very strange to me to walk around my neighborhood and not see any election signs, other than my own. We are facing the same kind of poverty and repression from our secular left fascists, and yet people are just going about their lives as normal. They're not having conversations, they're not posting signs, they're not voting.

Two socialists shake hands: Barack Obama and Hugo Chavez

It’s so depressing to me that people don’t realize how hard it is to fix socialism once you vote it into power. Why think that the Democrat party is any different from Chavez and Maduro? They’re not. Their policies lead to the same place.

Two reasons why Christians and conservatives should not donate to United Way

July 28, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, it's that time of year again, when corporations bully their employees into donating to the United Way. I thought it might be a good idea to urge all Bible-believing Christians to avoid donating to the United Way. *Please share this post if you agree with it!*

Let's start with abortion. The United Way gives TONS of money to fund abortion providers.

In 2008, United Way affiliates send $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood:

> The national United Way does fund Planned Parenthood; their website states:
>
> United Way funded programs through Planned Parenthood include community health maintenance, e.g. communicable disease prevention; medical care service; family planning; health education; public awareness services; and family preservation and strengthening services, e.g. counseling and family life education.
>
> Nationally in 2008, local United Ways distributed an estimated $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood agencies.
>
> Any finances being donated to Planned Parenthood (even if not specifically for abortion services) will free up more of their money to be used toward abortion services.

In 2015, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Last year, on the heels of shocking videos showing the Planned Parenthood abortion business selling the body parts of aborted babies, a new expose' from a group that monitors corporations that finance the abortion giant reveals the United Way is a major donor. That expose found United Way agencies giving $2 million to the abortion giant.
>
> A new expose' released this week shows that figure has increased to $3 million.

In 2016, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Analysis of the most recent IRS Form 990 filings and other documentation found 62 United Way affiliates sent $2,756,799 to Planned Parenthood abortion organizations in tax year 2016. 2ndVote's latest findings indicate an increase of $168,806 from the $2,590,994 United Way funneled to Planned Parenthood in 2015.

We're living in a time when abortion rights involves such issues as sex-selection abortions, race-selection abortions, covering up statutory rapists, Democrat support for infanticide, attacking Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, selling the body parts of

unborn babies, etc. I don't think we can count on United Way to come down on the right side of these issues. We're already being forced to fund abortions with our tax dollars, thanks to Democrats. I don't think we should give any more money to abortion providers and their secular leftist allies.

That's abortion. What about gay rights? We've seen a lot of pressure on traditional values coming from the secular left lately. They redefined marriage AGAIN to deprive children of their biological mothers or fathers. They're pushing for the Equality Act, which would have huge religious liberty repercussions for Christians.

Texas attorney Maria Martinez explains on the American Thinker:

> The Equality Act is more draconian that any state or city conversion therapy ban to date because it takes away the traditional constitutional exemption for religious freedom. The act specifically states that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) may not be invoked as a defense, marking the *first time in history that Congress has limited the reach of RFRA*. This means that it could become illegal for Christian pastors, churches, schools, and ministries to communicate a message that sexual orientation or gender identity can change. The Equality Act is unprecedented in its overreach, impacting even adults who are *willingly seeking counseling*.
>
> By contrast, therapy of any kind that pushes a person *toward* same-sex attraction or gender transition is not impacted by the law at all.
>
> Banning counseling isn't the only thing the Equality Act will do:

- Parents could lose custody of their children if they decline to assist in their gender transition. Parents in Ohio recently lost custody of their female child because they would not give her testosterone supplements to help her "transition" to look like a male.
- Doctors and hospitals could be subject to lawsuits for refusing to perform so-called "sex change" surgeries. In California and New Jersey, Catholic hospitals are already being sued for discrimination for refusing to perform these surgeries.
- Battered women's shelters could be required to admit members of the opposite sex. In Anchorage, Alaska, a male who was refused access to a shelter for abused and trafficked women sued the shelter for "gender identity discrimination."
- Faith-based adoption and foster care agencies that believe that children do best with both a mother and a father could be forced to shut down. This has already occurred in at least six states in this country.

I wonder what United Way thinks about attacks on Bible-believing Christians by LGBT activists? I posted what they shared on Facebook at the top of this post, and this is what I found on their Twitter:

United Way Twitter Gay Rights Pride Month LGBT

I don’t find that very encouraging, do you?

As a Bible-believing Christian, maybe I would be better off giving money to an organization that protects religious liberty, like Alliance Defending Freedom. I understand that many people who call themselves Christians think that the United Way’s positions are compatible with the Bible. But not everyone who calls herself a Christian actually takes the Bible seriously. Especially when it interferes with their career advancement and peer approval. This is especially true of people who work in Human Resources.

Please, don’t give money to the United Way

You don’t HAVE to give money to the United Way, just because the godless progressives in your office try to bully you into it. Instead, why not send the money to the Life Training Institute, or Ratio Christi, or Alliance Defending Freedom? These are groups do operate on Bible-based principles. I do think that Christians need to be careful about who they donate their money to. It doesn’t make sense for Christians to get up and go to work and earn money, and then give it away to anti-Christian groups who want Christianity to disappear from American life. Paul talks about how God rewards those who give gifts to partner for the gospel in Philippians. Make sure that you are not wasting your money on anything less.

What would Kamala Harris do as president? Her record on policy issues

July 29, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kamala Harris has received over $200 million of donations, some from Democrat billionaires, and many more from first time donors. It's not going to be easy for Republicans to beat her in November with her huge advantage in fundraising. But, one thing we can do right now is to take a look at her record on issues, and then share these stories with our friends and family members.

Here's the first article from Daily Signal:

> The "Biden Accountability Tracker" presents a list of "disturbing and harmful actions," including "each significant policy decision made, executive action taken, or regulation promulgated by the administration that hurts the American people," the organization's letter to lawmakers explains.
>
> "Our organization has kept a rolling record of the failures of the Biden-Harris administration since 2021, from reversing Trump-Pence border policies, to pushing an expensive and burdensome climate agenda, failing to protect women's sports, and using the FDA to make the dangerous abortion drug mifepristone available by mail," Teller told The Daily Signal. "Kamala Harris owns each and every one of these failings, along with her own record from her time as California attorney general and as a senator."
>
> "It is clear her policies are left of Biden and that she has it out for conservatives and the freedom-loving community," Teller added.
>
> Teller's reference to Harris' having it out for conservatives touched on the vice president's record from her time as California attorney general. For example, Harris directed her office to search the home of pro-life investigative journalist David Daleiden, who had exposed Planned Parenthood officials' selling aborted baby body parts for profit. She prepared a legal case against Daleiden, which her successor as California attorney general—now Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra—brought against the pro-life journalist.
>
> Harris also demanded sensitive donor information from two conservative organizations, Americans for Prosperity and the American Freedom Law Center, after her office had leaked sensitive donor information and after some on the Left had launched a video game in which players acted out a shooting at Americans for Prosperity headquarters.

If you look through that issue tracker, you're bound to find something to convince an independent voter not to vote for Harris. Stuff like climate regulation (which caused our energy prices to skyrocket) and open borders (which caused housing prices to increase due to a shortage of housing) should be of interest to anyone.

Here are a few more of Kamala Harris' specific actions, reported by the Daily Signal:

> A newly resurfaced memo put out by Vice President Kamala Harris' 2020 presidential campaign outlines her plan to "fundamentally transform" the criminal justice system by reducing penalties for criminals.
>
> In 2019, Harris promised to end cash bail, get rid of court-ordered fines, expunge the records of some felons, discontinue federal mandatory minimum sentences, and to place greater federal scrutiny on local police departments, according to a memo resurfaced Thursday by the Washington Free Beacon.
>
> […]"It is long past time to re-envision public safety by strengthening and supporting our communities and drastically limiting the number of people we expose to our criminal justice system," the memo reads. "As president, Kamala will fundamentally transform how we approach public safety."

And ending cash bail, which has already been tried in many Democrat cities:

> "Excessive cash bail disproportionately harms people from low-income communities and communities of color," Harris' 2019 memo reads. She characterized cash bail systems as "criminalizing poverty" and vowed to end them.
>
> Ending cash bail has led to a backlash in some major cities, with New Yorkers in February 2022 overwhelmingly supporting tightening bail laws following an increase in crime, the New York Post reported. The Texas Organizing Project, a George Soros-backed nonprofit that opposes cash bail, bonded out a man who allegedly went on to murder six people and shoot three others in December 2023.

I remember that she's a big supporter of "defunding the police" as well, but that's not all:

> She also supported restoring voting rights to all those who have served criminal records, per the memo, and advocated for more federal oversight of local police departments, citing alleged "racial profiling" and "excessive force."
>
> The now-vice president proposed a "National Police Systems Review Board" that "would collect data and review police shootings and other cases of severe misconduct," according to the memo. She also promised to provide the Department of Justice with resources to provide grants to fund greater scrutiny of officers who shoot suspects and pledged to reinstate an executive order restricting the sale of certain military equipment to police departments.

So, it's not enough for her that unvetted illegal immigrants are coming into the country in droves. She looks at the taxpayers who pay her salary, and she thinks "I side with the killers and the rapists against those taxpayers – my job is to help the killers and the rapists, and not the taxpayers who pay my salary". Do you think that independents would care about that? I think they would.

Good review of Megan Basham's new book "Shepherds for Sale" and my thoughts

July 30, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have the audio book on order, and it's read by THE Megan Basham herself. But you can already get it in some stores. The audio book is live TODAY (July 30th, 2024). Anyway, I'm excited about this book for many reasons. One reason is that I've long held the conviction that evidential apologetics is needed in order for Christians to be bold. I think their compromising with the left is related to that.

Anyway, here is the early book review from Amy Simmons, published in Truth Script. (H/T Dr. Jonathan Sarfati)

First, let's just see what the book is even about, and then I'll share my favorite paragraph in the review.

This is what the book is about:

> In this extensively researched exposé, Basham unravels how the progressive left has infiltrated the conservative church through shadowy non-governmental organization (NGO) initiatives with benign-sounding front groups that well-respected pastors, theologians, and para-church leaders promoted under the banner of "loving your neighbor." Based on a compilation of her years of reporting on church issues for the conservative news and media outlet The Daily Wire, Shepherds uncovers the behind-the-scenes political machinations of evangelical elites that have led venerated Christian institutions and publications.
>
> Utilizing her research acumen, personal anecdotes, and connections with evangelical insiders, Basham systematically unmasks the benefactors of current progressive left ideologies being pushed into conservative evangelical churches. The amount of players involved in what is akin to a conservative evangelical "deep state" is overwhelming at times, but that serves to show the level of obfuscation under which the current regime operates. Basham writes with precision and thoroughness while still wearing her layperson's hat. The reader senses her righteous indignation as she does not hide her own beliefs and convictions, and her commentary is fortified throughout with biblical refutations. The following are some takeaways one can glean from a good-faith reading of Shepherds.

So, I have some experience dealing with this compromise myself, as someone who has tried to get evidential Christianity into the church. I have seen all kinds of pushback to learning how to defend your faith from within the church, and this paragraph from the review nails what I've seen in many different churches:

> Since our society has become more feminized, we've seen a propensity for leaders to cater to the whims of those who are led by their emotions. Rigney is

> again helpful here by describing this inclination as “untethered empathy,” which is “a concern for the hurting and vulnerable that is unmoored from truth, goodness, and reality.” Basham goes to great lengths to show how the SBC abuse reforms are based on specious arguments from “trauma-informed” counseling and the now-rescinded Obama-era Title IX Sexual Abuse guidance. In fact, it’s a deception that will keep women in bondage to a “victim status” rather than taking accountability for their own actions, which Basham demonstrates through powerful anecdotes.

You can read the review to see which specific areas Megan talks about in her book.

So I want to make one point about why church leaders are so prone to bend over backwards to please the secular left.

In my experience with apologetics, my goal has been to provide evidence to people, because I think that evidence sets boundaries on what a person can and cannot believe. And then their actions run within the boundaries of their beliefs. I think the root cause of our problems in the church is that pastors and other church leaders have not rooted their beliefs in evidence. People like Russell Moore and JD Greear don’t know whether God exists, or whether Jesus rose from the dead. They don’t know where to look in nature for signs of intelligent design. They don’t know how to answer philosophical challenges to Christian doctrines. They don’t study these topics, and they can’t convince non-Christians about any of it. On the contrary, for them Christianity is about proving to other people how good they are. And it’s this mad rush to feel good and look good to others that causes them to capitulate to the secular left, lest they appear to be “mean”.

So, on global warming, I would immediately go to the evidence, from books by authors like Judith Curry, Fred Singer, Roy Spencer, Roger Pielke, etc. On economics, I would immediately go to Thomas Sowell, Jay Richards, Jennifer Roback Morse, F. A. Hayek, etc. On race / CRT, I would immediately go to Thomas Sowell, Heather MacDonald, Voddie Baucham, etc. On abortion, I would look to people like Robert George, Maureen Condic, Scott Rae, Francis J. Beckwith, Christopher Kaczor, etc. On marriage, I would immediately go to Ryan T. Anderson, Jennifer Roback Morse, Robert George, etc. And so on. I look for people who have studied, published and debated on these topics. Not people who are trying to be noticed by secular leftist elites in the New York Times. Basically, you have to study the evidence if you want to have convictions. And our Christian leaders haven’t done that. They think studying is a waste of time.

Father wins custody of son from woman who wanted to raise him non-binary

July 31, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are a bunch of these cases going on in Canada and America right now. Usually, the wife wants the child to go transgender. The father opposes it, and points to evidence. The wife divorces the father. The courts, medical experts, therapists, public school teachers, social workers, etc. all side with the wife. The wife gets full custody and transes the kid. The father pays all the costs.

So, I was shocked to hear about this case on the Daily Signal podcast, which is the best podcast… except for the Knight and Rose Show, of course.

There are two episodes to this story. One is from November 2023, where Harrison Tinsley explains the situation to Virginia Allen, the interviewer:

And then this week, we got the happy news:

This transcript is from November 2023 and was reported in Daily Signal.

It says:

> Harrison Tinsley's son, Sawyer, will turn 4 in December. He likes to play hockey and football with his dad and also enjoys singing. According to his father, Sawyer is a happy little boy, but the child's mother is attempting to raise him not as a boy, or as a girl, but nonbinary.
>
> Tinsley has seen photos of his son in dresses on social media, and Sawyer told his dad that when his mother took him to Disneyland, "she wouldn't let him go on the rides unless he wore princess shoes."
>
> Tinsley is concerned for his son's well-being and is seeking full legal and physical custody of Sawyer, and arguing that his son should be treated as a male.

This was a podcast episode, and there's a transcript. Here is the background:

> **Allen:** It's special to have that relationship. And I know you said before we started, he turns 4 in December. I want to dive into some of the details behind this custody battle. What exactly is going on here? Sawyer's mother is your ex-girlfriend. You have partial custody right now of your son, but you're seeking full custody in part because you say that Sawyer's mom is seeking to raise him as nonbinary. Can you just explain what exactly is happening here? What is the situation?
>
> **Tinsley:** Well, I have half custody. So I mean, me and his mom both have 50%. And his mom makes the claim that she is now nonbinary and that Sawyer is nonbinary or that she's at least trying to raise him that way. Although, some of the things she does seem more girly to me than nonbinary.
>
> Not that I admit that's a real thing. I radically disagree that it is or it's an

> appropriate thing, rather, for children. But I think putting them in dresses and princess shoes seems girly to me and not so much nonbinary, not so much neutral.
>
> However, Sawyer knows he's a boy, loves being a little boy. He's adamant about it. If you give him a girly toy, he'll yell and scream at you, "I'm not a girl, I'm a boy." So thankfully he's a strong-willed rebel like me, and that hasn't been working and I'm extremely thankful for that.

And then this part about why he fights was interesting:

> **Allen:** Harrison, how have you held up through this whole court fight?
>
> **Tinsley:** It's been almost four years, but it's hard sometimes. But I just do what I can to be the best version of myself I can be and be as strong as I can be. And I accept the responsibility. I look the evil right in the eye and say, "This is life. This is what I have to do." I have a duty to Sawyer. I have a duty to children everywhere to stand up to this and to fight for what's right.
>
> And I know that I'll be able to sleep at night because I choose to do the right thing. No matter how hard it is, no matter how much pain it causes me, I'm never backing down. I don't care. I've accepted life for what it is and what I have to do. And I just look at it with that attitude that I have a responsibility to do it and I'm going to do it regardless.
>
> **Allen:** Where does that conviction come for you?
>
> **Tinsley:** All my life I've always, regardless of how terrified or scared I am of things, the one thing I'm most proud of about myself is that I've always been brave. Whether it's singing in front of people or doing a back flip on my snowboard, I've always been able to find courage to do things in life. And I think that's a big part of it.
>
> Music affects me incredibly. I mean, I get chills when I listen to music. I love music so much. It makes me feel inspired. I listen to some Jordan Peterson or different stoics that just give me wisdom to guide me through this and the Bible, and there's just all these different things that help inspire me.
>
> And at some point in your life, you just have to make a choice: Who do you want to be? Do you want to be strong or do you want to be weak? And I just choose to be strong.

That was the first episode, and then this week we got the good news in the second episode.

I have some thoughts about this.

I rarely ever heard much admiration from women for men who have character and convictions. Usually, women today don't like when men have firm religious and moral convictions. One of the first questions that young women like to ask men to test them is "are you pro-choice?" because pro-life men are immediately disqualified from

relationships. Too judgy. Too narrow-minded. Too mean. Young women today like the idea of men protecting and providing, but they don't like the idea of spiritual and moral leadership. Especially when doing the right thing goes against their feelings or their desires. Good men often end up having to choose between being good, and being liked.

Whether they know it or not, what men really want and need most is respect. And we have to get it for being good – good for Boss. It's not good when men seek respect by adapting their behavior to what the selfish, evil people around them demand.

In my IT career, I've worked with many intelligent, wealthy, programmers who changed their convictions 180 degrees opposite to how they were raised, in order to get women to like them and to marry them. I worked with US-born, Christian-raised, church-attending men who voted for Joe Biden in order to keep peace in their homes – and to keep the bedroom door open. This is the opposite of masculinity. Men are masculine when they fight evil, and women have to respect them for putting right and wrong above her feelings and desires.

I’m not a Jehovah’s Witness for the same reason I’m not a global warming alarmist

August 1, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the summer, a couple of Jehovah’s Witness ladies were going door-to-door and they stopped by my house while I was out mowing. I decided to talk to them. They asked me why I was an evangelical Protestant rather than a JW. Rather than go into a lot of theology about the Trinity and the Watchtower translation, I decided to to just tell them about the false predictions their group has made.

So, let’s just quickly review that using this article from Watchman fellowship, which quotes JW publications:

> Initially the organization taught the “battle of the Great Day of God Almighty” (Armageddon) would end in 1914. Every kingdom of the world would be overthrown in 1914 which was “God’s date” not for the beginning but “for the *end”* of the time of trouble.
>
> “…we consider it an established truth that the final end of the kingdoms of this world, and the full establishment of the Kingdom of God, will be accomplished by the end of A.D. 1914” (Watchtower founder, Charles Taze Russell, *The Time is at Hand,* p. 99).
>
> “…the ‘battle of the great day of God Almighty’ (Rev. 16:14), which will end in A.D. 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth’s present rulership, is already commenced” (*Ibid.,* p. 101).
>
> “CAN IT BE DELAYED UNTIL 1914?…our readers are writing to know if there may not be a mistake in the 1914 date. They say that they do not see how present conditions can last so long under the strain. We see no reason for changing the figures – nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God’s dates not ours. But bear in mind that the end of 1914 is not the date for the *beginning,* but for the *end* of the time of trouble” (*Watch Tower,* 15 July 1894, p. 226).

Clearly, the world did not end in 1914, and it did not end at subsequent JW predictions, either, e.g. 1925, 1975.

So, as the title of the post says that I can’t be a global warming alarmist for the same reason I can’t be a Jehovah’s Witness: failed predictions.

Here’s an excellent article from Daily Signal by famous black economist Walter Williams, who explains the connection:

> As reported in The New York Times (Aug. 1969) Stanford University biologist Paul Ehrlich warned: “The trouble with almost all environmental problems is that by the time we have enough evidence to convince people, you’re dead. We must

> realize that unless we're extremely lucky, everybody will disappear in a cloud of blue steam in 20 years."
>
> In 2000, David Viner, a senior research scientist at University of East Anglia's climate research unit, predicted that in a few years winter snowfall would become "a very rare and exciting event. Children just aren't going to know what snow is."
>
> In 2004, the U.S. Pentagon warned President George W. Bush that major European cities would be beneath rising seas. Britain will be plunged into a Siberian climate by 2020. In 2008, Al Gore predicted that the polar ice cap would be gone in a mere 10 years. A U.S. Department of Energy study led by the U.S. Navy predicted the Arctic Ocean would experience an ice-free summer by 2016.
>
> In May 2014, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius declared during a joint appearance with Secretary of State John Kerry that "we have 500 days to avoid climate chaos."
>
> Peter Gunter, professor at North Texas State University, predicted in the spring 1970 issue of The Living Wilderness:

> Demographers agree almost unanimously on the following grim timetable: by 1975 widespread famines will begin in India; these will spread by 1990 to include all of India, Pakistan, China and the Near East, Africa. By the year 2000, or conceivably sooner, South and Central America will exist under famine conditions. … By the year 2000, thirty years from now, the entire world, with the exception of Western Europe, North America, and Australia, will be in famine.

> Ecologist Kenneth Watt's 1970 prediction was, "If present trends continue, the world will be about four degrees colder for the global mean temperature in 1990, but eleven degrees colder in the year 2000." He added, "This is about twice what it would take to put us into an ice age."

Williams concludes:

> Today's wild predictions about climate doom are likely to be just as true as yesteryear's. The major difference is today's Americans are far more gullible and more likely to spend trillions fighting global warming. And the only result is that we'll be much poorer and less free.

We have known for decades that the Earth's temperatures were much warmer during the "Medieval Warming Period", hundreds of years ago. But some people are just having irrational fears about overpopulation, resource shortages, etc. and so they will promote nonsense to try to scare people into doing what they want. World history is full of pious-sounding attention-seeking hoaxsters who try to scare the gullible masses into giving them money and/or power. It's not new.

Jay Richards: How to end poverty in 10 tough steps

August 2, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Jay Richards: How to end poverty in 10 tough steps

Why are some nations more prosperous than others? Is it because the wealthier nations exploit the poorer ones, keeping them poor? Or are there certain policies, laws, and cultural beliefs that lead to prosperity? Dr. Jay Richards delivers a lecture for Impact 360, in which he identifies 10 different factors that lift nations out of poverty, and explains why they work.

Summary:

1. Establish and maintain the rule of law.
2. Focus the jurisdiction of government on maintaining the rule of law, and limit its jurisdiction over the economy and the institutions of civil society.
3. Implement a formal property system with consistent and accessible means for securing a clear title to property one owns.
4. Encourage economic freedom: Allow people to trade goods and services unencumbered by tariffs, subsidies, price controls, undue regulation, and restrictive immigration policies.
5. Encourage stable families and other important private institutions that mediate between the individual and the state.
6. Encourage belief in the truth that the universe is purposeful and makes sense.
7. Encourage the right cultural mores—orientation to the future and the belief that progress but not utopia is possible in this life; willingness to save and delay gratification; willingness to risk, to respect the rights and property of others, to be diligent, to be thrifty.
8. Instill a proper understanding of the nature of wealth and poverty—that wealth is created, that free trade is win-win, that risk is essential to enterprise, that trade-offs are unavoidable, that the success of others need not come at your expense, and that you can pursue legitimate self-interest and the common good at the same time.

9. Focus on your comparative advantage rather than protecting what used to be your competitive advantage.
10. Work hard.

Solving economic problems is just like solving any other problem. First, we read to learn what has been proven to work. Then, we do what works. I want to encourage Christians to move beyond good intentions to good results when voting for economic policies. Often, people on the left want to "fix" inequalities by doing what feels good to them, or what sounds good to them. Economics is about choosing policies that we know have worked in other times and places.

Let's talk more about #4 from Richards' list.

Economic freedom linked to prosperity

Consider the book "The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution" by famous conservative theologian Wayne Grudem.

You can even read an article about it from the left-wing Christian Post here:

> In a presentation of his new book at the Family Research Council, biblical theologian Wayne Grudem argued that poor countries can become rich only by producing their own prosperity, and that the free market is not only the economic answer, but in tune with the Bible's moral teachings.
>
> "Every nation that has escaped poverty has done so by producing its own prosperity," said Grudem, professor of theology and biblical studies at Phoenix Seminary in Arizona. Perhaps best known for his book Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, Grudem presented the key themes in his new book The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution. The very first of his 79 factors to help nations escape poverty in "a free market economy."
>
> […]Grudem argued that the wealth of a country is determined by its per-capita income – the average amount of money each citizen makes. The only way to increase this is to increase the production of goods and services, creating more wealth for everyone, he said.
>
> […]The professor pointed to 79 factors to help a country produce more goods and services, in three different key areas: the economic system, government, and cultural beliefs and values.
>
> For the economic system, Grudem mentioned the Index of Economic Freedom, a report put out by the Heritage Foundation to judge each country's openness to trade and wealth creation.

You can find the Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom right here. Take a look at the countries at the top… these countries also have a very high per capita income. Their citizens are earning a lot of money by selling what they produce to willing customers. The ones at the bottom are run by socialist governments. You wouldn't want to try to make a living in Venezuela or Cuba or North Korea. But these are the places that

American socialists admire and support. Does that tell you something about what they would do to you, if they got hold of the reins of government?

The Fraser Institute in Canada did a similar ranking of economic freedom (economic freedom = low taxes, low regulation, free trade), and they concluded:

> Countries in the top quartile (25 per cent) of economic freedom (such as the U.K., Japan and Ireland) had an average per-capita income of US$40,376 in 2016 compared to US$5,649 for the bottom quartile countries (such as Venezuela, Iran and Zimbabwe). And life expectancy is 79.5 years in the top quartile of countries compared to 64.4 years in the bottom quartile.

Economic freedom works best.

Scott Klusendorf discusses right to life, assisted reproduction, and end of life

August 3, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the video, featuring my favorite pro-life speakers Scott Klusendorf. Scott is the founder and President of the Life Training Institute. LTI's mission is to make a rigorous, rational defense for pro-life positions with respect to a variety of ethical issues. If you listen to Scott, you will learn a lot, and learn it from someone who has been tested on the battlefield of ideas.

Three topics:

- right to life of the unborn
- reproductive technologies
- end of life questions

40 minutes of guided discussion, 20 minutes of Q&A. This video was apparently recorded in the summer of 2016.

Abortion:

- the 1-minute case for the pro-life position (excellent)
- dealing with those who dismiss the pro-life case as religious
- how and when do people win arguments?
- how does one get better at discussing moral issues?
- who are some of the best books to get informed about life issues?
- what are some of the best books from the other side?
- what is the SLED test? do pro-abortion scholars accept it?
- if abortion were illegal, who should be punished and how much?
- is it inflammatory and dangerous to say that abortion is killing?

Assisted reproductive technologies:

- how should we speak to people considering ARTs?
- what is the underlying issue in ART discussions?
- should pro-lifers be opposed to all use of ARTs?
- what should pro-lifers think about surrogacy?
- which books provide an introduction to ART ethics?

End of life issues:

- what is the central issue in end of life discussions?
- should treatment always be continued or are there situations where treatment can be withdrawn?

Final issues:

- if a student wants to take courses in bioethics, where should they go to take courses or do a degree?
- what is the policy situation for pro-lifers in terms of legislation and SCOTUS decision-making?
- what are some policies that pro-lifers can support as incremental measures that move the issue in the right direction?

I liked this discussion. I tried to listen as someone new to the issue and he did a good job of not assuming any prior knowledge of the debate. My favorite part was his survey of books and arguments on the other side, and what they say. I don't think that most people realize what the implications of the pro-abortion worldview really are for things like infanticide, and so on. The discussion about who should be punished for abortion and how much was new to me – and that actually came up during the last election, during the GOP primary. Personally, I would let the woman get off, and just prosecute the doctor.

It's very very good to listen to crystal clear thinking on these controversial issues from someone who has encountered the other side in their writings, and in public debates with them. Not to mention having to interact with people making decisions in these areas.

Ryan T. Anderson lectures on marriage and why it matters

August 4, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's the lecture:

About the speaker:

> Ryan T. Anderson researches and writes about marriage and religious liberty as the William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He also focuses on justice and moral principles in economic thought, health care and education, and has expertise in bioethics and natural law theory.
>
> Anderson, who joined the leading Washington think tank's DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society in 2012, also is the editor of *Public Discourse*, the online journal of the Witherspoon Institute of Princeton, N.J.
>
> Anderson's recent work at Heritage focuses on the constitutional questions surrounding same-sex "marriage." He is the co-author with Princeton's Robert P. George and Sherif Girgis of the acclaimed book "What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense" (Encounter Books, December 2012).

The lecture starts at 7:20 in. The lecture ends at 49:35. There are 32 minutes of Q&A.

Introduction:

- When talking about marriage in public, we should talk about philosophy, sociology and public policy
- Gay marriage proponents need to be pressed to define what marriage is, on their view
- Every definition of marriage is going to include some relationships, and exclude others
- It's meaningless to portray one side as nice and the other mean
- Typically, marriage redefiners view marriage as a more intense emotional relationship
- Marriage redefiners should be challenged in three ways:
- 1) Does the redefined version of marriage have a public policy reason to prefer only two people?
- 2) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer permanence?
- 3) Does the redefined version of marriage have a reason to prefer sexual exclusivity?
- Also, if marriage is just about romance, then why is the state getting involved in recognizing it?
- The talk: 1) What marriage is, 2) Why marriage matters, 3) What are the consequences of redefining marriage?

What marriage is:

- Marriage unites spouses – hearts, minds and bodies
- Marriage unites spouses to perform a good: creating a human being and raising that human being
- Marriage is a commitment: permanent and exclusive
- Male and female natures are distinct and complementary

The public purpose of marriage:

- to attach men and women to each other
- to attach mothers and fathers to their children
- there is no such thing as parenting, there is only mothering and fathering
- the evidence shows that children benefit from mothering and fathering
- boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to commit crimes
- girls who grow up without fathers are more likely to have sex earlier
- Children benefit from having a mother and a father
- can't say that fathers are essential for children if we support gay marriage, which makes fathers optional
- without marriage: child poverty increases, crime increases, social mobility decreases, welfare spending increases
- when government encourages marriage, then government has less do to – stays smaller, spends less
- if we promote marriage as an idea, we are not excluding gay relationships or even partner benefits
- finally, gay marriage has shown itself to be hostile to religious liberty

Consequences redefining marriage:

- it undermines the norm in public like that kids deserve a mom and a dad – moms and dads are interchangeable
- it changes the institution of marriage away from the needs of children, and towards the needs of adults
- it undermines the norm of permanence
- we learned what happens when marriage is redefined before: with no-fault divorce
- no-fault divorce: after this became law, divorce rates doubled – the law changed society
- gay marriage would teach society that mothers and fathers are optional when raising children
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then how can you rationally limit marriage to only two people?
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if other people cause intense feelings, there's no fidelity
- if marriage is what people with intense feelings do, then if the feelings go away,

there is no permanence
- the public policy consequences to undermining the norms of exclusivity and permanence = fatherless children and fragmented families
- a final consequences is the decline and elimination of religious liberty – e.g. – adoption agencies closing, businesses being sued

We're doing very well on abortion, but we need to get better at knowing how to discuss marriage. If you're looking for something short to read, click here. If you want to read a long paper that his book is based on.

Are puberty blockers “reversible”?

August 5, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed an article about puberty blockers on Daily Caller, that I thought would be really useful in a debate. Normally, transing kids involves 1) social transitioning, 2) puberty blockers, 3) hormone replacement therapy, 4) sex mutilation surgery. Pro-transing doctors often tell parents that puberty blockers are “reversible”. But are they really?

The article says:

> Prominent World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) physicians acknowledged that puberty blockers are more invasive than portrayed in the media and can have irreversible effects on minors such as infertility, bone loss and disruption of brain development, according to WPATH educational sessions obtained by the Daily Caller News Foundation.
>
> WPATH is a transgender medical organization that has published influential clinical guidance for the sex reassignment industry, called Standards of Care, which recommend children receive puberty suppression, cross sex hormones and sex reassignment surgery. However, during educational sessions recorded in September 2022 that were part of a transgender medicalization certification program offered to WPATH licensed clinicians, WPATH doctors revealed that the consequences of puberty blockers for minors are often far more disruptive than portrayed in the media.

Calcium stores:

> In an educational session titled “Foundations in Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy: Adults and Adolescents,” Dr. Daniel Metzger, a WPATH certified pediatric endocrinologist, explained how puberty blockers impede adolescents from developing the calcium stores needed to prevent osteoporosis later in life.

Brain development:

> “Obviously teenagers, their brains are changing. They’re unwiring, they’re rewiring. And if we’ve started one kid unwiring and half rewiring, and then we changed their puberty the other way and we’re unwiring, people have been trying to figure out what this does for kids’ brains,” said Metzger.
>
> “They seem to do reasonably the same as their friends but we’re not looking at their IQ and their learning ability and lots of other things.”

Fertility:

> During a question and answer segment, Metzger discussed the impact of puberty blockers on a child’s fertility, explaining how puberty blockers stop males from developing sperm. He said it was unknown if girls placed on puberty blockers

> during the initial stages of puberty, as recommended by WPATH, would have eggs mature enough for fertility preservation.
>
> “Kids have zero idea about their fertility,” said Metzger.

Reversible?

> During a session titled, “Foundations in Clinical Care for Transgender and Gender Diverse Adolescents,” Dr. Scott Leibowitz, a co-lead in the development of the adolescent chapter of the WPATH Standards of Care and member of the WPATH Board of Directors, challenged the reversibility of puberty suppression.
>
> “I think when we just say, ‘Oh puberty blockers are just reversible and it’s a very noninvasive treatment,’ I would say it’s more invasive than often times the media makes it out to be or other people,” he said.
>
> Leibowitz explained how puberty blockers suppress the release of sex hormones (estrogen and testosterone) that cause puberty, stopping puberty and the essential brain and bone maturation that occurs during pubertal development, calling the body’s need for binary sex hormones a challenge.
>
> “There’s challenges with puberty suppression that we have to acknowledge and that’s why it’s ‘reversible asterisks,’” Leibowitz said. “One cannot be on puberty suppression endlessly. You get to a place where physiologically we need hormones.”

So, the take-away lesson from this is that puberty blockers are less reversible and more invasive than is portrayed by the media. And that’s according to the people who know the most about it, and who push for it the most.

New study: an example of the function of so-called "junk DNA"

August 6, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rose and I interviewed Dr. Casey Luskin a while back on the Knight and Rose Show about junk DNA. (We are still making episodes, but Rose is very busy with her D. Min degree, conference speaking, and teaching kids in her church). Casey told us about is how the progress of science is finding new functions for DNA that was thought to be "junk". And he has a new post about it.

Here's the new post from Evolution News.

Here's the topic:

> One of the most common functions of non-coding / junk DNA is to regulate gene expression. When a given non-coding / junk element is working properly, it regulates the gene it's supposed to be regulating; it does its job, and nobody notices it. But what happens when a mutation arises in that junk DNA genetic element? Well, one common result is that it will affect expression of the gene, and the gene will no longer be regulated in the manner that it's supposed to be regulated. This then leads to a disease. The disease associated with some junk DNA element is evidence of some useful function gone wrong, not no function at all. Let's consider a few examples.

So, my understanding of junk DNA is that it is parts of the DNA that does not code for proteins. People really think that the only parts of DNA that are useful are the parts that contain instructions for making more proteins. Darwinists dismiss the non-coding parts of DNA as "junk". Just leftovers from supposed evolution that doesn't do anything useful.

One of the studies he quotes explains it like this:

> While the coding genes provide blueprints for building proteins, which direct most of the body's functions, some of the noncoding sections of the genome, including regions previously dismissed as "junk," seem to turn up or down the expression of those genes.

The way I understand this is by thinking of a cookbook. The coding parts of the cookbook talk about what ingredients you need and how much of each you need. For some reason, people thought that this is the best part of the cookbook, the part about the ingredients. In this cookbook analogy, the Darwinists might think that the part about what to do with the ingredients is just "junk". Stuff like the actual recipe steps, where to cook it, what temperature to use, how long to cook it for, and so on.

So what does the non-coding part of the DNA do that gives it "function" (makes it useful). Well, he has examples, and one of them is some "junk DNA" that regulates gene expression. What happens when that junk DNA gets bad mutations, changing the

instructions?

This:

> This junk DNA element contains an enhancer that helps regulate the gene ETS2, but mutations in that region deleteriously affect gene regulation, potentially causing various diseases.

You can imagine if your cookbook had a recipe that said “set the oven the 350 degrees Fahrenheit, and put the chicken breasts in for 30 minutes.” But then a mutation happened, and suddenly the so-called junk part of the cookbook said: “set the oven the 350 degrees Fahrenheit, and put the chicken breasts in for 300 minutes.” You would not get a good result from that. That part of the recipe is not junk! It’s important.

He has a bunch more examples, including how mistakes in the non-coding DNA causes increased susceptibility to certain psychiatric disorders.

I thought it was an interesting add-on to our episode, because it explains what a useful non-coding function would look like.

Here is his conclusion:

> In other words, once again, the “junk DNA” is functional. That is reflected by the fact that when you mess with the “junk,” the result is problems. That doesn’t sound like junk DNA to me.

If you missed the episode, you can get the MP3 here, and the YouTube episode is here.

What can we expect from a Harris-Walz ticket?

August 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I collected together a few stories that show some of the past actions of the two members of the Democrat party presidential ticket. Some of these you may already know, and some may be new to you. The appeal of the ticket is surface-level. Kamala is so brown and female, and Tim Walz is so nice. This is interesting to some people, but more interesting to me is what policies I would have to live under.

Here's a couple of articles about the vice presidential candidate Tim Walz, who is the current governor of Minnesota.

Washington Free Beacon:

> Walz… came under scrutiny over his response to both the coronavirus pandemic and riots in the wake of the death of George Floyd, who was killed by a Minneapolis police officer in May 2020.
>
> Walz waited days after riots in Minneapolis to call in the National Guard. By then, anti-police protesters had burned down a police station in Minneapolis and caused $500 million in damage.
>
> Walz signed a bill last year to restore voting rights to 55,000 convicted felons in Minnesota as part of an initiative to "expand the right to vote." And Walz signed a bill last year to provide free college and health care to illegal immigrants, even as he raised taxes on gasoline, cars, retail deliveries, and other items.

We'll find out more about his response to COVID in this article from the UK Daily Mail:

> Minnesota Republicans also singled out Walz for mishandling coronavirus funds that sent $250 million to a nonprofit group Feeding Our Future, ignoring warning signs that the organization was mishandling the funds.
>
> The organization was using the funds for luxury cars, jewelry, travel and property, according to reports, while only using a small portion of the money from the federal government for feeding children.
>
> At the time, Republicans blamed Walz for failing basic oversight and continuing to allow the non-profit to receive funds.
>
> The Minnesota Department of Education flagged serious concerns about the group in 2018, but failed to address them, and gave even more funding to the organization.

According to this article from The Blaze:

> As thousands of BLM rioters who burned down half of Minneapolis remain out of jail, and as a record number of criminals remain on the streets, a business owner is now sitting in de facto solitary confinement for 90 days for the crime of having

> her restaurant open during the illegal lockdowns.

Business owners go to jail, but rioters and arsonists get released. Also during COVID, Walz set up an anonymous snitch hotline so that progressives could report their conservative neighbors for non-compliance. Is that the sort of country you want to live in?

What else has Walz accomplished?

The Federalist on his abortion legislation, which Walz signed into law:

> Minnesota Democrats are poised to ignore the at least 69 percent of Americans who say they want significant limits on abortion to pass the state's most radical abortion bill, which would legalize taxpayer-funded on-demand abortion for all.
>
> The Protect Reproductive Options Act (PROA), the first bill Democrats introduced in both the state House and Senate this session, would repeal dozens of the state's protections for women and babies and expand legal immunity for abortions up until the moment of birth and beyond.

Speaking of the abortion issue, lets' move on to the Democrat presidential nominee, Kamala Harris.

Here's an article about her from the New York Post:

> Kamala Harris stands accused of "weaponizing" the California Attorney General's office against a pro-life activist who alleges he was exposing the illegal sale of aborted fetuses.
>
> David Daleiden, whose nine-year legal saga instigated by Harris is still ongoing, released shocking undercover videos he took of Planned Parenthood executives discussing fees and prices for fetal tissues in July 2015.
>
> He now faces eight felony charges and possible jail time for making the videos without getting the executives' permission to film them, as well as "manufacturing" a fake driving license.
>
> Daleiden's lawyers say it's one of the first times the California AG's office has ever undertaken a stand-alone prosecution involving the state's video-recording law.
>
> His lawyers, who include Steve Cooley, Los Angeles's second-longest serving DA, contend Harris — who served as California Attorney General from 2011 to 2017 — singled him out to do the bidding of Planned Parenthood, who have contributed heavily to her campaigns for office.
>
> "What Kamala Harris did was unconstitutional and vindictive," Cooley told The Post. "It was a selective prosecution for huge donors.
>
> "Kamala Harris opened this investigation at the behest of Planned Parenthood and the two AGs that followed her have kept it alive."

That one is particularly important for me, because I already have concerns about federal law enforcement singling out Christians and social conservatives, while they let real

criminals and terrorists get a free ride. This would likely get worse under a Harris presidency.

And of course there is her record as the person responsible for securing the Southern border.

Daily Signal explains:

> "The fact is she has a long track record of opposing border security and immigration enforcement, whether as a senator, a presidential candidate, or as Joe Biden's 'border czar,'" Rep. Mark Green, R-Tenn., chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, recently said on the House floor.
>
> […]Just over 31% of illegal aliens encountered at the nation's borders were removed during the Trump-Pence administration, according to the National Immigration Center for Enforcement. During the Biden-Harris administration, by contrast, 4.4% of illegal aliens encountered at the borders have been removed.
>
> Harris previously advocated "progressive" immigration policies. Most notably, during her brief run for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020, she expressed support for providing government health care to illegal aliens and decriminalizing border crossings by foreign nationals.

That's what you're going to get on border security from a Harris-Walz presidency. Is that what you want?

Should men marry women who think relationship boundaries are “emotional abuse”?

August 8, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the reasons that I am not married today is because I tried to set spiritual and moral boundaries with women I wanted marry, but those boundaries were rejected. The purpose of the boundaries was to get the woman to be suitable for a marriage designed to serve God. In every case, the relationships ended. And this is actually becoming more common, under the influence of feminism.

Here is an article from The Federalist, written by Kylee Griswold.

She writes:

> Who would have thought perpetual adolescent Jonah Hill would be good at grown-up relationships? Well, he is, judging by some apparent texts his surfer ex-girlfriend Sarah Brady shared to Instagram over the weekend — despite the out-of-control media screeching to the contrary.
>
> […]According to Brady and the TikTokkers, self-proclaimed therapists, media, and fellow thirst-trappers who came to her defense, Hill is a controlling narcissist and misogynist — all for the crime of allegedly asking his then-girlfriend to please put on some clothes.

So, a man told a woman that he was interested in that he proposed certain rules in the relationship, rules that would allow him to get serious, and point the relationship towards commitment (as you’ll see). But the woman, and all of her supportive allies, from the secular left to the religious right, all agreed with her that a man setting boundaries on a woman to make her safe for a marriage commitment is “emotional abuse”.

More:

> Specifically, Hill laid down some boundaries for his partner:
>
> […]Plain and simple: If you need: Surfing with men[,] Boundaryless inappropriate friendships with men[,] to model[,] to post pictures of yourself in a bathing suit[,] to post sexual pictures[,] friendships with women who are in unstable places and from your wild recent past beyond getting a lunch or coffee or something respectful[,] I am not the right partner for you. If these things bring you to a place of happiness I support it and there will be no hard feelings. These are my boundaries for romantic partnership.
>
> Hill’s detractors say this is “emotional abuse.” But can something really be described as “abuse” if the alleged perpetrator tells you “no hard feelings” if you’d rather walk away than agree to the terms?

Feminism has made it a lot harder for men to set boundaries that will orient women towards marriage. No matter how wise the man, and how good the advice, it must all be

rejected. But the demands for men to get married to rebels remain. Especially when the feminists are hitting 35, and their friends are all getting married. They feel entitled to marriage, and how dare men tell them no? Many women today don't want to hear a man *talk about the Bible* or hear a man *talk about right and wrong*, they just want weddings, wedding rings, vacations, and things to be fixed around the house. It would be better if men were just walking ATMs that didn't talk at all.

More:

> To protect the health and integrity of his relationship, Hill established reasonable and respectable parameters for how his girlfriend was to behave toward him through how she acted toward other men. Don't sexualize yourself for other guys or engage in other relationship-compromising behaviors. And he made clear how he would respond if she didn't respect those limits. I'm not the right man for you.

In my cases, my boundaries were always things that were clearly good for the women, and also good for commitment. For example, I might say "stop spending money on travel, get a private sector job in your field, and pay off your student loans". But these conditions were rejected. Later on, when the woman reached her early 30s, I would get e-mails about wanting to get back together. But the student loans had only increased, and the resumes now had huge gaps. I can only assume that the body counts had also increased from all the "traveling". No thanks, I said. No thank you. I can do something more productive than bail women out. I especially don't want to bail women out *who have no respect for men who know how to lead*.

This behavior of calling moral and spiritual leadership "emotional abuse" and "controlling" is common – even in Christian circles – because of feminism. In general, the only acceptable male roles are "protect and provide". Men are supposed to take on all the accountability, but with none of the authority to defend the truth, or to defend morality. On any topic. For example, if you try to tell a single woman in her late 20s about infertility, it's "emotional abuse". No amount of evidence can ever beat "follow your heart". And she has legions of supporters who will shame you for trying to argue from scientific studies.

If you think I am mean, then read Kylee:

> Enter feminism, which loves female autonomy and sold women lots of lies about it. Feminism said love yourself. If that means wreaking all kinds of havoc, your second "X" chromosome trumps the consequences. Unrestrained sex and unintended pregnancy? Abort the baby. Not happy in your marriage? Divorce him. Unfulfilled at home? Leave the kids with an underpaid immigrant and climb that corporate ladder. No boundaries. No bonds. No bras.
>
> But news flash: Relationships take two. And sadly, thanks to that third-wave wrecking ball, some dating women need to be told some obvious things when it comes to romantic fidelity, even if those things have to come from their partners: Seeking the approval of other men for how you look is a bad idea. Worse, it

> communicates lots of bad things about your priorities and desires.
>
> Frankly, a man who's willing to say that tough thing is probably a man worth holding onto. Thanks in part to "toxic masculinity" messaging and the militant feminization of America, a man who shoots for commitment and faithfulness, and communicates those aims in a straightforward way while proposing an amicable split as the alternative, is a rarity.

Oh, how I love those words.

Sadly, Kylee's view is in the minority today, thanks to feminism. And if men are not allowed to lead a relationship, then the marriage rate will continue to decline. Neither shaming of men nor blaming of men will cause men to accept marriage without leadership.

For more on this topic, I recommend this excellent article by Mark McDonald, M.D., entitled "Why American Women Are Undatable" The subtitle is "No One Wants to Play with a Porcupine". Indeed not.

Does the “legacy of slavery” explain black women’s 72% out-of-wedlock birth rate?

August 9, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

James White asks: does the Bible apply to black women?

I don’t like Calvinist theologian James White very much, but at least he’s willing to defend the moral teachings of the Bible against the woke identity politics that is taking over Christian churches. A few months ago he tweeted something very controversial (see above), and got into a lot of hot water with fake Christians. In this post, I’ll explain why he is right.

So, as you can see above, James is concerned that black women are having so many abortions, and he thinks that the solution to this is to encourage black women to take the Bible’s advice on sexual morality. Shocking, I know.

If you read the replies to his tweet on Twitter, you’ll see millions and millions of comments calling him a racist, and telling him that slavery is to blame for EVERYTHING that black women do wrong. Basically, the James haters say that black women can do anything they want, and should never be told that it’s wrong according to the Bible, because their bad choices are all the fault of slavery. So the Bible doesn’t even apply to them, or something.

Here is an example from a radical feminist progressive named Karen Swallow Prior:

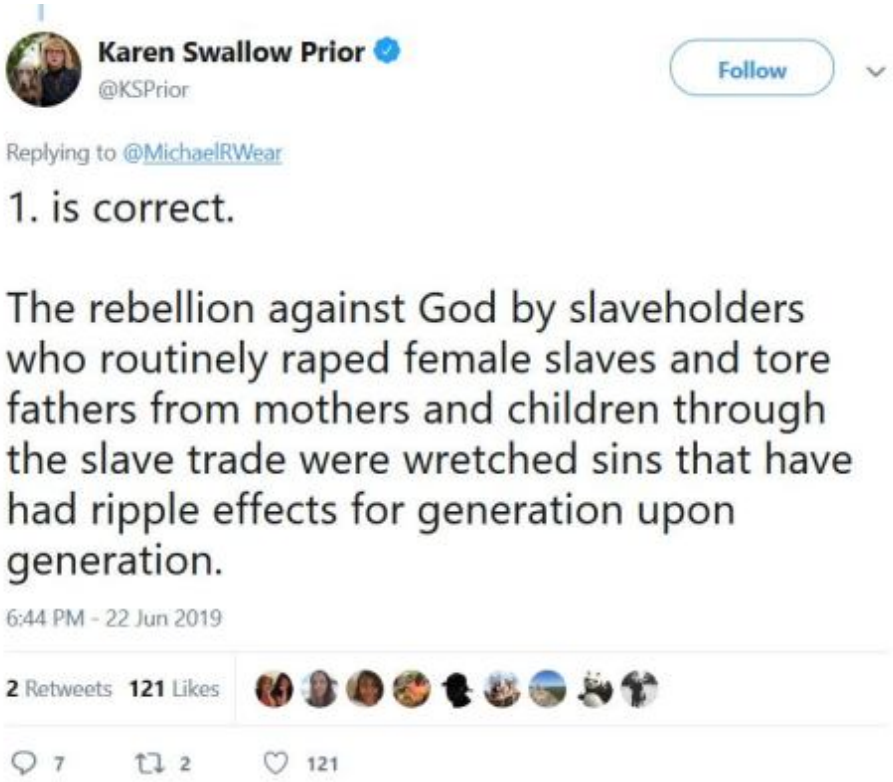

Karen Swallow Prior says that unlike whites, blacks have no moral agency

According to the fake Christians, it's not that black women make poor choices with sex, it's that the ghosts of white slavers who raped their great-great-great grandmothers reach through time with magic and force them to have sex with hunky bad boys who won't commit to them before sex. It's not rap music calling black women hoes! It's the ghosts of slavery past. And even if this ghost theory isn't true, we shouldn't tell black women not to sin, because… it would hurt their feelings. After all, the Bible isn't a book that's designed to set boundaries to prevent self-destructive behaviors. It encourages us to listen to our hearts, be reckless, and sin as much as we can.

So when did black community problems with sex and abortion start? Did it start with slavery times? Actually, blacks were doing GREAT at marriage and sexual matters just 50 years ago.

This reply to James White explained:

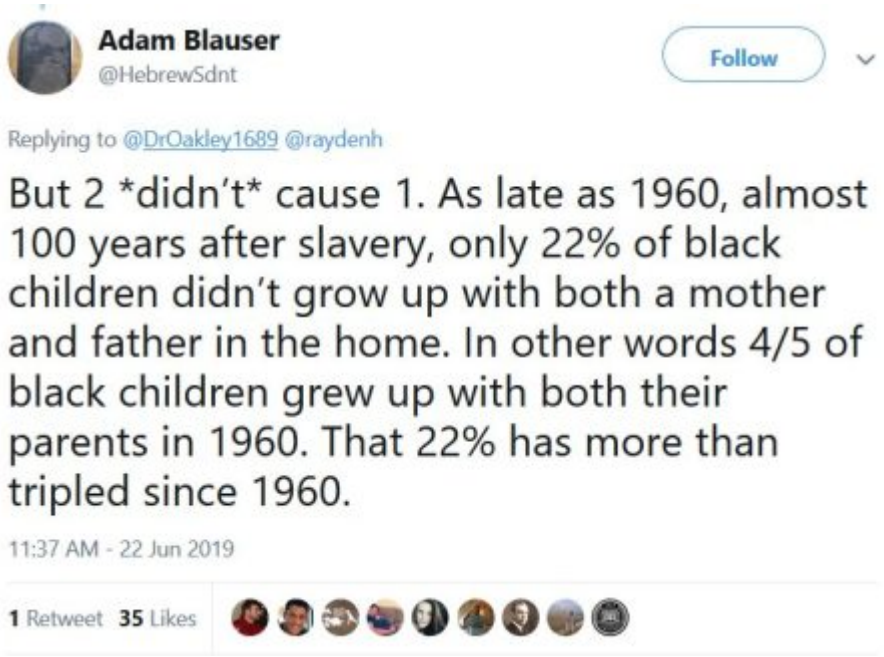

Blacks married at rates comparable to whites before welfare
That's true. Black children weren't fatherless, so they weren't having early sex outside of marriage, and so they weren't getting abortions.

As the header graphic shows, black women were just as likely to be married as white women in the 1960s, FAR AFTER the days of slavery.

The reason that the graph is going upward is because daughters raised in fatherless homes tend to engage in sexual activity at younger ages, because they are seeking approval from a man which their (single) mother cannot give them. It's a tragic downwards spiral, and it affects all races. The only way to stop it is to tell women to choose marriage-minded men (not hot bad boys) and marry before having sex, like the Bible says. But woke fake Christians think the Bible is too mean, and better to allow sin by saying that sin is inevitable because slavery ghosts or something.

What's neat is that black men who take Christianity seriously are totally on board with the facts:

Black man here. Can confirm that the Bible applies to black women.
On this blog, I don't talk about my ethnicity myself, for confidentiality reasons, but I have said that my skin is darker than Barack Obama. I'm not white or Asian. And the reason that I don't fall into this trap of causing babies to be born out of wedlock is because I think that when the Bible says that sex outside of marriage is a sin, that this is true. I

don’t make excuses or shift blame. It’s incumbent on me to obey, since I claim to be a follower of Jesus.I’m not interested in identity politics. I’m not interested in racial divisions. I’m not interested in blame-shifting. The rules are the rules. And my following of the rules caused me to not cause abortions, according to Christian specifications. Period.

When it comes to sex outside of marriage, the answer of every Bible believing Christian is simple: I’m against it. That is the correct answer, and anything more or less than this answer is demonic. If you are a Christian, sex outside of marriage is always morally wrong. And if you try to justify it, or blame someone else, in order to excuse it, then you’re not a Christian at all. If you try to make excuses for why someone did it, you’re not a Christian. Whether you have had it and been forgiven, or never had it, the answer is always the same: it’s morally wrong. Don’t do it. Never do it.

What I am seeing from people who are critical of James White’s tweet is that they are basically trying to attack those who make moral judgments based on what the Bible says. They want to make room for sinners to sin. The root of abortion sin is sexual sin. Real Christians discourage sexual sin, and therefore protect unborn children. Fake Christians want to be liked by appearing compassionate, so they make excuses for sexual sin. If you take the Bible seriously on morality, you won’t be liked. Those who try to excuse sin do so because their need to be liked is more important than their need to promote what the Bible teaches.

Some fake Christians will say “oh, but I do think the Bible is right about sex and marriage, but we have to care about slavery reparations and global warming and refugees and illegal immigrants and trasnsgender rights, too”. Baloney. An authentic Christian is concerned about the things that the Bible teaches are “major” things. Drunkenness is a major thing. Sexual immorality is a major thing. Divorce is a major thing. Homosexuality is a major thing. If you meet a Christian who treats those issues as minor issues, and instead majors in what the secular left tells them are major issues, then you’re talking to a fake Christian.

Christianity isn’t a brain-dead faith. You get your priorities from the Bible, and you argue those priorities using facts. The facts about marriage rates are clear and they show that the problems in the black community aren’t caused by slavery. They’re caused by single mother welfare programs. Those welfare programs taught women of all races that they didn’t have to listen to their fathers when choosing men. Those welfare programs taught women that feelings were a better guide in relationships than the Bible. Those welfare programs taught women that their eyes were a better judge of character than performance of traditional marriage roles. Those welfare programs taught women that recreational sex was a way to get a man to commit and stop being a bad boy. We need to go back to the root cause of the problem. The root cause of the problem was making excuses for disobedience to the Bible, and transferring money from married homes to out-of-control women. Of all races.

New study: women who have fewer premarital sex partners have lower risk of divorce

August 10, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider this article from Family Studies that talks about how the number of pre-marital sex partners that a woman has increases her risk of divorce.

It says:

> American sexual behavior is much different than it used to be. Today, most Americans think premarital sex is okay, and will have three or more sexual partners before marrying. What, if anything, does premarital sex have to do with marital stability?
>
> This research brief shows that the relationship between divorce and the number of sexual partners women have prior to marriage is complex. I explore this relationship using data from the three most recent waves of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) collected in 2002, 2006-2010, and 2011-2013. For women marrying since the start of the new millennium:
>
> - Women with 10 or more partners were *the most likely* to divorce, but this only became true in recent years;
> - Women with 3-9 partners were *less likely* to divorce than women with 2 partners; and,
> - Women with 0-1 partners were the *least likely* to divorce.
>
> Earlier research found that having multiple sex partners prior to marriage could lead to less happy marriages, and often increased the odds of divorce.
>
> […]Even more noteworthy has been the decline in the proportion of women who get married having had only one sex partner (in most cases, their future husbands). Forty-three percent of women had just one premarital sex partner in the 1970s.
>
> […]By the 2010s, only 5 percent of new brides were virgins. At the other end of the distribution, the number of future wives who had ten or more sex partners increased from 2 percent in the 1970s to 14 percent in the 2000s, and then to 18 percent in the 2010s. Overall, American women are far more likely to have had multiple premarital sex partners in recent years (unfortunately, the NSFG doesn't have full data on men's premarital sexual behavior, and in any event they recall their own marital histories less reliably than do women).

Here's the change:

Table 1: The Distribution of Women's Premarital Sex Partners, by Marriage Cohort					
	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
0 partner	21%	17%	14%	12%	5%
1 partner	43%	36%	26%	21%	22%
2 partners	16%	15%	13%	13%	12%
3 partners	8%	11%	11%	11%	11%
4-5 partners	6%	12%	16%	17%	18%
6-9 partners	4%	5%	11%	13%	14%
10+ partners	2%	4%	10%	14%	18%
total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	268	1,921	4,312	3,598	273

Women have freely chosen to dismiss the Bible and the moral law

And the problem with this, of course, is that more premarital sex partners means a higher risk of divorce:

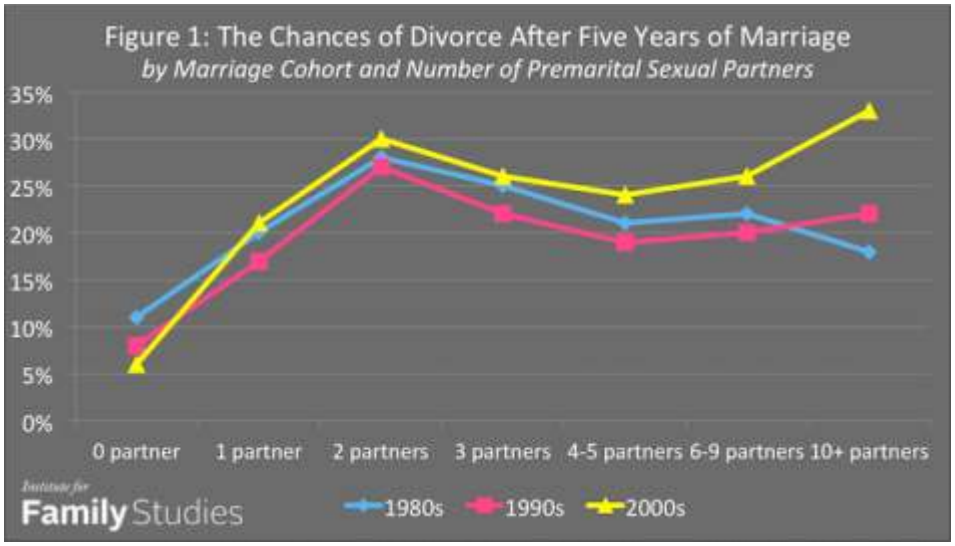

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

Why is the 2-partner number so high?

> In most cases, a woman's two premarital sex partners include her future husband and one other man. That second sex partner is first-hand proof of a sexual alternative to one's husband. These sexual experiences convince women that sex outside of wedlock is indeed a possibility. The man involved was likely to have become a partner in the course of a serious relationship—women inclined to hook up will have had more than two premarital partners—thereby emphasizing the seriousness of the alternative.

The Christian Post had an article about some recent numbers from the Centers for Disease Control about virgins.

Excerpt:

> A new Centers for Disease Control study examines teenage health behaviors in connection to their self-reported sexual activity and shows those who remain abstinent are much healthier on many fronts than their sexually active peers.
>
> The report, titled "Sexual Identity, Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12, United States and Selected Sites," showcased the results from a 2015 survey that monitored several categories of health-

> related behaviors like tobacco usage, drug and alcohol use, sexual habits, unhealthy dietary behaviors, and behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence.
>
> The report concludes "that students who had no sexual contact have a much lower prevalance of most health-risk behaviors compared with students" who had sexual contact.

The article quotes Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, who I have featured on this blog many times:

> In a Monday interview with The Christian Post, Jennifer Roback Morse, founder and president of the Ruth Institute, said, "this study is remarkable because it asks questions and reports the answers, rather than avoiding questions or assuming answers."
>
> As Glenn Stanton noted last week in The Federalist, the results from those questions and answers are remarkable.
>
> With regard to smoking, teenage virgins are 3,300 percent less likely to smoke daily than their peers who are sexually involved with someone of the opposite sex, Stanton computed from the report's data. Teen virgins are 9,500 percent less likely to smoke daily than their peers who are sexually involved with someone of the same sex or in a bisexual relationship, he added. Chaste young people are also extremely less likely to use indoor tanning beds, binge drink, smoke marijuana, ride in cars as passengers with a drunk driver, and get into physical fights than their sexually active peers. Abstinent youth are also more likely to get a solid eight hours of sleep every night and eat breakfast daily.
>
> […]The CDC report also included findings from 25 state surveys, and 19 large, urban school district surveys conducted among students in grades 9–12 which took place between December of 2014 and September of 2015.

Now, many pro traditional marriage people will tell young men "feminism and the sexual revolution change nothing about a woman's suitability for marriage, so go out there and get married to these women anyway". In my experience, no one is telling women NOT to follow their hearts, and explaining to them the harm that they do by allowing their feelings to determine who they will engage in relationships.

I would like to see women make better decisions with men before they marry, rather than be influenced by their peers and culture to give themselves to men who are not marriage-minded. Maybe a little skepticism should be shown to "follow your heart"? Women need to understand what they are losing when they choose to have premarital sex.

In my group of friends, the men are aware of the Biblical prohibition on premarital sex. My friends know about the research on marriage, and what it takes to make a marriage work. We don't follow our hearts, because we do what we know will work to achieve the results we want. We don't listen to the culture, and we don't listen to radical feminists. Men generally take an engineering approach to marriage – we want to know what the best

practices and tradeoffs are, and then we plan and act to succeed.

Britain descends into fascism with two-tier policing, criminalizing speech

August 11, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm not sure if you heard about this, but Britain had an election recently, and they decided to elect secular leftists. What is the secular left championing? Open borders immigration policies, two-tier policing, and suppression of speech critical of the regime's policies or ideology. Let's take a look at what it's like to be a taxpayer in the UK and live under secular left fascism.

Consider this article by Tim Dieppe, which appeared in The Critic.

> There is a perception that the police can treat Muslim protestors differently to white protestors. Scenes of police running away from an Asian-led protest in Leeds contrasted with riot police responding in Southport. Indeed, protestors in London mocked the police there, chanting, "Where the f*** were you in Leeds?"

I disagree with any armed protests, and would never attend one. Violence is never justified, except as a last resort in self-defense when all other options have been exhausted. (Although in the UK, self-defense against violent criminals is effectively illegal – it is illegal to brandish a kitchen knife at trespassers from inside your own home)

But there's more evidence of two-tier policing in the past, as the article explains:

> Two years ago I wrote about how Christian evangelist Hatun Tash was arrested by police in Speakers' Corner after having her Qur'an stolen from her. You can watch footage of the incident here. Hatun had broken no laws and done nothing wrong. In fact, she was the victim. No one was arrested for stealing her Qur'an. The crowd of Muslims mocked her as she was brutally frog-marched off into a police van amidst chants of "Allahu Akbar".
>
> Only after being strip-searched, having her glasses removed from her so that she could not read, being questioned at 4:00am, arrested again, and detained for a total of 15 hours was she finally released without charge.
>
> Hatun's stolen Qur'an was later found by the police. She deliberately uses a large copy of the Qur'an with holes drilled through it to remind Muslims that a famous Islamic apologist admitted that "the standard narrative [of the origins of the Qur'an] has holes in it." This is undoubtedly provocative, but it is nowhere near being a crime. Astonishingly, video footage shows the police later finding her copy of the Qur'an and handing it to Muslim onlookers! One Muslim shortly afterwards brazenly put out video footage of himself holding the stolen Qur'an! Isn't there an offence of handling stolen goods? Did the police take any action? Did they heck.
>
> This was not the first time that Hatun has been wrongfully arrested. Metropolitan Police paid out £10,000 for wrongful arrests in 2020 and 2021. They also issued a

> statement of apology. Sadly, they don't seem to have learned their lesson.
>
> Police policy appears to be to effectively to enforce elements of sharia law. If you offend Muslims you will be arrested. Hatun has proven this several times. There are no arrests, however, for offending Christians. Not that there should be any arrests for causing offence at all. Being offensive is, after all, not an offence. If it were, we would not have free speech at all. Not that the police seem to understand this or be at all interested in protecting free speech, particularly when it comes to Islam.
>
> What really grates, is that there are also no arrests for assaulting or stealing from Christians — even when done in broad daylight with multiple witnesses and video footage. Even when repeated requests are made for action to be taken. What other conclusion are we supposed to draw than that two-tier policing is a reality?

The police are warning people not to talk about two-tier policing on social media, and threatening action against anyone who does. Why would they try to suppress this? Well, the police in the UK want potential tourists in the West to think of the UK as a peaceful country, where tourists are safe from criminals. "Our open border immigration policies are working fine", they say, "nothing for you to worry about here".

But there's a lot for you to worry about:

> Since 7 October we have seen police stand by while protestors call for Jihad or chant antisemitic slogans. The police response to Islam-related protests or riots is clearly muted in comparison to the reaction to white protests. Video-footage of an unarmed 72-year-old white woman with a pacemaker being arrested by five riot police in London went viral on the internet.
>
> Videos of pro-Palestine groups of masked and sometimes armed men congregating and threatening or attacking people with no police presence to be seen, contrast with riot police out in force for unarmed white groups.

Here's what we mean by two-tier policing:

> Video footage emerged on Saturday showing a police liaison officer in Stoke-on-Trent telling Muslim protestors that they could leave their weapons at the mosque. He said:
>
> We will work with you guys for the best solution. The EDL lot I've been assured have left.
>
> If there are any weapons or anything like that, then what I would do is discard them at the mosque.
>
> Don't give anybody any reason to have any interaction with the police, so if there's any weapons, get rid of them, we are not going to arrest anybody. You don't want us to make arrests or start dispersing people. Is that alright?
>
> Police have now admitted that public confidence was undermined by this incident and are said to be reviewing the incident. It is a criminal offence to carry a knife

> or a weapon. Allowing Muslims to leave their weapons at the mosque rather than arresting them for this crime is another example of two-tier policing.

This is similar to how the British police declined to investigate complaints from mothers about their daughters being sex-trafficked by Muslim men. They didn't want to "inflame racial tensions". And if you criticize them for what they've done, then they want to punish you for it. But if you post a meme that criticizes the secular left, then the police are all over you. This is fascism.

The article notes:

> Even more concerningly, Met Police Commissioner, Sir Mark Row1ey, appears to want to criminalise people who claim that there is two-tier policing. In an interview with Sky News he suggested that people who say that there is two-tier policing are legitimising violence. He added: "If you're a keyboard warrior, you're not safe from the law if you incite violence."

Would you live in a country like that? Would you even visit it? I would expect the police in the UK to join in the murdering of me, rather than protect me from actual criminals. They are serious about collecting their salaries paid for by taxpayers, but not serious about doing their job of protecting those taxpayers. At what point can we just describe law enforcement in the UK as Gestapo or Stasi? They exist to protect the secular left regime from criticism. That's it.

And just to be clear, half my family is Muslim, I have very dark skin, and I am a legal immigrant (by employer sponsor, in the highest category of merit) to the United States. No problem with any of that. But I think I'll decline from ever setting foot in the UK, and so should you. It's not any different than any other corrupt country running the communist fascist playbook. I wouldn't visit a garbage country like Venezuela, just as I wouldn't visit the UK.

Two chapters from Megan Basham's new book "Shepherds for Sale"

August 12, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Megan's new book is popular that it's up to #11 on Amazon as of Sunday night, when I am writing this post. The book talks about how some popular evangelical pastors and teachers have aligned themselves with the secular left on issues like abortion, LGBT, immigration, global warming, health care, etc. I got the audio version, read by the author, and I'm enjoying it immensely.

So what's in the book? Here is one article in First Things containing a sample chapter about how some evangelical pastors and leaders align themselves with the secular left on LGBT policy.

It says:

> In 2000, Jon Stryker, gay heir to a one-hundred-billion-dollar surgical supply conglomerate, launched the Arcus Foundation, a grant-making institution that soon became the largest funder of LGBTQ initiatives in the United States. But after legislative defeats like the passage of a 2008 California law banning gay marriage, Stryker's foundation began devoting tens of millions of dollars to, in its words, "challenging the promotion of narrow or hateful interpretations of religious doctrine" within every major Christian denomination.
>
> […]Between 2014 and 2018, the Reformation Project, a brand-new organization led by twenty-three-year-old Harvard dropout Matthew Vines, received $550,000 in grants. The purpose of the funding, according to Arcus, was to "reform church teaching on sexual orientation and gender identity among conservative and evangelical communities."
>
> […]Enter Greg and Lynn McDonald. In 2015, they founded Embracing the Journey, an organization for Christian parents of LGBTQ children, at the urging of North Point's executive director, Bill Willits. They had recently relocated to the Atlanta area and had begun attending services at the church. Over a breakfast meeting with Willits early in the year, Greg happened to share that his son had come out as gay in 2001, and he described how his and Lynn's process of acceptance eventually led them to become informal counselors to other parents of gay and transgender kids. Willits was "captivated" by their story and revealed that North Point had already begun exploring new ministries in that vein. He urged them to film a video for Stanley's Drive Conference that May.
>
> As Stanley introduced the McDonalds' video to approximately two thousand church leaders from all over the country, he urged those leaders not to view homosexuality through a "political" lens. Instead of suggesting that ministers use the Bible as their foremost frame of reference, he urged the audience to approach the issue through a "relational lens." His example for relational was the

> McDonalds' story.

And this part was interesting. As someone who has tried and tried and tried to get evidential apologetics into churches, I was astonished to see how churches approached Vines' teaching material on LGBT:

> As might be expected, given how seriously he takes his mission, Vines's courses are far more rigorous than the kind of light, Wednesday night discussions the typical evangelical church offers on such subjects, if it offers them at all. Over a period of three months, the Reformation Project requires participants of one program to complete the equivalent of an advanced college course, all for the purpose of preparing to subvert the faithful churches Vines has called "the last stronghold of homophobia."

When I was reading this article, I could not help but think of the episodes of Knight and Rose Show that Rose and I did about the definition of marriage, and then our interview with Dr. Frank Turek about LGBT as a whole. Naturally, our conversations were about *evidence*. We wanted to follow the advice of 1 Peter 3:15, and give an evidential defense of Jesus' views on these issues, that would be convincing to non-Christians. But Andy Stanley doesn't like evidence, he wants to be "relational". You know, "don't judge".

Here's another article in The Federalist with a sample chapter about evangelical pastors and immigration.

It says:

> In January 2020, Baptist Press, the house organ of the Southern Baptist Convention, published a lie. The question is whether the outlet knew at the time that it was a lie.
>
> The article was not attributed to any specific author and was labeled an "explainer." It claimed to debunk reporting from the conservative news outlet Breitbart, which revealed that the Evangelical Immigration Table, a group that lobbies for various amnesty policies in the name of Jesus, was funded by left-wing, atheist billionaire George Soros. This was not a small matter because, largely under the direction of, first, Richard Land, and then Russell Moore, the SBC's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission had become a key leader in the EIT. Nor were Land and Moore alone. Leadership for a host of trusted evangelical organizations, including the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, the NAE, World Relief, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Focus on the Family, Prison Fellowship Ministries, and the Wesleyan Church, had joined hands with the EIT. If it was being bankrolled by Soros, they would all have a lot of explaining to do.
>
> […]From the outset, the group focused not on encouraging Christians to meet the material and spiritual needs of immigrants in their own communities, something few would object to, but on pushing them to lobby lawmakers for specific legislation.

> […]By late 2013, the group was soliciting proposals for “mobilizers” to “activate” pastors and congregations, explaining that “81 Republicans in the House who may vote for immigration reform represent districts whose population is at least 20% evangelical Christian. Over the last year, the [EIT] has worked to engage pastors and congregants in 16 of the 20 states that are home to these districts.”
>
> […]The EIT’s efforts to see the bill passed began in earnest in January 2013, as the group pushed churches to join a 40-day study of cherry-picked Bible verses, titled “I Was a Stranger,” that they insisted applied to U.S. immigration law. Instead of studying the Bible, churches involved with the EIT began recruiting their congregants for political activism.

The first thing that popped into my head reading these chapters was “why haven’t evangelical churches been teaching their congregants evidence to confirm Biblical positions on issues like atheism, feminism, socialism, sexuality, Darwinian evolution, abortion, marriage and divorce, etc.” These evangelical churches seem to be fine with persuading Christians to accept the politics of the secular left. Where is the effort from these shepherds to get Christians to defend the truth claims of the Bible with evidence?

By the way, there is a good conversation on the book here with Dr. Frank Turek and Alisa Childers, and another good conversation here with Krista Bontrager and Monique Duson.

Poll: few Millennials describe belief in God as “very important”

August 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

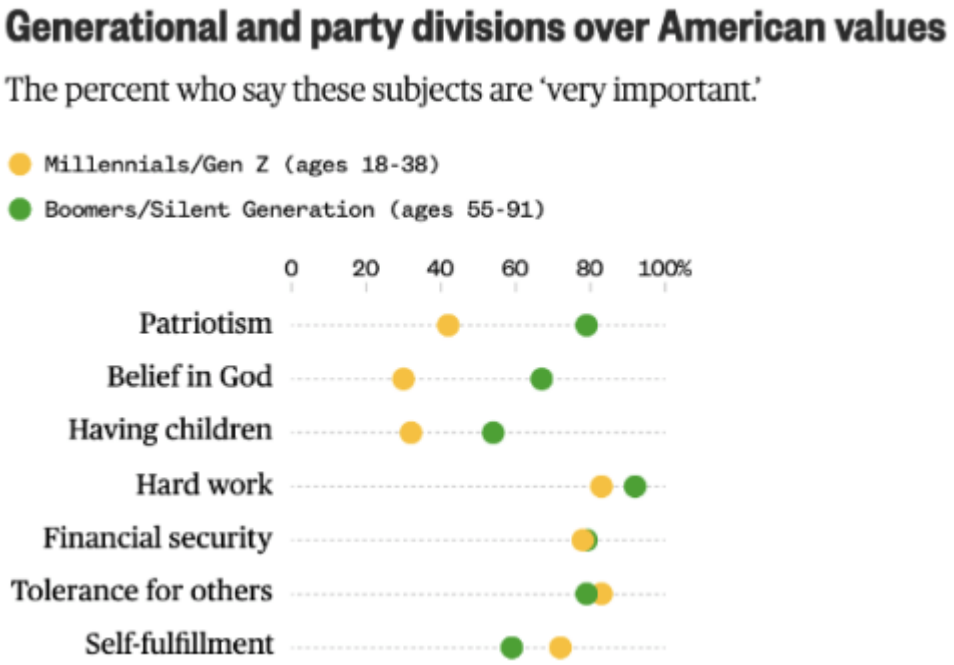

Beliefs of millennials and boomers

I saw a very interesting article that compared the attitudes of young people about things like patriotism, religion, freedom, etc. The numbers are very discouraging.

So, here’s the article from the Washington Examiner:

> The importance of patriotism, faith in God, and having children is significantly lower among millennials and Generation Z, compared to previous generations.
>
> In a new poll conducted by the *Wall Street Journal* and NBC News, nearly 80% of people aged 55-91 said being patriotic is important to them, while only 42% of millennials and Generation Z, or those aged 18-38, said the same. Thirty percent of millennials and Generation Z said religion was important, compared to the over 75% of baby boomers, with just over 30% of millennials and Generation Z saying it was important to have children.
>
> Areas where the younger generations had placed higher importance compared to boomers were tolerance for others and self-fulfillment, with financial security being almost tied between the two age groups.

I’m sure that everyone has seen other polls showing the decline of Christianity, especially in mainline and Catholic churches. Evangelicals are declining less, but they are still declining.

The reason I linked to this post is because I’ve noticed that some Christians don’t really think that there is anything to be concerned about. Everything is working fine, they say. Whatever we’re doing right now must be working, because there is no decline. We’re

winning, and if you think otherwise, then you're just complaining.

Well, I don't really know why there is this decline, all I can do is speak from my experiences. I've met people through my blog who did lose their faith in college, and I've met ex-Christians in my office, too. I asked them what the problem was, and it seems to be that when they were growing up, they often bullied into behaving like a Christian without being able to ask any questions about whether it was true. And then as soon as they got to college away from their parents and pastors, they just dumped the whole thing.

I remember listening to an amazing lecture a while back by Dr. Scott Waller. I think it was a lecture he gave for the Stand to Reason "Masters Series in Christian Thought" in 2003. The lecture was about Postmodernism in the University. Postmodernism is the view that there are no true or false views, especially with "soft" issues like religion and morality. In the lecture, he talked about how a father had sent his devout Christian son to university, and the son had returned an atheist after one semester. I remember Dr. Waller quoting the son telling his parents "I have come to think of my time growing up in this house as the dark period of my life". The father was very upset. So Dr. Waller told him what to do. He said, you're going to need to read a few books on the most common questions that your son has, and then work through the answers with him. And he made a little pile of books about common questions that college students ask, and pushed the pile across the table to the father. And the father pushed the books back across the table to Dr. Waller, and said "well, I don't have time for reading so many books… but could you just talk to him instead?"

Another thing that seems to cause a lot of young people to leave the faith in college is sex. Now if I were trying to convince someone to be responsible about sex, I'd try to show them studies and statistics to explain why there really are best practices to relationships and marriage. For example, I'd might show them that the number of premarital sex partners increases marital instability, or that sliding into cohabitation early tends to make marriages less stable. But this takes a bit of work, and you have to work through it with the young people. I just don't know if parents really reason with their kids like this. But in churches, I've noticed that trying to make an argument using evidence isn't very popular. To me, if I were trying to be convincing to someone about something, I would use evidence. It's just natural to me to make a case if I'm trying to be persuasive. But making a case just hasn't been a really big priority in the churches I've attended.

So, I guess if I had to give any advice to parents of children, or pastors in churches, it would be that Christianity is in decline, and we need to do more than just order people to memorize Bible verses and creeds, go to church, etc. It's hard for me to know what's really going on in everyone's home, and in everyone's church. But I don't think that whatever we're doing in our homes and churches is working to convince young people that belief in God is very important.

Progressive white women report high levels of mental illness in 2020 Pew survey

August 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have the most amazing video for you to see. It's a crazy left-wing activist doxing a libertarian lesbian woman wearing a breathe-through mask. First, let's take a look at the video. Then, we'll look at a recent survey reported by Pew Research in 2020, which assesses how mentally stable far-left feminist women are (self-reported). Then, I'll make some comments for unmarried men.

OK, so here is the video, which was shared by the woman who was doxed. So it's OK for me to share it, since the doxed woman didn't care about it.

So, is this crazy woman rare? Or is she common?

Progressive white women and mental illness

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

Here's the part of the data I thought was most interesting:

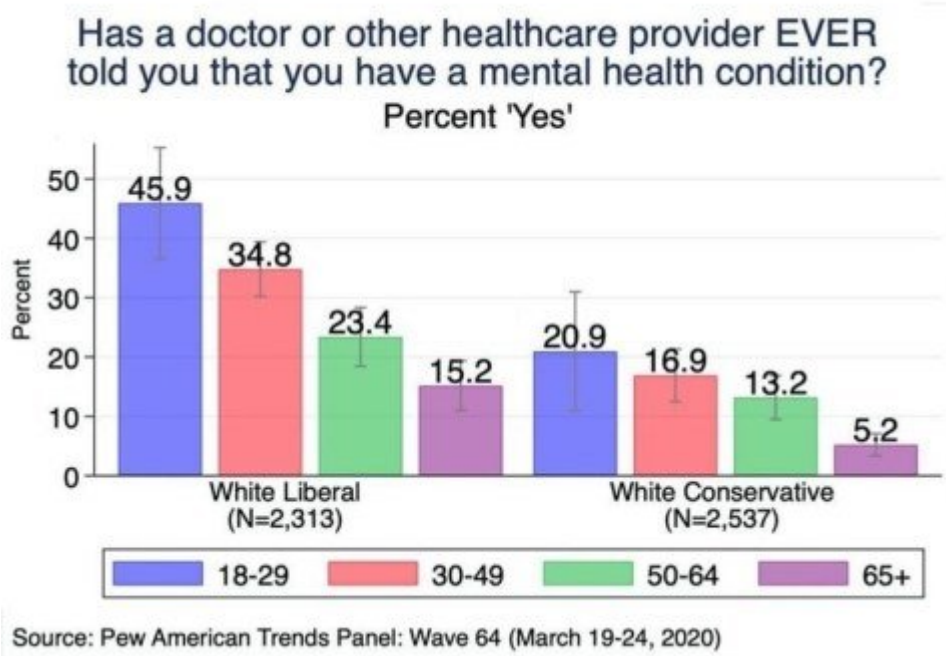

Who would marry a crazy person?

So, the point about this that I want to make is… who is going to marry these mentally ill progressive white women? Being a good wife and mother takes a certain amount of connection to reality. It takes a certain amount of empathy, compassion, and rationality. These progressive white women don't have any of that. So, who is going to marry them? I know that there are thirsty progressive men (and thirsty conservative men who fake being progressive), who will go ahead and hit it and quit it. Pump it and dump it. But how many men would commit to someone who's mentally ill?

And in fact, that's exactly what we're seeing with the marriage rates:

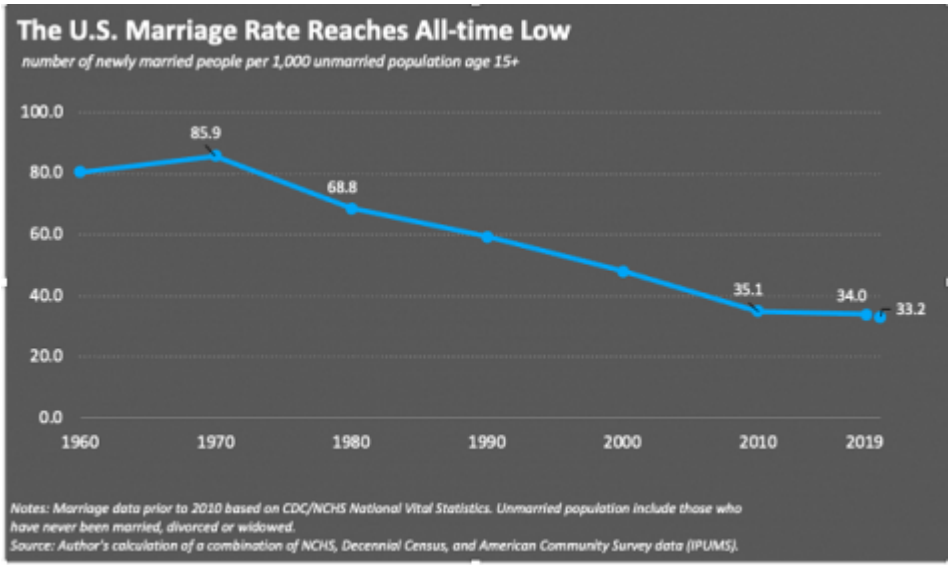

That's for America, but things are even worse in countries that have slid further toward the secular left edge of the political spectrum.

When you look at marriage rates in Canada and Europe, you understand that men are even LESS likely to choose marriage when they have to pay over 50% of what they earn in taxes. And so the marriage rate is declining. I think young, unmarried women in

Canada and Europe want to raise taxes in order to get free stuff from government. Single mother welfare, food stamps, abortions, contraceptives, IVF, breast enlargements, etc. Some feminists are even asking for free cosmetic surgery. With a big enough government, they don't have to marry at all. Big government leaves them free to play the field, without having to care about finding a good man. But what if taxes get so high that the few good men those women passed over for 40 years simply can't afford to take on a wife and support multiple children he didn't father? Paying for things like a stay-at-home wife and homeschooling, etc. is expensive. Men can't afford a wife, and also pay for goodies for all the single progressive women with mental illnesses.

Conservative men want nothing to do with daycare and public schools – we know that those facilities are *dominated* by progressive women. And we don't want trouble from feminist lawyers and feminist judges in the divorce courts. Divorce is very expensive for men. And we may never see our children again. Then there are the progressive white women in the workplace, who get very bitter with men as a result of getting wrecked by bad boys. Even if we find a good wife, we still have to deal with all these progressive white women with mental illnesses in positions of power. Is it worth it to take risks like this? It depends on the reward, I guess. There comes a point where the juice isn't worth the squeeze.

Christians need to know what happens to our rights in secular left nations

August 14, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This week, I had a conversation with a Christian leader who explained to me that Christians need to avoid getting involved in "culture wars" and "politics", and just focus on being nice and loving everyone. "Just love everybody" he assured me. "What's the point of being divisive?" So, I thought it might be a good idea to review what happens to Christians in countries that follow his advice.

Read this article from The Public Discourse. The article just came out this week, and it's written by Dr. Päivi Räsänen, a member of the Finnish parliament.

She writes:

> I have been a member of the Finnish Parliament for twenty-nine years. During that time, I have witnessed a dramatic change in the value system undergirding our modern society. From the protection of life to the defense of marriage, the changes we are living through are undeniable, with far-reaching implications for us all. And it's evident that the general atmosphere toward Christianity grows increasingly hostile every day. Only ten years ago, I could not have imagined that I would soon be summoned to my country's Supreme Court to defend my religious convictions.
>
> "Has somebody occupied Finland?" My six-year-old grandson asked me this in June 2019 when he saw a giant rainbow flag, the biggest we had seen to date, flying over our home city of Riihimäki, Finland. At that same time, the majority church of our country, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church, officially published its support of a Helsinki "pride" event, which disappointed and shocked many (including me).
>
> Before our very eyes, the church was assuming a position contrary to its own confession that God designed marriage for one man and one woman. If the authority of God's Word is undermined, the question becomes not only about marriage or gender, but also about the path to salvation and eternal life. Every person, including the LGBT community, has the right to hear the whole truth of God's Word. While I briefly considered leaving my church, I was convinced that it was better to stay aboard and try to wake up those who had fallen asleep, not jump out of a sinking boat.
>
> This was why I wrote a tweet, in which I directed a question to my church leadership. I wanted to exercise my basic right to free speech to publicly ask how they reconciled their activities with biblical teaching. The main content of my post was a photo of verses 24–27 of Romans Chapter 1, where the Apostle Paul teaches that homosexual relations are sinful. A citizen filed a criminal complaint

> in response to my tweet, and more complaints quickly followed.
>
> These complaints resulted in eighteen months of police investigation and thirteen hours of interrogations. As a former government minister, sitting parliamentarian, and grandmother, I found the situation unreal. Just a few years before, I had been in charge of the police as Minister of Interior, and now I was sitting in the police station being interrogated, with the Bible on the table in front of me.

And it goes on.

I can't possibly quote enough of her post to tell you all you need to know. All I want to say is that I've been watching how people are responding to Megan Basham's book. On Twitter, a lot of Megan's attention recently has been focused on J. D. Greear – a pious pastor who is always trying to be nuanced, sounding good to Democrats, and watering down the Bible's teachings so he can be popular and well-liked. For pastors like this, Christianity is primarily a vehicle for signaling virtue. They talk about the parts that make people like them, they affirm non-Christians in their rebellion against God. To them, Christianity is not about being faithful, or being an ambassador. It's not about self-sacrificial obedience at all.

Since Christianity is so easy for these "don't judge" and "just love everyone" pastors, they have no idea what happens to people who tell the truth (with evidence) about things like abortion, socialism, atheism, feminism, Darwinism, LGBT, etc. They can't understand it. How could God allow anything unhappy to happen to people who "just love everyone" they wonder.

I brought up the case of Bill Dembski to one of these people recently. Dembski advocated for intelligent design, and was thrown out of Baylor University, because they were committed to naturalistic Darwinism. He said "Dembski got what was coming to him. He wasn't collegial enough with his Darwinian colleagues". They don't think of people who take a hit to their reputations or careers to stay faithful as heroes. They don't understand them. "Why would you even talk about origins?" they wonder. "Why not just say happy things, instead of knowledge things?"

Anyway, I don't want any of my readers to be this naive about what happens if we listen to these virtue-signaling pastors at election time. If you let the secular left become the government, then you will lose your liberty to even make a case against the secular left on controversial issues. How do you stop the secular left from becoming the government? You learn how to make an evidential case for the truth claims of the Bible that will be convincing to people who won't believe the Bible, but will believe the evidence. Even Jesus told people who didn't believe his words to believe his works. That's our model.

Whatever it is that the secular left is talking about: global warming socialism, radical feminist misandry, abortion and infanticide, LGBT, etc. you have to be ready with convincing evidence from outside the Bible to convince them that Christian position on these issues is reasonable. Otherwise, they will think we are irrational idiots and trample over our rights. We have to get to work, and step one is to stop listening to people like J. D. Greear, Russell Moore, David French, and the like. They are not interested in providing

evidence to non-Christians, and advocating for free speech and religious liberty. They are out for their own happiness and popularity.

The psychological motivation of those who embrace postmodernism

August 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

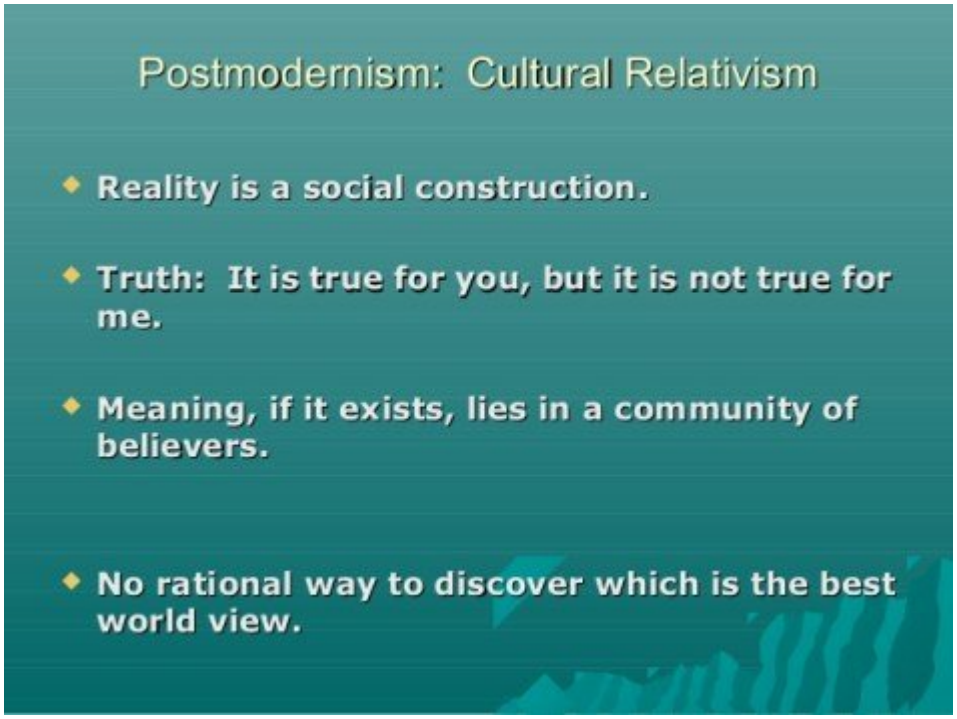

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian? Not for long

Famous analytical philosopher John Searle has written a book "Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World", explaining what's factually wrong with postmodernism. In the introduction, he explains what postmodernism is, and what motivates people to accept postmodernism.

He writes:

> […][W]hen we act or think or talk in the following sorts of ways we take a lot for granted: when we hammer a nail, or order a takeout meal from a restaurant, or conduct a lab experiment, or wonder where to go on vacation, we take the following for granted: there exists a real world that is totally independent of human beings and of what they think or say about it, and statements about objects and states of affairs in that world are true or false depending on whether things in the world really are the way we say they are. So, for example, if in pondering my vacation plans I wonder whether Greece is hotter in the summer than Italy, I simply take it for granted that there exists a real world containing places like Greece and Italy and that they have various temperatures. **Furthermore, if I read in a travel book that the average summer temperature in Greece is hotter than in Italy, I know that what the book says will be true if and only if it really is hotter on average in the summer in Greece than in Italy. This is because I take it for granted that such statements are true only if there is something independent of the**

> **statement in virtue of which, or because of which, it is true.**
>
> […]These two Background presuppositions have long histories and various famous names. The first, that there is a real world existing independently of us, I like to call "external realism." "Realism," because it asserts the existence of the real world, and "external" to distinguish it from other sorts of realism-for example, realism about mathematical objects (mathematical realism) or realism about ethical facts (ethical realism). The second view, that a statement is true if things in the world are the way the statement says they are, and false otherwise, is called "the correspondence theory of truth." This theory comes in a lot of different versions, but the basic idea is that statements are true if they correspond to, or describe, or fit, how things really are in the world, and false if they do not.

The "correspondence theory of truth" is the view of truth assumed in books of the Bible whose genre is such that that they were intended by the authors to be taken *literally*, (with allowances for symbolism, figures of speech, metaphors, hyperbole, etc.).

But what about the postmodernists, who seek to deny the objectivity of external reality?

More Searle:

> Thinkers who wish to deny the correspondence theory of truth or the referential theory of thought and language typically find it embarrassing to have to concede external realism. Often they would rather not talk about it at all, or they have some more or less subtle reason for rejecting it. In fact, very few thinkers come right out and say that there is no such thing as a real world existing absolutely, objectively, and totally independently of us. Some do. Some come right out and say that the so-called real world is a "social construct."

What is behind the denial of objective reality, and statements about external reality that are warranted by evidence?

> It is not easy to get a fix on what drives contemporary antirealism, but if we had to pick out a thread that runs through the wide variety of arguments, it would be what is sometimes called "perspectivism." Perspectivism is the idea that our knowledge of reality is never "unmediated," that it is always mediated by a point of view, by a particular set of predilections, or, worse yet by sinister political motives, such as an allegiance to a political group or ideology. And because we can never have unmediated knowledge of the world, then perhaps there is no real world, or perhaps it is useless to even talk about it, or perhaps it is not even interesting.

Searle is going to refute anti-realism in the rest of the book, but here is his guess at what is motivating the anti-realists:

> > **I have to confess, however, that I think there is a much deeper**

> > **reason for the persistent appeal of all forms of antirealism, and this has become obvious in the twentieth century: it satisfies a basic urge to power. It just seems too disgusting, somehow, that we should have to be at the mercy of the "real world." It seems too awful that our representations should have to be answerable to anything but us. This is why people who hold contemporary versions of antirealism and reject the correspondence theory of truth typically sneer at the opposing view.**
>
> […]I don't think it is the argument that is actually driving the impulse to deny realism. I think that as a matter of contemporary cultural and intellectual history, the attacks on realism are not driven by arguments, because the arguments are more or less obviously feeble, for reasons I will explain in detail in a moment. **Rather, as I suggested earlier, the motivation for denying realism is a kind of will to power, and it manifests itself in a number of ways. In universities, most notably in various humanities disciplines, it is assumed that, if there is no real world, then science is on the same footing as the humanities. They both deal with social constructs, not with independent realities. From this assumption, forms of postmodernism, deconstruction, and so on, are easily developed, having been completely turned loose from the tiresome moorings and constraints of having to confront the real world. If the real world is just an invention-a social construct designed to oppress the marginalized elements of society-then let's get rid of the real world and construct the world we want. That, I think, is the real driving psychological force behind antirealism at the end of the twentieth century.**

Now, I'll go one step further than Searle.

People, from the Fall, have had the desire to step into the place of God. It's true that we creatures exist in a universe created and designed by God. But, there is a way to work around the fact that God made the universe and the laws that the universe runs on, including logic, mathematics and natural laws. And that way is to *deny logic, mathematics and natural laws.* Postmodernists simply deny that there is any way to construct rational arguments and support the premises with evidence from the real world. That way, they imagine, they are free to escape a God-designed world, including a God-designed specification for how they ought to live. The postmoderns deny *the reliable methods of knowing about the God-created reality because logic and evidence can be used to point to God's existence, God's character, and God's actions in history.*

And that's why there is this effort to make reality "optional" and perspectival. Everyone can be their own God, and escape any accountability to the real God – the God who is easily discovered through the use of logic and evidence. I believe that this is also behind the rise of atheists, who feign allegiance to logic and science, but then express "skepticism" about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, objective

morality, the minimal facts concerning the historical Jesus, and other undeniables.

Christian father imprisoned in Egypt for discussing theology in a Facebook group

August 16, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a few "Big Eva" friends who cannot understand why I would need an alias. They never take stands on controversial topics, so they have no experience getting pushback from non-Christians. Well, two of the most threatening groups that hunt Christians are Muslims and governments. And worst of all is a government run by Muslims. There's no such thing as free speech and religious liberty in Islam.

Here's the story from ADF International:

> A father, imprisoned for over two-and-a-half years for discussing theology with Christian converts in a private Facebook group following his conversion from Islam to Christianity, has declared a hunger strike in a heartbreaking letter to his wife and family.
>
> Religious freedom advocates are calling for the urgent and safe release of Abdulbaqi Saeed Abdo following a devastating letter to his family, in which he vows to strike in stages until he makes the strike "complete," including turning away healthcare treatment and, eventually, food.
>
> Abdo was arrested by Egyptian authorities in 2021 for his involvement with a Facebook page that is dedicated to supporting people who have converted from Islam to Christianity. He was living as a UNHCR registered asylum seeker in Egypt following the death threats he received in his home country of Yemen after he converted to Christianity.

And here is his current status:

> The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief have received information on behalf of Girgis and Abdo, citing that both men have been deprived of their right to religious freedom and a fair trial under international law. ADF International is directly involved in international efforts to secure their release.

So, what to say about this?

Well, I think we should be concerned about opening our borders to let in unskilled workers from predominantly Muslim countries. And I also think that Christian leaders should stop advocating for open borders, and start equipping their flocks to disagree with Islam using evidence. I don't mean "share your faith". I mean make an argument using evidence for why Christianity is true, and make an argument using evidence for why Islam is false. Because if we Christians ever find ourselves living in a country that is majority Muslim, it will not be easy for us to act like Christians.

In case you want to see our Knight and Rose Show episodes where we take on Islam with

evidence, look on our podcast page. If you haven't taken the time to inform yourself about Islam, and equipped yourself to debate it with evidence, you should check out those episodes. And just in general, if you are relying on Christian leaders who don't know anything about the dangers of Islam, and can't show their work about why they disagree with Islam, like we've done, then maybe you should look elsewhere for leadership.

Peter Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospels

August 17, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a lecture I found from British historian Dr. Peter J. Williams.

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?

- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate. That link contains a link to the audio of the debate as well as my snarky summary. It's very snarky.

How Australia censored online disagreement with transing of children

August 18, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the women I admire the most today is Kristen Waggoner, an attorney who is president, CEO and general at Alliance Defending Freedom. Kristen takes cases where she has to defend basic human rights, including all the way up to the Supreme Court. She doesn't often write articles, but she has a new one in World Magazine, where she talks about how Australia censors free speech.

Here is the article.

It says:

> "Billboard Chris" defends kids from gender ideology like it's his full-time job—because it is.
>
> In 2020, Chris Elston, a father of two from Vancouver, British Columbia, decided he could no longer stand idly by as he saw child after child fall prey to gender ideology. So, leaving behind a successful job in finance, he launched a new "career," engaging people in street conversations while wearing a sandwich board with pithy messages. One reads, "Children cannot consent to puberty blockers." Another says, "dad [noun]: a human male who protects his kids from gender ideology."

This is the part that was interesting, especially if you are ever thinking of traveling to Australia for a vacation:

> In February, Elston shared a Daily Mail article criticizing the appointment of gender ideology activist Teddy Cook to a panel of the World Health Organization. The article explained that Cook promotes deviant sexual practices, including bestiality and bondage. Elston took to X to state the obvious: that such a person has no business making global policy on mental health.
>
> That's when Australia's "eSafety commissioner" demanded that X take down Elston's post. With Elon Musk at the helm, X refused. The authorities then forced X to block the post in Australia, and X is now suing. Elston is challenging this censorship in court as well, with ADF International backing his legal defense.

I'm sure I'm going to surprise no one when I tell you that Australia's "eSafety commissioner" is a progressive woman. More often than not, progressive women are always at the bottom of these censorship efforts. They just resort to force in order to silence words that they disagree with. Never marry one of these women. Don't even date them. It's not safe.

The reason I linked to this article is because of the interesting evidence that she musters against the most common arguments for transing kids.

Here's some of her evidence:

> One of the most common assertions we hear from activists is that "transition" is necessary to prevent people from committing suicide. That claim is flatly contradicted by the science. In 2011, an expansive Swedish study found that mortality rates among study participants became much worse after "transition" surgeries, with a lifetime suicide rate 19 times higher than the control group. In addition, last year, studies out of Denmark and Finland each reviewed more than 3,000 patients who had undergone transition procedures, both as children and adults, and more than 20 years of records revealed no meaningful improvement in mental health outcomes.
>
> Most recently, a high-profile review commissioned by the English National Health Service found that "the evidence does not support the claim that gender-affirming treatment reduces suicide risk." The same review echoed warnings that puberty blockers pose "potential risks to neurocognitive development, psychosexual development, and longer-term bone health" among children. These findings were published in the full Cass Review.

As she notes in the article, many countries who were ahead of America on transing children have now put the brakes on it. Sadly, America is lagging behind these other nations. There are a lot of people who are desperate to virtue-signal about their great tolerance: public school teachers, social workers, lawyers, judges, and medical professionals. And of course, transing kids is a big money maker for hospitals, since the kids will be hooked on drugs and treatments long after the surgeries are done.

But there was also this interesting case from Switzerland, too, reported in Daily Signal:

> In Switzerland, gender transitions for minors are regulated by the Swiss Pediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes Society (SPED), The European Conservative reports, and under SPED's regulations, the state can supersede a parent's refusal to allow their 16- and 17-year-old children to transition if the parents are stripped of their legal authority.
>
> The Swiss child protection agency, or the Service de Protection des Mineurs (SPMi), has full authority over where their daughter is treated, John said. And it has mandated that she receive the "gender-affirming" treatment that her parents believe will harm her.
>
> In late July, the highest court in Geneva (the Court of Justice) ruled against the parents and ordered that they hand over documents necessary for their daughter's legal "sex change." If they do not turn over those documents, they face the threat of criminal charges, according to the Christian legal advocacy group Alliance Defending Freedom International.

Check out these articles, and think about what's at stake in the next election. Would you want people like the Australian chief fascist censoring your speech? Would you like the hospital and the courts to overrule your rights as parents? If not, it would be a good idea

to get some of this evidence out in front of your friends and family. That way, they would understand what would happen here if the secular lefts had more political power.

And I also hope this helps you to know how to think about evangelical leaders, who are passionate about Democrat priorities like opening the borders, but silent on issues like this that affect you and your family.

UK gay activist facing more than 30 sex abuse against children charges

August 19, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm monitoring laws, policies and trials of interest to Christians in outside the USA, so that I can get an idea of what will happen here, if the secular leftists win the elections in November. One country that is particularly troubling on several fronts is the UK. They have problems from their weak immigration policies, their green energy policies, their weak crime policies, and their censorship of speech.

Here's the latest from Christian Concern, about one of the major gay activists in the UK.

It says:

> A patron of Educate and Celebrate, the now defunct government-funded gender identity group allowed into thousands of schools across the UK, has this week been charged with multiple accounts of sex abuse against children.
>
> Stephen Ireland, who is also the founder of gay pride in Surrey, is facing more than 30 charges, including rape of a child under 13, sexual assault, six counts of conspiracy to sexually assault a child, conspiracy to kidnap a child, voyeurism, making indecent photographs of children, arranging the commission of a child sex offence, and possession of an extreme pornographic image.

What's interesting about this is how differently gay activists are treated compared to Christian teachers and chaplains. Christianity is viewed as the source of all intolerance and bigotry. Far from being seen as moral people, Christians are viewed as predators, because of the official UK religions of "don't judge" and "follow your heart". Meanwhile, actual predators are given complete access to children.

Look:

> The development raises alarm over how Educate and Celebrate have, for example, been given access to nursery age children across the country, while a Christian chaplain, Rev. Dr Bernard Randall, has been reported to counter-terrorism, sacked and blacklisted as a safeguarding risk to children by the Church of England (CofE), after raising concern about the group.
>
> In 2019, Rev. Dr Bernard Randall… gave a sermon on the Church of England's (CofE) teaching on marriage and human sexuality in a CofE chapel in a school with a CofE ethos.
>
> Dr Randall gave the sermon, which encouraged debate and critical thinking, after Educate and Celebrate had been allowed into Trent College in Derbyshire, to promote queer theory into the morale fabric of the school.
>
> At a staff training day, the group's leader, Elly Barnes, got staff to stand up and chant *'smash heteronormativity.'*

> Dr Randall's career has been torn apart since he gave the sermon, despite having been vindicated by a string of secular agencies. Yet still the CofE refuse to give him his permission to officiate licence back.
>
> In contrast, Educate and Celebrate have been plagued by scandal culminating with the group quietly folding in January following a low-key announcement by the Charity Commission.

If you look at a few of the photos of Kamala Harris with LGBT activists and drag queens, then you will understand that for her, her LGBT allies are good people – moral people. But Christians on the other hand – we are the devils.

She used the power of law enforcement to go after Christian pro-lifers when they offended abortion providers who were accused of selling baby body parts for profit. So, I expect that Christians would get the same treatment as Dr. Randall, while gay activists would enjoy the same "soft on crime" treatment that Muslim sex-traffickers in the UK get from their secular leftists.

Remember, as I blogged about before, California is a sanctuary for people who want to trans kids. I blogged about how California rips the kids away from their fathers, and force the dissenting fathers to pay the medical bills, while denying them access to their kids. Is that what you want to live under? I sure don't. And it's probably causing a lot of good men to think twice about getting married and having children, since the secular leftists seem to be very enthusiastic about handing over the children of good men to child abusers and child mutilators. If you think that good men aren't counting the cost of paying their taxes to secular leftists and being ruled by them, then you had better think again. We are watching.

UCLA research psychiatrist makes the case for mind-body dualism

August 20, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was talking about substance dualism with Rose, and showing her new academic books (one, two) about it. So, I decided to blog something related to that. Today's post is about Jeffrey Schwartz – a research psychiatrist at UCLA. His research shows that mental effort can change your brain chemistry. Would you like a scientific argument for non-physical minds? Read on, and I'll show you one.

First, let's see something completely secular, from UCLA Health, just to explain who Jeffrey is, and what he does:

> Thanks to neuroplasticity — the brain's ability to create and reorganize neural connections — people can find relief from anxiety, depression, substance abuse, obsessive-compulsive disorder and everyday mental health challenges, says Jeffrey Schwartz, MD, a research psychiatrist with the UCLA Department of Psychiatry.
>
> Dr. Schwartz outlined his four-step method for dealing with mental health challenges at the Emerging Themes in Behavioral Health conference, April 28, at the UCLA Luskin Conference Center(Link is external).
>
> The four steps combine mindfulness with cognitive behavioral therapy, which results in what he calls "self-directed neuroplasticity."

Why is this argument for substance dualism? Well, his research shows that when humans exert "mental effort" in certain structured ways, they can actually change their brains. This contradicts the materialist / physicalist view which is that your experience of consciousness is an illusion that is entirely controlled by deterministic chemical processes in your brain.

Here's a video about his research:

And here's a summary of the research, published in First Things, and authored by William Dembski.

Excerpt:

> Schwartz provides a nonmaterialist interpretation of neuroscience and argues that this interpretation is more compelling than the standard materialist interpretation. He arrived at this position as a psychiatrist specializing in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).
>
> […]From brain scans, Schwartz found that certain regions in the brain of OCD patients (the caudate nucleus in particular) exhibited abnormal patterns of activity. By itself this finding is consistent with a materialist view of mind (if, as materialism requires, the brain enables the mind, then abnormal patterns of

> brain activity are likely to be correlated with dysfunctional mental states). Nonetheless, having found abnormal patterns of brain activity, Schwartz then had OCD patients engage in intensive mental effort through what he called relabeling, reattributing, refocusing, and revaluing (the 4 Rs).
>
> **[…]Schwartz documents not only that patients who undertook this therapy experienced considerable relief from OCD symptoms, but also that their brain scans indicated a lasting realignment of brain-activity patterns.** Thus, without any intervention directly affecting their brains, OCD patients were able to reorganize their brains by intentionally modifying their thoughts and behaviors. The important point for Schwartz here is not simply that modified thoughts and behaviors permanently altered patterns of brain activity, but that such modifications resulted from, as he calls it, "mindful attention"- conscious and purposive thoughts or actions in which the agent adopts the stance of a detached observer.

So mind-brain interaction is not a one-way street. Everyone knows that you can alter your consciousness, beliefs, moods, sensations, etc. by changing your brain, e.g. – with drugs. But it turns out that you can also will to focus your thoughts on certain things in order to change your brain chemistry. So the causation is not just bottom-up, but also top-down.

Mindfulness therapies – which are documented in the research papers published by Schwartz (like this one and this one and this one)- assume the existence of *free will*. Naturalists don't like this research because naturalists don't believe in free will. So what do you find more trustworthy? The evidence? Or the philosophy? Me, I trust the evidence more than the philosophy.

How Biden and Harris raised oil and gas prices, and caused inflation

August 21, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Before we look at the Biden-Harris administration's actions on oil and gas, let's review how prices are set in a free market economy. When supply goes down and demand stays the same, then prices rise, because more people want to buy a resource that has become more scare, so sellers can raise the price. Now, has the Biden-Harris administration taken action to reduce the supply of oil and gas?

Well, consider what he did right after taking office in January 2021.

CNBC explains:

> President Joe Biden on Wednesday signed a series of executive orders that prioritize climate change across all levels of government and put the U.S. on track to curb planet-warming carbon emissions.
>
> Biden's orders direct the secretary of the Interior Department to halt new oil and natural gas leases on public lands and waters, and begin a thorough review of existing permits for fossil fuel development.
>
> […]On his first day in office last week, Biden had the United States re-enter the Paris accord. He also cancelled the permit for the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline.

The Keystone XL pipeline would have allowed us to purchase oil and gas from Canada, which is much better than buying it from Russia, the Middle East, etc. Biden loves Russia. One might even say that he colludes with Russia to help them invade Ukraine – by helping them build their military. Biden gave approval for Russia to construct the Nord Stream 2 pipeline from Russia to Germany, so that they could sell all their oil and gas to European countries.

Nord Stream 2

That's what Democrat voters voted for in 2020: a pipeline for Russia, so they could sell oil

and gas and invade Ukraine.

European countries are desperate for oil and gas, after having exchanged their conventional energy sources for green energy sources. Green energy sources produce low amounts of energy, and are inconsistent, while costing more than conventional energy sources. Since the green plan didn't work out, the Europeans have to enrich Russia now. They make a show of being made at Russia, but they (like Biden) aren't willing to develop their own energy.

How did American energy producers respond to having their lease applications denied, and their existing leases and pipelines canceled?

> Biden's moratorium on oil and gas leases won't end fossil fuel extraction since industry leaders currently hold undeveloped leases. Drilling on public lands generates billions of dollars in revenue but comprises roughly a quarter of the country's greenhouse gas emissions.
>
> Oil and gas producers have strongly opposed Biden's move and are expected to challenge the order in court.
>
> "Penalizing the oil and gas industry kills good-paying American jobs, hurts our already struggling economy, makes our country more reliant on foreign energy sources, and impacts those who rely on affordable and reliable energy," Anne Bradbury, president of the American Exploration and Production Council, said in a statement.
>
> Environmental groups, who have long pushed for the changes sought by Biden, praised the orders.

Has Biden learned his lesson from the huge spike in gas prices? Is he concerned about the widespread inflation that is caused by the spike in energy prices?

Nope!

The Federalist notes:

> CBS News revealed the Biden administration canceled more oil and gas leases across the country this week as soaring gas prices reached new heights Wednesday.
>
> The Department of Interior canceled plans to drill in more than 1 million acres in Alaska's Cook Inlet, arguing "lack of industry interest," on top of canceling a pair of leases in the Gulf of Mexico over "conflicting court rulings."
>
> […]The administration's relentless animosity towards fossil fuels, showcased in its repeated cancelation of oil and gas projects, has chilled investment in the capital- and labor-intensive industry. This keeps production down despite rising demand at home and turmoil in markets abroad.
>
> […]In Alaska, upon inauguration Biden canceled leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which is forecast to hold between 4 to 12 billion barrels of recoverable oil. He closed another 7 million acres from the state's National

> Petroleum Reserve off from development last month.

What happens when investors see that the Biden administration is taxing, regulating and blocking oil and gas development? They say “we would do better investing our money elsewhere”. Oil and gas producers get the message very quickly, and they stop creating new energy sources. That’s how supply dries up. And when supply is reduced, prices go up.

Biden tried to fix the rising prices by getting Russia and the Middle East to drill more, and by stealing the strategic oil reserve, which is primarily designed for use during a crisis. But Biden considers his falling poll numbers a crisis. And begging our enemies to produce the oil that we should be producing seems right to him.

> The president has turned to the nation’s emergency petroleum reserves for desperate political capital ahead of the November midterms… With no plans announced to restock the emergency supplies, Biden ordered the self-proclaimed “unprecedented” release of 1 million barrels of oil a day onto the market for the next six months beginning Sunday.

The new Democrat strategy is actually the old Democrat strategy used by Democrat President Jimmy Carter in the 1970s: to impose price controls on oil and gas:

Gas Lines

That led to massive gas lines in the 1970s, because suppliers shut down when they realized they couldn’t make enough money to stay in business. There was no money to be made in producing energy, so energy companies just slowed down or stopped producing. Would you go to work if the government took 80% of what you earned?

People in America would line up around the block for gas, and they could only get a certain limited amount. Gas was only sold during certain hours of the day.

Gas Lines

I’m sure that the young people won’t have heard about the results of setting price controls, but it’s in the first few chapters of Thomas Sowell’s “Basic Economics”. But if their teachers have no ability in economics, then how would the student learn it? They can’t.

If unborn babies don’t have consciousness or don’t feel pain, may we kill them?

August 22, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Was having a conversation by e-mail yesterday with a pro-abortion atheist, and he gave two reasons why he supported abortion in the first and second trimester. First, he said that unborn babies can’t feel pain, so it’s OK to kill them. Second, he said that unborn babies don’t have consciousness, so it’s OK to kill them. I thought it might be useful to link to something that answers both of these objections.

Frank Beckwith is the author of “Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice“, which was published by Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote four easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal. Part IV is the one that has the response to the two questions raised by my atheist friend.

Part I. The Appeal to Pity

Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem

Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human?

Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person?

Excerpt:

> Some ethicists argue that the unborn becomes fully human sometime after brain development has begun, when it becomes sentient: capable of experiencing sensations such as pain. The reason for choosing sentience as the criterion is that a being that cannot experience anything (i.e., a presentient unborn entity) cannot be harmed. Of course, if this position is correct, then the unborn becomes fully human probably during the second trimester and at least by the third trimester. Therefore, one does not violate anyone’s rights when one aborts a nonsentient unborn entity. [13]
>
> There are several problems with this argument. First, it confuses harm with hurt and the experience of harm with the reality of harm. [14] One can be harmed without experiencing the hurt that sometimes follows from that harm, and which we often mistake for the harm itself. For example, a temporarily comatose person who is suffocated to death “experiences no harm,” but he is nevertheless harmed. Hence, one does not have to experience harm, which is sometimes manifested in hurt, in order to be truly harmed.
>
> Second, if sentience is the criterion of full humanness, then the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping would all have to be declared nonpersons. Like the presentient unborn, these individuals are all at the moment nonsentient though they have the natural inherent capacity to be sentient. Yet to countenance their executions would be morally reprehensible.

> Therefore, one cannot countenance the execution of some unborn entities simply because they are not currently sentient.
>
> Someone may reply that while these objections make important points, there is a problem of false analogy in the second objection: the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping once functioned as sentient beings, though they are now in a temporary state of nonsentience. The presentient unborn, on the other hand, were never sentient. Hence, one is fully human if one was sentient "in the past" and will probably become sentient again in the future, but this cannot be said of the presentient unborn.
>
> There are at least three problems with this response. First, to claim that a person can be sentient, become nonsentient, and then return to sentience is to assume there is some underlying personal unity to this individual that enables us to say that the person who has returned to sentience is the same person who was sentient prior to becoming nonsentient. But this would mean that sentience is not a necessary condition for personhood. (Neither is it a sufficient condition, for that matter, since nonhuman animals are sentient.) Consequently, it does not make sense to say that a person comes into existence when sentience arises, but it does make sense to say that a fully human entity is a person who has the natural inherent capacity to give rise to sentience. A presentient unborn human entity does have this capacity. Therefore, an ordinary unborn human entity is a person, and hence, fully human.
>
> Second, Ray points out that this attempt to exclude many of the unborn from the class of the fully human is "ad hoc and counterintuitive." He asks us to "consider the treatment of comatose patients. We would not discriminate against one merely for rarely or never having been sentient in the past while another otherwise comparable patient had been sentient….In such cases, potential counts for everything." [15]
>
> Third, why should sentience "in the past" be the decisive factor in deciding whether an entity is fully human when the presentient human being "is one with a natural, inherent capacity for performing personal acts?" [16] Since we have already seen that one does not have to experience harm in order to be harmed, it seems more consistent with our moral sensibilities to assert that what makes it wrong to kill the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, the momentarily unconscious, and the presentient unborn is that they all possess the natural inherent capacity to perform personal acts. And what makes it morally right to kill plants and to pull the plug on the respirator-dependent brain dead, who were sentient "in the past," is that their deaths cannot deprive them of their natural inherent capacity to function as persons, since they do not possess such a capacity.

These four essays are a very good introduction to common responses to pro-abortion arguments. I recommend that people get familiar with this, as once you look into it, you

will see that the abortion issue can be debated with as much confidence as William Lane Craig defends Christian theism. You will have the same access to scientific evidence and rational arguments on this topic, and so you will have the upper hand. And that's fun.

The best introductory book on the abortion / right to life issue is "The Case for Life" by pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf. The best comprehensive book is a tie between "The Ethics of Abortion" by Christopher Kaczor, and Frank Beckwith's "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice".

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

August 23, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to video)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

Here's the debate:

Summary

Note: the following debate summary is rated "S" for Snarky. Reader discretion is advised.

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism
- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program
- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent

- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true

- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah
- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is

speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet 9 from Outer Space!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren't going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

Knight and Rose Show #52: Alternative Explanations for the Resurrection Data

August 24, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 52 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss alternative explanations for the widely-accepted elements of the resurrection narratives. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose review elements of the historical Jesus narratives that are accepted as reliable by the majority of historians. We evaluate several naturalistic explanations for these “minimal facts”. Did Jesus die on the cross, or did he just faint? Was Jesus crucified or was it someone else? Were the appearances only hallucinations? Is the resurrection a late legend? Did the disciples make it all up?

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show (with timestamps) provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 52:

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Stephen C. Meyer answers objections to arguments for a Designer

August 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to pick the strongest defender of Christianity operating today, I would pick Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. His recent book "Return of the God Hypothesis" defends three arguments for a Creator / Designer of the universe. But there have been some criticisms of those arguments. In this conversation, Justin Brierley asks Dr. Meyer to respond to those criticisms.

Here is the video:

Here is the description:

> Justin Brierley interviews controversial philosopher of science Dr Stephen Meyer, about his recent book "Return of the God Hypothesis". Stephen shares the latest advances in the field of "Intelligent Design", ranging from design inferences that can be drawn from the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, the information content of the living cell, and even from attempts of atheist materialists to try to avoid the God Hypothesis!

And here are the topics, with timestamps:

00:00:00 Coming up…
00:00:40 Introduction
00:01:08 Darwinism is in trouble
00:05:42 Isn't I.D. God of the gaps?
00:09:03 What about the Dover School trial?
00:13:21 Has the I.D. stigma changed?
00:15:57 Big Bang points to design?
00:23:44 Objections to beginning & cause of the universe
00:30:04 Is there a bias against God?
00:32:31 Fine-tuning points to design?
00:37:14 Puddle objection to design
00:42:38 "C.R.A.P." objection to design
00:45:40 Multiverse defeats design?
00:52:42 About The Surprising Rebirth of Belief in God podcast
00:54:29 Own-goals from trying to avoid design
00:56:29 Origin of life points to design?
01:03:56 Dawkins is wrong about life arising by chance
01:09:15 What about naturalistic models of life?
01:12:23 Aesthetic objections to I.D.
01:15:47 Paul Davies' views on I.D.
01:19:53 Conclusion

01:23:46 Next!

If you watch this, leave a comment and let me know what you thought of it.

How open borders immigration causes housing prices to rise

August 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On Twitter, many people who support Kamala Harris are raving about her smile, her happy words, and how she makes them feel. They don't seem to really understand that a candidate's appearance and talk doesn't mean that they can get results or solve problems. One problem is expensive housing. In this post, I'll explain how the Biden-Harris policies have caused housing prices to rise.

First, let's see how the housing industry is going in America, with a Daily Signal article by a Heritage Foundation economist:

> Home affordability just hit a 17-year low, which means the dream of homeownership remains unattainable for the average person. Amid a cost-of-living crisis, saving enough for a downpayment and then affording a monthly mortgage payment has become a Sisyphean task—and radical leftist policies are to blame.
>
> Adding up the monthly cost of principal and interest on a mortgage, property taxes, and insurance amounts to half the average wage earner's monthly take-home pay. That would be a stretch even in good economic times, but it is downright impossible when the prices of necessities such as food and energy have exploded over 20% and 50%, respectively, in less than four years.
>
> When people are already borrowing on credit cards just to pay for groceries, spending half your income on housing just is not doable.

Government spending is to blame for the inflation that is crowding out people's budgets:

> Forty-year-high inflation was created by a profligate Congress and White House spending trillions of dollars that the nation did not have. In 2020, the year before the radical Left took control of the federal government, prices rose just 1.4%. Just 18 months later, prices were rising almost that fast in a single month.

And when inflation rises, interest rates have to rise, too. This isn't going to affect people like me – I bought my new construction home for cash years ago. But young people who are buying today will have to borrow for their homes, and they'll pay more in interest:

> Just as the predictable result of government overspending was inflation, so, too, was the rise in interest rates that followed. The sheer size of the multitrillion-dollar deficits of the last several years caused prices and interest rates to jump significantly.

But there's more. The open borders policies of the Democrat party are an independent cause of higher home prices.

Here is an article from the Washington Times, written by that same Heritage Foundation economist:

> Many Americans rightly blame the current housing affordability crisis on government for overspending and manipulating interest rates, which drove up prices and made borrowing prohibitively expensive.
>
> But few understand the role the radical left's open-border policies have played in raising home prices.
>
> As millions of aliens entered the United States illegally over the last 3½ years, they significantly increased housing demand. That was especially true in places where state and local governments gave handouts — in addition to federal funds — to illegal aliens for monthly housing payments.
>
> This dynamic in the housing market has even been recognized by Neel Kashkari, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. But you don't need to be a Fed bank president to know that increasing the demand for housing will raise prices; it's basic economics.

The same thing happened in Canada, after 9 years of Justin Trudeau. He let in MILLIONS of illegal immigrants and refugees – people who pay less in taxes than they collect in benefits. And you can bet they need somewhere to live. Unfortunately, Trudeau's anti-business policies have killed the home construction industry. Demand went up, supply went down. Now the average price of a single-family home in Canada is up to $801,600 CAD. ($593,406.75 USD) And if that were not bad enough, the massive influx of unskilled immigrants has caused health care costs to skyrocket – up to $17, 713 CAD for a two-parent family with two children. Demand is going up, but supply is going down, as many Canadian doctors leave to work in countries that pay more, and tax less.

I can't believe that in America, there are people out there who do not know how prices are set in a free market economy. In a free market economy, when demand goes up, and supply goes down, then there is a shortage, and prices rise. You would think that the public school teachers would understand basic economics, and teach it to children. That's what they are paid to do. But not only do the young people not understand basic economics, the teachers in the public schools don't understand it either. It's the blind leading the blind.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg: Biden-Harris regime pressured us to censor

August 27, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rose told me about this article from Daily Wire on Monday night, and I thought it was important enough for me to share here. Many Big Tech companies are allied with the Democrat party. The question is, how much does that affect their goods and services? I think if you read this story, you might feel the need to do more of your online sharing on Twitter, rather than on Facebook.

Here's the article from Daily Wire:

> Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in a letter on Monday that the Biden-Harris administration repeatedly pressured his company — which includes Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, WhatsApp, and more — to censor content that is protected free speech.
>
> Zuckerberg made the admission in a letter to House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan (R-OH) this week…
>
> "In 2021, senior officials from the Biden Administration, including the White House, repeatedly pressured our teams for months to censor certain COVID-19 content, including humor and satire, and expressed a lot of frustration with our teams when we didn't agree," he said in the letter.

Here's an example of Facebook censoring content in order to help the Democrat party:

> He said that the company made a mistake by temporarily demoting a New York Post story during the 2020 election about Hunter Biden's laptop after officials falsely suggested that it was part of a "Russian disinformation operation."
>
> "It's since been made clear that the reporting was not Russian disinformation, and in retrospect, we shouldn't have demoted the story," he said. "We've changed our policies and processes to make sure this doesn't happen again – for instance, we no longer temporarily demote things in the U.S while waiting for fact-checkers."

How much did censoring that story interfere with our elections? In my opinion, Facebook handed the election to Biden by censoring this story. But there were never any consequences. They're just too powerful, so long as millions of people keep going onto their site. I prefer to spend my time on Twitter, and rarely go on Facebook. I can't take the chance of having my account shut down for posting true news – just because some loser with an arts degree decided that she didn't want to see anything that made her feel bad.

It's important for people to understand that you only have as much free speech on these Big Tech platforms as they allow you to have. When it's election time, many Big Tech

companies use “fact checkers” to censor true news stories that make the Democrat party look bad. They want the Democrat party to win.

I’ve collected some of my previous posts about Facebook helping the Democrat party and interfering in our elections.

- Facebook censored posts at the request of the Democrat party / Biden administration
- Twitter and Facebook suspend LibsOfTikTok after she reported on sex-change surgery on kids
- Facebook and Twitter spread disinformation about Hunter Biden’s laptop to help Biden win in 2020
- Facebook / Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s election meddling violated bribery laws
- Peer-reviewed medical journal blasts Facebook “fact checkers” for censorship
- Facebook has a long record of censoring speech critical of Democrats
- Facebook fact-checker caught plagiarizing 54 articles
- Facebook bans Christian professor for disagreeing with Biden’s executive actions
- Facebook “non-partisan” fact-checker revealed to be a far-left Trump-hating Democrat
- Facebook “fact-checker” Politifact forced to retract “false” rating against Candace Owens
- When Facebook fact-checkers conflict with peer-reviewed studies, who is right?
- Potential violation of election law: Facebook and Twitter censor Biden scandal
- Facebook and Google removing content that harms Democrat party
- Facebook censors admit that they suppress Republican content to help Democrat Party
- Facebook censors interview with abortion survivor to help Democrats win 2020 election
- Facebook uses pro-abortion “fact checkers” to label pro-life pages “fake news”
- Facebook bans Christian apologist David Wood for posting the death threats he received
- Facebook censors criticism of Democrat Party, especially before “important elections”

How the presence and quality of fathers affects belief in God

August 28, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article by Paul Copan which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.* It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own* rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of François-Marie Arouet.
> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his

> autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence, but there is also statistical evidence. Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is

> regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an more difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others. If you want your child to be religious and moral, you have to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he makes, he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading.

My advice to Christian women is this. When you are picking a man, be sure and choose one who is already invested in Christian things and producing results. It's very unlikely that he's going to start from nothing after you marry him. If you value your kids, make a man's interest in developing and acting on a Christian worldview the main thing you are looking for.

New study: Google’s bias in favor of Democrat Party affects search engine results

August 29, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s election time, and a lot of Big Tech companies are using their products and services to tip the scales in favor of the Democrat party. Is Google one of those companies? A new study by the Media Research Center analyzes Google search results about Kamala Harris’ past actions and stances on political issues. Are those search results balancing conservative and leftist sources? Let’s see.

Here’s the latest report on the study from MRC:

> Google is actively assisting Vice President Kamala Harris in maintaining her media honeymoon by keeping users in the dark about her radical policy views, including her support for abolishing ICE and threatening to end private health insurance, a new MRC Free Speech America study found.
>
> The study revealed a staggering bias in Google’s favoring of left-leaning media by a nearly 10:1 margin in both Google Search and the Google News tab. MRC conducted the searches on Aug. 21, covering four search prompts across both Google Search and the Google News tab. These findings raise serious concerns about Google’s influence on the outcome of the 2024 election, echoing its interference in the 2022 midterm elections.
>
> MRC completed the searches using a clean environment, discovering that Google has promoted left-leaning media sites at a shocking 17:2 ratio in Google Search results. The bias was equally pronounced in the Google News tab for search results, where left-leaning outlets appeared at a 19:2 ratio. This is a nearly 10:1 biased ratio on each tab.
>
> MRC used the media bias chart by AllSides to determine the ideological leaning of the outlets featured in Google’s search results. Among the 19 media outlets that received favorable placements in the Google News tab results were The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN, MSNBC, Politico, Slate, Vox and The Guardian. In contrast, only three right-leaning media outlets — The Federalist, New York Post and The Washington Times — were scarcely featured.

MRC also did a previous poll to see whether Democrat voters new about Kamala’s previous positions and past actions.

Here’s what they found:

> A significant new Media Research Center poll finds that large majorities of registered Democrats and Independents who voted for Joe Biden in 2020 — exactly those who would be expected to support Vice President Kamala Harris in this year’s contest — are mostly in the dark about many of the controversial and

> radical positions Harris has taken.
>
> When asked about ten different aspects of Harris's public record — on issues as varied as her sponsorship of the Green New Deal, abolishing ICE, and eliminating private health insurance — between 71% and 86% of these Democrats and Independents said they either had not heard of Harris's position or were unsure.

Where do you get your news? I read sources like Daily Signal, The Federalist, Washington Stand, and other center right sources. But I rarely see those sources in the first page of Google results, or the second page, or the third page.

The article notes:

> When these voters were asked about where they got most of their news about political elections and candidates, by far the top answers were broadcast television (ABC, CBS and NBC) or cable news (such as CNN and MSNBC). This suggests that the knowledge gaps found by our poll reveal a failure of these outlets to report on radical positions once (and perhaps currently) supported by the now-Democratic nominee for President.
>
> In fact, a detailed Media Research Center examination of ABC, CBS and NBC evening news coverage in the three weeks since Harris became the leading Democratic candidate (July 21 to August 10) shows eight of these ten issues received ZERO attention from these newscasts, while two others received only minor coverage.

In case you're wondering what the previous positions of Harris are, they have a list:

1. Harris supported cutting funding for the police
2. Harris co-sponsored the Green New Deal
3. Harris supported the elimination of private health insurance
4. Harris supported reparations payments to atone for slavery
5. As "Border Czar," Harris never visited a conflict zone on the border
6. Harris said it should not be considered a crime to enter the U.S. illegally.
7. Harris supported abolishing ICE
8. Harris promoted a fund to bail out violent protesters during 2020 riots
9. Harris would consider allowing death row inmates to vote
10. Harris was named the most liberal U.S. Senator in 2019

I had blogged about a few of those in the past, but the one that shocked me was #9. I knew that Harris was ultra-leftist on law-and-order and border security, but I didn't know she was that far to the left. No wonder Google, which has been caught many, many times supporting the secular left, is trying to hide those positions. And their allies in the corporate news media are helping.

Related posts

- Which organizations are undermining the fairness and integrity of American

elections?
- Did Google / YouTube suspend Steven Crowder for reporting on the rape of a child?
- Google whistleblower: Google “rewrote algorithms to go after Trump”
- Big Tech purge of conservatives shows the danger of secular left worldview
- Facebook and Google removing content that harms Democrat party
- Google purges conservative sites from its search results to help the Democrat party
- Google fires another Republican engineer who disagreed with Democrat party policies
- Google internal document calls prominent Jews Dennis Prager and Ben Shapiro “Nazis”
- Google employees revolt against having a black, female conservative on advisory board
- Does Google’s anti-conservative bias affect its products and services?

Image source: Media Research Center

Is Politifact trustworthy? Is Politifact unbiased? A review of past rulings

August 30, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Politifact is in the news again for labeling a true claim by J.D. Vance, the Republican candidate for vice president, as "false". Let's take a look at this claim, then we'll see whether Politifact is a fact-checker, or just a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Democrat Party.

The Media Research Center reports.

Here is Vance's claim:

> **"I think it's pretty weird to try to take children away from their parents if the parents don't want to consent to sex changes,"** Vance said Aug. 7 at a campaign event in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. "That's something that Tim Walz did."

As usually, Politifact concedes that the claim is correct – the courts can temporarily remove children from the custody of their parents. But, it's got to be labeled "false" because this is an election year, and people who have failed at life need a bailout from the taxpayers:

> Abels, the LGBTQ-issues "fact checker," is funded by the Gill Foundation, a radical LGBTQ philanthropy. Last October, she worried out loud about "incarcerated trans people" being denied the "gender-affirming" stuff.
>
> Last May, Tuquero defended Minnesota Democrats when they took expressly anti-pedophile language out of an "anti-discrimination" bill.

Grace Abels is a loser:

> Grace Abels joined PolitiFact as a staff writer focused on LGBTQ issues in February 2023. She graduated from Duke University where she studied history and journalism.

Loreben Tuquero is a loser:

> Loreben Tuquero is a reporter covering misinformation for PolitiFact. She graduated from Ateneo de Manila University with a degree in communication.

These people are losers at life, who have no marketable skills, and just vote Democrat because they want dentists, veterinarians and petroleum engineers to pay off their tens of thousands of dollars in student loans.

This isn't the first time that Politifact, which is used by all the big social media companies to "fact check" speech, has been caught protecting their favored political party.

Let's see some examples of past bias.

Arizona Senate Race

Politifact screwed up their fact-check for the Arizona Senate race.

The Daily Caller explains:

> PolitiFact incorrectly labeled it “mostly false” that Democratic Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema “protested troops in a pink tutu” during its live fact-check of the Arizona Senate debate Monday night.
>
> It’s an established fact that Sinema, a former Green Party activist who co-founded an anti-war group, wore a pink tutu at one of the multiple anti-war protests she attended in 2003.
>
> “While we were in harm’s way, she was protesting our troops in a pink tutu,” Republican candidate Martha McSally, a former Air Force fighter pilot, said during Monday night’s debate.

Here’s their Politifact’s evaluation of McSally’s claim:

Who are you going to believe? Politifact, or your own eyes?

And here’s the photo of Kyrsten Sinema, protesting the troops, in a pink tutu:

Anti-war Democrat Senate candidate Kyrsten Sinema in a pink tutu
The Daily Caller notes:

> A 2003 Arizona State University news article at the time described Sinema wearing "something resembling a pink tutu" at one of the protests.
>
> […]Sinema openly associated with fringe elements of the far-left during her anti-war activism.
>
> She promoted an appearance by Lynne Stewart, a lawyer who was convicted of aiding an Islamic terrorist organization, in 2003.
>
> Sinema also reportedly partnered with anarchists and witches in her anti-war activism and said she did "not care" if Americans wanted to join the Taliban.

And now for the big one: Politifact's fact-checking of Obamacare.

Obama's claims about Obamacare

Avik Roy, health care policy expert at Forbes magazine, wrote about Politifact's assessment of Obama's promise to Americans about keeping their health plans after Obamacare.

In 2008, before the presidential election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about Obamacare "True":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On October 9, 2008, Angie Drobnic Holan of PolitiFact published an article using the site's "Truth-O-Meter" to evaluate this claim: "Under Barack Obama's health care proposal, 'if you've got a health care plan that you like, you can keep it.'"

And she concluded:

> […]…people who want to keep their current insurance should be able to do that under Obama's plan. His description of his plan is accurate, and we rate his

> statement True."

Roy notes:

> PolitiFact's pronouncements about Obamacare were widely repeated by pro-Obama reporters and pundits, and had a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Indeed, in 2009, PolitiFact won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 campaign.

Here's the screen capture from 2008:

Politifact says that everyone who likes their health care plan can keep it
Before the election, it's true! And Obama got re-elected, because people believed that.
But what happened after the election?

In 2013, after the 2012 election, PolitiFact rated Obama's claims about Obamacare "Pants On Fire":

Roy writes: (links removed)

> On December 12, [2013] the self-appointed guardians of truth and justice at PolitiFact named President Obama's infamous promise—that "if you like your health care plan, you can keep it"—its 2013 "Lie of the Year."
>
> […][N]one of the key facts that made that promise "impossible" in 2008 had changed by 2013. The President's plan had always required major disruption of the health insurance market; the Obamacare bill contained the key elements of that plan; the Obamacare law did as well. The only thing that had changed was the actual first-hand accounts of millions of Americans who were losing their plans now that Obamacare was live.

And the screen capture from 2013:

The article:

Lie of the Year: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it'

By Angie Drobnic Holan
Published on Thursday, December 12th, 2013 at 4:44 p.m.

It was a catchy political pitch and a chance to calm nerves about his dramatic and complicated plan to bring historic change to America's health insurance system.

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep it," President Barack Obama said -- many times -- of his landmark new law.

But the promise was impossible to keep.

So this fall, as cancellation letters were going out to approximately 4 million Americans, the public realized Obama's breezy assurances were wrong.

Related rulings:

"What we said was, you can keep (your plan) if it hasn't changed since the law passed."

Barack Obama, Monday, November 4th, 2013.

Ruling: Pants on Fire! | Details

"FACT: Nothing in #Obamacare forces people out of their health plans."

Valerie Jarrett, Monday, October 28th, 2013.

Politifact said one thing before the election, and the opposite afterwards

So when Politifact rates a statement by a Democrat as true, what they really mean is that it's pants-on-fire-false, but it's election time so they don't say that. It's not like the critical assessments of Obamacare from health policy experts were not out there between 2007-2012. I know, because I blogged on every study and report on the predicted effects of the law that I could find. But the intellectually lazy journalism-major clowns at Politifact couldn't be bothered to read those studies and reports.

Secular left journalists are the stupidest people on the planet. Stick with reading The Federalist and Daily Wire if you want to know what's really going on in the world.

Is Christianity Today a Christian publication?

August 31, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to follow the work of Megan Basham on Twitter and Daily Wire, because she takes the Bible seriously on moral and spiritual issues. So I was very interested to read her latest article evaluating Christianity Today. On the surface, Christianity Today presents itself as a Christian publication. But are their beliefs really consistent with what the Bible teaches? Let's see.

Here's the article from Daily Wire:

> The media has long framed Christianity Today, founded by Billy Graham in 1956, as America's most influential Christian news outlet. The Washington Post, for instance, regularly describes it as evangelicalism's "flagship" magazine," as does The New York Times. A review of federal election records, however, indicates that the views of the magazine's leadership and staff may be far out of step with ordinary evangelicals.
>
> Between 2015 and 2022, nine Christianity Today employees made 73 political donations. All of them went to Democrats. This tally includes President and CEO Timothy Dalrymple, who gave $300 in two separate payments to failed Georgia Senate candidate Sarah Riggs Amico.
>
> Amico's platform, which includes protecting abortion "without exception" and repealing the Hyde Amendment to allow federal tax dollars to fund abortions, contrasts sharply with the views of evangelicals who overwhelmingly say abortion should be illegal in all or most cases. She is also at odds with traditional Christian beliefs when it comes to gender, sexuality, and religious liberty.
>
> Along with declaring herself a "staunch LGBTQ ally," Amico promised to support the Equality Act, a bill that The Heritage Foundation warns would threaten parental rights over children who believe they're transgender. The conservative think tank has also said the bill would decimate conscience rights for medical workers and "cancel[s] religious freedom." Southern Baptist Theological Seminary president Albert Mohler put the Equality Act in even starker terms, saying it "represents the greatest threat to religious liberty in the United States in our lifetimes" and would "totally transform the United States as we know it."
>
> Dalrymple was not the only member of the magazine's executive ranks to donate to Democrats. Natalie Lederhouse, Vice President of Advertising and Partnerships, contributed $50 to the 2020 Biden Victory Fund. The Federal Election Commission has no records of any Christianity Today executive giving to the GOP since 1991.

You might remember the Equality Act discussed in previous posts on this blog. Basically,

the legislation would have made it impossible for Christians to advocate for Biblical positions on sexual issues. Not only individual Christians, but Christian businesses and charities. They would all have had to comply with the secular left's views on sexual issues.

Megan also found this about a former NEWS EDITOR at Christianity Today:

> Between October 2019 and November 2020, news editor Daniel Silliman made eight donations to five different pro-abortion, pro-LGBTQ candidates, among them, Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren's presidential campaign. In addition to possessing a perfect voting score from Planned Parenthood and NARAL, Warren supported shutting down crisis pregnancy centers across the country, and her platform included requiring schools to admit biological men into women's sports and single-sex spaces. She also pledged to allow a gender dysphoric nine-year-old to approve anyone she appointed as education secretary.
>
> Silliman also donated to Renee Hoyos, Tennessee Democrats' nominee to the U.S. House; Moe Davis, House candidate from North Carolina; Blair Walsingham, House candidate from Tennessee; and former Senator Doug Jones (D-AL).

As news editor, he would have been in charge of all of Christianity Today's coverage of political stories.

More:

> In another article in the run-up to the 2020 election,
> Silliman spotlighted President Biden's Catholicism and quoted progressive theologian Richard Mouw opining that "[Biden] is viewed as having an authentic faith… when he talks about his faith, it rings true." Silliman then tied Mouw to conservative Christian icons, Chuck Colson and J.I. Packer.
>
> […][Silliman] also covered the Fairness for All Act, a proposal that would have granted special privileges to people who identify as LGBTQ. It was opposed by conservative legal groups like Alliance Defending Freedom for "undermin[ing] human dignity by threatening the fundamental freedoms of speech, religion, and conscience." Approximately three-quarters of Silliman's report on the bill was devoted to those who favored the legislation.

You might remember that Mouw is one of these "evangelicals for Biden". Now that we know the truth about Biden's business dealings and connections to foreign governments, it's easier to understand what sort of morality Mouw supports.

The new editor-in-chief of Christianity Today is Russell Moore, who seems more focused on promoting the Democrat party platform than with defending policies consistent with the Bible.

The root cause of the problem with these "evangelicals for Biden" is that they have never adopted Christianity on the basis of studying the evidence, and forming their own views. Progressive Christians form their views *socially* not *intellectually.* When they are young,

they put on the cloak of Christianity as a way of seeming virtuous to their parents and those around them. They didn't choose Christianity because it was the best description of reality. They were born into it. It's not a worldview to them, it's an act.

Progressive Christians don't make a case for core Christian beliefs using evidence to non-Christians. They simply don't know how to do it, because they didn't do it in order to "become" a Christian in the first place. They don't have any work to show, because they never did the work. And their policy views are the same. They don't form their views based on reason and evidence. They don't read scholars like Thomas Sowell, or John Lott, or Ryan Anderson, or Scott Atlas, or Robert George. They just believe whatever will make people like them – just like they did when they were children.

New study: most children suffering from gender confusion grow out of it

September 1, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are you having any conversations about transgenderism these days? It seems like there is a big push for transing kids, mostly coming from pharmaceutical companies and their allies in the public schools. They believe that children should be able to request drugs and surgeries based on their feelings. Even if parents disagree. But what if children's discomfort with their biological sex is temporary?

Take a look at this study, which appeared in the peer-reviewed scientific journal Archives of Sexual Behavior.

There's a nice article about this study over at the left-leaning UK Daily Mail:

> The majority of gender-confused children grow out of that feeling by the time they are fully grown adults, according to a long-term study.
>
> Researchers in the Netherlands tracked more than 2,700 children from age 11 to their mid-twenties, asking them every three years of feelings about their gender.
>
> Results showed at the start of the research, around one-in-10 children (11 percent) expressed 'gender non-contentedness' to varying degrees.
>
> But by age 25, just one-in-25 (4 percent) said they 'often' or 'sometimes' were discontent with their gender.
>
> The researchers concluded: 'The results of the current study might help adolescents to realize that it is normal to have some doubts about one's identity and one's gender identity during this age period and that this is also relatively common.'

This paragraph was interesting:

> According to the findings, females were more likely to report being unhappy with their gender and both increasing and decreasing 'non-contentedness' were associated with lower self-reported self worth, more behavioral problems and an increase in emotional struggles.

If you are raising daughters, you might want to have a plan to counter this. I think the best way to build up a girl's self-esteem is to give her interesting things to do, and help her to excel at them. And I mean things like writing code, reading Thomas Sowell, learning self-defense, shooting guns, fixing machines, understanding classical literature, etc. Useful stuff. Girls need to do useful things together with their Dads, that way, when they have bad feelings, they can think of all the things that they know how to do, and all the people that ask them for help. It's hard to feel bad when you know how to achieve results. And you know that you are good at achieving results. I'm not an expert in women, but it seems to me that they have trouble when they dwell too much on their own

feelings, and too much on what other people think about them, or what other people are doing. Girls should just not care about all that. Girls should just be good at doing things that matter. Girls should know how the world works.

The conclusion of the Daily Mail article features Christian scholar Dr. Jay Richards, was also interesting:

> Dr Jay Richards, director of the Richard and Helen DeVos Center for Life, Religion, and Family, told DailyMail.com: 'We've known for over a decade that most kids who experience distress with their sexed bodies resolve those feelings after they pass through natural puberty.
>
> 'Indeed, we can infer from the DSM 5 [2013] and other sources that as many as 88 percent of gender-dysphoric girls and as many as 98 percent of gender-dysphoric boys in previous generations desisted if allowed to go through natural puberty.
>
> 'These two facts make it clear why "gender-affirming care" on minors is such an outrage. It leads, in the end, to sterilization and in many cases to a complete loss of natural sexual function.
>
> 'There is no good evidence that this helps minors long term. Moreover, it medicalizes what could very well be temporary psychological symptoms.
>
> 'History will judge this medicalized "gender-affirming care" on minors as we now judge eugenics and lobotomies.'

I was pretty impressed with Jay. Of all the people they could have quoted, they went to Jay Richards, who has put a lot of effort into understanding these issues.

Do you know what would be wonderful? If children who take these drugs and submit to these surgeries could then sue all the people who told them to do it. They're being told one thing, but getting something else entirely. If a child gets hit with sterilization or loss of sexual function, then they should be able to clean out the bank accounts of the people who did this to them. Public school teachers, nurses, doctors, drug manufacturers, etc. Just bankrupt them. Because children shouldn't be lied to by adults, who know better.

I went to see the new Reagan movie, and I found a good review of it

September 2, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw it this past weekend, and I really liked it. A lot of people hate Ronald Reagan. The secular left has this crazy idea that religion, free market economics and patriotism will start World War 3. Well, Reagan had a degree in economics, used to teach Sunday school, and he definitely thought that America was better than communism. And he beat the communists, without firing a shot.

Let's see a movie review, from Focus on the Family:

> But whether you're young or old, whether you lived through the tumultuous latter days of the 20th century or not, Reagan, the movie, reminds us why courage and vision, tenacity and faith remain vitally important character qualities in our leaders.
>
> And even though I did live through a portion of that era, Dennis Quaid's portrayal of Ronald Reagan here shines a light on chapters of this actor-turned-politician's life that I had little knowledge of myself.
>
> Along the way, we see how the faith of a mother and the love of a devoted wife played huge roles in shaping the heart and soul of a failed actor into a president whose tenacity arguably bent the course of history.

When I walked out of the theater, my head was spinning from the way that Reagan's mother Nellie and his second wife Nancy had treated him in the movie. I don't have any personal experience with mothers looking after their children like this. Taking them to church. Giving them Christian books to read. Having a plan for them. Teaching them right from wrong. My mom didn't do any of those things. And I am always surprised when I see a wife investing in her husband and supporting him, and getting upset when he cannot achieve everything he was mean to achieve.

Here's a bit about his mother Nellie:

> During Reagan's youth, we see that his mother, Nelle, takes him to the First Christian Church in Dixon, Illinois. In one service there, we hear 2 Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (KJV).
>
> Nelle drills into her young son a sense of divine purpose and calling on his life—lessons that form the bedrock of Reagan's sense of identity in some tough moments. "God has a purpose for your life," Nelle instills into her impressionable boy. "Something only you can do." Elsewhere she reminds him, "Remember to listen to that small, soft voice" when he's alone and quiet, and to give it his "full attention." She offers this exhortation as well: "Remember who you are and

> Whose you are."

My mother never treated me like that, so I was really just lost taking in all this good mothering. I wondered what I could have been, if I had a mother, too. My mother's god was money, and she certainly didn't see me the way that Nellie say her son Ronald. I think a lot of women today want to have children, but if all they want to do is throw them into daycare and public schools, what's the point of a man signing up to have other people raise his kids? Conversely, it might be worth it to have kids, if the man got to see a very good woman his children about God, and train them to achieve something in the world that respects God.

The review also talks about his second wife Nancy:

> [H]is first wife, Jane Wyman, finds Reagan's flirtation with politics disdainful. "Is there anything worse than an actor with a cause" she quips. And then she adds, scornfully, "You are an *actor*. That is your job. Not politics."
>
> Given that discrepancy of values, it's no surprise that Reagan's first union doesn't last. His marriage skids toward the rocks about the same time his career does, prompting Reagan to tell his mother, "I lost a child, I lost my marriage, I lost my career." That's one of the points at which she encourages him with strong spiritual counsel (which we'll unpack in the next section).

Here's a bit more about his second wife, Nancy:

> Near the end of his acting career, when he's more involved with SAG than actually making movies, Reagan meets Nancy Davis. As their connection deepens, he says of himself, "I'm what you call damaged goods," noting that he's divorced, broke and has children from a previous marriage. Nancy gently counters, "We're all damaged goods, Ronnie." That prompts him to say, "I just want to do something good in this world, to make a difference."
>
> In the years that follow, of course, Reagan seeks to make good on that desire, with Nancy constantly encouraging him at his side—first in his run for the governor of California, then his first failed presidential campaign in 1976 (where he lost the Republican nomination to Gerald Ford) and finally in his sunset years as the specter of Alzheimer's disease looms.

I've never had the feeling from any woman that my dreams were important, and that it was important to help me to achieve them. So again, I was just looking at all this excellent wife-ing, and thinking "wow, so that's what it must be like to have a good wife". Today, I see a lot of non-traditional women demanding that traditional men give them things, but they don't want to be traditional wives. They don't want to help men at all.

Honestly, I think this movie will make self-centered feminists very uncomfortable. It shows women treating boys and men well.

The movie also has some policy, diplomacy and history in it. But it's at a high level. They talk a lot about religious liberty and about the need to deter aggression with strength. So,

it’s a good introduction to conservative ideas. I think you’ll really like the movie. If you go see it, be sure to leave a comment telling me what you thought of it.

Understanding socialism: tariffs, price controls and nationalization of industry

September 3, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What is socialism? In a free market system, prices are set by buyers and sellers without input from the government. Private property is guaranteed by law. And thegovernment does not have a state-run monopoly in any area of the economy. Socialism is different: massive government spending on welfare, prices set by government, tariffs on imports, nationalizing industries.

Let's take a look at a case of socialism: Venezuela. Venezuela adopted socialism, and implemented import tariffs, nationalized industry, and imposed price controls. Let's take a look.

The American Institute for Economic Research explains:

> In 1998 [Hugo Chavez] was elected to the Presidency. He immediately worked to deepen and expand the "Bolivarian Revolution," focused on social welfare programs, nationalizing key industries, and "democratizing" the market system.
>
> […]The situation eroded quickly, reaching an early head in the summer of 2015. Prices were skyrocketing because of inflation, caused by the government using newly printed money to pay off debts and make payroll. But the government had accused corporations that ran large grocery chains of "price-gouging."

So, we have inflation in the United States right now. And that inflation was caused by the Biden-Harris regime, which has been in power for nearly 4 years. They caused prices to skyrocket in two ways. First, by raising the price of electricity and gas. They did this because of their climate change alarmism, which caused them to cancel pipelines and deny drilling leases, etc. Second, by spending reckless government spending. And now they, like Hugo Chavez, are trying to blame the inflation they caused on "price-gouging". Will they adopt the same solutions as Venezuela did? And how will that work out for us?

Here is how the Harris of the Biden-Harris regime intends to respond to the inflation caused by the Biden-Harris regime:

> Vice President Harris announced on August 16 that she would place controls on grocery prices.
>
> As attorney general in California, I went after companies that illegally increased prices, including wholesalers that inflated the price of prescription medication and companies that conspired with competitors to keep prices of electronics high. I won more than $1 billion for consumers. (Applause.)
>
> So, believe me, as president, I will go after the bad actors. (Applause.) And I will work to pass the first-ever federal ban on price gouging on food.

So, she's going to go with price controls. Is this the same thing as what communists did in

Venezuela? How did it work out there?

Well, here is a report from the Institute for Free Trade:

> In 2003, Hugo Chávez declared war on “speculators” and imposed price controls not only on Venezuelan milk, but also on sugar, coffee, beef, chicken, pork, grain, and pasta (he also severely restricted access to foreign currency). According to very unreliable official figures, price controls caused shortages of basic goods to increase from 5% at the outset to over 22.2% in ten years.
>
> Chávez, however, refused to learn the lesson about the price mechanism even as he was unleashing mass scarcity. In 2011, he extended price controls to soap, detergent, shampoo, toilet paper, mouthwash, fruit juice and other products. To take one example, toilet paper was already scarce in Venezuela when Chávez died in 2013, as the government imported 50 million rolls and citizens, downtrodden but not without a sense of humour, shared videos on social media with theories on how to get by without it.
>
> In 2016, scarcity of basic goods reached 82.6% in Caracas according to Luis Vicente León, the head of polling firm Datanalisis. Caracas, León added, was Venezuela’s best-supplied city. Scarcity has only worsened since.
>
> Initially, the Venezuelan regime made up for shortages in national food production with imports paid with oil revenue. However, price controls and expropriations (see point # 2) had already destroyed the country’s productive sector once oil prices began to fall sharply in 2014. Last year, 93% of Venezuelans could not afford food. According to a recent survey, 60% of Venezuelans shed at least 11 kilograms in weight during the last year due to malnutrition.

Right now, supermarkets in America have a profit margin of around 1-2%. If Kamala comes in and artificially lowers their prices, then their suppliers will also have to have price controls. Food producers (especially smaller ones) will stop making products that are price controlled. Grocery stores (especially smaller ones) will stop selling products that are price controlled. Shortages of grocery store products will lead to lines outside of these stores, just like when Jimmy Carter put price controls on gas, and there were gas lines in America. Why think that price controls in America will work any differently than they do in Venezuela? Where is the evidence?

Frank Turek lectures on the case against same-sex marriage

September 4, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker Frank Turek:

Frank Turek is one of my favorite speakers, and I admire him for being willing to take a public stand on controversial issues like gay marriage. He's actually had to pay a price for that in his professional life, and I blogged about that before.

Here's the lecture on gay marriage, featuring Christian apologist Frank Turek.

Outline:

Outline of Frank Turek's lecture on same sex marriage

Introduction:

- how to present your case against marriage safely
- Christians are required to go beyond tolerance
- loving another person can mean opposing the person when they want to do something wrong, even if they hate you
- what did Jesus say about marriage? (see Matt 19:4-6)
- what did Jesus say about sexual morality? (Matt 15, Matt 19)

Summary:

- the same-sex marriage debate is about whether to compel people who disagree with the gay lifestyle to validate and normalize it
- P1: the government has an interest in marriage because it perpetuates and stabilizes society – this is the purpose of marriage
- P2-4: government can take 3 kinds of stances towards behaviors: promote, permit

or prohibit
- government promotes behaviors when it has an interest in them
- same-sex relationships should be permitted, but not promoted
- Q1: if same-sex marriage had serious negative consequences, would you reconsider their position?
- Q2: are heterosexual relationships the same as homosexual relationships?
- Q3: what would society be like if everyone married according to the natural marriage definition: one woman, one man, for life?
- Q4: what would society be like if everyone married according to the same-sex marriage definition: man/man and woman/woman?
- Should Christians care about law and politics? or should they just preach the gospel?
- They should care because people often get their cues about what is moral and immoral based on what is legal and illegal
- Many of the social problems we see today can be traced back to problems with marriage and family
- Children do much better when they have a relationship with their mother and their father
- Same-sex marriage necessarily destroys the relationship between a child and its mother or its father
- When a country embraces same-sex marriage, it reinforces the idea that marriage is not about making and raising children
- same-sex marriage shifts the focus away from the needs of the children to the feelings of desires of the selfish adults
- does homosexuality impose any health and mental health risks?
- what has the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage been in Massachusetts to individuals, schools, businesses and charities?
- how same-sex marriage poses a threat to religious liberty
- how should you respond to the view that homosexuality is genetic?

And at the very end, he shows this short video, which is only 5 minutes and explains the logic of opposing the redefinition of marriage:

My biggest concern is religious liberty, and we are seeing how same-sex marriage has proven to be incompatible with religious liberty. But I also care about children… I want them to have mothers and fathers who put their needs first. Marriage is about a commitment – it is the subjugation of feelings and desires to responsibilities and obligations. It is a promise. A promise to commit to love your spouse and children regardless of feelings and desires. It requires more self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice. Not less.

Jay Richards: eight common myths about wealth, poverty and the free market

September 5, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you read Jay Richards' book "Money, Greed and God?" Because if you haven't, he's written a series of articles that summarize the main points of the book.

The index post is here.

Here are the posts in the series:

- Part 1: The Eight Most Common Myths about Wealth, Poverty, and Free Enterprise
- Part 2: Can't We Build A Just Society?
- Part 3: The Piety Myth
- Part 4: The Myth of the Zero Sum Game
- Part 5: Is Wealth Created or Transferred?
- Part 6: Is Free Enterprise Based on Greed?
- Part 7: Hasn't Christianity Always Opposed Free Enterprise?
- Part 8: Does Free Enterprise Lead to An Ugly Consumerist Culture?
- Part 9: Will We Use Up All Our Resources?
- Part 10: Are Markets An Example of Providence?

Parts 4 and 5 are my favorites. It's so hard to choose one to excerpt, but I must. I will choose… Part 4.

Here's the problem:

> **Myth #3: The Zero Sum Game Myth – believing that trade requires a winner and a loser.**
>
> One reason people believe this myth is because they misunderstand how economic value is determined. Economic thinkers with views as diverse as Adam Smith and Karl Marx believed economic value was determined by the labor theory of value. This theory stipulates that the cost to produce an object determines its economic value.
>
> According to this theory, if you build a house that costs you $500,000 to build, that house is worth $500,000. But what if no one can or wants to buy the house? Then what is it worth?
>
> Medieval church scholars put forth a very different theory, one derived from human nature: economic value is in the eye of the beholder. The economic value of an object is determined by how much someone is willing to give up to get that object. This is the subjective theory of value.

And here's an example of how to avoid the problem:

> How you determine economic value affects whether you view free enterprise as a

> zero-sum game, or a win-win game in which both participants benefit.
>
> Let's return to the example of the $500,000 house. As the developer of the house, you hire workers to build the house. You then sell it for more than $500,000. According to the labor theory of value, you have taken more than the good is actually worth. You've exploited the buyer and your workers by taking this surplus value. You win, they lose.
>
> Yet this situation looks different according to the subjective theory of value. Here, everybody wins. You market and sell the house for more than it cost to produce, but not more than customers will freely pay. The buyer is not forced to pay a cost he doesn't agree to. You are rewarded for your entrepreneurial effort. Your workers benefit, because you paid them the wages they agreed to when you hired them.
>
> This illustration brings up a couple important points about free enterprise that are often overlooked:
>
> **1. Free exchange is a win-win game**.
>
> In win-win games, some players may end up better off than others, but everyone ends up better off than they were at the beginning. As the developer, you might make more than your workers. Yet the workers determined they would be better off by freely exchanging their labor for wages, than if they didn't have the job at all.
>
> A free market doesn't guarantee that everyone wins in every competition. Rather, it allows many more win-win encounters than any other alternative.
>
> **2. The game is win-win because of rules set-up beforehand.**
>
> A free market is *not* a free-for-all in which everybody can do what they want. Any exchange must be free on both sides. Rule of law, contracts, and property rights are needed to ensure exchanges are conducted rightly. As the developer of the house, you'd be held accountable if you broke your contract and failed to pay workers what you promised.
>
> An exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game.

On this view, what you really need to fear as a consumer is government intervention that restricts your choices in the marketplace, or makes some choices more expensive than they need to be (tariffs).

If you care about poverty, it's often tempting to think that it can only be solved one way – by transferring wealth from the rich to the poor. But that is a very mistaken view, as any economist will tell you. The right way to create prosperity is by creating laws and policies that unleash individual creativity. Letting individuals create innovative products and services, letting them keep what they earn, making sure that the law doesn't punish entrepreneurs – that incentivizes wealth creation. Fixing poverty does not mean transferring wealth, it means giving people more freedom to create wealth on their own.

Free trade between nations is an important way that we encourage people to create better products and services that what they have available in their own countries.

Economists agree on the benefits of free trade

Who could possibly disagree with free trade? Well, many people on the left do. But economists across the spectrum of ideology (university and private sector and public sector) agree on the benefits of free trade.

Harvard economist Greg Mankiw explains what most professional economists agree on.

Excerpt:

> Here is the list, together with the percentage of economists who agree:
>
> 1. **A ceiling on rents reduces the quantity and quality of housing available. (93%)**
> 2. **Tariffs and import quotas usually reduce general economic welfare. (93%)**
> 3. Flexible and floating exchange rates offer an effective international monetary arrangement. (90%)
> 4. Fiscal policy (e.g., tax cut and/or government expenditure increase) has a significant stimulative impact on a less than fully employed economy. (90%)
> 5. The United States should not restrict employers from outsourcing work to foreign countries. (90%)
> 6. The United States should eliminate agricultural subsidies. (85%)
> 7. Local and state governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises. (85%)
> 8. If the federal budget is to be balanced, it should be done over the business cycle rather than yearly. (85%)
> 9. The gap between Social Security funds and expenditures will become unsustainably large within the next fifty years if current policies remain unchanged. (85%)
> 10. Cash payments increase the welfare of recipients to a greater degree than do transfers-in-kind of equal cash value. (84%)
> 11. A large federal budget deficit has an adverse effect on the economy. (83%)
> 12. **A minimum wage increases unemployment among young and unskilled workers. (79%)**
> 13. The government should restructure the welfare system along the lines of a “negative income tax.” (79%)
> 14. Effluent taxes and marketable pollution permits represent a better approach to pollution control than imposition of pollution ceilings. (78%)

Socialist economic policies don’t work because they are making policies that are based on economic myths. We know that these myths are myths because of economics is a mathematical science, and because we have tried good and bad policies in different

times and places. We have calculations and we have experience to know what works and what doesn’t work. If you want to help the poor, you have to respect what economists know about how wealth is created. The solution is not to “spread the wealth around”, it’s to encourage people to create more wealth by inventing things that people freely choose to buy.

Economist Thomas Sowell explains the result of legislating price controls

September 6, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite economist is Thomas Sowell, who is famous for making the findings of academic economists accessible to ordinary people. I always joke to my friends that Thomas Sowell books are like Lay's potato chips – you can't read just one. Well, if you've read Dr. Sowell's flagship book "Basic Economics", you know that the early chapters are about how prices work in the economy.

So, I thought I would link to a VERY good article on price controls by Thomas Sowell. If you've never read him, I think you'll really enjoy how me makes sense of the world for you. Learning how the world works is fun – now you see how to make good decisions.

This is "An Ancient Fallacy: Price Controls" from Capitalism Magazine.

He writes:

> Those old enough to remember the gasoline crisis of 1979 may recall sitting in long lines of cars at filling stations, waiting — sometimes for hours — to reach the pump. This was one of the most common consequences of price control throughout history — a shortage. Yet how many Americans ever made the connection between the price controls of the 1970s and the gasoline shortages of the 1970s? How many have noticed that they haven't been waiting in gasoline lines since Ronald Reagan got rid of the price controls on oil?
>
> Why do price controls cause shortages? There are basically two reasons: supply and demand.
>
> People will not supply as much at a lower price as they will at a higher price. Some oil wells that will repay their costs and earn a profit when the price of oil is $25 a barrel will not cover their costs when the price is $15 a barrel. Some people who will rent out a bungalow in their backyard when rents are high will not bother when rents are low. Some farmers will give up farming when food prices are kept below the point where they can earn a living.
>
> On the demand side, people will demand more when the price is kept artificially low by price controls. Before rent control laws were passed in Sweden, less than one-fourth of unmarried adults there had their own separate housing units, but afterwards more than half did. People buy more of anything that is cheaper. With more being demanded and less being supplied, shortages are inevitable, whether with housing, food, medical care or whatever.
>
> It is not just the quantity supplied that declines under price controls. Quality also declines.
>
> When there are more people trying to rent apartments than there are apartments for rent, landlords no longer have to maintain the appearance of their

> buildings. They do not need to pay for painting, repairs or maintenance as often as they did when there was no housing shortage and they needed to attract tenants.
>
> Sometimes quality deterioration takes the form of waiting — not just cars waiting in line at filling stations, but also sick people remaining on waiting lists for months to get surgery or other medical treatment they need. Cheap medical care is one of the most expensive things there is.

So, if you force producers to charge less for what they are making, you might see a shortage, you might see a decline in quality, or you might see waiting lists.

Now, one of the examples that Sowell uses in his books is the example of rent control. This is when the government responds to people complaining that "the rent is too damn high" by forcing landlords to charge less. If you're paying attention, then you can predict what will happen next. There will be a shortage of housing, because people with capital invest it in other places, rather than building and renting out places to live. Why? Because there is no money to be made by investing in renting properties when the government is pushing prices down.

So, let's look at a reverse case, where price controls are removed. What would you expect to see when a country that has had rent control laws for a long time repeals it?

Well, Argentina just elected a new free market capitalist government, and they repealed their rent control laws.

Newsweek reports on what happened next:

> Argentina's recent repeal of rent control by libertarian President Javier Milei has led to a surge in housing supply, with the freedom to negotiate contracts, previously restricted, directly causing a drop in rental prices.
>
> Milei, a self-described "anarcho-capitalist" known for his free-market approach, repealed the 2020 Rental Law, enacted by former leftist President Alberto Fernández, which had imposed restrictions on landlords and led to a significant decline in rental availability.
>
> […]For many locals, finding a new apartment had become "mission impossible." But after the repeal, Buenos Aires saw a doubling of available rental units, and rental prices have stabilized. Under the new rules, landlords and tenants have more freedom to agree on lease terms. If the duration isn't specified, it defaults to two years.
>
> "We've seen a significant increase in rental apartments, and in some cases, we had to lower prices in pesos because of fewer viewings," Soledad Balayan, head of the real-estate agency Maure Inmobiliaria, told Argentine newspaper La Nación.
>
> Since Millei's repeal of rent control laws took effect on December 29, the supply of rental housing in Buenos Aires has jumped by 195.23%, according to the

> Statistical Observatory of the Real Estate Market of the Real Estate College (CI).

If you guessed that repealing price controls on rental properties would reverse the shortage and cause an abundance of high quality properties, then you guessed right. This is how the world works! Naturally, as supply increases, consumers have a lot more choice, and they get the benefit of better quality at a lower price, because of increased competition among suppliers of rental properties.

The article notes that Joe Biden has proposed rent control at the federal level, which is exactly the kind of policy that you would epect his successor, Kamala Harris, to push if she is elected President. If you know someone who rents, maybe you should tell them about the consequences of rent control laws?

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

September 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a debate with a well-qualified atheist and Dr. William Lane Craig, the most effective defender of Christianity operating today.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It’s not just that the settings are unlikely, it’s that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a “herd morality” that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this

evolved “herd morality”. However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God’s existence by pointing to the “evil” in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God’s existence.

Dr. Millican’s opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it

leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It's possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It's also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans

believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just

happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties

that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Robin Collins and atheist Peter Millican discuss the fine-tuning of the universe for life

September 8, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember Peter Millican from the debate he had with William Lane Craig. I ranked that debate as one of the 3 best I have ever seen, along with the first Craig vs Dacey debate and the second Craig vs Sinnott-Armstrong debate.

Details:

> Science has revealed that the fundamental constants and forces of the cosmos appear to be exquisitely fine-tuned to allow a universe in which life can develop. Is God the best explanation of the incredibly improbable odds of the universe we live in being a life-permitting one?
>
> Robin Collins is a Christian philosopher and a leading advocate of the argument for God from cosmic design. Peter Millican is an atheist philosopher at Oxford University. They debate the issues.
>
> From 'Unbelievable?' on 'Premier Christian Radio', Saturday 19th March 2016.

The debate:

As usual when the atheist is an expert, there is no snark or paraphrasing in the summary.

Summary

Brierley: What is the fine-tuning argument?

Collins: the fine-tuning is structure of the universe is extremely precisely set to allow the existing of conscious, embodied agents who are capable of moral behavior. There are 3 kinds of fine-tuning: 1) the laws of nature (mathematical formulas), 2) the constants of physics (numbers that are plugged into the equations), 3) the initial conditions of the universe. The fine-tuning exists not just because there are lots of possibilities, but there is something special about the actual state of affairs that we see. Every set of laws, parameters and initial conditions is equally improbable, but the vast majority of permutations do not permit life. The possible explanations: theism or the multiverse.

Brierley: How improbable are the numbers?

Collins: Once case is the cosmological constant (dark energy density), with is 1 part in (10 raised to 120th power). If larger, the universe expands too rapidly for galaxies and stars to form after the Big Bang. If smaller, the universe collapses in on itself before life could form. Another case is the initial distribution of mass energy to give us the low entropy we have that is necessary for life. The fine-tuning there is 1 part in (10 raised to the 10th power raised to the 123rd power).

Brierley: What do you think of the argument?

Millican: The argument is worth taking very seriously. I am a fan of the argument. The other arguments for God's existence such as the ontological and cosmological arguments

are very weak. But the fine-tuning argument has the right structure to deliver the conclusion that theists want. And it is different from the traditional design argument tended to focus on biological nature, which is not a strong argument. But the fine-tuning argument is strong because it precedes any sort of biological evolution. Although the design is present at the beginning of the universe, it is not visible until much later. The argument points to at least deism, and possibly theism. The argument is not based on ignorance, it is rooted in "the latest results from the frontiers of science" (his phrase).

Brierley: Is this the best argument from natural theology?

Collins: The cosmological argument makes theism viable intuitively, but there are some things that are puzzling, like the concept of the necessary being. But the fine-tuning argument is decisive.

Brierley: What's are some objections to the fine-tuning argument?

Millican: The argument is based on recent physics, so we should be cautious because we **maybe** we will discover a natural explanation.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: The cosmological constant has been around since 1980. But the direction that physics is moving in is that there are more constants and quantities being discovered that need to be fine-tuned, not less. Even if you had a grand unified theory, that would have to be have the fine-tuning pushed into it.

(BREAK)

Millican: Since we have no experience of other laws and values from other universes, **we don't know** whether these values can be other than they are. Psychologically, humans are prone to seeing purpose and patterns where there is none, so **maybe** that's happening here.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: It is possible to determine probabilities on a single universe case, for example using multiple ways of calculating Avogadro's number all converging on the same number makes it more probable.

Millican: Yes, I willing to accept that these constants can take on other values, ("principle of indifference"). But **maybe** this principle be applied if the improbability were pushed up into the theory?

Collins: Even if you had a grand theory, selecting the grand theory from others would retain the improbability.

Brierley: What about the multiverse?

Millican: **What if** there are many, many different universes, and we happen to be in the one that is finely-tuned, then we should not be surprised to observe fine-tuning. **Maybe** a multiverse theory will be discovered in the future that would allow us to have these many universes with randomized constants and quantities. "I do think that it is a little bit of a promissary note". I don't think physics is pointing to this right now.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Collins: I agree it's a promissary note. This is the strongest objection to the fine-tuning argument. But there are objections to the multiverse: 1) the fine-tuning is kicked back up to the multiverse generator has to be set just right to produce universes with different constants, 2) the multiverse is more likely to produce a small universe with Boltzmann brains that pop into existence and then out again, rather than a universe that contains conscious, embodied intelligent agents. I am working on a third response now that would show that the same constants that allow complex, embodied life ALSO allow the universe to be discoverable. This would negate the observer-selection effect required by the multiverse objection.

Brierley: Respond to that.

Millican: I don't see why the multiverse generator has to be fine-tuned, since **we don't know** what the multiverse generator is. I'm not impressed by the Boltzmann brains, but won't discuss. We should be cautious about inferring design because **maybe** this is a case where we are seeing purpose and design where there is none.

Brierley: Can you negate the discoverability of the universe by saying that it might be psychological?

Collins: These things are not psychological. The selected value for the cosmic microwave background radiation is fine-tuned for life and for discoverability. It's not merely a discoverability selection effect, it's optimal for discoverability. If baryon-photon value were much smaller, we would have known that it was not optimal. So that judgment cannot be explained by

Millican: That's a very interesting new twist.

Brierley: Give us your best objection.

Millican: I have two. 1) Even if you admit to the fine-tuning, this doesn't show a being who is omnipotent and omnisicient. What the fine-tuning shows is that the designer is doing the best it can given the constraints from nature. **If I were God,** I would not have made the universe so big, and I wouldn't have made it last 14 billion years, just to make one small area that supports life. An all-powerful God would have made the universe much smaller, and much younger. 2) The fine-tuning allows life to exist in other solar systems in other galaxies. What does this alien life elsewhere mean for traditional Christian theology? The existence of other alien civilizations argues against the truth of any one religion.

Brierley: Respond to those.

Collins: First objection: with a finite Creator, you run into the problem of having to push the design of that creature up one level, so you don't really solve the fine-tuning problem. An unlimited being (non-material, not composed of parts) does not require fine-tuning. The fine-tuning is more compatible with theism than atheism. Second objection: I actually do think that it is likely that are other universes, and life in other galaxies and stars, and the doctrine of the Incarnation is easily adaptable to that, because God can take on

multiple natures to appear to different alien civilizations.

Other resources (from WK)

If you liked this discussion, be sure and check out a full length lecture by Robin Collins on the fine-tuning, and a shorter lecture on his very latest work. And also this the Common Sense Atheism podcast, featuring cosmologist Luke Barnes, who answers about a dozen objections to the fine-tuning argument.

How is the Democrat party economic plan working out in European countries?

September 9, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

We just recorded a two episodes of Dr. Frank Turek's "I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist" podcast, over at CrossExamined.org and we talked about some of the policies of the Democrat party. Not just the ethical issues like abortion and LGBT, but also their economic policies. Whenever I could, I tried to point out where Democrat party policies had already been tried.

And here is a very good article from the Daily Signal, about how the economies of European countries are doing under similar policies as are being proposed by the Harris-Walz ticket.

It says:

> New numbers say the European Union has joined Japan in the "lost decades" brigade, with per-person gross domestic product in dollar terms nearly flat since 2008.
>
> According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, while disposable household income in the U.S. is $51,000, it's just $39,000 in Germany, $34,000 in France, $29,000 in Italy, and $21,000 in Greece. For perspective, Mexico is about $16,000.

A very good way to measure poverty in a country is to look at GDP per capita. This is the median amount produced by individuals in that country. A high GDP per capita means high individual productivity, which typically corelates with high individual earnings.

So why do people in Europe have such low productivity, and low earnings?

> Simple: Government took over. Government spending is nearly half of Europe's GDP, which hogs physical resources—steel, workers, etc.—while predatory tax rates punish production and welfare tempts workers away. Nobody produces, everybody takes.
>
> Add in mandates from environment to social policy that hike prices and slap straitjackets on companies, and the smart ones leave, the rest grimly soldier on, staying in business till their factories wear out, then it's lights out.
>
> In short, it doesn't pay to produce in Europe.

Notice the countries that he lists: France, Germany, Greece, and Italy. These are European countries that have government control of their economies. According to the Index of Economic Freedom, which measures how socialist an economy is, Germany is ranked #18 best out of 184 countries. But France is ranked 62, Italy is ranked 81, and Greece is ranked 113. A significant cause of Germany's poverty is the massive inflation caused by their green energy policies, bu their economy is largely free, as well as their

open border immigration policy.

Many Americans on the secular left say that those countries are not doing “real” socialism. They want us to look at countries like Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. and they call what’s happening in those countries “socialism”. But those are not socialist countries. Again, according to the Index of Economic Freedom, the economies of those countries are more free than the United States. Denmark is ranked #7 for most capitalist economy. Sweden is ranked #9 and Norway is ranked #10. The difference is that those economies have very high tax rates and very high government spending.

What makes an economy “free”?

The Heritage Foundation explains in this article:

> We measure economic freedom based on 12 quantitative and qualitative factors, grouped into four broad categories, or pillars, of economic freedom:
>
> - Rule of Law (property rights, government integrity, judicial effectiveness);
> - Government Size (government spending, tax burden, fiscal health);
> - Regulatory Efficiency (business freedom, labor freedom, monetary freedom); and
> - Open Markets (trade freedom, investment freedom, financial freedom).
>
> Each of the twelve economic freedoms within these categories is graded on a scale of 0 to 100. A country’s overall score is derived by averaging these twelve economic freedoms, with equal weight being given to each.

Sadly, the Harris-Walz plans for the United States are NOT to turn us into Denmark or Sweden or Norway. They aren’t going for a free market economy that is isolated from government, with higher taxes and more social spending. They are going for the model of France, Italy and Greece, with higher taxes, but also reducing property rights, fiscal health, business freedom, labor freedom, monetary freedom, trade freedom, investment freedom and financial freedom. But they also want to increase activist courts, government spending, and the tax burden on businesses and individuals.

I think the articles I linked to above are worth reading, because if you are a Christian, you will find it much harder to achieve the goals you have as a Christian in an economic system that is unfree. It’s hard to think about apologetics and evangelism when you can’t afford electricy or food. That’s happening right now in secular left countries like Cuba, Venezuela and North Korea.

What kinds of Christians should we look up to?

September 10, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Many Christians admire celebrities, athletes, entertainers, and other famous people. But the Christians who impress me are the ones who use their minds to explain Christianity to non-Christians, get into trouble for it, and stand by their beliefs. Three of the ones who come to mind for me are William Dembski, Guillermo Gonzalez and Richard Sternberg. And the first two have posted new stuff.

Frank Turek posted a new podcast about this Substack from William Dembski, where he talks about his thoughts after reading Meg Basham's new book.

Here is his main point, illustrated with many Bible verses:

> My point in this post is not to name evangelical elites who have compromised themselves or the secular philanthropies who have tempted them into compromise. You can get the details in Basham's book. But here's an example that Basham gives that's emblematic of the temptations faced by elite evangelicals. It's the the case of an elite evangelical being invited to dinner at the Obama White House. I knew this individual 20 years ago early in his career. He has since had a meteoric rise in elite evangelical circles. In the introduction to a recent book that he wrote, he inserts a paragraph that seems out of place about his dinner at the Obama White House (confirming Basham's account). No doubt, it must be personally gratifying to be invited to the White House. But ego aside, is that really something for an evangelical to be proud of given that the Obama presidency was so opposed to core evangelical beliefs and practices?

I think he's talking about Russell Moore, who met with Obama. I have an extremely, extremely low opinion of Russell Moore. I don't think he's an authentic Christian at all. I think he pretended to be a Christian when he was young, to impress the Christians around him. And then when he fell in with a secular left crowd, he adapted his views so that they would praise him, too. He never put in the work to know whether Christianity is true. People who don't know whether Christianity is true tend to just USE Christian language to decorate what is essentially a narcissistic enterprise. And of course he doesn't work at showing non-Christians that it is true, with evidence. That would run counter to his real goal of feeling good, and getting people to like him.

More:

> Let me put this point more starkly. The Scriptures teach repeatedly that we should guard against recognition, accolades, and advancement from those hostile to the faith and that in fact we are on much safer ground when those hostile to the faith persecute rather than praise us. This is not to say that we should purposely make ourselves so annoying or distasteful that we receive the reproach of unbelievers (as when Christians act as hypocrites). But it is to say

that by quietly and consistently living out our faith, we will naturally attract opposition (consider the ongoing saga of the Denver baker Jack Phillips).

The New Testament makes this point so consistently, as illustrated in the following verses, that it is hard to dismiss it simply as proof texting:

Matthew 5:10–12
"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Matthew 10:22
"You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved."

Luke 6:22–23
"Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets."

John 15:18–20
"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also."

Acts 5:40–41
"They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name."

2 Timothy 3:12
"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

1 Peter 2:20b–21
"If you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."

Luke 6:26
"Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets."

> **John 5:44**
> "How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?"
>
> **John 12:42b–43**
> "Because of the Pharisees, [many] would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved human praise more than praise from God."
>
> **Galatians 1:10**
> "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ."
>
> **James 4:4**
> "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."
>
> So the prime lesson I take from Basham's book, and one I would like readers of this post to take with them also, is that we do well not to sell our Christian birthright for a mess of liberal or progressive pottage. We should be better than that and our Christian faith demands better than that.

If you're not familiar with what the Baptists elites did to Dembski at Baylor University, he talks about it in that column.

He's not the only one who was persecuted. In a recent interview, Guillermo Gonzalez talked about what happened to him at Iowa State University:

And there is the story of Richard Sternberg, which is reported on here and here. I could go on, but there are 3 examples.

I believe that these men will have a much larger crowns in Heaven than famous "Christian" athletes, celebrities and entertainers. They had to pay a price for their faith. Do you know who they are? And what about you? Is there something that happened to you that hurt you, because you put Boss above your own reputation with non-Christians? You think that what happened to you is a loss, but actually, sharing in the sufferings of Jesus for obedience to the Father is a sign that you are a real follower of Jesus. This is something that many elite Christian leaders do not know.

New video series on intelligent design starts off discussing the Cambrian explosion

September 11, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I am always on the lookout for good resources on science and Christianity. And I found some. Well, Uncommon Descent found them, and I read their blog, so I found them too. The first four episodes are out, and the topics are: 1) introducing the Cambrian explosion, 2) pre-Cambrian fossils, 3) punctuated equilibrium, and 4) Darwin's "tree of life". Each video is 12-20 minutes long.

So, before we see the videos, I feel I should explain the outline for arguing for a creator / designer of the universe from scratch. There are six main arguments. 1) the origin of the universe from nothing, 2) fine-tuning of the creation event, 3) fine-tuning for habitability in the galaxy, solar system, and planet, 4) the origin of the first living self-replicating organism, 5) irreducible / minimal complexity in molecular machines, 6) the sudden origin of basic body plans in the Cambrian explosion (a geological period a long time ago).

These four videos introduce you to the sixth argument in that list, the Cambrian explosion.

First video: Introducing the Cambrian explosion

Description:

> When Charles Darwin published "On the Origin of Species" in 1859, he was painstakingly aware of the fact that the fossil record diametrically opposed his theory. Ever since Darwin's time, paleontologists have put their finger on the Cambrian explosion, where most of the major animal phyla appear abruptly in the fossil record suddenly and without any evidence of intermediate forms preceding them in Precambrian strata.

Second video: evaluating precursors to the Cambrian explosion

Description:

> Are there transitional forms and Precambrian fossils which reveal the evolution of the diverse animal phyla that appear in the Cambrian explosion? The history of paleontology shows the answer is no! As paleontologists have learned more about the fossil and geological record, the challenge of the Cambrian explosion to Darwinian theory has only increased.

Third video: evaluating punctuated equilibrium

Description:

> In the 1970s, paleontologists Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge proposed a model of evolution called punctuated equilibrium, intended to resolve the lack of transitional forms in the fossil record. Can "Punk Eek," as it's often called, resolve

> the abrupt appearance of new animal phyla in the Cambrian explosion? This video explains why the answer is No—among many other problems, Punk Eek requires too much evolutionary change too quickly and lacks a biological mechanism to account for the rapid origin of anatomical novelty we see in the Cambrian period.

Fourth video: evaluating homology and phylogenetics

Description:

> As more scientists have realized that the fossil record poses serious challenges to Darwin's theory of evolution, many have turned to molecular homologies and phylogenetic trees to defend Darwin's tree of life. But do these approaches really support Darwin's tree? Nope.

If you like these videos, you can read a much longer, more detailed book about it by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, called "Darwin's Doubt". Or, you can do what I'm doing and just read a chapter about it in the new book "The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith". That book covers all 6 of the arguments I mentioned before. You can see the table of contents on the Discovery Institute web site. The chapter by Dr. Gunter Bechly entitled "Does the Fossil Record Demonstrate Darwinian Evolution?" covers the fossil record, and the Cambrian explosion in particular. I like Gunter a LOT, because he had a recent debate on the Unbelievable show on this topic, and he really cleaned the clock of his opponent, a slippery theistic evolutionist named Joshua Swamidass. It was beautiful. He cut through all the theistic evolution garbage and got straight into the science.

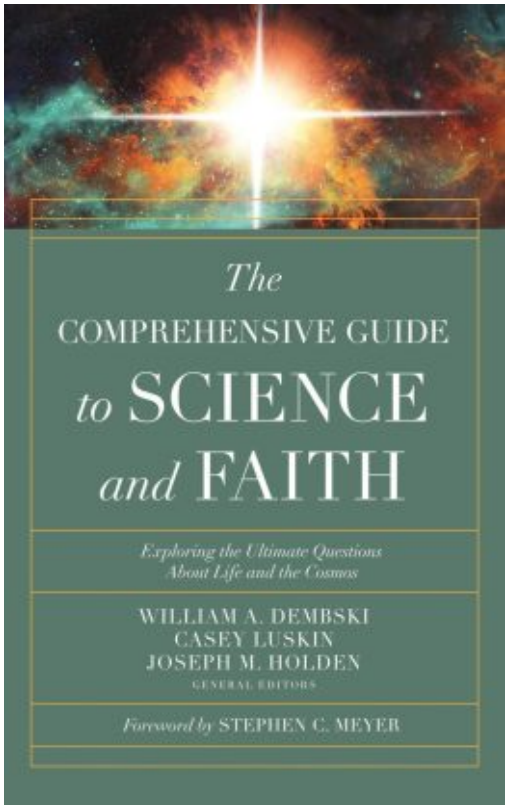

I'm reading the book right now. Or rather, I'm having it read to me, because I got the audio book version. If you remember reading books like "Mere Creation" (1998) and "The

Creation Hypothesis” (1994) as a young man like I do, then you will love this book.

I like to know a little about every interesting topic, and then watch lots of university lectures and formal debates about them, so I can debate these topics in the places where I live and work. The new book has a lot of different authors from a lot of different perspectives writing on a lot of different topics. You could find a way to talk about these topics in pretty much any environment.

So far, I like Dr. Fazale Rana’s chapter on Adam and Eve the best, but I’m still in Section I. I’m just starting on Jay Richards chapter next.

Study: white progressives are more racist against minorities than white conservatives

September 12, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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What's the definition of racism? Well, it seems to me that a person is racist if they treat people of a different skin color differently than they treat people of their own skin color. So, if a white person treats a black person differently than they do a white person, then the white person is a racist. Because they're discriminating on the basis of skin color. So, who are the real racists? Conservatives? Or Progressives?

The Yale School of Management reports on an academic study that provides the definitive answer to the question:

> According to new research by Cydney Dupree, assistant professor of organizational behavior at Yale SOM, white liberals tend to downplay their own verbal competence in exchanges with racial minorities, compared to how other white Americans act in such exchanges. The study is scheduled for publication in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.
>
> […]Dupree and her co-author, Susan Fiske of Princeton University, began by analyzing the words used in campaign speeches delivered by Democratic and Republican presidential candidates to different audiences over the years. They scanned 74 speeches delivered by white candidates over a 25-year period. Approximately half were addressed to mostly-minority audiences—at a Hispanic small business roundtable discussion or a black church, for example. They then paired each speech delivered to a mostly-minority audience with a comparable speech delivered at a mostly-white audience—at a mostly-white church or university, for example. The researchers analyzed the text of these speeches for two measures: words related to competence (that is, words about ability or status, such as "assertive" or "competitive") and words related to warmth (that is, words about friendliness, such as "supportive" and "compassionate").
>
> […]The team found that Democratic candidates used fewer competence-related words in speeches delivered to mostly minority audiences than they did in speeches delivered to mostly white audiences. The difference wasn't statistically significant in speeches by Republican candidates… There was no difference in Democrats' or Republicans' usage of words related to warmth.

More testing confirmed the patronizing white supremacist attitude of whites on the political left:

> They designed a series of experiments in which white participants were asked to respond to a hypothetical or presumed-real interaction partner. For half of these participants, their partner was given a stereotypically white name (such as "Emily"); for the other half, their partner was given a stereotypically black name

> (such as “Lakisha”). Participants were asked to select from a list of words for an email to their partner.
>
> […]The researchers found that liberal individuals were less likely to use words that would make them appear highly competent when the person they were addressing was presumed to be black rather than white. No significant differences were seen in the word selection of conservatives based on the presumed race of their partner.

Conservatives aren’t racist at all – they’re color blind.

One of the reasons why I get along so well with white conservatives is that they don’t patronize me with low expectations, the way that white leftists patronize non-whites. The view of white progressives is similar to the view of white supremacist racists – they think that there is something defective about people like me because of our non-white skin color.

White supremacists and white progressives agree on this: that non-white people aren’t competent enough to make our own decisions. We need help from big government in order to do what whites can do without help. We need to be told what to think for our own good, and shamed if we step out of line. It’s amazing to me that white racist progressives are seen as “compassionate”, when they are the ones who actually believe in the racial inferiority of non-whites.

Why do so many law-abiding Americans carry legally-owned firearms?

September 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I'm not originally from the United States, and when I go back home to visit, one of the questions that I get asked a lot is "why do Americans own so many guns?" My favorite writer on the gun ownership and self-defense issues is Amy Swearer, who writes for the Daily Signal. Below, I'll link to two recent articles where she talks about recent examples of self-defense in America.

Here are some examples from August 2024:

> - **Aug. 5, Albuquerque, New Mexico:** A disabled Vietnam War veteran awoke to the sounds of someone using a knife to open his bedroom window, police said. The veteran grabbed a pistol from a nightstand and, as the intruder raised the window, fired a single shot that killed him.
>
> - **Aug. 15, Brookhaven, Georgia:** Police said that a woman called a neighbor for help after her home surveillance system detected four armed men had broken in. The neighbor confronted the men and, according to witnesses, exchanged 15 to 20 rounds until police arrived and the suspects fled in a car. After a chase and a second exchange of fire with officers, three of the four were taken into custody, police said.
>
> - **Aug. 21, Liberty Hills, Texas:** As a homeowner surveyed his backyard with a contractor, he saw a machete-wielding man climb a fence, enter his property, and try to get into his residence, police said. Afraid for his wife and two young children, the homeowner locked up before getting his gun and confronting the man on a deck of the residence. Seeing the gun, the intruder began to walk away and was arrested by police. He was charged with criminal trespass.
>
> - **Aug. 23, Falls Mills, Virginia:** Police said a would-be carjacker assaulted a female driver at a rural gas station, telling her child in the back seat: "I'm going to rape your mommy." Bystanders, one with a handgun, heard the woman's screams and came to her aid. The carjacker charged at the armed good Samaritan, who shot and wounded him. Police said that the assailant was wanted on outstanding criminal charges. The local sheriff publicly praised the bystanders who intervened, telling reporters, "This could have been a very different outcome."
>
> - **Aug. 24, Medford, Oregon:** An armed resident fatally shot an intruder who forced his way into an apartment and threatened another resident with

> a knife, police said.

And here are some examples from July 2024:

- **July 2, Bullhead City, Arizona:** Police said Mayor Steve D'Amico heard someone banging on his front door and "messing with" the doorknob in the middle of the night, so he armed himself for a potential confrontation. While still in his underwear, the mayor opened the door, located the would-be intruder (who'd somehow gotten past a locked gate), and detained him at gunpoint until police arrived. The suspect faced charges for trespassing and disorderly conduct.
- **July 8, California Valley Village, California:** Police said two intruders broke into what they believed was an unoccupied residence and came face-to-face with an armed homeowner. After a "scuffle" in which one intruder used pepper spray against him, the homeowner opened fire, hitting one intruder and sending the other fleeing with an accomplice waiting in a getaway car. The wounded suspect was identified as a repeat offender recently released on probation; his extensive criminal record included arrests for burglary, robbery, and illegal gun possession.
- **July 18, Towns County, Georgia:** Police said an armed homeowner helped end a dayslong search for an escaped prisoner who walked away from an off-site work detail. The homeowner ordered him to the ground and held him at gunpoint until police arrived. The homeowner's dog had alerted him to an intruder on the property; when the homeowner investigated, he saw the man in an orange prison jumpsuit. The escapee had been at a county detention center awaiting a court appearance on charges including two counts of burglary, drug offenses, and violating his probation.
- **July 22, Ogden, Utah:** Police said a pair of pit bulls attacked two neighbors, who shot the dogs to avoid being bitten. The growling dogs had hemmed in one neighbor, who shot and killed one dog when they went after him; the other neighbor shot and wounded the second dog when it charged. The dogs had a history of biting, police said.
- **July 28, North Vernon, Indiana:** An intruder entered a house through an unlocked door, helped himself to food, went into the room of a female resident, and chased her around the property, police said. The homeowner armed himself and held the intruder at gunpoint until police arrived. The suspect faced charges of burglary and unlawful residential entry.

It's especially important for people living in blue cities or blue states to arm themselves,

because the police forces in these areas have had their budgets slashed by Democrats. “Defund the police” sounds so good, but it just gets a lot of peaceful, law-abiding people killed.

It’s very important to ask secular leftists who want to ban law-abiding people from owning firearms “what do you expect people to do when criminals want to hurt them?” The answer I get from my atheist Democrat friend is that he expects them to call the police, and wait for them to arrive. There is a real suspicion among secular leftists of law-abiding people defend themselves – especially men. A man defending his family? Why, that’s “sexist”. Better to call the police and wait for them to arrive.

The peer-reviewed research

Whenever I get into discussions about gun control, I always mention two academic books by John R. Lott and Joyce Lee Malcolm.

- The Lott book was published by the University of Chicago Press (now in its 3rd edition)
- The Malcolm book was published by Harvard University Press

The book by economist John Lott, linked above, compares the crime rates of all U.S. states that have enacted concealed carry laws, and concludes that violent crime rates *dropped* after law-abiding citizens were allowed to carry legally-owned firearms. That’s the mirror image of Dr. Malcolm’s Harvard study, which shows that the 1997 UK gun ban caused violent crime rates to MORE THAN DOUBLE in the four years following the ban. But both studies affirm the same conclusion – more legal firearm ownership means less crime.

One of the common mistakes I see anti-gun advocates making is to use the metric of all “gun-related deaths”. First of all, this completely ignores the effects of hand gun ownership on violent crime, as we’ve seen. Take away the guns from law-abiding people and violent crime skyrockets. But using the “gun-related deaths” number is especially wrong, because it includes suicides committed with guns. This is the majority (about two thirds) of gun related deaths, even in a country like America that has a massive inner-city gun violence problem caused by the epidemic of single motherhood by choice. If you take out the gun-related SUICIDES, then the actual number of gun homicides has decreased as gun ownership has grown.

For a couple of useful graphs related to this point, check out this post over at the American Enterprise Institute.

William Lane Craig’s moral argument, and five objections to it

September 14, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Which argument for God is the most accessible? To really sustain the cosmic beginning argument and the cosmic fine-tuning argument, you have to learn some scientific evidence. Same for the resurrection of Jesus – you have to learn some history. But what about the moral argument? All you need to make that argument is for your opponent to think that something is morally wrong.

First, let’s review the moral argument, from William Lane Craig.

He writes:

> We are going to turn now to a discussion of the moral argument for the existence of God. So far we have been looking at philosophical and scientific arguments. This is an ethical argument. There are a wide variety of moral reasons for believing in God, but this is a particularly simple moral argument that I have used over and over again with university students and I find very effective. It really grabs people where they live. This is not just a matter of scientific evidence or philosophical issues that may not impact your life. This is an issue that is vitally important because everyday as you live you make moral choices. So everyday by your behavior you answer the question whether or not you believe that God exists. The argument consists basically of three simple steps:
>
> 1. If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist.
>
> 2. Objective moral values do exist.
>
> 3. Therefore, God exist.
>
> That is a very simple argument for the existence of God and is easy to memorize. It is just three steps. It is logically valid. If those two premises are true then the conclusion follows necessarily and logically. The only question is: are the two premises true?

But there are some objections to the moral argument. CrossExamined.org has posted a list of five objections to the moral argument from philosopher Paul Rezkalla.

Here are the 5 points:

1. “But I’m a moral person and I don’t believe in God. Are you saying that atheists can’t be moral?”
2. “But what if you needed to lie in order to save someone’s life? It seems that morality is not absolute as you say it is.”
3. ‘Where’s your evidence for objective morality? I won’t believe in anything unless I have evidence for it.’
4. ‘If morality is objective, then why do some cultures practice female genital

mutilation, cannibalism, infanticide, and other atrocities which we, in the West, deem unacceptable?'

5. 'But God carried out many atrocities in the Old Testament. He ordered the genocide of the Canaanites.'

That last one seems to be popular, so let's double-check the details:

> For starters, this isn't really an objection to the moral argument. It does not attack either premise of the argument. It is irrelevant, but let's entertain this objection for a second. By making a judgement on God's actions and deeming them immoral, the objector is appealing to a standard of morality that holds true outside of him/herself and transcends barriers of culture, context, time period, and social norms. By doing this, he/she affirms the existence of objective morality! But if the skeptic wants to affirm objective morality after throwing God out the window, then there needs to be an alternate explanation for its basis. If not God, then what is it? The burden is now on the skeptic to provide a naturalistic explanation for the objective moral framework.

If you have heard any of these objections before when discussing the moral argument, click through and take a look.

And if you have a non-Christian in your life who likes to make moral statements, it's a good conversation to have. Where does your standard come from? Is it from your own desires? Is it from cultural conventions, that vary by time and place? Is it from Darwinian evolution? Find out what the answer is, and then respond to it.

Knight and Rose Show #53: A Christian Perspective on the 2024 Election

September 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Welcome to episode 53 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the upcoming 2024 American election, and how specific policies would impact Christians. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the upcoming 2024 election. How can you measure whether an economy is socialist or free enterprise? Are Scandinavian countries an example of socialism? Does the Bible teach that Christians should support socialism? Which economic system is better for individual prosperity? We also discuss inflation, price controls, moral issues, crime, immigration, energy and health care.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show (with timestamps) provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 53:

Links

Abortion:

- Harris and Walz Would be the Most Extreme Pro-Abortion Administration in History
- Rating on abortion policy: Kamala Harris
- Rating on abortion policy: Tim Walz
- Planned Parenthood execs allegedly caught discussing sale of fetus body parts in shocking undercover video

LGBT:

- Tim Walz Signed Bill Making Minnesota a Sanctuary State for Child Sex-Changes
- The Dangers of the Equality Act

Crime:

- Walz Shifted Blame To City Leaders For ‘Abject Failure’ In Response To 2020 Minneapolis Riots
- What Harris’ Voters Don’t Know About Her Could Hurt America

Immigration:

- New Report Details The True Cost Of Illegal Immigration
- Whistleblowers Detail How 85,000 ‘Unaccompanied Minors’ Went Missing After Biden Admin Dropped Them Off With ‘Sponsors’

Energy:

- New Minnesota law mandates 100% clean energy by 2040
- Where Kamala Harris stands on Green New Deal and climate initiatives
- Exploding Energy Prices in California

Health care:

- 7 reasons to fear Kamala Harris’ radical ‘Medicare-for-all’ schemes
- The Price of Public Health Care Insurance, 2024
- Waiting Your Turn: Wait Times for Health Care in Canada, 2023 Report

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Mark D. Linville: does Darwinian evolution make morality rational?

September 16, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Have you ever heard an atheist tell you that naturalistic evolution is an answer to the moral argument? I have. And I found a good reply to this challenge in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". The chapter that responds to the challenge is authored by Dr. Mark D. Linville. It is only 13 pages long. I have a link to the PDF at the bottom of this post.

First, a bit about the author:

> Blog: The Tavern at the End of the World
> Current positions:
>
> - PhD Research Fellow
> - Tutoring Fellow in Philosophy
>
> Education:
>
> - PhD in Philosophy with a minor in South Asian Studies and a specialization in Philosophy of Religion, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy of Religion, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
> - MA in Theology, Cincinnati Christian Seminary
> - BA in Biblical Studies, Florida Christian College

Here is his thesis of the essay:

> Darwin's account of the origins of human morality is at once elegant, ingenious, and, I shall argue, woefully inadequate. In particular, that account, on its standard interpretation, does not explain morality, but, rather, explains it away . We learn from Darwin not how there could be objective moral facts, but how we could have come to believe—perhaps erroneously—that there are.
>
> Further, the naturalist, who does not believe that there is such a personal being as God, is in principle committed to Darwinism, including a Darwinian account of the basic contours of human moral psychology. I'll use the term evolutionary naturalism to refer to this combination of naturalism and Darwinism. And so the naturalist is saddled with a view that explains morality away. Whatever reason we have for believing in moral facts is also a reason for thinking naturalism is false. I conclude the essay with a brief account of a theistic conception of morality, and argue that the theist is in a better position to affirm the objectivity of morality.

And here’s a sample to get your attention:

> But even if we are assured that a “normal” person will be prompted by the social instincts and that those instincts are typically flanked and reinforced by a set of moral emotions, we still do not have a truly normative account of moral obligation. There is nothing in Darwin’s own account to indicate that the ensuing sense of guilt—a guilty feeling—is indicative of actual moral guilt resulting from the violation of an objective moral law. The revenge taken by one’s own conscience amounts to a sort of second-order propensity to feel a certain way given one’s past relation to conflicting first-order propensities (e.g., the father’s impulse to save his child versus his impulse to save himself). Unless we import normative considerations from some other source, it seems that, whether it is a first or second-order inclination,one’s being prompted by it is more readily understood as a descriptive feature of one’s own psychology than material for a normative assessment of one’s behavior or character. And, assuming that there is anything to this observation, an ascent into even higher levels of propensities (“I feel guilty for not having felt guilty for not being remorseful over not obeying my social instincts…”) introduces nothing of normative import. Suppose you encounter a man who neither feels the pull of social, paternal or familial instincts nor is in the least bit concerned over his apparent lack of conscience. What, from a strictly Darwinian perspective, can one say to him that is of any serious moral import? “You are not moved to action by the impulses that move most of us.” Right. So?
>
> The problem afflicts contemporary construals of an evolutionary account of human morality. Consider Michael Shermer’s explanation for the evolution of a moral sense—the “science of good and evil.” He explains,
>
> By a moral sense, I mean a moral feeling or emotion generated by actions. For example, positive emotions such as righteousness and pride are experienced as the psychological feeling of doing “good.” These moral emotions likely evolved out of behaviors that were reinforced as being good either for the individual or for the group.2
>
> Shermer goes on to compare such moral emotions to other emotions and sensations that are universally experienced, such as hunger and the sexual urge. He then addresses the question of moral motivation.
>
> In this evolutionary theory of morality, asking “Why should we be moral?” is like asking “Why should we be hungry?” or “Why should we be horny?” For that matter, we could ask, “Why should we be jealous?” or “Why should we fall in love?” The answer is that it is as much a part of human nature to be moral as it is to be hungry, horny, jealous, and in love.3
>
> Thus, according to Shermer, given an evolutionary account, such a question is simply a non-starter. Moral motivation is a given as it is wired in as one of our basic drives. Of course, one might point out that Shermer’s “moral emotions”

> often do need encouragement in a way that, say, “horniness,” does not. More importantly, Shermer apparently fails to notice that if asking “Why should I be moral?” is like asking, “Why should I be horny?” then asserting, “You ought to be moral” is like asserting, “You ought to be horny.” As goes the interrogative, so goes the imperative. But if the latter seems out of place, then, on Shermer’s view, so is the former.
>
> One might thus observe that if morality is anything at all, it is irreducibly normative in nature. But the Darwinian account winds up reducing morality to descriptive features of human psychology. Like the libido, either the moral sense is present and active or it is not. If it is, then we might expect one to behave accordingly. If not, why, then, as a famous blues man once put it, “the boogie woogie just ain’t in me.” And so the resulting “morality” is that in name only.
>
> **In light of such considerations, it is tempting to conclude with C. S. Lewis that, if the naturalist remembered his philosophy out of school, he would recognize that any claim to the effect that “I ought” is on a par with “I itch,” in that it is nothing more than a descriptive piece of autobiography with no essential reference to any actual obligations.**

When it comes to morality, we are not interested in mere descriptions of behavior. We want to know about prescriptions of behavior, and whether why we should care about following those prescriptions. We are interested in what grounds our sense of moral obligation in reality. What underwrites our sense of moral obligation? If it is just rooted in feelings, then why should we obey our moral sense when obeying it goes against out self-interest? Feelings are subjective things, and doing the right thing in a real objective state of affairs requires more than just feelings. There has to be a real objective state of affairs that makes it rational for us to do the right thing, even when the right thing is against our own self-interest. That’s what morality is – objective moral obligations *overriding* subjective feelings. I wouldn’t trust someone to be moral if it were just based on their feelings.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

September 17, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates

- You didn’t need to come out on this cold night
- Craig’s arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn’t listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don’t require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that “every effect requires a cause”
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can’t see
- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism

6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said.

Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can’t God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus’ burial isn’t historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig’s concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg’s concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig’s arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don’t look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

Can we rely on the secular left to protect us from school shooters?

September 18, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A while back, a transgender person committed a mass shooting at a Christian school in Nashville, TN. People were waiting to see if the killer's writings would reveal that the motive was to kill Christians. Many people in secular left governments share the killer's convictions that transgenderism is good, and Christianity is bad. Can we trust them to prevent such attacks?

First, you might not have heard, but the Tennessee Star obtained the writings of the Nashville shooter.

The article (September 4, 2024) explained about the killer's mental health:

> In various entries that referenced her mental health, Hale confirmed her desire to transition genders, revealed a purported autism diagnosis, claimed she was not "bi-polar," and wrote that she once called a phone number associated with a Suicide Prevention Helpline five times in one day.

You might remember how the Biden-Harris regime sought to suppress her manifesto:

> Since it first obtained Hale's journal and a portion of police documents related to the Covenant case, The Star has published more than 100 articles that analyze the killer's own words or provide new details about the police investigation, including the existence of an FBI memo which "strongly" advised MNPD against releasing "legacy tokens" from killers like Hale. The term would appear to include her writings.

Now there are new articles that reminded me of this story.

Here's a new article from Daily Wire, dated 9/17/24.

It says:

> A federal judge released an alleged cyberstalker in Tennessee who identifies as transgender and made threatening statements aimed at a Christian school.
>
> McKenzie McClure, a woman who identifies as a man and goes by Kalvin McClure, made a concerning call to Nashville, Tennessee's, Christ Presbyterian Academy (CPA) in March of this year just days before the anniversary of the Covenant School shooting, when a transgender-identifying woman killed six victims, including three nine-year olds.
>
> McClure, a former student of CPA, left a voicemail for the school where she referenced a Marvel movie in which a character returns to an orphanage where he was raised and kills a headmaster who was abusive. The message caused CPA and nearby Currey Ingram Academy to close the following day and resulted in

> McClure being arrested by federal agents a month later for alleged cyberstalking.
>
> Security cameras at the school also appeared to show McClure walking across campus making obscene gestures in the days before her arrest.

Maybe we'll see this McKenzie McClure person in the news soon, and then there will be excuses from the people who encouraged her down the transgender path.

Here's another article from Daily Wire, also dated 9/17/24, and also related to public safety and mental illness.

It says:

> Iowa police arrested a trans-identifying 19-year-old on Monday and charged her with a "threat of terrorism" after she revealed in therapy that she wanted to shoot up an elementary school, The Daily Wire has learned.
>
> The Norwalk Police Department announced Monday that it had arrested Margaret Anderson after being made aware last week of a "potential threat" to Oviatt Elementary School, located in Norwalk, Iowa. In a release, the department said that Anderson has been charged with a "Threat of Terrorism" under Iowa Code 708A.5, and had been processed into the Warren County Jail.
>
> Anderson is a 19-year-old female who identifies as a transgender man, Warren County Attorney Doug Eichholz confirmed to The Daily Wire on Tuesday.
>
> […]According to Eichholz, the complaint about Anderson says: "The defendant stated that she had thoughts that she wanted to take a gun to Oviatt Elementary School in Norwalk, at 11 am through the cafeteria, and shoot children."

And she was also released to house arrest:

> She was then arrested on Monday, Eichholz said, released Tuesday morning to house arrest with restrictions including a GPS bracelet, and is currently on pretrial release.

Now, if I asked the "don't judge" people why they want to encourage young people towards transgenderism rather than helping them, they would say that nothing bad can ever result from their actions, because they just love everyone, and they don't judge. "My motives are pure, I feel good about myself, other people like me, and so anything bad that happens next isn't my fault", they say. "The world is such a complicated place. I can't predict the consequences of my actions", they cry. I don't see why we should celebrate people who want to lead children down the path of Audrey Hale, McKenzie McClure, and Margaret Anderson. How does that help them? And how does that help us to have a more peaceful society?

So what to do? Well, I think that it's wise to choose to live far away from these "don't judge" people. We need to stop dating them. We need to stop marrying them, too. We need to stop having children with them. We need to stop giving our kids to these "don't judge" people in daycares and public schools. We need to stop letting our kids be

influenced by them through entertainment and social media. And most of all, we need to stop living in places where “don’t judge” people run the government, the schools, the hospitals, law enforcement and the courts.

What did the earliest Christians think about Hell?

September 19, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I thought it might be a good idea for us to take a look at the doctrine of Hell, and see how far back it goes. These days, people seem to have lost sight of the idea that there will be eternal separation from God for people who reject him. But this idea is a core part of Christianity, and it goes right back to the early church fathers. Not to mention how much Jesus has to say about it.

Here's an article from Cold Case Christianity, by J. Warner Wallace, that talks about what early Christians thought of Hell.

Introduction:

> As we seek to understand what the Bible teaches about Hell, it may be helpful to understand what the earliest believers believed and taught. The teachings of the early believers have been preserved for us in the writings of the earliest church leaders (known as the Early Church Fathers). While their writings are not canonical (they are not on par with the words of the Bible), they do help us to see what those closest to the apostles first understood as Biblical Truth.
>
> As we assemble the teachings of these first church leaders, several patterns emerge related to the nature of Hell. The Early Church Fathers, with very few exceptions, agree with the teaching of the Bible in the way they describe Hell:

> 1. Hell is a place of judgment for those who have rejected God and denied Jesus as their Savior
> 2. Hell is a place of separation from God
> 3. Hell is a place of torment in which the rebellious are in anguish and pain
> 4. Hell is a place where the rebellious are tormented forever and are CONSCIOUS of this torment for all eternity (In fact, the eternal duration of their torment is often compared to the eternal duration of the reward of the saved)

> At the same time, the earliest Church Fathers are ambiguous on those areas where the Bible is ALSO ambiguous.
>
> 1. The exact nature of the torment of the rebellious is unknown
> 2. The manner in which the rebellious are kept alive in spite of 'deathly' anguish is also un-described
>
> The Early Church Fathers simply reflected the clearest teachings of the Bible related to the nature of Hell. They believed that Hell was a place of eternal conscious torment, reflecting the clearest teaching of the scriptures.

Excerpt:

> From Ignatius of Antioch (110AD)
>
> Ignatius was a student of the Apostle John, and succeeded the Apostle Peter as

the Bishop of Antioch. He wrote a number of important letters to believers in churches in the area:

Corrupters of families will not inherit the kingdom of God. And if they who do these things according to the flesh suffer death. how much more if a man corrupt by evil reaching the faith of God. for the sake of which Jesus Christ was crucified? A man become so foul will depart into unquenchable fire: and so will anyone who listens to him. (Letter to the Ephesians 16:1-2)

From Clement of Rome (150AD)

Clement was Bishop of Rome from 88 to 98AD, and his teaching reflects the early traditions of the Church. “Second Clement” reportedly a recorded sermon, and Clement discusses the nature of Hell:

If we do the will of Christ, we shall obtain rest; but if not, if we neglect his commandments, nothing will rescue us from eternal punishment (“Second Clement” 5:5)

But when they see how those who have sinned and who have denied Jesus by their words or by their deeds are punished with terrible torture in unquenchable fire, the righteous, who have done good, and who have endured tortures and have hated the luxuries of life, will give glory to their God saying, ‘There shall be hope for him that has served God with all his heart!’ (“Second Clement” 17:7)

From Irenaeus (189AD)

Irenaeus was bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul (now Lyon, France) at the end of the second century. He was a disciple of Polycarp and a notable early apologist for the faith. He wrote several volumes defending the faith against Gnosticism and other early heresies of the Church, and he often compared eternal punishment to eternal reward, drawing the conclusion that one endured as long as the other:

…Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, ‘every knee should bow, of things in heaven,, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess’ to Him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all; that He may send ‘spiritual wickednesses,’ and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning of their Christian course, and others from the date of their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory. (“Against Heresies” 1:10:10)

The penalty increases for those who do not believe the Word of God and despise his coming. . . . [I]t is not merely temporal, but eternal. To whomsoever the Lord shall say, ‘Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire,’ they will be damned forever (“Against Heresies” 4:28:2)

> From Clement of Alexandria (195AD)
>
> Titus Flavius Clemens was the first significant and recorded Christian from the church of Alexandria, Egypt. His parents were Greek and he was raised with a solid, formal Greek education. While he had a tendency to blend Greek and Christian philosophies, his view on the issue of Hell was derived from the scriptures:
>
> All souls are immortal, even those of the wicked. Yet, it would be better for them if they were not deathless. For they are punished with the endless vengeance of quenchless fire. Since they do not die, it is impossible for them to have an end put to their misery. (from a post-Nicene manuscript fragment)
>
> From Tertullian (197AD)
>
> Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus was a Romanized African citizen who was born in Carthage (now Tunisia). He became a Christian and was a powerful and influential apologist for the faith, writing prolifically in defense of the doctrines of orthodoxy:
>
> These have further set before us the proofs He has given of His majesty in judgments by floods and fires, the rules appointed by Him for securing His favor, as well as the retribution in store for the ignoring, forsaking and keeping them, as being about at the end of all to adjudge His worshippers to everlasting life, and the wicked to the doom of fire at once without ending and without break, raising up again all the dead from the beginning, reforming and renewing them with the object of awarding either recompense. (“Apology” 18:3)
>
> Then will the entire race of men be restored to receive its just deserts according to what it has merited in this period of good and evil, and thereafter to have these paid out in an immeasurable and unending eternity. Then there will be neither death again nor resurrection again, but we shall be always the same as we are now, without changing. The worshipers of God shall always be with God, clothed in the proper substance of eternity. But the godless and those who have not turned wholly to God will be punished in fire equally unending, and they shall have from the very nature of this fire, divine as it were, a supply of incorruptibility (“Apology” 44:12–13)
>
> Therefore after this there is neither death nor repeated resurrections, but we shall be the same that we are now, and still unchanged–the servants of God, ever with God, clothed upon with the proper substance of eternity; but the profane, and all who are not true worshippers of God, in like manner shall be consigned to the punishment of everlasting fire–that fire which, from its very nature indeed, directly ministers to their incorruptibility. (“Apology” 48:12)

Just to be clear, I am one of those Christians who holds to the traditional doctrine of hell. Eternal, conscious punishment for eternity. I think most, if not all, people who object to the traditional doctrine of hell do it for one reason only – because they don’t want to appear to be mean, so that non-Christians will like them. Well, I don’t think there is any

wiggle room here – conscious, eternal torment is what the Bible teaches, and what the earliest Christians believed.

Having said that, if someone has a *historical* case to make, then I'd like to see how they interpret the Bible and where the line of tradition is for their view. There is always room for scholars to make a case against the traditional view, but that case has to be on the merits. But I think for the vast majority of people who reject the traditional notion of hell, they are just asserting their emotions and intuitions over the Bible and the traditional interpretations of the early church. I don't think that wanting to feel "nicer" than others, or wanting to be liked by others, is a good rationale for overruling the text and the traditional interpretations.

How will Kamala-Walz open-borders immigration affect you and your family?

September 20, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Many Christians have been trained to think that the only relevant issue in elections is abortion. And many of those like to argue for the pro-life view by citing Bible verses only. But what would those people do if they were discussing policy with a non-Christian who didn't accept the Bible as an authority? Could you still win them over on other grounds, so that the result is that the pro-life party wins?

So, in our recent Knight and Rose Show episode, we discussed a bunch of different areas where conservative policies perform better than leftist policies. And one of those was immigration policy.

Rose talked about this article from Daily Wire:

> Illegal immigration could cost Mississippi more than $100 million every year, a new report from the state's auditor reveals.
>
> […]"Just last week, an illegal immigrant was arrested in North Mississippi for allegedly raping a 10-year-old boy twice," State Auditor Shad White told The Daily Wire. "Every state is a border state now, and our new report shows how much state taxpayers are spending thanks to the open border."
>
> […]Mississippi's healthcare system is hit particularly hard by illegal immigration, with the report estimating that the state spends a whopping $77 million on healthcare for illegal immigrants and their children every year. The report estimates the figure with data on the number of illegal immigrants in the state, their rate of health insurance, and their use of emergency medical services. It also found that Mississippi spends $4 million every year to pay for births to illegal immigrants, whose children are then designated as American citizens.

And now there's a new article about Springfield, Ohio, from Daily Signal:

> Reports of shoplifting and vehicle theft increased considerably in Springfield, Ohio, following the arrival of thousands of Haitian refugees, according to data obtained by the Daily Caller News Foundation through a records request.
>
> The town, which had a population of 58,622 in 2020, has taken in between 12,000 and 20,000 Haitian refugees over the past three years, marking a population increase of between 20.4% and 34.1%. From 2021 to 2023, Springfield also saw a 51.5% jump in motor vehicle theft reports and a 112.8% spike in reports of shoplifting, data provided by the Springfield Police Division shows.
>
> Springfield residents previously told the Daily Caller News Foundation that the influx of Haitians has resulted in an uptick in car accidents, increased housing

> prices, and strained public services.
>
> […]The issue of poor driving among refugees became a flashpoint in the community after a Haitian national driving a minivan without a license swerved in front of a school bus in August 2023, killing an 11-year-old boy and injuring roughly a dozen other students.

Please don't talk about pet stealings and pet eatings, though – there is just no evidence for that:

> Police recorded just two reported cases of animal cruelty in 2021 and none in 2022 or 2023, failing to provide evidence for rumors of Haitians stealing and eating residents' pets.

In other posts on this blog, I've talked about how unskilled immigrants are a burden on productive taxpayers, because they pay less in taxes, but use more social programs, like education, health care, etc. And they drive up the costs of things like housing and cars, because there is more demand for the same supply.

As a brown person, and legal immigrant, I'm in favor of legal immigration by employer sponsor for highly-skilled immigrants who speak English, follow the law, and pay more in taxes than they take in benefits. We need more doctors and researchers. But what we don't need is people with no skills, no money and no jobs.

Does the Miller-Urey experiment explain how life originated on Earth?

September 21, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two problems related to the origin of the first living cell, on atheism:

1. The problem of getting the building blocks needed to create life – i.e. the amino acids
2. The problem of creating the functional sequences of amino acids and proteins that can support the minimal operations of a simple living cell

Normally, I concede the first problem and grant the atheist all the building blocks he needs. This is because step 2 is impossible. There is no way, on atheism, to form the sequences of amino acids that will fold up into proteins, and then to form the sequences of proteins that can be used to form everything else in the cell, including the DNA itself.

Today, let's take a look at the problems with step 1.

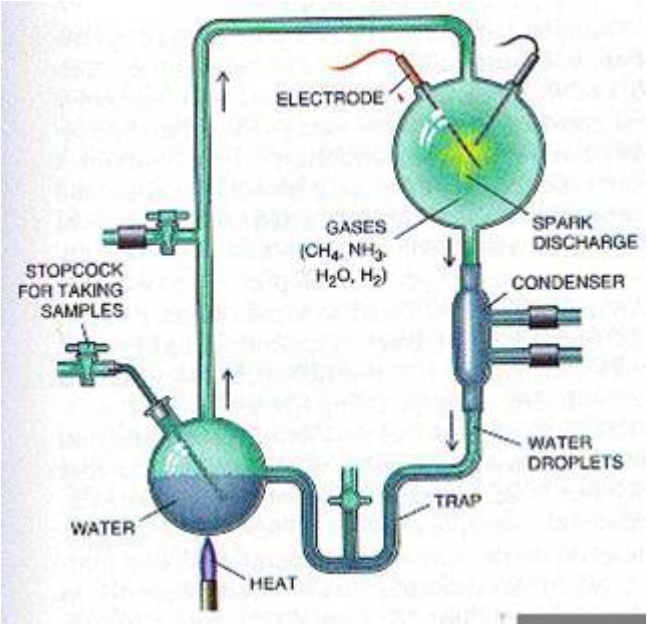

The Miller-Urey experiments

The problem of getting the building blocks of life

Now you may have heard that some scientists managed to spark some gasses to generate most of the 20 amino acids found in living systems. These experiments are called the "Miller-Urey" experiments.

The IDEA center has a nice summary of origin-of-life research that explains a few of the main problems with step 1.

Miler and Urey used the wrong gasses:

> Miller's experiment requires a reducing methane and ammonia atmosphere,[11, 12] however geochemical evidence says the atmosphere was hydrogen, water, and carbon dioxide (non-reducing).[15, 16] The only amino acid produced in a such an

> atmosphere is glycine (and only when the hydrogen content is unreasonably high), and could not form the necessary building blocks of life.[11]

Miller and Urey didn't account for UV of molecular instability:

> Not only would UV radiation destroy any molecules that were made, but their own short lifespans would also greatly limit their numbers. For example, at 100ºC (boiling point of water), the half lives of the nucleic acids Adenine and Guanine are 1 year, uracil is 12 years, and cytozine is 19 days[20] (nucleic acids and other important proteins such as chlorophyll and hemoglobin have never been synthesized in origin-of-life type experiments[19]).

Miller and Urey didn't account for molecular oxygen:

> We all have know ozone in the upper atmosphere protects life from harmful UV radiation. However, ozone is composed of oxygen which is the very gas that Stanley Miller-type experiments avoided, for it prevents the synthesis of organic molecules like the ones obtained from the experiments! Pre-biotic synthesis is in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. The chemistry does not work if there is oxygen because the atmosphere would be non-reducing, but if there is no UV-light-blocking oxygen (i.e. ozone – O_3) in the atmosphere, the amino acids would be quickly destroyed by extremely high amounts of UV light (which would have been 100 times stronger than today on the early earth).[20, 21, 22] This radiation could destroy methane within a few tens of years,[23] and atmospheric ammonia within 30,000 years.[15]

And there were three other problems too:

> At best the processes would likely create a dilute "thin soup,"[24] destroyed by meteorite impacts every 10 million years.[20, 25] This severely limits the time available to create pre-biotic chemicals and allow for the OOL.

> Chemically speaking, life uses only "left-handed" ("L") amino acids and "right-handed" ("R)" genetic molecules. This is called "chirality," and any account of the origin of life must somehow explain the origin of chirality. Nearly all chemical reactions produce "racemic" mixtures–mixtures with products that are 50% L and 50% R.

Two more problems are not mentioned in the article. A non-peptide bond anywhere in the chain will ruin the chain. You need around 200 amino acids to make a protein. If any of the bonds is not a peptide bond, the chain will not work in a living system. Additionally, the article does not mention the need for the experimenter to *intervene* in order to prevent interfering cross-reactions that would prevent the amino acids from forming.

Now keep in mind that even if you get the building blocks, you are left with the sequencing problem. Like the letters of the words in this blog post, the building blocks of life also need to be put in a meaningful sequence in order to do work in a living system –

but that’s another topic for another day.

William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

September 22, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women

    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don’t have any earlier sources, so we just don’t know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn’t check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

Did Amber Thurman die from pro-life laws or from abortion pill complications?

September 23, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A lot of people are arguing against pro-life laws in red states. Basically, they are saying that laws that protect unborn children must all be repealed, because here is one woman who stopped being alive while un-aliving her unborn children. In particular, people are citing an article in Pro Publica, written by Kavitha Surana. She has degrees in European History and European Studies. Is she right?

Here is what The Federalist article, which is written by an OB/GYN says:

> The latest is ProPublica's story of a Georgia woman who died after a North Carolina abortionist gave her chemical abortion pills — which, contrary to Democrat narratives, are unsafe. The article, however, pretends the death was caused by Georgia's pro-life laws. The author of the story repeatedly attempts to conflate a procedure used to treat miscarriages, dilation and curettage (D&C), with elective abortion.
>
> In ProPublica's telling, 28-year-old Amber Nicole Thurman had ingested the chemical abortion pill regimen, which consists of the drugs mifepristone and misoprostol. Mifepristone ends the life of the developing human being; misoprostol helps achieve complete expulsion of the embryo.
>
> It's worth noting that the FDA's 2000 approval of mifepristone acknowledged its risks and enacted safety requirements, including a seven-week gestational limit, requiring women to see a physician in person, and a mandatory one-time post-abortion appointment to confirm that the uterus was empty and that bleeding had subsided.
>
> […]But thanks to Democrat efforts to relax safety requirements for abortion pills, important safeguards no longer apply. When Thurman experienced "complications" from the abortion, which ProPublica wrongly asserts are "rare," she went to the hospital for a D&C.
>
> […]Here Kavitha Surana, the story's author, fails to note the difference between elective abortion and non-abortive D&Cs. She writes: "But just that summer, [Thurman's state of Georgia] had made performing [D&Cs] a felony, with few exceptions. Any doctor who violated the new Georgia law could be prosecuted and face up to a decade in prison."

So, are D&Cs a felony, like Kavitha says? Nope.

> This is a gross mischaracterization of the Georgia law. Performing a D&C is not a felony in Georgia (or anywhere else in the nation), nor has it been criminalized. It remains a standard medical procedure — and an indispensable one in cases like Thurman's. It is always legal in every state because, unlike abortion, it is not

> intentional feticide.

So that article is by an OB/GYN. Here's an article from the Daily Signal which is written by a lawyer. The author says that Amber Thurman was also supposed to get an ultrasound, but that requirement was also removed by the Democrats:

> Amber Nicole Thurman died after she took the abortion pill, deregulated by the FDA (with multiple safety restrictions eliminated), which caused complications and left parts of her twin unborn babies inside her.

And note – Amber died *before* she could get the perfectly legal D&C procedure. It's not illegal, and it's not a felony because of pro-life laws:

> Doctors monitored her condition and hospitalized her, but Thurman died before they could do a D&C (dilation and curettage) to remove the remaining parts of her unborn twins after the incomplete abortion.

Now, Pro Publica's version of the events was picked up by lots of left-wing news outlets, despite the fact that the AUTHOR of that article has no earned degrees (medicine / law) in the topics that she is writing about, and no private sector work experience in the topics that she is writing about. I chose the articles from The Federalist and Daily Signal because the authors had the right degrees, and the right experience.

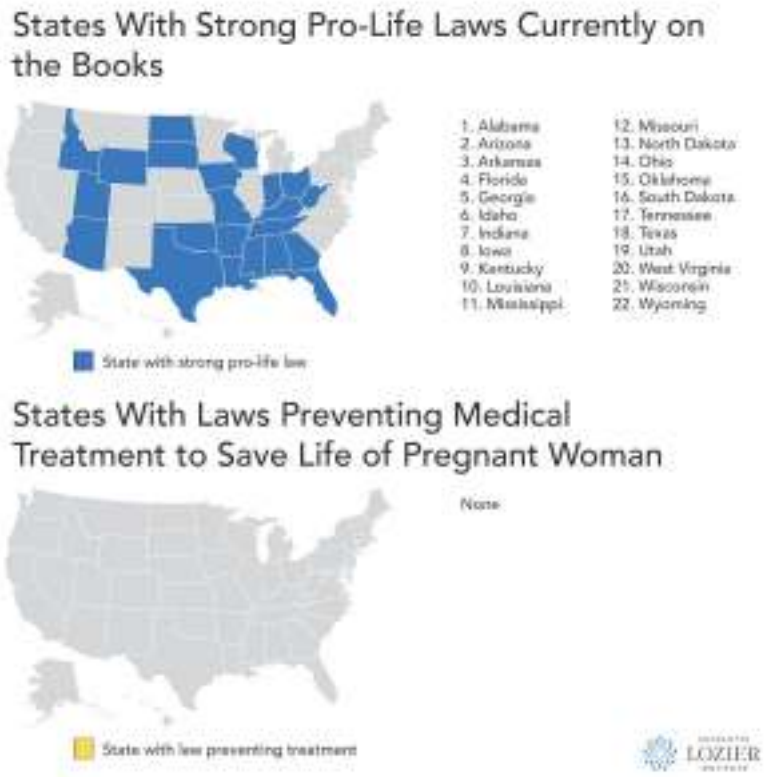

Map of States with Pro-Life Laws 2024

I think people need to be a lot more skeptical about articles on medical topics that are written by people with degrees in "European Studies". This is a question to be decided by doctors and lawyers.

Why are teachers and other talkers paid less than engineers and other doers?

September 24, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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The meme below makes fun of unionized public school teachers, who feel entitled to the same salary and benefits as doctors, software engineers, etc. in the private sector. So, the point of this meme is simple, it's to point out that the teachers who belong to teacher unions are ignorant of basic economics, specifically, the law of supply and demand.

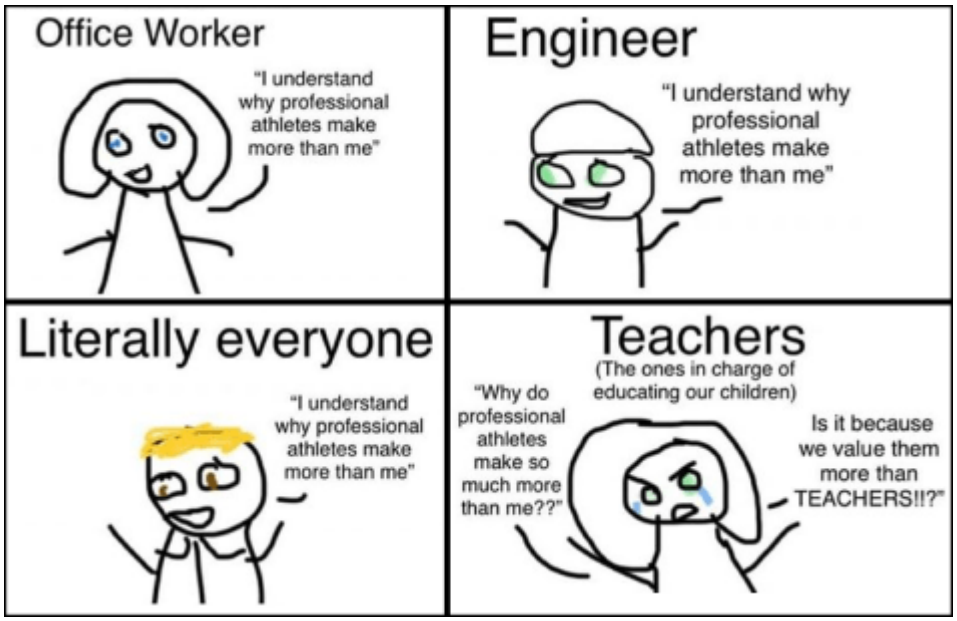

Basic Economics: In a free market, prices are set by supply and demand
When there is more demand for a product or service than there is a supply for it, then prices go up. When there is more supply for a product or service than there is a demand for it, prices go down.

A good place to see this explained is in a book by famous black economist Thomas Sowell. Thomas Sowell has written many books, but he wrote one book in particular for people who have no knowledge of basic economics. It's called "Basic Economics: A Citizen's Guide to the Economy". And the first few chapters explain how prices are set by supply and demand:

1. What is Economics?
2. The Role of Prices
3. Price Controls
4. An Overview of Prices

It turns out that there are two views of how wages are set in an economy:

> The labor theory of value (LTV) is a theory of value that argues that the economic value of a good or service is determined by the total amount of "socially necessary labor" required to produce it.
>
> LTV is usually associated with Marxian economics… The LTV is central to Marxist

> theory, which holds that the working class is exploited under capitalism, and dissociates price and value. Marx did not refer to his own theory of value as a "labour theory of value".
>
> Mainstream neoclassical economics tends to reject the need for a LTV, concentrating instead on a theory of price determined by supply and demand.

Marxists economists believe that the value of a good or service is determined by the "social utility" of the work produced. But classical ("free market") economists believe that value is determined by the scarcity of the good or service relative to the demand from consumers.

So, a Marxist economist might say "teaching English to 5 year olds is valuable because it is relevant and meaningful". But, a classical economist would say "conducting a security audit on distributed point-of-sale system is valuable, because very few people can do it, but many people want it".

I've noticed that school teachers and non-STEM university students and professors are very likely to hold to the labor theory of prices and wages. Robert Nozick wrote a paper about why this happens. It turns out that "wordsmiths" (his word) are conditioned by their performance in the classroom to expect success in the free market economy. But when they find that their "brilliance" in English poetry, Medieval history, or lesbian dance theory has no value to anyone else, they complain that the economy is being manipulated by powerful people. Marxism is a coping mechanism for people who value academic acclaim more than doing something useful for their neighbors. The Marxists study easy things that no one cares about, and then they can't get paid because millions of people can do them. The free market people focus on the customer, so they study hard things like computer science and petroleum engineering that are in demand from customers. And they get paid more.

Majors by Salary Potential – Full List

RANK	MAJOR	STARTING SALARY	MID-CAREER SALARY
1	Petroleum Engineering	$98,000	$163,000
2	Aerospace Engineering	$62,500	$118,000
3	Actuarial Mathematics	$56,100	$112,000
4	Chemical Engineering	$67,500	$111,000
5	Nuclear Engineering	$66,800	$107,000
6	Electrical Engineering (EE)	$63,400	$106,000
7	Computer Engineering (CE)	$62,700	$105,000
8	Applied Mathematics	$50,800	$102,000
9	Computer Science (CS)	$58,400	$100,000
10	Statistics	$49,300	$99,500
11	Physics	$51,200	$99,100
12	Mechanical Engineering (ME)	$60,100	$98,400
13	Biomedical Engineering (BME)	$54,900	$98,200

Starting and Mid-Career salaries by profession (click for larger image)

Consider this article from College Pulse about a survey of 10,590 undergraduate students:

> Students with certain majors are far more likely than their peers to approve of socialism. Philosophy majors, in particular, have a positive view of socialism. Nearly 8 in 10 (78%) say they view the economic system favorably, followed by 64% of anthropology majors, and 58% of both English and international relations majors. Accounting and finance majors are least likely to view socialism positively (20% and 22% respectively).

Do you know what accounting and finance students have to study? *Basic economics.*

As soon as I got my first job as a software engineer, and finished my study of Christian apologetics, the very next thing I studied was economics. It was Dr. Jay Richards who got me interested in it, when I heard him speaking about economics in an apologetics lecture for Stand to Reason. I contacted him, and he recommended the works of two famous economists, F. A. Hayek and Thomas Sowell. And that's what I want to recommend to you, too. Our continued liberty and prosperity depends on ordinary Americans taking the time to educate themselves about basic economics.

For the first time, young men are more religious than young women

September 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I noticed an article in the Financial Times about a growing divide between young women and young men. Young women are increasingly leftist, and young men are increasingly conservative. Surveys of young men and young women have found that young men are more conservative on abortion and LGBT than young women. And now young men are more religious than young women.

Now, I want to be clear in this post that I am not criticizing all women. I am criticizing the majority of YOUNG WOMEN. Older women don't usually have these problems, especially married older women.

First, let's take a look at the previous article, from the far-left UK Independent:

> An analysis of survey data from across the developing world had found that "a new global gender divide" is emerging. The analysis, conducted by the Financial Times' John Burn-Murdoch, showed that the developed world's young women have rapidly become more liberal. Young men, however, have either become more conservative (as in the US) or been much slower to become more progressive (as in the UK). Gen Z, Burn-Murdoch concluded, is "two generations, not one."
>
> […]Quoting similar figures to those in the FT, and noting that political views have become more tightly bound to personal identity, a Washington Post editorial warned that members of Gen Z will struggle to pair off romantically.

Young men, statistically speaking, are more likely to side with the weak against the strong. Since abortion harms unborn children, and divorce and same-sex marriage harm born children, men typically oppose these behaviors. But statistically speaking, young women more often side with the selfish adults against the children.

Naturally there are exceptions, but the statistics show that young men are more conservative on moral issues than young women. And nowhere is this more apparent than in the issue of abortion, which is really just about whether selfish adults can resort to murdering their own children in order to escape the consequences of no-commitment sex.

In September 2024, Gallup explained how young men and young women view abortion:

> For this, Gallup reviewed 24 questions from its trends archive that measure Americans' beliefs or positions on widely debated policy-related issues, and that Gallup has asked frequently enough to produce sufficient sample sizes of young men and women across the three periods… On five of these, the percentage of young women holding the liberal position has increased by more than 15 points.

> These have to do with the environment, abortion and gun laws.

> - Young women have become 18 points more likely to support **broad abortion rights**, saying abortion should be legal under any or most circumstances (rather than in only a few or no circumstances). Their preference for this position rose from 42% to 60% between 2008-2016 and 2017-2024.

The number for young men is much lower than 60% at only 48%!

So, what happens to young men when they take these traditional MALE positions on issues, and society disapproves of them? Well, they turn to God for vindication of their good moral views. If society won't approve of young men for protecting the unborn from abortion, and protecting children from divorce and same-sex marriage, then young men will have to find their vindication somewhere else. And that somewhere else is *God*.

Here's the latest from the far-left New York Times: (archived)

> For the first time in modern American history, young men are now more religious than their female peers. They attend services more often and are more likely to identify as religious.
>
> […]Among Generation Z Christians, this dynamic is playing out in a stark way: The men are staying in church, while the women are leaving at a remarkable clip.
>
> Church membership has been dropping in the United States for years. But within Gen Z, almost 40 percent of women now describe themselves as religiously unaffiliated, compared with 34 percent of men, according to a survey last year of more than 5,000 Americans by the Survey Center on American Life at the American Enterprise Institute.

To be accurate, I don't think that young women have been more religious than men. If you look at the kinds of books that young women tend to read, it's more about comfort and life enhancement. They are not looking to get their orders from God. They are looking to get their desires met by God. And you can see that coming out in the new trends of "manifesting" that is so popular with young women.

By contrast, young men are more likely to turn to apologetics, science, history and theology. Young women were only "spiritual", they were not looking to sacrifice themselves in order to serve God. You can see this by looking at what books young women and men read. Young women tend to read people like Rachel Hollis, Rachel Held Evans, and Sarah Young. Young men see religion as being about their duties to others. They read people like J. Warner Wallace, Frank Turek and Sean McDowell. They want to learn how to tell people the truth, and tell people right and wrong. They want to lead in moral and spiritual areas. They want to make the world a better place for the weakest people.

How did this happen? Well, we have had generation after generation of pietistic Christian

parents and pietistic Christian pastors who thought that it was the height of chivalry to only apply the Bible to young men, and never to young women. Young men need to be “challenged”, but never young women. People acted as if women had some sort of hotline to God through their emotions, and could never be judged for any of their questionable policy preferences and choices.

My question for you is this: do you think that these pietistic parents and pietistic pastors will finally stop asking the question “Where are all the good men?” and start asking a much better question “Where are all the good women?” Because I can tell you right now, conservative religious men are not going to be interested in dating or marrying these secular leftist young women.

Marriage is a huge risk for young men, in a world of no-fault divorce, biased divorce courts and feminized public schools. Good young men are not going to take those risks just to give secular leftist young women their “happily ever after” once they tire of “having fun” with hot bad boys, and want to settle down. And no amount of shaming and blaming is going to force good men to take those risks.

By the way, I’ve noticed that a lot of good young men are now seeking out friendships with more traditional older women. They are looking for sanity, and validation for their good moral and religious views. That’s not surprising. They’ll go where they are respected.

Do moral dilemmas undermine objective moral absolutes?

September 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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One reason why some people reject the existence of objective morality is because moral absolutes can conflict.

Canadian philosopher Michael Horner to explains the problem.

He writes:

> You may have been confronted with the story of the Nazi soldier coming to the door of the family who are hiding some Jewish people in their home and asking them point blankly, “Are there any Jews here?” The person telling the story then asks you, “What would you say?” or more precisely, “What should you say?”
>
> […]I think for many people the term moral absolutes connotes ideas like inflexibility and rigidity, and that there can never be exemptions. I have also found that many people believe that holding to moral absolutes means that circumstances are not relevant in a moral evaluation and that moral absolutism cannot handle moral dilemmas. But in fact it is possible to believe in moral absolutes, or as I prefer to call them objective moral values, without adhering to these connotations I have mentioned.
>
> For many people to believe in moral absolutes is to believe in rules that no other rules can ever trump. It follows from this that moral absolutes are all equal and there can never be any exemptions. But what if moral absolutes exist in a hierarchy?
>
> We know from experience that very often more than one moral rule applies to a situation. This often leads to moral dilemmas. So in the ‘hiding the Jews example’ the moral rule of telling the truth seems to apply to the situation, but it would seem that the moral rule to protect innocent human life from torture and murder applies also.
>
> If absolutes are all equal there is no way out of the dilemma. You can’t choose one absolute over another because in doing so you would be violating at least one absolute which, in their view, is supposed to be inviolable.

So, in this case, it seems as if the moral absolutist is stuck in a dilemma. If you lie to save the innocent life, then that would be wrong. But if you tell the truth and hand the innocent person over to murderers, then that would be wrong. Does this really disprove objective moral absolutes?

This problem annoys me, because I know this is the kind of objection to objective morality that annoying philosophy lecturers like to push onto freshmen in order to convince them that morality is nonsense. But does the moral dilemma objection really work?

More Horner:

> […][I]f moral absolutes exist in a hierarchy and the circumstances or the situation were relevant in determining which absolute takes precedent, then there may be a solution to the moral dilemma. That is exactly what I think is the case in the example. I for one have no difficulty knowing that the morally right thing to do in that situation is to protect the life of innocent people from torture and murder rather than tell the truth to a person who has torture and murder in their plans. My moral intuitions are very clear about this.
>
> If someone objects and says, “No, you must always tell the truth. After all it is an absolute, and absolutes by definition can never be violated,” I would point out that they are just using a different hierarchy, putting truth telling above protecting the life of innocent people from torture and murder. There is no way to avoid making a judgment like that since more than one absolute does apply to the situation. I would just ask them to think it through again, and once they see that they have to make a judgment based on some sort of hierarchy in that situation, then I think most people’s moral intuitions will affirm that protecting the lives of innocent people from torture and murder, in that situation, trumps truth telling. There is no way to avoid choosing one over the other.

But isn’t this moral relativism? After all, we are deciding what to do based on the situation! It’s relativism, isn’t it?

No, it isn’t, because there is always one right thing to do in every situation. In every situation, you always follow the weightiest moral rule. The right thing to do does not depend on your subjective state of mind. It is an objective moral duty, and it is the same for everyone, across all times and in all places. That’s what objective morality means - what is right and wrong is not determined by personal preferences or cultural conventions, which vary by time and place.

And of course, God is the ground of this hierarchy of objective moral absolutes. They existed through him before human beings even appeared, as part of his design for us, his creatures. How we ought to behave is grounded ontologically in God’s design for us.

Is the text of the Bible we have today different from the originals?

September 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I thought it might be a good idea to write something about whether the Bible is generally reliable as a historical document. Lots of people like to nitpick about things that are difficult to verify, but the strange thing is that even skeptical historians accept many of the core narratives found in the Bible. Let's start with a Christian historian, then go to a non-Christian one.

First, let's introduce New Testament scholar Daniel B. Wallace:

> Daniel B. Wallace
> Senior Research Professor of New Testament Studies
>
> BA, Biola University, 1975; ThM, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; PhD, 1995.
>
> Dr. Wallace… is a member of the Society of New Testament Studies, the Institute for Biblical Research, the Society of Biblical Literature, the American Society of Papyrologists, and the Evangelical Theological Society (of which he was president in 2016). He has been a consultant for several Bible translations. He has written, edited, or contributed to more than three dozen books, and has published articles in New Testament Studies, Novum Testamentum, Biblica, Westminster Theological Journal, Bulletin of Biblical Review, the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, and several other peer-reviewed journals. His Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament is the standard intermediate Greek grammar and has been translated into more than a half-dozen languages.

Here is an article by Dr. Wallace that corrects misconceptions about the transmission and translation of the Testament.

He lists five in particular:

- *Myth 1: The Bible has been translated so many times we can't possibly get back to the original.*
- *Myth 2: Words in red indicate the exact words spoken by Jesus of Nazareth.*
- *Myth 3: Heretics have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 4: Orthodox scribes have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 5: The deity of Christ was invented by emperor Constantine.*

Let's look at #4 in particular, where the argument is that the text of the New Testament is so riddled with errors that we can't get back to the original text.

It says:

> Myth 4: Orthodox scribes have severely corrupted the text.
>
> This is the opposite of myth #3. It finds its most scholarly affirmation in the

> writings of Dr. Bart Ehrman, chiefly The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture and Misquoting Jesus. Others have followed in his train, but they have gone far beyond what even he claims. For example, a very popular book among British Muslims (The History of the Qur'anic Text from Revelation to Compilation: a Comparative Study with the Old and New Testaments by M. M. Al-Azami) makes this claim:
>
> The Orthodox Church, being the sect which eventually established supremacy over all the others, stood in fervent opposition to various ideas ([a.k.a.] 'heresies') which were in circulation. These included Adoptionism (the notion that Jesus was not God, but a man); Docetism (the opposite view, that he was God and not man); and Separationism (that the divine and human elements of Jesus Christ were two separate beings). In each case this sect, the one that would rise to become the Orthodox Church, deliberately corrupted the Scriptures so as to reflect its own theological visions of Christ, while demolishing that of all rival sects."
>
> This is a gross misrepresentation of the facts. Even Ehrman admitted in the appendix to Misquoting Jesus, "Essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament." The extent to which, the reasons for which, and the nature of which the orthodox scribes corrupted the New Testament has been overblown. And the fact that such readings can be detected by comparison with the readings of other ancient manuscripts indicates that the fingerprints of the original text are still to be seen in the extant manuscripts.

Here is the full quote from the appendix of Misquoting Jesus:

> "Bruce Metzger is one of the great scholars of modern times, and I dedicated the book to him because he was both my inspiration for going into textual criticism and the person who trained me in the field. I have nothing but respect and admiration for him. And even though we may disagree on important religious questions – he is a firmly committed Christian and I am not – we are in complete agreement on a number of very important historical and textual questions. If he and I were put in a room and asked to hammer out a consensus statement on what we think the original text of the New Testament probably looked like, there would be very few points of disagreement – maybe one or two dozen places out of many thousands. The position I argue for in 'Misquoting Jesus' does not actually stand at odds with Prof. Metzger's position that the essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament."

Finally, I think that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls shows us that religious texts don't change as much as we think they do over time.

Look:

The Dead Sea Scrolls play a crucial role in assessing the accurate preservation of the Old Testament. With its hundreds of manuscripts from every book except Esther, detailed comparisons can be made with more recent texts.

The Old Testament that we use today is translated from what is called the Masoretic Text. The Masoretes were Jewish scholars who between A.D. 500 and 950 gave the Old Testament the form that we use today. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947, the oldest Hebrew text of the Old Testament was the Masoretic Aleppo Codex which dates to A.D. 935.{5}

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now had manuscripts that predated the Masoretic Text by about one thousand years. Scholars were anxious to see how the Dead Sea documents would match up with the Masoretic Text. If a significant amount of differences were found, we could conclude that our Old Testament Text had not been well preserved. Critics, along with religious groups such as Muslims and Mormons, often make the claim that the present day Old Testament has been corrupted and is not well preserved. According to these religious groups, this would explain the contradictions between the Old Testament and their religious teachings.

After years of careful study, it has been concluded that the Dead Sea Scrolls give substantial confirmation that our Old Testament has been accurately preserved. The scrolls were found to be almost identical with the Masoretic text. Hebrew Scholar Millar Burrows writes, “It is a matter of wonder that through something like one thousand years the text underwent so little alteration. As I said in my first article on the scroll, ‘Herein lies its chief importance, supporting the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition.'”{6}

A significant comparison study was conducted with the Isaiah Scroll written around 100 B.C. that was found among the Dead Sea documents and the book of Isaiah found in the Masoretic text. After much research, scholars found that the two texts were practically identical. Most variants were minor spelling differences, and none affected the meaning of the text.

One of the most respected Old Testament scholars, the late Gleason Archer, examined the two Isaiah scrolls found in Cave 1 and wrote, “Even though the two copies of
Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”{7}

Despite the thousand year gap, scholars found the Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls to be nearly identical. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide valuable evidence that the Old Testament had been accurately and carefully preserved.

I hope that this post will help those who think that we can’t get back to the text of the original New Testament documents.

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

September 27, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses? God said, See that staff? Throw it down. Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent. God said, See that serpent? Pick it up. And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff. God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention. And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone? Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home? Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened. But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful. Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you. Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines

- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Making monergism make sense: reconciling divine sovereignty and free will

September 28, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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This article at Free Thinking Ministries was written by my friend Dr. Tim Stratton. In it, he presents a view of God's sovereignty over the universe, but one that doesn't fall into the errors of determinism or double-predestination.

Excerpt: (links removed)

> Many reformed folks *(freely?)* choose to reject Molinism because they contend that this theological view "smells of synergism." What is this stench that reportedly makes John Calvin turn over in his grave? Simply put, synergism is the view that man plays at least a small part in his own salvation process. Monergism, on the other hand, is the view that God is the author of salvation from beginning to end.
>
> Since Molinism affirms that man is free to choose to reject God's saving grace or not, many Calvinists jump to the conclusion and assume that Molinism must be synergistic. This does not necessarily follow.[1] Consider one possible model:
>
> 1- God, by nature, is a volitional unmoved mover who is free to choose between options in accord with His nature. (This is supported via the *Kalam* and the *Argument from Time*).
>
> 2- By God's grace, humans are created in the "image of God." By nature, then, we are free to choose between options in accord with our nature. (This is supported via the *Freethinking Argument*).
>
> 3- Adam & Eve freely chose to disobey God and this sin completely separates humanity from God. This is what it means to have a "totally depraved sin nature." (Every aspect of man is separated from God).
>
> 4- In this state of depraved separation from God (sin nature), humans do not even know God exists if merely left to our own devices.
>
> 5- If humans do not even know God exists, then, left to our own devices and **apart from God's grace**, it would be impossible to choose to love and follow God (thus, Pelagianism is impossible on this view).
>
> 6- God, in His love for all people, provides amazing prevenient grace to all people (Romans 1:20), writing the law on the human heart (Romans 2:15), conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-9), and draws all men (John 12:32). This is commonly referred to as "common grace."
>
> 7- Therefore, by God's grace, human nature has changed from a "totally separated from God nature" to a nature that has now experienced enough divine revelation (influences) allowing all mankind to start making some free and volitional choices in accord with our new nature; namely, to choose to resist

> God’s grace and revelation, or not.[2] Mankind is without excuse because we do not have to resist what God has made clear (Romans 1:18-20).[3]
>
> *[Note: According to Calvinist, Matt Slick (albeit inadvertently), Mark 4:10-12 implies that if an unregenerate person gets access to clear and accurate information, then they possess the ability to become Christians!]*
>
> 8- If one does not reject or continually resist the grace and revelation God provides them, then God will continually provide more and more until the person reaches the point of “no return” and will become saved.
>
> Thus, God does *ALL* the work in salvation from beginning to end on this Molinistic model; all the human can do is freely resist God’s grace and revelation, but he or she does not have to! The human does nothing to gain salvation apart from God’s grace on this Monergistic Model of Molinism.

I think that Stratton’s formulation above does indeed keep God as the sole initiator of salvation. And that’s good. But it also makes sure that human who resist God’s leading are responsible for their choice to resist God, and that’s good. We want salvation to be 100% by faith alone in Christ alone. But we don’t want God to be the cause of people not being saved. On Stratton’s view, God wants everyone to be saved. If anyone is saved, it’s because God did ALL THE WORK to lead them and secure their salvation with the death of Jesus on the cross. But, on Stratton’s view, humans do get a choice – the choice to trust God or not. And so, if a person is not saved, then it’s their fault – not God’s. This works.

Read his whole post, and see what you think about it.

Tens of thousands of illegal immigrants with criminal convictions released into USA

September 29, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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A simple way to understand the secular left is that they want to be very generous with other people's money, and very compassionate at the expense of other people's safety. The Biden-Harris regime, for example, wants to let in millions of illegal immigrants. Many of those have serious criminal convictions, and many of them are facing serious criminal charges. And these criminals threaten YOU.

This story is from Fox News:

> Tens of thousands of illegal immigrants with sex offenses and homicide convictions could be loose on the streets, according to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) data provided to lawmakers this week.
>
> The agency provided data to Rep. Tony Gonzales, R-Texas, about national data for illegal immigrants with criminal charges or convictions. The data, as of July 2024, is broken down by those in detention, and those who are not in detention — known as the non-detained docket. The non-detained docket includes illegal immigrants who have final orders of removal or are going through removal proceedings but are not detained in ICE custody. There are currently more than 7 million people on that docket.

Pay attention to these numbers:

> The data says that, among those not in detention, there are 425,431 convicted criminals and 222,141 with pending criminal charges.
>
> Those include 62,231 convicted of assault, 14,301 convicted of burglary, 56,533 with drug convictions and 13,099 convicted of homicide. An additional 2,521 have kidnapping convictions and 15,811 have sexual assault convictions.
>
> There are an additional 1,845 with pending homicide charges, 42,915 with assault charges, 3,266 with burglary charges and 4,250 with assault charges.
>
> "As of July 21, 2024, there were 662,566 noncitizens with criminal histories on ICE's national docket—13,099 criminally convicted MURDERS!" Gonzales said in a statement. "Americans deserve to be SAFE in our own communities."

And this – a sharp drop in deportations compared to the Trump administration's policies:

> The Biden administration came under fire for releasing many migrants who came to the U.S. border into the interior, which coincided with a sharp drop in deportations as it focused on prioritizing public safety and national security threats. There were 142,580 removals in FY 23, up considerably from 72,177 in FY 22 and 59,011 in FY 21, but still down from the highs of 267,258 under the

> Trump administration in FY 19.

Should we expect Harris-Walz to protect taxpayers from criminals? Or does their virtue-signaling take precedence over their responsibilities to protect taxpayers?

Let's look at Tim Walz's record. Do you remember how Tim Walz handled rioting and arson and violence in his state, when he was governor?

Daily Wire reports:

> Minneapolis officials estimated the rioting and looting in 2020 cost the city around $55 million in damages. Rioters set fire to at least 220 buildings following George Floyd's death in police custody. Estimates in 2021, a year after the riots, put the total cost of damage to both Minneapolis and St. Paul at $500 million, according to the Star Tribune. Many of the businesses damaged in the riots remained closed a year after the unrest.

And what about Kamala Harris? She put out a call on Twitter for people to donate money to bail criminals out – including ones who had previous convictions for violent crimes.

Kamala Harris wants donations to bail out violent criminals

Even if you put aside concerns about crime, there's also the matter of costs. Illegal immigration costs money, and taxpayers have to foot the bill.

Daily Wire reports about the costs of illegal immigration for just one state – Mississippi:

> Illegal immigration could cost Mississippi more than $100 million every year, a new report from the state's auditor reveals.
>
> […]Mississippi's healthcare system is hit particularly hard by illegal immigration, with the report estimating that the state spends a whopping $77 million on healthcare for illegal immigrants and their children every year. The report estimates the figure with data on the number of illegal immigrants in the state,

> their rate of health insurance, and their use of emergency medical services. It also found that Mississippi spends $4 million every year to pay for births to illegal immigrants, whose children are then designated as American citizens.
>
> […]The state auditor's report indicates that illegal immigration poses a massive financial burden on the Mississippi education system as well.
>
> "In K-12 spending alone, in total, Mississippi taxpayers likely pay $25 million to educate illegal immigrants each year," it reads, also noting that an estimated 2,500 illegal immigrants are currently enrolled in the state's K-12 education system. "This estimate does not include the cost to educate the US-citizen children born to illegal immigrants, which is difficult to estimate given the state's inability to collect citizenship data for students and their families."

So, just be careful what you vote for in November.

Meet conservative rockstar Jonathan Skrmetti, Tennessee's attorney general

September 30, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I'm always on the lookout for the best conservative fighters. Regular readers will know that Florida Governor Ron DeSantis was my choice for the GOP presidential candidate in 2024. But there are other conservatives who are amassing a long, long list of conservative achievements. And I'm interested in telling you about them, so you know who to vote for in GOP primaries.

Here's an article from the Daily Signal about Tennessee's conservative attorney general:

> As Tennessee's attorney general for only two years, Republican Jonathan Skrmetti is racking up wins for conservatives in policy and law against the Biden-Harris administration and private sector actors.
>
> […]Skrmetti, now 47, was sworn in as attorney general on Sept. 1, 2022. Married and the father of four, the Franklin resident previously was chief deputy attorney general under his predecessor, Herbert H. Slatery III, for three years.
>
> […]Skrmetti also was chief counsel to Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, a fellow Republican.
>
> […]Skrmetti received degrees from George Washington University, the University of Oxford, and Harvard Law School.
>
> […]Aides and other admirers say that as attorney general, Skrmetti has spearheaded successful lawsuits against the federal government, especially leading the charge against gender ideology mandates and government overreach.

And the article has a list of 5 of his major accomplishments:

- Protecting Consumers
- Countering Gender Ideology
- Combating Illegal Immigration
- Fighting for Life
- Opposing Racial Discrimination and DEI Policies

Let's look at one of these:

> 1. Protecting Consumers
> Skrmetti's duties as attorney general include protecting the state's consumers, and supporters say he has risen to that task.
>
> Skrmetti filed a lawsuit against one of the world's largest asset managers, BlackRock Inc., in a "first-of-its-kind" consumer protection case.
>
> Tennessee successfully sued BlackRock over misleading statements about its use

> of ESG standards (for environmental, social, and governance considerations) in investments.
>
> Ordinary shareholders argue that ESG standards elevate over “social justice” and other progressive causes over profitability and good business practices.

He’s also sued the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. And put Fortune 100 corporations on notice about their DEI policies being unwelcome in Tennessee.

When I speak to some Republican voters who claim to be “very conservative”, I often hear from them lines like this:

- elections are rigged
- the parties are the same
- the government is run by federal agencies who have dirt on all the politicians
- Republicans never go after big leftists like Blackrock and Soros
- I’m the real pro-lifer because I don’t support incremental measures

When I ask these people how are the parties the same, how are the elections rigged, and what is the dirt that the federal agencies have, they have no evidence for any of these assertions. The real cause of their lack of knowledge and lack of effort seems to be “convenience”. They want to assert that they are better conservatives than people like Ron DeSantis and Jonathan Skrmetti and Chip Roy, etc. But they want to do it without reading anything, advocating for anything, convincing anyone, etc. They don’t want to put *any effort* into achieving conservative outcomes. And they especially don’t want to give any respect to the people who do achieve conservative outcomes. The conspiracy theories about how everyone is compromised except them are convenient, because it allows them to sound conservative without to achieve any conservative results. And you’d better believe that conspiracy theories don’t equip them to convince anyone else to vote conservative.

I’m the opposite of that. I want to read a lot of books about economics, health care, immigration, education, foreign policy, military history, etc. and then evaluate the candidates using voter guides and performance metrics. And I would like you to be a high-information, high-persuasion voter, too.

Knight and Rose discuss policy and the election with Freethinking Ministries

October 1, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

As the election gets closer, Rose and I are getting into more discussions about the election, and the specific policies of the candidates. We had a GREAT discussion with two Christian apologists who follow these issues closely. Please give the video a like (you can see Rose and I) and give Freethinking Ministries a subscribe. We hope you enjoy it!

Here's the episode:

And here are the topics:

- abortion
- LGBT and the Equality Act
- socialism vs free markets
- socialism in the Bible?
- inflation and energy policy
- crime
- illegal immigration
- gun rights and self-defense
- health care

Even with such a long discussion, we were still not able to get to everything! And lots of interesting data came out during the discussion and after the discussion.

For example, Josh Klein raised this tweet from former Democrat environmentalist Michael Schellenberger:

> No matter your politics, these new numbers are shocking. Of the 7 million migrants that ICE released while their cases are being processed, 663,000 have criminal histories, 13,000 were convicted of homicide, 16,000 of sexual assault, and 1,845 face homicide charges. pic.twitter.com/R20ShfPpFq
>
> — Michael Shellenberger (@shellenberger) September 27, 2024

And Tim Stratton pointed out this article he wrote, where he discusses whether carrying a concealed weapon for self-defense is consistent with the Bible.

He writes:

> From this verse we can infer that Jesus not only commanded the carrying of weapons for self-defense purposes (as Luke 22:36 reads), but he was also aware that Peter was "packing heat." It seems quite ad hoc to suggest that Jesus was being figurative about carrying swords, but his disciples mistakenly took him literally. Modern readers do this quite often by reading ancient texts through modern lenses, but Peter and company would have been in a position to know if

> Jesus was speaking figuratively or not. Moreover, are we really to believe that Jesus was not aware of the swords his disciples were carrying (and intentionally hiding) until the moment Peter drew his weapon? I find that hard to take seriously!
>
> Also, note that Jesus does not tell Peter to drop his sword and never touch it again. No, Jesus tells Peter to put his sword “back into its sheath.” If a Sheriff tells his deputy to holster his firearm, he means put it away but keep it on your person. The Sheriff is not implying that the deputy ought to get rid of his weapon forever. We can infer from this that Jesus condoned Peter’s further carrying of the sword.

Please comment on the video if you have a YouTube account, as this will help more people to see the video, and might help people to get excited about the election and make a plan to vote. We hope you enjoy the episode.

By the way, we have a couple of guests scheduled already for Knight and Rose Show episodes, and two episodes of our own. So subscribe to our podcast if you haven’t already. Rose had to speak at a conference in September, and she has another one in October, and another one in November, but we will try to get out two episodes of Knight and Rose Show in each month, anyway!

Are Mormon doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

October 2, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually

> infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian

> culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

How should Christians redeem their regrets over past decisions?

October 3, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I posted a dating ad from a 39-year-old never-married single mother. She explained that she was now a Christian and was looking for a man to marry her, so that she could have a second child "the right way". Some people thought we should take her conversion at face value. Others thought she was desperate and looking for a financial bailout. How can we tell if she is really sincere?

Well, I was still thinking about the comments on that post when I saw another great post from Laura, who writes at An Affair With Reason. Her post is about the feelings of regret that people have because of their past mistakes, and how Christians should deal with those regrets.

She writes:

> As I thought about what to write I became distressed, sorrowful, angry, and even despondent over some of my own decisions. As I sobbed inconsolably, I noticed that every caustic thought began with, "If only…." That's when I realized I was still carrying the burden of regret and I didn't know how to let go. It wasn't that I still needed God's forgiveness or that I had any doubts about my standing with him; I knew I was forgiven. It was the lifelong consequences that I experience to this day which embittered my soul and squelched my joy.
>
> The "if onlys" are a heavy burden to carry. They represent shattered dreams that will never be recovered in this life. They invoke feelings of discontentment, grief, and doubt. They cause us to sob with regret for what could have been, to pray for second chances that we know will not be granted.
>
> So what do we do with the regrets that we must live with for the rest of our lives? Lately, as I've reflected on conversations I've had with many women who have made regretful decisions over the years and on the direction of our culture, I've noticed two very distinct paths:
>
> 1. Attempt to assuage our own guilt and regret by convincing others to make the same foolish, and even sinful, decisions we made.
>
> OR
>
> 2. Humble ourselves, grieve our losses, and commit to teaching the younger generations to choose a better way.
>
> The first path is the wide and well-traveled one. Tragically and despicably, most people today seek to justify themselves and ease their consciences by getting others on board with their own ignorance, foolishness, and sinfulness.

She's got quite a few examples of the kinds of regrets that men and women have, and

different ways of dealing with those regrets. Some ways self-serving, others God-serving. Her examples are really interesting. It reminds me of "The Great Divorce" by C.S. Lewis, where he explains why some people don't resist God, and others do. Some people want to justify the past, and keep making decisions to benefit themselves. Others want to serve God. They want to take on the difficult work of opening up to others, and loving them by telling them the truth.

When I hear someone with a past say that they have now become a Christian, I normally ask "is this conversion just convenient for you or is it the result of some process where your mind was changed through study?" You can ask the person to show their work – how did they get to the right answer? And what has becoming a Christian cost them? How does it affect their relationships with non-Christians?

People "convert to Christianity" all the time based on need. Sometimes they're trying to get something for themselves, e.g. – wanting to not be judged for their past, so they can attract a partner to financially support them. But other people spend years reading books and changing their minds page by page, debate by debate. Then they put their knowledge into practice.

I have mentored women who did this. One girl who contacted me through the blog wasn't able to talk to her smart atheist brother about her faith. Then, she read a bunch of apologetics books about science and history, then called me and slipped the phone into her pocket and let me listen to her make a bold, informed stand for her Christian worldview for two hours. She won every point.

When people really become Christians, they don't do it in order to be happy and or to be liked. They take on work, and they take on shame, because they have a Boss now. That's how you can tell that real repentance has taken place. The letters of Paul in the New Testament are filled with advice for Christians who want to be bold, put themselves second, and advocate for their Boss. You should read them. When you read the Bible, try to put aside your feelings, your desires, and your concerns about what people will think. You'll find that putting work for the Boss ahead of what you want is worth the price of being "second". I would start with Philippians, then go on to 1 Peter.

By the way, this isn't the first time I've linked to Laura's posts. Here are some of the other times I've linked to her work on my blog: on voting, on Islam, on mentoring boys, on fighting with pastors, on learning what works when dealing with atheists. She had a 10 part series advising women how to choose a husband, which really made me feel good as a man. Today, most people see a husband as an accessory – like a handbag. He's there to provide, or to be a handyman, or to complain at if the wife is unhappy. Men should read that series, and find out what we can do in a marriage, if we are valued for our distinctive male nature.

How Mark Zuckerberg's $400 million helped get out the vote for Biden-Harris

October 4, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Since Mark Zuckerberg decided to BAN yesterday's post on Facebook, I decided to remind everyone about his $400 million of donations to "get out the vote" groups that had connections to the far-left. He was recently questioned about it in the House of Representatives by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan. How did he respond?

Here's the article from the New York Post.

It says:

> The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, an organization led by Zuckerberg's wife, Priscilla Chan, gave more than $350 million to the Center for Technology and Civic Life (CTCL) and the Center for Election Innovation and Research (CEIR) on the pretense of getting out the vote to everyone.
>
> But the administrators of those groups had deep ties to the left, researchers told The Post, including CTCL founder Tiana Epps-Johnson, a former Obama Foundation fellow.

A study was done on how the money was spent, and here is Hayden Ludwig, director of research at Restoration News, to explain it.

> The people who founded CTCL come from a defunct group called the New Organizing Institute, Ludwig notes. And back in 2014, CNN quoted a GOP operative who called the New Organizing Institute "the Left's New Death Star."
>
> "These were people whose entire jobs were figuring out how to elect Democrats. Personally I think he went home and quietly congratulated himself on helping get Joe Biden elected. He found a big loophole and put $350 million into it," Ludwig says.

The Zuck Bucks were overwhelmingly spent in Democrat-leaning counties, to get out their votes. Especially the ones that were expecting close races.

> An analysis shows that Zuck Bucks were disproportionately spent getting out the vote in Democratic-leaning counties in Georgia, which Biden won by just 12,000 votes.
>
> The same thing happened in Arizona, where Biden won by 10,000.
>
> According to the Foundation for Government Accountability, Georgia received more than $31 million in Zuck Bucks for the general election alone, one of the highest amounts in the country.
>
> It worked out to nearly 9 percent of all Zuckerberg funding, even though Georgia has just over 3 percent of the country's population.

> A county-by-county analysis in Georgia by the Foundation for Government Accountability revealed a spend of between $7 and $15 in Zuck Bucks per voter in six of the largest counties in the state, which were all won by Biden.
>
> Meanwhile, there was a spend of $1 to $3 per voter in the top six counties won by Donald Trump.
>
> In Wisconsin, which had previously voted for Trump, the CTCL spent $47 per voter in Green Bay, when normally the legislature spent $7 per voter there and $4 in rural areas of the state.
>
> […]"We looked at 8 or 9 battleground states and in every state we looked at we found the same pattern. CTCL cut checks that per person were significantly larger in big blue Democrat cities compared with rural Republican counties.
>
> "Wisconsin CTCL grants averaged $3.75 per person in Biden counties versus 55 cents in Trump counties. The bottom line is that all this Zuckerberg money boosted turnout everywhere but it boosted turnout the highest in these big blue cities who got massive Zuck bucks from CTCL."

Facebook has become a trash website, where stories that tell the truth about the Democrat party are marked as false news and disinformation. At the same time, stories that lie about the Republican party are marked as true and reliable.

When you look at Zuckerberg and his far-left wife's donations, it becomes obvious what happened.

Facebook / Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg's election meddling violated bribery laws

October 5, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm re-posting this old post from 2022, to celebrate having my post about how to deal with your regrets censored by Facebook as "spam" this week. Just want to remind everyone how Zuck interferes with elections to help the Democrat party.

We have an election this year, and now seems like a good time to remind everyone about Facebook's bias in favor of the Democrat party. Take a look at this article from The Federalist.

It says:

> Nearly $9 million in Zuckerberg grant funds directed solely to five Democratic strongholds in Wisconsin violated the state's election code's prohibition on bribery. That conclusion represents but one of the many troubling findings detailed in the report submitted today by a state-appointed special counsel to the Wisconsin Assembly.
>
> […]The first unlawful action, according to the report, concerned the payment of grant funds to five Wisconsin counties that were used to facilitate voting. That arrangement, Gableman wrote, violated Wis. Stat. § 12.11, which prohibits election bribery by providing it is illegal to offer anything of value to or for any person in order to induce any elector to go to the polls or vote.
>
> According to the report, Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg providing financing that allowed the Center for Tech and Civic Life to offer nearly $9 million in "Zuck Bucks" to Milwaukee, Madison, Racine, Kenosha and Green Bay counties. In exchange, the "Zuckerberg 5," as the report called the counties, in effect, operated Democratic get-out-the-vote efforts. Those grant funds then paid for illegal drop boxes to be placed in Democratic voting strongholds.

A week ago, Facebook was in trouble again for meddling in elections.

The Washington Examiner reported:

> Facebook blocked Texas GOP gubernatorial candidate Chad Prather from accessing his page on the site only eight days before the primary election.
>
> Prather told the Washington Examiner the ban resulted from a months-old comment discussing the events of Jan 6. A commentator, who Prather confirmed tends to "spam" his page and "comments nonstop," called the events of the day an "insurrection."
>
> Prather responded by pointing out that even the FBI didn't classify the event as an insurrection, further accusing the commentator of using "victimhood" in her favor.

> As a result, Facebook banned him for “bullying.”
>
> Facebook notified Prather he was banned from his page for seven days starting Feb 21. The primary election is March 1.
>
> “They silenced my campaign on Facebook,” Prather said. “This is illegal. This is interference. This is absolutely a travesty to the political process of free and fair elections.”

Facebook / Meta uses partisan “fact-checkers” (censors) like Lead Stories, Politifact, etc. to suppress ideas that support the Republican party.

Here’s the about Politifact, reported by The Blaze:

> Fact-checking website PolitiFact recently engaged in some head-scratching analysis in an attempt to discredit a claim made by Fox Business Network host Maria Bartiromo — but ended up doing the exact opposite.
>
> […]Bartiromo said this: “The United States is also reliant on Russian oil — we have doubled our imports from Russia in the last year. So, [there’s] no question why President Biden is begging OPEC and others to pump more oil.”
>
> […]In a Monday column, PolitiFact parachuted in to assess Bartiromo’s claim that the U.S. doubled oil imports from Russia as “mostly false.”
>
> Normally, oil imports and energy imports — which include refined products — are categorized separately. The U.S. Energy Information Administration, which PolitiFact cites multiple times, shows as much by breaking down crude oil imports in a separate chart.
>
> A spokesperson for Bartiromo evidently explained this to PolitiFact, resulting in the fact-checker admitting, “The U.S. more than doubled its crude oil imports from Russia, to about 208,000 barrels a day in the first 11 months of 2021, from 76,000 barrels a day in 2020.”
>
> Amazingly, that wasn’t enough for the fact-checker to change its assessment, even while it openly admitted that Bartiromo’s specific claim was accurate.

The author of that “fact check” has a degree in English. ENGLISH. That’s the kind of imbecile that Facebook / Meta uses to censor conservatives, especially before elections.

Although Donald Trump was President for four years, he didn’t do much to rein in the power of Big Tech. But there are other Republicans running for President in 2024 who are taking action.

News Max reports:

> Gov. Ron DeSantis, R-Florida, has directed state officials to investigate Facebook for alleged election interference, it was announced Monday.
>
> The governor’s action came after a report that Facebook possibly influenced numerous state and local races by exempting elite users from the social platform’s own rules.

> “It’s no secret that Big Tech censors have long enforced their own rules inconsistently,” DeSantis said in a statement released by his office. “If this new report is true, Facebook has violated Florida law to put its thumb on the scale of numerous state and local races.”
>
> […]”Floridians deserve to know how much this corporate titan has influenced our elections,” he said. “That is why I am directing Secretary Lee to use all legal means to uncover violations of Florida’s election laws.
>
> “The thought of Facebook clandestinely manipulating elections is an affront to the basic principles of our republic. We the people have the right to choose our representatives, whether or not Silicon Valley approves.”

On this blog, I’ve documented a long line of disturbing anti-American behavior by Facebook / Meta. We have an election coming up, and I don’t want to lose because of Big Tech interference. Make sure everyone knows what Facebook / Meta does.

Related posts

- Peer-reviewed medical journal blasts Facebook “fact checkers” for censorship
- Facebook has a long record of censoring speech critical of Democrats
- Facebook fact-checker caught plagiarizing 54 articles
- Facebook “non-partisan” fact-checker revealed to be a far-left Trump-hating Democrat
- Facebook “fact-checker” Politifact forced to retract “false” rating against Candace Owens
- When Facebook fact-checkers conflict with peer-reviewed studies, who is right?
- Potential violation of election law: Facebook and Twitter censor Biden scandal
- Facebook and Google removing content that harms Democrat party
- Facebook censors interview with abortion survivor to help Democrats win 2020 election
- Facebook uses pro-abortion “fact checkers” to label pro-life pages “fake news”
- Facebook bans Christian apologist David Wood for posting the death threats he received
- Facebook censors criticism of Democrat Party, especially before “important elections”
- Spotify joins Google, Youtube, Facebook and Twitter in censoring Prager University
- Facebook bans Franklin Graham for “hate speech”, Google YouTube shadow-bans pro-life videos
- Facebook, Amazon, Google and Twitter ally with leftist group linked to domestic terrorism
- Facebook enlists left-wing Politifact and Snopes to censor criticism of Democrats

The Wintery Knight’s favorite Bible verses

October 6, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are 8 of my favorite Bible verses. Leave yours in the comments below.

Psalm 27:14:

> [11] Teach me Your way, O Lord,
> And lead me in a level path
> Because of my foes.
>
> [12] Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries,
> For false witnesses have risen against me,
> And such as breathe out violence.
>
> [13] *I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord
> In the land of the living.
>
> **[14] Wait for the Lord;**
> **Be strong and let your heart take courage;**
> **Yes, wait for the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 4:2:

> 1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
>
> **2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**
>
> 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.
>
> 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.
>
> [5] Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men’s* hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.

Matthew 5:13:

> 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
>
> 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
>
> **13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless,**

> **how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.**
>
> 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
>
> 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

2 Timothy 2:4:

> 1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
>
> [2] The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
>
> [3] Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[4] No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.**
>
> [5] Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

Daniel 3:18:

> [13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.
>
> [14] Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?
>
> [15] Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?”
>
> [16] Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.
>
> [17] If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire;and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
>
> **[18] But *even* if *He does* not,let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”**

Esther 4:14:

> [10] Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai:
>
> [11] “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds

> out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days."
>
> [12] They related Esther's words to Mordecai.
>
> [13] Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews.
>
> **[14] For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"**

Philippians 1:9:

> [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
>
> [4] always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
>
> [5] in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
>
> [6] *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> [7] For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.
>
> [8] For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
>
> **[9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**
>
> [10] so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
>
> [11] having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Numbers 13:30:

> [25] When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,
>
> [26] they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.
>
> [27] Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.
>
> [28] Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.
>
> [29] Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."

> **[30] Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.”**

If you have a favorite Bible verse or two, post them in the comments.

Are Democrats blocking hurricane relief to interfere with the 2024 election?

October 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On the weekend, I noticed a number of disturbing reports of aid to hurricane victims being blocked by FEMA. Also, FEMA claims that they don't have the money to help hurricane victims. Did they spend all the taxpayer's money on illegal immigrants? We'll see. And finally, I saw people floating theories about why the Democrats might want to block aid to rural voters in Tennessee and North Carolina.

The first article is from Fox Business:

> Elon Musk on Friday slammed the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), claiming that it is blocking shipments of Starlink satellite internet deliveries in hurricane-ravaged North Carolina.
>
> "FEMA is not merely failing to adequately help people in trouble, but is actively blocking citizens who try to help!" the billionaire claimed on X.
>
> Musk said he had just received a note from a SpaceX engineer, Starlink's parent company, in Asheville, North Carolina, who said the company has "powered up two large operating bases for choppers to deliver goods into hands. We've deployed 300+ starlinks and outpour is it has saved many lives."
>
> But Musk said the engineer claimed that FEMA is "actively blocking shipments and seizing goods and services locally and locking them away to state they are their own. It's very real and scary how much they have taken control to stop people helping. We are blocked now on the shipments of new starlinks coming in until we get an escort from the fire dept. but that may not be enough."

This second article is from New York Post:

> Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas set off outrage Wednesday when he told reporters that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) "does not have the funds" to see Americans through the rest of this Atlantic hurricane season — after the agency spent more than $1.4 billion since the fall of 2022 to address the migrant crisis.
>
> […]Critics pointed out that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) allocated $640.9 million this year in FEMA-administered funds to aid state and local governments coping with the influx of asylum seekers — though Mayorkas' office fired back late Thursday, insisting that those funds couldn't be used for hurricane relief because Congress authorized them specifically for the migrant crisis.

The third article is from Daily Signal:

> Hurricane Helene wreaked havoc on the deepest red areas of North Carolina. Hundreds are dead and missing in the region. Destroyed roads and bridges and

> lack of water and electricity will make voting a challenge in a region that contributed a net of 231,000 votes for Donald Trump's 2020 margin of 74,000 votes in the state.
>
> […]However, the concern is that measures designed to help voters in hurricane-affected areas might be applied across the state, particularly in densely populated regions that are less affected, creating the potential for partisan advantage. There is a high probability of a sue-and-settle lawsuit on 14th Amendment equal protection grounds brought by the likes of Marc Elias that would argue that loosened voting rules in the West must be applied evenly throughout North Carolina—even in urban areas untouched by the hurricane. This was the same tactic used successfully in 2020 with COVID-19 as the excuse to change election rules.
>
> […]If Vice President Kamala Harris flips North Carolina, she wins the White House.
>
> The GOP, recognizing these concerns, is mobilizing the state Legislature to push back against some of these changes. However, with early voting fast approaching, the Republican effort faces a race against time. There is also uncertainty about what additional changes may be implemented by Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper or the North Carolina State Board of Elections, potentially bypassing the Legislature entirely.

This reminds me of the words of Rahm Emanuel, former Chicago mayor and chief of staff to President Barack Obama: "You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. And what I mean by that is an opportunity to do things that you think you could not do before."

Indeed. That's how the Democrats in government often see their responsibilities to the people who pay their salaries.

FEMA prioritizes DEI while veterans provide aid to NC hurricane victims

October 8, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Following up on my post from yesterday, I found two more articles showing what poor service we get for our tax dollars from secular leftists. Yesterday, we saw how FEMA was getting in the way of Elon Musk giving aid to hurricane victims, and how FEMA had wasted all their money on illegal immigrant welfare, and how the Democrats would benefit from not helping the hurricane victims at all.

Today, let's look at a couple of articles from the New York Post. I have to give credit to Dr. Frank Turek for finding both of these articles and posting them on Twitter. If you are not following him, you really should. He tweets a nice mix of apologetics and policy.

Here is Frank's Twitter account.

First article: (Frank's tweet)

> In FEMA's alphabet, DEI comes first.
>
> A startling 2023 FEMA webinar features federal health and disaster personnel trumpeting the urgent need to move away from policies that benefit the greatest number of people and instead turn focus toward "disaster equity" where aid is distributed based on innate characteristics like sexual orientation and gender identity.
>
> […]The initiatives raised at the panel discussion echo many of those on FEMA's own website, which proudly proclaims instilling "equity as a foundation of emergency management" as goal 1.
>
> "Underserved communities, as well as specific identity groups, often suffer disproportionately from disasters. As a result, disasters worsen inequities already present in society," the declaration reads in part.

Maybe, as a taxpayer, you thought that the Federal Emergency Management Agency would occupy itself with… emergency management. But that's not the case. Secular leftists don't have a rational grounding for morality. When you put them in charge of anything, they don't see it as their job to serve others. They see their job as looking after themselves – their feelings, and their approval from peers. When you give them money, they don't solve problems with it. They just use it to virtue signal and buy the approval of their friends. This is why it's a waste of money to elect secular leftists. They can watch the Black Lives Matter and Antifa domestic terrorists run up 1-2 BILLION dollars in damages, and then turn around and focus on pre-dawn raiding the homes of peaceful pro-lifers with armored vehicles and fully-automatic assault rifles.

Here's the second article. (Frank's tweet)

> Hundreds of special operations personnel in North Carolina have formed their

> own homegrown rescue and supply operation in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene after they grew tired of waiting for the federal government to get its act together.
>
> The Post found an all-volunteer operation being run out of a Harley-Davidson dealership with ruthless efficiency and military precision.
>
> “Who’s FEMA?” ex-Green Beret Adam Smith derisively responded when asked about the agency’s presence on the ground since the deadly storm ravaged the rural western part of the state.
>
> “This disaster has definitively proven without a shadow of a doubt FEMA’s incompetence and incapability,” he said, noting that the agency didn’t even show up until Thursday — almost a week after the storm that has killed at least 232, nearly half of them in the mountainous west of the Tar Heel State.
>
> […]They’re using their own aircraft to fly doctors, medicine, generators, fuel and food to isolated residents cut off from the world by the unprecedented floods to washed out mountain roads and wiped entire towns off the map.
>
> […]Now that the effort has taken on a life of its own, Smith and others leading the operation have gone from cursing FEMA for its absence to hoping they never come back.
>
> Smith said he fears their carefully calibrated rescue mission will be bogged down with governmental red tape if the feds show up.
>
> “Nobody out here wants the federal agencies to come in. FEMA has walked into operations centers like this and has attempted to just take over and tell them what they’re doing is illegal and they’re not allowed to keep going. I’ve seen it firsthand in this area,” Smith told The Post.
>
> “My biggest fear is they’ll move into the area and in the process they’ll reinvent the wheel and rebuild the entire process.”
>
> Smith said he’s even directly told agencies to stay away.
>
> “I’ve respectfully told FEMA individuals on a couple of different occasions, ‘don’t come to our location, we don’t want your help.’”
>
> In just a few days, the “Redneck Air Force” has evolved from surveying road damage and going door-to-door on horseback to the military-scale operation that stands today.
>
> With the group’s rescue operations now complete, they’ve turned their attention to flying supplies to communities cut off from communication and electricity.

By the way, if you are in the Charlotte / Rock Hill area, and would like to attend a really good apologetics conference, check out the Southern Evangelical Seminary National Apologetics conference this Friday and Saturday. It features a few of the recent guests we’ve had on the Knight and Rose Show: Fuz Rana, Casey Luskin and Frank Turek.

New data: hospitals charged $120 million for sex-change procedures on 14,000 children

October 9, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to think about one trend that is really causing me to doubt the morality of the secular left, it's their continued support for transing children. I can understand why they think that unborn children are too small to care about. That's why they support abortion. But I just can't understand why they want to mislead children into a life of suffering just to make "a lot of money".

Take a look at this article from the Daily Caller:

> U.S. hospitals charged nearly $120 million over five years for sex-change procedures performed on around 14,000 children, according to new data compiled by medical watchdog Do No Harm.
>
> The first-of-its-kind database, which logs sex-change procedures given to children nationwide between 2019 and 2023, catalogs a total of 5,747 minors who underwent sex-change surgeries, along with 8,579 who obtained puberty blockers or cross sex hormones.
>
> Do No Harm believes the problem is likely even bigger than the data shows. The numbers, which are drawn from insurance claims data across all 50 states, do not include self-pay, charity payments, internal Veterans Affairs claims or patients covered by Kaiser Health Plans.
>
> To create its dataset, the watchdog group matched gender-related diagnosis codes with codes for procedures related to gender transitions, such as body modification surgeries, cross sex hormones and puberty blockers.
>
> Do No Harm Chairman Dr. Stanley Goldfarb said during a press call that the database should dispel myths that these procedures are a "rare" event or localized to a few places.

In case you missed my previous post about what secular leftists in the medical field think they are doing, their motivation is very simple.

This article from the Daily Wire explains it:

> "It's a lot of money," VUMC Clinic for Transgender Health's Dr. Shayne Sebold Taylor said at one Medicine Grand Rounds lecture, video reveals. "These surgeries make a lot of money."
>
> Taylor noted that a "chest reconstruction" can bring in $40,000 per patient, and someone "just on routine hormone treatment, who I'm only seeing a few times a year, can bring in several thousand dollars … and actually makes money for the hospital."
>
> Citing the Philadelphia Center for Transgender Surgery, Taylor said vaginoplasty

> surgeries can generate $20,000, gushing that it "has to be an underestimate," since hospital stay, anesthesia, post-op visits, and other add-ons are not included in the total.
>
> "And the female-to-male bottom surgeries, these are huge money makers," the doctor continued, adding that such surgeries could bring in "up to $100,000" for the hospital.
>
> Some clinics are "entirely" "supported" financially by such phalloplasty surgeries, Taylor boasted.
>
> "These surgeries are labor intensive, there are a lot of follow-ups, they require a lot of our time, and they make money," she emphasized. "They make money for the hospital."

They're saying "it's a lot of money" but can't we do something to help kids other than give them dangerous drugs and violent mutilation? Seriously. It's better to just talk things out with children who, for one reason or another, clearly have mental issues that need care and therapy. I don't know why our response to the problems of kids is always to do what's best for the (greedy) adults who want "money for the hospital".

How should we fix this? Well, Tennessee attorney general Jonathan Skrmetti seems to be doing a pretty good job of doing things the right way – by winning case after case.

The Daily Signal explains:

> Skrmetti has been at the forefront of battles with progressives over gender ideology, most notably foiling the Biden-Harris administration's proposed Title IX changes.
>
> The administration's adjustments would have mandated that biological boys be allowed to play girls sports at school and to use girls' restrooms and locker rooms, among other things.
>
> Despite facing several challenges from the Biden-Harris Justice Department, Skrmetti successfully defended Tennessee's ban on so-called gender-affirming care for children. This is the case pending at the U.S. Supreme Court.
>
> The attorney general also won a U.S. District Court case against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which sought to mandate that medical providers perform, and insurers cover, some sex-change procedures.
>
> Skrmetti also went to the District Court as well as the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit to successfully defend Tennessee's policy forbidding a change in the biological sex listed on birth certificates.

Regarding that case pending at the Supreme Court, the Biden administration is going after Tennessee for banning irreversible, unproven medical procedures on children.

Skrmetti tweeted this out on Tuesday:

> "The people of Tennessee, through their elected representatives, took measured

> action with Senate Bill 1 to protect kids from irreversible, unproven medical procedures. Lawmakers recognized that there is little to no credible evidence to justify the serious risks these procedures present to youth and joined a growing number of European countries in restricting their use on minors with gender-identity issues. The federal government, in its arguments to the Supreme Court, puts its faith in a false and manufactured consensus that ignores the many doctors, States, and countries who have looked at the evidence and determined these treatments are too risky for kids. The Constitution does not prevent the States from regulating the practice of medicine where hot-button social issues are concerned. People who disagree with restrictions on irreversible pediatric procedures for gender transition are free to advocate for change through state elections."

Keep an eye on Tennessee's attorney general and this Supreme Court case. If anyone can save these poor kids from the greed of the secular left, it's him. And if you're still living and paying taxes in these blue states that support these procedures, then maybe it's time to think about moving to a better state.

New study: Google search engine is biased in favor of Democrat party

October 10, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A couple of weeks ago, I was doing some searches to try to find the policy positions of the candidates. I started using Google, in order to get the latest news. But I just got pages and pages of far-left corporate news propaganda. But is there any hard evidence that Google intentionally designs their products and services to benefit the Democrat party at election time?

Here's an interesting article from the New York Post:

> While Congressional Republicans were hammering Mark Zuckerberg and Jack Dorsey for censoring conservatives on their platforms, Google's executives sat back smugly, confident that their obscene censorship schemes went undetected.
>
> But our organization, the Media Research Center, and others have shown that Google is the most effective weapon in the left's arsenal — the one that gets its candidates across the finish line.
>
> In the last presidential election, Google swayed anywhere from six to eight million votes in favor of Joe Biden.
>
> MRC's studies over a 12-month period consistently showed that Google completely buried Republican campaign websites in favor of their Democrat opponents.

Here's what happened during the GOP primaries for this election:

> During the presidential primary contests, MRC conducted studies searching for the campaign websites for both Democrats and Republicans.
>
> Not surprisingly, when MRC searched for "democrat presidential campaign websites," Biden's campaign site was always the first or second search result.
>
> But the results were very different when searching for the Republican campaign websites.
>
> Shockingly, Google only produced a total of two sites: one for Democrat Marianne Williamson and another for Will Hurd, a little-known Congressman who never polled above 1%.
>
> Google would not produce the campaign websites for Donald Trump, Nikki Haley, Ron DeSantis, Vivek Ramaswamy or the other eleven candidates.

And here's what's going on right now:

> In our latest study, we show that Google is finally revealing Trump's website, albeit, still lower than Harris'.
>
> But a user is now required to wade through a flood of news articles, almost all

> hostile to Trump, before ever reaching either candidate's website.
>
> […]Congressional Republicans and several state Attorneys General understand that Google is weaponized against Republicans and uses its corporate resources to help Democrats.
>
> It is not illegal for a corporation to use its resources to influence the outcome of an election.
>
> But it is against the law when a corporation does not disclose its efforts with the Federal Election Commission.

And this is the conclusion, which should be shocking to you:

> Google is either illegally coordinating with the Harris campaign, or if its expenditures are independent, it is unlawfully failing to file its disclosure reports.
>
> Congress should find out which it is.

In another recent article, the Media Research Center tried using Google to search for JD Vance, after the VP candidate debate:

> The morning after the debate, MRC Free Speech America conducted a search in the Google News tab for "jd vance." MRC analysis revealed that 100 percent of the results came from outlets with a leftist political bias. Google News tab did not display a single article from an outlet that did not have a predominantly leftist political bias.

And what about the "fact checkers" that are used by big social media sites like Facebook and Instagram to censor content? Well, those fact checkers are just more journalists, like the ones who work for NPR, the New York Times, and the Washington Post.

The Media Research Center reports:

> Donald Trump was fact-checked 42 times from April to September, and none were on the True side, two were Half True, and 40 were Mostly False or worse. Forty to zero. Does that look nonpartisan to anyone? Add in the first quarter, and it's 57 to 0. Fully 15 of the 40 new False verdicts were the worst designation of "Pants On Fire," falling just short of the 17 False rulings.
>
> From April to September, President Biden was checked 19 times, and he was on the True side as often as the False side, seven and seven (with five Half Trues). For the year, it's nine on the True side and 11 on the False side (10 Half Trues).
>
> In that time frame, Kamala Harris was checked 17 times, and she was rated as True or Mostly True on six occasions, and as Mostly False or worse on eight occasions (six Mostly False, two False). She had three Half Trues. For the year, it's eight on the True side and nine on the False side (three Half Trues).
>
> Biden drew zero "Pants on Fire" warnings this year, and has only seven of those in the entire history of PolitiFact going back to 2007 (just one during his presidency). Kamala Harris has zero overall, and she was first elected statewide

> in California in 2010. Trump currently has 201. This is where you can see PolitiFact's editorial aggression, since Newt Gingrich has only twelve. Bernie Sanders has a perfect zero like Kamala.
>
> In the April to September time frame, Republicans were whacked as "Pants on Fire" 19 times, and the Democrats only once. Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker drew one — for saying on ABC's This Week that J.D. Vance is "getting known for his obsession with couches."

Please be careful about where you get your news. My choices for good news web sites are Daily Signal and Christian Post. I also look at Daily Caller, Washington Free Beacon and sometimes The Federalist.

By the way, I've start using StartPage as my search enginer, and it's so fun to see this blog appearing in the first page of results when I search for something that I specifically wrote about. I remember when Google used to work like that. But when Trump won in 2016, that all changed. I used to get over 1000 searches a day coming to this blog. Now it's about 1% of that per day.

And if you want to try an alternative to StartPage, try Qwant.

FBI revises 2022 violent crime rates upward – up 6.6% from previous numbers

October 11, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A strange thing about the secular left. You would expect them to want to be concerned about the safety of people who live in high crime areas. These people are often too poor to afford to move to safer neighborhoods. But if you look closely at the policies of secular left candidates like Harris and Walz, you see that they tend to take the side of criminals.

Here is an article from the New York Post about how crime rates have changed after nearly 4 years of Biden-Harris:

> Last month, new FBI data showed that reported serious violent crime (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) fell by 3.5% in 2023.
>
> But at the same time — and much more quietly — the FBI revised its earlier data for 2022, turning a reported decrease into a worrisome increase in violent crime.
>
> Last year, the media trumpeted the FBI's claim that reported violent crime had fallen in 2022 by 2.1%.
>
> But now the FBI admits that violent crime rose in 2022 instead, by 4.5% — off by 6.6 percentage points.

Although the Biden-Harris regime likes to quote FBI crime data, that data is based on crimes that are reported to the police. Many crimes are not reported to the police. There is another survey conducted by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics. It's called the 2023 National Crime Victimization Survey. They interviewed 240,000 to see if they were impacted by crime. And the latest report says this:

> Instead of the FBI's 3.5% drop in serious violent crime, the NCVS found a 4.1% increase in violent crime victimization from 2022 to 2023.
>
> While the FBI claims that serious violent crime has fallen by 5.8% since Biden took office, the NCVS numbers show that total violent crime has risen by an incredible 55.4%. Rapes were up by 42%, robbery by 63%, and aggravated assault by 55% during his term.
>
> The increases shown by the NCVS during the Biden-Harris administration are by far the largest percentage increases over any other three-year period, more than doubling the previous record.

Here's another article about crime from illegal immigration, reported in RealClear Politics:

> The new data on all the criminal noncitizens coming into the U.S. is shocking.
>
> The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) checks the background of illegal aliens they have in custody. But, the administration's letter to Rep. Tony Gonzales (R-TX) shows that as of July 21, 2024, ICE let 435,719 convicted

> criminals and 226,847 people with pending criminal charges in their home countries into the U.S.
>
> […]About 7.4 million noncitizens are in the "national docket data," so 662,776 is 9% of the total, and if one extrapolates the numbers to the homicide rate in this country, it strongly indicates that the government is letting migrants into this country who commit murder at a rate 50% higher than the rest of the U.S. population.
>
> And these numbers clearly underestimate the crime rate of these noncitizens. The noncitizens in the "national docket data" turned themselves in to border agents for processing or were caught. Those who don't turn themselves in are obviously far more likely to have something to hide from those doing the processing, so-called "gotaways," who are observed illegally entering the U.S. but not caught or turned back.
>
> These figures coincide with other data from the Arizona prison system and show illegal aliens commit crime at much higher rates than Americans or legal immigrants.

Now, you would expect elected representatives who are paid by taxpayers to allow those taxpayers to own legal firearms and to defend themselves from criminals without being persecuted. Sadly, there's no reason to think that a Harris-Walz regime would be supportive of law-abiding citizens owning weapons, or defending themselves from criminals.

This new article from the Daily Caller talks about how the Republican party is trying to appeal to gun owners to vote in the election, so they can avoid gun confiscation and facing criminal charges for self-defense against criminals:

> According to Vote4America, more than 10 million gun owners across the country are not registered to vote.
>
> […]For Republicans, these figures can be perplexing, but gun owners explained to the Caller that there is skepticism towards voting and politics as a whole in the community. Some believe that because they don't want the government in their business, then they shouldn't get involved by voting.

Personally, I know a lot of men like this. We have them in Christianity. These are the same people who try to do whatever involves the least amount of work, but they want to sound pious about it. They don't want to read apologetics books, but they instead cherry pick from the Bible in order to make their laziness and ignorance sound pious and holy. The same thing is happening with many male gun owners. They want to drink beer and watch football, but they also want to say words that make you think that they are patriotic. Their apathy will actually result in the end of the second amendment. Infuriating! But for now, let's just focus on getting them to vote, so we can save the Republic.

So how do Republican candidates intend to solve this apathy?

> To carry its message, Hunter Nation, alongside the NRA, has partnered with celebrities such as Ted Nugent, Donald Trump Jr. (a prominent hunting enthusiast) and the Duck Dynasty organization, Mark told the Caller. Similarly, Vote4America has teamed up with pro-gun personalities like Brooke Ence, Shawn Ryan, Andy Stumpf, Andy Frisella, Dan Hollaway, Shermichael Singleton, and Jason Alden to encourage gun owners to vote, senior adviser Baker Leavitt told the Caller.
>
> Mark expects these types of partnerships to pay off in a big way.
>
> In Wisconsin, according to Hunter Nation's data, 416,085 gun owners are low-propensity, at risk or newly-registered voters. Of that total, the organization expects to turn out 54,196, Mark said. Biden won the state in 2020 by 20,600 votes.
>
> In Michigan, the number of those potential voters is 452,471. The organization is estimating that it will turn out 70,142 in the 2024 election. Biden won the state in 2020 by 154,000 votes.
>
> The organization also expects to have a big impact in Georgia, where Biden won by about 11,000 votes in 2020. Hunter Nation hopes to turn out 122,913 of the state's more than 825,000 low-propensity or newly-registered gun owners, Mark said.
>
> In perhaps the election's most critical state, Pennsylvania, which Biden previously won by about 80,000 votes, the hunting group says their campaign projects to turn out at least 58,000 low-propensity gun owners.

I like this approach, because it's doing something to solve the problem. I hope that the Republicans can convince these second amendment non-voters to vote. If they can't, then the second amendment people are going to find out real quick what their apathy costs them.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

October 12, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang
– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws

– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection
– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus

– god wouldn’t have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that’s a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that’s a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that’s a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don’t support life, that’s a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that’s a bad design

3. hitchens’ burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can’t prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig’s scientific arguments don’t go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don’t prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don’t prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn’t be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig’s evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can’t use the progress of science
– it’s too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god’s existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn’t forming his view based on evidence
– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don’t believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you’ve got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God

– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH’s evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH’s argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn’t need to be efficient

CH’s argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH’s argument that Craig’s scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH’s argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn’t need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH’s citation of Craig’s book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true
– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH’s rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH’s rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH’s argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed

– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them
– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that's a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven't even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn't prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they're growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn't improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do

– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn't need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that's why people act morally
– it's degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don't know why, because i can't ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don't hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don't believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don't agree

WC moral argument: it's not epistemology it's the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing

– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history
– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it's just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that's not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Which side of the abortion rights debate is backed by scientific evidence?

October 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Once upon a time I didn't know much about the case for abortion rights or the case for the right to life of unborn children. My reason for not reading much about it is that I thought that it was kind of a subjective issue. But, I started a project to read 1-2 books on every conceivable topic, including one on abortion. Lo and behold, it turned out that one side did have the backing of science.

This article from The Public Discourse explains: (links removed)

> The following are typical examples—only three of the many, many we could cite. These are from standard texts by embryologists, developmental biologists, and microbiologists:
>
> "Human life begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm unites with a female gamete or oocyte (ovum) to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marked the beginning of each of us as a unique individual." "A zygote is the beginning of a new human being (i.e., an embryo)." Keith L. Moore, The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology, 7th edition.
>
> "Fertilization is the process by which male and female haploid gametes (sperm and egg) unite to produce a genetically distinct individual." Signorelli et al., Kinases, phosphatases and proteases during sperm capacitation, Cell Tissue Research.
>
> "Although life is a continuous process, fertilization (which, incidentally, is not a 'moment') is a critical landmark because, under ordinary circumstances, a new, genetically distinct human organism is formed when the chromosomes of the male and female pronuclei blend in the oocyte" (emphasis added; Ronan O'Rahilly and Fabiola Mueller, Human Embryology and Teratology, 3rd edition.

The genetically distinct part is key – this unborn child is has a different DNA signature (a human signature) than either the mother or the father. Nothing will be added or taken away from this new signature as the unborn child grows. It never changes.

More:

> These authorities all agree because the underlying science is clear. At fertilization—or, more precisely, when the sperm (a male sex cell) fuses with the oocyte (a female sex cell, more commonly referred to as an egg)—each of them ceases to be, and a new entity, one that is both genetically and functionally distinct from either parent, is generated. This new entity, initially a single totipotent cell, then divides into two cells, then (asynchronously) three, then four, eight, and so on, enclosed all the while by a membrane inherited from the oocyte

> (the zona pellucida), which then dissolves during implantation, allowing for continued growth in the direction of maturity as a member of the species. Even prior to implantation, however, these cells and membrane function as parts of a whole that regularly and predictably develops into the more mature stages of a complex human body.
>
> How do we know that the result of sperm-oocyte fusion is a new entity, rather than a continuation of the oocyte? We know that a new entity exists because, once the sperm penetrates the oocyte, a completely new trajectory of biological development commences. The biological activity of an oocyte is directed toward successful fertilization; the biological activity of sperm is directed toward penetration of an oocyte. The biological activity of the new entity that results when sperm and oocyte fuse, however, is directed toward nothing less than the development of a mature human organism, distinct from either parent. Further, this new entity's activities are directed not by instructions from the mother's body, as some people wrongly suppose, but by its own unique set of instructions, especially the blueprint for development contained in its unique genetic material. The mother's body recognizes the zygote and then the embryo as an entity distinct from itself. In fact, the embryo must send out chemical signals to prevent the mother's immune system from attacking it. The embryo also emits chemical signals that induce changes in the lining of the mother's uterus to enable successful implantation.
>
> If this embryo is provided a suitable environment, nutrition, and protection from deliberate attack, serious injury, or disease, it will develop to the mature stage of a human organism. Thus, from the zygote stage onward this distinct, new organism has all of the internal resources—in its genetic and epigenetic structure—needed to develop itself (or, rather, himself or herself, since in the human sex is determined from the very beginning) to the mature stage of a human organism. At no point after fertilization—implantation, gastrulation, birth, puberty, etc.—does a fundamental change in biological trajectory occur. These subsequent stages of development are simply the unfolding of the zygote's inherent dynamism toward human organismal maturity. This shows that the zygote already is a human organism—a member of the species Homo sapiens—albeit at an early stage of his or her development.

So, since I like to win arguments with science, I just took the side of the debate that was backed by science. I really hate to lose debates, you know. I really like to cite scientific evidence when I'm debating.

The crime of abortion, it seems to me, is that you are depriving a human being of his or her future, because of your convenience right now. Human beings don't have the right to take away the futures of other human beings because they want to be unburdened by the results of their own actions. We shouldn't resort to violence in order to escape responsibility for our own actions. In almost every case, (except to save the life of the

mother), killing the unborn child isn’t justified. It’s actually very scary to me that anyone would think that hurting other people was a reasonable response to one’s own diminished happiness. How did we ever get to a place in society when people don’t think that taking responsibility to care for the unborn child is morally better than killing the unborn child? It’s a baby for goodness sake. We ought to be serious about setting up our lives and controlling ourselves so that we never hurt an unborn child.

Teacher wins case after being fired for not using student's pronouns

October 14, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Good news! I saw an article in the Daily Signal about a teacher in Virginia who was fired for not using a student's preferred pronouns. Well, the teacher sued the school board, and it went all the way to the Virginia Supreme Court! Finally, after 5 years of litigation, the school board capitulated and agreed to settle the case for $575, 000. Let's have some happy news for a change!

Here's the article from Daily Signal:

> In 2018, one of Vlaming's female students at West Point High School began identifying as a transgender male. Although Vlaming consistently used the student's preferred name, the French teacher carefully avoided using third-person pronouns so as not to violate his own religious beliefs.
>
> That courtesy wasn't good enough for West Point's school board and school administrators. When Vlaming refused to use preferred pronouns, they fired the teacher for "creating a hostile learning environment."
>
> That's right. Vlaming wasn't fired for what he said. He was fired for what he didn't—and couldn't—say.
>
> Represented by Alliance Defending Freedom and a local attorney, Vlaming sued in state court in 2019, asserting claims under Virginia law and the Virginia Constitution.
>
> […]The majority decision, written by Justice D. Arthur Kelsey, was a landmark victory for religious freedom and free speech. The state Supreme Court held that the Virginia Constitution protects religious exercise—not just religious speech—unless it threatens the public's safety or order.

I thought this part was interesting:

> In so ruling, the state's highest court rejected U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's highly criticized majority opinion in Employment Division v. Smith. That decision gutted religious freedom when a challenged law could be considered both neutral and generally applicable to everyone.

A lot of people name Antonin Scalia when asked who the most conservative SCOTUS Justice is, but I always say Clarence Thomas. He's the best, and I wish we had 9 of him on the Supreme Court. Scalia inconsistent, just like Barrett, Gorsuch and Kavanaugh.

More:

> The court also ruled for Vlaming on his claim of compelled speech. Merely "objectionable" or "hurtful" speech, it emphasized, poses no threat to public

> safety or order.
>
> Vlaming's refusal to use preferred personal pronouns based on his Christian religious beliefs thus was protected even if others subjectively took offense to his silence, Kelsey wrote in the opinion.
>
> […]"[I]f liberty means anything at all," Kelsey wrote, "it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear. … All the more, it means the right to disagree without speaking at all."
>
> Seeing the writing on the wall, the West Point School Board finally relented. In a settlement finalized Monday, the board agreed to pay Vlaming $575,000 in damages and attorneys' fees. It also agreed to expunge Vlaming's firing from his employment record.

And this part I really liked – the school board changed their policy to match the law of Virginia:

> And for good measure, the school board took the initiative and changed its policies to conform to new educational policies from Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin, a Republican, which protect free speech and parental rights.

Can you imagine how much it must cost to fight a case like this for 5 years, though? This is why I am so careful about saving money for the case where I get sued. I have to do with a lot less goodies day by day. It's a real struggle to say yes to a board game here, or a Steam game there. Instead, I like to put money into savings, in the case where someone like this female student decides to sue me like this for not saying the things that she demands that I say.

It's shocking that I have to live like this in America, but leftists are dangerous people. They have no mercy on those that cause them to feel bad. It doesn't bother them at all to take someone's job if that person refuses to play along with their woke delusions. I guess that's better than using violence, but honestly, leftists are often using violence to get their way as well. It's quite a scary time to be alive.

What I've done, to mitigate the risk, is just avoided talking to people who are likely to be offended. And that's just people who are in the traditional Democrat voting groups, like the young unmarried female student in the story. They're just not safe to talk to. Their first instinct when confronted with normal, moral Christian men is to drag them to court, and have the court punish good men for their moral and spiritual convictions.

I don't like that I have to censor myself and stop doing the things that I want to do, just because leftists are offended. And since society seems to side with them over me – dragging Christians into court because we take the Bible seriously – I've learned just not give them the same friendliness and openness that I give to more moral and trustworthy people. I wouldn't tell Stalin what I really think, and I wouldn't want to be Stalin's friend. Stalin is not a good person. Stalin is not safe to make friends with.

I just want to make one general point about this social trend of letting young secular

leftists attack Christian men because society is offended by moral leadership and spiritual leadership. Society is fine with Christian men paying taxes. They love when Christian men protect and provide for women. But they DO NOT want those same men to lead anyone morally and spiritually. And I'm going to tell you right now – Christian men are tired of being used by society as ATMs. We are not interested in dating and marriage unless our leadership is respected.

The more that good Christian men see society trashing us for our desire to lead on moral and spiritual issues, the less interested we are in getting married and raising children. We are not interested in just paying the bills, and letting the feelings-oriented people, and their allies in the courts, trample all over us. We will opt out of that.

What would Kamala Harris do as president? Her record on policy issues

October 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kamala Harris has received over $200 million of donations, some from Democrat billionaires, and many more from first time donors. It's not going to be easy for Republicans to beat her in November with her huge advantage in fundraising. But, one thing we can do right now is to take a look at her record on issues, and then share these stories with our friends and family members.

Here's the first article from Daily Signal:

> The "Biden Accountability Tracker" presents a list of "disturbing and harmful actions," including "each significant policy decision made, executive action taken, or regulation promulgated by the administration that hurts the American people," the organization's letter to lawmakers explains.
>
> "Our organization has kept a rolling record of the failures of the Biden-Harris administration since 2021, from reversing Trump-Pence border policies, to pushing an expensive and burdensome climate agenda, failing to protect women's sports, and using the FDA to make the dangerous abortion drug mifepristone available by mail," Teller told The Daily Signal. "Kamala Harris owns each and every one of these failings, along with her own record from her time as California attorney general and as a senator."
>
> "It is clear her policies are left of Biden and that she has it out for conservatives and the freedom-loving community," Teller added.
>
> Teller's reference to Harris' having it out for conservatives touched on the vice president's record from her time as California attorney general. For example, Harris directed her office to search the home of pro-life investigative journalist David Daleiden, who had exposed Planned Parenthood officials' selling aborted baby body parts for profit. She prepared a legal case against Daleiden, which her successor as California attorney general—now Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra—brought against the pro-life journalist.
>
> Harris also demanded sensitive donor information from two conservative organizations, Americans for Prosperity and the American Freedom Law Center, after her office had leaked sensitive donor information and after some on the Left had launched a video game in which players acted out a shooting at Americans for Prosperity headquarters.

If you look through that issue tracker, you're bound to find something to convince an independent voter not to vote for Harris. Stuff like climate regulation (which caused our energy prices to skyrocket) and open borders (which caused housing prices to increase due to a shortage of housing) should be of interest to anyone.

Here are a few more of Kamala Harris' specific actions, reported by the Daily Signal:

> A newly resurfaced memo put out by Vice President Kamala Harris' 2020 presidential campaign outlines her plan to "fundamentally transform" the criminal justice system by reducing penalties for criminals.
>
> In 2019, Harris promised to end cash bail, get rid of court-ordered fines, expunge the records of some felons, discontinue federal mandatory minimum sentences, and to place greater federal scrutiny on local police departments, according to a memo resurfaced Thursday by the Washington Free Beacon.
>
> […]"It is long past time to re-envision public safety by strengthening and supporting our communities and drastically limiting the number of people we expose to our criminal justice system," the memo reads. "As president, Kamala will fundamentally transform how we approach public safety."

And ending cash bail, which has already been tried in many Democrat cities:

> "Excessive cash bail disproportionately harms people from low-income communities and communities of color," Harris' 2019 memo reads. She characterized cash bail systems as "criminalizing poverty" and vowed to end them.
>
> Ending cash bail has led to a backlash in some major cities, with New Yorkers in February 2022 overwhelmingly supporting tightening bail laws following an increase in crime, the New York Post reported. The Texas Organizing Project, a George Soros-backed nonprofit that opposes cash bail, bonded out a man who allegedly went on to murder six people and shoot three others in December 2023.

I remember that she's a big supporter of "defunding the police" as well, but that's not all:

> She also supported restoring voting rights to all those who have served criminal records, per the memo, and advocated for more federal oversight of local police departments, citing alleged "racial profiling" and "excessive force."
>
> The now-vice president proposed a "National Police Systems Review Board" that "would collect data and review police shootings and other cases of severe misconduct," according to the memo. She also promised to provide the Department of Justice with resources to provide grants to fund greater scrutiny of officers who shoot suspects and pledged to reinstate an executive order restricting the sale of certain military equipment to police departments.

So, it's not enough for her that unvetted illegal immigrants are coming into the country in droves. She looks at the taxpayers who pay her salary, and she thinks "I side with the killers and the rapists against those taxpayers – my job is to help the killers and the rapists, and not the taxpayers who pay my salary". Do you think that independents would care about that? I think they would.

Will a Harris-Walz regime take gender-confused kids from “non-affirming” parents?

October 16, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A very, very interesting article about the Biden-Harris regime came out on Monday in the Daily Caller. I think it’s really important for Christians to take a look at this article, and understand that voting in elections is not just voting for someone you like – someone who agrees with you. It’s really often about voting against policies that could really hurt you. And hurt your children.

Here’s the article from Daily Caller:

> While crafting its foster care rule finalized in April, HHS officials took inspiration from social workers in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, who spent years pioneering a program that strong-arms parents into affirming whatever confused beliefs children express about their gender. Parents who decline risk losing a voice in their child’s life.
>
> The program developed in Cuyahoga County using federal grant funds provided the HHS’ Administration for Children and Families (ACF) with an ideal model for infusing gender ideology into foster care and social services, the Daily Caller News Foundation discovered in reviewing hundreds of documents and emails obtained via public record requests.

Note that this is a federal rule – it will apply in all 50 states. So living in a red state will not protect you from having your children taken from you:

> The Biden-Harris administration’s new federal rule directs states to ensure foster children who identify as LGBTQ are placed in affirming homes. These “designated placements” must commit to creating an environment that supports a child’s “status or identity,” including through access to age-appropriate “resources, services, and activities.” To gender activists consulted by the Biden administration, being “affirming” means assuming the child knows best about his or her identity — even if what he or she claims to want is life-altering medical procedures like hormone blockers, cross-sex hormones and surgeries to appear more like the opposite sex.
>
> To Cuyahoga County child protective services, being affirming often means providing kids access to items like chest binders or prosthetic packers that mimic a penis, according to an information sheet for caregivers on the Cuyahoga County Division of Children & Family Services (DCFS) website.

So, parents are “good enough” to pay for transing their kids, but not good enough to parent their kids. The parenting of the kids should be done by secular leftists in government, who are also paid by the parents, through their taxes. So that’s all that

parents are good for – to pay people to parent their kids, because they don't know what's best for their kids.

And parents are already facing the effects of these policies:

> When the rule was announced in September 2023, it quickly faced resistance. A coalition of 19 Republican states slammed the proposed rule, arguing it would infringe on religious liberty and free speech protections. Religious groups warned it would restrict faith-based providers.
>
> Those concerns were well-founded: In states like Washington and Vermont, Christian couples have lost their foster care licenses due to similar state regulations. But as the activists consulted in the development of the federal rule show, these objections only scratch the surface of problems with the rule.
>
> Parents in a handful of states have already sounded the alarm, claiming local authorities deemed them unfit guardians for refusing to allow their children to undergo a gender transition. In light of federally funded programs, like the one operating in Cuyahoga County, stories like these sound more like harbingers of an organized effort to undermine the family than one-off incidents.

The article talks about how non-parent adults will determine whether the child is transgender – by asking them questions about their feelings. The child will determine whether they are transgender or not.

This part was interesting – your Christian faith will have to go:

> The program is designed to help parents and caregivers of children already in the welfare system, or "at risk" of entering, become affirming, according to the AFFIRM.ME guide. The program also pushes families to "reconcile" their values, including their faith, to accept their child's identity.

Not that this program is already in effect in certain states, and if Harris-Walz wins, there is no reason to think this will not become the law in all 50 states:

> YAP is currently being implemented in California, New York, Pennsylvania and Missouri, along with Ohio, according to the SOGIE Center. Of the 34 Cuyahoga County families who started the program between 2018 and 2021, seven cases were successfully "closed" when parents stopped opposing their child's gender-bending desires, according to SOGIE Center data.

Christianity and conservatism are obstacles for the government to neutralize:

> "I mean, they don't say anything to my face anymore about it and they stopped being super religious around me because they used to," said one young person who was part of the program in Spring 2021, according to the data sheet. "I don't know what was their problem, but they used to try to push a lot of weird religion stuff on me."
>
> Another adolescent reported having a "very conservative" family approve of

> transitioning after going through YAP. “So I could start testosterone and things of that sort soon,” the youth said. “And [mom is] helping me with the name change.”

What was interesting about this article is how all the people who are trying to push transgenderism onto children were progressive women! And they were working in the Biden-Harris administration, with the goal of turning children against their parents.

Christians sitting out the 2024 elections

I’ve been reading a lot of comments on Twitter from pietistic Christians who are talking about not voting in this election, because they don’t like either of the candidates. And it’s really causing me some concern. They think they are saying something pious and intelligent when they talk about not voting because neither candidate reflects their values. They don’t seem to grasp that one of the candidates will trample on their basic human rights, such as the right to free speech, religious liberty and parental authority.

I’ve talked to many of these pietistic people whose children left the faith. I ask them “did you study apologetics so you could answer their questions?” And I get these rationalizations about why learning apologetics would be a waste of time, like “Children are more liberal these days than we were” and “they’ll come back to the church when they have children” and so on. Maybe you are tempted to take these rationalizations at face value. But I see it more clearly now – the pious language is just being used to excuse them from having to do anything that doesn’t make them happy. And in the same way, this Pollyannish whistling-past-the-graveyard isn’t really anything they know. It’s just their desire to virtue signal, while still leaving their pursuit of comfort and ease unchallenged.

I have no doubt that when their rights are trampled by the secular left, they will find some pious way to shift blame and excuse themselves. They will be satisfied with their virtue signaling. The question though is what will God think about it? I don’t think he will like it at all.

The real Kamala Harris revealed in Fox News interview with Bret Baier

October 17, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kamala Harris did a 25-minute interview with Bret Baier on Fox News, and I have the clips. She dodged every single question, and accepted zero accountability for the policies of the Biden-Harris regime, during the past 3.5 years . She denied the existence of every problem facing American voters. America is in for disaster if this unqualified person is elected president.

Here is a 10-minute clip on the Biden-Harris open-borders immigration policy:

Here is the full video: (25 minutes)

And here's an article for those are just reading about it, from Daily Caller:

> Fox News host Bret Baier stopped Harris during an interview Wednesday evening as she struggled to explain how her presidency would move the country "forward" despite her already being in a position of power.
>
> The interview marks Harris' first appearance on the network during her campaign, following a busy week of media appearances on networks like CBS and ABC. On "Special Report with Bret Baier," the host pressed Harris on her campaign slogan "A New Way Forward" and her claim that "it's time to turn the page," to which she initially responded by explaining she was moving on from the "last decade" of former President Donald Trump's "rhetoric."
>
> "More than 70% of people tell the country is on the wrong track. They say the country is on the wrong track. If it's on the wrong track, that track follows three and a half years of you being vice president and President Biden being president. That is what they're saying, 79% of them. Why are they saying that? If you are turning the page, you've been in office for three and a half years," Baier said.
>
> "And Donald Trump has been running for office since — " Harris began.
>
> Baier pushed back and pointed out to the vice president how she's been "the person holding the office," with Harris then claiming that the host understood what she was talking about.
>
> "C'mon, you and I both know what I'm talking about. You and I both know what I'm talking about," Harris said.
>
> "I actually don't. What are you talking about?" Baier asked.

Breitbart News notes:

> Since 2021, the Biden-Harris administration reversed or undid many of the Trump-era border policies; they suspended the Remain in Mexico policy on the administration's first day in office, for example.

She caused this mess, and now she won't apologize for it, or accept responsibility for it. This is not someone that should be elected to the White House. She won't solve problems. We have no evidence that she knows how to define and resolve problems.

On this blog, and on podcasts, I've tried to point out the problems with the policies that Kamala Harris supports. But this interview really showed me the problem with the person. Kamala is not going to be able to solve any problems, because she won't admit that there are any problems. When she is told that she's been in charge for the last 3.5 years, she shifts the blame to other people who are not in charge. When she is asked for specific solutions to the problems caused by the Biden-Harris regime, she says that she has no policy differences with Joe Biden.

I almost wonder if she said this because she doesn't know what a policy is. When I watch this interview, I could really believe that Kamala Harris has no education or work experience of any kind. If this were a candidate for a job that I was interviewing for, I would say "this person cannot do any useful work, she just tries to paint a picture of herself with words". This might be OK for an actor or entertainer, but not for someone who will be setting policies for the next 4 years.

What will life be like for Christians in a Harris-Walz secular left regime?

October 18, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's become fashionable in our time to claim that facism is an emergence of the right, as if somehow, you get authoritarianism from private property, the rule of law, unbiased courts and free trades. Actually, when you look at history, it's always the secular left that wants to force individuals to agree with their ideology. And they don't treat religious people who dissent very well.

Let's take a look at a couple of stories from this week from a country that is further down the road of secularism and leftism.

Here's the first story from Christian Post:

> A Christian pastor was arrested after he made comments about Islam and the binary nature of sex while street preaching outside Bristol University.
>
> In response to a question from a Muslim member of the public, Dia Moodley said he believed there were differences between the moral standards of the God of Islam and the Christian God.
>
> During his preaching he also expressed the belief that God made humans male and female and that this truth should not be denied.
>
> The Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF UK), which is supporting Moodley, said he was arrested and detained for 13 hours by Avon and Somerset Police in March.
>
> The organization said that Moodley was pushed off his short stepladder and had a sign snatched from his hands before being arrested by attending officers.
>
> Four of his signs were handed to staff at Bristol University, who disposed of them under the instruction of the officers.
>
> Reacting to the incident, Moodley said, "Two-tier policing is sadly not a fiction or some conspiracy theory, it's a reality that Christians in the U.K. have been experiencing for years.
>
> […]"The world is looking at the dismal state of free speech in the U.K. with shock. What happened to me reflects a wider trend of increasing state censorship in the U.K. and across the West."

Yes, so one of the known effects of importing millions and millions of unskilled immigrants is that the laws will change so that they get special treatment, whereas anyone who points out the effects of thesse immigration policies will be branded a racist. Recently, I talked about how the UK police advised armed Muslims to hide their weapons in mosques to avoid being arrested, but they brutally beat unarmed non-Muslim protesters who objected to violent crimes being committed in their neighborhoods. And whenever Christians speak publicly against the truth of Islam, they are arrested and imprisoned.

Just ask Hatun Tash, who we interviewed on the Knight and Rose Show. Christians are always the losers in cases where the secular left wants to improve "diversity" by importing a bunch of unskilled immigrants – who tend to vote for more spending on welfare and for defunding the police.

Anyway, here is the second article, also from Christian Post:

> A British army veteran who served in Afghanistan was found guilty today of praying silently near an abortion clinic in England.
>
> Adam Smith-Connor breached a Public Spaces Protection Order by this action, according to the ruling at Poole Magistrates Court in the town of Poole near Bournemouth, Dorset, England.
>
> […]The court found Smith-Connor guilty for an act of a "disapproval of abortion," though he was only thinking about his son, who had been aborted many years before, according to Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) International.
>
> Smith-Connor had slightly bowed his head and clasped his hands in prayer on a public green in a buffer zone near the abortion facility in Orphir Road, Bournemouth in November 2022. During a confrontation with police officers that he recorded, they asked him, "What is the nature of your prayer?"
>
> The buffer zone had been previously legalized under a Public Spaces Protection Order enforced on streets near the abortion clinic. The intent of the buffer zone had been to stop pro-life beliefs being expressed near the facility, including offering help or prayers to women in crisis pregnancies, according to a press statement by ADF International.
>
> Defense attorneys argued that Smith-Connor's prayerful thoughts, beliefs and opinions were not a crime, especially as he stood peacefully and silently on a public street. He stood behind a tree, spoke to no one and had his back to the facility.
>
> The court also ordered the father of two children to pay prosecution costs amounting to £9,000 ($11,700 USD).

How close is the UK government that does these things to Kamala Harris? They are sending over members of the ruling secular left party to help her in her election campaign in swing states!

Now, many Christians who have not too closely into the policy differences of the candidates will say "Oh, but Kamala would never do such things, after all, she laughs a lot and seems to have a lot of joy!" But those Christians are just uninformed. It was Kamala Harris, when she was the attorney general of California, who colluded with abortion providers to raid the homes of pro-life activists.

Here is the Tennessee Star to refresh your memory:

> In March 2016, top Planned Parenthood officials in California eagerly emailed one another about an upcoming meeting with the state's then-attorney general,

> Kamala Harris. The meeting carried so much import that the Planned Parenthood officials met with Harris' staff ahead of time "to discuss prep," emails reviewed by The Daily Signal show.
>
> About two weeks later, on April 5, 2016, California Department of Justice authorities raided the home of a pro-life journalist in his late 20s—David Daleiden, the head of the Center for Medical Progress, who had recently published videos allegedly showing Planned Parenthood officials gruesomely describing how they extract aborted-baby body parts. Daleiden says the videos prove that Planned Parenthood was selling the aborted baby body parts for profit.
>
> How had Daleiden done this? By studying up on fetal tissue and stem cells, posing as a fetal tissue procurer, infiltrating secretive abortion conferences so protected that they required background checks, schmoozing and sweet talking abortionists, nurses, and researchers over lunch, drinks, and dinner, and wearing hidden cameras to capture what no other journalists had.

This is what we can look forward to, in a Harris-Walz regime. Why think that our secular left fascists would be any different from the secular left fascists of the UK? And this isn't an insult, I'm literally describing the sort of person who uses government to trample of the basic human rights of people who disagree with their policies.

New study: men experience domestic violence at the same rate as women

October 19, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've noticed that young women are quite frightened of men, because they are taught that men are dangerous. I'm concerned that these beliefs will deter women from choosing men wisely, and marrying them. One way to counter these fears about "domestic violence" is to take a look at the studies, and see who is really doing the violence. Is it always men, or is there a balance?

The study was published in the Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma.

Here's the abstract:

> Recent debates surrounding intimate partner violence (IPV) have focused on its gender symmetry and gender-oriented nature. These debates center on findings from various data sources, like victimization or self-reported surveys and police-based reports. Data by Statistics Canada, from 1999 to 2014, has shown that the prevalence of IPV is similar for male and female victims, except for sexual assaults. However, there has been a paucity of studies on the severity and risk factors of IPV against men by female partners. Thus, this paper examines the severity of and risk factors for physical IPV against heterosexual men in Canada using the General Social Survey (Victimization) data of 2014. This study revealed that there is a symmetry in the experiences of physical violence between male and female victims. This study also revealed that male victims experience more severe violence than female victims. Using binary logistic regression analysis, years of dwelling together, the victim's age, childhood victimization, and marijuana use were found to predict physical IPV against heterosexual men. This paper concludes with suggestions about how these predicting factors can be used to identify male victims and the need for a more inclusive approach toward addressing IPV, which should include male victims.

The key points for us:

- scholars typically ignore violence against men committed by women: "However, there has been a paucity of studies on the severity and risk factors of IPV against men by female partners."
- men and women commit domestic violence at roughly equal rates: "This study revealed that there is a symmetry in the experiences of physical violence between male and female victims."
- Men are the victims of more severe violence than women: "This study also revealed that male victims experience more severe violence than female victims."

This confirms data from a blog post I wrote a long time ago (2011) about this issue.

I found that:

> Data from Home Office statistical bulletins and the British Crime Survey show that men made up about 40% of domestic violence victims each year between 2004-05 and 2008-09, the last year for which figures are available. In 2006-07 men made up 43.4% of all those who had suffered partner abuse in the previous year, which rose to 45.5% in 2007-08 but fell to 37.7% in 2008-09.

That's the UK.

And:

> An estimated 7% of women and 6% of men in a current or previous spousal relationship encountered spousal violence during the five years up to and including 2004, according to a comprehensive new report on family violence.

That's Canada.

It's interesting to note that the police and the courts do not acknowledge that women commit domestic violence. Whenever there is a report of domestic violence, the man is ALWAYS assumed to be the attacker, and ALWAYS arrested and removed from his home. That is the way that domestic violence works, according to the famous "Duluth model". The Duluth model actually discourages men from getting into relationships that lead to marriage. Men don't want to be attacked by women, and then treated as the aggressors by police.

Another factor also deters men from relationships and marriage: courts that are biased against men. When there is domestic violence, women are treated far more leniently than men. I blogged about a study about this recently, and found:

> The estimated gender disparities are strikingly large, conditional on observables. Most notably, treatment as male is associated with a 63% average increase in sentence length, with substantial unexplained gaps throughout the sentence distribution.

I see stories all the time where women are violent, and get no jail time. Here is one story from January 2024 and here is another from March 2024.

Men do look at these studies, and they decide on their life goals accordingly. Don't blame men for aligning their goals and decisions with the way that the world really is. If women want men to engage the way that men used to, they should stop being so defensive and fix the problems that are deterring men from relationships.

Biden-Harris regime sues states that want to remove non-citizens from voting lists

October 20, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I have two articles that may surprise you. Democrats seem to have an obsession with demanding that everyone agree that they don't steal elections. Their words say that they want free and fair elections, where only citizens vote, and every vote is counted. That's a wonderful goal. But do their words match their actions? Let's take a look at some news stories, then you can decide.

Here's the first article from the Washington Times:

> The Biden administration sued Virginia on Friday over the state's effort to remove noncitizens from its voting lists, arguing the move violated a federal law that bars changes to the rolls so close to an election.
>
> Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin in August ordered state officials to conduct "daily updates" to remove ineligible voters, including felons and those who are "unable to verify that they are citizens."
>
> The Justice Department said that amounts to a formalized cleansing of the voter rolls, which it said violates a 1993 law on voter registration.
>
> […]Mr. Youngkin, in a statement, blasted the case.
>
> "With less than 30 days until the election, the Biden-Harris Department of Justice is filing an unprecedented lawsuit against me and the Commonwealth of Virginia, for appropriately enforcing a 2006 law signed by Democrat Tim Kaine that requires Virginia to remove noncitizens from the voter rolls," he said.
>
> He said the noncitizens Virginia cleaned from its rolls had previously declared "themselves a non-citizen" and then registered to vote.

And it's not just Virginia, it's Alabama, too:

> The federal lawsuit against Virginia follows another one the Justice Department filed against Alabama, which flagged 3,251 names it moved to its inactive voter list on Aug. 13 — 84 days before the election.
>
> Alabama used state records where someone indicated on an unemployment form or an application for a driver's license or identity card that they weren't a citizen.

Let's see another story and make sure that I'm understanding their actions correctly.

Here's an article from Daily Signal:

> After requesting citizenship status information about registered voters in Florida, and not receiving it from federal agencies as required by law, Florida sued.
>
> In September, Florida requested information from the Department of Homeland Security and its subagencies about citizenship status of a subset of registered

> voters it identified and its request was denied.
>
> One month later, a coalition of attorneys general, including Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody, called on DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to provide the requested information, after multiple states, including Texas and Florida, also asked for similar information. They made the requests as multiple states also removed thousands of noncitizens from their voter rolls.
>
> On Oct. 16, Moody sued Mayorkas and DHS in U.S. District Court Northern District of Florida Pensacola Division "for refusing to verify immigration records for the State of Florida to ensure voter-roll integrity."
>
> Under the Biden-Harris administration, millions of illegal border crossers "have flooded into the country," Moody said. "Florida has an interest in ensuring that only American citizens are registered to vote. Recently, the state identified registered voters who may not be U.S. citizens, and DHS refuses to provide information necessary to determine their immigration status." Moody sued "to ensure noncitizens are not on the voter rolls."
>
> "Voting is a right granted to American citizens—not illegal immigrants or other noncitizens," she said.
>
> The 16-page lawsuit cites federal and state law related to maintaining accurate voter registration records, federal government agencies' legal requirement to ensure only citizens are voting in elections, among other provisions. "Because the federal government is refusing to comply with these obligations and frustrating Florida's ability to maintain the integrity of its elections, Florida files this suit," the lawsuit states.

So what do we learn from this?

Well, I think it's important for everyone who doesn't want communism to get out there and vote in November. Why? Because the best way to prevent one party from cheating in an election is to make sure that the election is not close. If it's not close, then they can't cheat. So, make sure that you have a plan to vote, and make sure that you're convincing the people around you to vote against communism, too. If it's not close, then they can't cheat.

Comparing the records of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris on inflation

October 21, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's election time, so I thought it might be a good idea for everyone to get some data on one of the most pressing problems Americans are facing, and that's inflation. People keep saying that the rate of inflation is coming down, but the prices are still way higher than they used to be. So, who did a better job of controlling inflation? Trump, during his 4 years, or Kamala, during her 4 years?

This article is from the Wall Street Journal:

> Kamala Harris couldn't explain during her interview with Fox News's Bret Baier this week why she'd be better on the economy and inflation than Donald Trump. The Vice President instead invoked the expert wisdom of progressive economists. That wisdom is worth a closer look.
>
> […]A nearby chart shows the inflation trend during the Trump and Biden presidencies. Inflation averaged 2.1% annually between 2017 and 2019, compared to 5.1% under Mr. Biden. (Inflation declined to 1.2% in 2020 amid the Covid lockdowns.) Deficits totalled $2.4 trillion during Mr. Trump's first three years compared to $5.8 trillion during Mr. Biden's.
>
> […]In March 2021, Democrats stoked consumption… with their $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act…
>
> The bill was largely composed of transfer payments, including $1,400 checks per person, $3,600 per child tax credits, an extra $300 a week in unemployment benefits, a 15% increase in food stamps, rental assistance and more. Such handouts discouraged unemployed Americans from returning to work since they could earn as much not working.
>
> President Biden further loosened the spending spigot with executive actions, sweetening food stamps and waiving monthly student loan payments. A Congressional Budget Office report this week noted that the 2021 food-stamp boost likely reduced the labor supply since people received fewer benefits the more income they earned.
>
> This unprecedented helicopter drop of money, aided by the Federal Reserve, kicked off the highest inflation in 40 years.

And the article concludes:

> Ms. Harris has adopted the Biden spending agenda and more. Mr. Trump is no fiscal conservative, but on deficits and inflation his first-term record is far superior to the four years of Biden-Harris.

Remember, Kamala was asked what she would do differently than Biden, and she said

that she wouldn’t do anything different than Biden. Now, some people might say that’s because she doesn’t know enough about policy to know how to answer that question, but let’s just take her at her word, and expect 4 more years of Biden’s record on inflation.

The nice thing about a Kamala victory is that the people who will have to pay the most are the people who spend a lot of money now. Especially people who just don’t have the willpower to stop spending money on things they don’t need. We have a $36 trillion debt. Interest on the debt will start to crowd out discretionary spending like spending on welfare programs. So, it’s going to be harder for people who depend on collecting welfare to make ends meet. I’m looking forward to seeing people with high burn rates have to cut their spending, because of the consequences of their votes.

Elderly Americans being evicted to make space for illegal immigrants

October 22, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I could get young people to accept one thing about the secular left, it's that all the "nice" things that they talk about are always at other people's expense. As soon as you ask them to solve a problem for someone with their own costs, efforts and risks, they say "I was thinking that we could have a systemic solution". They're always spending other people's money, risking other people's safety.

Here's an article from the Daily Wire:

> Dozens of seniors in New York, including a 94-year-old Army veteran named Frank Tammaro, were evicted from their senior center, which was then converted into a migrant shelter.
>
> City officials have estimated that tens of thousands of migrants have entered the city since last spring, which is costing around $5 million per day. Mayor Eric Adams, who previously boasted about NYC being a "sanctuary" for migrants, has more recently complained about the influx of migrants.
>
> Tammaro told Fox News that he had lived in the center for five years, and intended to spend the rest of his days there until he and the other members were notified that they were being kicked out. After he was evicted, Tammaro's family found out that the center was turned into a migrant shelter.
>
> "I do get upset when I see them handing out all this money and all these things, and I'm paying taxes and getting kicked out," Tammaro said. "I've never got anything from the city. Or the state."

Notice that this happened in New York state, which is denominated from top to bottom by Democrats. Democrats just feel better when they help illegal immigrants and refugees. They don't get the same "buzz" from helping American taxpayers – especially if they have to use their own money.

Here's another article from the UK Daily Mail:

> A 96-year-old woman is facing eviction from her home of 22 years where she says she's invested her entire savings – in a Democrat state where lawmakers want to give migrants $150,000 loans to buy homes.
>
> Jean Jacques was given a three-day eviction notice from the Pacific Grove Senior Living facility, located on the picturesque Monterey County coast in California, KSBW reported.
>
> The notice demands Jacques pays her outstanding balance of $110,000 or leave her unit, according to the outlet.

Meanwhile in California:

> On Wednesday, state lawmakers approved the California Dream For All Shared Appreciation Loan program, which would provide no-interest home loans of up to $150,000 to illegal migrants to use on down payments and fees.
>
> It now heads to California Governor Gavin Newsom's desk for final approval.
>
> The program was launched last year and has already provided thousands of first-time homebuyers with loans of up to 20 percent of a house's purchase price.

People who vote Democrat often don't think about the costs of being "generous" with taxpayer money to illegal immigrants. But it's hundreds of millions of dollars for each state. Here's one report about Mississippi:

> Illegal immigration could cost Mississippi more than $100 million every year, a new report from the state's auditor reveals.
>
> The report, from Mississippi State Auditor Shad White, addresses the costs of illegal immigration for the broader country before delving into the ways illegal immigration places a financial burden on Mississippi's education, healthcare, and public safety systems. The investigation comes as polling indicates that immigration is a top issue for voters heading into the presidential election.
>
> […]"Illegal immigration creates a financial burden for taxpayers across the country, but the cost of illegal immigration is not borne solely by the federal government," the report explains, also noting that an estimated 22,000 illegal immigrants reside in the state. "Taxpayers from each state—including Mississippi—must face the reality of increased spending as a result of crisis-level illegal immigration."

That's New York and California. If I had to pick another Democrat state, I'd pick Illinois. Specifically, Chicago.

Let's see what's happening there:

> Chicago has spent $299 million on the migrant crisis since 2022, including $215 million since Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson took office in May 2023.
>
> Nearly 37,000 migrants have arrived in Chicago since August 2022. As of March 14, more than 11,200 migrants were living in shelters.

Right now, we are $36 trillion in debt, so we really have run out of money to be spending on illegal immigration. Who will pay for this debt? Future generations. People who aren't even born yet. Their quality of life is being diminished by these secular left big spenders who are desperate to virtue signal to you about their great generosity. Therefore, vote wisely.

Kamala Harris wants to force Christian medical workers to perform abortions

October 23, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I always laugh when I read a bio of a secular leftist, who claims to be an "anti-fascist". I think to myself, "has this person ever read any history?" History is filled with the stories of big-government atheists using political power to force others violate their consciences. In contrast, conservatives support marriage, unborn children, parent's rights, free markets, free trade, free speech and religious liberty.

Let's hear about the latest evidence that Kamala Harris would be a *terrible* president for Christians.

This is from The Federalist:

> On Tuesday, Kamala Harris voiced opposition to providing religious exemptions in any federal legislation legalizing abortion nationwide in the event that such legislation is brought to her desk as president.
>
> The moment came during the vice president's sit-down interview with NBC News' Hallie Jackson.
>
> […]The NBC host specifically queried if "religious exemptions" were "something [Harris] would consider."
>
> "I don't think we should be making concessions when we're talking about a fundamental freedom to make decisions about your own body," Harris said.

And it's not just her words against religious liberty that are a problem. It's her actions. Here's a reminder of some of her actions, from First Things:

> In February 2019, Harris introduced the Do No Harm Act in the U.S. Senate, the purpose of which was to dilute—if not neutralize—the federal 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) and similar legislation in about twenty states. The purpose of RFRA was to give legislative protection to religious practices that might incidentally be forbidden by otherwise generally applicable laws prohibiting (or compelling) certain behaviors. RFRA was a legislative response to a U.S. Supreme Court decision that allowed a state law to prohibit the use of sacramental peyote in a minority religious ritual. RFRA laws carve out exemptions from generally applicable laws for some religious practices that are fundamental to religious belief.
>
> For example, a RFRA law might protect a church from another law that prohibits consideration of sexual orientation for employment, promotion, or retention. Or it might protect a physician who participates in public health reimbursement programs from a law requiring such physicians to perform a broad scope of so-called healthcare services, such as abortion.

Now, I often run into people who claim to be Christians, but warn me that they don't want to get involved in "culture wars" and that Christianity is just about "loving everyone" and they also think Jesus would attend gay weddings. And for fake Christians like this, it's not going to be a problem that Kamala Harris stops Christians from acting like Christians. Because these people don't act like Christians already. They just attend church and sing songs and do nice things, but they would never dream of obeying God if they had to pay some kind of price for it.

For these people – and for Kamala Harris – Christianity is just about singing songs in church on Sunday. It's not any more important than going bowling on Tuesday nights with your friends.

More:

> Harris sponsored the Do No Harm Act for the express purpose of emasculating RFRA laws. As she explained on the website introducing the act, it would prevent RFRA laws from "being used to deny" such things as "Healthcare access, . . . coverage or services to which persons are otherwise legally entitled," or "Services that the government has contracted to be beneficiaries through a government . . . grant." In other words, the Do No Harm Act would compel a Catholic physician to prescribe contraceptives or perform abortions if she participates in federal or state reimbursement programs. And it would require a parochial school that receives state grants, for example, to employ persons in open same-sex relationships as teachers or even ministers.
>
> The full implications of Harris's philosophical understanding of the scope and limit of religious freedom, however, are found in her apologetic for the Do No Harm Act. In a statement on her website explaining the purpose of the act, Harris uses a very narrow definition of religious freedom. "The freedom to worship is one of our nation's most fundamental rights," she writes. "That First Amendment guarantee should never be used to undermine other Americans' civil rights." The problem, of course, is that "the freedom to worship" is not a "First Amendment guarantee." The First Amendment guarantees the "free exercise" of religion, which has a much more expansive scope than mere "worship."
>
> The free exercise clause of the First Amendment provides that "Congress shall make no law . . . prohibiting the free exercise of" religion. Harris misquotes the clause, changing "free exercise" to "freedom to worship," betraying a definition of religious practice that would remove it from any meaningful legislative or political protection. In doing so, she turns the free exercise clause on its head, driving religious faith to the margins of public life and religious exercise out of public life altogether.

Like I said, I don't expect this kind of warning to mean anything to the "Shepherds for Sale" Christians. Their real religion is being liked, and Christianity has value only if it helps them to be liked. For the rest of us, who take the Bible seriously, a Kamala Harris presidentcy would be a disaster to our plans. To our ability to work, to keep what we

earn, and to champion what God says. She would use the force of government to force Christians to choose between working to feed their families, and their relationships with God in Christ. And for a secular left fascist, that's pretty exciting. They love that. They get a sick and twisted joy out of using power to force Christians to abandon their convictions.

Don't forget how she pre-dawn raided the homes of pro-lifers, and how many pro-lifers have been pre-dawn raided by the Biden-Harris federal law enforcement. Why think that American Stalinists are any different than the Stalin of the Soviet Union?

How strong are naturalistic hypotheses about the origin of life?

October 24, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The origin of life is easy to explain if it is the result of intelligent design, because intelligent agents know how to engineer the building blocks, and how to assemble them into the components of a living system: proteins and nucleic acids. But how can you do it when there are no intelligences allows in your worldview? There is a new article in Nature about that.

The authors write:

> To understand how life might have begun, researchers must stop cherry-picking the most beautiful bits of data or the most apparently convincing isolated steps, and explore the implications of these deep differences in context. Depending on the starting point, each hypothesis has different testable predictions. For example, if life started in a warm pond on land, the succession of steps leading from prebiotic chemistry to cells with genes is surprisingly different from those that must be posited if the first cells emerged in deep-sea hydrothermal vents.
>
> Building coherent frameworks — in which all the steps in the continuum fit together — is essential to making real progress. To see why, here we highlight two of the most prominent frameworks, which propose radically distinct environments for the origin of life.

Let's see what the authors say about the prebiotic soup:

> This framework posits that nucleotides are concentrated in a small pond. To form RNA, the simplest and most versatile genetic material, nucleotides must polymerize. That is most easily achieved by drying them out (polymerization is a type of dehydration reaction). Proponents imagine a succession of wet–dry cycles, in which the pond dries out to form polymers of RNA, then fills again with water containing more nucleotides and so on, cycle after cycle, making more and more RNA3.

This is the "RNA World" hypothesis, which I've blogged about before. The authors don't like it:

> But this concept raises some difficult questions. It places the onus on an 'RNA world', in which RNA acts both as a catalyst (in a similar way to enzymes) and as a genetic template that can be copied. The problems are that there is little evidence that RNA can catalyse many of the reactions attributed to it (such as those required for metabolism); and copying 'naked' RNA (that is not enclosed in compartments such as cells) favours the RNA strands that replicate the fastest. Far from building complexity, these tend to get smaller and simpler over time.

> Worse, by regularly drying everything out, wet–dry cycles keep forming random groupings of RNA (in effect, randomized genomes). The best combinations, which happen to encode multiple useful catalysts, are immediately lost again by re-randomization in the next generation, precluding the 'vertical inheritance' that is needed for evolution to build novelty.
>
> If selection on RNA in drying ponds could somehow be made to generate greater complexity, what must it achieve? To make cells that grow and reproduce, RNA must encode metabolism: the network of hundreds of reactions that keeps all cells alive. Modern-day metabolic reactions bear no resemblance to the cyanide chemistry that makes nucleotides in this model. Evolution would therefore need to replace each and every step in metabolism, and there is no evidence that such a wholesale replacement is possible.

The authors are saying that they need to build up complexity from simple to more complex, in order to get the bare minimum they need for simple life. Life basically requires four different capabilities: membrane, energy capture, metabolism, and information storage. And they all have to be there and working right from the start. It's a frightful amount of complexity to get right – unless you appeal to intelligence.

The authors also talk about life forming from non-living materials in hydrothermal vents:

> Our own favoured scenario is that the chemistry of life reflects the conditions under which life began, in deep-sea hydrothermal systems on the early Earth4. In broad brush strokes, this means that gases such as carbon dioxide (the near-universal source of carbon in cells today) and hydrogen feed a network of reactions with a topology resembling metabolism. Genes and proteins arise within this spontaneous protometabolism and promote the flux of materials through the network, leading to cell growth and reproduction. There are plenty of problems here, too, but they differ from those in the prebiotic soup framework.

The first problem is that they need enzymes in order go from simple gases to nucleotides, and they don't have them:

> The first problem is that H2 and CO2 are not particularly reactive — indeed, their chemistry was largely ignored for decades, although rising interest in green chemistry is changing that. But deep-sea vents are labyrinths of interconnected pores, which have a topology resembling cells — acidic outside and alkaline inside. The flow of protons from the outside to the inside of these pores can drive work in much the same way that the inward flow of protons can drive CO2 fixation in cells today5.
>
> […]But many chemists are troubled by the idea that, in the absence of enzymes to serve as catalysts, hydrothermal flow could drive scores of reactions through a network that prefigures metabolism, from CO2 right up to nucleotides. The chemist Leslie Orgel once dismissed this scenario as an "appeal to magic". Certainly, further data are required, supporting or otherwise.

They have problems sequencing nucleotides into functioning components:

> Polymerization is another stumbling block. Nucleotides have been polymerized in water on mineral surfaces9, but this raises similar questions to those noted for wet–dry cycles about how selection could act. If the problem is solved by polymerizing nucleotides inside growing protocells, mineral surfaces would not have been available. Polymerization would then have needed to happen in cell-like (aqueous gel) conditions, but without enzymes. If serious attempts to synthesize RNA under those conditions fail, the overall framework would need to be modified.

I'm not convinced that mineral surfaces can help with the nucleotide sequencing problem, but they don't even have those available in the hydrothermal vents.

I studied computer science in university, so biochemistry is all new to me. I am trying to learn it, but I also have to write code all day for work. But thankfully, there are experts who can sort this out for us.

Here is a podcast from the fellows over at the Discovery Institute, and they talked about this article. Podcasts are a great way to try to understand these complex problems.

Pro-abortion woman shocked that pro-abortion man she chose slapped her

October 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the funniest things about young, unmarried women is the way that they choose men who have no morals, and then they're shocked when those men treat them poorly. In today's post, we'll look at a secular leftist woman, who deliberately chooses to have a relationship with a famous secular leftist man. And you know this famous secular leftist man, it's Kamala Harris' husband.

Here's the story from the New York Post:

> A former girlfriend of second gentleman Doug Emhoff said she was left "embarrassed and humiliated" when he slapped her following a gala dinner at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival in the South of France — adding that the husband of Vice President Kamala Harris has maintained a "completely fabricated persona" as a public figure.
>
> The woman, a New York attorney identified only as "Jane," told the Daily Mail in an interview published Thursday she was trying to hand a valet the equivalent of $100 to get her and Emhoff to the head of a taxi line when her beau struck.
>
> "As I'm talking to him, Doug got out of the line, comes up, turns me around by my right shoulder. I'm completely caught off guard, I'm not bracing, I'm in four inch heels, wearing a full-length gown and it's between 2-3 a.m.," she told the outlet. "He slaps me so hard I spin around, and I'm in utter shock."
>
> "There had been no fight, no argument," she added. "In that moment, his mask had dropped and I saw his dark side."

What's funny about these secular left women is that they choose secular men who think that the best way to get out of an unwanted pregnancy is murder. Somehow, they expect that the murder-supporting man will treat them well.

Oh, and there is more slapping in the article:

> Jane claimed she already had reservations about Emhoff, now 60, after he admitted he had cheated on his first wife, Kerstin Mackin, with Najen Naylor, the nanny of Emhoff's daughter Ella — getting the woman pregnant in the process.
>
> "All I did was ask him one question, and he told me the whole story," she said, recalling the conversation in April 2012. "He's telling me this very casually like it's no big deal. He yelled at her. He never said he hit her, but he said he got really angry with her, and she subsequently claimed that whatever he did caused her to lose the pregnancy."

He may be a misogynist, but he's a *pro-abortion* misogynist, so he's a "good man":

> The Daily Mail previously reported on accusations from the future second gentleman's former colleagues at Venable that he was "inappropriate" and "misogynistic" toward his female colleagues.
>
> A 2019 lawsuit obtained by The Post charged that Emhoff hired an assistant named "Katya" who was widely considered unqualified but was "young, attractive and friendly with the powerful men in the office."

And if you show these secular left women a different man – one who is conservative and Christian, and who doesn't believe in sex before marriage – then they will say that that man is "bad". The best men, the secular leftist women will tell you, are the ones who don't have any morals at all.

This is actually a really big problem for young, unmarried women these days.

You might have heard by now that young, unmarried women are becoming more and more leftist in their policy views.

Here's the far-left UK Independent to explain:

> An analysis of survey data from across the developing world had found that "a new global gender divide" is emerging. The analysis, conducted by the Financial Times' John Burn-Murdoch, showed that the developed world's young women have rapidly become more liberal. Young men, however, have either become more conservative (as in the US) or been much slower to become more progressive (as in the UK).

And young, unmarried women are becoming less and less religious.

Here's the far-left New York Times to explain: (archived)

> For the first time in modern American history, young men are now more religious than their female peers. They attend services more often and are more likely to identify as religious.
>
> "We've never seen it before," Ryan Burge, an associate professor of political science at Eastern Illinois University, said of the flip.
>
> Among Generation Z Christians, this dynamic is playing out in a stark way: The men are staying in church, while the women are leaving at a remarkable clip.

What should we make of this trend of young, unmarried women becoming more secular and leftist, and then being shocked when the secular left men they deliberately choose treat them poorly? Will anyone tell them that the root cause of their problems with men is their own worldviews, and their own choices based on those worldviews? Who is brave enough to tell young women that they have to accept responsibility for the results of their own choices?

Knight and Rose Show #54: Guillermo Gonzalez: The Privileged Planet

October 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 54 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Dr. Guillermo Gonzalez, co-author of the new 20th Anniversary Edition of "The Privileged Planet". If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Dr. Guillermo Gonzalez to discuss the new 20th anniversary edition of "The Privileged Planet". Guillermo explains the book's thesis, and gives examples of the link between habitability and measurability from our planet, solar system, and galaxy. Guillermo responds to arguments against design, and talks about getting into trouble with opponents of design on campus.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show (with timestamps) provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 54:

Speaker biographies

Guillermo Gonzalez is a Senior Fellow at Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture. He received his Ph.D. in Astronomy in 1993 from the University of Washington. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Texas, Austin and at the University of Washington. He has taught astronomy and physics courses at the University of Washington, Iowa State University, Grove City College, and Ball State University. He is a world-class expert on the astrophysical requirements for habitability and on habitable zones and a co-founder of the "Galactic Habitable Zone" concept, which captured the October 2001 cover story of Scientific American. Gonzalez has also published over 90 articles in refereed astronomy and astrophysical journals. He also is the co-author of the second edition of Observational Astronomy, an advanced college astronomy textbook.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

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New study: Significant parallels found between anorexia and gender dysphoria

October 27, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A common objection against transgenderism by biological realists is to make a parallel argument from anorexia. Conservatives say "we wouldn't want to help a skinny anorexic person lose weight because they thought they were too fat, would we?" Transgender activists reply that these two things are completely different. Who is right? Well, now we have a peer reviewed study to help us decide.

The new study was published in the peer-reviewed journal Sexuaologie, which is the journal of the *German Society for Sexual Medicine, Sexual Therapy and Sexual Science/DGSMTW.*

The Society for Evidence-Based Gender Medicine reported on it:

> A new publication* in Sexuologie (the journal of the German Society for Sexual Medicine, Sexual Therapy and Sexual Science/DGSMTW) takes on the issue of the sharp rise in transgender identification in adolescent females, which remains poorly understood. The authors, Korte and Gille, present an intriguing hypothesis for this novel phenomenon, comparing and contrasting gender dysphoria to anorexia nervosa, and finding a number of important similarities. The authors conclude that clinicians working with gender-dysphoric adolescents must familiarize themselves with the complex dynamics of female adolescent development, and that trans-affirmative medical interventions should not be considered until adolescent development is complete.

SEGM got permission to post the full English language translation of the study, but I didn't. So you have to click through to read it.

But here's the interesting part of SEGM's synopsis of the paper:

> Drawing on their clinical work with such patients, Korte and Gille observe that trans identification in adolescent girls may reflect the desire to circumvent the challenges of female adolescence rather than a deep identification with maleness. They note that "although there is pronounced rejection of the female body and/or the female gender role," there is frequently no pronounced desire for the primary or even secondary physical characteristics of the opposite sex.
>
> […]The authors note several similarities between anorexia and gender dysphoria. Both involve body image disorders where aggression is "turned against one's own self, inward, but also outward, against important others." The authors note:
>
> "*…in both anorexic eating disorders and gender identity disorders (gender dysphoria), relatives, especially parents, are exposed to strong feelings of helplessness and powerlessness in addition to the massive feelings of guilt and failure that often arise. In both disorders, this sometimes exacerbates the*

> *symptoms" of the … patient within a correspondingly pathological relationship dynamic*."
>
> Korte and Gille conclude by outlining concrete steps that pediatricians, child and adolescent psychiatrists, gynecologists, and other medical providers can take to help girls navigate puberty in a way that averts or mitigates these developmental crises. They caution clinicians that in the vast majority of cases of gender dysphoria arising around adolescence, it is likely temporary and represents a maturation crisis or insecurity of 'sexual, rather than gender identity."
>
> The authors criticize the "trans-affirmative" (gender-affirming) model of care for adolescents, which is focused on the provision of physical body modifications, as inconsistent with the principles of adolescent development. They highlight the importance of addressing adolescent gender dysphoria within a developmental framework, recognizing the complexity of adolescent experiences and the need for tailored interventions that address underlying conflicts and promote adaptive coping strategies.

I think this study is very helpful for understanding what's really going on in the mind of young people when they reject their own gender.

In the most recent episode of Knight and Rose, Rose and I were talking about how to be more bold when discussing controversial issues. Our advice was to be the smartest person in the room. I remember when homosexuality was becoming a big issue, I went out and read a whole bunch of books about it, from people like Jeffrey Satinover and Charles Socarides. It's similar to how I am handling transgenderism now.

Christians should always be the smartest people in the room when these topics come up. Nobody should be listening to the "compassionate" virtue signalers, who just want to jump to affirmation and approval. And the way you beat those people is by asking them a few simple questions about what they know, to show that they aren't operating from knowledge at all.

The doctors and the surgeons are often just trying to hook a young person onto constant surgeries, drugs and treatments. They want money, lots of money. All you have to do is to ask them what liability they have if their treatment results in regret and the desire to detransition. Is there a warranty? Of course not. Would they put their promises about "pauses" and "rollbacks" in writing? Of course they won't.

What about the emotion-based friends and relatives? All you have to do is ask them about technical issues. What are the long-term effects of these drugs? How much does it cost? How painful is it? Are there permanent effects? They are supporting the transition because they want to feel good. They want to be liked. When you ask them knowledge questions, the children can see that the feelings-based adults are only serving themselves.

It's much better to discuss these issues by pointing out the long-term consequences of decisions. Of course young people have feelings. Of course they want to act on those feelings. But young people also need to hear from people who understand what is further

down the road. They don’t know that, and they need to rely on adults who know for help. Not the greedy health care workers. And not the low-self-esteem feelings-based crowd.

Poll: Kamala Harris supporters don't know her past political positions

October 28, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How good of a job do people on the secular left do of understanding the positions of the candidate that they vote for? If you ask them, they'll say that they are super-intelligent, and highly informed. They don't form their views from impressions, intuitions and sound bites at all! But what would happen if someone did an actual poll, where the secular leftists were asked about facts? Would they pass?

Here's the story from the Media Research Center:

> A significant new Media Research Center poll finds that large majorities of registered Democrats and Independents who voted for Joe Biden in 2020 — exactly those who would be expected to support Vice President Kamala Harris in this year's contest — are mostly in the dark about many of the controversial and radical positions Harris has taken.
>
> When asked about ten different aspects of Harris's public record — on issues as varied as her sponsorship of the Green New Deal, abolishing ICE, and eliminating private health insurance — between 71% and 86% of these Democrats and Independents said they either had not heard of Harris's position or were unsure.

My favorite question to ask people to see if they are safe to talk to is "where do you get your news?". Because if people are relying on the corporate news media to tell them the truth, then they are likely to have tremendous confidence in their beliefs, but all those beliefs are likely to be false:

> When these voters were asked about where they got most of their news about political elections and candidates, by far the top answers were broadcast television (ABC, CBS and NBC) or cable news (such as CNN and MSNBC). This suggests that the knowledge gaps found by our poll reveal a failure of these outlets to report on radical positions once (and perhaps currently) supported by the now-Democratic nominee for President.
>
> In fact, a detailed Media Research Center examination of ABC, CBS and NBC evening news coverage in the three weeks since Harris became the leading Democratic candidate (July 21 to August 10) shows eight of these ten issues received ZERO attention from these newscasts, while two others received only minor coverage.

Here are the facts about Kamala Harris, along with the percentage of Democrat voters who were ignorant about each one (in parentheses):

- Harris supported cutting funding for the police (71%)
- Harris co-sponsored the Green New Deal (73%)

- Harris supported the elimination of private health insurance (81%)
- Harris supported reparations payments to atone for slavery (71%)
- As “Border Czar,” Harris never visited a conflict zone on the border (72%)
- Harris said it should not be considered a crime to enter the U.S. illegally. (74%)
- Harris supported abolishing ICE (77%)
- Harris promoted a fund to bail out violent protesters during 2020 riots (78%)
- Harris would consider allowing death row inmates to vote (86%)
- Harris was named the most liberal U.S. Senator in 2019 (75%)

What’s funny about these questions, is that they were asked as yes / no questions. So I’ll bet some of the people saying they knew the facts didn’t really know the specifics at all!

The article has a paragraph about each of these questions, but this one about the reparations caught my eye:

> Harris supported reparations payments to atone for slavery: During her 2019 campaign, Harris joined with other far-left Democratic candidates to support massive payments as a form of “reparations” to the descendants of those enslaved prior to 1865. According to a PBS account, “Harris has proposed monthly payments to qualified citizens of any race in the form of a tax credit.”
>
> While there are various proposals for possible reparations, a CNBC report in 2020 suggested an ultimate price tag of $10 to $12 trillion, or vastly more than the size of the current U.S. federal government budget (on track to surpass $6 trillion in 2024).
>
> Since July 21, the Big Three evening newscasts haven’t said a word about Harris’s past support for reparations. And according to our poll, 71% of the Democrats and Independents we polled were unsure or completely unaware of her position on the issue.

Keep in mind that Democrats DO believe in slavery – they just want the slaves to be the young people who will have to pay for all this government spending and welfare. They want children, born and unborn, to pay for their living high on the hog today. I don’t know what you’d call this except “slavery”.

It might be a good idea for those of your reading to send this MRC article to your friends, so they can know the answers in case these topics come up in discussions. It’s not a good idea to choose the leader of the free world if you don’t know what the candidates believe about things.

Image source: Media Research Center

Democrats want to block voting by citizens, allow voting by non-citizens

October 29, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here are a couple of stories from just the last few days that really show how desperate Democrats are to hang on to political power. In one state, they want to allow self-declared non-citizens to stay on the voter rolls. In a different state, they want to prevent citizens who just went through a natural disaster from having access to vote. I'm posting these stories to remind you that you really need to vote.

First story is from the The Center Square:

> A federal judge is ordering Virginia to return the names of more than 1,500 "noncitizens" to voter rolls following a lawsuit filed by the Department of Justice saying the commonwealth violated the National Voter Registration Act.

Here's the Republican Attorney General of Virginia:

> "It should never be illegal to remove an illegal voter," said [Virginia Attorney General Jason] Miyares. "Yet, today a Court – urged by the Biden-Harris Department of Justice – ordered Virginia to put the names of noncitizens back on the voter rolls, mere days before a presidential election. The Department of Justice pulled this shameful, politically motivated stunt 25 days before Election Day, challenging a Virginia process signed into law 18 years ago by a Democrat governor and approved by the Department of Justice in 2006."
>
> […]"More concerning is the open practice by the Biden administration to weaponize the legal system against the enemies of so-called progress," Miyares added.

And here's what the Repoublican governor of Virginia had to say:

> In a statement Youngkin said, "Let's be clear about what just happened: only 11 days before a presidential election, a federal judge ordered Virginia to reinstate over 1,500 individuals – who self-identified themselves as noncitizens – back onto the voter rolls. Almost all these individuals had previously presented immigration documents confirming their noncitizen status, a fact recently verified by federal authorities."

They self-identified as non-citizens, so they don't think they are eligible to vote. But the Biden-Harris administration says that they should be added back to the voter rolls.

That's awful. But wait, there's more. Not only does the Biden-Harris administration want non-citizens to vote, they also don't want citizens to vote – if those citizens are in very Republican areas.

Here's the story from The Federalist:

> The havoc wrought by Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina brought disaster to homes and families, but that has not stopped Democrats from blocking the approval of emergency early voting sites in the heavily Republican area. The refusal to act forced the GOP-led state legislature to intervene.
>
> Democrat-run local elections boards in McDowell and Henderson counties have failed to approve additional early voting sites in the disaster-stricken area, despite increasing calls for more access to voting. Both counties voted for Donald Trump in 2020.
>
> […]Meanwhile, Democrats in nearby deep-blue Buncombe County, home to Asheville, have already given the go-ahead for new voting locations to replace the ones damaged by Helene, bringing the county's total to 10.
>
> […]Stonewalling the approval of new voting locations in the disaster area seems inexplicable, as even the Democrat-run State Board of Elections and state legislature have made it easy for local boards to open them under emergency circumstances. The state board did not respond to a request for comment from The Federalist.
>
> Democrats playing games with peoples' access to vote this close to the election and in Republican-heavy districts devastated by a natural disaster lends even more credence to the belief that state and federal Democrats have slow-rolled relief efforts in order to suppress the vote.

I am noticing how sites like YouTube and Facebook are regularly censoring stories that are supportive of Republicans, and critical of Democrats. So, there is a lot going on to influence the election. So I really want to urge you to vote yourself, and make sure that your friends and family vote as well.

If you are trying to live out a Christian life plan, you are NOT going to like what Kamala Harris does with policy. This will affect you, and it will affect other Christians. Some of those Christians are going to be forced to choose between honoring their faith commitments, and just being able to work and live. Just like Christians have in other places and times when the secular left got into power.

Democrat energy policies will raise electricity prices and cause inflation

October 30, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two ways for a government to raise the price of goods and services for consumers. First, the government can increase spending. Second, the government can tax and regulate energy developers, so that they have to raise prices on gas and electricity. Do you remember when the Biden-Harris regime stopped the construction of pipelines? That made inflation worse.

Here's the first story from Daily Signal:

> High inflation could soon make a comeback across the American economy. That's because a combination of soaring demand for electricity and artificially constricted supply has laid the foundations for steadily increasing electricity prices.
>
> […]Electricity bills are rising because of the required adoption of renewable energy mandates, carbon emission-reduction goals, and cap-and-trade schemes, as can be seen in this table, primarily in states with Democratic leadership.
>
> States that have required renewables, particularly wind and solar energy, to be used in electricity production often experience higher electricity costs due to the regulatory burdens placed on traditional energy sources, such as natural gas and coal.
>
> For instance, several states have limited the construction of natural gas infrastructure or restricted access to abundant natural gas resources, exacerbating energy costs for their residents and their neighbors.
>
> At the same time, incentives for clean energy in the so-called Inflation Reduction Act discourage investment in power plants fired by natural gas or coal that provide affordable and reliable baseload power.
>
> People are all too familiar with rising residential electricity bills and their consequences for inflation rates. It's obvious that all businesses have to pay for electricity, too. What's not as obvious is that electricity is a crucial input into the production of virtually everything that is produced, bought, and sold.

Basically, everything that you buy – products and services – has to be produced in buildings that use electricity. This even applies to online services and commerce. Further, goods have to be transported by vehicles that use gas. So when you purchase goods and services in a "green" economy, you are going to pay a lot more for them. People think that this is a technological problem, and we will eventually solve it. That's a faith commitment, and we have no evidence to back that up. But we can look at "green" states like California, Massachussetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut and immediately see that these policies are causing higher prices for consumers.

The article has a very good example of what we can expect under the Harris-Walz regime:

> One example of the damage done by higher electricity prices is Germany, where companies are relocating due to higher energy prices caused by the closure of nuclear power plants and the cutoff from Russian natural gas.
>
> In an annual survey of 3,300 German companies, performed annually since 2012, the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry found that 40% of companies were considering relocating or reducing production due to high electricity prices.
>
> According to Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry Deputy Managing Director Achim Dercks, "The trust of the German economy in energy policy is severely damaged. So far, the government has failed to provide companies with a perspective for a reliable and affordable energy supply."
>
> A doubling of electricity prices could produce a rise in inflation well above 5% and drive jobs offshore. This would fall hardest on America's poor but would affect everyone.

Remember, Kamala Harris supports the Green New Deal, and Tim Walz signed legislation that would eliminate carbon emissions in Minnesota by 2040. So, if you like what Germany did, then you will be very happy with Harris-Walz energy policies.

Here's a second article from Daily Caller, talking about restrictions on energy inside your home:

> The Biden-Harris administration released data on Oct. 17 suggesting its push to electrify everything will ratchet up costs for American households, contradicting one of the White House's favorite selling points for its green agenda, experts told the Daily Caller News Foundation.
>
> The Biden-Harris administration has made a crackdown on residential fossil fuel consumption a key aspect of its environmental strategy, justifying the push in part on the grounds electrification will lower energy costs. Now, Oct. 17 residential energy price data from the Department of Energy (DOE) shows electricity was roughly four times as expensive as natural gas in 2024, with experts telling the DCNF the White House's electrification push is an example of extremist climate policy hurting everyday Americans.
>
> […]The Biden-Harris DOE has issued a slew of rules restricting the use of gas appliances, including issuing revised standards on furnaces in September 2023 that could prohibit 40-60% of gas furnaces in homes, and increased efficiency requirements for water heaters that the agency claimed would save U.S. consumers $11.4 billion on their energy and water bills every year.

Naturally, the poorest Americans would be hurt the most by these green energy policies. I hope that Christians and conservatives are doing a good job of communicating ALL the facts to undecided voters. Because there is a lot more to policy than abortion. It's our job

to protect the poor and the weak in every way we can.

Theologian Wayne Grudem: 20 reasons to vote for Republicans in the 2024 election

October 31, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Everyone remembers that Ron DeSantis is my candidate in 2024, but for the rest of you in “battleground” states, you have to vote against Kamala Harris! And now we are going to get 20 good reasons why you should, from the King of systematic theology, Dr. Wayne Grudem. What is his superpower? His superpower is knowing all of the Bible teachings that apply to any policy.

Here’s the article from Townhall.com, (H/T Dr. Owen Anderson)

It starts by explaining the difference between the Republican view of government, and the Democrat view of government.

Republican views of government:

> Most Republicans favor limited government control of our lives, lower taxes, greater individual freedom, and greater personal responsibility for one’s actions. Republicans also believe that the best deterrent for crime is the punishment of criminals.
>
> On foreign policy, Republicans generally believe that superior American military power is the best deterrent against war.
>
> Republicans also believe that the best economic system is one that allows everyone to keep most of what they have honestly and legally earned, one that effectively cares for the poor, and one that does not seek to bring about more equality of income among people.

Democratic views of government:

> Most Democrats favor greater government control of our lives, higher taxes (especially for higher income brackets), less individual freedom, and less personal responsibility for one’s actions. Democrats also believe that the best deterrent against crime is education.
>
> On foreign policy, Democrats generally believe that diplomacy and foreign aid are the best deterrent against war.
>
> Democrats also believe that an ideal economic system leads to greater equality between the rich and the poor. With respect to levels of taxation, the rich should pay their “fair share” (an amount that is never specified but always assumed to be more than what they currently pay).

Then he has a list of 20 reasons to vote for Republicans, which he has broken into categories:

Economics:

1. To stifle inflation
2. To preserve lower tax rates and promote greater national prosperity and economic freedom
3. To protect free-market capitalism and prevent creeping socialism
4. To preserve our ability to choose our own doctors and healthcare plans

Foreign policy:

1. To secure the border
2. To help Israel win its war
3. To obtain a lasting peace in the Middle East
4. To make our military once again the strongest on earth

Crime and law forcement:

1. To make our cities safe again
2. To appoint 3,000 conservative Republicans to powerful federal offices instead of 3000 liberal Democrats
3. To appoint hundreds of additional judges who interpret and apply the laws but do not create new laws
4. To stop powerful government agencies from interfering in American politics

Other reasons:

1. To give unborn children some degree of legal protection
2. To protect religious freedom
3. To protect freedom of speech
4. To keep men from competing in women's sports.
5. To respond to climate change/global warming with realistic solutions
6. To begin to pay down our national debt
7. To see a rebirth of patriotism
8. To stop Kamala Harris from becoming president

We can't look at all of these, but I will choose one that caught my eye. I chose #1, because I have been really feeling bad about wanting to retire early to focus on ministry, but now after four years of Democrat rule, my monthly expenses are up 50%, so now I have to work for a few more years in order to be able to replace enough of my income with interest and dividend income. I will be fine when I hit 60 because then I can use my retirement funds. But during the years of 50-60, I have to have enough money to live from my non-retirement savings. And with this inflation, it's barely enough.

He writes:

> Inflation happens when governments print or borrow too much money and inject it into the economy, as I explained in more detail in an earlier article. For example, if I have ten apples to sell and you have $10 to spend on apples, I will

charge you $1 per apple. But if you have $20 to spend on apples, I will charge you $2 per apple. You spend more money, but you don't get any more apples. That has happened to the cost of groceries, gas, and everything else.

Inflation hit our economy under Biden's administration because our government injected far too much money into our economy while the amount of things for sale stayed about the same. It was all Democrats and no Republicans who did this.

Joe Biden became president on January 20, 2021, and Democrats controlled both the House and the Senate to pass whatever tax or spending legislation they wanted (because the budget reconciliation process is not subject to the filibuster, it only requires 51 votes in the Senate). Just six weeks after Biden took office, on March 6, 2021, the Senate passed the American Rescue Plan Act by a vote of 50-49 with all Democrats voting for it and all Republicans voting against it (one was absent). It passed the House on March 10 with a vote of 220-211, with all Republicans and one Democrat voting against it. President Biden signed it into law on the next day, March 11.

Republicans warned that this would cause harmful inflation because the bill authorized a whopping $1.9 trillion in additional government spending. (By way of comparison, the entire federal budget for the previous year was $6.55 trillion.)

But that was not the end of the Democrats' spending. In 2022, they passed the Inflation Reduction Act by 220-207 in the House (all Democrats for it, all Republicans against it) and by 51-50 in the Senate (all Democrats for it, all Republicans against it, and Vice President Kamala Harris cast the tie-breaking vote). President Biden signed it on August 16, 2022.

The bill would more accurately be described as the Inflation Multiplying and Green Energy Act because a large portion of the $891 billion was designated for climate change and green energy projects. Together, these two bills added an astounding $2.8 trillion in government spending. By way of comparison, $2.8 trillion is equal to 11% of the total economic output of the entire nation for 2022 (GDP for 2022 was $25.4 trillion).

Why did Democrats authorize such gigantic additional spending? Probably because they thought that when they gave free money to millions of people, many of those people would vote for Democrats.

On top of all that spending, President Biden issued two executive orders that drove up gas prices. One executive order restricted future oil and natural gas extraction, which immediately drove up energy prices, and the other shut down the Keystone XL Pipeline project, which would have safely brought much more US and Canadian oil to our best refineries. These executive orders were inflationary because the price of energy affects the price of everything else.

The result was predictable. According to Forbes magazine, the Consumer Price Index rose by 19% during the first 3 ½ years of Biden's presidency. But it only

> rose by 6% during President Trump's entire four years. (Trump's average increase was just under 2% per year, and 2% is the Federal Reserve's target amount.)
>
> For example, think of a family that brought a certain basket of groceries for $100 on the day Biden became president. To buy that same basket of groceries today would cost $119, so they would need to find the additional $19 somewhere – in savings if they have any savings, or perhaps put it on a credit card. In terms of our apples example above, they will be paying more dollars but will just get the same number of apples. We could even say that inflation has "stolen" $19 from that family because that is how much extra money they need to buy the same amount of goods. And if a husband and wife together earned $80,000 last year, they would need to earn an extra 19% (or $15,200) just to stay even with their purchasing power compared to Biden's first day in office, because that is the amount that inflation has "stolen" from their earnings this year.
>
> I would also note that, in words of wisdom written over 3000 years ago, the Bible has something very clear to say about stealing: "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15). This is commandment 8 of the Ten Commandments, and it serves as the moral foundation for all protection of any individual's property.
>
> After looking at the voting and spending patterns of the past eight years, I conclude that Republicans are much more likely than Democrats to keep inflation under control.

If you see anything in that list that is important to you, you will get a similarly clear and concise explanation about how the parties differ on that issue in the rest of the article. Read it, and share it!

What’s the best example of election interference from the 2020 election?

November 1, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought it might be a good idea, in preparation for any last minute “surprises” from the secular left, to remember a major example of election interference from the 2020 election. Who really interferes with elections? Is it even happening? Why can’t we post about election interference on social media without getting “de-boosted” or banned outright? Let’s take a look at it.

Here is the best example of election interference from the 2020 election, reported in the New York Post:

> They are the supposed nonpartisan group of top spies looking out for the best interest of the nation.
>
> But the 51 former “intelligence” officials who cast doubt on The Post’s Hunter Biden laptop stories in a public letter really were just desperate to get Joe Biden elected president. And more than a year later, even after their Deep State sabotage has been shown again and again to be a lie, they refuse to own up to how they undermined an election.
>
> The officials, including CNN pundit and professional fabricator James Clapper — a man who was nearly charged for perjury for lying to Congress — signed a letter saying that the laptop “has the classic earmarks of a Russian information operation.”
>
> What proof did they have? By their own admission, none. “We do not know if the emails . . . are genuine or not,” the letter said. They’re just “suspicious.” Why? Because they hurt Biden’s campaign, that’s evidence enough.
>
> Keep in mind this was written Oct. 19, 2020, five days after The Post published its first story. Neither Joe Biden nor Hunter Biden had denied the story, they simply deflected questions. Didn’t these security experts think that if this was disinformation, the Biden campaign would have yelled to the heavens that the story was false?
>
> […]Politico picked up the letter and ran the false headline “Hunter Biden story is Russian disinfo, dozens of former intel officials say.” That headline is still online today, even though the letter clearly says they don’t know if it’s Russian disinformation.
>
> That headline was tweeted out by legions of Democrats, including current White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki, as proof that it was all a con. That tweet also is still up despite being proven false.
>
> […]Only after the election was safely over did Hunter tacitly admit the laptop was his. Last year, a Politico reporter confirmed that the laptop’s materials were real.

> And now, the coup de grace: The Times said it's "authenticated" material from the laptop.

The author of that article contacted the 51 "intelligence experts" to comment on how they were wrong about the laptop, and most of them didn't reply. Some insisted that they were right even after being proved wrong. What do you think would be a good punishment for their actions? Personally, I would try each of them for treason, and sentence them appropriately.

That first article is from 2022, but there's more from this New York Post article from 2024:

> Four years later, none of the 51 have retracted the statement or apologized.
>
> Some have doubled down on their lie, even though they know that the FBI had possession of the laptop in December 2019, had determined that it belonged to Hunter, that it had not been tampered with in any way and was fit for use as evidence in court.
>
> Four months ago, that silver MacBook Pro was brought by prosecutors into a Delaware court, displayed to the jury that convicted Hunter of felony gun charges, and confirmed by an FBI forensic expert to be Hunter's laptop.
>
> It was also cited as evidence by prosecutors in his felony tax indictment in California, to which he pleaded guilty last month.

Just to be clear, there is no doubt about the evidence. The evidence shows that the laptop was genuine, and that means that the 51 experts, their allies in the corporate news media, and their allies in Big Tech, all colluded to spread misinformation that interfered with a federal election, handing the victory to the Democrat candidate.

And just to get the names and ranks out there, so everyone knows how to think about the CIA as a federal department:

> Among the Dirty 51 were five former CIA directors or acting directors, including John Brennan, Leon Panetta and Michael Hayden, as well as former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper. Brennan and Clapper, who were also knee-deep in the Russia collusion hoax against Donald Trump, were appointed by Mayorkas to his inaugural Homeland Security intelligence group before it was disbanded after public outcry and litigation.

Finally, it's important to remember that Big Tech companies like Facebook, also interfered in the election to help the Democrat party.

The New York Post explains:

> The FBI warned major US tech companies ahead of The Post's first reports on Hunter Biden's laptop in October 2020 that Russian agents were preparing a strikingly similar document dump — and once the scoop materialized, Facebook executives discussed calibrating censorship decisions to please what they assumed would be an incoming Biden-Harris administration, a congressional

> investigation found.
>
> The new details — contained in an interim report by the House Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on the weaponization of government — are emerging as former President Donald Trump leads in polls ahead of the Nov. 5 election and as his allies urge a house-cleaning at the FBI and possible new regulations or antitrust actions to punish and restrain platforms like Facebook.
>
> "FBI tipped us all off last week that this Burisma story was likely to emerge," an unidentified Microsoft employee wrote on Oct. 14, 2020, the day The Post published the first in a series of bombshell stories on the Biden family's foreign dealings, according to the congressional report.
>
> Internal Facebook communications, including a chat log, show that employees quickly discounted The Post's reporting because it was the "[e]xact content expected for hack and leak."
>
> "Right on schedule," another Facebook employee concurred.
>
> "Obviously, our calls on this could colour [sic] the way an incoming Biden administration views us more than almost anything else…," Facebook's then-vice president of global affairs Nick Clegg wrote on the same day to vice president of global public policy Joel Kaplan.

I wrote before about how Google uses their products and services to also interfere in elections to help the Democrat party. So, if you see a Trump administration taking power and arresting "intelligence experts" and "journalists" and "tech executives" in January 2025, don't be alarmed. It's just justice.

Doctor refused to publish study showing puberty blockers don't improve mental health

November 2, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been listening to a podcast from Daily Signal about media bias, and how censoring the news helped Biden to win in 2020. For example, the suppression of the Hunter Biden laptop story by the corporate news media swayed enough votes to deny Trump the presidency. People like to base their decisions on evidence, but what happens when evidence is suppressed by the secular left?

Well, I found a very shocking example of the secular left suppressing evidence that disagrees with their worldview. This story was reported in the far-left New York Times, of all places.

The New York Post reported on it:

> A prominent doctor and trans rights advocate admitted she deliberately withheld publication of a $10 million taxpayer-funded study on the effect of puberty blockers on American children — after finding no evidence that they improve patients' mental health.
>
> Dr. Johanna Olson-Kennedy told the New York Times that she believes the study would be "weaponized" by critics of transgender care for kids, and that the research could one day be used in court to argue "we shouldn't use blockers."
>
> Critics — including one of Olson-Kennedy's fellow researchers on the study — said the decision flies in the face of research standards and deprives the public of "really important" science in a field where Americans remain firmly divided.
>
> For the National Institutes of Health-funded study, researchers chose 95 kids — who had an average age of 11 — and gave them puberty-blocking drugs starting in 2015. The treatments are meant to delay the onset of bodily changes like the development of breasts or the deepening of the voice.
>
> After following up with the youths for two years, the treatments did not improve the state of their mental health…

I thought this was interesting, about the evidence-withholder lady:

> Olson-Kennedy, the outlet points out, is one of the country's leading advocates for providing gender-affirming care to adolescents, and regularly provides expert testimony in legal challenges to state bans on such procedures, which have taken root in more than 20 states.
>
> When asked by the Times why the results have not been made public after nine years, she said, "I do not want our work to be weaponized," adding, "It has to be exactly on point, clear and concise. And that takes time."
>
> She then flat-out admitted she was afraid the lack of mental health

> improvements borne out by the study could one day be used in court to argue "we shouldn't use blockers."

Secular leftists are always telling me how driven by "evidence" they are. Maybe that's because the only evidence they allow is evidence that confirms what they already want to believe! I bet they feel very superior to the people who disagree with them, though. They will just say "well, we are guided by evidence, and our opponents just believe whatever they see on social media". Uh huh.

Now, I know what the pro-trans people will say to this. They will say that "all the problems that result from a child trying to transform from his/her birth sex into the opposite sex with chemicals and surgeries are all caused by social disapproval". They really believe that IF ONLY people would celebrate the delusions of children, then everything would work out perfectly.

Dr. Casey Luskin discusses evolution on the Cross Examined podcast

November 3, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I try to keep an eye out for any podcasts that look really good, and when I saw one of our former Knight and Rose Show guests (Dr. Luskin) being interviewed by another former Knight and Rose Show guest (Dr. Frank Turek) on a very interesting topic: the shortcomings of the Darwinian theory of origins. In this post, you'll find a YouTube video, a link to the MP3 file, and an outline of topics.

In the episode, they discuss the change of heart that some evolutionists are having as the evidence turns against their theory. We talked about the evidence from junk DNA with Dr. Luskin, but he talks about a bunch of different topics in this episode with Dr. Turek.

Here's the outline from the Cross Examined blog:

- What are some key differences between micro and macroevolution?
- What did later research reveal about the Galápagos Island finches and how does it compare to Darwin's findings?
- What is epigenetics and how does it relate to the case for Intelligent Design?
- Why are some biologists hesitant to openly share their doubts about Neo-Darwinism, while others are increasingly vocal?
- What's the difference between Darwinism and Neo-Darwinism?
- What are the strongest arguments for a common ancestor?
- Are non-coding regions of the human genome really "junk DNA"?
- What about the God of the Gaps argument?
- Are proponents of Intelligent Design religiously motivated?
- What are the 4 basic L.I.F.E. problems found within macroevolutionary theory?

You can download the MP3 file here.

Here's the YouTube video:

We're trying to interview good scholars on the origins debate for the Knight and Rose Show, and so far we've had:

- Guillermo Gonzalez: Earth is Designed for Discovery
- Casey Luskin: Debunking the Myth of Junk DNA
- Chemist Fazale Rana Investigates the Origin of Life

And here is the book where you can learn about all of these interesting topics!

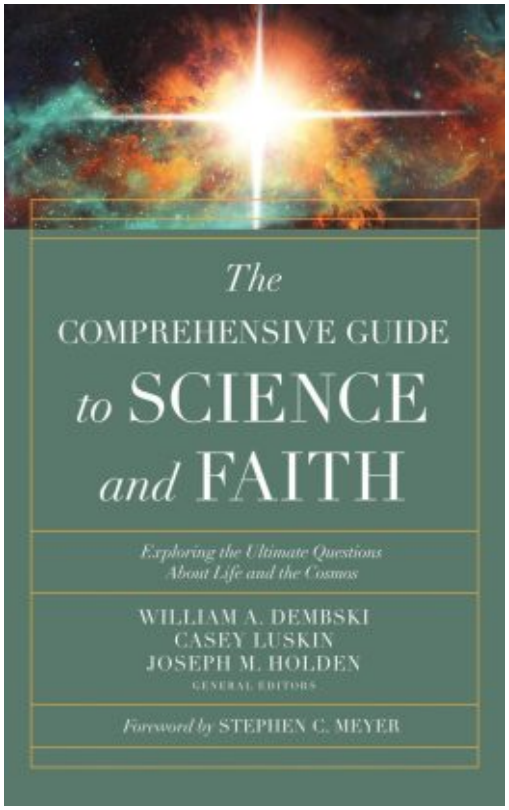

The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith: Exploring the Ultimate Questions About Life and the Cosmos

I have the audio book and the paperback versions.

Stay tuned, because we have a guest scheduled to discuss another topic in the design vs evolution debate. That episode will probably be out in January, though. We got the best guest that you could possibly get on this topic! And we have a couple more topics and guests in mind for later.

Kamala Harris used government power to force Christians to violate their consciences

November 4, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The title of this blog post is a paraphrase from Kristen Waggoner. Kristen is the CEO, president and lead lawyer for the Alliance Defending Freedom, a law firm that champions First Amendment rights up to the Supreme Court. Kristen argues many of these cases herself. She has defended the rights of free speech and religious liberty of Christians against the secular left many times.

Here's her latest article in the Daily Signal:

> [Vice President Kamala] Harris has consistently undermined the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment. That should alarm every American.
>
> As I told Wall Street Journal columnist William McGurn: "Throughout her career as a public official, Kamala Harris has long used government power to try to coerce people of faith to violate their consciences, especially regarding abortion and gender ideology."
>
> […]The Biden-Harris Treasury Department conspired with major banks to flag transactions of ordinary citizens making purchases at Dick's Sporting Goods, Bass Pro Shops, and Cabela's, and buying "religious texts" like Bibles, under the guise of identifying potential "domestic terrorists."
>
> The Justice Department under the Biden-Harris administration similarly went after parents who spoke up at school board meetings in an infamous 2021 memo, equating their advocacy on behalf of their kids with "harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence."
>
> […]In a speech to the NAACP, she said that social media platforms "have a responsibility to help fight against this threat to our democracy."
>
> Who would Harris classify as a "threat to our democracy"? Presumably, the same people her administration labeled as potential "domestic terrorists"; namely, concerned parents, nonprofit charitable organizations, and guys who like to camp, among others.

What I like about Kristen's column is that she recalled all of the times that the Biden-Harris administration has gone after people's first amendment rights.

Here is another case, the "Twitter Files", which were internal documents released by Elon Musk that showed how the Biden-Harris administration pressured social media companies to censor factual news stories that made their regime look bad, such as the Hunter Biden laptop story.

Kristen writes:

> As the explosive "Twitter Files" documented, the Biden-Harris administration

> indeed colluded with social media companies to suppress ideas and voices that didn't conform to the "official" narrative around several issues of public interest that required free and open debate.

And the Biden-Harris response to getting caught was to try to destroy Elon Musk:

> An Oct. 22 investigative report by independent journalists Matt Taibbi and Paul D. Thacker uncovered a plot by a group of foreign advisers to the vice president to "Kill Musk's Twitter" and to solicit the help of Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., one of the leading proponents of online speech suppression.

As I've reported on this blog, Harris does not want to grant conscience exemptions to Christian medical professionals that would allow them to opt out of performing abortions. She wants pro-life Christians to be forced to perform abortions, in violation of their religious liberty. And she also colluded with abortion providers and raided the homes of pro-life whistleblowers.

More:

> During an interview with NBC, when asked whether she supported a "religious exemption" for medical professionals who choose not to participate in abortion, Harris responded, "I don't think we should be making concessions when we're talking about a fundamental freedom to make decisions about your own body."
>
> […]As a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Harris badgered at least three judicial nominees for having been members of the respected Catholic nonprofit Knights of Columbus, which has more than 2 million members. Harris may be unaware, but the Constitution expressly prohibits religious tests for holding public office.
>
> Legislatively, then-Sen. Harris sponsored the Do No Harm Act, a bill that would gut the Religious Freedom Restoration Act—one of the most important federal safeguards for religious freedom—primarily for the benefit of the abortion industry.
>
> She also cosponsored the Equality Act, which would wipe out freedom of conscience and free speech by giving the federal government the power to police and punish the beliefs of disfavored Americans who have not submitted to the new sexual orthodoxy.
>
> As attorney general of California, Harris celebrated the passage of the Reproductive FACT Act, which effectively required pro-life pregnancy resource centers to advertise for abortionists, and defended it in court on more than one occasion.
>
> In one case, A Woman's Friend Pregnancy Resource Clinic v. Harris, a federal court upheld the law, which would have forced pregnancy help centers to comply with a bizarre array of coerced-speech mandates.
>
> […]In 2015, journalist David Daleiden exposed Planned Parenthood's grisly

> practice of selling the body parts of aborted babies in a series of undercover videos. Did Harris, as attorney general, investigate Planned Parenthood for trafficking fetal organs?
>
> No. She went after Daleiden in 2016—instead of her abortion industry allies and donors—raiding his home and seizing his equipment. And eight years later, his legal troubles are far from over. Daleiden still faces eight felony charges in an unprecedented case.

Now, I know a lot of wealthy establishment "Christians" who are in favor of Kamala Harris. When I ask them about these stories, they have never heard of any of them. Not a single one of them. When I ask them to name one of the Christian business owners who have been sued by LGBT activists, they don't know about any of those cases, either. And that's not surprising, because many of these wealthy establishment "Christians" have no Christian life plan. So, they are not authentic enough about their faith that they feel threatened in any way by secular left fascism. But what about you? Are you a Bible-believing Christian? If you are, then I hope enough evidence has been presented here to cause you to vote, and to make sure that your friends and family vote, too. ESPECIALLY if you are in one of these battleground states, where the races are all tied, or nearly tied. Remember, if it's not close, they can't cheat.

Eight voting controversies that could provoke ongoing legal battles

November 5, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Will we even know who won on election day? Democrat-run states and counties are threatening to drag out their vote counting for days. But let's look at eight specific cases where there have been voting controversies that could drag out the election. Remember, there is only one way to guarantee that the election is decided quickly: IF IT'S NOT CLOSE, THEY CAN'T CHEAT.

Here's the article from Daily Signal:

> Election Day is accompanied by some major voting controversies in battleground states, with lawsuits and investigations looking into alleged voter registration fraud, overseas ballots, and complaints about how some jurisdictions follow election law.
>
> Both Democrats and Republicans brought lawsuits.
>
> Some matters already have been settled. For example, the U.S. Supreme Court sided last week with Virginia by allowing the state to remove the names of 1,600 noncitizens from the voter rolls. And in Pennsylvania, Republicans successfully sued to extend early voting hours.
>
> However, courts tossed other election cases on procedural grounds or cases remain unsettled and could prompt arguments in close elections.
>
> Here are eight issues to look out for, both on Election Day and after.

And here are the eight controversies:

1. Voter Registration in Pennsylvania
2. Undelivered, Duplicate Ballots
3. Overseas Mail Ballots
4. 218,000 Arizona Voters With No Proof of Citizenship
5. Georgia Ballot Centers
6. Nevada Postmarks
7. Iowa and Noncitizen Voting
8. Unsent Mail Ballots in Georgia

My read on the election is that whoever wins Pennsylvania will win the election. I don't see Trump winning either Wisconsin or Michigan, and especially Michigan. But Pennsylvania could go either way.

So let's take a look at the two Pennsylvania stories:

> At least four jurisdictions in Pennsylvania are investigating potential voter registration fraud.

> State prosecutors in Pennsylvania's Lancaster County are investigating two batches of about 2,500 voter registration forms that may include several hundred fraudulent forms.
>
> As of Monday afternoon, the Lancaster County District Attorney's Office had determined that 17% of the forms were fraudulent. Another 57% were determined to be legitimate, WPMT-TV (Fox 43) reported. The rest were still being investigated.
>
> York County officials also are investigating potential voter registration fraud. Of a batch of 3,087 forms, about 24% were declined after being found to be duplicate requests.
>
> York County also is reviewing challenges to 350 overseas mail-in ballots.
>
> And the Monroe County District Attorney's Office last week identified fraudulent voter registration forms. A specific number wasn't given and the investigation continues, the Pocono Record reported.
>
> Berks County also referred two potential voter registration violations for investigation.

And this one:

> Republicans lost three federal lawsuits regarding a law called the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, which governs how Americans living overseas can vote in federal elections.
>
> The GOP lawsuits over UOCAVA focused largely on nonmilitary overseas voters, many of whom indicated no intention to return to the United States.
>
> Six Republican members of the U.S. House sued Pennsylvania over the state's counting procedures. The GOP lawmakers' complaint says that about 15,000 nonmilitary American voters living abroad but casting ballots in Pennsylvania elections should have to provide the same personal identification as Pennsylvania residents.
>
> But U.S. District Judge Christopher Conner determined last Tuesday—one week before Election Day—that an injunction could "upend the commonwealth's carefully laid election administration procedures to the detriment of untold thousands of voters."
>
> Michigan Court of Appeals Judge Sima Patel ruled against the Republican National Committee's challenge to rules in the U.S. law. The RNC challenge was based on nonresidents' dependents who live abroad voting in state elections. Patel ruled that the GOP lawsuit was an attempt to "disenfranchise" voters.
>
> Similarly, North Carolina Superior Court Judge John Smith ruled that the RNC challenge "presented no substantial evidence" of fraudulent voting.

I think that the fact that Pennsylvania is run by Democrats who will be counting the votes gives Kamala Harris the edge.

Young women have been going out to vote for her in battleground states in droves:

> Historian Allan Lichtman has suggested that the apparent gender gap in swing state early voting could be a "huge advantage" for Vice President Kamala Harris.
>
> […]Lichtman broke down data from early voting in the all-important swing states from NBC News' early voting tracker.
>
> It showed that in Michigan 56 percent of early voters were women and 44 percent were men. "That's huge," the American University professor said.
>
> In Wisconsin the figure was 51 percent women and 43 percent men, while in Pennsylvania it was 56 to 43 percent.
>
> "So we're talking about anywhere between an eight- and 13-point gap between men and women," Lichtman said.
>
> "And, presuming the gender gap holds, that means a huge advantage in these states."

Young women are *passionate* about their right to end a pregnancy using violence. And sadly, older women have not taught them that it's wrong to do that. So, if young men don't balance out the election with Republican votes, then I think that the Democrats will win this election. They will win the battleground states, and that will do it.

I enjoyed watching Pearl interview these Democrat voters in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and you can really hear what their main concern is – it's abortion rights.

I'm just not seeing much passion from people on the right in general. I'm the only one in my subdivision with election signs out. It's strange because I have enough money saved that I can retire early, and I'll be OK. But the people who have children – they are the ones who will be in real trouble. Their children will be stuck with the bill for all this government spending. They will be slaves, working so that their masters – the selfish adults of today – can live high on the hog. I just don't understand why people who will be the most impacted are doing less than I am to stop the socialism.

New study: virgins have happiest marriages, more sex partners means more unhappiness

November 6, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Although we live in a culture that is dominated by the thoughts and opinions of secular leftists, science provides useful information for those who want defend Biblical morality. Consider the issue of sexuality and marriage. Secular leftists claim that sex outside of marriage is natural, and produces happiness. Bible believing Christians and Jews say chastity is best. Who is right?

Here is the latest study authored by Dr. Nicholas Wolfinger, a sociologist at the University of Utah. His previous book on relationships was published by Oxford University Press. In his analysis of the data, Wolfinger controlled for divorce rates, religiosity, and socioeconomic status.

Here's the most important graph:

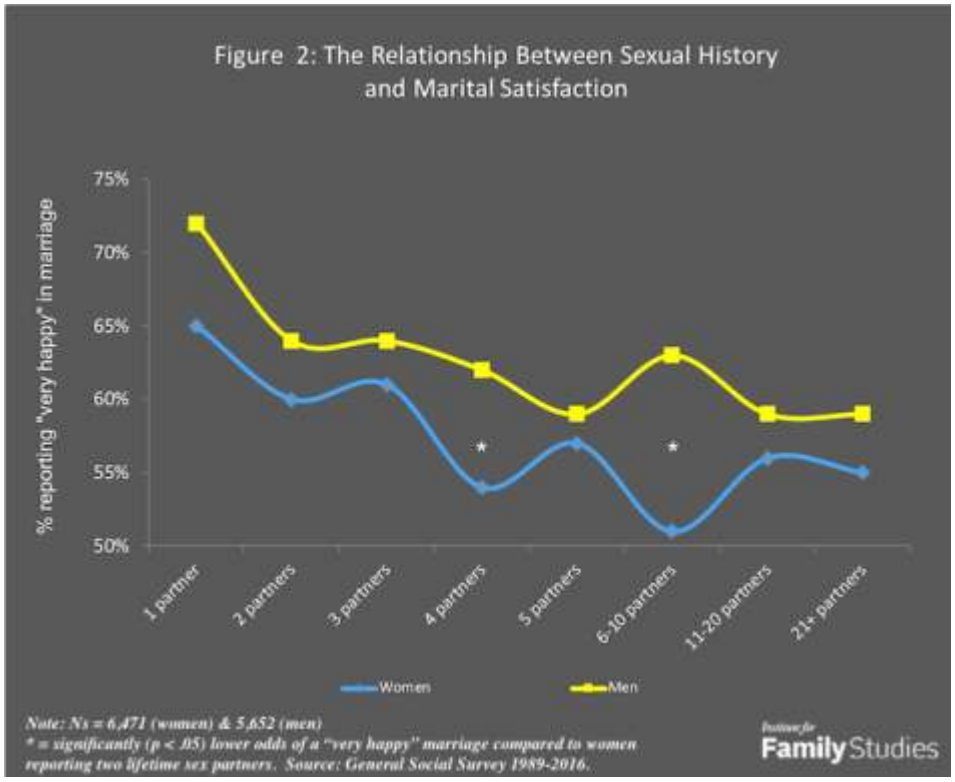

Study: virgins have the happiest marriages, more partners means less happiness

Other factors that increased marital happiness: having a 4-year college degree (5%), having a salary > 78K (5%), regular church attendance (6%). Notice that women are more dissatisfied with marriage (in general) than men are, and they tend to blame the spouse they freely chose for that unhappiness.

The Federalist also reported on previous research relevant to this study:

> Psychologists Galena K. Rhoades and Scott M. Stanley found that women who have had sex with someone other than their husband report statistically significant drops in marital quality over those who don't. A 2004 study by

> sociologist Jay Teachman showed that intimate premarital activities such as cohabitation and intercourse increased the rate of marital dissolution by anywhere between 28 and 109 percent, depending on the activity.

Wolfinger also noted in a previous study that only 5% of women were virgins when they married.

Wolfinger noted that a possible explanation for the link between promiscuity and unhappiness is that people look back on their past partners and compare their spouse unfavorably to them. This is especially the case with women. My concern about this is that feminism has taught women to try to increase their social standing by having hook-up sex with attractive bad boys. If those women ever marry, they do it when they are older, less fertile, and less attractive. The husband they eventually "settle" for will (in their minds) always compare unfavorably to the hot bad boys they had sex with when they were younger and prettier. This, I believe, is what leads to their unhappiness with the man they chose to marry.

More partners also means more marital instability

In a previous post, I blogged about several studies linking virginity to marital stability. Couples who don't have sex before marriage, or even who delayed it, reported better communication, higher satisfaction, better quality sex, and a lower chance of divorce.

Men ought to be aware of this research when they are choosing a spouse. Women initiate 69% of divorces, and the most common reason given is "unhappiness". Well, now we know what's causing that unhappiness – a high number of sexual partners prior to marrying. Smart men should prefer a virgin, for the increased happiness and increased stability. A large number of past sexual partners teaches women that relationships are engines for them to be happy, not commitments that are permanent and exclusive. They'll have internalized the view that relationships are not commitments to invest in self-sacrificially. The pattern will be: "if it doesn't make me feel happy right now, then it should be ended". It will be seen as the man's fault that she is unhappy, even if the study I talked about above shows the real reason is her past promiscuity. Men who aren't serious about evaluating the character of the women for the marriage enterprise are running the risk of divorce, it's that simple.

The best way to make sure that you have a clear head when evaluating a woman is to stay sober, and keep her hands off of you. When a man refuses to let a woman cloud his judgment with sex, then she is forced to learn how to love him in marriage-oriented ways, e.g. – help him, support him, and submit to his leadership. Male chastity encourages women who have been influenced by feminism to abandon selfishness, fun-seeking, and thrill-seeking, so that they learn to care for others. Male chastity also helps a man to resist older women who chose bad boys in their teens and 20s and want to get married to a good provider in their 30s. The studies discussed above clearly show that such women are more likely to be unhappy, and their future marriages are more likely to be unstable. Avoid them. You don't want to be in a marriage to someone who isn't very good at it, because she never prepared herself for it.

Pre-ban study: 53% of mothers with gender-confused boys have mental illness

November 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Normally, on this blog, every other post is some "new study" that I can use in discussing the controversial issues of the day. A lot of the best new studies get unpublished if they go against the worldview of the secular left, for example, the famous ROGD study. (That one was later re-published). Or they don't get published at all. It's fun to see what was allowed to get published pre-ban.

Here's a study that's on PubMed, one of my favorite web sites for studies.

Abstract:

> This pilot study compared mothers of boys with gender identity disorder (GID) with mothers of normal boys to determine whether differences in psychopathology and child-rearing attitudes and practices could be identified. Results of the Diagnostic Interview for Borderlines and the Beck Depression Inventory revealed that mothers of boys with GID had more symptoms of depression and more often met the criteria for Borderline Personality Disorder than the controls. Fifty-three percent of the mothers of boys with GID compared with only 6% of controls met the diagnosis for Borderline Personality Disorder on the Diagnostic Interview for Borderlines or had symptoms of depression on the Beck Depression Inventory. Results of the Summers and Walsh Symbiosis Scale suggested that mothers of probands had child-rearing attitudes and practices that encouraged symbiosis and discouraged the development of autonomy.

Fifty-three percent of the mothers of boys with gender identity disorder were diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder or had symptoms of depression.

Now, there are concerns I have about this study. First, it's a small number of research subjects, which is understandable because back in 1991, there were not a lot of kids with gender identity disorder.

So what is Borderline Personality Disorder? Here is the description from the NIH:

> People with borderline personality disorder may experience intense mood swings and feel uncertainty about how they see themselves. Their feelings for others can change quickly, and swing from extreme closeness to extreme dislike. These changing feelings can lead to unstable relationships and emotional pain.
>
> People with borderline personality disorder also tend to view things in extremes, such as all good or all bad. Their interests and values can change quickly, and they may act impulsively or recklessly.

I don't know much about mental illness, but I've been told never to date (much less marry) someone with BPD, because it is the most serious mental illness.

This finding from the study is interesting to me, because it suggests a reason why we are seeing this enormous surge in LGBT identification among young people. Sure, there is peer pressure, that's what the study on ROGD was about. But now it suggests a chain between radical feminism, the Sexual Revolution, the decline of women's happiness, and their transgender children.

We know for certain that women are experiencing far greater unhappiness after radical feminism became widespread, because they don't like the goodies of radical feminism – promiscuity, abortion, careers, etc. – as much as they liked being married to a good man, and being a stay-at-home mother.

Daily Wire noted this in 2017:

> According to a recent study from Yale University researchers, liberated, college educated women are freezing their eggs because they can't find a man to marry and have children with before their natural childbearing years expire. In the U.K., for instance, one in five women is childless when their natural reproductive years expires, as opposed to one in ten women a mere generation prior.
>
> So what's to blame for this onslaught of college-educated yet terribly empty women?
>
> The short answer is feminism.

The short answer is feminism, because although women claim that it's men's fault for not marrying them, no man with a brain would ever marry a feminist. It's actually become too dangerous for men to even date feminists. I don't even talk to them. The character traits that go with the feminist worldview are not just anti-marriage, they're dangerous to men. Women who blame the bad results of their own choices on men are not safe to even speak to.

And as I've noted before, the decline of marriage is causing a massive spike in mental illness. Not in conservative women – just in progressive women.

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

Here’s the part of the data I thought was most interesting:

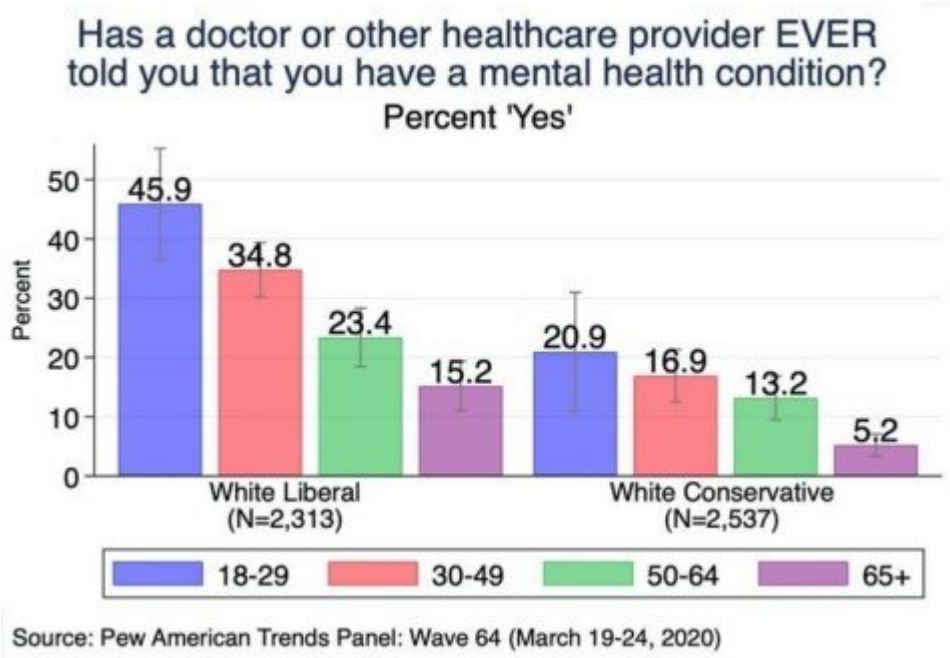

It turns out that marriage accounts for a lot of women’s happiness. But by allying themselves with radical feminism, women have made themselves totally unattractive to marriage-minded men. I think that the explosion of kids with gender identity disorder is just one of the ways that feminism is working itself out.

Democrat donors gave $442.7 million to elect Kamala Harris, and she lost

November 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my favorite things about Trump beating Kamala is how much more money the left spent trying to help her win. Democrats FAR outspent Republicans in their campaigns. And once a dollar is spent on this election, it isn't there to be spent on the next one. I was very skeptical about Trump's ability to win this election. He was not my choice. But not only did he win, but he really hurt the secular left.

Here's the story from Daily Caller:

> Outside groups spent $442.7 million on independent expenditures designed either to support Vice President Kamala Harris or to oppose Trump between Oct. 5 and Nov. 5, Federal Election Commission (FEC) records show. On the other side of the equation, PACs only spent about $160.7 million supporting Trump and opposing Harris over the same period. Despite the massive financial advantage, Harris lost the Electoral College and is on track to lose the popular vote as well, according to the New York Times' projections.

I thought this part below was interesting, because of another story I read recently about how a company that collects donations for Democrat campaigns was not verifying whether the donors were legally allowed to make those donations at all.

> Harris' allies largely relied on dark money — where the original donor is unknown — to fund their home-stretch spending spree, according to FEC records. Future Forward PAC, the primary super PAC that supported Harris, was responsible for about 70% of the pro-Harris and anti-Trump spending during the final month of the election.
>
> Trump's allies were considerably less reliant on dark money. Make America Great Again Inc., the primary super PAC behind the president-elect, took in about $286.2 million this election cycle, campaign finance records show. Of that sum, about $260 million came from named individuals.
>
> Harris' official campaign also had far more money than Trump's, raking in nearly $1 billion in funds while the president-elect took in just $388 million, Forbes reported.

So, here is the article from The Center Square, which reported the latest on Democrat donation collection.

It says:

> A nearly year-long investigation into ActBlue, a Democratic Party online donation platform, alleges a large number of suspicious donations have been made, resulting in Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton petitioning the Federal Election

> Commission to get involved.
>
> […]Since launching the investigation, Paxton said it's been publicly reported that potentially fraudulent transactions have occurred on political committee online platforms.
>
> "Certain platforms appear to facilitate straw donor transactions, where a contributor disguises his identity by attributing his contribution to another, unaware person," the petition states.
>
> Alleged straw donations are being made through the use of prepaid credit cards, which he says "are a favorite tool of fraudsters."
>
> Paxton's office launched an investigation into ActBlue in December to determine if the platform's operations were compliant with all applicable laws.
>
> […]The OAG's investigation says it found a large number of suspicious donations that were made "through obscured identities and untraceable means," necessitating FEC action.
>
> Through the use of prepaid cards it "appears that straw donations are systematically being made using false identities, through untraceable payment methods," Paxton said.

We are talking about a lot of money here:

> ActBlue says it's raised more than $15.8 billion online since 2004.
>
> In the third quarter of fiscal 2024, it says "6.9 million unique donors gave over 31 million contributions to 18,396 campaigns and organizations, totaling over $1.5 billion."

Could these donations be coming from donors who are not legally allowed to make these donations?

I know that China, for example, has a lot to lose if Trump imposes tariffs on their exports. So, if it were possible for them to get away with it, why wouldn't China collude with Democrats in order to interfere with the election? I would not expect the corrupt Biden-Harris regime to do anything to stop them. They're too busy faking Trump-Russia collusion stories, conducting surveillance on the Trump campaigns, pre-dawn raiding the homes of Christian pro-lifers, and labeling American parents as "domestic terrorists".

Study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others

November 8, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back I finished reading “God’s Crime Scene”, the new book by J. Warner Wallace. I wanted to post something about some studies he mentioned in Chapter 6, on free will. This is one of the places where he found evidence in a surprising area.

Wallace says that free will makes more sense if theism is true, because we have non-material souls that interact with our bodies, but are not causally determined by them. On atheism, only matter exists, and you can’t get free will (or consciousness) from matter. So atheists like Sam Harris and Alex Rosenberg, for example, deny free will, because they are materialists and atheists.

Anyway, here’s what he writes on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others.” Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: “It seems that not only do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it.”” The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here’s the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free

> will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons' belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you're an atheist, then you are a physical object. And like every other physical object in the universe, your behavior is determined by genetic programming (if you're alive) and external inputs. Material objects do not have the ability to make free choices, including moral choices.

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no

moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

(Source)

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality. Can you imagine trying to get into any sort of enterprise with someone who has this view of moral choices? A marriage, or a business arrangement, etc? It would be crazy to expect them to behave morally, when they don't even think that moral choices is possible. It just excuses all sorts of bad behavior, because no one is responsible for choosing to do the right thing.

Believers in materialism are going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

Choosing to do the right thing

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when doing the right thing sets you back. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me about their ability to do the right thing when it was hard for them to do it. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality. My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

Andy Bannister and Michael Ruse discuss how atheists find meaning in life

November 9, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

> An old post of mine appeared in a recent Mid-Week Apologetics Booster over at Christian Worldview Blog, so I decided to re-post it below. I am still trying to adjust to the fact that I am not going to be ruled by the secular left for the next 4 years. It's a happy surprise, but I need some time to adjust. This post was originally published in March 2016, but I added a new image.

I'm summarizing a recent episode of the Unbelievable show.

Details:

> Atheist philosopher Michael Ruse joins Justin as we spend a second week looking at Andy Bannister's new book 'The atheist who didn't exist'.
>
> Its amusingly titled chapters include 'The Peculiar Case of the Postmodern Penguin (or: Why Life without God is Meaningless). Michael and Andy debate whether it's a problem that atheists can't have meaning with a 'capital M'.

Here is a summary of the discussion between Ruse and Bannister, and my comments below the summary.

The MP3 file is here.

Summary:

- Ruse: ultimate questions are serious questions, and some religions are attempting to provide serious answers to those questions
- Ruse: there is a psychological element to belief in God but it's not a complete explanation, but it can apply to non-belief as well
- Bannister: there are psychological reasons why people would prefer unbelief (quotes Thomas Nagel and Aldous Huxley)
- Bannister: (to Ruse) what do you think would follow next if you got new information that caused you to believe in God?
- Ruse: I'd feel scared, I'd think of all the reasons that God would dislike me, rather than any reasons why God would save me
- Bannister: according to the Bible, God is not so much interested in mere belief, but in active trust in him
- Ruse: without being smug, I just completed 50 years as a college professor of philosophy, and I have a sense of worth from that
- Ruse: if God turns up, and says that 50 years of being a professor is not good enough, well, I don't know God, I'm sorry, I did my best
- Brierley: Andy, explain to us this story of how a penguin explained to you how he invented a subjective meaning in life for himself?

- Brierley: (reads the story)
- Bannister: when it comes to reading a book, the real meaning is the meaning the author intended the book to have
- Bannister: readers can inject their own meaning into the book that has nothing to do with it, but the author gives the real meaning
- Bannister: meaning in life is like reading a book – you can make up your own meaning, but the author's meaning is the real meaning
- Brierley: (to Ruse) on atheism, is there any objective meaning?
- Ruse: "obviously, someone like myself cannot have meaning with a capital M in that sense"
- Ruse: the real question is and atheist can find a sense of self-worth, "I find that I'm happier within myself, I can find meaning"
- Bannister: what would you say to someone who drinks away the family inheritance and gets the same sense of happiness you have?
- Bannister: what would you say to all the people who are unable to get "a sense of self-worth" from their career, because of where they are born, sickness, etc.
- Ruse: I have nothing to offer them, some people are born into such awful situations that they are bound to be bad people
- Ruse: these unfair accidents of birth, etc., fits with atheism better
- Ruse: what we should do is change society so that more people can build a sense of self-worth through achievements
- Ruse: that way, they can say to God "I used my talents" so they can create feelings of self-worth and happiness (apart from God)
- Bannister: meaning in life cannot be answered without answering questions related to identity, value, which are rooted in the overall worldview
- Bannister: on the Christian worldview, you have an infinite worth, your value isn't determined by circumstances, earnings, friends, etc.
- Bannister: your value comes from what Jesus was willing to pay to save you, namely, giving his own life for you
- Bannister: when I travel to meet other Christians in other parts of the world, they have a happiness that should not be there if they are getting happiness from wealth, fame, achievements, etc.
- Bannister: but when you come to the West, many people who have wealth, fame, achievement, etc. are unhappy
- Ruse: well maybe who look after a flock of sheep every day may get a sense of self-worth from that, or from other jobs
- Ruse: I do take Christianity very seriously, it is a grown-up proposal to answer grown-up questions – it works if it is *true*
- Ruse: we don't have to follow Nietzche's statement that if there is no God, there is no meaning in life – we can find a middle way, we can achieve meaning in life by using our talents to achieve things
- Bannister: I disagree with Michael, I don't think that the meaning you invent for yourself is authentic meaning

- Bannister: distracting yourself with amusing things and happiness is not an answer to the problem
- Brierley: (to Ruse) are you saying that you have searched for ultimate meaning, and you are settling for subjective meaning?
- Ruse: my subjective meaning is not second class to objective meaning, "I feel a real deep sense of achievement, of meaning, of self-worth, of having used my talents properly, and I don't feel in any sense a sense of regret" (what matters to him is how he feels)
- Bannister: notice how Michael keeps bringing in value judgments. e.g. – "use my talents well", that implies that there is a right way and a wrong to use your talents, which assumes an objective scale of right and wrong, which makes no sense in atheism
- Bannister: an atheist can sit in a sun room and enjoy the feelings of happiness generated by the light and heat of the Sun, without asking whether there is a Sun out there
- Bannister: ultimately, at the end of the day, my concern is not whether something makes me happy or makes me feel fulfilled
- Bannister: ultimately, at the end of the day, I think there is only one real reason to wrestle with these questions of meaning, and that is to find truth
- Ruse: sometimes we reach a point where we cannot get to true answers to some questions, sometimes we look for truth, but then give up and confess "I cannot find it" and then move on from there

Is it possible to dispense with God's advice on your decision-making and achieve something that affects a lot of people, or makes people like you, or makes you famous, etc., and then have *that* please God? "Look, God, I did something I liked that affected a lot of people, and made them feel happy as they were on their way to Hell because they rejected you". I think a lot of celebrities, athletes and musicians have feelings that they have achieved something, but having feelings of achievement because you entertain people doesn't mean anything to God.

So what is the standard? How you imitate Jesus – *self-control, self-denial and self-sacrifice to honor God* – that is the standard. If I had to choose between giving up two hours of my life to summarize this discussion for my readers, and all the fame and fortune that people who make godless TV shows, movies and music have, I would choose to make this debate summary. My goal in life is not to have fun, thrills, travel and feel happy *in this world*. I have a Boss. Performing actions that respect the Boss is objectively meaningful. It's may not seem like much compared to what James Bond does in million-dollar movies, but at least I am wearing the right uniform, and playing for the right team.

I'm starting to notice that a lot of younger Christians are more interested in feeling good, having fun, being liked by others than they are in being able to know what's true or show what's true. Christians are no exception to this problem of finding meaning in life. A lot of us are just taking in entertainment and trying hard not to think at all.

Why I admire people in the armed forces more than famous entertainers

November 10, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've noticed that many Christians can tell me a lot about famous entertainers. It doesn't matter if it's singers, musicians, actors, athletes, etc., they seem to know details of their biographies, achievements, etc. And it doesn't really matter if those people are Christians, or whether they have performed actions consistent with a Christian worldview in their private lives.

Anyway, speaking for myself, I mostly admire two kinds of people. The first kind is the kind I blog about here all the time: Christian scholars engage non-Christians intellectually using logic and evidence. The second kind, as you can tell from my reading list, is people who distinguish themselves in conflict with those who oppose the principles and policies that allow me to live out my Christian life. And I am especially interested when people who are fighting evil (imperialists, Nazis, socialists, communists, leftists, etc.) exhibit Christ-like character in risking their lives to save others, or in giving their lives to save others.

Lt. Walt Chewning charges unto burning F-6F Hellcat to save trapped pilot

I have a war story to tell you that happened on November 10th, 1943.

> Lieutenant (later Lieutenant Commander) Walter Lewis Chewning of Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, steps on the burning fuel tank of an F6F-3 Hellcat flown by Ensign (later Lieutenant) Byron Milton Johnson of Potter, Nebraska to effect a successful rescue of the pilot on November 10, 1943. Johnson had flown out to USS Enterprise from Barbers Point, Hawaii, enroute to Makin Atoll in the Gilberts to support the United States Army invasion, which occurred on November 20, 1943.

> The afternoon of November 10, Johnson took off in F6F Hellcat Number 30 for a routine training exercise. He immediately developed engine trouble and requested an emergency landing. He was waved off three times as he struggled to maintain control, but his tail hook caught the third arresting gear wire, and Johnson's Hellcat was slammed into the deck, coming to rest in the port catwalk. The plane came to rest on its external belly fuel tank, which started to leak. As the engine vibrated horribly as the propeller bent itself on the deck, sparks ignited the fuel. The hard landing had jammed Johnson's canopy closed, shearing the retaining pin; he could not exit the plane. Chewning, who had joined the ship October 2, 1943 as Enterprise new catapult officer, scrambled out of the catwalk and came through the smoke. Stepping on the burning belly tank, he forced open the canopy and pulled Johnson to safety.

He received the two highest non-combat medals available:

> Chewning was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his actions.

He was a well-educated and accomplished person before joining the Navy:

> Chewning played soccer and Lacrosse at Cornell while studying Mechanical Engineering, breaking his rib and left ankle in one game. He graduated in 1936 and studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before joining the Navy in January 1941. He was the assistant to the Chief Engineer at the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania before joining USS Enterprise. He served as Enterprise's catapult officer until December 1944, when he transferred to Dutch Harbor Naval Air Station in Alaska as ordinance officer. Chewning served in the Navy until December 1949; he also was awarded the Bronze Star. After the war he assisted research and development for various aeronautical companies, the United States Air Force, and the fledgling National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Motion picture film of the crash, taken from Enterprise's bridge, was shown as part of the television program "Victory at Sea" on January 25, 1953. Chewning and Johnson gave interviews to several newspapers about the accident after the program aired.

I found a colorized version of the picture above here:

Lt. Walt Chewning charges unto burning F-6F Hellcat to save trapped pilot
This image was colourized from the original by Paul Reynolds.

What I thought was interesting about Chewning was how he had everything going for him in terms of his education and career, but he chose to join the Navy anyway, in order to defend his country from Japanese imperialism. Those who understand how the Japanese treated prisoners and conquered peoples will know which side of that conflict was good, and which side was evil. Chewning wasn't some sort of loser who took risks for fun and thrills. It had to be a risk where the prize was worth the risk. And he had the humility to consider others better than himself, so that their life was worth the risking of his own.

I just think that it's important for young Christians to have the right kind of heroes. The heroes who are promoted to young Christians by the cultural elites are not usually the right role models. And there is a reason for that. The secular leftists don't want young Christians to be emulating people who excel according to the standards of the Christian worldview. We are in a religion where self-sacrificial love is the centerpiece. Taking trouble on yourself for someone else. Doing your job, when it goes against your own self-interest.

Secular left fascism: FEMA workers directed to avoid homes with Trump signs

November 11, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Atheists are the most politically active group in America. They are overwhelmingly for leftist policies. As I have shown before, atheists do not have a rational foundation for moral values and duties. When doing the right thing goes against their self-interest, they have no rational justification to do the right thing. So what happens when they go into government? Can they be trusted to do their jobs?

Here's an article from the New York Post:

> A Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) supervisor told disaster relief workers in Florida to "avoid homes" with signs supporting President-elect Donald Trump, the agency confirmed Friday.
>
> The FEMA official — Marn'i Washington — conveyed her edict both verbally and in a Microsoft Teams chat used by relief workers canvassing Lake Placid homes ravaged by Hurricane Milton last month, according to the Daily Wire.
>
> "Avoid homes advertising Trump," Washington wrote in a "best practices" memo to employees.
>
> The order was the second bullet point in a list instructing workers to not go "anywhere alone," practice "de-escalation," stay hydrated and to "follow the rules."
>
> FEMA employees told the outlet that at least 20 homes displaying Trump signs or flags — a common sight during election season — were passed between the end of October and into November because of the order.
>
> "Trump sign no entry per leadership," read messages left by workers in FEMA's tracking system when homes were skipped because of the banners.
>
> By ignoring the homes, residents were denied the opportunity to sign up for federal FEMA disaster relief assistance in the wake of the Category 3 hurricane's landfall.

You might remember that we learned previously that FEMA was deliberately blocking relief efforts for people in North Carolina, specifically in areas with many Republican voters.

Remember this article from Fox Business?

> Elon Musk on Friday slammed the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), claiming that it is blocking shipments of Starlink satellite internet deliveries in hurricane-ravaged North Carolina.
>
> "FEMA is not merely failing to adequately help people in trouble, but is actively

> blocking citizens who try to help!" the billionaire claimed on X.
>
> Musk said he had just received a note from a SpaceX engineer, Starlink's parent company, in Asheville, North Carolina, who said the company has "powered up two large operating bases for choppers to deliver goods into hands. We've deployed 300+ starlinks and outpour is it has saved many lives."
>
> But Musk said the engineer claimed that FEMA is "actively blocking shipments and seizing goods and services locally and locking them away to state they are their own. It's very real and scary how much they have taken control to stop people helping. We are blocked now on the shipments of new starlinks coming in until we get an escort from the fire dept. but that may not be enough."

It's very important for taxpayers to reflect on the actions that we see from secular leftists who are in government.

We see:

- pre-dawn raids on the homes of enemies of the Democrat party
- false dossiers used to obtain warrants to spy on political opponents
- statements claiming that laptops are "Russian disinformation" when they are actually genuine
- slow-walking prosecutions of relatives of Democrat party members
- labeling concerned parents of students as "domestic terrorists"
- persecuting Christian business owners for their religious beliefs
- forcing Christian medical professionals to perform violent acts that go against their consciences
- seizing children from parents when disagree with secular leftist sexual ideologies
- launching criminal prosecutions of their political opponents before an election

And this is not to mention all the times that actual political violence has been committed by Democrats against Republicans, such as the attempted murder of Congressman Steve Scalise by a former Bernie Sanders campaign worker. There are many such cases.

When you find these cases happening, and you ask secular leftists what is an appropriate measure to take to deter it, they say they will suspend the person(s) who were caught, and launch an investigation. Is it enough, though? When secular leftists get angry with Christians who merely disagree with them, they drag them into court, and try to shut down their businesses and take their life savings. Maybe it's time for Republicans to start thinking about how to deter the secular left from using government as a weapon against their fellow Americans who have every right to speak up and participate in the political process without being punished.

Richard Dawkins: “the hypothesis of theism is a scientific hypothesis”

November 12, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’m not sure if you’ve been following Richard Dawkins lately, but he has been getting less and less beastly. First of all, he did several debates with Christian scholars. Second, he’s realized the difference that Christian values make for morality and civilization. And thirdly – and this is the new one – he thinks that the intelligent design hypothesis is a valid scientific hypothesis. Let’s take a look.

In this clip from the preview of a debate that Richard Dawkins had with John Lennox, he explains (at around the 3-minute mark) that a “reasonably respectable case” can be made for a deistic God. That means a God who creates and designs the universe, but does not intefere:

That happened back in 2008. And in their debate he said this: “A serious case could be made for a deistic God”.

So already, he was starting to sound more like Anthony Flew, who, atheist though he was, always showed that he would be willing to go wherever the evidence led. I remember in Flew’s debate with William Lane Craig, an atheist questioner asked him why he was accepting the case for a supernatural cause of the beginning of the universe, instead of trying to proposing a different model that would get out of the need for a Creator. And Flew said that he had to go with the scientific consensus, which requires a beginning of the universe. A few years later, Flew gave up atheism and accepted theism (although not Christianity). He was honest about what science shows. I can tell a smart atheist from a dumb atheist.

Anyway, round 2 of Dawkins is when he recently lamented the fact that the decline of Christianity (which he spent his life trying to achieve) had caused changes in British culture that he didn’t like.

Here it is from Christian Post:

> Atheist author Richard Dawkins described himself as a “cultural Christian” and lamented the faith’s waning cultural influence in Europe, though he still derided its key tenets as “nonsense,” during an interview on Easter Sunday.
>
> Speaking with British journalist Rachel Johnson, Dawkins noted that the United Kingdom is “fundamentally a Christian country,” and he still personally values the Christian ethos despite not believing the religion from which it emerged.
>
> “I call myself a cultural Christian,” said the evolutionary biologist and author of The God Delusion. “I’m not a believer, but there’s a distinction between being a believing Christian and being a cultural Christian. And so, I love hymns and Christmas carols, and I sort of feel at home in the Christian ethos. I feel that we are a Christian country in that sense.”

All right, here is the latest Richard Dawkins news, from Evolution News:

> Recently Dr. Dawkins had a moving dialogue with former New Atheist Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who is also a former Muslim. She has announced her conversion to Christianity for what she describes as “very subjective” reasons. It was in response to a “personal crisis”: “I lived for about a decade with intense depression and anxiety and self-loathing. I hit rock bottom. I went to a place where I actually didn’t want to live anymore, but wasn’t brave enough to take my own life.” Faith was her way out of the crisis.
>
> Dawkins answers kindly that belief in a creator or designer is more than a mere subjective response: “You appear to be a theist,” he tells her. “You appear to believe in some kind of higher power. Now, I think that the hypothesis of theism is the most exciting scientific hypothesis you could possibly hold” (emphasis added). Hold that thought in your mind.
>
> Obviously, Dawkins wasn’t giving up his own atheism. He goes on: “And the idea that the universe was actually created by a supernatural intelligence is a dramatic, important idea. If it were true, it would completely change everything we know. We’d be living in a totally different, different universe. That’s a big thing. It’s bigger than personal comfort and nice stories and these things. The idea that the universe has lurking beneath it an intelligence or supernatural intelligence that invented the laws of physics, that invented mathematics, is a stupendous idea, if it’s true.” Minus the reference to “lurking,” that is of course the thesis of intelligent design. He adds, “To me that simply dwarfs all talk of nobility and morality and comfort and that sort of thing.”
>
> This is a remarkable response, granting the premise of arguments for intelligent design like those of Stephen Meyer in Return of the God Hypothesis: Three Scientific Discoveries Revealing the Mind Behind the Universe. The premise is that in discussions of ID, there really is a scientific question to consider. The design hypothesis could be wrong, or it could be right. But let’s weigh it on its own terms as the scientific hypothesis that it is. Thank you to Richard Dawkins for using his authority to point that out.

And of course, anyone who has looked into these things knows the elements of the scientific case for theism:

1. origin of the universe
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic, stellar and planetary habitability
4. origin of life
5. Cambrian explosion
6. molecular machines / irreducible complexity

A lot of atheists don’t go near enough to the evidence to be able to make a statement like

what Dawkins said. I’m impressed with Dawkins, because he was even able to correct Ayann Hirsi Ali about what Christianity actually involves. Christianity is not primarily about subjective beliefs or communities or even a set of moral teachings. Christianity is a knowledge tradition. It’s a set of claims about reality that are either true or false. And he knows that Christianity makes testable claims, and some of them can be verified or falsified by science. Dawkins has a more respectful view of what Christianity is than many Christians. Impressive.

How many evidences do you know for the origin of the universe?

November 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's very, very important to get a conversation about spiritual things started off on the right foot. My favorite place to start is with the origin of the universe. I always use the same 3 evidences, but I found an article that has even MORE. First, let me talk about the ones I like, then I'll send you the link to the article with the bigger list. Once you get the beginning proved, the next question is: who caused it?

Here's the article from J. Warner Wallace.

He writes this:

> My career as a Cold Case Detective was built on being evidentially certain about the suspects I brought to trial. There are times when my certainty was established and confirmed by the cumulative and diverse nature of the evidence. Let me give you an example. It's great when a witness sees the crime and identifies the suspect, but it's even better if we have DNA evidence placing the suspect at the scene. If the behavior of the suspect (before and after the time of the crime) also betrays his involvement, and if his statements when interviewed are equally incriminating, the case is even better. Cases such as these become more and more reasonable as they grow both in depth and diversity. It's not just that we now have four different evidences pointing to the same conclusion, it's that these evidences are from four different categories. Eyewitness testimony, forensic DNA, behaviors and admissions all point to the same reasonable inference. When we have a cumulative, diverse case such as this, our inferences become more reasonable and harder to deny. Why did I take the time to describe this evidential approach to reasonable conclusions? Because a similar methodology can be used to determine whether everything in the universe (all space, time and matter) came from nothing. We have good reason to believe our universe had a beginning, and this inference is established by a cumulative, diverse evidential case.

Here is his list of evidences:

1. Philosophical Evidence
2. Theoretical Evidence
3. Observational Evidence
4. Thermal Evidence
5. Quantitative Evidence
6. Residual Evidence

Now, if you listened to our podcast with astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez, I mentioned the

ones that I like, which are #3, #5 and #6. And I like these, because they are scientific, and because I have clever ways of explaining them using simple terms.

Here's what he says:

> **3. Observational Evidence (from Astronomical Data)**
>
> Vesto Slipher, an American astronomer working at the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona, spent nearly ten years perfecting his understanding of spectrograph readings. His observations revealed something remarkable. If a distant object was moving toward Earth, its observable spectrograph colors shifted toward the blue end of the spectrum. If a distant object was moving away from Earth, its colors shifted toward the red end of the spectrum. Slipher identified several "nebulae" and observed a "redshift" in their spectrographic colors. If these "nebulae" were moving away from our galaxy (and one another) as Slipher observed, they must have once been tightly clustered together. By 1929, Astronomer Edwin Hubble published findings of his own, verifying Slipher's observations and demonstrating the speed at which a star or galaxy moves away from us increases with its distance from the earth. This once again confirmed the expansion of the universe.
>
> **5. Quantitative Evidence (from the Abundance of Helium)**
>
> As Astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle studied the way elements are created within stars, he was able to calculate the amount of helium created if the universe came into being from nothing. Helium is the second most abundant element in the universe (Hydrogen is the first), but in order to form helium by nuclear fusion, temperatures must be incredibly high and conditions must be exceedingly dense. These would have been the conditions if the universe came into being from nothing. Hoyle's calculations related to the formation of helium happen to coincide with our measurements of helium in the universe today. This, of course, is consistent with the universe having a moment of beginning.
>
> **6. Residual Evidence (from the Cosmic Background Radiation)**
>
> In 1964, two American physicists and radio astronomers, Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson detected what is now referred to as "echo radiation", winning a Nobel Prize for their discovery in 1978. Numerous additional experiments and observations have since established the existence of cosmic background radiation, including data from the Cosmic Background Explorer satellite launched in 1989, and the Planck space observatory launched in 2009. For many scientists, this discovery alone solidified their belief the universe had a beginning. If the universe leapt into existence, expanding from a state of tremendous heat, density and expansion, we should expect find this kind of cosmic background radiation.

So, I've made simple analogies for these, so that I can explain them to people from every background.

For #5, for example, I use the story of leaving you in a room with beads and strings and then watching you make one necklace of beads, and timing you, and then leaving you for an hour, and coming back and estimating how many necklaces you will have made, and how many beads you have left. With respect to the beginning of the universe, at the very beginning, it's all hydrogen (beads). But there is nuclear fusion going on, and the beads are being fused into heavier elements like helium and carbon and oxygen (necklaces). Well, astronomers made predictions about HOW MUCH helium you could fuse during the very hot period, according to the standard cosmology, and the prediction was for 75% hydrogen (beads) and 24% helium (necklaces), and that's exactly what we see today.

And for #6, I talk about baking a cake. Suppose you heated up your oven and put a ban full of cake batter in there for an hour. You notice that the room is 68 Fahrenheit (20 Celsius) when the cake went in. Then you take the cake out to cool, but you leave the oven open. An hour later, you notice that the oven is cool, but the temperature of the room has gone up to 72 Fahrenheit (22 Celsius). When you have a source of heat in a small area, then you open it up in a bigger area, the smaller area cools down, and the bigger area warms up a bit. Astronomers made a prediction that the very hot creation event would leave a small 3 degrees Kelvin "cosmic microwave background radiation" everywhere in space, and when they were finally able to measure it, they found that the predicted 3 Kelvin temperature was found exactly as predicted.

So, if you don't know all of these evidences for a beginning, read the article, pick your favorites, and be ready to explain them.

Why do so many atheist historians think that 1 Corinthians 15 is reliable history?

November 14, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Which passage of the Bible is the favorite of Christians who like to defend the Christian worldview? I don't mean which one is most inspirational… I mean "which one is the most useful for winning arguments?" Well, when it comes to the historical Jesus, the most important passage has to be 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

The tradition in 1 Corinthians 15 is an early creed that was received from the eyewitnesses Peter and John when Paul visited them several times in Jerusalem, as documented in Galatians 1 and 2, where Paul meets the eyewitnesses. And of course, Paul records his own eyewitness experience, documented in 1 Cor 15:8.

So, is this passage accepted as historically reliable by all ancient historians? Or only by the Bible-believing ones?

Here's something posted by Dr. William Lane Craig about the 1 Corinthians 15 passage:

> The evidence that Paul is not writing in his own hand in I Cor. 15.3-5 is so powerful that all New Testament scholars recognize that Paul is here passing on a prior tradition. In addition to the fact that Paul explicitly says as much, the passage is replete with non-Pauline characteristics, including, in order of appearance: (i) the phrase "for our sins" using the genitive case and plural noun is unusual for Paul; (ii) the phrase "according to the Scriptures" is unparalleled in Paul, who introduces Scriptural citations by "as it is written"; (iii) the perfect passive verb "has been raised" appears only in this chapter and in a pre-Pauline confessional formula in II Tim. 2.8; (iv) the phrase "on the third day" with its ordinal number following the noun in Greek is non-Pauline; (v) the word "appeared" is found only here and in the confessional formula in I Tim. 3.16; and (vi) "the Twelve" is not Paul's nomenclature, for he always speaks of the twelve disciples as "the apostles."
>
> Now the visit during which Paul may have received this tradition is the visit you mention three years after his conversion on the road to Damascus (Gal. 1.18). This puts the tradition back to within the first five years after Jesus' death in AD 30. So there's not even an apparent inconsistency with Paul's appropriating the language of the formula to encapsulate the Gospel he was already preaching during those first three years in Damascus.

Ancient historian Gary Habermas loves to read non-Christian scholars… and then he writes about what THEY think about Jesus in peer-reviewed articles, published in academic journals. Let's look at this one: *Dialog: A Journal of Theology, Vol. 45; No. 3 (Fall, 2006), pp. 288-297; published by Blackwell Publishing, UK.*

He writes:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: "However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul's."[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul's own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: "It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition."[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]

This is important:

> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

He's an eyewitness (verse 8), and he met with the other eyewitnesses, James and Peter. 1 Corinthians is early. Galatians is early. The creed is extremely early – right after the events occurred. There was no time for legends to develop.

And atheistic / critical historians agree, the creed is reliable:

> Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too

> optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]
>
> Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]
>
> Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.
>
> (3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]
>
> These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.
>
> (4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

Now, some of the people he lists are really biased against the supernatural, and they really hate the idea that the claims of Christianity exclude other religions. And yet they don't deny the historical reliability of 1 Corinthians 15, or that it is based on eyewitness testimony.

That’s why when you watch debates about the historical Jesus, you see skeptical historians like Bart Ehrman, Gerd Ludemann, James Crossley, Michael Goulder, etc. accepting that the disciples thought they saw Jesus after his death. They’re not just being nice to Dr. Craig when they give him that. They are forced to accept it, because it passes the historical tests. Every Christian ought to be aware of which passages of the New Testament are seen by the broad spectrum of ancient historians as “historical”, regardless of their various biases. You can believe everything in the Bible. But when you debate non-Christians, you have to use the historical core of Christianity which successfully passes historical analysis.

You can see the creed used as evidence in the debate between James Crossley and William Lane Craig.

Why can't the FBI identify the pipe bomber suspect from January 6th?

November 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The FBI has been involved in many, many scandals that show how corrupt and politicized they've become. They failed to do their jobs when they investigated Hillary Clinton's private e-mail server, and they failed to do their jobs with the Trump-Russia collusion hoax. But more of their failures are just coming to light now.

Here's the story from Just The News:

> Cellular carriers have told Congress they possess intact phone usage data from the vicinity where two pipe bombs were planted during the Jan. 6 incident, directly disputing FBI testimony that agents couldn't identify a suspect because the phone data was corrupted, a key House chairman tells *Just the News*.
>
> The revelations from Rep. Barry Loudermilk, R-Ga., the chairman of the House Administration oversight subcommittee, adds new intrigue to a debate that has gripped Washington for nearly four years: Why can't the FBI with so much evidence and manpower identify the suspect who planted the explosive devices at the Democrat and Republican Party headquarters hours before the Capitol was breached.

Here's what the FBI said:

> "In June 2023, the former Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office, Steve D'Antuono, who oversaw the pipe bomb investigation, said that the FBI received corrupted data from one of the cell carriers and that it most likely contained the identity of the pipe bomber. Given the significance of this information, my Subcommittee sent letters to the three major cell carriers, asking them to respond to Mr. D'Antuono's claim of corrupted data," he said.

And here's what the non-partisan, private sector cell phone companies said:

> "Every major cell carrier responded and confirmed that they did not provide the FBI corrupted data," Loudermilk said.
>
> "Additionally every major cell carrier confirmed they were never notified that the FBI had any issues accessing the data. This contradictory testimony raises some serious questions about the status of the investigation into the pipe bomber and about why the case remains unsolved nearly four years later," he added.
>
> Last year, D'Antuono told the House Judiciary Committee that the FBI did not a receive complete phone data from telephone carriers because some of it had been corrupted.

And this wasn't the only problem with the FBI testimony:

> Additionally, D'Antuono gave testimony that the pipe bombs were deemed inoperable, despite the Quantico laboratory coming to a different conclusion.

And here's how the FBI responded to questions:

> […]The FBI declined to comment on the investigation.

Looks like two completely different stories, right? I believe the phone companies, and that means that the FBI is lying. Again.

Why do you think that the FBI would misrepresent what the cell phone companies did? Who are they trying to protect? The pipe bomber? Why would they want to protect the pipe bomber?

The FBI doesn't do good work for taxpayers

Anyway, I thought it might be a good idea to remind everyone of what the FBI is really like.

Do you remember Peter Strozk?

> An FBI agent who worked on the special counsel's Russia probe texted another investigator in August 2016 that "We'll stop" Donald Trump from getting elected president, according to Thursday's watchdog report on the FBI's investigation of Hillary Clinton's private email server.

Do you remember James Comey?

> For most of the past three years, the FBI has tried to portray its top leadership as united behind ex-Director James Comey's decision not to pursue criminal charges against Hillary Clinton for transmitting classified information over her insecure, private email server.
>
> Although in the end that may have been the case, we now are learning that Comey's top lawyer, then-FBI General Counsel James Baker, initially believed Clinton deserved to face criminal charges, but was talked out of it "pretty late in the process."

Do you remember Andrew McCabe?

> It's official: McCabe lied.
>
> The new report from the Justice Department inspector general concludes that Andrew McCabe, the former FBI deputy director, lied to then-FBI Director James Comey, to other FBI agents, and to officials of the Office of the Inspector General. Some of those lies came when McCabe was under oath.

Do you remember Christopher Wray?

> FBI Director Christopher Wray has some major explaining to do.
>
> In recent Congressional testimony, he insisted that a January 2023 memo suggesting his agency's resources be used against American citizens for the

> crime of — gasp! — being devout Catholics was a “single product by a single field office,” namely the Richmond field office.
>
> That claim’s been given the lie by a newly surfaced version of the memo showing it to be the product of multiple offices, including Portland and Los Angeles.
>
> That was conveniently redacted from the version of the memo he presented to the Senate Intelligence Committee in July.

If it were up to me, I would dismantle the FBI and delegate their responsibilities to other agencies who understand the meaning of fidelity, bravery, integrity. People who don’t use government as a weapon against enemies of the Democrat party. People who know how to provide their employers – the American taxpayers – with good, professional service.

Knight and Rose Show #55: Krista Bontrager and Monique Duson

November 16, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 55 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Krista Bontrager and Monique Duson about their new book "Walking in Unity". If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Krista Bontrager and Monique Duson to discuss their new book "Walking in Unity: Biblical Answers to Questions on Race and Racism". They discuss how their friendship developed through difficult conversations about race and racism. They offer a Christ-centered perspective on the tough issues being discussed in our culture, such as historic racial injustices, system racism and the call for reparations.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show (with timestamps) provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 55:

Speaker biographies

Krista Bontrager is a fourth-generation Bible teacher. She is an author, podcaster, former university professor and homeschool mom. Krista has a BA in Communications from Biola University, and a MA in Theology, and MA in Bible Exposition from Talbot School of Theology. She has worked for almost three decades in various capacities in theology and apologetics, and is the VP of Educational Programs and Biblical Integrity at the Center for Biblical Unity. She is working on a Doctor of Ministry in Apologetics at Birmingham Theological Seminary.

Monique Duson is the President at the Center for Biblical Unity. She has a background in social service and children's ministry. She has worked with a diverse array of under-served communities. She worked as a missionary to South Africa for over four years, serving children and teachers impacted by drugs, violence, and trauma. She spent two decades advocating for Critical Race Theory (CRT), but through a series of events, she

began to clearly see the contradictions of CRT with the historic Christian worldview. Monique is now convinced that CRT is not the best way to achieve racial unity and actively speaks out against the use of CRT within the church. Monique has appeared on shows such as Relatable (with Allie Beth Stuckey), the Alisa Childers podcast, and Breakpoint (with John Stonestreet). Monique has a BA in Sociology from Biola University, and is pursuing an MA in Public Theology at Birmingham Theological Seminary

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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The authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke knew eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus

November 17, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Were the authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke connected to eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus? Well, it turns out that there are good reasons to think that Mark was linked to the eyewitness Peter, and Luke was linked to Paul, who had a post-mortem appearance of Jesus in 1 Cor 15:8, and who met with Peter and James in Galatians 1 and again in Galatians 2.

There is a list of evidence for Peter's influence on Mark on the Cold Case Christianity blog.

Here's my favorite one from the list:

> **Peter's Embarrassments Have Been Omitted**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter's special input and influence,including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It's important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It's not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter's standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters 'indiscretions' in their own accounts. See *Cold-Case Christianity* for a more detailed explanation).

It makes me laugh to imagine Peter looking over Mark's shoulder and saying "no, don't put that in it" and "no, don't tell them I did that". Funny! But also very good evidence. The rest of Wallace's list makes it even more clear.

And what about the gospel of Luke? Well, did you know that the author of Luke's gospel knew Paul? If you read it carefully, you'll see that Luke switches from describing history from an "I" perspective to describing things from a "we" perspective in the book of Acts (which he also wrote). Who is the "we" he is talking about?

Here's famous Christian scholar William Lane Craig to explain:

> Now who was this author we call Luke? He was clearly not an eyewitness to Jesus's life. But we discover an important fact about him from the book of Acts. Beginning in the sixteenth chapter of Acts, when Paul reaches Troas in modern-day Turkey, the author suddenly starts using the first-person plural: "we set sail from Troas to Samothrace," "we remained in Philippi some days," "as we were going to the place of prayer," *etc.* The most obvious explanation is that the author had joined Paul on his evangelistic tour of the Mediterranean cities. In chapter 21 he accompanies Paul back to Palestine and finally to Jerusalem. What

> this means is that the author of Luke-Acts was in fact in first hand contact with the eyewitnesses of Jesus's life and ministry in Jerusalem.
>
> […]There is no avoiding the conclusion that Luke-Acts was written by a traveling companion of Paul who had the opportunity to interview eyewitnesses to Jesus's life while in Jerusalem. Who were some of these eyewitnesses? Perhaps we can get some clue by subtracting from the Gospel of Luke everything found in the other gospels and seeing what is peculiar to Luke. What you discover is that many of Luke's peculiar narratives are connected to women who followed Jesus: people like Joanna and Susanna, and significantly, Mary, Jesus's mother.
>
> Was the author reliable in getting the facts straight? The book of Acts enables us to answer that question decisively. The book of Acts overlaps significantly with secular history of the ancient world, and the historical accuracy of Acts is indisputable.
>
> This has recently been demonstrated anew by Colin Hemer, a classical scholar who turned to New Testament studies, in his book *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History.* [5] Hemer goes through the book of Acts with a fine-toothed comb, pulling out a wealth of historical knowledge, ranging from what would have been common knowledge down to details which only a local person would know. Again and again Luke's accuracy is demonstrated: from the sailings of the Alexandrian corn fleet to the coastal terrain of the Mediterranean islands to the peculiar titles of local officials, Luke gets it right.

I know a lot of people (like my Dad) read the Bible devotionally, looking for feelings or trying to "get right with God" so they get blessings. But I think it's helpful to look at things from an evidential point of view – how am I going to make a case for this? When you look at things from that perspective, the Bible gets a whole lot more interesting. And you can talk about it with non-Christians when you know about these interesting details.

Secular leftists turn to violence after election loss

November 18, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are a lot of people in the Biden-Harris regime who think that Christians and conservatives are very, very dangerous people. “We need to watch those crazy Christian conservatives” the taxpayer-funded secular leftists say to each other. “They are dangerous domestic terrorists who believe in free speech and religious liberty”. But are they right? Is that where violent extremism comes from?

First, remember that when a person turns away from religion, they typically switch their focus and allegiance to politics. Atheists are the most politically-involved people in America. For them, it is critical that no one’s speech disapproves of their godless behaviors, and that no laws punish them for their godless behaviors. All their hearts, souls, minds, and strength are bent on these goals: using the force of government to control their Christian neighbor’s 1) free speech, 2) religious liberty and 3) political influence.

Let’s look at one story from the Christian Post and see:

> A Minnesota man at the center of a murder-suicide that left five people dead, including his two sons, expressed a hatred for Christianity on social media prior to the shootings.
>
> Anthony Nephew, 46, was found dead last week from a self-inflicted gunshot wound in his home in Duluth, Minnesota, after killing his wife and son, and his ex-partner and their son, authorities said.
>
> […]A CP review of Anthony Nephew’s Facebook profile revealed several anti-Christian views, including posts in which he expressed fear about Christian influence over a second Trump administration.

He wrote this: “I am terrified of religious zealots inflicting their misguided beliefs on me and my family”.

More:

> Nephew also claimed to have “intrusive thoughts of being burned at the stake as a witch, or crucified on a burning cross,” as well as “having people actually believe that I or my child are Satan or, the anti-Christ or whatever their favorite color of boogie man they are afraid are this week.”
>
> A few days later, he compared Christianity to the Ku Klux Klan, writing, “Christian is a dog whistle, for white sheets, and pointy hats.”
>
> […]“How’s that call for turning down the rhetoric going?” Nephew wrote. “Your freedom of religion, in no way implies you can force it on others. This is exactly why I left the church. You’re not interested in worshiping God, you’re just pushing religious extremism.”

> […]Nephew, who shared images in support of President Joe Biden, former President Barack Obama, Vice President Kamala Harris and others, also appeared to support Harris' failed presidential bid.
>
> […]Nephew also appeared to support abortion rights: in a June 2022 post, shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, he offered his "home and resources" to anyone in an "anti-abortion state."

Here's another story from the Christian Post, describing events that happened in Seattle, the secular leftist capital of America:

> Police found the wife of a prominent trans-identified writer covered in blood and clapping her hands after she allegedly became "overwhelmed" by the results of the 2024 presidential election and murdered her father with an ice axe.
>
> Corey Burke is accused of murdering her father, 67-year-old Timothy Burke, on election night in their shared home in a Seattle neighborhood. The 33-year-old woman charged with first-degree murder is married to trans writer and journalist Samantha Leigh Allen, the author of Real Queer America: LGBT Stories from Red States, who also serves as an editor for the online LGBT magazine Them.
>
> […]According to the Seattle Times, Burke told police she believed there was "something important" about the presidential race between former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris and that she felt overwhelmed with emotion.
>
> […]"Corey stated that she had to bite her father while choking him because he was too strong," the charging documents stated. "Corey stated that once her father 'went limp,' she felt better. Corey said that she then hit him with the ice pickaxe in the head several more times. Corey then sat next to her father and watched him until she saw that he was not breathing anymore."

Now, I know what the secular leftists in the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice will say to this. They'll say "she was on our radar! She was on our radar!" But there just were not enough secular leftists in government to watch her, because all them were watching those nasty pro-life Presbyterian married couples who want to pull their kids out of public schools. Those are the real domestic terrorists, the secular leftists cry. They focus their attention on pre-dawn raiding those dangerous peaceful pro-life grandmothers, and real criminals are ignored or released.

What should Christians think about abolishing the federal Department of Education?

November 19, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of my favorite questions to ask conservatives is "which federal departments would you abolish?" My favorite five are (in order): 1) the Department of Education, 2) the Environmental Protection Agency, 3) the Department of Energy, 4), the Internal Revenue Service, 5) the Department of Commerce. And cut all funding for PBS, NPR, and the National Endowment for the Arts, of course.

Well, not everyone likes the idea of abolishing departments, but I have an article showing why Christians should at least support the elimination of the Department of Education.

Here's an article from the Christian Post:

> The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that the U.S. Department of Education unlawfully denied nonprofit status to Grand Canyon University, one of the country's largest Christian higher education institutions.
>
> In a 3-0 decision, the panel instructed the department to revisit GCU's status using the correct legal standard under the Higher Education Act. The department overstepped its authority by using an incorrect standard, the court ruled.
>
> […]The nonprofit status grants the university access to federal funds and research grants, especially given its large Hispanic student population, Mueller told Fox News last year.
>
> Without nonprofit classification, GCU had been barred from accessing these resources.
>
> The university states that it has kept tuition frozen for 17 years, an uncommon achievement in higher education, even as it has increased enrollment, expanded academic programs and invested in infrastructure.

It's just another case of the weaponization of government by the secular left:

> GCU was also hit with a $37.7 million fine from the department last November, alleging that the university misled students about the costs of the doctoral program. The fine is significantly larger than other institutions' penalties, such as those issued to Penn State and Michigan State. GCU is appealing the fine.
>
> In an interview with The Christian Post last year, Mueller called the fine "tyranny from federal government agencies" and vowed to stand up "to ensure this type of ideological government overreach and weaponization of federal agencies does not happen to others."
>
> Education Secretary Miguel Cardona threatened to shut down GCU during an April House Appropriations Committee hearing.

So, this is a very helpful story for explaining to people who did not vote for Trump why Trump-supporters voted for Trump.

What I've found is that people on the secular left tend to help themselves to the idea that they are pure and good and true, and everyone who opposes them is a "domestic terrorist". And because their opponents are "domestic terrorists", they have to use the government as a weapon against them. I think that Christians and conservatives got tired of paying taxes to people who think like that. Now what we need is to shut down as much government as possible, so that the people in government have to find ways to live that involve doing productive work for customers in the competitive private sector. No more virtue signaling during office hours.

Can you trust the Department of Homeland Security to secure the homeland?

November 20, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Anyone who has been following me on Twitter will know that I have been watching the new president of Argentina Javier Milei closely, and getting more and more excited by his actions to cut wasteful spending and slim down government. I've been especially excited to see that DONALD TRUMP has met with him at Mar-A-Lago. Maybe we'll see some of that awesome government waste cutting here?

Here's a story from Matt Walsh at the Daily Wire (full text) that talks about another big government department that doesn't do good work for taxpayers.

He has two cases that show the same problem with secular leftists in government putting virtue signaling above duty.

First one:

> Three years ago, a 25-year-old Honduran national named Medina Ulloa was stopped by border patrol agents in Texas. He gave them a fake name and lied about being a juvenile. But instead of kicking him out of the country, authorities gave him a "notice to appear" for a court date that everyone knew he'd never actually attend. Then Ulloa was flown to Jacksonville, Florida, where he was taken in by a 46-year-old father of four. Soon afterwards, the immigrant beat the man to death inside his own home.
>
> […]How did Medina Ulloa get to Jacksonville? Did he buy a ticket himself, even though he had no money?
>
> […]In this case, the victim's daughter claimed that Ulloa had indeed arrived on one of these [Biden-Harris administration] resettlement flights. And she would have reason to know that. Again, her father had allowed this guy into his home, and presumably they talked about how he had arrived in Jacksonville in the first place.

You might have heard about these "resettlement flights". This is where the Biden-Harris Department of Homeland Security uses taxpayer dollars – dollars that will be put on the $36 trillion debt and paid back by your children – to flying illegal immigrants around the country.

Now here's the second story from Matt Walsh's article:

> As you may have heard, the trial of 26-year-old Venezuelan illegal alien Jose Ibarra got underway this week in Athens, Georgia. Ibarra is accused of murdering Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student, near a jogging trail at the University of Georgia back in February. Prosecutors say Ibarra put on a hoodie-style jacket, a black hat, and black disposable gloves, before going off to "hunt for females"

> on the university's campus.
>
> What we didn't know until yesterday is how exactly Ibarra got to Georgia in the first place. The government certainly didn't bother to tell us. But during the trial yesterday, we learned the answer to that question. According to Ibarra's roommate, just like Medina Ulloa, he received a taxpayer-funded resettlement flight. In the case of Ibarra, the flight took him from New York City to Georgia.
>
> In other words, the Biden-Harris administration didn't just enable the murder of Laken Riley with their lax border policies, they also facilitated the murder.

So, what should we do with the secular leftist activists in the Biden-Harris Department of Homeland Security? We pay their salaries. But are we getting good value for the money we pay them? Why do they think that it is OK to use the money we pay them to import more Democrat voters into the country, and even criminals who commit violence against the very people who PAY THEIR SALARIES with our taxes?

Remember – every government worker only gets money by taking that money from real workers in the productive private sector. Many of these public sector workers have useless non-STEM degrees that they got by running up student loan debt. Many of them have no marketable skills, and no private sector work experience. They survive by being parasites on the productivity of real workers in the private sector. And then the government gives them massive salaries, benefits, and even student loan bailouts for their worthless non-STEM degrees.

We are $36 trillion in debt. We can't be paying a bunch of public sector trash to enjoy adult day care at taxpayer expense. We either need to reform the Department of Homeland Security with new employees who have real skills and real integrity, or we need to scrap it. We just don't have the money to pay Democrat party activists to do secular leftist activism all day, when they are supposed to be keeping us safe.

Luke Barnes on the fine-tuning of the strong force and fine structure constant

November 21, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

By now, anyone who has had discussions about scientific evidence for the existence of God knows about the fine-tuning argument. In a nutshell, if the fundamental constants and quantities given in the Big Bang were even slightly other than they are, then the universe itself would not be hospitable for complex, embodied intelligent life.

Here is an article from The New Atlantis written by Australian cosmologist Luke Barnes.

Excerpt:

> Today, our deepest understanding of the laws of nature is summarized in a set of equations. Using these equations, we can make very precise calculations of the most elementary physical phenomena, calculations that are confirmed by experimental evidence. But to make these predictions, we have to plug in some numbers that cannot themselves be calculated but are derived from measurements of some of the most basic features of the physical universe. These numbers specify such crucial quantities as the masses of fundamental particles and the strengths of their mutual interactions. After extensive experiments under all manner of conditions, physicists have found that these numbers appear not to change in different times and places, so they are called the fundamental constants of nature.
>
> […]A universe that has just small tweaks in the fundamental constants might not have any of the chemical bonds that give us molecules, so say farewell to DNA, and also to rocks, water, and planets. Other tweaks could make the formation of stars or even atoms impossible. And with some values for the physical constants, the universe would have flickered out of existence in a fraction of a second. That the constants are all arranged in what is, mathematically speaking, the very improbable combination that makes our grand, complex, life-bearing universe possible is what physicists mean when they talk about the “fine-tuning” of the universe for life.

Let’s look at an example – the strong force. Not only must the strong force be fine-tuned so we have both hydrogen and helium, but the ratio of the strong force must also be fine-tuned with the fine structure constant.

Barnes writes:

> The strong nuclear force, for example, is the glue that holds protons and neutrons together in the nuclei of atoms. If, in a hypothetical universe, it is too weak, then nuclei are not stable and the periodic table disappears again. If it is too strong, then the intense heat of the early universe could convert all hydrogen into helium — meaning that there could be no water, and that 99.97 percent of

> the 24 million carbon compounds we have discovered would be impossible, too. And, as the chart to the right shows, the forces, like the masses, must be in the right balance. If the electromagnetic force, which is responsible for the attraction and repulsion of charged particles, is too strong or too weak compared to the strong nuclear force, anything from stars to chemical compounds would be impossible.

Here's the chart he's referencing:

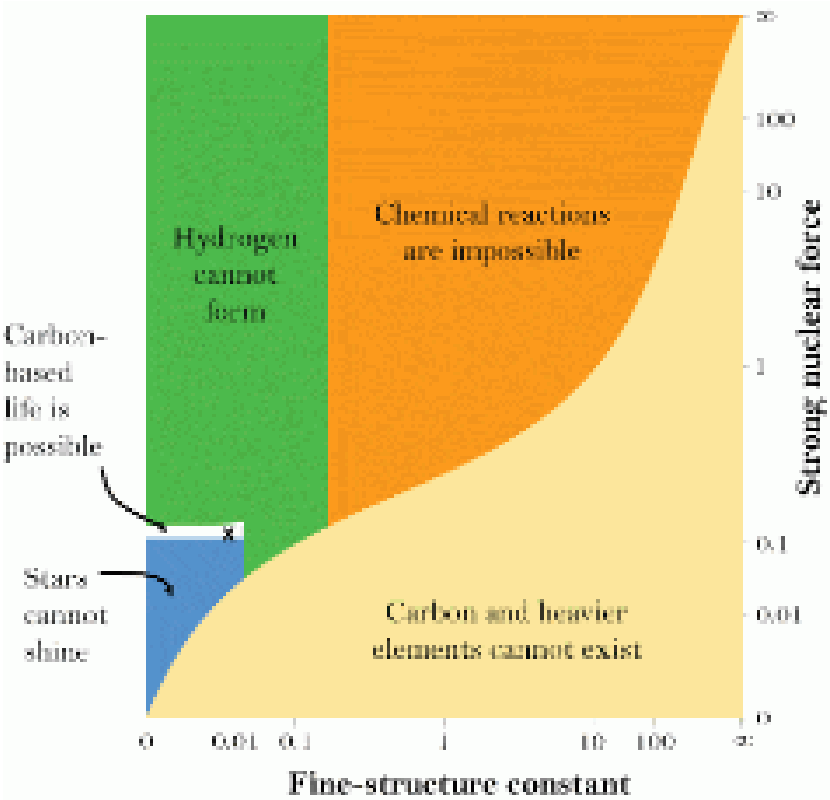

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant
As you can see from the chart, most of the values that the constants could take would make complex, embodied intelligent life impossible.

We need carbon (carbon-based life) because they form the basis of the components of life chemistry, e.g. proteins, sugars, etc. We need hydrogen for water. We need chemical reactions for obvious reasons. We need the light from the stars to support plant and animal life on the surface of a planet. And so on. In almost every case where you change the values of these constants and quantities and ratios from what they are, you will end up with a universe that does not support life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind under these laws of physics. And we don't have any alternative laws of physics in this universe.

By the way, just to show you how mainstream these examples of fine-tuning are, I thought I would link to a source that you're all going to be familiar with: The New Scientist.

The fine-tuning of the force of gravity

So here is an article from the New Scientist about a different constant that also has to be

fine-tuned for life: the force of gravity.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe‘s birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What’s more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Notice how the article also mentioned “the universe’s birth”, which is part of mainstream science.

When I’m writing to you about things like the origin of the universe, or the cosmic fine-tuning, I’m not talking to you about things that pastors found in the Bible. These discoveries are known and accepted by mainstream scientists. It’s amazing that people are constructing their worldviews without having to account for the birth of the universe and this cosmic fine-tuning. We all, as rational individuals, have to bound our view of the universe with the findings of science. Right now, those findings support the existence of a Creator and a Designer. So why am I seeing so many atheists who are just plain ignorant about these facts? Maybe we should tell them about this evidence. Maybe we should ask them why they don’t account for scientific evidence when forming their beliefs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason

- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Evidence that Laken Riley was a pretty serious Christian

November 22, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I remember having a debate at the SBC church I was attending, with someone from Russell Moore's ERLC. The ERLC is a group that pretends to be religious and conservative, but they frequently align with Democrats. The ERLC person was explaining to me why they are in favor of open borders. And I tried to explain to him how open borders costs ordinary Christians money and puts them at risk.

So, with that in mind, here is an interesting article from Christian Post, about the young woman who was recently murdered by an illegal immigrant when she resisted his attempts to rape her.

First, here is the news about the trial:

> The mother of Laken Riley, a Georgia nursing student murdered by an illegal immigrant earlier this year, wept as she begged the judge to sentence the killer to life in prison, asking that he not receive mercy when he showed none to her daughter or the family he destroyed.
>
> Jose Antonio Ibarra, 26, was found guilty on all counts and sentenced to life in prison without parole for Riley's murder Wednesday.
>
> Haggard sentenced Ibarra to the maximum possible punishments for multiple charges, including kidnapping, aggravated assault with intent to rape, obstruction of a 911 call, tampering with evidence and a peeping tom charge. The judge ordered that the defendant serve each sentence consecutively, according to CNN, condemning Ibarra to two life sentences and 27 years in prison.

Now, I already wrote about this crime, and about the role that the Department of Homeland Security had in allowing it to happen.

But I have to write about it again, because of the facts that came out about the victim, at the sentencing:

> In a victim statement read before the court Wednesday, Allyson Phillips called her daughter a "child of God" who demonstrated her love for the Lord through missionary work and caring for the elderly.

Missionary work and caring for the elderly?

This girl was not out doing risky things, like partying with drunk bad boys, she was just out for a JOG on a university campus:

> Riley, a student at Augusta University College of Nursing, never returned home after she left that morning to go jogging around the University of Georgia

> campus.

She wrote a letter to her future husband, which is a pretty good sign that she was thinking about an early marriage:

> John Phillips, Riley's stepfather, spoke before Ibarra's sentencing on Wednesday, referring to Riley as a "shining beacon of light in the life of everyone that knew her." The stepfather read one of Riley's last journal entries, in which the young woman wrote a letter to her future husband.
>
> "'I pray that you know that it is with my full faith and trust in God that I know this relationship has been handcrafted by Him,'" Phillips read. "I pray that we continue to glorify the Lord, prioritize Him in every aspect of our lives, and raise our future family to be God-fearing Christians as well.'"

I just thought that it was important to highlight this so that Christians understand how to process the political positions of people like David French, Russell Moore, Matt Chandler, etc. Frankly I think that even Christians who are silent about border security are also to blame. I think that Christian leaders ought to speak up about the policies and past actions of the political candidates, so that everyone understands what is at stake.

We really need to have Christian leaders who understand policy. And I don't mean only abortion. I mean fiscal policy, social policy and foreign policy. During elections, it's not the time to lay low, and try to get along with everyone. It's the time to speak up for people who are going to be hurt by bad policy. Not just the unborn ones, the born ones, too.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

November 23, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

Video, audio and summary of intelligent design discussion, with Ben Shapiro and Stephen C. Meyer

November 24, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Stephen C. Meyer and Ben Shapiro discuss evolution and intelligent design
(Re-posting this for those who missed it the first time around)

This is a must-see / must-hear conversation. Famous conservative Ben Shapiro discusses evolution and intelligent design with Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, author of "Signature in the Cell" (origin of life) and "Darwin's Doubt" (fossil record). These are the two best books on intelligent design. Their conversation covers the most important issues in the origins debate.

So to start, here's the full video:

Someone actually put out an outline on Youtube, with a time-based index, so I'll just steal that as a base, and add to it:

- 1:34 What is your scientific background? Science undergraduate degree, professional geologist, later did a PhD in philosophy of science from Cambridge University.
- 2:39 What is the difference between intelligent design and creationism? Creationism starts from the Bible and posits a shorter history of the universe. ID starts from the data of the natural world and is neutral about the age of the Earth / universe. Meyer accepts the old-Earth.
- 3:36 How is Intelligent Design a scientific theory? The discovery of DNA reveals that code is central to living systems. Intelligent design uses the method of "inference to the best explanation" in order to argue that the best explanation for the code is an intelligent agent.
- 6:10 What evidence would have to arise to make Intelligent Design Falsifiable? If a naturalistic mechanism was discovered that could produce biological information using the probabilistic resources of the universe, and the time available, then intelligent design would be falsified.

- 7:26 Is religion separate from science or intertwined within it? There are three views: science is totally separate from religion, science is in total conflict with religion, science and religion agree on some issues, e.g. – the origin of the universe and Genesis 1:1. There are areas where science and religion overlap.
- 9:55 Why are the most prominent Darwinians also militant atheists? Evolution is a theory that tries to explain nature using naturalistic mechanisms, so it is compatible with atheism.
- 10:45 What does the theory of evolution say? The term evolution has multiple meanings, and should be defined before discussions. It can refer to change over time. It can refer to animals changing slightly to adapt to enviromental changes. It can refer to the idea that all animals evolved from simpler life forms, and that there is a tree of life showing how different types of organisms share common ancestors. And it can refer to the idea that purely undirected processes can explain the history of life using purely materialistic forces. It's that final view that intelligent design challenges.
- 13:15 Where is the discontinuity in naturalistic processes in the development of life? The first discontinuity is the origin of simple life from non-living components. The second discontinuity is the sudden appearance of different body plans in a very narrow window of time in the Cambrian era.
- 15:42 Why does information theory suggest that code requires some sort of designer? DNA is a true information-bearing system identical to the software in computers, e.g. – operating system, applications.
- 19:45 Can information be created by random mutation, and favorable mutations preserved by natural selection? Just as in software code, instructions must be added in order to develop new functionality. Random additions of characters will almost always degrade biological function. The number of possible sequences that do nothing useful is vastly higher than the number of sequences that perform biological functions. Doug Axe did research on this at Cambridge University, and he found that the number of functional sequences of amino acids is 1 in 10 to the 77th power. Given the probabilistic resources (replicating organisms)and the time available, it is extremely unlikely to find sequences that have functional information by chance.
- 25:05 What about Stephen Jay Gould's model of punctuated equilibrium – doesn't it explain the sudden jumps in information? Gould's mechanism is accurate according to the fossil record, which shows a lot of jumps. But he did not have a naturalistic explanation for sudden jumps in biological function. Darwinian mechanisms work slowly and would (in theory) produce different body plans gradually. But this is not what the fossil record shows.
- 27:22 What is the mechanism for injecting information in the theory of intelligent design? The information comes in from an intelligence when new major body plans appear, and minor variations within types could be explained by evolution.
- 29:25 Does the Miller-Urey experiment provide a naturalistic explanation for the building blocks necessary for the origin of life? The MU experiment only produced a few types of amino acids, it doesn't say anything about how to sequence the amino

acids in order to form protein folds that can perform biological functions. The MU experiment also pre-supposes conditions on the early Earth (reducing gases) that do not match what was there (oxidyzing or neutral gases).

- 32:00 Is the RNA world hypothesis is a good explanation for the origin of life? Evolution requires that replication already be in place, because evolution assumes that mutations appear during the replication. The RNA world hypothesis suggests that sequences contain information, but also catalyze origin of life chemistry. The problem with RNA world is that it starts with self-replicating systems. And those replicating systems require the scientist to inject information into the system to get even the simplest replication started.
- 34:56 How do scientists respond to the critiques of Darwinism proposed by intelligent design advocates? By and large, they accept them. They think that mutation and selection works once living systems are in place, but they realize it has no explanation for the origin of life or the sudden origin of body plans. (Tells about the conference of the Royal Society, where problems with Darwinian mechanisms were discussed, and the 2003 MIT Press book by Muller and Newman).
- 37:16 Why do people hold to Darwinian evolution in the face of these problems? Many scientists presuppose methodological naturalism, which requires that any explanation for the origin of life and the origin of major body plans involve materialist explanations only. No intelligent agents are allowed. The problems occur when assumption of naturalism causes scientists to propose incorrect explanations for what we observe in nature. It's also not clear how naturalistic mechanisms could produce organisms who are capable of reason and free will.
- 40:43 Does naturalistic evolution have an answer for conscious minds, reasoning, free will? No, consider the work of atheist scholar Thomas Nagel, who argues in his book "Mind and Cosmos" (Oxford University Press 2012) that the existence of mind is a disproof of the neo-Darwinian explanation for life. Darwinism stops us from accepting the reality of minds.
- 42:06 So do naturalistic evolutionists have to explain away the mind as an illusion? First, we humans have immediate experience of consciousness, reason and free will. Second, our whole legal system is based on the idea free will, because you can't hold someone guilty unless they chose to do something they knew was wrong. Third, we have an epidemic of suicide among young people. This is caused by a crisis of meaning. Intelligent design opens up the possibility of their being a mind behind the universe, who we could have a relationships with.
- 44:53 Why aren't schools allowed to be honest about the problems with neo-Darwinian evolution? The intellignt design view is to that teachers should be allowed to teach all the vidence for Darwinian evolution, and also discuss some of the problems with the theory. Students learning science should not be told that everything is solved. Students learn science better when they are presented with peer-reviewed evidence for and against a theory, rather than being indoctrinated.
- 47:37 Is intelligent design theory connected to God? Intelligent design infers from the information content in nature that a mind with capabilities like ours injected

information into living systems. Intelligent design is agnostic about the designer, because in principle, embodied or unembodied agents could inject information into living systems. Intelligent design is friendly to theism, because theists will immediately identify the mind as God. Furthermore, the fine-tuning in the initial conditions of the universe is another intelligent design argument. In that case, since the design occurs at the beginning of the universe, the intelligent agent acting prior to the creation of the universe would have to be supernatural, i.e. – God.

- 50:53 Can naturalists say that the imposition of "function" on a sequence is arbitrary, in the same way that the English language is arbitrary? This won't work, because *biological function* is not arbitrary in the same way as language. Biological function is not arbitrary, because sequences can be tested for function *objectively* by observing whether sequences can perform functions necessary for life, e.g. – replication.
- 52:43 Doesn't the multiverse explain away the improbabilities of the fine-tuning, the origin of life, and the development of life? No, because all models of the multiverse require fine-tuning in the mechanism that generates the different universes.
- 55:42 What about cosmological models that eliminate the beginning of the universe? The standard Big Bang model and the inflationary model both posit a beginning of the universe. There is also the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theory which proves that any universe that is expanding requires a beginning. The only chance for naturalists is quantum cosmologies, but this doesn't work because 1) it requires an abstract reality of mathematics to actualize the physical universe, but this presupposes a mind. 2) The model requires an earlier input of information, which can only have come from a mind.

If you listen to this lecture, or watch the video, and you enjoyed it, then please share. If you have questions, I can try to answer them for you – just leave your question in the comments, or shoot me an e-mail, or message me from the blog's Facebook page, or direct message me on Twitter. I've invested a lot of time in this, and have been studying intelligent design since the late 1990s.

New study: homeschool produces healthier, happier and more virtuous kids

November 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, I've noticed that lately, many Christian, conservatives express Christian and conservative convictions when they are in a Christian, conservative audience. But when they are in the company of secularists, feminists and socialists, they keep quiet. In this post, I'll explain why I think that using evidence from studies helps us to be bolder, then we'll see a study about homeschooling.

Well, I can only explain why I am so inclined to fight. Just because I have an alias online, that doesn't mean that I don't fight for what I believe in under my real name in person. I take every opportunity to push for authentic Christian (not woke) truth claims and values in person. It's especially important for Christians and conservatives *of color* to do this, in the current culture.

But how can you fight with people? I recently faced off against a bully in my company at a large company meeting. I had heard that this guy was a yeller, and had previously yelled at other employees. And that he was extremely progressive, and in a liberal echo chamber where he never heard any intellectual conservatives or Christians. I attacked him on two issues: socialized medicine and gun control. By using studies to explain how I changed my mind, I was able to escape his caricature of Christian conservatives as stupid fundamentalists who don't think critically.

With that said, here is a report from the Wall Street Journal about a new study that you might be able to use to be bold with people who oppose homeschooling. (Full text of the article here)

It says:

> Elizabeth Bartholet, a Harvard Law School professor, sparked debate in May 2020 by calling for a presumptive ban on home schooling. Home-schooled children, Ms. Bartholet asserted, are less likely than their school-attending peers to receive a "meaningful education" and more likely to be subject to physical abuse or indoctrination by "extreme religious ideologues."
>
> […]Ms. Bartholet criticized home schooling for both diminishing children's educational attainment and undermining their physical and mental health. One of us (Ms. Chen) recently examined how school type affected adolescents on a range of long-term outcomes into young adulthood, including educational attainment, mental health and social integration. Looking at data on more than 12,000 children of nurses (mostly white and mostly well-off) surveyed from 1999 to 2010, we estimated the effects of school type independently from other factors such as socioeconomic status, race and region.
>
> To the extent that college graduation is a fair proxy for having received a

> “meaningful education,” Ms. Bartholet was right to point to a disadvantage for home schooling: The home-schoolers in our sample were 23% less likely to attend college than public-school students. This may reflect lower attainment in learning or less interest in attending college, but it may also be a result of admissions policies at some U.S. universities that disadvantage home-schooled students.
>
> Parents want their kids to be well-educated and professionally successful, but they also want them to be healthy, happy and virtuous. By this broader measure of success, home schooling has advantages. Among the students we examined, home-schoolers were 33% more likely to volunteer, 31% more forgiving and 51% more likely to attend religious services in young adulthood than those who attended public school. (“Levels of forgiveness” were measured on a self-reported four-point scale, which other research has shown predicts some subsequent health and well-being outcomes.) The difference in religious participation has public-health implications, since those who attend services regularly have substantially lower risks of alcohol and drug abuse, depression and suicide. They also have a lower risk of premature death for any reason than those who never attend.
>
> The picture of the home-schooled student that emerges from the data doesn’t resemble the socially awkward and ignorant stereotype to which Ms. Bartholet and others appeal. Rather, home-schooled children generally develop into well-adjusted, responsible and socially engaged young adults.

The libertarians at the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE) reached out to the researchers, and they got more information about that concern about lower rates of university attendance:

> I reached out to Case and Chen for additional comments on their study’s findings, including how they think the homeschooling data and outcomes might have changed since 2010, when their data set ended.
>
> “We are also glad to see that some colleges, including some top-tier colleges, have become more flexible in their admission policies for homeschoolers over the past years,” Chen responded.
>
> Indeed, more colleges and universities have implemented clearer guidelines and policies for homeschooled students in recent years, and many are now eager to attract homeschooled applicants. In 2015, Business Insider noted that homeschooling is the “new path to Harvard,” and in 2018 the university profiled several of its homeschooled students.
>
> The researchers also suspect that the well-being gap between homeschoolers and public school students has widened over the past decade, with homeschoolers faring even better.
>
> “For instance, social media apps have come to smartphones over the past few

> years, leading to their widespread adoption by teenagers and even younger children," Chen told me this week. "Some prior studies suggested that such increasing smartphone use may have contributed to the recent huge spikes in adolescent depression, anxiety, and school loneliness. Cyberbullying, sexting and 'phubbing' have also become more common in children's daily lives, especially in school settings. We might expect that these issues may be less common among homeschoolers than their public school peers."

I think if you are going to do homeschooling, it will have to be very practical. I think the world is too dangerous right now. We need to focus on learning practical skills that pay. So, don't focus on things classics and Latin early on. I love the classics, but only the classics that teach something practical should be relied on. Instead, math and computer science should be the most important subjects, along with economics. Or choose the hard sciences like biology, chemistry, physics, etc. Get your STEM degrees, get your private sector work experience, then homeschool your kids with a focus on STEM.

I do think that after you get a job, then you should go back and work on the classics, literature and philosophy. But the financial situation we are in – with so much government debt, so many people in debt, and so many people on welfare – suggests that we should make sure that we are independent of the government and debt-free as quickly as possible.

(Image source: NHERI.org)

What are undesigned coincidences, and how are they used in apologetics?

November 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When you're reading the Bible, you may find passages in one book that are mysterious on their own, but then they make sense if you add missing details from a parallel account from a different source inside or even outside the Bible. I think these "undesigned coincidences" are helpful for answering the question of that skeptics often ask: "is the Bible history or myth?" Let's see some examples.

So, there are two kinds of undersigned coincidences. In the "internal" kind, the clearing up is done by another source in the same book. In the external kind, the clearing up is done by a source outside the same book.

Here's an article from Apologetics UK with some internal examples:

> In John 6:1-7, we are told:
>
> Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Festival was near.When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"
>
> Now, Philip is a fairly minor character in the New Testament. And one might, naturally, be inclined to wonder why Jesus hasn't turned to someone a little higher in the pecking order (such as Peter or John). A partial clue is provided in John 1:44: "Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida." Likewise, John 12:21 refers to "Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee"
>
> And what is so significant about Philip being from the town of Bethsaida? We don't learn this until we read the parallel account in Luke's gospel (9:10-17). At the opening of the account (verses 10-11) we are told, "When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing."
>
> And so, we are informed by Luke that the event was actually taking place in Bethsaida — the town from which Philip was from! Jesus thus turns to Philip, whom, he believed, would be familiar with the area. Notice too that Luke does

> not tell us that Jesus turned to Philip.
>
> But it gets even more interesting still. In Matthew 11, Jesus denounces the unrepentant cities, saying, “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” The reader is left wondering what miracles were performed in these cities. We are not told in Matthew’s gospel. It is only in light of Luke’s account of the feeding of the five thousand (chapter 9), in which we are told of the event’s occurrence in Bethsaida, that this statement begins to make sense!

This one is pretty clever:

> In Matthew 2 6:67-68, we read, “Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, “Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?”” This raises the natural question, why are they asking “Who hit you?” It is not until we read the parallel account in Luke’s gospel (22:64) that we learn that they had blindfolded him, thereby making sense of their taunts “Who hit you?”

Another one:

> In Luke 23:1-4, w e read,
> Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king.”
>
> So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”
>
> “You have said so,” Jesus replied.
>
> Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”
> On the surface, this seems to be a rather strange declaration to make. Jesus has just declared Himself to be a King, and has been charged with subverting the nation and opposing paying taxes to Caesar. Why has Pilate found no basis for a charge against him?
>
> The answer lies in the parallel account in John’s gospel (18:33-38):
>
> Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”
>
> “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”
> “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”
>
> Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

> “You are a king, then!” said Pilate.
>
> Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”
>
> “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.
>
> It is only when you read John’s account that you learn that Jesus had told Pilate that “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

And the same article has some external undesigned coincidences:

> In Matthew 2:22, we are told:
>
> But when [Joseph] heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being waned by God in an dream, he left for the regions of Galilee…
>
> Josephus’ Antiquities 17.3.1 tells us that the domain of Herod the Great was divided among his sons, with Archelaus having authority in Judea but not in Galilee, which was governed by his younger brother, Herod Antipas.
>
> We also know that Archelaus had acquired quite a bloody reputation (e.g. Antiquities 17.13.1-2 and 17.9.3). The latter of these references describes how Archelaus slaughtered 3,000 Jews at Passover. Thus, Joseph decides not to return to Judea and, instead, goes further north to the regions of Galilee, governed by Herod Antipas.

And another one:

> In Matthew 2:22, Archeleaus is reigning as king in Judea; in Matthew 27:2, Pilate is governor of Judea; in Acts 12:1, Herod is king of Judea; and in Acts 23:33, Felix is governor of Judea. This becomes extremely confusing.
>
> But here’s the thing: Josephus attests to the accuracy of every one of these titles. Herod the Great was made King of Judea by Mark Anthony. Archelaus was deposed in the year 6 A.D., after only a ten-year reign, and a series of procurators ruled over Judea (of whom Pilate was fifth). The Herod of Acts 12 is Agrippa I. He was made king by Claudius Caesar. After his death, Judea was, once again, placed under the government of procurators (one of them being Felix).

And another one:

> When Luke tells us of the riot in Ephesus, he reports that the city clerk tells the crowd that “There are proconsuls”. A proconsul is a Roman authority to whom a complaint may be taken. Normally, there was only one proconsul. Just at that particular time, however, there seems to have been two as a result of the

> assassination of Silanus (the previous proconsul) by poisoning in the Fall of AD 54, by the two imperial stewards at the urging of Nero's mother. This event is independently documented by Tacitus in his Annals (13.1). Indeed, Luke's accuracy has allowed historians to date the event which Luke narrates with incredible precision since we know when Silanus was poisoned.

If you think that these are clever, then share this post, and encourage your non-Christian friends and family to consider one of the many reasons why so many scholars have considered the New Testament books to be so reliable.

I wish that Christian parents and pastors were more thoughtful about how they present the Bible to young people. Instead of just saying "the Bible says" and praising blind faith acceptance of the Bible, why don't we think a little harder, and look for some confirmation of the Bible from historical methods like undesigned coincidences, and from non-Biblical authors, and from archaeology, etc.? Surely adding more evidence for taking the Bible seriously is the right approach, if the goal is to be persuasive? It's not like we're see good results from the current "blind faith" approach to raising Christian children, right?

Are illegal immigrants less likely to commit crimes?

November 27, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have discussed this topic of whether illegal immigrants have a lower crime rate than natural born Americans and legal immigrants (the latter are deported if they commit a crime) many times. Even many Christians like to say that illegal immigrants commit fewer crimes than legal residents and citizens. I thought it might be a good idea to link to some evidence from RealClearInvestigations.

It says:

> An analysis of the available statistics by RealClearInvestigations suggests that the crime rate of noncitizens is vastly understated. A separate RCI analysis based on estimates developed by the U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice (NIJ) suggests that crime by illegal aliens who entered the U.S. by July 21, 2024 cost the country some $166.5 billion. These criminals disproportionately entered the U.S. during the Biden administration.

Even if you are not the victim of a crime by an illegal immigrant, we all have to pay for law enforcement and property damage. We all have to pay for higher insurance rates. We all have to pay for criminal courts and prisons.

Here are two more ways that the numbers of offenses are not counted accurately.

Numbers of past offenses not being counted:

> The data on migrants who have been processed also understates the problem. Criminals rarely commit just one crime. For example, from 1990 to 2002, in the 75 most populous U.S. counties, 70% of those convicted of a violent felony had a prior arrest, and 56% had a prior criminal conviction. In 2023 in Washington, D.C., the average homicide suspect had been arrested 11 times before committing a homicide. Data for 30 states shows that 60.1% of criminals released from prison in 2005 had been arrested again within two years, and 73.5% had been arrested within four years. The ICE data set provides a single entry for each individual.

Numbers of people who are not arrested / convicted not being counted:

> Most violent crimes don't result in an arrest, so looking at arrests or convictions in these other countries will underestimate whether illegal aliens are criminals. Across all U.S. cities in 2022, only 35.2% of violent crimes resulted in an arrest. While 50.6% of murders resulted in an arrest, just 24.1% of rapes produced an arrest, 22.7% of robberies, and 39.9% of aggravated assaults.

On Tuesday night, I watched a video of a TikTok that had gone viral, in which a white leftist young woman was talking about the murder of Laken Riley. She was complaining about why the news had to report that the accused murderer was an illegal immigrant.

And she went on to say that white males were the most dangerous people in America, because they committed the most crimes. I just thought it was interesting to think that many people are voting for lax border security, thinking that it will not make them less safe. This is even after we've seen young women like Laken Riley, Lizbeth Medina, Jocelyn Nungaray and Rachel Morin suffer violence and even death at the hands of illegal immigrants.

I can understand that saying things like what this young leftist woman was saying is a good way to virtue signal. But the real-world effect of open borders is that a lot of innocent people – people who pay taxes in order to fund law enforcement – will get hurt, raped and even killed. Young women who vote for leftist policies are actually causing harm to other young women, even as they drone on about the patriarchy and how much they fear toxic masculinity. You really have to wonder whether they learn anything at all about how the world really works in college.

Good news from several states ahead of new Republican leadership

November 28, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Now that we have a new Republican administration incoming, I'm getting ready for lots of good news. Some of that news will be at the federal level, but some will be at the state level, too. I have a couple of interesting stories to blog about that happened in two different states. If you have any more good news stories, you can leave them in the comments.

Here's the first one, reported in Life Site News:

> Missouri can continue to protect gender-confused children from damaging drugs and surgeries, a judge ruled recently.
>
> Cole County Judge Craig Carter upheld the Save Adolescents from Experimentation Act. It prohibits transgender drugs and surgeries intended to make minors look more like the opposite sex. The law also prohibits taxpayer funding of the procedures.
>
> These procedures are sometimes called "sex change operations," although it is not possible to change one's sex.
>
> Judge Carter ruled in favor of the state on several grounds. He cited a recent 7th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in favor of Indiana's similar law. The Supreme Court of the United States will hear a case next week, on December 4, concerning Tennessee and Kentucky's prohibitions.

Now, I am hearing that some transgender activists are arguing that the science is not settled on this issue, so they should be allowed to prescribe puberty blockers and hormone replacement drugs to children, and maybe chop their bodies up a bit, too. However, it's not always prudent to go ahead with something if you don't know what the long-term effects will be. For example, suppose you are washing dishes in the kitchen, and your oldest child says "Parent, may I kill this?" It's probably fine to say yes if the child has caught a spider, but not if the child has his younger sibling around the neck. Similarly with firing a gun through a closed door when someone knocks at 3 AM. It could be a burglar, but it could be the police looking for the burglar. So you have to be sure before you take actions that can do irreversible harm, like making a child infertile. And besides, I think the science is setttled, and it's 100% against transing kids.

Here's the next story from Breitbart News:

> Haitian migrants are reportedly self-deporting from Springfield, Ohio, and fleeing to sanctuary jurisdictions such as Chicago, Illinois, and New York City, New York.
>
> Springfield, a city of 50,000 that lies between Columbus and Dayton, garnered national attention months ago when President-elect Donald Trump and Vice

> President-elect JD Vance noted that the community had been inundated with thousands of Haitian migrants as a result of President Joe Biden's immigration policies.
>
> Many of the 10,000 to 20,000 Haitian migrants who arrived in Springfield over the last few years are in the United States on Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a quasi-amnesty program. Others were awarded parole after being released into the United States at the southern border.
>
> As Breitbart News reported in September, the arrival of thousands of Haitians has driven up housing costs in Springfield, created more welfare dependency, and coincided with a surge in car crashes that police and firefighters must respond to.
>
> With Trump and Vance's election victory this month, Haitian migrants have told CBS News and The Guardian that they plan to flee to sanctuary jurisdictions like Chicago and New York City.

Although some mayors of sanctuary cities and governors of sanctuary states are vowing not to allow the Republicans to deport dangerous illegal immigrants, the incoming Republican administration doesn't seem likely to accept that.

Daily Wire says:

> We've heard a lot from Tom Homan lately, and for good reason. He's the incoming border czar for the second Trump administration. And he's vowed, unapologetically, to deport as many illegal aliens as possible — and to arrest any local officials who try to intervene.
>
> We talked about that promise yesterday, in the context of the mayor of Denver, who's suggesting that he will defy federal immigration authorities who try to carry out deportations in the second Trump term. Homan's response was the correct one — if the mayor of Denver wants to go to jail, then ICE will happily oblige.

If you're a Bible-believing Christian and a conservative, you should expect good news like this to happen more and more. I'll be tweeting about it on Twitter, so give me a follow there and I will find you some.

CDC finds that abortions fell 2% the year SCOTUS overturned Roe

November 29, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I debated on Twitter with Dr. Michael Austin, president of the Evangelical Philosophical Society. He supported Kamala Harris, because he thought that both parties are the same on abortion. I explained that Kamala supported legislation to end state-level pro-life laws, and Trump didn't. He claimed that the total number of abortions had gone up after Roe v. Wade was overturned.

If you get a challenge like this one, I would start by explaining that it's possible for the overall number of abortions to go up, even as the numbers declined in pro-life states because of restrictions on abortions passed in those pro-life states. In that case, the increase in abortions in states with no restrictions on abortion would be larger than decrease in abortions in states with pro-life legislation. Then I would explain how Kamala had previously supported legislation to end those state-level restrictions. That makes her position on abortion different from Trump, who would leave those restrictions in place.

Today's post counters the original claim that Michael Austin made that the total number of abortions went UP after Roe v. Wade was repealed.

This is from Daily Wire:

> Abortions of unborn babies fell 2% the year the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, according to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
>
> The CDC's annual abortion surveillance report, published on Wednesday, found that a total of 613,383 unborn babies were legally aborted within 48 reporting areas in the United States in 2022, the year the High Court ruled in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, overturning Roe.
>
> Out of the 47 areas that were consistently reporting data between 2021 and 2022, there was a 2% decrease from the 622,108 unborn babies who were legally aborted in 2021, to 609,360 in 2022.

By the way, I've noticed that a lot of Christian philosophers want to reduce policy debates down to abortion. They don't seem to have thought through how other policy areas affect a Christian's ability to live out a Christian life. For example, my ability to work and earn in the competitive private sector as a software engineer is affected by many, many different areas of policy. That's why I have to know a little about many different areas, like energy policy, education policy, guns and crime, basic economics, health care policy, etc. I am affected by the prices of gas and electricity. I am affected by the price of health care. I am affected by government regulations. I am affected by bans on firearms and bans on self-defense. I am affected by rising costs due to illegal immigration. If I lived in an ivory tower, and was mainly concerned with impressing my colleagues with words, then maybe

these topics wouldn't matter to me. I get the impression that philosophers are not informed in these areas, because they have chosen a discipline that often insulates them from the need to solutions that work in the real world.

If I wanted to understand something about economics, I would read Thomas Sowell. If I wanted to understand something about guns and crime, I would read John Lott. If I wanted to understand something about health care, I would read Regina Hertzlinger or Avik Roy. And so on. In the real world, you can't arrive at correct beliefs with "thought experiments". You need to run real experiments – in the lab. You need to write real code – in the lab. It's so important for people to have private sector work experience, developing solutions for customer problems in the competitive private sector.

Philosophers are the people LEAST LIKELY to understand basic economics. They tend to support bigger government in order to get more bailouts and redistribution of wealth.

Here's an article from Newsweek:

> Overall, socialism isn't winning over the majority of college students. When broken down by major, though, its popularity doubled with philosophy students.
>
> […]Only 39 percent of the 10,590 undergraduates polled had a favorable view of socialism, and the same percentage responded that they had an unfavorable view. When respondents were broken out by major views of capitalism shifted considerably.
>
> Philosophy majors were most likely to view socialism positively, with 78 percent of those polled saying they had at least a somewhat favorable view of it. Anthropology majors were a close second at 64 percent, followed by English majors at 58 percent and international relations, sociology and music majors all at 57 percent.
>
> Least likely to view socialism favorably were accounting and finance majors at 20 percent and 22 percent respectively.

Why are most philosophers so wrong on areas that touch on reality, like finance and economics? Maybe, it's because they make their living with words. Libertarian philosopher Robert Nozick, who is one of the good philosophers, calls people like this "wordsmiths".

He explains the consequences of being a "wordsmith" here in this essay for the Cato Policy Report (Cato Institute):

> What factor produced feelings of superior value on the part of intellectuals? I want to focus on one institution in particular: schools. As book knowledge became increasingly important, schooling–the education together in classes of young people in reading and book knowledge–spread. Schools became the major institution outside of the family to shape the attitudes of young people, and almost all those who later became intellectuals went through schools. There they were successful. They were judged against others and deemed superior. They

> were praised and rewarded, the teacher's favorites. How could they fail to see themselves as superior? Daily, they experienced differences in facility with ideas, in quick-wittedness. The schools told them, and showed them, they were better.
>
> The schools, too, exhibited and thereby taught the principle of reward in accordance with (intellectual) merit. To the intellectually meritorious went the praise, the teacher's smiles, and the highest grades. In the currency the schools had to offer, the smartest constituted the upper class. Though not part of the official curricula, in the schools the intellectuals learned the lessons of their own greater value in comparison with the others, and of how this greater value entitled them to greater rewards.
>
> The wider market society, however, taught a different lesson. There the greatest rewards did not go to the verbally brightest. There the intellectual skills were not *most* highly valued. Schooled in the lesson that they were most valuable, the most deserving of reward, the most entitled to reward, how could the intellectuals, by and large, fail to resent the capitalist society which deprived them of the just deserts to which their superiority "entitled" them? Is it surprising that what the schooled intellectuals felt for capitalist society was a deep and sullen animus that, although clothed with various publicly appropriate reasons, continued even when those particular reasons were shown to be inadequate?

Now, it's important to be fair and acknowledge that some "wordsmiths" do understand finance and economics. But it's the minority. It's a sad thing when one of these wordsmiths manages to get to the top of an evangelical organization, though. Which is why you need to be careful what you let your children study, and where you send your donations. Giving money to evangelical wordsmiths who think that "Jesus didn't care about politics" and "both parties are the same on abortion" and "abortions went up after the repeal of legalized abortion" is a waste of money.

Survey: young, unmarried women explain why they avoid having children

November 30, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why do so many women end up involuntarily childless? Is it because men are ruining their lives, with sexism and discrimination and refusal to commit? OR is it because women are deliberately making choices that lead them to involuntary childlessness? This interesting article answers that question. It comes from the far leftist Huffington Post.

They write:

> The Huffington Post and YouGov asked 124 women why they choose to be childfree. Their motivations ranged from preferring their current lifestyles (64 percent) to prioritizing their careers (9 percent) — a.k.a. fairly universal things that have motivated men not to have children for centuries. To give insight into the complex, layered decisions women make, HuffPost asked childfree readers to discuss the reasons they have chosen not to have kids and gathered 270 responses here.

They grouped the responses into 5 categories:

1. I want to prioritize my career
2. I don't like children
3. I had a bad relationship with my parents
4. I don't want the financial responsibility
5. I like my life as it is

And here are some interesting quotations:

Category 1:

> I am a first-generation college graduate in my family. My mother was a single mom my entire childhood, and I was there to see that struggle. Being a parent, for a woman, means for life. Being a parent, for men, seems to be something very different. I understand raising children is a big life change and I don't want to sell myself short on my potential to become something more and maybe even create change. **I am childfree because I want to travel, move, pursue my career wholly** and be able to push myself to be an inspiration to other women. If a child comes into my life, it won't be until I am happy and successful in my work life, and not until I am secure with my finances and a marriage. I don't want to one day wake up as an old woman wishing I had waited to have children so I could live my own life first, make mistakes, learn new things and find myself. Today kids are not for me.

Category 2:

> I'm nearly 47; my boyfriend (domestic partner) of 17 years is nearly 50. I've never been pregnant and have taken every precaution to remain childfree. I tolerate other people's children when I have to. I'm happiest when there are NO children around. I definitely don't want them in my home. I like my life as it is. My boyfriend and I are both scientists. We also raise snakes and spiders! **We like to travel. We travel to ride roller coasters (members of ACE — American Coaster Enthusiasts) and to attend rock concerts.** I am also a performer in a senior winter guard. My plate overfloweth! I see no reason to procreate. I would be unhappy. Why be unhappy?

Category 3:

> I have a great relationship with my husband. **We have the time and money to travel, and that gives us precious memories.** I had a bad relationship with my dad, and maybe I'm scared to treat my children like that. I'm very happy with my decision. I have a great relationship with myself too.

Category 4:

> My spouse and I have talked in depth about having children. However, **we both decided that our desire to travel the world is a financial burden in itself. If we have kids, we will never have the means to travel**, and at the end of our life, we would rather be 100 percent committed to fulfilling our own realistic dreams rather than only able to provide a subpar life for a child. Comes down to the fact we are selfish, but at least we recognize this and made the choice early enough to avoid damaging a kid

Category 5:

> The thought of having to do kiddie crap every weekend makes me want to shoot myself. I like having the extra money to save for retirement and not worry about braces, summer camp or college tuition. **I can travel on a moment's notice.** I can give my all to my job and not have to worry about daycare, sick days, or having to leave my co workers to pick up my slack. I'm the "cool aunt" to all my nieces and nephews. I have more time to do the things that make me happy and productive. My relationship with my guy is not strained due to the constant neediness of children. I don't want to put my body through pregnancy and childbirth. I can give my dog all the attention he needs and deserves.

If I had to choose one comment to represent the entire survey, it would be this one:

> The moment you have children, you're life ceases to be about yourself. Kids always take priority and I feel like I can do more for this world than just generate offspring.

These quotations are very troubling to me. I don't see that young women today are being serious about choosing men who are serious about marriage – especially men who are

financially prepared to pay for things like houses and children.

Many women try to communicate maturity to others by saying that they want to get married “some day”. But all the actions *right now* show that they really see marriage as “boring” and “demanding”. Marriage and children “some day” is like planning for your retirement by winning the lottery. The every day actions of spending money aren’t preparing you in any way to win the lottery. Talking about marriage “some day” is just a way for the woman to signal to her family and friends that she will *eventually* want the responsibility of a husband and kids, but not right now. The problem with that is that making selfish decisions over and over and over is not the way to prepare your character to be content with caring for the needs of a husband and children. Being unselfish is a skill that you have to build by repetition and practice. Just like any other virtue. And men know that. Good men won’t marry women who won’t care for them or care for their children.

William Lane Craig on the unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

December 1, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember that Dr. Craig used a new argument in his debate with Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia.

My notes on the debate record it thus:

> The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
>
> - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
> - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
> - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
> - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see

And now Dr. Craig has expanded on it in the Q&A section of his Reasonable Faith web site.

The question:

> Dear Dr Craig
>
> Firstly can I thank you for all your work. My faith in Christ has been enormously strengthened through studying your work in apologetics in particular and I have grown in confidence in my Christian witness.
>
> My question relates to numbers and mathematics as a whole. On the Defenders podcast you state that as God is the only self-existent, necessary being, numbers and mathematical objects, whilst being useful, don't actually exist as these too would exist necessarily and independently of God. If this is the case, how can it be that mathematics is so easily applied to the natural world? Surely if mathematics only existed in our minds, we would expect to see no correlation between it and how the physical world actually is?
>
> Michael
>
> United Kingdom

Excerpt from the answer:

> As philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng points out, for the non-theistic realist, the fact that physical reality behaves in line with the dictates of acausal mathematical entities existing beyond space and time is "a happy coincidence"

> (*Mathematics and Reality* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 239). Think about it: If, *per impossibile*, all the abstract objects in the mathematical realm were to disappear overnight, there would be no effect on the physical world. This is simply to reiterate that abstract objects are causally inert. The idea that realism somehow accounts for the applicability of mathematics "is actually very counterintuitive," muses Mark Balaguer, a philosopher of mathematics. "The idea here is that in order to believe that the physical world has the nature that empirical science assigns to it, I have to believe that there are causally inert mathematical objects, existing outside of spacetime," an idea which is inherently implausible (*Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 136).
>
> By contrast, the theistic realist can argue that God has fashioned the world on the structure of the mathematical objects. This is essentially what Plato believed. The world has mathematical structure as a result.

This argument was also made by mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley in a lecture he gave on scientific evidence for an intelligent designer. You can read an essay that covers some of the material in that lecture at Leadership University.

Excerpt:

> The physical universe is surprising in the simple mathematical form it assumes. All the basic laws of physics and fundamental relationships can be described on one side of one sheet of paper because they are so few in number and so simple in form (see table 1.1).
>
> […]It has been widely recognized for some time that nature assumes a form that is elegantly described by a relatively small number of simple, mathematical relationships, as previously noted in table 1.1. None of the various proposals presented later in this chapter to explain the complexity of the universe address this issue. Albert Einstein in a letter to a friend expressed his amazement that the universe takes such a form (Einstein 1956), saying:
>
> You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world to the degree that we may speak of such comprehensibility as a miracle or an eternal mystery. Well, a priori one should expect a chaotic world which cannot be in any way grasped through thought. . . . The kind of order created, for example, by Newton's theory of gravity is of quite a different kind. Even if the axioms of the theory are posited by a human being, the success of such an enterprise presupposes an order in the objective world of a high degree which one has no a priori right to expect. That is the "miracle" which grows increasingly persuasive with the increasing development of knowledge.
>
> Alexander Polykov (1986), one of the top physicists in Russia, commenting on the mathematical character of the universe, said: "We know that nature is described by the best of all possible mathematics because God created it." Paul Davies, an

> astrophysicist from England, says, “The equations of physics have in them incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe” (Davies 1984). Successful development of a unified field theory in the future would only add to this remarkable situation, further reducing the number of equations required to describe nature, indicating even further unity and integration in the natural phenomena than have been observed to date.

The whole paper that started this off is called “The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics”, and it is a must read for advanced Christian defenders. You can read the whole thing here.

Trump hits home run by replacing corrupt FBI Director with competent reformer

December 2, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There were actually two great picks that came out late last week. The FBI Director Kash Patel and the new NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya. Both of these men are sorely needed to investigate corruption and weaponization of government in the FBI and NIH. In this post, let's take a look at Kash Patel, and remember the corruption of his successor, Christopher Wray.

Here's an article from New York Post:

> President-elect Donald Trump has selected Kash Patel to lead the FBI, closing one of the last remaining presidentially appointed positions available two months before taking office — and putting current bureau boss Christopher Wray's tenure on the chopping block before his term expires.
>
> […]The New York native is known for his deep loyalty to Trump — which has made him a target of the left despite serving as a National Security Council official, senior adviser to the acting Director of National Intelligence, and later, chief of staff to the acting United States secretary of defense.
>
> Patel, who will have to earn Senate confirmation to become FBI director, was one of the leading Republicans who opposed the investigation into Trump and Russian interference in 2016, long opposing government overreach in how its federal agents surveil Republicans.
>
> He has written about the need to dismantle the Justice Department and do an overhaul of the intelligence agencies, including the FBI, by firing their "top ranks" and prosecuting "to the fullest extent of the law" anyone who "in any way abused their authority for political ends."
>
> "[T]he FBI has become so thoroughly compromised that it will remain a threat to the people unless drastic measures are taken," Patel wrote in his book, "Government Gangsters," which Trump lauded as a "blueprint" for his next term.

Former corrupt FBI Director Andrew McCabe doesn't like the pick:

> Former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe cautioned against Patel, claiming on CNN Thursday that "no part of the FBI's mission is safe with Kash Patel in any position of leadership in the FBI."
>
> […]McCabe butted heads with the 45th president over the FBI's Trump-Russia collusion probe, pursued the debunked Steele dossier and was fired as acting director of the bureau for leaking sensitive case information to a journalist.

Patel will have a lot of work to do, as the FBI has basically become the equivalent of the East German Stasi under Biden-Harris. Using taxpayer money to suppress dissent from

leftism and elect Democrat politicians.

My favorite source for conservative policy is Daily Signal, and here is what they said about his qualifications:

> During the first Trump administration, Patel was the chief of staff to Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller.
>
> Before that, Patel was the deputy assistant to the president and the senior director for counterterrorism at the National Security Council.
>
> While at the NSC, he helped oversee Trump policies that included eliminating the Islamic State terrorist group, as well as Al Qaeda leadership such as al-Baghdadi and Qasem al-Rimi.
>
> Patel also was the principal deputy to the former Acting Director of National Intelligence Ric Grenell, who oversaw the operations of 17 intelligence community agencies.
>
> Before going to the White House, Patel was senior counsel for the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, under then-Chairiman Devin Nunes, R-Calif., and oversaw the investigation into the Russian active measures campaign to influence the 2016 presidential–election.
>
> He also played a key role in the Nunes memo that showed the FBI relied on partisan "politically motivated or questionable sources" to obtain a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act warrant to spy on Trump campaign aide Carter Page.
>
> The two and a half year investigation into whether Trump conspired with the Russian government to win the 2016 election was prompted by information fed to the FBI from Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, and Democrat operatives. The House panel and later special counsel Robert Mueller concluded there was no evidence that Trump conspired with Russians.

Now, let's have a quick review of why Trump needs Kash Patel to replace the current FBI Director, Christopher Wray.

Here's the story from the Daily Signal:

> FBI Director Christopher Wray may have lied under oath concerning the FBI Richmond office's Jan. 23 memo citing the Southern Poverty Law Center in urging investigation of "radical traditional Catholic hate groups," Rep. Jim Jordan suggested in a letter sent Wednesday.

The issue is that Wray tried to minimize the scope of the FBI's investigation into Catholics:

> On July 12, Wray testified to the House Judiciary Committee that the memo represented "a single product by a single field office, which, as soon as I found out about it, I was aghast and ordered it withdrawn and removed from FBI

> systems."

He says it was a "single field office", but the memo reveals collaboration between *multiple* field offices.

I think all Christians and conservatives would be thrilled if they were allowed to be pro-life without having their doors battered down in the early morning by SWAT teams.

Remember this story from Daily Wire?

> FBI agents reportedly raided the home of a pro-life activist in Pennsylvania on Friday and arrested him.
>
> A group of between 25 and 30 FBI agents raided the Bucks County, Pennsylvania, home of pro-life activist Mark Houck early Friday morning, his family told LifeSite News. Houck is the leader of a nonprofit group that provides sidewalk counseling at abortion clinics in Philadelphia.
>
> […]"The kids were all just screaming," Houck's wife, Ryan-Marie, told LifeSite. "It was all just very scary and traumatic."
>
> Ryan-Marie Houck told the outlet that the group of agents in SWAT gear arrived in 15 vehicles outside the family home at around 7:05 a.m. Friday morning. The agents quickly surrounded the house and began pounding on the door, demanding they open up. Houck reportedly tried to get the agents to calm down, noting that his seven children were scared, but the agents kept shouting. "[T]hey had big, huge rifles pointed at Mark and pointed at me and kind of pointed throughout the house," his wife said.

What did he do to get his house raided by 25-30 armed FBI agents in 15 vehicles?

This:

> According to his wife, Houck was providing sidewalk counseling at abortion centers in Philadelphia last year, and had taken his then 12-year-old son. On multiple occasions over weeks, a "pro-abortion protestor" allegedly shouted vulgarities and insults at the boy. Houck repeatedly told the protestor not to speak to his son, but the protestor continued to encroach on the boy's personal space, still spewing vulgarities. Finally, Houck shoved the man away, causing him to fall down. The protestor was not injured, but tried to sue Houck. Though the case was thrown out this summer, it was somehow picked up by the DOJ, Ryan-Marie Houck said.

Many powerful secular leftists in this country are all terrified of Christiand and conservatives using government to coerce them. They are terrified, but they are the only ones who ever abuse power to punish their political enemies. We need to stop secular leftists from using government as a weapon against people they disagree with, to benefit the political party they favor.

Hunter Biden pardon proves that secular left fascists think they are above the law

December 3, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I had a conversation with a secular conservative, and he said something that really made me think. I listed off a number of abuses of power by the secular leftists in the Biden administration – pre-dawn raids, prosecuting political opponents, punishing religious speech and behavior, etc. And his reply was "what makes you think that Trump won't do these things if he is elected?"

And I thought about that, and I realized that this is how the fascists in the secular left Biden administration think. They have to fascist Christians and conservatives, because they are so convinced that Christians and conservatives would do it to them. In history, there's never been Christian or conservative weaponization of government. Throughout history, the big mass murders have only ever been done by the secular left – the German National Socialists, the Soviet Union, Communist China, North Korea, etc. Secular left regimes that persecuted and even outlawed Christianity. But somehow, the secular left believes that they should be allowed to break the law. Their fears about what their opponents have never done, but might do, justifies the fascist actions they are doing right now.

So here is the latest news from New York Post. And I chose this article, because it was the lies of the corporate news media and the Democrat party leaders about whether this would happen that bothered me the most.

> The fiction that Joe Biden is a selfless, honorable public servant — long undermined by his own deeds — collapsed in on itself Sunday night.
>
> As did the credibility of his longtime allies in the Fourth Estate who helped write it.
>
> For well over a year now, the president and his surrogates have indignantly insisted that he would not pardon his son, Hunter.
>
> And because Biden is a Democrat, he enjoyed not only the benefit of the doubt from America's journalists, but preemptive praise from them.
>
> S.E. Cupp marveled that "the contrast" between Biden and Donald Trump — who protested the politically-motivated zombie case brought against him by Alvin Bragg — was "profound."
>
> Andrew Weissmann declared that Biden was "living what it means to have rule of law in this country."
>
> Legal commentator Neal Katyal said he knew "no other word" for Biden's decision other than "presidential."
>
> Chris Whipple, the author of a book about the Biden White House, called his choice "extraordinary" and stood in awe of his "moral clarity."

> Biden biographer Evan Osnos expounded on his subject's "old-school" conception of his duty and agitation at "abuses of power."
>
> And when a Republican strategist had the gall — nay, the temerity — to suggest that Biden would go back on his word, CNN's Abby Phillip informed him, with no shortage of annoyance in her tone, that the president had "ruled out" a pardon for Hunter.
>
> So much for all that.
>
> On Sunday, Biden announced that he had pardoned his progeny not just for the gun and tax crimes he committed, but for any and all illegal conduct over the course of the last decade.
>
> Asked about the reversal on Monday, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said that Biden had determined that "war politics" had "infected the process."
>
> […]Joe Biden has destroyed not just his own legacy, but that of those who went to bat for him.

This is how the secular left works:

And the corporate news media promoted this lie, over and over, and contrasted the virtuous Joe Biden's devotion to the rule of law, with the lawless threat to democracy. They trumpeted those lies, they denounced the Hunter Biden laptop, they denied the the payments, and they denied 10% for the Big Guy. Now, when it all has been blown up and falsified, their news story is "Republicans pounce".

By the way, if you are upset by this story – not surprised, but upset by it – then you should by all means check out the Monday podcasts by Matt Walsh and Ben Shapiro. It helps to hear other people who have even more of the details talk about how horrible this pardon is.

Disgusting immorality. And this is the immorality that was trumpeted by "Evangelicals for Biden" and "Evangelicals for Harris". They supported these lies, and when the lie comes out, they attack the people they lied to. Disgusting people. Nothing should be off the table for the incoming Republican administration in punishing the secular left for their lies.

Two examples of how the Biden-Harris administration persecutes Christians

December 4, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I do have some churchy Christian friends who like to say that they don't want to get involved in a "culture war", and they don't see much difference between the political parties. I have an idea of why they say things like this, and I'll talk about that below. But first, let's see two examples of how the Biden-Harris administration went after Christians, and is even doubling down on the persecution.

First story is from the wonderful Virginia Allen, who writes for the Daily Signal and also does their podcast.

She wrote this article in Life News:

> The Biden-Harris administration finalized a rule in April requiring foster parents to affirm a child's gender ideology.
>
> "The provider must commit to establishing an environment that supports the child's LGBTQI+ status or identity," according to the rule issued by the Department of Health and Human Services.
>
> The policy, says Herbie Newell, president and executive director of Lifeline Children's Services, "made people of faith into a different category of foster and adoptive parent, saying that because they didn't give in to this pro-radical LGBTQ+ agenda, that they couldn't foster any child with gender dysphoria or any child that might be having any questions about their LGBTQ status."
>
> "Faith-based Christian people were put on the sidelines and not able to participate in our foster care and adoption system in the same way," Newell says.

I heard about this story on the Daily Signal podcast, so if you would rather listen to the interview with the Lifeline guy (I thought he was very good, although he did say "during Biden's pregnancy" when he meant "during Biden's presidency"). Virginia Allen sounds great.

Anyway, you would think that this would be a concern for the church Christians, who don't want to get involved in the "culture war". Usually when I tell them stories like this, they say "well, I think Jesus would attend a same-sex wedding, I certainly would". So, that's their attitude to sin, go and participate in it. And the Christians who don't deserve to be persecuted by the state.

Anyway, here's another one that I found in Daily Signal. It's written by Elizabeth Troutman Mitchell. This article is even more scary, because the DOJ is facing a house-cleaning right now, and you would think they would cool it with the secular leftist fascism. But no. More fascism. Fascism piled on top of fascism.

It says:

> The Justice Department filed a reply Tuesday supporting its motion for a gag order against Dr. Eithan Haim, a surgeon indicted by the Biden-Harris administration after he blew the whistle on sex-change procedures for minors.
>
> "The prosecutors in @eithanhaim's case are doubling down on their shameless effort to ask the court to censor us and our client on @X," the Burke Law Group, which is representing Haim, said on X. "We will continue to zealously represent @EithanHaim's liberty, and now his (and our) First Amendment right to Free Speech."
>
> Haim initially came forward as an anonymous whistleblower to expose gender treatments being performed on minors at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston. He is facing four felony counts of violating the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, also known as HIPAA, according to journalist Chris Rufo, who first reported on Haim's story.
>
> The Justice Department's reply in support of its motion for a gag order against Haim and his legal team said the order would "prevent the defendant and his attorney from making inflammatory and unfairly prejudiced statements."
>
> […]Haim was a resident at the Baylor College of Medicine from June 2018 to June 2023. He worked at Texas Children's Hospital during part of his residency.
>
> The gag order would "completely prevent Dr. Haim or his counsel from criticizing the prosecution, no matter how correct the criticism," according to Burke Law Group.
>
> […]The DOJ particularly wants to prevent Haim from retweeting allies who have defended him on X, including Ethics and Public Policy Center legal expert Ed Whelan; Rep. Dan Crenshaw, R-Texas; psychologist and author Jordan Peterson; and Rufo, according to Burke Law Group.

So, this "gag order" procedure is very common. In fact, if you watched Matt Walsh's first movie "What is a Woman?", he spoke to a father who was having his child transed against his will. The court slapped a publication ban on the legal proceedings. The father was banned from speaking about the trial and from "misgendering" the child. Basically, they want to control people's lives, but they don't want anyone to publicize what they are doing, so that they might be shamed or disapproved of.

So, here is why many Christians say "I don't want to get involved in the culture war".

The reason is that they don't have a plan to serve God that would be affected by laws and policies. They read the Bible. They attend church. But if they have to choose between advocating for Jesus' vew of marriage, or going to a same-sex wedding in order to appease their leftist spouse, then they choose to appease the leftist spouse and go to the same-sex wedding. Why? Because they don't think that obedience to God should ever result in any bad consequences for them. No bad feelings. No social disapproval. No being cut off by family members, like in Matthew 10:34-38.

For me, I have an interest in laws and policies because I do have a Christian life plan. And

I understand that the secular left does not want me to achieve that Christian life plan. They have all of their own ideologies, and they want me to give up on Jesus, and bow down to their ideologies. And they get a lot of “Christians” like David French and Russell Moore to swap out Jesus for their ideologies. Me, I would prefer to stick with Jesus. And I understand that if the laws and policies don’t allow the secular left to force me to choose between Jesus and secular left ideologies, then I will have a much more productive life for my Boss. Instead of having to face false accusations, pay legal fees, go on trial, go to jail, etc. I can take more of my money and give it to FreeThinking Ministries (which has a matching grant right now!) or Eric Chabot or someone else worthy. So that’s why I care about laws and policies.

Supreme Court hears cases for and against ban on transing kids

December 5, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm sure that my regular readers or Twitter followers will know about the Supreme Court case that started on Wednesday. The state of Tennessee, the best state in the Union, passed a law banning doctors from giving puberty blockers, hormone treatments and sex-mutilation surgeries to children. And the Biden-Harris Democrats, being secular leftists, decided to contest that law.

So, I am linking to a number of articles in this post.

First, this Daily Signal article explains the case from the secular leftists:

> In Wednesday's oral argument, lawyers for the U.S. government and the American Civil Liberties Union contended that the Tennessee law discriminates based on sex because it bans transgender medical procedures only "when inconsistent with the patient's birth sex."
>
> U.S. Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelagor, representing the Biden-Harris administration, argued that so-called puberty blockers are prescribed to boys and girls with early-onset puberty. It is thus sex discrimination to deny puberty blockers based on sex to children with gender dysphoria, she said.

So, that's their case.

And this Daily Signal article explains the argument from the Attorney General of Tennessee:

> As Tennessee persuasively argues, rather than classifying based on sex, the law classifies on based on purpose. In other words, it distinguishes based on minors seeking drugs for gender transition and minors seeking drugs for any other medical purposes. The Supreme Court has never recognized restrictions on the use of drugs for a particular medical purpose to demand heightened scrutiny review, so rational-basis review applies.

So, the lawyers presented their cases, and they were asked questions by the Supreme Court Justices.

Now here's an article from Daily Wire, which gives us the three big admissions made by the secular leftist advocates:

> Proponents of transgender procedures on children made three stunning admissions on Wednesday as they argued against a Tennessee law protecting children from the irreversible procedures before the Supreme Court.
>
> The admissions — that cross-sex hormones can cause infertility, that people regret the procedures, and that transgender procedures aren't associated with

> lower suicide rates — undercut leftist activists' core arguments that the procedures are necessary and lifesaving.
>
> These revelations were made as justices heard oral arguments in the case brought by the Biden administration and the ACLU against Tennessee for a law that shields children from transgender procedures like puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones.

The big hero of the day was Justice Alito, who knew more about what the evidence says about these issues than anyone else.

This Daily Signal article explains:

> Roberts and Kavanaugh also stressed the shaky scientific footing of gender "medicine," and cited various European reports, saying that "countries who have been at the forefront [are now] pumping the brakes on this," something that Kavanaugh noted gave the court "a yellow light, if not a red light" in moving forward into "constitutionalizing" a new area of law.
>
> But it was perhaps the line of questioning from Alito that was the most intense of the morning. Alito, too, cited specific studies from Sweden and England, including the bombshell Cass report, which indicated that gender medicine is largely unproven and presents significant health risks to children.
>
> He chided Prelogar, saying that she had "relegated [it] to a footnote."

And:

> When transgender lawyer Chase Strangio took the podium for the ACLU, Alito continued his grilling, asking pointedly "Is transgender status immutable?" When Strangio responded that it would indeed "satisfy an immutability test," Alito peppered the ACLU lawyer with various hypotheticals: What about people who are "gender-fluid," or who change gender identities over time, or who are "nonbinary"?
>
> When Strangio floundered, Alito retorted, "So, transgender status is not an immutable characteristic, is it?"

Desert Rose sent me two articles about the arguments of the affirmative action Supreme Court Justices (Sotomayor and Brown-Jackson) who were nominated by Obama and Biden.

Here's the first article from Daily Wire:

> Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson compared Tennessee's law against irreversible medical interventions that seek to change children's sex to laws against interracial marriage.

Here's the second article from Daily Wire:

> Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor drew a wave of backlash when she dismissed concerns about risks associated with gender transition surgeries —

> particularly among patients who are minors — by arguing that all medical treatments, even aspirin, can have side effects.

Again, you can double-check those articles to get the details, I'm trying to move through a list of notable events, though.

Daily Signal and Independent Women's Forum both had reporters on the scene, and they were tweeting out useful things all day. Every time I got up to get coffee or go to the bathroom, I was checking my phone to get the latest updates.

This was my favorite tweet of the day:

https://x.com/DailySignal/status/1864341828901740803

That doctor looks Indian – probably East Indian, maybe West Indian. I hope we have a million more conservative Indians like him soon, arguing against secular left lies with evidence.

And here's a good article about what the Daily Signal reporters saw outside the Supreme Court:

> A mother told The Daily Signal her family travelled to the rally from Arizona to support her child "Violet," a biological male identifying as a girl. Violet told his parents he was trans "when she one and a half," the mother claimed.
>
> "She knew since birth," the woman said.

And:

> A mom and transgender-identifying adolescent at the rally said they want the Supreme Court to rule the Tennessee law unconstitutional because their home state, Louisiana, bans transgender procedures for minors.
>
> "The wrong puberty can kill us," the young person who identified as transgender told The Daily Signal. "There are people here who are alive because they got access to gender-affirming care, and restricting the right to that will kill people."
>
> The mom added that the "most pro-life thing politicians can do" is allow "gender-affirming care" because transgender kids will commit suicide without it.

I know that in the men's communities that I belong to, whenever we see children of single moms or children of lesbian couples behaving weirdly, we always like to say "The father could not be reached for comment". That's not throwing shade at men, that's noting that the current family laws make it easy for mothers to eject biological fathers from their homes, often using false accusations that never go to trial. And then the children grow up without a male influence, which can sometimes lead to mental health issues.

More ways the Biden-Harris administration targeted Christians and conservatives

December 6, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Earlier this week, I posted about two ways that the Biden-Harris administration targeted Christians. First, by preventing Christians from taking in foster kids. And second, by punishing Christian medical workers who blew the whistle on the transgendering of children. I thought I was done, but Desert Rose sent me a couple more stories, which I will talk about below.

This story is from Christian Post:

> The United States Department of Education is being accused of unjustly targeting Christian colleges and universities, allegedly to advance a "woke agenda."
>
> The American Principles Project, a conservative think-tank, published a report earlier this month that cites the department's Office of Enforcement actions against Christian schools.
>
> According to the report, although Christian colleges and universities have fewer than 10% of students in the U.S., they make up around 70% of the penalties imposed by the Office of Enforcement.
>
> Additionally, over the past 10 years, while the average fine against public and private academic institutions that violated federal law on campus crime was around $228,571, the average fine against a Christian school was $815,000.
>
> The report also took issue with the record fines recently imposed on Grand Canyon University and Liberty University, two prominent Evangelical Christian academic institutions.

Secular universities that had REAL scandals were punished much less:

> According to the APP, when the department issued punitive fines on Michigan State University and Penn State University for high-profile abuse scandals, they were several million dollars less.
>
> APP Policy Director Jon Schweppe, author of the report, said in a statement released on Nov. 18 that he believed this was an example of the Biden administration "weaponizing every part of the federal government to target their opponents."
>
> "As our report details, the Biden-Harris Department of Education has been engaged in a long-running scheme to punish Christian colleges that are ideologically opposed to the left's agenda. The unfair targeting of these institutions has been egregious, and it needs to stop immediately," stated Schweppe.

As you can see above, I posted a picture of Russell Moore, who rose to the top of a

secular leftist advocacy group known as the ERLC. You can see him meeting with Democrat president Barack Obama, in the photo. I show that, because Moore is what I would call an "Evangelical for Biden" and "Evangelical for Harris". Instead of advocating for Christian positions on fiscal policy, social policy and foreign policy, Moore used his platform to push for Democrat policies. Now that the news is coming out about what Obama did to Christian colleges, it sheds light on what Moore, and people like him, were really up to. There are a lot of fake Christians who advocate for secular left policies.

Here's another article with four more instances of targeting conservatives, from Daily Wire. (archived)

Here are the four:

- Targeting Political Opponents (parents, pro-lifers, etc.)
- FEMA Skipping Homes Of Trump Supporters
- Censoring Conservative Media (e.g. – Facebook)
- Spying On Financial Transactions

I've blogged before about the first 3 (see the links), so let's look at the last one:

> Earlier this year, Rep. Jordan revealed how federal officials were ordering banks to comb through customer data in search of terms like "TRUMP" or "MAGA" used in transactions.
>
> This came after the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) asked banks to help federal law enforcement identify transactions of "persons of interest" using specific typologies and Merchant Category Codes after January 6, 2021.
>
> Other transaction keywords identified by the feds included "Cabela's" and "Dick's Sporting Goods," along with the purchase of "religious texts" as potentially problematic.
>
> "Despite these transactions having no apparent criminal nexus — and, in fact, relate to Americans exercising their Second Amendment rights — FinCEN seems to have adopted a characterization of these Americans as potential threat actors," Jordan wrote in January. "This kind of pervasive financial surveillance, carried out in coordination with and at the request of federal law enforcement, into Americans' private transactions is alarming and raises serious doubts about FinCEN's respect for fundamental civil liberties."

Why do you think that Evangelicals for Biden-Harris, many of whom are very pietistic pastors and church leaders, would support the secular left using government as a weapon against Bible-believing Christians and Constitutional conservatives? I think it's because many of these "evangelicals" were raised in a Christian bubble. For them, Christianity is about being liked and feeling good. They embraced it because it made the Christians around them like them. They never had to work through evidence, such as the origin of the universe, fine-tuning, origin of life, Cambrian explosion, habitability, molecular machines, gospel reliability, minimal facts case for the resurrection, etc. like Desert Rose

and I do on the Knight and Rose Show. They simply don’t know or care whether Christianity is true, they only care that they signal their virtue to other people.

So, when these pietistic pastors and charismatic church leaders grew older and went into the secular world, they just repeated what had worked for them in the Christian bubble. They said whatever they needed to say to impress the elites in the larger secular culture. There was no foundation for their faith based on truth, and based on experiences of self-sacrificial obedience. They never had the experience of using evidence to win a debate (like Jesus), and then suffering the shame and loss of being obedient to God (like Jesus).

Science and Faith conference scheduled for February 8th, 2025 in Dallas, TX

December 7, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that there is a new Dallas, TX Science and Faith conference scheduled for February 8th, 2025. This one is offering online viewing, if you can't make it to Dallas. Well, I thought it might be fun to review some lectures from the 2019 Dallas, TX Science and Faith conference, because they posted them online. It's a nice way to get an easy, popular-level introduction to science apologetics.

Here are a few of the sessions from the upcoming conference that I'm looking forward to:

- **The miracle of butterfly metamorphosis** (Paul Nelson)
- **The amazing honeybee** (Eric Hedin)
- **The scientific evidence of the human soul** (Michael Egnor)
- **The intelligent design of plants** (Emily & Daniel Reeves)
- **The theory of ID as fuel for scientific discovery** (Casey Luskin)
- **The origin of animal body plans** (Stephen Meyer)

When it comes to scientific arguments, I have 6 that I usually use:

- origin of the universe
- fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe
- origin of the life
- sudden origin of body plans in the Cambrian explosion
- habitability and discoverability
- molecular machines

If you want to get an idea of what these events are about, the ID folks did one of these conferences about 6 years ago in 2019, and they posted the videos. And they actually covered a few of these arguments.

Here is the YouTube playlist. And below are some of the lectures.

The origin of the universe:

The origin of life:

Habitability and Discoverability:

Cambrian explosion:

If you're wondering, "is this the lecture where James Tour got really, really excited with a church audience?" Yes, this is the one.

One of my heroes is speaking at the 2025 conference, Dr. Richard Sternberg. You might remember that Dr. Sternberg was thrown out of his job at the Smithsonian Institute, just for publishing a paper by Dr. Stephen Meyer that supported intelligent design in a peer-

reviewed journal.

> For decades, opponents of intelligent design derided the theory as unscientific because it hadn't been published in peer-reviewed science journals. "What intelligent design advocates fail to realize is that the peer-review process could benefit them enormously," sneered one such opponent, computer scientist Jeffrey Shallit, in 2001. But when a peer-reviewed journal published an ID-friendly paper in 2004, the response from Darwinists was simply more derision. And for Dr. Richard Sternberg, it was worse. Sternberg endured sustained hostility from his colleagues at the Smithsonian, including conspiracy theories and wild accusations, that damaged his reputation and resulted in his premature departure.

These are the real heroes. The ones who have to pay a price for standing up for the truth. Here is his biography:

> Richard Sternberg is an evolutionary biologist with interests in the relation between genes and morphological homologies, and the nature of genomic "information." He holds two Ph.D.'s: one in Biology (Molecular Evolution) from Florida International University and another in Systems Science (Theoretical Biology) from Binghamton University. From 2001-2007, he served as a staff scientist at the National Center for Biotechnology Information, and from 2001-2007 was a Research Associate at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. Dr. Sternberg is presently a research scientist at the Biologic Institute, supported by a research fellowship from the Center for Science and Culture at Discovery Institute. He is also a Research Collaborator at the National Museum of Natural History.
>
> From 2001-2004, Sternberg served as Managing Editor of the Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington, and has also served on the Editorial Board of the International Journal of General Systems. In 1999, he was a Visiting Associate Professor of Biology at Northern Michigan University, and from 1999-2001 was a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Invertebrate Zoology, National Museum of Natural History. He has received postdoctoral fellowships from both the NIH and the National Museum of Natural History, and has published refereed articles in such journals as Genetica, Evolutionary Theory, Journal of Comparative Biology, Crustacean Research, Journal of Natural History, Journal of Morphology, Journal of Biological Systems, and the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences.

People sometimes try to talk to me about charismatic pastors, and Big Eva politicians, famous Christian athletes, famous Christian artists, etc. And I just have no regard for people who talk about things that they haven't investigated themselves. I'm even a little suspicious of analytic philosophers! The guys who I admire and look up to are the STEM guys. The mathematicians and the scientists. The guys who work in the labs. The guys

who move the ball forwards by giving us evidence that we can talk about and use with people who don’t even know where to begin looking for evidence.

Does the fossil record match Darwinist predictions or Design predictions?

December 8, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I wrote a post about how you can make a simple argument for intelligent design based on junk DNA. Step 1: find out what Darwinian naturalists claim about junk DNA. Step 2: find out what design proponents claim about junk DNA. Step 3: compare those predictions with scientific discoveries about junk DNA over the past decades. Today we'll do it with the fossil record.

I'm going to use an amazing article from Günter Bechly from over at Evolution News. Günter writes an article about fossils every Friday (he calls it "Fossil Friday").

Here's last Friday's article, where he gave a nice overview of why Christians should care about the fossil record.

He writes:

> This Fossil Friday I want to address the common request to provide an expanded written form of my lectures on discontinuities in the fossil record (e.g., on YouTube) together with references to mainstream scientific papers that back up these arguments against neo-Darwinism. Since the sudden appearance of trilobites in the Cambrian Explosion is one of the best known examples for discontinuities in the fossil record, I chose the early trilobite Wanneria sp. from the Lower Cambrian of Canada as today's featured fossil. So let's jump right in.

Then he talks about the predictions of Darwinists and design proponents:

> Every theory makes certain predictions and these predictions have to be tested with empirical evidence. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution necessarily predicts a gradual development of life. Therefore he insisted on gradualism, against the advice of his good friend Thomas Huxley. Darwin quoted in his magnum opus *The Origin of Species* (Darwin 1859) not less that six times the Latin dictum "*natura non facit saltus*", nature does not make jumps, because he wanted to present a fully naturalistic explanation for the history of life on our planet, knowing perfectly well that saltations would have tacitly implied miracle-like intelligent interventions. The prediction of gradualism is not accidental and not a dispensable side issue in Darwinism. This was made clear by Richard Dawkins, arguably the most ardent modern popularizer of Darwinism, in his bestselling book *The Greatest Show on Earth* (Dawkins 2009), where he explicitly clarified that "Evolution not only is a gradual process as a matter of fact; it has to be gradual if it is to do any explanatory work." In another book titled *Climbing Mount Improbable* (Dawkins 1996) he explained the reasons with a beautiful metaphor: Imagine the task to reach the top of a steep and tall cliff from the sea shore. It would be an improbable (or rather impossible) miracle to achieve this task with a

> single big jump. However, if there was a gentle slope on the backside of the cliff, you could easily and effortlessly climb the mountain with a lot of small successive steps. This is the way evolution must operate according to Darwin and Dawkins: not by sudden miraculous jumps, but many small steps, that are each not unlikely to happen accidentally without intelligent intervention, and which accumulate over long periods of time to add up to big biological differences.

Engineers don't check in code gradually, one letter at a time. We check in a bunch of related changes to different files that implement some feature. Some days, I have a lot of meetings. Some days, I spend time doing code reviews or making diagrams or writing documentation. And some days, I get to write code all day. So, if you look at my Github history, you'll see that some days I have 35 commits, and other days none. That's consistent with having a "designer". The complexity increases in "jumps", with each jump containing changes to several files, and the changes add some new feature. But that's not available to Dawkins and Darwin, they don't like engineers, or sudden jumps in complexity.

Günter lists out a bunch of biological "jumps", where God pulled an all-nighter, with pizza and Mountain Dew, and checked in a whole bunch of new code all at once.

Here are a few from his list of about 15 of them:

- The Origin of Life (3.8 bya)
- The Origin of Photosynthesis (3.8 bya)
- The Cambrian Explosion (537-508 mya)
- The Carboniferous Insect Explosion (325-314/307 mya)
- The Early Triassic Marine Reptile Radiation (248-240 mya)
- The Mid Triassic Gliding / Flying Reptile Radiation (230-210 mya)
- Upper Triassic Dinosaur Explosion (234-232 mya)
- The Abominable Mystery of the Origin of Flowering Plants (130-115 mya)
- The Paleogene Big Bang of Modern Birds (65-55 mya)

Günter has the details of each of these, but if you have listened to our recent episode about the origin of life with Dr. Fazala Rana, then you already know about the first one. The point is that the fossil record has a whole bunch of "big bangs", where God checked in a whole bunch of new code in a very short period of time. This is strictly forbidden in Darwinian theory, but the fossil record doesn't care about theories.

Günter concludes:

> The gradualistic core predictions of any unguided evolutionary mechanisms such as neo-Darwinism are strongly contradicted by the empirical evidence. The cumulative conflicting evidence from molecular biology, genetics, population genetics, and the discontinuous fossil record can no longer be explained away as anomalies or as artifacts such as under-sampling of an incomplete fossil record. The total evidence is better explained with pulses of infusion of new information

> from outside of the system (top-down), rather than with a purely mechanistic stepwise bottom-up process. The only known cause in the universe that is able to produce significant amounts of new complex specified information is the activity of an intelligent conscious agent, so that intelligent design theory qualifies as superior alternative to unguided Darwinian evolution in an inference to the best explanation (abductive reasoning) among competing hypotheses. This is not an argument from ignorance (i.e., God of the gaps) as is often incorrectly claimed by critics, but is based on empirical data and our positive knowledge about the regular causal structure of the universe and the type of causes that exclusively are known to produce certain effects.

And I found a nice lecture that he gave on the topic:

The article was tough for me to understand, but I think I got the big picture of what he was saying. I blogged on it so that I can find it again if I get questions about what evidence there is for a designer. I sure hope that we are making more scientists like him for Team Design, because his post was quality work.

New study: there is no gay gene that causes homosexuality

December 9, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I heard one of the authors of this new study commenting on how he was a gay man, and the purpose of his research was to show a genetic basis for homosexuality, in order to make it equal to race. His goal was to make it impossible to disagree with homosexual behavior, because homosexual behavior would be seen as natural and normal. Let's see if his new study helps him out.

The blog of the peer-reviewed journal PLOS One reported on the new study, which was published in the prestigious journal Science.

Excerpt:

> The once-prevailing concept of a "gay gene" dictating sexual orientation has been put to rest in a powerhouse study published today in *Science*. The work brilliantly illustrates the very nature of science: evolving with the input of new data, especially the large-scale contributions of bioinformatics and crowd-sourcing.
>
> "We formed a large international consortium and collected data for more than 500,000 people, comparing DNA and self-reported sexual behavior. This is approximately 100 times bigger than any previous study on this topic," said lead author Andrea Ganna, of the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Finland and an instructor at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, opening a news conference earlier this week.
>
> […]The investigation estimates a genetic contribution to same-sex sexual behavior as under 1 percent, thanks to analysis of a trove of data from the UK Biobank and the consumer genetic testing company 23andme.

So, there you have it, there is no gay gene. But this is of course something we've known for decades, as all the previous studies had found the same thing.

The normal way that people do these studies is to analyze identical twins, and see how often both identical twins are gay.

> Eight major studies of identical twins in Australia, the U.S., and Scandinavia during the last two decades all arrive at the same conclusion: gays were not born that way.
>
> "At best genetics is a minor factor," says Dr. Neil Whitehead, PhD. Whitehead worked for the New Zealand government as a scientific researcher for 24 years, then spent four years working for the United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency. Most recently, he serves as a consultant to Japanese universities about the effects of radiation exposure. His PhD is in biochemistry and statistics.

> Identical twins have the same genes or DNA. They are nurtured in equal prenatal conditions. If homosexuality is caused by genetics or prenatal conditions and one twin is gay, the co-twin should also be gay.
>
> "Because they have identical DNA, it ought to be 100%," Dr. Whitehead notes. But the studies reveal something else. "If an identical twin has same-sex attraction the chances the co-twin has it are only about 11% for men and 14% for women."
>
> Because identical twins are always genetically identical, homosexuality cannot be genetically dictated. "No-one is born gay," he notes. "The predominant things that create homosexuality in one identical twin and not in the other have to be post-birth factors."
>
> Dr. Whitehead believes same-sex attraction (SSA) is caused by "non-shared factors," things happening to one twin but not the other, or a personal response to an event by one of the twins and not the other.

By the way, a previous study also found that transgender behavior was not genetic, but was clearly linked to environmental factors such as peer approval and social media.

Here is the report from Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.
>
> Littman surveyed more than 250 parents of children who suddenly developed gender dysphoria symptoms during or after puberty.
>
> […]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

A previous study also found that children are more likely to be gay if they are raised by gay adults. It was reported in AOL News.

Excerpt:

> Walter Schumm knows what he's about to do is unpopular: publish a study arguing that gay parents are more likely to raise gay children than straight parents. But the Kansas State University family studies professor has a detailed analysis that past almost aggressively ideological researchers never had.
>
> […]His study on sexual orientation, out next month, says that gay and lesbian parents are far more likely to have children who become gay. "I'm trying to prove

> that it’s not 100 percent genetic,” Schumm tells AOL News.
>
> His study is a meta-analysis of existing work. First, Schumm extrapolated data from 10 books on gay parenting… [and] skewed his data so that only self-identified gay and lesbian children would be labeled as such.
>
> […]Schumm concluded that children of lesbian parents identified themselves as gay 31 percent of the time; children of gay men had gay children 19 percent of the time, and children of a lesbian mother and gay father had at least one gay child 25 percent of the time.
>
> […]Finally, Schumm looked at the existing academic studies… In all there are 26 such studies. Schumm ran the numbers from them and concluded that, surprisingly, 20 percent of the kids of gay parents were gay themselves. When children only 17 or older were included in the analysis, 28 percent were gay.

It’s very important for people to understand that there is a trend in society to make every behavior traditionally seen as sinful into something caused by genetics. The twin goals of this effort are to insulate the behaviors from criticism, and to minimize evaluation of the effects of these behaviors on society as a whole. The genetic argument was used extensively to normalize same-sex marriage and transgenderism. I have seen the genetic argument used to defend other behaviors like pedophilia and incest. But the scientific research does nothing to support any of these arguments. What’s amazing is how a majority of people in the United States have such false beliefs about the scientific research. They vastly overestimate the number of gay people, and also the influence of genetics.

Trump hits home run by replacing corrupt NIH Director with competent reformer

December 10, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know that at least some of my American readers had concerned about the leadership that we got during the Covid pandemic. Different people had concerns about mask mandates, vaccination mandates, pharmaceutical company liability, church closures, loss of employment for dissenters, etc. Let's take a look at what the House of Representatives found, then see Trump's nominee for NIH.

First, this article from Christian Post:

> Several allegations made during the early stages of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic that were dismissed as conspiracy theories might have been factually accurate, contends a new report from congressional Republicans.
>
> Released by the Republican-led U.S. House of Representatives Committee On Oversight and Accountability's Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, the "After Action Review of the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Lessons Learned and a Path Forward" report covers the federal government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting both successes and failures.
>
> The report presents several findings focusing on the origins of the virus, the management of public health measures and the long-term consequences of the pandemic response.

Here are the 5 points:

1. NIH funded gain-of-function research in Wuhan
2. Health officials falsely characterized lab leak theory as a 'conspiracy theory'
3. China, US agencies, scientists 'sought to cover up' pandemic facts
4. Pandemic-era school closures had long-term adverse impacts
5. Lockdowns in US cities were 'worse than the disease'

I think the ones that are the most important going forward are numbers 4 and 5.

School closure effects:

> The subcommittee emphasized that the long-term educational, social, and mental health impacts on students must be considered in any future response to public health crises.
>
> The report is also critical of the American Federation of Teachers' influence on the Biden administration and transition team in 2021.
>
> "AFT is not a scientific organization — it does not employ epidemiologists or immunologists. Instead, it is a political union — committed to activism on behalf of its 1.7 million members — that donated $2.4 million dollars to Democrat

> candidates during the 2020 election cycle," the report reads. "The extent of the AFT's political influence is reflected in the fact that the Biden administration reached out to AFT for advice on school reopening rather than the AFT reaching out to the Biden administration."
>
> "While AFT … [has] attempted to rewrite history by arguing that they were always trying to reopen the schools, this simply is not true," the report concludes. "AFT continually pushed for school closures throughout the pandemic. Restricting in-person schooling was always the default — not the alternative — mitigation measure underlying AFT's positions."

Lockdowns in US Cities:

> The report contends that the strict "stay-at-home" orders imposed by states and local governments to curb the spread of the virus often did more harm than good and points to the widespread economic, psychological and social consequences of these measures.
>
> The fallout from so-called "stay at home" health mandates in California and other states led to outcomes such as increased unemployment, mental health issues and educational disruption, and was disproportionately high compared to the health benefits, according to the panel.

You might recall that Sweden didn't look their schools down, and they suffered no learning loss during the pandemic.

OK, so with the election of Trump, we are going to get the best possible pick to lead the National Institutes of Health.

Christian Post had that story, as well:

> President-elect Donald Trump's nomination of Dr. Jay Bhattacharya to lead the National Institutes of Health has drawn strong reactions as he has advocated for overhauling the agency.
>
> Bhattacharya, the director of Stanford University's Center for Demography and Economics of Health and Aging and a research associate at the National Bureau of Economics Research, first emerged on the national stage as a prominent critic of lockdowns implemented to stop the spread of COVID-19.
>
> The president-elect expressed confidence in Bhattacharya's ability to lead the $50 billion agency and "restore the NIH to a Gold Standard of Medical Research" and "Make America Healthy Again."

They have 6 points in their article:

1. Emerged as a prominent critic of Dr. Anthony Fauci
2. Censored by Twitter
3. Would 'restructure' the NIH
4. Published by several reputable academic journals

5. Operates a Substack titled ‘Science From The Fringe’
6. Founding fellow at Hillsdale College’s Academy for Science and Freedom

Let’s take a look at #1 and #3.

Criticism of Fauci:

> In 2020, Bhattacharya co-authored The Great Barrington Declaration. Signed by hundreds of thousands of concerned citizens, doctors and medical and public health scientists, the document warned that the lockdown policies implemented to stop the spread of the coronavirus were “producing devastating effects on short and long-term public health.”
>
> Examples of the negative consequences of the COVID-19 lockdowns listed include “lower childhood vaccination rates, worsening cardiovascular disease outcomes, fewer cancer screenings and deteriorating mental health,” predicting “greater excess mortality in years to come” as a result with “the working class and younger members of society carrying the heaviest burden.” The document also condemned “keeping students out of school” during the pandemic as a “grave injustice.”
>
> […]The declaration seemingly drew the ire of then-NIH Director Francis Collins, who privately called the document “fringe” and called for a published “take down.”
>
> […]Bhattacharya’s positions on lockdowns put him on a collision course with Dr. Anthony Fauci, the former head of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, an agency of NIH, who emerged as the strongest advocate for stringent COVID-19 lockdowns.
>
> In 2023, when Fauci proclaimed that he had such strong “personal ethics” that his Catholic faith was something he did not “really need to do,” Bhattacharya responded by saying, “Hard to say which is worse — his theology or his science.”

He has plans to restructure the corrupt NIH:

> Bhattacharya emerged as a top candidate to lead the NIH earlier this month after meeting with Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Trump’s nominee to head the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and discussed ideas on how to overhaul the NIH, sources close to the matter told The Washington Post.
>
> The professor has long called for changes at NIH and said in an interview earlier this year he lost “almost all confidence” in the American public health establishment.
>
> […]”I would restructure the NIH to allow there to be many more centers of power, so that you couldn’t have a small number of scientific bureaucrats, dominating a field for a very long time,” Bhattacharya told The Post in a January 2024 interview.

I say that the NIH is corrupt in part because of their past actions on DEI, which Desert Rose and I talked about in episode #44 of the Knight and Rose Show. And if you don't recall why the current leader of the NIH is corrupt, you can read my previous post about it.

Another perfect pick by Trump for civil rights division of DOJ

December 11, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the biggest problems I had with the Biden-Harris administration was the weaponization of government against Christians and conservatives. A good example of this weaponization was the abuse of power by Kristen Clarke, who is Assistant Attorney General and leads the Civil Rights Division. She used her position to persecute peaceful Christian pro-lifers.

First, let's look at this article from Daily Signal:

> The Department of Justice has multiple divisions, with assistant attorneys general at their helms. Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke leads up the Civil Rights Division under Biden, and she has weaponized the division to target pro-lifers.
>
> In one case, the Civil Rights Division sent a SWAT team to the home of a Catholic father with seven children at 7 a.m. on charges that he had assaulted an abortion center worker. Not only had local authorities declined to charge Mark Houck for the brief altercation, but a federal jury ultimately acquitted him. He's now suing for malicious prosecution.

I would argue that the Obama and Biden rhetoric about abortion has inflamed secular leftists, inciting them to commit crimes like attacking pro-life pregnancy centers and burning down churches and shooting up Sunday services. These activities are ongoing. But the Biden-Harris focus isn't on actual crimes. They want to focus on punishing Christians for their Christian faith, and punishing conservatives for disagreeing with their policies.

And it's not just on issues like abortion.

> The Civil Rights Division has also taken up the cause of transgender orthodoxy.
>
> […]"As a result, in addition to our Title VII [employment law] cases involving sexual assault and misconduct, we are pursuing cases based on gender identity and sexual orientation across all of our statutes that prohibit sex discrimination," the department noted.
>
> The department highlighted "developments" that it claimed "reflect the increased visibility and urgency of issues related to gender-based violence and discrimination." In that list, it claimed that "nearly 240 anti-LGBTQ bills have been filed in state legislatures in 2022 alone, most of them targeting people for their gender identity."
>
> That suggests that the Civil Rights Division was gearing up to file lawsuits against states that pass laws aimed at protecting kids from experimental transgender medical interventions or preventing biological males from accessing women's

> private spaces.

Now, you might think that the Federal Department of Justice would be concerned with the epidemic of sex-trafficking of children that's been caused by the Biden-Harris open borders policies. But their focus is investigating conservatives who disagree with their transgender agenda. Remember how they labeled parents who disagreed with boys in girl's bathrooms as "domestic terrorists"? They're not worried about violent crimes committed by transgender people, which are frequent. No, they are concerned about prosecuting "domestic terrorists" – parents who disagree with their transgender activism.

Kristen Clarke looks like an unqualified DEI clown. She has a messed-up marriage, and lied about her past arrest during her confirmation hearings.

> Clarke served as president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a left-wing activist group. She also worked for five years at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, a leftist group that links abortion to "racial justice." Both groups have frequently accessed the Biden White House and received large cash infusions from the Left's dark money network… She cited the far-left smear factory the Southern Poverty Law Center in condemning Alliance Defending Freedom, a nonprofit pro-life and religious freedom law firm, as a "hate group."

The Southern Poverty Law Center was linked to a REAL instance of domestic terrorism, when a gay-rights activist attempted a mass shooting at the conservative Family Research Council headquarters. So, this Kristen Clarke is a woman who goes after peaceful pro-lifers, but thinks that the SPLC – a real hate group – is just wonderful.

Did you disagree with Fauci about the lab-leak theory of COVID or cloth mask mandates? Well, Clarke thought you should be killed for that:

> She said that those protesting Dr. Anthony Fauci, the controversial COVID-19 czar and now-retired head of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, should be "publicly identified and named, barred from treatment at any public hospital if/when they fall ill and denied coverage under their insurance."

She lied about her arrest for her domestic violence in order to be confirmed:

> As my former colleague Mary Margaret Olohan exclusively reported for The Daily Signal, Clarke had been arrested for attacking her then-husband, Reginald Avery, with a knife, deeply slicing one of his fingers to the bone in 2006. The pair finalized their divorce in 2009. Clarke had the arrest expunged from her record, and during her Senate confirmation, she denied ever having been arrested or having been accused of committing a violent crime. Clarke admitted to her failure to disclose that arrest, and Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, called for her to resign.

OK, so who does Trump want to replace this affirmative-action psychopath?

> Dhillon, by contrast, has been a fearless advocate, not just for pro-lifers, but for

> the civil liberties of many who stand against the woke orthodoxies of the day.
>
> […]Dhillon has represented pro-life journalist David Daleiden, who exposed Planned Parenthood staff who sold aborted-baby body parts. Then-California Attorney General Kamala Harris launched an investigation into Daleiden that later led to criminal charges from her successor, Xavier Becerra (who now serves as Biden's secretary of health and human services). Planned Parenthood also sued him, and Daleiden responded with lawsuits of his own.
>
> Dhillon also represented former Google senior software engineer James Damore, who sued Google after it terminated him following his exposure of the Big Tech company's anti-conservative bias. She sued Rose City Antifa on behalf of journalist Andy Ngo, after Ngo suffered injuries in an assault in Portland, Oregon.
>
> Dhillon also represented Americans who lost their freedoms during the COVID-19 pandemic. She filed more than a dozen lawsuits against pandemic orders in California, representing pastors, businesses, and citizens.
>
> […]Dhillon has also championed the cause of detransitioners—men and women who identified as transgender, underwent medical experiments to alter their bodies, and then rejected their transgender identities, lamenting the damage done to their bodies. Detransitioners are often left out in the cold, as transgender people receive praise and recognition in public and LGBTQ activist groups often demonize or ignore those who are victimized by gender ideology.

Just achievement piled on top of achievement piled on top of achievement. Elections matter.

The worst mistake you can make when defending the Christian worldview

December 12, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it

entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it.

> I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent's weakness.

The simplest argument against Darwinian evolution is Junk DNA

December 13, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Discovery Institute has a new video out in their series on intelligent design, about so-called "junk DNA". Basically, there are two sides to the origins issue: the design-deniers and the design-recognizers. (And theistic evolutionists belong in the former group). These two groups make different predictions about the information in the human genome. And we can check their predictions.

First, here's the new video:

Here is description from Evolution News:

> The myth of junk DNA is much more than just an evolutionary idea that turned out to be mistaken. As the new episode of Long Story Short makes amusingly clear, it also reflects a "battle of predictions" with intelligent design. Going back to the 1970s, evolutionists predicted that, in line with their premise of a randomly generated genome, DNA would turn out to be full of Darwinian debris, playing no functional role but merely parasitic (atheist Richard Dawkins's term) on the small portion of functional DNA.
>
> Proponents of intelligent design said the opposite. William Dembski (1998) and Richard Sternberg (2002) predicted widespread function for the so-called "junk." After all, as a product of care and intention, the genome ought to be comparable in a way with products of human genius, with every detail there for a reason.
>
> On that, ID has since been massively vindicated. Scientific theories are tested by the predictions they make. If those fail, it's a bad sign for the theory. Mainstream science journals like Science are admitting the truth about the erstwhile "junk" — even as a few diehard Darwinists like Laurence Moran at the University of Toronto deny it.

And these predictions by the design side are not new. My young Earth creationist friend even sent me this today (today is Wednesday, I always write these posts the night before and schedule them for the next morning):

> While a Creation/Fall model could account for the accumulation of some random, mutationally defective "extra copies," evolutionists felt they had a strong point that 97% "junk" DNA pointed more to evolution than intelligent design. Creationists have long suspected that this "junk DNA" will turn out to have a function. In fact, junk DNA research is now a hot topic; not only are more and more functions being detected, but it is suspected that junk DNA is full of yet-to-be-discovered "intellectual riches.

That prediction is from 1994. My friend has a whole article about Junk DNA here, with all

the predictions from each side.

He says “Carl Wieland founded CMI”. CMI is Creation Ministries International, which is supposed to be the best YEC web site.

Anyway, if you missed the other videos in the series, there is a playlist, but all the videos are out of order! If you want a quick and snarky introduction to intelligent design, this is it.

Is there an epidemic of violence against transgender people?

December 14, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm busy today rushing around doing holiday errands, and then feeding the outdoor birds, and getting groceries. We have warm weather in my super red state, so it was a good time to go outside. But I saw this article a few days ago and wanted to say something about it. It seems like the kind of article I should add to my blog, because it will be useful to bring up in a debate.

Here is the article from The Federalist, and note that the article is by a conservative LGBT person.

> In 2024 there were no reported murders of a trans-identifying person due to anti-trans bias in the United States. This might be a surprise, based on the routine headlines declaring that violence against transgender Americans is only getting worse. The Human Rights Campaign, one of the more prominent LGBT advocacy organizations, provides a list each year of reported murders of trans-identifying people.

The HRC – a secular left hate group – wants people to think that these murders are all being committed by white Presbyterian married couples who attend church weekly. And they are doing it because they are filled with hate. But I know enough about debating this issue to know that most of these murders are going to be 1) drug or prostitution murders that are caused by the victim putting themselves in very very risky situations, for example drug use and / or prostitution, or 2) intimate partner violence.

And the author leads with an example of that:

> Discussing the death of Quanesha Shantel, Human Rights Campaign Director of Community Engagement for the Transgender Justice Initiative Tori Cooper argued, "It's time for communities across this country to reckon with the fact that their silence makes them complicit. Hateful stereotypes, rhetoric and legislation fuels violence against transgender people." This despite Shantel, whose legal name was Juquan Hamilton, being allegedly murdered by his former romantic partner, Jeremy Reynolds, who reportedly was furious over their recent breakup.

You might remember from our podcast episode on same-sex marriage that LGBT relationships, expecilally lesbian and trans relationships, then to have much higher rates of intimate partner violence. In fact, many famous murders that are labeled "hate crimes" by the secualr left are intimate partner violence. Consider the case of Matthew Sheppard, trying to claim that it was an anti-LGBT hate crime. Actually, according to LGBT activist publication The Advocate, "the perpetrator and victim not only knew each other but also had sex together, bought drugs from one another, and partied together".

But let’s stay with The Federalist article, and see the details on these murders:

> Looking at each of 29 such reported cases in 2024, the three most common categories are domestic violence (6), altercations (6), and accidents (4). Of all cases, four did not have sufficient information reported by authorities to make a determination on what kind of violence occurred. The deaths also included a suicide, the highly publicized death of Dagny (Nex) Benedict, a victim of a mass shooting, and a random act of violence.
>
> Kita Bee and Honee Daniels were both killed in what HRC calls “hit-and-run” accidents — they involved negligent behavior and both drivers have been arrested. Jazlynn Johnson, 18, was allegedly accidentally shot and killed by his friend, 17-year-old Cesar Sandoval, while showing off a new gun, according to reports.
>
> Finally, Santonio Coleman, who identified as a gay man who sometimes dressed as a woman, was found dead on a park trail, but he may have fallen, and no suspects have been identified. The headline reporting Coleman’s death states, “Family shocked after loved one brutally killed while walking on popular trail in Athens,” despite no current indications from police investigating the incident that Coleman was attacked.
>
> The “altercation” category of reports indicates a fight occurred in which a trans-identifying person was killed. A transgender man, Righteous TK Hill, was allegedly shot by his cousin, Jaylen Hill, in an argument. Robert Clark Jr., named as Yella Clark, was killed in a prison fight. Clark was serving life in prison for the murder of another inmate while he was serving a 75-year sentence for armed robbery.
>
> A 20-year-old named Dylan Gurley was reportedly stabbed to death in a dispute over money while staying in an abandoned house with a fellow homeless person, Michael Tooley. Another trans-identifying person listed, known only as Redd or Barbie, was killed by an unknown assailant in a mass shooting on a street corner while talking with several other people. Another homeless person, Andrea Doria Dos Passos, was attacked while sleeping by another homeless person in what appears to be a random assault; police have not reported a motive. The suspect has been charged.

And the HRC also misleads about race. They talk about the race of the victims, but they don’t mention the race of the attackers, because they want you to think that this is white on black crime.

> Despite 82 percent of known suspects in the deaths of black trans-identifying individuals being black themselves, based on an evaluation of the reported cases, the HRC demands, “Young trans women of color — particularly Black trans women, continue to be disproportionately affected.”
>
> Year after year, these reports end up the same. Domestic violence, interpersonal

> fights, random violence, and, more frequently, complete accidents, make up the majority of reported deaths of trans-identified people. Hate crimes do occur — they are simply very rare, upon review of reported cases.
>
> Unfortunately, the constant repetition of this false narrative, always using alarming language and insisting on placing the blame politically, creates an environment of fear and hatred in the LGBT community. It sends a message that transgender identity is a privileged status that demands special protections from the government and the public. When every reported violent death of a trans-identifying person is elevated as a social failure requiring national mourning and outrage, the impact of real hate crimes is diminished.

This same deception that Black Lives Matter advocates do, when complaining about the handful of unarmed blacks who are killed by white police officers every year. BLM leaders don't talk about the numbers for black-on-black crime, which are far, far greater. We did a whole episode of Knight and Rose Show on those numbers.

By the way, you might have noticed that there seems to be a higher rate of violence being committed BY the transgender community, like the attack on Congresswoman Nancy Mace from a few days ago. But you never hear the Biden-Harris regime talking about that.

Latest developments in Canada's war on Christians and Christianity

December 15, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I do like to keep an eye on how secular left countries are treating Christians, especially European countries and Canada. It's important to keep an eye on things so I can stay ahead of any threats. Well, Canada has been making continuous attacks on free speech and religious liberty since they elected Justin Trudeau, who leads the far-left Liberal Party of Canada. Let's take a look.

Here's the latest story from Christian Post:

> The mayor of a small town in Ontario, Canada, is facing a bank levy from his personal account following a legal battle with a pride group who compared their legal victory to sexual intercourse.
>
> Mayor Harold McQuaker of Emo, Ontario, had funds garnished from his personal bank account following his refusal to comply with a Human Rights Tribunal order after the governing body found that the town of Emo — with a population of just 1,400 — violated the Ontario Human Rights Code by not recognizing LGBT pride month.
>
> The decision stems from a legal case initiated by Borderland Pride, a local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) advocacy organization, which accused the township of discrimination for voting against an official pride month proclamation in 2020.
>
> The tribunal's ruling, delivered on Nov. 20, penalized McQuaker personally with a CA$5,000 fine (about $3533) and required him to undergo Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training. Additionally, the township itself was fined CA$10,000 (about $7066), and the two other town councilors who voted against the proclamation were also mandated to complete the same training.
>
> […]Borderland Pride took to social media to announce that they had successfully garnished the mayor's bank account.
>
> "Sure, sex is great, but have you ever garnished your mayor's bank account after he publicly refused to comply with a Tribunal's order to pay damages?" the group asked in a post on Facebook.

You might remember that these Human Rights Commissions and Human Rights Tribunals are staffed by secular left activists, and they are able to punish people who disagree with secular left dogma. Canada does not have any authoritative statement of rights and freedoms like we do. They have something on paper, but that doesn't apply when they want to go after Christians and conservatives. As I've blogged on before, if you disagree with the government, you're likely to face gag orders, bank account freezes, and even being violently ridden down by a policeman on a horse. And in Canada, the judges and

LGBT activists can trans your kid in a split second, and throw you in prison if you so much as voice dissent.

Here's another one from True North, which is my favorite source of news about Canada:

> A Canadian billboard company cancelled a contract with a Manitoba pro-life group, saying that the requested image "creates too much controversy" and that the company received "a lot of backlash" for similar designs in the past.
>
> […]The image featured a pregnant woman cradling her belly. The caption read, "Celebrate the gift of life!" and included Life Culture's website address. Penner told True North in an interview that the billboard was meant to remind people, in a time of widely accessible euthanasia and abortions, that "life and pregnancy is a gift."
>
> […]"Our government creates fear by pitting life and women's rights against each other. Businesses fear the legal and economic consequences if there's any indication they support life. Churches fear losing a charitable probation status…Individuals fear losing friends or acceptance," Penner said.

Now, you might think that Penner would be able to log a human rights complaint, but like I said, Christians and conservatives never, ever win those cases in Canada.

And here's an article from New York Post about the epidemic of church arsons in Canada:

> According to Olivia Torrone of the Catholic Civil Rights League (CCRL) who runs the Church Attacks Database, there have been at least 40 church arsons since the wave began in June 2021, and this is just Catholic churches.
>
> Non-Catholic churches are burning as well; in total nearly 120 churches in Canada have been vandalized, set ablaze, or burned to the ground, with a married couple living above one of them dying as a result. Yet, as of January 2024, only 12 people had been charged in relation to these — and just one person had been convicted.
>
> […]Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has given Canadians mixed messages on the fires, calling them "unacceptable and wrong" on the one hand, while on the other calling the motive for the attacks "real and fully understandable."

Church arson in Canada is "fully understandable" according to the Prime Minister of Canada. It's something Hitler might have said about Jewish synagogues, but that's just how Canada is now.

Right after clicking "Publish" a friend of the blog, David H. left a comment on Facebook with this story from the New York Post:

> Controversial psychologist Jordan Peterson has fled Canada as liberals push to pass legislation that he says will suppress free speech and turn the country into a "totalitarian hellhole."
>
> Speaking in a recent episode of his daughter's show, "The Mikhaila Peterson

> Podcast," Peterson said he opted to move to the US over the contentious bill, C-63, and ongoing feud with the College of Psychologists of Ontario.
>
> "The issue with the College of Psychologists is very annoying, to say the least, and the new legislation that the liberals are attempting to push through, Bill C-63, we'd all be living in a totalitarian hellhole if it passes," Peterson said.

Christians in America need to be vigilant about the secular left. They have a long history of using threats, coercion, and violence against their enemies. You can see it in the history of communist regimes, like Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, etc. And today in North Korea. Atheists have no rational foundation for behaving morally in his or her worldview. Anything is permissible.

Most atheists in America act better than their worldview allows, because we are still living in Christian culture. But once that Christian influence is dead, the real atheism will emerge, and we are already seeing the start of it in Canada.

Bible study: the importance of truth in religion

December 16, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting passage of the Bible. What do you all think the practical value of this passage is?

[1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

[2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

[3] he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

[4] Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

[6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

[7] Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[8] Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

[9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

[10] The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

[11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

[12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king."

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him."

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

[27] Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

[29] "As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

[30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

This passage is interesting to me because it shows the kind of attitude that God answers. The King in this passage was tired of hearing man-made stories from his servants – stories that were undoubtedly influenced by the servants desire to survive the King's wrath. The servants would only have told the King things that were vague and happy, so that they could never be proved wrong or found to be judgmental or offensive. But the King was tired of that. He wanted someone with authority to tell him the truth about the way the world was.

In the rest of the chapter, Daniel interprets the dream, and concludes by saying this: "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.". The King replies: "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

I think it is is going to be difficult for Christians living today to be able to tell people their dreams like that. But what we can do is talk about God's miracles as revealed by science and history. We can study astrophysics, biochemistry and history and we can explain what God did in creating and fine-tuning the universe for life, in sequencing amino acids into functioning proteins, in creating brand new body plans in the Cambrian explosion, in raising Jesus from the dead as a matter of historical record, and so on. We have to show how great God is to people who do not even think he exists, and without assuming that they believe in the Bible. And we have to do it by focusing on *what is true.*

Early last week, I got a message from a friend who was interested in a girl that he met on an online dating service. She claimed to be a Christian. My friend explained why he was so interested in some of the evidences I outlined above. She was not impressed. She said "I prefer to show people Christianity is true by not judging them, by being compassionate, by introducing them to a fun and affirming community". There was no emphasis on truth in her approach. In fact, any religious group could do those things and "establish" their religion as true, by appealing to feelings. But this is clearly not what the God of the Bible intends for people who seek him. He is a God of truth, and truth is established by logical reasoning and supporting evidence.

There are still people out there like the King who are looking for someone who can speak to them with authority. All it takes from us is a little studying, and we can be like Daniel, too. But we have to know what God has done from science and history, and speak with authority about how we can know that God has acted *supernaturally*. Authority to speak comes from having knowledge about what we are talking about, and knowledge comes from studying and debating with people we disagree with. Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer in the God of Israel, but he was still interested in truth. That won't always be the case, but it is the case for some people.

Does neuroscience provide support for physicalism or dualism?

December 17, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When it comes to the problem of mind, there are some people who maintain that the mind is just reducible to the physical brain. Those are physicalists, also known as materialists. And then there are those who defend dualism, which is the idea that you are a non-material soul, and you have a body (which includes your brain). Who is right? Well, let's take a look at the science and see.

This post is from Mind Matters, and it's written by Dr. Michael Egnor.

He says:

> Neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield (1891–1976), who pioneered epilepsy surgery at the Montreal Neurological Institute in the mid-20th century, asked this very question: What does the brain do? He explored the question during eleven hundred "awake" brain operations over four decades. He needed patients to be awake so that he could communicate with them, to be sure that he was not damaging vital tissue while removing the tissue that was prone to epileptic seizures.
>
> Penfield could do brain surgery while a patient is awake because the brain has no pain sensors. A local anesthetic (similar to the novocaine used in dentists' offices) ensures that there is no pain in the scalp either during the surgery. Neurosurgeons still do this type of surgery today.
>
> While epilepsy patients were awake and their responses to brain stimulation could be observed, he mapped their brains using electrical probes to find and remove seizure foci but also to determine which parts of the patients' brains did what. He could answer questions like "What part of the brain makes us move our muscles?", "What part of the brain enables us to see?" and "What part of the brain enables us to have memories and emotions?"
>
> What fascinated Penfield is not so much what he found—i.e., which parts of the brain caused movement, perception, memory and emotions—but what he didn't find.
>
> Penfield could find no part of the brain that, when stimulated, caused patients to think abstractly—to reason, think logically, do mathematics or philosophy or exercise free will.
>
> He noticed the same thing about epileptic seizures as about stimulation during surgery. Patients who were having seizures did all sorts of things—they jerked their muscles, they saw flashes of light or had unusual sensations on their skin. They even occasionally had specific memories and emotions. Then they fell unconscious.

> But patients never had intellectual seizures. That is, they never had seizures that caused them to reason, think logically, or do mathematics or philosophy. There are no “calculus seizures” that cause them to uncontrollably take first derivatives. There are no philosophical seizures that cause them to uncontrollably contemplate Plato’s Republic.
>
> Penfield asked the obvious question: why did brain stimulation only cause certain mental operations, like movement, perception, memory and emotion to happen, but not other ones, like abstract thought and free will?

It sounds like the brain is responsible for low-level interactions with the body itself. It reminds me of “device driver” software, which allows higher software to interact with hardware devices, like graphics cards and hard drives. What the progress of neuroscience seems to show is that the brain is doing device driver work, but something else is doing higher operations. And that something else is what substance dualists like me would call a “mind”.

There are lots of good philosophical arguments for minds, such as consciousness, direct first-person access to your thoughts, persistent identity over time that does not depend on your (changing) physical body, the intentionality problem (thinking *about* something else is not something that a material system can do), as well as free will. And there are more of those, too.

But it’s nice to see that there are scientific arguments as well. By doing the neuroscience, we can find out what the brain controls, and what it doesn’t control.

I thought this part of the article was interesting:

> Penfield started out as a materialist, like most scientists do, but, as he learned more about the mind and the brain he became a dualist. He concluded in his book Mystery of the Mind (1975) that the mind is something separate from the brain, and that there are aspects of the mind that don’t come from the brain but are spiritual in nature. As he put it, “The mind must be viewed as a basic element in itself . . . That is to say, it has a continuing existence.” (p. xxi.)

The article mentions a new book coming out in June 2025, entitled “The Immortal Mind”. And I’ve already contact one of the authors of the book to see if we can get them to come on the Knight and Rose Show to tell us about all of this scientific research. I hope that will help our listeners to be able to have good evidence-based conversations about this fascinating area of disagreement between theists and atheists.

New study: the majority (69%) of divorces are initiated by women

December 18, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This new report from Live Science gives us some numbers about who initiates divorces most frequently.

It says:

> Women are more likely than men to initiate divorce in the United States, but they are no more likely than men to initiate breakups in a dating relationship, a new study finds.
>
> "The breakups of nonmarital heterosexual relationships in the U.S. are quite gender-neutral and fairly egalitarian," study author Michael Rosenfeld, an associate professor of sociology at Stanford University, said in a statement. "This was a surprise because the only prior research that had been done on who wanted the breakup was research on marital divorces."
>
> Previous research had found that women are more likely to initiate divorce, at least in the United States, Europe and Australia. In the new study, Rosenfeld compared divorces to nonmarital breakups, in an effort to understand the driving forces behind each type of breakup.
>
> To investigate, he looked at data from the 2009 to 2015 waves of How Couples Meet and Stay Together, a nationally representative survey spearheaded by Rosenfeld and his colleagues. The new study includes 2,262 adults, ages 19 to 64, who reported having opposite-sex partners in 2009. By 2015, 371 of the participants had broken up or gotten divorced.
>
> Women initiated 69 percent of the 92 divorces, Rosenfeld found. But there was no statistically significant difference between women and men when it came to nonmarital breakups, regardless of whether they were living together, he said.

The Ruth Institute reports on a few studies:

> Female unions seem to have the highest divorce rates, followed by male unions, followed by opposite sex unions.
>
> "For Sweden, the divorce risk for partnerships of men is 50% higher than the risk for heterosexual marriages, and that **the divorce risk for female partnerships is nearly double that for men."**
>
> "For Norway, **divorce risks are 77% higher in lesbian partnerships than in those of gay men."** (The Norwegian data did not include a comparison with opposite sex couples.)
>
> In California, the data is collected a little differently. The study looks at couples who describe themselves as partners, whether same sex or opposite sex. The

> study asks the question, how likely is it that these couples live in the same household five years later. **Male couples were only 30% as likely, while female couples were less that 25% as likely, as heterosexual married couples, to be residing in the same household for five years.**

It really seems as if there is something about women in particular that causes them to be unable to keep to commitments *in their actions*, despite what they might say *with their words*.

So I am seeing a couple of problems in young, unmarried women that might explain this.

Feminism is bad

First, there is the feminism. Feminism was the driving force behind no-fault divorce. Today, young unmarried women are being taught to view marriage as stifling to their freedom. So if they do get married, they are often resolved that marriage should not affect their freedom in any way. That is just not the way marriage works, though – both spouses need to be equally ready to have their freedom infringed upon by things that HAVE TO GET DONE. Lots of things that have to get done will not be fun, thrilling or amusing – and that's why it's good to be prepared to do them before you marry.

My friend Dina says that she only knows one happily married couple from among her friends. The most frequent case she sees is wife is working in order to pay for big house, two cars, etc. and wife is denying husband sex, which makes him disengage from the marriage. A working wife tends to not be as responsive to the needs of husband and kids as a non-working wife, probably in part due to work stress. There is an epidemic of sex-withholding by women, and it causes men to disengage from marriage because they feel unloved. Although women tend to rebel against the idea that the man's bad behavior is their fault, and that there is a "contractual" nature to marriage, that is how marriage works. You cannot stay married, women, by just doing whatever you feel like, and NOT doing whatever you DON'T feel like. Men will disengage when their needs are not supplied, and that's no fault of theirs. It's your fault. Denying relationship obligations causes men to underperform.

Feminism is often linked closely to "independence". There is a lot of confusion over what the word independence means among young, unmarried women. A man uses that word to mean "lack of financial dependence on parents, the state, etc. because of good decisions in education, career and finances". But a woman means "not having to care about the needs of a man and the leadership of a man, or the needs of children while still getting what I want from men and children". That attitude is not compatible with life-long married love.

Emotions are bad

Second, emotions. In my experience, young, unmarried women are less likely to have reasoned out their own life plan in a practical step-by-step manner. Instead, they tend to do whatever makes them feel good moment-by-moment without any realistic plan. One Christian woman was recently telling me how attracted she was to an atheist moral relativist who had been promiscuous from the age of 15. She explained that her emotions

were kindled by his GQ looks, 6-pack abs, mysterious European accent, seductive manner and witty conversations. Although she is apparently a Christian, she doesn't take Christianity seriously in her decisions about relationships and marriage.

Peer-approval and culture play a large part in determining what women think is attractive in a man, as well as their life goals, and women are driven by these cultural standards more than men who focus on honoring their commitments *regardless* of their emotions. In my experience, women struggle to make their day-to-day actions match their socially-acceptable goal of getting married "some day". Marriage is for "some day" for today's busy women, but fun and thrills is for today. "Live in the moment", they often tell me. If you try to talk to them about roles and responsibilities in a marriage, they will withdraw and rebel. But marriage is about each spouse doing his or her job, and feeling content about what the couple is building together. You can't make life-long married love from emotional craziness and pursuing fun and thrills with seductive promiscuous moral relativist atheists.

How to pick a woman who won't divorce you

Young men, I advise you to choose wives who have had to do things that they did not feel like doing. That can involve things like getting a STEM degree, getting a job in STEM, moving out of her parents' house, getting a "boring" job that helps her pay off her debts, keeping commitments when she doesn't feel like it, and caring for other people and even animals.

Basically, the more the woman has ground down any narcissism and hedonism she may have, by having to do nasty calculus and horrid lab work, the better. The more accustomed she is to constraints, responsibilities, expectations and obligations, the less likely it is that she'll divorce you for unhappiness. And all of this goes for men, as well. STEM degree, STEM job, save money, serve others, give to charity.

Marriage is not the time for people to be carried away by their emotions. It's an enterprise, and it works when both people are rational, practical, hard-working and self-controlled.

Casey Luskin and Fuz Rana: Nobel Prize supports intelligent design

December 19, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Exciting news! The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine has been announced, and the winning discovery supports intelligent design. Do you remember a while back when we had Dr. Casey Luskin and Dr. Fazale Rana on the Knight and Rose Show to discuss junk DNA and the origin of life? Well, they discussed the Nobel Prize discovery with Lenny Esposito on a new Come Reason podcast episode.

Here's the description from Evolution News, written by Casey Luskin:

> What's the biggest science story of the year? My vote goes to the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, awarded for the discovery of function for a type of "junk DNA" that produces microRNA (miRNA), a crucial molecule involved in gene regulation. That so-called genetic junk would turn out to be functional was a prediction of intelligent design going back to the 1990s. On that, ID has been vindicated over and over again, now by the Nobel Committee. Our colleagues Richard Sternberg and Bill Dembski were early predictors, as critics of what Jonathan Wells called in a 2011 book, The Myth of Junk DNA.
>
> […]Not only was this 2024 Nobel Prize awarded for the discovery that a type of junk DNA is actually extremely important (it produces microRNAs that regulate gene expression), but we see that the evolutionary "junk DNA" paradigm probably hindered acceptance of this groundbreaking discovery.

Here's the video of the podcast:

Here are the topics:

- Introduction
- The Mystery of Protein Creation in the Cell
- Replication, Transcription, and Translation
- The Central Dogma and its Oversimplification
- Junk DNA Isn't Junk After All
- The Human Genome Project and The Revolution In Understanding DNA
- Ambrose and Ruvkin's Discovery – Micro RNA
- Micro RNA and protein regulation
- The Complex Interactions That Shows Design in the Cell
- Pseudo Genes and Their Importance For the Cell
- ID-Based Biology Finds Answers That Evolutionary Biology Misses
- Does the Discovery of Micro RNAs show it Isn't Mutations That Provide New information In DNA?
- The Evolutionary Paradigm Is Getting Harder to Explain

- We See In the Cell Just What Designers Do
- Predictions From an ID Paradigm
- What The Nobel Means to ID as “Real Science”
- Are There Any implications for the RNA World Hypothesis?

If you missed our previous episodes of the Knight and Rose Show with Dr. Casey Luskin and Dr. Fuz Rana, here are the links:

- Casey Luskin: Debunking the Myth of Junk DNA
- Chemist Fazale Rana Investigates the Origin of Life

Knight and Rose Show #56: Making the Most of Your Youth

December 20, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 56 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose offer advice to children, teenagers and young adults on getting the most out of your youth. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose offer advice to children, teenagers and young adults about how to get the most out of their youth. They talk about their own experiences, positive and negative, and what they learned from those experiences that may prove useful to others. They also discuss best practices in the areas of education, work, finances, character formation, spiritual formation, sports, and relationships.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show (with timestamps) provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 56:

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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The seven fatal flaws of moral relativism

December 21, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Moral relativism is the view that moral values and moral duties do not exist in reality, but only exist as opinions in people's minds. When you ask a moral relativist where the belief that stealing is wrong comes from, he may tell you that it is his opinion, or that it is the opinion of most people in his society. But he cannot tell you that stealing is wrong independent of what people think, because morality (on moral relativism) is just personal preference.

So what's wrong with it?

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Salvo magazine web site.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like "It's wrong to push your own morality on others". This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don't let them make any moral statements without asking them first to ground morality on their worldview. And that's because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can't answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people's personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It's all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be "it depends". It depends on the person who is speaking because it's a subjective claim, not an objective

claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

So, practically speaking, everyone has to decide whether right and wrong are real – objectively real. If they are objectively real, that means that there is a right way for human beings to behave, and a wrong way for human beings to behave. It means that things that are really objectively wrong like rape are wrong for all times and all places, regardless of what individuals and societies might think of it. In order to rationally ground that kind of morality, you have to have a foundation for it – a cosmic Designer who decides for all times and places what the conduct of his creatures ought to be. And then our moral duties are duties that are owed to this Designer. It is like playing football or playing a boardgame – the person who invents the game decides the rules. But if there is no designer of the game, then there are no rules.

Without a designer of the universe, the question of how we ought to act is decided by people in different times and different places. It's arbitrary and variable, and therefore it doesn't do the job of prescribing behavior authoritatively. It's very important not to get involved in any serious endeavor with another person or persons if they don't have a sense of right and wrong being absolute and fixed. A belief in objective moral values is a necessary pre-requisite for integrity.

Dr. Tim Stratton on the Apologetics 315 podcast to discuss free will and divine sovereignty

December 22, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I really enjoyed this interview of Dr. Stratton from the Apologetics 315 podcast. I've had non-Christians in previous workplaces raise the problem of free will vs divine sovereignty. After all, they say, how can humans be responsible for their choices if God is all-powerful? If God is all-powerful, then surely he must control everything, and there's no space for free will. Right?

The episode can be heard here.

Here is the show description:

> In this episode, Brian Auten and Chad Gross interview Tim Stratton of Free Thinking Ministries. They discuss the topic of Molinism as it relates to God's sovereignty, human free will, and why it matters. Tim's book on the subject is Human Freedom, Divine Knowledge, and Mere Molinism: A Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Philosophical Analysis.
>
> 1:03 – Intro to Tim Stratton
> 1:41 – Why Molinism on the podcast?
> 3:20 – Welcome to Tim Stratton
> 3:54 – How Tim became a Christian
> 9:37 – God as a maximally great being
> 10:43 – Tim's dissertation
> 11:18 – What does Tim find compelling about Molinism?
> 12:42 – The Mere Molinism Facebook group
> 16:14 – What is the problem that Molinism is trying to solve?
> 22:47 – How to briefly summarize Molinism?
> 23:41 – Defining terms: Middle knowledge and counterfactuals
> 31:39 – Scriptures that affirm counterfactuals / middle knowledge
> 41:53 – Why us the term "mere" Molinism?
> 46:22 – Can Molinism be applied to salvation?
> 48:21 – Does this chess analogy work?
> 52:10 – Objection: Molinism is not derived from scripture
> 58:23 – Objection: Who cares? That's just for scholars and theologians
> 1:02:45 – How Molinism saved Tim's marriage
> 1:06:20 – Where to find Tim's resources

Tim Stratton's reconciliation of divine sovereignty and free will is interesting to me. He keeps God as the sole initiator of salvation. And that's good. But it also makes sure that human who resist God's leading are responsible for their choice to resist God, and that's also good. We want salvation to be 100% by faith alone in Christ alone. But we don't want

God to be the cause of people not being saved. On Stratton's view, God wants everyone to be saved. If anyone is saved, it's because God did ALL THE WORK to lead them and secure their salvation with the death of Jesus on the cross. But, on Stratton's view, humans do get a choice – the choice to trust God or not. And so, if a person is not saved, then it's their fault – not God's.

If you hear this challenge from non-Christians, be sure to listen to the podcast. You can find a written version of his argument on his web site, Free Thinking Ministries.

William Lane Craig lectures on the historical Jesus at Columbia University

December 23, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the other software engineers at work is always finding interesting sermons and lectures to listen to. On Friday afternoon, things were a bit slow, so she messaged me a lecture featuring Dr. William Lane Craig, talking on "Who Was Jesus?" at Columbia University. I wanted to encourage her, so I put it on to listen as well. I liked it so much, I wrote out a summary below to go with it.

Here is the lecture:

Description:

Dr. William Lane Craig unpacks questions surrounding Jesus' resurrection and the historical accuracy of the biblical claims. Columbia University, 2009.

And my outline:

Different views of Jesus:

- Jewish view of Jesus
- Muslim view of Jesus
- skeptical historian view of Jesus
- what did Jesus think about himself?
- Jesus didn't write anything of his own
- best sources are the records of Jesus followers
- problem: how do we know these records are accurate
- maybe stories of Jesus' divinity emerged over time

New tools from the Renaissance:

- historiography
- textual criticism
- investigate Jesus as a historical figure
- same tools are used for other historical figures

Sources:

- Christian
- Jewish
- Roman
- Many more sources than other figures of antiquity

External sources:

- confirm what the gospels say, but don't say anything new

Treating the Bible as a collection of ancient documents

- not using the Bible to prove the Bible is divine
- just treating the books as historical documents

New Testament

- a collection of the earliest documents
- much later documents about Jesus not included
- later documents not written by eyewitnesses

Skeptical scholars:

- ignore the earliest sources
- focus on the later sources
- result is a more radical left-friendly Jesus

Burden of proof

- are the gospels assumed reliable until proven unreliable?
- are the gospels assumed unreliable until proven reliable?

Five reasons to assume the New Testament is reliable

1. Insufficient time for legendary influences to erase the historical core

- the gap between the events and the sources is much shorter than other comparable sources
- Greek and Roman sources are at least 1-2 generations from the events they record
- Gospels written down and circulated within first generation after the events they record
- the eyewitnesses were alive at the time they were written down

2. Gospels are not the same genre as folk tales or urban legends

- Gospels talk about real people who actually lived
- Gospels talk about real places excavated by archaeologists

3. Oral tradition in first century Jewish society

- Jewish culture valued reliable transmission of religious tradition
- Memorization of long passages and entire books

4. Restraints on the embellishment of traditions about Jesus

- The apostles and other eyewitnesses could correct embellishments

5. Gospel writers make testable statements that are found to be true

- Luke is the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts
- In Acts, Luke accompanies with the eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus
- Acts contains many historical details accurate to the times and places he writes about
- Luke's gospel is in accord with archaeological discoveries made since

It's reasonable to accept the general reliability of the Gospels, unless they are found unreliable

Historical basis for facets of Jesus

1. Unique Son of God

- historical critics claim that the divinity of Jesus developed over time
- why would monotheistic Jews contradict their monotheism by inventing a divine Jesus?
- the only reasonsable answer is that Jesus claimed divinity for himself
- His followers accepted it because Jesus provided reasons to believe
- Mark 12:1-8
  Earliest gospel reveals Jesus' self-understanding as God's "only beloved son"
- Matthew 11:27
  "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." This story is also in Luke. Source is "Q", an early set of traditions common to Matthew and Luke
- Mark 13:32
  Jesus sees himself as above humans and angels, but subordinate to God the Father

Why would anyone take Jesus seriously, unless he was able to provide evidence?

2. Jesus' miracles

- Jesus' miracle stories are in all four sources
- The only reason to reject them is because of a philosophical bias against the supernatural

3. Trial and crucifixion

- Crucifixion narrative is in the Gospels, Paul's letters, Acts
- Also confirmed by Josephus and Roman historians
- Historians across the ideological spectrum affirm the crucifixion

Why was Jesus crucified?

- Doesn't fit with the skeptical view that Jesus was uncontroversial and had few followers

4. Jesus' resurrection

- Jesus resurrection is the best explanation for historical facts accepted by diverse majority of historians

1. Burial location known to friends and enemies, and corpse would refute the resurrection
2. Tomb was found empty by a group of Jesus' women followers
3. Post-mortem appearances to individuals and groups, friends, skeptics and enemies
4. Original disciples became convinced that Jesus rose from dead counter to their own interests

- The facts are accepted by a majority of scholars across the ideological spectrum
- Dr. Craig's debate with a scholar who invented an unknown, identical twin brother who was separated from Jesus at birth
- Jewish historian Pinchas Lapide affirms the resurrection of Jesus as a historical event

Then there is a period of question and answer, which I did not find useful, because the questions seemed to be more about the needs and feelings of Christians, rather than about the facts presented by Dr. Craig, or about how these facts survive in debates on university campuses. Facts don't care about your feelings.

It never hurts to listen to William Lane Craig. If you listen enough, you can remember his points when you get the opportunity. In college, all of my friends at Crusade could do his opening speech from his debates on God's existence from memory.

New study: gender-affirming surgery associated with suicide attempts

December 24, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My understanding of how the secular left pushing transitioning kids onto parents is that the teacher, the guidance counselor, the health care workers, etc. tell the parents "would you rather have a dead girl than a live boy?" This approach is in keeping with the compassionate "don't judge" worldview, which emphasizes emotions over moral standards and truth. But does it work?

Here is the latest study that I found on Pubmed, entitled "Risk of Suicide and Self-Harm Following Gender-Affirmation Surgery". (archived)

The Abstract says:

> **Introduction**
>
> With the growing acceptance of transgender individuals, the number of gender affirmation surgeries has increased. Transgender individuals face elevated depression rates, leading to an increase in suicide ideation and attempts. This study evaluates the risk of suicide or self-harm associated with gender affirmation procedures.
>
> **Methods**
>
> This retrospective study utilized de-identified patient data from the TriNetX (TriNetX, LLC, Cambridge, MA) database, involving 56 United States healthcare organizations and over 90 million patients. The study involved four cohorts: cohort A, adults aged 18-60 who had gender-affirming surgery and an emergency visit (N = 1,501); cohort B, control group of adults with emergency visits but no gender-affirming surgery (N = 15,608,363); and cohort C, control group of adults with emergency visits, tubal ligation or vasectomy, but no gender-affirming surgery (N = 142,093). Propensity matching was applied to cohorts A and C. Data from February 4, 2003, to February 4, 2023, were analyzed to examine suicide attempts, death, self-harm, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) within five years of the index event. A secondary analysis involving a control group with pharyngitis, referred to as cohort D, was conducted to validate the results from cohort C.
>
> **Results**
>
> Individuals who underwent gender-affirming surgery had a 12.12-fold higher suicide attempt risk than those who did not (3.47% vs. 0.29%, RR 95% CI 9.20-15.96, $p < 0.0001$). Compared to the tubal ligation/vasectomy controls, the risk was 5.03-fold higher before propensity matching and remained significant at 4.71-fold after matching (3.50% vs. 0.74%, RR 95% CI 2.46-9.024, $p < 0.0001$) for the gender affirmation patients with similar results with the pharyngitis

> controls.
>
> **Conclusion**
>
> Gender-affirming surgery is significantly associated with elevated suicide attempt risks, underlining the necessity for comprehensive post-procedure psychiatric support.

This reminds me of how doctors in gender-bender clinics see their work. Are they helping children? Or are they virtue-signaling to parents about how much more moral they are than parents?

Here is a story from Daily Wire about that:

> "It's a lot of money," VUMC Clinic for Transgender Health's Dr. Shayne Sebold Taylor said at one Medicine Grand Rounds lecture, video reveals. "These surgeries make a lot of money."
>
> Taylor noted that a "chest reconstruction" can bring in $40,000 per patient, and someone "just on routine hormone treatment, who I'm only seeing a few times a year, can bring in several thousand dollars … and actually makes money for the hospital."
>
> Citing the Philadelphia Center for Transgender Surgery, Taylor said vaginoplasty surgeries can generate $20,000, gushing that it "has to be an underestimate," since hospital stay, anesthesia, post-op visits, and other add-ons are not included in the total.
>
> "And the female-to-male bottom surgeries, these are huge money makers," the doctor continued, adding that such surgeries could bring in "up to $100,000" for the hospital.
>
> Some clinics are "entirely" "supported" financially by such phalloplasty surgeries, Taylor boasted.
>
> "These surgeries are labor intensive, there are a lot of follow-ups, they require a lot of our time, and they make money," she emphasized. "They make money for the hospital."

The interesting thing about these stories is how often it's white progressive women doing the virtue-signaling, and collecting the money for their new cars, traveling and cosmetic surgeries.

I recently spoke to my doctor about my concerns that medicine was becoming too politicized, and that their motivations seemed to be to follow the priorities of politicians and special interest groups. He actually lost his temper, and insisted that doctors are guided by "evidence" in every respect, and that people who oppose doctors are guided by "social media". He was quite upset.

That might be the case for him, but I don't think it's unreasonable for patients to ask their doctors what's guiding their decisions.

Did the early church invent the divinity of Jesus over a long period of time?

December 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus? When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography. The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

[4] Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

[5] Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

[6] These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

[7] Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

[8] Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[9] Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

[4]So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

[5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

[6]yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

[5]Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6]Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

[7]but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

[8]And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

[9]Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above

every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The “Q” source for Matthew and Luke

Here’s Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier “Q” source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

For Christmas Day, let’s remember George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

December 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington’s line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington’s retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington’s army at White Plains, New York,

> British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after

> months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
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> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
>
> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.

> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
>
> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
>
> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

My gameplay videos of The Troop, a turn-based tactical wargame

December 25, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Since it's Christmas Day, I decided to play a new turn-based tactical wargame that was gifted to me by Desert Rose, who co-hosts the Knight and Rose Show podcast with me. I really enjoy reading military history, and learning about strategy and tactics. And in order to learn from a different angle, I enjoy playing realistic (but not gory) military simulations. So today I'll show you what it looks like.

First, here's the description of the game itself, which was developed by Giant Flame, and published by PLA Studios, based in London, England:

On the morning of the 6th June 1944 the Western Allies began the largest seaborne invasion in the history of warfare. D-Day would mark the start of a vicious campaign to wrestle North West Europe from German control. The following months would see the ancient fields, farms and villages serve as a battleground for new, lethal weapons that would become legendary.

The Troop follows the campaign of British and Canadian forces as they face the German Heer and SS in Normandy. Take command of infantry, motorised and armoured units in desperate tactical turn-based combat against an AI opponent that is challenging and unpredictable, but fair and fallible. Play as British/Canadian or German forces across over 30 maps and 4 play modes.

Simple, complete control – The Troop embraces the best traditions of classic tabletop war gaming combined with the interactivity and excitement the digital format affords. You have complete control over your units' actions; tanks will not expose their weak side armour with unexpected pathing, hidden guns will not reveal their positions by firing prematurely, infantry will not flee inexplicably when victory is a few heroic paces away. You are free to take your time… but any mistakes are yours and yours alone.

The Troop contains stylised depictions of casualties being sustained in combat including representations of injury and death. The Troop does NOT contain any depictions of gore, blood or wounds.

I am a huge fan of games like Combat Mission, Steel Panthers, and Close Combat, and I have been delighted to see that The Troop is an even better game than all of my previous favorites. It's the perfect game for me to put the lessons I learned from reading military history into practice.

Regarding the game mechanics, it is an I-go, you-go turn-based system on a hex map. Infantry units can move up to 4 hexes, but if they move 2 only, then they can remain prone. If they move 4 then they cannot fire. The more they move, the less accurate their fire. Also, if they were shot at and suppressed by enemy fire in a previous turn, then they will be less accurate. If an armored unit fires it's main gun, then it ends its turn and cannot move further. This game models terrain effects, line of sight, smoke, armor

penetration, morale, opportunity fire, and other features of realistic warfare.

So, in the two gameplay videos below, I am playing as the British armed forces, just after the June 1944 D-Day landings in Normandy, France. The first map is a beach landing, and the second map is a bocage / urban setting. In each case, my forces were pre-selected, but in other scenarios, you can purchase forces with points.

Here is the first scenario I recorded, “Per Mare, Per Terram”:

And here is the second scenario I recorded, “Crossroads”:

I posted these videos on my personal channel, to keep them separate from the Knight and Rose Show uploads. I want to thank Desert Rose again for gifting me this game. I hope that you all had a happy Christmas, got a great gift, and had as much fun as I did playing The Troop. If you have a Steam account, and want to get the game, it’s on sale for a few more days.

If you like these videos, let me know in the comments on YouTube, so I know to make more of them. It’s fun to play these scenarios, but it’s also fun to look at the maps and read them and think about them. It’s fun to be able to read terrain and make plans, and then make decisions, and see those decisions produce a result. I think it’s a very masculine behavior. It certainly appeals to my male nature to make plans, carry them out, and see the good result. I love it when a plan comes together.

By the way, I got myself a solitaire wargame for Christmas, as well: Carrier Battles: Philippine Sea, which you can read about on Boardgame Geek. It’s highly rated, and I am looking forward to doing the tutorial missions over the holidays, and then playing a real game.

A scientist’s path from hard atheism to Christianity

December 26, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

UPDATE: We just posted our interview with Dr. Günter Bechly on the Knight and Rose Show podcast. Subscribe to the Knight and Rose Show wherever you listen to podcasts, and we also upload them to YouTube, Rumble and Odysee.

Lately, when I ask parents and church leaders how a person comes to Christ, the responses I get most often is that people need to be invited into a welcoming community first and foremost. To me, this is a very strange answer. When I think about Jesus working miracles so that people who didn’t believe in him would have reasons to trust him, I don’t see this emphasis on welcoming community.

Along those lines, I found a very interesting faith story at Salvo magazine, written by a prominent paleontologist named Dr. Günter Bechly.

First, let’s see his biography, though:

Günter Bechly, PhD, is a German paleontologist, senior fellow with Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture, and senior research scientist at Biologic Institute in Washington state. He has written about 160 scientific publications, described over 180 new species, and been advisor for 3 BBC nature documentaries.

Here is the captivating introduction to his faith story:

> When atheists hear conversion stories that begin with, “I was a staunch atheist and then . . . ”, they tend to roll their eyes and doubt the claim. However, this is exactly what happened to me. I had been a 150-percent atheist and materialist for almost forty years before I embarked on a spiritual journey that ultimately, after many twists and turns, led me to belief in God and Christianity. I had no life crisis, no epiphany, and no spiritual experiences at all. It was the result of purely rational, scientific, philosophical, and historical arguments that gradually changed my mind as a scientist. Here is my story.
>
> I grew up in a medium-sized town in southwestern Germany, where the Mercedes-Benz factory is located. My parents were both irreligious. My mother was simply not interested in religion, and my father was agnostic. We never talked about religion or God, and we never prayed or visited any church service. My parents pushed to opt me out of religion class in school, which was then still compulsory, resulting in my being ridiculed as the village atheist.
>
> I first saw churches from the inside as a young adult, but it was only as a tourist taking photos.

He had a fabulous career and a dream job in paleontology, but he started looking for answers when he realized the problems with naturalism:

> It all started in my late thirties when I became interested in modern physics. I read popular books by Stephen Hawking, Richard Feynman, Michio Kaku, John

> Barrow, David Deutsch, Brian Greene, and others. I was fascinated by the weirdness of quantum mechanics and relativity theory, as well as the mind-blowing implications of modern cosmology.
>
> While I had started from a materialist, clockwork-universe perspective, I soon discovered certain implications of modern physics that did not fit well with such an obsolete, 19th-century worldview. I stumbled upon further problems, such as the questions of causality, the ontology of time and space, the status of mathematics, and the laws of nature. This brought me even deeper into metaphysics with issues like the problem of universals, the one and the many, the persistence of diachronic (personal) identity, free will, and the hard problem of consciousness.
>
> I soon realized that materialism is untenable, and I searched for a new worldview that could explain these problems and make sense of the world we experience.

The first step in Dr. Bechly's journey was investigating evidence for design in the universe, and finding it compelling:

> Around this time, I also came into contact with intelligent design theory, though for totally different reasons. I was the project leader for a large special exhibition on evolution at our museum for Darwin Year 2009, which celebrated the double event of Darwin's 200th birthday and the 150th anniversary of the first publication of his magnum opus On the Origin of Species. In preparing for this exhibit, I read some books by Darwin critics, because we wanted to refute and mock them.
>
> This did not go as intended. I was surprised that the arguments of the ID theorists were nothing like the distorted picture painted by their opponents. The more I studied ID arguments, the more I became a critic of Neo-Darwinism and an ID proponent myself.
>
> I was still into process philosophy when I embraced intelligent design theory, so my support for ID had nothing to do with religion, but only with scientific arguments. I had come to see that Neo-Darwinism simply fails to explain the diversity and complexity of life and that these are better explained by an infusion of information from outside the system. The information does not have to come from a divine, miraculous intervention, but of course that would be compatible with such a view.

So, he accepts design in the universe at this point, but still doesn't accept theism, and even further away from Christianity.

But he's not done exploring:

> So I finally decided to check out the belief system that was the last thing I wanted to be true: Classical theism. I had previously read all the New Atheists' books, but even then, as a non-theist and fan of the authors, I had found them

> quite shallow and unsatisfying.

He goes on to explain how he explored the arguments for classical theism, and then the specific evidences for Christianity, such as prophecy and the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. Eventually, he just went for the worldview that answered the questions raised by the progress of science, that also solved the metaphysical problems he had encountered.

You can read the whole thing, if you're looking for a wonderful testimony filled with lots of apologetics. I wish that this testimony was seen as the "normal" testimony by Christian parents and pastors. Then we would be taking a completely different approach to parenting and church. We would put the emphasis on evidence.

Gay couple gets 100-year prison sentence for r@ping adopted boys

December 27, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Many people today would never think to post anything critical of LGBT. That includes many "conservative" Christians and even many popular Christian apologists. But, I have to speak about these things, because I have to defend the Bible on every point where it disagrees with the culture. It doesn't make me feel good. It doesn't make me popular. But it has to be done.

Here is the latest news story from Christian Post:

> A same-sex Georgia couple who pleaded guilty to aggravated sodomy against their two adopted sons were recently sentenced to 100 years in prison without the possibility of parole.
>
> Zachary and William Zulock, a wealthy couple who adopted two boys with the help of a now-defunct Christian adoption agency, faced sentences for multiple other charges, including child molestation, sexual exploitation of children and incest, according to a press release from the Alcovy Judicial Circuit District Attorney Randy McGinley.
>
> "These two defendants truly created a house of horrors and put their extremely dark desires above everything and everyone else," McGinley said.
>
> […]Judge Jeffrey L. Foster sentenced both men on Dec. 19 to a century in prison, followed by life on probation.

I remember prior to the legalization of same-sex marriage, many people on the secular left put yellow equal signs on their cars, to signal their support for same-sex marriage. And not just famous atheists from Seattle, Washington who like to talk about "objective morality". Even many "compassionate" Christians put these yellow equal signs on their cars. Big corporations slapped the yellow equal signs on their web sites, too. They signaled support for homosexual behaviors and lifestyles. The people who endorsed same-sex marriage were saying that gay relationships are the exact same thing as opposite sex married couples. And that gay couples should be allowed to adopt children not biologically related to them, just like heterosexual married couples.

Now, if you look in the Bible, you'll find that God doesn't see things the same way as "don't judge" atheists or as "just love everyone" Christians or as big "celebrate diversity" corporations.

Here's what Jesus says about marriage.

Matthew 19:1-11:

> 1 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.

> 2 And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.
>
> 3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?”
>
> 4 He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
>
> 5 and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?
>
> 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

To be a Christian, minimally, is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That means that we accept what Jesus teaches, on whatever he teaches about. We don’t overturn the teachings of Jesus in order to make people who are rebelling against God feel better about their rebellion. It is central to the Christian worldview that Christians care more about what God thinks of them than what non-Christians think of them. In fact, Christians are supposed to be willing to endure shaming, blaming, and even suffering, rather than side with non-Christians against God’s authority.

By the way, it’s not the first time that we’ve had stories like this about gay men adopting boys.

Not the first time:

This story reminds me of the Two Gay Dads story that I wrote about previously, where a white female progressive journalist did a fawning story about two gay dads and their new boy adopted from Russia. She titled her article, “Two Dads are Better than One”. She was so proud of herself for being all affirming, tolerant and compassionate. Same-sex marriage is something to be proud of, she said, because children do better with two gay dads.

But then, the Sydney Morning Herald reported how this example of gay adoption went awry.

Excerpt:

> Standing before an American court convicted of the most heinous of child sex crimes, the double lives of Australian citizen Mark J. Newt0n and his long-term boyfriend Peter Tru0ng were laid bare.
>
> […]Moments later Newt0n was sentenced to 40 years in prison for sexually abusing the boy he and Truong, 36 from Queensland, had ‘‘adopted’’ after paying a Russian woman $8000 to be their surrogate in 2005.
>
> Police believe the pair had adopted the boy ‘‘for the sole purpose of exploitation’’. The abuse began just days after his birth and over six years the couple travelled the world, offering him up for sex with at least eight men, recording the abuse and uploading the footage to an international syndicate known as the Boy Lovers Network.

> […]Evidence before the court revealed the abuse began before the couple returned to Australia. One video is said to show Newt0n performing a sex act on the boy when he was less than two weeks old.
>
> Judge Barker said the pair brainwashed the child to believe the sexual abuse was normal. Newt0n was also said to have trained the boy to deny any inappropriate behaviour if he was ever questioned by authorities.
>
> Newt0n and Truong came to the attention of police in August 2011 after their connections to three men arrested over the possession of child exploitation material came to light. The couple had visited the three men in the US, New Zealand and Germany with their son.
>
> […]Newt0n and Truong claimed they were being targeted because they were homosexual.

I could show you a dozen examples like that without even trying. Democrat judge in Wisconsin. Duke University administrator. Penn State University coach. USC professor. Head of a Scottish youth organization. San Francisco Human Rights Commission staffer. Same-sex marriage activists. Seattle mayor. Co-founder of g4y advocacy organizations. Designers of education curriculums designed to sexualize children. It’s everywhere and it happens all the time. Children don’t have any rights, only selfish adults have rights. This is the core belief of the secular left. They want to get rid of Christianity from the culture, because Christians side with the children against the adults. They don’t want Christian rules slowing down their pursuit of pleasure. They don’t want Christians to offend them by disagreeing with their actions.

What is the earliest statement of the authoritative books of the Bible?

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I know that in the land of secular leftism, there are many myths, and those myths survive because they circulate in an echo chamber. But this is the Wintery Knight blog, and on this blog, we go back to the evidence. So what's the myth? "The list of authoritative books of the Bible was determined hundreds of years after they were written". Is that true? Let's take a look at the data and see.

So, the allegation is that before 325 AD, people were using the canonical gospels equally with the forgery gospels like Judas, Peter, Mary, Thomas, etc. Then there was a church council that whittled down that list of equally valid sources to just the 4 gospels we recognize today. But did it really happen like that?

So, before we look to a scholar, I want to take a stab at this, and say what I would say if someone asked me this question. So, the first thing that came into my mind is that you don't need a church council to tell you which books of the Bible are authoritative, you just have to look at which books the earliest church fathers are quoting. And they are quoting the gospels.

Here is a snip from a conversation between Frank Turek and J. Warner Wallace, and here's what Wallace says:

> So, I write in this new book, Person of Interest, I reached out to David now that Norm has passed, and he had some great people who he was working with on this, and I cited them in the case notes of this book. And you can see it in the book. It's illustrated. Every church father who precedes the Council of Nicaea, and how many books, how many gospels, and how many letters are quoted by that particular church father. There's a graphic for this, and you can see them all standing with the numbers of gospels they quote, and the numbers of letters they quote. And then I went through, I did the research, and he has compiled numbers. David and his associates have compiled numbers on how many…so this is a much more accurate. So, here's what we know. And this is what I talked about in the book. It turns out that about 87% of the Gospel of Matthew is quoted by the early church fathers prior to the Council of Nicaea. About 935 verses. 66% of Mark, about 435 verses are quoted by these same church leaders. But 86% of the Gospel of Luke, 990 verses quoted by these church leaders. And 97% of the Gospel of John, about 859 verses that are quoted by these early church fathers.

So, if you go by that standard of who are the early church fathers quoting, it's the 4 canonical gospels. And by the way, if you are looking for specific reasons why some "gospels" were not included, I would look at the Michael Licona chapters of Lee Strobel's "The Case for the Real Jesus". And there is an audio book!

But I also found this article over at Canon Fodder (Michael Kruger's blog), that had more. He writes:

> First, we don't measure the existence of the New Testament just by the existence of lists. When we examine the way certain books were *used* by the early church fathers, it is evident that there was a functioning canon long before the fourth century. Indeed, by the second century, there is already a "core" collection of New Testament books functioning as Scripture.
>
> Second, there are reasons to think that Athanasius' list is not the earliest complete list we possess. In the festschrift for Larry Hurtado, Mark Manuscripts and Monotheism (edited by Chris Keith and Dieter Roth; T&T Clark, 2015), I wrote an article entitled, "Origen's List of New Testament Books in Homiliae on Josuam 7.1: A Fresh Look."
>
> In that article, I argue that around 250 A.D., Origen likely produced a complete list of all 27 New Testament books–more than a hundred years before Athanasius. In his typical allegorical fashion, Origen used the story of Joshua to describe the New Testament canon:
>
> But when our Lord Jesus Christ comes, whose arrival that prior son of Nun designated, he sends priests, his apostles, bearing "trumpets hammered thin," the magnificent and heavenly instruction of proclamation. Matthew first sounded the priestly trumpet in his Gospel; Mark also; Luke and John each played their own priestly trumpets. Even Peter cries out with trumpets in two of his epistles; also James and Jude. In addition, John also sounds the trumpet through his epistles [and Revelation], and Luke, as he describes the Acts of the Apostles. And now that last one comes, the one who said, "I think God displays us apostles last," and in fourteen of his epistles, thundering with trumpets, he casts down the walls of Jericho and all the devices of idolatry and dogmas of philosophers, all the way to the foundations (Hom. Jos. 7.1).
>
> As one can see from the list above, all 27 books of the New Testament are accounted for (Origen clearly counts Hebrews as part of Paul's letters). The only ambiguity is a text-critical issue with Revelation, but we have good evidence from other sources that Origen accepted Revelation as Scripture (Eusebius, Hist. eccl. 6.25.10).

So, if you ever hear someone saying that the authoritative books of the Bible were not decided until the 4th century, then there are a couple of ideas of how to respond to that.

Atheist Jerry Coyne explains why morality is impossible for atheists

December 29, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's review what you need in your worldview in order to have a rationally grounded system of morality.

You need 5 things:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a "social contract" is just based on people's opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people's individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people's expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What's in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question "what does it matter?". Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you've finished eating them, you die for real and that's the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It's hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Theism rationally grounds all 5 of these. Atheism cannot ground *any of them.*

Let's take a look at #4: free will and see how atheism deals with that.

Atheism and free will?

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality.

Here are some more atheists to explain how atheists view morality.

William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

When village atheists talk about how they can be moral without God, it's important to ask

them to justify the minimum requirements for rational morality. Atheists may act inconsistently with their worldview, believing in free will, expecting praise and blame for complying with the arbitrary standards of their peer group, etc. But there is nothing more to morality on atheism that imitating the herd – at least when the herd is around to watch them. And when the herd loses its Judeo-Christian foundation – watch out. That's when the real atheism comes out – the atheism that we've seen before in countries that turned their backs on God, and the moral law. When God disappears from a society, anything is permissible.

Atheist gets her PhD in astronomy and astrophysics and finds evidence for God

December 30, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Christian apologist Terrell Clemmons tweeted this testimony by Sarah Salviander, a research scientist in astronomy and astrophysics at the prestigious University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Salviander writes:

> I was born in the U.S., but grew up in Canada. My parents were socialists and political activists who thought British Columbia would be a better place for us to live, since it had the only socialist government in North America at the time. My parents were also atheists, though they eschewed that label in favor of "agnostic." They were kind, loving, and moral, but religion played no part in my life. Instead, my childhood revolved around education, particularly science. I remember how important it was to my parents that my brother and I did well in school.

I just want to point out that I hope that all you Christian parents are taking seriously the obligation to make your kids do well in school, because even if they start out as atheists when they are young, they can still find their way back to God through study, as Sarah did.

She had a bad start, that's for sure:

> I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, a time when science fiction was enjoying a renaissance, thanks largely to the popularity of *Star Wars*. I remember how fascinated I was by the original *Star Wars* trilogy. It had almost nothing to do with science—it's more properly characterized as space opera—but it got me thinking about space in a big way. I also loved the original *Star Trek*, which was more science fiction. The stoic and logical character of Mr. Spock was particularly appealing to me. Popular science was also experiencing a renaissance at that time, which had a lot to do with Carl Sagan's television show, *Cosmos*, which I adored. The combination of these influences led to such an intense wonder about outer space and the universe, that by the time I was nine years old I knew I would be a space scientist someday.
>
> Canada was already post-Christian by the 1970s, so I grew up with no religion. In retrospect, it's amazing that for the first 25 years of my life, I met only three people who identified as Christian. My view of Christianity was negative from an early age, and by the time I was in my twenties, I was actively hostile toward Christianity. Looking back, I realized a lot of this was the unconscious absorption of the general hostility toward Christianity that is common in places like Canada and Europe; my hostility certainly wasn't based on actually knowing anything

> about Christianity. I had come to believe that Christianity made people weak and foolish; I thought it was philosophically trivial. I was ignorant not only of the Bible, but also of the deep philosophy of Christianity and the scientific discoveries that shed new light on the origins of the universe and life on Earth.

She documents a phase of following Ayn Rand and embracing "Objectivism", but eventually she rejects it for failing to answer the big questions of life.

More:

> I began to focus all of my energy on my studies, and became very dedicated to my physics and math courses. I joined campus clubs, started to make friends, and, for the first time in my life, I was meeting Christians. They weren't like Objectivists—they were joyous and content. And, they were smart, too. I **was astonished to find that my physics professors, whom I admired, were Christian. Their personal example began to have an influence on me, and I found myself growing less hostile to Christianity.**

This is why I think it is so important for Christian parents to raise their children to get advanced degrees… either to become professors themselves, or to finance others (e.g. – our own children) to do advanced degrees. It is so important for university students to see Christian professors on campus. And failing that, it's important that we bring Christian speakers in to debate non-Christian speakers on the important issues. This will not happen unless we recognize how important it is, and then make a plan to achieve it.

More:

> **I had joined a group in the Center for Astrophysics and Space Sciences (CASS) that was researching evidence for the big bang. The cosmic background radiation—the leftover radiation from the big bang—provides the strongest evidence for the theory, but cosmologists need other, independent lines of evidence to confirm it. My group was studying deuterium abundances in the early universe. Deuterium is an isotope of hydrogen, and its abundance in the early universe is sensitive to the amount of ordinary mass contained in the entire universe. Believe it or not, this one measurement tells us whether the big bang model is correct.**
>
> **If anyone is interested in how this works, I'll describe it, but for now I'll spare you the gruesome details. Suffice it to say that an amazing convergence of physical properties is necessary in order to study deuterium abundances in the early universe, and yet this convergence is exactly what we get. I remember being astounded by this, blown away, completely and utterly awed. It seemed incredible to me that there was a way to find the answer to this question we had about the universe. In fact, it seems that every question we have about the universe is answerable. There's no reason it has to be this way, and it**

> **made me think of Einstein's observation that the most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it's comprehensible. I started to sense an underlying order to the universe. Without knowing it, I was awakening to what Psalm 19 tells us so clearly, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."**
>
> That summer, I'd picked up a copy of T*he Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas and was reading it in my off hours. Previous to this, I'd only known it as an exciting story of revenge, since that's what the countless movie and TV adaptations always focused on. But it's more than just a revenge story, it's a philosophically deep examination of forgiveness and God's role in giving justice. I was surprised by this, and was starting to realize that the concept of God and religion was not as philosophically trivial as I had thought.
>
> All of this culminated one day, as I was walking across that beautiful La Jolla campus. I stopped in my tracks when it hit me—I believed in God! I was so happy; it was like a weight had been lifted from my heart. I realized that most of the pain I'd experienced in my life was of my own making, but that God had used it to make me wiser and more compassionate. It was a great relief to discover that there was a reason for suffering, and that it was because God was loving and just. God could not be perfectly just unless I—just like everyone else—was made to suffer for the bad things I'd done.

The Count of Monte Cristo is one of my favorite, favorite books as well, and had the same impact on me as it did on her.

OK, that's enough for this post. Go read the rest, and please share it.

I spoke to her recently and she told me that she is working on several projects that are designed to get people more familiar with science and Bible issues. This woman is an expert Christian apologist and her life will have an influence. Are you going to be like her? Will you mentor others to be like her? Will you marry someone like her? Will you raise children who are like her? I think we should all have a plan to study the areas that are important and have an influence for God with what we learn.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason

- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

Is it time for the Trump administration to punish Google for leftist bias?

December 31, 2024 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I supported Ron DeSantis in the GOP primary because he has a record of going up against woke corporations like Disney. I just don't see the same seriousness about the threat posed by leftist corporations from Trump, who strikes me as a bit too moderate. In Trump's first term, he did nothing about the leftist bias of Big Tech corporations. Will that change in his second term?

Here's an article from the Media Research Center showing how badly Google needs to be reined in by the Trump administration:

> Google stacked search results for Trump nominees with legacy and leftist media sources for the fourth straight week. In fact, the search giant went above and beyond to push outlets that encourage hatred of several of President-elect Donald Trump's choices.
>
> […]For the news tab search results, Google provided 176 left-leaning articles compared to only 31 U.S.-based "lean right" or "right" articles. The general search results included a paltry 12 "lean right" or "right" articles, badly outnumbered by the 96 leftist articles in the results. Furthermore, Google failed to show a single U.S.-based "lean right" or "right" article for over 65 percent of nominees that the search giant provided articles for in general search.

And they have specific searches. One of my favorite nominees is Kash Patel, so I looked up what they did to him first:

> Google truly distinguished itself by pushing outlets that stoke hatred against nominees like Kash Patel, Trump's FBI director nominee. Google filled Patel's general search results with attacks and elevated a fearmongering Slate article with the headline "We've Seen Kash Patel's Enemies List. It's Terrifying" at the top of the page. Other articles by leftist outlets such as NPR, CNN, The Guardian, The Daily Mail and NBC News spread fear about Patel.
>
> In the news tab search result for "Kash Patel," Google included the Slate article second from the top, while also elevating a Mother Jones article calling Patel a "useful idiot for Putin," a CNN article implying Patel was paranoid and an NPR article accusing him of feeding "conspiracy theories" to children.

Another area where Trump might like to act more like DeSantis could be in how he handles the corporate news media. In Trump's first term, the corporate news media got a pass. They were not targeted by the Trump administration at all, and in fact Trump continues to participate in interviews and debates with members of the far-left coporate news media.

Another article from the Media Research Center explains how far left the corporate news media really are:

> MRC analysts examined all coverage of Trump's cabinet appointees on ABC, CBS, and NBC's evening newscasts from December 1 through December 14.
>
> […]Across all three networks, the coverage of Gabbard, Patel, and the handful of other nominees mentioned was entirely negative. Only Pete Hegseth, who received the lion's share of the airtime, enjoyed a scant four positive evaluative statements, all of which cited his mother describing him as "redeemed" and "a changed man."
>
> To reiterate: the only positive commentary any Trump nominee received on the broadcast networks was from his own mother.

What could Trump do to address this situation? Well, one thing he could is just shut the corporate news media out of White House Press briefings completely. Or, at least seat them at the back of the room, and prioritize taking questions from large-audience podcasts and conservative news sources like the Washington Times, the Washington Examiner, the Washington Free Beacon, Daily Caller, Daily Signal, Daily Wire, The Federalist, Just The News, Breitbart, Epoch Times, American Spectator, The Blaze, etc.

Why I am not Roman Catholic

January 1, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I explain why I'm not Roman Catholic. And I also explain how Protestant Christians arrive at their beliefs. I'll go first with my reason, and then I'll let J. Warner Wallace add another reason.

The Roman Catholic church teaches that Mary was "bodily assumed" into Heaven. Let's see if that is recorded anywhere in the Bible, or in the early Church fathers, or in early Christian history.

Here's what I found:

1. To be a Roman Catholic, you need to believe in Papal infallibility in matters of dogma.
2. In 1950, the Pope pronounced the assumption of Mary to be infallible dogma.
3. This pronouncement was solicited by a petition featuring over 8 million signatures.
4. There is no historical record of this doctrine in the Bible.
5. No early church father mentions the assumption until 590 AD.
6. Documents dated 377 AD state that no one knows how Mary died.
7. The assumption appears for the first time in an apocryphal gospel dated about 495 AD.

Data

I only cite Roman Catholic sources for my facts.

6. "But if some think us mistaken, let them search the Scriptures. They will not find Mary's death; they will not find whether she died or did not die; they will not find whether she was buried or was not buried … Scripture is absolutely silent [on the end of Mary] … For my own part, I do not dare to speak, but I keep my own thoughts and I practice silence … The fact is, Scripture has outstripped the human mind and left [this matter] uncertain … Did she die, we do not know … Either the holy Virgin died and was buried … Or she was killed … Or she remained alive, since nothing is impossible with God and He can do whatever He desires; for her end no-one knows." (Epiphanius, Panarion, Haer. 78.10-11, 23. Cited by Juniper Carol, O.F.M. ed.,*Mariology*, Vol. II (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1957), pp. 139-40).

7. "The idea of the bodily assumption of Mary is first expressed in certain transitus–narratives of the fifth and sixth centuries. Even though these are apocryphal they bear witness to the faith of the generation in which they were written despite their legendary clothing. The first Church author to speak of the bodily ascension of Mary, in association with an apocryphal transitus B.M.V., is St. Gregory of Tours." (Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*(Rockford: Tan, 1974), pp. 209–210).

It should be noted that the apocryphal gospel in which the doctrine of the assumption of Mary first appeared was condemned as heretical by two Popes in the 5th and 6th

centuries. However, I was not able to find a CATHOLIC source for this fact, so I deliberately chose not to use it in my case.

Purgatory

Second, here's an article from Cold Case Christianity, by the Master of the Evidence J. Warner Wallace. He writes about the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, and his experience with studying and then rejecting it.

Here is his introduction:

> The notion of purgatory assumes many of us die with unforgiven sins that need to be purged from our account; some of us are not good enough to go to heaven, but not bad enough to go to hell. Purgatory, therefore, is a temporary, intermediate place (or state of being) where good deeds and works can be performed in order to purge our impurity prior to our final destiny with God. Although millions of Catholics believe purgatory to be a reality, the idea needs to be tested in light of the Scripture. Is purgatory something we, as Bible believing Christians, should accept as true?

He's got a stack of Bible verses to make two points against Purgatory: first, that Jesus' death on the cross is sufficient to atone for *all* our rebellion against God, and we don't need to endure any suffering or punishment to supplement it. And second, the teaching about the afterlife in the Bible says that believers are immediately ushered into the presence of God after they die (without resurrection bodies, yet), while unbelievers are separated away from God.

Here's what he says about the first point:

> **Our Salvation Isn't Based On Our Good Works**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, forgiveness is not based on the good works of the believer. For this reason, deeds or works performed for those in purgatory are both unnecessary and ineffectual:
>
> **Romans 3:21-24, 27-28**
> But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus… Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.
>
> **Romans 8:1**
> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man

> to be a sin offering.
>
> **Our Salvation Is Based On Jesus' Work on the Cross**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, Jesus' work on the cross (His blood) purifies us from allsin. For this reason, there isn't a lingering sin problem requiring the existence of a place like purgatory:
>
> **Titus 2:13-14**
> …we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.
>
> **1John 1:7b**
> …the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.
>
> **1John 1:9b**
> …he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
>
> **1John 2:2**
> He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.
>
> **Hebrews 10:14**
> …because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.
>
> **Our Salvation Has, Therefore, Already Been Guaranteed**
> According to the Biblical doctrine of Salvation, Jesus has already purified and purged believers of sin based on our faith in Him. For this reason, there is no need for a place like Purgatory where additional purging must be performed…
>
> […]The Biblical doctrine of Salvation clearly eliminates the need for purgatory.

I was never able to find anything in the Bible to support purgatory. It's a very very late doctrine that was unknown to the early church until the late 2nd / early 3rd century, where it is spoken about by a handful of people. But lots of weird doctrines were creeping up on the fringe around that time, so we shouldn't be surprised… the point is that they have no support from the Bible, and not in the community of believers for the first 150 years after the death of Jesus.

Conclusion

The first thing I want to say is that the Bible is not the only place you look to decide these issues. You also look in church history, and you are looking for a clear chain of custody of the doctrine as far back as it can go. Purgatory and the perpetual virginity of Mary have some track record, but the bodily assumption of Mary is just nowhere – not in the Bible, not in the Early Church fathers. So that's the silver bullet against Roman Catholicism, since they made it "infallible".

This post is more directed to non-Christians to sort of show you how we do our homework. I am the first Protestant in my family. We have half the family who is Muslim, and the

other half mostly Hindu, with some Catholic. I had to debate all these people growing up, and I wiped the floor with them. It was not even close. I simply settled on the beliefs that allowed me to win every argument, every time. That's how you do religion. If you have to go against your whole family in order to be right, you do it. It's not good to be wrong about things just because that's what your family believes. These things were not pushed hard on me by my parents, I studied them on my own in order to win arguments. After a while of winning, I found myself acting consistently with what I was arguing for. Although that might sound really weird to you, that's probably the right way to do this. Don't listen to parents and church, find your own way forward by winning arguments, and believing only what the evidence supports.

Although most people think that if I had kids, I'd bully them into my beliefs, I actually would not. Because that's not what worked on me. What really works is fighting about evidence, welcoming questions, and allowing differences of opinion. Being free to pursue truth is more important in the long run than coercing your kids to act nicely.

Why are some Muslims peaceful, while others are not?

January 2, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There was a recent terrorist attack committed by a Muslim carrying an Isis flag. Sadly, the Biden-Harris administration law enforcement was not able to prevent it. Perhaps they were too busy prosecuting Christians and pro-lifers? Let's take a look at the details of the attack and then see what David Wood has to say about why some Muslims are so peaceful, while other Muslims are not peaceful at all.

First the story from Daily Signal:

> The FBI has identified the driver of a truck that plowed into a crowd of people celebrating New Year's on Bourbon Street early Wednesday, killing at least 15 people and injuring 35.
>
> Shamsud-Din Jabbar, 42, a U.S. citizen and U.S. Army veteran from Houston, rented the F-150 Lightning truck, the FBI said. Alethea Duncan, an assistant special agent in charge of the FBI's New Orleans field office, said the agency doesn't believe he acted alone.
>
> The law enforcement agency said in a news release that he had improvised explosive devices that were found in both the truck and two in different locations in the French Quarter, body armor and an ISIS flag hanging from the tailgate.
>
> […]Jabbar drove into a group of revelers at 3:17 a.m. and got out of the truck, exchanging gunfire with New Orleans Police Department officers, injuring two of them, before Jabbar succumbed from his wounds, lawmen say.

This video featuring David Wood is very helpful for explaining why some Muslims are peaceful, while others are violent:

(archive)

Until then, I think it's a good idea to keep Democrats away from control of law enforcement. As long as they are focused on punishing Christians and conservatives, they will never be serious about preventing terrorist attacks like this.

Judge rules that man must pay $50,000 a month to ex-girlfriend for 10 years

January 3, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was younger, I got the impression from young women that men with strong views on theology and morality made them uncomfortable. I had my share of rejections by Christian women who didn't like my strong Biblical views. At the time, I was worried that I might not be able to get married at all. But looking at how the family courts operate, that turned out to be a good thing.

The news story is from one of Canada's national newspapers, the National Post:

> A wealthy businessman will have to pay more than $50,000 a month in spousal support for 10 years to a woman with whom he had a long-term romantic relationship even though they kept separate homes and had no children together, Ontario's top court has ruled.
>
> Under Ontario law, an unmarried couple are considered common-law spouses if they have cohabited — lived together in a conjugal relationship — continuously for at least three years. But that doesn't necessarily mean living in the same home, the court found.
>
> […]When their 14-year relationship finally broke down in May 2015, Climans asked the courts to recognize her as Latner's spouse and order him to pay her support. He argued she had been a travel companion and girlfriend, nothing more. As such, he said, they were never legally spouses and he owed no support. An eight-day trial ensued.
>
> In her decision in February 2019, Superior Court Justice Sharon Shore sided with Climans. She ruled they were in fact long-time spouses, finding that despite their separate home, they lived under one roof at Latner's cottage for part of the summer, and during winter vacations in Florida. Shore ordered him to pay her $53,077 monthly indefinitely.

Superior Court Justice Sharon Shore didn't care that the man never married this woman, or lived with her, or had children with her. He had money, and she wanted it, so the judge gave it to her.

Elsewhere in the article, we learn that he had asked her to sign a pre-nuptial agreement many times, and each time she refused. (Those are not even enforced in divorce courts) It's like her plan all along was to demand that a judge awarded her all of this man's money.

Some people will say "well, these are Ontario family courts, this is normal. Haven't you heard about what happened to Dave Foley?" I think every man knows the story of what the Ontario divorce courts did to Dave Foley.

Here is a story about it from the far-left Toronto Star, otherwise known as the Toronto Red

Star.

It says:

> Dave Foley of beloved Toronto sketch troupe the Kids in the Hall is starting a new career in standup comedy, but not in Toronto — he suspects he'll be arrested if he returns to Canada.
>
> The 48-year-old faces a back child-support bill in Ontario of more than half a million dollars: the accumulation of a debt that accrues steadily at more than $17,000 per month. On the set of *Servitude,* a film shot in Toronto last year, "I told the production guys, I have a court appearance on Monday and there's a good chance I'll be in jail on Monday afternoon,'" Foley said in an interview with the *Star*.
>
> During an appearance on comic Marc Maron's *WTF* podcast last month, Foley explained that his marriage to Toronto writer Tabatha Southey ended during his run on NBC's five-year hit comedy *NewsRadio,* and he has failed in his efforts to adjust his child support downward to reflect his new life after sitcom stardom.
>
> "My income has dropped in the last 10 years, as anyone can tell from the number of s—ty movies I've been in," says Foley. "I'm not exactly picking and choosing my projects." However, four years ago, Superior Justice Nancy Backhouse denied his motion to vary his support payments.
>
> […]Foley says that Ontario's Family Responsibility Office now has an enforcement order and last year sought a six-month jail sentence for him, which was to extend indefinitely, until the overdue support was paid.

Ontario family courts are notoriously anti-male, and men know this. Unfortunately, the female judges who make these rulings don't seem to understand that men know what they are doing, and then opt out of marriage. It must be so wonderful for these judges to punish the men who appear before them. But they can't punish the men who respond to what they are doing by declining to marry women, and then declining to date women, and then declining to even speak to women.

I looked up Superior Justice Nancy Backhouse, and found another article about her decisions, entitled "Judge rejects pre-nup, awards ex-wife $5.3-million". So, pre-nuptial agreements are also thrown out in Ontario divorce courts.

But it's not just Ontario. I have two Christian friends here in America who married their Christian wives as virgins, and then their wives divorced them. I heard what happened to them in divorce court. They lost custody of their kids, and they are forced to pay alimony and child support even though their ex-wives poison the children against them, and deny them communication rights and visitation rights. And men know that this is happening to other men. How can women expect men to marry when the financial risks are so high?

Forbes magazine explains:

> Of the 400,000 people in the United States receiving post-divorce spousal

> maintenance, just 3 percent were men, according to Census figures. Yet 40 percent of households are headed by female breadwinners — suggesting that hundreds of thousands of men are eligible for alimony, yet don't receive it.

The divorced courts are biased against men, and men are getting the message. They look at these cases, and they understand that marriage is not worth the financial risks. They don't want to have their possessions stolen by radical feminist judges.

Further reading

An excellent book to read about this issue is Dr. Stephen Baskerville's book "Taken Into Custody: The War Against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family". You can read what the book is about here. Dr. Baskerville is a Christian and a conservative. He has a PhD from London School of Economics and does a good job of explaining the negative view that society has about men, and male leadership. And sadly, these negative man-blaming views are often shared by Christians, too.

Militant atheist Richard Dawkins resigns from atheist group over transgenderism

January 4, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lately, I've noticed that some of the most famous atheists are regretting their long war against Christianity. People like Richard Dawkins spent their lives warring against Christianity. And now that they've achieved their goal of diminishing Christian influence, they don't like the results. They don't like the Islam. They don't like the wokeness. They don't like the transgenderism. But they caused it.

Here's a story from Breitbart News: (H/T My Dad)

> Celebrated atheist and evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins stepped down from the board of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) on Saturday after the atheist group made clear its allegiance to transgenderism over biological reality.
>
> Dawkins resigned after the foundation censored an article from a fellow scientist who pointed out that sex is, in fact, immutable and biological, and rejected the pseudo-spiritual claim that one can choose their "gender," The Telegraph reported.
>
> Dawkins accused the organization of caving to the "hysterical squeals" of cancel culture after FFRF pulled the article and called its publishing of it a "mistake." Dawkins resigned after two other scientists, Jerry Coyne and Steven Pinker, left the organization over the ordeal. The pair accused the foundation of pushing an ideology with the "dogma, blasphemy, and heretics" of a religion, according to the report.
>
> The resignations can be traced back to a piece published to FFRF's Freethought Now! website and written by Kat Grant called "What is a Woman?" The piece argues against the biological reality of womanhood and instead claims that "a woman is whoever she says she is."

After they pilled the article by the atheist scientist arguing for biological reality, we got this from the FFRF leaders:

> "Despite our best efforts to champion reason and equality, mistakes can happen, and this incident is a reminder of the importance of constant reflection and growth," co-presidents Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor wrote.
>
> "Publishing this post was an error of judgment, and we have decided to remove it as it does not reflect our values and principles. We regret any distress caused by this post and are committed to ensuring it doesn't happen again," they added.

No one would say that people like Michael Shermer, Richard Dawkins, Jerry Coyne, Steve Pinker were stupid people. What they are is *foolish*. These are the most foolish people on

the planet. They spend their entire lives embracing the lie of atheism. They denied all of the scientific evidence for theism, such as the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, explosions of biological complexity in the fossil record, irreducible complexity, habitability, etc.

And what did this advocacy against scientific evidence *and reason itself* get them? It gets them the Islamic dominance, wokeness, and transgenderism that they now claim to dislike. It would be like someone talking and talking about how much they believe in early retirement, but they way they prepare for retirement is by spending all their money on lottery tickets. And then they act surprised when they get the failure that their actions virtually guaranteed.

Wayne Grudem explains what the Bible says about capital punishment

January 5, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why would anyone support the idea of ending the life of a convicted criminal? What are the reasons for governments to support the death penalty for certain crimes? What does the Bible have to say about capital punishment? Reformed Baptist theologian Wayne Grudem did a Sunday school presentation on the Bible and capital punishment. Let's take a look.

About Wayne Grudem:

> Grudem holds a BA from Harvard University, a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. In 2001, Grudem became Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary. Prior to that, he had taught for 20 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he was chairman of the department of Biblical and Systematic Theology.
>
> Grudem served on the committee overseeing the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and in 1999 he was the president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He is a co-founder and past president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. He is the author of, among other books, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, which advocates a Calvinistic soteriology, the verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the body-soul dichotomy in the nature of man, and the complementarian (rather than egalitarian) view of gender equality.

The MP3 file is here.

The PDF outline is here.

Topics:

- what kinds of crimes might require CP?
- what did God say to Noah about CP?
- what does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
- is CP just about taking revenge?
- what does CP say about the value of human life?
- does CP apply to animals, too?
- could the statements supporting CP be understood as symbolic?
- one purpose of CP is to protecting the public
- another purpose of CP is to deter further wrongdoing
- but the Biblical purpose of CP is to achieve justice by retribution
- does the Pope make a good argument against CP?

- what is the role of civil government in achieving retribution?
- do people in Heaven who are sinless desire God to judge sinners?
- should crimes involving property alone be subject to CP?
- is the Mosaic law relevant for deciding which crimes are capital today?
- should violent crimes where no one dies be subject to CP?
- is CP widespread in the world? why or why not?
- what are some objections to CP from the Bible?
- how do you respond to those objections to CP?
- should civil government also turn the other cheek for all crimes?
- what is the “whole life ethic” and is it Biblical?
- what do academic studies show about the deterrence effect of CP?
- how often have innocent people been executed in the USA?
- should there be a higher burden of proof for CP convictions?

The Bible is awesome because it gives us knowledge about God’s character. How are we supposed to act in a way that is pleasing to God if we don’t know what he thinks of the issues of the day? We won’t know how we are supposed to act unless we know who God is first. And that’s why when we read the Bible we should be looking to find out the truth about who God is.

Can we trust the secular left DEI FBI to protect us from real terrorism?

January 6, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

America suffered a couple of terrorist attacks recently. And it caused me to wonder whether the Biden administration FBI can be trusted to protect the people who pay their salaries from real threats. The FBI has been focusing on dangerous church-attending Presbyterians and dangerous parents of school children. But are these groups the real threats to liberty and peace?

Here's an article from Jordan Boyd up at The Federalist entitled "An FBI That Targets Political Opponents Instead Of Terrorists Doesn't Deserve To Lead New Orleans Investigation" and it says:

> The FBI claims protecting the nation from terrorist attacks is its "number one priority." Yet the agency spent recent years redirecting its attention and resources from top issues like violent criminal acts that lead to mass casualties and child sex abuse cases to arresting meemaws for walking around the U.S. Capitol grounds on January 6, 2021 and praying at abortion facilities.
>
> The FBI's laundry list of corruption extends far beyond smearing Catholics, concerned parents, and Trump voters as domestic terrorists, manufacturing scandals like the Russia collusion hoax, killing the Hunter Biden laptop bombshell, raiding the home of a former and future president even if it required "deadly force," and interfering in elections. Yet, the DEI-plagued agency, despite its discrediting track record, is routinely accepted as the lead on investigations into real terrorism.
>
> The FBI wholly disqualified itself from being the lead on the New Orleans investigation when it deemed anyone questioning the regime guilty of wrongthink at the same time it allowed, entrapped, and even groomed true threats. How can an entity that openly hyper-fixated its best efforts on "white supremacy" accurately and adequately evaluate a threat as serious and as widespread as Islamic terrorism? It can't.

Here's an article from Brianna Lyman up at The Federalist entitled "Here's Who Biden's FBI Decided To Persecute Rather Than Hunt Down Real Terrorists", and it says:

> Early Wednesday morning, a radical Islamic terrorist drove his truck through a crowd of people celebrating the start of the New Year in New Orleans. Fifteen people were murdered and more than 35 injured. But maybe this tragedy could have been avoided if the FBI spent less time targeting parents, Catholics, and countless other dissidents and instead focused its resources on catching actual terrorists.

The list of weaponizations from Jordan's article was pretty long, but Brianna found a new one:

> Unfortunately under the leadership of then FBI Director Christopher Wray, the FBI was too busy doing things like helping to orchestrate a kidnapping plot targeting Democrat Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to catch a terrorist.

And it might be worth expanding on the "concerned parents" one – here's what the FBI really thinks about the people who ar taxed to pay their salaries, and the children who will be taxed to pay for their benefits when they retire:

> […]The Department of Justice (DOJ) issued a memo in October of 2021 instructing the FBI to label activist parents at school board meetings with "threat tags." The guidance came just days after the Biden White House approved a recommendation from the National School Board Association that called for counterterrorism measures to be used against parents who spoke up at school board meetings.
>
> Attorney General Merrick Garland "encouraged the use of an FBI tip line for individuals to flag parents for surveillance," as my colleague Tristan Justice reported.
>
> Tiffany Justice, co-founder of Moms for Liberty, told The Federalist of a mother who was reported to the FBI for simply being "quite upset" at a school board meeting when speaking about the adverse effects of quarantines and school closures.

Maybe expanding a little more on the FBI's leading bogeyman – people who reject the Democrat party position on abortion:

> During the Biden administration, the FBI targeted 55 pro-lifers for "praying, singing, and evangelizing at abortion facilities across the U.S.," as Boyd reported. Under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, the Biden administration targeted pro-lifers instead of targeting terrorists or the at least 90 instances of "abortion-fueled firebombing, vandalism, and other attacks on lifesaving pregnancy centers, pro-life organizations, and churches …"
>
> In fact, 75-year-old Paulette Harlow was charged and found guilty for violating the FACE Act after she prayed at a Washington, D.C., abortion facility. Harlow was sentenced to two years in jail.
>
> The FBI has long smeared pro-lifers as threats, with former FBI-special-agent-turned-whistleblower Steve Friend revealing in an interview with the Tennessee Informer that the FBI showed agents a video produced by the far-left Southern Poverty Law Center that, according to Friend, "ranked people who oppose abortion, pro-life activists, as a greater threat than Islamists."

That last paragraph is key: the FBI ranks people who oppose abortion as a GREATER threat than Islamic terrorists. That's why we are in the situation they are in. The pro-lifers

pay their salaries, not the Islamic terrorists, but the FBI is more concerned about the threat posed by their customers. This is an important point.

So, what should we do with the taxpayer-funded FBI?

Maybe we should fire them all, and let them sink or swim in the competitive private sector? Without their pensions and benefits, of course. Then they might learn something about professionalism, and finally be able to demonstrate “fidelity” to their job descriptions (and oaths). Not the leaders of the FBI of course, they need to be criminally prosecuted for what they’ve done.

How the UK's secular left government covered up sex-trafficking of children

January 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have written many times about the sex-trafficking of mainly white girls by gangs of mainly Muslim men in the UK. My main concern in writing these posts is to emphasize what secular leftists do when their policies don't work. The secular left parties in Europe opened up their borders to unskilled men from the Middle East. And when it failed, they covered it up and blamed the innocent victims.

Here's a story from the UK Telegraph (archived), entitled "How the grooming gangs scandal was covered up" and the subtitle is "The child victims of rape were denied justice and protection from the state to preserve the image of a successful multicultural society".

It says:

> Across the country, in towns and in cities, on our streets and in the state institutions designed to protect the most vulnerable members of our society, authorities deliberately turned a blind eye to horrific abuse of largely white children by gangs of men predominantly of Pakistani heritage.
>
> Over time, details have come to light about abuse in Rotherham, in Telford, in Rochdale and in dozens of other places. But with the stories released in dribs and drabs, and the details so horrific as to be almost unreadable, the full scale of the scandal has still to reach the public.

I would be very careful about reading the details of these crimes, they are horrific and disgusting.

But these crimes are the direct consequences of the immigration policies of the secular left Labour Party of the UK. The Labour Party wanted more diversity. But they didn't achieve that diversity with skilled immigrants who could speak English and respect Western culture. They imported large numbers of unskilled Middle Eastern men, who often could not even speak English. And when their decisions had bad consequences, they covered it up, and blamed the victims for being racists.

> In Manchester, a 2019 report concluded gangs were left to roam the streets in part because officers were told to look elsewhere. One detective constable was quoted by a report as saying "the offending target group were predominantly Asian males and we were told to try and get other ethnicities".
>
> Central government took a similar view. In 2020, the Home Office refused to release its research into grooming gangs, claiming that it would not be in the "public interest" to do so.

The secular left talks about "objective morality", but here is what their "objective morality" looks like:

> In Telford, Lucy Lowe died at 16 alongside her mother and sister when her abuser set fire to her home in 2000. She had given birth to Azhar Ali Mahmood's child when she was just 14, and was pregnant when she was killed.
>
> Her death was subsequently used to threaten other children. The Telford Inquiry found particularly brutal threats. When one victim aged 12 told her mother, and the mother called the police, "there was about six or seven Asian men who came to my house. They threatened my mum saying they'll petrol bomb my house if we don't drop the charges."
>
> Yet in a pattern that would repeat itself, Telford's authorities looked the other way. When an independent review was finally published in 2022, it found police officers described parts of the town as a "no-go area", while witnesses set out multiple allegations of police corruption and favouritism towards the Pakistani community. Regardless of the reason, the inquiry found that "there was a nervousness about race… bordering on a reluctance to investigate crimes committed by what was described as the 'Asian' community".
>
> Similar concerns applied at the council, where anxieties over appearing racist saw safeguarding officers waving away concerns simply because the perpetrators were Asian. It was felt that some suspects were not investigated because it would have been "politically incorrect".
>
> This is not to say that the council did nothing. Aware that taxi drivers were offering children rides for sex, in 2006 it suspended licensing enforcement for drivers, allowing high risk drivers to continue practicing. As the Telford Inquiry found, this was "borne entirely out of fear of accusations of racism; it was craven".
>
> […]The result was stasis, despite officials acknowledging in at least one case that abuse by Asian men had gone on for "years and years".
>
> It had: at least 1,000 girls were abused in the town between 1980 and 2009. Yet even this conservative estimate was disputed by authority figures, with West Mercia police superintendent Tom Harding insisting in 2018 the figure was "sensationalised". The independent review later found it entirely plausible.

Notice the response of the UK police. The UK is notorious for two-tier policing, which is the idea that people are treated differently based on their race and religion. They arrest Christian pastors. But Muslims breaking the law are ignored.

The UK Telegraph article goes on quite a bit more, discussing many more cases.

For example, the Rotherham cases:

> As the 2014 Jay Inquiry into Rotherham found, children were "doused in petrol and threatened with being set alight", "threatened with guns", "witnessed brutally violent rapes and were threatened that they would be the next victim if they told anyone. Girls as young as 11 were raped by large numbers of male perpetrators, one after the other".

> In the same town, a senior police officer allegedly said the abuse had been "going on" for 30 years, adding "with it being Asians, we can't afford for this to be coming out.
>
> As Louise Casey's 2015 report on Rotherham Council found, this attitude was widespread. The Pakistani community accounted for around 3 per cent of the town's population, and the story emerging was clear: Pakistani men were grooming white girls. As a result, one witness said, the council was "terrified of [the impact on] community cohesion".

So, when you hear the secular left talking about immigration in America, it's important to understand what can result from their decision-making. Yesterday, I wrote about how the FBI views pro-lifers as a greater threat than Islamic terrorists. Why do you think that is? It's because their worldview – secular leftism – doesn't provide a rational foundation for morality. When the moral law goes against their self-interest, the secular leftist invariably ignores the moral law, and follows self-interest.

By the way, the current Prime Minister of the UK, a secular leftist, played a direct role in enabling the sex-trafficking of underage girls. This UK Telegraph story explains. So this isn't some fringe minority of secular leftists who put law-abiding people at risk. It's the secularleftist elites who are doing these things.

Knight and Rose Show #57: Günter Bechly: The Fossil Record

January 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 57 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Dr. Günter Bechly about whether the fossil record supports Darwinian evolution or intelligent design. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Note: We are releasing this episode a few days early, because of the tragic death of Dr. Bechly in an auto accident. You can read more about it here at Evolution News. Rose and I are devastated. This episode is Rose's favorite episode of our entire podcast. We just liked talking to him so much. You can find his full testimony, which we thought was really, really valuable. We think that this would be a wonderful thing for you to share on social media to remember him.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome paleontologist Dr. Günter Bechly to discuss the fossil record. Günter explains why the fossil evidence is more consistent with intelligent design than Darwinian evolution. He explains why mutation and selection are inadequate mechanisms for generating the biological information needed for new body plans. Finally, he explains his journey from atheism to Christianity.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show (with timestamps) provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 57:

Speaker biographies

Günter Bechly, PhD, is a German paleontologist, senior fellow with Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture, and senior research scientist at Biologic Institute in Washington state. He has written about 160 scientific publications, described over 180 new species, and been advisor for 3 BBC nature documentaries.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since

January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Articles:

- Discontinuities in the Fossil Record | Evolution News
- 3 Challenges to the Causal Adequacy of Darwinism | Evolution News
- Seventy Years of Textbook Wisdom Was Wrong | Evolution News
- A Long Surrender by Günter Bechly – Salvo Magazine

Lectures:

- Fossil Explosions in the History of Life: Paleontologist Günter Bechly
- Gunter Bechly on Why Seventy Years of Textbook Wisdom Was Wrong

Debate:

- Gunter Bechly vs Joshua Swamidass – For and Against Intelligent Design

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Pro-ID paleontologist Dr. Günter Bechly has gone home to his Lord and Savior

January 8, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I don't know what to say about this event. Yesterday, Rose and I found out about Dr. Bechly's passing. He was the guest on our most recent episode of Knight and Rose Show. We knew that we wanted to do an episode on the fossil record and intelligent design, and we wanted to get the best person we could. Dr. Bechly was our first choice. Let's find out about what he was really like.

So, previously, I blogged about his testimony, and on Tuesday night, I posted our episode of Knight and Rose Show with him.

What really impressed us about Dr. Bechly is how rigorous he was about forming his views of what was true. And how much integrity he had to pay the consequences of coming out in favor of intelligent design and eventually Christianity, in a very secular environment.

This article by David Klinghoffer at Evolution News told me a lot more about the man.

Excerpt:

> We are shocked and grieved to report the death of our friend and colleague Günter Bechly, on January 6 in an auto accident in Austria. He was 61. "There is no easy way to say this," said Center for Science and Culture Managing Director John West yesterday morning when we all found out. I could feel my scalp tighten from the grim tone of his voice before I even knew what was coming. Now try in vain to imagine how Bechly's wife, Luise, and his two young sons are feeling. It seems beyond inadequate to wish them comfort.
>
> Dr. Bechly, a paleontologist who was pushed out of his position as a curator at the State Museum of Natural History in Stuttgart, Germany, after becoming persuaded by the evidence for intelligent design, was not just a gifted and prolific scientist. He was a hero. Changing your view about a controversial matter when it costs you nothing is one thing. When it costs you, in the professional context, everything — that is quite another.

I've said before on this blog how weird it is for me to see how so many Christians in America think that Christianity will make you happy, successful, and popular. Christians in places like Africa do not usually hold these views. How Christians in America can get ideas like that from a suffering Savior is a mystery to me. But what we loved about Dr. Bechly was that he just loved to puzzle about what was really true. And when he decided that something was true, he lived by it, and no one else could shake him off it.

More from the article:

> As an academic field, evolutionary biology is a bully's playground where the use

> of intimidation to silence doubters is just the way things are done. Bechly refused to be bullied and thus gave courage to many in the science world, including friends of ID that you will be hearing more about in years to come. It could be called (not my formulation) the Bechly Effect. One person gives courage to others, and it builds from there.
>
> He wanted to know what was true. In Germany, in organizing an exhibit at his museum celebrating the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth, he almost on a whim decided that if he was going to mock intelligent design, as he intended, he really ought to read a few books by those ID rascals. The experience changed him profoundly. That story is memorably told in the documentary Revolutionary. The switch to ID cost him his job but it won him many friends in the ID world. He will be terribly missed.

The rest of the article goes on to talk about what projects he had in the works, his most recent lecture at Cambridge University, his personal character, his spiritual journey. I recommend that you read it, because I think that Christians need to recapture what it is like for someone not raised in the church to work through the evidence, and decide that Christianity is the correct worldview.

Everywhere I look today, I see elite Christian leaders whose first priority, it seems, is to be liked by non-Christians. In every area, we ask non-Christians what their problems are, and what they would like us to do to solve their problems. We're falling over ourselves trying to appease non-Christians because we want them to like us so badly. We have lost confidence in the Bible as an authority that tells people what their real problems are, and what their real solutions are, and what their real priorities should be, and how to be wise about making plans to achieve what really matters. On issues of race, climate change, sexuality, etc. elite Christian leaders just don't believe that the Christianity can be recommended to a non-Christian *based on the evidence*. They don't know what that evidence is. They never did the work themselves. And we – the rank and file – keep choosing them to lead. We disregard their laziness and ignorance, and choose them for their appearance and charisma.

But Dr. Bechly knew what that evidence was. He investigated. He found it. And he followed the evidence to a true worldview. If only we could convince our Christian leaders that this is the right way to go, the normal way of evangelizing others. Jesus used evidence.

Who is responsible for wildfires burning down cities in Democrat-run California?

January 9, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have many Christian friends living in California, and I often ask them why they would choose to remain in a state that is controlled, from top to bottom, by secular leftists. And their answer is usually, "I like the weather in California". But now the weather in California is fire and brimstone! Who is responsible for these fires? Is it the greedy Republicans? Is it the intolerant Christians? Let's see.

This is from Daily Wire:

> California State Representative Bill Essayli (R) explained how the mismanagement of the state's fire policies made it vulnerable as a wildfire rages through Los Angeles County's Pacific Palisades.
>
> Essayli, a Republican who represents California's 63rd State Assembly district southeast of Los Angeles, detailed different policies that he says have exacerbated the risk and severity of wildfires. Essayli's comments come as a wildfire in the Pacific Palisades and the Eaton Fire just south of Los Angeles have taken at least two lives and destroyed an estimated 1,000 structures.

I had a quick look, and Pacific Palisades is the #1 wealthiest suburb in Los Angeles. All those limousine liberals are having their houses burned down. Who is to blame?

Back to Daily Wire:

> "In the 1950s, the average timber harvest in California was around 6.0 billion board feet per year. Today, that number has dropped to ~1.5 billion board feet per year," he went on to say. "California's forests, which cover a third of the state, are now choked with nearly 163 million dead trees."
>
> "California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other regulatory policies limit the ability of local government and fire management services to clear dead trees and vegetation. (This is a big deal and prevents much of the controlled burns we desperately need.)"
>
> Essayli also explained that various pieces of legislation that could have helped prevent wildfires or limit their severity were rejected or failed to reach the desk of Democrat Governor Gavin Newsom or were vetoed by him.
>
> Senate Bill 1003, for example, would have allowed local governments and fire management services to build more underground power lines, a measure that could prevent exposed power lines from lighting forest debris on fire.
>
> Other pieces of legislation would have exempted wildlife prevention efforts from regulations imposed by the California Environmental Quality Act, he added.
>
> "Many of the wild fires CA experienced could have been prevented or

> significantly mitigated with better management, policies, and funding. This is a time for accountability and, more importantly, change in how we approach fire policy," Essayli added. "Many of the rejected proposals were brought by Republicans, and I suspect they were rejected for that reason. There is only one political party to blame for CA's failures."

I found another related story on Daily Wire:

> Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass faced backlash on Wednesday over policy decisions she made that left her city ill prepared for combatting the deadly fires that erupted this week, causing billions of dollars worth of damage.
>
> Patrick Soon-Shiong, the owner of The Los Angeles Times, called out Bass' failings in a post on X.
>
> "Fires in LA are sadly no surprise, yet the Mayor cut LA Fire Department's budget by $23M," he wrote. "And reports of empty fire hydrants raise serious questions. Competence matters."
>
> […]The New York Post reported that the cut was the second largest cut that Bass made in her 2024-25 fiscal year budget.

According to Wise Voter, California is the 5th most Democrat state in the Union, behind Vermont, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Hawaii.

I would really recommend that Christians and conservatives consider moving out of California, to a red state. In my rankings, Tennessee is number 1 for Christians, followed by Florida.

Just look at the Daily Wire company. They moved out of California to Nashville, TN, and Ben Shapiro moved to Florida. Seth Dillon is running the Babylon Bee out of Florida. A lot of the cultural change is coming from Tennessee and Florida.

Personally, weather isn't as important as liberty, prosperity and security.

If we seriously want men to marry and become fathers, let's repeal no-fault divorce

January 10, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw a very good article at the Heritage Foundation web site about the importance of fathers for children. The author Virginia Allen listed out some of the benefits that fathers provide to children:

> Studies have found that children raised without a father are:
>
> - At a higher risk of having behavioral problems.
> - Four times more likely to live in poverty.
> - More likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime.
> - Twice as likely to never graduate high school.
> - At a seven times higher risk of teen pregnancy.
> - More vulnerable to abuse and neglect.
> - More likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.
> - Twice as likely to be obese.
>
> From education to personal health to career success, children who lack a father find themselves at a disadvantage to their peers raised in a two-parent household.

I was looking for a good analysis of why there's been a decline of marriage and fatherhood, and I found an article by Joe Carter on far-left The Gospel Coalition, of all places. By looking at marriage rates and historical events that changed the marriage rate, he was able to identify the cause of the decline of marriage – and fatherhood.

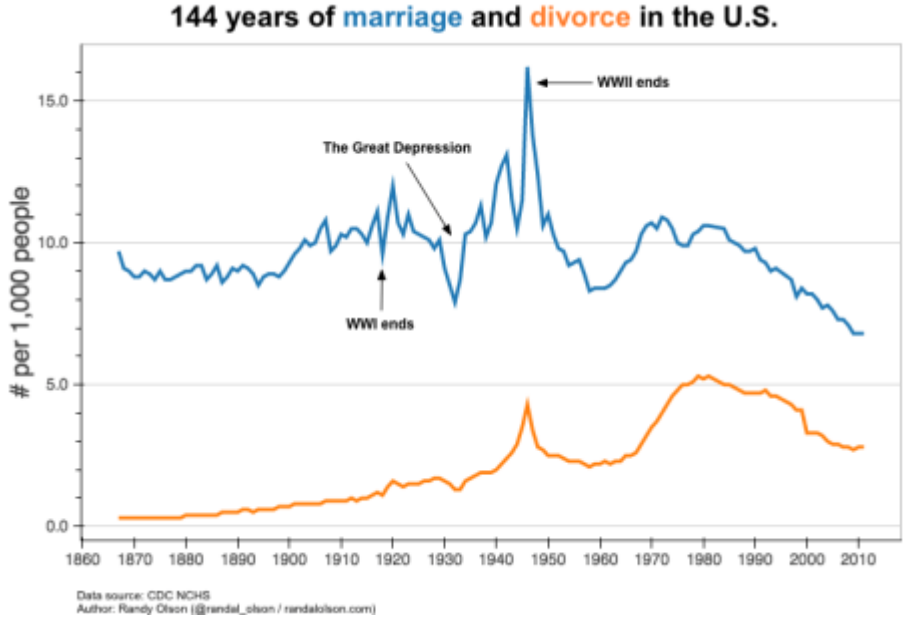

Marriage and divorce rates per capita

I'll spare you the statistical analysis, which is excellent, and give you the conclusion –

although you can guess it from the graph above:

> Now that we've explored the data, what year should we use as the marker for the beginning of the decline of marriage in the United States? I would argue for 1985, the last year that the marriage rate topped 10 percent.
>
> […]What changed in 1985 that could have led to the decline in marriage? There are likely numerous factors—which we'll examine in future articles—but one stands out in particular: By 1985, all states (except for New York) had enacted no-fault divorce legislation.

The most helpful book I know of about no-fault divorce is "Taken Into Custody", by Dr. Stephen Baskerville. He wrote a column for Crisis magazine that summarizes some of his ideas.

Excerpt:

> Feminists were drafting no-fault divorce laws in the 1940s, which the National Association of Women Lawyers now describes as "the greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken."
>
> The result effectively abolished marriage as a legal contract. Today it is not possible to form a binding agreement to create a family.
>
> The new laws did not stop at removing the requirement of citing grounds for a divorce, to allow divorce by mutual consent, as deceptively advertised at the time. Instead they created unilateral and involuntary divorce, so that one spouse may dissolve a marriage without any agreement or fault by the other.

Here's what divorce does to the spouse who is the victim of the unilateral "no-fault" divorce:

> Though marriage is a civil matter, the logic quickly extended into the criminal, including a presumption of guilt against the involuntarily divorced spouse ("defendant"). Yet formal due process protections of criminal proceedings did not apply, so forcibly divorced spouses became quasi-criminals not for recognized criminal acts but for failing or refusing to cooperate with the divorce by continuing to claim the protections and prerogatives of family life: living in the common home, possessing the common property, or—most vexing of all—parenting the common children.
>
> Following from this are the horrendous civil liberties violations and flagrant invasions of family and individual privacy that are now routine in family courts. A personalized criminal code is legislated by the judge around the forcibly divorced spouse, controlling their association with their children, movements, and finances. Unauthorized contact with their children can be punished with arrest. Involuntarily divorced parents are arrested for running into their children in public, making unauthorized telephone calls, and sending unauthorized birthday cards.

In my conversations with men, no-fault divorce laws, and anti-male divorce courts are the main reasons given for why they do not pursue marriage and fatherhood. Men do not want to be coerced in a marriage with the threat of divorce by an unhappy wife. Men do not want to be subject to the government in so many areas of their lives if the wife does carry out the threat. They especially don't want to be separated from their children. One my secular male friends told me that he would not marry unless the woman had evidence in her past of hating radical feminism and no-fault divorce. This was the main criteria. He actually was able to find a woman who was a men's rights activist who hated divorce. But that was the only way he would marry.

Statistically speaking, the wife is more likely to initiate divorce than the husband. Women initiate 70% of divorces, the majority of those just because she is "unhappy". I think this is because women get into marriage based on their feelings, and they think that it is the husband's job to make them feel good. They see their happiness as the primary goal of the marriage, and see a marriage that does not make them happy as a marriage that needs to be ended. They're not interested in helping a man to succeed in his mission, which, for Christian men, is to have a marriage and family that serve GOD first and foremost, not the woman's feelings.

Are we going to repeal no-fault divorce, then?

No-fault divorce was seen as a boon to women who had married the wrong men by following their hearts. It's an interesting question to ask whether women really would want no-fault repealed. It would mean that they would have to get serious about who they marry, instead of just getting into marriage based on feelings. They would have to evaluate men according to expectations of what a man does in a marriage, instead of on feelings. They would have to think about what men want out of a marriage, and prepare themselves to provide for his needs. They would have to say no to their feelings, when choosing a man, and in keeping a man after the wedding.

If women aren't willing to demand the repeal of no-fault divorce laws and get serious about men and marriage, then what's the point of complaining that men don't want to marry and become fathers? If you're not willing to fix the root cause of the problem, then don't complain about the problem.

If you accept Jesus and become a Christian, will God make you happy?

January 11, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a wonderful, wonderful post from Amy Hall, who writes for the Stand to Reason blog.

She writes:

> I had a brief interaction with an atheist on Twitter a couple of weeks ago that unexpectedly turned to the issue of suffering when she said:
>
> You clearly never had a time you were hurt. I don't mean sick. I don't mean heart broken. I mean literally a near death experience or rape or abusive relationship…. You can keep floating on a [expletive] cloud thinking Jesus will do everything for you but it's a lie. What makes you so special?
>
> That surprised me at first because it didn't seem to have anything to do with the tweet she was responding to, and I was confused as to why she would assume I'd never been through anything traumatic. But then in subsequent tweets, when she revealed she had been raped, it became clear that her trauma had played a central role in her becoming an outspoken, obviously angry "antitheist." She's a self-described antitheist now because she thinks Christianity teaches Jesus "will do everything for you" to give you a perfect life, and now she knows that's a lie. The rape proved her understanding of Christianity false.
>
> So it made sense for her to reason that since I believe Christianity is true, I must still be under the delusion that Jesus is making my life special, which means I obviously never encountered any evil or suffering to shake that delusion.

All right, readers. I don't want any of you to be thinking that if you become a Christian that these things should be expected to happen:

- you will feel happy all the time
- you will be able to sense God's secret plan for your life through your feelings
- God's secret plan for your life will automatically work, even though it's crazy
- God will give you a perfect spouse and lots of money without you having to study anything hard, or do any hard work
- you get permission to do things that that make you happy, even if they are expressly forbidden by the Bible
- you don't have to do anything that makes you feel bad (e.g. – talk to non-Christians about Christian truth claims), because God wants you to be happy

No! Where do people get this idea that if they convert to Christianity, then God will become their cosmic butler?

Amy has the answer: (emphasis mine)

> Hear me, everyone: **This is a failure of the church.**
>
> A friend of mine who was deeply suffering once said to me that many Christians are in for "an epic letdown" when they realize their preconceived notions about what God is expected to do for us are false. Pastors who preach a life-improvement Jesus are leading people down this precarious path to disillusionment.
>
> If suffering disproves your Christianity, you've missed Christianity. The Bible is filled with the suffering of those whom God loves. The central event of the Bible is one of suffering. Love involves suffering. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." That means suffering.

It's the church. It's the focus on happy things and having of happy feelings and happy songs and preaching designed to make us feel good. I would say the comforting devotional reading doesn't help to make us any tougher or more practical, either. That happy-clappy stuff just gives you a false sense of safety about your precarious situation. God's job is not to prevent you from suffering. In fact, even if you make really smart, practical decisions, you can expect to get creamed *anyway*.

Please take 15 minutes and read the book of 1 Peter in the New Testament.

Here's a summary from GotQuestions.org:

> **Purpose of Writing:** 1 Peter is a letter from Peter to the believers who had been dispersed throughout the ancient world and were under intense persecution. If anyone understood persecution, it was Peter. He was beaten, threatened, punished and jailed for preaching the Word of God. He knew what it took to endure without bitterness, without losing hope and in great faith living an obedient, victorious life. This knowledge of living hope in Jesus was the message and Christ's example was the one to follow.
>
> **Brief Summary:** Though this time of persecution was desperate, Peter reveals that it was actually a time to rejoice. He says to count it a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ, as their Savior suffered for them. This letter makes reference to Peter's personal experiences with Jesus and his sermons from the book of Acts. Peter confirms Satan as the great enemy of every Christian but the assurance of Christ's future return gives the incentive of hope.
>
> **Practical Application:** The assurance of eternal life is given to all Christians. One way to identify with Christ is to share in His suffering. To us that would be to endure insults and slurs from those who call us "goodie two shoes" or "holier than thou." This is so minor compared to what Christ suffered for us on the Cross. Stand up for what you know and believe is right and rejoice when the world and Satan aim to hurt you.

Recently, I blogged about how suffering is compatible with an all-powerful God, so you might want to read that too if you missed it.

How to explain the gospel in less than 1000 words

January 12, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend sent me a draft e-mail, that he wrote to a family member, who has rejected historic Christianity for progressive Christianity. He was asked to give the basics of salvation, and his attempt to explain the gospel to her is below. My advice included taking out the Christianese terms. Do you think he did a good job? I think his emphasis on what is not the gospel (what needs to be rejected) makes this a first-class explanation of the gospel.

So, you've asked the 10,000 talent question (alluding to Matthew 18:23-35). You are basically asking me what I think the Gospel is. I'll try to answer that in a minimalistic way, using my own characterization of it rather than just making doctrinal statements.

One must accept that there is a God, who is a higher authority than themselves. How much one must first believe about that God is debatable, but candidate beliefs would be that He is personal (having a mind like, but greater than, ours), powerful, and the creator of this cosmos and everything in it — He owns it all. Our natural intuition is to see beauty, order, complexity, and "design" in nature. There is a difference in belief vs unbelief in that some think it is just the appearance of design and some acknowledge their intuition that it actually is designed.

One must acknowledge their moral intuitions, and recognize that there are actually right and wrong things in this world. It's not just whatever you want to do, or whatever society decides in a given time or culture.

Given that morality is then understood to be a transcendent thing (universal and independent of time and culture), the connection is made to God as the author of this moral law.

One must then recognize that he/she regularly fails to live up to this law, even according to just their meager understanding of it, and even by the standards of morality that they make up for other people.

One must not try to suppress this, or therapize it away. One must recognize there is a problem and real moral culpability. One must recognize that they feel guilty and have self-esteem issues because they actually do have guilt and issues.

One must make the connection between guilt and their standing before God. Being good sometimes and in some ways does not erase the bad you do, past, present, or future. One must be willing to bend the knee to God's will regarding morality.

One must also come to see the moral failure (sin) in their lives as a bad thing that they'd like to be rid of, rather than excusing it as the fault of others, or revelling in it as part of the pleasure of life, or shrugging it off as just "who I am."

One must appeal to God in these matters for both forgiveness and help in living as they

should.

Given that God has provided a champion for the problem that humanity faces (the backstory of which not all will fully know), one whose heart is truly yielded to all these things will naturally and eagerly receive Word of this as Good News. God has solved the seemingly irreconcilable demands of both justice and forgiveness in that champion.

Those with ears to hear will receive this solution — Jesus — and believe what He has done in life and on the cross for their sake — the resurrection being both confirmation of His divine authority and also the sign of the defeat of death which awaits us all, and is the only barrier between us and facing this God whom we fail at every turn. They will believe on (or upon) Jesus as Lord and their means of salvation, surrendering dependence upon their own ideas of self-righteousness and earning the favor of God.

The outward expression that we have understood and accepted these things is that we have made Jesus Lord and committed ourselves to following Him, conform our character to His, resist our sinful inclinations, and are interested in learning all about Who God is and what has been done for us in Christ.

This commitment to the Lordship of Christ naturally leads to the acceptance of subsequent beliefs. If Jesus is indeed Lord, then He holds all authority, and what He said and taught to His followers is our guide — the New Testament. And if this is the divine story, as intended by God for men, then we have reason to believe that it is comprehensible to us, and He will insure (in spite of the fallibility of men and demonic plots) that its essential message will not be lost or corrupted until all things are completed. Given that Jesus affirmed every categorical section of the Old Testament, and claimed to be its promised Messiah, then that, too, is a source of truth and understanding.

Those doctrines that are sometimes characterized as “essential” for salvation, are merely the highlights of this redemption narrative, which are those things being clear and consistent, and which indicate that someone has yielded themselves to the authority of Christ and the scriptures, and understands these things. It is not that believing them is what saves, but they are what the saved naturally come to believe. Confessing them is the tangible, verbal act of affirming the Gospel, but is not necessarily identical to a life committed to putting it into practice, which is saving faith.

Should Facebook Democrats be punished for censorship and election interference?

January 13, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've written many times about Facebook's continuous efforts to alter their products and services to censor Christians and conservatives. And I've written about how they have spread misinformation and censored true stories in order to help their allies in the Democrat party. But now Facebook is claiming that they will change their old ways. Should we believe them?

This article from The Federalist collects together many stories of their past actions.

> Meta has repeatedly displayed anti-conservative prejudice. For example, it directly censored The Federalist at least 11 times, suspended the Facebook account of the America First Policy Institute, and restricted the account of conservative Hillsdale College.
>
> When asked why users should vote for Vice President Kamala Harris or former President Donald Trump, Meta AI told users positive things about the Democrat but negative things about the Republican. Research has shown that media bias can shift elections.
>
> Zuckerberg, Meta's founder and CEO, also directly poured $350 million through nonprofits into local election offices in 2020. The funding helped boost turnout in mostly Democrat areas, and enabled left-wing groups like the Center for Tech and Civic Life to meddle in local election processes.
>
> That same year, the company engaged in government collusion to exert draconian control over public discussions online about a prudent Covid-19 response. It also caved to pressure from the FBI to censor the New York Post's Hunter Biden laptop story as "Russian misinformation" — even though the story proved true.

So, should we think that Zuckerberg and his secular left lackeys have turned over a new leaf? Or, are they just trying to avoid jail time by sucking up to Trump (who is prone to sycophant behavior). Time will tell. I don't have any faith in Big Tech. You can tell what they think from their political donations, which is disproportionately delivered to Democrat party candidate. And their political convictions definitely do affect their products and services. If it were up to me, they would be charged, tried, fined and imprisoned. For years.

The Trump Cabinet pick who can crush the Deep State

January 14, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I blogged previously about Kash Patel (FBI) and Jay Bhattacharya (NIH) but when I saw an article (below) on Daily Signal about Russ Vought (OMB) by the politics editor, I thought I'd better read it. And after I read it, I though I'd better share it. First of all, Vought is an excellent conservative. Second, he has a lot of experience. And third, he is an outspoken evangelical Christian.

Daily Signal:

> The Office of Management and Budget is a less well-known entity within the executive branch, but few are as critical for ensuring the implementation of the president's agenda. President-elect Donald Trump has once again placed that awesome responsibility in Russ Vought's hands.
>
> […]Trump released a statement announcing Vought's nomination as OMB director on Friday evening. "I am very pleased to nominate Russell Thurlow Vought, from the Great State of Virginia, as the Director of the United States Office of Management and Budget. He did an excellent job serving in this role in my First Term – We cut four Regulations for every new Regulation, and it was a Great Success! Russ graduated with a B.A. from Wheaton College, and received his J.D. from the Washington University School of Law," Trump's statement read.
>
> "Russ has spent many years working in Public Policy in Washington, D.C., and is an aggressive cost cutter and deregulator who will help us implement our America First Agenda across all Agencies. Russ knows exactly how to dismantle the Deep State and end Weaponized Government, and he will help us return Self Governance to the People. We will restore fiscal sanity to our Nation, and unleash the American People to new levels of Prosperity and Ingenuity. I look forward to working with you again, Russ. Congratulations. Together, we will Make America Great Again!"

So, this is the guy who did the cut four regulations for ever one new regulation. And he graduated from Wheaton College, back when Wheaton was still a conservative Christian school.

More:

> In a recent interview with Tucker Carlson, Vought explained how OMB can… kill the deep state—a death by a thousand cuts.
>
> "OMB is the nerve center of the federal government, particularly the executive branch," Vought told Carlson. "Office of Management and Budget has the ability to turn off the spending that's going on at the agencies. It has all the regulations coming through it to assess whether it's good, or bad, or too expensive, or could

> be done a different way, or 'What does the president think?'"
>
> In short, "presidents use OMB to tame the bureaucracy," Vought said.
>
> "It is the President's most important tool for dealing with the bureaucracy, the administrative state," he reiterated. "And you know, the nice thing about President Trump is he knows that, and he knows how to use it effectively."

And he's experienced:

> Vought was previously atop the OMB, first in an acting capacity and then confirmed by the Senate, for the second half of Trump's first term.
>
> As Trump and Vought prepared to depart the White House in 2021, Vought told the president of his intention to start the Center for Renewing America, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank that sought to keep Trump's policy vision alive in the nation's capital. Trump was supportive of Vought's endeavor, and the pair remained in close contact while Trump was out of power.
>
> Vought's fingerprints have been all over Republican politics and the conservative movement for the past four years. He wrote the Project 2025 chapter on how to reform the Executive Office of the President of the United States. In the media, he was an outspoken proponent for "draining the swamp" by making the federal agencies once again accountable to the president and the American people. And, over the summer, Vought lead the Republican National Convention's policy platform committee.
>
> Now, his fingerprints will be all over bringing the bureaucracy to heel.

I was snooping around in far-left communist atheist publications, and found this hand-wringing about Vought's Christian convictions:

> In 2021 he founded the Centre for Renewing America, an organisation whose mission is to "renew a consensus of America as a nation under God".
>
> His religious views have provoked controversy. In Mr Vought's confirmation hearing in 2017—he squeaked through by a single vote—Senator Bernie Sanders pointed to an article by Mr Vought in which he described Muslims as "condemned" for having rejected Jesus Christ. Mr Vought replied that he respected the right of every person to express their religious beliefs. In the secretly recorded meeting last year he said that elected leaders should discuss whether to prioritise Christian immigrants over those of other faiths. And he has called for a total abolition of abortion—a position that is too extreme for even most American conservatives.
>
> But Mr Vought's religiosity gives a scorching fervour to his criticism of politics and society, and that appeals to the Republican base. He regularly describes the federal government as "woke and weaponised" and has warned that the Democratic Party is "increasingly evil" because it forces secularism on families. He also was an early combatant in the pushback against diversity policies, which

> became a potent campaign theme for Mr Trump: in 2020 he wrote an official memo saying that anti-racism training in the federal government was divisive and anti-American.

So, let’s conclude with this. The best Trump pick, the one you’ve probably never heard of, is the most conservative one, and he’s in a great position to smash the secular left Deep State.

Why you should read “Up From Slavery” by Booker T. Washington

January 15, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lately, my friends have been very excited that I’m a non-white conservative. They want me to answer the grievances of BLM people, and explain from my own experiences what Christianity and conservative policies have to say about making the lives of non-whites better. My friend Wes recommended “Up From Slavery” by Booker T. Washington to help me focus my thoughts.

Here’s a summary of the book:

> ### Dignity through Labor
>
> Over the course of *Up From Slavery,* Washington develops the idea and ideal of dignity through labor. For Washington, the gravest aspect of the institution of slavery is the denigration of labor for both blacks and whites. Because the enslaved had no personal investment or return on their labor, they did not complete their work with an attitude toward improvement. Likewise, whites, largely deprived of meaningful labor, were robbed of the ability to achieve self-sufficiency. In both races, this produced personalities and characters that seek to escape labor. Washington emphasizes labor as the only way to make oneself useful in an interdependent, modern society. Throughout the whole of *Up From Slavery*, Washington searches for and obtains work. Further, once he obtains it, Washington completes all labor to best of his ability, no matter how lowly the task. At the Tuskegee Institute, Washington makes this idea and ideal a foundational ethos. All students who study at the Tuskegee Institute must learn a trade or industry alongside their more traditional academic pursuits. In addition, many of the buildings, most of the furniture, the wagons, and the materials used at the school are produced by students. This level of practical skill and diligence also acts as the foundation of Washington’s theory and program for racial uplift.
>
> ### Selflessness, Desire to Be Useful to One’s Community
>
> The people that Washington most admires and models himself after are those he labels selfless. Washington defines this as the willingness to work on the behalf of others. For Washington, this is not only about duty or labor, but also about the willingness to do one’s best for the benefit of the collective good. Washington believes that racial prejudice can be overcome if black people make themselves indispensable to their communities and their nation. The brick-making episode provides an example. Though the brick-making enterprise at Tuskegee felled three kilns before successfully producing bricks, the venture eventually proved successful and the school began to sell its bricks on the open market.

> Washington describes how whites who were unsympathetic or apathetic to the education of blacks and the overall project of the Tuskegee Institute were willing to purchase Tuskegee bricks due to their quality and convenience. Washington suggests that if black race can find their niche in society by fulfilling a need, then they can co-exist peacefully and productively with whites.
>
> **Impracticality of Political Agitation**
>
> Throughout *Up From Slavery*, Washington defends his ideas about racial advancement and uplift by subtly undermining the proposals of his critics. Though Washington does not explicitly state his objection to the strategies of specific thinkers like W.E.B. Dubois or even his predecessor, Frederick Douglass, he nevertheless highlights the wastefulness of political agitation for equal rights at every chance he gets. To do this, Washington shows that political agitation results in worse relations and outcomes than those that existed before. For example, when he goes home to Malden after his second year at the Hampton Institute, Washington finds that both the salt-furnace and the coal-mine are not in operation due to worker's strikes. In Chapter IV, Washington describes how strikers usually spent all their savings during the strikes and returned to work in debt, but at the same wages. He raises the impracticality of political agitation again after his controversial Atlanta Exposition speech. After the success of his speech, he hypothetically asks if a black man would have been invited to give a speech had people agitated to put a black person on the program. He answers in the negative, saying that such opportunities can only arise through merit.

And here's a summary of his most famous speech:

> On September 18, 1895, Booker T. Washington was selected to give a speech that would open the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia. The speech, which is often referred to as the "Atlanta Compromise," was the first speech given by an African American to a racially-mixed audience in the South. In it, Washington suggested that African Americans should not agitate for political and social equality, but should instead work hard, earn respect and acquire vocational training in order to participate in the economic development of the South. By doing so, eventually, he stated, African Americans would gain the respect of white society and be granted the rights of full citizenship.

There's a free full audio version of the book, and the full text is online. I recommend this book to people of all races, because as the sexual anarchy brought on by feminism becomes widespread, the majority of the children of tomorrow will face the same kinds of challenges.

I see Washington's ideas as consistent with a Christian worldview, where we don't expect to be treated fairly. We expect sinful people to treat us badly. What Christianity says is to be patient, and focus on your relationship with God and loving your neighbor. And one way to love your neighbor is to sell them something valuable that you made through your

labor. Another way is to work and save, and give to charity.

Government solutions to problems like racism and poverty aren't a top priority for Christians. Most of all, we need the freedom to be good, and to do good. That's priority one. You may not make your life better by being moral and diligent, but it's rare that doing so causes you to harm yourself. It's very important that you not harm yourself.

So, this dovetails nicely with my own story. My married non-white parents were not smart enough or willing enough to monitor my education, but they were clear that they wanted me to do well in order to find good-paying work. So I completed my BS and MS in a STEM field, and went to work right away, and I've been at it continuously for 22 years now. I save most of what I earn for charity and early retirement.

I've never experienced any of the racism or police brutality that American blacks complain about. And that's because I follow what Washington is teaching. I dress in a clean way that doesn't communicate danger to others. I'm careful to spend my time reading apologetics, economics and military history. I don't listen to popular music or watch popular TV or movies. I don't hang out with people who blame other people for their lack of success.

I got my first job by volunteering to do it for free on Saturdays for 7 months. My first full-time job salary after college was $50,000. Then I got a raise of $6,000 and then a raise of $9,000. I used to work 70 hour weeks in my 20s. I graduated college with $9,000 dollars in the black, because I went to a small local college and lived at home, and never spent any money on alcohol. My net worth is now about $1.35 million. By the way, the secret to becoming wealthy is to not spend money on showing off. You can be very generous to your friends and still get rich. Just never buy anything that is designed to communicate "status" to anyone. And never spend money on alcohol or chasing sex outside of marriage.

At no time did I accept that the problems defined by the secular left were my real problems. And at no time did I accept their "solutions" as real solutions to anything. As black economist Thomas Sowell writes, the "solutions" of the left are not effective at helping people like me. The "solutions" of the left are designed to make leftists feel better, and look more virtuous to others. You are much better off reading the Bible, Christian apologetics, free market economics, American military history, etc., and then respecting what you learn from that in your decision-making. I think that reading the right stuff is even more important than having good parents or attending church.

What is healthcare like in a universal coverage single-payer system?

January 16, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I want to make sure that America does not adopt single-payer healthcare, and one way to do that is to always be ready to debate healthcare policy with people who ask me. Another way to prevent single-payer is to collect evidence for you, so you can be ready, too. One country that has single-payer healthcare is Canada, and we can learn a lot from them about how well it works.

Here's an article from The Federalist, about healthcare in Canada.

It says:

> When a Canadian child was rushed to the hospital after nearly drowning, his parents say doctors threatened to take the child off life support and suggested harvesting his organs.
>
> "We had 14 days to prepare his funeral and say goodbye to him," Nicolas Tétrault, the boy's father and a former Montreal politician, told The Federalist in English, his second language. "They were promoting to harvest the organs and give them away."
>
> Tétrault said his two-year-old son, Arthur, drowned in October. An ambulance took Arthur to a hospital where doctors resuscitated him, and he was later transferred to Montreal Children's Hospital, where he was stabilized. But doctors told his parents Arthur had brain damage and an abnormal breathing pattern. According to Tétrault, after approximately five weeks doctors gave an ultimatum — they would "unplug" the boy from life support on Nov. 29.
>
> So Tétrault and his wife fled with Arthur to New Orleans, where he is being treated at Ochsner Medical Center and is off a ventilator.

Canadian healthcare is run by socialists. It has taxpayer-funded infanticide, taxpayer-funded child mutilation, and taxpayer-funded euthanasia. When you have an entire society that is majority secular and leftist, that's what you get in the healthcare system. It's not run by Christians. It's not pro-life. It doesn't respect conscience rights. And it doesn't respect parental rights. Canada is run by atheistic communists, and their healthcare system reflects that.

More from the article:

> Doctors were "constantly talking about" harvesting Arthur's organs, according to Tétrault.
>
> "They were killing him with all these drugs, and they were justifying the fact that they were promoting to harvest the organs and give them away," he said. "They were talking about it all the time."

> Tétrault said Sam Shemie (of the pediatric ICU and advanced care unit), Samara Zavalkoff (of the pediatric and advanced ICU), and Stephen Liben (of palliative care and pediatric advanced care) — along with several nurses — suggested harvesting Arthur's organs.
>
> "They don't force you, but the way it's done, it's kind of a strong marketing from the head of the pediatric unit," he said. "Everybody talks about it over there."
>
> […]Tétrault said the difference in Arthur's treatment stems from the difference between American and Canadian hospital systems.
>
> "In Quebec, it's a socialist hospital system where the patients are seen as an expense. In the U.S., a patient is seen as an income, as a client," he said. "It makes the entire difference in the world."

And this is important:

> Canadian doctors harvest organs from euthanasia victims, and some medical professionals say they should do so while the patient is alive for best organ quality, as The Federalist previously reported.

It's the same kind of thing that goes on in China. And Canada's prime minister Trudeau is a great admirer of Chinese communism.

Well, that's enough about that. But I do think that it's important for Americans to be familiar with these horror stories. When you go in the hospital in America, you take it for granted that the doctors are there to help you. But in Canada, the doctors are there to kill you – to stop you from draining money from their government-controlled system. And they want to harvest your organs. Their system is already at the breaking point. They are charging $17, 713 per family just so that people can get on a waiting list with a median wait time of 30 weeks. You're not paying for healthcare – you're paying for a spot on a waiting list. So, of course they are desperate to kill any patients they can, to get people off the waiting lists. Because they know that we are laughing at their third-world healthcare system.

Ron DeSantis names conservative successor to moderate Marco Rubio

January 17, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Trump has selected Marco Rubio to be Secretary of State. I'm not a fan of Marco Rubio – he has a trashy 69% rating from Heritage Action, while Mike Lee has 91% and Ted Cruz has 90%. DeSantis gets to pick someone to replace Rubio in the Senate, and he's chosen Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody. Moody has a LONG track record of conservative battling, so let's get into it.

First, the news from Daily Wire:

> Governor Ron DeSantis (R-FL) announced on Thursday that he has chosen Florida Republican Attorney General Ashley Moody to replace Sen. Marco Rubio, the likely incoming Secretary of State, in the U.S. Senate.
>
> Moody, 49, has served as Florida's AG under DeSantis since 2019 and has been at the forefront of multiple issues recently. In November, she sued FEMA over its alleged discrimination against Trump supporters during the disaster relief efforts after Hurricane Milton. She also took on special prosecutor Jack Smith "for his politically motivated persecution of the former president," DeSantis said at a press conference in Orlando.

Lots of achievements:

> "I wanted somebody with a demonstrated record of delivering results on those important issues," DeSantis said. "Talk is cheap. We need people that have demonstrated fidelity to these principles with their actions."
>
> Moody won two statewide attorney general elections by large margins. Before she became attorney general, Moody served as a federal prosecutor and was the youngest judge in Florida when she was elected to the Circuit Court in Hillsborough County in 2006.

I did a search on Christian Post, to see what adventures she's been having that would interest Christians.

Christian Post says that she loves to defund abortion providers:

> A federal court has reinstated a 2016 Florida law that allows the state to strip taxpayer funding from Planned Parenthood, citing the overturning of Roe v. Wade as justification.
>
> […]Last month, AG Moody announced that she was going to vacate the 2016 injunction, citing the overturning of Roe last year as a justification.
>
> "Now that the case at the center of the court's reasoning has been overturned, we are petitioning the court to vacate the court's injunction and allow the will of

> our state's legislative body and the people who elected them to take effect," stated Moody in February.

Christian Post says that she doesn't like pro-abortion domestic terrorism:

> The law firm First Liberty Institute announced in a post on X Thursday that Heartbeat of Miami, a pro-life pregnancy center in Hialeah, Florida, had finally secured "justice" after it was vandalized by pro-abortion activists in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization decision which ruled the U.S. Constitution does not contain a right to abortion.
>
> The post elaborated on what it meant by "justice," specifically highlighting that "vandals who spray-painted threatening messages on Heartbeat's property last year will pay for their crimes." Expressing gratitude for the assistance of Florida's Republican Attorney General Ashley Moody for "holding these violent protesters accountable," First Liberty described the development as a "big win for Florida's pro-life community."

And Christian Post also says that she thinks that biological men should stay out of women's sports:

> A lawsuit filed by Florida's attorney general and three other states warns that the Biden administration's Title IX rule change will force female athletes to compete against men despite the U.S. Department of Education's claims that the rule does not apply to participation on athletic teams.
>
> […]"Biden's new Title IX rules shred protections for women — that so many fought for over decades," Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody said in a Monday statement.
>
> "The idea that young girls can now legally be forced to undress in the same room with males in what is supposed to be a safe space like a locker room, that a young woman could be randomly assigned a roommate that is a biological male with little to no say over the matter, or that biological men would be eligible for women's scholarships is ludicrous," the attorney general continued. "To ensure safety and fairness, Florida will aggressively fight Biden who refuses to think through the real-world consequences before overhauling regulations."

By the way, if you're paying attention to the federal Attorney General nominee, Pam Bondi, she is also really conservative. I like about half of Trump's picks, and dislike the other half, but Bondi is definitely one of the better picks. Great record, solid conservative, lots of evidence of being able to fight through adversity to victory.

CNN found liable for defaming Navy veteran, has to pay $5 million

January 18, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Corporate news media is losing viewers, and no wonder – they are very biased in how they cover the news. But sometimes, they go beyond bias, and actually defame other people. Recently, CNN, a former news network, ran a story about a Navy veteran. And they got in big trouble for it. And now they have to pay millions and millions of dollars.

I have to link to the Media Research Center's Newsbusters blog, because nobody does a better job of covering media bias than Newsbusters.

They write:

> On Friday, a jury of six in Florida's 14th Circuit Court in Bay County has found CNN liable for the defamation of Navy veteran Zachary Young and that he was entitled economic and emotional damages, a ruling that proved CNN was not worthy of their moniker "the most trusted name in news." They also found that CNN's reporters had demonstrated expressed malice, actual malice, and outrageous behavior, which opened the door for a massive punitive damages judgement.
>
> The jury also found Young was entitled to $4 million in economic damages and $1 million in emotional damages. They also ruled that CNN should be subject to punitive damages, but the two sides settled Friday afternoon following nearly 90 minutes of discussions.

In another story from the New York Post, they talked about how much the punitive damages might be:

> Louis G. Adolfsen, a defamation lawyer and founding member of the Melito & Adolfsen PC law firm in Manhattan, speculated that the settlement could be for as high as $25 million considering Panama City is a "rural or semi-rural" area where the jury pool is likely hostile to CNN.

Back to Newsbusters – this part is interesting. The material was false, and false to the level of defamation:

> A ruling of liable meant the jury had determined CNN published the defamatory material, the material was "of and concerning" Young, the materials that was published was false, said false material rose to the level of defamation, CNN was negligent in their news reporting about Young, and that Young had sustained damages as a result of the material.

"False material rose to the level of defamation". And these are the kinds of people who fact check what you say on social media.

Internal CNN e-mails show what they are really like:

> Young's lead counsel Vel Freedman said in his closing that the Marquardt segment ran on 11 different CNN shows both domestically and on CNN International. And, in addition to Marquardt's defamatory report, it was accompanied by anchors making their own defamatory statements about Young.
>
> The jury also found CNN had operated with expressed and actual malice. The evidence presented to the jury was clear; Marquardt had messaged colleagues that he was going to "nail this Zachary Young Mfucker" while calling the report was going to be "your funeral bucko." CNN editors called him a "shit" and "a shitbag" who had a "punchable face."

They say that journalism is one of the easiest majors to get. And when you read their internal e-mails, you really can see that they've never really moved beyond high school. What do people learn in journalism school? Nothing.

Anyway, it's Saturday, so enjoy some good news.

Joe Biden commuted the sentences of 37 brutal murderers: is that justice?

January 19, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On this blog, I've previously blogged about how the death penalty deters criminals from committing violent crimes. And in another post, I reported on the findings of famous systematic theologian Wayne Grudem about whether the Bible supports or opposes the death penalty. Well, the actions of Joe Biden, a secular leftist, have provided an occasion for us to look at the death penalty again.

Here's a very interesting article at the The Federalist written by famous conservative theologian Dr. Robert Gagnon.

He writes:

> Two days before Christmas, in the waning days of his presidency, Joe Biden commuted the death sentences of 37 out of 40 federal prisoners to a life sentence. Only by hearing what they had done can we begin to grapple with their offense. Many of them were responsible for gruesome murders of multiple persons.

In the rest of the article, he looks at some of the murderers that Joe Biden pardoned.

Here are some:

> Jorge Avila-Torrez "sexually assaulted and stabbed to death two girls — Laura Hobbs, 8, and Krystal Tobias, 9 — who had been riding their bicycles in their neighborhood in a suburb north of Chicago in 2005. Four years later, he strangled naval officer Amanda Snell, 20, inside her barrack in Arlington, Virginia." He subsequently admitted to these crimes. A year after that, he kidnapped, raped, and strangled a woman in a secluded area of northern Virginia, leaving her for dead by the side of a road. She survived and reported the crime to police, finally leading to his arrest and conviction.
>
> […]Marvin Gabrion murdered 19-year-old Rachel Timmerman before she could testify in a 1997 rape case against him. He handcuffed her, covered her eyes and mouth with duct tape, wrapped her in chains, weighted her down with concrete blocks, and threw her into a lake alive. He also murdered Rachel's 11-month-old daughter.
>
> […]Richard Jackson in 1994 kidnapped, raped, and murdered 22-year-old Karen Styles when she was going for a jog in Asheville, North Carolina. A hunter found her partially naked body duct-taped to a tree, with a gunshot wound to the head. Jackson later confessed to the crime.

This one is interesting because it shows the difference that the death penalty makes – it deters people who have life sentences from killing anyone else:

> Anthony Battle “murdered an Atlanta prison guard with a hammer in 1994 while serving a life sentence for murdering his wife, a US Marine, in 1987.” Battle confessed that he killed the guard because he was “tired of being bossed around” and wanted to kill the first guard he saw. He showed no remorse. At Battle’s trial, three prison guards from the facility testified that Battle’s actions emboldened other prisoners to threaten staff because “without the death penalty, all prisoners … believe there is nothing that can happen to them.”

Dr. Gagnon says that it’s an injustice when someone who murders escapes the approriate punishment:

> Biden’s action in commuting nearly all federal death sentences to life sentences for heinous murderers should generate a sense of moral outrage. This moral outrage emanates not from a bloodthirsty desire for vengeance but from a sense of justice regarding the value and dignity of innocent life. Taking the innocent life of one made in God’s image, especially in particularly heinous murders such as the above, requires the forfeiture of the murderer’s life (see Genesis 9:6).

One question I find myself asking is why should taxpayers get the bill for letting these people live to the end of their natural lives? They should either have to pay for their own upkeep, or family members should pay. Why do taxpayers have to get the bill? If Joe Biden wants to be so generous, then why doesn’t he get the bill for it? It seems like the secular left is always being generous with other people’s money, and being non-judgmental by risking other people’s safety.

Study: 1 in 8 divorces is caused by student loan debt

January 20, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to make plans in advance and calculate everything out before I try to do anything. This is the curse of being a software engineer. We're taught to take a test-first approach to design. So, when I think about marriage, I naturally think about what tests marriage is supposed to pass, and work backwards from there to requirements for each of the spouses.

Here's some research from CNBC that might help young people to avoid a divorce, if they respect the research in their choices.

Excerpt:

> When it comes to student loan debt, "for richer, for poorer" doesn't quite cut it.
>
> In general, finances are the leading cause of stress in a relationship, according to a study by SunTrust Bank, but student debt takes a particularly hard toll on a marriage.
>
> More than a third of borrowers said college loans and other money factors contributed to their divorce, according to a recent report from Student Loan Hero, a website for managing education debt.
>
> In fact, 13 percent of divorcees blame student loans specifically for ending their relationship, the report found. Student Loan Hero surveyed more than 800 divorced adults in June.

Here is a link to the full study from Student Loan Hero.

I think in general, you can't just do whatever you want before marrying and jump into it unprepared. Marriage involves specific requirements in order to work, such as being faithful to your spouse, and buying things that you need for the marriage enterprise, like a home, and baby stuff. It doesn't make any sense to say "I want to get married" and then not prepare for marriage by being careful about preparing for the behaviors marriage that requires of you. Being debt-free is one of those behaviors that marriage requires of you.

So how can we be debt-free, so that the marriage will be stable? Well, one way to be debt-free is to find a way to learn skills that will allow you to get a job without going to college, like being a self-taught software engineer. One of my friends actually did that, and now he's with a very good software company as a remote worker. But if you're going to go to college, you can avoid debt by studying something that will get you a high-paying job when you graduate.

This 2017 article from Harvard Business Review is interesting.

It says:

> Examining 46,934 resumes shared on Glassdoor by people who graduated

> between 2010 and 2017, the researchers looked at each person's college major and their post-college jobs in the five years after graduation. They then estimated the median pay for each of those jobs (also using Glassdoor data) for employees with five years of experience or less. Their key finding: "Many college majors that lead to high-paying roles in tech and engineering are male dominated, while majors that lead to lower-paying roles in social sciences and liberal arts tend to be female dominated, placing men in higher-paying career pathways, on average."

Here's the plot, and you can click it to expand it:

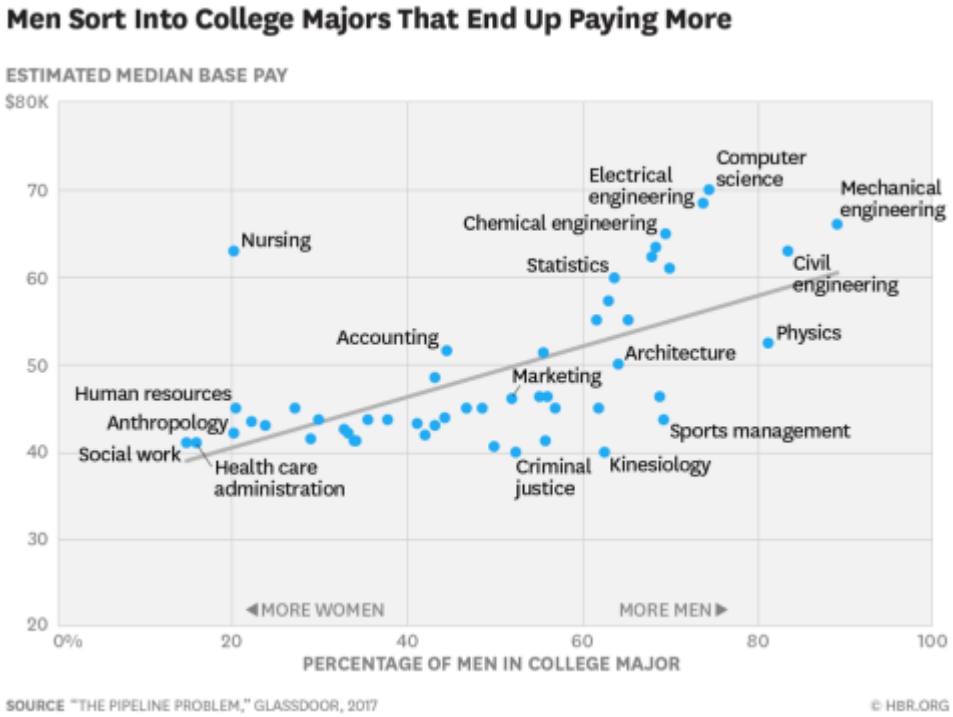

Median salaries by major, broken out by gender – don't study things at the bottom!

As you can see from the graph, it's especially important to share the message about choosing a major, salaries and student loan debt with WOMEN, because as the graph shows, they tend to choose the wrong majors, if the goal is to pay off student loans and avoid divorce. Everyone who wants marriage to go smoothly needs to choose majors that are near the top of the graph, like nursing, chemical engineering, computer science, or mechanical engineering. It doesn't make sense to go to college if you aren't going to graduate in one of these high-paying fields.

As you might expect from the graph, women hold the majority of student loan debt, according to the Boston Globe, and that's because women tend to choose majors that don't result in good-paying jobs. And we already saw how this becomes a risk factor for divorce.

Student loans delay marriage and children

Another interesting piece of data, reported by The Consumerist, is that people with student loans tend to delay marriage, which means the couple has fewer children:

> As consumers navigate life's financial journey, they are faced with major financial

> milestones, like buying a home. But student loans are also delaying consumers from reaching these goals.
>
> Survey respondents report delaying homeownership (23 percent), buying or leasing a car (23 percent), having children (10 percent) and getting married (9 percent) because of their student loan burdens.

So, it’s not just that there is an increased risk of divorce from student loans, but there’s also fewer children, which means a diminished legacy. I can’t speak for how others would see this, but for myself, I want to pass on my beliefs to as many effective, influential Christian children as I can.

When I was in high school, I was far more interested in becoming an English teacher than I was in becoming a software engineer. It was my Dad who overruled my choice of college major when I was still in high school. He had me take a first-year English course at a local university. When I saw how politicized and useless it was (they were studying all sorts of politically correct postmodern relativist stuff, instead of the classics, and they weren’t trying to learn any wisdom from any of it), I chose computer science. I did what was likely to avoid divorce, and likely to support having many children.

What should we think about the Democrat party, based on Biden's presidency?

January 21, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw two interesting articles over at The Federalist, listing out 12 corrupt actions that Joe Biden committed, and 7 reasons why Biden was one of our worse presidents. I read through these, and the first thing I though of was all of the "Christians" who cheered him on in his presidency: people like David French, Russell Moore, etc. How could "Christian" leaders support such an immoral man?

Here's the first article about the 12 corrupt actions.

Releasing Gantanamo Bay prisoners:

> The Biden administration has been busy its last few weeks in office repatriating terrorists and other bad actors imprisoned at Gitmo back to foreign countries throughout the world. The decision appears to be an attempt to fulfill Biden's pledge to close the high-security detention facility by the end of his presidency.
>
> Unsurprisingly, relocating Gitmo detainees to foreign countries has produced horrendous consequences. According to the New York Post, "Twenty-three years after the 9/11 attacks on NYC, new US intelligence documents reveal 234 'rehabbed' former Gitmo detainees have returned to terrorism and killing Americans — an alarming 32% recidivism rate. Most of them have not been recaptured and are still at large."

Pardoning Hunter Biden to protect himself:

> For Americans who have followed the Biden family's corruption, it came as no surprise when Sleepy Joe doled out a blanket pardon for his son Hunter last month. Rather than only wiping Hunter's slate clean of his tax and gun charges, Biden's pardon covered all "offenses against the United States which [Hunter] has committed or may have committed or taken part in" dating back to January 2014.
>
> The move marked a clear attempt by the outgoing president to protect his son (and himself) from criminal investigation into the Biden family's foreign business dealings.

Raising the price of oil and gas:

> The Biden administration's war on American energy is nothing new. But his latest action to stymie incoming President Donald Trump's plans to unleash the country's oil and gas industries takes on a whole new level of despicable.
>
> As The Federalist's Tristan Justice reported, Biden issued an executive order earlier this month "banning new oil and gas projects across 625 million acres of ocean across the East and West Coasts, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Bering Sea."

> While Trump has vowed to undo the "ridiculous" edict, the law weaponized by the outgoing administration to shut down the planned projects will seemingly make such an action much more difficult.

Bailing out people who refuse to pay back the money they borrowed for useless university degrees – with your children's money:

> After being denied by the U.S. Supreme Court twice, Biden is spending his final days in office attempting to circumvent the nation's high court by unilaterally bailing out student loan borrowers. The administration announced Monday it used taxpayer money to "cancel" the debts of more than 150,000 individuals who chose to take on such loans.

In the second article, we hear about 7 reasons why Biden was one of our worse presidents.

Runaway inflation, caused by blocking energy production, and runaway government spending:

> According to the latest figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, $100 when Biden took office is now worth just $82.88. Relatedly, Americans' credit card debt has risen 51 percent under Biden (through last September), to $1.166 trillion, the highest tally on record.
>
> What's more, the federal government racked up more deficit spending during just the first half of Biden's presidency than it did during the four years of World War II — even after adjusting for inflation (see "Chart"). With such massive quantities of borrowed money sloshing around in the economy, inflation predictably ensued, with everyday Americans paying higher prices for items ranging from groceries… to Big Macs, to airline tickets, to cars, to homes. Speaking of homes, 30-year mortgage interest rates rose from 2.8 percent to 7.0 percent on Biden's watch.

Supporting racial divisiveness and misogyny:

> On his very first day in office, Biden issued an executive order on "equity." Asserting that America is a land of "unbearable … systemic racism" — a claim unsupported by the evidence — Biden launched "an ambitious whole-of-government equity agenda." This radical agenda informed Biden's entire presidency — from his refusal to enforce federal immigration laws (which are said to disadvantage non-citizen "people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality"), to his rejection of the colorblind ideal in favor of race-consciousness and favoritism, to his insistence that boys and men should be allowed to play girls' and women's sports and use ladies' locker rooms, and that anyone who says otherwise is a "bigot" whose views should be suppressed by the federal government and/or its social media allies. This radical leftist social

> agenda, which defies both basic notions of equal treatment for all and basic recognition of biological truths, became a hallmark of Biden's presidency.

Lawlessness and abuse of power:

> The federal courts routinely had to rebuke Biden for issuing kingly mandates that usurped legislative power. Examples include his vaccine/mask decree at the expense of private workers; his transportation edict requiring Americans to wear masks on planes, trains, and buses; his proclamation that federal employees had to get one of the experimental Covid vaccines or else be fired; and his ploy, via executive fiat, to transfer some $400 billion in student-loan debt from borrowers to taxpayers as a whole. (After being rebuked by the Supreme Court in the latter instance, Biden declared that "that didn't stop me," as he went around the verdict and transferred much of that student loan debt anyway.) Each of these monarchical decrees was struck down by the federal courts on the grounds that Biden exceeded his lawful authority.
>
> Not content merely with usurping legislative power, Biden also took it upon himself to try to rewrite the Constitution. On literally the last official federal workday of his presidency (the Friday before Inauguration Day), Biden — in opposition to a recent statement from Colleen Shogan, his own appointee as the Archivist of the United States — declared that the Equal Rights Amendment, a proposed amendment whose ratification window expired more than 40 years ago, somehow is now "the law of the land" and "has become part of our Constitution" — per his decree.

Since evangelicals for Biden – people like Russell Moore, David French, the ERLC, etc. – supported these actions and policies, you really have to wonder whether "Christian" leaders are capable of understanding morality. Did they just get compromised by their desperate desire to get the approval of non-Christians?

Biden issues last-minute pardons, confirming the guilt of his Democrat party allies

January 22, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Just hours before President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration, Joe Biden gave sweeping pardons to Dr. Anthony Fauci, Army General Mark Milley, and members of the Democrat-run January 6 committee. These pardons offer convincing evindence that these individuals engaged in wrongdoing, and their acceptance of these pardons are evidence that they admit that they are guilty.

This article from The Federalist is by Beth Brelje, and she has a very direct headline: "Mentally Incompetent Biden Confirms Guilt Of J6 Committee, Fauci, Milley With Last-Minute Pardons".

It says:

> To be pardoned for a crime, there must be a crime. None of the people on this list have been charged for the awful ways they harmed people in their official capacities.
>
> […]As The Federalist's Tristan Justice recently reported, during the hearings, "Cheney started coordinating with ex-White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson using the encrypted Signal app to circumvent Hutchinson's attorney, Stefan Passantino. Hutchinson suddenly went from a benign fact-witness without much to offer Jan. 6 investigators to the committee's breakout star, offering outlandish testimony about then-President Trump attempting to violently hijack a vehicle from his Secret Service detail so he could personally riot at the Capitol."
>
> So which is it? Award-winning behavior, or a crime? She tampered with a witness and tainted the facts presented to the American people.
>
> Sounds like a crime, and with this preemptive pardon, Biden proves he thinks so too — a crime vulnerable to investigation that would lead to charges. It could be no other reason.

What about Milley? What crime did he commit?

> Milley was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and was the top dog during the disastrous Afghanistan withdrawal, which saw 13 soldiers die, hundreds of Americans stranded, and millions of dollars' worth of military equipment abandoned.
>
> Heads did not roll. Instead, the White House characterized the withdrawal as a success.
>
> Under Milley's leadership, the military went woke, embracing LGBTQ issues and placed racial equity above military readiness. Federalist writer Jordan Boyd reported in 2021 how, the day before the withdrawal, Milley was in a Senate a

> hearing explaining that he wanted to understand “white rage.”
>
> The book, “Peril,” claimed that after Jan. 6, Milley called his Chinese counterpart, Gen. Li Zuocheng, and allegedly told him the “American government is stable” and promised the U.S. would not attack and that the Chinese would be warned first.
>
> With the last-minute pardon, Biden finally admits the withdrawal was a crime. But he robs the U.S. of the justice that comes from accountability. It is not surprising; Biden is good at bad exits, a BBC report said.

Another article from The Federalist, by Jordan Boyd, goes into the details on why Fauci needs a pardon:

> The evidence overwhelming indicates Fauci played a large role in funding the Wuhan lab where the deadly virus originated and also worked overtime to subvert information about the viral leak that killed millions of people worldwide.
>
> Biden’s pardon for Facui notably extends back to Jan. 1, 2014. It was around that same time that NIAID’s parent agency, the National Institutes of Health, claimed it ceased funding for the gain-of-function research (GOF) “involving influenza, SARS, and MERS viruses.” GOF involves extracting viruses from the wild and engineering them to infect humans to study potential therapeutics. Just three years later, GOF was eligible for taxpayer funding again.
>
> Fauci not only supported GOF research of coronaviruses like Covid-19, but he also devoted taxpayer funding to it — specifically in the form of a $600,000 five-year annual grant through the EcoHealth Alliance for work at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Then he lied about the research’s existence to Congress.
>
> As early as February 2020, Fauci knew the signs of Covid-19’s creation and origin pointed to the Wuhan lab. He also knew from a 2020 Federalist article that masking was ineffective, flip-flopped on the importance of in-person schooling, nuked the herd immunity strategies in favor of deadly lockdowns, and pushed for a forced jab proven not to prevent infection.
>
> Instead of informing Americans of these facts, Fauci colluded with federal government players like the CIA, the Department of State, and the Biden White House to downplay the truth about the virus. He also turned a blind eye when corporate media and Big Tech censors used their power in the public square to defame and deplatform those who dissented from the regime’s Covid response.
>
> Fauci opted for ineffective and even harmful Covid-19 policies that made him and his agency millions. Shortly before the pandemic he became the highest-paid federal employee.
>
> Biden’s pardon of Fauci may look like an obstacle to the justice he deserves, but it’s actually a gift in the form of an admission.
>
> For one, Biden’s pardon does not protect Fauci from a reckoning in the form of state prosecutions. Nor does it prevent Congress from compelling Fauci to

> explain in detail his role in one of the biggest scandals in U.S. history.
>
> Sen. Rand Paul, chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, already vowed on Monday to continue Congress's pursuit to "pierce the veil of deception."
>
> "If there was ever any doubt as to who bears responsibility for the COVID pandemic, Biden's pardon of Fauci forever seals the deal," he wrote on X.

What should we make of these pardons? These pardons make me think about the evangelicals for Biden, like David French and Russell Moore. These two clowns present themselves to others as pious and moral Christians. And they claim to care about morality. But now we know that they don't care about morality at all. Or the rule of law. They just care about saying whatever they have to say to get the approval of secular left elites.

Knight and Rose grade Trump's Cabinet picks on the Freethinking podcast

January 23, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Desert Rose and I went on the Freethinking Ministries podcast to talk about Trump's Cabinet picks. We talked about around a dozen of Trump's Cabinet picks with host Josh Klein. Which ones will be confirmed? Which ones were home runs? Which ones were stinkers? Tune in to find out. And along the way, we talked about why Christians should care about policy. See below for my notes.

Here's the YouTube episode:

And if you like audio-only podcasts, you will find the episode here on Apple, here on Spotify, and anywhere else you listen to podcasts. These guys are a regular listen for me, because they are great on apologetics, and on policy. Which is uncommon.

Here are my notes with links to the articles that I read, to prepare to go on the show:

- This Trump Pick Can Silently Strangle the Deep State (Daily Signal)
- Trump taps longtime ally Kash Patel to lead FBI (New York Post)
- 5 biggest FBI scandals during Christopher Wray's tenure as director (Fox News)
- Trump taps COVID-censored Stanford professor Jay Bhattacharya to lead NIH (New York Post)
- 5 revelations from the House COVID-19 report (Christian Post)
- Trump names his picks for FDA, CDC and surgeon general (New York Post)
- Trump Taps Champion of Free Speech, Biological Reality to Replace Woman at DOJ Who Jailed Pro-Lifers (Daily Signal)
- Putting RFK Jr. in charge of health breaks the first rule of medicine (New York Post)
- 'Disgusting': Nikki Haley Condemns Two Trump Cabinet Picks (Daily Caller)
- Dr. Oz, Running For U.S. Senate As A Republican, Has A History Of Donating To Democrats (Daily Wire)
- Trump Cabinet pick Dr. Janette Nesheiwat faces MAGA fury after COVID videos resurface (UK Daily Mail)
- President Trump needs the full story on Penny Schwinn's education history in TN (Robby Starbuck)

We talked about several other picks not discussed in these links, as well.

Stephen C. Meyer debates Charles Marshall on the Cambrian explosion

January 24, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is a summary of recent podcast of Unbelievable between intelligent design proponent Stephen C. Meyer and UC Berkeley evolutionary biologist Charles Marshall. Dr. Marshall had previously reviewed Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt" in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal "Science".

Details:

> Stephen C Meyer is the world's leading Intelligent Design proponent. His new book Darwin's Doubt claims that the Cambrian fossil record, which saw an "explosion" of new life forms in a short space of time, is evidence for ID.
>
> Evolutionary biologist Charles Marshall of the University of California, Berkeley has written a critical review of the book. He debates Meyer on whether Darwinian evolution can explain the diversity of life in the Cambrian rocks.
>
> For Meyer & Darwin's Doubt:
> http://www.darwinsdoubt.com/
>
> For Charles Marshall's review:
> http://www.sciencemag.org/content/341/6152/1344.1.full

Here's the debate on YouTube:

The brief summary this time is not provided by me, it's from Evolution News.

Excerpt:

> This past weekend Britain's Premier radio network broadcast a debate between Stephen Meyer and UC Berkeley paleontologist Charles Marshall, recorded at the beginning of November. As David Klinghoffer noted yesterday, the subject of the debate was Meyer's book *Darwin's Doubt*. Yes, that's the same Charles Marshall who reviewed *Darwin's Doubt* in *Science* back in September. See here for our multiple responses.
>
> It was an excellent debate, with both participants offering important insights and good arguments, though in my opinion Meyer unquestionably had the better of it, especially concerning the key scientific question of the origin of the information necessary to build the Cambrian animals. Nevertheless, both parties came to the table ready to engage in serious, thoughtful, and civil discussion about the core issues raised in *Darwin's Doubt*, and we commend Marshall not only for participating, but for focusing his critique of the book on the central scientific issues, something other critics have conspicuously failed to do.
>
> The debate was consequently both constructive and civil. Both parties complimented, as well as critiqued, the work of the other. Marshall, for example,

> described the first third of *Darwin's Doubt* — the section that discusses the Cambrian and Precambrian fossil record, Marshall's own area of principle expertise — as "good scholarship." He also said it "looks like good science" and that Meyer "writes well," and that he (Marshall) "really enjoyed reading"*Darwin's Doubt*. Meyer, for his, part expressed his admiration for Marshall's many scientific papers in paleontology and noted that he had been looking forward to the conversation because he and Marshall clearly "shared a passion for the same subject," despite their different perspectives. Of course, Marshall is not pro-ID and both men expressed spirited disagreements, but they did so in a mostly respectful way that made the debate all the more interesting and engaging to listen to.

I was very impressed with Dr. Marshall's performance during the debate, although he did try to poison the well a bit against ID at the beginning, and he got nasty at the end. It's amazing how Dr. Meyer was able to get him to stop it with the politics and get serious, just by sticking to the science. Even when Marshall got insulting at the end, it was still valuable to see how the other side has to abandon rational argument and scientific evidence once they see that they can't win on the merits. It's "Inherit the Wind" in reverse.

Evolution News also posted a more complete guide to the debate in this post, and I recommend that you read that post before listening to the debate if you are not familiar with the science.

This is a great debate, and you definitely ought to listen to it. I hope I've posted enough here to convince you. If you haven't yet bought "Signature in the Cell" and "Darwin's Doubt", then I urge you to get them, although they are intermediate/advanced level books. The two books are the state of the art in intelligent design research, good enough to be debated with a University of California, Berkeley professor of biology.

Fascist atheist group loses lawsuit against Ratio Christi student ministry

January 25, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Consider the case of "Secular Student Alliance v. U.S. Department of Education", in which an atheist group called Americans United for Separation of Church and State filed suit to challenge a Trump-era rule that guaranteed first amendment protections to religious student groups on college campuses. Why would atheists want to use government to coerce religious people against their will?

Are there such things as human rights in atheism? Of course not. The universe is an accident. Human beings are just accidental arrangements of atoms that evolved by chance. Their behaviors are determined by chemicals in their brains. And there is no reward or punishment waiting for us when we die. So, of course atheists look at American documents like the Constitution as a pack of nonsense. And of course they have no rational foundation for basic human rights, such as freedom of speech.

Well, lucky for these religious student groups, Alliance Defending Freedom – a Christian legal firm – decided to step in and oppose the fascist atheists. And they won! The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled that the Trump-era regulation defending freedom of speech is valid.

Here is what the ADF said about their win:

> Universities are meant to be a marketplace of ideas where students can learn to respect diverse opinions and beliefs and not have to fear punishment or harassment because of their own values. The Department of Education under President Trump rightfully updated its regulations to ensure that institutions of higher education have policies that align with the First Amendment. Christian student group Ratio Christi has at least twice gone to court over discriminatory policies targeted at their beliefs, and the Department of Education updated its regulations to prevent these types of violations. We're pleased the court upheld First Amendment freedoms for college students everywhere.

I learned about this story from the Sound Faith Consulting blog, and the leader of Sound Faith actually did an interview about these issues with the head of Ratio Christi, Corey Miller:

I still have a passion for what goes on at university campuses, and listening to that video reminded me of how much Christianity is attacked on campuses. It's definitely something to pray about, and something to think about for people who enroll in universities hoping to get an education.

You know what I always say: whether trades or degrees, make sure that you are learning something that lets you solve problems for customers in the private sector. Don't go for a non-STEM degree that just leaves you with student loans and no job and no money. If you

are going to go non-STEM, at least be aware of the risks. The rewards can be great (you could work for the ADF as a lawyer) but the risks are much higher. So count the cost.

What’s the strongest argument in favor of Darwinian evolution?

January 26, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

As you can see from the right column of the blog, I am currently reading a review copy of Dr. John West’s new book “Stockholm Syndrom Christianity”, which is coming out early next month. The book provides a lot of interesting details on what causes Christian institutions to abandon historical Christian convictions. And I found an interesting article by Dr. West to give you a preview.

This article from Evolution News has the title “Do Scientists Have Freedom to Question Darwinism?” and it’s adapted from one of the chapters of the amazing book “The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith: Exploring the Ultimate Questions About Life and the Cosmos.”

Here’s an excerpt from the article:

> The list of scientists, teachers, students, and others who have faced retaliation or discrimination for their public skepticism of Darwinism is long and growing.
>
> […]At San Francisco State University, tenured biology professor Dean Kenyon was removed from teaching introductory biology classes. Once an influential proponent of Darwinian evolution, Kenyon had come to doubt key parts of Darwin’s theory and expressed those doubts to students in class, including his belief that some biological features exhibited evidence of intelligent design.
>
> […]Scientists outside of biology who express skepticism about Darwinism can also face discrimination and bullying. At Baylor University, mathematician William Dembski was fired as director of an academic center he had founded to explore the idea of intelligent design as an alternative to unguided Darwinian evolution. Eventually his faculty contract was not renewed as well, and he lost his job. Dembski, who holds doctorates from the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois at Chicago, had exemplary academic credentials and publications, but his research center had been strenuously opposed by Baylor’s biology faculty.

This one is about a professor who identified as an evolutionist, but simply argued for giving every scientific theory a critical evaluation:

> Sometimes scientists can find themselves blacklisted if they merely express openness or sympathy to a critical examination of Darwinism. Astronomer Martin Gaskell was a top applicant to become the head of an observatory at the University of Kentucky. In the words of one university faculty member there, “his qualifications…stand far above those of any other applicant.” But Gaskell was ultimately rejected for the job after the biology faculty waged an internal war against his hiring. Why did they want to prevent him from getting the job? First, Gaskell was perceived by other faculty to be “potentially evangelical.” Worse,

> although he identified himself as a supporter of evolution, in online notes for a science and faith talk, Gaskell respectfully discussed the views of intelligent design proponents and acknowledged that modern evolutionary theory had unresolved problems — just like any scientific theory.

When it comes to intelligent design, the approach of critics is similar to the Inquisition. Don't just expel the heretic, but make sure that everyone else has been warned not to criticize the church:

> Eric Hedin was an assistant professor of physics at Ball State University. Like Gaskell, he had a long list of peer-reviewed science publications. For many years, he taught an interdisciplinary honors class at Ball State called "The Boundaries of Science,"which explored the limits of science.

Now they are going to talk about Jerry Coyne. You might remember that I recently blogged about his view that atheists cannot ground morality rationally in their atheistic worldview. So of course, here he is, behaving immorally and trampling the human rights of anyone who disagrees with him:

> During one small part of the course, Hedin discussed the debate over intelligent design in physics and cosmology — not biology. Hedin's course received positive student reviews. However, atheist evolutionary biologist Jerry Coyne at the University of Chicago and the Freedom from Religion Foundation filed complaints. Ball State then violated its own procedures and appointed an ad hoc committee stacked with avowed critics of intelligent design, including two who spoke at a previous Darwin Day conference organized by the Ball State Freethought Alliance, a group whose "original goal," according to its president, was "belittling religion." Hedin's class was eventually cancelled by Ball State. In addition, the university president issued a campus speech code not only banning professors from covering intelligent design in science classes but also from expressing support for the concept in social science and humanities classes.

Isn't it interesting to see that the best argument for Darwinism is "if you don't make a faith commitment to Darwinism, I will destroy your career".

And the second best argument is like it, "if you claim to be a Christian and deny Darwinism, then I will let you lead the NIH, or publish books with a prestigious academic press. And you can be a professor at Wheaton College, Calvin College, Westmont College or Baylor University."

Sometimes, I think it's better to just get your STEM degrees, and then just go directly into the private sector. Then you can be paid well, do productive work that customers are willing to pay for, without having to compromise your faith to impress the secular leftist elites, and without having to beg for grant money from the secular leftists in government.

New course by Shanda Fulbright on worldviews for students grades 7-9

January 27, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed that a new online course taught by Shanda Fulbright is going to run in February. It's for students in grades 7 to 9. The title is "Expedition to Reality: Exploring Worldviews and Major World Religions". There is a 20% off coupon if you register before this Wednesday, so I thought I'd better mention it. Shanda has a lot of experience in this area.

Here's what it is about:

> In today's culture, your child is constantly confronted with competing worldviews and tough questions about faith. Are they ready to respond with confidence and clarity?
>
> Now your 7th-9th grade student can join certified apologist Shanda Fulbright and Dr. Frank Turek in this BRAND NEW 8-WEEK PREMIUM COURSE, Expedition to Reality: Exploring Worldviews and Major World Religions, where they'll learn how to identify the core principles of Christianity, compare it to other world religions, AND HAVE FUN DOING IT!
>
> This course will equip your child to stand strong in a world full of false ideas. They'll explore ideas like:
>
> - What is a worldview, and why does it matter?
> - What sets Christianity apart from other belief systems?
> - How can I confidently respond to challenges to my faith?
> - What tools are available to think critically about competing ideas?
>
> Through interactive lessons, real-world applications, and a focus on building a strong Christian worldview, your child will grow in their faith and develop tools to engage thoughtfully with the world around them.

Shanda has a Christian apologetics and worldview podcast called "Her Faith Inspires" and she has a lot of teaching experience in her background:

> Shanda Fulbright is a former California Public School teacher. She is credentialed with a certification in multiple subjects for grades K-8. Along with her BA from California State University, Fresno, she has a certificate in Christian Apologetics from Biola University, a certificate from the CrossExamined Instructor's Academy as well as several certificates from Online Christian Courses.

You can learn more about the course and see if you think it's a match for you and your children here.

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life by J. P. Moreland

January 28, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this essay on After All, but it looks like their site is not working well, so I'm just going to steal it and post it here, in case it disappears completely. This is one of my favorite short essays on utilitarianism, and it's a wonder that the thing can't stay up somewhere. Well, it will have a home here now. I'd be surprised to see anyone else be this awesome in a measly 1000 words as Dr. Moreland is below.

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Utilitarianism and the Moral Life

What Is Utilitarianism?

Utilitarianism (also called consequentialism) is a moral theory developed and refined in the modern world by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). It can be defined as follows:

> *An action or moral rule is right if and only if it maximizes the amount of nonmoral good produced in the consequences that result from doing that act or following that rule compared with other acts or rules open to the agent.*

By focusing on three features of utilitarianism, we can clarify this definition.

(1) Utilitarian theories of value.

What is a nonmoral good? Utilitarians deny that there are any moral actions or rules that are intrinsically right or wrong. But they do believe in objective values that are nonmoral.

Hedonistic utilitarians say that the only intrinsic good is pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Quantitative hedonists (Bentham) say that the amount of pleasure and pain is the only thing that matters in deciding between two courses of action, I should do the one that produces the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain (measured by factors like the duration and intensity of the pleasure). Qualitative hedonists (Mill) say that pleasure is the only intrinsic good, but the type of pleasure is what is important, not the amount. They would rank pleasures that come from reading, art, and friendship as more valuable than those that come from, say, a full stomach.

Pluralistic utilitarians say there are a number of things that have intrinsic, nonmoral value: pleasure, friendship, health, knowledge, freedom, peace, security, and so forth. For pluralists, it is not just the pleasure that comes from friendship that has value but also friendship itself.

Currently, the most popular utilitarian view of value is subjective preference utilitarianism. This position says it is presumptuous and impossible to specify things that

have intrinsic nonmoral worth. So, they claim, intrinsic value ought to be defined as that which each individual subjectively desires or wants, provided these do not harm others. Unfortunately, this view collapses into moral relativism.

(2) Utilitarians and maximizing utility.

Utilitarians use the term utility to stand for whatever good they are seeking to produce as consequences of a moral action (e.g., “pleasure” for the hedonist, “satisfaction of subjective preference” for others). They see morality in a means-to-ends way. The sole value of a moral action or rule is the utility of its consequences. Moral action should maximize utility. This can be interpreted in different ways, but many utilitarians embrace the following: the correct moral action or rule is the one that produces the greatest amount of utility for the greatest number of people.

(3) Two forms of utilitarianism: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.

According to act utilitarianism, an act is right if and only if no other act available maximizes utility more than the act in question. Here, each new moral situation is evaluated on its own, and moral rules like “don’t steal” or “don’t break promises” are secondary The moral agent must weigh available alternatives and choose the one that produces the best consequences. Rule utilitarianism says that correct moral actions are done in keeping with correct moral rules, However, no moral rule is intrinsically right or wrong. Rather, a correct moral rule is one that would maximize utility if most people followed it as opposed to following an alternative rule. Here, alternative rules (e.g., “don’t lie” vs. “don’t lie unless doing so would enhance friendship”) are compared for their consequences, not specific actions.

What Is Wrong with Utilitarianism?

Several objections show the inadequacy of utilitarianism as a normative moral theory.

First, utilitarianism can be used to justify actions that are clearly immoral. Consider the case of a severely deformed fetus. The child is certain to live a brief, albeit painless life. He or she will make no contribution to society. Society, however, will bear great expense. Doctors and other caregivers will invest time, emotion, and effort in adding mere hours to the baby’s life. The parents will know and love the child only long enough to be heartbroken at the inevitable loss. An abortion negates all those “utility” losses. There is no positive utility lost. Many of the same costs are involved in the care of the terminally ill elderly. They too may suffer no pain, but they may offer no benefit to society. In balancing positives and negatives, and excluding from the equation the objective sacredness of all human life, we arrive at morally repugnant decisions. Here deontological and virtue ethics steer us clear of what is easier to what is right.

Second, in a similar way, utilitarianism denies the existence of supererogatory acts. These are acts of moral heroism that are not morally obligatory but are still praiseworthy.

Examples would be giving 75 percent of your income to the poor or throwing yourself on a bomb to save a stranger. Consider the bomb example. You have two choices — throwing yourself on the bomb or not doing so. Each choice would have consequences and, according to utilitarianism, you are morally obligated to do one or the other depending on which option maximized utility. Thus, there is no room for acts that go beyond the call of morality.

Third, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of human rights and human dignity. If enslaving a minority of people, say by a lottery, would produce the greatest good for the greatest number, or if conceiving children only to harvest their parts would do the same, then these could he justified in a utilitarian scheme. But enslavement and abortion violate individual rights and treat people as a means to an end, not as creatures with intrinsic dignity as human beings. If acts of abortion, active euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and so forth maximize utility, then they are morally obligatory for the utilitarian. But any moral system that makes abortion and suicide morally obligatory is surely flawed.

Finally, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of motives and character. We should praise good motives and seek good character because such motives and character are intrinsically valuable. But utilitarianism implies that the only reason we should praise good motives instead of bad ones, or seek good character instead of bad character, is because such acts would maximize utility. But this has the cart before the horse. We should praise good motives and blame bad ones because they are good or bad, not because such acts of praising and blaming produce good consequences.

In sum, it should be clear that utilitarianism is an inadequate moral theory. Unfortunately, ours is a pragmatic culture and utilitarianism is on the rise. But for those of us who follow Christ, a combination of virtue and deontological ethics is a more adequate view of common sense morality found in natural law and of the moral vision contained in the Bible.

NY Times claims Democrats don’t support infanticide, as Democrats vote for infanticide

January 29, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why do so many Democrat voters believe in conspiracy theories that don’t match reality? Well, if you look closely at the news sources they read, then you can understand why. Take this case of the New York Times, a former newspaper, fact-checking Trump about his claim that Democrats support infanticide. Trump is wrong, claims the NY Times. But what is the truth?

Consider this article from the Christian Post:

> In a Friday article, The New York Times highlighted the Republican leader’s video address during the 2025 March for Life rally in Washington, D.C.
>
> The newspaper mentioned Trump’s appearance at the annual pro-life demonstration in a piece analyzing some opposition within the movement to Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s nomination for health secretary.
>
> “At the march on Friday, Mr. Trump repeated false claims about abortion rights, vowing to ‘stop the radical Democrat push for a federal right to unlimited abortion on demand up to the moment of birth and even after birth,'” The New York Times reported. “Mr. Vance called Mr. Trump’ the most pro-family, most pro-life American president of our lifetimes.’ The crowd roared.”

Oh my goodness, Democrats are pro-life? They don’t vote against legislation that protects babies born alive during abortions?

The article continues:

> Every Democrat in the U.S. Senate voted this month against the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act introduced by Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla. The bill would have guaranteed equal protection under the law for “any infant born alive after an abortion.”
>
> Under the proposed legislation, all health care practitioners present during the birth of an infant who survives an abortion attempt must “exercise the same degree of professional skill, care, and diligence to preserve the life and health of the child as a … health care practitioner would render to any other child born alive at the same gestational age.”

Oh, so they Democrats do support infanticide. And this position of Democrat legislators isn’t new. In fact, Barack Obama also voted in favor of infanticide when he was a state senator in Illinois.

In fact, here is the New York Times (a former newspaper) reporting on it:

> Both Mr. Obama and his critics agree that, as chairman of the Health and Human

> Services Committee in the state legislature in 2003, he led efforts to defeat a bill called the Born Alive Infants Protection Act.

"He led efforts to defeat a bill called the Born Alive Infants Protection Act." in 2003. Oh! So this support for infanticide is not even new, it goes back over 20 years.

Back to the Christian Post article, you can see that these secular leftists really love infanticide:

> Other abortion-related legislation that recently made headlines includes a proposed constitutional amendment in Virginia that critics say could establish a right to abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy.
>
> In a 21-19 vote this month, the Democrat-controlled Virginia Senate approved Senate Joint Resolution 247 along party lines. The passage means that the Virginia General Assembly can weigh in on the proposal to amend the Virginia Constitution for a second time following the next general election.

They want to have the recreational sex with hot strangers, and then they don't want to be "punished with a baby", as old Obama used to say. Like children, they don't want any consequences for their own pleasure-seeking. And they've never grown out of that.

It's not just Obama. Many, many Democrat voters supported his rise to the presidency. Why? Because infanticide is actually totally normal for Democrat voters, and the only time they deny it is when Trump describes accurately what they have been supporting for years. Then suddenly they have to pretend like they haven't been supporting infanticide – and voting for pro-infanticide candidates – for years. And they expect you to believe them, because they hope you don't read anything except the New York Times.

In debates between Christianity and atheism, the Christian will often introduce a moral fact, such as "torturing little babies for fun is wrong", as an example of a moral fact that everyone agrees on. The problem is that Democrats like Barack Obama, and his allies at the New York Times, DO NOT agree on this fact. And when you point this out to them, that's when they have to start lying about it. And they just hope that you are dumb enough to believe them.

It's very important to understand that secular leftists use moral language in order to sound like moral people. But they have no understanding of morality, any more than a cat understands the titles of books while walking around in a library. Morality has no rational foundation in atheism. There's no such thing as objective moral values and moral duties on atheism. And no moral choices, because there's no free will. And no accountability when you die.

If you're still reading trash like the New York Times, just be aware that this is not real news. Its just Democrat party propaganda.

Study: sentences are 63% more severe for men than for women

January 30, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, in response to yesterday's post, I have been asked what are some of the other reasons that cause men to become disinterested in dating and marriage. I have a list as long as my arm. But here's another one for today. Today's reason is that the legal is system is biased against men. There many examples of the bias, but I'll focus on sentencing.

The study I want to talk about today is called "Estimating Gender Disparities in Federal Criminal Cases", and it's published in the peer-reviewed journal "*American Law and Economics Review".*

The abstract says this:

> This paper assesses and decomposes gender disparities in federal criminal cases. It finds large unexplained gaps favoring women throughout the sentence length distribution, conditional on arrest offense, criminal history, and other pre-charge observables. Decompositions show that most of the unexplained disparity appears to emerge during charging, plea-bargaining, and sentencing fact-finding. The approach provides an important complement to prior disparity studies, which have focused on sentencing and have not incorporated disparities arising from those earlier stages. I also consider various plausible causal theories that could explain the estimated gender gap, using the rich dataset to test their implications.

The key sentence there is "It finds large unexplained gaps favoring women throughout the sentence length distribution, conditional on arrest offense, criminal history, and other pre-charge observables."

I also found this paragraph interesting:

> The estimated gender disparities are strikingly large, conditional on observables. Most notably, treatment as male is associated with a 63% average increase in sentence length, with substantial unexplained gaps throughout the sentence distribution.

This anti-male discrimination becomes apparent to men when they are going through the divorce process.

About 70% of divorces are initiated by women, and most of them for frivolous reasons (reasons that were not recognized as valid in the law prior to "no-fault-divorce" being enacted). The reasons are also not recognized in the Bible. Throughout the divorce process, men encounter anti-male bias. This begins with the common use of false accusations against the man, in order to get sole custody, which provides the woman

with greater child support payments from the man. These false accusations are usually not based on any evidence, such as police reports. They just emerge during the divorce proceedings and are used to eject the man from the home, and get the woman sole custody of the kids. In 90% of cases, the woman gets sole custody of the kids. And this is despite the fact that single-father homes have similar outcomes for children as married two-parents homes. The results of single-mother homes are disastrous for children in many areas, including poverty, crime, mental health, sexual activity, etc. But the court system insists on doing what is worse for children by separating the father from the child. Even the meager visitation rights that fathers get are not enforced.

Failure to pay alimony and child support can land men in prison. And the laws are enforced very unfairly there, as well. Consider this case from Canada:

> A wealthy businessman will have to pay more than $50,000 a month in spousal support for 10 years to a woman with whom he had a long-term romantic relationship even though they kept separate homes and had no children together, Ontario's top court has ruled.

Seeing this, many men today have declined to participate in dating and marriage. And I could come up with *dozens* more reasons like this one. Based in peer-reviewed studies. It's not one reason deterring men from marrying, it's dozens of reasons. In every case, society has decided that men are expendable. And sadly, the church has largely ignored the root causes of men's retreat from dating and marriage. The church simply has nothing at all to say to men who are faced with these risks, costs and disincentives.

When I explain these problems to pro-marriage conservatives, they confess to never having heard about any of these issues. They say "I just like the idea of people falling in love and having lots of cute babies". They haven't really bothered to think about the calculations that men run before deciding what to do with women. Maybe it's time for Christian leaders to do a little more homework about these issues. Maybe there is something Christian churches can do to make marriage a bit more appealing to men.

We are already seeing this happening in conservative states like Florida and Tennessee. In Florida, there are new laws requiring that child custody be 50-50 in most circumstances. This acts as a deterrent against women who want to file frivolous divorces just to get child support from wealthy men. Florida also banned permanent alimony, which is another positive step to make marriage more fair for men. (Although many women in Florida were furious about it). In Tennessee, it is now a misdemeanor to claim child support payments from a man who is not the biological father of the child.

These are the kinds of policy solutions that will bring marriage back. But I've never heard Christians talking about these issues. All I ever hear from pious Christian leaders is that men need to "man up", as if manning up makes the threats from feminist laws and courts disappear. It doesn't work, but it does signal virtue, which seems to be the goal of many pious Christian leaders. We're going to have to do better than virtue-signaling if we want to reverse the decline of marriage. It's not going to be solved by shaming and blaming

men.

Abigail Shrier’s thoughts on Trump’s ban on taxpayer-funding of transing children

January 31, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Abigail Shrier wrote a popular book called “Irreversible Damage” where she talked about the movement to change a child’s appearance to the opposite sex with drugs and surgeries. Her goal was to convince voters that this caused “irreversible harm” to children. Now that president Trump has signed a ban on taxpayer-funding of transitioning children, she has excellent thoughts.

Here’s the article in the Free Press.

She starts like this:

> When the history of 21st-century gender mania is written, it should include this signal entry: In 2020, a website called GoFundMe, usually a place to find disaster-relief appeals and charities for starving children, contained more than 30,000 urgent appeals from young women seeking to remove their perfectly healthy breasts.
>
> Another entry, from June 2020: The New England Journal of Medicine, America’s platinum medical publication, published a piece explaining that biological sex is actually “assigned at birth” by a doctor—and not a verifiable fact, based on our gametes, stamped into every one of our cells. In fact, biological sex ought to be deleted from our birth certificates—the authors claimed—because a person’s biological sex serves “no clinical utility.”

How did it start? She has an answer:

> It began with Obamacare.
>
> Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, President Barack Obama’s signature legislation incentivizing and coercing private insurers to offer their products on a government exchange, prohibited those companies from discriminating on the basis of sex. And in May 2016, six years after the bill’s enactment, the Obama administration’s Department of Health and Human Services added this fateful qualification: Discrimination on the basis of “sex” was to include discrimination on the basis of “gender identity.”
>
> “Obama effectively wrote into law, through healthcare, that gender identity is a protected class,” healthcare executive and gender-medicine researcher Zhenya Abbruzzese told me. And that opened a huge new source of funding for these treatments. “Because once these insurers feel like they have to cover it, that’s it. You have just turned on the engine,” Abbruzzese said.
>
> If an insurer covers testosterone to treat a man who was deficient, then, according to gender ideology’s cracked logic, the insurer would also need to

> cover testosterone for a woman identifying as a man. If a procedure to remove a man's unwanted breast tissue was covered, then a similar procedure for a woman identifying as a man must also be covered. Denying those claims could subject insurers to federal enforcement action.

Do you ever wonder why healthcare got so expensive after Obamacare was passed? It's not just because Obama increased the number of mandatory coverages, and mandated coverage of more people. It's the types of treatments that were now covered by health insurance companies. That's why caused YOUR premiums to go up.

I like to get into fights with my doctor. He kept insisting that doctors who support pandemic mandates and transitioning children are driven by "evidence", whereas opposition to these fads were based on "social media".

But was he right? No, he's wrong:

> The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), an activist organization styled as a medical one, issued guidelines used as the "standards of care" by all major insurers and Medicaid to justify the provision of, and reimbursement for, gender transition services. WPATH represented their guidelines as evidence-based. Court-ordered discovery in a 2022 lawsuit filed by the Department of Justice to overturn Alabama's ban on gender treatments for minors revealed that WPATH's guidelines lacked solid evidentiary basis, but also that WPATH leadership knew it.
>
> The organization suppressed publication of systematic reviews of puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgeries undertaken by Johns Hopkins University. That research would almost certainly have revealed, as so many systematic reviews have now done, that while the risk of sterility, cardiac event, osteoporosis, and bone fracture were high, any alleged mental health benefits of the WPATH-approved puberty blockers-to-cross sex hormones protocol remained unproven.
>
> But the Biden administration pressed onward, suing any state that enacted bans on medical transition for minors. Assistant Secretary for Health Rachel Levine, a transgender adult, successfully pressured WPATH to drop minimum age requirements for gender medical treatments and surgeries in its September 2022 standards of care.

I blogged about this. And I guess that one of the reasons why Trump won is because people realized that the doctors were NOT operating on the basis of evidence at all. The doctors were being driven by the "big money" they were getting for drugging and mutilating these children. I blogged about that, too.

Back to Abigail. She talks about how the Obama and Biden regimes funded pro-trans research with taxpayer dollars. But they didn't get the results they wanted:

> The Obama and Biden administrations worked in tandem with activist

> organizations. Federal funds poured into tainted research. Gender physician Johanna Olson-Kennedy received nearly $10 million from the National Institutes of Health to study the effects of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones on gender-confused adolescents ages 11 and up. (She later lowered the age to 8.)
>
> […]As for her nine-year study on puberty blockers, Olson-Kennedy didn't like the results so, by her own admission, she shelved them. "She said the findings might fuel the kind of political attacks that have led to the bans of the youth gender treatments in more than 20 states," according to The New York Times. She told the Times she intends to publish the data, but that getting her work to a place where it wouldn't be "weaponized" required it to be "clear and concise. And that takes time."
>
> The public that had funded her research has never had the opportunity to review its results.

OK, that's enough. You should read the whole article, it's just first class. Evidence, evidence, evidence.

By the way, if you missed Matt Walsh's opening monologue on Trump's action, he shows why it's actually better than you think.

If you are not listening to the Matt Walsh podcast, you should subscribe to it. Every opening monologue is worth a listen. We really need to return men to their rightful place as moral and spiritual leaders. We are not "servant leaders", as Christian feminists like to argue. If we encouraged men to make moral judgments, and lead, then we would never have had transgenderism in the first place. And we need to train women to prefer men who judge and lead on moral and spiritual issues. It will be a 180-degree change from what we have now, but we need to do it.

The link between single mother welfare, fatherlessness, poverty and crime

February 1, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What is the root cause of criminal behavior? This article by feminist sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, who points out the link between fatherlessness and crime in an article on the AEI web site.

Wilcox writes:

> From Adam Lanza, who killed 26 children and adults a year ago at Sandy Hook School in Newtown, Conn., to Karl Pierson, who shot a teenage girl and killed himself this past Friday at Arapahoe High in Centennial, Colo., one common and largely unremarked thread tying together most of the school shooters that have struck the nation in the last year is that they came from homes marked by divorce or an absent father. From shootings at MIT (i.e., theTsarnaev brothers) to the University of Central Florida to the Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy in Decatur, Ga., nearly every shooting over the last year in Wikipedia's "list of U.S. school attacks" involved a young man whose parents divorced or never married in the first place.
>
> […]The social scientific evidence about the connection between violence and broken homes could not be clearer. My own research suggests that boys living in single mother homes are almost twice as likely to end up delinquent compared to boys who enjoy good relationships with their father. Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson has written that "Family structure is one of the strongest, if not the strongest, predictor of variations in urban violence across cities in the United States." His views are echoed by the eminent criminologists Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi, who have written that "such family measures as the percentage of the population divorced, the percentage of households headed by women, and the percentage of unattached individuals in the community are among the most powerful predictors of crime rates."
>
> Why is fatherlessness such a big deal for our boys (almost all of these incidents involve boys)? Putting the argument positively, sociologist David Popenoe notes that "fathers are important to their sons as role models. They are important for maintaining authority and discipline. And they are important in helping their sons to develop both self-control and feelings of empathy toward others, character traits that are found to be lacking in violent youth." Boys, then, who did not grow up with an engaged, attentive, and firm father are more vulnerable to getting swept up in the Sturm und Drang of adolescence and young adulthood, and in the worst possible way.

So where do fatherless children come from? It turns out that government programs

incentivize women to make them.

Dr. Michael Tanner of the libertarian Cato Institute explains how welfare causes fatherlessness in his testimony to Congress:

> Welfare contributes to crime in several ways. First, children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. According to one study, children raised in single-parent families are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior.(3) Moreover, O'Neill found that, holding other variables constant, black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as black children from a family where the father is present. Nearly 70 percent of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 percent of prison inmates.(4) Research indicates a direct correlation between crime rates and the number of single-parent families in a neighborhood.(5)
>
> As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead noted in her seminal article for The Atlantic Monthly:
>
> The relationship [between single-parent families and crime] is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature. The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family break up as the most important source of rising rates of crime.(6)
>
> At the same time, the evidence of a link between the availability of welfare and out-of-wedlock births is overwhelming. There have been 13 major studies of the relationship between the availability of welfare benefits and out-of-wedlock birth. Of these, 11 found a statistically significant correlation. Among the best of these studies is the work done by June O'Neill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Holding constant a wide range of variables, including income, education, and urban vs. suburban setting, the study found that a 50 percent increase in the value of AFDC and foodstamp payments led to a 43 percent increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.(7) Likewise, research by Shelley Lundberg and Robert Plotnick of the University of Washington showed that an increase in welfare benefits of $200 per month per family increased the rate of out-of-wedlock births among teenagers by 150 percent.(8)
>
> The same results can be seen from welfare systems in other countries. For example, a recent study of the impact of Canada's social-welfare system on family structure concluded that "providing additional benefits to single parents encourages births of children to unwed women."(9)

The secular left in this country believes that fathers need to be separated away from their children, and that's why they support welfare programs that redirect money from husbands in intact families to single mothers. They believe that fathers are harmful

because they set boundaries on children, and judge them and punish them when they act immorally. To the secular left, boundaries, judgments and punishments on children are bad, and must be stopped. So how can the secular left discourage men from marrying and teaching their own children morality? Well, they can tax married men, and they can give the money to single mothers.

Not only is crime caused by fatherlessness, but poverty is. as well.

Here is Dr. Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation to explain:

> Census data and the Fragile Families survey show that marriage can be extremely effective in reducing child poverty. But the positive effects of married fathers are not limited to income alone. Children raised by married parents have substantially better life outcomes compared to similar children raised in single-parent homes.
>
> When compared to children in intact married homes, children raised by single parents are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems; be physically abused; smoke, drink, and use drugs; be aggressive; engage in violent, delinquent, and criminal behavior; have poor school performance; be expelled from school; and drop out of high school.[19] Many of these negative outcomes are associated with the higher poverty rates of single mothers. In many cases, however, the improvements in child well-being that are associated with marriage persist even after adjusting for differences in family income. This indicates that the father brings more to his home than just a paycheck.
>
> The effect of married fathers on child outcomes can be quite pronounced. For example, examination of families with the same race and same parental education shows that, when compared to intact married families, children from single-parent homes are:
>
> - More than twice as likely to be arrested for a juvenile crime;[20]
> - Twice as likely to be treated for emotional and behavioral problems;[21]
> - Roughly twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school;[22] and
> - A third more likely to drop out before completing high school.[23]
>
> The effects of being raised in a single-parent home continue into adulthood. Comparing families of the same race and similar incomes, children from broken and single-parent homes are three times more likely to end up in jail by the time they reach age 30 than are children raised in intact married families. [24] Compared to girls raised in similar married families, girls from single-parent homes are more than twice as likely to have a child without being married, thereby repeating the negative cycle for another generation.[25]
>
> Finally, the decline of marriage generates poverty in future generations. Children living in single-parent homes are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty as adults when compared to children from intact married homes. This intergenerational poverty effect persists even after adjusting for the original

> differences in family income and poverty during childhood.[26]

People on the left claim that poverty causes crime, but they don’t look for the root cause of poverty. The root cause of poverty is the decline of marriage, which produces fatherless children.

How is universal government-run healthcare working for Canada in 2024?

February 2, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I always get excited when the annual report on Canadian healthcare comes out. A lot of people in my office love single payer healthcare. Except they don't know how it works in countries that have tried it. They imagine that it works well. They love the idea that healthcare will be free for them. But when I get my hands on a good study, it means a lot of fools are about to get a beat down.

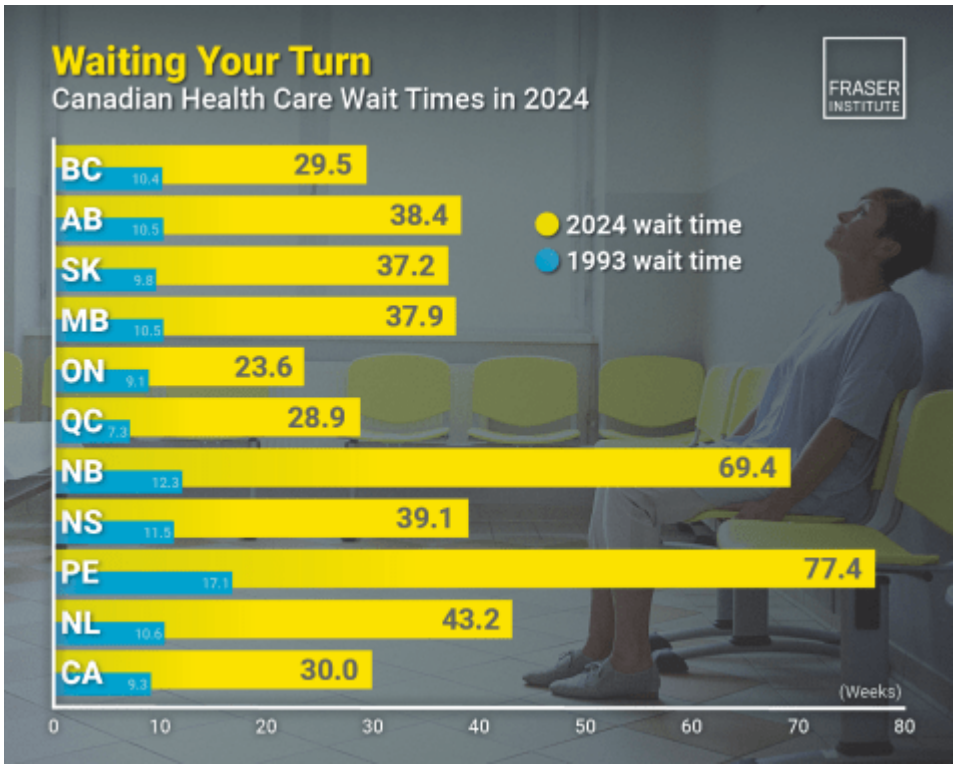

Canada Universal Coverage Government Run Single Payer Healthcare Health Care Wait Times

Here's the latest from the Fraser Institute:

> In 2024, physicians across Canada reported a median wait time of 30.0 weeks between a referral from a GP and receipt of treatment. Up from 27.7 in 2023.

> This is 222% longer than the 9.3 week wait Canadian patients could expect in 1993.

> The national 30 week total wait is comprised of two segments. Referral by a GP to consultation with a specialist: 15.0 weeks. Consultation with a specialist to receipt of treatment: 15.0 weeks.

> After seeing a specialist, Canadian patients waited 6.3 weeks longer than what physicians consider to be clinically reasonable (8.6 weeks).

> Across 10 provinces, the study estimated that patients in Canada were waiting for 1.5 million procedures in 2024.

> Patients also suffered considerable delays for diagnostic technology: 8.1 weeks for CT scans, 16.2 weeks for MRI scans, and 5.2 weeks for Ultrasound.

Well, there's a saying in business. You can have a product or a service fast, or you can have it good, or you can have it cheap. Pick two out of 3. So, Maybe Canadian healthcare is not fast, but maybe it's good, and maybe it's cheap.

Canada Universal Coverage Government Run Single Payer Healthcare Health Care Cost Taxes

Let's turn to the Fraser Institute again:

> Canadians often misunderstand the true cost of our public health care system. This occurs partly because Canadians do not incur direct expenses for their use of health care, and partly because Canadians cannot readily determine the value of their contribution to public health care insurance.

> In 2024, preliminary estimates suggest the average payment for public health care insurance ranges from $4,908 to $17,713 for six common Canadian family types, depending on the type of family.

> Between 1997 and 2024, the cost of public health care insurance for the average Canadian family increased 2.2 times as fast as the cost of food, 1.7 times as fast as the average income, and 1.6 times as fast as the cost of shelter. It also increased much more rapidly than the cost of clothing, which has been falling in recent years.

OK, so Canadians aren't getting healthcare fast, and they're not getting healthcare cheap. Maybe they're getting really really good healthcare, though.

Here are the numbers from a recent study from Ipsos, a major Canadian pollster:

> An Ipsos survey for the Montreal Economic Institute is showing that Canadians' opinions about their provincial healthcare systems have not improved in 2024 compared to last year. As in 2023, we find that less than half (48%) of Canadians are satisfied with their provincial healthcare system, with only 8% saying they are very satisfied. This proportion is even lower among women (43%), as well as residents of the Atlantic (30%).

Well, they are getting garbage healthcare. And they are not actually paying for healthcare. They are paying massive amounts of taxes for *access to a waiting list for healthcare.* And they get in line behind refugees who cannot even speak English, and have paid nothing in taxes. That's what happens when you have universal-coverage government-run healthcare. That's how it actually works in real life.

And sometimes they even *die* while waiting for healthcare. Here is an article from the Toronto Sun from January 2025:

> Close to 15,500 people died waiting for health care in Canada between April 1, 2023 until March 31, 2024, according to data compiled by SecondStreet.org via Freedom to Information Act requests across the country.
>
> However, SecondStreet.org says the exact number of 15,474 is incomplete as Quebec, Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador don't track the problem and Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia only provided data on patients who died while waiting for surgeries – not diagnostic scans.
>
> SecondStreet.org says if it extrapolates the unknown data, then an estimated 28,077 patients died last year on health care waiting lists covering everything from cancer treatment and heart operations to cataract surgery and MRI scans.

I know that a some Americans like to pick political leaders and policies based on their feelings. They want to feel good. They want to be liked. People who like government-run healthcare tend to be people with enormous student loan balances for worthless non-STEM degrees. They work in easy jobs in the public sector. They join labor unions because they're scared of competition and accountability. Many of them work in daycare or they teach little children, because they don't want to be challenged by adults. When you look at the numbers on healthcare in different countries, it's very clear what works and what

doesn’t work. Americans need to be smarter than Canadians. We have to vote based on reason and evidence.

John West: 10 questions to ask when evaluating a Christian college

February 3, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, Rose and I finished reading Dr. John West's new book "Stockholm Syndrome Christianity", and we recorded an interview with him about the topics he discusses in the book. One of the topics he is passionate about is how Christian colleges can maintain their Christian identity. He worked at a college that slid into secular leftism. It's hard on Christian students.

So, how can a Christian student avoid going to a college where they will face opposition from professors and administrators?

Here's a recent article from Dr. West, that offers some questions that the student can ask before making a bad choice.

It says:

> As a former professor at an evangelical Christian university, I am sometimes asked by concerned parents to recommend a good Christian college for them to consider for their children. Because the spiritual health of specific colleges and universities can change radically over time, and because there can be a wide diversity of views even among different academic departments on the same campus, it is not always possible to provide specific recommendations.
>
> What I can provide are questions you can ask if you or your teens are seeking to find a biblically-faithful college or university. Don't just rely on marketing materials produced by the college or university! Those materials will invariably stress how the institution integrates the Christian faith with learning in everything it does. These marketing materials may or may not reflect the actual situation on the campus. At the Christian university where I taught, the marketing materials became more and more explicitly Christian while the actual Christian faithfulness of the university was getting less and less.
>
> If you know the right questions to ask, you can cut through the PR and gain a more accurate perception of what is actually going on. The following questions are a good place to start.

Here are the ten questions:

1. What are the statements of faith and behavioral expectations that all faculty, staff, and board members must sign and agree to abide by?
2. How many members of the theology or Bible departments belong to the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS)?
3. How many members of the philosophy department belong to the Evangelical Philosophical Society (EPS)?

4. How many members of the science faculty (especially the biology faculty) are skeptical of Darwinian evolution or supportive of the idea that nature shows clear evidence of intelligent design?
5. Does the college offer chapel services, and is attendance by students required?
6. How many speakers at chapel or official university-sponsored events during the past academic year addressed each of the following topics: (a) the trustworthiness and/or historical accuracy of the Bible; (b) biblical standards against sex outside of marriage and for sexual chastity and faithfulness; (c) biblical standards against transgenderism and homosexuality; (d) Christian teaching on the sanctity of human life, including abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia; (e) the persecution of Christians both inside and outside of the United States, and the importance of defending religious liberty; (f) positive Christian teaching on racial equality and reconciliation as well as critiques of unbiblical ideas such as "Critical Race Theory" and calls for racial/ethnic separatism and superiority (from both left and right).
7. Does the campus health center provide (a) abortion referrals, (b) referrals to Planned Parenthood, (c) referrals to LGBTQ groups, or (d) contraceptives to unmarried students?
8. What student clubs has the college approved?
9. What books are assigned in courses?
10. What are the policies regulating student speech?

And this is the one that stood out to me:

> **6. How many speakers at chapel or official university-sponsored events during the past academic year addressed each of the following topics: (a) the trustworthiness and/or historical accuracy of the Bible; (b) biblical standards against sex outside of marriage and for sexual chastity and faithfulness; (c) biblical standards against transgenderism and homosexuality; (d) Christian teaching on the sanctity of human life, including abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia; (e) the persecution of Christians both inside and outside of the United States, and the importance of defending religious liberty; (f) positive Christian teaching on racial equality and reconciliation as well as critiques of unbiblical ideas such as "Critical Race Theory" and calls for racial/ethnic separatism and superiority (from both left and right).**
>
> Before actually attending a college, it can be hard to know what is taught in the classrooms there. But the topics addressed by speakers at official campus events will tell you a lot about the viewpoints dominant among the faculty and administration. If campus speakers are not regularly being brought in to explain and defend key Christian beliefs under attack in our culture, that is another huge warning sign. Also pay attention to the point of view of the speakers being brought in. Just because campus speakers are addressing one of the topics above does not mean they are doing so in a way consistent with biblical teaching. When

> it comes to other topics, especially political topics where Christians disagree (for example, the best way to fight poverty, or American foreign policy), pay attention to whether the university hosts Christian speakers with a range of views, including those on the politically conservative side of the spectrum.

This one is also important to me:

> **8. What student clubs has the college approved?**
>
> The student clubs allowed on a Christian college campus will reveal a lot. For example, does the college have a club that promotes the agenda of the LGTBQ movement? More positively, does the college have a club devoted to pro-life issues or apologetics (such as a chapter of the national apologetics ministry Ratio Christi)? You might also want to look at the student newspaper

These two questions matter to me, because I work with groups like Ratio Christi in order to bring in Christian speakers to address some of the topics that he talked about in Question 6. It's actually better to enforce orthodoxy through *persuasion and evidence* than it is to enforce it by writing rules on a page. If the apologetics speakers hold events, that will equip the students to think carefully about these topics, so that they don't roll over for feelings and peer approval.

If this kind of concern affects you, then check out the article, and go over it with your child. There's no sense sending your child into a difficult situation that will make it harder for them to get their education, without being indoctrinated.

New study: Wikipedia blacklists right-leaning media, relies only on left-wing sources

February 4, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm sure that I don't have to tell anyone this, but Wikipedia is not a reliable website, if you are looking up topics like religion, science or policy. If you need to prove this to anyone, then bookmark this post. Because we're going to take a look at a new study by the Media Research Center, that clearly shows how wikipedia is biased against Christians and conservatives.

Here's the article from the Media Research Center:

> A new study by Media Research Center Free Speech America found that Wikipedia, the encyclopedia behemoth, has effectively blacklisted all right-leaning media from being used as source material, exclusively relying on leftist, legacy media notoriously known to spread misinformation and attack opponents of the left.
>
> Among the effectively blackballed media sources are Breitbart, The Daily Caller, Daily Mail, Newsmax, OANN and the Media Research Center. Meanwhile, leftist media like The Atlantic, Jacobin, Mother Jones, Pro-Publica, The Guardian and National Public Radio (NPR) are given the green light. This blatant misinformation means that Wikipedia is purposely feeding Americans information exclusively through the lens of one side of the political spectrum—the left.
>
> Positioning themselves as arbiters of truth, Wikipedia and its editors have effectively institutionalized a blacklisting system utilizing a "Reliable sources/Perennial sources" page that forbids the use of some of the most popular media sources on the right when editing Wikipedia pages. Their claims? Right-leaning sources are not "reliable," and in some cases literally "blacklisted" — Wikipedia's actual word — from use on the platform altogether. The predictable effect? Conservatives, Republicans and Trump appointees are smeared, maligned and slandered by the most popular online source for information about people.

I still use Wikipedia for finding out about famous historical battles, or different kinds of animals, but not for anything else. It's just not a reliable web site. Plus, they are always begging for money. Never give them a cent!

Trump’s freezing of USAID might be the best thing he’s done so far

February 5, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s hard to to make a ranking of which actions are the best for Christians and conservatives. There have been so many. But this one really draws a line between Trump 1.0 and Trump 2.0. The most common complaint I heard from Trump supporters after his first term was that he didn’t do enough to drain the swamp. Well, this new Trump action is the most Swamp-Draining one yet.

This is from Daily Signal:

> The Trump administration is putting a stick of dynamite under the deep state, and Democrats are apoplectic.
>
> On Tuesday, President Donald Trump put nearly all District of Columbia-based employees of the U.S. Agency for International Development on leave. According to Politico, this amounts to about 1,400 people in addition to 600 employees who were put on leave starting Sunday.
>
> This comes after the Trump administration put a 90-day freeze on all foreign assistance.

New Secretary of State Marco Rubio “noted that embassies around the world complain that USAID is not only uncooperative but that it undermines the governments the U.S. wants to work with. Rubio said that the agency operates as if its master is the “globe” and not the U.S., which is a departure from the intent of the original statute that created it.”

And this is just crazy:

> Rubio, who is putting the operation of USAID under his authority, said the goal has been to reform the agency, but right now, there is “rank insubordination.” The attitude of the employees, Rubio said, is that they work for themselves, not the American people or their elected officials.
>
> This is why the administration had to take dramatic steps to temporarily freeze the agency, Rubio explained.
>
> […]Organizations like USAID became enlisted in what can be described as no less than the creation of a global leftist empire… a conduit to siphon U.S. taxpayer dollars to various leftist projects, many of which are deeply resented by other nations.
>
> It became, at minimum, a jobs program for hordes of American left-wing activists.

The Democrats are not going to take this one lying down, as this is their whole global secular leftist network. But, all that Trump has to do to beat them is to show the

American public what USAID has been spending their money on.

Here are some examples:

> For instance, The Washington Free Beacon reported that in 2023 under President Joe Biden, USAID spent $1 million "on a project to help disabled people in the Central Asian country of Tajikistan become 'climate leaders.'"
>
> For instance, according to The Wall Street Journal, the State Department was funding "culture grants" to promote drag queen performances in Ecuador. Meanwhile, China was investing heavily in the country's copper mining production.
>
> The Free Beacon also reported that USAID spent millions of dollars on various diversity, equity, and inclusion projects, including a program created to "engage with indigenous-led institutions to implement an indigenous language technology program" in Guatemala where over 95% of people speak Spanish.
>
> […]"In November 2022, USAID sent $78,000 to the Community Development and Continuing Education Institute (CDCEI), a Palestinian activist group based in the West Bank. Its leaders praised a terrorist who murdered a U.S. military attaché as a 'hero fighter,'" the Free Beacon reported.
>
> Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., sent a letter to USAID in October 2024 saying that some of the more than a billion dollars being used for humanitarian relief in Gaza was likely being funneled to terrorists.
>
> […]Under Biden, USAID even spent money funding abortions in Africa through programs billed as AIDS relief, Fox News reported.

This is what happens when you give secular leftists access to taxpayer money. They just go crazy with it, and that's why they shouldn't have any money at all.

And if that's not enough for you, check out this story from Breitbart, about how the Trump administration wants to tackle corruption in the FBI and DOJ:

> FBI officials acknowledged over 5,000 employees worked on investigations related to January 6, CNN reported Tuesday.
>
> The numbers reveal for the first time the scope of the federal government's resources devoted to the J6 investigations, which took place while violent crime in urban America soared 40 percent from 2019 to 2023 under the Biden administration, according to the federal government's own numbers.
>
> The Department of Justice asked the FBI Friday to provide by Tuesday at noon the details of all its employees who worked on January 6 investigations.

But of course these agents don't want to be held accountable for their actions under the previous (fascist) administration:

> FBI employees have fought to hide their roles in J6 investigations.

Just fire them all right now! Or ship them to prisons in El Salvador if they resist.

Evaluating William Lane Craig's views on Genesis, Adam and Eve

February 6, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a wonderful series of articles by someone I really trust on origins issues: Dr. Casey Luskin. He has a *long* history with the intelligent design movement, starting from when he was a college student. He has a BS and MS in Earth Sciences from the University of California, San Diego, a PhD in Geology from the University of Johannesburg, and a JD from the University of San Diego.

He has a series of articles up at Evolution News, about Dr. William Lane Craig's new book "In Quest of the Historical Adam". I'm not sure if he is done with the series, but I thought that it was a good time to look over what he's already written.

In the first article he notes that "Craig convincingly argues that mainstream science can be reconciled with a traditional view of Adam and Eve" and "argues that Adam and Eve were real people who could have been members of Homo heidelbergensis". Craig's conclusion is that "it's not scientifically problematic to take a truly "traditional" view of Adam and Eve".

But Luskin has criticisms of Craig's views on rival interpretations of Genesis, "As an old earther myself, I was concerned that Craig did not adequately engage with old earth interpretations" and "I believe that young earth creationists will feel that Craig badly misrepresents the scientific claims of their models".

Craig's handling of the science:

> Craig's book provides highly informed discussions of the paleoanthropological, archaeological, neurological, and genetic evidence regarding human origins, but his arguments often incorporate evolutionary assumptions which are doubtful. For example, Craig is too credulous towards evolutionary explanations of the origin of the human mind which amount to miracle mutations, as well as common evolutionary notions that pseudogenes are "junk DNA" that support common ancestry. He misses a key deficiency in evolutionary explanations: a conspicuous gap between the genus Homo and our supposed ape-like australopithecine ancestors in the hominid fossil record. Although Craig does not recognize it, key neurogenetic evidence raised in his book actually suggests a potent mathematical challenge to the Darwinian evolution of humans. I also believe he sells Homo erectus short as a potential candidate for Adam and Eve.
>
> […]Craig continues to rely upon BioLogos arguments that pseudogenes are "broken" and non-functional junk DNA that we share with apes, thereby demonstrating our common ancestry. Those arguments are increasingly contradicted by evidence presented in highly authoritative scientific papers which find that pseudogenes are commonly functional, and they ought not be assumed to be genetic "junk." In relying upon dubious evolutionary arguments

> that are increasingly refuted by the technical literature, Craig may be repeating the very mistake that led previous evangelicals to think Adam and Eve did not exist.

There are 6 parts to the review. Here are the links to parts 2 through 6:

- Is Genesis “Mytho-History”? As a Guide to Scripture, William Lane Craig’s Book Falls Short
- Missed Opportunity: Passing over Scientific Problems with Human Evolution
- Traditional or Not? Assessing William Lane Craig’s Model on Adam and Eve
- Lessons from the Evangelical Debate About Adam and Eve
- Lessons Not Learned from the Evangelical Debate over Adam and Eve

If you’re interested in the topics of Christianity and science, this is a great series to read. I love when someone trustworthy reads through a lot of stuff I don’t have time for (I have a day job as a software engineer!) and gives me an accurate summary of the strengths and weaknesses.

Is the definition of atheism “a lack of belief in God”?

February 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

First, let’s see check with the Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> ‘Atheism’ means the negation of theism, the denial of the existence of God.

Stanford University is one of the top 5 universities in the United States, so that’s a solid definition. To be an atheist is to be a person who makes the claim that, as a matter of FACT, there is no intelligent agent who created the universe. Atheists think that there is no God, and theists think that there is a God. Both claims are objective claims about the way the world is out there, and so both sides must furnish forth arguments and evidence as to how they are able to *know* what they are each claiming.

Philosopher William Lane Craig has some thoughts on atheism, atheists and lacking belief in God in this reply to a questioner.

Question:

> In my discussions with atheists, they are using the term that they “lack belief in God”. They claim that this is different from not believing in God or from saying that God does not exist. I’m not sure how to respond to this. It seems to me that its a silly word-play and is logically the same as saying that you do not believe in God.
> What would be a good response to this?
> Thank you for your time,
>
> Steven

And here is Dr. Craig’s full response:

> Your atheist friends are right that there is an important logical difference between believing that there is no God and not believing that there is a God. Compare my saying, “I believe that there is no gold on Mars” with my saying “I do not believe that there is gold on Mars.” If I have no opinion on the matter, then I do not believe that there is gold on Mars, and I do not believe that there is no gold on Mars. There’s a difference between saying, “I do not believe (p)” and “I believe (not-p).” Logically where you place the negation makes a world of difference.
>
> But where your atheist friends err is in claiming that atheism involves only not believing that there is a God rather than believing that there is no God.
>
> There’s a history behind this. Certain atheists in the mid-twentieth century were promoting the so-called “presumption of atheism.” At face value, this would appear to be the claim that in the absence of evidence for the existence of God, we should presume that God does not exist. Atheism is a sort of default position, and the theist bears a special burden of proof with regard to his belief that God

exists.

So understood, such an alleged presumption is clearly mistaken. **For the assertion that "There is no God" is just as much a claim to knowledge as is the assertion that "There is a God." Therefore, the former assertion requires justification just as the latter does. It is the agnostic who makes no knowledge claim at all with respect to God's existence. He confesses that he doesn't know whether there is a God or whether there is no God.**

But when you look more closely at how protagonists of the presumption of atheism used the term "atheist," you discover that they were defining the word in a non-standard way, synonymous with "non-theist." So understood the term would encompass agnostics and traditional atheists, along with those who think the question meaningless (verificationists). As Antony Flew confesses,

the word 'atheist' has in the present context *to be construed in an unusual way*. Nowadays it is normally taken to mean someone who explicitly denies the existence . . . of God . . . But here it has to be understood not positively but negatively, with the originally Greek prefix 'a-' being read in this same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is in . . . words as 'amoral' . . . . In this interpretation an atheist becomes not someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God, but someone who is simply not a theist. (*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Philip Quinn and Charles Taliaferro [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], s.v. "The Presumption of Atheism," by Antony Flew)

Such a re-definition of the word "atheist" trivializes the claim of the presumption of atheism, for on this definition, atheism ceases to be a view. It is merely a psychological state which is shared by people who hold various views or no view at all. On this re-definition, even babies, who hold no opinion at all on the matter, count as atheists! In fact, our cat Muff counts as an atheist on this definition, since she has (to my knowledge) no belief in God.

One would still require justification in order to know either that God exists or that He does not exist, which is the question we're really interested in.

So why, you might wonder, would atheists be anxious to so trivialize their position? Here I agree with you that a deceptive game is being played by many atheists. If atheism is taken to be a view, namely the view that there is no God, then atheists must shoulder their share of the burden of proof to support this view. But many atheists admit freely that they cannot sustain such a burden of proof. So they try to shirk their epistemic responsibility by re-defining atheism so that it is no longer a view but just a psychological condition which as such makes no assertions. They are really closet agnostics who want to claim the mantle of atheism without shouldering its responsibilities.

> This is disingenuous and still leaves us asking, “So is there a God or not?”

So there you have it. We are interested in what both sides *know* and *what reasons and evidence they have to justify their claim to know.* We are interested in talking to people who make claims *about objective reality*, not about themselves, and who then go on to give reasons and evidence to support their claims *about objective reality*. There are atheists out there that do make an objective claim that God does not exist, and then support that claim with arguments and evidence. Those are good atheists, and we should engage in rational conversations with them. But clearly there are some atheists who are not like that. How should we deal with these “subjective atheists”?

Dealing with subjective atheists

How should theists respond to people who just want to talk about their psychological state? Well, my advice is to avoid them. They are approaching religion irrationally and non-cognitively – like the person who enters a physics class and says “I lack a belief in the gravitational force!”. When you engage in serious discussions with people about God’s existence, you only care about what people know and what they can show to be true. We don’t care about a person’s psychology.

Knight and Rose Show #58: John West: Stockholm Syndrome Christianity

February 8, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 58 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Dr. John West about his new book "Stockholm Syndrome Christianity". If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Vice President of the Discovery Institute Dr. John West to discuss his new book "Stockholm Syndrome Christianity". He discusses how Christians are influenced by non-Christian ideas, key figures in the Stockholm Syndrome movement, how Christian institutions are captured by secular left, and strategies to combat the spread of Stockholm Syndrome Christianity.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show (with timestamps) provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 58:

Speaker biographies

Dr. John West is Vice President of the Discovery Institute, and Managing Director of the Institute's Center for Science & Culture, which he co-founded with Dr. Stephen C. Meyer in 1996. Dr. West was previously an Associate Professor of Political Science at Seattle Pacific University where he chaired the Department of Political Science and Geography. He earned his PhD in Government from Claremont Graduate University and BA in Communications from the University of Washington. Dr. West has written or edited twelve books, including "Darwin Day in America: How Our Politics and Culture Have Been Dehumanized in the Name of Science". His newest book is "Stockholm Syndrome Christianity: Why America's Christian Leaders Are Failing — and What We Can Do About It".

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Videos:

- Socrates in the City: C. S. Lewis and Scientism with Dr. John West and Eric Metaxas
- Bad Policies, Bad Leadership, Bad Theology: John West Interview – The Becket Cook Show
- "Darwin's Corrosive Idea" John West at Dallas Science Faith Conference 2020
- Biola University: Dr. John West – Evolution and C.S. Lewis: What Did He Really Believe?
- Heritage Foundation: John West on Scientism in the Age of Obama

Links:

- Articles by Dr. John G. West
- Articles at Evolution News by John West

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Is Darwinian evolution compatible with Christian theism?

February 9, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The message of many Christian elites about evolution is that Christians should go ahead and believe it. After all, it doesn't make any difference. Science tells you how the heavens go, they say. And religion tells you how to go to Heaven, they say. But is it true? Or does Darwinism have implications that are are hostile to believe in Christian theism? Let's see.

First of all, it's important to understand that Darwinian evolution is *fully naturalistic evolution.* There is no room in Darwinian evolution for a Designer, or a design. Nature does it's own gradual creating, and there is no room for jumps in biological complexity.

And what is the implication of a "clockwork" universe? Let the Darwinists tell you themselves.

William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

Well, some people might point to prominent Christians like Howard Van Till and Karl Giberson as examples of people who believe in Darwinian evolution, but profess a belief in Christianity.

Here's Dr. John G. West to discuss Howard Van Till, over at Evolution News:

> In the early years of the intelligent design movement, one of the most significant critics of ID among evangelical Christian academics was Howard Van Till (1938-2024).
>
> A physics professor at Calvin College (the campus chapel is pictured above), Van Till was the pre-eminent example of an evangelical Christian scientist in the

> 1990s who defended Darwinian evolution. Van Till still ends up being cited by some as an example of how an orthodox Christian can embrace Darwin.
>
> The problem is that after retiring from Calvin, Van Till evolved well beyond Christianity. Indeed, he eventually evolved beyond theism.
>
> By 2006, Van Till was declaring himself a freethinker. By 2016, he was identifying with what he called "a comprehensively naturalistic worldview," which he described as a belief "that the physical universe is the only reality… and that it is not dependent on a non-corporeal, person-like Agent (the Abrahamic God, for example) to give it being or to guide its evolution."

And here's Karl Giberson:

> One of the Christian scientists who liked to cite Van Till as a model for integrating Christianity with evolution was Karl Giberson. Also a physicist, Giberson has been a longtime associate of geneticist Francis Collins, with whom he coauthored a book. For many years, Giberson was a professor at Eastern Nazarene University, an explicitly evangelical Christian institution. He helped Francis Collins start the BioLogos Foundation to promote theistic evolution.
>
> Giberson hasn't yet slid as far down the slope as Van Till. But, sadly, he appears to be on the same trajectory.
>
> In his book Saving Darwin (endorsed by Collins), Giberson denied the historic Christian teaching that humans were originally created good. In Giberson's view, that can't be true because it conflicts with Darwinian evolution. According to him, evolution is driven by selfishness, so humans must have been selfish and evil from the start. Giberson nevertheless maintained that he was a committed Christian.
>
> But reading between the lines, his reasons for staying a Christian were rather shaky. He acknowledged poignantly: "my belief in God is tinged with doubts and, in my more reflective moments, I sometimes wonder if I am perhaps simply continuing along the trajectory of a childhood faith that should be abandoned."

This part is scary. When you marry a theistic evolutionist, they might come to church with you. But they could just as easily be faking it to keep up appearances. Their commitment to Darwinian evolution is absolute, but the Christian theism is just acting:

> So why did he stay a Christian? "As a purely practical matter, I have compelling reasons to believe in God. My parents are deeply committed Christians and would be devastated were I to reject my faith. My wife and children believe in God, and we attend church together regularly. Most of my friends are believers. I have a job I love at a Christian college that would be forced to dismiss me if I were to reject the faith that underpins the mission of the college. Abandoning belief in God would be disruptive, sending my life completely off the rails." Note that Dr. Giberson's "compelling reasons" to believe in God were sociological. They

> weren’t about whether Christianity is actually true.
>
> Within a few years of writing Saving Darwin, Giberson resigned his post at the Christian university where he taught. In a book following his departure, Saving the Original Sinner (2015), Giberson made fairly clear that he now regards the Bible as a mish-mash of divergent stories from one particular tribe rather than a divinely inspired text featuring God’s authoritative message. He thinks if Christianity wants to survive it needs to evolve: “Christianity emerged in a different time and must be prepared to evolve like everything else.”

So, if you meet a Christian who believes in Darwinian evolution, make sure they understand the implications of Darwinian evolution, and what it means for the Christian worldview. The conflicts between Darwinian evolution and Christian theism are much more severe than just disagreeing with Bible stories.

Biden regime gave millions to left-wing news media that spread misformation

February 10, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I worked with a secular Jewish guy named Tom for several years. I disagreed with him on topics like Darwinism and global warming alarmism. One day, Tom got very angry and he told me that I was living in a bubble, because I believed that the corporate news media was biased. So I showed him some peer-reviewed studies that proved that they were biased. Needless to say, he was not happy.

But what remained to be proved is WHY is the corporate news media so biased. Is it because smart people are naturally secular leftists? Or is there another reason.

Here's an article from The Federalist that explains the real reason that the corporate news media is biased to the left:

> Federal agencies have been funneling millions to leftist media outlets including The Associated Press, Politico, Reuters, The New York Times, The Washington Post, and CNN, according to public grant disclosures.
>
> These legacy corporations have fashioned themselves the gatekeepers of information to the American public. But ever since 2015, when now-President Donald Trump announced his first campaign — and even earlier — they have spewed lie after lie in an attempt to control the political narrative.

Associated Press:

> The Associated Press, an "independent news cooperative," has received $37.5 million from the federal government over the last 15-plus years, according to public spending data.

Politico:

> Politico has received $34.3 million from the federal government since 2015, according to government spending data published by Liz Wheeler.

Reuters:

> Reuters has received $10.6 million from federal agencies starting in 2020, according to government grant data.

New York Times:

> The New York Times has received $2.7 million total from federal agencies since 2008, according to government spending data.

Washington Post:

> The Washington Post has accepted $1.7 million from federal agencies starting in

> 2014, according to public data.

CNN:

> CNN has received nearly $220,000 from the federal government, according to government grant disclosures.

Did these "payments" cause the corporate news media to spread disinformation, misinformation and false news so that their Democrat paymasters could stay in power?

What about the Trump-Russia collusion story?

> Soon after Trump began his first term, outlets like The New York Times amplified and advanced the "Russiagate" collusion narrative, which turned out to be a hoax. Its website still features a section on "Trump and the Russians," filled with hit pieces from 2017. In fact, all six outlets that have taken federal funding — The AP, Politico, Reuters, The New York Times, The Washington Post, and CNN — amplified this narrative.
>
> But it later turned out that the dossier of former British spy Christopher Steele — the impetus for many of these conspiracy theories, as well as the FBI's spying on the Trump campaign — was fabricated, as The Federalist previously reported. And even more concerning, Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign paid for it.

What about deliberately misquoting Trump to help the Democrat party?

> Still, these outlets served as anti-Trump megaphones through his entire first term. CNN and Reuters repeated phony stories from anonymous sources, such as the smear that Trump supposedly called fallen U.S. soldiers "suckers" and "losers." The New York Times amplified quotes taken out of context, such as when Trump referred to "very fine people on both sides" of the Charlottesville, Virginia, protests — omitting his comment that "I'm not talking about the neo-Nazis and the white nationalists, because they should be condemned totally."

What about the Hunter Biden laptop is Russian disinformation story?

> In the crucial days before the 2020 election, CNN dismissed the New York Post's story exposing the contents of Hunter Biden's laptop, and Politico editors allegedly buried the story at the time, designating it "disinformation." It turned out the Hunter Biden laptop story was true, and as revealed in the Twitter Files, Democrats and federal officials worked with Big Tech to suppress it. A poll found 80 percent of respondents thought the story would have changed the outcome of the 2020 election.

And the spreading of misinformation to help the Democrat party was amplified by far-left Big Tech corporations like Google, who intentionally steered users to left-wing news sources in the corporate news media.

Here's a report from the New York Post:

> Google’s already left-leaning news aggregator platform Google News skewed even more off the charts in 2023, according to a recent analysis.
>
> Media company AllSides’ latest bias analysis found that 63% of articles that appeared on Google News over two weeks were from left-leaning media outlets — a 2% increase from 2022, when 61% of articles on the aggregator were from liberal outlets.
>
> By contrast, the number of right-leaning news sources picked up by Google News in 2023 was 6%, a relative improvement from the paltry 3% the previous year.

The article notes that the study authors did not consider Reuters to be a left-wing source. If you consider Reuters to be a left-wing source, as I do, then 67% of the articles on Google News were linking to left-wing sources. At what point does this become election interference? We should by all means cut off the taxpayer-funding for the corporate news media. And then cut off the taxpayer-funded for NPR and PBS. Then we can investigate how Big Tech companies like Facebook and Google used their products to favor the Democrat party, especially to interfere in our elections.

Stephen C. Meyer answers objections to arguments for a Designer

February 11, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to pick the strongest defender of Christianity operating today, I would pick Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. His recent book "Return of the God Hypothesis" defends three arguments for a Creator / Designer of the universe. But there have been some criticisms of those arguments. In this conversation, Justin Brierley asks Dr. Meyer to respond to those criticisms.

Here is the video:

Here is the description:

> Justin Brierley interviews controversial philosopher of science Dr Stephen Meyer, about his recent book "Return of the God Hypothesis". Stephen shares the latest advances in the field of "Intelligent Design", ranging from design inferences that can be drawn from the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, the information content of the living cell, and even from attempts of atheist materialists to try to avoid the God Hypothesis!

And here are the topics, with timestamps:

00:00:00 Coming up…
00:00:40 Introduction
00:01:08 Darwinism is in trouble
00:05:42 Isn't I.D. God of the gaps?
00:09:03 What about the Dover School trial?
00:13:21 Has the I.D. stigma changed?
00:15:57 Big Bang points to design?
00:23:44 Objections to beginning & cause of the universe
00:30:04 Is there a bias against God?
00:32:31 Fine-tuning points to design?
00:37:14 Puddle objection to design
00:42:38 "C.R.A.P." objection to design
00:45:40 Multiverse defeats design?
00:52:42 About The Surprising Rebirth of Belief in God podcast
00:54:29 Own-goals from trying to avoid design
00:56:29 Origin of life points to design?
01:03:56 Dawkins is wrong about life arising by chance
01:09:15 What about naturalistic models of life?
01:12:23 Aesthetic objections to I.D.
01:15:47 Paul Davies' views on I.D.
01:19:53 Conclusion

01:23:46 Next!

If you watch this, leave a comment and let me know what you thought of it.

Wikipedia co-founder, who holds PhD in philosophy, returns to Christianity

February 12, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Who is Larry Sanger? Larry Sanger is the co-founder of Wikipedia, and he holds a PhD in philosophy from the Ohio State University. Although he was raised in a Christian home, he did not get good answers to his many questions from Christian leaders. In fact, they foolishly made him feel badly for asking questions. He decided to take another look at the arguments for Christian theism.

Here's the story from Evolution News:

> As I found myself returning to the old arguments for the existence of God, I did not slap myself on the forehead and say, "Oh! It turns out that this is a great argument! I guess I believe in God after all!" Even today I deny that, individually, the traditional arguments for the existence of God are particularly persuasive. But I began to examine them in new versions.
>
> I was impressed by a lecture by philosopher of science and well-known apologist Stephen Meyer, who presented versions of the cosmological argument and the fine-tuning argument. Science says the Big Bang was the beginning of the universe. But whatever had a beginning has to have had an explanation. As this is the beginning of matter itself, it cannot have a material cause; thus it must have an immaterial cause (whatever that might be like).
>
> Similarly, certain features of the universe that are absolutely necessary to explaining how fundamental natural laws operate are physical constants. Physicists tell us that if the values of those constants were different, then various things could not have happened; for example, atoms could not have formed, or stars could not have ignited and given off light and heat. But scientists have never offered an explanation for these constants.

He mentions Stephen C. Meyer, so let's talk about that.

I want you, the reader, to consider that the arguments of Stephen C. Meyer, and the people like him, do work on non-Christians. If you are still batting around "arguments" from people like Aquinas and C.S. Lewis, then you are trying to build a wall with spaghetti, instead of with bricks. The new arguments are much better than what you learned in Sunday school. They are much better than what you heard from your parents and pastors. They are much better than what you read in popular Christian books. Much better than anything a seminary professor could teach you.

If you haven't put in the time on the new scientific arguments, then you better get moving, because there has been a huge revolution in the way that people think about the Big Questions of life. We covered some of them on the Knight and Rose Show, but you'll be better off getting yourself a book like "The Comprehensive Guide to Science and

Faith”. That book is one stop shopping.

More:

> This is a greatly condensed summary; I developed these ideas in much greater depth. But beyond such details, what I dwelled upon more than anything is the fact that the arguments taken together are far more persuasive than I had understood. Individually, the arguments might seem relatively weak. As I said, the Argument from Contingency only shows that a necessary being exists. The Argument from Causality shows only that the universe had a cause outside of itself. The Argument from Design shows only that the universe has some sort of designer or other. An Argument from Morality might add that the designer is benevolent, to some degree, in some way, but not even necessarily personal. But what happens when we combine all the arguments to make a unified case for the existence of God? I’m not sure the idea had ever dawned on me, certainly not with its present vividness. Taken together, the arguments point to a necessary being that exists apart from space, time, and matter. This is the very cause of the universe, which was designed according to orderly abstract laws. Ever more complex properties emerge, one from another, with great beauty and rationality—rationality that exhibits various mind-like features. This order can even be described as good, a cosmos indeed, because life and its preservation seem to be part of the plan, and life is the very standard of value.

And this is the exciting part – he’s going to be a regular contributor at Evolution News:

> Editor’s note: We are delighted to welcome Wikipedia co-founder Larry Sanger as a new contributor. The following is excerpted from his essay, “How a Skeptical Philosopher Becomes a Christian” at LarrySanger.org. See also, “Wikipedia Co-Founder Blasts ‘Appallingly Biased’ Wikipedia Entry on Intelligent Design.”

I love stories like this. I’ve talked this over with Rose. Neither of us grew up in Christian homes, so we had complete freedom to puzzle these things out on our own, and only act according to what we discovered. In my case, I explained to a youth pastor early on that in my family, we liked to argue. So, he gave me apologetics books, and said that in Christianity, there was a long tradition of debating.

I puzzled through these books at my own pace, never having to be forced to go to church, never having to put on a show, and never having to get my Christianity secondhand from people who were terrible at it. I got it straight from the Bible, not from anybody’s words or behaviors. And in the end, it stuck very well. In fact, it never even bothered me that Christianity lost me reputation with other people. After all, they couldn’t defend their views in a debate. Sometimes I think it’s better to do it this way.

How is secular left socialism going in Germany?

February 13, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Americans can learn which policies work and don't work by looking at policies that have been tried in other times and places. That way, we can avoid the mistakes that other people have already made. That's one of the reasons why people like Thomas Sowell so much – he is always talking about which policies work, and which ones don't. And in Germany, it's mostly policies that don't.

Here's a fun article from Victor Davis Hanson, writing for the Daily Signal. If you're like me, you already know Dr. Hanson from his writings on military history. But he likes policy, too.

He says:

> Today I'd like to talk about the crisis facing Europe, specifically its self-implosion across the spectrum—energy, population, fertility, defense. Germany, for example, has been systematically shutting down its nuclear plants and, for a while, its natural gas electrical generation plants.

If you know your energy policy, then you know that natural gas and nuclear power are the two power sources pushed by conservatives. They are safe and reliable, and they are also zero emission. Best of all for me, they don't kill bats, birds and other animals. Birds are my favorite animals, and that's a huge reason why I hate wind and solar power – they kill birds in large numbers.

More:

> the net result of all of this deliberate turn to wind and solar, at the expense of fossil fuels and nuclear, is that it costs about four times more to use electricity in Germany than it does on average throughout the United States. That's not the only problem.
>
> Germany is deindustrializing. And by that I mean it's losing about 200,000 jobs in its auto industry due to these high energy prices and regulations. Its green mandates, especially electric vehicle mandates, have revolutionized the car industry, in the sense that they're not selling abroad as they did in the past.

When you raise the prices of gas and electricity, it raises the price of all production of goods, and transportation of goods. The funny thing is that this has been going on for some time. I remember talking about Angela Merkel's failed policies with an international student from Germany with I was in grad school. And they never pulled out of their death spiral! It's still going now.

Anyway, the higher cost of gas and electricity is having big effects:

> In addition to that, Germany's disarmed. They only have about 125 attack aircraft. They have very few armored vehicles. Their active military is only about

> 180,000 soldiers.
>
> They have 84 million people in the country. The fertility rate is getting very close to 1.4. I know we have problems here in the United States at 1.6, but 1.4.
>
> And they don't have borders. They have had a million to 2 million illegal aliens just prance into Germany, especially during the last years of the Merkel chancellorship. In terms of percentage of foreign-born, Germany has more foreign-born than does the United States, which doesn't have a border in the south, at least until Donald Trump comes in. Twenty percent of the German population is foreign-born.

We have a new administration now, and if you look at the picks for Department of the Interior, and Secretary of Energy, then we should be getting some action on developing our own supply of clean energy. Let's hope that we don't make the same mistakes that the Germans made.

By the way, if people ask you "why are you a conservative?" it's nothing to be ashamed of. You don't have to bring up Bible verses, religious beliefs, or moral issues. Start with economic policies. Just tell them that conservative policies are policies that allow you to have a job, earn money, and spend it how you like. And when they ask you for an example, you can talk about energy policy, and how things are going in free countries that produce a lot of energy (like Norway) vs un-free countries that don't develop a lot of energy (like Germany). Norway's GDP per capita is $90,500 (great), but Germany's is $61,900 (trash). That's why we want to be like Norway, and we don't want to be like Germany.

By arguing for conservative fiscal policies, you often will get an opportunity to argue for conservative social policies. Once people see that you have done your homework in one area, they will be more welcoming of your views in other areas. At the very least, you win whenever you can show your work.

Conservative policy is just "let's do what works" and "let's not do what does not work". Secular leftist policy is "do what feels good" and "do what makes people like me", but that often produces very bad results, especially for the next generation.

Image source: Clean Energy Wire (January 2023)

New study: break-ups are harder for men than for women

February 14, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

For Valentine's Day, I found a new 2024 study that is related to male-female romantic relationships! A lot of people think that men are less committed than women, but if you look at the data, men initiate fewer divorces than women, and they take break-ups a lot harder than women. And lesbian couples have the highest rates of divorce! Let's take a look at the data.

Here's the report on the new study, from the New York Post:

> Breaking up is hard to do — for men, anyway.
>
> That's because males care more about being in a relationship than females, a new study set to be published in Behavioural and Brain Sciences found, according to PsyPost.
>
> Researchers at the Humboldt University of Berlin are pouring cold water on the popular belief that gals are more desperate for a partner — saying that guys are more likely to experience loneliness after calling it quits, and are less likely to see the silver lining to the situation.
>
> The team analyzed more than 50 scientific studies on gender differences in heterosexual relationships to come up with their findings.

Women are more likely to initiate divorces than men:

> The results could explain why men are less likely than women to initiate a break-up when in a steady relationship — 70% of divorces are initiated by women, the experts stated.
>
> Men are also more likely to search for a partner and to be focused on entering into a serious relationship — perhaps because they have more to gain.
>
> "We know from numerous studies that women typically receive more emotional support from their social environment than men. Therefore, heterosexual men are more dependent on their partners to fulfill their emotional needs than heterosexual women," Iris Wahring, lead author of the study, said in a statement.
>
> "In short, steady relationships are psychologically more important for men than for women."

If you look at the instability rates of lesbians, they have the highest rates of relationship instability of any relationship arrangement.

> During the five years of marriage, lesbian spouses have twice the risk of divorce compared to heterosexual marriages. Only after 25 years of marriage this difference seems to be gone, the study shows. Same-sex male couples only have

> an 8 percent higher chance of getting divorced than heterosexual couples in that same period. Senior researcher Ruhne Zahl Olsen is not surprised by the results. They have been the same in other countries, he says to Aftenposten.
>
> […]For the survey, 5,187 same-sex couples and marriages entered between 1993 and 2018 were examined.

This is important, because in lesbian relationships, it's two women. So, you can't blame the high rate of instability / divorce on any man. There isn't any man there to blame!

Anyway, I thought this new study would be good for men. Men are always getting beaten up and blamed for everything. But not everything about men is bad. I don't mean the top 20% most attractive men, who have so many options that they don't have to be nice to any particular woman. I mean the vast majority of ordinary men who just work and live quiet lives. They are the ones who are good at commitment.

Something to think about for those who are wondering "where are all the good men?". Men are good, you just have to choose the good character ones.

Jay Richards: what should Christians know about economics?

February 15, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good basic introduction to the free enterprise system by Dr. Jay Richards:

Here is the description:

> In this edition of the Evangel Guest Lecture Series, Jay W. Richards discusses his book on the capitalist system within the context of the Christian faith and examine how enterprise based on hard work, honesty, and trust fosters creativity and growth.
>
> Jay W. Richards, PhD, is author of many books including the New York Times bestseller Infiltrated (2013). Richards is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute, and executive editor of The Stream. In recent years he has been a distinguished fellow at the Institute for Faith, Work & Economics, contributing editor of The American at the American Enterprise Institute, a visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation, and research fellow and director of Acton Media at the Acton Institute.

It turns out that the best system for lifting the poor out of poverty – by work or charity – is the economic system that creates wealth through human ingenuity and hard work. That system is the free enterprise system.

Something to read?

If you can't listen to the lecture and don't want to buy the whole book "Money, Greed and God?" Then I have a series of posts on each chapter for you.

The index post is here.

Here are the posts in the series:

- Part 1: The Eight Most Common Myths about Wealth, Poverty, and Free Enterprise
- Part 2: Can't We Build A Just Society?
- Part 3: The Piety Myth
- Part 4: The Myth of the Zero Sum Game
- Part 5: Is Wealth Created or Transferred?
- Part 6: Is Free Enterprise Based on Greed?
- Part 7: Hasn't Christianity Always Opposed Free Enterprise?
- Part 8: Does Free Enterprise Lead to An Ugly Consumerist Culture?
- Part 9: Will We Use Up All Our Resources?
- Part 10: Are Markets An Example of Providence?

Parts 4 and 5 are my favorites. It's so hard to choose one to excerpt, but I must. I will choose… Part 4.

Here’s the problem:

> **Myth #3: The Zero Sum Game Myth – believing that trade requires a winner and a loser.**
>
> One reason people believe this myth is because they misunderstand how economic value is determined. Economic thinkers with views as diverse as Adam Smith and Karl Marx believed economic value was determined by the labor theory of value. This theory stipulates that the cost to produce an object determines its economic value.
>
> According to this theory, if you build a house that costs you $500,000 to build, that house is worth $500,000. But what if no one can or wants to buy the house? Then what is it worth?
>
> Medieval church scholars put forth a very different theory, one derived from human nature: economic value is in the eye of the beholder. The economic value of an object is determined by how much someone is willing to give up to get that object. This is the subjective theory of value.

And here’s an example of how to avoid the problem:

> How you determine economic value affects whether you view free enterprise as a zero-sum game, or a win-win game in which both participants benefit.
>
> Let’s return to the example of the $500,000 house. As the developer of the house, you hire workers to build the house. You then sell it for more than $500,000. According to the labor theory of value, you have taken more than the good is actually worth. You’ve exploited the buyer and your workers by taking this surplus value. You win, they lose.
>
> Yet this situation looks different according to the subjective theory of value. Here, everybody wins. You market and sell the house for more than it cost to produce, but not more than customers will freely pay. The buyer is not forced to pay a cost he doesn’t agree to. You are rewarded for your entrepreneurial effort. Your workers benefit, because you paid them the wages they agreed to when you hired them.
>
> This illustration brings up a couple important points about free enterprise that are often overlooked:
>
> **1. Free exchange is a win-win game**.
>
> In win-win games, some players may end up better off than others, but everyone ends up better off than they were at the beginning. As the developer, you might make more than your workers. Yet the workers determined they would be better off by freely exchanging their labor for wages, than if they didn’t have the job at all.
>
> A free market doesn’t guarantee that everyone wins in every competition. Rather, it allows many more win-win encounters than any other alternative.

> **2. The game is win-win because of rules set-up beforehand.**
>
> A free market is *not* a free-for-all in which everybody can do what they want. Any exchange must be free on both sides. Rule of law, contracts, and property rights are needed to ensure exchanges are conducted rightly. As the developer of the house, you'd be held accountable if you broke your contract and failed to pay workers what you promised.
>
> An exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game.

If you do get the book, be sure and skip the chapter on usury. It's just not as engaging as the others, in my opinion.

Why are Republicans so interested in giving parents school choice?

February 16, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Tennessee recently enacted a school choice problem, and on Facebook, there were a lot of negative comments. I was able to click on the profiles of some of the negative commenters – the majority of them were white, female public school teachers. Well, I thought it might be a good idea to explain to people why Republicans are so interested in letting parents choose.

First, here's the story from Focus on the Family:

> Tennessee Governor Bill Lee signed the Educational Freedom Act of 2025 earlier this week, creating 20,000 educational scholarships for students for the 2025-2026 school year. The bill also gives all public school teachers a one-time, $2,000 bonus for the current school year.
>
> This legislation is part of a growing movement toward giving families the freedom to choose the best type of education for their children, allowing them to thrive and succeed.
>
> […]The scholarships, amounting to a little over $7,000, can be used for tuition and fees at a private school of a family's choice, along with textbooks, instructional materials and uniforms at the private school. Money can also be used for transportation, tutoring and computer technology for educational needs.
>
> In addition, "There will be an automatic growth trigger of 5,000 additional scholarships for each year after 75% of total scholarships are taken in the prior year." The bill denies scholarships to students who cannot establish their "lawful presence in the United States."
>
> The Education Freedom Act was applauded by groups who want parents and families to have more freedom in choosing the education that best fits their children's needs.

So, why would the opponents of school choice want to prevent parents from having a choice? Well, they view parents – the very people who pay their salaries – as enemies. They report them to the federal government as "domestic terrorists". Why? Because those parents object to having their children indoctrinated with secular leftist ideologies.

Here's an example of school choice opponents dealing with parents who object to their indoctrination:

First Daily Wire post:

> On Tuesday evening, school board members representing Penfield Central School District in Rochester, New York, walked out on a packed house of parents who were upset about an inappropriate book on display at the elementary school

> library called “The Rainbow Parade,” authored by Emily Neilson.
>
> The book in question is about a young girl attending a pride parade with her lesbian parents. The illustrations show men in sexual BDSM gear holding hands, drag queens, and naked people.
>
> Instead of taking on comments from concerned parents, the board’s president called a motion to adjourn and ended the meeting abruptly. Kimberly DeRosa, who attended the meeting, told The Daily Wire that it ended after “more than an hour of presentations celebrating Black History Month and the superintendent detailing the process of submitting objections to books in the school.”
>
> As noted by DeRosa, the board told parents that they should submit their complaints, which apparently negated their right to speak out at the meeting.
>
> “We are here at our board meeting, conducting our business,” one board member told parents, who began booing. One parent responded, “It’s our board meeting,” and others yelled, “cowards!”
>
> DeRosa, who is a Penfield taxpayer, concerned mother, and on the executive board of the Monroe County Federated Republican Women, told The Daily Wire that it was “a slap in the face to everyone there when the board members walked out before any public comments could be made.”

Second Daily Wire Post:

> After school board members walked out on parents who were upset over LGBT book “The Rainbow Parade,” the board is doubling down and prohibiting public comments at meetings until at least the end of April, citing alleged racism.
>
> […]Now, the board representing Penfield Central School District has barred public comment at all meetings for the months ahead.
>
> […]The message also cited alleged racism, since one of the board meeting attendees showed up on Tuesday wearing a gorilla suit and a black “Make America Great Again” hat. Roberts suggested it was worn as an act of racism, since the district’s superintendent and some of the board members are black.

Can you imagine being treated like this by companies in the private sector, like Amazon.com or Apple? Recently, I ordered some Indian simmer sauces from Wal-Mart. They didn’t arrive for 2 weeks. So I asked for a refund. They gave me the refund immediately, no questions asked. But public school education isn’t like the private sector. You pay your money up front – in taxes – and then they give you whatever they feel like. It’s the complete opposite of the private sector, where they compete with rivals in order to earn your money.

And the Trump administration is aware of this, and they are already doing something about it.

Here’s a story from The Federalist:

> The U.S. Department of Education has launched a Title IX investigation into five

> Virginia school districts that allow boys to use girls' facilities like restrooms and locker rooms, moving one step closer to revoking their federal funding.
>
> The Education Department's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) confirmed to America First Legal (AFL) that it is investigating Loudoun, Fairfax, Arlington, and Prince William Counties, as well as the City of Alexandria, for violating allegedly Title IX civil rights law meant to protect women and girls at school. AFL filed a formal complaint about the far-left Washington, D.C., suburb school districts in early February.
>
> […]The school districts in Northern Virginia, which serve some of the largest populations of students in the commonwealth, are notoriously defiant and completely consumed by gender theory, critical race theory, and a dedication to conducting far-left social and academic experimentation on children. If the Department of Education finds them violative of Title IX and they continue to be defiant, the districts are poised to lose federal funding.

You might remember that the Loudon County school board is the one responsible for working with the Biden administration to label concerned parents as "domestic terrorists". This is why elections are important. The Democrat party thinks that parents should be forced to pay, and if they object to what they get, then they are "domestic terrorists". The Republican party thinks that parents are more important than the school boards. I hope you voted Republican in the last elections, because they are looking out for your kids.

Call your senators and ask them to vote against Lori Chavez-DeRemer

February 17, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like about a third of Trump's Cabinet picks. A third are OK. And a third are terrible. The worst pick of all is his pick for Secretary of Labor. He picked Lori Chavez-DeRemer, who is endorsed by a teacher union leader. Lori opposes right-to-work laws. She supports job-killing labor unions. And she is a former employee of Planned Parenthood. Democrats love this pick.

Here's an article from Christian Post:

> President Donald Trump's nominee to serve as secretary of labor, who is expected to face opposition from Senate Republicans, admitted to lawmakers that she once worked at a Planned Parenthood facility.
>
> A source close to the situation confirmed to The Christian Post Thursday that Lori Chavez-DeRemer worked for a Planned Parenthood in Fresno, California, from January 1989 through February 1991.
>
> Chavez-DeRemer, a Republican who represented Oregon's 5th Congressional District in the 118th United States Congress, took appointments at the abortion provider's front desk.

That's a problem with her on moral issues, but there are also problems with her economic views.

Daily Caller explains:

> Chavez-DeRemer, who represented Oregon's 5th congressional district from 2023 to 2025, supported several pieces of legislation favored by Democrats, including the PRO Act, a bill championed by former President Joe Biden that targeted the private sector. Notably, Chavez-DeRemer also supports the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, which would "strengthen" the rights of public sector workers who want to join unions and or bargain collectively.

Rand Paul, author of "The Case Against Socialism" is opposed to her:

> "I'm not going to support her," Paul told NBC News in January. "I'm the national spokesman and lead author of the right-to-work bill. Her support for the PRO Act, which would not only oppose national right to work but would pre-empt state law on right to work — I think it's not a good thing."

And the far-left website The Atlantic has this to say about her:

> After Chavez-DeRemer's nomination was announced, two senior Democratic senators, Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Patty Murray of Washington State, issued cautiously optimistic statements about her—a rare sentiment for

> Democrats to express about any Trump nominee.
>
> […]“It’s a positive move for those of us who represent workers and who want workers to have a better life,” Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers and a close ally of Democratic Party leaders, told me. She noted that Chavez-DeRemer bucked her party not only by supporting the PRO Act but also by voting against private-school vouchers and cuts to public-education funding.
>
> […]An anti-union group, the National Right to Work Committee, wrote in a letter to Trump before he announced Chavez-DeRemer’s nomination that she “should have no place” in his administration: “She would not be out of place in the Biden-Harris Department of Labor, which completely sold out to Big Labor from the start.”

She should be withdrawn as a candidate, and someone who understands economics, and is pro-business, should be nominated in her place.

If I have time, and it’s not too complicated, I’m going to call both of my senators this week and urge them not to vote for her.

New poll: secular leftist women far more likely to feel lonely than conservative women

February 18, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Our society is going through an age of feminism. Everyone agrees that feminism is a wonderful thing for women. Secular leftists and pro-marriage conservatives agree: women should follow their hearts, and never face judgment or accountability. Christian leaders tell us that modern women are entitled to protection, and provision from any man they choose. But is that a good deal for men?

Here's a fun new article from the New York Post about a recent survey showing how well things are working out for women.

It says:

> Liberal women are the least likely to report being fully satisfied with their lives and are far more likely to report feeling lonely often, according to analysis from a recently published poll.
>
> The 2024 American Family Survey reportedly found that 37% of conservative women and 28% of moderate women, between the ages of 18-40, reported being "completely satisfied" with their lives, but just 12% of liberal women in the same age group said the same.
>
> Liberal women were also nearly three times more likely than conservative women to say they experienced loneliness at least a few times a week.

And the survey author, feminist professor Brad Wilcox, has an idea about what's behind these findings:

> Brad Wilcox, a sociology professor at the University of Virginia and fellow at the Institute for Family Studies who analyzed the survey's data, said he believes there are a couple of reasons why conservative young women are more likely to be happier than their liberal counterparts.
>
> "We've seen in the research that conservative women tend to be more likely to embrace a sense of agency and to have the sense that they are not, in any way, the victim of larger structural realities or forces," he told Fox News Digital.
>
> "They're also less likely to catastrophize about public events and concerns," and "more likely to think of themselves as captains of their own fate," Wilcox added.

The victim mentality is a central feature of the feminist ideology that is promoted to young women. To me making yourself into a victim is a mental illness. Is anyone challenging women about it? It seems like good men would not marry a woman who blames her bad outcomes on other people instead of on her own choices.

Consider this article from Evie Magazine, a moderate feminist website:

> A 2020 survey showed that 56% of white liberal women between ages 18 and 29 were diagnosed with a mental health condition, compared to 27% of conservative women in the same age bracket. 40% of liberal women between 30 and 49 reported having a mental health condition, compared to 26% of conservative women of the same age.

Will good men bail out women who are diagnosed with a mental health condition? Is that safe? Is it a good deal for men?

It seems to me that good men don't want to deal with secular leftist women's student loan debts. They don't want to be punished with her STIs and mental illnesses. They don't want to be the man that women "settle" for when they fail to land the hot bad boy they really wanted. Good men don't want to lose half their assets and future income in a divorce. They don't want to be servants to women who see male leadership as something to be avoided.

Good men want to retire at 50. And that means steering well clear of aging secular leftist women. Sorry, Brad Wilcox. No deal.

Do moral dilemmas undermine objective moral absolutes?

February 19, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One reason why some people reject the existence of objective morality is because moral absolutes can conflict.

Canadian philosopher Michael Horner to explains the problem.

He writes:

> You may have been confronted with the story of the Nazi soldier coming to the door of the family who are hiding some Jewish people in their home and asking them point blankly, “Are there any Jews here?” The person telling the story then asks you, “What would you say?” or more precisely, “What should you say?”
>
> […]I think for many people the term moral absolutes connotes ideas like inflexibility and rigidity, and that there can never be exemptions. I have also found that many people believe that holding to moral absolutes means that circumstances are not relevant in a moral evaluation and that moral absolutism cannot handle moral dilemmas. But in fact it is possible to believe in moral absolutes, or as I prefer to call them objective moral values, without adhering to these connotations I have mentioned.
>
> For many people to believe in moral absolutes is to believe in rules that no other rules can ever trump. It follows from this that moral absolutes are all equal and there can never be any exemptions. But what if moral absolutes exist in a hierarchy?
>
> We know from experience that very often more than one moral rule applies to a situation. This often leads to moral dilemmas. So in the ‘hiding the Jews example’ the moral rule of telling the truth seems to apply to the situation, but it would seem that the moral rule to protect innocent human life from torture and murder applies also.
>
> If absolutes are all equal there is no way out of the dilemma. You can’t choose one absolute over another because in doing so you would be violating at least one absolute which, in their view, is supposed to be inviolable.

So, in this case, it seems as if the moral absolutist is stuck in a dilemma. If you lie to save the innocent life, then that would be wrong. But if you tell the truth and hand the innocent person over to murderers, then that would be wrong. Does this really disprove objective moral absolutes?

This problem annoys me, because I know this is the kind of objection to objective morality that annoying philosophy lecturers like to push onto freshmen in order to convince them that morality is nonsense. But does the moral dilemma objection really work?

More Horner:

> […][I]f moral absolutes exist in a hierarchy and the circumstances or the situation were relevant in determining which absolute takes precedent, then there may be a solution to the moral dilemma. That is exactly what I think is the case in the example. I for one have no difficulty knowing that the morally right thing to do in that situation is to protect the life of innocent people from torture and murder rather than tell the truth to a person who has torture and murder in their plans. My moral intuitions are very clear about this.
>
> If someone objects and says, “No, you must always tell the truth. After all it is an absolute, and absolutes by definition can never be violated,” I would point out that they are just using a different hierarchy, putting truth telling above protecting the life of innocent people from torture and murder. There is no way to avoid making a judgment like that since more than one absolute does apply to the situation. I would just ask them to think it through again, and once they see that they have to make a judgment based on some sort of hierarchy in that situation, then I think most people’s moral intuitions will affirm that protecting the lives of innocent people from torture and murder, in that situation, trumps truth telling. There is no way to avoid choosing one over the other.

But isn’t this moral relativism? After all, we are deciding what to do based on the situation! It’s relativism, isn’t it?

No, it isn’t, because there is always one right thing to do in every situation. In every situation, you always follow the weightiest moral rule. The right thing to do does not depend on your subjective state of mind. It is an objective moral duty, and it is the same for everyone, across all times and in all places. That’s what objective morality means - what is right and wrong is not determined by personal preferences or cultural conventions, which vary by time and place.

And of course, God is the ground of this hierarchy of objective moral absolutes. They existed through him before human beings even appeared, as part of his design for us, his creatures. How we ought to behave is grounded ontologically in God’s design for us.

Found: $2 Billion in taxpayer money earmarked for Stacey Abrams-linked Group

February 20, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I don't have TV and I have not been listening to news podcasts for a week, but I have the impression that the secular left is upset at the idea that our $37 trillion debt, and $2 trillion deficits will be cut. Somehow, they don't really think that this is a problem. They want the spending (which is being paid for by future generations) to continue. Even if the spending is just wasteful.

Here's a bombshell story from the Washington Free Beacon:

> DOGE discovered $2 billion in taxpayer funds set aside for a fledgling nonprofit linked to perennial Georgia Democratic candidate Stacey Abrams.
>
> The Environmental Protection Agency under the Biden administration awarded Power Forward Communities the grant in April 2024 as part of the agency's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund program. Power Forward Communities received the green energy grant despite the fact that it was founded months earlier in late 2023 and never managed anywhere near the grant's dollar figure—it reported just $100 in total revenue during its first three months in operation, according to its latest tax filings.

Two billion dollars for greenhouse gas reduction program? And they only reported $100 in revenue? That seems like a pretty poorly-run group. Let's see who is running it.

More:

> Power Forward Communities was established in October 2023 as a coalition of groups led by Rewiring America, a left-wing group that advocates for electrification policies and a transition away from fossil fuel dependence. Abrams, who serves as Rewiring America's senior counsel, said at the time that she was "thrilled" to be part of the Power Forward Communities coalition. "This is how we expand access to clean energy—by prioritizing housing, equity and resilience," she wrote in an X post.

Oh yes, Stacey Abrams! That well known nuclear physicist with the strong record of running companies that developed loads of clean nuclear energy, so that prices were lowered for consumers. Oh wait, no, that's not the one. This Stacey Abrams is the romance novel author, who has earned no STEM degrees, and no STEM work experience. A single mother of 3 children. She has no achievements in the field of science at all.

More:

> "For an organization that has no experience in this, that was literally just established, and had $100 in the bank to receive a $2 billion grant—it doesn't just fly in the face of common sense, it's out and out fraud," Daniel Turner, the

> executive director of energy advocacy group Power the Future, alleged in an interview with the *Free Beacon*.

This is not the only instance of waste from the Biden administration. Here's another from yesterday from Daily Caller:

> Nikola, an electric vehicle start-up that received federal funding during the Biden administration, said it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy Wednesday and will pursue a sale of most or all of its assets.
>
> The company, once a Wall Street darling valued at $30 billion, announced the bankruptcy after several quarters of rapid cash burn and waning investor interest. Nikola also suffered from chronic leadership changes after its founder and original CEO, Trevor Milton, was convicted of fraud in 2022. The long-haul electric truck manufacturer produced only 600 vehicles since its founding in 2014, according to CNBC News, despite receiving subsidies from the Biden administration's Department of Energy (DOE).

So, should you listen to the corporate news media's cries about DOGE cutting government waste and rooting out corruption? Of course not. This is the kind of thing they are finding, and stopping.

New study: homeschooled adults are more religious and less anxious

February 21, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been preparing an outline for a podcast about "Where Are All the Good Men?" and I only get to have like 7 questions. But one of the issues that gets a question is my obsession with homeschooling. I didn't always like homeschooling, but the more I studied it, the more important it became. In my opinion, good men will insist on homeschooling out of a candidate wife, because it's critical.

Here's a story about a new study that I found in The Federalist:

> A recent report from the Cardus Education Survey analyzed educational, economic, mental health, civic, family, and faith status for American adults who were homeschooled and found a range of outcomes within a diverse population.
>
> […]The most notable differences between homeschoolers and the survey respondents who were never homeschooled are seen in the mental health outcomes. The report states, "Compared to the other respondent groups, long-term homeschoolers exhibited the highest levels of optimism, gratitude, and life satisfaction. Long-term homeschoolers were also the least likely to 'feel helpless dealing with life's problems' and to report symptoms associated with depression and anxiety."
>
> In the area of spirituality and faith, the report found: "Homeschooled adults were much more likely to report that they believed in God and life after death and regularly engaged in religious practices. The prevalence of religious belief and practice increased with the number of years spent in the homeschool sector."

This is pretty good, but even better if you pair it with another recent study on homeschooling that was written up in the Wall Street Journal.

With that said, here is a report from the Wall Street Journal about a new study that you might be able to use to be bold with people who oppose homeschooling. (Full text of the article here)

> Parents want their kids to be well-educated and professionally successful, but they also want them to be healthy, happy and virtuous. By this broader measure of success, home schooling has advantages.
>
> Among the students we examined, home-schoolers were 33% more likely to volunteer, 31% more forgiving and 51% more likely to attend religious services in young adulthood than those who attended public school. ("Levels of forgiveness" were measured on a self-reported four-point scale, which other research has shown predicts some subsequent health and well-being outcomes.)
>
> The difference in religious participation has public-health implications, since

> those who attend services regularly have substantially lower risks of alcohol and drug abuse, depression and suicide. They also have a lower risk of premature death for any reason than those who never attend.

So, again, for a good man who is data-driven in his search for a wife, homeschooling emerges as the best option for educating the children. It’s just not a good idea to give your children to unionized, government-run schools for 6 hours a day. Those schools are not neutral. And as we’re seeing in the news, the people who work at those schools don’t view the parents who pay their salaries as customers. They’re more likely to see you as “domestic terrorists” just because you don’t agree with them on politics.

Is having a burning bosom a good test for truth in religion?

February 22, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a good post from Christian apologist Clay Jones. He's talking about how Mormons embrace Mormonism because of a burning in their bosom. (A subjective feeling) In the quote below, I reproduce the main thrust of the post – which he makes as part of his conversation with some Mormon missionaries. If you ever run into Mormons, this might help you.

Excerpt:

> I pointed out that the Mormons base the truth of their religion on a subjective personal experience—namely, they base the truth of Mormonism on praying a prayer to ask God whether the Book of Mormon is trustworthy and if they get a warm feeling, which is described in some of their works a "a burning in the bosom," then they conclude that Mormonism is true. They agreed.
>
> I said that we evangelicals base our faith in historic Christianity on the evidence of Jesus being raised from the dead.
>
> […]But then I pointed out that the Mormons base their beliefs on a subjective personal experience that has led them to believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet, that historic Christianity is mistaken, that there was a great falling away, that there are many gods, that Mormons one day believe that they are going to become gods (just the males, actually), and that the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods still function today (they didn't disagree with even one word of this). I explained that you couldn't get any of these ideas from the New Testament.

He goes to explain why subjective experiences are unreliable for determining truth.

When facing Mormons, and other cults, I also argue against subjectivism. But I supplement that with evidence. For Mormons, I use scientific evidence for the creation of the universe out of nothing. Mormons think that the matter in the universe existed eternally. They don't accept the Big Bang theory! So you just roll through the scientific advances, show that the cause of the universe was non-physical, eternal, powerful and endowed with free will (to create an effect in time without antecedent conditions), and that's the end of that.

I think that people in cults like Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Science have similar ways of forming their beliefs. They just filter out evidence falsifying their religion. JWs made all kinds of silly predictions about the end of the world that are not true – they're false prophets, in other words. And Christian Science thinks that Jesus didn't actually die, which no credentialed historian believes. (Just like Islam)

The denial of female accountability is causing the decline of marriage

February 24, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let's look at a tweet from a conservative Christian pro-marriage activist named Katy Faust. Katy is a very conservative Christian who advocates for marriage and parenting. She recently tweeted her view that Elon Musk is a polygamist, because he is accused of having consensual recreational sex with a 26-year-old woman. Is Katy right to accuse Elon Musk of "polygamy"?

Here is her tweet.

And it says:

> Elon is a modern day #polygamist- a family structure characterized by jealousy & inequality.
>
> "Musk has never asked to see the baby, nor asked for photos of him"
>
> St. Clair [asked] to meet "Hmm ok," EM responds, "Well, I do have a legion of kids to make."

And she links to this article in the New York Post, which clearly explains why this is not "polygamy", it's just premarital sex between an adult female and a wealthy non-Christian man.

In general, pro-marriage conservatives tell women like Ashley St. Clair two things:

1. When a man and a woman have recreational premarital sex, only the man is to blame. The woman didn't do anything wrong.
2. A women should expect that premarital sex with a non-Christian man who has many babies with many other women will cause that man to convert to Christianity and marry her.

So, what happens when tall, hot, wealthy high-status bad boys like Elon Musk don't comply with the message that pro-marriage conservatives tell young women? Well, then they ignore the woman's own choices, and only shame and blame the man. "Why isn't this bad man behaving like a good man?!" they cry.

This attitude that women should be free to follow their hearts, and men must be forced to pay for her choices is EVERYWHERE in our society. It's in student loan bailouts, it's in single mother welfare, it's in the family courts. As I blogged previously, men receive much longer prison sentences than women for the same crimes. Men are just walking ATMs, and whenever women do something that doesn't work, it's ALWAYS a man's fault, and men must ALWAYS pay the costs.

And this view is very popular. When I say popular, I think this is the majority view among Christian women and Christian pastors. They think that the main teaching of Christianity

is just that men ought to transfer all their money to women after having premarital sex. That's it. And they call this "servant leadership". Women lead the relationship, and men just give them money,. Just like an ATM. And the entire family court system reflects this view – if a man disappoints a woman in any way, then she should just take half his stuff, and he should have to pay her alimony and child support forever. In fact, you don't even have to get married. And you don't even have to cohabitate. The courts will transfer the money.

How will men respond to this? Well, here is how they respond. The top 20% of the most attractive, wealthy and high status men will continue to be pursued by hordes of women like this 26-year-old woman, and these men will continue to get free sex with no commitment from these women. These men have options. They don't need to commit to get sex. The line for them is around the block. The line is over the river and through the woods. 80% of women are chasing the top 20% of men. Far from finding non-Christian man-sluts repulsive, most women are attracted to their "dark triad" traits. And the pro-marriage conservatives just let these women follow their hearts. Then they turn to the bad men and try to shame them for being exactly what they are: BAD. "You bad man! How could you be bad?" they cry. They make the shocked pikachu face. And women watching get the message: keep chasing the tall, hot bad boys, nobody is ever going to hold us accountable for our bad choices. This is where abortion, fatherlessness and frivolous divorce come from, by the way.

Meanwhile, the bottom 80% of ordinary men, will continue to be invisible to these women… until these women hit 35-40. Then the aging women will ask "where are all the good men?" And then the pro-marriage conservatives will be right there, to point at the formerly-invisible men and say "you boring, stable men! You have to marry this single mother, who thinks she is settling for someone far beneath her because she once has sex with Elon Musk!". And those men are going to say – and they are saying it now – "I DECLINE TO PARTICIPATE". And then the pro-marriage conservatives will write articles to shame those men, but those men aren't going to be shamed into becoming slaves. Not when they are just coming into their highest-earning years, and without any help from women.

So, who is responsible for the decline of marriage? Contrary to popular belief, it is not men. It is the pro-marriage conservatives. They are the ones who are clearly communicating to young women that is fine to chase premarital sex with tall, hot, wealthy, high-status bad boys. And they tell them to keep expecting these non-Christian man-sluts to suddenly change into Christians and commit, after they get premarital sex. It's the pro-marriage conservatives who are setting false expectations of what happens after sex.

And this view that women must be left free to "follow their hearts" is everywhere in society. Women live in New York City, travel to Europe, and run up student loans for worthless non-STEM degrees. Women must have recreational sex in their 20s and 30s, delay marriage for career, and throw their fatherless kids into daycare. Or abort them. Oh yes, the pro-life conservatives only blame the tall, hot, non-Christian bad boys for

abortion. Abortion is never the woman's fault, because it was totally reasonable for her to expect the non-Christian man would convert to Christianity, marry her, give her all his money, and then transform into Prince Charming – right after she gives him recreational sex.

This is why the invisible good men are declining to date and marry. It's the lies that pro-marriage conservatives tell young women. Lies that are reflected in our schools, workplaces, police, and courts. Good men know never to be the man that a leftover woman "settles" for, after her fun with the bad boys who she is actually attracted to. They know that they will bear the costs, when she inevitably divorces him. And that's why the marriage rate is dropping.

Respectful dialog between Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Saleem Ali

February 25, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the post below, please find the video and summary of a fairly recent dialog between my number one favorite Christian scholar, Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Saleem Ali. The summary is not snarky, because this was a great respectful dialog!

Here is the video:

Here is the short summary:

Saleem Ali and Stephen Meyer debate the origins of order in nature on "Unbelievable." Ali, an environmental planner with a PhD from MIT, argues in Earthly Order that natural laws and human constructs shape sustainability, remaining agnostic about a designer. Meyer, a Cambridge PhD and Discovery Institute scholar, asserts in The Return of the God Hypothesis that life's specified complexity, cosmic fine-tuning, and the universe's beginning suggest an intelligent design. They explore self-organization versus top-down causation, the nature of physical laws, and agency's role, agreeing on order's reality and determinism's limits, but differing on its source—Ali favoring empirical humility, Meyer theistic inference.

And here is the long summary:

The conversation begins with Saleem Ali introducing his book, Earthly Order: How Natural Laws Define Human Life, published by Oxford University Press. Ali, chair of the Department of Geography and Spatial Sciences at the University of Delaware, frames his work as a quest to understand how order underpins a sustainable future. His intellectual journey traces back to his PhD at MIT, where he engaged with Stephen Jay Gould, whose concept of science and religion as "non-overlapping magisteria" sparked Ali's interest in order's functionality. Trained as an environmental planner, Ali seeks solutions-oriented insights, aiming to bridge natural laws with human constructs like economics and society. He spent nearly two decades refining this interdisciplinary approach, resulting in a book that spans physics, chemistry, biology, and social systems. Ali distinguishes between two Greek concepts of order: cosmos (natural order inherent in the universe) and taxis (constructed order imposed by humans). He illustrates this duality with examples—biomimicry in city planning reflects natural order beneficially, while stereotypes show constructed order gone awry. For Ali, order is both intrinsic to nature (e.g., physical laws) and a human projection, but he remains agnostic about whether it demands an explanation beyond material reality, emphasizing humility given empirical limits.

Stephen Meyer, from the Discovery Institute, counters with a perspective rooted in his book, The Return of the God Hypothesis. With a background in physics, earth science, and philosophy of science (PhD from Cambridge), Meyer argues that certain orders, particularly in biology, suggest a designing intelligence. He highlights three key

evidences: the universe's beginning, its fine-tuning, and the informational complexity of life, which he believes point to theism over materialism or pantheism. Meyer differentiates between repetitive order—like the crystalline structure of salt (NaCl), reducible to simple physical laws—and specified complexity, such as the genetic code in DNA. The latter, he asserts, involves a precise arrangement of parts for function, akin to software or language, and is not derivable from physics or chemistry alone. Drawing on historical science, he cites Kepler's view that nature's intelligibility reflects a rational creator, a belief that fueled the scientific revolution's blend of confidence in discovery and rigorous testing against human fallibility. Meyer's first book, Signature in the Cell, took nearly two decades to complete, mirroring Ali's timeline, and argues that life's digital code implies agency—an intelligence behind its origin.

Their discussion pivots to the origin of life, revealing a central tension. Meyer critiques bottom-up, self-organizational models proposed by scientists like Stuart Kaufman and Manfred Eigen. He acknowledges these models explain simple patterns—like vortices or crystals—but argues they fall short of accounting for specified complexity. For instance, Kaufman's metabolic scenarios presuppose highly specific molecular arrangements, begging the question of their origin, while Eigen's hypercycles assume pre-existing RNA and enzymes. Meyer bolsters this with experimental evidence: protein folds, essential for biological function, are rare and isolated in sequence space, as shown by Douglas Axe and Dan Toffik's research. Modifying a stable fold risks losing function, suggesting new folds require external information—evidence, he claims, of top-down design. Ali responds by noting the contested nature of origin-of-life research. He references evolving theories—e.g., the shift from primordial soup to RNA world, and emerging ideas about metals like aluminum, abundant yet rejected by life for bioenergetic reasons. Citing Frances Arnold's Nobel Prize-winning work on enzyme design, Ali argues that natural processes are "messier" than a neat top-down model implies, with redundancy and trial-and-error playing roles. He urges caution against over-interpreting patterns as deterministic causality, whether from intelligent design or speculative physics like string theory.

The nature of physical laws emerges as another focal point. Meyer views laws as descriptive rather than explanatory, critiquing the materialistic tendency to reify them as causes. He uses Newton's gravity—consistent with both an apple falling and a rocket flying—to illustrate that laws permit many configurations without specifying them. At the fundamental level (e.g., gravitation, electromagnetism), laws describe recurring phenomena with precision, but their cause remains mysterious absent a deeper principle. Meyer proposes a theistic view: laws reflect God's sustaining action, a medieval concept of potentia ordinata (ordinary power), offering a philosophical alternative to Hume's skepticism (laws as mental habits) or positivist causation. Ali agrees that cosmos-type order exists—evident in constants like the fine-structure constant or Martin Rees' "six numbers" defining a Goldilocks universe. However, his focus is practical: how do these laws, as constraints, inform environmental planning? In Earthly Order, he explores planetary boundaries and tipping points, noting humans can temporarily override natural

limits (e.g., through technology), but long-term consequences enforce equilibrium. Ali donates his royalties to science literacy, underscoring his goal of fostering environmental awareness.

Consciousness and agency bridge their perspectives. Meyer sees life's informational order as hinting at mind's cosmic role, citing origin-of-life simulations where chemists impose constraints to achieve life-relevant outcomes—imparting information that mirrors top-down causation. He suggests these experiments reflect a need for intelligence in life's origin. Ali, while open to consciousness as an emergent property, prioritizes its utility for sustainability over metaphysical resolution. Both reject determinism—scientific or theological—for negating agency. Meyer ties this to intelligent design's push against methodological naturalism, which excludes agency as a scientific cause, advocating for intellectual pluralism rooted in early scientists like Newton. Ali concurs, noting determinism's pitfalls in theology (e.g., fatalistic asceticism) and science, valuing human agency to navigate complexity.

Religiously, Ali identifies as a cultural Muslim, favoring allegorical over literal interpretations of faith. He's agnostic about a divine mind, wary of exclusionary theism but open to benign frameworks that inspire hope, echoing Churchill's view against stripping people of meaning. Meyer, a theist, embraces pluralism as a civic virtue, citing James Madison's Christian-influenced advocacy for tolerance. He sees agency—human or divine—as a real ontological category, enriching reality beyond reductionism. Their shared disdain for rigid determinism and appreciation for order's mystery forge common ground, despite Meyer's evidence-driven theism and Ali's pragmatic agnosticism.

In sum, Ali's Earthly Order explores order's spectrum from cosmos to human constructs, aiming for sustainability, while Meyer's Return of the God Hypothesis infers a designing mind from life's complexity and cosmic fine-tuning. They converge on order's reality and agency's importance, diverging on its source—Ali with empirical humility, Meyer with theistic inference.

Secular left fascism in the UK: 74-year-old pro-life woman arrested

February 26, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Things are going very well for us in the United States in the new Trump administration. Pro-lifers are getting pardoned, government spending is being cut, the border is being secured. But what about in other countries that are ruled by the secular left? Are they like us, or are they different? I have a couple of stories in this post that will make you never want to set foot in the UK.

First story is new, and it's from Daily Signal (my favorite news web site):

> Police in Scotland arrested a 74-year-old grandmother for silently offering to speak to women outside an abortion facility, if they wished.
>
> Rose Docherty stood outside the abortion wing of Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Glasgow holding a sign that read, "Coercion is a crime, here to talk, only if you want." Two police officers insisted she desist, handcuffed the elderly woman, and charged her with violating the abortion facility's "buffer zone" barring free speech within a wide radius of any abortion facility.
>
> The pensioner's arrest last week is the first made under Scotland's Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Act. Those convicted face a fine of 10,000 pounds (approximately $12,600 U.S.) or an unlimited financial penalty if their expression is deemed serious.
>
> The member of Scottish Parliament who wrote her own nation's law, Gillian Mackay of the far-left Scottish Greens, denounced any and all peaceful pro-life advocacy outside abortion facilities as "utterly shameful and I am grateful to Police Scotland for acting so quickly."

Here's a photo of Gillian Mackay, so you know what secular left fascists look like:

And by the way, this bill was not passed by a narrow margin. It was passed 118 votes to 1. So that should tell you something about free speech in the UK.

More:

> Docherty's arrest mirrors an English city's charges last year's against Livia Tossici-Bolt, 63, who held a sign outside an abortion facility in Bournemouth, England. Her sign read, "Here to talk, if you want."
>
> […]"For several years now, I have been offering a helping hand to women who would like to consider other options to abortion, and pointing them to options where they can receive financial and practical support, if that's what they would like," said Tossici-Bolt. "There's nothing wrong with offering help. There's nothing wrong with two adults engaging in a consensual conversation on the street. I shouldn't be treated like a criminal just for this."

She would be fine in America, but not in the UK.

Here's another article from Fox News that I saw that is from August 9, 2024, but I never blogged on it, because I somehow missed it.

It says:

> London's Metropolitan Police chief warned that officials will not only be cracking down on British citizens for commentary on the riots in the U.K., but on American citizens as well.
>
> "We will throw the full force of the law at people. And whether you're in this country committing crimes on the streets or committing crimes from further afield online, we will come after you," Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark

> Rowley told Sky News.

So, the UK is not a very wealthy country. They have a health system that is bankrupt, and performing so poorly that the government actually pays hospitals to kill patients. So, it's very funny to listen to this man threatening American citizens with deportation.

It's not like the UK is doing a good job of enforcing the law against their many, many, many, many child sex-trafficking gangs. And that might be because certain people high up in the police are partakers in the child prostitution activities, and they want it covered up. Maybe they think that child sex-trafficking is OK for some cultures, and that it's wrong to criticize it. They don't arrest the child sex-traffickers very quickly in the UK. Complaints from the parents just get ignored and covered up by high-ranking policemen. So what do the high-ranking policemen focus on instead of child sex-trafficking? They're more likely to arrest people who complain about children being sex-trafficked. That's the big concern of police in the UK.

And remember, the UK does not want any inquiries about their child sex-trafficking:

> British lawmakers voted against launching a national inquiry into the U.K. grooming gang scandal on Wednesday, after objections to the way the vote was being put forward – and amid international scrutiny of the crisis spearheaded by Elon Musk.
>
> The House of Commons voted on an amendment to hold a statutory inquiry into the scandal – where it was revealed that men of predominantly Pakistani heritage had sexually abused girls for years in towns in northern England.

Again, not a country that Americans need to be visiting. Not a safe country. Not a country that respects basic human rights. Get out of there if you can, and never travel there. They are in decline.

Economist Thomas Sowell explains the result of legislating price controls

February 27, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite economist is Thomas Sowell, who is famous for making the findings of academic economists accessible to ordinary people. I always joke to my friends that Thomas Sowell books are like Lay's potato chips – you can't read just one. Well, if you've read Dr. Sowell's flagship book "Basic Economics", you know that the early chapters are about how prices work in the economy.

So, I thought I would link to a VERY good article on price controls by Thomas Sowell. If you've never read him, I think you'll really enjoy how me makes sense of the world for you. Learning how the world works is fun – now you see how to make good decisions.

This is "An Ancient Fallacy: Price Controls" from Capitalism Magazine.

He writes:

> Those old enough to remember the gasoline crisis of 1979 may recall sitting in long lines of cars at filling stations, waiting — sometimes for hours — to reach the pump. This was one of the most common consequences of price control throughout history — a shortage. Yet how many Americans ever made the connection between the price controls of the 1970s and the gasoline shortages of the 1970s? How many have noticed that they haven't been waiting in gasoline lines since Ronald Reagan got rid of the price controls on oil?
>
> Why do price controls cause shortages? There are basically two reasons: supply and demand.
>
> People will not supply as much at a lower price as they will at a higher price. Some oil wells that will repay their costs and earn a profit when the price of oil is $25 a barrel will not cover their costs when the price is $15 a barrel. Some people who will rent out a bungalow in their backyard when rents are high will not bother when rents are low. Some farmers will give up farming when food prices are kept below the point where they can earn a living.
>
> On the demand side, people will demand more when the price is kept artificially low by price controls. Before rent control laws were passed in Sweden, less than one-fourth of unmarried adults there had their own separate housing units, but afterwards more than half did. People buy more of anything that is cheaper. With more being demanded and less being supplied, shortages are inevitable, whether with housing, food, medical care or whatever.
>
> It is not just the quantity supplied that declines under price controls. Quality also declines.
>
> When there are more people trying to rent apartments than there are apartments for rent, landlords no longer have to maintain the appearance of their

> buildings. They do not need to pay for painting, repairs or maintenance as often as they did when there was no housing shortage and they needed to attract tenants.
>
> Sometimes quality deterioration takes the form of waiting — not just cars waiting in line at filling stations, but also sick people remaining on waiting lists for months to get surgery or other medical treatment they need. Cheap medical care is one of the most expensive things there is.

So, if you force producers to charge less for what they are making, you might see a shortage, you might see a decline in quality, or you might see waiting lists.

Now, one of the examples that Sowell uses in his books is the example of rent control. This is when the government responds to people complaining that "the rent is too damn high" by forcing landlords to charge less. If you're paying attention, then you can predict what will happen next. There will be a shortage of housing, because people with capital invest it in other places, rather than building and renting out places to live. Why? Because there is no money to be made by investing in renting properties when the government is pushing prices down.

So, let's look at a reverse case, where price controls are removed. What would you expect to see when a country that has had rent control laws for a long time repeals it?

Well, Argentina just elected a new free market capitalist government, and they repealed their rent control laws.

Newsweek reports on what happened next:

> Argentina's recent repeal of rent control by libertarian President Javier Milei has led to a surge in housing supply, with the freedom to negotiate contracts, previously restricted, directly causing a drop in rental prices.
>
> Milei, a self-described "anarcho-capitalist" known for his free-market approach, repealed the 2020 Rental Law, enacted by former leftist President Alberto Fernández, which had imposed restrictions on landlords and led to a significant decline in rental availability.
>
> […]For many locals, finding a new apartment had become "mission impossible." But after the repeal, Buenos Aires saw a doubling of available rental units, and rental prices have stabilized. Under the new rules, landlords and tenants have more freedom to agree on lease terms. If the duration isn't specified, it defaults to two years.
>
> "We've seen a significant increase in rental apartments, and in some cases, we had to lower prices in pesos because of fewer viewings," Soledad Balayan, head of the real-estate agency Maure Inmobiliaria, told Argentine newspaper La Nación.
>
> Since Millei's repeal of rent control laws took effect on December 29, the supply of rental housing in Buenos Aires has jumped by 195.23%, according to the

> Statistical Observatory of the Real Estate Market of the Real Estate College (CI).

If you guessed that repealing price controls on rental properties would reverse the shortage and cause an abundance of high quality properties, then you guessed right. This is how the world works! Naturally, as supply increases, consumers have a lot more choice, and they get the benefit of better quality at a lower price, because of increased competition among suppliers of rental properties.

The article notes that Joe Biden has proposed rent control at the federal level, which is exactly the kind of policy that you would epect his successor, Kamala Harris, to push if she is elected President. If you know someone who rents, maybe you should tell them about the consequences of rent control laws?

Billionaire sex-trafficker Jeffrey Epstein donated money to Democrats

February 28, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm expecting Jeffrey Epstein news today, so I thought I would help everyone remember who Epstein was. Epstein was a billionaire who donated to the Democrats. He had connections to Bill Clinton and other Democrat elites. And in this post, I want to look at those donations and ask why Epstein was so interested in donating to the Democrat party.

Here is an old article from Fox News about the Epstein flight logs:

> Former President Bill Clinton was a much more frequent flyer on a registered sex offender's infamous jet than previously reported, with flight logs showing the former president taking at least 26 trips aboard the "Lolita Express" — even apparently ditching his Secret Service detail for at least five of the flights, according to records obtained by FoxNews.com.
>
> Clinton's presence aboard Jeffrey Epstein's Boeing 727 on 11 occasions has been reported, but flight logs show the number is more than double that, and trips between 2001 and 2003 included extended junkets around the world with Epstein and fellow passengers identified on manifests by their initials or first names, including "Tatiana." The tricked-out jet earned its Nabakov-inspired nickname because it was reportedly outfitted with a bed where passengers had group sex with young girls.
>
> […][Epstein] allegedly had a team of traffickers who procured girls as young as 12 to service his friends on "Orgy Island," an estate on Epstein's 72-acre island, called Little St. James, in the U.S. Virgin Islands.
>
> […]Police in Palm Beach, Fla., launched a year-long investigation in 2005 into Epstein after parents of a 14-year-old girl said their daughter was sexually abused by him. Police interviewed dozens of witnesses, confiscated his trash, performed surveillance and searched his Palm Beach mansion, ultimately identifying 20 girls between the ages of 14 and 17 who they said were sexually abused by Epstein.
>
> […]One victim, in sworn deposition testimony, said Epstein began sexually assaulting her when she was 13 years old and molested her on more than 50 occasions over the next three years.

So the most important point to make is that Jeffrey Epstein made many, many donations to Democrat politicians and the Democrat party.

OpenSecrets.org, which tracks political donations, explains:

> From 1989 up until 2003, Epstein donated more than $139,000 to Democratic

> federal candidates and committees and over $18,000 to Republican candidates and groups, according to data from OpenSecrets. Notable recipients include former President Bill Clinton and former Senator Bob Packwood, a Republican. In 2003, a couple of years before a full-scale investigation into the allegations of sexual exploitation of underage girls, his political giving abruptly stopped.
>
> From 1999 to 2003, Epstein donated $77,000 to Democrats John Kerry, Richard Gephardt, Chris Dodd, and other high-profile politicians and committees. Dodd received a $1,000 contribution from Epstein during his reelection campaign in 2003, however, the contribution was returned in 2006.
>
> After a hiatus in political giving during the investigations into his sexual abuse, Epstein gave to independent Connecticut House candidate Gwendolyn Beck in 2014 and U.S. Virgin Islands Democratic Delegate Stacey Plaskett both in 2016 and the most recent midterms (Epstein owns a private island in the Virgin Islands called Little Saint James).
>
> Most recently, Epstein contributed $10,000 to the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in October 2018.

Keep in mind that this isn't the first Democrat mega-donor who has been accused of behavior like this. Remember Harvey Weinstein? But why are these perverts donating to the Democrat party?

The key to the Democrat party

My view of the Democrat party is that their top priority is abortion. And this support for abortion is the key to all their other policies.

Think about what would have happened if Jeffrey Epstein or Bill Clinton got a young underage prostitute pregnant. They would want to escape the judgement of those nasty Christians, and they would want to avoid having their fun-seeking impacted by the need to provide for the child. And that's why the Democrats support abortion. Their number one goal is to destroy anything that interferes with their desire to have recreational sex.

Now you might say, well, their plan won't work, because we have the institution of marriage, so that girls are being raised by their biological fathers. And the churches will teach women to be chaste, and to prioritize marriage and children. But the Democrats have a plan to get the fathers out of the homes, and reduce the influence of Christianity on young women.

First, they push feminism, which results in women denouncing chastity, marriage and traditional male roles as "sexist". So, instead of women choosing men who are traditional, they choose what their eyes can see: tall hot bad boys. Second, they destroy marriage with no-fault divorce, single mother welfare, denial of father visittation, biased family courts, etc. This gets the biological fathers out of the homes, and away from the daughters, so that the Democrat elites can farm plenty of underage women for their sex-trafficking. Third, they normalize premarital sex in the schools, by having abortion

providers come in to teach girls all about “sex education”. Fourth, they make contraceptives and abortions taxpayer-funded healthcare, so that premarital sex is free. Fifth, they have Hollywood glamorize premarital sex and portray marriage as “boring”.

Their policies allow them to farm fatherless women who can then be raped, assaulted and abused by powerful men. And then there is a cultural push to shame people with traditional values, so that no one can judge them as morally wrong. In Christianity, each woman is made in the image of God, to know God in a personal relationship. It’s the job of Christian men to treat women as sisters, helping them to grow stronger, wiser and holier. But that’s not the view of women held by secular leftist men. They believe that the strong have a right to exploit the weak, in order to satisfy their selfish desires. For them, it’s survival of the fittest, and life ends at the grave – so have all the fun you can, and who cares who gets hurt?

And the powerful men have female allies. Epstein had women helping him to find his victims. And remember how Hillary Clinton defended her husband from credible accusations of rape and sexual assault, and the feminist left nearly elected her President. Some women willingly assist Democrat men, because they want the help of these powerful men in achieving their own ambitions.

That’s the Democrat party in a nutshell. All the other policies that sound so nice, (e.g. – amnesty for millions of low-skilled illegal immigrants, raising the minimum wage, etc.), are just vote-buying schemes to get what they really want: sex-trafficking of underage girls, with abortion on demand (including infanticide) to get them out of trouble if there are any “issues”. Issues = unborn babies.

Knight and Rose Show #59: Natasha Crain: When Culture Hates You

March 1, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 59 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Natasha Crain about her new book “When Culture Hates You”. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Natasha Crain to discuss her new book “When Culture Hates You”. We discuss the shift from a culturally accepted faith to one increasingly at odds with societal norms. What is driving the church’s tendency to conform to cultural pressures? We explore how Christians can respond to societal hostility with grace and conviction.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show (with timestamps) provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 59:

Speaker biographies

Natasha Crain is a speaker, blogger, podcaster, and author of five books who equips Christians to think more clearly about holding to a biblical worldview in an increasingly challenging secular culture. Her podcast is “The Natasha Crain Podcast”. Her articles have been featured in outlets such as Focus on the Family Magazine and the Christian Research Journal. She has been featured on radio and TV shows across the U.S. and Canada. She holds the MBA in Marketing and Statistics from UCLA, a BA in Economics from USC, and a certificate in Christian apologetics from Biola University. She was a marketing executive and adjunct marketing professor before transitioning to the ministry of writing and speaking.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a

conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Two black economists explain how to end poverty in America

March 2, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These days, everyone seems to think that being good to the poor means looking around to see what people are saying is good to the poor, then loudly shouting your agreement with it. People want to look good to others more than they want to help others. Besides, looking good by loud virtue signaling is free. If we really wanted to help people, though, we should tell them to do what will work.

So let's talk about poverty in America, with help from famous black economist Walter Williams.

First, he says real poverty is not common in America:

> There is no material poverty in the U.S. Here are a few facts about people whom the Census Bureau labels as poor. Dr. Robert Rector and Rachel Sheffield, in their study "Understanding Poverty in the United States: Surprising Facts About America's Poor", report that 80 percent of poor households have air conditioning; nearly three-quarters have a car or truck, and 31 percent have two or more. Two-thirds have cable or satellite TV. Half have one or more computers. Forty-two percent own their homes. Poor Americans have more living space than the typical non-poor person in Sweden, France or the U.K. What we have in our nation are dependency and poverty of the spirit, with people making unwise choices and leading pathological lives aided and abetted by the welfare state.

Second, the "poverty" is not caused by racism, but by poor choices:

> The Census Bureau pegs the poverty rate among blacks at 35 percent and among whites at 13 percent. The illegitimacy rate among blacks is 72 percent, and among whites it's 30 percent. A statistic that one doesn't hear much about is that the poverty rate among black married families has been in the single digits for more than two decades, currently at 8 percent. For married white families, it's 5 percent. Now the politically incorrect questions: Whose fault is it to have children without the benefit of marriage and risk a life of dependency? Do people have free will, or are they governed by instincts?
>
> There may be some pinhead sociologists who blame the weak black family structure on racial discrimination. But why was the black illegitimacy rate only 14 percent in 1940, and why, as Dr. Thomas Sowell reports, do we find that census data "going back a hundred years, when blacks were just one generation out of slavery … showed that a slightly higher percentage of black adults had married than white adults. This fact remained true in every census from 1890 to 1940"? Is anyone willing to advance the argument that the reason the illegitimacy rate among blacks was lower and marriage rates higher in earlier periods was there

> was less racial discrimination and greater opportunity?

Third, avoiding poverty is the result of good choices:

> No one can blame a person if he starts out in life poor, because how one starts out is not his fault.
>
> If he stays poor, he is to blame because it is his fault. Avoiding long-term poverty is not rocket science. First, graduate from high school. Second, get married before you have children, and stay married. Third, work at any kind of job, even one that starts out paying the minimum wage. And finally, avoid engaging in criminal behavior. It turns out that a married couple, each earning the minimum wage, would earn an annual combined income of $30,000. The Census Bureau poverty line for a family of two is $15,500, and for a family of four, it's $23,000. By the way, no adult who starts out earning the minimum wage does so for very long.

Fourth, what stops people from making good choices is big government:

> Since President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty, the nation has spent about $18 trillion at the federal, state and local levels of government on programs justified by the "need" to deal with some aspect of poverty. In a column of mine in 1995, I pointed out that at that time, the nation had spent $5.4 trillion on the War on Poverty, and with that princely sum, "you could purchase every U.S. factory, all manufacturing equipment, and every office building. With what's left over, one could buy every airline, trucking company and our commercial maritime fleet. If you're still in the shopping mood, you could also buy every television, radio and power company, plus every retail and wholesale store in the entire nation". Today's total of $18 trillion spent on poverty means you could purchase everything produced in our country each year and then some.

Regarding those last two points, here is another famous black economist, Thomas Sowell:

Economist Thomas Sowell blames welfare for killing the black family

To illustrate this point, here's a graph with some helpful data taken from the U. S. Census. In fact, there is a whole video featuring Thomas Sowell to go with this graph:

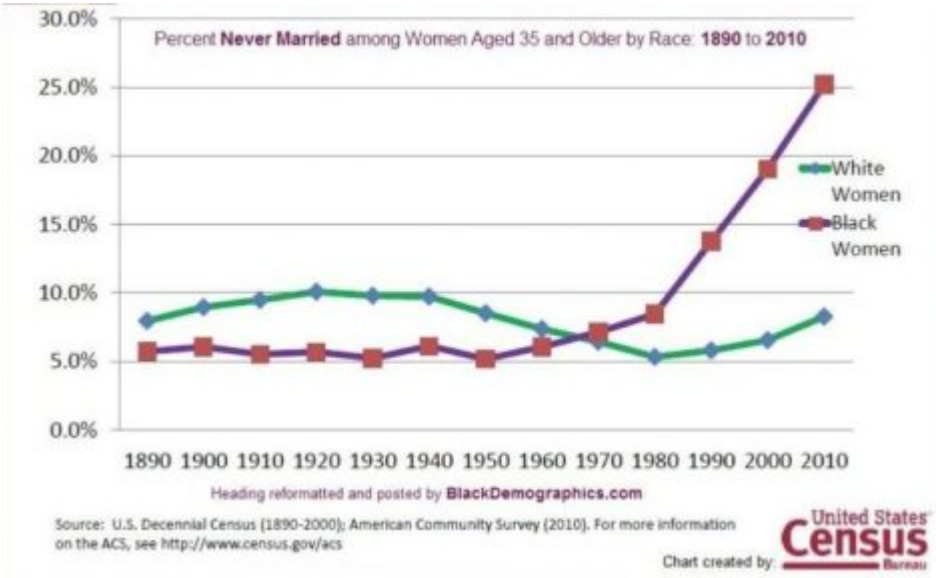

Black women were more likely to be married before welfare programs
And an article to go with it:

> If we wanted to be serious about evidence, we might compare where blacks stood a hundred years after the end of slavery with where they stood after 30 years of the liberal welfare state. In other words, we could compare hard evidence on "the legacy of slavery" with hard evidence on the legacy of liberals.
>
> Despite the grand myth that black economic progress began or accelerated with the passage of the civil rights laws and "war on poverty" programs of the 1960s, the cold fact is that the poverty rate among blacks fell from 87 percent in 1940 to 47 percent by 1960. This was before any of those programs began.
>
> Over the next 20 years, the poverty rate among blacks fell another 18 percentage points, compared to the 40-point drop in the previous 20 years. This was the continuation of a previous economic trend, at a slower rate of progress, not the economic grand deliverance proclaimed by liberals and self-serving black "leaders."
>
> Ending the Jim Crow laws was a landmark achievement. But, despite the great proliferation of black political and other "leaders" that resulted from the laws and policies of the 1960s, nothing comparable happened economically. And there were serious retrogressions socially.
>
> Nearly a hundred years of the supposed "legacy of slavery" found most black children being raised in two-parent families in 1960. But thirty years after the liberal welfare state found the great majority of black children being raised by a single parent.

The rest of the article points out how even crime rates among blacks were caused by the implementation of soft law enforcement policies by progressives. Just look at the big cities if you want to know what it is like for blacks to be ruled by Democrats. It sucks!

If everybody started to read more Thomas Sowell books, we would be much better off as a country! Only good things happen when people stop watching TV and listening to music and watching movies, and instead settle down in a chair with a Thomas Sowell book. I recommended a bunch of them in a previous post.

New study: Transgender surgeries linked to suicidal ideation, depression

March 3, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I love to debate controversial issues, so I gather every study that can help me win on my little blog. If you like to fight and win, you can come here and steal them all! Today, I have a new peer-reviewed study published in the Oxford Academic Journal of Sexual Medicine. I checked and they really are linked to Oxford University. So read on and we give you a new arrow for your quiver.

Here is the new study on the Oxford Academic web site.

And I found a new article about the study, from The Post Millennnial.

And they write:

> A study of over 107,000 patients with gender dysphoria over the age of 18 has concluded that those who undergo transgender surgeries, are at greater risk for mental health problems, including depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety, and others.
>
> The paper, published in the Oxford Academic Journal of Sexual Medicine, stated in conclusion that bottom and top surgeries are "associated with increased risk of mental health issues." The results section stated that "from 107 583 patients, matched cohorts demonstrated that those undergoing surgery were at significantly higher risk for depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and substance use disorders than those without surgery."
>
> It said of those who got surgery, "Our analysis reveals a significantly elevated risk of mental health disorders-including depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and substance use disorder-post-surgery among individuals with a prior diagnosis of gender dysphoria."
>
> Males and females who underwent surgery had a higher risk of depression, according to the study.

Now, whenever I get into these discussions, one of the first things that people say is that all of these negative consequences would just disappear if the culture were 100% affirming of LGBT. That is, it's only social disapproval that makes these bad consequences.

On the weekend, I posted a new episode of Knight and Rose Show, in which Rose and I spoke to famous Christian author Natasha Crain. At one point, we were talking about how best to defend the Bible's teachings on gender from the secular left view. I brought up a previous blog post, where I collected several studies that show that even in LGBT-affirming countries like Sweden and Denmark, these same behavioral issues are found.

Here's is what I wrote last time:

First, I want to note that in this NBC News article, the following countries are listed in the "15 Best Countries for LGBTQ Expats":

- Denmark
- Iceland
- Sweden

I say this, because these are the countries measured in the studies below.

So, here is one study from November 2019, published in the Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, entitled "Suicide among persons who entered same-sex and opposite-sex marriage in Denmark and Sweden, 1989–2016: a binational, register-based cohort study".

The abstract says:

> This large register-based study found higher suicide rates among individuals who entered an SSM, compared with those who entered an OSM. A lower suicide rate was noted for individuals in SSMs in recent years. More research is needed to identify the unique suicide risk and protective factors for sexual minority people.

SSM means same-sex "marriage" and OSM means opposite-sex marriage.

Here's another study from Sweden about same-sex "married" LGBT people, published May 2016, in the European Journal of Epidemiology. The title is the "Suicide in married couples in Sweden: Is the risk greater in same-sex couples?"

The abstract says:

> Even in a country with a comparatively tolerant climate regarding homosexuality such as Sweden, same-sex married individuals evidence a higher risk for suicide than other married individuals.

Here's another study from Sweden about LGBT individuals, published in March 2016 in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, entitled "Self-reported suicide ideation and attempts, and medical care for intentional self-harm in lesbians, gays and bisexuals in Sweden".

The abstract says:

> Positive histories of suicidal ideation, attempts and medical care for intentional self-harm, including higher levels of recurrence, are more prevalent among LGB individuals in contrast to heterosexuals. Lesbian/bisexual women evidence an earlier age of onset of treatment.

Here's another study from Sweden about people who underwent sex-reassignment surgery, published in February 2011, PLoS One, entitled "Long-Term Follow-Up of Transsexual Persons Undergoing Sex Reassignment Surgery: Cohort Study in Sweden".

The abstract says:

> Persons with transsexualism, after sex reassignment, have considerably higher risks for mortality, suicidal behaviour, and psychiatric morbidity than the general population.

Here's a study from Iceland about LGBT adolescents, published in May 2015, and entitled "Suicidal risk and sexual orientation in adolescence: A population-based study in Iceland".

The abstract says:

> The LGB girls were six times more likely to have had frequent suicide attempts, whilst the LGB boys were 17 times more likely to have attempted suicide that often.

So, there are some studies I found, and if anyone asks me about this, I'll explain that although I am not a social science researcher, the studies of people in LGBT-friendly countries show that there is a higher risk of suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide for LGBT individuals and couples than there is for heterosexual individuals and couples. And if they ask which countries, I'll say Sweden, Iceland and Denmark. I'll say that these are countries where same-sex "marriage" is legal.

The Biden-Harris regime used social media to overstate COVID vaccine effectiveness

March 4, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I had a funny conversation with my doctor at my last annual check-up. He said that the Biden-Harris regime's COVID views came from "evidence", and opposition to the Biden-Harris regime's views came from "social media". Well, we are finding out a lot of new things now that the Republicans are in charge. Let's find out below which side was spreading their views with social media.

Here's the article from Daily Signal:

> Based on extensive investigations and sworn testimony, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight exposed how the Biden-Harris administration used a $900 million public relations campaign to influence how Americans understood and responded to the administration's COVID-19 policies.
>
> The public relations campaign became a tool for flawed narratives. Despite the administration's promises to "follow the science," the evidence clearly showed that the administration prioritized managing people's perceptions over public transparency.

Big Tech social media and search engines were involved:

> The October 2024 subcommittee report also unveiled a textbook example of how federal officials used taxpayer dollars to engage platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Google to advance their policy agenda. The report proved that these public officials relied upon selective data to shape public opinion that was not, in fact, supported by the existing scientific evidence.

The key point is the assertion that the COVD vaccine prevents a person from being infected by another person. The FDA was not convinced that it could prevent transmission:

> The administration pursued this aggressive PR campaign despite the Food and Drug Administration's own determination on COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness. When the FDA issued an emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine on Dec. 11, 2020, it explicitly stated that it could not affirm that the vaccine could prevent COVID-19 transmission: "At this time, data are not available to make a determination about how long the vaccine will provide protection, nor is there evidence that the vaccine prevents transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from person to person."
>
> The FDA repeated this message in issuing its emergency use authorizations for the Moderna vaccine on Dec. 18, 2020, and the Janssen vaccine on Feb. 27, 2021.

This information should have been given to people, but what we actually heard from the Biden-Harris was something else. But that's not the approach that the Biden-Harris regime took.

Instead, they said this:

> Nonetheless, in March 2021, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky declared that vaccinated persons "do not carry" the virus. In September 2021, falsely insisting that the pandemic was a "pandemic of the unvaccinated," President Joe Biden announced a series of unprecedented federal vaccine mandates that would have affected an estimated 100 million Americans.
>
> Remarkably, in the teeth of mounting evidence, including the personal experiences of millions of Americans, the administration's continuous messaging overstated vaccine effectiveness. It was not until January 2022 that the United States Supreme Court halted most of the mandates.

And they spread this message of "overstating vaccine effectiveness" on social media, which was very convincing to many people who formed their opinions from social media, and not from evidence:

> Big Tech actively censored views critical of administration policy from private citizens and even other public officials. This became clear when, on July 4, 2023, in Missouri v. Biden, a federal court held that the Biden administration colluded with and coerced social media platforms to censor dissenting viewpoints on COVID-19—"a massive attack" in an apparent violation of the First Amendment.
>
> This was later confirmed when, on Aug. 26, 2024, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg wrote a letter to Congress in which he stated: "In 2021, senior officials from the Biden administration, including the White House, repeatedly pressured our teams for months to censor certain COVID-19 content, including humor and satire, and expressed a lot of frustration when we didn't agree."

I think there is a good lesson here about whether we should form our views based on what we see in the culture. It's possible for powerful people to harness mainstream news media, social media, Big Tech search engines, etc. and give us claims that are not supported by scientific evidence. The problem with the government doing it is that they do it with our money. They don't have any money of their own. And remember, secular leftists don't have any rational grounding for human rights in their accidental universe. So don't expect them to allow free speech that is critical of their views.

What happens when we die? Is there a resurrection? Is there a Heaven and a Hell?

March 5, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the questions that everyone should ask themselves is "what happens to me when I die?" Well, I'm an evangelical Protestant Christian, and I think that view of the world is correct according to logic and evidence. Well, I found an article on this that provides the philosophical theology perspective, from Dr. William Lane Craig. Let's see what he thinks about it.

He writes:

> The first and most fundamental truth that we must hold on to is that *the biblical hope of immortality is physical, bodily resurrection*. I repeat: The biblical hope for immortality is physical, bodily resurrection. The biblical hope is *not* that the soul will someday be separated from the body and fly off to heaven and be forever with God in heaven in this disembodied existence. That's actually a very Greek understanding of the afterlife, from the Greek philosophers like Plato, and it's very different from the Jewish-Hebrew way of thinking of the afterlife. For Jews and for the early Christians alike, the hope of immortality was not the immortality of the soul alone but rather the resurrection of the body. This physical body will be raised from the dead and transformed to immortal life.

He cites 1 Cor 15:20 and Phil 3:20-21 as support.

And do we get our resurrection bodies right away?

> Now that raises the next question: *When* do we receive our resurrection bodies? When do we get our resurrection body? Is it immediately upon death? When we die, do we immediately receive our resurrection body? Well, the answer to that is, no. That idea fails to take seriously the physical nature of the resurrection. The resurrection body is not some different body. It is *this* body transformed into a glorious, immortal, Spirit-filled, incorruptible form. So if we received our resurrection body immediately upon death, the graves of all the Christians would be empty! There would be no corpses left in the tombs because our resurrection bodies are the transformation of this earthly body. Therefore, the resurrection doesn't take place immediately upon death. Rather the Scriptures are fairly clear that this takes place at the second coming of Christ, when Christ returns to earth.

He cites 1 Cor 15:21-23, 51-52 for support, as well as 1 Thes 4:13-17.

And what about the time in between death and the second coming of Christ? After all, in Luke 23:39-43, Jesus tells the dying thief who believes in him that he'll be with Jesus in Paradise that very day:

[39] *One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah?*

Save yourself and us!”

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence?

41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

43 Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Dr. Craig says:

> [T]he Bible indicates is that the soul does survive the death of the body. Human death does not mean extinction. Human death is simply the separation of the soul from the body. While the body dies biologically and decays away, the soul continues to exist and continues to live in a disembodied state. In between your death and your resurrection you will exist as a disembodied soul, a soul without a body, in a conscious state.

And he cites Phil 1:21-24, where it talks about how life after death, but before the resurrection, is an improvement, because he will be with Christ, which is “far better”. Those who don’t accept Jesus as Lord and Savior will also have a life after death, but apart from Christ. And they’ll also have a resurrection, but not to eternal life with Christ:

> In John 5 there’s a very interesting passage where Jesus speaks about the resurrection, and He says that there will be a resurrection, not only of the righteous dead, but even also of the unrighteous dead. John 5:28-29. Look at this saying by Jesus: “Do not marvel at this. For the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.” Jesus envisions that all people will be raised from the dead. Those who are believers, the righteous dead, will be raised to the resurrection of life; but the unrighteous dead, those who have rejected God’s grace and His love, will be raised to the resurrection of condemnation.

Dr. Craig also talks about the story of Lazarus, where the rich man, who is not saved, is in Hades, which is the Greek word for the Hebrew word “Sheol”, which you may recognize from the Psalms.

Dr. Craig writes:

> When people die, the righteous go to be with Christ, where they will await their resurrection from the dead. The damned go to Hades, where they are in a disembodied state where they await their resurrection to final judgment. Only then are people ushered in to their *final* state, which is heaven or hell.

I cannot wait until I get my resurrection body. I have a very good idea of what I’d like it to be, too. I think about the resurrection a lot, and really look forward to it. I had a difficult

life in many ways. There are things that have not been resolved. But my hope is that in the end, I will share in his vindication, being clothed in a righteousness that I did not earn myself.

For the first time, young men are more religious than young women

March 6, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed an article in the Financial Times about a growing divide between young women and young men. Young women are increasingly leftist, and young men are increasingly conservative. Surveys of young men and young women have found that young men are more conservative on abortion and LGBT than young women. And now young men are more religious than young women.

Now, I want to be clear in this post that I am not criticizing all women. I am criticizing the majority of YOUNG WOMEN. Older women don't usually have these problems, especially married older women.

First, let's take a look at the previous article, from the far-left UK Independent:

> An analysis of survey data from across the developing world had found that "a new global gender divide" is emerging. The analysis, conducted by the Financial Times' John Burn-Murdoch, showed that the developed world's young women have rapidly become more liberal. Young men, however, have either become more conservative (as in the US) or been much slower to become more progressive (as in the UK). Gen Z, Burn-Murdoch concluded, is "two generations, not one."
>
> […]Quoting similar figures to those in the FT, and noting that political views have become more tightly bound to personal identity, a Washington Post editorial warned that members of Gen Z will struggle to pair off romantically.

Young men, statistically speaking, are more likely to side with the weak against the strong. Since abortion harms unborn children, and divorce and same-sex marriage harm born children, men typically oppose these behaviors. But statistically speaking, young women more often side with the selfish adults against the children.

Naturally there are exceptions, but the statistics show that young men are more conservative on moral issues than young women. And nowhere is this more apparent than in the issue of abortion, which is really just about whether selfish adults can resort to murdering their own children in order to escape the consequences of no-commitment sex.

In September 2024, Gallup explained how young men and young women view abortion:

> For this, Gallup reviewed 24 questions from its trends archive that measure Americans' beliefs or positions on widely debated policy-related issues, and that Gallup has asked frequently enough to produce sufficient sample sizes of young men and women across the three periods… On five of these, the percentage of young women holding the liberal position has increased by more than 15 points.

> These have to do with the environment, abortion and gun laws.

> - Young women have become 18 points more likely to support **broad abortion rights**, saying abortion should be legal under any or most circumstances (rather than in only a few or no circumstances). Their preference for this position rose from 42% to 60% between 2008-2016 and 2017-2024.

The number for young men is much lower than 60% at only 48%!

So, what happens to young men when they take these traditional MALE positions on issues, and society disapproves of them? Well, they turn to God for vindication of their good moral views. If society won't approve of young men for protecting the unborn from abortion, and protecting children from divorce and same-sex marriage, then young men will have to find their vindication somewhere else. And that somewhere else is *God*.

Here's the latest from the far-left New York Times: (archived)

> For the first time in modern American history, young men are now more religious than their female peers. They attend services more often and are more likely to identify as religious.
>
> […]Among Generation Z Christians, this dynamic is playing out in a stark way: The men are staying in church, while the women are leaving at a remarkable clip.
>
> Church membership has been dropping in the United States for years. But within Gen Z, almost 40 percent of women now describe themselves as religiously unaffiliated, compared with 34 percent of men, according to a survey last year of more than 5,000 Americans by the Survey Center on American Life at the American Enterprise Institute.

To be accurate, I don't think that young women have been more religious than men. If you look at the kinds of books that young women tend to read, it's more about comfort and life enhancement. They are not looking to get their orders from God. They are looking to get their desires met by God. And you can see that coming out in the new trends of "manifesting" that is so popular with young women.

By contrast, young men are more likely to turn to apologetics, science, history and theology. Young women were only "spiritual", they were not looking to sacrifice themselves in order to serve God. You can see this by looking at what books young women and men read. Young women tend to read people like Rachel Hollis, Rachel Held Evans, and Sarah Young. Young men see religion as being about their duties to others. They read people like J. Warner Wallace, Frank Turek and Sean McDowell. They want to learn how to tell people the truth, and tell people right and wrong. They want to lead in moral and spiritual areas. They want to make the world a better place for the weakest people.

How did this happen? Well, we have had generation after generation of pietistic Christian

parents and pietistic Christian pastors who thought that it was the height of chivalry to only apply the Bible to young men, and never to young women. Young men need to be “challenged”, but never young women. People acted as if women had some sort of hotline to God through their emotions, and could never be judged for any of their questionable policy preferences and choices.

My question for you is this: do you think that these pietistic parents and pietistic pastors will finally stop asking the question “Where are all the good men?” and start asking a much better question “Where are all the good women?” Because I can tell you right now, conservative religious men are not going to be interested in dating or marrying these secular leftist young women.

Marriage is a huge risk for young men, in a world of no-fault divorce, biased divorce courts and feminized public schools. Good young men are not going to take those risks just to give secular leftist young women their “happily ever after” once they tire of “having fun” with hot bad boys, and want to settle down. And no amount of shaming and blaming is going to force good men to take those risks.

By the way, I’ve noticed that a lot of good young men are now seeking out friendships with more traditional older women. They are looking for sanity, and validation for their good moral and religious views. That’s not surprising. They’ll go where they are respected.

Bible study: Was the resurrection body of Jesus spiritual or physical?

March 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the leading naturalistic attempts to account for Jesus' death, empty tomb, post-mortem appearances, and the early proclamation of the resurrection is that the disciples had individual and group hallucinations. In this case, the New Testament authors would not have meant that the resurrected body of Jesus was physical. But is that what they recorded?

Here's a quotation from my friend Eric Chabot, from his blog Think Apologetics. He explains why Paul's use of the word "resurrection" to describe what the other witnesses saw means *bodily* resurrection.

He writes:

> The two words are used for resurrection in the New Testament "anastasis" (rising up) and "egersis" (waking up), both imply a physical body**.** Furthermore, the use of the word "opethe" (the Greek word for appeared) shows the Gospel writers did believe that Jesus appeared physically. "There you will see (opethe) him" (Matt. 28:7); "The Lord has risen and has appeared (opethe) to Simon" (Luke 24:24). When they used "opethe" here, it means that He appeared physically to them.

OK so all the words they used for resurrection imply a physical body.

But what about the word for body. Do they imply a physical body?

Yes:

> So when Paul gives his list of appearances in 1 Cor. 15, the issues becomes whether the appearance to him is the same as it was to the disciples. There is no doubt the post resurrection body of Jesus (after the ascension) had to be somewhat different than the body the disciples saw. Also, whenever the New Testament mentions the word body, in the context of referring to an individual human being, the Greek word "soma" always refers to a literal, physical body. Greek specialist Robert Gundry says "the consistent and exclusive use of soma for the physical body in anthropological contexts resists dematerialization of the resurrection, whether by idealism or by existentialism." [9] Furthermore, in N.T. Wright's The Resurrection of the Son of God shows that the Greek word for resurrection which is "anastasis" was used by ancient Jews, pagans, and Christians as bodily in nature.

What about the nature of Paul's appearance? Was that a hallucination, or seeing some objective reality? Did the people with Paul see or hear anything?

Eric Chabot writes this in another place:

> The Bible says, "they heard" the same voice Paul did " (Acts 9: 7). But they "did

> not see anyone ” (Acts 9: 7). Notice Paul was physically blinded by the brightness of the light. One way or the other, the experience involved something that was external to Paul. It wasn’t something that was the same thing as a vision that Paul talks about in 2 Cor. 12:1. Furthermore, the phrase “he let himself be seen’” (ōphthē , aorist passive,), is the word Paul uses in 1 Cor. 15:7 to describe of his own resurrection appearance as the other ones in the creed.

Paul didn’t get a bodily resurrection appearance, but he got an objective appearance that people nearby could see (as a bright light) and hear. His appearance, coming 5-8 years after the appearances to the disciples, should not be seen as overriding their appearances, which were appearances of the bodily resurrected Jesus.

If you want to read something a little more challenging, I found a paper from the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) from their journal, where it talks more about soma and anastasis. If you want a bit of a challenge, download the PDF and read it. It’s by Kirk R. MacGregor and the title is “1 Corinthians 15:3B–6A, 7 And The Bodily Resurrection Of Jesus”.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

March 8, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has ever done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates). If you've never seen Dr. Craig in a debate with a non-Christian, this one is probably the best introductory one out there. Dr. Craig is the foremost defender of Christian theism on the planet, and probably of all time.

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it! Normally, Dr. Craig debates at major universities in front of students and faculty.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.

3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

Why do Republicans want to shut down the Federal Department of Education?

March 9, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this article, I will start with an anecdote. After that, we'll see what kind of student performance we are getting for the taxpayer dollars we spend on education. Is the federal Department of Education doing a good job of producing high-performing students? And after that, we'll talk about what the Republicans can do to abolish the federal Department of Education.

Here's the funny anecdote, reported by Newsweek:

> Aleysha Ortiz, 19, alleges she cannot read or write yet says she graduated with honors from Hartford Public High School in 2024. She has since filed a lawsuit against the Hartford Board of Education and city officials, accusing them of negligence in failing to provide adequate special education services throughout her schooling, per reporting from Connecticut's News 8 WTNH.
>
> […]Ortiz told CNN she was promoted through school without acquiring fundamental literacy skills. In a May 2024 city council meeting, she testified that after 12 years in Hartford Public Schools, she was unable to read or write, despite being awarded an honors diploma.

She can't read or write, but she's now a university student at the University of Connecticut.

So, let's take a look at the federal Department of Education. Are they doing a good job of improving student test scores?

The Heritage Foundation has the answer:

> Nearly 45 years after its creation under former President Jimmy Carter, high school seniors' math and reading outcomes remain stagnant. Worse still, the academic achievement gap between the United States's poorest and wealthiest students, a gap of four grade levels, has not narrowed since the department's inception.
>
> These dismal results come at a staggering cost. Funding this vast federal agency, with its more than 4,000 employees, has cost parents and U.S. taxpayers billions of dollars. Since 1980, K-12 spending and college costs have doubled in real terms, while every additional dollar funneled through Washington has come at the expense of local schools, including public, charter, and private, that actually educate our children.
>
> As the American Enterprise Institute's Rick Hess recently pointed out, more than 1,000 Department of Education employees are paid more than $160,000 annually, with nearly 90 making upwards of $200,000—more than four times the

> average starting teacher salary.

The most common complaint from parents about federal control of education is not the inefficiency. It's the weaponization of government against parents – the same parents who pay the salaries of the education bureaucrats.

More:

> In just the past four years, the Biden administration has weaponized the federal government against parents and children in unprecedented ways. The FBI, under President Joe Biden's direction, created "threat tags" to monitor parents simply for exercising their First Amendment rights at school board meetings and speaking up about critical matters such as school safety, boys in female bathrooms and locker rooms, and sexualized content in classrooms.
>
> Meanwhile, the Department of Education rewrote Title IX rules to expand the definition of "sex" discrimination to include "gender identity" and then handed enforcement over to the Department of Agriculture, which threatened to withhold school meal funding from institutions that refused to embrace this radical ideology.

OK, excellent. We're spending a lot of money on these bureaucrats, and getting lousy results. That would be unacceptable in the competitive, consumer-focused private sector. But it's totally fine in a government monopoly that gives customers no opt-out.

Let's shut it down. How can we shut it down? This article from The Federalist explains how the process has already started.

> McMahon said that the review of the department was "long overdue," noting the over $1 trillion spent by taxpayers on a government agency that has overseen plummeting education outcomes for American students. She also noted massive student debt for obtaining degrees that are less and less valuable, anti-American indoctrination in schools, and teacher shortages due to bureaucratic "red tape."
>
> "Disruption leads to innovation and gets results. We must start thinking about our final mission at the department as an overhaul — a last chance to restore the culture of liberty and excellence that made American education great," she said. "Changing the status quo can be daunting. But every staff member of this Department should be enthusiastic about any change that will benefit students. "
>
> McMahon laid out three "convictions" that will guide the closure of the department: Parents should be "the primary decision makers in their children's education"; "taxpayer-funded education should refocus" on educational pillars like math, reading, science, and history as opposed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and gender ideology; and education beyond high school should revive its value by aligning degrees "with workforce needs."
>
> States, school systems, teachers, and families alike would benefit from being able to tailor education funds to their individual needs, as opposed to having

> objectives dictated by federal control, McMahon said.

By the way, a lot of states aren't waiting for relief from federal mismanagement of education. The Federalist reports on which states already have school choice:

> On Tuesday, Wyoming became the 15th state to enact universal school choice into law with Gov. Mark Gordon's signature on the Steamboat Legacy Scholarship Act.
>
> The Cowboy State joins a rapidly growing group of states that have passed laws giving all (or nearly all) families statewide choice concerning their children's kindergarten through twelfth-grade education. Those states are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, and West Virginia.
>
> The act grants families who choose to participate with an education savings account of $7,000 per student per year to allocate toward approved K-12 educational expenses. Education savings accounts with universal eligibility are the gold standard of school choice programs due to the flexibility they provide parents to select the best learning avenues for their children.

Do you live in a state without school choice? Why? Get out of there!

Who is the (temporary) Prime Minister of Canada?

March 10, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, Justin Trudeau, a former part-time drama teacher and snowboarding instructor, resigned as leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. He was the Prime Minister. The Liberal Party has selected a new leader, Mark Carney. Mark Carney has a record that goes back to the United Kingdom, which is a fascist secular left country that bans free speech and prosecutes peaceful pro-lifers.

Let's find out more about Carney, from this excellent article on Breitbart News:

The Justin Trudeau era is coming to a close in Canada, with the governing Liberal Party selecting former central banker Mark Carney as its new leader and eventual prime minister on Sunday.

Conservative leader reacts:

> Critics, such as Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre, have accused the former Goldman Sachs investment banker of being "sneaky" and of representing a doubling down of the failed economic and environmentalist Trudeau-era agendas.

Never ran a campaign, never elected to office:

> While never elected to public office, likely the first prime minister to have never been voted for at any level, Carney has been deeply involved in politics in Canada and internationally for nearly two decades. He was first installed as the head of the Bank of Canada during the 2008 financial crisis.

Anti-Brexit, pro-EU:

> Carney later became the first non-British person to be selected to lead the Bank of England in 2013. During his tenure as governor of the UK's central bank, Carney frequently faced criticism for spreading "project fear" warnings of a potential financial crisis due to the Brexit withdrawal from the European Union.

Fascist views of opposition to COVID lockdowns:

> During the Chinese coronavirus crisis, Carney served as an advisor to Boris Johnson's government in Britain and later to Justin Trudeau's government in Canada, both of which instituted some of the strictest lockdown restrictions in the Western world.
>
> Carney publicly branded the Canadian "Freedom Convoy" uprising against the draconian measures, including vaccine mandates, as representing "sedition" against the government in Ottawa and advocated for the government to go after those who funded the protest movement.
>
> "By now, anyone sending money to the convoy should be in no doubt: You are

> funding sedition. Foreign funders of an insurrection interfered in our domestic affairs from the start. Canadian authorities should take every step within the law to identify and thoroughly punish them. The involvement of foreign governments and any officials connected to them should be identified, exposed and addressed," he wrote in 2022.

You might remember that Canada froze the bank accounts of peaceful protestors, leading to a flight of capital and investment for their little third-world Banana Republic.

He's also an eco-socialist – using global warming alarmism to push for higher taxes, more spending, more regulations, and larger government:

> Carney has also been at the forefront of the international green agenda, having served as the United Nations Special Envoy for Climate Action and Finance from 2019 until January when he stepped down to run for the Liberal Party leadership.
>
> Additionally, Carney led the Net Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA), an initiative to advance climate policies throughout financial institutions throughout the West. The institution has recently suffered significant blows, as top American banks, including J.P. Morgan, withdrew from the scheme in the wake of the re-election of President Donald Trump, who has vowed to combat so-called Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) policies.

If he wins, I would expect some sort of Chinese social credit system, but along the lines of complying with green energy socialism. Expect the sort of economic contractions that we see in France and Germany, where you have leaders crowing about supporting Ukraine, as they purchase all their (dirty) energy from Russia, because they don't make any of their own. Carney is a huge supporter of carbon taxes, and will likely want Canadians to to pay more for "green" appliances, "green" vehicles and "green" homes. It's a convenient way to squeeze the last bit of self-sufficiency out of voters, so that they have to agree with the central government in order to be able to afford to live.

Right now, the Conservative Party candidate is in the lead, but Canada has about 66% secular leftist voters. Which means that any candidate from a secular left party is going to have a lot of votes from this majority. It's not a good country. Not a good place to live. Not even a good place to visit. And definitely not a good place to invest. They simply don't understand basic economics.

Should people with unwanted sexual desires be allowed to seek therapy?

March 11, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the things that happens when secular leftists get control of a country is that they make it illegal to criticize the beliefs of the government. For example, in some countries, you can't criticize global warming mythology. In other countries, you can't disagree with abortion rights. And in other countries, you can't disagree with LGBT lifestyles. Not even respectfully. Not even in private.

To give an example, Canada supports LGBT so much, that they've made it illegal for people to disagree with it.

Christian Post reported this:

> On Wednesday, Canada's House of Chambers unanimously passed Bill C-4, a bill that if — or when it passes in the Senate, will make conversion therapy an illegal offense punishable by up to five years in prison.
>
> The Canadian government believes the Bible is filled with harmful myths about homosexuality and transgenderism — therefore, it is necessary to strip freedom of expression and freedom of religion from Canadian Christians.
>
> When Bill C-4 becomes law, anyone who preaches what the Bible says about homosexuality and transgenderism could be sentenced to up to five years in prison.
>
> That includes pastors and Christian counselors who believe what the Bible says about homosexuality and transgenderism.
>
> Pastors and Biblical counselors who teach that homosexuality and transgenderism are unnatural and sinful thoughts and behaviors could be sentenced to prison. Christians who attempt to help homosexual and transgender people repent from their sins so they can have freedom in Christ might lose their freedom and be sentenced to prison.

The bill passed on December 9, 2021. This is why I keep telling you never to visit Canada. You don't have the same rights to free speech there, as you do here. It's a police state. During the freedom convoy protests against vaccine mandates, the RCMP was trampling old women using walkers with their horses. That's normal for Canada.

Look at this Bill C-4. That's where the secular left in America would like to go. They also want prison sentences of up to 5 years for Christians who disagree with them on LGBT issues. Even in a private conversation. Even if you do it respectfully. Even if you're just quoting the Bible. It doesn't matter to them – it's a criminal offense to be offensive to secular leftists.

So, how is the secular left doing in America?

Here's an article from The Federalist from this week:

> Kaley Chiles is a Christian counselor in Colorado. When the state passed a law forcing mental health professionals to advance radical gender ideology, she challenged it. Now, the Supreme Court has agreed to review the case — in what could bring a landmark ruling for free speech.
>
> Chiles challenged Colorado's law banning so-called "conversion therapy" in 2022, according to The Hill, saying it hindered her efforts to assist those with "same-sex attractions or gender identity confusion" who "prioritize their faith above their feelings." She "never promises that she can solve" these issues but works to help clients "accept the bodies that God has given them and find peace." Chiles sought an injunction, citing the law's violation of her First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

She lost her case at the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, but it's not over:

> The 10th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled against Chiles, but in November, her attorneys petitioned the Supreme Court to consider the case, according to SCOTUSblog.
>
> ADF said the Colorado law violates Chiles' freedom of speech by banning counselors from "having any conversation with clients under age 18 that 'attempts or purports to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity.'"
>
> "Significantly, the law only prohibits counseling conversations in one direction," reads the ADF release. "For example, it allows counseling conversations that aim to steer young people toward a gender identity different than their sex but prohibits conversations that aim to help them return to comfort with their sex when they desire that."

I think it's really important for Christians to understand that secular leftists are the ideological heirs of Nazis and Stalinists and other totalitarians. Atheists don't have any rational grounding for human dignity and human rights. They think the universe is an accident, and human beings are just machines made out of meat. Just another animal. And morality? They believe in survival of the fittest.

Today's secular leftists are great admirers of police states. They think it is wonderful when the centralized government uses threats, imprisonment, torture and even murder in order to force their ideologies onto citizens. Why think that our secular leftists are any different than the secular leftists of North Korea, or the Soviet Union? They believe the same things. The only difference is that here, they haven't won. Yet.

New study: concealed carriers better at stopping active shooters than police

March 12, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Many people think that policy disagreements are like clothing style disagreements: there's no right answer, it's all personal preferences. Lazy people love this view, because it allows them to not have to read anything. I try to read 1 or 2 books on every policy topic, and that's because I want to be able to persuade people to cote for the policies that I support. One of those areas is gun rights.

And there's a new study from the Crime Prevention Research Center about gun policy, and it was written up in The Federalist.

It says:

> In non-gun-free zones, where civilians are legally able to carry guns, concealed carry permit holders stopped 51.5 percent of active shootings, compared to 44.6 percent stopped by police, CPRC found in a deep dive into active shooter scenarios between 2014 and 2023.
>
> Not only do permit holders succeed in stopping active shooters at a higher rate, but law enforcement officers face significantly greater risks when intervening. Our research found police were nearly six times more likely to be killed and 17 percent more likely to be wounded than armed civilians.

The article has a lot more interesting findings, for example, of the 180 total instances where an armed civilian stopped an active shooting, only one permit holders accidentally shot a bystander. But in the 156 cases stopped by law enforcement, police accidentally shot the wrong person in four cases, killing fellow officers twice and civilians twice.

And:

> 27 police were shot and killed while trying to stop an active shooter, a 7.7 percent rate, which is nearly six times higher than the rate for permit holders.
>
> One hundred police were wounded, a 28.6 percent rate, compared to 24.4 percent for permit holders.

You might find this surprising, but in many of these big city police forces, they have a DEI appointee in charge, and all the hiring is governed by DEI. So, a lot of the time, it's just people like the Secret Service agent who hid behind Trump when he was being shot at, or the one who couldn't even re-holster her weapon without looking.

Anyway, let's head over to the Daily Signal, and hear the latest defensive gun usages from Amy Swearer, who busies herself with these sorts of things.

She writes:

- Jan. 4, North Charleston, South Carolina: When a man saw his neighbor dragging a

woman by her hair through the front yard of a nearby home, he called 911, then grabbed his handgun before successfully intervening to protect the woman without having to fire a shot. Police arrived and arrested the neighbor, who was “visibly intoxicated” and smelled of alcohol. He was charged with first-degree domestic violence.

- Jan. 9, Clarion, Pennsylvania: After a woman and her husband discovered a serial stalker had come to their home and parked in their driveway, one of the woman’s employees responded to their call for help and detained the stalker at gunpoint until police arrived. Police arrested the stalker, who they described as engaging in “an escalating pattern of concerning behavior” over the last two years. He’d been released on bail just 17 days earlier after a different stalking incident involving the same victims.
- Jan. 11, Brooklyn, New York: A concealed carry permit holder fatally shot a man who tried to rob him at knifepoint in a park. The robber allegedly put the victim in a chokehold and held a knife to his neck while demanding all of his money, but the permit holder drew his gun and shot his assailant. Police said the permit holder is unlikely to face criminal charges.
- Jan. 15, San Antonio, Texas: When an apartment complex manager and two maintenance workers confronted a suspicious man who’d been peering into residents’ vehicles, the man “became hostile” and physically assaulted them. A resident then tried to intervene, but the man pulled out a knife and a taser. The resident responded by drawing a handgun, causing the man to flee. The resident chased him in a “brief pursuit” before the man turned around and “postur[ed] like he was about to stab or attack the resident,” at which point the resident shot and wounded him.
- Jan. 26, Kansas City, Missouri: A knife-wielding man entered a convenience store, jumped over the counter, and tried to stab the manager. The manager, however, drew a gun and shot the attacker, wounding him. A bystander in the store was also armed and “stood guard” over several customers (including an 8-year-old) who barricaded themselves in a back room during the assault. The injured suspect was charged with first-degree assault and armed criminal action. The 8-year-old’s father, meanwhile, told reporters that he believed the armed intervention saved their lives.

I think it’s important for every American to be able to explain both the studies AND the examples of defensive gun usage by concealed carry permit holders to people who don’t understand why lab-abiding people should be allowed to own guns. It’s not enough to have your one vote, you have the duty to convince other people to vote for the right policies.

JP Morgan Chase changes policy for de-banking Christians and conservatives

March 13, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've written about JP Morgan Chase's far-left bias many times, going as far back as 2015. JP Morgan Chase along with Bank of America, Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, and Wells Fargo are the most radically leftist banks. Chase might be the worst of all. Whereas the others focus on giving money to left-wing causes, Chase actually forces their secular leftist views onto employees and customers.

Before we see the good news, here is something I blogged about WAY BACK in 2015:

> A document provided to Breitbart News shows the investment banking behemoth JP Morgan Chase has joined a long line of major corporations in putting pressure on employees to sign up for the cause of gay rights. And they have not-so-subtly let each employee know not signing up will be noted.
>
> Employees are being told "to help create an environment for open and honest dialogue." The document notes descriptors such as "wife" and "boyfriend" are frowned upon, and "partner" is preferred. Not referring to your wife as your wife "offers up the opportunity for more inclusive conversations."

Imagine me working for a company like that! As a Christian, and a conservative, I would never survive a month working for this corporation. Not even with an alias, because they are actively hunting down dissenters using loyalty tests. But JP Morgan Chase doesn't just target employees who dissent from secular leftist ideology. They are also known for de-banking Christians and conservatives.

Here's a report posted on the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) web site:

> JPMorgan Chase, America's largest bank, has proven to be one of the worst offenders. In 2022, JPMorgan Chase closed the bank account of the nonprofit, National Committee for Religious Freedom, founded by former U.S. Ambassador Sam Brownback. Chase refused to provide a clear explanation for why the account had been closed in the first place, and insisted that it would only consider re-opening the account if the nonprofit agreed to disclose confidential donor information and detailed information about its pollical activities. Over the course of the next year, Chase offered no fewer than five increasingly untenable and contradictory explanations for why it canceled the account—including a false claim from Chase's CEO, Jamie Dimon, at the annual shareholders meeting that NCRF's representatives had simply failed to "fill out all the forms."

And that's not all, there's more:

> Chase's payment processing subsidiary, WePay, has also denied service to religious and center-right nonprofits on multiple occasions. In 2021, WePay

> denied payment processing services to an organization called Defense of Liberty for an event featuring Donald Trump Jr. … That same year, WePay denied service to the Arkansas Family Council for being "high risk," presumably for their advocacy that focuses on family values.

There's more discrimination, but the important thing is that now you know how to receive the good news that came out on Wednesday, reported by Daily Wire: (archived)

> Luckily, some of the most influential names in both the conservative legal, financial, and government worlds stepped up to the plate. Pressure for increased transparency and commitments to ditch any policies that could lead to a client being debanked for political reasons has come from all directions, from legal giants like Alliance Defending Freedom to notable financial professionals to state financial officers and attorneys general. As that public pressure mounted, shareholder pressure has been growing from the inside for the past three years, spurred on by organizations like the firm I work for, Bowyer Research, with Chase investors like financial advisor David Bahnsen spending literal years urging the company to clarify its approach to debanking — and fix its spotty track record on political neutrality.
>
> And Chase listened.
>
> In 2023, JPMorgan made the decision to axe its "social risk" policy from its payment processing arm, no longer allowing vague terms like "intolerance" and "hate" to determine whether a customer was fit to continue doing business at Chase. But the biggest win so far came several days ago, when Chase agreed to a policy change explicitly protecting customers and employees from discrimination based on religious or political views.
>
> […]Shareholders like Bahnsen, and groups like ADF & Bowyer Research, have been engaging with Chase for years to get this change. Make no mistake: Chase's willingness to protect against future political/religious debanking is the result of real shareholders using real influence to create real change.

This is very good news for me. I have some money invested with JP Morgan, and I was worried about what might happen if they found out that I don't believe the same things they do, maybe from spying on my Chase account. I was already in good shape, because I live in a red state that opposes de-banking. But now I am really in good shape to leave the money there. So this is really good news for me personally. I hate moving things around!

By the way, I already switched out my Zelle and my credit card purchases out of Chase to smaller banks. Not willing to take any chances with big leftist banks that would label me bad names based on my donations and purchases.

J. Warner Wallace: I am not a Christian because it works for me

March 14, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Some of my favorite Christians are the ones that start out as atheists, and do very well at life, but just change direction because they investigate the evidence. One person who had a fabulous career in law enforcement switched sides because of the evidence: J. Warner Wallace. And in a must-read post from Cold-Case Christianity, he explains his motive.

Excerpt:

> Life on this side of my decision hasn't always been easy. It's been nearly seventeen years since I first trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. I still struggle to submit my prideful will to what God would call me to do. Christianity is not easy. It doesn't always "work" for me. There are times when I think it would be easier to do it the old way; easier to cut a corner or take a short cut. There are many times when doing the right thing means doing the most difficult thing possible. There are also times when it seems like non-Christians have it easier, or seem to be "winning". It's in times like these that I have to remind myself that I'm not a Christian because it serves my own selfish purposes. I'm not a Christian because it "works" for me. I had a life prior to Christianity that seemed to be working just fine, and my life as a Christian hasn't always been easy.
>
> I'm a Christian because it is true. I'm a Christian because I want to live in a way that reflects the truth. I'm a Christian because my high regard for the truth leaves me no alternative.

I think this is important. There are people who I know who claim to be Christian, but they are clearly believing that God is a mystical force who arranges everything in their lives in order to make them happy. They are not Christians because it's true, but because of things like comfort and community. But people ought to become Christians because they think it's true.

Truth doesn't necessarily make you happy, though. Truth can impose intellectual obligations and moral obligations on you. Seeing God as he really is doesn't help us to "win" at life, as the culture defines winning. But it does offer the opportunity for us to walk a similar path to the one Jesus walked. And that is very appealing for real Christians.

The Bible doesn't promise that people who become Christians will be happier. Actually, it promises that Christians will suffer for doing the right things. Their autonomy will suffer, as they sacrifice their own interests and happiness in order to make God happy, by serving his interests.

Christianity isn't something you add on to your before-God life in order to achieve your before-God goals. When you become a Christian, you get a new set of goals, based on

God’s character and his design for you. And although you might be very successful in the world as part of serving God, there is no guarantee of that. Christianity is not life enhancement. I do think that Christians do well at not hurting themselves though, but because they eliminate selfish desires, not because God gives them stuff.

By the way, if you’re looking for a great speaker to invite to your university campus, J. Warner Wallace is the best, then Frank Turek is my number two choice. Wallace has the homicide detective background, and Turek is a former naval aviator. Two tough guys who are tough-minded about the Christian faith.

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

March 15, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's a debate with a well-qualified atheist and Dr. William Lane Craig, the most effective defender of Christianity operating today.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It’s not just that the settings are unlikely, it’s that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a “herd morality” that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this

evolved “herd morality”. However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God’s existence by pointing to the “evil” in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God’s existence.

Dr. Millican’s opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it

leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It's possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It's also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans

believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just

happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties

that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

What’s in an apologetics book? A review of “God’s Crime Scene” by J. Warner Wallace

March 16, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the best introductory books on the existence of God is Detective J. Warner Wallace’s “God’s Crime Scene”. The book provides a good overview of all of the areas that suggest an intelligent agent at work in the natural world. I found a good review of the book over at Luke Nix’s “Faithful Thinkers” blog.

The book begins with an introductory chapter explaining what’s in the book, then an opening statement explaining (without taking sides) how we can investigate whether or not there is a Creator and Designer of the universe. The next 8 chapters talk about 8 areas where we can investigate:

1. the origin of the universe
2. evidence for design in the universe
3. the origin of life
4. the presence of information in the cell
5. our awareness of consciousness
6. our experience of free will
7. objective human value and objective moral duties
8. the reality of evil in the world

I’ll just grab a couple of paragraphs on a couple of those points from Luke’s review:

> ### Chapter 1: In the Beginning
>
> Wallace’s first piece of evidence that appears to not have an explanation inside the universe is the universe’s beginning. He presents a diverse set of arguments for the beginning of the universe. These include the philosophical evidence of the impossibility of infinite regresses, theoretical evidence of mathematics and physics, observational evidence from astronomy, thermal evidence provided by the second law of thermodynamics, quantitative evidence in the abundance of helium, and evidence of the cosmic background radiation. All these used together provide powerful evidence of the beginning of the universe, and since everything that begins to exist, must have a cause, the universe must have had a cause outside itself too.
>
> ### Chapter 2: Tampering with the Evidence
>
> The foundational conditions of the universe that allow for life’s existence include the physical laws governing the atom, the matter of the universe, and the creation of chemicals. The next layer (regional) moves closer to home: our galaxy and solar system. The shape, position, and size of our galaxy make it habitable

> for life; while our sun's position, age, mass, and composition allow it to to host a planet fit for life. The third layer is the planet, itself. The earth's relationship to the sun, atmosphere, terrestrial nature, and moon all play a role in making a place that is fit for life.
>
> ### Chapter 5: Our Experience of Consciousness
>
> In naturalistic worldviews it is common to believe that the brain and the mind are the same thing. Wallace explains that the only way that two things are the same is if they share all their attributes with no differences. He describes six attributes of the brain that are not shared by the mind. All of these distinctions build a powerful case for the two being completely different. He concludes that the brain is physical while the mind is non-physical and that the mind's existence can only be explained "outside the room" of the universe being the product of another mind. He examines several attempts by naturalistic philosophers to explain the mind "inside the room" of the universe, but he shows how each of them fail to offer an adequate explanation.
>
> ### Chapter 6: Free Will or Full Wiring
>
> From a naturalistic perspective (one that holds there is no distinction between the mind and the brain) free will does not exist; it is an illusion much like the mind. If free will does actually exist, it points even more powerfully towards the existence of the mind, which must derive its origin from the supernatural, since it is supernatural itself. Wallace uses the concept of responsibility and the ability to choose other than we do to build his case for free will's actual existence. Without the ability to chose something other than what we do, we cannot be held responsible, thus no one would be worthy of punishment (in the case of wrong-doing) or praise (in the case of doing right).

A while back I finished reading "God's Crime Scene", and I found something interesting in Chapter 6, on free will on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others." Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: "It seems that not only

> do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it.”” The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here’s the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons’ belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you’re an atheist, then you are a physical object. And like every other physical object in the universe, your behavior is determined by genetic programming (if you’re alive) and external inputs. Material objects do not have the ability to make free choices, including moral choices.

Here’s prominent atheist Jerry Coyne’s editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can’t ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

(Source)

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality. Can you imagine trying to get into any sort of enterprise with someone who has this view of moral choices? A marriage, or a business arrangement, etc? It would be crazy to expect them to behave morally, when they don't even think that moral choices is possible. It just excuses all sorts of bad behavior, because no one is responsible for choosing to do the right thing.

Believers in materialism are going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

Choosing to do the right thing

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when doing the right thing sets you back. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me about their ability

to do the right thing when it was hard for them to do it. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality.
> My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

Mark D. Linville: does Darwinian evolution make morality rational?

March 17, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard an atheist tell you that naturalistic evolution is an answer to the moral argument? I have. And I found a good reply to this challenge in the book "Contending With Christianity's Critics". The chapter that responds to the challenge is authored by Dr. Mark D. Linville.

First, a bit about the author:

> Blog: The Tavern at the End of the World
> Current positions:
>
> - PhD Research Fellow
> - Tutoring Fellow in Philosophy
>
> Education:
>
> - PhD in Philosophy with a minor in South Asian Studies and a specialization in Philosophy of Religion, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
> - MA in Philosophy of Religion, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
> - MA in Theology, Cincinnati Christian Seminary
> - BA in Biblical Studies, Florida Christian College

Here is his thesis of the essay:

> Darwin's account of the origins of human morality is at once elegant, ingenious, and, I shall argue, woefully inadequate. In particular, that account, on its standard interpretation, does not explain morality, but, rather, explains it away . We learn from Darwin not how there could be objective moral facts, but how we could have come to believe—perhaps erroneously—that there are.
>
> Further, the naturalist, who does not believe that there is such a personal being as God, is in principle committed to Darwinism, including a Darwinian account of the basic contours of human moral psychology. I'll use the term evolutionary naturalism to refer to this combination of naturalism and Darwinism. And so the naturalist is saddled with a view that explains morality away. Whatever reason we have for believing in moral facts is also a reason for thinking naturalism is false. I conclude the essay with a brief account of a theistic conception of morality, and argue that the theist is in a better position to affirm the objectivity of morality.

And here's a sample to get your attention:

But even if we are assured that a “normal” person will be prompted by the social instincts and that those instincts are typically flanked and reinforced by a set of moral emotions, we still do not have a truly normative account of moral obligation. There is nothing in Darwin’s own account to indicate that the ensuing sense of guilt—a guilty feeling—is indicative of actual moral guilt resulting from the violation of an objective moral law. The revenge taken by one’s own conscience amounts to a sort of second-order propensity to feel a certain way given one’s past relation to conflicting first-order propensities (e.g., the father’s impulse to save his child versus his impulse to save himself). Unless we import normative considerations from some other source, it seems that, whether it is a first or second-order inclination,one’s being prompted by it is more readily understood as a descriptive feature of one’s own psychology than material for a normative assessment of one’s behavior or character. And, assuming that there is anything to this observation, an ascent into even higher levels of propensities (“I feel guilty for not having felt guilty for not being remorseful over not obeying my social instincts…”) introduces nothing of normative import. Suppose you encounter a man who neither feels the pull of social, paternal or familial instincts nor is in the least bit concerned over his apparent lack of conscience. What, from a strictly Darwinian perspective, can one say to him that is of any serious moral import? “You are not moved to action by the impulses that move most of us.” Right. So?

The problem afflicts contemporary construals of an evolutionary account of human morality. Consider Michael Shermer’s explanation for the evolution of a moral sense—the “science of good and evil.” He explains,

By a moral sense, I mean a moral feeling or emotion generated by actions. For example, positive emotions such as righteousness and pride are experienced as the psychological feeling of doing “good.” These moral emotions likely evolved out of behaviors that were reinforced as being good either for the individual or for the group.2

Shermer goes on to compare such moral emotions to other emotions and sensations that are universally experienced, such as hunger and the sexual urge. He then addresses the question of moral motivation.

In this evolutionary theory of morality, asking “Why should we be moral?” is like asking “Why should we be hungry?” or “Why should we be horny?” For that matter, we could ask, “Why should we be jealous?” or “Why should we fall in love?” The answer is that it is as much a part of human nature to be moral as it is to be hungry, horny, jealous, and in love.3

Thus, according to Shermer, given an evolutionary account, such a question is simply a non-starter. Moral motivation is a given as it is wired in as one of our basic drives. Of course, one might point out that Shermer’s “moral emotions” often do need encouragement in a way that, say, “horniness,” does not. More

> importantly, Shermer apparently fails to notice that if asking “Why should I be moral?” is like asking, “Why should I be horny?” then asserting, “You ought to be moral” is like asserting, “You ought to be horny.” As goes the interrogative, so goes the imperative. But if the latter seems out of place, then, on Shermer’s view, so is the former.
>
> One might thus observe that if morality is anything at all, it is irreducibly normative in nature. But the Darwinian account winds up reducing morality to descriptive features of human psychology. Like the libido, either the moral sense is present and active or it is not. If it is, then we might expect one to behave accordingly. If not, why, then, as a famous blues man once put it, “the boogie woogie just ain’t in me.” And so the resulting “morality” is that in name only.
>
> **In light of such considerations, it is tempting to conclude with C. S. Lewis that, if the naturalist remembered his philosophy out of school, he would recognize that any claim to the effect that “I ought” is on a par with “I itch,” in that it is nothing more than a descriptive piece of autobiography with no essential reference to any actual obligations.**

When it comes to morality, we are not interested in mere descriptions of behavior. We want to know about prescriptions of behavior, and whether why we should care about following those prescriptions. We are interested in what grounds our sense of moral obligation in reality. What underwrites our sense of moral obligation? If it is just rooted in feelings, then why should we obey our moral sense when obeying it goes against out self-interest? Feelings are subjective things, and doing the right thing in a real objective state of affairs requires more than just feelings. There has to be a real objective state of affairs that makes it rational for us to do the right thing, even when the right thing is against our own self-interest. That’s what morality is – objective moral obligations *overriding* subjective feelings. I wouldn’t trust someone to be moral if it were just based on their feelings.

Republicans push for election integrity to avoid repeat of 2020 election

March 18, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to the 2020 election, Democrats expanded mail-in voting and drop box vting in states like Nevada, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Virginia. The election results showed that there were 65.6 million mail-in ballots in 2020, up from 33.5 million in 2016. Drop-box voting surged, too. When the votes were counted, Democrats got 15.4 million (23.4%) more votes in 2020 compared to 2016.

To prevent this from happening again, Republicans are pushing hard to enhance election integrity.

Here's the story from Daily Caller:

> As President Donald Trump moves at breakneck speed to enact his agenda, the Republican National Committee is quietly racking up election integrity wins and gearing up for the next election cycle, the Daily Caller has learned.
>
> The RNC won three lengthy legal battles related to the prevention of election fraud in March across the key states of Arizona, Georgia and Washington.
>
> "These cases represent that a lot of times, things get started and resolved during an election year, but many times they don't, and the RNC doesn't walk away from them," an RNC official told the Caller. "We are here to see these things through."

Here is an interesting story about Arizona, which got a lot of press for failure to count their ballots in a timely way. It turns out that their Democrat Secretary of State (in charge of elections) wanted to weaken "safeguards against non-citizen voting":

> In March, Arizona's Court of Appeals announced that the secretary of state, Adrian Fontes, did not "substantially comply" with the state's proper rule making process when finalizing the 2023 Election Procedures Manual. The court's ruling was the result of a February 2024 lawsuit filed by the GOP, which argued that Fontes's Election Procedures Manual would weaken "safeguards against non-citizen voting," "unlawfully limited the ability to challenge early ballots," and "violate[d] numerous provisions of state law meant to protect election integrity," a party official shared with the Caller.

You might remember that this Democrat also lost a case where he tried to cover up which voters were improperly registered to vote.

More from the original Daily Caller article, this time about Georgia:

> Another significant win came in Georgia on March 7. The RNC intervened in a case in May 2024 after a local labor union sued trying to overturn the state's absentee ballot rules. The state's law sets the deadline to request absentee

> ballots at 11 days prior to election day, but the union wanted to extend the deadline.
>
> Nearly a year later, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia threw out the union's lawsuit, ultimately ruling in the RNC's favor.

Why would Democrats and their union allies want to make it easier for people to vote absentee?

Here's another one, from the state of Washington:

> In Washington, the state's Supreme Court unanimously ruled in the RNC's favor that the state's signature verification law does not violate the state's constitution. The RNC first got involved in that legal battle in 2023.

Why would Washington Democrats want to attack a signature verification law? What could their motive be?

Anyway, it's good to see that Republicans are not floating blindly through their 4 years in power this time. Now is the time for them to strengthen election integrity, so that our elections are protected from mail-in ballot fraud and drop-box ballot fraud.

By the way, if you live in states like Nevada, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Virginia, Georgia, Washington and Arizona, it might be a good idea for you to make sure that you vote for Republicans for Secretary of State. Because the Secretaries of State in many of these states are Democrats, and they certainly have an agenda.

Public school administrators force girls to undress in front of male student

March 19, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you missed the Matt Walsh shows from Monday and Tuesday, then you missed two really good shows. One of the stories that he covered on Tuesday is the inspiration for today's blog post. This story is from a public school in Deerfield, Illinois. Three female administrators at the school tried to force female students to get naked in front of a male student.

Here's the story from the Lake County Gazette.

> Deerfield School District 109 administrators forced teen girls at Shepard Middle School to change in front of a boy in the school locker room.
>
> That's according to parent testimony heard during public comment Thursday's District 109 School Board meeting.
>
> After receiving a complaint from girls in early February that a boy was in their locker room while they were changing for gym class, District 109 "Assistant Superintendent for Student Services" Joanna Ford, "Assistant Principal" Cathy Van Treese and "Director for Student Services" Ginger Logemann reprimanded the girls, then escorted them to the locker room and tried to force them to change in front of the boy.

That's all I needed for this blog post – to tell you that three administrators at the goverment-run school – who are all WOMEN – reprimanded the girls, and escorted them to the girl's locker room, and tried to force them to change (get naked) in front of a biological male. Now you see what the secular left means by "tolerant" and "open-minded".

I was able to do a quick check on the backgrounds of these three public school administrators, to see if they had any real (STEM) degrees or trades training, and private sector work experience.

Take the case of Joanna Ford, who seems to be the ring-leader:

> Joanna Ford holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Spanish from the University of Michigan, and a Master's degree in Special Education and Teaching from both DePaul University and Hunter College.

These are not degrees that require a person to solve real-world problems and produce results. These are not degrees that allow you to work for customers in the competitive private sector. These are not degrees that require you to understand anything about how the real world really works. They're just pieces of paper that show a willingness to be indoctrinated.

But the article also talked about the LGBT activists who attacked the mother of the

female student, for questioning the actions of the three white, female school administrators.

> Kerrick Goodman-Lucker of Northbrook, a female who dresses like a male and has grown a mustache and beard, said she had a male cross-dressing friend in college who “was pulled out of a woman’s bathroom and attacked by a police officer for using a bathroom (he) thought was safe.”
>
> Jesse Holzman of Chicago, a woman who describes herself as a “Queer, Non-binary, Consensually Non-monogamous, Intersectional Feminist, Anti-Racist, Activist, Educator and Scholar,” said that “ensuring access to (girls’) bathrooms and changing rooms is not controversial.”
>
> Charlee Friedman of Berwyn, a female who describes herself as a “transmasc nonbinary human” and also has a beard, used much of her three minutes at the podium to praise Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker for “protecting” the right of teen boys to watch teen girls undress.
>
> Tina Nelson of Deerfield, who informed the board she is a lesbian, said those opposed to letting boys watch teen girls undress in the locker room are “petty women” pushing “the white supremacist agenda of their ‘cis white’ husbands” and their “White God.”

That last one was interesting – she deliberately attacked the father’s leadership, and God, in her defense of transgenderism.

You can see several of these transgender activists in Matt Walsh’s show from Tuesday. I’ve got it cued up for you to 1:29, so watch until 23 minutes to get all of it:

So, now it’s time for me to comment.

We really need to give parents a choice to opt out of public schools. They shouldn’t be forced to pay for this. They should be able to keep their money and spend it on customer-focused private schools or homeschooling, instead. School administrators should have to compete for patents’ money in a free market. Compete against private schools and homeschooling.

What does scientific evidence tell us about the effectiveness of same-sex parenting?

March 20, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw that Katy Faust tweeted this article by Mark Regnerus, a sociologist who specializes in dating, marriage and parenting issues. In the article, Regnerus cites the conclusions from several recent research studies. Once we see what he has to say, I'll pull the data from a Canadian study that he didn't mention that also shows the effect of same-sex parenting on children.

The article appears in The Public Discourse:

> The story of "no differences" between same-sex and opposite-sex households with children hinges on a pair of repetitive themes in the published research: (1) hiding behind small and nonrepresentative samples, and (2) employing analytic strategies that all but guarantee motivated researchers can "explain away" those pesky baseline observable differences between children from same-sex and opposite-sex households.
>
> Baseline differences matter. What happens before control variables matters. Building statistical models to hide differences is called p-hacking, a common but problematic practice. A 2020 study of over 1.2 million children in the (gay-friendly) Netherlands, whose primary media message trumpeted how same-sex parents were better than opposite-sex parents, nevertheless revealed that 55 percent of children living with same-sex parents—the vast majority of which were female couples—experienced the separation of these parents, well above the 19 percent of children of opposite-sex parents who experienced the same. "Controlling" for such instability—in effect implying it doesn't matter—clears the way to proclaim the benefits of same-sex parents. It's a common statistical practice, but a deceptive one.
>
> Hence, alternative analyses are always a good idea. For example, a 2020 published reexamination of three nationally representative datasets from the United States and Canada revealed that the presence of children tended to stabilize opposite-sex couples but destabilize same-sex couples. Dissolution rates were 43 percent for same-sex couples, but only 8 percent for opposite-sex couples. Its authors agree, saying that "parental instability is an important factor through which parents' sexual orientation influences children's outcomes."

So, the problem of higher separation between partners in a lesbian relationship is well-known. Lesbian couples have the highest instability rates of any kind of couple, heterosexual or homosexual.

Family Research Council notes:

> In the past, same-sex couples who got a slice of the marriage pie immediately

> wanted their share of the divorce market. In South Africa, couples who were first to wed under a 2006 law also won the race to divorce court only a year later; two Toronto lesbians who wed in 2003 separated after only five days, petitioning successfully in 2004 for a judge to overturn Canadian law so they could divorce. Or take Los Angeles, where 2008's historic first same-sex couple divorced this summer although they had been together for 18 years! Lest we think these cases are exceptional, of the same-sex couples who did marry in Sweden, males were 35% more likely to divorce than heterosexual couples, while lesbians were up to 200% more likely.

Before same-sex marriage, the concept of marriage included the concepts of permanence and exclusivity. Natural marriage has the production and raising of children at the core. No-fault divorce damaged that core, saying that the happiness of the selfish adults was more important than the children. Then same-sex marriage damaged the core again, saying that producing children isn't even central to the concept of marriage. As the selfish adults pass more laws against natural marriage, the children suffer more from the decline of permanence and exclusivity.

I found another study related to same-sex parenting, this one out of Canada.

Here is the abstract of the study:

> Almost all studies of same-sex parenting have concluded there is "no difference" in a range of outcome measures for children who live in a household with same-sex parents compared to children living with married opposite-sex parents. Recently, some work based on the US census has suggested otherwise, but those studies have considerable drawbacks. Here, a 20% sample of the 2006 Canada census is used to identify self-reported children living with same-sex parents, and to examine the association of household type with children's high school graduation rates. This large random sample allows for control of parental marital status, distinguishes between gay and lesbian families, and is large enough to evaluate differences in gender between parents and children. Children living with gay and lesbian families in 2006 were about 65 % as likely to graduate compared to children living in opposite sex marriage families. Daughters of same-sex parents do considerably worse than sons.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington. A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more shorter times). That's not good for children either. Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships have much higher rates of domestic violence. That's not good for children either. So we have three reasons to think that normalizing gay relationships as "marriage" would not be good for children.

Stephen C. Meyer and Marcus Ross lecture on the Cambrian explosion

March 21, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

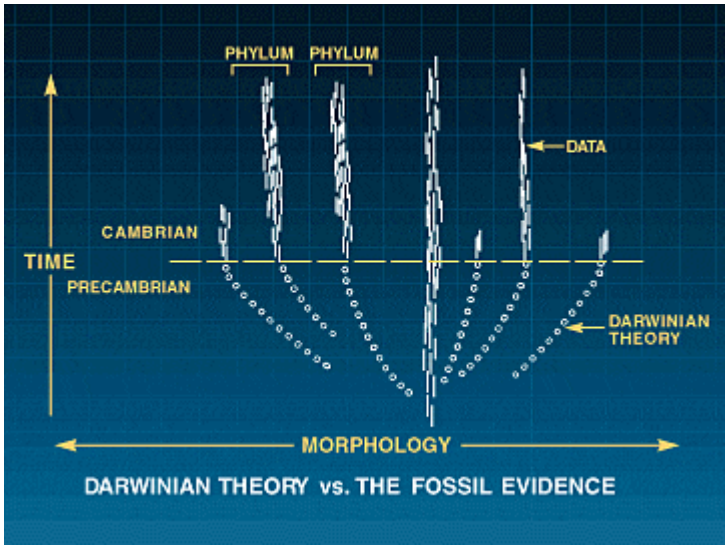

Cambrian Explosion

Access Research Network is a group that produces recordings of lectures and debates related to intelligent design. I noticed that on their Youtube channel they are releasing some of their older lectures and debates for FREE. So I decided to write a summary of one that I really like on the Cambrian explosion. This lecture features Dr. Stephen C. Meyer and Dr. Marcus Ross.

The lecture is about two hours. There are really nice slides with lots of illustrations to help you understand what the speakers are saying, even if you are not a scientist.

Here is a summary of the lecture from ARN:

> The Cambrian explosion is a term often heard in origins debates, but seldom completely understood by the non-specialist. This lecture by Meyer and Ross is one of the best overviews available on the topic and clearly presents in verbal and pictorial summary the latest fossil data (including the recent finds from Chengjiang China). This lecture is based on a paper recently published by Meyer, Ross, Nelson and Chien “The Cambrian Explosion: Biology’s Big Bang” in *Darwinism, Design and Public Education*(2003, Michigan State University Press). This 80-page article includes 127 references and the book includes two additional appendices with 63 references documenting the current state of knowledge on the Cambrian explosion data.
>
> The term *Cambrian explosion* describes the geologically sudden appearance of animals in the fossil record during the Cambrian period of geologic time. During this event, at least nineteen, and perhaps as many as thirty-five (of forty total) phyla made their first appearance on earth. Phyla constitute the highest biological categories in the animal kingdom, with each phylum exhibiting a

> unique architecture, blueprint, or structural body plan. The word *explosion* is used to communicate that fact that these life forms appear in an exceedingly narrow window of geologic time (no more than 5 million years). If the standard earth's history is represented as a 100 yard football field, the Cambrian explosion would represent a four inch section of that field.
>
> For a majority of earth's life forms to appear so abruptly is completely contrary to the predictions of Neo-Darwinian and Punctuated Equilibrium evolutionary theory, including:
>
> - the gradual emergence of biological complexity and the existence of numerous transitional forms leading to new phylum-level body plans;
> - small-scale morphological diversity preceding the emergence of large-scale morphological disparity; and
> - a steady increase in the morphological distance between organic forms over time and, consequently, an overall steady increase in the number of phyla over time (taking into account factors such as extinction).
>
> After reviewing how the evidence is completely contrary to evolutionary predictions, Meyer and Ross address three common objections: 1) the artifact hypothesis: Is the Cambrian explosion real?; 2) The Vendian Radiation (a late pre-Cambrian multicellular organism); and 3) the deep divergence hypothesis.
>
> Finally Meyer and Ross argue why design is a better scientific explanation for the Cambrian explosion. They argue that this is not an argument from ignorance, but rather the best explanation of the evidence from our knowledge base of the world. We find in the fossil record distinctive features or hallmarks of designed systems, including:
>
> - a quantum or discontinuous increase in specified complexity or information
> - a top-down pattern of scale diversity
> - the persistence of structural (or "morphological") disparities between separate organizational systems; and
> - the discrete or novel organizational body plans
>
> When we encounter objects that manifest any of these several features and we know how they arose, we invariably find that a purposeful agent or intelligent designer played a causal role in their origin.
>
> *Recorded April 24, 2004. Approximately 2 hours including audience Q&A.*

I learned a lot by watching great lectures from Access Research Network. Their YouTube channel is here. I recommend their origin of life lectures – I have watched the ones with Dean Kenyon and Charles Thaxton probably a dozen times *each*. Speaking as an engineer, you never get tired of seeing engineering principles applied to questions like the origin of life.

If you'd like to see Dr. Meyer defend his views in a debate with someone who reviewed his book about the Cambrian explosion, you can find that in this previous post.

Further study

The Cambrian explosion lecture above is a great intermediate-level lecture and will prepare you to be able to understand Dr. Meyer's new book "Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design". The Michigan State University book that Dr. Meyer mentions is called "Darwin, Design and Public Education". That book is one of the two good collections on intelligent design published by academic university presses, the other one being from Cambridge University Press, and titled "Debating Design: From Darwin to DNA". If you think this lecture is above your level of understanding, then be sure and check out the shorter and more up-to-date DVD "Darwin's Dilemma".

Knight and Rose Show #60: Doug Groothuis: The Moral Argument

March 22, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 60 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the moral argument with philosopher Dr. Douglas Groothuis. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Douglas Groothuis to discuss morality. Is morality objective or subjective? Can atheists rationally ground human rights and moral duties? Can atheists appeal to Darwinian evolution to get out of relativism? Is it rational for atheists to do the right thing when it goes against their self-interest? Does the Bible teach Christians not to judge?

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show (with timestamps) provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 60:

Speaker biographies

Dr. Douglas Groothuis is the Distinguished University Research Professor of Apologetics and Christian Worldview at the Cornerstone Theological Seminary. Dr. Groothuis holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy (University of Oregon). He is the author of 20 books, including a popular textbook, Christian Apologetics, 2nd ed. (IVP Academic, 2022). He also co-authored an introductory textbook on apologetics, The Knowledge of God in the World and in the Word (Zondervan-Academic, 2022) with Andrew Shepardson. Dr. Groothuis has published over 30 academic articles in journals such as Academic Questions and Philosophia Christi, as well as dozens of pieces in publications such as The Chronicle of Higher Education and The Christian Research Journal.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a

conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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New example of convergence found, featuring parrots and humans

March 23, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Regular readers will know that I love everything about birds, and I love every bird. Any my favorite birds of all are parrots! Every time I see a scientific discovery involving parrots, I blog about it. Well, there was just such a discovery, and published in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal Nature. In it, we find evidence for intelligent design, and evidence against Darwinian evolution.

Before we see the new discovery, let's review with the definition of convergence in biology.

> In evolutionary biology, convergent evolution is the process whereby organisms not closely related (not monophyletic), independently evolve similar traits as a result of having to adapt to similar environments or ecological niches.

So, for example, if we could find a feature that is common to parrots and humans, that would be an example of "convergence", because the same feature would be found in to kinds of creature, but these creatures don't have a recent common ancestry. The feature would have had to evolve TWICE, independently, and that is not the kind of evidence that Darwinists like.

So here is the discovery, in Science News:

> When it comes to speech, parrots have the gift of gab. And the way the brains of small parrots known as budgerigars bestow this gift is remarkably similar to human speech, researchers report March 19 in Nature.
>
> So far, budgerigars are the only animals known to have language-producing centers akin to those in humans, says Michael Long, a neuroscientist at New York University Langone Health. This "is really the first nonhuman animal in which that has been shown." Understanding how speech gets created in budgies' brains could help clarify what goes wrong in certain communication disorders in people.
>
> […]The similarities between human and parrot brains may reflect two species solving a problem in a similar way, neurally speaking. These parallels could be "a very tidy example of convergent evolution, where you have humans that have developed this kind of neural mechanism for speech, and these parrots have developed a kind of similar mechanism," Long says.

Here's an excellent, recent article from Evolution News to explain what convergence means for the two competing views of Darwinian evolution and intelligent design:

> Biology is replete with instances of convergence — repeated designs in distant species. Marsupials and placentals, for instance, are mammals with different reproductive designs (placentals have significant growth in the embryonic stage

> attached to the nutrient-rich placenta whereas marsupials have no placenta and experience significant development after birth) but otherwise with many similar species.
>
> The marsupial flying phalanger and placental flying squirrel, for example, have distinctive similarities, including their coats that extend from the wrist to the ankle giving them the ability to glide long distances. But evolutionists must believe that these distinctive similarities evolved separately and independently because one is a marsupial and the other is a placental, and those two groups must have divided much earlier in evolutionary history. Simply put, evolution's random mutations must have duplicated dozens of designs in these two groups.
>
> It is kind of like lightning striking twice, but for evolutionists — who already have accepted the idea that squirrels, and all other species for that matter, arose by chance mutations — it's not difficult to believe. It simply happened twice rather than once (or several times, in the cases of a great many convergences).
>
> What is often not understood, however, by evolutionists or their critics, is that convergence poses a completely different theoretical problem. Simply put, a fundamental evidence and motivation for evolution is the pattern of similarities and differences between the different species. According to this theory, the species fall into an evolutionary pattern with great precision. Species on the same branch in the evolutionary tree of life share a close relationship via common descent. Therefore, they share similarities with each other much more consistently than with species on other branches.
>
> This is a very specific pattern, and it can be used to predict differences and similarities between species given a knowledge of where they are in the evolutionary tree.
>
> Convergence violates this pattern. Convergence reveals striking similarities across different branches. This leaves evolutionists struggling to figure out how the proverbial lightning could strike twice…

And convergence is everywhere in the history of life. A common example is echo location in bats and dolphins, but my favorite example is octopus eyes and human eyes.

Here's an evolutionist explaining the problem:

> One of the most remarkable features of octopuses is their eyes, which are remarkably like our own. Like ours, their eyes consist of an iris, a circular lens, vitreous fluid, pigments, and photoreceptors. In fact, the octopus eye is superior to ours in one notable way: Because of the way they develop, the fibers of the optic nerves grow behind the retina rather than through it, meaning they lack the central blind spot common to all vertebrates. And this difference exists because the octopus eye evolved entirely separately from our own, starting from that blind flatworm 600 million years ago, along an entirely different branch of the evolutionary tree.

Got that? No common ancestry for 600 million years. The similar eyes appeared independently. And these are difficult things to make. You can’t write eye code by dropping a bowling ball on a keyboard over and over. To get the design twice strains credulity.

When you look at software, which is my field, you will often see similar solutions to problems across different companies. These companies don’t inherit the solutions from a parent company, they develop them on their own. And often, this process means pulling in “open source” components to solve problems that have already been solved, but not by “ancestors”. The developers who pull in these open source components have no “ancestry” with the developers of these open source components. But they can pull them into a composition of their own, and make use of the component to solve the same problem.

Christian nurse punished by NHS for misgendering transgender pedophile

March 24, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently on Twitter / X, I have been seeing many tweets pop up showing how frequently transgender people commit sexual crimes with children. But what's even more interesting is what happens to people who try to argue against transgenderism with this data. The secular left is 100% committed to shutting down any dissent to their pro-transgender agenda. How committed? Let's find out.

Look at this story from Christian Concern:

> On the night of May 22, 2024, Jennifer began her shift at the hospital, where a Pride Progress Flag—symbolising support for transgender rights and gender identity affirmation—flew from the rooftop.
>
> Miss Melle, who came to the UK from Uganda as a child, and has worked her way up to become a senior nurse, had been told along with her colleagues that Mr X had been brought in for treatment from a Category C men's prison and was a sex offender.
>
> He entered the hospital chained to two guards and was clearly masculine in appearance, standing over six feet tall and of large build.
>
> At 10pm, a junior colleague approached Miss Melle in a distressed state saying that Mr X wanted to self-discharge. He was shouting and upsetting other elderly and vulnerable patients on the ward.
>
> The doctor had been called for guidance on the discharge but had not yet responded. As the senior nurse on the ward, Jennifer followed her colleague to take charge of the situation and to provide support.
>
> Looking at the patient's medical records, she saw that the patient was recorded as male, not female or transgender. On the name board next to the bed, it simply gave the feminine name.
>
> With her colleague finally getting through to the doctor on the phone, Jennifer requested to speak to him. She said to the doctor that: 'Mr X would like to self-discharge.'
>
> Overhearing the call, enraged Mr X screamed: "Do not call me Mr! I am a woman!"
>
> Still on the phone to the doctor, Jennifer called back to Mr X that she was speaking to the doctor and was working out what medication could be given before he was discharged.
>
> Finishing the call, she approached the patient's room.
>
> Stepping inside, Jennifer found Mr X pacing up and down in chains.

> Jennifer politely said: ‘I am sorry I cannot refer to you as her or she, as it’s against my faith and Christian values but I can call you by your name.’
>
> She then began to relay what the doctor had said, but then the abuse and vitriol escalated.
>
> ‘Imagine if I called you n*****’, Mr X yelled. ‘How about I call you n*****? Yes, black n*****!’
>
> Jennifer said if he carried on, she would have to call security.
>
> Mr X then lunged threateningly towards Jennifer and pursued her out of the room until he was eventually held back by the guards.
>
> He then shouted: ‘I want your name and NHS number and am going to report you to the police for homophobia and to Patient Advice and Liaison Service’ (PALS).
>
> […]Shortly after arriving home, Jennifer received a call from a colleague who had taken over her shift. They said that Mr X had been shouting for her and repeating the threat that he was going to make a complaint to PALS.
>
> […]The next time Jennifer was on night shift, she was pulled aside by a ward manager and asked to make a statement about what had happened.
>
> After Jennifer relayed that she was still feeling impacted by the racial and potential physical attacks, she was told that despite that she still had to respect “equality and diversity” according to the Nursing and Midwifery Council code of conduct.
>
> […]Over the next few days Jennifer said she felt pressured to provide management with a statement.

Now, you may have heard that the UK has gone socialist, and that they have a lot of controls on speech, association, parental rights, etc. The central government is secular left, and they don’t respect the rights of Christians to act like Christians.

It’s so bad there, that the UK police virtually ignores the sex-trafficking of white British girls by men of Pakistani origin. Why? Because it would be “racist” to enforce the law against non-white people, based on complaints by the white parents of these girls.

The UK police actually punishes anyone who criticizes them. They monitor social media, to see who is disapproving of the sex-trafficking crimes, and they punish those people who speak out against it. London’s Metropolitan Police chief even threatened to have Americans extradited to be arrested and stand trial, if they disagreed with the police about their soft-on-crime policies.

So, what happened to the Christian nurse should be no surprise:

> She was then told that she must attend a meeting with HR and that if she refused to comply, she would be sent home until an investigation was completed.
>
> […]Summoned to a disciplinary hearing in October 2024, Jennifer was given a final written warning and has been referred to the Nursing and Midwifery Council

> (NMC).
>
> Since the incident, she has been moved to another ward and effectively demoted. Her name was wiped off the internal system, making it difficult to apply for extra shifts at the hospital.
>
> Her capacity to earn much needed extra money was therefore removed and she and her family have suffered as a result.

I think it’s important for Christians in America to understand what happens when a society adopts secularism and leftism. Do not let this happen in America.

Domestic terrorist attempts to murder Christian apologist using SWAT team

March 25, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, people on the political left have been engineering SWAT team raids on the homes of prominent Christians and conservatives. Below, we'll take a look at one of the Christian scholars who was raided – Larry Taunton. You might remember Larry from his public discussions with famous atheists like Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and Christopher Hitchens.

Here's the story from Christian Post:

> A Christian author and apologist who was recently "swatted" at his rural Alabama home told The Christian Post he believes the recent spate of false police reports made against conservative commentators indicates the Left is getting desperate.
>
> Larry Alex Taunton told CP he grabbed his pistol and nearly shot a heavily armed police officer who attempted to enter his house shortly after 1 a.m. on March 17.
>
> The local sheriff's office in Talladega County responded in full force that morning upon fielding a call from a man who said he was trapped inside Taunton's blood-soaked home after having been shot in the leg amid three active shooters at his residence.
>
> As has been the case for approximately 15 other prominent conservative voices in recent weeks, the call was fake and made in an apparent attempt to instill fear and potentially instigate a lethal situation.

What's interesting about this SWAT attempted murder against Taunton is how the police came at 1 AM with nine police cars, body armor, and assault rifles. But when they got to Larry's house, they din't announce themselves.

If you watch the video, you'll see that the police do not knock, and they do not announce themselves to the homeowner. They just try to come directly into the house. In rural Alabama – a state with strong gun laws, and self-defense laws.

Larry was waiting inside with his own weapon, and he did NOT know who these people outside his house were. He says that if the attacker had opened the door, he would have opened fire:

> "So here's someone trying to breach my front door with a semi-automatic rifle without announcing himself," he said. "I'm armed. I can see him, he cannot see me. And I'm thinking, 'If this guy comes through my door, I will shoot him. I'm not asking questions. He's more heavily armed than I am, and if I'm to have any chance at all, I will have to shoot first.'"

There have been a LOT of SWAT team incidents in the last month. It looks like it is a coordinated effort.

Fox News reported this:

> FBI Director Kash Patel on Friday revealed that the agency is investigating a recent spike in swatting incidents after several conservative media figures said they were targeted.
>
> “I want to address the alarming rise in ‘Swatting’ incidents targeting media figures,” Patel wrote Friday morning on his social media. “The FBI is aware of this dangerous trend, and my team and I are already taking action to investigate and hold those responsible accountable.”
>
> […]Conservative podcaster Nick Sortor said Thursday on X that both his father and sister were swatted that same day.
>
> “A dozen cops attempted to kick my dad’s door in at gunpoint,” he wrote.
>
> […]Sortor said the person who called the police on his father claimed he was killing his “entire family, requiring them to intervene with deadly force.”
>
> “This is nothing short of attempted murder. They wanted the police to kill my father,” he added.

I notice that this is not the first time that leftist activists have engaged in domestic terrorism. And this is not something new. Republican politicians have been frequent victims of SWAT attacks, going back to 2023. In Wisconsin, Democrats ordered pre-dawn raids on the homes of Republicans. In 2022, the FBI raided the home of a pro-life activist. And don’t forget how Democrats just open fire on Republicans, like a Bernie Sanders supporter did with Steve Scalise. When will federal law enforcement stop these attacks?

What do ancient non-Christian sources tell us about the historical Jesus?

March 26, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This article from Biblical Archaeology covers all the non-Christian historical sources that discuss Jesus.

About the author:

> Lawrence Mykytiuk is associate professor of library science and the history librarian at Purdue University. He holds a Ph.D. in Hebrew and Semitic Studies and is the author of the book Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200–539 B.C.E. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004).

Here are the major sections:

- Roman historian Tacitus
- Jewish historian Josephus
- Greek satirist Lucian of Samosata
- Platonist philosopher Celsus
- Roman governor Pliny the Younger
- Roman historian Suetonius
- Roman prisoner Mara bar Serapion

And this useful excerpt captures the broad facts about Jesus that we get from just the first two sources:

> We can learn quite a bit about Jesus from Tacitus and Josephus, two famous historians who were not Christian. Almost all the following statements about Jesus, which are asserted in the New Testament, are corroborated or confirmed by the relevant passages in Tacitus and Josephus. These independent historical sources—one a non-Christian Roman and the other Jewish—confirm what we are told in the Gospels:31
>
> 1. He existed as a man. The historian Josephus grew up in a priestly family in first-century Palestine and wrote only decades after Jesus' death. Jesus' known associates, such as Jesus' brother James, were his contemporaries. The historical and cultural context was second nature to Josephus. "If any Jewish writer were ever in a position to know about the non-existence of Jesus, it would have been Josephus. His implicit affirmation of the existence of Jesus has been, and still is, the most significant obstacle for those who argue that the extra-Biblical evidence is not probative on this point," Robert Van Voorst observes.32 And Tacitus was careful enough not to report real executions of nonexistent people.
>
> 2. His personal name was Jesus, as Josephus informs us.

> 3. He was called Christos in Greek, which is a translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, both of which mean “anointed” or “(the) anointed one,” as Josephus states and Tacitus implies, unaware, by reporting, as Romans thought, that his name was Christus.
>
> 4. He had a brother named James (Jacob), as Josephus reports.
>
> 5. He won over both Jews and “Greeks” (i.e., Gentiles of Hellenistic culture), according to Josephus, although it is anachronistic to say that they were “many” at the end of his life. Large growth
> in the number of Jesus’ actual followers came only after his death.
>
> 6. Jewish leaders of the day expressed unfavorable opinions about him, at least according to some versions of the Testimonium Flavianum.
>
> 7. Pilate rendered the decision that he should be executed, as both Tacitus and Josephus state.
>
> 8. His execution was specifically by crucifixion, according to Josephus.
>
> 9. He was executed during Pontius Pilate’s governorship over Judea (26–36 C.E.), as Josephus implies and Tacitus states, adding that it was during Tiberius’s reign.
>
> Some of Jesus’ followers did not abandon their personal loyalty to him even after his crucifixion but submitted to his teaching. They believed that Jesus later appeared to them alive in accordance with prophecies, most likely those found in the Hebrew Bible. A well-attested link between Jesus and Christians is that Christ, as a term used to identify Jesus, became the basis of the term used to identify his followers: Christians. The Christian movement began in Judea, according to Tacitus. Josephus observes that it continued during the first century. Tacitus deplores the fact that during the second century it had spread as far as Rome.

I remember reading the 1996 book by Gary Habermas entitled “The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ“. This book is a little before the time of most of you young Christian apologists, but back before the time of Lee Strobel and J. Warner Wallace, this is the stuff we all read. Anyway, in the book he makes a list of all that can be known about Jesus from external sources. And fortunately for you, you don’t have to buy the book because you can read chapter 9 of it right on his web site.

From Tacitus he gets this:

> From this report we can learn several facts, both explicit and implicit, concerning Christ and the Christians who lived in Rome in the 60s A.D. Chronologically, we may ascertain the following information.
>
> (1) Christians were named for their founder, Christus (from the Latin), (2) who was put to death by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilatus (also Latin), (3) during the reign of emperor Tiberius (14 37 A.D.). (4) His death ended the “superstition” for a short time, (5) but it broke out again, (6) especially in Judaea, where the teaching had its origin.

> (7) His followers carried his doctrine to Rome. (8) When the great fire destroyed a large part of the city during the reign of Nero (54 68 A.D.), the emperor placed the blame on the Christians who lived in Rome. (9) Tacitus reports that this group was hated for their abominations. (10) These Christians were arrested after pleading guilty, (11) and many were convicted for “hatred for mankind.” (12) They were mocked and (13) then tortured, including being “nailed to crosses” or burnt to death. (14) Because of these actions, the people had compassion on the Christians. (15) Tacitus therefore concluded that such punishments were not for the public good but were simply “to glut one man’s cruelty.”

And from Josephus he gets this:

> (1) Jesus was known as a wise and virtuous man, one recognized for his good conduct. (2) He had many disciples, both Jews and Gentiles. (3) Pilate condemned him to die, (4) with crucifixion explicitly being mentioned as the mode. (5) The disciples reported that Jesus had risen from the dead and (6) that he had appeared to them on the third day after his crucifixion. (7) Consequently, the disciples continued to proclaim his teachings. (8) Perhaps Jesus was the Messiah concerning whom the Old Testament prophets spoke and predicted wonders. We would add here two facts from Josephus’ earlier quotation as well. (9) Jesus was the brother of James and (10) was called the messiah by some.

So when you are reading the New Testament, these facts are the framework that you read within. It’s a good starting point when dealing with people who have never looked into who Jesus was and what he taught and what his followers believed about him, right from the start.

The cartel that is behind Americans' declining health and fitness

March 27, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've noticed that Dr. Jay Richards has been talking a lot about the role that government plays in guiding the health of American citizens. I am so far behind on this, so I have to catch up. Basically, there is concern that government agencies are guiding Americans poorly because they are too close to Big Pharma and Big Food. And it is causing us a lot of health problems.

Well, I noticed that Jay wrote an article for Daily Signal about MAHA, and I think it's a really good article to explain what the Trump administration is supposed to solve.

First, he explains how we got here:

> Although RFK, Jr. is famous—or infamous, depending on your view—for his criticisms of vaccines, that wasn't the theme of his lengthy speech. He spoke instead about an unholy alliance—a cartel—of industries, corporate media, government regulatory agencies, and even nonprofit "charities" that is making us fat and sick. This problem doesn't fit the simple taxonomy of "public" and "private" or "left" and "right" that served us well during the Cold War.
>
> Kennedy has been a voice in the wilderness warning about this cartel for years. Most Americans first became aware of it during the 2020 pandemic. Here's the basic story: COVID-19 itself was likely the product of dangerous gain-of-function research conducted by the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China. That's bad enough. But Communist China didn't act alone. This work was funded, at least in part, by the U.S. government's National Institutes of Health and laundered through the nonprofit EcoHealth Alliance.

One point is that critics of the cartel were suppressed:

> Once the virus was out, the absurd and counterproductive lockdowns and hygiene theater were pushed by global entities such as the World Health Organization. Domestically, Francis Collins, then-head of the NIH, and Anthony Fauci, then-head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, worked to undermine independent experts who criticized the federal bureaucrats' favored policies.
>
> Collins and Fauci even orchestrated the publication of a deceptive article in Nature that claimed the virus had a natural origin. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other federal entities, including the Biden White House, pressured social media platforms to censor even the best-credentialed dissenters.
>
> Attentive Americans soon learned that public health, as a field, focuses on

> nudging whole populations, rather than seeking the health of individual patients.

Another key point – the cartel companies cannot be sued for any damages they cause:

> Certain pharmaceutical companies—which pay royalties to many NIH staff, including Collins and Fauci—enjoyed a suspiciously fast and less than rigorous approval process for their mRNA "vaccines." Vaccine mandates then created a massive artificial market for the drugs. And drug companies' immunity from legal liability allowed them to enjoy the financial benefits of these policies without facing the downside risks from any long-term harm to those who took the vaccines.

Many Americans started to mistrust their doctors, because they were pushing drugs and surgeries on their children:

> Then, during the lockdowns, the growing awareness of the "gender-industrial complex"— media, medical professionals, pharmaceutical companies, politicians, and others who push ghoulish "gender-affirming" interventions on people distressed about their sexed bodies—further reinforced the lack of credibility of private and public health authorities.

Jay says that these symptoms – lockdowns, mandates, persecution of scientific dissent – are all the work of "the cartel", which is composed of actors from Big Government, Big Food, Big Pharma, and Big Media.

Jay then switches over to the specific problems that the cartel is alleged to have caused:

> In his speech, Kennedy devoted many paragraphs to the "chronic disease epidemic"—including ever higher rates, even among children, of Type II diabetes and obesity, and of Alzheimer's, which some now refer to as "Type III diabetes."
>
> […]He spoke of "an explosion of neurological illnesses that I never saw as a kid," including: "ADD, ADHD, speech delay, language delay, Tourette's Syndrome, narcolepsy, ASD, Asperger's, autism. In the year 2000, the Autism rate was one in 1500. Now, autism rates in kids are one in 36, according to CDC; nationally, nobody's talking about this."
>
> He also spoke of the massive spikes in the use of antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs.

So, that's the problem that Kennedy and his allies in the Trump administration need to solve.

For me, two of the biggest red flags are 1) the persecution of qualified dissenting scientists, and 2) the threats of ending the employment of people who don't want to take medications where the manyfacture is immune to being sued. Those factors right there alerted me to the existence of "the cartel", and now I'm just hoping that Kennedy is the right person to do something about it. I'm not convinced that he is, but I think it's positive that Jay thinks he is.

Does the ERLC advocate for Bible-based policies, or for secular leftist policies?

March 28, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, Megan Basham has done it again. She's got a new article up in Christ Over All, where she takes a look at the ERLC, a policy advocacy group funded by the Southern Baptist denomination. She starts by talking about how good the ERLC used to be, when they focused on their original mission – protecting religious liberty, and promoting Christian values.

She talks about the role the ERLC played in getting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act passed and signed by BILL CLINTON, way back in 1993. The leader of the ERLC at that time was Mike Whitehead.

She writes:

> The reason the ERLC was in the room where RFRA happened was because Mike Whitehead, then the ERLC's general counsel, had deep relationships with DC insiders who had long worked on religious liberty legislation. After he signed the law, Clinton sent Whitehead a personal note, thanking him for his work crafting the measure and offering prayers for Whitehead's teenage son, who was battling leukemia at the time.
>
> "Our involvement in that litigation was probably the first major involvement by Southern Baptists in legislative drafting," Whitehead told me. And because he stopped representing the ERLC two years later, it was also one of their last.

In the rest of the article, Megan talks to a variety of conservatives on Capitol Hill, and she asks them why RFRA was one of the last good things that the ERLC was able to do:

> Today, Whitehead sits on the board of the Alliance Defending Freedom, the conservative legal advocacy group that continues to be heavily involved in drafting federal- and state-level legislation on religious liberty, the sanctity of life, and marriage and family. When he talks to friends in the Capitol about what role, if any, the ERLC is playing in supporting policies in these areas, he's told they're invisible. "They'll offer comments to the press, then they'll write that they are involved, and they'll take credit when an issue they're supporting prevails. But they really are not viewed as being actively helpful on advancing conservative politics on the Hill," he said.
>
> The 19 lawmakers and Hill staffers I contacted for this essay all echoed that assessment.

She talked to Mike Lee, who is one of the most conservative senators, according to the Heritage Foundation ratings:

> [W]hen I asked Lee about any support his office has received from the Southern

> Baptists' policy arm, he couldn't remember ever hearing from them. "That doesn't mean that they're not meeting with staff," he told me. "But the fact that I haven't heard anything memorable about them means they've been completely absent on the big fights over big issues. I don't recall them going against RFMA or Planned Parenthood funding or anything else."
>
> This would be the consistent refrain of my inquiry into how the ERLC is viewed on the Hill.

One of my favorite conservatives on Twitter is Rachel Bovard. She has a lot of connections in D.C. because she's worked with a whole bunch of different conservative organizations to get things done. She's currently the Vice President of Programs at the Conservative Partnership Institute.

Megan spoke to her as well:

> And what are her views on the effectiveness of the ERLC in advocating for policies that align with biblical principles? "In 12 years on the Hill I don't ever remember hearing from the ERLC," she said. This is particularly noteworthy because, during her time as executive director of the Senate Republican Steering Committee, Bovard ran weekly meetings of conservative movement groups and staff, where priority issues and positions on legislation were discussed. "Probably 175–200 people were on the invite list," she told me, "and meetings regularly drew 80–100 people. [The] ERLC was never there as far as I recall." In fact, Bovard said she never thought of the ERLC because she didn't know they existed. "Which is odd," she continued, "because the Steering Committee's entire job is to be an access point for the conservative movement to the Senate."

Megan goes on to quote a few prominent conservatives, but it's the same story. The ERLC has as much influence pushing for Biblical principles as the SPLC, a far-left hate group. And they're more effective at pushing for the positions the SPLC supports.

Megan spoke to Eric Teetsel, who he took over the leadership of the conservative *Center for Renewing America* after its founder, Russ Vought, was appointed by Donald Trump to run the Office of Management and Budget:

> "As a Southern Baptist who happens to be an expert in what they're supposed to be doing, I can tell you, they're completely and entirely worse than useless," he told me. "They are actively counterproductive to the ends that Southern Baptists ought to expect from an entity that purports to be the public policy arm of their convention. When it comes to protecting life, family stuff—you know, the basic conservative things where all the movement groups in town would tend to align—they'll sign coalition letters, but that's nothing. It's meaningless. Those agenda items are going to happen anyway, because other groups that are more influential and effective than the ERLC are driving them. The ERLC just hops on board and takes credit."

In the rest of the article, Megan looks at how the ERLC has affected policy in their home state of Tennessee.

Here's what she heard about the current leader of the ERLC, Brent Leatherwood:

> Though Leatherwood told *The Baptist Press* the ERLC supported a law to ban transgender treatments on children "as it made its way through the Tennessee legislature," House Majority Leader William Lamberth, who was a principal architect and co-sponsor of the bill, couldn't remember receiving that support. He did not recall any involvement from the ERLC.
>
> […]One issue that did not find the ERLC so motivated was protecting women's private spaces. Lamberth's colleague, Tennessee Representative Monty Fritts, told me the ERLC was similarly MIA on a bill he sponsored to keep men out of women's bathrooms, locker rooms, and prisons. Again, this is an issue the ERLC regularly highlights in its appeals to Southern Baptists for support. Fritts also said that while many ministries and faith groups in Tennessee backed his proposal to officially name July a month of prayer and fasting, the ERLC was not one of them.

And this anecdote from a prominent conservative about Russell Moore was interesting:

> Tami Fitzgerald, executive director of the policy nonprofit, North Carolina Values Coalition, served on the ERLC's board from 2012 to 2019 and had a front-row seat to the entity's shift in focus under the leadership of Moore. "We had this meeting of the executive committee, which I was on, before the convention started," she remembered, "and Russell Moore was going through his agenda, and he had made some statements that the SBC was going to change its tone and that the culture wars were over. Instead of stuff like abortion and gay marriage, we were going to focus on issues like immigration, sexual abuse, and racial injustice."

And:

> The ERLC continues to be heavily involved with the George Soros-funded Evangelical Immigration Table, registering opposition to President Trump's border policies.

My impression after reading the article was that the ERLC does nothing to support Bible-based policy, and everything to support secular left policy. They just aren't very good at having a Biblical worldview. They don't know how to convince anyone else of what the Bible says, using evidence that those non-Christians would find convincing. They're just obsessed with agreeing with the secular left, because they love the praise from men more than the praise from God. Simple.

Have a read, and see what you think.

William Lane Craig debates Daniel Came: Does God exist?

March 29, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

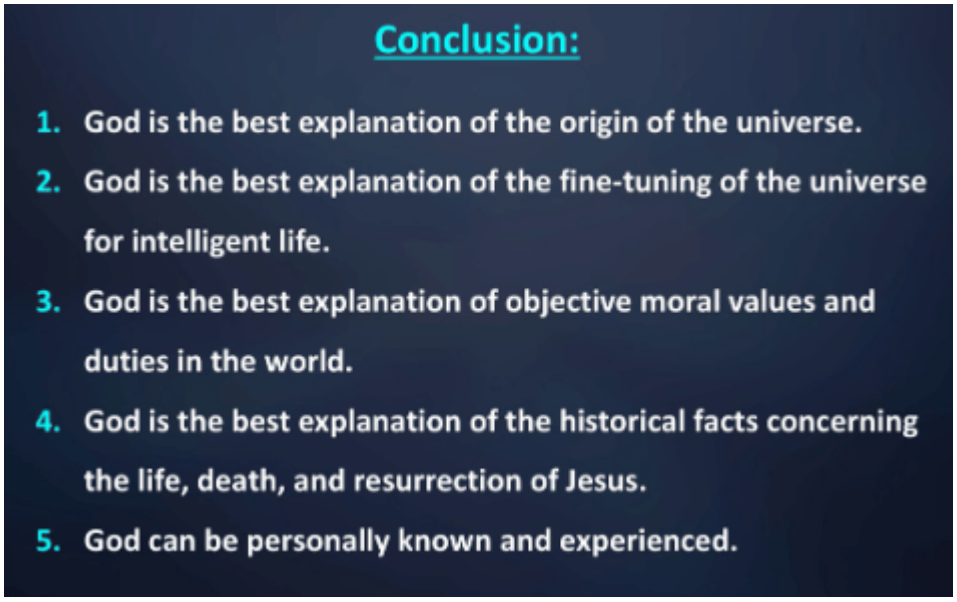

Dr. Craig's opening speech summary slide

The video of the debate was posted by ReasonableFaith.org – Dr. Craig's organization. This debate occurred in March 2017 at the University of Dublin, in Ireland.

The video: (91 minutes)

My non-snarky summary is below.

Dr. Craig's opening speech

Two claims:

1. There are good reasons to think that theism is true.
2. There are not comparably good reasons to think that atheism is true.

Five reasons for God's existence:

1. The beginning of the universe
– actual infinite past is mathematically impossible
– BGV theorem: any universe that is on balance expanding in its history (like ours) cannot be past eternal

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– slight changes to quantities and constants prevent a universe from supporting complex embodied life
– the multiverse response of atheists conflicts with observations, e.g. the Boltzmann Brains problem

3. Objective moral values
– God's existence is required to ground objective moral values and duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus

– there are good reasons to accept the most widely accepted facts about the historical Jesus (empty tomb, appearances, early widespread belief in the resurrection)
– the best explanation of these minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

5. Experience God directly
– in the absence of any defeaters to belief in God, a person can experience God directly

Dr. Daniel Came's opening speech

1. The hiddenness of God
– if God wants a personal relationship with us, and a relationship with God would be the greatest good for us
– God ought to reveal himself to us, but he does not reveal himself to many people, the "non-resistant non-believers"

2. The inductive problem of evil
– many evil events occur that are pointless – there is no morally sufficient reason why God would allow them to occur
– examples: animal suffering, children born with disease, tsunamis
– the theistic response to this is that humans are not in a position to know whether there are morally sufficient reasons, due to our limitations of knowing the consequences
– but this ripple effect defense has 4 possible outcomes, 3 of which don't do the job of justifying

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

1. The hiddenness of God
– God's goal is not to make his existence known, but to draw them into a love relationship
– it's speculative that overt displays of God's existence would draw people to him in a love relationship, they might resent his bullying
– atheist would have to prove that God could draw more people into a love relationship with him by revealing himself more overtly

2. The inductive problem of evil
– as humans, we are not in a position to know for certain that any apparently pointless evil really is pointless
– William Alston article: 6 limitations of human knowing make it impossible to judge that an evil is actually "pointless"
– Dr. Came says that there are 4 possibilities for the ripple effects, and since 3 are bad, it's likely that there are not morally sufficient reasons for a apparently pointless evil
– it is logically fallacious to assert probability conclusions without knowing the probabilities of those 4 options
– there is actually an argument from evil: since the problem of evil requires an objective standard of good and evil by which to measure, and God is the only possible ground of objective morality, then pressing the problem of evil actually requires the atheist to assume God, in order to ground this objective moral standard

Dr. Came's first rebuttal

3. Objective moral values

– there are naturalistic theories of moral realism where objective moral duties and objective moral values exist in a naturalistic universe
– I'm not saying that any of them are correct, but there are many theories about object morality in a naturalistic universe

There are naturalistic theories for all of the 5 arguments that Dr. Craig presented. It is Dr. Craig's responsibility to present those naturalistic theories and prove that they are not as good as his explanations. I'm not going to defend (or even name!) a single naturalistic theory for any of these 5 arguments by Dr. Craig.

Dr. Craig's explanations for the 5 evidences he gave can't be admitted, because we have to know how God did something *in naturalistic terms* before we can know that God did it supernaturally. Explanations are only valid if they are naturalistic.

1. The beginning of the universe
– naturalism explains how the universe expands after it came into being, so that explains how it came into being
– the God explanation, that God created the universe out of nothing, is not admissible, because it is not naturalistic
– how does God, as an unembodied mind interact with the physical world?
– the only agency that we know about is human agents, and we have bodies, so how could God perform actions without having a body?

The theistic hypothesis does not make any predictions, but naturalism makes lots of testable predictions. God could do anything, so he is not constrained and is therefore untestable. We can't infer God as an explanation in principle because we can't predict what is more probable if God exists than if he does not.

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the university was not set up to make embodied intelligence plausible, because the vast majority of the universe is hostile to life
– there are models of the multiverse that escape the Boltzmann Brains problem that Dr. Craig raised

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

Some of Dr. Craig's arguments are deductive (e.g. – the beginning of the universe, objective moral values), so that the conclusion follows from the premises if the premises are true. The resurrection passes the standard tests for historical explanations.

1. The beginning of the universe
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for an ultimate beginning of the universe

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for a design of the universe to support life
– he has to prove that intelligences has to be attached to bodies
– human beings are non-physical minds united to physical bodies
– naturalistic attempts to explain mental operations fail

– the arguments *prove* that unembodied minds exist
– the vast expanse of the universe is required in order to form the galaxies, stars and heavy elements needed for complex life
– why expect that the entire universe should be small, or that life would be everywhere?
– a non-fine-tuned world is more likely in the multiverse, and in a multiverse, we are more likely to have a Boltzmann brain world than a world with complex, embodied life
– Dr. Came has not advanced any naturalistic explanation for the fine-tuning

3. Objective moral values
– non-theistic ethical theories cannot account for the ontological foundations of objective moral values and duties
– atheistic theories of moral realism simply assume objective moral values out of thin air
– it is especially hard to find any basis for objective moral duties in the absence of God

Dr. Came's second rebuttal

5. Religious experience
– Dr. Craig should not bring up religious experience in a debate where arguments and evidence are central
– people who have dreams, hallucinations and psychotic delusions could appeal to religious experience
– religious experience is by no means universal, and it is possible to doubt it

3. Objective moral values
– there are lots of atheists who hold to objective moral values
– Dr. Craig has to explain how God grounds objective moral values and duties
– Dr. Craig has to explain why atheist moral realist theories don't work to ground objective moral values and duties

1. The beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig claims that something can't come from nothing, that's not an argument
– there are numerous models that don't require an absolute beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig cites the BGV theorem, but Guth (one of the authors) says that only the inflation has a beginning, not the whole universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion

1. The beginning of the universe
– on theism, there is an efficient cause, but no material cause, for the origin of the universe
– on atheism, there is neither an efficient cause nor a material cause, for the origin of the universe: that's worse!
– if he thinks that there are models of the universe that don't require a beginning, then let him name a viable eternal model of the universe
– he never refuted the mathematical argues against an infinite past

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– nothing to refute

3. Objective moral values

– God is a better ground for morality than humans, because he is ultimate, and not contingent and arbitrary
– God is a being who is worthy of worship, and therefore command his creatures with moral duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus
– nothing to refute

5. Religious experience
– only justified because there are no defeaters to it

1. The hiddenness of God
– atheist has to show that if God's existence were more obvious, that it would result in more people being drawn to him

2. The inductive problem of evil
– Dr. Came's argument was logically fallacious, and makes errors in probability theory

Dr. Came's conclusion

Sometimes, people can't prove something, but lack of evidence is a justification for doubting it, e.g. – werewolves.

If none of Craig's arguments work, then it follows that it is not rational to believe that God exists, and it is rational to believe that God does not exist.

Atheists shouldn't have a burden of proof for what they know, only theists have a burden of proof for what they know.

My thoughts

One quick point. If life were common everywhere then atheists would infer that God wasn't involved in it. Period. "Life is everywhere, so it's common, why do we need a designer?" they'd say. I agree with Dr. Came about denouncing religious experience in a formal debate. I don't like when Dr. Craig brings this up, but I see why he does it – he's an evangelist, and that's a good thing, too. I just worry about how it looks to atheists, although it's good for sincere seekers. I'm not the one on the stage, though, Dr. Craig is.

I think the point about more overt revealing by God would annoy people and make them turn away. Think of how gay people respond to the suggestion that there is anything wrong with them, with rage, vandalism, threats, coercion, attempts to get you to lose your job and business, and using government as a weapon to fine and imprison you. It's really obvious to me that more God does not mean more *love* of God. For those who don't want God, the hiddenness is respect for their choice to put pleasure above the search for truth. (I mean the gay activists – I have great sympathy for people who struggle with same-sex unwanted attractions because they were impacted by a failed bond with their parent of the same sex as they are).

Whenever I meet people like Dr. Came, I always urge them to keep investigating and pursuing truth, because they will find it if they are sincerely seeking after God. Some atheists do sincerely seek God, but I don't know any who haven't found him. I'm not sure if that's because those atheists who claim to be non-resistant and rational are in fact

resistant and non-rational, or what the real reason is. If you believe the Bible, *all* unbelief is non-rational and resistant (see Romans 1). Regarding the werewolves, we don't have any good arguments for werewolves, we do have good arguments for God. Dr. Came didn't refute the arguments that Craig raised, nor did his own arguments for atheism work. And there are many, many more arguments (origin of life, Cambrian explosion, habitability-discoverability, molecular machines) that Craig did not raise, too.

Does the Bible say that you should forgive someone who does not repent?

March 30, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Kevin Lewis, a professor of Theology and Law at the conservative Biola University, was asked this question:

> Recently, I was reading Dr. Kenneth Bailey's "Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes" (IVP press 2008). When commenting on Matthew 6:12-13, he writes,
>
> "It is a common human assumption that the violator of the rights of others must ask for forgiveness before the wronged party can be expected to accept the apology and grant forgiveness…But Jesus here asks the person wronged to forgive the one responsible for the wrongdoing when when there is no confession of guilt… There is a voice from the cross that echoes across history to all saying 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.' Neither Pilate nor the high priest nor the centurion offered any apology to Jesus, yet he prayed for divine forgiveness…(p.125)"

And here's some of his response copied with permission from his Facebook note:

> First, regarding God and His forgiveness, it is undisputed in orthodox Christian theology that God does not forgive everyone. The doctrine of Hell is a sufficient proof of the lack of universal forgiveness by God.
>
> Next, it is clear that God does not forgive without repentance. This doctrine is taught in a number of texts. For example, in Luke 13:3 Jesus says, "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." In Mark 1:15 John the Baptist commands that we must "repent and believe the Gospel." The connection between repentance and forgiveness of sins (i.e. "salvation") is seen throughout the Scriptures. For example, in Acts 2:38 repentance is directly connected as a condition for the remission of sins. For additional examples of this connection see Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30-31; Romans 2:4-5; II Corinthians 7:10; II Tim. 2:25-26.
>
> So since we are to be imitators of God and forgive in the same way God forgives, we would expect the Scriptures to be consistent, stating that the condition of repentance is required to be fulfilled before believers are required to forgive each other's sins. It does.
>
> Jesus stated in Luke 17:3, "If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him." Here, the meaning is clear. The word "if" (Grk. ean) introduces the condition for a rebuke and for granting forgiveness. If (subjunctive) a person sins, we must (imperative) rebuke him, and if (subjunctive) he repents, we must (imperative) forgive him. This is as clear a statement as you will find on the subject. Forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance—and this is one of the same

criteria that God requires before He forgives sin.

This principle of permitting believers to withhold forgiveness unless the condition of repentance is satisfied is also explicitly seen in Matthew 18:15-17. Compared with the Luke 17:3 text above, the situation is the same. If a brother sins, reprove him; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. Here, the word “reprove” is used rather than “rebuke” and the word “listen” is employed rather than “repent,” but the meaning is virtually identical to Luke 17:3. What we see in Matthew 18 is an escalation of the issue and the result if the person fails to repent (i.e. “listen”). If the person fails to repent, we are to shun him in all appropriate ways (v. 17).

[…]Finally, I would make the case that it is harmful to a person to forgive him without requiring repentance. As seen above, the Bible is clear that sin requires a rebuke. Ignoring sin teaches sinners that sin does not bring consequences. This is harmful to their souls. Continuing to have the benefit of a righteous relationship with another and yet remain in sin against that person results in fostering a habituation of sinful inclinations in their soul, which God says brings about suffering and death.

Moreover, since the ultimate purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation, it is meaningless and harmful to forgive when no reconciliation may be had with the sinner. We cannot “walk together” in a biblical manner in righteous peace when the unrepentant sinner walks in unrighteousness. Necessarily, there is a conflict and a want of shalom. Their soul is headed in a different direction than the believer’s soul; they are walking away from God and we cannot have fellowship with darkness. God has no intimate fellowship with unrepentant people, and that is the model for Christians as well (See Matt. 18).

Regarding personal anger issues commonly raised by Christian psychologists, these types of psychologists unbiblically make unconditional forgiveness a part of therapy. By contrast, however, if a counselee will not forgive after the offending party has truly repented, the counselee sins, and this kind of unforgiveness may be one of the causes of his or her problems. But this is a separate issue from universal and unconditional forgiveness raised above.

Human beings in the image of God may be angry in appropriate ways (Eph.4:26, 31). There is a time to love and a time to hate (Ecclesiastes 3:8). The notion that Christians cannot ever hate, be angry, or lack forgiveness is an unbiblical concept. God Himself is eternally angry with sin, but He is certainly not a psychological basket case. He loves, hates, and is angry in appropriate ways. Our task as believers is to imitate this. Be angry with and hate sin appropriately (Rom. 12:9) and love what good appropriately. For example, righteous anger can evolve beyond the biblical limits to become malice, slander, and bitterness while, to give another example, an appropriate love of food can evolve beyond the biblical limits into gluttony.

I agree with Kevin, and I think it is a helpful tool for people to insist on seeing some sort of repentance and restitution from someone who wrongs you before you trust them again. If they are not even sorry for what they've done, and they refuse to explain why what they did is wrong, then they can't be forgiven, and you can't trust them again.

I think this is the key passage – Luke 17:3-4:

Luke 17:3-4:

3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

That's Jesus speaking, there.

Also, I was having a debate with someone who disagrees with all this, and while debating with her, I thought of another example.

Luke 18:9-14:

9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

13 But the tax collector,standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So again, no forgiveness without repentance.

Forgiveness is what happens when someone who is sinned against treats the sinner as if he had never sinned. It is not on the balance sheet. It is not brought to mind. It is not held against them in the future. The forgiver trusts the sinner again as if the previous sin had never happened.

In divine (vertical) forgiveness, there is no forgiveness without repentance. There are Bible verses above to show that.

My argument is twofold. First, there is a clear teaching of Jesus explaining the sequence of sin and forgiveness. Repentance precedes forgiveness, between humans (Luke 17:3). The verses cited by the forgive without repentance crowd don't show the mechanics of how to forgive, they are making the point that if you want God to forgive you, you should forgive others. The parable in Luke 18:9-14 affirms this again – repentance always precedes forgiveness.

Second, we have an obligation to imitate God, and that means imitating the way he forgives those who sin against him. When I raise that with the unconditional forgiveness

crowd, they want to insist that there is a difference, that the word “forgive” means different things. I’m not convinced.

Finally, I do think that forgiving someone is obligatory if they sincerely repent, and even if they screw up again and again. So long as the repentance is sincere, (like if there is restitution and a genuine effort to show an understanding how the sin affected the wronged party in writing), *then forgiveness should be automatic*.

Alan E. Kurschner argues that there is serious textual doubt about the originality of Luke 23:34a, a text used by the pro-unconditional-forgiveness crowd. He has a journal article coming out on it, but a synopsis of his argument is here.

He also wrote this in a comment on this blog:

> Second, on Matt 6:15, this is what I have to say. Notice the then-clause: “neither will your Father forgive your sins.” This would require universalism on the Father’s part according to the unconditional interpretation given the first half: “But if you do not forgive others their sins.” Since everyone has wronged the Father is the Father required to forgive everyone even if they are not seeking forgiveness?

So I think the case for the forgiveness being conditional on repentance is pretty strong, especially when serious harm has been caused.

How NPR’s CEO Katherine Maher responded to accusations of bias

March 31, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Trump administration has a difficult task ahead of them. The country is over $36 trillion in debt. The interest on the debt is now up to about 13% of the budget. If government spending is not cut, that will increase by about half a percent per year. Eventually, it will take up so much of the budget, that government won’t be able to keep its promises for social programs.

First, for those who would rather watch than read, check out this clip of Matt Walsh:

If you cannot watch, then here’s an editorial by famous law professor Jonathan Turley that was published in the far-left The Hill:

> In one of the most cringeworthy appearances in Congress, Katherine Maher imploded in a House hearing on the public funding of the liberal radio outlet.
>
> By the end of her series of contradictions and admissions, Maher had made the definitive case for ending public funding for NPR and state-subsidized media.

And here are the details:

> She was the personification of advocacy journalism, even declaring that the First Amendment is the “number one challenge” that makes it “tricky” to censor or “modify” content as she would like.
>
> Maher has supported “deplatforming” anyone she deems to be “facsists” and even suggested that she might support “punching Nazis.” She also declared that “our reverence for the truth might be a distraction [in] getting things done.”

A former NPR editor published an article about bias at NPR: “NPR’s Washington headquarters has 87 registered Democrats among its editors and zero Republicans.”

It’s amazing how secular leftists change their views when they are about to lose access to taxpayer handouts:

> When asked about her past public statements that Trump is a “deranged, racist sociopath,” she said that she would not post such views today. She similarly brushed off her statements that America is “addicted to White supremacy” and denounced the use of the words “boy and girl” as “erasing language” for non-binary people.
>
> When asked about her past assertion that the U.S. was founded on “black plunder and white democracy,” Maher said she no longer believed what she had said. She also wrote that “America is addicted to white supremacy”
>
> When asked about her support for the book “The Case for Reparations,” Maher denied any memory of ever having read the book. She was then read back her

> own public statements about how she took a day to read the book in a virtue-signaling post.
>
> She then denied calling for reparations, but was read back her own declaration: "Yes, the North, yes all of us, yes America. Yes, our original collective sin and unpaid debt. Yes, reparations. Yes, on this day."

Suddenly, the thought of losing access to taxpayer money made Katherine Maher forget everything that her company – NPR – had ever done or said:

> The one moment of clarity came when Maher was asked about NPR's refusal to cover the Hunter Biden laptop story. When first disclosed, with evidence of millions in alleged influence-peddling by the Biden family, NPR's then-managing editor Terence Samuels made a strident and even mocking statement: "We don't want to waste our time on stories that are not really stories, and we don't want to waste the listeners' and readers' time on stories that are just pure distractions."
>
> Now Maher wants Congress to know that "NPR acknowledges we were mistaken in failing to cover the Hunter Biden laptop story more aggressively and sooner."

All it took was the threat of a complete cutoff of federal funding.

It must be so confusing for her to be confronted with her own words and her own choices. I can imagine that she must be thinking something similar to Hillary Clinton, when she was confronted with evidence of her crimes: "what difference at this point does it make?" No apology. No taking responsibility. No accepting accountability. Just lie, evade, dodge, deflect, shift blame, project.

Listen. All of this government spending is going to have to be paid by your children, and your children's children. For Democrats – the party of slavery – this is not a problem. Democrats LOVE spending money now, and making other people pay for it later. Democrats LOVE the idea of forcing others to pay their bills. They believe in unlimited money, unlimited youth, unlimited beauty. They don't understand scarcity. They just want to have a good time now.

Now that the grown-ups are back in charge, we need to cut the spending while we still can. Let these welfare queens fend for themselves. Let them face the consequences of their actions.

Christian teachers are being punished for declining to participate in LGBT

April 1, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Normally, I find stories about Christians being persecuted in European countries, or Canada. But when I did a search for stories about Christians being persecuted for declining to participate in LGBT in America, I was able to find quite a few cases. I've previously covered all the Christian businesses who got sued for refusing to celebrate same-sex marriages. But there's more!

Consider the case of Peter Vlaming, who was fired for declining to use transgender pronouns.

The Washington Stand reports:

> The saga began in 2018, when a female student in Vlaming's class who identified as transgender demanded to be called by a male name and pronouns. Vlaming, who had taught in the district for almost seven years and was popular with students, agreed to call the student by her chosen name but declined to refer to her with male pronouns. In an attempt at compromise, he invited the whole class to use new names for French class and also avoided using any pronouns in class.
>
> But Vlaming's attempts to accommodate the student were not enough for West Point High School officials. They ordered him to start using the trans-identifying student's preferred pronouns or risk losing his job. After Vlaming declined to use male pronouns and attempted to explain his efforts to compromise, he was informed that he was being fired for "discrimination" on the basis of gender identity.

Now, you might be tempted to say "well, West Point is in New York state, so of course blue states are going to abuse the human rights of Christians". But here's a case from Kansas, which is a purple state.

Daily Signal reports:

> Fort Riley, Kansas, middle school math teacher Pamela Ricard wasn't looking to pick a fight. But when the Geary County School District suspended and disciplined the teacher with a 17-year history of teaching at the school, she sued.
>
> Her offense? She addressed two students who considered themselves transgender by their legal names rather than their preferred names and pronouns, and she refused to hide their social transition from the students' parents. Both actions were in contravention of the school district's new communications policy.

It's important to note that in both of these cases, the people who were punished argued that they had a right to do what they were doing, because of the Bible's teaching about

male and female sexes. But that didn't save them, because people don't care about religious liberty as a defense to "making someone feel bad".

Here's another case, this time from California, where a gym teacher was fired for the crime of refusing to use a student's preferred pronouns.

The Washington Stand reports:

> The Jurupa school district fired Tapia in January 2023 after she said her religious beliefs made her "unable to comply" with the district's directives "to refrain from disclosing the gender identity of a student who is transgender to a parent who does not know the student's gender identity" and "to address students by their preferred name and preferred gender pronouns."
>
> "It was crazy to be in the position where I realized that I couldn't be a Christian and a teacher," said Tapia, a mother of three children herself. "I made sure to clarify, too, with [the] district personnel that were sitting across from me. I looked them in the eye, and I said, 'Are you asking me to lie to parents?' and they said, 'Yes. It's the law.'"

Now, to be honest, I think you'd have to be really naive to want to try to live an authentic Christian life in CALIFORNIA. I think you would have to tone down your advocacy for Biblical positions, in order to live there. But, some people like the weather, or something. Me, I'd rather live in a red state like Tennessee or Oklahoma, where I can say what I want and not care what people think.

Here's another case from a blue state, Virginia. In this case, a physical education teacher was suspended for opposing a preferred pronoun policy at a school board meeting.

Daily Signal reports:

> A prominent religious liberty organization is asking a Virginia school district to reverse a decision to suspend a gym teacher for not complying with pronoun rules for transgender students in his elementary school.
>
> The Loudoun County school district suspended Byron "Tanner" Cross, a physical education teacher at Leesburg Elementary School, after he said during a May 25 school board meeting that he would not abide by a proposed rule requiring teachers to call students who say they are transgender by their preferred personal pronouns.

You might remember the Loudoun county school district. This is the school district that allowed a male student to sexually assault a female student, and then when it was discovered, they tried to label the concerned parents "domestic terrorists". This is why the question "where will our children go to school?" ought to be a topic for Christians who are considering marriage. It's very important that Christian kids not go to government schools.

Here's a final story out of Indiana, a red state. This time, a music teacher was forced to resign for refusing to use the preferred pronouns of a student.

The Indy Star explains:

> A Brownsburg teacher is fighting for his job after he says the district forced him to resign over its transgender student policy.
>
> John Kluge, the former orchestra teacher at Brownsburg High School, said the school district's requirement that teachers call transgender students by their preferred names, rather than those given at birth, goes against his religious beliefs. The requirement, Kluge said, violates his First Amendment rights.

In every case, these were Christian people who refused to participate in LGBT indoctrination, because they believed in the Bible, not in the morality of the secular left. But it didn't save them from being persecuted. It's so strange to me to see so many Christian pastors and leaders ignoring the violation of the religious liberty of Bible-believing Christians. Make sure that you think about that when you go to the ballot box to vote.

I’m not a Jehovah’s Witness for the same reason I’m not a global warming alarmist

April 2, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the summer, a couple of Jehovah’s Witness ladies were going door-to-door and they stopped by my house while I was out mowing. I decided to talk to them. They asked me why I was an evangelical Protestant rather than a JW. Rather than go into a lot of theology about the Trinity and the Watchtower translation, I decided to to just tell them about the false predictions their group has made.

So, let’s just quickly review that using this article from Watchman fellowship, which quotes JW publications:

> Initially the organization taught the “battle of the Great Day of God Almighty” (Armageddon) would end in 1914. Every kingdom of the world would be overthrown in 1914 which was “God’s date” not for the beginning but “for the *end”* of the time of trouble.
>
> “…we consider it an established truth that the final end of the kingdoms of this world, and the full establishment of the Kingdom of God, will be accomplished by the end of A.D. 1914” (Watchtower founder, Charles Taze Russell, *The Time is at Hand,* p. 99).
>
> “…the ‘battle of the great day of God Almighty’ (Rev. 16:14), which will end in A.D. 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth’s present rulership, is already commenced” (*Ibid.,* p. 101).
>
> “CAN IT BE DELAYED UNTIL 1914?…our readers are writing to know if there may not be a mistake in the 1914 date. They say that they do not see how present conditions can last so long under the strain. We see no reason for changing the figures – nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God’s dates not ours. But bear in mind that the end of 1914 is not the date for the *beginning,* but for the *end* of the time of trouble” (*Watch Tower,* 15 July 1894, p. 226).

Clearly, the world did not end in 1914, and it did not end at subsequent JW predictions, either, e.g. 1925, 1975.

So, as the title of the post says that I can’t be a global warming alarmist for the same reason I can’t be a Jehovah’s Witness: failed predictions.

Here’s an excellent article from Daily Signal by famous black economist Walter Williams, who explains the connection:

> As reported in The New York Times (Aug. 1969) Stanford University biologist Paul Ehrlich warned: “The trouble with almost all environmental problems is that by the time we have enough evidence to convince people, you’re dead. We must

> realize that unless we're extremely lucky, everybody will disappear in a cloud of blue steam in 20 years."
>
> In 2000, David Viner, a senior research scientist at University of East Anglia's climate research unit, predicted that in a few years winter snowfall would become "a very rare and exciting event. Children just aren't going to know what snow is."
>
> In 2004, the U.S. Pentagon warned President George W. Bush that major European cities would be beneath rising seas. Britain will be plunged into a Siberian climate by 2020. In 2008, Al Gore predicted that the polar ice cap would be gone in a mere 10 years. A U.S. Department of Energy study led by the U.S. Navy predicted the Arctic Ocean would experience an ice-free summer by 2016.
>
> In May 2014, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius declared during a joint appearance with Secretary of State John Kerry that "we have 500 days to avoid climate chaos."
>
> Peter Gunter, professor at North Texas State University, predicted in the spring 1970 issue of The Living Wilderness:

> Demographers agree almost unanimously on the following grim timetable: by 1975 widespread famines will begin in India; these will spread by 1990 to include all of India, Pakistan, China and the Near East, Africa. By the year 2000, or conceivably sooner, South and Central America will exist under famine conditions. … By the year 2000, thirty years from now, the entire world, with the exception of Western Europe, North America, and Australia, will be in famine.

> Ecologist Kenneth Watt's 1970 prediction was, "If present trends continue, the world will be about four degrees colder for the global mean temperature in 1990, but eleven degrees colder in the year 2000." He added, "This is about twice what it would take to put us into an ice age."

Williams concludes:

> Today's wild predictions about climate doom are likely to be just as true as yesteryear's. The major difference is today's Americans are far more gullible and more likely to spend trillions fighting global warming. And the only result is that we'll be much poorer and less free.

We have known for decades that the Earth's temperatures were much warmer during the "Medieval Warming Period", hundreds of years ago. But some people are just having irrational fears about overpopulation, resource shortages, etc. and so they will promote nonsense to try to scare people into doing what they want. World history is full of pious-sounding attention-seeking hoaxsters who try to scare the gullible masses into giving them money and/or power. It's not new.

How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

April 3, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our

> universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

April 4, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

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Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

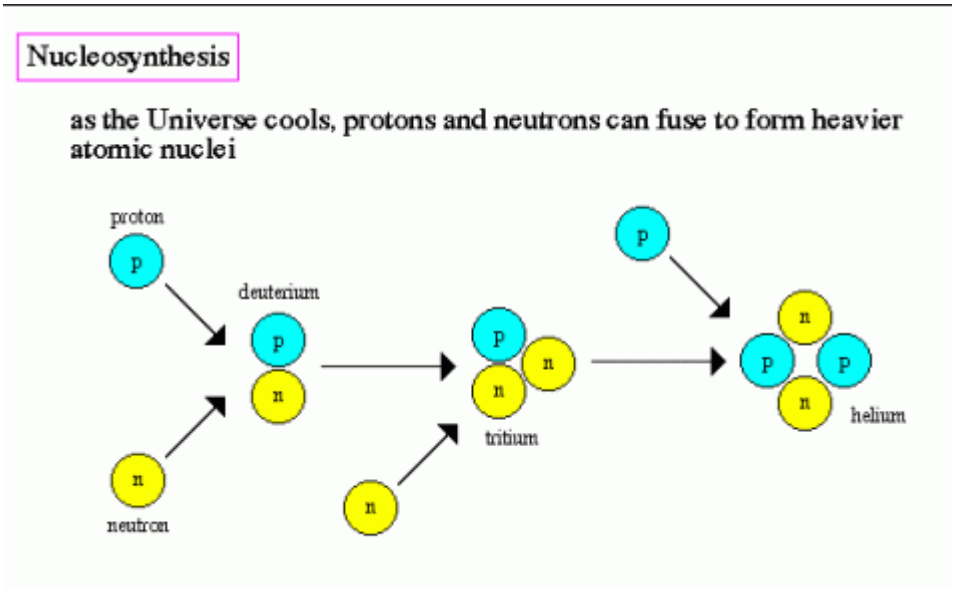

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 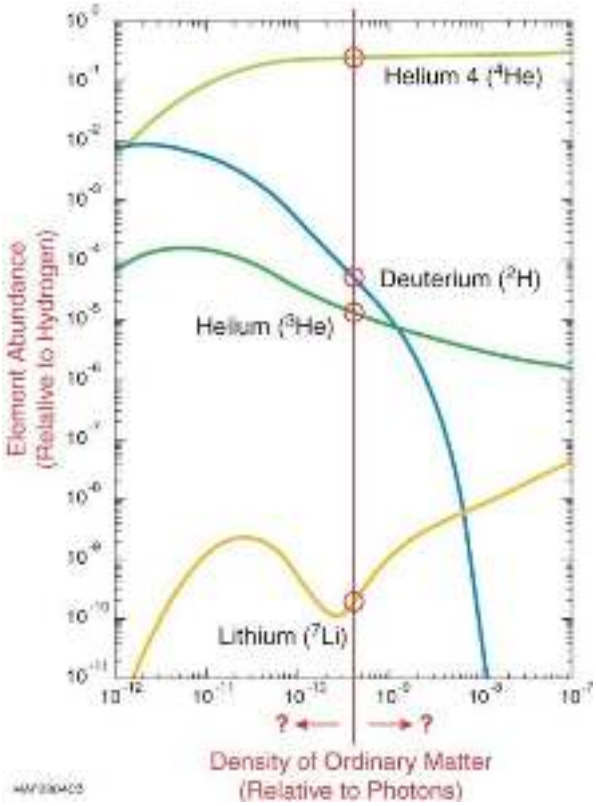
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the

elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Knight and Rose Show #61: J. Warner Wallace: Case Files: Murder and Meaning

April 5, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 61 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss a new graphic novel co-authored by J. Warner Wallace and his son Jimmy. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome J. Warner Wallace to discuss his new graphic novel, co-authored with his son Jimmy, entitled "Case Files: Murder and Meaning". The book tells the story of police detectives trying to catch a dangerous serial killer. We discuss how the story raises questions about human value, morality, identity, and meaning – creating an opportunity for deeper conversations with a wider audience.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 61:

Speaker biographies

J. Warner Wallace is a Dateline featured cold-case homicide detective, popular national speaker and best-selling author. He continues to consult on cold-case investigations while serving as a Senior Fellow at the Colson Center for Christian Worldview. He is also an adjunct professor of apologetics at Talbot School of Theology (Biola University), Gateway Seminary, and Southern Evangelical Seminary, and a faculty member at Summit Ministries. J. Warner became a Christ-follower at the age of thirty-five after investigating the claims of the New Testament gospels using his skill set as a detective.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker,

author, and teacher.

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Christian leaders ignore the real reasons why good men decline to marry

April 6, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Before we start, here are two articles explaining why men are supposedly not marrying. First one from a pastor. Second one from a sociologist. And this is, I think, the majority view: men are to blame for the decline of marriage, because men are stupid, weak, lazy and lacking ambition. Feminist women are great. Marriage laws are fair. Family courts are impartial. But is that all true?

Now, if you ask an actual man whether these are his reasons for not marrying, he will have a different list:

- women initiate the majority of divorces
- young women are increasingly politically leftist
- men can easily be fired for false accusations at work
- men are sentenced far more severely than women are sentenced, for the same crimes
- the Sexual Revolution encourages women to be promiscuous with the men who they find the most physically attractive
- family courts are biased against men, punishing men with alimony, child support, loss of custody, loss of visitation
- majority of student loan debt is held by women
- concerns about the moral impact of the books, music, TV shows and movies that are popular with young women

And so on.

I think if good Christian men had to pick just one factor that is deterring them from marriage, it would be no-fault divorce.

On this blog, I've covered several cases of the "nightmare scenario" facing men in divorce. One of those cases is the case of Rob Hoogland, which occurred in Canada.

There's some new news about his case, reported in the London Daily:

> A Canadian man, involved in a legal battle over his right to object to hormone treatment for his teenage trans child, has reportedly been jailed and denied bail for violating a gag order banning him from discussing the story.
>
> Robert Hoogland was denied bail by the Vancouver Supreme Court on Friday and will remain in the North Fraser remand prison, according to news website the Post Millennial. He was arrested this week for contempt of court, due to his continued violation of an order restricting his speech regarding his transgender child.

I also reported on the case of an Apple senior software engineer named Ted Hudacko.

Here's a report about him from City Journal:

> Shortly after returning from a trip to New York with their two sons, Hudacko's wife, Christine, told him that she wanted a divorce—and that their oldest son identified as transgender. During divorce proceedings, the presiding judge, Joni Hiramoto… stripped him of all custody of his trans-identified son. Hudacko was concerned about administering experimental drugs and preferred to wait and see if his son's gender issues might resolve on their own, as usually happens in such cases. To the California judge, this confirmed his unfitness as a father.

I also reported on the case of a father from Texas named Jeff Younger, whose ex-wife wants to trans their kid.

And there a recent report about the status of his case in the New York Post:

> A California judge dealt a devastating blow to a Texas father in his years-long fight to stop his ex-wife from allowing their pre-teen son, who identifies as a girl named "Luna," to receive gender-affirming care.
>
> Father of two Jeff Younger, 59, announced on X that he "lost all parental rights" over his twin sons after Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Mark Juhas granted his estranged pediatrician ex-wife Anne Georgulas the authority to "castrate" his 12-year-old son James.

I blogged on all of these cases, but it's doubtful that pastors and pro-marriage sociologists have heard of any of them. They just want men to use their strength and finances to make women happy, and they don't care about the actual risks and costs that men are facing.

But there's been another case in the news just in the past week, reported in The Federalist:

> After raising concerns about his then-13-year-old son taking puberty blockers and starting on a path to irreversible, experimental, and life-long medical interventions to "transition" into a girl, the Colorado government stripped father Robert Cameron of all rights to protect his child.
>
> Colorado was able to do that because the child's mother and Cameron's ex-wife, Nancy Drake, used Colorado's "affirmation only" legal structure to wage a war against Cameron through the courts. Drake, who joined forces with an activist therapist, has been able to use government force to push the now-14-year-old boy into the transition interventions which, if pursued in full, have the power to sterilize, reduce brain development, and cause bone density issues, among a host of other gruesome effects.
>
> "My child is more important to me than whatever the court system may do to me. If my child needs to be saved, it's my job as a parent to save him, and he needs to be saved right now. He needs to be saved from predation and

> manipulation," Cameron told The Federalist. "I haven't slept well in forever because I'm afraid for my child. I also see the adults preying on this child's innocence. This all falls under the sexualization of children that we are engaging in as a society. That's absolutely appalling. And I'm not even talking about the medical experiments we're doing on children."
>
> […]Cameron's primary goal is to have his son be able to wait until he is 18 to make the decision, but Drake, who appears to have trigger-happy, extraordinarily litigious lawyers behind her, need the transition to start now, no questions asked — literally.
>
> Drake, an academic in a left-wing community in Colorado with whom Cameron shares joint custody, successfully got the state of Colorado to block Cameron's oversight over their son's medical treatment or even speak to him about transgenderism…
>
> […]Drake did not respond to The Federalist's request for comment, but within minutes of the request being sent, she threatened Cameron with calling Child Protective Services if he spoke to the media, claiming doing so means that he "intended [their son] to be harmed" and that it is "proof of child abuse."
>
> […]Some weeks ago, Drake also attempted to stop Cameron's ability to speak to pretty much anyone by requesting a gag order on top of the others already issued that would encompass "friends … anyone in our social circle … activists, and … the media," claiming it puts their children (their son is one of two twins, the other, a girl) in "physical, medical, and psychological danger," according to an email sent to the case arbitrator reviewed by The Federalist.
>
> Drake threatened Cameron's ability to have parenting time with their children at all.

Now, in every case I presented, I blame the MAN 100% for the problems he is facing. Why? Because people don't change after you marry them. These women were terrible secular leftists before marriage, and these foolish men all chose to marry them anyway. Maybe because men tend to value youth and beauty above character. Men are responsible for marrying badly. And I have the same view when women marry badly. It's the women's fault.

My point is that good men who are not yet married look at these cases, and it causes them to want to decline to participate in dating and marriage. They don't like the fact that these social workers, therapists, lawyers, judges, etc. have this VERY LOW VIEW of fatherly authority and leadership. They don't want to be judged in a system run by man-haters. This is especially true for men who are well-educated and high earners. They don't want to be ruined.

So, what should we think about pastors, sociologists, and feminist Christians in general, when they try to blame the decline of marriage on men? Well, an excellent question to ask them is "what reasons do conservative men who are well-educated, and financially successful have for declining the offer of "feminist" marriage?" If their answer is to blame

and shame men some more, just understand that you are dealing with someone who is not interested in solving the underlying problem.

When I ask questions like this to social conservatives, even the ones who claim to be against divorce, they cannot bring themselves to take seriously the dangers of marriage for men. Instead, they try to make it seem that a man taking these risks is “brave” and “strong”. When I ask them if they shoe was on the other foot, and it was women who were facing these same risks, should she marry? And they say “Of course not. That’s unfair!”

Why is there this double standard? Could it be because *even in the Christian church, there is a double standard that asserts that Christianity is really about making women happy, no matter what, and that men are expendable for this purpose?* I’m not saying that the Bible teaches this. But I’ve found this view of Christianity to be extremely popular, and not just among egalitarians, but among complementarians, too. Especially the ones who redefine “male headship” to mean “servant leadership”. That really turns men off of marriage, because it makes them think that Christianity is being run by the ex-wives in these stories, and there is no support for male leadership at all.

Pro-life scientist convicted for offering conversation counseling in UK

April 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, we've been hearing a lot from UK voices, including the Prime Minister, about how the secular leftist government of the UK allows free speech, just as much as in America. The UK doesn't have a first amendment, or anything equivalent. Let's take a look at a very recent case and see what you can expect from the secular left if you act like a Christian in public.

Here's the story from The Stream:

> A U.K. court earlier today convicted a pro-life clinical scientist of violating a "buffer zone" outside an abortion facility in a trial that has triggered threats of trade reprisals from the Trump administration over "freedom of expression" in Britain.
>
> Dr. Livia Tossici-Bolt, a devout Catholic, was found guilty on two counts of breaching a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) or "buffer zone" outside the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) abortion facility in Bournemouth in March 2023.
>
> The 64-year grandmother from Italy, who lives in Britain, was holding a sign that read: "Here to talk, if you want." The Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), which is defending Tossici-Bolt, said that several women approached her to converse about issues they were dealing with.
>
> Tossici-Bolt was sentenced Friday to a conditional discharge and ordered to pay prosecution costs of £20,000 in full by May 31. According to the order, she will face prison time if she is convicted of any future offenses in the next two years.

You can see the sign that she was holding up in the image. Does that look scary or threatening to you? In Tennessee, you can hold up a sign like that, and you can have a conversation, and you won't be arrested by multiple armed policemen. But not so in the fascist UK. The secular left is very sensitive about speech that offends them. And they're willing to use force to stamp it out.

The bad thing about this case is that ADF argued for her, and they lost, which is unusual for the ADF. It shows you how far the UK has gone down the road of secular left fascism.

Here is her reaction to the verdict:

> In response to the verdict Friday, Tossici-Bolt said, "This is a dark day for Great Britain. I was not protesting and did not harass or obstruct anyone. All I did was offer consensual conversation in a public place, as is my basic right, and yet the court found me guilty.
>
> "Freedom of expression is in a state of crisis in the U.K. What has happened to

> this country? The U.S. State Department was right to be concerned by this case as it has serious implications for the entire Western world."

This sort of thing happens a lot in the UK:

> Pro-lifers were expecting Tossici-Bolt to be found guilty after they became aware that the judge in her case had already found pro-life advocate Adam Smith-Connor guilty last October for silently praying outside the same abortion clinic in November 2022.
>
> […]Judge Orla Austin found him guilty of breaching the buffer zone and sentenced him to a conditional discharge after ordering him to pay prosecution costs of £9,000 (about $11,700).
>
> In her decision, Austin reasoned that Smith-Connor's prayer amounted to "disapproval of abortion" because at one point his head was seen slightly bowed and his hands were clasped.
>
> […]In Tossici-Bolt's case, Austin said, "I conclude that she lacks insight into the fact that her presence could have a detrimental impact upon women attending the clinic, their associates, the staff, and members of the public."

I'm giving you all of these facts, so you can really understands what happens when people elect the secular left to run the government. A lot of people in the UK don't know the history of Stalin, Mao, and other secular leftists in history. But they are finding out now.

By the way, the Stream article notes that the leader of the Conservative Party of the UK had no problem with this verdict, and opposed the United States for disapproving of it.

You might remember a previous story that I blogged about, in which another pro-life Christian was arrested *just for praying* outside of an abortion clinic.

Here's that story, reported by the Daily Wire:

> Isabel Vaughan-Spruce, a 45-year-old charity volunteer, was arrested and charged on four counts after she told police she "might" be silently praying near the U.K.'s leading provider of NHS-funded abortion services BPAS Robert Clinic in Kings Norton, Birmingham, according to local media.
>
> […]Police arrested Vaughan-Spruce on December 6 and subsequently charged her on December 15 with four counts of failing to comply with a Public Space Protection Order in so-called censorship zones, which authorities introduced to criminalize individuals appearing to be "engaging in any act of approval or disapproval or attempted act of approval or disapproval."

Just a few days ago, there was an EXCELLENT article that appeared in the UK Telegraph, written by Allison Pearson. (archived here)

She wrote about another free speech case:

> If the name Lucy Connolly rings a bell it's because she was one of the 1,500-plus

> people arrested in connection with the social unrest which followed the July 29 Southport massacre of three little girls at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class. In fact, that's not strictly accurate. Mrs Connolly, then aged 41 – she turned 42 in prison in January – played no part in the rioting, but a tweet she posted on the day when Elsie Dot Stancombe, Bebe King and Alice da Silva Aguiar were murdered by Axel Rudakubana was enough to get her arrested eight days later, and charged under Section 19 of the Public Order Act 1986, with publishing material intending to stir up racial hatred.

The secular left in the UK has made a commitment to "multiculturalism". And they don't mean giving work permits to brown-skinned software engineers who speak perfect English, like America did with me. They mean letting in men of Middle Eastern origin, who have very different views of stabbing and raping than most Americans have. And if any UK citizen expresses disapproval of the stabbing or the raping, then the UK police is right there to put them in prison. In fact, that's what they think their job is.

It's very important for American tourists to understand that the UK is no longer a free, Western country. They've gone fascist. They have two-tier policing. You need to stay out of there.

> (Image source: Alliance Defending Freedom UK)

Does the fossil record match Darwinist predictions or Design predictions?

April 8, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I wrote a post about how you can make a simple argument for intelligent design based on junk DNA. Step 1: find out what Darwinian naturalists claim about junk DNA. Step 2: find out what design proponents claim about junk DNA. Step 3: compare those predictions with scientific discoveries about junk DNA over the past decades. Today we'll do it with the fossil record.

I'm going to use an amazing article from Günter Bechly (who recently passed away) from over at Evolution News. Günter used to write an article about fossils every Friday (he called it "Fossil Friday").

Here's an article, where he gave a nice overview of why Christians should care about the fossil record.

He writes:

> This Fossil Friday I want to address the common request to provide an expanded written form of my lectures on discontinuities in the fossil record (e.g., on YouTube) together with references to mainstream scientific papers that back up these arguments against neo-Darwinism. Since the sudden appearance of trilobites in the Cambrian Explosion is one of the best known examples for discontinuities in the fossil record, I chose the early trilobite Wanneria sp. from the Lower Cambrian of Canada as today's featured fossil. So let's jump right in.

Then he talks about the predictions of Darwinists and design proponents:

> Every theory makes certain predictions and these predictions have to be tested with empirical evidence. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution necessarily predicts a gradual development of life. Therefore he insisted on gradualism, against the advice of his good friend Thomas Huxley. Darwin quoted in his magnum opus *The Origin of Species* (Darwin 1859) not less that six times the Latin dictum "*natura non facit saltus*", nature does not make jumps, because he wanted to present a fully naturalistic explanation for the history of life on our planet, knowing perfectly well that saltations would have tacitly implied miracle-like intelligent interventions. The prediction of gradualism is not accidental and not a dispensable side issue in Darwinism. This was made clear by Richard Dawkins, arguably the most ardent modern popularizer of Darwinism, in his bestselling book *The Greatest Show on Earth* (Dawkins 2009), where he explicitly clarified that "Evolution not only is a gradual process as a matter of fact; it has to be gradual if it is to do any explanatory work." In another book titled *Climbing Mount Improbable* (Dawkins 1996) he explained the reasons with a beautiful metaphor: Imagine the task to reach the top of a steep and tall cliff from the sea shore. It

> would be an improbable (or rather impossible) miracle to achieve this task with a single big jump. However, if there was a gentle slope on the backside of the cliff, you could easily and effortlessly climb the mountain with a lot of small successive steps. This is the way evolution must operate according to Darwin and Dawkins: not by sudden miraculous jumps, but many small steps, that are each not unlikely to happen accidentally without intelligent intervention, and which accumulate over long periods of time to add up to big biological differences.

Engineers don't check in code gradually, one letter at a time. We check in a bunch of related changes to different files that implement some feature. Some days, I have a lot of meetings. Some days, I spend time doing code reviews or making diagrams or writing documentation. And some days, I get to write code all day. So, if you look at my Github history, you'll see that some days I have 35 commits, and other days none. That's consistent with having a "designer". The complexity increases in "jumps", with each jump containing changes to several files, and the changes add some new feature. But that's not available to Dawkins and Darwin, they don't like engineers, or sudden jumps in complexity.

Günter lists out a bunch of biological "jumps", where God pulled an all-nighter, with pizza and Mountain Dew, and checked in a whole bunch of new code all at once.

Here are a few from his list of about 15 of them:

- The Origin of Life (3.8 bya)
- The Origin of Photosynthesis (3.8 bya)
- The Cambrian Explosion (537-508 mya)
- The Carboniferous Insect Explosion (325-314/307 mya)
- The Early Triassic Marine Reptile Radiation (248-240 mya)
- The Mid Triassic Gliding / Flying Reptile Radiation (230-210 mya)
- Upper Triassic Dinosaur Explosion (234-232 mya)
- The Abominable Mystery of the Origin of Flowering Plants (130-115 mya)
- The Paleogene Big Bang of Modern Birds (65-55 mya)

Günter has the details of each of these, but if you have listened to our recent episode about the origin of life with Dr. Fazala Rana, then you already know about the first one. The point is that the fossil record has a whole bunch of "big bangs", where God checked in a whole bunch of new code in a very short period of time. This is strictly forbidden in Darwinian theory, but the fossil record doesn't care about theories.

Günter concludes:

> The gradualistic core predictions of any unguided evolutionary mechanisms such as neo-Darwinism are strongly contradicted by the empirical evidence. The cumulative conflicting evidence from molecular biology, genetics, population genetics, and the discontinuous fossil record can no longer be explained away as anomalies or as artifacts such as under-sampling of an incomplete fossil record.

> The total evidence is better explained with pulses of infusion of new information from outside of the system (top-down), rather than with a purely mechanistic stepwise bottom-up process. The only known cause in the universe that is able to produce significant amounts of new complex specified information is the activity of an intelligent conscious agent, so that intelligent design theory qualifies as superior alternative to unguided Darwinian evolution in an inference to the best explanation (abductive reasoning) among competing hypotheses. This is not an argument from ignorance (i.e., God of the gaps) as is often incorrectly claimed by critics, but is based on empirical data and our positive knowledge about the regular causal structure of the universe and the type of causes that exclusively are known to produce certain effects.

And I found a nice lecture that he gave on the topic:

The article was tough for me to understand, but I think I got the big picture of what he was saying. The video was much easier to understand. I blogged on this topic so that I can find it again if I get questions about what evidence there is for a designer. I sure hope that we are making more scientists like him for Team Design, because his post was quality work.

We did a podcast with Gunter recently, and it was popular on YouTube.

Colorado Democrats push genital mutilation and taxpayer-funded abortion

April 9, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought that states like Washington, California, New York, etc. were the worst blue states, but Colorado is really getting nasty. If you asked me what my nightmare is as a taxpayer, it would be having my tax money used for immoral things. I fled my home country in part because they were making me pay for abortions, IVF and sex-changes. If you're in Colorado, it might be time to leave.

Here's the story from The Federalist:

> Democrats in the Colorado General Assembly bulldozed their way forward to require health insurance to cover genital mutilation for children, kidnap children from parents who do not "affirm" a transgender claim, and make sure the state is the biggest taxpayer-funded abortion enterprise in the country.
>
> Left-wing lawmakers in the state House are advancing two bills related to "transgender" identity, one of which forces healthcare providers to cover everything from chemical castration to genital mutilation in their plans, while the other would codify "misgendering" as child abuse with the ability to strip custody rights from parents who do not "affirm."
>
> In the Senate, one bill codifies taxpayer-funded abortions, and the other one expands Colorado's ability to mail abortion pills out-of-state to kill even more babies.

They're also preventing Republicans from debating the legislation:

> Democrats in the House started the weekend by using parliamentary tools to restrict Republicans from being able to debate or object to the bill to only two hours.

One Republican legislator said "The most egregious moment was when they prevented any debate on HB25-1312. This bill enshrines that if you are having a custody dispute and your child is suffering from gender identity delusions, not affirming those delusions are considered child abuse and grounds for losing custody".

Remember that article I posted earlier in the week, about how white secular leftist women were choosing to trans their kids against their husbands wishes? Well, it turns out that this is being done intentionally in order to get custody of the kids. How? Well, the leftist parent pressures the child into gender dysphoria, and then uses that as an excuse to keep the moral parent from getting custody. Hello, big child support money.

The article explains:

> As The Federalist reported, HB25-1312 would allow Colorado to become a "transition" mill for parents who want to use the "transgender" claims of their

> children as a weapon in custody battles. As one parent advocate in the Colorado described it, the bill allows "state-enabled kidnapping."
>
> The bill would require that "a court shall consider deadnaming, misgendering, or threatening to publish material related to an individual's gender-affirming health-care services as types of coercive control," meaning that any parent who does not want to see their child mutilated.

And taxpayers will be paying for it – all of it:

> The tandem "transgender" bill in the House, HB25-1309, requires that all health insurance plans sold in the state cover medical gender transition interventions.
>
> […]SB25-183… repeals a constitutional amendment that prohibited the use of taxpayer dollars on abortions and adds one, recognizing the right to an abortion and prohibiting Colorado state and local governments from denying, impeding, or discriminating against the exercise of that right, including prohibiting health insurance companies from excluding coverage for abortion," a bill summary states.

Remember, transing a kid means a lifetime of drug use and surgeries to keep it going. So, if you're paying for health insurance, then you'll be paying for people to trans their kids and for abortions. Your health premiums will go up, because more stuff is being covered. Disgusting. The people who are living clean are subsidizing the people who are living recklessly. Can you say "moral hazard"?

And here's how opposition was characterized by the Democrats:

> The Democrats behind the bill are crazed, too, with state Rep. Yara Zokaie comparing parental rights groups opposed to the destructive bill to the Ku Klux Klan, saying, "A well-stakeholded bill does not need to be discussed with hate groups, and we don't ask someone passing civil rights legislation to go ask the KKK their opinion."

One of the divorce horror stories I blogged about recently was out of Colorado, and there, the secular leftist wife did seem to be using lack of support for transgenderism to wrestly custody (and those yummy child support dollars) away from her ex-husband. This legislation will definitely lead to more of that, which is why men need to take responsibility for choosing women who have demonstrated their morals and religion through a sustained pattern of action, over many years.

Daily Signal notes:

> Critics warn that a bill like this could make stories like that of California father Jeff Younger more likely in Colorado. Younger is battling in court to prevent his ex-wife from putting his son on experimental treatments to make him appear female.
>
> "It prejudices the court by saying any non-affirmation of gender, anything short

> of actual celebration of the genital mutilation and the hormone therapy, the conversion, is discriminatory and is coercive control," state Rep. Ken DeGraaf, a Republican, told The Daily Signal in an interview Friday. "It just prejudices the court in this civil arena."
>
> "This bill puts one parent waste-deep in a hole for the other one to start throwing stones at them," he added.
>
> Caldwell, the Republican who asked about stakeholders, told The Daily Signal that the bill creates a "legal imbalance that could lead to serious consequences for parents who do not affirm their child's gender dysphoria."
>
> "I believe the ultimate intention of this bill is to make it impossible for a parent to get their child help when the child is gender confused by declaring such help as child abuse," he added.

Personally, if you are a conservative man, you need to be in Tennessee, Oklahoma, Alabama and other states that are socially conservative. You do not want to be paying taxes and health insurance premiums to cover these sorts of behaviors. Part of being an intelligent man is to take action to achieve results. You don't choose to live in a blue state, and then cry victim when they smash your finances and your marriage and ruin your kids.

Australian judge sides with father against mother wanting to trans child

April 10, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know, I know. And from Australia, of all places. I would classify Australia as a secular left police state, at this point. I'm not sure if this judge's ruling will stand up. But it sure is amazing to see a judge side with the father instead of the secular leftist mother. And even better, the judge sanctioned an "expert" in transgenderism – in fact, a transgender activist – for misleading the family court.

Here's the story (biased to the left, of course) from The Australian. (full text archived)

Here is a summary I found on Twitter.

> BREAKING: A Family Court Judge has prevented a 12-year-old boy from receiving 'gender-affirming' treatment and removed him from his mother's custody after determining he does not have gender dysphoria, finding the boy had been surrounded by 'gender-affirming and external influences'.
>
> The mother claimed her son was gender-dysphoric from the age of 6 and started taking him to a children's gender clinic.
>
> Despite no formal diagnoses or consultation with the treating doctor, his mother gave him a female name and socially affirmed her son, including making him wear 'gender-affirming' underwear described as 'small, tight, and padded underpants designed to pressure and flatten his penile area'.
>
> The mother then sought the son to be prescribed puberty blockers, which the father objected to, resulting in court action. There was no formal diagnosis of gender dysphoria from the gender clinic until the commencement of the court case.
>
> The Judge slammed one of the key witnesses in the case, a paediatric gender-medicine 'expert' who for failing to meet court requirements in giving an 'objective and unbiased opinion that is independent and impartial' after she was found to be an advocate for trans people who's preferred model of healthcare for transgender children is 'gender-affirming' care and supported the removal of court authorisation for trans and gender diverse adolescents to receive gender-affirming hormones.
>
> The Judge also found the RCH Australian Standards of Care and Treatment Guidelines 'do not have the approval or the imprimatur of the Commonwealth or any State or Territory Government, including any such minister or Department of Health'.
>
> This damning judgment further highlights the need for an urgent national inquiry into youth gender medicine in Australia and a pause on all medical gender transitions for children and young people until this inquiry is complete.

So, this is a shock ruling, to me. It goes against the other cases that I blogged about recently where women were claiming that their children had gender dysphoria in order to get full custody of the children, and the maximum child support from the father. Basically, they wanted the father's money, and to raise the child without any male influence, and the family courts were giving it to them. Then we saw a case out of Colorado about legislation designed to label any dissent from transgenderism as "abuse", which is typically used in divorces to cut the father out of his natural role.

What I expect from family courts is what I see in cases of divorce. I expect to see false accusations against the father, with no supporting evidence. I expect CPS to show up and take the child from the father. I expect the judge to award alimony and child support to the mother. So, this story out of Australia was a real shock. My view of Australia is that it's become a feminized police state, where men are viewed as dangerous and evil. So I really was not expecting any kind of recognition of the importance of male influences in bringing up children.

Study: female same-sex marriages have the highest rates of divorce

April 11, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Sometimes, when I raise the fact that women initiate 69% of divorces, I get the response that this number is men's fault. For example, pro-marriage Christian feminists and sociologists will say "it's because men are less emotionally intelligent, they don't meet the needs of women". If that's true, then we should expect that lesbian relationships will be the most committed. Are they?

Here's a study from August 2022, published in the Journal of Family History.

The abstract says:

> The trends in marriage and divorce among male and female same-sex couples in urban and rural Norway were compared to different-sex marriages. Norway legalized same-sex living in 1993 and marriage in 2009. Cohorts from 1993 to 2018 were included. The 2009 gender-neutral marriage law appears to have had minimal impact on the rate of same-sex unions and divorces. Moreover, divorce risks are highest in female same-sex marriages, whereas male same-sex marriages have the same divorce risk levels as different-sex marriages. The divorce risk is declining for same-sex marriages in urban areas, while the opposite is observed in rural areas.

And down in the results section, we have this:

> Female same-sex marriages had the highest total divorce rate throughout the period, followed by male same-sex marriages. The highest total divorce rate was observed among female same-sex marriages formed in 2003, with 59.1% divorced before 2018.

Now, some people will say, but this is just one country. Yes, but it's a same-sex marriage affirming country. They've had same-sex unions since 1993, and same-sex marriage since 2009. So critics can't blame disapproval of LGBT for these numbers. And this study agrees with previous studies.

Now, let's make a comment about this.

I think this data suggests a wonderful question for men to use in the course of vetting a candidate wife for marriage. Just casually mention the study, and then ask her "what do you think the explanation for this is?"

There will be one group of women who say "that's easy. women are very emotional, and that causes them to have more difficulty keeping to their commitments. It's something that men should test for. Men should choose women who have a habit of taking on tough tasks, and seeing them through to the end. And maintaining their relationship obligations with difficult or demanding family members, friends, elderly pets, etc." That's the right

answer. I like women who do STEM degrees and work hard jobs in the competitive private sector, they tend to be good at sticking with tough situations and engineer solutions, instead of quitting.

But there's another group that will reply "these numbers are the result of external forces that are conspiring against women to make them fail. It's all the fault of insufficient resources, or social disapproval, or sexism, or the males in their lives." That's the wrong answer. I avoid women who do easy degrees like English, psychology, etc. They tend to go straight to a safe unionized job teaching children in the public school monopoly. That's not good training for commitment-keeping. It shows that they like to do easy things. Marriage is hard work. Don't pick a wife who likes fun and thrills. Pick a wife who engineers solutions to problems.

I do understand that women expect high quality communication and emotional intelligence in their relationships. To those women, I would just say, you need to choose better men. You need to know up front what marriage is about in the long-run, and you need to choose the things that you really need for the long run.

I wrote this post to try to help men avoid disasters when making their relationship choices. The best we can do as men is to take responsibility for our own choices. That means not letting ourselves be carried away by emotions. We have to test by asking questions. And even better than listening to an answer, is looking at the actions. Always look for women who keep their commitments when it goes against their self-interest. They are out there. Pick one.

I went on a date with a Christian woman who couldn’t defend the pro-life view

April 12, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Please note: this is a re-post, I have not been going on dates with anybody, recently.

I’ve been thinking lately about how to measure how committed and capable a person is on issues of interest to conservatives. For example, on abortion, most conservatives will say, “I vote pro-life”. But I think a higher level of conviction and commitment is shown when a person can show WHY they are pro-life. And I’m not looking for feelings, here. I’m looking for handling scientific evidence.

So, when it comes to the abortion issue, the first step is to answer the question “what is the unborn?” And again, I’m not looking for an opinion here. I’m not looking for feelings. I’m not looking for what your parents, or your pastor, or your church choir says. I’m interested in whether a person can cite some scientific evidence.

Fortunately, we have first class scientists who have collected the relevant information for us, like Dr. Maureen Condic, She’s an Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Adjunct Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Utah School of Medicine, and recently served on the National Science Board. She earned her Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley, and has published papers in peer-reviewed journals.

One of her publications (PDF) explains what science tells us about the unborn. The title is “When Does Human Life Begin? The Scientific Evidence and Terminology Revisited”. A good paper to have available, especially if your opponent has nothing but purple hair, tattoos and nose piercings. But if you want something easy, you can just use quotations from a variety of embryology textbooks (PDF).

Like this one:

> “Human development begins at fertilization, when a sperm fuses with an oocyte to form a single cell, the zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell (capable of giving rise to any cell type) marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual.”

Source: Keith L. Moore, The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology, 10th edition. Philadelphia, PA: Saunders, 2016. p. 11

Don’t just use one quotation, use lots.

Also useful to know is what the unborn baby can do during the process of developing.

Here’s an article from the famous Cleveland Clinic that explains:

> At the moment of fertilization, your baby’s genetic make-up is complete, including its sex. The gender of your baby depends on what sperm fertilizes the egg at the moment of conception.

And a bit further along:

> **Month 1 (weeks 1 through 4)**
>
> In these first few weeks, a primitive face will take form with large dark circles for eyes. The mouth, lower jaw and throat are developing. Blood cells are taking shape, and circulation will begin. The tiny "heart" tube will beat 65 times a minute by the end of the fourth week.

And a bit further along:

> **Month 2 (weeks 5 through 8)**
>
> Facial features continue to develop. Each ear begins as a little fold of skin at the side of the head. Tiny buds that eventually grow into arms and legs are forming. Fingers, toes and eyes are also forming.
>
> The neural tube (brain, spinal cord and other neural tissue of the central nervous system) is well formed now. The digestive tract and sensory organs begin to develop too. Bone starts to replace cartilage.
>
> The head is large in proportion to the rest of the body at this point. At about 6 weeks, a heartbeat can usually be detected.

Most abortions happen in the first trimester, and that's why pro-lifers say "abortion stops a beating heart". It's definitely human, and it's definitely killed in an abortion.

So, what's the point of this post? I'm saying that if you are a conservative, then you have to be familiar with enough evidence to be persuasive to others who do not share your views. Not just on the issue you like, but on EVERY issue – social issues, foreign policy issues, fiscal issues.

It's not enough for you to be happy that you have the right opinion about one issue. It's not enough that the people around you like you because they agree with your "right answer". You have to be able to make a case that crushes your opponent with evidence. Being a conservative isn't about you or your feelings. It's about the world out there – can you make a difference by being convincing to other people?

Of course if doesn't feel good to have to learn how to talk about issues using scientific evidence. It's work. And of course it doesn't feel good to disagree with people about controversial issues. But you have to get used to not being ignorant and not being liked. I know a lot of feelings-based Christians who know a lot about sports, fiction, music, essential oils, and other nonsense. They want me to be satisfied that they have the right answer to questions like "Does God exist?", "does military preparedness deter aggression?" and "does the free market system make people more prosperous than socialism?" But if I am out on a date with you, and I ask you these questions, I'm looking for more than the right answer. I want you to show your work. I want to see you demonstrate your ability to persuade people on the other side, either in your writings or in your discussions.

Don't cry to me about how you can't find a husband when you can't do anything that a

husband needs you to do. There is no path to impressing a conservative man that allows you to be lazy, ignorant and cowardly. I expect performance. If you are smart enough to get a college education and a job in the competitive private sector providing value to paying customers, (not a public school teacher or anything disconnected from reality, like that), then you are smart enough to be able to explain your views on moral issues and public policy.

Archaeologists find evidence for Biblical account of ancient battle

April 13, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

These days, many people are raised to think that religion is not about describing reality as it is, especially in religions that are closely tied to race, region or nationality. But Christianity is different. People are expected to become Christians because Christianity makes claims that are testable, and can be investigated with science, logic and history. Let's see an example.

This is from Christian Post:

> Archaeologists have discovered new evidence backing up the biblical account of the Battle of Megiddo.
>
> The battle is recorded in both 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles and is given as the cause of death for King Josiah, who was noted for being a pious king and is also recorded in the New Testament as an ancestor of Jesus.
>
> Josiah is praised in the biblical text for his zeal in turning Israel away from idolatry and toward worship of the Lord. He is also noted for encouraging the people to observe the Passover, with 2 Kings 23:22 going so far as to say: "Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah."
>
> However, it was not to last. The Old Testament accounts say that Pharaoh Necho of Egypt came with an army "to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him."
>
> […]Now archaeologists have found pottery fragments in the area suggesting that there was indeed an Egyptian presence around the time of the battle in 609 BC.
>
> Israel Finkelstein, an archaeologist at the University of Haifa and Tel Aviv University and the lead author of a study describing the finds, told Live Science that as well as Egyptian pottery, the remains of Greek pottery were also found, likely due to the Egyptian practice of hiring Greek mercenaries at the time.

Let's review some of the other major archaeological confirmations of the Bible in the rest of this post.

Consider this article from Be Thinking by UK apologist Peter S. Williams. It has a lot of examples, so let's just se a few.

Here's a good one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Bethesda
>
> John 5:1-15 describes a pool in Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate, called Bethesda, surrounded by five covered colonnades. Until the 19th century, there was no

> evidence outside of John for the existence of this pool and John's unusual description *"caused bible scholars to doubt the reliability of John's account, but the pool was duly uncovered in the 1930s – with four colonnades around its edges and one across its middle."*[38] Ian Wilson reports: *"Exhaustive excavations by Israeli archaeologist Professor Joachim Jeremias have brought to light precisely such a building, still including two huge, deep-cut cisterns, in the environs of Jerusalem's Crusader Church of St Anne."*[39]

And this one:

> ### Jerusalem and The Pool of Siloam
>
> In the 400s AD, a church was built above a pool attached to Hezekiah's water tunnel to commemorate the healing of a blind man reported in John 9:1-7. Until recently, this was considered to be the Pool of Siloam from the time of Christ. However, during sewerage works in June 2004 engineers stumbled upon a 1st century ritual pool when they uncovered some ancient steps during pipe maintenance near the mouth of Hezekiah's tunnel. By the summer of 2005, archaeologists had revealed what was *"without doubt the missing pool of Siloam."*[40] Mark D. Roberts reports that: *"In the plaster of this pool were found coins that establish the date of the pool to the years before and after Jesus. There is little question that this is in fact the pool of Siloam, to which Jesus sent the blind man in John 9."*[41]

I just read this one because I am working my way through John. In case you haven't read John, you really should it's my favorite gospel.

Here's another one:

> ### Herod the Great
>
> We have a bronze coin minted by Herod the Great. On the obverse side (i.e. the bottom) is a tripod and ceremonial bowl with the inscription 'Herod king' and the year the coin was struck, 'year 3' (of Herod's reign), or 37 BC.
>
> In 1996 Israeli Professor of Archaeology Ehud Netzer discovered in Masada a piece of broken pottery with an inscription, called an ostracon. This piece had Herod's name on it and was part of an amphora used for transportation (probably wine), dated to c. 19 BC. The inscription is in Latin and reads, *"Herod the Great King of the Jews (or Judea)"*, the first such that mentions the full title of King Herod.
>
> Herodium is a man-made mountain in the Judean wilderness rising over 2,475 feet above sea level. In 23 BC Herod the Great built a palace fortress here on top of a natural hill. Seven stories of living rooms, storage areas, cisterns, a bathhouse, and a courtyard filled with bushes and flowering plants were constructed. The whole complex was surrounded and partly buried by a sloping

> fill of earth and gravel. Herod's tomb and sarcophagus were discovered at the base of Herodium by archaeologist Ehud Netzer in 2007.

And one more:

> ### The 'James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus' Ossuary
>
> James, the brother of Jesus, was martyred in AD 62. A mid-1st century AD chalk ossuary discovered in 2002 bears the inscription *"James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus"* ('Ya'akov bar Yosef akhui di Yeshua'). Historian Paul L. Maier states that*"there is strong (though not absolutely conclusive) evidence that, yes, the ossuary and its inscription are not only authentic, but that the inscribed names are the New Testament personalities."*[68] New Testament scholar Ben Witherington states that:*"If, as seems probable, the ossuary found in the vicinity of Jerusalem and dated to about AD 63 is indeed the burial box of James, the brother of Jesus, this inscription is the most important extra-biblical evidence of its kind."*[69] According to Hershel Shanks, editor in chief of the *Biblical Archaeological Review*: *"this box is [more] likely the ossuary of James, the brother of Jesus of Nazareth, than not. In my opinion … it is likely that this inscription* does *mention the James and Joseph and Jesus of the New Testament."*

And finally one short one:

> **Tiberius Caesar**
>
> The Denarius coin, 14-37 AD, is commonly referred to as the 'Tribute Penny' from the Bible. The coin shows a portrait of Tiberius Caesar. Craig L. Blomberg comments: *"Jesus' famous saying about giving to Caesar what was his and to God what* his *(Mark 12:17 and parallels) makes even more sense when one discovers that most of the Roman coins in use at the time had images of Caesar on them."*[48]

This is a good article to bookmark in case you are ever looking for a quick, searchable reference on archaeology and the Bible. There are many more examples in that post.

Now some people might be wondering why archaeology doesn't confirm *every detail* in the New Testament. And here's what J. Warner Wallace has to say about that:

> But what are we to say to those who argue the Biblical archeological record is incomplete? The answer is best delivered by another expert witness in the field, Dr. Edwin Yamauchi, historian and Professor Emeritus at Miami University. Yamauchi wrote a book entitled, *The Stones and the Scripture*, where he rightly noted that archaeological evidence is a matter of "fractions":
>
> *Only a fraction of the world's archaeological evidence still survives in the ground.*
>
> *Only a fraction of the possible archaeological sites have been discovered.*
>
> *Only a fraction have been excavated, and those only partially.*

> *Only a fraction of those partial excavations have been thoroughly examined and published.*
>
> *Only a fraction of what has been examined and published has anything to do with the claims of the Bible!*
>
> See the problem? In spite of these limits, we still have a robust collection of archaeological evidences confirming the narratives of the New Testament (both in the gospel accounts and in the Book of Acts). We shouldn't hesitate to use what we do know archaeologically in combination with other lines of evidence. Archaeology may not be able to tell us everything, but it can help us fill in the circumstantial case as we corroborate the gospel record.

I think you can form an opinion about the whole New Testament based on the record of confirmations. The verdict is in: the New Testament should be presumed trustworthy.

What Christians should learn by watching how the secular left governs

April 14, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm hoping that more and more Christians are seeing how big government can thwart our ability to carry out Christian life plans. Bad government does this in several ways. They mismanage foreign policy, which causes expensive wars and commerce disruptions. They mismanage fiscal policy, which makes us all poor. And they mismanage social policy, which disrupts marriage and family.

The UK has been under the control of the secular left for some time. They have an open borders policy, massive government spending on wasteful government monopolies and welfare programs, and massive attacks on the human rights of taxpayers. And the more they squeeze taxpayers, the less the taxpayers can afford to run their own life plans, including the choices to marry and have kids.

Here's an example of how the government discourages marriage and family, by attacking parents who try to raise their children right.

This is from LBC UK:

> History teacher Vanessa Brown, 50, spent seven-and-a-half hours in a custody cell on March 26 this year, following a claim she had stolen two iPads which were traced to her mother's house in Cobham, Surrey.
>
> Yet it transpired that the two devices belonged to her daughters, and Ms Brown had merely confiscated them to encourage them to focus on their schoolwork, a fact Surrey Police has now acknowledged.
>
> "I find it quite traumatic even talking about this now," Ms Brown recalled.
>
> "At no point did they [the officers] think to themselves, 'Oh, this is a little bit of an overreaction for a moment, confiscating temporarily her iPads and popping over to her mum's to have a coffee'. It was just a complete overreaction.

The UK nanny state doesn't like when parents make children "sad" by enforcing discipline.

In the United States, parents would be able to use the courts to deflect government overreach into how they parent their kids. Or they could move to a red state like Tennessee, Oklahoma or Florida. But in the UK, all the courts are opposed to parental rights, as well as free speech and freedom of religion. So, government just goes wild in trampling the rights of the taxpayers who pay their salaries:

> Ms Brown was taken to Staines station, where she was searched, and had fingerprints and custody shots taken before being placed in a police cell for several hours.
>
> Surrey Police also sent officers to her children's school, pulling her daughter out

> of class in the process.
>
> Her ordeal was compounded, however, when she learned of the conditions of her bail, which would have prevented her from seeing her children on Mother's Day.
>
> It wasn't until half-past midnight that Ms Brown was returned to her mother's house – nearly twelve hours after officers first arrived.
>
> She told LBC she suffered a sleepless night and was left in a "catatonic state" by the experience.

In the UK, they have opened up their borders to Middle Eastern men, and many of those Middle Eastern men get involved in sex-trafficking white girls. When British citizens – i.e. – the parents – complain to the police about this, the British police ignore them. That's because the British police are more aggressive against the taxpayers than the criminals:

> It comes amid increasing concern about how officers are using their time after a couple from Borehamwood were arrested by Hertfordshire Police following their criticism of a local school on a parents' Whatsapp chat.
>
> It's a concern that Ms Brown echoed following her arrest.
>
> "They were able to send a police car with police officers to my children's school, they were able to send another police car or two to arrest me… I know people are making reports of thefts, of assaults and very violent crimes in and around our neighbourhood – and they're not getting a response for days.

And if the parents take to social media to complain about the immigration policies, then the police will go straight to their homes to arrest them.

The UK Times reported on this:

> The police are making more than 30 arrests a day over offensive posts on social media and other platforms.
>
> Thousands of people are being detained and questioned for sending messages that cause "annoyance", "inconvenience" or "anxiety" to others via the internet, telephone or mail.
>
> Custody data obtained by The Times shows that officers are making about 12,000 arrests a year under section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 and section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1988.
>
> […]Officers from 37 police forces made 12,183 arrests in 2023, the equivalent of about 33 per day. This marks an almost 58 per cent rise in arrests since before the pandemic. In 2019, forces logged 7,734 detentions.
>
> The statistics have provoked criticism from civil liberties groups that the authorities are over-policing the internet and threatening free speech using "vague" communications laws.

You might remember that the London Chief of Police had actually threatened to extradite Americans to prosecute them if they commented on the state of affairs (rioting, arson,

knife crime, sex-trafficking children, etc.) in the UK. That’s how crazy secular left totalitarianism is in the UK. They don’t even realize that there is anything wrong with running a police state against taxpayers, using the money they take from the taxpayers. Don’t let it happen here! Vote smart. Vote against the secular left. Vote against Stalinism.

Distinguished chemistry professor lectures on God's existence at Harvard

April 15, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was just starting out my career in America, I ordered dozens of audio lectures featuring Christian scholars defending the Christian worldview on the university campus. These lectures were recorded on audio cassettes. And they came to my house in a box. I would put them into my tape player and listen to them, then rewind the tapes and listen again. And these lectures are still going on.

Today I wanted to blog about a recent lecture given by a famous chemistry professor named James Tour. You might have heard of Dr. Tour. He has a stellar career doing research in nano technology at Rice University.

Here's his biography. I can only excerpt a little, because it's very, very long:

> James M. Tour, a synthetic organic chemist, received his Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Syracuse University, his Ph.D. in synthetic organic and organometallic chemistry from Purdue University, and postdoctoral training in synthetic organic chemistry at the University of Wisconsin and Stanford University. After spending 11 years on the faculty of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of South Carolina, he joined the Center for Nanoscale Science and Technology at Rice University in 1999 where he is presently the T. T. and W. F. Chao Professor of Chemistry, Professor of Computer Science, and Professor of Materials Science and NanoEngineering. Tour has about 650 research publications and over 200 patents.

I figured that the average senior scientist doing research at a university has about 40 peer-reviewed publications, and Grok agreed with that, citing a survey from *Nature* from 2018, which found that senior scientists (15+ years post-PhD) average 20–50 peer-reviewed publications. So, 650 is a TON of publications! And what's exciting is that his research is actually solving problems in the private sector.

Anyway, here is an article from the Harvard Sentinel, about his recent lecture at Harvard University, on the topic of the existence of God:

> On April 1st, Rice University chemistry professor James Tour visited Harvard to deliver a guest lecture on the existence of God. During his lecture, which was hosted by Christian student group Harvard Undergraduate Faith and Action (HUFA), Tour presented what he called a scientific challenge to the current explanations for life's origin, and he discussed the myriad of unanswerable dilemmas within the presumed scientific consensus.
>
> Tour, who was raised in a secular Jewish home but converted to Christianity, began by introducing his religious background and his ongoing nanotechnology research. He then overviewed the current state of research on the origin of life.

Here is the very important point. He made sure to say that he is not arguing from a current gap in naturalistic scenarios for the origin of life. He is arguing that the more our knowledge increases, the less plausible naturalistic scenarios for the origin of life are. In other words, it's the progress of science that is making things harder for the naturalist / materialist. And Dr. Tour ought to know, since he's one of the scientists making the progress.

But wait, there's more – a minimal facts case for the resurrection:

> With this, Tour transitioned to the historical evidence for the Bible being true. According to Tour, there are three claims concerning the Bible upon which most academic religious scholars agree: first, Jesus died by crucifixion; second, the disciples of Jesus asserted that Jesus rose from the dead, and they were willing to die for that assertion; and third, there were individuals who previously did not follow Jesus but converted after asserting that Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to them. They, too, died for that assertion. None of the disciples, in any record—including in their recorded thoughts—recanted before being killed.
>
> "No man dies for what he knows to be a lie," Tour stated.

It's great to see a professional scientist arguing for an inference based on the facts that "most academic religious scholars" agree on. And why do they agree on them? They agree on them because these facts pass the standard historical criteria for ancient biographies. These facts are recorded early. They appear in multiple sources. Many of them are supported by enemies, or outside the Bible. Many of them are embarassing to the authors of these biographies.

Here's the full lecture:

And I noticed that he's speaking at another famous university on April 15th: Cornell University. And he's apparently on a speaking tour, because his previous stops at Princeton and Dartmouth and Yale.

And I thought this 1 minute interaction with an agnostic professor at one of these talks was really a good window into what Christianity is really about. It's about taking up God's priorities in the little opportunities that you have.

He also has a weekly podcast! Find out all about him here.

Does the New Testament book of James undermine salvation by faith alone?

April 16, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Are people brought into a right relationship with God because God provides for their salvation, or must we do works in order to earn our place with God in the afterlife?

The Bible is pretty clear that God provides our salvation from our rebellion by himself, all we have to do is accept it.

Look at Romans 3:21-30:

> [21] But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
>
> [22] even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;
>
> [23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
>
> [24] being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
>
> [25] whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;
>
> [26] for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
>
> [27] Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.
>
> [28] For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.
>
> [29] Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God*of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,
>
> [30] since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

Here's theologian R.C. Sproul, to explain a passage from the Bible that seems to contradict the passages that teach that faith alone is sufficient for salvation.

Here's James 2:18-24:

> [18] But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."
>
> [19] You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.
>
> [20] But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

> [21] Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?
>
> [22] You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;
>
> [23] and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God.
>
> [24] You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Sproul explains the apparent conflict:

> What James is saying is this: If a person says he has faith, but he gives no outward evidence of that faith through righteous works, his faith will not justify him. Martin Luther, John Calvin, or John Knox would absolutely agree with James. We are not saved by a profession of faith or by a claim to faith. That faith has to be genuine before the merit of Christ will be imputed to anybody. You can’t just say you have faith. True faith will absolutely and necessarily yield the fruits of obedience and the works of righteousness. Luther was saying that those works don’t add to that person’s justification at the judgment seat of God. But they do justify his claim to faith before the eyes of man. James is saying, not that a man is justified before God by his works, but that his claim to faith is shown to be genuine as he demonstrates the evidence of that claim of faith through his works.

So yes, works are important as a sign to others that you believe what you say you believe, but not important for balancing your sins. Your sins are already paid for by Jesus, what you do in your life doesn’t add or take away anything from that. But I will say that if you can see that a person is spending a great deal of their time performing actions that are consistent with a concern for God’s purposes and reputation, then that’s a good sign that his faith is in good shape. Yes, even if he doesn’t do as much Bible study, devotions, singing and praying as he should. The important thing about actions (works) is that you can look at a person’s life and see evidence that he is taking God seriously – that Jesus is his leader, and that Jesus’ character is informing their decision-making and prioritizing.

Does neuroscience provide support for physicalism or dualism?

April 17, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When it comes to the problem of mind, there are some people who maintain that the mind is just reducible to the physical brain. Those are physicalists, also known as materialists. And then there are those who defend dualism, which is the idea that you are a non-material soul, and you have a body (which includes your brain). Who is right? Well, let's take a look at the science and see.

This post is from Mind Matters, and it's written by Dr. Michael Egnor.

He says:

> Neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield (1891–1976), who pioneered epilepsy surgery at the Montreal Neurological Institute in the mid-20th century, asked this very question: What does the brain do? He explored the question during eleven hundred "awake" brain operations over four decades. He needed patients to be awake so that he could communicate with them, to be sure that he was not damaging vital tissue while removing the tissue that was prone to epileptic seizures.
>
> Penfield could do brain surgery while a patient is awake because the brain has no pain sensors. A local anesthetic (similar to the novocaine used in dentists' offices) ensures that there is no pain in the scalp either during the surgery. Neurosurgeons still do this type of surgery today.
>
> While epilepsy patients were awake and their responses to brain stimulation could be observed, he mapped their brains using electrical probes to find and remove seizure foci but also to determine which parts of the patients' brains did what. He could answer questions like "What part of the brain makes us move our muscles?", "What part of the brain enables us to see?" and "What part of the brain enables us to have memories and emotions?"
>
> What fascinated Penfield is not so much what he found—i.e., which parts of the brain caused movement, perception, memory and emotions—but what he didn't find.
>
> Penfield could find no part of the brain that, when stimulated, caused patients to think abstractly—to reason, think logically, do mathematics or philosophy or exercise free will.
>
> He noticed the same thing about epileptic seizures as about stimulation during surgery. Patients who were having seizures did all sorts of things—they jerked their muscles, they saw flashes of light or had unusual sensations on their skin. They even occasionally had specific memories and emotions. Then they fell unconscious.

> But patients never had intellectual seizures. That is, they never had seizures that caused them to reason, think logically, or do mathematics or philosophy. There are no “calculus seizures” that cause them to uncontrollably take first derivatives. There are no philosophical seizures that cause them to uncontrollably contemplate Plato’s Republic.
>
> Penfield asked the obvious question: why did brain stimulation only cause certain mental operations, like movement, perception, memory and emotion to happen, but not other ones, like abstract thought and free will?

It sounds like the brain is responsible for low-level interactions with the body itself. It reminds me of “device driver” software, which allows higher software to interact with hardware devices, like graphics cards and hard drives. What the progress of neuroscience seems to show is that the brain is doing device driver work, but something else is doing higher operations. And that something else is what substance dualists like me would call a “mind”.

There are lots of good philosophical arguments for minds, such as consciousness, direct first-person access to your thoughts, persistent identity over time that does not depend on your (changing) physical body, the intentionality problem (thinking *about* something else is not something that a material system can do), as well as free will. And there are more of those, too.

But it’s nice to see that there are scientific arguments as well. By doing the neuroscience, we can find out what the brain controls, and what it doesn’t control.

I thought this part of the article was interesting:

> Penfield started out as a materialist, like most scientists do, but, as he learned more about the mind and the brain he became a dualist. He concluded in his book Mystery of the Mind (1975) that the mind is something separate from the brain, and that there are aspects of the mind that don’t come from the brain but are spiritual in nature. As he put it, “The mind must be viewed as a basic element in itself . . . That is to say, it has a continuing existence.” (p. xxi.)

The article mentions a new book coming out in June 2025, entitled “The Immortal Mind”. And I’ve already contact one of the authors of the book to see if we can get them to come on the Knight and Rose Show to tell us about all of this scientific research. I hope that will help our listeners to be able to have good evidence-based conversations about this fascinating area of disagreement between theists and atheists.

Michael Behe: can Darwinian mechanisms account for the origin of new features?

April 18, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've found a new article on intelligent design, and I didn't find it in my regular online haunts for science news: Evolution News and Mind Matters. This time, it's an article by Dr. Michael Behe, writing in the American Spectator, of all places. His topic is this: how do Darwinists explain the origin of new body types and new organ types? Do they have the naturalistic mechanisms they need to do the work?

Here's the article from American Spectator.

Here's the thing to be explained:

> As one prominent evolutionary biologist wrote in a leading science journal just a few years ago, "Modern evolutionary theory … has little to say about the actual history of life, especially the emergence of new levels of biological complexity, and nothing at all about the origin of life." But those are exactly the most intriguing questions! Why, after more than a century and a half, does Darwin's theory still fail to account for the mysteries it had promised to explain?

I looked up that quote and it does indeed come from this article in a science journal. The problem is, how do you come up with a complicated design like a bat's ability to fly, or a whale's ability to live under water? Do the Darwinists have a mechanism?

He says it doesn't work for complicated designs, because small aimless steps don't create a design:

> The stumbling block is that the mechanism Darwin proposed to account for differences — "natural selection" sifting random mutations — is quite the feeble tool. It can only work, in Darwin's words, "by numerous, successive, slight modifications," that is, one single aimless step at a time. If that first mutation is helpful, then great, it can grope for another step. But when a long line of coordinated changes is required to build an intricate system, selection has no power to look ahead.
>
> This myopic mechanism seemed reasonably promising way back in Darwin's day, when comparatively little of life's complexity was known, and when the foundation of life, the cell, was thought to be a simple glob of jelly, dubbed "protoplasm." Maybe protoplasm could be expanded smoothly here, shrunk there, and molded a little at a time into whatever shape was needed, the way a potter might shape soft clay on a wheel.
>
> Yet modern biology has revealed that cells are preternaturally sophisticated assemblages — literally automated, miniaturized factories. In the case of reproductive cells, they contain the tremendous number of complex machines (yes, actual machines, made of molecules) and instructions needed to build

> whatever kind of plant or animal they generate. Just try to think up a realistic way to retool a computer-controlled factory that is making cars into one that makes helicopters or submarines — one nut or bolt, one line of computer code, one tiny, random alteration in the factory at a time. That's the magnitude of the problem facing Darwinian explanations for bats and whales and many other creatures.

This makes me think about what would happen if I had to write code one letter at a time by throwing a bowling ball at the keyboard. You could hope to get the letters in the right order for something to compile and run, but problem not something like bat flight.

His article is actually about what modern materialists / naturalists are doing to try to save the idea of no-designer from all this emerging complexity. He looks at several of their proposed extensions of Darwinian theory, and explains why they don't work.

This is the one that stood out to me:

> Another EES idea is "Natural Genetic Engineering." Advocates of NGE point out that many of the tools molecular biologists use to manipulate DNA in a lab (to clone it, sequence it, and so on) are harvested from life, because cells are already endowed with a sophisticated box of tools to build and propagate life. If humans can use those cellular tools for their own purposes, the thinking goes, maybe cells can use them to direct their own evolution — to rearrange and improve their own DNA.
>
> But the elegant tools are already there — where did they come from? And exactly how is an apparently unconscious cell supposed to direct itself to evolve when intelligent humans can barely make simple changes to cells without unexpected, damaging side effects? Meanwhile, in lab experiments where cells are allowed to grow and evolve on their own, over many generations they invariably change by degrading genes they already had, not by building complex new ones. When biologists observe life closely rather than invent stories, they see evolution working mainly by de-volution.

The other ones he looked at were even more crazy. Well, if you're interested in understanding how to critically evaluate scientific theories like Darwinism, then take a look at his article. But, if you are already working in a biology department, it might be a good idea to be careful who you discuss this with. It might negatively impact your career to question this ancient, evidence-resistant theory of origins.

Knight and Rose Show #62: Jay Richards: Policy and Culture

April 19, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 62 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome policy expert Dr. Jay Richards to discuss policy and culture. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Heritage Foundation policy expert Dr. Jay Richards to discuss policy and culture. Jay explains how economic freedom supports religious liberty, and corrects popular myths about economics. He explains how gender ideology is a cultural Marxist attack on truth, and how the stories of detransitioners shape the debate. He also assesses the MAHA movement as a way to combat chronic diseases.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 62:

Speaker biographies

Jay W. Richards, PhD, is Director of the Richard and Helen DeVos Center for Life, Religion, and Family and the William E. Simon Senior Research Fellow in American Principles and Public Policy at The Heritage Foundation. He is also a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute. Jay is author or editor of more than a dozen books, including the 10th Anniversary edition of “Money, Greed, and God”. His most recent book, with James Robison, is “Fight the Good Fight: How an Alliance of Faith and Reason Can Win the Culture War”. He has also debated atheist Christopher Hitchens at Stanford University, socialist Jim Wallis at Trinity International University, and socialist Bhaskar Sunkara at the University of Notre Dame.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a

conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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William Lane Craig debates James Crossley on the resurrection of Jesus

April 20, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is my favorite debate on the resurrection.

You can watch the debate here:

There is not much snark in this summary, because Crossley is a solid scholar, and very fair with the evidence.

SUMMARY

William Lane Craig's opening speech

Two contentions:

- There are four minimal facts that are accepted by most historians
- The best explanation of the four minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

Contention 1 of 2:

Fact 1: The burial

- The burial is multiply attested
  - The burial is based on the early source material that Mark used for his gospel
  - Scholars date this Markan source to within 10 years of the crucifixion
  - The burial is also in the early passage in 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - So you have 5 sources, some of which are very early
- The burial is credited to a member of the Sanhedrin
  - the burial is probable because shows an enemy of the church doing right
  - this makes it unlikely to to be an invention

Fact 2: The empty tomb

- The burial story supports the empty tomb
  - the site of Jesus' grave was known
  - the disciples could not proclaim a resurrection if the body were still in it
  - the antagonists to the early Christians could have produced the body
- The empty tomb is multiple attested
  - it's mentioned explicitly in Mark
  - it's in the separate sources used by Matthew and John
  - it's in the early sermons documented in Acts
  - it's implied by 1 Cor 15:3-8, because resurrection requires that the body is missing
- The empty tomb was discovered by women

    - the testimony of women of women was not normally allowed in courts of law
    - if this story was being made up, they would have chosen male disciples
- The empty tomb discover lacks legendary embellishment
    - there is no theological or apologetical reflection on the meaning of the tomb
- The early Jewish response implies that the tomb was empty
    - the response was that the disciples stole the body
    - that requires that the tomb was found empty

Fact 3: The appearances to individuals and groups, some of the them hostile

- The list of appearances is in 1 Cor 15:3-8
    - this material is extremely early, withing 1-3 years after the cross
    - James, the brother of Jesus, was not a believer when he got his appearance
    - Paul was hostile to the early church when he got his appearance
- Specific appearances are multiply attested
    - Peter: attested by Luke and Paul
    - The twelve: attested by Luke, John and Paul
    - The women: attested by Matthew and John

Fact 4: The early belief in the resurrection emerged in a hostile environment

- There was no background belief in a dying Messiah
- There was no background belief in a single person resurrecting before the general resurrection of all of the righteous at the end of the age
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus
- The resurrection is the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples from frightened to reckless of death

Contention 2 of 2:

- The resurrection is the best explanation because it passes C.B. McCullough's six tests for historical explanations
- None of the naturalistic explanations accounts for the minimal facts as well as the resurrection

James Crossley's opening speech

Appeals to the majority of scholars doesn't prove anything

- the majority of people in the west are Christians so of course there are a majority of scholars that support the resurrection
- there are Christian schools where denial of the resurrection can result in termination

The best early sources (1 Cor 15:3-8 and Mark) are not that good

1 Cor 15:3-8 doesn't support the empty tomb

- verse 4 probably does imply a bodily resurrection
- the passage does have eyewitnesses to appearances of Jesus
- but there are no eyewitnesses to the empty tomb in this source
- appearances occur in other cultures in different times and places
- Jesus viewed himself as a martyr
- his followers may have had hallucinations

Mark 16:1-8

- Mark is dated to the late 30s and early 40s
- The women who discover the tomb tell no one about the empty tomb

The gospels show signs of having things added to them

- Jewish story telling practices allowed the teller to make things up to enhance their hero
- one example of this would be the story of the earthquake and the people coming out of their graves
- that story isn't in Mark, nor any external sources like Josephus
- if there really was a mass resurrection, where are these people today?
- so this passage in Matthew clearly shows that at least some parts of the New Testament could involve
- what about the contradiction between the women tell NO ONE and yet other people show up at the empty tomb
- the story about Jesus commissioning the early church to evangelize Gentiles was probably added
- there are also discrepancies in the timing of events and appearances
- why are there explicit statements of high Christology in John, but not in the earlier sources?

William Lane Craig's first rebuttal

Crossley's response to the burial: he accepts it

Crossley's response to the empty tomb: he thinks it was made up

- rabbinical stories are not comparable to the gospel accounts
- the rabbinical stories are just anecdotal creative story-telling
- the gospels are ancient biographies – the genre is completely different
- the rabbinic miracle stories are recorded much later than the gospels
- the rabbi's legal and moral ideas were written down right away
- the miracle stories were written down a century or two later
- in contrast, the miracle stories about Jesus are in the earliest sources, like Mark
- the rabbinical stories are intended as entertainment, not history
- the gospels are intended as biography
- just because there are some legendary/apocalyptic elements in Matthew, it doesn't

undermine things like the crucfixion that are historically accurate

Crossley's response to the evidence for the empty tomb:

- no response to the burial
- the empty tomb cannot be made up, it was implied by Paul early on
- the women wouldn't have said nothing forever – they eventually talked after they arrived to where the disciples were
- no response to the lack of embellishment
- no response to the early Jewish polemic

Crossley's response to the appearances

- he agrees that the first followers of Jesus had experiences where they thought Jesus was still alive

Crossley's response to the early belief in the bodily resurrection:

- no response about how this belief in a resurrection could have emerged in the absence of background belief in the death of the Messiah and the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the age

What about Crossley's hallucination theory?

- Crossley says that the followers of Jesus had visions, and they interpreted these visions against the story of the Maccabean martyrs who looked forward to their own resurrections
- but the hallucination hypothesis doesn't account for the empty tomb
- and the Maccabean martyrs were not expecting the resurrection of one man, and certainly not the Messiah – so that story doesn't provide the right background belief for a hallucination of a single resurrected person prior to the end of the age
- if the appearances were non-physical, the disciples would not have applied the word resurrection – it would just have been a vision
- the visions could easily be reconciled with the idea that somehow God was pleased with Jesus and that he had some glorified/vindicated non-corporeal existence – but not resurrection
- not only that, the hallucination hypothesis doesn't even explain the visions, because there were visions to groups, to skeptics and to enemies in several places

What about the argument that only Christians accept the resurrection?

- it's an ad hominem attack that avoids the arguments

James Crossley's first rebuttal

Regarding the burial:

- I could be persuaded of that the burial account is accurate

Regarding the non-expectation of a suffering/dying Messiah:

- Jesus thought he was going to die
- this thinking he was going to die overturned all previous Messianic expectations that the Messiah wouldn't suffer or die
- the early Jews could easily reconcile the idea of a suffering, dead man killed by the Romans with the power of the all-powerful Messiah who supposed to reign forever
- no actually bodily resurrection would have to happen to get them to continue to identify an executed corpse with the role of Messiah

Regarding the belief in the bodily resurrection:

- it would be natural for Jews, who believed in a general resurrection of all the rigtheous dead at the end of the age, to interpret a non-physical vision of one man after he died as a bodily resurrection, even though no Jew had ever considered the resurrection of one man before the general resurrection before Jesus

Regarding the testimony of the women:

- Just because women were not able to testify in courts of law (unless there were no male witnesses), the early church might still invent a story where the women are the first witnesses
- first, the disciples had fled the scene, so only the women were left
- and it would have been a good idea for the early church to invent women as the first witnesses – the fact that they could not testify in court makes them ideal witnesses and very persuasive
- also, it's a good idea to invent women as witnesses, because the Romans had a rule that said that they never killed women, so they wouldn't have killed these women – Romans only ever kill men
- in any case, the first witness to the empty tomb is angel, so as long as people could talk to the angel as being the first witness, that's the best story to invent

Regarding the consensus of Christian scholars:

- I am not saying that Craig's facts are wrong, just that appealing to consensus is not legitimate
- he has to appeal to the evidence, not the consensus

Regarding my naturalistic bias:

- I don't know or care if naturalism is true, let's look at the evidence

Regarding the genre of the gospels:

- the creative story-telling is common in all genres, it's not a genre in itself
- stuff about Roman emperors also has creative story-telling

Regarding the legendary nature of the empty tomb in Mark:

- First, Christians interpreted the visions as a bodily resurrection
- Second, they invented the story of the empty tomb to go with that interpretation
- Third, they died for their invention

William Lane Craig's second rebuttal

The burial:

- Bill's case doesn't need to know the specifics of the burial, only that the location was known
- the location is important because it supports the empty tomb
- to proclaim a resurrection, the tomb would have to be empty
- a tomb with a known location is easier to check

The empty tomb:

- creative story telling was common in Judaism: retelling OT stories (midrash), romances/novels, rabbinical anecdotes
- but the gospels are none of these genres – the gospels are ancient biographies
- Craig also gave five arguments as to why the tomb was empty
- the burial story supports the empty tomb
- there is multiple *independent* attestation, then it cannot be a creative fiction invented in Mark alone
- the witnesses were in Jerusalem, so they were in a position to know
- regarding the women, even though Jesus respected the women, their testimony would not be convincing to *others*, so why invent a story where they are the witnesses
- the male disciples did not flee the scene, for example, Peter was there to deny Jesus three times
- if the story is made up, who cares what the male disciples did, just invent them on the scene anyway
- the angel is not authoritative, because the angel cannot be questioned, but the women can be questioned
- there was no response on the lack of embellishment
- there was no response to the earliest Jewish response implying that the tomb was empty

The appearances:

- we agree on the appearances

The early belief in the resurrection:

- he says that Jesus predicted his own death
- yes, but that would only cause people to think that he was a martyr, not that he was the messiah – something else is needed for them to keep their believe that he was the Messiah even after he died, because the Messiah wasn't supposed to die
- and of course, there was no expectation of a single person rising from the dead before the general resurrection, and certainly not the Messiah

The consensus of scholars:

- Jewish scholars like Geza Vermes and Pinchas Lapide accept these minimal facts like the empty tomb, it's not just Christian scholars

Against Crossley's hallucination hypothesis:

- it doesn't explain the empty the tomb
- it doesn't explain the early belief in the resurrection
- hallucinations would only lead to the idea that God had exalted/glorified Jesus, not that he was bodily raised from the dead
- the hallucination theory cannot accommodate all of the different kinds of appearances; individual, group, skeptic, enemy, etc.

The pre-supposition of naturalism:

- if Crossley is not committed to naturalism, then he should be open to the minimal facts and to the best explanation of those facts
- the hallucination hypothesis has too many problems
- the resurrection hypothesis explains everything, and well

James Crossley's second rebuttal

Religious pluralism:

- well, there are lots of other religious books
- those other religious books have late sources, and are filled with legends and myths, and no eyewitness testimony
- so why should we trust 1 Cor 15 and the early source for Mark and the other early eyewitness testimony in the New Testament?
- if other religious books can be rejected for historical reasons, then surely the New Testament can be rejected for historical reasons

Genre:

- the genre of ancient biography *can* incorporate and commonly incorporates invented legendaryt story-telling

- this is common in Roman, Greek and Jewish literature and everyone accepts that

Empty tomb: multiple attestation

- ok, so maybe the empty tomb is multiply attested, but that just gets back to a belief, not to a fact
- multiple attestation is not the only criteria, and Craig needs to use the other criteria to make his case stronger

Empty tomb: invented

- if there is a belief in the resurrection caused by the visions, then the empty tomb would have to be invented
- why aren't there more reliable stories of people visiting the empty tomb in more sources?

Empty tomb: role of the women

- there are women who have an important role in the Bible, like Judith and Esther
- Mark's passage may have used women who then kept silent in order to explain why no one knew where the empty tomb was
- if the fleeing of the men is plausible to explain the women, then why not use that? why appeal to the supernatural?
- we should prefer any explanation that is naturalistic even if it is not as good as the supernatural explanation at explaining everything

Empty tomb: embellishment

- well there is an angel there, that's an embellishment
- anyway, when you say there is no embellishment, what are you comparing it to that makes you say that?

Appearances: anthropology

- I've read anthropology literature that has some cases where people have hallucinations as groups

Appearances: theology

- the hallucinations would not be interpreted against the background theological beliefs that ruled out the resurrection of one man before then general resurrection of all the righteous dead
- these hallucinations could have been so compelling that they made the earliest Christians, and skeptics like James, and enemies like the Pharisee Paul abandon all of their previous background beliefs, proclaim the new doctrine of a crucified and resurrected Messiah which no one had ever expected, and then gone on to die for

that belief
- the hallucinations could have changed all of their theology and reversed all of their beliefs about the what the word resurrection meant

William Lane Craig's conclusion

Supernaturalism:

- None of the four facts are supernatural, they are natural, and ascertained by historians using normal historical methods
- the supernatural part only comes in after we decide on the facts when we are deciding which explanation is the best
- a tomb being found empty is not a miraculous fact

Genre:

- the gospels are not analagous to these rabbinical stories, the purpose and dating is different

Empty tomb:

- what multiple attestation shows is that it was not made-up by Mark
- and the argument was augmented with other criteria, like the criterion of embarrassment and the criterion of dissimilarity
- Judith and Esther are very rare exceptions, normally women were not viewed as reliable witnesses
- if the story was invented, whatever purpose the inventors had would have been better served by inventing male witnesses
- Craig grants that the angel may be an embellishment for the sake of argument, but there are no other embellishments
- the real embellishments occur in forged gnostic gospels in the second and third centuries, where there are theological motifs added to the bare fact of the empty tomb (e.g. – the talking cross in the Gospel of Peter)
- he had no response to the earliest jewish response which implied an empty tomb

Belief in the resurrection:

- there was no way for Jewish people to interpret an appearance as a bodily resurrection before the end of the world, they did not expect that
- they could have imagined exaltation, but not a bodily resurrection

James Crossley's conclusion

Supernatural explanation:

- as long as there is any other other possible naturalistic explanation, we should prefer that, no matter how unlikely

Creative stories:

- some of these creative stories appear within the lifetimes of the people connected to the events (none mentioned)

Embellishment:

- you should compare to earlier stories when looking for embellishments, not later
- and we don’t have any earlier sources, so we just don’t know the extent of the embellishment

Jewish response:

- they probably just heard about the empty tomb, and didn’t check on it, then invented the stole-the-body explanation without ever checking to see if the tomb was empty or not

How the presence and quality of fathers affects belief in God

April 21, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an article by Paul Copan which points out how father presence/absence and father quality affects belief and disbelief in God.

Excerpt:

> *Seventh, the attempt to psychologize believers applies more readily to the hardened atheist.* It is interesting that while atheists and skeptics often psychoanalyze the religious believer, they regularly fail to psychoanalyze *their own* rejection of God. Why are believers subject to such scrutiny and not atheists? Remember *another* feature of Freud's psychoanalysis — namely, an underlying resentment that desires to kill the father figure.
>
> Why presume atheism is the rational, psychologically sound, and default position while theism is somehow psychologically deficient? New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz turns the tables on such thinking. He essentially says, "Let's look into the lives of leading atheists and skeptics in the past. What do they have in common?" The result is interesting: *virtually all of these leading figures lacked a positive fatherly role model — or had no father at all.*[11]
>
> ### Let's look at some of them.
>
> - *Voltaire*(1694–1778): This biting critic of religion, though not an atheist, strongly rejected his father and rejected his birth name of François-Marie Arouet.
> - *David Hume*(1711–76): The father of this Scottish skeptic died when Hume was only 2 years old. Hume's biographers mention no relatives or family friends who could have served as father figures.
> - *Baron d'Holbach*(1723–89): This French atheist became an orphan at age 13 and lived with his uncle.
> - *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1804–72): At age 13, his father left his family and took up living with another woman in a different town.
> - Karl Marx(1818–83): Marx's father, a Jew, converted to being a Lutheran under pressure — not out of any religious conviction. Marx, therefore, did not respect his father.
> - *Friedrich Nietzsche*(1844–1900): He was 4 when he lost his father.
> - *Sigmund Freud*(1856–1939): His father, Jacob, was a great disappointment to him; his father was passive and weak. Freud also mentioned that his father was a sexual pervert and that his children suffered for it.
> - *Bertrand Russell*(1872–1970): His father died when he was 4.
> - *Albert Camus*(1913–60): His father died when he was 1 year old, and in his

> autobiographical novel The First Man, his father is the central figure preoccupation of his work.
> - *Jean-Paul Sartre*(1905–80): The famous existentialist's father died before he was born.[12]
> - *Madeleine Murray-O'Hair* (1919–95): She hated her father and even tried to kill him with a butcher knife.
> - We could throw in a few more prominent contemporary atheists not mentioned by Vitz with similar childhood challenges:
> - *Daniel Dennett* (1942–): His father died when he was 5 years of age and had little influence on Dennett.[13]
> - *Christopher Hitchens* (1949–): His father ("the Commander") was a good man, according to Hitchens, but he and Hitchens "didn't hold much converse." Once having "a respectful distance," their relationship took on a "definite coolness" with an "occasional thaw." Hitchens adds: "I am rather barren of paternal recollections."[14]
> - *Richard Dawkins* (1941–): Though encouraged by his parents to study science, he mentions being molested as a child — no insignificant event, though Dawkins dismisses it as merely embarrassing.[15]
>
> Moreover, Vitz's study notes how many prominent *theists* in the past — such as Blaise Pascal, G.K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer — have had in common a loving, caring father in their lives.[16]

Not only is there that anecdotal evidence, but there is also statistical evidence. Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is

> regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, anyone who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an more difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others. If you want your child to be religious and moral, you have to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he makes, he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading.

My advice to Christian women is this. When you are picking a man, be sure and choose one who is already invested in Christian things and producing results. It's very unlikely that he's going to start from nothing after you marry him. If you value your kids, make a man's interest in developing and acting on a Christian worldview the main thing you are looking for.

Cosmologist Luke Barnes answers 11 objections to the fine-tuning argument

April 22, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is from the blog Common Sense Atheism.

Atheist Luke Muehlhauser interviews well-respect cosmologist Luke Barnes about the fine-tuning argument, and the naturalistic response to it.

Luke M. did a good job explaining the outline of the podcast.

Details:

> In one of my *funniest* and *most useful* episodes yet, I interview astronomer Luke Barnes about the plausibility of 11 responses to the fine-tuning of the universe. Frankly, once you listen to this episode you will be better equipped to discuss fine-tuning than 90% of the people who discuss it on the internet. This episode will help clarify the thinking of anyone – including and perhaps *especially* professional philosophers – about the fine-tuning of the universe.
>
> The 11 responses to fine-tuning we discuss are:
>
> 1. "It's just a coincidence."
> 2. "We've only observed one universe, and it's got life. So as far as we know, the probability that a universe will support life is one out of one!"
> 3. "However the universe was configured, evolution would have eventually found a way."
> 4. "There could be other forms of life."
> 5. "It's impossible for life to observe a universe *not* fine-tuned for life."
> 6. "Maybe there are deeper laws; the universe *must* be this way, even though it *looks* like it could be other ways."
> 7. "Maybe there are bajillions of universes, and we happen to be in one of the few that supports life."
> 8. "Maybe a physics student in another universe created our universe in an attempt to design a universe that would evolve intelligent life."
> 9. "This universe with intelligent life is just as unlikely as any other universe, so what's the big deal?"
> 10. "The universe doesn't look like it was designed for life, but rather for empty space or maybe black holes."
> 11. "Fine-tuning shows there must be an intelligent designer beyond physical reality that tuned the universe so it would produce intelligent life."
>
> **Download** CPBD episode 040 with Luke Barnes. Total time is 1:16:31.

There is a very good explanation of some of the cases of fine-tuning that I talk about most on this blog – the force of gravity, the strong force, etc. as well as many other

examples. Dr. Barnes is an expert, but he is also very very easy to listen to even when talking about difficult issues. Luke M. is very likeable as the interviewer.

SCOTUS to hear case on whether schools can override religious freedom

April 23, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm writing this post on Tuesday night, and I wanted to highlight a Supreme Court case that started on Tuesday. It's a case to decide whether parents in Maryland – a Democrat-run state – can opt their young children out of LGBT indoctrination, at the hands of the schools. As it stands, parents don't even have to be notified.

Here's an article in Daily Signal, written by Tiffany Justice, the Moms for Liberty co-founder. She writes about the "Mahnoud v. Taylor" SCOTUS case that started on Tuesday.

She writes:

> Since 2022, Montgomery County schools have used books like "Pride Puppy!" and "Born Ready" for children as young as 3. These aren't simple stories about kindness. They introduce complex ideas—gender transitions, Pride events, pronoun choices—that often conflict with the religious and cultural values of diverse families.
>
> Initially, the school board promised parental notification and opt-outs, but in March 2023, it eliminated these options, leaving parents like Tamer Mahmoud, a Muslim father, with an impossible choice: expose their kids to material they find inappropriate or leave public schools.
>
> Supporters of the policy argue it promotes inclusivity, but true inclusion respects differences, not silences them. These books don't just "teach tolerance"; they advocate a worldview that embraces "nonbinary" identities and gender fluidity, often ignoring whether young children can process such ideas.
>
> When these ideas are presented in the context of "being inclusive," it means children are inherently pressured not to examine or think critically about these notions but to embrace them.

What I find interesting about these cases, where goverment monopolies decide that they know more than the people who pay their salaries, is that there is no opt-out. So, the people who pay for public schools and school boards have real degrees and real jobs. They work hard to learn math, then they get their STEM degrees, then they go work in the competitive private sector.

But when they have to send their kids to school, they find the system is run by people who never learned math, never got STEM degrees, and never worked in the private sector. It's those people who want to indoctrinate children with their woke values.

So, do the STEM degree fathers get an opt-out of paying taxes for this system? No, they don't. They have to pay the taxes. And their children have to be indoctrinated. There is no opt-out.

In fact, asking for an opt-out will get you branded as a hater:

> Worse, school board members have suggested that allowing opt-outs encourages "hate," casting sincere beliefs as prejudice. This isn't a conversation—it's an accusation.

I don't think that I need to remind anyone about how the Loudon County school board in Virginia worked with the Biden government to label all parents who object to the mandatory sexualization of children as "domestic terrorists". And again, it's the parents who pay their salaries.

What's interesting about this case is that it is an appeal of a decision by the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals. That decision went against the parents. Do you see why it is so important for Christians to vote conservative at election time? There are so many of these fake ERLC / woke "Christians" out there telling people to worry about Democrat priorities, and vote for Democrats. What does it get you? It gets you school boards and schools that indoctrinate your children in sexual anarchy. Therefore, vote wisely.

Report from first meeting of Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias

April 24, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wrote a lot about the anti-Christian bias of the previous Democrat party administration. The Biden administration has a long record of anti-Christian prosecution: pre-dawn raiding the homes of pro-lifers, targeting Christian schools and organizations, labeling parents as "domestic terrorists", ignoring religious exemptions to medical mandates, etc. But now there is a new sheriff in town. Let's see.

Here's the story from Daily Wire, by Leif Le Mahieu.

Here's the brief overview:

> Attorney General Pam Bondi opened up the first meeting of the Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias on Tuesday by hearing stories about how the Justice Department was weaponized by the Biden administration to go after Christians.
>
> […]Other admin officials who attended the meeting included FBI Director Kash Patel, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., and Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

And here's an example of a couple of the stories:

> During the meeting, the task force heard from lawyer Michael Farris, who is represented the Cornerstone Church as it was under investigation by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for an alleged Johnson Amendment violation. The Johnson Amendment is a decades old provision in federal law that allows pastors to be prosecuted for making political statements from the pulpit.
>
> The panel also heard from Phil Mendes, a Navy Seal who was relieved of duty by the Department of Defense after it denied his request for a religious exemption to the COVID vaccine.

Now, you might think that groups like the ERLC would be very concerned about religious liberty, but actually, as I blogged about previously, they have other priorities. Ethics and religious liberty just aren't very important to "Christian" elites.

Meanwhile, there was more positive news from Dr. John Lott, writing over at Real Clear Politics:

> Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard has declassified a shocking plan by former President Joe Biden's administration for dealing with domestic terrorists. Last Wednesday, Gabbard released a June 2021 document titled "Strategic Implementation Plan for Countering Domestic Terrorism" (henceforth "the Plan"). But despite the release receiving over 6.3 million views on X by Monday morning, the major media has ignored the document.

Keep in mind that the Biden-Harris administration thought that parents who were concerned about girls being forced to shower and change clothes with boys were "domestic terrorists".

More:

> To combat this domestic threat, the Biden administration advocated censorship, closing people's accounts at banks or financial institutions (so-called "de-banking"), and gun control.

And who was going to be subject to these measures? Illegal immigrants who commit crimes? No. People with mental illnesses who are taking powerful drugs, who commit violence? No. People from crime syndicates and drug cartels? No. Actually, they wanted to use these measures on law-abiding Americans who disagreed with the Democrat party on policy:

> The Biden administration obliterated the line between lawful expression and criminal intent by encouraging federal agencies to monitor speech that involved no criminal activity. Once you read the declassified version of the Plan, it becomes clear that the Biden administration actions weren't necessarily by accident. Despite repeated public denials, it followed an explicit policy of identifying people based solely on their political views.
>
> In 2022, an FBI whistleblower exposed the rollout of a related document: the FBI's "Domestic Terrorism Symbols Guide" for identifying "Militia Violent Extremists" (MVEs). As Congressman Jim Jordan wrote in a letter to FBI Director Christopher Wray, the guide advised agents to be suspicious of symbols like "2A" and imagery referencing the Second Amendment. It also flagged historically significant emblems like the Betsy Ross Flag and Gadsden Flag as indicators of potential domestic terrorists.
>
> Of course, in December 2023, reports revealed that the FBI categorized "certain Catholic Americans as potential domestic terrorists." And FBI whistleblower Stephen Friend testified before Congress in May 2023 that he was tasked with recording the license plate numbers of parents who attended school board meetings and expressed concerns about topics such as critical race theory and gender ideology.
>
> While the Biden administration publicly stated their intent was limited to criminal activities, the declassified documents reveal the targeting of individuals based on their expressions of free speech or religious practices. The concerns and criticisms about overreach arose from the administration's explicit policy.

Interestingly, the report states that the Biden administration was supportive of actions taken by other countries who cracked down on their citizens for disagreeing with secular left policies:

> After a March 2019 massacre at a mosque in Christchurch, the New Zealand

> government pushed for Twitter accounts to be locked even for simply pointing out that the murderer was “a socialist, environmentalist, who hates capitalists & free trade.” That went against the government and the media’s line. Even linking to newspaper pieces making that point resulted in censorship.

The secular left likes socialism and environmentalism, so you can’t criticize those things. Even by pointing to facts and evidence. The secular left wants you to love their *ideology*. They don’t want you to *question* the results of their policies. You have to *approve* of their results. You have to *believe* anything they say, because they want what’s best for you. You have to *admire* them, because they are smarter and more moral than you are. You have to *trust* them. You have to *love* them.

We got a reprieve in the last election, but it might be worth sharing stories like this with your Christian and conservative friends, so that they understand that there are many secular leftists in America who are exactly the same as secular leftists in the Soviet Union, or North Korea, or Cambodia, or anywhere else where communism has been tried. In America, there are still enough Christians and conservatives around to put the brakes on their plans. Thanks to the release of this report, we know exactly what they were planning to do to Christians and conservatives. Don’t forget.

Notes for episode(s) of Knight and Rose Show about the Book of James

April 25, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Rose and I are recording episode(s) for a Bible study of the book of James. I asked Twitter's Grok AI what everyone needs to know about the author of the book, the book itself, as well as the apologetics significance of both. I've pasted what Grok had for us below, and you might recognize some of the scholars and authors. I thought it would be good prep for the podcast.

The Book of James and Apologetics Connections

Author:

- James, the brother of Jesus, known as James the Just (Eusebius, Church History).
- Leader in the Jerusalem church, not one of the Twelve Apostles (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews).
- Authorship affirmed; polished Greek explained by education or scribal assistance (D.A. Carson).
- Apologetics Connection: James's transformation from skeptic to church leader (implied in early traditions) supports the resurrection's impact. A family member's conversion counters claims of Jesus as a mere teacher, as skeptics rarely die for a sibling's myth (Gary Habermas).

Author's Fate:

- Martyred around AD 62 in Jerusalem.
- Thrown from temple pinnacle and clubbed to death for refusing to deny Christ (Eusebius, quoting Hegesippus).
- Death corroborated by non-Christian historian Josephus (Antiquities 20.9.1).
- Apologetics Connection: Josephus's mention of James's execution by Jewish authorities provides external, non-Christian evidence for early Christian persecution, bolstering the historicity of the New Testament (Craig Blomberg). James's martyrdom underscores the sincerity of his faith, a key apologetic for the truth of Christianity.

Audience:

- Jewish Christians dispersed outside Judea due to early persecution.
- Addressed as "the twelve tribes scattered among the nations" (F.F. Bruce).
- Primarily for Jewish believers, with universal Christian application.
- Apologetics Connection: The Jewish context refutes claims of Christianity as a later Gentile invention. The epistle's focus on Jewish believers connects to Old

Testament ethics, showing continuity between Judaism and Christianity, countering supersessionist critiques (Michael Brown).

Date:

- Written between AD 45-50, among the earliest New Testament books.
- Early date inferred from simple church structure and absence of Gentile controversy (Donald Guthrie).
- Precedes Jerusalem Council (AD 49-50), reflecting James's early influence.
- Apologetics Connection: The early date places James close to Jesus's ministry, minimizing legendary development. Its lack of later theological debates (e.g., Gnosticism) supports the reliability of early Christian documents, challenging late-dating theories (Daniel B. Wallace).

Purpose:

- Instructs Jewish Christians on authentic faith amidst trials.
- Stresses practical holiness: good works, controlled speech, wisdom, perseverance (John MacArthur).
- Complements Pauline theology, showing faith produces action.
- Apologetics Connection: James's emphasis on works as evidence of faith resolves apparent contradictions with Paul, strengthening the Bible's coherence (Norman Geisler). Its practical ethics align with Jesus's teachings, reinforcing the moral credibility of Christianity against secular critiques.

Chain of Custody:

- Part of the Jerusalem/Judean chain, centered in the Jerusalem church (Eusebius, Church History).
- James oversaw transmission of Jesus's teachings to Jewish Christian communities (F.F. Bruce).
- Distinct from Peter/John (Antioch/Asia Minor) and Paul (Gentile mission) chains; focused on Jewish believers.
- Preserved through Jerusalem networks, later canonized with attestation by Origen and Eusebius (D.A. Carson).
- Apologetics Connection: The Jerusalem chain ties James to the apostolic hub, ensuring reliable transmission of Jesus's teachings (Richard Bauckham). Early canonical acceptance in the Eastern church counters claims of late or forged texts, providing a traceable lineage for the epistle's authenticity.

Cool Apologetics Highlights:

- Non-Christian Corroboration: Josephus's reference to James's death (Antiquities 20.9.1) is one of the few non-Christian sources naming a New Testament figure, offering external validation (Josh McDowell).

- Skeptic-to-Saint Arc: James’s shift from unbeliever to martyr mirrors other apostolic transformations, supporting the resurrection as a historical catalyst (Sean McDowell).
- Archaeological Tie: The early Jerusalem church’s setting aligns with archaeological evidence of first-century Jewish Christian communities, like the Dominus Flevit ossuary, potentially linked to James’s era (Craig Evans).

Sources: Eusebius (Church History), Josephus (Antiquities of the Jews), conservative scholars (D.A. Carson, F.F. Bruce, Donald Guthrie, John MacArthur), apologetics scholars (Gary Habermas, Craig Blomberg, Norman Geisler, Daniel B. Wallace, Richard Bauckham, Josh McDowell, Sean McDowell, Craig Evans, Michael Brown).

Astrophysicist explains the problems with naturalistic origin of life

April 26, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There's an interesting article posted at Universe Today by Dr. Paul M. Sutter. Although he does accept unguided evolution after the origin of life, he doesn't think that naturalism can account for the origin of life. On this blog, I've talked about three problem's with life's origin: 1) getting the right building blocks, 2) getting the right information, and 3) irreducible complexity. Let's take a look.

Here is a link to the article from Universe Today.

Here is a quick bio of the author:

> Paul M. Sutter is a theoretical cosmologist, award-winning science communicator, NASA advisor, U.S. Cultural Ambassador, and a globally recognized leader in the intersection of art and science. Paul is a research professor at the Institute for Advanced Computational Science at Stony Brook University and a visiting professor at Barnard College, Columbia University.
>
> […]Paul earned his PhD in physics in 2011 as a Department of Energy Computational Science Graduate Fellow at the University of Illinois. He then spent three years as a research fellow at the Paris Institute for Astrophysics followed by two years at the Trieste Observatory in Italy. Prior to his current appointment, he held a joint position as the chief scientist at the Center of Science and Industry in Columbus, Ohio and as a cosmological researcher at the Ohio State University.

Now let's turn to his article.

It's always good to remind people what is required for the simplest kind of life, and he does that:

> To succeed at evolution and separate itself from mere chemical reactions, life must do three things. First, it must somehow store information, such as the encoding for various processes, traits, and characteristics. This way the successful traits can pass from one generation to another.
>
> Second, life must self-replicate. It must be able to make reasonably accurate copies of its own molecular structure, so that the information contained within itself has the chance to become a new generation, changed and altered based on its survivability.
>
> Lastly, life must catalyze reactions. It must affect its own environment, whether for movement, or to acquire or store energy, or grow new structures, or all the many wonderful activities that life does on a daily basis.

I remember listening to lectures about the origin of life by Dean Kenyon, Charles Thaxton,

and Walter Bradley in my younger years. If I remember correctly, the minimal functions of a living system are capture energy, store information, and replicate. Sutter does a nice job of describing an even longer list.

So what's the problem with appealing to chance and necessity to create all that? Well, in order to do all that, we need to have three components in place: DNA, RNA and molecular machines.

He writes:

> Put exceedingly simply (for I would hate for you to mistake me for a biologist), life accomplishes these tasks with a triad of molecular tools.
>
> One is the DNA, which through its genetic code stores information using combinations of just four molecules: adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine. The raw ability of DNA to store massive amounts of information is nothing short of a miracle; our own digital system of 1's and 0's (invented because it's much simpler to tell if a circuit is on or off than some stage in-between) is the closest comparison we can make to DNA's information density. Natural languages don't even earn a place on the chart.
>
> The second component is RNA, which is intriguingly similar to DNA but with two subtle, but significant, differences: RNA swaps out thymine for uracil in its codebase, and contains the sugar ribose, which is one oxygen atom short of the deoxyribose of DNA. RNA also stores information but, again speaking only in generalities, has the main job of reading the chemical instructions stored in the DNA and using that to manufacture the last member of the triad, proteins.
>
> "Proteins" is a generic catch-all term for the almost uncountable varieties of molecular machines that do stuff: they snip apart molecules, bind them back together, manufacture new ones, hold structures together, become structures themselves, move important molecules from one place to another, transform energy from one form to another, and so on.
>
> Proteins have one additional function: they perform the job of unraveling DNA and making copies of it. Thus the triad completes all the functions of life: DNA stores information, RNA uses that information to manufacture proteins, and the proteins interact with the environment and perform the self-replication of DNA.

What's the problem? The problem is that this all has to come together at the start, in order to have life. You can't build up gradually, from one component, to two components, to three components. All three are needed at the start. This is what Michael Behe calls irreducible complexity, but others have described it as minimal complexity.

Sutter says:

> The interconnected nature of DNA, RNA, and proteins means that it could not have sprung up *ab initio* from the primordial ooze, because if only one component is missing then the whole system falls apart – a three-legged table

> with one missing cannot stand.

And just to be clear, he would have to provide some evidence of "primordial ooze". As I've blogged about before, life appears almost instantaneously after the cooling of the Earth. He might like to appeal to "billions of years" to get that first replicator, but he doesn't have billions of years. Molecular oxygen, which is poisonous to origin of life chemistry, was present right after the Earth cooled. And that's not my opinion – that's right out of the prestigious peer-reviewed journal *Nature*.

Evolution News notes:

> A recent *Nature* publication reports a new technique for measuring the oxygen levels in Earth's atmosphere some 4.4 billion years ago. The authors found that by studying cerium oxidation states in zircon, a compound formed from volcanic magma, they could ascertain the oxidation levels in the early earth. Their findings suggest that the early Earth's oxygen levels were very close to current levels.
>
> […]Their findings not only showed that oxygen was present in the early Earth atmosphere, something that has been shown in other studies, but that oxygen was present as early as 4.4 billion years ago. This takes the window of time available for life to have begun, by an origin-of-life scenario like the RNA-first world, and reduces it to an incredibly short amount of time. Several factors need to coincide in order for nucleotides or amino acids to form from purely naturalistic circumstances (chance and chemistry). The specific conditions required already made purely naturalist origin-of-life scenarios highly unlikely. Drastically reducing the amount of time available, adding that to the other conditions needing to be fulfilled, makes the RNA world hypothesis or a Miller-Urey-like synthesis of amino acids simply impossible.

I understand that naturalists want to believe that nature is self-contained, and can do it's own creating. That belief is practically *required* in order to have careers in academia. Scientists have to at least *claim* that "naturalism can do it" or they would draw the unwanted attention of the Darwin mob – the people who got people like William Dembski, Guillermo Gonzalez, Richard Sternberg, etc. fired. However, the scientific evidence doesn't support naturalism. I wish more people would form their views based on scientific evidence, rather than on the religion of naturalism.

Reason #736 why men are opting out of dating and marriage: paternity fraud

April 27, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Statistics show that men are choosing to disengage from dating and marriage. There are many reasons for this. I can name a dozen. One of the reasons is "paternity fraud". Paternity claims occur when a woman has a child, and then tries to collect child support from a man by claiming that he is the father. Sometimes, the man she identifies as the father is not the actual father. This is "paternity fraud".

Before I get started on paternity fraud, let me explain how child support works today, from this article in USA Today:

> The most well-known case was of a Kansas boy who, at age 13, impregnated his 17-year-old baby-sitter. Under Kansas law, a child under the age of 15 is legally unable to consent to sex. The Kansas Supreme Court in 1993 ruled that he was liable for child support.
>
> California issued a similar state court ruling a few years later in the case of a 15-year-old boy who had sex with a 34-year-old neighbor. In that case, the woman had been convicted of statutory rape.
>
> In both cases, it was the state social-services agency that pursued the case after the mother sought public assistance.
>
> […]In Arizona, the Department of Economic Security oversees child–support enforcement. Its written policy is not to exempt situations like Olivas' from child-support responsibilities, unless the parent seeking child support has been found guilty of sexual assault with a minor or sexual assault.
>
> […]The state has more routes than the courts to acquire money from a parent. It can garnishee wages up to 50 percent of disposable income. It can take a tax refund. It can put a lien on a home or a vehicle. It can suspend driver's licenses or revoke passports. And it can seize money out of bank accounts.

And another one from Fox 2 Detroit:

> A Metro Detroit man cleared his name after Friend of the Court sent him a letter saying he had a baby with a woman he never met.
>
> […]Late last year, DeAngelo received a letter from Friend of the Court in Berrien County saying that he was the father of a baby girl.
>
> "Said she's a stripper from Detroit, we had a one-night stand at some hotel, and this is the story that was told to me," DeAngelo said.
>
> His wife first spotted the letter in the mail from Friend of the Court.
>
> "Let's just set the record, I trust my husband," Tyahvia Smith said. "I know his

> character, man of integrity."
>
> While waiting for the child's mother to take the baby for a DNA test, DeAngelo said the school where he teaches received an inquiry for possible garnishment in case the child was his.
>
> "It made it something that is not being alleged, but now it's something that's being taken into action and no paternity has been established," he said.
>
> Finally, the woman had the DNA test done, and DeAngelo has since gotten a letter confirming he was not the father.

The request for money comes to the man's employer first, the DNA test comes later, and only if the man fights the system to get it.

I show these cases, so that people will understand what men are facing from social services agencies and courts. Basically, in cases where a woman statutory rapes a man, she is still entitled to child support from the victim of the rape. One can imagine the uproar if the sexes were reversed. The laws are anti-male in many ways, this is just one example. Anti-male laws deter men from dating and marrying women.

Now let's look at paternity fraud, another example of anti-male bias in the legal system.

Here's a story about it from CBS News Detroit:

> A Detroit man has been ordered to pay $30,000 in back child support for his ex-girlfriend's child — even though he's not the father.
>
> Carnell Alexander brought his case to Wayne County Circuit Court with hopes for a fix. Instead, Judge Kathleen McCarthy told him Tuesday he waited too long to challenge the situation and "failed to take this matter seriously."
>
> Alexander said the paternity case started in the 1980s when the woman gave his name to a case worker so she could get assistance for her baby, who was born in 1987.
>
> The woman agrees that Alexander wasn't the father and a DNA test taken in 2013 backs that up. But that wasn't enough to sway McCarthy, who ruled that despite the case being decades old, Alexander still has to pay.

Here's another story of paternity fraud from NBC News Miami:

> A man in North Florida is fighting the state after he was told to pay child support despite DNA tests proving that he was not the father.
>
> Joseph Sinawa told NBC affiliate WTLV-TV that he signed the birth certificate because he did truly believe he was the father – adding that the mother of the child doesn't want him to have to pay, but the state is forcing the issue.
>
> "She told the judge she just wants this to be done and over with, and so do I," he said from his home in St. Augustine.
>
> Sinawa found out he was not the father after the DNA test was administered by a St. Johns County court following a custody question – but the state's Department

> of Revenue appealed the decision because they say Sinawa has not properly attempted to disestablish paternity.
>
> “At the time it had been taking $83 out of my paycheck, more than 1/3 of my pay,” he says. “When I thought I was the father I didn’t have a problem with it.”
>
> Sinawa is currently representing himself in court cases due to financial issues and has filed the necessary paperwork, but no time table has been set and it is unknown if he will be refunded any of the money spent.

According to this study in the peer-reviewed journal Epidemiology & Community Health, the median rate of paternity fraud across various studies is 3.7%:

> Paternal discrepancy (PD) occurs when a child is identified as being biologically fathered by someone other than the man who believes he is the father. This paper examines published evidence on levels of PD and its public health consequences. Rates vary between studies from 0.8% to 30% (median 3.7%, n = 17).

Even men who are not at risk for paternity fraud understand the lesson of paternity fraud. The courts are anti-male, and men need to stay well clear of those courts. And that means minimizing exposure to those courts. And that means keeping to themselves, and tending to their own problems and pursuing their own goals.

Men are getting smarter now. Men understand that society does not have their interests at heart. Now men want to be left alone.

Big federal election today in Canada, so let's talk about them

April 28, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, I like to follow the policies of other countries, like Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. It's important for me to see what the secular left is doing in countries that are a little further along with their socialism. On Monday, Canada is going to go to the polls to vote on their federal government. Will they give the Trudeau Liberal party a fourth term in office?

Here's the latest poll reported in the Ottawa Sun:

> The Liberals were in the lead with all age cohorts except for 35 to 54 year olds, where the Conservatives led by a 44 to 38 margin.
>
> Eight in 10 respondents said their choice was final or they'd already voted at the advance polls.
>
> Forty per cent said that Carney would make the best prime minister of any party leader, giving him a nine-point edge over Poilievre.
>
> Carney beat Poilievre across all age groups, eclipsing him by 20 points among respondents 55 and older.

The current average home price in Canada is about $700,000 CAD, which is about $520,000 USD. Young people can't afford it, but old people largely don't care. They just want to keep the good times rolling for themselves, and pass the bill onto other people's children.

You might be wondering why this happened, and the answer is that Donald Trump had a lot to do with it. The tariffs and talk of "51st state" did a lot to take away the Conservative supermajority that was being predicted by polls prior to his comments.

Here's what the Liberal party did over the last 10 years, courtesy of the Fraser Institute:

> After first being elected in 2015, Trudeau promised to balance the budget by 2019—then ran nine consecutive deficits including an astonishing $61.9 billion deficit for the 2023/24 fiscal year, the largest deficit of any year outside of COVID.
>
> From 2020 to 2023, the government racked up the four highest years of total federal debt per person (inflation-adjusted) in Canadian history. Compared to 2014/15 (the last full year under Prime Minister Harper), federal debt per person had increased by $14,127 (as of 2023/24).

Mark Carney, the new Liberal party leader, will be worse than Trudeau – his own budget shows why:

> Today, Carney released the Liberal Party's "fiscal and costing plan." Carney's

> plan projects the debt to increase consistently.
> Here is the breakdown of Carney's annual budget deficits:
>
> - 2025-26: $62 billion
> - 2026-27: $60 billion
> - 2027-28: $55 billion
> - 2028-29: $48 billion
>
> Over the next four years, Carney plans to add an extra $225 billion to the debt. For comparison, the Trudeau government planned on increasing the debt by $131 billion over those years, according to the most recent Fall Economic Statement.

So how are things going up north?

Well, this article from the Toronto Sun, about the most populous province of Ontario, caught my eye. It mentions "OHIP", the Ontario Health Insurance Plan, which is responsible for Ontario's system of government-run health care.

It says:

> Behold your tax dollars at work. OHIP has been ordered, for the third time, to pay for an out-of-country surgery for an Ontario trans, nonbinary patient who wants to keep the P while she gets the V.
>
> […]Called penile-preserving vaginoplasty, the procedure creates a fully functional vagina without surgically removing the penis.
>
> According to the decision, K.S., who's sex assigned at birth was male, is female dominant and "suffered physical, mental, and economic hardships to transition her gender expression to align with her gender identity."
>
> In May 2022, her doctor submitted the required request for prior funding approval to OHIP for a vaginoplasty — but without the usually accompanying removal of her penis. "(K.S.) identifies as transfeminine but not completely on the 'feminine' end of the spectrum and for this reason it's important for her to have a vagina while maintaining her penis," the doctor explained.

> Since that wasn't offered anywhere in Ontario, K.S. was asking for OHIP to fund the novel "bottom surgery" at the Crane Center for Transgender Surgery in Austin, Texas.

So, Ontario taxpayers will be footing the bill for an out-of-country transgender surgery, paid for in U.S. Dollars.

The author of the article notes:

> "K.S. is pleased with the Court of Appeal's decision, which is now the third unanimous ruling confirming that her gender affirming surgery is covered under Ontario's *Health Insurance Act* and its regulations," her lawyer John McIntyre

> wrote in an email to the Toronto Sun.
>
> According to the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, an intervenor in the case, “the Court of Appeal for Ontario is a victory for equitable and non-discriminatory healthcare funding for trans, non-binary and gender diverse people in Ontario.” OHIP was also ordered to pay K.S.’s legal costs of $23,500 — on top of the $20,000 in costs they had to pay for their appeal to the Divisional Court.
>
> But really, that’s out of our pockets, of course, including the thousands of (American) dollars it will cost for this out-of-country niche and experimental surgery.

The Monday election was a chance to stop the runaway deficits and the DOUBLING of the national debt, under Trudeau. But as you see, as long as there is money to steal, and virtue to signal, Canada is going to continue down the road to serfdom. We should learn from their mistakes.

New study: complication rate after baby-ending pill is 22X higher than FDA claims

April 29, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Whenever the topic of baby-ending comes up, I try to put forward a logical argument. One of the premises will always be “the unborn are living and have human DNA”. And for that, I turn to the science of embryology. Basically, I always want to support my case in discussions about social issues with scientific facts. So, in this post, we can add a new study to your quiver for discussing baby-ending.

Here’s the article about the new study, from The Federalist:

> In the “largest known study of the abortion pill,” Ethics and Public Policy Center President Ryan Anderson and Director of Data Analysis Jamie Bryan Hall used purchased Medicaid, TRICARE, Medicare, Department of Veterans Affairs, and private medical insurance claim data to determine that 865,727 mifepristone abortion prescriptions for 692,873 women were handed out between 2017 and 2023.
>
> Approximately 10.9 percent of those claims, or 94,605 chemical abortions, involved potentially life-threatening “serious adverse events” such as emergency room visits, hemorrhage, sepsis, infection, and/or follow-up surgeries for the women who had downed the abortion drug within the last 45 days.
>
> That rate, which researchers adjusted to reflect “that some women suffer from adverse events in multiple categories,” is 22 times the FDA’s <0.5 percent estimation printed on the Mifeprex label. The researchers also suggest that the 45-day timeframe they used is “conservative, as some adverse events may present later (and studies relied on by the FDA used a timeframe as long as 72 days).”

Notice how large the study is, this is not like those LGBT parenting studies of like 100 self-selected cases. Also, I like that they use insurance claims, which are hard facts. Some groups who support the pill use much smaller studies to reach opposite conclusions. But their controlled clinical trials are much smaller than this new study.

What’s the point of bringing up this study? Well, people need to be able to calculate the risks of their actions using real numbers. It’s fashionable today to tell young women “follow your heart” and then blame everyone else when that doesn’t “work out” for them. But a much better approach is to let people decide based on facts. It might even cause more women to choose not to have reckless sex at all.

Some women are taking these extreme measures by using telehealth or mail ordering to get this drug. But given these findings, it seems like it would be better for them to see a real healthcare provider to get the facts. And certainly the FDA should be more accurate about the risks.

You might remember that there was a famous case of this in the news recently. Although the secular left tried to blame the death of Amber Nicole Thurman on pro-life laws, she actually died from complications after taking mifepristone and misoprostol to end her pregnancy. What she needed to fix those complications was a non-abortive D&C. The secular left claimed that was illegal in Georgia, but it actually is legal, because it's not an abortion. Still, these drugs really does affect some women negatively, which is the point.

The Federalist article suggests these fixes to make the situation better:

> Changes like reinstating multiple in-person office visits, physician-only prescription, ultrasounds to confirm the gestational stage and rule out ectopic pregnancy, and mandated reporting of complications, the study suggests, could spare suffering women severe and even fatal fallout from the pill.

If you know anyone who is considering this drug, it might be worth pointing them to this study. These days, I see a lot of women having reckless recreational sex with men who have no intention of commiting to them. In fact, many of these women *don't want* commitment first. But there are risks to having sex like this. Sometimes, it can cause serious consequences. I think it would be much better if we coached women to choose better men, and to get married first. Then they wouldn't have to deal with unwanted pregnancies alone – there would be a husband there to help.

Have pro-lifers got what they voted for, when they voted for Trump?

April 30, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When people ask me how the Trump presidency is working out, I say that it's a mixed bag. There are definite positives, like border security and law enforcement. And definite negatives, like tariffs against our allies, and throwing the Canadian election for the leftist Liberal party. But many Trump supporters most important issue is the issue of life. How has Trump been doing on that issue?

Well, Life News is the source I trust for news about life issues, and they have a nice article about Trump's first 100 days.

It says:

> President Donald Trump has moved swiftly to advance a pro-life agenda in the first 100 days of his second term, enacting a series of executive actions and policy changes that have energized pro-life advocates.
>
> Since his inauguration on January 20, Trump has signed more than 139 executive orders, with several directly targeting pro-life policies and reinforcing protections for the sanctity of human life.
>
> These actions fulfill key campaign promises and align with the priorities of pro-life groups, who see the administration's early moves as a historic step toward curbing abortion and promoting a culture of life.

Sounds good, but I thought if I could get a few specifics, then I would be able to bring them up in discussions. I've been doing a lot of running around town for various tasks, and getting into good conversations with people. Auto repair, auto inspection, mower blade sharpening, Indian food, dentist and doctor check-ups, etc. So, I always want to have the latest facts ready to go in case anyone asks me. Of course, where I live, most people agree with me, but oh well.

Here's are two related ones that I can remember:

> The president followed that up with an executive order pardoning 23 pro-life Americans who Joe Bien unjustly convicted for exercising their free speech rights to protest at abortion businesses.
>
> [..]Furthermore, the administration announced plans to limit the enforcement of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, arguing that it has been used to target pro-life activists unfairly. This decision reflects the administration's stance on protecting the rights of individuals engaging in peaceful protest outside abortion businesses. The end of lawfare against pro-life Americans is a significant free speech victory.

This one was important to me. I am always furious when I see the Democrat party using

government power as a weapon against taxpayers who disagree with the Democrat party on policy. Sadly, we had a lot of abuse of power under the Biden-Harris regime, including unlawful detainment and pre-dawn-raiding of political opponents. Although these things do fit the definition of fascism, the corporate news media often had nothing to say about them. I'm glad that Trump had heard about them, and did something about them.

Here are another two related ones that I can remember:

> Trump signed an executive order reinstating the "Mexico City Policy," which prohibits taxpayer funding of groups like International Planned Parenthood that promote and perform abortions in other nations.
>
> […]President Trump issued an executive order enforcing the Hyde Amendment, which bars the use of federal funds for elective abortions domestically. This move underscores the administration's commitment to preventing taxpayer dollars from funding abortion services within the United States.

So, it's frustrating to me as a conservative Christian that my tax dollars go to support activists who disagree with me on all of my beliefs. You would think someone was weird if William Lane Craig was able to get taxpayer money to fun his debates on college campuses. But, that's exactly what's happening, when the Democrat party gets into power – except they hand out billions and billions of dollars to universities, companies and corporate news media. And that's not even to mention their other constituencies: criminals, single mothers, student loan defaulters, illegal immigrants, etc.

Now, before I even started blogging, I remember visiting home in 2008, and following my Obama-supporting mother around the house with a pack of printed out articles, complaining to her about how Obama voted against protections for babies born alive during abortions. So, Trump did something about that:

> President Trump also issued a statement endorsing a Congressional bill that would protect babies who survive abortions. And finally, President Trump signed the United States onto a document called the Geneva Declaration that confirms there is no right to kill babies in abortions.

Actually, the Democrat party supports not only killing babies born alive during abortions, but also sex-selection abortions (typically unborn girls) and race selection abortions (typically non-white unborn babies).

But there's more. Trump also stopped federal interference with pro-life laws at the state level:

> In other pro-life actions, Trump has dropped a lawsuit Joe Biden filed attempting to force Idaho to allow abortions.

I once had a debate with the President of the Evangelical Philosophical Society on Twitter. He was claiming that it was fine to vote for Biden-Harris, because Trump would be the same on abortion. I had to explain to him that Trump would not touch state-level restrictions on abortion. But not only did Trump not touch them, but he's reversing

Biden’s previous attacks on them!

I suppose that the President of the Evangelical Philosophical Society also opposed this action by Trump, since he didn’t support Trump:

> He froze some Planned Parenthood funding, cutting of $27.5 million to the abortion giant and he defunded UNFPA, which promoted forced abortions in China.

Anyway, there’s more in the article, so just read it, and then maybe tell a friend.

Trump has disappointed me in some ways, especially screwing the Canadian conservatives out of their supermajority with his tariffs and “51st state” clowning. But, we have to give him points when he scored.

Are Democrat-run states “smarter” than Republican-run states?

May 1, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I think that there is a view held by people living in blue states that they are smarter than people living in red states. If that were true, then we should be able to measure and see what this smartness has achieved. For example, I would expect the smart states to have better academic performance, lower crime rates, better roads, better health care, higher marriage rates, and so on. Let’s see.

Here’s an article from The Federalist by Helen Raleigh, who is very good on these kinds of issues.

She writes on education in blue states and red states:

> The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has released the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for the 2024 school year. Known as the “Nation’s Report Card,” NAEP assesses the reading and math skills of America’s fourth and eighth graders. The latest report reveals something surprising: after adjusting for demographics, the reading and math scores of students in Mississippi and Louisiana, two heavily Republican states and among the poorest in the nation, have surpassed those in deeply Democratic states such as California and New York.

As soon as I read that, I went straight to Grok to get a listening of per-pupil spending in the 50 states. (no point using Google for searching, it’s biased to the far left, and is just a search engine for corporate news media at this point).

Grok said this:

- Louisiana: $12,000
- Mississippi: $10,984
- California: $17,700
- New York: $30,282

So, you would expect the states that spend more on education to have higher test scores on basics like math, reading, science, history, etc. Right?

Let’s go back to the Federalist article, and see what Missiippi did:

> The secret of Mississippi and Louisiana’s educational success is not secret at all; it is about returning to the fundamentals and following the evidence. Mississippi’s Republican-led legislature has implemented effective education reforms in 2012 that prioritize phonics — teaching students to sound out words — and enforce a retention policy for third graders who do not meet essential reading benchmarks. Furthermore, the state invests $15 million each year, or approximately $32 per

> student, into training teachers on literacy and providing dedicated reading coaches in schools.
>
> The reform has produced remarkable results, with Mississippi's fourth graders' reading scores rising from 49th in the nation in 2013 to the top of the rankings (after adjusting for demographics) in 2024. The progress among black students is particularly impressive. According to Republican Gov. Tate Reeves, the reading scores of the state's black fourth graders have improved from 45th to third place during the same period. This reflects the effectiveness of Mississippi's literacy program, which has provided a learning gain equivalent to a full year of schooling. Moreover, the state's graduation rate has seen a significant rise from 72 percent in 2013 to 89.9 percent in 2024.

And here's what Louisiana did:

> Inspired by Mississippi's success, Louisiana implemented similar education reforms in 2019. The state focused on phonics instruction and providing "content-rich" literacy curriculums. Additionally, Louisiana has invested in extensive training programs for principals, teachers, and reading coaches on how students learn to read.
>
> Chad Aldeman, who tracks education-related news, noted, "While Mississippi might win the prize for ten-year gains, Louisiana might win for the most significant recent improvements. It was the closest state to recovering from COVID-related declines in eighth-grade reading and math, and it was the only state where fourth-grade reading scores were higher in 2024 than in 2019."

Now, you might be thinking "but isn't that what California and New York do, except with more money?" Well, no, they don't:

> According to California Policy Center, "less than half (47.1 percent) of all public school students in California met state grade-level English Language Arts (ELA) standards during the 2021-22 school year … The reading scores of Black and Hispanic students are even worse. Only 30.3 percent of Black students and 36.4 percent of Hispanic students in California met grade-level ELA standards."
>
> Yet legislation requiring schools to implement more phonics-based reading curricula failed to pass in California's legislature last year. This was primarily due to opposition from Democratic Party leadership, teachers unions, and advocacy groups.

If you're thinking "well, I don't think any state is stupid enough to do things that don't work", let me show you another article from Daily Wire about California:

> Democrats on the California Senate Public Safety Committee shot down a bill on Tuesday that would have kept male sex criminals out of female prisons.
>
> The committee, which includes far-Left Senator Scott Wiener, voted down a proposal from Republican Senator Shannon Grove to protect women from males

> who are registered sex offenders from being able to be housed in women's prisons. The bill also would have given women privacy in sleeping arrangements and showers, meaning that they would be protected from males who have taken advantage of California's lax laws that allow men to be placed in women's prisons.

Back to education. California and New York schools are run by Democrats. They want their schools to indoctrinate students in secular left ideology. They don't hire the best teachers, and they can't fire the worst ones. They don't want parents to tell them what to do, and they don't focus on basics like reading and math. They focus on putting condoms on cucumbers, and LGBT indoctrination. They hire tons of administrative staff to come in and make sure the schools are woke enough. That's what blue states do: spend more, get less. And when they fail to perform, they go to the government, and have the law enforcement label the concerned parents "domestic terrorists". Get out of those blue states, and get into a red state. Don't give them your money.

I want men to stop giving money to Only Fans women

May 2, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have an ongoing disagreement with a female friend about how to restore marriage and family. We both agree on the harm that is done to children by the redefining marriage to remove the traditional marriage norms of exclusivity, permanence, heterosexual romance, etc. But she thinks that it's better to approach men and get them to change, whereas I think it's better to approach women and get them to change.

So, in a previous post, I argued that we should focus on telling women to stop choosing hot bad boys, and trying to get them to commit. I said this because I don't think you can change the hot bad boys and make them commit. They want s3x, and that's what they are getting when the normal women throw s3x at them. They don't have to commit if they get what they want before committing.

But is there anything constructive to say to the normal men, who are not getting s3x thrown at them from many different women? Well, yes. There is something to say to them. Although they are not smashing up families, they are doing something wrong. They are giving attention to the wrong sort of women, for the wrong reasons.

Consider this article about the web site Only Fans, from Business Insider:

> OnlyFans, the subscription-based adult-entertainment site, boomed during the pandemic.
>
> Revenue at the UK-based company grew by 553% in the year to November 2020, and users spent £1.7 billion ($2.36 billion) on the site, a seven-fold increase, the Financial Times reported.
>
> The site allows creators to sell video clips, photos, and messages directly to subscribers on a pay-per-view basis, with OnlyFans taking a 20% cut. Customers pay between $5 and $50 per month.
>
> User numbers grew from 20 million before the pandemic to more than 120 million over 12 months, as adult entertainers and their customers signed up during lockdowns to share X-rated content.

Only Fans is a web site where the most impulsive and reckless women make easy money by showing off their bodies and performing s3xual activities for subscribers. It's voluntary, not coerced. They want to get rich quick without having to care about doing well in school or getting a job. They aren't interested in marriage, because they know that good men don't marry women who make themselves available to millions of other men. They are not conservative. They don't want men to lead them. They don't read anything that makes them wiser or more noble. Men shouldn't be paying women like this any money, or even giving them attention.

I want normal guys to give better women their time and money – preferably in a

relationship, but at least in a friendship. Even if the majority of women are using their young and pretty years to try to land hot bad boys, there are always a minority of women who are busy with better things, like doing computer science degrees. I think that the normal guys should be paying attention to them.

In fact, if I could just convince these normal guys to read more useful stuff, I'm sure they would realize that there is a lot more to a woman than youth and beauty. They would probably find the Only Fans girls pretty repulsive, once they realized how much different women can be if they are trained and prepared to commit to men and respect them. And by trained, I don't mean "I'm a Christian, you can't judge my past". I mean bookshelves of good books, read and highlighted. I mean a public record of conservative Christian achievements.

If normal guys can't find good young women to pay attention to, then they should try to make friends with older, wiser good women. That way, they won't be lonely, they will learn something from the older more conservative women , and they will avoid making the wrong sort of women richer. I used to have a half-dozen older women advisors who would fill my head with wisdom chirped out in their cute girly voices whenever I wanted. Getting wisdom from conservative older Christian women is a lot better for me than throwing dollar bills at online strippers, who take your money, but have no interest in getting ready for marriage.

And if a younger woman came along who read good books, was conservative, and wanted marriage and children, you can start the marriage evaluation process. The important thing is to have the money to close the deal on a marriage if you find a real marriage candidate, which is why you don't waste money on Only Fans women. Good women are the ones who trust you, respect your leadership, and achieve things when you lead and support them.

I don't really care much about the Only Fans women, but I don't think that getting attention and money for how you look is good for them in the long run. Women who get attention for stripping and doing s3x acts don't learn anything that's useful for them to be content in a stable marriage. They get used to seeing men at their worst, and they lose their ability to trust and bond with one guy. Giving them money to do something temporary that cannot be sustained as their looks fade isn't good for them either. I don't think it's good for society long-term to have a bunch of shallow, immature women voting for bigger government and less liberty when they reach age 32 and can't find good men to marry them.

Basically, what I would like is for men and women to get better at understanding moral character, religion and relationships, so they can choose quality relationship partners. And the best way to do that is what the Bible recommends – by renewing your mind. And how do you renew your mind? Well, you have to convince yourself that the world works a certain way. And how do you do that? By reading difficult challenging books that show you how to achieve the goals that are best for you, even if you have to sacrifice happiness in the short term. Men and women need to read better books.

I’m going to keep recommending to young people that they try to get out of the chaos of this generation by reading better books. Start with Philippians and John in the Bible. Then, I like “Is God Just a Human Invention?” by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow. Read some Thomas Sowell economics, and some military history. There is no shortcut to valuing good things, and making good decisions. You have to change your mind by keep out the culture’s junk, and putting in the good stuff.

What can men do to save this 24-year-old woman from toxic masculinity?

May 3, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting set of articles from a young woman who graduated from Pennsylvania State University. In one, she explains how a man she "hooked up" with treated her poorly. I think I've been able to figure out what her approach to relationships is. In this post, I'll explain her approach, and then discuss how social conservatives should solve problems like abortion and single motherhood.

NOTE: Please do not contact or harass this woman, just leave her alone.

So, here's the first, most important article:

> As someone who considers themselves a feminist, and I always thought that being sexual and unashamed was liberating and empowering. And for that reason, I never stopped myself from doing what I wanted to do.

In the article, she explains what it feels like to be used for sex and then ghosted by a man. She says that he never got to know her, and that makes her feel bad. What did he know about her? She says that she appeared to him as "just some blonde blacked out drunk". In the article, she describes lying awake next to him after sex, then getting up to walk home at 5:30 in the morning. And this is not the only toxic man in her life.

She says:

> This applies to more than a few people from my past… I started to realize this lifestyle wasn't working after I hooked up with a guy who thought New England was a state. And yeah, I still hooked up with him after finding out this knowledge about him… And I don't know if that says more about him that he didn't know or more about me since I was willing to overlook that fact **just to feel desired for a night**.
>
> Because I do turn to other people for validation. When I think about it objectively, **90% of the reason I hook-up with anyone is to feel good about myself**.

She calls the search for validation an "addiction":

> I am addicted to validation I got from getting with people. I needed that rush of dopamine. I needed to know I am wanted. I got addicted to hooking up. Cause it was the only thing that made me feel good about myself for a while. When I was feeling down, I turned to boys… that didn't care about anything except what I look like. And I have been blessed/cursed with a pretty fast metabolism and a naturally larger than average chest. So I always have known I could default to my looks for validation. It's the easiest thing to get recognition for. And I got addicted to being told I was hot, or pretty, or whatever.

In other articles, she explains what kinds of men she's looking for.

She's a strong Democrat.

> There are two kinds of Republicans: the ignorant and the evil. Either they are uninformed and dumb or aware of the world and other cultures other than their own and just too corrupt or bigoted to care. It's just that being a Republican seems to now stand for religious nuts, rich, rednecks, and racists. This current election cycle has only increased my deep seeded hatred for the right-wingers even more.
>
> And I can't help myself, but whenever I find out someone who I have been talking to or have been friends with is a Republican, I let out an audible "ugh, really?" I can not hide my disgust.

In another article, she explains that she's an atheist:

> If singing songs, praying or going to confession makes you feel better, by all means, do what you have to do to feel better. As long as you aren't hurting anyone, do what you want to do. As an atheist, it doesn't offend me. I just choose not to do it.
>
> For example, at thanksgiving dinner this year my family wanted to say grace before eating, but they know where I stand when it comes to religion.

She came out of a Christian family.

In another post, she explains why she cheated on her boyfriend:

> I wish I could say I don't know why I did it, but that would be a blatant lie. I found myself in someone else's bed because… I didn't have feelings for you anymore. If you were enough for me, then you would have been. But you weren't. I stopped craving your company. I felt guilty, sure, but not enough to stop me from doing it multiple times. I didn't care about you or how you felt. And as my feelings started to fade, yours only seemed to get stronger. I know that stings, but it's true.
>
> So when I would go out in that extra-lowcut dress you loved when I wore it around you and a cute guy would ask me to dance or to go hangout on the porch, I wouldn't mention you. I guess I got tired of turning people down when I didn't feel like there was any "good" reason to. I missed my freedom. I missed the exciting feelings that come with flirting with someone new. The whole giddy honeymoon phase, getting butterflies whenever someone texts you, stalking them on Facebook and pretending you know nothing about them, finding yourself daydreaming about the next time you hang out in class. But I think I skipped a step before getting with someone new– breaking it off with you first.

She seems to be guided primarily by her feelings. If the feelings are gone, they're gone. She doesn't try to pick a good guy and invest in the relationship so that she builds something. I don't think this is going to work for her to avoid bad men.

So, what kind of man is she looking for? She writes about how interested she is in “hot” guys in many of her articles. Guys with height, looks, tattoos, piercings, displayed wealth validate her more than guys who want to protect, provide, and lead her in moral and spiritual areas. I don’t think that the men she is choosing will treat her well – they just have too many options to focus on building something good with one woman.

She’s looking for a man who agrees with her on abortion and same-sex marriage. So, men like that don’t want to protect unborn children, and take responsibility for their choices. And a man who supports same-sex marriage is siding with selfish adults. Every same-sex relationship deprives a child of their bio-mom or bio-dad. That’s not a good man to build a stable marriage with.

Regarding religion, she’s uncomfortable with men who have definite exclusive views. Religion, for her, is not about truth at all. You shouldn’t make any exclusive claims that make people feel bad. Instead, just have your private religion that makes you feel better. She’s looking for men who will not lead her in moral and spiritual areas. That’s not a good man to date, either.

How is it working out for her?

Her worldview – feminism, atheism, socialism – doesn’t have the resources necessary for her to approach relationships in a way that will work for her, in the long run. She is not a Christian, pro-marriage, or conservative. The men she chooses are not Christians, pro-marriage, or conservative. This isn’t going to lead to a relationship that is faithful, exclusive and permanent. If that’s what she wants, then she is choosing the wrong people to get there. And even if she doesn’t want commitment now, she will some day. It’s better for her to focus on finding a good man now and building him up. Men make better husbands and fathers the sooner women get in there and support them at those goals.

I always urge young women to get a STEM degree and work in the private sector until they marry and have their first child. To make them think logically, take responsibility for engineering results, and to feel validated by their achievements. I wanted to see what her college major was – because I suspected that she did not do STEM. While searching, I stumbled upon her dating profile (posted on 9Gag by her), two Instagram pages full of selfies, a Tumblr blog of sexy photos, and an Only Fans page. Her LinkedIn page showed no current or previous work experience. To me, these things are clear signs that she is head straight for evil men who will hurt her.

Saving women from toxic masculinity

I think what we have to do is focus on her disappointment with the results of her own choices, and challenge her to change her worldview and relationship choices. She needs to stop rewarding the hot bad boys with free sex. There are good men out there who want to protect, provide and lead on moral and spiritual issues. She needs to be taught to focus on those good men.

Learn evidence for the beginning of the universe to show your work to atheists

May 4, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Atheists are committed to an eternally existing, static universe. They cannot accept that the natural, material universe has a supernatural, spiritual cause. So it's very important for Christians to have a stack of evidence ready to show that the universe – matter, space, energy and time itself – all have a beginning. So in this post, we'll review a list of a half-dozen evidence, and look at one in detail.

First, let's review what atheists think about the universe.

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

So for today's post, I'll start with my fun conversation where I play a game with Grok, to see who has the best list of evidences for a beginning of the universe. Initially, Grok had a mix of assertions and evidence, instead of all evidence. But I kept pushing for specific observable evidences. Finally, I shared a 6th evidence, and challenged Grok to get a 6th of its own, and it did! Let's see what we each came up with.

Here were my six evidences:

1. Redshift of distant galaxies: Shows expansion, implying a starting point.
2. Cosmic microwave background radiation: Remnant of the early universe's hot origin.
3. Second law of thermodynamics: Increasing entropy requires a low-entropy beginning.
4. Abundance of light elements: Hydrogen/helium ratios match early nucleosynthesis.
5. Finite age of stars and galaxies: Stellar evolution points to a definite start.
6. Half-lives of radioactive elements (from Robert Jastrow's "God and the Astronomers"): Presence of uranium-238 etc. suggests a finite-age universe.

Here are Grok's six – the first 5 from my list, and the 1 he came up with to try to tie my list:

1. Redshift of distant galaxies: Observed expansion implies a singular start.
2. Cosmic microwave background radiation: Remnant of the early universe.
3. Second law of thermodynamics: Entropy indicates a low-entropy origin.
4. Abundance of light elements: Matches early universe nucleosynthesis.
5. Finite age of stars and galaxies: Stellar evolution shows a finite start.

6. Cosmic homogeneity and isotropy: The universe's large-scale uniformity suggests a single origin event.

And Grok had references for his 6th one, just like I did for my 6th one.

So, you should at least know the core 5 that we agree on. And these are normal and natural for Christians to talk about. I wish we learned about them in church, from the pulpit, when studying different accounts of Creation in the Bible. Why not? I'm so wild, that I also think that the church should be teaching embryology, natural marriage, and basic economics from the pulpit. Not politics, but evidence related to how we navigate the world.

Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation

Anyway, here's an article about one of the core 5 evidences from the J. Warner Wallace, writing at Cold Case Christianity.

He says:

> In 1964, two American physicists and radio astronomers, Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson, made an important discovery. They were unable to eliminate the radio signal "noise" from their large antenna at the Bell Telephone Laboratories in New Jersey, regardless of where in the universe they tried to point their instrument. They consulted with colleagues to determine the cause of this noise. Another physicist suggested the noise might not be coming from the antenna at all. Instead they might be detecting the residual background radiation caused when the universe first came into being. Penzias and Wilson proved this to be correct, winning a Nobel Prize for their discovery in 1978.
>
> Numerous additional experiments and observations have since established the existence of cosmic background radiation, including data from the Cosmic Background Explorer satellite launched in 1989, and the Planck space observatory launched in 2009. For many scientists, this discovery solidified their belief the universe had a beginning.

And of course, Wallace knows all the evidences, and he even has more.

When You're Ahead, Get More Ahead

Here's an illustration from his book "God's Crime Scene". Have you read it?

Illustration from God's Crime Scene by J. Warner Wallace (used with his permission)
So, I hope this is helpful for all of you.

When you are talking to an atheist like a Bart Ehrman or a Bill Nye about evidence for a Creator and Designer, then it's important that the score be 5-0. You need to win 5-0.

- origin of the universe (list the 5 core evidences)
- fine-tuning (list several examples from different areas)
- habitability (list examples for sun, solar system, earth-moon)
- fossil record (list some of the biological Big Bangs)
- origin of life (explain the building block and information)
- molecular machines (explain machines in the cell)

I guess that's 6-0, but you get the idea. It needs to be a shut-out. Boys get along better after they have had a good fight, and you need to win that fight. You can be "gentle" and "reverent", but you need to win that fight, so everyone understands what the truth is. Don't make a big deal out of changing the person, just make sure that the scoreboard says what the scoreboard should say.

Trump ends taxpayer funding of far-left propagandists NPR and PBS

May 5, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Something very exciting happened last week, so I wanted to talk about it today instead of on the weekend. Trump signed an executive order to cut funding for National Public Radio and Public Broadcasting Service, two far-left organizations. In this post, we'll take a look at some reasons why NPR and PBS needed to be defunded. Are they really as far left as conservatives say?

First, let's see a news article from Daily Signal:

> President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Thursday night axing taxpayer funding for "biased" news outlets NPR and PBS.
>
> […]Trump ordered the Corporation for Public Broadcasting board of directors and all executive departments and agencies to cease federal funding for NPR and PBS.

Brianna Lyman had a really good article at The Federalist with more reasons why NPR and PBS are just too far to the left to receive funding from taxpayers – especially since taxpayers just voted for Republicans in the 2024 elections.

Here is the full list:

1. NPR Refused To Cover Hunter Biden's Laptop
2. 100% Of NPR's 'Editorial Positions' Are Held By Registered Democrats
3. NPR Spread Tear Gas Hoax
4. NPR Editor Promoted Defense Of Looting
5. NPR Pushed Skin Color Emoji Conundrums
6. PBS Promoted Reparations
7. PBS Claimed Trump Lied About America's Greatness
8. PBS Accused GOP Of Pushing 'White Supremacy'
9. PBS Ran Anti-Republican Hit Piece
10. NPR Claimed No Evidence For Biden Family Corruption
11. NPR Buried Biden's Declining Mental Acuity
12. NPR Accused GOP Of 'Voter Suppression' While Ignoring Democrat Schemes

Looking over that list, it just looks like NPR and PBS are propaganda outlets for the Democrat party. I don't know what else to think about such obviously biased (and often flat-out false) news reporting.

Let's look at a few. Here's #1:

> Perhaps the most egregious example of why NPR should be defunded — and should have been five years ago — is their refusal to cover the Hunter Biden

> laptop scandal in the lead up to the 2020 election.
>
> "We don't want to waste our time on stories that are not really stories, and we don't want to waste listeners' and readers' time on stories that are just pure distractions," NPR Managing Editor for News Terence Samuel said in a statement back in October 2020. A newsletter published by NPR Public Editor Kelly McBride claimed "there are many, many red flags in that New York Post investigation."

As we all know know, the laptop was genuine. Even left-wing sources agree. The FBI had laptop since December 2019. They confirmed its authenticity in November 2019 by matching its device number to Hunter Biden's iCloud ID. The Justice Department, in 2024, used laptop data as "self-authenticating" evidence in court, dismissing manipulation claims.

But NPR didn't think it was a true story. Or maybe they didn't want their political allies – the Democrat party – to look bad, before an election.

But are they really just Democrat party operatives? Look at #2:

> NPR editor Uri Berliner previously reported that voting records showed "87 registered Democrats working in editorial positions and zero Republicans."
>
> NPR's Katherine Maher admitted it was a "concern" during a March Congressional hearing that all 87 positions are held by registered Democrats.

The evidence shows a strong connection to the Democrat party, so why are they getting taxpayer money right after the majority of the country voted Republican?

When it comes to monitoring media bias, the best source is the Media Research Center. And #12 talks about them:

> According to NewsBusters' Clay Waters, "PBS treated the RNC to 72% negative and 28% positive commentary" while the "DNC received far friendlier reception: 12% negative, 88% positive."

So, if you look at the evidence, there's no reasons for taxpayer dollars to go to organizations that are clearly biased towards the Democrat party. Next, we should remove all grants for universities, which have similar numbers of Democrats. They can operate, but why do they need taxpayer funding? Let them sink or swim in the free market by pleasing customers, like the rest of us have to.

Is the Bible's definition of faith opposed to logic and evidence?

May 6, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Probably the biggest misconception that I encounter when defending the faith is the mistaken notion of what faith is. Today we are going to get to the bottom of what the Bible says faith is, once and for all. This post will be useful to Christians and atheists, alike.

What is faith according to the Bible?

I am going to reference this article from apologist Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason in my explanation.

Koukl cites three Biblical examples to support the idea that faith is not blind leap-of-faith wishing, but is based on evidence.

1. Moses went out into the wilderness and he had that first encounter with the burning bush, and God gave him the directive to go back to Egypt and let his people go. Moses said, Yeah, right. What's going to happen when they say, why should we believe you, Moses? God said, See that staff? Throw it down. Moses threw it down and it turned into a serpent. God said, See that serpent? Pick it up. And he picked it up and it turned back into a staff. God said, Now you take that and do that before the Jewish people and you do that before Pharaoh. And you do this number with the hail, and the frogs, and turning the Nile River into blood. You put the sun out. You do a bunch of other tricks to get their attention. And then comes this phrase: "So that they might know that there is a God in Israel."
2. [I]n Mark 2 you see Jesus preaching in a house, and you know the story where they take the roof off and let the paralytic down through the roof. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." And people get bugged because how can anyone forgive sins but God alone? Jesus understood what they were thinking and He said this: What's harder to say, your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your pallet and go home? Now, I'll tell you what would be harder for me to say : Arise, take up your pallet and go home. I can walk into any Bible study and say your sins are forgiven and nobody is going to know if I know what I am talking about or not. But if I lay hands on somebody in a wheelchair and I say, Take up your wheelchair and go home, and they sit there, I look pretty dumb because everyone knows nothing happened. But Jesus adds this. He says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has the power and authority to forgive sins, I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." And he got up and he got out. Notice the phrase "In order that you may know". Same message, right?
3. Move over to the Book of Acts. First sermon after Pentecost. Peter was up in front of this massive crowd. He was talking about the resurrection to which he was an eyewitness. He talked about fulfilled prophecy. He talked about the miraculous

tongues and the miraculous manifestation of being able to speak in a language you don't know. Do you think this is physical evidence to those people? I think so. Pretty powerful. Peter tells them, These men are not drunk as it seems, but rather this is a fulfillment of prophecy. David spoke of this. Jesus got out of the grave, and we saw him, and we proclaim this to you. Do you know how he ends his sermon? It's really great. Acts 2:36. I've been a Christian 20 years and I didn't see this until about a year ago. This is for all of those who think that if you can know it for sure, you can't exercise faith in it. Here is what Peter said. Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." There it is again. "Know for certain."

What is faith according to Bible-based theologians?

I am going to reference this article from theologian C. Michael Patton of Parchment and Pen in my explanation.

Patton explains that according to Reformation (conservative, Bible-based) theologians, faith has 3 parts:

1. **notitia** – This is the basic informational foundation of our faith. It is best expressed by the word content. Faith, according to the Reformers must have content. You cannot have faith in nothing. There must be some referential propositional truth to which the faith points. The proposition "Christ rose from the grave," for example, is a necessary information base that Christians must have.
2. **assensus** – This is the assent or confidence that we have that the *notitia* is correct… This involves evidence which leads to the conviction of the truthfulness of the proposition… This involves intellectual assent and persuasion based upon critical thought… *assensus*… says, "I am persuaded to believe that Christ rose from the grave."
3. **fiducia** – This is the "resting" in the information based upon a conviction of its truthfulness. *Fiducia* is best expressed by the English word "trust."… Fiducia is the personal subjective act of the will to take the final step. It is important to note that while *fiducia* goes beyond or transcends the intellect, it is built upon its foundation.

So, Biblical faith is really trust. Trust(3) can only occur *after* intellectual assent(2), based on evidence and thought. Intellectual assent(2) can only occur *after* the propositional information(1) is known.

The church today accepts 1 and 3, but denies 2. I call this "fideism" or "blind faith". Ironically, activist atheists, (the New Atheists), also believe that faith is blind. The postmodern "emergent church" denies 1 and 2. A person could accept 1 and 2 but deny 3 by not re-prioritizing their life based on what they know to be true.

How do beliefs form, according to Christian philosophers?

I am going to reference a portion of chapter 3 of J.P. Moreland's "Love Your God With All Your Mind" (i.e. – LYGWYM).

J.P. Moreland explains how beliefs form and how you can change them.

1. Today, people are inclined to think that the sincerity and fervency of one's beliefs are more important than the content… Nothing could be further from the truth… As far as reality is concerned, what matters is not whether I like a belief or how sincere I am in believing it but whether or not the belief is true. I am responsible for what I believe and, I might add, for what I refuse to believe because the content of what I do or do not believe makes a tremendous difference to what I become and how I act.
2. A belief's strength is the degree to which you are convinced the belief is true. As you gain ,evidence and support for a belief, its strength grows for you… The more certain you are of a belief… the more you rely on it as a basis for action.

But the most important point of the article is that *your beliefs are not under the control of your will.*

> …Scripture holds us responsible for our beliefs since it commands us to embrace certain beliefs and warns us of the consequences of accepting other beliefs. On the other hand, experience teaches us that we cannot choose or change our beliefs by direct effort.
>
> For example, if someone offered you $10,000 to believe right now that a pink elephant was sitting next to you, you could not really choose to believe this… If I want to change my beliefs about something, I can embark on a course of study in which I choose to think regularly about certain things, read certain pieces of evidence and argument, and try to find problems with evidence raised against the belief in question.
>
> …by choosing to undertake a course of study… I can put myself in a position to undergo a change in… my beliefs… And… my character and behavior… will be transformed by these belief changes.

I think definition of faith is important, because atheists seemed to want to substitute their own definition of faith as blind belief for this Biblical definition, but there is no evidence for their view that faith is belief without evidence. I think this might be another case of projection by atheists. Blind faith is how they arrive at their views, so they are trying to push it onto us. But the Bible is clearly opposed to it.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines

- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig’s case for the resurrection of Jesus

It’s the end of Anthony Fauci’s horrifying experiments on captive dogs

May 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wrote an article back in 2021 about why elite Christians should not hold Anthony Fauci in high regard. So many Christian leaders sided with Anthony Fauci and Francis Collins, and tried to promote their positions to Christians. But strangely enough, there were many reasons to doubt the goodness of these two men. One of the reasons was the NIH’s experiments on captured dogs.

In my previous article, I wrote about these experiments. Let’s review that, and then see what the Trump admnistration thinks of it.

This is from the far-left The Hill.

Excerpt:

> The White Coat Waste Project, the nonprofit organization that first pointed out that U.S. taxpayers were being used to fund the controversial Wuhan Institute of Virology, have now turned its sights on Anthony Fauci on another animal-testing-related matter — infecting dozens of beagles with disease-causing parasites to test an experimental drug on them.
>
> […]White Coat Waste claims that 44 beagle puppies were used in a Tunisia, North Africa, laboratory, and some of the dogs had their vocal cords removed, allegedly so scientists could work without incessant barking.
>
> […]“Our investigators show that Fauci’s NIH division shipped part of a $375,800 grant to a lab in Tunisia to drug beagles and lock their heads in mesh cages filled with hungry sand flies so that the insects could eat them alive,” White Coat Waste told Changing America. “They also locked beagles alone in cages in the desert overnight for nine consecutive nights to use them as bait to attract infectious sand flies.”

That’s what I covered in my previous article, along with the NIH funding of gain of function research which likely led to the COVID lab leak. But now there is news from the Trump administration – what do they think of these experiments on dogs?

This is the latest from the Daily Caller:

> The National Institutes of Health has closed the last remaining intramural beagle lab conducting painful experiments — the federal government’s largest dog lab — NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya said in a television interview Sunday.
>
> A project at the NIH Clinical Center on “stress-induced and sepsis-induced cardiomyopathy” represented the final in-house experiments that induced pain and distress in beagles, classified under U.S. Department of Agriculture pain categories D and E. The project has now been terminated.

> […]The NIH has killed 2,133 beagles in septic shock experiments since 1986, according to a nine-year investigation and advocacy campaign by White Coat Waste Project. Necroposy reports from 41 beagles and other veterinary records obtained by the group through the Freedom of Information Act show that the experiments involved infecting the beagles' lungs with pneumonia-causing bacteria to induce sepsis and sometimes bleeding them out to induce hemorrhagic shock. The dogs are then euthanized.

I think it's important for Christians to do their own thinking when it comes to how they vote. I don't want Christians to vote so that they feel smart, and can claim to be in the "smart" crowd. I don't think that Christians should get their ideas from the secular leftistswho work at NPR and PBS. One of the reasons I voted against Biden is because I remembered these experiments. I thought that a Republican administration would see someone like Jay Bhattacharya, Vinay Prasad or Scott Atlas as leader of the NIH. We got Jay, and he's cleaning up the filth.

There are actually two dissentings scientists in the Trump administration:

- **Jay Bhattacharya**: He's now the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). During the pandemic, Bhattacharya, a Stanford professor, co-authored the Great Barrington Declaration, which argued against widespread lockdowns and for focused protection of vulnerable groups while letting others resume normal life. He criticized mask mandates, social distancing, and vaccine policies, often clashing with the NIH and CDC's approaches. His views on letting the virus spread among low-risk groups to build immunity were controversial, with critics arguing it underestimated COVID's risks. Supporters, though, saw him as a voice of reason against overreach.
- **Marty Makary**: Appointed as the FDA Commissioner. Makary, a Johns Hopkins surgeon and health policy expert, was outspoken about the need to balance COVID restrictions with societal costs. He questioned the efficacy of prolonged school closures and blanket mask mandates, emphasizing the low risk to children and the economic fallout of lockdowns. He also pushed for recognizing natural immunity in policy decisions, which put him at odds with federal health officials.

So, next election, remember not to listen to "Evangelicals for Biden" and fake, Soros-funded "evangelical" groups.

Trump pulls nomination of Janette Nesheiwat for Surgeon General

May 8, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back, Rose and I went on the FreeThinking Podcast to discuss Trump's Cabinet picks. I was especially negative about the nominations for Secretary of Labor and Surgeon General. Well, the leftist Secretary of Labor got through her nomination, but enough was discovered on the Surgeon General nominee for her nomination to be pulled. So who is the replacement?

First, here is the previous nominee, Janette Nesheiwat, who is very attractive, just like many of Trump's other bad nominees:

> Donald Trump's nominee for Surgeon General is facing backlash from some of his fiercest MAGA supporters for backing some strict COVID restrictions and masking mandates.
>
> […]Nesheiwat, a medical director for CityMD in New York, frequently spoke about the coronavirus pandemic and offered hardline advice about how citizens should behave.
>
> […]'Dr. Janette Nesheiwat supported masking kids in school. Dealbreaker,' wrote podcast host Liz Wheeler on social media when the pick was announced.
>
> […]Another video making the rounds on social media featured Nesheiwat praising Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg for censoring and banning so-called 'misinformation' about vaccines on Facebook and Instagram.
>
> […]Nesheiwat signaled her support for other social media platforms to follow Zuckerberg's example and also censor vaccine skeptics.
>
> […]Nesheiwat also promoted the idea of making sure children were getting their COVID-19 vaccines.

Below, I link to a Daily Signal article that talks about her replacement. That article adds that "Nesheiwat has also been criticized by conservatives for touting the idea that children can identity as a gender that differs from their biological sex." Just a total trash pick by Trump, not conservative at all. But she's hot.

Here is the story from Daily Signal:

> The Trump administration pulled the nomination of Dr. Janette Nesheiwat to be surgeon general following reports that she inflated her credentials, Bloomberg reported.
>
> President Donald Trump instead nominated Dr. Casey Means on Wednesday… Means attended Stanford Medical School, then she pursued a surgical residency at Oregon Health & Science University. Before completing the program, she dropped out to start her own functional medicine practice and founded the

> company Levels, which offers consumers continuous glucose monitors and an app to track their blood sugar.
>
> Means' brother, Calley Means, is a prominent advisor to Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

I'm not impressed with this new pick, but she does have a record of promoting individual autonomy and choice in health care. She also has a record of opposing woke content in medical school curriculums.

The better pick would have been Florida's Surgeon General, who has a record of opposing Big Government Health Care.

Florida Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo has taken several anti-establishment actions, including:

- Opposing Water Fluoridation: Advocated for removing fluoride from drinking water, citing health risks.
- Challenging Vaccine Mandates: Opposed COVID-19 vaccine mandates, questioned vaccine efficacy, and pushed for legislation against discrimination based on vaccination status.
- Contradicting Federal Health Guidance: Issued guidance against federal recommendations on COVID-19 vaccines and measles outbreak managemen.

Trump is definitely a mixed bag for conservatives. Mostly good, but a lot bad, too. I'm still seething with Trump for handing the Canadian socialist party a victory with his clowning about "51st state". Having a socialist country to the north is only going to hurt us in the future.

Apologetics in the gospel of John

May 9, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

John is my favorite gospel, because the thing reads like a well-constructed essay. The author makes a number of claims about who Jesus was, and supplies evidence for each claim. There is nothing extraneous to John's thesis, the whole thing that he wrote is designed to make a case. Since I've been listening to it again on my daily walks, I thought I'd write something about it.

My friend Eric Chabot wrote a post on his blog on the use of apologetics in the gospel of John.

Here is his thesis:

> In this post, I will highlight some of the different ways John utilizes apologetics in his testimony of who Jesus is.

He talks about how God has his messengers use evidence:

> 3.Signs and Miracles
>
> While actions by other prophets such as Ezekiel and Jeremiah etc. show some significant parallels to Jesus, Jesus is closer to the actions of the Jewish sign prophetssuch as Moses. "Signs" have a specific apologetic function in that they are used to provide evidence for people to believe the message of God through a prophet of God. Hence, the signs Moses does proves he is truly sent from God. Moses had struggled with his prophetic call when he said " But they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say 'The Lord did not appear to you.' (Exod. 4:1). God assures Moses that the "signs" will confirm his call:
>
> God says, "I will be with you. And this will be אות *"the sign"* to you that it is I who have sent you" (Exod. 3:12).
>
> "If they will not believe you," God said, "or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground." (Exod 4: 8-9).
>
> We see the signs are used to help people believe.
>
> Moses "performed *the "signs" before* the people, and they believed; … they bowed down and worshiped" (Exod. 4:30–31)

So what did Jesus do?

> "Works" are directly related to the miracles of Jesus (Jn. 5:20; 36;10:25; 32-28; 14:10-12; 15:24) and is synonymous with "signs." Interestingly enough, when Jesus speaks of miracles and he calls them "works" he doesn't refer to Exod.

> 4:1-9, but to Num. 16:28, "Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord." For example:
>
> Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. *The works* that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me" (John 10:25).
>
> If I am not doing *the works* of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe *the works,* that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." (John 10:37-38).
>
> But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, *the very works* that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me (John 5: 36)
>
> **"Sign"(*sēmeion*) is used seventy-seven times (forty-eight times in the Gospels). As far as the "signs' Jesus does, 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 42:18; 61:1). In John's Gospel, Jesus performs three "signs," at the beginning of his ministry; the water turned into wine at Cana at Galilee (2:1-12), the healing of the son of the royal official at Capernaum (4:46-64), and catching of the fish in the sea of Galilee (21:1-14). The link between the first two signs in Jn 2:12 while the link between the last two are seen in Jn 7:1, 3-4, 6, 9. Jesus follows the pattern of Moses in that he reveals himself as the new Moses because Moses also had to perform three "signs" so that he could be recognized by his brothers as truly being sent by God (Exod 4: 1-9). In the exchange between Nicodemus said to Jesus, Nicodemus said, We know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous *signs* you are doing if God were not with him" (John 3:2)**

A diligent reader wrote to me and mentioned that the references in this line "As far as the "signs' Jesus does, 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 42:18; 61:1)" are from Isaiah.

More:

> Also, regarding miracles, in some cases the miracle is a witness against those who reject this evidence. John grieved: "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" (John 12:37). One result, though not the purpose, of miracles is condemnation of the unbeliever (cf. John 12:31, 37).

I first read John a long time ago, when I was about 10 or 11 years old. I can't remember what I thought of it, but it probably had a very good effect on me as far as making me think that Christianity was something that I ought to look into. The gospel of John is that good. Philippians is still my favorite book of the Bible (because it's practical, duh), but John is the best introduction. It's the first thing a non-Christian should read to at least understand what Christianity is all about. Everybody should at least know that!

By the way, if you don't have a dramatized audio Bible on your phone, you can download one for free here. The voices are sometimes funny. I got the English Standard Version

Audio Drama with Music and Sound Effects. Start with Philippians and the Gospel of John, of course. I think people get bogged down in the Bible because they read it from front to back. But some parts are better to start with than others. That’s what I think.

Knight and Rose Show #63: Sean McDowell: Fate of the Apostles

May 10, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 63 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Dr. Sean McDowell to discuss the fate of the Apostles (and Paul and James the brother of Jesus). If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Dr. Sean McDowell to discuss the fate of the twelve Apostles, as well as Paul and James the brother of Jesus. Many Christians incorporate the willingness of the earliest Christians to die for their beliefs in their case for the resurrection of Jesus. Sean takes a deep dive into history to find out what we know about these early Christians.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 63:

Speaker biographies

Sean McDowell is a professor of Apologetics at Talbot School of Theology at Biola University. He has earned two Master's degrees, one in philosophy and one in theology, both from the Talbot school of Theology. And he has a Ph.D. in Apologetics and Worldview Studies from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author, editor, or co-author of over 20 books, including my favorite introductory apologetics book "Is God Just a Human Invention?" which he co-authored with Jonathan Morrow. His most recent academic book is the 2nd edition of "The Fate of the Apostles", published by Routledge. He is the co-host of the Think Biblically podcast where he talks about the intersection of faith and culture. Sean has a popular YouTube channel and blog. He's also an experienced public speaker, including speaking on university campuses. Sean has also participated in debates, including with Matthew Vines, Michael Shermer and James Corbett.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an

amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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New study: Risks associated with pediatric “gender-affirming” care

May 11, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’m not so old that I have forgotten Joe Biden and the entire Democrat party talking about the need to give children access to “gender-affirming care”. This is the term used to describe steps to deny children’s gender by 1) social denial of gender, 2) injecting them with gender-denying drugs, and 3) performing gender-denying surgeries on children. Let’s see what the new study says.

Here is the new study about treatments for children (ages 10-18), published by Springer in Current Sex Health Reports.

> A key question at the center of the controversy regarding pediatric gender-affirming care is whether it is safe and effective. Therefore, analysis of the evidence base for PB/GAH use requires understanding of the potential risks and benefits. Thus, the relevant questions are: what are the goals of PB/GAH in the context of pediatric gender-affirming care? To this end, is treatment effective? What are the risks? Are these treatments safe?

Here is the list of risks that are identified in the study:

1. Decreased bone mineralization.
2. Negative impact on neuropsychological functioning.
3. Metabolic and cardiovascular risks.
4. Infertility.
5. Impaired sexual function.
6. Surgical complications.
7. Detransition and/or regret.

The study looks at studies about the supposed benefits of “gender-affirming” care, and whether those are proven, as well as the risks of “gender-affirming” care and whether those are proven. It uses previous research to reach conclusions, such as the famous Cass Review from the UK, as well as studies from Sweden and Finald.

The report concludes that the evidence supporting mental health improvements from hormone treatment in pediatric “gender-affirming” care is of low quality. Why? Because the studies often show no significant reduction in psychological distress, suicidality, or other mental health issues. In fact, there are indications of potential worsening of symptoms in certain cases. So, even in the best case, the benefits are not proven.

What about the 7 risks? The report discusses the seven risks I listed above, using clinical studies and reviews. Each risk is supported by evidence.

Here they are, in descending order, from most risky to least risky:

Infertility

The article shows strong proof that puberty blockers and hormones can make it hard or impossible for kids to have children later, especially if treatment starts young. Many studies agree on this risk, and there’s little evidence that fertility can be fully saved, making it the best-supported concern.

Bone Health Deterioration

Research in the article clearly links puberty blockers to weaker bones, which can lead to more fractures, and stopping treatment may not fully fix this. The evidence is solid but ranks second because we don’t know enough about how bones recover over time.

Cardiovascular Complications

The article points to studies showing hormones, especially estrogen, raise the chance of blood clots and heart problems, based on adult experiences. There’s less information for kids, so it ranks third since the evidence partly relies on adults.

Sexual Dysfunction

Puberty blockers can affect sexual development, causing issues like low sex drive or trouble with orgasm, according to some studies in the article. The evidence isn’t as strong as for infertility or bones because long-term effects in kids aren’t well-studied.

Regret/Detransition

Some kids later regret treatment or want to detransition, with studies showing this happens in 1–10% of cases, but the numbers vary. This ranks lower because the evidence is mixed and depends on personal and social factors.

Mental Health Concerns

The article finds little proof that gender-affirming care improves mental health, and some studies suggest it might not help or could worsen things. The evidence is weaker because results differ across studies, making it less certain.

Cancer Risk

Hormones might increase the risk of cancers like breast or prostate cancer, but the article says there’s no solid proof yet, just guesses. This has the least evidence since there are no long-term studies on kids to back it up.

My thoughts:

So, I hope this will help you to have conversations about this topic. I would especially remember the two at the top: infertility and bone health detioration, as the most well-supported by the evidence.

What do split-brain experiments tell us about mind-body dualism?

May 12, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On the weekend, I went for an hour walk, and listened to a 3-part series of discussions between Pat Flynn and neurosurgeon Michael Egnor. The first episode of the series was especially good, talking about the scientific evidence against materialist / physicalist views of our minds. I went hunting around on the Mind Matters web site, and was able to find a good article about two of those evidences.

Here's the first article from Mind Matters, which talks about the ways that neuroscience is disconfirming materialist views of mind, with scientific evidence.

First evidence:

> Dr. Egnor, Professor of Neurosurgery and Pediatrics at Stony Brook University in New York State, offers a number of specific examples, including the pioneering work of neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield (1891–1976) in treating epilepsy. Penfield, observed closely what happens in an epileptic seizure. But the most interesting element he found was what *didn't* happen.
>
> Seizure victims might collapse, feel tingles, see flashing lights, experience strange smells. They could have powerful emotions, a sense of doom, oir a sense that everything is hilarious. They can even remember things they thought were long forgotten, like an incident from school days:

> But Penfield said that's where it ends. That is that there's no other mental content that ever appears in a seizure. He said, for example, you never have a mathematics seizure. You never have a seizure where you can't stop doing calculus. You never have a logic seizure, you never have a philosophy seizure, you never have a music seizure, you never have a literature seizure. This whole range of abstract thought, things that kind of make us human are never a part of a seizure. And Penfield said, why not? If random electrical discharges in the brain will spark off a thought, why aren't the thoughts ever abstract? Why aren't they ever about math?

And Penfield did more experiments, which also raised problems for materialism:

> Penfield had started out as a materialist but he ended up thinking, as Egnor puts it, that "maybe the mind isn't entirely from the brain. Maybe there are aspects of the mind that are spiritual and not material."
>
> His conviction was strengthened by the more than 1100 "awake" brain operations he did. During surgery, he would stimulate an area of the brain of a patient with serious epilepsy in order to find out if that area did anything important. If not, he could simply remove it if it were damaged, lessening the

> chances of another serious seizure. Meanwhile, he mapped the areas of the brain he was working on.

> And Penfield found exactly the same thing that he had found in his review of epilepsy. That is that when he stimulated the brain, he could stimulate people to move their limbs. He could stimulate people to have perceptions like flashes of light or feelings on the skin. He could stimulate emotions by stimulating certain parts of the brain and he could stimulate memories, but he could never stimulate abstract thought. He could never stimulate mathematics. No matter where he touched in the brain, you didn't start saying one plus one is two.

That first podcast also contained a second evidence that falsifies materialist conceptions of mind – split-brain surgeries.

This second article from Mind Matters explains:

> Split-brain surgery, which gives even Dr. Egnor, who has done it, "the chills," is a radical effort to control epileptic seizures that jump through the corpus callosum — the huge bundle of nerve fibres that connects the two halves of the brain. By the 1940s, surgeons realized that if they just cut the bundle, severing the connection, the seizure was confined to one side. That cut down on life-destroying seizures. But was the patient then living with two brains that mirror each other but can't communicate?
>
> Neuroscience pioneer Roger Sperry (1913–1994) won a Nobel Prize for his clever experiments on split-brain subjects, showing what they could and couldn't do. But, Egnor notes, the big story is the one that receives very little emphasis: "You could cut the brain in half and practically nothing happens."
>
> […]McGill University neuroscience researcher Justine Sergent (1950–1994) picked up on this in the 1980s and decided to focus on it:
>
> *Egnor:* … there are ways that you could present a picture, like an image to the right hemisphere and a picture, an image to the left hemisphere. And if you're a split brain patient, these hemispheres can't talk to one another. They don't communicate.
>
> So she would present, for example, an arrow pointing up to the right hemisphere, and an arrow pointing sideways to the left hemisphere. She would ask the person who had had the split brain surgery, are the arrows pointing in the same direction or different directions?
>
> And the split brain patients almost always got it right. They almost always could tell, they could compare something that the right hemisphere sees with something that the left hemisphere sees.
>
> *The problem is that there was no part of their brains that saw both things.* And so how did they know? How do you compare things when no part of your brain sees both things?

So, a couple of pieces of scientific evidence that contradict the materialist / physicalist view of mind. Do you think I should add this argument to my list of 6 scientific evidences for a Creator / Designer? It might be fun to have a discussion with Grok AI about this and see if it is good enough to add to my list of 6.

Anyway, here is the podcast. And there is also a transcript for it, if you prefer to listen. If you like that one, you can listen to all three in the series, but the first one was the best, and the second was good.

What are the historical arguments for the post-mortem appearances of Jesus?

May 13, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Eric Chabot of Ratio Christi Ohio State University has a *great* post up about the post-mortem appearances of Jesus.

The post contains:

- a list of the post-mortem resurrection appearances
- quotations by skeptical historians about those appearances
- alternative naturalistic explanations of the appearances
- responses to those naturalistic explanations

Although there is a lot of research that went into the post, it's not very long to read. The majority of scholars accept the appearances, because they appear in *so many different sources* and because some of those sources are very early, especially Paul's statement of the early Christian creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, which is from about 1-3 years after Jesus was executed by the Romans. Eric's post lists out some of the skeptical scholars who the appearances, and you can see how they allude to the historical criteria that they are using. (If you want to sort of double-check the details, I blogged about how historians investigate ancient sources before)

Let's take a look at some of the names you might recognize:

> **E.P. Sanders:**
>
> That Jesus' followers (and later Paul) had resurrection experiences is, in my judgment, a fact. What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. "I do not regard deliberate fraud as a worthwhile explanation. Many of the people in these lists were to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming that they had seen the risen Lord, and several of them would die for their cause. Moreover, a calculated deception should have produced great unanimity. Instead, there seem to have been competitors: 'I saw him first!' 'No! I did.' Paul's tradition that 500 people saw Jesus at the same time has led some people to suggest that Jesus' followers suffered mass hysteria. But mass hysteria does not explain the other traditions." "Finally we know that after his death his followers experienced what they described as the 'resurrection': the appearance of a living but transformed person who had actually died. They believed this, they lived it, and they died for it."[1]
>
> **Bart Ehrman:**
>
> It is a historical fact that some of Jesus' followers came to believe that he had been raised from the dead soon after his execution. We know some of these believers by name; one of them, the apostle Paul, claims quite plainly to have

> seen Jesus alive after his death. Thus, for the historian, Christianity begins after the death of Jesus, not with the resurrection itself, but with the belief in the resurrection.[2]
>
> **Ehrman also says:**
>
> We can say with complete certainty that some of his disciples at some later time insisted that . . . he soon appeared to them, convincing them that he had been raised from the dead.[3]
>
> **Ehrman also goes onto say:**
>
> Historians, of course, have no difficulty whatsoever speaking about the belief in Jesus' resurrection, since this is a matter of public record.[4]
>
> Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don't doubt at all that some disciples claimed this. We don't have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don't think he is making it up. And he knew are least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event (Galatians 1:18-19).[5]
>
> **Marcus Borg**
>
> The historical ground of Easter is very simple: the followers of Jesus, both then and now, continued to experience Jesus as a living reality after his death. In the early Christian community, these experiences included visions or apparitions of Jesus. [8]

The references to Paul are because of the early creed he records in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, and his conversations with the other eyewitnesses in Galatians. Eric has another post where he goes over that early creed, and it is something that every Christian should know about. It's really kind of surprising that you never hear a sermon on that early creed in church, where they generally sort of assume that you believe everything in the Bible on faith. But skeptical historians don't believe in the post-mortem appearances by faith – they believe it (in part) because of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

If you want to see a Christian scholar make the case for the resurrection appearances in a debate, then here is a post I wrote with the video, audio and summary of the William Lane Craig vs James Crossley debate on the resurrection.

Peter Williams lectures on the historical reliability of the gospels

May 14, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is a lecture I found from British historian Dr. Peter J. Williams.

Here's the main lecture: (54 minutes)

And here's the Q&A: (9 minutes)

About Peter Williams:

> **Peter J. Williams** is the Warden (CEO) of Tyndale House and a member of the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He received his MA, MPhil and PhD, in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible from Cambridge University. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament there as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy. In July 2007 he became the youngest Warden in the history of Tyndale House. He also retains his position as an honorary Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Aberdeen.

Summary of the lecture:

- What if the stories about Jesus are legendary?
- were the gospels transmitted accurately?
- were the gospels written in the same place as where the events happened?
- do the gospel authors know the customs and locations where the events happened?
- do the gospels use the right names for the time and place where the events took place?
- do the gospels disambiguate people's names depending on how common those names were?
- how do the New Testament gospels compare to the later gnostic gospels?
- how do the gospels refer to the main character? How non-Biblical sources refer to Jesus?
- how does Jesus refer to himself in the gospels? do the later Christians refer to him that way?
- how does Jesus teach? do later Christians teach the same way?
- why didn't Jesus say anything about early conflicts in the church (the Gentiles, church services)?
- did the writers of the gospels know the places where the events took place?
- how many places are named in the gospels? how about in the later gnostic gospels?

- are the botanical details mentioned in the gospels accurate? how about the later gnostic gospels?

And here are the questions from the audience:

- how what about the discrepancies in the resurrection narratives that Bart Ehrman is obsessed with?
- what do you think of the new 2011 NIV translation (Peter is on the ESV translation committee)?
- how did untrained, ordinary men produce complex, sophisticated documents like the gospels?
- is oral tradition a strong enough bridge between the events and the writers who interviewed the eyewitnesses?
- what does the name John mean?
- why did the gospel writers wait so long before writing their gospels?
- do you think that Matthew and Luke used a hypothetical source which historians call "Q"?
- which gospel do critical historians trust the least and why?

I really enjoyed watching this lecture. He's getting some of this material from Richard Bauckham's awesome book "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses", so if you aren't familiar with it, you can get an idea of what's in it. Peter Williams is a lot of fun to listen to – an excellent speaker.

And you can listen to the Peter Williams vs Bart Ehrman debate. That link contains a link to the audio of the debate as well as my snarky summary. It's very snarky.

Are Mormon doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

May 15, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually

> infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian

> culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

New survey: high school boys twice as likely to be conservative than girls

May 16, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Did you know that women tend to be further to the left than men? According to surveys, women are more leftist than men on abortion, same-sex marriage, and a host of other policies. I'll show you a few surveys below. But even more interesting is that there is a link between support for leftist policies, and higher mental illness. Let's take a look at it.

First, here is an article from The Hill:

> Forty-four percent of young women counted themselves liberal in 2021, compared to 25 percent of young men, according to Gallup Poll data analyzed by the Survey Center on American Life. The gender gap is the largest recorded in 24 years of polling. The finding culminates years of rising liberalism among women ages 18 to 29, without any increase among their male peers.

That article is a bit old, here's a new one from this week in The Post Millennial:

> In annual surveys over the last few years, data pulled from Monitoring the Future has shown that about a quarter of high school seniors identify as conservative or very conservative. Only 13 percent of the 12th grade boys identify as liberal.
>
> […]The graph excludes moderate students, but of those high school seniors that do identify politically, around 65 percent of boys were conservative while only around 31 percent of girls identified that way.

According to surveys, young women are also more likely to support abortion under any circumstances (40 to 27) and more likely to support same-sex marriage than men.

I don't support abortion because I favor the rights of unborn babies over the happiness of adults. I don't support same-sex marriage because studies show children do better when they are raised by a mother and a father. And I think that's why most of these men are with me, they follow that same reasoning, and side with the children against the adults.

I thought this part of the article was interesting:

> As one Politico analyst put it, "Democrats have a masculinity problem." Citing trends among black and Latino voters, the analyst pointed out that even in minority communities that have voted majority Democrat, men have been turning to the Republican party at higher rates than women.
>
> Some conservative figures such as Jordan Peterson and Dennis Prager (through PragerU) have millions of followers on YouTube, a platform where the users are majority male.
>
> In addition, one of the more popular conservative political podcasts, The Ben Shapiro Show, has an audience that skews overwhelmingly male at 86 percent.

> The audience also skews younger, 18-44, in comparison to Fox's former show with Tucker Carlson, 25-54, which skews slightly female at 53 percent.

This is good news. Boys are finding themselves role models who they see as "strong". And those new role models are conservative. These stronger role models champion truth, and they make moral judgements. Even if it hurts other people's feelings.

Let's go on to the second point. These leftist policies are having a bad effect on young women's mental health.

Feminist web site Evie Magazine reported on the some 2020 findings by Pew Research (left-wing pollster):

> A 2020 Pew Research study reveals that over half of white, liberal women have been diagnosed with a mental health condition at some point.
>
> [T]he study, which is titled Pew American Trends Panel: Wave 64, was dated March 2020 — over a year ago.
>
> The study, which examined white liberals, moderates, and conservatives, both male and female, found that conservatives were far less likely to be diagnosed with mental health issues than those who identified as either liberal or even "very liberal."
>
> […]**White women, ages 18-29, who identified as liberal were given a mental health diagnosis from medical professionals at a rate of 56.3%, as compared to 28.4% in moderates and 27.3% in conservatives.**

I found an interesting article in the Wall Street Journal that talked about how one leftist policy concern (global warming alarmism) is tied to higher rates of mental illness.

It says:

> A study in 2021 of 16- to 25-year-olds in 10 countries including the U.S. reported that 59% were very or extremely worried about climate change, and 84% were at least moderately worried. Forty-five percent claimed they were so worried that they struggled to function on a daily basis, the definition of an anxiety disorder.

The study found that the mental illness was more common in younger people:

> Climate anxiety and dissatisfaction with government responses are widespread in children and young people in countries across the world and impact their daily functioning.

So now we are looking at a direct link between the policies of the left, and the lower mental health of the left. And we know that more women than men are on the left. And we see more mental illness among women. Interesting, isn't it?

And this has consequences. Leftist women are noticing that men are more conservative than they are, and it's affecting their dating:

The marriage rate is also declining. Could this decline in marriage be related to the increase in leftist women, and all the related mental illnesses that leftist women have? Does it make sense for a conservative man to enter a relationship where he pays all the costs and bears all the risks, but all the decisions are being made by a leftist woman? It's dangerous for a man to do that.

Consider that the divorce rate is very high right now, and divorce takes away a man's money, his access to his kids, and his freedom. Women initiate 69% of divorces. College-educated women – who are especially leftist – initiate 90% of divorces. This high divorce rate cannot be blamed on men, because the divorce rate of lesbians is the highest of all. No man to blame in that situation.

Why would a man sign up to be controlled by feminist institutions, like the divorce courts? Men are not interested in projects where they have to pay for everything, but someone else is making the decisions. Especially if they get blamed when things go wrong.

Facing all of these risks, a man would have to be crazy to even talk to a leftist woman – much less date her. Unfortunately, we aren't making enough young conservative women for these conservative young men to marry. And so, the marriage rate is declining. Young women today are not as conservative as previous generations.

I know a lot of people today are worried about young men falling under the influence of bad role models. But the surveys show that boys tend to have the right role models, and the right political views. So, we need to work on making young women more conservative.

William Lane Craig debates atheist Lawrence Krauss: Does God Exist?

May 18, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video from the third debate from Dr. William Lane Craig's speaking tour in Australia.

Format:

- William Lane Craig (15 min)
- Lawrence Krauss (15 min, but was actually 21:40)
- Moderated discussion
- Question and answer

Dr. Graham Oppy, the moderator, is a well-known atheist philosopher. He let Dr. Krauss speak for 21 minutes and 40 seconds, which is why my summary of Krauss is so long.

The video:

Summary

After careful consideration, I decided not to be snarky at all in this summary. What you read below is what happened. There may be some small mistakes, but I will fix those if people tell me about them. I also included some quotes and timestamps for the more striking things that Dr. Krauss said.

The debate itself starts at 4:50 with Dr. Craig's opening speech. He does use slides to show the structure of his arguments.

Dr. Craig's opening speech. (4:50)

1. The kalam cosmological argument:
    - God is the best explanation of the origin of the universe
    - The Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem supports the absolute beginning of the universe
    - Even if our universe is part of a multiverse, the multiverse itself would have to have an absolute beginning
    - Speculative cosmologies try to challenge the Big Bang theory, but none of them – even if true – can establish that the past is eternal
    - Only two types of things could explain the origin of spece, time, matter and energy – either abstract objects or minds
    - Abstract objects do not cause effects, but minds do cause effects (we do it ourselves)
    - A mind is the best explanation for the origin of the universe
2. The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
    - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature

    - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
    - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
    - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see
3. The cosmic fine-tuning for the existence of intelligent life
    - There are two kinds of finely-tuned initial conditions: 1) cosmological constants and 2) quantities
    - These constants and quantities have to be set within a narrow range in order to permit intelligent life
    - There are three explanations for this observation: law, chance or design
    - Law is rejected because they are put in at the beginning or matter – they don't emerge from matter
    - Chance must be rejected, because they odds are just too long unless you appeal to a world-ensemble
    - We do not observe what the world ensemble hypothesis predicts that we should observe
    - Design is the best explanation for finely-tuned constants and quantities
4. The existence of objective moral values and duties
    - Our experience of morality (values and duties) is that it is objectively real and incumbent on us
    - When someone goes into a classroom and shoots at innocent children, that is objectively wrong
    - On naturalism, moral values and moral duties do not exist – they are conventional and variable by time and place
    - The best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties is that God exists
5. The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus
    - There are three widely-accepted facts that are best explained by the resurrection hypothesis
    - 1) the empty tomb, 2) the post-mortem appearances, 3) the early church's belief in the resurrection
    - Naturalistic attempts to explain these 3 boilerplate facts fail
    - The best explanation of the 3 minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead
6. The immediate experience of God
    - Belief in God is a "properly basic" belief – rational even without arguments because of experience of God

Dr. Krauss' opening speech. (21:12)

Slides: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

1. Religious pluralism I

    - There have been lots of different gods created by people through history
    - We've gotten rid of all of them by understanding how the universe works by doing science
    - Religion is just stories, and the stories are inconsistent with how the universe works
2. Progress of naturalistic science I
    - Newtonian physics refutes the idea that angels push planets around
    - Darwinian evolution refutes design arguments, including the one that Dr. Craig presented (24:10)
    - Biochemistry hasn't explained how life originated, but we will have the solution soon
    - Physics shows us that matter can be created and destroyed without need a God
    - Physics shows us that universes can be created and destroyed "no problem"
3. Religious pluralism II
    - Since we have been able to disprove all the gods we've invented, why hang on to the last one
    - It's unlikely that the God that Dr. Craig presented exists, because we disproved all the others he didn't present
4. Hiddenness of God
    - There is a complete lack of evidence for the other 999 gods, so how likely is it that the God Dr. Craig presented exists
5. Religious pluralism III
    - There are inconsistencies between various religions, so therefore there can be no religion that is right
6. Progress of naturalistic science II
    - Peasants had a very low level of knowledge about the world and they believed in God
    - But our level of knowledge has increased over time, so we shouldn't believe in God now
    - Peasants thought that the Earth orbited the Sun, but this is now known to be false
    - The Scriptures said that the Earth orbited the Sun, but now we know that's false from science
7. Christianity plagiarizes from other religions I
    - There is nothing new or special about Jesus
    - He's just as unpleasant as all the other gods
    - Everything particular to Jesus occurs in other religions
8. Catholics are inconsistent about what they believe
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in transubstantiation
    - I'll bet most Catholics don't really believe in the virgin birth
9. The resurrection is copied from many other religions
    - Dionysus, Osiris, etc.

10. There is no evidence for the resurrection
    - The stories about Jesus were written “decades or hundreds of years after the fact”
    - The stories are inconsistent with each other
    - Dr. Craig tells me that historical Jesus scholars all accept that the resurrection happened
    - That’s like saying that all alien abductions experts agree that alien abductions happened
    - It’s unreasonable to think that the resurrection happened because no one saw it happen
    - I accept that people reported on appearances, but hallucination theory can explain that
11. The timeline for the creation and incarnation are all wrong
    - The creation, planet formation, hominids, incarnation, etc. all take place in the wrong times
    - If God knew what he was doing, he would done everything at better times to be more efficient
12. David Hume’s argument against miracles is sound
    - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – nothing wrong with this argument
    - Miracles are really just coincidences
    - Catholic apparitions at Lourdes disprove the historical argument that Dr. Craig made for the resurrection
13. God is petty and jealous
    - God shouldn’t demand that we trust him, esteem him and consider his character when we make decisions
    - The atoning death of Jesus for the sins of the world also makes no sense
14. Belief is based on geography
    - What you believe is clearly correlated with where you are born
    - There is even an Islamic clone of Dr. Craig who “uses the exact same arguments” that he does to prove Islam
    - Belief in God is decreasing in the Internet-accessible world
15. Science can develop morals without God
    - Reason is able to guide our actions to be moral
    - Morality evolves over time, so there is no objective morality
    - Catholicism teaches things that are immoral
    - Some things are prohibited by biological revulsion, such as incest
    - But if a brother and sister have sex using condoms “is that morally wrong? I can’t say it is frankly” (37:24)
16. Dr. Craig is irrational
    - “I came here convinced based on my past interactions and his writing that Dr. Craig was a dishonest Charlatan”
    - “Any argument that validates God is reasonable to him”

    - “And any argument against it is not only unreasonable but wrong and worth distorting”
    - “Because it must be wrong – he’s decided the answer in advance”
17. Dr. Craig is immoral
    - Dr. Craig thinks it is OK for God to command that Canaanite children are killed
    - “So in fact if they were Canaanite children in that schoolroom that he talked about then it would be OK”
    - It’s not reasonable to justify genocide in that way, but Dr. Craig is willing to go to those lengths
18. The cause of the origin of the space time universe need not be God
    - Dr. Craig says that if there is an explanation for the origin or space, time, matter and energy it must be God
    - But it could just as easily be turtles or Zeus
19. Dr. Craig misrepresents the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem
    - Alexander Vilenkin wrote me an e-mail that says that the theorem doesn’t work in all cases
    - “Dr. Craig is so convinced that these arguments must be true that he won’t listen to the fact that they’re not”
20. Darwinian evolution explains the fine-tuning
    - “Life was fine tuned – we got rid of it with Darwin”
    - Mutation and natural selection explain the cosmic fine-tuning argument that Dr. Craig presented
21. Suboptimal design disproves the fine-tuning argument
    - “We get back aches” therefore “This argument that [the universe] is fine-tuned for life is nonsense”
22. William Lane Craig can be proven to exhibit homosexual behavior using logical arguments
    - Look, you can construct arguments that are clearly wrong
    - Premise 1: “All mammals exhibit homosexual behavior”
    - Premise 2: “William Lane Craig is a mammal”
    - Seems to be saying that logical arguments can prove false things “it’s nonsense”
23. Dr. Craig distorted a podcast that some group made on pain receptors
    - Dr. Craig’s faith is so strong that it causes him to distort what this group said

Discussion: (44:35)

I will not be summarizing everything that was said, just a few main points.
The segment from 52:18 to 57:12 about the Vilenkin e-mail on the BVG theorem is a must-see. Krauss is standing up and gesticulating while Craig is calmly trying to quote a paper by Vilenkin that shows that Krauss is misrepresenting Vilenkin. Krauss constantly interrupts him. After a while, when Craig exposes him as having misrepresented Vilenkin and gets him to admit that all current eternal models of the

universe are probably wrong, he quietens down and can't even look at Craig in the face.

Cosmological argument:

- Craig: The e-mail says any universe that is expanding, on average, requires a beginning
- Craig: There are two models – Aguirre & Gratton and Carroll & Chen – where there is a period of contraction before the expansion
- Craig: The two models are the ones cited in the e-mail that Dr. Krauss showed
- Craig: In the very paper by Vilenkin that I cited, he says that both of those models don't work
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Vilenkin said that they have to make an assumption about entropy that they have no rationale for
- (as Craig starts to talk Krauss makes an exaggerated, disrespectful gesture and sits down in a huff)
- Craig: Yes, an unwarranted assumption means that they don't have EVIDENCE for their theories being correct
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "All the evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning but WE DON'T KNOW!!!!!!!" (raising his voice)
- Craig: I'm not saying that we know that the universe had a beginning with certainty
- Craig: I am saying that the beginning of the universe is more probably true than false based on the evidence we have
- Craig: And you agree with me about that – you think the universe had a beginning
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) (Unintelligible)
- Moderator: One at a time
- Craig: In your Vilenkin e-mail slide, at the end of the paragraph where the two models are mentioned that Vilenkin specifically shows…
- (I am guessing that Craig is going to ask why so much of what Vilenkin wrote has been cut out of the e-mail that Krauss showed)
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) Because it was technical…
- Moderator: Lawrence! Hang on a sec!
- Craig: He specifically shows that these models are not past eternal, and that they require a beginning just like the others…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) We can do the math if you want
- Craig: Now wait. I couldn't help notice that there on your slide there was a series of ellipsis points indicating missing text…
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "Yeah, because it was technical!"
- Craig: "I wonder what you deleted from the original letter"
- Krauss: (agitated and interrupting) "I just told you!"
- Craig: "Now wait. Could it have been something like this: (reads a quote from Vilenkin) 'You can evade the theorem by postulating that the universe was contracting prior to some time. This sounds as if there is nothing wrong with having contraction prior to expansion. But the problem is that a contracting universe is

highly unstable. Small perturbations would cause it to develop all sorts of messy singularities, so it would never make it to the expanding phase.'
- Craig: "That's Vilenkin."
- Krauss: "In this paper, that's absolutely right"
- Krauss: But it's ok for theories to assume things that we know are wrong – they are still good theories – it's unknown
- (Craig turns away and looks through his papers)
- Craig: "Isn't it true that the only viable quantum gravity models on order today involve a beginning – have a finite past?"
- Krauss: "No"
- Craig: "Well, can you give us one then"
- Krauss: (talks about a variety of possible eternal models) "In my experience in science, all of them are probably wrong"
- Krauss: "You know most theories are wrong, which is why, you know, it's hard"
- Craig: "Right"

I noticed that a huge number of atheist web sites are taking the Vilenkin quote that Krauss used out of context, like this one and this one. There are probably a lot more of them like that, which I think is interesting. That's why we have these debates, I guess. To set the record straight about who accuses people of being dishonest, and who is actually dishonest.

Fine-tuning:

- Krauss tried to argue that he had explained the fine-tuning with the Higgs particle, but Dr. Craig said that only applied to the cosmological constant, not all the other examples of fine-tuning. Krauss said that it wasn't impressive that this universe permitted life and that "It would have been much more surprising if we evolved in a universe in which we couldn't live". Krauss argued the fine-tuning was only for "Life like us". But Dr. Craig explained that the fine-tuning is what allows us to have the basics of any kind of life, like slow-burning stars, chemical diversity, etc. – things that are required for basic minimal life functions in any living system. Craig said that he was working with the current physical laws of this universe (F = ma, etc.) and that he was looking at what changed if we changed those even slightly. Krauss tried to say that if he changed things like the mass of particles then the strength of forces would change. (But the forces aren't laws!) Krauss argued that the cosmological constant would be even better for life if it was zero, and Craig said that the life permitting range did include zero, but that the range of life-permitting values was narrow.

Jesus' existence:

- Craig reponded to the mystery religions charge, the charge that the evidence for the minimal facts is too late/too weak, the charge that grief visions explained the evidence better, and Hume's argument against miracles. Craig brought up the early

creed from 1 Cor 15:3-7 and explained to Krauss that it was 5 years after the events, and that Jewish standards of oral transmission were strong enough to ensure that the creed was reliable, and most of the eyewitnesses would still have been alive.

Audience Q and A: (1:21:09)

The first topic is the grounding of morality. Krauss agrees that there is no objective morality and no objective moral oughts. He also said that that standards of behavior are arbitrary, and that they change over time and they are adopted for promoting social order. Dr. Craig pressed the point that science itself would collapse without ethical values. It assumes them, but cannot ground them.

The next topic was free will. Krauss is a determinist. Craig asked him how he could reconcile moral responsibility with determinism.

The next topic was the effectiveness of mathematics. Krauss didn't have an explanation for it and didn't think it needed one. Then they got into whether the Genesis has been verified by science and whether it is meant to be taken literally.

The next topic was whether philosophy makes any progress. Craig gave the example of verificationism being rejected as too narrow, and self-refuting. Krauss: "I'm going to come to the defense of philosophy for the first time". Craig: "That's amazing!" Krauss said that science provides new knowledge. Craig said there were some things that could be known apart from science.

Which side of the abortion rights debate is backed by scientific evidence?

May 18, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Once upon a time I didn't know much about the case for abortion rights or the case for the right to life of unborn children. My reason for not reading much about it is that I thought that it was kind of a subjective issue. But, I started a project to read 1-2 books on every conceivable topic, including one on abortion. Lo and behold, it turned out that one side did have the backing of science.

This article from The Public Discourse explains: (links removed)

> The following are typical examples—only three of the many, many we could cite. These are from standard texts by embryologists, developmental biologists, and microbiologists:
>
> "Human life begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm unites with a female gamete or oocyte (ovum) to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marked the beginning of each of us as a unique individual." "A zygote is the beginning of a new human being (i.e., an embryo)." Keith L. Moore, The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology, 7th edition.
>
> "Fertilization is the process by which male and female haploid gametes (sperm and egg) unite to produce a genetically distinct individual." Signorelli et al., Kinases, phosphatases and proteases during sperm capacitation, Cell Tissue Research.
>
> "Although life is a continuous process, fertilization (which, incidentally, is not a 'moment') is a critical landmark because, under ordinary circumstances, a new, genetically distinct human organism is formed when the chromosomes of the male and female pronuclei blend in the oocyte" (emphasis added; Ronan O'Rahilly and Fabiola Mueller, Human Embryology and Teratology, 3rd edition.

The genetically distinct part is key – this unborn child is has a different DNA signature (a human signature) than either the mother or the father. Nothing will be added or taken away from this new signature as the unborn child grows. It never changes.

More:

> These authorities all agree because the underlying science is clear. At fertilization—or, more precisely, when the sperm (a male sex cell) fuses with the oocyte (a female sex cell, more commonly referred to as an egg)—each of them ceases to be, and a new entity, one that is both genetically and functionally distinct from either parent, is generated. This new entity, initially a single totipotent cell, then divides into two cells, then (asynchronously) three, then four, eight, and so on, enclosed all the while by a membrane inherited from the oocyte

> (the zona pellucida), which then dissolves during implantation, allowing for continued growth in the direction of maturity as a member of the species. Even prior to implantation, however, these cells and membrane function as parts of a whole that regularly and predictably develops into the more mature stages of a complex human body.
>
> How do we know that the result of sperm-oocyte fusion is a new entity, rather than a continuation of the oocyte? We know that a new entity exists because, once the sperm penetrates the oocyte, a completely new trajectory of biological development commences. The biological activity of an oocyte is directed toward successful fertilization; the biological activity of sperm is directed toward penetration of an oocyte. The biological activity of the new entity that results when sperm and oocyte fuse, however, is directed toward nothing less than the development of a mature human organism, distinct from either parent. Further, this new entity's activities are directed not by instructions from the mother's body, as some people wrongly suppose, but by its own unique set of instructions, especially the blueprint for development contained in its unique genetic material. The mother's body recognizes the zygote and then the embryo as an entity distinct from itself. In fact, the embryo must send out chemical signals to prevent the mother's immune system from attacking it. The embryo also emits chemical signals that induce changes in the lining of the mother's uterus to enable successful implantation.
>
> If this embryo is provided a suitable environment, nutrition, and protection from deliberate attack, serious injury, or disease, it will develop to the mature stage of a human organism. Thus, from the zygote stage onward this distinct, new organism has all of the internal resources—in its genetic and epigenetic structure—needed to develop itself (or, rather, himself or herself, since in the human sex is determined from the very beginning) to the mature stage of a human organism. At no point after fertilization—implantation, gastrulation, birth, puberty, etc.—does a fundamental change in biological trajectory occur. These subsequent stages of development are simply the unfolding of the zygote's inherent dynamism toward human organismal maturity. This shows that the zygote already is a human organism—a member of the species Homo sapiens—albeit at an early stage of his or her development.

So, since I like to win arguments with science, I just took the side of the debate that was backed by science. I really hate to lose debates, you know. I really like to cite scientific evidence when I'm debating.

The crime of abortion, it seems to me, is that you are depriving a human being of his or her future, because of your convenience right now. Human beings don't have the right to take away the futures of other human beings because they want to be unburdened by the results of their own actions. We shouldn't resort to violence in order to escape responsibility for our own actions. In almost every case, (except to save the life of the

mother), killing the unborn child isn’t justified. It’s actually very scary to me that anyone would think that hurting other people was a reasonable response to one’s own diminished happiness. How did we ever get to a place in society when people don’t think that taking responsibility to care for the unborn child is morally better than killing the unborn child? It’s a baby for goodness sake. We ought to be serious about setting up our lives and controlling ourselves so that we never hurt an unborn child.

Desert Rose is really enjoying her review copy of “The Immortal Mind”

May 19, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Desert Rose got a review copy of “The Immortal Mind“, and she loves it. Her mom loves it. And two of her neightbors love it, too. It’s made a huge splash. Although the material is scientific evidence, it’s written in a way that non-scientists can understand. And these are interesting topics to talk about with skeptics, atheists, and non-Christians. Let’s take a look at what’s in the book.

The book is about what the best explanation is for our mental experiences: consciousness, abstract thought, and free will. Basically, what is the “mind”? One view is that your mind is just your physical brain. That’s called “materialism”. Then there is “dualism”, where you are your mind, and you interact with your physical body. Which way does the evidence point?

Here’s the description of the new book:

> Many scientists and doctors believe that there is no such thing as the soul. That there is no part of us that persists beyond death. We are not spiritual in any respect. We are made up of cells and tissue, and completely controlled by a material organ in our heads: the brain.
>
> In this groundbreaking book, Dr. Michael Egnor, practicing neurosurgeon, neuroscientist and Professor of Neurosurgery at Stony Brook University, makes the case—based on 40 years of practice and over 7,000 brain surgeries—that science has gotten it all wrong. The human brain is incredible, mysterious, and powerful. But it’s not what makes us who we are. The soul does that.
>
> Drawing on the most important research studies in neuroscience, Dr. Egnor presents evidence that the brain alone does not explain the mind. He explores, using modern neuroscience and his vast surgical experience, how inside every damaged brain there is a thinking, feeling person with a spiritual soul that transcends the brain. He argues that scientists can locate the parts of the brain that control the body or sensations or emotions, but they can’t find the seat of reason or free will. He uses fascinating case studies to show how cutting-edge brain surgery on patients who are awake, how research on conjoined twins who share parts of their brains, on patients in deep coma who are still able to communicate with people around them, on near-death experiences, and on artificial intelligence all make a scientific case for the existence of the spiritual human soul.
>
> Engaging, thought-provoking, and groundbreaking, The Immortal Mind shows here that some aspect of who we are is spiritual and immortal, transcending the physical body. Using science, he proves the existence of the human soul.

You can pre-order the book here.

I know that there are great arguments for the soul in philosophy, like persistent identity over time, or intentionality. But somehow, I just feel that it is more persuasive to talk about the scientific evidence, and that's what this book does.

When it comes to Creator and Designer, I have 6 arguments that use scientific evidence:

1. origin of the universe
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. origin of life
4. fossil record
5. habitability
6. molecular machines

What I'd really like is to get a seventh argument added to my list. Another argument for falsifying naturalism / materialism that is based on scientific evidence. Run up the score! 7-0. Sounds like a football game now.

There is a GREAT pre-order goody if you order the book before May 31st. You get a free digital copy of "Minding the Brain". It has articles by people you might recognize: Taliaferro, Menuge, Farris, Egnor, Marks, Gordon, Habermas! Lots of different topics by different authors, kind of like "The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith", which is one of my favorite books.

I already bought Minding the Brain on Kindle, but if you like making an argument for the the soul, then it's a great collection of chapters from some of the best scholars, and the digital version is free if you pre-order "The Immortal Mind". Let me know in the comments if you have ever done prep to make an argument for the soul.

Republicans want to repeal law used to persecute pro-life Christians

May 20, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the worst things about secular leftism is their denial of human rights. For a secular leftist, it's so tempting to want to collect money from taxpayers, then use that money to punish taxpayers who disagree with them. One of the ways that this happened during the Biden regime is when the government used heavily-armed police to pre-dawn raid the homes of Christians.

But the House Republicans are going to do something about it.

This Daily Wire article explains:

> The House of Representatives will take steps towards repealing the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act this week, a law repeatedly weaponized against pro-life activists by President Joe Biden's administration.
>
> Lawmakers on Wednesday will mark up H.R. 589, the FACE Act Repeal Act of 2025, which Texas Congressman Chip Roy introduced in January. The bill "repeals provisions of federal criminal law that prohibit conduct intended to injure, intimidate, or interfere with persons who are seeking to (1) obtain or provide reproductive health services, or (2) exercise their right of religious freedom at a place of religious worship."
>
> Senator Mike Lee of Utah introduced the Senate version of the bill in January as well.

If you don't know the names "Chip Roy" and "Mike Lee", you should. Roy is one of the most conservative Congressman in the House, and an early backer of Ron DeSantis in 2024. DeSantis was the mst conservative candidate for president running in 2024. Lee is one of the most conservative Senators in the Senate. Roy and Lee were clearly not happy with the Biden administration using government to punish people who disagree with the Democrat party.

The article talks about that:

> The move comes after years of work from Roy and his team, who aggressively argued in favor of repealing the FACE Act while the Biden Justice Department used the law to imprison pro-life activist after pro-life activist from 2022 to 2024, often pairing FACE with a felony conspiracy charge to lock peaceful pro-life protesters. President Donald Trump pardoned these imprisoned activists earlier this year.

I blogged earlier about how well Trump has performed for the pro-lifers who voted for him. Pardoning the pro-lifers was one of the most significant actions he took on behalf of his pro-life voters.

It might be worth reviewing the kind of person that Biden appointed to persecute Christians for their not-Democrat views.

This article from Daily Signal tells us all about Kristen Clarke:

> Clarke served as president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a left-wing activist group. She also worked for five years at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, a leftist group that links abortion to "racial justice." Both groups have frequently accessed the Biden White House and received large cash infusions from the Left's dark money network… She cited the far-left smear factory the Southern Poverty Law Center in condemning Alliance Defending Freedom, a nonprofit pro-life and religious freedom law firm, as a "hate group."
>
> […]She said that those protesting Dr. Anthony Fauci, the controversial COVID-19 czar and now-retired head of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, should be "publicly identified and named, barred from treatment at any public hospital if/when they fall ill and denied coverage under their insurance."
>
> […]Clarke had been arrested for attacking her then-husband, Reginald Avery, with a knife, deeply slicing one of his fingers to the bone in 2006. The pair finalized their divorce in 2009. Clarke had the arrest expunged from her record, and during her Senate confirmation, she denied ever having been arrested or having been accused of committing a violent crime. Clarke admitted to her failure to disclose that arrest, and Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, called for her to resign.

That's who Trump-supporters were really voting against, when they voted for Trump in 2024. Trump-supporters voters to stop the persecution of Christians by the government.

What about the people who dislike Trump, and can't understand why Christians would vote for him? Well, they probably don't know who Chip Roy, Mike Lee or Kristen Clarke are. They know about Trump, because their TVs told them to hate Trump. But Christians and conservatives don't get their news from watching TV. We monitored stories like the persecution of pro-life Christians, and we voted to oppose the weaponization of Big Government against Christians. We voted for the results we wanted. We did not vote to have happy feelings or to virtue signal.

Colorado parents can’t raise their kids according to their own values

May 21, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I waited to blog on Colorado’s new bill that punishes parents who raise their their kids according to Christian values. Now that it’s passed, and we have the final version, let’s find out what’s in it. Then I’m going to ask why Christians and / or conservatives are content to live their lives – and pay their taxes – in states that trample on their religion and values. And I think I know the answer.

First, here’s the article from the Daily Caller, written by Mary Rooke, one of my favorite columnists:

> Under the guise of “anti-discrimination” and adding legal protection for so-called transgender individuals, Colorado lawmakers adopted into law House Bill 25-1312, “Legal Protections for Transgender Individuals,” which may violate the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

Previously, I blogged on a new study that listed 7 different risks to children who undergo so-called “gender-affirming care”. I asked everyone to remember the top two: infertility and damage to bones. I’m very pleased with myself that I was able to name those two risks again today, while writing this post! And without any help! That’s why I write these blog posts. In case you need a refresher, here was the list in order of risk:

1. Infertility
2. Bone Health Deterioration
3. Cardiovascular Complications
4. Sexual Dysfunction
5. Regret/Detransition
6. Mental Health Concerns
7. Cancer Risk

But the Daily Caller article explains why it’s apparently a crime for parents to tell their children about this study, and try to warn them about the need to make wise decisions.

It says:

> This bill puts the government and schools in charge of the welfare of children by requiring that the courts consider whether parents committed cardinal sins of transgender ideology like deadnaming or misgendering, which is now considered “coercive control” under the law. It also prevents the court from removing a child from a parent for allowing the child to receive so-called “gender-affirming care services.”

And:

> HB 25-1312 also changes the state law to include deadnaming and misgendering as discriminatory acts. This makes using biological pronouns and birth names in a public place a discriminatory practice, which could mean fines starting at $5,000 per violation. It requires teachers to use "chosen" names and pronouns, and that school districts provide clothes and other amenities for these confused children, even if the parents disapprove.

It's important to note that it's not just disrespecting the will of the parents – who are the taxpayers that pay the salaries of the perverts. It's that they want to *punish* the parents for disagreeing with Democrats on this issue. So, parents are good enough to pay taxes to the secular leftists, but not good enough to raise their own kids. They're just slaves, in effect. And kings and queens don't care what their slaves think about morality. Slaves just work and pay taxes.

One more quote from Mary, then I will give my opinion:

> The left wants you to believe that the government has the right to sever the parent-child relationship by ending the importance of parental authority. It also wants you to believe in a false reality that sex is not immutable by forcing even non-parents to use fake names and pronouns. Their ultimate goal is to get to children. They want them so badly, and you, as their parent, stand in the way.
>
> We have to fix this problem. Not only should this law be struck down as unconstitutional, but any state official who voted for or otherwise signed their name to it should face serious repercussions at the ballot box. We have to end the left's control of our state and local governments, or these laws will continue to pass.

These are good thoughts, but I don't think we need to reform any state or city laws. We just need to have the courage to leave blue cities and blue states. And I know why Christians don't do it, too.

Christians don't leave blue states for two reasons. Reason 1 is because they aren't living lives that are inconvenced by these laws. For one reason or another, it's not going to bother their plans at all if the secular left is taking their money and making decisions to limit their freedom. Probably because their plan isn't Christian at all. There's a lot of people who claim the label who have no plan.

The second reason is that too many Christians marry non-Christian spouses. These are spouses who think that Christianity is supposed to make them popular and happy. They don't like to think about news or laws or anything else that will make them feel bad. And this isn't a situation where the real Christian is the victim of a fake Christian spouse. People CHOOSE who they marry. If your "Christian" spouse likes to live in a blue state, then it's YOUR fault for marrying that person. There is no use complaining about the state transing your kid if you chose to marry a secular leftist. And don't complain about family courts in a blue state, when your property is plundered for the rest of your life because of an angry secular leftist judge.

Don’t pay taxes in blue states. Move to a red state. That’s the best way to change your blue state to a red state. When you leave, your tax money leaves with you, and that’s the only thing that will stop the abuse of Christian parents by the secular left. They understand money – they understand when the money leaves their state.

Education worker threatened for showing books critical of transgenderism

May 22, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Many women today, including "Christian" feminists, complain about the decline of traditional male behaviors. They like the male behaviors that benefit women, like protecting and providing, but they strongly oppose other male behaviors: spiritual and moral leading. They only want "servant leadership" (non-judgmental ATM). They don't want leadership that fights lies and evil.

Here's an example of how society – under the influence of feminism – responds to traditional male spiritual and moral leadership, as reported in Daily Wire:

> An Oregon education worker is suing his district, claiming it threatened to fire him for displaying several "transphobic" books, including Daily Wire host Matt Walsh's children's book "Johnny the Walrus."
>
> Rod Theis has worked as an education specialist at the InterMountain Education Service District outside of Portland since 2008. In his office, Theis had displayed several children's books, including two titled "He is He" and "She is She" as well as "Johnny the Walrus," all books with messages rejecting transgender ideology.
>
> A school employee saw some of the books and complained that they were "transphobic," even filing a "bias incident" complaint with the district, the lawsuit says.
>
> In response, the district opened an investigation and ultimately "ordered him to remove them and threatened him with discipline simply because it disagreed with the books' content," Theis' lawsuit against the district, which he filed Wednesday, claims.
>
> The district said the books were a "hostile expression of animus toward another person relating to their actual or perceived gender identity" and warned him that "further conduct of this nature" may result in discipline, including termination, the suit says.
>
> Meanwhile, the district was allegedly allowing other employees to decorate in support of transgender ideology as well as "Black Lives Matter" and support for the teachers' union.

The plaintiff is being represented by the Alliance Defending Freedom, which is who I would pick if I were in his shoes.

And the ADF says this in their press release:

> The district has created and implemented a speech policy that forbids employees from expressing a biological view of sex but permits employees to express viewpoints that a person's subjective identity determines whether a person is

> male or female, not a person's sex. The district's censorship of Theis' message, and the speech policy on which that censorship was based, violate the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

According to the complaint, the plaintiff:

- is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker employed by IMESD as an Education Specialist
- is a professing Christian who bases his beliefs on the Bible and strives to live out his Christian faith at work and in the community
- has sincerely held religious beliefs govern his views about all aspects of life, including human nature, sex, and gender
- is motivated by his sincerely held religious beliefs to speak on many topics from a Christian worldview
- believes that all people should be treated with dignity and respect, that God created every person male or female, and that people should accept their God-given sex and not seek to reject or change it

So let me comment about this.

I have a very different view of Christianity and male leadership than virtually all Christians. Basically, I disagree with "servant leadership", and that's the dominant view of how men should lead today.

The standard cultural view of Christianity is "a set of rules that forces men to be nice so that people will like us so that we will feel good". This is how most Christians understand Christianity today. For them, it's not about making truth claims, especially ones that offend non-Christians. And it's not about taking moral stands, because that is mean and judgmental, and makes people not like us. The standard view is that God wants people to like us, and he wants us to feel good. And that's why it's considered normal and natural to respond to a Christian man's leadership on moral and spiritual issues with censorship and coercion. Everyone is so sure that Christianity is a tool for making men be "nice" that they are sure that Christian men who are not "nice" are wrong, and need to be punished.

My view of Christianity is not the standard cultural view. My view is the old view – namely, that men should be allowed to put up books in their offices to indicate that they oppose transing children, even if it is seen by feelings-based people as "mean" and "judgmental".

Men have to be free to fight lies and evil. And if it is too difficult for a good man to do while married then men have to not marry. And if it is too difficult for a good man to do outside of a male-dominated profession, then men have to work in a male-dominated profession. And if it's too difficult for a good man to do because he's born in a feelings-dominated country, then the man has to immigrate to a better country. The point is that men should not put himself in an environment where the feelings-based people are going to rule over him.

C.S. Lewis wrote a wonderful essay a while back called "Men Without Chests". It appears

in the book "The Abolition of Man" which is one of his best works. In the essay, he explains how people expect men to behave honorably and self-sacrificially, even after they have removed the metaphysical underpinnings of those convictions. This case shows how they did it. They feelings-based people punish Christian men every time to speak out about things that God wants men to speak out about.

So, think about the tyranny of "nice", and the toxicity of "empathy" when you wonder why men are not performing according to your expectations. "Why don't men give us all their money and stop judging our bad behaviors?" It's because good men don't get involved in situations where they will be punished for leading on moral and spiritual issues. We are not here to be your servants. We are here to lead you.

When you emasculate good men out of their natural roles of moral and spiritual leadership, you don't get the non-judgmental "servant leadership" ATM that you wanted. You get *nothing* – because good men decline to be reduced to people-pleasing slaves. Good men will find some other way to serve Boss that doesn't put us under the control of feelings-based people. Every decision I made in my education, career and finances was to escape the coercion of the "be nice, be liked, feel good" crowd. I already HAVE a Boss.

Study: virgins have happiest marriages, more sex partners means more unhappiness

May 23, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Although we live in a culture that is dominated by the thoughts and opinions of secular leftists, science provides useful information for those who want defend Biblical morality. Consider the issue of sexuality and marriage. Secular leftists claim that sex outside of marriage is natural, and produces happiness. Bible believing Christians and Jews say chastity is best. Who is right?

Here is the latest study authored by Dr. Nicholas Wolfinger, a sociologist at the University of Utah. His previous book on relationships was published by Oxford University Press. In his analysis of the data, Wolfinger controlled for divorce rates, religiosity, and socioeconomic status.

Here's the most important graph:

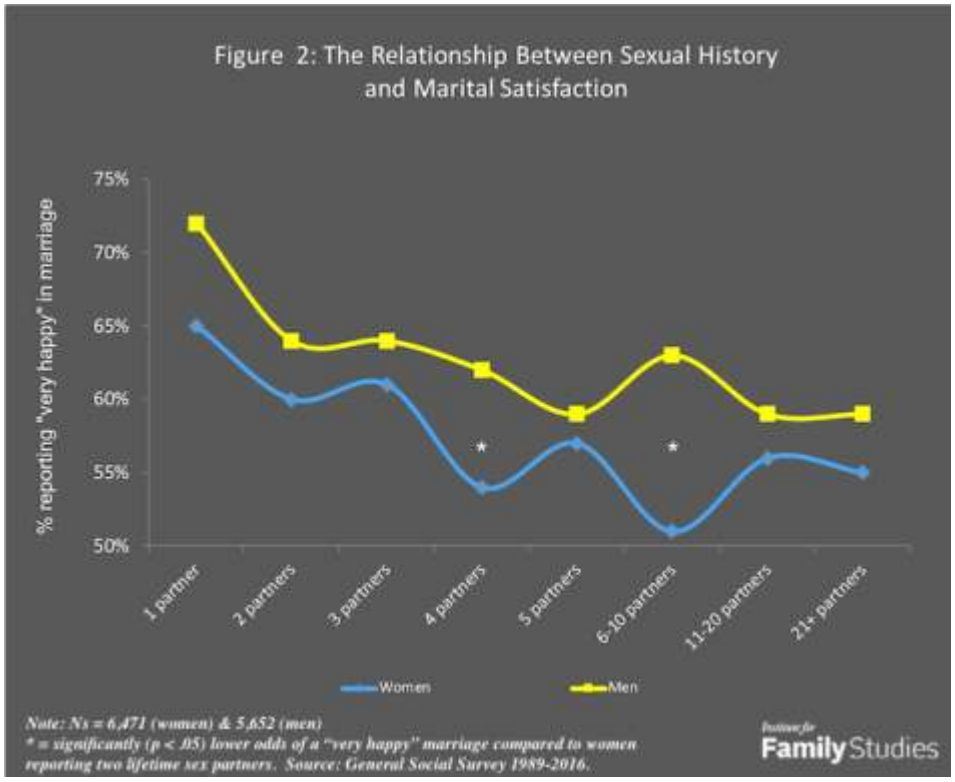

Study: virgins have the happiest marriages, more partners means less happiness

Other factors that increased marital happiness: having a 4-year college degree (5%), having a salary > 78K (5%), regular church attendance (6%). Notice that women are more dissatisfied with marriage (in general) than men are, and they tend to blame the spouse they freely chose for that unhappiness.

The Federalist also reported on previous research relevant to this study:

> Psychologists Galena K. Rhoades and Scott M. Stanley found that women who have had sex with someone other than their husband report statistically significant drops in marital quality over those who don't. A 2004 study by

> sociologist Jay Teachman showed that intimate premarital activities such as cohabitation and intercourse increased the rate of marital dissolution by anywhere between 28 and 109 percent, depending on the activity.

Wolfinger also noted in a previous study that only 5% of women were virgins when they married.

Wolfinger noted that a possible explanation for the link between promiscuity and unhappiness is that people look back on their past partners and compare their spouse unfavorably to them. This is especially the case with women. My concern about this is that feminism has taught women to try to increase their social standing by having hook-up sex with attractive bad boys. If those women ever marry, they do it when they are older, less fertile, and less attractive. The husband they eventually "settle" for will (in their minds) always compare unfavorably to the hot bad boys they had sex with when they were younger and prettier. This, I believe, is what leads to their unhappiness with the man they chose to marry.

More partners also means more marital instability

In a previous post, I blogged about several studies linking virginity to marital stability. Couples who don't have sex before marriage, or even who delayed it, reported better communication, higher satisfaction, better quality sex, and a lower chance of divorce.

Men ought to be aware of this research when they are choosing a spouse. Women initiate 69% of divorces, and the most common reason given is "unhappiness". Well, now we know what's causing that unhappiness – a high number of sexual partners prior to marrying. Smart men should prefer a virgin, for the increased happiness and increased stability. A large number of past sexual partners teaches women that relationships are engines for them to be happy, not commitments that are permanent and exclusive. They'll have internalized the view that relationships are not commitments to invest in self-sacrificially. The pattern will be: "if it doesn't make me feel happy right now, then it should be ended". It will be seen as the man's fault that she is unhappy, even if the study I talked about above shows the real reason is her past promiscuity. Men who aren't serious about evaluating the character of the women for the marriage enterprise are running the risk of divorce, it's that simple.

The best way to make sure that you have a clear head when evaluating a woman is to stay sober, and keep her hands off of you. When a man refuses to let a woman cloud his judgment with sex, then she is forced to learn how to love him in marriage-oriented ways, e.g. – help him, support him, and submit to his leadership. Male chastity encourages women who have been influenced by feminism to abandon selfishness, fun-seeking, and thrill-seeking, so that they learn to care for others. Male chastity also helps a man to resist older women who chose bad boys in their teens and 20s and want to get married to a good provider in their 30s. The studies discussed above clearly show that such women are more likely to be unhappy, and their future marriages are more likely to be unstable. Avoid them. You don't want to be in a marriage to someone who isn't very good at it, because she never prepared herself for it.

Stephen C. Meyer lectures on intelligent design and the origin of life

May 24, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A MUST-SEE lecture based on Dr. Stephen C. Meyer's book "Signature in the Cell". One of my favorite 6 arguments for a Creator and Designer is the origin of the simplest replicating living system. When you look into the cell, what you'll find is carefully sequenced components that for complex structures, like proteins. In this lecture, you'll learn all about this "biological information".

I highly recommend watching the lecture, and looking at the slides. The quality of the video and the content is first class. There is some Q&A (9 minutes) at the end of the lecture.

Topics:

- intelligent design is concerned with measuring the information-creating capabilities of natural forces like mutation and selection
- Darwinists think that random mutations and natural selection can explain the origin and diversification of living systems
- Darwinian mechanisms are capable of explaining small-scale adaptive changes within types of organisms
- but there is skepticism, even among naturalists, that Darwinian mechanisms can explain the origin of animal designs
- even if you concede that Darwinism can account for all of the basic animal body plans, there is still the problem of life's origin
- can Darwinian mechanisms explain the origin of the first life? Is there a good naturalistic hypothesis to explain it?
- there are at least two places in the history of life where new information is needed: origin of life, and Cambrian explosion
- overview of the structure of DNA and protein synthesis (he has helpful pictures and he uses the snap lock blocks, too)
- the DNA molecule is composed of a sequence of bases that code for proteins, and the sequence is carefully selected to have biological function
- meaningful sequences of things like computer code, English sentences, etc. require an adequate cause
- it is very hard to arrive at a meaningful sequence of a non-trivial length by randomly picking symbols/letters
- although any random sequence of letters is improbable, the vast majority of sequences are gibberish/non-compiling code
- similarly, most random sequences of amino acids are lab-proven (Doug Axe's work) to be *non-functional gibberish*
- the research showing this was conducted at Cambridge University and published in

the Journal of Molecular Biology
- so, random mutation cannot explain the origin of the first living cell
- however, even natural selection coupled with random mutation cannot explain the first living cell
- there must already be replication in order for mutation and selection to work, so they can't explain the first replicator
- but the origin of life *is* the origin of the first replicator – there is no replication prior to the first replicator
- the information in the first replicator cannot be explained by law, such as by chemical bonding affinities
- the amino acids are attached like magnetic letters on a refrigerator
- the magnetic force sticks the letters ON the fridge, but they don't determine the specific sequence of the letters
- if laws did determine the sequence of letters, then the sequences would be repetitive
- the three materialist explanations – chance alone, chance and law, law alone – are not adequate to explain the effect
- the best explanation is that an intelligent cause is responsible for the biological explanation in the first replicator
- we know that intelligent causes can produce functional sequences of information, e.g. – English, Java code
- the structure and design of DNA matches up nicely with the design patterns used by software engineers (like WK!)

There are some *very good tips* in this lecture so that you will be able to explain intelligent design to others in simple ways, using everyday household items and children's toys to symbolize the amino acids, proteins, sugar phosphate backbones, etc.

Proteins are constructed from a sequence of amino acids:

A sequence of amino acids forming a protein

Proteins sticking onto the double helix structure of DNA:

Some proteins sticking onto the sugar phosphate backbone

I highly, highly recommend this lecture. You will be delighted and you will learn something.

Here is an article that gives a general overview of how intelligent design challenges. If you want to read something more detailed about the material that he is covering in the lecture above related to the origin of life, there is a pretty good article here.

There is a good breakdown of some of the slides with helpful flow charts here on Uncommon Descent.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

New study: chimp genome is 14.9 percent different from human genome

May 25, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How do people decide that all of life is the product of blind forces like mutation and selection? Many people encounter the blind forces narrative in government-run schools at an age where they are not qualified to investigate anything themselves, at must rely on adults. And what kinds of "evidence" do the adults use on them? Does that "evidence" stand up over time?

When I was in high school, we had the choice to study 2 or 3 of the hard sciences: physics, biology or chemistry. I chose physics and chemistry, because I didn't want my young Earth creation views being assaulted by adults who held the red marking pen. At the time, I was in a secular left country, and my non-Christian working parents only wanted to hear that I was getting the highest marks. Recognizing that the odds of overturning Darwinism in my public schools were against me (for now), I declined to participate in biology indoctrination, and threw myself into math and computer science instead. (I still scored near the top in physics and chemistry) Everything worked out fine for my career, and I eventually went back and got a biology education on my own, from the strong position of having a full time job that paid me more than the government school teachers.

But during high school, I heard about what my less careful friends were learning about in the biology classroom. One of my best friends, a Muslim named Shareef, told me about how he had learned that the chimp genome was only 1% different from the human genome. To him, this was proof of common ancestry, and showed that a naturalistic origin of the diversity of life was likely. He went on to get with a rowdy crowd, eventually dropping out of his engineering degree after 1 year where he performed poorly. Many people embrace evolution because it gives them moral license to drink a lot, and play the fool, which is bad for their grades. It was bad for his grades, and he got into more trouble later.

Well, at the time, I didn't have the evidence to contradict Shareef about the chimp genome. But now I do!

Here is the latest evidence in Evolution News from Casey Luskin, who you might remember because he was a guest on the Knight and Rose Show.

> [N]ew data reported in a recently published *Nature* paper by Yoo et al. has overturned this previous claim. The new findings reveal that human DNA is far more different from chimp DNA than previously thought.
>
> Many times over the years, I've discussed how this 1 percent claim about humans and chimps is likely wrong. It is also misleading. No matter how similar humans might be to chimps at the genetic level, anyone who has been to the zoo knows already that chimps and humans are vastly different. After all, we're the

> ones writing scientific papers about them—not the other way around. So common sense alone dictates that there is something misleading about that number and how it is used. But the new data show that the previous statistic isn't just misleading. It's flat-out false.
>
> As I will elaborate in a subsequent article, this team of researchers has published "complete" sequences of ape genomes that were created 'from scratch' rather than using the human genome as a template. As a result, for the first time we can attempt a much more accurate assessment of the true degree of difference between the human and chimp genomes.
>
> The results are groundbreaking:
>
>> - At least 12.5 percent and possibly up to 13.3 percent of the chimp and human genomes represent a "gap difference" between the two genomes. **That means there's a "gap" in one genome compared to the other, often where they are so different, they cannot even be aligned.**
>>
>> - There are also significant alignable sections of the two genomes that show "short nucleotide variations" which differ by only about 1.5 percent. We can add this difference to the "gap difference," and calculate **a 14 percent to 14.9 percent total difference between human and chimp genomes. This means that the actual difference between human and chimp DNA is 14 times greater than the often-quoted 1 percent statistic.**
>
> It's true that large portions of the human genome are still only about 1.5 percent genetically different from the chimp genome. We'll explore what that means in a subsequent post. But the new data reveal just how little this one fact tells us about the overall picture. We now know that major portions of the two genomes — 12.5 percent to 13.3 percent of the human genome, in fact — are so different that arguably the sections are unalignable and/or not directly present in one genome or the other.

And he has subsequent articles dealing with the details:

- Fact Check: New "Complete" Chimp Genome Shows 14.9 Percent Difference from Human Genome
- Genetic Differences Between Humans and Chimps Represent Functional DNA
- What's the Best Explanation for Human-Chimp Genetic Differences?

So, if this is something you or your children have ever encountered, it might be worth familizarizing yourself with the response: that the original estimates were based on using the human genome as a "target" and ignored the new evidence of gap differences. You

can always come back to Casey's articles if you need more evidence.

I hope you also see how you have to play the game as a Christian, in terms of strategy. When I was young, I didn't have the parents or the experts to help me deal with the government school teachers. I was alone! And in many ways, I'm still alone now. But even so, every Christian has to navigate the world as it is, guarding their beliefs until the time when they are strong enough to make their claims in public. Now, I have no problem butting heads with the atheists in my workplace – they're terrified of me. But that's the result of a long journey of reading books, listening to podcasts and watching debates, and keeping up with the data on all of these controversial questions.

So, I recommend to people to get a copy of Luskin's book "The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith". And if you haven't checked out the Discovery Institutes classes in biology and chemistry for students, you should do it. The default path for most young people in America is just to believe a lot of lies and half-truths served up to them by failure-to-launch teachers whose salaries based on whether their students can be tricked into voting for bigger government. They have an agenda.

I should mention that Shareef did eventually become a Christian, although he is still pretty liberal politically.

Memorial Day: Medal of Honor recipients John Basilone and Hector Cafferata

May 26, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I write military history posts every once in a while, to remind people to honor those who fought for our freedoms. If you check out my "What I am Reading" page on this blog, then you'll see that I've been reading a fair number of books about the Korean War west of Chosin, and Guadalcanal. These were both Marine actions, so for Memorial Day, let's talk about one Marine from each action.

Chronologically, the battle of Guadalcanal comes first. This engagement involves naval conflicts as well as land conflicts. I've read several books about it; "Neptune's Inferno: The U.S. Navy at Guadalcanal" (naval), "The Cactus Air Force: Air War over Guadalcanal" (air), and "Midnight in the Pacific: Guadalcanal — The World War II Battle That Turned the Tide of War" (land). I also play a simulation game called "War on the Sea" where I get to control the American navy and air force. And I have already pre-ordered a new wargame about it: "Guadalcanal: The Battle for Henderson Field".

The operation starts in August 1942, two months after the Americans scored a shocking victory against a superior Japanese force at the Battle of Midway, sinking 4 Japanese carriers in exchange for the loss of one, the USS Yorktown.

Map of Guadalcanal, August 1942, showing Henderson Field, key to Operation Watchtower
(Image source credit for above Solomon Islands map)

In early August 1942, Operation Watchtower targeted the Japanese-held Solomon Islands,

primarily Guadalcanal, where Japan had established a foothold and was building an airfield to threaten Allied supply lines to Australia. The Japanese, having expanded rapidly across the Pacific since Pearl Harbor, held the strategic initiative, with strong garrisons and naval dominance in the region. Their air forces, including the Mitsubishi Zero, outmatched early American aircraft like the Wildcat in maneuverability and range. Japan's navy, with formidable carriers and battleships, held a slight edge over the U.S. Pacific Fleet, depleted after Pearl Harbor but bolstered by carriers like the Enterprise and Hornet.

One figure who really stood out to me during the land campaign was an enlisted Marine named John Basilone.

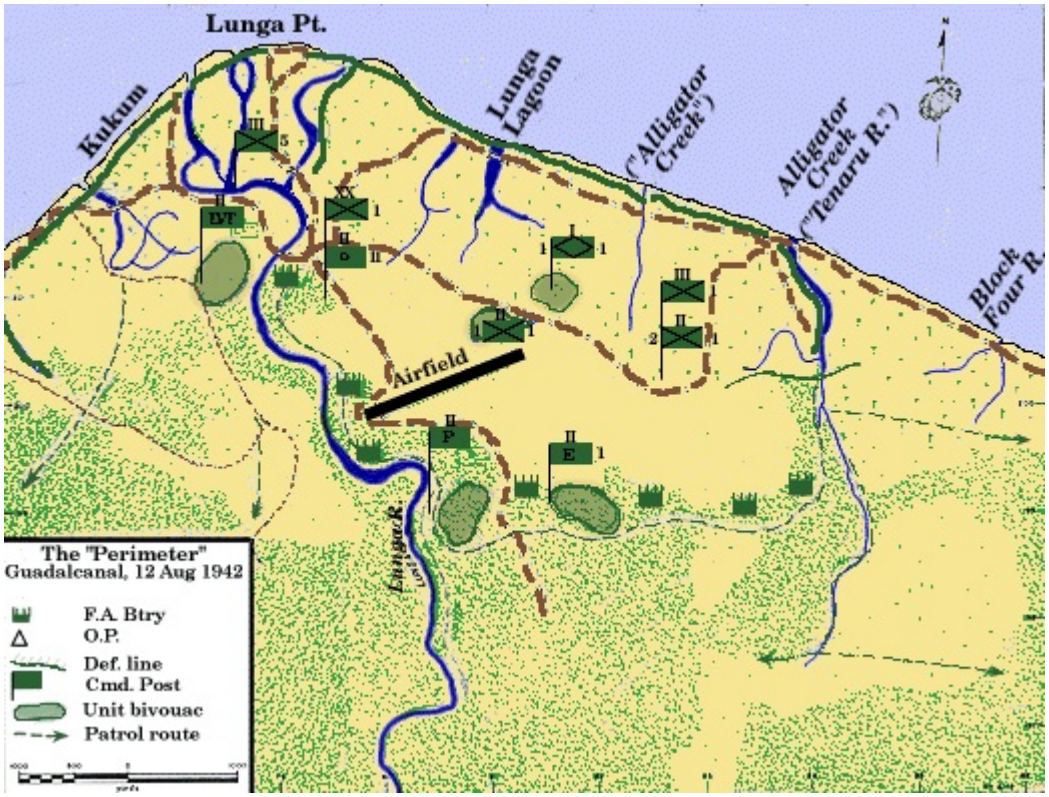

Lunga Perimeter, Guadalcanal, 1942, showing the jungle terrain where John Basilone fought for three days against overwhelming odds

I saw a new New York Post article about Basilone authored by Rich Lowry, so let's see what he has to say:

> Born in Buffalo and raised in New Jersey by his Italian-American parents, he enlisted in the Army in the 1930s as a teenager. Then, after a stint as a civilian, he signed up for the Marines in 1940.
>
> During the Battle of Guadalcanal in 1942, he almost single-handedly held off a massive assault by a Japanese regiment against two machine gun sections he commanded.
>
> […]When the Japanese disabled one of the American gun crews, Basilone moved another machine gun into position and personally manned it, and also repaired another gun under heavy fire.
>
> When they needed more supplies, Basilone ran through Japanese lines to get the ammunition, defending himself with his Colt .45.

> He fought for days and, by the end, he and his comrades had basically annihilated the Japanese attackers.
>
> Basilone lost his asbestos gloves in the chaos and still handled the searing machine gun barrels, sustaining burns on his hands.
>
> […]Nash Phillips, a private who was wounded in the fight, recalled, "Basilone had a machine gun on the go for three days and nights without sleep, rest or food."

He was awarded the Medal of Honor for that action (citation), but he wasn't done serving his country:

> Basilone was awarded the Medal of Honor and afforded, appropriately, a hero's welcome back in the States. He participated in the campaign to sell war bonds.
>
> His conduct at Guadalcanal would be more than enough valor in one life for the rest of us, but Basilone wanted back in the fight.
>
> The Marines told him he was more valuable at home and denied his request. Basilone insisted, and the Marines eventually relented.
>
> He was a machine gun section leader again in February 1945, on the first day of the invasion of Iwo Jima, a godforsaken hunk of volcanic rock in the middle of the Pacific. The dug-in Japanese chewed up the Americans on the beaches.
>
> Basilone flanked a Japanese blockhouse, climbed atop it, and took it out on his own. He then led a Marine tank out of a minefield, before getting fatally hit.
>
> For this action, he posthumously received the Navy Cross. The citation refers to him as "stouthearted and indomitable," and praises "his intrepid initiative, outstanding skill, and valiant spirit of self-sacrifice."

The war against Japan was one of our most noble wars. Prior to our entry in the war, Japan was already invading neighboring countries, and committing atrocities against unarmed civilians. We had every right to fight back once they attacked us, and to use *every means necessary* to stop their brutal aggression.

Since there is still space in this blog post, let's fast forward a few years to the Korean War, and look at a famous battle in it, the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. For this theater, I recommend several books from my reading list. The best one is "On Desperate Ground: The Marines at The Reservoir, the Korean War's Greatest Battle". And I also liked "Colder Than Hell: A Marine Rifle Company at Chosin Reservoir" and "The Last Stand of Fox Company: A True Story of U.S. Marines in Combat". There are actually two battles going on at the reservoir, one with the U.S. Marines on the west side of the reservoir, and one with the U.S. Army on the east side of the reservoir.

So, recall that the Korean War started with an invasion by North Korean communists against peaceful South Korea. America stepped in to defend South Korea from this aggression.

In late November 1950, the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir unfolded in North Korea's frozen mountains, where the U.S. 1st Marine Division, under Major General Oliver P.

Smith, faced a dire situation. Following the successful Inchon landing, General Douglas MacArthur and Major General Edward “Ned” Almond, pursued an aggressive push to the Chinese border at the Yalu River. MacArthur ignored October 1950 intelligence of 120,000+ Chinese troops crossing the Yalu, while Almond’s orders to advance disregarded the frozen, mountainous terrain.

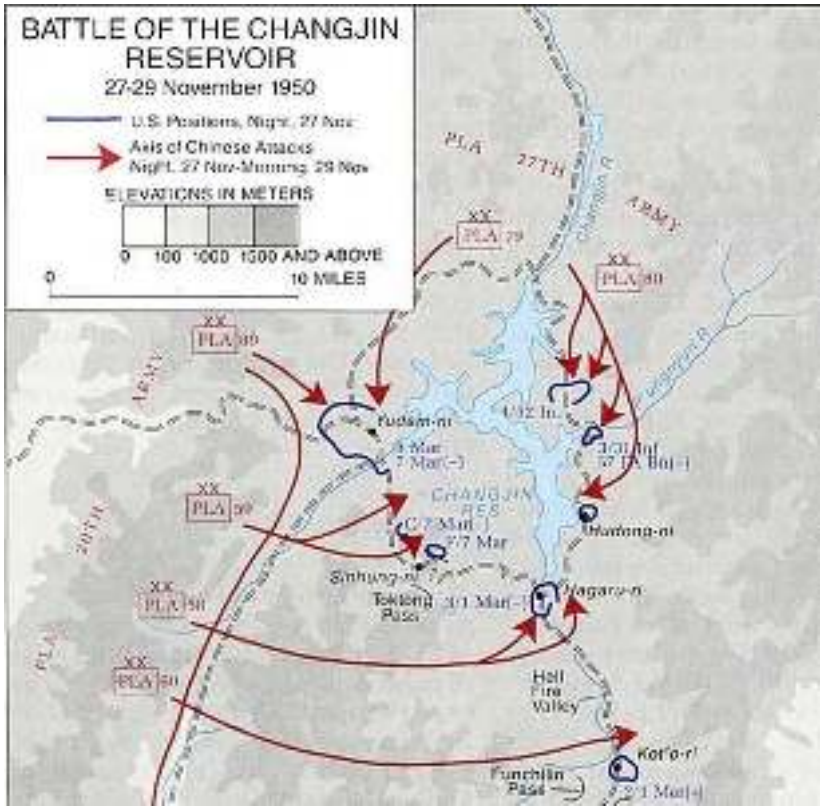

Map of the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir, 27–29 November 1950, showing the Marines’ retreat from Yudam-ni to Hagaru-ri, with Toktong Pass held by Barber’s Fox Company Make sure you find Toktong Pass in the image! It’s important!

By late November, 30,000 UN troops, including 20,000 Marines, were strung along a narrow 78-mile-long mountainous road from Hungnam to Yudam-ni, with key positions at Hagaru-ri and Toktong Pass. The Chinese held the initiative, outnumbering UN forces 10-to-1 in places. Bitter cold weather (-30°F) limited the U.S. air advantage, with Marine Corsairs from Hagaru-ri’s airfield providing vital support. Smith’s cautious advance, defying Almond’s dismissal of the Chinese (“Don’t let a bunch of Chinese laundrymen stop you!”), ensured supply stockpiles and an airfield at Hagaru-ri, critical for evacuations and reinforcements. His foresight preserved unit cohesion and saved 15,000 Marines from annihilation.

If you noticed that phrase “preserved unit cohesion”, I’ll just give you a hint that the U.S. Army forces east of Chosin were more beholden to the recklessness of MacArthur and Almond, and made no provisions for the Chinese ambush. Unit cohesion was lost and our forces were annihilated. You can read all about that in “East of Chosin: Entrapment and Breakout in Korea, 1950“. It’s a tough book, but shows the value of *planning* and *caution* when dealing with unknown enemies in mountainous terrain during the winter.

I previously blogged about William Barber and his Fox Company‘s heroic stand at Toktong

Pass. Captain Barber's Fox Company held Toktong Pass for five days against 1,400 Chinese, allowing 8,000 trapped Marines in the north to move south down the road to escape defeat. Fox Company received only minimal support from light helicopters, because of the cold, snowy weather and roadblocks to the north and south.

Funchilin Pass, Chosin Reservoir, December 1950, showing the frozen terrain similar to Toktong Pass

So today let's take a look at one of the Fox Company Marines who held the Toktong Pass for 5 days, with this article from Task and Purpose:

> On Thanksgiving 74 years ago, at the height of the Korean War, the sound of gunfire abruptly woke Marine Pvt. Hector Albert Cafferata Jr. He and his squad held Fox Hill during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, and a regimental-sized Chinese People's Volunteer Army — a force of approximately 1,400 soldiers — sprung an ambush two hours past midnight.
>
> Cafferata, then 23, was assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division. He and over 200 Marines were tasked with protecting the Toktong Pass, an escape route through the Nangnim Mountains near the Chosin Reservoir in modern-day North Korea.
>
> An initial hail of gunfire, grenades, and mortars knocked out nearly everyone in Cafferata's squad, creating a weak spot in the defense perimeter, but Cafferata continued fighting, without a jacket in the pre-dawn winter cold. The Washington Post reported that fellow wounded Marine Kenneth Benson was initially blinded by a grenade blast during the attack but continued helping Cafferata by reloading his rifle.
>
> Cafferata also landed on a desperate but ingenious way to send enemy grenades

> back toward the enemy.
>
> “For the rest of the night, I was batting hand grenades away with my entrenching tool while firing my rifle,” Cafferata said in a 2001 interview with Florida’s Charlotte Sun newspaper. “I must have whacked a dozen grenades that night with my tool. And you know what? I was the world’s worst baseball player.”
>
> Described as “Stouthearted and indomitable” in his Medal of Honor award citation, Cafferata managed to repel the ambush single-handedly, though it was temporary. The Chinese soldiers launched a vicious second wave in the morning hours.
>
> During the fierce fighting, a grenade landed near a group of wounded Marines, and Cafferata threw it back under heavy fire. This time, it detonated after leaving his hand and severely wounded his right arm and hand with shrapnel. That didn’t stop him, though.
>
> “Courageously ignoring the intense pain, he staunchly fought on until he was struck by a sniper’s bullet and forced to submit to evacuation for medical treatment,” reads the award citation.
>
> Before getting evacuated, Cafferata is credited with killing 15 enemy soldiers and wounding several others. In Peter Collier’s 2003 book “Medal of Honor: Portraits of Valor Beyond the Call of Duty,” Cafferata’s Marine officers recalled how they counted about 100 dead Chinese soldiers where he had held the line. Still, they did not report that number because “they thought that no one would believe it.”

His Medal of Honor citation is here.

So, it’s Memorial Day, and it’s a time for Americans to take time out to think about the respect and gratitude that we owe to people who risked their lives for their friends.

We owe our liberties in large part to the American heroes who fought against imperialism and communism. It’s sad that we have so many people going through our schools and our universities, and coming out with ignorance of these heroes, and a lack of patriotism.

As a non-white legal immigrant to the United States, I’ve made it a major part of my life to go back in time and learn about the sacrifices of the people in our armed forces. You should make the effort, too. I don’t watch television, I am not subscribed to any streaming services, and with RARE exceptions, I don’t watch modern movies. My head is always in the past, learning about people who lived tougher lives than mine, and performed greater deeds fighting against evil than I ever will.

Reading this post and sharing it on social media would be a good start! Many Americans leave school unaware of the sacrifices of our heroes in the armed forces. Let’s share their stories to inspire gratitude in the next generation.

New Republican budget bill finishes the job of defunding Planned Parenthood

May 27, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The Republican party has been taking away the funding of the nation's largest abortion provider piece by piece for some time. Pro-life voters understand that stopping abortion is an incremental process, and a big part of that process is taking the taxpayer money away from the abortion providers. And we are already seeing the effects of the legislation, before it's even been signed.

Here's the latest news from Daily Signal:

> House Republicans delivered on their promise to defund Big Abortion on Thursday by passing the budget reconciliation bill that has consumed Washington's attention for the past three months.
>
> In the bill, the House GOP removed Medicaid funding for Planned Parenthood, the largest provider of abortions in the country. The effort had been supported by dozens of pro-life legislators from around the country.
>
> The move is a monumental win for pro-lifers because Planned Parenthood receives more than one-third of its overall funding from the U.S. government through grants, contracts, and Medicaid reimbursements. That translates to about $2 million per day, which taxpayers are on the hook for. Furthermore, taxpayer funding for the organization has been on an upward trajectory for about the past dozen years, having increased by 50% since 2013.
>
> […]Planned Parenthood is also a major provider of hormones for so-called transgender transitions in the country, which means defunding it is also combating the organization's efforts in that regard as well.

The Federalist had a bit more about this story – how many abortions they perform, how much they profit from that, and weather they perform any other "health care" services:

> In the last two years, Planned Parenthood — an ostensibly "nonprofit organization" — earned a stunning $206 million in profit, its own numbers reveal. Much of that is thanks to hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars flowing into its coffers.
>
> The number of abortions Planned Parenthood performs continues to increase, reaching a staggering 402,200 last year. Meanwhile, the organizations' cancer screening and prevention services have dropped by 54 percent since 2013, including declines of 61 percent for breast exams and 54 percent for pap tests.

The Post Millennial notes that even thought the bill has not been signed into law, it's already causing Planned Parenthood to quit:

> Eight abortion clinics run by Planned Parenthood's Northern Central States region

> are slated to shut down across Minnesota as well as Iowa as the Trump administration is targeting funds going to Planned Parenthood.

And finally, related to the issue of the pro-abortion secular left, here was a recent news story about them from Mind Matters. The article is by Wesley J. Smith, and he talks about how often the convictions of the secular left lead to violence.

This is a good review of the actions of the secular left:

> Back in 2010, a mentally disturbed anti-human terrorist was shot to death by snipers after he took hostages at the Discovery Channel, demanding that the television service stop "encouraging the birth of any more parasitic human infants," and instead air "programs encouraging human sterilization and infertility."
>
> Now, a similar disturbing scenario befell Palm Springs, Calif., where a young man named Guy Edward Bartkus killed himself, injured four people, and caused widespread property destruction when he detonated a huge car bomb in front of an in vitro fertilization clinic. The motive? According to Newsweek's reporting, Bartkus was a "'pro-mortalist' (believing death is preferable to living) or an 'anti-natalist' (believing no more human beings should be born)."

It's not just the crazies who believe these things:

> Anti-natalism is a form of anti-humanism, which isn't just believed by mentally disturbed people capable of violence. Indeed, various forms of anti-humanism have been promoted in professional journals, the media, and popular culture, as a consequence of which, nihilism has been slowly seeping through the culture like a stain.

So often, when you bring up the the issue of being responsible with sex, and being protective of tiny humans, the response is that it's "violence" to tell women to choose good men, and to get married to those good men before having sex. But if you look a bit more closely, the actual violence is all coming from the pro-abortion side.

Supreme Court decision shows why good men are declining to protect and provide

May 28, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

What many people don't realize about men is that men are constantly making calculations about whether or not to impact the world for good. The average man disagrees with things like abortion, same-sex marriage, and transing kids. But the average man also understands that the world is currently being run by don't-judge people. And those don't-judge people have made it risky and costly for good men to make bold stands.

As I've said before, people used to expect Christian men to be generous and protective, but also bold about declaring and defending spiritual and moral truths. Well, the world has changed. The old masculine leadership has been replaced with "servant leadership" – men have to be servants of society's needs, while having no needs of their own. Men aren't allowed to make any decisions. Men aren't allowed to challenge evil with words and actions. Men are only allowed to protect and provide. Silently! Just like an ATM. And an ATM doesn't judge how the money is spent.

So, how does society encourage men to keep dispensing money and making muscles, while simultaneously making sure that they comply with the new feelings-based rules of empathy and don't judge?

Why, by punishing anyone who expresses a moral or spiritual truth, of course. In the case below, the feelings-dominated schools punished a boy for wearing a t-shirt that disagrees with transgenderism, and then the courts refused to fix the mess.

Here's the story from Fox News:

> The Supreme Court declined to hear a case involving a Massachusetts student who was banned from school for wearing a shirt criticizing the transgender movement on Tuesday.
>
> The student, Liam Morrison, brought the case through his father and stepmother, Christopher and Susan Morrison. The plaintiffs argue Nichols Middle School violated his free speech rights when it banned him from wearing two T-shirts to school with the words "There are only two genders" and "There are [censored] genders" on the front.
>
> Liam was sent home both times after he refused to change shirts. The school argued the shirts made his classmates feel unsafe, and a federal court agreed, saying the message was demeaning for transgender students.

So, if SCOTUS declines to hear the case, then the lower ruling stands. This is where American elites are right now. If a young man decides to try to reverse the decline of civilization by opposing lies and evil with his words and / or actions, then he needs to be punished.

Only two justices stood up for free speech:

> Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito both issued separate dissents, arguing the court should have taken up the case.
>
> The decision comes nearly a year after the First Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against Liam and his parents in June 2024, finding that the school was justified in asking him to remove the shirt and sending him home when he refused.
>
> Morrison, who was in seventh grade at the time, was sent home with his father in May 2023 after he refused to take off the shirt, according to court documents. He later wore the same shirt with the words "only two" covered with a piece of tape on which "censored" was written. The school also told him to take this shirt off.
>
> In a 2023 interview with Fox News Digital, Liam stressed that his T-shirt was not directed toward anyone, specifically people who are "lesbian or gay or transgender or anything like that."
>
> "I'm just voicing my opinion about a statement that I believe to be true," he said at the time. "And I feel like some people may think that I'm imposing hate speech, even though it's not directed towards anyone."

So what is the general point to draw from this case?

The key point is this: if society insists on making men bow down to "empathy" and "don't judge", then society will find that good men decline to participate in the other male roles, too. Wearing a t-shirt that challenges the transgendering of kids is quintessential MALE behavior – it's moral leadership. And the public schools, working together with the courts, have punished the boy for standing up for his convictions.

This sends a clear signal to the other men watching: "stop moral and spiritual leading, but keep on protecting and providing." But society can't have that. If the secular leftists take away a man's moral and spiritual leading, then they won't get the protecting and providing. Men don't invest in and protect enterprises, unless they are allowed to speak up about their moral and spiritual convictions.

And you can see that this is already happening, with masculine behaviors like protection and provision being withheld from society. Society now cries "where are all the good men?" and "why don't men make the first move" and "why don't men pay for everything on dates?" and "why don't men protect women from strangers on the subway?" But those things are declining, because of the anti-male attitudes of the schools and courts.

The root cause goes back to C.S. Lewis' old essay "Men Without Chests" in his book "The Abolition of Man". If you punish men for leading from their Christian convictions, then you don't get to help yourself to the benefits provided by those same Christian convictions. This is what the "servant leadership" people don't understand – men don't want to be reduced to dispensing cash for your shopping and not judging your spending. Good men want to lead. They want to fight against lies and evil, and rally others to fight with them.

How well is “atheist morality” working out in secular leftist Seattle?

May 29, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Can atheists rationally ground objective morality? A lot of Americans who were raised in Christian homes give up the faith, and they like to tell Christians “I’m a good person. I believe in human rights. I believe in objective morality. Getting rid of God doesn’t change anything about me”. But, what really happens in cities like Seattle, where the majority of people vote for secular leftism?

Here’s an article from Daily Wire, written by Matt Walsh (archived).

It says:

> The pro-life group Mayday USA held an event in the park as part of their “Don’t Mess With Our Kids” campaign. This was a lawful gathering, by all accounts. They had all the required permits. And at this event, people held signs and sang songs that affirmed the sanctity of life, the reality of human biology, the importance of the nuclear family, and so on. It was basically a Christian concert. People of all ages, including young children, were present.

Matt then links to this video, showing that the Christians are having fun singing hymns and getting along with each other. I do think that waving arms during singing is a bit weird, but it’s just regular first amendment stuff, and they even have a permit from the city to assemble and wave their arms around weirdly.

But then things got violent in secular leftist Seattle:

> But as the event went on, Left-wing activists decided to shut down the event. They began violently assaulting police officers and stormed the stage.

And he has a video of the attack, too.

Well, maybe the Christians provoked this fascistic response somehow.

But Matt says:

> As far as contrasts go, this one is about as stark as you can get. And by the way, the Christians were minding their own business. They weren’t trying to disrupt any other event, or hassle anyone else. They reserved the park, using all of the appropriate legal channels. But the demons decided to charge in, and use violence to silence the Christians. And eventually they got what they wanted. The police arrested 22 adults and one juvenile — all of them on the side of the Left-wing activists — and shut down the event early.

The videos of the attack show black-clad violent extremists, some in tactical gear, surrounding, confronting and shouting at the rally attendees, including a woman holding a baby. I guess that’s secular left Seattle for you. Woooo! Awesome objective morality!

It’s actually surprising that the police did arrest anti-Christian violent extremists, because Seattle is well-known as a city populated by people who cannot rationally ground human rights, free will, or objective morality.

Look:

> [I]n every relevant respect, the government of Seattle has taken the side of the LGBT activists who attacked the Christians.
>
> First of all, everyone who was arrested was released without any bond whatsoever, and no charges were announced. There’s one exception — someone who was accused of attacking an officer and throwing an explosive device — who received a whopping $20,000 bail. But otherwise, none of these people have suffered any real consequences, and of course they never will. And there’s zero chance that any of them will be prosecuted in Seattle. We all know that.
>
> Secondly, the mayor of Seattle — a wormy little man named Bruce Harrell… released a statement over the weekend that blames the Christians for being attacked. This is one of the most extraordinary statements ever released by a public official.

The major of Seattle called the Christian gathering a “far-right rally” – blaming the Christians and their blasted song-singing and baby-holding for the violence that actually was caused by the anti-Christian violent extremists.

Is this surprising? You might remember that the voters in Seattle previously voted for a mayor who resigned because of multiple allegations of child sex abuse. In red states, that would be bad, but in secular left Seattle, it’s actually good! They’re proud of it! They’ll tell you that this is GREAT objective morality. So much “reason”!

And Matt notes that none of this fascism is surprising, in Seattle:

> At the same time, even if the mayor’s office is hauled before a federal court, the truth is that there’s a much deeper problem here. The mayor, after all, was elected by the people of Seattle. And unsurprisingly, in this case, most of Seattle, including the media, agrees with the mayor.

Now, you might remember that I blogged about Harmeet K. Dhillon a while back. She is the replacement for Kristen Clarke, the Biden official who persecuted pro-lifers for peaceful demonstrations. And she said this, on X:

Harmeet K. Dhillon
@HarmeetKDhillon

To deny a group a permit to pray in a public space because of crowd reaction is the classic heckler's veto, which is barred by the First Amendment. Seattle's Mayor clearly needs an education in viewpoint discrimination.

Andy Ngo @MrAndyNgo · May 24

.@MayorofSeattle Bruce Harrell has released a statement written by @jamiehousen, his director of communication, condemning the Christians for holding a worship event at a public park in the city. The event was violently attacked by Antifa and Trantifa.

...
Show more

So Harmeet, the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the Department of Justice, getting involved. But the Alliance Defending Freedom is also considering it.

And Daily Signal is reporting that there will be an FBI probe:

> The FBI is investigating possible "targeted violence against religious groups" in Seattle after leftists crashed two Christian events over the past week and dozens of people were arrested, FBI Deputy Director Dan Bongino said Wednesday.
>
> […]"We have asked our team to fully investigate allegations of targeted violence against religious groups at the Seattle concert," Bongino said in a Tuesday X post. "Freedom of religion isn't a suggestion."

Anti-Christian violent extremists can't seem to stop themselves from attacking Christians using violence and coercion, can they? At least now we have some real law enforcement to look into to the people who actually DO use violence to advance their beliefs.

By the way, I am having a bit of fun in this post at the expense of atheists who want to be taken seriously as "moral", but for a serious refutation of atheist morality, check out this post. I have others, but it's my bedtime.

Why you should listen to the Matt Walsh Show podcast

May 30, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I try to never miss an episode of Matt Walsh, and Desert Rose is the same. It's my favorite podcast, other than the Knight and Rose Show of course. In the post below, I'm going to list out a few recent segments that I think will convince you. And best of all, it's free! I really think this postcast is especially good for men, and for women who like good men.

OK, so here is a very mean and funny segment from Thursday's show. Here is the description "In their desperate quest to appeal to men, the Democrats have called in an expert: a self-professed plus sized, disabled, queer Latina feminist. Who could possibly understand men better than her?"

This one was my favorite this week – buckle yourself in before watching this masterpiece. The description is "We have another super viral entry in the ever-expanding genre of online videos where wives complain about their husbands.":

I've seen the bad wife that he is talking about before, on the Emily King podcast, which I really like.

And then lastly, this one about the South Africa refugees situation.

I know a lot of people watch shows like Joe Rogan, but I can't stand shows like this. I like shows where we are really going to tell the truth, and really take on moral evils. Matt does a great job. In fact, I wish that we could replace all the Christian feminists and feminized pastors with clones of Matt Walsh. I know that a LOT of pastors sound exactly like him, but I want more. I want all the pastors to sound exactly like him. Men should be so bold about truth and morality, that they make the "don't judge" Christian feminists cringe. That's good masculinity! That's what we want.

Knight and Rose Show #64: Egnor and O'Leary: The Immortal Mind

May 31, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 64 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Dr. Michael Egnor and Denyse O'Leary to discuss the scientific evidence for "The Immortal Mind". If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

NOTE: You can pre-order the book here, and get the pre-order goodies, for example, a free digital copy of "Minding the Brain: Models of the Mind, Information, and Empirical Science".

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview Dr. Michael Egnor and Denyse O'Leary about their new book "The Immortal Mind". They discuss how scientific evidence such as split-brain surgeries, veridical near-death experiences, and terminal lucidity challenges materialist views of the mind. Egnor and O'Leary argue that an immaterial, immortal soul is the best explanation for human consciousness, free will, and abstract thought.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 64:

Speaker biographies

Michael R. Egnor, MD, is a Professor of Neurosurgery and Pediatrics at State University of New York, Stony Brook, has served as the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery, and is an award-winning brain surgeon. He was named one of New York's best doctors by the New York Magazine in 2005. He received his medical education at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and completed his residency at Jackson Memorial Hospital. His research on hydrocephalus has been published in journals including Journal of Neurosurgery, Pediatrics, and Cerebrospinal Fluid Research.

Denyse O'Leary is a freelance journalist based in Victoria, Canada. Specializing in faith and science issues, she is co-author, with neuroscientist Mario Beauregard, of "The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist's Case for the Existence of the Soul", and author of "By

Design or by Chance?: The Growing Controversy on the Origins of Life in the Universe". Her newest book, co-authored with neurosurgeon Michael Egnor, is the forthcoming "The Immortal Mind: A Neurosurgeon's Case for the Existence of the Soul". She received her degree in honors English language and literature.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Study: there is no gay gene that causes homosexuality

June 1, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I heard one of the authors of this new study commenting on how he was a gay man, and the purpose of his research was to show a genetic basis for homosexuality, in order to make it equal to race. His goal was to make it impossible to disagree with homosexual behavior, because homosexual behavior would be seen as natural and normal. Let's see if his new study helps him out.

The blog of the peer-reviewed journal PLOS One reported on the new study, which was published in the prestigious journal Science.

Excerpt:

> The once-prevailing concept of a "gay gene" dictating sexual orientation has been put to rest in a powerhouse study published today in *Science*. The work brilliantly illustrates the very nature of science: evolving with the input of new data, especially the large-scale contributions of bioinformatics and crowd-sourcing.
>
> "We formed a large international consortium and collected data for more than 500,000 people, comparing DNA and self-reported sexual behavior. This is approximately 100 times bigger than any previous study on this topic," said lead author Andrea Ganna, of the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Finland and an instructor at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, opening a news conference earlier this week.
>
> […]The investigation estimates a genetic contribution to same-sex sexual behavior as under 1 percent, thanks to analysis of a trove of data from the UK Biobank and the consumer genetic testing company 23andme.

So, there you have it, there is no gay gene. But this is of course something we've known for decades, as all the previous studies had found the same thing.

The normal way that people do these studies is to analyze identical twins, and see how often both identical twins are gay.

> Eight major studies of identical twins in Australia, the U.S., and Scandinavia during the last two decades all arrive at the same conclusion: gays were not born that way.
>
> "At best genetics is a minor factor," says Dr. Neil Whitehead, PhD. Whitehead worked for the New Zealand government as a scientific researcher for 24 years, then spent four years working for the United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency. Most recently, he serves as a consultant to Japanese universities about the effects of radiation exposure. His PhD is in biochemistry and statistics.

> Identical twins have the same genes or DNA. They are nurtured in equal prenatal conditions. If homosexuality is caused by genetics or prenatal conditions and one twin is gay, the co-twin should also be gay.
>
> "Because they have identical DNA, it ought to be 100%," Dr. Whitehead notes. But the studies reveal something else. "If an identical twin has same-sex attraction the chances the co-twin has it are only about 11% for men and 14% for women."
>
> Because identical twins are always genetically identical, homosexuality cannot be genetically dictated. "No-one is born gay," he notes. "The predominant things that create homosexuality in one identical twin and not in the other have to be post-birth factors."
>
> Dr. Whitehead believes same-sex attraction (SSA) is caused by "non-shared factors," things happening to one twin but not the other, or a personal response to an event by one of the twins and not the other.

By the way, a previous study also found that transgender behavior was not genetic, but was clearly linked to environmental factors such as peer approval and social media.

Here is the report from Science Daily:

> This month, a Brown University researcher published the first study to empirically describe teens and young adults who did not have symptoms of gender dysphoria during childhood but who were observed by their parents to rapidly develop gender dysphoria symptoms over days, weeks or months during or after puberty.
>
> […]The study was published on Aug. 16 in *PLOS ONE*.
>
> Littman surveyed more than 250 parents of children who suddenly developed gender dysphoria symptoms during or after puberty.
>
> […]"Of the parents who provided information about their child's friendship group, about a third responded that more than half of the kids in the friendship group became transgender-identified," Littman said. "A group with 50 percent of its members becoming transgender-identified represents a rate that is more 70 times the expected prevalence for young adults."

A previous study also found that children are more likely to be gay if they are raised by gay adults. It was reported in AOL News.

Excerpt:

> Walter Schumm knows what he's about to do is unpopular: publish a study arguing that gay parents are more likely to raise gay children than straight parents. But the Kansas State University family studies professor has a detailed analysis that past almost aggressively ideological researchers never had.
>
> […]His study on sexual orientation, out next month, says that gay and lesbian parents are far more likely to have children who become gay. "I'm trying to prove

> that it’s not 100 percent genetic,” Schumm tells AOL News.
>
> His study is a meta-analysis of existing work. First, Schumm extrapolated data from 10 books on gay parenting… [and] skewed his data so that only self-identified gay and lesbian children would be labeled as such.
>
> […]Schumm concluded that children of lesbian parents identified themselves as gay 31 percent of the time; children of gay men had gay children 19 percent of the time, and children of a lesbian mother and gay father had at least one gay child 25 percent of the time.
>
> […]Finally, Schumm looked at the existing academic studies… In all there are 26 such studies. Schumm ran the numbers from them and concluded that, surprisingly, 20 percent of the kids of gay parents were gay themselves. When children only 17 or older were included in the analysis, 28 percent were gay.

It’s very important for people to understand that there is a trend in society to make every behavior traditionally seen as sinful into something caused by genetics. The twin goals of this effort are to insulate the behaviors from criticism, and to minimize evaluation of the effects of these behaviors on society as a whole. The genetic argument was used extensively to normalize same-sex marriage and transgenderism. I have seen the genetic argument used to defend other behaviors like pedophilia and incest. But the scientific research does nothing to support any of these arguments. What’s amazing is how a majority of people in the United States have such false beliefs about the scientific research. They vastly overestimate the number of gay people, and also the influence of genetics.

NYT: LGBT youth have greater approval, but mental health is “significantly worse”

June 2, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It’s LGBT pride month, so everyone is going to tell me that I have to affirm LGBT doctrines and lifestyles, or else! So, instead of doing that, let’s look at some evidence about these topics. Did you know how the secular left looks at the poor mental health of LGBT youth, and asserts (without evidence) that more acceptance would make those outcomes better? Turns out the exact opposite is true.

Here’s the left-wing extremist New York Times, dated June 3rd, 2023:

> For L.G.B.T.Q. teenagers, high school is a much more accepting place than even a decade ago. They change their pronouns, go to school dances with people of the same gender, and are more likely than any previous generation to openly identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or otherwise queer.
>
> […]Yet there is a darker side. Even as they are increasingly welcomed by peers, their mental health is significantly worse than that of heterosexual young people.
>
> […]Their experiences highlight a “paradoxical finding,” as researchers have described it: Even as social inclusion for young L.G.B.T.Q. people has grown, large health disparities between them and their non-L.G.B.T.Q. peers have not shrunk.

The article talks about the strongest reasons why young people embrace LGBT:

1. there are pro-LGBT TV shows, movies, music.
2. famous pro athletes identify as LGBT
3. the Supreme Court overturned legislation passed by elected legislators
4. “everyone knows someone who is LGBT”
5. social media supports LGBT
6. big corporations support LGBT

Growing up in the situation I was in – poverty, different skin color, two working parents, public schools run by secular leftists – I wasn’t much interested in feeling good in the moment. I wanted an accurate view of the battlefield so I could make good decisions, and get out of the mess I was born into. I read the Bible, Shakespeare and my parents’ textbooks from their night classes at the local universities.

My approach was very different from the secular left. They don’t care about truth, or making good decisions to get good results. They care about living in the moment. They want to give in to their desires now, and point fingers later. They want to borrow money and run up expenses now, and pass the bill to someone else later. They are reckless and irresponsible. And they feel entitled to the life outcomes of those detestable Christians later. But they can’t be bothered to behave like those detestable Christians right now.

People who are LGBT are facing little to no disagreement or disapproval:

> A recent survey by The New York Times and Morning Consult of 1,574 young adults found that people ages 18 to 28 — who mostly graduated from high school since 2013 — were significantly more likely to know L.G.B.T.Q. students in school than those a decade older, who were teenagers in the 2000s.
>
> The younger group was twice as likely to report knowing at least one transgender student, and three times as likely to have known three or more. Four in 10 said they knew numerous gay, lesbian or bisexual people in high school, compared with a quarter of the older group.
>
> And while both groups reported hearing the words “gay” and “queer” used negatively at similar rates — a data point reflected in interviews with teenagers, who say they still hear “that’s so gay” in school hallways — the younger graduates were significantly more likely to hear those words used in a positive light, too. They were also more likely to have a gay-straight alliance or similar club at their school.
>
> This reflects other data that has found that verbal harassment of L.G.B.T.Q. teenagers declined during the 2010s, while support for same-sex marriage became the norm among young people.

And finally:

> “You’re at the point among young adults where almost all these measures of acceptance are in the high 80s, low 90s,” said Jeff Jones, a senior editor who oversees research at Gallup. “It’s basically getting toward a consensus.”

Sounds wonderful for the secular left. They got the morality of the Bible removed from society. Young people today don’t even know what the Bible teaches are dating, relationships, marriage, sexuality, etc. All they know is TV shows, celebrities, entertainers, athletes, and what their public school teachers tell them.

Just one little problem. Secular leftists don’t get to determine what is objectively right and wrong. In a God-designed universe, God decides what works, and what doesn’t work. And no amount of community, peer-approval, propaganda, etc. is going to overrule God’s design for his creatures.

More:

> As acceptance has grown, though, the mental health of queer youth has continued to suffer. Reported rates of mental health problems among all young people have been rising for the last decade, but non-heterosexual students face far higher rates than straight students.
>
> About 70 percent of high school students who identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual reported persistent sadness, according to recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, twice the rate of their heterosexual peers. One in five attempted suicide in the past year, nearly four times the rate of straight

> young people. (The C.D.C. does not track the mental health of transgender youth, but other data shows that roughly half had considered suicide in the past year.)

The New York Times tries to blame these numbers on being in a minority group. But Bible-believing Christians who embrace chastity, marriage, parenting and homeschooling are also a “minority group”. We don’t run the show any more. In fact, we’re the only minority that is still able to be targeted for ridicule and persecution, even by the police and government. But we also don’t have mental illnesses like the poor young people who believed the lies of the secular left, either. I wonder why that is. Could it be that chastity, marriage, parenting and homeschooling are morally right, whether anyone thinks it is or not? Could it be that these activities are self-evidently moral, and therefore just doing them makes the approval and celebration of other people completely unnecessary? For some behaviors, having an audience of One is enough.

What’s the best book for introducing all the basics of defending the faith?

June 3, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Let’s look at the table of contents of my favorite introduction to Christian apologetics, which is “Is God Just a Human Invention?” written by Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow.

In that book, you will find 18 topics.

1. Is Faith Irrational? (Commentary by: Gregory Koukl)
2. Are Science and Christianity at Odds? (Commentary by: John Warwick Montgomery)
3. Are Miracles Possible? (Commentary by: Gary R. Habermas)
4. Is Darwinian Evolution the Only Game in Town? (Commentary by: William A. Dembski)
5. How Did the Universe Begin? (Commentary by: R. Douglas Geivett)
6. How Did Life Begin? (Commentary by: Fazale R. Rana)
7. Why Is the Universe Just Right for Life? (Commentary by: Jay W. Richards)
8. Has Science Shown There Is No Soul? (Commentary by: Dale Fincher and Jonalyn Fincher)
9. Is God Just a Human Invention? (Commentary by: Garry DeWeese)
10. Is Religion Dangerous? (Commentary by: Douglas Groothuis)
11. Does God Intend for Us to Keep Slaves? (Commentary by: Paul Copan)
12. Is Hell a Divine Torture Chamber? (Commentary by: Frank Turek)
13. Is God a Genocidal Bully? (Commentary by: Clay Jones)
14. Is Christianity the Cause of Dangerous Sexual Repression? (Commentary by: Kerby Anderson)
15. Can People Be Good Without God? (Commentary by: Mark D. Linville)
16. Is Evil Only a Problem for Christians? (Commentary by: Randy Alcorn)
17. What Good Is Christianity? (Commentary by: Glenn S. Sunshine)
18. Why Jesus Instead of the Flying Spaghetti Monster? (Commentary by: Darrell L. Bock)

Prominent atheist scholars are quoted in each chapter to introduce the challenges, and then scholarly arguments and evidence are presented to defend the Christian worldview. The language is simple enough, but the material is solid enough to use in a real debate. I would say that introductory books like this one are more than enough to equip you for everyone who will challenge you.

Why are these 18 topics important? Because these are the questions that atheists ask. These are the questions that cause Christians to leave the faith. These are the questions that your children will face in high school and college, which might cause them to leave the faith.

Let’s start with chapter one. One of the most prominent arguments by atheists is that faith is irrational. This chapter allows you to define faith using the Bible’s definition of faith, which relies on logic and evidence.

Atheists also say that Christianity is at war with science. In chapter 2, they discuss the history of science and how Christianity provided the framework that allowed scientific method to take root and flourish.

Atheists like to claim that miracles are impossible. Chapter 3 defends the view that God, if he exists, is capable of interacting with his created world.

Atheists love to put forward Darwinism as means to deny that God is the designer of life. Chapter 4 explains the concept of intelligent design, and why intelligent design is a better explanation for the history of life.

Atheists love to talk about how the universe has always existed, and there’s no need for a Creator. Chapter 5 contains a philosophical argument that is supported by mainstream science to argue that the universe had a beginning, just like the Bible says.

Atheists love to argue that life can emerge from non-life, and the process is simple. Chapter 6 is written by a biochemist, and it takes a look at the real complexity of the simplest living cell.

Atheists like to argue that the universe itself is just an accident, and there is no need for a Designer. Chapter 7 introduces the scientific evidence for fine-tuning and habitability.

Atheists like to say that there is no soul and no afterlife. Chapter 8 gives some arguments for the existence of the soul.

Atheists like to argue that Christians invent God because God makes them feel good. But chapter 9 explains that having an all-powerful God who can hold humans accountable is the last thing any human would want to invent.

Atheists like to talk about how religion, with it’s habit of teaching to believe in things that can’t be tested, causes religious people to do a lot of harm. Chapter 10 takes a look at the real record of Christianity as a force for good in the world.

Atheists like to talk about slavery in the Bible. Chapter 11 talks about what the Bible really says, and provides some rational responses to the accusation.

Atheists like to talk about eternal punishment in Hell isn’t a just punishment for just getting a few questions wrong on a theology exam. Chapter 12 provides an explanation and defense of the concept of Hell.

Atheists love to talk about how God commanded the Israelites to attack their enemies in the Bible. Chapter 13 explains who their enemies really were, and what was really happening in those wars.

Atheists feel that unrestricted sexual activity is very healthy and normal, and that the Biblical prohibitions outside of male-female marriage are repressive and unhealthy. Chapter 14 explains why God has these rules in place, and supports his rules with evidence.

Atheists love to assert that they don’t need God, because they can behave morally on

their own. Chapter 15 explains how to answer this claim by talking about how well atheism grounds objective moral values, objective moral duties, free will and moral accountability: the minimum requirements for objective morality.

Atheists think that the mere existence of natural disasters and human immorality are incompatible with the God of the Bible. Chapter 16 explains why this argument doesn't work, and why even the concept of evil requires God to exist.

I have an atheist friend in my office who can't defeat my scientific arguments for the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning and the origin of life. But still, he says to me, even if God exists, why would that matter to my life? Chapter 17 explains what difference Christianity makes in a person's life.

Atheists think that the life of Jesus has no relevance to their life, and that he has nothing to offer them anyway. Chapter 18 explains the uniqueness of Jesus and explains why his resurrection is relevant to our lives today.

It's important to understand that this book is not on the level of A. W. Tozer, G.K. Chesterton, Francis Chan, John Piper, etc. Those authors write for a Christian audience and therefore they do not equip you to answer realistic challenges from non-Christians. But the apologetics book we looked at actually equips you to answer challenges from non-Christians using logical arguments and evidence from mainstream history and science. You can use the material in that book in discussions outside the confines of your home and your church.

What can Christians learn from the bravest naval aviator at the Battle of Midway?

June 4, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been reading lots of books about the World War II battles in the Pacific theater lately, and I wanted to write a post about one of the heroes I found who was the most compelling to me. You may have seen him in the old 1976 Midway movie or the new 2019 Midway movie. But neither movie tells the full story. The man I am talking about is Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.

John Waldron was the leader of the torpedo bomber squadron on the Hornet. This squadron was composed of outdated and slow Devastator torpedo bombers, armed with the Mark 13 Mod 1 torpedoes, which malfunctioned about 90% of the time.

I found an article on the Federalist that tells the story of John Waldron:

> Now there are countless men and woman who deserve to be singled out for their valor, but with the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Midway just around the corner, I thought it would be appropriate to call your attention to one of the bravest men who ever lived. A man who, knowing he was facing certain death, led the first attack against the Japanese aircraft carriers and played a direct role in what would be a decisive victory for the United States, and a defeat from which Japan would never recover. That man was Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.
>
> Now for those who don't know, the Battle of Midway was the turning point in the Pacific theater. The Japanese had an elaborate plan that involved attacking the U.S. base on Midway Island in order to lure the Americans into a battle which the Japanese High command felt their experience and tactics would overwhelm and annihilate the American fleet. With no significant U.S. naval presence, Hawaii and the entire West Coast would be at risk of invasion. But the Americans broke the Japanese code and set a trap of their own – hoping to destroy their enemy's carriers and thereby establish U.S. dominance in the Pacific. And that was exactly what happened : The U.S. fleet surprised the Japanese, sank their four carriers, and took the first real step to winning the Second World War.
>
> John Waldron was 42 years old when the *USS Hornet* steamed towards Midway on June 1st, 1942. Born and raised on a reservation in South Dakota, he had never seen the ocean until he attended the Naval Academy. It wasn't long after he graduated that he moved into naval aviation. He had been assigned to be the squadron leader of the *Hornet's* torpedo bombers in late 1941 and had been drilling his men tirelessly ever since. Waldron had the reputation of a tough as nails, no-nonsense commander. Not surprising, since Waldron was a direct descendant of the warriors from the Oglala Lakota tribe – part of the Great Sioux Nation. The tough skin he developed came from decades of derision from his peers over his meager beginnings, and from the racism directed at his Native

> American heritage. Waldron didn't care what anyone thought of him – all he wanted to do was fight for his country. He was a natural leader and his men would follow him into the gates of Hell, which, as fate would have it, is exactly what they would do in the upcoming battle.
>
> On the morning of June 4th, the Americans were ready to spring their trap, but in the preflight briefing aboard the *Hornet* there was a problem. Stanhope Ring, who was in command of the carrier's air group, directed his pilots to head northwest of the last reported position of the Japanese fleet. Waldron disagreed with this decision, feeling that they should head in the exact direction of that last sighting. He wasn't shy about expressing this opinion, much the displeasure of Ring. Waldron continued to lobby his superior officer several times after the briefing ended, but to no avail.

The Federalist article doesn't talk much about Stanhope Ring, but the book I just finished called "The Battle of Midway" by Craig L. Symonds did. Ring was a very tall, good-looking, and white officer who had breezed up the chain of command thanks to his good looks and confident manner. He loved to show off for cameras, and pull rank on subordinates. He was too proud to admit that Waldron was right in front of the other pilots.

More:

> The air strike force took off from the deck of the *Hornet* – fighters, dive bombers, and the 15 planes in Waldron's torpedo squadron. This force would be joined in the air by similar strike forces from the other U.S. carriers – the *Yorktown* and the *Enterprise*. Shortly after the Hornet's air group was airborne, Waldron couldn't contain his anger anymore. He broke radio silence to tell Ring that they were headed in the wrong direction. He repeated that comment and Ring issued a terse reply that he was in charge of this group and to stay the hell off the radio. Waldron waited a couple of minutes before replying "The hell with you" and peeled his squadron off and headed due west, where he felt the Japanese fleet was.
>
> Less than an hour later, Waldron was proved right. He had led his squadron on a direct line to the enemy. Waldron broke radio silence again to signal to Ring that he had found the fleet, but Ring and the rest of the *Hornet's* planes were too far away to hear. So now, Waldron was faced with a brutal decision. If he went in to attack, he would do so without any fighter protection, and they'd be totally at the mercy of the Japanese fighters. To make matters worse, the U.S. planes (Douglas Devastators) were hopelessly outdated aircraft – their top speed was about a third of what the Japanese fighters could do. They had hoped to get the newer Grumman Avengers, but the *Hornet* had left Pearl Harbor before they had arrived from the mainland. All of this meant that Waldron and Torpedo 8 were looking at a suicidal attack run. […]Waldron got on the radio again and told his men "We will go in. We won't turn back. Former strategy cannot be used. We will attack. Good luck!"

> And with that, the planes of Torpedo 8 closed up their formation and bore down on the Japanese fleet, some seven miles distant.
>
> The Japanese fighters quickly pounced on the Americans, who were going in low and slow – the only way torpedo bombers can attack. One by one the planes from Torpedo 8 were shot down. […]Every single plane in Torpedo 8 was destroyed and not one torpedo hit a Japanese ship.

Not only were the torpedo bombers of John Waldron's VT-8 (Hornet) shot down, but two more waves led by Eugene Lindsey VT-6 (Enterprise) and Edward Massey VT-3 (Yorktown) were also repulsed without a hit.

More:

> History might have viewed Waldron's attack as more insane than brave, and utterly pointless….except for what happened next. Shortly after his failed attack, the torpedo squadron from the *Enterprise* attacked the fleet – and right after that the torpedo squadron from the *Yorktown*. Both of those squadrons had devastating casualties as well (10 of 14 planes lost and 10 of 12 respectively) without inflicting any damage on any Japanese ship. But these three attacks in succession drew the Japanese fighter cover down so low, that it left their carriers exposed to dive bomber attacks. It also burned up a lot of fuel for the fighters, who now needed to land before they could continue their defense of the fleet. The attacks also forced the Japanese carriers into defensive maneuvers, so they were unable to land any planes or launch any for a strike on the American carriers.

In addition to using up their fuel and coming down to low altitude, the Japanese CAP (combat air patrol) fighters also used up most of their dangerous 20 mm ammunition. They mostly had much weaker 7.7 mm ammunition remaining when the dive bombers from the Enterprise and Yorktown arrived.

More:

> As the Japanese were trying to compose themselves after the three fierce but harmless attacks, the American dive bombers from the *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* arrived and quickly struck. Within minutes, three of the Japanese carriers were in flames – the heart of the Imperial Navy had been gutted.
>
> […]The other planes from the Hornet never found the Japanese ships. Ring kept his planes flying in that northwesterly direction until they were too low on fuel to keep going. They returned to the *Hornet* with their full payload of bombs.
>
> […]Now, there were a lot of heroes that day – some who lived and some who died, but the valor that John Waldron displayed in defying orders he knew were wrong and then attacking the enemy when he knew it meant certain death, place him on a special level. His actions directly helped the Americans win this crucial battle, which turned the tide of the war in the favor of the United States. He got

> the Navy Cross for his actions that day, but it seems astonishing to me that he wasn't awarded the Medal of Honor – he is definitely worthy of it.

You can learn more about the Battle of Midway in this helpful video:

So, here is what I wanted to say about this.

John Waldron was not properly equipped by his organization to make a difference at Midway. His planes were too old and slow, his torpedoes almost never worked. His leader was an arrogant, incompetent coward who prevented him from leading others to find and attack the actual targets. The only way he could do something to his enemy was to disobey orders and go off on his own. If he had lived, he probably would have been court-martialed for insubordination. After Waldron was shot down, every single one of the men in his squadron continued their attack until they too were all shot down. Everyone watching must have thought "what a waste of effort". It was only later that it became evident to all that what he did was necessary for the second wave to succeed.

This plaque at the United States Naval Academy Club honors the three commanders of the torpedo bomber squadrons:

Plaque honoring the Midway torpedo bomber squadron commanders

According to the Family Research Council, the plaque reads:

> The torpedo attacks of Waldron, Lindsey, and Massey had followed hard upon each other by luck. What was not luck, but the soul of the United States in action, was the willingness of the torpedo plane squadrons to go in against hopeless odds. This was the extra ounce of martial weight that in a few decisive minutes tipped the balance of history.

When I read this story, it immediately occurred to me that this is the problem that serious Christians are facing today. Parents and pastors are not equipping young people to actually make a difference. Instead of finding and fighting the real targets: atheism, radical feminism, communism, etc., all our forces have been sent on wild goose chases, so that now "Christians" are actually trying to promote the priorities of the secular left, e.g. – global warming, wealth redistribution, affirming sexual immorality, open borders,

critical race theory, etc.

The few of us who actually know how to do our jobs are poorly equipped. We are prevented from leading by organizations that are focused on feelings rather than results. We can only hope that our decision to attack against hopeless odds somehow paves the way for a second wave to succeed. It has happened before, and that’s why we should be brave and continue to engage our opponents using tools that work (philosophy of religion, evidential apologetics, scientific research, historical evidence, chastity, sobriety, self-control, good stewardship of our educations, careers and finances, effective charitable giving, self-sacrificial love, etc.).

Southern Poverty Law Center labels Focus on the Family a “hate group”

June 5, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I remember a few years ago that many, many big corporations, including Facebook, YouTube, and Amazon were using groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center to classify which people were motivated by “hate”. The SPLC had as much respect as other human rights groups. But then, the SPLC was linked to domestic terrorism, and internal scandals emerged.

First, let’s see the latest news from Christian Post:

> The far-left civil rights organization Southern Poverty Law Center has added the conservative Evangelical parachurch ministry Focus on the Family to its list of “anti-LGBTQ+ hate groups,” joining similar organizations that advocate for traditional beliefs on sexuality and family.

You might remember how the SPLC labeled the Alliance Defending Freedom – a law firm that regularly wins civil rights cases at the Supreme Court – as a “hate group”. But they are not the only ones who got that treatment – the Family Research Council, Moms for Liberty, and the American Family Association are on it, too. Even former Republican presidential candidate BEN CARSON was on the list. Probably for being a non-white conservative – left-wing racists hate us the most.

You might remember the link between the SPLC and the Family Research Council.

The Daily Caller reports.

Excerpt:

> The man accused of opening fire and shooting a security guard at the conservative Family Research Council headquarters last August plead guilty to three charges in a D.C. federal court Wednesday.
>
> Floyd Lee Corkins, II of Herndon, Virginia entered guilty pleas to a federal weapons charge as well as a local terrorism charge and a charge of assault with intent to kill, according to news reports.
>
> […]Following the guilty plea the FRC issued a statement placing a large portion of the blame for the shooting at the feet of the liberal Southern Poverty Law Center, which had listed FRC as a hate group. FRC noted that prosecutors discovered Corkins identified his targets on the SPLC’s website.

That’s not the only link between the SPLC and domestic terrorism.

Here’s the story from Daily Wire:

> An attorney with the far-left nonprofit Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) was arrested Sunday for allegedly committing domestic terrorism to stop a police

> facility from being built.
>
> The Atlanta police department said Sunday night that Thomas Webb Jurgens was among the 23 people charged after a “group of violent agitators used the cover of a peaceful protest of the proposed Atlanta Public Safety Training Center to conduct a coordinated attack on construction equipment and police officers. They changed into black clothing and entered the construction area and began to throw large rocks, bricks, Molotov cocktails, and fireworks at police officers.”

I could go on and on about the scandals, but since I want to be brief, let’s just see the kind of person who works for the SPLC.

Fox News has a good article about that:

> The SPLC fired [SPLC co-founder Morris] Dees in March 2019 following accusations of unchecked internal racism and sexism. His ouster came after the SPLC faced two dozen employee complaints saying its workplace fostered an intolerable workplace environment, including mistreatment, sexual harassment and a lack of diversity based on race and gender.
>
> The New York Times reported at the time that several employees were subject to “racially callous remarks” and that some on staff were sidelined because of their skin color – ultimately affecting their pay and advancement within the organization.

This part is funny:

> “As a civil rights organization, the SPLC is committed to ensuring that the conduct of our staff reflects the mission of the organization and the values we hope to instill in the world,” SPLC’s then-president Richard Cohen said at the time. “When one of our own fails to meet those standards, no matter his or her role in the organization, we take it seriously and must take appropriate action.”
>
> Cohen later stepped down from the organization amid the harassment and diversity allegations.

Big Tech has been judging you for years, using the opinions of the SPLC. It would be great if the Trump administration investigated them for it. Maybe we would get less domestic terrorism if they had to face a little legal scrutiny?

Meet four heroes of the D-Day invasion of Normandy on June 6th, 1944

June 6, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought it might be a good idea to write up something about D-Day in order to help people understand some of our military history, and to put the spotlight on some real heroes. I don't regard artists, athletes, dancers, singers, actors, or other celebrities as heroes. It really alarms me that so many people know more about these fake heroes than they do about real ones.

Weakness emboldens aggressors

For one thing, many people don't understand how British and American libertarian isolationism made World War 2 into a much bigger mess than it needed to be. As historian Victor Davis Hanson explains in the lecture I linked below, the Allied nations were much stronger and better equipped than the Axis nations before the war started. The Axis nations developed better weapons after the war started. But Germany and Japan didn't think that the Allied nations would do anything if they were aggressive. We know this from their writings and correspondence. They thought that British and Americans were just too scared of war to stop them.

Germany and Japan tested their hypothesis out by re-arming and annexing territory from their neighbors. Britain and America were led by libertarian isolationists, so they didn't fight back. The aggressors correctly understood that libertarian isolationists didn't have the will to oppose them, even if they were weaker than the Allies. But the more they re-armed and annexed territory, the stronger they became. The Allied nations waited too long to confront them. And that's why World War 2 was much harder to win than it needed to be.

Here's a very good lecture about the causes of World War 2 by an actual military historian, Victor Davis Hanson:

So, that's the first point I wanted to make: libertarian isolationism causes wars. Although libertarians claim to oppose war, they actually cause war, due to their weakness in the face of evil. So who stops wars? People who favor a strong defense, and show a willingness to fight back against aggression are the ones who REALLY oppose wars. This is called "peace through strength", and you can see it in action in the Cold War, where Ronald Reagan defeated the Soviet Union by making their aggression costly.

Heroes of D-Day

My second concern was to promote the real heroes of D-Day, over the fictional heroes of movies, fiction, music, dancing, sports, and other entertainment nonsense.

Here are the four heroes I chose:

- Major John Howard
- Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort
- Brigadier General Norman Cota
- Major Richard Winters

Let's take a look at each of them.

John Howard

Major John Howard led elements of the British 6th Airborne Division to take two vital bridges southeast of Sword beach. He did this in order to prevent German socialist counterattacks coming from the east. After they took the bridges, they had to repulse German tanks with nothing more than their useless PIAT (Projector Infantry Anti-Tank) grenade launchers. The PIAT was nothing more than a grenade launcher powered by a coiled spring. It was very inaccurate, and only effective to 50 yards. But that's all the British paratroops had to stop tanks, and they made it work. You can read about him in this book by Stephen E. Ambrose, entitled: "Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944". This New York Times article tells the story in brief. He also is played by Richard Todd in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Benjamin Vandervoort

Lt. Col. Ben Vandervoort served with the 82nd Airborne Division. I read about how he lead an infantry attack against German Tiger tanks (!) and infantry in Stephen E. Ambrose's book "Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany". Ben Vandervoort broke his ankle during the D-Day landing, but he insisted that the medic just "lace it up tight" so that he could supervise the attacking

and holding of Ste. Mere Eglise, southwest of Utah beach, against a vastly superior enemy force. This article tells about how he defended against elite German SS infantry and heavy Tiger tanks at Trois-Ponts, during the Battle of the Bulge. He was outgunned and outnumbered 20 to 1, and had just a few lightly-armed soldiers, two weak 57mm anti-tank guns and some bazookas. He is portrayed by John Wayne in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Norman Cota

Brig. General Norman Cota is my favorite person in World War 2. At 51 years old, he nevertheless landed at D-Day, and rallied terrified Army Rangers to follow him up the bluff, by telling them that Rangers ought to lead the way. "Rangers Lead The Way" later became the motto of the Army Rangers. He always led from the front, demonstrating how to attack a German machine gun position in a farmhouse to a group of American soldiers who were pinned down. He actually grabbed a bunch of grenades and led the assault team against a heavy machine gun! You can read about him in this short article and in Stephen E. Ambrose's "D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II". He is portrayed by Robert Mitchum in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Richard Winters

Major Richard Winters served in the 101st Airborne Division. Winters led an assault against a superior force of heavy machine guns and 105mm field guns. His tactics were so brilliant that they are still studied at West Point today. You can see Richard Winters and Carwood Lipton in the HBO "Band of Brothers" series, or read this book by Stephen E. Ambrose entitled "Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne, from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest", which is the basis for that series.

I hope this convinces you that military heroes are far more important than the "heroes" of fiction and entertainment. It's alarming to me that people invest more and have more respect for characters in Hollywood science fiction movies, and other such make-believe nonsense. We need to be rooted in reality. In reality, men who fight and die fighting evil to protect your freedoms are the real heroes. People who take military history seriously are able to give respect and gratitude where it is due – a very important part of being a mature, moral human being.

William Lane Craig debates Alex Rosenberg: Does God Exist? Video, audio and summary

June 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of the debate:

Here is my summary of the Craig-Rosenberg debate, which occurred on February 1st, 2013 at Purdue University.

The debaters

- William Lane Craig
- Alex Rosenberg

Below is the summary.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

The topic: What are the arguments that make belief in God reasonable or unreasonable?
First speech: arguments for reasonableness of belief in God
Second speech: respond to arguments against reasonableness of belief in God

Eight arguments:

1. Contingency argument: God – a transcendent, personal being – is the explanation of why a contingent universe exists.
2. Cosmological argument: God is the cause of the beginning of the universe, which is attested by physics and cosmology.
3. Applicability of mathematics to nature: God is the best explanation for the applicability of mathematics to nature.
4. Fine-tuning argument: God is the best explanation of the fine-tuning of the universe to permit life.
5. Intentionality of conscious states: God is the best explanation of the intentionality of our mental states.
6. The moral argument: God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.
7. The resurrection of Jesus: God is the best explanation for the core of historical facts accepted by most ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.
8. Religious experience: God is the best explanation of our immediate experience and knowledge of his existence.

Dr. Rosenberg's opening speech

First argument: The fallacy of ad hominem

- I don't know whether to laugh or to cry
- Dr. Craig has said all of that before in other debates

- You didn’t need to come out on this cold night
- Craig’s arguments have all been refuted
- Dr. Craig just doesn’t listen
- Dr. Craig is not interested in getting at the truth
- Dr. Craig is just interested in scoring debate points
- The adversarial system is the wrong approach to decide truth
- Dr. Craig is very confident about his take of physics

Second argument: The fallacy of arguing from authority

- 95% of members of the NAS are atheists
- Therefore Dr. Craig cannot use science

Third argument: Effects don’t require causes

- I am going to pretend that Craig said that “every effect requires a cause”
- Quantum mechanics shows that some effects occur without causes
- A particle of uranium (which is not nothing, it is something) decays without a cause
- This uncaused effect is the same as the universe coming into being out of nothing uncaused
- Therefore the principle of sufficient reason is false

Fourth argument: Silicon-based life and the multiverse

- If these constants had been different, maybe we would have other kinds of intelligent life, like silicon-based life
- Carbon-based life is not the only kind of life, maybe you can have other kinds of life, none of which have been observed
- There could be different kinds of life in other areas of the universe that we can’t see
- There are things we can’t see that disprove the current physics that we can see
- Quantum foam is evidence that a multiverse exists
- The multiverse would solve the problem of fine-tuning

Fifth argument: The Euthyphro dilemma

- The moral argument is refuted by Euthyphro dilemma
- Dr. Craig is such a moron that he has never heard of the Euthyphro dilemma ever before
- This is found in the first and simplest of Plato’s dialogs
- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid that he has not read this simple dialog ever before?
- Evolution explains why humans evolve arbitrary customs and conventions that vary by time and place
- Alternative moral theories: utilitarianism, social contract, etc. that don’t require God

Sixth argument: Mormonism undermines Dr. Craig’s three minimal facts about Jesus

- Why is Dr. Craig so stupid and ignorant to persist in pushing such an ignorant, stupid argument?
- Mormonism is a silly religion that is not historically well founded
- Therefore, Jesus was not buried
- Islam is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the tomb was not found empty
- Scientology is a silly religion that is not historically grounded
- Therefore, the eyewitnesses didn't have post-mortem appearances
- Eyewitness testimony is unreliable in some cases
- Therefore, eyewitness testimony was unreliable in this case
- Apparitions of Mary are bizarre
- Therefore, the majority of historians are wrong to think that the disciples saw post-mortem appearances

Seventh argument: Deductive problem of evil

- Evil and suffering are logically incompatible with an all good, all powerful God

Eight argument: God is not just to allow evil and suffering

- God cannot make the evils of this life right in the afterlife

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

Dr. Rosenberg sketched the deductive argument from evil.

Dr. Rosenberg presupposes naturalism. Naturalism is a false theory of knowledge:

1. It's too restrictive: There are truths that cannot be proved by natural science.
2. It's self-refuting: no scientific proof for naturalism exists.

That's why epistemological naturalism is considered false by most philosophers of science.

But more importantly than that: Epistemological naturalism does not imply metaphysical naturalism. (E.g. – W. Quine)

Dr. Rosenberg has to present arguments in favor of (metaphysical) naturalism, not just assume that (metaphysical) naturalism is true.

Dr. Craig presented eight arguments against metaphysical naturalism taken from Rosenberg's own book:

1. The argument from the intentionality (aboutness) of mental states implies non-physical minds (dualism), which is incompatible with naturalism
2. The existence of meaning in language is incompatible with naturalism, Rosenberg even says that all the sentences in his own book are meaningless
3. The existence of truth is incompatible with naturalism
4. The argument from moral praise and blame is incompatible with naturalism
5. Libertarian freedom (free will) is incompatible with naturalism

6. Purpose is incompatible with naturalism
7. The enduring concept of self is incompatible with naturalism
8. The experience of first-person subjectivity ("I") is incompatible with naturalism

Metaphysical naturalism is false: it is irrational and it contradicts our experience of ourselves.

And epistemological naturalism is compatible with theism.

Rebutting Dr. Rosenberg's responses:

1. Contingency: no response

2. Cosmological: he mis-states the first premise to say every effect… when it is whatever begins to exist…, the origin of the universe was not from a vacuum, virtual particles come from a vacuum not nothing, there are interpretations of QM that are compatible with determinism. Rosenberg has to believe that the entire universe popped into being from non-being.

3. Mathematics: no response

4. Fine-tuning: the multiverse is refuted by empirical observations of the universe. Without fine-tuning, it's not that we still have silicon to make life out of. It's that we lose basic minimal things like chemical diversity, matter, stars, planets, etc. No life of any kind, not just no carbon-based life.

5. Intentionality: no response.

6. Moral argument: the answer to the dilemma is that you split the dilemma: God is the standard of good, and the commands flow from his unchanging moral nature. The commands are not arbitrary, and the standard is not external to God. Dr. Rosenberg is a nihilist and he cannot ground good and evil on his nihilistic view.

7. Resurrection: The Gospels are early eyewitness testimony. Mormonism and Islam have nothing to do with the minimal set of historical facts about Jesus agreed to by the majority of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum, general statements against eyewitnesses do not refute the specific eyewitness testimony in this case.

8. Religious experience: No response.

Dr. Rosenberg's first rebuttal

I wrote a book and you should buy it, because it got me invited to this debate. Let me repeat the title a few times for you. Please buy it.

Dr. Craig is right, there are multiple interpretations of QM, not just the one I presented, including deterministic ones.

All the disturbing implications of naturalism that Dr. Craig stated follow from metaphysical naturalism, and metaphysical naturalism is true. (Note: he equates science with metaphysical naturalism)

Science proves that metaphysical naturalism is true, but I won't say what specific scientific tests prove my philosophical assumption of metaphysical naturalism.

I'll pretend that the Big Bang (science) doesn't disprove naturalism, like Dr. Craig said.

Again. (covers ears) La la la, there is no Big Bang.

We didn't come here to debate epistemological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Let me explain the problem of intentionality since I'm so smart and no one knows what it means.

There are many answers to this problem of intentionality.

My answer is that most scientists are naturalists, therefore naturalism is true, regardless of the argument from intentionality of mental states.

That's how I would respond to one of the eight problems with naturalism that Dr. Craig raised. I won't answer the other seven problems.

It is an argument from ignorance to argue that the applicability of mathematics to the universe requires a designer, because there are non-Euclidean geometries. Craig's argument, which he gets from people like respected physicists like Eugene Wigner, is bizarre. It is bizarre, therefore I refute Eugene Wigner and all the other scholars who make that argument. It is bizarre! Bizarre!

Deductive problem of evil: there is no response to this argument, certainly not Alvin Plantinga's free will defense. The deductive argument from evil has not been entirely abandoned at all! It's not like arch-atheist J.L. Mackie himself admits that the deductive problem of evil doesn't lead to a logical inconsistency between evil and God.

Dr. Craig has to tell me why God allows evil or God doesn't exist.

It is offensive that Dr. Craig cannot tell me why God allows every evil and suffering that occurs.

He literally said this: "I will become a Christian if Dr. Craig can tell me why God allowed EVERY EVIL THAT OCCURRED IN THE LAST 3.5 BILLION YEARS"

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

We are not in a position to know why God allows specific instances of evil and suffering.

God cannot force people to freely do anything – freedom is not compatible with determinism. Freedom is a good, but freedom opens up the possibility of moral evil. You cannot have the good of free will without allowing people to choose to do morally evil things.

God can permit evil and suffering in order to bring more people into a relationship with him.

The atheist has to show that God could allow less evil and achieve more knowledge of God in order to say there is too much evil.

The purpose of life is not happiness, but knowledge of God.

Dr. Craig quotes agnostic Paul Draper (Purdue) and Peter Van Inwagen (Notre Dame) to state that the deductive problem of evil is dead because of free will and morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil.

1. Contingency: no response.

2. Cosmological: QM does not apply, because the universe came from nothing, not a vacuum, and QM only works in a vacuum.

3. Mathematics: He mentions alternatives like non-Euclidean geometry, but we have to explain the structure of THIS universe.

4. Fine-tuning: ???

5. Intentional states: intentional mental states proves that minds exist, which fits with theism better than it fits with atheism.

6. Moral argument: You need God to ground morality, and Dr. Rosenberg believes in morality. He needs God to ground objective moral values and duties.

7. Historical argument: He has to respond to the minimal facts supported by the consensus of ancient historians across the ideological spectrum.

8. The problems of naturalism: He says that you can't have science without naturalism, but you can have science with EPISTEMOLOGICAL NATURALISM, and theists accept science and methodological naturalism. We don't accept METAPHYSCIAL NATURALISM because of the eight problems Craig presented, like intentionality, first-person, persistence of self, etc. You can believe in both science and theism, by embracing epistemological naturalism, while rejecting methaphysical naturalism.

Dr. Rosenberg's second rebuttal

Dr. Craig hasn't answered many of my points, I won't say which ones though.

Debates don't work as a way of deciding what's true, so we should overturn the entire criminal justice system.

The principle of sufficient reason is false because it is disconfirmed by quantum mechanics. And quantum mechanics (vacuum and virtual particles that exist for a short time) is similar to the origin of the universe (nothing and entire universe and 14 billion years).

We know that alpha particles come into being without cause all the time from a quantum vacuum for a tiny sub-second duration before going out of existence, so we can say that the entire physical universe came into being for 14 billion years from absolute nothing which is not a quantum vacuum.

Peter Van Inwagen is the best metaphysician working today, and he says that my deductive argument from evil is not decisive, it's not a successful argument. (Why is he undermining his own problem of evil argument????!)

Dr. Craig invoked Plantinga's free will defense to the deductive POE. Freedom allows us to do evil. God could have given us free will without evil and suffering. I won't show how, but I'll just assert it, because debates are such a bad forum for supplying evidence for my speculative assertions.

If you answer the question 3 + 5 as being 8, then you don't have free will – you are biologically determined if you answer 8, because everyone answers 8, and that means everyone is biologically determined with no free will.

Why can’t God give us free will and then prevent us from making a free choice?

No scholars date the gospels earlier than 60-70 AD, especially not atheists like James Crossley who dates Mark to 40 AD. Therefore Jesus’ burial isn’t historical, like the majority of scholars across the broad spectrum of scholarship agree it is.

The original New Testament documents were written in Aramaic.

All New Testament scholars are orthodox Christians, like atheist Robert Funk for example.

Dr. Craig’s concluding speech

In order to sustain the deductive argument from evil, Dr. Rosenberg must show that God could create a world of free creatures with less evil.

Principle of Sufficient Reason: not using the general principle of sufficient reason, but a more modest version of this states that contingent things should have an explanation for their existence. And we know that the universe is a contingent.

The New Testament was not written in Aramaic, they were written in Greek. Dr. Rosenberg is wrong there too.

(Dr. Craig spends the rest of his concluding speech giving his testimony and urging people to investigate the New testament).

Dr. Rosenberg’s concluding speech

Some long-dead French guy named Laplace said that he has no need of that (God) hypothesis. He did not know about any of Dr. Craig’s arguments made in this debate tonight when he said that, though.

There is no need to explain how the universe began or how the universe is finely-tuned if you just assume metaphysical naturalism on faith.

The Easter Bunny, therefore atheism.

Most scientists are atheists, therefore atheism.

You can do a lot of science without God, just don’t look at the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, or the other parts of science that Craig mentioned, as well as the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, the habitability argument, and so on.

You can be a Christian, but good Christians should not use arguments and evidence.

Good Christians should be irrational and ignorant. Bad Christians look for arguments and evidence from science and history.

Good Christians should embrace the absurd. Bad Christians want to search for truth and use logic and evidence.

National Guard soldiers deployed to stop violent leftist insurrection

June 9, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

During the Biden administration, we saw federal law enforcement used to punish opponents to the Democrat party. Concerned parents were labeled "domestic terrorists". Peaceful pro-lifers had their homes pre-dawn raided. Assault rifles were pointed at children in their homes. So now that we have a real left-wing insurrection in Los Angeles, what should the federal government do?

The Federalist reports:

> President Donald Trump on Saturday announced the deployment of 2,000 National Guard soldiers to Los Angeles County amid escalating violent protests against federal agents enforcing U.S. immigration laws. The protests have reportedly included explosives detonated against cars, federal buildings, and federal law enforcement personnel. The insurrectionists have also lobbed rocks, stones, and concrete at federal law enforcement, according to Fox News.
>
> Foreign criminals apprehended this week by now-beseiged U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in Los Angeles included gang members and others with long rap sheets, including assault, domestic violence, robbery, cruelty to children, and drug and alien trafficking, Fox News reported, citing the Department of Homeland Security.
>
> […]Several people were arrested on charges of assaulting a federal agent, U.S. Border Patrol head Michael W. Banks said.
>
> The violence came on the heels of Friday's bedlam in which more than 1,000 rioters "surrounded a federal law enforcement building and assaulted ICE law enforcement officers, slashed tires, defaced buildings, and taxpayer funded property," according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Democrats run the state of California from top to bottom, so the slow-walking of local law enforcement is no surprise:

> DHS noted that it took the Los Angeles Police Department two hours to show up at the scene of the insanity.

TWO HOURS! I thought LAPD was supposed to be a highly-skilled police department. Maybe they are, or maybe the LAPD leaders are beholden to the Democrat city leaders.

Here's a video of leftist terrorist throwing cement blocks at government vehicles moving at high speed. That's what we are talking about when we say "violent insurrection".

I follow ICE accounts on Twitter, so I see the stories of some of the people they've been deporting. Convicted murderers, rapists, drug dealers, child molesters, child abusers, etc.

Daily Wire noted:

> "BREAKING: Federal sources ID some of the criminal illegal alien targets ICE arrested in their LA operation yesterday & today, which sparked violent protests," Melugin posted via X. "They include multiple gang members, convicted sex offenders, violent gun offenders, & drug offenders. One has already been deported."

What do Democrat leaders think about left-wing insurrections?

Daily Wire notes:

> Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) hit the streets alongside anti-ICE protesters in Los Angeles, taunting and harassing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents before she attempted to enter the Los Angeles Federal building to check on a union boss who had been arrested.

That's not an isolated opinion.

Daily Wire has another example of a Democrat leader, and this one is no surprise:

> Former Vice President Kamala Harris declared on Sunday that she is supporting the anti-ICE protests in and around Los Angeles, claiming the demonstrations have been "overwhelmingly peaceful" despite violent clashes with federal authorities.

You'll recall that Harris had previously supported rioters:

> As riots shook cities across the United States in 2020, then-Sen. Kamala Harris authored a little-known blog post urging the public to help demonstrators "on the front lines" by donating to a bail fund that freed violent criminals.
>
> The blog post, which Harris published on her Medium profile on May 31, 2020, came amid riots in Minneapolis and other major cities following the death of George Floyd. Harris… asked readers in the post to contribute to the Minnesota Freedom Fund, which bailed murderers and serial domestic abusers out of jail. Harris is still fundraising on behalf of the controversial charity, according to an ActBlue software page.

So, that's what Democrat party leaders think about the use of violence to further their left-wing agenda. And you get the bill for the damage and the law enforcement.

What's a proportional response by the Trump administration, given what the Biden administration did to their opponents?

Federal law enforcement needs to designate the left-wing groups responsible for the violence as terrorist organizations, and prosecute them until they are disbanded. Including the organizers and financiers of the violence. We need to use the full force of federal law enforcement to punish these left-wing anti-government groups for their insurrection activities. And not just the members of the groups, but the financiers of the

groups.

After all, insurrections are so bad, remember? That’s what the corporate news told us for 4 years under Biden/Harris.

J. P. Moreland explains the meaning of happiness in the Christian worldview

June 10, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

From happiness expert and Christian philosopher J.P. Moreland.

Excerpt:

> According to ancient thought, happiness is a life well lived, a life that manifests wisdom, kindness and goodness. For the ancients, the happy life — the life we should dream about — is a life of virtue and character. Not only did Plato, Aristotle, the Church Fathers and medieval theologians embrace this definition, but Moses, Solomon and (most importantly) Jesus did, too. Sadly their understanding is widely displaced by the contemporary understanding of happiness defined as pleasure and satisfaction, a subjective emotional state associated with fleeting, egocentric feelings.
>
> Consider the differences:

Contemporary Understanding	**Classical Understanding**
Happiness is:	Happiness is:
1. Pleasure and satisfaction	**1.** Virtue and character
2. An intense feeling	**2.** A settled tone
3. Dependent on external circumstances	**3.** Depends on internal state; springs from within
4. Transitory and fleeting	**4.** Fixed and stable
5. Addictive and enslaving	**5.** Empowering and liberating
6. Irrelevant to one's identity, doesn't color the rest of life and creates false/empty self	**6.** Integrated with one's identity, colors rest of life and creates true/fulfilled self
7. Achieved by self-absorbed narcissism; success produces a celebrity	**7.** Achieved by self-denying apprenticeship to Jesus; success produces a hero

> How can we be certain Jesus is inviting us to a classical understanding of happiness in Matthew 16:24-26? He isn't talking about going to heaven rather than hell, nor is He telling his followers how to avoid premature death. Where Matthew writes, "what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits *his soul*" (emphasis added), Luke clarifies Jesus' teaching by replacing "his soul" with the word "himself" (Luke 9:25). The issue is finding one's self vs. losing one's self. More specifically, to find one's self is to find out how life *ought* to look like and learn to live that way; it's to become like Jesus, with character that manifests the fruit of the Spirit and the radical nature of Kingdom living; it's to find out God's purposes for one's life and to fulfill those purposes in a Christ-honoring way.

I like that “success produces a hero”. Who doesn’t want to be a hero? I certainly do.

In one of his lectures, Dr. Moreland says, and I quote: “Happiness is the freedom to do what we ought to do”. That’s right. When a person is free to comply with God’s design for human flourishing, then he/she is happy. My biggest source of unhappiness is the feeling that I cannot be who I want to be as a Christian. It’s getting even worse when I think about how the government is now using force to prevent me from spending what I earn the way I want, and saying what I want about the issues of the day, regardless of who is offended. I am becoming increasingly thankful for the time I spend with other dedicated Christians. That’s when I can be myself and not worry about what anyone is going to think of me. This is no small source of happiness.

Woman gets light sentence for falsely accusing “creepy” man of rape and kidnapping

June 11, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was having a conversation with my friend Katy the other day, about whether men are not interested in marrying because they find older women unattractive. I told her that men find older women very attractive, if they are slim and athletic. I left it at that, but I wanted to go on and explain to her why men are declining to marry, even good Christian men who have good jobs and savings,

My thesis is that men have recognized that the legal system is very much against them, and it is unwise for them to expose themselves to that legal system.

What’s the evidence?

So, on this blog, I have written about how women overall initiate 69% of the divorces that they are involved in. In fact, college-educated women initiate 90% of the divorces they are involved in. And I’ve written about how the sentences for men are 63% more severe than for women, for the exact same crime and criminal record. And I’ve written about how a high number of the accusations of rape or sexual assault by women (20-40 percent) are hoaxes. And I’ve written about how men are often the victims of paternity fraud. Men don’t even have to cohabitate with a woman to be billed for thousands of dollars in alimony and child support. False accusations of child abuse are routinely used in order to eject husbands from their homes, and to get custody of the children (and the child support money that comes with having custody).

I could go on and on, but I hope enough has been said to show what the evidence supports the view that the legal system in America is biased against men.

But wait! There’s another reason. Men have also noticed that women can easily press false accusations, and they suffer virtually no consequences when those accusations are proven false and / or recanted.

Here is a recent example, reported by New York Post:

> A Pennsylvania woman who admitted to fabricating kidnapping and rape allegations against a stranger whom she “specifically targeted” because she thought he was “creepy” last year is paying for her lies.
>
> Anjela Borisova Urumova, 20, was sentenced to from 45 days to 23 months in Bucks County Correctional Facility on Tuesday by Judge Stephen A. Corr, according to the Bucks County District Attorney’s Office.

The article notes that she “pleaded guilty to seven misdemeanor counts, including tampering with or fabricating physical evidence and false reports.” As a result of her lies, the accused spent 31 days in prison.

Three things. First, he is married:

> Pierson, 41, was present with his wife in court Tuesday but did not wish to make a statement during the sentencing since the ordeal has been “too emotional” for him and his family, the DA’s office said.

Second, the false accuser recanted her accusation:

> She then went to the police and accused Pierson as her attacker before eventually fessing up to the tale.

Third, she judged him as evil based solely on her feelings (intuitions, first impressions) about his appearance:

> Urumova told investigators that she “specifically targeted” Pierson because she had seen him and his blue Ford F-150 pickup truck in the area before and thought he was “creepy.”

I asked Grok what the average sentence is for a false accusation of rape, compared to a real conviction of rape, and it said:

> Data on sentences for false accusations of rape or sexual assault by women in the USA is limited. Available studies and legal cases suggest most convictions result in light punishments, often suspended sentences, fines, or no jail time. Estimating based on available information, including cases with zero jail time, the average sentence is approximately 2 months (0.17 years).
>
> For men convicted of rape in the USA, the average prison sentence is 212 months (17.67 years), per 2019 USSC data.

So, women get “approximately 2 months” for a false accusation of rape, and men get “average prison sentence is 212 months” for a rape conviction.

False accusations deter good men from marrying

Even if a good man is very clever about choosing the right women to be his wife, he would still be vulnerable to false accusations from women in the workplace, and other places. It’s not the Christian homeschooling future wife in the house who is the problem. It’s the radical feminist single mother in the office who is the problem. The bitter, angry one with the 200+ body count, and the 200K of student loan debt for a degree in misandry.

And the worst part of this is that when you tell pro-marriage people about these false accusations, they dismiss it. I’ve been told “why would you make decisions off of evidence and calculations? One day you’ll meet a nice girl and fall in love” It’s terrifying to be dealing with people who approach major life decisions by feelings and wilful blindness. They try to goad you into bad decisions by shaming you.

Imagine if someone tried to sell you a lemon at the car dealership by attacking your masculinity. “I dare you to buy this used car without getting it checked out by a mechanic!” You would have to be really lacking in education and work experience to think that the “man up!” approach would work on a man. And yet, when I talk to pro-marriage

people, this is *their only argument.* They scream “Get Married!” and then refuse to address any of the evidence of the threats posed by feminism, such as false accusations.

Who is going to support the good wife and good children if the man is in prison because of a false accusation? Not the pro-marriage advocates. And the younger generation of women are sliding further and further into secularism and leftism, making the risk of false accusation even higher. Why would a wise man expose himself to these risks? Especially when no one wants to fix the problem.

Here’s the bottom line: It’s an enormous deterrent to a good man’s desire to be a husband and father that they are exposed to prison and / or financial ruin because of false accusations. You have to give men a good value proposition if you expect them to go the husband and father route. Good men have other things that they can do with their money and time. Just because you *really* want them to do your plan with their lives, it doesn’t mean that they can’t find something *else* to do with their time and money – like focus on serving God. If you want men to marry, then take men’s concerns seriously.

What is the earliest statement of the authoritative books of the Bible?

June 12, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know that in the land of secular leftism, there are many myths, and those myths survive because they circulate in an echo chamber. But this is the Wintery Knight blog, and on this blog, we go back to the evidence. So what's the myth? "The list of authoritative books of the Bible was determined hundreds of years after they were written". Is that true? Let's take a look at the data and see.

So, the allegation is that before 325 AD, people were using the canonical gospels equally with the forgery gospels like Judas, Peter, Mary, Thomas, etc. Then there was a church council that whittled down that list of equally valid sources to just the 4 gospels we recognize today. But did it really happen like that?

So, before we look to a scholar, I want to take a stab at this, and say what I would say if someone asked me this question. So, the first thing that came into my mind is that you don't need a church council to tell you which books of the Bible are authoritative, you just have to look at which books the earliest church fathers are quoting. And they are quoting the gospels.

Here is a snip from a conversation between Frank Turek and J. Warner Wallace, and here's what Wallace says:

> So, I write in this new book, Person of Interest, I reached out to David now that Norm has passed, and he had some great people who he was working with on this, and I cited them in the case notes of this book. And you can see it in the book. It's illustrated. Every church father who precedes the Council of Nicaea, and how many books, how many gospels, and how many letters are quoted by that particular church father. There's a graphic for this, and you can see them all standing with the numbers of gospels they quote, and the numbers of letters they quote. And then I went through, I did the research, and he has compiled numbers. David and his associates have compiled numbers on how many…so this is a much more accurate. So, here's what we know. And this is what I talked about in the book. It turns out that about 87% of the Gospel of Matthew is quoted by the early church fathers prior to the Council of Nicaea. About 935 verses. 66% of Mark, about 435 verses are quoted by these same church leaders. But 86% of the Gospel of Luke, 990 verses quoted by these church leaders. And 97% of the Gospel of John, about 859 verses that are quoted by these early church fathers.

So, if you go by that standard of who are the early church fathers quoting, it's the 4 canonical gospels. And by the way, if you are looking for specific reasons why some "gospels" were not included, I would look at the Michael Licona chapters of Lee Strobel's "The Case for the Real Jesus". And there is an audio book!

But I also found this article over at Canon Fodder (Michael Kruger's blog), that had more. He writes:

> First, we don't measure the existence of the New Testament just by the existence of lists. When we examine the way certain books were *used* by the early church fathers, it is evident that there was a functioning canon long before the fourth century. Indeed, by the second century, there is already a "core" collection of New Testament books functioning as Scripture.
>
> Second, there are reasons to think that Athanasius' list is not the earliest complete list we possess. In the festschrift for Larry Hurtado, Mark Manuscripts and Monotheism (edited by Chris Keith and Dieter Roth; T&T Clark, 2015), I wrote an article entitled, "Origen's List of New Testament Books in Homiliae on Josuam 7.1: A Fresh Look."
>
> In that article, I argue that around 250 A.D., Origen likely produced a complete list of all 27 New Testament books–more than a hundred years before Athanasius. In his typical allegorical fashion, Origen used the story of Joshua to describe the New Testament canon:
>
> But when our Lord Jesus Christ comes, whose arrival that prior son of Nun designated, he sends priests, his apostles, bearing "trumpets hammered thin," the magnificent and heavenly instruction of proclamation. Matthew first sounded the priestly trumpet in his Gospel; Mark also; Luke and John each played their own priestly trumpets. Even Peter cries out with trumpets in two of his epistles; also James and Jude. In addition, John also sounds the trumpet through his epistles [and Revelation], and Luke, as he describes the Acts of the Apostles. And now that last one comes, the one who said, "I think God displays us apostles last," and in fourteen of his epistles, thundering with trumpets, he casts down the walls of Jericho and all the devices of idolatry and dogmas of philosophers, all the way to the foundations (Hom. Jos. 7.1).
>
> As one can see from the list above, all 27 books of the New Testament are accounted for (Origen clearly counts Hebrews as part of Paul's letters). The only ambiguity is a text-critical issue with Revelation, but we have good evidence from other sources that Origen accepted Revelation as Scripture (Eusebius, Hist. eccl. 6.25.10).

So, if you ever hear someone saying that the authoritative books of the Bible were not decided until the 4th century, then there are a couple of ideas of how to respond to that.

How do “conservative” women like Tomi Lahren explain the decline of marriage?

June 13, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, “conservative” Tomi Lahren has appeared on shows like Piers Morgan and Laura Ingraham, arguing that men are defective, weak, and lazy. She thinks that the deficiencies of men are the reason for the decline of marriage. Women want to get married, but the men are just so inferior that women cannot find any “real men”. And that’s why marriage is declining.

But are her views accurate? Is the decline of marriage really due to a shortage of high quality men?

First of all, it’s important to point out that women’s views of what a good man is have been changing. For one thing, a “good man” is now a man who embraces leftist policies like abortion, same-sex marriage, student loan bailouts, green new deal socialism, government-run healthcare, defund the police, open borders, transing the kids, etc.

The far-left UK Independent explains:

> An analysis of survey data from across the developing world had found that “a new global gender divide” is emerging. The analysis, conducted by the Financial Times’ John Burn-Murdoch, showed that the developed world’s young women have rapidly become more liberal. Young men, however, have either become more conservative (as in the US) or been much slower to become more progressive (as in the UK). Gen Z, Burn-Murdoch concluded, is “two generations, not one.”

Today, young, unmarried women are more likely to support abortion and same-sex marriage than young, unmarried men. And it’s not just moral issues, it’s fiscal issues as well. Young unmarried women generally vote against the policies that make a country prosperous, such as low taxes and small government.

This study from the Journal of Political Economy explains:

> This paper examines the growth of government during this century as a result of giving women the right to vote. Using cross-sectional time-series data for 1870–1940, we examine state government expenditures and revenue as well as voting by U.S. House and Senate state delegations and the passage of a wide range of different state laws. Suffrage coincided with immediate increases in state government expenditures and revenue and more liberal voting patterns for federal representatives, and these effects continued growing over time as more women took advantage of the franchise. Contrary to many recent suggestions, the gender gap is not something that has arisen since the 1970s, and it helps explain why American government started growing when it did.

Now, if you think that Christian leaders are opposed to this slide to the left among young women, then you are wrong. Christian leaders have embraced a view called "servant leadership". And that view is simply that men are not supposed to lead on moral and spiritual issues, like telling the truth, making decisions, making plans, and achieving results. If men say anything that upsets non-Christians, then this is BAD, and the man has to be punished.

The new view of male leadership which is shared by Christian and non-Christian feminists is that men's primary purpose is not to serve God, but women. Men are not there to confront lies and immorality in the culture, because "don't judge". Men are only there to "provide" (dispense money) and "protect" (be tall, and make muscles). Men should not expect their wives to stay home with their young children. Men must not expect their wives to homeschool the children. Men must drop off the kids at day care and public school, and pick them up. This allows men's wives to be free to pursue their feminist goals – like buying expensive clothes, putting on make-up and going on TV, just like Tomi Lahren does.

So, how do traditional men respond to this assessment of the decline of marriage?

Here is a clip from Matt Walsh, where he explains what he thinks is wrong with Tomi Lahren's view:

And then here's another clip from Steven Crowder, where he explains why feminists (non-Christian and Christian) have failed to be convincing to young men:

Finally, a note. Tomi Lahren is not a conservative. Like most childless, career-oriented feminists, she's pro-abortion. In fact, if she is like most Christian leaders, she doesn't think that women sin by choosing abortion. It is somehow always a man's fault when women sin, because women were not affected by The Fall.

Where are all the good men?

What about Tomi's definition of "good men"? When modern women talk about "where are all the good men?", they don't mean men who are good at defeating lies and opposing moral evil. They don't mean Matt Walsh. Conservative, Christian men "give them the ick".

By "good men", they mean men who:

- are tall and have muscles
- display wealth, rather than save it
- dispense lots of cash to women on demand
- put their kids in daycare and public schools
- vote for Democrat policies, e.g. – abortion, green new deal socialism, defunding police, open borders, transing kids, etc.
- don't judge, especially don't judge the woman's past

Those are the "good men" that modern feminists are having so much trouble finding in their 30s and 40s, once they get tired of having "fun", and want to settle down with a stable, boring ATM who agrees with them on secular leftism, and NEVER imposes any

responsibilities or obligations on them. “Servant leadership”!

So, should traditional men wife up non-traditional women like Tomi Lahren? No. Traditional men should only get married to traditional women. Non-traditional women have to get married to non-traditional men.

Correcting four myths about the history of the Crusades

June 14, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an interesting article from Intercollegiate Studies Institute.

Intro:

> The verdict seems unanimous. From presidential speeches to role-playing games, the crusades are depicted as a deplorably violent episode in which thuggish Westerners trundled off, unprovoked, to murder and pillage peace-loving, sophisticated Muslims, laying down patterns of outrageous oppression that would be repeated throughout subsequent history. In many corners of the Western world today, this view is too commonplace and apparently obvious even to be challenged.
>
> But unanimity is not a guarantee of accuracy. What everyone "knows" about the crusades may not, in fact, be true. From the many popular notions about the crusades, let us pick four and see if they bear close examination.

The four myths:

- Myth #1: The crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.
- Myth #2: Western Christians went on crusade because their greed led them to plunder Muslims in order to get rich.
- Myth #3: Crusaders were a cynical lot who did not really believe their own religious propaganda; rather, they had ulterior, materialistic motives.
- Myth #4: The crusades taught Muslims to hate and attack Christians.

Here's the most obvious thing you should know. The Crusades were *defensive* actions*:*

> In a.d. 632, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, North Africa, Spain, France, Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica were all Christian territories. Inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, which was still fully functional in the eastern Mediterranean, orthodox Christianity was the official, and overwhelmingly majority, religion. Outside those boundaries were other large Christian communities—not necessarily orthodox and Catholic, but still Christian. Most of the Christian population of Persia, for example, was Nestorian. Certainly there were many Christian communities in Arabia.
>
> By a.d. 732, a century later, Christians had lost Egypt, Palestine, Syria, North Africa, Spain, most of Asia Minor, and southern France. Italy and her associated islands were under threat, and the islands would come under Muslim rule in the next century. The Christian communities of Arabia were entirely destroyed in or shortly after 633, when Jews and Christians alike were expelled from the

> peninsula.[6] Those in Persia were under severe pressure. Two-thirds of the formerly Roman Christian world was now ruled by Muslims.
>
> What had happened? Most people actually know the answer, if pressed—though for some reason they do not usually connect the answer with the crusades. The answer is the rise of Islam. Every one of the listed regions was taken, within the space of a hundred years, from Christian control by violence, in the course of military campaigns deliberately designed to expand Muslim territory at the expense of Islam's neighbors. Nor did this conclude Islam's program of conquest. The attacks continued, punctuated from time to time by Christian attempts to push back. Charlemagne blocked the Muslim advance in far western Europe in about a.d. 800, but Islamic forces simply shifted their focus and began to island-hop across from North Africa toward Italy and the French coast, attacking the Italian mainland by 837. A confused struggle for control of southern and central Italy continued for the rest of the ninth century and into the tenth. In the hundred years between 850 and 950, Benedictine monks were driven out of ancient monasteries, the Papal States were overrun, and Muslim pirate bases were established along the coast of northern Italy and southern France, from which attacks on the deep inland were launched. Desperate to protect victimized Christians, popes became involved in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in directing the defense of the territory around them.

If you asked me what are the two best books on the Crusades, I would answer God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades by Baylor professor Rodney Stark and The Concise History of the Crusades by Professor Thomas F. Madden. If you get this question a lot from atheists, then I recommend you pick these up. Anything by Rodney Stark is useful for Christians, in fact.

The importance of fathers for teaching children about Christian worldview

June 15, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One thing I wish that Christian parents and pastors emphasized more with young, unmarried Christian women is the need to choose a man who keeps his commitments. It turns out that passing on Christian values and worldview works a lot better when there is a man around to teach the children himself.

Here is some statistical evidence showing the difference that Christian fathers make, from Touchstone magazine.

Excerpt:

> In 1994 the Swiss carried out an extra survey that the researchers for our masters in Europe (I write from England) were happy to record. The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.
>
> If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41 percent will end up attending irregularly. Only a quarter of their children will end up not practicing at all. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves, while a further 59 percent will become irregulars. Thirty-eight percent will be lost.
>
> If the father is non-practicing and mother regular, only 2 percent of children will become regular worshippers, and 37 percent will attend irregularly. Over 60 percent of their children will be lost completely to the church.
>
> Let us look at the figures the other way round. What happens if the father is regular but the mother irregular or non-practicing? Extraordinarily, the percentage of children becoming regular goes*up*from 33 percent to 38 percent with the irregular mother and to 44 percent with the non-practicing, as if loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.
>
> […]In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church

> regularly or occasionally.
>
> A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!
>
> The results are shocking, but they should not be surprising. They are about as politically incorrect as it is possible to be; but they simply confirm what psychologists, criminologists, educationalists, and traditional Christians know. You cannot buck the biology of the created order. Father's influence, from the determination of a child's sex by the implantation of his seed to the funerary rites surrounding his passing, is out of all proportion to his allotted, and severely diminished role, in Western liberal society.

Basically, a child who doesn't have a benevolent, involved father is going to have an more difficult time believing that moral boundaries set by an authority are for the benefit of the person who is being bounded. The best way to make moral boundaries stick is to see that they apply to the person making the boundaries as well – and that these moral boundaries are rational, evidentially-grounded and not arbitrary. It is therefore very important to children to be shepherded by a man who studied moral issues (including evidence from outside the Bible) in order to know how to be persuasive to others.

If a woman wants her child to be religious and moral, then she has to pick a man who is religious and moral. And it can't just be a faith commitment that he claims with words, because he can just lie about that. Women ought to check whether men are bound to what they believe by checking what they've read. A man usually acts consistently with what he believes, and beliefs only get formed when a man informs himself through things like reading. It would be good to see how he puts those beliefs into practice, too.

My advice to Christian women is this. When you are picking a man, be sure and choose one who is already invested in Christian things and producing results. It's very unlikely that he's going to be interested in developing that capacity from scratch if he's not already doing it. If you want your kids to be taught Christianity by their father, then make spiritual leadership a priority when you're choosing a husband.

Southern Baptists fail to shut down Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission

June 16, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Regular readers will remember the ERLC, which is a branch of the Southern Baptist Convention that is often accused of advancing left-wing Democrat party policies. There was an opportunity to de-fund the ERLC at the most recent SBC convention, but the attempt failed. In this post, let's review a couple of articles that explain what the ERLC is, and why conservatives wanted to shut them down.

The first article is from Daily Signal:

> The Southern Baptist Convention held its annual conference this week, and delegates narrowly voted against eliminating the public policy arm, which has been accused of advancing left-wing ideology.
>
> […]ERLC has been accused of pushing social justice initiatives like critical race theory and gun control. ERLC President Brent Leatherwood has lobbied for gun control under a pro-life banner and led a group to block the release of the transgender Nashville shooter's writings.
>
> Former ERLC president, Russell Moore, repeatedly denounced President Donald Trump, even though the majority of Southern Baptists voted for him.

About that mention of critical race theory in the quote above… A resolution opposing critical race theory was blocked at a previous Southern Baptist conference. It makes sense to me that this refusal to condemn critical race theory would come from the ERLC, based on their other leftist positions on political issues. But let's review the refusal to condemn first.

Here's what Dr. Voddie Baucham had to say about it, as reported by Capstone Report:

> The Southern Baptist Convention messengers were cowards for not repudiating Critical Race Theory by name, said Dr. Voddie Baucham on the Todd Starnes Show.
>
> "I don't think it was so much buying in (to CRT) as much as white guilt and cowardice," Dr. Baucham said. "It was obvious building up to the Convention that the issue at hand was Resolution 9 on Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality from two years ago and how that was going to be responded to. And when you respond to it with a Resolution that refuses to even name Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality, that is an act of cowardice."

And another black conservative Carol Swain said this:

> I was most interested in the Critical Race Theory issue and a resolution that the Conservative Baptist Network crafted and put forward.

> And I am on the steering committee of that network. Our resolution was killed by the resolutions committee. And they put forth a substitute that was vaguely worded and did not mention intersexuality or Critical Race Theory itself.
>
> […]…then they shut down any debate about how the issue was handled.

Critics of the ERLC claim that the ERLC associates with and is influenced by secular left-wing groups. Critics also claim that the ERLC takes their marching orders from the secular left – not from Scripture or Baptist faith and convictions. And those critics may have a point, when you consider the previous leader of the ERLC, Russell Moore. You might remember him, because he met with Barack Obama. They got along really well! And now Moore is heading up Christianity Today. Check this out: "Between 2015 and 2022, nine Christianity Today employees made 73 political donations. All of them went to Democrats".

Regarding the ERLC's links to the secular left, Daily Signal notes:

> Between 2018 and 2021, during Moore's presidency, ERLC received $150,000 from eBay founder and longtime Democrat donor Pierre Omidyar, Basham reported. The Fetzer Foundation, which gets money from Bill Gates, has given ERLC $220,000. Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg gave another $90,000.

And that's not even to mention their connections with the Evangelical Immigration Table, which receives funding from none other than George Soros.

The Center for Baptist Leadership explains in this May 2025 article:

> The National Immigration Forum launched the Evangelical Immigration Table with funds from George Soros. The 2013 Open Society Foundations board book notes explicitly that funding from Soros' organization was sent to the NIF action fund for the purpose of "muster[ing] evangelical support".
>
> […][T]he ERLC continues to actively participate in the Evangelical Immigration Table as one of the leadership organizations.
>
> […]Not only does the ERLC serve as one of the leadership organizations of the Evangelical Immigration Table, but the ties between the ERLC, the National Immigration Forum, and the other leadership organizations of the Evangelical Immigration Table seem unusually interconnected.
>
> Consider this: the ERLC's former Director of Public Policy was hired directly from the National Immigration Forum. This alone should raise alarms: an employee of a Soros-funded organization that explicitly targeted evangelicals for ideological reformation was hired by the ERLC to represent Southern Baptists on matters of public policy. When she left the ERLC, she moved on to another EIT leadership organization. And she's not alone.

Megan Basham authored a recent article with Christ Over All, where she talked about the current leader of the ERLC, Brent Leatherwood.

She wrote:

> Though Leatherwood told *The Baptist Press* the ERLC supported a law to ban transgender treatments on children “as it made its way through the Tennessee legislature,” House Majority Leader William Lamberth, who was a principal architect and co-sponsor of the bill, couldn’t remember receiving that support. He did not recall any involvement from the ERLC.
>
> […]One issue that did not find the ERLC so motivated was protecting women’s private spaces. Lamberth’s colleague, Tennessee Representative Monty Fritts, told me the ERLC was similarly MIA on a bill he sponsored to keep men out of women’s bathrooms, locker rooms, and prisons. Again, this is an issue the ERLC regularly highlights in its appeals to Southern Baptists for support. Fritts also said that while many ministries and faith groups in Tennessee backed his proposal to officially name July a month of prayer and fasting, the ERLC was not one of them.

How should the ERLC respond to the charges of conservatives? Well, they can differentiate themselves from the Democrat party, and show the conservatives that they understand what the Bible teaches that affects policy and apologetics. Where is the evidence for their advocacy for socially conservative policies? Do any of them even know how to make a case from the Bible for conservative positions like pro-life or natural marriage? What about defending the existence of God, or the resurrection of Jesus? Does anyone at the ERLC know how to use reason and evidence to make a case to non-Christians about the reasonableness of basic Christian beliefs? Where’s the evidence that this is a priority for them?

The Biden-Harris regime engaged with left-wing activist group

June 17, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How many concerning actions by the Biden-Harris regime can you remember? There was the labeling of parents and traditional Catholics as "domestic terrorists", pre-dawn raids on pro-lifers, weak prosecution of church burnings and attacks on pro-life centers, delayed the release of the Nashville shooter's manifesto, and ignoring the persecution of Christians abroad.

And now we are finally finding out to what extent they were weaponizing government to persecute their political (and religious!) rivals.

Here's the latest news from Daily Signal:

> A left-wing activist group known for putting its political opponents on a "hate map" with chapters of the Ku Klux Klan advised Justice Department prosecutors at a "hate crimes1 symposium," newly unveiled documents show.
>
> America First Legal obtained the documents via a Freedom of Information Act request and provided them first to The Daily Signal.
>
> "All Americans should be shocked, appalled, and terrified that the Biden Justice Department was taking advice from a hate-filled, morally bankrupt organization like the Southern Poverty Law Center," Ian Prior, senior counselor at America First Legal, told The Daily Signal in a statement Monday. "The SPLC's agenda is anti-American to its core, and we must ensure that the SPLC never regains the power that it was so wrongly granted by the woke bureaucrats who ran this country until this past January."

You might remember my blog post of a few days ago about how the SPLC labeled FOCUS ON THE FAMILY as a "hate group". That's not the only Christian group they've done that with, either. The Family Research Council was also on the SPLC hate map. The Family Research Council headquarters building was attacked by a gay activist in 2012, and the shooter cited SPLC's hate map as inspiration, per The Daily Caller. The Alliance Defending Freedom, a presitigous religious liberty law firm, even says "The Southern Poverty Law Center's labels have led to violence". By the way, the SPLC labels groups like the Alliance Defending Freedom and Moms for Liberty as "extremist" or "hate" groups.

And this SPLC – DOJ symposium was not a one off:

> The Justice Department repeatedly engaged with the SPLC during the Biden administration. DOJ staff seemed receptive to meeting with the SPLC shortly after the group put the parental rights group Moms for Liberty on the "hate map" in 2023. Clarke appears to have met with the SPLC in March 2023.
>
> The FBI's Richmond office cited the SPLC in its since-rescinded memo on "radical

> traditional Catholics."

The Daily Signal also talked about Kristen Clarke, who I've blogged about before. Fortunately for Christians, Trump appointed someone much better than her when he took office. (Clarke admitted to not disclosing an 2006 arrest for domestic violence, as reported by NY Post).

Harmeet was talked about in the Daily Signal recently:

> Harmeet Dhillon, who was selected by Trump in December to lead the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, has been nearly the opposite of her Biden administration predecessor.
>
> Former Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke, who led the civil rights office before Dhillon, was one of the most aggressive in weaponizing the DOJ against political opponents, especially pro-lifers.
>
> Dhillon achieved some notoriety before being appointed to office. Her California law office took up a few high-profile cases in the last decade, including that of James Damore, the Google employee who said he was fired because he criticized the company's diversity policies.
>
> "While the Civil Rights Division prosecuted pro-lifers, Dhillon has represented pro-life journalist David Daleiden, who exposed Planned Parenthood staff who sold aborted-baby body parts," my colleague Tyler O'Neil wrote in December.
>
> Dhillon has not only stopped the persecution of pro-life activists but has initiated DOJ investigations into states that have endangered women while violating civil rights law, like California.
>
> She announced in May that her department was investigating whether California is violating Title IX by allowing males to compete in women's sports.
>
> "Title IX exists to protect women and girls in education. It is perverse to allow males to compete against girls, invade their private spaces, and take their trophies," Dhillon said in May. "This Division will aggressively defend women's hard-fought rights to equal educational opportunities."

She's doing a great job. Conservatives should keep an eye on her, she would make a nice Attorney General in the next Republican administration. That's who I would pick. I like her far more than Pam Bondi, the current Attorney General. She has more fighting spirit.

One thing for sure, it really shows the importance of Christians voting. And not just voting, but advocating for conservative policies with independent voters during the election campaign period.

Frank Turek lectures on the case against same-sex marriage

June 18, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

About the speaker Frank Turek:

Dr. Frank Turek is the author or coauthor of five books, including I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist and Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God to make their Case. As the President of CrossExamined.org, Frank presents evidence for Christianity at churches, high schools, and secular college campuses. He has also debated several prominent atheists including Christopher Hitchens and Michael Shermer, Founding Publisher of Skeptic Magazine. Frank hosts an hour-long TV program each week called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist which is broadcast Wednesday nights on DirecTV Channel 378 (NRBTV). His radio program and podcast called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with Frank Turek airs on 182 stations every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. eastern and is available continuously on the free CrossExamined App.

Frank Turek is one of my favorite speakers, and I admire him for being willing to take a public stand on controversial issues like gay marriage. He's actually had to pay a price for that in his professional life, and I blogged about that before.

Here's the lecture on gay marriage, featuring Christian apologist Frank Turek.

Outline:

Outline of Frank Turek's lecture on same sex marriage

Introduction:

- how to present your case against marriage safely
- Christians are required to go beyond tolerance
- loving another person can mean opposing the person when they want to do

something wrong, even if they hate you
- what did Jesus say about marriage? (see Matt 19:4-6)
- what did Jesus say about sexual morality? (Matt 15, Matt 19)

Summary:

- the same-sex marriage debate is about whether to compel people who disagree with the gay lifestyle to validate and normalize it
- P1: the government has an interest in marriage because it perpetuates and stabilizes society – this is the purpose of marriage
- P2-4: government can take 3 kinds of stances towards behaviors: promote, permit or prohibit
- government promotes behaviors when it has an interest in them
- same-sex relationships should be permitted, but not promoted
- Q1: if same-sex marriage had serious negative consequences, would you reconsider their position?
- Q2: are heterosexual relationships the same as homosexual relationships?
- Q3: what would society be like if everyone married according to the natural marriage definition: one woman, one man, for life?
- Q4: what would society be like if everyone married according to the same-sex marriage definition: man/man and woman/woman?
- Should Christians care about law and politics? or should they just preach the gospel?
- They should care because people often get their cues about what is moral and immoral based on what is legal and illegal
- Many of the social problems we see today can be traced back to problems with marriage and family
- Children do much better when they have a relationship with their mother and their father
- Same-sex marriage necessarily destroys the relationship between a child and its mother or its father
- When a country embraces same-sex marriage, it reinforces the idea that marriage is not about making and raising children
- same-sex marriage shifts the focus away from the needs of the children to the feelings of desires of the selfish adults
- does homosexuality impose any health and mental health risks?
- what has the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage been in Massachusetts to individuals, schools, businesses and charities?
- how same-sex marriage poses a threat to religious liberty
- how should you respond to the view that homosexuality is genetic?

And at the very end, he shows this short video, which is only 5 minutes and explains the logic of opposing the redefinition of marriage:

My biggest concern is religious liberty, and we are seeing how same-sex marriage has

proven to be incompatible with religious liberty. But I also care about children… I want them to have mothers and fathers who put their needs first. Marriage is about a commitment – it is the subjugation of feelings and desires to responsibilities and obligations. It is a promise. A promise to commit to love your spouse and children regardless of feelings and desires. It requires more self-denial, self-control and self-sacrifice. Not less.

Tennessee’s SCOTUS win halts harmful transgender procedures for kids

June 19, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve blogged before about Tennessee’s badass Attorney General, Jonathan Skrmetti. He defends the laws of the state of Tennessee from radical leftists. Tennessee’s SB1 stopped doctors from giving kids puberty blockers, hormones and surgeries. The ACLU sued, but SCOTUS crushed them in *United States v. Skrmetti*. This post is a great tool to show the difference between the two parties, so please share.

First, let’s see what was going on in Tennessee:

> The governor of Tennessee is calling for an investigation into Vanderbilt University Medical Center’s Pediatric Transgender Clinic following viral tweets exposing alarming attitudes toward transgender surgeries and procedures for children.
>
> Daily Wire host Matt Walsh shared Tuesday afternoon that his team has been investigating the transgender clinic, claiming that “Vanderbilt drugs, chemically castrates, and performs double mastectomies on minors.”
>
> In one video posted by Walsh, which has since gone viral, Vanderbilt University Medical Center’s Clinic for Transgender Health physician Dr. Shayne Taylor describes how she persuaded the hospital to “get into the gender-transition game,” as Walsh said. The doctor emphasizes that gender transition is a “big moneymaker.”
>
> “The female-to-male bottom surgeries, these are huge moneymakers,” Taylor says in the video.
>
> “They make money,” she adds of the transgender surgeries. “They make money for the hospital.”

So, the people in Tennessee are pretty conservative, and they are careful about who they elect. After all, Tennessee is home to big social conservative leaders like Matt Walsh and Robby Starbuck. So, voters in Tennessee elect real conservatives. In this case, House Majority Leader William Lamberth and Senate Majority Leader Jack Johnson authored a piece of legislation designed to stop health care providers from giving transgender drugs and surgeries to kids. That bill was called SB-1 and it took effect in September 2023.

Unfortunately, the American Civil Liberties Union, a far-left organization, sued the state of Tennessee, believing that they knew better than the voters of Tennessee. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, and on Wednesday, we got the decision.

The Federalist explains:

> In a 6-3 ruling, SCOTUS deemed a Tennessee law prohibiting the surgical and chemical castration of minors does not violate the 14th Amendment’s equal

> protection clause.

All 6 Republican appointees voted in favor of Tennessee, and all 3 Democrat appointees voted against Tennessee.

My favorite Justice is Clarence Thomas. If you ask any Republican voter what they would think about 9 clones of Clarence Thomas on the Supreme Court, they would kiss you on both cheeks and say "from your lips to God's ears".

Thomas had a separate concurrence, aimed specifically at the "healthcare experts" who like to push their leftist views onto the public under the cloak of science.

The article quote Thomas' concurring statement:

> "First, so-called experts have no license to countermand the 'wisdom, fairness, or logic of legislative choices.' … Second, contrary to the representations of the United States and the private plaintiffs, there is no medical consensus on how best to treat gender dysphoria in children," Thomas wrote. "Third, notwithstanding the alleged experts' view that young children can provide informed consent to irreversible sex-transition treatments, whether such consent is possible is a question of medical ethics that States must decide for themselves. Fourth, there are particularly good reasons to question the expert class here, as recent revelations suggest that leading voices in this area have relied on questionable evidence, and have allowed ideology to influence their medical guidance."
>
> "Taken together," the senior justice wrote, "this case serves as a useful reminder that the American people and their representatives are entitled to disagree with those who hold themselves out as experts, and that courts may not 'sit as a super-legislature to weigh the wisdom of legislation.'"
>
> […]"Thus, whether 'major medical organizations' agree with the result of Tennessee's democratic process is irrelevant."

Even moderate Justice John Roberts decided not to side with the leftists this time.

Daily Signal reports:

> In fact, Roberts pointed out, several European countries that jumped on the "gender-affirming" care bandwagon have reversed course, "rais[ing] significant concerns regarding the potential harms associated with using puberty blockers and hormones to treat transgender minors."

So, given all this, I want to make a point about a friend of mine who is a church-attending Christian, but no interested in politics. Let's call him "Libby", because he is a libertarian.

Libby loves to share memes on his meme page. He likes to read fiction. He watches TV comedies. He knows all the latest movies. Whenever the topic of politics comes up, Libby is sure that it's pointless to discuss politics because "both political parties are the same". He also thinks "it doesn't matter what state you live in, they're all the same". He also

thinks that all countries are the same “Canada is just like the United States except colder”.

Whenever I send Libby articles to convince him about something related to politics or policy, he always replies with “too many words”.

Then he sends me a meme of Duke Nukem:

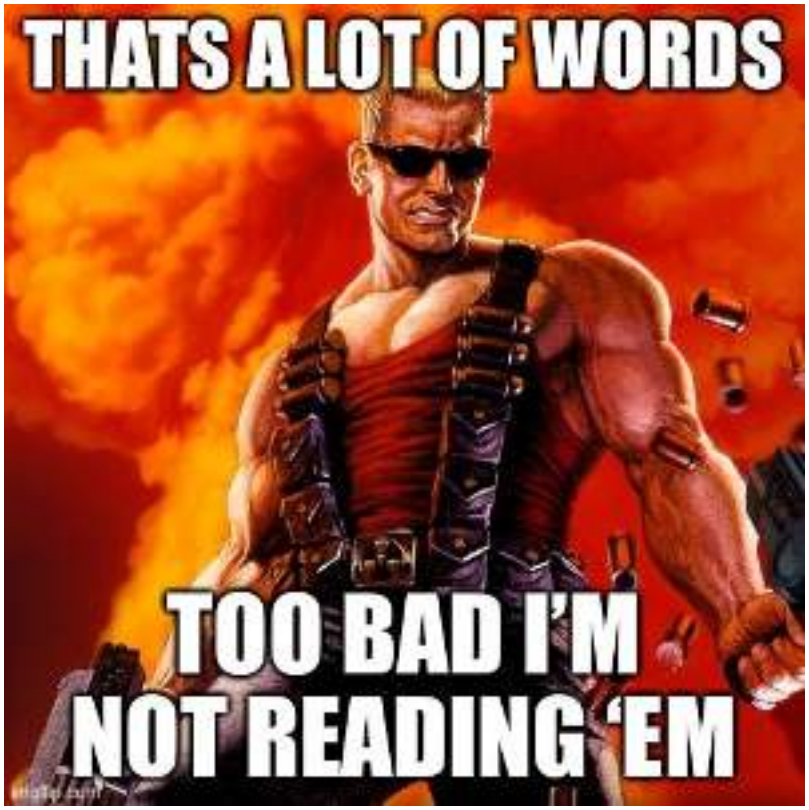

Then he reacts to my post with the yawn reaction, the Zzzzz reaction, and the bed reaction:

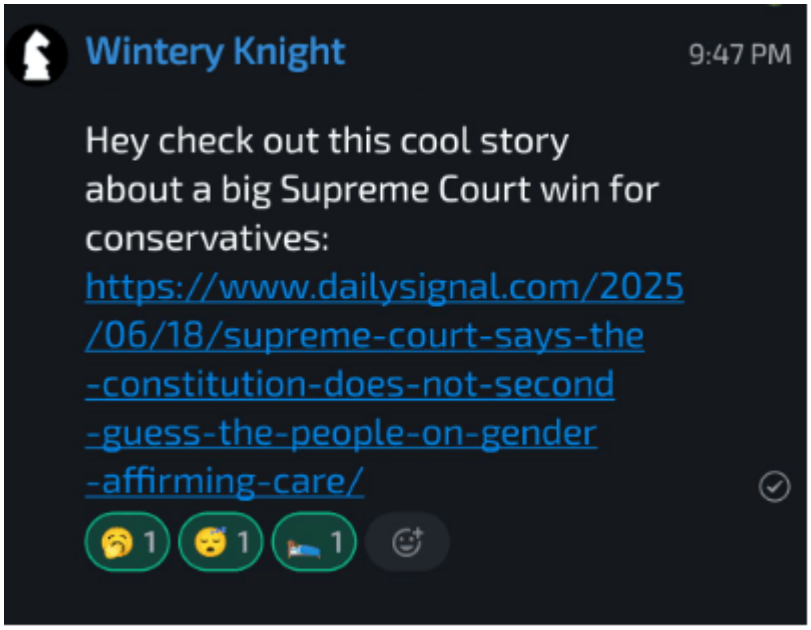

Personally, I think this is a more appropriate Duke Nukem meme for Libby:

So today, Libby is out there sharing memes about Batman and Disney, but he didn’t mention anything about the big win for conservatives at SCOTUS. So I asked him, is this SCOTUS decision a good thing? And surprisingly, Libby agreed that not transing the kids WAS a good thing. So I asked him, are you going to share this good news with anyone? And he replied, no he wasn’t. You see, Libby shares memes, and he doesn’t want to lose any of his fans by sharing anything that would rock the boat.

So, don’t be a Libby. The 2026 election cycle has already started. Now is the time to be sharing stories that show what Republicans do when they have power. The transgender issue is a winning issue with independents. It doesn’t help us win elections to ignore all the good news on these issues while it’s happening. Now is the time to convince independent voters that Republicans are VERY different than Democrats, and VERY different than Democrats for Christians in particular. Show people that you know why you vote for the Republican party. It’s not just how you were raised. And it’s not just your favorite football team. You have policy reasons.

So, share this blog post, or share the articles that I linked. Don’t be a Libby. Now is the time to explain to people why they should vote Republican.

Where are all the good women? New poll finds men vastly more pro-life than women

June 20, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been blogging about the emerging ideological split between young women and young men. Young women, under the influence of feminism, have taken a hard left turn. They are now extremely likely to support abortion, gay rights, and other non-Christian views. Young men, now being influenced by the red pill and the manosphere, have becoming increasingly conservative.

First, let's review what the surveys say about the political views of young men and women.

The far-left UK Independent explains:

> An analysis of survey data from across the developing world had found that "a new global gender divide" is emerging. The analysis, conducted by the Financial Times' John Burn-Murdoch, showed that the developed world's young women have rapidly become more liberal. Young men, however, have either become more conservative (as in the US) or been much slower to become more progressive (as in the UK). Gen Z, Burn-Murdoch concluded, is "two generations, not one."

Who is influencing these young men? Well, it's not Christian feminists, who talk about "servant leadership" and twist the Bible to attack masculinity and eliminate male headship. Christian feminists think that men are supposed to be silent ATMs that dispense cash without judgement, and show off their muscles. "Protect and provide" they demand. But they never want men to fight against lies or make moral judgments – that's "mean".

Who are young men listening to that's causing them to become so conservative? Men are listening to leaders in the manosphere – the online community of people who are concerned about men's rights. And what are they hearing there? They are hearing that feminism is *terrible* for men. They are learning that that women on dating apps are chasing the top 20% of most attractive men. They are learning that women initiate most (69%) divorces, and that family courts are extremely unfair to men. They are learning that the more men that a woman has sex with before marriage, the greater the risk that she will initiate divorce. And they are learning that lesbians have the highest rates of marital instability AND domestic violence. Men are learning to be more careful with women.

And do you know what else young men are learning in the manosphere? Pro-life convictions.

Here are the numbers from National Right to Life:

> Lydia Saad handles much of Gallup's coverage of the abortion issue and does so

> in a comprehensive way. This morning, she authored "Gender Gaps on Abortion Reach Historic Highs" which is well worth reading.
>
> You would expect self-identified Democrats to support abortion—and the current survey bares that out. Likewise, you would anticipate Republicans to be more supportive of unborn children—also borne out by Gallup's latest poll.
>
> Currently, as of May 2025,
>
> * 32% of women and 54% of men identify as pro-life. 61% of women and 41% of men consider themselves pro-choice. The difference—the gap—was 13-points in 2022 "and no more than 10-point differences in any reading before Dobbs," according to Saad. "The gap has expanded since 2022 because pro-choice identity has dipped among men, from 48% to 41%, while it has held steady among women."
>
> In 2022, in the aftermath of the leak of the draft showing that Dobbs would overturn Roe, the "pro-choice" was ahead of the pro-life by 16 points, but by this year the margin had been halved–down to 8 points.

Basically, young men are learning that abortion empowers young women to choose recreational sex with the hot bad boys that they find so desirable. Abortion provides feminists (and the hot bad boys) with a way to get out of the consequences of recreational sex. It enables feminists to delay "boring" marriage to the "unattractive" good man for as long as possible, and that's what feminists want.

The manosphere's reach extends all over the world. So, other countries are seeing this male pro-life trend.

Here is an article about young men in the UK, from the far-left UK Independent:

> Fewer than half of young men believe abortion should be legal, far less than the general population, a shocking new poll has found.
>
> Just 46 per cent of 16- to 34-year-old males believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases, compared with 71 per cent among the general population.

And it's not just abortion that the manosphere teaches young men to oppose. It's no-fault divorce. Feminists, including Christian feminists, LOVE no-fault divorce. It allows reckless feminists to choose a husband based on appearance, and then pretend to be surprised when the hot bad boy they chose turns out to be… a hot bad boy. Rather than having to take responsibility for their reckless choice, they can get out of it easily – and with cash and prizes. Young men understand that like abortion, no-fault divorce is a tool that feminists use in order to avoid "boring" marriage to an "unattractive" good man. Young men oppose frivolous divorce. They even have a funny phrase for it in the manosphere.

By the way, if you think that the manosphere is "Andrew Tate" or "Myron Gaines", that's just uninformed. Those are pick-up artists, which is only one segment of the manosphere. It's not those pick-up artists that are causing this massive swing back to conservatism. Pick-up artists are the bogeymen that the traditional "Get Married!" people try to scare

you with, to get you to not care about the effects of feminism, e.g. – abortion and no-fault divorce.

If you want to listen to mainstream conservatives who take men's issues seriously, you can start with people like Matt Walsh and Steven Crowder. Ironically, some *women* actually do very well in the manosphere. Two of the more popular women influencers are Emily King and Courtney Ryan. I don't always agree with those people, but they certainly are more respectful of young men's conservative beliefs than Christian feminists.

So, now that men are being influenced by manosphere voices, instead of feminist voices, where will these good men find good women to marry? I don't think that church is producing anti-feminist women these days. Churches are still stuck in feminism, blaming good man bystanders for every poor choice that reckless women make with hot bad boys.

The hidden message of these impressive pro-life numbers among men is that traditional men will not be pursuing non-traditional women. Young men are becoming more conservative, and young women are becoming more leftist. Just because young women expect to claim a husband "when they are ready", that doesn't mean that the marriage-minded man they expect to comply will be there. Nothing against women in general. Just saying that non-traditional women will not be able to get traditional men to commit.

Knight and Rose Show #65: Choices and Character in James, Part 1

June 21, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 65 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose begin a two-part series studying the book of James in the New Testament. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose explore chapters 1 and 2 of the Book of James. They discuss the book's author, James, the brother of Jesus, and his martyrdom. They examine themes such as endurance through trials, self-control, and faith vs. works. They also critique the prosperity gospel, warn against judging by appearances, and emphasize caring for orphans and widows, offering practical insights for living an authentic Christian life.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 65:

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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How to respond to an atheist who complains about slavery in the Bible

June 22, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I often hear atheists going on and on about how the Bible has this evil and that evil. Their favorite one seems to be slavery. Here are three things I say to atheists when they push this objection.

The Bible and slavery

First, you should explain to them what the Bible actually says about slavery. And then tell them about the person responsible for stopping slavery in the UK: a devout evangelical named William Wilberforce.

Here's an article that works.

Excerpt:

> We should compare Hebrew debt-servanthood (many translations render this "slavery") more fairly to apprentice-like positions to pay off debts — much like the indentured servitude during America's founding when people worked for approximately 7 years to pay off the debt for their passage to the New World. Then they became free.
>
> In most cases, servanthood was more like a live-in*employee*, temporarily embedded within the employer's household. Even today, teams trade sports players to another team that has an owner, and these players belong to a franchise. This language hardly suggests slavery, but rather a formal contractual agreement to be fulfilled — like in the Old Testament.3

Atheism and moral judgments

Second, inform them that moral values are not rationally grounded on atheism. In an accidental universe, there is no way we ought to be. There is no design for humans that we have to comply with. There are no objective human rights, like the right to liberty (that would block slavery) or the right to life (that would block abortion). Although you may find that most atheists act nicely, the ones who really understand what atheism means and live it out consistently are not so nice.

Famous atheist Richard Dawkins has previously written this:

> The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of

> starvation and misery is restored. In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. **The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.**
>
> ("God's Utility Function," *Scientific American*, November, 1995, p. 85)

When atheists like Dawkins talk about morality, you have to understand that they are pretending. To them, morality is just about personal preferences and cultural conventions. They just think that questions of right and wrong are *arbitrary*. Things that are wrong in one time and place are right in another. Every view is as right as any other, depending on the time and place. That's atheist morality.

What's worse than slavery? Abortion!

Third, you should ask the atheist what he has done to oppose abortion. Abortion is worse than slavery, so if they are sincere in thinking that slavery is wrong, then they ought to think that abortion is wrong even more. So ask them what they've done to oppose the practice of abortion. That will tell you how sincere they are about slavery.

Here's atheist Richard Dawkins explaining what he's done to stop abortion:

That's right. The head atheist supports killing born children.

When I was a child, I read J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Hobbit" and it changed my life

June 23, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Since I mentioned "The Hobbit" in my biographical page at the top of the blog, I thought it might be worth explaining what I like about it. I still listen to my favorite chapter from it quite often before bed, to put me to sleep. If it doesn't work, I listen to other chapters. But why choose that book? Well, because The Hobbit had a huge impact on me when I was growing up.

So, the first thing to say is that I didn't grow up in a home with parents who had any plan for me. They were not involved in engineering me into anything. They just wanted good grades, and their method of getting that was yelling at me on report card day, then forgetting about school entirely, a few days later. As a result, I had to find my own morality and wisdom. The main things I read for that were the Bible, and later on, British literature, like Shakespeare and Spenser. But I'll always remember the first "big" book that I ever read, and that was the "The Hobbit".

The Cover

I noticed that there was a new printing of the book with the same cover design as the one that I read when I was small. I managed to get a gift copy of it from Desert Rose for my birthday. What I liked about the cover was the trees. If you look at the cover, there are multiple levels of trees, and you can see that the forest is deep, and you can't see very far into it. I really liked that as a child. Somehow, that picture on the cover made me think about adventure, and then when I read the book, that really inspired me with the idea of going far away to earn my fortune. I remember that I didn't read this book for school. I got it from the library.

My favorite chapter

My favorite chapter of "The Hobbit" is "Barrels Out of Bond". That's not the most popular chapter. But there is a phrase that appears in that chapter that's also in the cover blurb from the first edition:

> Bilbo Baggins was a hobbit who wanted to be left alone in quiet comfort. But the wizard Gandalf came along with a band of homeless dwarves. Soon Bilbo was drawn into their quest, facing evil orcs, savage wolves, giant spiders, and worse unknown dangers. Finally, it was Bilbo, alone and unaided, who had to confront the great dragon Smaug, the terror of an entire countryside

Did you notice that phrase, "alone and unaided"? I have it on my Twitter profile for my location. It comes from the "Barrels out of Bond" chapter.

So, let's talk about the overall plot of the book. The plot is that a famous wizard named Gandalf asks Bilbo the hobbit to accompany a group of dwarves on an adventure. His job is to be the burglar, because hobbits are small and sneaky. They travel along until they

reach a dark forest called Mirkwood. The dwarves are captured by the inhabitants of the forest – a band of wood elves. Bilbo is able to avoid capture, by slipping on his ring of invisibility that he found earlier. He follows the dwarves into the cave of the wood elves, because he doesn't want to leave them behind. So, he gets stuck in the cave, wandering around, stealing food, and trying to keep from getting discovered and caught. All while trying to think about how to help the dwarves escape, and get on with their journey.

And then we find this passage:

> "I am like a burglar that can't get away, but must go on miserably burgling the same house day after day," he thought. "This is the dreariest and dullest part of all this wretched, tiresome, uncomfortable adventure! I wish I was back in my hobbithole by my own warm fireside with the lamp shining!" He often wished, too, that he could get a message for help sent to the wizard, but that of course was quite impossible; and he soon realized that if anything was to be done, it would have to be done by Mr. Baggins, alone and unaided.

You can listen to the whole chapter here.

Bilbo isn't your typical hero. He isn't tall. He doesn't have big muscles. He doesn't beat up monsters because of his martial training. He doesn't always know what to do. He sometimes makes mistakes. His strength is his character, especially his humility and selflessness. He isn't motivated by the same selfish desires as many people are these days. He's not motivated by greed. He's not trying to impress anyone.

When I was small, it was important for me to be able to not fall into the traps of my environment. Finding out how to be different was important for me, because I was stuck in a home filled with negative talk and neglect, going to government schools, trapped in an socialist country. So, by reading books like the Hobbit, I was able to find virtues that were nowhere else in my environment.

More than the character was the idea of going on an adventure. That was one of the reasons why I left the country where I was born – so that I could come to America on a work permit, and seek my fortune. And keep seeking it, despite a lot of mistakes and setbacks. And not because outside people were leading me or helping me or engineering me to succeed. No family, no friends, no donations.

So the big lesson from the book is that an adventurous spirit isn't free – it has to be put into a boy by what he reads. You should make your children read "The Hobbit". Put into their minds at a young age the idea that life is an adventure, that dangers and hardships are normal, and that character counts. Put into their minds that all goodness requires sacrifice. And to not worry so much about appearing important to other people.

New study: stunning example of sudden, rapid genetic change in worm fossils

June 24, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Normally in a post with a title like that, I would be linking an intelligent design web site, like Evolution News. But in this case, I didn't even find this story at Evolution News, I found it at Science Daily. The author of the article definitely takes the side of Darwinian evolution. But remember, as we discussed with Dr. Günter Bechly, evolution has to work gradually, if it is going to work at all.

If you remember the episode of Knight and Rose Show with Dr. Bechly, he talked about how natural mechanisms could only introduce change very gradually, and that sudden leaps of complexity in the fossil record are better explained by intelligent design. Why? Well, consider the task of writing an essay on paper with a pen. You can understand how a human could come up with a 1000 word essay in an hour, but you wouldn't be able to get the same result by dropping a bowling ball on a keyboard over and over.

A new study about worm genetics

Check out this article (archived) from Science Daily entitled "Defying Darwin: Scientists discover worms rewrote their DNA to survive on land". The subtitle is "A comparative genome study of earthworms and their marine relatives could challenge Darwin's theory of evolution by showing that worms colonized land in evolutionary jumps."

Now for some excerpts, and please pay attention to the bias of the author. There's a lot of could have, would have, should have in there. And a lot of assuming a mechanism that there is no evidence for. Remember, only designers can dump out functioning words and code in a short time. Natural mechanisms can't do it.

The article says:

> […][A] research team led by the Institute of Evolutionary Biology (IBE), a mixed research centre belonging to the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and Pompeu Fabra University (UPF), points for the first time to a mechanism of rapid, massive genomic reorganisation which could have played a part in the transition of marine to land animals 200 million years ago. The team has shown that marine annelids (worms) reorganised their genome from top to bottom, leaving it unrecognisable, when they left the oceans.

I remember Dr. Bechly telling us in the podcast that naturalists cannot help themselves to jumps in complexity, because natural mechanisms can only work if there are no jumps at all. The latin phrase from philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz is "natura non facit saltus" which means "nature makes no jumps". Naturalists sometimes like to help themselves to jumps, and call it "punctuated equilibrium", but punctuated equilibrium is not a *mechanism* for the rapid generation of genetic complexity. Rather, it merely *describes* what we find in the fossil record – long period of statis, and VERY short periods

of huge jumps in complexity. Or “biological big bangs” as Dr. Bechly called them in his article about it.

The Science Daily article explains the findings of the study:

> The analysis of these genomes has revealed an unexpected result: the annelids’ genomes were not transformed gradually, as Neo-Darwinian theory would predict, but in isolated explosions of deep genetic remodelling.

“Isolated explosions of genetic remodeling”. I can do that at work, when I refactor the code. But I’m an intelligent designer. Evolution can’t do refactoring like that.

Evaluating the Science Daily article

I asked Grok whether the article explained any specific naturalistic mechanism that explained the “isolated explosions” in genetic complexity, and Grok said:

> In short, the article uses vivid phrasing to describe the fossil record and genetic findings but does not articulate a clear, plausible naturalistic mechanism for the sudden genetic changes beyond the general idea of genomic rearrangement.

About the supposed designing ability of “punctuated equilibrium”, Grok said:

> Punctuated equilibrium is primarily descriptive. It characterizes the fossil record’s pattern—long periods of little change punctuated by rapid bursts of morphological innovation. It does not, by itself, provide a detailed mechanistic explanation for how sudden jumps in genetic complexity occur.
>
> The theory posits that rapid evolutionary change happens in small, isolated populations over relatively short geological timescales (thousands to tens of thousands of years), which may not leave many transitional fossils. However, it relies on standard evolutionary mechanisms (mutation, selection, drift) operating faster in these contexts, without specifying unique genetic or molecular processes to account for dramatic increases in complexity.

Keep in mind that the best experiments on the speed of naturalistic mechanisms, such as the LTEE experiments by Richard Lenski, show that mutation and selection produce steady, incremental changes, not sudden explosions of complexity.

The best explanation for biological big bangs

In the article about biological big bangs, Dr. Bechly says:

> The gradualistic core predictions of any unguided evolutionary mechanisms such as neo-Darwinism are strongly contradicted by the empirical evidence. The cumulative conflicting evidence from molecular biology, genetics, population genetics, and the discontinuous fossil record can no longer be explained away as anomalies or as artifacts such as under-sampling of an incomplete fossil record.
>
> The total evidence is better explained with pulses of infusion of new information from outside of the system (top-down), rather than with a purely mechanistic

> stepwise bottom-up process. The only known cause in the universe that is able to produce significant amounts of new complex specified information is the activity of an intelligent conscious agent, so that intelligent design theory qualifies as superior alternative to unguided Darwinian evolution in an inference to the best explanation (abductive reasoning) among competing hypotheses.
>
> This is not an argument from ignorance (i.e., God of the gaps) as is often incorrectly claimed by critics, but is based on empirical data and our positive knowledge about the regular causal structure of the universe and the type of causes that exclusively are known to produce certain effects.

I do think it's important for everyone to be clear on what the science shows. Naturalists have to have the evidence that naturalistic mechanisms can do all the creating in the brief time available. We know that intelligent agents can make explosions of specific complexity (functional information) in brief periods of time. But we don't know that naturalistic mechanisms can do it.

If you would like to watch a nice lecture featuring Dr. Bechly explaining the fossil record, and the biological big bangs, then you can find that here:

If you want something to listen to, check out our podcast episode on the fossil record with Dr. Bechly.

Did the early church invent the divinity of Jesus over a long period of time?

June 25, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How early is the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus? When I answer this question, I only want to use the earliest, most reliable sources – so I can defend them *on historical grounds* using the standard rules of historiography. The 4 sources that I would use are as follows:

- The early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 1
- A passage in Philippians 2
- Two passages from Mark, the earliest gospel
- A passage from Q, which is an early source of Matthew and Luke

So let's see the passages.

1 Corinthians

I've written before about the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which skeptical scholars date to 1-3 years after the death of Jesus, for a variety of reasons I covered in the previous post. Here's the creed which definitely makes Jesus out to be more than an ordinary man. Ordinary men don't get resurrection bodies after they die.

Here's the passage: (1 Cor 15:3-8)

[3]For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

[4]that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

[5]and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

[6]After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

[7]Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

[8]and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 talks about Jesus being "the power of God and the wisdom of God". Paul is identifying Jesus with the divine.

[21]For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

[22]Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

[23]but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

[24]but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[25]For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

But it gets even stronger! You all probably already know that the most important passages in the Old Testament for Jews is the famous "Shema", which is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The Shema is a strong statement of Jewish monotheism.

Here's the passage:

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

So how does Paul fit Jesus in with this strong statement of Jewish monotheism?

Paul alludes to the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

4So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.

5For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

6yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Holy mackerel! How did that get in there? Paul is splitting the roles of God in the the Shema and identifying Jesus in one of the divine roles! Jesus is not an ordinary man. That passage "through whom all things came" foreshadows John identifying Jesus as "the Word of God", which "became flesh and dwelt among us". Holy snark – did you guys know that was all in here so early?

The date for 1 Corinthians is 55 AD. It should be noted that skeptical scholars like James Crossley accept these passages, and you can check it out in the debate audio yourself.

Philippians

Check out Philippians 2:5-11.

5Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

6Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

7but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

9Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above

every name,

[10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

[11]and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The date for Philippians is 60-61 AD. Still within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses, and written by an eyewitness who was in contact with the other eyewitnesses, like Peter and James, whom Paul spoke with numerous times on his journeys to Jerusalem.

Mark's gospel

Mark's gospel is the earliest and atheists like James Crossley date it to less than 40 AD, which is 10 years after the death of Jesus at most. When you read the gospel of Mark, you are getting the earliest and best information available about the historical Jesus, along with Paul's epistles. So what does Mark say about Jesus? Is Jesus just a man, or is he something more?

Check out Mark 12:1-9:

[1]He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

[2]At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

[3]But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

[4]Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

[5]He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

[6]"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[7]"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

[8]So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9]"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

And Mark 13:32, talking about the date of the final judgment.

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

And again, this passage is establishing a hierarchy such that Jesus is being exalted above all men and the angels, too. And the passage is embarrassing to the early church, because it makes Jesus look ignorant of something, so they would not have made this passage up. Jesus is not an ordinary man, he is *above* the angels – God's *unique* Son.

The “Q” source for Matthew and Luke

Here’s Matthew 11:27, which is echoed in Luke 10:22:

[27]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[22]“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Since this passage is in both of Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, scholars believe that it is in the earlier “Q” source used by both Matthew and Luke. Q predates both Matthew and Luke, and so it is also fairly early (maybe 67-68), although not as early as Mark and Paul. Bill Craig writes that this passage is also embarrassing because it says that *no one* knows Jesus.

Zohran Mamdani: government-run grocery stores, minimum wage hikes, and rent control

June 26, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If there is one difference between conservatives and leftists, it's that conservatives are much stronger on basic economics than leftists. That's why conservative states like Tennessee and Florida and Oklahoma are much more fiscally healthy than leftist states, like California, New York and Illinois. Conservative voters understand the problems with nationalization and price controls.

First, let's see the news from Daily Signal, where they explain what policies New York assemblyman Zohran Mamdani holds :

> A far-left socialist who has supported defunding the police and replacing them with social workers, abolishing prisons, abolishing private health insurance, banning guns, decriminalizing pretty much every drug, and creating government-run grocery stores won the Democratic Party mayoral primary in New York City on Tuesday.

Like many leftists, Mamdani comes from a very wealthy background:

> Mamdani came from a well-to-do background. His mother is a famous Bollywood producer. His father is a Columbia University professor who specializes in "postcolonialism."

And what's interesting is where the support for his Marxist economic policies come from.

Daily Wire explains:

> According to election results published by the New York Times, Mamdani won counties with a median income of more than $117,000 by an average of 13 points, while Cuomo won counties with a median income below $62,000 by 13 points.
>
> […]Mamdani's margin of victory in wealthier counties is likely to increase after several rounds of ranked-choice tabulation conclude throughout the week.

The Daily Wire article also says that Mamdani has expressed support for higher taxes, and $65 million for "gender-affirming" drug treatments and surgeries for adults and children. And that's not his parents' money, that's taxpayer money. According to the Daily Caller, he wants to raise minimum wage to $30 an hour.

So, what do economists say about policies like this? What happens when governments take over private industry, like grocery stores? What happens when governments raise the minimum wage? What happens when the government imposes price controls on rent?

Well, we know about all of these things – we know by studying what results these policies have had when they have been tried in other times and places. And the results are

always the same.

Nationalizing grocery stores

Let's start with nationalizing grocery stores. It's been done in Venezuela and Cuba. In Venezuela, the Chavez government took over private supermarkets like Éxito in 2010, rebranding them as state-run Bicentenario stores.

By 2015, most basic goods were unavailable in stores due to price controls and mismanagement. Shoppers faced long lines. Food production plummeted, because food suppliers could not sell at a loss. Malnutrition surged, including for children. Investors got a clear signal – do not put your money into producing food, you will not get a return on your investment.

Raising minimum wage

Seattle, Washington, a bastion of atheism and socialism, raised their minimum wage to $15 and hour in 2017 for large employers.

The results? It hurt the poorest most. Low-wage workers had their hours cut. Small businesses laid off staff to stay open. Prices for consumer goods increased. Businesses closed down. When you raise the price of labor for no gain in productivity, businesses cannot survive. They have to cut worker hours, or eliminate low-skill jobs entirely. For example, McDonald's installs self-serve kiosks to replace low-skill cashiers.

Imposing rent controls

San Francisco imposed rent control on pre-1994 buildings, including 45% of rentals.

Landlords responded by selling rental units, or converting them into owner-occupied residences. There was a drop in rental supply, leading to shortages of rentable properties. This affected the poorest people the most, because it's the poor who rent small residences when they are just starting out.

Basic economics

When you read a book on basic economics, such as "Basic Economics" by Thomas Sowell, or "Common Sense Economics" or "Economics for Dummies", all of the above cases are considered basic cases that virtually *no economist* disagrees on. So then, if almost every economist agrees on the bad results from such policies, how do they get made into law?

It's simple. Many of the wealthiest people champion these policies because they want to get elected by seeming "generous". They want voters to believe that their words, which sound so kind and compassionate, will automatically achieve good results. And many voters – and I mean especially the economically-illiterate leftist voters – believe this. Sadly for them, ignorance of economics does not give you immunity from the results of your voting.

How is universal government-run healthcare working for Canada?

June 27, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I always get excited when the annual report on Canadian healthcare comes out. A lot of people in my office love single payer healthcare. Except they don't know how it works in countries that have tried it. They imagine that it works well. They love the idea that healthcare will be free for them. But when I get my hands on a good study, it means a lot of fools are about to get a beat down.

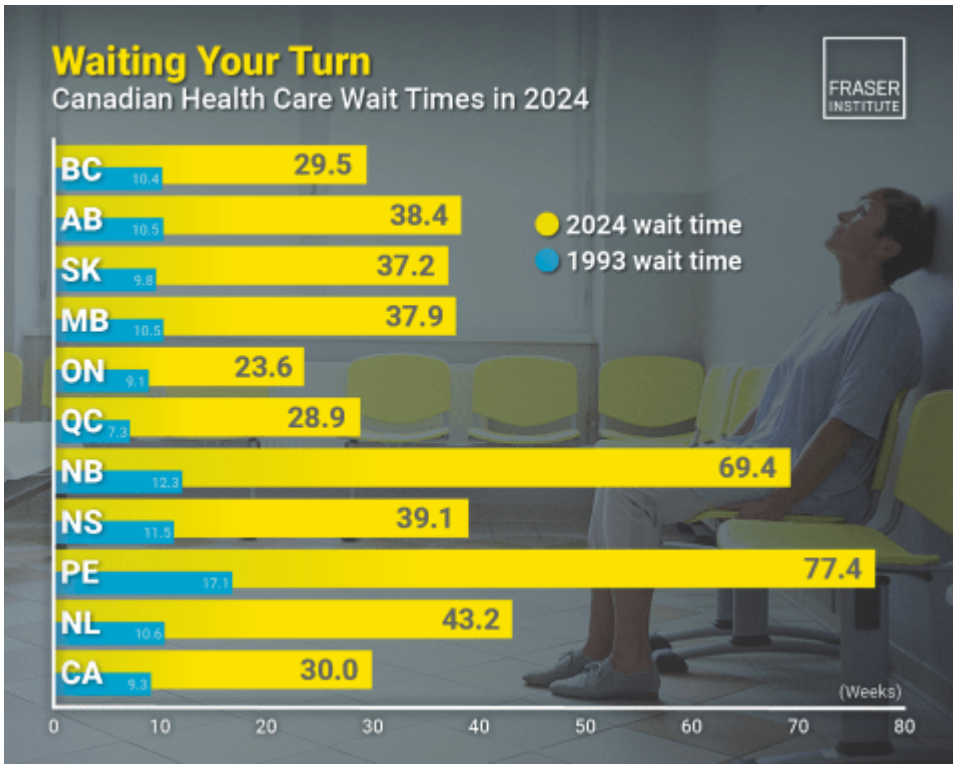

Canada Universal Coverage Government Run Single Payer Healthcare Health Care Wait Times

Here's the latest from the Fraser Institute:

> - In 2024, physicians across Canada reported a median wait time of 30.0 weeks between a referral from a GP and receipt of treatment. Up from 27.7 in 2023.
>
> - This is 222% longer than the 9.3 week wait Canadian patients could expect in 1993.
>
> - The national 30 week total wait is comprised of two segments. Referral by a GP to consultation with a specialist: 15.0 weeks. Consultation with a specialist to receipt of treatment: 15.0 weeks.

> After seeing a specialist, Canadian patients waited 6.3 weeks longer than what physicians consider to be clinically reasonable (8.6 weeks).

> Across 10 provinces, the study estimated that patients in Canada were waiting for 1.5 million procedures in 2024.

> Patients also suffered considerable delays for diagnostic technology: 8.1 weeks for CT scans, 16.2 weeks for MRI scans, and 5.2 weeks for Ultrasound.

Well, there's a saying in business. You can have a product or a service fast, or you can have it good, or you can have it cheap. Pick two out of 3. So, Maybe Canadian healthcare is not fast, but maybe it's good, and maybe it's cheap.

Canada Universal Coverage Government Run Single Payer Healthcare Health Care Cost Taxes

Let's turn to the Fraser Institute again:

> Canadians often misunderstand the true cost of our public health care system. This occurs partly because Canadians do not incur direct expenses for their use of health care, and partly because Canadians cannot readily determine the value of their contribution to public health care insurance.

> In 2024, preliminary estimates suggest the average payment for public health care insurance ranges from $4,908 to $17,713 for six common Canadian family types, depending on the type of family.

> Between 1997 and 2024, the cost of public health care insurance for the average Canadian family increased 2.2 times as fast as the cost of food, 1.7 times as fast as the average income, and 1.6 times as fast as the cost of shelter. It also increased much more rapidly than the cost of clothing, which has been falling in recent years.

OK, so Canadians aren't getting healthcare fast, and they're not getting healthcare cheap. Maybe they're getting really really good healthcare, though.

Here are the numbers from a recent study from Ipsos, a major Canadian pollster:

> An Ipsos survey for the Montreal Economic Institute is showing that Canadians' opinions about their provincial healthcare systems have not improved in 2024 compared to last year. As in 2023, we find that less than half (48%) of Canadians are satisfied with their provincial healthcare system, with only 8% saying they are very satisfied. This proportion is even lower among women (43%), as well as residents of the Atlantic (30%).

Well, they are getting garbage healthcare. And they are not actually paying for healthcare. They are paying massive amounts of taxes for *access to a waiting list for healthcare.* And they get in line behind refugees who cannot even speak English, and have paid nothing in taxes. That's what happens when you have universal-coverage government-run healthcare. That's how it actually works in real life.

And sometimes they even *die* while waiting for healthcare. Here is an article from the Toronto Sun from January 2025:

> Close to 15,500 people died waiting for health care in Canada between April 1, 2023 until March 31, 2024, according to data compiled by SecondStreet.org via Freedom to Information Act requests across the country.
>
> However, SecondStreet.org says the exact number of 15,474 is incomplete as Quebec, Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador don't track the problem and Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia only provided data on patients who died while waiting for surgeries – not diagnostic scans.
>
> SecondStreet.org says if it extrapolates the unknown data, then an estimated 28,077 patients died last year on health care waiting lists covering everything from cancer treatment and heart operations to cataract surgery and MRI scans.

I know that a some Americans like to pick political leaders and policies based on their feelings. They want to feel good. They want to be liked. People who like government-run healthcare tend to be people with enormous student loan balances for worthless non-STEM degrees. They work in easy jobs in the public sector. They join labor unions because they're scared of competition and accountability. Many of them work in daycare or they teach little children, because they don't want to be challenged by adults. When you look at the numbers on healthcare in different countries, it's very clear what works and what

doesn’t work. Americans need to be smarter than Canadians. We have to vote based on reason and evidence.

Information Enigma: 21-minute video explains intelligent design

June 28, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The video is here:

I have read and listened and watched a lot of material on intelligent design, but I have never seen so much value packed into such a short lecture. I really hope you'll watch this and that it's helpful to you.

Summary:

- the big question when discussing the origin of life: where did the information in living systems come from?
- Until 530 million years ago, the oceans were largely devoid of life
- In a 10 million year period, many new forms of animal life emerged
- New biological forms of life require new information
- the discovery of DNA shows that living systems work because cells have information that allows them to build the components of molecular machines: cell types, proteins, etc.
- can random mutation and natural selection create new functional information?
- normally, random mutations tend to degrade the functionality of information, e.g. – randomly changing symbols in an applications code does not usually introduce useful new functions, it usually renders what is there non-functional
- the majority of possible sequences will NOT have functions, so random mutations will more likely give you non-functional code, rather than functional code
- example: a bicycle lock with 4 numbers has many possible sequences for the 4 numbers, and only one of them has unlock functionality, the rest have no functionality
- if you have lots of time, then you might be able to guess the combination, but if the lock as has 10 billion numbers, and only one combination that unlocks, you can spend your whole life trying to unlock it and won't succeed
- how likely is it to arrive at a functional protein or gene by chance? Is it more like the 4-dial lock (can be done with lots of time) or the 10 billion dial lock (amount of time required exceeds the time available)?
- the probability is LOW because there is only one sequence of numbers that has unlock function
- consider a short protein of 150 amino acids has 10 to the 195th power possible sequences
- if many of these sequences of amino acides had biological function, then it might be easier to get to one by random mutation and selection than it is with a lock that only unlocks for ONE sequence
- how many of the possible sequences have biological function?

- Thanks to research done by Douglas Axe, we now know that the number of functional amino acid sequences for even a short protein is incredibly small…
- Axe found that the odds of getting a functional sequence of amino acids that will fold and have biological function is 1 in 10 to the 77th power
- Is that number too improbable to reach by chance? well, there are 10 to 65th atoms in the entire Milky Way galaxy… so yes, this is a very improbable outcome
- can random genetic mutations search through all the sequences in order to find the one in 10 to the 77th power one that has biological function? It depends on how much guessers we have and how many guesses we get in the time available
- even with the entire 3.5 billion year history of life on Earth, only about 10 to the 40th organisms have ever lived, which far smaller fraction of the 10 to the 77th total sequences
- even with a very fast mutation rate, you would not be able to reach a functional protein even with all that time, and even with all those organisms

I was once having a discussion with a woman about the research that Axe did at the Cambridge University lab. He published four articles in the Journal of Molecular Biology. I held out one of the papers to her and showed her the numbers. She said over and over "I hate the Discovery Institute! I hate the Discovery Institute!" Well, yeah, but you can't make the Journal of Molecular Biology go away with hating the Discovery Institute. JMB is peer-reviewed, and this was experimental evidence – not a theory, not a hypothesis.

We have been blessed by the Creator and Designer of the universe in this time and place with *overwhelming evidence* – an abundance of riches. For those who have an open mind, this is what you've been waiting for to make your decision. For the naturalists who struggle so mightily to block out the progress of experimental science, they'll need to shout louder and shut their eyes tighter and push harder to block their ears. Maybe if they keep screaming "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" over and over to themselves, they will be able to ignore the real science a little longer.

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate theistic evolution vs intelligent design

June 29, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Michael Behe and Keith Fox debate evolution and intelligent design. (See below for link to video)

Details:

> Michael Behe is professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania and the founder of the modern Intelligent Design movement. His book "Darwin's Black Box" ignited the controversy 14 years ago when it claimed that certain molecular machines and biological processes are "irreducibly complex" and cannot be explained by Darwinian evolution.
>
> Keith Fox is Professor of biochemistry at the University of Southampton and chairman of Christians in Science. As a theistic evolutionist he believes that Evolution is the best explanation going for the complexity we see and that ID is a blind scientific alley and theologically unappealing to boot.
>
> They debate whether micromachines in the cell such as the "bacterial flagellum" could have evolved by a Darwinian process of evolution. When inference to design is and isn't acceptable in science. Whether random mutation can mathematically stack up to complex life, and whether God is reduced to a divine "tinkerer" by ID.

Here's the debate:

Summary

Note: the following debate summary is rated "S" for Snarky. Reader discretion is advised.

Michael Behe:

- ID is not Biblical creationism
- ID is not religion
- ID is a scientific research program
- People refuse to discuss ID because of personal philosophical assumptions
- ID is like the Big Bang – it is based on evidence, but it has broad religious implications

Keith Fox:

- ID is not Biblical creationism, but it isn't science

Michael Behe:

- ID is compatible with common descent

- ID is only opposed to unplanned, unguided evolution (Darwinism)
- ID is not necessarily opposed to long periods of time

Behe's first book – the bacterial flagellum

Keith Fox:

- Here are a couple of papers that show how parts of the flagellum evolved
- They are possible pathways

Michael Behe

- No, those are studies that show that there are similarities between bacterial flagella in multiple organisms
- Similarities of proteins between different organisms do not necessarily imply a developmental pathway
- The problem of having the instructions to BUILD the flagellum still remains

Keith Fox:

- Maybe parts of the flagellum had other functions before they were used in the flagellum
- Maybe you can use the parts of the flagellum for other purposes
- Maybe, one can imagine, it's possible that!

Michael Behe:

- No, parts have to be modified and re-purposed in order to be used for other functions

Keith Fox:

- But maybe the proteins can be used in other systems for other things
- I re-purpose parts from of designed things to other purposes in my house when I do maintenance

Michael Behe

- Uh, yeah – but aren't you an intelligent designer? What does your home maintenance have to do with Darwinian evolution?

Is ID another God-of-the-gaps argument?

Michael Behe:

- Well consider the Big Bang… there was a build-up of scientific evidence for that theory
- Just because a theory has religious implications, doesn't mean that it isn't true

- You really have to look at the specific evidence for a theory, and not decide in advance

Keith Fox: (I'm paraphrasing/inventing/mocking from now on)

- But the Big Bang is based on discoveries, and intelligent design is based on gaps in our scientific knowledge
- What if I did have evidence of a step by step pathway (which I don't right now)? Then I would win the argument – what would you do then?

Michael Behe:

- Well, if tomorrow you do manage to find expiremental evidence of a pathway, which you don't have today, then I would be wrong
- ID is falsifiable by experimental evidence
- But what about your your view? Is that falsifiable by experimental evidence?
- What if someone goes into a lab (someone like Scott Minnich?) and performs gene knockout experiments, and publishes the results
- You knock out a gene from the bacterial flagellum, you wait for a large number of generations, and it never develops the missing gene
- You repeat this with every one of the 50 genes in the bacterial flagellum and it never recovers for any of the 50 genes
- There is no pathway to build up even one of the 50 genes – according to actual experiments
- What do Darwinists do with experimental evidence that falsifies Darwinism?

Keith Fox:

- No, I would not accept that experimental evidence could falsify Darwinism
- Just because known published experimental evidence that we have today falsifies Darwinism, it doesn't mean Darwinism is false because it's not falsifiable
- We don't know how Darwinism even works – it happened so long ago, and it's not repeatable or testable, so how could lab ,experiments falsify it?
- Darwinism is science and intelligent design is faith, though

Which side has the experimental evidence?

Michael Behe:

- Consider the largest longest-running lab experiment of evolution, Richard Lenski's experiments on e. coli
- Lenski has presided over 50,000 generations, (millions of years of evolution)
- The bacterium *did evolve* and they *did get better* but not by *evolving* features, but by *disabling* features

Keith Fox:

- But those are just LAB EXPERIMENTS! What do lab experiments prove?
- What if? What if? What if? You don't know, it happened so long ago, and you weren't there! You weren't there!
- (clutches Flying Spaghetti Monster idol tighter and sobs pitifully)

Michael Behe:

- See, the thing is that I have actual experiements, and here's some more evidence that just got published last week
- So I've got evidence and then some more evidence and them some other evidence – experimental evidence
- And all the evidence shows that adaptation is done *losing traits* not by *gaining traits*
- And the published observations are what we see in nature as well

Keith Fox:

- But doesn't Darwinism explain some things that we observe?

Michael Behe:

- Well, I am not saying that micro-evolution doesn't explain *some things* – it explains bacterial resistance, and other micro-evolution
- it just doesn't explain macro-evolution, and that's what the experiments show

Keith Fox:

- But ID is a science stopper! It stops science! You can't produce *experimental evidence* to falsify Darwinism – that would stop science!

Michael Behe:

- Well, you have to understand that the Big Bang postulated a non-material cause to the entire physical universe and yet the experimental evidence was allowed to stand because it was testable and verifiable evidence, even if the theory does have religious implications
- All explanations in science are design to settle a question and it stops rival explanations that are not as good at explaining the observations
- Finding the best explanation stops further study because it is better than rival explanations

Keith Fox:

- Well you have to come up with a materialist explanation because that's the only kind that a functional atheist like me will allow

Michael Behe:

- Well, what if the best explanation for an observed effect in nature is non-material, as with the Big Bang?

Keith Fox:

- But I have to have a material explanation because I am a functional atheist! (i.e. – a theistic evolutionist = functional atheist)

Michael Behe:

- Well what about the cosmic fine-tuning argument? Do you accept that?
- That's an inference to design based on the latest scientific discoveries

Keith Fox:

- Well I do accept that argument, but I don't accept design in biology
- When you apply it to biology, somehow it's bad and you can't do that or you losing research money and get fired
- Anyway, your argument is based on a gap in our current knowledge

Michael Behe:

- No, back in Darwin's time we had a gap in our knowledge – we didn't know what the cell was – we thought it was jello
- Now, we know what the cell is *really* like, it's irreducibly complex, and you can't build up those molecular machines in a step-wise manner
- The inference to design is based on the progress of science revealing the increasing levels of complexity
- In experiments, Darwinian mechanisms cannot build anything useful, instead genes are disabled or dropped
- You guys don't have the evidence to prove your view that naturalistic mechanisms can do the creating
- You keep issuing promissory notes

Keith Fox:

- Well, you're just seeing design subjectively, because you are a non-scientist
- I'm being objective when I tell you that we will discover a materialist explanation later on – really really soon now, maybe even tomorrow, yeah
- You won't accept my speculations and you insist on these published experiments
- You're subjective and I'm objective
- Just give me more research money so I can hide the decline better

Michael Behe:

- Uh, you're the one who is subjective – I cited evidence, and you are the one who is

speculating
- You have arguments from credulity, and I've got the lab experiments
- You refuse to be skeptical, I am the one who is being skeptical

Keith Fox:

- Maybe, maybe, maybe! Maybe tomorrow! Maybe in a parallel universe! Maybe aliens from Planet 9 from Outer Space!
- Who knows! I certainly don't know! And that somehow means you don't know either! See?

Michael Behe:

- Well, to prove me wrong, go into the lab, and run experiments and evolve some new genes (using Darwinian mechanisms) that have new useful functionality

Are there limits to what evolution can do?

Michael Behe:

- You need multiple changes in the genome to get a new helpful feature (let's say two specific mutations)
- One specific change is possible
- the odds are against getting multiple beneficial changes are really really small – you need two SPECIFIC changes to occur in order

Keith Fox:

- Well, lots of things are really unlikely – any permutation of dice rolls is as unlikely as any other

Michael Behe:

- Well, we are talking about TWO SPECIFIC mutations that are needed to get a beneficial function – lots of other mutations are possible, but we are looking for a specific outcome that requires two SPECIFIC mutations out of the whole genome
- You aren't going to get useful outcomes unless you direct the mutations

Keith Fox:

- *But then why does God allow evil!!!!1!1!!one!!!*

Why do Christians vote for the Republican party in the United States?

June 30, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I sometimes get messages from people from Canada, the UK, Australia, etc. asking me why so many conservative American Christians vote for the Republican party. Well, the simple answer is that American Christians vote for policies that align with the Bible in many areas: social issues, fiscal issues, foreign policy. We don't vote for a person, we vote for the policies of the party.

So, one of the things that presidents get to do when they are elected is to appoint Supreme Court justices. So let's review Trump's Supreme Court picks, and then see what you get if you let a Democrat president choose the judges.

Donald Trump's Supreme Court Appointments:

- Neil Gorsuch: Nominated on January 31, 2017
- Brett Kavanaugh: Nominated on July 9, 2018
- Amy Coney Barrett: Nominated on September 26, 2020

Current Supreme Court Justices Appointed by Democratic Presidents:

- Sonia Sotomayor: Appointed by Barack Obama
- Elena Kagan: Appointed by Barack Obama
- Ketanji Brown Jackson: Appointed by Joe Biden

Christians care about the Supreme Court. The character of the president isn't what goes into the Supreme Court. What goes into the Supreme Court is the judges. We're voting for the judges. Not just the Supreme Court judges, but all the federal court judges.

Now consider what getting good Supreme Court judges gets us. Let's look at a couple of stories.

First story, from The Federalist:

> The U.S. Supreme Court in a 6-3 decision ruled Friday that parents are allowed to opt their children out of homosexual and "transgender" propaganda in school, noting that a school district forcing young children to be confronted with the perverse sexual program violates parents' religious liberty.
>
> […]The Supreme Court decided that the parents are entitled to a preliminary injunction — meaning they can pull their children out of the instruction — as their lawsuit proceeds.

And the Trump administration reacted so:

> Education Secretary Linda McMahon celebrated the opinion, stating, "The Supreme Court's ruling in Mahmoud v. Taylor is a major win for religious liberty

> and parental rights. The Court rightfully held that schools can't shut parents out or disregard their religious obligations to their children."

So, this wasn't an accident, the Republican leaders are celebrating this judgement. The Republicans appointed the judges, and then when they got the decision that their voters wanted, they were 100% behind it. They wanted to deliver this result for the voters. That's what the voters wanted. We wanted results.

It's a 6-3 ruling, and all 3 of Trump's appointees were on the side of parents' rights and children's rights. All 3 nominees by Democrat presidents opposed it. So, I hope that people in Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand etc. can understand this. If Christians vote Republican in America, they get 3 judges who support religious liberty and parents' rights. If Christians vote Democrat, then they get 3 judges who oppose religious liberty and parents' rights. It's that simple. That's how we decided. We decide to get the results.

Second story, also from The Federalist:

> On the last day of its 2024 term, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 6-3 decision along ideological lines to uphold a Texas age verification law aimed at protecting children from online obscenity.
>
> In his majority opinion affirming the Fifth Circuit decision, Justice Clarence Thomas declared that "First Amendment leaves undisturbed States' traditional power to prevent minors from accessing speech that is obscene from their perspective."
>
> "That power necessarily includes the power to require proof of age before an individual can access such speech. It follows that no person — adult or child — has a First Amendment right to access speech that is obscene to minors without first submitting proof of age," he wrote.

Again, the 3 Trump nominees voted to protect children, but the 3 dissenting votes are from the judges appointed by Democrat presidents. I don't know what people in other countries want. Do they want to protect the children? Or do they want to put the children at risk? American Christians voted to protect the children. We voted to get results, and we got the results we wanted.

American Christians vote for results that are good for religious liberty, parents' rights and children's safety. Maybe the people in these other countries who don't like those results have also heard that our Supreme Court reversed the decision that made abortion legal through all 9 months. All the Republican judges voted against abortion, but all the Democrat judges voted for abortion. Americans Christians voted for the pro-life laws and policies, and we got the pro-life laws and policies. Maybe people in these other countries don't want that, but American Christians did. And we got it. That actually happened here.

UPDATE: I noticed that someone very very important shared this post on social media, so here are a few recent news stories to let you know what American Christians DO NOT want in America.

We do not want this in America:

- churches to be FINED for having worship events (Canada)
- pastor investigated for TERRORISM for sermon (UK)
- doctor found GUILTY of professional misconduct for opposing abortion and gender ideology (Australia)

Should we expect to know what God’s reason is for allowing evil and suffering?

July 1, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is an article by Steven Cowan about the problems of evil and suffering.

Intro:

> The problem of evil is no doubt the most serious challenge to belief in God. Even religious believers find it troubling that evil exists in the world—and so much evil! It is puzzling, to say the least, that an all-powerful, absolutely good being would allow evil to exist in his creation. And yet it does. Evil and suffering exist and they are often overwhelming in their magnitude.

Now let’s find out what a noseeum is, and how it relates to the existence of evil and suffering:

> However, perhaps God’s existence is incompatible with a certain kind of evil that exists. For example, the atheist William Rowe has argued that God’s existence is inconsistent with pointless or gratuitous evil. By “pointless evil,” Rowe means evil that does not and cannot serve a greater good. And Rowe believes that there is such pointless evil in the world. He thus concludes that God does not exist. Rowe’s argument may be simply stated as follows:
>
> 1. If God exists, there would be no pointless evil.
> 2. There is pointless evil.
> 3. Therefore, God does not exist.
>
> […]But, is there pointless evil in the world? Rowe thinks there is. To show that there is pointless evil, Rowe introduces what he calls the “noseeum inference.” Like the pesty little bugs that some readers may be familiar with, a “noseeum” is something that you cannot see—it is a “no-see-um.” And a noseeum inference is a conclusion drawn on the basis of what one does not see. The basic structure of all noseeum inferences looks like this:
>
> 1. I cannot see an x.
> 2. Therefore, there probably is no x.
>
> We all make noseeum inferences everyday of our lives. Every time I go to cross a street, I look both ways and I step out into the street only after I “no-see-um” a car coming.
>
> […]Rowe applies this kind of noseeum reasoning to God and evil. Rowe suggests that if we cannot see a reason for a particular instance of evil, then there is probably not a reason. Suppose we hear about a very young child who is tortured

> to death to amuse some psychotic person. We think about this event and we examine all the circumstances surrounding it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot see any good reason why this child had to suffer the way she did. Since we cannot see a reason why God would allow this child to suffer, there probably is not a good reason—the child's suffering was pointless. Of course, Rowe would be quick to point out that he is not speaking merely hypothetically. There are cases like this in the news every day—real-life cases in which we shake our heads in frustration, wondering why God would allow such a thing.
>
> Is Rowe correct in his conclusion? Do such examples prove that there is pointless evil in the world? I don't think so. To see why, we must recognize that noseeum inferences are not all created equal. Some noseeum inferences, as we have seen, are reasonable and appropriate. But, many are not. Suppose I look up at the night sky at the star Deneb and I do not see a planet orbiting that star. Would it be reasonable for me to conclude that there is no planet orbiting Deneb? Of course not. Suppose that using the best telescopes and other imaging equipment presently available, I still cannot see a planet around Deneb. I would still be unjustified in concluding that there was no such planet.

In that example, the planet is the noseeum. Just because you look really hard, you can't be confident that the planet is not there. And similarly with the problem of evil and suffering, looking really hard and finding no reason does not mean that there is no reason. It just means that you are not in a good position to see the reason. You don't know enough to to be sure that there is no reason, because of your limitations as a human being.

To *know* that any given instance of evil or suffering is *gratuitous/pointless* requires a high level of knowledge. How much knowledge? Well, consider this paper by the late William Alston of Syracuse University, who lists six problems with the idea that humans can *know* that any particular instance of evil and suffering is gratuitous.

According to the paper, human beings just do not have the capability to know for certain that God has NO morally sufficient reason for allowing any particular instance of evil and/or suffering. God's morally sufficient reason is a noseeum. To know for sure that there is no reason, we would need to have more knowledge than we do.

Also, remember that on the Christian view, the good aim that God has is NOT to make humans have happy feelings in this life, regardless of their knowledge, wisdom and character. That's what atheists think, though. They think that God, if he exists, is obligated to make them feel happy all the time. They don't think that God's goal is being actively involved in forming their knowledge, wisdom and character. God has a purpose – to work in the world so that everyone who can freely respond to him will respond to him. The Bible says that allowing pain and suffering is one of the ways that he gets that group of people who are willing to respond to respond to him – FREELY. To be able to claim that evil is gratuitous, the atheist has to show that God can achieve his goal of saving all the people he wants to save *while permitting less suffering in the world.* And that is a very

difficult thing for an atheist to show, given our human cognitive limitations.

Testing drug decriminalization policies in Oregon and Portugal

July 2, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Libertarians generally favor relaxing criminal laws. They want to eliminate capital punishment (which deters violent crime). They are pro-choice on abortion. They want to decriminalize sex work of all kinds. And they want to decriminalize highly-addictive hard drugs. Let's take a look at that last one and see if it's produced results.

Here's Reason magazine writing in August 2021. They are far left / libertarian on social issues:

> In 1973, Oregon became the first state to decriminalize marijuana use, setting in motion a movement that has unraveled much of the disastrous U.S. drug war—with far-reaching consequences.
>
> Today, Oregon is once again at the vanguard of reform: In February, it enacted Measure 110, a law ending prison and jail sentences for all types of drug use and possession, whether it be cocaine, meth, heroin, or psychedelics.
>
> […]Haven Wheelock, who runs a needle exchange in Portland called Outside In, says delaying decriminalization would have been morally unacceptable.
>
> […]Wheelock says that even if Oregon's decriminalization gets off to a bumpy start, in no small part because the pandemic has exacerbated substance abuse problems nationwide, that Oregon voters have made the right choice.
>
> "I think we're going to see systems improve. I think we're going to see people have access to care that they currently don't have access to. I think we're going to see less people getting saddled with convictions that harm them for the rest of their lives. And to me, all of that is a win," says Wheelock.

And, here is the Cato Institute, a libertarian advocacy group, crowing happily about legalizing hard drugs:

> In November 2020, Oregon voters passed Measure 110, which decriminalized the possession for personal use of small amounts of all drugs, including cocaine, heroin, LSD, methamphetamine, and oxycodone. Oregon is the only U.S. state to have implemented this policy.
>
> […]The problem, however, is that 110 did not go far enough.
>
> While 110 eliminated serious penalties for personal use, it did not legalize production and sale of drugs.

When you make something legal, more people use it. And that's exactly what happened.

Libertarians seem to think that when you legalize something addictive, then no one will commit any crimes to feed their addictions. Of course people will be able to keep their

jobs with a cocaine addiction. And OF COURSE cocaine addicts will be able to make enough money legally from that job to support their habit. Libertarians think that crime will go down, because people with addictions can just work at their white collar jobs, and pay for their cocaine. No problem.

So, what happened next? Something that was a great surprise to libertarians.

The far-left The Atlantic noted:

> But three years later, with rising overdoses and delays in treatment funding, even some of the measure's supporters now believe that the policy needs to be changed. In a nonpartisan statewide poll earlier this year, more than 60 percent of respondents blamed Measure 110 for making drug addiction, homelessness, and crime worse. A majority, including a majority of Democrats, said they supported bringing back criminal penalties for drug possession.

Libertarians like to point to Portugal as a model for successful drug decriminalization, but again it's just wishing and hoping.

The far-left Washington Post explains:

> Portugal decriminalized all drug use, including marijuana, cocaine and heroin, in an experiment that inspired similar efforts elsewhere, but now police are blaming a spike in the number of people who use drugs for a rise in crime. In one neighborhood, state-issued paraphernalia — powder-blue syringe caps, packets of citric acid for diluting heroin — litters sidewalks outside an elementary school.
>
> […]A newly released national survey suggests the percent of adults who have used illicit drugs increased to 12.8 percent in 2022, up from 7.8 in 2001, though still below European averages. Portugal's prevalence of high-risk opioid use is higher than Germany's, but lower than that of France and Italy. But even proponents of decriminalization here admit that something is going wrong.
>
> Overdose rates have hit 12-year highs and almost doubled in Lisbon from 2019 to 2023. Sewage samples in Lisbon show cocaine and ketamine detection is now among the highest in Europe, with elevated weekend rates suggesting party-heavy usage. In Porto, the collection of drug-related debris from city streets surged 24 percent between 2021 and 2022, with this year on track to far outpace the last. Crime — including robbery in public spaces — spiked 14 percent from 2021 to 2022, a rise police blame partly on increased drug use.

Going back to Oregon, the article also notes that "overdoses this year in Portland, the state's largest city, have surged 46 percent."

I think that libertarians are great on fiscal policy. But I don't think we need to listen to them on social policy. Or on foreign policy, but that's for another post.

Report: Biden FBI interfered with investigation into Chinese election meddling

July 3, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been monitoring the progress of the new FBI leader Kash Patel, just waiting to see what he will do about some of the well-known scandals of the Biden-Harris regime. Things like the Trump-Russia collusion scandal, the Hunter Biden laptop, the targeting of Christians for persecution, etc. Well, there was some shocking news this week about the Biden-Harris regime FBI.

Here's the story from The Federalist:

> The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) interfered with an investigation into Chinese meddling in the 2020 election to cover for former Director Christopher Wray, who had just testified to Congress that he had seen no evidence of a coordinated voter fraud effort, According to previously classified documents released Tuesday by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa.
>
> The FBI "suppressed intelligence" of alleged Chinese Communist Party (CCP) interference in the 2020 election, including the production of '"tens of thousands' of fraudulent drivers' licenses to manufacture mail-in votes for then-presidential candidate Joe Biden," according to a press release.

Grassley said:

> "These records smack of political decision-making and prove the Wray-led FBI to be a deeply broken institution. Ahead of a high-stakes election happening amid an unprecedented global pandemic, the FBI turned its back on its national security mission,.. Chris Wray's FBI wasn't looking out for the American people – it was looking to save its own image."

And:

> Grassley's office says that the evidence was never investigated further, despite signs of credibility, because of a "sudden and 'abnormal'" decision to stop further proceedings and "bury the IIR's existence," because, as the FBI put it, "the reporting will contradict Director Wray's testimony."
>
> […]The FBI recalled the report to "re-interview the source," but also told "recipients" to "destroy all copies of the original report and remove the original report from all computer holdings."

I checked Grassley's government web site to make sure this was a real story, and yes, the story is real.

A while back, I was asking Grok (the AI) about 2020 election, and it was very dismissive of

election fraud, relying on reports from corporate news sources. These are the same corporate news sources that make statements like “the Hunter Biden laptop is Russian disinformation”. And even after those corporate news sources exposed, search engines, Big Tech and AIs decline to update their views of these sources. In fact, Grok reverts back to using news sources like NPR, which dismissed the Hunter Biden laptop story.

Recently, I was asking Grok about the FBI’s actions related to the Hunter Biden laptop and the release of the Nashville shooter’s manifesto. Regarding the Nashville shooter, Grok said that the FBI had not intentionally suppressed the Nashville shooter’s manifesto.

And then one FOIA request later, we find out this:

> The trans-centric Biden administration wanted to protect the trans agenda, and, as the Star News Network reported, the FBI advised against releasing information that it believed could put males pretending to be females and females identifying as males at risk.
>
> […]“And we knew that the FBI had this information. They did not want to release it to the public. They withheld it, requiring us to sue them,” the attorney added.

When I pointed out to Grok that the people who run many of these corporate news providers and fact checkers are Democrat donors, Grok just acts surprised. It’s not capable of taking into account the political contributions of these organizations to determine bias. It’s just programmed to see left-wing corporate news sites as reliable.

Prior to publishing this post, I asked Grok if there was any evidence of CCP election interference. Grok checked it’s favorite 3 web sites: the UK Guardian, The Washington Post, and The New York Times – and it claimed there was no evidence for it. Then I sprang the trap and linked to Grassley’s link above. Grok dismissed The Federalist, Daily Signal, National Review, Epoch Times and Grassley’s government web site despite having no evidence against their claims from its own preferred left-wing news sources.

Big Tech companies that run search engines and AI are biased to the left. Studies show that their products are affected by political bias. And leaked videos of executives show that. And political donations show that. What’s troubling to me is that even after left-wing news sources are caught lying about the Hunter Biden laptop, the Russia collusion hoax, the Jussie Smollett hoax, etc. it doesn’t seem to change the bias of the search engines or the AIs.

For Independence Day, let’s learn about George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

July 4, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington’s line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington’s retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington’s army at White Plains, New York,

> British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after

> months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
>
> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
>
> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.

> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
>
> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
>
> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

William Lane Craig lectures on the historical Jesus at Columbia University

July 5, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the other software engineers at work is always finding interesting sermons and lectures to listen to. On Friday afternoon, things were a bit slow, so she messaged me a lecture featuring Dr. William Lane Craig, talking on "Who Was Jesus?" at Columbia University. I wanted to encourage her, so I put it on to listen as well. I liked it so much, I wrote out a summary below to go with it.

Here is the lecture:

Description:

Dr. William Lane Craig unpacks questions surrounding Jesus' resurrection and the historical accuracy of the biblical claims. Columbia University, 2009.

And my outline:

Different views of Jesus:

- Jewish view of Jesus
- Muslim view of Jesus
- skeptical historian view of Jesus
- what did Jesus think about himself?
- Jesus didn't write anything of his own
- best sources are the records of Jesus followers
- problem: how do we know these records are accurate
- maybe stories of Jesus' divinity emerged over time

New tools from the Renaissance:

- historiography
- textual criticism
- investigate Jesus as a historical figure
- same tools are used for other historical figures

Sources:

- Christian
- Jewish
- Roman
- Many more sources than other figures of antiquity

External sources:

- confirm what the gospels say, but don't say anything new

Treating the Bible as a collection of ancient documents

- not using the Bible to prove the Bible is divine
- just treating the books as historical documents

New Testament

- a collection of the earliest documents
- much later documents about Jesus not included
- later documents not written by eyewitnesses

Skeptical scholars:

- ignore the earliest sources
- focus on the later sources
- result is a more radical left-friendly Jesus

Burden of proof

- are the gospels assumed reliable until proven unreliable?
- are the gospels assumed unreliable until proven reliable?

Five reasons to assume the New Testament is reliable

1. Insufficient time for legendary influences to erase the historical core

- the gap between the events and the sources is much shorter than other comparable sources
- Greek and Roman sources are at least 1-2 generations from the events they record
- Gospels written down and circulated within first generation after the events they record
- the eyewitnesses were alive at the time they were written down

2. Gospels are not the same genre as folk tales or urban legends

- Gospels talk about real people who actually lived
- Gospels talk about real places excavated by archaeologists

3. Oral tradition in first century Jewish society

- Jewish culture valued reliable transmission of religious tradition
- Memorization of long passages and entire books

4. Restraints on the embellishment of traditions about Jesus

- The apostles and other eyewitnesses could correct embellishments

5. Gospel writers make testable statements that are found to be true

- Luke is the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts
- In Acts, Luke accompanies with the eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus
- Acts contains many historical details accurate to the times and places he writes about
- Luke's gospel is in accord with archaeological discoveries made since

It's reasonable to accept the general reliability of the Gospels, unless they are found unreliable

Historical basis for facets of Jesus

1. Unique Son of God

- historical critics claim that the divinity of Jesus developed over time
- why would monotheistic Jews contradict their monotheism by inventing a divine Jesus?
- the only reasonsable answer is that Jesus claimed divinity for himself
- His followers accepted it because Jesus provided reasons to believe
- Mark 12:1-8
  Earliest gospel reveals Jesus' self-understanding as God's "only beloved son"
- Matthew 11:27
  "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." This story is also in Luke. Source is "Q", an early set of traditions common to Matthew and Luke
- Mark 13:32
  Jesus sees himself as above humans and angels, but subordinate to God the Father

Why would anyone take Jesus seriously, unless he was able to provide evidence?

2. Jesus' miracles

- Jesus' miracle stories are in all four sources
- The only reason to reject them is because of a philosophical bias against the supernatural

3. Trial and crucifixion

- Crucifixion narrative is in the Gospels, Paul's letters, Acts
- Also confirmed by Josephus and Roman historians
- Historians across the ideological spectrum affirm the crucifixion

Why was Jesus crucified?

- Doesn't fit with the skeptical view that Jesus was uncontroversial and had few followers

4. Jesus' resurrection

- Jesus resurrection is the best explanation for historical facts accepted by diverse majority of historians

1. Burial location known to friends and enemies, and corpse would refute the resurrection
2. Tomb was found empty by a group of Jesus' women followers
3. Post-mortem appearances to individuals and groups, friends, skeptics and enemies
4. Original disciples became convinced that Jesus rose from dead counter to their own interests

- The facts are accepted by a majority of scholars across the ideological spectrum
- Dr. Craig's debate with a scholar who invented an unknown, identical twin brother who was separated from Jesus at birth
- Jewish historian Pinchas Lapide affirms the resurrection of Jesus as a historical event

Then there is a period of question and answer, which I did not find useful, because the questions seemed to be more about the needs and feelings of Christians, rather than about the facts presented by Dr. Craig, or about how these facts survive in debates on university campuses. Facts don't care about your feelings.

It never hurts to listen to William Lane Craig. If you listen enough, you can remember his points when you get the opportunity. In college, all of my friends at Crusade could do his opening speech from his debates on God's existence from memory.

Judge rules that man must pay $50,000 a month to ex-girlfriend for 10 years

July 6, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was younger, I got the impression from young women that men with strong views on theology and morality made them uncomfortable. I had my share of rejections by Christian women who didn't like my strong Biblical views. At the time, I was worried that I might not be able to get married at all. But looking at how the family courts operate, that turned out to be a good thing.

The news story is from one of Canada's national newspapers, the National Post:

> A wealthy businessman will have to pay more than $50,000 a month in spousal support for 10 years to a woman with whom he had a long-term romantic relationship even though they kept separate homes and had no children together, Ontario's top court has ruled.
>
> Under Ontario law, an unmarried couple are considered common-law spouses if they have cohabited — lived together in a conjugal relationship — continuously for at least three years. But that doesn't necessarily mean living in the same home, the court found.
>
> […]When their 14-year relationship finally broke down in May 2015, Climans asked the courts to recognize her as Latner's spouse and order him to pay her support. He argued she had been a travel companion and girlfriend, nothing more. As such, he said, they were never legally spouses and he owed no support. An eight-day trial ensued.
>
> In her decision in February 2019, Superior Court Justice Sharon Shore sided with Climans. She ruled they were in fact long-time spouses, finding that despite their separate home, they lived under one roof at Latner's cottage for part of the summer, and during winter vacations in Florida. Shore ordered him to pay her $53,077 monthly indefinitely.

Superior Court Justice Sharon Shore didn't care that the man never married this woman, or lived with her, or had children with her. He had money, and she wanted it, so the judge gave it to her.

Elsewhere in the article, we learn that he had asked her to sign a pre-nuptial agreement many times, and each time she refused. (Those are not even enforced in divorce courts) It's like her plan all along was to demand that a judge awarded her all of this man's money.

Some people will say "well, these are Ontario family courts, this is normal. Haven't you heard about what happened to Dave Foley?" I think every man knows the story of what the Ontario divorce courts did to Dave Foley.

Here is a story about it from the far-left Toronto Star, otherwise known as the Toronto Red

Star.

It says:

> Dave Foley of beloved Toronto sketch troupe the Kids in the Hall is starting a new career in standup comedy, but not in Toronto — he suspects he'll be arrested if he returns to Canada.
>
> The 48-year-old faces a back child-support bill in Ontario of more than half a million dollars: the accumulation of a debt that accrues steadily at more than $17,000 per month. On the set of *Servitude,* a film shot in Toronto last year, "I told the production guys, I have a court appearance on Monday and there's a good chance I'll be in jail on Monday afternoon,'" Foley said in an interview with the *Star*.
>
> During an appearance on comic Marc Maron's *WTF* podcast last month, Foley explained that his marriage to Toronto writer Tabatha Southey ended during his run on NBC's five-year hit comedy *NewsRadio,* and he has failed in his efforts to adjust his child support downward to reflect his new life after sitcom stardom.
>
> "My income has dropped in the last 10 years, as anyone can tell from the number of s—ty movies I've been in," says Foley. "I'm not exactly picking and choosing my projects." However, four years ago, Superior Justice Nancy Backhouse denied his motion to vary his support payments.
>
> […]Foley says that Ontario's Family Responsibility Office now has an enforcement order and last year sought a six-month jail sentence for him, which was to extend indefinitely, until the overdue support was paid.

Ontario family courts are notoriously anti-male, and men know this. Unfortunately, the female judges who make these rulings don't seem to understand that men know what they are doing, and then opt out of marriage. It must be so wonderful for these judges to punish the men who appear before them. But they can't punish the men who respond to what they are doing by declining to marry women, and then declining to date women, and then declining to even speak to women.

I looked up Superior Justice Nancy Backhouse, and found another article about her decisions, entitled "Judge rejects pre-nup, awards ex-wife $5.3-million". So, pre-nuptial agreements are also thrown out in Ontario divorce courts.

But it's not just Ontario. I have two Christian friends here in America who married their Christian wives as virgins, and then their wives divorced them. I heard what happened to them in divorce court. They lost custody of their kids, and they are forced to pay alimony and child support even though their ex-wives poison the children against them, and deny them communication rights and visitation rights. And men know that this is happening to other men. How can women expect men to marry when the financial risks are so high?

Forbes magazine explains:

> Of the 400,000 people in the United States receiving post-divorce spousal

> maintenance, just 3 percent were men, according to Census figures. Yet 40 percent of households are headed by female breadwinners — suggesting that hundreds of thousands of men are eligible for alimony, yet don't receive it.

The divorced courts are biased against men, and men are getting the message. They look at these cases, and they understand that marriage is not worth the financial risks. They don't want to have their possessions stolen by radical feminist judges.

Further reading

An excellent book to read about this issue is Dr. Stephen Baskerville's book "Taken Into Custody: The War Against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family". You can read what the book is about here. Dr. Baskerville is a Christian and a conservative. He has a PhD from London School of Economics and does a good job of explaining the negative view that society has about men, and male leadership. And sadly, these negative man-blaming views are often shared by Christians, too.

Scottish senior lawyer says that men are not allowed to use evidence against accusers

July 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the teachings about courts that we find in the Bible is that the courts are not supposed to be biased. The passage in question is Leviticus 19:15. Unfortunately, our current society doesn't really respect fairness in the courts, at least for men. Previously, I blogged a study that showed that sentences for men are 63% longer than for women. But there's more unfairness, so let's look at it.

First, let's review the Bible verse – Leviticus 19:15:

> You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.

Now consider this article from the Scottish newspaper The Herald:

> A leading lawyer has warned that men accused of rape or serious sexual assault may not receive a fair trial because of long established rules over what evidence is admissible in court.
>
> […]"We have reached the stage where the victim has lied about things and the court has not allowed the defence to put that before the jury.
>
> "How can it be said that someone has had a fair trial when it's been proved that the complainer lied about something important in the course of the inquiry and that was not allowed to be introduced as evidence?" he told The Herald.
>
> "There are serious concerns that people are not getting a fair trial when they are not being given the opportunity to provide evidence which might support their innocence".
>
> […]"Every day you were hearing examples of people saying they thought a piece of evidence was relevant but the judge has ruled that it would not be allowed.
>
> "Defendants would be going around with messages, photographs, things they thought would prove them to be innocent and the judges would not allow them to tell the jury about those pieces of exculpatory evidence."

In one of the examples in the article, there was CCTV video showing that the woman had led the man into the sex, but that evidence could not be used in court as part of the man's defense.

Now, what lessons do men take away from cases of bias against men like this one? Well, men learn about three things.

First, men learn that society doesn't care whether men are innocent of guilty of charges made by women – they just want men punished. "Believe all women". And remember, false accusations can be made against men who have not even met the alleged victim.

Second, men learn to keep well clear of the courts, because they've learned that the courts treat men much more harshly than women, as the sentencing study shows. And thirdly, Christian men have learned not to expect any sort of help from Christian counselors, Christian pastors, and even from *pro-marriage / pro-child advocates*. I have personally seen a married couple that runs a "pro-family" ministry urging a woman to divorce her husband because he did not make enough money to pay for her frivolous spending. And yes, the couple had young children who became fatherless as a result.

Whenever I tell social conservatives about the effect that this bias against men is having on men's willingness to engage with women (romantically, professionally, etc.), they go silent. Let me give you an example of this.

I was having a discussion with a woman who writes about marriage and family. I told her "did you know that women initiate 70% of divorces, and almost all of those are not for reasons that the Bible would condone". Her reply was "that's because women have emotional needs, so the divorce is justified". I agree that women have emotional needs, and that husbands have a responsibility to care for their wives' needs. That's why I tell people that women are responsible for vetting men for this ability prior to marrying. But the woman I was talking to did not think that women should have to test men, because women are *entitled* to these behaviors *regardless of her own choice of man.* I also brought up the higher rate of divorce for lesbian women, and asked her which man was responsible for this. She just went silent.

So, this is the problem. The conviction that a woman is entitled to a man's protection and provision regardless of any risk to the man is so widespread that no evidence can cause them to question it. Marriage is not going to be seen as attractive to men if the response to their evidence-based concerns is silence.

Are the Galapagos finch beaks evidence of Darwinian evolution?

July 8, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Were you taught in biology class that the changing lengths of finch beaks was a good proof of Darwinian evolution? Many students were… but is it true?

Jonathan Wells has an article about it at Evolution News.

It says:

> When Charles Darwin visited the Galápagos Islands in 1835, he collected specimens of the local wildlife. These included some finches that he threw into bags, many of them mislabeled. Although the Galápagos finches had little impact on Darwin's thinking (he doesn't even mention them in *The Origin of Species*), biologists who studied them a century later called them "Darwin's finches" and invented the myth that Darwin had correlated differences in the finches' beaks with different food sources (he hadn't). According to the myth, Darwin was inspired by the finches to formulate his theory of evolution, thoughaccording to historian of science Frank Sulloway "nothing could be further from the truth."
>
> In the 1970s, biologists studied a population of medium ground finches on one of the islands in great detail. When a severe drought left only large, hard-to-crack seeds, 85 percent of the birds perished. The survivors had beaks that were about 5 percent larger than the average beak size in the original population. The biologists estimated that if similar droughts occurred once every ten years, the population could become a new species in only 200 years. In a 1999 booklet defending evolution, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences called the finches "a particularly compelling example" of the origin of species.
>
> **But after the drought, birds with smaller beaks flourished again, and the average beak size of the population returned to normal. No net evolution had occurred.** No matter; Darwin's finches became an icon of evolution that is still featured in most biology textbooks.
>
> In the 1980s, a population of large ground finches, with larger beaks than the medium ground finches, migrated to the island. When a drought in 2004-2005 again reduced the food supply, the medium and large ground finch populations both declined. But since even the largest beaks among the medium ground finches were no match for the beaks of the large ground finches, the latter pretty much monopolized the larger seeds and the former had to make do with smaller seeds. This time, the medium ground finches that survived the drought had beaks that were *smaller* than the average size in the original population. Biologists studying the finches argued that birds with smaller beaks were better able to eat the tiny seeds that were left after the large ground finches ate the big ones, and they concluded that this was again an example of "evolutionary

> change."
>
> **[…]Wait a minute. Average beak size increased slightly during one drought, only to return to normal after the rains return. Then average beak size decreased slightly during another drought. A region of DNA is correlated with beak size. And somehow that tells us how finches evolved in the first place?**

There is an important distinction to make between micro-evolution and macro-evolution. Changes within a type is micro-evolution. Evolving a new organ type or body plan is macro-evolution. There is plenty of evidence for micro-evolution, but no evidence for macro-evolution.

What needs to be proven by the Darwinists is that the same process that results in different average beak size in a population of finches after a drought can create the finches in the first place. I think that Darwinists are credulous – they believe what they want to believe because they want to believe it, even if the evidence is incredibly weak. Darwinists must demonstrate that *heritable variations can result in the generation of new organ types and body plans.* Changes in average beak size is not interesting. What is needed is to show how the beaks, much less the wings, evolved in the first place.

Icons of Evolution

Jonathan has actually written about a number of misleading things that you may mind in Biology textbooks.

Here are the sections in his book "Icons of Evolution":

- The Miller-Urey Experiment
- Darwin's Tree of Life
- Homology in Vertebrate Limbs
- Haeckel's Embroys
- Archaeopteryx–The Missing Link
- Peppered Moths
- Darwin's Finches
- Four-Winged Fruit Flies
- Fossil Horses and Directed Evolution
- From Ape to Human: The Ultimate Icon

Dr. Wells holds a Ph.D in Molecular and Cell Biology from the University of California at Berkeley.

Michael Egnor debates the nature of mind with Christof Koch and Michael Shermer

July 9, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A little while ago, we welcomed Dr. Michael Egnor and Denyse O'Leary onto the Knight and Rose Show to discuss their new book "The Immortal Mind: A Neurosurgeon's Case for the Existence of the Soul". Desert Rose and I really had fun interviewing them, and their book has gotten rave reviews from our friends. But Dr. Egnor has also been going into hostile forums to defend his views.

Let's start with the first one. Michael Shermer is a well-known skeptic (I would say atheist) who occasionally interviews people who disagree with him, such as Dr. Stephen C. Meyer.

Well, he moderated a discussion with Dr. Egnor and an opponent, neuroscientist Christof Koch:

This was a cordial debate where Dr. Egnor answered specific cases from the field of neuroscience that challenged his views.

But a more recent debate on the Piers Morgan show featured Dr. Egnor facing off against Dr. Michael Shermer:

In this one, the main topic was near-death experiences and terminal lucidity, both of which were brought up in our episode of the Knight and Rose Show. Those are two good pieces of data that I think refute the materialist view of mind, which holds it to be identical to the brain.

Sadly, on a show like that, they tend to focus on a small number of topics, which is why I recommend our episode that was published on May 31st, 2025.

We covered those topics, and many more:

In our episode, we discussed:

- Dr. Egnor's experiences as a neurosurgeon, especially cases where there was significant brain loss, but no loss of mental capacities
- different views of mind: materialism (mind is brain), substance dualism (mind as separate substance), Thomistic dualism (mind and brain integrated but separable), and idealism (everything is mind)
- Wilder Penfield's research on epilepsy patients, which showed the limits of brain stimulation, and also supported free will
- how split-brain surgeries give support for a unified, immaterial mind
- Benjamin Libet's free will experiments that showed the existence of "free won't", giving more support to an immaterial mind
- cases of conjoined twins that share brain structures but have different personalities
- near-death experiences, especially the Pam Reynolds case, which strongly supports the idea of an immaterial mind that survives while the brain is inactive

- how computers cannot develop consciousness or free will by adding computational power
- how the human mind does not have an evolutionary pathway of gradual development
- cases of terminal lucidity, where a patient who had previously shown diminished mental processing due to brain damage suddenly regains their clarity

So, if you haven't been following this new argument against naturalism, it might be a good idea to either listen to our episode, or if you are a fan of one of the skeptics, then listen to one of the debates. The book "The Immortal Mind" has many, many more details than our podcast episode.

I am always happy to add to my list of arguments for theism, and against naturalism.

So far, I have:

    - origin of the universe
    - cosmic fine-tuning
    - information in the origin of life
    - irreducible complexity and molecular machines
    - biological big bangs in the fossil record
    - habitability – discoverability correlation
    - first-person consciousness and free will
    - moral realism and objective moral values

Does anyone know any others that I can add to this list? No philosophical arguments! Except the moral argument! Philosophy is just too squishy for engineers. I like hard evidence when I'm making a positive case! Run up the score!

Has the case against same-sex marriage strengthened or weakened over time?

July 10, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Just over 14 years ago I first wrote my first long essay against same-sex marriage. I was still new at making the case, but I did my best. Sadly, we lost. I think we lost because Christians were not being equipped to make a case for natural marriage that would be convincing to non-Christians. If we want to live in a society that protects children, we have to be able to do that.

Before we begin, it's worth reviewing why the government has an interesting in recognizing marriage as distinct from other relationships. The state recognizes natural marriage as valuable because the state has an interest in what marriage produces, namely, children who are raised in a stable environment.

Natural marriage is built on the norms of *gender complementarity, exclusivity* and *permanence*. It's the coming together of a man and a woman that creates children. And when the children are created, each biological parent has an allegiance to that child, because they contributed to that child's DNA. And who else but the biological parents will have a stronger interest in the well-being of their own child?

Stability is achieved because of the norms of exclusivity (fidelity) and permanence (commitment). In a properly functioning marriage, the adults give up some of their own freedoms in the short term in order to provide the children with long-term stability. And government used to give a special status to relationships that gave children that stabiliity.

In my original post, I talked about how the normalizing premarital sex and legalizing no-fault divorce would harm children. Same-sex marriage came after, and it also harms children. And some new articles pick up on that theme with new evidence.

Here's an article from Katy Faust, published in The Blaze. She writes about how parents are now assigned by the state:

> Since 2015, activists have been arguing state by state that equality requires making parenthood gender-neutral and elevating "social parents" (unrelated adults in the home who have not undergone background checks). Fathers have been legally erased from birth certificates to accommodate "two moms" and vice versa. Activists have insisted on requiring insurance or the government to fund the creation of fatherless and motherless children. Biology and adoption are bypassed in favor of "intent-based" parenthood. Giving same-sex couples equal access to the marital "constellation of benefits" denied children equal access to their own mother and father.

What happened to the idea of two people with two different natures coming together to commit for life, in order to have and raise children? It's gone. Now, children are lower

than pets. No one is thinking about God's design for getting men and women to work together to care for their children. Now people are in it for themselves, and children are just expendable accessories.

Katy's article talks about the cataclysmic effects that undoing the complementary genders norm had on the schools. Schools don't talk about mothers and fathers. In fact, they indoctrinate kids to think that mothers and fathers are not even normal for marriage and family. Public libraries promote books to children to make them feel bad about needing to be loved by their father and mother. All in the name of "don't judge".

Katy also notes:

> The culture shift and the legal restructuring contributed to a booming fertility market. Surrogate pregnancies more than doubled from 2.2% in 2011 to 4.7% in 2020. Fertility clinics often direct gay couples to surrogacy grants in the name of "equitable access to parenthood."
>
> These children did not lose their mothers to tragedy. They lost their mothers to adult "equality."

Many children are not growing up with a mother and father in the home. By the way, Katy had a civil debate with a gay activist in Australia, and you might like to watch it if you want to debate this issue well.

The second article from First Things talks more about how children are affected:

> The overwhelming desire to be connected to one's biological parents is evident in the 70 percent of donor-conceived adults who believe they have been harmed by not knowing the identity of a biological parent. Seventy-seven percent agree that a sperm or egg donor is "half of who I am," and 86 percent believe that a biological parent's information belongs to the adult child.
>
> These are not abstract trends; they negatively impact children every day.

That article also notes how the same-sex marriage has caused all sorts of bad effects on society. Now that relationships are about adult selfishness, people just don't even bother marrying before they have kids.

Look at this:

> [A] historically low marriage rate: An all-time low of 46.8 percent of households were headed by a married couple in 2022.

And this:

> [A] historically low birth rate: Live births decreased nearly 9 percent from 2014, the year before *Obergefell* was decided, to 2019, the year before Covid-19 decreased live births even further.

And this:

> Third, young people are increasingly confused about their identity: Americans aged eighteen to twenty-four who identify as transgender increased 422 percent from 2014 to 2023.

It's not just kids that are affected, it's society as a whole. It will result in a drop in tax revenues, which are used to pay for social programs. And we will get a drop in workers in sectors like energy, health care, and other critical industries.

My thoughts

I don't have any experience raising children, but I do have experience with parrots. My family had several, back where I immigrated from. And I know that parrots need to have stability in order to be happy. They need to feel that if they call, their humans will come. They don't like to move to a different house. They don't like the furniture to move. They like routines and they like head scratches, but they have to trust you first. I remember being in grad school, and calling home from the computer lab to check on the parrot, because I didn't trust my lazy, selfish older brother to monitor the bird while I was gone. The TSA staff at my local airport in the US got so used to me bringing home balsa wood blocks and California Spray Millet that they would call me "The Parrot Guy". Parrots are so little. They need the bigger people to look after them!

I just cannot imagine how people could want children, and then not understand children need stable relationships with their real mother and father! We have so much evidence showing the effects of divorce on kids, and the effects of same-sex parenting on kids. We need marriage to be child-focused, not adult-focused.

If you want to hear Rose and I talk about it, we did an episode. Audio is here.

And we did an episode with Frank Turek. Audio is here.

Yale University computer science professor takes a look at protein formation probabilities

July 11, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

When I was in graduate school, we studied a book called “Mirror Worlds”, authored by famous computer science professor David Gelernter at Yale University. This week, I noticed that Dr. Gelernter had written an article in the prestigious Claremont Review of Books. In his article, he applies his knowledge of computer science to the problem of the origin of life.

Evolution, if it is going to work at all, has to explain the problem of how the basic building blocks of life – proteins – can emerge from non-living matter. It turns out that the problem of the origin of life is essentially a problem of information – of code. If the components of proteins are ordered properly, then the sequence folds up into a protein that has biological function. If the sequence is not good, then just like computer code, it won’t run.

Here’s Dr. Gelernter to explain:

> How to make proteins is our first question. Proteins are chains: linear sequences of atom-groups, each bonded to the next. A protein molecule is based on a chain of amino acids; 150 elements is a “modest-sized” chain; the average is 250. Each link is chosen, ordinarily, from one of 20 amino acids. A chain of amino acids is a polypeptide—“peptide” being the type of chemical bond that joins one amino acid to the next. But this chain is only the starting point: chemical forces among the links make parts of the chain twist themselves into helices; others straighten out, and then, sometimes, jackknife repeatedly, like a carpenter’s rule, into flat sheets. Then the whole assemblage folds itself up like a complex sheet of origami paper. And the actual 3-D *shape* of the resulting molecule is (as I have said) important.
>
> Imagine a 150-element protein as a chain of 150 beads, each bead chosen from 20 varieties. But: only certain chains will work. Only certain bead combinations will form themselves into stable, useful, *well-shaped* proteins.
>
> So how hard *is* it to build a useful, well-shaped protein? Can you throw a bunch of amino acids together and assume that you will get something good? Or must you choose each element of the chain with painstaking care? It happens to be *very* hard to choose the right beads.

Gelernter decides to spot the Darwinist a random sequence of 150 elements. Now the task the Darwinist is to use random mutation to arrive at a sequence of 150 links that has biological function.

> [W]hat are the chances that a random 150-link sequence will create such a protein? Nonsense sequences are essentially random. Mutations are random. Make random changes to a random sequence and you get another random

> sequence. So, close your eyes, make 150 random choices from your 20 bead boxes and string up your beads in the order in which you chose them. What are the odds that you will come up with a useful new protein?
>
> […]The total count of *possible* 150-link chains, where each link is chosen separately from 20 amino acids, is 20^{150}. In other words, *many*. 20^{150} roughly equals 10^{195}, and there are only 10^{80} atoms in the universe.
>
> What proportion of these many polypeptides are useful proteins? Douglas Axe did a series of experiments to estimate how many 150-long chains are capable of stable folds—of reaching the final step in the protein-creation process (the folding) and of holding their shapes long enough to be useful. (Axe is a distinguished biologist with five-star breeding: he was a graduate student at Caltech, then joined the Centre for Protein Engineering at Cambridge. The biologists whose work Meyer discusses are mainly first-rate Establishment scientists.) He estimated that, of all 150-link amino acid sequences, 1 in 10^{74} will be capable of folding into a stable protein. To say that your chances are 1 in 10^{74} is no different, in practice, from saying that they are zero. It's not surprising that your chances of hitting a stable protein that performs some useful *function*, and might therefore play a part in evolution, are even smaller. Axe puts them at 1 in 10^{77}.
>
> In other words: immense is so big, and tiny is so small, that neo-Darwinian evolution is—*so far*—a dead loss. Try to mutate your way from 150 links of gibberish to a working, useful protein and you are guaranteed to fail. Try it with ten mutations, a thousand, a million—you fail. The odds bury you. It can't be done.

Keep in mind that you need many, many proteins in order to have even a simple living cell. (And that's not even considering the problem of organizing the proteins into a system).

So, if you're a naturalist, then your only resources to explain the origin of life are chance and mutation. As Dr. Gelernter shows, naturalistic explanations won't work to solve even part of the problem. Not even with a long period of time. Not even if you use the entire universe as one big primordial soup, and keep trying sequences for the history of the universe. It just isn't possible to arrive at sequences that have biological function in the time available, using the resources available. The only viable explanation is that there is a computer scientist who wrote the code without using trial and error. Something that ordinary software engineers like myself and Dr. Gelernter do all the time. We know what kind of cause is adequate to explain functioning code.

Knight and Rose Show #66: Choices and Character in James, Part 2

July 12, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 66 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose complete a two-part series studying the book of James in the New Testament. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose study James chapters 3-5, emphasizing taming the tongue and pursuing godly wisdom. They discuss humility, patience, and responsible stewardship, critiquing worldly desires and reckless spending. Encouraging Christians to avoid slander and seek reconciliation, they offer practical guidance for living an authentic faith, blessing others through words and actions in a Christ-centered life.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 66:

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Feminist explains how she chose to drink alcohol before recreational sex

July 13, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Guess where I'm linking today? To a radical feminist web site named Jezebel, to an article written by a radical feminist who writes for the radically leftist Slate.

No, I'm not crazy. Just read it:

> Much of the conversation around alcohol and sex has focused on assault—the line at which intoxication becomes incapacitation, for instance—**but what we fail to mention is how haunted people can be by the sex they actually, technically consented to.**
>
> […]I wonder what my sex life would even look like if alcohol hadn't been there. Alcohol gave me comfort in my own body, and it allowed me to turn my erotic curiosity and hunger for experience into an action plan. I was tired of being the stuttering girl sucking in her stomach after the lights went out. I wanted to be the woman who roamed wild and free.
>
> Alcohol also helped me cut the girlish strings on my heart, an action my college years demanded. Three months into my freshman year, I split a six pack with a dashing sophomore, and we wound up partially clothed on his bed, my bare legs wrapped around his waist, my hands around his neck. I pulled back slightly and asked him the question, the naive question of a girl who does not yet understand her fate: "What does this mean?"
>
> He looked past me, into his studio apartment, and then back into my eyes. "It means that I'm a 19-year-old boy, and we're having fun."

What is interesting is that she didn't see this man's using her for fun after getting her drunk as any disqualification for a serious relationship. On the contrary, she believes that a serious relationship built on self-sacrificial love and commitment that lasts through difficulties can be found in a man who uses her for fun sex:

> I'm not saying I didn't enjoy that night with the dashing sophomore. I'm saying the fun part for me might have been turning our physical intimacy into a sustained attachment.

Amazing. She wasn't looking for men with good educations, good jobs, lots of savings, who were sober and chaste – they would have made her unhappy with their bossy leading, and strict plans about courting and marriage. She thought that she could get to live-long married love by choosing what was free, easy and fun in the moment.

She is 35 now, and still single. I'm sure if you ask her, she would like to be married "some day", but who would say that her past decisions were good preparation for the challenges of marriage? Marriage is about self-sacrificial love, and endurance. To prepare for

marriage, you practice self-denial and self-control. You learn how to accept expectations, obligations and responsibilities. You grow up.

Anyway, back to the article. She *choose the alcohol* herself, and she did it for a very specific reason:

> I wanted to have fun, too. *And alcohol evened the score***.** I cared less about everything when I was drinking: What you thought of me, what I looked like in this dress, whether that taco was warm or cold when I stuffed it in my mouth. I don't want to make it sound like I drank *in order to* have sex. I drank for a million reasons.
>
> […]Booze downshifted my intense body consciousness, and it revved up my bravado. Sex was scary—but alcohol made me feel safe.

She drank in order to have sex. Got it? *She chose to get drunk in order to feel safe about having sex.* Many young women think that recreational sex with hot guys is a pathway to marriage. They drink in order to make progress towards the marriage they want – the marriage to the man who is fun. Not the man who is serious. They don't want the serious man who makes plans for marriage, and expects the woman to sober up, behave responsibly and honor obligations.

Why are millennials acting like children into adulthood?

This reminds me of the Institute for American Values study. Despite their name, it is not a conservative organization

Look at this citation from p. 15:

> A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up.
>
> **A Yale University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up."**

> **A New York University student observed, “[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking.”**
>
> **A Rutgers University student commented, “If you’re drinking a lot it’s easier to hook up with someone… [and] drugs, it’s kind of like a bonding thing… and then if you hook up with them and you don’t want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs.”**
>
> **[…]A University of Chicago junior observed, “One of my best friends… sometimes that’s her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn’t have to feel guilty about [hooking up].”**

I hope that many of the men out there who refuse to hold women accountable for their own desires start to understand that not everything a woman wants is good, and not every plan a woman makes will work. Sometimes, you need to calmly and constructively challenge them about their priorities, plans and actions. It’s for their own good.

A scientist’s path from hard atheism to Christianity

July 14, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lately, when I ask parents and church leaders how a person comes to Christ, the responses I get most often is that people need to be invited into a welcoming community first and foremost. To me, this is a very strange answer. When I think about Jesus working miracles so that people who didn’t believe in him would have reasons to trust him, I don’t see this emphasis on welcoming community.

Along those lines, I found a very interesting faith story at Salvo magazine, written by a prominent paleontologist named Dr. Günter Bechly.

First, let’s see his biography, though:

Günter Bechly, PhD, is a German paleontologist, senior fellow with Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture, and senior research scientist at Biologic Institute in Washington state. He has written about 160 scientific publications, described over 180 new species, and been advisor for 3 BBC nature documentaries.

Here is the captivating introduction to his faith story:

> When atheists hear conversion stories that begin with, “I was a staunch atheist and then . . . ”, they tend to roll their eyes and doubt the claim. However, this is exactly what happened to me. I had been a 150-percent atheist and materialist for almost forty years before I embarked on a spiritual journey that ultimately, after many twists and turns, led me to belief in God and Christianity. I had no life crisis, no epiphany, and no spiritual experiences at all. It was the result of purely rational, scientific, philosophical, and historical arguments that gradually changed my mind as a scientist. Here is my story.
>
> I grew up in a medium-sized town in southwestern Germany, where the Mercedes-Benz factory is located. My parents were both irreligious. My mother was simply not interested in religion, and my father was agnostic. We never talked about religion or God, and we never prayed or visited any church service. My parents pushed to opt me out of religion class in school, which was then still compulsory, resulting in my being ridiculed as the village atheist.
>
> I first saw churches from the inside as a young adult, but it was only as a tourist taking photos.

He had a fabulous career and a dream job in paleontology, but he started looking for answers when he realized the problems with naturalism:

> It all started in my late thirties when I became interested in modern physics. I read popular books by Stephen Hawking, Richard Feynman, Michio Kaku, John Barrow, David Deutsch, Brian Greene, and others. I was fascinated by the weirdness of quantum mechanics and relativity theory, as well as the mind-blowing implications of modern cosmology.

> While I had started from a materialist, clockwork-universe perspective, I soon discovered certain implications of modern physics that did not fit well with such an obsolete, 19th-century worldview. I stumbled upon further problems, such as the questions of causality, the ontology of time and space, the status of mathematics, and the laws of nature. This brought me even deeper into metaphysics with issues like the problem of universals, the one and the many, the persistence of diachronic (personal) identity, free will, and the hard problem of consciousness.
>
> I soon realized that materialism is untenable, and I searched for a new worldview that could explain these problems and make sense of the world we experience.

The first step in Dr. Bechly's journey was investigating evidence for design in the universe, and finding it compelling:

> Around this time, I also came into contact with intelligent design theory, though for totally different reasons. I was the project leader for a large special exhibition on evolution at our museum for Darwin Year 2009, which celebrated the double event of Darwin's 200th birthday and the 150th anniversary of the first publication of his magnum opus On the Origin of Species. In preparing for this exhibit, I read some books by Darwin critics, because we wanted to refute and mock them.
>
> This did not go as intended. I was surprised that the arguments of the ID theorists were nothing like the distorted picture painted by their opponents. The more I studied ID arguments, the more I became a critic of Neo-Darwinism and an ID proponent myself.
>
> I was still into process philosophy when I embraced intelligent design theory, so my support for ID had nothing to do with religion, but only with scientific arguments. I had come to see that Neo-Darwinism simply fails to explain the diversity and complexity of life and that these are better explained by an infusion of information from outside the system. The information does not have to come from a divine, miraculous intervention, but of course that would be compatible with such a view.

So, he accepts design in the universe at this point, but still doesn't accept theism, and even further away from Christianity.

But he's not done exploring:

> So I finally decided to check out the belief system that was the last thing I wanted to be true: Classical theism. I had previously read all the New Atheists' books, but even then, as a non-theist and fan of the authors, I had found them quite shallow and unsatisfying.

He goes on to explain how he explored the arguments for classical theism, and then the specific evidences for Christianity, such as prophecy and the historicity of the resurrection

of Jesus. Eventually, he just went for the worldview that answered the questions raised by the progress of science, that also solved the metaphysical problems he had encountered.

You can read the whole thing, if you're looking for a wonderful testimony filled with lots of apologetics. I wish that this testimony was seen as the "normal" testimony by Christian parents and pastors. Then we would be taking a completely different approach to parenting and church. We would put the emphasis on evidence.

The psychological motivation of those who embrace postmodernism

July 15, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

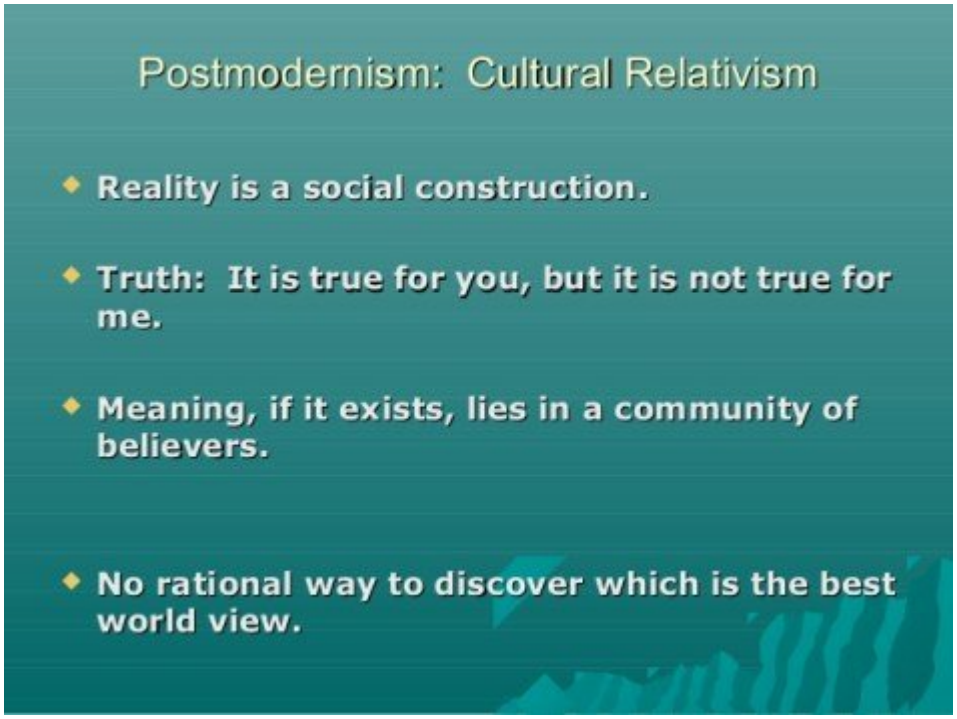

Can a person be postmodern and a Christian? Not for long

Famous analytical philosopher John Searle has written a book "Mind, Language And Society: Philosophy In The Real World", explaining what's factually wrong with postmodernism. In the introduction, he explains what postmodernism is, and what motivates people to accept postmodernism.

He writes:

> […][W]hen we act or think or talk in the following sorts of ways we take a lot for granted: when we hammer a nail, or order a takeout meal from a restaurant, or conduct a lab experiment, or wonder where to go on vacation, we take the following for granted: there exists a real world that is totally independent of human beings and of what they think or say about it, and statements about objects and states of affairs in that world are true or false depending on whether things in the world really are the way we say they are. So, for example, if in pondering my vacation plans I wonder whether Greece is hotter in the summer than Italy, I simply take it for granted that there exists a real world containing places like Greece and Italy and that they have various temperatures. **Furthermore, if I read in a travel book that the average summer temperature in Greece is hotter than in Italy, I know that what the book says will be true if and only if it really is hotter on average in the summer in Greece than in Italy. This is because I take it for granted that such statements are true only if there is something independent of the**

> **statement in virtue of which, or because of which, it is true.**
>
> […]These two Background presuppositions have long histories and various famous names. The first, that there is a real world existing independently of us, I like to call "external realism." "Realism," because it asserts the existence of the real world, and "external" to distinguish it from other sorts of realism-for example, realism about mathematical objects (mathematical realism) or realism about ethical facts (ethical realism). The second view, that a statement is true if things in the world are the way the statement says they are, and false otherwise, is called "the correspondence theory of truth." This theory comes in a lot of different versions, but the basic idea is that statements are true if they correspond to, or describe, or fit, how things really are in the world, and false if they do not.

The "correspondence theory of truth" is the view of truth assumed in books of the Bible whose genre is such that that they were intended by the authors to be taken *literally*, (with allowances for symbolism, figures of speech, metaphors, hyperbole, etc.).

But what about the postmodernists, who seek to deny the objectivity of external reality?

More Searle:

> Thinkers who wish to deny the correspondence theory of truth or the referential theory of thought and language typically find it embarrassing to have to concede external realism. Often they would rather not talk about it at all, or they have some more or less subtle reason for rejecting it. In fact, very few thinkers come right out and say that there is no such thing as a real world existing absolutely, objectively, and totally independently of us. Some do. Some come right out and say that the so-called real world is a "social construct."

What is behind the denial of objective reality, and statements about external reality that are warranted by evidence?

> It is not easy to get a fix on what drives contemporary antirealism, but if we had to pick out a thread that runs through the wide variety of arguments, it would be what is sometimes called "perspectivism." Perspectivism is the idea that our knowledge of reality is never "unmediated," that it is always mediated by a point of view, by a particular set of predilections, or, worse yet by sinister political motives, such as an allegiance to a political group or ideology. And because we can never have unmediated knowledge of the world, then perhaps there is no real world, or perhaps it is useless to even talk about it, or perhaps it is not even interesting.

Searle is going to refute anti-realism in the rest of the book, but here is his guess at what is motivating the anti-realists:

> > **I have to confess, however, that I think there is a much deeper**

> > **reason for the persistent appeal of all forms of antirealism, and this has become obvious in the twentieth century: it satisfies a basic urge to power. It just seems too disgusting, somehow, that we should have to be at the mercy of the "real world." It seems too awful that our representations should have to be answerable to anything but us. This is why people who hold contemporary versions of antirealism and reject the correspondence theory of truth typically sneer at the opposing view.**
>
> […]I don't think it is the argument that is actually driving the impulse to deny realism. I think that as a matter of contemporary cultural and intellectual history, the attacks on realism are not driven by arguments, because the arguments are more or less obviously feeble, for reasons I will explain in detail in a moment. **Rather, as I suggested earlier, the motivation for denying realism is a kind of will to power, and it manifests itself in a number of ways. In universities, most notably in various humanities disciplines, it is assumed that, if there is no real world, then science is on the same footing as the humanities. They both deal with social constructs, not with independent realities. From this assumption, forms of postmodernism, deconstruction, and so on, are easily developed, having been completely turned loose from the tiresome moorings and constraints of having to confront the real world. If the real world is just an invention-a social construct designed to oppress the marginalized elements of society-then let's get rid of the real world and construct the world we want. That, I think, is the real driving psychological force behind antirealism at the end of the twentieth century.**

Now, I'll go one step further than Searle.

People, from the Fall, have had the desire to step into the place of God. It's true that we creatures exist in a universe created and designed by God. But, there is a way to work around the fact that God made the universe and the laws that the universe runs on, including logic, mathematics and natural laws. And that way is to *deny logic, mathematics and natural laws.* Postmodernists simply deny that there is any way to construct rational arguments and support the premises with evidence from the real world. That way, they imagine, they are free to escape a God-designed world, including a God-designed specification for how they ought to live. The postmoderns deny *the reliable methods of knowing about the God-created reality because logic and evidence can be used to point to God's existence, God's character, and God's actions in history.*

And that's why there is this effort to make reality "optional" and perspectival. Everyone can be their own God, and escape any accountability to the real God – the God who is easily discovered through the use of logic and evidence. I believe that this is also behind the rise of atheists, who feign allegiance to logic and science, but then express "skepticism" about the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, objective

morality, the minimal facts concerning the historical Jesus, and other undeniables.

Re-assessing Mark Regnerus' 2012 study on the effects of same-sex parenting

July 16, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In 2012, I blogged about a ground-breaking studying on the effects of same-sex parenting on children. At the time, Big LGBT went ballistic at this study, alleging all sorts of flaws in it. Well, here we are in 2025, and a new statistical analysis of the 2012 study has vindicated it. And that's putting it mildly.

Before we go too far, let's go back to my initial post and get the conclusion. I quoted the Washington Times so:

> Using a new, "gold standard" data set of nearly 3,000 randomly selected American young adults, Dr. Regnerus looked at their lives on 40 measures of social, emotional and relationship outcomes.
>
> He found that, when compared with adults raised in married, mother-father families, adults raised by lesbian mothers had negative outcomes in 24 of 40 categories, while adults raised by gay fathers had negative outcomes in 19 categories.
>
> Findings such as these do not support claims that there are "no differences" between gay parenting and heterosexual, married parents, said Dr. Regnerus, who helped develop the New Family Structures Study at the university.
>
> Instead, "children appear most apt to succeed well as adults when they spend their entire childhood with their married mother and father, and especially when the parents remain married to the present day," he wrote.

In that same year, his study did get early vindication from other scientists, and later by the University of Texas, Austin.

The new report vindicating his earlier study comes from The Public Discourse.

They start by describing the new statistical method of analysis:

> Recently a statistical critique by Cornell sociologists Cristobal Young and Erin Cumberworth examined how small, invisible methodological choices, such as how categories are classified or extreme cases are handled, yielded very different results in published studies. They did this by examining the results of every possible reasonable permutation of such choices—what they called, with a nod to Spiderman, the "multiverse of analyses"—to show where on the range of possible outcomes landed the outcome reported. This procedure shone a bright light on exaggeration or bias due to hidden analytical decisions.

And here is what this method found about the Regnerus study:

> As a kind of stress test, the authors devoted a chapter to reexamining the "now

> infamous" 2012 study by University of Texas (Austin) sociologist Mark Regnerus which "found that the children of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) parents, compared to those raised in 'intact biological families' (IBFs), were worse off in many sociodevelopmental ways"—which they succinctly term the "LGBT effect" (though inaccurately: transgender persons (T) were not studied).
>
> The widespread critique of this highly disputed study resulted in a multiverse of more than two million alternative analyses that were statistically significant (meaning the results could not be the result of chance variation due to random sampling). Initially anticipating that "a comprehensive multiverse analysis would drive [the study's many critics'] point home in a powerfully conclusive way," Young and Cumberworth instead found something unexpected and remarkable: not one of the two million significant alternatives resulted in positive outcomes for LGBT-parented children.
>
> Although often with smaller effects, every analysis confirmed the Regnerus study's central finding that children turned out better with intact biological parents than with LGBT parents. Regnerus's thesis, it turns out, was not only true in the analytic model in which he presented it: it was true in every analytic model possible.

What was most interesting about the Public Discourse report is how the author went back and looked at the early criticism of the study. I really like when conservatives are mean about these things. Many, many people who are raised conservative get worn down in college to centrism or leftism, just because they perceive that there are social costs to being conservative. So, when we find out that we were right, we need to show some swagger a little bit. We need to make sure people watching know the score.

Here's a sample:

> In a pattern now familiar from other culture war issues, the social science journals became flooded with weak, misleading "studies," often written by politically motivated gay authors, purporting to show that children fared just as well with same-sex parents as with other-sex ones. A primary tactic was to ask obviously biased samples of gay parents recruited from gay bookstores, advertisements in gay-themed newspapers, pride events, and similar sources, how their children were doing, then treat this a representative of all gay-parented children. Rarely were the children themselves examined or even consulted.
>
> The "studies" also typically drew samples too small to show any differences between gay-parented and other children even if they existed, then misstated their failure to find differences as a strong conclusion that none existed. One review counted that of the forty-seven studies of gay parenting before 2010, only four used a random sample, and most sample sizes of gay-parented children were fewer than fifty.

> In study after study, absence of evidence was presented as evidence of absence, feeding a growing consensus, despite the lack of real evidence, that there were "no differences" that mattered for the wellbeing of children raised by same-sex parents and those raised by their own mother and father.

The use of "studies" by the secular left was all entertainment. It was basically no better than showing "Will and Grace" episodes, or other propaganda TV shows designed to make disagreement with the LGBT agenda look stupid and uninformed.

I say this because I've now spent 25 years working full-time in the competitive field of information technology. I had so many experiences of white Christian software engineers who were raised in married Christian homes, who attended private Christian schools, and went to church. The minute they hit college, they were walloped with LGBT propaganda. And they caved. It didn't matter that they were natural born Americans, tall, white, handsome, etc. They caved, because they didn't have the evidence to fight back.

In fact, in the workplace, supposed intolerance of LGBT is the first thing that they threw at me. Naturally, I was ready. But they had the impression that there were billions of studies of gay parenting that showed that they were equal to opposite sex biological married parents. Ridiculous. But I am so happy to see the Regnerus study get vindicated like this. This whole theme of "don't judge" that tears people away from the Bible needs to be defeated. And by secular evidence. Not by Bible verses.

If you liked this post, I would really recommend that you share the article from The Public Discourse. Same-sex marriage needs to be overturned. And data is how we do it.

How Michael Medved’s uncle mentored him to become an influential conservative

July 17, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to share a story from the book “Right Turns“, written by Jewish conservative talk show host Michael Medved. In the story, he explains how his uncle got him to accept one of the most important lessons of life.

He tells the story of having a special dinner with his Uncle Moish in chapter 7:

He took special interest in me from the beginning because, he claimed, he saw a chance with me to redeem past mistakes and to do a better job in shaping a finished product than he had done in “raising” his kid brother, my father. I appreciated my uncle’s solicitous attention… Nevertheless, I was only eleven and found it difficult to ignore my other pressing priorities, most notably, my obsession with tacky science fiction movies. I began to pester Uncle Moish to take me to see a heavily advertised shocker called The Brain from Planet Arous.

To my surprise, Moish at least kept the door open to the idea that he would escort me to The Brain from Planet Arous. But first he insisted on taking me out to dinner at a “fancy restaurant” for a very important and very serious conversation.

I dressed up in my one suit for this solemn occasion and remember the discomfort of a too-tight tie and the too-snug shoulders during our steak dinner. Moish allowed me to order absolutely anything I wanted from the menu—in contrast to my unfailingly cost-conscious mother on those rare occasions when I went out to eat with my parents. Looking around that shiny, busy dining room, with all the well-dressed and prosperous adults, I remember feeling conscious of my status as the only kid in the place. After dinner, feeling very important and grown up, I ordered dessert before my uncle leaned his long, serious face conspiratorially across the table.

“Now is the time, Mike, for the talk we need to have. Maybe your parents think you’re too young, or they don’t want you to hear. But I think you’re ready. I think you need it. I think you are going to remember.”

[…]“First of all, let me ask you. Have you ever heard of the Scarlet Plague?”

“I know about the Black Death, Uncle Moish. That was the disease that killed all those people in the Middle Ages.”

‘That’s very good. but no, the Scarlet Plague is even worse. It’s not about the Middle Ages. It’s about right now, and fifty years ago. It kills more people, ruins more lives, than any other disease. And the worst part about it is the people who are most likely to get sick, and who are going to suffer the most, are the brightest minds, the biggest idealists, the natural leaders of this world. They are people just like you.”

I warmed to his compliment, and tried to smile away my fear and discomfort.

“The Scarlet Plague is Communism. It’s Scarlet because they call themselves Reds, and

also that is the color of blood. And there's blood everywhere with the Communists, of the people they kill, that they torture and they cripple. I know because I saw it myself—I saw it starting in Russia before we got out in 1924. But not only Russia, you know. It's everywhere. It's in America. It's in Israel. Especially with intellectuals! If you're not ready for it, you may get infected—so you have to understand."

And he went on to lay out the most gripping, convincing, and altogether persuasive case against the Communists and their lies and their cruelty and they insatiable lust for power and destruction. More than a decade later, when I first read Solzhenitsyn's epochal (and then brand new) Gulag Archipelago, I thought of my Uncle Moish making the same sort of case, with equal passion, in that ritzy restaurant in Philadelphia. l tried to remember all the names and dates and stories he told me, but the underlying message emerged more clearly than any details. I knew something about "The Cold War" and the threat from the Soviet Union, but Moish made the danger feel far more immediate, insidious, almost supernatural.

"And when you tell your father that we had this talk—and you should tell him—he'll just laugh and make fun of me. He'd tell you not to worry. He thinks because the Reds never infected him that there's nothing to worry about. He's too relaxed about everything! Because he doesn't know the way they're going to go after you— I know they will!—and they're going to go after millions and millions of other people in your generation. Your father doesn't take it seriously but I need you to take it seriously. I need you to be prepared. You're In the Boy Scouts, right? 'Be prepared' is the motto! Be ready to fight back against the Scarlet Plague!"

It all seemed impossibly heavy and melodramatic, as if Moish worried that my mostly Republican, middle-class San Diego world had already been infested with active cells of preteen Commie agents. Nevertheless, I promised to heed his lecture and to keep his pleas in mind in the years ahead.

And amazingly enough, I did. Less than six years after the diatribe, I was surrounded in college by honest-to-goodness leftist lunatics, and in trying to deal with the psychos from the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society), I thought repeatedly of my uncle's warnings about the Scarlet Plague… I'd like to believe that I would have rejected extremist temptations even without my uncle's warnings, but as I made progress in my political journey, his unforgettable harangue seemed more and more prescient, even profound.

I read the book about 20 years ago and the story stuck with me.

Michael Medved is a very successful talk show host. He reaches a wide audience, including a lot of religious and secular Jews with his conservative message. And he promotes scholars who work on intelligent design in science, like Dr. Stephen C. Meyer. What a huge difference his Uncle made. He knew the importance of winning a person using ALL the tools that you have available. You can't rely on daycare, public schools, celebrities, athletes and artists to communicate important truths to young people. You must do it. And if you have something important to say, then spend your time and money and effort making sure you are heard.

Life’s fragile towers: why proteins and RNA need a Designer’s hand

July 18, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Non-theists are committed to the idea that the building blocks of life emerged spontaneously from chemicals on the early Earth. Well, Dr. James Tour and a couple of colleagues have written a new article that argues that proteins and RNA both break down faster than they can be formed in a realistic early Earth environment. To get them formed, you would need an intelligent designer.

Before we get to the paper, I should say what a protein is. A protein is a chain of amino acids. If you imagine a chain of kid’s blocks that can chain together, then the amino acids are the blocks, and the chain of blocks is the protein. Once the chain of amino acids is long enough, it can fold up into a shape to do things in the body. BUT the chain only folds into a useful shape if the sequence of blocks is in the right order. It’s similar to how Scrabble letters can form words and sentences. If the amino acids make meaningful words and sentences, then they will fold up, and be useful. Otherwise, they are junk.

RNA is like a messenger that reads recipes out of a book of recipes (DNA) and carries them to the kitchen (cells) where the recipes can be followed to make dishes. The recipe tells the kitchen how to put the blocks (amino acids) together to make a protein chain (a meal). Without RNA, the body wouldn’t know how to build the right proteins to perform biological functions. Again, the RNA itself is another chain, but this time it’s a chain of nucleotides. Nucleotides are also like letters, but more complex than amino acids.

So, the paper is asking the question: could these chains of components arise in the early Earth, without an intelligent designer to arrange them?

The paper was published in the journal BioCosmos, and it’s posted on Sciendo. You can read the full text and even download the PDF.

Anyway, Evolution News reported on the article, and here is what they said:

> Rice University chemist James Tour, along with co-authors M. C. Parker and C.

> Jeynes, recently published an article in BioCosmos titled “Thermodynamic Limitations on the Natural Emergence of Long Chain Molecules: Implications for Origin of Life.” The study demonstrates that proteins and RNA degrade at rates that render their spontaneous formation under natural, undirected conditions highly implausible. To date, no origin-of-life researcher has provided a substantive response to the thermodynamic challenges outlined in the paper.

The early Earth environment is a much more messy place than a university lab, and as a result, chains tend to break down. It would be like trying to chain together blocks while running or swimming.

The authors calculate the decay time of proteins and RNA, to see how quickly they break down. And it turns out that the longer the chain is, the faster it breaks down.

Here’s how Evolution News explains it:

> More specifically, the half-life of a dipeptide — two amino acids linked by a peptide bond, as found in proteins — is approximately 7 years. Therefore, a polypeptide chain of 200 amino acids, which is typical for many functional proteins, has a half-life of only 13 days. The situation is even more severe for RNA. A chain of two nucleotides has a half-life of about 100 days, meaning that an RNA strand of 200 nucleotides would degrade in roughly 12 hours. Both classes of molecules decay far more rapidly than they could plausibly form under natural conditions, making their spontaneous emergence highly unlikely in any undirected origin-of-life scenario.

The key point again is that the longer the chain gets, the faster it breaks down. But how fast is the building up rate?

> In comparison to a protein’s half-life, the rate of polypeptide chain elongation under prebiotic conditions is very long. Yang et al. (2025) identify numerous barriers to sustained polypeptide growth, including the formation of non-peptide linkages and cyclic structures, stringent environmental requirements, and unfavorable thermodynamics. Their analysis establishes that the rate of growth must be far smaller than one added amino acid per chain per day.
>
> Even assuming one addition each day, synthesizing a protein of 200 amino acids would require over six months. However, the growing chain would almost certainly degrade in a much shorter time span. The challenge is even greater for RNA, which has a significantly shorter half-life and encounters additional chemical and structural hurdles during formation.

So the building up rate for proteins and RNA is much slower than the breaking down rate.

I’m not a biochemist, I’m a software engineer. So my job is to try to come up with a good analogy for you so that you remember this well enough to use it in a conversation, later. After all, we must help the evolutionists to come to their senses!

Imagine building a tall tower of toy blocks on a windy beach. You carefully stack each

block (amino acids or nucleotides) to make a protein or RNA chain, but it’s slow work—maybe one block a day. Meanwhile, big waves (the harsh early Earth environment) keep crashing in, knocking your tower down faster than you can build it. For a 200-block tower (a functional protein), it’d take months to stack, but waves destroy it in days (protein half-life: 13 days). For RNA, it’s even worse—your tower collapses in hours (half-life: 12 hours)! Without a skilled builder (an intelligent designer) shielding and guiding the process, the tower will never get built.

Well, I think this is a very interesting piece of work these gentlemen have put together, so we shall see how good of a job the other side does at finding an answer. If you have ever seen Dr. Tour debate, he likes to draw a formula on the chalkboard, and then hand the chalk to his opponent and ask them to solve it. Will they be able to solve this problem? If not, then they should quit being so bold about their naturalistic view of life!

J. P. Moreland on the Pat Flynn podcast to discuss theories of mind

July 19, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

After Rose and I managed invted Michael Egnor and Denyse O'Leary onto the Knight and Rose Show to discuss their new book about mind, we made lists of podcasts and articles to review in order to refresh ourselves on metaphysics and theories of mind. My favorite two podcasts (first, second) were from a three part series that Pat Flynn did with Michael Egnor.

And now there is a new episode of Pat Flynn, but this time with J. P. Moreland. When I was just still doing my undergraduate degree, I read two books by J. P. Moreland: "Scaling the Secular City" and "Christianity and the Nature of Science". I actually taught the first one chapter-by-chapter, in my basement, to other students. I also listened to many of his Veritas Forum and Stand to Reason lectures, including the famous Wonmug lecture. He also has a STEM undergraduate degree (chemistry).

There are 3 parts:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- Part 3

Here is the description from Mind Matters:

> Moreland turns to an older philosophical idea: the concept of a substance. Unlike an aggregate (a pile of wood, for example), a substance is a unified whole. It exists as a single thing. A deeper unity allows it to stay the same even as it changes in minor ways.
>
> A human being, in this view, is a substance. Your soul is the organizing principle that gives you identity and holds everything together — even when your body changes. Moreland explains that the parts of a substance are inseparable; they only exist as part of the whole. For example, a hand that's been cut off is no longer a real hand because it has lost its role and function.
>
> This idea goes all the way back to Aristotle (384–322 BC). He said that substances are more basic than their parts. Your identity doesn't come from the combination of your parts — it's your identity as a substance that gives your parts their meaning and function.

Naturally, I like the scientific evidence from Egnor and O'Leary better than philosophical arguments. But I do think it's worth it for even sensible people to know a little squishy nonsense about metaphysics and mind. There are good arguments against naturalism from philosophy, and we should all know about them. I find that it's always better, in a discussion, to say "I have 10 reasons for what I believe, and you haven't got any reasons

for what you believe”.

By the way, here are the different views of mind that I learned about when I was younger, by listening to all these old on-campus lectures with Christian scholars:

- substance dualism
- thomistic dualism
- idealism
- physicalism

I asked Grok to list out the useful arguments for dualism. So, if you’ve never heard of any of this before, then you can check that out. If I were going to defend dualism using philosophy, I would argue from first-person knowledge of my own thoughts, intentionality, and persistent identity over time. Grok has two more in the list that I don’t use.

Are atheists unbiased about the question of God's existence?

July 20, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Brian Auten has a book review posted up at Apologetics 315.

The book is "If There's A God, Why Are There Atheists?", by theologian R.C. Sproul. R.C. Sproul is one of my favorite theologians. The book in question has a very, very special place in my heart, because I think that it is one of the major reasons why I was able to resist pernicious ideas like religious pluralism and postmodernism for so long. Once you put on the glasses of Romans 1 and see for the first time what man is really doing with respect to God, you can never see things the same again. I'll say more about this at the end, but let's see what Brian wrote first.

The review

So often, you hear atheists complaining about religion is nothing but wish-fulfillment or some sort of crutch for people who are frightened by a variety of things. They think that God is invented to solve several problems. 1) how does the world work?, 2) is there meaning to suffering and evil?, 3) why should I be moral?, and 4) what will happen to me and my loved ones when I die?. On the atheistic view, God is just a crutch that people cling to out of weakness and ignorance. But is this really the case?

Sproul starts the book by investigating three atheists who sought to explain religious belief as a result of psychological factors.

Brian writes:

> Before tackling the psychology of atheism, Sproul spends a chapter on the psychology of theism, from the perspective of Freud's question "If there is no God, why is there religion?"11 What follows is an overview of various psychological explanations of theistic belief: Feuerbach's "religion is a dream of the human mind."12 Marx's belief that religion is "due to the devious imagination of particular segment of mankind."13 And Nietzche's idea that "religion endures because weak men need it."14 The author properly reiterates: "We must be careful to note that the above arguments can never be used as proof for the nonexistence of God. They can be useful for atheists who hear theists state that the only possible explanation for religion is the existence of God."15 That being said, Sproul also reveals what these arguments presume:

> Their arguments already presupposed the nonexistence of God. They were not dealing with the question, Is there a God? They were dealing with the question, Since there is no God, why is there religion?16

> Sproul points out the weaknesses of each of these approaches and says "there are just as many arguments showing that unbelief has its roots in the

> psychological needs of man."

Wow, could that really be true? What are the real reasons why people reject God? Does the Bible have anything to say about what those reasons are?

Brian cites Sproul's contention:

> The New Testament maintains that unbelief is generated not so much by intellectual causes as by moral and psychological ones. The problem is not that there is insufficient evidence to convince rational beings that there is a God, but that rational beings have a natural hostility to the being of God.
>
> […]Man's desire is not that the omnipotent, personal Judeo-Christian God exist, but that He not exist.

In Romans 1:18-23, the apostle Paul explains what is really going on:

> [18]The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,
>
> [19]since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.
>
> [20]For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.
>
> [21]For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.
>
> [22]Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools
>
> [23]and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Do you believe that? I believe that. I have never in my life met an atheist who varied from what Paul is saying here.

On this blog, I have presented many, many arguments for theism in general, and Christian theism in particular:

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason

- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Sproul explains why atheists cannot allow themselves to live according to the evidence that is presented to them:

> The cumulative effect of this knowledge that is clearly seen is to leave men 'without excuse.' Herein lies the basis of the universal guilt of man. No one can claim ignorance of the knowledge of God. No one can cite insufficient evidence for not believing in God. Though people are not persuaded by the evidence, this does not indicate an insufficiency in the evidence, but rather an insufficiency in man.
>
> […]The basic stages of man's reaction to God can be formulated by means of the categories of trauma, repression, and substitution.
>
> […]If God exists, man cannot be a law unto himself. If God exists, man's will-to-power is destined to run head-on into the will of God.

So, it's pretty clear that there are huge implications to the question of God's existence, and that the atheist will be affected by these implications when weighing evidence.

Here's something Thomas Nagel, an excellent atheist philosopher, said:

> "In speaking of the fear of religion, I don't mean to refer to the entirely reasonable hostility toward certain established religions and religious institutions, in virtue of their objectionable moral doctrines, social policies, and political influence. Nor am I referring to the association of many religious beliefs with superstition and the acceptance of evident empirical falsehoods. I am talking about something much deeper–namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.
>
> I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."
>
> ("The Last Word" by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)"

The rest of the book review, and the book, deals with explaining in detail how atheists respond to an all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator/Designer. I encourage you to click through and read the whole book review. You can read the review, and the book, and then investigate for yourself whether the atheists are effected by this bias against moral accountability.

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life by J. P. Moreland

July 21, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found this essay on After All, but it looks like their site is not working well, so I'm just going to steal it and post it here, in case it disappears completely. This is one of my favorite short essays on utilitarianism, and it's a wonder that the thing can't stay up somewhere. Well, it will have a home here now. I'd be surprised to see anyone else be this awesome in a measly 1000 words as Dr. Moreland is below.

—-

Utilitarianism and the Moral Life

What Is Utilitarianism?

Utilitarianism (also called consequentialism) is a moral theory developed and refined in the modern world by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). It can be defined as follows:

> *An action or moral rule is right if and only if it maximizes the amount of nonmoral good produced in the consequences that result from doing that act or following that rule compared with other acts or rules open to the agent.*

By focusing on three features of utilitarianism, we can clarify this definition.

(1) Utilitarian theories of value.

What is a nonmoral good? Utilitarians deny that there are any moral actions or rules that are intrinsically right or wrong. But they do believe in objective values that are nonmoral.

Hedonistic utilitarians say that the only intrinsic good is pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Quantitative hedonists (Bentham) say that the amount of pleasure and pain is the only thing that matters in deciding between two courses of action, I should do the one that produces the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain (measured by factors like the duration and intensity of the pleasure). Qualitative hedonists (Mill) say that pleasure is the only intrinsic good, but the type of pleasure is what is important, not the amount. They would rank pleasures that come from reading, art, and friendship as more valuable than those that come from, say, a full stomach.

Pluralistic utilitarians say there are a number of things that have intrinsic, nonmoral value: pleasure, friendship, health, knowledge, freedom, peace, security, and so forth. For pluralists, it is not just the pleasure that comes from friendship that has value but also friendship itself.

Currently, the most popular utilitarian view of value is subjective preference utilitarianism. This position says it is presumptuous and impossible to specify things that

have intrinsic nonmoral worth. So, they claim, intrinsic value ought to be defined as that which each individual subjectively desires or wants, provided these do not harm others. Unfortunately, this view collapses into moral relativism.

(2) Utilitarians and maximizing utility.

Utilitarians use the term utility to stand for whatever good they are seeking to produce as consequences of a moral action (e.g., “pleasure” for the hedonist, “satisfaction of subjective preference” for others). They see morality in a means-to-ends way. The sole value of a moral action or rule is the utility of its consequences. Moral action should maximize utility. This can be interpreted in different ways, but many utilitarians embrace the following: the correct moral action or rule is the one that produces the greatest amount of utility for the greatest number of people.

(3) Two forms of utilitarianism: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.

According to act utilitarianism, an act is right if and only if no other act available maximizes utility more than the act in question. Here, each new moral situation is evaluated on its own, and moral rules like “don’t steal” or “don’t break promises” are secondary The moral agent must weigh available alternatives and choose the one that produces the best consequences. Rule utilitarianism says that correct moral actions are done in keeping with correct moral rules, However, no moral rule is intrinsically right or wrong. Rather, a correct moral rule is one that would maximize utility if most people followed it as opposed to following an alternative rule. Here, alternative rules (e.g., “don’t lie” vs. “don’t lie unless doing so would enhance friendship”) are compared for their consequences, not specific actions.

What Is Wrong with Utilitarianism?

Several objections show the inadequacy of utilitarianism as a normative moral theory.

First, utilitarianism can be used to justify actions that are clearly immoral. Consider the case of a severely deformed fetus. The child is certain to live a brief, albeit painless life. He or she will make no contribution to society. Society, however, will bear great expense. Doctors and other caregivers will invest time, emotion, and effort in adding mere hours to the baby’s life. The parents will know and love the child only long enough to be heartbroken at the inevitable loss. An abortion negates all those “utility” losses. There is no positive utility lost. Many of the same costs are involved in the care of the terminally ill elderly. They too may suffer no pain, but they may offer no benefit to society. In balancing positives and negatives, and excluding from the equation the objective sacredness of all human life, we arrive at morally repugnant decisions. Here deontological and virtue ethics steer us clear of what is easier to what is right.

Second, in a similar way, utilitarianism denies the existence of supererogatory acts. These are acts of moral heroism that are not morally obligatory but are still praiseworthy.

Examples would be giving 75 percent of your income to the poor or throwing yourself on a bomb to save a stranger. Consider the bomb example. You have two choices — throwing yourself on the bomb or not doing so. Each choice would have consequences and, according to utilitarianism, you are morally obligated to do one or the other depending on which option maximized utility. Thus, there is no room for acts that go beyond the call of morality.

Third, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of human rights and human dignity. If enslaving a minority of people, say by a lottery, would produce the greatest good for the greatest number, or if conceiving children only to harvest their parts would do the same, then these could he justified in a utilitarian scheme. But enslavement and abortion violate individual rights and treat people as a means to an end, not as creatures with intrinsic dignity as human beings. If acts of abortion, active euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and so forth maximize utility, then they are morally obligatory for the utilitarian. But any moral system that makes abortion and suicide morally obligatory is surely flawed.

Finally, utilitarianism has an inadequate view of motives and character. We should praise good motives and seek good character because such motives and character are intrinsically valuable. But utilitarianism implies that the only reason we should praise good motives instead of bad ones, or seek good character instead of bad character, is because such acts would maximize utility. But this has the cart before the horse. We should praise good motives and blame bad ones because they are good or bad, not because such acts of praising and blaming produce good consequences.

In sum, it should be clear that utilitarianism is an inadequate moral theory. Unfortunately, ours is a pragmatic culture and utilitarianism is on the rise. But for those of us who follow Christ, a combination of virtue and deontological ethics is a more adequate view of common sense morality found in natural law and of the moral vision contained in the Bible.

New study: more sexual experience does not make you a better relationship partner

July 23, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Today, most young people think that they are building up their relationship resumes by having casual sex. They think that they are elevating their value proposition to a marriage partner by having casual sex, and all that comes with it – the lack of emotional bond, the lack of commitment, the lack of partnership, the painful break-ups, the decline of trust, etc. But what does the research say?

Here's the report from Institute for Family Studies about the new study.

Methodology:

> Our findings are based on a new study using data from The National Couples and Pornography Study. The data sample was collected independently by Qualtrics from their existing data panel during 2020. It consists of 3,750 individuals in committed couple relationships, including 1,942 married adults, on whom we focused in this study. The demographically diverse sample was recruited from across the U.S. based on quotas for age, race, education level, and geographic region.
>
> We examined the effects of sexual experience on marriage across four married groups:

- > ***Group 1: Inexperienced*** – These are individuals who were sexually inexperienced prior to marriage and who have only had sex with their spouse (19.5% of the sample).
- > ***Group 2: Less Experienced*** – These were individuals with between 2 to 4 lifetime sexual partners before marriage, which is less sexual experience than the average adult in the sample (33.4% of the sample).
- > ***Group 3: More Experienced*** – These are individuals who reported a total number of 5 to 9 lifetime sexual partners. This is the group that captures the average person in the sample (24.4% of the sample).
- > ***Group 4: Highly Experienced*** – The final group includes those who reported 10 or more total lifetime sexual partners. This group made up 22.7% of the sample.

Now let's look at the findings, starting with relationship satisfaction:

> **Sexually inexperienced couples have the highest levels of relationship satisfaction.**

> While over 1 in 5 spouses in the Inexperienced group were likely to report a very high level of relationship satisfaction, only 1 in 7 of those in the More Experienced group were likely to report the same level of satisfaction. This dropped even further for those in the Highly Experienced group, with less than 1 in 10 of spouses reporting that they are very satisfied with their marriage. Thus, sexually inexperienced spouses are more than twice as likely to report that they are highly satisfied with their marriages than are spouses with high levels of sexual experience (*see Figure 1*).

And the findings about marital stability:

> **Having multiple sexual partners before marriage is strongly associated with lower marital stability.**
>
> Similar to other studies, we found that sexual experience prior to marriage is correlated with lower stability in marriage and a greater likelihood of divorce. Specifically, we found that inexperienced men and women who have only had sex with their spouse have a nearly 45% chance of reporting a very high level of relationship stability in their marriage, whereas only 25% of married individuals with 5 to 9 lifetime sex partners, and only 14% of married individuals with 10 or more lifetime sex partners report a similarly high level of relationship stability.

And the findings about sexual satisfaction and emotional connection:

> **Spouses who have only had sex with their current spouse have the highest levels of sexual satisfaction and emotional connection in their marriage.**
>
> Nearly 1 in 5 married men and women who have only had sex with their spouse report that they are “very satisfied” with multiple aspects of their sexual relationship. In comparison, only 1 in 10 married men and women who are “highly sexually experienced” (meaning they had 10 or more sexual partners before marriage) report similar levels of sexual satisfaction (*see Figure 3*). Also, nearly 80% of married individuals who were sexually inexperienced before marriage report the highest level of emotional closeness in their marriage, which is more than 20% higher than individuals who have had multiple sexual partners.

Now let me give my comments about this.

I follow a lot of content that features young people talking about sex in relationships. The dominant view among young people is that they are becoming better relationship partners when they engage in casual sex. They say that they are learning about their own needs, and about what to look in other people so that their needs will be met. They think that more casual sex is like more work experience on a resume, and that this is what marriage-minded people of the opposite sex will be impressed with. They think that their Sexual Revolution approach to sex is going to lead to more stability, more relationship satisfaction, more emotional connection, and more sexual satisfaction.

So the first thing is that the research falsifies this. And you can see how this works by just thinking about the break-ups. Break-ups have the effect of making people look for the exits in relationships. Instead of committing first, and then taking responsibility to build and maintain the relationship, they are looking to get out of it to avoid being hurt. And they are always trying to make sure that their needs are met, and avoiding committing too much to the other person. They neither know nor care what the other person is trying to achieve, and they aren't engaged in helping them to do that.

Also, consider that most young people are not forming their beliefs with knowledge that is likely to make them a better person. Concepts that are familiar to experienced Christians such as forgiveness and self-sacrificial love are nowhere in their worldviews. Biblical Christianity provides a rational basis for loving a spouse well, even when you don't feel like it. Which is very useful in a marriage. They have a pretty self-serving view Christianity, something like "don't judge" and "listen for the voice of God telling you his plan to make you happy".

Instead their views are being formed by radical feminism, popular culture, celebrity worship, materialism, an almost fanatical focus on judging people by appearances, being led by feelings and peer-approval, etc. They expect to have stability and quality in a relationship where skills like forgiveness, self-denial, delayed gratification, planning, achieving goals together, etc. are critical. Imagine wanting to retire early. Is someone on the path to early retirement if they are guided entirely by their feelings? If they do only what feels good "in the moment"? If none of the peers who influence them have achieved this goal? Today, relationships are just a case of the blind leading the blind. It doesn't work.

IKEA fires Christian employee for refusing to use transgender pronouns

July 23, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Things are getting much better in corporate America these days. DEI hiring standards are declining, LGBT support during "pride month" declined. It's much easier for Christian employees to be who they are, without being shamed, coerced and even fired for taking Jesus seriously. But not every company sees it that way. And it's happening in Indiana, of all places.

Here's the story from The Federalist:

> An Indiana IKEA employee was fired after refusing to call his co-worker "they/them" and filed an official complaint due to "unlawful termination," the Indiana Family Institute said in a Wednesday press release.
>
> Steven Ressler, a "devout Christian who believes there are only two genders" and who's worked at IKEA since 2019, was under investigation in December for "misgendering" his co-worker. Soon after, Ressler filed for a "religious accommodation request" to "inform my employer of my religious beliefs and engage in the interactive process in good faith," the press release said.
>
> Three days after filing the religious exemption, Ressler was fired on the basis of "misgendering," the press release said.

The article notes that Ressler has filed a complaint with both the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Indiana Civil Rights Commission.

On the face of it, I would expect his complain to easily succeed. First amendment rights protect you from compelled speech. Now, I expect that if the Biden-Harris regime was still in control, that the government would side with the corporation against the individual. But now there's a new sheriff in town.

The article notes that this isn't the first time that IKEA has trampled the rights of Christian employees:

> IKEA, the Swedish furniture and home goods store, has a page on their website on how to be "an everyday ally" and "mak[e] space" for the "LGBTQIA+ community."
>
> In 2019, a former Catholic IKEA employee in Poland sued IKEA after being fired for not taking down Bible verses rebuking homosexuality he posted on IKEA's article for "International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia."

Now, I'm not sure if you knew about this, but IKEA furniture has actually sold people dangerous furniture. Their products have actually killed people in the past.

Check out this article from Home Furnishings Association:

> IKEA recalled millions of chests and dressers in June 2016 because of tip-over hazards. It repeated the recall announcement in November 2017.
>
> In between, on May 24, 2017, an IKEA dresser toppled over on 2-year-old Jozef Dudek in his Buena Park, Calif., bedroom. The blow injured the child's neck, causing him to suffocate.
>
> Monday, a law firm representing Jozef's parents reported that IKEA agreed to pay $46 million in damages, "believed to be the largest child wrongful death recovery in American history," the firm stated. The settlement "includes non-monetary terms intended to protect other children from IKEA furniture tip-over incidents."
>
> A lawsuit filed in 2018 alleged that IKEA knew of many injuries and deaths associated with tip-overs of the MALM line of dressers prior to Jozef's death but failed to take adequate measures to improve the safety and stability of its products.

I'm trying to be very wise these days about where I buy things. So, I'll remember what IKEA did to Christians when I'm shopping for whatever it is they sell. I'll also remember their past sales of dangerous products when I'm choosing where to shop. I'm sure I can find something more respectful of free speech and religious liberty from a smaller store in my red state.

How Dr. Walter Bradley helped me keep my faith at university and in the workplace

July 24, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My close friends know that Walter Bradley is the Christian scholar I admire the most. I've mentioned Dr. Bradley on the Knight and Rose Show several times, and plugged the book about his life "For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley". Recently, Dr. Bradley passed away. Many prominent Christian scholars have been writing about his life and how he impacted them.

My good friend Kevin, who is an amazing Christian man and a real hero to me, mentioned an article about Dr. Bradley by Dr. William Dembski. Kevin asked me to write something of my own. Work has just been draining all my fuel lately, so this is the best I can do. I am not a perfectionist, and I try to write these posts in under 1-2 hours each day, so there is a lot more to say than what you will find here.

I first encountered Dr. Bradley shortly after I arrived in America by ordering some of his campus lectures from Veritas Forum. These lectures had a huge impact on me, even causing me to have a plan to do a PhD in computer science and go into teaching. I figured out by listening to all of Dr. Bradley's lectures that this is what he was always urging Christian graduate students to do. Well, my plans got derailed because it took me 16 years to get a permanent residency, and another 5 years to get my citizenship. Even if I got the PhD then, I would have much less time for research and teaching.

Still, I thought it might be fun to list out the lectures that I ordered from Veritas Forum that featured Walter Bradley:

- Dr. Walter Bradley – Giants In The Land – Georgia – 1997
- Dr. Walter Bradley – Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer – Georgia – 1997
- Dr. Walter Bradley – Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer – Penn State – 1997
- Dr. Walter Bradley – A Scientist's Quest For Success – Penn State – 1997
- Dr. Walter Bradley – Truth In Religion – Georgia – 1997
- Dr. Walter Bradley – Truth In Religion – Penn State – 1997

If you want to listen to some of these lectures, I uploaded them as MP3s here, from the original audio cassettes, which are unavailable now, and not online anywhere. The key ones are the "Testimony", and the 3 versions of "Giants in the Land". The sound quality is not the best, and there is a pause in the recording from when I flipped the cassettes. If you listen to those, and read "Cyrano de Bergerac" in the original French, then you'll know a lot about me.

The Walter Bradley lectures I remember the most were Testimony, Quest for Success and different versions of Giants in the Land. He talked about how he grew up. His Dad committed suicide when he was young, and he was always poor. He worked a lot of jobs

to make ends meet, and was excellent in his academic studies and sports. He wanted so badly to be a success, but found achieving success very empty and unfulfilling. What was fulfilling for him was his relationship with God, and serving God. It's lessons like this that allowed me to persist all this time, even without the traditional home and church community that most Christians have. I was trained by these two lectures to operate alone in a harsh environment, like a secular university or workplace.

One part that stood out to me was his explanation of how he stopped viewing Christianity as a set of rules, instead of as a relationship. He explained this by telling how his affection for his girlfriend and eventual wife Ann caused him to finally understand that Christianity was not about stopping the things that you most liked doing, and starting the things that you least liked doing. Even though he didn't have a lot of money for dating, he liked to take Ann on dates, because he loved her. And that's how Christians ought to feel about the how the Boss wants them to act. Prioritizing Boss in your conduct and life-planning is easy when you are in a relationship with a Boss who leads from the front. For me, a valuable lesson was that you don't have to care about your reputation if you are excellent in things like education, career, marriage and finances.

He also talked a lot about how to be a Christian in academia, and the importance of professors being a resource for their students. He was very familiar with the law, frequently had to "butt heads" over religious liberty with the Dean. But he also had a lot of amazing adventures by being willing to be identified as a Christian. He explains in "Giants in the Land" how he would feel about identifying as a Christian to his secular colleagues. If only every Christian son and daughter could have heard this lecture before going to college, we would never have lost any of them. Listening to Dr. Bradley talk about the struggles of being a Christian on a secular university campus was just magical. I think a lot of them just feel ashamed of moral rules and truth claims that they were never prepared to defend at the university or in the workplace. They were never taught to see the life of an evidence-wielding secret agent as more fun than getting drunk and having hook-up sex.

Walter Bradley's thoughts about being a Christian in a hostile environment formed my character and prepared me for the secular workplace. Unlike many Christian leaders who started out conservative and then caved to the secular left for prestige, I never expected non-Christians co-workers to like me. Walter Bradley had already warned me not to expect that. I built my castle with scientific evidence, up on the hill of analytical philosophy from William Lane Craig. Later on, I added a moat around the castle, with the economics of Hayek and Sowell.

His lectures made me want to become a Christian professor. But sadly, I never did get to be a Christian professor like Dr. Bradley. I used to cry about how long it was taking for me to make progress on my "become a Christian professor" plan. Maybe some day… I have had offers to teach introductory computer science courses at Christian universities.

I wish more of our Christian leaders were evidence-based like Dr. Bradley – then then we'd avoid the issues plaguing many denominations. Whenever you look at someone like

Russell Moore, David French, Brent Leatherwood, Ed Stetzer, David Platt, etc., you are looking at someone who expected that Christianity would make them feel good and be liked in non-Christian environments. Walter Bradley killed that expectation dead for me. I think that's why people who knew him, like William Dembski and Robert Marks, have been so faithful to the Boss with their research and writing. By the way, I have met Dembski, Marks and Bradley in real life! I've also met Kelly Monroe Kullberg, founder of the Veritas Forum. Those are the type of Christian that I look up to. Who are your role models?

Finally, I have to mention the website "Leadership University", which was my lifeblood during my undergraduate years. Not only did they have all the transcripts of William Lane Craig's debates, but they also had many articles by Walter Bradley, and other scholars I loved: J. P. Moreland, Henry Schaefer, Phillip E. Johnson, etc. There were tons of articles there, including articles on controversial topics, like homosexuality. You could find anything that you were being challenged about. And then I also got a lot out of Access Research Network, which had amazing videos that I would watch dozens and dozens of times until I could remember every word.

Many of the same videos I used to watch over and over are now available free, including one with Dr. Walter Bradley.

- On the Origin of Life – An Interview with Dr. Dean Kenyon
- Focus on the Origin of Life – An Interview with Dr. Charles Thaxton
- Darwinism on Trial – Phillip E. Johnson
- Blind Watchmaker? A Skeptical Look at Darwinism – Phillip E. Johnson
- Can Science Know the Mind of God? – Phillip E. Johnson
- A Critique of Darwinist Icons – Dr. Johnathan Wells
- Doubting Darwin: An Interview with Dr. Scott Minnich
- Intelligent Design: From the Big Bang to Irreducible Complexity – Dr. Michael Behe
- Creation of the Cosmos – Dr. Walter Bradley
- Scientifically Testable Consequences of Fine-tuning Related Arguments & Hypotheses – Dr. Robin Collins
- On the Origin of the Cosmos – An Interview with Dr. Michael Strauss

Anyway, if you haven't checked out the book about Bradley's life, get it. And if you want to know what makes me tick, check out the lectures I mentioned. There are other things that had a huge effect on me, but those lectures are my heart and soul. I would say that my resilience over my time at the university and in the secular workplace comes from people like Walter Bradley.

I am also grateful for Art Battson of ARN, who worked on those videos so that I could buy them and watch to them when I was still young. I never met a single non-Christian in the workplace who could defeat these arguments.

By the way, these campus lectures are still going on today – if you want to donate to a great cause, check out my friend Eric Chabot who organizes campus events at THE Ohio

State University. He blogs here. I support his work. The lectures that he organizes may be bullet-proofing the worldviews of the next Wintery Knights!

Canada’s descent into secular left fascism: terrifying recent news stories

July 25, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Most of my friends from Canada are economically-literate and good at evidential apologetics. So when I make fun of Canada, I’m not making fun of them. However, Canada as a whole is just a trash country. And what I mean by that is that no one there understands economics. They don’t believe in religious liberty. In fact, it’s pretty much a third world country with a few conservatives in it.

Let’s take a look at the data, starting with this recent article from Toronto Sun – which shows what kind of prison sentence you can get for organizing a peaceful protest against medical mandates:

> Crown prosecutor Siobhain Wetscher said Wednesday she is seeking stiff sentences for convoy leaders Tamara Lich and Chris Barber because of the broad community harm caused by the three-week 2022 protest in Ottawa’s downtown core.
>
> […]Lich and Barber were both found guilty of mischief in April for their key roles in the convoy protest, which filled downtown Ottawa for three weeks beginning in late January 2022 to protest vaccine mandates and other pandemic measures.
>
> The Crown is seeking a prison sentence of seven years for Lich and eight years for Barber, who was also found guilty of counselling others to disobey a court order.

The article notes that Barber has no previous criminal record.

Keep in mind that Canada gives extremely light sentences to real criminals, provide they are members of certain groups favored by the secular left.

Here is an example from July 15th, reported in Juno News:

> An Indian foreign national, Akashkumar Narendrakumar Khant, who admitted to trying to buy sex from what he thought was a 15-year-old girl, was given a conditional discharge by an Ontario judge to help him and his wife with their immigration statuses.
>
> In a decision released on June 25, Ontario Court Justice Paul Thomas O'Marra provided Khant with a conditional discharge on the basis that "a conviction would lead to severe collateral consequences, such as jeopardizing his immigration status, delaying his citizenship, and preventing him from sponsoring his wife, which would likely result in their separation."

That's what the entire justice system of Canada is like. 8 years in prison for organizing a protest to disagree with the government, and conditional discharge for trying to have s*x with a 15-year-old girl. And Canadians vote for this, they like this, they approve of this.

Soldiers with guns. In Canadian Cities. In Canada.

Corporations in Canada are allied with the government, because the country is essentially communist. And these corporations are not afraid to enforce the policies of the secular left fascist regime. For example, banks in Canada regularly freeze or close accounts of people who disagree with the government – and not just for peaceful protests, but for disagreeing with the government's policies.

First article from Western Standard talks about what happened with the bank accounts of people protested against the governments medical mandates:

> Lawyers for Evan Blackman are demanding that the RCMP and Toronto Dominion Bank hand over records detailing why his personal bank accounts were frozen following the 2022 Freedom Convoy protest.
>
> The Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms announced Thursday it would argue that the freezing violated Mr. Blackman's constitutional rights.
>
> Blackman was arrested on February 18, 2022, during police action after the federal government invoked the Emergencies Act. Although he was released the same day, he later discovered that three of his bank accounts had been frozen without warning.

You might remember that Toronto Dominion bank was in the news recently for criminal activities. That link goes to the Department of Justice web site, by the way.

Automatic weapons and armored vehicles to break up peaceful protests in Canada

Next article, very recent, from Western Standard. Canadian corporations freeze and terminate bank accounts willy-nilly. All it takes is that you disagree with the government, then corporations stomp all over you:

> Eva Chipiuk, a lawyer known for her involvement in the Freedom Convoy and vocal criticism of Canadian institutions, has been blindsided after the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) terminated its banking relationship with her, citing risk-related concerns.
>
> According to an official letter the banking institution sent to Chipiuk, her "recent activity was outside of RBC's client risk appetite," and it would "no longer be in a position to continue serving her."

So what do we learn from this? Well, we learn that Americans should never, ever set foot in a secular left fascist bleephole like Canada. Most Canadians don't believe in basic freedoms, like freedom of speech, freedom of association, and peaceful protest. If you try to exercise those rights in Canada, then it's very likely that you will be arrested and imprisoned. Unless you belong to one of the government's favored groups, e.g. – child abusers. There are many safer countries to visit, countries that respect human rights. Go spend your money there. You wouldn't vacation in North Korea, so don't vacation in Canada. They're the same thing.

William Lane Craig and James White debate Calvinism vs Molinism

July 26, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In a recent episode of the Unbelievable show, Calvinist pastor / theologian James White discussed middle knowledge (a.k.a. Molinism) with philosopher / theologian William Lane Craig. In this post, you'll find a link to the audio, the YouTube video, and my comments on the debate. My comments were quoted in an episode of William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith podcast.

Here is a link to the details from Unbelievable: (with MP3 download link)

> Calvinism and Molinism are two very different ways of understanding God's sovereignty. But which one best addresses the problem of evil?
>
> James White argues that Calvinism – God foreordaining all human behaviour both good and evil – is the more Biblical and coherent view. William (Bill) Lane Craig argues that Molinism – a view which reconciles human freedom and divine sovereignty – is Biblically consistent without making God the author of evil.

And the video:

Summary:

JB: Why is there evil?

JW: Natural and moral evil are the results of God's divine decree to create the world.

WLC: God has knowledge of what individual humans would do in different circumstances prior to his divine decree to create the world. God's decree takes into account the free decisions of people in different situations. With regard to natural evil, Calvinists and Molinists do not differ much – they are permitted to achieve a greater good. But for moral evil, there is a difference. Moral evil is the result of free decisions by individual humans. They are not God's will. God permits people to perform evil actions, because those free actions will lead to him achieving his ultimate purposes. God does not override human free will. He achieves his ultimate purposes through the actions of his free creatures. On the Calvinist view, God moves the will of creatures to do evil. God is the cause of their evil acts.

JB: God sees all of the possible worlds and instantiates a world where he is able to achieve his ultimate purposes while respecting the free decisions of his creatures.

WLC: God does not see what humans WILL do, and decree based on that. He sees what they WOULD do in different circumstances, and articulates a world where the free decisions they make in the circumstances he decrees lead to his ultimate purposes being fulfilled.

JB: And this view achieves God's sovereignty (God gets the result he wants) with human freedom (God is not responsible for moral evil)

JB: James, isn't it better for God to get what he wants while respecting free will, rather than micromanaging every thought and action of the people?

JW: There's micromanaging on both sides. On Molinism, God micromanages the circumstances. On Calvinism, God micromanages everything. But how could God have that knowledge of what people would do, prior to actually creating those people? The Bible teaches Calvinism, and so we should go with that. Calvinists are concerned when Craig says that God does not determine the truth value of these subjunctive conditionals (i.e. – what free individuals would do in different circumstances) The individuals determine what they will do in different circumstances. And Calvinists would prefer that God determine (i.e. – exhaustive determinism) what individuals do in different circumstances. WLC, would you agree that the knowledge of these subjunctive conditionals are the essence of what middle knowledge is? (WK note: micromanaging circumstances doesn't violate free will, micromanaging everything does violate free will)

WLC: No, but it is an essential aspect of it. According to Molinism, God does not determine what free individuals would do in different situations in which they find themselves. The Calvinist view is that in any situation, God actually moves the will of the creature, so God is the author of moral evil. On the Molinist view, creatures are responsible for moral evil, not God.

JW: So you're saying that these subjunctive conditionals are not under God's control. How can they be under the control of the creatures, since prior to God's creative decree, the creatures do not exist yet? Where do these truth values come from.

WLC: This objection to Molinism is called the "grounding objection". The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom are true without having to be grounded by the created individuals. This objection presupposes a view of truth called "truth-maker" theory. This theory says that in addition to propositions that are true, there are things that make propositions true. There are many counterexamples to this view. For example, if you deny the existence of something that does not exist, then there is no truth maker that makes that claim true. (WK note: E.g. – a unicorn does not exist) Another example is "If WLC were rich, WLC would buy a Mercedes" but there is no truth-maker situation that makes that true, except maybe if he were rich. (WK note: I think that the created individual WLC would be the truth-maker in that case?)

JW: The decisions that I make are caused by God's decree of what gifts I have or don't have. He has freedom to decree those gifts, and then that has an effect of what I am free to do. E.g. – I am not 6'11" so I am not free to be a center in the NBA. So on the Molinist view, what is the basis for these subjunctive counterfactuals that limit what God can do?

WLC: The grounding objection presupposes the truth-maker theory, and a particular strain of that theory called truth-maker maximalism, and counterfactuals of creaturely of creaturely freedom would be prime candidates to be exceptions to the truth-maker theory.

WLC: Regarding the point about how people don't exist in a vacuum but have a whole history, background, characteristics, etc. to shape their decisions. That's right. But the

counterfactuals of creaturely freedom factor all that in. The key point that divides us is that God doesn't determine what creatures decide, he decides the circumstances. And so the creature is responsible for moral evil, not God. And so God doesn't cause people to commit moral evils, then punish them for it.

WLC: We should guide our views based on what is in the Bible. But even Calvinist theologians affirm things about God that are not taught explicitly in the Bible, such as God's spacelessness and timelessness. And Molinism makes the best sense of divine sovereignty and human freedom. On the Calvinist view, God determines how anyone would act in any situation God might place him in, so God is responsible for the moral evil committed by his creatures.

JW: (repeats) If God is limited in what he can do by counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, then we have to know where these counterfactuals come from. (WK note: the counterfactuals of creaturely freedom come from… creaturely freedom.)

JW: Genesis 50:20 says that God used the moral evil committed by some creatures to achieve the good purposes he intended. (WK note: that's exactly what the Molinist view is, God permits moral evil by his creatures, as long as it achieves his ultimate good purposes)

JW: Molinism is unknown in the church for 1500 years. (WK note: Molinism is in Acts 17:24-27, and also, Calvin and Luther were unknown in the church for 1500 years)

JB: Is Genesis 50:20 a good example of Calvinism?

WLC: (very excited) NO!!!!!! It's a great example of Molinism!!!! The text says that God didn't move the bad actors to perform sinful actions – that would make God the author of evil. But God knew that if they were in this situation, they would behave in these evil ways, but ultimately it would lead to good results that God wanted. There is a chain of people partially articulating the middle knowledge view prior to Molina.

JW: You shouldn't believe Molinism, because it comes from Jesuits. (WK Note: this is the genetic fallacy)

JW: The Bible has examples where God "hardens hearts", e.g. Pharaoh.

WLC: It's not that the Bible authors had Molinism in mind. It's that this theory is consistent with what the Bible teaches.

JW: Ephesians 1 teaches that God unilaterally determines who the elect are. Calvinism emerges from the text. But in Genesis 50:20, Molinism doesn't emerge from it.

WLC: We're both trying to make sense of the data of Scripture. Scripture doesn't teach the universal divine determinism of every human act, especially evil acts. The Bible says thate God is not evil, and cannot even be tempted with evil, but on the Calvinist view, God is causing the evil actions of his creatures, and then he punishes them for it. If it's evil to cause someone to do evil, it makes God himself evil.

JW: In Isaiah 10, God uses the Assyrians to punish Israel, then he punishes the Assyrians for the haughty attitude of their heart.

WLC: The Molinist view of Ephesians 1 is that part of God's good pleasure is to respect

human freedom, and not to unilaterally divinely determine them to sin. Regarding Isaiah 10, you're asking how God can punish the Assyrians for something he causes them to do? No, God knows that the Assyrians are going to do this moral evil and he uses that for his purposes, and he is free to punish their immoral act, because they did it of their own free will.

JW: But if you need Molinism to understand these texts, then what did the authors intend for people to think before Molinism.

WLC: People understand from Genesis 50:20 that people do evil things, but God gets a good outcome out of it.

JW: As a Calvinist, I do not believe that God respects human freedom.

JW: I don't think that individuals have control of the circumstances in which they are born or where they live that limits God's sovereignty. (WK note: he doesn't understand Molinism or Acts 17:24-27. Individuals control their own decisions. But God controls the circumstances – i.e. – everything else). There is no essence of James White that determines where I am born, my physical characteristics, my siblings, etc. God decrees everything about who I am.

WLC: "That's because you're a determinist, James, and I'm not"

JW: "Yes. Yes. OK."

WLC: There are number of possible worlds where James White could exist. Different country, different education, different language, different family. God decides the circumstances for James White. James White makes the decisions. God doesn't cause James White's moral evil. James White does. The counterfactuals of creaturely freedom must exist prior to the divine decree in order for humans to be responsible for their evil actions.

JW: You're using philosophy. But your view should come from the Bible. (WK note: look at Acts 17:24-27)

WLC: Universal divine determinism isn't taught in the Bible.

JW: Yes, in Ephesians 1.

WLC: The Molinist affirms Ephesians 1.

JW: It doesn't mention respecting free will there, it's teaching universal divine determinism.

WLC: The Bible teaches that God does have knowledge of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, e.g. 2 Cor 2:8. So the question is whether God has this knowledge logically prior the decree (Molinism requires this), or is it logically after. If it is logically after, then it makes God the cause of human moral evil.

JW: The verses raised by Craig can be subsumed under God's natural knowledge and free knowledge.

JW: Some Molinists believe that the only people who are lost in this world are people who cannot freely respond to God's saving initiative in any circumstances (WK note: this is

called trans-world damnation (TD), and I hold this view). Does anyone in the Bible know about this idea? That changes God's expression from universal divine determinism to accepting human free will and human responsibility for sin (which Calvinism denies).

WLC: Yes, there are two different views. The one view takes human free will, and human responsibility for sin, seriously. The other view makes God the cause of human sin, and therefore makes God evil for being the author of evil.

JW: On Molinism, God knew that if he actualized this world, then he knew the evil that would result, but he didn't do it for some purpose, like revealing his own character?

WLC: No, he didn't bring the evil into the world. He actualized a set of circumstances, and a set of free creatures. And he knew that in those circumstances, he knew that the creatures would choose to do evil. His absolute will is for all his creatures to always do the right thing. But he knows that often they will do evil. He permits that to happen, but in the end he achieves the good purposes. E.g. – achieving the redemption of mankind through Jesus through the evil decisions of the rulers at that time.

WLC: I love the Westminster Confession. But without middle knowledge, that Confession is incoherent. Middle knowledge explains how things work, so that the Westminster Confession's affirmations are logically coherent.

JW: What you're saying is that God respects human free will and human responsibility.

WLC: Molinism is extremely fruitful theologically. I have applied to the problem of exclusivity of salvation, to the perseverance of the saints, to the inspiration of Scripture… but the focus of the discussion today is on moral evil. Who is the cause of human evil?

JW: Only universal divine determinism and the denial of human free will and human responsibility are consistent with Scripture.

WLC: Scripture alone is my authority, not church tradition. But Reformed theology is permeated with concepts that are not described in Scripture, but are consistent with Scripture, e.g. – timelessness, spacelessness, simplicity.

JW: I disagree, ALL the concepts in Calvinism emerge directly from the text. Isaiah 40-48 clearly teaches divine necessity, that God exists necessarily, in every possible world. (WK note: Calvinist thought emerges 1500 years after the Bible was written)

JW: Middle knowledge is a Catholic dogma, which is why even the Catholics rejected it.

WLC: (holds up 2 volumes of a 4 volume, 2144 page set of books on Reformed theology) Anyone who thinks that Reformed Dogmatics are simply read out of Scripture "doesn't know the history of Reformed theology". These volumes are permeated with theological constructs, philosophical models, philosophical principles. The necessity of God's existence, timelessness, spacelessness, etc. are all affirmed by Reformed theologians, and were inherited from medieval scholastics (Catholics).

JW: The central claim of middle knowledge, that counterfactuals of creaturely freedom are known by God, are not in the Bible. (WK note: Craig gave an example of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom in the Bible. There are lots of them.)

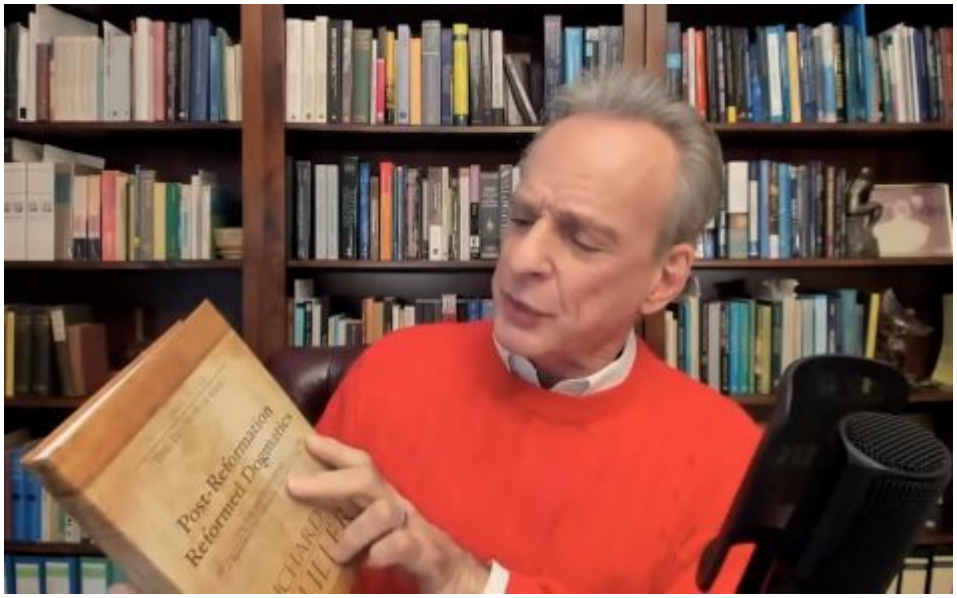

Four volume 2144-page book set on Reformed dogmatics

My thoughts:

I think that it was a good debate. Well worth watching. I don't promise that my summary is 100% accurate. Please leave room for a little snark, and watch the debate yourself. I like to take the spin off of people's words, when I feel that they are trying to weasel out of the conclusions of their own views. It's 2 AM on Monday morning now, and I don't want to proof-read. Please point out errors in the comments.

If I could boil down the mistake that James White makes to one sentence, it would be to say that he comes to the text with a *philosophical* presupposition (determinism), and this causes him to misinterpret the plain meaning of the text as a whole. And this misinterpretation isn't about peripheral teachings of the Bible. His embrace of God as the cause of moral evil means that he denies the goodness of God – a basic Christian doctrine. (This is compounded by his embrace of double-predestination, although that was not the topic of the debate). Christians shouldn't let a philosophy – determinism – override the plain meaning of Scripture. Determinism is *man's philosophy* – it's a Greek philosophy that existed centuries before Christ.

White also was clearly unfamiliar with the philosophy of religion of his own Reformed tradition, and especially with the history of the development of Reformed theology. Craig was able to correct him, by showing him the books on Reformed Dogmatics and explain the historical antecedents of Reformed thought.

James White is not a "hyper-Calvinist". He is a normal Calvinist. Calvinism teaches universal divine determinism. Calvinism teaches that where each individual goes after the judgment is decided unilaterally by God. Calvinism teaches that human moral evil is caused by God. Calvinism teaches that God punishes people for this moral evil. Calvinism teaches *intentional* double-predestination.

I wrote about the problems with Calvinism, citing Calvinist D.A. Carson and William Lane Craig, in a previous post. Determinism denies free will, and therefore undermines all meaning in life. That's not consistent with the Bible's clear teaching that God issues commands to his creatures, because he expects (free will) obedience. That is how we

develop our relationship with God after becoming Christians (sanctification), and those relationships have ultimate significance.

Note: I link to James White's work on this blog. He does a great job of fighting cultural and political enemies. I really appreciate his conservative perspective on issues like abortion, and his sensitivity to the totalitarian impulses of the secular left. His work on KJV-only and and debating Catholics is excellent. I don't always agree with Craig. I recently posted disagreement with Craig on his latest work on the historical Adam and evolution. I have other minor disagreements with him as well, in substance and method. The only theology books in my house are by R. C. Sproul, Wayne Grudem, D.A. Carson, Millard Erickson, John MacArthur, etc. – all Calvinists.

If you missed Craig's debate with Paul Helm, which is mentioned in the debate, I blogged about that previously, as well.

Can a person believe in both God and Darwinian evolution?

July 27, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The term for a person who believes in fully naturalistic evolution but who also believes in God is "theistic evolutionist".

Terrell Clemmons takes a look at one organization of theistic evolutionists "Biologos", and makes a distinction between their public statements and the real implications of their public statements.

Here is the PR / spin definition of theistic evolution:

> Evolutionary creation is "the view that all life on earth came about by the God-ordained process of evolution with common descent. Evolution is a means by which God providentially achieves his purposes in creation." This view, also called *theistic evolution*, has been around since the late nineteenth century, and BioLogos promotes it today in a variety of religious and educational settings.

And here is the no-spin definition of theistic evolution:

> As Dr. Stephen Meyer explains it, the central issue dividing Bio-Logos writers from intelligent design theorists is BioLogos's commitment to methodological naturalism (MN), which is not a scientific theory or empirical finding, but an arbitrary rule excluding non-material causation from the outset. "Unfortunately," Meyer writes,
>
> methodological naturalism is a demanding doctrine. The rule does not say "try finding a materialistic cause but keep intelligent design in the mix of live possibilities, in light of what the evidence might show." Rather, MN tells you that you simply must posit a material or physical cause, whatever the evidence.
>
> **What this means, according to BioLogos's own epistemology, is that God is objectively undiscoverable and unknowable—a tenet that sits squarely at odds with Christian orthodoxy, which has for centuries held that God is clearly discernible in the natural world (e.g., Romans 1:20).** Obviously, this is theologically problematic, but Meyer also points out that theistic evolution faces problems from a scientific standpoint as well, as the technical literature among evolutionary biologists is moving *away* from the Darwinian mechanism.

Whenever I talk to theistic evolutionists, I try to stop them from talking about the Bible or their faith, because that's not what is interesting to me. I don't really care about their history as a religious person, or where they go to church, or who their pastor is. When I talk about origins and evolution, I only care about the science. What the ordinary process of scientific inquiry tells us about nature? Does nature have the capacity to create all of

the varieties of life without any intelligent agency playing a role? Or, are there parts of nature that are similar to computer programs, blog posts, and term papers, where the best explanation of the effect is an intelligent agent choosing how to arrange the parts to achieve functionality?

I don't accept molecules-to-man unguided evolution. This is not because I start with faith and let faith override the findings of science. It's because I think that if you look at specific areas of natural history, there is clear evidence of intelligent agency, such as in the origin of life, or the Cambrian explosion. These effects in nature are well-studied and well-understood, and they look much more like the code that a computer scientist (like me) writes than the simplistic "order" created by wind erosion or crystalline patterns or anything the blind forces of nature could produce. Blind forces are observed to make small changes – short or long finch beaks, fruit flies with 4 wings and no balancers, bacterial resistances.

What's also interesting is how often theistic evolutionists drop the theism but keep the evolution.

Consider this article about Stephen Matheson from Evolution News:

> Biologist Stephen Matheson is a longtime critic of the theory of intelligent design. His extensive attacks on Stephen Meyer's *Signature in the Cell*, for one, ranged from the substantive to the trivial and personal. The tone was frequently…abrasive, and we responded at the time. With Arthur Hunt, Dr. Matheson has debated Dr. Meyer in a forum at Biola University. Formerly a professor at an Evangelical Christian school, Calvin College, Matheson is still listed as a Blog Author at the theistic evolutionary website *BioLogos*, where it notes that he enjoys "explor[ing] issues of science and Christian faith."
>
> Well, his theistic evolutionary explorations have now terminated. As he reports on his personal blog page, where he took a hiatus of more than five years along with a break from his teaching, he is "happily" no longer a Christian.

OK. Now that's just one case, but what about Howard Van Till, also of Calvin College?

Salvo magazine takes a look at what he wrote in a recent book:

> In what follows I shall use the term "naturalism," when unqualified, to represent neither more nor less than *the rejection of supernaturalism.* Stated positively, naturalism is committed to the belief that all events that occur within this Universe are consistent with and adequately explained by the system of natural causes. This commitment necessarily entails the additional belief that the system of natural causes is fully adequate to account for all events that transpire. Focusing on the issue of the Universe's formational economy, we can say that naturalism—as here defined -entails the RFEP.

He now gives presentations for atheist groups entitled "From Calvinism to Freethought". Freethought is a euphemism for atheism.

Now, for the big three Western monotheistic religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. To deny supernaturalism IS to deny the robust theism present in the world's big three monotheistic religions. Van Till denies theism as commonly understood now. And again, this isn't because of the science. His heavy handed naturalistic assumption squashed out any kind of serious inquiry into areas like the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine tuning, the origin or life, the Cambrian explosion, biological convergence, so-called junk DNA, deleterious mutations, and so on. Places where you can see that naturalistic forces cannot do the creating that Van Till has faith that they can.

I don't accept any kind of macro-evolution – evolution of body plans or organ types. My problem with evolution is not Bible-based, it's science-based. If the science shows the need for intelligent causes, and I think it does, then I think that the naturalists need to adjust their assumptions and pre-suppositions to match the evidence. On the Internet have ball sorts of programs written in different computer languages. They are evidence for programmers. In nature, we have DNA and proteins and sudden origin of body plans, that's evidence for a programmer, too.

On the Beatitudes, John MacArthur is wrong, Sinclair Ferguson is right

July 28, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I stayed home from church on Sunday and decided to watch sermons (and birds, through the window) while doing weights and then cardio on my recumbent bike. I wanted to hear a good sermon on the Beatitudes, so I started with John MacArthur and moved on to Sinclair Ferguson. I thought it might be worth making a post about it, because it's an important point.

So, to start with, I will say that I don't have an ordinary living room like most hoomans, with, like, "furniture". I have a chin-up / dip station, a flat/incline/decline bench, two adjustable dumbbells, a folding floor mat, a recumbent bike, and a TV hooked up to a laptop for streaming. My living room is just for working out, and watching streaming videos. Usually, it's about men's issues like Chisha Zed and Emily King, wargame gameplay like Example of Play and Taff in Exile, or sermons.

So, I started out with coffee and a fiber smoothie (e-mail me for recipe), and then this sermon from John MacArthur:

MacArthur says:

> The third reason we ought to study the Sermon on the Mount is that it's the only path to true happiness for Christians. If you want to be truly happy and filled with the Spirit, you don't chase mystical experiences, pursue elusive dreams, or hop from meeting to meeting trying to catch something in the air. Instead, to know happiness, blessedness, bliss, joy, and gladness, you simply study the Sermon on the Mount and put it into practice. Additionally, I believe we should study it because it's the most powerful tool for evangelism. Living out the Sermon on the Mount will astonish the world—it's the greatest evangelistic tool there is, as this kind of life transforms and draws others to Christ.

I disagree with John MacArthur here. Christians should use the method of evangelism that Jesus used, which is to present evidence to non-believers.

Here is a great article by Greg Koukl of Stand to Reason, and he looks through the Bible to see how people in the Bible evangelize.

Koukl starts with the actions of Moses in the Exodus:

> Note the pattern: a powerful *evidence* (miracles, in this case), giving the people *knowledge* of God, in Whom they then placed their *faith*. Knowledge—some level of certainty—went before belief in each of these cases.

Then Koukl goes on to the New Testament:

> Jesus gives us the same lesson we find in Exodus. He proves something that can't

> be seen—the forgiveness of sins—with evidence that can be seen—a dramatic healing. Jesus heals "in order that you may know." Once again, the concrete *evidence* allows the doubters to *know* the truth so they can then *trust* in the forgiveness Christ could give.

It's easier for a pastor to say to people in the pews that they don't have to study any evidence to evangelize. Then there's no work for them to do, and people like to hear that message. People love testimonies and changed lives, because it's easy.

One problem with this approach is that people in all different religions have testimonies and changed lives. Mormons have that. Even atheists can tell you that atheism improved their happiness. So that's not going to work. But the bigger problem is what Greg said: the testimony / changed life approach is not Biblical. The use of evidence is Biblical. And we have loads of evidence available.

Here is a list of evidences that a mature Christian should be able to say SOMETHING about:

- origin of the universe
- fine-tuning of the initial conditions for permitting life
- origin of life (building blocks AND information)
- molecular machines
- sudden infusions of information in the fossil record
- habitability
- scientific evidence that the mind is not the brain
- the moral argument
- a good argument from prophecy, like Psalm 22
- a case for the reliability of the gospels
- a case for the resurrection based on evidence accepted by a wide range of Christian and non-Christian scholars
- a case for the archaeological accuracy of the Bible

And so on! There's more, but I want to get to Scottish pastor Sinclair Ferguson.

I feel I should say that my dear departed best friend and wise advisor Murdina would love that I am listening to her beloved Scottish pastors. I even know how to translate Scottish rubbish to real English. "Warrum" means "warm". "Girrul" means "girl". "Worruld" means "world". "Churruch" is "church". Etc. Etc.

Anyway, here's Sinclair Ferguson's sermon:

At 8:28, Sinclair Ferguson says:

> The Beatitudes describe a countercultural transformation that reflects the beauty of Jesus in our lives, but this transformation often leads to conflict and persecution in a world that opposes such values. Jesus emphasizes this in a postscript to the Beatitudes, warning that this new way of life will bring believers into opposition with the world, resulting in suffering.

> This reality deeply impacted the Apostle Peter, who initially struggled with the idea of a Christian life marked by persecution, longing for a Christ without a cross. Yet, by the end of his life, in his first letter, Peter encourages Christians facing trials, saying, “Do not be surprised by the fiery trial that is coming upon you, as though something strange were happening to you.” He came to understand that belonging to Jesus Christ and His kingdom naturally invites the same opposition Jesus faced, marking a defining characteristic of the citizens of God’s kingdom.

This is a much more accurate and realistic statement of what will happen to you if you start taking discipleship to the Lord Jesus seriously.

An authentic Christian life is not going to be marked by “happiness” as the world understands it. On the contrary, Christians are not only vulnerable to ordinary suffering, but they also will face social disapproval and even persecution for following Jesus. That’s the normal Christian life. This should NOT be surprising for *followers of Jesus.* We should expect to experience the same loss and persecution that Jesus experienced.

In fact, *staying faithful through suffering or privation* is more likely to impress non-Christians.

The only way that the normal Christian life is ever going to make you happy is if you rejoice at experiencing the same sort of sadness that your Boss did. Like if your reputation at work suffers because you disagree with same-sex marriage. The only happy thing about it is that you can look back on your loss with Boss, and give him a fist-bump. You were faithful, and it cost you something to do it.

The authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke knew eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus

July 29, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Were the authors of the gospels of Mark and Luke connected to eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus? Well, it turns out that there are good reasons to think that Mark was linked to the eyewitness Peter, and Luke was linked to Paul, who had a post-mortem appearance of Jesus in 1 Cor 15:8, and who met with Peter and James in Galatians 1 and again in Galatians 2.

There is a list of evidence for Peter's influence on Mark on the Cold Case Christianity blog.

Here's my favorite one from the list:

> **Peter's Embarrassments Have Been Omitted**
>
> There are many details in the Gospel of Mark consistent with Peter's special input and influence,including omissions related to events involving Peter. How can Mark be a memoir of Peter if, in fact, the book contains so many omissions of events involving Peter specifically? It's important to evaluate the entire catalogue of omissions pertaining to Peter to understand the answer here. The vast majority of these omissions involve incidents in which Peter did or said something rash or embarrassing. It's not surprising these details were omitted by the author who wanted to protect Peter's standing in the Christian community. Mark was quite discreet in his retelling of the narrative (other Gospel writers who were present at the time do, however, provide details of Peters 'indiscretions' in their own accounts. See *Cold-Case Christianity* for a more detailed explanation).

It makes me laugh to imagine Peter looking over Mark's shoulder and saying "no, don't put that in it" and "no, don't tell them I did that". Funny! But also very good evidence. The rest of Wallace's list makes it even more clear.

And what about the gospel of Luke? Well, did you know that the author of Luke's gospel knew Paul? If you read it carefully, you'll see that Luke switches from describing history from an "I" perspective to describing things from a "we" perspective in the book of Acts (which he also wrote). Who is the "we" he is talking about?

Here's famous Christian scholar William Lane Craig to explain:

> Now who was this author we call Luke? He was clearly not an eyewitness to Jesus's life. But we discover an important fact about him from the book of Acts. Beginning in the sixteenth chapter of Acts, when Paul reaches Troas in modern-day Turkey, the author suddenly starts using the first-person plural: "we set sail from Troas to Samothrace," "we remained in Philippi some days," "as we were going to the place of prayer," *etc.* The most obvious explanation is that the author had joined Paul on his evangelistic tour of the Mediterranean cities. In chapter 21 he accompanies Paul back to Palestine and finally to Jerusalem. What

> this means is that the author of Luke-Acts was in fact in first hand contact with the eyewitnesses of Jesus's life and ministry in Jerusalem.
>
> […]There is no avoiding the conclusion that Luke-Acts was written by a traveling companion of Paul who had the opportunity to interview eyewitnesses to Jesus's life while in Jerusalem. Who were some of these eyewitnesses? Perhaps we can get some clue by subtracting from the Gospel of Luke everything found in the other gospels and seeing what is peculiar to Luke. What you discover is that many of Luke's peculiar narratives are connected to women who followed Jesus: people like Joanna and Susanna, and significantly, Mary, Jesus's mother.
>
> Was the author reliable in getting the facts straight? The book of Acts enables us to answer that question decisively. The book of Acts overlaps significantly with secular history of the ancient world, and the historical accuracy of Acts is indisputable.
>
> This has recently been demonstrated anew by Colin Hemer, a classical scholar who turned to New Testament studies, in his book *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History.* [5] Hemer goes through the book of Acts with a fine-toothed comb, pulling out a wealth of historical knowledge, ranging from what would have been common knowledge down to details which only a local person would know. Again and again Luke's accuracy is demonstrated: from the sailings of the Alexandrian corn fleet to the coastal terrain of the Mediterranean islands to the peculiar titles of local officials, Luke gets it right.

I know a lot of people (like my Dad) read the Bible devotionally, looking for feelings or trying to "get right with God" so they get blessings. But I think it's helpful to look at things from an evidential point of view – how am I going to make a case for this? When you look at things from that perspective, the Bible gets a whole lot more interesting. And you can talk about it with non-Christians when you know about these interesting details.

The seven fatal flaws of moral relativism

July 30, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Moral relativism is the view that moral values and moral duties do not exist in reality, but only exist as opinions in people's minds. When you ask a moral relativist where the belief that stealing is wrong comes from, he may tell you that it is his opinion, or that it is the opinion of most people in his society. But he cannot tell you that stealing is wrong independent of what people think, because morality (on moral relativism) is just personal preference.

So what's wrong with it?

I found this list of the seven flaws of moral relativism at the Salvo magazine web site.

Here's the summary:

1. *Moral relativists can't accuse others of wrongdoing.*
2. *Relativists can't complain about the problem of evil.*
3. *Relativists can't place blame or accept praise.*
4. *Relativists can't make charges of unfairness or injustice.*
5. *Relativists can't improve their morality.*
6. *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.*
7. *Relativists can't promote the obligation of tolerance.*

Here's my favorite flaw of relativism (#6):

> *Relativists can't hold meaningful moral discussions.* What's there to talk about? If morals are entirely relative and all views are equal, then no way of thinking is better than another. No moral position can be judged as adequate or deficient, unreasonable, acceptable, or even barbaric. If ethical disputes make sense only when morals are objective, then relativism can only be consistently lived out in silence. For this reason, it is rare to meet a rational and consistent relativist, as most are quick to impose their own moral rules like "It's wrong to push your own morality on others". This puts relativists in an untenable position – if they speak up about moral issues, they surrender their relativism; if they do not speak up, they surrender their humanity. If the notion of moral discourse makes sense intuitively, then moral relativism is false.

I sometimes get a lot of flack from atheists who complain that I don't let them make any moral statements without asking them first to ground morality on their worldview. And that's because on atheism morality IS NOT rationally grounded, so they can't answer. In an accidental universe, you can only describe people's personal preferences or social customs, that vary by time and place. It's all arbitrary – like having discussions about what food is best or what clothing is best. The answer is always going to be "it depends". It depends on the person who is speaking because it's a subjective claim, not an objective

claim. There is no objective way we ought to behave.

So, practically speaking, everyone has to decide whether right and wrong are real – objectively real. If they are objectively real, that means that there is a right way for human beings to behave, and a wrong way for human beings to behave. It means that things that are really objectively wrong like rape are wrong for all times and all places, regardless of what individuals and societies might think of it. In order to rationally ground that kind of morality, you have to have a foundation for it – a cosmic Designer who decides for all times and places what the conduct of his creatures ought to be. And then our moral duties are duties that are owed to this Designer. It is like playing football or playing a boardgame – the person who invents the game decides the rules. But if there is no designer of the game, then there are no rules.

Without a designer of the universe, the question of how we ought to act is decided by people in different times and different places. It's arbitrary and variable, and therefore it doesn't do the job of prescribing behavior authoritatively. It's very important not to get involved in any serious endeavor with another person or persons if they don't have a sense of right and wrong being absolute and fixed. A belief in objective moral values is a necessary pre-requisite for integrity.

Alexander Vilenkin: “All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning”

July 31, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I’ve decided to explain why physicists believe that there was a creation event in this post. That is to say, I’ve decided to let famous cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin do it.

From Uncommon Descent.

Excerpt:

> Did the cosmos have a beginning? The Big Bang theory seems to suggest it did, but in recent decades, cosmologists have concocted elaborate theories – for example, an eternally inflating universe or a cyclic universe – which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos. Now it appears that the universe really had a beginning after all, even if it wasn’t necessarily the Big Bang.
>
> At a meeting of scientists – titled “State of the Universe” – convened last week at Cambridge University to honor Stephen Hawking’s 70th birthday, cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin of Tufts University in Boston presented evidence that the universe is not eternal after all, leaving scientists at a loss to explain how the cosmos got started without a supernatural creator. The meeting was reported in *New Scientist* magazine (Why physicists can’t avoid a creation event, 11 January 2012).
>
> […]In his presentation, Professor Vilenkin discussed three theories which claim to avoid the need for a beginning of the cosmos.

The three theories are chaotic inflationary model, the oscillating model and quantum gravity model. Regular readers will know that those have all been addressed in William Lane Craig’s peer-reviewed paper that evaluates alternatives to the standard Big Bang cosmology.

But let’s see what Vilenkin said.

More:

> One popular theory is eternal inflation. Most readers will be familiar with the theory of *inflation*, which says that the universe increased in volume by a factor of at least 10^78 in its very early stages (from 10^−36 seconds after the Big Bang to sometime between 10^−33 and 10^−32 seconds), before settling into the slower rate of expansion that we see today. The theory of *eternal inflation* goes further, and holds that the universe is constantly giving birth to smaller “bubble” universes within an ever-expanding multiverse. Each bubble universe undergoes its own initial period of inflation. In some versions of the theory, the bubbles go both backwards and forwards in time, allowing the possibility of an infinite past. Trouble is, the value of one particular cosmic

parameter rules out that possibility:

> But in 2003, a team including Vilenkin and Guth considered what eternal inflation would mean for the Hubble constant, which describes mathematically the expansion of the universe. They found that the equations didn't work (Physical Review Letters, DOI: 10.1103/physrevlett.90.151301). "You can't construct a space-time with this property," says Vilenkin. It turns out that the constant has a lower limit that prevents inflation in both time directions. "It can't possibly be eternal in the past," says Vilenkin. "There must be some kind of boundary."

A second option explored by Vilenkin was that of a cyclic universe, where the universe goes through an infinite series of big bangs and crunches, with no specific beginning. It was even claimed that a cyclic universe could explain the low observed value of the cosmological constant. But as Vilenkin found, there's a problem if you look at the *disorder* in the universe:

> Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists – nothing like the one we see around us.
>
> One way around that is to propose that the universe just gets bigger with every cycle. Then the amount of disorder per volume doesn't increase, so needn't reach the maximum. But Vilenkin found that this scenario falls prey to the same mathematical argument as eternal inflation: if your universe keeps getting bigger, it must have started somewhere.

However, Vilenkin's options were not exhausted yet. There was another possibility: that the universe had sprung from an eternal cosmic egg:

> Vilenkin's final strike is an attack on a third, lesser-known proposal that the cosmos existed eternally in a static state called the cosmic egg. This finally "cracked" to create the big bang, leading to the expanding universe we see today. Late last year Vilenkin and graduate student Audrey Mithani showed that the egg could not have existed forever after all, as quantum instabilities would force it to collapse after a finite amount of time (arxiv.org/abs/1110.4096). If it cracked instead, leading to the big bang, then this must have happened before it collapsed – and therefore also after a finite amount of time.
>
> "This is also not a good candidate for a beginningless universe," Vilenkin concludes.

> So at the end of the day, what is Vilenkin's verdict?
>
> > "All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

This is consistent with the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin Theorem, which I blogged about before, and which William Lane Craig leveraged to his advantage in his debate with Peter Millican.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, can be eternal into the past. *No one* denies the expansion of space in our universe, and so we are left with a cosmic beginning. Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

Conclusion

If the universe came into being out of nothing, which seems to be the case from science, then the universe has a cause. Things do not pop into being, uncaused, out of nothing. The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

Now, let's have a discussion about this science in our churches, and see if we can't train Christians to engage with non-Christians about the evidence so that everyone accepts what science tells us about the origin of the universe.

The worst mistake you can make when defending the Christian worldview

August 1, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, this is just an advice post for doing apologetics.

Here are three situations I've run into while doing apologetics in the last month.

First situation. I was talking with a lady who is an atheist. I had a copy of "God's Crime Scene" in my hand, and she asked me about it. I told her that it was a book written by the guy who solved the homicide case that I asked her to watch on Dateline. She remembered – it was the two-hour special on the woman who was killed with a garrotte. She pointed at the book and said "what's in it?" I said, it has 8 pieces of evidence that fit better with a theistic worldview than with an atheistic one, and some of them scientific. Her reply to me was – literally – "which denomination do you want me to join?"

Second situation. I was talking with a friend of mine who teaches in a Catholic school. She was telling that she got the opportunity to talk to her students about God, and found out that some of them were not even theists, and many of them had questions. So she asked them for questions and got a list. The list included many hard cases, like "what about the Bible and slavery" and "why do Christians oppose gay marriage?" and so on.

Third situation. Talking to a grad student about God's existence. I'm laying out my scientific arguments for her, holding up the peer-reviewed papers for each discovery. I get to the Doug Axe paper on protein folding probabilities, and she holds up her hand. One question: "Am I going to Hell?"

So think about those three situations. In each case, the opponent is trying to reject Christianity by jumping way, way ahead to the very end of the process. When you do Christian apologetics, you do not take the bait and jump to the end of the process dealing with nitty gritty details until you have made your case for the core of the Christian worldview using your strongest evidence. Let me explain.

So, your strongest evidence as a Christian are the scientific arguments, along with the moral argument. Those would include (for starters) the following:

1. kalam cosmological argument
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. galactic and stellar habitability
4. origin of life / DNA
5. molecular machines / irreducible complexity
6. the moral argument

The problem I am seeing today is that atheists are rejecting discussions about evidence because they think that all we are interested in is getting them to become Christians. Well, yes. I want you to become a Christian. But I know perfectly well what that entails – it

entails a change of life priorities. Both of the women I spoke to are living with their boyfriends, and the kids in the Catholic school just want to have fun. None of them wants to believe in a God who will require self-denial, self-control, and self-sacrifice. Nobody wants God to be in that leader position in their lives. Christianity is 100% reversed from today's me-first, fun-seeking, thrill-seeking, fear-of-missing-out travel spirit of the age.

So, how to answer all these late-game questions? The answer is simple. You don't answer any late-game questions until the person you are talking with accounts for the widely-accepted data in your list. These are things that have got to be accepted before any discussion about minor issues like one angel vs two angels at the empty tomb can occur. When we discuss all the basic issues where the evidence is the strongest, then we can go on to discuss issues where the evidence is debatable, then finally, in the last bits before the end, we can discuss these other kinds of questions.

How to explain why this process must be followed to the person who asks specific questions about minor issues? Simple. You explain that your goal is *not* to get them to become a Christian right now. That you want to let them believe *anything thing they want.* That's right. They can believe *anything they want to believe.* As long as what they believe is *consistent with the evidence.* And what I am going to do is give them the evidence, and then they can believe whatever they want – so long as it's consistent with the evidence.

So, for example, I'm going to tell them 3 pieces of evidence for a cosmic beginning of the universe: the expanding universe (redshift), the cosmic microwave background radiation, and the light element abundances. That's mainstream science that shows that the universe came into being out of nothing, a finite time in the past. And I will charge them not to believe in any religion that assumes that the universe has always been here. For example, Mormonism is ruled out, they believe in eternally existing matter. See how that works? Hey, Ms. Atheist. You can believe anything you want. *As long as what you believe is consistent with the evidence.*

I think this approach of not letting them rush you to the end at the beginning is important for two reasons. First, we can get our foot in the door to talk about things that are interesting to everyone, in a non-stressed environment. Everyone can talk about evidence comfortably. Second, we show that we hold our beliefs because we are simply letting evidence set boundaries for us on what we are allowed to believe. We can't believe not-Christianity, because not-Christianity is not consistent with the evidence. And you start with the most well-supported evidence, and eliminate worldviews that are falsified by the most well-supported evidence. Atheism actually gets falsified pretty quickly, because of the scientific evidence.

So, that's my advice. Had a friend of mine named William try this out about a week ago. It went down like this:

William to me:

> This guy I know messaged me and bragged for a while about how easy he can dismantle Christianity. He said: "present the gospel to me as you understand it.

> I'll simply ask questions to demonstrate it is not worth your belief."

WK to William:

> First of all, he isn't allowed to just sit there and poke holes in your case, he has to present a positive case for atheism. Second, don't discuss Christianity with him at all until you first discuss the evidence for theism – start with the good scientific evidence.

And William wrote this to his friend:

> The way I'm wired is that I process all competing theories and go with the best one. By doing a comparative analysis of worldviews I find that Christian theology easily explains the most about the world I find myself living in.
>
> I'm pretty sure that a God of some sort exists because of the scientific evidence for the origin of the universe and the fine tuning in physics. From there I find it quite intuitive that if a God went through the trouble of creating and tuning a universe for life that this God likely has some sort of interest in it and has revealed Himself to humanity in some way.
>
> From there I can look at the major world religions and compare them to see which one explains the past and the present the best. Christianity easily comes out on top.

And then a few days later, I got this from William:

> I finally got the agnostic to tell me what he thinks about origin and fine tuning. When I started pointing out that his views were unscientific, he blew a gasket, called me dishonest and told me he didn't want to discuss anything further.

And that's where you want to be. Cut off all discussions where the challenger tries to jump to the end and get you to debate the very last steps of your case. Present the strongest evidence for your core claims, and get him to account for this evidence within his own worldview. Lead the discussion with public, testable evidence. All warfare depends on picking the terrain, weapons and tactics that allow you to match your strength against your opponent's weakness.

How many evidences do you know for the origin of the universe?

August 2, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's very, very important to get a conversation about spiritual things started off on the right foot. My favorite place to start is with the origin of the universe. I always use the same 3 evidences, but I found an article that has even MORE. First, let me talk about the ones I like, then I'll send you the link to the article with the bigger list. Once you get the beginning proved, the next question is: who caused it?

Here's the article from J. Warner Wallace.

He writes this:

> My career as a Cold Case Detective was built on being evidentially certain about the suspects I brought to trial. There are times when my certainty was established and confirmed by the cumulative and diverse nature of the evidence. Let me give you an example. It's great when a witness sees the crime and identifies the suspect, but it's even better if we have DNA evidence placing the suspect at the scene. If the behavior of the suspect (before and after the time of the crime) also betrays his involvement, and if his statements when interviewed are equally incriminating, the case is even better. Cases such as these become more and more reasonable as they grow both in depth and diversity. It's not just that we now have four different evidences pointing to the same conclusion, it's that these evidences are from four different categories. Eyewitness testimony, forensic DNA, behaviors and admissions all point to the same reasonable inference. When we have a cumulative, diverse case such as this, our inferences become more reasonable and harder to deny. Why did I take the time to describe this evidential approach to reasonable conclusions? Because a similar methodology can be used to determine whether everything in the universe (all space, time and matter) came from nothing. We have good reason to believe our universe had a beginning, and this inference is established by a cumulative, diverse evidential case.

Here is his list of evidences:

1. Philosophical Evidence
2. Theoretical Evidence
3. Observational Evidence
4. Thermal Evidence
5. Quantitative Evidence
6. Residual Evidence

Now, if you listened to our podcast with astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez, I mentioned the

ones that I like, which are #3, #5 and #6. And I like these, because they are scientific, and because I have clever ways of explaining them using simple terms.

Here's what he says:

> **3. Observational Evidence (from Astronomical Data)**
>
> Vesto Slipher, an American astronomer working at the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona, spent nearly ten years perfecting his understanding of spectrograph readings. His observations revealed something remarkable. If a distant object was moving toward Earth, its observable spectrograph colors shifted toward the blue end of the spectrum. If a distant object was moving away from Earth, its colors shifted toward the red end of the spectrum. Slipher identified several "nebulae" and observed a "redshift" in their spectrographic colors. If these "nebulae" were moving away from our galaxy (and one another) as Slipher observed, they must have once been tightly clustered together. By 1929, Astronomer Edwin Hubble published findings of his own, verifying Slipher's observations and demonstrating the speed at which a star or galaxy moves away from us increases with its distance from the earth. This once again confirmed the expansion of the universe.
>
> **5. Quantitative Evidence (from the Abundance of Helium)**
>
> As Astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle studied the way elements are created within stars, he was able to calculate the amount of helium created if the universe came into being from nothing. Helium is the second most abundant element in the universe (Hydrogen is the first), but in order to form helium by nuclear fusion, temperatures must be incredibly high and conditions must be exceedingly dense. These would have been the conditions if the universe came into being from nothing. Hoyle's calculations related to the formation of helium happen to coincide with our measurements of helium in the universe today. This, of course, is consistent with the universe having a moment of beginning.
>
> **6. Residual Evidence (from the Cosmic Background Radiation)**
>
> In 1964, two American physicists and radio astronomers, Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson detected what is now referred to as "echo radiation", winning a Nobel Prize for their discovery in 1978. Numerous additional experiments and observations have since established the existence of cosmic background radiation, including data from the Cosmic Background Explorer satellite launched in 1989, and the Planck space observatory launched in 2009. For many scientists, this discovery alone solidified their belief the universe had a beginning. If the universe leapt into existence, expanding from a state of tremendous heat, density and expansion, we should expect find this kind of cosmic background radiation.

So, I've made simple analogies for these, so that I can explain them to people from every background.

For #5, for example, I use the story of leaving you in a room with beads and strings and then watching you make one necklace of beads, and timing you, and then leaving you for an hour, and coming back and estimating how many necklaces you will have made, and how many beads you have left. With respect to the beginning of the universe, at the very beginning, it's all hydrogen (beads). But there is nuclear fusion going on, and the beads are being fused into heavier elements like helium and carbon and oxygen (necklaces). Well, astronomers made predictions about HOW MUCH helium you could fuse during the very hot period, according to the standard cosmology, and the prediction was for 75% hydrogen (beads) and 24% helium (necklaces), and that's exactly what we see today.

And for #6, I talk about baking a cake. Suppose you heated up your oven and put a ban full of cake batter in there for an hour. You notice that the room is 68 Fahrenheit (20 Celsius) when the cake went in. Then you take the cake out to cool, but you leave the oven open. An hour later, you notice that the oven is cool, but the temperature of the room has gone up to 72 Fahrenheit (22 Celsius). When you have a source of heat in a small area, then you open it up in a bigger area, the smaller area cools down, and the bigger area warms up a bit. Astronomers made a prediction that the very hot creation event would leave a small 3 degrees Kelvin "cosmic microwave background radiation" everywhere in space, and when they were finally able to measure it, they found that the predicted 3 Kelvin temperature was found exactly as predicted.

So, if you don't know all of these evidences for a beginning, read the article, pick your favorites, and be ready to explain them.

Things are getting worse for conservatives and Christians in the UK

August 3, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the past, I've written about how the UK is a dangerous secular left fascist country that suppresses the basic human rights of its citizens. In the UK, free speech that disagrees with government policies is illegal. You can't defend yourself from the criminals that the government imports from third-world countries. And they have two-tier policing – one justice system for allies, and one for enemies.

So, here is how I formed my opinion of the UK. According to Douglas Murray's "The Strange Death of Europe", the UK let in unskilled immigrants from Middle Eastern countries. Some of those went on to run child sex-trafficking rings. This has happened in many cities in the UK. And when the parents of the sex-trafficked girls complained to the police, the police refused to do anything, because they said that it's "racist" to investigate those crimes. This is secular left woke police in action. And then if UK taxpayers say something about the failures of the taxpayer-funded politicians and police to protect their kids, then the police will charge them with hate crimes and hate speech. That's what's going on in the UK right now, and has been for some time.

So, let's see some news stories to learn how things are going.

Here's the UK Daily Mail, explaining what you have to do in order to be flagged by the UK government as a threat to their policies.

It says:

> Record numbers of over-60s are being referred to the Government's troubled anti-terrorism scheme, the Daily Mail can reveal today. Home Office figures show 127 adults in their 60s or beyond were put on Prevent's radar in 2023/24 – the most since records began in 2016. Of them, 43 had sparked alarm for expressing 'extreme right wing' views.

"Extreme right wing" views are basically things like disagreeing with the child sex-trafficking rings. If you disagree with child sex-trafficking, then the UK government thinks that you are "extreme right wing" and a potential terrorist.

I'm not kidding:

> Last month, it was revealed how Prevent training documents listed sharing the view that Western culture was 'under threat from mass migration and a lack of integration' was a 'terrorist ideology'.

Are you wondering how they determine who is a potential terrorist? Well, if you watch certain comedy shows like "Yes, Minister" and "The Thick of It", then you might be a terrorist. Or if you like old war movies. Or if you own any Shakespeare plays.

Look:

> Even the 1955 epic war film The Dam Busters and The Complete Works Of William Shakespeare were flagged as possible red flags of extremism by Prevent's Research Information and Communications Unit.

Just FYI, I am probably on their list. I just recently read a book about the Dam Busters mission ("Operation Chastise") called "Enemy Coast Ahead (Uncensored)" by the lead pilot of that mission, Guy Gibson. And I even want to buy a boardgame version of it, if GMT ever gets around to printing it with a mounted map board.

And of course I own *two* Complete Shakespeares – The Illustrated Globe edition from my high school days, and an audio book version. Not only that, but I was recently bugging Grok to tell me the best classical commentaries on Shakespeare, because that's what I want to read when I'm retired (at 50, not 60). I never wanted to be a software engineer – I wanted to teach people the wisdom that you can get out of the British classics and Shakespeare.

And the UK goverment is finding a lot of people who are potential terrorists:

> Across all age groups, more than 1,300 people were referred to Prevent last year for 'extreme right wing' behaviour, including 27 kids under the age of ten.

But Islam is no big deal:

> Over the same period, the overall number of referrals under the Islamist umbrella has plunged by 75 per cent, from 3,706 to 913 – or 13 per cent of the total.

Now, you might think that a failed nation like the UK would be more concerned about their failing healthcare system. Or their violent crime epidemic. Or their third-world economy. Or their diminished role in keeping peace in the world. Or their criminalization of free speech. Or… their child sex-trafficking rings. But no.

Now, let's look at a different article, one that shows what happens to Christians who try to speak about what the Bible says in the UK.

Here is a recent article from the UK Telegraph:

> A school chaplain who was sacked after telling children they were free to question LGBT policies has told how he is still living in "shame and spiritual exile" six years later.
>
> The Rev Bernard Randall, 52, lost his job at Trent College in Derbyshire and was referred to the Government's Prevent counter-terrorism programme after delivering a sermon to pupils.
>
> During the 2019 sermon, Dr Randall discussed identity politics and said pupils did not have to agree with LGBT teaching.

This obviously affected his finances:

> Dr Randall, who is married and has a daughter, said: "I got part-time work with an adult education provider. So we're OK, but we've definitely had to tighten our

> belts."

Let me quickly say that many narcissistic people these days are asking "why don't men lead?" and "why don't men protect?" and "why don't men provide?". And the answer is because it has become costly – finances and freedom – to do so. People find male leadership offensive, and men lose their jobs for leading.

The article also notes that his punishment is ongoing, because of the first female Bishop in the Church of England:

> Despite being cleared of wrongdoing over the 2019 sermon, Dr Randall was barred from preaching after a decision by the Rt Rev Libby Lane, the Bishop of Derby, over concerns that he could pose a risk of harm to children.

It's a common view among feminists that men's moral and spiritual leadership is "harmful to children", because feminists interpret their own sad feelings about demonstrated male competence at decision-making as evidence that demonstrated male competence at decision-making will be harmful to children. Single mothers are doing so well raising kids, they think.

Here are more recent stories about life in the UK:

- UK Police Arrest Gardener in His Own Garden For Carrying Trowel, Sickle
- Record Numbers of Foreign Sex Offenders Being Held in English Prisons
- Doctors in England start a 5-day strike over pay
- Muhammad Remains Top UK Baby Name
- Channel Migrant Crisis Arrivals For 2025 Soar Past 25,000 in Record Year
- UK 1984: Hundreds Charged in Britain for Speech Crimes Under Orwellian Online Safety Act
- Serving Police Officer Charged With 11 Counts of Sexual Activity With a Child

Christian doctor guilty of “professional misconduct” in fascist Australia

August 4, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If I had to pick which Western countries are the most hostile to Christians, Australia would be near the top of the list. Now there’s a new story about a Christian doctor named Jereth Kok. He posted some pretty standard stuff on social media under his own name. Tame stuff like Katy Faust, Babylon Bee, etc. Stuff we’ve all done. But that was too much for the fascists of Australia.

An article I found from The Daily Declaration, a Christian news site based in Australia explains the facts:

> A landmark free speech case has found that Dr Jereth Kok’s Christian and conservative views disqualify him from medical practice, even though his social media posts weren’t directed at patients and most were shared with limited visibility.
>
> Dr Jereth Kok, a Melbourne-based GP suspended for posting memes, satire and Christian commentary on social media, has been found guilty of professional misconduct, in a landmark case with far-reaching implications for free speech in Australia.
>
> In a 186-page ruling handed down last Tuesday, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) found that Dr Kok’s deeply held religious views, expressed on social media between 2008 and 2022, were sufficient grounds to indefinitely suspend him from the medical profession.
>
> Dr Kok — who had no prior history of patient complaints or professional misconduct before his suspension — now faces a separate sanctions hearing in early 2026 that could result in the full cancellation of his medical license.
>
> In *Medical Board of Australia v Dr Jereth Kok,* VCAT assessed 85 social media posts made by Dr Kok on topics ranging from abortion to same-sex marriage, Islam, sex change surgery for children, COVID-19 mandates and “conversion therapy” bans.
>
> The Tribunal concluded that two-thirds of the posts “denigrated, demeaned and slurred” members of protected identity groups and other medical practitioners, and also contributed to vaccine hesitancy.

Focus in on this:

> Around 80 per cent of Dr Kok’s implicated posts were made on Facebook, with only 13 of those visible to the general public — indicating that complainants and regulators either actively sought them out or were tipped off by people in his wider network.

This is why it is important for Christians to not only have an alias, but be careful about who you let see your posts. As the article indicates, many of the social media posts used to condemn Dr. Kok were posted with the limited audience settings enabled. It didn't save him from surveillance and persecution by the Australian fascist government.

Another article from The Daily Declaration added more details:

> What began as anonymous complaints triggered a years-long, taxpayer-funded witch hunt to comb through over a decade of his online religious and political commentary, ultimately branding him "unfit to practise" for holding and sharing Christian beliefs.
>
> The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal may have only just handed down its ruling against Dr Jereth Kok, but behind the scenes, the witch hunt began years ago. And now, following eight items of correspondence to and from AHPRA to other parties (that have been secured by Nation First), we can see the full scale of the ideological operation to break a Christian GP for the crime of expressing his beliefs online.

And this should be SHOCKING to you:

> On 5 August 2019, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) sent a formal demand to Facebook's Sydney office. The letter, marked Private and Confidential, required Facebook to produce:
>
> - Every post and comment ever made by Dr Kok
> - Comments made under his posts by other users
> - Deleted and archived content
> - Evidence of any community standards violations
> - Details of any warnings or bans
> - The dates, times, and content of every interaction
>
> This wasn't a narrow review. It was a blanket data trawl from 2014 to 2019, a five-year dragnet to scrutinise his private thoughts, satire, and Christian commentary.
>
> And this was all done without a single complaint from a patient. Not one.

And more:

> AHPRA hired Ferrier Hodgson, a private forensic firm, and commissioned them to scour not only Facebook, but also websites and blogs, where Dr Kok had posted comments over the years. The result:
>
> - 239 web pages crawled
> - 122 pages identified with Kok's name
> - Sophisticated "scrolling" software deployed to uncover hidden and de-ranked comments

> - Facebook’s own privacy settings bypassed using test accounts
> - A full quote for this particular item of work: one email dated 5 June 2019 cites an estimate $4,800 to $6,000 in taxpayer funds.
>
> […]This was not standard medical oversight but, rather, a government-ordered deep-dive into a man’s personal and political life.
>
> They didn’t just want to know what Dr Kok had said. They wanted to know everywhere he’d said it, everyone he’d said it to, and everything anyone said in response.

I really recommend that you read both of these articles IN FULL, as they were excellent, and help us to understand how the secular left is operating in countries where they have political power.

My thoughts

If you want to be a Christian, it is wise to have to have an alias, and keep that alias a secret from all but close friends and family. One of the advantages of doing this is that you don’t get FIRED and find yourself unable to work in your field for SIX YEARS, when you have a wife and 4 kids to provide for. Don’t listen to advice from people who mock aliases. They aren’t going to pay your bills.

Second, pro-abortion and pro-LGBT “Christian conservatives” like Tomi Lahren are always complaining about “why aren’t men more masculine?” Well, many feminized Christians and feminized conservatives don’t define masculinity as “leading on moral and spiritual issues”. They understand masculinity when “a man pays a woman’s bills and fixes her appliances”. They look at what this doctor did, and they say “that’s wrong, he used his speech to make non-Christians feel bad!” They think that Christianity means “being nice so that I feel good, and non-Christians like me” These people do not see masculinity as correcting lies and protecting the weak from evil. Men are learning from cases like Daniel Penny’s case to be more careful about how they confront lies and protect the weak. It’s straight out of C.S. Lewis’ “Men Without Chests” essay.

Finally, Christians should not be ashamed to vote for lower taxes and smaller government. As we can see in this case, the bigger the government is, the more power they have to ruin your life. So vote for politicians who want to cut taxes and shrink government so that they are only doing the jobs that are outlined in the Constitution.

What criteria do historians use to get to the minimal facts about the historical Jesus?

August 5, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Have you ever heard Gary Habermas, Michael Licona or William Lane Craig defend the resurrection of Jesus in a debate by saying that the resurrection is the best explanation for the "minimal facts" about Jesus? The lists of minimal facts that they use are typically agreed to by their opponents during the debates. Minimal facts are the parts of the New Testament that meet a set of strict historical criteria. These are the facts that skeptical historians agree with, totally apart from any religious beliefs.

So what are the criteria that skeptical historians use to derive a list of minimal facts about Jesus?

Dr. Craig explains them in this article.

Excerpt:

> The other way, more influential in contemporary New Testament scholarship, is to establish specific facts about Jesus without assuming the general reliability of the Gospels. The key here are the so-called "Criteria of Authenticity" which enable us to establish specific sayings or events in Jesus' life as historical. Scholars involved in the quest of the historical Jesus have enunciated a number of these critieria for detecting historically authentic features of Jesus, such as dissimilarity to Christian teaching, multiple attestation, linguistic semitisms, traces of Palestinian milieu, retention of embarrassing material, coherence with other authentic material, and so forth.
>
> It is somewhat misleading to call these "criteria," for they aim at stating sufficient, not necessary, conditions of historicity. This is easy to see: suppose a saying is multiply attested and dissimilar but not embarrassing. If embarrassment were a necessary condition of authenticity, then the saying would have to be deemed inauthentic, which is wrong-headed, since its multiple attestation and dissimilarity are sufficient for authenticity. Of course, the criteria are defeasible, meaning that they are not infallible guides to authenticity. They might be better called "Indications of Authenticity" or "Signs of Credibility."
>
> In point of fact, what the criteria really amount to are statements about the effect of certain types of evidence upon the probability of various sayings or events in Jesus' life. For some saying or event S and evidence of a certain type E, the criteria would state that, all things being equal, the probability of S given E is greater than the probability of S on our background knowledge alone. So, for example, all else being equal, the probability of some event or saying is greater given its multiple attestation than it would have been without it.
>
> What are some of the factors that might serve the role of E in increasing the

> probability of some saying or event S? The following are some of the most important:
>
> (1) Historical congruence: S fits in with known historical facts concerning the context in which S is said to have occurred.
>
> (2) Independent, early attestation: S appears in multiple sources which are near to the time at which S is alleged to have occurred and which depend neither upon each other nor a common source.
>
> (3) Embarrassment: S is awkward or counter-productive for the persons who serve as the source of information for S.
>
> (4) Dissimilarity: S is unlike antecedent Jewish thought-forms and/or unlike subsequent Christian thought-forms.
>
> (5) Semitisms: traces in the narrative of Aramaic or Hebrew linguistic forms.
>
> (6) Coherence: S is consistent with already established facts about Jesus.
>
> For a good discussion of these factors see Robert Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in *Gospel Perspectives I*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63.
>
> Notice that these "criteria" do not presuppose the general reliability of the Gospels. Rather they focus on a particular saying or event and give evidence for thinking that specific element of Jesus' life to be historical, regardless of the general reliability of the document in which the particular saying or event is reported. These same "criteria" are thus applicable to reports of Jesus found in the apocryphal Gospels, or rabbinical writings, or even the Qur'an. Of course, if the Gospels can be shown to be generally reliable documents, so much the better! But the "criteria" do not depend on any such presupposition. They serve to help spot historical kernels even in the midst of historical chaff. Thus we need not concern ourselves with defending the Gospels' every claim attributed to Jesus in the gospels; the question will be whether we can establish enough about Jesus to make faith in him reasonable.

And you can see Dr. Craig using these criteria to defend minimal facts in his debates. For example, in his debate with Ehrman, he alludes to the criteria when making his case for the empty tomb.

Here, he uses multiple attestation and the criteria of embarrassment:

> Among the reasons which have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:
>
> 1. The empty tomb is also multiply attested by independent, early sources.
>
> Mark's source didn't end with the burial, but with the story of the empty tomb, which is tied to the burial story verbally and grammatically. Moreover, Matthew and John have independent sources about the empty tomb; it's also mentioned in the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles (2.29; 13.36); and it's implied by Paul in

> his first letter to the Corinthian church (I Cor. 15.4). Thus, we have again multiple, early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb.
>
> 2. The tomb was discovered empty by women.
>
> In patriarchal Jewish society the testimony of women was not highly regarded. In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus says that women weren't even permitted to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law. Now in light of this fact, how remarkable it is that it is women who are the discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb. Any later legendary account would certainly have made male disciples like Peter and John discover the empty tomb. The fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the discoverers of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that they were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb, and the Gospel writers faithfully record what, for them, was an awkward and embarrassing fact.

There are actually a few more reasons for believing in the empty tomb that he doesn't go into in the debate, but you can find them in his written work. For example, in his essay on Gerd Ludemann's "vision" hypothesis. That essay covers the reasons for all four of his minimal facts.

So, if you are going to talk about the resurrection with a skeptic, you don't want to invoke the Bible as some sort of inerrant/inspired Holy Book. You want to look at it as a historical book, and use historical criteria to get to some facts that critical historians would accept. From that, it's possible to make a case for the resurrection, which is the guarantee that the words of Jesus are authoritative. Including the words of Jesus where he describes the Bible as a whole as God's revelation of Himself to his creatures.

Here is the approach I use when talking to non-Christian co-workers:

1. Explain the criteria that historians use to get their lists of minimal facts
2. Explain your list of minimal facts
3. Defend your list of minimal facts using the criteria
4. Cite skeptics who admit to each of your minimal facts, to show that they are widely accepted
5. List some parts of the Bible that don't pass the criteria (e.g. – guard at the tomb, Matthew earthquake)
6. Explain why those parts don't pass the criteria, and explain that they are not part of your case
7. Challenge your opponent to either deny some or all the facts, or propose a naturalistic alternative that explains the facts better than the resurrection
8. Don't let your opponent attack any of your minimal facts by attacking other parts of the Bible (e.g. – the number of angels being one or two, etc.)

And remember that there is no good case for the resurrection that does not make heavy use of the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. That passages is universally accepted as early, eyewitness testimony from Paul, and represents the core of early Christian beliefs about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Everyone who takes evidence seriously has to

account for that early creed, which passes the historical tests I outlined above.

The best essay on the minimal facts criteria that I've read is the one by Robert H. Stein in "Contending with Christianity's Critics". It's a good short essay that goes over all the historical criteria that are used to derive the short list of facts from which we infer the conclusion "God raised Jesus from the dead". That whole book is really very, very good.

11 Reasons Most Biologists Accept Evolutionary Theory in Spite of the Evidence

August 6, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Below is a guest post from my friend Eric, who has an interest in origins science.

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1. Many immediately reject creation or ID from the many embarrassingly bad "why are there still monkeys" arguments used by laymen. They assume there's nothing beyond that.

2. It's what they were taught in school and they never questioned it. "I didn't give it much thought; It wasn't my area of concern", as Michael Behe reflected of his postdoc research days as an evolutionist. "college students have not been shown the weakness of Darwinian evolution" as Joseph Kuhn wrote in 2012.

3. A lot of biologists aren't exposed to problems outside their own field. For example paleontologist and ID critic Don Prothero wrote that "Nearly all metazoans [meaning animals] show stasis, with almost no good examples of gradual evolution… the prevalence of stasis is a puzzle that has no simple answer" but lamented, "by and large the neontological [non-paleontologist] community still 'doesn't get it'… The journal Evolution continues to publish almost no contributions by paleontologists".

4. Others just don't talk about the problems. Renowned chemist James Tour (inventor of nanocars) describes his own experience: "Let me tell you what goes on in the back rooms of science – with National Academy members, with Nobel Prize winners. I have sat with them, and when I get them alone… I say, "Do you understand all of this, where all of this came from, and how this happens?" Every time that I have sat with people who are synthetic chemists, who understand this, they go 'Uh-uh. Nope.' These people are just so far off, on how to believe this stuff came together. I've sat with National Academy members, with Nobel Prize winners. Sometimes I will say, 'Do you understand this?' And if they're afraid to say 'Yes,' they say nothing. They just stare at me, because they can't sincerely do it."

5. Some see anything other than materialistic naturalism is seen as a violation of scientific professionalism. At one conference, "Chinese scientists encouraged the investigation of a variety of new hypotheses to explain the Cambrian explosion: hydrothermal eruptions, sudden seafloor changes, even intelligent design. This last was too much for one American paleontologist who stood up and shouted, 'This is not a scientific conference!'" Likewise the famed Lynn Margulis (proposed symbiogenesis theory) said, "The critics, including the creationist critics, are right about their criticism. It's just that they've got nothing to offer but intelligent design or 'God did it.'"

6. Many biologists don't have much training in engineering. Many of the patterns claimed to only arise by common descent are the same I see in the code I write or among other

objects designed by humans.

7. Some recognize insufficiencies in evolutionary theory, but hope new theories will arise to resolve them. Evolutionists Depew & Weber published in 2012: “Darwinism in its current scientific incarnation has pretty much reached the end of its rope… however, we are confident that a new and more general theory of evolution is evolving.”

8. A bias toward sensationalism in the media–which is true everywhere and not just with evolutionary biology.

9. It’s taboo to publish anything from the ID movement. As one example, Springer (a large scientific publisher) was going to publish 20-so-papers from ID proponents. They had already passed Springer’s internal peer review and Springer agreed to publish them. But a public campaign threatened to boycott Springer if they published, even though none any of the critics had even read the papers. Springer complied, but the papers were still published in World Scientific after also passing peer review there.

10. A small number of rather popular evolution “evangelists” shame anyone who dissents from the Party line. For example see Jerry Coyne’s response to Lynn Margulis claiming evolution doesn’t work (cited above). Coyne says she’s “dogmatic, willfully ignorant, and intellectually dishonest,” “wrong in the worst way a scientist can be wrong,” and “embarrasses both herself and the field.”

11. Rigged debates. Sean B. Carroll (well known biologist) wrote a critique of Michael Behe’s work in the journal Science: He cited “the tuning of color vision in animals” as a response to Michael Behe as an example of observed evolution creating through a long process of gradual steps. To support this, Carroll cites his own book where he describes (based on phylogeny) lineages would have had to evolve color vision multiple times, lose it, and then evolve it again. This would have happened among the presumed ancestors of reptiles, fish, and mammals so none of it is even observed to begin with. Behe correctly noted that Carroll’s papers show “different species have different protein binding sites” but “they demonstrate nothing about how the sites arose.” Behe submitted a brief response, only to have Science to trim the last 100 words. Science gave Carroll a far longer response chastising Behe for not addressing this very point he addressed in the 100 words that were trimmed.

Older career woman calls Dennis Prager show to warn young women about marriage

August 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I used to listen to the Dennis Prager show all the time, and my favorite hour was the male-female hour, which is the second hour every Wednesday. In that hour, you will hear some of the most frank discussion of male and female issues. I was surprised to see Better Bachelor, a men's rights activist, talk about an article about the male-female hour in his show. I'll link to the article below.

Prager explains in The Stream:

> Every Wednesday, the second hour of my national radio show is the "Male/Female Hour." A few weeks ago, a woman named Jennifer called in. For reasons of space, I have somewhat shortened her comments. Every young woman should read them. This is precisely what she said:
>
> Dennis, I want to get right to it. I'm 50 years old with four college degrees. I was raised by a feminist mother with no father in the home. My mother told me get an education to the maximum level so that you can get out in the world, make a lot of money. And that's the path I followed. I make adequate money. I don't make a ton of money. But I do make enough to support my own household.
>
> I want to tell women in their 20s: Do not follow the path that I followed. You are leading yourself to a life of loneliness. All of your friends will be getting married and having children, and you're working to compete in the world, and what you're doing is competing with men. Men don't like competitors. Men want a partner. It took me until my late 40s to realize this.
>
> And by the time you have your own household with all your own bills, you can't get off that track, because now you've got to make the money to pay your bills. It's hard to find a partner in your late 40s to date because you also start losing self-confidence about your looks, your body. It's not the same as it was in your 20s. You try to do what you can to make your life fulfilling. I have cats and dogs. But it's lonely when you see your friends having children, going on vacations, planning the lives of their children, and you don't do anything at night but come home to your cats and dogs. I don't want other women to do what I have done.

How did this happen to her?

> Somebody asked me the other day, "Why did you stay single and never have kids?" There's answers: Because I was brainwashed by my mother into this. But it's hard and it's shameful to tell people, "I don't know. I ran out of time."
>
> There's not a good answer for it except "I was programmed to get into the workforce, compete with men and make money." Supposedly, that would be a fulfilling life. But I was told that by a feminist mother who was divorced, who

> hated her husband — my father.
>
> She tried to steer me on what she thought was the right path, but feminism is a lie. That's what I want women to know.
>
> I didn't realize this until late in life. I want to tell women: Find someone in your 20s. That's when you're still very cute. That's when you're still amiable to working out problems with someone. It's harder in your 50s, when you've lived alone, to compromise with someone, to have someone in your home and every little thing about them annoys you because you're so used to being alone. It's hard to undo that, so don't do what I did. Find someone in your 20s.

I don't want young women to be wasting their teens and 20s like this woman is, choosing men for relationships using criteria that have nothing at all to do with marriage, or what a man does in a marriage.

Look at this weird list of criteria from a dating ad – is any of this related to the actual work that a man does as a husband and father?

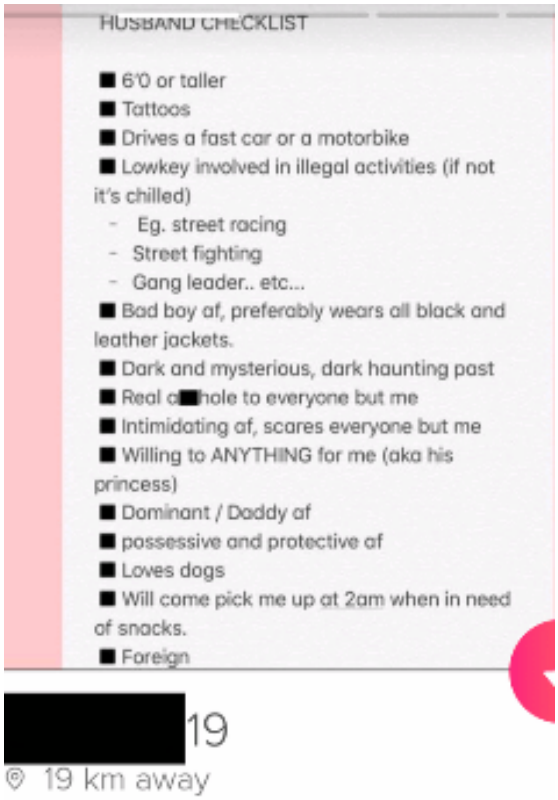

She's looking for drama, domestic violence and instability – not for a husband

I see young women going for "bad boy" qualities a lot, but for some reason, they think that the bad boy will turn into a good man. What could cause this? Is it that easy to change a man? I don't think that men change that easily, which is why you should pick the man you marry based on his ability to do the work.

I think young women should focus their energy on relationships with men who are sober and chaste, and looking to commit and start a family. These men are easy for women to find when the women are in their teens and early 20s, but much harder for women to find if they delay marriage into their 30s and 40s. Although these marriage-minded men may not be "attractive" according to "bad boy" criteria, they should be selected because they

are good at marriage, and want to marry sooner, rather than later. Feelings are not the best way to judge a man. Sometimes, you have to look at his academic transcripts, his resume, his bank account, his library.

On the other hand, I would advise successful man to choose a woman who is attracted to his abilities as a husband and father. Choose a woman who respects your ability to be serious, to be self-controlled, to be focused on serving others, and to achieve what you set out to achieve. Men need respect more than they need oxygen. In order to get that respect, a man *has to* choose a woman who has, from earliest times, preferred men who have good moral character, demonstrated leadership ability, and a proven record of achieving what he set out to achieve by wise decision-making.

Men on strike: the social changes that caused men to opt out of marriage

August 8, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

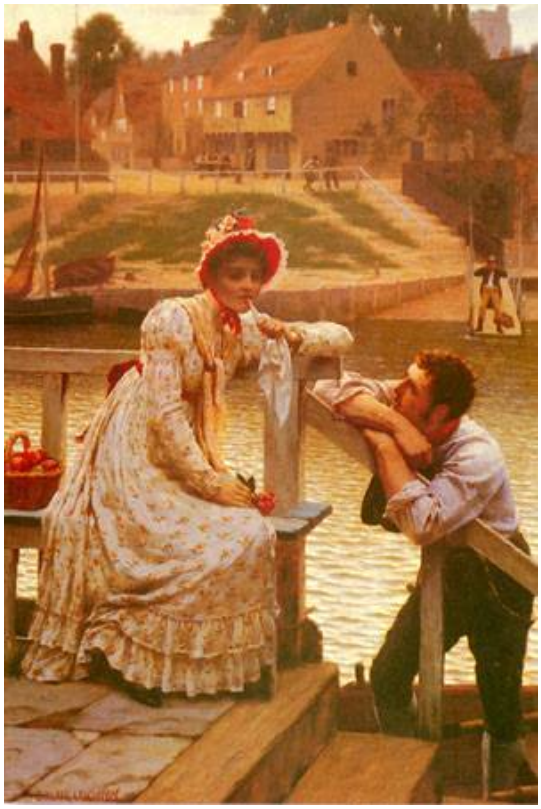

Painting: "Courtship", by Edmund Blair Leighton (1888)

I read and enjoyed Dr. Helen Smith's book "Men on Strike" a few years back. The book explains a few of the developments that have led to men underperforming in school and in the workplace, and opting out of marriage and fatherhood.

Dr. Helen comes to this problem as a secular libertarian, not as a Christian conservative.

A review of Dr. Helen's book appeared in Salvo magazine. The review is written by Terrell Clemmons, who has the best Christian worldview of any woman I know – I frequently rely on her advice.

Terrell writes:

> While the feminist movement may originally have been about equal respect for both sexes, what it has morphed into, she argues, is female privilege. From rape laws that empower women but not the men they may falsely accuse, to divorce laws tilted in favor of the wife, to the feminization of the U.S. education system, men have become the sex under the gun, while women enjoy the status of a protected class.
>
> But unlike their mothers or grandmothers, men today are not taking to the streets burning their undergarments and shrieking demands (thank God). They're doing just the opposite, which is far worse. They're going on strike. The strike

> zones are manifold:
>
> **Higher Education.**In addition to the enrollment imbalance, which is approaching a 60/40 ratio of women to men, college has become, in the words of one professor, “a hostile working environment [in which] males increasingly feel emasculated.” Smith quotes a student named John, who had this to say about his college experience: “I had already been cautious around women, having grown up with Tawana Brawley in my backyard and daily stories of sexual harassment; I played it safe and passive every time. But it doesn’t matter. The only way not to lose is to not play. So I’m out.”
>
> **Work,**including community involvement. With higher female graduation rates and salaries, men today are falling behind their fathers economically and professionally. Consequently, their efforts to prove themselves worthy mates through hard work and higher earnings don’t win female attention the way they used to. Discouraged, too many retreat to a man cave, and inertia sets in from there.
>
> **Marriage.**Marriage rates are down, and honest men opting out will tell you why. Smith cites a Rutgers University study of single heterosexual men which turned up the top reasons they hadn’t married. They can get sex and the companionship of cohabitation without marriage more easily than in times past, and they don’t want to open themselves up to the risk of divorce and financial loss. It really isn’t that complicated a decision. In fact, it’s often not an actual decision at all. It just happens.

The simplest explanation for the difficulties that boys face in an education system that is dominated by women (teachers and administrators) is discrimination. And in the workplace, the government requires employers to report on male and female head counts, and promote women who are not qualified. I have seen receptionists with tattoos and no college degrees promoted to six-figure manager jobs in companies where I worked.

There is one more which to me was the most surprising one in the book – paternity fraud, and the laws that support paternity fraud:

> Take the following cases of nonconsensual insemination: Nathaniel from California, age 15, had sex with 34-year-old Ricci, which, due to his age, was legally considered nonconsensual. Emile from Louisiana was visiting his parents in the hospital when a nurse offered him oral sex, *if* he wore a condom, which she conveniently offered to dispose of for him afterward. S. F. from Alabama passed out drunk at the home of a female friend and awoke undressed the following morning. In all three cases, including the one involving the minor, a woman got sperm and, nine months later, a child, and the man got ordered by a court of law to pay support for eighteen years.
>
> Less devious, but similarly amiss, are those cases in which a man, having been

> betrayed by his wife or girlfriend, was nevertheless held financially responsible for a child genetically proven to be another man's offspring. While not as sensational as sperm-jacking, it is another form of paternity extortion.

In each of those cases, the man was found liable to pay child support – including the case of the 15-year-old boy, who was forced to pay child support to his statutory rapist when he turned 18. This is how the court system works, and more and more men are understanding the risks.

I often encounter "pro-marriage" people while gathering stories for the blog. These pro-marriage people come in two varieties.

On the one end of the spectrum are people like Terrell Clemmons and Jennifer Roback Morse, who understand marriage, but who also understand the social changes that have made marriage unattractive for men. Both Clemmons and Morse have a background in STEM fields, so they are able to understand incentives and tradeoffs. They understand that society has to rollback the changes to education, divorce laws, etc. if they expect men to be interested in marriage again. They understand that men are not just accessories of women, but instead have their own desires, feelings and reasons for marrying.

On the other end of the spectrum are feminist men, who are not able to understand the changing incentives that face men in a world that has evolved under the influence of radical feminism. It is just simpler (less thinking) for these men to accept the radical feminism as a given, and then urge men to "man up". I think a much better idea would be for the "man up" crowd to realize how marriage has changed, and how the schools and the workplace have changed, then make all of these things more attractive to men. It doesn't do any good to try to "dare" men into jumping off a cliff. Men aren't stupid, and they do what is in their own best interests. If the man-up crowd wants younger men to marry, then they need to change the incentives offered to men. And that means changing women first.

Christopher Hitchens debates William Lane Craig: Does God Exist?

August 9, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video of the debate:

TOPIC: DOES GOD EXIST?

MY NOTES ON THE DEBATE: (WC = William Lane Craig, CH = Christopher Hitchens)

WC opening speech:

Introduction:

WC makes two contentions:
– there are no good arguments for atheism
– there are good arguments for theism

These topics are IRRELEVANT tonight:
– social impact of christianity
– morality of Old Testament passages
– biblical inerrancy
– the debate is whether god (a creator and designer of the universe) exists

1. cosmological argument
– an actually infinite number of past events is impossible
– number of past events must be finite
– therefore universe has a beginning
– the beginning of the universe is confirmed by science – universe began to exist from nothing
– space, time, matter, energy began at the big bang
– the creation of the universe requires a cause
– the cause is uncaused, timeless, spaceless, powerful
– the cause must be beyond space and time, because it created space and time
– the cause is not physical, because it created all matter and energy
– but there are only two kinds of non-physical cause: abstract objects or minds
– abstract objects don't cause effects
– therefore must be mind

2. teleological argument
– fine-tuned constants and ratios
– constants not determined by laws of nature
– also, there are arbitrary quantities
– constants and quantities are in narrow range of life-permitting values
– an example: if the weak force were different by 1 in 10 to the 100, then no life
– there are 3 explanations: physical law or chance or design
– not due to law: because constants and quantities are independent of the laws

– not due to chance: the odds are too high for chance
– therefore, due to design
– the atheist response is the world ensemble (multiverse)
– but world ensemble has unobservable universes, no evidence that they exist
– and world ensemble contradicts scientific observations we have today

3. moral argument
– objective moral values are values that exist regardless of what humans think
– objective values are not personal preferences
– objective values are not evolved standards that cultures have depending on time and place
– objective moral values and duties exist
– objective moral values and duties require a moral lawgiver

4. argument from resurrection miracle
– resurrection implies miracle
– miracle implies God
– 3 minimal facts pass the historical tests (early attestation, eyewitness testimony, multiple attestation, etc.)
– minimal fact 1: empty tomb
– minimal fact 2: appearances
– minimal fact 3: early belief in the resurrection
– jewish theology prohibits a dying messiah – messiah is not supposed to die
– jewish theology has a general resurrection of everybody, there is not supposed to be a resurrection of one person
– jewish theology certainly does not predict a single resurrection of the messiah after he dies
– therefore, the belief in the resurrection is unlikely to have been invented
– disciples were willing to die for that belief in the resurrection
– naturalistic explanations don't work for the 3 minimal facts

5. properly basic belief in god
– religious experience is properly basic
– it's just like the belief in the external world, grounded in experience
– in the absence of defeaters, those experiences are valid

Conclusion: What CH must do:
– destroy all 5 of WC's arguments
– erect his own case in its place

CH opening speech:

1. evolution disproves biological design argument
– evolution disproves paley's argument for a watchmaker

2. god wouldn't have done it that way
– god wouldn't have waited that long before the incarnation
– mass extinction and death before Jesus

– god wouldn’t have allowed humans to have almost gone extinct a while back in africa
– why insist that this wasteful and incompetent history of life is for us, that’s a bad design
– the universe is so vast, why would god need so much space, that’s a bad design
– there is too much destruction in the universe, like exploding stars – that’s a bad design
– the heat death of the universe is a bad design
– too many of the other planets don’t support life, that’s a bad design
– the sun is going to become a red giant and incinerate us, that’s a bad design

3. hitchens’ burden of proof
– there is no good reason that supports the existence of god
– all arguments for god can be explained without god
– atheists can’t prove there is no god
– but they can prove there is no good argument for god

4. craig’s scientific arguments don’t go far enough, they only prove deism, not theism
– the scientific arguments don’t prove prayer works
– the scientific arguments don’t prove specific moral teachings of christianity

5. if the laws of physics are so great then miracles shouldn’t be allowed
– good laws and miracles seem to be in contradiction

6. extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence
– none of craig’s evidence was extraordinary

7. science can change, so craig can’t use the progress of science
– it’s too early for craig to use the big bang and fine-tuning
– the big bang and fine-tuning evidences are too new
– they could be overturned by the progress of science

8. craig wrote in his book that the internal conviction of god’s existence should trump contradicting evidence
– but then he isn’t forming his view based on evidence
– he refuses to let evidence disprove his view
– but then how can atheists be to blame if they don’t believe
– so evidence is not really relevant to accepting theism

9. the progress of science has disproved religion
– christianity taught that earth was center of the universe
– but then cosmology disproved that

Response to the big bang and fine-tuning arguments:
– was there pre-existing material?
– who designed the designer?

WC first rebuttal:

Reiterates his 2 basic contentions

CH agrees that there is no good argument for atheism
– then all you’ve got is agnosticism
– because CH did not claim to know there is no God

– and he gave no arguments that there is no God

CH’s evolution argument
– irrelevant to christianity
– Genesis 1 allows for evolution to have occurred
– christianity is not committed to young earth creationism
– the origin of biological diversity is not central to christianity
– st. augustine in 300 AD said days can be long, special potencies unfold over time
– also there are scientific reasons to doubt evolution
– cites barrow and tipler, and they say:
– each of 10 steps in evolution is very improbable
– chances are so low, it would be a miracle if evolution occurred

CH’s argument that god is wasteful
– efficiency is only important to people with limited time or limited resources
– therefore god doesn’t need to be efficient

CH’s argument that god waits too long to send Jesus
– population was not that high before jesus
– jesus appears just before the exponential explosion of population
– conditions were stable – roman empire, peace, literacy, law, etc.

CH’s argument that Craig’s scientific arguments only prove deism, not theism
– deism a type of theism, so those scientific arguments work
– all that deism denies is miraculous intervention

CH’s argument that Craig has a burden of proof
– theism doesn’t need to be proven with certainty
– must only prove best explanation of the evidence

CH’s citation of Craig’s book saying that evidence should not overrule experience
– there is a difference between knowing and showing christianity is true
– knowing is by religious experience which is a properly basic belief
– showing is done through evidence, and there the evidence does matter

CH’s rebuttal to the big bang
– there was no pre-existent material
– space and time and matter came into being at the big bang
– the cause must be non-physical and eternal
– cause of universe outside of time means = cause of universe did not begin to exist
– this is the state of science today

CH’s rebuttal to the fine tuning
– CH says scientists are uncertain about the fine-tuning
– craig cites martin rees, an atheist, astronomer royal, to substantiate the fine tuning
– the fine-tuning is necessary for minimal requirements for life of any kind
– the progress of science is not going to dethrone the fine-tuning

CH’s argument about heat death of the universe
– duration of design is irrelevant to whether something was designed

– cars are designed, yet they break down
– design need not be optimal to be designed
– ch is saying why create if we all eventually go extinct
– but life doesn't end in the grave on christianity

CH's rebuttal to the moral argument
– CH says no obj moral values
– but CH uses them to argue against god and christians
– but CH has no foundation for a standard that applies to God and Christians

CH's rebuttal to the resurrection argument
– empty tomb and appearances are virtually certain
– these are minimal facts, well evidenced using standard historical criteria
– best explanation of these minimal facts is the resurrection

CH's rebuttal to religious experience
– prop basic belief is rational in the absence of defeaters
– so long as craig has no psychological deficiency, experience is admissible

CH first rebuttal:

it's not agnosticism
– if there are no good arguments for theism
– then there is no reason for belief in god
– that is atheism
– everything can be explained without god

god wouldn't have done it that way
– homo sapiens is 100K years old
– for 98K years, they had no communication from God
– lots of people died in childbirth
– disease and volcanos are a mystery to them
– life expectancy is very low
– they die terrible deaths
– their teeth are badly designed
– their genitalia are badly designed
– why solve the problem of sin by allowing a man to be tortured to death
– that's a stupid, cruel, bumbling plan

lots of people haven't even heard of jesus
– many of them die without knowing about him
– they cannot be held responsible if they do not know about jesus

the early success of christianity doesn't prove christianity is true
– because then it applies to mormonism and islam, they're growing fast

objective morality
– belief in a supreme dictator doesn't improve moral behavior
– i can do moral actions that you can do

– i can repeat moral positions that you can say

religious people are immoral
– genital mutilation
– suicide bombing

moral behavior doesn't need god
– we need to act moral for social cohesion
– it evolved for our survival
– that's why people act morally
– it's degrading to humans, and servile, to require god for morality

free will
– i believe in free will
– i don't know why, because i can't ground free will on atheism
– a bossy god seems to reduce free will because then we are accountable to god

WC cross-examination of CH:

WC why call yourself an atheist when you have no reasons?

CH because absence of belief is atheism

WC but agnosticism, atheism, verificationism all don't hold that belief, which are you?

CH i think god does not exist

WC ok give me an argument for the claim you just made to know god does not exist

CH i have no argument, but i don't believe in god because it depresses me to think he might be real

WC would you agree that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence?

CH no i don't agree

WC moral argument: it's not epistemology it's the ontology – have you got a foundation for moral values and duties?

CH i do not, it's just evolution, an evolved standard based on social cohesion

CH cross-examination of WC:

CH you said that the historical reports of jesus doing exorcisms are generally accepted – do you believe in devils?

WC i commit to nothing, what I am saying there historical concensus on the reports that jesus did exorcisms

CH what about the devils going into the pigs, do you believe that?

WC yes i do, but the main point i'm making is that the historical reports show that jesus acted with divine authority

CH do you believe in the virgin birth?

WC yes, but that's not historically provable using the minimal facts methods, and i did not use the virgin birth in my arguments tonight, because it doesn't pass the historical tests to be a minimal fact

CH do you believe that all the graves opened and dead people all came out?

WC not sure if the author intended that part as apocalyptic imagery or as literal, i have no opinion on it, have not studied it

CH do exorcisms prove son of god?

WC no, i am only saying that the historical reports show that jesus exercised authority and put himself in the place of god

CH are any religions false? name one that's false

WC islam

CH so some religions are wicked right?

WC yes

CH if a baby were born in saudi arabia would it be better if it were an atheist or a muslim?

WC i have no opinion on that

CH are any christian denominations wrong?

WC calvinism is wrong about some things, but they are still christians, i could be wrong about some things, i do the best i can studying theology so i'm not wrong

WC second rebuttal

Response to CH arguments:

no reasons for atheism
– no reasons to believe that god does not exist
– ch withholds belief in god

why wait so long before contacting humans with jesus
– population matters, not time – jesus waited until there was about to be a population explosion
– there is natural revelation (Romans 1) for those who lived before christ

what about those who never heard
– (*Acts* 17:22-31) god chooses the time and place of each person who is born to optimize their opportunity to know him based on how they will respond to evidence (this is called middle knowledge)
– those who haven't heard will be judged based on general revelation

WC re-assess the state of his five arguments:

cosmological argument
– heat death of the universe won't happen on christianity

moral argument
– if no objective moral standard, can't judge other cultures as wrong
– no transcendent objective standard to be able to judge slavery as wrong

name an action argument
– e.g. – tithing

– the greatest command – love the lord your god your god with everything you've got
– atheists can't do that, and that is the biggest commandment to follow

moral obligations
– there are no objective moral obligations for anyone on atheism
– on atheism, you feel obligated because of genetics and social pressure
– on atheism, we're animals, and animals don't have moral obligations

resurrection
– the belief in resurrection of 1 man, the messiah is totally unexpected on judaism
– they would not have made this up, it was unexpected

religious experience
– experience is valid in the absence of defeaters

CH second rebuttal:

faith and reason
– Tertullian says faith is better when it's against reason

it's easy to start a rumor with faith-based people
– mother teresa: to be canonized she needs to have done a miracle
– so there was a faked miracle report
– but everybody believes the fake miracle report!
– this proves that religious rumors are easy to start
– the resurrection could have started as a similar rumor by people wanting to believe it

name an action
– tithing is a religious action, i don't have to do that

moral argument
– i can be as moral as you can without god
– i can say that other cultures are wrong, there i just said it
– without god, people would still be good, so god isn't needed

religious people did bad things in history
– this church did a bad thing here
– that church did a bad thing there
– therfore god doesn't exist

religion is the outcome of man's struggle with natural phenomenon
– that is why there are so many religions

WC concluding speech

no arguments for atheism presented

What CH has said during the debate:
– god bad, mother teresa bad, religion bad

atheism is a worldview
– it claims to know the truth
– therefore it is exclusive of other views

what does theism explain
– theism explains a broad range of experiences
– origin of universe, CH has dropped the point
– fine-tuning, CH has dropped the point
– moral, CH says that humans are no different from animals – but an evolved standard is illusory, there are no actual moral values and standards, it's just a genetic predisposition to act in a certain way – that's not prescriptive morality
– resurrection, CH has dropped the point
– experience, craig tells his testimony and urges the audience to give it a shot

CH concluding speech

HITCHENS YIELDS HIS ENTIRE CONCLUDING SPEECH!

A question & answer Period followed end of the formal debate

Further study

Check out my analysis of the 11 arguments Hitchens made in his opening speech in his debate with Frank Turek.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge's ontological argument from reason
- Alvin Plantinga's epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig's moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical minds
- William Lane Craig's case for the resurrection of Jesus

Robin Collins lectures on the fine-tuning argument at Pepperdine University

August 10, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Details:

> Dr. Robin Collins is a Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Messiah College. Collins is the foremost defender of what is known as the teleological argument for the existence of God. He has a background in both physics and philosophy and will be discussing how the specific physical constants and conditions in the universe are finely-tuned for intelligent life and how this "fine-tuning" gives us reason to believe in a Creator.

Here is the video:

Topics:

- the constants and quantities set at the origin of the universe is fine-tuned for conscious, embodied intelligences like us
- three kinds of fine-tuning: 1) laws of nature, 2) constants, 3) quantities
- examples of 1): gravity, electromagnetism, strong force, quantization, Pauli exclusion principle
- examples of 2): **gravitational constant**, **cosmological constant**,
- examples of 3): initial distribution of mass-energy
- in addition to fine-tuning for life, there is also fine-tuning for discoverability
- Naturalistic response to the evidence: the multiverse hypothesis
- problems with the multiverse hypothesis
- additional topics

I put the ones I am ready to speak on in bold. I recommend you learn those as well in order to illustrate the fine-tuning with evidence when you present it. It's important to understand that if the constants and quantities change, it's not that you still have life, but just with pointy ears and/or green skin. It's that you don't have stars or planets or heavy elements or chemical reactions. Things that are necessary for complex, intelligent life forms of any conceivable kind.

New example of convergence found, featuring parrots and humans

August 11, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Regular readers will know that I love everything about birds, and I love every bird. And my favorite birds of all are parrots! Every time I see a scientific discovery involving parrots, I blog about it. Well, there was just such a discovery, and published in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal Nature. In it, we find evidence for intelligent design, and evidence against Darwinian evolution.

Before we see the new discovery, let's review with the definition of convergence in biology.

> In evolutionary biology, convergent evolution is the process whereby organisms not closely related (not monophyletic), independently evolve similar traits as a result of having to adapt to similar environments or ecological niches.

So, for example, if we could find a feature that is common to parrots and humans, that would be an example of "convergence", because the same feature would be found in to kinds of creature, but these creatures don't have a recent common ancestry. The feature would have had to evolve TWICE, independently, and that is not the kind of evidence that Darwinists like.

So here is the discovery, in Science News:

> When it comes to speech, parrots have the gift of gab. And the way the brains of small parrots known as budgerigars bestow this gift is remarkably similar to human speech, researchers report March 19 in Nature.
>
> So far, budgerigars are the only animals known to have language-producing centers akin to those in humans, says Michael Long, a neuroscientist at New York University Langone Health. This "is really the first nonhuman animal in which that has been shown." Understanding how speech gets created in budgies' brains could help clarify what goes wrong in certain communication disorders in people.
>
> […]The similarities between human and parrot brains may reflect two species solving a problem in a similar way, neurally speaking. These parallels could be "a very tidy example of convergent evolution, where you have humans that have developed this kind of neural mechanism for speech, and these parrots have developed a kind of similar mechanism," Long says.

Here's an excellent, recent article from Evolution News to explain what convergence means for the two competing views of Darwinian evolution and intelligent design:

> Biology is replete with instances of convergence — repeated designs in distant species. Marsupials and placentals, for instance, are mammals with different reproductive designs (placentals have significant growth in the embryonic stage

> attached to the nutrient-rich placenta whereas marsupials have no placenta and experience significant development after birth) but otherwise with many similar species.
>
> The marsupial flying phalanger and placental flying squirrel, for example, have distinctive similarities, including their coats that extend from the wrist to the ankle giving them the ability to glide long distances. But evolutionists must believe that these distinctive similarities evolved separately and independently because one is a marsupial and the other is a placental, and those two groups must have divided much earlier in evolutionary history. Simply put, evolution's random mutations must have duplicated dozens of designs in these two groups.
>
> It is kind of like lightning striking twice, but for evolutionists — who already have accepted the idea that squirrels, and all other species for that matter, arose by chance mutations — it's not difficult to believe. It simply happened twice rather than once (or several times, in the cases of a great many convergences).
>
> What is often not understood, however, by evolutionists or their critics, is that convergence poses a completely different theoretical problem. Simply put, a fundamental evidence and motivation for evolution is the pattern of similarities and differences between the different species. According to this theory, the species fall into an evolutionary pattern with great precision. Species on the same branch in the evolutionary tree of life share a close relationship via common descent. Therefore, they share similarities with each other much more consistently than with species on other branches.
>
> This is a very specific pattern, and it can be used to predict differences and similarities between species given a knowledge of where they are in the evolutionary tree.
>
> Convergence violates this pattern. Convergence reveals striking similarities across different branches. This leaves evolutionists struggling to figure out how the proverbial lightning could strike twice…

And convergence is everywhere in the history of life. A common example is echo location in bats and dolphins, but my favorite example is octopus eyes and human eyes.

Here's an evolutionist explaining the problem:

> One of the most remarkable features of octopuses is their eyes, which are remarkably like our own. Like ours, their eyes consist of an iris, a circular lens, vitreous fluid, pigments, and photoreceptors. In fact, the octopus eye is superior to ours in one notable way: Because of the way they develop, the fibers of the optic nerves grow behind the retina rather than through it, meaning they lack the central blind spot common to all vertebrates. And this difference exists because the octopus eye evolved entirely separately from our own, starting from that blind flatworm 600 million years ago, along an entirely different branch of the evolutionary tree.

Got that? No common ancestry for 600 million years. The similar eyes appeared independently. And these are difficult things to make. You can’t write eye code by dropping a bowling ball on a keyboard over and over. To get the design twice strains credulity.

When you look at software, which is my field, you will often see similar solutions to problems across different companies. These companies don’t inherit the solutions from a parent company, they develop them on their own. And often, this process means pulling in “open source” components to solve problems that have already been solved, but not by “ancestors”. The developers who pull in these open source components have no “ancestry” with the developers of these open source components. But they can pull them into a composition of their own, and make use of the component to solve the same problem.

Why do so many atheist historians think that 1 Corinthians 15 is reliable history?

August 12, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Which passage of the Bible is the favorite of Christians who like to defend the Christian worldview? I don't mean which one is most inspirational… I mean "which one is the most useful for winning arguments?" Well, when it comes to the historical Jesus, the most important passage has to be 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

The tradition in 1 Corinthians 15 is an early creed that was received from the eyewitnesses Peter and John when Paul visited them several times in Jerusalem, as documented in Galatians 1 and 2, where Paul meets the eyewitnesses. And of course, Paul records his own eyewitness experience, documented in 1 Cor 15:8.

So, is this passage accepted as historically reliable by all ancient historians? Or only by the Bible-believing ones?

Here's something posted by Dr. William Lane Craig about the 1 Corinthians 15 passage:

> The evidence that Paul is not writing in his own hand in I Cor. 15.3-5 is so powerful that all New Testament scholars recognize that Paul is here passing on a prior tradition. In addition to the fact that Paul explicitly says as much, the passage is replete with non-Pauline characteristics, including, in order of appearance: (i) the phrase "for our sins" using the genitive case and plural noun is unusual for Paul; (ii) the phrase "according to the Scriptures" is unparalleled in Paul, who introduces Scriptural citations by "as it is written"; (iii) the perfect passive verb "has been raised" appears only in this chapter and in a pre-Pauline confessional formula in II Tim. 2.8; (iv) the phrase "on the third day" with its ordinal number following the noun in Greek is non-Pauline; (v) the word "appeared" is found only here and in the confessional formula in I Tim. 3.16; and (vi) "the Twelve" is not Paul's nomenclature, for he always speaks of the twelve disciples as "the apostles."
>
> Now the visit during which Paul may have received this tradition is the visit you mention three years after his conversion on the road to Damascus (Gal. 1.18). This puts the tradition back to within the first five years after Jesus' death in AD 30. So there's not even an apparent inconsistency with Paul's appropriating the language of the formula to encapsulate the Gospel he was already preaching during those first three years in Damascus.

Ancient historian Gary Habermas loves to read non-Christian scholars… and then he writes about what THEY think about Jesus in peer-reviewed articles, published in academic journals. Let's look at this one: *Dialog: A Journal of Theology, Vol. 45; No. 3 (Fall, 2006), pp. 288-297; published by Blackwell Publishing, UK.*

He writes:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: "However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul's."[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul's own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: "It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition."[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]

This is important:

> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

He's an eyewitness (verse 8), and he met with the other eyewitnesses, James and Peter. 1 Corinthians is early. Galatians is early. The creed is extremely early – right after the events occurred. There was no time for legends to develop.

And atheistic / critical historians agree, the creed is reliable:

> Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too

> optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]
>
> Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]
>
> Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.
>
> (3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]
>
> These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.
>
> (4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

Now, some of the people he lists are really biased against the supernatural, and they really hate the idea that the claims of Christianity exclude other religions. And yet they don't deny the historical reliability of 1 Corinthians 15, or that it is based on eyewitness testimony.

That’s why when you watch debates about the historical Jesus, you see skeptical historians like Bart Ehrman, Gerd Ludemann, James Crossley, Michael Goulder, etc. accepting that the disciples thought they saw Jesus after his death. They’re not just being nice to Dr. Craig when they give him that. They are forced to accept it, because it passes the historical tests. Every Christian ought to be aware of which passages of the New Testament are seen by the broad spectrum of ancient historians as “historical”, regardless of their various biases. You can believe everything in the Bible. But when you debate non-Christians, you have to use the historical core of Christianity which successfully passes historical analysis.

You can see the creed used as evidence in the debate between James Crossley and William Lane Craig.

Even 100 years ago, opposition to evolution was never about the Bible

August 13, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

If you're a fan of Knight and Rose Show, then you'll have noticed that we have skipped a few weeks without publishing a show. And this is not our fault! Rose and I have recorded a couple of shows, and sent them off to our sound guy. But the sound guy is busy gallivanting all over the world, climbing mountains and running marathons! So, let me try to keep you entertained with a new post.

So, there was a recent issue of Salvo magazine that was mainly concerned with the 100th Anniversary of the Scopes Monkey Trial, which occurred in Dayton, TN. Because Rose and I are huge fans of Salvo magazine, we decided to ask the Executive Editor of Salvo to come on and tell us about it. Her name is Terrell Clemmons. I've met her in real life and blogged about her a few times before, too. So I hope you will get that episode, soon.

Anyway, the issue #73 of Salvo is filled with interesting articles, but one of them stood out to me: this article by Richard Townsend. He's done a bunch of research about the Scopes Trial and about William Jennings Bryan. In the movie, "Inherit the Wind", Bryan is portrayed as an idiotic Biblical literalist. But, just like Darwinism, the facts are very different from the myths.

Here's the article from Salvo #73.

It says:

> Bryan was one of the most famous Americans of the early 20th century. He ran for president as the Democratic Party nominee in 1896, 1900, and 1908, losing all three elections, but gaining a large, loyal constituency that never lost its devotion to him. He was influential in national politics from 1890 until his death in 1925. It is hard for people living in the 21st century to grasp how influential he was and how effectively he advocated for his beliefs.

And here was his reason for wanting to be the prosecutor at the Scopes Trial:

> For Bryan, [World War 1] displayed a danger associated with the prevalence of materialistic thinking associated with Darwin's theory. The beliefs that everything happened by chance and that death determined the most-fit species' survival had led, at least in part, to grotesque violence. Those factors changed Bryan's ambivalence into action. He saw Darwin's theory to be the causal force driving societal decay; it had to be opposed.

Actually, the theory of evolution was very significant for many of the aggressive tyrants of the 21st century. They seemed to latch on to the ideas of different "races" of people struggling against each other for survival. Definitely, the German and Japanese leaders were influenced by Darwinian evolution, and embraced Social Darwinism. Both regimes

took the concept of “survival of the fittest” and applied it directly to their militaristic aggression.

When you watch propaganda movies like “Inherit the Wind”, you don’t get the facts. These movies are shown in public schools, by unionized public school teachers. They have an agenda, and their agenda isn’t to tell the truth to children. Far from being a young-Earth literalist, William Jennings Bryan had 4 scientific reasons for doubting evolution. Read below, and ask yourself, have these been resolved by the scientific progress of the last 100 years? Or are they even bigger problems now (for the naturalist / materialist) than they were before?

1. Origin of life:

> Bryan saw this as a major hurdle, one Darwin brushed aside with a rhetorical flourish as he theorized a “warm little pond.” Bryan was not convinced.
>
> Those who reject the idea of creation are divided into two schools, some believing that the first germ of life came from another planet and others holding that it was the result of spontaneous generation. Each school answers the arguments advanced by the other, and as they cannot agree with each other, I am not compelled to agree with either.6
>
> Bryan clearly did not agree that the case was closed on the origin of first life.

We did an episode on the origin of life with Dr. Fuz Rana, President of Reasons to Believe.

2. Genetics and Morphology:

> Little was known about how genetics worked in Bryan’s lifetime, but Mendelian genetics had morphed into the neo-Darwinian synthesis incorporating genetic mutation with natural selection. The “neo-Darwinian synthesis” terminology became standard usage after Bryan’s passing, but the concepts were being circulated in his lifetime. Bryan didn’t buy it and used a watermelon illustration to explain his doubts.
>
> I was eating a piece of watermelon some months ago and was struck with its beauty…. One [seed], put into the ground, when warmed by the sun and moistened by the rain, takes off its coat and goes to work; it gathers from somewhere two hundred thousand times its own weight, and forcing this raw material through a tiny stem, constructs a watermelon. It ornaments the outside with a covering of green; inside the green it puts a layer of white, and within the white a core of red, and all through the red it scatters seeds, each one capable of continuing the work of reproduction. Where does that little seed get its tremendous power? Where does it find its coloring matter? How does it collect its flavouring extract? How does it build a watermelon?
>
> Until you can explain a watermelon, do not be too sure that you can set limits to the power of the Almighty and say just what He would do or how He would do it. I cannot explain the watermelon, but I eat it and enjoy it.9

> Bryan's argument was that a watermelon seed contains "power" (which we now know to reside in the genetic code) to build a specific fruit, another watermelon. The structure of the plant and its fruit are the morphology (shape and structure) of the vine that produces the watermelon. And Bryan knew that the process was unexplained.

We did an episode about biological information with Dr. Casey Luskin, from the Discovery Institute.

3. Chemistry and Evolution:

> One early idea about nature's ability to generate new complex features was that the chemistry of life naturally tended toward such complex coding. Bryan doubted that was the case. He wrote this comment in his planned closing argument, later published after his death:
>
> Chemistry is an insurmountable obstacle in the path of evolution. It is one of the greatest of the sciences; it separates the atoms, isolates them and walks about them, so to speak. If there were in nature a progressive force, an eternal urge, chemistry would find it. But it is not there. All of the ninety-two original elements are separate and distinct; they combine in fixed and permanent proportions. Water is H2O, as it has been from the beginning. It was here before life appeared and has never changed; neither can it be shown that anything else has materially changed.12
>
> In short, Bryan said that there was no chemical imperative to life.

We talked about chemical evolution in our episode with Dr. Fuz Rana.

4. No Definitive Proof of Origin of Any New Species:

> Bryan discussed the problem of an organism's deviating from the tendency toward stasis—the continuity of features and body plans found in previous generations of a species. He suggested that no evidence had been presented to validate the claim of new species arising naturally. He cited a letter in which an acquaintance had claimed that "nearly all scientists seemed to accept Darwinism."14 Bryan countered that "many evolutionists adhere to Darwin's conclusions while discarding his explanations.… [They] accept the line of descent which [Darwin] suggested without any explanation whatever to support it."15 To paraphrase, Bryan said there was no convincing evidence to support Darwin's theory of species arising through materialistic, undirected means.

We did an episode on the fossil record with Dr. Gunter Bechly, also of Discovery Institute.

In our podcast, we've met with guests to talk about each of these problems with the Darwinian naturalistic / materialistic origins theory, and what we found was that in each case, the progress of science *made the problems worse for naturalism / materialism*. So, far from the progress *helping* the naturalist / materialist, it's actually made it worse for them. The simplest self-replicator got MORE complex. We found MORE stasis and MORE

biological big bangs in the fossil record. Things got worse… for the Darwinists.

Anyway, read the article, maybe check out the rest of the issue, and if our sound guy ever comes back from vacation, then you can finally get the episode that we did on this topic! Like, share, comment and subscribe, in the meantime. We talked a lot more about the Social Darwinism angle in the podcast.

In the secular leftist UK, police persecute taxpayers, not criminals

August 14, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm monitoring what is happening in countries that have elected secular left fascists, such as Canada, Australia and the UK. In these countries, the leaders are focused on governing from their emotions. They feel a desperate need to signal their virtue to others. This typically results in throwing open the borders to unskilled refugees and illegal immigrants. And taxpayers get the bill for it.

This time, we'll turn to the UK. The most important thing to understand about the UK is that they don't like Christianity or conservatism. In order to cancel out the votes of Christians and conservatives, the secular left political parties that have been running the UK for decades opened their borders to unskilled migrants from Middle Eastern countries, like Pakistan and Afghanistan. The story is told in Douglas Murray's book "The Strange Death of Europe". Basically, Labour Minister Barbara Roche crafted permissive immigration policies in order to make Britain "truly multicultural" and to "rub the Right's nose in diversity." Here is an article from the UK Telegraph about it.

As a result of these policies, massive child sex-trafficking rings were started up in many, many major British cities. When the British taxpayers complained that their daughters were being raped, the British police refused to investigate, because they didn't want to appear "racist". Today in the UK, much like in Nazi Germany, there is one permissive legal system for allies of the secular leftist fascists, and one tyrannical legal system for enemies of the secular leftist fascists. Now let's see how it's working out for them.

Consider this article from Free Speech Union:

> Local officials have raised concerns about a lack of transparency after it emerged that Warwickshire Police advised councillors not to disclose the immigration status of two men remanded in custody over the alleged rape of a 12-year-old girl in Nuneaton, citing fears of inflaming community tensions.
>
> The guidance, reportedly issued to avoid inflaming community tensions, has prompted renewed warnings about the impact on democratic accountability when the full range of consequences of immigration policy are obscured from public view.
>
> Ahmad Mulakhil, 23, was arrested on Saturday 26 July and charged the following day with two counts of rape. He appeared before Coventry Magistrates' Court on Monday 28 July and was remanded into custody.
>
> Four days later, Mohammad Kabir, also 23, was arrested in Nuneaton and charged with kidnap, strangulation, and aiding and abetting the rape of a girl under 13. He appeared before magistrates on Saturday 2 August and was also remanded into custody. Both men are due to appear at Warwick Crown Court on

> 26 August.

Just to be clear, the article states that the police advised city councillors not to reveal to the public the suspects' asylum background because "it might inflame community tensions". So, in case you thought that the police had learned their lesson from the child sex-trafficking scandals, you would be wrong. It continues on, because the need for secular leftists to virtue signal continues on. You can deduce what secular leftists believe about protecting women and girls from these actions. They're *misogynists*.

First, note the effects of bad policing: crime has skyrocketed in the UK:

> Crime rates are soaring in the UK. In the year to March 2025, shoplifting hit its highest level since records began, up 20 per cent to more than 530,000 offences. And theft from a person rose 15 per cent to over 151,000 cases.

The UK Telegraph explains how police advise law-abiding taxpayers about crime:

> Dame Diana Johnson, the policing minister, said products such as bottles of alcohol should not be displayed at the front of stores because people will steal them.
>
> It comes amid growing pressure on the police to tackle a shoplifting epidemic, with a record high of nearly three thefts carried out every minute in the year to March. …
>
> Speaking on the BBC Radio 4 Today programme, Dame Diana said: "I think we need to have that neighbourhood police presence. I think stores need to play their part in making sure that items that are high value are not at the front of the store because that is an issue in some stores, that they put bottles of alcohol at the front of the store which obviously people will nick.
>
> "If they are going to steal to resell they will nick items like that. So I think it is not just one thing here, it has to be an approach with the retailers, with the Government and with the police to work together." …
>
> Dame Diana also warned against members of the public stepping in to confront and tackle shop thieves as she said it was not "appropriate". …

Yes, in the UK, you cannot purchase and carry a firearm to defend yourself, like you can in the United States. And that's why the violent crime rates have skyrocketed in the UK. Only the criminals have weapons. The law-abiding victims of criminals don't. We would never put up with this in the United States, but in the UK, they actually elect secular left fascists to make their laws.

But my post today is about the UK police themselves. What do they do about crime?

> The issue of shoplifting has risen to prominence in recent days after the Telegraph disclosed that Rob Davies, a North Wales shopkeeper, after repeated thefts had put up a handwritten note in his store that read: "Due to scumbags shoplifting, please ask for assistance to open cabinets."

> But officers from North Wales Police attended his retro shop in Wrexham and told him to consider changing the wording because it was offensive.
>
> It has also emerged that the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has advised retailers that putting up images of thieves in a local area "may not be appropriate" because it could violate suspects' data rights. …

This is the priority of the UK police – how to make the world more comfortable for criminals. They spend your money, and they risk your life, because they have such a strong need to virtue signal.

So, let this be a lesson to us as Americans. We don't want to elect people who govern with their feelings. That would be a mistake. Instead, you should move yourself and your family to the most conservative parts of the country. Conservative states, like Florida, Tennessee, Oklahoma, etc. The police are laser-focused on protecting you. The conservative states have the best police forces. Taxpayers get good value for their money there. As for the UK, it's a third world country run by idiots. Never travel there.

New study: the majority (69%) of divorces are initiated by women

August 15, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This new report from Live Science gives us some numbers about who initiates divorces most frequently.

It says:

> Women are more likely than men to initiate divorce in the United States, but they are no more likely than men to initiate breakups in a dating relationship, a new study finds.
>
> "The breakups of nonmarital heterosexual relationships in the U.S. are quite gender-neutral and fairly egalitarian," study author Michael Rosenfeld, an associate professor of sociology at Stanford University, said in a statement. "This was a surprise because the only prior research that had been done on who wanted the breakup was research on marital divorces."
>
> Previous research had found that women are more likely to initiate divorce, at least in the United States, Europe and Australia. In the new study, Rosenfeld compared divorces to nonmarital breakups, in an effort to understand the driving forces behind each type of breakup.
>
> To investigate, he looked at data from the 2009 to 2015 waves of How Couples Meet and Stay Together, a nationally representative survey spearheaded by Rosenfeld and his colleagues. The new study includes 2,262 adults, ages 19 to 64, who reported having opposite-sex partners in 2009. By 2015, 371 of the participants had broken up or gotten divorced.
>
> Women initiated 69 percent of the 92 divorces, Rosenfeld found. But there was no statistically significant difference between women and men when it came to nonmarital breakups, regardless of whether they were living together, he said.

The Ruth Institute reports on a few studies:

> Female unions seem to have the highest divorce rates, followed by male unions, followed by opposite sex unions.
>
> "For Sweden, the divorce risk for partnerships of men is 50% higher than the risk for heterosexual marriages, and that **the divorce risk for female partnerships is nearly double that for men."**
>
> "For Norway, **divorce risks are 77% higher in lesbian partnerships than in those of gay men."** (The Norwegian data did not include a comparison with opposite sex couples.)
>
> In California, the data is collected a little differently. The study looks at couples who describe themselves as partners, whether same sex or opposite sex. The

> study asks the question, how likely is it that these couples live in the same household five years later. **Male couples were only 30% as likely, while female couples were less that 25% as likely, as heterosexual married couples, to be residing in the same household for five years.**

It really seems as if there is something about women in particular that causes them to be unable to keep to commitments *in their actions*, despite what they might say *with their words*.

So I am seeing a couple of problems in young, unmarried women that might explain this.

Feminism is bad

First, there is the feminism. Feminism was the driving force behind no-fault divorce. Today, young unmarried women are being taught to view marriage as stifling to their freedom. So if they do get married, they are often resolved that marriage should not affect their freedom in any way. That is just not the way marriage works, though – both spouses need to be equally ready to have their freedom infringed upon by things that HAVE TO GET DONE. Lots of things that have to get done will not be fun, thrilling or amusing – and that's why it's good to be prepared to do them before you marry.

My friend Dina says that she only knows one happily married couple from among her friends. The most frequent case she sees is wife is working in order to pay for big house, two cars, etc. and wife is denying husband sex, which makes him disengage from the marriage. A working wife tends to not be as responsive to the needs of husband and kids as a non-working wife, probably in part due to work stress. There is an epidemic of sex-withholding by women, and it causes men to disengage from marriage because they feel unloved. Although women tend to rebel against the idea that the man's bad behavior is their fault, and that there is a "contractual" nature to marriage, that is how marriage works. You cannot stay married, women, by just doing whatever you feel like, and NOT doing whatever you DON'T feel like. Men will disengage when their needs are not supplied, and that's no fault of theirs. It's your fault. Denying relationship obligations causes men to underperform.

Feminism is often linked closely to "independence". There is a lot of confusion over what the word independence means among young, unmarried women. A man uses that word to mean "lack of financial dependence on parents, the state, etc. because of good decisions in education, career and finances". But a woman means "not having to care about the needs of a man and the leadership of a man, or the needs of children while still getting what I want from men and children". That attitude is not compatible with life-long married love.

Emotions are bad

Second, emotions. In my experience, young, unmarried women are less likely to have reasoned out their own life plan in a practical step-by-step manner. Instead, they tend to do whatever makes them feel good moment-by-moment without any realistic plan. One Christian woman was recently telling me how attracted she was to an atheist moral relativist who had been promiscuous from the age of 15. She explained that her emotions

were kindled by his GQ looks, 6-pack abs, mysterious European accent, seductive manner and witty conversations. Although she is apparently a Christian, she doesn't take Christianity seriously in her decisions about relationships and marriage.

Peer-approval and culture play a large part in determining what women think is attractive in a man, as well as their life goals, and women are driven by these cultural standards more than men who focus on honoring their commitments *regardless* of their emotions. In my experience, women struggle to make their day-to-day actions match their socially-acceptable goal of getting married "some day". Marriage is for "some day" for today's busy women, but fun and thrills is for today. "Live in the moment", they often tell me. If you try to talk to them about roles and responsibilities in a marriage, they will withdraw and rebel. But marriage is about each spouse doing his or her job, and feeling content about what the couple is building together. You can't make life-long married love from emotional craziness and pursuing fun and thrills with seductive promiscuous moral relativist atheists.

How to pick a woman who won't divorce you

Young men, I advise you to choose wives who have had to do things that they did not feel like doing. That can involve things like getting a STEM degree, getting a job in STEM, moving out of her parents' house, getting a "boring" job that helps her pay off her debts, keeping commitments when she doesn't feel like it, and caring for other people and even animals.

Basically, the more the woman has ground down any narcissism and hedonism she may have, by having to do nasty calculus and horrid lab work, the better. The more accustomed she is to constraints, responsibilities, expectations and obligations, the less likely it is that she'll divorce you for unhappiness. And all of this goes for men, as well. STEM degree, STEM job, save money, serve others, give to charity.

Marriage is not the time for people to be carried away by their emotions. It's an enterprise, and it works when both people are rational, practical, hard-working and self-controlled.

Knight and Rose Show #67: Terrell Clemmons: Scopes Monkey Trial

August 16, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 67 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the legacy of the famous Scopes "Monkey" Trial, now 100 years old. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Terrell Clemmons to discuss the 100th anniversary of the Scopes Monkey Trial. We discuss Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, its impact on morality, and its ties to racism and eugenics. Clemmons challenges the popular "religion-versus-science" framing of the debate over origins, and offers practical guidance for Christians to challenge materialist narratives with scientific evidence.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 67:

Speaker biographies

Terrell Clemmons earned a BS in Computer Science from Clemson University and worked in software development until she hopped off the career track to be a full-time mom. Raised in a church-going home, she lived complacently toward the faith until she became a parent. Newly motivated at that point to find truth about the bigger issues of life, she researched the worldview claims of Christianity and became convinced that they were actually true. She began writing on Christian living and apologetics in 2004 and joined Salvo in 2007. She has also worked with Ratio Christi and Anchorsaway apologetics ministries for youth. With her kids now grown and her husband deceased, she lives in Indianapolis, Indiana, with her dog, the only family member still at home, and writes on apologetics and matters of faith.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

Further reading:

If you want to know more about this topic, I encourage you to check out Issue #73 of Salvo magazine, which is edited by Terrell Clemmons. One of the easiest ways to get conversations started in your home or workplace is to have something eye-catching that will provoke discussions. One of our podcast helpers (Bonnie) already subscribes to Salvo, and another of our podcast helpers (Vitoria) subscribed to it after looking at the issue online.

The graphics for Salvo magazine are done by Jerry Janquart and the print version works well as a conversation starter. The trouble you might have is that you will need two copies. One for you, and one to lend out. If you subscribe, they give you the PDF immediately, so you can read that one on your tablet, while you wait for the lending out copy to arrive. It looks great on a tablet or a coffee table. You can have a lot of adventures with a print copy of Salvo.

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Study: belief in free will linked to ability to behave morally and to help others

August 17, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back I finished reading “God’s Crime Scene”, the new book by J. Warner Wallace. I wanted to post something about some studies he mentioned in Chapter 6, on free will. This is one of the places where he found evidence in a surprising area.

Wallace says that free will makes more sense if theism is true, because we have non-material souls that interact with our bodies, but are not causally determined by them. On atheism, only matter exists, and you can’t get free will (or consciousness) from matter. So atheists like Sam Harris and Alex Rosenberg, for example, deny free will, because they are materialists and atheists.

Anyway, here’s what he writes on p. 256:

> In 2008, researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of British Columbia conducted experiments highlighting the relationship between a belief in determinism and immoral behavior. They found students who were exposed to deterministic literature prior to taking a test were more likely to cheat on the test than students who were not exposed to literature advocating determinism. The researchers concluded those who deny free will are more inclined to believe their efforts to act morally are futile and are, therefore, less likely to do so.
>
> In addition, a study conducted by researchers from Florida State University and the University of Kentucky found participants who were exposed to deterministic literature were more likely to act aggressively and less likely to be helpful toward others.” Even determinist Michael Gazzaniga conceded: “It seems that not only do we believe we control our actions, but it is good for everyone to believe it.”” The existence of free will is a common characteristic of our experience, and when we deny we have this sort of free agency, there are detrimental consequences.

I decided to look up these studies.

Here’s the abstract for first study: (2008)

> Does moral behavior draw on a belief in free will? Two experiments examined whether inducing participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage cheating. In Experiment 1, participants read either text that encouraged a belief in determinism (i.e., that portrayed behavior as the consequence of environmental and genetic factors) or neutral text. Exposure to the deterministic message increased cheating on a task in which participants could passively allow a flawed computer program to reveal answers to mathematical problems that they had been instructed to solve themselves. Moreover, increased cheating behavior was mediated by decreased belief in free

> will. In Experiment 2, participants who read deterministic statements cheated by overpaying themselves for performance on a cognitive task; participants who read statements endorsing free will did not. These findings suggest that the debate over free will has societal, as well as scientific and theoretical, implications.

And the abstract for the second study: (2009)

> Laypersons' belief in free will may foster a sense of thoughtful reflection and willingness to exert energy, thereby promoting helpfulness and reducing aggression, and so disbelief in free will may make behavior more reliant on selfish, automatic impulses and therefore less socially desirable. Three studies tested the hypothesis that disbelief in free will would be linked with decreased helping and increased aggression. In Experiment 1, induced disbelief in free will reduced willingness to help others. Experiment 2 showed that chronic disbelief in free will was associated with reduced helping behavior. In Experiment 3, participants induced disbelief in free will caused participants to act more aggressively than others. Although the findings do not speak to the existence of free will, the current results suggest that disbelief in free will reduces helping and increases aggression.

So what to make of this?

If you're an atheist, then you are a physical object. And like every other physical object in the universe, your behavior is determined by genetic programming (if you're alive) and external inputs. Material objects do not have the ability to make free choices, including moral choices.

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

Atheist William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no

moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

(Source)

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality. Can you imagine trying to get into any sort of enterprise with someone who has this view of moral choices? A marriage, or a business arrangement, etc? It would be crazy to expect them to behave morally, when they don't even think that moral choices is possible. It just excuses all sorts of bad behavior, because no one is responsible for choosing to do the right thing.

Believers in materialism are going to struggle with prescriptive morality, including self-sacrificial care and concern for others. Their worldview undermines the *rationality* of the moral point of view. You might find atheists acting morally for their own purposes, but their worldview doesn't rationally ground it. This is a big problem for people who can see objective morality woven into the universe – and themselves – because they have the awareness of objective right and wrong.

Choosing to do the right thing

I think what atheists like to say is "I can be moral, too". That's not interesting. What is interesting is whether it is rational for you to be moral when doing the right thing sets you back. When I look at the adultery of Dawkins, the polyamory of Carrier, the divorces of Shermer and Atkins, etc. I am not seeing anything that really wows me about their ability to do the right thing when it was hard for them to do it. They all deny free will of course, and think that trying to resist temptation is a waste of time.

Wallace explains how the awareness of free will and moral choices caused him to turn away from atheism, in this blog post.

He writes:

> As an atheist, I chose to cling to naturalism, in spite of the fact that I lived each day as though I was capable of using my *mind* to make *moral choices* based on more than my own opinion. In addition, I sought *meaning and purpose* beyond my own hedonistic preferences, as though meaning was to be discovered, rather than created. I called myself a naturalist while embracing three characteristics of reality that simply cannot be explained by naturalism. As a Christian, I'm now able to acknowledge the "grounding" for these features of reality. My *philosophical* worldview is consistent with my *practical* experience of the world.

I think atheists who want to be honest about their own experience of first-person consciousness, free will, moral realism, etc. will do well to just accept that theism rationally grounds all of these things, and so you should accept theism. Theism is real. If you like morality, and want to be a virtuous person, then you should accept theism.

What should Christians bring up when discussing truth with Muslims?

August 18, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have some experience dicussing Islam because my mother's side of the family is all Muslim. My go-to argument has always been to confront them about the Qur'an's claim that Jesus did not die of crucifixion. But I noticed a different argument from Laura Powell, who knows far more about this topic than I do. Do you think her approach is the best one?

She writes about it over at her blog, An Affair with Reason:

> The crux of the argument is this: The Qur'an affirms the inspiration, authority, and preservation of the New Testament Gospels;[2] yet the Qur'an also contradicts the Gospels on major theological and historical points. Therefore, the Qur'an cannot be reliable.
>
> According to the Qur'an, the Gospel is the trustworthy, reliable revelation of God given as a guidance for mankind (Qur'an 3:3-4). These Scriptures from God were available and trustworthy when the Qur'an was revealed in the 7th century A.D., and those who had access to them were repeatedly told to obey them, judge by them, submit to their teaching, and stand fast upon them. In other words, according to the Qur'an, the Gospels are the inspired and authoritative words of God.
>
> Qur'an 5:47 says, "And let the People of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed—then it is those who are the defiantly disobedient."
>
> Furthermore, Qur'an 5:68 states, "Say, 'O People of the Scripture, you are [standing] on nothing until you uphold [the law of] the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to you from your Lord'" (see also 6:114; 3:3-4).

What I like about her argument is that she's just taking the words of the Qur'an seriously, and asking the Muslims who claim to believe it what's going on here. Why say that the gospels are unreliable today, when the Qur'an said that the gospels were reliable, yesterday.

My argument about the death of Jesus requires us to ask Muslims "where is the non-Muslim historian who thinks that Jesus did not die?" There isn't one.

But my argument requires that the Muslim know something about historical scholarship, to know what non-Muslim historians think.Laura's argument has wider appeal, because it doesn't require that the Muslim have *any* knowledge about history – only knowledge about what their own holy book says.

She concludes with this:

> What we see here is that the Qur'an teaches the inspiration, authority, and

> preservation of the Gospels. The Qur’an was intended as an Arabic version of the message of truth found in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, but this presents a huge problem for Muslims because the Qur’an contradicts the Christian Scriptures on essential doctrines. Most notably, the Qur’an teaches that Jesus was not God incarnate, he did not die on a cross, and he was not raised from the dead (Qur’an 4:157; 5:116).
>
> Here’s the dilemma for Muslims: If the Gospels *are not* trustworthy, then the Qur’an is false because it teaches that the Gospels are the inspired, perfectly preserved, authoritative words of God. But if the Gospels *are* trustworthy, then the Qur’an is false because it teaches contradictory, mutually exclusive facts about key issues. Either way, the Qur’an is false.
>
> This, of course, is a huge problem for Muslims. The validity of Islam rests upon the reliability of the Qur’an, just as Christianity rests upon the truth of the divinity, death, and resurrection of Jesus. If the Qur’an is unreliable, then Islam is a false religion.

I like that she’s comfortable having disagreements with people. That’s not very common in the church today, in my experience.

By the way, this is the same Laura who wrote that really good article about how she found a better way to discuss her Christian worldview when she moved on from sharing her testimony. I blogged about it here.

Do “social conservative” Christians really hate divorce and lies?

August 19, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There were a couple of interesting articles in The Federalist about marriage and divorce, so I wanted to blog about them. The first one is about the no-fault divorce law in Texas. The second one is about temporary restraining orders. And then finally I wanted to talk about whether Christian social conservatives really are as socially conservative as they claim.

So there is the first article from The Federalist, and it’s about the Texas Christian man who has had a divorce initiated against him, and he is fighting it, because he doesn’t think it’s Biblical.

The article says:

> Jeff Morgan was blindsided when his wife of 11 years recently filed for divorce in Dallas County, Texas. On Aug. 8, he filed a 31-page motion to dismiss the lawsuit, claiming the Texas no-fault divorce law is unconstitutional for 11 distinct reasons. Although Morgan isn’t an attorney and represents himself, his papers are packed with case law.

In a no-fault divorce, one party can dissolve the marriage – even if there are young children! They just say that the marriage is over because of “discord or conflict of personalities”. They don’t need to prove abuse or adultery or abandonment or addiction. Divorces are automatic just because one spouse is *not getting along with the other.*

Remember, 69% of the time divorces are initiated by women. Before you blame the husband for that, remember that lesbian couples have the highest rates of divorce. So it’s not men who are responsible for the majority of these cases. When men make a commitment, they really mean to keep it. Feeling “conflict of personalities” doesn’t make them break the marriage covenant.

So what happens in the divorce court? There’s no judge who listens to two sides in a divorce case – the person who files is heard, and the divorce is automatic. Morgan doesn’t get to make a case for why the marriage should stay intact, and how it will harm the children. No one listens and no one cares. Even in red states, supposedly conservative Christian lawmakers don’t want marriage laws to be conservative or Christian.

Why do people want no-fault divorce? Well, they want to make the decision about who to marry *recklessly*. They don’t want to feel any kind of constraint or responsibility to vet the other person for marriage abilities. Many of them get into marriages based on Disney stories about “soul mates”. And then when they find out how much work marriage really is – responsibilities, expectations, obligations – they want to get out of it. Doesn’t matter if it hurts the kids.

Here’s another article from The Federalist, this one is about “temporary restraining

orders". These orders are routinely used in divorce hearings in order to get men separated from their children and kicked out of their own houses. All the woman has to do is say "I'm scared" and the judge grants it immediately. No police report, no investigation of facts, no jury trial.

Note that Protection from Abuse Order (PFA) is the same as Temporary Restraining Order (TRO). It's called different things in different states.

The article says:

> In family court, PFAs are colloquially known as "silver bullets." They instantly shift custody, restrict communication, and tilt the playing field in favor of the accuser. Even if dropped, the damage lingers.
>
> […]Take the case of Harry Stewart, a lay minister from Weymouth, Massachusetts. Stewart was arrested and jailed simply for walking to the door of his ex-wife's apartment building and opening it. Why? He had violated a restraining order "that prohibited him from exiting his car near his ex-wife's home." The system treated this routine act of fatherhood as a criminal offense. Writing about the case in Salon, Cathy Young observed, "While his former wife told reporters that Stewart was dangerously unstable, her examples — that he had watched 'prison movies' with his 8- and 6-year-old sons and promised to send them some live caterpillars to grow into butterflies — seem shocking only in their innocuousness."
>
> As Stephen Baskerville noted in Taken Into Custody, "Stewart had already been jailed for six months not for committing any crime but because he refused to confess to one." The real offense was not violence, but noncompliance with a legal fiction.
>
> The consequences didn't end with jail time. As Young wrote, "The client could have only supervised visitation for the next two years, until the social worker who monitored the visits finally gave him a clean bill of health."

A lot of socially conservative Christians today are complaining about men. They are asking "why don't men approach women?" and "why don't men take women out on dates?". They don't know that men are very much aware of laws and policies like no-fault divorce, false accusations PFAs / TROs, paternity fraud, and biased policing of domestic violence. Men know, and men count the cost.

Have you ever heard a sermon that was critical of divorce or false accusations? Is there any popular music, like from Taylor Swift, that condemns such things? Are there movies, like The Notebook and Titanic, that argue against these things? We are not a culture that really values marriage. And Christians today are not battling against these threats to marriage and family, either.

Here is what I would do in order to make marriage more attractive to men, and better for children (stability):

- person who initiates divorce leaves with clothes on back, no access to kids except by permission of remaining spouse
- abolish single mother welfare, and all other welfare that rewards bad decisions about divorce and reckless sex
- no special category for domestic violence, just have regular criminal law apply to violence in the home
- false accusations to be punished by giving the accuser the sentence that the accused would have gotten
- mandatory paternity tests for all children after birth
- ban IVF in all cases
- remove abortion coverage from all medical insurance policies, and have them be a separate policy, like life insurance or home insurance
- abolish all government-provided, government-guaranteed student loans. (Only banks give loans, based on the likelihood of being paid back)

I mention student loans, because men see a woman's student loans as a deterrent to marriage, and a predictor of financial irresponsibility that can lead to divorce.

Have you ever heard a Christian social conservative advocate for solutions like this? They would certainly solve the problem. So why don't we hear anything about these solutions?

Canadian arrested and charged for self-defense against armed home intruder

August 20, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Why should Christians vote? To live out a faithful life plan, you need freedom, safety, and the ability to prosper. This means being able to work without facing discrimination, keeping (most of) what you earn, and educating your children according to your values. But at the most basic level, you need to stay alive. And there are laws that affect whether you are going to be able to stay alive or not.

Now, most of us Americans feel secure from crime. At the local level, we count on the police. We don't have two-tier policing, like in the UK. American police forces are responsive to taxpayers, not to criminals. Not only do we have great police, but we can also own and train with weapons (if we pass a background check). And even more, now the federal government under Trump is deporting criminals who belong in other countries. For Christians, this means the fundamental need to avoid being killed by criminals is largely met, at least in conservative states with strong self-defense laws.

But now let's consider Canada.

Here's the latest story from the Toronto Sun:

> This all happened early Monday on Kent St. in downtown Lindsay.
>
> "Officers arrived on scene and learned that the resident of the apartment had woke up to find another male intruder inside his apartment," said a news release from Kawartha Lakes Police. "There was an altercation inside the apartment and the intruder received serious life-threatening injuries as a result of that altercation."
>
> […]"The (alleged) intruder was transported to Ross Memorial Hospital and later air lifted to a Toronto hospital," say police.
>
> […]Kawartha Lakes Police Service added: "When released from hospital, he will be held in custody pending a bail hearing."

So they took the intruder to the hospital, but they arrested the homeowner:

> Ezra Levant of Rebel News has spoken with the man who is named Jeremy McDonald.
>
> "A 44-year-old Lindsay man (homeowner) was charged with: aggravated assault and assault with a weapon" but was "released with a future court date," said that release.
>
> Perhaps in court there will be presented a fuller picture of why police decided to lay the charge on both the alleged intruder and on the break-in victim. Until then, people see it as just another example of letting criminals off easy while victims have to take it — even when they are in a dream state.

Now, those charges – aggravated assault and assault with a weapon – those are *very serious charges.*

Grok says:

> In Canada, the maximum sentence for one charge of aggravated assault under section 268 of the Criminal Code is 14 years imprisonment, as it is a straight indictable offence. For one charge of assault with a weapon under section 267, the maximum sentence depends on the prosecution method: if prosecuted by indictment, it carries a maximum of 10 years imprisonment; if by summary conviction, the maximum is 18 months incarceration.

Imagine that you were an elderly Christian scholar like Wayne Grudem or William Lane Craig, and you got sentenced to 10 years of hard time in a federal prison for defending your home and family from an armed intruder. That's what happens in Canada! And the feminized majority up there vote for that – it's "compassion". I know there are some great conservative Christians in Canada, but that's not who is making the laws and the policies.

I asked Grok what would happen for a similar case in a conservative American state with Castle Doctrine and Stand Your Ground laws:

> Consider the same scenario in Florida. If a homeowner wakes to an armed intruder wielding a knife, grabs a baseball bat, and injures the intruder, Florida's Castle Doctrine (Fla. Stat. § 776.013) presumes the homeowner acted lawfully. As long as the response was proportionate and the threat imminent, the homeowner is unlikely to face charges and may be immune from civil lawsuits. Excessive force, like attacking a surrendering intruder, could lead to charges, but the law strongly favors the homeowner's right to self-defense.

Here's an actual case from Tennessee, reported by The Blaze, that shows how diferently self-defense is handled in conservative Americans states:

> A Tennessee grand jury will not bring charges against a Lenoir City homeowner who fatally shot an intruder through a front door in May, saying the shooting was a "stand your ground" self-defense case, according to a Wednesday press release from Russell Johnson, the 9th Judicial District Attorney General.

> […]The grand jury reviewed a presentation by Lenoir City Police Department detectives Lynnette Ladd and Jon Yates and agreed with the District Attorney General Johnson's decision not to bring criminal charges against the homeowner who fatally shot Owen based on the "stand your ground" statute and that it was a case of self-defense.

Everyone – the police and the District Attorney and the grand jury (fellow Tennessee taxpayers) – sided with the law-abiding homeowner and not the violent criminal.

In strong self-defense states like Tennessee and Florida, the law protects law-abiding citizens. When voting, Christians must consider this. Supporting policies like those of the

Democrat Party risks two-tier policing, as seen in the UK, or the criminalization of self-defense, as seen in Canada. To live out your faith, stay safe, and remain free, vote for leaders who prioritize your right to protect yourself and your family from armed criminals.

Vote like your life depends on it, because one day, it might.

Six reasons why you should believe in non-physical souls

August 21, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The first argument for theism that most people learn is the moral argument. Why the moral argument? Because it's the most accessible – everyone you talk to expects to be treated a certain way. But there's another argument that's intuitive for humans: the argument from mind. Everyone has the experience of consciousness and free will. You can make a good argument for God from that.

Here's the podcast:

Details:

> In this podcast, J. Warner examines the evidence for the existence of the mind (and inferentially, the soul) as he looks at six classic philosophical arguments. Jim also briefly discusses Thomas Nagel's book, Mind and Cosmos and discusses the limitations of physicalism.

The MP3 file is here. (67 MB, 72 minutes)

Topics:

- Atheist Thomas Nagel's latest book "Mind and Cosmos" makes the case that materialism cannot account for the evidence of mental phenomena
- Nagel writes in this recent New York Times article that materialism cannot account for the reality of consciousness, meaning, intention and purpose
- Quote from the Nagel article:

> Even though the theistic outlook, in some versions, is consistent with the available scientific evidence, I don't believe it, and am drawn instead to a naturalistic, though non-materialist, alternative. Mind, I suspect, is not an inexplicable accident or a divine and anomalous gift but a basic aspect of nature that we will not understand until we transcend the built-in limits of contemporary scientific orthodoxy.

- When looking at this question, it's important to not have our conclusions pre-determined by presupposing materialism or atheism
- If your mind/soul doesn't exist and you are a purely physical being then that is a defeater for Christianity, so we need to respond
- Traditionally, Christians have been committed to a view of human nature called "dualism" – human beings are souls who *have* bodies
- The best way* to argue for the existence of the soul is using philosophical arguments

The case:

- The law of identity says that if A = B' if A and B have the exact same properties
- If A = the mind and B = the brain, then is A identical to B?
- Wallace will present 6 arguments to show that A is not identical to B because they have different properties

Not everyone of the arguments below might make sense to you, but you will probably find one or two that strike you as correct. Some of the points are more illustrative than persuasive, like #2. However, I do find #3, #5 and #6 persuasive.

1) First-person access to mental properties

- Thought experiment: Imagine your dream car, and picture it clearly in your mind
- If we invited an artist to come and sketch out your dream car, then we could see your dream car's shape on paper
- This concept of your dream car is not something that people can see by looking at your brain structure
- Physical properties can be physically accessed, but the properties of your dream care and privately accessed

2) Our experience of consciousness implies that we are not our bodies

- Common sense notion of personhood is that we own our bodies, but we are not our bodies

3) Persistent self-identity through time

- Thought experiment: replacing a new car with an old car one piece at a time
- When you change even the smallest part of a physical object, it changes the identity of that object
- Similarly, your body is undergoing changes constantly over time
- Every cell in your body is different from the body you had 10 years ago
- Even your brain cells undergo changes (see this from New Scientist – WK)
- If you are the same person you were 10 years ago, then you are not your physical body

4) Mental properties cannot be measured like physical objects

- Physical objects can be measured (e.g. – use physical measurements to measure weight, size, etc.)
- Mental properties cannot be measured

5) Intentionality or About-ness

- Mental entities can refer to realities that are physical, something outside of

themselves
- A tree is not about anything, it just is a physical object
- But you can have thoughts about the tree out there in the garden that needs water

6) Free will and personal responsibility

- If humans are purely physical, then all our actions are determined by sensory inputs and genetic programming
- Biological determinism is not compatible with free will, and free will is required for personal responsibility
- Our experience of moral choices and moral responsibility requires free will, and free will requires minds/souls

He spends the last 10 minutes of the podcast responding to naturalistic objections to the mind/soul hypothesis.

*Now in the podcast, Wallace does say that scientific evidence is not the best kind of evidence to use when discussing this issue of body/soul and mind/brain. But I did blog before about two pieces of evidence that I think are relevant to this discussion: corroborated near-death experiences and mental effort.

You might remember that Dr. Craig brought up the issue of substance dualism, and the argument from intentionality ("aboutness"), in his debate with the naturalist philosopher Alex Rosenberg, so this argument about dualism is battle-ready. You can add it to your list of arguments for Christian theism along with all the other arguments like the Big Bang, the fine-tuning, the origin of life, stellar habitability, galactic habitability, irreducible complexity, molecular machines, the Cambrian explosion, the moral argument, the resurrection, biological convergence, and so on.

Women want to complain to Human Resources because man is reserved at work

August 22, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have spent over 25 years in information technology, and most of the companies were large IT companies. Large IT companies tend to emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion more than smaller companies, which have to perform in order to stay afloat. And that means making sure there is an equal balance of genders, ethnicities, etc. in every different area.

Here is a very interesting post on the relationship advice forum of Reddit:

> Hi all I'm posting this on an alt because I know a few of my friends are following me on here and I don't want this spilling out until I have some clear thoughts on what I want to do.

The author – who uses Commonwealth spelling – has a short summary of her post at the top:

> A colleague (27M) joined our firm last year and since then he has had zero issues socialising with the guys we work with but always finds an excuse or says no to hanging out with the girls after work, even if we go out together as a whole he rarely talks to us and its making some of my friends uncomfortable.

And then here is the long version:

> So early last year our firm hired Dan (27M). In the first few weeks he was really quiet and didn't talk much and that's just how we thought he was. Every conversation with him was short and to the point and never deviated from work, asides from pleasantries (Have a nice weekend etc). About 2 months in he started becoming a bit more friendly with the guys in our office and they would hang out every so often and have normal conversations. However, whenever any of the girls in the office tried to do so he would quickly change the conversation back to work or just not reply. Even now after a year of Dan working with us he straight up refuses to socialise with the girls in the office and it is making them feel uncomfortable. He avoids any discussion of himself outside of work related events and future plans and doesn't ask any of the girls either. Where as he is, what I can only assume, pretty good friends with the guys in the office.
>
> Even on work meals out to celebrate events he is only doing the bare minimum when it comes to conversation with the girls where again with the guys he talks to them like there is no problem whatsoever. I don't know if I'm overreacting but one of the girls is considering go to HR about this because she is saying its creating a hostile work environment. Dan treats us like he treats clients we work with; cordial and strictly about business and its wearing thin now.

> Any advice is appreciated.

Many young people today don't see the workplace as being about work. They see it as a time of socializing. And they get angry when people don't socialize with them. They want to be allowed into a man's personal space, even though they are the kind of people who go straight to HR whenever anyone disagrees with them, or refuses to make them happy. Many of these women are single mothers who divorced the father of their kids.

I actually left my last job and took a lower salary job, because I was being harassed by a woman who had *no college degree*. Her official title was "Software Engineer", but she didn't write code. She just supervised deployments to production. She was very attractive, and had had cosmetic surgery done – her chest was super-sized. (I heard her explaining why she did it to one of the Indian workers one day). She was also about 6-8 years older than me. She started to get very angry with me for not giving her attention at work. She would come to my desk and talk about how politically conservative she was (she must have heard that I was conservative). But I didn't want to have anything to do with her.

I blogged previously about a woman who accused a man of grooming her because he didn't want to get more serious with her. Men are getting tired of this. If you know any young women who are wondering why men don't talk to them, maybe it's because many young women are not pleasant or safe to talk to. Even if a particular young unmarried woman is safe to talk to, men will judge her based on the majority of single, unmarried women. It's just not safe for men to have non-business conversations in the workplace with young, unmarried women.

The juice isn't worth the squeeze.

TikTok single mom has two flaws: entitlement and lack of accountability

August 24, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been working on an article that explains some of the reasons why Christian men are declining to approach, date and marry women. My list started off with 16 reasons, and now it's over 30! There are policy reasons, feminist culture reasons, and feminization-of-the-church reasons. So, in this post, let me talk about two reasons, which came up in a recent TikTok video that went viral.

So, two of the "feminist culture" reasons why Christian men are declining to pursue women for marriage are:

1. entitlement
2. lack of accountability

Now it's important to say that I am not talking about ALL WOMEN when I say these things. In fact, if you go back to the 1940s, these flaws were rare. But somehow, they have become dominant today. You can see them in the movies and books that are popular with female audiences.

The TikTok below has over 100,000 comments, and over 1.5 million likes. It's resonating with young women, and we need to see why.

The TikTok is from Shylee Allen. Her channel is @wildly_shy. It's 5 minutes long:

> @wildly_shy
> For the women. #singlemom
> ♬ original sound – Shy

Please don't message the TikTok lady, but please do pray for Boss to help her to make excellent decisions going forward. We get the most amazing results from women who have made mistakes exactly like hers. There are many Christian women who teach other women not to make the same mistakes that they made, and that's great.

So, there are two flaws in this video, and I want to recommend that Christian men pay attention, because you want to learn these flaws, and make sure that you do not choose to approach, date, and marry women with these flaws. There are lots of women who are anxious to serve the Lord, and they want to help a man who will lead them well. You need to focus your attention on THOSE women.

So, the first flaw in this view is *entitlement*.

Entitlement

An entitled person feels that they deserve to get a particular outcome, without having to merit it, because of their special privileges or victimhood. One good illustration of entitlement was Tomi Lahren on the Piers Morgan Show, insisting that "real men" give women protecting and providing, without asking for anything in return. Think of going into a store with a gift card, and not having to pay any of your own money for anything under $100. The Tomi Lahren view, and I think her view is shared my other famous women like Laura Ingraham and Megyn Kelly, is that women have a gift card with unlimited dollars for use in the man store.

So, when men ask modern women "what do you bring to the table," women today reply "I am the table". Today, "strong, independent boss babes" demand that men pay for everything on dates, despite decrying sex differences as "sexist". The common motto of modern women in relationships is "my money is my money, and your money is our money". That's what men are seeing as "entitlement".

So, in the TikTok video, the woman felt entitled to a husband who meets all her emotional needs. Since she ended two relationships, clearly she did not get her emotional needs met. So how to succeed on the third attempt? Well, rather than feeling that getting your emotional needs met should be automatic, regardless of which man you choose, women need to test men, and choose one who can actually do the work. And not one who says he can do the work. Not one who she feels can do the work, based on his appearance and words. But one who has a worldview that rationally grounds doing the work. And one who has a record of demonstrated ability at doing the work. And the way to do that of course is just to disregard what the man says, and what he looks like, and observe for 2-3 years whether he is able to do actions that meet her emotional needs. And most importantly

what is the worldview that caused him to do it. How stable is that worldview? What evidence grounds him in it?

One specific thing she mentioned was that the man lied about not being able to get her pregnant, and it's not her fault for believing him. Anyone who has ever participated in a private sector candidate interview knows how to evaluate a candidate's knowledge and ability. We don't rely on "first impressions". We don't have intuitions about clothes or confidence. We are looking for competence. We hand you a marker, and we make you write code on the white board. We want to see your hobby coding and your Github repository of open source projects. We sit next to you and we pair program with you. We change the requirements, and we ask you how you would adapt your design. We need to help women take the job interview approach to dating, instead of the hedonistic approach. Having fun on dates doesn't prove that a man can meet emotional needs.

Another problem with entitlement is that women have to accept responsibility for engineering relationship outcomes. Have you ever noticed that lesbians have the highest rates of instability and domestic violence? They have high expectations from their partners, but low ability to meet their partners needs. Women seem to be more likely to accept the "soul mate" view of relationships. They think that "the universe" will "manifest" the perfect mate for them. The perfect mate, of course, gives them everything they want, and asks for nothing in return. Soul mates don't impose any obligations on you to fuel them or help them, you just "follow your heart". But that's not how anything works in the real world.

In the real world, you have to find out what counts as fuel to another person. You have to accept responsibility to fuel the other person. You have to solve problems that are roadblocks to success. In short, you have to run towards obligations, instead of away from them. We need to encourage young people to accept what Dr. Laura Schlesinger calls "loving obligation" in relationships. We need to teach women not to end relationships where their needs aren't met, but to choose men wisely, and accept the obligation to fuel men so that the men want to meet their emotional needs.

The woman in our TikTok clearly felt entitled to certain outcomes from her marriage and motherhood choices. But what preparation did she make? She should have prepared herself to choose a good man by learning about religion and morality, so that she could choose a man who had a good reason to be moral when it went against his self-interest. She could have prepared herself to supply the typical kinds of fuel that men respond to, like food, sex, conservative politics, watching sports and playing co-operative video games. But if you watch that video, you can pretty clearly see that she just sees herself as a victim of "the patriarchy". She talks about what she wanted as if it was a guaranteed outcome, but she has nothing to say about her process for choosing a good man, testing him, or meeting his needs.

The second flaw is *lack of accountability.*

Lack of accountability

A person who lacks accountability makes foolish decisions that are unlikely to produce the desired outcome, and then complains to others as if the predictable outcome of her choices was completely unexpected. You would think that after having TWO children with TWO men who she dumped, she would see that the problem is her own choosing. But she doesn't see herself as responsible at all. And she's screaming and crying about her innocence very energetically! she telling other women "I made no mistakes at choosing men, so if you choose a man, you won't be able to do any better than me. So don't date or marry men!" That's like saying "I took a course in math, and I failed! So don't you take a course in math, or you'll fail too!" She refuses to accept that her failure was related to her own choices, and that someone who makes better choices might get better results.

There seems to be an epidemic of women going on social media and complaining about the shortcomings of their boyfriends and / or husbands. But what they don't understand is that thoughtful men see these complaints about husbands and boyfriends as huge red flags. All it means to men is that if a man approaches a woman who complains about the men she chooses, then he will be the next man that she complains about on social media. If good men see a woman complaining about her ex, we know right away that she either 1) failed to choose a good man, or 2) failed to keep a good man. And then we don't get into a relationship with someone with either of those problems.

The lack of accountability problem is a widespread problem. It's not this one TikTok and the 1.5 million likes. Look at the voting trends of single women over the past decades. While married women are about 50-50 conservative vs leftist, unmarried women vote about 70-80 percent leftist. That's a lot of women. They see government as a substitute husband. When they make mistakes, like bad marriages and student loans for useless degrees, they want the government to swoop in and give them no-fault divorce cash and prizes, single mother welfare and student loan bailouts. So, this problem is very widespread – and we should all care about it.

When I talk to conservative Christians who are "pro-child" and "pro-marriage", they inevitably agree with women that the bad outcomes of a woman's choices are never the

woman's fault. It's always a man's fault. For example, one pro-marriage advocate I know thinks that women should just be able to choose a man who is attractive to her, and then expect him to change after marriage. I will never forget one Christian woman who commented on my blog. She claimed to be a Christian and went on and on about how her ex-husband had mistreated her. I asked her "how did you test him to see if he really believed in Christianity, and had acted on it?" She said "he was not a Christian". So I said "why would you marry a non-Christian man, and then think that he would act like a Christian?" And she replied "the Bible applies even to non-Christian men". So that is the level of lack of accountability that men sometimes see. And I would really like to invite "pro-child" and "pro-marriage" Christians to start talking to women who have this problem about it. Women aren't going to be empowered to choose better men unless we ask them to.

Advice for Good Men

Sometimes, men (because we are impressed with looks) will chase after women who are attractive, even if they have these two flaws. I want Christian men to stop choosing bad women. Don't look at youth and beauty. Instead, choose good women who want to help you to achieve results for the Boss, women who follow your lead. It should be seen as a huge betrayal of God to give your time and money to women who aren't interested in serving God. Choose good women. Choose women who choose good men, and choose women who accept the obligation to treat good men in the right way to fuel those good men to do good things.

What's the best way to avoid women like the one in the TikTok? Avoid women who have red flags. Easy degrees are a red flag. Debt is a red flag. Tattoos are red flags. Piercings (especially nose and tongue) are a red flag. Spending a lot of money on make-up and

cosmetics and cosmetic surgeries is a red flag. Excessive spending on displayed wealth is a red flag. Leftist politics is a red flag. Liking fiction like “50 Shades of Grey” is a red flag. Liking movies like “Titanic” and “The Notebook” etc. is a red flag. Seeing Christianity as life enhancement rather than self-sacrificial service to God is a red flag. Astrology and manifesting are red flags. Posting selfies of travel / entertainment are all red flags. Seeking attention with immodest photos is a red flag. Screaming and crying on camera for sympathy and money is a huge red flag. Men, we need to choose better women! Women who work for the Boss. Women who respect and value good leadership from good men.

By the way, if you’re a good man, and you want to learn how to choose better women, check out the YouTube channels of Emily King and Jedediah Bila. If you’re a woman who wants to avoid making the mistakes of the TikTok lady, you’ll like them, too.

Casey Luskin and Sean McDowell discuss human and chimpanzee DNA

August 25, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I listened to a lot of different apologetics-related shows last week, and the very best one was Dr. Casey Luskin appearing on Dr. Sean McDowell's podcast to discuss new findings about chimpanzee and human DNA. Have you ever heard the argument for common descent that says "human and chimpanzee DNA only differ by 1% so of course they have a common ancestry"? I had a friend in high school who believed that. Let's see what the evidence says.

This is the YouTube episode from Sean's popular YouTube channel:

This is 64 minutes long.

Here are the questions from the interview:

- How did you first get interested in the topic of origins, and human origins in particular?
- What interested you in the topic of human-chimp genetic similarity?
- Can you give us some examples of people who've claimed that we're 99% genetically similar to chimps or apes or kind of 1% different from them as they use that to make an argument for common descent slash evolution?
- How do museums present the data to visitors?
- When did that data that questions the 1% chimp-human DNA difference first emerge?
- What is an "icon of evolution"?
- Does human-chimp genetic similarity falls into that category of "icons of evolution"?
- Do you have a sense of how significant this piece of evidence is for supporting Darwinian evolution?
- How was the original 1% genetic difference calculation made?
- So now we have new evidence that the 1% number was wrong. A new paper suggests that there is a 15%. How did they calculate that?
- Are these numbers being challenged? Are critics accepting them, saying this is the new data?
- Now, one response that I've heard is that our genome is full of what's called junk DNA. So, the differences are like repetitive DNA and thus junk. Thus, we can ignore them and get a much smaller number getting closer to that 1% if we assess the genome that way. Is that fair or reasonable?
- Humans can vary by as much as 10% difference in DNA, so is 15% between humans and chimps really a big difference?
- Does a small genenetic difference automatically imply common ancestry or it could be because of a common creator?

- Is this new 15% difference evidence against common descent?
- You've written a piece in the New York Post about how this is presented in museums. Did the museums respond at all? And if so, what did they say?
- Are there other areas of scientific misinformation at the Smithsonian that either you saw when you were there in person or you've just seen in your research?
- Where does this go next as far as you can see?
- If a follow-up comes in a journal article as prestigious as Nature and they go, you know what, we got it wrong, it's 0.5% genetic difference and we blew it, whether two years, five years, 10 years, will you come back and say, you know what, I'll own it.

If you don't have time to watch the whole video, Casey did write a nice recent article in the New York Post about it.

He writes:

> The National Museum of Natural History's Hall of Human Origins vastly distorts the scientific evidence on human evolution, seeking to convince visitors that there's nothing special about us as human beings.
>
> "There is only about a 1.2% genetic difference between modern humans and chimpanzees," the exhibit starts, with large photos of a human and apes. "You and chimpanzees [are] 98.8% genetically similar."
>
> No doubt you've heard this statistic before because many science popularizers say the same thing.
>
> Yet it's been known for years that these numbers are inaccurate. Thanks to a groundbreaking April paper in the journal Nature, we know just how wrong they are.
>
> For the first time, the paper reports "complete" sequences of the genomes of chimpanzees and other apes done from scratch. When we compare them to humans, we find our genomes are more like 15% genetically different from chimpanzees'. That means the true genetic differences between humans and chimps are more than 10 times greater than what the Smithsonian tells us.

It's very good for him to point this out, because we a lot of people go to these taxpayer-funded museums and believe things that we now know have been discredited by the progress of science. I had a friend in high school who saw this in some History Channel or Discovery Channel documentary, and he believed it. So I think it's important for Christians to know that there is evidence available now, to push back against the claim. Even if you don't know how to discuss it as well as Sean and Casey, you should know how to pull up this discussion, or maybe the New York Post article, and respond.

Most Americans think cohabitation leads to a stable marriage, but what does the data say?

August 26, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

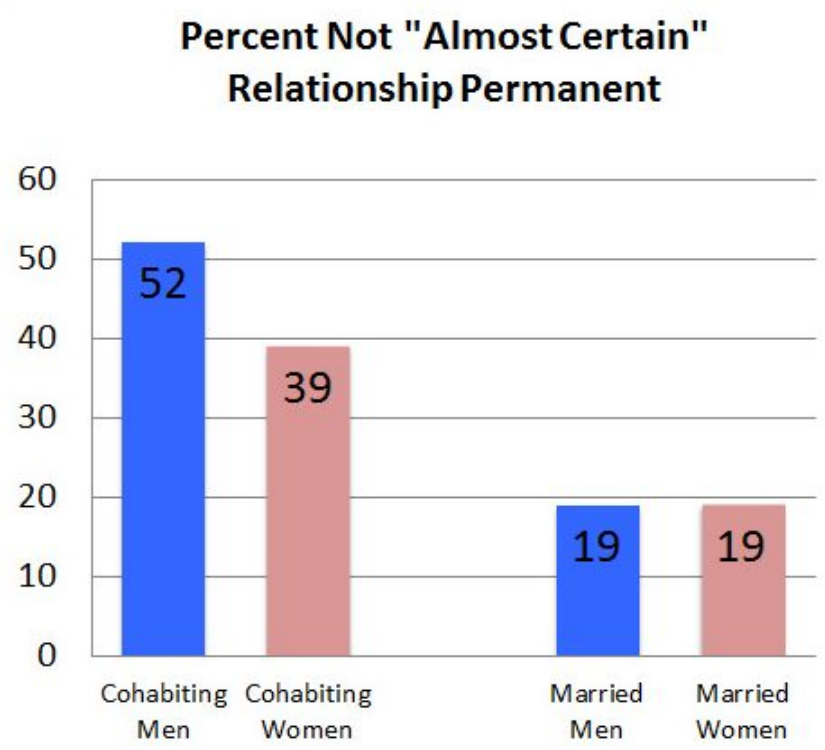

Men who cohabitate are not certain that the relationship is permanent

If there's one thing that ought to lead people to Christianity, it's the proven ability of the Christian moral rules to guide believers away from the sins that destroy them. A lot of modern "Christians" have reduced Christianity to being about their feelings and their community, while allowing the culture to determine their goals and moral boundaries. But that won't protect them from danger.

Cohabitation describes the situation of a couple moving into the same home and being sexually active, but without any legally-recognized commitment. It's extremely popular among young people today, and even Christians.

Consider this article from The Federalist about cohabitation:

> A new Pew Research Center study shows Americans both cohabitate ("live with an unmarried partner") and find cohabitation acceptable more than before.
>
> […]More young adults have cohabited than have married. Pew's analysis in the summer of 2019 of the National Survey of Family Growth found that, for the first time ever, the percentage of American adults aged 18-44 who have ever cohabited with a partner (59 percent) exceeded the percentage of those who have ever married (50 percent).

I thought this was very interesting, especially for the Christian parents and pastors who

imagine that their lovely pious daughters all have a Christian worldview just because they sing in the church choir:

> Just 14 percent hold a view consistent with a biblical sexual ethic, that cohabitation with an unmarried romantic partner outside of marriage is “never acceptable.”

Just to be clear, in my life I’ve met about 6 non-Christian men who cohabitated with women, and every single one of them cohabitated with a Christian-raised woman. That should tell you what young women are being told about relationships in their homes and churches about sex and marriage. “Do whatever you want”.

So what purpose does cohabitation serve?

> A majority of Americans (69 percent) say that “it is acceptable for an unmarried couple to live together even if they don’t plan to get married.” They may assume that they can decrease their chances of a bad marriage and increase their chances of a good one by giving the relationship a cohabitation “test run.”
>
> […]A plurality of Americans believe cohabitating before marriage yields more successful unions. Nearly half of Americans (48 percent) believe that couples who live together before marriage “have a better chance of having a successful marriage.” This view is even more prevalent among young adults aged 18-29 (63 percent).
>
> Another 38 percent of all Americans say cohabitation “doesn’t make much difference” on marital success. Only 13 percent of Americans believe cohabiting couples have “a worse chance” of having a successful marriage.
>
> […]Most Americans believe cohabitating couples raise children just as well as married couples. Pew also surveyed people’s opinions about cohabiting couples raising children, and 59 percent of Americans declared that cohabiting couples “can raise children just as well as married couples.” Again, the younger respondents were most likely to have a favorable view of cohabitation: among adults aged 18 to 49, 67 percent agreed cohabiting couples do just as well, while 32 percent said: “Married couples do a better job raising children.”

Yes, cohabitation is seen as a test run, and it’s supposed to make stable marriage more likely and not be harmful to children at all.

But why think that a test run should be part of getting married? After all, when I buy a parrot from the pet store, I don’t expect to later return that parrot. Why not? Because I am not buying the parrot to enhance MY life. I am buying the parrot to make a commitment to care for the parrot. Whether the parrot fulfills any of my needs is irrelevant to me. I want the bird in my house so that I can decide what it eats, what it drinks, and invest myself into making it happy, according to its birdish nature. This is because I think that parrots have value in and of themselves, and they deserve a certain quality of life. When I buy the parrot, I am guaranteeing a permanent commitment to the

bird to provide for its needs, physical and emotional. And that commitment carries forward to the time (now) when the bird is elderly, and can't even fly up to his cage or down to the floor. He calls for me, and I go over and pick him up and move him. That's commitment.

Cohabitation, on the other hand, is the practice of saying to another *human being*: "I am going to try you out as an entertaining commodity in my home, but if you don't fulfill *my needs* then I'm going to send you right back." That's not a commitment. That's self indulgence. It's defining a relationship as *entertainment* that is designed to meet *my needs* and *make me happy*. And that's because the concept of commitment in relationships is not presented to young people at any time in their lives. Not from parents. Not in churches. Not in the secular left culture as a whole. Everything is a consumer good designed for the purpose of entertainment – including people. It was only the Christian worldview that had a view of people as creatures made by God for eternal life, so that marriage was about guarding the other person's faith, and building them up to achieve all the things that God wanted them to achieve for his purposes.

But does cohabitation really work to create stable relationships? After all, anyone can find a partner when they're young and pretty. The real question is whether that partner will stick around when you're old and ugly and can't be as "fun" as you used to be.

Here's a recent (2018) study on cohabitation and stability:

> A new study published in the *Journal of Marriage and Famil*y finds that the "premarital cohabitation effect" lives on, despite what you've likely heard. The premarital cohabitation effect is the finding that those who live together prior to marriage are more likely, not less, to struggle in marriage.
>
> […]Michael Rosenfeld and Katharina Roesler's new findings suggest that there remains an increased risk for divorce for those living together prior to marriage, and that prior studies suggesting the effect has gone away had a bias toward short versus longer-term effects. **They find that living together before marriage is associated with lower odds of divorce in the first year of marriage, but increases the odds of divorce in all other years tested, and this finding holds across decades of data.**

Strategy advice to those who debate this issue: just be aware that Team Secular Leftist is using papers that have short-range samples, which don't show the instability problem, because they deliberately cherry-pick recently married couples.

And what about children raised in cohabitating relationships?

> While Americans are optimistic about the ability of cohabiting couples to raise children, a study published by the American College of Pediatricians in 2014 reported that children whose parents cohabit face a higher risk of: "premature birth, school failure, lower education, more poverty during childhood and lower incomes as adults, more incarceration and behavior problems, single parenthood, medical neglect and chronic health problems both medical and psychiatric, more

> substance, alcohol and tobacco abuse, and child abuse," and that "a child conceived by a cohabiting woman is at 10 times higher risk of abortion compared to one conceived in marriage."

I'm just going to be blunt here. The majority of young people are progressives, and they vote for candidates who believe in abortion through all nine months of pregnancy, and even after birth. Why? Because they don't want to have their right to seek happiness impacted by the needs of other people. Progressives believe that children, if they exist at all, should enhance the lives of their adult owners. No one should be surprised that people who think that killing inconvenient children is moral are willing to inflict other bad outcomes on them by raising them in an unstable cohabitation environment.

Creature design videos from the 2025 Dallas Conference on Science and Faith

August 27, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been trying so hard to get in a weights session and a cardio session on BOTH days of the weekend. On Saturdays, I get to watch sports and funny men's videos. On Sundays, I'm watching sermons or videos on apologetics. This past Sunday, I watched two videos on animal design from the 2025 Dallas Conference on Science and Faith, and Tuesday night I watched two more.

First, I should say that Denton Bible Church is the best church in the United States for Christian apologetics. They have been doing apologetics events featuring people like William Lane Craig as far back as I can remember. The do apologetics conferences. And they do science and faith conferences. If you live near Denton, you should by all means attend this church. And if you like sermons, they have sermons, too. I'd be more inclined to trust these guys for sermons, because of their long, long, long record of apologetics.

So, on the past Sunday, I first watched this lecture with Eric Hedin on the design of the honeybee:

This lecture is only 35 minutes, but it talks about a lot of the strange behaviors of the honeybee, including their weird message-conveying dancing.

I found an article about it at Science and Culture (formerly Evolution News):

> The famous "waggle dance" that a scout bee performs back at the hive after discovering a food source communicates to other bees (by touching, since the inside of the hive is dark) both the distance and the direction of the food in relation to the current position of the sun. Bee keepers have found that if they reorient the honeycomb on which the bee is dancing, the undaunted bee will adapt its dance so that it still correctly communicates the proper direction to the food source. Sometimes the dancing scout bee will continue its dance for more than an hour, and over this time, the position of the sun has changed. In response, the bee will compensate for the sun's movement across the sky by gradually adjusting the angle of its dance.

So, the next one I watched was by Paul Nelson, and he was talking about the Monarch butterfly:

This one is only 30 minutes. Once, when I was at an intelligent design conference in the early 2000s, Paul Nelson came up to ask a question at one of the microphones. My foot was pushing out into the aisle, and he pinched it and said hello, and he knew my real name, because it was on my name tag. I have remembered it all these years. He is one of my favorite intelligent design people.

Finally, here is the one with Ray Bohlin, talking about the design of woodpeckers:

This one is only 15 minutes long!

I have a couple of red-headed woodpeckers in my backyard, and they had been pecking on my guttering very early in the morning. I got so mad at them, that I started bringing the bird feeders in at night, and putting them out in the late morning. That worked. I'm having a lot of fun watching these amazing little creatures, the older I get. I am putting out water, seeds, nuts, fruits, and nectar (if the hummingbirds are around) every morning, and taking it all back in at night. Next I have to build nesting boxes.

The last animal design video from this conference that has to do with design in nature is the one on plants, which is done by Emily and Daniel Reeves. It's called "Plants are Creatures, Too!"

Daniel is the biologist, and Emily is the biochemist.

I remember in the old days, I would have order videos like this on VHS tapes through a web site, or by mailing in an order form and a check! And then, because I watched them over and over, I would have to rewind them over and over. Things are so much easier now. I would really like it if more young people knew how to make a case for design in nature by watching these videos over and over. What I would like is for Christians to be thinking about their faith. Not just having feelings, not just having community, but really thinking "could this really be true?" and "how would I explain what I believe to someone who doesn't accept the Bible as inspired by God?"

Do you all have something to watch during your workouts? I stopped going to pay gyms, and made a home gym in my living room (I have no furniture), and that allows me to watch wholesome constructive videos while I work out and cook meals. It encourages me to work out and cook my own meals, because I can learn something and keep my skills up.

Is the hate speech of the secular left inciting violence against Christians?

August 28, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Transgenderism is promoted by many groups: WPATH, GLAAD, hospitals like the Boston Children's Hospital, big tech companies like Google and Facebook, left-wing groups like the Human Rights Campaign, corporations like Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson, etc. Is all this advocacy for transgenderism causing violence against people who disagree with it, such as Bible-believing Christians?

The concern that Christians have is that when powerful groups promote gender dysphoria as natural and normal, then anyone who tells the truth about that can become a target. And it's not a stretch to see someone who is having mental issues turning to violence to get the approval and celebration that *they feel* will make their lifestyle choices work out for them – in the sense that compelled affirmation makes them feel good about their own choices.

By now, everyone has heard about Audrey Hale's attack on the Christian school in Nashville.

> Newly released pages purportedly from the Nashville Covenant School shooter's manifesto indicate that the shooter was strongly fixated on gender ideology and deeply held anger against Christianity.
>
> In the pages, released Wednesday by The Daily Wire, trans-identifying shooter Audrey Hale condemns her parents, harshly criticizes Christians, and fantasizes about her "imaginary penis." The pages come after months of stonewalling from authorities, who refused to confirm or deny a previous set of manifesto pages commentator Steven Crowder released in November.

On Wednesday, there was a new shooting by a new transgender shooter, this time targeting a Catholic school.

Daily Signal reports:

> The man who opened fire at a Minneapolis Catholic school Wednesday identified himself by two names, and those names match a court record for a name change in 2019.
>
> Two children, ages 8 and 10, died in the shooting, and the shooter injured 17 others. Authorities found the gunman dead at the scene. The FBI is investigating the shooting as an act of domestic terrorism and a hate crime targeting Catholics, FBI Director Kash Patel posted on X.
>
> "The shooter has been identified as Robin Westman, a male born as Robert Westman," Patel wrote. "The FBI will continue to provide updates on our ongoing investigation with the public as we are able."

> Law enforcement sources confirmed the suspect's identity as Robert Westman or Robin Westman in speaking with Fox News. The New York Post also reported that police identified Westman in a news conference and said Westman "has been identified as a transgender woman."

Just regarding the motive, the shooter did not like Jesus, and presumably followers of Jesus.

The Post Millennial explains:

> The alleged shooter in Wednesday's deadly attack at Annunciation Catholic Church and School in Minneapolis… appears to have posted a chilling video on YouTube before the massacre that makes several pop culture references as well as references to other shooters. In the footage, Westman can be seen displaying multiple firearms and ammunition magazines, as well as a target board with an image of Jesus Christ taped to it.

Now, you might remember that Minnesota is famous for their seculalism and leftism. These people aim to be "good without God", so let's see some "objective morality" from the secular left.

Here's an article from The Post Millennial:

> In the wake of a devastating mass shooting at Annunciation Catholic School that left two children dead and 17 others injured, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey preached about transgender rights during a press conference after it was revealed that the trans male killer identified as a woman.
>
> "I have heard about a whole lot of hate that's being directed at our trans community," Frey told reporters at a press briefing Wednesday afternoon.

The mayor of Minneapolis, MN is – of course – a Democrat. He has nothing good to say about Christians, but lots of good to say about transgenders. Does he think that the shooting was justified, because of disagreement with transgenderism? It's almost like he is telling Christians (the victims) not to cause more shootings by disagreeing with his transgender agenda. This certainly is an escalation from the traditional response of "don't disagree with me, or I'll end myself". Now it sounds like "don't disagree with me, or I'll end you". There were some voices saying similar things about the Nashville shooting, that it was provoked by those hateful Christians.

And in another article from The Post Millennial, the mayor says:

> "Don't just say this is about thoughts and prayers right now, these kids were literally praying."
>
> Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey delivered a statement on Wednesday after a deadly shooting at Annunciation Catholic School, rejecting "thoughts and prayers."

Andy Ngo, who follows the violence of "Trantifa" and other leftists pretty closely, tweeted

this:

We don't know the shooter's motive yet. A full investigation is needed to find out whether the motives are anti-Christian. But, there are several anti-Christian quotes from the shooter, such as the saying "Where's your God now?"

More from that article: no mention of a father in the home, but:

> Fox News reported that his mother, who worked at the school before retiring in 2021, signed off on his gender transition as a minor.

Many leftist women today are transing their children, divorcing fathers in order to get a free hand from the family courts to do it. I've blogged several examples: this one and this one and this one. I have a friend whose ex-wife is transing his kid against his will. She is making him pay for it, too. I am left to wonder if the ejection of the father from the home (69% of the time the woman initiates divorce), and then the use false accusations to get full custody, causes the child's mental issues. Children need their fathers.

By the way, be careful what corporate news sources you rely on, because they can distort the truth for their own leftist agenda.

Daily Caller explains: (archived)

> CNN senior justice correspondent Evan Perez inaccurately claimed Wednesday that semiautomatic firearms could fire "dozens of bullets" with a single pull of the trigger while covering a Minneapolis shooting.
>
> […]"What has incorrectly been termed an 'assault weapon' is a semi-automatic firearm that fires just one bullet with each pull of the trigger (versus a fully automatic firearm — machine gun — which continues to shoot until the trigger is

> released)," the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) said in a fact sheet.

And another one from The Federalist about ABC News:

> Few moments best capture ABC News' reputation as "propaganda press" better than anchor Aaron Katersky's misleading coverage of the alleged anti-Christian, anti-Trump Minneapolis school shooter — who Katersky effectively portrayed as a Trump supporter on Wednesday.
>
> […]"We've also been going through [the video manifesto] and can tell you there are crude diagrams of the church. There are also photos of the weapons, and they include all sorts of writings, the names of past mass shooters, criticism of Israel, the name of President Trump written on the guns," Katersky said Wednesday.
>
> […]Katersky omitted the actual full inscription related to Trump revealed in the videos, which was: "Kill D*****d T***p." Casual listeners who didn't see the footage of the weapons themselves or read the manifesto could easily walk away thinking Trump's name on the weapon meant allegiance to him, not homicidal rage against him.

The Federalist also has a post entitled "CNN, NYT, USA Today All Publish Stories About Shooter Without Mentioning His Trans Identity".

Would you like to see federal law enforcement do something about hate speech from the secular left that incites violence against Christians and conservatives?

Two reasons why Christians and conservatives should not donate to United Way

August 29, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, it's that time of year again, when corporations bully their employees into donating to the United Way. I thought it might be a good idea to urge all Bible-believing Christians to avoid donating to the United Way. *Please share this post if you agree with it!*

Let's start with abortion. The United Way gives TONS of money to fund abortion providers.

In 2008, United Way affiliates send $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood:

> The national United Way does fund Planned Parenthood; their website states:
>
> United Way funded programs through Planned Parenthood include community health maintenance, e.g. communicable disease prevention; medical care service; family planning; health education; public awareness services; and family preservation and strengthening services, e.g. counseling and family life education.
>
> Nationally in 2008, local United Ways distributed an estimated $1.9 million to Planned Parenthood agencies.
>
> Any finances being donated to Planned Parenthood (even if not specifically for abortion services) will free up more of their money to be used toward abortion services.

In 2015, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Last year, on the heels of shocking videos showing the Planned Parenthood abortion business selling the body parts of aborted babies, a new expose' from a group that monitors corporations that finance the abortion giant reveals the United Way is a major donor. That expose found United Way agencies giving $2 million to the abortion giant.
>
> A new expose' released this week shows that figure has increased to $3 million.

In 2016, United Way sent $3 million to Planned Parenthood:

> Analysis of the most recent IRS Form 990 filings and other documentation found 62 United Way affiliates sent $2,756,799 to Planned Parenthood abortion organizations in tax year 2016. 2ndVote's latest findings indicate an increase of $168,806 from the $2,590,994 United Way funneled to Planned Parenthood in 2015.

We're living in a time when abortion rights involves such issues as sex-selection abortions, race-selection abortions, covering up statutory rapists, Democrat support for infanticide, attacking Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, selling the body parts of

unborn babies, etc. I don't think we can count on United Way to come down on the right side of these issues. We're already being forced to fund abortions with our tax dollars, thanks to Democrats. I don't think we should give any more money to abortion providers and their secular leftist allies.

That's abortion. What about gay rights? We've seen a lot of pressure on traditional values coming from the secular left lately. They redefined marriage AGAIN to deprive children of their biological mothers or fathers. They're pushing for the Equality Act, which would have huge religious liberty repercussions for Christians.

Texas attorney Maria Martinez explains on the American Thinker:

> The Equality Act is more draconian that any state or city conversion therapy ban to date because it takes away the traditional constitutional exemption for religious freedom. The act specifically states that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) may not be invoked as a defense, marking the *first time in history that Congress has limited the reach of RFRA*. This means that it could become illegal for Christian pastors, churches, schools, and ministries to communicate a message that sexual orientation or gender identity can change. The Equality Act is unprecedented in its overreach, impacting even adults who are *willingly seeking counseling*.
>
> By contrast, therapy of any kind that pushes a person *toward* same-sex attraction or gender transition is not impacted by the law at all.
>
> Banning counseling isn't the only thing the Equality Act will do:
>
> - Parents could lose custody of their children if they decline to assist in their gender transition. Parents in Ohio recently lost custody of their female child because they would not give her testosterone supplements to help her "transition" to look like a male.
> - Doctors and hospitals could be subject to lawsuits for refusing to perform so-called "sex change" surgeries. In California and New Jersey, Catholic hospitals are already being sued for discrimination for refusing to perform these surgeries.
> - Battered women's shelters could be required to admit members of the opposite sex. In Anchorage, Alaska, a male who was refused access to a shelter for abused and trafficked women sued the shelter for "gender identity discrimination."
> - Faith-based adoption and foster care agencies that believe that children do best with both a mother and a father could be forced to shut down. This has already occurred in at least six states in this country.

I wonder what United Way thinks about attacks on Bible-believing Christians by LGBT activists? I posted what they shared on Facebook at the top of this post, and this is what I found on their Twitter:

United Way Twitter Gay Rights Pride Month LGBT

I don't find that very encouraging, do you?

As a Bible-believing Christian, maybe I would be better off giving money to an organization that protects religious liberty, like Alliance Defending Freedom. I understand that many people who call themselves Christians think that the United Way's positions are compatible with the Bible. But not everyone who calls herself a Christian actually takes the Bible seriously. Especially when it interferes with their career advancement and peer approval. This is especially true of people who work in Human Resources.

Please, don't give money to the United Way

You don't HAVE to give money to the United Way, just because the godless progressives in your office try to bully you into it. Instead, why not send the money to the Life Training Institute, or Ratio Christi, or Alliance Defending Freedom? These are groups do operate on Bible-based principles. I do think that Christians need to be careful about who they donate their money to. It doesn't make sense for Christians to get up and go to work and earn money, and then give it away to anti-Christian groups who want Christianity to disappear from American life. Paul talks about how God rewards those who give gifts to partner for the gospel in Philippians. Make sure that you are not wasting your money on anything less.

William Lane Craig debates Austin Dacey: Does God Exist?

August 30, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here is the video and summary of a debate between Christian theist William Lane Craig and Austin Dacey at Purdue University in 2004 about the existence of God.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Austin Dacey

The video: (2 hours)

The video shows the speakers and powerpoint slides of their arguments. Austin Dacey is one of the top atheist debaters, and I would put him second to Peter Millican alone, with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong in third place. This is the debate to show people who are new to apologetics. The debate with Peter Millican is better for advanced students, and that's no surprise since he teaches at Oxford University and is familiar with all of Dr. Craig's work. The Craig-Dacey debate is the one that I give to my co-workers.

By the way, you can get the DVDs and CDs for the first Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Dacey debate and the second Craig-Sinnott-Armstrong debate. The Peter Millican debate is not available on DVD, but the link above (Peter Millican) has the video and my summary.

Dr. Dacey's 5 arguments below are all good arguments that you find in the academic literature. He is also an effective and engaging speaker, This is a great debate to watch!

SUMMARY of the opening speeches:

Dr. Craig's opening statement:

Dr. Craig will present six reasons why God exists:

1. (Contingency argument) God is the best explanation of why something exists rather than nothing
2. (Cosmological argument) God's existence is implied by the origin of the universe
3. (Fine-tuning argument) The fine-tuning of the universe for intelligent life points to a designer of the cosmos
4. (Moral argument) God is the best explanation for the existence of objective moral values and objective moral duties
5. (Miracles argument) The historical facts surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
6. (Religious experience) God's existence is directly knowable even apart from arguments

Dr. Dacey's opening argument:

There are two ways to disprove God's existence, by showing that the concept of God is self-contradictory, or by showing that certain facts about ourselves and the world are incompatible with what we would expect to be true if God did exist. Dr. Dacey will focus on the second kind of argument.

1. The hiddenness of God
2. The success of science in explaining nature without needing a supernatural agency
3. The dependence of mind on physical processes in the brain
4. Naturalistic evolution
5. The existence of gratuitous / pointless evil and suffering

One final point:

One thing that I have to point out is that Dr. Dacey quotes Brian Greene during the debate to counter Dr. Craig's cosmological argument. Dr. Craig could not respond because he can't see the context of the quote. However, Dr. Craig had a rematch with Dr. Dacey where was able to read the context of the quote and defuse Dr. Dacey's objection. This is what he wrote in his August 2005 newsletter after the re-match:

> The following week, I was off an another three-day trip, this time to California State University at Fresno. As part of a week of campus outreach the Veritas Forum scheduled a debate on the existence of God between me and Austin Dacey, whom I had debated last spring at Purdue University. In preparation for the rematch I adopted two strategies: (1) Since Dacey had come to the Purdue debate with prepared speeches, I decided to throw him for a loop by offering a different set of arguments for God, so that his canned objections wouldn't apply. I chose to focus on the cosmological argument, giving four separate arguments for the beginning of the universe, and on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. (2) I reviewed our previous debate carefully, preparing critiques of his five atheistic arguments. In the process I found that he had seriously misunderstood or misrepresented a statement by a scientist on the Big Bang; so I brought along the book itself in case Dacey quoted this source again. I figured he might change his arguments just as I was doing; but I wanted to be ready in case he used his old arguments again.
>
> […]The auditorium was packed that night for the debate, and I later learned that there were overflow rooms, too. To my surprise Dr. Dacey gave the very same case he had presented at Purdue; so he really got clobbered on those arguments. Because he wasn't prepared for my new arguments, he didn't even respond to two of my arguments for the beginning of the universe, though he did a credible job responding to the others. I was pleased when he attacked the Big Bang by quoting the same scientist as before, because I then held up the book, specified the page number, and proceeded to quote the context to show what the scientist really meant.

Dr. Craig is always prepared!

Why is Jen Hatmaker popular with evangelical women?

August 31, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed from the latest round-up of Truthbomb Apologetics that Chad had found some interesting news about Jen Hatmaker. I remember that Jen Hatmaker, like Beth Moore, used to be a Southern Baptist and then left the denomination. I never pay much attention to these popular women. I prefer Walter Bradley, Stephen C. Meyer, Jay Richards, etc. Let's see why they are different.

First, let's see the latest news about Jen Hatmaker, in the far-left New York Times: (archived)

> Jen Hatmaker went through a drastic middle-age crisis like that. Twice. Hatmaker, who is 51, had built a career as a Christian women's influencer, best-selling author and TV personality — all along modeling a lighthearted, relatable yet enviable family lifestyle for evangelical women. Then, about a decade ago, she went through a public shift away from some of her most conservative stances on things like gay marriage.

The thing is, I want to know why she was a Christian influencer in the first place. When I am picking a Christian influencer, I am picking people who allow me to defend the Boss and disciple Christians in areas that are being challenged. So, I care about what James Tour says about the origin of life. I care about what Jay Richards says about economics. I care about what Sean McDowell says about the gospels. Why would I care about someone who makes me feel things about my own life? There is a war on, and I want to know how to train, fight, lead and win about what's actually true. I don't have a me-centered view of Christianity. I am on a truth quest, not a happiness quest.

More from the article:

> **On your website, you say, "I used to be a darling of the evangelical women's subculture, but now I am a bit of a problem child." How did you become a darling?** I grew up in a really traditional, regimented Christian environment, the Southern Baptist world. I had always been good at being good, so that was a great environment for me to succeed in because it's rules based: This is what we do, this is what we don't do, this is what we believe, this what we don't believe. I went to a Baptist college, and I married a ministry major. We immediately went into full-time ministry. But the way that it works in church is a two-for-one approach: His job was my second job. I was a teacher, but I was at every single church thing that existed. Then when I was 29, I wrote my first book. Miraculously it got published, it became a five-book contract, and thus began my ascent into evangelical lady subculture.

Notice what she says here, that the Southern Baptist world is a "rules based" world. And

that's what I've seen as well, and I would extend it to every conservative denomination. What's emphasized there is behaviors and community. What is not emphasized is truth. That's why they produce people like Russell Moore and Brent Leatherwood. Those people are great at feeling good and being liked by non-Christians. But they have literally no knowledge or skills when it comes to defending the Bible's truth claims and commandments. They don't speak or write about evidential apologetics, and they have no evidence-based defense for any of the Bible's moral teachings that would work on a non-Christian.

My view of Christianity is totally different from their "I'll follow the parent and church rules, and that entitles me to happiness, community and success". My view is "the Bible is full of truth claims and moral commands. Jesus gave arguments and evidence for those truth claims and commands. I have access to the Holy Spirit to help me do the same. How can I manage the resources that God has entrusted to me well, so that I can promote his truth and commands most powerfully and persuasively?"

I just don't have the expectation that "following the rules" will lead to a happy life of social acceptance. When I read military history, what I see is a lot of people sacrificing their happiness and even safety in order to serve their commanding officer. (2 Tim 2:3-4) Not sure how anyone can read the Bible and not get the idea that with respect to God's purposes in the world, our happiness and popularity are *expendable*. Also, people who suffer while following the Boss are the most honorable and blessed. I'm really wondering whether people like Jen Hatmaker, Rachel Hollis, Glennon Doyle Melton, etc. have ever read and understood the Bible at all.

Gay Rights Women Pride Feminism

Apparently, getting soft on Jesus' definition of marriage is a big winner with evangelical women:

> Maybe 10 days before the 2016 election, I gave an interview to the Religious News Service in which I said, I've changed my mind on this, and I'm in full

> affirmation of the L.G.B.T.Q.I.A. community. That was it. My books were pulled off shelves the next day. My most successful book was put out of print. All my speaking engagements were canceled. My publisher put out a press release the next day against me. I thought my career was over, but then to my surprise, my community began backfilling with hundreds of thousands of primarily women who were in a similar seat as me going, This is what we were raised in, this is what we were taught, but this is no longer holding. That began a whole new period of my life.

So, I am pretty strong on defending marriage. I've written secular cases against no-fault divorce, the sexual revolution, cohabitation, premarital sex, same-sex marriage, etc. Rose and I have done podcast episodes about it. And in every case, I'm making logical arguments, I'm quoting secular data, like studies on how children do best with their biological mother and father. But, I guess knowing how to fight to defend the Bible is not a really big priority in conservative denominations. Instead, they prefer feminized priorities: making people feel good, making people be liked. It's like it doesn't matter to anyone what Jesus says about sexual issues, because Jesus has a higher goal: making his followers feel good and be liked by non-Christians. And that's what makes women like Hatmaker and Moore famous in evangelical circles.

Well, I don't know anything about Christian women. I don't read books by the authors that are popular with women. I don't listen to the music that is popular with women. I don't watch the movies that are popular with women. I just don't understand how women can go through a Christian upbringing and then come out like Jen Hatmaker, raging against chastity and natural marriage, and not bothering to do a stitch of actual research about either. When I go to a car mechanic, I want an expert to fix the car. Why do so many Christian women choose someone who is not an expert at anything related to Christian truth and ethics?

Women Protesting

My thoughts

I asked Grok why Hatmaker and Moore are so popular with evangelical women when they can't advocate for the Bible's truth claims and moral teachings with reason and evidence, the way that Jesus and Paul, etc. did in the Bible when dealing with skeptics and enemies.

And here is what Grok said:

> Jen Hatmaker and Beth Moore's popularity among evangelical women stems from their relatable personas, emotional authenticity, and ability to connect through storytelling, social media, and accessible teachings. Hatmaker's humor and transparency about family life, combined with Moore's passionate Bible studies, resonate with women seeking inspiration and community, often filling gaps left by male-dominated church structures. Their platforms, amplified by books, podcasts, and events, create a sense of intimacy and empowerment, appealing to women navigating faith in modern contexts.
>
> Critically, their appeal lacks the intellectual rigor of apologists like Jay Richards or William Lane Craig, focusing instead on emotional engagement over evidential apologetics. Their shift toward progressive stances—Hatmaker's support for gay marriage and abortion rights, Moore's critiques of evangelical Trumpism—diverges from traditional evangelical values, yet retains followers due to their emphasis on compassion and inclusion. This may reflect some women's preference for affirming, less confrontational messages, possibly tied to cultural trends toward entitlement or people-pleasing, though it risks diluting doctrinal accountability. Their limited engagement against feminism, socialism, or atheism, and alignment with leftist politics, suggests their influence lies more in emotional resonance than theological or ideological consistency, which may not deter women prioritizing relatability over orthodoxy.

I would never rely on someone like this do achieve anything that had to work in the real world.

I always wanted to partner with Christian women who advocate for God with non-Christians using reason and evidence. If you look at my podcast with Desert Rose, that's what I think women should be like. In that podcast, I promote women's voices who I admire and respect like Natasha Crain, Shanda Fulbright, Terrell Clemmons, etc. But it sure does seem like the bulk of Christian women have a totally different way of approaching Christianity than I do.

Are unions good for American workers?

September 1, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to write a post about unions for Labor day. I have to be nice, because my conservative neighbor to the north really likes unions, and there are conservative people who work in unions. In fact, many people who work in unions don't like that they are forced to pay union dues in order to work, because they know those union dues go straight to the secular left, to push for leftist policies.

Let's start with this article from John Stossel, that appeared in Daily Signal, because it explains how unions like the Teamsters work:

> Another was Yellow Corp—once one of the largest freight carriers in America.
>
> Then the Teamsters threatened to strike, demanding faster payments of healthcare and pension benefits.
>
> The company warned that a strike could bankrupt it.
>
> But O'Brien kept pushing, saying, "The company has two more days to fulfill its obligations, or we will strike. Teamsters at Yellow are furious and ready to act!"
>
> Yellow gave in. The strike was averted.
>
> Days later … the trucking company shut down for good.
>
> Thirty thousand people lost their jobs.
>
> Asked if he felt responsible for the lost jobs, O'Brien said, "No, not at all … they were so mismanaged."

I think a case can be made for private sector unions, but not public sector unions. Public sector unions are unions composed of government workers.

Here is an article written by my favorite economist Thomas Sowell. As usual, Sowell is able to dig around in the past to show you how policies that sounds so good to the ears have worked out so badly when tried.

He writes:

> The old-time, legendary labor leader John L. Lewis called so many strikes in the coal mines that many people switched to using oil instead, because they couldn't depend on coal deliveries. A professor of labor economics at the University of Chicago called John L. Lewis "the world's greatest oil salesman."
>
> There is no question that Lewis' United Mine Workers Union raised the pay and other benefits for coal miners. But the higher costs of producing coal not only led many consumers to switch to oil, these costs also led coal companies to substitute machinery for labor, reducing the number of miners.
>
> By the 1960s, many coal-mining towns were almost ghost towns. But few people connected the dots back to the glory years of John L. Lewis. The United Mine Workers Union did not kill the goose that laid the golden eggs, but it created a

> situation where fewer of those golden eggs reached the miners.
>
> It was much the same story in the automobile industry and the steel industry, where large pensions and costly work rules drove up the prices of finished products and drove down the number of jobs. There is a reason why there was a major decline in the proportion of private sector employees who joined unions. It was not just the number of union workers who ended up losing their jobs. Other workers saw the handwriting on the wall and refused to join unions.

So, just think about how unions work on Labor Day, and ask yourself whether they are good for anyone except the union bosses. I do think that a case can be made for private sector labor unions, as long as they let workers who want to join opt-in voluntarily. But I don’t think any case can be made for public sector unions. They end up costing taxpayers a lot of money, and they can’t be stopped by a company going out of business. That’s why we have a $37 trillion national debt, and our children (and children’s children) will be the ones who have to pay it off.

Why do so many ordinary Americans distrust the medical industry?

September 2, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was having a conversation about trust in the medical industry with my doctor, and he told me that his patients were just being tricked by "social media", whereas doctors like him are "evidence-based". First of all, the people I follow on social media are now running the NIH, FDA and CDC. So now I am the science. Second of all, the public's distrust of doctors is based on evidence.

Let's take a look at an article from the Manhattan Institute's City Journal by Leon Sapir about the American Medical Association:

> The American Medical Association (AMA) is the largest and most powerful doctors' organization in the United States. It has also consistently supported pediatric medical transition, or "gender-affirming care," which includes puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgeries administered to minors. The AMA has passed a resolution promising to protect these procedures, joined an amicus brief in a lawsuit challenging a state age-restriction law, and written a letter urging state governors to veto similar legislation.

So, I think what consumers of medical services are seeing what the professional body of doctors says about transing kids, and they are thinking "gender dysphoria is a mental illness, and you cannot treat it with hormone replacement, and sex mutilation surgeries". We are not just thinking about long-term consequences like infertility and continuous expensive treatments. Many of these doctors aren't citing the studies at all, just asking parents "would you rather have a dead girl or a live boy?" That not evidence-based.

More:

> The AMA has done all this despite the findings from systematic reviews—the gold standard of evidence-based medicine (EBM)—of weak evidence for these treatments' mental health benefits, and despite the corresponding health risks.
>
> […]Skeptics of the AMA's position have wondered how a professional medical organization could have ignored systematic reviews. New videos published by the Daily Wire provide a possible answer. The videos reveal the AMA's president, the Michigan-based otolaryngologist Bobby Mukkamala, making false claims about pediatric gender medicine and demonstrating ignorance of basic concepts in EBM.
>
> […]In accordance with his belief about expertise, Mukkamala recommended that a legislator consult with one gender doctor in particular, fellow Michigander Jesse Krikorian. The Daily Wire videos also reveal that Krikorian, like Mukkamala, is unfamiliar with basic principles of EBM and with existing research on pediatric gender medicine.

Now, my doctor would probably have a very negative view of parents ability to form opinions about health care policy. But actually, ordinary people like me are following the studies closely, and ordinary people like you are reading about the studies, too.

The AMA's stance contradicts years of research I've covered, including:

- New study: Risks associated with pediatric "gender-affirming" care
- New study: Transgender surgeries linked to suicidal ideation, depression
- New study: gender-affirming surgery associated with suicide attempts
- Pre-ban study: 53% of mothers with gender-confused boys have mental illness
- New study: Significant parallels found between anorexia and gender dysphoria
- New study: most children suffering from gender confusion grow out of it
- New study: Mental health issues persist after receiving "gender-affirming" treatment
- Study: "social contagion" is a major factor in teen and young adult gender dysphoria
- New study: psychotherapy improves mental health of autistic teens with gender dysphoria
- Controversial study on Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria and transgenderism re-published

The UK's Cass Review, which I discussed in my May 2025 post linked above, is a gold-standard analysis. It found no consistent mental health benefits from puberty blockers or hormones, yet the AMA pushes these treatments regardless. I'm blogging about the gold standard studies, but AMA people think that ordinary people are not following the science. We are. Christians and conservatives bound our worldviews off of what science tells us. We are not being swayed by Big Medicine and Big LGBT to suppress the science. The AMA argues gender-affirming care reduces distress, but the Cass Review and other studies show no consistent mental health benefits.

The rest of that City Journal article talks about some of the myths that are believed by senior people at the AMA. (Either they are deliberately lying because transing kids is "a big money-maker", or they are just ignorant of the research)

Here's one example:

> The AMA president… asserted that the suicide rate— not suicidal ideation or attempts, but deaths by suicide—among people who identify as transgender is between "50 and 70 percent." He was clearly implying that gender-transition procedures for minors are necessary to prevent these tragic outcomes.
>
> This claim is baseless. Indeed, even the most outspoken advocates of pediatric transition refrain from saying that suicide—as opposed to suicidal ideation or attempts—is this high among trans-identifying youth… Last December, ACLU lawyer and LGBTQ & HIV Project co-director Chase Strangio admitted in a Supreme Court hearing that "suicide, thankfully and admittedly, is rare" among trans-identifying youth.
>
> […]No credible evidence shows that medical transition resolves or lowers the rate of suicidal behavior, and some evidence suggests that suicide risk remains

> significantly elevated—though still nowhere near the figures cited by Mukkamala—following medical transition.

I think my doctor is probably thinking that rank-and-file Americans are not following these issues closely. We interviewed Dr. Jay Richards on our podcast, who is one of the experts on this issue at the Heritage Foundation think tank. I follow Jay Richards on Twitter, and he tweets out all the studies that he expects ordinary Americans to read them – at least the abstracts!

Heritage is a think tank that influences legislation and policy in the federal government. I read everything that Jay tweets, and that's how I find all these studies. So, maybe social media is not such a bad thing, if it leads to the studies. It's certainly a lot better than listening to NPR and reading the New York Times and the Washington Post and expecting to have accurate views about these topics.

I’m adding the waiting time problem to my list of scientific evidences for God

September 3, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I keep a list of all of the scientific evidences that are incompatible with naturalism / materialism / atheism. After our podcast episode with Gunter Bechly, I learned a new argument that he called “the waiting time problem”. I’ve been asking around to see how respected this argument is from all sides, and I found out that even naturalists agree that the problem is a real problem for naturalism.

So, let me tell you what it is first, with this article from Science and Culture.

Let me explain what the waiting time problem is first. The waiting time problem is a challenge to Darwinian evolution based on paleontology and population genetics. Population genetics explains microevolution, like germs building up resistance to drugs. But the same calculations that support microevolution reveal that geological timeframes from paleontology are too short for the genetic changes needed for major evolutionary transitions.

How many mutations are needed for an advantageous adaptation that natural selection can select for? Complex adaptations require “coordinated mutations”. Coordinated mutations are when two or more genetic changes happen together, each harmless on its own, but together they create a useful trait that natural selection can pass on to future generations. Many adaptations need these mutations, as shown by research and the fact that many traits are controlled by multiple genes.

So the article, which is written by Bechly explains the argument:

> So here is how the waiting time problem is derived:
>
> - Evolution is supposed to proceed by random mutation and natural/sexual selection.
> - Selection can only work on mutations with a positive or negative adaptive value.
> - At least some adaptive advantages require two or more coordinated mutations.
> - Any evolutionary adaptation requires mutations that have to arise and spread in a population. Thus, all mutations have two time constraints that mainly depend on mutation rate, population size, and generation time: the waiting time for a mutation to occur and the waiting time for the fixation of this mutation.

- Question: Does the history of life provide sufficient resources for evolution to accommodate these waiting times? The answer can be shown to be negative!
- Conclusion: Neo-Darwinism is mathematically refuted as a viable theory of macroevolution.

Now, what I care about is this. First, what does paleontology say is the window of time available for a complex adaptation? And second, what does population genetics say is a reasonable time to get a coordinate mutation that can get you a complex adaptation?

Now, putting on my Darwinist hat, the first thing I thought of is that the time might be short, but the coordinated mutations would be easier to get with a very very large population. But, since I'm not a biologist, I was wrong – a large population has its own problem. Larger populations have a longer "fixation time". The fixation time is the time it takes for a new mutation to spread and become permanent in an entire population, so every individual has it.

Bechly explains:

> Indeed the waiting time problem is not just a simple problem but rather an inextricable dilemma, because however you change the crucial parameter of population size, it will always increase one of the two waiting times. With large population sizes the waiting time for a mutation to occur decreases, but fixation time increases (the same is true for neutral evolution). With small population sizes the waiting time for a mutation to occur increases, but fixation time decreases. Thus, there is no easy way for evolution to work around the waiting time problem, e.g. by means of genetic drift and the founder effect.

Why is this argument so wonderful? Because unlike many arguments that philosophers make, we can actually do math to prove this argument. This is the equivalent of me writing a unit test with the given, when, then structure. Given a known window of time from the fossil record, when evolving a coordinated mutation, then the time taken must be less than the window of time available.

Bechly says:

> The amazing power of the argument from the waiting time problem is that it does not rely on fuzzy concepts but actually allows you to do the math, based on the well-established mathematical apparatus of mainstream population genetics. All required parameters are either known empirically or their range can be reasonably estimated by comparisons with recent relatives (e.g., mutation rates, effective population sizes, generation turnover times, length of binding sites, etc). The fossil record and radiometric dating provide the data for the available windows of time.

So that's everything in the argument. Now we have to decide whether to add it to my

awesome list of atheist-defeating evidence. How to decide? Well, we have to get people on the other side to agree with us that the window of time is too small, and the waiting time for coordinated mutations is too large. And they do! Let's take a look at the domain of human evolution, to see an example of a change that requires many, many coordinated mutations (if not done directly by an intelligent designer).

Bechly explains:

> Michael Behe (2007) in his book The Edge of Evolution made the argument that the waiting time for two coordinated mutations is prohibitive for the Neo-Darwinian mechanism of evolution to work. Behe used empirical data about an actual waiting time for a coordinated mutation that conveyed chloroquine drug resistance in malaria. Applying these empirical data on human evolution, by simply correcting for the much lower population size and much longer generation time, predicted a waiting time of 10^15 years, which is many orders of magnitude longer than the existence of our universe! The mainstream population geneticists Durrett & Schmidt (2008) criticized Behe's argument with a mathematical model and claimed that his calculated waiting time of 1015 years is unrealistic. However, their own calculations also resulted in a prohibitive waiting time of 216 million years for a single coordinated mutation in human evolution, which vastly exceeds the available window of time of only about 6 million years since the split of the human lineage and the chimp lineage from a common ancestor.
>
> Of course, when results from a theoretical model differ so greatly from experimental real world data, we should rather trust the real world data, because every model necessarily has to make certain simplifications that can introduce errors. Consequently, Behe's numbers are certainly closer to the true limits of the Darwinian mechanism than those of Durrett and Schmidt. Anyway, both numbers are prohibitive and refute the feasibility of a Darwinian mechanism of macroevolution.

So, even the naturalists agree that evolution doesn't work, because the 216 million years they calculated is still bigger than the 6 million years that are available for the macroevolution they want to explain.

But, and this is interesting, there is an application here to the recent post I wrote about the chimp – human DNA difference. Often thought to be 1%, the new evidence shows that it is closer to 15%. But the main thing is, Bechly says that you need MILLIONS of coordinated mutations to make all the changes to go from chimp to human:

> Using a different model, Sanford et al. (2015) applied a computer simulation to calculate the waiting times in human evolution based on reasonable estimates for an ancestral hominin population of 10,000 individuals and a generation turnover time of 20 years. They arrived at fixation times of 85 million years for a single codependent mutation, and 1.5-15.9 million years for a single specific

> point mutation. This is very remarkable and prohibitive, considering the fact that the assumed 5% difference in the human vs chimp genome translates to millions of mutations that had to arise and become fixed within 6 million years since the assumed separation of their respective lineages. This comes [in addition to] the waiting time problem for coordinated mutations but is a separate argument (see below).

Sanford, by the way is a brilliant scientist who also happens to be a young Earth creationist. But his paper appears in a mainstream scientific journal.

So, I think it's reasonable for me to add this argument to my list of scientific arguments against naturalism, and for a Creator / Designer.

Here is the updated list:

1. origin of the universe
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. origin of life (specified complexity)
4. Cambrian explosion (and other explosions)
5. galactic, stellar and planetary habitability
6. molecular machines
7. non-material mind, e.g. – split brain surgery
8. the waiting time problem

Of course, there are philosophical arguments like "the moral argument" and "St. Thomas Augustine says" and "do you want fries with that?", but who cares about philosophy, when you can have SCIENCE! Scientific arguments are the best kind of arguments!

Do you know any more evidences that are solid enough to go on my list of evidences?

The pipeline from divorce to school shootings

September 4, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There was a recent school shooting in Minneapolis, MN, so in this post, I'll reflect on how to prevent more school shootings. People on the left say that we need to confiscate the weapons owned by law-abiding people, so that only the criminals and police will have guns. People on the right want to allow adults at the schools to train and carry weapons. But I have a different idea: let's ban divorce.

First, how many of the shooters are from divorced homes? This new article from The Federalist is very popular, and it has a lot of data. It starts off by mentioning that the Minneapolis school shooter's parents were divorced. But he's not the only one!

It says:

> A 2018 international academic study found a strong link between childhood separation from parents and an "elevated risk for later violent criminality." (The study specifically excluded children with deceased parents.) A subsequent nationwide analysis bolstered these results, finding a strong association between two-parent households and cities with markedly less crime. Indeed, nearly every school shooting in 2013 involved young men with divorced or never married parents.
>
> "The social scientific evidence about the connection between violence and broken homes could not be clearer," says Brad Wilcox, Distinguished University Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia and considered a leading authority on marriage and family.
>
> Westman's parents divorced in 2013. Westman would have been about 12, on the cusp of adolescence. After the split, Westman, a biological male who later identified as a woman, bounced from school to school. And dad remarried — the shooter's manifesto mentions the step-mom.

So, when arguing social issues, it's not good to argue from one case here and one case there. We need a study that covers all the cases. If you don't use a study, then people will always say "well, I am special, I won't end up like that one person".

More data from the article:

> Decades of research also demonstrate solid connections between divorce and single-parent households, on the one hand, and other serious child outcomes, on the other. For example, boys in single mother households have twice the rate of juvenile delinquency. Divorce increases the risk for depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicide, which can be particularly acute during adolescence. The evidence Westman left behind exhibited deep levels of stress, self-loathing, and hate. Westman alluded to school suspensions and smoked marijuana. Then, after killing two children, Westman committed suicide, just like

> the Sandy Hook and Colorado school shooters.

If you've ever spoken to a police officer or read a book by J. Warner Wallace, then you'll know that a huge majority of men in prisons were raised fatherless.

The article says:

> According to a central finding from a 2024 marriage report, "young men from non-intact families are more likely to land in prison or jail than they are to graduate from college." Westman appears not to have even graduated from high school. Still, divorce rates remain high, marriage rates plummet, and innocent children die.

One of the things that people on the left like to do with studies is to say "well, this study is not applicable because it doesn't look at a large enough sample size" or "this study is not applicable because it doesn't look at a long enough time period". That's what they love to do with studies of fatherless kids. But some of the studies cited in that article are about over a million children, and over decades of time. So, you can't dismiss these studies.

So, the next time that you get into a discussion about school shootings, ask the people on the secular left if they are willing to ban no-fault divorce. Typically, they will say no. Most divorces are initiated by women, and people want women to have divorce as an option. We don't expect women to have to do the work to measure the man and then take responsibility for their choices. Society wants women to have a "get out of accountability free" card, just like they do with abortion. But as you can see, making divorce easy causes a lot of problems for children.

Now, some feminists will say "do you expect women to stay in unhappy marriages?" And the answer to that is, of course not. I think that the person who initiates the divorce should leave the marital home with the clothes on their back. Not one penny of family money, and no more access to kids, except if the remaining parent agrees to it. The parent who remains should keep everything. That would end divorce pretty quickly, and all the problems that arise from the fatherlessness that divorce causes. What do you think?

New study: break-ups are harder for men than for women

September 5, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found a new 2024 study that is related to male-female romantic relationships! A lot of people think that men are less committed than women, but if you look at the data, men initiate fewer divorces than women, and they take break-ups a lot harder than women. And lesbian couples have the highest rates of divorce! Let's take a look at the data.

Here's the report on the new study, from the New York Post:

> Breaking up is hard to do — for men, anyway.
>
> That's because males care more about being in a relationship than females, a new study set to be published in Behavioural and Brain Sciences found, according to PsyPost.
>
> Researchers at the Humboldt University of Berlin are pouring cold water on the popular belief that gals are more desperate for a partner — saying that guys are more likely to experience loneliness after calling it quits, and are less likely to see the silver lining to the situation.
>
> The team analyzed more than 50 scientific studies on gender differences in heterosexual relationships to come up with their findings.

Women are more likely to initiate divorces than men:

> The results could explain why men are less likely than women to initiate a break-up when in a steady relationship — 70% of divorces are initiated by women, the experts stated.
>
> Men are also more likely to search for a partner and to be focused on entering into a serious relationship — perhaps because they have more to gain.
>
> "We know from numerous studies that women typically receive more emotional support from their social environment than men. Therefore, heterosexual men are more dependent on their partners to fulfill their emotional needs than heterosexual women," Iris Wahring, lead author of the study, said in a statement.
>
> "In short, steady relationships are psychologically more important for men than for women."

If you look at the instability rates of lesbians, they have the highest rates of relationship instability of any relationship arrangement.

> During the five years of marriage, lesbian spouses have twice the risk of divorce compared to heterosexual marriages. Only after 25 years of marriage this difference seems to be gone, the study shows. Same-sex male couples only have an 8 percent higher chance of getting divorced than heterosexual couples in that

> same period. Senior researcher Ruhne Zahl Olsen is not surprised by the results. They have been the same in other countries, he says to Aftenposten.
>
> […]For the survey, 5,187 same-sex couples and marriages entered between 1993 and 2018 were examined.

This is important, because in lesbian relationships, it’s two women. So, you can’t blame the high rate of instability / divorce on any man. There isn’t any man there to blame!

Anyway, I thought this new study would be good for men. Men are always getting beaten up and blamed for everything. But not everything about men is bad. I don’t mean the top 20% most attractive men, who have so many options that they don’t have to be nice to any particular woman. I mean the vast majority of ordinary men who just work and live quiet lives. They are the ones who are good at commitment.

Something to think about for those who are wondering “where are all the good men?”. Men are good, you just have to choose the good character ones.

William Lane Craig on the unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature

September 6, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember that Dr. Craig used a new argument in his debate with Lawrence Krauss in Melbourne, Australia.

My notes on the debate record it thus:

> The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics:
>
> - The underlying structure of nature is mathematical – mathematics is *applicable* to nature
> - Mathematical objects can either be abstract objects or useful fiction
> - Either way, there is no reason to expect that nature should be linked to abstract objects or fictions
> - But a divine mind that wants humans to understand nature is a better explanation for what we see

And now Dr. Craig has expanded on it in the Q&A section of his Reasonable Faith web site.

The question:

> Dear Dr Craig
>
> Firstly can I thank you for all your work. My faith in Christ has been enormously strengthened through studying your work in apologetics in particular and I have grown in confidence in my Christian witness.
>
> My question relates to numbers and mathematics as a whole. On the Defenders podcast you state that as God is the only self-existent, necessary being, numbers and mathematical objects, whilst being useful, don't actually exist as these too would exist necessarily and independently of God. If this is the case, how can it be that mathematics is so easily applied to the natural world? Surely if mathematics only existed in our minds, we would expect to see no correlation between it and how the physical world actually is?
>
> Michael
>
> United Kingdom

Excerpt from the answer:

> As philosopher of mathematics Mary Leng points out, for the non-theistic realist, the fact that physical reality behaves in line with the dictates of acausal mathematical entities existing beyond space and time is "a happy coincidence"

> (*Mathematics and Reality* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], p. 239). Think about it: If, *per impossibile*, all the abstract objects in the mathematical realm were to disappear overnight, there would be no effect on the physical world. This is simply to reiterate that abstract objects are causally inert. The idea that realism somehow accounts for the applicability of mathematics "is actually very counterintuitive," muses Mark Balaguer, a philosopher of mathematics. "The idea here is that in order to believe that the physical world has the nature that empirical science assigns to it, I have to believe that there are causally inert mathematical objects, existing outside of spacetime," an idea which is inherently implausible (*Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], p. 136).
>
> By contrast, the theistic realist can argue that God has fashioned the world on the structure of the mathematical objects. This is essentially what Plato believed. The world has mathematical structure as a result.

This argument was also made by mechanical engineering professor Walter Bradley in a lecture he gave on scientific evidence for an intelligent designer. You can read an essay that covers some of the material in that lecture at Leadership University.

Excerpt:

> The physical universe is surprising in the simple mathematical form it assumes. All the basic laws of physics and fundamental relationships can be described on one side of one sheet of paper because they are so few in number and so simple in form (see table 1.1).
>
> […]It has been widely recognized for some time that nature assumes a form that is elegantly described by a relatively small number of simple, mathematical relationships, as previously noted in table 1.1. None of the various proposals presented later in this chapter to explain the complexity of the universe address this issue. Albert Einstein in a letter to a friend expressed his amazement that the universe takes such a form (Einstein 1956), saying:
>
> You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world to the degree that we may speak of such comprehensibility as a miracle or an eternal mystery. Well, a priori one should expect a chaotic world which cannot be in any way grasped through thought. . . . The kind of order created, for example, by Newton's theory of gravity is of quite a different kind. Even if the axioms of the theory are posited by a human being, the success of such an enterprise presupposes an order in the objective world of a high degree which one has no a priori right to expect. That is the "miracle" which grows increasingly persuasive with the increasing development of knowledge.
>
> Alexander Polykov (1986), one of the top physicists in Russia, commenting on the mathematical character of the universe, said: "We know that nature is described by the best of all possible mathematics because God created it." Paul Davies, an

> astrophysicist from England, says, “The equations of physics have in them incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there must be a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe” (Davies 1984). Successful development of a unified field theory in the future would only add to this remarkable situation, further reducing the number of equations required to describe nature, indicating even further unity and integration in the natural phenomena than have been observed to date.

The whole paper that started this off is called “The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics”, and it is a must read for advanced Christian defenders. You can read the whole thing here.

How does church appear to someone raised in a non-Christian home?

September 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My friend Wes posted an article about how communication is set up in the church, and why it's not effective at equipping Christians to defend their worldview in hostile environments. The article describes what I encountered in church, after I was raised in a non-Christian home and become a Christian on my own by reading the New Testament. The view presented in the essay is how I viewed the church, and is probably how most outsiders view church. I think it explains why young people leave the church in droves once they move out of their parents' houses.

The author writes:

> On the Internet, one soon discovers that many respected church leaders are quite unable to deal directly with opposing viewpoints. In fact, many of them can't even manage meaningful engagement with *other voices*. Their tweets may be entirely one-way conversations. They talk *at* their audiences. They can talk *about* other voices, but fail to talk *to* them, let alone *with* them. Their representations of opposing viewpoints reveal little direct exposure to the viewpoints in question.
>
> […]Around this point, it can start to dawn on one that many church leaders have only been trained in forms of discourse such as the sermon and, to a much lesser extent, the essay. Both forms privilege a single voice—their voice—and don't provide a natural space for response, questioning, and challenge. Their opinions have been assumed to be superior to opposing viewpoints, but have never been demonstrated to be so. While they may have spoken or written about opposing voices, they are quite unaccustomed to speaking or writing to them (not to mention listening to or being cross-examined by them). There are benefits to the fact that the sermon is a form of discourse that doesn't invite interruption or talking back, but not when this is the *only* form of discourse its practitioners are adept in.
>
> Many church leaders have been raised and trained in ideologically homogenous cultures or contexts that discouraged oppositional discourse. Many have been protected from hostile perspectives that might unsettle their faith. Throughout, their theological opinions and voices have been given a privileged status, immune from challenge. Nominal challenges could be brushed off by a reassertion of the monologue. They were safe to speak about and habitually misrepresent other voices to their hearers and readers, without needing to worry about those voices ever enjoying the power to answer them back. Many of the more widely read members of their congregations may have had an inkling of the weakness of their positions in the past: the Internet just makes it more apparent.

One of my friends who comments here as “Wintery’s Friend” actually did his M. Div, and I think it was he who told me that his seminary had dropped the lone course in apologetics that had been part of the curriculum. Now seminary grads don’t learn any opposing views. They just pre-suppose that the Bible is true in the same way that Mormons pre-suppose their Bible is true, or Muslims pre-suppose their Bible is true, etc.

More:

> If one’s opinion has never been subjected to and tried by rigorous cross-examination, it probably isn’t worth much. If one lacks the capacity to keep a level head when one’s views are challenged, one’s voice will be of limited use in most real world situations, where dialogue and dispute is the norm and where we have to think in conversation with people who disagree with us.
>
> The teachers of the Church provide the members of the Church with a model for their own thinking. The teacher of the Church does not just teach others *what* to believe, but also *how* to believe, and the process by which one arrives at a theological position. This is one reason why it is crucial that teachers ‘show their working’ on a regular basis. When teaching from a biblical text, for instance, the teacher isn’t just teaching the meaning of that particular text, but how Scripture should be approached and interpreted more generally. An essential part of the teaching that the members of any church need is that of dealing with opposing viewpoints. One way or another, every church provides such teaching. However, the lesson conveyed in all too many churches is that opposing voices are to be dismissed, ignored, or ‘answered’ with a reactive reassertion of the dogmatic line, rather than a reasoned response.

You can imagine that the first questions that you’ll be asked by a non-Christian co-worker would be things like “why think God exists?” and “why think the Bible is history rather than legend?”. In order to answer those questions, you would have to know how to counter what a non-Christian believes. You would have to show them the reasons for your view.

Unfortunately, many of the conservative Christian leaders we trust think that the best way to be convincing is not to show your work, but just to speak Bible verses at people who don’t accept the Bible as an authority. Some people attend church for 20 years, and they never meet a single person who didn’t just assume that the Bible is trustworthy without doing an investigation first.

What’s most surprising is that this fideistic view of Christianity is not even Biblical. The Biblical view of faith is that faith is trust in God, based on evidence. This is why Jesus offered his own resurrection as evidence to a generation of unbelievers. His miracles were also evidence offered to unbelievers. And the Old Testament is filled with examples of people like Isaiah presenting evidence to unbelievers. The fideist view sounds more like the Mormon “burning of the bosom” view. We can do better than that!

Look:

That debate has over 6 million views on YouTube. That’s a debate with Christopher Hitchens, one of the most famous atheists of the last 100 years. In the post-debate comments, the atheist admitted he lost. Watch it. You won’t find it in most churches, so you’re going to have to learn it on your own. Without anyone’s help. Don’t be a spectator. Don’t settle for youth pastor Christianity.

The author of the books of Luke and Acts was an eyewitness to the life of Paul

September 8, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was listening to a friend give a talk on the book of Acts on the weekend. He had a number of interesting points, but the most interesting was from chapter 16. His point will help everyone who likes to answer questions about the historical basis for Christian faith. It has to do with the author of Acts, and why historians think that he was in contact with eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus.

Let's take a look at the passage from Acts 16:1-10 (NASB), and notice how Luke is talking about what Paul and his helper Timothy are doing:

> [1] Now *Paul* also came to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek,
>
> [2] and he was well spoken of by the brothers *and sisters* who were in Lystra and Iconium.
>
> [3] Paul wanted this man to leave with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.
>
> [4] Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the ordinances for them to follow which had been determined by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.
>
> [5] So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.
>
> [6] They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, after being forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;
>
> [7] and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them;
>
> [8] and passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.
>
> [9] And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and pleading with him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."
>
> [10] When he had seen the vision, we immediately sought to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Now something interesting happens in the next few verses. Read them closely and see if you catch it:

> [11] So after setting sail from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the following *day* to Neapolis;

> [12] and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district
> of Macedonia, a *Roman* colony; and we were spending some days in this city.
>
> [13] And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we
> were thinking that there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and began
> speaking to the women who had assembled.

Did you catch it? The narrator switches from the third-person ("they") to the first-person ("we"). And there are several more "we" passages in the book:

- Acts 16:10-17: The first "we passage" occurs during Paul's second missionary journey, starting with the departure for Macedonia and ending after the events in Philippi.
- Acts 20:5-15: The "we" perspective resumes during Paul's journey from Philippi to Miletus.
- Acts 21:1-18: The "we" narrative continues as Paul travels to Jerusalem.
- Acts 27:1-28:16: The final "we passage" covers Paul's sea voyage to Rome.

Now, for the apologetic significance of this, let's turn to William Lane Craig:

> The most obvious explanation is that the author had joined Paul on his evangelistic tour of the Mediterranean cities. In chapter 21 he accompanies Paul back to Palestine and finally to Jerusalem. What this means is that the author of Luke-Acts was in fact in first hand contact with the eyewitnesses of Jesus's life and ministry in Jerusalem.
>
> […]There is no avoiding the conclusion that Luke-Acts was written by a traveling companion of Paul who had the opportunity to interview eyewitnesses to Jesus's life while in Jerusalem. Who were some of these eyewitnesses? Perhaps we can get some clue by subtracting from the Gospel of Luke everything found in the other gospels and seeing what is peculiar to Luke. What you discover is that many of Luke's peculiar narratives are connected to women who followed Jesus: people like Joanna and Susanna, and significantly, Mary, Jesus's mother.

So, the author of Acts was an eyewitness to the life of Paul, and he was able to interview eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus.

But the best part of all is testability. My friend who gave the talk on Acts mentioned that many details that Luke recorded can be tested by archaeologists. And what do the archaeologists find?

Dr. Craig says:

> Was the author reliable in getting the facts straight? The book of Acts enables us to answer that question decisively. The book of Acts overlaps significantly with secular history of the ancient world, and the historical accuracy of Acts is indisputable. This has recently been demonstrated anew by Colin Hemer, a classical scholar who turned to New Testament studies, in his book The Book of

> Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History. Hemer goes through the book of Acts with a fine-toothed comb, pulling out a wealth of historical knowledge, ranging from what would have been common knowledge down to details which only a local person would know. Again and again Luke's accuracy is demonstrated: from the sailings of the Alexandrian corn fleet to the coastal terrain of the Mediterranean islands to the peculiar titles of local officials, Luke gets it right.
>
> According to Professor Sherwin-White, "For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming. Any attempt to reject its basic historicity even in matters of detail must now appear absurd." The judgement of Sir William Ramsay, the world-famous archaeologist, still stands: "Luke is a historian of the first rank. This author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians." Given Luke's care and demonstrated reliability as well as his contact with eyewitnesses within the first generation after the events, this author is trustworthy.

I asked Grok about the accuracy of Luke, and Grok listed out the confirmed details, and concluded:

> While archaeology cannot confirm every detail in Luke and Acts, numerous findings—such as inscriptions, structures, and artifacts—corroborate the historical, geographical, and cultural settings described in these texts. The accuracy of Luke's references to officials, places, and events lends credibility to his accounts, though some specifics remain debated.

It's important to understand that the gospels are not trying to make people feel good and have community. They're trying to tell you who God is and what God really did in history. It's a bit scary to think "oh my, all this really happened", but it really did, and we have to come to terms with it and adjust our goals and priorities.

Study: galactic habitable zone depends on fine-tuning of cosmological constant

September 9, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is going to be old news to readers of this blog who are familiar with the Michael Strauss, Walter Bradley and Guillermo Gonzalez lectures on habitability and fine-tuning. But, it's nice to see these ideas show up in one of the most prestigious peer-reviewed science journals in the world (if not the most prestigious).

Here's the article from Science.

It says:

> Scientists have known for several years now that stars, galaxies, and almost everything in the universe is moving away from us (and from everything else) at a faster and faster pace. Now, it turns out that the unknown forces behind the rate of this accelerating expansion—a mathematical value called the cosmological constant—may play a previously unexplored role in creating the right conditions for life.
>
> That's the conclusion of a group of physicists who studied the effects of massive cosmic explosions, called gamma ray bursts, on planets. They found that when it comes to growing life, it's better to be far away from your neighbors—and the cosmological constant helps thin out the neighborhood.
>
> "In dense environments, you have many explosions, and you're too close to them," says cosmologist and theoretical physicist Raul Jimenez of the University of Barcelona in Spain and an author on the new study. "It's best to be in the outskirts, or in regions that have not been highly populated by small galaxies—and that's exactly where the Milky Way is."
>
> Jimenez and his team had previously shown that gamma ray bursts could cause mass extinctions or make planets inhospitable to life by zapping them with radiation and destroying their ozone layer. The bursts channel the radiation into tight beams so powerful that one of them sweeping through a star system could wipe out planets in another galaxy. For their latest work, published this month in *Physical Review Letters*, they wanted to apply those findings on a broader scale and determine what type of universe would be most likely to support life.
>
> The research is the latest investigation to touch on the so-called anthropic principle: the idea that in some sense the universe is tuned for the emergence of intelligent life. If the forces of nature were much stronger or weaker than physicists observe, proponents note, crucial building blocks of life—such fundamental particles, atoms, or the long-chain molecules needed for the chemistry of life—might not have formed, resulting in a sterile or even completely chaotic universe.

Basically, the best place for a galaxy that permits complex, embodied life to exist is one where you can pick up enough heavy elements from dying stars nearby, but not be in an area that is so crowded by stars that you will be wiped out by intense gamma radiation when they die. So, you want to be between the “arms” of a spiral galaxy, close enough to the areas with a lot of stars, and not too far away. But you can only get that pattern of stars if the universe is expanding at the right rate.

More:

> **As it turns out, our universe seems to get it just about right. The existing cosmological constant means the rate of expansion is large enough that it minimizes planets’ exposure to gamma ray bursts, but small enough to form lots of hydrogen-burning stars around which life can exist. (A faster expansion rate would make it hard for gas clouds to collapse into stars.)**
>
> Jimenez says the expansion of the universe played a bigger role in creating habitable worlds than he expected. “It was surprising to me that you do need the cosmological constant to clear out the region and make it more suburbanlike,” he says.

Remember, this is only one of many characteristics that must obtain in order for a have a location in the universe that can support complex, embodied life of any conceivable kind.

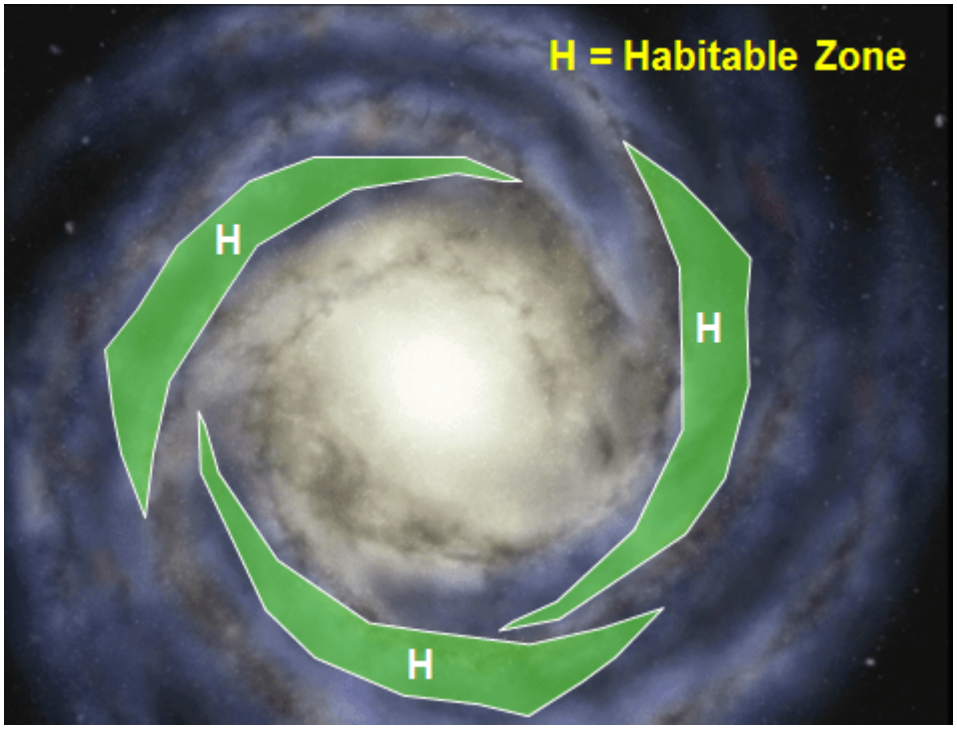

The galactic habitable zone (GHZ) is shown in green against a spiral galaxy

Let’s review the big picture

Time for me to list out some of the things that are required for a galaxy, solar system and planet to support complex embodied life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind given these laws of physics.

- a solar system with a single massive Sun than can serve as a long-lived, stable source of energy
- a terrestrial planet (non-gaseous)
- the planet must be the right distance from the sun in order to preserve liquid water at the surface – if it’s too close, the water is burnt off in a runaway greenhouse effect, if it’s too far, the water is permanently frozen in a runaway glaciation
- the solar system must be placed at the right place in the galaxy – not too near dangerous radiation, but close enough to other stars to be able to absorb heavy elements after neighboring stars die
- a moon of sufficient mass to stabilize the tilt of the planet’s rotation
- plate tectonics
- an oxygen-rich atmosphere
- a sweeper planet to deflect comets, etc.
- planetary neighbors must have non-eccentric orbits

And remember, these requirements for a habitable planet are downstream from the cosmic fine-tuning of constants and quantities that occurs at the Big Bang. No point in talking about the need for plate tectonics if you only have hydrogen in your universe. The habitability requirements are a further problem that comes after the fine-tuning problem.

Leftist news media furious that conservatives noticed murder by 14-time repeat offender

September 10, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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By now, everyone has heard about the murder of the 23-year-old lady by a 14-time repeat offender. The lady was just riding a light train in Charlotte, NC, and the criminal attacked her from behind and stabbed her many times with a knife. Two things are interesting about the story. First, the judiciary workers who released the criminal. Second, the reaction from corporate news media.

So, first, the facts of the case from Meg Basham at Daily Wire:

> The victim, Iryna Zarutska, came to the United States in 2022. She was returning from her job at a local pizzeria when Decarlos Brown stabbed her repeatedly in the neck.

And this is the key part – in a Democrat-run city, the criminal was released FOURTEEN TIMES.

> Brown had a lengthy criminal history, including at least 14 prior arrests for offenses such as armed robbery and assault with a deadly weapon. Despite serving five years for the robbery, most of his other cases resulted in time served, probation, or community service.
>
> His most recent arrest in January was for misusing 911, yet Judge Teresa Stokes granted him pretrial release despite his violent record. In 2024 alone, Brown had three encounters with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's (CMPD) community policing team, each time receiving referrals to resources and fines rather than jail time.

According to Grok, here are the qualifications for her position:

Under North Carolina law (N.C.G.S. § 7A-171), magistrates are appointed judicial officials, not judges, and do not require a law degree or bar admission.

Requirements include:

- A four-year college degree, or a two-year associate degree with at least four years of experience in a related field (e.g., court administration, social services).
- Completion of a 40-hour basic training course within six months of appointment, covering civil and criminal duties.
- Annual continuing education through the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) and UNC School of Government.

Grok also mentioned to me that she is married to a woman, Ayanna Ballard. Can you imagine choosing to live in a place like Charlotte, seeing the violent crime rates go higher and higher because of the failures of the district attorney and the others to deal with

criminals and protect taxpayers? Why do people do it?

Anyway, the corporate news media was very upset… not with the murder, but with people noticing the murder.

Here's Daily Signal:

> Instead of focusing on the terrible and enraging crime that took place, it became one of their "conservatives pounce" spin jobs.
>
> Axios put up a post on X, saying, "The gruesome video of the fatal knife attack on Iryna Zarutska on a light-rail car in Charlotte is drawing attention from MAGA influencers seeking to elevate the issue of violent urban crime—and accuse mainstream media of under-covering shocking cases."

That wasn't the only one, Politico was also concerned by the "political messaging war", not by the actual murder of an innocent girl. Did you know that Democrats are the party of women's rights? Yes, here is more of the Democrat party's women's-rightsing.

Here's a gruesome story from September 9th, 2025, reported in the Daily Caller:

> A Louisiana man reportedly may face chemical castration or the death penalty after he allegedly raped a four-year-girl on Aug. 1 and gave her Chlamydia.
>
> Anthony James Jelks, 25, allegedly suggested that he raped the child on Aug. 1 at a Baton Rouge, Louisiana, residence, according to arrest documents obtained by WAFB.
>
> […]"Mr. Jelks, we have arrested six times over the past six years," Baton Rouge Police Chief TJ Morse said. "He has everything from firearm charges to domestic violence battery, violation of protective orders, and is currently on probation."

From May 2025, reported in New York Post:

> College coed Logan Federico, 22, of Waxhaw, NC, was visiting friends in Columbia, SC, on May 3 when a prowler broke into a rental house, swiped her credit cards and gunned her down, the Columbia Police Department said in a press conference.
>
> […]Alexander Dickey, 30, a career criminal with 40 prior charges, allegedly broke into the rental home where Federico was staying and opened fire with a stolen gun after stealing from the house.

And here's another one from December 2023, also reported in New York Post:

> A troubled vagrant randomly stabbed two teenage girls enjoying a Christmas morning meal with their parents at a Grand Central Terminal restaurant — after ranting that he wanted "all white people dead," authorities said.
>
> […]Hutcherson has 17 prior arrests on his rap sheet, sources said.

It's hard for me to write about this. I am so upset by the attacks that are going on in Europe against young women, and then even now, here in the United States. And why? Because people vote for the secular left politicians. Secular leftists are dominated by irrational emotions. They have a real problem with moral judgments and punishments. For them, the important thing is to show great compassion with their non-judgement. They want to make a world in which no one can judge them for their evil.

In Europe, women's groups are so concerned with prioritizing feeling good and looking good with virtue signaling, that they won't even condemn crimes committed by unskilled immigrants from misogynistic countries against women.

The UK Daily Mirror explains:

> More than 100 women's rights groups have warned "racist" attempts to link sexual violence with immigration are putting victims at increased risk.
>
> Rape Crisis England and Wales, the End Violence Against Women Coalition and Refuge are among the organisations warning anti-migrant groups and politicans are "hijacking" survivors' trauma. They have signed a letter to Keir Starmer and Home Secretary Yvette Cooper warning that sexual abuse must not be used for political gain – and those who spread misinformation must be held to account.

Who pays the price for the "don't judge" atttitude of the secular leftists? The victims of the criminals that they don't punish pay the price. The real misogyny comes from the secular left. That's why you should never vote for a secular leftist. They don't have the ability to ground moral judgments and that's why they need to be kept out of political power by wise voters.

William Lane Craig’s moral argument, and five objections to it

September 11, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Which argument for God is the most accessible? To really sustain the cosmic beginning argument and the cosmic fine-tuning argument, you have to learn some scientific evidence. Same for the resurrection of Jesus – you have to learn some history. But what about the moral argument? All you need to make that argument is for your opponent to think that something is morally wrong.

First, let’s review the moral argument, from William Lane Craig.

He writes:

> We are going to turn now to a discussion of the moral argument for the existence of God. So far we have been looking at philosophical and scientific arguments. This is an ethical argument. There are a wide variety of moral reasons for believing in God, but this is a particularly simple moral argument that I have used over and over again with university students and I find very effective. It really grabs people where they live. This is not just a matter of scientific evidence or philosophical issues that may not impact your life. This is an issue that is vitally important because everyday as you live you make moral choices. So everyday by your behavior you answer the question whether or not you believe that God exists. The argument consists basically of three simple steps:
>
> 1. If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist.
>
> 2. Objective moral values do exist.
>
> 3. Therefore, God exist.
>
> That is a very simple argument for the existence of God and is easy to memorize. It is just three steps. It is logically valid. If those two premises are true then the conclusion follows necessarily and logically. The only question is: are the two premises true?

But there are some objections to the moral argument. CrossExamined.org has posted a list of five objections to the moral argument from philosopher Paul Rezkalla.

Here are the 5 points:

1. “But I’m a moral person and I don’t believe in God. Are you saying that atheists can’t be moral?”
2. “But what if you needed to lie in order to save someone’s life? It seems that morality is not absolute as you say it is.”
3. ‘Where’s your evidence for objective morality? I won’t believe in anything unless I have evidence for it.’
4. ‘If morality is objective, then why do some cultures practice female genital

mutilation, cannibalism, infanticide, and other atrocities which we, in the West, deem unacceptable?'

5. 'But God carried out many atrocities in the Old Testament. He ordered the genocide of the Canaanites.'

That last one seems to be popular, so let's double-check the details:

> For starters, this isn't really an objection to the moral argument. It does not attack either premise of the argument. It is irrelevant, but let's entertain this objection for a second. By making a judgement on God's actions and deeming them immoral, the objector is appealing to a standard of morality that holds true outside of him/herself and transcends barriers of culture, context, time period, and social norms. By doing this, he/she affirms the existence of objective morality! But if the skeptic wants to affirm objective morality after throwing God out the window, then there needs to be an alternate explanation for its basis. If not God, then what is it? The burden is now on the skeptic to provide a naturalistic explanation for the objective moral framework.

If you have heard any of these objections before when discussing the moral argument, click through and take a look.

And if you have a non-Christian in your life who likes to make moral statements, it's a good conversation to have. Where does your standard come from? Is it from your own desires? Is it from cultural conventions, that vary by time and place? Is it from Darwinian evolution? Find out what the answer is, and then respond to it.

Pro-abortion feminist professor justifies divorce from the man she loved

September 12, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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In the past, I've written about how we need to get rid of no-fault divorce laws, if we expect men to feel comfortable about getting married. I've explained that men have seen what divorce does to other men, and to children. Some of us, like me, have read books and studies about it. And it's a major reason why men don't marry.

In today's post, we're going to look at an article in the far-left New York Times, written by a pro-abortion progressive feminist professor, who divorced her husband, making her two children fatherless.

What did he do wrong? Nothing.

Behold:

> There was no emotional or physical abuse in our home. There was no absence of love. I was in love with my husband when we got divorced. Part of me is in love with him still. I suspect that will always be the case. Even now, after everything, when he walks into the room my stomach drops the same way it does before the roller coaster comes down. I divorced my husband not because I didn't love him. I divorced him because I loved myself more.
>
> […]I made choice after choice to prioritize my career because I believed fervently in the importance of the work I was doing… [children of divorce] benefit because happier mothers are better parents.
>
> […] I knew that trying to force myself to subordinate my ambitions and always put our children first would have been impossible without lopping off a vital part of myself.

At the time of her decision, the children were aged 5 and 3! If she chose her career, that means that she was not raising them, during that critical first five years. Daycare is proven to be a poor substitute for the mother during those early years.

CafeMom notes:

> No one is more acutely aware than Bazelon is of the many things she's missed as a mother — things that have stuck with her through the years so strongly, she can mentally list them off one by one. They include, in her words: "My daughter's seventh birthday, my son's 10th birthday party, two family vacations, three Halloweens, [and] every school camping trip," she writes. "I have never chaperoned, coached or organized a school event."
>
> My daughter's seventh birthday was the worst. She cried… But I had a trial starting the next day, six hours away."

Now, what about her statement about divorce being good for children, because if she is

happy, then they will be happy? Many women believe this, and most communities for women affirm this. But is it true? What does the peer-reviewed data say?

Here's a famous study (PDF) that says: (H/T Philip Greenspun)

> This follow-up study of 131 children, who were 3–18 years old when their parents divorced in the early 1970s, marks the culmination of 25 years of research. The use of extensive clinical interviews allowed for exploration in great depth of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as they negotiated childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and adulthood. At the 25-year follow-up, a comparison group of their peers from the same community was added. Described in rich clinical detail, the findings highlight the unexpected gulf between growing up in intact versus divorced families, and the difficulties children of divorce encounter in achieving love, sexual intimacy, and commitment to marriage and parenthood. These findings have significant implications for new clinical and educational interventions.

Specifically: (I stole this from Philip)

> Hardly any of our subjects described a happy childhood; in fact a number of children told us that "the day they divorced was the day my childhood ended." … By the 25-year mark, the majority had decided not to have children.
>
> No child of divorce in our study was invited by both parents, either separately or together, to discuss college plans. … Only 57% of the divorce group achieved their bachelor's degree as compared with 90% in the comparison group. … Unhappy, [those who did attend college] settled for fields of study that were not their first choice, at lower ranked institutions than their parents had attended. It was at this time that one young person, echoing the emotions of many others, commented bitterly, "I paid for my parents' divorce."
>
> The central finding of this study is that parental divorce impacts detrimentally the capacity to love and be loved within a lasting, committed relationship.

This study was actually made into a book, and I read it. That's partly how I formed my views of divorce. In her column, the feminist refutes data like this with an anecdote. She "knows a person" whose experience refutes the peer-reviewed evidence. I don't find that kind of self-serving rationalization very convincing. But it's common.

By the way, I also read books about daycare when I was thinking about marriage, and I hate daycare, too. You would think that a smart feminist academic would read books about marriage, divorce and parenting like I did, and respect the evidence in her decision-making, rather than being led by her feelings. I'm just a senior software engineer with 22 years of private sector experience. But I sure wouldn't make decisions about marriage and children without reading books and studies first. What's that old familiar saying in Information Technology? RTFM. Read The Freaking Manual. Engineers read the manual. Emotion-based people don't.

Women may say to all this, “well, what do you expect me to do? Be unhappy with a bad man?” And the answer is – if you have children, then yes. The time to avoid getting married to a bad man is before you marry him. And we should teach women to disregard feelings, feminism, and peer approval. They should instead prepare themselves for marriage with chastity and sobriety, and choose men who are sober, chaste and have demonstrated commitment ability.

So here’s my conclusion. I don’t recommend that any man marry a feminist. If they are willing to kill their own children, then they are willing to abuse their own children with divorce. If they believe in same-sex marriage, then they don’t think that children deserve a mother AND a father. Don’t marry a secular leftist woman. You’ll pay, and your children will suffer.

Homeschooling moms who influence their neighbors, their local church, and the local university, for Christ, have the better end of the marriage deal. If I were married, I would trade places with my wife in a minute, if I could. It’s far more interesting to homeschool kids in great literature, science, economics, and computer programming, than it is to keep your mouth shut all day in an environment that is hostile to Christian convictions.

Video, audio and summary of William Lane Craig vs Peter Millican debate

September 13, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's a debate with a well-qualified atheist and Dr. William Lane Craig, the most effective defender of Christianity operating today.

Video:

Audio:

Description from the Youtube upload:

> This debate on "Does God Exist?" took place in front of a capacity audience at the Great Hall, University of Birmingham. It was recorded on Friday 21st October 2011 as part of the UK Reasonable Faith Tour with William Lane Craig.
>
> William Lane Craig is Research Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California and a leading philosopher of religion. Peter Millican is Gilbert Ryle Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford and a noted scholar in studies of Hume.
>
> The debate was hosted by the University of Birmingham Student Philosophy Society, and the debate was moderated by Professor Carl Chinn.

Dr. Millican proved to be an amazing debater, and that allowed Dr. Craig to show the full range of his talents in a way that he has never done before. This was a great debate – right up there with Craig's two debates against Austin Dacey and Paul Draper. Dr. Millican is excellent at analytical philosophy, had studied cosmology and physics, and he came prepared to answer Craig's arguments. There is NO SNARK in my debate summary below, out of respect for Dr. Millican. However, I haven't proof-read it, so please do point out any errors. There is about 30 minutes of Q&A time at the end.

Dr. Craig's opening speech:

There are good reasons to believe that God exists.

There are no good reasons to believe that God does not exist.

A1) The origin of the universe

1. The universe began to exist
2. If the universe began to exist, then the universe has a transcendent cause.
3. The universe has a transcendent cause.

The origin of the universe is confirmed by philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

There cannot be an actual infinite number of past events, because mathematical operations like subtraction and division cannot be applied to actual infinities.

The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin (BGV) proof shows that every universe that expands must have a space-time boundary in the past. That means that no expanding universe, no matter what the model, cannot be eternal into the past.

Even speculative alternative cosmologies do not escape the need for a beginning.

The cause of the universe must be transcendent and supernatural. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be eternal, because it created time. It must be non-physical, because it created space. There are only two possibilities for such a cause. It could be an abstract object or an agent. Abstract objects cannot cause effects. Therefore, the cause is an agent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is either due to law, chance or design.
2. It is not due to law or chance.
3. Therefore, it is due to design.

The progress of science has revealed that the Big Bang was fine-tuned to allow for the existence of intelligent life.

Type 1: Constants like the gravitational constant are finely-tuned, and are not dependent on the laws of physics.

Type 2: Quantities like the amount of entropy in the universe, are not dependent on the laws of physics.

The range of life-permitting values is incredibly small compared to the possible values of the constants and quantities. (Like having a lottery with a million black balls and one white ball, and you pick the white ball. Even though each individual ball has the same tiny chance of being picked, but the odds are overwhelming that the whichever ball you pick will be black, and not white).

Not only are the numbers not due to laws, but they are not due to chance either. It’s not just that the settings are unlikely, it’s that they are unlikely and they conform to an independent pattern – namely, the ability to support complex life.

A3) The moral argument

1. If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective morality does exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Objective moral values are values that exist independently of whether any humans believe them or not.

Michael Ruse, an atheist philosopher agrees that if God does not exist, then there is only a “herd morality” that is determined by biological evolution and social evolution. There no objective moral standard, just different customs and conventions that vary by time and place. Anyone who acts against the herd morality is merely being unfashionable and unconventional. On the atheistic view, there is nothing objective and binding about this

evolved “herd morality”. However, people do experience objective moral values, and these cannot be grounded on atheism.

Furthermore, God must exist in order to argue that there is evil in the world. In order to be able to make a distinction between good and evil that is objective, there has to be a God to determine a standard of good and evil that is binding regardless of the varying customs and conventions of different people groups. Even when a person argues against God’s existence by pointing to the “evil” in the world, they must assume objective moral values, and a God who grounds those objective moral values.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus.

1. There are certain minimal facts that are admitted by the majority of historians, across the ideological spectrum: the empty tomb, the appearances and the early belief in the resurrection.
2. Naturalistic attempts to explain these minimal facts fail.
3. The best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.

A5) Religious experience

People can know that God exists through experience. In the absence of defeaters for these experiences, these experiences constitute evidence for God’s existence.

Dr. Millican’s opening speech:

Dr. Craig has the burden of proof because he claims that God exists.

The Christian God hypothesis:

1. An omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God created the universe.
2. This God cares about humans.
3. This God has acted in history though the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is a factual claim, and we are discussing the evidence for whether these claims are true or false. We are not interested in religious practice, or the consolation of religious belief, nor any other religions.

A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

Human beings are purpose-finding creatures – we are prone to prefer explanations that involve purpose.

Human beings are pattern-finding animals – we tend to find designs in states of affairs.

Human beings have an interest in maintaining religious hierarchies because of the power it gives them.

Religious beliefs are not determined by rational considerations, but are determined by geographic location.

The same non-scientific method of generating religious beliefs (purpose-finding, pattern-finding, geographic location, parental teaching, charismatic speakers, praise songs and worship, religious education, ancient holy books) is being used in several religions, and it

leads to different, contradictory truth claims. So at least some of those conflicting claims are false. And if the method is generating some false claims, then it's not a good method, and it undermines all the religions that use those methods.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

There is no scientific evidence for God.

A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

There is no scientific evidence for a disembodied intelligence.

Our universal human experience is that intelligence and mental operations require a physical brain.

The quality of our thinking depends on physical conditions, like being tired or on drugs.

But Christian theists believe that mental processes can exist independently of an underlying physical reality, unimpaired by the death of the physical body and the brain.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

1. There is no evidence that whatever begins to exist requires a cause. All the evidence we have of things beginning to exist are when something is created from rearrangements of other things that already existed.

The closest analog we have to something coming into being from nothing is quantum particles coming into being from nothing, and that causation is random.

There is no evidence that thoughts can bring about physical effects, and Bill is arguing for a mental cause to the origin of the universe.

Even if things that begin to exist IN the universe have causes, it doesn't hold for the universe as a whole. Bill is committing the fallacy of composition.

Time begins with the universe, but our experience of causation is that it is a temporal process. So if there is no time "prior to" the universe's beginning, then how can there be a cause to the universe?

It's possible that there could be something outside our universe that is eternal.

It's also possible that the Big Bang could be wrong, and this universe could oscillate eternally and not require a beginning.

2. There are cosmological theories that avoid the beginning of the universe by positing a prior period of contraction prior to the Big Bang.

The beginning of this universe depends on general relativity, and that theory breaks down at the level of quantum mechanics.

3. There is no evidence that minds can exist without an underlying physical system. So even if there is a cause of the universe, then it is neither an abstract object nor a mind. It would have to be something else, and not something we are familiar with – we are just not in a position to speculate of what it could be.

R.A3) The moral argument

Atheists do believe in a standard of morality that is not based on what groups of humans

believe.

Utilitarians think there is a standard of moral values that is objective, because the measure of human happiness (for the greatest number) is objective, even if people are mistaken about what promotes that happiness.

Kantians have a rational process for determining which moral imperatives should be universalized.

Humeans have a system that is rooted in natural human sentiment.

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal:

I do not have the only burden of proof. The topic is "Does God Exist?". If Dr. Millican answers "no" then he has a burden of proof, otherwise we are left with agnosticism.

R.A1) Religious pluralism and epistemology

First, there is no single common method of adopting a religion.

Second, MY method this evening is logic and evidence and personal experience – which is the same as his method. So his comments about how people in different religions adopt their religion through parents, church, singing, etc. have no bearing on the arguments I will be making.

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

Absence of evidence is only evidence of absence if we can reasonably expect that there should be some evidence that is not present. He would have to show that there should be more evidence for God's existence that the 5 arguments that I already presented – something that we should expect to see that we don't see.

R.A3) Mental processes depend on physical systems

No response by Dr. Craig. (but see below)

A1) The origin of the universe

1. He says that there are speculative cosmologies like the multiverse that escape the need for a beginning, but that's false, the BGV proof applies to them, and they do need a beginning.

He says that you can escape BGV by positing a contraction prior to the expansion. However Vilenkin says that any contraction phase is unstable and would introduce additional singularities that would hamper any later expansion phase.

He says that we need a theory of quantum gravity in order to describe the early universe. But Vilenkin says that the BGV proof is independent of gravity as defined by general relativity.

He did not respond to the philosophical arguments for a beginning of the universe.

2. He says that we don't have experience of things coming into being except from material causes. However, it would be even more difficult to explain the universe coming into being on atheism since you can't appeal to a material cause nor to an efficient cause. Even Hume recognizes that things can't pop into being without causes.

He talks about how in quantum physics virtual particles appear out of nothing. But that's false, because the quantum vacuum in which virtual particles appear is not nothing, it is a sea of subatomic particles and energy. Quantum physics is not an exception to the idea that things that come into being require a cause.

He mentions the fallacy of composition. But I am not saying that everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe as a whole has a cause. I am saying that non-being has no capacity to bring something into being. Non-Being doesn't even have the potential to bring something into being.

3. He says that there are no unembodied minds, so the cause of the universe can't be an unembodied mind. But the argument concludes that there is a non-material cause, and it can't be an abstract object, so it would have to be a mind.

In addition, we ourselves are unembodied minds. This is because physical objects cannot have the properties that minds have, like the property of having feelings.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain identity over time.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain free will.

Material conceptions of mind don't explain intentional states (thinking about something).

Material conceptions of mind don't explain mental causation.

The best explanation for our own first person experience of the mental realm is a substance dualism. We are non-material minds, and we can cause effects in the physical world. And God does the same thing. He is a mind, and he causes physical effects.

A2) He gave no response.

A3) He says that there are atheistic theories of morality that don't depend on the opinions of groups. But these theories all depend on the idea that human beings have instrinsic value – that they are the sorts of things to which moral considerations apply. Naturalism cannot ground this moral value – human beings are no more valuable any other animal.

Also, there are no objective moral obligations in naturalist systems of morality, because there is no one in authority to command them. Moral prescriptions require moral prescribers.

A4) He gave no response.

A5) He gave no response.

Dr. Millican's first rebuttal:

R.A2) The fine-tuning argument

We have to be careful not to judge what counts as finely-tuned through our intuitions.

We have to be careful about reasoning for a sample size of this one observable universe.

We don't really know about the full range of possibilities for these constants and quantities.

There might be other universes that we can't observe that aren't fine-tuned, and we just

happen to be in the one that is fine-tuned.

The fine-tuning might be solved by future discoveries, like the inflationary cosmology removed some of the fine-tuning.

There might be a multiverse that we don't have evidence for right now.

We need to be careful about using science to prove God because science might change in the future.

The universe is very big and mysterious.

This argument doesn't prove that God is good. He could be evil = anti-God.

God created the universe inefficiently if his goal was to produce life.

God created the universe too big.

God created the universe too old.

God created too many galaxies and stars that are not hospitable to life.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there should be more aliens.

If the universe were fine-tuned for life, then there are probably lots of alien civilizations. But then Jesus would have to appear to all of the aliens too.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. It's not a big deal that you can get multiple solutions to equations involving subtraction of actual infinities. For example, the equation 0 x y = 0 has many solutions for y, but that doesn't mean that multiplication doesn't work in the real world.

A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

I would expect that there would be more evidence than there is.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

2. The BVG proof might be overturned by future scientific discoveries. We have no reason to be confident in current physics.

I agree that the quantum vacuum is something and not nothing, but it's similar to nothing.

We don't have any reason to believe that things that come into being require causes – except for our universal experience that this is always the case.

3. As to the cause of the universe coming into being, you said that it could only be an abstract object or a mind, and it can't be an abstract object because they don't cause effects, so it must be a mind. But there are all sorts of things we've never thought of that it could be other than a mind.

I agree that mental properties are not physical properties and that epiphenomenalism is incorrect. Physical objects can have "algorithmic properties" as well as physical properties, it doesn't mean that computers have minds.

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal:

R.A2) Absence of evidence is evidence of absence

He expressed his personal opinion that there should be more evidence, but that's not an argument.

God knows how people will respond to getting more evidence or less evidence and he has to be careful not to take away their free will to disbelieve by piling them up with coercive evidence. God's goal is not just to convince people that he exists. God's goal is to have people respond to him and pursue him.

A1) The origin of the universe

2. He said that multiple answers to equations are no problem. But the problem is that you can't translate multiple answers into a real world context.

The problem is that you are subtracting an identical number from an identical number and getting contradictory results, and that cannot be translated into the real world, where subtraction always gives a definite single result.

He talks about how you can get multiple answers with multiplication by 0. But 0 is not a real quantity, it is just the absence of something, and that cannot translate into the real world, because it has no being.

He says that I am only using evidence from current physics. But that is the point – the evidence of current physics and cosmology supports the beginning of the universe.

3. He said that an umembodied mind can't be the cause, but we are minds and we cause effects on our physical bodies.

In addition, the design argument supports the idea that the cause of the universe is intelligent.

A2) The fine-tuning of the universe

He says we should be cautious. Of course.

He says the probabilities can't be assessed. But you can just take the current value and perturb it and see that the resulting universe loses its ability to support life, and you can test an entire range around the current value to see that that vast majority of values in the range don't permit life.

He says that the current physics is not well-established, but there are so many examples of fine-tuning across so many different areas of science that it is not likely that all of them will be overturned, and the number of finely-tuned constants and quantities has been growing, not shrinking.

He says it doesn't prove that God is good, and he's right – that's what the moral argument is for.

He says that God isn't efficient enough, but efficiency is only important for those who have limited time and/or limited resources. But God has unlimited time and resources.

He says that the universe is too old, but the large age of the universe is a requirement to support intelligent life – (i.e. – you need third generation stars to provide a stable source of energy to planets, and those stars require that two generations of stars are born and die).

He said what about aliens, and theists are open to that, and God can certainly provide for the salvation of those beings, if they have fallen into sin.

Dr. Millican's second rebuttal:

R.A1) The origin of the universe

3. Just because epiphenominalism is false, it doesn't mean that substance dualism is true.

The majority of philosophers of mind do not accept substance dualism.

R.A3) The moral argument

The majority of philosophers are moral realists, but a minority of philosophers are theists. So that means that there must be some way of justifying morality on atheism, which I will not describe right now.

Atheists can express their opinion that humans have intrinsic moral value.

He grants that atheists can perceive moral values. But if atheists can perceive moral values, then why is God needed to enable that?

Atheists can express their opinion that humans are special. We can be rational, and that makes us special.

Atheists can express their opinion that it is good to care about other humans because they are of the same species.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

We don't have any reasons to believe i the supernatural.

The gospels are written late for the purposes of evangelism.

The gospels are not independent, e.g. Matthew and Luke depend on Q.

John is the latest gospel, and the Christology of John is the highest of all.

The four gospels agree because the early church rejected other (unnamed) gospels that didn't agree.

Matthew 27 – the earthquake and the raised saints – is not recorded in any other contemporary non-Christian source.

Dr. Craig's final rebuttal:

A3) The moral argument

He says that human beings are rational, and that gives them value. But atheists like Sam Harris prefer the flourishing of sentient life. He includes non-rational animals as having moral value. So without God, we see that the choice of who or what has moral value is arbitrary. And where would objective moral duties come from if there is no moral lawgiver?

The fact that most atheists accept objective moral values doesn't mean that they can rationally ground those values on their atheistic worldview. You can't provide a basis for moral values on atheism by counting the number of atheists who accept objective morality. It's not surprising that atheists can perceive objective moral values IF they are living in auniverse created by God who grounds these objective moral values and duties

that atheists perceive.

A4) The resurrection of Jesus

He cites Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman as authorities on the historical Jesus, but both of them accept all three of the facts that I presented as minimal facts. Ehrman doesn't accept the resurrection of Jesus because he presupposes naturalism. He rejects the resurrection on philosophical grounds, not historical grounds.

Dr. Millican's final rebuttal:

R.A5) Religious experience

Religious experience is an unreliable way to test the claims of a religion, because lots of religions have them and they make contradictory truth claims. In the future, we may discover naturalistic ways of explaining religious experience.

R.A4) The resurrection of Jesus

Even if you can make a case for the resurrection based on these3 minimal facts, there are other stories in the New Testament like Matthew 27 that are quite weird and they undermine the 3 minimal facts that even Geza Vermes and Bart Ehrman accept.

R.A1) The origin of the universe

Bill hasn't shown that there is any reason for thinking that things don't come into being, uncaused, out of nothing.

A4) The problem of evil

Theists can't explain what God's specific morally sufficient reasons are for permitting the apparently gratuitous evil that we see.

Christian woman finds a way to discuss her faith with non-Christians

September 14, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I found an interesting article where a Christian woman explains how she used to share her testimony with non-Christians. But that wasn't working. So she decided to try something different.

She writes:

> I'll never forget the first time I shared my personal testimony with a non-Christian.
>
> When the opportunity arose and I shared my story with an unbelieving friend, she replied, "That's so cool. I'm so happy you found something that works for you."
>
> *For me?*
>
> "It's not about what works *for me*," I said, trying to hide my discouragement. "It's about what's true for everyone."
>
> "That doesn't make sense," she responded. "That's *your experience*, not mine. I had a similar revelation when I realized I could leave the church, and I've become a better person for *my* decision. Just as you were freed from your heaviest burdens by finding God, I was freed from mine by leaving God behind."
>
> I was devastated but I chalked it up to my friend's hardheartedness. I decided to shake the dust off my feet and look forward to the next opportunity.
>
> But time after time of sharing my testimony resulted in similar responses. People expressed enthusiasm that I was happy, that Christianity worked for me, and that I had "found my niche." Yet no one considered my experience as anything more than just that—my own personal experience.
>
> […]I had been taught that sharing what God had done in my life was the ideal way to witness to non-Christians. A personal testimony was interesting yet non-confrontational, compelling but inoffensive. And yet, despite having shared my testimony with dozens of unbelievers, not a single person felt challenged to consider the truth claims of Christianity.

She noticed that her approach wasn't actually in the Bible. There was a different approach being demonstrated by Jesus, and later by his disciples.

She writes:

> When Jesus called his first disciples, he taught truth and provided evidence (miracles) to support his claims, then he asked people to follow him (Luke 5:1–11). In fact, this was his method whenever he went into new regions (see Luke 4:14–44; John 4:7–26). People decided to follow Jesus not on blind faith or a

> subjective feeling, but based on the evidence they had seen and heard.[i]
>
> Jesus also used evidence to assuage the doubts of even those who had been with him a long time. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin, who leapt in the womb during Mary's visit (Luke 1:39–45), baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, heard God's voice from heaven, and saw the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus in bodily form like a dove (Luke 3:21–22). Yet when John experienced unexpected suffering, he began to doubt.
>
> Jesus didn't respond as many do today, by insisting that John "just believe" or "have faith" or "prayer harder." Rather, he responded with more evidence, saying, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." (Matt. 11:2–6).
>
> […]At Pentecost, the apostle Peter offered signs and wonders, fulfilled prophecy, and relayed eyewitness testimony to persuade people from all over the Roman Empire that the most reasonable explanation for what they were seeing was not morning drunkenness, but a risen Messiah (Acts 2:1–41).
>
> On his missionary journeys, the apostle Paul reasoned with the Jews from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that Jesus was the Messiah who needed to suffer and rise from the dead (Acts 17:1–3, 17). And he reasoned with the Gentiles from outside the Scriptures, making a case with their own accepted beliefs to convince them (Acts 17:17–34).
>
> In fact, in describing his mission, Paul told the Philippians, "I am put here for the defense of the gospel" (1:7, 16). This word translated defense is the same word from which we get our English word "apologetics," meaning to make reasoned arguments or to provide evidence as justification. Using this same word, Peter commanded believers to "always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you"(1 Pet. 3:15).

So, she decided to dump the testimony approach, and try the Biblical approach. But she had to change it a little bit, since she couldn't perform miracles herself:

> We are not eyewitnesses to Jesus's life and resurrection, but we have the accounts of those who were. We don't typically see miracles, but we have millennia of biblical scholarship and archaeology that provide reasons to believe the accounts are trustworthy. We don't often hear God speaking audibly or see him parting seas, but we have significant scientific evidence that shows the universe had a beginning, and millennia of observation to confirm the scientific principle that everything that begins to exist has a cause.

I think a lot of Christians never move on from approach she described that wasn't getting results. And there's a reason for that – studying evidence is hard work. But I can tell you from my experience as a software engineer, there is no better way to convince other

people to adopt your view than to show them working code that produces results. If they have a prototype, they will adopt your design. Similarly with Christianity. If you have evidence, then you will be persuasive.

When talking about spiritual things with non-Christians, always remember the joke about the two men walking in the woods who meet a bear. One man starts to put on his running shoes. The other man says “what are you doing? you can’t outrun a bear!” And the first man says “I don’t have to. I only have to outrun you”. It’s the same with apologetics. You don’t have to be William Lane Craig to talk about your faith to non-Christians. You just have to know more than your non-Christian opponent knows about evidence.

The way things are going these days with the public schools and the mainstream news media, this is actually pretty easy to do. One or two introductory books on the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning for intelligent life, the origin of biological information, the origin of body plans, the historical reliability of the New Testament, the minimal facts case for the resurrection, etc. will do the job. You might need another one on philosophical challenges like evil, suffering, divine hiddenness, etc. But we’re talking no more than 5 books, and you’ll be effective in the vast majority of your conversations. If you can only get one book, I like Sean McDowell and Jonathan Morrow’s “Is God Just a Human Invention?” best.

Man-blaming vs incentive-changing: what really works to restore marriage

September 15, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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What approach should social conservatives take to solve the problem of the declining marriage rate? A naive approach would be to just order young people to "Get Married!" without analyzing and defusing the reasons why young people are declining to approach, date and marry like they used to. Most social conservatives go for the naive approach. But which approach really works?

So, let's focus on men. Why are men staying single? Why aren't men approaching women, paying for dates, and proposing marriage?

Here's a short list of some disincentives that men are facing:

- no-fault divorce (alimony, child support, father alienation)
- domestic violence laws assume the man is at at fault
- false accusations to gain child custody
- paternity fraud
- massive student loan debt by women
- national debt / deficit
- lack of accountability for false accusations made by women
- women's focus on working full-time after having kids means that kids have go to daycare and public schools
- women's much higher rates of spending on non-essentials
- unrealistic expectations of men caused by social media
- commitment instability caused by past sexual history
- women's hard swing to the political left

So, again, the response of naive social conservatives is to say "let men fix it". I was having a conversation with a social conservative who researches marriage, and I asked him how many of these factors he's considered. He hadn't considered any, because women good, and men bad. Why would you ask bad men why they are not doing what the good women want? Just tell the bad men what the good women want them to do. And if it doesn't work, try again. And if it doesn't work, try again. That's been the dominant approach by social conservatives since the start of the Sexual Revolution. They just keep trying to make men fix it.

But what if social conservatives decided to try an intelligent, problem-solving solution? Something that a software engineer might think up, that actually *engineers* a solution over the long-term, by changing the incentives that men face?

Here's the story from the Daily Caller:

> In a pioneering move in 2018, Kentucky passed the first law making joint custody

> the default in divorce and separation cases.
>
> The common-sense approach to divorce and child custody cases has had a major effect, with the state's divorce rate dropping by 25% from 2016 to 2023, surpassing the nationwide decrease of 18%, the National Center for Family & Marriage Research at Bowling Green State University found.
>
> Following Kentucky's lead, Arkansas, West Virginia, Florida, and Missouri enacted similar bills, with about 20 other states considering such legislation, according to the National Parents Organization (NPO).
>
> "There is no law that affects more people other than taxes or traffic. Giving kids equal access to both their parents is just common sense," Matt Hale, vice chair of NPO, told The Wall Street Journal in its feature on Kentucky's law.
>
> Hale attributes the decline in divorce rates to the custody law, saying that parents are now more inclined to remain together since shared custody requires couples to work things out and communicate. Hale also shared accounts of couples who chose not to divorce due to the shared custody presumption and later valued that decision.
>
> This is a common-sense solution, as Kentucky's law does not state that 50/50 custody be blindly granted in every case. Rather, it sets the baseline presumption that, upon divorce, the mom and dad will split custody.

When you make it less attractive for women to initiate divorce, then women divorce less. When women divorce less, men marry more. It's very simple. Men today do not want to be financially ruined in divorce courts by child support, to pay for children that they don't even get to see. I think if you added mandatory paternity testing, and removed the ability to make up false accusations that were never investigated by the police, that would be two more good reasons for men to come back to marriage. And that's how these problems need to be solved. Not by telling men what to do, but by giving men a good deal.

Scott Klusendorf discusses right to life, assisted reproduction, and end of life

September 16, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Here's the video, featuring my favorite pro-life speakers Scott Klusendorf. Scott is the founder and President of the Life Training Institute. LTI's mission is to make a rigorous, rational defense for pro-life positions with respect to a variety of ethical issues. If you listen to Scott, you will learn a lot, and learn it from someone who has been tested on the battlefield of ideas.

Three topics:

- right to life of the unborn
- reproductive technologies
- end of life questions

40 minutes of guided discussion, 20 minutes of Q&A. This video was apparently recorded in the summer of 2016.

Abortion:

- the 1-minute case for the pro-life position (excellent)
- dealing with those who dismiss the pro-life case as religious
- how and when do people win arguments?
- how does one get better at discussing moral issues?
- who are some of the best books to get informed about life issues?
- what are some of the best books from the other side?
- what is the SLED test? do pro-abortion scholars accept it?
- if abortion were illegal, who should be punished and how much?
- is it inflammatory and dangerous to say that abortion is killing?

Assisted reproductive technologies:

- how should we speak to people considering ARTs?
- what is the underlying issue in ART discussions?
- should pro-lifers be opposed to all use of ARTs?
- what should pro-lifers think about surrogacy?
- which books provide an introduction to ART ethics?

End of life issues:

- what is the central issue in end of life discussions?
- should treatment always be continued or are there situations where treatment can be withdrawn?

Final issues:

- if a student wants to take courses in bioethics, where should they go to take courses or do a degree?
- what is the policy situation for pro-lifers in terms of legislation and SCOTUS decision-making?
- what are some policies that pro-lifers can support as incremental measures that move the issue in the right direction?

I liked this discussion. I tried to listen as someone new to the issue and he did a good job of not assuming any prior knowledge of the debate. My favorite part was his survey of books and arguments on the other side, and what they say. I don't think that most people realize what the implications of the pro-abortion worldview really are for things like infanticide, and so on. The discussion about who should be punished for abortion and how much was new to me – and that actually came up during the last election, during the GOP primary. Personally, I would let the woman get off, and just prosecute the doctor.

It's very very good to listen to crystal clear thinking on these controversial issues from someone who has encountered the other side in their writings, and in public debates with them. Not to mention having to interact with people making decisions in these areas.

How is secular left socialism going in Germany?

September 17, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Americans can learn which policies work and don't work by looking at policies that have been tried in other times and places. That way, we can avoid the mistakes that other people have already made. That's one of the reasons why people like Thomas Sowell so much – he is always talking about which policies work, and which ones don't. And in Germany, it's mostly policies that don't.

Here's a fun article from Victor Davis Hanson, writing for the Daily Signal. If you're like me, you already know Dr. Hanson from his writings on military history. But he likes policy, too.

He says:

> Today I'd like to talk about the crisis facing Europe, specifically its self-implosion across the spectrum—energy, population, fertility, defense. Germany, for example, has been systematically shutting down its nuclear plants and, for a while, its natural gas electrical generation plants.

If you know your energy policy, then you know that natural gas and nuclear power are the two power sources pushed by conservatives. They are safe and reliable, and they are also zero emission. Best of all for me, they don't kill bats, birds and other animals. Birds are my favorite animals, and that's a huge reason why I hate wind and solar power – they kill birds in large numbers.

More:

> the net result of all of this deliberate turn to wind and solar, at the expense of fossil fuels and nuclear, is that it costs about four times more to use electricity in Germany than it does on average throughout the United States. That's not the only problem.
>
> Germany is deindustrializing. And by that I mean it's losing about 200,000 jobs in its auto industry due to these high energy prices and regulations. Its green mandates, especially electric vehicle mandates, have revolutionized the car industry, in the sense that they're not selling abroad as they did in the past.

When you raise the prices of gas and electricity, it raises the price of all production of goods, and transportation of goods. The funny thing is that this has been going on for some time. I remember talking about Angela Merkel's failed policies with an international student from Germany with I was in grad school. And they never pulled out of their death spiral! It's still going now.

Anyway, the higher cost of gas and electricity is having big effects:

> In addition to that, Germany's disarmed. They only have about 125 attack aircraft. They have very few armored vehicles. Their active military is only about

> 180,000 soldiers.
>
> They have 84 million people in the country. The fertility rate is getting very close to 1.4. I know we have problems here in the United States at 1.6, but 1.4.
>
> And they don't have borders. They have had a million to 2 million illegal aliens just prance into Germany, especially during the last years of the Merkel chancellorship. In terms of percentage of foreign-born, Germany has more foreign-born than does the United States, which doesn't have a border in the south, at least until Donald Trump comes in. Twenty percent of the German population is foreign-born.

We have a new administration now, and if you look at the picks for Department of the Interior, and Secretary of Energy, then we should be getting some action on developing our own supply of clean energy. Let's hope that we don't make the same mistakes that the Germans made.

By the way, if people ask you "why are you a conservative?" it's nothing to be ashamed of. You don't have to bring up Bible verses, religious beliefs, or moral issues. Start with economic policies. Just tell them that conservative policies are policies that allow you to have a job, earn money, and spend it how you like. And when they ask you for an example, you can talk about energy policy, and how things are going in free countries that produce a lot of energy (like Norway) vs un-free countries that don't develop a lot of energy (like Germany). Norway's GDP per capita is $90,500 (great), but Germany's is $61,900 (trash). That's why we want to be like Norway, and we don't want to be like Germany.

By arguing for conservative fiscal policies, you often will get an opportunity to argue for conservative social policies. Once people see that you have done your homework in one area, they will be more welcoming of your views in other areas. At the very least, you win whenever you can show your work.

Conservative policy is just "let's do what works" and "let's not do what does not work". Secular leftist policy is "do what feels good" and "do what makes people like me", but that often produces very bad results, especially for the next generation.

Image source: Clean Energy Wire (January 2023)

Famous pastor discovers the real reason for the decline in marriage rate

September 18, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I want to look at a series of tweets from an ordinary pro-marriage pastor. He is concerned about declining marriage rates. He observed young people in his church, and he did some social science research. And he's come up with a theory about why young Christians are delaying marriage, or not getting married at all.

First, here's the marriage rate, accurate to 2020:

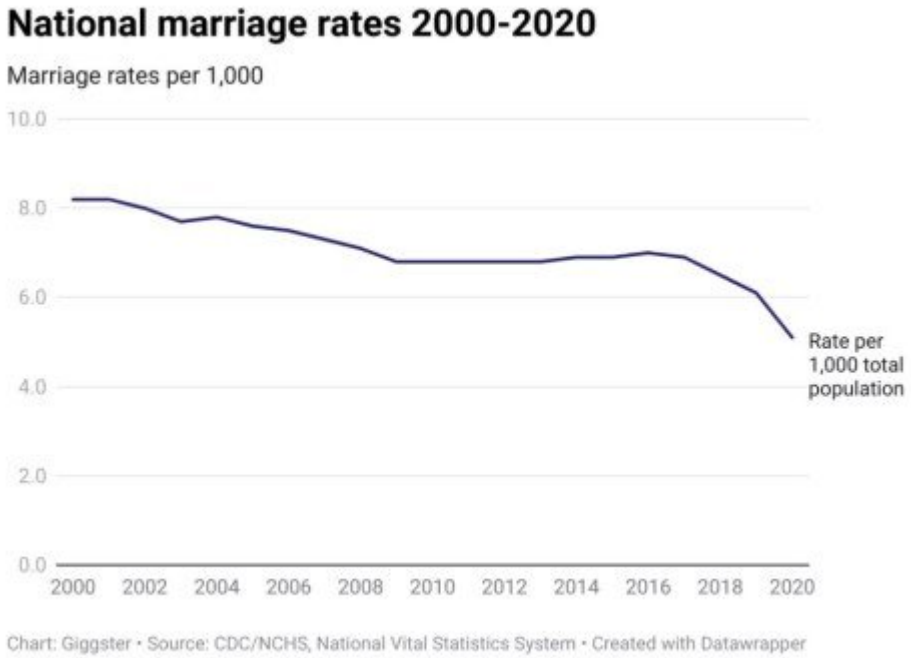

Marriage Rate in America through to 2020

This pastor is just talking about ordinary Christian men in his tweets below, not the ones who do a ton of research on apologetics, etc.

Here is what the pastor said:

> I saw this chart a while back and scratched out some rough thoughts…
>
> Around 2010 or 2011, I noticed a significant shift in "the relationship marketplace." I can sum up this shift with two trends I saw in my church circles.

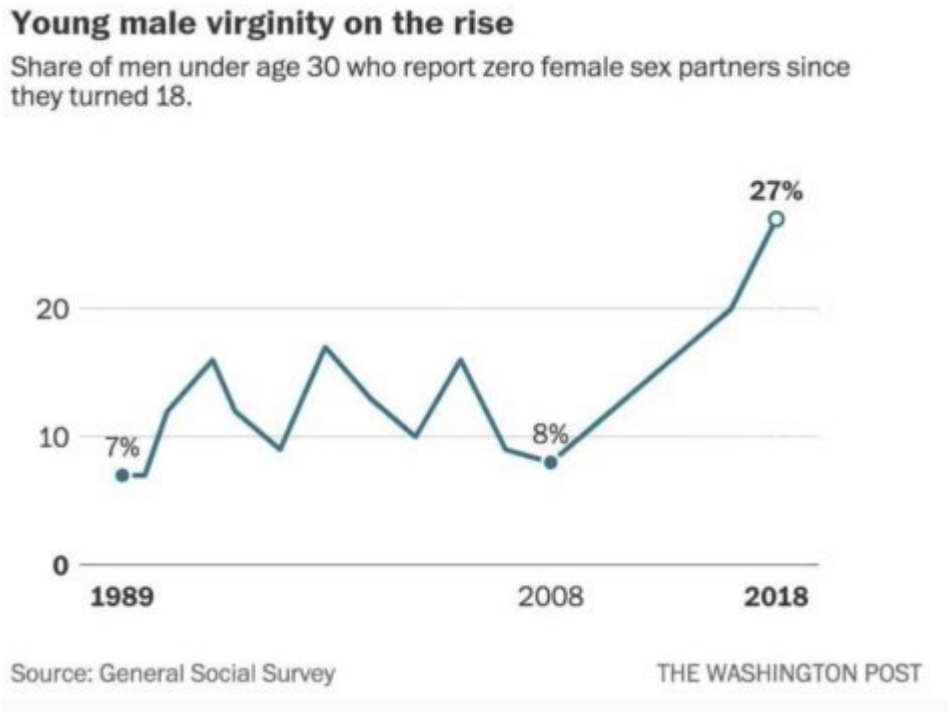

> First, I noticed that many (not all) average to above average Christian men in overall quality (e.g. health, looks, ambition, etc.) were struggling to get a girlfriend. At first, I thought these guys were just being too picky or had some other major deficiency. After all, there are a lot of lazy foolish men out there. This wasn't the case with these men. They weren't the top 1%. But they were quality and had very reasonable (perhaps too low) standards for a girlfriend.
>
> Second, I noticed that many (not all) average to below average Christian women (I know me suggesting that such a thing exists is upsets a lot you) in overall quality (e.g. beauty, personality, temperament, etc.) had a fear of a committed relationship and were extremely picky. They would often complain that there weren't any good men. But there were good men. They just thought those men were below them. They weren't. The arrogance and pride of these women was shocking to me at the time. Not anymore.
>
> I ran my concerns past a boomer pastor. He dismissed it. He thought all the women were just great and men needed to step up to win them. Man up and all that. That really was the moment I realized that there was some form of generational blindness related to what is happening. And that's why I started tracking trends in sexuality not just generally but specifically as they related to dating (aka the relationship marketplace).
>
> Now let me point out 2 particularly concerning trends that overturn older assumptions about the relationship marketplace.
>
> First more and more women today are delaying marriage into their 30s. They, however, aren't delaying sex. Very few of these unmarried women are virgins when they turn 30. Stats vary but it's below 10% and perhaps closer to 5%. Moreover, these women have multiple sexual partners. It's difficult to calculate the number but a survey of the material points toward between 7-14 sexual

> partners prior to getting married right around 30. Others say that is a low number. Regardless, the consequences of this are hard to overstate. This sort sexual promiscuity has intense negative emotional, spiritual, and even physical consequences in the lives of these women. Also, it means that a large number of these women are using hormonal birth control and having abortions.
>
> […]Second, as you see in the chart above, male virginity between ages 18-30 has increased 20% since ’89. That’s good, right? No. It’s doubtful that this increase in virginity is directly connected to an increase in morality among men.
>
> […]So who are these women having sex with?
>
> There appears to be men who are consider “top tier guys” by women who are having a lot casual sex with a lot of women. Supposedly, 20% of the men are having 80% of the sex.

The pastor mentions that 80% of the young women these days are chasing the “top” 20% of men. It’s important to understand that these are not the top 20% of men according to criteria like commitment ability, protecting, providing and moral / spiritual leading. These are the “top” 20% of men according to appearance. In fact, if a man has definite, defensible views on moral or spiritual issues, that is bad, because that means that he is strict, judgmental and boring. Not high status.

What do young women consider “high status”?

Look at this survey of women who use Bumble about where they set the minimum and maximum height of men they are seeking:

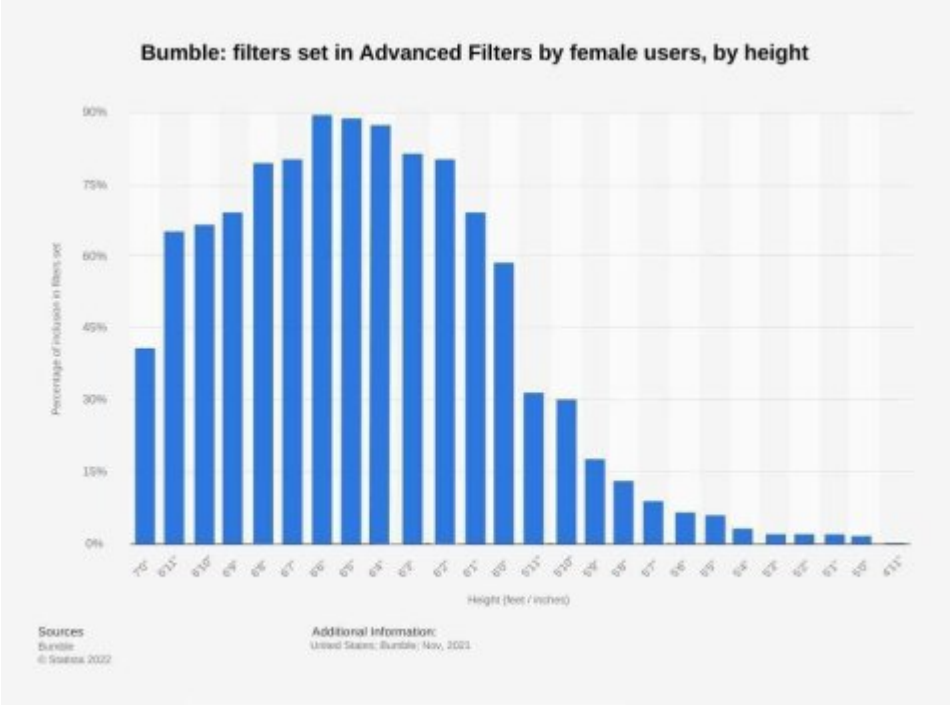

Women’s Height Preferences on Bumble Dating App

What this shows is that women have the height slider set to find men who are between 6 feet tall and 7 feet tall. The average height of a North American man is 5’9″. This is what they value in a man.

Have a look at this survey of OKCupid users:

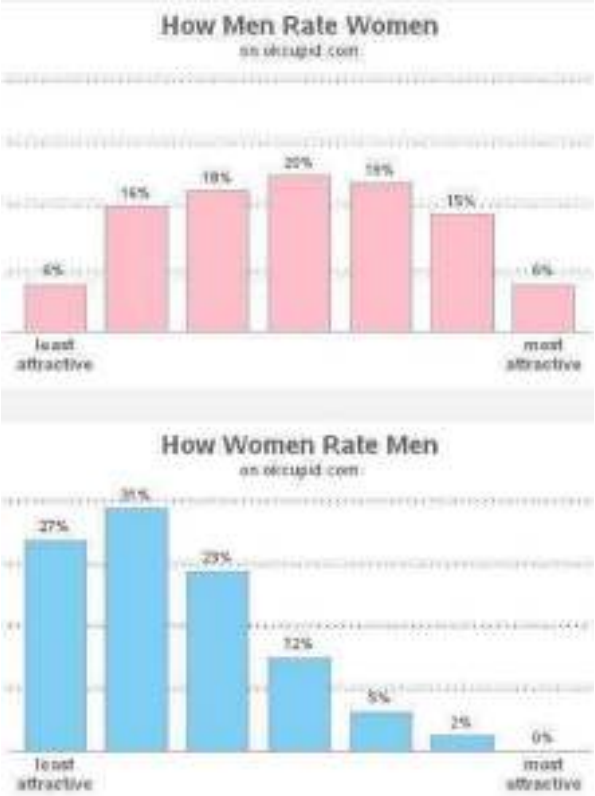

OKCupid Male and Female Attractiveness Ratings

Again, the men with the highest status are judged by their appearances. And how do 80% of the women get the attention of these top 20% of men? Why, by giving them premarital sex, of course. Since these men are swimming in attention from 80% of the women, there is no need for them to commit first in order to get sex. Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free? Although you might think that promiscuity makes men unstable, selfish and low status, you would be wrong. These are the men that women want.

As famous feminist Hanna Rosin explains:

> But this analysis downplays the unbelievable gains women have lately made, and, more important, it forgets how much those gains depend on sexual liberation. Single young women in their sexual prime—that is, their 20s and early 30s, the same age as the women at the business-school party—are for the first time in history more successful, on average, than the single young men around them. They are more likely to have a college degree and, in aggregate, they make more money. What makes this remarkable development possible is not just the pill or legal abortion but the whole new landscape of sexual freedom—the ability to delay marriage and have temporary relationships that don't derail education or career. To put it crudely, feminist progress right now largely depends on the existence of the hookup culture. **And to a surprising degree, it is women—not men—who are perpetuating the culture, especially in school, cannily manipulating it to make space for their success, always keeping their own ends in mind. For college girls these days, an overly serious suitor fills the same role an accidental pregnancy did in the 19th**

> **century: a danger to be avoided at all costs, lest it get in the way of a promising future.**

I've written about how feminists support the hook-up culture before.

They aren't looking for men who will commit until they reach their mid-30s or 40s, and feel peer pressure from their friends who are married and having kids. And many Christian women think that hooking up with hot bad boys is compatible with Christianity, because Christianity is just about God making women happy by letting them do whatever they feel like doing "in the moment".

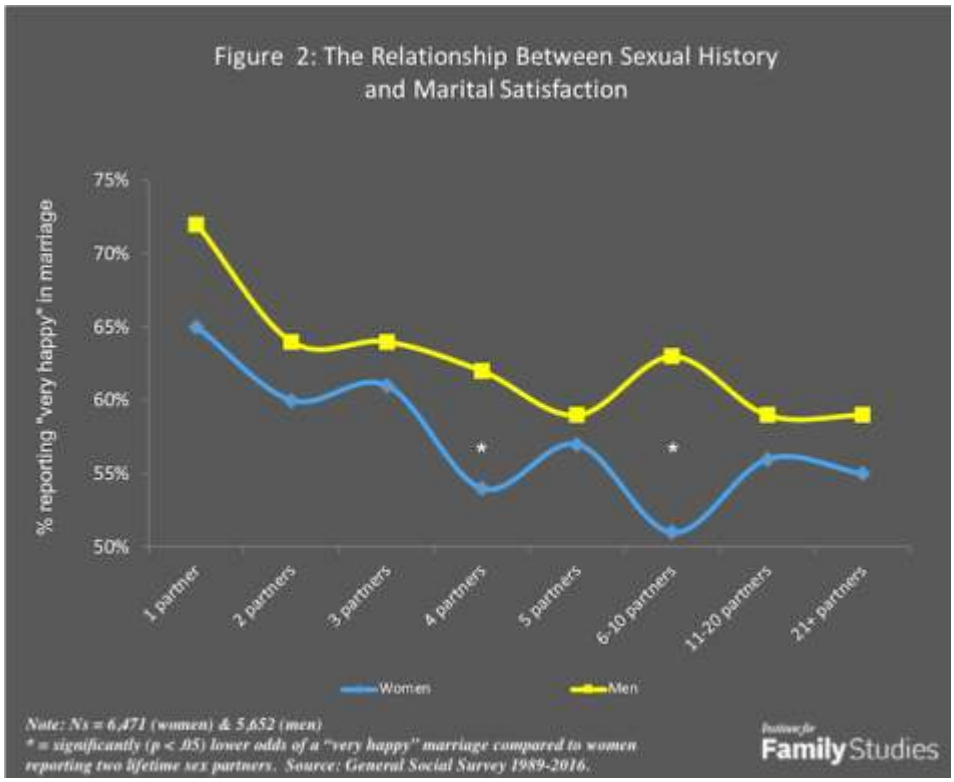

Study: virgins have the happiest marriages, more partners means less happiness

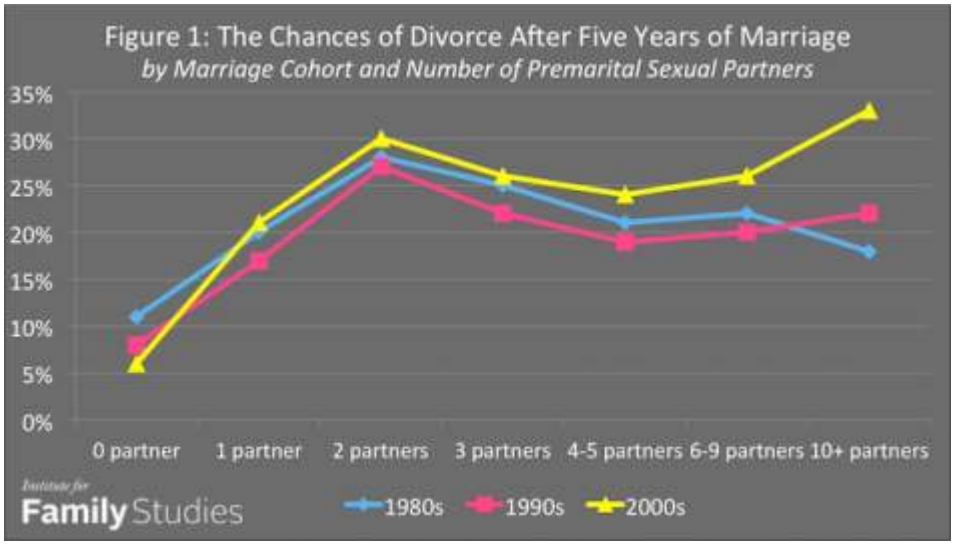

Even one non-husband premarital sex partner raises risk of divorce

What Christian women, their parents and pastors believe

Here are some things I've heard over the years by Christian women, their parents, and their pastors:

- there’s nothing wrong with women choosing men based on height, appearance, and bad boy character traits
- bad boy character can easily be fixed by nagging, sex-withholding, and threatening divorce
- marriage will magically happen when the woman feels like getting married, until then she should focus on casually “dating” attractive men, career, travel and fun
- a woman’s ability to choose good men and be a good wife and mother isn’t harmed by having premarital sex with hot bad boys
- men aren’t discouraged by a woman’s student loan debt or secular left indoctrination, or her desire to put the kids in daycare and public schools, so she can keep working after they are born
- it’s wrong for men to have standards about what they want in a wife and mother, or to prefer early marriage
- if Christian men want to attract women, they should spend more money on expensive cars, clothes and watches
- women are just as likely to get pregnant at 35 as they are at 20, as long as they are in good shape and healthy
- studies that show that past promiscuity causes the woman to be unhappy, and the marriage to be unstable, are all false

There are costs and risks to men who decide to marry. There are external threats from policy, courts, the workplace, the schools, etc. It’s become dangerous for men to advocate for Christian views, and having a family makes it even more risky. These risks make sense when the man gets early investment from a woman – support, investment and many well-raised children. These risks make NO sense when there is no early investment from a woman. A woman who chased “high status” men will never be attracted to a good man. She may eventually want to settle for one, but she will never respect him.

Does the “legacy of slavery” explain black women’s 72% out-of-wedlock birth rate?

September 19, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

James White asks: does the Bible apply to black women?

I don’t like Calvinist theologian James White very much, but at least he’s willing to defend the moral teachings of the Bible against the woke identity politics that is taking over Christian churches. A few months ago he tweeted something very controversial (see above), and got into a lot of hot water with fake Christians. In this post, I’ll explain why he is right.

So, as you can see above, James is concerned that black women are having so many abortions, and he thinks that the solution to this is to encourage black women to take the Bible’s advice on sexual morality. Shocking, I know.

If you read the replies to his tweet on Twitter, you’ll see millions and millions of comments calling him a racist, and telling him that slavery is to blame for EVERYTHING that black women do wrong. Basically, the James haters say that black women can do anything they want, and should never be told that it’s wrong according to the Bible, because their bad choices are all the fault of slavery. So the Bible doesn’t even apply to them, or something.

Here is an example from a radical feminist progressive named Karen Swallow Prior:

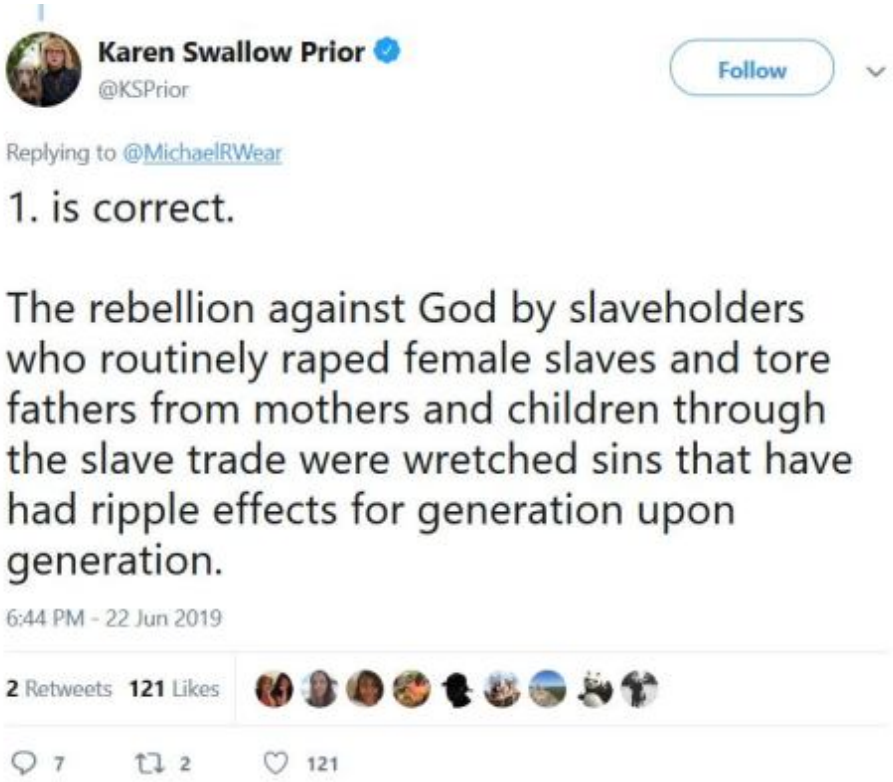

Karen Swallow Prior says that unlike whites, blacks have no moral agency

According to the fake Christians, it's not that black women make poor choices with sex, it's that the ghosts of white slavers who raped their great-great-great grandmothers reach through time with magic and force them to have sex with hunky bad boys who won't commit to them before sex. It's not rap music calling black women hoes! It's the ghosts of slavery past. And even if this ghost theory isn't true, we shouldn't tell black women not to sin, because… it would hurt their feelings. After all, the Bible isn't a book that's designed to set boundaries to prevent self-destructive behaviors. It encourages us to listen to our hearts, be reckless, and sin as much as we can.

So when did black community problems with sex and abortion start? Did it start with slavery times? Actually, blacks were doing GREAT at marriage and sexual matters just 50 years ago.

This reply to James White explained:

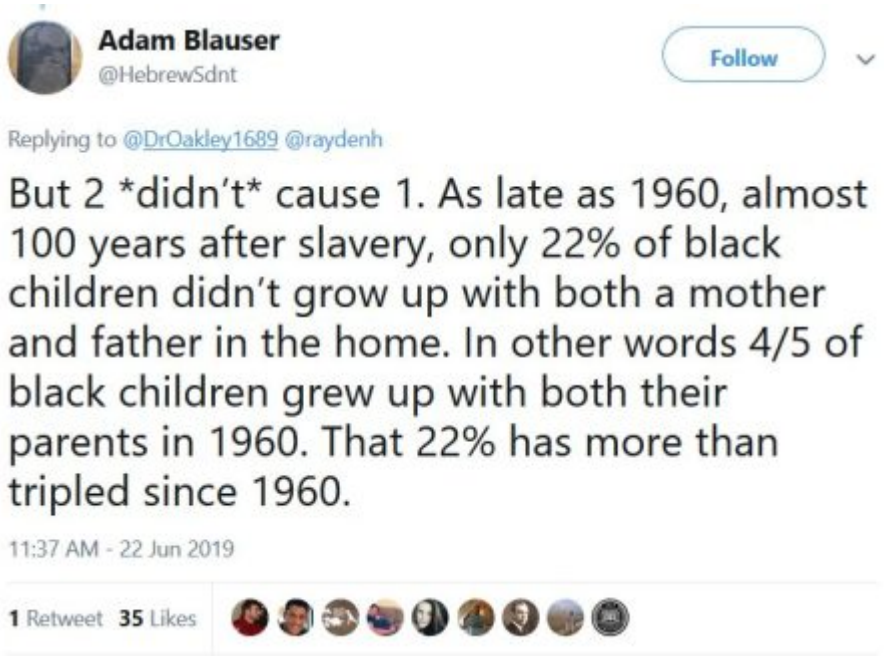

Blacks married at rates comparable to whites before welfare
That's true. Black children weren't fatherless, so they weren't having early sex outside of marriage, and so they weren't getting abortions.

As the header graphic shows, black women were just as likely to be married as white women in the 1960s, FAR AFTER the days of slavery.

The reason that the graph is going upward is because daughters raised in fatherless homes tend to engage in sexual activity at younger ages, because they are seeking approval from a man which their (single) mother cannot give them. It's a tragic downwards spiral, and it affects all races. The only way to stop it is to tell women to choose marriage-minded men (not hot bad boys) and marry before having sex, like the Bible says. But woke fake Christians think the Bible is too mean, and better to allow sin by saying that sin is inevitable because slavery ghosts or something.

What's neat is that black men who take Christianity seriously are totally on board with the facts:

Black man here. Can confirm that the Bible applies to black women.
On this blog, I don't talk about my ethnicity myself, for confidentiality reasons, but I have said that my skin is darker than Barack Obama. I'm not white or Asian. And the reason that I don't fall into this trap of causing babies to be born out of wedlock is because I think that when the Bible says that sex outside of marriage is a sin, that this is true. I

don’t make excuses or shift blame. It’s incumbent on me to obey, since I claim to be a follower of Jesus.I’m not interested in identity politics. I’m not interested in racial divisions. I’m not interested in blame-shifting. The rules are the rules. And my following of the rules caused me to not cause abortions, according to Christian specifications. Period.

When it comes to sex outside of marriage, the answer of every Bible believing Christian is simple: I’m against it. That is the correct answer, and anything more or less than this answer is demonic. If you are a Christian, sex outside of marriage is always morally wrong. And if you try to justify it, or blame someone else, in order to excuse it, then you’re not a Christian at all. If you try to make excuses for why someone did it, you’re not a Christian. Whether you have had it and been forgiven, or never had it, the answer is always the same: it’s morally wrong. Don’t do it. Never do it.

What I am seeing from people who are critical of James White’s tweet is that they are basically trying to attack those who make moral judgments based on what the Bible says. They want to make room for sinners to sin. The root of abortion sin is sexual sin. Real Christians discourage sexual sin, and therefore protect unborn children. Fake Christians want to be liked by appearing compassionate, so they make excuses for sexual sin. If you take the Bible seriously on morality, you won’t be liked. Those who try to excuse sin do so because their need to be liked is more important than their need to promote what the Bible teaches.

Some fake Christians will say “oh, but I do think the Bible is right about sex and marriage, but we have to care about slavery reparations and global warming and refugees and illegal immigrants and transgender rights, too”. Baloney. An authentic Christian is concerned about the things that the Bible teaches are “major” things. Drunkenness is a major thing. Sexual immorality is a major thing. Divorce is a major thing. Homosexuality is a major thing. If you meet a Christian who treats those issues as minor issues, and instead majors in what the secular left tells them are major issues, then you’re talking to a fake Christian.

Christianity isn’t a brain-dead faith. You get your priorities from the Bible, and you argue those priorities using facts. The facts about marriage rates are clear and they show that the problems in the black community aren’t caused by slavery. They’re caused by single mother welfare programs. Those welfare programs taught women of all races that they didn’t have to listen to their fathers when choosing men. Those welfare programs taught women that feelings were a better guide in relationships than the Bible. Those welfare programs taught women that their eyes were a better judge of character than performance of traditional marriage roles. Those welfare programs taught women that recreational sex was a way to get a man to commit and stop being a bad boy. We need to go back to the root cause of the problem. The root cause of the problem was making excuses for disobedience to the Bible, and transferring money from married homes to out-of-control women. Of all races.

Paternity fraud case shows how pro-marriage conservatives see men as expendable

September 20, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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When terrible things happen to men in this society, you often get comments from people saying “well, it’s his fault, he chose a bad woman”. And I agree that men often make poor choices because they focus on attraction instead of on character. But what if a man is an innocent bystander, and is falsely accused by a woman he doesn’t even know? Is it still his fault then?

Here is the news story from Fox 2 Detroit.

Excerpt:

> A Metro Detroit man cleared his name after Friend of the Court sent him a letter saying he had a baby with a woman he never met.
>
> “She don’t know me, how do you just put my name down? How do you just put anybody’s name down?” DeAngelo Smith said. “I don’t know her. Never seen her. Still to this day, haven’t talked to her, and it just proves the baby has no ties to my name.”
>
> Late last year, DeAngelo received a letter from Friend of the Court in Berrien County saying that he was the father of a baby girl.

His wife was the first to see the accusation:

> His wife first spotted the letter in the mail from Friend of the Court.
>
> “Let’s just set the record, I trust my husband,” Tyahvia Smith said. “I know his character, man of integrity.”

They contacted his employer:

> While waiting for the child’s mother to take the baby for a DNA test, DeAngelo said the school where he teaches received an inquiry for possible garnishment in case the child was his.
>
> “It made it something that is not being alleged, but now it’s something that’s being taken into action and no paternity has been established,” he said.
>
> Finally, the woman had the DNA test done, and DeAngelo has since gotten a letter confirming he was not the father.

Legislation introduced by Republican Jim Runestad to prevent this from happening has been tied up for eight years… in a Republican-led legislature:

> “It’s very unfortunate, but paternity fraud is not a unique, unusual situation in Michigan,” Sen. Jim Runestad (R-White Lake) said.
>
> Runestad said he has been pushing for new legislation on the matter for the past

> eight years. Currently, there is no penalty for lying and a DNA test is not required before a person is contacted about the paternity of the child.

The fact that there are no consequences for doing this means that women are going to keep doing it again and again.

Does masculinity mean that a man should give a woman whatever she wants?

I sent this story to a conservative pro-marriage friend, and she said "So what? How many times does something like this happen?" Her only concern was that this story made women look bad. She had previously told me that "masculinity is when a man uses his strength to protect and provide for women". So, then it is just "masculine" for this innocent man to pay for a child who isn't his own. Why would he object to paying? Does he not like children?

Most people today like the changes that feminism has made for women. They like public schools run by women that discriminate against boys. They like women taking out huge student loans for useless non-STEM degrees, then demanding bailouts from taxpayers. They like women taking part in hook-up culture. They like women using no-commitment bad boys for validation. They like no-fault divorce laws. They like false accusations during divorce trials. They like biased domestic violence laws. They like paternity fraud. They like massive welfare spending designed to reward women who make reckless decisions. And they like feminist judges stripping fathers of parental rights for refusing to agree with the transing of their kids.

Men are expendable when it comes to creating greater happiness for women. So what's wrong with sending a man a bill for a woman who needs some money for a child that isn't his? It's horrible to tell a woman that she can't do what she feels like doing. It's horrible to tell a woman that she has to pay the costs of her own actions. Just make a man pay for it. Men are big and strong, they can handle it. And besides, women never tell lies. We have to believe all women. We have to force men to make women happy. That's "masculinity".

Society pressures men to get married

This "believe all women" attitude that is shared by many Christians and conservatives becomes a problem for men when men are pressured to get married. This society makes marriage a risky enterprise for men. And men have to understand that this pressure to get married is often coming from people who see men as expendable in the cause of increasing women's happiness. The person telling you to get married is often the same person who thinks that a DNA test shouldn't be performed in a paternity case.

Men have to understand that the command to "get married" is coming from pro-marriage activists who think that men exist solely to make women happy. Who cares about the risks and costs of marriage for men? Who cares about men's needs and desires? Who cares what reasons a man has for marrying? Who cares about a man's standards for his wife? Who cares about a man's plan for his marriage? He should just be pressured to get married. Just like the falsely accused paternity fraud victim should have to pay.

It's not the purpose of men's lives to get married and have kids

Always remember that according to the Bible, serving God is *more honorable* than getting married and having children. (Read 1 Cor 7:8-9 and 2 Tim 2:4) Many social conservatives try to guilt men into getting married and having children by denying the risks and costs of marriage for men. They think that Christianity's main purpose is to force men to make women happy, regardless of what women offer to men in exchange. That's the actual view of several of my social conservative Christian friends.

Men are designed to serve God first and foremost. And it's much easier to serve God if you are not encumbered by alimony, child support, false accusations, denial of due process, paternity fraud, feminist judges, etc. Only women who honor that obligation, and want to help a man to meet that obligation, should be taken seriously for marriage and child-rearing.

Does the Miller-Urey experiment explain how life originated on Earth?

September 21, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There are two problems related to the origin of the first living cell, on atheism:

1. The problem of getting the building blocks needed to create life – i.e. the amino acids
2. The problem of creating the functional sequences of amino acids and proteins that can support the minimal operations of a simple living cell

Normally, I concede the first problem and grant the atheist all the building blocks he needs. This is because step 2 is impossible. There is no way, on atheism, to form the sequences of amino acids that will fold up into proteins, and then to form the sequences of proteins that can be used to form everything else in the cell, including the DNA itself.

Today, let's take a look at the problems with step 1.

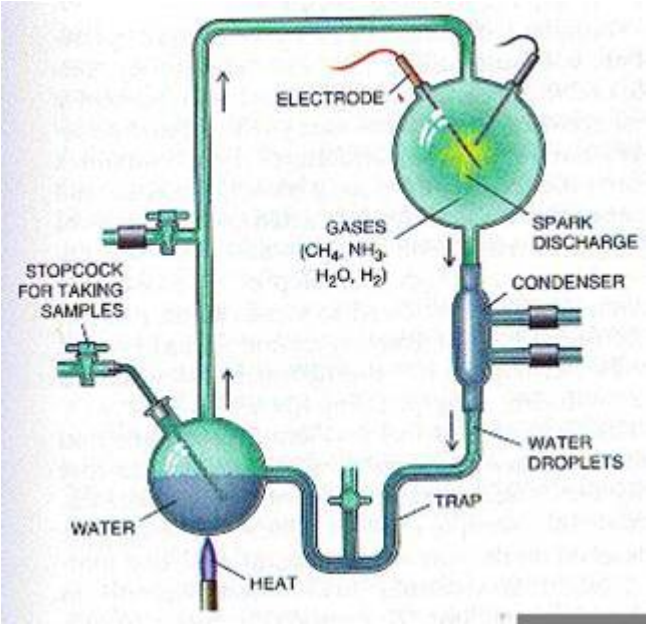

The Miller-Urey experiments

The problem of getting the building blocks of life

Now you may have heard that some scientists managed to spark some gasses to generate most of the 20 amino acids found in living systems. These experiments are called the "Miller-Urey" experiments.

The IDEA center has a nice summary of origin-of-life research that explains a few of the main problems with step 1.

Miler and Urey used the wrong gasses:

> Miller's experiment requires a reducing methane and ammonia atmosphere,[11, 12] however geochemical evidence says the atmosphere was hydrogen, water, and carbon dioxide (non-reducing).[15, 16] The only amino acid produced in a such an

> atmosphere is glycine (and only when the hydrogen content is unreasonably high), and could not form the necessary building blocks of life.[11]

Miller and Urey didn't account for UV of molecular instability:

> Not only would UV radiation destroy any molecules that were made, but their own short lifespans would also greatly limit their numbers. For example, at 100ºC (boiling point of water), the half lives of the nucleic acids Adenine and Guanine are 1 year, uracil is 12 years, and cytozine is 19 days[20] (nucleic acids and other important proteins such as chlorophyll and hemoglobin have never been synthesized in origin-of-life type experiments[19]).

Miller and Urey didn't account for molecular oxygen:

> We all have know ozone in the upper atmosphere protects life from harmful UV radiation. However, ozone is composed of oxygen which is the very gas that Stanley Miller-type experiments avoided, for it prevents the synthesis of organic molecules like the ones obtained from the experiments! Pre-biotic synthesis is in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. The chemistry does not work if there is oxygen because the atmosphere would be non-reducing, but if there is no UV-light-blocking oxygen (i.e. ozone – O_3) in the atmosphere, the amino acids would be quickly destroyed by extremely high amounts of UV light (which would have been 100 times stronger than today on the early earth).[20, 21, 22] This radiation could destroy methane within a few tens of years,[23] and atmospheric ammonia within 30,000 years.[15]

And there were three other problems too:

> At best the processes would likely create a dilute "thin soup,"[24] destroyed by meteorite impacts every 10 million years.[20, 25] This severely limits the time available to create pre-biotic chemicals and allow for the OOL.

> Chemically speaking, life uses only "left-handed" ("L") amino acids and "right-handed" ("R)" genetic molecules. This is called "chirality," and any account of the origin of life must somehow explain the origin of chirality. Nearly all chemical reactions produce "racemic" mixtures–mixtures with products that are 50% L and 50% R.

Two more problems are not mentioned in the article. A non-peptide bond anywhere in the chain will ruin the chain. You need around 200 amino acids to make a protein. If any of the bonds is not a peptide bond, the chain will not work in a living system. Additionally, the article does not mention the need for the experimenter to *intervene* in order to prevent interfering cross-reactions that would prevent the amino acids from forming.

Now keep in mind that even if you get the building blocks, you are left with the sequencing problem. Like the letters of the words in this blog post, the building blocks of life also need to be put in a meaningful sequence in order to do work in a living system –

but that’s another topic for another day.

Luke Barnes on the fine-tuning of the strong force and fine structure constant

September 22, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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By now, anyone who has had discussions about scientific evidence for the existence of God knows about the fine-tuning argument. In a nutshell, if the fundamental constants and quantities given in the Big Bang were even slightly other than they are, then the universe itself would not be hospitable for complex, embodied intelligent life.

Here is an article from The New Atlantis written by Australian cosmologist Luke Barnes.

Excerpt:

> Today, our deepest understanding of the laws of nature is summarized in a set of equations. Using these equations, we can make very precise calculations of the most elementary physical phenomena, calculations that are confirmed by experimental evidence. But to make these predictions, we have to plug in some numbers that cannot themselves be calculated but are derived from measurements of some of the most basic features of the physical universe. These numbers specify such crucial quantities as the masses of fundamental particles and the strengths of their mutual interactions. After extensive experiments under all manner of conditions, physicists have found that these numbers appear not to change in different times and places, so they are called the fundamental constants of nature.
>
> […]A universe that has just small tweaks in the fundamental constants might not have any of the chemical bonds that give us molecules, so say farewell to DNA, and also to rocks, water, and planets. Other tweaks could make the formation of stars or even atoms impossible. And with some values for the physical constants, the universe would have flickered out of existence in a fraction of a second. That the constants are all arranged in what is, mathematically speaking, the very improbable combination that makes our grand, complex, life-bearing universe possible is what physicists mean when they talk about the “fine-tuning” of the universe for life.

Let’s look at an example – the strong force. Not only must the strong force be fine-tuned so we have both hydrogen and helium, but the ratio of the strong force must also be fine-tuned with the fine structure constant.

Barnes writes:

> The strong nuclear force, for example, is the glue that holds protons and neutrons together in the nuclei of atoms. If, in a hypothetical universe, it is too weak, then nuclei are not stable and the periodic table disappears again. If it is too strong, then the intense heat of the early universe could convert all hydrogen into helium — meaning that there could be no water, and that 99.97 percent of

> the 24 million carbon compounds we have discovered would be impossible, too. And, as the chart to the right shows, the forces, like the masses, must be in the right balance. If the electromagnetic force, which is responsible for the attraction and repulsion of charged particles, is too strong or too weak compared to the strong nuclear force, anything from stars to chemical compounds would be impossible.

Here's the chart he's referencing:

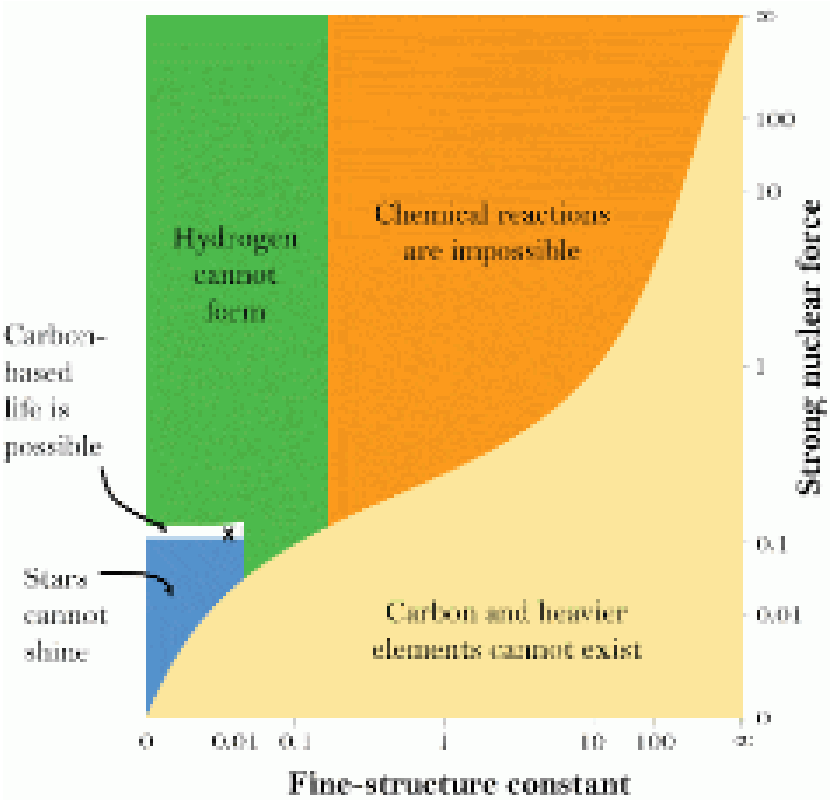

Fine-tuning of the strong nuclear force and the fine structure constant
As you can see from the chart, most of the values that the constants could take would make complex, embodied intelligent life impossible.

We need carbon (carbon-based life) because they form the basis of the components of life chemistry, e.g. proteins, sugars, etc. We need hydrogen for water. We need chemical reactions for obvious reasons. We need the light from the stars to support plant and animal life on the surface of a planet. And so on. In almost every case where you change the values of these constants and quantities and ratios from what they are, you will end up with a universe that does not support life. Not just life as we know it, but life of any conceivable kind under these laws of physics. And we don't have any alternative laws of physics in this universe.

By the way, just to show you how mainstream these examples of fine-tuning are, I thought I would link to a source that you're all going to be familiar with: The New Scientist.

The fine-tuning of the force of gravity

So here is an article from the New Scientist about a different constant that also has to be

fine-tuned for life: the force of gravity.

Excerpt:

> The feebleness of gravity is something we should be grateful for. If it were a tiny bit stronger, none of us would be here to scoff at its puny nature.
>
> The moment of the universe‘s birth created both matter and an expanding space-time in which this matter could exist. While gravity pulled the matter together, the expansion of space drew particles of matter apart – and the further apart they drifted, the weaker their mutual attraction became.
>
> It turns out that the struggle between these two was balanced on a knife-edge. If the expansion of space had overwhelmed the pull of gravity in the newborn universe, stars, galaxies and humans would never have been able to form. If, on the other hand, gravity had been much stronger, stars and galaxies might have formed, but they would have quickly collapsed in on themselves and each other. What’s more, the gravitational distortion of space-time would have folded up the universe in a big crunch. Our cosmic history could have been over by now.
>
> **Only the middle ground, where the expansion and the gravitational strength balance to within 1 part in 10^{15} at 1 second after the big bang, allows life to form.**

Notice how the article also mentioned “the universe’s birth”, which is part of mainstream science.

When I’m writing to you about things like the origin of the universe, or the cosmic fine-tuning, I’m not talking to you about things that pastors found in the Bible. These discoveries are known and accepted by mainstream scientists. It’s amazing that people are constructing their worldviews without having to account for the birth of the universe and this cosmic fine-tuning. We all, as rational individuals, have to bound our view of the universe with the findings of science. Right now, those findings support the existence of a Creator and a Designer. So why am I seeing so many atheists who are just plain ignorant about these facts? Maybe we should tell them about this evidence. Maybe we should ask them why they don’t account for scientific evidence when forming their beliefs.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

- The kalam cosmological argument and the Big Bang theory
- The fine-tuning argument from cosmological constants and quantities
- The origin of life, part 1 of 2: the building blocks of life
- The origin of life, part 2 of 2: biological information
- The sudden origin of phyla in the Cambrian explosion
- Galactic habitable zones and circumstellar habitable zones
- Irreducible complexity in molecular machines
- The creative limits of natural selection and random mutation
- Angus Menuge’s ontological argument from reason

- Alvin Plantinga’s epistemological argument from reason
- William Lane Craig’s moral argument
- The unexpected applicability of mathematics to nature
- Arguments and scientific evidence for non-physical minds

Trump admin pushing election integrity measures ahead of 2026 elections

September 23, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I was on vacation all last week and took Monday off as well, so most of the posts were repeats. But it's Monday night, and I have a fresh post set for Tuesday morning. If you asked me what the biggest mistake of the Trump 2016 administration was, it was neglecting the state level changes to election policy in blue states that made it easier for voter fraud to happen.

Here is the latest story from Daily Signal:

> The Republican National Committee is executing President Donald Trump's election-integrity agenda ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.
>
> […]Trump signed an executive order in March requiring states to use proof of U.S. citizenship for federal voter registration, setting Election Day as the uniform deadline for receiving ballots in federal elections, and conditioning federal election funding on compliance with those and other election-integrity rules.
>
> The RNC is working to defend Trump's executive order in states where practices prohibited by the directive continue. While the president is taking the national approach to election integrity, the RNC is coming alongside him with a state-by-state approach.
>
> "We are challenging these things on a state-by-state basis to make sure that they are compliant with the statutory schemes as constructed now, and that they provide the most balanced security as we can have in those states," the official said.

So what are the changes that the RNC is pushing for? They are going after states that have a universal mail-in ballot system, where election officials automatically send absentee ballots to all registered voters in the state, regardless of whether individuals have asked for one.

They are also going after states that don't update their voter rolls to remove ineligible voters—such as those who have died, moved away, or become inactive. If you don't remove ineligible voters, you make it easier to commit voter fraud by duplicate voting or fraudulent voting.

They are also going after states that have "ballot harvesting", such that third parties (e.g., campaign workers, family members, or organizations) can gather and submit completed ballots from multiple voters without limits, deadlines, or strict tracking requirements.

Now, when I read all this, I was thinking of the Secretaries of State in blue states like Michigan and Pennsylvania. Can you really improve election integrity scores in blue states? Well the article talks about some of their wins in blue states, so yes – they really

are doing it.

Here is a ranking of states for election integrity:

Rank	State	2024 Vote
1-t	Tennessee	R
1-t	Arkansas	R
3	Alabama	R
4	Louisiana	R
5-t	Florida	R
5-t	Georgia	R
7-t	Indiana	R
7-t	Oklahoma	R
9	South Carolina	R
10	Missouri	R
11-t	Mississippi	R
11-t	Ohio	R
11-t	Texas	R
11-t	Wisconsin	R
15	Kentucky	R
16	Iowa	R
17	Kansas	R
18	North Carolina	R
19	Nebraska	R
20-t	New Hampshire	D
20-t	South Dakota	R
22	Montana	R
23	Virginia	D
24-t	Arizona	R
24-t	Idaho	R
24-t	Pennsylvania	R
24-t	Rhode Island	D
28	Utah	R
29	West Virginia	R
30	Wyoming	R
31	Michigan	R
32	Alaska	R
34	Maryland	D

Rank	State	2024 Vote
35-t	Delaware	D
35-t	North Dakota	R
37	New Mexico	D
38-t	Colorado	D
38-t	Connecticut	D
38-t	Maine	D
41	Illinois	D
42-t	Minnesota	D
42-t	New Jersey	D
42-t	New York	D
45	Massachusetts	D
46	Washington	D
47	Nevada	R
48-t	Oregon	D
48-t	Vermont	D
50	California	D
51	Hawaii	D

Notice how most of the red states have good election integrity, whereas most of the blue states have poor election integrity. That’s because most people who live in blue states like Washington cannot rationally ground objective moral values and objective moral duties, and so they just behave immorally.

My advice to people in blue states is to move out to red states, where you are sure your vote will count.

Atheist Jerry Coyne explains why morality is impossible for atheists

September 24, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Let’s review what you need in your worldview in order to have a rationally grounded system of morality.

You need 5 things:

1) Objective moral values

There needs to be a way to distinguish what is good from what is bad. For example, the moral standard might specify that being kind to children is good, but torturing them for fun is bad. If the standard is purely subjective, then people could believe anything and each person would be justified in doing right in their own eyes. Even a “social contract” is just based on people’s opinions. So we need a standard that applies regardless of what people’s individual and collective opinions are.

2) Objective moral duties

Moral duties (moral obligations) refer to the actions that are obligatory based on the moral values defined in 1). Suppose we spot you 1) as an atheist. Why are you obligated to do the good thing, rather than the bad thing? To whom is this obligation owed? Why is rational for you to limit your actions based upon this obligation when it is against your self-interest? Why let other people’s expectations decide what is good for you, especially if you can avoid the consequences of their disapproval?

3) Moral accountability

Suppose we spot you 1) and 2) as an atheist. What difference does it make to you if you just go ahead and disregard your moral obligations to whomever? Is there any reward or punishment for your choice to do right or do wrong? What’s in it for you?

4) Free will

In order for agents to make free moral choices, they must be able to act or abstain from acting by exercising their free will. If there is no free will, then moral choices are impossible. If there are no moral choices, then no one can be held responsible for anything they do. If there is no moral responsibility, then there can be no praise and blame. But then it becomes impossible to praise any action as good or evil.

5) Ultimate significance

Finally, beyond the concept of reward and punishment in 3), we can also ask the question “what does it matter?”. Suppose you do live a good life and you get a reward: 1000 chocolate sundaes. And when you’ve finished eating them, you die for real and that’s the end. In other words, the reward is satisfying, but not really meaningful, ultimately. It’s hard to see how moral actions can be meaningful, ultimately, unless their consequences last on into the future.

Theism rationally grounds all 5 of these. Atheism cannot ground *any of them.*

Let's take a look at #4: free will and see how atheism deals with that.

Atheism and free will?

Here's prominent atheist Jerry Coyne's editorial in USA Today to explain why atheists can't ground free will.

Excerpt:

> And that's what neurobiology is telling us: Our brains are simply meat computers that, like real computers, are programmed by our genes and experiences to convert an array of inputs into a predetermined output. Recent experiments involving brain scans show that when a subject "decides" to push a button on the left or right side of a computer, the choice can be predicted by brain activity at least seven seconds before the subject is consciously aware of having made it. (These studies use crude imaging techniques based on blood flow, and I suspect that future understanding of the brain will allow us to predict many of our decisions far earlier than seven seconds in advance.) "Decisions" made like that aren't conscious ones. And if our choices are unconscious, with some determined well before the moment we think we've made them, then we don't have free will in any meaningful sense.

If you don't have free will, then you can't make moral choices, and you can't be held morally responsible. No free will means no morality.

Here are some more atheists to explain how atheists view morality.

William Provine says atheists have no free will, no moral accountability and no moral significance:

> Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.

Richard Dawkins says atheists have no objective moral standards:

> In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, or any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference… DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music. (Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (1995))

When village atheists talk about how they can be moral without God, it's important to ask

them to justify the minimum requirements for rational morality. Atheists may act inconsistently with their worldview, believing in free will, expecting praise and blame for complying with the arbitrary standards of their peer group, etc. But there is nothing more to morality on atheism that imitating the herd – at least when the herd is around to watch them. And when the herd loses its Judeo-Christian foundation – watch out. That's when the real atheism comes out – the atheism that we've seen before in countries that turned their backs on God, and the moral law. When God disappears from a society, anything is permissible.

Study: female same-sex marriages have the highest rates of divorce

September 25, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Sometimes, when I raise the fact that women initiate 69% of divorces, I get the response that this number is men's fault. For example, pro-marriage Christian feminists and sociologists will say "it's because men are less emotionally intelligent, they don't meet the needs of women". If that's true, then we should expect that lesbian relationships will be the most committed. Are they?

Here's a study from August 2022, published in the Journal of Family History.

The abstract says:

> The trends in marriage and divorce among male and female same-sex couples in urban and rural Norway were compared to different-sex marriages. Norway legalized same-sex living in 1993 and marriage in 2009. Cohorts from 1993 to 2018 were included. The 2009 gender-neutral marriage law appears to have had minimal impact on the rate of same-sex unions and divorces. Moreover, divorce risks are highest in female same-sex marriages, whereas male same-sex marriages have the same divorce risk levels as different-sex marriages. The divorce risk is declining for same-sex marriages in urban areas, while the opposite is observed in rural areas.

And down in the results section, we have this:

> Female same-sex marriages had the highest total divorce rate throughout the period, followed by male same-sex marriages. The highest total divorce rate was observed among female same-sex marriages formed in 2003, with 59.1% divorced before 2018.

Now, some people will say, but this is just one country. Yes, but it's a same-sex marriage affirming country. They've had same-sex unions since 1993, and same-sex marriage since 2009. So critics can't blame disapproval of LGBT for these numbers. And this study agrees with previous studies.

Now, let's make a comment about this.

I think this data suggests a wonderful question for men to use in the course of vetting a candidate wife for marriage. Just casually mention the study, and then ask her "what do you think the explanation for this is?"

There will be one group of women who say "that's easy. women are very emotional, and that causes them to have more difficulty keeping to their commitments. It's something that men should test for. Men should choose women who have a habit of taking on tough tasks, and seeing them through to the end. And maintaining their relationship obligations with difficult or demanding family members, friends, elderly pets, etc." That's the right

answer. I like women who do STEM degrees and work hard jobs in the competitive private sector, they tend to be good at sticking with tough situations and engineer solutions, instead of quitting.

But there's another group that will reply "these numbers are the result of external forces that are conspiring against women to make them fail. It's all the fault of insufficient resources, or social disapproval, or sexism, or the males in their lives." That's the wrong answer. I avoid women who do easy degrees like English, psychology, etc. They tend to go straight to a safe unionized job teaching children in the public school monopoly. That's not good training for commitment-keeping. It shows that they like to do easy things. Marriage is hard work. Don't pick a wife who likes fun and thrills. Pick a wife who engineers solutions to problems.

I do understand that women expect high quality communication and emotional intelligence in their relationships. To those women, I would just say, you need to choose better men. You need to know up front what marriage is about in the long-run, and you need to choose the things that you really need for the long run.

I wrote this post to try to help men avoid disasters when making their relationship choices. The best we can do as men is to take responsibility for our own choices. That means not letting ourselves be carried away by emotions. We have to test by asking questions. And even better than listening to an answer, is looking at the actions. Always look for women who keep their commitments when it goes against their self-interest. They are out there. Pick one.

Google / YouTube admits to censoring conservatives for Democrat politicians

September 26, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I remember when Apple, Google and Amazon banned the Parler app because it was being used by conservatives to share conservative views online. Today, we're seeing that leftist domestic terrorists are using social media apps to communicate, but these companies don't seem concerned about that. Why is there a double standard? Why are conservatives censored, but not leftists?

Well, here's an interesting story from Daily Wire:

> Google has committed to allowing all creators who were kicked off YouTube — over so-called political speech "violations" — the chance to return to the platform. And according to House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan, "THAT'S NOT ALL."
>
> The tech giant sent a letter to Jordan and the Judiciary Committee on Tuesday, but the letter also included several statements from YouTube, admitting, among other things, to pressure from the former President Joe Biden's administration to censor certain political statements.

In the rest of the article, it notes that conservatives were censored for their conservative viewpoints – not because they had violated any specific policy.

Another article from Daily Wire notes:

> Creators banned under this regime include Dan Bongino and Sebastian Gorka, both of whom now serve in the Trump administration.

Now, back to that point I made about Big Tech companies censoring the Parler app, because it was for conservatives. What do you think would happen if leftist domestic terrorists were using an app to assist them in their domestic terrorism? Would Apple and Google censor that app?

The Federalist explains:

> In a chilling social media post, FBI Director Kash Patel described how Wednesday's sniper at a Dallas ICE facility gathered intelligence online for the ambush that left one ICE detainee dead and two seriously injured. Authorities say suspected killer Joshua Jahn, 29, committed suicide after the ambush.
>
> […]While retracing Jahn's movements and writings, the FBI found he reviewed a document that listed Dallas DHS locations, and he "searched apps that tracked the presence of ICE agents." Marcos Charles, the ICE executive associate director for enforcement and removal operations, confirmed the gunman utilized these apps to carry out the attack.

So, will the same big tech companies that banned Parler also ban these anti-government, anti-law-enforcement apps?

Of course not:

> The Federalist sent emails to the media relations teams at the Google and Apple app stores. These teams are made up of people who are paid full-time wages to answer questions from the media. And the question The Federalist asked seemed like a real softball: Will the app store remove apps that track ICE or law enforcement?
>
> […]But at the time of publication both companies had refused to commit to suspending ICE-tracking apps.

Do you think they will ban these apps, or do you think they will let their allies on the left continue to use them to commit violence against law enforcement? What would you do with Big Tech censors? I don't think they would be changing a thing if the Democrats had won in 2024. They're only sorry now, because they got caught. Not because they care about free speech.

Christian leaders ignore the real reasons why good men decline to marry

September 27, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Before we start, here are two articles explaining why men are supposedly not marrying. First one from a pastor. Second one from a sociologist. And this is, I think, the majority view: men are to blame for the decline of marriage, because men are stupid, weak, lazy and lacking ambition. Feminist women are great. Marriage laws are fair. Family courts are impartial. But is that all true?

Now, if you ask an actual man whether these are his reasons for not marrying, he will have a different list:

- women initiate the majority of divorces
- young women are increasingly politically leftist
- men can easily be fired for false accusations at work
- men are sentenced far more severely than women are sentenced, for the same crimes
- the Sexual Revolution encourages women to be promiscuous with the men who they find the most physically attractive
- family courts are biased against men, punishing men with alimony, child support, loss of custody, loss of visitation
- majority of student loan debt is held by women
- concerns about the moral impact of the books, music, TV shows and movies that are popular with young women

And so on.

I think if good Christian men had to pick just one factor that is deterring them from marriage, it would be no-fault divorce.

On this blog, I've covered several cases of the "nightmare scenario" facing men in divorce. One of those cases is the case of Rob Hoogland, which occurred in Canada.

There's some new news about his case, reported in the London Daily:

> A Canadian man, involved in a legal battle over his right to object to hormone treatment for his teenage trans child, has reportedly been jailed and denied bail for violating a gag order banning him from discussing the story.
>
> Robert Hoogland was denied bail by the Vancouver Supreme Court on Friday and will remain in the North Fraser remand prison, according to news website the Post Millennial. He was arrested this week for contempt of court, due to his continued violation of an order restricting his speech regarding his transgender child.

I also reported on the case of an Apple senior software engineer named Ted Hudacko.

Here's a report about him from City Journal:

> Shortly after returning from a trip to New York with their two sons, Hudacko's wife, Christine, told him that she wanted a divorce—and that their oldest son identified as transgender. During divorce proceedings, the presiding judge, Joni Hiramoto… stripped him of all custody of his trans-identified son. Hudacko was concerned about administering experimental drugs and preferred to wait and see if his son's gender issues might resolve on their own, as usually happens in such cases. To the California judge, this confirmed his unfitness as a father.

I also reported on the case of a father from Texas named Jeff Younger, whose ex-wife wants to trans their kid.

And there a recent report about the status of his case in the New York Post:

> A California judge dealt a devastating blow to a Texas father in his years-long fight to stop his ex-wife from allowing their pre-teen son, who identifies as a girl named "Luna," to receive gender-affirming care.
>
> Father of two Jeff Younger, 59, announced on X that he "lost all parental rights" over his twin sons after Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Mark Juhas granted his estranged pediatrician ex-wife Anne Georgulas the authority to "castrate" his 12-year-old son James.

I blogged on all of these cases, but it's doubtful that pastors and pro-marriage sociologists have heard of any of them. They just want men to use their strength and finances to make women happy, and they don't care about the actual risks and costs that men are facing.

But there's been another case in the news just in the past week, reported in The Federalist:

> After raising concerns about his then-13-year-old son taking puberty blockers and starting on a path to irreversible, experimental, and life-long medical interventions to "transition" into a girl, the Colorado government stripped father Robert Cameron of all rights to protect his child.
>
> Colorado was able to do that because the child's mother and Cameron's ex-wife, Nancy Drake, used Colorado's "affirmation only" legal structure to wage a war against Cameron through the courts. Drake, who joined forces with an activist therapist, has been able to use government force to push the now-14-year-old boy into the transition interventions which, if pursued in full, have the power to sterilize, reduce brain development, and cause bone density issues, among a host of other gruesome effects.
>
> "My child is more important to me than whatever the court system may do to me. If my child needs to be saved, it's my job as a parent to save him, and he needs to be saved right now. He needs to be saved from predation and

> manipulation," Cameron told The Federalist. "I haven't slept well in forever because I'm afraid for my child. I also see the adults preying on this child's innocence. This all falls under the sexualization of children that we are engaging in as a society. That's absolutely appalling. And I'm not even talking about the medical experiments we're doing on children."
>
> […]Cameron's primary goal is to have his son be able to wait until he is 18 to make the decision, but Drake, who appears to have trigger-happy, extraordinarily litigious lawyers behind her, need the transition to start now, no questions asked — literally.
>
> Drake, an academic in a left-wing community in Colorado with whom Cameron shares joint custody, successfully got the state of Colorado to block Cameron's oversight over their son's medical treatment or even speak to him about transgenderism…
>
> […]Drake did not respond to The Federalist's request for comment, but within minutes of the request being sent, she threatened Cameron with calling Child Protective Services if he spoke to the media, claiming doing so means that he "intended [their son] to be harmed" and that it is "proof of child abuse."
>
> […]Some weeks ago, Drake also attempted to stop Cameron's ability to speak to pretty much anyone by requesting a gag order on top of the others already issued that would encompass "friends … anyone in our social circle … activists, and … the media," claiming it puts their children (their son is one of two twins, the other, a girl) in "physical, medical, and psychological danger," according to an email sent to the case arbitrator reviewed by The Federalist.
>
> Drake threatened Cameron's ability to have parenting time with their children at all.

Now, in every case I presented, I blame the MAN 100% for the problems he is facing. Why? Because people don't change after you marry them. These women were terrible secular leftists before marriage, and these foolish men all chose to marry them anyway. Maybe because men tend to value youth and beauty above character. Men are responsible for marrying badly. And I have the same view when women marry badly. It's the women's fault.

My point is that good men who are not yet married look at these cases, and it causes them to want to decline to participate in dating and marriage. They don't like the fact that these social workers, therapists, lawyers, judges, etc. have this VERY LOW VIEW of fatherly authority and leadership. They don't want to be judged in a system run by man-haters. This is especially true for men who are well-educated and high earners. They don't want to be ruined.

So, what should we think about pastors, sociologists, and feminist Christians in general, when they try to blame the decline of marriage on men? Well, an excellent question to ask them is "what reasons do conservative men who are well-educated, and financially successful have for declining the offer of "feminist" marriage?" If their answer is to blame

and shame men some more, just understand that you are dealing with someone who is not interested in solving the underlying problem.

When I ask questions like this to social conservatives, even the ones who claim to be against divorce, they cannot bring themselves to take seriously the dangers of marriage for men. Instead, they try to make it seem that a man taking these risks is “brave” and “strong”. When I ask them if they shoe was on the other foot, and it was women who were facing these same risks, should she marry? And they say “Of course not. That’s unfair!”

Why is there this double standard? Could it be because *even in the Christian church, there is a double standard that asserts that Christianity is really about making women happy, no matter what, and that men are expendable for this purpose?* I’m not saying that the Bible teaches this. But I’ve found this view of Christianity to be extremely popular, and not just among egalitarians, but among complementarians, too. Especially the ones who redefine “male headship” to mean “servant leadership”. That really turns men off of marriage, because it makes them think that Christianity is being run by the ex-wives in these stories, and there is no support for male leadership at all.

Knight and Rose Show #68: Corey Miller: The Progressive Miseducation of America

September 27, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Welcome to episode 68 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the the progressive miseducation of America, with Dr. Corey Miller. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Dr. Corey Miller to discuss The Progressive Miseducation of America. They examine how universities promote scientism, cultural Marxism, and postmodernism, undermining morality and fueling issues like divorce and fatherlessness. Miller critiques the secular drift and offers practical guidance, highlighting Ratio Christi's tools to equip young people for the intellectual and moral challenges of high school and university.

You can find the details about his new book here, and if you sign up for the Ratio Christi newsletter on that site, you get the first two chapters FOR FREE!

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 68:

Speaker biographies

Corey Miller grew up in Utah as a seventh generation Mormon. He came to Christ, and later became a pastor, philosophy professor, campus minister, and now serves as the president/CEO of Ratio Christi (RatioChristi.org). He has authored or edited five books and holds three master's degrees, along with a PhD from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. His thought is centered on the intersection of faith, reason, and culture. His newest book is entitled "The Progressive Miseducation of America: Confronting the Cultural Revolution from the Classroom to Your Community ", published by Harvest House Publishers. It will be available on October 14, 2025.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since

January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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What does scientific evidence tell us about the effectiveness of same-sex parenting?

September 28, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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I saw that Katy Faust tweeted this article by Mark Regnerus, a sociologist who specializes in dating, marriage and parenting issues. In the article, Regnerus cites the conclusions from several recent research studies. Once we see what he has to say, I'll pull the data from a Canadian study that he didn't mention that also shows the effect of same-sex parenting on children.

The article appears in The Public Discourse:

> The story of "no differences" between same-sex and opposite-sex households with children hinges on a pair of repetitive themes in the published research: (1) hiding behind small and nonrepresentative samples, and (2) employing analytic strategies that all but guarantee motivated researchers can "explain away" those pesky baseline observable differences between children from same-sex and opposite-sex households.
>
> Baseline differences matter. What happens before control variables matters. Building statistical models to hide differences is called p-hacking, a common but problematic practice. A 2020 study of over 1.2 million children in the (gay-friendly) Netherlands, whose primary media message trumpeted how same-sex parents were better than opposite-sex parents, nevertheless revealed that 55 percent of children living with same-sex parents—the vast majority of which were female couples—experienced the separation of these parents, well above the 19 percent of children of opposite-sex parents who experienced the same. "Controlling" for such instability—in effect implying it doesn't matter—clears the way to proclaim the benefits of same-sex parents. It's a common statistical practice, but a deceptive one.
>
> Hence, alternative analyses are always a good idea. For example, a 2020 published reexamination of three nationally representative datasets from the United States and Canada revealed that the presence of children tended to stabilize opposite-sex couples but destabilize same-sex couples. Dissolution rates were 43 percent for same-sex couples, but only 8 percent for opposite-sex couples. Its authors agree, saying that "parental instability is an important factor through which parents' sexual orientation influences children's outcomes."

So, the problem of higher separation between partners in a lesbian relationship is well-known. Lesbian couples have the highest instability rates of any kind of couple, heterosexual or homosexual.

Family Research Council notes:

> In the past, same-sex couples who got a slice of the marriage pie immediately

> wanted their share of the divorce market. In South Africa, couples who were first to wed under a 2006 law also won the race to divorce court only a year later; two Toronto lesbians who wed in 2003 separated after only five days, petitioning successfully in 2004 for a judge to overturn Canadian law so they could divorce. Or take Los Angeles, where 2008's historic first same-sex couple divorced this summer although they had been together for 18 years! Lest we think these cases are exceptional, of the same-sex couples who did marry in Sweden, males were 35% more likely to divorce than heterosexual couples, while lesbians were up to 200% more likely.

Before same-sex marriage, the concept of marriage included the concepts of permanence and exclusivity. Natural marriage has the production and raising of children at the core. No-fault divorce damaged that core, saying that the happiness of the selfish adults was more important than the children. Then same-sex marriage damaged the core again, saying that producing children isn't even central to the concept of marriage. As the selfish adults pass more laws against natural marriage, the children suffer more from the decline of permanence and exclusivity.

I found another study related to same-sex parenting, this one out of Canada.

Here is the abstract of the study:

> Almost all studies of same-sex parenting have concluded there is "no difference" in a range of outcome measures for children who live in a household with same-sex parents compared to children living with married opposite-sex parents. Recently, some work based on the US census has suggested otherwise, but those studies have considerable drawbacks. Here, a 20% sample of the 2006 Canada census is used to identify self-reported children living with same-sex parents, and to examine the association of household type with children's high school graduation rates. This large random sample allows for control of parental marital status, distinguishes between gay and lesbian families, and is large enough to evaluate differences in gender between parents and children. Children living with gay and lesbian families in 2006 were about 65 % as likely to graduate compared to children living in opposite sex marriage families. Daughters of same-sex parents do considerably worse than sons.

The author of the study is a professor of economics at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. His PhD in economics is from the University of Washington. A previous study had shown that gay relationships typically have far more instability (they last for more shorter times). That's not good for children either. Another study featured in the Atlantic talked about how gay relationships have much higher rates of domestic violence. That's not good for children either. So we have three reasons to think that normalizing gay relationships as "marriage" would not be good for children.

Does the Bible teach Christians to expect happiness or suffering?

September 29, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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Is God your cosmic butler? Do you just ring a bell to summon him so that he can give you whatever you want? Let's see what the Bible teaches in the book of 1 Peter. Peter is writing to all the Christians who are spread out all over the place, trying to survive in a world that doesn't care much about things that they think are meaningful.

Pay attention to these verses:

1 Peter 1: 3-7:

> [3] Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
>
> [4] and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,
>
> [5] who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.
>
> [6] In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.
>
> [7] These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Suffering is normal and expected.

1 Peter 2:6-8:

> [6] For in Scripture it says:
>
> "See, I lay a stone in Zion,
> a chosen and precious cornerstone,
> and the one who trusts in him
> will never be put to shame."
>
> [7] Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,
>
> "The stone the builders rejected
> has become the cornerstone,"
>
> [8] and,
>
> "A stone that causes people to stumble
> and a rock that makes them fall."
>
> They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were

> destined for.

Rejection by “those who do not believe” is normal and expected.

1 Peter 2:18-24:

> [18] Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.
>
> [19] For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.
>
> [20] But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.
>
> [21] To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.
>
> [22] “He committed no sin,
> and no deceit was found in his mouth.”
>
> [23] When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.
>
> [24] “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

When people attack you personally for being a Christian, you don’t retaliate against them.

1 Peter 3:14-18:

> [14] But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.”
>
> [15] But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,
>
> [16] keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.
>
> [17] For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.
>
> [18] For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

Jesus sets the example for Christians of being willing to suffer for obedience to God.

1 Peter 4:1-5:

> [1]Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin.
>
> [2] As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

> [3] For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.
>
> [4] They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you.
>
> [5] But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

The normal Christian life involves some non-Christians heaping abuse on you, *precisely because* you don't participate in their sins, or celebrate their sins. For example, attending or participating in a same-sex marriage ceremony.

1 Peter 4:12-19:

> [12] Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.
>
> [13] But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.
>
> [14] If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.
>
> [15] If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.
>
> [16] However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.
>
> [17] For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?
>
> [18] And,
>
> "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
> what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"
>
> [19] So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

Christians who experience shame and/or suffering at the hands of some non-Christians for obeying God, are imitating Christ. They should expect to be vindicated, just as Christ was vindicated through his resurrection.

1 Peter 5:5-6:

> [5] In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,
>
> "God opposes the proud
> but shows favor to the humble."
>
> [6] Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up

> in due time.

Authentic Christianity involves obeying God's commandments, and defending God's truth claims and moral values. It doesn't mean virtue signaling to Christians, (or non-Christians, which seems very popular these days among pious Christian leaders). Humility means thinking of yourself less, and comparing yourself to others less. Just do your job as a Christian, and don't think about what it says about you. To anyone. What people think of you doesn't matter.

Look at 1 Corinthians 4:1-5:

> [1] This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed.
>
> [2] Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.
>
> [3] I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.
>
> [4] My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.
>
> [5] Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

Christianity isn't there for you to use to make yourself happier, or to make other people like you. You're not supposed to agree with non-Christians so that they like you. That's missing the entire point of Jesus' example. Jesus obeys God. Some non-Christians get mad at him. Some non-Christians shame Jesus, and make him suffer, for obeying God. God vindicates Jesus. That's the plan. You're supposed to follow that plan, not make up some other compromise and virtue signal plan!

By the way, in no way am I telling Christians to be impractical. You should be as smart as you can, work as hard as you can, and save as much money as you can, in order to make your shame and suffering bearable, without compromising your principles. For example, you could try to make a network of like-minded friends who can support one another when you become a target. You can donate to organizations like Alliance Defending Freedom, a legal group that defends Christians from persecution by the secular left.

But just understand that being rejected, and being mistreated, is part of the normal, authentic Christian life. You're not supposed to agree with non-Christians, or celebrate them, or affirm them, in order to escape feeling shame, and suffering persecution. I don't know how people can read the Bible and not understand what the life of Jesus means. We're supposed to follow Jesus.

How can we get normal people to care about the effects of feminism?

September 30, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

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On the weekend, I saw a really great 90-minute discussion about how feminism has affected relationships and marriage, featuring the famous Christian Zuby and Joker from Better Bachelor. Joker speaks for the standard, non-religious moderately conservative man (pro-life, opposed to LGBT activism). And Zuby is a traditional conservative who wants men to pursue women for marriage.

So, here is the video:

And Zuby even posted timestamps, so you can see what it is all about:

Timestamps:
(0:00) Trailer
(01:29) Introduction
(01:48) Joker's background and content creation journey
(03:00) Personal experiences with marriage and divorce
(05:04) Traveling and cultural observations
(06:39) Modern dating challenges and gender dynamics
(08:24) Men's issues and the Red Pill community
(27:13) Advice for young men and personal growth
(35:11) Global perspectives on relationships
(38:54) Conservative views and personal reflections
(52:10) Understanding marriage risks
(52:20) Nuances of marriage suitability
(54:14) Marriage and children: complexities and rewards
(54:50) Secular vs. religious views on marriage
(56:34) Men's concerns about marriage
(57:46) The rise of traditional values
(1:00:26) Challenges in modern dating
(1:03:19) The impact of promiscuity on relationships
(1:09:01) Societal breakdown and family dynamics
(1:11:20) The role of religion and tradition
(1:14:20) Concluding thoughts on society and relationships
(1:37:29) Outro

My Dad is currently visiting me in America, and we watched this on Saturday together and had a great discussion. I lean more towards Better Bachelor than Zuby, but Zuby did a good job of accepting the situation that men find themselves in. Most pro-marriage conservatives and Christians are extremely naive about how feminism has affected the dating market, and the value proposition of marriage for men. They can't even put the situation facing men into words, because they are so committed to tricking young men

into marriage despite the risks and costs. But not Zuby. He has an accurate view of the situation facing men. He was making great points, but so was Better Bachelor. I think that people watching will find that it was a close contest, with both sides landing some pretty good points.

I was going to post this on Monday night for Tuesday, which a better day for blog traffic, but I found another (shorter) video from Sargon of Akkad, the British commentator. Sargon seems to be secular, but he definitely leans right. Anyway, he is happily married, with a stay-at-home wife. And he's noticed that something has gone wrong with modern women. They seem to think that going after higher education, careers, wealth, travel and fun makes them *more attractive* to men. Actually, everything that leftist women think is good for men is actually *very, very, very bad for men.* Watch the video below (shorter) and see what you think. What's so funny is how many conservative Christian parents and pastors just let their daughters slide into feminism, and never warn them about how marriage-minded men *never marry feminists.*

Here's the video:

That lady in the thumbnail is "Lisa" and she is looking for a man to marry her, now that she has reached 42 years old. She lives in San Francisco, and she loves wine and cats. Also, she's a non-religious Democrat, and she expects her high value husband to share those values. Do non-religious Democrats have the character traits for lifelong married love?

New York Post has an article about her:

> The Bay Area singleton, 42, is spending cold, hard cash to rent a dozen digital billboards along California's famed Highway 101 — advertising her hand in marriage to any commuter that's ready for commitment.
>
> "I'm putting myself out there," Catalano, a vintage clothes retailer, from San Mateo, Calif., told the Post with a laugh. "People would be shocked if they knew how much this is costing me."
>
> Catalano, who launched her ad campaign on September 2, chose not to disclose how much the exploit has cost her over the past month.
>
> […]She's also taking out ad space atop taxicabs, further promoting herself to motorists around the region.

And her LinkedIn says that she hasn't worked since October 2024.

Do you think that a man who believes that two men can "marry" and adopt children would be good at marriage? Do you think that a man who believes that murder is a good way to resolve reckless, hedonistic sex would be good at marriage? Lisa does. Lisa thinks that immoral men make GREAT husbands. Feminism teaches women to oppose traditional male character and roles, and just go for tall, hot and *non-judgmental* men.

Anyway, I realize that the first video is pretty long, but just watch it over two 45 minute workouts. The last one is shorter, but you can just listen to it while sweeping, vacuuming

or mowing. I really enjoyed them, and I’m glad that we are getting more controlled, moderate voices to make the case about why Christians should be more opposed to feminism. You can either have feminism, or you can have marriage. You can’t have both.

Grieving father of murdered girl attacks soft-on-crime Democrats

October 1, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Previously, I blogged about the murder of Iryna Zarutska, the 23-year-old woman who was murdered by a criminal who was a 14-time repeat offender, in Democrat-dominated Charlotte, NC. What struck most people about the story is how Democrats didn't want to accept any responsibility for their soft-on-crime policies. And now we have a similar case in South Carolina.

Daily Caller has an exclusive story about it:

> Stephen Federico, the father of 22-year-old Logan Federico, told the Daily Caller no Democratic lawmakers have contacted him since her murder.
>
> Logan was shot and killed during a May 3 suspected home invasion while visiting friends in Columbia, South Carolina. Democrat South Carolina Rep. James Clyburn represents the district where Logan Federico was killed.
>
> When the Caller asked Federico if any Democratic lawmaker, including Clyburn, had reached out since his daughter's death, he said no.
>
> Referring to Democrat North Carolina Rep. Deborah Ross, he added, "One called my daughter the wrong name yesterday."

I do think that it is infuriating when someone takes a course of action for social reasons – virtue signaling – and then refuses to accept responsibility for the results of their actions. In this case, Democrats took an action – being soft on criminals, and deterring self-defense – and then when the result occurred – repeat offenders committing serious crimes after being released – the Democrats don't want to even accept that it happened. And they certainly don't accept that they are responsible. After all, they think, how could bad results come from actions taken by someone as morally superior as myself? The moral superiority means that they should never be held accountable for any results of their actions.

Just like the Iryna case, the accused in this case had been caught and released many times:

> Authorities charged Dickey with two counts of first-degree burglary in 2014, then served warrants for a third first-degree burglary charge in October, according to WIS10. The man pleaded guilty on a second-degree non-violent burglary charge and was sentenced to 10 years suspended amid probation.
>
> Dickey faced the other two burglary counts the following year, though one was dropped. He pleaded guilty to burglary to the third-degree. Dickey pleaded guilty for the third time to third-degree burglary in 2023 after originally facing a count of violent second-degree burglary. Eleventh Circuit Court Solicitor Rick Hubbard

> claimed his office did not know of Dickey's previous burglary charges and guilty pleas amid the 2023 case.
>
> […][Stephen Federico] noted that prison is meant to rehabilitate people but argued that Dickey never spent enough time behind bars to know if rehabilitation could have worked — noting he only served about 600 days over a decade. "I would say the odds are against career criminals ever being rehabilitated."

There's some must-see video of the father that has been making the rounds – a rare look at what crime is like for the victims:

In this case, the accused criminal was arrested 39 times, and had 25 felonies in his criminal record. What was he doing out on the streets? Well, you just have to consider that big problem that secular leftists have with accountability. They don't like the idea of anyone being "punished" for their actions. That's why they hate Christianity and the idea of a final judgment so much. And this hatred comes out in their coddling of criminals.

Dennis Prager had a memorable line that he used to say often on his radio show. He would say "If you are kind to the cruel, you will be cruel to the kind". But that's what the secular left believes, which is why people have to learn never to put them into power. You think you are electing people to protect you from evil, but the secular left sees it as an opportunity to deal with their own guilt by showing their great capacity for forgiveness and non-judgment. "I don't judge" they say, and they mean that as a boast. Well, they are making that boast while risking your life. Their boast, your life.

How to explain the gospel in less than 1000 words

October 2, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A friend sent me a draft e-mail, that he wrote to a family member, who has rejected historic Christianity for progressive Christianity. He was asked to give the basics of salvation, and his attempt to explain the gospel to her is below. My advice included taking out the Christianese terms. Do you think he did a good job? I think his emphasis on what is not the gospel (what needs to be rejected) makes this a first-class explanation of the gospel.

So, you've asked the 10,000 talent question (alluding to Matthew 18:23-35). You are basically asking me what I think the Gospel is. I'll try to answer that in a minimalistic way, using my own characterization of it rather than just making doctrinal statements.

One must accept that there is a God, who is a higher authority than themselves. How much one must first believe about that God is debatable, but candidate beliefs would be that He is personal (having a mind like, but greater than, ours), powerful, and the creator of this cosmos and everything in it — He owns it all. Our natural intuition is to see beauty, order, complexity, and "design" in nature. There is a difference in belief vs unbelief in that some think it is just the appearance of design and some acknowledge their intuition that it actually is designed.

One must acknowledge their moral intuitions, and recognize that there are actually right and wrong things in this world. It's not just whatever you want to do, or whatever society decides in a given time or culture.

Given that morality is then understood to be a transcendent thing (universal and independent of time and culture), the connection is made to God as the author of this moral law.

One must then recognize that he/she regularly fails to live up to this law, even according to just their meager understanding of it, and even by the standards of morality that they make up for other people.

One must not try to suppress this, or therapize it away. One must recognize there is a problem and real moral culpability. One must recognize that they feel guilty and have self-esteem issues because they actually do have guilt and issues.

One must make the connection between guilt and their standing before God. Being good sometimes and in some ways does not erase the bad you do, past, present, or future. One must be willing to bend the knee to God's will regarding morality.

One must also come to see the moral failure (sin) in their lives as a bad thing that they'd like to be rid of, rather than excusing it as the fault of others, or revelling in it as part of the pleasure of life, or shrugging it off as just "who I am."

One must appeal to God in these matters for both forgiveness and help in living as they

should.

Given that God has provided a champion for the problem that humanity faces (the backstory of which not all will fully know), one whose heart is truly yielded to all these things will naturally and eagerly receive Word of this as Good News. God has solved the seemingly irreconcilable demands of both justice and forgiveness in that champion.

Those with ears to hear will receive this solution — Jesus — and believe what He has done in life and on the cross for their sake — the resurrection being both confirmation of His divine authority and also the sign of the defeat of death which awaits us all, and is the only barrier between us and facing this God whom we fail at every turn. They will believe on (or upon) Jesus as Lord and their means of salvation, surrendering dependence upon their own ideas of self-righteousness and earning the favor of God.

The outward expression that we have understood and accepted these things is that we have made Jesus Lord and committed ourselves to following Him, conform our character to His, resist our sinful inclinations, and are interested in learning all about Who God is and what has been done for us in Christ.

This commitment to the Lordship of Christ naturally leads to the acceptance of subsequent beliefs. If Jesus is indeed Lord, then He holds all authority, and what He said and taught to His followers is our guide — the New Testament. And if this is the divine story, as intended by God for men, then we have reason to believe that it is comprehensible to us, and He will insure (in spite of the fallibility of men and demonic plots) that its essential message will not be lost or corrupted until all things are completed. Given that Jesus affirmed every categorical section of the Old Testament, and claimed to be its promised Messiah, then that, too, is a source of truth and understanding.

Those doctrines that are sometimes characterized as “essential” for salvation, are merely the highlights of this redemption narrative, which are those things being clear and consistent, and which indicate that someone has yielded themselves to the authority of Christ and the scriptures, and understands these things. It is not that believing them is what saves, but they are what the saved naturally come to believe. Confessing them is the tangible, verbal act of affirming the Gospel, but is not necessarily identical to a life committed to putting it into practice, which is saving faith.

Study: sentences are 63% more severe for men than for women

October 3, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, in response to yesterday's post, I have been asked what are some of the other reasons that cause men to become disinterested in dating and marriage. I have a list as long as my arm. But here's another one for today. Today's reason is that the legal is system is biased against men. There many examples of the bias, but I'll focus on sentencing.

The study I want to talk about today is called "Estimating Gender Disparities in Federal Criminal Cases", and it's published in the peer-reviewed journal "*American Law and Economics Review".*

The abstract says this:

> This paper assesses and decomposes gender disparities in federal criminal cases. It finds large unexplained gaps favoring women throughout the sentence length distribution, conditional on arrest offense, criminal history, and other pre-charge observables. Decompositions show that most of the unexplained disparity appears to emerge during charging, plea-bargaining, and sentencing fact-finding. The approach provides an important complement to prior disparity studies, which have focused on sentencing and have not incorporated disparities arising from those earlier stages. I also consider various plausible causal theories that could explain the estimated gender gap, using the rich dataset to test their implications.

The key sentence there is "It finds large unexplained gaps favoring women throughout the sentence length distribution, conditional on arrest offense, criminal history, and other pre-charge observables."

I also found this paragraph interesting:

> The estimated gender disparities are strikingly large, conditional on observables. Most notably, treatment as male is associated with a 63% average increase in sentence length, with substantial unexplained gaps throughout the sentence distribution.

This anti-male discrimination becomes apparent to men when they are going through the divorce process.

About 70% of divorces are initiated by women, and most of them for frivolous reasons (reasons that were not recognized as valid in the law prior to "no-fault-divorce" being enacted). The reasons are also not recognized in the Bible. Throughout the divorce process, men encounter anti-male bias. This begins with the common use of false accusations against the man, in order to get sole custody, which provides the woman

with greater child support payments from the man. These false accusations are usually not based on any evidence, such as police reports. They just emerge during the divorce proceedings and are used to eject the man from the home, and get the woman sole custody of the kids. In 90% of cases, the woman gets sole custody of the kids. And this is despite the fact that single-father homes have similar outcomes for children as married two-parents homes. The results of single-mother homes are disastrous for children in many areas, including poverty, crime, mental health, sexual activity, etc. But the court system insists on doing what is worse for children by separating the father from the child. Even the meager visitation rights that fathers get are not enforced.

Failure to pay alimony and child support can land men in prison. And the laws are enforced very unfairly there, as well. Consider this case from Canada:

> A wealthy businessman will have to pay more than $50,000 a month in spousal support for 10 years to a woman with whom he had a long-term romantic relationship even though they kept separate homes and had no children together, Ontario's top court has ruled.

Seeing this, many men today have declined to participate in dating and marriage. And I could come up with *dozens* more reasons like this one. Based in peer-reviewed studies. It's not one reason deterring men from marrying, it's dozens of reasons. In every case, society has decided that men are expendable. And sadly, the church has largely ignored the root causes of men's retreat from dating and marriage. The church simply has nothing at all to say to men who are faced with these risks, costs and disincentives.

When I explain these problems to pro-marriage conservatives, they confess to never having heard about any of these issues. They say "I just like the idea of people falling in love and having lots of cute babies". They haven't really bothered to think about the calculations that men run before deciding what to do with women. Maybe it's time for Christian leaders to do a little more homework about these issues. Maybe there is something Christian churches can do to make marriage a bit more appealing to men.

We are already seeing this happening in conservative states like Florida and Tennessee. In Florida, there are new laws requiring that child custody be 50-50 in most circumstances. This acts as a deterrent against women who want to file frivolous divorces just to get child support from wealthy men. Florida also banned permanent alimony, which is another positive step to make marriage more fair for men. (Although many women in Florida were furious about it). In Tennessee, it is now a misdemeanor to claim child support payments from a man who is not the biological father of the child.

These are the kinds of policy solutions that will bring marriage back. But I've never heard Christians talking about these issues. All I ever hear from pious Christian leaders is that men need to "man up", as if manning up makes the threats from feminist laws and courts disappear. It doesn't work, but it does signal virtue, which seems to be the goal of many pious Christian leaders. We're going to have to do better than virtue-signaling if we want to reverse the decline of marriage. It's not going to be solved by shaming and blaming

men.

Jeff Hester debates William Lane Craig on the topic “Is Belief in God Rational in a Scientific Age?”

October 4, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is an accurate protrayal of what went down in this debate

I was very excited to see a recent debate by Christian philosopher William Lane Craig against atheist astronomer Jeff Hester. When I summarize a debate, I do a fair, objective summary if the atheist is intelligent and informed, as with Peter Millican, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong or Austin Dacey. But the following summary is rated VS for Very Snarky, and you’ll soon see why.

The debate itself starts at 29 minutes:

Thanks to Enrique for the link to a version with better audio.

Dr. Craig’s opening speech

Dr. Craig went first, and he presented 4 arguments, as well as the ontological argument which I won’t summarize or discuss. He later added another argument for theism from the existence of the universe that does not require an origin of the universe.

A1. Counter-examples

Theists who are elite scientists cannot be “irrational”, for example: Allan Sandage, Gustav Tammann, George Ellis, Don Page, Christopher Isham

A2. Kalam cosmological argument

1. Whatever begins to exist requires a cause.

2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe requires a cause.

A3. Fine-tuning of the universe to permit complex intelligent life

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is due either to physical necessity, chance or design.
2. It is not due to physical necessity or chance.
3. Therefore it is due to design.

A4. Moral argument

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.
2. Objective moral values and duties do exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Dr. Hester's opening speech

Dr. Hester went second and presented two arguments which both committed the genetic fallacy, a logical fallacy that makes the arguments have no force.

Hester starts his opening speech by asserting that Albert Einstein was irrational, because he denied quantum mechanics.

Hester explains that he became an atheist at 15. This would have been before the evidence for the origin of the universe became widespread, before we had very many examples of fine-tuning, before the discovery that the origin of life problem is a problem of the origin of complex, specifed information, etc. What kind of reasons can a 15-year-old child have for becoming an atheist? It's hard to say, but I would suspect that they were psychological. Children often desire autonomy from moral authorities. They want to be free to pursue pleasure. They don't want to be thought of as superstitious and morally straight by their non-religious peers.

Later on in the debate, Hester volunteers that he hated his father because his father professed to be a Christian, but he was focused on his career and making money. In the absence of any arguments for atheism, it's reasonable to speculate that Hester became an atheist for psychological reasons. And as we'll see, just like the typical 15-year-old child, he has no rational basis for atheism. What's astonishing is how he continues to hold to the atheism of his teens when it has been falsified over and over by scientific discoveries in the years since.

He says that Dr. Craig's deductive arguments do not have premises that reach a conclusion through the laws of logic. On the contrary, he just asserts that God exists as his conclusion, and then says that this assertion is the best explanation of a gap in our scientific knowledge. Some of the gaps in our scientific knowledge he uses in his arguments are: 1) he doesn't understand why the Sun moves through the sky, so God exists, 2) he doesn't understand why the wind blows, so God exists.

What counts as "rational" are things that have not been disproved. The progress of science has shown that the universe did not need a casuse in order to begin to exist, and

also there is no cosmic fine-tuning.

A1. The success of evolution in the software industry proves that there is no God

All hardware and software is developed using genetic algorithms that exactly match Darwinian processes. All the major computer companies like Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Apple, etc. are just generating products using mutation and selection to evolve products over long periods of time. If you look over a typical software engineering degree, it's all about Darwinian evolution, and nothing about design patterns, object-oriented design, etc.

This widespread use of evolution in the software industry undermines all of the arguments for God's existence. Evolution caused the origin of the universe. Evolution explains why the universe is fine-tuned for life. Evolution, which requires replication already be in place in order to work, explains the origin of the first self-replicating organism.

A2. Theist's view of the world is just a result of peer pressure from their tribes

All of Dr. Craig's logical arguments supported by scientific evidence don't matter, because he got them from a primitive tribe of Christians that existed 2000 years ago. Everyone gets their view of origins, morality, meaning in life, death, etc. from their tribes. Except me, I'm getting my beliefs from reason and evidence because I'm a smart atheist. I don't have an atheist tribe in the university that would sanction me if I disagreed with nonsense like homosexuality is 100% genetic, transgenderism, man-made catastrophic global warming, fully naturalistic evolution, aliens seeded the Earth with life, infanticide is moral, socialism works, overpopulation will cause mass starvation, nuclear winter, etc. Also, my argument isn't the genetic fallacy at all, because smart atheists don't commit elementary logical fallacies that even a first-year philosophy student would know.

A3. Our brains evolved so our rational faculties are unreliable, so God does not exist

The logical reasoning that Dr. Craig uses to argue for theism are all nonsense, because human minds just have an illusion of consciousness, an illusion of rationality, and an illusion of free will. Everything Dr. Craig says is just deluded nonsense caused by chemicals in his brain. He has cognitive biases the undermine all his logical arguments and scientific evidence. He just invented an imaginary friend with super powers. Except me, I'm a smart atheist, so I actually have real consciousness, real reasoning powers, and no cognitive biases. Also, my argument isn't the genetic fallacy at all, because my arguments would not get an F in a first-year philosophy course.

Discussion

I'm not going to summarize everything in the discussion, or the question and answer time. I'm just going to list out some of the more interesting points.

Dr. Craig asks him how it is that he has managed to escape these biases from tribalism, projection, etc. He talks about how brave and noble atheist rebels are. The moderator

asks him the same question. He repeats how brave and noble atheist rebels are.

Dr. Hester is asked whether he affirms a causeless beginning of the universe or an eternal universe. He replies he states that the universe came into being without a cause, because causality doesn't apply to the beignning of the universe. He also asserts with explanation that Borde, Guth and Vilenkin have undermined the kalam cosmological argument, mentioning a web site.

Dr. Craig replied to this phantom argument after the debate on Facebook:

> Speaking of which, although I haven't had time to consult the website mentioned by Dr. Hester concerning Guth and Vilenkin on the kalam cosmological argument, I know the work of these two gentlemen well enough to predict what one will find there. Since neither one is yet a theist (so much, by the way, for the dreaded confirmation bias!), they have to reject at least one of the premises of the kalam cosmological argument.
>
> Guth wants to deny premiss (2) The universe began to exist–for which Vilenkin has rebuked him. Guth would avoid the implications of their theorem by holding our hope for the Carroll-Chen model, which denies the single condition of the BGV theorem. This gambit is, however, unsuccessful, since the Carroll-Chen model does so only by positing a reversal of the arrow of time at some point in the finite past. This is not only highly non-physical, but fails to avert the universe's beginning, since that time-reversed, mirror universe is no sense in our past. The model really postulates two different universes with a common beginning.
>
> So Vilenkin is forced to deny premiss (1) Whatever begins to exists has a cause. He says that if the positive energy associated with matter exactly counterbalances the negative energy associated with gravity, then the net sum of the energy is zero, and so the conservation of energy is not violated if the universe pops into being from nothing! But this is like saying that if your assets exactly balance your debts, then your net worth is zero, and so there does not need to be a cause of your financial situation! As Christopher Isham points out, there still needs to be "ontic seeding" in order to create the positive and negative energy in the first place, even if on balance their sum is zero.

Dr. Hester is asked how he explains the evidence for fine-tuning. He literally says that "Life is fine-tuned for the Universe", i.e. – that evolution will create living beings regardless of the laws of physics, constants, etc. For example, he thinks that in a universe with a weaker stong force, which would have only hyrogen atoms, evolution would still evolve life. And in a universe that recollapses in a hot fireball, and never forms stars or planets, evolution would produce life. Physicist Luke Barnes, who was commenting on the YouTube chat for the video, said this:

> "Life is fine-tuned for the Universe" – complete ignorance of the field. Read a book.

Hester tries to cite Jeremy England to try to argue for life appearing regardless of what

the laws of physics are. Barnes comments:

> Jeremy England's work supports no such claim.

Hester appealed to the multiverse, which faces numerous theoretical and observational difficulties. For example, the multiverse models have to have some mechanism to spawn different universes, but these mechanisms themselves require fine-tuning, as Robin Collins argues. And the multiverse is falsified observationally by the Boltzmann brains problem. It was so ironic that Hester claimed to be so committed to testing theories. The mutliverse theory cannot be tested experimentally, and must be accepted on faith.

Dr. Hester is asked how he grounds morality on atheism. He says there are no objective moral values and duties. He instead lists off a bunch of Christian beliefs which he thinks are objectively wrong. Even his statements about these moral issues are misinformed. For example, he asserts that homosexuality is causally determined by biology, but this is contradicted by identical twin studies that have a rate of 20-40% where both twins are gay.

Dr. Hester is asked about free will, which is required in order to make moral choices. He denies the existence of free will, which undermines his earlier statements about morality. Morality is only possible if humans can make free choices to act in accordance with a moral standard. So, he claims that Christians are immoral, then he claims that they have no freedom to act other than they do.

Dr. Hester also volunteered that his father believed in the prosperity gospel, and tithed in order to be rewarded with money by God. Dr. Craig immediately says "no wonder you're in rebellion against Christianity". Indeed.

Dr. Hester is asked about his view that human beings are unable to unable to perceive the world objectively. How is he able to perceive the world objectively, when all of the rest of us are unable to? His response is that he is just smarter than everyone else because his ideas have never been falsified by testing.

Scoring the debate

Dr. Craig's 5 arguments went unrefuted. Hester's argument about genetic algorithms was ludicrous to anyone who understands software engineering. His arguments about tribalism and unreliable mental faculties were self-refuting, and committed the genetic fallcy. At several points, Hester denied mainstream science in favor of untested and untestable speculations. It was the worst defeat of atheism I have ever witnessed. He was uninformed and arrogant. He didn't know what he was talking about, and he tried to resort to speculative, mystical bullshit to cover up his failure to meet Dr. Craig's challenge.

Virginia Democrats OK with candidate who wished death on political opponent

October 6, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

The big political news on the weekend was about the elections for statewide offices in Virginia. Right after the politically-motivated assassination of a leading Christian speaker, Charlie Kirk, we're hearing about text messages from the Democrat candidate for attorney general. What does he say? Oh, just that he thinks that a Republican he doesn't like should be shot in the head.

Here's an article from Daily Signal to explain:

> Less than a month after the assassination of Charlie Kirk, Virginia Democrats are carrying water for a candidate who wished death on his political opponent, hoped his opponent's wife would watch as her children died, and said he would urinate on his opponent's grave.
>
> Jay Jones, the Democrat nominee for attorney general in the Old Dominion, has not denied the report of these horrifying comments, though he said he regrets them and has apologized to Todd Gilbert, the Republican former speaker of the House of Delegates about whom he made the remarks.

Now, you would think that in a purple state like Virginia, Democrats would be anxious to withdraw this man as a candidate. But as of October 6, 2025, no prominent Democrats—including Abigail Spanberger, Ghazala Hashmi, Mark Warner, or the Virginia Democratic Party—have demanded Jones step down. It's just not a big enough deal that Jones should have to resign for saying these things. Maybe this is the mainstream Democrat view?

The article explains the context of the text messages, and the content as well:

> Jones texted the death wish to Republican House Delegate Carrie Coyner on Aug. 8, 2022, after Republicans had eulogized Joe Johnson Jr., a moderate Democrat. Gilbert had honored Johnson's memory, though he had disagreed with Johnson on many issues.
>
> Jones reportedly condemned Johnson's political centrism and attacked Republicans for paying him tribute. After suggesting the texts were meant for someone else, he continued to comment to Coyner. He reportedly joked about what "that POS" Gilbert "would say about me if I died."
>
> "If those guys die before me," Jones wrote, "I will go to their funerals to piss on their graves."
>
> He then suggested that, in a hypothetical situation in which he had two bullets and had the choice of shooting Gilbert, Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler, or Cambodian dictator Pol Pot, he would save the bullets for his Republican former colleague

> “every time.”
>
> “Three people, two bullets,” Jones wrote. “Gilbert, hitler, and pol pot.”
>
> “Gilbert gets two bullets to the head,” he added. “Spoiler: put Gilbert in the crew with the two worst people you know and he receives both bullets every time.”

I’m not surprised by Jones leaving Hitler and Pol Pot alone, because Hitler and Pol Pot were leftists. They believed in banning guns, banning homeschooling, banning free enterprise, etc. Big government and high taxes all the way for left. So, of course Jones would let the two leftists live, and shoot the conservative. This shooting of conservatives actually happened a lot in history in countries that were run by people on the left. 100 million deaths in the 20th century alone. Of course, not all of that was shooting. There was some stabbing, some starving, some working people to death in cocentration camps.

And:

> Jones called Coyner to explain himself. On the call, he reportedly wished Gilbert’s wife could watch her own child die in her arms so that Gilbert might reconsider his political views.

Look, all we have to do to find out what mainstream Democrats think about domestic terrorism against their political opponents is see what they do with Jones. If Jones represents their views, and they keep him as a candidate, then we know that they don’t think that political violence against Republicans is wrong at all. You have to disregard the words, and look at the actions. The actions show you what they really believe about murdering their opponents.

It’s very funny to me that young Democrat women are complaining that no one wants to approach them, date them or marry them. Do you think that marriage-minded men are anxious to get into a legal contract with someone who supports violence? Men don’t want to get married to people who vote for violence. We don’t want to get married to people who cheer for violence either. Men already know that Democrat women support violence against unborn babies. And lesbian relationships have the highest rates of domestic violence. Why would marriage-minded men want to share a home with someone who takes this lenient attitude towards violence?

Australia’s chief fascist Julie Inman Grant censors video of Iryna Zarutska murder

October 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

How desperate are open-borders secular leftists to conceal evidence of the harms caused by soft-on-crime policies? Well, in Australia, a country ruled by fascists, they are threatening fines of $825,000 (AUD) to anyone who posts the video of the murder of Ukrainian refugee Iryna Zarutska. They don’t want voters to see the result of coddling criminals and banning self-defense.

Here’s the story from Rebel News:

> Australia’s controversial eSafety Commissioner has threatened social media giant X with daily fines of up to $825,000 for refusing to take down or block posts containing CCTV footage of the fatal attack on Ukrainian refugee Iryna Zarutska in the U.S.
>
> The footage shows Zarutska being killed by Decarlos Brown, a man with a long record of violent crime who had been released just weeks earlier under North Carolina’s bail laws.

I blogged about the story previously, and noted that the accused killer was a 14-time repeat offender. Leftists like Julie Inman Grant don’t believe in opposing real evil or punishing real evil. They get extremely upset when their “don’t judge” policies are exposed as failed policy to voters. So what to do? Well, they just use political power to suppress anyone who shows the evidence of their failed “don’t judge” policies. After all, if people complain about being murdered, then that spoils the virtue signaling of the leftists.

This isn’t the first time they’ve tried to cover up crimes against law-abiding victims:

> Inman Grant’s previous attempt to compel X to censor footage of a church stabbing in Sydney ended in failure after the platform argued Australia had no authority to impose global content restrictions. X later hailed that case as a victory for free speech.

Is Julie Inman Grant an exception, or does she represent the way that most white progressive women see the issues of crime and self-defense? Well, we know from recent surveys that leftism has surged among young women. Not just in America, but worldwide.

Young men are more conservative than young women, and more religious than young women, too.

And women’s groups are opposed to people who point out the results of their “don’t judge” policies.

Here’s a recent article from the UK Daily Mirror:

> More than 100 women's rights groups have warned "racist" attempts to link sexual violence with immigration are putting victims at increased risk.
>
> Rape Crisis England and Wales, the End Violence Against Women Coalition and Refuge are among the organisations warning anti-migrant groups and politicans are "hijacking" survivors' trauma.
>
> […]In their statement, co-ordinated by End Violence Against Women Coalition, Women for Refugee Women, Hibiscus and Southall Black Sisters, the groups said linking sex offences with migration is a "racist diversion".

Lately, I have been seeing many posts from conservative Christian women demanding that men protect and provide for women. However, none of these conservative Christian women have said anything about the voting patterns of young women. How are men supposed to protect women, when women keep voting for more dangerous criminals, and against police and self-defense? We can't. And we know that if we try, we'll end up just like Kyle Rittenhouse and Daniel Perry.

Conservative, Christian women need to think more carefully about how to solve problems. They have an addiction to their knee-jerk reaction of "men, fix it!" and "men, serve us!" But that ship has sailed. Now, the best policy of conservative, Christian women is to turn to young women, and warn them that no one is coming to save them from the consequences of their own choices. Young women need to stop voting on feelings and the desire to virtue signal.

Finally, can you imagine being married to Julie Inman Grant? That's what parents and pastors are producing for good men these days, but what good man would be stupid enough to marry a leftist fascist like her? Men are coming to their senses, and judging women correctly. The new "10" is the stay-at-home mother who will respect her husband and homeschool the kids. Nobody wants a Karen.

William Lane Craig debates Walter Sinnott-Armstrong: evil, suffering and God

October 8, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This is one of the top 4 best debates that William Lane Craig has ever done in my opinion. (The other three are Craig-Millican debate and the first and second Craig-Dacey debates). If you've never seen Dr. Craig in a debate with a non-Christian, this one is probably the best introductory one out there. Dr. Craig is the foremost defender of Christian theism on the planet, and probably of all time.

Sinnott-Armstrong is very courteous, respectful and intelligent scholar and he is very good at defending his side. This is a very cordial and engaging debate, and because it was held in front of a church audience, it was targeted to laymen and not academics. So if you are looking for a good first debate to watch, this is it! Normally, Dr. Craig debates at major universities in front of students and faculty.

There is also a book based on this debate, published by Oxford University Press. I was actually able to find a PDF of it online. I should also remind people that you can get the wonderful Craig-Hitchens debate DVD from Amazon.com if you are looking for a debate to watch, or show in your church, this is the one to start with.

The debaters:

- William Lane Craig
- Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

The format:

- WSA: 15 minutes
- WLC: 15 minutes
- Debaters discussion: 6 minutes
- Moderated discussion: 10 minutes
- Audience Q&A: 18 minutes
- WSA: 5 minutes
- WLC: 5 minutes

SUMMARY:

WSA opening speech:

Evil is incompatible with the concept of God (three features all-powerful, all-god, all-knowing)

God's additional attributes: eternal, effective and personal (a person)

He will be debating against the Christian God in this debate, specifically

Contention: no being has *all* of the three features of the concept of God

His argument: is not a deductive argument, but an inductive/probabilistic argument

Examples of pointless, unjustified suffering: a sick child who dies, earthquakes, famines

The inductive argument from evil:

1. If there were an all-powerful and all-good God, then there would not be any evil in the world unless that evil is logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
2. There is evil in the world.
3. Some of that evil is not logically necessary for some adequately compensating good.
4. Therefore, there can't be a God who is all-powerful and all-good.

Defining terms:

- Evil: anything that all rational people avoid for themselves, unless they have some adequate reason to want that evil for themselves (e.g. – pain, disability, death)
- Adequate reason: some evils do have an adequate reason, like going to the dentist – you avoid a worse evil by having a filling

God could prevent tooth decay with no pain

God can even change the laws of physics in order to make people not suffer

Responses by Christians:

- Evil as a punishment for sin: but evil is not distributed in accordance with sin, like babies
- Children who suffer will go straight to Heaven: but it would be better to go to Heaven and not suffer
- Free will: this response doesn't account for natural evil, like disease, earthquakes, lightning
- Character formation theodicy: there are other ways for God to form character, by showing movies
- Character formation theodicy: it's not fair to let X suffer so that Y will know God
- God allows evil to turn people towards him: God would be an egomaniac to do that
- We are not in a position to know that any particular evil is pointless: if we don't see a reason then there is no reason
- Inductive evil is minor compared to the evidences for God: arguments for a Creator do not prove that God is good

WLC opening speech:

Summarizing Walter's argument

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. Gratuitous evil exists.

3. Therefore, God does not exist.

Gratuitous evil means evil that God has no morally sufficient reason to permit. WSA doesn't think that all evil is incompatible with God's existence, just gratuitous evil.

Everyone admits that there are instances of evil and suffering such that we cannot see the morally sufficient reason why God would allow it to occur.

The claim of the atheist is that if they cannot see that there is a moral justification for allowing some instance evil, then there is no moral justification for that instance of evil.

Here are three reasons why we should not expect to know the morally sufficient reasons why God permits apparently pointless evil.

1. the ripple effect: the morally sufficient reason for allowing some instance of evil may only be seen in another place or another time
2. Three Christian doctrines undermine the claim that specific evils really are gratuitous
3. Walter's own premise 1 allows us to argue for God's existence, which means that evil is not gratuitous

Christian doctrines from 2.:

- The purpose of life is not happiness, and it is not God's job to make us happy – we are here to know God. Many evils are gratuitous if we are concerned about being happy, but they are not gratuitous for producing the knowledge of God. What WSA has to show is that God could reduce the amount of suffering in the world while still retaining the same amount of knowledge of God's existence and character.
- Man is in rebellion, and many of the evils we see are caused by humans misusing their free will to harm others and cause suffering
- For those who accept Christ, suffering is redeemed by eternal life with God, which is a benefit that far outweighs any sufferings and evils we experience in our earthly lives

Arguing for God in 3.

1. If God exists, gratuitous evil does not exist.
2. *God exists*
3. Therefore, gratuitous evil does not exist.

Four reasons to think that God exists (premise 2 from above):

- the kalam cosmological argument
- the fine-tuning argument
- the moral argument
- the argument *from* evil

Worse than Watergate: Biden FBI spied on eight Republican senators

October 9, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have a friend who calls himself a secular leftist, and he is always warning me not to get too excited about Trump because soon Trump will be using government to do terrible things. I ask "what sorts of terrible things?" And then he lists out the terrible things. Then I say "Oh, but those terrible things have already happened, except it was your side – Obama, Biden, etc. that did it". He is shocked.

Here is the latest news from The Federalist:

> The Biden FBI targeted eight Republican senators' personal cell phone information as part of an investigation that evolved into lawfare against Donald Trump, new records published Monday show.
>
> The agency document released by Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, indicates that the FBI sought and obtained the cell phone "tolling data" of eight GOP senators and Rep. Mike Kelly, R-Penn., as part of its "Arctic Frost" inquiry in 2023. That investigation ultimately became Special Counsel Jack Smith's elector lawfare against Trump.
>
> According to a Senate Judiciary Committee press release, the FBI obtained the data "about the senators' phone use from January 4 through January 7, 2021." The information, the presser noted, "shows when and to whom a call is made, as well as the duration and general location data of the call," but "does not include the content of the call."
>
> The eight Senate Republicans targeted in the probe include Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, Bill Hagerty and Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee, Josh Hawley of Missouri, Dan Sullivan of Alaska, Tommy Tuberville of Alabama, Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, and Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming.
>
> "Based on the evidence to-date, Arctic Frost and related weaponization by federal law enforcement under Biden was arguably worse than Watergate," Grassley said in a statement. "What I've uncovered today is disturbing and outrageous political conduct by the Biden FBI. The FBI's actions were an unconstitutional breach, and Attorney General Bondi and Director Patel need to hold accountable those involved in this serious wrongdoing."

You thought I was kidding when I said "worse than Watergate", but this actually is. Unfortunately, the Democrats have a lot less integrity than Republicans, so none of them are resigning when they abuse their power and weaponize government against their political opponents.

When I told my friend on the secular left about this, he said "just you wait, Trump will do it to! Trump is just about to do the same thing that the Democrats have been doing!" I

guess there is no helping him – when your blindness is caused by self-delusion, there's not much I or anyone can do to fix it. He just doesn't want to believe that his side is the evil side, and they've been evil for a long time.

So, you might go on and ask yourself "why hasn't Wintery's friend heard of the actions of his own political party?" And there's a good answer for that. My friend only watches MSNBC, CNN, NBC, ABC, NPR and PBS. And late night leftist comedy shows. And if those are your only sources of news, then of course you'll never hear about stories that are harmful to the Democrat party.

Here's a recent example from Newsbusters:

> In resurfaced texts that were released on October 3, [Jay] Jones (who is running for Virginia attorney general) suggested he would shoot then-Virginia House Speaker Todd Gilbert over Adolf Hitler and declared that Gilbert's wife should be forced to watch his "fascist" children be killed.
>
> […]So how much time did the broadcast networks devote to the texts controversy?
>
> 63 seconds.
>
> MRC analysts looked at the ABC, CBS, NBC and PBS evening, morning and Sunday roundtable shows from October 3, the day the texts were first reported by National Review, through the morning of October 7 and found just ONE mention of the Jones text scandal. The only discussion of Jones on the broadcast networks arrived on NBC's Sunday roundtable show.

So, this is a good way to see why people on the secular left (and the religious left, too) are so ignorant. It's not that they are stupid. Many of them are highly educated and able to earn a lot of money. No, the problem is that they deliberately lie to themselves by only choosing news sources that make them feel better than their Republican neighbors. That's why they always think that Republicans are about to do all the evil things that the Democrats have already done.

For the first time, young men are more religious than young women

October 10, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I noticed an article in the Financial Times about a growing divide between young women and young men. Young women are increasingly leftist, and young men are increasingly conservative. Surveys of young men and young women have found that young men are more conservative on abortion and LGBT than young women. And now young men are more religious than young women.

Now, I want to be clear in this post that I am not criticizing all women. I am criticizing the majority of YOUNG WOMEN. Older women don't usually have these problems, especially married older women.

First, let's take a look at the previous article, from the far-left UK Independent:

> An analysis of survey data from across the developing world had found that "a new global gender divide" is emerging. The analysis, conducted by the Financial Times' John Burn-Murdoch, showed that the developed world's young women have rapidly become more liberal. Young men, however, have either become more conservative (as in the US) or been much slower to become more progressive (as in the UK). Gen Z, Burn-Murdoch concluded, is "two generations, not one."
>
> […]Quoting similar figures to those in the FT, and noting that political views have become more tightly bound to personal identity, a Washington Post editorial warned that members of Gen Z will struggle to pair off romantically.

Young men, statistically speaking, are more likely to side with the weak against the strong. Since abortion harms unborn children, and divorce and same-sex marriage harm born children, men typically oppose these behaviors. But statistically speaking, young women more often side with the selfish adults against the children.

Naturally there are exceptions, but the statistics show that young men are more conservative on moral issues than young women. And nowhere is this more apparent than in the issue of abortion, which is really just about whether selfish adults can resort to murdering their own children in order to escape the consequences of no-commitment sex.

In September 2024, Gallup explained how young men and young women view abortion:

> For this, Gallup reviewed 24 questions from its trends archive that measure Americans' beliefs or positions on widely debated policy-related issues, and that Gallup has asked frequently enough to produce sufficient sample sizes of young men and women across the three periods… On five of these, the percentage of young women holding the liberal position has increased by more than 15 points.

> These have to do with the environment, abortion and gun laws.

> - Young women have become 18 points more likely to support **broad abortion rights**, saying abortion should be legal under any or most circumstances (rather than in only a few or no circumstances). Their preference for this position rose from 42% to 60% between 2008-2016 and 2017-2024.

The number for young men is much lower than 60% at only 48%!

So, what happens to young men when they take these traditional MALE positions on issues, and society disapproves of them? Well, they turn to God for vindication of their good moral views. If society won't approve of young men for protecting the unborn from abortion, and protecting children from divorce and same-sex marriage, then young men will have to find their vindication somewhere else. And that somewhere else is *God*.

Here's the latest from the far-left New York Times: (archived)

> For the first time in modern American history, young men are now more religious than their female peers. They attend services more often and are more likely to identify as religious.
>
> […]Among Generation Z Christians, this dynamic is playing out in a stark way: The men are staying in church, while the women are leaving at a remarkable clip.
>
> Church membership has been dropping in the United States for years. But within Gen Z, almost 40 percent of women now describe themselves as religiously unaffiliated, compared with 34 percent of men, according to a survey last year of more than 5,000 Americans by the Survey Center on American Life at the American Enterprise Institute.

To be accurate, I don't think that young women have been more religious than men. If you look at the kinds of books that young women tend to read, it's more about comfort and life enhancement. They are not looking to get their orders from God. They are looking to get their desires met by God. And you can see that coming out in the new trends of "manifesting" that is so popular with young women.

By contrast, young men are more likely to turn to apologetics, science, history and theology. Young women were only "spiritual", they were not looking to sacrifice themselves in order to serve God. You can see this by looking at what books young women and men read. Young women tend to read people like Rachel Hollis, Rachel Held Evans, and Sarah Young. Young men see religion as being about their duties to others. They read people like J. Warner Wallace, Frank Turek and Sean McDowell. They want to learn how to tell people the truth, and tell people right and wrong. They want to lead in moral and spiritual areas. They want to make the world a better place for the weakest people.

How did this happen? Well, we have had generation after generation of pietistic Christian

parents and pietistic Christian pastors who thought that it was the height of chivalry to only apply the Bible to young men, and never to young women. Young men need to be “challenged”, but never young women. People acted as if women had some sort of hotline to God through their emotions, and could never be judged for any of their questionable policy preferences and choices.

My question for you is this: do you think that these pietistic parents and pietistic pastors will finally stop asking the question “Where are all the good men?” and start asking a much better question “Where are all the good women?” Because I can tell you right now, conservative religious men are not going to be interested in dating or marrying these secular leftist young women.

Marriage is a huge risk for young men, in a world of no-fault divorce, biased divorce courts and feminized public schools. Good young men are not going to take those risks just to give secular leftist young women their “happily ever after” once they tire of “having fun” with hot bad boys, and want to settle down. And no amount of shaming and blaming is going to force good men to take those risks.

By the way, I’ve noticed that a lot of good young men are now seeking out friendships with more traditional older women. They are looking for sanity, and validation for their good moral and religious views. That’s not surprising. They’ll go where they are respected.

Is the text of the Bible we have today different from the originals?

October 11, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought it might be a good idea to write something about whether the Bible is generally reliable as a historical document. Lots of people like to nitpick about things that are difficult to verify, but the strange thing is that even skeptical historians accept many of the core narratives found in the Bible. Let's start with a Christian historian, then go to a non-Christian one.

First, let's introduce New Testament scholar Daniel B. Wallace:

> Daniel B. Wallace
> Senior Research Professor of New Testament Studies
>
> BA, Biola University, 1975; ThM, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979; PhD, 1995.
>
> Dr. Wallace… is a member of the Society of New Testament Studies, the Institute for Biblical Research, the Society of Biblical Literature, the American Society of Papyrologists, and the Evangelical Theological Society (of which he was president in 2016). He has been a consultant for several Bible translations. He has written, edited, or contributed to more than three dozen books, and has published articles in New Testament Studies, Novum Testamentum, Biblica, Westminster Theological Journal, Bulletin of Biblical Review, the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, and several other peer-reviewed journals. His Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament is the standard intermediate Greek grammar and has been translated into more than a half-dozen languages.

Here is an article by Dr. Wallace that corrects misconceptions about the transmission and translation of the Testament.

He lists five in particular:

- *Myth 1: The Bible has been translated so many times we can't possibly get back to the original.*
- *Myth 2: Words in red indicate the exact words spoken by Jesus of Nazareth.*
- *Myth 3: Heretics have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 4: Orthodox scribes have severely corrupted the text.*
- *Myth 5: The deity of Christ was invented by emperor Constantine.*

Let's look at #4 in particular, where the argument is that the text of the New Testament is so riddled with errors that we can't get back to the original text.

It says:

> Myth 4: Orthodox scribes have severely corrupted the text.
>
> This is the opposite of myth #3. It finds its most scholarly affirmation in the

> writings of Dr. Bart Ehrman, chiefly The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture and Misquoting Jesus. Others have followed in his train, but they have gone far beyond what even he claims. For example, a very popular book among British Muslims (The History of the Qur'anic Text from Revelation to Compilation: a Comparative Study with the Old and New Testaments by M. M. Al-Azami) makes this claim:
>
> The Orthodox Church, being the sect which eventually established supremacy over all the others, stood in fervent opposition to various ideas ([a.k.a.] 'heresies') which were in circulation. These included Adoptionism (the notion that Jesus was not God, but a man); Docetism (the opposite view, that he was God and not man); and Separationism (that the divine and human elements of Jesus Christ were two separate beings). In each case this sect, the one that would rise to become the Orthodox Church, deliberately corrupted the Scriptures so as to reflect its own theological visions of Christ, while demolishing that of all rival sects."
>
> This is a gross misrepresentation of the facts. Even Ehrman admitted in the appendix to Misquoting Jesus, "Essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament." The extent to which, the reasons for which, and the nature of which the orthodox scribes corrupted the New Testament has been overblown. And the fact that such readings can be detected by comparison with the readings of other ancient manuscripts indicates that the fingerprints of the original text are still to be seen in the extant manuscripts.

Here is the full quote from the appendix of Misquoting Jesus:

> "Bruce Metzger is one of the great scholars of modern times, and I dedicated the book to him because he was both my inspiration for going into textual criticism and the person who trained me in the field. I have nothing but respect and admiration for him. And even though we may disagree on important religious questions – he is a firmly committed Christian and I am not – we are in complete agreement on a number of very important historical and textual questions. If he and I were put in a room and asked to hammer out a consensus statement on what we think the original text of the New Testament probably looked like, there would be very few points of disagreement – maybe one or two dozen places out of many thousands. The position I argue for in 'Misquoting Jesus' does not actually stand at odds with Prof. Metzger's position that the essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament."

Finally, I think that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls shows us that religious texts don't change as much as we think they do over time.

Look:

The Dead Sea Scrolls play a crucial role in assessing the accurate preservation of the Old Testament. With its hundreds of manuscripts from every book except Esther, detailed comparisons can be made with more recent texts.

The Old Testament that we use today is translated from what is called the Masoretic Text. The Masoretes were Jewish scholars who between A.D. 500 and 950 gave the Old Testament the form that we use today. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947, the oldest Hebrew text of the Old Testament was the Masoretic Aleppo Codex which dates to A.D. 935.{5}

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now had manuscripts that predated the Masoretic Text by about one thousand years. Scholars were anxious to see how the Dead Sea documents would match up with the Masoretic Text. If a significant amount of differences were found, we could conclude that our Old Testament Text had not been well preserved. Critics, along with religious groups such as Muslims and Mormons, often make the claim that the present day Old Testament has been corrupted and is not well preserved. According to these religious groups, this would explain the contradictions between the Old Testament and their religious teachings.

After years of careful study, it has been concluded that the Dead Sea Scrolls give substantial confirmation that our Old Testament has been accurately preserved. The scrolls were found to be almost identical with the Masoretic text. Hebrew Scholar Millar Burrows writes, “It is a matter of wonder that through something like one thousand years the text underwent so little alteration. As I said in my first article on the scroll, ‘Herein lies its chief importance, supporting the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition.'”{6}

A significant comparison study was conducted with the Isaiah Scroll written around 100 B.C. that was found among the Dead Sea documents and the book of Isaiah found in the Masoretic text. After much research, scholars found that the two texts were practically identical. Most variants were minor spelling differences, and none affected the meaning of the text.

One of the most respected Old Testament scholars, the late Gleason Archer, examined the two Isaiah scrolls found in Cave 1 and wrote, “Even though the two copies of
Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The five percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”{7}

Despite the thousand year gap, scholars found the Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls to be nearly identical. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide valuable evidence that the Old Testament had been accurately and carefully preserved.

I hope that this post will help those who think that we can’t get back to the text of the original New Testament documents.

New study: oral contraceptives greatly increase the risk of depression

October 12, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I like to collect studies on my blog so that I can always find them when I get into a debate. One of the things I like to argue against is recreational premarital sex. It's pretty hard to argue this with non-Christians if all you are going to do is quote the Bible. But you can make a pretty good case that will win you the argument from studies, and so I keep a nice collection of studies to use.

Here's the report from The Federalist:

> Oral contraceptives raise the risk of depression, according to a new international study that surveyed more than 264,000 women. Teenagers were at the highest risk, with a 130 percent higher risk of depression in women who started using birth control as adolescents, compared to a 92 percent higher risk among those who started as adults.
>
> The study provides conclusive results to a growing body of research linking oral birth control with the use of anti-depressants, depression diagnoses, and depressive symptoms.
>
> While adult users saw a decrease to more normal risk after using "the pill" for more than two years or getting off the pill, teenage users were still at increased risk even after stopping usage.

Very interesting. I clicked on the link to the study and made sure it was peer-reviewed. It was. So what do we learn from this?

Well, this is not the first time I am hearing about the emotional and mental problems with birth control pills. So, I think the lesson here is to definitely do your research first, so that you don't get involved with things that will cause you problems later. The woman who told me about had tried to go on them, but she immediately noticed how much it changed her moods, and she went off them. I think it caused her some problems in her life, because she ended up taking 5 years to complete her degree, instead of the normal for. So, using these things could really cost you.

Now you might be wondering about other birth control methods, and the team that did this study has a plan for future work:

> This study only examined combination birth control pills, but researchers plan to study other contraceptive options.
>
> "In a future study, we plan to examine different formulations and methods of administration. Our ambition in comparing different contraceptive methods is to give women even more information to help them [m]ake well-informed decisions about their contraceptive options," Johansson said.

The article also notes (with links, which I removed):

> In other studies, birth control methods have also been linked to increased risk of heart attack and stroke, blood clots, breast cancer, and cervical cancer.
>
> Despite significant evidence of risk, researchers still insist that birth control is safe to use…

Normally, I am pretty hard on women on this blog. I feel like they make way too many decisions by following the crowd, instead of thinking about what they want in the long-term, and then making decisions that are likely to get those results – whatever anyone else thinks. I think that women need to be smarter than that, and instead of forming their views by peer pressure, they need to form their views based on truth. And truth is not on the bottom shelf.

I see women getting taught all about sexual topics by public school teachers, entertainers, athletes, celebrities, etc. It makes no sense to me. These people are insulated from real life, for one reason or another. And then I see Planned Parenthood going into the schools and teaching children about birth control and sex. *They make money by getting these kids to become sexual active and then pay them to get abortions*. Young women cannot trust women their own age to know about studies. They can't trust teachers with degrees in English. They can't trust celebrities, entertainers and athletes – they probably cannot even read, much less read studies. Women have to do their own research and make their own plans that work for them.

Today women are being taught from preschool to college and beyond, that they need to use their "young years" to seek happiness by playing the field with tall, hot men who give them tingles. They are told to delay marriage (boring) and children (demanding) for as long as possible, in order to have no-commitment sex with the hottest men they can get. Somehow, having sex with a lot of hot men is thought to raise the value of the woman. It builds her self-esteem, or something. This is objectively stupid behavior. But this is why they jump all over birth control, because it helps them to do stupid things that they've been told to do. They don't even know the long-term effects of the behavior they're doing. It's monkey-see, monkey-do. The blind leading the blind.

So, I think it's good for us as grown-ups to point them towards the data that they should know about. They can certainly ignore it, and go with their feelings. But some of them will prefer to get the real truth about how the world works, and those are the ones we need to reach. They should at least have a choice to make.

By the way, I'm not saying that it's a bad idea to give someone a Bible. I got one when I was young, and that worked for me. But for people who ask questions, you need to have the studies ready. Always be ready for anyone who asks you questions about why you believe what you believe.

Can atheists rationally ground objective moral values and duties?

October 13, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's Dr. William Lane Craig explaining why atheists can't help themselves to objective morality, given a worldview of atheism:

He presents 3 reasons why in the video, all of which are also discussed in his Defenders class:

> The mention of Plato brings to mind another possible atheistic response to the first premise of the moral argument that *if God does not exist, then objective moral values and duties do not exist*. Plato thought that the Good just exists as a sort of self-subsistent idea, as an entity in and of itself. Indeed, it is the most real thing in reality. The Good simply exists. If you find this difficult to grasp, join the company! Nevertheless, that is what Plato believed. Later Christian thinkers, like Augustine, equated Plato's Good with the nature of God. God's nature is the Good, and so it was anchored in a concrete object, namely, God. But for Plato, at least, the Good just sort of existed on its own as a kind of self-existent idea.
>
> Some atheists might say that moral values, like Justice, Mercy, Love, and Forbearance, just exist all on their own as sort of abstract moral objects. They have no other foundation; they just exist. We can call this view Atheistic Moral Platonism. According to this view, moral values are not grounded in God. They just exist all on their own.
>
> Unintelligibility of Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> What might we say by way of response to Atheistic Moral Platonism? Let me make three responses. First, it seems to me that this view is just unintelligible. I simply don't understand what it means. What does it mean, for example, to say that the moral value Justice just exists? I understand what it means to say that a *person* is just or that some *action* is just, but what does it even mean to say that in the absence of any persons or any objects at all, that Justice just exists? It is hard to understand even what this means. Moral values seem to be properties of persons, and so it is hard to understand how Justice can just exist as a sort of abstraction.
>
> Lack of Moral Obligation on Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> Secondly, a major weakness of this view is that it provides no basis for objective moral duties. Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that moral values like Justice, Love, Forbearance, and Tolerance just exist on their own. Why would that lay any sort of moral obligation upon me? Why would the existence of this realm of ideas make it my duty to be, say, merciful or loving? Who or what lays such an obligation upon me? Why would I have the moral duty to be merciful or loving?

> Notice that on this view moral vices like Greed, Hatred, and Selfishness presumably also exist as abstractions. In the absence of any moral law giver, what obligates me to align my life with one set of these abstract ideas rather than with some other set of abstract ideas? There just doesn't seem to be any basis at all for moral duty in this view. In the absence of a moral law giver, Atheistic Moral Platonism lacks any basis for moral obligation.
>
> Improbability of Atheistic Moral Platonism
>
> Finally, thirdly, it is fantastically improbable that the blind evolutionary process should spit forth exactly those kinds of creatures that align with the existence of this realm of abstract values.1 Remember that they have no relationship with each other at all. The natural realm and this abstract moral realm are completely separate. And yet, lo and behold, the natural realm has by chance alone evolved exactly those kind of creatures whose lives align with these moral duties and values. This seems to be an incredible coincidence when you think about it. It is almost as if the moral realm knew that we were coming! I think it is a far more plausible view to say that both the natural realm and the moral realm are under the sovereignty of a divine being, who is both the creator of natural laws that govern the physical universe and whose commands constitute the moral laws that govern our ethical duties. This is a more coherent view of reality. Theism is a more coherent view because these two realms of reality don't fall apart in this disjointed way. They are both under the sovereignty of a single natural and moral law giver.
>
> For those three reasons, Atheistic Moral Platonism is a less plausible view than theistic based ethics such as I have been defending.

And now, I must be mean to the atheists, because I think this me too nonsense is just ridiculous, desperate intellectual dishonesty.

I remember having a conversation with one of my IT project managers who was an atheist, and she asked me what I thought would happen to dogs when they died. I said "well on your view of atheism, they don't have an afterlife, so they just rot away when we bury them and they get eaten by worms". She was aghast and said "no they don't, they go to Heaven". That was just her wishful thinking, there. And that's what morality on atheism is: wishful thinking. It's just an appearance package that gets bolted onto absolute meaninglessness and hedonism. And even if the atheist tries to make traditional decisions in their own lives, they typically push for full-on dismantling of Judeo-Christian values, especially in the sexual realm. And that spills over into abortion, divorce, same-sex marriage and government restraints on free speech, conscience and religious liberty.

Dear atheists: you cannot duct tape morality onto nihilism and have it be rational. We know you're doing it to feel good about yourselves and to appear normal instead of wearing your nihilism openly. But your faked morality is not even close to the morality of theists, and especially not of Christian theists. Christians go against their self-interest because we imitate the self-sacrificial love of Christ, who gave himself as a ransom to

save others. That makes no sense on an atheistic worldview, since this life is all you have, and there is no afterlife where your actions are in the context of a relationship with that self-sacrificial Son of God. In any case, free will doesn't exist on atheism, so that means no moral choices regardless. These are the common sense implications of atheist first principles, and in fact that's what you hear expressed from the finest atheist scholars: no free will, no right and wrong, no life after death.

If you want to see what atheists really think about morality, then take a look at this post featuring Matt Dillahunty, where he is asked to condemn the Holocaust as objectively wrong, and he refuses to do it. That's intellectually consistent atheist morality right there. If the universe is an accident, and human beings evolved by accident, then there is no way things ought to be, and no way we ought to act. And no one is there to be part of an ongoing two-way relationship where our conduct matters, anyway. On atheism, human beings will die out individually and collectively in the heat death of the universe. Once the heat death of the universe arrives, there will be no one left to care how we lived after we're dead – there is no one waiting for us who cares how we act towards him and towards others. Atheists can arbitrarily put any limits they want on their actions, based on what makes them feel good, and what makes people like them, perhaps taking account the arbitrary customs and conventions of the time and place they find themselves in. But it's delusional and irrational make-believe for atheists to claim that morality is rational on their worldview.

Positive arguments for Christian theism

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How the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation falsified atheism

October 14, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

So a couple of quotes to show that.

> An initial cosmological singularity… forms a past temporal extremity to the universe. We cannot continue physical reasoning, or even the concept of spacetime, through such an extremity… On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.

Source: P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in The Study of Time III, ed. J. T. Fraser (Berlin: Springer Verlag).

And another quote:

> [A]lmost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.

Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the American Physical Society web site:

> Bell Labs radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a large horn antenna in 1964 and 1965 to map signals from the Milky Way, when they serendipitously discovered the CMB. As written in the citation, "This unexpected discovery, offering strong evidence that the universe began with the Big Bang, ushered in experimental cosmology." Penzias and Wilson shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 in honor of their findings.
>
> The CMB is "noise" leftover from the creation of the Universe. The microwave radiation is only 3 degrees above Absolute Zero or -270 degrees C,1 and is uniformly perceptible from all directions. Its presence demonstrates that that our

> universe began in an extremely hot and violent explosion, called the Big Bang, 13.7 billion years ago.
>
> In 1960, Bell Labs built a 20-foot horn-shaped antenna in Holmdel, NJ to be used with an early satellite system called Echo. The intention was to collect and amplify radio signals to send them across long distances, but within a few years, another satellite was launched and Echo became obsolete.2
>
> With the antenna no longer tied to commercial applications, it was now free for research. Penzias and Wilson jumped at the chance to use it to analyze radio signals from the spaces between galaxies.3 But when they began to employ it, they encountered a persistent "noise" of microwaves that came from every direction. If they were to conduct experiments with the antenna, they would have to find a way to remove the static.
>
> Penzias and Wilson tested everything they could think of to rule out the source of the radiation racket. They knew it wasn't radiation from the Milky Way or extraterrestrial radio sources. They pointed the antenna towards New York City to rule out "urban interference", and did analysis to dismiss possible military testing from their list.4
>
> Then they found droppings of pigeons nesting in the antenna. They cleaned out the mess and tried removing the birds and discouraging them from roosting, but they kept flying back. "To get rid of them, we finally found the most humane thing was to get a shot gun…and at very close range [we] just killed them instantly. It's not something I'm happy about, but that seemed like the only way out of our dilemma," said Penzias.5 "And so the pigeons left with a smaller bang, but the noise remained, coming from every direction."6
>
> At the same time, the two astronomers learned that Princeton University physicist Robert Dicke had predicted that if the Big Bang had occurred, there would be low level radiation found throughout the universe. Dicke was about to design an experiment to test this hypothesis when he was contacted by Penzias. Upon hearing of Penzias' and Wilson's discovery, Dicke turned to his laboratory colleagues and said "well boys, we've been scooped."7
>
> Although both groups published their results in Astrophysical Journal Letters, only Penzias and Wilson received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of the CMB.
>
> The horn antenna was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1990. Its significance in fostering a new appreciation for the field of cosmology and a better understanding of our origins can be summed up by the following: **"Scientists have labeled the discovery [of the CMB] the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century."**8

It's the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century.

In the New York Times, Arno Penzias commented on his discovery – the greatest discovery of the 20th century – so:

> The best data we have [concerning the Big Bang] are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the bible as a whole.

Just one problem with the greatest scientific discovery of the 20th century: atheists don't accept it. Why not?

Here's a statement from the Secular Humanist Manifesto, which explains what atheists believe about the universe:

> Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

For a couple of examples of how atheistic scientists respond to the evidence for a cosmic beginning, you can check out this post, where we get responses from cosmologist Lawrence Krauss, and physical chemist Peter Atkins.

You cannot have the creation of the universe be true AND a self-existing, eternal universe ALSO be true. Someone has to be wrong. Either the science is wrong, or the atheist manifesto is wrong. I know where I stand.

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How the WMAP satellite confirmed nucleosynthesis predictions and falsified atheism

October 15, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Prior to certain scientific discoveries, most people thought that the universe had always been here, and no need to ask who or what may have caused it. But today, that's all changed. Today, the standard model of the origin of the universe is that all the matter and energy in the universe came into being in an event scientists call "The Big Bang". At the creation event, space and time themselves began to exist, and there is no material reality that preceded them.

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Source: Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, The Nature of Space and Time, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 20.

So, there are several scientific discoveries that led scientists to accept the creation event, and one of the most interesting and famous is the discovery of how elements heavier than hydrogen were formed.

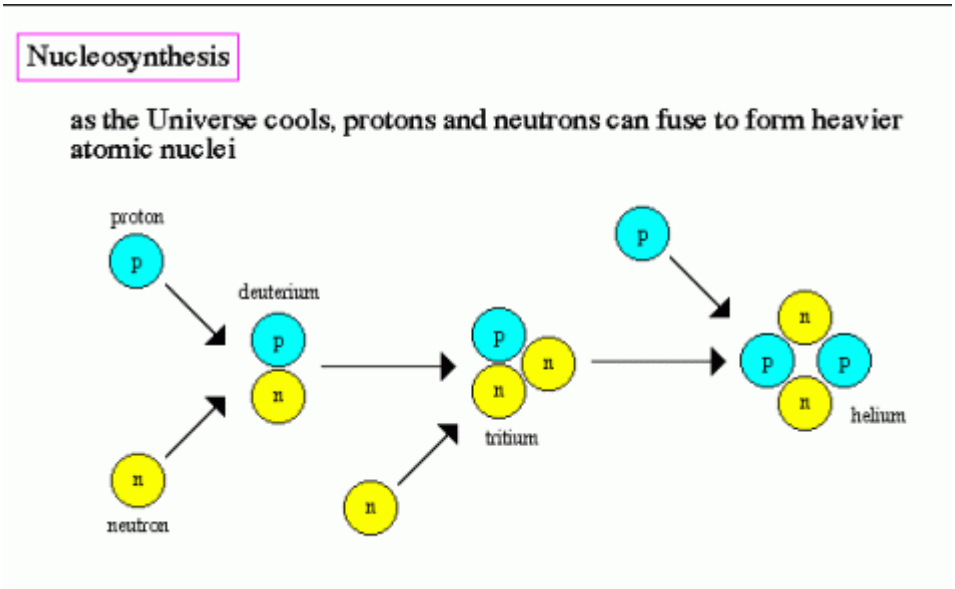

Nucleosynthesis: forming heavier elements by fusion

Here's the history of how that discovery happened, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) web site:

> The term nucleosynthesis refers to the formation of heavier elements, atomic nuclei with many protons and neutrons, from the fusion of lighter elements. The Big Bang theory predicts that the early universe was a very hot place. One second after the Big Bang, the temperature of the universe was roughly 10 billion degrees and was filled with a sea of neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons (positrons), photons and neutrinos. As the universe cooled, the neutrons either decayed into protons and electrons or combined with protons to make deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen). During the first three minutes of the universe, most of the deuterium combined to make helium. Trace amounts of lithium were also produced at this time. This process of light element formation in the early universe is called "Big Bang nucleosynthesis" (BBN).

The creation hypothesis predicts that there will be specific amounts of these light elements formed as the universe cools down. Do the predictions match with observations?

Yes they do:

> The predicted abundance of deuterium, helium and lithium depends on the density of ordinary matter in the early universe, as shown in the figure at left. These results indicate that the yield of helium is relatively insensitive to the abundance of ordinary matter, above a certain threshold. We generically expect about 24% of the ordinary matter in the universe to be helium produced in the Big Bang. This is in very good agreement with observations and is another major triumph for the Big Bang theory.

Moreover, WMAP satellite measurements of mass density agree with our observations of these light element abundances.

Here are the observations from the WMAP satellite:

> 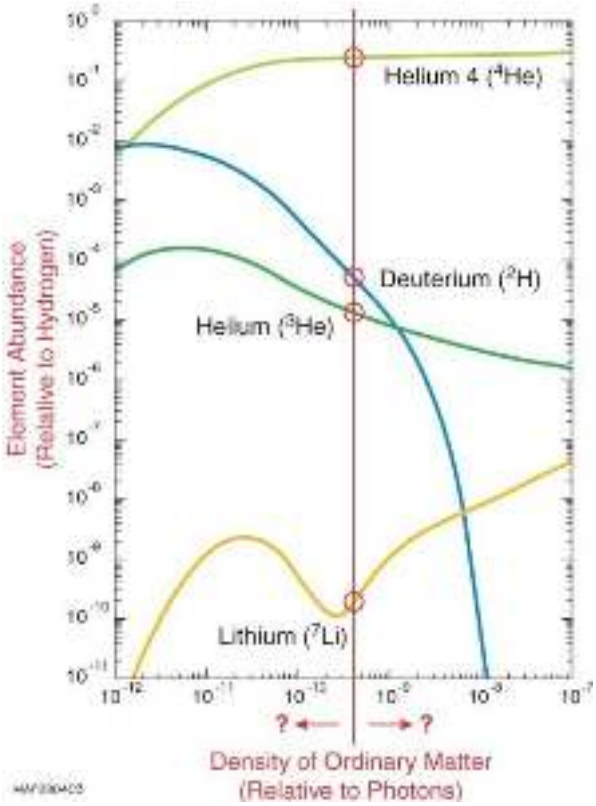
>
> Scientific observations match predictions

And here is how those WMAP measurements confirm the Big Bang creation event:

> However, the Big Bang model can be tested further. **Given a precise measurement of the abundance of ordinary matter, the predicted abundances of the other light elements becomes highly constrained. The WMAP satellite is able to directly measure the ordinary matter density and finds a value of 4.6% (±0.2%), indicated by the vertical red line in the graph. This leads to predicted abundances shown by the circles in the graph, which are in good agreement with observed abundances. This is an important and detailed test of nucleosynthesis and is further evidence in support of the Big Bang theory.**

"An important and detailed test".

For completeness, we should learn how elements heavier than these light elements are formed:

> Elements heavier than lithium are all synthesized in stars. During the late stages of stellar evolution, massive stars burn helium to carbon, oxygen, silicon, sulfur, and iron. Elements heavier than iron are produced in two ways: in the outer envelopes of super-giant stars and in the explosion of a supernovae. All carbon-based life on Earth is literally composed of stardust.

That's a wonderful thing to tell a young lady when you are on a date: "your body is made of stardust". In fact, as I have argued before, this star formation, which creates the

elements necessary for intelligent life, can only be built if the fundamental constants and quantities in the universe are finely-tuned.

Now, you would think that atheists would be happy to find observations that confirm the origin of the universe out of nothing, but they are not. Actually, they are in denial.

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Steven Crowder discusses Ayesha Curry's "Call Her Daddy" interview

October 16, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Steph Curry is an NBA player who has earned over a billion dollars in salary. Unfortunately, he made a *terrible* choice of wife. His wife, Ayesha Curry, recently went on the far-left feminist "Call Her Daddy" podcast, and essentially complained about the life that he provides for her. I just thought it was the most interesting thing to see how modern young women think of men who provide.

Her bio is here, it seems like she has no earned degrees or private sectory work experience beyond being an entertainer. And I'm pretty sure that any success she has at that is going to be due to her husband's fame!

Here's the video:

So, I think Ayesha's interview shows a major reason why marriage to a modern young woman is a terrible deal for a successful Christian man. Why? Because everything that Christian men do that is awesome and difficult seems to be seen as an *entitlement* by modern young women. It doesn't get you any consideration as a man that you are good at these things especially when women are getting helped along in school and at work to earn the same as a man, sometimes with much less effort. Whereas the previous generation would give a man respect and gratitude for slogging through STEM degrees, waking up early, saving money, remaining chaste and sober, etc., modern young women tend to dismiss it all. In addition, modern women are overwhelmingly leftist, and see a man's moral and spiritual leadership as *liabilities*. So those skills actually count *against* a man.

And I know why, too. I once was dating a woman who had an unused degree in business administration. She graduated in 5 years, but she never ever used the degree for business administration. In fact, she turned down jobs that I found her in FT100 companies that were for business administration. She just wanted to do easy jobs, have huge gaps in her resume, and have fun. But the interesting part is that when I showed her the preparations that I had made to be a good provider – graduate degree, 6-figure portfolio, provisional patent, publications, etc. – she was dismissive and disrespectful. And I'll never forget what she said about my investment portfolio. She said "I hope that you'll consider my advice when you're buying and selling securities, because I learned a lot about that in school". She was 20K in debt and had been carrying that debt unpaid for 7 years after graduation. Never bought a stock or an option or a mutual fund in her life. Her money was being spent on fun, thrills and travel! That's what this Ayesha interview reminded me of.

So, I think it's just something for young men to think about. When you are deciding whether to date and get married, you have to think about whether the hard things that you have done are going to get you any respect and gratitude. Especially if you have

some sort of plan for your family! Over the course of dating during my 20s and 30s, I had a non-stop line of Christian women with student loan debt and low-earning easy jobs telling me how they didn't know how to cook, didn't want to clean, didn't want to homeschool the kids, didn't want to have more than 2 kids, didn't want to do campus ministry, didn't want to learn science or economics, and so on. They just felt *entitled* to everything that I would provide, but they weren't willing to do *anything* that I wanted the marriage to achieve for the Boss. They were quite confident that marriage was about making the woman happy, not God. Men are just "servant leaders". Their achievements in the real world don't qualify them to lead.

And the worst part of this was the responses of pastors, parents, and Christian leaders. Instead of reining in the entitlement of young Christian women, they would instead say things like "you need to lower your standards" and "why don't you let your 30-year-old girlfriend go to EUROPE for a couple of years, and just wait for her to come back". I'm sure that these Christian parents, pastors and leaders *thought* that they were whipping men into shape, but the end result is that men just decline the bad deal that's being offered to them. We can do ministry and early retirement instead. And that's better for the Boss than a marriage that is just going to be led by a woman's feelings.

Country breakfast

Anyway, Crowder did mention something called "country breakfast" and I looked it up, and here's what it is:

Now, Ayesha didn't cook this. This Christian grandmother of 15 grandkids makes it. It looks *amazing!* American breakfast is one of my 3 favorite foods. (I also love Indian food and Thai food). But do you think that any modern young woman can cook something like that? That's ground sausage in the top left, and STEAK STRIPS at 7 o'clock. Two kinds of potatoes and two kinds of eggs and two kinds of cheese and two kinds of pig!

It's no wonder that men 100 years ago were chasing traditional women for marriage. But you can't get anything like that today! Today, you're more likely to have your pick of aging feminists who have nothing to offer. That's not a good deal for a man. We have

other things that we can do that will be better for the Boss.

Secular left feminist Sarah Stankorb explains why women leave Christianity

October 17, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I sometimes read articles from mainstream conservative pastors and theologians. One of these is the famous Doug Wilson who blogs at Blog and Mablog. Well, recently he was attacked by a secular left feminist named Sarah Stankorb. I looked over her recent articles, and a pattern emerged about what she – and the women she writes about – think that Christianity is about.

Here's an article entitled "These Evangelical Women Are Abandoning Trump and Their Churches".

She talks about a woman named Katie Loveland, who leaves her church for the following reasons:

1. If a church allows a man to act like a fool towards women, then Christianity is false.
2. If a church allows a man who has passed a background check and holds a concealed carry permit to be armed so he can protect church members from attacks like this one, then Christianity is false.
3. If Christians support a politician who has a pro-life record of demonstrated achievements over a politician who promises to remove all state and local restrictions on abortion from conception to birth, then Christianity is false.

And another woman named Elaina Ramsey, and her reasons for rejecting Christianity:

1. If Christianity requires you to disagree with your gay and queer friends, then Christianity is false.
2. If Christians refuse to marry you because you've been raped, then Christianity is false.
3. If the Bible records (and condemns) the rape of Bathsheba by David, then Christianity is false.
4. If Christianity teaches that murdering humans is wrong, and science says that the unborn are human, then Christianity is false.

And more about another woman named Deirdre Sugiuchi, and her reasons for rejecting Christianity:

1. If your father claims to be a Christian and spanks you, then Christianity is false.
2. If you are sent to an abusive Christian reform school for being rebellious, then Christianity is false.
3. If Christianity feels anti-gay, anti-black or anti-woman, then Christianity is false.
4. If the United States opposes Al Qaeda for carrying out the 9/11 attack, then Christianity is false.

Are you seeing a pattern here?

It turns out that a lot of emotion-based people claimed to be Christians and were accepted as "Christian", without any rational basis for believing it. And later on, when Christianity made them feel bad about being reckless and irresponsible, or when it loses them non-Christian friends, then they abandoned it. It's not that they discovered that Christianity is illogical. It's not that they discovered evidence to falsify Christian truth claims. Their stated reasons for leaving Christianity are entirely subjective. And none of the reasons do the work of falsifying core Christian truth claims, such as God's existence, the inspiration of the Bible, or the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus.

Just to review, here are some of the reasons why authentic Christians believe in Christian theism:

- scientific evidence for the origin of the universe
- scientific evidence for cosmic fine-tuning
- scientific evidence for the origin of life
- scientific evidence for habitability
- scientific evidence for sudden origin of body plans
- scientific evidence for molecular machines
- scientific evidence for irreducible complexity
- the argument from consciousness
- the argument from objective morality
- the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus

These arguments – and many more like them – are defended by scholars in books published by top academic presses. But I see no evidence that emotion-based ex-Christians *have ever read such books*. Why would they? They aren't interested in forming their worldview based on objective reality. They aren't interested in constructing a life plan where their desire for happiness comes second to following Jesus.

People who abandon Christianity because of feelings or experiences have not "left Christianity". They just stopped faking being Christians. They were never actually Christian in the first place. To be a Christian in the first place, you have to know that Christianity is true. People who accept the arguments for Christianity listed above have *just as many disappointments with God, bad experiences with Christians, and bad experiences with churches as people who were guided by their emotions and experiences.*

In fact, I personally know women who grew up fatherless, or had defective parents, or other setbacks. They got themselves into a lot of trouble with churches and immoral men, and yet today, not only are they solid Christians, but they actually take the lead in gospel enterprises, such as apologetics. Why? Because for them, the objective truth of Christianity was more important than their subjective feelings and experiences.

The differences between Christians and non-Christians is that Christians overlook bad feelings, shame and rejection, because we know facts don't care about our feelings. For

real Christians, the normal Christian life *requires* bad feelings, disappointments, bad experiences and rejection by non-Christians. We actually read the Bible, and so we expect bad things to happen to us.

Note: if you are relying on someone to act in a Christian way – say, as a marriage partner – then you'd better find out what kind of "Christian" they are, by asking them how they arrived at their beliefs. Do not marry a fake Christian who just reads romance novels and fiction. A person can't determine the truth of Christianity by focusing on career, travel, entertainment, promiscuity, etc.

William Lane Craig debates Daniel Came: Does God exist?

October 18, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

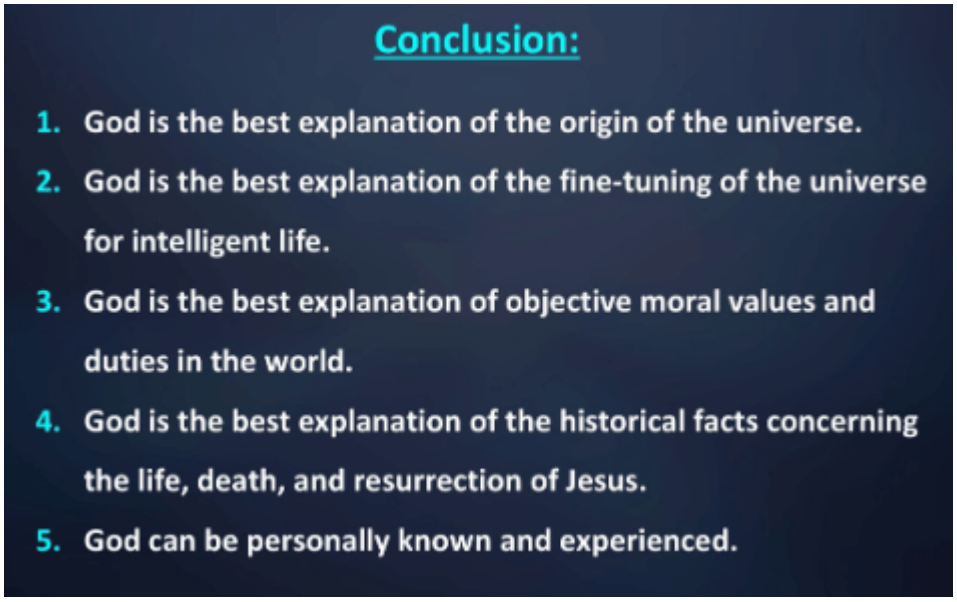

Dr. Craig's opening speech summary slide

The video of the debate was posted by ReasonableFaith.org – Dr. Craig's organization. This debate occurred in March 2017 at the University of Dublin, in Ireland.

The video: (91 minutes)

My non-snarky summary is below.

Dr. Craig's opening speech

Two claims:

1. There are good reasons to think that theism is true.
2. There are not comparably good reasons to think that atheism is true.

Five reasons for God's existence:

1. The beginning of the universe
– actual infinite past is mathematically impossible
– BGV theorem: any universe that is on balance expanding in its history (like ours) cannot be past eternal

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– slight changes to quantities and constants prevent a universe from supporting complex embodied life
– the multiverse response of atheists conflicts with observations, e.g. the Boltzmann Brains problem

3. Objective moral values
– God's existence is required to ground objective moral values and duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus

– there are good reasons to accept the most widely accepted facts about the historical Jesus (empty tomb, appearances, early widespread belief in the resurrection)
– the best explanation of these minimal facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead

5. Experience God directly
– in the absence of any defeaters to belief in God, a person can experience God directly

Dr. Daniel Came's opening speech

1. The hiddenness of God
– if God wants a personal relationship with us, and a relationship with God would be the greatest good for us
– God ought to reveal himself to us, but he does not reveal himself to many people, the "non-resistant non-believers"

2. The inductive problem of evil
– many evil events occur that are pointless – there is no morally sufficient reason why God would allow them to occur
– examples: animal suffering, children born with disease, tsunamis
– the theistic response to this is that humans are not in a position to know whether there are morally sufficient reasons, due to our limitations of knowing the consequences
– but this ripple effect defense has 4 possible outcomes, 3 of which don't do the job of justifying

Dr. Craig's first rebuttal

1. The hiddenness of God
– God's goal is not to make his existence known, but to draw them into a love relationship
– it's speculative that overt displays of God's existence would draw people to him in a love relationship, they might resent his bullying
– atheist would have to prove that God could draw more people into a love relationship with him by revealing himself more overtly

2. The inductive problem of evil
– as humans, we are not in a position to know for certain that any apparently pointless evil really is pointless
– William Alston article: 6 limitations of human knowing make it impossible to judge that an evil is actually "pointless"
– Dr. Came says that there are 4 possibilities for the ripple effects, and since 3 are bad, it's likely that there are not morally sufficient reasons for a apparently pointless evil
– it is logically fallacious to assert probability conclusions without knowing the probabilities of those 4 options
– there is actually an argument from evil: since the problem of evil requires an objective standard of good and evil by which to measure, and God is the only possible ground of objective morality, then pressing the problem of evil actually requires the atheist to assume God, in order to ground this objective moral standard

Dr. Came's first rebuttal

3. Objective moral values

– there are naturalistic theories of moral realism where objective moral duties and objective moral values exist in a naturalistic universe
– I'm not saying that any of them are correct, but there are many theories about object morality in a naturalistic universe

There are naturalistic theories for all of the 5 arguments that Dr. Craig presented. It is Dr. Craig's responsibility to present those naturalistic theories and prove that they are not as good as his explanations. I'm not going to defend (or even name!) a single naturalistic theory for any of these 5 arguments by Dr. Craig.

Dr. Craig's explanations for the 5 evidences he gave can't be admitted, because we have to know how God did something *in naturalistic terms* before we can know that God did it supernaturally. Explanations are only valid if they are naturalistic.

1. The beginning of the universe
– naturalism explains how the universe expands after it came into being, so that explains how it came into being
– the God explanation, that God created the universe out of nothing, is not admissible, because it is not naturalistic
– how does God, as an unembodied mind interact with the physical world?
– the only agency that we know about is human agents, and we have bodies, so how could God perform actions without having a body?

The theistic hypothesis does not make any predictions, but naturalism makes lots of testable predictions. God could do anything, so he is not constrained and is therefore untestable. We can't infer God as an explanation in principle because we can't predict what is more probable if God exists than if he does not.

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the university was not set up to make embodied intelligence plausible, because the vast majority of the universe is hostile to life
– there are models of the multiverse that escape the Boltzmann Brains problem that Dr. Craig raised

Dr. Craig's second rebuttal

Some of Dr. Craig's arguments are deductive (e.g. – the beginning of the universe, objective moral values), so that the conclusion follows from the premises if the premises are true. The resurrection passes the standard tests for historical explanations.

1. The beginning of the universe
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for an ultimate beginning of the universe

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– the whole point of the argument is that there is no naturalistic explanation for a design of the universe to support life
– he has to prove that intelligences has to be attached to bodies
– human beings are non-physical minds united to physical bodies
– naturalistic attempts to explain mental operations fail

– the arguments *prove* that unembodied minds exist
– the vast expanse of the universe is required in order to form the galaxies, stars and heavy elements needed for complex life
– why expect that the entire universe should be small, or that life would be everywhere?
– a non-fine-tuned world is more likely in the multiverse, and in a multiverse, we are more likely to have a Boltzmann brain world than a world with complex, embodied life
– Dr. Came has not advanced any naturalistic explanation for the fine-tuning

3. Objective moral values
– non-theistic ethical theories cannot account for the ontological foundations of objective moral values and duties
– atheistic theories of moral realism simply assume objective moral values out of thin air
– it is especially hard to find any basis for objective moral duties in the absence of God

Dr. Came's second rebuttal

5. Religious experience
– Dr. Craig should not bring up religious experience in a debate where arguments and evidence are central
– people who have dreams, hallucinations and psychotic delusions could appeal to religious experience
– religious experience is by no means universal, and it is possible to doubt it

3. Objective moral values
– there are lots of atheists who hold to objective moral values
– Dr. Craig has to explain how God grounds objective moral values and duties
– Dr. Craig has to explain why atheist moral realist theories don't work to ground objective moral values and duties

1. The beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig claims that something can't come from nothing, that's not an argument
– there are numerous models that don't require an absolute beginning of the universe
– Dr. Craig cites the BGV theorem, but Guth (one of the authors) says that only the inflation has a beginning, not the whole universe

Dr. Craig's conclusion

1. The beginning of the universe
– on theism, there is an efficient cause, but no material cause, for the origin of the universe
– on atheism, there is neither an efficient cause nor a material cause, for the origin of the universe: that's worse!
– if he thinks that there are models of the universe that don't require a beginning, then let him name a viable eternal model of the universe
– he never refuted the mathematical argues against an infinite past

2. Fine-tuning of cosmic quantities and constants
– nothing to refute

3. Objective moral values

– God is a better ground for morality than humans, because he is ultimate, and not contingent and arbitrary
– God is a being who is worthy of worship, and therefore command his creatures with moral duties

4. Minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus
– nothing to refute

5. Religious experience
– only justified because there are no defeaters to it

1. The hiddenness of God
– atheist has to show that if God's existence were more obvious, that it would result in more people being drawn to him

2. The inductive problem of evil
– Dr. Came's argument was logically fallacious, and makes errors in probability theory

Dr. Came's conclusion

Sometimes, people can't prove something, but lack of evidence is a justification for doubting it, e.g. – werewolves.

If none of Craig's arguments work, then it follows that it is not rational to believe that God exists, and it is rational to believe that God does not exist.

Atheists shouldn't have a burden of proof for what they know, only theists have a burden of proof for what they know.

My thoughts

One quick point. If life were common everywhere then atheists would infer that God wasn't involved in it. Period. "Life is everywhere, so it's common, why do we need a designer?" they'd say. I agree with Dr. Came about denouncing religious experience in a formal debate. I don't like when Dr. Craig brings this up, but I see why he does it – he's an evangelist, and that's a good thing, too. I just worry about how it looks to atheists, although it's good for sincere seekers. I'm not the one on the stage, though, Dr. Craig is.

I think the point about more overt revealing by God would annoy people and make them turn away. Think of how gay people respond to the suggestion that there is anything wrong with them, with rage, vandalism, threats, coercion, attempts to get you to lose your job and business, and using government as a weapon to fine and imprison you. It's really obvious to me that more God does not mean more *love* of God. For those who don't want God, the hiddenness is respect for their choice to put pleasure above the search for truth. (I mean the gay activists – I have great sympathy for people who struggle with same-sex unwanted attractions because they were impacted by a failed bond with their parent of the same sex as they are).

Whenever I meet people like Dr. Came, I always urge them to keep investigating and pursuing truth, because they will find it if they are sincerely seeking after God. Some atheists do sincerely seek God, but I don't know any who haven't found him. I'm not sure if that's because those atheists who claim to be non-resistant and rational are in fact

resistant and non-rational, or what the real reason is. If you believe the Bible, *all* unbelief is non-rational and resistant (see Romans 1). Regarding the werewolves, we don't have any good arguments for werewolves, we do have good arguments for God. Dr. Came didn't refute the arguments that Craig raised, nor did his own arguments for atheism work. And there are many, many more arguments (origin of life, Cambrian explosion, habitability-discoverability, molecular machines) that Craig did not raise, too.

10,000,000 page view post: The Great Feminization and my trials in woke corporations

October 19, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Announcement: The blog just reached 10,000,000 page views since I started it in January 2009. So, leave me a comment on Facebook, Twitter or below this post, if you want me to keep going! I'm thinking about scaling back the blog and the podcast and the YouTube channel, since I am ready for early retirement! Maybe I will just scale back the blogging to days when I really am bursting to speak out.

The article I want to comment on is written by Helen Andrews. It might be the best thing you read all year, it's certainly the best thing I've read this year. Better than anything you will hear from popular Christian authors and podcasters, who tend to shy away from policy and controversy. This article is about what is really going on in big woke corporations, outside of the happy Christian bubble.

Here is her article in Compact Magazine.

And here is the excerpt:

> Everything you think of as wokeness involves prioritizing the feminine over the masculine: empathy over rationality, safety over risk, cohesion over competition. Other writers who have proposed their own versions of the Great Feminization thesis, such as Noah Carl or Bo Winegard and Cory Clark, who looked at feminization's effects on academia, offer survey data showing sex differences in political values. One survey, for example, found that 71 percent of men said protecting free speech was more important than preserving a cohesive society, and 59 percent of women said the opposite.

This part was my favorite:

> The field that frightens me most is the law. All of us depend on a functioning legal system, and, to be blunt, the rule of law will not survive the legal profession becoming majority female. The rule of law is not just about writing rules down. It means following them even when they yield an outcome that tugs at your heartstrings or runs contrary to your gut sense of which party is more sympathetic.
>
> A feminized legal system might resemble the Title IX courts for sexual assault on college campuses established in 2011 under President Obama. These proceedings were governed by written rules and so technically could be said to operate under the rule of law. But they lacked many of the safeguards that our legal system holds sacred, such as the right to confront your accuser, the right to know what crime you are accused of, and the fundamental concept that guilt should depend on objective circumstances knowable by both parties, not in how one party feels about an act in retrospect. These protections were abolished

> because the people who made these rules sympathized with the accusers, who were mostly women, and not with the accused, who were mostly men.

She doesn't mention domestic violence laws and family courts, perhaps strategically, but these both are nothing like traditional legal processes. Many intelligent men are avoiding relationships out of caution about false accusations and divorce. It's called the "marriage strike", and it is just the rational response to the feminization of the police force and family courts. Especially for men of means who have more to lose.

> These two approaches to the law clashed vividly in the Brett Kavanaugh confirmation hearings. The masculine position was that, if Christine Blasey Ford can't provide any concrete evidence that she and Kavanaugh were ever in the same room together, her accusations of rape cannot be allowed to ruin his life. The feminine position was that her self-evident emotional response was itself a kind of credibility that the Senate committee must respect.
>
> If the legal profession becomes majority female, I expect to see the ethos of Title IX tribunals and the Kavanaugh hearings spread. Judges will bend the rules for favored groups and enforce them rigorously on disfavored groups, as already occurs to a worrying extent. It was possible to believe back in 1970 that introducing women into the legal profession in large numbers would have only a minor effect. That belief is no longer sustainable. The changes will be massive.

Her article is based on a speech that she gave at NatCon5: a national conference of conservative thought.

Please read her article, and watch the video if you like. Send it to all your friends. Post it on social media. Share the video with all of your friends. I found the article cathartic. It really moved me. I did cry for a bit because I have experienced what she is talking about, in corporate America. It really was not easy to get through.

It's great to see Helen Andrews take up this issue of institutional feminization, which I think is the core danger of our time. Except for a very small minority, nobody seems to have the balls to say that we need to roll back things like single mother welfare, no-fault divorce, student loans for worthless degrees, anti-discrimination laws for businesses, me-too false accusations at work, etc. Most social conservative Christians, for example, claim to be pro-life and pro-marriage, but they are terrified about confronting women about their role in causing those problems. Similarly, they don't want to confront women about their support for leftist policies.

Well, Helen Andrews has said something about one of the problems, and we all need to follow her lead. And the best part is, *she doesn't think that blaming and shaming men is the answer*. She thinks the answer is *changing laws and policies*. That's rare.

You can find more of her articles here.

My time in woke corporations

I wanted to add a few more words about my experience working in woke Big Tech

corporations while fighting for my green card and early retirement.

The company that eventually sponsored me for my green card was a Platinum partner of the Human Rights Campaign. So, they are a far far far left woke company. They would push me hard to do many secular left actions that I disagreed with. When you are not a permanent resident, you can't go to Human Resources, or sue the company. You have to lay low and avoid threats and find another way to speak your mind. This is something that many Christian leaders who were *born in the USA* don't understand about aliases.

Here's a few things I encountered in the 16 years before I got my permanent residency (green card):

- was asked to wear a rainbow ribbon to support gay rights by my female manager
- was called into my female manager's office after a Muslim complained about my disagreement with Islam
- had my blog leaked to Human Resources by a Muslim who found out about it somehow, and was called in to explain it
- gay male co-workers would try to get me to disagree with LGBT in front of people so them could send me to HR
- had to use vacation days to avoid woke training, and then was asked why I did that
- was badgered incessantly to donate to the United Way, a woke non-profit
- was called into a meeting with a Director because I spoke to a CHRISTIAN woman about apologetics at work (she was offended because I made her feel bad about her fideism)
- was passed over for IT promotions for female candidates who did not even have STEM degrees, or in one case ANY degree or IT work experience
- hauled into Human Resources after a Hindu communist complained because I asked him why he didn't stay in India if he was so opposed to free market capitalism
- was called onto the carpet by my female manager for making the no-degree and no-experience lady feel bad when she declined to reply to my e-mails about requirements for an entire week
- was denied a letter of reference from the Human Resources lady at a previous employer that I needed for my application for Permanent Residency, (she knew I was a conservative and Christian because I slammed their woke policies in my exit interview)

And I could go on and on, but this is the kind of thing that I had to put up with, mainly from cry-baby feminists and LGBT activists, in corporate America.

Not just in woke corporations

I don't expect Christian leaders who have given me flack for my alias to understand this, since none are legal immigrants by employer sponsor and few have worked in a woke Fortune 100 IT shop. But even outside of woke IT corporations, I have seen many "conservative" Christians throw out the Bible and side with crying women against men who were in the right Biblically and morally. I have seen "pro-child" "Mama Bear"

Christians urge women to initiate divorce *over money,* and lie about their husbands in family court in order to get custody of kids, even though the divorce was completely unBiblical and immoral.

Many very "manly" looking Christian leaders fold up like origami for women, too. Many years ago, a very famous masculine-looking Christian apologist told my 30-year-old girlfriend that she should feel free to go to Europe to do TWO NON-STEM DEGREES, and that I would be here waiting for her to marry her when she returned. She returned to America at age 34. She didn't work when she was in Europe, just lived off of donations and debt. And she never used those extra degrees for work. No one had the boldness to confront her about her crazy choices, not even that male "masculine" apologist. And in fact two other male apologists were so desperate to be liked by her, that they also told her that going to Europe at age 30 was a great idea. Do you ever wonder why so many aging Christian women are struggling to get married? Many of them wasted their 20s chasing worldly happiness, to the applause of weak Christian men who merely *appeared* masculine.

A famous woman apologist once told me that I should not reject women who had tens of thousands of dollars of debt as a wife candidate, because "if Jesus forgives her sins, then who are you to judge her? You need to lower your standards". We just don't have Christian leaders who are tough enough to confront women about the lies they believe, and their poor decision-making.

Last point from me. I've mentored several women who went through a wild phase as non-Christians. I teach them apologetics and economics, and build up their resume and finances. Once they get their lives on track, the most frequent phrase I hear from them is "everyone was lying to me when I was young". People tell young women what they want to hear, and it causes them problems in the long run. It is a mistake to think that men exist as ATM servants who will just dispense cash and fixes when women have gotten themselves into these problems. We need to do better at telling women the truth early, even if it hurts their feelings.

Read and share Helen's article

So, yes. It's just so encouraging to see an article that finally takes a step into saying "maybe it's not a good idea to have these laws that force businesses to place women into positions of authority". Read the article. Share the article. And just consider; should we confront the threat to civilization posed by the feminization of our institutions? Or should we cower in fear of displeasing women, and just keep telling them what they want to hear, so that they will like us?

Jennifer Roback Morse and Hannah Spier discuss the pitfalls of feminism

October 20, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

So, I am still on Cloud 9 from the amazing essay and lecture by Helen Andrews that I posted on the weekend. My female friends were unanimous in their praise for the article. My male friend Blake and I talked about it for 2 hours on the phone. My other male friends have not had the chance to read it. But on the heels of that, here's *another* fantastic podcast about feminism. Terrell found it for me.

I don't need to introduce economist Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse (of the Ruth Institute) to regular readers of the blog, as she is well known for her opposition to feminism, and her policy-oriented approach to solving the problems of the Sexual Revolution. Whereas many social conservatives just moan and complain about the Sexual Revolution, and then expect men to "fix it" so that women are happy, Dr. Morse has all sorts of interesting ideas about what laws and policies to change to bring us back to normal.

Her guest Dr. Hannah Spier is someone I had never head of before. She's a former psychiatrist who is married and lives in Switzerland with her husband and children. She's a stay-at-home mother now. And you might not believe this but she describes herself as very supportive of "men's rights". Now, don't get me wrong, she's not a basher of women. What I heard in the podcast was a lot of discussion about what feminism is, and how women who believe in it order their lives. Does it work out for them?

Anyway, I have the video version and the audio version. So here's the uncensored video from Rumble:

And the audio-only version: (opens in new tab)

https://sites.libsyn.com/20124/psychiatrist-proves-feminism-is-even-worse-than-we-thought-hannah-spier-dr-j-show

Don't forget that our Knight and Rose Show is also posted on Rumble, if you don't like YouTube. I certainly don't.

I was supposed to be working on work-work (work related to my job) on Sunday, and doing the laundry. But I could not escape from this podcast. I kept re-winding it to play parts over.

Anyway, I was going to write a summary of this, but I fed Grok the transcript, and told it the parts that impressed me, and asked for a summary. I got this:

> Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse and Dr. Hannah Spier explore how feminist ideology influences women's choices, often leading to mental health challenges and unfulfilled desires. Dr. Spier, a psychiatrist, shares insights from her practice, highlighting how societal pressures and personal decisions rooted in feminism can create resentment and emotional distress across different life stages.
>
> For women in their 20s, Dr. Spier observes a pattern of pursuing demanding

> degrees while grappling with unmet emotional needs. Many focus on dating or social status, influenced by feminist ideals of career-driven success, only to face anxiety and panic attacks when academic and romantic goals clash. This mismatch stems from chasing a glamorous career image that doesn't satisfy deeper attachment needs.
>
> In their 30s, women often experience burnout from unfulfilling jobs, compounded by the pressure of declining fertility. Dr. Spier notes that some women invest years in relationships with partners hesitant to commit, partly because career-focused women initially seem less likely to prioritize marriage or children. When these women later seek commitment, the delay can lead to conflict.
>
> By their 40s, married women with children may face depression and marital strain, often feeling guilt over their children's struggles, like ADHD, which Dr. Spier links to attachment issues from balancing work and family. Resentment toward husbands for perceived unequal responsibilities can push some toward divorce, seeking relief but facing new challenges.
>
> Both critique feminism's narrative that pits men and women against each other, arguing it undervalues motherhood and fuels bitterness. They encourage women to make choices aligned with their biological and relational needs, fostering healthier emotional lives and stronger families, rather than adhering to societal pressures that may lead to regret.

What was most interesting to me about all this was how even though women were making these decisions all along, it was pretty clear that they had been sold a bill of goods by powerful people who wanted them to go in this direction for whatever reason.

In particular, I was pleased to hear Dr. Spier mention how women who are committed to full-time careers *deliberately choose* men who support that. I.e. – men who don't want to be burdened by commitment and children. So, to the woman who has her eventual demands for commitment and children rejected, it looks like "all men are bad" because the man she chose was bad. I know that many modern women, for example, consider support for abortion rights to be a *non-negotiable* when dating a man. If a feminist woman chooses a pro-abortion man, it gives her maximum autonomy for her career during her 20s. But how likely do you think it is that a pro-abortion man is going to suddenly sign up for marriage and children when she hits 32? It seems unlikely. After all, abortion is nothing but seeking reckless sexual pleasure, and then resorting to deadly violence to avoid the consequences of your actions. A man who believes in that is not going to sign up for marriage and kids. Marriage and kids are responsibilities, and pro-abortion men don't want that.

What we need to do is to tell women that good men are men who want to commit early, and raise kids early. And so, they need to choose those good men early. Men marry for a specific plan. Good men want a helper who can help them with their plans. It's wrong to pass up good men in the woman's 20s, and then hope that they will be there in the woman's 30s. That's not a good deal for the good men. They will not take that deal. The

right solution is for older women to teach younger women to reject feminism when they are still young. So, please share the podcast with young women.

Another exciting story of a famous scholar (Charles Murray) studying Christianity

October 21, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

You might remember how famous philosopher Larry Sanger, the co-founder of Wikipedia, recently investigated Christianity. He found the evidence good enough to make a commitment. I wrote about what arguments he found convincing in this post. A new famous scholar, Charles Murray, has investigated into Christianity. Let's see what arguments he looked at and where he came out.

Before we see what Charles Murray found, here is a good list of arguments for a Creator and Designer.

I have a list of 8 scientific arguments:

1. origin of the universe
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. origin of life (building blocks and sequencing of information)
4. Cambrian explosion (and other surges of information in the fossil record)
5. galactic, stellar and planetary habitability, e.g. – habitable zones
6. molecular machines in the cell, e.g. – bacterial flagellum
7. evidence for a non-material mind, e.g. – split brain surgery
8. the waiting time problem

And then there are philosophical arguments, too:

1. the moral argument
2. the contingency argument
3. arguments for substance dualism, e.g. – intentionality
4. the argument from reason

And historical arguments:

1. reliability of the New Testament documents
2. minimal facts case for the resurrection, e.g. – Paul's conversion
3. prophecy, e.g. – Psalm 22

I excluded all "soft" arguments from my list, because emotion-based claims grate on my software engineer and military history soul.

So, what was Murray's starting point? He explains in a New York Post article:

> By the middle of the 20th century, academia's appraisal of religion amounted to "Smart people don't believe that stuff anymore."
>
> That's the message I got when I reached Harvard in the fall of 1961.

> None of my professors was religious (at least visibly). I didn't have any friends who were religious.
>
> When the topic of religion came up, professors and friends alike treated it dismissively or as a subject for humor.
>
> I didn't expend energy rejecting religion. It was irrelevant. I ignored it.

That's his starting point. And why investigate Christianity when you are already at the top of your field, getting a lot of respect for the influential books that you are putting out?

So often, Christians are taught to think that Christianity is something that you investigate when you have a life crisis. Then you take this irrational leap into the dark, and turn over a new leaf, to get your life in order. Maybe to make people stop judging you. That's how Christianity is seen today. Most people think that Christianity is about feelings and community, but that's not the way Jesus saw it. Jesus said that everyone who is on the side of TRUTH listens to him. He used evidence in order to appeal to people who didn't believe in him already. We talked about Christianity as a "truth quest" in our podcast episode with Dr. Gunter Bechly, who went on a truth quest and arrived at Christianity. Intellectuals who are curious and open can find solid evidence for the Christian worldview.

Science and Culture has an article up about what evidence Charles Murray looked at in his new book:

> "Millions are like me when it comes to religion: well-educated and successful people for whom religion has been irrelevant," Charles Murray writes. "For them, I think I have a story worth telling."
>
> Taking Religion Seriously is Murray's autobiographical account of the decades-long evolution in his stance toward the idea of God in general and Christianity in particular. He argues that religion is something that can be approached as an intellectual exercise. His account moves from the improbable physics of the Big Bang to recent discoveries about the nature of consciousness, from evolutionary psychology to hypotheses about a universal Moral Law. His exploration of Christianity delves into the authorship of the Gospels, the reliability of biblical texts, and the scholarship surrounding the resurrection story.

These align with some of the arguments that I mentioned (origin of the universe, fine-tuning, consciousness, moral argument, gospel reliability, resurrection), showing you how these arguments really do work on non-Christian scholars.

A Wall Street Journal article (archived) has more about his process of changing his mind:

> Whatever else may be said about Mr. Murray, he can't be accused of dishonesty or cowardice. He has a penchant for saying what many other writers and scholars know but either can't say or can't say clearly and without a thousand qualifications. He has often been typecast in liberal organs as an ideologue, but that is exactly wrong: Reading Mr. Murray's work—this is most plainly true in "Losing Ground" and "Coming Apart"—you often sense that the writer would

> rather draw different conclusions but, in view of the evidence, can't.
>
> "Taking Religion Seriously" is, in that sense, typical of its author. Mr. Murray wasn't searching for religious belief.

He starts out with a book written by a famous atheist astronomer, Martin Rees, about the cosmic fine-tuning argument. This argument is generally viewed by atheists as the most compelling argument for a Creator and Designer of the universe:

> Mr. Murray's conversion, if that's what it is, began in the early 2000s, when he read a few theoretical accounts of the universe's origins, among them Martin Rees's "Just Six Numbers" (1999). So wildly improbable were the conditions necessary for the so-called Big Bang, it seems to Mr. Murray, that the whole business, whenever it happened, sounded very much like what Christians call creation. "I can't believe I'm thinking this," he recalls reflecting, "but it's the only plausible explanation"—"it" meaning the divine origin of everything.

He was also impressed by the case for the reliability of the gospels, including the relatively recent, ground-breaking work done by Dr. Richard Bauckham on the eyewitness backing of the gospels:

> One of those books on the Gospels' formation is perhaps the greatest of them all: Richard Bauckham's "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses" (2006), a densely researched and dispassionate argument that the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) are more or less what they present themselves to be: accounts of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, compiled from the testimonies of eyewitnesses. Mr. Murray also read prominent critical accounts of the Gospels—books by Bart Ehrman, among others, that reject all supernatural claims—and wasn't so impressed.
>
> These latter accounts, Mr. Murray concludes, falter under the weight of unanswered questions. Among those questions: If the idea of Jesus' divinity was so late an invention, as all critical biblical scholarship must assume, how is it that not a single New Testament book so much as alludes to the most cataclysmic event of ancient Judaism, the destruction of the Second Temple in A.D. 70? Jesus foretells its destruction in the Gospels, and this has been interpreted as a later insertion to make him sound prophetic, but are we to believe that any mention of the temple's actual destruction never found its way into any New Testament book?
>
> And why does the Acts of the Apostles end with the reader wondering what became of its two most important characters, when we know they were martyred? "If people kept augmenting and altering the books of the New Testament as the revisionists insist," Mr. Murray wonders, "why wouldn't someone have added a few lines at the ending of the Acts mentioning the deaths of Paul and Peter?" The most plausible answer, of course, is that Luke's account was finished before their deaths and no one in subsequent decades felt

> sufficiently bold to tamper with it. And most puzzling of all: Why did Jesus' disciples go to their deaths insisting he had been raised from the dead when they had neither hoped for nor expected such a thing in the first place, if they knew it never happened?

If you're a student of apologetics, then you'll have heard of these concerns before, maybe in the writings of William Lane Craig for one and two, and N.T. Wright for number three. That's why Christian apologists spend all this time reading this stuff, so that we can suggest these books to skeptics like Charles Murray! And these books do work on skeptics. It's a shame that so many Christians never learn about how to use these books in church.

Anyway, if you like stories about very, very famous non-Christians taking a look at the good evidence for God's existence, and Christianity in particular, then mark this one down on your list. It's good to not care too much about flashy celebrities, and people who draw crowds based on their entertainment ability. Life isn't about that. Life is about taking the time to puzzle about the evidence in nature and history that you can follow to get into a two-way relationship with the Boss. Many people seem to get so busy with other things. Some of these things are bad, and some of these things are good. But the purpose of life is surely to puzzle about the big questions, and to be reconciled with God.

Maybe you've been a Christian all your life, and you don't even know why. Maybe you'd like to find out how to show non-Christians your work? In that case, it's helpful to consider the stories of people like Gunter Bechly, Larry Sanger, Charles Murray, etc. and do a little study to see how good the evidence that they found really is. It's fun to talk to people about the clues that the Boss has left.

Shareholders urge woke companies to stop relying on anti-Christian group

October 22, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Tyler O'Neil over at the Daily Signal does a good job of keeping up with the news about the Southern Poverty Law Center. The SPLC web site has been used by domestic terrorists to target Christians and conservatives. Recently, the FBI decided to cut ties with the SPLC. But many big corporations are still using their resources. Which corporations? Tyler has done the research.

Here's his article from Daily Signal, and then after that, I have some other information that might help you to keep your dollars away from the secular left.

Tyler writes:

> Conservative shareholders at eight major corporations have filed resolutions urging those companies to stop using politicized tools like the Southern Poverty Law Center's "hate map," which added Turning Point USA a few months before the assassination of Charlie Kirk.
>
> […]"As someone who lives in Alabama, right in the SPLC's backyard, I've seen its nefariousness up close," Allen Mendenhall, senior advisor for Heritage's Capital Markets Initiative, told The Daily Signal. "The assassination of Charlie Kirk has made tragically clear what conservatives have warned for years: When groups like the SPLC equate mainstream conservative beliefs with hatred, they help create a culture of dehumanization with deadly consequences."

You might remember that SPLC's resources were used by a convicted domestic terrorist who attacked the Family Research Council headquarters, in an attempted mass shooting. It turns out that big American corporations are using these same resources.

Anyway, here are the companies:

> The Heritage Foundation filed resolutions with Alphabet (Google's parent company), Amazon, Mastercard, Meta (Facebook's parent company), PayPal, Salesforce, and Starbucks. Bahnsen filed a resolution with Texas Instruments.

I've written about the left-wing extremism of many of these companies before. I'm trying to avoid using their products and services. I closed my account with PayPal. One of my co-workers gave me a Starbucks gift card for Christmas, and I just threw it in the garbage. I'm trying to buy more and more from Publix, which doesn't get involved in secular leftism as much as Amazon. Even Wal-mart is better than Amazon. I buy my technical stuff from NewEgg or the local Best Buy instead of Amazon. I do my best to stay clear of these 8 corporations as much as I can. Not only are they opposed to my religion and values, but their bias also creeps into their products, making them unreliable. Have you tried search using the Google search engine lately? It just returns a bunch of data from

left wing hate groups and far-left corporate news media. I just ask Grok when I need something. Google is useless as a search engine.

The Daily Signal article has details on how each of the 8 companies is linked to the SPLC. I will leave those for you to read.

Let's look at who the SPLC puts on their hate map:

> The Southern Poverty Law Center… publishes a "hate map" that plots mainstream conservative and Christian groups… A terrorist used the "hate map" to target the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C., for an attempted mass shooting in 2012…
>
> The SPLC added Turning Point USA to the "hate map" this summer, a few months before the assassination of Kirk, Turning Point's founder. The SPLC condemned the assassination, but has yet to remove Turning Point from its map.
>
> In recent years, the SPLC has added parental rights groups like Moms for Liberty to the "hate map," along with groups of doctors who oppose "gender-affirming care," conservative Christian nonprofits including Focus on the Family, and even the nonprofit PragerU, best known for producing 5-minute educational videos.

Far-left extremism, if you ask me.

Now for something very new. As I mentioned in a previous post, I worked in several tech companies that pushed me to make mandatory donations to the far left United Way. It was so bad that the CEO of one company met with me, and at a different company, someone from the head office met with me. That's how alarmed they were that I wanted no part of the United Way giving. I don't give money to United Way, and neither should you.

Well, there's another company called Benevity, which uses the SPLC "hate map" to discriminate against Christians and conservative charities.

This article from Do No Harm explains:

> Benevity is a software company that provides a platform to facilitate companies' charitable giving efforts to nonprofit organizations.
>
> However, Benevity uses a so-called "Hate List" and "Hate Map" developed by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) to vet the nonprofits deemed eligible for corporate charitable giving and employee matching programs. The SPLC fully supports radical identity politics, branding efforts to fight back against discriminatory DEI practices and gender ideology as somehow hateful.
>
> And at some point, the SPLC designated Do No Harm as a "hate group."
>
> Do No Harm, along with 11 other similarly-branded organizations, is signing onto a letter urging Benevity to immediately cease relying on this discredited and harmful list.
>
> "By relying on these partisan designations, Benevity legitimizes a severely biased blacklist that inspires violence, urges discrimination against mainstream

> organizations, and undermines the spirit of charitable giving," the letter reads.
>
> The letter then cites examples of groups that have been falsely deemed hateful by the SPLC and subsequently subjected to violence.

I never had to deal with Benevity. But one thing for sure – if you work in one of these companies that wants you to give your money to any charity, say no. Take the money and give it to charities you trust. Me, I like Ratio Christi. Find a chapter, and partner with them. But don't co-operate with these secular left companies, and don't give them any of your money.

Radical feminist Kate Mulvey is alone and childless at age 63

October 24, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In 2018, I wrote about a 54-year-old feminist who spent her entire life savings on a dating agency to find a rich husband. Kate spent her entire life writing columns to tell young women to live feminist lifestyles: get easy degrees, work easy jobs, spend money on fun and travel, get cosmetic surgeries, disrespect male leadership, and have lots of casual sex. How is she doing at age 63? Let's find out.

Let's first review my post from 2018, in part, and see what this woman was all about.

> A couple of years ago, I too joined an expensive matchmaking agency. I had just come out of a seven year relationship, and was on the wrong side of 50.
>
> I soon tired of online dating and receiving messages from over weight baldies who peppered their emails with childish emojis. I hankered to find Mr Right-for-me, a man who was suitably educated and a successful professional.
>
> And so this is how I found myself, throwing money (my entire savings to be precise) to an upmarket matchmaking agency in central London. The agency claimed to filter out the undesirables, the mediocre and give clients the personal touch, so I handed over the hefty sum of £6,000.

So, just a few things about this lady Kate Mulvey. She has made some decisions that I find very unwise.

I documented my findings in my previous post:

- she has no useful degrees – she paid for useless degrees in Italian and French, instead of studying something useful, like computer science or nursing or petroleum engineering. Her "writing" is all about fashion, dating and "lifestyles"
- her opinion on children: "uppity children take your time, emotions and energy" – she sees children as a detriment to her highest priority (her career). She says "I, however, have lived a life of unfettered freedom to take on projects, write books and travel"
- she had loads of entertaining men "beating a path to [her] door" when she was younger
- she spend thousands of pounds on plastic surgery
- she blames her lack of marriage success on her being "brainier" than men
- she turned down men who wanted to marry her, as late as age 33
- her book is called "Accidental Singleton" because her approach to life – anti-marriage hedonism – has accidentally left her single and penniless at age 54

So, this woman, who scorns the leadership of men, made very bad decisions. Her columns are filled with constant bragging about how much smarter she is than men – men who

have made far better decisions and achieved much greater prosperity than she has.

Here is the latest article, in which she explains what feminism told her to do with her life, and what that got her.

She writes:

> I'm convinced that the reason I'm still booking a table for one at the age of 63 instead of having settled with a significant other is because, like so many women of my generation, feminism has ruined my love life. Instead of empowering us, those ideals of the second-wave feminists made us believe marriage and domesticity were to be avoided like the plague and that men were competition rather than partners.
>
> […]I had always imagined I would end up married with two wonderful children and living in a house in the countryside. I have paid a hefty price for my so-called liberation.

Act like men – demonize housework and family:

> I was 17, and a pupil at Godolphin and Latymer – one of Britain's most academic institutions – when I was introduced to the Women's Liberation movement. It offered such hope and excitement, and we spent our lunch breaks soaking up the feminist mantras of Germaine Greer and Betty Friedan: "Act like men," they cried as they burnt their bras and demonised housework and the family.

Recreational sex with hot pro-abortion bad boys who don't judge:

> Another thing I regret deeply is my tally of one-night stands when I was younger.
>
> [..]My generation of women were encouraged to "have sex like a man" – in other words have casual sex…

The number of partners that a person (man or woman) has had before marriage is related to their likelihood of initiating divorce. So, someone like Kate Mulvey would be a high risk of divorce. Also, smart men don't sign up for marriage to women who tell them that "my money is my money, and your money is our money".

So, she spent her life telling young women to follow feminism, like she did. But are Christian leaders telling young women anything different? Many socially conservative Christian leaders believe in "servant leadership", which means that men serve, and women lead. Instead of confronting lies and evil, men have to take out the trash, and dispense cash on demand for his wife's handbags and travel.

Many social conservative Christians define masculinity as "men using their strength to benefit women". In contrast, my wise advisor Dina taught me that masculinity is demonstrated when a man opposes lies and evil, and doesn't let a woman distract him from those goals with her sex appeal. Dina would say that Christian men should only protect and provide for Christian women who are helpful to men, and led men take the lead to product results for the Boss. So, men should judge women. They should measure

them, and choose good ones. And the job of Christian leaders is to produce women that good men want.

As I've blogged about before, there are many reasons why good men will be cautious about marrying feminists. Men are realizing that women today are not the same as their mothers and grandmothers. They don't offer the same value to a marriage-minded man. They don't respect men as much, and they don't want to help a man who leads as much. Not only is there the problem of young women being extremely leftist, but there is also the problems of feminized laws, policies and courts being hostile to men. We need Christian leaders who fight against young women's feminism while they are still young enough to have 4+ children. And we need leaders who fight against laws, policies and courts that are hostile to men.

The three simplest examples of cosmic fine-tuning

October 27, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On this blog, I have said repeatedly that I keep three examples of the fine-tuning in my back pocket, ready to go, because they are the ones that make the most sense to me, based on my memory of taking physics and chemistry courses. I thought it might make a good post to just write about them, and you can see if you want to memorize them, too. It's a good argument, and non-theists respect it.

So, first, let me just explain what the argument is. Basically, if you remember in your high school physics textbook, there were lots of numbers for well-known constants and quantities, such as the speed of light and the gravitational constant. What they never told you was that if you change most of those quantities and constants, then the universe would not be able to support life. Not just life as we know it, but any conceivable kind of complex life.

It's not as though you can change these constants, and you will just have Spock-ears, or green skin, or nose ridges. No. If you change these constants and quantities, terrible horrible things will happen to your universe. Maybe it recollapses into a hot fire ball. Maybe you have no galaxies. Maybe you have no stars. Maybe you have no elements heavier than hydrogen. Or maybe you have no hydrogen. All bad things! All the bad things that wreck the ability of your universe to support life.

So, without further ado, let me tell you THREE of the best evidences for fine-tuning that even a child can understand. Well, maybe not a child, but you can understand them, OK?

Here they are:

Amount of Matter in the Universe:

The universe's total stuff—stars, galaxies, gas clouds, dark matter—sets its expansion path. Too much stuff, and gravity would've crushed the universe into a hot dense fireball after the Big Bang. Too little, and matter in the universe would scatter, never forming galaxies or stars. The universe has the perfect weight to create galaxies and stars. This balance lets stars and planets form stable homes for life.

Strong Nuclear Force:

This force binds protons and neutrons in atomic nuclei, forming elements like hydrogen, helium, and carbon, vital for human bodies. If 2% stronger, protons would stick too tightly, depleting hydrogen, so stars couldn't burn properly, and water wouldn't form. If 5% weaker, only hydrogen would exist, like a chemistry class with one element on the chalkboard. The precise setting that we have ensures the a diverse variety of different elements, allowing stars to shine and life's chemistry to work.

Cosmic Expansion Rate:

The universe expands at a speed set by the cosmological constant's dark energy, like a balloon being carefully inflated. If slightly faster, matter would scatter too thinly, preventing stars or galaxies. If slower, gravity would clump everything into black holes.

The universe grows at the ideal speed to allow galaxies, stars, and planets to form a cosmic stage where life can thrive.

By the way, the first and the third are distinct constants that work together, like ingredients in a recipe.

Conclusion

So, there are the three I have memorized. If you have time for discuss one, use the strong force. And by the way, if you are dealing with an atheist, you can give him the book "Just Six Numbers" by the famous atheist astronomer Martin Rees. Rees talks about several instances of fine-tuning, including the strong force. To escape the evidence for a Designer, he has to invent a multiverse (for which there is NO PHYSICAL EVIDENCE). There's actually evidence against the multiverse, and we talked about it in our podcast episode on the cosmic fine-tuning (transcript here).

If you want a good introductory book about this topic, I like Dr. Mike Strauss' "The Creator Revealed". And he's a real experimental particle physicist, too. I've met him in person! Anyway, I hope you have fun with this list. According to the Bible, the Boss used evidence when appealing to skeptics, and so you must use evidence, too, if you want to follow the Leader.

Canada’s national ban on bolt-action hunting rifles and shotguns has started

October 29, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A while back on this blog, I blogged about a case where a Canadian homeowner was awakened in the middle of the night by an armed intruder. The homeowner defended himself from the armed intruder. The intruder was air-lifted to a hospital, and the Canadian police arrested and charged the homeowner with aggravated assault and assault with a weapon.

Not content to have banned self-defense, but now they want to *ban possession of bolt-action rifles and shotguns.*

Here’s the story from Daily Signal:

> Gun control in America’s northern neighbor has moved into confiscation phase, as Nova Scotia, Canada’s east coast province, kicked off a pilot program of “voluntary” gun buybacks in September, while the western provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan say they will not comply.
>
> The national ban was originally decreed by then-Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government in 2020, covering 1,500 models of rifles, but has since been expanded to include more than 2,500 models. And while the ban is purported to cover “semi-automatic firearms with sustained rapid-fire capability,” the list of prohibited firearms also includes more traditional bolt-action rifles and shotguns commonly used in hunting.
>
> […]The program will go nationwide later this fall.
>
> […]Canadians gun owners have complied with strict regulations but accepted the government’s pledges that it would respect the rights of hunters and sports shooters, he said. That compact has now been broken.

Naturally, the criminals aren’t going to turn in their guns. It’s just the law-abiding people who have to.

The article notes that failure to hand over your guns to the federal government is a *criminal offense*, punishable by up to *10 years in prison*. This applies to people who live in rural areas who might have to deal with dangerous wildlife, as well. So it’s not just threats from violent rapists and murderers, it’s threats from animals that could literally kill you. The government just tells people “call the police” and “comply with the criminal’s orders”. I am not joking.

Colion Noir has actual video of the Canadian police explaining:

The article also notes that this ban on bolt-action rifles and shotguns was actually enacted by executive order. It was not passed through the House and Senate and signed into law. It’s just the command of the dictator who runs the poorly-named Liberal Party of

Canada.

Look at what the criminal justice system is like in Canada:

> A British Columbia court sentenced a 24-year-old refugee to probation and a suspended sentence on Wednesday over a violent stabbing incident in Vancouver last November.
>
> Mohamed Abdalla Mohamed Elbahloul pleaded guilty to assault in connection with the stabbing and slashing of one man, and a minor charge related to the assault of another.
>
> […]Elbahloul was provided with a knife by one of his companions and used it to stab the victim's stomach and then proceeded to also cut his legs. The victim required medical attention as a result of the fight.
>
> Elbahloul also admitted to kicking another victim who was on the ground during the altercation.
>
> […]Judge Kathryn Denhoff acknowledged the seriousness of the crimes but noted that neither victim provided an impact statement.
>
> She also considered what she called the challenging circumstances of Elbahloul's background.
>
> Displaced by war in his home country of Libya at a young age, Elbahloul experienced significant violence and loss, Denhoff argued in her decision.

This story reminds me of my recent blog post that talked about the consequences of having a feminized legal system. Compassion for criminals, and too bad for their victims.

This happens all the time, actually:

> Recently, a Pakistani national narrowly avoided deportation due to a last-minute intervention by the Liberal government, despite participating in infrastructure blockades alongside climate extremist groups.

Do you think that it's safe to travel to a country like this? I would avoid traveling to Canada at all costs. It's not a safe country. And the police and criminal courts have zero liability for the results of their pro-criminal, anti-self-defense policies. You pay them, you are raped and murdered, and they don't face any consequences for it. And the majority of their voters are OK with that.

What if they gave a Watergate but no one in the corporate news media came?

October 31, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A little while ago, I blogged about how the Biden administration had spied on eight Republican senators. And I thought, “wow, this is 8 times worse than Watergate, will anyone go to jail for this?” Well, now we have 100 times worse than Watergate. This is a HUGE news story. Super journalist Catherine Herridge covered it. But no one in the corporate news media has covered it.

So, here’s the article in The Federalist, written by Beth Brelje, my new favorite author there.

Beth writes:

> The Joe Biden-era FBI’s Arctic Frost operation — which targeted nearly every facet of the Republican Party and the conservative movement — was described Wednesday as “100 times worse than Watergate,” but the propaganda press *still* chose to ignore it. Larger new outlets turned a blind eye to the Senate Judiciary Committee’s press conference detailing how the FBI tried to tank President Donald Trump’s reelection campaign by using its authority to invasively gather data on some 430 Republican individuals and entities.

She notes that this bombshell story was not featured in the The New York Times, or Jeff Bezos’ Washington Post, or the CNN, ABC News, CBS News, and NBC News websites.

What do you think will happen to the people involved? If it were up to me, I would charge

them with treason, and send them to Guantanomo Bay.

But Daily Signal has a more realistic prediction:

> As revelations about former special counsel Jack Smith's investigation into the Jan. 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol protest come to light, an investigation of the investigator could go in several different directions.
>
> Those directions include criminal charges against certain Justice Department personnel, civil rights lawsuits against federal agencies, a judicial impeachment, and presidential pardons, legal experts say.
>
> […]On Wednesday, Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, called for the impeachment of Chief Judge James Boasberg of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.
>
> Boasberg signed off on a gag order in 2023 to prevent businesses that were subpoenaed from informing their clients. That included preventing AT&T from notifying Cruz that his cellphone records were being collected by investigators.
>
> […]There is the potential for criminally prosecuting Justice Department personnel who were part of Smith's investigative team, said Mike Howell, director of the Oversight Project, a watchdog group.
>
> The charge of conspiracy against rights would apply anytime two or more individuals plotted to threaten, injure, or intimidate another American to prevent him from exercising his constitutional rights—in this case, the right to free speech and freedom of assembly, as well as the right against unreasonable searches and seizures.

I think this would be a wonderful story to have floating around in the news right up until the 2026 mid-term elections. Help voters to understand which political party really does use government as a weapon against their political opponents… just like Hitler did.

Do you ever wonder why people on the left are so uninformed? It's not because they're stupid. It's because they choose to consume news sources that make them feel superior to Republicans. They don't know about these stories, because the brain is not in charge of how they are informed. The heart is in charge. And the heart says "you aren't allowed to read anything that makes me feel bad". And that's why they don't know about these stories.

So, if you want to make a difference before the next election, why not share that article from The Federalist on your social media pages? Might as well help people to understand the need to vote Republican. In every election. Fascism should not be allowed to happen again, like it did under the Obama and Biden regimes.

Frank Turek’s event at Ohio State University today at 7:30 PM

November 3, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Ratio Christi is my favorite campus ministry. And the chapter that does the best job of tackling the toughest and most impactful topics is the Ohio State University chapter, which is run by my good friend Eric Chabot. Eric just finished teaching a series on intelligent design to the students. He also brings the best evidential apologists to speak on campus. This time it’s Frank Turek.

Here are the details:

> Join Frank LIVE tonight (MON. 11/3) at THE Ohio State University (Columbus, OH) as he presents, ‘If God, Why Evil? A Q&A in Honor of My Friend Charlie Kirk.’ The event kicks off at 7:30 PM ET in the Ohio Union Archie Griffin Ballroom
>
> Please come, bring a friend, and be part of the conversation. Thanks to our generous donors, this event is FREE and open to the public. If you can’t attend in person, you can join us LIVE on YouTube HERE or your favorite social media channel.

The live stream will be here at 7:30 PM Eastern TONIGHT:

I hope you can tune in. I certainly will. And please pray now for God to make use of this event to lead people to him, and maybe even some people who will go on to have an influence on the university campus, just like Eric and Frank are doing now.

The problem of evil is one of the most frequently occurring questions that non-Christians ask. Sadly, most Christians are not well equipped to answer this question. But Frank Turek has a long history of working on this issue, so you will hear good answers from him. Even more important, you can see the real questions that college students are asking.

There is not much time given to the task of evangelism in most churches. Pastors seem to want people to avoid preparation, and just bypass the real questions that non-Christians ask. So, they don’t equip you to answer questions like “Does God Exist?” or “How Could a Good God Allow Evil?” You’re just supposed to say that Jesus forgives your sins, and makes your life better (somehow). This is not good preparation for answering the questions of college students or the non-Christian co-workers you find in the workplace.

My current church has the same attitude about dismissing apologetics training. Two weeks ago, one of the co-pastors at my church told the flock “the best evangelists are often new Christians, because they just explain what Jesus did for them in their own lives”. This past Sunday, the other co-pastor also praised the ability of people to evangelize without putting in any work. So, we are down to the level of the Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses now, just trying to appeal to people with personal testimony, and hoping that their bosoms will catch fire with feelings.

When you watch an event like Frank Turek on a university campus, you get the real

experience of evangelism. This is a case where someone has put in the time to study these issues deeply, and write about them, even in published works. Frank has also done debates with people like Michael Shermer, editor of Skeptic magazine. He has spoken and written about the most controversial issues, such as LGBT and pro-life. Most people in church tend to shy away from controversial issues or they just quote the Bible to people who don't believe the Bible. Frank does a better job.

Eric told me that they have booked a room to hold 1000 students, and the event has been well advertised. You should share the link to the live stream on your social media, as well. Make sure you take the opportunity to see what evangelism to non-Christians really looks like outside the church doors. It's not just sharing your testimony, or quoting the right Bible verse to people who don't even believe the Bible. It's about being ready with to answer anyone who asks you, and in the same way that Jesus answered his skeptics: with evidence. You might not be able to perform the miracles, but you can certainly learn how to make the case from God's creation and designing work in nature, and make the historical case for the reliability of the New Testament and the resurrection of Jesus. And that does make you a better evangelist.

If you feel led to invest in what Eric is doing at Ohio State University, you can find his donate link here.

Must men protect leftist women who vote for open borders and defunding the police?

November 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In this post, I go over a recent example of a violent crime where a Good Samaritan was punished for protecting the intended victims of the criminal. Then I want to take a look at the voting patterns of young women. Then I want to evaluate the demands made by conservative Christians and social conservatives that good men "protect women" under the current incentives and laws.

So, first, an example of how good men are treated when they do try to protect people from criminals.

Here is a re-cap of an old but famous case from 2023, reported in The Federalist:

> U.S. Marine Corps veteran Daniel Penny was reportedly indicted by a Manhattan grand jury on Wednesday for defending New York City subway passengers from an erratic and threatening homeless man.
>
> The incident in question occurred on May 21, when Jordan Neely — who had been arrested 44 times for "criminal conduct" and, at the time, "had an outstanding warrant for felony assault" — began threatening and getting violent with NYC subway passengers. During the episode, Neely allegedly kept repeating the phrases, "I'm going to kill you," "I'm prepared to go to jail for life," and "I'm willing to die."
>
> In response, Penny and two of his fellow passengers attempted to restrain Neely, which involved the former placing the latter in a headlock. Neely ultimately died during the encounter, with NYC's medical examiner ruling the death a homicide.
>
> According to sources who spoke with Fox News, Penny is being indicted "on one count each of criminally negligent homicide and second-degree manslaughter." If convicted of the latter charge, Penny could face five to 15 years in prison.

Now, let's see how young women voters feel about violent crime. Are they opposed to it? Are they opposed to opening the borders to criminals? Are they opposed to defunding the police?

The UK Mirror explains:

> More than 100 women's rights groups have warned "racist" attempts to link sexual violence with immigration are putting victims at increased risk.
>
> Rape Crisis England and Wales, the End Violence Against Women Coalition and Refuge are among the organisations warning anti-migrant groups and politicans are "hijacking" survivors' trauma. They have signed a letter to Keir Starmer and Home Secretary Yvette Cooper warning that sexual abuse must not be used for political gain – and those who spread misinformation must be held to account.

There's an epidemic of sexual abuse in the UK right now, and immigrants are committing these offenses at rates far in excess of native citizens—foreign nationals (10.9% of pop) grabbed 28–34% of female sexual assault convictions and 25% of adult female rapes in 2024 alone. (Fact-checked AGAIN here by Sky News) But are women concerned about it? Do they want to stop it? Or are they more concerned about being seen by others as tolerant and compassionate?

What about in America? New York City had a Muslim communist who wants to replace the much of the police force with social workers on the ballot. So, did young women vote against Islam and against defunding the police?

CNN has the exit polls:

Age by gender

4,744 total respondents

	Women 18-29 6%	Women 30-44 14%
Mamdani	84%	65%
Sliwa	3%	5%
Adams	0%	0%
Cuomo	12%	30%

84% of women from the ages of 18-29 supported the Muslim communist.

And they support all his policies:

- Oppose Mass Deportations and ICE Raids: Mamdani vows to block federal immigration enforcement in New York, labeling ICE operations as "state terror" and pledging to shield undocumented immigrants from deportation, undermining national border security and encouraging illegal entry.
- Declare New York a Sanctuary Jurisdiction: He demands the city and state prohibit local law enforcement from cooperating with ICE, refusing to honor detainers for criminal aliens and turning New York into a magnet for unchecked migration that strains housing, schools, and public resources.
- Push Amnesty and Citizenship for Undocumented: Mamdani calls for a blanket pathway to citizenship for all 11 million+ undocumented immigrants, rewarding lawbreaking while sidelining legal immigrants and imposing massive costs on

taxpayers for welfare, healthcare, and education.

- End Border Wall and Detention Funding: He explicitly opposes funding for border walls, detention centers, or any expansion of ICE, framing enforcement as “cruel” and pushing to defund agencies tasked with securing the southern border against drugs, trafficking, and illegal crossings.
- Support Open Refugee Resettlement: Mamdani advocates flooding New York with unchecked refugee intakes from high-risk regions, rejecting vetting reforms and ignoring the strain on local services already overwhelmed by migrant surges.

So, the question is this: should good men be expected to protect young women, when they 1) overwhelmingly vote to increase the risks of violent crime, and 2) overwhelmingly vote against self-defense (charge Daniel Penny and put him on trial for a year), and voting against gun ownership by law-abiding citizens?

Final point: what do pro-marriage Christians and pro-marriage conservatives have to say about all of this? Well, pro-marriage Christians and pro-marriage conservatives look at this situation and they have two responses.

First, they do not dare say anything to these young women about their choices, or the long-term consequences of those choices. Whatever women are choosing, they have to be allowed to “follow their hearts”. Any bad consequences that follow should be pushed onto the good men who opposed their choices. The good men should be expected to “fix” the problems caused by these young women. And if the young women like, they can then arrest those good men, and put them on trial, maybe even send them to prison for a few years… or for many years. Remember, these are the same people who don’t lift a finger to ban single mother welfare, mixed schools, Title IX violation of due process, false accusations in family courts to obtain custody illegitimately, etc. so they have no interest

in engineering the production of good men to protect women. They create the conditions that cause men to be timid, then they complain that the timid men they created are timid.

Second, they demand that good men protect and provide for women who are overwhelmingly leftist. Good men have no agency of their own! They only exist to provide utility to young women, including the 84% of young women who vote for Sharia Law and communism. Good men can have no plans of their own, and they are not allowed to have any standards for women that might exclude women who voted for Mamdani. NO! Good men are just walking cash dispensers who must also risk their lives to fight the criminals that their Mamdani-supporting wives let in through the doors and windows of the home. And they must do it without using violence, and certainly not with firearms! Only the criminals can have guns.

Is it any wonder that good men are opting out of the demands of pro-marriage Christians and pro-marriage conservatives? They are like the people that C. S. Lewis describes in his essay "Men Without Chests" from his book "The Abolition of Man". They insist on the positive outcomes, while doing everything possible to engineer negative outcomes. They raise the price of good behavior, then insult good men who decline to pay the costs as being "weak". That's the Christian and conservative leadership we have. The irony is that it is the pious Christian leaders and the chivalrous social conservatives who are weak. They are the ones who are 1) refusing to confront young women about their choices and 2) refusing to listen to men who are telling them how to engineer conditions where it is rational for good men to act.

Michael Licona debates Bart Ehrman on November 20th, 2025 in Boston, MA

November 10, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

At the last Sound Faith conference in 2024, I heard about a magnificent presentation by Michael Licona, that was based on his academic publications but presented with a slideshow to the layperson. In that presentation, he made a case that there was more flexibility for authors of biographies in ancient times than modern people understand.

My reaction to his presentation was that Christians who like normal inerrancy (and I do like my inerrancy that way) can keep it. But if you are fighting a skeptic like Bart Ehrman, then according to Licona, you can find enough flexibility in the style of ancient biographers to avoid contradictions in the Bible by understanding how ancient biographers worked.

So, I have been hoping that this presentation would become available, and now and here it is:

Share that with all your non-Christian friends.

This presentation draws on Mike's academic work, for example, his book "Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?: What We Can Learn from Ancient Biography" which was published in 2016 by Oxford University Press.

This book is not designed for evangelizing people who already accept the traditional view of inerrancy in the Bible. This is a book designed to allow skeptics to stop getting hung up on alleged contradictions. None of you reading this post needs to be convinced about inerrancy. But Bart Ehrman does, and so we need someone extra clever to make a special academic university press case designed for him.

Anyway, here is the news about the debate, which is their eighth debate! It happens on the first day of the Sound Faith 2025 conference, November 20-22, in Boston, Massachusetts:

> This November, join Sound Faith 2025 in Boston for a three-day conference to learn from and engage with the most influential voices defending the Christian faith today. Held at the beautiful Tremont Temple Baptist Church, this event will feature interactive sessions on topics such as God's existence, the resurrection of Jesus, faith and science, and more. One of the feature events will be a hard-hitting debate between Christian historian Michael Licona and agnostic textual critic Bart Ehrman – on a topic neither has ever publicly debated before! We'll also have an in-depth discussion on the resurrection between Licona and Dale Allison, whom William Lane Craig described as "a very prominent New Testament scholar of considerable repute." Our tremendous speaker lineup includes philosophers, historians, professional apologists, social media influencers, and more! The magic of these conferences happens when attendees are able to ask

> questions and have discussions with speakers and other attendees, so throughout the conference there will be tons of interactive opportunities, both inside and outside of the presentations. Our goal is this: to equip you with a SOUND FAITH ready to face the toughest challenges facing Christianity today!

The debate is on day 1 of the conference and then on day 2, Mike has to go up against another high-power historian, Dale Allison. Rose and I both have Dale Allison's book on the resurrection, because although he is skeptical, everyone thinks his work on this topic is top shelf quality.

Now, I want to say one more thing about Mike's arguments and who they are for. I had a friend Murdina ("Dina") who lived in Inverness, Scotland and she was my best friend for a long time until she passed away. Just the wisest person you could ever meet. She had multiple degrees in medicine and was extremely respected in health care management. She was also Young Earth, King James Bible only, and super, hyper Calvinist. She used to call the middle knowledge view that I hold to "Middle Earth Hobbitry". And she had lots of mocking nicknames for everything else that I liked, for example, calling my the Etrian Odyssey series of games that I love so much "Estrogen Oddity". (Best. Music. Ever. And here is my favorite remix!)

Anyway, Dina had an atheist younger brother, who had abandoned the faith of the family and become an atheist. Because I had been buying her all the best books about evidential apologetics (Stephen C. Meyer) and free market economics (Thomas Sowell), she had really learned a lot about how to make a case with evidence. One day, her brother came up from Glasgow for a fishing trip. And Dina called me on Skype and dropped her phone into her pocket, so that I could hear them talking. Then she let her brother have it with both apologetics fists for about 2 hours. She used the arguments of old-Earth intelligent design and the minimal facts case for the resurrection of Jesus to smash every single objection he made from his brittle atheistic fundamentalist view of Christianity. By the end, he was so flustered that he started to say the most incoherent things, and I laughed and laughed at how badly she had beaten him.

For weeks after, this atheist brother would text her constantly, trying over and over to wiggle out from the thrashing that she had given him. But there was no escape. Although he had mocked her constantly prior to this engagement, in private and in public, he never ever mocked her again.

I asked her why she used the mainstream science arguments and the minimal facts argument, instead of just quoting the Bible to him, or trying to argue young Earth or KJV only. And she said "first step is to get him into the church. After that, I will fix his wrong views about the young Earth, my beloved KJV, and Reformed theology".

I tell you all this so that you will understand how I see Mike Licona's work. It is a tool for the most hardened skeptics. The first step, as Phillip E. Johnson used to say, is to get the thin edge of the wedge into the log. After that comes the hammering.

I don't think anyone has ever debated the reliability of the gospels with an academic skeptic like Bart Ehrman eight times. To me, that says that Mike is a special person who is

able to make friends with his opponents, so that they keep coming back. He isn’t rude, insulting and abrasive. So you have a rare package of extraordinary ability as a historian, paired with extraordinary character. And that’s what allows him to make a difference.

Wise women holding young feminist women accountable at The Federalist

November 14, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite news web site to read every day after I have a look at Twitter is The Federalist. Imagine my surprise when I found not one, not two, but three columns about how feminism harms young women. And all of them written by women! Normally, when I read these columns, the authors make it sound as though it is men who are to blame for bad outcomes. But none of these did that.

Here's the first one by Brooke Brandtjen, entitled "NYC Women Voted For Mamdani Because They Can't Bag a Man". That was the original title, she changed it to something almost as good.

Here is my favorite part – explaining how Democrats trick women into voting for big government:

> Left-wing politics are predatory. Democrats make emotional arguments — about "empathy," "equity," contrived "rights," and "safety" — which largely appeal to a notoriously emotional demographic. In fact, Democrat leaders want the government to fill a husband-like role, making their constituents dependents of the state — and they've been working toward it for years. Remember former President Barack Obama's "Life of Julia" campaign in 2012, for instance. Playing on female anxieties about college, health insurance, motherhood, and career, Democrats made women feel vulnerable and presented the government as a sort of benevolent husband for every point in "Julia's" life. Compared to Mamdani's radical communist agenda, Obama's vision feels tame, but it offered Democrats a playbook for targeting young women.
>
> Conservative logic often takes a backseat to left-wing talking points. Abortion advocates cry "my body, my choice" to make young women feel empowered, while simultaneously stripping them of agency and true femininity. Social justice warriors tell them "love is love," "diversity is strength," and "silence is violence." Corporate media post photos of crying illegal aliens facing deportation to show how cruel American border enforcement is. Democrats rely on emotional manipulation to get their base out to vote.
>
> Many of these young women are also crippled by student loan debt. Gen Z has the fastest annual student loan compound interest rate, a whopping 6.72 percent. Almost half of Gen Z has student loan debt. The good careers they were promised from their overpriced colleges aren't as readily available as they had hoped, either. With a staggering number of entry-level positions being outsourced to foreigners or AI, there is less chance they will earn a salary that chips away at their compounding interest.
>
> After being lied to about living in a fascist, intolerant, sexist society and crushing

> themselves under a mountain of debt, it's no surprise that young women are scrambling to alleviate the pain. The number of young women prescribed SSRIs has skyrocketed in recent years, and many of them are in therapy. Young women are conditioned to be sad, angry, and financially unstable.

Honestly, you have to read the whole thing, it is a masterpiece. The author attends a Bible-based church in Wisconsin, so if you are a young man out there, you might see if she is single, and if she is, ask her out on a date. Because I don't think she will be single for long.

Here is the second article, written by Jennifer Galardi, entitled "Most Women Are On Crazy Pills, And It's Bad For Everyone".

The title is already great, but here is an excerpt:

> The ease of self-diagnosis, combined with increased accessibility to SSRIs, has led a large number of young women to pursue medical intervention for their problems. Approximately one in four adult women in the United States reported taking at least one psychiatric medication (antidepressants, anxiolytics/sedatives, antipsychotics, mood stabilizers, or ADHD drugs) in the past year, according to recent CDC National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) data.
>
> Approximately 17 percent of college students (ages 18–25) use psychiatric meds, mirroring wider population trends — and the percentage of female college students taking these meds is likely much higher. Bottom line — adjusting for trends over the past few years — roughly 30-35 million American women are currently on at least one psychiatric medication, with the true number likely closer to 35 million because overall mental-health treatment (including medication) has risen every year since the pandemic (23.9 percent of all adults in 2023).

When I was 18-25, I remember spending my money on an occasional computer game. Maybe I would buy Harpoon, and go hunting for Soviet submarines with sonobuoys, SOSUS and sonars in the GIUK Gap. I learned a lot about modern warfare from playing that game. Or maybe I would buy a boxed wargame, and play that with my friends. Boy hobbies are certainly a lot more wholesome than the girl hobby of doing drugs. And less expensive!

Anyway, the third one is a bit sad. It's by Jordan Boyd, and it's entitled "Kelsea Ballerini's 'I Sit In Parks' Exposes The Heartbreak Of Buying Girl Boss Lies".

The whole thing is wonderful, showing how young women are being taught by celebrities to delay marriage for careers. In this case, the celebrity is Kelsea Ballerini (I've never heard of her).

It starts like this:

> Kelsea Ballerini is suffering from a broken heart. The 32-year-old's troubles do not necessarily stem from an off-again, on-again relationship with beau Chase

> Stokes, though that probably plays a role. Rather, Ballerini's obvious emotional ache comes from a deep longing to be a wife and mother.
>
> Ballerini's real-time struggle between the girl boss identity she bought into at just 19 years-old and the reality that it's left her "sitting in parks" coveting the love and memories made by families with kids is documented in her latest release "I Sit In Parks".

And this is the part I loved, it really shows you what is going on:

> Ballerini doesn't explicitly say it in her song, but she appears to have some regret about the end of her nearly five-year marriage in 2022. After all, her relationship with fellow country music star Morgan Evans was the closest she's gotten to the life she now desperately dreams of and desires in her latest song.
>
> At the time of the split, Ballerini claimed the two went their separate ways due to "irreconcilable differences." It wasn't until later that she admitted her devotion to her career and her unwillingness to have children at the time — if at all — played key roles in the divorce.

Women don't get a lot of wisdom from conservative men these days. Conservative men seem to be afraid to tell young women the truth about the likely outcomes of their decisions. Those men are weak men, because they put their desire to be liked by women above their obligation to protect women by telling them the truth. Some of them got married to feminists, and just don't want to get kicked out of the bedroom – or get served with divorce papers.

It's fashionable today to just let women chase their careers into their 30s. People want to blame men for not marrying career women when they are in their 30s. But men don't want to marry a woman who works full-time and who puts the kids in daycare and public schools. Besides, those men probably had their proposals rejected by the career women when those women were in their 20s.

It's better to warn young women about making bad decisions when they are still young enough to change course. That's what these three articles do. So, I'd like you to read them and share them.

UK government is “withholding data that may link Covid jab to excess deaths”

November 17, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There’s a new article the UK Telegraph, with the headline: “Government ‘withholding data that may link Covid jab to excess deaths’”. The subtitle is “UKHSA argued that releasing figures would lead to ‘distress or anger’ of bereaved relatives if connection were discovered”. The UK government, a leader in COVID hysteria, is refusing to release data that would show what they caused.

It says:

> The public health watchdog has been accused of a “cover-up” after refusing to publish data that could link the Covid vaccine to excess deaths.
>
> The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) argued that releasing the data would lead to the “distress or anger” of bereaved relatives if a link were to be discovered.
>
> Public health officials also argued that publishing the data risked damaging the well-being and mental health of the families and friends of people who died.
>
> Last year, a cross-party group expressed alarm about “growing public and professional concerns” over the UK’s rates of excess deaths since 2020.
>
> In a letter to UKHSA and Department for Health, the MPs and peers said that potentially critical data – which map the date of people’s Covid vaccine doses to the date of their deaths – had been released to pharmaceutical companies but not put into the public domain.
>
> […]UsForThem, a campaign group, requested that UKHSA release the data under freedom of information laws. But the agency refused, making a number of different arguments including that publishing the data “could lead to misinformation” that would “have an adverse impact on vaccine uptake” in the public.

It’s important to be skeptical of any dogmas embraced by the secular left. They are alarmed by human freedom and personal responsibility, so they tend to seize on anything that that attacks them. Their goal being to equalize outcomes for all, regardless of persona life choices. They don’t like that some people choose to buy big SUVs. They don’t like that some people live in big houses. They don’t like that some people have a lot of children. They don’t like that some people send their kids to better private schools. They REALLY don’t like when families homeschool their kids. They want everyone to agree with them, and they often use government to achieve that goal. That’s why they get so excited when everyone isn’t moving in the same direction that they want. Like with Darwinian evolution, man-made global warming, and pandemics.

Keep in mind that people were losing their jobs left, right and center because of their

refusal to take these vaccines. And anything you said online was being scrutinized to shut down your free speech.

Now might be a good time to review my reason for not taking any COVID vaccines: manufacturer liability waivers. I simply do not use products made by companies who bear no consequences for causing me harm. That's also my reason for disliking government monopolies by the way. I don't like big government, because so often, they have get-out-of-jail-free cards for their crimes – just look at Hillary Clinton's private, unsecure e-mail server as a good example.

This far-left CNBC article is from December 2020, and it says:

> If you experience severe side effects after getting a Covid vaccine, lawyers tell CNBC there is basically no one to blame in a U.S. court of law.
>
> The federal government has granted companies like Pfizer and Moderna immunity from liability if something unintentionally goes wrong with their vaccines.
>
> "It is very rare for a blanket immunity law to be passed," said Rogge Dunn, a Dallas labor and employment attorney. "Pharmaceutical companies typically aren't offered much liability protection under the law."
>
> You also can't sue the Food and Drug Administration for authorizing a vaccine for emergency use, nor can you hold your employer accountable if they mandate inoculation as a condition of employment.
>
> Congress created a fund specifically to help cover lost wages and out-of-pocket medical expenses for people who have been irreparably harmed by a "covered countermeasure," such as a vaccine. But it is difficult to use and rarely pays. Attorneys say it has compensated less than 6% of the claims filed in the last decade.

And then there was a more recent article from the far-left Bloomberg News in December 2024, letting us know that these get-out-of-consequences-free cards had been extended:

> The US Department of Health and Human Services is extending through 2029 liability protections for those producing and administering Covid-19 vaccines, in a move to guard against future potential health emergencies.
>
> […]The announcement comes as people working in the vaccine injury space have called for Covid-19 vaccines to be covered under the HHS' Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. Known as the VICP, the program pays people injured by standard childhood vaccines and shields drugmakers from litigation.
>
> Covid-19 vaccine injuries aren't currently covered by the VICP.

Extending the protection from liability was one of the last things that Biden (or his autopen) did, on his way out.

People need to be wise when deciding who to believe about things. Most of the people in

the commanding heights of this society think that the universe is eternal, that there's a viable naturalistic explanation for things like the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, cosmic fine-tuning, etc. People believe that abortion doesn't take a human life and that human action has more effect on global temperatures than solar activity. So, that's how some people arrive at their beliefs – whatever makes them feel good. Whatever makes them get approval from the elites. Whatever leads to more and bigger government making everyone "equal" – especially equal in their beliefs about things.

These people haven't done any work to investigate anything themselves. It's just convenient for them to believe it. In totalitarian regimes, lots of people committed atrocities because that's what was easiest for them. The trick is spotting the trends and getting out before they can force you to go along with their schemes.

A list of objections to the multiverse theory that you should know

November 18, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was doing some research on the multiverse theory to prepare myself for an episode of the Knight and Rose Show podcast. I thought it might be a good idea to put the list of objections to the multiverse theory into a blog post, explain them all as simply as I could, and then link to an expert for the details on one more that you can take with you on your apologetics adventures.

So, the first thing is to explain what caused the development of the multiverse theory: the fine-tuning argument. The fine-tuning argument has to do with the constants, quantities and ratios that are simply "given" as parameters to the universe, at the beginning of the universe. The parameters are fine-tuned to allow complex, embodied life to exist. Change the parameters slightly, and you have no life. It's an argument for design. And the multiverse is supposed to counter it.

Let's link to something by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, for a quick version of what that argument is all about:

> Beginning in the 1960s, physicists unveiled a universe apparently fine-tuned for the possibility of human life. They discovered that the existence of life in the universe depends upon a highly improbable but precise balance of physical factors.[4] The constants of physics, the initial conditions of the universe, and many other of its features appear delicately balanced to allow for the possibility of life. Even very slight alterations in the values of many factors, such as the expansion rate of the universe, the strength of gravitational or electromagnetic attraction, or the value of Planck's constant, would render life impossible. Physicists now refer to these factors as "anthropic coincidences" (because they make life possible for man) and to the fortunate convergence of all these coincidences as the "fine tuning of the universe". Given the improbability of the precise ensemble of values represented by these constants, and their specificity relative to the requirements of a life-sustaining universe, many physicists have noted that the fine tuning strongly suggests design by a preexistent intelligence. As well-known British physicist Paul Davies has put it, "the impression of design is overwhelming."[5]
>
> To see why, consider the following illustration. Imagine that you are a cosmic explorer who has just stumbled into the control room of the whole universe. There you discover an elaborate "universe-creating machine", with rows and rows of dials, each with many possible settings. As you investigate, you learn that each dial represents some particular parameter that has to be calibrated with a precise value in order to create a universe in which life can exist. One dial represents the possible settings for the strong nuclear force, one for the

> gravitational constant, one for Planck's constant, one for the ratio of the neutron mass to the proton mass, one for the strength of electromagnetic attraction, and so on. As you, the cosmic explorer, examine the dials, you find that they could easily have been tuned to different settings. Moreover, you determine by careful calculation that if any of the dial settings were even slightly altered, life would cease to exist. Yet for some reason each dial is set at just the exact value necessary to keep the universe running. What do you infer about the origin of these finely tuned dial settings?

And in a previous post, I wrote about the three examples of fine-tuning that I personally have ready to go in a discussion, the ones that are the simplest for me.

Anyway, atheists were not very happy about what the progress of science had revealed, so decided to invent a new theory to get them out of the evidence. And that theory is the multiverse theory. The multiverse theory simply states that we shouldn't be surprised to find evidence for design in our universe, because there are billions and billions of other universes where there is no design, and so, we just got lucky.

So, here is my quick list of objections (and brief explanations) to this multiverse theory:

1. **Boltzmann Brains:** In an infinite multiverse, random chaos should create lone brains with fake memories way more often than real people with bodies like us. So why do we see a universe with embodied intelligences?
2. **Inverse Gambler Fallacy:** The multiverse says, "Our universe is rare, so there must be tons of others." But seeing one rare thing doesn't prove that billions of hidden common things exist.
3. **Universe generating factory still needs fine-tuning:** Even if a "multiverse factory" spits out universes with different random quantities and constants, it still needs super-precise settings to make any life-friendly ones. The problem just moves up a level.
4. **No direct evidence for multiverse:** We can't see, touch, or detect other universes. So far, it's a story, not science.
5. **Infinite universes means anything can happen, making science impossible:** If there is an infinite number of actual universes, then anything can happen, and we can't do science any more.
6. **Multiverse can't explain independent local fine-tuning:** The multiverse might explain one dial being right, but not why we find fine-tuning for habitability (and fine-tuning that is correlated with discoverability) at lower levels.
7. **The measure problem:** Even if universes exist, physicists can't agree on how to measure probability. Without that, the multiverse can't explain anything.

So, people really find #4 to be the easiest to remember. By definition, we can't ever get out of our universe to be able to observe these other universes that supposedly exist. So definitely remember that one. And then #3, because Stephen C. Meyer makes a big deal out of the universe generator needing fine-tuning itself, in his book "The Return of the

God Hypothesis". You can read an essay that mentions it here, written by Robin Collins. And #6 is good too, here is an article by Guillermo Gonzalez about the local fine-tuning (habitability – discoverability link).

But here are some details on #1 in this article from Science and Culture by physicist Dr. Brian C. Miller. Basically, the multiverse theory makes a prediction about what we should see if it were true, but sadly for the design-deniers, our experience contradicts the prediction.

> **Boltzmann Brains**
>
> Standard multiverse models, such as those based on eternal inflation and string theory, predict that the odds are far smaller for a brain emerging from a gradual process in an ancient universe than for a brain emerging from atoms suddenly coalescing in a young universe. In other words, we are far less likely to possess a brain with memories of a real life history than possess what is termed a Boltzmann brain that emerged from quantum fluctuations in the recent past with fictitious memories.
>
> Since no one desires to believe in such freaky observers as Boltzmann brains, physicists have grappled with our being such seemingly improbable normal observers. In addition, our universe is highly atypical in its old age and its high level of order. Mathematical physicist Roger Penrose calculated that the odds of a universe appearing as orderly as ours to be 1 chance in 10 to the power of 10 to the power of 123 — a number that includes more zeros than the number of atoms in the visible universe.

So, I hope that's enough to equip you to discuss this theory. Now you have everything you need. Three easy examples of fine-tuning, and four easy refutations of the the counter to the fine-tuning. This is a solid argument, so have fun with it.

Three reasons why Americans should never travel to the UK

November 21, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

It's helpful to look at countries where the secular left is more powerful, so you can see what they have done with their power. Germany is a good one. France, too. And Canada. And the UK. So, in this post, I have 3 terrifying stories from across the pond that will show you why you should never let the secular left take political power in America. If you do, you will not like the result.

First, here's an article from the UK Daily Mail:

> Figures obtained by the Daily Mail show that some forces are making arrests for 'offensive' social media posts at 'extremely concerning' rates.
>
> […]The crime of sending 'grossly offensive' messages or sharing content of an 'indecent, obscene or menacing character' on electronic communications networks is punishable by up to two years' imprisonment or an unlimited fine.
>
> […]Together, the 39 of 45 police forces that replied to the Mail's freedom of information (FOI) requests arrested around 9,700 people last year under section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 and section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1988.
>
> However, the total arrest figures are likely to be higher, as six forces failed to respond to FOI requests or provided inadequate data, including Police Scotland, the second-largest force in the UK.

Keep in mind that this is the same country that refused to investigate "grooming gangs" (child sex-trafficking rings), because of their fear of appearing "racist".

And of course, since they are busy intimidating taxpayers for sharing memes, they don't have time for more serious crimes:

> The outcry that the police are wasting their time has increased because official figures show that 90% of all crime went unsolved in 2023, up from 75% in 2015.

Here is an example:

> Another alarming example of free speech under threat involved Hertfordshire Police officers arresting parents Maxie Allen and Rosalind Levine in January.
>
> Officers held them in a cell for eleven hours, on suspicion of harassment and malicious communications, after their child's primary school objected to the volume of emails they sent and 'disparaging' comments made in a WhatsApp group.
>
> No fewer than six uniformed cops showed up to arrest them for messages which could be deemed sarcastic, but were clearly far from 'abusive or malicious'.

Under Winston Churchill, the UK won a war against German totalitarianism. Then, under Margaret Thatcher, the UK won a war against Russian totalitarianism. And now the UK is North Korea. You can't say anything bad about the bad effects of the government's policies, because the government doesn't like that.

Second article, also from the UK Daily Mail:

> The number of Britons emigrating has hit a new high, it was revealed on Tuesday – as the exodus under Labour gathers pace.
>
> Last year the number of UK citizens going to live abroad was 257,000 – far more than the 77,000 previously estimated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
>
> […]Net emigration has also peaked since last year's general election.
>
> In the 12 months to September 2024, a net 116,000 Britons left the country. This is far higher than previously thought. By December, the net figure for the previous 12 months was 114,000. Net British emigration was just 81,000 in 2022.
>
> Shadow home secretary Chris Philp said: 'Keir Starmer's punishing tax rises are causing Britons to flee in record numbers.
>
> 'The brightest and the best are leaving the UK for places like Dubai and Milan, leaving the rest of us to pay Labour's higher taxes.
>
> 'This is evidence that increasing tax too far makes people leave.'

So, every American understands that. We fought a far against the UK over taxation, because when the government taxes you, it diminishes your freedom to live your life how you want. If the government taxes you a lot, then your wife has to work. Then your one child goes into daycare and public schools. But if the government lets you keep what you earn, then your wife stays home and she homeschools your four children. Taxes are a big deal to people who have a plan about how they want to live. Money is the fuel to run a plan.

Here's the third article, from ADF International:

> 75-year-old grandmother Rose Docherty has been arrested a second time and criminally charged for holding a sign within 200m of the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, reading:
>
> "Coercion is a crime, here to talk, only if you want."
>
> In Scotland, "buffer zones" are enforced within 200m of every hospital, forbidding harassment, intimidation, and "influencing" of anyone seeking to access abortion services.
>
> Despite only having stood silently offering consensual conversation and not having approached any individual, Docherty has been charged with breaching the "buffer zone."

According to a recent article from Christian Today, it's not just abortion clinics that have a no-disagreement-with-murder-by-government buffer zone. Soon it wil be expanded to

areas around assisted suicide clinics, called “safe access zones”. The UK has found it more profitable to kill patients rather than treat them, so they don’t want any criticism of that policy, either.

Biochemist Michael Behe lectures on Darwinian evolution at Cornell University

November 26, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have exciting news. Do you remember a long time ago, when the famous atheist professor Will Provine invited Michael Behe to make the case for intelligent design at Cornell University? Well, 22 years later, Behe has returned to Cornell, to give a lecture to students and answer questions. Let's find out what Behe's arguments were and whether any biologists showed up to stump him.

So, it's always fun to start with the announcement of the event. I like to support these events because I am very passionate about events on campus where students are presented with evidence that will help them to form more accurate views about the big questions of life.

So, here is the link to the event announcement, and it says:

> Throughout history, most people, including most scientists, thought that the intricate mechanisms of life were purposefully designed. The design hypothesis fell out of favor in academia after 1859, the year Charles Darwin instead proposed that life evolved by utterly unguided random variation sifted by natural selection. In the past 75 years, however, much has been learned about the molecular basis of life that was completely unknown in Darwin's era. In my talk I will argue that the astonishing discoveries of modern biochemistry require a reversal of our evaluation of Darwin versus design: the conclusion that, in large part, life was purposely designed has once again become rationally compelling.

I would like to get my hands on the slides for this lecture. Roger Pielke just gave a talk at Cornell earlier this month, and he posted his slides. Maybe I can get Mike to do the same. If you have ever seen one of his lectures, he actually has fun slides – he puts Far Side cartoons into his lectures to keep people paying attention.

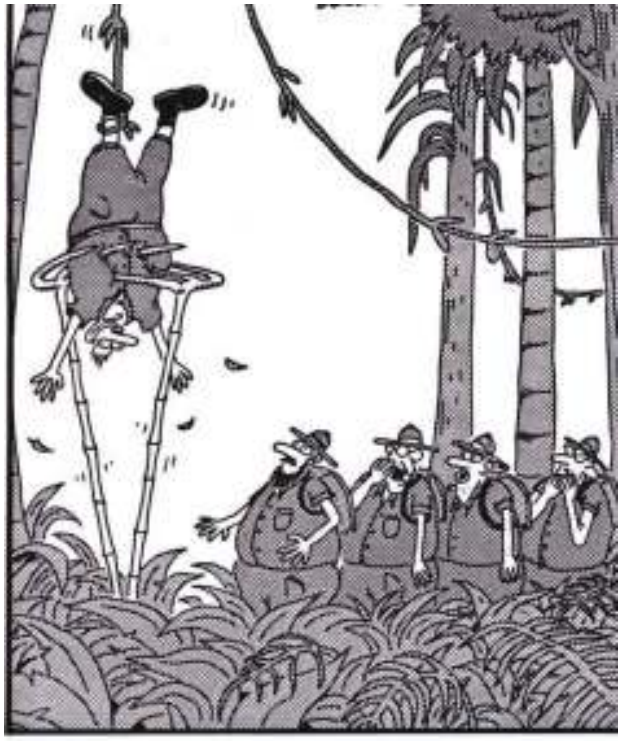

"That's why I never walk in front."

Anyway, here is the audio from the talk, and here are his main arguments: 1) irreducible complexity and 2) Darwinian mechanisms cannot create new forms over time.

But he actually made 5 points in the presentation:

1. Design is NOT mystical – it is a normal empirical conclusion from physical evidence
2. Everyone (even Richard Dawkins) admits biology appears to be designed.
3. The progress of science has revealed structural obstacles to Darwinian explanations (irreducible complexity "Darwin's Black Box" and the discovery that most observed beneficial mutations break genes "Darwin Devolves").
4. Darwinian claims still rest on imagination and "just-so stories".
5. We have strong evidence for real design but almost no evidence that Darwinism can build complex molecular machines.

What was interesting about this podcast? Well, like I said, I am really, really committed to helping students to hear two sides to the big questions of life. Most of the college students that I talk to in the workplace explain to me that their process of forming their worldviews was two-fold: 1) I wanted to have fun, and 2) I wanted the smart people (professors) to like me. It was just easier for them to accept certain beliefs in the college environment, and that's why they accepted them. A lot of things that are false are just easier to believe for social or professional reasons: the universe is eternal, the origin of life is a solved problem, the fossil record shows gradual increases in complexity, the genome is 90% junk DNA – just complete nonsense. And the best way for them to correct these false beliefs is to bring an honest scholar like Mike Behe or Mike Licona to speak about evidence at the local university campus.

The podcast is fun because they really explain all the details of what happened. Who

invited Behe to speak? Where did Behe speak? Who did Behe speak to? Were biologists invited? Did any biologists show up to confront Behe? How long was the talk? How long was the Q&A? Was the tone of the Q&A calm or argumentative? Did the Q&A stop because no one had questions, or was there a long line of people waiting to ask more questions?

Confronting naturalism on campus

I have a friend named Stephanie who just loves all sorts of protests and gatherings and marches. But for me, this is much better. Instead of people yelling at each other over politics, we can actually have some evidence presented, and minds can change. Maybe not right in the moment, but afterwards. This worked well for me when I was in my 20s. I used to order dozens and dozens of lectures and debates from university campuses from places like Veritas Forum and Access Research Network. I would listen over and over, and then when I tried out the evidence on co-workers (and I mean people with graduate degrees from good schools like UIUC and Purdue and Northwestern) they always had to concede. There is just something about being able to listen to Christians speak about evidence to college students – it's just the right level of difficulty for software guys like me to understand it and learn how to speak like that. And this led to a lot of adventures.

Secrets of the Cell with Mike Behe

Well, if you listen to the podcast, and you like it, and you want to try to explain Michael Behe's arguments to college students yourself, he does have quite a good series of lectures posted on YouTube:

1. Someone Must Have the Answer! (Secrets of the Cell, Ep. 1)
2. The Complexity of Life (Secrets of the Cell, Ep. 2)
3. Bugs with Gears (Secrets of the Cell, Ep. 3)
4. The Effects of Mutation (Secrets of the Cell, Ep. 4)
5. The X Factor in Life (Secrets of the Cell, Ep. 5)
6. Bacteria: Superheroes of the Microbial World (Secrets of the Cell, Ep. 6)
7. Blood Clotting: The Body's Emergency Response System (Secrets of the Cell, Ep. 7)
8. Michael Behe Unravels the Mystery of Biological Information (Secrets of the Cell, Ep. 8)
9. The Robot Repairmen Inside You (Secrets of the Cell, Ep. 9)

Everything is so much easier now than it used to be for me in the old days. You guys don't have to rewind VHS tapes and audio cassettes like I used to have to do! And if you hear a word or phrase that you don't understand, just ask Grok to explain it to you like it would explain it to a high school student. Anyway, have fun.

Brian Miller's thermodynamics argument for design in the origin of life

December 3, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm doing prep work for a possible episode of the Knight and Rose Show. This time, I've been looking into Dr. Brian Miller's argument about thermodynamics and the origin of life. So, the first thing I did was read his chapter in "The Mystery of Life's Origin", which is available online for free. Then I listened to a recent episode that he did with Dr. James Tour, on The Science & Faith Podcast.

First, here is the podcast:

I actually made a transcript of the episode using TurboScribe AI, so I could read along while I listened. You can also grab just the audio from that transcript page, too.

Just keep in mind that the video is BETTER than just the audio, because Brian shows SLIDES in the video, with quotes and diagrams.

Here are the main points in their discussion:

1. Brian's personal testimony, going from atheism to Christianity
2. Brian's thermodynamic argument against a naturalistic origin of life
3. The minimum requirements of a simple living system
4. Can natural selection be invoked to explain the origin of life naturalistically?
5. The role of experimenter interference in origin of life experiments
6. Evidence for engineering in biological systems
7. The requirement for a minimum level of information just to maintain the basic functions of the cell
8. The problem of the origin of biological information present in the first living system
9. Implications for theories about life emerging on other planets
10. Additional evidence for biological big bangs in the fossil record

If you're looking for something to read, and send to your friends who also like to read, you can send them Brian's chapter – chapter #14 – from the new second edition of "The Mystery of Life's Origin".

Here is what it is about:

> The thermodynamic barriers to the origin of life have become decidedly more well defined since this book's first publication. The initial challenges described in the original edition still stand. Namely, spontaneous natural processes always tend toward states of greater entropy, lower energy, or both. The change of entropy and energy are often combined into the change of free energy, and all spontaneous processes move toward lower free energy. However, the generation of a minimally functional cell on the ancient Earth required a local system of molecules to transition into a state of both lower entropy and higher energy.

> Therefore, it must move toward dramatically higher free energy. The chance of a system accomplishing this feat near equilibrium is astronomically small.
>
> Many origin-of-life researchers have responded to this challenge by arguing that a system driven far from equilibrium could self-organize into a functional cell through processes that are connected to such monikers as complex systems, emergence, synergetics, or nonequilibrium dissipative systems. The basic hope is that some new physical principles could overcome the barriers to life's origin mandated by classical thermodynamics. However, advances in nonequilibrium thermodynamics have proven that the odds of a system driven far from equilibrium generating an autonomous cell are no greater than the odds for one near equilibrium.
>
> Others have proposed that "natural engines" on the early Earth converted one form of energy into another that could drive a local system to sufficiently high free energy. These approaches have proven equally disappointing. The only plausible explanation for the origin of life is intelligent agency.

He seems to be saying that a living system exhibits low entropy, and high free energy. And that there is no known naturalistic mechanism that can produce a result like that, without an intelligent agent to guide it. I wonder if I will have to add this to my list of arguments against naturalism.

Then it would grow to:

1. origin of the universe
2. cosmic fine-tuning
3. origin of life (specified complexity)
4. Cambrian explosion (and other explosions)
5. galactic, stellar and planetary habitability
6. molecular machines
7. non-material mind, e.g. – split brain surgery
8. the waiting time problem
9. origin of life (thermodynamics)

I wish we had one more to make it 10 arguments. We need the scholars to make MORE progress in science, so I can have an even 10 arguments in my list.

Where are all the good women? New poll finds men vastly more pro-life than women

December 6, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've been blogging about the emerging ideological split between young women and young men. Young women, under the influence of feminism, have taken a hard left turn. They are now extremely likely to support abortion, gay rights, and other non-Christian views. Young men, now being influenced by the red pill and the manosphere, have becoming increasingly conservative.

First, let's review what the surveys say about the political views of young men and women.

The far-left UK Independent explains:

> An analysis of survey data from across the developing world had found that "a new global gender divide" is emerging. The analysis, conducted by the Financial Times' John Burn-Murdoch, showed that the developed world's young women have rapidly become more liberal. Young men, however, have either become more conservative (as in the US) or been much slower to become more progressive (as in the UK). Gen Z, Burn-Murdoch concluded, is "two generations, not one."

Who is influencing these young men? Well, it's not Christian feminists, who talk about "servant leadership" and twist the Bible to attack masculinity and eliminate male headship. Christian feminists think that men are supposed to be silent ATMs that dispense cash without judgement, and show off their muscles. "Protect and provide" they demand. But they never want men to fight against lies or make moral judgments – that's "mean".

Who are young men listening to that's causing them to become so conservative? Men are listening to leaders in the manosphere – the online community of people who are concerned about men's rights. And what are they hearing there? They are hearing that feminism is *terrible* for men. They are learning that that women on dating apps are chasing the top 20% of most attractive men. They are learning that women initiate most (69%) divorces, and that family courts are extremely unfair to men. They are learning that the more men that a woman has sex with before marriage, the greater the risk that she will initiate divorce. And they are learning that lesbians have the highest rates of marital instability AND domestic violence. Men are learning to be more careful with women.

And do you know what else young men are learning in the manosphere? Pro-life convictions.

Here are the numbers from National Right to Life:

> Lydia Saad handles much of Gallup's coverage of the abortion issue and does so

> in a comprehensive way. This morning, she authored "Gender Gaps on Abortion Reach Historic Highs" which is well worth reading.
>
> You would expect self-identified Democrats to support abortion—and the current survey bares that out. Likewise, you would anticipate Republicans to be more supportive of unborn children—also borne out by Gallup's latest poll.
>
> Currently, as of May 2025,
>
> * 32% of women and 54% of men identify as pro-life. 61% of women and 41% of men consider themselves pro-choice. The difference—the gap—was 13-points in 2022 "and no more than 10-point differences in any reading before Dobbs," according to Saad. "The gap has expanded since 2022 because pro-choice identity has dipped among men, from 48% to 41%, while it has held steady among women."
>
> In 2022, in the aftermath of the leak of the draft showing that Dobbs would overturn Roe, the "pro-choice" was ahead of the pro-life by 16 points, but by this year the margin had been halved–down to 8 points.

Basically, young men are learning that abortion empowers young women to choose recreational sex with the hot bad boys that they find so desirable. Abortion provides feminists (and the hot bad boys) with a way to get out of the consequences of recreational sex. It enables feminists to delay "boring" marriage to the "unattractive" good man for as long as possible, and that's what feminists want.

The manosphere's reach extends all over the world. So, other countries are seeing this male pro-life trend.

Here is an article about young men in the UK, from the far-left UK Independent:

> Fewer than half of young men believe abortion should be legal, far less than the general population, a shocking new poll has found.
>
> Just 46 per cent of 16- to 34-year-old males believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases, compared with 71 per cent among the general population.

And it's not just abortion that the manosphere teaches young men to oppose. It's no-fault divorce. Feminists, including Christian feminists, LOVE no-fault divorce. It allows reckless feminists to choose a husband based on appearance, and then pretend to be surprised when the hot bad boy they chose turns out to be… a hot bad boy. Rather than having to take responsibility for their reckless choice, they can get out of it easily – and with cash and prizes. Young men understand that like abortion, no-fault divorce is a tool that feminists use in order to avoid "boring" marriage to an "unattractive" good man. Young men oppose frivolous divorce. They even have a funny phrase for it in the manosphere.

By the way, if you think that the manosphere is "Andrew Tate" or "Myron Gaines", that's just uninformed. Those are pick-up artists, which is only one segment of the manosphere. It's not those pick-up artists that are causing this massive swing back to conservatism. Pick-up artists are the bogeymen that the traditional "Get Married!" people try to scare

you with, to get you to not care about the effects of feminism, e.g. – abortion and no-fault divorce.

Ironically, some *women* actually do very well in the manosphere. Three of the more popular women influencers are Emily King, Courtney Ryan and Jedediah Bila. I don't always agree with those people, but they certainly are more respectful of young men's conservative beliefs than Christian feminists.

So, now that men are being influenced by manosphere voices, instead of feminist voices, where will these good men find good women to marry? I don't think that church is producing anti-feminist women these days. Churches are still stuck in feminism, blaming good man bystanders for every poor choice that reckless women make with hot bad boys.

The hidden message of these impressive pro-life numbers among men is that traditional men will not be pursuing non-traditional women. Young men are becoming more conservative, and young women are becoming more leftist. Just because young women expect to claim a husband "when they are ready", that doesn't mean that the marriage-minded man they expect to comply will be there. Nothing against women in general. Just saying that non-traditional women will not be able to get traditional men to commit.

Knight and Rose Show #69: Lora Ries: Border Security and Immigration Policy

December 7, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 69 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the border security and immigration policy with Lora Ries from the Heritage Foundation. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Lora Ries to discuss border security and immigration policy. They explore Biden's policy changes, like ending Remain in Mexico, resuming catch and release, and creating mass parole programs. Ries critiques refugee expansions, NGO incentives, and "welcome the stranger" misuses. She discusses unaccompanied minors. Ries recommends merit-based reforms, assimilation, and enhanced vetting, drawing lessons from Europe's crime and balkanization issues.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 69:

Speaker biographies

Lora Rees is the Director of the Border Security and Immigration Center at The Heritage Foundation, with nearly 30 years of experience in immigration and homeland security. She has worked in various roles, including at the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee. She also worked in the private sector as a homeland security industry strategist and in government relations. Ries earned a law degree at Valparaiso University Law School in Indiana, and a BA in International Economics and Cultural Affairs; and Spanish from Valparaiso University.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a

prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Nearly half of Netflix's shows expose children to LGBT indoctrination

December 10, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I found an interesting article by Beth Brelje in The Federalist. She writes about how Netflix shows indoctrinate children in pro-LGBT propaganda. Children often believe false ideas for all sorts of bad reasons. Just think of how many take out student loans for degrees that don't result in jobs with good salaries. After that, I have two studies about how TV influences our attitudes on LGBT.

First, the article from The Federalist:

> Some 41 percent of children's shows on Netflix are pushing the LGBT agenda, according to a recently released report by Concerned Women for America (CWA).
>
> CWA analyzed Netflix programming ratings for children and found 41 percent of both G-rated and TV-Y7-rated series on Netflix contain LGBT content.

Why is this happening?

> It is not an accident that more LGBT characters are being written into storylines across media. It is encouraged by the nonprofit Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD).
>
> Each year, GLAAD produces the "Where We Are on TV Report," tracking representation.
>
> "Between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2025, GLAAD counted 489 LGBT regular or recurring characters in total. This is a 4% increase and 21 additional characters from 468 characters counted in the previous edition," the 2025 report said.
>
> What's shocking is how much representation is aimed at children. LGBT activists are well aware that parents feel it is not a topic for their children to explore without parental guidance. Sneaking it into children's programming is a blatant attempt to change the culture.

I ran into this problem when I was in my mid-20s. My co-workers were watching a television show called "Will & Grace" (which had nothing to do with soteriology). It was a portrayal of a gay character in positive ways, and this was having a huge effect on the attitudes of young people to LGBT.

It didn't make any sense to me, because around that time I was reading books about LGBT by scientists, therapists and medical doctors like Jeffrey Satinover and Charles Socarides. But while I was getting more accurate views of LGBT, everyone else was watching propaganda. And they were coming to opposite conclusions than I did. This was especially troubling because at that time I wanted to get married. And what I found was that young Christian women in particular seemed to be getting liberal on moral issues. And today, it's become a huge split between young men and young women. Even back

then, parents and pastors didn't seem to think that it was a big deal that young women were becoming more liberal because of TV shows and movies.

Let's look at two studies about this topic and see if there is any data to support my thesis.

The first study is "Can One TV Show Make a Difference? Will & Grace and the Parasocial Contact Hypothesis". It was published in the Journal of Homosexuality (Volume 53, Issue 4, 2007). This study tested whether repeated exposure to positive gay characters in Will & Grace (which aired from 1998–2006 and reached 25 million weekly viewers at its peak) could foster similar attitude shifts among straight audiences who rarely knew gay people personally. And what they found was that showing episodes of the show to undergraduate students reduced their opposition to LGBT. The more episodes shown, the more positive their views of LGBT.

The second study is "Exposure to the Lives of Lesbians and Gays and the Origin of Young People's Greater Support for Gay Rights". It was published in the International Journal of Public Opinion Research in November 2014. The study tested the impact of exposure to LGBT characters in popular media, focusing on the sitcom Grace Under Fire (1993–1998), which featured a recurring gay character. And what they found was that frequent viewing of the show produced more positive views of LGBT behaviors, as well as LGBT-friendly policies.

So, you can clearly see how watching TV shows and movies – which are *fiction* – can change your attitudes to be out of alignment with actual evidence. And I think that if those changes are related to areas where the Bible has spoken – like the definition of marriage, objective vs subjective truth, etc. – then it can cause people to turn away from the Bible and / or Christianity. The new feelings and attitudes that came from TV and movies clash with the Bible and Christian worldview, and the entertainment wins. For example, a young Christian might watch TV shows that paint divorce in a positive light, and then leave Christianity because it is too "restrictive" or "repressive" or "intolerant" or "bigoted".

Consider the following movies:

- Eat Pray Love
- Sex and the City
- The Bridges of Madison County
- Fifty Shades of Grey
- The Notebook
- Pretty Woman

These movies are VERY popular with young people, but they portray very, very negative views of sex, marriage, male headship, child-bearing, etc. The important thing is NOT that these movies disagree with the Bible, with church, or with Christianity. The problem is that the views presented in these movies are FALSE views that can result in tragic life outcomes. These popular movies are teaching people to proceed on life plans that do not lead to successful outcomes. It's as if people were learning from TV and movies to rely on

the lottery for their retirement savings. This does not work in real life. And yet, because it is in the TV shows and the movies that have fancy clothes and big explosions and beautiful people, people chart the course of their lives based on their views.

This is very serious.

Lately, I have been spending a bit more time on cooking, weights and cardio. I was able to do this because I found good TV shows to watch while doing these things.

I watch shows like “The Rifleman”:

Season 1 playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRpEpIGpxrE&list=PLtbMv4lXX2mvPj1kMzYl1OFczol5AxMQE

Season 2 playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4pnstPnvY4&list=PLtbMv4lXX2msIZiCC8z-bBwt2kkFWpguq

Season 3 playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIsQ2lYSdSA&list=PLtbMv4lXX2mtW-zGH_G35XpbnoStlCmjA

Season 4 playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZYTjys7_WA&list=PLtbMv4lXX2mtfjYYL74JqCoI5kZr0P-Pu

Season 5 playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_LPzIbzWRw4&list=PLtbMv4lXX2mtaEv2tcCFaYtCfQefGkkLl

I also listen to military history audio books. For moral and truth issues, stick to non-fiction. I don’t recommend reading fiction at all.

I think video games are better than TV and movies, because you actually get to make plans and decisions and execute and adapt. If you use Steam, there are curators who detect woke content in games. I play military simulation games like The Troop or Armored Brigade II. Next year, I want to play Sea Power and Task Force Admiral. (You can watch me play The Troop on my YouTube channel). And I love solo military board games, like Skies Above Britain, Atlantic Chase, and Carrier Battle: Philippine Sea. I don’t want to have my views change because of the entertainment I choose.

Woman gets light sentence for falsely accusing “creepy” man of rape and kidnapping

December 15, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was having a conversation with my friend Katy the other day, about whether men are not interested in marrying because they find older women unattractive. I told her that men find older women very attractive, if they are slim and athletic. I left it at that, but I wanted to go on and explain to her why men are declining to marry, even good Christian men who have good jobs and savings,

My thesis is that men have recognized that the legal system is very much against them, and it is unwise for them to expose themselves to that legal system.

What’s the evidence?

So, on this blog, I have written about how women overall initiate 69% of the divorces that they are involved in. In fact, college-educated women initiate 90% of the divorces they are involved in. And I’ve written about how the sentences for men are 63% more severe than for women, for the exact same crime and criminal record. And I’ve written about how a high number of the accusations of rape or sexual assault by women (20-40 percent) are hoaxes. And I’ve written about how men are often the victims of paternity fraud. Men don’t even have to cohabitate with a woman to be billed for thousands of dollars in alimony and child support. False accusations of child abuse are routinely used in order to eject husbands from their homes, and to get custody of the children (and the child support money that comes with having custody).

I could go on and on, but I hope enough has been said to show what the evidence supports the view that the legal system in America is biased against men.

But wait! There’s another reason. Men have also noticed that women can easily press false accusations, and they suffer virtually no consequences when those accusations are proven false and / or recanted.

Here is a recent example, reported by New York Post:

> A Pennsylvania woman who admitted to fabricating kidnapping and rape allegations against a stranger whom she “specifically targeted” because she thought he was “creepy” last year is paying for her lies.
>
> Anjela Borisova Urumova, 20, was sentenced to from 45 days to 23 months in Bucks County Correctional Facility on Tuesday by Judge Stephen A. Corr, according to the Bucks County District Attorney’s Office.

The article notes that she “pleaded guilty to seven misdemeanor counts, including tampering with or fabricating physical evidence and false reports.” As a result of her lies, the accused spent 31 days in prison.

Three things. First, he is married:

> Pierson, 41, was present with his wife in court Tuesday but did not wish to make a statement during the sentencing since the ordeal has been “too emotional” for him and his family, the DA’s office said.

Second, the false accuser recanted her accusation:

> She then went to the police and accused Pierson as her attacker before eventually fessing up to the tale.

Third, she judged him as evil based solely on her feelings (intuitions, first impressions) about his appearance:

> Urumova told investigators that she “specifically targeted” Pierson because she had seen him and his blue Ford F-150 pickup truck in the area before and thought he was “creepy.”

I asked Grok what the average sentence is for a false accusation of rape, compared to a real conviction of rape, and it said:

> Data on sentences for false accusations of rape or sexual assault by women in the USA is limited. Available studies and legal cases suggest most convictions result in light punishments, often suspended sentences, fines, or no jail time. Estimating based on available information, including cases with zero jail time, the average sentence is approximately 2 months (0.17 years).
>
> For men convicted of rape in the USA, the average prison sentence is 212 months (17.67 years), per 2019 USSC data.

So, women get “approximately 2 months” for a false accusation of rape, and men get “average prison sentence is 212 months” for a rape conviction.

False accusations deter good men from marrying

Even if a good man is very clever about choosing the right women to be his wife, he would still be vulnerable to false accusations from women in the workplace, and other places. It’s not the Christian homeschooling future wife in the house who is the problem. It’s the radical feminist single mother in the office who is the problem. The bitter, angry one with the 200+ body count, and the 200K of student loan debt for a degree in misandry.

And the worst part of this is that when you tell pro-marriage people about these false accusations, they dismiss it. I’ve been told “why would you make decisions off of evidence and calculations? One day you’ll meet a nice girl and fall in love” It’s terrifying to be dealing with people who approach major life decisions by feelings and wilful blindness. They try to goad you into bad decisions by shaming you.

Imagine if someone tried to sell you a lemon at the car dealership by attacking your masculinity. “I dare you to buy this used car without getting it checked out by a mechanic!” You would have to be really lacking in education and work experience to think that the “man up!” approach would work on a man. And yet, when I talk to pro-marriage

people, this is *their only argument.* They scream “Get Married!” and then refuse to address any of the evidence of the threats posed by feminism, such as false accusations.

Who is going to support the good wife and good children if the man is in prison because of a false accusation? Not the pro-marriage advocates. And the younger generation of women are sliding further and further into secularism and leftism, making the risk of false accusation even higher. Why would a wise man expose himself to these risks? Especially when no one wants to fix the problem.

Here’s the bottom line: It’s an enormous deterrent to a good man’s desire to be a husband and father that they are exposed to prison and / or financial ruin because of false accusations. You have to give men a good value proposition if you expect them to go the husband and father route. Good men have other things that they can do with their money and time. Just because you *really* want them to do your plan with their lives, it doesn’t mean that they can’t find something *else* to do with their time and money – like focus on serving God. If you want men to marry, then take men’s concerns seriously.

LGBT activists pressure venue to cancel an event featuring Christian speaker

December 15, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the reasons why I have an alias for my speaking and writing is that I have seen people in the workplace go after Christians and conservatives who spoke out on controversial issues. It's not unusual for people to go after Christians and conservatives on issues like evolution, global warming, LGBT, BLM, etc. And by go after, I mean cancel them, fire them, make them pay money.

One of the people who tracks this sort of ideological pressuring of Christians and conservatives is Tyler O'Neil, who writes for the Daily Signal. He had a recent article posted where he talked about a case of cancel culture going on in Cleveland, Ohio. Now, you might think "Ohio is a red state" but cities like Cleveland, Toledo, Columbus and even Cincinnati are pretty blue. And Christians and conservatives living in these cities don't have the same freedom to speak as people in Nashville, TN or Birmingham, AL.

Anyway, here's the story, which concerns the attempted cancelling of Aaron Baer, president of the Center for Christian Virtue:

> [M]ore than 100 LGBTQ+ leaders and organizations across Ohio signed an open letter denouncing the City Club for hosting Baer and urging the venue to "cancel or modify this forum in a way that does not platform an organization that has been designated by the Southern Poverty Law Center as an anti-LGBTQIA2S+ hate group."
>
> The letter makes four demands: cancel the event or include an LGBTQ+ activist; replace Moulthrop with a likely pro-LGBTQ+ "external moderator"; "disavow platforming hate speech"; or "structure the event so that diverse and impacted perspectives are not only present but also meaningfully centered."
>
> More than 20 organizations—including HRC Cleveland, the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland, Equality Ohio, GLAAD, and Plexus LGBT & Allied Chamber of Commerce—signed the letter, which aims to "prevent extremism from going unchallenged" and suggests a distinction between "facilitating dialogue and platforming organized hate."
>
> "Free speech is a cornerstone of our democracy," Dwayne Steward, CEO and executive director of Equality Ohio, told The Daily Signal. Yet he argued that Baer's message is "rooted in oppression and erasure."

That part always makes me laugh – the invocation of "tolerance", "inclusion", "diversity", "equality" and "free speech" by secular left fascists. I have seen this so many times with my own eyes at university, in the FT100 IT workplace, and these speeches by left-wing activists. They love to use these words, but then they follow it up with actions that show no respect for the human rights of the people they disagree with. Just look up the stories

of the Christian bakers, florists or photographers. Or look up the story of Floyd Lee Corkins and his attempted domestic terrorism at the Family Research Council HQ.

And remember, this is coming just a little while after a high-profile assassination of a well-known conservative Christian by a left-wing assassin. And this combination of cancel culture and domestic terrorist actions is not uncommon among secular leftists.

I have noticed a very strange thing when I talk to regular non-apologetics-equipped Christians at church or at work about how much they advocate for Biblical views about controversial issues. On the one hand, Christians really want me to know that if they were threatened with death for their faith in Jesus, they would totally be ready to die for their faith in Jesus. But, when I look at their social media, it's filled with non-controversial things. Their travels, their athletic achievements, their sports teams, photos of their kids, etc. So, there is this weird thing going on where we POTENTIALLY have millions of bold martyrs for Christ, but ACTUALLY have a bunch of Christians in hiding.

And listen, I don't blame these hiding Christians, because I'm careful myself about what I say under my own name, that's why I have an alias, and probably why I have no wife and no kids (because a wife and kids means you have responsibilities and obligations that keep you from losing your job due to speaking out). What I'm saying is that we need to have laws and policies that make it as easy for the hiding Christians to speak their minds. That's why we have to get noisy when we see the rights of Christians and conservatives curtailed by bullies from the secular left. There are a lot of people watching who want to know if it is safe, and we have to fight to make it safe for them.

I wish I didn't have to have an alias. But in order to survive in STEM programs at university, and then in corporate America, I had to have an alias. Some people have lives where they are strong enough financially and well-connected socially that they have what they need to speak out already, and that's good. But many Christians and conservatives are not safe to speak out without being punished. They are running the calculations, and choosing to stay silent. We need to make it as easy as possible *for them* to speak their minds, so they can have the impact that they are meant to have.

Good news: 60% of young Britons planning to go to church for Christmas

December 23, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, if there ever was a good time for good news, it's Christmas time. Now is the time for everyone to remember that our biggest problem – our separation from God problem – has already been solved, because God stepped into history. And if you live in a country that is going in the wrong direction – like the UK – then it can be a very good thing to remember. And that's exactly what 60% of young people in Britain are planning to do.

Here's the story from GB News.

It says:

> Young Britons are increasingly turning to Christianity as they are "crying out or cultural and moral confidence", Quentin Letts has told GB News.
>
> Reacting to staggering new data, the parliamentary sketchwriter said UK leaders are "shying away from the Church" and Britain "doesn't stand for anything anymore".
>
> New polling by Tearfund has shown that 60 per cent of Gen Z Britons (born between 1997 and 2012) are intending on attending a church service this Christmas.
>
> The data also found that 45 per cent of British adults are planning to attend church this Christmas, which is a sharp rise from recent years.

The article notes that that 60% number is DOUBLE the number of people going to church who are from older generations – boomers and up. As I blogged about previously, it's mostly young boys who are becoming more conservative and returning to church. Surveys show that young women are becoming more leftist, and less religious.

The article states that the youngsters are interested in two things: 1) formal church services with "smells and bells" and / or 2) conservative preaching with truth and condemnation, i.e. – "fire and brimstone". I think this is exactly what's lacking in the UK these days. But I don't want this to be a political post.

I've now hit the time that I was thinking about for early retirement, and it's caused me to make a few adjustments myself. And part of that is making sure that I get steady doses of conservative preaching and theology. Sometimes, when you are working full-time and fussing about investments and house repairs and chores, it is hard to find time to read the Bible and listen to sermons and Sunday school. So, I am trying to redeem my weights and cardio time with Bible teaching.

For this, I have turned to Mike Winger, and his wonderful YouTube channel. So far, I have been working my way through his playlist on Calvinism, and when he explains the meaning of all the texts, and makes a very strong case, I just get very excited to

understand what the Bible is saying.

Here are the three parts that made me say "WOW!":

- Calvinism, Arminianism, Election & Predestination: Romans 8:29-30, 33
- Non-Calvinist Interpretation of Romans 9
- Why God Hardens Hearts: Romans 9:17-24

And today (Monday), I watched this one:

- Unbiblical stuff the Catholic Church teaches: Mary, Indulgences, Eucharist, Priests, 7 Sacraments

Now, my point in posting 3 lectures critical of Calvinism, and one 1 lecture critical of Catholicism is not to offend everyone. It's just because this is how I think boys like to approach religion, with lots of Bible teaching and thinking about history and what the meaning of texts are. Boys aren't think about the social aspects of "religion" – the family gatherings and the getting along and the social aspects. Boys are thinking about truth and disagreements, and why people disagree. And that's why I picked these to watch myself! To understand why people disagree. To find out who is right.

I'll just say that I learned a lot of things that I just did not know before when I watched this 4 lectures, and it just made me think that the Bible is really clever, and well worth reading. It kind of re-captured the feelings I had when I was reading the Bible as a young man, and gathering up all the answers from the text, and trying to put them into practice.

If there is one thing that comes out of these Mike Winger lectures, it's that Christianity is not something that you should take passively, as a spectator sport. It's not something to accept uncritically from others. But it's also not something you should do without considering the study of others. I guess I would say that each person has to investigate for themselves, and part of being a good investigator is listening to the reasoning of other people.

I guess as Christians, we often want to make things simple for people, maybe because we don't want simple people to feel dumb. I think that's a mistake when we are dealing with young people. Young people want to know if these things are true, and they want to understand the meaning of the text. It can be tempting to brush aside their questions. But a much better idea is to enourage them to dig into the meaning of the text and have reasons for their beliefs.

Everyone is falling over themselves to say "everyone is equally right" these days – especially in the UK. Feelings are seen by many as more important than truth. I think Christians need to study harder, debate and disagree instead.

How Dr. Walter Bradley helped me keep my faith at university and in the workplace

December 29, 2025 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My close friends know that Walter Bradley is the Christian scholar I admire the most. I've mentioned Dr. Bradley on the Knight and Rose Show several times, and plugged the book about his life "For a Greater Purpose: The Life and Legacy of Walter Bradley". Dr. Bradley passed away recently, and so people have been paying their respects.

My good friend Kevin, who is an amazing Christian man and a real hero to me, mentioned an article about Dr. Bradley by Dr. William Dembski. Kevin asked me to write something of my own. Work has just been draining all my fuel lately, so this is the best I can do. I am not a perfectionist, and I try to write these posts in under 1-2 hours each day, so there is a lot more to say than what you will find here.

I first encountered Dr. Bradley shortly after I arrived in America by ordering some of his campus lectures from Veritas Forum. These lectures had a huge impact on me, even causing me to have a plan to do a PhD in computer science and go into teaching. I figured out by listening to all of Dr. Bradley's lectures that this is what he was always urging Christian graduate students to do. Well, my plans got derailed because it took me 16 years to get a permanent residency, and another 5 years to get my citizenship. Even if I got the PhD then, I would have much less time for research and teaching.

Still, I thought it might be fun to list out the lectures that I ordered from Veritas Forum that featured Walter Bradley:

- Dr. Walter Bradley – Giants In The Land – Georgia – 1997
- Dr. Walter Bradley – Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer – Georgia – 1997
- Dr. Walter Bradley – Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer – Penn State – 1997
- Dr. Walter Bradley – A Scientist's Quest For Success – Penn State – 1997
- Dr. Walter Bradley – Truth In Religion – Georgia – 1997
- Dr. Walter Bradley – Truth In Religion – Penn State – 1997

If you want to listen to some of these lectures, I uploaded them as MP3s here, from the original audio cassettes, which are unavailable now, and not online anywhere. The key ones are the "Testimony", and the 3 versions of "Giants in the Land". The sound quality is not the best, and there is a pause in the recording from when I flipped the cassettes. If you listen to those, and read "Cyrano de Bergerac" in the original French, then you'll know a lot about me.

The Walter Bradley lectures I remember the most were Testimony and different versions of Giants in the Land. He talked about how he grew up. His Dad committed suicide when he was young, and he was always poor. He worked a lot of jobs to make ends meet, and was excellent in his academic studies and sports. He wanted so badly to be a success,

but found achieving success very empty and unfulfilling. What was fulfilling for him was his relationship with God, and serving God. It's lessons like this that allowed me to persist all this time, even without the traditional home and church community that most Christians have. I was trained by these two lectures to operate alone in a harsh environment, like a secular university or workplace.

One part that stood out to me was his explanation of how he stopped viewing Christianity as a set of rules, instead of as a relationship. He explained this by telling how his affection for his girlfriend and eventual wife Ann caused him to finally understand that Christianity was not about stopping the things that you most liked doing, and starting the things that you least liked doing. Even though he didn't have a lot of money for dating, he liked to take Ann on dates, because he loved her. And that's how Christians ought to feel about the how the Boss wants them to act. Prioritizing Boss in your conduct and life-planning is easy when you are in a relationship with a Boss who leads from the front. For me, a valuable lesson was that you don't have to care about your reputation if you are excellent in things like education, career, marriage and finances.

He also talked a lot about how to be a Christian in academia, and the importance of professors being a resource for their students. He was very familiar with the law, and threatened to sue whenever he had to "butt heads" with the Dean. But he also had a lot of amazing adventures by being willing to be identified as a Christian. He explains in "Giants in the Land" how he would feel about identifying as a Christian to his secular colleagues. If only every Christian son and daughter could have heard this lecture before going to college, we would never have lost any of them. Listening to Dr. Bradley talk about the struggles of being a Christian on a secular university campus was just magical. I think a lot of them just feel ashamed of moral rules and truth claims that they were never prepared to defend at the university or in the workplace. They were never taught to see the life of an evidence-wielding secret agent as more fun than getting drunk and having hook-up sex.

Walter Bradley's thoughts about being a Christian in a hostile environment formed my character and prepared me for the secular workplace. Unlike many Christian leaders who started out conservative and then caved to the secular left for prestige, I never expected non-Christians co-workers to like me. Walter Bradley had already warned me not to expect that. I built my castle with scientific evidence, up on the hill of analytical philosophy from William Lane Craig. Later on, I added a moat around the castle, with the economics of Hayek and Sowell.

His lectures made me want to become a Christian professor. But sadly, I never did get to be a Christian professor like Dr. Bradley. I used to cry about how long it was taking for me to make progress on my "become a Christian professor" plan. Maybe some day… I have had offers to teach introductory computer science courses at Christian universities.

I wish more of our Christian leaders were evidence-based like Dr. Bradley – then then we'd avoid the issues plaguing many denominations. Whenever you look at someone like Russell Moore, David French, Brent Leatherwood, Ed Stetzer, David Platt, etc., you are

looking at someone who expected that Christianity would make them feel good and be liked in non-Christian environments. Walter Bradley killed that expectation dead for me. I think that's why people who knew him, like William Dembski and Robert Marks, have been so faithful to the Boss with their research and writing. By the way, I have met Dembski, Marks and Bradley in real life! I've also met Kelly Monroe Kullberg, founder of the Veritas Forum. Those are the type of Christian that I look up to. Who are your role models?

Finally, I have to mention the website "Leadership University", which was my lifeblood during my undergraduate years. Not only did they have all the transcripts of William Lane Craig's debates, but they also had many articles by Walter Bradley, and other scholars I loved: J. P. Moreland, Henry Schaefer, Phillip E. Johnson, etc. There were tons of articles there, including articles on controversial topics, like homosexuality. You could find anything that you were being challenged about. And then I also got a lot out of Access Research Network, which had amazing videos that I would watch dozens and dozens of times until I could remember every word.

Many of the same videos I used to watch over and over are now available free, including one with Dr. Walter Bradley.

- On the Origin of Life – An Interview with Dr. Dean Kenyon
- Focus on the Origin of Life – An Interview with Dr. Charles Thaxton
- Darwinism on Trial – Phillip E. Johnson
- Blind Watchmaker? A Skeptical Look at Darwinism – Phillip E. Johnson
- Can Science Know the Mind of God? – Phillip E. Johnson
- A Critique of Darwinist Icons – Dr. Johnathan Wells
- Doubting Darwin: An Interview with Dr. Scott Minnich
- Intelligent Design: From the Big Bang to Irreducible Complexity – Dr. Michael Behe
- Creation of the Cosmos – Dr. Walter Bradley
- Scientifically Testable Consequences of Fine-tuning Related Arguments & Hypotheses – Dr. Robin Collins
- On the Origin of the Cosmos – An Interview with Dr. Michael Strauss

Anyway, if you haven't checked out the book about Bradley's life, get it. And if you want to know what makes me tick, check out the lectures I mentioned. There are other things that had a huge effect on me, but those lectures are my heart and soul. I would say that my resilience over my time at the university and in the secular workplace comes from people like Walter Bradley.

I am also grateful for Art Battson of ARN, who worked on those videos so that I could buy them and watch to them when I was still young. I never met a single non-Christian in the workplace who could defeat these arguments.

By the way, these campus lectures are still going on today – if you want to donate to a great cause, check out my friend Eric Chabot who organizes campus events at THE Ohio State University. He blogs here. I support his work. The lectures that he organizes may be

bullet-proofing the worldviews of the next Wintery Knights!

Knight and Rose Show #70: E. Calvin Beisner: Climate and Energy

January 4, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 70 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss the climate and energy policy with Dr. E. Calvin Beisner of the Cornwall Alliance. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Dr. E. Calvin Beisner to discuss climate and energy policy. They explore Biblical dominion and stewardship, contrasting the Christian worldview with the pantheistic roots of environmental movements. Beisner explains Earth's natural resilience through Le Chatelier's principle and the Genesis perspective. He critiques climate alarmism, highlighting warming benefits like longer growing seasons. Beisner compares energy sources, advocating for abundant energy to aid human flourishing.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 70:

Speaker biographies

Dr. E. Calvin Beisner is the founder and national spokesman of the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, Dr. Beisner established The Cornwall Alliance in 2005, building on years of research and teaching in theology, economics, environmental ethics, and public policy. With a background in historical theology and social ethics, he has lectured worldwide, testified before government bodies, and authored numerous books and articles on environmental stewardship and economic development. His early experiences in Calcutta, India, witnessing both the beauty of creation and the tragedy of poverty, deeply shaped his vision for Cornwall Alliance. He is the author of Climate and Energy: The Case for Realism.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since

January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Dr. James Tour discusses the case for design in nature with Tucker Carlson

January 6, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Every time an intelligent design scholar appears on a popular show, I like to write something about it. We've been blessed lately to hear the case for design presented on Joe Rogan and Piers Morgan and Ben Shapiro. So, people are starting to learn about the origin of life, the fossil record, the structures inside the cell, and other pieces of evidence that are terrible for naturalism. And now another big show (Tucker Carlson) has had Dr. James Tour on.

Here's the video: (1 hour and 40 minutes)

Topics:

- Tour's professional background: Professor at Rice University teaching organic chemistry and nanotechnology, with appointments in chemistry, materials science, nanoengineering, and computer science; conducts research, mentors PhD students, publishes papers, and has founded companies in pharmaceuticals, materials, electronics, including AI computing and memory chips.
- Active involvement in scientific research beyond teaching, spending most time on research rather than lecturing.
- No internal conflict between science and Christian faith; scientific understanding enhances belief in God.
- Molecular basis for wood's properties: polysaccharides strands held by hydrogen bonds providing impact strength, explaining why a tree withstands a car crash better than the car.
- Comparison of wood's durability (1,000-year-old structures) vs. plastics decomposing in 5-10 years, highlighting divine material design.
- Challenges in building robots from biological molecules (polysaccharides, polypeptides, lipids, nucleic acids) vs. using plastics, wires, silicon; humans mimic nature but can't replicate molecular construction.
- Photosynthesis in leaves: magnesium atom in porphyrin funnels light, ejects electron, processes CO2 into tree structure and releases O2.
- Vision mechanism: rhodopsin molecules change configuration upon photon impact, relax back to enable sight.
- Memory formation: electronic interactions lead to protein synthesis, which during sleep forms hardwired brain interconnects.
- Scientists sometimes worship creation (e.g., trees) instead of the creator, per G.K. Chesterton quote.
- Private admissions by scientists: no full understanding of life, origins, or mechanisms; some privately agree with Tour but stay silent.
- Community pressures: exclusion from societies and academies for admitting

uncertainties or diverging from norms.
- Science requires honesty and admitting unknowns, but COVID revealed dishonesty, eroding credibility.
- Peer review biases: papers challenging established views often rejected, especially if contradicting reviewer's career work.
- Grant funding tied to aligning with certain narratives; hard to introduce field-shaking ideas.
- Evolutionary process lacks detailed chemical explanation; molecular interactions for changes not clarified.
- Two-day meeting in St. Louis with colleague to discuss evolutionary chemistry, but left unconvinced.
- Characteristics of life: responsive to environment, growth/change, metabolism, homeostasis, cellular composition, trait inheritance.
- Efforts to redefine life minimally to claim synthetic creation, but such claims lack full characteristics like homeostasis (e.g., maintaining internal temperature, pH, ATP production).
- Origin-of-life researchers use "proto-life" to hype lab results; media exaggerates to "scientists created life."
- Challenges to researchers: inability to link two amino acids or glucose molecules prebiotically without interference.
- Unfulfilled predictions: e.g., Jack Szostak (2014: life in 3-5 years), Dmitry Tarseslav (5 years), Steve Benner (paradoxes solved), Lee Cronin (2011: life in couple years)—none achieved.
- Creating life: turning inorganic to living meeting life criteria.
- Four compound classes for life: lipids (cell membranes), polysaccharides (energy/channels), nucleotides (RNA/DNA), polypeptides (proteins/enzymes).
- Inability to form these polymers or even monomers prebiotically.
- Miller-Urey experiment (1953): produced amino acids but unusable mixtures without handedness.
- Molecular chirality: right- and left-handed forms (mirror images like hands); biology needs one handedness, prebiotic methods yield mixtures.
- Modern techniques achieve chirality but not via early Earth mimicry; chiral surfaces fail to produce pure handedness.
- Inability to assemble cell even with all components, ions, and DNA code provided.
- Simplest cells: similar in modern and fossil records; biophysical calculations show minimal operable cell needs 15 unmade prebiotic components.
- Progress illusion: new discoveries (e.g., chiral induced spin selectivity, interactome) move target farther away.
- No scientific idea how life originated; Bible says God spoke it into existence, science seeks details.
- Projections of nearing life creation due to mob mentality, career inertia.
- Cop-out responses: e.g., Benner leaving assembly to younger researchers.
- Cloning: duplicates existing life, not creates; starts with cells, inserts genetics.

- Ethical concerns: cloning humans could create superhuman races or enhanced individuals (e.g., 10% faster, 20% smarter).
- Genetic engineering: potential to correct disorders (e.g., autism, breast cancer predisposition) vs. abuse like preemptive surgeries.
- Chinese embryo modification abuse: led to imprisonment, career ends, funding bans; community condemned.
- Evolution: from LUCA (last universal common ancestor) to diversity via adaptation to environment.
- Microevolution: observed small changes (e.g., bird bills, bacterial antibiotic resistance via mutations or population selection).
- Bacterial resistance: often surviving resistant individuals propagate; finish antibiotics to eliminate all.
- Bacteria share DNA via tubules; respond to stresses, suggesting cellular “consciousness” or adaptive behavior.
- Macroevolution: body plan changes (e.g., invertebrate to vertebrate) never observed.
- Fossil record: supports microevolution but not body plan transitions; hypotheses link fossils without direct evidence.
- Regulatory genetic networks: early wiring lethal if clipped; requires coordinated downstream changes (not single mutations).
- Lenski experiment (1988-present): bacterial evolution under stress equivalent to 2 million years; no body plan changes, only minor (e.g., citrate use via existing gene activation).
- Cambrian explosion (540M years ago): sudden burst of species over short period, no transitional forms.
- Punctuated equilibrium (Gould): stasis then sudden changes, no gradual ramp from single cell.
- No animal macroevolution to new species; some plant genome doubling.
- Unicellular to multicellular: not observed, requires regulatory network changes.
- Design language implies designer; some admit “looks designed” but deny it.
- Resistance to questioning evolution: funding cuts, grant denials, academy exclusion for Tour’s skeptical statement.
- Unsolved: sleep consolidates memory via protein strengthening, hardwired interconnects.
- Cell anatomy: extraordinary, can’t mimic.
- Mimicking materials (e.g., wood as nylon-carbon composite) but not structures.
- Phenomena: sensing stares (evolutionary prey detection?), maternal intuition.
- Dark matter/energy: 70-90% of universe, inferred by difference from Big Bang matter/energy.
- Electromagnetic spectrum: narrow visible range; tools detect beyond (e.g., radio waves).
- Fine-tuning: physical constants (e.g., water dipole moment) precise for life; slight changes preclude life.

- Unique Earth: atmosphere, breathable, viewable heavens; universal periodic table.
- Cell as factory with systems engineering.
- Synthetic molecular brain: voltage pulses for simple gates (AND/OR), vs. child's complex brain.
- Mosquitoes: coordinated flight via pheromone sensors from tiny brains.

Nice to see Dr. Tour bringing up additional evidence that is not related to his usual domain: the origin of life. Specifically, he brought up the fine-tuning, habitability, and sudden infusions of information in the fossil record, e.g. – the Cambrian explosion. I want everyone to know about these things.

I'm not keeping track of the controversies with Tucker Carlson, etc. I'm only posting this because I want you to share it, and pray for the people who watched it who are still not yet reconciled with God, through Christ.

Religious liberty and freedom of association under fire in Washington state

January 13, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Lately, I have noticed some Christians trying to attain an appearance of piety by claiming that it is more holy to not get involved in politics. These claims remind me of my early days as a Christian, when I would bring up C.S. Lewis and other easy apologetics, and people would act as if I were discussing the occult. “Only people with doubts care about evidence!” they’d cry. And today, the new heresy is Christians who care about what laws they live under.

Anyway, you regular readers will know all about this. On this blog, we talk about how different cities, states and countries make it difficult for serious Christians to do Kingdom business.

So, today, we have a new story about what happens in states where the majority of Christians think that “Jesus never cared about politics” or “Jesus was neither a Democrat nor a Republican” or “Jesus was a refugee”.

Here is an Alliance Defending Freedom article about case:

> The Washington Supreme Court recently reinterpreted state law to prohibit religious organizations, including Yakima Union Gospel Mission, from only hiring individuals who share and live out its religious beliefs. State officials are threatening the mission with significant penalties for using its constitutionally protected right to hire employees who share and live the ministry’s religious beliefs.

According to their timeline, the Washington Supreme Court “effectively gutted” the Washington Law Against Discrimination’s exemption for religious employers in March 2021. This prevented Yakima Union Gospel Mission from making sure that the people who work in their Christian ministry are actually Christians.

By the way, this is the same Washington Supreme Court that went after that nice Christian florist Barronelle Stutzman, who ended up having to pay $5000 to two gay activists according to the far left NBC News. Washington is a fascist state, I don’t recommend that Christians live there.

Anyway, there’s some good news about that Yakima Union Gospel Mission case reported in the Washington Stand:

> A blue state’s “anti-discrimination” law targeting Christian organizations has been struck by a federal appellate court as blatantly unconstitutional. In 2023, Union Gospel Mission of Yakima, Washington, filed a lawsuit to block enforcement of the state of Washington’s “Law Against Discrimination” (WLAD), arguing that the law’s prohibition against employment discrimination on the basis of certain protected characteristics violated the Christian group’s First Amendment rights to

> hire only fellow Christians who adhere to a biblical understanding of sex and marriage. The U.S. Court of Appeals agreed with Union Gospel Mission in a ruling this week.

The funny thing about this ruling is that this was from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. I used to listen to the Michael Medved Show when I first came to America, and he (a resident of Washington state) used to call this court the "9th Circus Court of Appeals". Well, a funny thing happened to the 9th Circus Court of Appeals. They became centrist – the 9th Centrist Court of Appeals!

Here's another 9th Circuit case, from December 2025, reported in The Federalist:

> The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit ruled Friday that the University of Washington is not allowed to punish a professor for making fun of the "land acknowledgments" they tried to force on their staff.
>
> The win at the circuit level comes after the district court sided with the school.
>
> "A public university investigated, reprimanded, and threatened to discipline a professor for contentious statements he made in a class syllabus. The statements, which mocked the university's model syllabus statement on an issue of public concern, caused offense in the university community," Judge Danial Bress, an appointee of President Donald Trump, wrote in the majority opinion. "Yet debate and disagreement are hallmarks of higher education. Student discomfort with a professor's views can prompt discussion and disapproval. But this discomfort is not grounds for the university retaliating against the professor. We hold that the university's actions toward the professor violated his First Amendment rights."
>
> The court found that the school subjected computer science professor Stuart Reges to punitive employment actions and reprimand, based entirely on his speech disagreeing with their policy.

In conclusion, please be cautious about people who are urging Christians not to be involved in politics. These are either atheists or Christians who have no serious life plan consistent with Christianity. There are no exceptions. People who have Christian life plans understand that those plans cannot be carried out if their country turns into North Korea. Or Venezuela. You can't buy apologetics books to read in those countries. You either don't have the money or the books are banned. Owning a Bible is a capital offense in North Korea, which is officially atheist.

This is something that these "Jesus didn't care about politics" fools never think about. They're usually philosophers who dropped math in Grade 10 and never worked a day in the private sector. They just don't know enough about how the world works, and that's why they try to make a virtue out of their laziness. Either that or it's atheists wagging their fingers at Christians, telling them not to vote, because they don't want any restrictions on all the new atheist hobbies: sex-selection abortion, race-selection abortion, transing the kids for social media clout, etc.

Don’t listen to these people. Read Thomas Sowell, Wayne Grudem and Jay Richards, and then go vote. Put up lawn signs and car magnets. And maybe switch your monthly donations to Alliance Defending Freedom.

New poll: 61% of white leftist women ages 18-44 agree with obstructing law enforcement

January 20, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was asked by a friend to write something about what's going on with leftist white women aged 18-44 these days. Everyone has seen the videos of these women using violence against federal law enforcement as they go about their duties removing violent criminals who should not be inside the USA. In this post, I'll go over a few recent articles that talk about this problem, and identify the cause of it. I really hope this will help you.

First, a poll, reported by PJ Media:

> Earlier this week, Kevin Downey Jr. wrote about what he calls "affluent white liberal women," or AWFLs, pegging them as the biggest internal threat to America… well-off women with pronouns in their bios and too much time on their hands. He described them as attention-seeking harpies who push extreme gender ideology, drag their kids to medicalized gender clinics, and parade them at sexualized drag shows labeled as "family-friendly." These are the same people, he argued, who want to defund the police, defend criminals no matter how violent or foreign, and censor anyone who steps out of line with their diversity-and-inclusion gospel.
>
> In fact, recent polling from Cygnal supports his thesis in a significant way. According to the poll, around 24% of Americans overall think criminal action, including violence, is acceptable to stop federal immigration enforcement.
>
> […]But drill down to white liberal women ages 18 to 44, and that number explodes to 61%.

The poll helps to illustrate the general trend behind the specific videos of these women getting violent with the police. Far from being one or two cases, this is actually what 61% of white leftist women ages 18 to 44 agree with. Regular readers will know about the slide of young women into the radical, extremist left, because I've blogged about the surveys showing a *worldwide trend of young women becoming more leftist*. But it's useful to have the up to date numbers.

It's also significant that most of these women are extremely unhappy:

> Turns out they're miserable. The 2024 American Family Survey found that 37% of conservative women and 28% of moderate women between 18 and 40 reported being "completely satisfied" with their lives. For liberal women in the same age group, that figure collapses to just 12%. Liberal women are almost three times more likely than conservative women to experience loneliness multiple times a week, 29% compared to 11%.

I've blogged about that, and also about the majority of them are mentally ill and taking

psychiatric medications for their mental illness.

This article from The Federalist by Joshua Slocum entitled "Why Leftist White Women Are Leading Domestic Terrorism In Minnesota" is exactly right in identifying the root cause:

> At least 60 years of mainstreamed feminism has put American culture under the stiletto heel of entitled and exploitative women.
>
> […]How did so many leftist American women decide that young foreign men who jump the border are innocent victims in need of their maternal protection, instead of the American girls and young women entitled to be shielded from these men?
>
> The answer appears to be Cluster B personality disorders. These are deep, ingrained characteristics. Those with such disorders are fundamentally narcissistic, emotionally unstable, and often disconnected from reality.
>
> […]This is what we're seeing in these female leftist "protestors." Cluster B personalities are all about dysregulated emotions (usually rage or suicidal despair) and twisting reality into its opposite.

If you don't follow me on Twitter, then you might not have heard of Hannah Spier, M.D. who is a psychiatrist whose videos on Cluster B personality disorders and dark tetrad personality patterns have been extremely helpful to me in understanding white leftist women.

And Joshua Slocum actually proposes a solution to this problem. What's the solution? We hold women accountable for their bad choices, instead of blaming the results of their bad choices on men.

He writes:

> First, we must enact swift and proportionate consequences. For too long, leftist agitators, especially women, have been given the hands-off treatment. Too many of these videos show cops wasting time issuing repeated orders to stop the car and get out while the harpies behind the wheel only escalate. Give the order clearly once. If she disobeys, cuff her and put her in the paddy wagon.
>
> […]Second, we have to reject the "women are wonderful" effect. This is a phenomenon that describes how both men and women have an in-built pro-female bias. We can look at a man and a woman both performing the same bad action, but we'll excuse the woman while condemning the man.
>
> Ill-tempered women in America have gotten away with disorderly and criminal behavior at high rates because of this bias. They know it, and they use it deliberately. This woman was tailing ICE and interfering with their operation, pulled the "I'm just a mom!" card when she was caught and forced to stop. Don't fall for it.

By the way, there's a great recent article from The Federalist about Christians firing a man and paying a woman just over $1 million dollars *for engaging in the exact same*

action. The sentences given to men for crimes are 63% more severe compared to women, according to a recent study.

But let us continue with Joshua Slocum:

> Finally, men have to go back to telling women "no." This is the piece of advice most people have the hardest time with. Women hate hearing it. Many men do, too. We've been so hypnotized for so long by feminism that simply telling women "no," and suggesting that a man ever exercise authority over a woman, is read by otherwise reasonable people as "misogyny."
>
> Nonsense. If women are full adults with as much agency as men, then they must be treated that way. Men have become knock-kneed with fear, even contemplating telling women "no." It's not an unreasonable worry. In my counseling practice, male clients have told me that simply holding female underlings to the same standards as males has resulted in complaints to HR that the men are "aggressive" with women.
>
> Men, I'm afraid we're going to have to do it anyway. They're going to call us misogynists. They're going to tell us we have "an aggressive tone" with women. This is merely the same toddler distraction behavior that ends up exploding in these absurd and dangerous street performances.
>
> Men are not going to get through this without the accusations, and we have to accept that as the price we pay for helping put civil society back in order. The women will be fine. Sooner or later, the stroppy toddler cries it out and starts behaving sanely again.

If you want a *long-form explanation* for what the underlying cause of this mental illness is, you should check out this article from Aporia Magazine, entitled "Sterile Polygamy". In one line, white leftist women are going crazy because they have adopted a dating strategy that leaves them with no commitment, no children, and no long-term love relationships.

Here's the important part:

> At the 2018 peak, 28% of men under 30 reported no sex in the past year, compared to 18% of women.
>
> On dating apps, women's average match rate is 31%; men's is 2.6% — a 12-fold difference. The most desirable men receive overwhelming attention while the majority receive almost nothing.
>
> […]The data is stark. Analysis of dating app behavior shows that women like about 14% of male profiles, whereas men like 46% of female profiles. The result is that a small percentage of men receive the vast majority of female attention. The top 10% of men get over half of all likes. The bottom 50% of men get about 5%.
>
> […]High-status men benefit from polygyny. Women may even prefer to share a

> high-status man over exclusive access to a low-status one.
>
> […]If you designed a system to maximize sexual access for high-status men while maintaining the pretense of monogamy, you couldn't do better than the one we've built by accident.
>
> […]We've invented something different: effective polygamy without children. High-status men cycle through partners, but nobody reproduces. Why? Because reproduction requires the lock-in that marriage provides. Serial dating offers [high-status] men all the benefits of access with none of the costs of commitment. And women, waiting for commitment from [high-status] men who have no incentive to provide it, delay childbearing until it's too late.

So, will we get any leadership on this from within the Christian community or the conservative community? I don't see any reason why we should expect to. Our leaders are still harping about "Andrew Tate" and ignoring all of the real underlying problems caused by feminist laws, policies and indoctrination.

When I listen to Christian and conservative leaders, they seem to think that they can expect good men to date and marry 40-year-old single-mother feminists who have spent their 20s chasing the bad boys and becoming less and less attractive as wives. And these leaders have no interest in reforming injustices like no-fault divorce, false accusations, biased domestic violence laws, paternity fraud, single mother welfare, etc. They can't even name them! So, they're just going to keep on insisting on a woman's "right" to protection and provision from any man that she decides to settle for. When she is "ready".

That's not working. It will never work. We need a new strategy.

New study: Can the introduction of oxygen explain the Cambrian explosion?

January 22, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Do you remember the episode of Knight and Rose Show where we interviewed Dr. Günter Bechly about the Cambrian explosion? We were talking about naturalistic explanations for the explosions of new information at certain points in the fossil record. I mentioned that one paper had argued that the introduction of molecular oxygen into the early Earth's atmosphere might explain the origin of all these new body plans and organ types.

Well, before we see the new paper, let's start at the very beginning. What is the Cambrian explosion?

The Cambrian Explosion refers to an explosive event in Earth's history. Around 530 million years ago, over a geologically brief window of roughly 5–10 million years, nearly all major animal body plans (phyla) appeared suddenly in the fossil record. These are new, complete body plans with new designs for things like hard shells, jointed limbs, compound eyes, digestive systems, nervous tissue, etc. And they came in without clear transitional precursors from the simpler life forms found in earlier strata.

So, what could have caused this? Well, in my computer lab, when we see new code in the Github repository, we know that a software engineer committed those changes and then pushed them into the code repository. But some people don't like the idea of a Cosmic Software Engineer, so they try to come up with alternative explanations that are more comfortable for them.

In this case, one of the explanations that keeps coming up is that the introduction of a new gas into the atmosphere must have caused all this code to appear. Which gas? Oxygen!

Here's the story from Casey Luskin, over at Science and Culture:

> For many evolutionary biologists, that trigger is a sudden rise in atmospheric oxygen just before the Cambrian — and the claimed sudden rise of oxygen is enough to satisfy them that the Cambrian explosion is explained (or at least explained away).

Today's post is about a new paper that gives us reasons to doubt it, and Casey explains:

> The oxygen "trigger" theory for the Cambrian explosion has now taken another hit. A new paper in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, "Breathing life into the boring billion: Direct constraints from 1.4 Ga fluid inclusions reveal a fair climate and oxygenated atmosphere," suggests that oxygen might have been quite high long before the Cambrian period, casting doubt on the idea that it played a role as a trigger.

Casey quotes an article about the new paper, which explains that the researchers got

samples of air trapped in ancient crystals that are 1.4 BILLION years old – much, much older than the Cambrian explosion. And what is in the samples? Molecular oxygen! And yes, this does show that the planet had more oxygen than expected at this much earlier time. Casey notes that if oxygen were the trigger to all this code being written in the blink of an eye, then why didn't it happen when the oxygen was there 1.4 billion years ago?

Because oxygen doesn't write code, duh!

And since we're on the topic, in the episode with Dr. Bechly, I mentioned an article he wrote about an earlier (2023) paper that also disproved the oxygen explanation for massive amounts of new code. This was one of his famous "Fossil Friday" articles. Except here, he is talking about the Avalon explosion, not the Cambrian explosion. It turns out that there are tons of these explosions in the fossil record.

He wrote this:

> Now a new study (Ostrander et al. 2023) by group of researchers from Denmark has overturned decades of evolutionary dogma and claims the exact opposite: "oxygen didn't trigger multicellular organisms" (Anonymous 2023, UCPH 2023). What this study found was instead clear evidence of a lower oxygen content correlated with the Avalon Explosion of the Ediacaran biota. The authors summarize their surprising findings as: "Contrary to a classical hypothesis, our interpretations place the Shuram excursion, and any coeval animal evolutionary events, in a predominantly anoxic global ocean." Co-author Christian Bjerrum commented "Specifically, it means that we need to rethink a lot of the things that we believed to be true from our childhood learning. And textbooks need to be revised and rewritten.

And again, there are lots of these explosions. He calls them "biological big bangs". If you want to read his big article about all the different biological big bangs, you can find it here.

And he also did a long presentation on it, which is even better than our podcast episode, because he had pictures and graphs:

Well, that's something for people to know about. You don't want to make your view of the world based on speculations. We know what makes code appear. Software engineers make code appear. So people need to stop grasping at gasses and accept the way the world really is. Designs need a Designer.

If you watch his presentation twice, I'm pretty sure that you will remember it enough to make this case for design. And arguing from scientific evidence makes life more fun. Let the other team do the speculating, you stick with the scientific evidence.

Also, don't forget about our episode on junk DNA with Casey Luskin.

Knight and Rose Show #71: Keri Ingraham: Education Policy

January 24, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 71 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and his friend Bonnie discuss the school choice and education reform with Keri Ingraham from Discovery Institute. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and guest host Bonnie welcome Dr. Keri Ingraham to discuss school choice and education reform. They discuss the public school monopoly's resistance to innovation and undermining of parental values. Ingraham explains how education savings accounts restore parental authority. She critiques teacher unions and radical ideologies. Ingraham advocates for micro schools, hybrid learning, and vocational paths to align education with family values.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 71:

Speaker biographies

Dr. Keri D. Ingraham is a Senior Fellow at Discovery Institute and Director of the Institute's American Center for Transforming Education. She is also a Senior Fellow at Independent Women's Forum. Prior to joining Discovery Institute, Dr. Ingraham spent nearly two decades leading within the field of education. Her areas of education expertise include innovation, thought leadership, research, online learning best practices, customized hybrid program development, business model creation, operations effectiveness, and strategic planning for sustainability and scaling. She holds a Doctor of Education degree and a Master of Education degree from Regent University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from George Fox University.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Bonnie is a software engineer and a mother of 5 children, ages 4 to 18. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Theology from Prairie College and an Associate degree in Nursing from Jefferson State Community College. She is currently working on her M. Div at Birmingham Theological Seminary.

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My notes for my call-in to the Duane Lester Show this morning

January 28, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I called in to the Duane Lester Show on KNIM Talk 95.9 Live to talk about my recent post analyzing the rise in left-wing advocacy among white women aged 18-44. I tried to explain what I think the root cause is, and what I think we can do as a society to address it. I was able to make all 6 of my points, but for people listening who are here to check out my blog, I thought I would just go ahead and post the notes I made, along with the sources.

Point 1: Radical Views on Violence

Data: Recent Cygnal polling shows ~24% of Americans overall accept criminal action (including violence) to obstruct federal immigration enforcement (e.g., against ICE). But among white leftist women ages 18-44, it jumps to 61%.

Source: https://pjmedia.com/matt-margolis/2026/01/10/white-leftist-women-really-are-bat-poop-crazy-and-this-proves-it-n4948130

Point: ICE targets criminal aliens (murderers, rapists, etc.), so this majority view means these women are willing to use lawbreaking/violence to protect those criminals over enforcing laws that protect citizens.

To me, it feels like an application of the “don’t judge” slogan, a slogan that is used by people who are underperforming to stop others from judging them.

Point 2: Global Leftward Shift

Data: A recent Financial Times analysis shows that in the 1990s, young men and women (18-29) were similarly mildly leftist. By 2024, men stayed roughly the same, but women shifted sharply further left. And this trend applies across multiple countries (US, France, Germany, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea).

Source: https://spectator.com/article/the-rise-of-toxic-femininity/?edition=us

Point: The women clashing with ICE or supporting obstruction fit this larger, international trend of younger women radicalizing leftward, while men hold steady. Many people think that what’s happening to women is the result of Trump being elected, but that doesn’t explain the hard slide to the left of young women in more leftist countries.

Point 3: Antidepressant Use and Mental Health Decline

Data: A 2024 study published in the journal Pediatrics looked at national prescription data from 2016–2022. And it found that post-March 2020, rates of antidepressant

dispensing accelerated sharply:

- 129.6% faster monthly increase for female adolescents (12–17)
- 56.5% faster for young women (18–25)
- No similar surge for young males

Source: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38404197/

Point: We're seeing a real, documented crisis in young women's mental health—exploding use of antidepressants (SSRIs are the most common class here) and higher depression rates. This lines up with the leftward shift we just discussed in point 2. Something is fueling distress in this group.

Point 4: Link Between Leftist Ideology and Mental Health Decline

Data: Multiple studies find that female leftists show the largest increases in depressive symptoms over the past decade, diverging from conservatives. Young leftist women report higher depression, anxiety, and lower life satisfaction (e.g., only 12% "completely satisfied" vs. 37% for conservative women in recent surveys).

Source:

- SSM Mental Health study: https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8713953
- Institute for Family Studies study: https://ifstudies.org/blog/why-so-blue-liberal-women-are-less-happy-more-lonely-but-why

Point: Left-leaning views often lead to emotion-driven decision-making. These decisions lead to bad outcomes. And leftists deflect responsibility and place blame on others. For example, taking out huge student loans for a degree that does not lead to a good-paying job, or choosing a boyfriend based on appearance
who then demonstrates poor character. If the leftist is always the victim of external forces, then the leftist has no reason to develop accurate beliefs to make better decisions. Leftists are not reading books about personal finance or Christian apologetics so that they can choose a major or choose a mate. The pattern of making bad decisions causes anxiety, stress, and anger.

The victimhood that young leftist women experience as they slide further to the left has caused a sharp increase in "Cluster B" disorders, which involve lack of respect, impulsiveness, attention-seeking and narcissism.

Point 5: Young women are choosing non-traditional men

Data: Modern dating shows imbalances: Dating app usage shows that the vast majority of women are targeting the minority of most physically attractive men. This means that

this minority of most-attractive men don't have to treat women well or commit to get sex, since there is always a long line of women interested in them. Addiction to social media makes this focus on the most attractive men even stronger.

Source: https://www.aporiamagazine.com/p/sterile-polygamy

Point: Young leftist women are being indoctrinated in feminist ideology. They see the traditional male roles of moral leader and spiritual leader as "sexist" and "oppressive". So, they tend to pick men by appearance. They look for permissive men who don't judge or lead. This minority of permissive, attractive men are not trying to shape the women for marriage roles like wife and mother. They are just there for the temporary sex.

In addition to the missing boyfriend problem, there is just a general lack of male leadership in women's lives. Fathers are ejected from homes by no-fault divorce. Male teachers are ejected from classrooms. And so on.

Point 6: Men are facing major deterrents to dating and marriage

In addition to women choosing the most attractive men who match their leftist politics and moral relativism, there is also the problem of traditional men dealing with disincentives to marriage and fatherhood.

- feminist laws and policies deter men from marrying, e.g. – no-fault divorce, false accusations for custody, transing kids
- women get preferential treatment for degrees and jobs, making it harder for men to have leadership from provider role
- young women are being trained to reject accountability for bad choices, e.g. – abortion, single mother welfare, student loan bailouts, lighter sentences for crimes, etc.
- soulmate view of relationships: popular movies and books train women to have unrealistic views of relationships
- leftist political views, (e.g. – abortion, same-sex marriage), are unattractive to traditional men
- possibility of a workplace complaint getting a man fired and potentially blacklisted – can't support a family
- the male roles of protector and provider are seen as "entitlements" for which men get no respect, so women have no obligations to fuel their men with care

The disincentives faced by traditional men to pursue marriage are typically ignored by social conservatives, who just insist that men embrace husband and father roles regardless of these disincentives. But this isn't working.

A better way forward is the changes to laws and policies, such as the Kentucky 50-50 custody
law: https://dailycaller.com/2025/09/08/mr-right-kentucky-divorce-rates-50-50-child-custody/

Did Josephus know the men who sent Jesus to the Cross?

February 3, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I recently found out about a new academic book published by T. C. Schmidt who is an associate professor of religious studies at Fairfield University, although he's currently a visiting fellow at Princeton University. He has a PhD in Religious Studies from Yale University. The new book is called "Josephus and Jesus: New Evidence for the One Called Christ" and the publisher is Oxford University Press. The book is available for free thanks to a generous donor. Let's find out what it's about.

Well, the first report of this book that I found was on Dr. Mike Licona's YouTube channel, where he has a 1 hour interview with the author, and he's quite impressed with what the author found.

Here's the video:

And the description says:

> Josephus is often cited as one of the strongest non Christian sources for the historical Jesus. But is that really the case?
>
> He mentions Jesus in two controversial passages… or does he? Scholars have debated this for decades, questioning what Josephus actually wrote, what may have been added later, and what it all means for the case of Jesus outside the Bible.
>
> In this fascinating interview, Dr. Tom Schmidt helps us dive deep into the facts behind one of the most discussed ancient references to Jesus.

Most Christian apologists know about the two passages about the historical Jesus found in the writings of Josephus. These passages are important because they are written by a Jewish historian with good credentials, and they confirm the gospels description of the historical Jesus. But there's always been some suspicion about one of them in particular. Anyway, let's start with who Josephus is.

His full name is "Flavius Josephus" and he was born in 37 AD just a few years after Jesus died. Josephus was a Jewish priest, historian, and military leader whose writings provide some of the earliest references to Jesus from outside the New Testament.

Here are the passages:

This is the uncontroversial one:

> when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority]. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an

> accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned

That's from Antiquities of the Jews, Book 20, Chapter 9, Section 1.

And this is the controversial one:

> Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, [9] those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; [10] as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

That's from Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18, Chapter 3, Section 3.

So people wonder, is Josephus just reporting what he's hearing from other people, or is he getting this from eyewitnesses, or what?

Well, the new news is that there is reason from Schmidt's book to believe that he had personal connections to the events surrounding Jesus' trial and execution. The book uses textual analysis to argue for the authenticity of the passages above, because the language itself indicates personal knowledge. But there's more.

Josephus repeatedly refers to knowing the "protoi" (the first or leading men) of Jerusalem. In his autobiography, he mentions that he started meeting with these elite figures—the chief priests and leaders—around 51 or 52 AD and these meetings were ongoing. Logically, many of these individuals would have been active two decades earlier during Jesus' trial in 30-33 AD. Josephus uses the phrase "first men among us" about 50 times across his writings, often to denote groups he personally knew or interacted with. This suggests that when he attributes Jesus' accusation to these "first men," he's drawing from firsthand accounts, not mere hearsay. But there's even more!

I mentioned earlier how Josephus was in the military. Well, he describes his commanding officer during the Jewish-Roman war as "oldest of the high priests" in 68-69 AD, which implies that he would have been an adult around the time of Jesus. Schmidt makes the case that this commander is the son of the high priest mentioned in the Gospel of John who is the first to interrogate Jesus after his arrest. And that the commander would have been a potential witness or participant in the events surrounding the arrest. But there's still more!

Schmidt says that Josephus' own father, Matthias, who was born around 5-10 AD was a prominent priest in Jerusalem, and about 25 years old at the time of the crucifixion. Because the crucifixion happens at the festival of Passover, he would certainly have been nearby . It's a required pilgrimage for Jews, especially for priests. So Josephus would have had access to someone who was there at the time of these rather important events. And

it’s reasonable that he would have heard about them from his father or extended family.

So, this is pretty big stuff. Normally, I wouldn’t be overly excited about this, because I liked to see these things debated by scholars, like Mike Licona does with Bart Ehrman. So the real test would be to see if Mike thinks it’s good enough to raise in a debate, and how would someone like Ehrman respond to it. But because this was published by Oxford University Press by a professor with a PhD from Yale, I’m impressed. This is big news, and something for you to investigate, so you can make use of it yourself in your conversations. I think when you put discoveries like this together with ground-breaking research like Richard Bauckham’s Jesus and the Eyewitnesses, you can see that there is a trend of increasing support for the Bible’s reliability.

Twenty military engagements that Christians and conservatives should know about

February 5, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was thinking hard on the weekend about whether to pre-order another solo wargame, because the deadline was approaching. The new game is about the attack on the Merville Battery, and it's designed by the same guy who made the new Guadalcanal game in the "Valiant Defense" series, which I did pre-order. I loved the Lanzerath Ridge game in that series. So I decided to see where Merville Battery fits on the list of most heroic actions by Western nations. In case you want to improve your character with a little humility and gratitude, you can find a good list of stories below. I also included a relevant book, movie or wargame where available.

1. **Battle off Samar (Taffy 3)**
   Outmatched US Navy escort carriers and destroyer escorts of Taffy 3 aggressively charged and fought a desperate delaying action against Admiral Kurita's vastly superior Center Force (including battleship Yamato) off Samar Island, Philippines, October 25, 1944.

   Highlight: Commander Ernest E. Evans (USS Johnston), Lieutenant Commander Robert Copeland (USS Samuel B. Roberts) and Admiral Clifton Sprague made the selfless choice to attack rather than flee, buying vital hours for the Leyte landings.

   Book: The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors by James D. Hornfischer (Goodreads: 4.36). Available on Audible.

   Solo wargame: Carrier Battles: Philippine Sea (Compass Games).

2. **Defense of Toktong Pass (Fox Company, 7th Marines)**
   Captain William Barber's Fox Company (~240 Marines) held a vital hilltop overlooking Toktong Pass during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, Korea, November 27–December 2, 1950, against thousands of Chinese attackers in extreme cold.

   Highlight: Isolated and outnumbered, they endured five days of assaults with heavy casualties, refusing retreat to keep the escape route open for the 1st Marine Division—ultimate selfless stand that saved thousands; Barber earned the Medal of Honor.

   Book: On Desperate Ground: The Marines at The Reservoir, the Korean War's Greatest Battle by Hampton Sides (Goodreads: 4.59). Available on Audible.

3. **USS Tang's fifth patrol**
   Under Cmdr. Richard O'Kane, Tang sank 10 ships in one patrol (including a daring night surface attack on a convoy), totaling ~93,000 tons—making her the top-scoring U.S. sub by tonnage in a single war patrol.

Highlight: O'Kane's aggressive maneuvering and precise torpedo work exemplified selfless risk for maximum damage in hostile waters; he earned the Medal of Honor for his overall command of Tang.

Book: Clear the Bridge! The War Patrols of the USS Tang by Richard H. O'Kane (Goodreads: 4.43) – raw, firsthand memoir of the Silent Service's most successful skipper.

Solo wargame: Silent Victory: U.S. Submarines in the Pacific, 1941-45 (Consim Press, new edition by GMT).

4. **Guadalcanal Campaign (Henderson Field Defense)**
   US Marines and Army forces landed on Guadalcanal in August 1942, seizing and defending Henderson Field against relentless Japanese assaults in jungle hell (disease, starvation, constant combat) until February 1943.

   Highlight: Isolated troops held critical airfield against overwhelming odds for months—ultimate selfless endurance and resolve; Sgt. John Basilone's MoH stand on Bloody Ridge (manning guns alone, repulsing regiment-sized attack) exemplified genius under fire and sacrifice that turned the Pacific tide.

   Book: Midnight in the Pacific: Guadalcanal — The World War II Battle That Turned the Tide of War by Joseph Wheelan (Goodreads: 4.45). Available on Audible.

   Solo wargame: Guadalcanal (upcoming DVG solitaire game).

5. **Battle of Midway**
   US Navy carriers and land-based aircraft decisively defeated the Japanese Combined Fleet off Midway Atoll, June 4–7, 1942, sinking four Japanese fleet carriers.

   Highlight: Outnumbered US forces used genius intelligence/codebreaking and selfless sacrifice by torpedo squadrons (drawing defenders low) to enable devastating dive-bomber attacks—turning the Pacific War from Japanese offensive dominance to Allied initiative.

   Book: The Battle of Midway (Pivotal Moments in American History) by Craig L. Symonds (Goodreads: 4.39). Available on Audible.

   Solo wargame: Pacific Chase (upcoming DVG solitaire game).

6. **Lanzerath Ridge defense**
   18-man US I&R Platoon (plus 4 observers) ambushed and delayed a 500-man elite German paratrooper battalion on a key ridge in the Losheim Gap, Belgium, December 16, 1944.

   Highlight: Lt. Lyle Bouck's genius lay in perfect ambush discipline—holding fire until point-blank range—disrupting the entire German northern thrust timetable.

   Book: The Longest Winter by Alex Kershaw (Goodreads: 4.23) – intense, platoon-

focused classic. Available on Audible.

Solo wargame: Lanzerath Ridge (DVG).

7. **MACV-SOG Covert Operations (Vietnam)**
   Small MACV-SOG recon teams conducted high-risk cross-border missions into Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam throughout the war, 1964–1972.

   Highlight: Operators ran daring insertions and extractions against overwhelming odds, often deep behind enemy lines with minimal support, providing critical intelligence that shaped operations, suffering some of the highest casualty rates in U.S. units.

   Books: Uncommon Valor: The Recon Company That Earned Five Medals of Honor and Included the Most Decorated Green Beret by Stephen L. Moore (Goodreads: 4.42). Available on Audible. and **Beyond the Call of Duty: The Life of Colonel Robert Howard, America's Most Decorated Green Beret** by Stephen L. Moore (Goodreads: 4.28). Available on Audible.

   Solo wargame: Warfighter: Vietnam Expansion – MACV-SOG #1 (DVG).

8. **St Nazaire Raid**
   British Commandos and Royal Navy rammed an explosive-packed destroyer into the gates and destroyed the only large Atlantic dry dock at St Nazaire, France, March 28, 1942.

   Highlight: Commander Robert Ryder masterminded the precise ramming and commando assault, a selfless plan executed with foresight that denied the Tirpitz safe repair for the war's duration.

   Book: The Greatest Raid of All by C.E. Lucas Phillips (Goodreads: 4.29) – the definitive account. Available on Audible.

   Solo wargame: Raid on St. Nazaire (Avalon Hill).

9. **Bruneval Raid (Operation Biting)**
   British paratroopers (C Company, 2nd Parachute Battalion) plus radar expert Flt Sgt C.W.H. Cox dropped into occupied France to steal key parts of a German Würzburg radar set near Bruneval, February 27–28, 1942.

   Highlight: Maj. John Frost's precise planning and split-second execution (parachute drop, ground fight, beach rendezvous) under extreme risk delivered crucial radar intel that shaped Allied air superiority.

   Book: The Bruneval Raid: Operation Biting 1942 by Ken Ford (Goodreads: 3.92) – solid, detailed account.

10. **USS Wahoo under Mush Morton (1942–1943 patrols)**
    Lt. Cmdr. Dudley "Mush" Morton transformed Wahoo into one of the most

aggressive submarines, sinking 20+ ships (60,000+ tons) across patrols, including bold surface gun actions and ramming convoys in confined waters like the Sea of Japan.

Highlight: Morton's fearless tactics ("Run silent, run deep" but attack aggressively) set the standard for the Silent Service and crippled Japanese supply lines; Wahoo was lost on her final patrol.

Book: Wahoo: The Patrols of America's Most Famous World War II Submarine by Richard H. O'Kane (Goodreads: 4.40) – firsthand account from Morton's executive officer. Available on Audible.

Solo wargame: Silent Victory: U.S. Submarines in the Pacific, 1941-45 (Consim Press, new edition by GMT).

11. **Merville Gun Battery assault**
    150 men of the British 9th Parachute Battalion stormed and silenced a fortified German artillery battery near Merville, France, early hours of D-Day, June 6, 1944.

    Highlight: Lt. Col. Terence Otway, reduced to 25% strength with no heavy weapons, made the courageous call to press the attack, saving thousands on Sword Beach.

    Book: The Day the Devils Dropped In by Neil Barber (Goodreads: 4.43) – definitive 9th Para history.

    Solo wargame: Merville Battery (upcoming DVG solitaire game).

12. **Arnhem Bridge Defense (Frost's Paratroopers)**
    Lt. Col. John Frost's 2nd Parachute Battalion (~750 men) held the north end of Arnhem bridge for 4 days against SS Panzer forces during Operation Market Garden, September 17–20, 1944.

    Highlight: Frost's decision to dig in and fight despite being cut off tied down German reserves and exemplified selfless airborne resolve.

    Book: A Bridge Too Far by Cornelius Ryan (Goodreads: 4.28) – classic narrative of the operation.

    Solo wargame: The Devil's Cauldron: The Battles for Arnhem and Nijmegen (Multi-Man Publishing).

13. **Norwegian Heavy Water Sabotage (Operation Gunnerside)**
    Nine Norwegian commandos (SOE-trained) infiltrated and destroyed the heavy water production facility at Vemork, Norway, February 27–28, 1943, critically delaying the Nazi atomic program.

    Highlight: Joachim Rønneberg led a flawless, bloodless sabotage deep in occupied territory—pure tactical genius and restraint that likely prevented Hitler from

acquiring nuclear capability.

Book: The Winter Fortress by Neal Bascomb (Goodreads: 4.19) – epic, gripping mission narrative. Available on Audible.

Note: Film: *The Heroes of Telemark* (1965); highly-rated miniseries *The Heavy Water War* (2015, IMDb 8.0).

14. **Pegasus Bridge capture**
    Glider-borne D Company, Ox & Bucks Light Infantry seized intact bridges over the Caen Canal and Orne River near Bénouville, France, minutes after midnight on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

    Highlight: Maj. John Howard's coup de main prevented immediate German counterattack.

    Book: Pegasus Bridge by Stephen E. Ambrose (Goodreads: 4.15) – concise and dramatic. Available on Audible.

    Note: Featured in *The Longest Day* (1962, IMDb 7.7).

15. **Los Baños Internment Camp Raid**
    US 11th Airborne paratroopers, Rangers, and Filipino guerrillas liberated 2,147 civilian and military internees from Los Baños camp, Philippines, February 23, 1945.

    Highlight: Perfect multi-axis timing arrived minutes before a planned Japanese massacre, showcasing selfless risk for non-combatants.

    Book: Rescue at Los Baños by Bruce Henderson (Goodreads: 4.28) – daring prison camp raid account. Available on Audible.

    Note: TV documentary/special: *Rescue at Dawn: The Los Baños Raid* (2004).

16. **Cabanatuan Raid**
    US 6th Ranger Battalion and Alamo Scouts rescued 513 Allied POWs near Cabanatuan City, Philippines, January 30, 1945.

    Highlight: Lt. Col. Henry Mucci coordinated the deep infiltration and lightning assault, saving lives just before a potential massacre.

    Book: Ghost Soldiers by Hampton Sides (Goodreads: 4.26) – gripping narrative. Available on Audible.

    Note: Film: *The Great Raid* (2005, IMDb 6.6).

17. **Operation Tidal Wave (Ploesti Raid)**
    177 USAAF B-24 Liberators (with B-17 elements) flew ultra-low-level to bomb Romanian oil refineries fueling the German war machine, August 1, 1943.

    Highlight: Crews pressed through hellish flak, fighters, and balloons at treetop height in a genius low-altitude plan; immense selflessness amid 30% losses delayed

Nazi fuel supply critically; multiple Medals of Honor awarded.

Book: Ploesti: The Great Ground-Air Battle of 1 August 1943 by James Dugan & Carroll Stewart (Goodreads: 4.32).

Solo wargame: B-17 Flying Fortress Leader (DVG).

18. **Imjin River stand**
British 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment fought overwhelming Chinese forces on Hill 235 along the Imjin River, South Korea, April 22–25, 1951.

    Highlight: Lt. Col. James Carne's men held to near annihilation, covering the UN retreat.

    Book: To the Last Round by Andrew Salmon (Goodreads: ~4.3) – moving account.

    Note: Older film *A Hill in Korea* (1956) loosely inspired.

19. **Doolittle Raid**
Sixteen US Army Air Forces B-25 bombers launched from USS Hornet to strike Tokyo and other Japanese cities, April 18, 1942.

    Highlight: Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle led the daring carrier launch and low-level bombing, boosting US morale and forcing Japan to divert resources homeward.

    Book: Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo by Capt. Ted W. Lawson (Goodreads: 4.20) – iconic firsthand account. Available on Audible.

    Note: Highly-rated classic film: *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (1944, IMDb 7.2).

    Solo wargame: Enemy Coast Ahead: The Doolittle Raid (GMT).

20. **USS Laffey Stand (Okinawa)**
The destroyer USS Laffey endured 22 kamikaze attacks in 80 minutes off Okinawa, April 16, 1945, taking 6 plane hits and bombs while fighting back.

    Highlight: Crew's selfless damage control and gunnery kept the ship afloat and fighting—immense resolve under fire saved the vessel ("The Ship That Would Not Die") and demonstrated US Navy tenacity in the final Pacific push.

    Book: Hell from the Heavens: The Epic Story of the USS Laffey and World War II's Greatest Kamikaze Attack by John Wukovits (Goodreads: 4.41). Available on Audible.

    Solo wargame: Picket Duty: Kamikaze Attacks against U.S. Destroyers – Okinawa, 1945 (Legion Wargames LLC).

Many of the books are already done and dusted in my reading list, which might give you even more ideas!

Some of my favorite YouTube channels have excellent documentaries for these events, for example:

- Yarnhub: Battle off Samar
- The Operations Room: Battle off Samar Part 1
- The Operations Room: Battle off Samar Part 2
- The Operations Room: The Battle of Midway
- Yarnhub: Raid on St. Nazaire
- Yarnhub: Pegasus Bridge
- Yarnhub: Doolittle Raid
- The Operations Room: Operation Tidal Wave
- Yarnhub: The USS Laffey

I also just discovered House of History, which has very good videos as well, like this one, which reminded me of the book "Air Apaches" by Jay Stout:

- Bismarck Sea, 1943: How Allied Pilots won the "most decisive aerial victory of World War 2"

And I just watched this one from The Operations Room, which reminded me of the book "The Convoy: HG-76" by Angus Kostam:

- Battle of the Atlantic – Convoy HG76 Fights the Wolfpacks – Animated

Let me know if I missed anything important in the comments!

Detransitioner lawsuit win precedes declining support for transing kids

February 11, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Exciting news last week for Christians and conservatives who are concerned about children being bullied into self-mutilation. A great victory has been achieved. The first ever lawsuit made by a detransitioner has succeeded. I've blogged before that the medical personnel who do these treatments and surgeries are only interested in one thing: MONEY. And when you take away their MONEY, a funny thing happens. They stop transing kids.

Here's the story from The Federalist:

> On Jan. 30, a New York State jury awarded a 22-year-old woman, Fox Varian, $2 million in damages for her 2019 "gender-affirming" double mastectomy, which she came to deeply regret. She was 16 years old at the time. This settlement against Varian's psychologist and plastic surgeon is the first legal judgment imposed upon those performing such mutilations.

According to this article in the New York Post, the people who lost the lawsuit pushed bullied the parents with threats that the child would self-end:

> Psychologist Kenneth Einhorn and surgeon Simon Chin were held responsible in Westchester County Supreme Court in White Plains for ignoring standards of care and procedural guardrails by pressuring the minor into addressing gender dysphoria with permanent surgery, the jury decided.
>
> Lawyers for Varian pointed the finger at Einhorn, saying he "drove the train" and was "putting the idea in Fox's head" that she needed to change her gender with surgery, according to the report.
>
> Varian's mother, Claire Deacon, testified that she was against the surgery, but consented to it out of fear her daughter would commit suicide, according to the outlet.
>
> "This man was just so emphatic, and pushing and pushing, that I felt like there was no good decision," Deacon told The Epoch Times.

That's the standard approach, because they have to get that insurance money somehow! According to the Federalist article, there are at least 5,200 teen girls who have had their breasts removed by adults who got paid to do it. And there are 27 other detransitioner lawsuits still waiting on a verdict. All it takes is one win, though and suddenly the medical associations that approved of these surgeries are changing their tunes.

The Society for Evidence-Based Gender Medicine (SEGM) reports:

> In a watershed moment, on February 3, 2026, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) issued an official position statement recommending that a key

> step of "gender-affirming" care—surgical intervention—be delayed until the patient is "at least 19 years old." The recommendation against performing gender-affirming procedures in minors extends to all types of gender-related surgeries, including breast/chest, genital, and facial surgeries. However, the ASPS statement goes much farther than merely advising surgeons to delay surgery. It raises serious evidentiary and ethical concerns about the entire gender-affirming treatment pathway for youth, including social transition, puberty blockers, and cross-sex hormones.

But that's not the only one, here's another, reported in the far-left Washington Post: (archived)

> The American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend transition surgeries primarily for adults but say adolescents can receive them on a case-by-case basis.
>
> The AMA appears to now be taking a more cautious stance. A spokesperson for the AMA said Tuesday that "the evidence for gender-affirming surgical intervention in minors is insufficient for us to make a definitive statement" but that it agrees with ASPS that surgeries for minors should be generally deferred to adulthood in the absence of clear evidence.

Was the AMA's previous stance on transing the kids based in scientific evidence? Well, the AMA's previous stance contradicted years of research I've covered on this blog, including:

- New study: Risks associated with pediatric "gender-affirming" care
- New study: Transgender surgeries linked to suicidal ideation, depression
- New study: gender-affirming surgery associated with suicide attempts
- Pre-ban study: 53% of mothers with gender-confused boys have mental illness
- New study: Significant parallels found between anorexia and gender dysphoria
- New study: most children suffering from gender confusion grow out of it
- New study: Mental health issues persist after receiving "gender-affirming" treatment
- Study: "social contagion" is a major factor in teen and young adult gender dysphoria
- New study: psychotherapy improves mental health of autistic teens with gender dysphoria
- Controversial study on Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria and transgenderism re-published

The UK's Cass Review, which I discussed in my May 2025 post linked above, is a gold-standard analysis. It found no consistent mental health benefits from puberty blockers or hormones, yet the AMA pushed these treatments regardless. I'm blogging about the gold standard studies, but AMA people thought that ordinary people were not following the science. We are. Christians and conservatives bound our worldviews off of what science tells us. We are not being swayed by Big Medicine and Big LGBT to suppress the science.

The AMA argued gender-affirming care reduces distress, but the Cass Review and other studies show no consistent mental health benefits.

I just think it's amazing that these medical doctors who threaten parents with their child self-ending and bragged about how transing the kids was "a big money-maker" are now suddenly very cautious. All it took was a 2-million-dollar lawsuit and suddenly, scientific evidence matters after all. And that's what Christians had been saying all along – let the scientific evidence inform our decisions about moral issues. It shouldn't just be be a situation of wanting insurance money.

Many Christians think that people who reject Christianity can be trusted to make good moral decisions. "Of course my doctor would never mutilate my child for money" Christian think. "No need for me to study and make a case against abortion, same-sex marriage, and transgenderism". Well, not so fast.

When a person kicks God out of his or her worldview, it actually does have a big effect on how that person sees morality. It doesn't matter that the doctor looks nice, dresses nice, sounds nice, and has fancy degrees. When God is gone from a doctor's worldview, you cannot expect them to behave morally. And that should be a concern to all Christians and conservatives, because we all get old one day. We will all have to rely on health care providers.

We judge too much by appearances. We think a rich doctor must be morally good. It's just not the case. It's our job as Christians to challenge everyone to think more closely about moral issues like abortion, same-sex marriage, transgenderism, etc. We have to study to get the evidence and then we have to not care about the loss of reputation.

Rose and I did a couple of Knight and Rose Show episodes about this topic. One with Frank Turek and one with Jay Richards, so check them out. And check out my previous posts.

Christians and conservatives need to be very skeptical of corporate news media

February 12, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

All the regular readers will know that I am often linking to news sites like The Federalist, Daily Signal, Breitbart, etc. And I also watch news shows like the Lotus Eaters (UK), Juno News (Canada), Steven Crowder (USA), Rita Panahi (Australia), and so on, to see what's going on in other countries. I wanted to write a short blog post with a couple of recent shows, to show you how important it is not to rely on mainstream news media.

So, the first story is about the mass shooting in Canada. For that, I follow the reporting of Juno News managing editor Cosmin Dzsurdsza on X. He was the first reporter in the world to confirm the shooter's identity and the fact that he was trans and identified as a trans woman. Here's an interview from Juno News:

The vast majority of the people who live in Canada are watching news sources who receive money from the Canadian government. And of course the Canadian government is very concerned about people being able to look at Twitter and find out the truth about the results of their policies. They don't want anyone finding out about the results of their immigration policies, their policing policies, their promotion of transgenderism to children, their adoption of euthanasia (MAID) as a substitute for health care, the traffic accidents committed by immigrants who can't even drive safely, the high costs of their green energy policies, etc. Outside of Canada, we know about all of these things. But inside Canada, most of them have no idea. Almost none of it is covered on the government-funded news. They think they are living in the best country in the world. They literally have no idea.

Remember how in Canada, the courts regularly arrest and imprison parents who try to stop their children from being transed. Everyone is in on this – the government, the judges, the courts, the lawyers, the doctors. And the parents are paying for all of it.

Let's go on to the UK. On this blog, I've covered the activities of Muslim immigrants related to the trafficking of underage girls for the purposes of prostitution. Again, outside of the UK, everyone knows about this – we can name the cities where this happened: Rotherham, Rochdale, Telford, Oldham, Oxford, etc. You can find these cities on this blog. But inside the UK, if you can't even tweet about these things because the UK police will come to your house and threaten you with prison. You can't own a firearm, and people who try to defend themselves from criminals are prosecuted. The government and their servants in the UK police don't want anyone questioning or resisting policies that harm them or their families. Most people in the UK think they are living in the best country in the world. They literally have no idea. The UK police and the Canadian police are nothing like honest law enforcement in red cities and red states in America.

How has the government responded to the surge in crime caused by their policies? Well, the government refused to have a hearing about it. In early 2025, the Labour government

(under Keir Starmer) declined a national inquiry into grooming gangs. So, one of the conservative MPs in the UK (Rupert Lowe) did a crowd-funded effort to have his own hearings with the victims.

Here's a report on that from the Lotus Eaters show:

Again, you aren't going to see these grooming gangs investigated by the UK government. In January 2026 the Labour government (Starmer and ministers like Liz Kendall) threatened a potential nationwide ban on access to X. They don't want people finding out about the results of their bad policies – policies that harm the very taxpayers who pay their salaries.

Well, what about in America? It depends where you get your news. This story from the Media Research Center shows you that even relying on Big Tech companies like Apple and Google to find you the news is a big mistake:

> Editor's Note: This study was shared by President Donald Trump, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, X owner Elon Musk, the New York Post, Fox Business and more.
>
> Apple News continued its defiant stance against offering news from right-leaning outlets through the end of January 2026.
>
> Apple News stubbornly refrained from using any right-leaning outlets in the top 20 articles of its morning editions between Jan. 1 and Jan. 31, 2026. Of the 620 top stories featured by the news app in the first month of the year, not a single one was from a right-leaning media outlet.

So, I think this is important to say. You can't turn to the corporate news media or Big Tech news aggregators to get real news. You have to have some other way to find out what's going on in the world. For me, I read Just Facts, The Federalist and Daily Signal and sometimes Breitbart, and try to check out reporting from reliable independent journalists.

Knight and Rose Show #72: Kingdom Priorities: Following the Teachings of Jesus

February 14, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 72 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose explore the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels, to equip you to follow the Leader. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss Jesus' teachings from the Gospels, emphasizing truth, evidence, self-denial, and forgiveness. They explore passages on seeking the kingdom, loving enemies, and private prayer. They critique prosperity gospel and moral relativism, urging Christians to prioritize eternal matters over worldly approval. They offer practical insights for obedience to Jesus, focusing on reconciliation, service, and pursuing God's priorities.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 72:

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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New book by professor of mechanical engineering on the design of the human body

February 17, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I'm always on the alert for new books that will help me get into interesting conversations with people about the big questions of life. The trick is being good on every topic relevant to the big questions. I've had to learn the basics of cosmology, astrobiology, paleontology, historical methods, economics, policy, investing, etc. And there's a new book out on the human body that might help me to have even more interesting conversations.

Here's a description of the new book by physicist Dr. Brian Miller (who is actually our guest on the next episode on the Knight and Rose Show):

> I have written previously about the groundbreaking research of engineering professor Stuart Burgess that has demonstrated the exquisite design behind human anatomy… Dr. Burgess has compiled many of the best examples in his new book, out today for Darwin Day, the birthday of Charles Darwin: Ultimate Engineering: How Human Biomechanics Reveals Intelligent Design. This book not only dismantles claims that the human body often appears poorly designed, but it also demonstrates that human anatomy displays ingenuity and efficiencies far superior to the best creations of human engineers.

I know what most of you are used to making sophisticated arguments like the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, habitability, explosions of biological complexity in the fossil record, etc. But think back to when you were in high school. Your friends were deciding what to think about origins then, and they did not know about the sophisticated arguments. At that time, I remember my friends accepting Darwinian evolution over things like supposedly poor designs in biology as well as the "icons of evolution" that Dr. Jonathan Wells writes about. So, you and I have to know how to respond to that low level of argument for Darwinian evolution.

Anyway, Dr. Miller continues:

> After contrasting the divergent expectations of the two frameworks, Burgess shows that claims of poor design consistently collapse under close inspection… Rather than arising from empirical evidence, evolutionary critiques largely reflect the projection of anti-teleological expectations onto the biology.
>
> Burgess goes much further by demonstrating that human anatomical structures appear was well designed as theoretically possible.

He mentions a few "poor designs" in the article, and I hadn't heard of any of them.

The argument against design from sub-optimal design is a fine argument to try, but I don't think it is going to work on engineers. I am a software engineer. When we do

designs, we are always thinking in terms of tradeoffs. I used to work in the embedded space, so we wanted to have things run fast, but we couldn't put desktop CPUs and desktop amounts of memory in these little devices or they would cost too much! Designers understand that optimal design simply is not realistic. I buy my Dad a new laptop every 4 years, and sometimes his old one is still working fine. He keeps telling me that he wants his laptops to last more than 5 years, but if they did, he would have to accept that this might blow up the cost, the size, the power consumption, the noise level, etc. There's no free lunch when you're designing software or hardware.

And in the human body, the designs have clearly prioritized certain features at the expense of others. Just because God designs something, it doesn't mean that it has to match our expectations of "perfect" design. We want to live forever, but that's not what God wants most of all. He gives us a body that lasts a certain period of time so that we can either reconcile with him or not. People want to think that the design of biological systems should be for their comfort and ease. But that's not what God's goal is when he designs something. He has different goals.

I think some people who reject God just don't want to accept that they are not the center of the universe. They say "well, if my happiness isn't the goal of all this designing, then I'll just deny that there is a designer". I remember Christopher Hitchens saying things like that in his debate with William Lane Craig. "The universe is so big, I don't like it. That's not how I would have done it". And there are certain people that find an argument like that very convincing for some reason. To me, it sounds too narcissistic. Why does everything have to be perfect for me, or I throw a temper tantrum? Sometimes I think that a theist is just someone who doesn't insist on having their own way all the time, about every little thing.

I noticed that Dr. Miller has a new article up after this first one where he talks about two specific examples of design: the knee and the brain.

If this is something you think you might like to add to your quiver of discussion topics, check out the book.

Colorado bill would take kids away from parents who refuse to trans them

February 24, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

On this blog, I've talked about how pushy the Transgender Industrial Complex is about pushing transgender drugs and surgeries onto kids. Usually, they will tell parents that if they don't agree with transing their kid, then the parents will be responsible for the self-ending of the child. "Would you rather have a dead daughter or a live son?" they ask parents of girls. And in at least one state, they want to put even more pressure on parents to consent.

Here's the latest story from The Federalist:

> Colorado's Democrat state legislators want to force transgenderism on parents, requiring them to affirm their child's "gender identity" or risk losing custody.
>
> Radical lawmakers introduced "Concerning Legal Protections for The Dignity of a Minor" (SB 26-018) on Jan. 14, and the Senate Judiciary Committee passed the bill, referring it to the full Senate on Feb. 18.
>
> In its intended form, the bill requires courts to consider whether parents embrace their child's "gender identity" when determining custody. Courts must favor parents who support their child's "preferred name and pronouns" and push their child to receive harmful and damaging "transgender" drugs, hormones, and surgeries.
>
> […]While the bill seeks to regulate custody disputes, it also opens the door for courts or child protective services to remove transgender-identified kids from the custody of parents who believe in biological reality and don't want to irreversibly harm their child with drugs and surgeries.
>
> […]Primary sponsors of the bill include Sens. Katie Wallace and Chris Kolker and Reps. Meg Froelich and Lorena García.

The article goes on to note that this has already happened in many states, including in red states like Indiana, Montana, Texas and Arizona. Who is doing this? Well, it's usually a joint effort by a group of teachers, social workers, school administrators, school nurses, therapists, and medical providers.

One of the things that makes the transgendering of kids so painful is how these courts silence the parents so they can't even tell anyone about what they are doing.

The Federalist article describes two of the cases – from Montana and Indiana:

> When Krista and Todd Kolstad's 14-year-old daughter landed in a Montana hospital for suicidal thoughts, her parents had no idea she would soon be taken from them. After the Kolstads' daughter revealed her desire to "change genders," Montana Child and Family Services removed her from their custody

> and relocated her to a treatment facility in Wyoming focused on "gender therapy."
>
> "They have a complete agenda. We have no voice, no voice in court," Todd said. "They just gag ordered us and threatened jail time."
>
> Likewise, Mary and Jeremy Cox lost custody of their 16-year-old son for refusing to affirm his sexual identity confusion.
>
> In courtroom proceedings, the Indiana Department of Child Services — while using biologically incorrect pronouns — argued the Coxes' son needed to be in a home "where she is accepted for who she is," not one that will "tell her how she should think and how she should feel."

I don't think socially conservative Christians realize the effect that this silencing parents has on the willingness of young people to get married. It's a huge deterrent – the idea that teachers, administrators, social workers, medical people, etc. can come in and trans your child, force you to pay the costs on your health insurance, and then silence you from complaining about what they are doing to you.

This is very depressing, and if I were you, I would move to the reddest state you can find. Not Indiana, not Texas, not any of those. Tennessee is the best state in the union for social conservatives, and then other states like Oklahoma, Arkansas and Alabama. Make this move a priority if you have kids, because you do not want to have your kids taken from you, and then be slapped with a gag order that prevents you from telling anyone about it.

Anyway, here is a good news story from The Federalist:

> On Wednesday, the Texas Supreme Court heard opening arguments in the case of a woman seeking damages for medical malpractice in gender transition.
>
> Soren Aldaco, a detransitioned woman who suffered from gender dysphoria as a teen and underwent a double mastectomy at 19, is suing Barbara Wood and Three Oaks Counseling Group for recommending the senseless mutilation and allegedly falsifying information to secure it.

I thought this part of the article was interesting, so you can see how children are led along the transgender path:

> As a minor, a nurse practitioner she met at a transgender support group prescribed Aldaco hormones. He was essentially "recruiting" patients from the support group, Aldaco said, influencing children and their parents.
>
> At the time of her surgery, Aldaco said she was taking multiple mental health medications, had been hospitalized for a manic episode, and struggled with anxiety and depression.
>
> Although Aldaco had only received telehealth counseling from her therapist for "relationship issues," Wood signed a recommendation letter for a double mastectomy. Wood provided the letter in February 2021, and Aldaco underwent

> surgery in June.
>
> The aftermath of the surgery was brutal, physically and mentally scarring. Aldaco documented excessive bruising and swelling that would eventually require drains from the surgery sites. The clinic staff was less than receptive, evading responses to her concerns and repeatedly requesting that she sign a nondisparagement agreement, she said.

Basically, the teaching, therapy and health care professions are filled with people who are driven by emotions. Their motto is "don't judge". They aren't big on moral boundaries and spiritual truth claims. They just want people to do what feels good in the moment, and then escape all judgment and punishment. And they certainly don't care what the Bible has to say about what the rules are and what the purpose of life is. They just want to be happy. And they want you to "just love everybody". So, guys like me who tell young people not to take out student loans for English degrees are seen as terrible people.

Bible-believing Christian men are seen as the worst – always telling people to make better choices about relationships and sex and money. Blech! But what happens when the "don't judge" people mislead their victims into terrible mistakes, like transgenderism. Then, the don't judge people stop answering the phone, and they want you to sign a "nondisparagement agreement". They really don't like accountability. In fact, if they can, they'll use force to cover up their failure and the damage that they caused. In Canada, the transgender activists often force parents to keep silent about what they are doing to children with publication bans, for example.

In case you missed it, the first victory from a detransitioner case happened recently. I blogged before about how transgender doctors love to trans kids because the initial treatments and ongoing treatments are a "huge money maker" for these health care providers. That's why you need to be careful where you take your children for their educations and health care. A lot of these people on the secular left in the schools and hospitals are hoping to turn your kid into a pot of gold. And they don't care what permanent effects they cause when they're getting their bag of gold.

The best argument against Islam is the historicity of Jesus' death

February 25, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite Ratio Christi person of all is Eric Chabot. He works at Ohio State University. He is the best, because can teach on many topics, he gets the best speakers to lecture, and mentors the most promising Christian students. I could tell you so many stories about his achievements as a Christian. Anyway, he has a new substack, and I decided to check it out to see what he's writing about. I was not disappointed.

Here is his latest article, where he talks about what works best in real conversations with Muslim students:

> Over the last several years, I have had many opportunities to engage in spiritual discussions with Muslims in our campus ministry in Columbus, Ohio. On several occasions, I have told Muslims that I will never become a Muslim because of their position on the death of Jesus. For Christians, the death and resurrection of Jesus are central to the Gospel message. After all, the *kerygma* in the Book of Acts is that the Messiah was crucified according to the plan of God (Acts 2:23), that He was raised from the dead, and that He appeared to His disciples (Acts 2:24, 31–32; 3:15–26; 10:40–41; 17:31; 26:23).
>
> Muslims, however, believe that Jesus did not die. Instead, they believe the early disciples were deceived and that Allah delivered Jesus. The Qur'an says in Sura 4:157:
>
> "And [for] their saying, 'Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah.' And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but another was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain."
>
> From this passage, most Muslim scholars conclude the following:
>
> - Jesus was not actually killed on the cross.
> - Someone else may have been made to look like Him, or the event was made to appear that way.
> - God rescued Jesus and raised Him to heaven.
>
> Across both Sunni and Shia traditions, it is commonly believed that:
>
> > - Jesus was taken alive into heaven.
> > - He will return before the Day of Judgment.
> >
> >

- He will defeat Al-Masih ad-Dajjal (the false messiah).
- He will eventually die a normal human death.

Now, my podcast partner Rose is an expert in Islam, and she loves to use this argument with Muslims, along with the The Islamic Dilemma. Why is this argument so good? It's so good because you have a clear case of two historical sources asserting two mutually contradictory points. Christianity teaches that Jesus did die on the cross. Islam teaches that Jesus did not die on the cross. Only one can be right. It's the perfect point to bring up with Muslims, because it's a clear disagreement, and one that can be settled by the ordinary methods of historical analysis. The right answer depends on which sources come first – who is in contact with the eyewitnesses at the time when history was recorded?

Eric writes:

> [T]he Qur'an was written roughly six hundred years after the life of Jesus, making it a much later source of information than the New Testament. The evidence suggests that the core historical content of the Gospel—the death and resurrection of Jesus—was circulating very early within the Christian community. As mentioned earlier, historians look for records that are closest in time to the events they describe. Given the early date of 1 Corinthians 15:3–8, along with other sources, it is evident that this material is historically earlier than the Qur'an.

If you don't know about the early creed from 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, you really should listen to episode 1 of the Knight and Rose Show. We quoted the writings of a famous atheist German New Testament scholar and atheist (formerly professor at the University of Göttingen). He dates the elements of the creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 (or more broadly 15:3-8) very early. You can find his own statement in his book "The Resurrection of Jesus" (1994), where he states:

> "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus…not later than three years… the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE."

So, this is very, very early evidence for the crucifixion of Jesus. And the crucifixion is of course echoed by other non-Biblical sources, e.g. – Tacitus, Flavius Josephus, The Babylonian Talmud and Lucian of Samosata.

Eric notes that it's not just early sources that matter. The number of sources matters too. He has a list of dozens of sources going from the event itself right up to the late sixth century.

My podcast partner Rose talked about the implications of Allah allowing people to believe in mistakes for 6 centuries before Mohammed finally shows up to correct them in episode 11 of the Knight and Rose Show.

Eric makes the same point:

> Consider the implication of the Islamic claim. According to Islam, Allah allowed the first-century disciples to be deceived into believing that Jesus literally died on a cross. Not only that, but this supposed deception continued for roughly six centuries until Muhammad received a revelation through the angel Gabriel.

His article is great. It's something that everyone should know how to do. I think most Christians think of Christianity as "our tradition". It's what Westerners believe. It's our family tradition, our community tradition. Then, when they encounter Islam, they think of it as just "Middle East Christianity". That's just their tradition, on the same historical footing as our tradition.

Certainly, it's easy to think that all religions are the same, and many Christians do. And unfortunately, there's not much apologetics being taught in church. Pastors don't do much to teach their flocks how to test a religion for truth. Instead, pastors teach Christians to share their testimony. And when Muslims share their testimony, Christians aren't equipped to have a truth-focused discussion where evidence is weighed.

Well, I think that what Eric has written there is about the best you can do as a lay Christian. So, read his article closely. Notice how he quotes non-Christian scholars to make his points. Don't let yourself get tricked into discussions about which book is more holy. If you stick with the historical evidence, then the discussion doesn't get heated. On the contrary, you will be shedding light on the subject, when you explain your views and how you arrived at them. My mom's side of the family is all Muslim, and none of them ever got mad at me when I explained this argument to them. It just works.

Trump’s State of the Union speech explains Republican values to mid-term voters

February 26, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I watched the State of the Union address to the nation by President Donald Trump on Tuesday night. I really enjoyed it, and thought it was an excellent showcase of Republican party priorities, as well as showing voters Trump’s vision for the future, heading towards the mid-term elections. I was shocked to hear that polls show that Trump is under 50% popularity. Honestly, Trump was not my guy in the 2024 primary, but he has seriously outperformed.

Let’s start with the video of the speech itself:

I have to say that I like a tight speech, and this speech could have been a double-episode of Knight and Rose Show. He didn’t deliver it “scripted” but there was no rambling. For the first time since Trump became a high-profile Republican, I actually thought “this is a person who does a good job advocating for many of the things I care about – not just with words, but with achievements”. So let’s see some of Trump’s demonstrated achievements.

This article from The Federalist by Brianna Lyman lists a few of the things that he highlighed in the speech:

- The Duty of American Government Is to Protect American Citizens
- Flow of Fentanyl Across Southern Border Plummets
- Decline in Murder Rate
- Inflation Coming Down
- Justice for Iryna Zarutska
- Washington D.C.’s Safer
- Protecting Children From Satanic Trans Cult

The speech was crafted in a way that it would appeal to 70-80 percent of voters, regardless of party. But even so, the Democrat legislators refused to stand up and applaud for all these good things.

Let’s look at one of the things in Brianna’s list:

> The president… spoke out about the satanic, left-wing efforts to mutilate children suffering from gender dysphoria.
>
> Trump spoke about Sage Blair, who was 14 years old in 2021 when “school officials in Virginia sought to socially transition her to a new gender, treating her as a boy and hiding it from her parents. Hard to believe, isn’t it?”
>
> Blair was placed into an all-boys state home following an order from an activist judge after Blair’s parents refused to affirm their daughter’s gender dysphoria, Trump said. Eventually, Blair was returned to her parents and is now comfortable

> in the body God gave her.
>
> "We can all agree no state can be allowed to rip children from their parents' arms and transition them to a new gender against the parents' will," Trump said. "We must ban it and we must ban it immediately."
>
> But Democrats refused to stand.
>
> "Look, nobody stands up," Trump said. "These people are crazy, I'm telling you. They're crazy."

They didn't stand for any of the 7 achievements. So what do we get from this? Well, Trump can decide to prioritize lots of things as President. But what he prioritized was protecting innocent people from criminals and protecting innocent children from greedy child abusers. These things are popular with American voters. But Democrat legislators wouldn't stand for them.

Let's get out of the tactical weeds, and look at strategy. An article by Elle Purnell from The Federalist talked about the big differences between the two political parties.

The big difference is that Republicans think that American citizens are their bosses, and Democrats thin that illegal immigrant criminals are their bosses. Trump proved it with his speech:

> [I]n Tuesday night's State of the Union address, President Donald Trump urged every member of Congress to "stand up and show your support" for the statement: "The first duty of the American government is to protect American citizens, not illegal aliens." Cameras panned to show nearly the entire left-hand side of the chamber awkwardly remaining in their seats. After two minutes of Republican cheering and Democrat scowling, Trump suggested that Democrats should "be ashamed of yourselves," and the cameras showed Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Mogadishu, shouting angrily in response.

Another big difference between the parties is that Republicans think that people in the armed forces who take risks and pay a price to serve their country deserve to be honored. Democrats don't think that people in the armed forces should be honored.

The article notes:

> Throughout the address, Trump handed out medals to American heroes left and right: Medals of Honor to 100-year-old war hero Navy Captain Royce Williams and to Chief Warrant Officer Eric Slover, a pilot in the recent capture of Venezuelan dictator Nicolas Maduro.

I have to mention that Slover served with the US Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), a very prestigious unit that does all the flying for covert operations, including hostage rescues. I read an entire book about them called "The Night Stalkers". I read this book because I wanted to be more informed about them so that I could be more thankful and respectful about their deeds. This particular pilot Slover had both of his legs shot up by foreign security forces during the mission to deliver Venezuela

from the tyranny of communism. He was standing on crutches.

Yet the Democrats would not stand up and applaud – for a Medal of Honor recipient. I doubt that Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib even know what a Medal of Honor is! I’ve read three books about Medal of Honor recipients. It should be required reading for immigrants. How can you live in this country and not know anything about the sort of people who make it safe for you to live here? When I am in a grocery store, I always go up to people who have Vietnam War or Korean War caps on, to talk to them. I want to praise them for their actions in our noble wars against communism. Republicans are people who know history and who respect heroes in the armed forces.

So, why post something about this speech? Well, this might sound crazy to people who think that Trump is a bad guy with bad character, but I think they should watch the speech. The corporate news media has been carefully indoctrinating voters with left-wing stories about the Trump administration. But the speech put the lie to all of that. I highly recommend sending the speech to people you know ahead of the mid-terms. Now is the time to get people in the middle to be aware of what the Republican party actually stands for. Don’t wait for the corporate news media to speak to your family and friends, they’re not going to do it fairly. You will have to do it.

New study: honeybee decision-making shows evidence of intelligent design

February 27, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I wanted to announce to everyone that there is a Science and Faith conference in Dallas, Texas coming this weekend. And there's live streaming. I have watched all the videos from the previous ones. It's much better to watch and listen to them than to just listen to them, because of the slides. Anyway, one of the previous talks was about honeybees, and I blogged about it. BUT there is even more interesting design evidence in honeybees. Let's investigate.

So, in my last post, I talked about the design of honeybees.

But here is the latest on the honeybees, from Science and Culture.

First, here is the topic – bee selection of flowers for efficient collection of nectar:

> Animals are constantly faced with having to make behavioral decisions. An example is when they forage — searching for food. Bee behavior when questing for pollen and nectar has been a favorite subject for biologists to study. One reason is that rather than searching randomly for flowers, bees exhibit clear tendencies and preferences. Research has determined that bees use information about flower characteristics to make their foraging decisions.
>
> Various aspects of bee foraging have been the subject of experiments. There are a number of factors that affect their decisions on where and when to forage. Bees typically have to choose between "Several dozen flower species which all differ in reward and signal, and they may encounter several flowers with different signals per second of flight." Bees have been shown to be flexible, adjusting their decision-making behavior based on the conditions they encounter. One piece of information that bees use in foraging is the depth of the flower, which affects the time required to forage (called handling time). Flowers of shallow depth require less handling time, which can be viewed as a trade-off cost, and thus are more efficient. Other things being equal, bees generally prefer flowers of shallow depth with, therefore, reduced handling time. It has also been shown that bees prefer flowers that provide a greater reward (i.e., more nectar) if handling time is not a factor. Some experiments have shown that bees have a distinct preference for flowers with optimum concentrations of nectar. Bees also show a preference for continuing to forage on flowers of the same color, sometimes even when flowers of a different color offer superior rewards.

And here is the new study about this:

> A recent paper from the University of Sheffield in the UK studied foraging by honeybees (Apis mellifera), analyzing their decision-making process, including an assessment of their accuracy and efficiency.

> […]In the experiment, honeybees were trained to associate different colors with either a reward or punishment, and with a range of probabilities.
>
> […]Key findings from the experiment include that for tests which were intended to provide easy discrimination between reward and punishment, the bees made the correct choice significantly more often than mere chance would lead us to expect.
>
> […]The authors indicate that the study, "Unveils the remarkable sophistication and subtlety of honeybee decision-making." They also comment that the sophistication of honeybee decision-making has features in common with primates. That is all the more remarkable given the small size of their brains (less than 1 million neurons). These behaviors are largely controlled by a segment of the brain called mushroom bodies, which contain multisensory integration, learning and memory formation, and comprise about 40 percent of the brain neurons. In comparison, the brains of goldfish and hummingbirds are roughly 100 times larger. Despite the small size of the bee's brain, expert Lars Chittka has documented the significant repertoire of honeybee behaviors, many that involve decision-making.

Very good article, and shows evidence of design in animals. I am a bird person myself, but bees have wings, so I guess I can like them, too. Certainly they are cute and offer a great case for intelligent design.

By the way, I recently bought a whole bunch of books for one of my co-workers who has 5 kids. I decided that it would be good for the kids to be exposed to apologetics evidence. One of the books was about the design of the human body. So, if you have kids that are aged 8-12 or so, you might want to check this book out. It's never too early for kids to get serious about evidence that will help them choose and defend the truth.

And of course there is a new book for grown-ups that just came out written by a super-qualified engineer from the UK. I blogged about that one here.

Has Lipscomb Academy in Nashville abandoned Christianity for Marxist ideology?

March 4, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

There's a big problem facing Christian families today. Thanks to decades of growing government spending and higher taxes, many Christian parents can't afford to keep one parent at home to homeschool their children. Most of the Christian parents I know both work. So how do these Christians parents educate their children? Many don't have enough money for anything except for public schools. But some turn to private Christian schools.

Here's an interesting story from The Federalist about a Christian school in Nashville, TN:

> Parents and staff at a Christian prep school in Nashville are upset about what they say is a trend away from biblical teaching and toward leftist ideology after Lipscomb Academy hired a principal who wrote his dissertation on school diversity policies.

This is a very expensive school for high-earning Christian parents. But what are Christian parents getting for all that tuition money?

Some of the parents have expressed concerns about leftist ideologies infiltrating the school:

> Lipscomb Academy has shifted to a more politicized, "diversity, equity, and inclusion"-influenced education, some Lipscomb parents and others connected to the academy including employees tell The Federalist. They asked not to be identified for fear of reprisal against their children and their positions with the school.

The problems seem to be related to the new leader of the school:

> These individuals claim the shift picked up when Brad Schultz was tapped to lead Lipscomb Academy. Schultz, whose 2013 doctoral dissertation was titled "Intentionally Diverse: A Historical Investigation of a Southern Private School's Ten-Year Diversity Initiative," began his tenure as Lipscomb's Head of School in June 2020 — just as race riots took off in Minneapolis and other U.S. cities.

The Christian parents I know want their children to have an accurate and defensible Christian worldview. So that means not only learning what the Bible teaches, but how it applies to every area of life. And it also means not just taking the Bible "on faith", but knowing how to disagree with other faiths and cultures using logic and evidence. It means being able to show objective evidence for the core claims of Christianity, such as the origin of the universe and the goodness of chastity, right to life, natural marriage, etc.

But what is Schultz concerned about in his dissertation?

> Schultz's dissertation relies on several critical theorists, including Antonio Gramsci, Frantz Fanon, Paulo Freire, and Max Horkheimer. According to its adherents, critical social theory aims to challenge systemic power structures on behalf of "oppressed" people.
>
> […]The dissertation expresses "concerns" that Northeastern Christian School's mission statement — "To help each child grow as Jesus did in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man" — showed "signs of cultural invasion." The mission statement's "commitment to help students grow in favor with God" presents a "significant threat here of students being negatively influenced by a hidden curriculum," he wrote.
>
> "Is the school saying it holds the key to being in favor with God? If so, what is this saying to students who come to the school from different religious faiths or cultures?" Schultz wrote of the Christian school, which was "run and taught by members of the Churches of Christ."
>
> The dissertation also warned Northeastern was missing out on further "diversity" by turning away homosexual students and families. Schultz said the school uses "rules and disciplinary measures" to "prevent homosexual students and/or parents from 'accomplishing its educational and spiritual purposes.'"
>
> "As support for gay marriage continues to rise, the school's stance towards homosexuality and same-sex marriage is likely to come into question," Schultz wrote.

Do you think that a leader of a Christian school should be intimidated by what members other religions – like Islam – feel about the truth of Christianity? Do you think that a leader of a Christian school should be intimidated by what homosexuals and proponents of same-sex marriage feel about the Bible's teachings on those issues? I think the problem we are having today is that we have redefined Christianity to be about feeling good and being liked by non-Christians. Those were not concerns of Jesus, according to the Bible. But they are the concerns of people today.

We have a discipline called "apologetics" that teaches Christians how to be comfortable showing why they believe what they believe to non-Christians. But it takes effort to learn. It's not taught in most Christian homes, churches or Christian schools. So many Christians never learn how to challenge non-Christian ideas like Marxism and sexual immorality. And some of those unequipped people end up as administrators and teachers in Christian schools. And then those Christian schools don't produce students who go on to become Christian scholars like Stephen C. Meyer or Michael Licona or Fazale Rana.

In the specific case of Lipscomb Academy, they seem to value achieving racial diversity. They highlight that priority on Schultz's biography page. This is something Jesus did not prioritize. Jesus seemed to be more concerned with telling people the truth and then providing evidence for them to believe his truth claims, as with the healing of the paralytic.

The Federalist article has many more details. Please go read it.

And if you missed our episode of the Knight and Rose Show on this topic with Dr. Corey Miller, you might want to check it out.

Now let's flip over to Daily Signal and see what Tyler O'Neil has to say.

He writes:

> According to two Lipscomb Academy parents who spoke to The Daily Signal on condition of anonymity, the academy sent the new Code of Conduct to parents Feb. 24, requiring them to sign it by March 5 in order to keep their kids enrolled for the 2026-2027 academic year.
>
> […]"Families shall respect the confidentiality of administration, faculty, staff, and other students, and parents/guardians/families," reads a section on privacy. "Information about personnel matters, disciplinary actions, grades, or other student matters must not be discussed publicly or shared through social media, texts, email, or conversation."
>
> The privacy section demands that families not "publicly speculate or criticize personnel decisions or school matters."

Lipscomb Academy doesn't seem to like parents (their customers) complaining about the quality of the school.

Also note:

> Lipscomb reportedly threatened The Federalist with legal action when the conservative outlet started asking questions.
>
> "After The Federalist started looking into the allegations about the school's left-leaning turn, Lipscomb's general counsel sent a letter to Federalist Executive Editor Joy Pullmann warning that 'publication of statements known to be false or made with reckless disregard for their accuracy could expose The Federalist to potential liability,'" the outlet's M.D. Kittle reported.

Does this behavior sound like something Jesus would do? It sounds to me like something an atheist like Stalin would do. "Straight to the Gulag!" he'd say.

By the way, we have a forthcoming episode of Knight and Rose Show with Tyler O'Neil, so stay tuned to the podcast!

Knight and Rose Show #73: Brian Miller: Fine-Tuning and the Multiverse Theory

March 7, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 73 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and guest host Terrell Clemmons welcome Dr. Brian Miller from the Discovery Institute to discuss the evidence for fine-tuning and the multiverse theory. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and guest host Terrell Clemmons welcome Dr. Brian Miller to discuss the the evidence for fine-tuning in physics and cosmology and the multiverse theory. They discuss how the laws and constants of nature suggest intentional design. Miller explains specific examples of fine-tuning and critiques the main naturalistic explanation for this data: the multiverse theory. He recounts his shift from skepticism to accepting design via evidence.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 73:

Speaker biographies

Dr. Miller obtained a BS in physics with a minor in engineering from MIT and a PhD in complex systems physics from Duke University. His research focuses on thermodynamics, information theory, protein rarity, and the origin of life. Dr. Miller is a Senior Fellow and Research Coordinator for the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute. He helps manage the ID 3.0 Research Program and helped launch the biannual Conference on Engineering in Living Systems (CELS). He has contributed to multiple books and technical journals covering the debate over intelligent design, including The Mystery of Life’s Origin: The Continuing Controversy and The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Terrell Clemmons earned a BS in Computer Science from Clemson University and worked in software development until she hopped off the career track to be a full-time mom. She began writing on Christian living and apologetics in 2004 and joined Salvo magazine in 2007, where she now serves as Executive Editor. She has also worked with Ratio Christi and Anchorsaway apologetics ministries for youth.

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Bible study: the importance of truth in religion

March 11, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Here's an interesting passage of the Bible. What do you all think the practical value of this passage is?

[1] In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

[2] So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

[3] he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

[4] Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[5] The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

[6] But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

[7] Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

[8] Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

[9] If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

[10] The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

[11] What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

[12] This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

[13] So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

[14] When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

[15] He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

[16] At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

[17] Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

[18] He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

[20] and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king."

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him."

[25] Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."

[26] The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

[27] Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

[28] but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

[29] "As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

[30] As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

This passage is interesting to me because it shows the kind of attitude that God answers. The King in this passage was tired of hearing man-made stories from his servants – stories that were undoubtedly influenced by the servants desire to survive the King's wrath. The servants would only have told the King things that were vague and happy, so that they could never be proved wrong or found to be judgmental or offensive. But the King was tired of that. He wanted someone with authority to tell him the truth about the way the world was.

In the rest of the chapter, Daniel interprets the dream, and concludes by saying this: "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.". The King replies: "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

I think it is is going to be difficult for Christians living today to be able to tell people their dreams like that. But what we can do is talk about God's miracles as revealed by science and history. We can study astrophysics, biochemistry and history and we can explain what God did in creating and fine-tuning the universe for life, in sequencing amino acids into functioning proteins, in creating brand new body plans in the Cambrian explosion, in raising Jesus from the dead as a matter of historical record, and so on. We have to show how great God is to people who do not even think he exists, and without assuming that they believe in the Bible. And we have to do it by focusing on *what is true.*

Early last week, I got a message from a friend who was interested in a girl that he met on an online dating service. She claimed to be a Christian. My friend explained why he was so interested in some of the evidences I outlined above. She was not impressed. She said "I prefer to show people Christianity is true by not judging them, by being compassionate, by introducing them to a fun and affirming community". There was no emphasis on truth in her approach. In fact, any religious group could do those things and "establish" their religion as true, by appealing to feelings. But this is clearly not what the God of the Bible intends for people who seek him. He is a God of truth, and truth is established by logical reasoning and supporting evidence.

There are still people out there like the King who are looking for someone who can speak to them with authority. All it takes from us is a little studying, and we can be like Daniel, too. But we have to know what God has done from science and history, and speak with authority about how we can know that God has acted *supernaturally*. Authority to speak comes from having knowledge about what we are talking about, and knowledge comes from studying and debating with people we disagree with. Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer in the God of Israel, but he was still interested in truth. That won't always be the case, but it is the case for some people.

Physicist Brian Miller presents scientific evidence for God on university campuses

March 18, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I was already a Christian by the time I made it to university, but I had never seen the sorts of sophisticated arguments that could be presented for Christianity. Somehow, I stumbled upon a website called Leadership University, and that pointed me to a whole bunch of Christian professors who had written essays on a wide variety of topics. From there, I was able to locate actual lectures they had given to students on university campuses.

Although I grew up in a trashy communist country, I was still able to order campus lectures on audio cassette or VHS video tape. I got them from Veritas Forum, Integrated Resources, Access Research Network, etc. So I was able to listen to and watch lots of lectures by Phillip E. Johnson, Michael Behe, Walter Bradley, Henry F. Schaefer, J. P. Moreland and of course William Lane Craig. Some of these recordings were actual debates between a Christian and a non-Christian. That's how I got serious about Christianity.

There is just something about watching a Christian professor get up on stage at a secular research university and deliver a lecture to non-Christian faculty, graduate students and undergrad students. And then take questions – that's the key part that's so different from church sermons and vacation Bible school. In the campus lectures, you can see hostile questions from non-Christian thinkers being handled gracefully by Christian scholars. Sometimes I wonder if the reason I stuck with Christianity this far is because of the non-traditional way that I learned about it.

Anyway, what made me think about this? Well, it was this interesting article written by physicist Dr. Brian Miller. We just had him on the Knight and Rose Show, to discuss fine-tuning and the multiverse. He just did some talks at a different universities, and I wanted to share what he wrote and the video of one of the talks with you.

Here's what he wrote:

> I recently had the privilege of speaking at High Point University, ranked the best-run university in the country, and at Duke University, my alma mater, on the cumulative case for God drawn from cosmology, the origin of life, and the centrality of information in biology.
>
> I was joined by Dr. Rice Broocks, whose training in philosophy and history complemented my scientific expertise. Over the past several years, we have also addressed students together at several other universities, such as Berkeley and MIT, engaging in questions at the intersection of science, philosophy, and Christian thought. Last year, I spoke at the University of Washington, and the presentation, along with the Q&A, was recorded. The consistently positive response reflects a deep hunger among students to examine foundational

> questions of truth, meaning, and purpose.
>
> Dr. Broocks and I labored to create an atmosphere in which listeners from any philosophical or religious background felt respected and safe to share their ideas.

So, the key part is that when you are on a non-Christian university campus then you really have to know your stuff. Because people who don't agree with you are going to ask you questions, and this is in front of a live audience, and the recording is probably going on the Internet.

Brian listed some of the questions that he was asked:

- How can we infer that Earth was designed if we do not know the total number of planets? I addressed this question in a recent article (here).
- In what ways can evolutionary theory be integrated with faith, and which evolutionary claims conflict with traditional religious beliefs?
- To what extent is modern science consistent with various religious doctrines?
- If God is an all-powerful creator who is directly involved in the world, why does so much evil and suffering exist?
- What role does evidence play in Christianity, if religion is supposed to be grounded in faith?
- Why should anyone even pursue the ultimate truth? Isn't skepticism the easiest option?

Have you ever heard any Christian leader in a church take questions from a non-Christian? Have you ever heard a Christian leader in a church even interact with non-Christian views? Have you ever heard a Christian leader in a church explain why people who go to church just *assume* that the Bible is authoritative? Most people who grow up in the church never hear questions, because most leaders in the church don't know how to answer them. And that does send a message to young people about the sort of thing that Christianity is. As J. P. Moreland says, most Christians see Christianty as a "faith tradition". But Moreland says that Christianity is actually a "knowledge tradition". Young Christians dump Christianity because a "faith tradition" grounded in community is easily swept away when they arrive at university and have a new godless community. But if they were trained to see why Christianity is a "knowledge tradition", then maybe they would be a bit more resilient.

Anyway, back to Dr. Miller. Here's a lecture where Dr. Miller shares reasons and evidence for the core claims of his Christian worldview:

Here's the summary:

- evidence for an origin of the universe
- evidence for cosmic fine-tuning
- evidence for habitability fine-tuning
- evidence from the origin of life
- refutation of naturalistic alternatives

So, there is a “show your work” approach to Christianity that is going on outside of the church / family environment. That’s how I learned about it, and I’m still taking Christianity seriously even nearing my wealthy early retirement years, where I don’t have any felt needs. People who stick with Christianity over the long-term don’t do it because of “needs” or “feelings”. They choose it because it’s true. Christianity actually makes life harder these days, because of the moral rules, the self-denial and the social disapproval. But real Christians like all that, because we want to suffer like Jesus suffered for obeying the Father. We like losing some of our autonomy for the sake of relationship and we like taking a loss to our reputations when we stick up for the Boss. Christianity is life on hard mode, and we like that. We want the deep vertical relationship more than we want the shallow horizontal relationships.

Let me know in the comments if you have any experience with campus lectures and debates contributing to your lasting faith.

The secular left’s hostility to conservative Christian parents

March 20, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Our next guest on the Knight and Rose Show is Tyler O’Neil, who is the senior editor at Daily Signal. It’s still in editing. Tyler is an expert on the SPLC, and monitors threats to religious liberty. Well, he had back-to-back articles this week exposing two different ways that the secular left showed their hostility to family integrity and parental authority. I thought it would be worth putting these together into a blog post, so you can read about them, too.

The first Daily Signal article was from March 18th, and it talks about a new program designed to indoctrinate young women in wokeness:

> The organization that sets the agenda for the 130,000 school counselors across the U.S. just promoted a left-wing activist program that advocates for transgender ideology and critical race theory, according to a new report.
>
> “While the American people are actively rejecting the harms of transgender ideology, the invasion of women’s private spaces, and the culture of critical race theory, the American School Counselor Association is working overtime to install these very same radicalisms into our daughters,” Alvin Lui, president of the conservative group Courage Is a Habit, told The Daily Signal.
>
> The American School Counselor Association, which counts about 42,000 of the nation’s estimated 131,230 school counselors as members and which releases guidance for the entire profession, held a Feb. 19 webinar promoting the Lean In Girls program. The Sandberg Goldberg Bernthal Family Foundation, founded by former Meta COO Sheryl Sandberg, launched Lean In Girls as a leadership program for girls ages 11-15.
>
> […]The handbook’s section on “Gender Inclusion” warns facilitators that “some teens in the program may identify strongly with being a girl, while others may be exploring their gender identity or may feel uncomfortable with the label ‘girl.’” The section recommends resources from the Southern Poverty Law Center, the British LGBTQ nonprofit Stonewall, and GLSEN (which rebranded to GLISTEN in February).
>
> […]Courage Is a Habit also faults the handbook for promoting critical race theory, the idea that American society is systemically racist despite the progress of civil rights laws and that it requires fundamental change to root out “white supremacy.”
>
> “Group facilitators are directed to rank themselves and each other on an intersectional hierarchy of oppression, a textbook critical race theory exercise that divides children by race, sexuality, and perceived victim status—all

> disguised as harmless ‘mental health’ support,” the Courage Is a Habit report states.

The second Daily Signal article has to do with how secular leftists in government view the parents who pay their salaries:

> When the Biden administration turned its attention to concerned parents in the fall of 2021, the Central Intelligence Agency drafted a memo warning about white racial extremists recruiting women for “traditional motherhood” and “homemaking.”
>
> The CIA produced an intelligence assessment focused on “women advancing white racially and ethnically motivated violent extremist radicalization and recruitment” on Oct. 6, 2021.
>
> […]The CIA warned about the “great replacement” theory, which it framed as extremist.
>
> “White REMVEs and their sympathizers have claimed in online posts that it is essential for white families to have as many biological children as possible to counter the rising birthrates among non-white populations, white REMVEs allege that this rise is a conspiracy, which they have termed the ‘great replacement,’” the assessment states.
>
> The CIA discussed a specific organization—the identity of which has been redacted—and noted that this group “has lauded motherhood and homemaking as women’s most important responsibility.”

Now, I work with a fair number of conservative Christians. They love to read people like Russell Moore and David French and Tim Keller and JD Greear. If I had to summarize what their worldview is like, I would say that they are experts at Netflix, Star Trek, Disney and especially Star Wars. When I talk to them about these threats to religious liberty and parental authority, they say “I don’t want to get involved in the culture war, I just love everybody”. They just don’t believe that corporations or governments could ever interfere with their ability to live out Christian life plans. They just “love everybody”. But their taxpayer dollars are going to pay the salaries of powerful people who don’t love them.

I think it’s something that we all need to think about. You might not be interested in fighting the secular left, but the secular left is most definitely interested in fighting you. We should be learning from what happens to Christians in places like Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, etc. and make sure that it never happens here. Part of that is going to be voting conservative, but part of that is surely convincing others to vote conservative, too. And you’re not going to learn how to do that from Star Wars. Instead of feeding at the trough of popular culture like good little piggies, Christians are going to have to work a little harder and learn how to discuss policy issues.

Terrell Clemmons and J. Budziszewski: Why smart people embrace delusions

March 25, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Terrell Clemmons was a recent guest and guest co-host on the Knight and Rose Show. I noticed she has not one, but FOUR new articles on the Discovery Institute Science and Culture website. I waited until all 4 had been published to write about the series. It's about the intellectual journey of J. Budziszewski from nihilism back to Christianity. He is a professor of government and philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin.

Our regular host of the Knight and Rose Show (Desert Rose) *loves* Jay's books. She is using them for her D. Min thesis, which is about natural law. Jay actually has a new book out about 30 popular beliefs that are completely false. The book explains *why people believe* delusions and also offers suggestions for avoiding delusions.

The first article in Terrell's series is here. It talks about the new book:

> In 30 succinct chapters, Budziszewski addresses 30 delusions related to virtue and happiness, politics and government, family and sexuality, God and religion, even human nature and reality itself. He doesn't polemicize for "sides" on the controversial subjects nearly so much as help us think through falsehoods clouding our current milieu.

As soon as I read what the book was about, I wondered if he was going to talk about how people form their beliefs based on what is easy, convenient and popular with their social groups. And he does, as we will see.

Here is the second article. This one is about Jay's spiritual journey:

Terrell asks:

After all that, how did you come to profess Christian faith once again?

And here is part of Jay's answer that I liked:

> I hadn't *lost* my faith by a rational process either. I just thought I saw through it. In my milieu, all the smart people didn't believe in God. And I unconsciously wanted to believe I was one of the smart people. There were many other things that pushed me away from faith, but that's one example of my own motivated irrationality. Another is that I'd committed some sins. I didn't want to face God, so I stopped believing in him. That's irrational, too.

I've now spent over 27 years in the IT industry, including internships and summer jobs. I have met *so many people* who grew up in intact Christian homes, some who went to Christian private schools, who abandoned their Christian faith the minute they hit college. When I ask them what the arguments and evidence were that changed their minds, it is almost universally two things. 1) I wanted to be seen as smart by the new social group, and 2) I was away from home for the first time and didn't want to follow moral rules.

That's it. I mean, part of it is that their entire Christian upbringing had never been grounded on a stitch of evidence, but those are the two reasons I get the most often.

Here's the third article. This one talks about how people suppress moral knowledge, which is something Jay did during his lost years.

Terrell asks:

Speaking about things that are inherent to being human, you've also written that "the longing for truth, for purity, for lightness is indestructible," but that at the same time, "the fear of truth, of purity, and of lightness is also very strong." How do you see this play out in your observations of human interactions?

And here is the part from Jay's response that I liked:

> Freud talked about the suppression of libido — his term for the sexual drive — and all the crazy things that he thought happened to us when libido is suppressed. But I don't think he knew the first thing about it. Because the drive I have in mind — this inclination to know the truth, especially the truth about God — may express itself in indirect or distorted ways when we suppress it. By suppressing it, I mean, for example:
>
> - I don't want to know the truth about God because I would have to change.
> - I don't want to know the truth about God because I would have to admit that I was wrong.
> - I don't want to know the truth about God because it puts me to shame.
> - I don't want to know the truth about God because he's so good that it scares me. I don't want him to be that good. I don't want him to love me that much, more than I love myself.
>
> We do suppress the desire for the truth, and the consequences of suppressing the desire for the truth are far more potent and powerful than the consequences of suppressing libido.

One of the Bible passages that I found so amazing as a kid growing up in a trash communist country was Romans 1. Romans 1 is the kind of chapter that has the ability to yank a kid out of the atheistic communism he is surrounded by (parents, teachers, government, etc.) and propel him to move to the reddest state in the United States of America. By any means necessary. You should read Romans 1 and make everyone you know read it. It is the "magic glasses" that turns the ship around. Whether you agree with it or not, it describes the way the world really is.

But aside from that, I just want to point out that many famous atheists agree with Jay about the suppression of truth. I wrote about a bunch of them in this old blog post from 2011. Wow! That was a long time ago.

And finally, the fourth article. This is about how morality is related to public policy and government.

Terrell asks:

On your blog, you have called wokeness "status signaling," as opposed to "virtue signaling." What did you mean by that?

And this is the part of his reply that I liked best:

> I saw a pair of bumper stickers on the right and left side of a back bumper. One said, "Save the laboratory animals," and the other said, "I'm pro-choice, and I vote." The driver wanted to save the little bunnies, and not have them hurt, for example, by having cosmetics put in their eyes for testing. But she didn't want to save the little humans. There wasn't much penetrating thinking about right and wrong there, but there was a very sharp awareness of what was acceptable in her milieu and of what attitudes would give her approval among people in it: "The people that *I* associate with would never say it's wrong to have an abortion, or that it shouldn't be a woman's choice. That's just not done."
>
> You can see this in Austin, a sort of ideological hothouse populated largely by woke professional classes. They're all imitating each other and imitating each other's attitudes. It's about conformism. It's much more about that than about conscience.

My friend Bonnie told me recently that she never met a person who believed more in "engineering belief". I engineer my own beliefs and the beliefs of others by making choices about what to consume, and meddling in what other people consume, too. So, for me, I don't watch anything on TV, streaming services, and new movies (unless they are war movies like Midway (2019) and Greyhound (2020). I was forced to watch the first Star Wars movies as a kid, but I've never seen any of the new ones.

On the other hand, I fill my head with good stuff like Shakespeare, Jane Austen, free-market economics and military history. If I want to build up another Christian, I buy them the books that I want them to read, like Thomas Sowell books, and then I give them rewards for reading them. Or, I take them to places and do activities where they have a practical experience of gaining knowledge or solving a problem. This is how I build up their resistance to the sorts of social pressures that Jay talked about. And it works on other people. One of my friends loves Salvo magazine, so I bought her 25 back issues because it's her birthday this week. I'm trying to level her up.

I think that when it comes to anything in life, if it is important to you to believe it, then it should be important to you to show your work. And before you can show your work, you have to do your work. If you want to change your mind about something, the best thing to do is to read the best books you can understand and watch or listen to debates. And test it for yourself. That way, you can explain how you arrived at your beliefs. That process almost always makes you resistant to the surrounding culture. And that means you are one step ahead of the people who just believed whatever was easy and convenient.

Unfortunately, most people who grow up in Christian homes don't get the idea that the process of doing your work is important. We have to fix that.

Bad news for liberty in Canada and Finland, but good news in America

March 27, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw quite a few interesting stories about free speech and religious liberty in the news this week. It's always a shock to me to hear some Christian leaders say that Christians shouldn't care about policy and politics. Some even say "Jesus doesn't care about politics". I can only think that these people are naive and have small life plans. If a Christian is serious – i.e. has life experience and a big life plan – then he or she will care about policy and politics.

Here's the first scary story from Finland, reported by Tyler O'Neil in the Daily Signal. Tyler is actually going to be our guest on the next episode of Knight and Rose Show, which is coming out this Saturday morning.

He writes:

> Attorneys are warning about the "severe chilling effect" of the Finnish Supreme Court's ruling against Päivi Räsänen, a Christian member of Parliament who long faced hate speech charges for tweeting a Bible verse.
>
> The Supreme Court upheld Räsänen's acquittal for posting a Bible verse in 2019, but the 3-2 majority convicted her, along with Lutheran Bishop Juhana Pohjola, of hate speech for expressing their beliefs on Christianity and sexuality in a 2004 church pamphlet.
>
> […]"In order to protect the dignity and equality of homosexuals, it is necessary to exclude Räsänen's statements from freedom of expression by interpreting them as punishable hate speech directed at them [homosexuals]," the prosecution wrote.

Here's the second article about one such country – Canada. This is from the Catholic Register:

> Bill C-9, the Combatting Hate Act, advanced to the Senate tonight. The House of Commons adopted it with a 186-137 vote at third reading.
>
> […]Campaign Life Coalition (CLC), the political arm of the Canadian pro-life movement, was one of many groups that mobilized Canadians opposed to the amended C-9 by executing a petition campaign and by hosting a press conference on Parliament Hill on Feb. 13 alongside 4 My Canada, CitizenGo and Campaign Québec-Vie.
>
> David Cooke, a Christian pastor and CLC's campaigns manager, warned that "with the passage of Bill C-9 in the House, Christians and pro-life advocates will almost certainly face an entirely new level of hostility, as the door swings open to actual persecution under a cloak of supposed legality."

OK, now for some good news about a country where Christians have wise in their political activities, and benefit from good policy.

This is from the Tyler O'Neil in the Daily Signal again:

> During the COVID-19 pandemic, federal health agencies and the White House under President Joe Biden pressured social media companies to censor speech that contradicted the federal government's narrative, but two Republican attorneys general secured a consent decree Tuesday that will prevent the government from returning to that "Orwellian" strategy.
>
> […]The consent decree notes that the federal government "unlawfully pressured, coerced, induced, and encouraged major social media platforms to censor their posts" about the pandemic, the reports about Hunter Biden's laptop, and the 2020 presidential election.
>
> […]The consent decree, which will end the litigation from Missouri and Louisiana, binds the surgeon general, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency from taking any actions "to threaten social media companies with some form of punishment (i.e., an adverse legal, regulatory, or economic government sanction) unless they remove, delete, suppress, or reduce, including through altering their algorithms, posted social-media content containing protected free speech."
>
> The decree will last for a period of 10 years, well past the next administration.

Well, how did we get this amazing consent decree? We got it from the voters who voted for Louisiana Attorney General Liz Murrill and Missouri Attorney General Catherine Hanaway. It was these two ladies who challenged the federal government to stop threatening social media companies unless they censor free speech that is critical of government policies. That's how we get good policy – we vote for it. We advocate for it.

By the way, Rose and I did an entire episode to about Christians taking politics seriously entitled "Does Jesus Care About Politics? Why Policy Matters". Please check it out.

And please check out our newest episode with Tyler O'Neil on free speech and religious liberty when it comes out tomorrow. After that one, we have an episode on health care policy, where Rose and I compare American health care to health care in other countries, and propose a policy that will make American health care much better.

Knight and Rose Show #74: Tyler O'Neil: Religious Liberty and Free Speech

March 28, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 74 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Tyler O'Neil from Daily Signal to discuss the state of religious liberty and free speech in America. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Tyler O'Neil to address the state of religious liberty and free speech in America. They discuss how organizations such as the Southern Poverty Law Center demonize conservative Christians by equating them with extremists. O'Neil explores the SPLC's influence on corporations, government, and law enforcement. He critiques this bias against Christianity and encourages Christians to stand firm in the public square.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 74:

Speaker biographies

Tyler O'Neil is the Senior Editor at The Daily Signal. He is the author of two books: "Making Hate Pay: The Corruption of the Southern Poverty Law Center" (2020) and "The Woketopus: The Dark Money Cabal Manipulating the Federal Government" (2024). A graduate of Hillsdale College, he is an Eagle Scout, husband, and father. He frequently covers topics like free speech threats, government weaponization against conservatives, and cultural issues, often testifying before Congress on these matters—such as in December 2025, where he highlighted attempts by leftist groups to silence him.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a

prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Why do so many atheist historians think that 1 Corinthians 15 is reliable history?

April 1, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Which passage of the Bible is the favorite of Christians who like to defend the Christian worldview? I don't mean which one is most inspirational… I mean "which one is the most useful for winning arguments?" Well, when it comes to the historical Jesus, the most important passage has to be 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.

The tradition in 1 Corinthians 15 is an early creed that was received from the eyewitnesses Peter and John when Paul visited them several times in Jerusalem, as documented in Galatians 1 and 2, where Paul meets the eyewitnesses. And of course, Paul records his own eyewitness experience, documented in 1 Cor 15:8.

So, is this passage accepted as historically reliable by all ancient historians? Or only by the Bible-believing ones?

Here's something posted by Dr. William Lane Craig about the 1 Corinthians 15 passage:

> The evidence that Paul is not writing in his own hand in I Cor. 15.3-5 is so powerful that all New Testament scholars recognize that Paul is here passing on a prior tradition. In addition to the fact that Paul explicitly says as much, the passage is replete with non-Pauline characteristics, including, in order of appearance: (i) the phrase "for our sins" using the genitive case and plural noun is unusual for Paul; (ii) the phrase "according to the Scriptures" is unparalleled in Paul, who introduces Scriptural citations by "as it is written"; (iii) the perfect passive verb "has been raised" appears only in this chapter and in a pre-Pauline confessional formula in II Tim. 2.8; (iv) the phrase "on the third day" with its ordinal number following the noun in Greek is non-Pauline; (v) the word "appeared" is found only here and in the confessional formula in I Tim. 3.16; and (vi) "the Twelve" is not Paul's nomenclature, for he always speaks of the twelve disciples as "the apostles."
>
> Now the visit during which Paul may have received this tradition is the visit you mention three years after his conversion on the road to Damascus (Gal. 1.18). This puts the tradition back to within the first five years after Jesus' death in AD 30. So there's not even an apparent inconsistency with Paul's appropriating the language of the formula to encapsulate the Gospel he was already preaching during those first three years in Damascus.

Ancient historian Gary Habermas loves to read non-Christian scholars… and then he writes about what THEY think about Jesus in peer-reviewed articles, published in academic journals. Let's look at this one: *Dialog: A Journal of Theology, Vol. 45; No. 3 (Fall, 2006), pp. 288-297; published by Blackwell Publishing, UK.*

He writes:

> (1) Contemporary critical scholars agree that the apostle Paul is the primary witness to the early resurrection experiences. A former opponent (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-7), Paul states that the risen Jesus appeared personally to him (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Gal. 1:16). The scholarly consensus here is attested by atheist Michael Martin, who avers: "However, we have only one contemporary eyewitness account of a postresurrection appearance of Jesus, namely Paul's."[3]
>
> (2) In addition to Paul's own experience, few conclusions are more widely recognized than that, in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff., Paul records an ancient oral tradition(s). This pre-Pauline report summarizes the early Gospel content, that Christ died for human sin, was buried, rose from the dead, and then appeared to many witnesses, both individuals and groups.
>
> Paul is clear that this material was not his own but that he had passed on to others what he had received earlier, as the center of his message (15:3). There are many textual indications that the material pre-dates Paul. Most directly, the apostle employs paredoka and parelabon, the equivalent Greek terms for delivering and receiving rabbinic tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Indirect indications of a traditional text(s) include the sentence structure and verbal parallelism, diction, and the triple sequence of kai hoti Further, several non-Pauline words, the proper names of Cephas (cf. Lk. 24:34) and James, and the possibility of an Aramaic original are all significant. Fuller attests to the unanimity of scholarship here: "It is almost universally agreed today that Paul is here citing tradition."[4] Critical scholars agree that Paul received the material well before this book was written.[5]

This is important:

> The most popular view is that Paul received this material during his trip to Jerusalem just three years after his conversion, to visit Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19), both of whose names appear in the appearance list (1 Cor. 15:5; 7). An important hint here is Paul's use of the verb historesai (1:18), a term that indicates the investigation of a topic.[6] The immediate context both before and after reveals this subject matter: Paul was inquiring concerning the nature of the Gospel proclamation (Gal. 1:11-2:10), of which Jesus' resurrection was the center (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 14, 17; Gal. 1:11, 16).

He's an eyewitness (verse 8), and he met with the other eyewitnesses, James and Peter. 1 Corinthians is early. Galatians is early. The creed is extremely early – right after the events occurred. There was no time for legends to develop.

And atheistic / critical historians agree, the creed is reliable:

> Critical scholars generally agree that this pre-Pauline creed(s) may be the earliest in the New Testament. Ulrich Wilckens asserts that it "indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity."[7] Joachim Jeremias agrees that it is, "the earliest tradition of all."[8] Perhaps a bit too

> optimistically, Walter Kasper even thinks that it was possibly even "in use by the end of 30 AD . . . ."[9]
>
> Indicating the wide approval on this subject, even more skeptical scholars frequently agree. Gerd Ludemann maintains that "the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus. . . . not later than three years. . . . the formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor.15.3-8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 CE. . . ."[10] Similarly, Michael Goulder thinks that it "goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion."[11] Thomas Sheehan agrees that this tradition "probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion."[12] Others clearly consent.[13]
>
> Overall, my recent overview of critical sources mentioned above indicates that those who provide a date generally opt for Paul's reception of this report relatively soon after Jesus' death, by the early to mid-30s A.D.[14] This provides an additional source that appears just a half step removed from eyewitness testimony.
>
> (3) Paul was so careful to assure the content of his Gospel message, that he made a second trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) specifically to be absolutely sure that he had not been mistaken (2:2). The first time he met with Peter and James (Gal. 1:18-20). On this occasion, the same two men were there, plus the apostle John (2:9). Paul was clearly doing his research by seeking out the chief apostles. As Martin Hengel notes, "Evidently the tradition of I Cor. 15.3 had been subjected to many tests" by Paul.[15]
>
> These four apostles were the chief authorities in the early church, and each is represented in the list of those who had seen the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-7). So their confirmation of Paul's Gospel preaching (Gal. 2:9), especially given the apostolic concern to insure doctrinal truth in the early church, is certainly significant. On Paul's word, we are again just a short distance from a firsthand report.
>
> (4) Not only do we have Paul's account that the other major apostles confirmed his Gospel message, but he provides the reverse testimony, too. After listing Jesus' resurrection appearances, Paul tells us he also knew what the other apostles were preaching regarding Jesus' appearances, and it was the same as his own teaching on this subject (1 Cor. 15:11). As one, they proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:12, 15). So Paul narrates both the more indirect confirmation of his Gospel message by the apostolic leaders, plus his firsthand, direct approval of their resurrection message.

Now, some of the people he lists are really biased against the supernatural, and they really hate the idea that the claims of Christianity exclude other religions. And yet they don't deny the historical reliability of 1 Corinthians 15, or that it is based on eyewitness testimony.

That’s why when you watch debates about the historical Jesus, you see skeptical historians like Bart Ehrman, Gerd Ludemann, James Crossley, Michael Goulder, etc. accepting that the disciples thought they saw Jesus after his death. They’re not just being nice to Dr. Craig when they give him that. They are forced to accept it, because it passes the historical tests. Every Christian ought to be aware of which passages of the New Testament are seen by the broad spectrum of ancient historians as “historical”, regardless of their various biases. You can believe everything in the Bible. But when you debate non-Christians, you have to use the historical core of Christianity which successfully passes historical analysis.

You can see the creed used as evidence in the debate between James Crossley and William Lane Craig.

New study: Adolescents have worse mental health after transgender treatments

April 8, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Just last week, a new large-scale study was published about what happens to the mental health of adolescents who get transgender treatments. It was published in the journal Acta Paediatrica. The data comes from gender identity clinics in Finland. I waited a few days to see what the response from critics would be and it's been surprisingly muted. I always blog about studies that will help me to debate these issues, and I think this is a good one.

So, I looked at the Results section of the Abstract, and it says this:

> Gender-referred adolescents showed significantly higher psychiatric morbidity than controls both before (45.7% vs. 15.0%) and ≥ 2 years after referral (61.7% vs. 14.6%). Those referred after 2010 had greater psychiatric needs than earlier cohorts, both before (47.9% vs. 15.3%) and ≥ 2 years after (61.3% vs. 14.2%) referral. Among adolescents who underwent medical gender reassignment, psychiatric morbidity increased markedly during follow-up—rising from 9.8% to 60.7% in feminising gender reassignment and from 21.6% to 54.5% in masculinising gender reassignment. After adjusting for prior psychiatric treatment, all gender-referred adolescents had similarly elevated risks of psychiatric morbidity, with hazard ratios approximately three times higher than female controls and five times higher than male controls.

I say large-scale, because the study compared 1) 2,083 people who were referred to gender identity clinics in Finland before age 23 to 2) a control group of several similar people in the general population. And this was over a long period of time – 1996 to 2019. I think the abstract explains the findings pretty well. People who got referred to gender identity clinics for treatment had MUCH higher mental health problems than the general population.

I asked a nice lady on Twitter who works for SEGM (the Society for Evidenced Based Gender Medicine) for a good write-up on this study, and she pointed me to a Substack article by Benjamin Ryan, who specializes in this area. He had some interesting context about the study.

He writes:

> The Finnish study's four coauthors have published some of the strongest scholarship challenging the assertion that providing them to adolescents improves their mental health and is life-saving. All of these Finnish investigators were also coauthors of a paper published in 2024 that found that there was no independent, statistically significant association between taking cross-sex hormones and the rate of suicide deaths among youths attending gender clinics.

The 2024 article that he's talking about was in a different medical journal, BMJ Health. One of the four authors was actually one of the pioneers of gender transitioning treatment. She was all for it, until she got far enough into it that she realized that it wasn't working out as expected.

Sometimes, you do see studies where people report that they feel better about getting transgender treatment in the short term. But what really matters is the long term. And also, it is important to measure outcomes using objective measurements, rather than self-reported "satisfaction". Objective markers are things like doing well in school or holding a steady job.

The Ryan article has a nice summary of what we've found so far in the research:

> Systematic literature reviews—the gold standard of scientific evidence—have all found that the research backing the use of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones to treat gender dysphoria in youths is weak and unreliable. It was due in part to Dr. Kaltiala's influence that Finland conducted its own systematic literature review of pediatric gender medicine. Given the review's findings, the nation has sharply restricted youths' access to gender-transition interventions.

I've blogged before about several countries that are pulling back from transitioning children. But here in America, the left isn't really driven by scientific studies. They are in some sort of mad rush to virtue signaling by celebrating actions that are not in the child's best interest. They want to prove how moral they are by tolerating the maximum number of behaviors. But some behaviors are harmful and should not be tolerated.

And this was the interesting part:

> The gender-dysphoric youths who did undergo gender-transition interventions arrived at the gender clinics with a much lower rate of previous use of specialist psychiatric care: 10 percent among natal males and 22 percent among natal females. But notably, two years or more after their first gender-clinic appointment, this group's use of specialist psychiatric care shot up, to 61 percent among the natal males and 55 percent among the natal females.

So, if you go ahead with the transition treatments, it made your mental health worse than when you started.

I think this is a good study to keep around when you have to debate this issue. Please continue to debate this issue, because we want to save these children from doing anything that will cause them harm in the long term.

My recommended strategy for preparing Christian kids for college

April 15, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

In the last two weeks, I have been gathering information about the problem that Christians parents face when they send their Christian-raised kids to college. Specifically, I met some excellent Christian parents who seem to have done a great job of raising their kids in private Christian schools and had good consversations with them about policy and apologetics. Yet, these kids still dumped their faith and their conservatism in college. What to do?

Well, I can only go off of what I have seen from people in my workplace who were raised in red states, in intact married homes, in private Christian schools, and so on and then left the faith in college. And the problem seems to be twofold. 1) They don't want to have any "the Bible says" moral limitations on their pursuit of pleasure. And 2) They don't want to counter claims about the world that disagree with the Bible with "the Bible says".

There are varying degrees of going along with the secular left. Some kids are just desperate to rebel either in moral issues or in claims about reality. Some kids just have honest intellectual doubts about the Bible's teachings on moral issues or truth claims.

So, in this post, I thought it might be a good idea to look at how kids have pressure placed on them at college, and how to counter it.

So, on moral issues, usually any sorts of limitations on the pursuit of pleasure are going to be seen as "mean". Do you disagree with cohabitating before marriage? Oh, then you are mean. Do you disagree with same-sex marriage? Oh, then you are a bigot. Do you disagree with reckless sex leading to abortion? Oh, then you are anti-women.

How to deal with this? So, most students raised in the church either capitulate to this immediately, because that's easier, or they just hide their Christian convictions, because "the Bible says" isn't a good answer to "you're a mean bigot". So, in that case, it's probably a good idea to teach your children early on that it's possible for people to put pressure on you to agree with them about moral issues while still being wrong about those moral issues. For example, for abortion, you can defend your view using the science of embryology. For cohabitation, you should have a study or two showing that cohabitation has higher instability and worse outcomes for kids. For same-sex marriage, you can point out how removing marriage norms like gender complementarity impacts children.

But I also think that it's important to prepare children for the challenges to truth claims. And what I was thinking for this is that children need to be given a "clear case" where the secular and leftist opinions that dominate on campus are proven to be factually incorrect.

Regular listeners to the Knight and Rose Show will know that we urge all Christian apologists to add economics to the list of topics that they study for apologetics. A good grasp of economics is useful for being able to see that the dominant opinions on campus

(socialism, communism, etc.) produce BAD results in the real world. You can even compare countries that went from capitalist to communism (e.g. – Venezuela) to countries that went from communist to capitalist (e.g. – Chile).

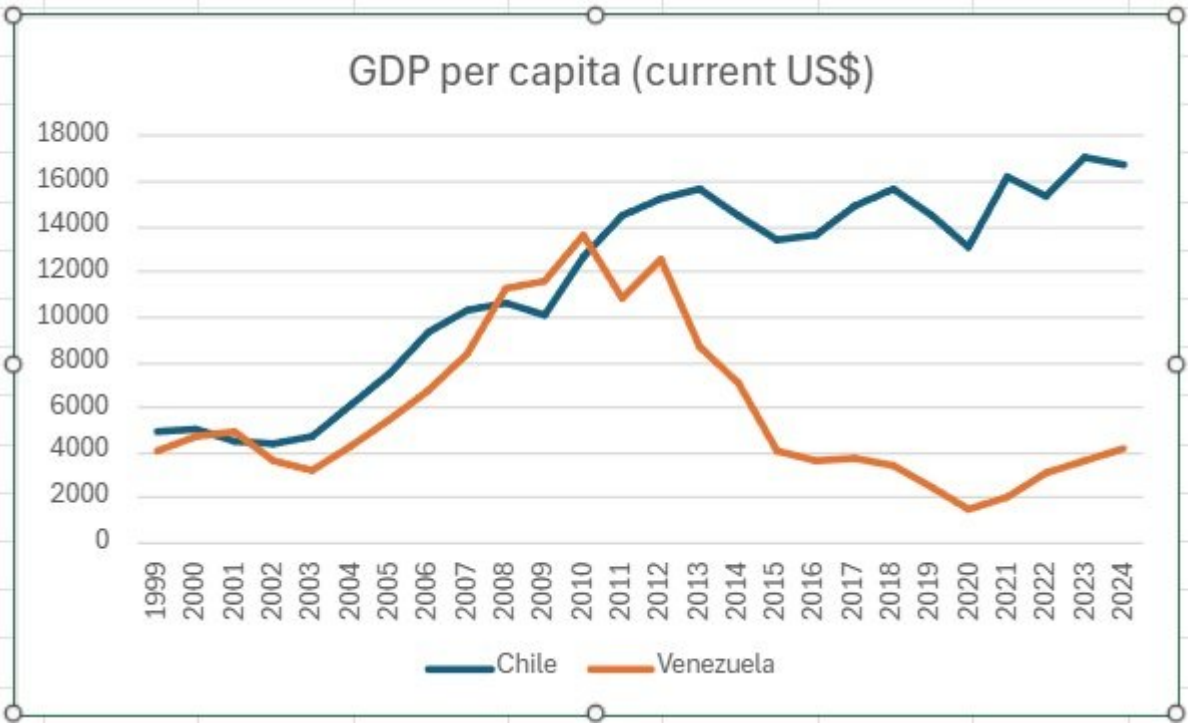

And what this does is that it makes it crystal clear to your Christian kids that not everything they hear on a college campus is correct. E.g. – when their same-age peers call them "mean" for opposing minimum wage hikes, those peers could be wrong. And when their college professors call them "mean" for opposing replacing nuclear power with solar and wind, they could be wrong too. It's possible that the people you meet on college campuses don't know how reality works.

Here is a nice recent article by David Harsanyi in the New York Post that makes the case for this second type of college preparation.

> In 2023, over 100 leading economists from around the world, including progressive darling Thomas Piketty, signed a letter warning that "far-right" Argentine presidential candidate Javier Milei's policies, which were "rooted in laissez-faire economics," would cause "devastation," spike inflation, expand poverty and worsen unemployment.
>
> Celebrated economists never penned any open letters warning that the preceding Peronists' or Kirchnerists' perverse blend of fascism, socialism and unionism would drive Argentina — once one of world's wealthiest nations — into destitution, unemployment, soaring inflation and bankruptcy.
>
> Under Milei, political scientist Ian Bremmer warned, "Economic collapse is coming imminently."
>
> Felix Salmon, then chief financial correspondent at Axios (now at Bloomberg), argued that Milei's "wrecking ball" policies would plunge Argentina into "a deep recession."

> When the United States provided Argentina with a $20 billion currency swap line last year, former New York Times columnist and Milei critic Paul Krugman argued that there's "no plausible scenario in which even $20 billion in US loans will save Javier Milei's failing economic strategy."

So, imagine your Christian student gets to campus, and the professors are telling them how wonderful socialism is and how well it works, and quoting all these famous leftist economists like Piketty and Krugman. It would really help them to know what these elites said about Argentina before Milei took over, because look at how wrong they were.

So here is what happened, starting with the $20 billion in US loans:

> Argentina only tapped around $2.5 billion of that funding, and then fully repaid the loan in January with interest, far ahead of schedule.
>
> Well, Argentina's 2025 GDP also blew past expectations, growing 4.4%, the highest in years.
>
> The International Monetary Fund expects the GDP will grow at similar rates in 2026 and 2027.
>
> Since Milei's party won power in 2023, inflation has dropped nearly 200 percentage points, plunging to the lowest level in eight years.
>
> it had a fiscal surplus for the second consecutive year in 2025, marking the first time since 2008 that it accomplished that feat — and the poverty rate dropped significantly in 2025, reaching its lowest level since 2018.
>
> The crisis Milei took on was stark: In the first half of 2024, around 52.9% of the population was living in poverty, with 18% in extreme poverty.
>
> Poverty fell 14 percentage points, to 38%, last year. It is at 31% now.
>
> Milei did all this the old-fashioned way.
>
> He removed price controls, got rid of tariffs and opened trade, privatized a slew of government-run agencies, cut red tape, weakened union monopolies, made major cuts in spending and eliminated an array of needless state jobs.
>
> In other words, all the usual stuff that free marketers preach will work — and experts warn us will bring on Armageddon.

Why is this important? Because this is an evidence-based refutation of economic views pushed by students and professors on campus. When your kids understand clearly their peers and professors are blabbing about things that are known to be false, they won't feel so much pressure to agree with them on moral issues or other truth claims that contradict Christianity.

I talked to some Christians about my idea. Some liked it and some didn't like it. The engineers all liked it. The ones who didn't like it didn't like the idea of treating Christianity as a knowledge tradition – a set of claims about the world that are true. They wanted to treat Christianity as something subjective – it's about my feelings, or it's about my family, or it's about my community. They wanted to insulate it from logic and evidence. But this

fails because feelings, family and community are not going with the kids to college.

So, I recommend taking the truth-focused approach. That's why on the Knight and Rose Show, we cover topics like economics, energy policy, education policy, and so on. Our next show, which comes out this Saturday, is on health care policy. And in that one, we are again countering the teachings of the secular leftist elites by opposing government-run health care and promoting a free-market alternative. And we will do it with evidence.

By branching out into these other areas of knowledge, your children will understand that Christianity is seen by you as "knowledge". And when they compare what you taught them with what their peers and professors believe, they will say "well, I have reasons to doubt these people on other topics, so why would I have trouble doubting them on Christian worldview topics?". All the name-calling and peer pressure in the world isn't going to convince anybody that communism worked in Venezuela and capitalism failed in Chile.

I also do something similar with people who hate America's history when I bring up American's noble wars against totalitarianism, e.g. – the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Marshall Plan, etc. Or our war against cruel Japanese imperialists and genocidal German socialists in WW2. That's another way that you can insulate your kids – by teaching them about all the good things that America has done. Take them to the museums and show them what America has done for other countries.

The key point is that your kids need some area where they have worked through the facts themselves, so they will not be easily moved by shaming and rhetoric.

The Best State: Tennessee designates June as "Nuclear Family Month"

April 17, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the reasons why we have 50 states in America is so that we have 50 little laboratories where we can run public policy 50 different ways and see which way works best. There are lots of ways to measure which states are best: tax rates, cost of living, crime rates, school choice, energy production, fiscal health, business climate, concealed carry laws, etc. And certainly social conservatives will want to live in a state that respects marriage and family.

Well, it's hard to see how any state could ever beat Tennessee on that last criterion. Tennessee was already best in the nation on protecting the unborn. And their rock star attorney general Skrmetti recently won a landmark case protecting children from transgender activism at the Supreme Court. But now Tennessee is the best on marriage and family, too.

Here's the latest news from Breitbart:

> Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee (R) signed a resolution that designates June, considered "Pride Month" by some, as "Nuclear Family Month," noting that the nuclear family "is God's design for familial structure."
>
> The resolution states that "the nuclear family, consisting of one husband, one wife, and any biological, adopted, or fostered children," has "been the bedrock of society" since God created the world.
>
> The nuclear family is also described as having been "the basic building block of Tennessee's society throughout her formative years," and as having "built the United States of America."
>
> It continues to affirm that "the nuclear family built the United States of America and created prosperity within our nation[.]"
>
> The resolution also points out that "fatherless families are four times more likely to live in poverty than married-couple families," and that children who grow up in homes without fathers "are ten times more likely to abuse chemical substances" and have mental health and behavioral problems."

It's very important to make these declarations, because they start conversations about these issues. In addition, secular leftists might want to move out of Tennessee, and Christians conservatives might want to move in. Tennessee has a lot of achievements in the area of social conservatism, like the one I mentioned earlier. And one other good thing is that declarations like this allow you to see what the secular leftist legislators really think. I bet a lot of rank and file Democrats think that Democrat legislators believe in marriage and family. But do they? Let's see how they voted.

Rose send me an article about this from her favorite news source, Daily Wire, and they

had some additional details that I thought were interesting. For example, they said this:

> The resolution easily passed the Republican-dominated state legislature, clearing the House 72-18 last year and passing the Senate 26-4 last month.

I asked Grok who voted no, and Grok confirmed that all the no votes came from Democrats. Why is this interesting? Because a lot of non-traditional Democrat women fancy that "some day" they will all have handsome, traditional husbands who will protect and provide for them in a permanent exclusive marriage. They think that they deserve such a marriage, that their voting for Democrats is compatible with that end result. But the people these women vote for DO NOT believe in marriage. They DO NOT believe in husbands. They DO NOT believe in children. They DO NOT believe in homes, home-making, fidelity or permanence. I see so many non-traditional women complaining that the secular leftist men they are attracted to (for permissiveness) cannot be trusted to act like traditional men. They simply don't understand that they can't be non-traditional and vote non-traditional and just claim traditional men and traditional benefits after spending their whole lives voting against those men and those traditional male roles.

More from that article:

> Leftist organizations expressed outrage after Lee signed the resolution last week. The LGBT activist organization GLAAD called Tennessee lawmakers who passed the resolution "clueless."

That's what leftists really believe – but somehow, leftist young women vote for these people and then act surprised when they cannot find a man who takes marriage and parenting seriously. There just isn't a way for a self-centered narcissist who dismisses all the obligations of healthy relationships to attract a slave who will perform all of the traditional obligations of healthy relationships. The policies passed by Democrat legislators and lobbied for by Democrat-aligned activists destroy the supply of good men and make marriage risky and costly and unattractive to good men.

So what about Tennessee as a state?

> Tennessee was among the first states to ban gender procedures on children, prohibit schools from hiding children's gender "transitions" from parents, and crack down on drag queen performances in public or in settings where children are present.

I did an evaluation of Tennessee and other states when I got my green card and had to decide where to live. I had columns for Cost of Doing Business, Infrastructure, Economy, Business Friendliness, Cost of Living, Tax as a Percentage of Income, Family Structure, Laws against same-sex marriage, Pro-life protections for unborn babies, Self-defense against criminals, Concealed Carry laws, Fiscal Health, etc. I got the numbers from rankings by CNBC, Mercatus Center, Guns and Ammo, Pro-life groups, and so on. Overall, Tennessee came out #1, edging out Texas (#2) and Utah (#3). Since then, they have improved many of those numbers.

Let me show you some examples.

I used the 2015 Mercatus Center fiscal solvency ranking, which ranked Tennessee at #9. They did another ranking in 2018, and this time Tennessee was ranked #3. I did a quick check to see how Tennessee is doing today. One ranking has them at #3 and another ranking has them at #2.

I also rated all the states for gun rights and concealed carry. The Guns and Ammo rankings from 2015 had Tennessee at #23 for gun rights. In Guns and Ammo rankings from 2023, Tennessee is #8 for gun rights.

I also rated all the states for pro-life legislation. In 2015, Tennessee got ranked #18 by Americans United for Life. In 2025, Tennessee got ranked #6 by Americans United for Life.

So, if I had Tennessee at #1 in 2016 and since then many of their numbers have *improved*. The legislators in TN don't understand the meaning of "good enough". They hear about something bad that happened in another state or at the federal level and they think "we've got to pass a law so that it never happens here". It's important to live in a state that takes Christian and conservative values seriously. You don't want to be paying taxes to secular leftists to rule over you and ruin your life. They are stupid people and so they don't deliver good results.

Knight and Rose Show #75: Improving Healthcare: A Christian Perspective

April 18, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 75 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose evaluate health insurance options in America, discuss moral concerns, and offer reforms to lower prices and improve quality. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose explore healthcare policy in America from a Christian perspective. They discuss moral concerns, such as stewardship of resources and impact on religious liberty. Health insurance options are evaluated, focusing on costs and access to care. Single-payer healthcare models in Canada and the UK are critiqued. Finally, they advocate for consumer-focused reforms including health savings accounts, price transparency, and competition.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 75:

Speaker biographies

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Illustra Media’s documentary on intelligent design in the fossil record is online

April 21, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I must have given away dozens of those 3-DVD sets from Illustra Media that contained “Unlocking the Mystery of Life’s Origin”, “The Privileged Planet” and “Darwin’s Dilemma”. I wanted to send these to people as part of their “start doing apologetics” starter packs. Well, good news for my readers who didn’t get a set from me. Now you can just watch the latest one for FREE on YouTube. I have all the parts (not the credits) linked below.

Here’s part 1:

Here’s part 2:

Here’s part 3:

Here’s part 4:

Here’s part 5:

I checked to see what resolution they uploaded it at, and it’s at 1080 pixel resolution – so very, very sharp.

If you have never seen an introduction to the argument for design from the fossil record, you won’t find anything more gentle than this. A good follow-up to this would be this video on several “fossil record explosions” by Dr. Günter Bechly. Because it’s not just the Cambrian explosion.

I just had a meeting with a bunch of my co-workers last week and I talked to a bunch of them about what they were doing to prepare their kids for college. Some of them had a good plan, and some of them had waited too long and kids were already lost to the secular left. So, it’s very important to make sure that your kids have some sort of grounding in the evidence for intelligent design.

I would say that scientific evidence and a close study of economics are two of the best ways to insulate your child from the pressures they will face from the secular left at college. Don’t rely on feelings and community when we have hard evidence available.

James Tour, Stephen C. Meyer and John Lennox discuss “The Story of Everything”

April 22, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Something very exciting just happened! By now, most people have heard about the new movie about intelligent design in the universe that is coming to theaters on April 30th through May 6. Well, I’ve been telling people at work about this movie and sending them links about various discussions about it with the people involved. The best discussion is this one led by Peter Robinson, and featuring James Tour, Stephen C. Meyer and John Lennox.

Here is the video:

I watched it in my “after cardio” after lifting weights on Tuesday. They covered 4 of the best scientific arguments for design: the origin of the universe, the cosmic fine-tuning, the origin of life, and the sudden origin of new body plans in the fossil record.

Here’s the description:

> Moving from the Big Bang and the discovery of cosmic beginnings, to the fine-tuning of the physical constants that make life possible, to the extraordinary complexity and information embedded in DNA, mathematician John Lennox, philosopher of science Stephen Meyer, and chemist James Tour, explores whether these developments point to blind, undirected processes—or to the activity of an intelligent mind. The trio challenges long-held materialist assumptions, revisits classic scientific debates, and reflects on what these questions mean not only for science but also for our understanding of human existence and purpose.

I noticed that our friend Terrell Clemmons has been publishing articles about the movie on the Science and Culture website.

She has three:

- The Story of the Discovery of the Beginning of All Things
- What Grand Design? On Stephen Hawking’s Loophole
- The Living Nano-Factory: Darwinists Ignore the Ultimate Information Enigma

These articles provide some helpful background to what you see in the discussion above, especially for beginners to the material.

Anyway, here’s a snip from her first article, which is about the origin of the universe:

> The self-existing-universe paradigm was discarded by the 1970s for the Big Bang model, which holds that the entire universe, including matter and energy and space and time (also called spacetime), began to exist at a zero point in finite history and has been expanding ever since. Until this zero point, nothing material

> existed.
>
> The human story of this 20th-century paradigm shift is fascinating, but the empirical findings that drove it are even more so. They are — dare I say — captivating. The Story of Everything, which we've been discussing here at Science and Culture Today, relates both the human narrative of the shift and the stunning discoveries that propelled it forward. The upcoming theatrical documentary relates more than just these developments, but that story alone is enough to captivate your mind with the wonder of it all.

I've always urged readers of this blog to present scientific evidence for creation and design as a series of discoveries made by real people. Discoveries that overturned the eternally-existing, not-designed views of the distant past. In that discussion I linked to above, they mentioned redshift and cosmic microwave background radiation. But they could also have added the light element abundance predictions – maybe those are discussed in the movie. The point is that evidence piled up until it overturned the naive "eternal universe" view that is still held today by atheists who are holding out hope that the new science will all be reversed so they regain support their Old Time Religion.

Here's a quote from the second article, which talks the naturalistic response to the evidence for the origin of the universe:

> In their 2010 book, *The Grand Design*, Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow set out to answer a big question: "Is the apparent 'grand design' of our universe evidence of a benevolent creator who set things in motion — or does science offer another explanation?"
>
> […]The thesis of *The Grand Design*, as stated in the closing chapter, is, "Because there is a law like gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing," i.e., no designer required.
>
> The Story of Everything takes up Hawking's and Mlodinow's thesis on their own turf, so to speak. From the perspective of physics, does their "another explanation" add up to a viable case for the universe creating itself out of nothing?
>
> If you've never seen the Hawking-Mlodinow hypothesis refuted in a debate or lecture, you're going to see it in "The Story of Everything". Honestly, I don't see how a law of nature – a description of the behavior of matter – can instantiate matter itself. Not to mention fine-tuning that allows the universe to support complex, embodied intelligence.

Here's the third article, which talks about the biological information that has to be present in the first living system in order for it to perform the minimal functions of life:

> In the 1950s, James Watson and Francis Crick elucidated the structure of the DNA molecule and its information-bearing properties. From that starting point, scientists went on to discover how the chemical subunits on the "rungs" of the

> DNA “ladder” function like alphabetic letters in a language and how the information they bear directs protein synthesis in the cell.
>
> The Story of Everything, the upcoming theatrical documentary based on Stephen Meyer’s Return of the God Hypothesis, explains the marvelous information processing that operates inside the cell. For every protein molecule synthesized, the operations include deciphering and copying information from a specific segment of the DNA strand, lining up in correct sequence the required amino acids according to the segment’s specifications, and folding the resulting amino-acid chain into the exact shape necessary so that the molecule can perform its specific task in the cell. The process is comparable to a sophisticated factory production line, with everything running automatically according to preexisting coded instructions. Without it, or without the information that runs it, there would be no life on planet Earth. Zip. Nada. It must have been present, too, in Earth’s first life.

So, if you have not heard how the discovery of information in the cell suggests an intelligent designer, they will be telling you the story of the discoveries and the discoverers of it in the movie.

Does this sound like something you would like your friends and family to know about? It’s very strange to me that at a time when we are making all these scientific discoveries that pretty clearly show that the universe was created and was designed for life, that people are still believing whatever they like without evidence. We’ve got to do better than that! So make a plan to take you and yours to the movie – and share the movie trailer or the discussion video with your friends and family.

Why social conservatives fail to reverse declining marriage and birth rates

April 24, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I saw an interesting post on Katy Faust's Substack and I wrote a long comment to it. I sent the comment to three of my manliest male friends (police officer, and two software engineers who run their own very profitable companies). They said "publish as is". And I also sent it to a female co-worker, a female podcast co-host (Rose) and a very famous female Christian author. They all said "publish as is". So, I published as is.

Below is my published comment to Katy's article. Keep in mind, this was straight shoot from the hip, didn't link to any studies, didn't even proof-read it, with just fixing up the few typos that my female friends found. I am so happy with everyone who checked it over for me.

If you comment on Katy's blog, please be kind. Don't attack her personally. I hope I didn't attack her personally in my comment. I was just trying to address what I see as a failing strategy. Katy herself is excellent. I regularly give her books away to friends (and I just warn them about her anti-male bias).

One of helpful editors sent me a couple of images, so take a look at those first:

And:

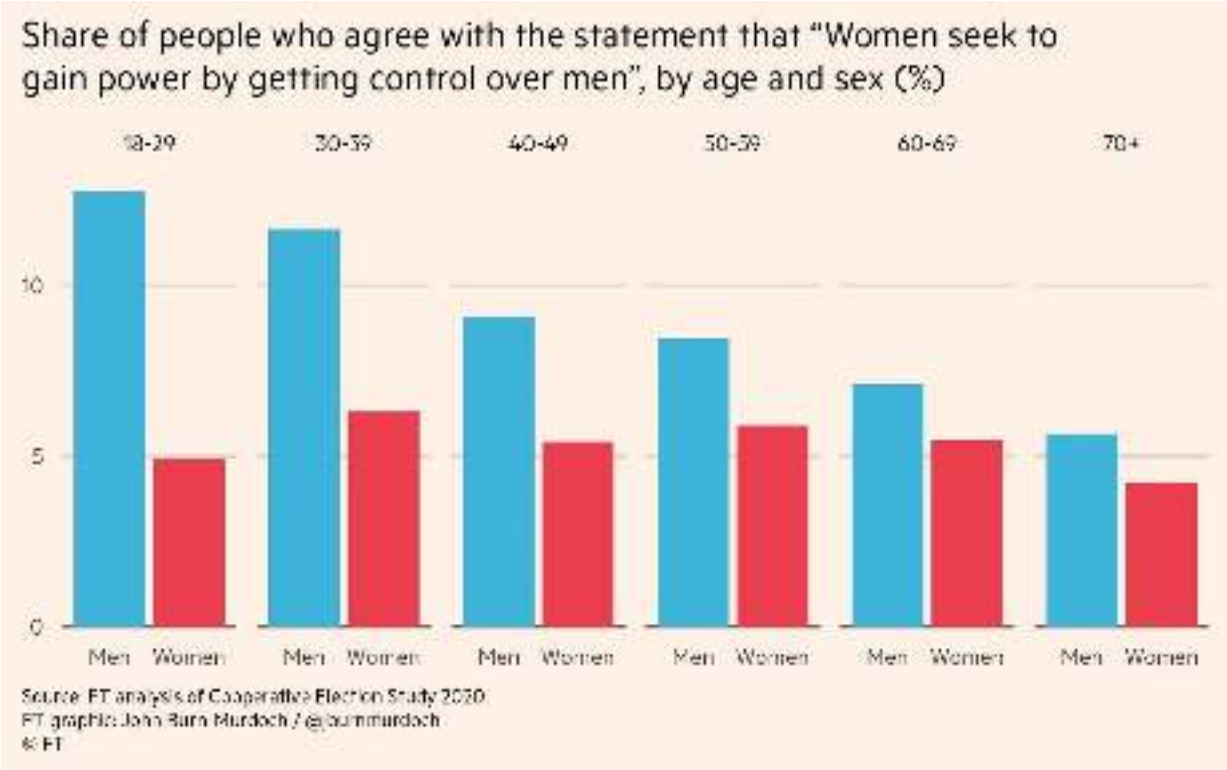

Here is the full text of my comment:

Speaking as someone who is a visible minority, has had to navigate legal immigration by merit, and worked 27 years in the competitive private sector in the field of technology (FT100 companies), I have a different view of how we should approach the twin problems of declining marriage rate and declining birth rate.

First, we don't want to reduce male headship to "taking the initiative". Leadership, as seen in great leaders like Dwight Eisenhower, involves making plans and making decisions to achieve real results. Someone who is a good leader is not someone who merely takes the initiative. It is someone who knows how to get from point A to point B, who has a record of doing it, and who knows how to make other people want to participate in the plan by following the leader's decisions. Going up to a woman and starting a conversation is not leadership. It's convenient for the woman to be passive and avoid rejection and decide if they like the man based on first impressions and feelings. But it is not actual leadership. And it is not demonstrating the kind of leadership that women will want from a husband and father in the long run.

Again, taking Eisenhower as the model, leadership would be if a man is able to motivate a woman into a long-term effort in which she takes independent action to help him to achieve the plan that he thinks is important. For a Christian man, that higher goal would not be the woman's happiness, but serving God. A man's purpose for a relationship with a woman is leading her to serve God. Masculinity is NOT "when a man uses his strength to benefit women". (A social conservative once told me that was her definition of masculinity) Speaking as a non-white person, that view sounds exactly like slavery to me, and it implies that slaves who don't like being slaves are lacking in character – i.e. – less masculine. A man whose first priority is serving God is going to be very skeptical about signing up for a relationship where the strength that God has entrusted him with is taken

away from God, and transferred to the woman for her happiness. It's not appealing to Christian men to disregard their goals for relationships and become a woman's slave instead.

Now onto why men are declining to approach and pursue. The root cause of men's disinterest in pursuing women is twofold. First, Christian parents and church pastors have not prepared women to resist secularism and leftism in the culture. The second concern is the changes to laws, workplaces, courts, etc. brought on by feminism.

What are the consequences of the widespread turn towards secularism and leftism in young women (according to surveys). Well, they tend to be attracted to left-wing and immoral men. Men who don't judge, men who are permissive, men who don't hold women accountable. More and more young women don't value or choose chastity, pro-life advocacy, evidential apologetics, sobriety, frugality, etc. They aren't being taught to by Christian parents and pastors, because women are already seen as perfect for marriage. Nothing to fix. You won't find anything like Thomas Sowell economics, evidential apologetics, etc. in most Christian homes and churches. So, when good Christian men meet these women, they have to start from ground zero – and often after the women has lived out the secular feminist lifestyle through her late teens, her 20s, and sometimes even 30s and 40s. So no defenses to secularism and feminism get laid down in the years before college, and then these Christian women lose their faith and conservatism after a semester or two of college. Studies show that promiscuity is a risk for lower relationship quality and higher relationship instability. Relationship instability is already a big risk for women, who initiate 70% of divorces. The highest instability rate is for lesbians. This is because women naturally condition commitment on their feelings. Whatever we are doing right now, it's not preparing women to get over this tendency.

And it's not just avoiding moral and spiritual leadership. Studies on attraction show that many young women are looking for dark triad traits. Again, a few rounds with men who have these traits will make them very unattractive for good men who have kept themselves chaste and sober. The damage is more like student loan debt – it doesn't just disappear by spiritual conversion in the mid-30s. It stays on the books and requires work to eliminate. And the attempt by good men to choose the right woman for the job or lead the wrong woman into becoming the right woman is often dismissed as "controlling" or "judging" or "emotional abuse" or worse. This is not a good situation for a good man to get involved with. Young women are not trained to be led on moral and spiritual issues, and male leadership is seen as suspicious and even evil.

The second problem is underestimating the effects of feminism in laws and courts on men's incentives to marry. Most social conservatives can't admit or list the problems that are causing well-educated, high-earning, commitment-ready Christian men to decline to date and marry. That would be things like no-fault divorce, bias in domestic violence, handling of false accusations, bias in custody assignment, more severe sentencing of men, paternity fraud permissiveness, and so on. If these problems are even admitted, they are usually blamed on men failing to make women sufficiently happy. Men can name dozens of clear examples of society treating men unfairly. If a good man is weighing what

to do with the fruits of his labor, then he is going to be looking at these problems. Even if these threats are not likely to get the good man, they are signs of widespread approval of bias against men – even among parents, pastors and social conservatives. Many good men will choose to just use their hard-earned millions for other things – like Christian ministry and mentoring. Jesus never married nor did he have children. Was he doing a good job of obeying God the Father when he decided to focus on other things instead?

The naive approach of hoping that men will somehow just disregard the influence of 6 decades of feminism on 1) women's character and choices and 2) the laws and courts has not worked, is not working now, and will never work. And just doubling down on making demands or shaming men is not going to make it work any better than it has been. Maybe we can start with a new definition of masculinity that is 100% opposed to the "masculinity is when men are women's slaves" definition. Let's make the new definition of masculinity this: "masculinity is when a man is able to disregard the attractiveness and sexual offers of women such that he is able to focus himself and the women around him on his higher responsibility to serve God".

After that, we can ask good men what they want out of marriage, and how they see the effects of feminism on 1) women's character and 2) the laws and courts, as deterrents to men marrying.

That's it for the comment. Let me know what you thought of it in the comments to this post.

We have a long way to go to reverse feminism and misandry inside the church… and also in the minds of some Christian social conservatives. Unfortunately, I can't think of a single prominent Christian leader who takes the concerns of men about dating and marriage seriously.

Sean McDowell has had some amazing guests on his popular YouTube channel

April 29, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Two of my friends alerted me to a bunch of recent shows posted on Sean McDowell's popular YouTube channel. I always like shows where there are discussions of evidennce – topics like economics and science are best for me. Well, Sean has had a bunch of good guests on good topics. The key thing about his recent shows is that he is doing 2-part shows. The first makes a positive case, and the second is about how to answer objections to that case.

The first guest is Dr. Stephen C. Meyer, and he talks about the origin of the universe:

And then there is a second show, where Sean talks with a Biola University philosopher about objections to the origin of the universe:

The second guest is Dr. Doug Axe. I met Dr. Axe way back at the Baylor Conference on intelligent design in April, 2000. He talks about the evidence for design in the origin of life, which is what his research is on.

Here is his "positive case" show:

And then here is the second show, where they discuss objections to the positive case:

So, if you watch both of these, you will really learn something about how to talk about this topic.

The third guest is Dr. Jay Richards. You might remember him, because we had him on the Knight and Rose Show. His topic was the fine-tuning argument. I am running into Christians at work who are just trying to learn this argument, so I hope this video helps them.

Here is the first show – the positive case:

And here is the second show, where they answer objections to the positive case:

By the way, if you like David Wood, he has a recent episode with David Wood about the biggest problem in Islam right now. Which is the biggest problem? I would say either the Islamic Dilemma or the research coming out on Quran variations. It looks like they go over a whole bunch of problems!

Finally, if you like listening to Sean McDowell, we had him on an episode of the Knight and Rose Show, where he talked about the fate of the Apostles. So if you missed that, then you can go back and listen.

Atheist responds to case for intelligent design in "The Story of Everything" movie

May 4, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I've put up a few posts about this new "The Story of Everything" movie that is available to see from April 30th to May 6th. My tickets are for tomorrow (Monday). Some of my friends went to see it on the weekend. One told me it sparked discussion about the big questions of life among her four children. But some people in my office were skeptical that such a movie could have appeal to non-Christians. So, today's post will be very helpful.

Today's post is a review of the movie from a website called TechSpective. The reviewer is Tony Bradley.

What caught my eye was this introduction about how the writer abandoned his faith:

> I should tell you upfront: I'm an atheist. I was born-again Christian as a kid, read the Bible end to end more than once, and eventually landed somewhere else entirely. I mention this not to pick a fight, but because it's relevant to what I'm about to say about a documentary that opens in theaters today — one I might have dismissed without a second thought if I hadn't spent an hour talking to the man behind it.

I do have a number of friends who are fairly high up in establishment Christianity. And I know how they explain their lack of interest in apologetics. It's something along the lines of "Apologetics? That's not very useful. People become Christians when it enhances their lives. It works for them when they are children, then it doesn't work for them when they are in college and starting their careers, and then it does work for them again when they have kids. So don't worry about apologetics, people who are raised in the church will come back to the church as soon as they have kids". This is literally how most pastors and Christian leaders think. They are really happy with the status quo of people being involved in Christianity for emotional reasons, and then leaving it when it's convenient.

And this also applies to their own kids, who they raised in married Christian homes and with regular church attendance. I've had Christian professionals in my office reject books by Dr. Stephen C. Meyer for their kids who were going off to study BIOLOGY and ENGINEERING at big universities. "Kids these days are more leftist than we were, and they just see religion differently. The main thing is that my two kids got accepted to Vanderbilt and Duke! Isn't that great? They're going to make a lot of money, and have a lot more kids, so I'll have lots of grandkids." So, even the Christians who are very smart and very good at their IT jobs – experts in technology – don't know why the Christianity they believe in is true. It's just what they were raised in, what makes them feel good. It's their favorite brand of clothes, type of food or local sports team. We cheer for Christianity because we were born in the South. Rah, rah, Jesus.

Anyway, let's see what this guy who left Christianity thought about a movie that makes

truth the issue, for a change.

First, what he thinks that the movie is about:

> The Story of Everything is a new film anchored by Stephen Meyer, a philosopher of science with a Ph.D. from Cambridge. It makes an explicit, unapologetic case for intelligent design — the idea that discoveries in cosmology, physics, and molecular biology point not just to some vague designer, but to a system that has been conceived and engineered with intent.
>
> […]Meyer's central argument — laid out in his 2020 book *Return of the God Hypothesis*, on which the film is based — isn't "the Bible says so." It's that three major scientific discoveries of the past century create a serious problem for strict materialism: the universe had a definite beginning, the physical constants that make life possible are calibrated to a degree of precision that strains every probabilistic resource available, and the information encoded in DNA cannot be explained by the chemistry that carries it.
>
> That last point is where a technology background becomes relevant, and it's what Meyer said fascinates him most. Inside living cells, the chemical subunits along the DNA molecule function like alphabetic characters in a written text — or like digital characters in machine code. The sequence is what matters, just like the sequence of characters in software. And here's the part that doesn't get enough attention: natural selection has nothing to select until a self-replicating system with a working genetic code already exists. The origin of that code is not a question Darwinian evolution actually addresses. It starts after the code is already there.

Then, what he thinks about the movie as an atheist:

> Meyer is not a preacher. He's a deeply credentialed philosopher and scientist with a recall of specific facts, sources, and counterarguments that's difficult to match. During our conversation, he cited papers, named researchers across multiple disciplines, engaged Hawking's quantum cosmology in technical detail, and pushed back on my objections with precision rather than deflection. He'd be a formidable person to debate. But our conversation wasn't adversarial — not remotely. He was curious, thoughtful, and didn't try to convert me or judge me for disagreeing. He was interested in the exchange, not just in winning it. That's rarer than it should be.
>
> Nothing about the film or our conversation fundamentally changed where I stand. But I came away with a much clearer picture of the actual argument — not a strawman version of it — and a better understanding of why serious, intelligent people find it compelling. That's enough of a reason to watch.

It would be wonderful if Stephen C. Meyer was the baseline of what it means to be a Christian. Wouldn't it be great if what you learned in church, Sunday school, VBS, etc. was literally the scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer. Sadly, that's not at all

what Christians who are raised in the church typically learn. And that’s because the people who are supposed to be teaching them don’t know about these things either.

If you have not yet made plans to see the movie, you should by all means do so. Take your spouse. Take your kids. And when it’s over, take them to a nice quiet restaurant with no distractions, and talk about the evidence, so other people can overhear your discussion. There is no point letting atheism take over the minds of the people closest to you, especially when atheists don’t have the facts.

Knight and Rose Show #76: Passing the Torch: Standing Firm in a Secular Culture

May 9, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Welcome to episode 76 of the Knight and Rose podcast! In this episode, Wintery Knight and Desert Rose interview our protégé Ella, a promising young Christian standing firm in her convictions in secular Europe. If you like this episode, please subscribe to the podcast, and subscribe to our YouTube channel. We would appreciate it if you left us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Podcast description:

Christian apologists Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss apologetics, policy, culture, relationships, and more. Each episode equips you with evidence you can use to boldly engage anyone, anywhere. We train our listeners to become Christian secret agents. Action and adventure guaranteed. 30-45 minutes per episode. New episode every week.

Episode summary:

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Ella, their protégé, to discuss her experiences as a young Christian in secular Europe. They explore how she moved from doubt to confident faith through apologetics. Ella shares her journey navigating university life, the workplace, and cultural pressures while mentoring the next generation. She offers practical encouragement for young believers seeking to live out Christianity with courage and conviction.

Outline and transcript

Here is a transcript of the show provided by TurboScribe AI. TurboScribe AI allows you to translate the transcript into many, many different languages. You can also export the transcript into many different formats, with optional timestamps.

Episode 76:

Speaker biographies

Ella is a student who lives in a very secular European country. She is currently completing her university degree and working part-time in the area that she is studying. She mentors young women in her church and is actively trying to influence her culture. Her long-term plan is to grow string and have an influence for Christ. Ella blogs at Ella Apologetics.

Wintery Knight is a black legal immigrant. He is a senior software engineer by day, and an amateur Christian apologist by night. He has been blogging at winteryknight.com since January of 2009, covering news, policy and Christian worldview issues.

Desert Rose did her undergraduate degree in public policy, and then worked for a conservative Washington lobbyist organization. She also has a graduate degree from a prestigious evangelical seminary. She is active in Christian apologetics as a speaker, author, and teacher.

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Bettina Arndt explains why traditional men are declining to date and marry

May 20, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Well, the last (maybe) episode of Knight and Rose Show is up and I'm starting to wind down the blogging and spend more time on my health, fitness, nutrition and playing all the games that I had been neglecting. But I'm still very active on Twitter. And I saw a great article on there from Bettina Arndt, who is a pretty famous men's advocate from Australia. This article will be helpful to traditional men living in a world of non-traditional women.

So, the first thing to do is link to the article and then give you my favorite part:

> If you want to understand why men are voting with their feet, you need to look not just at what marriage now costs them — and the costs are severe — but at what it delivers. Increasingly, what it delivers is a pretty dud deal.
>
> **The modern woman: a prospectus.**
>
> - They are the most miserable, anxious, and insecure cohort in living memory — hardly great marriage material.
> - Most married women go off sex — and the husband who objects is seen as the problem.
> - Many women don't actually like men very much. The more educated she is, the higher the contempt.
> - They've gone full throttle left — and three quarters of college-educated women won't even date a man who votes differently.
> - They've rigged the education system and colonised corporate and institutional life, turning universities and workplaces into man-repellent factories.
> - Yet their hypergamy (desire to marry up) is still running hot. Despite outnumbering men in education and careers, they demand a tall, equally high-status unicorn.
> - The modern female threat-detection system is hyperactive. Almost any male behaviour — silence, opinions, jokes, breathing — gets flagged as a red flag.
> - They're extremely well-versed in the lucrative economics of divorce, including a well-timed false allegation to eliminate tedious shared parenting.
>
> To examine more carefully what is going on here, let's start by looking at the latest addition to this sorry reckoning. I'm referring to the finding published in *New Statesman* last month: that many young women don't like men. A Merlin Strategy poll of young Britons aged 18 to 30 found three times more young

> women than young men held a negative view of the opposite sex. Only about 50% of women had a positive view of men compared to 72% of men feeling positive about women. For women under 25, it was even starker: only around one-third (35%) reported a positive view of men.
>
> This applies particularly to professional and managerial young women of whom just 36 per cent hold a positive view of men, compared with 61 per cent of working-class women. In other words, the contempt for men is most concentrated in educated, middle-class women — precisely the demographic that has benefited most from feminist gains and whose prospects are objectively the strongest.

By the way, there used to be a guy who would write on these issues who was pretty good – his name is Dalrock. And he wrote a great article about this exact issue of traditional men realizing that marrying a non-traditional woman is a bad deal:

> But there is another aspect to this, because women's past decisions to delay marriage also played a role in shrinking the pool of men who prepared to take on the role of provider.
>
> The first generations of women who decided to push out the age of marriage for the most part found that the same number of men still prepared to be husbands. But over time as the length of the delay increased, this weakened the signal women collectively sent to young men that respectable men will be sexually successful.
>
> It isn't just that young women are now astonishingly open about their intent to have sex with badboys in their prime and settle for a beta provider at the last minute, although that has to have an impact. It also isn't just that as a society we see married fathers as beneath contempt, although surely that's having an impact as well.
>
> Today an 18 year old man doesn't see the same incentive to knock himself out on education and career that men of previous generations saw. Today an 18 year old man sees that for the next decade or so his most effective sexual strategy is to focus on being the sexy badboy young women dedicate their sexual prime to, not patiently preparing to be the boring loyal dude who will pick up the tab*.

And another great article that I really liked about how marriage has changed from being a good deal for men to being a bad deal for men:

> Feminists and their enablers have slowly shaved off the value of marriage for men.
>
> Marriage for men no longer means:
>
> - Being the legally and socially recognized head of the household.
> - An expectation of regular sex.

> - Legal rights to children.
> - Lifetime commitment.
>
> As men came to accept each [change], additional [changes] were continuously made. Women chose to marry later in order to first have a degree. This older bride then came with a little extra attitude, maybe some student loan debts, and perhaps more expensive tastes. Again, the choice by men was to accept what was commonly on offer or avoid the transaction altogether.
>
> […]There's just one more small thing. It took her so long to find you that you can't reasonably expect her chastity to be perfectly in tact. I mean, it's mostly there, but it suffered a ding or two. Her virginity was gone to her first boyfriend, but don't worry it was very romantic and she still has fond memories of that special time. Not too long after that those jerks at the frat house did a number on her pride, but you can't hold that against her. She's a bright gal, and after that she learned how to hook up smart.

Sadly, Dalrock has stopped writing, and even taken down his blog to focus on his own wife and kids.

Now, when I think about Christian pastors and Christian leaders – and here I will include literally all of the people who are writing about relationships and marriage from a Christian perspective – they are all 100% clueless about how men are calculating the value proposition of marriage. The cannot name the threats facing men, and they blame women's bad choices on men. So, no one traditional or conservative is leading women to be marriage-ready.

If you must get into a relationship with a woman, I would screen the candidate for a worldview like my podcast partner, Desert Rose. If you can't get that level of apologetics knowledge and policy knowledge, forget about it. That's the bare minimum for marriage and kids now.

Memorial Day: the 82nd Airborne’s heroic stand at the La Fière Bridge

May 25, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Despite being somewhat retired, I am keeping up with my reading on evidential apologetics and military history. You can always find out what I am reading in the “What I am Reading” page on this blog. Previously, I wrote a post about the top 20 heroic actions of the U.S. armed forces. The book I am reading now is “Nothing But Courage” and it described an action that I think is very suitable for a Memorial Day post.

The action I’m going to write about below happened in the days just after the D-Day invasion of France on June 6th, 1944. At that time, airborne units (parachute and glider) were being used to seize vital targets. There were two goals for this. To prevent German reinforcements from attacking the Allied forces on the beaches, and to allow the Allied forces to break out and seize objectives. One of the most important objectives being the nearby port of Cherbourg, which the allies could use to unload men and equipment to continue their advance.

First, a map where you can make note of the locations of Utah Beach, the city of Sainte-Mère-Église and the port of Cherbourg:

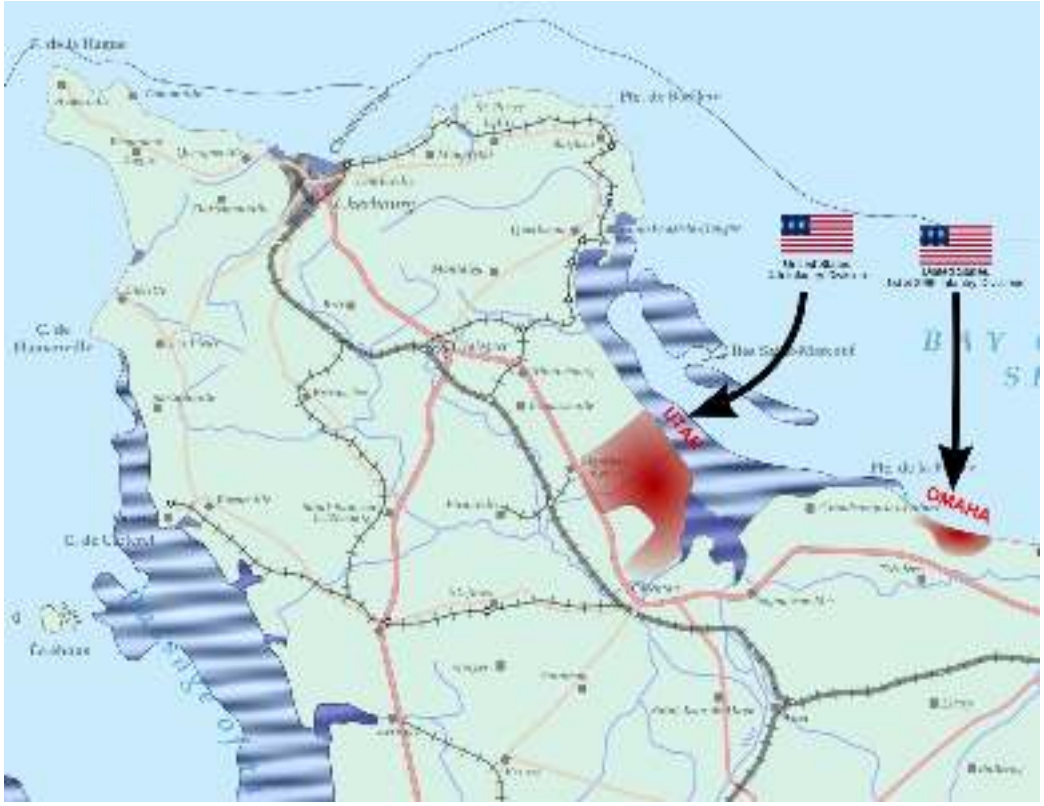

3840px-Map_of_the_D-Day_landings.svg
(Source: Map created by Philg88 and Hogweard, licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license, I cropped the relevant part)

Basically, the 82nd Airborne are dropped west of Sainte-Mère-Église and their objective is to seize and hold the La Fière Bridge and Causeway. If the Airborne troops achieve their

mission, then the Germans would no longer be able to approach Ste. Mère-Église from the west, or reach the roads needed to attack the invasion beaches.

Here is an closer map showing the beach and causeway, courtesy of Brooklyn Wargaming. This is the "after" map on June 9th. I cropped the relevant part of the map:

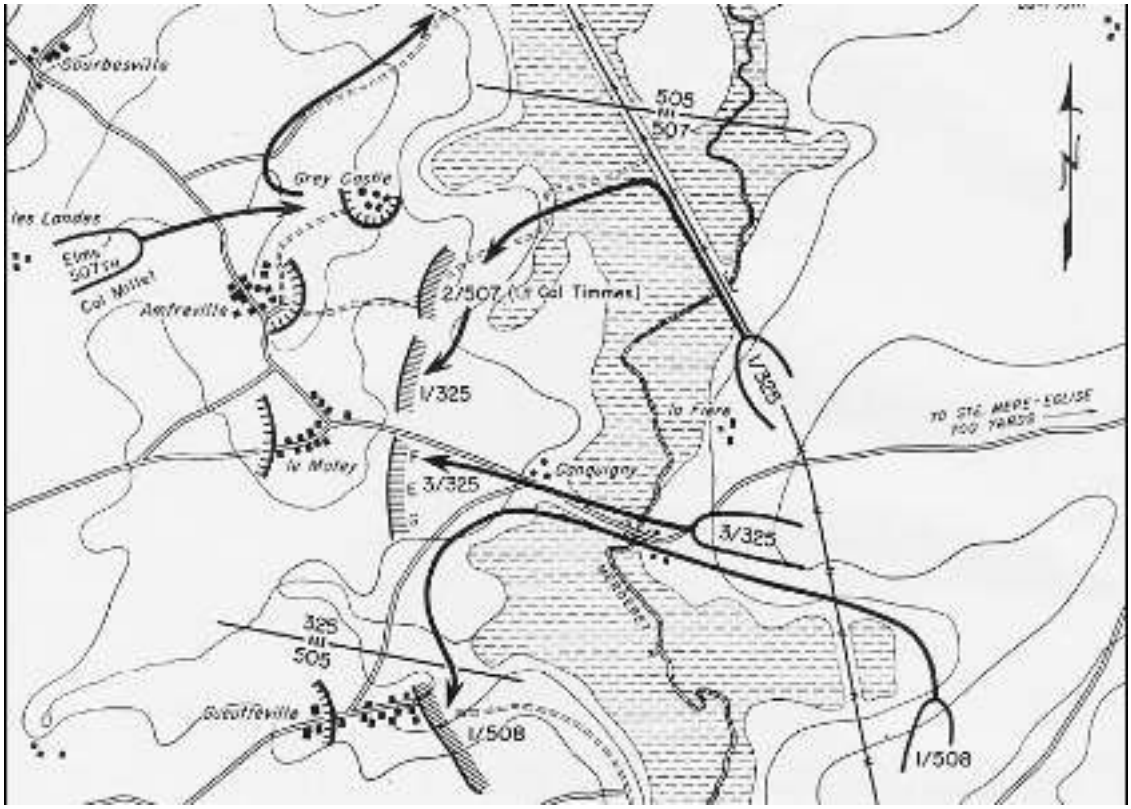

The Americans are deployed on the east side of the bridge and causeway, and you can see some troops on the west side to the north in an orchard. The audio book I'm listening to pronounces the name of the leader of that group "Timmies" but as you can see it's spelled Timmes. The key thing to note is that the bridge is tiny. The causeway is long and elevated. It's basically a shooting gallery with no cover for the attackers.

Since I can't paste the whole book in this blog post, I found a good article at Havok Journal to summarize what happened in the days before the attack across the bridge and causeway.

It says:

> 75 years ago, units of the American Paratroopers had already landed behind German lines in France. One such unit was the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), a seasoned element of the 82nd Airborne Division.
>
> […]In total, the U.S. Paratroopers numbered approximately 13,400, well below 10% of the invading land force on D-Day. "A" Company, 1-505 PIR represented a much smaller slice, but in the midst of the chaotic first 72 hours from 06-09 June 1944, theirs is a story worth telling. Led by First Lieutenant John "Red Dog" Dolan, "A" Company, and the rest of the 1st Battalion, 505 PIR quickly assembled 90% of their force and headed towards their objective, La Fiere Bridge.

The action starts on June 6th:

> […]Around daybreak, they managed to link in with a group of about 300 Paratroopers from the 508th PIR, including the Assistant Division Commander, Brigadier General James "Slim Jim" Gavin, and a contingent of 45 Troopers from the 507th. They converged on a *manior*, or manor, near the east side of the Merderet River and La Fiere bridge. The *manior* consisted of a farmhouse and surrounding buildings, barns, and pens.
>
> […]After consolidation on the *manior*…. They set up a 57 mm anti-tank gun brought in by a glider the morning of D-Day about 150 meters to the rear of the A Company element to provide supporting fires across the bridge.
>
> […]A Company's defenses near La Fiere bridge consisted of two, two-man bazooka teams set up near the marsh on the north and south sides of the eastern bridgehead. Bazooka gunner PFC Lenold Peterson occupied a position on the south side of the bridge with his assistant gunner, PVT Marcus Heim, Jr., while gunner PFC John Bolderson and assistant/loader PVT Gordon Pryne occupied the position to the north.

Shortly after 2 PM…

> […][A]rtillery and mortars began falling around the A Company fighting positions. As the indirect attack lifted, three French Renault tanks seized by Germans back in 1940 began creeping across the causeway towards La Fiere bridge and the A Co positions.
>
> […]In the ensuing melee, the A Co bazooka teams got to work. Springing into action both bazooka teams opened up on the tanks canalized on the causeway. Moving to exposed positions from their foxholes, the gunners and loaders put bazooka rounds on the first two tanks as fast as they could, eventually disabling both along the causeway, setting them on fire and killing the crews. The 57 mm anti-tank gun, put into action from the support by fire position, managed to destroy the third tank.

I like Private Heim's description of what he thought he was achieving:

"Our job was to be in the forward position with our bazooka and stop the Germans from using La Fiere bridge. This we accomplished despite the tremendous and continual firing by the enemy. When the Germans retreated, Peterson and I were still in our positions at the bridge, and as we looked around we could not see anyone so we moved back to our foxhole… We found later that of the few men holding the bridge, most were either killed or wounded… This was one of the toughest days of my life. Why Peterson and I were not wounded or killed, only the Good Lord knows why."

> […]As a result of their actions during the German attack, all four members of the two bazooka teams, all survivors of the battle despite their heroic actions, received the Distinguished Service Cross. After A Co and its supporting element destroyed the enemy vehicles, the Germans pulled back towards Cauquigny and

> set up their own defensive positions.

The defense of the east part of the bridge continued the next morning, with heavy losses:

> On the morning of the 7th of June, Another indirect barrage came in around 0800 and lasted for two hours. Around 1000, the Germans launched another attempt at taking back the eastern side of La Fiere bridge, and ran into A Co, along with B, C, and HHC of the 1-505th PIR. Two additional French Renault tanks and approximately 200 German soldiers began moving towards La Fiere bridge. Coming across the causeway, the bazooka teams, machine guns, and 57 mm anti-tank guns fired on the tanks, disabling the lead tank. At this time, the causeway road was littered enough with German tanks and the treeline, that the German infantry managed to get within 40 meters of the bridge and the A Co positions.
>
> After repulsing the counterattack on D-Day, the night indirect barrages, and the ongoing German assault, A Company was in bad shape. 1st Platoon lost their Platoon Leader, 2LT Oakley, which eventually found SGT William Owens, a squad leader, in charge of the 15 men from their platoon still capable of bearing arms. Due to suffering high numbers of casualties and running alarmingly low on ammunition, the will of some of the Paratroopers began to waiver. Many contemplated falling back to safer positions further east towards Saint Mere Eglise and requested to fall back. During this time, small unit leaders faced pressure from their fatigued and scared subordinates shifting their focus on self-preservation.
>
> […]In the bleakest moment for A Company on the morning of June 7th, SGT Owens sent Private Murphy as a runner to 1LT Dolan's position to let him know the platoon ran low on ammo and would not be able to hold their positions much longer. 1LT Dolan responded by telling Private Murphy, "No stay where you are." He then scribbled a note to Sergeant Owens, handed it to Private Murphy, and sent him back through the hail of gunfire. Sergeant Owens read the note, telling the platoon they would remain in place. Lieutenant Dolan's response to 1st Platoon's request to displace stated, "We stay. There is no better place to die."

However, it was at that point that the Germans decided to cease offensive operations. Despite their losses, the Americans cannot stop there, they have to take the other side of the bridge in order to hold it. But who is left to do the job at this point?

I found another article from HistoryNet for that part of the story (June 9th):

> Captain John Sauls crouched low behind a stone wall, the rest of G Company, 325th Glider Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, strung out alongside him, as scores of shells rattled over their heads toward the Germans. Twelve M4 Sherman medium tanks, lined up on a ridge behind the soldiers, bombarded the opposite shore of the little Merderet River in Normandy. There, German troops had taken up defensive positions at the end of a 500-yard causeway–the only

> means of crossing the flooded plain beyond the swollen river. It was June 9, 1944, three days after D-Day, and the paratroopers were fighting to capture the La Fiére causeway.
>
> Mortars, Browning Automatic Rifles (BARs), bazookas and machine guns helped the tanks plaster the German positions. But what Sauls and his men really needed was a smoke screen. Even though heavy fire was being concentrated on the enemy, crossing that causeway, which offered no cover for its entire length, would be near suicide once the Germans opened up with their own weapons. Nevertheless, at 10:45 a.m. Sauls yelled out 'Go! Go! Go! and began running for all he was worth, never looking back to see if anyone followed him. The company was to split into two columns, one on each side of the macadam roadway, as soon as they crossed the narrow bridge that spanned the river. After traversing the flooded area, each column would then peel off left and right to roll up the enemy positions along the edge of the flood area.
>
> But Sauls' plan began to come apart as soon as the men started across the bridge. The Germans opened up with a barrage of mortar, artillery and machine-gun fire that transformed the narrow roadway into a gantlet of destruction. Men fell by the score; some rolled into the river and drowned. The fallen men began to clog the path, and the attack slowed. Soon 100 men were down. Those who were left dashed for what little cover they could find. Sauls, against all odds, had reached the far side, but when he turned around to signal his men into position, he found himself alone.

It's just such a difficult mission that a lot of very brave men died trying to accomplish it:

> One man in the lead platoon, Private Melvin Johnson, rose and began to run but was instantly killed, further paralyzing the men. Then Lieutenant Frank Amino stood up and shouted, Follow me. Let's go kill some sons of bitches! and ran off with no more than a dozen men behind him. A weapons company tried to follow them, but weighted down by their equipment, they were too slow and were cut down one by one.
>
> A supporting Sherman tank advanced along the causeway but was soon disabled. Sergeant George Myers, in spite of a wound in the eye, dashed across, then fell from loss of blood. More and more men stopped to seek shelter when the fire became too much for them. As they crowded the edge of the exposed embankment, they left no room for those following them. Slowly, the bodies mounted and blocked the road.
>
> […]Squads, platoons and companies became hopelessly tangled as some men tenaciously made their way forward while others took cover, straggled back or just started shooting at the shoreline. The congestion increased casualties as some officers lost heart and took their men back while others, many severely wounded, braved fire to encourage their men to keep moving forward. Come on you bastards! Get up there! yelled Lieutenant Bruce Hooker, who had been shot

> in both legs.

One of the interesting characters from the book is General James Gavin, an orphan who was raised to be an officer from the enlisted ranks. He likes to parachute into battle with his men, leading from the front. After seeing how the attack was getting bogged down, he commits his fresh reserve unit, which was the right decision.

Back to the HistoryNet article:

> Thinking that the battle was in danger of being lost, Gavin ordered Rae's company forward. Forming a flying wedge, Rae's 90 men bulled their way through the crowd and reached the opposite end of the causeway, believing theirs the first group to make it. By that time, enemy fire on the causeway had considerably lessened, allowing Lieutenant Lee Travelstead's heavy weapons company to cross almost intact and Ridgway to get out into the open to help clear the road of blasted vehicles–including the disabled Sherman. With the road open, a column of Sherman tanks began to cross the river, sweeping the opposite shoreline with thelr weapons and flushing the remaining Germans from cover.
>
> A heavy German counterattack threatened to push the still disorganized Americans back across the river the next day, but the assault was repulsed. By mid-afternoon, a linkup was finally achieved with Timmes' men, who were still defending their orchard.
>
> Thus ended the fight for the causeway at La Fiére. Laced with individual stories of both heroism and faintheartedness, the tale, with all its confusion, error and misjudgment, shows human strength and frailty in all its diversity.

I recognized a name from the HistoryNet post, too: Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins. I blogged about Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins before, in the context of the Battle of the Bulge. Basically, he disobeyed orders in order to stop the German armored offensive from reaching the Meuse river. Sometimes, you have to disobey orders to win the war. I blogged about how Lt. Cdr John Waldron did it at the Battle of Midway.

I also talked about Lt. Col Benjamin Vandervoort (who defended Sainte Mere Eglise) in my post about D-Day heroes. I'm learning the names of all of these heroic people, and it's just sad that American children don't learn more about these men in the schools.

Whenever I read about these people, I always think of 1) wanting to experience what they did in a tabletop wargame or computer wargame, and 2) I want to travel to museums or to the battlefield to pay my respects. But the first step is always to hear or read the story or watch a related video. All to properly respect the men who fought.

I have 82nd Airborne patches, a flag and a coffee mug, and I can sing their cadence songs. You can visit the Special Operations museum in Fayetteville, NC. I took a picture of a plaque that I found outside the museum (that's my foot at the bottom).

"Here am I, send me" Isaiah 6:8
(Header image Source)

UK two-tier policing: white victim of Sikh stabber bled to death in handcuffs

May 29, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Once in a while there is a story that goes under the radar of the corporate news media, because it exposes the bad results of their "good intention" policies. In this case, everyone in the secular left corporate news media is in favor of open borders, to increase diversity of skin. (There is no "diversity of thought" in these companies) So, what happens when their open borders policies produces a bad result? They don't cover the story. So I will.

Here is a good recent article about it from Breitbart:

> Sikh man who claimed to have been the victim of a racist attack has been found guilty of murder for the slaying of student Henry Nowak, the death of whom became notorious after it was revealed he was handcuffed by police and ignored while he bled to death.
>
> A murderer who lied to police about having repeatedly stabbed a teenager, and covered for himself by telling a "wicked lie" about his victim having committed racist abuse against him, has been found guilty by a jury at Southampton Crown Court in Hampshire, England this afternoon. Police welcomed the conviction, but also apologised for having believed the knifeman's lies, meaning Anglo-Polish victim Henry Nowak's last conscious moments were spent handcuffed explaining that he'd been stabbed, while being told he was making it up.
>
> […]The jury of eight women and four men started their deliberations at lunchtime on Wednesday and found 23-year-old Vickrum Digwa guilty of murder on Thursday afternoon. Digwa was also found guilty of carrying a knife in a public place. Digwa's mother, Kiran Kaur was also found guilty on her charge of assisting an offender by removing the murder weapon from the scene and stashing it at their family home.
>
> […]Digwa chased and stabbed Nowak five times, including twice in the back of the legs and once in the chest. After some time, a delay which apparently gave an opportunity for several members of Digwa's family to arrive at the scene, police were eventually called and told there had been a racist attack, with no mention of a stabbing.
>
> […]When officers arrived at the scene they arrested the now-dying Henry Nowak and ignored his protests at having been stabbed until it became impossible to ignore that he was drowning in his own blood.

Note that the full bodycam footage has not been publicly released, and the specific officers involved have not been publicly named. That's how the UK two-tier police hold themselves accountable. You can see right away from their response whether they accept

any responsibility and whether anyone in the two-tier system will be punished.

Recall that police forces in the UK actively refused to investigate child prostitution and child rape gangs, because they were run by men of Middle Eastern descent. They didn't want to appear "racist" for investigating the raping of white children. White parents of the victims were ignored when they reported the crimes. Their attitude towards law-abiding taxpayers is that they need to be persecuted for disagreeing with the regime's policies. It's just like the East German Stasi – they spy on the private sector workers who pay their salaries and pensions to protect the regime's policies from criticism.

So how do the British two-tier police respond to criticisms of their failures?

Remember this story, reported by Fox News:

> London's Metropolitan Police chief warned that officials will not only be cracking down on British citizens for commentary on the riots in the U.K., but on American citizens as well.
>
> "We will throw the full force of the law at people. And whether you're in this country committing crimes on the streets or committing crimes from further afield online, we will come after you," Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley told Sky News.

I should say that Americans consider the UK to be a failed nation, at this point. Your health care system kills patients instead of treating them. You cannot even get your navy out of drydock to the sea. You are a poor, weak and stupid nation; ignorant about basic economics and lacking any objective moral standards. You've exchanged evidence-based Christianity for the blind faith of secular leftism. Americans view the UK as a third world shithole.

Public sector workers like Rowley would never be able to find work in the competitive American private sector. They typically have one useless undergraduate "Bachelor of Arts" degree and then a long, long resume of adult daycare jobs in the non-competitive public sector monopoly, where they are protected from being fired by their powerful labor unions. In America, we solve problems. We invent. We innovate. The UK is too weak to even drill in the North Sea for oil, and instead beg other stronger nations for energy.

This is what he does when questioned about his job performance:

> Sir Mark Rowley was caught on camera grabbing a reporter's microphone following a question about two-tier policing.
>
> […]A reporter from Sky News asked: "Are we going to end two-tier policing, sir?" – a reference to claims that forces have been tougher in their response to the far-Right riots than unrest at pro-Palestinian demonstrations or disturbances in the Harehills area of Leeds last month.
>
> Rather than respond to the question, Sir Mark grabbed the journalist's mic and threw part of it to the ground before walking towards a waiting car on Whitehall.

In the American private sector, he would be instantly fired. But, as Hayek says, godless

psychopaths who have no integrity or objective moral standards always rise to the top of socialist regimes. And then the fascism becomes evident.

I noticed that the Steven Crowder Show, with Gerald hosting, did an excellent job of gathering the facts about the two-tier policing murder case, and putting it in context:

Just for clarification for new readers, I am a legal immigrant (by merit; advanced degree(s), exceptional ability, professional publication(s)) to the United States, my parents are West Indian, and I have very dark skin. So, I am the person the UK police would side with based on skin color and national origin. But I don't care – there are too many cases of them not doing a good job for their customers, the people who pay their salaries.

In contrast to the UK taxpayer living under incompetent law enforcement, I live in a small town in a red state and here we LOVE our law enforcement and also the state Bureau of Investigation. We love federal agencies like the US Marshals, ICE, CBP and especially the Civil Rights division of DOJ.

Lt. Cmdr. John C. Waldron and the heroic charge of VT-8 at the Battle of Midway

June 4, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have been reading lots of books about the World War II battles in the Pacific theater lately, and I wanted to write a post about one of the heroes I found who was the most compelling to me. You may have seen him in the old 1976 Midway movie or the new 2019 Midway movie. But neither movie tells the full story. The man I am talking about is Lt. Commander John C. Waldron.

So, everyone knows the conclusion of the Battle of Midway. On June 4, 1942, Japan attacked the American-occupied island with carrier-based strike aircraft from 4 aircraft carriers, as a prologue to a planned amphibious landing. The Americans had broken the Japanese transmission code and were on site with 3 carriers (plus an airstrip on Midway) the morning of the attack. At the end of the first day, the Japanese had lost all 4 carriers, and the Americans had lost none, although Yorktown was heavily damaged. This (along with the defense of Guadalcanal) was a major turning point in the Pacific war. The Japanese would never again be on offense.

I like to blog about the story of John C. Waldron every year, and normally I use this old article from the Federalist that tells the story of John Waldron. But this year, I decided to use a different article from Warfare History Network, to maybe get a different angle on it.

So, their article starts with the key answer to the question – how were the Americans able to sink 4 carriers? And the answer is that when the squadrons of Dauntless dive bombers found the Japanese carriers, they were amazed to find that the the Japanese fighter cover was nowhere to be found. Why? Because 3 squadrons of these old and slow Devastator torpedo bombers had already attacked the Japanese carriers, without fighter escort. And they had pulled the superior Japanese Zero fighters out of position to low altitude, and exhausted their highly-effective 20 mm cannon ammunition.

The article says:

> The pilots of Bombing Squadron 6 could not believe what they were seeing on the morning of June 4, 1942. The squadron was about 150 miles northwest of Midway atoll when good visibility allowed the dive-bombers from the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise to make out three Japanese carriers almost 20,000 feet below. The light tan flight decks clearly stood out against the backdrop of the deep blue sea. A fourth carrier stood off in the distance. Most remarkable was the absence of any Japanese Mitsubishi Zero fighter planes. At a time when the squadron expected to be swarmed by Zeros, none were present.
>
> […]The dive-bombers were not the first American carrier-based planes to attack the enemy flattops. Three squadrons of torpedo planes had already made low-level attacks. The first torpedo squadron to find the carriers had been Torpedo

> Squadron 8.

The article is a magnificent explanation of the battle, but the key point for us to focus on is the sacrifice of the three torpedo squadrons, and especially VT-8 (Hornet's torpedo bomber squadron) which attacked first and had every single aircraft shot down with only one torpedo dropped that missed.

John Waldron was the leader of VT-8, which is the torpedo bomber squadron on the USS Hornet aircraft carrier. This squadron was composed of outdated and slow Devastator torpedo bombers, armed with the Mark 13 Mod 1 torpedoes, which malfunctioned at a very high rate.

I had Grok write up something for you about the plane and the weapon and here is the summary:

> The Douglas TBD-1 Devastator featured a top speed of about 206 mph (much less when laden). It carried a single Mark 13 aerial torpedo. By 1942, it was obsolete: slow, poorly armored, with weak defensive armament (usually one forward .30- or .50-cal and a rear .30-cal). Its low speed and limited maneuverability made it highly vulnerable.
>
> The Mark 13 torpedo was even more problematic. Early versions suffered severe reliability issues. A 1943 analysis of 105 drops at over 150 knots revealed: 36% ran cold (failed to propel), 20% sank, 20% had poor deflection (veered off), 18% had unsatisfactory depth performance, and only about 31% gave a satisfactory run—many with multiple defects. Drops required very low speed (~100 knots or less) and low altitude (~80 feet) from ~1,000 yards out for any chance of success, making the launching aircraft easy targets.

What I like about Waldron is that he is a native American. So, he is coming into the Navy as a kind of outsider. On the morning of June 4th, fighters, dive bombers and torpedo bombers all launched from the deck of the Hornet against the Japanese carriers, which had already been detected by US patrol aircraft:

> In the Hornet's ready room, the men of Torpedo 8 were up early to prepare for battle. Settling down into their comfortable chairs for briefings, the pilots found a memo from Lt. Cmdr. Waldron. His message concluded: "My greatest hope is that we encounter a favorable tactical situation, but if we don't, and the worst comes to the worst, I want each of us to do his utmost to destroy our enemies. If there is only one plane left to make a final run-in, I want that man to go in and get a hit. May God be with us all. Good luck, happy landings and give 'em hell."

The commander of Hornet's entire air group was a tall, handsome white pilot named Stanhope Ring. He is more known for attention-seeking than for skill as a pilot, due to his long career of administrative jobs. He decided to launch the entire airgroup to the WEST even though the Japanese carriers had been spotted SOUTHWEST of the Hornet. Waldron voiced his disagreement, but Ring would not listen to him. Eventually, Waldron just

ordered his torpedo squadron to break from the main strike package, and all his pilots listened to him, and disregarded Ring:

> As the air group left the carrier, the torpedo planes stayed low while the faster bombers and fighters gained altitude. Early in the flight Waldron broke radio silence to continue his argument with Ring about the course to the Japanese carriers. A short time later Waldron turned his torpedo planes away from the rest of the air group. Before long the torpedo squadron was alone, separated from the rest of the air group in which it was to make a coordinated attack.

Just to be clear, disobeying Ring was a court martial offense, but Waldron was so intent on striking the enemy, that he had to do it. He could not be part of a strike mission that was not going to find the enemy planes, because of the leader's incompetence.

Ring's dive bombers and fighters went on a long flight without ever finding any targets. It is now called "Stanhope Ring's Flight to Nowhere". He landed back on the Hornet with all his munitions. But Waldron found the enemy carriers:

> With good visibility, the pilots were able to identify three enemy carriers surrounded by a strong escort of cruisers and destroyers. Waldron had taken his squadron directly to the Japanese carriers.

Waldron sent a contact report to Ring, but Ring's fighters and dive bombers did not acknowledge or change course to join up with Waldron's torpedo bombers. It's almost as if Ring couldn't admit that he had made a mistake, and would rather see the torpedo bombers fail than admit he was wrong. So, would Waldron attack alone, without escort? It would be certain death to do it. But this might be their only chance to make a difference. Even if it meant a court martial later – assuming he survived, which was highly doubtful.

Here's what he decided:

> Waldron now had to make a critical decision—strike immediately unescorted, or wait for other squadrons to arrive to make a coordinated attack. He decided to attack and wiggled his wings to signal his decision to the rest of the group. The squadron immediately joined up in attack formation and dropped to 60 feet. Moving the planes close together allowed for concentrated fire from the rear guns.
>
> […]Approaching the carriers from the east, Waldron headed for the southernmost flattop. Noticing strong antiaircraft fire some distance ahead, he switched to the centrally located carrier. The target was about 16,000 yards away when Japanese fighters suddenly appeared. As many as 30 Zeros swarmed at the torpedo planes from above and behind. One Devastator on the left side of the formation immediately went down in flames.
>
> […]Waldron's plane was hit shortly afterward and began to head toward the ocean with the left fuel tank ruptured and on fire.

The Devastators were shot down one by one until there were none left, and only one pilot

survived and was later rescued. In the 1976 movie “Midway”, Vice Admiral Nagumo, the commander of the carrier strike force, says: “They sacrifice themselves like Samurai, these Americans.” That’s not how the military is presented in schools and culture today, but that’s how I see them, because I read the actual history!

Here’s the clip:

The movie emphasizes an additional effect of the sacrificial strike: the Japanese carriers cannot steer into the wind to launch their own strike against the American carriers. They are too busy dodging the torpedo bombers.

But it wasn’t just Waldron who sacrificed himself:

> In the aftermath of Torpedo 8’s heroic attack, two additional torpedo squadrons located the Japanese carriers. Shortly after 9:30 am, Torpedo Squadron 6 from the *Enterprise*, under the command of Lt. Cmdr. Eugene Lindsey, attacked without fighter cover. At about 10 am. Torpedo Squadron 3 from the *Yorktown* attacked under the lead of Lt. Cmdr. Lance Massey. His escort group of six Wildcat fighter planes had been overwhelmed by Japanese Zeros.
>
> Like Torpedo 8, these squadrons staged heroic attacks, suffered terrible losses, and scored no hits. Of the 41 torpedo planes that participated in the attacks, only six survived. Like Waldron, squadron commanders Lindsey and Massey were killed in action.

And, as we foreshadowed, the attacks were not in vain:

> At about 10:20 am, Bombing Squadron 6 and Scouting Squadron 6 arrived from the *Enterprise* and dove toward the carriers *Kaga* and *Soryu*. Almost simultaneously, dive-bombers from the *Yorktown* attacked the carrier *Akagi*. Within five minutes all three Japanese carriers were burning as a result of direct bomb hits. The great battle once envisioned by the Japanese had now turned into a decisive American victory.
>
> The importance of the torpedo attacks on the outcome of the battle cannot be underestimated. The brave assaults caused the Japanese fighter cover to be pulled out of position and antiaircraft gunners to focus on the low-level attackers. The evasive maneuvering needed to defend against the torpedo planes may have prevented the Japanese carriers from launching additional fighter planes. All levels of the Japanese air defense network were either out of position or unprepared to meet the subsequent dive bomber attacks.

This is my favorite part – they got their reward in the end:

> In the aftermath of the battle, all 15 of the pilots who participated in the June 4 attack of Torpedo 8 were awarded the Navy Cross. The rear gunners received the Distinguished Flying Cross. On April 5, 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt awarded Torpedo Squadron 8 the Presidential Unit Citation. Praising the heroic attack, the citation concluded, “The loss of twenty-nine lives, typifying valor,

> loyalty, and determination, was the price paid for Torpedo Squadron 8's vital contribution to the eventual success of our forces in this epic battle of the air."

The names I remember from the Battle of Midway are the 3 leaders of the torpedo bomber squadrons: Waldron, Lindsey and Massey. I also remember McClusky for his decision to follow the racing Japanese destroyer despite being at "bingo" fuel levels. And I remember Brockman, the captain of the submarine Nautilus, whose attack caused that Japanese destroyer to have to stop to depth charge his submarine, and then race back to the carrier strike force at high speed, leading McClusky's strike package to the main body.

You can learn more about the Battle of Midway in this helpful video:

This plaque at the United States Naval Academy Club honors the three commanders of the torpedo bomber squadrons:

Plaque honoring the Midway torpedo bomber squadron commanders

According to the Family Research Council, the plaque reads:

> The torpedo attacks of Waldron, Lindsey, and Massey had followed hard upon each other by luck. What was not luck, but the soul of the United States in action, was the willingness of the torpedo plane squadrons to go in against hopeless odds. This was the extra ounce of martial weight that in a few decisive minutes tipped the balance of history.

So, here is what I wanted to say about this.

John Waldron was not properly equipped by his organization to make a difference at Midway. His planes were too old and slow, his torpedoes almost never worked. His leader was incompetent and prevented him from leading others to find and attack the actual targets. The only way he could do something to his enemy was to disobey orders and go off on his own. If he had lived, he probably would have been court-martialed for insubordination. Everyone watching must have thought "what a waste of effort". It was only later that it became evident to all that what he did was necessary for the second wave to succeed.

When I read this story, it immediately occurred to me that this is the problem that serious Christians are facing today. Instead of finding and fighting the real targets: atheism, radical feminism, communism, etc., all our forces have been sent on wild goose chases, so that now many Christian leaders are actually trying to promote the priorities of the secular left, e.g. – global warming, wealth redistribution, feminism, sexual immorality, open borders, critical race theory, etc.

My recommendation for Christians today is to focus their attention on studying the evidence in areas like science, economics and history, so that they can fulfill the mandate of 1 Peter 3:15 with authoritative teaching and appealing to “signs” (e.g. the origin of the universe, fine-tuning, the origin of life, etc.) in the same way that Jesus did. The main strike force is going in the wrong direction, and it falls to us to break off and strike the enemy alone.

Meet four heroes of the D-Day invasion of Normandy on June 6th, 1944

June 6, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I thought it might be a good idea to write up something about D-Day in order to help people understand some of our military history, and to put the spotlight on some real heroes. I don't regard artists, athletes, dancers, singers, actors, or other celebrities as heroes. It really alarms me that so many people know more about these fake heroes than they do about real ones.

Weakness emboldens aggressors

For one thing, many people don't understand how British and American libertarian isolationism made World War 2 into a much bigger mess than it needed to be. As historian Victor Davis Hanson explains in the lecture I linked below, the Allied nations were much stronger and better equipped than the Axis nations before the war started. The Axis nations developed better weapons after the war started. But Germany and Japan didn't think that the Allied nations would do anything if they were aggressive. We know this from their writings and correspondence. They thought that British and Americans were just too scared of war to stop them.

Germany and Japan tested their hypothesis out by re-arming and annexing territory from their neighbors. Britain and America were led by libertarian isolationists, so they didn't fight back. The aggressors correctly understood that libertarian isolationists didn't have the will to oppose them, even if they were weaker than the Allies. But the more they re-armed and annexed territory, the stronger they became. The Allied nations waited too long to confront them. And that's why World War 2 was much harder to win than it needed to be.

Here's a very good lecture about the causes of World War 2 by an actual military historian, Victor Davis Hanson:

So, that's the first point I wanted to make: libertarian isolationism causes wars. Although libertarians claim to oppose war, they actually cause war, due to their weakness in the face of evil. So who stops wars? People who favor a strong defense, and show a willingness to fight back against aggression are the ones who REALLY oppose wars. This is called "peace through strength", and you can see it in action in the Cold War, where Ronald Reagan defeated the Soviet Union by making their aggression costly.

Heroes of D-Day

My second concern was to promote the real heroes of D-Day, over the fictional heroes of movies, fiction, music, dancing, sports, and other entertainment nonsense.

Here are the four heroes I chose:

- Major John Howard
- Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Vandervoort
- Brigadier General Norman Cota
- Major Richard Winters

Let's take a look at each of them.

John Howard

Major John Howard led elements of the British 6th Airborne Division to take two vital bridges southeast of Sword beach. He did this in order to prevent German socialist counterattacks coming from the east. After they took the bridges, they had to repulse German tanks with nothing more than their useless PIAT (Projector Infantry Anti-Tank) grenade launchers. The PIAT was nothing more than a grenade launcher powered by a coiled spring. It was very inaccurate, and only effective to 50 yards. But that's all the British paratroops had to stop tanks, and they made it work. You can read about him in this book by Stephen E. Ambrose, entitled: "Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944". This New York Times article tells the story in brief. He also is played by Richard Todd in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Benjamin Vandervoort

Lt. Col. Ben Vandervoort served with the 82nd Airborne Division. I read about how he lead an infantry attack against German Tiger tanks (!) and infantry in Stephen E. Ambrose's book "Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany". Ben Vandervoort broke his ankle during the D-Day landing, but he insisted that the medic just "lace it up tight" so that he could supervise the attacking

and holding of Ste. Mere Eglise, southwest of Utah beach, against a vastly superior enemy force. This article tells about how he defended against elite German SS infantry and heavy Tiger tanks at Trois-Ponts, during the Battle of the Bulge. He was outgunned and outnumbered 20 to 1, and had just a few lightly-armed soldiers, two weak 57mm anti-tank guns and some bazookas. He is portrayed by John Wayne in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Norman Cota

Brig. General Norman Cota is my favorite person in World War 2. At 51 years old, he nevertheless landed at D-Day, and rallied terrified Army Rangers to follow him up the bluff, by telling them that Rangers ought to lead the way. "Rangers Lead The Way" later became the motto of the Army Rangers. He always led from the front, demonstrating how to attack a German machine gun position in a farmhouse to a group of American soldiers who were pinned down. He actually grabbed a bunch of grenades and led the assault team against a heavy machine gun! You can read about him in this short article and in Stephen E. Ambrose's "D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II". He is portrayed by Robert Mitchum in the famous movie "The Longest Day".

Richard Winters

Major Richard Winters served in the 101st Airborne Division. Winters led an assault against a superior force of heavy machine guns and 105mm field guns. His tactics were so brilliant that they are still studied at West Point today. You can see Richard Winters and Carwood Lipton in the HBO "Band of Brothers" series, or read this book by Stephen E. Ambrose entitled "Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne, from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest", which is the basis for that series.

I hope this convinces you that military heroes are far more important than the "heroes" of fiction and entertainment. It's alarming to me that people invest more and have more respect for characters in Hollywood science fiction movies, and other such make-believe nonsense. We need to be rooted in reality. In reality, men who fight and die fighting evil to protect your freedoms are the real heroes. People who take military history seriously are able to give respect and gratitude where it is due – a very important part of being a mature, moral human being.

Are Mormon doctrines supported by philosophy, science and history?

June 12, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

This post presents evidence against Mormonism/LDS in three main areas. The first is in the area of science. The second is in the area of philosophy. And the third is in the area of history.

The scientific evidence

First, let's take a look at what the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, believes about the origin of the universe:

> "The elements are eternal. That which had a beggining will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beggining or end – cut it for a beggining place and at the same time you have an ending place." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 205)
>
> "Now, the word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existance from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beggining, and can have no end." ("Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith", p. 395)

A Mormon scholar named Blake Ostler summarizes the Mormon view in a Mormon theological journal:

> "In contrast to the self-sufficient and solitary absolute who creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), the Mormon God did not bring into being the ultimate constituents of the cosmos — neither its fundamental matter nor the space/time matrix which defines it. Hence, unlike the Necessary Being of classical theology who alone could not *not* exist and on which all else is contingent for existence, the personal God of Mormonism confronts uncreated realities which exist of metaphysical necessity. Such realities include inherently self-directing selves (intelligences), primordial elements (mass/energy), the natural laws which structure reality, and moral principles grounded in the intrinsic value of selves and the requirements for growth and happiness." (Blake Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17* (Summer 1984):65-93)

So, Mormons believe in an eternally existing universe, such that matter was never created out of nothing, and will never be destroyed. But this is at odds with modern cosmology.

The Big Bang cosmology is the most widely accepted cosmology of the day. It denies the past eternality of the universe. This peer-reviewed paper in an astrophysics journal explains. (full text here)

Excerpt:

> The standard Big Bang model thus describes a universe which is not eternal in the past, but which came into being a finite time ago. Moreover,–and this deserves underscoring–the origin it posits is an absolute origin *ex nihilo*. For not only all matter and energy, but space and time themselves come into being at the initial cosmological singularity. As Barrow and Tipler emphasize, "At this singularity, space and time came into existence; literally nothing existed before the singularity, so, if the Universe originated at such a singularity, we would truly have a creation *ex nihilo.*"
>
> […]On such a model the universe originates *ex nihilo* in the sense that at the initial singularity it is true that *There is no earlier space-time point* or it is false that *Something existed prior to the singularity.*

Christian cosmology requires such a creation out of nothing, but this is clearly incompatible with what Mormons believe about the universe. The claims about the universe made by the two religions are in disagreement, and we can test *empirically* to see who is right, using *science*.

Philosophical problems

Always Have a Reason contrasts two concepts of God in Mormonism: Monarchotheism and Polytheism. It turns out that Mormonism is actually a polytheistic religion, like Hinduism. In Mormonism, humans can become God and then be God of their own planet. So there are many Gods in Mormonism, not just one.

Excerpt:

> [T]he notion that there are innumerable contingent "primal intelligences" is central to this Mormon concept of god (P+M, 201; Beckwith and Parrish, 101). That there is more than one god is attested in the *Pearl of Great Price*, particularly Abraham 4-5. This Mormon concept has the gods positioned to move "primal intelligences along the path to godhood" (Beckwith and Parrish, 114). Among these gods are other gods which were once humans, including God the Father. Brigham Young wrote, "our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father, and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father, and so on…" (Brigham Young, *The Seer*, 132, quoted in Beckwith and Parrish, 106).
>
> […]The logic of the Mormon polytheistic concept of God entails that there is an infinite number of gods. To see this, it must be noted that each god him/herself was helped on the path to godhood by another god. There is, therefore, an infinite regress of gods, each aided on his/her path to godhood by a previous god. There is no termination in this series. Now because this entails an actually

> infinite collection of gods, the Mormon polytheistic concept of deity must deal with all the paradoxes which come with actually existing infinities…

The idea of counting up to an actual infinite number of things by addition (it doesn't matter what kind of thing it is) is problematic. See here.

More:

> Finally, it seems polytheistic Mormonism has a difficulty at its heart–namely the infinite regress of deity.
>
> […]Each god relies upon a former god, which itself relies upon a former god, forever. Certainly, this is an incoherence at the core of this concept of deity, for it provides no explanation for the existence of the gods, nor does it explain the existence of the universe.

Now let's see the historical evidence against Mormonism.

The historical evidence

J. Warner Wallace explains how the "Book of Abraham", a part of the Mormon Scriptures, faces historical difficulties.

The Book of Abraham papyri are not as old as claimed:

> Mormon prophets and teachers have always maintained that the papyri that was purchased by Joseph Smith was the actual papyri that was created and written by Abraham. In fact, early believers were told that the papyri were the writings of Abraham.
>
> […]There is little doubt that the earliest of leaders and witnesses believed and maintained that these papyri were, in fact the very scrolls upon which Abraham and Joseph wrote. These papyri were considered to be the original scrolls until they were later recovered in 1966. After discovering the original papyri, scientists, linguists, archeologists and investigators (both Mormon and non-Mormon) examined them and came to agree that the papyri are far too young to have been written by Abraham. They are approximately 1500 to 2000 years too late, dating from anywhere between 500 B.C. (John A. Wilson, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Summer 1968, p. 70.) and 60 A.D. If they papyri had never been discovered, this truth would never have come to light. Today, however, we know the truth, and the truth contradicts the statements of the earliest Mormon leaders and witnesses.

The Book of Abraham papyri do not claim what Joseph Smith said:

> In addition to this, the existing papyri simply don't say anything that would place them in the era related to 2000BC in ancient Egypt. The content of the papyri would at least help verify the dating of the document, even if the content had been transcribed or copied from an earlier document. But the papyri simply tell us about an ancient burial ritual and prayers that are consistent with Egyptian

> culture in 500BC. Nothing in the papyri hints specifically or exclusively to a time in history in which Abraham would have lived.

So there is a clear difference hear between the Bible and Mormonism, when it comes to historical verification.

UK gay couple found guilty of charges related to the death of 13-month-old boy

June 16, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I have to blog about this, because I was around during the time of same-sex marriage becoming legal, and everyone pushing for gay adoption. Everyone put these blue stickers with yellow equal signs on their cars and asked "how would same-sex marriage affect your marriage". Big corporations dragged employees into sensitivity training. And then the Supreme Court redefined the word marriage to benefit adults instead of children.

So, here we are with this story from Human Events now:

> A UK gay couple has been found guilty of charges related to the death of 13-month-old Preston Davey. Former teacher Jamie Varley was found guilty at Preston Crown Court of murder, child cruelty, sexual offences, and possessing indecent images relating to Davey. Varley was in the process of adopting the toddler with his partner, John McGowan-Fazakerley, who was also convicted of allowing the death of a child, child cruelty, and sexual assault, per the Crown Prosecution Service.
>
> Just four months after being placed with the couple, Preston was rushed to Blackpool Victoria Hospital unconscious and in cardiac arrest. He could not be saved. Varley claimed the child had drowned in the bath, but prosecutors proved that his airway had been deliberately obstructed, per the BBC.
>
> […]The prosecution's case against Varley was built on evidence, including indecent images found on his phone, taken by the perpetrators of the victim, as well as the post-mortem examination, which ruled out the defendants' claims of drowning as the cause of death. The post-mortem found 40 external and internal injuries to Davey's body, some being consistent with "forcible penetration" and sexual abuse.

I thought this was interesting, because of what we know about UK law enforcement turning a blind eye to child sex-trafficking gangs run by men of Middle Eastern origin, because they did not want to be accused of racism by investigating the allegations. Could the the medical workers and social workers and law enforcement have been afraid of being labeled "homophobic", like the police was afraid of being labeled "racist"?

The UK Telegraph talks about that:

> Social workers and medical staff have been accused of missing a string of opportunities to spot the abuse suffered by baby Preston Davey before he was murdered by his adoptive father.
>
> > […]Preston was taken to hospital three times before he was killed, and each time, medical staff noticed bruises on his body. On one occasion, a

> hospital safeguarding team referred the matter to Lancashire Constabulary, but the matter was closed when a consultant said there was nothing to worry about.
>
> […]Social workers visited Preston at home several times before his death, but failed to notice that he was being mistreated and harmed. A post mortem examination identified more than 40 external and internal bruises, as well as injuries consistent with sexual assault.

This is the important part:

> Debbie Davey, Preston's maternal grandmother, has questioned whether fears of being accused of homophobia clouded social workers' judgment.

Remember, the UK is a country that prides itself on being feminized. They have free healthcare and open borders immigration and two-tier policing. Their state religion is "don't judge". Well, surprise, surprise. When good people "don't judge", then children suffer at the hands of selfish adults. It doesn't always look like this particular case, but there's a lot of it going around, with practices like abortion, IVF and surrogacy, too. Everything is for the selfish adults, and no one cares about the children.

But this happens in the US as well, here's a recent example:

Here is the latest news story from Christian Post:

> A same-sex Georgia couple who pleaded guilty to aggravated sodomy against their two adopted sons were recently sentenced to 100 years in prison without the possibility of parole.
>
> Zachary and William Zulock, a wealthy couple who adopted two boys with the help of a now-defunct Christian adoption agency, faced sentences for multiple other charges, including child molestation, sexual exploitation of children and incest, according to a press release from the Alcovy Judicial Circuit District Attorney Randy McGinley.
>
> "These two defendants truly created a house of horrors and put their extremely dark desires above everything and everyone else," McGinley said.
>
> […]Judge Jeffrey L. Foster sentenced both men on Dec. 19 to a century in prison, followed by life on probation.

Again, there are a lot of people on the secular and religious left who would say that supporting these anti-child behaviors is not morally wrong. It's just where we are as a society – people want to feel good and look good to others. No one is willing or able to take the reputational hit for standing up for kids. You could lose your job. You could get arrested by the police. You could be persecuted by LGBT or feminist activists. They want to silence and/or punish anyone who would dare to put children's needs over adult needs.

These stories remind me of the Two Gay Dads story that I wrote about previously, where a white female progressive journalist did a fawning story about two gay dads and their

new boy adopted from Russia. She titled her article, “Two Dads are Better than One”. She was so proud of herself for being all affirming, tolerant and compassionate. Same-sex marriage is something to be proud of, she said, because children do better with two gay dads.

But then, the Sydney Morning Herald reported how this example of gay adoption went awry.

Excerpt:

> Standing before an American court convicted of the most heinous of child sex crimes, the double lives of Australian citizen Mark J. Newt0n and his long-term boyfriend Peter Tru0ng were laid bare.
>
> […]Moments later Newt0n was sentenced to 40 years in prison for sexually abusing the boy he and Truong, 36 from Queensland, had ‘‘adopted’’ after paying a Russian woman $8000 to be their surrogate in 2005.
>
> Police believe the pair had adopted the boy ‘‘for the sole purpose of exploitation’’. The abuse began just days after his birth and over six years the couple travelled the world, offering him up for sex with at least eight men, recording the abuse and uploading the footage to an international syndicate known as the Boy Lovers Network.

So, back to the story from the UK that just happened. I see new stories about it from far-left sources like the BBC, the UK Guardian, Sky News, etc. I can guarantee you that the journalists writing about this think that they are in the right for supporting practices like abortion, surrogacy, IVF, gay adoption, etc. But when the results come out, they act as if these consequences are somehow completely disconnected from their advocacy. It’s insane.

What you should know about Rupert Lowe's UK "Rape Gang Inquiry"

June 17, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

A new report on the UK child sex-trafficking scandal was privately funded because the UK government refused to investigate the child sex-trafficking gangs themselves. Why? Because they didn't want to appear "racist" to the unskilled immigrant population they've been taking in. In this post, we will get a link to the report, some of the details of specific cases, and then I will have some recommendations to Americans on how to avoid such problems.

I've been blogging about these stories for years on my blog. I just think that it is so important that we not take away the innocence of little girls just because of this mad desire for skin-color diversity and multiculturalism (diluting the majority of Christian beliefs in Western nations).

Anyway, here is a link to the report.

But since I know you're all busy, I'm just going to print the text of a tweet from a British pastor named Jamie Bambrick. I found this tweet through the excellent Nancy Pearcey, and you should follow her on Twitter.

Jamie says:

Here are eight essential quotes from @RupertLowe10 's Rape Gang Inquiry.

1) This was a nationwide, not merely local, phenomenon.

"…that this was never a series of isolated local failures. It was a coordinated, nationwide pattern of organised child sexual exploitation that repeated in town after town, city after city, from the far north to the south coast."

2) The scale was enormous, more than anyone dared to think.

"The scale of the crimes committed is staggering. It has been previously established that, at the very least, 250,000 young white girls have been subjected to repeated rape, gang rape, trafficking, torture, pregnancy, forced Islamic conversion, and lifelong trauma. The true number is probably higher."

3) As has been reported, the vast majority of perpetrators were Pakistani Muslims.

" In court records and official inquiries, around 87% of those convicted in these group-based child sexual exploitation ('CSE') cases bore distinctively Muslim names… Dr. Taj Hargey, an imam with the Oxford Islamic Congregation, believes the true proportion of gang members who are Muslims to be around 95%."

4) Vulnerable girls were targeted using a consistent method.

"Organised networks of perpetrators built coordinated operations that transported victims between locations, supplied them with drugs and alcohol, recorded abuse for distribution and blackmail, and passed girls between multiple adult men."

5) The police, and other institutions, knew what was happening and ignored it.

"Police forces ignored repeated reports, criminalised victims instead of perpetrators, destroyed evidence, and allowed known rapists to walk free on bail. Social care services undermined protective parents, placed children in trafficking hubs inside children's homes, closed cases despite clear indicators of exploitation, and retaliated against whistleblowers. The NHS recorded genital injuries, multiple sexually transmitted infections in children as young as 13, pregnancies caused by rape, and suicide attempts, yet discharged victims back to their abusers without safeguarding referrals or trauma care. Schools observed older men collecting girls at the gates, heard disclosures of rape on school premises, and responded by excluding victims rather than protecting them."

6) Those in these institutions did so because they were afraid of being called 'racist'.

"Political correctness, fear of accusations of racism, and fear of losing electoral support from certain demographics have taken precedence over the protection of British children."

7) Parts of the foster and orphan care system became exploitation hotspots.

"Children's homes became trafficking hubs where staff failed to stop older men collecting girls at night. Local authorities often returned children to unsafe homes and placements despite repeated disclosures of grooming… Social care across England systematically enabled organised grooming and the rape of children. Children's services, local authorities, foster carers, children's homes, and independent units repeatedly returned vulnerable children to known risk."

8) Multiple offenders explicitly linked their treatment of these girls with their own religious and cultural beliefs, and the girls' white ethnicity.

"They were taken to houses, flats, restaurants, and hotels where they were raped repeatedly by groups of men, tortured, filmed for blackmail, and told they were "white trash" or "kuffar" who merited punishment."

There must be comeuppance for this, and it must involve the death penalty.

I found many of the specific details from specific cases on this Twitter feed.

Here are a couple of examples and notice how useless and corrupt the UK police are:

Only the police took any formal action, issuing "harbouring notices" to the men – official warnings stating they had no permission to associate with, contact, or house a vulnerable child. However, no further action followed. When Fiona's mother called the police to report her daughter missing and mentioned a history of abuse by Asian men, the call handler told her: "You can't describe them as Asian men because that's racist. You should just be glad your child is being taught a different culture." On one occasion, a police officer returned Fiona to the house where the abuse was occurring and told the men to "have fun with her." On another occasion, police instructed the abusers that if they could persuade Fiona to sign herself out of care, the police would stop bothering them.

At age 14, she was gang-raped and beaten by three men who had locked her in a house. She was left covered in cuts and bruises, which alerted a friend. The friend told her own mother, who then contacted Michelle's mother. The police were called, but they claimed there was little they could do without more evidence. One of the gang members later forced Michelle to go to the police station with him to retract her statement. The police accepted him as her "appropriate adult" – a role normally reserved for a parent, close family member, social worker, or trained professional. The investigation was subsequently dropped.

Scarlett was unlawfully excluded from school due to grooming-related behaviour and assigned a new school where the grooming gang operated. A multi-agency risk management meeting was eventually convened with children's services and the police's Missing from Home team. While the meeting was ongoing one of the police officers in attendance told Marlon to stop reporting his daughter missing. Marlon challenged this which resulted in the police officer shouting at him in front of all in attendance. The officer has since been dismissed. The social worker and manager present did not intervene but privately acknowledged he was right to continue to report his daughter missing. They refused to launch a formal complaint against the officer.

One of Michelle's friends, who lived in a care home, would be collected directly outside by the same gang. Care staff would call the police, but officers reportedly referred to the girls as "prostitutes" despite them being children. Both social services and the police, Michelle says, failed to understand the situation and believed the girls were engaging in the activity by choice. As a result, little was done to intervene. When she was abducted and went missing, no one came looking for her. A social worker once told her that, at age 14, she would be allowed to live with her 30-year-old "boyfriend" as long as they did not share a room.

Chloe personally knows at least twenty other girls from her area who were predated on by the Muslim gangs who abused her. The pattern was always the same: grooming, drugging, trafficking, abuse, and rape. Furthermore, Chloe describes being taken into mosques where imams would describe non-Muslims as "infidels" and preach that white women who dressed "inappropriately" were "free game."

Chloe believes that the local police, social services, NHS, and government were all fully aware of what was happening, including the racialised nature of the crimes, but that they did not intervene for two reasons: because they "could not be bothered with the paperwork," and because "they did not want to be seen as racist." Chloe blames these bodies, and their "major push for diversity," for her abuse.

And the victims were even arrested instead of the criminals:

Following this, she wrote a post on Facebook alleging that she had been a victim of grooming gangs. The post went viral. Within half an hour, the police arrested her and she was sent to prison.

Following her daughter's conviction, the family experienced sustained harassment and intimidation, particularly from one Muslim man. Sally reports repeated failures by the police to protect them. She believes her daughter was a vulnerable young woman who lied at times but was nevertheless groomed.

Here is one explanation of why the police looked the other way – "and even police officers":

At age eleven, Sebastian was introduced by these abusive family members to a local café owner. The owner gave Sebastian free food, lifts in his car, and free cinema tickets to build trust and a sense of obligation. From there, they began prostituting Sebastian out to a number of people. These included seemingly respectable professionals such as estate agents, solicitors, care support workers for children, and even police officers. Even at boarding school, Sebastian was raped, assaulted, and groomed by staff and connected adults, with Sebastian's injuries often ignored by medical professionals. All of Sebastian's abusers were White British.

And it's important to remember how the leaders of the UK police repond to anyone who draws any attention to their failures, reported by Fox News:

> London's Metropolitan Police chief warned that officials will not only be cracking down on British citizens for commentary on the riots in the U.K., but on American citizens as well.
>
> "We will throw the full force of the law at people. And whether you're in this country committing crimes on the streets or committing crimes from further afield online, we will come after you," Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley told Sky News.

They're going to arrest Americans for posting about their failures online! We are the real villains who need to be investigated, arrested and imprisoned.

Remember, all these police and social workers are taxpayer-funded. So, they are there to serve taxpayers. But as you can see, the used their jobs as a way of feeling good about themselves for not being "racist". They saw their true customer as themselves "here is my chance to show the world what a good person I am, because I don't judge anyone". If this were the private sector, they would be fired for failing to serve customers. But it's the unionized public sector, so they don't care about customers. Customers are just prey.

This is a big reason why it's important for Americans to oppose unions of all kinds – but especially public sector unions. And definitely monopolies. Your liberty, safety and prosperity depend on the responsiveness and accountability of the people who sell you products and provide you with services. At least in America, conservative states and cities have great law enforcement. Because they are accountable to taxpayers.

And I also thought this was interesting:

Has any major American press outlet (CNN, CBS, The New York Times, The Washington Post, etc.) covered thr UK rape gang report put out by MP Rupert Lowe?

+2

No major American press outlet (such as CNN, The New York Times, or The Washington Post) has covered the recent independent report on UK grooming gangs released by MP Rupert Lowe.

Coverage of the report and the preceding parliamentary testimonies has primarily remained localized to British outlets, international financial publications, and alternative digital news platforms. BBC +4

Again, why would you expect the wealthy Epstein class of Democrat-donors to report on a scandal like this? They believe in diluting the majority who believe in Christian truths and Christian moral values with unskilled Muslim immigrants. It makes them feel good. And they just ignore the results. We vote very carefully to make sure that we have elected officials and police who are able to rationally ground moral values and duties.

Discovery Institute has a sale on their high school biology and chemistry courses!

June 24, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

One of the challenges of the modern world is this ideology of naturalism (aka materialism). If kids accept this ideology – which is just a philosophical assumption, and not a conclusion of scientific inquiry – they will lose their rational basis for morality, their grounding for free will and personal responsibility, their grounding for ultimate meaning and purpose, and more. So, it makes sense to train the kids to reject it. With evidence.

One way to do that is to make use of these fun courses from Discovery Institute.

Here is the description I got from Dr. John West about the courses:

> For the 2026-27 school year, Discovery Institute Academy will again be offering both **High School Biology** and **High School Chemistry**. Starting in the fall, these high-quality online courses are designed especially for homeschool students. The courses will cover the fundamentals of biology and chemistry and will also introduce students to the powerful evidence of intelligent design in nature. The courses will include video lectures, readings, lab activities, assignments, and more. They are designed to make it easy to teach science to your kids!
>
> We know that different homeschool families have different needs, so we have three different options for each course:
>
> - **Tier 1** is the full deal. It includes the online course and activities + live instructional sessions each week with a science teacher who guides the course, grades assignments, answers questions, and provides feedback to students.
> - **Tier 2** includes the online course and activities + one weekly drop-in session where students can ask a science teacher questions.
> - **Tier 3** is self-paced and only includes the online course — no teacher.
>
> **Even if you don't have kids who can participate, can you help us get the word out to those who do?** You may have people in your sphere of influence who are looking for courses like these (grandchildren, church families, neighbors, etc.).
>
> These courses are a wonderful way to begin to raise up the next generation of scientists — scientists who understand that we and our universe are intelligently designed.
>
> *And, for a limited time, parents who use the codes **bio50** and **chem50** to register will get $50 off tuition!*
>
> **Find out more information about the courses at the Discovery Institute**

> **Academy website.**

This is definitely something to look into if you have high school age children and you intend for them to go on to university, especially if they are going to study a STEM field.

For Independence Day, let’s learn about George Washington and the Battle of Trenton

July 4, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

My favorite book about the American Revolutionary war by far is called “1776”. It’s written by famous historian David McCullough. The part of the book that really stuck out to me was the Battle of Trenton. I think that this battle really defines the essential character of America, as seen in the decision-making of its great general and first President, George Washington.

In the book, I learned about how George Washington and his revolutionary army had suffered a string of defeats at the hands of the powerful Commonwealth army, and their mercenary allies. It was the middle of a freezing cold winter, and the many of the sickly and ill-equipped American troops were just days from having their enlistment contracts run out. Some of the troops were not waiting for their enlistments to expire, they were just deserting. In droves.

Washington was losing, and was just days from losing his Continental Army. If the Americans lost the revolutionary war, then it would mean that every man who signed the Declaration of Independence would be hanged as a traitor. The American revolutionaries had risked everything for liberty, and they were about to lose everything – their money, their property and even their lives.

I found a page that summarizes the battles leading up to the Battle of Trenton.

First battle, a defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of White Plains**
>
> *October 28, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> With the British army maneuvering to make his Harlem Heights position untenable, George Washington withdrew from the island of Manhattan, and established a new encampment further north near White Plains, New York.
>
> On October 28, 1776, a flank attack by the British on this new position resulted in the collapse of Washington’s line. Thankfully, he was able to orchestrate an orderly withdrawal that preserved the army. Unfortunately, Washington’s retreat further exposed Fort Washington, which remained garrisoned on Manhattan.

Next, another defeat for Washington:

> **The Battle of Fort Washington**
>
> *November 16, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> Following the defeat of George Washington’s army at White Plains, New York,

> British General William Howe focused his army's attention on Fort Washington, the last post defended by the Continental army on Manhattan. Although Washington hoped to abandon the fort, his officers convinced him that it needed to be held in order to keep British ships from ascending the Hudson River.
>
> During a carefully-orchestrated, all-out attack on November 16, 1776, British and Hessian forces overwhelmed the fort's garrison after vicious fighting. When he heard the attack begin, Washington, who had stationed himself across the Hudson River in New Jersey, travelled across the river to the enter the fort and personally inspect its defenses. Several officers accompanied Washington, including Generals Israel Putnam, Hugh Mercer, and Nathanael Greene. They convinced Washington to leave the fort just 30 minutes before it was surrounded.

And then, another defeat for Washington:

> **Evacuation of Fort Lee**
>
> *November 20, 1776*
>
> RESULT: BRITISH VICTORY
>
> After the fall of Fort Washington, George Washington made plans for the evacuation of Fort Lee, which stood across the Hudson River in New Jersey. In a letter written to John Hancock on November 19, 1776, the general wrote that "…Fort Lee was always considered as only necessary in conjunction with [Fort Washington]…," and that it would be abandoned as soon as provisions and other supplies were removed.
>
> Unfortunately, a large British force succeeded in scaling the heights close to the fort on November 20, 1776. Faced with superior numbers, Washington called for the immediate evacuation of the fort, which resulted in the loss of dozens of cannon, 2-300 tents, and 1,000 barrels of flour.

That brings us to the Battle of Trenton. Across the Delaware river from Washington's army was an encampment of Hessian mercenaries, fighting for the British. The Hessians believed that Washington's Continental army was in full retreat. The British generals had already written home to the King to tell him that the war was nearly over, and that they had won. But had they?

Washington crosses the Delaware

Here is what Washington decided to do on December 25th, 1776:

> General George Washington's commitment to cross the Delaware River on Christmas 1776 foreshadowed the many hardships faced as well as the eventual victory of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At first glance, the decision to transport 2,400 Continental soldiers across an icy river in one night, directly into a severe winter storm of sleet and snow seems irrational.
>
> Washington's decision, however, was based on strategic motivation, understanding that the Continental Army desperately needed a victory after

> months of intense fighting with several significant defeats and no major victories. Washington also understood that the element of surprise was the only way that he and his army stood a chance of defeating the highly trained Hessian mercenaries.
>
> On the morning of December 25, 1776, Continental soldiers woke up in their camps along the Delaware River to a frozen, snowy covered ground. Weather conditions worsened and temperatures continued to drop throughout the day. Late in the afternoon, the Continentals left their tents and began to form along the river in anticipation of the night's events. Washington kept almost all of the details of the crossing a secret; as a result, none of the soldiers knew anything about their upcoming mission.
>
> Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776 allowed his army to strike the Hessians at Trenton the next morning.
>
> Washington's plan was to cross the river at night, march to the nearby town of Trenton, New Jersey, and attack the Hessian garrison right before dawn. Time was Washington's greatest enemy; to combat it his orders called for the various regiments to assemble at their designated crossing points no later than sunset. The close proximity to the crossing points allowed the soldiers to begin the journey immediately after nightfall struck and complete the crossing no later than midnight. Once across, Washington intended for the armies to reassemble and march approximately ten miles to Trenton, arriving there no later than five o'clock in the morning to achieve surprise. Despite his meticulous planning, the schedule failed almost before it even began.
>
> Many of the regiments did not arrive at the river until well after dark. Additionally, a severe winter storm that included wind, rain, snow, hail, and sleet met the soldiers at the banks of the river significantly slowing their crossing. Many of the boats had to combat ice jams and unfavorable currents. To make matters even worse, the extreme darkness caused by the storm made it hard for the boatmen to see the opposite shore.
>
> The necessity of using larger ferries to carry pieces of artillery across the river caused even more delays. Washington crossed the river with John Glover's Marblehead mariners and upon arrival debated whether or not to cancel the entire operation because it was more than three hours behind schedule. Washington decided it was too costly to retreat and he painfully watched as his army continued to trickle across the river.

If you were standing by the river along with Washington watching his sick, frozen, ill-equipped army struggle across the Delaware, then you would probably think that Washington had lost the element of surprise. This attack was just taking too long to happen. Maybe Washington would give up his plan, because things hadn't gone his way. But Washington didn't quit – he persisted.

The Battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776 (click for larger image)

The Battle of Trenton

This is how the battle went down in Trenton, New Jersey:

> Immediately following his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General George Washington marched the Continental Army to Trenton, New Jersey. The army's forces included horses, guns, wagons, and soldiers, stretching for nearly one mile. The weather was worse than it had been crossing the river, but the army continued to proceed as Washington rode up and down the column pressing his men to carry on.
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> Shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1776, the Continental Army started its charge on the city. Three columns marched through thick snow with Washington personally leading the middle charge. As the soldiers pushed forward, artillery began to fire. At the same time, German drums urgently called the Hessians to arms. To his astonishment, Washington had maintained the element of surprise.
>
> Immediately after the firing began, three Hessian regiments ran from their quarters ready to fight, quickly forming ranks. As the Hessians grouped, the Continental Army entered the city at two points: John Stark marched into the city on River Road from the west, while Nathanael Greene and Washington arrived from the north.
>
> Andreas von Wiederholdt, a Hessian lieutenant, incorrectly reported to Colonel Johann Rall that the Continental Army had surrounded Trenton and there was no available route for retreat. As a result, Rall decided to counterattack Washington within the city and not retreat across Assunpink Creek. This proved to be costly as Washington's forces occupied the highest ground in the city and had clear views of all of Rall's movements.

> Time after time, Washington countered Rall's efforts to outflank the Continentals. Eventually, Washington's forces overpowered the Hessians. Rall was mortally wounded and many of his soldiers broke ranks, fleeing from the fighting. Normally very disciplined, Rall's regiment was confused and disoriented without their commander. They retreated to an orchard east of Trenton where they were forced to surrender.
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> Despite the large number of Hessians that escaped Trenton, Washington still won a crucial strategic and material victory. In only one hour of fighting, the Continental Army captured nearly nine hundred Hessian officers and soldiers as well as a large supply of muskets, bayonets, swords, and cannons. Washington ordered his soldiers to treat the Hessian prisoners in a humane manner, and the general quickly focused his attention on what to do next. Washington assembled all of his officers in Trenton to discuss whether they should attack another post, hold their position in Trenton, or retreat back across the Delaware. Washington decided that because of the condition of his army, the best move was to return to their camps across the River.
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> When the Continental Army returned to camp on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, soldiers were exhausted. They had marched and fought for two straight days through rain, snow, sleet, and hail. Washington knew that his army had far exceeded expectations at Trenton and that they faced many more challenges going forward.

Washington won two more battles in rapid succession. Many of his troops re-enlisted because of these victories. There were many battles remaining to fight, and many hardships such as the winter at Valley Forge. But the Battle of Trenton was the turning point of the revolution. George Washington would not let a string of defeats stop him.

Marco Rubio’s case against communism and left-wing political violence

July 17, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

I know that everyone will be talking about Trump’s prime-time speech today (Friday), but I always write blog posts the night before! So in this post, I just wanted to talk about Marco Rubio’s amazing speech opposing communism, left-wing political violence, and far-left extremist terrorism. And I’ve got the best clip from the speech, so that you can get an idea of what was said without having to watch the whole thing.

This article from PJ Media talks about the left-wing political violence:

> Rubio began his speech by saying that the number one responsibility of any government *should* be to protect the people it represents.
>
> He went on to point out that for a long time, counterterrorism in the United States focused primarily on Islamist extremism, which was necessary, but that there had always been a blind spot when it came to extremist violence from the political left.
>
> […]Rubio went on to say that many people here in the United States dismiss acts of violence and terrorism if it benefits the left-wing cause and that it’s time to put an end to that. He pointed to the George Floyd riots from the summer of 2020 and how media outlets called them “mostly peaceful” despite all the obvious violence and crime we saw with our own eyes, as well as other more recent examples, like Charlie Kirk’s murder, assassination attempts on Donald Trump, violence against ICE officers, and a transgender individual shooting up an elementary school. He listed numerous examples from other countries as well.

And the writer says that this is the best part of the speech:

> This is a distinctive and unique evil. It has always been driven by a hatred, above all else, a hatred for civilization itself. It is a revolt of the worst against the best, a revolt of the weak and cowardly against the strong and the good. It’s perpetrated by those who cannot build, who cannot create, who cannot achieve great things, and take their revenge upon the world for their own inadequacies, by seeking to destroy those who can.
>
> This is what radical leftism is. It may wear various different slogans and ideologies across place and time. They call themselves anti-capitalist or anti-imperialist, communist, anarchist, Marxist, but the fundamental character is always the same. It is a poisonous resentment cloaked in the language of equality, justice, and liberation; an overwhelming need to tear down what greater men have built; to wreck what is beautiful and what is right on behalf of people who are only filled with ugliness and have nothing else to offer.

And the clip! I can't believe I'm sharing something from the State Department Twitter account:

https://x.com/StateDept/status/2077753532409647185

And there was more in that clip – about communism. I found an article from Town Hall that had the words from that part of the speech:

> In a speech Thursday announcing a global crackdown on left-wing terrorism, Secretary of State Marco Rubio made exactly that argument: communism does not even work in theory. Socialism and communism, by their very nature, require the centralization of power, the destruction of the individual, and the abolition of private property, the very institution that has been instrumental to the development of the West and the greatest nations on Earth. Even as an abstraction, communism is the antithesis of nearly everything Americans have historically believed in.
>
> "One of the criticisms you sometimes hear of communism, for example, is that it sounds good in theory, but it never works in practice. That's actually not true," the secretary of state said. "Communism does not sound good in theory. The world it envisions for all of us is small, flat, grey, leveled of all exception, drained of all that is good and noble in the human soul. The world it envisions is a world without courage, a world without creativity or ambition, a world without heroes or glory or great causes to strive towards, a world without miracles, without myths, without men who rise above the rest to do incredible and extraordinary things. And the world communism envisions is a world without God."

Here is the whole thing:

If you want a good article about Trump's Thursday night speech, the best I have on a Thursday night is this article from The Federalist by Brianna Lyman. Keep in mind that she is only talking about ONE of the 10 or so points that Trump made about election integrity in his Thursday night speech.

There was also this one from PJ Media that talked about the actual declassification of election meddling intelligence.

And another from PJ Media about China hacking the files on 220 MILLION American voters.

Here's the full speech:

For more, you can probably find something about the de-classified reports Friday morning on Breitbart or The Federalist or PJ Media. As you can tell, I've completely given up on reading the corporate news media to find the latest news.

It's nice to see Trump saying that he's not signing the housing bill that Congress wants until he gets his Voter ID act passed. He's playing hard ball, but there are good reasons to. And good for him for going straight to the American people – bypassing the corporate news media.

(Image Source: Marco Rubio’s Twitter account!)

Building Christian Kids Who Can Stand Against Secular Culture: My Practical Plan

July 21, 2026 | by Wintery Knight | Link | Original Link

Recently, I have been meddling in the parenting plan of a friend who has a bunch of children, ages 5-12. She has been watching a lot of scholars talk about scientific evidence for a Creator and Designer, like James Tour and Stephen C. Meyer, and getting more and more concerned about whether her own children are going to keep their own faith as they go through the education system into the workplace. And make a difference for the Boss.

I reflected on how best to influence children and concluded that we need a two-pronged attack: (1) excellent books that shape their thinking and character, and (2) structured real-world experiences that build practical knowledge. Since I'm in a different state, my role is mainly shipping good books and celebrating their progress with them. Even asking the mom to ask them about their progress helps. The mom is taking care of giving them useful things to do, like taking them to see "The Story of Everything" and "Young Washington", teaching them to cook and build rockets, etc.

My plan is to build up their strength in testable areas, which will insulate them from the emotion-based arguments of the secular left in settings where peer-approval can easily overwhelm truth, unless truth is rooted in evidence.

I chose these areas:

1. economic policy
2. evidential apologetics
3. military history
4. classics*

* not the popular ones, but the ones with heroic characters and moral lessons.

Economic policy

For economics, I sent along a bunch of Tuttle Twins books. I don't like Connor Boyack's religion or politics, but he does a good job of teaching economics to children. And this is only a temporary measure until we can work our way up to Thomas Sowell, which will make them bulletproof against wokeness.

This is what I got them:

- Tuttle Rebuttals: 40 Responses to Popular Political and Economic Myths
- The Tuttle Twins Guide to Modern Villains
- The Tuttle Twins Guide to Inspiring Entrepreneurs
- Tuttle Twins Choose Your Consequence Combo
- Tuttle Twins Combo Pack (plus free workbooks!)

In economics, we look at other times and other places in order to learn what policies have

worked and what policies have failed. So, all the pressure that kids will get from the culture to accept wokeness, socialism, social justice, etc. will roll right off them like water off a duck, because of the evidence.

Evidential apologetics

And then I got them books on evidential apologetics for kids:

- God's Crime Scene for Kids
- Forensic Faith for Kids
- Cold-Case Christianity for Kids
- Case for Christ for Kids
- Case for a Creator for Kids
- Case for Faith for Kids
- Your Amazing Body
- The Farm at the Center of the Universe
- The God Proofs: How Science Points to YOUR Creator
- Discovering Intelligent Design: A Journey into the Scientific Evidence
- Explore Evolution: The Arguments for and Against Neo-Darwinism

And the mom has the oldest one registered in the Discovery Institute biology course that I blogged about before.

The point of these books is to avoid the common and predictable fate that awaits most "church-raised" Christians when they hit university. Most Christian parents put a lot of faith in the church community and shallow social connections, but these things do not preserve faith in hostile environments like the modern university or the corporate workplace. A much better bet is to rely on hard evidence. Evidence that they've seen tested in formal. Academic. Debates.

Military history

And I got them a bunch of basic books on military history:

- Great Battles for Boys: WW2 Pacific
- Great Battles for Boys the Korean War
- Great Battles for Boys: WW2 Europe
- Great Battles for Boys The American Revolution
- Great Battles for Boys The Vietnam War

You can see that military history dominates my "What I am Reading" page. I wrote an entire separate post about why Christians should read military history.

Most of the children are girls, but military history does the job of increasing humility, patience, endurance, and gratitude for boys and girls. These are all character traits children need to counteract the victim mindset, the entitlement, and the lack of accountability that dominate social institutions. Espcially the schools that are run by woke teachers and administrators and the big corporations that are run by DEI hires and woke

HR departments.

Classical literature

Finally, the classics. I was able to resist the bad parenting and secular leftism I was born into by immersing myself in classical literature and classical movies as a child. The classics are basically "design patterns" (software architecture patterns) for making good decisions within the moral framework of the universe.

So, some of my favorite books and movies are laid out in my "About WK" page, but these are the books I chose for the kids so far:

- **The Hobbit** ("Alone and unaided"): Readers learn how heroism can be found in people who don't look like heroes, and how to seize the initiative "alone and unaided" in order to solve problems without outside help.
- **The Scarlet Pimpernel** ("that part he played—the mask he wore… in order to throw dust in everybody's eyes"): Readers see the power of humility and strategy when defying tyrannical regimes. As I often say in my gameplay videos: "is this shot worth revealing my position to the enemy?"
- **Cyrano de Bergerac** ("I stand… not high it may be… but, I stand alone!"): Readers discover the nobility of personal integrity, avoiding peer pressure, and valuing excellence in everything over worldly approval or success.
- **A Man for All Seasons** ("When a man takes an oath, Meg, he's holding his own self in his own hands. Like water. And if he opens his fingers then — he needn't hope to find himself again."): Readers are reminded of the importance of personal integrity and keeping one's oath to God and conscience, even when it costs everything.
- **The Screwtape Letters** ("Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys."): Readers gain insight into the spiritual significance of everyday experiences and the game of cosmic chess that is being played out.

She already had the Narnia series by C. S. Lewis and The Book of Virtues by William Bennett in the house.

One reviewer (Tom) also suggested that I add the Anne of Green Gables series, but I have not read those.

For the early classics, I'm not choosing "popular" classics or anything tainted by modern ideologies like secularism, leftism, feminism, etc. I'm aiming for books with heroic characters who can serve as role models.

See this recent First Things article that the mother sent me:

> The stories of heroes and their spectacular deeds are intended as a lesson, an exhortation, to the present. This is what the Greek word mythos ("discourse")

> generally means in Homer: It is not a narrative in the abstract, but virtually always implies some sort of persuasive agenda, usually an exhortation… Indeed, the heroic story is a stand-in for the father figure.
>
> This is what the classical is about, for Homer. It is not concerned with books as such, nor ideas in the abstract, critical thinking, or intellectual history. Great men are what is essential, not great books. The classical exists, in short, to produce people resembling the best of its characters.

Later on, I will send classics to warn them about flaws in human nature; Anna Karenina, Madame Bovary, Mansfield Park, Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, etc. Basically, I am trying to take away the modern world's praising of narcissism, entitlement and lack of accountability with the left hand, while pushing forward heroic and self-sacrificial concern for others with the right hand. I'll add in Shakespearean plays like Macbeth, King Lear, Othello, Antony and Cleopatra, to get that theme of tragedy coming from the failure to distinguish appearance from reality. And Hamlet, of course, which is my favorite Shakespearean play. (By the way, Hamlet has *nothing to do with "indecisiveness"* – that's just postmodern relativists trying to avoid the real theme, which is how adult selfishness destroys the lives of children).

One reviewer (Drew) asked me to add a quick summary of what lessons are to be learned from these classics, so here is that:

- **Anna Karenina / Madame Bovary:** Readers witness the personal and familial destruction that follows when passion and self-fulfillment are elevated above relationship obligations and self-sacrificial commitment.
- **Mansfield Park:** Readers learn the quiet strength of moral conviction and humility triumphing over charm, social pressure, and compromised principles.
- **Pride and Prejudice / Sense and Sensibility:** Readers see the wisdom of valuing character over first impressions or fortune in mates, and the long-term blessings of self-control and prudent judgment.
- **Macbeth:** Readers confront the corrosive cost of unchecked ambition, the self-deception of "the ends justify the means," and the tragedy of abandoning moral order.
- **King Lear:** Readers learn how foolishness, vanity, and poor judgment in leaders and parents bring chaos and suffering, and the importance of choosing allies who have humility, loyalty and truth-telling ability.
- **Othello:** Readers are warned against the destructive power of jealousy, manipulation, and trusting appearances over truth and evidence.
- **Antony and Cleopatra:** Readers see the ruin that comes from prioritizing sensual passion and worldly glory over duty and self-mastery.
- **Hamlet:** Readers learn how adult selfishness and moral failure create chaos for the next generation, yet personal integrity and trust in divine providence offer a path out of despair.

Movies have a place, but books are *required*. I have a list of some of my favorite classical movies in the About WK page.

The goal of sending the children classics is to give them *the option of not acting according to the conventions of their culture*.

Conclusion

So that is my plan. That is what worked for me in my own life.

One last point. I have worked with many natural-born Americans in the IT sector who were either homeschooled or attended Christian schools for many years and then left the faith (and their conservative views) in college. They had great church communities. They had big social networks. And this approach of valuing community and social networks did not prevent them from losing their faith in college or in the workplace. They just went from doing what worked at home and at church to doing what worked at the university and at the corporate workplace. Their habit of forming many social connections actually put a lot of pressure on them to change their Christian and conservative convictions.

Related to that last point, I wanted to mention that Cyrano had a particularly big effect on me. Cyrano explicitly says that he prefers not to be friends with many different people. He only has one close friend – Le Bret. He says that *he prefers to have enemies.* In addition, many modern people are influenced by popular books, movies and TV shows that teach false ideas. Cyrano strives to study the best topics like poetry, literature and fencing. He values truth.

Here is an example of something memorable from Cyrano that helped me to not want to make too many social connections (church, social groups) that would influence me to compromise my core convictions:

And in French:

It’s even better in the original French.